

## 7 | ZÁBĚHLICE – DEVELOPMENT OF GARDEN CITIES AND HOUSING ESTATES

---

Martin Ouředníček



The cadastral area of Záběhlice represents a largely heterogeneous part of Prague, which developed in several historical stages and is still currently divided into legible urban units. The characteristic elements of historical suburban development and rapid urbanisation in the interwar period can be well documented here, especially in the context of the garden city concept (Howard, 1902). Two distinctive garden cities in the interwar Záběhlice are examples of targeted development on the outskirts of the young capital with broad public support for newly built projects (Praha neznámá, 2020). The boundaries of the cadastral area were quite variable, especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the gradual implementation of new construction. Záběhlice thus gained and lost territory in various ways – first, with the completion of Spořilov, it acquired the built-up area of family houses from the Michle cadastre in the Dolní Rožtyly area, and then after the war, it handed over part of the territory to Strašnice in the north and Chodov in 1987 to the south.

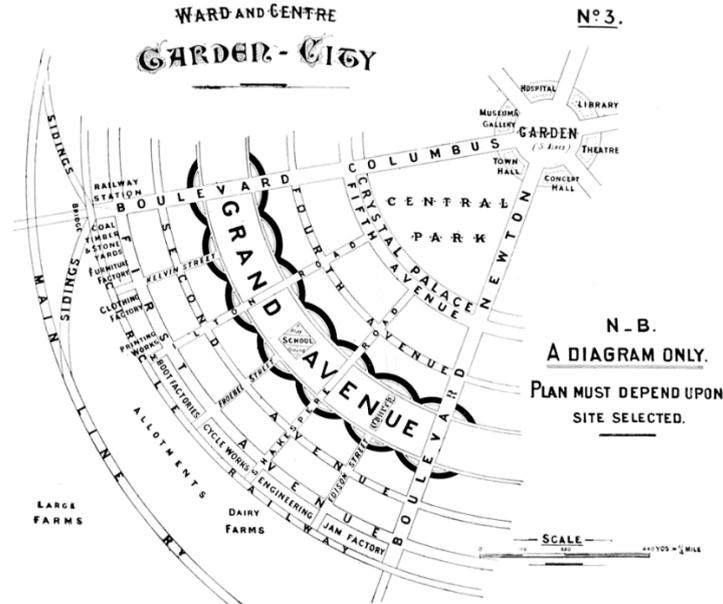
The ancient origin of the settlement is documented by the existence of a small Romanesque church (Votrubec, 1965). The first mention of Záběhlice appears in the founding document of the Vyšehrad chapter in 1088 (Míka et al., 1988). The natural axis of Záběhlice during pre-industrial times was the Botič stream, which indicated the character of the oldest settlement in old Záběhlice and the nearby settlement of Práče. Ponds, mills, industrial production, a brewery, two chateaux and several farmsteads formed the character of a settlement far beyond the borders of Prague until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lesy, 2020). However, this character underwent very rapid changes after the incorporation of Záběhlice into the administrative borders of Greater Prague and two new projects in the southeastern and northern parts of the territory (Figure 7.1). Between 1925 and 1929, Spořilov was first built as a garden suburb in many ways reminiscent of English garden towns and Howard's original concepts (Figure 7.2). According to Votrubec (1965), the English garden town of Welwyn was the model for the new suburban settlement. The investor was Vinohrady saving bank, which was reflected in the new name of the entire district (Maier, Hexner, Kibic, 1998). The district was not as magnificent as the garden towns of Prague's west end in Ořechovka or Baba, and the construction of 1,000 one-storey houses located on the northern slope was intended primarily for lower and middle-ranking officials of Spořitelna (saving bank). In the first and second sections, houses of the smallest types were built first, followed by houses for wealthier residents with larger gardens (Votrubec, 1965). Table 7.1 provides basic information on the entire newly completed district under the name Dolní Rožtyly.

