ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Budapest, the banks of the Danube and the district
of Buda Castle

Location : Budapest

State Party : Hungary

Date : April 24, 1986

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World
Heritage List on the basis of criteria II and IV.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Within the unified perspective of an immense urban panorama the
Danube is the dividing line between two cities which were quite
separate originally : Buda on the spur on the right bank, and
Pest in the plain on the left bank. Human occupation of both
sites is extremely ancient since it can be traced back to the
Paleolithic period; Celtic populations also established
themselves here, attracted by the abundance of thermal springs.
But the historic importance of the city is certainly prior to the
Medieval period, when the two urban developments received their
present names. It dates back to the foundation of Aquincum by the
Romans, the capital of Lower Pannonia, one of the borderline
provinces of the Empire in the 2nd century A.D.

Important remains of Aquincum and of the camp Contra Aquincum
have been revealed by archaeological excavations on both sides of
the river and can be seen today, together with a few arches of
the aqueduct which supplied the Roman colony, but the present
city did not really develop on the ruins of the ancient city, as
was the case for Florence, Treviso or Split not to mention Rome
or Istanbul. After the Hungarian invasion in the 9th century,
Pest became the first Medieval urban centre, only to be
devastated by the Mongol raids of 1241-1242. A few years later
the castle of Buda was built on a rocky spur on the right bank by
King Bela IV and the inhabitants of Pest found shelter within its
fortified outer walls.

The history of Buda, from this time onwards, became closely
identified with that of the Hungarian monarchy and followed their
changing fortunes. There was a brilliant period which
corresponded to the power of the Angevin Dynasty, from the reign
of Charles-Robert (1308-1342) to that of Sigismund of Luxembourg
(1382-1432). After the end of Hungarian independence, in the
complex political situation created by the influence of the

Habsburgs on the one hand and the growing threat of the Turks on the other hand, a second golden age coincided with the reign of Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490), the humanist king who not only founded the University, the library (which carries his name) and the royal printing office, but also attracted Italian architects, sculptors and painters to his court, thus making Buda one of the main centres of Renaissance art in Europe.

After the city was ransacked by the Turks in 1526 and its final fall in 1541, the two original cities were rebuilt and led a semi-lethargic existence up until 1686. Recovery did not really begin again until the 18th century, when the Empress Maria Theresa and the Emperor Joseph II took an interest in the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary : the city was then influenced by late baroque architecture, soon to be supplanted by the more sober lines of discreet neo-classicism. In the 19th century the city's role as capital became enhanced by the foundation of the Hungarian Academy (1830), after 1862 housed in a neo-renaissance palace, and especially by the construction of the imposing neo-gothic Parliament building (1884-1904). Since 1849, W.T. Clark's suspension bridge has symbolized the reunification of Buda and Pest, which did not in fact become official until 1873.

By highlighting some of the major periods of Budapest's history from the 2nd to the 20th century, ICOMOS hopes to draw the attention of the Committee to the originality of a nomination based on an essentially diachronic cultural wealth.

- **Criterion II** can be evoked on several scores. Aquincum played an essential role in the diffusion of Roman architectural forms in Pannonia, then in Dacia. Buda Castle played an essential role in the diffusion of Gothic art in Magyar region from the 14th century. In the reign of Matthias Corvinus Buda was an artistic centre comparable to that of Cracow (included on the World Heritage List in 1978) as a result of its influence.

- **Criterion IV** can especially be applied to Buda Castle, an architectural ensemble which, together with the nearby old district, illustrates two significant periods of history which were separated by an interval corresponding to the Turkish invasion. But the Parliament is also an outstanding example of a great official building on a par with those of London, Munich, Vienna and Athens, exemplifying the eclectic architecture of the 19th century, whilst at the same time symbolizing the political function of the second capital of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

The exact limits of the protected area, restricted to the most significant groups of monuments in Buda and Pest, will most certainly satisfy the requirements of the Committee. However, a conservation policy for the whole of the urban area of Budapest,

2

a metropolis with more than 2 million inhabitants, should be strongly recommended to the Hungarian government so that one of the most beautiful urban landscapes in the world may be preserved. Indeed, it is to be regretted that Budapest has recently suffered from the proliferation of tower blocks not built on the same scale as the buildings of the old town. Unfortunately the Atrium Hyatt Hotel and Forum Hotel, as well as high rise apartment blocks in the old town of Obuda, are most unfortunate examples of town planning which can only destroy cultural heritage.

