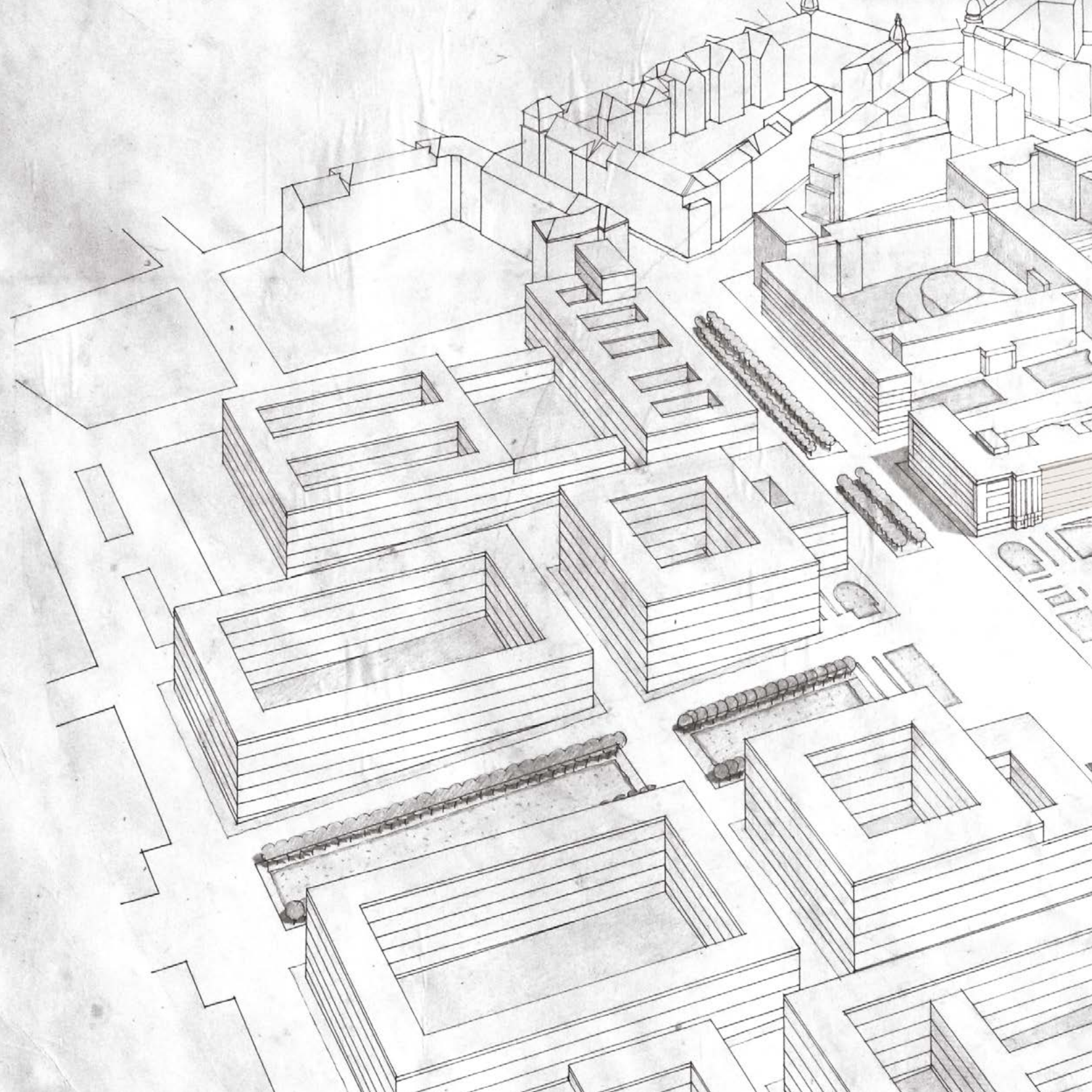


VEVEŘÍ STREET 70

History of the Building of the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University

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History of the Building of the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University

Ladislav Vojáček / Jaromír Tauchen

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The design of the Academic Square (site plan) from the collections of the National Technical Museum - Museum of Architecture and Construction, was used on the frontispiece.

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Masaryk University became the second university in the Czech lands after the ancient Charles University in Prague. Czech politicians as well as those interested in it had been striving for its establishment since the 1860s. However, it was not until shortly after the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak state that a new university was established. The university was named after Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk who had been one of the active promoters of its establishment. Later, due to the political circumstances, it was bearing for more than three decades the name of the eminent Czech scientist Jan Evangelista Purkyně, who was one of the first promoters of its establishment. The Faculty of Law building was the first and for a long time the only one of all the buildings of Masaryk University in Brno constructed after its establishment in 1919.

Not only people and institutions, but also buildings have lives of their own. Their fates are also affected not only by everyday events, but also by political upheavals and other circumstances. How many human destinies has the building at 70 Veveří Street influenced? How many people were prepared for their careers there? How many people found employment there? Unfortunately, how many people's lives and deaths were decided there? No one will ever be able to count that exactly. Neither will anyone trace and document in detail all the changes the building has undergone over the years.



PRÁVNICKÁ FAKULTA MÚ

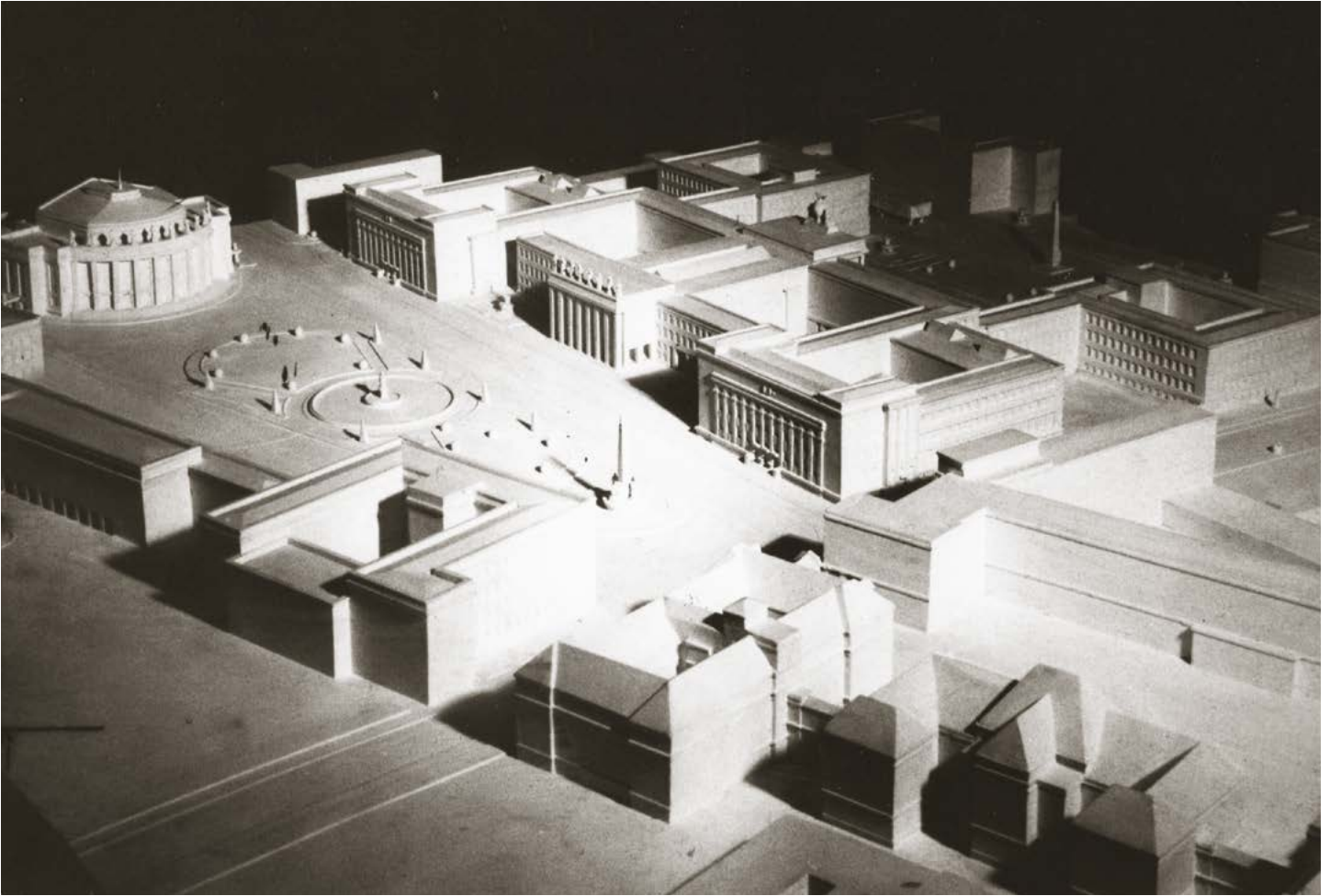
THE **FACULTY BUILDING** IN THE COURSE OF TIME

1.1 | ESTABLISHING THE FACULTY AND PREPARING THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS BUILDING

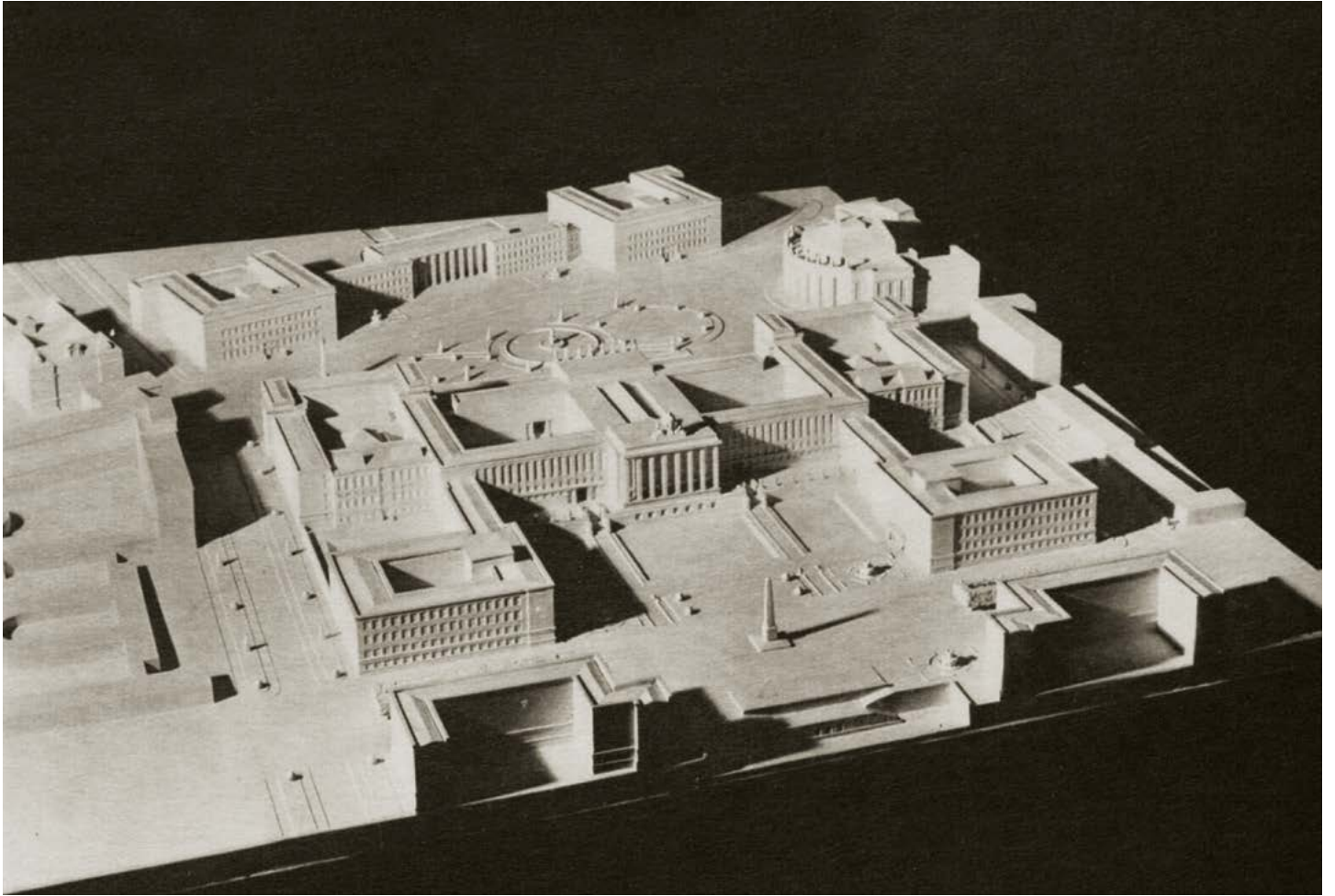
Masaryk University with its four faculties of law, medicine, philosophy and science was founded on the basis of an act of January 1919, which stipulated among other things that by 1930 new buildings for the various parts of the university should be built or founded and properly equipped.

