Urban landscapes

Any traveller familiar with the metropolises of the world can immediately feel at home in Budapest, where much of the architecture is a simple adaptation of styles that are found the world over. Yet there are many buildings that have a character specific to Budapest. A number of factors have shaped the city's architecture, first and foremost being its geographical location. The great beauty of Budapest derives from its relationship to the Danube, from the special coexistence that is not to be found in any other city located on a river. Both Paris and Prague span rivers, and the same River Danube flows through Vienna. Yet the river is not as primary an element in the view of that city as it is in Budapest. The panorama of the Danube links the hills of Buda to the mass of the city extending over the plains of Pest. That Budapest was the product of the merger of three cities also had important architectural consequences, embracing within one boundary a number of separate yet connected parts.

As we have seen above, this merger occurred during a period of dynamic urban development. However, this growth destroyed the achievements of earlier historical periods and wiped out their architectural works. Little remains of the rather provincial yet elegant Classicist city of the early nineteenth century. No other large European city belongs to such an extent and so uniformly to the age of architectural Eclecticism. In Budapest the late-nineteenth-century architectural environment acquired a special significance. Paris and Vienna developed into great metropolises during the same period. But since they already had a significant older core, the new additions did not dominate the character of the city. In Budapest, the lack of an older centre gave the new developments in the city far greater prominence. The third factor shaping the architectural environment was the location of Budapest between Eastern and Western Europe. Its architecture often displayed a rootlessness, copying various Eastern and Western architectural trends according to the prevailing influences upon the country.

To consider the architecture of the city, let us break the city up into smaller units with the help of the maps and photographs included in this volume. The best view for 'sightseeing' is offered by Gellért Hill. From here you can see the Danube River dissecting the city in two. On the left bank lies Pest, its older inner city surrounded by the Small Boulevard, and the present city spreading across the Grand Boulevard and other major avenues. From here you can see the tall apartment blocks of the first 'ring' around the edge of the inner city, and the outline of the second 'ring' of apartment buildings in the distance. And you can see the Danube flowing down from the north in several branches, embracing the Shipyard Island and Margit (Margaret) Island, as it broadens and narrows. It reaches its narrowest point at Gellért Hill, after which the river once again divides into branches. But dominating the view from Gellért Hill is Castle Hill, and so we will take this as our starting point.

The Castle district

The Castle district is located on Castle Hill in Buda, on the right side of the Danube as it flows through the city. The late Pál Granasztói, the eminent architect, described this as a reversed Acropolis. The acropolises were usually built first, with those seeking shelter and security only settling at their foot later. Castle Hill in Buda was a barren hill until the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century. It was the population of Pest, after the town had been destroyed by the Mongols, who migrated there to found a new town for themselves.

The royal household occupied the southern tip of the hill, where the Castle was built. The significance of the royal Castle was greatest during the reign of King Sigismund in the 1400s, and subsequently under King Matthias Corvinus, when it became the centre of the royal administration until 1541.

By the end of the Middle Ages Buda, with its royal palace and Gothic city, was one of the famous centres of Europe. However, Turkish rule between 1541 and 1686 destroyed the Castle area. Contemporary accounts say that only the debris of the palaces survived after the expulsion of the Turks. However, the medieval urban structure remained intact.

Italian architects participated in the reconstruction and surveying work of the post-1686 period. The impact of Italian architecture appears not only in the atmosphere of the small palaces, but also in the later trends of Hungarian architecture. The Church played a major role in the reconstruction, and a significant part of public construction served ecclesiastical and military purposes. The Jesuit order settled down here, and introduced the baroque style in attitudes toward daily life, in the social festivities, and in architecture. It was at that time that the modest baroque Royal Palace was built, although it no longer served as a royal residence. In the eighteenth century a larger palace was built. Baroque features can still be seen in some ecclesiastical buildings and in certain residential buildings.
Hungarian Classicism, which unfolded in the first decades of the nineteenth century during the early Reform period, made its impact on the residential buildings of the aristocracy. However, in the burghers’ city attached to the palace the majority of the residential buildings were simple, solid, plastered houses. There were light sunlit cobbled streets, lined with low buildings with narrow but lively courtyards. The medieval sedilia at the entrances of these courtyards recall the way of life of those days - the leisure and customs of travellers, availing themselves of the inns offered by the city. The layout of the streets and squares was determined not by some geometrical principle, but by topography. There are hardly any houses that are identical; almost every house varies in the curve of its roof, the width of its gate or the smoothness of its wall. The Castle district is beautiful and simple. It was built by burghers and masons, in keeping with the demands of rationalism, alongside the buildings of the Church and the aristocracy.

