

TIC BRNO



ARCHITECTURE:

# Modern architecture



01	“White House” – Administrative building of the Communist Party („Bílý dům“ – Administrativní budova Městského výboru KSČ)
02	Hotel International
03	City Market Hall (Městská tržnice)
04	Janáček Theatre (Janáčkovovo divadlo)
05	Hotel Continental
06	Prior department store (Obchodní dům Prior)
07	Zvonařka Central Bus Station (Autobusové nádraží Zvonařka)
08	Hała Rondo
09	Ingstav
10	Brno Exhibition Centre (Výstaviště)
11	Tram bridge over Veletržní Street (Most tramvajové dráhy ve Veletržní ulici)
12	Hotel Voroněž
13	National Centre for Nursing and Paramedical Fields (Národní centrum ošetřovatelství a nelékařských zdravotnických oborů)

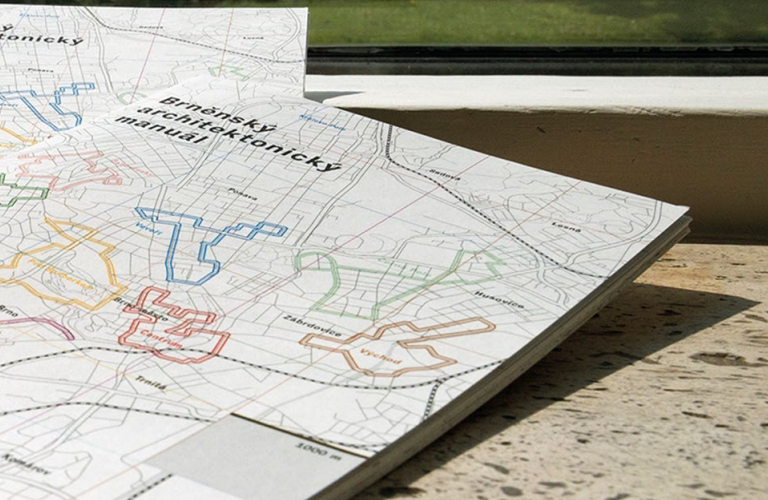
14	Bohunice Hospital (Nemocnice Bohunice)
15	Hotel Myslivna
16	Brno Reservoir (Brněnská přehrada)
17	Lužánky Municipal Swimming Pool (Plavecký stadion „Za Lužánkami“)
18	TESLA Sports and Swimming Centre (Sportovní a plavecký areál TESLA)
19	Brno-Židenice Funeral Hall (Smuteční síň Brno-Židenice)
20	Hády Transmitter (Vysílač Hády)

# Modern architecture

Giving the blanket term Modernist to the architecture that emerged between the years 1945 and 1989 would be just as inaccurate as labelling it “communist” or “socialist”. From the end of World War II up until the Velvet Revolution, Brno witnessed the building of huge quantities of residential properties, numerous cultural, sporting and recreational buildings or complexes, as well as public buildings and technical structures. Despite originating behind the Iron Curtain, the variety of their stylistic range stands in comparison with the creative output of contemporaneous worldwide architecture. Nonetheless,

the Modernist mind-set and so-called techno-optimism, combined with central planning, were determining factors for many of these structures. Their frequently lambasted “dehumanisation” and memories of the political regime under which they were erected have played a role in the rejection by today’s society of the values that inform these buildings. Maybe this brochure will contribute to people rediscovering a path – both literally and metaphorically – back to the architecture of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.





# Brno Architectural Manual (BAM): Architecture Guide 1945–1989

The Brno Architecture Manual (BAM) is a project aiming to popularise architecture and present it directly on the city's streets. Its website contains an open database (for experts and the general public) of architectural works. In the form of short descriptions and downloadable audio clips, you can find concise sketches of a site's history, the circumstances of its development, the stories of its owners and of course the architects. The signs on the pavement in front of the relevant building provide information. They contain the building's code and the

particular web page, making it easy with the help of a smart phone to get information about the site, or listen to its story, right outside its doors. These trails through the city also come in paper form – a printed leaflet with a map and an architectural guidebook. So far, this comprehensive processing has been applied to the interwar period and also the post-war period, the time under the Communist or Socialist regime that ended with the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

