

History

The Research Library in Liberec is the inheritor of the Czech and German library traditions in Liberec (Reichenberg)



- 1759 the library of the dean P. Anton Kopsch
- 1846 the first public lending room
- 1863 the library of the Česká beseda society
- 1885 Deutsche Volksbibliothek
- 1901 the first German public library
- 1904 the first Czech public library
- 1924 Bücherei der Deutschen
- 1938 closure of the Czech public library
- 1945 Státní studijní knihovna
- 1947 the right to receive a legal deposit copy granted (to 1995)
- 1954 fire, 250.000 volumes destroyed
- 1959 the merger of research and public libraries
- 1990 The Research Library Liberec
- 1995 project of the new building under the patronage of the presidents Václav Havel and Roman Herzog
- 1996 starting construction of the new library building
- 1997 foundation stone laid
- 2000 9. 11. formal opening
- 2001 8. 3. opening for public



The Reconciliation Building



VĚRA VOHLÍDALOVÁ
(director of the Library 1990–2001)
„The Reconciliation Building in Liberec, comprising a library and synagogue, was established under the patronage of presidents Václav Havel and Roman Herzog on 30th October 1995 in Dresden. In the project of this unique building the library is linked with a separate Jewish place of worship which also serves as a meeting place and cultural centre for the Jewish community. It symbolises the recompense due to minority cultures living in the region and their reconciliation with each other. It is also a memorial to oppression and violence. It will always remind us that people of different beliefs and cultures have lived, are living and will live among us. The library is the image and memory of the society. Just as society should protect all of its members including the weak and minority groups so the library symbolically protects the smaller synagogue and serves everybody regardless of sex, age, language, belief, outlook, colour, origin or physical condition. Through the joint financial support of the different parties involved, the new building also symbolises a joining of hands over a common past and a turn towards the future. It is a symbol of tolerance and human communication.“



RADIM KOUSAL
(architect)
„It is said that the difficulty in finding a solution for the design of a modern library arises from the coexistence of library and media archives, in an encounter between two worlds the historical library concept and a concept of the library of the future. The only way out of this dilemma is the design of a time-independent and universal institution, which would be capable of absorbing both these two worlds and which, at the same time, would exhibit the ability to integrate the variability of the library and the media archive programs.“



Project team
SIAL, spol. s r.o.
Architect
Ing. arch. Radim Kousal
Building
Stavební podnik Ralsko, a.s.
Stráž p. Ralskem
1996 – 2000
Area
Library – 12 500 m²
Synagogue – 245 m²
Places for users
300 seats for reading and study
180 seats in halls

In 2001
Price of the
architects
Building of
the year

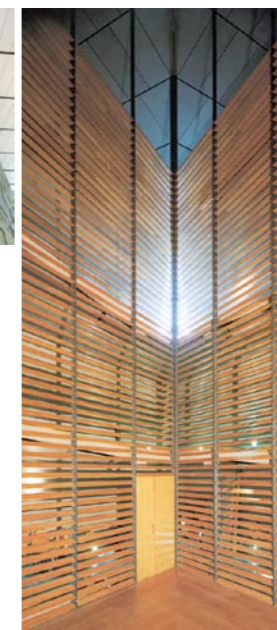


Costs for building and indoor equipment – total costs
14.210.000 €
Czech Republic
11.092.000 €
EU – programme Phare CBC
1.995.000 €
German government
281.000 €
Czech-German Fund of the Future
824.000 €
Swiss Canton of St. Gallen,
Czech-German Women's Forum,
private individuals
18.000 €

Synagogue



The Library with the Synagogue stands on area of the original synagogue, which was build in 1887–1889 (firm Sacher and Gärtner) by the plans of an architect Karl König from Wien. The Synagogue was burned and destroyed during the „Křišťálová noc“ 9.–10. 11. 1938.



RADIM KOUSAL – ARCHITECT
„The simple, closed form of the synagogue is based on one half of the Star of David. The structure of the synagogue consists of stone blocks with three narrow slots allowing light to enter the synagogue interior and reminiscent of the Wailing Wall. A Hebrew verse from the Torah hewn in stone around the synagogue perimeter and the contour of the destroyed synagogue traced in the pavement of the square and the library bear witness to this tragic event...“



Jonah (2,2–2,10)

² Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly
And said,

³ I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

⁴ For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the mindst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy wares passed over me.

⁵ Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

⁶ The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about me head.

⁷ I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.

⁸ When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

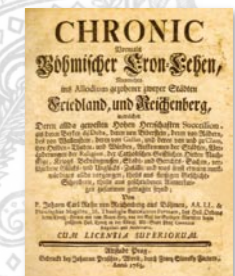
⁹ They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

¹⁰ But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed Salvation in of the Lord!

The Holy Bible
The Authorized King James Version

Historical and precious prints

1. The front page of the chronicle Frydlant's and Liberec's manor by P. Johann Carl Rohn (Praha 1763)
2. The first newspapers published in Liberec (1848–1849)



3. The wood block of the last judgement day by Hartmann Schedel's world chronicle (Nürnberg 1493)
4. Johann Kunckel's glass handbook (Frankfurt am M. 1689)
5. The longest published Liberec's journal (1860–1938)
6. The view of Liberec by Rohn's chronicle (1763)