

## L'attuale architettura funeraria in Repubblica Ceca, come patrimonio del 20° secolo e il suo percorso nel 21° secolo

### The Current Funeral Architecture as the Heritage of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and its Routing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in the Czech Republic

“La vita dei morti è conservata nella memoria dei vivi”. Queste parole furono dette dall'oratore, filosofo e scrittore romano Marco Tullio Cicerone duemila anni fa, ma sono ancora attuali. La dottrina cristiana, in seguito, rafforza queste parole e vengono incorporate in strutture sacrali, precedentemente usate per le cerimonie di addio, tra l'altro. I principali cambiamenti sono avvenuti durante il XIX sec. nel territorio ceco. La cremazione viene massicciamente promossa per una migliore igiene e come espressione del progresso umano. Le riforme di Giuseppina e l'inizio della laicizzazione iniziarono il processo di trasformazione delle cerimonie di commiato, in corso per tutto il XX sec. in Cecoslovacchia e in seguito in Repubblica ceca. La massiccia costruzione di crematori e sale funerarie (senza cremazione), così come il programma politico del regime comunista, hanno sostenuto la popolarità contemporanea delle cerimonie laiche e della cremazione. Questi cambiamenti hanno avuto un'influenza considerevole sulla formazione e trasformazione dei cimiteri e sulla loro posizione nella struttura urbana.

“The life of the dead is stored in the memory of the living.” These words said Roman speaker, philosopher and writer Marcus Tullius Cicero two thousand years ago, but they are still up to date. The Christian doctrine later strengthen these words and they are embedded in sacral structures, which previously where used for the last farewell ceremonies, inter alia. Major changes came during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Czech Lands. The cremation is massively promoted for better hygiene and as the expression of human progress. Josephine reforms and the onset of secularization started the process of the transformation of the last farewell ceremonies ongoing during whole 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic. Massive construction of crematories and funeral halls (without cremation), as well as the political program of the communist regime, supported contemporary popularity of secular ceremonies and cremation. These changes had a considerable influence to the formation and transformation of cemeteries and their position in urban structure.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

'Death is among the crisis situations which both individuals and communities have to copy with.' p. 57 (1) Therefore, each person and each community needed to address the issue of 'how to copy with death' - one that is currently addressed in multiple disciplines of science and religion. 'To a psychologist, death is the culmination of life - all of its development stages, while to a theologian, it is the end of earthly life and start of another. In terms of social science, we can view death as a result of the walk of life.' p. 35 [5] Despite the scale of all social issues addressed, an individual (dying/mourning) is the central figure at all times. Their 'copying' is part of the process; it is detailed in technical sociological and psychological publications (Špatenková, 2014), and related to the cause of the death, the age of the deceased, the time of dying etc. The behaviour of those surviving derived from the loss of the loved one is in turn the inseparable process of mourning. 'The acceptance of mourning as a process rather than as a state of mind is very important. Mourning, over time and as things develop, comes to certain changes, e.g. the intensity of the response is usually reduced with time.' p. 42<sup>5</sup>. All these processes of individual behaviour and attitudes of the society eventually influence the funeral culture and architectural design. O Nešporová says the following about the current stage of funeral rituals and understanding death: 'There are quite new ways of burial and motivation of the bereaved for these ways. By today's people, death is regarded as failure of medical science rather than as a natural end of life. The burial culture tells us on the state of each society more than we are ready to accept. At the present

time, funeral services take almost all arrangements regarding a funeral; the bereaved almost never come into contact with the body of the deceased. Through this, all the traditional funeral customs irreversibly disappear.' p. 2<sup>1</sup>

The transformation of rites and perception of death, however, started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century - one that has entered into the subconsciousness of the present as the time of progress and the emergence of new ideas. It was particularly this kind of progress which was associated with the hope of the "great" 20<sup>th</sup> century. After two world wars and the entry of two totalitarian regimes, these hopes have rather turned into scepticism and affects the public view of traditions and church.<sup>3, 16</sup> (fig. 1)

Cremation seemed to be an advanced idea as early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - one that was never been implemented under the government of the Habsburg monarchy with a major influence of the Catholic Church. The construction of the Liberec crematorium in 1915 was the only exception, with however no permit to cremate. The foundation of Czechoslovakia was an essential change in 1918. In years to come, the country saw a period of massive development of crematoria with only premises completed by 1938 counting 13 (see fig. 2), despite the fact that in 1937, the cremation-standard placement of the body into the grave ratio was only about 4.5% (5,881 cremations per 139,558 deaths in 1937). After World War II - and with reference to the policy of the Communist regime in 1948-1989 - there was however the onset of a massive increase in the number of cremations. The forthcoming quotation indicates a tendency of the political regime to consolidate and increase

the intensity of the development of cremations.