The architecture of the twentieth century has significantly transformed the character of Castle Hill. Classicism raised two-storeyed, Romanticism three-storeyed, and Eclecticism four-storeyed buildings in the Castle area. But the turn of the century and the second part of the twentieth century saw the construction of larger apartment blocks on the sides of Castle Hill. A number of taller public buildings, including ministries and the National Archives, were also built there, disrupting both the medieval structure and the baroque outlines of the district.

The siege of the Castle during World War II inflicted great damage on the district and the palace. During the reconstruction, efforts were made to retain the architectural traditions of the Royal Palace and the baroque outlines, and to rebuild the dome. The palace took on a new role: it now houses museums, the National Library, the National Gallery, and the Central Archives. Restrictions were imposed on the height of the taller buildings. The decorative architecture of the Matthias Church and the Fishermen's Bastion are major attractions in the district. The new Hotel Hilton, utilizing the medieval facade of the Dominican monastery, was a new colourful addition to the district in the 1970s and gave a boost to tourism. Many believe that the Castle district has a style of its own, and that certain buildings do not fit in. But in fact the Castle district only had a consistent architectural style in the Middle Ages and the baroque period. Later this was lost as each period added its own architecture and style. Consequently the Castle district has no unified style, only a unified history.

The Tabán, the Viziváros and the Krisztinaváros

The Tabán, or Rácsváros (Serbian city), is situated between Castle Hill, the Náphegy, and Gellért Hill. In 1212 Andrew II, King of Hungary issued a decree which referred to this old part of Buda as the Tabán. Tabán means foothill in Turkish. According to some accounts, our conquering ancestors found Turkish-speaking families here. Presumably they gave this name to the locality. In the Middle Ages, the district was chosen by Serbians who had fled from the Balkans as a place favourable for business and trade. Old engravings show mosques and slender minarets among the small houses of the Tabán, proving that a number of Turks also found their homes here. The one-storeyed
houses surrounded by high walls, steep roofs, and narrow windows looking on to the street also suggest Turkish origin.

In the eighteenth century the development of the quarter was stalled, partly because Pest had taken over as the main centre of trade. The Tabán's attraction was reduced to its history, picturesqueness and Romanticism. The curving streets and lanes, the old one-storeyed houses, and the poverty of the tenements dug into the earth on the steeper slopes made the place a favourite spot for lovers, artists and romantics, though the taverns and famous old restaurants attracted even the well-to-do segments of society.

In the 1930s the Tabán was almost completely demolished, a loss that the romantics of today still mourn. Its narrow winding lanes made communication with the newly-developed parts of the city difficult and its lack of any sewage system presented a health hazard. Presumably, the destruction of the old quarter seemed easier than reconstruction. Now the district is a park, and only the parish church of the baroque period and a few Classicist and late baroque houses surrounding it survive.

Viziváros (the Water Town), parallel to the Danube and located along the axis of Fő (Main) Street, was once the quarter of the well-to-do bourgeois and trading strata, and is an interesting part of the old city of Buda. Several architectural periods are represented in Fő Street, but it is the baroque that predominates. What lends particular interest to the street is that the quarter used to be called 'the fishermen's town' in the baroque period. This flavour has been preserved in the street names - Fisherman Street and Carp Street - and in the fish restaurants. Bathóinya Square, half way down Fő Street, used to be the centre and market place of Viziváros. With its two lovely baroque churches and fine baroque houses, it is the capital's only surviving baroque square. Now, however, little remains of the one-storey houses that made up the old Viziváros.

Krisztinaváros is located to the north-west of the Tabán. This is the most densely built up part of Buda. In the 1920s, there were mainly one-storeyed buildings here. Most of the six-storeyed houses were built in the 1930s and 1940s. The Vérmező (Field of Blood) used to be military grounds until World War II, surrounded by riding avenues. Later it was laid out as a park. Next to the Vérmező lies the Southern railway station. After its destruction during the war it was reconstructed in the early 1960s with an airy, floating ticket hall.

