



## 4th Quadrant of Victory Square International Architectural Competition Prague – Czech Republic

### Jury Phase 2 Assessment Report

**Team No. 15: Pavel Hnilička Architects+Planners  
+ Baumschlager Eberle Architects**

**Criterion a): The proposal presents a high quality solution for programme distribution, creates synergies between the activities, taking into account the needs of different types of users of the area.**

There is a good mix of public activities around the outside perimeters and in the courtyards with intentions about which activity goes where e.g. the farm market in Technická Street. However, the jury has concerns that the retail is open to the residential courtyard which would reduce residential access and privacy to the landscape. The retail leading from the metro is constrained and has a poor connection with ground level with no daylight. Also, there is untapped potential of direct connection between the metro and Technická Street as well as connecting the underground passages to an urban destination such as the Cultural Centre. Instead, the underground mall terminates with the supermarket. The shopping mall is too big and in its west section there are spaces which will not be commercially attractive. The small floor area of individual buildings is set off by more floors which is a certain disadvantage, the Jury is concerned that the requirement to respect the height level of the surrounding buildings is not met.

The Cultural Centre entrance is appropriately opposite the university at the widest part to create interaction and activity which seems logical, however, placing it on the corner of Šolínova Street without accentuating its forecourt is a missed opportunity. Its location in the residential part does not seem to be the best solution. In terms of space the design is oversized, its location does not match the preferences of the brief. It also does not communicate with the civic amenities.

The UCT building design satisfies the required building programme. However, it has an irregular shape which creates issues, including a need to compensate with extra height which is overbearing on Šolínova Street and a lack of internal flexibility.

**Criterion b): The architectural and urban design proposal reinforces place qualities and respects the requirements regarding the urban design composition of Victory Square and its surroundings.**

The design shows a set of solitary buildings of organic form. The elevations on Victory Square follows the Antonín Engel's masterplan, facades around the perimeter are varied from the monumental frontage and more pleasing ones. There is a clear intention to create a contrast between an informal interior architecture and a formal 'Engel' style. The funnel shape of Technická Street is innovative creating an exaggerated perspective and pleasing views of the facades.

However, the elevations on Victory Square seems rather monumental, the offset floors tries to copy the architecture of the Engel's buildings, however it is done in a rather unexciting and mechanical manner. Also, the cafés in the frontages is unrealistic given wind and noise, but could be solved with canopies etc., which would also soften the elevations. In some parts of the buildings, there are too small, glazed areas in the facades which prevents from the daylight inside and use for the given purpose. Courtyard and streetscape facades are uniform and austere.

The UCT building communicates well with the surrounding buildings and becomes the dominant feature in Technická Street. However the UCT building is L shaped and not compact. This results in a much higher massing in the context of Šolínova Street where generally the building heights should decrease. The jury liked the lantern at the termination of Zikova Street.

**Criterion c): The proposed public spaces and courtyards are architecturally and functionally interlinked with proposed buildings and enhance the socially cohesive functional mix and diversity of activities.**

Two contrasting courtyard characters are proposed – urban and residential – which seem attractive and varied over day/night and seasons. Each courtyard is broken open in three places and the buildings set back to invite entry. The openings in the courtyards will allow some sunlight to penetrate. The jury also liked the atmosphere of the beer garden with its gravelled landscape. Narrowing the axis of Technická Street forms a gradual transition between the quiet student boulevard and the vibrant square.

However, the areas between the buildings do not create adequately attractive public spaces, there is no significant difference between semi-private spaces at the residential buildings and the public courtyards in the commercial part. The jagged balconies on the interior are aggressive and visually disruptive and form a different architectural context. There is also no strong proposal for the relationship or interaction of the buildings onto Victory Square to create activity and animation.

**Criterion d): The proposal presents a high quality solution for the blue-green infrastructure of the development site and contributes to the city's climate goals.**

There is well-thought-out blue and green infrastructure concept integrated into the appropriate landscape design of the public spaces with tree lines and the proposed "green canyons" in the courtyards, where the inner edges of buildings merge with greenery. Positive feature are the tree lines complementing the surrounding public spaces. The landscape proposal is well organised with large areas of soil for trees. Large areas of terraces give opportunities for greening and biodiversity. Jury liked the underground storage strategy for rainwater.

However, there is an error in the calculation method of the greenery ratio which does not meet the required 50% share of greenery on the unmade ground.

**Criterion e): The proposal presents a holistic, feasible and sustainable mobility solution for all modes of transport.**

The transport design is in general feasible although in some respects need to be modified and developed to greater details. The drawing of Šolínova Street, including the location of bus stops, is only schematic and for transport layout D only. The final layout in Šolínova Street is shown only in sections. The overall design of cycling

routes is schematic and only for transport layout E, in transport layout D no cycling traffic through Šolínova Street towards Evropská Street is considered. Bicycle parking on the 2<sup>nd</sup> underground floor of the UCT building and accessible only by lift is not the best solution. Pedestrian routes through to the metro are not particularly easy or imaginative. Proposed parking capacities are too small.

**Criterion f): The proposal presents a technological solution with a high degree of energy efficiency and flexibility.**

The technical solutions are well thought through. The large central courtyard spaces are well lit and provide excellent outlook for building occupants.

However, the irregular plan forms create many layout issues which are quite well resolved in the tighter residential floorplates but perhaps less desirable as deep plan offices. There is small spacing between some facades of different functions caused by perforation affects the daylight and privacy of both residential and office buildings as well as the UCT building.