

130 YEARS OF THE PALACE OF JUSTICE

Presentation by the Secretary General of the Curia of Hungary



The Former Building of the Curia

The Hungarian Royal Curia commenced its operations in 1724 in Pest. At the end of the 1700s, it was moved to Buda for a short time, then in 1804 it was relocated back to its former building in Pest.

The severe floods of the Danube in 1838 impacted the building of the Curia. In the aftermath of the revolution and freedom fight of 1848-1849, the Curia was disbanded, and the Austrian Imperial Supreme Tribunal took residence in the building. Only after the re-establishment of the Curia in 1861 could the institution reoccupy the building.

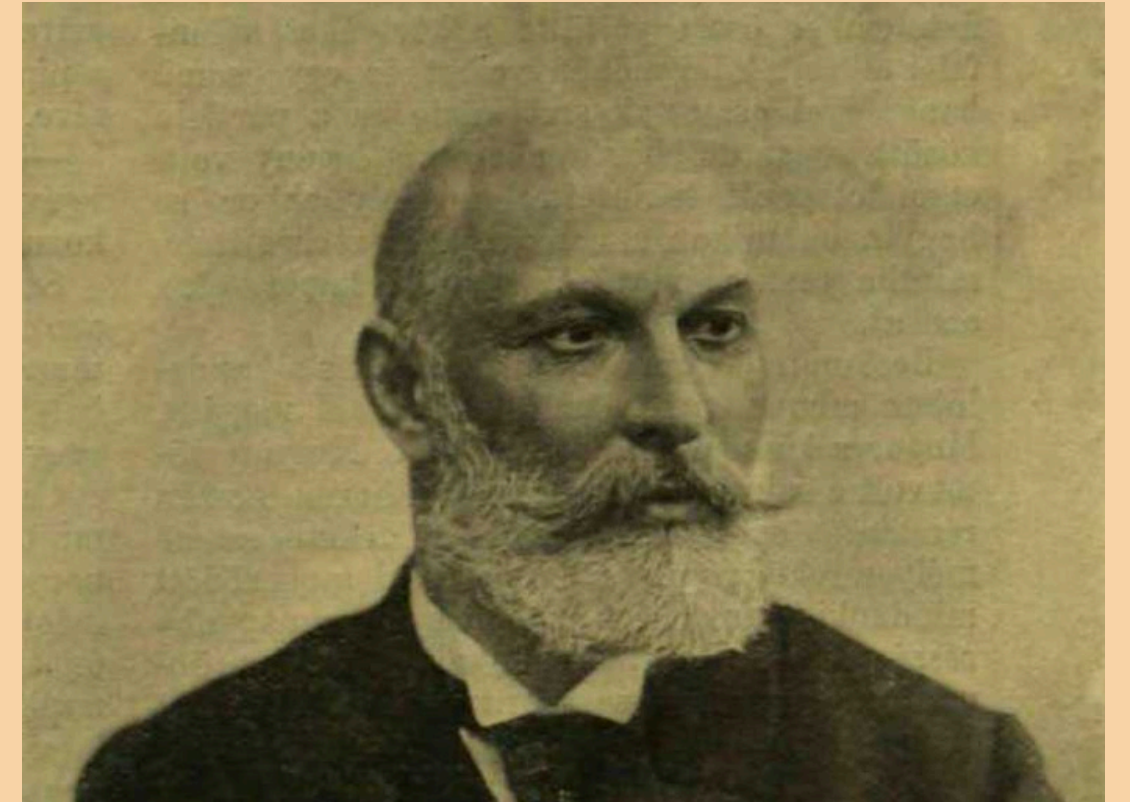


A magyar királyi kuria régi épülete a Ferenciek-terén.

Background to the Construction of a New Building

Following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the then-Justice Minister articulated the imperative for the construction of a new palace of justice.

In the Spring of 1891, Curia President Miklós Szabó engaged in consultations with Architect Alajos Hauszmann regarding the construction of an “ornate palace” for the Curia and the Royal Appeal Court of Budapest. Construction started in the Summer of 1893, opposite the new parliament building.



The Opening of the Palace of Justice

The building was handed over on 1 May 1896, and its cornerstone was laid on 20 October of the same year. This event took place as part of the millennium celebrations that were organized to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the establishment of the Hungarian state.



