

Longin an integrated

When I grew up in the Polesie Konstantynowskie estate in Łódź, I never thought that after many years I will teach the students of the Department of Architecture of Technical University of Wrocław about this town planning case. Then, I did not know either that the studies on the town planning of Wrocław, including the housing estates from between the Wars period, will become my passion.

In this paper, I would like to present the examples of 3 estates which were subject of my study. These are: garden estate Sępólno (Zimpel)¹ and rationalised estate Księże Małe (Klein Tschansch)², both in Wrocław and similar to the latter, Polesie Konstantynowskie estate in Łódź³.

The mentioned estates will be described from various sides, such as: history of erection, composition, social space, nature of neighbourhood or tendency of people to integrate into community.

A tradition of settling the housing estates on the outskirts of the Wrocław may be traced down to the 70's of 19th century, when the first residential quarter, Borek (Kleinburg), was founded in 1872 beyond the southern limits of the town. Shortly afterwards, two other estates followed, Borek No 2 (1898) and Zalesie (Leerbeutel – 1901), the layouts of which reflected the picturesque tendencies in town planning popularised by Camillo Sitte⁴.

Owing to Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928)⁵ who in 1898 defined a social/economical model of „garden-city” as the autonomous functional unit – a „garden-city movement” was initiated in Europe. After first well-known projects in UK (Letchworth – 1903) and in Germany (Hellerau near Dresden – 1907), also in Wrocław already in 1911 started construction of first „garden-cities” , Karłowice (Carlowitz) and Biskupin (Bischofs walde), supported by the Gartenstadtgesellschaft.⁶

After the World War I, Wrocław faced an economical and

ng for community

Examples of urban neighbourhood in Wrocław (Breslau) and Łódź

overpopulation crisis. Max Berg, a City's Building Counsellor, created a vision of the town inspired by results of competition on development of Great Berlin (1910). Berg perceived Wrocław divided into 3 zones: a City, Arbeitsstadt cultural zone – Monumentalstadt and residential zone – Wohnstadt. This last zone was to be situated on the outskirts of the town in form of island-type, closed housing estates with low buildings interleaved with green and isolated from the City and from each other with green belts. This idea was continued by Hugo Althoff, a Berg's successor after he resigned from this position in 1925⁷.

I. Sępolno Estate (Zimpel) (Fig. 1.)

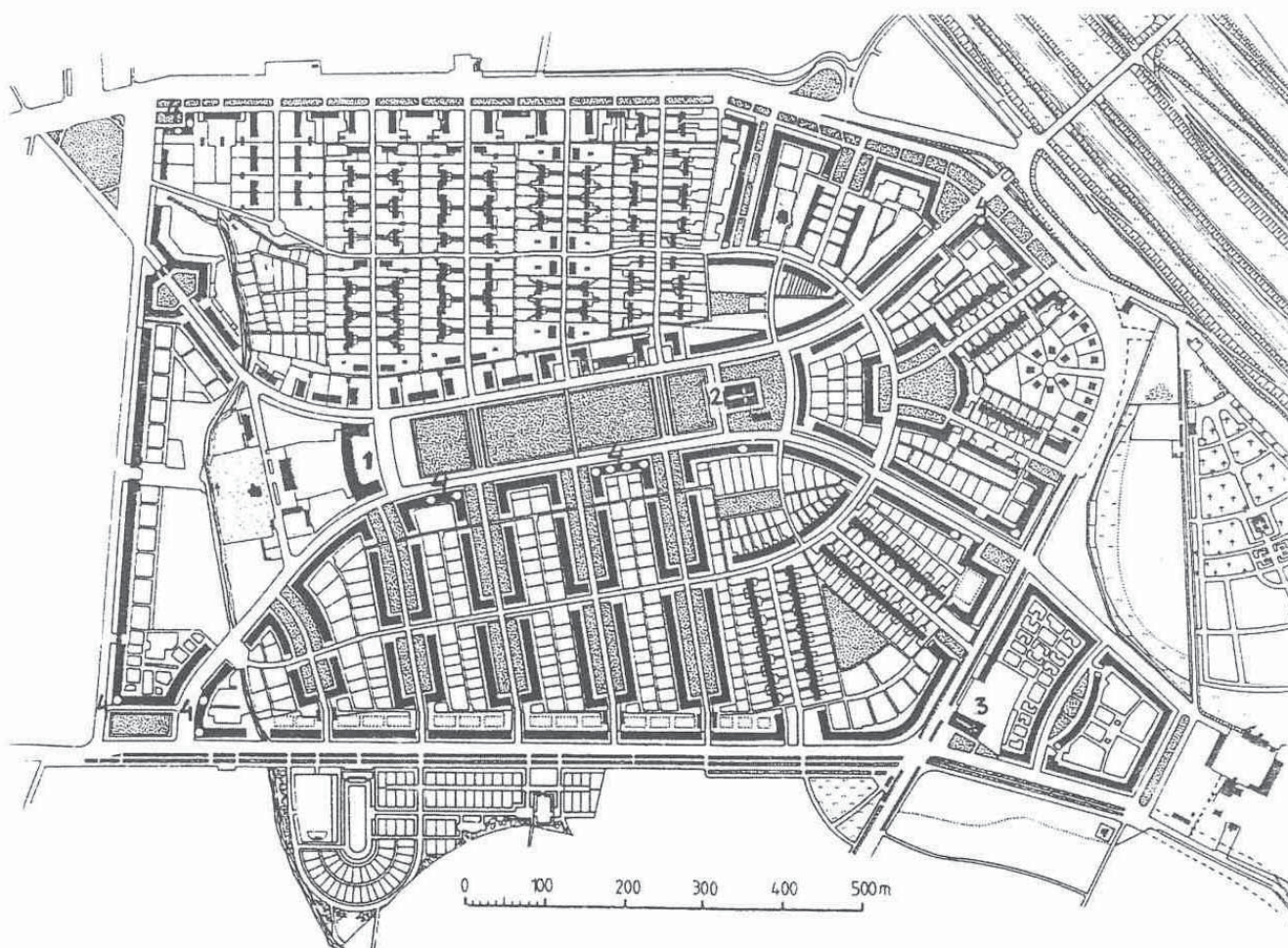
The housing estate was built in 1919-1935 at the eastern end of the town according to Hermann Wahlich and

