

Prague - Heritages

Past and Present - Built and Social

AMPS Proceedings Series 35.2

AMPS PROCEEDINGS SERIES 35

Czech Technical University & AMPS. 28-30 June, 2023

Prague – Heritages

Past and Present - Built and Social

ARCHITECTURE_MEDIA_POLITICS_SOCIETY
Amps

EDITOR:

Jitka Cirklová

EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION EDITOR:

Amany Marey

© AMPS

AMPS PROCEEDINGS SERIES 35. ISSN 2398-9467

INTRODUCTION

Prague – Heritages Past and Present - Built and Social

2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Heritage. It established culture as a concept to be safeguarded. That event came three decades after the World Heritage Convention. Through that, UNESCO had set up its World Heritage List of protected sites and buildings. The intervening years have seen multiple shifts in how we define heritage – as both material objects and social traditions. Today more than ever before, the distinction is blurred. The streets on which we live, and the monuments we protect are all connected to the traditions and social groupings we celebrate and preserve – whether physically, socially or, increasingly, digitally.

What we mean by heritage today then, is an open and diverse question. Our buildings and environments, our cities and neighborhoods, our memorials and our artworks, our cultures and communities are all component parts of what we understand as ‘preservable’ history. The dynamics at play are, however, complex. Conserving architectural heritage can conflict with development models. Community traditions are threatened by globalization. Monuments are often focal points for cultural contestation. Archaeological sites are valued in themselves and simultaneously erased by both the forces of conflict and ‘progress’. Digital models and modes of experience both attract a new audience and can alienate an older one.

However, the past and the present also overlap and mutually support. Placemaking sees built and cultural heritage as key to urban practice. Contextualization is central to planning laws. Museums are sites for communities and display. Digital modelling can be the only way to fully experience an ancient object or archeological site. Galleries present historical art while debating meanings in contemporary terms. Reflecting this scenario, the papers collected in this publication represent diverse perspectives of the complex and shifting concept of heritage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	
IMPACT OF FORCED EVICTIONS & LOSS OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: CASE OF EMPRESS MARKET, KARACHI, PAKISTAN	1
Suneela Ahmed, Rahat Arsalan	
Chapter 2	
RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE OF THE ANCIENT CHURCHES ON THE SYRIAN COAST	11
Ghieth Al Warah, Ram Sateesh Paspuleti	
Chapter 3	
RE-READING THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN THE VOGTLAND/FOJTSKO	22
Maria Frölich-Kulik, Leo Bockelmann	
Chapter 4	
COLLABORATING THROUGH HERITAGE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VIRTUAL MEMORIALS IN THE WAKE OF POSTCOLONIAL VIOLENCE	32
Nicholas Forrest Frayne	
Chapter 5	
THRESHOLDS AS DISPOSITIVE OF THE INTIMATE: TOWARD A VALUATION OF CULTURAL TESTIMONIES FROM PREMODERN AND MODERN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE	41
Virginie Lasalle	
Chapter 6	
SYMPATHETIC APPROACH TO HERITAGE PLACES ACKNOWLEDGING ATMOSPHERES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DANISH CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS	51
Nina Ventzel Riis, Mathilde Kirkegaard	
Chapter 7	
KING OTAKAR II'S FOUNDATIONAL CITIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC	62
Sandra Jiménez, Antonio Moro, Jordi Franquesa	
Chapter 8	
RE-MAPPING THE MULTI-CULTURAL LAYERS: VERNACULAR HOUSING IN ANATOLIA	68
Yekta Özgüven, Merve A. Kara Yüksel, A. Kumsal Şen Bayram, Doğan Z. Ertürk	
Chapter 9	
EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF KINETIC ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS TO CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES: INTEGRATION AS INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION METHOD	75
Anil Yavuz	
Chapter 10	
RAUL LINO'S VIRTUAL GUIDE TOUR IN ABRANTES – AN INTEGRATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ARTS AND ENGINEERING	85
Anabela Moreira, Inês Serrano, Paulo Santos, Regina Delfino, Pedro Matos, António Manso	
Chapter 11	
COMMON GROUND: MERGING OF DIGITAL CULTURE WITH TRADITIONAL CRAFT	96
Kuan-Yu Yeh, Kane Yanagawa	