'The long-time conservatism, resulting from the strong tradition of religious rites, is not yet overcome and simple, civil forms of burial are still promoted with difficulty. Therefore, a better support is needed for the current tendency of cremations and building urn groves. In this regard, a resolution No. 1093 was adopted by the Republic Government on 14 December 1960 on the perspective of construction of cremation facilities in the CSSR.' (p. 4<sup>16</sup>)

At the present time the cremation ratio is constant in the post-1989 period: 80% approximately. For example, 2010 saw 86,411 cremations out of 106,844 deaths in the Czech Republic. The radical increase to reach the current values occurred only with the changed political regime (see fig. 2). Actually, factors for the cremation percentage include the oscillating curve of total mortality after 1919. After 1982, there were 90,000 cremations with the percentage being 69.4% approximately (Toman, 1982), i.e. more than in 2010 with 80.9%. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the data that are graphically recorded in Figure 2 using the dashed line are deduction only rather than being supported by statistical sources. This is also due to the fact that acquiring such data likely never occurred at all. A different contemporary publication shows the proportion of cremation in the Czech countries before 1967 to be about 30% and only 0.57% in Slovakia. (p. 6<sup>2</sup>)

The sum of all crematorium facilities is 27; they are distributed evenly within the Czech Republic. "Yet more or less even distribution of crematoria can be traced, i.e. in each region (counting 14 in the Czech Republic) there is at least one crematory; in regions

with greater population density, e.g. Prague or Central Bohemian Region - these also being areas with a smaller proportion of believers) even more frequent representation of crematoria can be observed.”<sup>10</sup>

The aim of this work is to focus on the development of architectural design of cremation and funeral halls in the Czech Republic - one that has a tradition of nearly a century. This is a hot topic because in the Czech Republic the cremation ratio is currently 80% of all undertaken funerals. This makes a cremation superpower from this country, at least at the European level. Yet we encounter a general tabooisation of death caused by high levels of secularization of our society. The causes include the political changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or changed position of the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960s. This work also aims at bringing the way out, in terms of architectural design, for decent treatment of human remains and facilitating a sensitive approach to the surviving in the process called “copying with death”.

## II. FUNERAL RITE

The death of a human brings emotional moments of life for their loved ones who have to cope with. A kind of apparent division line, as traditionally seen, is the mourning ceremony, or also funeral rite (see *Ottův slovník naučný*). ‘A ceremony is an outer action which reflects a relationship of a rational creature to a divine being. Since it is normal and necessary for the human nature to demonstrate its inner life through outer displays, a ceremony is not a random admixture; instead, it is a normal need of religious life perceived by the individual and testified by all religious communities.’ (p. 312<sup>3</sup>)