01



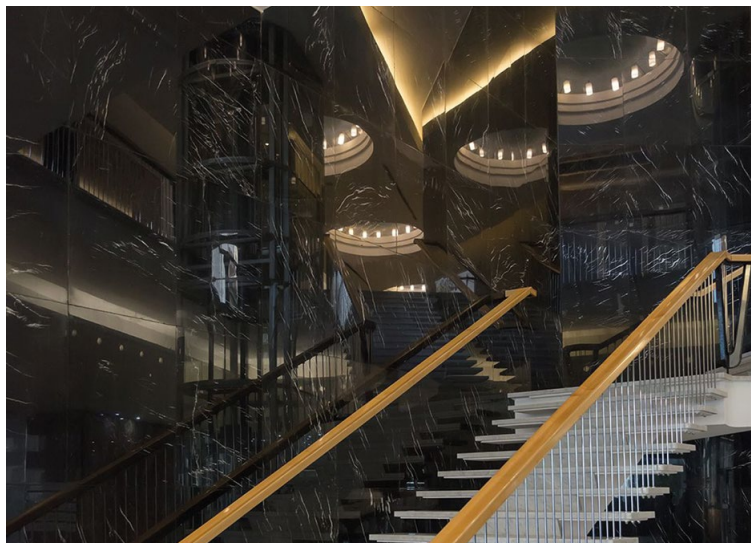


MIROSLAV SPURNÝ, FRANTIŠEK JAKUBEC (1974–1976)

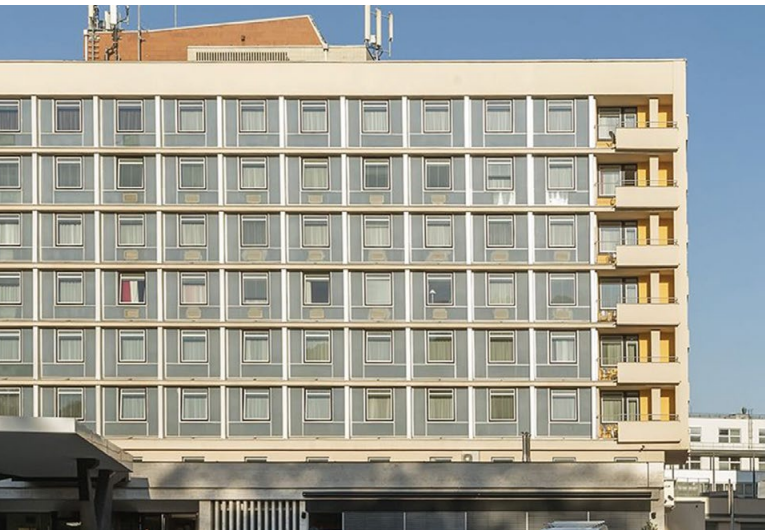
## “White House” – Administrative building of the Communist Party

The headquarters and administrative centre of the Communist Party were often critically regarded by the general public thanks to the building's political and social role. Notwithstanding, it is an exceptionally high-quality example of Modernist architecture in Brno, which moreover was creatively responding to contemporary trends from abroad. The architects ingeniously combine the pure forms of the office-block “panels” with the

almost sculptural quality of other parts of the building. In the two massive cylindrical towers are located glazed stairwells. Tumbling out like a contorted tube into the square is the conference hall. After 1989 the administrative building was repurposed as a health centre, and the former offices of the CPC committee have been transformed into surgeries for paediatricians. In addition to medical uses, the building also hosts cultural events and café society.







VILÉM KUBA, MIROSLAV KRAMOLIŠ, ARNOŠT KREJZA AND OTHERS (1958–1962)

# Hotel International

The boom in Brno trade fairs during the 1950s precipitated a demand for new hotel capacity. Hotel International was the first and most distinctive response. The plan was to erect a prominent architectural feature on this showcase site in the city's historic centre, a new building which would of course still respect the neighbouring townscape. To prevent any overt clash with the neighbouring historicist palaces, it was set back from the line of the street and conceived essentially as a horizontal "panel". The distinctive V-shaped awning, supported on pillars and extending out from the building, together

with the façade bisected by horizontal and vertical lines and overall colour scheme are characteristic of the so-called Brussels Style (referring to the Brussel's World Fair of 1958). As the hotel took form, the building's interiors and exteriors were adorned with exceptionally rich decoration, on which participated artists who had lately presented works at the Czechoslovak pavilion in Brussels. These days, as a result of the hotel recently losing its protected monument status, individual artworks are gradually disappearing from its premises. The future fate of this uniquely preserved building similarly hangs in the balance.