Chapter 12		
MEMORY & PLACE OF ROYAL SAINTS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE ROYAL CHAPELS OF SAINTS MARGARET AND WENCESLAS		107
Wendy Vencel		
Chapter 13		
ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL VALUE OF BUILT HERITAGE: A CASE STUDY OF PEOPLE'S PARK COMPLEX IN CHINATOWN, SINGAPORE		116
Junjie Qin, Nikhil Joshi		
Chapter 14		
DEMOLITION AS A BRUTAL INTERVENTION OVER THE PAST: THE FORMER MVM-ELECTRIC POWER DISTRIBUTOR STATION BY CSABA VIRÁG IN THE HISTORICAL BUDA CASTLE DISTRICT, BUDAPEST		128
Balázs Polito, António Carvalho		
Chapter 15		
TREE-MAN-ARCHITECTURE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP		141
F. Samara Rubio S		
Chapter 16		
ENGAGED ART FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE STUDY OF FORWARD		150
Astrid Huijgen, Zsuzsanna Kravalik, Inge Bongers		
Chapter 17		
PUBLIC CONTESTATION OF GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS ON HERITAGE: THE CASE OF THE PENICHE FORTRESS (PORTUGAL)		160
Catarina Almeida Marado		
Chapter 18		
INVESTIGATING THE SYSTEM(S) OF MAKING IN HINDU TEMPLES OF JAJPUR TOWN, ODISHA ERSTWHILE KALINGA REGION, INDIA		169
Aditya Jain, Smriti Saraswat, Rabi Narayan Mohanti		
Chapter 19		
NARRATION OF CONTESTED CULTURE: THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURES IN THE RENEWAL OF CULTURAL IDENTITY		182
Trisha Sarkar		
Chapter 20		
THE WHITE PYRAMID OF CORNWALL – A LANDSCAPE IN LIMBO		190
Lillian Tranborg		
Chapter 21		
THE IMPACT OF LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF DESIGN QUALITY ON THE CONSERVATION OF MODERNIST BUILDINGS IN HONG KONG		202
Han Man, Wu Jiawei		
Chapter 22		
THE CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION OF JARDIM AMÉRICA IN SÃO PAULO		212
Silvia Ferreira Santos Wolff, Roseli D'elboux		

Chapter 23		
A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE VITALITY OF HISTOR-IC BUILDINGS IN SINGAPORE'S CIVIC DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF THE CAPITOL SINGAPORE	222	
Weiwei Wang, Nikhil Joshi		
Chapter 24		
THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE: THE PHENOMENON OF 'AGE' IN HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS	235	
Paul Tuppeny		
Chapter 25		
THE NAUTICAL CULTURE OF SARDINIA, A SYNTHESIS OF TRADITIONS AND HYBRIDIZATIONS	247	
Enrico Tommaso Carassale		
Chapter 26		
CONSIDERING HERITGAGE MANAGEMENT IN ENGLISH SYNAGOGUES	257	
Jessie Clark		
Chapter 27		
WILL THE CURRENT EU LEGILATION CONCERNING BUILDINGS ENTAIL THE DESIRED REDUCTIONS IN GREENHOUSE GASES?	269	
Thomas Kampmann		
Chapter 28		
THE FORMER SANATORIUM "CASA DEL SOLE" IN PALERMO (ITALY): AN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FROM THE EARLY 1900s	285	
Tiziana Basiricò, Antonio Cottone		
Chapter 29		
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN(S) FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE. THE DEVELOPMENT OF DESIGN MODELS FOR UNESCO FRAGILE SITES	296	
Greta Allegretti		
Chapter 30		
LOOKING TO SEE, TOUCHING TO UNDERSTAND, SO WHAT TO DO FOR PRESERVE?	306	
Hasan Tahsin Selçuk		
Chapter 31		
HERITAGE EXPERIENCE DESIGN: CASE OF SARDINIA	.315	
Nicolò Ceccarelli, Nađa Beretić		
Chapter 32		
SCHOOL IN TZAR: CULTURAL GENOCIDE AS HERITAGE PRESERVATION	326	
Shant Charoian		
Chapter 33		
VANISHING LANDSCAPES: SOCIO-CULTURAL TRACES IN PORTUGUESE ANIMATION	331	
Pedro Serrazina		

Chapter 34		343
SPATIAL INTERPRETATIONS ON THE TRACES OF THE PAST: REFERENCING FORMERLY FUNCTIONAL ABANDONED STRUCTURES		
Anna Efstathiou, Elpida Roidou, Christina Vergopoulou - Efstathiou, Maria Vergopoulou-Efstathiou		
Chapter 35		353
INCREASING HERITAGE AWARENESS THROUGH ACTIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING: FROM CLAY MODELS TO VIRTUAL AND AUGMENTED REALITY IN THE CLASSROOM		
Marc Frincu, Simina Frincu		
Chapter 36		363
COMMUNITY-PERCEPTIONS OF PLACE-CHARACTER AND ASSOCIATED MEANINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF A CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL LANDSCAPE: THE CASE OF THE HISTORIC NEIGHBOURHOOD OF PATHURIAGHATA IN KOLKATA, INDIA		
Prerana Chatterjee, Raymond James Green		
Chapter 37		377
HOW LIBYAN IMMIGRANTS HAVE CHOSEN AND DECORATED THEIR HOUSE IN THE UK SINCE THE 1980s		
Intesar Ibrahim, Yun Gao		
Chapter 38		389
BRINGING INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TO LIGHT: A METHODOLOGY FOR ILLUSTRATING SOUTHERN EUROPEAN UTILITARIAN DESIGN THROUGH THE DIGITALIZATION OF ASSETS AND THE CREATION OF AN OPEN PUBLIC VIRTUAL 3D LIBRARY		
D. Cano-Lasso, S. Louie, J. Ramos, A. Herruzo		
Chapter 39		399
TENTS, TABERNACLES, AND GOSPEL HALLS: A RELIGIOUS VERNACULAR IN ULSTER		
Kevin Miller, Ian Montgomery, Catherine O'hara		
Chapter 40		411
IS THERE A CHANGE IN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL ASSETS THROUGH CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION TREATMENT?		
Beate Kozub		
Chapter 41		419
RETROFITTING LUNDAGER: TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ARCHITECTURAL SENSEMAKING		
Nicolai Bo Andersen, Victor Boye Julebæk		
Chapter 42		433
SOUND LIFELINE: SARAJEVO UNDER THE SIEGE, A CITY RECONFIGURED THROUGH SONIC EXPERIENCE		
Lejla Odobasic Novo		
Chapter 43		443
SKETCHING THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF A DISTRICT OF ATHENS THROUGH CINEMATIC IMAGES OF THE 1950s AND 1960s		
Georgia Eleftheraki		

Chapter 44		
THE TRANSFORMATION OF POST-INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE: CULTURAL, URBAN, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT. CASE STUDY FROM ZABRZE, POLAND		455
Jakub Świerzawski, Ming Hu, Justyna Kleszcz, Piotr Kmieciak		
Chapter 45		
WHAT CAN WE DO WITH CONTESTED MONUMENTS?		464
M. Paula O'donohoe		
Chapter 46		
PUBLIC SPACE, WELL-BEING AND CULTURAL IDENTITY		477
Alžběta Vaštová		
Chapter 47		
QUEER ORIENTATIONS: THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ORIENTALISTS		490
Mauricio Baros Townsend		
Chapter 48		
DISCOVERING THE PAST WHEN MAKING HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARIES		499
Maja Hagerman		
Chapter 49		
PALEONTOLOGY AND WILDNESS AS HERITAGE PERFORMANCE IN THE BURGESS SHALE		509
Chris Chang-Yen Phillips		
Chapter 50		
CONTRIBUTIONS OF SURFACE DESIGN IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GEOPRODUCTS OF THE CAÇAPAVA GEOPARK ASPIRING UNESCO		519
Amanda Da Silveira Bairros, Sandra Regina Rech		
Chapter 51		
RECYCLING HERITAGE: THE DOUBLE LIFE OF ARCHITECTURAL REPRESENTATIONS		529
Karen Olesen		
Chapter 52		
CITIES AS MULTIPLES – EMULATION IN URBAN FORM, FROM COLONIAL CAPITALS TO NODAL SUBURBS		536
Conrad Hamann, Ian Nazareth		
Chapter 53		
KEY ISSUES FOR EFFECTIVE HERITAGE-LED PLACEMAKING PROCESSES: PRACTICES OF ADAPTIVE REUSE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN THREE RURAL INDUSTRIAL SITES IN WEST SWEDEN		545
Paula Widmark, Susanne Fredholm		
Chapter 54		
INFRASTRUCTURE AS HERITAGE: EXPLORING THE ELSINORE HIGHWAY AS DISSONANT HERITAGE		554
Lars Rolfsted Mortensen		

Chapter 55		567
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL MECHANISM ON REVITALISING MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE IN HONG KONG: A RETROSPECT		
Jiawei Wu, Man Han		
Chapter 56		576
MESKHETIAN TERRACES: FUNCTIONAL-SPATIAL ASPECTS OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE EXAMPLE OF GEORGIA		
Shorena Tsilosani		
Chapter 57		584
THE WELFARE STATE'S SUBURBAN BUILDING CULTURE – DISCUSSING VALUES		
Charlie C. Steenbergi		
Chapter 58		595
(UN)WANTED MONUMENT: ON ART, MEMORY AND DESTRUCTION		
Elise Kleitz		
Chapter 59		602
PRESERVATION vs TRANSFORMATION? THE PARADOX OF FRAGILITY IN UNESCO BUFFER ZONES		
Sara Ghirardini		
Chapter 60		610
REJUVENATING CULTURE: ENHANCING CULTURAL HERITAGE AT RĀMAPPA TEMPLE		
Rohan Sadhu, Renata Jadresin Milic		
Chapter 61		621
MOBILIZING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED HERITAGE IN OBERLIN VILLAGE		
Alicia Ebbitt McGill, Dru McGill		
Chapter 62		637
A WALK THROUGH ANCIENT EGYPT: MODERN INCORPORATIONS OF ANCIENT THEMES		
Renee Lamb, Reem Elasfoury		
Chapter 63		648
A HELPING SCAN: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND THE BENEFITS OF A STATE-WIDE DIGITIZATION CENTER FOR PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY		
Ashlie Brewer		
Chapter 64		655
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN JAPAN: THE CASE OF KABUKI THEATRE		
Giorgia Caffagni		
Chapter 65		663
KOWLOON WALLED CITY, A SOCIAL URBAN ANALYSIS THROUGH PICTURES AND DRAWINGS		
Sofía Quiroga Fernández, Guillermo Sánchez Sotés		

Chapter 66

674

THE CITADEL OF ROSES (SPAIN): A PROJECT OF SOCIALISATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Marc Bouzas Sabater, Lluís Palahí Grimal

Chapter 67

684

CHALLENGES IN THE PROTECTION OF A ROCK ART SITE IN THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC, MEXICO.

