

## Opening Address

It is a big honour for me to take a part in the opening of your workshop. Let me to introduce my short speech with a quotation from the work of our art historian **Vojtěch Birnbaum**.

This quotation is from his article *The Idea of Preservation* from the 1947:

– Preservation is not a whim or predilection of individuals, but it is deeply rooted in the laws that govern in the evolution of the human mind. The most characteristic feature of these laws seems to be the gradual transference of man's interests from his own self to the objects which surround him. –

The **architect's task** has always been not only to design new buildings, but also to maintain, repair and adapt those that already exist. Architects cannot ignore such tasks in countries that are intensively settled and have preserved buildings of great historical and architectural value.

**Why is preservation desirable?** The present day is very sensitive to the protection of all kinds of monuments. The past and the nostalgia connected with it have become a special issue. This tendency has been emerging across cultural areas and borders. The invasion of the information culture into the ground plan of historical towns has developed much more rapidly than society's ability to defend its rights to its own past.

The inconspicuous values of the past are endangered much more than the most obvious values. One of the **architect's tasks is to recognize** and preserve these values. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the needs of the present day, and to avoid extreme conservationist attitudes, which can be harmful.

I am a head of a **department of monument preservation** at our faculty at present. It is a reason why I would like to say a couple of words about the education of architects in the field of monument preservation. I would like to stress an importance of such education of architects in this field.

I appreciate greatly this importance in view of the country where our architects live. Our cultural landscape is very rich of historical monuments. Architect's tasks are mostly connected with a historical environment.

Education in this field started at our faculty by prof. Stefan in the 50<sup>th</sup>. It was interrupted after 2 years from the political reasons. This subject was reestablished in 1966 and was lead by Mrs. Radová to 1968. It started in 70<sup>th</sup> again and continued to the present day.

Our students study e.g. history of monument preservation, method of historical survey, legislation, historical structures and its imperfections etc.

There are also courses for foreign students at our faculty. Course of monument preservation provides a basic orientation in this field and gives access to important Czech materials in the English language. There is a big interest of foreign students in this course. We have also postgraduate studies of monument preservation.

In my opinion, we need to **extend our teaching** of monument preservation for Czech students. We intend to start with two degrees of study – bachelor and master degree. My proposal is to create a branch of master degree studies focused on the monument preservation. This deeper education could be a way for better dealing of architects with monuments.

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