City Gate to Client Gate

The Mission of the Archives

Budapest City Archives is the one and only general archives in Hungary apart from Hungarian National Archives, but one which also functions as city archives. The documents and cultural treasures it keeps are of outstanding significance concerning the cultural life and identity formation of Budapest, Hungary and the entire Hungarian community. The city archives of European capitals today are important not only because they assist historical research of various levels and perform functions of public administration. Today’s modern municipal archives actively contribute to meeting the cultural, informational and identity-forming interests at community and personal level connected to the specific locality. Our main aim is to be present in the cultural scene of Budapest by revealing a wide variety of sources, by making accessible our archival holdings relying on the latest IT developments and by providing rich and colourful programs and services to all groups of the general public. Apart from meeting academic requirements and performing the task of certifying rights, our archives by its existence as an institution is an embodiment of the memory of Budapest. Our goal, therefore, must go beyond meeting the needs the specific academic fields interested in archival records. By finding and publishing sources using a wide range of methods, we would like to provide assistance to local and learning communities to gain access to any dimension of the past of their communities as simply and directly as possible.

The History of the Archives and its Collection

We have no data concerning the circumstances in which the documents of medieval Buda and Pest were kept and we have but a few documents dating from the period preceding 1686. (DATABASE) Following the liberation of Buda from the Turkish rule in 1686 and the revival of the city, its official documents were initially kept in the home of the mayor or the notary and later at the city chancellery. Following certain measures taken by subsequent monarchs over the 18th century, so-called ’archivaries’ (archivists) were appointed, whose duty it was to take care of and organise the documents in the building of the City Hall. After 1873, the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda into Budapest, apart from the old city hall of Pest, the basement of the former Buda city hall now unused and from 1887, also the New City Hall got to store archival documents. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the central City Hall was moved to the Károly (Charles) Military Barracks, where the archives were now even provided a strongroom – however, its long-term storage needs were unfortunately disregarded.

The next important development was the transfer of the bulky set of documents into the crypts of the St Stephen Cathedral during World War 2, in 1943-44. The most valuable documents were at the same time taken to the vaults of the National Bank of Hungary and got finally back to Hungary undamaged, after an adventurous journey in Western Europe. The majority of the documents that remained in the City Hall during the siege of Budapest got destroyed. Flames devoured, among other things, the official copies of the birth, marriage and death registers, the collection of statutes of civil organisations and foundations, while numerous series of the interwar period documents created at various departments of the mayor’s office suffered substantial damage. After the war and up to the early 60s in the main building of the municipal administration there were only working rooms to be used by the archives and therefore it continued to make use of the vaults under the Cathedral, where later even offices were set up. The 1960s finally saw the renovation of the City Hall and the creation of storage space in other locations, which somewhat improved the congestion. The renovated storage rooms of the City Hall were now able to accommodate the most valuable documents from the pre-1873 period. In 1972 the Budapest City Council decided to build a new building for the city archives as part of the preparations for the centenary of the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda. The most endangered part of the collection stored in the cathedral vaults were to be moved temporarily into the unfinished building of the Holy Land church of Hungary in the 2nd district (planned by the well-known modernist architect Farkas Molnár and listed as a monument). After the centennial enthusiasm was over, however, there was no more talk about creating a new archival building and in 1976 the church in Heinrich István Street was declared to be the final rather than a temporary home of this department. During the 1970s to the storage rooms were added workshops for handling microfilms, bookbinding and conservation. This was followed by the second largest document transfer campaign in the history of Hungarian archives in 1989 and 1991. It included the disinfection of the documents (by now infected with fungi) still stored in the cathedral vaults and together with many other sets of documents, the majority of the collection was moved into what originally was the building of the Misura Cart Factory in the 8th district, in Leonardo da Vinci Lane. This, however, still didn’t completely solve the problem of storage room shortage, so the management of the archives raised the issue of creating one single central building for the institution. In 1998 the building lot was finally chosen, in Teve Street, in the 13th district and the architectural competition was won by Budai Építész Műhely led by János Koris. The project was realised with the exclusive funding of the Municipality of Budapest. The foundation stone was ceremonially laid by the Mayor of Budapest Gábor Demszky on 11 October 2002 and the new building was opened to the public in 2004.

The Most Important Document Series of the Archives

The Pre-1873 records of Buda, Pest and Óbuda

The City Council, Administrative Bodies and Offices

The city council was originally no other thing than the so-called ’electa communitas’, an administrative body made up of the members of guilds. This body elected the Magistrate, the main executive organ of the cities, which were entitled to govern their affairs by the Decrees of City Rights of 1703 and some additional measures from later years. The most important offices were that of the Magistrate, the Mayor, the Notary, the Combatants and the members of the Jury, each representing their own quarter.

The Residents of the City

The names and data of those holding burghers’ rights in Pest and Buda are listed in the burghers’ registers kept from 1687 to 1848. (Database) The most important censuses in Buda were: the census of non-noblemen of 1803, the register of the lodgings of the representatives of parliament, 1805, the nationwide census of 1828 and the census sheets of the 1857 nationwide census. The similar census sheets for Pest didn’t survive. For Óbuda the earliest census dates from 1787-88, which was a mobility registry. We can gain insight into the income of the vine-growing population from the records of the wine tax gathering from 1786-1849. From the 1776-1849 period we also have the records of military tax gathering. There are several surviving censuses from the post-1849 period.

Guardianship issues and poverty relief

Managing the cases of orphans and inheritance was set in the Decree of 1703 as the task of the council of both cities. Last wills (from 1696 onwards) and inventories (from 1708 onwards) and orphans’ documents (acta pupillaria, from 1753 onwards) form an important part of the archival records.

In Buda, possessions of orphans were initially managed by one of the council members, then, as the population grew, a separate trustee was appointed, functioning until an Orphans’ Office was set up in 1760. The first orphans’ property manager was appointed in Pest in 1740.

The Orphans’ Committee was set up by the council in 1822, while after 1850 this field was referred to the authority of the k. k. (kaiserlich-königlich) courts of justice, but between 1861 and 1872 it was referred back to the municipal authority. A separate municipal committee was responsible for overseeing the poorhouse.

As for Óbuda, the earliest examples of orphans’ guardians’ documents date as far back as the mid-18th century. From 1861 a Board of Guardians was set up, overseen by the Court of Justice of Óbuda.

Financial Management of the City

The financial management of Buda was the duty of the Office of the Vice Chancellor, which, from 1710 on also ran the civil hospital (later St John’s Hospital) and the Poorhouse. The Office of the Vice Chancellor and the Tax Office were both answerable to the Chancellery Office.

As for the town of Pest, the creation of the chancellor’s office dates back to 1688. The most valuable documents originating from this source are the series of financial reports giving accounts of the incomes and expenditures of the town between 1703 and 1873. The Tax Office of the Town of Pest was separated from the chancellor’s office in the 1820s. Among the surviving documents of the Audit Office of the Town of Pest we find the copies of the contracts signed in the name of the town between 1862 and 1873.

Óbuda, being under feudal rule, had meagre income, so the post of financial manager was only created as late as 1803.

Law enforcement

As stated in the decree of 1703, the highest ranking official responsible for keeping law and order was the Town Captain in both Buda and Pest. The first surviving command describing the duties of a town captain dates back to 1729. The individual police stations of the various quarters were set up in the first half of the 19th century. Following the revolution of 1848-49, criminal and political policing were carried out by a k. k. (kaiserlich-königlich) organ, the Polizeidirekzion. City police was only responsible for administrative policing. The town of Pest also ran a workhouse as part of the penal system.

Market and Fair Authority

Local and national fairs and markets played an important part in the life of the city. Overseeing these was also the responsibility of the council. We have surviving records created by the subsequent Market Authorities of Pest between 1789 and 1884 and the minutes of the Market and Fair Committee of Pest between 1768 and 1813.

Property registry (DATABASE)

The most important land registries for the town of Buda are the cadastres (from 1709 onwards) and the land transfer protocols (from 1705 onwards). Land value estimation protocols, going back to 1776, constitute significant value in terms of the history of architecture and economy. It was the responsibility of the Cadastre Office to register mortgage claims. As for Pest, before 1703 land registration was the responsibility of the Chamber Administration of Buda, while between 1850 and 1860 that of the k. k. (kaiserlich-königlich) courts of justice. The oldest documents of land registration are the cadastres of the inner city, starting from 1694. Land transfer protocols started in 1767, while land value estimation protocols are available for the 1769-1811 period. As for the housing properties of Pest, these were registered by the Cadastre Office between 1822 and 1876.

