

GSE
ICOMOS Interim Report



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December 2019

Annex containing supplementary information in
support of the Additional Information request
Ref: GB/AS/1613/IR

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/Extract CZE – February 2020/

3.6 Mariánské Lázně; development of Mariánské Lázně between the 1930s and the present moment.

(1) Development of Mariánské Lázně between the 1930s and the present moment:

As far back as the eve of WWI, the *Mariánské Lázně* spa resort formed a contiguous and extremely valuable urban and architectural whole. After World War I, the use of the site as a spa continued even after the Spa Rental Company took over spa operations from the Teplá Monastery. In the 1920s the spa began to take off again and, between 1928 and 1929, it even broke its previous attendance record (41,226 guests and 120,000 visitors). Efforts to build on the city's pre-war social status were also successful, as a number of heads of states stayed in *Mariánské Lázně*, even in the interwar period. There was little new structural development in the city's spa district, in part because it was a recently completed and harmonious unit lying along a relatively narrow valley, which lacked other suitable development areas. The bulk of this activity focused on modernising the spa's treatment infrastructure and only a few reconstructions were carried out (Cristal). Extensive construction of new small villas continued in the residential part of the agglomeration. In the southern part of the city (outside the spa district), construction was ongoing in the residential districts of Šenov and Luft, as well as around the railway station. A major boom occurred in 1927-1938, when air transport to and from *Mariánské Lázně* developed with the opening of an airport south of the city, between the villages of Skláře and Chotěnov (outside the spa area and its buffer zones). *Mariánské Lázně* became the second largest air transport centre in the then Czechoslovakia, which helped secure sufficient spa clientele.

During the WWII, *Mariánské Lázně* was declared a hospital city and was therefore not significantly damaged by the events of war. However, during the Crystal Night, from November 9 to 10, 1938, the synagogue on Hlavní třída was looted and set on fire. Extensive changes came after 1945 as a result of the eviction of the city's original inhabitants and the nationalisation of the spa. The Spa Act of 1955 raised the National Municipal Committee in *Mariánské Lázně* to the level of a regional capital, placing it under the direct control of the government. One of

the goals of the socialist state was to prioritise spas whose operations provided economic input. The government also approved the status of *Mariánské Lázně*, which provided protection for spas and natural resources and regulated conditions in the city for comprehensive spa treatment. The introduction of year-round spa operations after 1948 created a need for numerous structural modifications (many spa houses did not have central and sometimes even local heating).

The decision to provide a higher level of spa treatment resulted in the extensive construction of new flats, which were built in the form of housing estates (outside the main spa district – railway station district and Úšovice). The complex restoration of the main colonnade was extremely demanding but led to the structure being saved.

In 1977, a block of dilapidated houses, numbers 36–40, was demolished between Mírové náměstí and the central park, where a large gap still remains (see the main parts of the nomination documentation on page 397 and the Management Plan). The systematic regeneration of parks and public greenery was also carried out.

The traffic that had previously transited the city's spa district was diverted out through the construction of a new bypass system. This relieved the spa district of the burden of traffic and it became a centre of calm, with a high proportion of areas for pedestrian promenades.

The social changes of 1989 became a fundamental prerequisite for new, positive developments. The previous legal protections for spa resorts and natural resources was also maintained (with a few minor amendments). The Spa Act was adopted in 2001, which still remains in force today, together with a Decree providing substantial support for care of the countryside surrounding the spa. The outstanding standard of the ground plan and the almost undisturbed architectural character of the 19th century spa town was rewarded in 1992 in the declaration of the central urban spa district of *Mariánské Lázně* as an urban conservation zone. In 2017, the conservation area of the spa resort was significantly expanded to include the land adjacent to the spa district and declared an urban heritage reservation.

