



Breda Department Store, Silesian Museum Opava (from a collection of photographs compiled by Leopold Bauer in 1936)



Dear colleagues,

we invite you to participate in our competitive dialogue. We are looking for a team who will design a quality solution for the revitalization of the Breda Department Store in Opava. The aim is to find an

answer to the question of how to deal with the operation and architectural design of a historic, heritage-listed building in the 21st century, and at the same time to give the building a new content that will benefit not only the social and cultural life of the city's inhabitants.

Application deadline: 27. 11. 2023

## [1] Opava



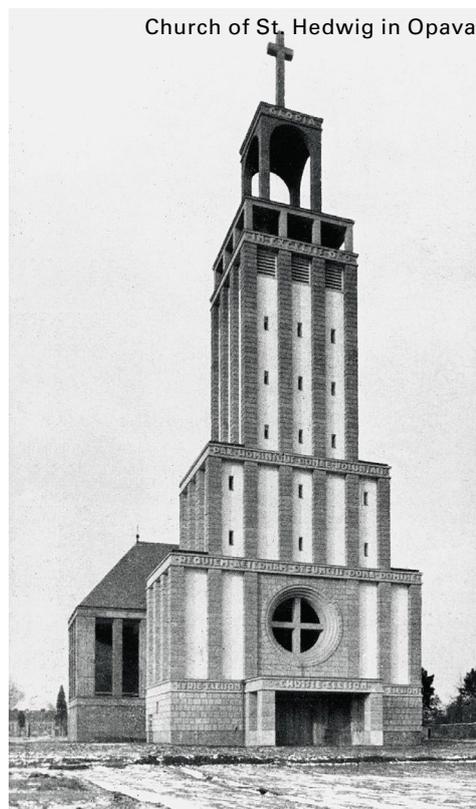
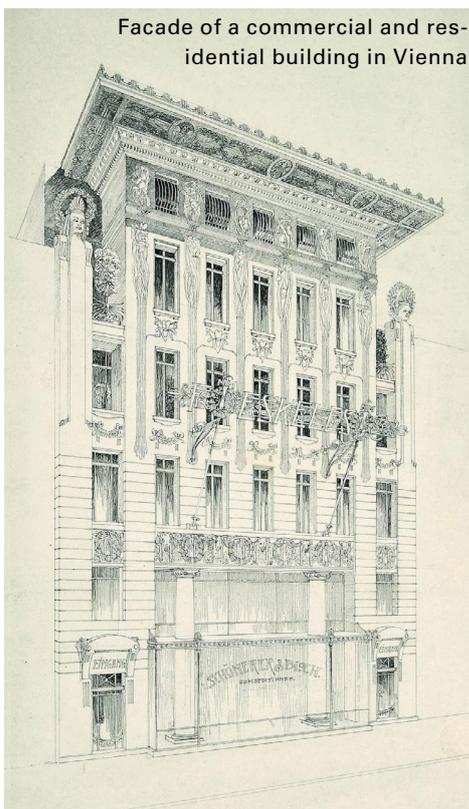
The city Opava is situated on the Opava River in the uplands of Opava and is the historical capital of Silesia. The first written record of the settlement, located at the crossroads of trade routes and named after the Opava River, dates back to the 12th century. From the middle of the 18th century, after the lost war when most of Silesia was ceded to Prussia, Opava was the capital of Austrian Silesia. In 1820, the second congress of the victorious powers, the Opava Congress, was held here. Representatives of the so-called Holy Alliance - the Russian Tsar, the King of Prussia, the Austrian Emperor and representatives of England and France - met to discuss joint action against the revolutionary movement in Italy. In the 19th century Opava experienced an industrial boom. Several textile companies, a brewery and sugar factories were established. The opening of the railway connection within the Ferdinand Northern Railway in 1855 was an important impetus for the development of industry. As the

capital of Austrian Silesia, Opava was also an important administrative and self-government centre. The political and national situation escalated after the end of World War I, when Opava became the capital of the province of Sudetenland in late 1918. Until the establishment of the Moravian-Silesian Land in 1928, Opava was the seat of the provincial authorities. After the Munich Conference and the annexation to Nazi Germany, the Jews of Opava were deprived of their civil rights and property. Most of the city's Jewish population ended up in concentration camps. After the Second World War, the German population was displaced and entire new residential districts and industrial plants were built, especially in the engineering, food, paper and pharmaceutical industries. Today Opava is a statutory town in the Moravian-Silesian Region with approximately 56,000 inhabitants.

## [2] Architect Leopold Bauer

The architect Leopold Bauer (1872 - 1938) came from Krnov (a town near Opava) , studied at the Technical School of Civil Engineering in Brno and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna - first with Karl von Hasenauer and then with Otto Wagner, co-founder of the Vienna Secession Manifesto. Bauer's classmates included Jan Kotěra, Jože Plečnik and Josef Hoffmann. Bauer made several study trips to Italy, France and Germany, and in 1900 he himself became a member of the circle of artists around the mentioned Vienna Secession Manifesto, which included, among others, Gustav Klimt and Bauer's fellow student and compatriot Joseph Maria Olbrich. At that time he was beginning to create: Reissig's villa in Brno in Pisárky from 1901-1903 is said to be the first modern house in the Habsburg monarchy, in a similar spirit he designed a villa in Rejštejn in Šumava for Max von Spaun, the owner of the glassworks in Klášterský Mlýn, and in Ždánice he

designed Seidl's villa. Between 1908 and 1910 Bauer's largest building, the Priessnitz Sanatorium in the Jeseník Spa, was built. In 1913, he was appointed professor of architecture at the Vienna Academy, where he worked until 1919. In the 1920s, Bauer discovered and explored the work of L. H. Sullivan. At that time, he began to work on the design of the Breda department store, which he decided to develop in the spirit of the Chicago School, bringing the ethos of American cities to the Silesian city. The architect himself considered his greatest and most prestigious work to be the 1918 National Bank building in Vienna. In the Czech territory, it is the 1928 Breda & Weinstein department store that is considered the most important. In addition to his interesting buildings, he designed approximately two thousand interiors, furniture, vases, carpets and other art objects.



### [3] Department store Breda

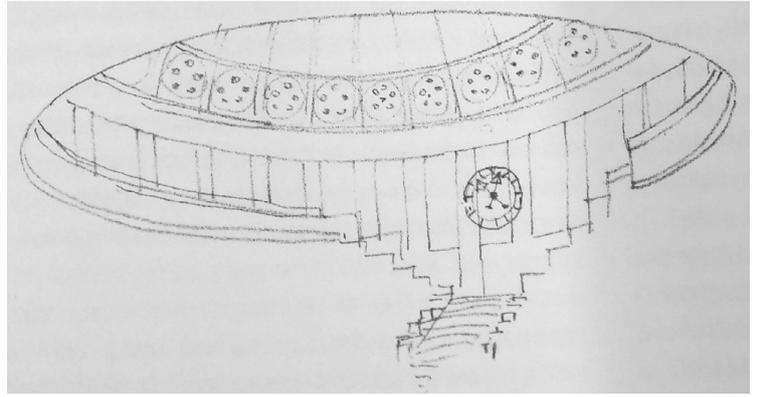


The Breda department store was built in 1927-1928 by the company Breda & Weinstein. The building was built to replace the original Breda & Weinstein department store, which was owned by Jewish merchant David Weinstein together with Max Breda. At the time, the partners approached the Viennese architect Leopold Bauer to build them a brand new, modern department store on the same site.

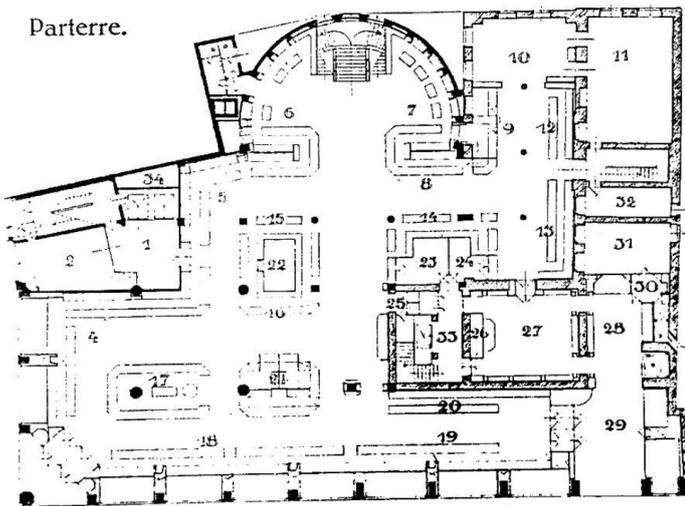
Bauer designed the monumental corner house on the Republic Square as a seven-storey reinforced concrete building with two basement floors. The ground floor of the building was divided by pillars and shop windows, the heart of the building was a glass hall with a dome. A double wooden staircase led from the ground floor to the hall on the first floor. There were many pioneering innovations, such as freight and passenger elevators connecting the various floors, modern air conditioning, central heating, an automatic telephone exchange, automatic fire detectors and

emergency lighting. Given this, the construction costs were also extremely high for the time. At the time of its construction, the Breda & Weinstein department store in Opava was the first modern department store in the country. The large central space with a double wooden staircase has a typical Bauer style, in which the architect was inspired by the Chicago School. The department store has changed its name several times in its history. It was first renamed in 1945 to Průkopník ("pioneer"), and later to Prior. This name lasted until 1989, when it reverted to its original name.

In 1994, it was acquired by a private entrepreneur as part of privatisation. In 2012 the department store was closed and left out of use, which led to the building falling into disrepair.



Parterre.



## [4] Breda's alive

The attempt to save the building was undertaken by a group of enthusiasts around Linda Bittová and the artist and sculptor Kurt Gebauer. In 2021, they organised a fundraising for the most necessary repairs to the cultural monument Breda and after 17 years, the façade of the department store was lit up to commemorate Opava's landmark. The collective's long-term goal was to restore Breda to its vitality. On 6 December 2021, the Opava City Council approved the purchase of the Breda department store. The price for the transaction is 40 million crowns.

The city's intention is to renovate the building and find a new use for it. The first stage of the reconstruction, which will begin in May 2023, includes the replacement of 170 dilapidated windows with faithful replicas, as well as the repair of the facade, replacement of the water supply and the construction of a freight elevator. The financial costs of the reconstruction in the amount of CZK 28.5 million are provided from the budget of the Statutory City of Opava.



## [5] Brief

The primary task of the competition dialogue is to revitalize the former Breda Department Store building, to fill it with new life, to place it in the present and to ensure its long-term and quality operation in the future. The aim of the revitalisation of Breda is not to create a new mono-functional complex on an area of approximately 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, but rather to provide space for different forms of use that will

complement, influence and develop each other. The aim of the revitalisation is to create a place that will become a popular destination for both locals and visitors. The whole process is conducted with the aim of not only renovating the house, but also redefining its role in the context of the city so that it becomes a living part of it again.