In Óbuda, socage land could only be transferred with the permission of the squire up till 1848, so all registration concerning rights pertaining to property as well as any changes in status were marked in the squires’ ’Grundbuch’-s (cadastres).

Courts of justice

From 1686 to 1708 the Mayor of Buda also acted as Magistrate. When the town got back its privileges, the two posts were separated. Between 1849 and 1861, there were k. k. (kaiserlich-königlich) courts of justice in both cities, then town-level courts were set up, which functioned until 1872, when royal courts of justice were created. As for Pest, the notary acted as head of jurisdiction until 1712, when a new post, that of public prosecutor was created. *The civil and penal cases of city burghers were handled by the Pest Court of Law from 1767 on functioning as a separate entity.* The changes in the 1850-1872 period are the same as those in Buda. In Óbuda, low-level jurisdiction was carried out by the magistrate and the council; the cases typically involved civil lawsuits, petty crimes and slander. More significant cases were handled by the feudal jurisdictional forum, the Squire’s Court.

Documents of municipal organs from between 1873 and 1950

The capital city of Budapest was created in 1873 by the unification of the two royal free cities of Pest and Buda and the market town of Óbuda (from 1892 bearing the title of *residential city*). In the civil public administration system that emerged after the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise, Budapest enjoyed county level legislative and executive autonomy. During this period, however subsequent governments kept municipal administration under close control.

Administrative bodies and executive organs

The representative body of Budapest was the General Assembly (DATABASE), whose membership was strongly determined by financial status until 1920, after which party interests, membership in interest protection groups and direct nomination were more important shaping factors. Its head was the Head Mayor of Budapest, who, after 1934, was appointed by the government. Until 1930 the executive body of Budapest was the Council, chaired by the mayor. After this, however, and increasingly after 1934, the exclusive responsibility of the mayor was ever more pronounced. The records created by the central public administration are divided into groups according to the organs or offices that created them. They can be researched using the original indexes. The database containing the minutes of the General Assembly of the Budapest Municipality is accessible on our website.

The function and records of the Head Mayor of Budapest

His most important functions included chairing the meetings of the general assembly, overseeing the work of the municipal administration, appointing certain officials and acting as government commissioner in some exceptional cases. The greatest part of the records are made up of information concerning individual residents of Budapest as well as civil organisations and associations. In the interwar period documents of public administration, financial management and the overseeing of institutions is more prevalent than before.

The Public Administration Committee

This organ was created in 1876 with the aim of coordinating state and municipal public administration. Its chair was the Head Mayor of Budapest, its members the highest ranking local state officials and those of the municipal government and ten members of the general assembly. The framework of coordination of the branches of public administration was provided by monthly joint meetings. The reports submitted to the committee have survived uninterrupted since 1924. The most complete picture of the activity of the municipal administration can be gained from the reports written by the mayor to the committee. The committee had substantial disciplinary authority as well.

The records of the executive organs of the municipal government

The records generated by the city council and later the mayor’s office containing the most detailed and most important data on city administration comprise files arranged according to year and department of creation. They can be researched using the surviving original indexes. The documents generated by the departments after 1926 were mostly destroyed in 1945, except for those pertaining to legal, construction and social policy issues. The central municipal apparatus included council (later mayor’s office) departments as well as specialised bureaus.

District prefectures

Initially these were small bodies with a relatively narrow scope of authority, structured into modern offices in 1893, yet they didn’t develop into district-level local governments. Apart from being the primary trade and commerce authority, it was in 1893 that they got endowed with authority in public health, construction inspection, road and sewage maintenance, poverty relief, the registration of school-age children, fair and market control and issuing official certificates. By 1930 Budapest consisted of only 10 districts, it was then that their number was increased to 14. The documents generated by the prefecture of the 1st district before 1945 got completely destroyed, those generated by the others in the 19th century survive mostly in incomplete form.

The sources of financial management

We can gain a detailed picture of the financial management of Budapest from the annual budgets and financial reports printed out every year. A law enacted in 1930 prescribed that the budget had to contain not just the brackets for the income and expenditures of the strictly taken municipal budget and separate funds, but also the budget of financially autonomous institutions and companies, including those functioning as joint-stock companies. The budget had to be approved by the Minister of the Interior. Keeping track of municipal assets, overseeing the financial and asset management of the city and compiling the annual report was the responsibility of the Audit Office.

The records of the towns and villages annexed to Budapest in 1950

The records of the towns and villages annexed to Budapest in 1950 are also kept in our archives. However, to carry out successful research in these sources, one also needs to consult the documents generated by the county and state organs kept at the Pest County Archives because these towns and villages had, before 1950, belonged to the administrative scope of the respective county level administration. The almost continuous belt of settlements that finally got annexed was made up of 16 villages and 7 towns in 1949.

Towns

*Budafok.* Founded: 1739. Became a town: 1927. *Records:* 1869–1949; *Csepel*. Founded: 1742. Town: 1949. *Records:* 1897-1950; *Kispest.* Founded: 1874, town: 1922. *Records:* 1892–1949; *Pestszenterzsébet.* Founded: 1897, town: 1923. *Records:* 1882–1949; *Pestszentlőrinc.* Founded: 1909, town: 1936. *Records:* 1910–1949; *Rákospalota,* town (but with a past reaching back as far as medieval times): 1923; *Records:* 1808- 1950; *Újpest.* Founded: 1840, town: 1907; *Records:* 1838–1949.

Villages

*Albertfalva.* Founded: 1828. *Records:* 1918–1949; *Békásmegyer.* Founded: 18. sz. vége. *Records:* 1937–1946; *Budatétény.* Founded: 1873–1949; *Cinkota.* Founded: 1872. *Records:* 1894–1949; *Mátyásföld.* Founded: 1933. *Records:* 1932–1949; *Nagytétény.* Founded: 1881. *Records:* 1885–1949; *Pesthidegkút.* Founded: 1872. *Records:* 1875–1949; *Pestszentimre.* Founded: 1919. *Records:* 1930–1949; *Pestújhely.* Founded: 1909. *Records:* 1913–1949; *Rákoscsaba.* Founded: 1872. *Records:* 1860–1949; *Rákoshegy.* Founded: 1921. *Records:* 1923–1949; *Rákoskeresztúr.* Founded: 18. sz. *Records:* 1925–1949; *Rákosliget.* Founded: 1903. *Records:* 1910–1949; *Rákosszentmihály.* Founded: 1902. *Records:* 1903–1949; *Sashalom.* Founded: 1919. *Records:* 1923–1949; *Soroksár.* Founded: 1749. *Records:* 1890–1949.

Councils (1950 – 1990)

Greater Budapest was created in 1949 by annexing the 7 towns and 16 villages to Budapest, while the number of districts grew from 14 to 22. The system of councils, based on the Soviet model, was created straight afterwards, in 1950, when councils were set up on district and municipal levels as well. The council was made up of three components: the board (members elected by the population) the executive committee (the actual executive and controlling body) and the council departments.

Main records:

Protocols of the meetings of the council and executive committee meetings (the list of the agenda items of the meetings of municipal level bodies are accessible through the archival catalogue, even with some audiorecordings already digitised) and the records of the council departments.

The documents of the Budapest sections of the Hungarian Working People’s Party, Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party and the Patriotic People’s Front (DATABASE)

Our collection comprises the documents of the municipal, district and institutional level branches of the communist state parties of Hungary in the 1948-89 period (called Hungarian Working People’s Party until 1956 and Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party after that). They also provide an important background for the study of council documents. From the period after 1956 it is especially the documents of the Budapest Committee of the Patriotic People’s Front which are noteworthy.

People’s Controlling Committee (1958-1989)

Its structure copied that of the Budapest public administration system. Its function was ’to protect the wealth of the people from illegal activity, to investigate claims, to unmask and remove hostile elements and to correct the mistakes revealed’.