Fernando Berrojalbiz, María Rivas Bringas

DEMOLITION AS A BRUTAL INTERVENTION OVER THE PAST: THE FORMER MVM-ELECTRIC POWER DISTRIBUTOR STATION BY CSABA VIRÁG IN THE HISTORICAL BUDA CASTLE DISTRICT, BUDAPEST

Authors:

BALÁZS POLITO, ANTÓNIO CARVALHO

Affiliation:

POLITECNICO DI MILANO, ITALY

INTRODUCTION

The socialist leadership after WWII promoted large-scale reconstruction works of many bomb sites in Budapest, such as the Power Station designed by Csaba Virág and built in 1979, an outstanding building of its time and a document of the modernist period, no matter its “invasive” character in the medieval surroundings. On the contrary, for many aspects this “machine” pointing towards future’s modernity remained respectful of the historical environment, regardless of its brutalism. The wise placement of the mass on a contradictory plot, the reflecting façade connecting the historical surroundings to the modernist interior, the tower element evoking the spire structures of the district and all the high-tech standardized details made this building an exceptional element inside the medieval urban fabric. But after the function was moved out from the Castle District in 2007, the building was abandoned. This caused several deteriorations on the non-maintained facade and a total functional decline. Highly growing antipathy and public rejection towards the neglected Power Station made its demolition possible for local Municipality, so to replace it by a conservative building which recreates the same walled structure system of historic houses in the bailey. Thus, by 2020 only the original basement and staircase elements of Virág’s building survived. The traditionalist attitude from the government shows how radically they want to recreate a fake historical architectural image of the castle district, by permanently deleting the evidence of recent history and the hidden significance behind modernist architectural language.

BUDA CASTLE DISTRICT

Being the smallest district with only 3,41 km² and a population of 24.728¹ it incorporates not only the past of Budapest but the history of Hungary as well. In there, some representative urban structure units, can be identified creating a heterogenous neighbourhood: 1. Buda Castle, 2. Castle slopes, 3. River waterfront, 4. Tabán, 5. Gellért Hill, 6. Nap Hill and 7. Kristina area.



Figure 1. Urban structure of Buda Castle district (Source: Balázs Polito²)

Buda Castle

The land within the castle walls, so called bailey has a very rich history whereby the different layers and unique aspects of each historical period is well readable. It can be clearly separated in two distinguished areas: a civil area and the royal palaces. There are urban and architectural elements, such as different typology of squares, streets, buildings and dwellings, stones, rails, windows, and patterns that are very specific in their type and convey the sense of the district only when they are perceived all together. Beside industry and manufacturing, some agricultural character remained, as wine and grapes were the second main sources of revenue, a reason for the wider street systems.³

Buda Castle slopes

The slopes that surround the bailey (partly within the castle walls), create a transition area which is intimately connected to the character of the Castle and can be understood as a “prelude” to something more majestic. The area around the Castle was built concentrically and almost parallelly to the wall structure. The different layers of this concentricity host firstly the same architecture characterizing the territory along the Danube River: more open spaces, unbroken rows of buildings, unique architectural elements, and public spaces (mostly on the Eastern slopes). Secondly, approaching the walls, architecture gives way to the regular rhythm of dwellings and private areas. The last layer, for a practical reason, is a green path beside the Castle walls. The district was the most invaded part of Budapest during WWII: approximately one fifth of the housing stock was destroyed and the remaining required a huge restoration work afterwards. Public buildings suffered especially violent attacks and after the war the government abandoned them to their fate. The war destructions also created an opportunity to reconsider the heritage of the Castle District, opening the way in 2014 for a special district-scale monument restoration strategy, the “National Hauszmann Program”⁴ (still in progress). After WWII the functions changed dramatically as the state services left the area and did not move back. However, after the restoration, reconstruction and recovery of the non-demolished buildings cultural and scientific institutions started to be present.



Figure 2. Csörgeő T. (1945) The ruins of the Chain bridge and the Buda Castle [photo] (Source: <http://budavar.btk.mta.hu/hu/galeria.html>)



Figure 3. N/A (1945) Ruins of Sándor palace [photo] (Source: <http://budavar.btk.mta.hu/hu/galeria.html>)

Demographic data

The Buda Castle district is the smallest, both in area and in population. Its population continuously decreased after 1970, but from 2001 this decline started to slow down. The population in 2011 was 24.148 residents, having increased to 24.728 in 2021.⁵ The population density of 7084,5 person/km² in the Castle district is double then the average in Budapest, making it one of the densely populated areas.

Year	1970	1980	1990	2001	2011	2013	2021
Population	46.631	41.097	34.778	25.914	24.158	24.561	24.728

Table 1. KSH analysis of population in the I. district of Budapest (Source: www.ksh.hu)

After 2011 the decline of the population started to stagnate and in the last 2-3 years a small increase is palpable in the numbers. The rate of young people between 0-14 years was always below the capital average. The number fluctuates around 10% in the actual population. On the other hand, the old people 60+ years rate was always above the capital's and even the national average. In 2012 the registered older people rate was around 31-32%, thereby showing the aging of the district. Regarding qualification, the population in the district is highly educated: more than 86% has a high school graduation and more than 55% has a university degree, strongly exceeding the national levels. Most of the resident population is Hungarian, with only 1,8% of the population declaring to have a German nationality, followed by 0,4% of other nationalities: Gipsy, Romanian, Slovakian, and Russian.⁶

Living quality of the district

The quality of life is mainly represented by the information held by the stock of dwellings. In the district there are around 16.557 dwellings, out of these 1598 is owned by the government.⁷ The 8% of the whole stock belongs to private citizens (mainly situated within the Castle walls). Recently, the municipality got the privilege to buy the houses that are being sold by locals. The green areas and natural conditions give a considerable support for the area livelihood. In summary, the Budapest I. district, with its rich historical landmarks like the Buda Castle, faces significant challenges: aging population, population decline, changing dwelling functions, and the departure of state services underscoring the district's complex dynamics. Despite its unique character and historical value, these issues raise concerns about the district's future sustainability and demographic balance.