Before this could happen, the new academic officials of the University and the Faculty of Law had to find a suitable temporary seat for the faculty, select staff and prepare for the start of teaching, all this in two years. Teaching began in 1919 in the premises of the Bishop's Alumnat College (today the seat of the Rector's Office of the Technical University). After some minor modifications, it was a suitable place to begin with. But only for the beginning, because the teaching was complicated by a low number of lecture rooms and their small capacities, which became even more serious after all four years were filled (in the academic year 1922/1923). Of course, the location in the cramped temporary premises had a negative impact on the functioning of the faculty and the university as a whole.

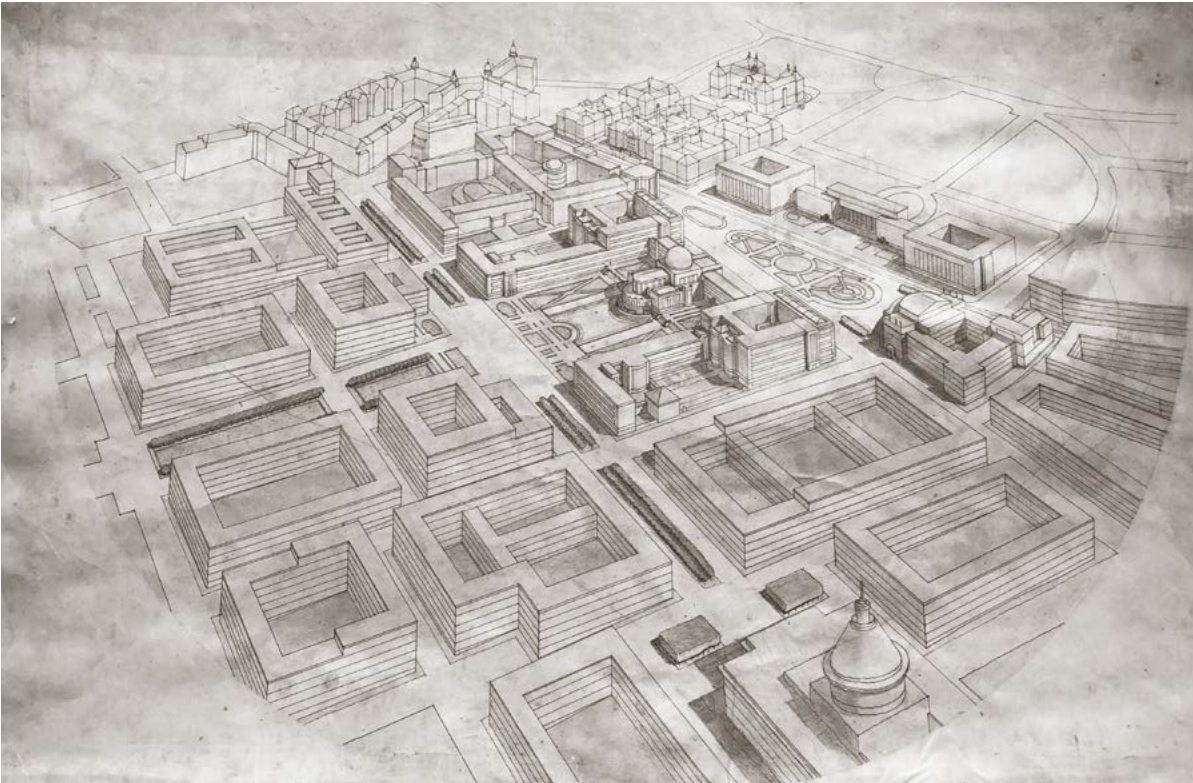
From the start, the preparation of the construction of new university buildings, as prescribed by the above mentioned act, was accompanied by difficulties. This was despite the fact that the Rector's Office had already initiated negotiations with representatives of the state administration on the construction of Masaryk University simultaneously with the commencement of teaching at the first two faculties in November 1919. It was not until 1922 that permission was obtained to launch a competition for the conceptual design of the "Academic Quarter", where the new university buildings were to be concentrated. The jury concluded and evaluated the competition in the summer of 1925. A large-scale design by the Prague architect Alois Dryák was considered the best.



01 | A model of the Academic Square



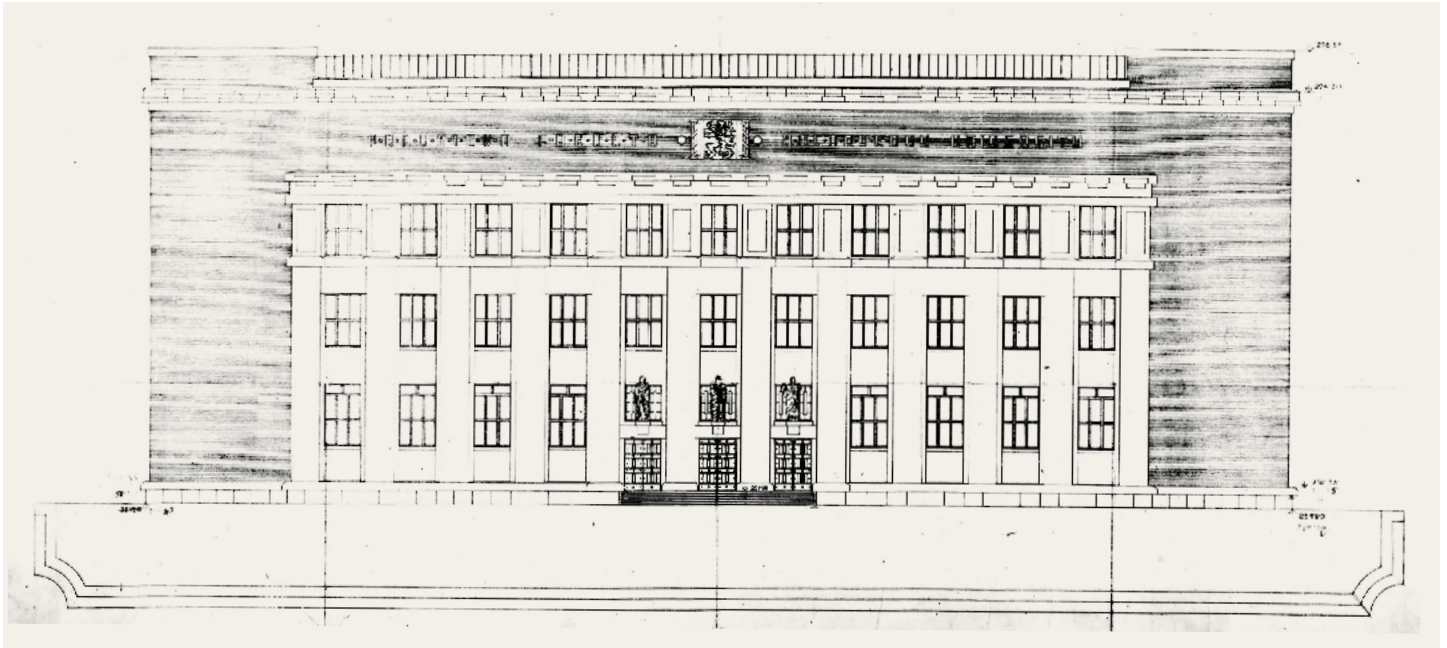
02 | A model of the Academic Square



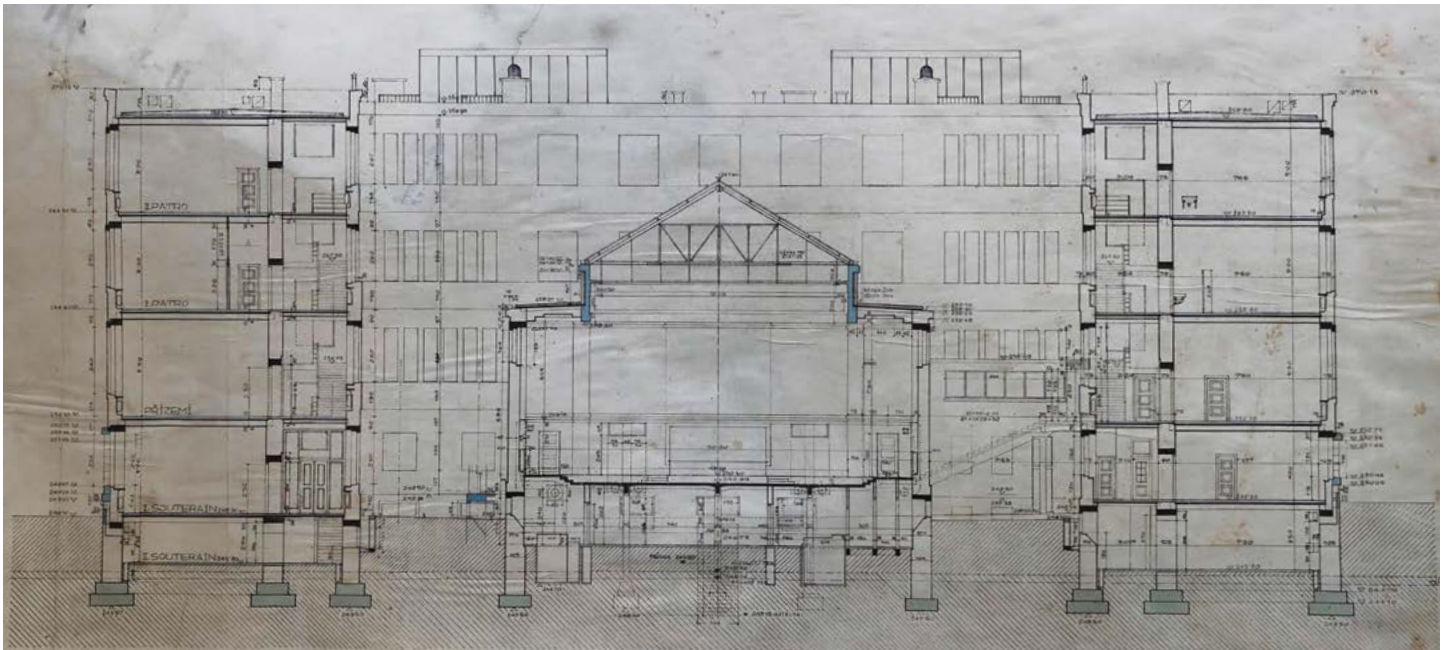
03 | A design of the Academic Square (site plan)



