# MAJZON SQUARE REIMAGINED: TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SPACE AT THE EDGE OF NOVÉ ZÁMKY'S HISTORICAL TOWN CENTRE

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#### Abstract

Majzon Square in Nové Zámky is a small public open space on the periphery of the historical town core, located just 100 metres from the main square. Originally, this triangular open space was positioned along the fortress town walls and, in the 20th century, it also served as a marketplace. Today, the square is enclosed on all sides by local roads and consists of green and paved surfaces, both of which are of low quality. The square's main features include an artesian well and a bronze bust of Ján Majzon (1849–1921), a prominent local figure. Given its strategic location in the town centre, the square holds significant potential for transformation into a more inclusive, multifunctional, and vibrant public space. This paper presents four redesign scenarios developed by students of landscape architecture within the Public Space Design Studio. Each scenario incorporates contemporary urban design principles, integrating green and blue infrastructure elements while enhancing the city's local identity, improving accessibility and permeability, and incorporating climate-responsive design features.

**Key words:** green infrastructure, landscape architecture, public space, research by design teaching, urban design

## Introduction

Squares, especially those located in central zones (Čibik et al., 2020), belong to the most important public open spaces in cities, towns, and villages (Tóth, 2022, 2023). They provide an in-between open space for social interaction (Čibik, 2024) and multifunctional use. To effectively address current climate challenges (Rózová et al., 2020) through mitigation and adaptation measures, novel landscape architecture approaches are needed (Fornal-Pienak & Bihuňová, 2022) that implement green infrastructure and nature-based solutions (Pochodyła et al., 2022). The integration of green spaces and trees in squares plays a crucial role in this challenge as they can significantly improve local urban microclimate and reduce the heat-island effect (Kuczman et al., 2022; Kuczman et al., 2024). In the context of changing climate, the tree species composition often needs to include nontraditional tree species (Hus et al., 2021), which might have better resilience features and nonetheless play a significant role in forming, enhancing and creating local identities and symbols (Hus, 2024). The quality of urban green spaces, including those integrated in squares (Vinczeová and Tóth, 2025) directly influence the quality of life and well-being of citizens (Rózová et al., 2021). Many urban squares do not address contemporary environmental challenges and there is an urgent need for their revitalisation, reactivation (Čibik and Jankechová, 2023), re-design (Tóth, 2022) and comprehensive conversion (Čibik et al., 2022). For this, innovative design scenarios are needed that can be generated among others within design studios (Tóth et al., 2023).

# Material and methods

Majzon Square in the district town Nové Zámky is situated at the northern edge of the former fortress, so historically this open space was closely related to the defensive system of the town like many other squares in historical settlements throughout Europe (Januszkiewicz, 2020). Today, the square is part of the historical town centre, see Fig. 1. Currently, it is in a bad condition, the surfaces are predominantly impermeable, the existing vegetation has poor vitality and health condition, and the square is generally underequipped. It is framed by local roads, see Fig. 2. The only vegetation present is planted in elevated green spaces. There is no clear programme, nor site furniture that would create qualities to attract people to come and stay. The assignment of the Public Space Design Studio supervised by Attila Tóth was to develop new design ideas, solutions and scenarios, which could revive the square and convert it into a novel attractive public open space that could complement the nearby main square.

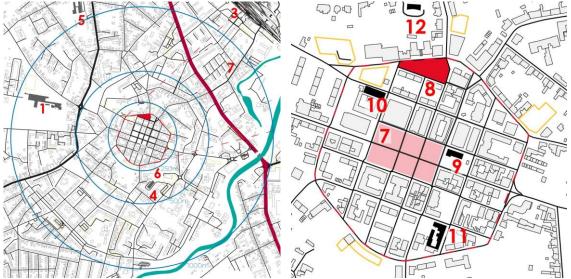


Fig. 1: Location of Majzon Square in the centre of Nové Zámky, at the edge of the former fortress (analysis by Patrik Segéň and Iveta Savková, 2024).

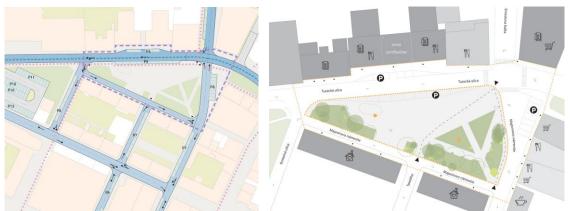


Fig. 2: Current situation of Majzon Square (analyses by Dávid Keller and Samuel Rozkoš, 2024).

