A Budavári Sikló


Kiépítésének helyét a korabeli forgalmi viszonyok alapján határozták meg. A Lánchíd budai hídfejénél a hidon áthaladó omnibuszközlekedés, az 1857-re elkészült Alagút és a színtén itt kialakított lóvasúti végállomásak jelentős forgalmi csomópontot hoztak létre, így kézenfelvét volt, hogy az új közlekedési eszköz pályáját is ennek középhez kell megépíteni.

Széchenyi 1868 májusában kaptak meg az engedélyt a hegypálya megépítésére, júliusban pedig már a kívalástozást is megkezdték. A sikló létesítésének terveit és építését Ferenc Henrik irányította.

A pálya alsó végére egy nagyobb méretű, impozáns inditócsarnokot építettek, ahol a gépészek berendezéseket és hogy kapják meg: a felüljáráson egy egyszerűbb kivitelű fogadóépületet emeltek. A mozgatóerőt az alsó állomáson elhelyezett gőzgép biztosította. A normál nyomtávú, 30 fokos hajléktalapú pálya hossza 95 méter volt, és 50 méteres szintkerületést kellett lelkedni.

A pálya mellett a kocsik műszaki megoldásai is egyedülálló voltak. A bécsi Anton Spiering Maschinen- és Wagenbau-Fabrik üzemben készült járművek három lépcsőzetes égőséggel elhelyezett fülkeből álltak, a középső 6 fő, a szélesek 8 fősségével voltak alkalmazottak. A pályán, egyszerre történő ingatlanok szövet négy kocsit tartalmazó jungelből és egy kis híd, a másik feléhez található visszafordítódásokkal, kétvégű tömlhető gyorsítóanakadával, felépítésre került.

A Budapest Castle Hill Funicular

The Budapest Castle Hill Funicular (Budavári Sikló), originally named Buda Hill Railway (Budai Hegypálya), was inaugurated on 2nd March 1870. The funicular, being the second in the world, was built at the initiative of Count Ödön Széchenyi, the son of Count István Széchenyi. He proposed the construction of a steam-operated cable-hauled railway following the example he had seen in Lyon. The main idea of creating this new form of public transport was to provide faster and easier access to the Castle Theatre and ministries situated in the Buda Castle area, which could not be reached by any other means of public transport until the first autobus line running up to the Castle Hill was launched in 1928.

The construction site was marked out with respect to the traffic conditions of the time. The Buda abutment area of the Chain Bridge on the right side of the Danube was a major traffic junction of the horse-drawn omnibuses passing through the bridge, the Tunnel, which was completed in 1857, and the horse-car terminals also set up there, and therefore it was evident that the track of the new vehicle should be located in the vicinity.

Széchenyi was granted permission to build the hill railway in May 1868, and construction started already in July. The engineering plans of the funicular were prepared by Ödön Jarasz. The construction operations were managed first by Jarasz and later on by Henrik Wolfhárt, who reworked the building plans as well.

At the lower terminal of the track, a bigger and more impressive dispatch hall was erected to house the engineering structures as well, while at the upper terminal, a simpler reception building was set up. Motive power was supplied by a steam engine positioned at the lower terminal. The standard gauge track with a 36-degree angle of inclination was 95 meters long, where 50 metres difference of altitude had to be surmounted.

In addition to the rail track, the technical solutions of the cars were also unique. The vehicles made by Anton Spiering Maschinen- and Wagenbau-Fabrik in Vienna consisted of three staggered cabins, with the middle one accommodating 6 persons, while the two outer cabins were able to carry 8 persons. There were two cars attached to each other like a pendulum, with one moving upwards and one going downwards at the same time. The safety apparatus was also special: the iron claws at the bottom of the cars were able to stop even runaway vehicles by getting caught in the beams placed along the track.

The Buda Hill Railway was put inaugurated on 2nd March 1870. It was operated by Buda Hill Railway Ltd. (Budai Hegypálya Rt.) until its ownership was transferred to the Metropolitan Government in 1920. During its history, the funicular was reconstructed on several occasions but its technical solutions remained practically unchanged until the end of 1944.

In the siege of Budapest, on 20th December 1944 the hill railway was destroyed by bombs. After the Second World War, a decision to dismantle rather than to reconstruct the remnants of the funicular was passed because public transport in the Castle District was to be resolved by means of autobuses. Although a possible restoration of the hill railway had never been taken off the agenda, it was not until 1986 that the line was reopened.

After numerous initiatives, reconstruction of the funicular was finally decided in February 1984. With respect to its historical past as well as to the ancient architectural environment of the Castle District, the funicular railway was to be reconstructed at its original site, in a way similar to the original design. Construction started on 10 April 1984 in co-operation of the Metropolitan Government and the Budapest Public Transport Company (BKV).

The technical solutions applied during the renovation of the funicular had to meet the requirements of the time while the terminals and the cars were to evoke the atmosphere of the past. The reconstructed funicular was equipped with electrical drive and the engineering structures were placed below the upper terminal building. At both ends of the line, glass buildings were erected, different from the original structures yet in harmony with the historical surroundings.

The brown cars decorated with copper elements received the names of Gellért and Margit, show the original design of 3 staggered cabins. Each car can carry eight persons per cabin, i.e. altogether 24 passengers. Similar to the original funicular, they run parallel with each other upwards and downwards. The safety of operation is guaranteed by spring brakes that will stop the vehicle if the cable becomes broken.

The "old yet new" means of transport renamed Budapest Castle Hill Funicular (Budavári Sikló) was re-launched on 4th June 1986, in the beginning it travelled at a speed of 3 m/s which was reduced to one half in 1988. Today the system works fully automatically.

The funicular operated by Budapest Public Transport Ltd, attracts first of all tourists wishing to enjoy the wonderful panorama of the Danube. The highly frequented scenic spot of the city was put on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in 1987 as part of the view of the Danube Banks and the Buda Castle District.