The documents of Budapest’s local governments (1991-)

Similarly to former times, we continue to collect the documents generated by todays municipal and district bodies and offices as well as state organs with authority in Budapest. Among all these many sources of documents, the archives prioritise the ones whose decisions have a special bearing on the city and its residents. Besides safekeeping, it is also our duty to preserve the authenticity and to ensure the accessibility of the documents generated during local decision-making processes, which is a prerequisite of these organs’ transparent functioning and a premise for the long-term responsibility of decision-makers. All this holds true also when it is born digital documents that are considered authentic original copies. Creating the conditions of the archival safekeeping of these is likewise a prerequisite of embracing the values of transparency, accountability and responsibility and the protection of citizens’ interests as stated in various documents. Today this fond comprises mostly the minutes of the Municipal General Assembly and the District Assemblies, and also the audio-recordings of the public forums.

The documents of Jurisdiction Organs

The Penal Court of Budapest was separated from the Royal Hungarian Court in 1895 by merging its penal and civil departments into a separate institution. At the same time, lower level local jurisdiction bodies were also set up separately for penal and civil cases. The ones on the Pest side of the city were later merged in 1914, while those in Buda (Districts 1-3) remained separate. Prosecutors’ offices were also part of the system. The starting point of the research of this kind of legal documentation is usually the name of the person(s) involved in the given case or lawsuit. The files of closed cases (which may be limited to the sentence statements, the rest having been discarded) is usually kept with the records of the law courts dealing with the given cases on primary level.

Courts of Justice (DATABASE)

The Royal High Court of Justice of Budapest

From 1890 on, its scope of authority included that of the Balassagyarmat, Budapest, Pest region, Besztercebánya, Eger, Ipolyság, Kalocsa, Kecskemét, Székesfehérvár, Szolnok and Fiume courts of law. From the 1916 – 1950 period, its sentences made in secondary and tertiary level penal and civil cases survive almost completely, which can make up for the loss of the primary level documents, for a region far larger than Budapest and its immediate surroundings.

Courts of Law

In civil lawsuits, the acting authority was the Royal Court of Law of Pest (from 1872), later of Budapest (from 1875), in cases of commerce and debt the Primary Royal Creditors’ Court of Pest (1841-1871) with few surviving records, later the Royal Creditors’ Court of Budapest (-1915), after that the Royal Court of Law of Budapest. It is in the records of the latter that we find the most complete surviving series of documents of a single law case. From the period preceding World War 1, only the records of proprietary anddivorce cases survives. Material from after 1935 is fragmented.

Penal Courts

Greater amount of records survived from the period after 1917 from the Royal Penal Court, while the files on juvenile delinquents is complete from 1923 onwards. Generally the interwar period is best represented in the surviving records, while within that from the 1867-1914 period there is a smaller surviving portion from the Penal Court and a larger portion by the District Penal Court.

District Courts

After the unification of the city in 1873 low level jurisdiction authorities on district level were named by the number of the district (some of them providing for more than one district): I-II, III, IV, V, VI-VII and VIII-X. Up till 1914 their scant records contain only the files of simplified legal procedures, while after that they include files of smaller value economic cases and other civil law (e.g. press) cases as well. Records from the I-III District Royal Law Court only survived from the period after 1895. Cadastre records belong to this fond and also to that of the Royal Central District Court of Budapest.

People’s Tribunals

These were set up in 1945 to serve the purpose of the ’retribution of war crimes and crimes committed against the people’. Its scope of authority included disciplinary penalties to be set as the result of certifying procedures. The records of the lawsuits of the political leaders of the earlier regime are especially important, like those involving former prime ministers condemned by people’s tribunals in 1945-46 László Bárdossy, Döme Sztójay, Ferenc Szálasi and Béla Imrédy. The People’s Tribunal of Budapest was disbanded in 1949. People’s tribunal committees functioned as part of the retribution procedure following the events of 1956 within the Municipal Court of Law of Budapest.

Court records after 1950

The structure of Hungarian jurisdiction organs was radically changed after 1950. District courts were made the general jurisdiction authority on primary level in both civil and penal cases. The Municipal Court of Law only dealt with more severe cases after this as primary authority. We have its penal records running up to 1986, including the files of the lawsuits against those involved in the revolution of 1956. The surviving records of the Municipal Public Prosecutor’s Office is rather bulky.

Penitentiary facilities (DATABASE)

The two types of characteristic documents generated by the two most important facilities functioning from 1885 and 1886 respectively are the prison inmate registers and the registers of persons to be expelled from Budapest.

Documents of civil law notaries (DATABASE)

The title of royal private civil law notary was created in 1875, whose responsibility was to issue documents of public authenticity and certify the authenticity of private documents. The Act on Civil Law Notaries set the scope of authority of civil law notaries working in Budapest to include those of the courts of law of Pest, Buda and the Pest region court. Apart from inheritance cases, applicants could consult any civil law notary in the city, regardless of their place of residence. The files left behind by the civil law notaries of Budapest from the 1875-1949 period is uniquely complete in comparison with other branches of jurisdiction. The post of private civil law notary was abolished in 1950. We have mostly the records of inheritance cases of state civil law notaries from the 1950-1984 period.

Public Prosecutors’ Offices

Similarly to the Royal High Court of Justice, the scope of authority of the Budapest Royal High Prosecutor’s Office covered a substantial region of central Hungary. The Royal Prosecutor’s Office of Budapest was set up in 1871 to represent the prosecution in cases dealt with by the Royal High Court of Pest and later Budapest. Researching the documents generated before the 1930s is only possible through a database.

The sources on the political life of Budapest

The greatest number of sources in this category belong to jurisdiction records. The majority of political and libel cases were dealt with by courts in Budapest. Documents of municipal administration organs also provide rich references on political and civil organisations. Lists of constituents are available from the following years: 1848, 1861, 1868, 1872, 1875, 1878, 1881, 1884, 1887, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1909, 1910, 1935, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1949, 1950, 1954 and after. In the interim period of 1945-49, so-called national committees performed important duties of state authority.

Certification committees (Database)

The setting up of these in early 1945 served the purposes of gaining information concerning the activity of the populace during the war. The original aim of the procedures was to make sure the new office holders in public administration were supporters of the new political regime. Later, however, wider and wider strata of the population were involved in the certifying procedures, with committees at work not only in state public administration but also at municipal organs and factories.

State Police

The policemen of the Budapest municipality were subjected to immediate control by the Minister of the Interior in 1873. The scope of authority of the municipal police was in due course extended to include Újpest and Rákospalota (1889), Pestszenterzsébet, Kispest and Pestszentlőrinc (1912) and Csepel (1916). Surviving records are very fragmented. From the 1867-1914 period apart from daily reports we mainly find observation documents on workers’, socialist and ethnic movements in the reserved records of the Police Commissioner. The records from the interwar period was almost completely destroyed in 1945. Our collection mostly comprises the reserved records of the Police Commissioner from the 1890-1910 period, but we keep a significant amount of documents concerning the structure and functioning of the Budapest police of the communist period as well.

Personal registries concerning the inhabitants of the city

Birth, marriage and death registries

Initially, these registries were kept by the church, until civil registries were introduced in 1895. Registries were kept in Budapest by the district authorities, who were obliged to send regular copies to the archives until 31 December 1980. At this point, this collection stopped expanding, yet if data changes occur, the registry offices forward the information to the archives so that they can be entered on the appropriate sheet as additional annotations. Data from before 1895, from the church registries can be searched on microfilms. Other typical documents from this collection from the 20th century include exemptions from published marriage intention, contracts between marriage partners belonging to different denominations, name change applications, patriation and repatriation cases and documents certifying a person’s belonging to a settlement (a prerequisite for entitlement to poverty relief there).

Military registries

The registers compiled at the annual conscriptions of 20-21-year-old men for military service run to many hundreds of volumes. Most of the collection dates from the 1876-1914 period and the two world wars.

Census documents

For building statistics, the apartment sheets of the 1857 census of Buda, the Budapest sheets of the national census of 1941 and the Budapest census of 1945 contain more detailed data than those collected in the other parts of the country. They also contain personal data of the residents and can be researched by district, street, and street number.

