

State of Conservation Report¹
Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter
and Andrásy Avenue

World Heritage Site, Hungary

Inscribed on the World Heritage List under number C 400 in 1987

Extension: 400bis, in 2002

1 Executive Summary of the Report

As a centre for receiving and disseminating cultural influences, Budapest is an outstanding example of urban culture and history in Central Europe, characterised by periods of devastation and revitalisation. Even though through the unification of the three former cities of Pest, Buda and Óbuda, over the past fifty years Budapest has become a global city, it has retained the separate structural and urban characteristics of its former settlements, like the typical Medieval and Baroque style of the Buda Castle Quarter, and the ring-radial structure of Pest with its vast, uniquely homogeneous architectural appearance interspersed with remarkable public buildings in the style of Historicism and Art Nouveau. A significant example of the latter is the Andrásy Avenue and its surroundings as one of the most defining works of the urban development ambitions of the late 1800s, an imposing collection of architectural styles of the age. The richness of the urban landscape structure and the Danube, which separates and connects the two parts of the settlement at the same time, frame it all in a unique harmony of the historical urban landscape.

Budapest as a global city has to live up to several expectations of urban development which cause major challenges for the preservation of the World Heritage site. In addition as a capital it has to comply with the constant need for expressing and reinforcing national identity as well.

During the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee several issues that had previously arisen concerning the effectiveness of the conservation of the Budapest World Heritage site has been clarified and concluded. However the questions of the management plan and the National Hauszmann Program necessitate more explanations and measures to be taken. In this present State of Conservation Report all steps taken during the last six months regarding these two topics are presented in accordance with the Decision 44 COM 7B.49 of the World Heritage Committee.

An online digital platform has been developed to observe and analyze the Outstanding Universal Value and as a result the attribute-groups of the World Heritage site got identified. This is an essential milestone for both the conservation and the management of the site. Once these attribute-groups and their value bearing elements are adopted, all conservation issues can be discussed in an exact framework. All further steps of the preparation of the management plan are also presented in detail.

Regarding the National Hauszmann Program in accordance with the Decision 44 COM 7B.49 of the World Heritage Committee, the State Party has initiated professional dialogue with the World

¹ According to the Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. This close collaboration will be continued until all open questions are cleared.

Fulfilling the undertaking presented in the previous State of Conservation Report, the new regulation regarding the World Heritage Complex Impact Assessment got adopted. In order to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, prior to any interventions affecting it, Heritage Impact Assessment supplemented with a Visual Impact Assessment can be requested. This will ensure – in accordance with the Paragraph 118bis. of the Operational Guidelines – the long-term safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value.

Following the model of the Townscape Design Guides based on the Act on the Protection of Townscapes the concept and the legal background for the innovative new World Heritage Design Guide have been made, in order to present the Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes of the World Heritage property and to show good examples of interventions, constructions and environmental designs on the World Heritage sites. The preparation of the World Heritage Design Guide for some of the World Heritage sites of Hungary – including the Budapest World Heritage site - are already underway.

On the 1st of January 2022, the Hungarian World Heritage Council, a new proposal-making, decision-preparing body, supporting the work of the Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, composed of experts with outstanding theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of heritage protection, has been established. Carrying out its tasks, the Council works closely with experts from the national ICOMOS and IUCN, to ensure that World Heritage sites are given priority protection.

With the maximum consideration of the observations and suggestions of the World Heritage Committee in the last half year a great number of specific measures were taken by Hungary that clearly demonstrates its commitment to the World Heritage Convention.

The State Party believes that the World Heritage sites have to be preserved, used, presented, developed or restored in a sustainable manner, safeguarding their national and Outstanding Universal Values, as well as contributing to the public policy. The State Party makes every effort possible in order to properly ensure – as set out in the Convention – that developments shall not cause the decrease of the Outstanding Universal Value and its deterioration and shall not endanger the authenticity and integrity of the property. Furthermore the State Party ensures the access to the World Heritage values, the accessibility and entrance for visitors to the World Heritage site.

Hungary trusts that the content of this State of Conservation Report showing the significant progress made and the professional dialogue being well underway, will ease the World Heritage Committee's concerns about the issues raised and will provide reassurance that the World Heritage site Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrásy Avenue is being preserved efficiently without losing its authenticity and integrity.

The State Party is committed to further cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and remains open for discussion with the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies.