

Heating station as a gallery of design, architecture and visual arts?

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Jurkovič work is currently in the state after the „cleaning“ from the annex buildings not protected like sights, although the question is still hanging in the air whether they should be remained due to possibility of the so-called total conversion. The heating station itself represents a beautiful, literally opened space. In this atmospheric environment each architect, designer or artist visions begin working immediately ... What about to change it to the style of London's Tate Gallery, for example? This is also the conversion of the heating station, although in some other aspects ...

The aim to convert the industrial sights

Under the main hall, reminding „a gallery“ is a former basement with a height of about two classic floors. Once upon a time there was installed the technology necessary to produce heat. Today it is a clean room. On the side are three large-sized hoppers, which served to place the needed fuel. The hall is reaching approximately 25 m height in this part and looks truly majestic, what convinces the view from the side staircase. Its height is even more amplified by narrow bands of windows, which are for this type of industrial buildings of the last century typical also from construction point of view (thin metal frame and rectangular glass panels).

The secondary longitudinal and lower turbine hall (only 10 m high) is also after „lifting“. Although it is free of technology, a large rail crane hook shows also today what it once served for. The hall is „shorten“, because the object of the sight protection was only a part of it. Perhaps it would have been better to preserve it in the original length of about 90 meters. It would more highlight the sense of perfect open space and the mentioned total conversion.

After an interesting observation to the building and campus the involved (among them were not missing Pavol Choma from the VŠVU Department of Applied Arts, the director of the Slovak Design Centre Katarína Hubová, the director of GMB - Mirbach Palace Ivan Jančár, the curator Alexandra Homolová from SNG, co-author of the Chalúpka zone Zoran Michalčák) moved to the neighbouring Design factory, which have attributed its successful conversion.

The need to define a program and dramaturgy

After a bit constrained beginning, all agreed finally during the discussion that in the first place it is necessary to very precisely define locality program of the object, respectively dramaturgy of its operation, what any of the parties involved - designers, artists, architects, should particularly specify. In the debate resonated the question of the establishment of the Art-industrial museum (UMPRUM), which is still lacking in Slovakia.

The architect Peter Žalman - the author of the heating station conversion study - presented the whole

concept together with a physical 3D model, which could create from 2 000 to 8 000 m² exhibition space, according to pre-specified requirements and, of course, also depending on the total cost for reconstruction. In response to it the representative of the investor Miro Hrušovský said that Penta is going to put up an architectural competition for the entire area of the former heating station in the near future. Such renowned studios would take part in it as Maksimiliano Fuksas from Italy or Foreign Office from the Great Britain.

In conclusion of the discussion the idea of cooperation resonated between all concerned, not just individual departments but also the SR Ministry of Culture with the investor who would finance the entire conversion. The new version of the Jurkovič heating station would move the design, architecture and art as such into higher dimensions, but also Bratislava and Slovakia in the world.

Photo - author

19.05.2009 08:22, Ing. arch. Miro Minca