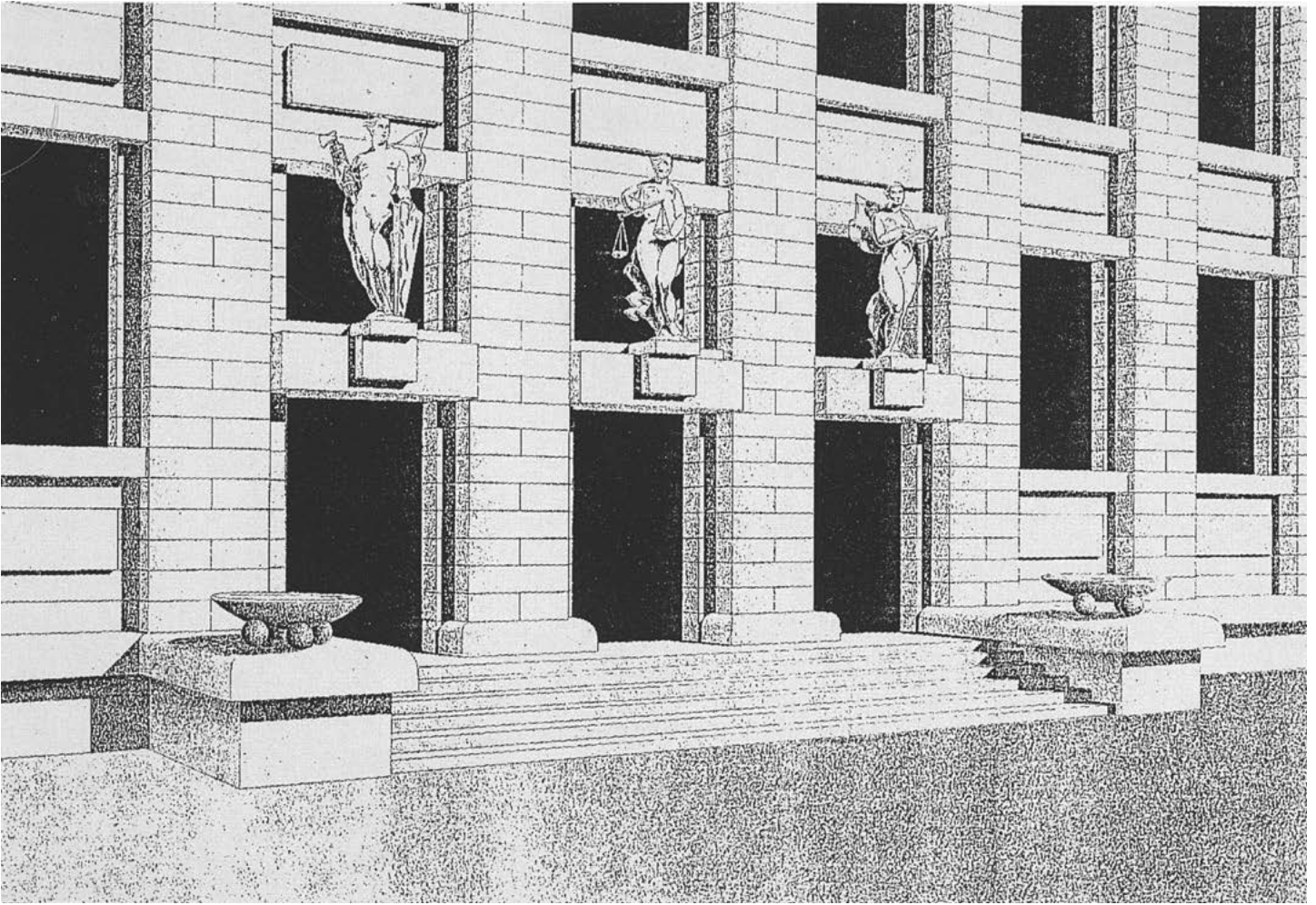
04 | The Academic Square with the building of the Faculty of Law (right), the Rector's Office and the University Library (centre), and the Faculty of Arts (left)



05 | The main front of the Faculty of Law building (design)



06 | A cross-section of the Faculty of Law building



07 | The main front of the Faculty of Law building (design)

1.2 | THE FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY

The preparatory period culminated in the laying of the foundation stone of the future Faculty of Law building as part of the entire university complex. It took place on 9 June 1928 and became a supreme social event as it was attended by the President of the Republic, T. G. Masaryk, and a number of other leading politicians. The presence of the President was all the more significant because in 1919 his illness prevented him from attending the opening of classes at the university that bore his name. With his hands laid on the foundation stone, the then rector Jaroslav Kallab concluded the ceremony with a pathetic exclamation: *'In the name of Masaryk University, we place you in the ground as a seed and when it comes up, may it bring a hundredfold benefit to truth, justice and goodness!'*



08 | The official gathering on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Brno Faculty of Law building (9 June 1928)



09 | The foundation stone of the building. In the front from the right: Jaroslav Kallab, Jan Šrámek, Tomáš G. Masaryk



10 | Today's location of the foundation stone in the Central Library (at the bottom: photo of the foundation stone of the building which was discovered in 2014 during renovation work)



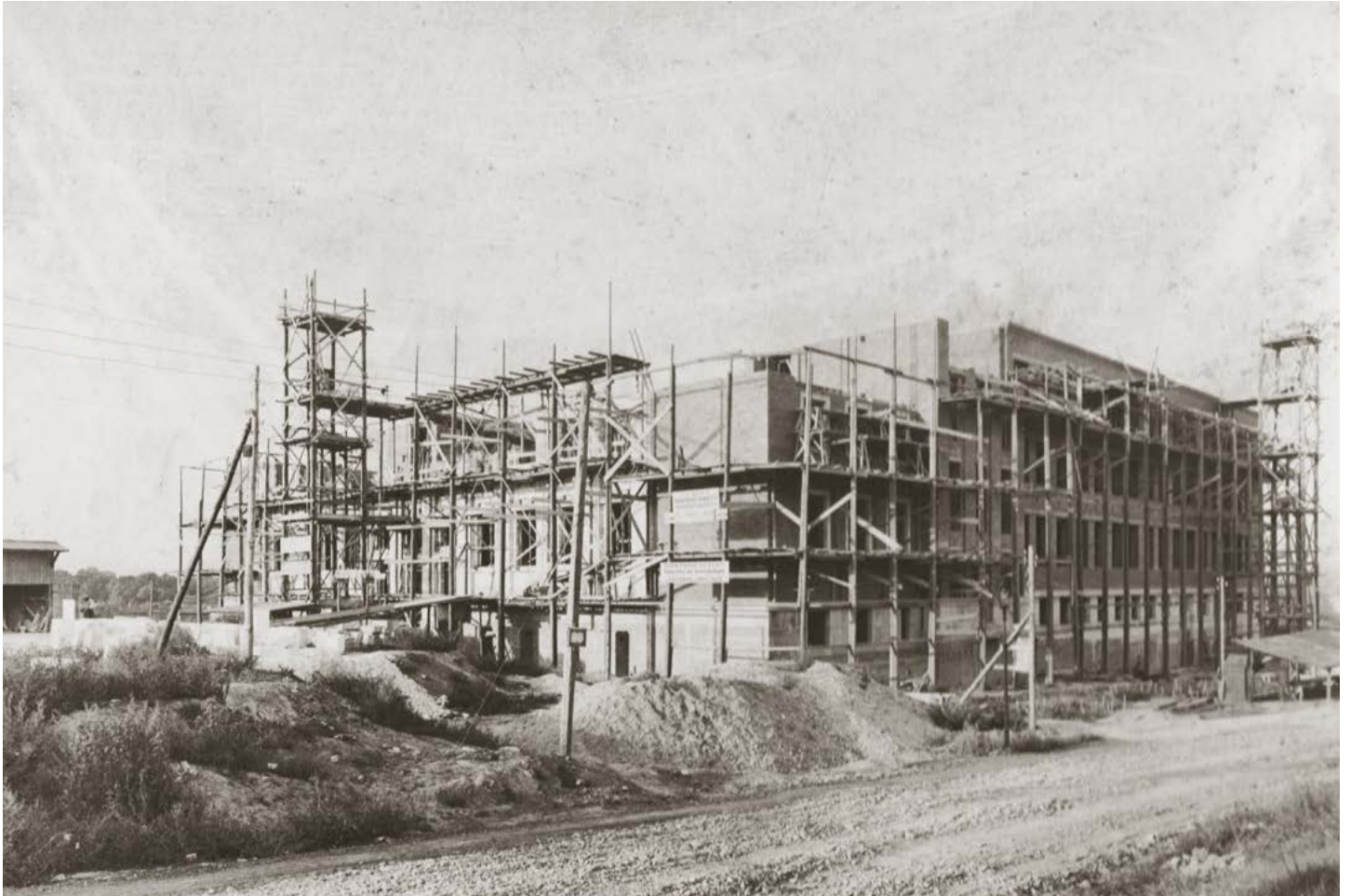
1.3 | CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING

The statutory deadline for the construction of the university buildings (1930) was not even met for the first and eventually the only building of the university complex – the Faculty of Law. Its completion was delayed by financial problems, so that in 1929, for example, the construction work did not resume until the end of June after the winter.

The first part of the building was handed over to the faculty by the construction companies at the end of 1931. It was only the north wing with thirty-one rooms, four of them being smaller lecture halls. Nevertheless, the faculty had to move into the new building at Christmas. It was pressured by the administration of the Bishop's Alumnat College, which already had other plans for their building. So, in January 1932, lectures began in the unfinished building, where construction work was still in progress. The faculty was particularly lacking large lecture rooms, situated in the eastern wing of the building. The construction companies handed over the east wing gradually during the winter semester of the academic year 1932/1933. The finishing touches continued until 1934. After the entire building was handed over, nine lecture rooms were used for teaching (including the auditorium, which, together with the cloakrooms in the entrance hall, was the last to be completed). The auditorium, also known as the Auditorium Maximum, was also used by the Rector's Office for various ceremonies. Its originally simple decoration, featuring only stained glass ceiling windows and a bust of the President of the Republic, was supplemented in 1938 by the monumental painting Prometheus Bringing Fire to Mankind.

Not only the Faculty of Law, but also the Rector's Office of the University with the Bursar's Office, and the Architecture Departments of the Czech Technical University found a new seat in the building at Veverí Street.

Despite all the difficulties accompanying the construction of the faculty building, the relocation of the faculty undeniably contributed to improving the quality of teaching. Large lecture halls, additional classrooms and offices provided sufficient comfort for teaching and academic work, although they were not fully equipped for a long time with the necessary equipment. The consequences of the economic crisis exacerbated the permanent lack of financial resources in higher education did not spare the university, either.



11 | A photograph of the Faculty of Law building under construction (turn of the 1930s)



12 | The faculty building soon after its completion in the first half of the 1930s

1.4 | THE BUILDING IN THE HANDS OF THE GESTAPO

After the German occupation, the fate of the building was mainly affected by the German secret state police (Gestapo). Immediately after 17 November 1939, when the Nazis shut down the Czech universities, Professor Worlitschek from the Brno German Technical University, followed by F. Schindler, an associate professor of the German Technical University, were appointed supervisors of the Faculty of Law. First, the German criminal police (KRIPO) expressed their interest in the faculty building – the new address being 70 Eichhorner Strasse – but soon the Gestapo took it over.

