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CONTRAST AS AESTHETIC VALUE IN THE TOWNSCAPE²

MODERNITY AND PRESERVATION IN THE 1960S AND 1970S IN HUNGARY

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Abstract

The 1960s and 1970s represent a period of housing estate construction in Europe, and this urban architectural model greatly affected the former socialist countries, including Hungary. It seems logical therefore that monument and townscape protection could not find its place in that period of building boom. Nevertheless, Hungarian monument protection flowered in those decades. The reason for this was that the search for "contrast" was one of the leading paradigms in modern urban aesthetics, and this contrast also highlighted development: the remaining architectural monuments and urban zones as relics emphasized the different characteristics of the modern town as opposed to the old one. Thus, while urban architects were working on creating the "new townscape", experts of monument protection had a wide range of license in their field to preserve the historical milieu as a contrast to the modern one. Naturally, this historical milieu had the stamp of the aesthetical paradigms of modern architecture as well. Therefore the old houses were interpreted as the antitype of modern design, the static and rationality were stressed, instead of the decoration and social representation of old structures. This paper attempts to verify empirically the above thesis by analyzing three Hungarian sites: the completely reconstructed Budapest-Óbuda, Komárom as municipal center and semi-new town in the 1960s and 1970s, and Esztergom as a historical town.

Keywords: architectural sociology, sociology of urban planning, sociology of monument preservation, cultural heritage

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THE IDEAL OF OPPOSITES

In the history of architectural space creation, modernity was the first not only to cater for, that is, to conceptualize social relations in space, but also to influence, or even to create those relations (Delitz 2009). Never before did any architectural style bring forth similar totalitarian social reforms. Even the national architectural aspirations of the 19th and 20th centuries were limited to the spatial conceptualization of the goals formulated by the customer (that is, by the national ideology and its political representatives) (Déry 1995). Henceforth, modernity includes not only the early twentieth-century architectural movements in a narrow sense, but the entire period until the sixties and seventies, until the postmodernist critique of modern urban planning appeared (Benevolo 1994, 2000, Pevsner 1972, Klotz 1994). Thus, the interpretation of modern architecture in the paper is very broad, implying more an attitude: a contemporary, progressive, trend-following behavior spanning the 20th century until the 1970s and 1980s. In other words, it is the effort of the 20th century that broke away from the Beaux-Arts historicism townscapes of the late 19th century and fought against its recurrence in any form, such as the tendencies to create picturesque scenery (Kostof 1998:90, Major 1969:233). Modern architecture is also a narrative framework, which captivated the architectural opinion of the 20th century, and even reinterpreted the history of architecture as a whole through its own view (Hitchcock 1958: Pevsner 1979). Certainly, the fact that it coincided with the emergence of the architectural vocation as an intellectual profession greatly contributed to its success (Gerber 2014:103). Until the 19th century, the builder and the artist's role in society were not separate. Due to academic training (also), however, the social role of the academic architect had emerged. Architects as members of the intellectual elite have autonomous scientific or artistic ambitions. In this way- at least in principle- the architect is different from the engineer, and even more from the builder, who receives a skilled worker's status in the modern social order of the occupational structure (Schmidtke 2006).

The separation of social roles, however, did not solve all the principal problems of the architect's identity, which creates tension within the profession, as in the conflict outlined above. Accordingly, architects are artists on the one hand with their own concept and freedom of choice, while on the other hand they are artisans executing the customer's requirements, professionals in practice (Allsopp 1983). Modern architecture integrates contrasts not only in sociological role (artist – expert of building: the duality was a key element of the self-image of modern architecture. Like a doctrine, theoretical texts of modern architecture insist on certain pairs of opposites like, for example, past versus present, old versus new, ornateness versus purity, perfection versus imperfection, structure versus faux facade, etc. These pairs of opposites often define the norms between good and bad solutions at the same time (Nerdinger 2010). Although these pairs of opposites derive from the architecture idebates at the beginning of the 20th century and were expressed as a rebellion against the practice of Beaux-Arts, they later became anchored within architectural education as dogmas (Hassler 2010:33). Strictly opposing in the townscape as "heritage zone" and "modern, developed areas" is one of the leading values of modern architecture movement (Rodwell 2011).

Our study aims to draw attention to contrast of old structures and modern urban environment within the townscape, which however has the characteristic that the contemporaries finally saw and presented these opposites as a unison. In particular, the practice of Hungarian urban planning in the 1960s and 1970s will be discussed, which was characterized by the culmination of monument protection and modern urban development at the same time. Although the two ambitions involved several disagreements they nevertheless became integrated into townscapes, or at least situated in the same space. The coexistence of past and present, monument protection and modern structures grew into one of one of the basic aesthetic values of the era.³ The contrast also occurred at the level of monument restorations, for example, in the powerful contrast of materials like for example between historical stones and reinforced concrete (Horler 1983).

THE CONTRAST OF PAST AND PRESENT

If modernity is regarded not as an architectural but a social process, the period of modernity significantly expands. The modernization of society typically covers 19th-century processes and therefore predates architectural modernization (Durkheim 1893, Polányi 1944, Sombart 1902, Spencer, 1876–1882, Tönnis 1887). However, there was a second social modernization period that took place in Europe after the Second World War. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the two types of modern, mutually amplifying, social and architectural processes brought about radical transformations in European urban life (Meggyesi 2005:126–136). German literature calls this period the second Gründerzeit (or Boomjahren), referring to the depth and quantity of changes in urban structures (Schäfers 2014:150, Hassler–Dumont d'Ayut 2009). In the following, the preservationist idea will be briefly interpreted in this broader field of modernization. An overall analysis is not possible here: I will only highlight the essential background to the intellectual history through three examples of urban reorganizations that took place in the 1960s and 1970s.

Raymund Aron claims that the essence of modernity is a gearshift in the course of social changes, which reveals the difference between the past and present, believed to be motionless until then (Aron 1965). Thus in modern societies, change is not just an occasional, unique event, but also part of everyday life. Aron dates this shift in the most advanced industrial countries to the decades around the French Revolution. It is hardly a coincidence that the idea of preservation was first outlined in the French society that had broken away from its past, as well as throughout the western world at that time (Chastel 2004:102, Nora 1997). Institutionalizing monument protection in the 19th century matched the idea of legitimizing a wide range of national aspirations. As the most outstanding works proved to be sufficient for the creation of the national ethos, the number of actual buildings considered as protected heritage remained extremely low in the whole era (Vauchez 1996:59). The less monumental, more modest relics rather disturbed the romantic myth created about the Middle Ages, therefore destroying them did not pose a real problem (Dercsény 1980:12). The trend of clean style related to architect Viollet-le-Duc did everything to make monuments adequate for representation: the less successful parts were replaced, the missing towers built up. The restoration style of the 19th century aimed not to present the historical authenticity of the material, but to demonstrate the design expertise of architects, who could create high-quality artwork in the style language of every era (Román 2004:149).⁴ The paradox of this era was that respect for the past was subordinated to the needs of the present. Nothing is more typical of its mentality than that it freed protected medieval cathedrals from the clamping ring of town houses and trading kiosks, and in their stead, it established representative squares typical of the Baroque, thus treating building and townscape heritage separately (Pogány 1954:168). The modern architecture movement criticized deeply

³ The advance of monument protection has of course several other grounds. One is for example the professionalism which led to the establishing of the nation-wide institution of monument protection in 1957 (Országos Műemléki Hivatal). Or the economic crises after 1970, as the "old" but still adaptable houses were many times promoted for use after certain modernisation.

⁴ András Román (1929–2004), one of the most known expert of monument protection, also active in international developing of the UNESCO.

this methodology and broke with this practice that was rooted in historicism (Mezős 2001).⁵ The basic document of the modern monument protection is the "Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments" (1931) and the later (as summarizing) "Venice Charter of 1964". They state that the restoration of monuments should employ the architectural language of the given era.⁶

The "architectural language" was not defined separately, because its essence is change. The classical document of modern architecture, the Charter of Athens (1933), states under point 70: "The re-use of past styles of building for new structures in historic areas under the pretext of aesthetics has disastrous consequences. The continuance or the introduction of such habits in any form should not be tolerated."⁷ In other words, modern architecture defined the basic principles of preservation practices by the middle of the 20th century, treating it as a specific area of architectural creation. Remarkably, the dogmatic application of the Venice Charter set the same objectivity in the focus of quality, as the modern movement did a few decades before in architecture. In this way, the role of the material was exaggerated, which led to the reduction of the content in a fundamentally historical narrative (Fejérdy 2008:44).⁸ To sum up it can said that the significance of ideological and spiritual interpretation decreased (whose monument) in favor of tangible, material and structural (what kind of architecture) knowledge.

The modern principles of monument protection were formulated in a period of deep social change in the 1960s, changes that may be compared to the importance of the 19th-century modernization. In the same way that the train, its speed and possibilities defined the transformation of nineteenth century towns, so cars and aircraft did in the second half of the twentieth century (Békési 2006, Morscher–Scheutz–Schuster 2013:275). The aircraft refers to the growth of speed, while cars refer to the fact that from the 1960s, urban planning could operate not only in the linear and circular patterns of railway lines, but also in evenly spread fields.

Modern architecture and urban planning in its track created a completely alien urban experience (Watters 2011). This urban experience became common in the era of prefabricated housing estates of the 1960s and 1970s, and we might add, often with very schematic solutions (Demblin–Cernek 1997:16). Perhaps the most important feature of the new urban experience was the elimination of the street. The street was the most important, historically formed, morphological basic unit of European towns (Kostof 1998:189). An endless urban landscape studded with detached blocks replaced the urban space reminiscent of the enclosed courtyard (Peters 1978). The enormous lifestyle change that took place within a single generation after 1945 has made it clear that in today's world, people were living radically differently in the 1970s as compared to 40–50 years before. The distance between the past and present of sites became larger and more exotic than the difference between geographical eras of the time. These changes are all a result of globalization (Lowen-thal 2004:57).

Thus, the same period that rapidly erased the traditional settlement environment also made the past apparent through its hiatus. "The acceleration of history: Let us try to gauge the significance, beyond metaphor, of this phrase. An increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good, a general perception that anything and everything may disappear – these indicate a rupture of equilibrium." (Nora 1989:7). The concept of the "historical townscape" is incomprehensible without the modern city. The

⁵ Tamás Mezős one of the most known monument expert of the today Hungary, the leader of university program "Expert for Monument Protection" (műemléki szakmérnőki képzés).

⁶ See the documents: https://www.icomos.org/en/167-the-athens-charter-for-the-restoration-of-historic-monuments, http://www. icomos.hu/data/documents/velencei_charta_1964.pdf Last View: 04.01.2021

⁷ Charter of Athens (1933): http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/research_resources/charter04.html Last View: 04.01.2021

⁸ Tamás Fejérdy, one of the most well-known experts of contemporary monument management, former chair of UNESCO, active after 1990 as the monument protection had to change to the up to day challenges (change to the "heritage protection", in Hungarian: Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal).

radicalism of modernity, the spirit that ignored the traditional constructions, materials and ways of life fostered the need to preserve the whole historical townscapes (Máté 1995).

The historical fact draws attention to the parallelism of scale shift in the radicalism of modern architecture and monument protection. While engineers of Hungary in the 1950s and 1960s were working on standards of prefabrications for mass producing (in line with European trends), another groups of architects (also following the European trends) had created the townscape value cadasters.⁹

Dezső Dercsényi was a central figure within monument protection after 1945. He wrote about his own activity: "Usually an architect and an art historian performed the investigation. (...) The complete examination of 74 settlements (not just towns but villages designated for development) was accomplished." (Dercsényi 1980:12). The 1964 / Act III about building issues (1964. évi III. törvény az építésügyről) defined a legal term in Hungary for the historic townscape as "the area of heritage importance" (műemléki jelentőségű terület, MJT), where modern urban endeavors are not applicable, or only to a limited extent (Román 1983:213).

The joint enforcement of the two principles, the preservation of historic zones and the development of new urban areas, was a typical trend of the 1960s and 1970s. In those decades, many experts welcomed the intertwining of monument (and townscape) protection and urban development: theoretical works were created on this topic, sharply opposing the socialist urban planning in the 1950s when for a short period historicism was on the table (Jankó 2011, 46). The parallel endeavor eventually merged into an urban planning and aesthetic content of the duality "old and new". One of the most important theoreticians of the time was Imre Perényi, who wrote the following guideline: "it is very important for the protection of the structure, silhouette, etc. of areas that include historical and architectural monuments. However, we should not give up on the implementation of reasonable modernization efforts." (Perényi 1976:165).

Therefore, embedded into the structure of new towns, the monument zones or at least some relic buildings were integrated into the modernizing townscape of the sixties. Although a European phenomenon, it had different emphases in different countries. Hungary is definitely one of those regions where monument protection was integrated into the urban planning system and architectural training, establishing a strong representation of monument protection in the time of radical urban planning processes (Mezős 2016:9).

Through monument and townscape protection, the ideas of modern architecture were changed as well. While the modern architecture movement was originally a strongly future-oriented utopian movement, monument protection took possession of the past. Thus, the town in the modern space became able to do what architectural monographs do: not only to point towards the future, but to redefine the heritage of urban spaces, as well. The monument reconstructions in the 1960s and 1970s forced extremely functional changes (like for example castles becoming tourist attractions). Like at the birth of modernism at the turn of the 20th century, its mass deployment in the sixties and seventies was to surpass the past of eclecticism. Modern monument protection redefined the eclectic heritage of towns: corner turrets, and excess plaster architectures largely disappeared - those elements that the architectural history of structural aspects disregarded. László Gerő was one of the few architects who planned picturesque townscapes around the monuments. But even he stressed in his theoretical works the main ideas of modern architecture is essentially- even in the best historic robe - a spatial art" (Gerő 1966:92). The practice of monument and townscape protection of the sixties and seventies and the triumph of modern architecture and urban planning are not only the offspring of the same

⁹ Remarkable, that the investigation of historical townscapes does not reflect the approach of the fifties, but it is a pre-war heritage of the profession, which the professionals of the forties and fifties carried on. The Act about Urban Planning and Building Issues 1937 (1937. évi VI. törvénycikk a városrendezésről és az építésügyről) already defined the protection of townscapes (Winkler, 2002).

age, but also a spatial program realized in townscape, in which the past and the present, and so indirectly progress, materializes by the juxtaposition of contrasts, and by the inclusion of historical and modern architectural elements.

From today this period is clearly to be defined through its typical expressions like 'monument' or 'building protection', 'conservation', or in a wider zone, 'townscape protection'. These words express a symbiosis with the architecture and their aesthetic values. Contemporary vocabulary would use rather 'culture heritage', or 'historical landscape', which refer to the social substances of the view (Harlov-Csortán 2018:20). Although the architecture sociological point of view of the paper suggests using current interpretations, I decided to use the words of the 1960s and 1970s, because of the better understanding they convey of the spirit of the historical period.

CASE STUDIES

Methodology

Based on the above perspectives, I attempt to illustrate how the contrast of past and present was realized during urban planning in the sixties and seventies through the cases of the following three settlements along the Danube River (in case of Budapest, I will present only a district). It was an important aspect in the selection of the three sites, that with this I can present a colorful picture of the methodology of townscape protection and urban development in the 1960s and 1970s. Óbuda and Esztergom are two historical settlements, while Komárom has a very special position, a new town that was still looking for a new identity at the beginning of the 1960s (Dercsényi–Zolnay 1956, Gál 1990, Kiss–Mocsy 1995, Horler 1962, Rédli 2010, Schoen 1935). The result, however, is almost independent of the starting point: Óbuda and Komárom have become modern towns of building estates with pronounced historical relics, while Esztergom has retained the historic town that has been rather counterpointed by modern architecture. Of course this selection is more or less arbitrary. The very different historical heritage and administrative position of the sites will stress the differences of methodology in the field of the relation of monument protection and urban development. Other cases could answer other questions, as for example the former catholic towns developed after 1945 to a mix of industrial new town and protected historical centre (Vác, Esztergom, Eger) would show special patterns.

The architecture sociological basis of this analysis is that the townscape is an expression of the currently effective values and power relations in a society, so the morphological analysis can bring forth anthropological, sociological, and socio-historical results (Delitz 2009:16). The basic source material is the townscape itself, and fundamentally, "promenadology" served as the method for analysis (Burckhardt 2006, Weisshaar 2013). This means that instead of a static perception there is the movement, mostly the pedestrian movement that explores relationships revealed during the walk. This procedure is not unknown in the research of traditional architectural history, as Frigyes Pogány's townscape analysis always concentrated on the experience of approaching a building (Pogány 1976:353). Another fundamental methodology is the exact investigation of historical sources, which explores the formation and chronology of townscapes. As regards Óbuda and Esztergom, I could rely on rich literature in this field (see the specific reference to literature), while in the case of Komárom I researched the primary sources in the local archives, especially for the post-1945 materials in the plan repository.

Exhibition of contrasts: the example of Óbuda

The medieval and early modern Óbuda was built on the ancient site of Aquincum, and in 1872, it was the third historical town of the unified city of Budapest. Nonetheless, Óbuda was left out of the city's rapid urbanization. Moreover, its dynamics lagged behind a number of country towns: "Lajos Street is Óbuda's main street.

It has ten two-story houses, the others are ramshackle huts. Air cannot fit in their long, narrow yards for the number of people in there." (Contemporaneous anonymous description from 1896, citied by Létay 1995:244). Urban planners wanted to change the situation. From the 1930s they wanted to establish a new, modern town, and their plans called for the demolition of the old structures and the erection of tenement houses. The Olgyay brothers elaborated a plan in the 1930s that was later repeatedly refined, which was to create a new frame-built urban structure with the main axis as the "Via Antica," a broad avenue that would have linked up the Roman relics of the area as well (Kaiser 1995:333). The idea came from Rome where the urban planners wanted to give a new identity to the city in which the duality of antique ruins and contemporary modern architecture was emphasised.¹⁰ Nonetheless, most Roman ruins in Budapest were still in the ground or under houses then.

The first "demolition" of vernacular dwellings took place at the "Királydomb," when a block of single-storey houses was removed, and the amphitheater of the former military town of Aquincum was excavated. In fact, in 1942, it became the emblematic monument of the new townscape allowing for the 'ruin' character with some spectacular additions: "László Gerő carrying out the renovation (...) at the points where the original remains were heavily damaged, and planned a partial reconstruction. Thus, the Amphitheater became the town's visual element, and its previous mass emerged as well." (Zsidi 2007:324). In the 1941 version of Via Antica, the Amphitheatre would have been the main town gate of the avenue. The avenue starting here would have run to the next junction (now Flórian Square) by the eradication of the historical street network and then continued to the archaeological exhibition site of the civil town. "Huge houses composed in the spirit of rationalist architecture lined up along the road to Florian Square. Along the two sides of the road that led from the square to the Ruin Garden there would have stood houses and farther on some industrial buildings. The Olgyay brothers wanted to provide the possibility to present the Roman monuments." (from Mezős 2001:48). The north-south avenue joined the other, east-west urban axis including the bridge to Pest. The plan, which became the basis for all further interventions with east-west, north-south avenues, was the first step in the elimination of the former Óbuda. However, the implementation progressed slowly until the sixties.

After 1945 the idea of duality continued, which involved the museum-like antiquating of urban space and radical modernization. The 1948 master plan considered a full demolition similar to the previous concept. Interestingly, it suggested that a large urban park should be established around the area of the main square of a few representative buildings and including the excavated ruins of the medieval structures (Kaiser 1995, 338).¹¹ Radical modernization and monument protection would have merged at this point in the methods of romantic garden architecture.

In contrast to the main square, the Hévizi Street housing project from the master plan of 1948 was realized. The number of four storey, detached houses represent the era before the prefabricated flats industry. The houses in Hévizi utca have some historicism references, quoting the late socialist realist style (architect, Dul 1957–1961). ¹²However, the archaeological exhibition site next to the buildings was completed only later, in 1967 (Berza 1993:549). The protective building above the ruins has a modest size, but its sharply sculpted concrete shell is in the spirit of modern architecture. It contrasts the Roman ruins (and the traditional materials of housing estate as well), so it is a typical example of the aesthetic of contrasts in the modern movement.

¹⁰ Notably, the Roman past had a particular importance in the interwar period in Central Europe including Hungary. For two reasons: one is that Mussolini's Italy inspired the political elites in small, authoritarian states (rather than Hitler), the other is that the Roman past expressed a kind of humanism, and adherance to the classic values. (Ferkai 2003:158).

¹¹ A ruin may best be placed in a little green park. There are several examples for intentions like that. The cellatrichora in Raktár Street from the 1930s, the small park in Miklós Street, or the wall structure of the Late Roman fort near Thermal Hotel Aquincum (Mezős, 2001:66–67).

¹² D. Dul, Budapest, III. kerület Hévizi úti lakótelep, tervdokumentáció 1959–1960 [Budapest, III. district, housing estate at Hévizi Road, plan documentation 1959-1960], Lechner Nonprofit Kft., Lechner Nonprofit Kft., Építésügyi Dokumentációs és Információs Központ, DKT/OÉMT/ÁÉTV/-5039.

A very similar situation can be observed in the houses along the "Via Antica" (after 1945 Ottó Korvin, today Pacsirtamező Street) built in socialist realist style for shipyard workers in 1955. The building was placed on a steel-concrete base to present the Roman monuments that had emerged at the foundation, and a museum was established in the basement. The museum part of the building was designed after the fall of Stalin as opposed to the building designed in 1950, so it was a product of the post socialist-realism era, a small sign of the returning modern architecture. "The designer could easily have erred by applying Roman decorative motifs, neoclassic architectural elements, which in this particular case would have been a definitely wrong, cheap, gimmicky solution. (...) The designer appropriately chose (...) the completely timeless, noble and simple, basic architectural form growing out of the job (from Borsos 1955:430). Here therefore, a strange situation arises again when the design of the archaeological exhibition site is the counterpoint in modern form language next to a relatively historizing building in the urban landscape.

Meanwhile, preparations were under way for the complete rehabilitation of the area. Here, the most interesting undertaking was the experimental housing estate at the site of a rehabilitated former pit (Branczik –Keller 2011). The idea behind the project was to find the best practices for the future mass housing industry. The architects involved were only Hungarian, but followed the contemporary international trends. The modern building design principles clearly dominated the experimental housing estate. From this time, architecture in Hungary turned back to international modernism. . However, the experiment remained an attempt, and instead of local architects designing the tenement houses, the state imported prefabricated panel technology from the Soviet Union. Óbuda became after 1960 one of the biggest areas of prefabricated housing estates in Budapest (Ferkai 2005:55).¹³

The developing projects until the 1960s concentrated only on the edges of the historical town and left intact the monument ensembles. So the townscape analyses of the 1950s noticed "as protectable" the urban axis of the medieval town, which included the environs of Lajos Street (Lajos utca) and the Main Square (Fő tér, Horler 1983). Nevertheless, this time the urban enlargement ideas did not favor the creation of a protected zone. This had a structural obstacle, because following the pre-war plans the Árpád-Bridge (Árpád-híd) was inaugurated in 1950, and split into two parts the historical settlement structure (Biczó 1979:120). However, the demolition of the old town only took place much later, between 1967 and 1976 (Bán et al 1985:176) (Fig. 1). This decade brought about the new urban image of Soviet-style ten-storey blocks of flats and their related service buildings, schools, and nurseries, when monument protection could not act as a regulator, but only as a rescuer of values adapting to the narrow opportunities, and not the least as an aesthetic, identity-building force.

Óbuda's new identity was radically modern and the former street lines disappeared in most places. The Roman and medieval remains of buildings were discovered and partly revealed at the sites of the demolished houses. The new urban landscape was brought together by the green space between the ten-storey houses, repeating the practice of the 1930s and 1940s in a radical form, with prefabricated structures (Fig. 2). The urban landscape was modernized and archaized at the same time, but the modernization enjoyed priority: "the development plan fostered the illusion that the unearthed archaeological remains would possibly be presented between the pillars of, and under the buildings. The constraints of the new buildings (technology, utilities etc.) did not allow this, besides which the new system of the city had kept no continuity whatsoever with the old town's structure" (from Kaiser 1995:333).

It is part of the overall picture that the monument protection, the urban development institute, and the prefab factories themselves were distinct divisions, and had different individuals as professionals. The ele-

¹³ Notably, the developing of prefabricated architecture affected Óbuda's historical zones as well. As the capacity of the brick industry that had developed in the late 19th century in Óbuda was no longer needed, the pits were filled up and then partly rehabilitated, partly remained free form houses . Today, as the pre-industrialization green belt of the townscape would have been restored, the town's historical zone itself did not exist anymore (Csemez 2005:108).

ments of Roman and medieval monuments emerging in the modern urban landscape was the work of experts in monument protection, while the whole construction was the work of the urban planners. One more important note belongs here. Óbuda had lost its historical townscape, and the urban structure full of ruins was intended to express the town's new identity. Nevertheless, the ruins express an identity which can hardly be understood by the everyday users of the space. In this regard the comments of the non-professional, but very active rescuer of the ruins, the writer Károly Kiss, are relevant: "The memories of Roman times, unfortunately, have remained stones (...) How much more sensible it would have been to put these almost two thousand year-old amphitheaters into service for public education with a smart effort." (Kiss 1982:153).

The town retained a much stronger relationship with the remaining structures of the 18th and 19th centuries that had somehow escaped demolition. Two "mini" reserve zone were designated, one around the main square and another around the Catholic parish. The historic streetscape may be perceived in these patch-like vestiges, although only as allusions, because the environment is dominated by ten-storey prefabricated blocks of flats (Czélényi 1985:174). The revitalization of reserved houses employed two typical solutions: one was archaization, the other was adjusting addition. In the case of the remaining groups of buildings, monument protection was given "carte blanche". The buildings often received cultural or sometimes gastronomy functions. Thanks to the daily (home) or occasional (cultural, gastronomic) use, the heritage reserves organically fit into the city's social life, and their museum-nature is less pronounced than that of the ruins (for further discussion see the thematic issue of Múzeumcafé 68:2018).

Urban planning makes historical milieu (Komárom)

The town of Komárom has a historical feature that its territory was cut in half after 1920 (Dębicki–Tamáska 2014). Thus, the historical town core in the north went in 1920 to Czechoslovakia (today Slovakia), and the southern part remained in Hungary (divided by the Danube river, Sikos–Tiner 2007, Kecskés 1984). The division took place a few decades after the two banks were connected by a permanent bridge and legally united (Simon 2011:91). In the following, we will deal exclusively with southern Komárom (or South-Komárom, HU) situated in Hungary, and we will refer to the other side as Komárno (or North-Komárom, SK).

In the early 20th century, Komárom was only a poorly developed suburb. A few newly built Beaux-Arts churches, the train station, a wealthier factory, the barracks, and the single-storey residential buildings comprised the urban street lines, which did not form a unit (Számadó 2006:9). This disorderly status corresponded to the situation of the settlement at that time, which could be interpreted as part of Komárno (SK) in every respect: Komárom was with the railway station an industrial suburb of the northern, historical town (Kovács 2011:103). Komárom was divided from the northern part in 1920 and it faced a serious dilemma since it had inherited the administrative status (as center of region) of the other bank (although later demoted) without any urban identity. In the twenties, Gyula Wälder, who was the most sought-after architect in Hungary at that time, was commissioned to design public buildings. In his characteristic neo-Baroque style, Wälder made designs in Komárom, so the two basic blocks of the main square, the school and the town hall received a neo-Baroque design (Sisa–Wiebenson 1998:276). In the thirties, Komárom also experienced a noticeable shift in architecture. However, regardless of the buildings, the era as a whole failed in the largest task: to incorporate the scattered settlement structure into some kind of system.

Construction of the center was left to the post-World War II times. In the fifties, the previous plan of the main square by Gyula Wälder was going to be completed, and the northern facade was accomplished with

typical socialist realist historicism decorations.¹⁴ However, the major rearrangement happened in the same style of flats as in Óbuda.

Nonetheless, the basic situation was quite different here. While Óbuda had had a given historical structure that the new urban planning structures eradicated, Komárom had to develop quietly from the zero point (Fig. 3). Whereas Óbuda had an almost inexhaustible richness of the past (early modern market town, medieval and Roman ruins), Komárom had hardly any pre-1715 relics worthy of protection according to the approach of the time (Harlov-Csortán 2020, Haris–Somorjay 2006). Not even traces of the vernacular architecture were present. Residents in Komárom had worked for the railways, factories, in barracks and in simple urban dwelling since the second half of the 19th century(Számadó 2008, 9).

Komárom does not have the strictly duality of urban development and monuments so typical of Óbuda, because of its lack of monuments. It is therefore particularly interesting that urban planners themselves created the quasi-values to be protected. They qualified first of all the churches as elements to be preserved in the townscape, while the other special feature was that the development plan for new estates aimed to emphasize the former street structure, which was not typical in Óbuda at all. In the center of Komárom, the new structures make out a closed street line. Elsewhere – see Mártírok Road – the same blocks stand detached, but they are exactly superimposed on the former allotment boundaries. The new prefabricated houses are linked together by service shops towards the street.¹⁵

Finally, two major centers emerged both of which applied the principle of aesthetic counterpoint. Jókai Square is a traditional country roadside square-formation that was lined by low rows of houses that originally used to stand in front of the Calvinist church built very late, only in 1927. The church itself is poor, that is to say, of poor quality in the sense of architectural history, yet it escaped demolition.¹⁶ We cannot say that this was merely due to the developers, but the fact is that the church was very consciously composed into the new townscape (Fig. 4.). The horizontal balconies of the prefabricated houses, that were built instead of the single-storey row of houses, draw the eye towards the church as a perspective line set in space. It is also remarkable that, although the downtown features four-storey houses, the block of Liszt Ferenc Square is three-storey. The relatively low blocks allow the vertical emphasis of the church's tower.

The complementary, nevertheless contrasting composition of old and new was repeated in the main town square.¹⁷ Here, next to Gyula Wälder's neo-Baroque public buildings and the northern, socialist-realism structures, the southern square partition remained unfinished until the sixties. A building of complex function (residential, commercial and office) was constructed here that matched the earlier structure of the square, but otherwise rigidly rejected the historicizing manner. Even the plans named the building as "the seven storey" ("hétemeletes") referring to the creation of an emphasized vertical space, and a new reference point in the square. The seven-storey is a typical example of modern infill constructions that counterpoint historical milieu. It radically interpreted the Athens Charter's principle, that every era should speak its own architectural language. Although a seven-storey building is generally not regarded as a tall one, in this environment it is. Not only its height, but also its openwork facade aims to counterpoint the historical (historicizing) enclosure of usual spatial partitions. Nevertheless, its radical contemporary forms contained some historical references

17 Szabadság téri vegyes rendeltetésű épület terve I-III kötet (Szabadság Square, plan of a complex building, Volumes I-III), Komáromi Fióklevéltár, Archive of Komárom. Plan Repository I. 86-89. box, Sz/2, Sz/3, Sz/4, Sz5, Sz6, 1972.

 ¹⁴ Komárom 48 lakás "C" épület tervei (48 flats, plans of Building "C"). Komáromi Fióklevéltár, Archive of Komárom. Plan Repository I.
54. box. K/27, 1956. Szabadság téri Városháza tervei (Townhall renovation): Townhall at Szabadság Square, plans): Komáromi Fióklevéltár, Archive of Komárom. Plan Repository I. 90. box SZ/7: 1981.

¹⁵ Komárom THJ Szab. Kir. Város térképe (Map of the royal free town of Komárom), 1:10:000, 1941. BME Urban Studies Library, K/71.; Komárom ÁRT térképe 1977 (Urban Developing Plan), 1:4000, BME Urban Studies Library 1977, nr. 351.

¹⁶ Jókai tér északi oldal beépítése, levelezések (Construction of the northern side of Jókai Square, correspondence), Komáromi Fióklevéltár, Archive of Komárom. Plan Repository I. 43. box, J/38, 1977–1980.

at the same time, as in the case of Jókai Square: like symmetry, the main axis and the archway. Actually, even the radical modern space formation makes allowances for historical forms in Komárom where no real historical architecture exists.

Although in chronological terms it is outside our scope, it is worth noting that Szőny merged with Komárom in 1977. Hence, this new town of just half a century gained "access" to the Roman excavation site of Brigetio, and all of a sudden, it created two thousand years of past (Nagy et al 2013:278). The process continues to this day, conquering public space as well. For example, the recent renovation of Szabadság Square has introduced Roman sarcophagi on the square, and Roman relics can be encountered elsewhere in the streets on display.¹⁸ Whereas modern architecture separates the ruins from the contemporary structure, creating a sort of historical reserve, here the new pleasure society dictates public spaces, and the relics blend into other attractions of the environment as instruments of cultural consumption and heritage protection (and sometimes even creations).

