

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 (Čibík 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 (Čibík, 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 & Biľušová, 2022) that implement green infrastructure and nature-based solutions (Pochodyla 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 non-traditional 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 (Čibík and Jankechová, 2023), re-design (Tóth, 2022) and comprehensive conversion (Čibík 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.

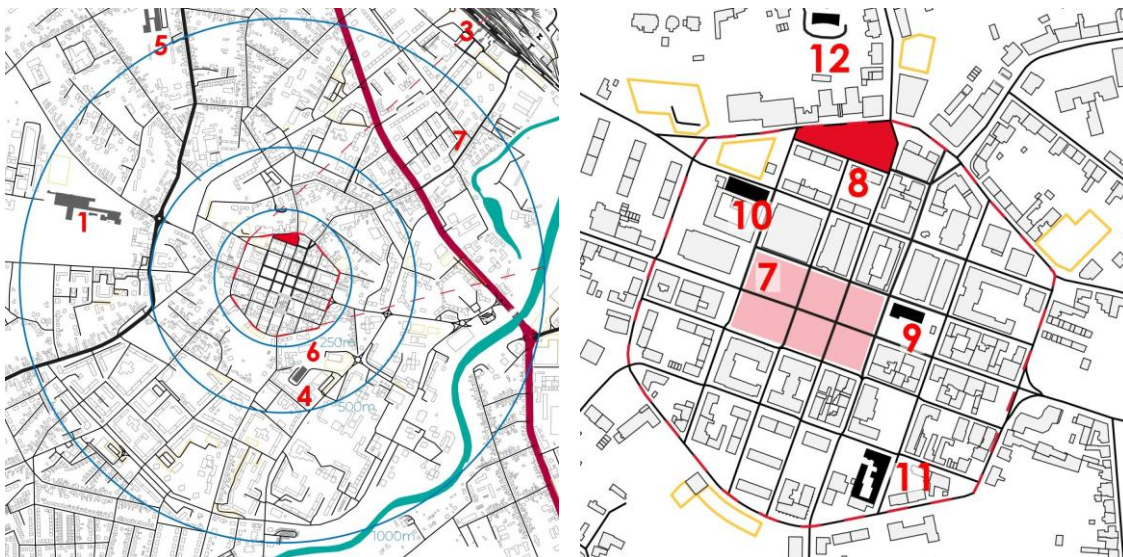


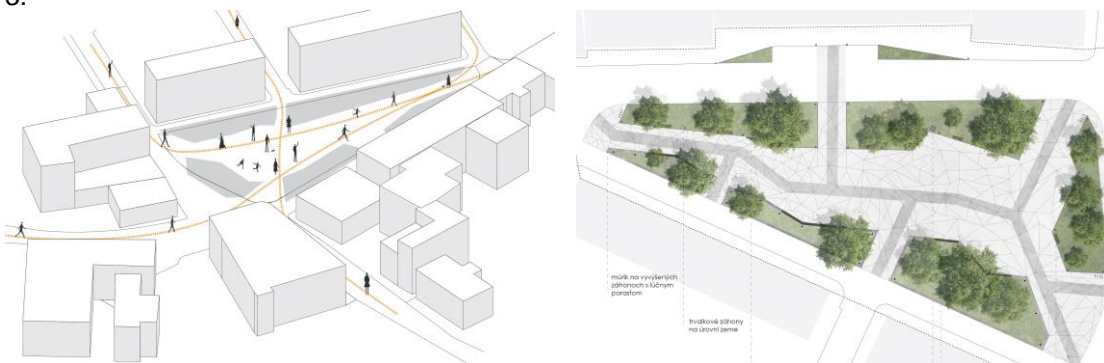
Fig. 1: Location of Majzon Square in the centre of Nové Zámky, at the edge of the former fortress (analysis by Patrik Segén and Iveta Savková, 2024).



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.





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.



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Souhrn

Majzonovo námestí v Nových Zámčích je malé verejné prostranstvo na okraji historického jadra mesta, vzdálené pouhých 100 metrov od hlavného námestia. Pôvodne bolo toto trojuholníkové prostranstvo situované podél hradeb pevnostného mesta a ve 20. storočí sloužilo také jako tržiště. Dnes je námestí 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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