Building regulations, urban development and the plan collection (DATABASE)

The modern form of building permission procedure was introduced in both Buda and Pest in the early 19th century, so it’s from this period onwards that we have a larger number of pertaining documents – plans of private buildings and the written documentation created in the building permit procedure. For Buda, most of the construction documents from the early 19th century can be found in council records, while the plans of public and private buildings can be found in the series generated by the Building Committee (1810-1827, 1832-1834) and the Building and Beautification Committee (1850-1873). As for Pest, it had a Beautification Committee of its own working alongside the council and set up by no other than Palatine Joseph for the beautification and development of the town. This was replaced in 1861 by the Building Committee of the Town of Pest. As for the specialised offices of urban development, the activity of the Engineering Office of the Town of Pest is the most significant. As for Óbuda, we can gain some information from the protocols and other documents of the general assembly meetings. In 1861 a Building Committee was created as an organ of the local council, functioning until the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda.

The surviving plans and documents of the three mentioned committees have by now been digitised and can be researched through databases accessible online.

The administrative unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda was preceded by their unification in the technical and urban developmental sense. The most important regulations for these were formulated in a law enacted in 1873, which set the basic framework of the functioning of the urban development department of the city management until as late as 1948. The law set up the Capital’s Board of Public Works (1870-1948), with an equal number of members delegated by the government and the representatives of the towns involved. This organ had immediate authority in questions of urban planning and reconstruction and functioned as the forum of appeal in construction related disputes. All its minutes have survived but the other records are very fragmented up to 1944.

The General Assembly of the Budapest Municipality was authorised to make decisions concerning all infrastructural investments and give its opinion concerning every major urban planning, building lot restructuring and public construction project and initiative. The law authorised the public construction committee of the town to make initiatives and proposals in questions under the authority of the Board of Public Works. Starting in 1890 the Municipal Bulletin published the outlines of the meetings. The substantial documents of the individual cases can be found among the departmental records of the council/mayor’s office. These include the opinions given by the Board of Public Works in the given question.

The plans of the buildings built in Budapest between 1873 and the early 2000s and their building permits and other documents can be found in the Plan Collection of Construction Departments, arranged according to the building lot’s current registration numbers. The assemblage of documents includes not just the original plans and building permits, but the architectural and structural plans for later transformations, extensions, demolitions, etc. as well. As for the territories annexed to Greater Budapest, the collection includes only documents generated after 1950, while earlier material may or may not be found among the documents of the preceding settlements.

The plans of public buildings erected by the city of Budapest (hospitals, schools, churches, tenement blocks, spas, fire departments, etc.) are kept in the Public Buildings’ Plan Collection. An important part of our plan collection from the period after 1873 are formed by the plans of the Board of Public Works, the Mayor’s Office’s Plan Collection and the Engineering Bureau. We are also storing the legacies of several renowned architects. An outstanding example is that of the great Hungarian representative of Romanticism and Historicism, Miklós Ybl, who planned numerous public buildings of the city. Its database is now accessible online. Other important series in our collection are the document and plan sets from building companies and contractors (e.g. those from the Lipót Havel and the Antal Sorg Companies).

As for the history of architecture, urban planning and the protection of monuments in the period after 1950, the documents of the council department for urban planning and architecture, the local organ of monument protection (Budapest Monument Authority) and certain planning and construction companies (e.g. Budapest Municipal Planning Office, Municipal Property Management Company) are of special interest.

Land registers

According to the system introduced from the early 1870 onwards, title deeds were made up of an A, B and C Sheet, where A described the identification characteristics of the property, B contained all information pertaining the ownership and transfer of the property (sale and purchase, owner a minor, preemptive rights, encumbrance ban, etc.) while C listed all burdens and encumbrances, including mortgage and easement.

We have the following title deeds, broken down by quarters and districts: *Buda – 1871-1921; Óbuda - 1875-1921; Pest - 1878-1926; Újpest – 1883-1950; Rákospalota -1885-1934*; also from the 1920s to 1972/73 left bank of the Danube, right bank of the Danube and Outskirts. We have their original finding aides and the plans of the new title deed form created when editing the property registry and also the paper-based title deeds from 1973 onwards. The title deeds submitted to the archives are closed, no more entries are added. For certification of the current status of the property, copies can be requested from the local land registry office in charge. The documents that form the basis of title deed entries were handed in to the archives for the 1961-1972 period.

Map Collection

The basis of the collection is probably formed by the maps kept in the Engineering Bureau closed down in 1911. Apart from traditional maps, we also keep regulation plans and site maps. Our main focus is on material generated during the everyday functioning of the public administration of Budapest. The typical document of the late-18th-century to 1873 period is the hand-written regulation and allotment division plan and the informational city map. Series of cadastral and survey maps generated in connection with the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda and subsequent urban management and planning series are especially important. The latter included individual districts, the whole city and later the outskirts as well. The map collection is primarily divided by periods: before 1873, between 1873 and 1950 and after 1950; subdivisions are made according to districts and then chronological order. To make navigation easier, there is a map catalogue and database at users’ disposal.

Economy, industry, commerce and transportation

Guilds and trade boards

Guilds, in evidence in Hungary from the 18th century on, were abolished in 1872. Typical documents include: guild foundation deeds and regulations, meeting protocols, master certificates, membership registries, apprenticeship documents, financial reports and balance books.

Trade boards were created in Budapest in 1884 and membership was obligatory for all working in trades requiring special training. Initially their function was to protect the interests of their members, but soon they acquired authority functions as well. Our archives keeps the documents of boards pursuing 47 different trades.

Documents of Industry Inspection

The primary authority in this field was the district prefecture, the secondary the council and the tertiary the mayor. We can reconstruct the ’biography’ of small businesses and tradesmen not registered by the registry court primarily from prefecture documents and trade registers. In trade and site license cases the secondary authority was the council and from 1930 on, the mayor. For tradesmen not registered as members of trade boards, the district prefecture was the authority in questions of employee and apprentice hiring contracts.

Registry Court documents (Database)

This database, currently under development, contains the major company data and attached documents from 1875 to 1949 of all companies beyond the scope of small trades (joint-stock, limited, cooperative or other).

Companies and businesses

The fonds of industrial and commerce companies, banks and production, service and commerce cooperatives form a significant group of sources. In their history the nationalisation following World War 2 was an obvious turning point. The economy became strictly centralised, production was to meet national and industry-specific quotas. The history of socialist firms and cooperatives ended in 1989, but the archives is still interested in acquiring the documents not only of municipally owned public utilities, but also the actors of private economy.

The Public Utilities of Budapest

Budapest has been the owner of a large number of factories and works to meet its public utility needs. The most varied part of our pertaining collection is the documentation of the public transport companies. The basis of the first public transport company of Budapest (BSZKRT, 1922) was the tram network, bought from the private tramway companies, whose records are also represented in our collection. The documents of the Municipal Waterworks date back to the beginning of communal water supply service, 1868. Before 1945 sewage was the responsibility of the pertaining department of the mayor’s office and the district prefectures. The gas supplier of Budapest was a private company until 1910, when it was bought on municipal funds. We keep the records of the ensuing Municipal Gas Works, but not its predecessor. Electricity was likewise supplied by two public companies in the 1893-1914 period. The Municipal Electric Works of Budapest was created in 1914. The city also set up its own banks, the first of which was founded in 1928 (Budapest Székesfővárosi Községi Takarékpénztár Rt). As for commerce and goods supplier companies, we have substantial documents of the City Foodstuff Trading Co. and the City Horsemeat Co. As for spas and the tourism industry, we have records from the Szent Margit Spa Ltd, while for the Szent Gellért Spa and Hotel we only have the construction plans.

Social and Health Care

Social care

State social care in the 19th and early 20th century meant basically poverty relief aid. Surviving documentation of social organisations involved in this is sporadic, while that of the pertaining council department is bulky. The primary authority on granting poverty relief was the district prefecture, while the secondary the specific council department (depts. 9 and 14). The questionnaires to be filled in by applicants around the turn of the century also wanted to know about their reason for not having any income, number of children and housing status. In certain cases it is possible to follow the connection between the applicant and the authorities for several subsequent years.

Health care

The archives acquired only fragments of the files of the healthcare institutions of Budapest, yet the municipality also functioned as head healthcare authority and the manager of numerous healthcare institutions and has left a large amount of documents to the archives.

