

Doubletree by Hilton Košice hotel - the first in our country, the second in Europe



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Hotel Slovan was built-up on the place of former most luxury hotel in Slovakia - Schalkház from year 1873. After Košice freeing (1945) it was re-named to Slovan and it was wearing this name till recent days. The original building was demolished in the 60-ties of the 20th century because of its poor technical state and Slovan rose-up on its place. Exploration works, technical expertises and contractual conditions between the Interhouse a.s. Košice investor and the network Hilton Hotels Corporation hotel forced it to let the concept of a particular reconstruction in favour of a complex one at the end. They rounded it out successfully under the developer patronage of J&T Real Estate and the new Doubletree Hilton Košice hotel was put into service on February 16, 2009 maestoso.



Spacious rooms in stylish design

So by this the first Hilton Family hotel visited Košice and Slovakia simultaneously. „The business & conference hotel is mainly concerned. It results from the key segment, which ought to create the main part for visitors. Its localization directly in the town centre and in immediate connection to main transport roads, its history- reaching already to servicing Schalkház and hotel Slovan - and the assortment of offered

services, “predetermine it for that purpose, Marek Harbulák, the Doubletree by Hilton Košice director, told for Stavebné fórum.sk.

As he added, newly reconstructed facility dispose with 170 rooms including 10 apartments. It offers the choice of smoker or non-smoker storeys and accommodating units for handicapped people in accordance with legal regulations and the trend in health protection. Completely renewed and spacious rooms in stylish design offer the concept of Sweet Dreams® by Doubletree guaranteeing comfortable sleep, generous working space involving broadband connection and wifi and coffee-pot with offer of coffee or tea and a hair drier.

Besides 1200 m2 of flexible space for congresses and conferences with built-in most modern audio, video or screening techniques and capacity of 500 persons in movie layout or for gala dinner (round tables) belong to other features of its equipment, fitness, sauna and whirlpool, business centrum, two restaurants with the Mediterranean and international cuisine, lobby bar, casino, shopping passage, concierge services and 220 parking places in the basement spaces of the hotel and in the new garage house in the vacant lot.



The reconstruction is the challenge for architects

Because the existing layout solution of the hotel did not meet increasing requirements and trends in the sphere of tourist trade, the mission of the reconstruction and building was to utilize its strategy location, increase the standard of restaurant and accommodation services and to enlarge congress and rentable shopping spaces. „We designed the building and layout modifications so as to meet higher criterions regarding the area, hygienic and technical equipment of rooms itself as well (air condition, fire safety and lighting, audio and video equipment). Interior components of movables in stylish spirit in shades of dark and light wood create smart atmosphere, “Martin Nedoba, the project main architect, told.

As he pointed out, the reconstruction became „not easy task and the challenge simultaneously“for architects, who stated the task to follow the original concept of the work and rational display of its

authors by present means of expression. Layout and operational changes touched the bottom part, „tie“, most of all, where the original main entrance was replaced from Hlavná Street to Rooseveltova Street, while number of storeys and the whole height of the object remained without a change. Movement of clients into and from the hotel became calmer, more discrete and more intimate by that.

An important fact of the reconstruction was incorporation of former Slovan to the world hotel network regarding its character of business & conference hotel. „ The investor operates it under the Doubletree by Hilton Košice mark based on the franchise agreement. Doubletree is a part of the hotel network Hilton and it was open in our country like the second hotel on the European continent in accordance with its strategy to expand to the European market with this mark. The first such project is the hotel Doubletree by Hilton Milan, “Harbulák specified.

The Košice Doubletree by Hilton hotel is assigned to the category **** in the frame of valid legislative and fulfils attributes of a congress hotel. „Workers of the hotel network monitored the hotel regularly so as all valid standards were provided not only in the building part but also in the interiors themselves and their equipment. A lot of audits were carried out focused on fire protection and preparation of operation before the reconstruction is finished. The result of schooling, which lasted more than two months in some professions, are employees familiar with standards, ready for offering highest level services. The central booking system was put into service after the hotel network approval with operation was issued, a part of which is also our hotel, and “its director approached the way to acknowledgement.



Demand for congress capacities is growing-up

Košice had shortage of four-star hotel capacities till now. There is notified several other projects at the town - hotels or complexes, a part of which accommodation facilities ought to be. After Doubletree by Hilton Košice opening and reconstruction of another one - design of Yasmin hotel (former Hutník) it is created about 340 rooms in four-star category soon. And what about congruency, which never sleep?

„The current congruence - if we take hotels in four-star category into consideration (Bristol, Zlatý Dukát in the centre) - offer smaller capacity of accommodation - 35 rooms, while it has limited space capacities for organizing congresses and conferences. The hotel reconstruction finish created the biggest area for organizing such events involving the entire capacity up of 500 people. Demand for such capacity is growing-up at Košice, but for suitable using services it is needed to take also other organizers either conferences or congresses or other events here. The result of such effort is utilization of services not only of out hotel, but also other accommodation facilities. It is assumed that new hotel projects at Košice will have ambition to bring new clients. In regard to that it is very important to keep and enlarge direct plane connection with other destinations, “Marek Harbulák, the Doubletree by Hilton Košice director, pointed out. As he notified, Košice is needed be sensed as a big town in the eastern edge of Schengen, what creates assumptions for development in the frame of this space enlarging to the east direction.

Re-building and stylization of the hotel together mean first swallow in changing all the surrounding to urban, functional and socially first core space of Košice. Mainly in connection to the being prepared building-up of shopping-entertainment centre Au Park of HB Reavis Group developer as well as other projects, the question is logical, how these facts will influence the occupancy and the entire operational profitability of the accommodation facility. Latest assumptions show, that apart from the advised building-up of other two hotels in the locality all the competitive investment activities ought to valuate each other. And this is the circumstance, which acts for the Doubletree by Hilton Košice hotel in long-term perspective expressly.

Photo - J&T Real Estate

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