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→
Szent
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Spora-
architects



↑ Népszínház utca station by Puhl Antal Építész Irodája



↑ Móricz Zsigmond körtér station by Gelesz & Lenzsér

Start

New
projects

Metro stations, Budapest

Palatium Stúdió is collaborating with four other firms to design ten new metro stations aimed at getting more people to use the metro.

HUNGARY — TEXT: EMIEL LAMERS

The first metro line on the European continent – the 'Millennium Line' – was opened in Budapest in 1896. Now, over a century later, the almost two million-strong city is building its fourth metro line. The new East-West line will connect two existing train stations, Kelenföld in the west, where the trains from Vienna make their first stop in Budapest, and Keleti, on the Pest side of the city.

The first designs for the new stations were made ten years ago by a team consisting chiefly of civil engineers. The stations were viewed as a purely technical problem and little thought was given to urban planning or architectural considerations. That all changed when the city council involved the Chamber of Hungarian Architects in the project. In 2003, together with the city's then chief architect, István Schneller, the Chamber held an open

competition for the design of the ten stations. The brief required designers to abandon the typology and use of the existing stations on lines 2 and 3 and to offer more architectural quality and comfort.

Travelling by metro is still seen as a necessary evil. School pupils, students, the elderly and tourists use this form of public transport, but most of the commuter traffic from the Buda part of the city is by car. The initiators of

the new line hope that its design will encourage these inhabitants to switch to the metro in future.

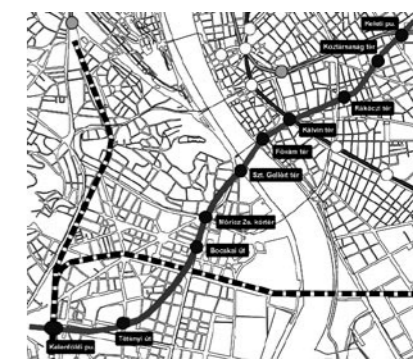
Palatium Stúdió were declared the winners of the competition, but the jury strongly recommended that they collaborate with the second and third prizewinners, BÉM and Antal Puhl. Palatium's chief architect, Zoltán Erő, was amenable to the idea of collaboration and practical considerations eventually led to two more firms, Sporaarchitects and Gelesz & Lenzsér, being added to the design team.

Palatium's prizewinning design had already laid down the framework within which the five firms could give the stations assigned to them a distinctive ambience and identity. The firms consult regularly about common aspects such as materialization, signage, artwork, advertis-

ing and lighting. The main change the architectural team has made to the original plans by the civil engineers, is to raise the height of the underground spaces and to replace the forest of columns with column-free spans. Even the inevitable horizontal cross beams have a less rigid, apparently random, configuration in the stations by Sporaarchitects. The platforms of these two stations, which are right beside the Danube, are some 30 metres below street level. Because of this enormous depth, the stations will have only one exit each, with the tunnels themselves acting as a second escape route in the case of fire or other disaster. The walls of the platforms in Szent Gellért tér station will be lined with a pattern of tiles by artist Tamás Komoróczy. His design is a contemporary, personal interpretation of

the Secession architecture of the famous Gellért spa hotel above the station.

The locations of the ten stations are pinpointed by a procession of tall building cranes. Now that their construction is generally visible, the ongoing debate about the line's functionality has flared up again. Because the line terminates at the two train stations in the east and west of the city, the outlying suburbs are still not connected to the metro network. Critics also complain that too many stations have been planned, some of them very close together, to the detriment of efficiency and travelling times. We will have to wait until at least 2010 to see who is right. In the meantime, planners are busy drawing a second North-South link in the city – metro line number 5. ←



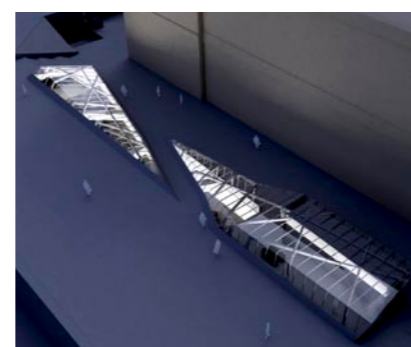
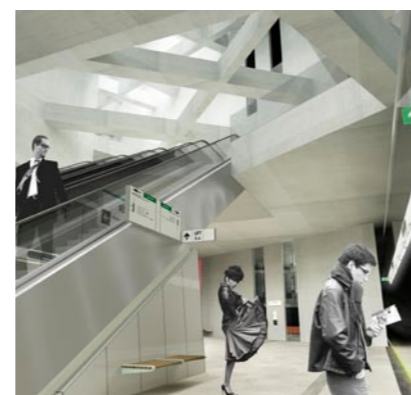
METRO LINE 4, 2006–2010

Architect: Palatium Stúdió Kft., Sporaarchitects, BÉM, Puhl Antal Építész Irodája, Gelesz & Lenzsér
Client: BKV Rt. DBR Metró Projekt Igazgatóság
Address: Budapest, Hungary
Info: www.metro4.hu

↓ The tiles of the Szent Gellért tér station are inspired by the aboveground Gellért spa hotel.



↓ Both stations by Sporaarchitects (here Fővám tér) are characterized by criss-cross beams.



↓ Tétényi station by Palatium Stúdió is naturally lit by an enormous skylight.

