Single-Use Architecture?

Every grand exhibition of the 19th century boasted its own central, iconic landmark. In 1851, visitors to London's Hyde Park marveled at the ethereal structure of the Crystal Palace; two decades later, the giant dome of the Rotunda dominated Vienna's Prater park; and in Paris, where the 1889 World's Fair took place, the 300-meter Eiffel Tower soared into the sky.

Prague's Industrial Palace belongs to this elite company. Built between late 1890 and early 1891 on the edge of the Stromovka park, this bold structure designed by Prague architect Bedřich Münzberger served as the main pavilion for the Jubilee Centennial Exhibition. It was from the Central Hall of the Industrial Palace that Archduke Charles Louis, the Emperor's younger brother, officially opened the exhibition on May 15, 1891. In September of that same year, organizers welcomed Emperor Franz Joseph I himself. Among those who had the honor of speaking with the Emperor at the Exhibition Grounds was architect Münzberger.

The exhibition proved to be a phenomenal success. Over five months, approximately 2.5 million visitors walked through its gates, showcasing the economic and cultural sophistication of the Czech nation to the world.

Yet, the Exhibition Grounds came dangerously close to being turned back into a park. Under the original plans, all the buildings were to be demolished once the event concluded. In the case of the Industrial Palace, the organizers initially reached a compromise with the authorities: the Central Hall would remain, but both lower wings – left and right – would be torn down. Throughout the exhibition, however, the organisers patiently lobbied to save the entire complex. Industrialist and inventor František Křižík later recalled how he repeatedly told the Supreme Land Marshal during walks through the Grounds that a palace without its wings would be nothing more than a "large glass box". Perhaps these expressive words ultimately helped save the building.

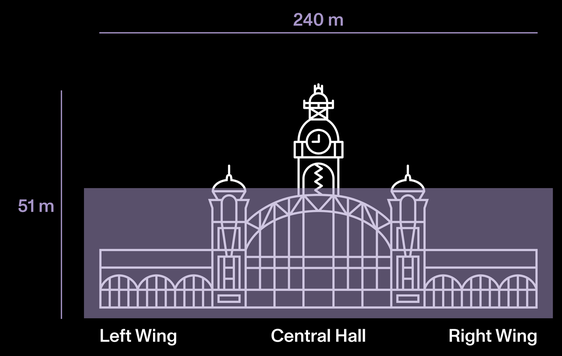
Did you know...?

- In 2023, Výstaviště Praha saved the grave of architect Bedřich Münzberger at the Olšany Cemetery in Prague.

Main Entrance Gate to the Exhibition Grounds.

Royal Pavilion in the Central Hall.

Industrial Palace, north side.



Industrial Palace Na Výstavišti Architecture Na Výstavišti Reconstruction Na Výstavišti I ♥ Na Výstavišti