(2) How the cultural tradition of 'taking the cure', as reflected during the timeframe 1700 to the 1930's, compares to how that cultural tradition is reflected nowadays and can still be considered to be living from a medical perspective + (3) How this medical perspective can be distinguished from a wellness approach:

Mariánské Lázně is still one of the most prominent centres of world-class balneotherapy, which combines effective treatment using natural mineral resources with physical exercise in well-preserved treatment facilities and a spa resort with leisure activities. The spa treatments are mostly carried out in the original historical spa buildings and facilities. Spa operations are still very alive today, and the preserved spa complex dominates the appearance of the city as a whole.

The traditional spa treatment in *Mariánské Lázně* is based on the effects of natural healing resources – mineral springs, peat, natural CO₂ gas and excellent climatic conditions. The peculiarity of *Mariánské Lázně* lies in the fact that dozens of springs of cold ferrous acidulous water rise from an extremely small area, but each is different due to the different geological composition of the rocks. They therefore also have different pharmacotherapeutic effects when taken as drinking cures. Because of this, the local springs were divided into several groups according to their characteristics and the most suitable water had to be chosen for each type of treatment. Traditionally, the Cross Spring has a privileged status in the treatment hierarchy. The most important factors were the amount of water drunk, the temperature of the drinking water and the frequency of drinking. The water cure is an extremely specialised procedure and is not intended for continuous or unregulated use. The choice of accompanying diet was and is of equal importance.

From the beginning, treatments in *Mariánské Lázně* were concentrated in several places - drinking cures at the colonnade and at the pavilions housing the source springs and bath treatment in therapeutic centres (Central and New Spas, Peat Spa). The colonnade "church" with the Cross Spring and the large cast-iron Spa Colonnade have become the centre of spa and social life.

Healing springs are used not only for drinking cures, but also for baths and inhalations. Carbon dioxide baths have been very popular since the second half of the 19th century. A very specific form of baths, typical of *Mariánské Lázně*, are gas baths using the unique Maria Spring (a gaseous spring), which was introduced as early as 1818. Another procedure involves subcutaneous gas injections. *Mariánské Lázně* is also one of those spas where mud has been used for mud baths (following the example of *Františkovy Lázně*) since the 1820s. In the past these achieved their extraordinary effects, which still apply today, from mixing peat with local mineral springs. During the early period of spa operations, spa doctors would wait for their patients in the colonnades. From the second half of the 19th century, doctors visited their patients in their hotel rooms. There were signs on the spa houses announcing that the doctor was on duty in the house and his visiting hours. There were also waiting rooms. This principle is still followed today - when the client has arrived for a therapeutic stay, the spa doctor - a specialist balneologist directly attached to the spa houses and sanatoriums - draws up the treatment programme. An individual treatment plan is compiled for each patient and they are prescribed specific treatment procedures focused specifically on their health condition. In contrast to relaxation wellness programmes, the well-established principle adhered to here is that traditional spa treatment should be performed daily for 3-4 weeks, ideally for at least 14 days.

The spa stay in *Mariánské Lázně* is suitable for the treatment of a wide range of diseases - from disorders of the musculoskeletal system, kidney and urinary tract diseases, to treatment of respiratory, gynaecological, metabolic or oncological diseases.

After 1900, the exercise cure devised by Dr. Oertel for the treatment of blood circulation and obesity disorders began to be followed in *Mariánské Lázně*, which led to the establishment of an extensive network of walking paths in the spa forests. Dr. Oertel classified the paths according to their difficulty of ascent and emphasised that the treatment could not be carried out by the patient alone, but only after consultation with a doctor. He will determine, depending on the type of illness, whether the patient should rest or, on the contrary, take exercise and walk outside. The result is a very sophisticated system of spa paths. That is why the therapeutic landscape of *Mariánské Lázně* is so vast. In addition, thanks to the numerous springs in the earth's crust carrying mineral water with dissolved substances and gases to the surface, it is truly medicinal. Trails for spa guests and patients led to lookout points where pavilions, lookout towers, cafes were located, and these are still marked accordingly.

