



THE BLACK TOWER

The impulse to build the Black Tower, which is the domain of the town skyline, came from necessity to design such a stately structure. It was not just a purpose-made building to have a good view of the town and its surroundings in the time of enemy or fire danger, but there were also social and aesthetic reasons. The prosperous king town needed prestige. In 1547 the enormous design was given to Master Anthony (Italian constructor Antonius de Sala.) He expected the huge tower to be part of the town hall in the future. The work was finished in 1557 and the tetragonal construction, built from huge blocks with six floors (on the first floor used to be a torture room) and the copper copula, made the appearance of the square more beautiful.

In the following years a new constructions were added to the tower. The renaissance town hall, the building of the Jesuit dorm and the baroque church.

In 1581 master bell-founder Marin Jindra made a huge bell for the tower. It was hang two years later and named Bartholomew-Andrew, popularly known as “Vondra”. The Black Tower was repaired in 1727. New roof beams were used according to the design of master carpenter Andrew Jilhan and the two copper copulas were decorated with small golden banners.

The name of the tower comes from the times when it was burnt by numerous fires, especially by the big fire in 1758 which even melted the original bell. The new one was hang two years later. It came from P. A. Jacomini workshop and even this one takes the name “Vondra”. This new bell cracked after the reconstruction in 1938 and it was hang again in 1940.

The appearance of the present-day tower has been known since 1872. In 1870 the old copula was carried off by wind storm (the place, where it fell down to the square, is visibly marked).

The hight of the Black Tower is 81,6 metres (with its new pyramid roof). The astronomical clock designed by professor F. Vaněk is placed in the lower part of the tower. The dwelling for a watchman, who blew his horn and announced regularly the time in the evenings, used to be placed in the upper part of the tower.

After the reconstruction in 60's and 70's the Black Tower was reopened to the public. Visitor can get an amazing view of the town, its neoghbourhood and the Bohemian forest from the Black Tower gallery.

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