

Part III

Summary

The structure of the capital city was basically defined at the creation of greater Budapest in 1950. The functional structure of the metropolis in the state socialist period reflected the pattern of the East-Central European big cities of the time (city centre, first residential zone, industrial and transportation zone, and second residential zone). The urban centre (the city) did not yet reach the Buda side; the Pest side was more developed and more diverse where the respective zones were located as real belts in concentric circles.

The quarter of a century that has passed since the regime change has brought fundamental changes resulting from the transformation of the political and management system, the building out of a market economy, the increase of social mobility, and the new urban policy. From among the new impacting factors we have to mention the mass construction of office buildings and the establishment of hypermarkets, specialised department stores and shopping centres, the transformation of the industrial areas, and the ever more significant urban regeneration that had/have the largest impact on the change of the urban structure. As a result of the combined effect of the above factors, a fundamental change has taken place in the structure of Budapest. The proportions of the respective functional belts have significantly changed, and new elements of functional structure have appeared.

The specific changes and features in the urban structure of Budapest are as follows.

- *The Budapest city has strengthened remarkably, with its territory considerably expanding and reaching the Buda side as well.* As an effect of the city-shaping forces, the city of Budapest—similarly to most other metropolises of Europe—is now divided into different functional units (city core, government quarter, Castle district, CBD, university district, edge of the city).

- *Shopping centres and hypermarkets that are often built on former industrial or brand new areas more and more function as new subcentres by now, similarly to the town/district centres created in the state socialist era and the old historical cores of the respective districts. Today there are 36 subcentres in Budapest.*
- *The former industrial area has lost much of its significance; it has been functionally restructured and the specification 'brownfield' is a more precise description. This belt no longer surrounds the inner residential zone as a real belt; it is located sporadically especially on the Pest side, in some cases stretching out along railways and roads. The brownfield areas have not only decreased in size but have also been significantly differentiated. They now include derelict rustbelt areas as well as modern industrial parks. Now there are five larger and two smaller brownfields in Budapest.*
- *Urban green areas are very important in Budapest; unfortunately, both their size and proportion have decreased over the last 25 years. The decrease is due to the building up of the territory, and their functional changes. The largest decline occurred in the territory of forests, grasslands, groves, and sport fields. The proportion of green areas is much higher in Buda than on the Pest side.*
- *There are two residential zones in Budapest, of which the outer one is more significant in size and the number of population. The inner residential zone surrounds the city as a real belt. Its size and population have decreased as a result of the spread of the city. The inner residential zone has mixed functions; in addition to the residential function we find many buildings and areas with central functions in them. Its look is definitely urban, mainly reflected in closedness and vertical diversity. It is built up primarily with blocks of multistorey buildings, multistorey semidetached houses, and villas. The outer residential zone can be found in mosaics in the outer districts of Budapest, mostly in Pest. It has a much more clear-cut residential function. Its image is a garden city image; it is built up less closed and the vertical diversity is small. Apart from a few districts this belt is built up primarily with detached houses.*