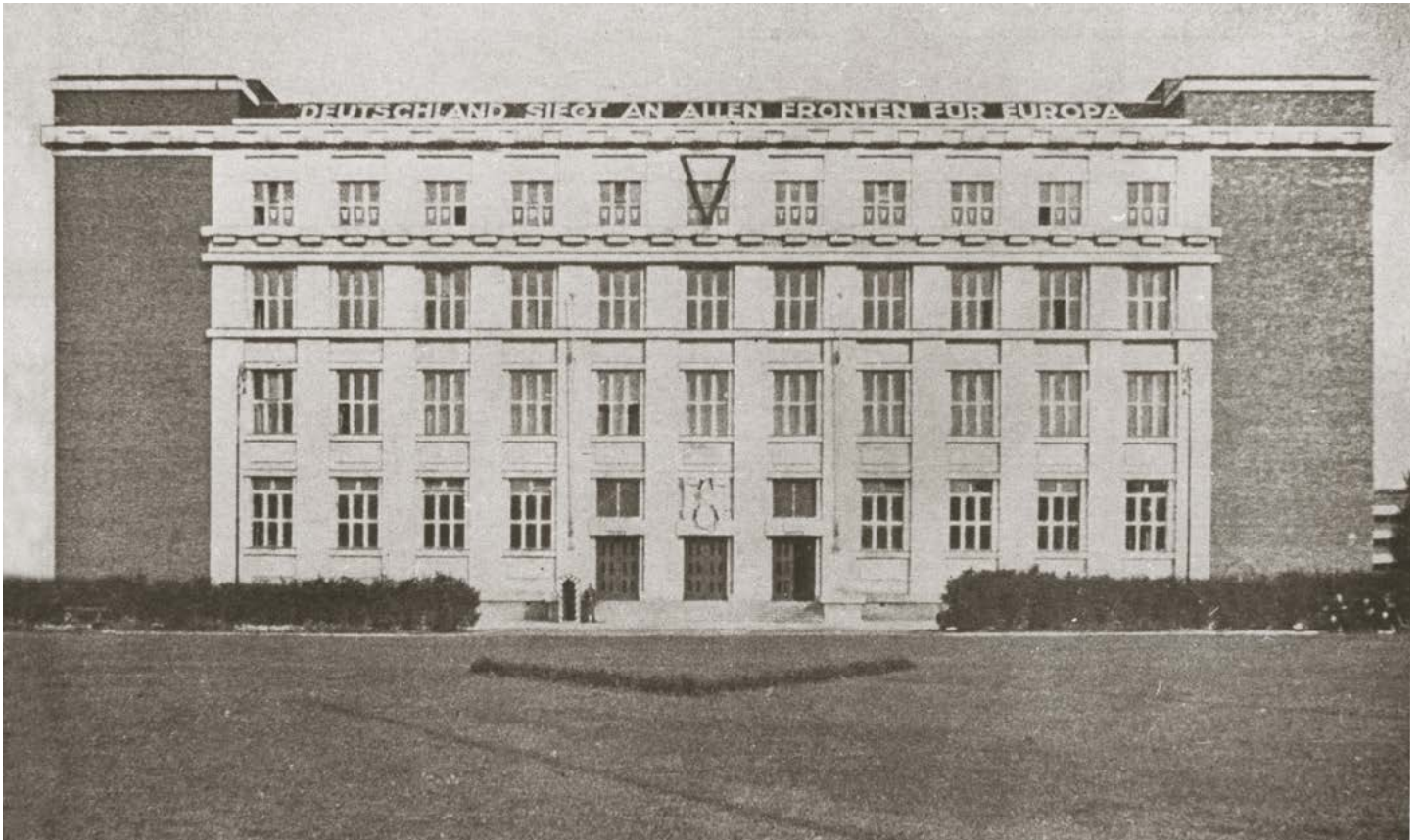
Nevertheless, the teachers of the Faculty of Law managed to save the insignia and the gold medal of T. G. Masaryk. The precious artefacts survived the war thanks to the cooperation with bank officials in the vault of the Land Bank. The determination and courage of the Czech people prevented the destruction of the large painting by Procházka and the stained glass ceiling windows of the auditorium. Two arrests – of a Czech prison guard and a student – were the price of saving the large portrait of Masaryk. However, the bust of the President was destroyed by the Nazis.

The Gestapo had the law school building reconstructed to adapt it to its needs. The existing premises were extended by adding rooms on the fourth floor. Above the entrance they installed a large Reich eagle with a swastika in its claws. The middle window in the row of new windows on the third floor was covered by a large “V” (Victoria) sign, which the Nazi occupiers used to decorate public buildings. On the roof, the inscription “*Deutschland siegt an allen Fronten für Europa*” (“Germany is winning on all fronts for Europe”) ran almost the entire length of the façade. Two large lecture halls were divided into two floors and used as workshops for prisoners. The Gestapo also divided the seminar rooms and made them into smaller offices. One of the smaller lecture halls

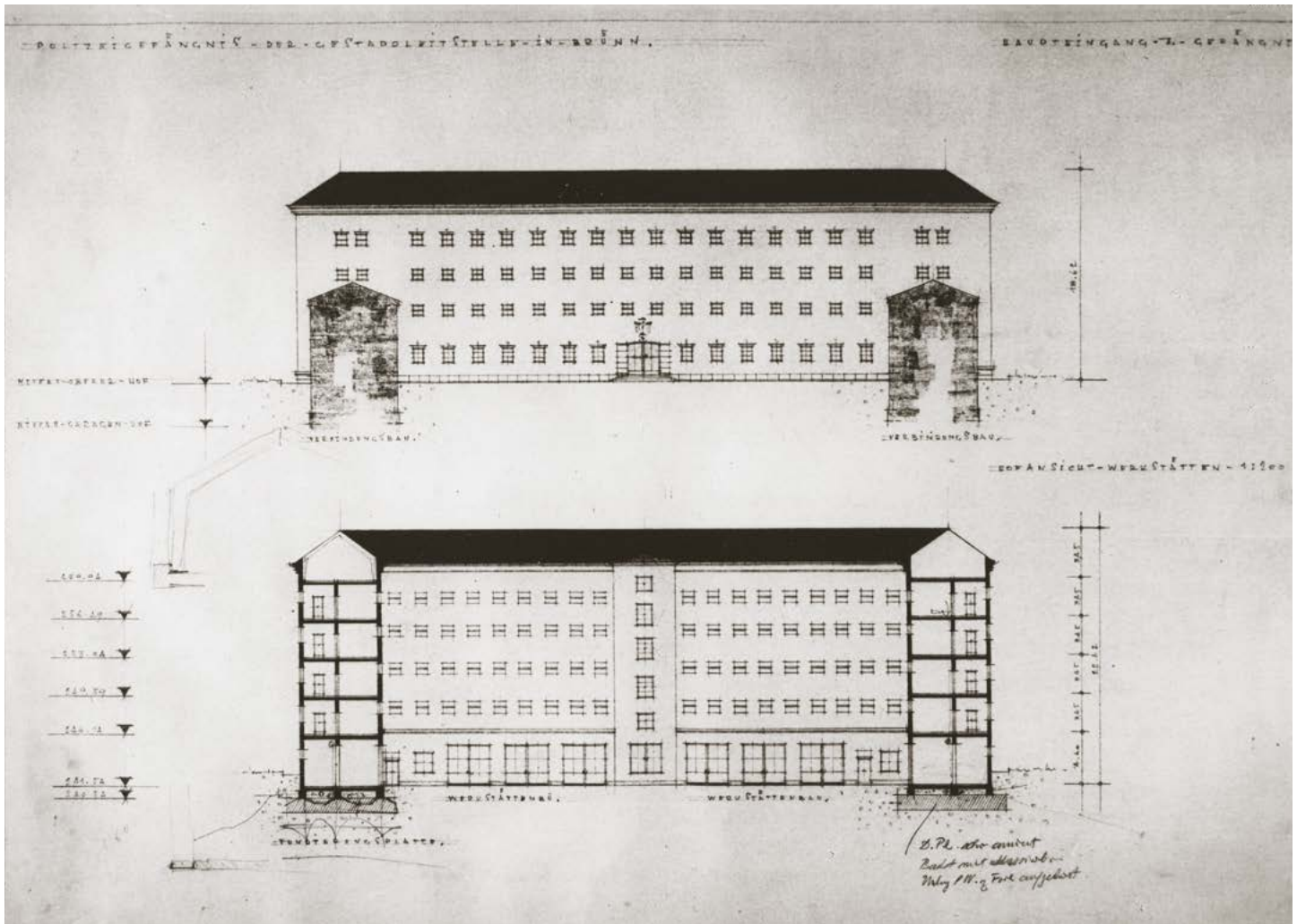
was used as the seat of the martial court. A part of the basement was converted into prison cells, from which the last prisoners were taken out on 21 April 1945. The Gestapo also set up a telephone and telegraph exchange with a teletype and radio in the building and a canteen, supplied from the pigsties and rabbit and poultry sheds situated just behind the faculty.

The converted building was officially opened on 17 December 1940. It housed all the executive offices of the Brno Gestapo. Including the staff and prison guards, more than three hundred people were employed there. In the immediate vicinity of the building, a prison connected to it was to be built in the future. However, this plan was never carried out.

The Gestapo left the building just before the arrival of the Red Army in Brno. Someone of them wrote a note in German on the wall of one of the rooms. "*Gruss an die NKWD! Wir kommen wieder – aber dann!*" ("Greeting the NKVD! We will return – but then!").



13 | The building during the Second World War with the inscription "Germany is winning on all fronts for Europe"



14 | The plans for a prison to be built in the immediate vicinity of the Gestapo building, which was to be directly connected to it by two wings so that prisoners could be transferred straight for interrogation

1.5 | THE BUILDING AFTER THE LIBERATION AND SUBSEQUENT DISSOLUTION OF THE FACULTY

After the liberation in 1945, the building of the Faculty of Law had to be adapted again to the activities of the previous users. Sadly, not only the Gestapo but also the explosion of an ammunition depot in the vicinity left their marks on the building. There was also some looting in the first moments after the liberation.

The workers first secured the building against rain by repairing the roof, temporarily sealed the windows, which then consumed about 2,000m² of glass, repaired the damaged central heating system and demolished the built-in structures and various partitions. How difficult and long-term a task the post-war reconstruction of the faculty was is evidenced by the fact that the two large amphitheatre lecture halls were not opened until the summer of 1947, and then full lighting, blackboards and teachers' desks still had to be supplied.

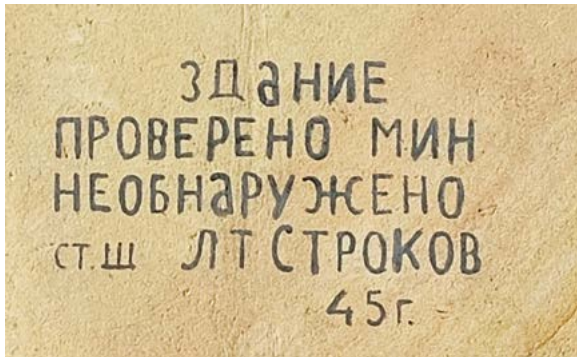
The building was also used by the Czechoslovak army and soldiers initially guarded the building. As early as 18 May 1945, the Rector's Office of Masaryk University with the Bursar's Office began to function in the building again. In the first weeks after the liberation, some institutes of the Brno University of Technology (at that time the Dr Edvard Beneš University of Technology) also returned to the building.