The most important records are: the meeting protocols of the Central Epidemic Committee (from the period of the cholera epidemics of 1886 and 1892-93), the records of subsequent Public Health Departments, the documents of district prefectures in their role as primary public health authority. Among the documents of public hospitals, the most important ones are patient registers, but from a hospital management perspective, the 1917-1947 fond of the Central Directorate of Public Hospitals is also an important historic source. The complete case diaries of the Voluntary Ambulance Service from 1890-1944 are a unique source for the study of social and medical history.

Child protection and guardianship management

Especially noteworthy in this collection are the series of registration forms from the State Royal Children’s Shelter from the 1922-1945 period. In the records of the 9th district, there is a separate series for interwar child protection files. A municipal Child and Youngster Protection Bureau was set up in 1942. Guardianship issues were dealt with by the Orphans’ Court from 1877 to 1950. DATABASE

Social statistics

Household surveys are especially important sources for the study of social history. Among our fonds there are housekeeping books from 1928-1931 and 1946-1953. In October 1948 there was a representative survey of 2500 factory workers; the social questionnaires filled in individually by a number of municipal employees in September 1948 and the social statistical data on the employees of the MÁVAG machinery works from 1947 are also valuable historical sources.

Sources on the education system, culture and the press

The documents of schools and educational authorities DATABASE

The majority of our fonds was generated by municipal schools, but the archives features a vast number of documents of schools run by the state, churches, social organisations and private owners as well. All types of primary and secondary schooling are amply represented, while materials of institutions for the higher education can be found only by some teacher-training facilities. Most of the fonds only runs up to the early 1950s. Major types of documents in this collection include staff meeting protocols, general management documents, student registers, financial management documents, curriculum diaries.

As for the organs of specialised state administration, the records of the Budapest Royal School District Directorate is especially important: this organ was responsible for overseeing the work of secondary schools until 1935, after which its authority included all school types.

Cultural life and the press

The vast majority of documents concerning the cultural life of Budapest are those reflecting the cultural policy and activity of the municipality and the functioning of the institutions run by the city. These include: Fine Art Committee 1874-1902, People’s Theatre Committee 1875-1918, Vígszínház Theatre 1950-1954, Extramural Education Committee 1921-1950, Bureau of Tourism 1914-1949.

Our archives provides a unique source of information on the history of the press. In the period preceding World War 2, the mayor was responsible for new periodicals’ meeting legal standards. The other great group of sources on the history of the press are those concerning lawsuits involving journalists or publishers (libel cases).

Associations

We see the formation of religious and funeral savings associations already in the early 18th century, while the first half of the 19th century saw a multitude of literary, political and self-help associations spring up. The collection of statutes of the associations functioning in Budapest was destroyed in the siege of 1945, so we only have a separate collection of such documents for 1945-50, even missing the membership lists. However, we find references in the sub-fonds of the municipal authority. Series of the statutes of associations functioning in settlements before they became districts of Budapest in 1950 did survive from the pre-war period as well. The overwhelming majority of religious, professional, cultural and economic associations were abolished in 1947-49 and the archives of these were rarely handed over to our care.

Our earliest surviving document of this type comes from the 18th century and was written by the Holy Trinity Brotherhood of Buda. The other typical fonds consist of cultural, gymnastics, funeral and health insurance associations.

Families and persons

The family and personal fonds from the 19th and 20th century have mostly been acquired as deposits, gifts or purchases. Family documents can sometimes reflect the way of life and thinking of several generations, not to mention family structure, interpersonal relationships and networks and financial status. Personal fonds contain the personal documents, certificates of origin, qualifications and employment, financial documents and increasingly personal material like diaries, letters, memoirs, notes and family photos. It is our goal to provide representation not only to the elite of Budapest but members of all its social strata.

Microfilm collection

Our microfilm collection comprises more than 27 thousand rolls with about 15 million frames. Within the e-archive project all of these will be digitised and published. This type of document has been the one most sought after, as this is the medium that we use for making accessible to researchers and the public not only the birth, marriage and death register pages, but also the aids and reference books that go with individual fonds. The microfilm scanner purchased on project funding makes it possible to process 20 to 25 rolls per day, which means producing 13 to 16 thousand digital frames – adding 3 million shots to our digital collection every year. The microfilm scanner enables us to digitise five or six times more material than with a traditional book or page scanner. For the purposes of long-term safekeeping we save the images using JPG format and 300 dpi resolution. Having completed digitisation, materials will be made accessible for researchers and the general public in our research room and, later, on the internet as well.

Photo collection (DATABESE)

The basic goal of our photo collection is to keep track of the changing appearance of the city. The photo series, made up of 34 thousand black-and-white shots and negatives and 1600 digital photos document the changes in all districts of Budapest and the buildings scheduled for demolition from 1990 to 2002. The photos handed over by the Urban Planning Department of the City Council constitute a valuable collection in themselves, documenting the Budapest of the 1960s. In the early 40s and then in the 50s and 60s several photo series were taken in the Csepel Metalworks (previously Weiss Manfréd Metalworks), documenting the lifestyle of the workers and presenting some of the factory’s products.

Photographer György Klösz took pictures of the major public and private buildings, streets, squares, parks of Budapest and the castles and manors of Hungary between 1873 and 1913. The postcard collection of István Gyökér likewise captures faces of the old Budapest. The cards, dating from the 1880-1960 period, show nooks and crannies of the city less known to the general public. The 9354 cards are researchable on microfilms, with a database to help navigation. Among the photos purchased from or donated by private persons we find ones documenting the events of World War 1 and the uprising of 1956. The over 100 thousand photo negatives handed over by the Criminal Technology Department of the Municipal Police contain the CSI photodocumentation from 1955 to 2009. The collection of photos from the 1983-2010 period donated by the Budapest Association for City Heritage Protection documents the sights of Budapest in over one thousand frames.

Reference library

The Archives serves the needs of registered researchers with its reference library comprising over 60 thousand volumes, accessible throughout the opening hours of the research room. Apart from the open shelf section, the documents are kept in a storeroom, with a digital catalogue to help navigation, accessible to the general public through our website. The main scope of our collection activity is the reference literature on Budapest and its preceding settlements, with the aim to purchase any and every type of source pertaining to the life, history and institutions of the city.

E-archives – what is an e-archival document and what is its significance?

We live the last days of paper-based communication. In official and private communication alike, born digital documents and data of various formats have by now become dominant. It is now obvious to all that these are just as important as their non-digital predecessors and have the same value in providing information, serving the purposes of administration, establishing and certifying rights and documenting various aspects of people’s lives. They are indispensable sources of national, local, community and individual identity. Their quantity is expanding exponentially, so their preservation and accessibility constitutes a public interest and is prescribed by legal regulations.

What does e-archives mean?

In 2009, KopintDatorg Zrt. (now called Nemzeti Infokommunikációs Szolgáltató Zrt., National Infocommunication Services, NIS), National Archives of Hungary (NAH) and Budapest City Archives (BCA) created a consortium for the realisation of the Electronic Archives project. The project, run on EU funding, aims to provide long-term preservation within the institutional framework of the archives network to the born digital or digitised documents generated by public institutions – legislation, central and local public administration, jurisdiction and local government organs – that are considered of lasting value within the national assets

The e-archives system has to meet a complexity of aims. It provides integrated storage and handling to the registration and other metadata of traditional paper-based documents as well as to digital documents. The former task is carried out by the scopeArchiv registry program used also by other national and municipal archives in Europe (e.g. Austrian National Archives and the cities of Zurich and Bern), while the latter by the product called Safety Deposit Box (SDB) developed by Tessella Co. These tried and trusted programs, apart from meeting our specific local needs also make it possible to connect to archival standards elsewhere in Europe.