ICOMOS, April 1987
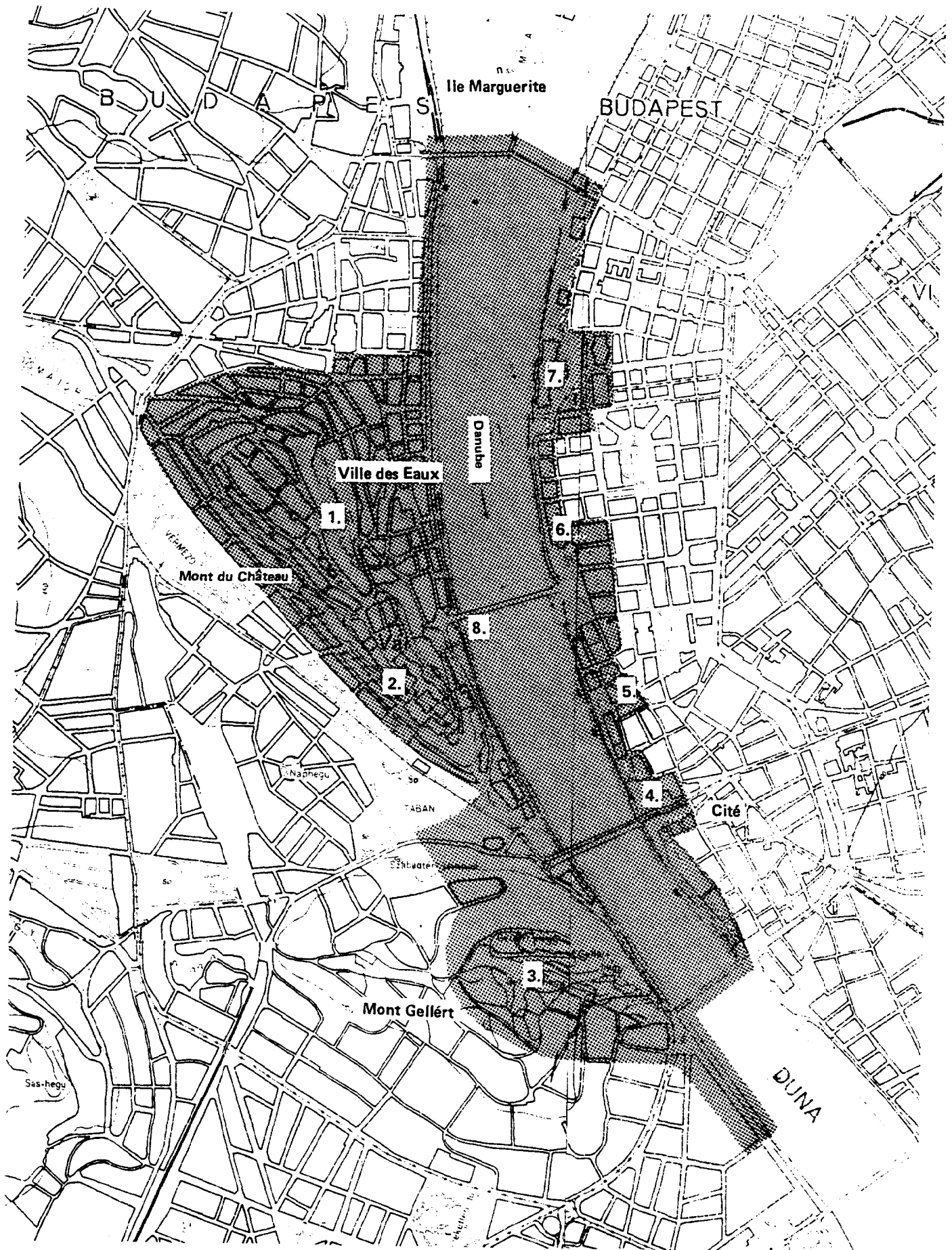
La localisation du territoire proposé dans la cité de Budapest (échelle 1 : 20000)

1. Église Mathias 2. le Château 3. Citadella 4. Église paroissiale de la Cité 5. Redoute 6. Académie des Sciences de Hongrie 7. Parlement 8. Pont Suspendu