

NEW FUNCTIONS OF THE OLD FACTORY CHIMNEYS

Martin VONKA

Czech Technical University in Prague, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Thákurova 7/2077, 166 29 Praha, Czech Republic, martin.vonka@fsv.cvut.cz

Summary

The Czech Republic was the most industrialized area of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so it can show off not only by a large number of chimneys, but even by the most sophisticated chimneys, by the quality of their architecture, which often surpassed the purpose and function.

Today are old chimneys witnessing a historical turning point. Industry in its traditional form declined and chimneys together with its factory silently watching the transformation of land from the traditional manufacturing to logistics. And one question arises. Will this magnificent heritage survive our present time, which is often unregulated and economic interests affected cleaning the land from factories?

Text of the paper shows examples of real options and ways how unnecessary chimneys can get a new function and that their demolition is not the only possible solution.

Keywords: chimney, industrial, factory, heritage, conversion, regeneration

1 Introduction

Only towers of churches and cathedrals towered from the horizon of the countryside to the early 19th century. In the 19th century church towers began to gradually be supplemented by industrial verticals – smokestacks, which, unlike the call to prayer, call to work and to build material values. The image of our towns and villages got a new dominants, which sometimes exceeded the previous buildings. Skyline of human settlements began to change significantly (Fig. 1).

There is one main function of a chimney and that is exhausting smoke. But for many owners have their chimney another, equally important functions – esthetic and representative. The chimney was from time immemorial a symbol that is visible from a distance and shows "there are people working here and there are created material values".

Old chimneys are designed usually with the same thoroughness and attention to detail as the other adjacent factory buildings. The chimney is a symbol of prosperity of the factory and its owner. Each chimney is due to its builders, its architecture and height unique and has its own unique charm (Fig. 2).

But now the old factory chimneys often lose the original functions and new features are picked. The destiny of the chimneys is directly linked to the destiny of the factories. After closing a factory, the future fate of a chimney is uncertain, and even more so that their quality is still little evaluated. Fortunately, there are new prospects, how to use chimneys.



Fig. 1 Varnsdorf around 1930

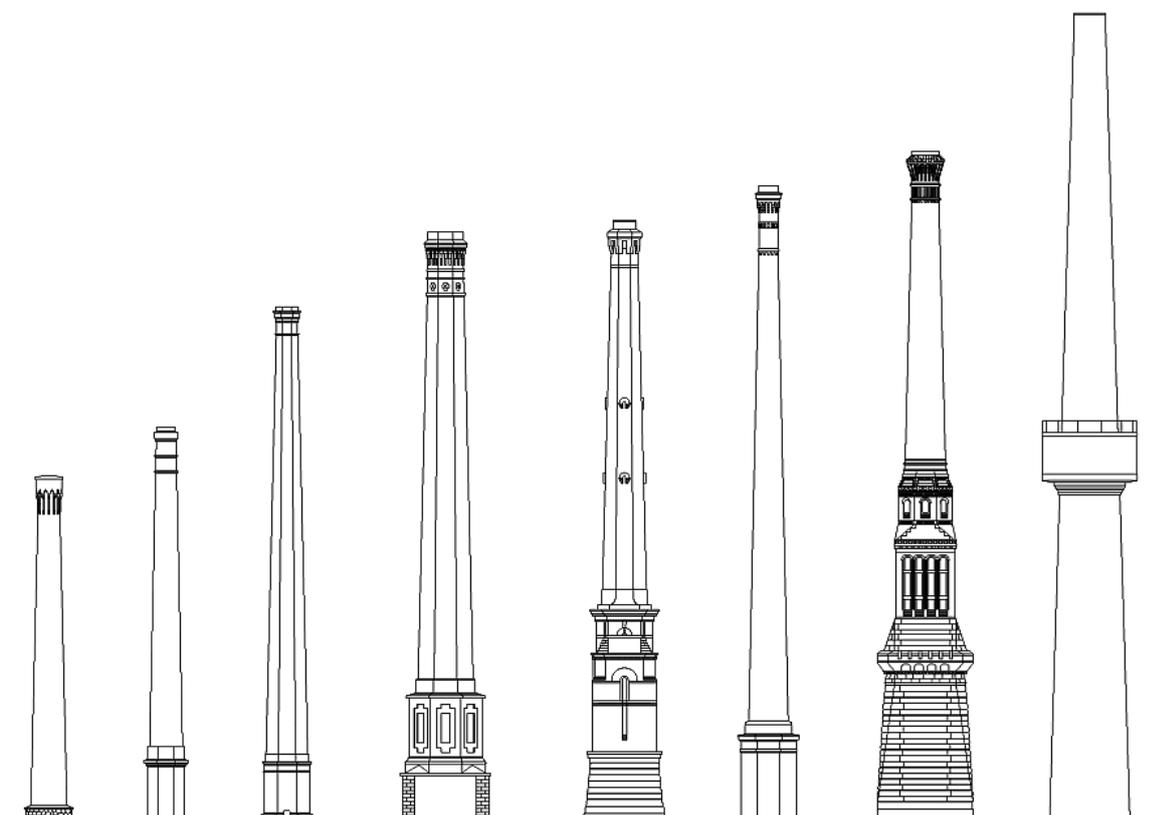


Fig. 2 Diversity of chimneys

2 New functions of the chimneys

Chimneys should have quite a lot of new functions. Major ways how to use old chimneys are:

- chimney as a symbol of industrial history (that is one of the most common situation) – Fig. 5, 6, 9, 10.

