

Budapest Extension (Hungary)

No 400bis

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Andrassy Avenue and the Underground (Extension to “Budapest, the Banks of the Danube and the Buda Castle Quarter,” inscribed in 1987, ii, iv)
<i>Location</i>	Budapest
<i>State Party</i>	Republic of Hungary
<i>Date</i>	28 December 2000

Justification by State Party

The proposed extension area of Andrassy Avenue and the Millenary underground is unique as an entity of harmonious interaction between parkland and a modern urban area, all created within an unprecedentedly short time span. It is a perfect technical solution which provides easy and inexpensive access to the parkland for all classes of an emerging modern society.

In the context of painfully protracted cultural and technical development in central eastern Europe it is the innovative planning and implementation of a unique architectural and technological concept of modern townscape design.

Criterion ii

The proposed extension, together with the previously inscribed area, represents as a whole all major historical sources of inspiration for the Hungarian nation, as reflected in the architectural trends, united harmoniously in a dynamic townscape.

Criterion iv

The Opera House and the old and the current Music Academy, all built within the proposed extension, are unique artistic and literal homes of the greatest Hungarian musicians: Ferenc Liszt, Bela Bartok, and Zoltan Kodaly, to mention just a few, whose contribution to the world’s musical tradition is of outstanding universal significance.

Criterion vi

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

History and Description

At the end of the 17th century a wall surrounded the city of Pest and for the most part Germans lived along the banks of the Danube. The areas outside of the city were arable land with fruit orchards, but by 1699 craftsmen had begun to establish suburban communities. From 1730 they began to settle an area then called Pacsirtamezq. In 1777 it was renamed Terezvaros after Saint Theresa and in honour of Maria Theresa. The parish church of Terezvaros was built in 1801–09 and by 1805 the current street grid had taken shape. Most of the merchants in the area settled and established themselves along Kiraly Street. At the beginning of the 20th century the areas of Erzsebetvaros and the City Park split off from this district. In 1841 Lajos Kossuth took up the idea of a large-scale promenade for Terezvaros. With the Union of Pest and Buda in 1873, Budapest truly became the nation’s capital, developing at a faster rhythm than earlier; by the turn of the century it had become a modern metropolis with more than a million inhabitants.

The symbol of this development is the radial Andrassy Avenue. There had been no attempts at organized urban development since the Middle Ages, and the Hungarian capital needed to make up for this lack in a single great leap in terms of public services, transportation, and city planning. To execute this great leap forward a special commission, the Capital Communal Labour Board, was established on the model of the London Metropolitan Board of Works. This commission planned and partially carried out construction of the avenue, as the modern city’s stately promenade, along with the creation of essential infrastructure (transportation and utilities). The commission’s establishment was decreed by a national act in 1870 and the state gave funds for its realization.

The route of the avenue cut straight through an unregulated suburban area, thereby radically transforming its urban structure. Construction of the road began in 1872, the route was opened in 1876, and in one decade, by 1885, it was completed with 131 buildings. The Siemens and Halske companies built the first underground railway on the European continent there in 1893–96. It starts in the heart of the city, near the banks of the Danube, and runs just beneath the surface for the length of Andrassy Avenue to the City Park. The railway served the Millennial Exhibition, organized in 1896 to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the Hungarian conquest. This also led to the construction of a memorial on Heroes’ Square (1894–1906), the development and extension of the landscape garden, the development of the Szechenyi Baths as an establishment for spa culture, and the Vajdahunyad Castle that displayed the different periods of Hungarian architecture.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The legal protection of the proposed site and the buffer zone is at three levels: 1. national level: territorial and individual; 2. Budapest municipal level; 3. district level.

According to amendments to the 83/1992 (V.14.) Government Decree and the National Historic Preservation Advisory Board’s 1/1967 (I.31.) ÉM. Decree, section 6,

paragraph (2), Andrássy Avenue is a designated protected historic environment on the basis of the 7759/1977 Resolution. This status was strengthened and expanded by the 1997 Law. Budapest is divided into 23 districts, each with its local authority. The Hungarian National Heritage Commission in 1990 declared Andrássy Avenue to be part of the national heritage.

The ICOMOS site mission observed that there was no buffer zone foreseen between the earlier nominated site and the extension. This was considered desirable for the sake of integrity, even though there is automatic legal protection for the surroundings of all protected areas. It was also noted that the building stock in this area is of good quality. Following the visit, in fact, the authorities have now provided for the extension of the buffer zone. It is noted, however, that there is still no buffer on the Buda side of the area already inscribed. It would thus be desirable to extend the buffer zone here as well.

Management

Management of the area is organized at the same levels as legal protection. At the national level, the responsibility is with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage with its specialized services. At the municipal level, there is a Council of Town Planning, and a Division for the Architectural Protection. At the district level, there are expert commissions, a bureau for urban development, and a section of the Council of Town Planning. In addition, some properties are under the care of public institutions, such as the Church and the University of Budapest. Collaboration between the different authorities and institutions is well organized.