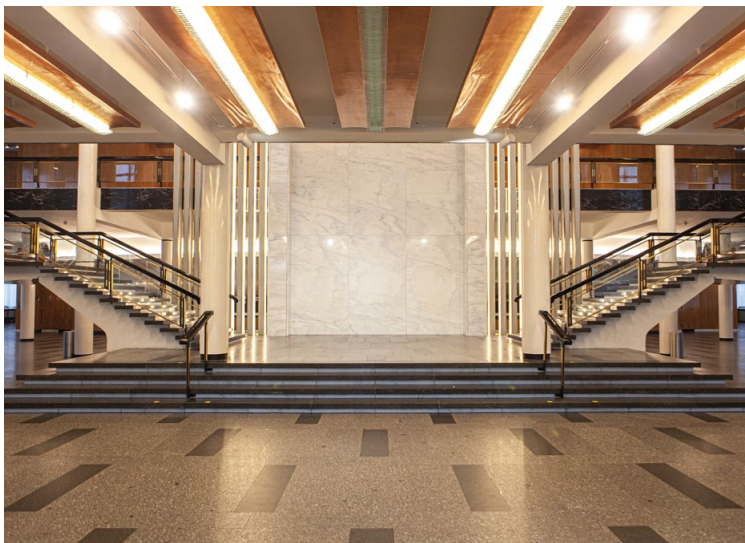


EMANUEL HRUŠKA, VILÉM ZAVŘEL, MICHAL PALAŠČÁK (RECONSTRUCTION)  
(1947–1950)

# City Market Hall

The year-round shopping complex, designed for the convenient purchase of foods, filled a gap on the northern side of Vegetable Market Square. The covered market was officially opened in 1951, i.e. in the depths of the Stalinist regime, with an unresolved food crisis and officially sanctioned socialist realism. Despite such unpromising forces, the building still drew upon Brno's strong inter-war functionalist traditions. The reinforced concrete skeletal construction meant that the retail areas could be left as free, open and unified spaces, powerfully lit thanks to

the suspended glass façade, which simultaneously offered a panoramic view over the historic square. After changes that saw the House of Food and Vegetables relegated to a standard shopping centre, aesthetically diminished by insensitive reconstructions and general decay, the building was returned to its original function in 2017. The reconstruction swept the building clean of its poor-quality structural accretions, reopened the covered walkway on the ground floor, and so linked the Vegetable Market Square with Starobrněnská and Radniční streets.



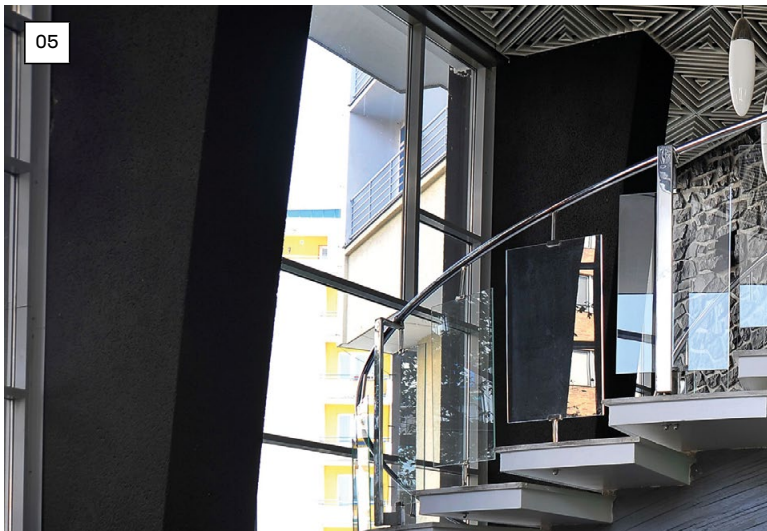


JAN VÍŠEK, VILÉM ZAVŘEL, OTAKAR OPLATEK, IVAN RULLER,  
LIBUŠE ŽÁČKOVÁ POKOROVÁ, BOLESLAV PÍSAŘÍK (1960–1965)

# Janáček Theatre

The form adopted for the home of Brno's opera and ballet was preceded by 50 years spent searching for the right architectural expression, each vision succumbing in turn before changing stylistic, operational, cultural and political demands. The tide finally turned with the design competition of 1956, i.e. at the tail end of so-called socialist realism. The resulting design bore signs of Neoclassical monumentalism as well as a new trend in architecture that was

gaining traction after the success of Czechoslovakia's pavilion at Expo 58, what Czechs call the "Brussel's Style". As the project developed, the style and layout of the theatre underwent a series of improvements – the lightening of the heavy mass of the glazed walls, or the merging of the originally separate public areas into a single spacious whole, for example. The entrance and the public spaces are some of the most architecturally successful parts of the theatre.





VLADIMÍR KOVAŘÍK, ALOIS SEMELA, ZDENĚK ŘIHÁK (1961–1964)

# Hotel Continental

This was another of the hotels erected to provide extra accommodation for trade fair visitors. The restricted plot of land – an old estate built for manual workers – determined the subsequent shape of the building, which had to rise high if it were to achieve the required capacity. The result was a building with a Y-shaped ground plan (a popular design at the time), rising 15 storeys to a height of 56 metres. The Continental dramatically rewrites the city skyline and has become an indispensable feature of Brno. Despite their modest size, the public areas of the hotel are

spectacularly appointed using a range of natural materials, and, in the spirit of the Brussels' Style, are complemented with vibrant hues of latex paints. From today's perspective, the hotel can be characterised as a representative work of architecture that weaves elements of the international and Brussels' styles, thereby illustrating the era in which it was built, when Eastern Bloc architects could at last draw freely upon the priceless heritage of pre-war architecture and on contemporaneous movements beyond the Iron Curtain.