**Lágymányos**

Lágymányos is the area south of Gellert Hill, bordered by the Danube, Budaörs and the Vienna railway line. Construction of blocks of flats around courtyards was begun on a large scale during the interwar period. The district was developed in the 1930s into a garden city. Gellért Square and the surrounding streets were completed shortly before the Great War, and the Hotel Gellért was opened during the war itself. The square draws its atmosphere from different sources: from the trams and buses coming from Pest and other parts of Buda, from the guests of the Hotel Gellért and its swimming pool, and also from the students of the nearby Technical University and its hostels. The small restaurants, cinema, department stores and smaller shops on Bartok Bela Street produce a bustling image. This character is even stronger around Fehervari Street, where there stands a large department store and market. In the area there are also major health centres and a number of ecclesiastical institutions. In the 1960s the Feneketlen (Bottomless) Lake and its surroundings were constructed and this is now a site for walks and sports activities. The building of the Hotel Flamenco was a major addition, broadening the services the district can offer. Moricz Zsigmond Circus and Kosztolanyi Dezso Square are also big junctions. One of the capital's new housing estates was built here between 1956 and 1964.

**The Inner City**

The term 'Inner City' used to refer to the inner core of the city within the medieval walls, and to Lipótváros to the north. In present-day usage it is applied to a far larger territory, including the present Fifth District within the Small Boulevard but stretching out across the Grand Boulevard to Arena Road. Now even the inner parts of Buda are often considered to belong to it.

The real core of Pest can be found in the northern part of the Inner City, where the city divides into two: into the world of offices and banks, and into the shopping centre, where shoppers crowd the colourful streets. There is also a great difference between the north and south of the city. Its southern half does not have the same throbbing vitality, being quieter as well as more neglected. Its characteristic features are the University of Economics, the Market Hall, and the newly-built Hotel Korona. This part of the inner city took on a secondary role in the eighteenth century: craftsmen and less wealthy artisans lived here, along with Serbians, Greeks and gypsies in a locality full of inns and so-called 'houses of ill repute'. The northern half had a different character. The specialized shops of the tradesmen were well respected by the local population. There were shops selling ironware, china, stationery, jewellery and books, as well as beer houses, cafes and small boarding houses, which combined to produce a lively social and business life.

In the 1820s, the city began to expand over the old walls. The city gates and walls were demolished, opening the way for development and modernization. The direction of development was set by the main roads leading out from the
old city gates. At first it was the southern part of the city which developed faster. A district of retailers, artisans and craftsmen grew up there. To the north, development occurred along Király (King) Street. Sugar (Radial) Avenue was designed to relieve the crowded district of Terézváros (Theresa Town), and to link the inner city with City Park, expressly developed to offer recreation and leisure to the people.

In 1821, Pest was the centre of the political reform movements. The Reform Age was not only full of the objectives of political and national independence, but also of new trends in architecture. The protests of the burghers against the absolutism and anti-Hungarian policy of Francis I, who ruled from 1792 to 1835, gave birth to Hungarian Classicism, which reflected primarily Italian and French elements, to which German elements were subordinated. This trend rejected the use of more valuable materials, such as stone facing, partly for ideological (anti-aristocratic) reasons but also out of economic considerations, preferring brick walls and plastered facades instead. The simple building materials and method of construction they used, together with particular features, such as facade proportions, combined to produce a Hungarian style different from the Classicism of other countries. The Classicism of Pest is characterized by pilasters clasping two storeys, with a central portion ornamented with columns or pillars. It was most commonly used in the apartment blocks of the period, but public buildings and even palaces were also built in this style. Only later did it appear in ecclesiastical architecture, when the Hungarian Protestants used it in their churches to express their opposition to the Catholic Habsburg imperial house. Yet Classicism did not win universal approval. Count Istvan Széchenyi, who was one of the major figures of the Hungarian Reform Age, saw medieval Gothic as the architectural style best suited to the Hungarian landscape and environment.

Some of the finest examples of Classicism from this period were built in Lipótváros in the early nineteenth century. Lipótváros lies to the north of the Inner City and was the first part of the city which was built in a consistent style according to a master plan. In the spirit of Classicism, the district is a network of streets crossing at right angles, parallel and perpendicular to the Danube. Unfortunately the Classicist palaces of the southern part of the district were pulled down, and barely a quarter of them have survived. The row of houses built along the Danube near the city, and the Ritz, Hungaria and Bristol Hotels which were all destroyed during World War II, were true masterpieces of Classicism.

