Mountain-top Hotel and Television Transmitter Ještěd (Czech Republic)

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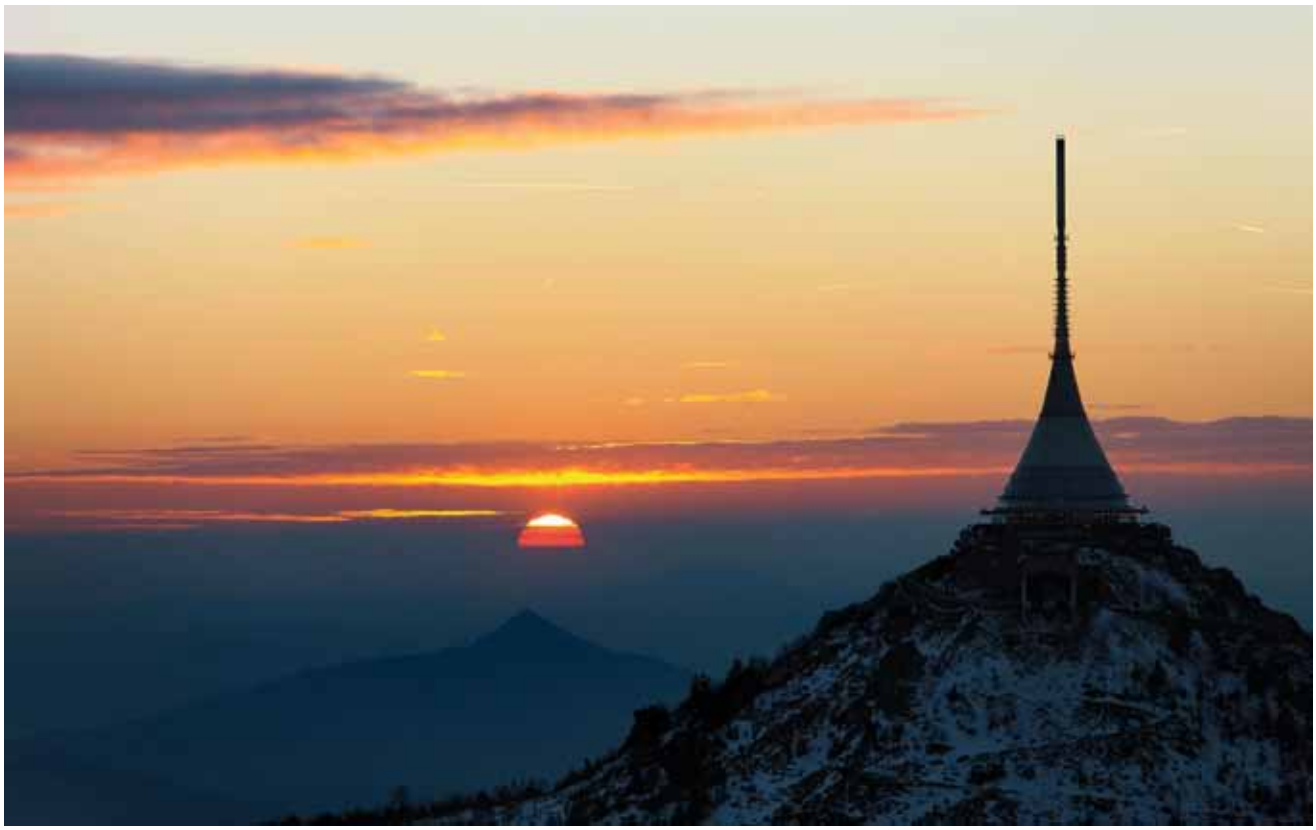
Description
Ještěd mountain-top hotel and television transmitter are integrated into one tower structure. The tower stands on the mountain of the same name Ještěd, which is the highest element of the Lužické hory (Lužické mountains) massif in the northern part of the Czech Republic. The peak of the mountain (1012 m above sea level) is approximately 6 kms from the centre of Liberec and forms a landmark in the wider vicinity. The monument is accessible by road and also by cable car from the foot of the mountain. Its design was developed during 1963–1966, construction itself took place from 1966–1973. The building's form of a revolving hyperboloid imaginatively combines the operation of a mountain-top hotel and a television transmitter in one. The basic load-bearing element of the structure is a reinforced concrete core, consisting of two concentric tubes of varying height in diameters of 5m and 13m, on which individual floors are suspended on a steel structure, starting with the third storey above ground i.e. the second floor. On the outer perimeter of the first floor a glazed gallery opens out at a height of 1014 m above sea level, directly tied in to a spiral access ramp. An internal annulus of the first floor forms the entrance hall and reception to the hotel, which is dominated by a suspended staircase leading to an observation restaurant on the second floor. The next two floors, clad in aluminium, are used for accommodation: on the third floor are 14 hotel rooms for a total of 56 guests. On the fourth floor are rooms for employees of the transmitter and the hotel and two three-roomed flats. The area of the fifth to seventh floors is set aside for the aerials of the transmitting technology. There is a specially developed laminated cladding, against extreme weather conditions, in the shape of a revolving hyperboloid. On the seventh and eighth floors there is a tank for drinking water and battery-operated back-up power supply. The ninth floor contains the lift plant room. Above it a special pendulum is installed, whose movement absorbs the transverse oscillation of the tower. The tower's Architect is ing. arch. Karel Hubáček (* 1924), who was awarded the prestigious Auguste Perret Prize for his design by the International Union of Architects in 1969.