## Functional use

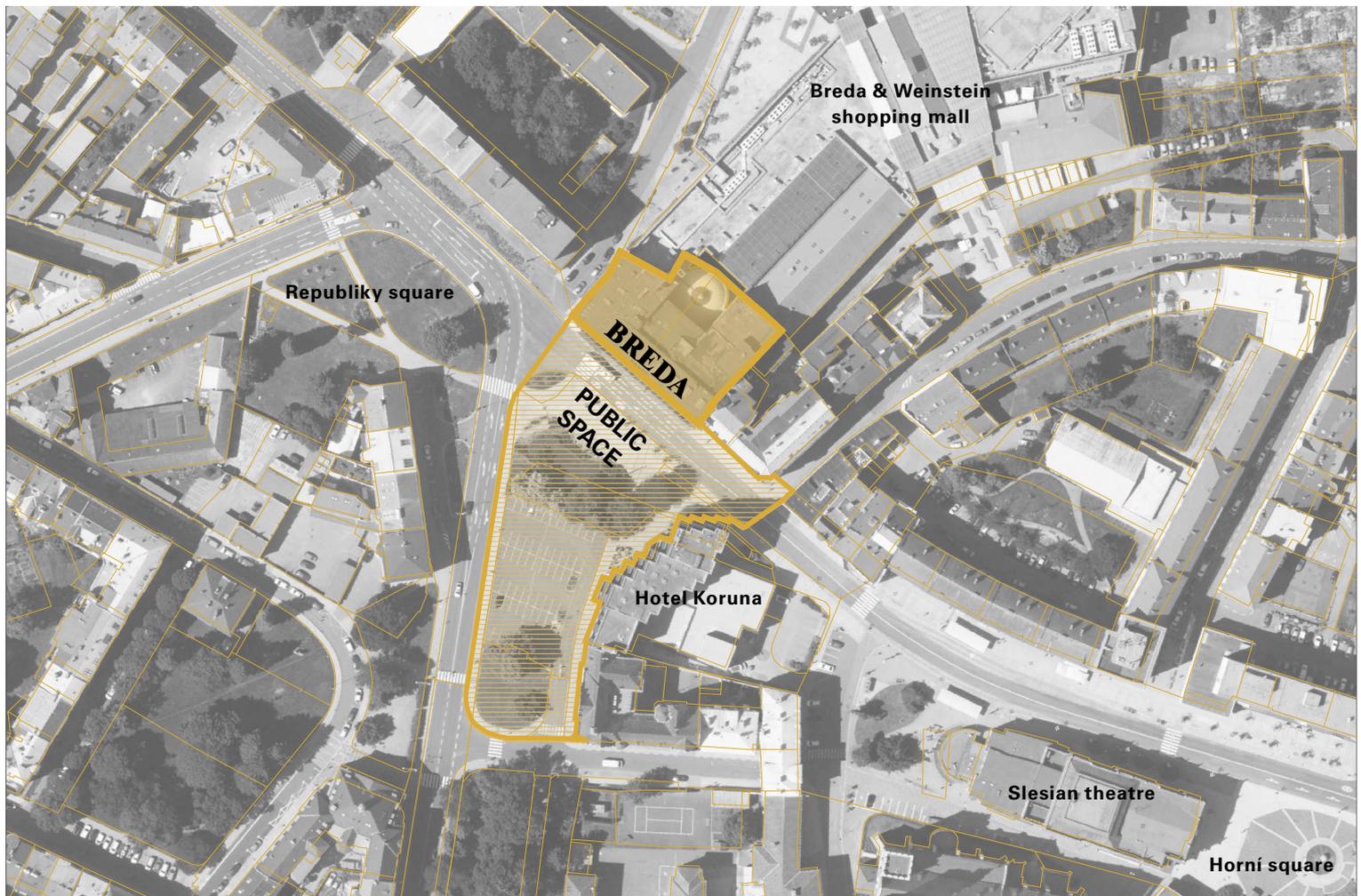
On behalf of the contracting authority, it should provide a combination of commercial and non-commercial use. The commercial part of the building should be used, for example, for offices, shared spaces, educational or other functions popular in cities today, mostly on the upper floors. The concept is also to include retail spaces, but these are to target different potential tenants and have different uses than the adjacent shopping centre, which will be connected to the building. We are also considering dedicating a part of the space to a year-round market or contemporary gastro concepts, which are lacking in the city. Non-commercial uses could include, for example, a gallery or community centre. However, these areas also need to be integrated into the overall economics of the building so that it functions as a whole and does not generate negative figures in its operations.

## Building modifications

The structural modifications that need to be addressed in the context of the competition dialogue assignment include the restoration of the roof, the reconstruction of the interior and a solution of the connection to the Breda&Weinstein shopping mall. Currently, the town is providing in cooperation with the National Institute of Natural History partial repair of the facade and replacement of windows with wooden replicas. The replacement of the windows will be completed in summer 2024.

## Public space

An important part of the task will be for the competitors to find an urban design solution for the foreground of the building. Part of the public space is in the hands of a private owner who is invited as an expert of the commission. The aim is to create a dignified forecourt to the Bauer building.





**The main task of the competition dialogue is to introduce the most important building of the architectural heretic Leopold Bauer through a multidisciplinary discussion and to bring it back into both the social, cultural and urban life of Opava and the Czech Republic. We are therefore addressing architects to join with other creative disciplines to conceive the assignment not only as a proposal for the reconstruction of the house, but also to address the concept of future operation, phasing of reconstruction and transformation of Breda.**

