A Heritage Landmark for the 21st Century

During the first six decades of its existence, the Industrial Palace underwent several minor alterations that were barely noticeable to ordinary visitors. Then came the Communist takeover and, with it, a decision to use the palace for a different purpose – as a venue for Party congresses and large public gatherings. In the 1950s, the Exhibition Grounds were renamed the Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Recreation, and the palace was remodelled according to a design by architect Pavel Smetana. The original entrance portal was replaced by a ground-floor foyer connecting all three sections of the palace, while an even more radical transformation took place inside. The original steel vaults of the side wings and their glazed ceilings disappeared beneath a massive new structure designed in the style of Socialist Realism. The building was also given a new name: the Industrial Palace became the Congress Palace.

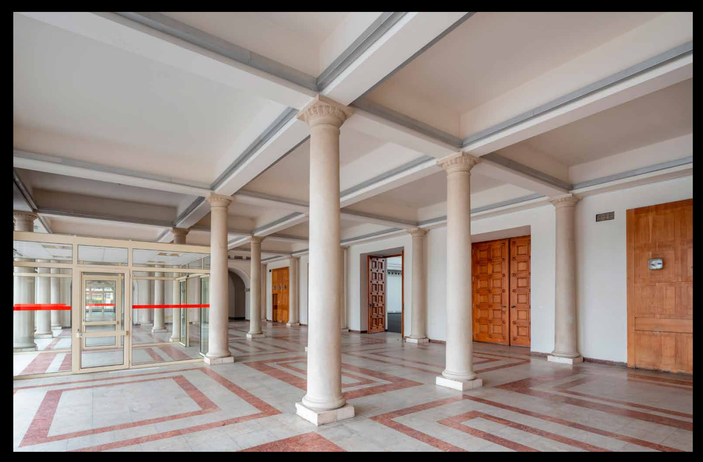
Following the fire in October 2008, the entire Left Wing had to be demolished, while the Central Hall was also partially damaged. A complete restoration, including the reconstruction of the destroyed wing, began in 2022. For everyone involved, it presented an extraordinary challenge. When the palace was originally built, it was seen as a testament to the courage and expertise of Czech architects and civil engineers, the advanced capabilities of Czech industry and the skill of Czech craftspeople. Its restoration likewise called for true masters of their trades – the very best in their fields.

At the same time, this historic landmark had to be technologically brought into the 21st century. How successfully was this achieved? You can see for yourself. Although spotting the changes may not be quite so easy... Wherever possible, all modern technology has been carefully concealed to preserve the atmosphere of this 135-year-old building.

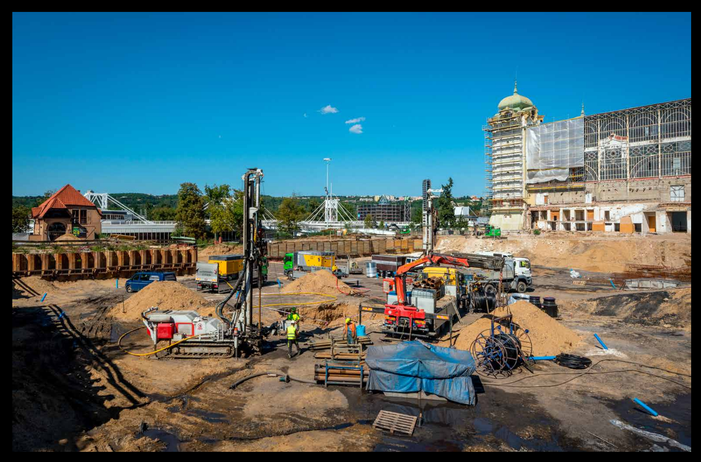
Smetana's extension concealed the steel structure and added side alcoves to both wings.

Did you know...?

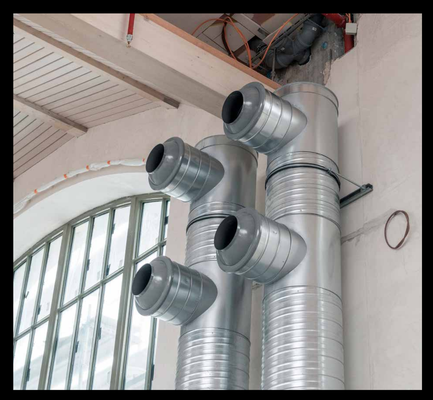
- One of the new features is the basement level beneath the newly built Left Wing. Three freight lift platforms connect the underground level with the floors above.
- The 2008 fire remains a powerful reminder of the importance of fire safety. The building is now protected by several different fire protection systems, with two water tanks located in the basement.
- The Left Wing features an automatic ventilation system that draws cooler night air into the building during the summer.



The foyer was also created in the 50s based on a design by Pavel Smetana.



An additional source of heating for the palace is a heat pump system connected to 70 boreholes, each 140 metres deep.



HVAC ductwork in the Left Wing.

To minimise heat loss, the glazing uses state-of-the-art multilayer insulating glass.

Photo: Jiří Šabek

Industrial Palace Na Výstaviští Architecture Na Výstaviští Reconstruction Na Výstaviští I ♥ Na Výstaviští