The structural components of the e-archives

It is the task of the NIS to provide closed circuit access by the HNA and BCA to the servers and hardware components of the e-archives. The main structural components of the e-archive system are the following:

* The Archival Information System (AIS) is the local application of the scopeArchiv program, whose main function is to register the complete archivalia kept in these institutions. It handles the metadata of both the paper-based and born digital documents, while also storing and making searchable the metadata of the digital documents taken over from the Digital Repository (DR).
* The storing of digital documents (e-documents) is performed by a separate storing module of the Digital Repository based on SDB. This is the heart and soul of the digital storage system, where the archives’ e-documents can be kept and sorted.
* The connecting of record generating organs to the archives and sending in their records is performed by the External System Interface (ESI) module, while the long-term safekeeping of not yet archivally mature documents sent in by record generators via the office protal is the task of the Digital Records Centre. When they become archivally mature, these are also transferred into DR.
* Access to public documents in the archives and to information concerning metadata is provided by the Digital Archives Portal, which also provides an interface for online search and download. This is the most important component from researchers’ perspective.

The Archival Information System

* The scopeArchiv software is capable of representing the archival data hierarchy and performing various professional tasks in accordance with the pertaining legal provisions. It knows and handles generally used hierarchy levels and is able to add new ones and fit them into the hierarchy.
* The general storage format of the system is based on the metadata scheme of Encoded Archival Description (EAD), also capable of handling the data of the International Standard of Archival Description. The software makes it possible to print and export the data of the archival catalogue.
* The system contains two Oracle database servers: a central one, storing the data entered into scopeArchiv, and a public one, storing freely researchable data. Archival Information System contains the data of paper-based and digital documents alike.
* Requests concerning the data stored in the public scopeArchiv database are processed using the web based search system of ScopeQuery. The individual search systems of the specific archives support meeting researchers’ needs integrated into the joint search system of the Digital Archives Portal.

The most important users’ modules

* Units of Description (registry of archival hierarchy and description units)
* Desciptors (a unified and hieararchically expanding registry of person, place and object names)
* Containers (a registry of storeroom storage facility items)
* Partners (a registry of persons and organs as: organs, archives, researchers, users and other partners)
* Loans (a registry of research requests and events, their processing and fulfilling)
* Reproductions (the registry, processing and fulfilling of reprography requests)

The storage of digital documents – SDB

Safety Deposit Box performs the task of long-term storing and handling of digital documents and provides access to these. Within the SDB system the two archives (BCA and NAH) function as separate units (multi-tenant mode). This means that the content stored is handled separately, with each tenant having a data structure, process control, access rights and of course user interface of its own.

Within these SDB is represented by three different functionalities in the digital archives system:

* the Digital Repository
* the content provider of the Digital Archives Portal
* the Digital Records Centre

The SDB system is based on the Open Archival Information System reference model. The model defines the following information packages and process packages for handling digital data:

* Submission Information Package, SIP. This is the information package used for the submission of digital data sets for archival storage. The intake of digital documents starts with the preparation of an information package with certain given structural properties. SDB has strict standards concerning the SIP format and each stage of the process requires this format to be used. The format sets both the physical structure of digital files and the properties of the metadata that go with them. The SIP-Creator software helps convert the data into the required format.
* Archival Information Package, AIP. As a result of the intake process, this package provides the archive storage of data sets and their metadata (contained in XML files). This standard intake process involvs multi-level quality control mechanisms.. SDB provides structure, interpretation, content and storage information, individual identification and the connection system of these AIPs in accordance with the OAIS reference model.
* Dissemination Information Package, DIP. This is the information package used for sending out digital data sets for research or other purposes.

The Archiaval Information System – Digital Repository connection

The hieararchical registration and cataloguingof archival documents is performed in the Archival Information System. This means that the digital data sets in Digital Repository are categorised according to the hieararchical units found in AIS – that is, the hieararchy is synchronised from the AIS side within the DR. The components of the hierarchy will be synchronised (down to series level) even if no digital document is connected to them. The metadata taken in with SIPs will, if needed, be transferred into scopeArchiv.

Digital Archives Portal – a unified and integrated user interface

DAP provides unified and integrated access to the archivalia and catalogues of both NAH and BCA, while making the list of available services easier to navigate. On the interface, a Joint Search system provides easy orientation in the public databases of each individual system (AIS, DR) at the same time or separately. All this is presented on the unified interface of DAP.

- The Joint Search system makes it possible to search the description data of the documents in the archival databases or, in the case of born digital or documents digitised using character recognition software in the actual text of the documents (full text version).

- The databases on DAP are free to research to the general public, while the digitised paper-based or born digital documents published here are also free to study online. Documents not published in digital version or under research limitations can be studied by registered researchers in the research rooms of the archives who – not fully free of charge – can also request their digital copies to be downloaded to a storage space.

The Digital Archives Portal offers the following services to registered users:

* Parallel with the registration at the portal, users can *online* submit their registration to the archives, to the institution of their choice by filling in the researcher registration form.
* The researchers already registered both at the archives and the portal can submit their orders directly using the resulting records of the internet database search as well as being able to submit freely formulated requests.
* Researchers can save their queries or re-run their earlier searches.
* The researchers can have sent to the External Storage Space created in their Own Mailbox the digital documents not under research limitations and which meet the following criteria: these should be documents, which the archives

- have digitised or have received in a digital format but have not published on the internet

- have published in digital or electronic format and the researcher has ordered a digital copy of at his / her own expense

- are only kept in paper-based format but the researcher has them digitised for a set fee

- the researcher initiates and pays for its anonymisation, thus making it searchable.

* The documents under research limitations can be requested to be sent to the researchers’ Internal Storage Space created in their Own Mailboxes (after having submitted their data management statement and an institutional support statement). These documents, for safety reasons accessible only from the research rooms of the archives, are defined as follows:

- they exist in digitised or electronic format

- they exist in paper-based format but the archives will digitise them at the request and expense of the researcher

* Users having a Hungarian Client Gate (Ügyfélkapu) registration and using this for their Digital Archives Portal registration can have documents under research limitations uploaded to their Client Gate storage space on the internet (in which case they are to submit a data management statement and an institutional support statement before starting the research).
* All the researcher registration forms, orders for research and reproduction, enquiries service requests of the individual researchers will be saved on the website; they can have these listed in their Own Mailboxes and printed.

Searching and submitting requests in scopeQuery

BCA’s own Archival Information System (AIS) is accessible both from the DAP website and the BCA website. Search possibilities are determined here by the properties of the scopeQuery application.

The search system of the Archival Information System of BCA provides online search access to the data entered and published it the system.

- Free Text Search

It is advisable to use this option for source independent search needs; it provides the usual options for narrowing, widening and extending (search phrase, search domain, time scope, etc.) search

- Archival Structure Search

It enables the user to overview the structure of the archival hierarchy, from the level of main fond-groups down to the level of the individual document, see metadata and browse by tree structure

- Field Value Search

This option is best used when searching for a given word or phrase in a specific data field (e.g. title, reference number, content, description level, type of archival material, time scope).

- Thesaurus Search

Enables the user to search among and connect names of persons, places or objects, possibly giving index conditions.

E-archives and records generating organs – the taking in of digital records by the Archives

Budapest City Archives is going to be an even more efficient partner of organs performing public duties thanks to its new, professional services.

What makes us think so?

- There will be a direct connection between the record generators and the archives.

- For organs connected to our network and having an office portal, connection to our system will be automatic

- Digital Records Centre will in the future provide digital records’ storage space to organs performing public duties

- In order to ensure the long term safekeeping of digital records, it will be possible for us to provide technical support services

How will record generators be connected to the archives?

Record generators can submit documents for long term storing or simple safekeeping via the External System Interface. One of the main tasks of this application is to check on the validity of the contracts accessible in its contract collection. Each record management system, as long as it provides the functions required for accessing and using the services offered by the External System Interface creates the conditions for the standardised submitting and accepting of documents into the archives and is enabled to use the services and to upload documents using the office portal.

E-archives service

The e-archives project makes it possible for record generators to choose their most important documents for long-term preservation according to their specific professional needs and guarantee the safekeeping of these already before and until they are actually submitted to the archives for further keeping or until they are finally discarded, all this by using a centralised and integrated system. Documents submitted for temporary keeping are handled by the Digital Records Centre. The archives has no access to these documents – only their generator can modify or discard them. The documents possess a metadata structure independent of the archives’ metadata.

This scheme exempts record generators from the obligation to keep digital documents on the long run and with no injury; the quality of handling sets of records and data is improved and another step is taken towards the unified and safe handling of national data assets.