### **Phasing of the reconstruction**

The future programme of the facility is still open and will be discussed in a competitive dialogue. The city's main interest is to make Breda an economically self-sufficient facility that, apart from the investment costs, will not burden the city's budget in the long term and will be profitable. With regard to the big unknown, which is the way the building will be operated in future, that is whether the city will lease the building as a whole to one entity or if it will lease out individual premises, it is necessary to take into account the possible phasing of a separate reconstruction when preparing the proposal. The phasing of the reconstruction may occur both in relation to the future operators and in relation to the financial requirements of the reconstruction in relation to the city's budget. At the same time, the building cannot be seen as a structure that can wait several more years for rescue with a locked gate. It is necessary to seek an allied path with the city and local partners that, within the framework of our rigid building code, the poor structural and technical condition of the building and the dynamic program of the building, propose solutions and procedures that will allow an „immediate“ integration of Breda into the life and fabric of the city. In this spirit, we expect a creative solution involving different creative professions that, in collaboration

with the architectural team, will fill a new perspective on the renovation of a precious building. If the architects in the competitive dialogue decide to go down the classic path of preparing the reconstruction, we recommend thinking about communication outwards and with the inhabitants of the city, so as not to alienate the building and disappoint the great expectations that are associated with the purchase and revitalization of Breda. Whichever way the architects' and development teams' considerations may go, we also recommend that the competitive dialogue be subjected to critique of the eventual phasing of construction, whether for the sake of the concept itself or to reduce the budgetary burden on the city budget.

### **Economic sustainability**

One of the main premises of the project and the overall investment is that the city will invest public funds in the purchase and renovation of the building and the future users will pay rent to the city, from which the city will create a sustainable project. A lower profit is expected, but with a long-term sustainable operation.

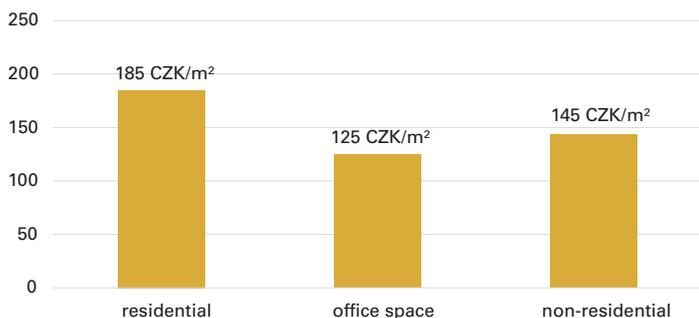
In order to achieve a sustainable operation, two main objectives must be pursued. The first objective is the long-term revenue for the city from the lease and operation of Breda. The second is to create a fund for repairs and also for the operation of a challenging luxury facility, which the Breda undoubtedly is.

### **Rent - long-term income**

Even though profit is not the main motive in the purchase and reconstruction of Breda, which is primarily to heal the scar in the city centre and to ensure the public function in the building that is Opava's pride, it is necessary to keep future operations and rental income in positive figures. It is necessary to work with the figures and income so that they are realistic in relation to local rents and, above all, to

secure income in the long term. The primary concern is not to maximize profit, but to create a smart economic model that is as self-sustaining as possible and independent of the city budget. From the perspective of a responsible economist, the pay-back on the investment in Breda, in its purchase, design and renovation, can be spread over a longer period of time than would be the case with private funds.

On the other hand, Breda is not intended to become a privately sponsored sector, but its operations are intended to approximate the realities of the real estate market in Opava. In a city where the rent level in the central part of the city for residential units is CZK 185,- per sqm/month, for non-residential premises on the ground floor CZK 145,- per sqm/month and for office premises CZK 125,- per sqm/month, it is necessary to be careful with the numbers so that the city does not get into a situation where it will have a beautiful renovated building, which, however, will have no one to rent it to because of the high



rent. On the other hand, care must be taken that the city does not negotiate an advantage to future tenants with exorbitantly low rents.

### Repair Fund

In addition to the rent, the amount of payments to the repair fund must be set. All future repairs will be paid for from the income of Breda itself. We foresee the establishment of a building repair fund, into which the amount from the rented area will be deposited. The funds saved will cover the maintenance and repairs of the luxury building for decades, perhaps even hundreds of years.

The rents and repair fund are an important topic of competitive dialogue and are key to creating a proposal that can respond to these key city requirements. At the same time, the competitive dialogue is also being used as a platform for approaching prospective bidders for the operation of the facility and declaring the city's position in relation to future operators of Breda. As already mentioned, if the facility will be leased as a whole to one entity or if individual operations will be leased is not decided at this time. It is imperative that the operational and architectural design is open to both possibilities. However, it is possible that some of the multidisciplinary teams may bring strong opinions on this key question regarding future operations, to which the promoter of the competitive dialogue is open.