(The Royal Palace of the Buda Castle)

(The burgher settlement of the Castle District)
(Street on the slopes of Castle Hill, view of Viziváros)

(The northern and eastern slopes of the Castle Hill, Viziváros below the Matthias Church and Hotel Hilton)

(above - the bank of the Danube River at Pest and the Inner City; below – The Inner City, Karóly Mihály Street)
(The centre of the Inner City, Vörösmarty Square and the Gerbeaud (confectioner) building)

(Hősök (Heroes') Square – the Millenial Memorial, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Exhibitions Hall. The Castle of Vajdahunyad.

(The Lipótváros (Leopold Town) – the governmental quarter and the Parliament)

(Blaha Lujza Square – the junction of the Grand Boulevard and Rákóczi Street)
(left – recently built condomium in the part of Lipót City fast becoming a slum; right – Nagydiofa Street: detail of the rehabilitation of a block of flats in the outer part of the Inner City)

(Traditional environment of Old Buda)

(Gülbaba Street: the Rózsadomb)

(Semi-detached houses along Törökvész Street on the Rózsadomb)
The period before the Compromise, the 1850s and 1860s, were characterized by Romanticism and subsequently by early Eclecticism, although Classicism continued to feature. In Pest the main objective of Romanticism was the creation of a national architecture. Its most outstanding products are the Vigadó (Concert Hall) with its elegant facade overlooking the Danube. This served as the _petit bourgeois_ casino, hosting the balls, concerts and different festivities of the burgheers. The building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is also a product of early Eclecticism, as are the Baslica (the largest Catholic church in Pest), the public baths on Margit Island, and the synagogue on Dohány Street. The three-to-four-storeyed palaces and apartment blocks on Sugar (Radial) Avenue were also built in this style. This avenue, now known as Andrassy Avenue, is one of the most beautiful streets of the capital. Almost half way down the avenue lies the neo-Renaissance Opera. The avenue leads out to Heroes' Square in front of the City Park. The square is dominated by Millennial Memorial, built in 1896 to commemorate the millennium of the Hungarian Conquest, and is flanked by the Museum of Fine Arts to the left, and the Palace of Exhibitions to the right. Both museums were built in the style of the Italian Renaissance. The construction of Sugar Avenue was completed in 1887. At the same time the Public Works Committee decided upon the construction of the Grand Boulevard (Nagykörút). The inner ring road, the Small Boulevard, had already been completed, though it had yet to be paved and have trees planted. The Grand Boulevard stretching from Margit Bridge to Petőfi Bridge, can be broken into four arcs. It is architecturally relatively monotonous, in the sense that there are few squares or public buildings along it. However, the uniformity is relieved by a number of valuable architectural creations: the early Eclecticism of the Vígszínház Theatre with its Renaissance elements, the cast iron Western railway station displaying elements of Romanticism, the surviving Classicist houses down Király Street flanking the passages to the Jewish quarter, the art nouveau palace of the Academy of Music, and the monumental New York Palace.

Today's visitor can learn a great deal about the city by setting out to explore the area around the boulevards. Of course, much has changed since their construction. But the districts next to Grand Boulevard still retain their various characters. Going from north to south, the first arc is the most elegant. There are numerous expensive small shops amidst the mostly six-storeyed blocks containing large flats and roof terraces; there are numerous good restaurants, beer houses and cafes, expensive cars are parked in the streets, and the people are elegantly dressed. The second and third arcs are even busier. The traffic is heavier because of the nearby railway stations and the shops. Here the shops are less elegant, and their goods are cheaper. The Grand Boulevard itself is in good condition, but the buildings immediately behind it badly need restoring.
after many years of neglect. The streets and small squares further away are somewhat quieter with few shops and less crowds. Here we find fewer cars parked, and they tend to be of cheaper makes and in worse condition. Yet the ageing four- and five-storeyed buildings are capable of springing surprises, with beautiful features such as friezes, ornaments, decorated windows and gates. Reaching the fourth arc, the streets have a small-town atmosphere, with smaller, even one-storeyed, buildings hidden among the larger ones.

This tour along the Grand Boulevard reveals both how differentiated the various parts of the city are, and how the demands made upon architecture have changed as bourgeois development has proceeded. In contrast to the aristocracy of earlier ages, the bourgeoisie, and in particular the grand bourgeoisie, took less direct interest in architecture, and preferred to leave the planning and building of their houses to professional architects. The greater demand for and commissions of architects also served to promote the technical development of architecture. Expansion was ensured by the abolition of the system of guilds in 1859 which had guaranteed the monopoly of working craftsmen. This opened up the way for the development of the architectural profession.