THE UNKNOWN CAVE SYSTEM OF THE DISTRICT

The Buda Castle hill in Budapest has several components, one of which is the “buda marl,” a layer of sediment that is topped with a 4-10-meter layer of limestone slate. Around 760 years ago, a freshwater resource created a channel system between the limestone and marl layers. This system greatly facilitated the lives of the castle district's inhabitants, as they did not have to dig deep pits to access water. Over time, they began to modify and expand the tunnel system that had been created by nature, and they discovered many caves beneath their homes that were connected to one another. Initially, the enlarged caves were used for crop storage, but during the early Middle Ages, they were also used as shelter in times of war. Artisans used the raw materials produced by the excavations. However, after the phylloxera pandemic in 1800, which killed all the grapes in the area, the caves were largely abandoned until the 1930s. It was then that exploration and detailed research were conducted, and Kadic Ottokár proposed to clean up the entrances and install lighting so that the caves could be opened to the public.⁸



Figure 4. Buda Castle Cave system with lighting (Source: <https://labirintus.eu/>)

The structures were reinforced, and connections among the tunnels were expanded, resulting in an underground facility that has become the world's largest calc-tuff cave beneath a medieval city. The system covers an area of approximately 18,000 square meters, and its length is over 10 kilometres. If the human-made structures are included, these numbers could be even higher. According to some reports, more than 10,000 people survived WWII by taking shelter in the caves.⁹ This cave system was also a reason for locating the MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station in the Castle district because it could use the cave system for its electrical cable network.

THE MVM-ELECTRIC POWER DISTRIBUTOR STATION

One of the most relevant topics of the modernist heritage is the changing valuation of the examples that have a strong relationship with the historic surroundings.¹⁰ This attitude came also from approach to the historical heritage. After the World War II a lot of buildings in the heart of Buda were damaged or destroyed. Many of these plots became the opportunity for new modern architectural solutions. One of these interventions was the MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station, designed by Csaba Virág a well-known architect of that period. His quest was to optimize the building in a way that the mass, the scale, the used materials, and the mood could suit the context. Modernist principles of functionality and architectural form are clearly reflected in the structure, but the main identity is the volumetric quality of the building. A flexible structure can host many functions, thus Virág's attraction for the structures and standardization is clearly shown in all segments of the building, highlighting the carefully designed details, to emphasise the technical character of the facility. The architect's intervention shows a provocative attitude, but at the same time being part of the territory: "I have concluded that for me the essence of such tasks is to try to envision a completely modern (up-to-date) building or building part, which, if it were taken out of its environment and suspended in a neutral space, would still meet the requirements [to be modern]. If I took it out of its environment and put it on a glass plate, I want it to be an up-to-date house, but when putting it back, it should fit exactly into its place."¹¹

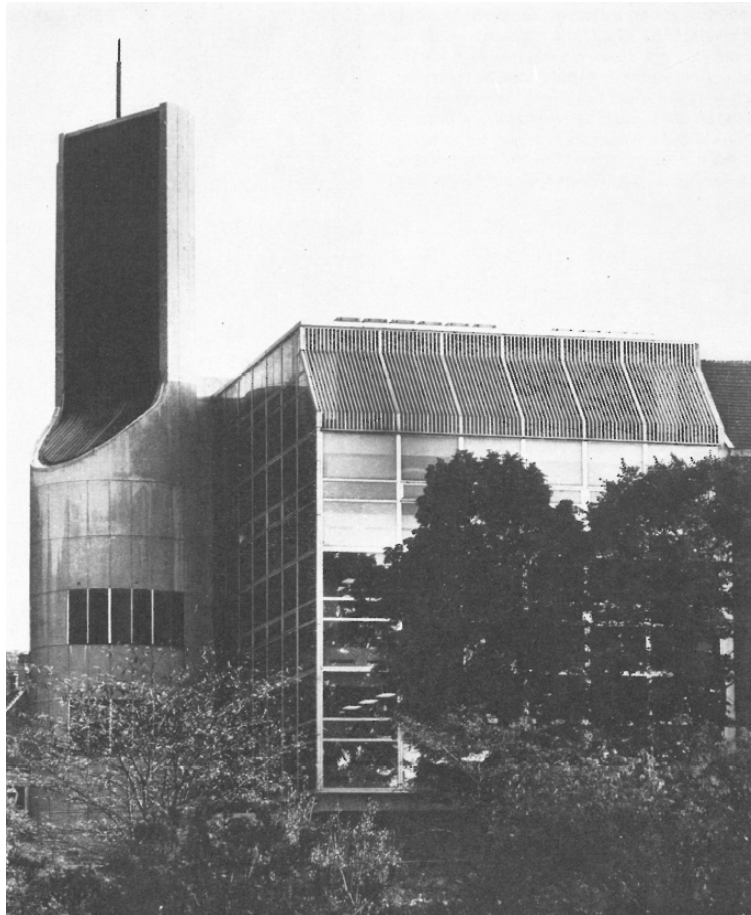


Figure 5. Virág Csaba OVT facade with towers seen from Bastion promenade (Source: www.kiscellimuzeum.hu)

It relates to the low-rise historical buildings on the West, and to the monumental National Archive built by Samu Petz between 1912-1923 on the East as immediate neighbours. In fact, in the Buda Castle district, most of the medieval and historic buildings have a walled architecture with perforations (windows and doors) which make unequivocally clear the difference between the historical houses and Virág's progressive approach.