“The New Home of Justice”

The construction of a monumental entrance hall was undertaken, and a statue of Lady Justice was positioned within this hall. The statue, designed by Alajos Stróbl, constituted a non-conventional representation of Lady Justice as his model. The imposing statue, measuring 3 meters in height and weighing 12 tons, greeted visitors entering the building.

In addition to the Curia, the Palace of Justice also served as the premises of the Royal Appeal Court of Budapest, the Crown Prosecutor’s Office, and the Royal Prosecutor General’s Office.



The Palace of Justice in the Post-World War II Era

The Palace of Justice sustained damage during World War II and was restored by the Central Museum Directorate following the war. The Soviet-style dictatorship evicted and abolished the Curia in 1949 and replaced it with the Supreme Court.

The building was converted into a museum of ethnography. The statue of Lady Justice was removed in 1951.

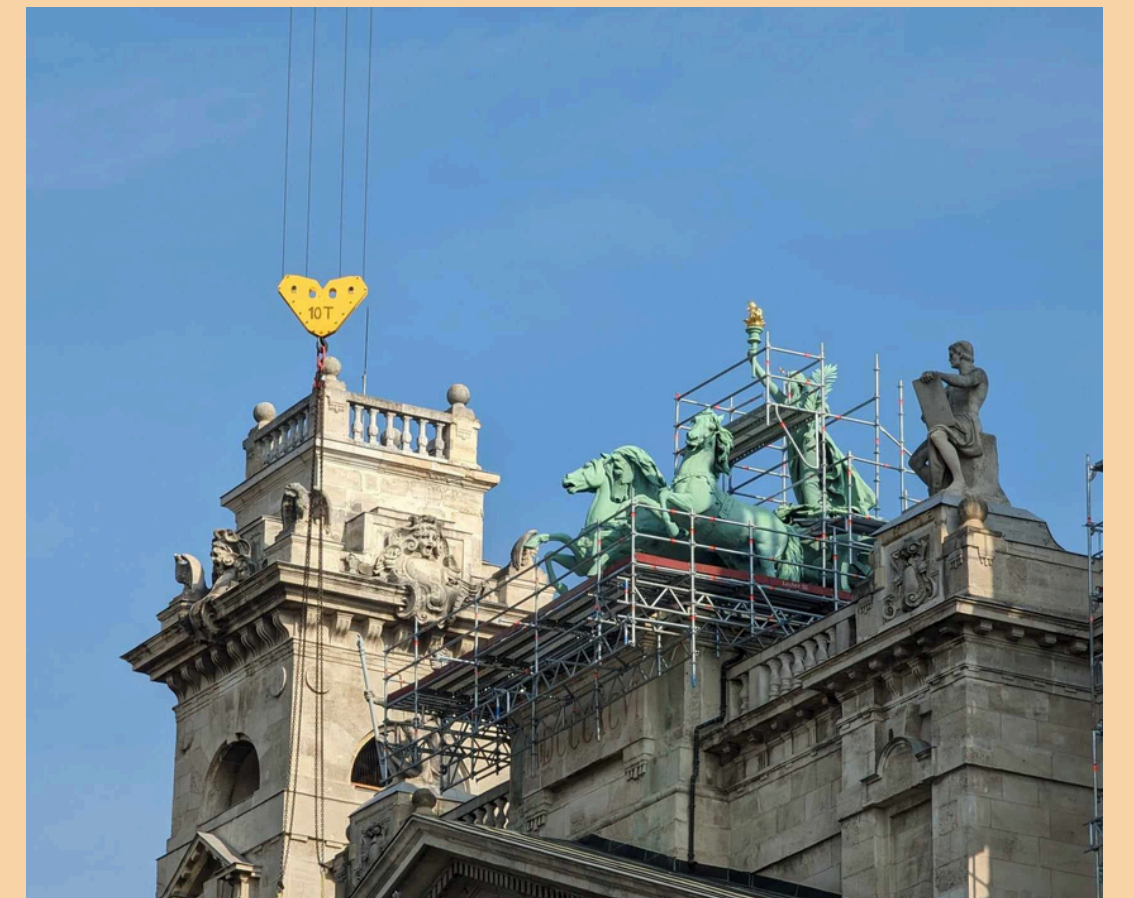
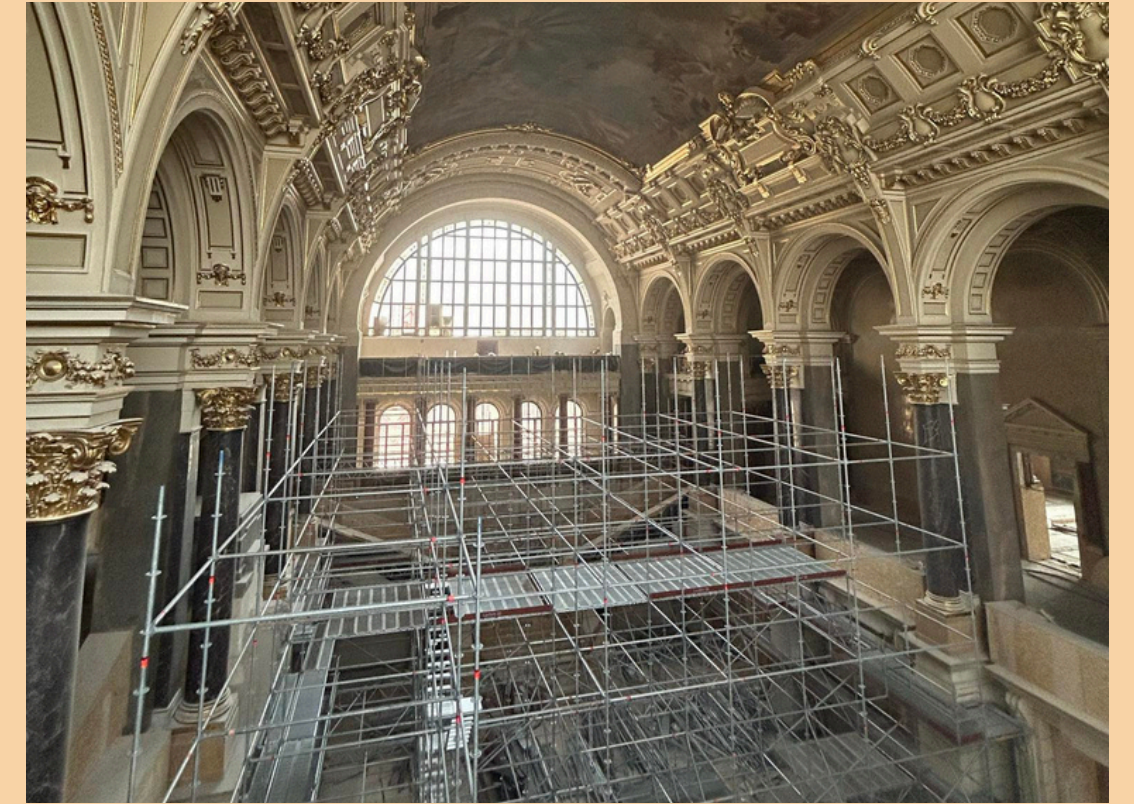
The southern part of the building housed the Institute of Party History, then the Institute of Political History from 1957 to 2018.



In the meantime, the Supreme Court operated in the building of the abolished Administrative Court in Buda, then in 1980, it took up residence in a building on Markó Street, a location it continues to utilize at the present time.

In 2012, the Supreme Court of Hungary reverted to its original appellation and has since been operating under the name “Curia”. The idea of moving back to the former Palace of Justice was brought up. Following the planning phase from 2019, construction works began in 2022.

The objective of the reconstruction was twofold: first, to replicate the building’s original layout and architectural elements, and second, to establish functional workspace that aligns with contemporary requirements.



Following the restoration process, the statue of Lady Justice and the original furniture preserved by the Curia will be returned, and the original inscription on the main façade will also be restored: „Iustitia Regnorum Fundamentum”.

Following the renovation, the well-known central hall, the ceremonial hall, and the courtrooms, which are historical monuments, will be accessible to the public in the future.



A cornerstone laying ceremony for the refurbished building is scheduled to take place on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the original Palace of Justice in 1896. The Curia will hopefully be able to commence its return to the Palace of Justice as early as this year.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!