The years between the Compromise and the turn of the century were unambiguously the age of Eclecticism, which was the architecture of flourishing capitalism. In those days, works appeared in urban architecture which could not be achieved with Classicism. Hungarian Eclecticism and Romanticism were of a European standard. Eclecticism in Budapest spread about a decade later than in the West European countries. Its immediate antecedent was Viennese Eclecticism: the building of the Ring, with its neo-Renaissance blocks of flats, the Viennese Opera, and also the Italian Renaissance universities. The essence of Eclecticism was that each building was erected in a style befitting its role. Hence, Eclecticism was a deliberately pluralist style.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Eclecticism of Budapest entered a new period, that of mature Eclecticism, the quality of which was poorer. This trend corresponds to the late German variant of the style. Baroque and Renaissance motifs were mixed in many buildings. Although Hungarian Eclecticism suffered from a tendency of seeking effects for effect's sake, it could still produce harmonious pieces of art that fitted nicely into their environment. Yet these buildings could not match the grandeur of Paris and Vienna.

The end of the century saw art nouveau enter the architectural scene. This new trend lasted from the millennium until World War I. A group of Hungarian architects, having tired of the stylistic repetitions of Eclecticism, wanted to make a radical break with the past, with academicalism and the official trends. Art nouveau, which advocated the transformation of the traditional Eclectic forms, and which stood for functionalism, offered the chance to make this break. And it quickly brought considerable success. The Academy of Music on Liszt Ferenc Square was built in this style, as were the Clotild palaces on Felszabadulas Square, which were commissioned by a female member of the ruling Habsburg house. The Hotel Gellért and its swimming pool, the Drechsler palace, the Pension Institute of the Hungarian State Railways opposite the Opera, and the Gresham palace, overlooking the Danube on Roosevelt Square, are other examples of this style.

The movement's success was established by the fact that a significant variant of the innovative movement also evolved: the so-called 'Hungarian art nouveau'. Young architects created a special national style out of the international language of forms and the elements of Hungarian folk art. They also stressed the difference between Hungarian architecture, and of Budapest in particular, and the Austrian, mainly Viennese, architecture.

The movement looked for motifs to the descendants of the Aryan peoples who had migrated to India with the Hungarians from their common Asian homeland, but the search extended only as far as the late-sixteenth-century Indo-Islamic components. These historical elements were combined with Hungarian folk motifs.

In 1879 the Museum of Applied Arts was inaugurated in the presence of the Hungarian King. The building is perhaps the best example of Hungarian art nouveau. The ceramic ornamentation of the high roof, the oriental atmosphere of the sills, and its bright colours and playful elegance mean not only a break from the greyness of the age, but also a bold challenge to the dominant trends in architecture. This is reflected in a number of Hungarian art nouveau buildings, such as the Geological Institute in Népstadion Street, the Post Office Savings Bank which today houses the National Bank on Hold Street, the National Institute of the Blind in Ajtós Diirer Row, the Budapest Zoo, the Gutenberg Palace, and the arcaded bazaar on Dohany Street. Other examples include the Rózsavölgyi house on Servita Square, the grammar school in Abonyi Street, the charity hostel in Amerikai Street, and the school of commerce in Vas Street.

In the early 1900s this trend was pushed into the background, when it turned out that the popular motifs in themselves were insufficient for the realization of functional and monumental works. Hungarian architectural opinion is still divided in its assessment of art nouveau. Many people hold the view that the individualistic buildings broke up the image of the city and are in glaring contrast to their environment, producing a sense of the unfinished. The turrets, wooden structures and domes seem to be unjustified. Others believe they provide interesting and colourful highlights to the city.

The country-town atmosphere of the old city completely disappeared with
the construction work carried out after the Compromise. Planning disrupted the meandering inner squares and streets with its geometric principles. Shops lost their local character, as the share of their customers from the local population declined. The flavour of old small-town life is only preserved in two promenades, Váci Street and the embankment of the Danube. The tourists flooding the modern hotels along the river and people taking the air have finally given the district a throbbing metropolitan atmosphere.

The huge multi-storeyed buildings of the Intercontinental, Hyatt and Forum Hotels, unabashed examples of modern architecture, are the source of much architectural dispute. The criticism is made that they do not fit in with their mostly Classicist environment and that they cut off the Inner City from the Danube. The Pest bank of the Danube extends beyond the old core of the city, and includes other parts of the present-day Inner City. The governmental quarter was developed in the northern part of Lipotváros (Leopold Town) in the late nineteenth century. Its most significant building is the Parliament, built in an Eclectic, neo-Gothic style. The square around it is occupied by grand buildings containing ministries and offices, giving the quarter a busy feel in the daytime, but leaving it quiet in the evenings.

The Pest and Buda sides of the Inner City are linked by bridges that are famed for their beauty. Margit (Margaret) Bridge is the northernmost bridge, meeting the northern end of the Grand Boulevard. To the south lies the favourite of the local inhabitants, the Chain Bridge, with its evening floodlights and fine arches, which stands as a tribute to the Reform Age city- and bridge-builder, Count Széchényi. The bridge links the northern end of the Small Boulevard with Clark Adam Square. Here stands the Zero Stone, the point from which all Hungarian road distances are measured. Leading off from the square to the right is Fő Street, which heads up through the Vizivaros to Batthyany Square. Straight ahead is the tunnel under the Castle Hill, taking traffic from Pest through to Krisztinaváros in Buda. At the southern end of the Small Boulevard the Szabadság (Freedom) Bridge (or Franz Joseph Bridge, as it was known before the war) leads to Kelenfold, Lagymányos and the southern slope of Gellért Hill in Buda. The southernmost bridge of the Inner City is Petőfi Bridge. The Grand Boulevard crosses the river and continues round on the Buda side through Moszkva (Moscow) Square to the Margit Bridge. The middle of the five bridges is the Erzsébet (Elizabeth) Bridge which is an extension of Rákóczi and Kossuth Lajos Streets. At the time of its construction (between 1897 and 1903), it was the largest single-arched bridge in Europe and the most beautiful suspension bridge in the world. Like all the Budapest bridges, it suffered the fate of being blown up by the retreating Germans in 1945. The new Elizabeth Bridge, which was opened in 1964, is in many ways similar to the original, and shows German and English architectural influences.

When admiring the bridges, one notices the baths and swimming pools along the Buda side. Near the Buda bridgehead of the Margit Bridge are the Csaszar (Emperor) and Lukacs (Luke) baths and the Komjádi swimming pool. Nearby at the northern end of Fő Street are the Király (King) baths, and at the Buda end of Elisabeth Bridge there are the Rudas baths, the Imre baths, and a little further from the river bank, the Rácí baths. Facing Szabadkis (Freedom) Bridge there are the Gellért baths, within the wonderful building of the Gellért Hotel. Swimming pools and baths can be found in Margaret Island, such as the baths of the medicinal Hotel Thermal, the Palatinus open air swimming pools, and the National Sports Pool. Nor is the Pest side devoid of baths. In the City Park there are the Széchenyi baths, which like all the others are fed by medicinal spas. There are also baths outside the Inner City; the Dagaly swimming pool lies at the Pest end of Arpad Bridge, and there are baths at Római Fürdő, Csillaghegy and Pünkösdfürdö on the Buda side, and at Pesterzsébet in Pest.

These swimming pools and baths attract local and foreign visitors not only for their curative properties, but also for their architecture. From the Arpad dynasty onwards, many historical eras have erected baths in recognition of the healing power of spas, spawning architecture to suit these needs (Szviezsényi, 1939). Sadly, neither their waters nor their architecture have been adequately protected. It is particularly the Turkish baths that are in danger now, and are in desperate need of repair. However, the Gellért and the Széchenyi baths have recently undergone reconstruction work. The new and elegant medicinal Hotel Thermal was built in place of the medicinal bath designed by Miklós Ybl, which was destroyed during World War II.

Walking through the Buda side of the Inner City from north to south there are several localities that deserve mention. Mártírok útja (the Road of Martyrs), for instance, which is the continuation of the Grand Boulevard of Pest on the Buda side, borders the Vizivaros, forming part of Buda's outer boulevard. Around the Mechwart Gardens stand several public institutions, including the district council, and the Central Statistical Office. Moszkva Square is situated at the crossroads of Martírok utja, Krisztina Körút, and Szilágyi Erzssébet Avenue, which leads out to Buda Hills. This square has seen many uses. When its mines were filled in after World War I, it was turned into tennis courts, and now is a major transport terminal, serving trams and buses and the metro. During weekdays it is crowded with people going in to work, and at weekends, many people change here on their way out to the hills for excursions. Next to Moszkva Square is Széna Square (Haymarket), where a coach terminal and a number of commercial establishments can be found. Near Szena Square stands the Fény Street Market, famous for its flower market, but also offering a rich
choice of vegetables.

**Obuda (Old Buda)**

The old settlement that dated back to the Romans on the plain between the hills and the Danube was totally destroyed during the Turkish period. After the expulsion of the Turks it became the property of the Count Zichy family. From the eighteenth century onwards it was a royal estate, mainly belonging to the Queen. The inhabitants were engaged in agriculture, viniculture and milling in almost total seclusion. To some extent this seclusion survived even its merger into Budapest. The range of the József Mountains stretching to the Danube has always separated Obuda from Buda proper, and transport links with Pest are not easy.

Obuda first developed in a modest baroque style. Rural single-storeyed houses with narrow facades and long courtyards stretching behind were built in the zigzagging streets. In the early nineteenth century, when the *embourgeoisement* of the population was proceeding vigorously, the more ornamented late baroque and Classicist houses lent a new character to the neighbourhood. During the period after the Compromise, the development of Obuda lagged behind the rest of the capital. It lost its earlier baroque atmosphere and became increasingly rural.

The outer regions of Obuda did not suffer this setback in development. Besides the detached family houses built on the northern slopes of the Ferenc Hill, another settlement which developed along the Roman bank has been important in offering popular recreation facilities for water sports. The Roman remains at Aquincum, excavated in the 1880s and 1890s, represent a major attraction for tourists.

From the middle of the twentieth century the architectural environment of Obuda changed completely. Old districts were pulled down to make room for new housing estates, a large shopping centre, and the road heading toward Szentendre, although efforts were made to retain the more valuable sections and buildings. This included the main square and the streets leading off it, the Classicist building of the district council, several pleasant houses of the period, and the former Zichy palace. Preserving the memory of earlier architecture are the main parish church of Obuda, the synagogue, and the Protestant church of Kálvin Street. In the basement of one house a museum was set up presenting the Roman camp. The oval-shaped building of the silk-spinning workshop near Arpad Bridge, built in Louis XVI style, is a true monument to the age of Joseph II (1780-1790). The restoration movement of the late 1980s has undertaken the rescue of this and other old buildings. This is important, as Obuda holds a special place in the hearts of the capital’s inhabitants for the small taverns, restaurants and old neighbourhoods that have an atmosphere of their own.

**The Buda Hills**

The Buda Hills have a local colour that is special to Budapest. The long slopes have been favourable for agriculture, especially for viticulture, until around the Compromise. It subsequently became a popular site for recreation and home-building. Construction began in the 1840s and 1860s, as the intelligentsia and the richer inhabitants of Pest built their Classicist and Romantic villas. Until World War I it was mainly summer houses that were built, but during the interwar period an increasing number of permanent residences appeared. This has long been a prestigious residential area of the city.

In the 1960s private construction began in the area, financed by investments that were strictly controlled and assisted by the state. The better educated, skilled classes with credit and capital who had not benefited from the state's housing policy started to build semi-detached houses in this area. The belt of semi-detached houses that appeared has grown in intensity, and the plots have become smaller. The architectural character of the area is quite varied. There are family villas built in the Classicist and Romanticist styles after the Compromise, and family houses built by the emergent *grand bourgeois* strata in the 1970s and 1980s: two- or three-storeyed buildings in modern, post-modern or even in Classicist style. Several public institutions have also been built here; big children's homes, laboratories, and research institutes. Here and there are clusters of taller buildings. The greeneries, the quiet, the clean air, and the long stretches of forest have made the residential areas of Zugliget, Hűvösvölgy, Pasaret, Németvölgy, around the Budakeszi road, and even on the Rózsadomb in the inner part of Buda favourite spots of excursions out from Budapest.

**Twentieth-century housing developments**

Viewing the city from Gellert Hill, one can see that the capital is surrounded by two rings of new estates. The first ring is attached to the inner parts of the city, and can be found in the suburbs of the so-called transit belt, while the second ring is located in the formerly autonomous suburbs.

Modern architecture made its appearance in Hungarian urban design in the first decade of the twentieth century. At that time the pure uniform forms and the potential of reinforced concrete and glass enjoyed only a limited appeal. Nor were the city authorities any more receptive. Advocates of modern architecture could construct only a few public buildings on account of their
leftist leanings. These included several schools and churches. However, modern apartment blocks became fashionable because of the functional demands of the bourgeois strata. Examples of the Modernist style are the modern blocks of small flats that were built at Pasarét in 1931. This was the start of the construction of modern family houses in Budapest, primarily among reform-minded intellectuals. In the early 1940s, two large working-class housing estates consisting of detached houses were built, one in Angyalföld and the other one at Albertfalva. They were financed by the Social Security Fund.

Up until 1951, only a few apartment blocks and experimental small housing estates of 7-800 flats each were developed. Traditional materials were usually used and the construction was similarly traditional: no departures were made from the existing street plan or system of plots. In keeping with the architectural ideology of the period, modern architectural forms were rejected by the advocates of 'socialist-realism' and those who wanted to revive the so-called progressive national traditions. One reason was the fact that the building industry, which had been nationalized in the early 1950s, was not equipped for the manufacture of the structures that modern architecture required, and no opportunities for importing were available.

Socialist-realist architecture developed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. After the war its purpose was to serve the highly centralized management of society in the East European countries. It was a fundamentally ideological style of architecture, detached from real social needs, which sought to express the strength and greatness of the working class by architectural means. The public buildings were almost monumental, decorated with friezes representing scenes from workers' lives. In this style, Classicist and Eclectic forms evoking national traditions were gradually enriched by art nouveau elements. The Thalman Street housing estate of Angyalföld and the estate at Béke Square in Csepel are examples of this style.

Only in the 1960s and 1970s did the mass construction of housing estates begin. In this period, larger housing estates of 2,000 flats were built in the outskirts in place of demolished residential areas in industrial districts. The housing estate of Lagymanyos was one such development. Originally the idea was to build blocks of the same height around closed, or almost closed, courtyards, but over time the design became less compact. Some of the buildings are symmetrical, but there are also long rows of buildings running perpendicular to the street, and tower blocks as well. The largest housing estate of the period, which consisted of 7,500 flats, was built between 1958 and 1965, and lies in the newly-developed outer Ferencváros on the Úllöi Road. But here it was not the street plan that determined the design, but the conception that the estate should be broken up into neighbourhood units. The housing estates of the 1960s kept to the traditional design of basing the layout on the street plan, and using traditional materials.

Kelenföld was a pre-World War II industrial development on the flat land between the Vienna railway line and Albertfalva. It is a mixed development, where from 1965 onwards long ten-storeyed rows and tower blocks were built in the midst of factories, tenement blocks, villas and smaller detached family houses. A similar estate with rows of uniform buildings is being built in Kobanya, the oldest industrial district of Budapest.

By the 1970s a huge system of investment and construction had emerged capable of building more than 10,000 flats in an estate. It developed standardized identical buildings using the prefabricated technology of house factories, laying down increasingly restricted standards. These estates were located in the suburban districts of Budapest, either in what used to be separate villages or in newly developed areas. Examples of the latter include Kispest, Budafok, Rakospalota, Békásmegyer, Újpest, and later Gazdagret and Kaposztásmegyer. The developments built in the 1960s and 1970s have increasingly lost any individual architectural character. The Eclectic elements have been abandoned, and the new solutions are monotonous in both their architecture and their layout. The buildings are constructed using prefabricated blocks made in housing factories, and a high proportion of them stand over nine storeys high. It is against the interests of the large state investment companies to build lasting structures that are costlier to maintain, particularly when their sole target is quantity, which pushes all consideration of quality into the background. Essential services such as creches, kindergartens and schools are either missing or are insufficient. The development of open spaces, parks and playgrounds is usually poor.

The old suburbs

Very little of the old suburbs survive: partly because - as we have seen - new housing estates were built in their place, and partly because the inhabitants themselves have transformed them with new family houses. But they were also transformed by the redevelopment of their centres. In most suburbs new centres with public offices, childcare institutions and other services have been developed. Yet some parts still retain the old rural atmosphere. Cinkota and the outer parts of the Rákos suburbs retain something of their past. Most of the villages that were formerly separate from Budapest - Rákoszenthimbóly, Mátásföld, Sashalom, Pesthidegkút and Csillaghegy - consist mostly of detached family houses with small gardens. One can find here the continuity of construction that is common to many small Hungarian towns. Rakospalota is one such example. And although life is naturally entirely different here from in
the capital, and sometimes more difficult, yet it holds a growing attraction for
many. The detached houses with gardens and fresh air, offering opportunities
for cultivation, are increasingly in demand. Nor are the transport facilities too
bad, offering easy access to workplaces and shops in the city centre.