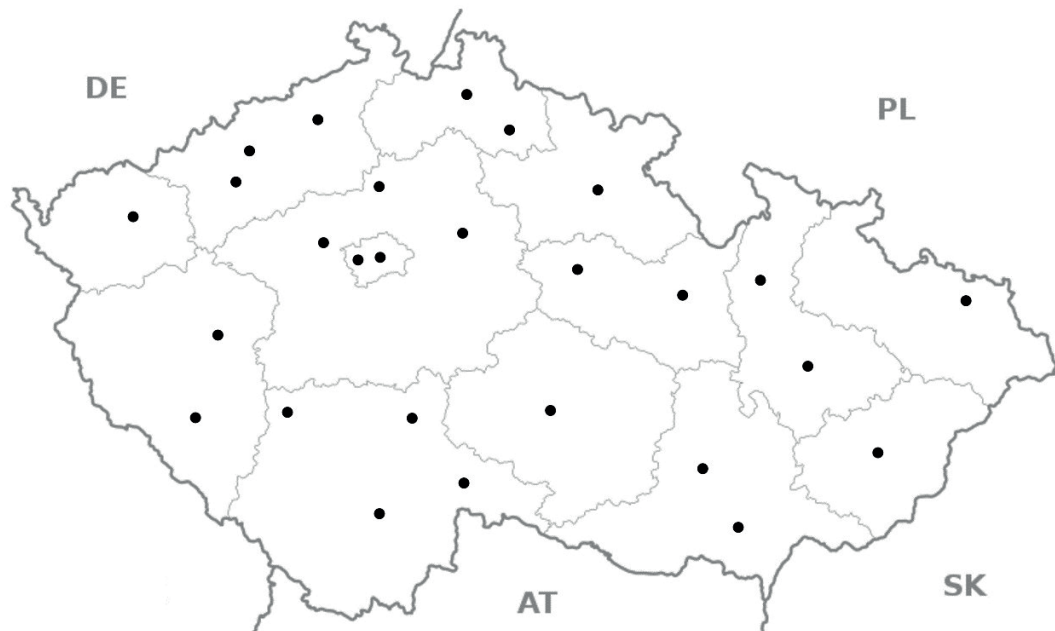


fig. 1 Even distribution of crematoria in the Czech Republic (Source: authors)

Such ceremony was once ensured by religious institutions that were restricted and substituted after 1948. Even though the current funeral halls had been coming to existence as the massive development of crematoria was underway (see the act of 1919, Lex Kvapil, enactment of burial by cremation), this time it was a political pressure seeking to suppress everything religious and take over any initiative. 'The increasing quality of life in our socialist state necessitated a number of facilities that established very well over time and became close to today's sentiments, thus forming an essential component in human affairs. The former exclusively religious ceremonies on baptising newborns and conducting marriages or funerals became the task of national committees and their bodies - councils for civil affairs; this in turn implies the simpler and more civil nature of the events.' (p. 3<sup>d</sup>) After 1989, with another change to the regime, funeral rites and any ceremony have lost intensity. 'If it is not the social dimension of the burial ceremony perceived by actors as an important point while also lacking any perceived need for collectively reconstructing and concluding the identity of the deceased, then organising a funeral ceremony is losing importance.' p. 82<sup>1</sup> Currently, also, the mourning ceremony moves closer to the place of cremation as demonstrated by additionally and often temporarily formed spaces for funeral guests in the technology and operating sections of the existing crematoria. Examples to mention include the crematorium in Prague - Strašnice (A Mezera, built in 1929-1932) where the area in front of the cremation chamber was adapted *ex post* so that there were no other technological facilities within a view of the surviving, such as the

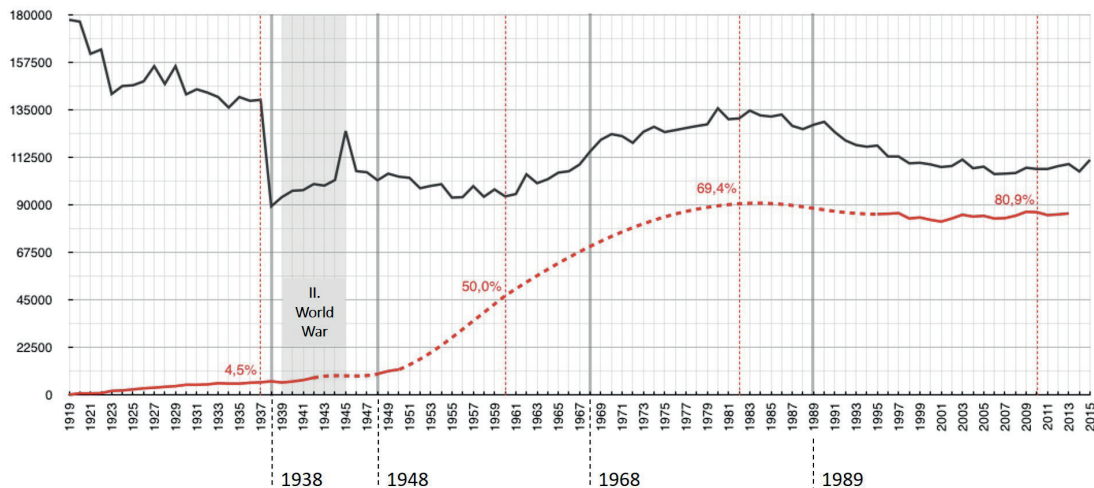


fig. 2 The annual survey of the number of deaths over the number of cremations carried out since 1919-2015 (Source: CSI data processed by the authors, Cremation Association's publication [12, 13] International statistics [14])

cremation furnace alone.

'Cremation offers even another option, and that is the final rite being arranged on the occasion of final placement of the ash. Usually, such a ceremony is an addition to the previous ceremonies and represents the peak of the mourning period, although sometimes it seems to be the only ritual held. On the basis of existing literature, however, it does not seem that such a substitute would be currently applied to any mass extent in the European area.' p. 62<sup>1</sup> Even the place of burial may be one of the final rite where unlike previous ceremonies, this really is the final phase of the whole burying process (see fig. 3). Gradually, outdoor shelters are built along scattering lawns in the open space of cemeteries. These primarily serve to protect the speaker and the urn of the bereaved (see fig. 4).

