



Hotel Karlov, Benešov

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Harmony between old and new

The Karlov hotel in Benešov in the Czech Republic was created through extensive refurbishment of existing buildings and the addition of three new structures. Design teams from architectural firms AA Lábus and K2 implemented the project with great respect for the historic surroundings. The modern architecture of the new buildings blends harmoniously with the setting of the historic buildings, so proponents of traditional values as well as fans of modern architecture will feel at home here.

The Karlov hotel is located in the centre of Benešov (near Prague) on the edge of the monument reserve district of Karlov, which has been populated since the eleventh century. A Minorite monastery was established in the district in the 13th century, but was destroyed during the Hussite Wars. All that remains of the original monastery are ruins composed of the two gothic brick arches of the church's windows, but that is sufficient to give one a feel for the history of the place.

Naturally evolved walkways

In 2004, AA Lábus and K2 were approached by a client who had acquired two abandoned buildings in Karlov with the intention of using them as a hotel. A detailed analysis by the design teams showed that the best solution (which would also be accepted by the monument protection authorities) would involve three new buildings, originally intended to be family homes, connected to one another by an underground passage. Later, while trying to obtain building permission, the client was forced to buy a neighboring property with two mini-courtyards. The architects adapted the plans to the new situation and extended the development to the south. This allowed for three additional rooms in the converted property and four in the new structures.

The hotel has 28 double rooms in total. The hotel seems like a labyrinth, but it is in fact easy to find your way around. The entrance leads into the basement which houses the hotel foyer and reception. From there, you can access the individual buildings located above ground. The architects were amazed at just how much charm a building that deviates so much from the usual design parameters of an ideal hotel could possess. It is a non-orthogonal environment and, as a result, the system of corridor systems through the hotel is reminiscent of city walkways that have evolved naturally. Taking into account the existing structures, the hotel rooms were arranged in agreement with the monument protection authorities. Furthermore, the greenery was preserved, leading to the formation of a discrete, exceptionally pleasant and welcoming environment.

New buildings as a harmonious addition

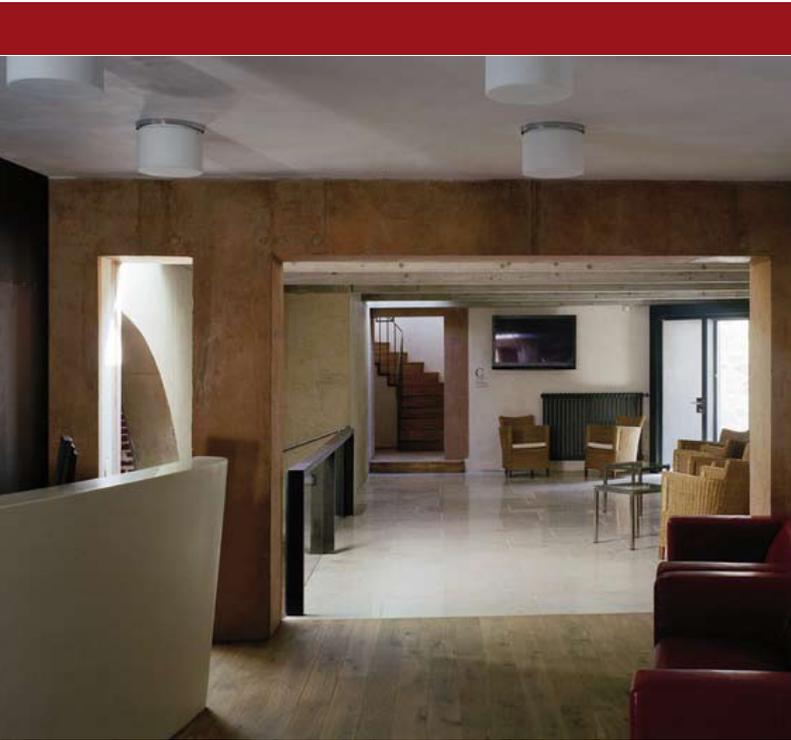
Refurbishment of the three existing buildings and construction of the three new buildings to form a hotel and separate restaurant with wine bar have helped revitalize not only the buildings, but also the surroundings. With its unique building fabric, the Karlov hotel has breathed new life into Benešov town centre.

The architects also felt it was important that the authenticity of the original structures was retained in the existing buildings. The southern part of the plot was used for the three new buildings which match the scale and character of the surrounding properties. The new and the old parts of the hotel complex had to be harmoniously combined and needed to complement each other effortlessly. Only the traditional gable roofs of the old buildings were incorporated into the new buildings; in all other respects, modern design elements were used. Exterior differences were mitigated by using a natural plaster color throughout.

The architects also wanted to ensure that guests would feel at home in their rooms and that they would be able to memorize the location instantly. Thanks to the diversity of the rooms and the use of various materials and colors for the interiors, each guest is afforded a unique environment. The ambiance of the original structures is different from that of the new buildings, both in terms of the building solution and interior design. One characteristic element is the use of materials with a natural surface finish. Paint has not been used anywhere to cover the exterior surfaces. Hence, the new parts blend quite naturally with the old and connect well with each other.

Easy data modification with Allplan

The entire project was realized using Allplan, right from the initial analysis through to the working drawings. Since construction needed to commence within a very short timeframe, implementation planning was divided into three stages and approved in stages. A variety of detailed solutions were drawn up during these phases and it was easy to apply amendments to the revision drawings. In view of the number of design changes made, the architects were especially pleased that it was easy to modify data in Allplan. Use of the Workgroup Manager also made the architects' work easier.



The project was configured using the chosen basic structure of floor plans, views, etc., together with various levels of authorization. The team members were assigned the layers and levels in Allplan that they needed for their individual work. During the completion phase, when a particularly large volume of data was being handled, practically all employees were involved in the project.

The hotel has won several awards, including "Building of the Year 2009". It has also been nominated by the "Club for Old Prague" which gives awards for new buildings in historical environments. In the "Best Real Estate" competition, the Karlov hotel won the title of "Harmonious combination of historical buildings and high guest standards", in the hotels category.