The power of the healing springs and the exceptional environment predetermined the very foundation of the spa town of *Mariánské Lázně* more than two hundred years ago and determines its development to this day. The positive impact of the overall spa environment and the peaceful cultural atmosphere are also important factors for successful treatment. Spa guests and visitors have a wide range of cultural events available to them throughout the year. The main event of the spa season is the ceremonial blessing and opening of the mineral springs at the launch of the season, which traditionally takes place during the second weekend of May and includes a rich cultural programme. The main part of the celebrations is the Mass and the ceremonial act - the consecration of the springs, together with the solemn procession and a concert by the *Mariánské Lázně* West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra, which is one of the oldest symphony orchestras in the Czech Republic.

Other events include the Fryderyk Chopin International Festival, one of the largest and most important Chopin festivals in Europe, attended by tens of thousands of visitors, Goethe's Autumn, the St. Wenceslas Meeting of

People of Good Will, the Marian Festival of Sacred Music, *Mariánské Lázně*, Cultural Summer, the Festival of Understanding and Jazz Days. The photographs below illustrate the annual opening of the spa season: <https://www.marianskelazne.cz/en/spa-season-opening/?dateId=4659>



6.b.5 *Mariánské Lázně* CZ:

Whole the buffer zone is protected by the national legal regulations regarding the state heritage conservation, protection of nature and landscape, and other provisions:

- The Act no. 164/2001 Coll., on natural healing resources, sources of natural mineral waters, natural spas and spa places (the Spa Law), and its Decree no. 423/2001 Coll., on resources and spa
- The Act no. 183/2006 Coll., on urban planning and building rules (the Building Act)
- The Act no. 20/1987 Coll., on the state monument care (the Heritage Preservation Act)
- The Act no. 114/1992 Coll., on nature and landscape protection
- The Act no. 289/1995 Coll., on Forests and Changes of Some Laws (the Forest Law)

Besides the general national legislation there is a local legislation protecting the buffer zone:

- Urban plan of the town of *Mariánské Lázně*
- Strategic plan of development of the town of *Mariánské Lázně* 2016–2031
- Development concept of *Mariánské Lázně*
- Regulation of the government no. 43/1955 Coll., on determining the spa area *Mariánské Lázně*.

6.c.5 Mariánské Lázně CZ:

- (a) the updated LMP, version of June 2019 (translated into Czech by February 2020), has been submitted for approval by the City Council on January 21st, and subsequently at the Municipal Assembly on February 18, 2020. The same applies for the approval of the updated LMSG;
- (b) The Site Manager of the ML component is currently Dr. Vladimír Kajlík, who holds the office of SM as an appointed member of the City Council until the end of 2020;
- (c) the appropriate adjustment is planned for 2021, or by the end of 2022, by recruiting a qualified candidate for a permanent position. Provided the nomination is successful, the SM post will be a full-time assignment. Another condition preferably being a sole expertise without political affiliation.

6.d.5 Mariánské Lázně CZ:

Updated ML LMP is consulted with the city management, discussed and approved by the City Council (RM 21. 1. 2020) and submitted for approval to the Municipal Assembly (ZM on February 18, 2020). The ML LMP is directly linked to the Urban Development Plan through the City's Urban Planning and ML Strategic Plan documents. For references cf. ML LMP pp 54ff and see also pp62 ff for local statutory specifics.

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7.a.3 Františkovy Lázně CZ: No further comment.

7.a.4 Karlovy Vary CZ: No further comment.

7.a.5 Mariánské Lázně CZ: No further comment.

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7.b.5 Mariánské Lázně CZ:

Information and statistics on tourism are generated by the Tourist Information Centre destination agency (TIC DA) from various sources, including the databases of the CZSO, regional sources of the DA of the *Karlovy Vary* region and local sources of the TIC DA. The information aggregator is used in the field of marketing and promotional activities of the TIC DA in *Mariánské Lázně*.

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