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Walks in Budapest VIII

Víziváros or Waterfront Town

District Two of Budapest—Víziváros or Waterfront Town—was the first little township to be built outside the walls of the former Royal Castle and the streets atop Castle Hill which were the mediaeval capital. The district, built and inhabited by artisans and craftsmen, stretches on the northern and eastern slopes of the Hill and is bonded by what are called today Moszkva tér, Mártírok útja, Bem József utca, the Danube embankment and Ybl Miklós tér.

The district once consisted of small houses, set back in gardens, with characteristic doorways. These houses have almost completely disappeared to give way to modern blocks of flats. However, a few of the old houses still remain, breathing the atmosphere of the old Víziváros.

Our first call is in the courtyard of the building on the corner of Mártírok útja and Fekete Sas utca. Fekete Sas (Black Eagle) was the name of a famous inn which once stood in this street. Now, in the courtyard the

moved to a new site, and industrial production here only ended in the 1950s.

In the old Ganz utca (street), a memorial commemorating the famous factory forms an interesting contrast to a Baroque cha-



PHOTO MTI — LAJOS SOÓS

Lion-shaped latch on an old house door in Toldi Ferenc utca



PHOTO MTI — TAMÁS FÉNYES

The cupolated roof of Király Baths in Fő utca. The baths were built by the Turks



Contemporary photograph showing rescue boat in the water-logged Fő utca during the 1972 flood



PHOTO MTI — TAMÁS FÉNYES

Altarpiece in Fő utca church showing a fire devastating the Víziváros district

ruins of the old town wall of Víziváros can be seen. A few minutes' walk brings us to an industrial relic of the township, the Museum of Metallurgy, installed in the old foundry shop of the Ganz Works. Until the first decade of the 19th century, Víziváros was a smoky industrial district and its Ganz Works turned out world famous metal and foundry products. It is worth mentioning that the foundry of the factory continued to work even after the factory itself was

pel next door to it. On the other side of the street is one of the most interesting buildings of the Víziváros, the Turkish steam bath, built by Mustafa Sokoli pasha. The more-than-400-year-old building, now known as Királyfürdő, has a new portion, built in neo-Classical style attached to it.

Within a short walk is one of the most attractive squares in Budapest—Batthyány tér. It is open to the Danube on one side and surrounded by lovely

Baroque churches and Baroque buildings, among them the once famous Fehér Kereszt (White Cross) inn building on the others. This restful old world atmosphere forms a sharp contrast to the bustle of the Metro station. St. Anne's Church with its two spires is perhaps the purest piece of Baroque architecture to be found in Hungary. It is also famous for its altarpiece, which commemorates one of the many fires that devastated the Víziváros. The township

was flooded several times as plaques on the walls of houses indicate how high the water rose. In 1872 the whole district was under water and boats plied the Main Street rescuing people.

Before leaving the district it is worth casting a glance into the many narrow cobbled streets leading to the castle district from Fő utca, and catch a glimpse of some of the old buildings lining them. Fő utca leads into Clark Ádám tér, one of the most busiest spots in Budapest, with Lánchíd (Chains Bridge) spanning the Danube on the left and Castle Hill on the right.

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