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**Architects from Brno and London jointly explored strategies for revitalising neglected parts of the city**

**International Workshop FA VUT and AA School of Architecture: Transformative Nature of Urbanism**

The Faculty of Architecture at Brno University of Technology (FA BUT), in cooperation with the prestigious London-based Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA School), organised the second edition of the international urban design workshop "*Transformative Nature of Urbanism*," held from May 8 to 16, 2025, at the creative hub KUMST in Brno. The event focused on the revitalisation of a large brownfield site bounded by Koliště, Cejl, Křenová streets and the Svitava River.

The workshop aimed to explore how new forms of spatial infrastructure can catalyse social, economic, and environmental change. Students and tutors from both institutions engaged in site visits and discussions with local stakeholders and developed architectural proposals that responded to the specific urban context.

**The workshop was opened on 8 May by the FA BUT Dean Radek Suchánek.** Coordinators Monika Konrad and Karin Písaříková introduced the workshop agenda, followed by introductory lectures by Písaříková and Kristýna Smržová on the cultural and social dimensions of the area known as "Upper and Lower Cejl." A guided tour through the so-called "Brno Bronx" included stops at an independent gallery, the former prison Káznice, industrial heritage sites and creative studios, allowing students to engage with cultural figures and community representatives.

**In the following days, students formed four interdisciplinary teams and conducted field research in the areas of Špitálka, Dornych, the former Mosilana complex, the gasworks and the railway embankment.** Under the guidance of tutors, they developed urban proposals with an emphasis on sustainability, public participation, biodiversity, and economic revitalisation through architecture.

The program included internal consultations, midterm reviews (held on 13 May), and a series of public lectures by invited experts, including Tomáš Kozelský, the studioChybík+Krištof, Martin Všetečka from the Brno City Architect’s Office, Jan Malý Blažek, Tomáš Hoření Samec, and Pavel Štěpán from the Museum of Romani Culture.

The final public presentations took place on 16 May in KUMST with the attendance of representatives from the City of Brno, the City Architect’s Office and the expert public.

**The event concluded with a reception and networking opportunity. The workshop brought together over 60 students and 20 tutors.** From AA School, participating tutors included **Lawrence Barth, Florian Dirschedl, Dominic Papa, Stephen Sinclair, Jorge Fiori, Elena Pascolo, Yasmina Aslakhanova, and Adithya Premraj.** Representing FA VUT **were Dean Radek Suchánek, Bára Ponešová, Marie Joja, Kristýna Smržová, Alex Bykov, Szymon Rozwałka, Karin Písaříková and Monika Konrad.**

The AA School’s design-based methodology with a strong emphasis on drawing was especially inspiring for Czech students and tutors. The cooperation fostered rich discussions and new opportunities for collaboration. **The workshop is part of the broader research framework Housing+**, whose outcomes will be published in a forthcoming book featuring expert texts, interviews and analyses on the role of architectural thinking in transformative urban processes. A third edition of the workshop is planned for the academic year 2025/26.

**Quotes from participants:**

“I’m not sure whether the working methodology we encountered during the workshop is representative of AA as a whole, but I was surprised by how strongly analogue it was – often manual, relying on sketches and drawings – contrary to my expectation of a more digital approach, which I had associated with AA until now. I was intrigued by the constant shifting between scales, from urban macro to fine architectural detail. This way of thinking, moving back and forth between the bigger picture and the detail, is something we could bring into our work. I genuinely enjoyed the collaboration in our team – I think we found a shared understanding of architecture and a language through which we were able to express what we wanted to communicate with the project.

And the students were truly great, although it seemed they could have been more open to critical thinking, which is something we try to encourage in our students.”
– **Szymon Rozwałka**

“The workshop was an inspiring opportunity for me to reflect on urban development. I appreciated the openness of the discussions on the role of infrastructure in cities and on housing typologies for creating vibrant urban environments.”

* **Marie Joja**

“For me, the workshop between the Architectural Association School of Architecture and the Faculty of Architecture at VUT was enriching, thanks to the meeting of different cultural contexts and architectural approaches. It led to an inspiring collaboration and exchange of perspectives across disciplines and methodologies.”

* **Karin Písaříková**