Paul Heim urban design. The construction of the estate lasted 16 years because the terrain was successively incorporated into the town.

General data

The housing estate planned for 10,000 residents was erected on area of 100 ha. There were about 2200 dwellings of various types of floor area from 55m² to 125 m² in 2-storey single-family or multi-family houses with gable roof.

In architectural projecting participated many architects, such as Albert Kempter, Kurt Langer, Hans Thomas, Fritz and Paul Rhoder, Paul Häusler. They brought a variety of architectonic details into an unified composition of urban plan.



1 Garden estate Sępolno, plan 1919-1935 / *Vrtno naselje Sępolno, situacija 1919.-1935.*

1 – school / *škola*, 2 – Protestant church (now Culture Hall) / *protestantska crkva (danas Dom kulture)*, 3 – Catholic church / *katolička crkva*, 4 – shops / *dućani*

Composition of layout

General layout of Sępolno estate shows the compositional features typical for the garden estate.⁸ These are, among others:

- a) „boundary” – in form of bordering buildings symbolising the wall isolating the inside, private part of the neighbourhood from the outside world; (Fig. 2.)
- b) „gates” – accentuated in different way;
- c) „centre of composition” – in case of Sępolno in form of elongated green square (approx. 5 ha);
- d) „axis of composition” ended with important utility buildings (school from the west and Protestant church from the east); (Fig. 3.)
- e) „a definite structure of general layout”;
- f) a wide variety of structural elements associated with housing (in case of Sępolno, the designers used element in form of garden-type courtyard (*Gartenhof*) which

invited to integration of residents and gave a visual priority to trees in the urban composition). (Fig. 4.)

Social space

The important buildings of the housing estate were located in the most prominent places; a school at the western end of the central square and Protestant church at its eastern end. The Catholic church was situated in the bordering street near the new housing estate Nowy Biskupin being under construction since 1928.