06







ZDENĚK ŘIHÁK, ZDENĚK SKLEPEK, JAN MELICHAR (1974–1984)

## Prior department store

As demand for more modern forms of retail and shopping experience grew, so did the need for a new department store in Brno. With the Prior department store, the very progressive approach taken by the architects allowed for the maximum number of different types of goods, access by car, a simple-to-understand variable layout, as well as separate public and internal operations. The ground floor up to the third floor was originally intended for various retail outlets, while the large terrace area could be accessed by the public from the first floor. The third floor

was originally given over to a restaurant and factory canteen. The uppermost floor with its apprentice workshops and offices was visually accentuated with concrete cells. The current appearance of the Prior owes itself to reconstruction works in the 1990s, carried out according to the vision of architect Jan Melichar and the original design. Today the building is unable to meet the requirements of our consumerist society and despite its indisputable architectural quality it is threatened with demolition.



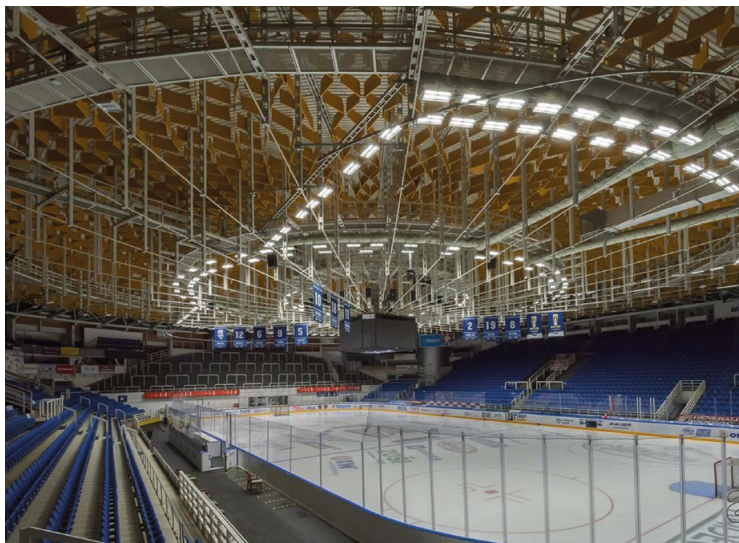


RADÚZ RUSS (1977–1985)

# Zvonařka Central Bus Station

Built to replace the cramped bus station opposite Hotel Grand, since 1978 Zvonařka has been Brno's main bus station. The trussed construction of the roof is an essential ingredient in creating what first appears as an exceptionally Brutalist building. Whereas all of the stops are arranged beneath the roof, its upper surface provides parking spaces for up to 90 buses and coaches. The last stage of construction, which envisioned a tower block to house the Czech State Bus

Transport authority (ČSAD) as part of the planned southern centre never materialized. Insufficient maintenance for the metal structure, concrete, and platform equipment led to renovations and modernization during 2017–2020 based on plans by CHYBIK + KRISTOF. The renovation project preserved the architectural value of the structure, which was covered in a light paint and had substantial lighting added to the covered areas.



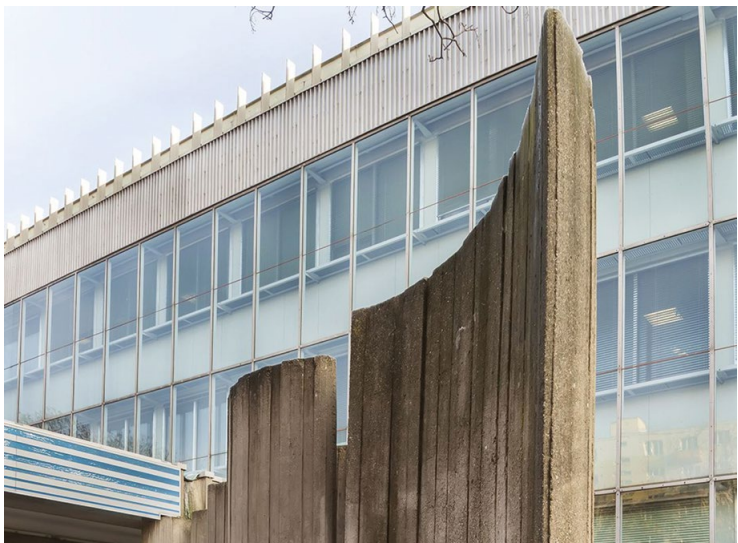


IVAN RULLER (1971–1982)

