The Psychiatric Hospital, Cerveny Dvur, South Bohemia

‘The historic Maurizovna: a new family therapy unit’

The setting of the hospital is the magnificent chateau and park of Cerveny Dvur, which were once the summer residence of the Schwarzenberg family. When the family left in 1947 these passed to the state.

Within the park lies the ‘Watchman’s Cottage’ or ‘Maurizovna’; an important feature that became ruinous in the 1950s. The Friends of Czech Heritage together with the hospital management identified the restoration of the ‘Maurizovna’ as a potential volunteer led project in 2010. By this time the building was a shell with only the walls remaining.

However, there is no point in restoring a building unless it has a use. The hospital had need of a therapy unit where broken family relationships arising from an addiction might start to be rebuilt. The restored ‘Maurizovna’ would be an ideal quiet location where the healing process might begin.

Since 2011 The Friends have organized working parties of UK volunteers who in conjunction with the hospital have steadily rebuilt the ‘Maurizovna’. This has included the replacement of the roof and attic floor funded by The Friends. But there is now little left for volunteers to do and the remainder of the work must be carried out by professional craftsmen. The partners are therefore seeking funding for the completion of the project.
The Psychiatric Hospital

Founded in 1966 the hospital is the only facility of its type in the Czech Republic specializing in drug and alcohol dependence and pathological gambling.

It offers short and medium term treatment based on a complex structure, which responds to each patients particular needs. In addition it provides detoxification and family therapy.

The emphasis of the programme is on community therapy and responsible patient involvement in an inspiring environment with the aim of the patient returning to a fulfilled life in the community.

The hospital has a high success rate and is very well regarded in both specialist and lay circles and amongst patients. The 109 bed spaces are always full.

The future strategy of the hospital is always under review and this is being successfully implemented with the aim of having the treatment respond to modern psychiatric practice and ideas.

The National Heritage Institute

The NPU is the guardian of the Czech historic building estate and apart from having numerous buildings within its care it is responsible for providing support to the owners of buildings both in public and private ownership.

The South Bohemia branch of the NPU in Ceske Budejovice has the responsibility for caring for historic monuments in this part of the Czech Republic and this includes the chateau and park at Cerveny Dvur.

Following years of abuse and neglect and since the founding of the psychiatric hospital the NPU has worked alongside the hospital to restore and conserve the building and the park whilst at the same time acknowledging the needs of the patients. Steadily the chateau and park with its features have been conserved.

The NPU sees its role not only as helping to care for the estate but to use the surroundings as part of the therapy and as an educational resource not only for the patients but the general public who are encouraged to explore the park.

The Friends of Czech Heritage

Founded in 2007 The Friends of Czech Heritage is a British charity based in London, which is devoted to helping the conservation and restoration of historic buildings, their surroundings and artefacts in the Czech Republic.

The Friends is run entirely by volunteers and has no paid officers. It relies on subscriptions, donations and the income from events for its work.

The Friends does two things: it gives small grants to help promote restoration projects in their early stages and organizes volunteer working parties, which utilize the long standing tradition for volunteering in the UK.

Through its activities The Friends aims to help promote and encourage an awareness of the their heritage amongst the Czech population.
Since the restoration began in 2011 volunteer working parties arranged by The Friends of Czech Heritage have contributed nearly 600 man-days to the project and they have given grants totaling £19,000.00 towards the replacement of the roof and attic floor.

The hospital has also contributed by providing accommodation for the volunteers and materials and supervision for the work.

Full construction details for the completion of the work have been drawn up and from these a detailed cost analysis prepared.

The costs reflect the remoteness of the building and the need to meet the current high standards required by a modern hospital building.

The budgeted cost to complete this project is £125,000 or Kč 3,750,000.
‘giving historic buildings a new life’