Figure 6. Picture of the former staircase and the glass façade (Source: www.kiscellimuzeum.hu)



Figure 7. Street glass façade with National Archive (Source: www.kiscellimuzeum.hu)

Internally, the building was giving space to big rooms with a span of 15 metres supported by huge beams that were visible through the glass façade. The building was closed on top mainly by a flat roof system but, on the two elevations facing the streets, the architect wanted to evoke the surrounding pitched roofs of the houses, thus the new volume had sloping roofs on both sides. A narrow wing,

where the stairs and entrances were located, separated the modern public facility from the adjacent building. The free façade, working as the skin for the building, was intentionally created to reflect the neighbouring historic environment on the surface. This higher level of connection through poetical gestures, created the bond among modern and historical elements. The curious person attracted by the interiors visible from outside could perceive simultaneously old and new, ancient and modern, through reflexion and transparency, creating an infinite space on the reflective glass curtain wall. One of the most representative examples of this could be the auditorium, with the free shaped curved ceiling.



Figure 8. Picture of the Auditorium (Source: www.kiscellimuzeum.hu)

But the most memorable elements were the two towers rising beside the building. They were planned not only to be a modern imaginary reference to the historical towers scattered within the Buda Castle district, but also for technological and architectural reasons: the antennas were hidden inside. Moreover, the building was placed in the trapezoidal plot in a way that opened a path directly to the Bastion promenade along the castle wall, thus, creating a small public square a storey lower. Small gestures with strong relations. The duality is constantly perceptible in every detail. Starting from the niches in the entrance hall, recalling the neo-Gothic National Archives, the relation with the medieval surrounding created by the reflection of the building's skin, the mass forming to fit in the context and the two mostly autonomous cylindrical towers referring the high-rise elements of the past. These Virág's important theoretical planning decisions, would also be very influential on Balázs Polito's Master Thesis¹² to design a contemporary building in this same urban plot, that could represent the present generation as the former MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station had done for decades.

CSABA VIRÁG, THE ARCHITECT

Csaba Virág (1933-2015) was an important representative of the high-tech architectural aspirations in Hungary. His architecture was already determinative and provocative at the time. After graduating from the University of Technology and Economics of Budapest in 1956, he started to teach in 1957 as an assistant of his mentor Prof. Károly Weichinger, in the Public Facilities Department. In 1962 he started to work as an architect at the IPARTERV, a national architectural firm, for 10 years, designing the Újpest Fűszért Warehouse (1968) and the Rákospalota Clothing Warehouse (1968), for which in 1968 he received the prestigious Hungarian National Ybl-prize. In 1972 he became the leading

director of LAKÓTERV (a state architectural firm) where he worked for the next 20 years. During this period, he designed the OMFB Sails Club (1972), MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station (1979), Hungarian Television Studio Headquarter (1991), MTI Communication Center (1991), Buda Center Office Building (1991). Finally, in 1994, already in the post-socialist period, he created his own private practice. In 1989 he was elected Honorary Professor at the UTE of Budapest.¹³

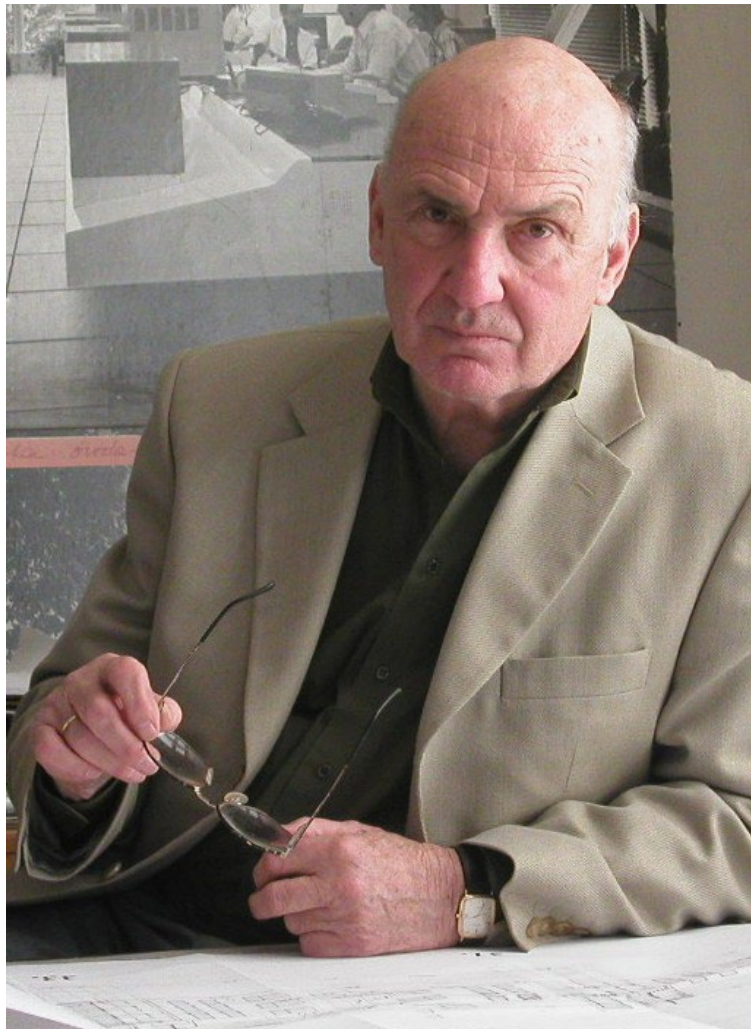


Figure 9. Portrait of Csaba Virág (Source: Zsuzsanna Fischer archive)