# Rondo

This multipurpose circular hall was primarily built to host winter sports, but could also accommodate other uses. Thanks to its visible, monumental steel roof structure, with its 65 m diameter, the interior acquired a distinctly technical flavour. The architect used variously sized white glazed panels for the external cladding around the Rondo's circumference, giving the building an elegant curvature and – combined with the

shadows gathering over the day – producing an impressive three dimensional quality. Situated at a busy crossroads, the 7000 spectator capacity hall creates a powerful and unmissable landmark, despite only rising to the same height as the blocks of flats in its immediate vicinity. Today it serves as the city's primary ice hockey venue, although many of the original architectural details are now tarnished by advertising billboards.



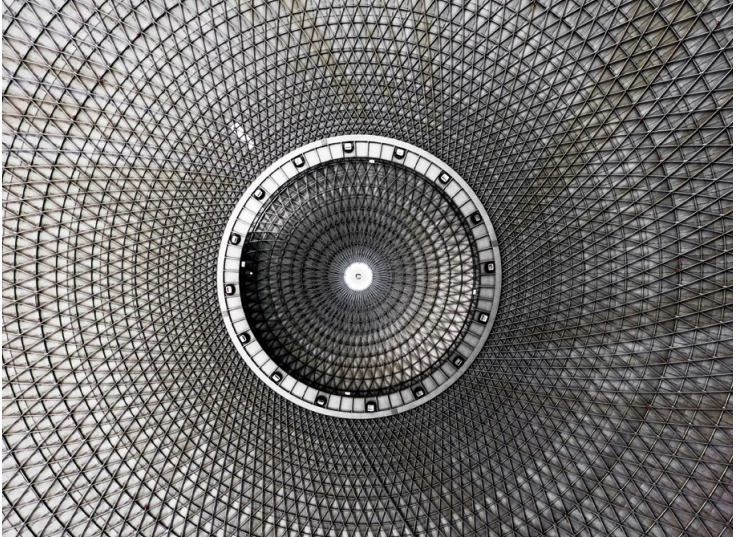


IVAN RULLER (1968–1970)

# Ingstav

The administrative building of the State Construction Enterprise excels in terms of structural and technological innovation, the sophistication of its layout, the fine art conception for the façade material, and the natural conversation between artworks in the building's exteriors and interiors. Guided by a clear vision to insulate the offices from sounds of the neighbouring busy road, and aiming to create more favourable climatic working conditions, Ruller erected in front of the building's steel construction a second façade entirely created from glass, suspended on a grid-work

of understated aluminium profiles. Delicate upon the eye, the transparency and smoothness of the façade contrast with the concrete fire escapes and the massive projecting reinforced concrete awning. In the post-revolution years numerous modifications for the new era were realised in the office building. The original equipment was removed, the original façade glazing was substituted for glass with a darker tint, and the exterior of the building and its immediate vicinity are currently swallowed up under a visual smog of advertising.







# Brno Exhibition Centre

The exhibition centre was opened in 1928 to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the independent Czechoslovak state, and later caught a second wind in the mid-1950s, when Brno began to host its world-famous engineering fair. This era is associated with a remarkable construction boom – not only for the exhibition grounds themselves, but for the city more generally. As part of improving the tourist infrastructure, several hotels were constructed that still number among Brno's important

architectural landmarks. Over the following decades the exhibition centre was used ever more intensively in presenting Czechoslovak international trade, and increasing the amount of exhibition space became essential. The exhibition halls B, C, Y and Z are only the most striking examples of this rise in capacity, and which together with the multi-storey administrative building have become a symbol of Brno trade fairs. More information about individual exhibition halls can be found in a separate TIC brochure.





FRANTIŠEK KOČÍ, ING. VAŇOUS – STATICS (1965)

## Tram bridge over Veletržní Street

From its inception right up until today, getting to Brno Exhibition Centre by public transport has primarily been achieved on the tram network. After relocating the original tram depot from the Brno brewery over to Veletržní Street, to speed up the network a prestressed reinforced 9 m wide concrete bridge was built, spanning the road beneath without a single pier. Its elegant curvature, echoing the composition of the main entrance to the exhibition grounds, gives it a tremendous

aesthetic quality. Technically the bridge is interesting for the variable thickness of the girder, which changes as it stretches from the back wall of one abutment to the other, with the narrowest point lying at the centre, where the clearance is greatest. Its uniqueness rests in the remarkable angle of rise, which made construction and resolving the static design a demanding task. Despite the challenge, however, the bridge has remained in good technical condition without requiring serious repair.