## [6] Jury

### Independent part of the jury



#### **Gabu Heindl - chairperson of the jury**

Gabu Heindl is Professor and head of the department Architecture Cities Economies | Building Economy and Project Development at the University of Kassel. Gabu is author of the book *Stadtkonflikte. Radical Democracy in Architecture and Urban Planning* (Mandelbaum 2020) and *Gerechte Stadt Muss Sein* (AK Vienna 2022). She works as an independent architect and urban planner with her Vienna-based practice GABU Heindl Architektur on public space, the refurbishing of public buildings, collective housing projects and urban justice.



#### **Jan de Vylder**

Flemish architect based in Ghent and Brussels. He has completed numerous works in Belgium and abroad and exhibited in many galleries. He is a professor at ETH Zurich and combines practice and teaching under the motto Re-Practice and Prac-Teach. He was awarded the Silver Lion at the Architecture Biennale for his design of the pavilion of the Caritas Psychiatric Clinic in Melle (2017), that was revitalised according to an experimental idea developed in collaboration with different user groups. The result is a surrealist fusion of old and new.



#### **Jana Zdráhalová**

She studied architecture at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague, where she now teaches urban planning. Her interests include the relationship between environmental characteristics and the way people move and use space. In her scientific work, she focuses, among other things, on the care of urban value.



#### **Jindřich Vybíral**

Art historian and rector of the University of Applied Arts in Prague born in Opava. In his scientific work, he focuses mainly on the history of architecture and architects of the 18th to 20th centuries. He deals with castle, bourgeois, industrial and funerary architecture. He has made a monography of the work of the Silesian architect Leopold Bauer and mapped the buildings of Moravian architects of the Otto Wagner school in Moravia and Silesia.



### **Boris Redčenkov**

Architecture graduate Czech Technical University in Prague. Together with Prokop Tomášek they founded their own office Atelier 69 - architects, whose team was later joined by J. Wertig. A69's projects include the Dr. Peták Sanatorium in Františkovy Lázně or the reconstruction of the pedestrian zone in Cheb. He teaches at the Architectural Institute in Prague (ARCHIP) and runs a studio at the Faculty of Architecture of the ČVUT.



### **Adam Gebrian - alternate**

An architect and promoter of architecture, he graduated from the Faculty of Art and Architecture at the Technical University in Liberec, studied in Los Angeles and worked in London and Paris. In 2015 he was awarded the Architect of the Year award. He is mainly engaged in theoretical, critical and media activity. He has been involved in the creation of the Centre for Architecture and Urban Planning (CAMP). He spreads general awareness of architecture through his own programmes on Radio Wave and on the internet television MALL.tv.



### **Martin Strakoš - alternate**

Architectural historian and conservationist. He works at the National Heritage Institute, a territorial department in Ostrava, where he deals with the architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries and the issues of new buildings in the historical context. He is the author of essays titled The Ostrava Pedestrian and organises guided walks through Ostrava.

## Dependent part of the jury



**Tomáš Navrátil**

mayor of the Statutory City of Opava



**Michal Štěpánek**

councillor of the Statutory City of Opava



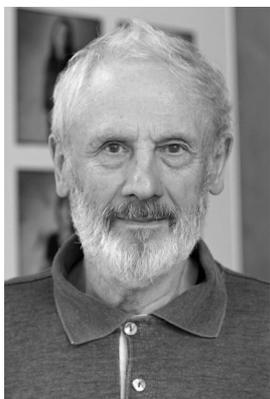
**Vladimír Schreier**

Deputy Mayor of the Statutory City of Opava



**Petr Stanjura**

Head of the Department of the Chief Architect and Master Plan of the Statutory City of Opava

**Kurt Gebauer - alternate**

artist, Association for the Rescue of the Breda Department Store

**Jana Foltysová - alternate**

Head of the Mayor's Office Department

**Invited expert****Lucie Častulíková**

Head of the Heritage Protection Department of the Opava City Council

**Marek Zygula**

Facility Manager Breda + OC Breda & Weinstein

**Pavel Koch**

economic expert, developer

**Zlata Holušová**

Head of the Colours of Ostrava festival

**Alois Hadamczik**

company OV Residence s.r.o., owner of plot 182/13