Currently, there are three ways of final rites possible to select. Of these, a funeral ceremony in a ceremonial hall definitely prevails. However, the current development should also be considered where a number of funerals are underway completely without any ritual. 'Even though the media have often been drawing attention to the significant increase in the practice of burying without ceremony in the recent years, accurate data is missing.' p. 221<sup>5</sup>.

Also: 'A location in Pilsen Region, one with a significant percentage of new settlement after World War II and, simultaneously, a low proportion of believers, was found to have the highest proportion of burials without ceremony. Here, four fifths of the deceased (80%) were buried without ceremony in 2010; this is an extremely high rate.' p. 222 [5] The religiosity of the population, however, needs to be taken into

account; such trends may greatly vary in this regard. 'Burying without ceremony is much more widespread in the Czech lands than in Moravia. Within individual sites, moreover, there are clear differences resulting from the nature of the population and the proportion of rural communities in the framework of the given area. When assessing the site-specific differences, it is true that burial without ceremony is more frequent in major and rather large towns. This however does not mean that in rural areas such kind of burials does not exist.' p. 222<sup>5</sup>

According to statements made by funeral services and crematoria managers burying without ceremony has its pitfalls primarily for the survivors as such. After a rather long term, doubts and mistrust appear among the bereaved whether their loved one was actually cremated or buried. The personnel of these funeral services can witness some sort of misalignment by those surviving with the death. This indicates that there are good grounds for funeral ceremonies or participating in the funeral alone. The acts aim at concluding the story of one's life and help the surviving disjoin from their loved one. Finding place in such events is also the vertical - spiritual - dimension and, thereby, the expressed hope that is further evolved through not only the address by the speaker or by the clergyman, but also the premises of the ceremony, the latter also evoking the perception mentioned above. The next item is how such a funeral ceremony actually takes place. Burying by cremation makes most frequently use of ceremonial halls in crematoria. There is a funeral ceremony of 15 to 30 minutes with about 15-minute spacing between the events. If the bereaved do not want to be involved in the

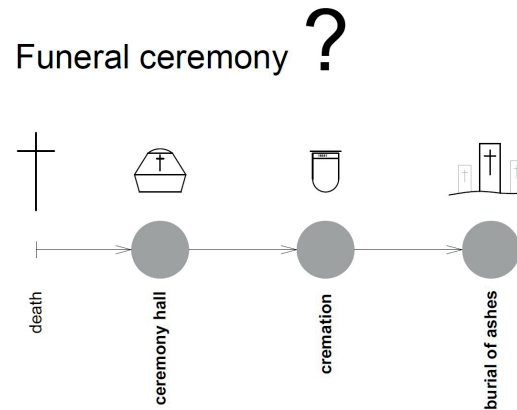


fig. 3 Funeral ceremony (Source: authors)



cremation, then the ceremony closes. Subsequently, the deceased is cremated technologically, where after a certain period of time the survivor collects the urn for the last placement; that day does not match the one of the funeral ceremony / cremation taking place. In contrast to the traditional burial into the ground, this placement often lacks any act of remembrance. And, as this is the last stage - the one of cremation only transforms rather than lays for the final rest - it has to be considered whether or not this last stage of placement should be one of the utmost commemorative importance (see fig. 3).

### III. CREMATORIUM

The construction and operation of the first crematoria in the territory of the Czech Republic became possible after the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and, subsequently, through the adoption of Lex Kvapil Act permitting cremations. Before this happened, any burial by cremation was not possible because of the prohibition by the then Habsburg monarchy supported by the Roman Catholic Church. Despite the architectural diversity of the first cremation facilities, these increasingly resembled religious premises of Christian churches. Examples include the design by Architect Pavel Janák executed in Pardubice in the 1922 to 1923 period while featuring the so-called *Rondocubism*, as a “national style” of the new state of Czechoslovakia. The indoor area strictly adheres to the principles of ecclesiastical buildings, such as the axial symmetry or separate presbytery with a catafalque instead of an altar. The funeral hall is surrounded by a vaulted, richly decorated, semi-dark area. Daylight passes only through a window



fig.4 Roofing by the scattering lawn of the cemetery in Pardubice  
(Source: authors)

tracery that also illuminates the elevated catafalque. Everything is subject to the deceased. Once the funeral ceremony is over, the coffin descends into the lower floor behind the scenes, as a reminder of the descent into the ground. These principles are also apparent from the way the cemetery area is designed. The axial symmetry of the structure connects the main gate of the more recent burial ground area. The crematorium is also elevated one floor over the surrounding terrain, despite the fact that the surrounding ground is flat. Early in the current century there was construction work with more facilities added, such as a smaller funeral hall in the lower floor and a brand new structure with combustion furnaces. In addition, a lift had to be incorporated to ensure a barrier-free access and comply with technical standards. (fig. 5)