The second relatively ambitious plan was the Zahradní Město (Garden City) project, partially implemented in the period of 1935 to 1941, again for middle officials working in Prague. In Figure 7.1, it is worth noting one of the most important attributes of the suburban construction, namely the terminal tram stop. In the case of Spořilov, tram transport was introduced only as a reaction to the insufficient bus connection with Prague. Zahradní Město, on the other hand, presented the new tram connection as one of the main advantages of remote but quickly accessible housing outside Prague (Přaha neznámá, 2020). An interesting aspect of the development of Zahradní Město was also the emphasis on a healthy lifestyle, including a wide range of sports activities in the new suburb (skittles, tennis, etc.). In both garden cities, street signs were imbued with meaning. While Spořilov does not deny the inspiration of classic English suburban settlements in the names of streets and tries to use the names of cardinal directions when orienting themselves in the territory, Zahradní Město is made up of streets named after flowers and trees. This approach is currently being repeated in many suburban communities in the city hinterland.



**Figure 7.1:** Characteristic urban form of the two newly built garden cities of Spořilov (southeast) and Zahradní Město (in the northern part) with the terminal stops of tramways.  
**Source:** IPR (2020).

Historical development of the population of Prague and its suburbs in the first half of the 20th century, residential and industrial suburbs



**Figure 7.2:** Ideal distribution of functions within a garden city by Ebenezer Howard.  
**Source:** Howard (1902).

In addition to garden cities, the interwar period in Prague was also characterised by the growth of temporary slum dwellings or entire slum colonies (Votrubec, 1959). At that time, it was possible to discover several smaller slum colonies in Záběhlice, such as Trnkov or Pod Lesíkem (Bahno Prahy, 2020), as well as a number of other smaller poor settlements. The whole district was thus quite socially differentiated in the interwar period (see below). An overview of individual settlements forming the interwar Záběhlice is available in Table 7.1, created on the basis of data from the Statistical lexicon of municipalities after the 1930 census.

The development of the area did not stop even after the war. On the contrary, the unfinished project of the Garden City was followed by the extensive construction of prefabricated housing estates Zahradní Město-west and Zahradní Město-east from 1962 to 1968. Housing construction in the Spořilov area was carried out almost in parallel (1961 to 1967). We can say that during the 1960s, Záběhlice was one of the most dynamically growing districts in the whole of Prague. This was subsequently reflected in the characteristics of the demographic and social structure of the young population (see below). In the second half of the 1970s (1976–1981), parts of the prefabricated housing estate Spořilov II were completed, as was an even smaller housing estate, Práče, in the 1980s.

In the post-revolutionary period, the service infrastructure in Záběhlice was supplemented and only a few residential projects were implemented, mostly on the edge of housing estates or on the slopes above Botič. It is interesting that localities in the built-up areas of old Záběhlice also developed (main map). For example, 231 flats were built in the Park Hostivař Residence,

212 flats in the Kaskády u Botiče project, and Garden City Park and Hyacintová Street were constructed. The characteristic development of the current Spořilov is evident from the photograph taken by the drone in Figure 7.3.

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Number of houses</b>	<b>Population</b>
Dolní Roztyly	village	1 199	4 075
Záběhlice	village	310	3 245
Zahradní Město	cluster of houses	158	667
Trnkov	cluster of houses	43	440
Na Padesáti	cluster of houses	15	234
Pod Lesíkem	colony, cluster of temporary dwellings	26	154
Práče	village	14	116
Na Padesáti	colony, cluster of temporary dwellings	7	32
Na Slatinách	colony, cluster of temporary dwellings	13	74
Rasovna	individual house	1	7
Dolní Roztyly	dispersed temporary dwellings	3	8
Horní Roztyly	village	1	6
Za Větrem	pub, hotel	1	7
individual house	individual house	8	225
dispersed temporary dwellings	dispersed temporary dwellings	31	204
<b>Záběhlice - total</b>	<b>village</b>	<b>1 830</b>	<b>9 494</b>

**Table 7.1:** Settlements forming the cadastral territory of Záběhlice (Census 1930).

**Source:** Statistical Lexicon (1934).



**Figure 7.3:** Contemporary view on Spořilov.

**Photo:** Jakub Lysák, Martin Ouředníček (2020).

### **Development of the number of inhabitants, houses and apartments**

In 1843, the settlements of Záběhlice and Práče had together 742 inhabitants in 109 houses, which represented a medium-sized suburban residence located in the pre-industrial Prague hinterland. The number of inhabitants and houses grew during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Záběhlice in several waves, which corresponded to the construction described in the introduction of this text. The first of these can be dated to the interwar period, when the number of houses increased almost ten times. Mainly due to the construction of two complexes of garden cities before the Second World War, the population exceeded 10,000. Boháč (1976) states populations of 2,396, 9,494 and 15,439 for the years 1921, 1939 and 1940, respectively. Záběhlice reached its current population maximum at the 1970 census, when it exceeded 40,000 people. This population increase was due to the significant housing construction of two generations of housing estates in Spořilov and the completion of Zahradní Město-east and west in the peripheral areas of the unrealised garden city from the First Republic. At present, about 35,000 inhabitants live in the territory in 3,000 houses and 17,000 apartments.

### **Development of the social environment and age structure**

While Král (1946) ranked Záběhlice among the socially weakest parts of the then-Prague, Moschelesová (1937) ranked it among the weak, but not very weak (the third category out of four). If we wanted to look at the internal division of the Záběhlice cadastre and assess the spatial differentiation of socio-economic status, only a few data sources from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be used. One of them is the prices of building plots (IPR, 2020) from the late 1930s. At that time, it was possible to build in Záběhlice at very cheap prices, much lower than in the districts of inner Prague or the nearest suburbs. While nearby Vinohrady showed

prices in the thousands per square metre, in Spořilov the price was most often CZK 360 per square metre and similarly in Zahradní Město. In a number of more remote parts and in slum colonies, prices fell below CZK 100 per square metre, which was one of the lowest values in Prague. At the 1930 census in Záběhlice, the share of the population in slum colonies was about 10 percent (Table 7.1; Ouředníček, 2012).

In the 1970s, Záběhlice was characterised by a relatively low proportion of workers' professions with less than 36 percent (compared to Prague's 42 percent) and almost 40 percent representation of people with secondary and university education. This is undoubtedly due to the very young age structure of the district in the early 1970s. The Prague-wide share in the same indicator was as much as ten percentage points lower. However, the internal differentiation of Záběhlice was significant in the early 1970s. While more than 40 percent of the population in the urban districts of Spořilov I, Spořilov II and Zahradní Město-západ had secondary or university education, and other districts with housing estates had 35 percent of people with the same education level, the old Záběhlice showed values of 15-17 percent of the population with higher education. There was a similar disproportion in employment between the districts of old workers' buildings on the one side and the garden cities and housing estates with a young population on the other. While the shares of the working population reached more than 60 percent in the urban districts of Záběhlice, Záběhlice-západ and Záběhlice-východ, the share of professional employees was about one third. On the other hand, in the Spořilov I and II, Zahradní Město-západ and Zahradní Město-východ districts, professional employees were significantly represented (between 60-70 percent), and the share of workers in 1970 was about a third of the economically active population.

In the 1970s, Záběhlice showed one of the lowest age indices in the whole of Prague (Ouředníček, 1994). The very young structure was created mainly by large waves of newly immigrated young families with children in the new housing estate. Since then, the age structure has gradually but steadily aged. In 1991, the territory was already characterised by a regressive age structure with a large predominance of women in higher age categories and a very small proportion of the youngest age groups. In 2019, the population born during the 1970s predominates, similar to the whole of Prague, but the relatively high predominance of older women was also evident. The lowest representation is the teen category, and there is a gradually expanding base of smaller children.

We decided to describe the socio-economic status of the current city using data on the share of high school and university students from the last population census in 2011 and the representation of people with foreign citizenship in 2019. The socio-spatial differences described in the 1970s were somewhat wiped out, but we can still find a difference of twenty percentage points in education levels. For example, near the aging district of Zahradní Město-východ or Trnkov locality, 52 percent of people have secondary or tertiary education, while in

the villa district of Spořilov, the same measure stands at 73 percent. In the newly defined urban district Nové Zahravní Město, which consists exclusively of new buildings, 70 percent of people have secondary and tertiary education. In 2019, 4,600 people with foreign citizenship lived in Záběhlice, of which 36 percent were Ukrainians and 19 percent were Slovaks, followed by citizens of Russia, China, Romania and Vietnam. Internal differentiation is interesting, for example, in the Nové Zahravní Město district, where an unusually high numbers of Chinese and Russians live. Villa district Spořilov has a varied composition of foreigners, while 50 percent of the foreign population is made up of Ukrainians in the Zahravní Město-střed or Spořilov II district, but also in other housing estates.