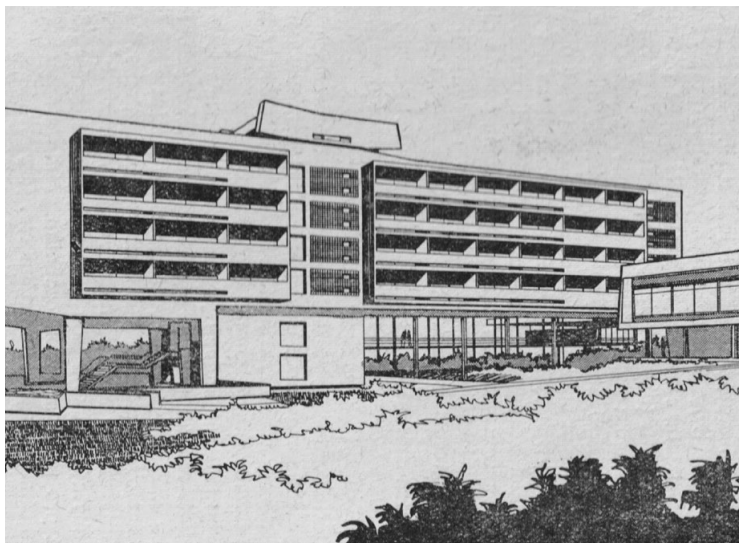


JÓZSEF FINTA, ERZSÉBET PÓZNA, ANIKÓ Z. HAVÁS (1977–1979)

# Hotel Voroněž

The hotel's planning and execution was rapid thanks to the prefabricated parts imported from the then Hungarian People's Republic. The already outmoded panel type was adapted to construct a hotel. The entrance part is supported by a two storey steel framework fitted with prefabricated elements, built into which are the communal areas with the entrance hall and other operational facilities. The second wing, containing guest rooms over ten floors, comprises panel parts based upon a single layout module. Onto the prefabricated elements of the façade, the architect applied a decorative

frieze – a strip that breaks up the building's uniform monotony, as does the suspended loggia, whose metal components were originally painted blue and ochre. Owing to its location, with easy access onto the motorway and ample parking capacity, the hotel became very popular during socialism with "motorised" visitors. Not only during its early years, but later too, thanks to its generously appointed interiors and services on offer, the Voroněž was regarded as a luxury hotel. However, its architectural impression of austerity, owing to its prefabricated construction, found little favour with some Brno residents.





VLADIMÍR SELZER (1965–1969)

## National Centre for Nursing and Paramedical Fields

By thrusting the 100 m-long main corpus of the residential wing block out towards the Brno Exhibition Centre below, the architect found an extraordinary solution for this sloping parcel of land in one of the city's residential quarters. His decision gave the building a twelve metre height difference between its northern and southern sides, while simultaneously providing users with an astonishing view over the expansive valley. Today, the

building continues to serve its original purpose – accommodating and teaching nurses and paramedics. Unfortunately, sunbathing and view-gazing from the originally accessible roofs are no longer available to current residents. This is one of Brno's most distinctive Brutalist structures, the face of which creates a gigantic cantilever that distinguishes and edifies the building's architectural expression.





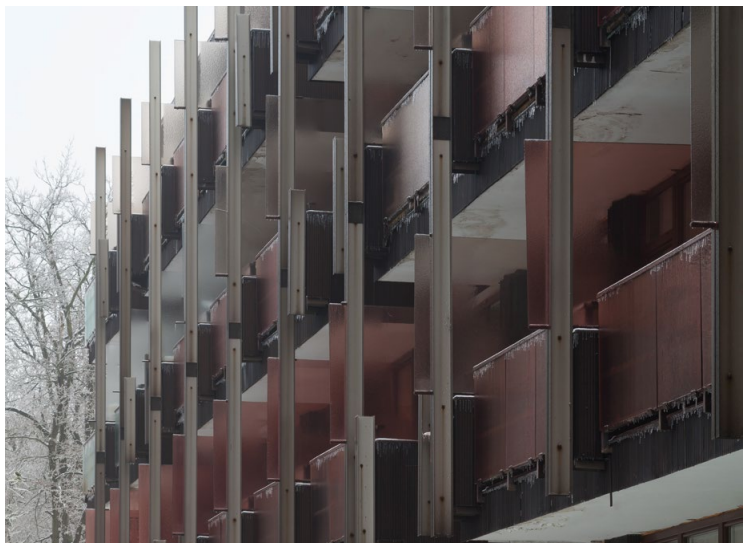


MIROSLAV SPURNÝ, JIŘÍ KUČERA (1968–1989)