Examples of a different approach includes a little more recent project of the crematorium in Brno by Architect E Wiesner; executed in 1925-1930, the concept goes far from that of Christian churches. Additionally, the timing matches the period of growing secularisation in the Czech Lands. 'The war was a fundamental ideological breakthrough - not just because of taking the 'old Austria' down. It was particularly a move away from the 'old world' symbolised by the Christian religion. The switch had two main causes: People ceased to believe in God...People stopped believing in man...as the image of God, but ceased to believe in man who is the pinnacle of creation or the purposeless guarantor of values.' p. 48 [8] While the earlier buildings, despite their broad range of diversity, increasingly resembled religious premises of Christian churches, later on there was a gradual switch from such designs. Throughout the indoor area, the interior



fig. 5 The crematorium in Pardubice (Source: authors)

is rather sterile compared with the preceding design in Pardubice, with emphasis being put on hygiene. There is also nothing like a separate presbytery with raised catafalque. 'The late 1920s see a conflict, in terms of both design and implementation, between two main concepts of style - modern Neoclassicism vs. functionalism, monumentality vs. sobriety, and aesthetic rationalism vs. hygiene.' p. 98 [7] Despite the asymmetric function of the operation the structure is seemingly symmetrical with the content of iconic tint. A decorative vault is substituted with a full-area glazed drop ceiling indoors. The entire crematorium building is raised above the surrounding area that is delimited through a staircase leading from entry plateau. The access portal is completely exposed and symmetrical along with the side semi-sheltered columbaria.

As part of subsequent implementations of cremation facilities, especially after 1948, concepts interconnected with the surrounding countryside gain ground, such as the crematorium constructed in Zlín (1970-1978, Architect J Čančík), Bratislava (1962-1966, Architect F Milučký), and Prague-Motol (1947-1954, Architect JK Říha). The sight of the bereaved is now oriented on the views of the landscape rather than strictly directed at the catafalque with the coffin. Such a design can be compared with the implementation in the Netherlands from a later period (Zoetermeer). 'The cases demonstrate that views of nature play an important role in the crematorium's design, and are thought to create an uplifting feeling. This seems based on the notion that the physical environment can influence human emotions and create feelings of well-being. This idea is embraced by designers of health institutions such as hospitals and hospices.' [9] (fig. 6)



fig.6 The crematorium in Brno (Source: authors)



#### IV. FUNERAL HALL

This is a specific type of a construction facility that was mostly applied after 1948 in connection with the change in the political regime in Czechoslovakia. This period is one that can be referred to as *second wave of secularisation* within which there is a significant increase in cremations. The changed position of the Roman Catholic Church that arrived in the 1960s and admits burying with cremation based on Vatican Council 2 was another important influence. As a result, the first-ever crematorium was built in the territory of current Slovakia, which managed to keep its religious traditions better in contrast with the Czech Lands. As already mentioned in the introduction, funeral halls performed the essential role as part of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Church institutions were generally perceived as hostile by the political regime. This created demand for construction of funeral halls that were to replace the existing religious practices in burying.

In spite of that, notable designs of funeral halls were coming into life. Examples include a facility in Vsetín implemented as late as the 1970s to the design of architects M Kadeřábek, J Zbořil, and J Jakeš. Here, the design of the funeral chamber alone is the main feature; it is surrounded by a glazed surface with metal segments arranged with geometry inducing even an optical illusion in the indoor area. Conversely, this shell framework is facing indoor climate problems despite the recent refurbishment and a massive air conditioning unit. Generally, the operation of the facility is arranged within three floors, which is unusual in comparison with other projects. The first floor above the ground is intended for reception

and technical operation such as staff facilities, refrigerating and handling areas and an elevator for the coffin of the deceased that interconnects the floor with the remainder of the floors. The second floor, with an area for displaying, is dedicated exclusively to the bereaved. Central to the room is the coffin of the deceased placed in the elevator shaft; the shaft is illuminated by the rays of daylight passing through the shaft from the last floor above the ground - from the funeral chamber. This suggests the feeling of “hope” which continues to escalate in the funeral room where the glass walls permit one to have a look at the silhouette of the town of Vsetín and, paradoxically, the Evangelical church in the close proximity. (fig. 7)

