

RENOVATION OF THE HISTORIC CENTRE - CASTRA IN AJDOVŠČINA

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Location: Ajdovščina, Slovenia

2021 NATIONAL CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTURE (ZAPS) AWARDS

Golden pencil for outstanding realisation

Jury report:

Renovation of the historic centre in Ajdovščina is certainly one of the most prominent realizations of open space renovations in recent years. It is notable also in terms of implementation of the project, based on the award-winning solution chosen on a public competition, during which the contracting authority and authors managed to transfer the central idea of the proposed solution into space in a consistent manner. The new design of a quality open public space of the city is thus successfully intertwined with ancient and other historical layers, which justifiably give the city a historical, cultural and local context and a unique character in contemporary times. Despite the fact that a rational approach narrated the emphasis on Lavričev square, choice and combination of the right materials and technical solutions, enabled authors to renovate also the surrounding streets. The new design thus represents a comprehensive approach to the renovation of not only the central square but also the wider city centre.

The authors consistently transferred into the city centre the concept of the central square as an open multifunctional area, defined at the edges by the facades of dominant buildings and complemented by new pergolas with horizontal vegetation and (vertical) tree strokes that build the rectangular design of the square. The central area of the square is perforated in places by presentation fields, which provide access to the level of the archaeological remains of the Castra. The fields are designed to give the user the impression that the square (also metaphorically in relationship to the historical layers) is placed over the archaeological remains, while still allowing interaction or contact with individual elements, even if it is just a place to sit or play. Individual details draw inspiration from antiquity as well as other historical periods of the city, while the clever use of water elements brings some added value to the space, by creating more favourable microclimatic conditions and user-friendly space.

Although the design approach of Lavričev square and the city streets has been consciously restrained, it represents a key step and starting point from which, the renovation of the city can continue with other changes in the building stock and the development of new content and programs. Above all, the key importance is the contribution of the comprehensively implemented renovation to the multi-layered revitalization of the city.

22nd SALON OF ARCHITECTURE NOVI SAD

Award in the category of Urban planning

Jury report:

The fact that not enough works were submitted for this category in order to gain a broader insight into the current urban design ideas and practice doesn't diminish the high qualities of the awarded project – Renovation of historic centre – Castra in Ajdovščina, realised in the Ravnikar Potokar architectural office.

The project of the reconstruction of the central square contributes to the respect and determining of the identity of a place, as the top value for every intervention whose roots reach as far away in the past as the 5th century BC, in a very persuasive way.

The existing square which was possessed by parked cars is given back to the pedestrians, while revealing layers of its deepest past through sophisticated and measured interventions – the foundations of old Roman buildings. With renewing the physical structures which shape the space of the square, the renewal of greenery and introducing a water element through the construction of pergolas, this space actually only now becomes a square by fulfilling the full meaning of the term.

The expert use of the native local stone for paving, and in a pattern derived from the dimensions of the double Roman step "passus", once again emphasises the identity and historical rootedness of the place, giving it a strong artistic expression as well. There are no exaggerated gestures, everything was done with measure, thus creating different smaller ambient wholes and providing the visitors with the possibility for the most varied activities.