In 1950, the party and state authorities decided to dissolve the Faculty of Law. The main reason was a wrongly assumed lower need for lawyers. The existing students were transferred to Prague and partly to Bratislava. The ministry promised the teachers jobs at other universities, but with a few exceptions it did not fulfil its promise.

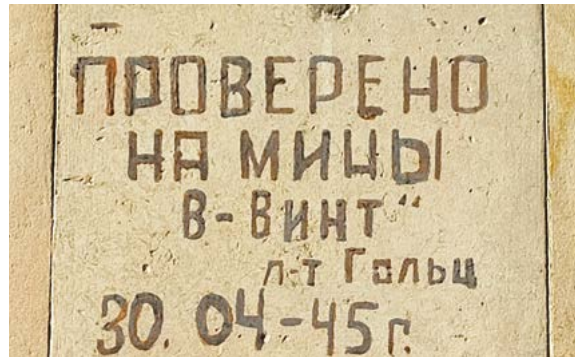
The building was acquired by the Brno University of Technology. The entire Department of Architecture and the Department of Surveying Engineering, which had been abolished in Prague, moved to the building.

In 1951, an order issued by the President of the Republic, under the influence of the worsening international situation, reorganized military higher education. As part of the reorganisation, effective from 15 August 1951, the majority of the Dr Edvard Beneš University of Technology became the Military Technical Academy based in Brno (later renamed the Antonín Zápotocký Military Technical Academy, then the Antonín Zápotocký Military Academy and after November 1989 the Military Academy), which can be considered one of the forerunners of the current University of Defence. The government dislocation commission allocated to the Academy, among other buildings, the building of the Faculty of Law where the soldiers immediately began to carry out building alterations.

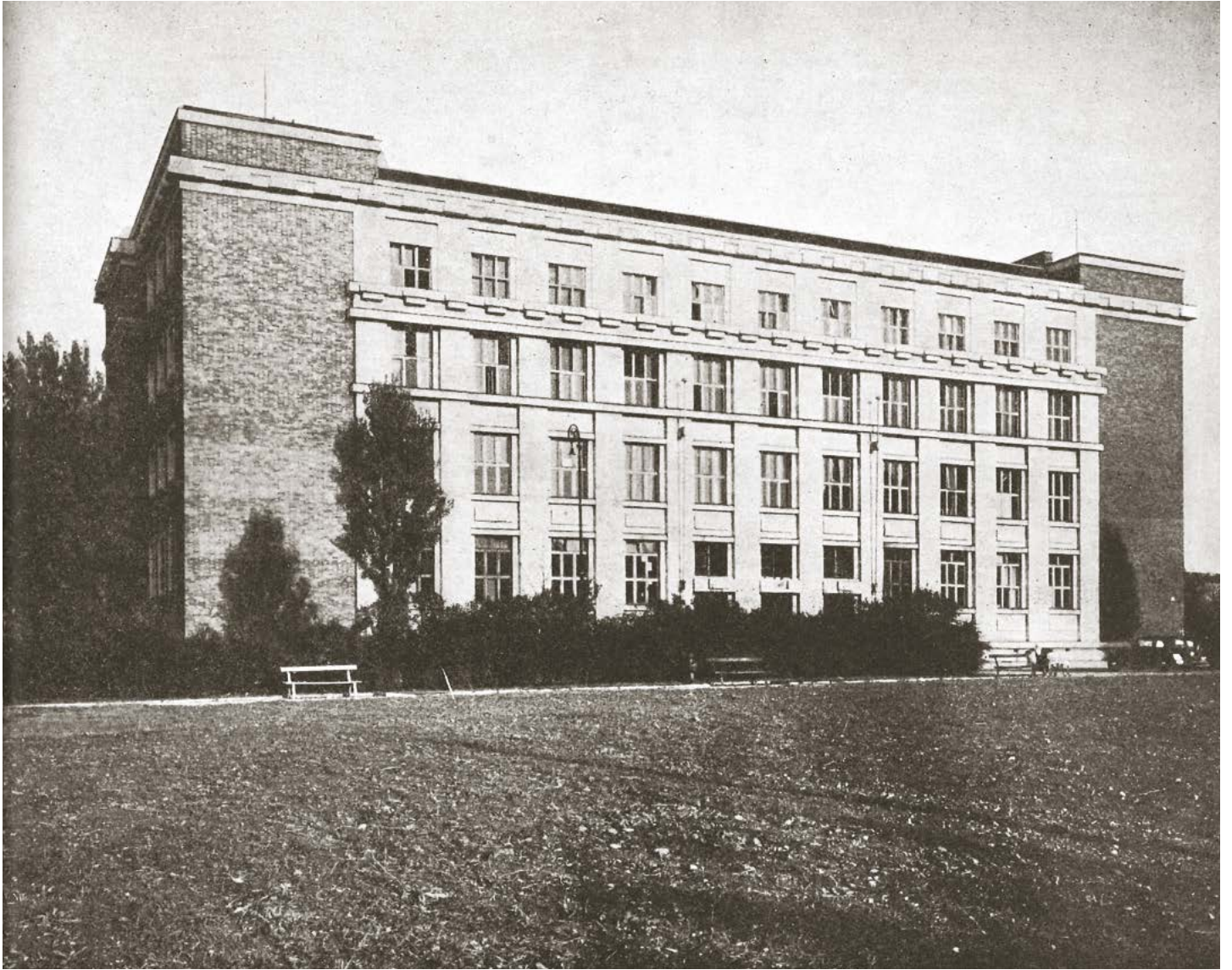
It was undeniably a positive thing in this period that from May 1958 the building of the faculty began to be protected as a monument and on 23 March 1964 it was registered as an immovable cultural monument in the state list of cultural monuments.



Building checked, no mines found.
Lieutenant Strokov; 1945



Checked for mines. ...
Lieutenant Golc; 30 April 1945



15 | The faculty building (1946)



16 | The re-installing of the painting “Prometheus” in the Auditorium Maximum (15 November 1946)



17 | The faculty building during the communist period when it was the seat of the Military Academy. Along with the clearly visible slogan “Led by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia towards the bright tomorrow of communism” on the roof, the inscription “Czechoslovak Army, a firm tool of working class power” was placed above the ground floor windows



18 | The faculty building at the turn of the 1970s



19 | The faculty building at the turn of the 1980s

1.6 | THE BUILDING RETURNED TO THE FACULTY OF LAW

After its restoration in 1969, the Faculty of Law of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, as Masaryk University was then called, did not regain its original building. After some search, it found a new seat in the building of the former Cyril and Methodius Savings Bank (now the Grandezza Hotel) on Zelný trh (then 25 February Square) in the city centre. However, rooms became available for the faculty only gradually and often with delays. In particular, there was a lack of large lecture halls, so lectures were given in various more or less suitable premises in the city.

The location of the Faculty of Law did not meet its needs, but it was only the revolutionary changes of 1989 that made it possible to relocate the Faculty to its natural seat at Veverí Street. Due to the rundown state of the building and the necessary structural modifications, it was assumed that in the academic year 1990/1991 classes would begin only in selected classrooms and two lecture rooms, which, however, first had to be equipped with the basic facilities. For the time being, only a meeting room was set up for the teachers, so they had to commute to classes from Zelný trh. However, the implementation of all these plans was delayed and the displacement of the Military Academy was only finished in 1993.

The individual departments of the Faculty of Law moved to Veverí Street as it was possible. The most complicated operation was the relocation of the library, for which the necessary space in the basement of the building had to be adapted first. In the first half of the 1990s, a bookstore, now closed, was set up on the ground floor of the faculty building, and a canteen in the basement.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Faculty of Law in Brno sought to return to the interwar traditions of legal science. In addition to holding occasional conferences, in 1991 the faculty managed to acquire the portrait of the first MU rector and one of the faculty deans, Karel Engliš. Later it received a gift of bronze busts of Thomas G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš which the conservationists sensitively incorporated into the interior of the entrance hall.

In the 1990s, a major renovation of the auditorium was carried out together with a new expert revision of Antonín Procházka's painting *Prometheus Bringing Fire to Mankind* and an organ was installed. In the mid-1990s, when the faculty's budget was rather tight, no major renovations were carried out except for modifications to the auditorium and the library and its adjoining study room. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1990s, a relatively good level and equipment of teaching spaces had been achieved. A number of lecture halls, teachers' offices and administrative staff offices were renovated.

In 2010, a bronze statue of the second Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš was installed in front of the entrance to the faculty. Organizations associated with the forcibly transferred Germans opposed the placement of the statue in front of the building.

Among the major building modifications carried out after 2000, the reconstruction of the library and the first floor of the building should be mentioned. The extensively renovated and greatly expanded library was inaugurated by the university and faculty representatives in 2015. The renovation of the first floor of the building came in the second half of the second decade. It newly housed a mock courtroom and a café.

In May 2018, a survey revealed the critical condition of the ceiling of the large lecture halls on the first floor. The costly refurbishment resulted in the creation of modern learning spaces that meet current health, safety and education requirements, including the provision of sufficient capacity for disabled students. At the same time, this renovation was also an opportunity to remove the remaining insensitive interventions and structurally get closer to the original appearance of the lecture halls.



20 | The faculty building (1994)



21 | The faculty building (1997)



22 | The faculty building (2012)



23 | The faculty building (2012)



24 | The faculty building (2012)

PARTS OF THE BUILDING



2.1 | ENTRANCE HALL

From the spacious entrance hall of the faculty building, which includes a cloakroom that functions only on ceremonial occasions, one enters the auditorium, with corridors of the slightly elevated ground floor and staircases to the floors and basements running along its sides. Before the completion of the auditorium, it was also used for the inauguration of university officials. After the Velvet Revolution and the return of the building to the Faculty of Law, several interventions changed its appearance.