Esztergom: developing to contrast the historical zones

Esztergom was one of the oldest towns in the Kingdom of Hungary, the most important settlement of the Kings, a collection of countless merchant populations until the Mongol invasion (1241/1242, Eperjessy 1971:213). Later it lost its rank, but remained the seat of the Catholic Church in Hungary. In the 16th century, it was occupied by the Turks, and the liberation struggles completely destroyed it. The baroque and classicist town built in the 18th and 19th centuries (which was administratively fragmented into several districts) was almost completely different from its medieval antecedent (Pifkó 1984:6). Understandably, the evolving modern historical science and archeology soon discovered Esztergom at the beginning of the 20th century, where extremely significant excavations began in the early 20th century (after 1920, Dercsényi–Zolnay 1956:63). Hence, the monument protection of Esztergom was a determining factor in the urban development before 1945 as well. However, unlike Óbuda, where the growing metropolis also hastened the excavation of the ruins, Esztergom can be defined as a stagnant, medium-sized town until 1945 (Bánlaky 1992:44).

In the years between 1945 and 1960 this stagnation became more pronounced. While the region's mining industry settlements (especially Dorog, but also Tatabánya, established at this time, or Oroszlány) experienced some spectacular urban changes, Esztergom was deliberately demoted (Lettrich 1964). The communist regime meant all this as a punishment for the center of the Catholics (Szabó 2016). As a result, not only Esztergom's historic core in a narrow sense persisted, but also the whole structure of the town. This later became the basis for Esztergom's residential development (Lettrich 1964:56–112). Based on the townscape studies of the 1950s, Esztergom was included in the first group of towns with a protected area (in Hungarian: Műemléki Jelentőségű Terület, with inner part of Buda, Eger, Győr, Kőszeg, Pápa, Pécs, Sárospatak, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Szombathely, Vác, Veszprém). Two distant monument zones were designated, the main square of the historical, royal free town (Széchenyi Square) and the castle hill with the Basilica (Gerő 1971:187).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the two protected zones did limit the options for urban development plans. While the principle of complete reconstruction was employed for Óbuda, in Esztergom the tender called for "the reorganization of the historical town center" (Gerő 1971:187). However, the reorganization meant a radical modernization in this case as well. Since the protected zones covered a significant part of the town, urban development ventured into the legally unprotected area between the two zones (Balogh L. 2011:15). Esztergom is Óbuda's counterexample: there monument and townscape protection could just act in fields left alone by modern urban planning, here modern urban planning had to conform to the historical parts of the town. In addition,

¹⁸ Designed by Andor Anikó 2009, completed: http://tajepiteszek.hu/hirek/kozter-megujitasi-nivodij-2012-komarom-szabadsag-ter Last view: 04.01.2021.

while historical ruins and historical building blocks survived as spots in Óbuda, in Esztergom, the historical town was counterbalanced by new buildings. The spot-like interventions in Esztergom meant some mega structures in the town center (Kun 1981, 19). During the reorganization of Rákóczi Square, residential houses and a super-market were built (Fig. 5, Fig. 6).¹⁹ The goal was to create a modern town center, a contemporary image instead of the single-storey town center of fragmented services. Despite the fact that the buildings are not very high (4-5 storeys) and even have pitched roofs, they still provide a perfect counterpoint to the neighboring historical town structure. The paradigm of the old town structure is the enclosed streetscape and the private courtyard, while that of the new- though making allowances for the framed allotment – is a traversable and flowing space. The modern town center inserted into the middle of the town structure therefore endeavored to counterpoint not only the image, but the structure and the construction order of the historical town center.

Not only the new town center proved how important the collision of old and new was, but so did the example of the former brick factory opposite the Basilica (Béke tér). Even László Gerő, a monument expert wrote, that because the square in front of the Basilica (Kanonok sor) remained unfinished in the past, the man of new times must make a "greater emphasis" by enclosing the square (Gerő 1971:187). The solution was already a compromise in spatial structure, since the block of one-storey houses exactly opposite the Basilica was left untouched. Instead of it, the construction took place a bit farther away in the plot of the former brick factory in the 1970s (Pifkó, 1984, 44). The construction therefore had no morphological constraints, for example, a former street network, or public utilities. The mid-rise blocks were positioned to connect to the parkland square opening up to the Basilica's square-formation. A public sculpture was placed in the middle of the centrally shaped park to emphasize the artistic commitment to the new. The very existence of the modern sculpture counterpoints the richness of the historical square and its artistic relics, so that it becomes palpable that the development of Esztergom is not closed down, motionless and retrospective. The housing estate and the sculpture therefore confirmed László Zolnay and Edit Lettrich's lines from the late 1960s that "the current townscape of Esztergom is therefore in no way final" (1970:75).

Despite this witty sentence (or perhaps because of it), the Béke tér prefabricated real estate did not want to interfere with the historical town's skyline substantially (Fig. 7), not least because at the time of building the estate, the Kanonok sor (building of catholic clerics of bishops) was a restricted area where the Soviet army was stationed. For that reason, the connection to the historical town was rather imaginary, an option sketched on a map, rather than reality. After the regime change (1989), the two squares (Kanonok sor – Béke tér) were connected. Rather than buildings a town park connects to the historical constructions in Béke tér, providing a pleasant boundary zone between the old and the new constructions. On the other hand, the buildings have 4–5 storeys, the whole area slopes, so they almost remain hidden in the vicinity of the Basilica's view. In contrast with the modern town center established at Rákóczi Square, the housing estate at Béke tér thus played out less of the contrasting-conflicting potential in the extensions, and rather tried to respect the historical town's skyline. The message of the housing estate is much more of narrative than that of townscape importance. Whereas the aesthetic scenery of the Kanonok sor related to the Basilica represents a highly elitist, hierarchical society, the housing estate reflects the equalizing approach of the socialist type, "people's democracy" (formulated in the words of the regime).²⁰

¹⁹ The supermarket, in Hungarian "áruház" was a very typical element of the late socialist townscapes, mostly with a "brutal" design. They represented consume oriented change of the dictatorship.