ICOMOS versus local municipality

The deactivation of the MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station in 2007, due to technological reasons, led to its total abandonment. Nevertheless, Csaba Virág and his team (which in the late years included his stepdaughter, engineer Zsuzsanna Szabóné Fischer, and her husband, architect Tibor Szabó) fought hard to save the building, developing and submitting different proposals for new uses: MVM – National Power Line Company Offices (2012), Representative Office building and expansion of the National Archive (2014), Office for the Ministry of the Interior (2017).

Unfortunately, in 2020, the government, and the local municipality decided to demolish the building, despite the statements of the Hungarian Academy of Arts, the Association of Hungarian Architects, and the Hungarian Committee of ICOMOS¹⁴ who all had declared, “that the building should not be demolished”. The political decision to demolish it was supported by the public negative judgment, by

its functional decline and neglected image which the official authorities somehow promoted by keeping it abandoned. Nevertheless, in the mind of some people and architects this little building was exceptional for its basic architectural concepts, freshness, and theoretical purity. Besides, its clear connections to the heritage environment had never been questioned during its 40 years of activity.



Figure 10. Demolition of the MVM-OVT, 2020 (Source: www.pestbuda.hu)

CURRENT STATE OF THE PLOT

Unfortunately, this building does not exist anymore, and only the Entrance Hall and the stairs are kept as remains, along with the basement floor. But the Castle district always played an important role in Budapest and the nation, thereby the government created “The National Hauszmann Program” in 2014. The goal of the program, still in progress, is the reconstruction of buildings destroyed during World War II. But rebuilding the former public buildings of the Castle District is problematic in different ways. Firstly, obliterating the border of monument authenticity can demolish the real values of cultural heritage. Secondly, the contemporary requirements hardly allow the designers to use the same materials and technologies used when the construction was originally built. That is why we cannot speak about a copy, but only a reinterpreted 1:1 scale model.

It is important to highlight that the municipality decided to build anew, in “Neo-Neo-Gothic style” the unfinished wing of the National Archive that Samu Pecz designed back in 1901 and never had been built. Therefore, we are not even talking about reconstruction but plain new construction in “old clothes”. In our opinion these decisions endanger the preservation of different historical layers, the memory of spaces, cities, buildings, resulting from political decisions of what to preserve and to which extent in time History is valid — in this case, cancelling most of the 20th century, the impact of WWII included. It is evident that decision-makers, influenced by and influencing public expectations, are now inclined to rebuild structures, in a revivalist mode, a concept that was previously deemed unthinkable.

CONCLUSION

The case of the demolished MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station, designed by architect Csaba Virág in 1979, showcases the challenges faced by modernist architecture within a historic context. Despite its architectural significance, the building fell victim to the critics of public perception, functional decline, and political pressures. The clash between preserving modernist architectural concepts and adapting to contemporary needs led to the Station's demolition, leaving behind a

complex plot that poses a new challenge for future development. This narrative also reveals the broader conflict between preservation and progress. The tension between reconstructing historically significant structures versus embracing modern architectural interpretations is evident in the government's "National Hauszmann Programme." The aim of reconstructing buildings destroyed during World War II raises questions about the authenticity of cultural heritage and the balance between honouring History and accommodating contemporary solutions as testimonies of the continuous flow of Time.

The MVM-Electric Power Distributor Station underscores the intricate interplay between heritage, architecture, and societal values. This case serves as reminder that each architectural decision has repercussions that extend beyond aesthetics, influencing how we remember the past and shape the future.

