

## **The City of Most – A Brief History**

Originally a royal town Most used to be located between the foot of Castle Hill (Hněvín) and the River Bílina. Today, practically only one small part of the old town called Zahražany has remained standing. The town's name was probably based on the bridge (in Czech: "most") spanning the marshy land nearby. In the past, it had various forms: Gnewin Mozt, Gnevinmost, in Latin Pons (or Pons Gnewyn), and in German Pruks, Bruck, Brūx.

Extensive building activities were under way until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1930's the construction history of the old town of Most came to an end. After World War II building work concentrated solely on the development of new residential quarters. In 1964 the Government passed a decision on demolishing Most, which took place from 1967 until 1982. During this period the whole historical town of Most, apart from the part called Zahražany, was destroyed to make way for the coal mining industry.

The town with a chequered history had to give way to coal. Until demolished, the historical centre itself had boasted over twenty Gothic structures, second only to Prague in terms of density of such architecture in such a small space.

During the preparation of mining plans for the Ležáky enterprise, the question of whether it would be possible to extract the required amount of coal without the destruction of the old town of Most came up and was looked into. Supposedly, it could not be done. And so, in 1965, families began moving into prefabs in new quarters, and the first demolition work began. A total of 4,258 families were forced to move out of the old town, which had not been systematically developed just to be allowed to fall. However, not many were upset, because the mining personnel and communist propaganda succeeded in making people believe that life on the new housing estate would be easier for them. "People were looking forward to not having to heat up the flats themselves or heat the water, because many buildings in the old Most had only cold running water," recalls Rybák. Another reason why there were not many protests was the fact that the tens of thousands of people, who had come to the north to work in the mines, felt no ties to the place. Before 1964 the population of the old town was just thirty thousand, while in the early 1980's there were 70 thousand living in the new "prefabville".

The town, which today would have been more than a match for any urban conservation area in the country, was destroyed by means of explosives. And indeed, this method of action was laid down in the projects; the planners did not want any delays and were ordered to spend time disassembling or dismantling masonry only in exceptional cases. By April 1, 1987 the blasting work had ended, Ležáky Most Mines had a free rein. And then came extraction after extraction, awaiting the glorious communist future ...

### **A Keepsake of Most Travelled 841.1 Metres in 500 Hours**

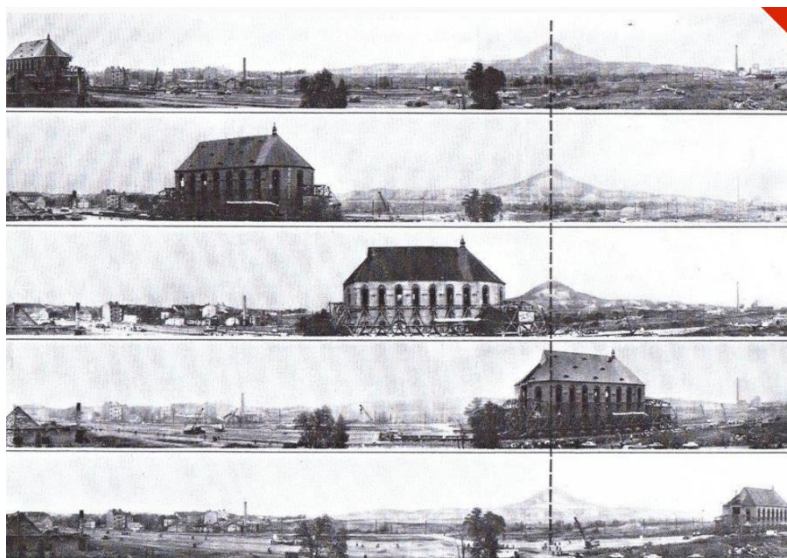
Replacing an older parish church after a fire, the Deanery Church – a Late Gothic architectural masterpiece, which was mostly completed in 1594, became the symbol of the destroyed town. The preservation of the church was decided on by the Government on November 18, 1964, as documented by Jaroslav Červenka, a historian, who wrote his diploma thesis on the topic of the destruction of the royal town of Most in 2000, to complete his study at the Technical University of Ostrava.

At first, two main options were considered. According to the first one, the church should have remained in its place on somewhat of a coal pillar. It would have been technically challenging, but the most important question at that time was - why on earth would anyone want to waste the coal lying under the church?

The second option actually had two alternatives: under the first - the church would be dismantled and relocated in parts, which though would have meant a reduction in its historic value. Under the second - the whole church would be transported. The latter plan was adopted by the Government of the CSSR on May 12, 1971.

The church travelled the distance of 841.1 metres at an average speed of 2.8 centimetres per minute. The journey took 500 hours and 1 minute. The church "sat down" on a reinforced concrete structure behind the town on October 27, 1975 and has remained there ever since.

Source: Webpages: [http://cestovani.idnes.cz/stary-most-vstava-z-mrtvych-projdete-se-zmizelym-mestem-pev-/po-cesku.aspx?c=A071026\\_160848\\_igcechy\\_tom](http://cestovani.idnes.cz/stary-most-vstava-z-mrtvych-projdete-se-zmizelym-mestem-pev-/po-cesku.aspx?c=A071026_160848_igcechy_tom), Authors: MF DNES, iDNES.cz , PETR SOUKAL, JAN VESELÝ



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