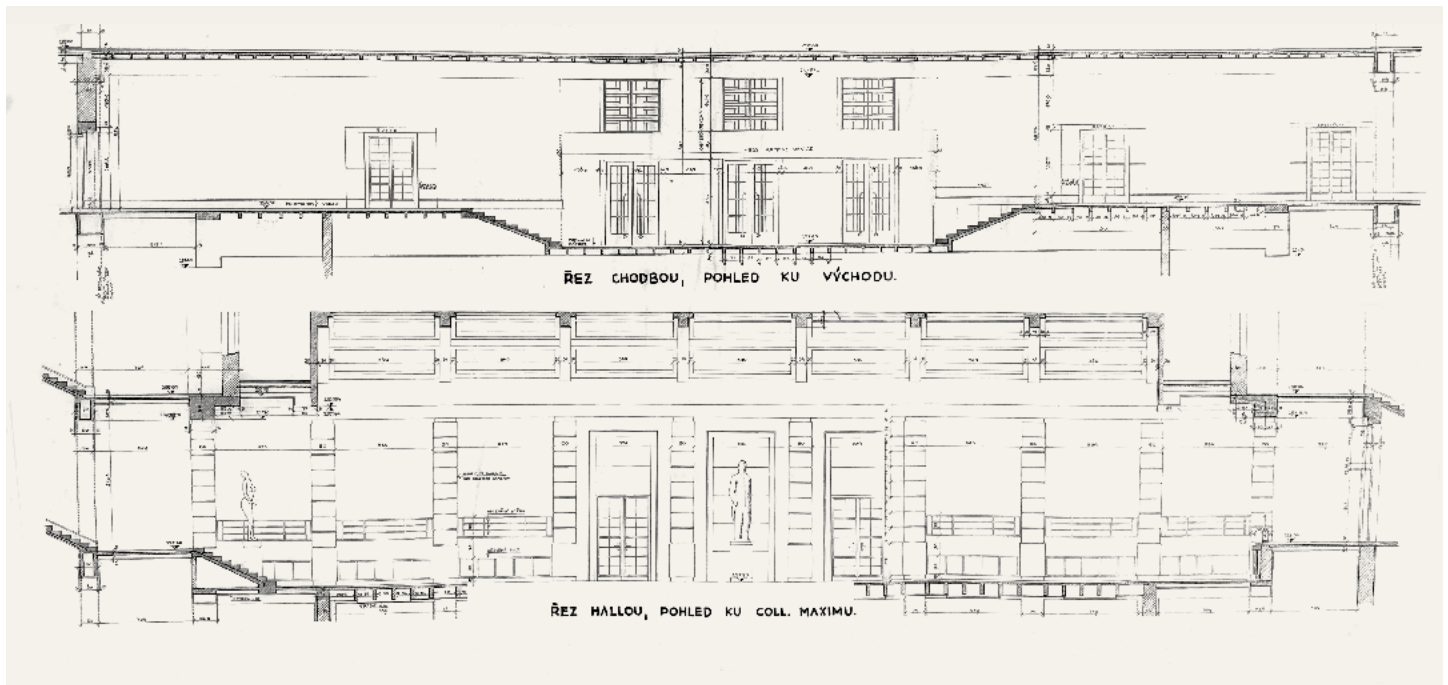
In October 1994, a sculpture by academic sculptor Vladimír Preclík entitled “The Code” was placed in front of the entrance to the auditorium. The wooden object was started by V. Preclík already in 1968. Originally, it was to become part of the decoration of the House of People of the Czechoslovak Parliament (Federal Assembly). However, after the Soviet occupation, the Czechoslovak Parliament refused to accept the sculpture. The reason was that the artist was labelled a person hostile to the communist regime. So, when this work by a leading Czech artist did not find a place where laws are made, years later it was at least used where students are taught how to apply them.

In May of the same year, two memorial plaques to the victims of Nazism were unveiled in the entrance hall in the presence of distinguished guests from the judiciary. The first one is dedicated to the victims among the teachers and students of the Brno Faculty of Law. The second plaque commemorates the dark fate of the building during the Nazi occupation. By installing them, the faculty has paid an old debt, because since 1945 no reminder of the atrocities committed there during the Second World War has been placed on the building.

In 1995, the aforementioned busts of Presidents Tomáš G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš were installed at the right-side stairs of the entrance hall.



25 | The entrance hall (1933)



26 | A design by architect Alois Dryák, a cross-section of the corridor with a view of the exit of the building and a cross-section of the entrance hall with a view of the entrance to the Auditorium Maximumum (1929)



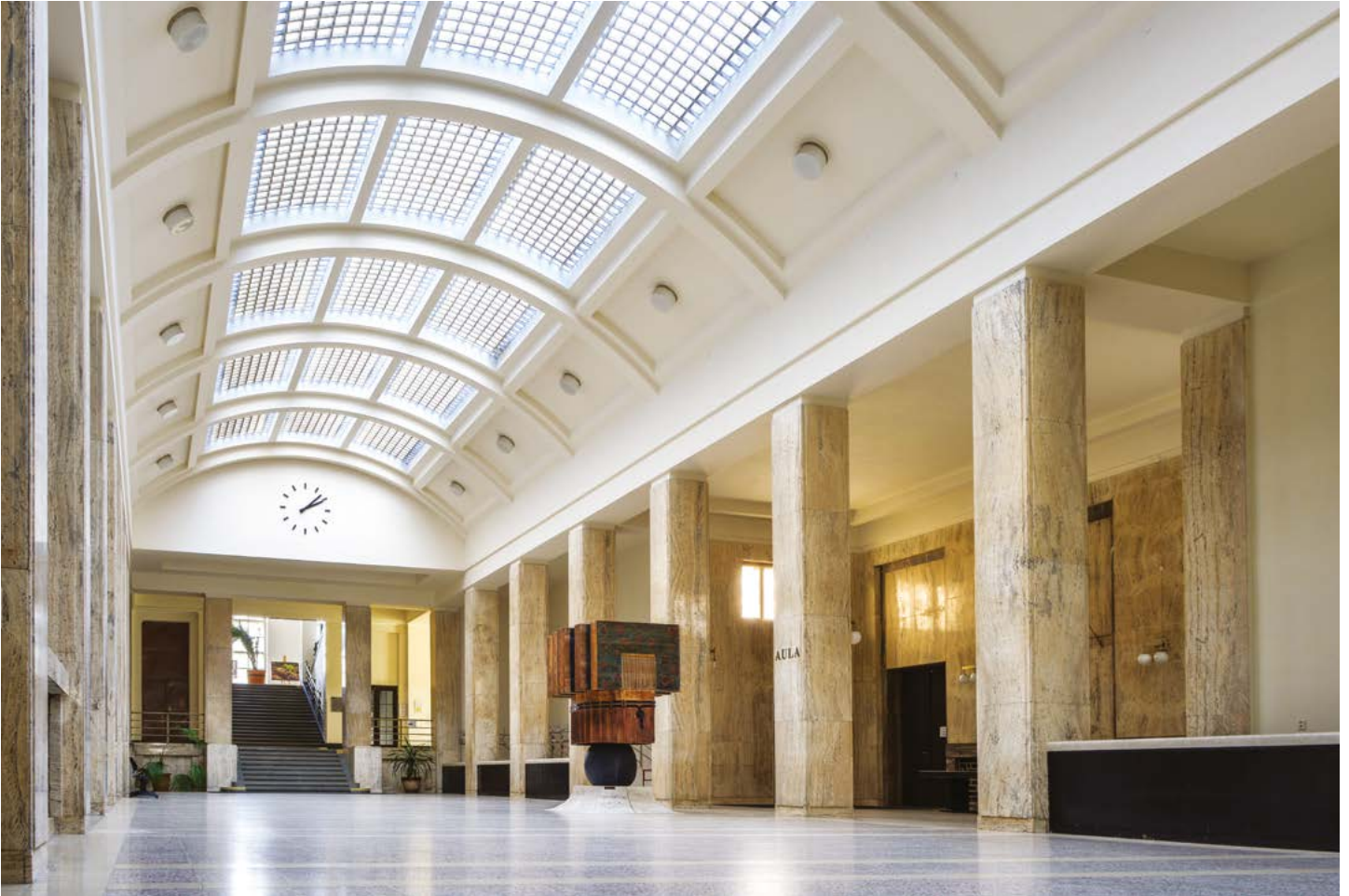
27 | A view of the entrance hall (April 1990)



28 | The entrance hall and its reconstruction (1994)



29 | The entrance hall with the statue „The Code“ (2012)



30 | The entrance hall with the statue "The Code" (2012)



31 |
The statue "The Code" (2012)



32 |
The busts of Tomáš G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš; an integral part of the entrance hall since the mid-1990s

2.2 | AUDITORIUM (AUDITORIUM MAXIMUM – TODAY THE KAREL ENGLIŠ GREAT AUDITORIUM)

The auditorium was completed as the last part of the building. It was originally intended as a large lecture room. It only became the venue for university ceremonies because the planned construction of the separate Rector's Office building was not carried out. Therefore, the austere spacious room was originally decorated only with stained glass ceiling windows by František Kysela (1881-1941) entitled "*Celebration of outstanding personalities of the Czech nation*". This large-scale work consists of 100 panels measuring 407 x 58cm and occupies 62m² of space. It was originally created for the decoration of the Czechoslovak Pavilion in Cologne in 1928. The author followed the type of medieval stained glass windows. It is rich not only in the extensive colour range but also in the texture of the glass surface. Alongside figurative motifs, it includes almost two dozen quotations from the works of important figures of Czech history: the religious reformer Jan Hus, the educator Jan Amos Comenius, the historian and politician František Palacký, the writer and politician Karel Havlíček Borovský, and the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk.

In 1938, the monumental painting *Prometheus Bringing Fire to Mankind*, which covers a substantial part of the front wall, became the artistic and ideological dominant of the auditorium. Its author was the painter, graphic artist and illustrator Antonín Procházka (1882-1945), who in his works, in addition to form, also placed great importance on the ideological content, which is also strongly reflected in this flagship of his figurative work. He found his theme in Greek mythology choosing Prometheus as the central figure. From the myth he used Prometheus' starry moment when, despite the opposition of the god Zeus, he decided to return fire to people. He also incorporated into the scene the allegory of the then existing faculties and the fact that Prometheus taught people a number of skills. Procházka did not complete the work until the end of 1938, which was already in the sultry atmosphere of the Second Republic. The opening ceremony, together with the presentation of the painting to the university, took place on 16 December 1938.

After the building was occupied by the Gestapo, the two works decorating the auditorium were endangered with destruction. The stained glass ceiling windows by František Kysela were saved by glassmakers. Thanks to them, they survived the war in the air-raid shelter under the Museum of Decorative Arts. The painting by the academic painter Antonín Procházka, installed only shortly before the occupation, was ordered by the Nazis to be cut out of its frame and removed from the auditorium. The scaffolders did not destroy it, but stored it under junk in the cellar and thus saved it. In its place, the Reich eagle with a swastika and a painting of Adolf Hitler began to dominate the building's representative space. Procházka's painting, however, suffered greatly in the cellar. The "restoration", or rather repainting, of the large work was undertaken by his wife Linka, because A. Procházka died in June 1945. She did not finish her work until 1948. When the building housed the Military Academy, the painting was covered with a red canvas on which political slogans were placed. However, even before the Velvet Revolution, restorers Kateřina Knorová and Jan Knor professionally restored the painting. After the war, the stained glass windows by F. Kysela were also installed in the auditorium. In 1970, however, the management of the Military Academy had them removed from the ceiling of the auditorium in two stages.

After 1989, the auditorium required major reconstruction. Procházka's painting underwent further renovation, the stained glass ceiling windows were expensively restored and reinstalled, an organ was added to the auditorium and the seating furniture was replaced. The ceremonial reopening of the auditorium took place in the presence of distinguished guests as part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Masaryk University, which took place in early November 1994. On the grounds that it was a historically valuable and historically protected interior, the auditorium was no longer used for teaching but served as "*an exclusive space for representative events of the university and faculties (anniversaries, graduations, concerts, etc.)*". It was used primarily for matriculation and graduation ceremonies for students of all faculties of the university, graduation ceremonies for honorary doctors and the awarding of honours. In exceptional cases, it could also be rented to external organisations, but always only for ceremonies or cultural events.

In 2022, the Auditorium Maximum was renamed the Karel Engliš Great Auditorium.