NOTES

- ¹ “2021 Kerületek,” Budapest Fővárosi Önkormányzat, accessed March 18, 2023, <https://budapest.hu/Lapok/Fovaros/Keruletek.aspx>
- ² Balázs Polito. “An Urban Activator in Budapest. Designing a Hybrid Building at the Former Electric Power Distributor Station by Csaba Virág” MArch diss., Politecnico di Milano, 2023
- ³ Gábor Zoboki, et al., “Budai Várhegy hosszútávú városfejlesztési és építészeti koncepció”, (2010), 37.
- ⁴ Levente Szabó (2019) “*Modernism and Changing Historical Context. Case Study of the Former Electric Power Distributor Station of the Hungarian Electrical Grid.*” studies in History and Theory of Architecture, (2019), 199.
- ⁵ “2021 Kerületek,” Budapest Fővárosi Önkormányzat, accessed March 18, 2023, <https://budapest.hu/Lapok/Fovaros/Keruletek.aspx>
- ⁶ “Budapest számokban 2014” Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, accessed April 20, 2023, https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/regiok/mesz/01_bp_14.pdf
- ⁷ Ferenc P. et al., „A Budai várnegyed és Várlejtők fejlesztési koncepcióvázlata” Jelenlegi Állapot, (2010), 91.
- ⁸ Ferenc P. et al., „A Budai várnegyed és Várlejtők fejlesztési koncepcióvázlata” Történelmi előzmények, (2010), 34.
- ⁹ Ferenc P. et al., „A Budai várnegyed és Várlejtők fejlesztési koncepcióvázlata” Történelmi előzmények, (2010), 35.
- ¹⁰ Levente Szabó (2019) “*Modernism and Changing Historical Context. Case Study of the Former Electric Power Distributor Station of the Hungarian Electrical Grid.*” studies in History and Theory of Architecture, (2019), 192.
- ¹¹ Csaba Virág, “Országos villamos teherelosztó, (OVT) Budapest I.” [“National Electric Power Distribution Station, (OVT) Budapest I.”], Magyar Építőművészet 6 (1979), 22-23.
- ¹² Balázs Polito. “An Urban Activator in Budapest. Designing a Hybrid Building at the Former Electric Power Distributor Station by Csaba Virág” MArch diss., Politecnico di Milano, 2023
- ¹³ Zsófia B. „Kortárs Magyar Építést, Személyes találkozás egy idős mesterrel” (2005).
- ¹⁴ “Az ICOMOS állásfoglalása Virág Csaba épületéről” [“ICOMOS resolution on Csaba Virág’s building”] (July 20, 2016), <http://epiteszforum.hu/az-icomos-allasfoglalasa-virag-csaba-epuleterol>, last accessed Sept 24, 2019.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Budapest Fővárosi Önkormányzat. “2021 Kerületek.” accessed March 18, 2023. <https://budapest.hu/Lapok/Fovaros/Keruletek.aspx>
- Buzder-Lantos Zsófia and Gönczi Orsolya. *Kortárs Magyar Építést, Személyes találkozás egy idős mesterrel.* 2005.
- Ferkai, András. “Recording and Preserving the Modern Heritage in Hungary.” In *Modern Movement Heritage – A Challenge to Manage*, edited by Allen Cunningham, 44-49. London: Spon and Thomson Professional, 1998.
- Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. “Budapest számokban 2014.” accessed April 20, 2023. https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/regiok/mesz/01_bp_14.pdf
- Polito, Balázs. “An Urban Activator in Budapest. Designing a Hybrid Building at the Former Electric Power Distributor Station by Csaba Virág” MArch diss., Politecnico di Milano, 2023.
- Pótzner Ferenc, Nagy Béla, Rhorer Ádám, Steffler István, Magyar Károly, Bencze Zoltán, Farbaky Péter, Rostás Péter, Szabó Balázs, Varga-Ötvös Béla and Onodi András. “A Budai várnegyed és Várlejtők fejlesztési koncepcióvázlata” *Jelenlegi Állapot*, (2010).
- Pótzner Ferenc, Nagy Béla, Rhorer Ádám, Steffler István, Magyar Károly, Bencze Zoltán, Farbaky Péter, Rostás Péter, Szabó Balázs, Varga-Ötvös Béla and Onodi András. “A Budai várnegyed és Várlejtők fejlesztési koncepcióvázlata.” *Történelmi előzmények*, (2010).
- Reimholz, Péter. “Kronologikus implantációk és didaktikus protézisek” [“Chronological Implants and Didactic Prostheses”]. *Magyar Építőművészet* 5 (1986): 9.
- Román, András. “Az ICOMOS III. közgyűlése és kollokviuma” [“The 3rd general meeting and colloquium of the ICOMOS”]. *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* (1971-1972): 385-400.
- Szabó, Levente. “Modernism and Changing Historical Context. Case Study of the Former Electric Power Distributor Station of the Hungarian Electrical Grid.” In *Studies in History and Theory of Architecture*, (2019): 189-204.

Zoboki, Gábor, Oláh Éva, Tóth Zoltán and Rutkai Pál. “Budai Várhegy hosszútávú városfejlesztési és építészeti koncepció”, (2010)

Virág, Csaba. “Országos villamos teherelosztó, (OVT) Budapest I.” [“National Electric Power Distribution Station, (OVT) Budapest I.”]. *Magyar Építőművészet* 6 (1979): 22-27.

“Az ICOMOS állásfoglalása Virág Csaba épületéről” [“ICOMOS resolution on Csaba Virág’s building”] (July 20, 2016), <http://epiteszforum.hu/az-icomos-allasfoglalasa-virag-csaba-epuleterol> (last accessed Sept 24, 2019).

“Állásfoglalás az Országos Villamos Teherelosztó épületének tervezett bontása ellen” [“Statement against the planned demolition of the National Power Distribution Building”] (Aug 1, 2016), <http://epiteszforum.hu/allasfoglalas-az-orszagos-villamos-tehereloszto-epuletenek-tervezett-bontasa-ellen> (last accessed Sept 24, 2019).

“A MÉSZ állásfoglalása Virág Csaba épületének sorsáról” [“The MÉSZ’s resolution on the future of Csaba Virág’s building”] (July 11, 2016), <http://epiteszforum.hu/a-mesz-allasfoglalasa-virag-csaba-epuletenek-sorsaro> (last accessed Sept 24, 2019).

AMPS PROCEEDINGS SERIES 35.3

Front cover image: Denis Poltoradnev

AMPS, Czech Technical University
New York: 28-30 June, 2023

© AMPS