- chimney as a carrier technology for mobile operators or for advertising (a chimney can make a profit) – Fig. 3,
- special action – chimney climbing (especially by members of the Union of Czech Chimney) – Fig. 4,
- chimney as a climbing wall (only one known case in the CZ),
- chimney as a watchtower (in the CZ is no example),
- chimney as a campanile (in the CZ is no example),
- chimneys for nesting storks – Fig. 8,
- chimney for using for training firemen and other special units,
- chimney as new functional unit in new construction (for example as a ventilation shaft) – Fig. 11,
- etc.



Fig. 3 Textile factory in Prague



Fig. 4 Waterworks in Káraný



Fig. 5 Praga in Prague



Fig. 6 Brewery Vratislavice



Fig. 7 Chimney in Zlín



Fig. 8 Chimney in Chotýšany



Fig. 9 Mine Jindřich in Karviná-Doly



Fig. 10 Thermal plant in Prague



Fig. 11 Factory for hats in Prague

3 Examples

3.1 Prague-Žižkov, part Parukářka: ammunition factory Sellier&Bellot

40 meters tall chimney from aprox. 1870 is conserved and together with several original buildings were incorporated into the not very good new residential buildings in 1998 (Fig. 12). However, passers-by can admire the beautiful elaborated square pedestal and a nice rustic texture octagonal shaft ended by a huge ornate crown.

Similar cases we can find in new development in Palmovka or Flora (in Prague) or in Židlochovice (sugar refinery).

3.2 Prague-Karlín, Pernerova street: machinery works (ČKD)

The developer could easily demolished the chimney, but he decided to keep the chimney as a famous landmark in the neighborhood, and created a pleasant vestibule in 2005, where massive chimney pedestal is dominated (Fig. 13). The boiler room was converted into an office building by architect Claudio Silvestrin. One time chimney served to artist David Černý, who installed his statue named Viselec in the height of 50 meters.

3.3 Vilémov-Zahořany: mine Prokop

All the buildings were demolished in 2012, there is still preserved a chimney with a water tank as a reminder. It is one of the twenty existing Czech chimneys with water reservoir and the only one that has octagonal shaft (Fig. 14).



*Fig. 12 Ammunition factory
Sellier&Bellot in Prague*



*Fig. 13 Machinery
works in Prague*



*Fig. 14 Mine Prokop
in Zahořany*

3.4 Prague-Libeň: brewery

40 meters tall chimney and the malt kiln preserved from whole brewery (Fig. 15). The chimney from 1908 neighbors with the supermarket in present and dominates the adjacent square. The space under the shaft has become a popular place for homeless people who consumes the waste food from the supermarket.

Nearby brewery chimney in Holešovice had not similar luck to the new life. It could be incorporated into the new residential development, but it was demolished in 2006. Kiln chimney and other manufacturing buildings in the neighborhood are preserved – there was done a conversion.

3.5 Smiřice: sugar refinery

50 meters high octagonal chimney from 1868 is the only structure which remained from the large area of refinery and now it is besieged by heaps of substrate, which also suggests an advertising word "SUBSTRATY" inscribed on the chimney shaft (Fig. 16).

The chimney pedestal is described with ornate font verses "Málo a častěj příkládej, hradítka přivírej, na vodu pozor měj, pořádku vůbec dběj!". Verses are airbrushed by graffiti today unfortunately .

3.6 Prague-Dejvice: brickworks

There was demolished unique industrial buildings – Prague's first malt-house – from 1873 in 2007 in Podbaba. A not very imaginative new development is only variegated by the pedestal of a neighboring brickworks chimney, which was moved to its current location (Fig. 17).



Fig. 15 Brewery
in Prague-Libeň



Fig. 16 Sugar
refinery Smiřice



Fig. 17 Brickworks
in Prague-Dejvice

3.7 Aš: dye-house

There were demolished most of buildings during 1990–1997, only a brick chimney (probably built in 1858) remained alone in a car parking of supermarket (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18 Dye house in Aš



Fig. 19 Steam-mill
in Smolotely



Fig. 20 Rustonka
in Prague

3.8 Smolotely: steam-mill

Solitary chimney stands alone together with the original building in which the owners live (Fig. 19). The chimney is for many decades out of order, but owners love their unique

octagonal shaft and have a motto: "we think that a lot of chimneys were demolished already, so we want to preserve ours." They are investing money in its repair at present.

3.9 Prague-Karlín: machinery works (Rustonka)

All buildings of one of the oldest industrial sites in Prague were demolished in 2008, only the boiler room with its 42 meters high chimney with octagonal shaft remained (Fig. 20). The investor's rendering of the project new construction includes also chimney and the boiler room, even though they have not status of listed building.

4 Conclusions

Lift up the head and enjoy the symbolism of ancient times, dream away and protect our vertical industrial heritage. It deserves it, not only to preserve examples of skills and traditions of ancient masters of the industrial era, but also for its genius loci.

Who knows, protects.

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