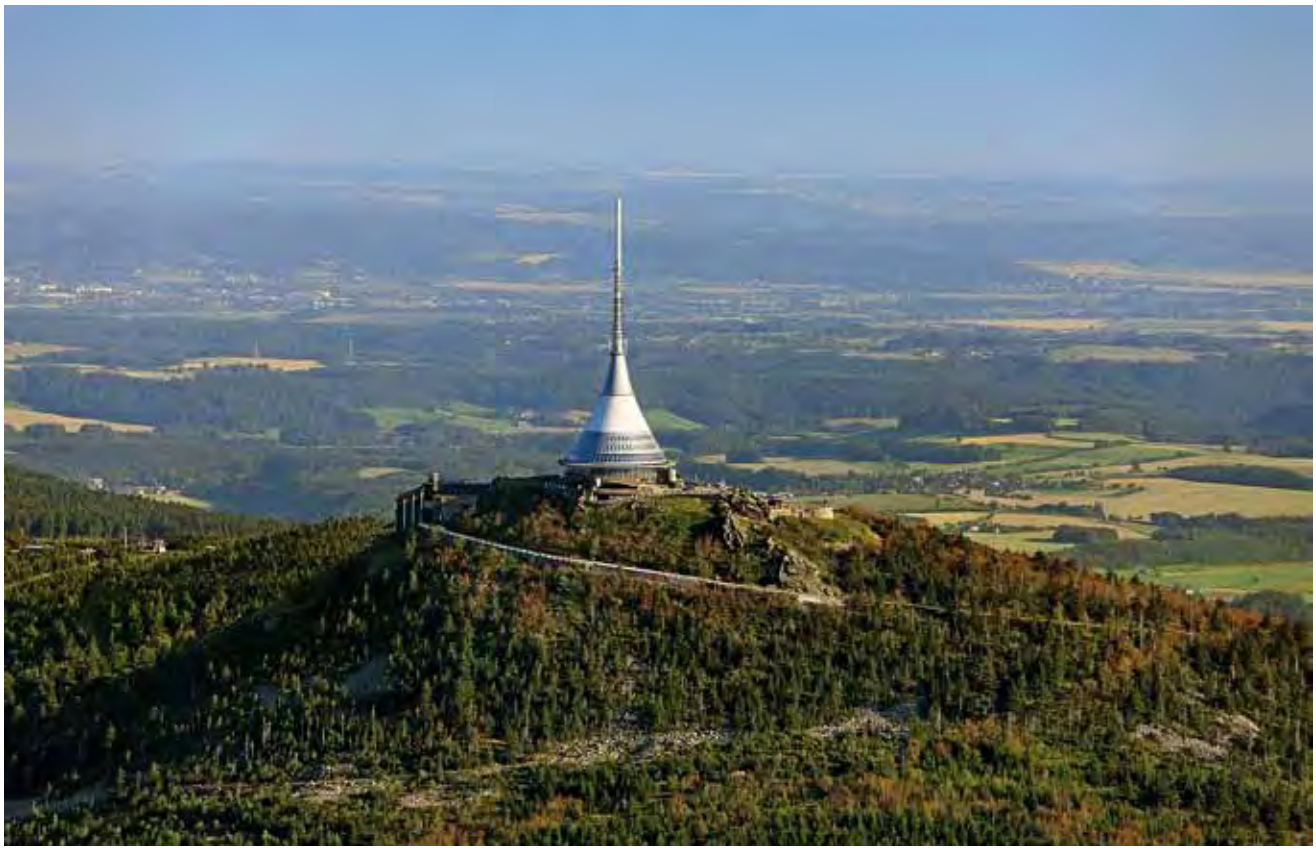
Satements of authenticity and/or integrity
The structure has been preserved to a high degree of authenticity. In the relatively short time of its existence its primary function has not changed. All the main characteristics for which it is valued, have been preserved. During the course of its use the electronic transmitting equipment has been changed and continuously updated, since the 1960s has gone through rapid development. This equipment has always been of a standard type; it has not affected the value of the structure and is not the subject of evaluation under section 48 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The structure is the work of a group of leading Czech designers who, by teamwork, have created an integral work of architecture. The structure is protected by the state as a national cultural monument, which means a guarantee that its general regeneration will be based on the maximum respect for the authenticity of its form, design and functions. The location of the structure on the peak of a hill does not facilitate further construction development which would disrupt its dominant position.

Comparison with other similar properties
The Ještěd television tower and mountain-top hotel, in its linking of a technical and a social facility, is typologically a unique structure, for which it is hard to find a comparison.

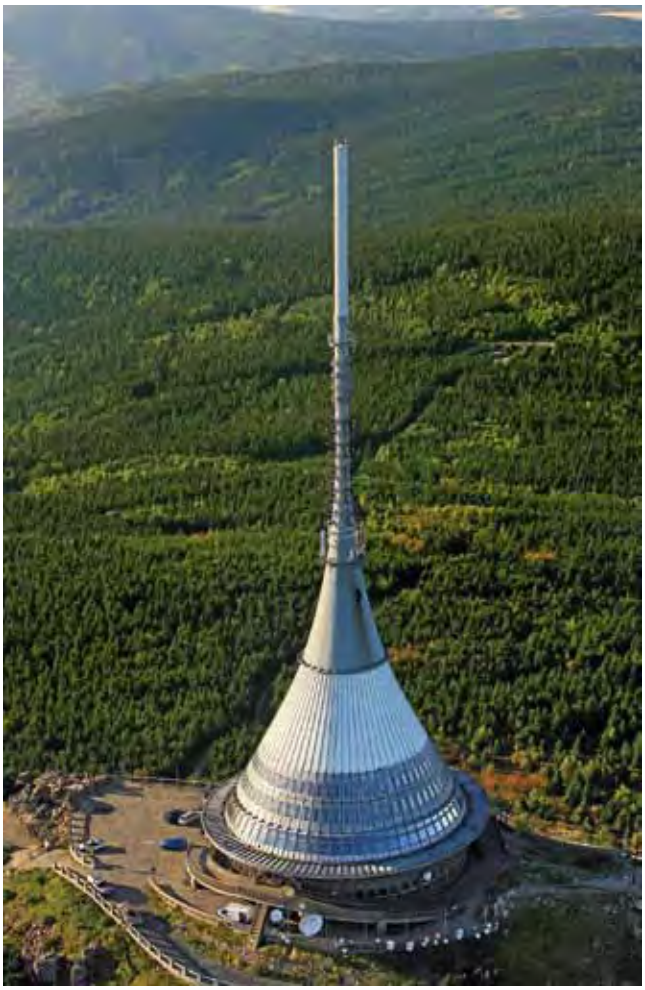
As a mountain-top hotel it represents a continuation of the tradition of similar facilities, appearing from the end of the nineteenth century, as a response to the development of tourism and the growth in popularity of winter sports; incidentally, a mountain-top hotel built in 1907, which preceded the present structure on the peak of Ještěd, was just such a structure but was burnt to the ground in 1963.

