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Over 150 Erasmus students heading for Prague for a term or a year of study at Charles University will find themselves living in Trója in the northern part of the city, the location of the 17th November Hall of Residence. Harry Rogers takes a look around an area that boasts not only cheap rooms in the university's halls of accommodation but also some of the top tourist attractions with magnificent views across the city.

Trója, a quaint area around half an hour from the city centre of Prague, is an ideally-placed residence for an Erasmus student whilst they study at Charles University. Students residing in the 17th November halls of residence not only have relatively cheap and functional accommodation, with their own kitchens and bathrooms, but have brilliant access to public transport whether that be catching the 112 bus to the Nádraží Holešovice metro station or walking the scenic route over the bridge, taking just 14 minutes. The halls offer students in term time a party room in the cellars, a small convenience shop and a cafeteria, but the real thrill of living in Trója is outside of these four walls.

Just six stops away on the 112 bus will get you to Prague Zoo, voted through TripAdvisor as the fourth best zoo in the world. Founded by Jiří Janda, who dedicated several years of study at Charles University, Prague Zoo is quite simply breath-taking. Founded and declared a zoo officially in 1931, it has grown into a masterpiece attracting people from all over the world to its wonderful facilities. Charles University itself has contributed to the zoo over the years, most recently through the Faculty of Science, when it was able to invite award winning chimpanzee expert Dr. Jane Goodall to the zoo to give a talk in 2016. Charles University's work with the zoo has aided in giving it a fantastic reputation on housing some of the rarest animals in the world.

Upon arrival to the main entrance, the zoo walkway is covered in footprints which have been made by animals themselves. It resembles the stars of Hollywood which gives the impression that the animals are the true celebrities in Prague, a nice touch. The park itself is huge with an upper clifftop African zone which has everything from tall, placid giraffes to the small but deadly honey badger. Elephant Valley gives visitors the chance to walk alongside the enclosure with numerous information boards to assist the public with their questions.

Once the upper clifftop has been explored, a fantastic chair lift scales the steep edge in two minutes, offering phenomenal views of the city of Prague and the rest of the zoo. One stand-out moment and a must see would be the polar bear exhibit. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the first Polar Bear born in Prague that survived until adulthood, named Ilun. She was hand-reared in Prague, making her the first ever hand-reared Polar Bear in the world's zoos. She was taken in by Dr. Jan Vlasák, the director of the zoo himself, after her birth. Seventy-five years on and the zoo is able to present two polar bears named Tom and Berta. Lively Tom loves to swim around for all to see. At only 150 CZK for a student to visit, Trója is bursting with wildlife to be lapped up within its zoo.

Trója Palace (Trója Chateau) and gardens, located just across the road from the zoo, is another attraction of the area, displaying some fine architecture that makes the city of Prague famous. Construction on the palace began in 1679 for the Counts of Sternberg. The line of Counts in the Sternberg family belongs to some of the oldest aristocratic families in the country. The building was designed by Italian architect Giovanni Domenico Orsi and later finished by his French colleague Jean-Baptiste Mathey for the family and now exhibits the Czech 19th century art collection of the City Gallery Prague. Walking around the grounds really gives an idea of how wealthy the Counts of Sternberg were. A fine set of stairs leading from the palace to the gardens were sculpted by Johan Georg and Paul Heermann from Dresden. The statues within the design were made to resemble the fight between the gods and giants, a peculiar idea but nevertheless a sensational piece of art that is one of a kind. Admission into the palace is 120 CZK, a reasonable price to visit something so beautiful.

If you continue uphill, a little further into the heart of Trója, another hot spot for tourists are the impressive botanical gardens of the capital city of Prague. With almost 25 hectares of land presenting some of the finest plants in the world, it's easy to get lost in a world of colour. You can take a walk through areas planted as different world regions within the grounds and admire all sorts of flowers and shrubbery. Possibly the most appealing area would be the Mediterranean Garden. Due to the extremely warm southern slope, the park is able to grow plants not available in any other botanical garden in central Europe. It is also here that visitors get fine views over the city of Prague, as well as the chance to overlook the zoo and the palace. The sight really is unforgettable. The entry fee for students is 75 CZK but this also

includes entry into St Claire's vineyard, south of the gardens. This vineyard is possibly the oldest in Prague and is thought to date back to the 13th century. Guided tours are also available if you are interested in how the wine is produced here. Trója itself also has some of the most striking houses in the country, some of them worth up to 2.4 million Euros, affirming its position as one of the grandest places to live in the Czech Republic. Its quiet surroundings and travel links into Prague make life here an enjoyable part of the Erasmus experience with Charles University.

Harry Rogers is studying Journalism at De Montfort University in Leicester, England. He took part in a short summer internship in Prague to write for iForum. He has also written for his university website, the Leicestershire Press, and a small independent music blog called Radsound. In his spare time he enjoys music and sport.