

Karlovy Vary: Lordship and Central park waiting for city's standpoint

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Lordship group wants to launch an investment project for about eight billion crowns in Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), which would fundamentally change the entire area of Dolní nádraží in the central part of the town. The future of the Central Park project now depends on the management of the municipality, which must rule on whether the project is consistent with the zoning plan. The views of local politicians and experts are now diverging, and they are seeking a unified view on the matter.

Lordship presented their intention in Karlovy Vary for the first time in early 2009 and former city leadership, formed by ČSSD and ODS, considered it very successful and beneficial for the 15-hectare site. Department of urban development and the municipality then saw it as corresponding with city zoning plan. However, the current ruling coalition K20 had a different view and asked to suspend action until it has familiarized with the project. "The initial studies have been changed several times and we are now waiting for the City Council to comment on the final scenario," said Martin Pilka, company representative.

The Central Park project is designed to build a public space with a square, a 2.5 kilometres long colonnade and to creating a public park along the Ohře river with an area of around six hectares and recreational areas including water park and entertainment centre. Furthermore, a multi-cultural centre with shops, services and offices will be built. Construction of hotels and apartments is also planned. "In the last study, we modified the appearance of buildings. Instead of continuous development, several high-rise, solitary buildings were created," Mr Pilka added.

The change in attitude of the city management is unpleasant for Lordship. For example, the company had to interrupt proceedings on environmental impacts of the project at the Regional Office last year. The company reportedly hasn't considered to surrender the Central Park project totally. If Central Park gets supports of the city the first phase of construction could begin within two to three years, the whole project is divided into five to six stages.

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