²⁰ Of course, we know from other research that owning or acquiring a flat in the socialist society was a privilege, so the socialist democracy in this area produced unfair and great differences between the social groups. (Szelényi–Konrád 1969).

CONCLUSION - SUMMARY

The first part of our study has argued that modern urban architecture in the 1960s and 1970s was linked to the second social gearshift of modernization. The pre-fabricated housing estate based on the principles of modern urban planning was a fast solution of urban architecture, and it reshaped former ideas about the town in just two decades. These include dissolved boundaries between square and street, disappearing local entities and a significant vertical shift. In the forefront of the extremely rapid transformation, the logic and aesthetics of the historical town became easier to interpret as well. So much so, that in the sixties and seventies, town-scape and monument protection and urban planning seemed to merge. This integration fostered the aesthetic premise in the spirit of the era that regarded the tension of old and new as a (positive) value, or at least as a remarkable architectural creation.

However, the selected overview of three Hungarian cases also shows that townscape conflicts have occurred in a great variety of forms. Óbuda, which belongs among the first prefabricated housing estates in Hungary, resolved the issue radically. In addition to a complete reconstruction, townscape protection primarily sought to exhibit the underground (archaeological) sites. Óbuda also demonstrates the value judgments operating in monument protection. For example, the Roman relics enjoyed a priority for a long time, so much that actually, the archaeological excavations initiated the demolition of the morphological legacy of the 18th and 19th century market town at the end of the 1930s. Óbuda's image changes thus took shape along two strong power relations: the first is the townscape and monument protection and modern urban planning; and the other is the priority of archaeological sites in the paradigm values of monument protection. Finally, as the established townscape was developing alongside these forces, it has resulted in a rather diffuse modern urban landscape with ruins and relics of historical street portions.

Whereas the historical town and the historical past underneath was given in Óbuda, it all had to be created for Komárom. Paradoxically, modern urban planning did the job, as during the reconstruction some, mainly sacred, buildings were left standing. Moreover, it integrated them into the new townscape as the historical counterpoints of the modern town.

While we can barely speak of heritage protection in Komárom (since the town had no historical materials according to the value perception of that time), and monument practice was subordinated to urban planning in Óbuda, the monument experts could play or could have played a leading role in Esztergom's downtown. Despite this, modern urban planning carried out major interventions in the unprotected areas to counterpoint to the town's development into a museum.

Lastly, the question may arise about how far the townscapes full of the tension of old and new should be considered deliberate or coincidences. We believe that it was not deliberate in that monument protection was a separate department, therefore urban planning had only a consultation obligation: "In the 1960s and 1970s, many welcomed the intertwining of heritage protection, urban planning and urban development. Over time, disappointment came, and heritage protection lost countless "battles" against urban planning, perhaps due to the fact that important issues were not decided among ministries, but within one ministry." (Jankó 2005:44). The point is therefore that while the era was theoretically characterized by both radical modernization and evolving townscape protection, still modernization was clearly decisive between the two parties. Consequently, the tension of old and new was also a power issue, where townscape and monument protection was the weaker party. Probably, contrasting eras as an aesthetic value was thus primarily an architectural premise that monument protection accepted. The reason for this is that the monument preservation and architectural design (despite the organizational separation) have not departed from each other in education and vocation. It is very typical that the monument experts of the time accepted modern architecture as the only legitimate architecture language of the time. The famous expert András Román formulated this point as follows: "the pre-

vailing architectural style of most of the twentieth century is modernism (...). I maintain that the restorations complying to the Venice Charter exactly correspond to this." (Román 2004, 149). Nonetheless, we know that the key principle of the restorations conceived in the spirit of the Charter was the rigid separation of historical parts from additions, and thus this aesthetic principle was magnified in townscape dimensions.

The spirit of modern architecture has lost its dominant position since the eighties. The postmodern era had new keywords: diversity, harmony pleasure and spectacle. Accordingly, perceptions and taste about townscapes are changing as well. The integrated townscape replaces the mass-like separation of old and new, where the historical styles evoke an historical adventure park. The excavated ruins, the restored monuments no longer counteract the modern times, but complement them: offering an alternatively consumable historical milieu to the residents, but also moreover to tourism. Accordingly, architectural heritage protection in the strict sense has dissolved in a larger and more comprehensive social phenomenon, the process of cultural heritage creation. In addition, as usually happens at the borderlines of cultural-historical eras, the "zeitgeist" considers the townscape that has emerged from modern urban architecture and its heritage perception as surpassed; furthermore it attempts to eliminate those elements from the townscape during square renovations, spatial developments, as presented above in the case of Komárom's Szabadság Square.

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FIGURES



Fig. 1. Master Plan 1958 and 1964–65, Budapest, Óbuda.

In Bán et al 1985:175, 177. See note 61.

Fig. 2. Budapest-Óbuda, Flórian Square today, the contrast of Roman heritage and modern urban landscape



Photo: the author



Fig. 3. Komárom, Master Plan 1978

The Archive of Komárom. Plan Documentation. nr. Tervtár V.A./2.

Fig. 4. Komárom, Jókai Tér today and before the modernization



Photos from Calendar 2006, published by the Local Government of Komárom

Fig. 5. Master Plan of the inner town of Esztergom, 1972



In Kun 1981: 36. See note 88

Fig. 6. The reconstructed (rebuild) inner town today, before demolishing the so called "green house" (zöldház), (2017)



Photo: the author

Fig. 7. Béke tér today. The housing estates, the green puffer zone and (right) the corner of the historical buildings of the bishop's administration



Photo: the author