



Amsterdam, 19 September 2023

BENTHEM CROUWEL AND OVA WIN COMPETITION 4TH QUADRANT, PRAGUE

The competition proposal by Benthem Crouwel Architects (NL) and OVA (CZ) was chosen as the winning design out of a selection of five finalists in the International Architectural Competition for the 4th Quadrant of Victory Square in Prague.

The jury praised the winning plan for its “*clever features*” and calls the design and layout “*clear, detailed and entirely logical*”. According to the jury, the diverse architectural identities in the design configuration come together to “*create a very attractive and convincing composition of buildings and interconnected spaces.*”

Pascal Cornips (architect and partner Benthem Crouwel Architects): “*Given the historical and symbolic significance of Victory Square, our main ambition is to create the 4th Quadrant as the heart for a diversified social, economic and cultural life in Prague 6, attracting a variety of residents, users and visitors.*”

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COMPETITION

The competition involved designing a mixed-use development on the 4th Quadrant site, aiming to revitalize the area by adding over 100,000 m² of housing, offices, civic amenities, a building for the University of Chemistry and Technology, and a Culture Centre with two halls. This development aims to create an appealing neighborhood for nearby residents, students, visitors, and campus employees. Benthem Crowel Architects and OVA designed a contemporary, varied program of functions, building typologies, public spaces and urban interiors for this historical plot, respecting but enriching the original plan. The primary feature of the design is the contrast between a lively public square, to encourage social interaction, and a calmer block with a lush green micro forest.

LAYERS OF TIME

The 4th Quadrant development is the long-awaited completion of Antonin Engel's Masterplan for Vítězné Náměstí (Victory Square). The winning proposal complements Engel's 100 year old blueprint and simultaneously adds a contemporary time-layer to it, opening up new possibilities for a diversified public realm attracting a variety of residents, users and visitors.

DEMOCRATIC ARCHITECTURE

Victory Square's historical ties to the birth of the Czech Republic are echoed in its majestic layout and neo-classical architecture. Today, while democratic values remain robust, their essence has evolved towards spaces that are more accessible, inclusive, and engaging. Benthem Crowel Architects' winning design champions 'Democratic Architecture', fostering inclusive, engaging spaces that serve both function and community well-being.

BUSTLING SQUARE VERSUS MICROFOREST

The winning design is building upon the diverse characteristics of the existing streets and public spaces surrounding the site, from the dynamic boulevard to the more quiet pedestrian streets. By opening up Engel's geometry to the public, two contrasting qualities arise on the plots along Technická Street. On one side a public square, formed by all-sided buildings, invites people to come together, interact and celebrate life. On the other side, a city block embraces a semi-private oasis; the micro forest offers a fantastic living environment.

ACCESSIBLE

The plinth is fully permeable and is characterized by open facades, welcoming entrances, informal routes, alleys, passages and squares. The first underground level is seamlessly

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integrated as part of this plinth and offers an additional layer to public life. It connects directly to the metro station, the mall, the Culture Centre, the university, offices, retail and food-market.

HUMAN SCALE

The set of unique buildings is thoughtfully designed to form a diverse yet recognizable entity. This leads to a holistic, inclusive and people-oriented urban development with depth and significance; a collage of different shapes and spaces tailored to a human scale, ensuring a sense of belonging and inclusivity for both residents and visitors.

The plans for 4th Quadrant of Victory Square will be further developed in the next period.



BENTHEM CROUWEL ARCHITECTS

Bentheim Crouwel Architects is a renowned Amsterdam based architecture firm. For over four decades, Bentheim Crouwel Architects has been creating innovative, flexible and efficient designs in a variety of scales: from universities, museums, bridges, railway stations, metro lines, offices, housing, malls and urban plans to bicycle tunnels, design

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projects and tiny houses.

Benthem Crouwel Architects design 'Beyond Architecture - creating buildings, spaces and infrastructure that contribute to an urban ecosystem. In all its designs, Benthem Crouwel Architects seeks to strike a balance between economic, social and ecological interests, with innovation and sustainability being two key concerns.

Architects/partners Pascal Cornips, Daniel Jongtien, Saartje van der Made and Joost Vos lead the international team of some fifty professionals at the Amsterdam based Benthem Crouwel LAB.

OVA

Jiří Opočenský and Štěpán Valouch established the architectural office OVA in 2007. Together with the team, they realized a number of projects of various types and sizes. Their buildings are distinguished by an authentic detail-oriented design with a strong connection to the place. During the design process, the emphasis is focused on the dialogue with the client, clear operational links, and the construction details. They are looking for timeless design solutions, unique spatial concepts, and costs appropriate to the client's intentions.

The OVA team has grown to more than twenty full-time members including the office's partner and authorised architect Ondřej Králík. Their project for Lasvit headquarters has won the Czech Architecture Award 2020 and with their Community House in Slavonice, they were nominated for the Mies van der Rohe award for architecture. Štěpán has been leading the Valouch-Stibrál studio at the Faculty of Architecture, CTU Prague, since 2020, while Jiří is a member of the scientific and artistic council at the same institution.

FACTS

ARCHITECTS

Benthem Crouwel Architects, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
OVA, Prague, Czech Republic

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Rehwaldt Landscape Architects

COMPETITION CLIENT: Fourth Quadrant company, company formed by investors Penta Real Estate, Sekyra Group and Kaprain

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COMPETITION WAS ORGANISED IN COOPERATION WITH:

University of Chemistry and Technology in Prague (UCT)

City of Prague

Prague Institute of Planning and Development

Prague 6 Municipality

COMPETITION ORGANISER:

Planning office ONplan

LOCATION

Prague, Czech Republic

GROSS FLOOR AREA

102.000 m²

COMPETITION

2022-2023

START DESIGN

2023

VISUALS

Bentham Crowel Architects

NOTE TO EDITORS – NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

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BENTHAM CROUWEL ARCHITECTS was founded in 1979 by Jan Bentham and Mels Crowel. Today, architects/partners Pascal Cornips, Daniel Jongtjen, Saartje van der Made and Joost Vos lead the international team of some fifty professionals at the Amsterdam based Bentham Crowel LAB.

WELL KNOWN PROJECTS are Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Stedelijk Museum, the railway stations in Rotterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, Amsterdam and Brno and Amsterdam's metro North/South link.