

History

In 1826 Neptune's Fountain replaced an earlier wooden fountain situated outside the Old Town Hall on the Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí), nowadays known as Dr. E. Beneš Square. Three years after the Old Town Hall was demolished, in 1896, the fountain was moved by a few meters to the centre of the Square and fitted with metal railings. In 1925, however, it had to give way to a new fountain designed by Franz Metzner and was relocated to Neruda Square. Neptune's Fountain was declared a National Cultural Heritage Monument in 1964. In 1994, Neptune's statue including its plinth and railings were dismantled and transported to restoration studios. Restoration works were then carried out in the following years: 1995 works on the railings, 1995–1997 on the plinth and on the statue itself. At the same time, a copy of Neptune's sculpture was made by the academic sculptor Jiří Novák. The severely damaged basin of the fountain together with the bottom part of the central plinth were dismantled and deposited at the premises of the Technical Services of the City of Liberec in 2004. Neptune's Fountain represents the last evidence of the historical method of supplying the city with drinking water. The Statutory

City of Liberec, as the owner of this heritage monument, intended to restore the preserved elements of the fountain, assemble them and reinstall the working fountain back on Dr. E. Beneš Square in Liberec that has been without a fountain since the summer 1945 when Metzner's Fountain was dismantled. In 2009 the first steps towards fulfilling this intention were taken after permission to return the cultural heritage landmark to Liberec central square was granted and a number of relevant procedures were completed. Using a subsidy from the Ministry of Culture, restoration works on the actual fountain were completed. In 2010 other steps subsequently followed leading to the return of the fountain to Dr. E. Beneš Square – construction of the foundation slab under the fountain including underground shafts, creating mains connections as well as technological infrastructure and the installation of street furniture such as benches in the fountain's vicinity. The assembly of the refurbished fountain was completed in July 2010 and on 31st of July Neptune's Fountain began to operate again.

Description

The basin of Neptune's Fountain is of an irregular octagonal shape, made of sandstone. Its side panels are finished

with rounded-edge top slabs – sills, and the railing that traces the fountain's shape is of forged ornate iron. Two access steps that surround the base of the whole fountain are from granite. Two side panels of the fountain's basin are decorated on the outside with plant design sections and German lettering. One of the sections contains an inscription on three lines '1823 // Joseph Miller // derzeit Bürgermeister' (1823, Joseph Miller, the Mayor at the time). The second section shows lettering on two lines 'Adalbert Linke // Steinmetzmeister' (Adalbert Linke, stonemason). The central section incorporates a simple prism plinth supporting a pedestal with fine volutes on the sides, finished with a tall capital with a massive moulded cornice rising in its central part to form a semicircle. The pedestal bears the statue of Neptune holding a Trident with both hands on his right side. At his feet is a dolphin figure functioning as a waterspout.

Interesting information

The fountain will operate all year round. In winter months water in the fountain's basin will be churned using four nozzles located in the pedestal just below the water's surface to prevent it from freezing. The temperature of the water circulating between the tank

located in the underground shaft and the fountain will be maintained at a few degrees Celsius above freezing through heating it. The year round operation was designed by the restorer-academic sculptor Jiří Novák, subsequently approved by the City's Authority and accepted by the conservationists. The year round operation serves a single purpose – to protect the fountain, especially its joints at the bottom and sides of the basin, against freezing up that could lead to cracking and damaging its watertight seals. Should the fountain's basin be emptied in winter, the inbuilt heating cables and imbedded sensors will provide protection for its joints and seals. Although it is possible to find water features in the Czech Republic that operate throughout the year without their water freezing up, we are not aware of a similar system being used at historical monuments such as Neptune's Fountain.

Contractors

Project design: SIADESIGN LIBEREC s.r.o.

Building contractor: STRABAG a.s.

Restoration: academic sculptor Jiří Novák

Fitting the fountain: MgA. Aleš John

Investor's expert technical supervision: IVESTTING CZ, spol. s.r.o.

Investor: Statutory City of Liberec, the Ministry of Culture of CR

THE CITY INFORMATION CENTRE

nám. Dr. E. Beneše 1, 460 59 Liberec 1

Phone.: +420 485 101 709

mic@infolbc.cz, www.infolbc.cz

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NEPTUNE'S FOUNTAIN



the original fountain was made of wood and provided drinking water * main feature of the fountain was the statue of Neptune standing on a dolphin and holding a Trident
* the fountain was later moved to Neruda Square * the original statue of Neptune can be seen in the North Bohemian Museum

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