The single-floor funeral hall in Luhačovice is a different example; built to a design by architects V Pall and V Rudiš in 1978, i.e. almost in the same period as the one in Vsetín, it faces the similar problems with climate caused this time by poorly dimensioned construction materials. The layout and the design of operational rooms can be assessed positively in that the designers allowed for refrigerating premises and separate facilities behind the scenes. Lesser attention, however, was paid to the area for a musician or a speaker as the person lacks a sufficient overview of the ceremony taking place. (fig. 8)

The room of the funeral hall offers a view into the area of the cemetery from either the front or back side. At the forefront there is also a Christian cross that was provided, as any other Christian symbols, only after 1989 following the change of the political regime.

In the communist regime era, construction of funeral halls and crematoria was characterised by high aesthetic value, which was ensured by the illustrious

names of the then major architects, along with incorporated works of fine arts of equally renowned artists. This is a matter that is lacking in the modern facilities. An example to mention might be the funeral hall in Svitavy completed in 1973, where academic sculptor Karel Nepraš joined architects P Kupka and B Blažek to become directly involved through his creative art design. (fig. 9)

Funeral halls completed most recently often lack space for facilities behind the scenes such as refrigerating box etc. This is now however an issue for the majority of funeral services due to the 2017 amendment of the act on funeral services. [15] The new regulation provides that operators of funeral services must ensure ‘a room for treatment of the body of the deceased and placement of human remains in a coffin that meets the requirements referred to in section 7 (1 )(h)’. This requires additional hygienic areas which often are not available in the premises of the funeral hall. For this reason, operators are forced to outsource such other areas. Examples may include the very recent implementation of the funeral hall in Opava. Completed in 2006-2007 to a design by Architect B Světlík, while boasting a generously designed public area, this is a funeral hall that already lacks certain rooms behind the scenes such as a refrigeration chamber. This is a complication for funeral services that need to arrive from outside for any ceremony.

A similar situation exists in the recent implementation of a ceremonial hall in Otice near Opava. It is however to be noted that there is a rural area where ceremonies take place 1 to 2 times per month. Therefore, the designed space has been executed to the minimum extent. Again, however, this is in conflict with the

absence of technology facilities that funeral services have to provide via external facilities.

#### V. DRAFT DESIGN FOR A CREMATORIUM, FUNERAL HALL AND AUXILIARY FACILITIES

As a result of transformation of the funeral ceremony, which underwent several changes in the course of one century, new types of construction facilities emerged. Yet individuals - the bereaved - are the central theme here; for them, the former place of the funeral ceremony has shifted from a traditional ceremonial hall (a place of memories, sometimes a place of never-ending speeches, and also a place of hope, as part of church ceremonies) toward the area in front of the cremation chamber as a place of physical transformation. For today's crematoria in the Czech Republic, the fact that the funeral ceremony takes place on a different day than that of cremation or placement of human ash is a problem. Another change of the political regime after 1989, when the society has found itself in a "vacuum" and state of seeking, is also the factor. 'What is happening can be seen as a transitional state associated with the period of social transformation that occurred after the 1989 political coup. It is in turn linked with the lack of adequate, meaningful funeral ceremonies, when their older religious forms no longer fit many members of the society while the secular methods introduced in the era of communism no longer speak to their hearts as well.' p. 231 [5]

This was reflected in the thesis of Ondřej Juračka, a master's degree student of architecture and civil engineering at the Faculty of Construction. [11] The outcome involved a design of not only a crematorium,



fig. 7 Funeral hall in Vsetín (Source: authors)



fig. 8 Funeral hall in Luhačovice (Source: authors)



but also the entire cemetery area which includes a columbarium, placement and dispersal sites, and a restaurant for the bereaved. All of this is set in the close proximity of the existing complex of “Spanish Chapel” and the municipal park which served as a cemetery in the past. The general concept of the design stems from the idea of *Community* and *Hope*, the former being reflected through the circular floor projection design of the crematorium, including the indoor area of the funeral hall. *Hope* is also highlighted via the axial view of the Spanish Chapel from the inside. This axuality is additionally emphasized through the design of the cemetery premises and an artefact with a Christian theme. The interior layout allows, using adjustable partitions, to respond to various requirements of the bereaved or numbers of participants in the funeral ceremony; this includes the possibility of taking part in the process of cremation. This was assumed to be supported through an innovative timetable resulting in accompanying the deceased all the way through to the burial site.

The tendentious developments in other countries indicate a different approach of so-called “running belt”. An example of this operating assembly is the crematorium in Haarlem, the Netherlands, designed by Architect Zeenstra in 2002, where the bereaved enter via one door and leave via another to vacate the area for the other participants and cut any time delay to a minimum. Here, despite the perfect functionality, dignity disappears along with the opportunity for custom time required for the last farewell.

As regards funeral halls, it is necessary to reiterate, even for the works completed very recently, the importance of these to provide adequate architectonisation of

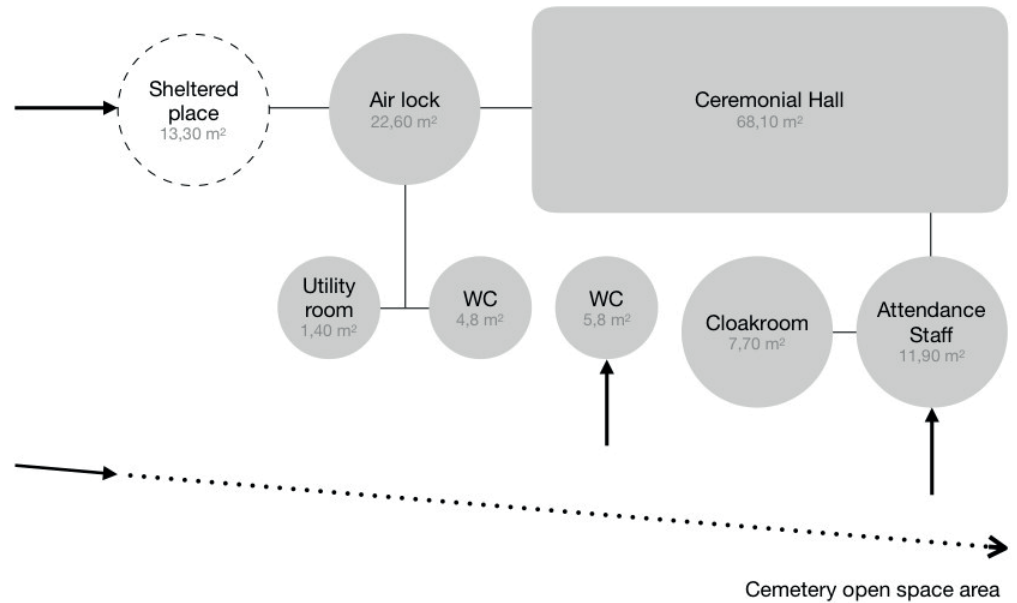


fig. 9 The layout of Office facility (Source: authors)



the structure with an emphasis on the value of the elements and the space in terms of creative arts to deliver not only a facility equipped with adequate technology, but also an area with a high cultural value to highlight the uniqueness of the moment, which is something that celebrating the life of the deceased certainly provides.

The auxiliary structures of funeral architecture the use of which had been activated through the increase in cremations, should be remembered as well. They primarily involve columbaria and other options of ash placement; these are linked to giving the form to a place of remembrance for placement of ash with dignity as part of the accompanying ceremony. It is necessary to consider the climate of our country and establish suitable gathering places for both the community and visitors to the cemetery. Storing ashes above the ground level - a way of burial that is historically not typical of the Czech Lands - needs to be applied with the rate that is bearable for common visitors; capacity should also be considered and sufficient access should be provided to individual boxes; last but not least, appropriate facilities should be in place for the placement of flowers and candles to avoid any uncontrolled manner of the activity as well as keep the burial site safe and cultivates. (fig. 10)

## VI. CONCLUSION

The paper aims at introducing the basis - from the perspective of architectural design - for decent treatment of human remains and facilitating a sensitive approach to the surviving as part of the process referred to as "copying with death". The development of cremation architecture, including the

large-scale construction of funeral halls, was affected by events after World War I and the subsequent change of the political regime after 1948. The changed position of the Roman Catholic Church, when cremation became acceptable for the remainder of the then Czechoslovakia, was another factor. After the democratic system was restored, the society found itself seeing, through which new forms of funeral architecture and new requirements for construction emerged.

When designing crematoria and funeral halls, factors that one should keep in mind include convenient technology facilities and adequate links throughout the operation in terms of layout while adhering to the current legislation. It can result in a funeral service that is more focused on the ceremony as such. This can be evidenced through the current crematorium facilities that accommodate the changes in the society with difficulties. Examples include the first crematoria works in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when there were no requests for barrier-free design. Conversely, the modern works lack certain technological facilities such as refrigerating chambers etc.