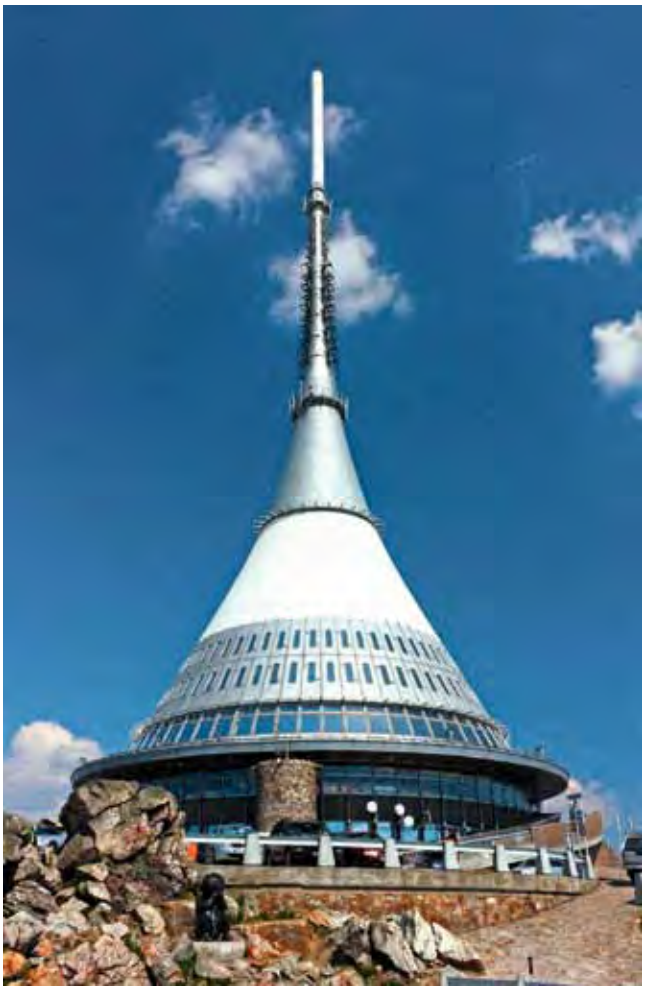
A still newer kind of construction is the tower transmitter. In the 1950s a free-standing reinforced concrete tower type of transmitter structure, technically derived from the design of factory chimneys, started to replace the anchored steel lattice aerial constructions. Often built up inside from great agglomerations they were, as were their landmark summits, symbols of a state's technical proficiency, and were remembered for the observation restaurant on their summits; the first such tower was a transmitter in Stuttgart (Fritz Leonhardt, 1953–1956). The best known structures of this kind, however, were built later: television towers in Moscow (Nikolai Nikitin, 1963–1967), in Berlin (Hermann Henselmann and Jörg Streitparth, 1965–1969) and, to this day the highest structure in the world, the CN Tower





Ještěd mountain-top hotel and television transmitter. Its design was developed between 1963–66, construction itself took place from 1966–73. The tower's architect is ing. arch. Karel Hubáček (1924–2011), who was awarded the prestigious Auguste Perret Prize for his design by the International Union of Architects in 1969
Berghotel und Fernsehturm „Jeschken". Die Anlage wurde 1963–1966 entworfen und zwischen 1966 und 1973 realisiert. Der Architekt Karel Hubáček (1924–2011) erhielt 1969 dafür den Auguste-Perret-Preis der Internationalen Vereinigung der Architekten (UIA)





Ještěd mountain-top hotel and television transmitter, planned 1963–66 and constructed 1966–73 (arch.: Karel Hubáček)
Berghotel und Fernsehturm „Jeschken", 1963–66 geplant und 1966–73 erbaut (Arch.: Karel Hubáček)

in Toronto (John Andrews Architects, 1972–1976). A special group was then made up of lower towers, built, however, on mountain peaks. Arguably their oldest forerunner was the television transmitter on Mount Feldberg in the Taunus range in Germany, built as early as 1937–1939. In some cases they are differentiated also by a connection to a town, as is for example the small tower over the Hungarian town of Miskolc (Hofer Miklós 1959–1962) or the bigger one in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia (Stanislav Májek et al., 1965–1974). On the whole perhaps comparable with Ještěd, could be the progressively built facility on the Swiss mountain Säntis (Rudolf and Esther Guyer), but which does not, however, blend recreational and technical functions in one structure, and which was only finished in 1999. In the Czech Republic a tower on the mountain Praděd (Jan Liška, 1968–1983), in whose base is likewise a restaurant and hotel, comes close to the structure typologically, but does not attain the architectural qualities of the tower on Ještěd.

What we find remarkably close to Ještěd in architectural style, never realised however, are parallels in the technicistic visions of Richard Buckminster Fuller, for example in the first version of Dymaxion House, originating as early as 1928, or in the study for the so-called Sin Centre (1962) by a member of the Archigram group, Michael Webb. More generally we can classify Ještěd along with the technicistic trend of architecture of Jean Prouvé, Konrád Wachsmann or Frei Otto, that is members of the generation which preceded the architects of the high-tech style of the 1970s.