The authorities affected by the proposed site are in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 14th districts. The proposed buffer zone also falls within the jurisdiction of these authorities. Owing to recent economic changes, all types of property ownership are to be found within the nominated area, including international diplomatic rules for foreign embassies, state authority for important national institutes, other agencies, and governmental institutes, as well as private owners. The Budapest city government controls public spaces, roads, public transport, tunnels, parks, plants, and individual buildings. In the new administrative system, district governments control certain former state-owned properties acquired in whole or in part, such as institutes, historic properties, and development zones. Buildings of mixed ownership include houses and condominiums where the ownership is shared between two or more: the resident community, local government, tenants, or private owners. Church-owned properties were returned by the state after the political transformation.

The site is subject to planning control in accordance with relevant norms and standards. These include the Environmental Protection Programme, implemented from 2000 in the 6th district. Coordination of the works is guaranteed by Urban Development Programme Board of the Terezvaros District Government. A series of property management plans are being prepared and implemented. These include the development plan for the “complete restoration and modernization of buildings along Andrássy Avenue.” The national tourism development plans also include specifications for the development of urban tourism, relevant to the area concerned.

The problems in the area are those generally met within similar central districts, including development pressures and modification of the attics, or noise at the street level.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The streetscape and the buildings of Andrássy Avenue have been preserved in their original form in their essential aspects since the time of their construction at the end of the 19th century. The minor alterations that have been made respect the overall character of the place.

Immediately after World War II the damage that occurred during the war period was repaired. There also followed some minor structural transformations. Since the 1980s the area has been subject to conservation and gradual improvement works, particularly in the most important buildings, such as the Opera. In the 1990s there has been a series of important restorations, such as the Metro stations. In the last years the social structure has also changed, and the present occupants are more motivated for conservation.

The underground railway has been renovated and modernized on two occasions, the last for the anniversary of its foundation in 1995. At the present time only the stations beneath the Avenue are still in their original condition. The stations in the City Park were originally above-ground, but have now been built beneath the surface. The underground railway line and its stations have been legally protected since 1997.

Authenticity and integrity

Andrássy Avenue with its buildings has been preserved reasonably well in its conception, in its relation to the surrounding urban environment, as well as in the building fabric. Attention is also given to the preservation and appropriate design of small elements that form part of the street furniture.

There are some problems, for example, in the physical condition of the buildings: wooden roof structures have suffered from humidity and metal structures have corroded, requiring maintenance and repair. There have also been some changes in the occupation, offices tending to replace the earlier residential use, which is a common problem in central urban areas. The underground railway, a functional part of the city infrastructure, has been renovated. The stations under the Avenue have retained their original features, while those in the Park have been changed from their original position above-ground and are now built under the surface. In this regard, while respecting the original function of the railway, its historical authenticity is compromised to some degree.

Nevertheless, as a whole the proposed nomination can be considered satisfactory, from the points of view both of authenticity and of integrity.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the site in November 2001.

Qualities

Andrassy Avenue forms a coherent ensemble, symbolizing the political function of the second capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Its principal characteristic lies in its being a representative example of late 19th century social development and urban planning, linking the city centre with the newly laid-out parkland.

Architecturally, the avenue has great integrity in its eclectic, neo-Renaissance buildings, achieved in the short space of ten years. The avenue is divided into three sections by two symmetrical squares, and the design of the artery gives a specific character and scale to each, reflecting the vicinity of the centre of the town on the one hand and the parkland on the other.

The project also included the construction of the first underground railway in continental Europe (after the London underground, begun in 1863).

As an extension to the existing World Heritage Site of Budapest (1987; criteria ii, iv), the present proposal can be seen to complement and strengthen it, taking into account the broader social and political references. In this context, the proposal to include Andrassy Avenue and the Millennium Park as an extension to the Buda Castle Quarter and the Banks of Danube is justified and consistent with the existing site.

The Opera House and the Music Academy are directly associated with the life and work of the greatest Hungarian musicians: Ferenc Liszt, Bela Bartok, and Zoltan Kodaly, who have made an important contribution to the history of Western music. Nevertheless, ICOMOS does not consider that this to be sufficient for the application of criterion vi of the *Operational Guidelines*.

Comparative analysis

It is noted that the term "avenue" (from Latin *advenire*) first meant generally a road of access to a destination; it then referred in particular to roads in parks giving access to castles; and finally it came to mean an urban street planted with trees. This was the case particularly in the 19th century, when urban renewal schemes used this term widely. Andrassy Avenue in Budapest should be seen in this context. Classic examples are the avenues in Baron Haussmann's scheme for Paris, above all the Champs-Élysées, built in the second half of the century. Vienna, another capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, acquired its Ringstrasse also in the same period.

The first underground railways were built in London (1863) and New York (1868). After an initial proposal in 1855, the *Métro* of Paris was only started in 1895, with the first part completed by 1900 (for the Universal Exhibition). The Budapest metro is thus the first underground railway on the European continent.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

ICOMOS recommends that the buffer zone be extended around the other sides of the existing World Heritage site, ie on the Buda side of the town.

Brief description

The site of Andrassy Avenue (1872–85) and the Millenary underground railway (1893–96) in Budapest was built in the second half of the 19th century as part of the celebration of the centenary of the Hungarian State. The scheme is a representative example of the implementation of planning solutions associated with the latest technical facilities of the day to meet the requirements of an emerging modern society.

ICOMOS recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List as an extension to the existing World Heritage Site, "Budapest, the Banks of the Danube and the Buda Castle Quarter" (inscribed in 1987, ii, iv), using the existing *criteria ii and iv*.

ICOMOS, January 2002