# Bohunice Hospital

The creation of a modern medical centre had been a burning issue right back to the inter-war period. The green-field plots alongside the transport corridor to Jihlava had long been earmarked for the concentrated delivery of healthcare to the city's residents, as well as for training new doctors and conducting medical research. The first of the specialist medical centres to be finished was the gynaecological clinic, whose architectural concept linked up with the central building of the main pavilion. Alongside the 1000+ beds, here were workplaces of specialised departments, admin

offices, laboratories and operating theatres. The main pavilion was conceived as a monumental eighteen-storey block. Its dominant expressive feature are the regular bands of the geometric grid, with its transparent window sills and chestnut-tinted sunscreens. The endless repetition and gigantic proportions give the hospital its monumental character. Also imposing are the twin, sculpturally formed staircases. In fact, the project as a whole was never fully completed. It is well worth seeing, however, not least because the architectural rendering has been preserved more or less intact.





JAN DVOŘÁK (1969–1987)

# Hotel Myslivna

In view of the accommodation shortage in a trade fair city, plans were drawn up to build new guest facilities close by a restaurant popular with day-trippers – the Myslivna (built in the 1930s by architect Bohumil Tureček). The prospective hotel's usage and technical requirements were constantly revised, until the three-star international hotel finally – also called Myslivna – opened its doors some twenty years later. In response to the contours of the terrain, the old and new parts of the building are rotated towards each other, and the lower building links to the reception and conference hall. The guestroom part

of the hotel is oriented towards the forest park and lookout point above the city. The aesthetically pleasing façade, on which the nearby branches are mirrored in the tinted glass, is one of the building's most charismatic qualities. The hotel's internal fittings combine both mass-produced and originally designed period accessories, as well as numerous artworks. The older parts of the building are furnished thematically, with some of the space given over to "hunting kitsch" (myslivna means "gamekeeper's lodge"). The current largely authentic preservation will soon be irretrievably lost through radical remodelling.





# Brno Reservoir

Originally just a water management structure, built from 1936 to 1940 (the dam was designed by architect Jaroslav Grunt), it became a popular site for relaxing and walking shortly after the Second World War. With the change of regime after 1948, the significance of what had become known as the “Brno Sea” rose rapidly – now it would acquire the status of a metropolitan leisure resort. With volunteer brigades at the ready,

the embankments and basic infrastructure were developed. The greatest construction boom occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, when most of the large-scale accommodation facilities as well as holiday cottages and chalets were erected, and the level of service provision upgraded. The attraction of the reservoir and the resulting building activity continues unabated, although the original appearance of the buildings is in slow decline.





OTAKAR OPLATEK, FERDINAND LEDERER – ROOF (1967–1979)

# Lužánky Municipal Swimming Pool

The “swimming stadium” was designed on three different operational levels to take account of the terrain. The architect situated the main entrance on an elevated terrace, granting visitors direct access to the central hall. From there the public and athletes could make their way to the changing rooms or buffet, with its generous view of the main pool. Visitors could either continue upstairs to the spectator grandstand, or descend to the first floor, to the little paddling pool and service rooms.

The exposed construction elements of the building are written large in bold gestures upon the external façade, and have become the building’s architectural signature. Similarly expressive is the forceful slope of the spectators’ grandstand, or the curve of the cylindrical bulge of the trussed roof. The maximal use of glass sought to conjoin the covered hall with the summer lido, which – as with many other projects in this locality – was never ultimately realised.







VIKTOR RUDIŠ, DAGMAR GLOSOVÁ, ZDENĚK MUSIL (1973–1982)

# TESLA Sports and Swimming Centre

The indoor swimming pool and sports centre is situated beneath a suspended cable roof, constructed in the iconic form of two “levitating” waves. The monumental glazed side walls and the aperture running just below the roof ensure sufficient natural light enters the interior, which is artistically adorned with glass mosaics and ceramic tile cladding. It was built with the assistance of the Tesla national enterprise, and was part of the longstanding, weekly “Z” campaign, in which local residents volunteered to build public amenities for

their local neighbourhood. In this case it was the Lesná housing estate (1961–1970), much acclaimed and awarded for its architecture and urbanism, especially thanks in part to the emphasis given by architects to its non-residential buildings, so-called civic amenities. One particular merit of the estate is its layout, which does not have any regular scheme but responds to the character of the landscape and terrain – the Čertova rokle Park. The result is wide parkland amid rising tower blocks.



