

264
In historic Buda Castle quarter

Budapest Hilton in is

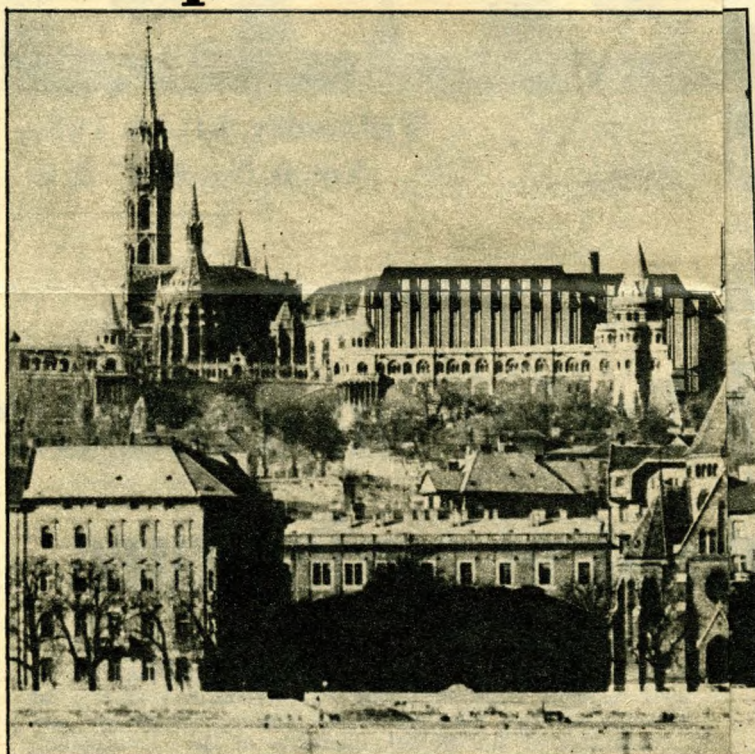


PHOTO MTI — BALASSA

This is how the future Budapest Hilton will fit itself into the famous historic Buda Castle skyline

You dial the number and a pleasant female voice on the other end of the line says: "This is the Budapest Hilton. What can I do for you?" Well, the fact is that there is no Hilton hotel at all in the Hungarian capital—yet. However, the telephone reply is not "a fake." Despite the absence for the time being of the luxury hotel—to be housed in a reconstructed building in the Buda Castle quarter, a staff is already at work to prepare this next link in the

international Hilton hotels chain.

For instance, men are at work deep underground in the vicinity of the Matthias Church, laying the foundations of the hotel. The tempo of work is rather slow, partly due to the abundance of ancient relics emerging from the soil. Sculptures and 15th-century glass jars are among the more common finds. Another reason for the delay is that hundreds of tons of concrete had to be injected into the ground to provide a solid basis for the building. Rock layers—some of them 10 feet (3 m) thick—have to be cut through.

However, on the surface, things are getting ahead faster—both the design of the rooms and halls, and their furniture, curtains, and carpets, are ready. Matching table cloths, linen, etc., have also been selected. The hotel will have 320 rooms, 62 being two-level suites, provided with the most sophisticated comfort.

When talking about the subject of equipment, smiles appear rather more frequently on the face of Hiltons' future director, Mr. Károly Bíró, than when the word "excavations" crops up. Sitting in a tiny office he says:

"The hotel will have an espresso bar overlooking the Fishermen's Bastion; a coffee shop and a modern snack-bar with a view over historic Matthias Church. The restaurant will accommodate 200 at a time. There will be a large hall for 500, and several smaller halls, suitable for meetings, conferences or dinners. A roof restaurant and a night club with a wonderful view over the whole city will add to the hotel's facilities. And, of course, underground garages, hairdresser's shops, travel offices, will also be laid on."

The Budapest Hilton will operate with a staff of 560, each member expected to have a good command of English. When completed,

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