

Důraz na zachování podoby sadů a autentické provedení detailů. To nám dovolí skutečnost, že Chotkovy sady jsou součástí hradu, pod který spadá jejich správa. Údržba je samozřejmě potřebuje odbornou péči, i když se návrhem zahradnického detailu snažíme budoucí management tím souvisí přizpůsobení navrhovaného sortimentu zachování pravdivosti výsadby

CHOTEK GARDENS





Project type: Park restoration, landscape architecture competition
 Location: Chotek Gardens, Prague 1, Czech Republic
 Participation period: 2024 – 2026
 Commissioning authority: Prague Castle Administration
 Participation process: Participation Office of IPR Prague + Hanus Consulting and Analysis (HanusKA)

Chotkovy Sady was the first collaborative project between the Participation Office of IPR Prague and the Prague Castle Administration. As a pilot initiative, it demonstrated how public participation can contribute to the heritage-sensitive restoration of a historically significant public space.

Established in 1832, Chotkovy Sady is Prague's oldest public park and an important part of the Prague Castle landscape. Designed by renowned landscape architect František Thomayer, the park lies between the Queen Anne's Summer Palace and the Royal Garden, offering panoramic views of the Vltava River and Prague's historic skyline while providing a pedestrian connection to Letná Plain. The condition of the park's pathways, street furniture and vegetation had significantly deteriorated, creating the need for a comprehensive yet sensitive restoration that respected its historic and landscape values. To identify the best design solution, a landscape architecture competition was launched, accompanied by a two-phase public participation process.

Participation objectives:

1. Understand how different groups of visitors use the park
2. Identify users' needs and everyday challenges
3. Gather local knowledge for the landscape architecture competition brief
4. Evaluate the winning design proposal with future park users
5. Enable the public to influence the future design of the park before implementation



Stakeholders:

- Prague Castle Administration (commissioning authority)
- Prague Institute of Planning and Development (competition organiser and participation coordinator)
- Hanus Consulting and Analysis (participation contractor for Phase 2)
- Landscape architecture competition teams
- Local residents
- Regular park users
- Experts (e.g. arborists)
- Tourists visiting the park

Participation process

Phase 1 – Collecting input + ethnographic research (2024 – 2025)
Prepared and delivered by the Participation Office of IPR Prague

The first phase took place before the landscape architecture competition was launched. It combined on-site collection of public input with an online survey. An ethnographic research complemented these by examining how the park is being used, identifying local values and challenges, and documenting the site’s social dynamics. The findings were incorporated into the competition brief.

Phase 2 – Feedback and refinement of the winning design (2026)
Prepared and delivered in collaboration with Hanus Consulting and Analysis (HanusKA)

Following the announcement of the competition results, a second participation phase was launched in spring 2026 to gather feedback on the winning design proposal.

The process consisted of a series of interconnected activities:

- Outdoor exhibition presenting the design proposals directly in the park
- Guided site walk with the authors of the winning proposal
- Community planning workshop focused on the winning design
- Arborist-guided walk explaining the principles of park management
- A final community meeting presenting the detailed architectural study, responses to public comments, and further adjustments to the park

A key feature of the process was the emphasis on closing the feedback loop. Rather than simply collecting comments, the project team transparently communicated how public input had been assessed, whether it had been incorporated into the final proposal, and, where it had not, the reasons why.

Participation methods used:

METHOD	PURPOSE
On-site collection of public input	Identifying users’ needs
Online survey	Validating collected input with a broader group of respondents
Ethnographic research	Analysing patterns of use and users’ relationships with the space
Outdoor exhibition	Presenting the winning design proposal directly in the park, accessible to visitors 24/7
Guided site walk	Explaining the principles of the proposal directly on site with the design team
Community planning workshop	Discussing specific design solutions and collecting feedback on the proposal
Arborist-guided walk	Explaining the condition of trees, proposed interventions and principles of park management
Feedback workshop	Presenting how public comments were addressed and reflected in the final design



Challenges:

One of the most sensitive topics in the project was the planned renewal of the park's vegetation, particularly the health of existing trees, necessary arboricultural interventions and potential tree removal. Discussions focused on the gradual renewal of the tree population, self-seeded species, and trees planted in recent decades at the request of local residents. The original landscape composition of the park, designed by František Thomayer and based on carefully planned views from the Vltava River towards the Queen Anne's Summer Palace, represents one of the key heritage values of the site.

To address questions around tree management, a dedicated arborist-guided walk was included in the participation process. Experts explained the historical concept of the park, the health condition of individual trees, and the reasons behind proposed interventions in relation to tree diseases and the impacts of climate change. A key part of the communication was ensuring that every tree would be assessed individually based on professional arboricultural evaluations and that decisions would not be made through a blanket approach. The event attracted approximately 50 participants and demonstrated that transparent communication, supported by expert knowledge, can help prevent conflicts and strengthen public trust in the restoration process.

Another important topic was pedestrian and cyclist safety. The existing cycle route currently passes through the park, creating conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians. Public feedback was reflected in the proposal: the cycle route will remain only in the section connecting to the bridge from Letná Plain, before being redirected outside the main park areas. The proposal therefore seeks to improve safety while maintaining an important cycling connection.



What worked well:

Strong cooperation between the Participation Office, the participation contractor and the Prague Castle Administration – active involvement of the commissioning authority throughout meetings and participation activities contributed significantly to the smooth running of the process. The sequence of activities also proved effective – the community planning workshop followed right after the guided site walk and thanks to a large tent provided by the Prague Castle Administration, the workshop could take place directly in the park even in unfavourable weather conditions. The arborist-guided walk helped participants better understand the principles of park management and the challenges involved in restoring historic green spaces, particularly in the context of climate change and changing conditions for urban vegetation.



Outputs

- Report from the first phase of participation
- Report on how community planning feedback was addressed
- Report from the arborist-guided walk
- Final report from the second phase of participation