The services of the Digital Records Centre are only available to record generators listed in the organ registry of the archives. Records are transferred via automatic ingest.

Record generators, on the other hand, can search the documents in a way which is integrated into their own IT system. Our Digital Records Centre provides a wide variety of search services for this. Having chosen one or more documents from the record list it is possible to perform traditional archival tasks like data query or modification or even deleting.

The databases of the Budapest City Archives

The database system of Budapest City Archives contain millions of records and continue to expand. They are accessible from the BCA website, from the Digital Archives Portal and the Hungarian Archival Portal created by BCA as well. The strong point of the latter is the Joint Search option and the advanced handling of images (including pdf format, geo-referenced historic maps, etc.). The databases make accessible mainly the data contained in sources that can help us find out more about the residents of Budapest, our built environment, visual information and the socialist period. Currently (in 2013), the following databases are available or are being developed.

Databases containing personal records

These databases provide information (e.g. name, profession, place of residence, religion) on the natural or legal persons mentioned in the documents kept in the Archives.

*Guardianship cases*. The database processes the files of cases involving typically the inheritance cases with minors as inheritors run by guardianship courts (with a significant number of guardianship or adoption cases as well).

*Penal cases*. This database processes the files and contemporary archival aides of penal procedures carried out as court or public prosecution cases.

*Inheritance cases (and other cases not requiring litigation)*. This database has mainly been built on the basis of the document pools of inheritance cases run by civil law notaries or courts of law.

*Documents by civil law notaries*. This database processes the documents of private civil law notaries of Budapest starting from the creation of the institution and title of civil law notary (1875) and up till the end of World War 1.

*Civil lawsuits*. This database contains mostly data from property and divorce lawsuits from the period between the second half of the 19th to the mid-20th century.

*Publicised last wills*. This database processes last wills otherwise kept in different document assemblages. A smaller part is made up of wills from Buda from the 18th century, but the majority of the pool is made up of publicised last wills from Budapest from the 19th and 20th centuries (typically from between 1896 and 1950).

*Registries of prison inmates*. This database contains the data of persons arrested or convicted and registered as inmates at one of the several penitentiary facilities of Budapest between 1873 and 1899 and between 1914 and 1923.

*Secondary school final exam (maturation) protocols*. This database contains the data and exam results of students who took the maturation exam at the secondary schools of Budapest, currently for the 1892-1911 period.

*Certification Committee cases*. This database includes the data of the cases generated by and persons involved in the activity of the special certification committees set up to look into the political views and actions of practically the entire population during World War 2.

*Company HR cases*. This database is being built using first of all the HR documents of the office workers among the employees of the Csepel Művek metalworks created between 1906 and 1956, to be expanded later to include other companies.

*Registry court cases*. This database contains the basic data of companies registered with the address of their main office in Budapest according to the documents of Royal Commercial Court of Budapest and the Royal Law Court of Budapest, mostly for the second half of the 19th century.

*The address registry of Budapest, 1900.* This database contains the data of the residents of Budapest listed in alphabetical order in the Registry of Addresses and Residents in Budapest for the period May 1900 – April 1901.

*Database of the constituents listed for the Király Street constituency*. This database contains the data of the persons listed as constituents for the addresses of Király street, District 6 and 7 of Budapest from the period 1935-1954.

Archontological databases

*Burghers of Buda and Pest, 1686-1848*. The records of this database give the data of new burghers admitted in the given period.

*The office holders of the market town of Óbuda*. This database contains the names, name versions, places of birth, times of birth and death and – if it could be revealed from the matriculae – religion, profession, rank, post and time period spent in office of all office holding residents of Óbuda.

*Joint archontology of the party documents of 1948-1989 and the council documents of 1950-1990 in Budapest.* This database comprises the archontology of the leaders of the Council of the Capital City of Budapest, the District Councils of districts I, II and III, and those of the Budapest and District I, II and III party committees of the Hungarian Working People’s Party and the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party.

*The database of decrees from the medieval history of Budapest.* This database, still under construction, includes the data of over 4000 decrees from before 1526 (kept not at the Budapest City Archives). The most complete section of the collection is the documents dating from the time of the Árpád dynasty. Since the aim was to create a collection as complete as possible, it includes decrees that contain but references to Budapest. The basic data of the decrees are searchable: reference codes now and earlier, time of creation, issued by, statement of authenticity, form of preservation. The data of the publication of the decrees are also given, and in certain cases there are notes concerning the authenticity and interpretation, short content extracts and a specification of how the decree is related to Budapest.

Databases processing protocols of official bodies

These databases, which can be used in various forms, have the common characteristic that they publish or extract the content of protocol-type sources created through the functioning of specific official bodies or institutions.

*The protocols of the meetings of the municipal councils of Buda and Pest*. In its current form this database contains the digitised protocols of the council meetings of Buda, 1687-1816 and Pest 1688-1786, written mostly in German, or, less frequently, Latin.

*General Assembly of the Budapest Municipality, meeting protocols*. This database contains the items on the agendas in the protocols written at the meetings of the Municipal Board of Budapest between 1873 and 1881.

*The protocols of the leading bodies of the Hungarian Working People’s Party/Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party*. This database contains some items from the agendas of the meetings of certain leading bodies of these parties.

Databases of the Maps and Plans Collection

The Archival Information System of the Budapest City Archives contains item-level record for each researchable set of the plans archive. Depending on the character of these sets these records describe either a specific construction project or point to the documents generated over a longer time period concerning a given property.

*Old maps of Budapest*. The version of this database published on the Hungarian Archival Portal contains descriptions of the maps of Budapest and its predecessors kept in public collections in Budapest and some academic institutions.

*The historical topography of Buda and Pest*. This database contains historical-topographical data for several quarters and districts of Budapest built up or allotted before 1873, specifically the Castle, Krisztinaváros, the Inner City, Lipótváros, Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and Ferencváros. It makes it possible to retrace the changes in the identification data of the lots in these areas from the late 17th century up till now.

*The plans and documents of the Pest Construction Committee*. This database contains the data of the over 11 thousand building permit requests dealt with by the construction authority of the city of Pest set up in 1861 and functioning until the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda into Budapest in 1873.

*The plans and documents of Miklós Ybl*. Miklós Ybl (1814-1891) was a leading Hungarian architect of the second half of the 19th century, whose collection of plans kept at the Budapest City Archives is the largest architectural bequest in Hungary. The database gives sheet-by-sheet description of the almost 7000 plan sheets and item-by-item description of the documents made up of contracts and invoices.

**Databases of the Photographic Collection**

*The photo albums of György Klösz*. This database contains the digitised copies and descriptions of the photographs of cityscapes, castles, buildings and objects taken by one of the best known figures of early Hungarian photography, György Klösz.

*Postcard database*. The digitised postcards published in this database, coming from private collections, make it possible to witness how the cityscape of Budapest changed between the 1880s and the 1960s.

The Digitising Workshop of the Budapest City Archives

Security microfilming in the BCA has been going on since 1973. During this time we have produced 15 million microfilm images, which can be studied in the research room. The microfilm as a conservation tool will continue to play an important role in the life of the archives, although, because of its cumbersome and slow handling, it has never been popular among researchers.

An important challenge 21 century archives have to face is the extensive digitization of documents combined with database building to ensure searchability. The current e-archives project made it possible for the BCA to purchase all devices that can further a quantitative and qualitative leap in digital content provision. One of the most important tools acquired in a public procurement procedure, is a Zeutschel OM 1600 microfilm scanner. Thanks to this device, our microfilms can be digitised quickly and effectively and made accessible to researchers in the research room, or to internet users through the scopeQuery or the Digital Archives Portal.

Parallel with database building, the digitising of paper-based documents has been in progress for several years as well. The complete map collection of BCA and a large part of the plan collection is now researchable online. This task had earlier been carried out by the archives on various funds involving external service providers, but the e-archives project has enabled us to purchase the most up to date book scanners, so now our digitising workshop boasts a Zeutschel OS 12000 A1 size book scanner and a smaller, Zeutschel OS 12000 HQ A2 size book scanner, purchased via public procurement. The documents of civil law notaries, prison inmate registers and council documents listed in the chapter on databases were scanned in our own workshop, using this new equipment. The output is researchable online, with the aid of the accompanying database. Both scanners make bitonal, grey scale and colour images, with a maximum resolution of 600 dpi.