In terms of the project's focus on the expansion of the city, the historical development of Záběhlice is a good example of the growth of Prague as a whole during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two garden cities represent the classic suburbanisation process of the industrial city. The massive housing estate in the 1960s filled the remaining developing areas and largely covered the relatively significant socio-economic spatial differentiation of garden districts and slum colonies, which later largely disappeared. The new millennium has not given the territory a new character, but new buildings and new inhabitants contribute to the diversity of Záběhlice.

## References:

- BOHÁČ, Z. (1976): Tisíciletý vývoj Prahy, in: Příspěvky k dějinám pražské aglomerace. *Historická geografie*, 14–15: 19–54.
- HOWARD, E. (1902): *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London.
- KRÁL, J. (1946): *Zeměpisný průvodce Velkou Prahou a její kulturní oblastí*. Melantrich. Praha.
- MAIER, K., HEXNER, M., KIBIC, K. (1998): *Urban Development of Prague: History and Present Issues*. Vydavatelství ČVUT. Praha.
- MÍKA, Z. a kol. (1988): *Dějiny Prahy v datech*. Panorama, Praha.
- MOSCHELESOVÁ, J. (1937): The Demographic, Social and Economic Regions of Greater Prague: a Contribution to Urban Geography. *Geographical Review*, 27 (3): 413–430.
- OUŘEDNÍČEK, M. (1994): *Vývoj sociálně-prostorové struktury Prahy*. Diplomová práce. Univerzita Karlova v Praze. Přírodovědecká fakulta. Katedra sociální geografie a regionálního rozvoje. Praha.

OUŘEDNÍČEK, M. (2012): Sociálně prostorová struktura industriální Prahy. In: Chodějovská, E., Šimůnek, R. (eds.): *Krajina jako historické jeviště. K poctě Evy Semotanové*. Historický ústav, Praha, s. 263-283.

PRAHA NEZNÁMÁ (2020): Zahradní Město. Online: <https://www.prahaneznama.cz/praha-10/zabehlice/zahradni-mesto/>

VOTRUBEC, C. (1959): Zanikání nouzových kolonií na území Prahy. Příspěvek k zeměpisu velkoměsta. *Sborník Československé společnosti zeměpisné*, 64 (1): 6–12.

VOTRUBEC, C. (1965): *Praha, zeměpis velkoměsta*. Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, Praha.

### Data sources:

BAHNO PRAHY (2020): *Bahno Prahy aneb web o nouzových koloniích*. Online: <https://www.bahnoprahy.cz/>

LESY (2020): *Bývalá osada Práče*. Information board. Lesy hl. m. Prahy, Praha.

IPR (2020): *Mapová aplikace Dvě Prahy*. Institut plánování a rozvoje hl. m. Prahy, Praha. Online: <https://app.iprpraha.cz/apl/app/dveprahy/>

ŘSCP (2020): Cizinci v Česku. Interní anonymizovaná databáze. Ředitelství služby cizinecké policie ČR, Praha.

SLDB (1970): Výsledky Sčítání lidu, domů a bytů. Urbanistické obvody v Praze. Czech Statistical Office, Prague.

SLDB (1991): Výsledky Sčítání lidu, domů a bytů. Urbanistické obvody v Praze. Czech Statistical Office, Prague.

SLDB (2011): Výsledky Sčítání lidu, domů a bytů. Urbanistické obvody v Praze. Czech Statistical Office, Prague.

Statistický lexikon (1934): Statistický lexikon obcí v Republice československé. Na základě sčítání lidu z 1. prosince 1930. Praha, Orbis. Díl I. Čechy.