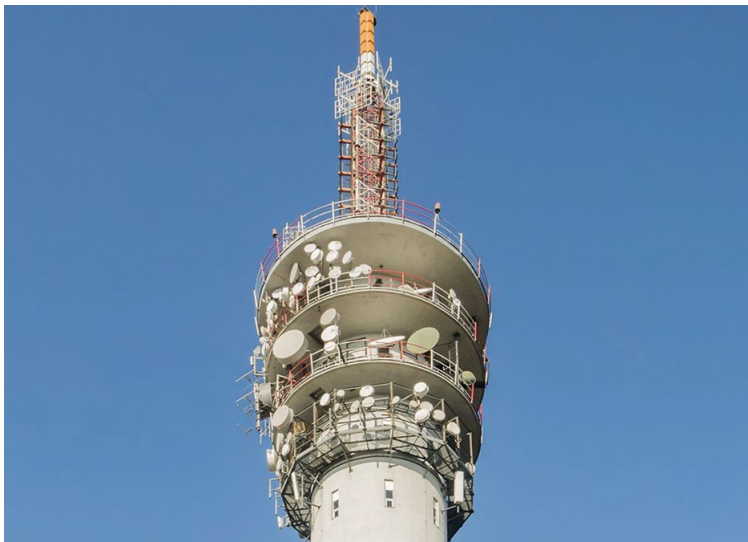


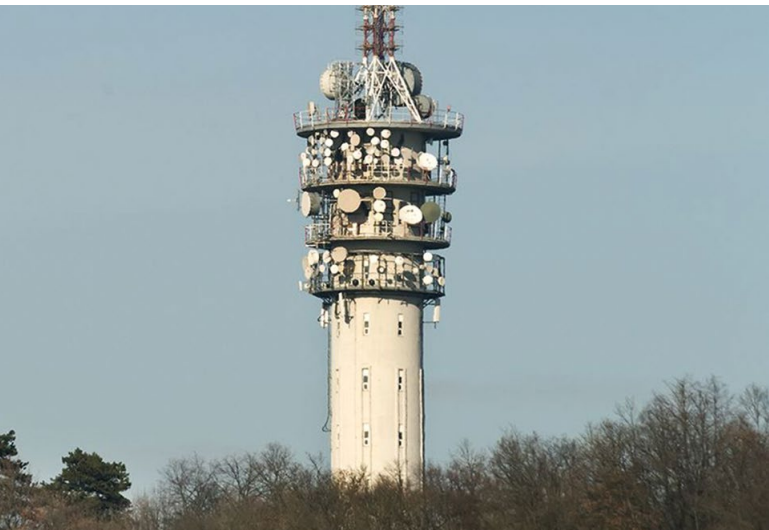
IVAN RULLER (1977–1985)

# Brno-Židenice Funeral Hall

The new ceremonial hall at the Židenice Cemetery was built to satisfy a rising demand for civil burials of residents of the city and other localities. It is situated beside the Akátky Forest Park, not far from the Modernist housing estate of Vinohrady. In material terms its design stems from the idea of two worlds coming together – the world of the living (entrance area for the public) and the world of the dead (cemetery). These two worlds merge in the central and dominant space of the hall for a final farewell. A water feature, intended to bolster this notion with an allusion to classical mythology, was unfortunately

never realised, neither were the projected bell-tower or eternal flame. The dynamically raised roof-shape enriches changes in the light by adding rays from the southern sun. The uninterrupted windows around the hall link together the building's interior and the surrounding landscape. These artistic architectural ruminations are underscored by a series of artworks within and without the hall. The complete absence of any regular and careful maintenance of the building, or remedying of faults or removal of vandalism, has caused the hall to fall slowly into dilapidation. It is currently undergoing renovations based on designs by architect Marek Štěpán.





IVAN DÉRER, J. PALIČKA (1961–1964)

# Hády Transmitter

The television and radio tower was built according to a 1958 standard design for the purpose of extending broadcasting range and ensuring reliable signal transmission between older transmitters. This 50 m structure was erected on Brno's highest point – the 424 m hill of the same name, rising above a limestone quarry. Of architectural value is the tubular structure itself, with its reinforced concrete rings, providing surfaces for siting antenna equipment. The roof also serves as a platform from which rises the truss structure of the main

antenna. In recent years the transmitter has been fitted with a fourth, metal platform. The uniform mass of the tubular base is broken up by windows along the vertical axis, lined with simple chambranes. These consolidate the tower-like impression of the structure and make it look slimmer. Although several of these mass-designed structures are still in existence, the Hády Transmitter is among the best preserved, and is essentially unchanged since the 1960s.

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The project Marketing of the Tourist Area Brno and Its Surroundings 2023 was implemented with the support of the state budget of the Czech Republic from the programme of the Ministry of Regional Development.

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Photo: Brno Architectural Manual (BAM)  
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BRNĚNSKÉ  
VÝSTAVIŠTĚ





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PARK  
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MORAVSKÉ  
NÁMĚSTÍ

NÁMĚSTÍ  
SVOBODY

HRAD ŠPILBERK

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