Another item of our digitising equipment is the workshop’s Canon DR-G 1130 high performance flat scanner, which makes it possible to scan several thousand pages a day. It also enables us to carry out the retrospective digitisation of the contemporary aides of our documents in the form of card catalogues, which had previously been rather clumsy to use, as well as the digitisation of large quantities of documents of varying sizes from business card size to A3. For character recognition we use the Abbyy FineReader software.

Over the years BCA has acquired great amounts of audio and video recordings, mainly from local governments. These analogue storage devices are liable to damage, unsuitable for long-term safekeeping and difficult to research. Digitising these is a time-consuming process requiring devices which are not manufactured any more. Also on project funding, we have purchased a good quality second hand tape recorder, a cassette player, a VCR and a mini DVD player, and also some new, professional studio equipment suitable for the digitising of analogue storage devices.

In order to meet researchers’ needs for large replicas and BCA’s need for large prints for the exhibitions regularly organised on the premises, we have also purchased an Epson Stylus Pro 9890 large-format printer, which can produce photo-quality prints using 9 colours.

Apart from developing the digitising equipment of the workshop, we have also invested in the long-term safekeeping of the digitised documents by purchasing a disc storage device providing tape backup for 80 TB of data, which was also set up in the workshop equipped with the latest technology on project funding.

Our research room boasts 20 new desktop computers providing the technical basis for on the spot digital research. Here it is also possible to watch and listen to digitised video and audio recordings, using the headphones provided.

To enable us to move large-size digital images inside the building, we also used the budget funding for system development, as a result of which researchers can now download digital data from the server with a 1 Gbit/s speed.

Mostly thanks to the e-archives project, BCA is now capable of digitising and making accessible data on almost any type of storage device. With our own means we contribute to ensuring digital equal opportunities and the accessibility of our archivalia in a way cross-cutting national boundaries.

Research and customer service

(On the possibility of online research see the chapter on Digital Archives Portal)

Research service

Every natural person is entitled to carry out research in the archives who accepts the terms and conditions of the valid research regulations. BCA has two research facilities:

The main research room, where all our records series and digital documents is researchable. Contacts:

* Phone: +36 1 298 75 03, e-mail: [kutato@bparchiv.hu](mailto:kutato@bparchiv.hu)

The plan collection research room is the place to study the planning drawings and the adjoining documentation handed in for building permit between 1873 and 2006 in the territory of Budapest. The collection is arranged by lot numbers so requests must be submitted with reference to these. The files include the original building permit documents (site plans, floor plans, sections, elevations), as well as the later transformation, renovation and demolition plans. Contacts:

* + 36 1 298 75 14, e-mail: [epitesikutato@bparchiv.hu](mailto:epitesikutato@bparchiv.hu)

The opening hours of the research facilities are published on the website of BCA.

The first step of research in BCA is getting a registration, which is possible online or in person. Registration is valid until the end of the given calendar year and has to be renewed each year. Research requests can be submitted by those holding a valid visitors’ ticket. Requests can likewise be submitted online or personally. Research regulations give exact guidelines for carrying out research and visitors are obliged to get acquainted with these. The preparation of the requested documents takes different amounts of time: archival aides (e.g. indexes) andmicrofilms requested are available on the workday following the day the request was submitted, while the preparation of documents on item level (e.g. from civil law notaries, law courts and councils) usually takes three workdays. There is a quantity limitation on requested documents as described in the research room regulations.

Researchers can also use the reprography services offered by the archives. We can make photocopies and digital scans of paper-based or microfilm documents. For the wide range of possible services contact our research service. Our colleagues are ~~Our customer service is~~ happy to answer any questions arising during research, but it is also possible for researchers to consult archivists in charge of the given set of documents involved in one’s research.

Enquiry service

Contacts: +36 1 298 7501, [bfl@bparchiv.hu](mailto:bfl@bparchiv.hu)

Our enquiry service provides data and performs the certification of documents. Right certification procedures and data provision are both dutiable. In accordance with current provisions, requests are to be fulfilled within 30 days. The most frequent types of requests: certification of term of study, term of service, inheritance cases, cadastral documents. The requests and other forms can be downloaded from the BCA website or can be handed in online via the Digital Archives Portal.

The building of Budapest City Archives

Access by public transport: Tram 1, Metro 3 or Bus 26 and 32 (’Árpád híd’ stop)

Address: 1139, Budapest, Teve u. 3-5.

Phone: +36 1 298 75 00

Website: [www.bparchiv.hu](http://www.bparchiv.hu)

e-mail: [bfl@pbarchiv.hu](mailto:bfl@pbarchiv.hu)

The building is divided into three parts. Wing A is open to the general public. From the entrance hall the main stairs and lifts take us to the 1st floor, where the exhibition room and the public canteen are located. The research rooms are on the 2nd floor, including the research room with the microfilm readers. A small teaching room on the 3rd floor accommodates groups of students.. The reference library is also located on the 3rd floor. The lecture hall (ground floor) is equipped with cutting edge audiovisual and interpreting equipment. The offices of the management are located on the 4th and 5th floors. All services are accessible for the disabled. Wing B serves the purpose of storing and safekeeping the documents, so it is open for the public only on special occasions. There are air-conditioned store rooms, working rooms, sorting rooms and workshops for the preliminary conservation procedures to prepare the documents for long-term storing. Wing C is home to our Conservation and Reprography Department with its workshops, and the IT Department, which is responsible for the running of the e-archives. 1st floor: microfilms workshops, 2nd floor: book binding workshops, 3rd floor: preparation of archival publications, digitising and IT, 4th floor: conservation workshops.

Useful floor area: 23 440 m2

Wing A: 3714 m2

Wing B: 17 933 m2

Wing C: 1793 m2

Document intake capacity of the archives: 53 202 running m

Floor area of document storage facilities: 9 666 m2

Store room shelving: rolling – 6861 shelf m, static – 36 655 shelf m, HUNFLEX shelving system by StRaktech Kft.

Rolling shelving: 1320 shelf m

No. of microfilm cases: 168

Research room capacity: 56 persons

Library reading room capacity: 12 persons

Capacity of lecture hall: 120 persons

Planning: 1998-1999

General planning: Budai Építész Műhely Kft.

Construction: 2002-2003

Contractor: BKK KKT (Baucont Rt., Kipszer Rt., Középületépítő Rt.)

Ground floor: 1 Reception 2 Cloakroom 3 Lecture hall 4 Customer service 5 Toilets

1st floor: 6 Canteen 7 Exhibition hall 8 Toilets

2nd floor: 9 Plan collection research room 10 Research room 11 Microfilm research room 12 Toilets

3rd floor: 13 Teaching room 14 Reference library 15 Toilets

Budapest City Archives serving the needs of the NGO sector and the public

The task of BCA is more than just taking in and keeping the documents of lasting value generated by local governments and state organs. After all, organisations excercising public authority are but part of a wider social reality. BCA considers it important to represent all social groups of the population of Budapest, be it private persons or organisations.

Documents of NGO-s welcome

The non-profit and non-governmental sector of Budapest performs important tasks serving a wide range of needs – suffice it to mention its social, religious or cultural activities. The documents generated by these organisations can later enable us to draw a detailed picture of local society. Thus BCA undertakes a public service when we encourage the actors of the non-profit sector to hand over (as deposit or otherwise) their paper-based or born digital documents of lasting value.

Personal and family documents welcome

The documents preserved by private persons and families are not less important. The increasing interest in genealogical research and the expansion and transformation of fields of historic interest, personal documents tend to get into the focus of attention more than ever. Also, the transformation of the ’culture of memory’ is another factor reinforcing this process. The significance of sources containing direct information on people’s and communities’ roots, identity, neighbourhoods and their history and locations of collective memory has been on the increase. Personal documents are less and less considered peripheral and uninteresting for historiography thanks to the personal moments, the individual characteristics of each biography and the growing academic interest in people’s thoughts and feelings – thus personal correspondence, memoirs, autobiographies and family albums acquire a special significance. It is our firm belief that the documentation of a locality involves the marks left by the individuals who lived their lives there.