# Results

Students have developed four diverse design solutions. They aimed at improving the accessibility of the site, enhancing the flow in the space and increasing the share of green spaces and trees, see Fig. 3.

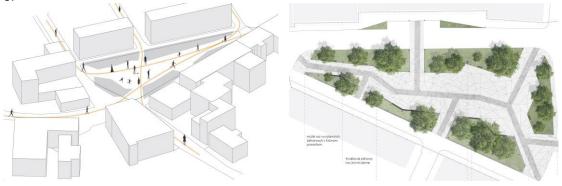






Fig. 3: A design concept inspired by the flow of people. The square is framed in by slightly elevated green spaces, with the addition of more trees (design by Klaudia Kovalovská, Karolína Žuffová and Yana Ischenko, 2024).



Fig. 4: A design concept based on the aim to connect the old and the new town through the square, which is also reflected in the pavement scheme (design by Samuel Rozkoš, Dávid Keller and Donat Karzhauov, 2024).

Students generated ideas on how to better contextualise the square and enhance its local identity. One of the concepts addresses this aim through the composition and morphology of the square including its pavement pattern, see Fig. 4.



Fig. 5: A design concept inspired by the organic shapes of former river meanders. The design includes different scenarios of use for seasonal events (design by Natália Bábiková, Kristína Jablonovská, Martina Lendáčová, 2024).

One of the designs found inspiration in the meandering morphology of the river Nitra, which is also reflected in the pavement scheme. Given its proximity to the main square, the Majzon Square can serve as an additional public open space, including different seasonal events. Therefore, students developed spatial schemes and programme scenarios to seasonally equip the square with additional architectural elements and features, see Fig. 5

#### Discussion

The necessity to re-design and revitalise the Majzon Square has been on the table for quite some time (Čibik & Tóth, 2020), see Fig. 6. However, no further steps have been made by the municipality since then. Now, the challenge has been addressed again by new ideas and approaches within the Public Space Design Studio. These results and outcomes together can serve as a good basis for furthering the revitalisation process and eventually proceed to realisation that could implement contemporary landscape architectural solutions (Fornal-Pienak & Bihuňová, 2022).

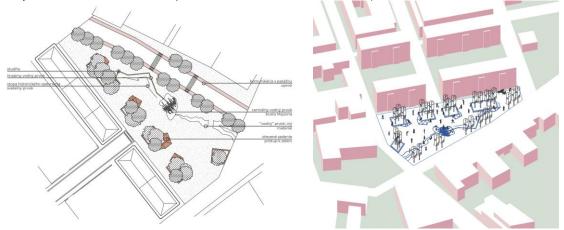


Fig. 6: The design concept developed by students within the For Water student competition four years before the re-design of the square was assigned to the Public Space Design Studio (design by Miroslav Čibik, Anna Kulperová, Martin Manina and Andrea Zajacová, supervised by Attila Tóth, 2019).

# Conclusion

The outcomes of the assignment within the For Water student design competition back in 2019, as well as the Public Space Design Studio from 2023-2024 provided the municipality of Nové Zámky with several ideas for possible re-design strategies and conversion scenarios. Now, there is a need for furthering the process through participation and co-design to convert this currently unattractive and neglected square into an attractive and well-functioning contemporary public open space that could better face environmental and social challenges.

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## Souhrn

Majzonovo náměstí v Nových Zámcích je malé veřejné prostranství na okraji historického jádra města, vzdálené pouhých 100 metrů od hlavního náměstí. Původně bylo toto trojúhelníkové prostranství situováno podél hradeb pevnostního města a ve 20. století sloužilo také jako tržiště. Dnes je náměstí ze všech stran ohraničeno místními komunikacemi a tvoří ho zeleň a dlážděné plochy, přičemž obě jsou nízké kvality. Mezi hlavní prvky náměstí patří artézská studna a bronzová busta Jána Majzona (1849-1921), významné místní osobnosti. Vzhledem ke své strategické poloze v centru města má náměstí značný potenciál pro přeměnu na inkluzivnější, multifunkční a živější veřejný prostor. Tento článek představuje čtyři scénáře redesignu, které vypracovali studenti krajinářské architektury v rámci Ateliéru designu veřejného prostoru. Každý ze scénářů zahrnuje zásady současného urbanistického designu, integruje prvky zelené a modré infrastruktury a zároveň posiluje místní identitu města, zlepšuje dostupnost a prostupnost a zahrnuje prvky designu reagující na klimatické podmínky.

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