

# Novoveská Huta: Alabaster Square and its story

Author: SF / Zuzana Kmecová | Published: 29.09.2009

The attractiveness of this remarkable locality revealed also the ideological proposal for its architectonic-urban reconstruction from the workshop of the team ARCH.EKO from Banská Bystrica called the Alabaster Square.

## A consequence of unregulated development

In the past, Novoveská Huta was an important spa centre, also known by mineral resources and a timber production. Today's development directs to a significant strengthening of development activities in the field of tourism in accordance with documents of the planning scheme. The carefully telling story about the so-called Alabaster Square reflects the natural, cultural and historical characteristics of Novoveská Huta.

At present the urban and architectural expression of the square is stigmatized negatively by unregulated development in terms of urban planning and transport solutions. With regard to tourism development requires a comprehensive transformation, given the needs of local residents and visitors. Vision of the square as a tourist point involves the need for parking places, information centre, paved pedestrian areas, public toilets, and areas with a park seating, a children playground and a rest house.

## Thrown stone as the beginning of the story

According to the author of the design - Ing. Arch. Michael Gaj younger - the so-called reanimations and viabilities of the spatial structure of the square, traffic solution of entrances into the square and organization of transport are the alpha and omega. Hence the need to reserve space to build new transport connections and the double sided bus stop, adjustment of crossroads and reconstruction of the bridge. Complete solution lies in finding historical nature of urbanization in the bundling to the present and near future.

Outwardly diverse rural structure of the village is directed to the composition centre - the village square. The dominant is the story on the thrown stone - gypsum, which is located in the locality and is fundamental by certain manner. The compositional centre of the spatial structure of the square represents the fountain symbolically referring to the former spa. But it is the multi-functional object with various possible uses of the specificities of the seasons throughout the year. Water from the fountain flows into the flow of Dubnica, which is in terms of composition and function another important element of the area and also has a symbolic function - carries the genotype of the town, the initial information.

## Compositional centre of time circles

Nascent and disappearing circles after the imaginary „throw of a stone“ are creating the story itself and show the individual objects of the square - existing and newly created. Everything happens on the basis of resonance of the point in the centre. An information centre designed in the form of chipped crystals of gypsum has not the ambition to be the dominant spatial component. An important is its link with the exterior, where is proposed the Park of minerals with seating. The protection of the relax area of the park from unpleasant influences of transportation is created by the sound deadening and optical screen consisting also of the gypsum and other local stones. Abstraction in the form of „armful of square“ is created by the coffee shop and the covered market-place, which performs primarily a social function. In the centre is also planned an external seating for watching cultural events, appropriately located - towards

the fountain.

An important complement situated behind the fountain is the multifunctional rotating screen useful for example as an information board or a projection screen. The rest house Poľovník (Hunter), the Post building, the old bus garage and the old stone bridge are functionally important and valuable space-creating objects. Conversely, an inconvenient and failed object is the wooden house - a big tent of the former shop on the southwest side of the square in contact with the old bus garage. Any new building ought to meaningfully shape the image of the square with retaining the vista to the church.

### **Relax on the Dubnica Brook**

An entrance to the square territory is linked on long-distance traffic, mouths via the Park of minerals to the square on the western side and culminates at the stone bridge, the so-called Most Vekov (Bridge of Ages). The old stone bridge in the design does not serve only as a bridge for pedestrians or cyclists, but also as a local historical treasure. Contemporary reference bears also the memorial commemorating the World War II. Due to transport solution of entrances to the square from the south and southwest was created the space between the new road and watercourse Dubnica. The Bridge of Ages is the entrance to the space, with terrain characteristics optimal for various children's activities.

Particularly suitable is location of the playground in its connection to the Dubnica Brook. Directly on the watercourse are proposed grades, on which it is possible to walk, and thus create the space for games. The demand for sports facilities and recreation will gradually require additional buildings and a sports centre and a motel. After construction of the target transport connection to the sport-recreation centre Novoveská Huta is in terms of the town zoning plan proposed elimination of car traffic and its replacement with an attractive shuttle - as an electric train or a horse yoke.

### **Symbolic interplay of materials**

The main carrier of the idea in terms of composition is the pavement. It captures real moments of creating the Alabaster Square in the form of objects and functional areas. In its structure is also written the story of the thrown stone and the composition centre of time circles. In recent history, there was produced a timber in Huta Novoveská. Benches and other seating areas in the combination with corten, stone and glass are made from it. The other movables of the square also fit into the overall concept, for example, vertical lighting, litter bins, mailboxes and so on.

The unifying material in the spatial structure of the square is corten - noble steel, which protects itself by its own rust. The author Gaj says: "... We chose this metallurgical material, which gradually absorb the climatic characteristics of the environment of Novoveská Huta and colourizes to the colour of various environmental impacts. On the square we want to move smoothly as in the story that tells about events in Novoveská Huta. We strive to maintain and create a space for the views, landscape vistas. Domestic visitors and offer space images.

The direct contact of the Alabaster Square with Novoveská, Hnilecká route and the state highway II/533 is important for tourism, predisposes this area of the square as a tourist footing point. " The town is interested in raising a mining village traditions and creating a sort of starting point to hiking and biking trails of Slovenský raj (Slovak Paradise) and therefore provides urban documentation," adds Arch. T. Štubňa, the head of territorial planning and building order of MsÚ Spišská Nová Ves.

Given the ambitions of the locality in tourism remains to us from the editors of Stavebné fórum to wish this story of Alabaster Square early real fulfilment.

The source ARCH.EKO, s.r.o., Banská Bystrica: Spišská Nová Ves / Novoveská Huta - Alabaster Square - urban-architectural design of the space

29.09.2009 15:13, SF / Zuzana Kmecová