33 |

The celebration of the 85th birthday of the President of the Republic, Tomáš G. Masaryk, in the Auditorium Maximum (6 March 1935)



34 |

Auditorium Maximum – the inauguration of rector Dobroslav Krejčí (21 November 1935). Compared to the previous photo from March 1935, the original bust of T. G. M. was replaced by another one

35 |

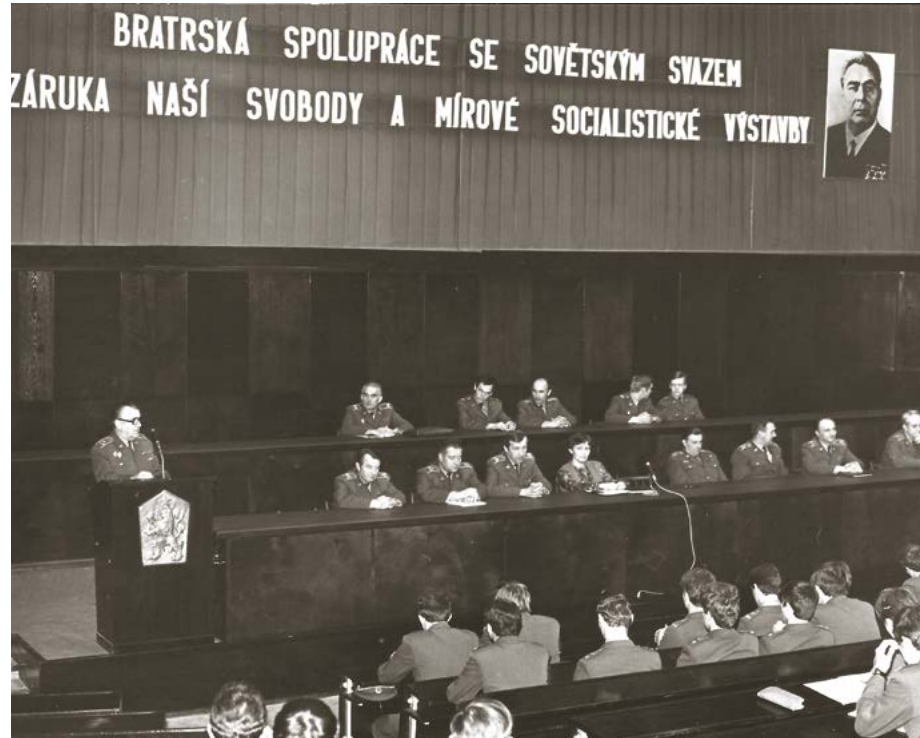
Auditorium Maximum - one of the last graduation ceremonies before the shutdown of the Czech universities. Since it took place at the time of the Protectorate, the bust of T.G.M. had to be removed (1939)



36 |

Auditorium Maximum - the graduation ceremony of František Weyr and Karel Engliš as honorary doctors of Masaryk University (21 April 1947)





37 |

Auditorium Maximumum in the
period of communism

38 |
Auditorium Maximum -
a graduation ceremony
of students in the first
half of the 1990s

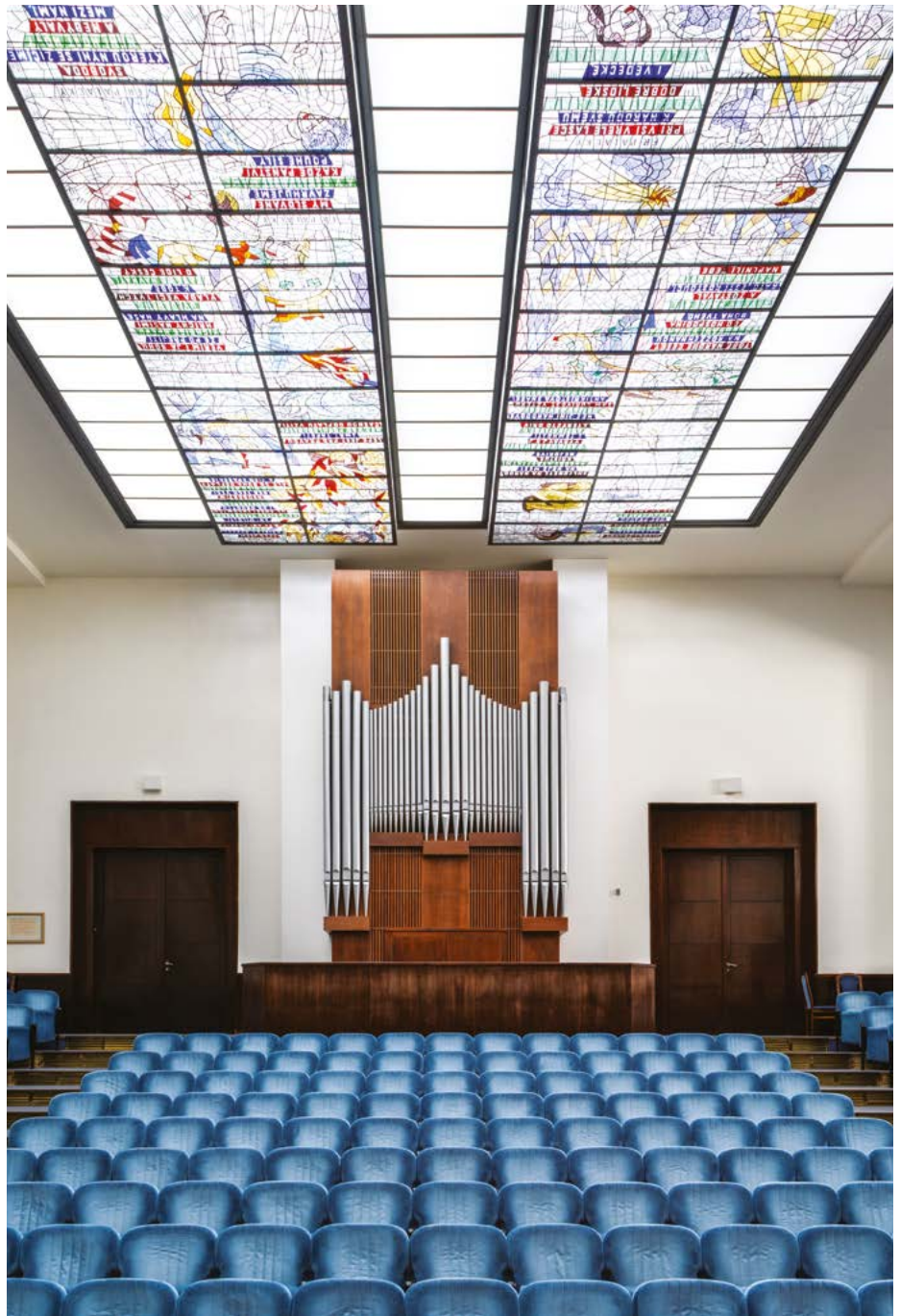


39 |
Auditorium Maximum -
a ceremonial gathering on the
occasion of the 75th anniversary
of the founding of MU
(27 January 1994)





40 | Auditorium Maximum - a graduation ceremony (2012)



41 | Auditorium Maximumum - the entrance doors and the organ, on the ceiling stained glass windows by František Kysela (2012)

2.3 | GESTAPO BAR

When the Gestapo used the faculty building during the Nazi occupation, it set up a bar in a separate rear area of the canteen. In 1943, it was “decorated” with statues, reliefs and obscene caricatures with the faces of the Brno Gestapo men, the work of imprisoned Czech artists who managed to incorporate a hidden meaning there. One of the paintings depicted Fatal Sisters, officially as Gestapo auxiliaries. But they were cutting the thread of life right above the heads of the Gestapo men. The Gestapo dining room also contained part of the valuable veneer of Macassar ebony, which was originally used for the wall in the dining room of the famous Villa Tugendhat in Brno. In the bar, the veneer of this rare Indonesian wood was used to make the panelling. In 2011, it was returned to its original place in Villa Tugendhat to be used in the reconstruction of the original curved wall which was designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

After the liberation, the bar room was locked and sometimes referred to as the “ Faculty of Law Museum”. The university and faculty officials were showing it to various guests ranging from Brno factory workers to foreign delegations. The management of the faculty had the “decoration” of the bar photographed several times. Then the paintings were covered with ordinary paint and the space began to be used as a canteen.



42 | The decoration of the Gestapo canteen with scenes from Old Germanic mythology in the form of the so-called witches' banquet (now the students' canteen)



43 | A statue of a girl by academic sculptor Julius Pelikán as a symbol of solstice, which was placed in the front of the Gestapo bar

2.4 | LIBRARY

In the pre-war period, the library collection was built up by the individual departments (history of law, state law, and private law) and the books were placed separately in the rooms of the individual departments and in the professors' offices.

During the occupation, the collections of the departments suffered greatly, especially by the destruction of the catalogues and the theft of the cabinets used to store the books. Some books were appropriated by the Gestapo, but others were moved several times and endangered with complete destruction. Luckily, most of them returned to the faculty in 1945. The professorial staff then decided to merge the libraries of individual departments into one unified law library with a name catalogue.

After the dissolution of the Faculty of Law in 1950, its library collection was to be transferred to the Provincial Library and the University Library. There were also plans to hand them over to the Prague Faculty of Law or even to liquidate them. In the end, the books were deposited in the castle of Brtnice near Jihlava. They were returned to the faculty after its reopening in 1969. As the so-called "old collection" they became an essential and still important part of the faculty library.

After the Velvet Revolution and the relocation of the faculty to its historic building at Veveří Street, the lending library and library storerooms remained in their original place for some time. The new premises for the library in the basement of the faculty building had to be adapted first, as they did not meet the required standards in terms of statics and technology.

After several years of reconstruction, the library was officially opened on 17 November 1996. A major improvement was the availability of a large part of the books in the so-called free choice zone so that readers could see them without having to ask for them in advance. Lockers for storing clothes and bags were installed outside the library entrance. The library was also equipped with anti-theft devices.

Another major renovation of the library took place between 2013 and 2015, when the gym was closed and the vacant space was provided to the library. The removal of the gymnasium allowed the library to significantly expand its free choice zone. It offers students and other visitors plenty of books and journals and places to study equipped with computers both in the spacious study room and in the intimate setting of separate enclosed boxes. Selected titles are gradually being digitised. Today, it is a matter of course that the study areas are equipped with computers. Visitors also can make photocopies and have relaxation areas at their disposal. Thanks to these modifications and regular additions to the library collection, it has become one of the largest and most modern law libraries in Central Europe.

When workers of a construction company surprisingly came across the foundation stone of the building during renovation work in 2014, after being properly cleaned and repaired it was placed close to the spot where it was ceremoniously laid in 1928. Being situated in a special glass display case in the centre of the renovated faculty library, it has become a kind of symbolic heart of the library and of the entire faculty.

44 |
The library –
free choice of books (1996-2013)



45 |
The library –
the study room (2006)





46 | The library depository located in the basement of the building (1996-2013)



47 |
The library – the main study room
after reconstruction in 2015



48 |
The library – free choice of books
after reconstruction in 2015



49 | The library - the main study room after reconstruction in 2015

2.5 | CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to briefly state that the building at 70 Veveří Street is the only realized part of the ambitious Academic Square project and that it has been used for educating new lawyers for ninety years.

But it was not always that simple. The last century was turbulent and this was reflected in the fate of both the Czech legal education and the building that was originally intended for it and now serves it again. As a result of major political upheavals, it was used by someone else for half of that time. From the shutdown of the Czech universities in 1939 until the spring of 1945, the Brno Gestapo was housed in the building and turned it into a prison and a martial court from which the convicted usually went for their execution. From the beginning of the 1950s to the early 1990s, it served educational purposes but for a newly established military academy.

Since the end of the 1930s, the building has been subject to frequent additions and demolitions. The façade and the surrounding area have also undergone major changes. On the first floor, the workshops set up by the Nazis became large lecture halls again after the war, and also other rooms, including the Nazi courtroom, returned to their original purpose. The painting of the academic painter Antonín Procházka, *Prometheus Bringing Fire to Mankind*, removed by the Nazis (and later covered up by the Communists for a change), once again became the dominant feature of the auditorium. The valuable stained glass windows by František Kysela suffered due to several removals and subsequent installations. On the other hand, new features that could not have been found in the pre-war building include the offices on the third floor, the canteen, the library, the mock courtroom, the café and the decoration of the entrance hall.