'Cemeteries have always been a real public space in terms of social science, accessible to all, open to the public. Survivors visited them often and abundantly to manage graves and remember their dead ones. In a symbolic sense, this makes cemeteries meeting places of the present and the past, of the live and the dead. They provided places where people of different ages, shared classes, gender and race could meet and spend time together.' p. 29 [6]

This applies not only to public cemetery areas that can be seen as public parks, but also structures as

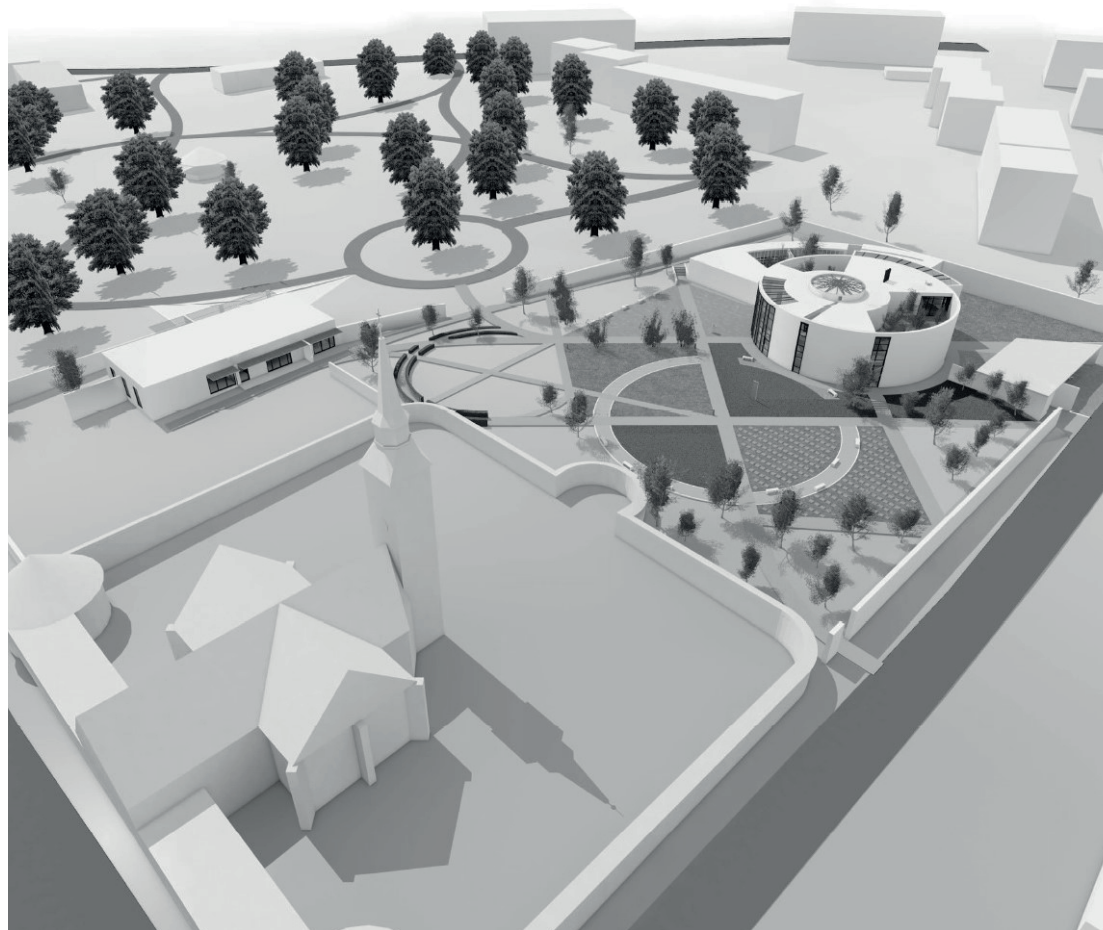
part of crematoria and funeral halls. One of the other options is the gradual focus on the bereaved and the ceremony accompanying them all the way through to the burial site. As part of the efforts, one can make use of architectural design to deliver a space evoking a human community and a symbolic expression of Christian hope. The protocol of funeral ceremonies is particularly important for the closest bereaved. To assist the process and ending of each of the stages of mourning, both the venue of the ceremony and the site of placement of the remains need to be adapted for the entire procedure to be completed while becoming a dignified act of remembrance.

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fig. 10 Overall visualization of the proposed site in Nový Jičín<sup>10</sup>