The Promethean painting and the stained glass ceiling windows in the auditorium bear the legacy of humanism and important personalities of Czech history, which corresponds with the ideas on which Masaryk University and its Faculty of Law were founded and for which they declare their support. However, in connection with the fate of the building during the Nazi occupation, it is also a memento that the fire brought by Prometheus was not only used by people for their own benefit but it was also abused by them – as when they threw into the flames one of those whose words decorate the auditorium – Master Jan Hus.



TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE FACULTY BUILDING

50 |

The meeting room No. 109 in the 1990s.
The photograph is from the conference
“Current Issues of Czech and Czechoslovak
Constitutionalism” (1993)



51 |

The meeting room No. 109 (1990s)





52 |
The meeting room No. 109
at present

53 |
The gallery of the faculty deans
in the meeting room No. 110



54 |
The meeting room No. 110
at present





55 | The small meeting room No. 043 (2017)

56 |

The Dean's office – the photo shows František Čáda (1945)



57 |

The Dean's office – the photo shows Minister of Foreign Affairs Josef Zieleniec and Dean Zdeňka Gregorová (1994)





58 |

The Dean's office – the photo shows members of Dean Josef Bejček's board (1995).



59 |

The Dean's office
No. 104A (2022)

60 |
The large lecture room No. 140
on the second floor (1998)



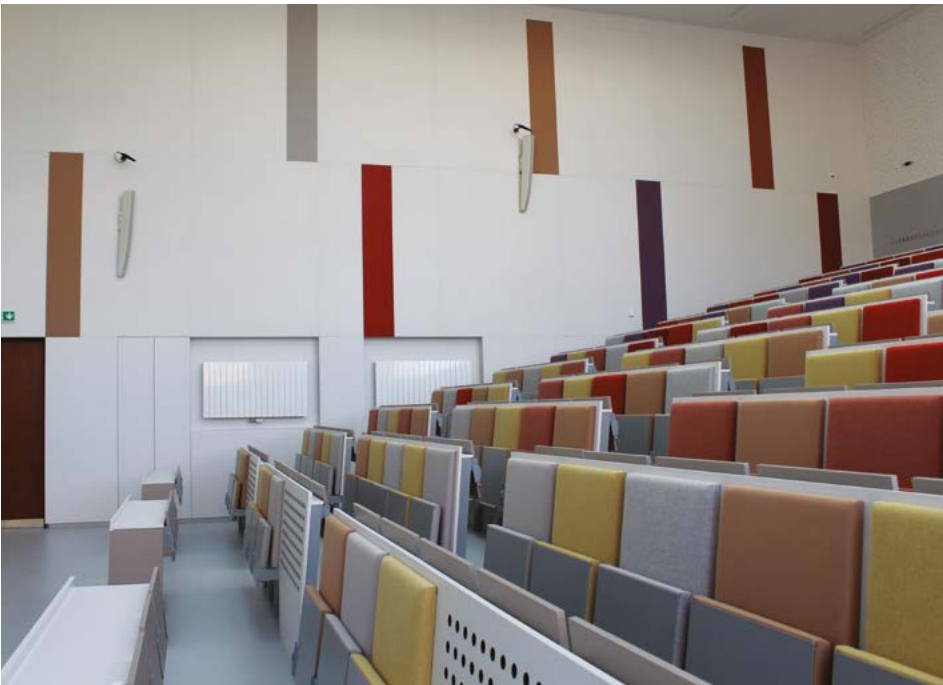
61 |
The large lecture room No. 140
on the second floor (2017)





62 |

The large lecture room No. 140
during reconstruction (2020)



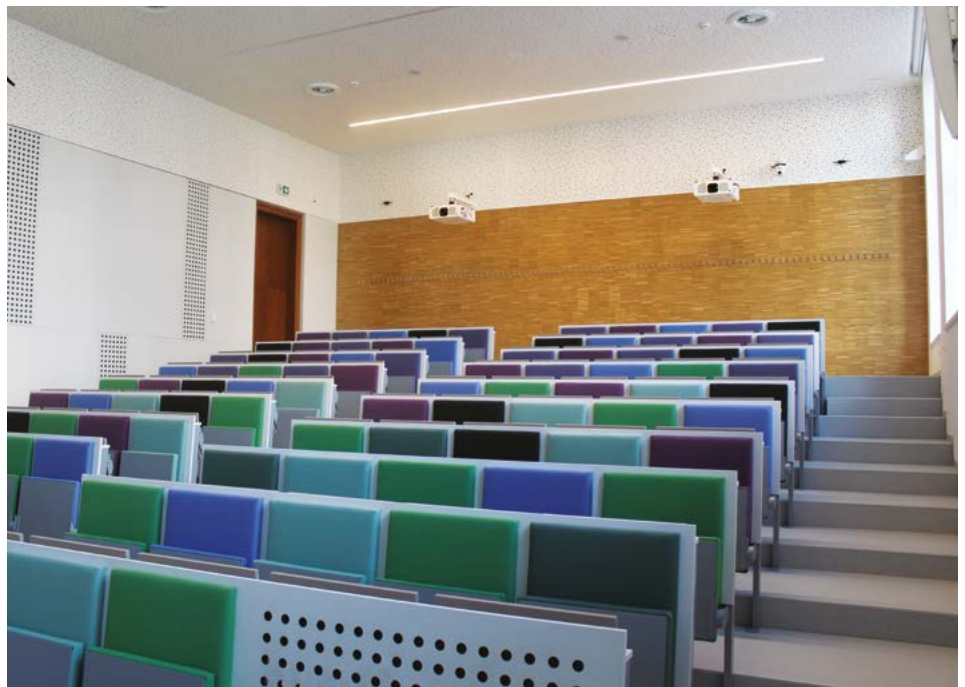
63 |

The large lecture room No. 140
after reconstruction (2021)

64 | Stabilization of the lecture room No. 034 ceiling during reconstruction (2018)



65 | The lecture room No. 034 after reconstruction (2021)





66 |

The seminar room No. 011 and its equipment in 2006 when it was used for language teaching, nowadays it is used as a cloakroom



67 |

The lecture room No. 133 (2013)

68 |

The former gymnasium which served as a lecture room for some time (2013)



69 |

The seminar room No. 040 (2017)





70 |
The seminar room No. 041 (2017)

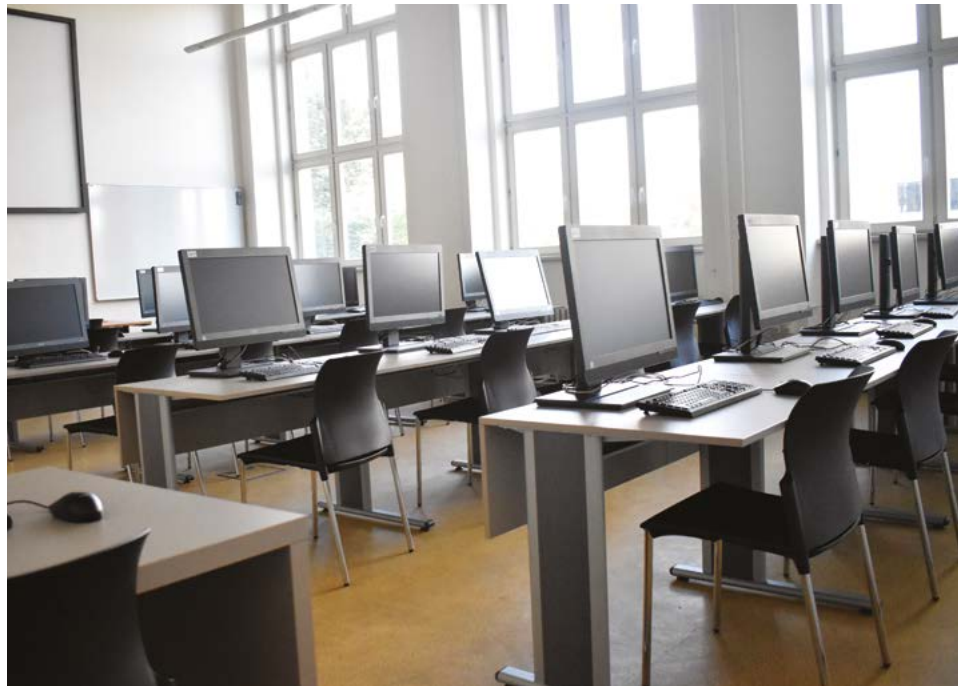


71 |
The seminar room No. 038 (2017)

72 |
The computer room No. 024 (1998)



73 |
The computer room No. 020 (2019)





74 |

During the Second World War
the Gestapo canteen, today the
students' canteen



75 |

The reconstructed students'
canteen (2022)

76 |
The corridor of one of the upper floors
of the southern wing of the building
(April 1990)



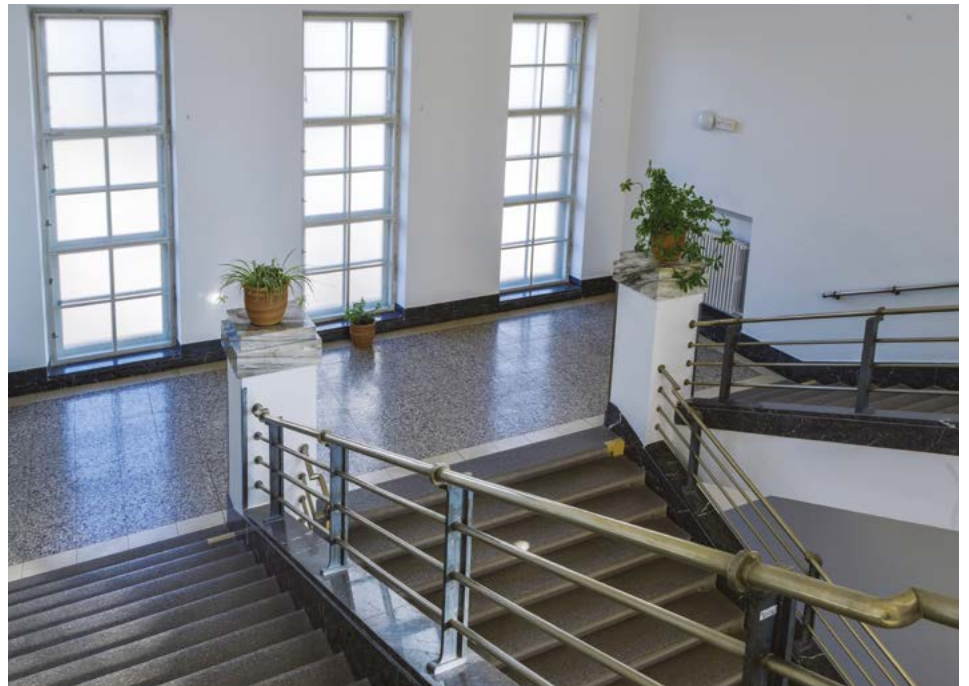


The corridor on the first floor (2021)

78 |
The area outside the large lecture
rooms on the first floor (2021)



79 |
The staircase (2021)





80 |

The office of PhD students No. 400 on the fifth floor (2012), now the office of the Judicial Studies Institute



81 |

The corridor on the third floor with the offices of the Department of Civil Law and the Department of Civil Procedure (2021)



82 |
New skylight construction
above the reconstructed large
lecture room No. 140 (2022)



83 |

Spaces above the stained glass windows on the ceiling of Auditorium maxima (2022)



84 |

Spaces above the entrance hall (2022)

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