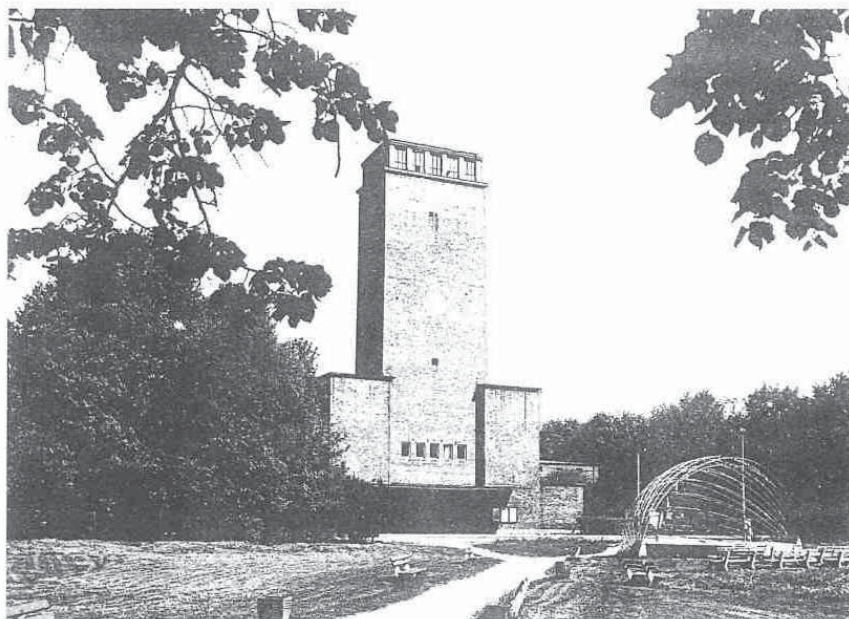
The shops, pharmacy, library, etc. were located alongside the main interior routes and at the entry gates. Initially, at the western end of the square, a complex of buildings was planned as a cultural/educational centre consisting of meeting hall (*Volkshaus*), church, school and nursery. This project was, however, never completed.

II. Księża Małe (Klein Tschansch) in Wrocław (Fig. 5)

Expansion of town's limits in 1928 was a turning-point in Wrocław's history when its area was enlarged by about 12,500 ha of land. This change was documented by the first town layout (Flächenaufteilungsplan – 1924) prepared by Stadterweiterungsamt managed by Fritz Behrendt. This gave a chance to improve the living condition by founding new housing estates. As early as in 1928 commenced work in such housing estates as Księża Małe and Nowy Biskupin and completed the construction work in Sępólno started in 1919. In 1929 started the work in Pilczyce (Pilsnitz) but the economic crisis did not allow to complete this work in the originally planned extent.

General data

The project was realised by Housing Society of Wrocław (Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau) in 1928-29 according to design of P. Heim and A. Kempter under the auspices of F. Behrendt from the Stadterweiterung samt. The housing estate was localised in south-east part of the town and occupied the area of 12.31 ha with 762 flats for 3048 inhabitants. The courtyards and green took 74% of total area and the remaining part was for buildings and roads.⁹



3 Sępólno – Protestant church (Culture Hall) / Sępólno – protestantska crkva (Dom kulture)

Gustaw Wolf, Rudolf Sack and Hans Thomas were invited to take part in design of particular buildings. Gustaw Wolf – a professor at Kunst und Kunstgewerbeschule co-operated with Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen (Rfg) making studies on the economic aspect of dwelling plans in search for a plan providing the minimum existence.

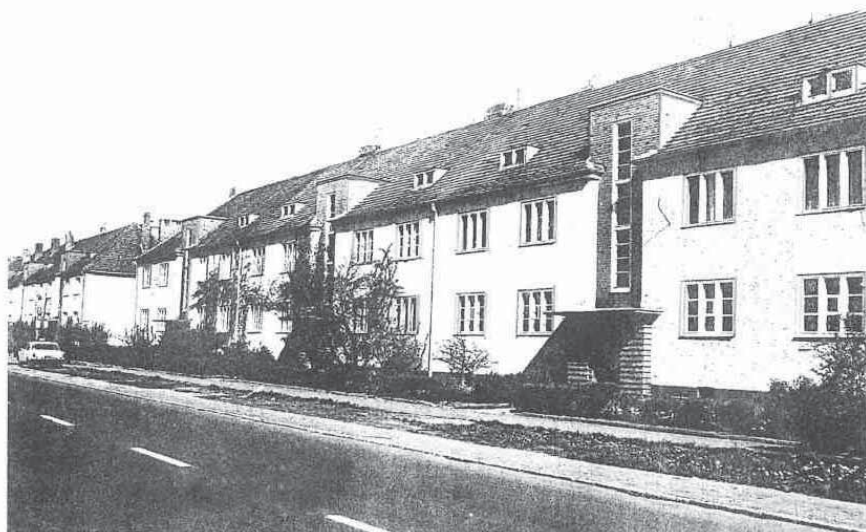
In this project were tested dwelling units of floor area corresponding to the experimental floor area recommended by Rfg plus some other individual types of dwelling units. A total floor area of flats ranged from 40

to about 70 m². Gustaw Wolf conducted also an experiment with minimum dwelling unit in his building erected in the WUWA exhibition estate (Wohnung und Werkraum) in 1929 organised by Werkbund and Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau A.G.

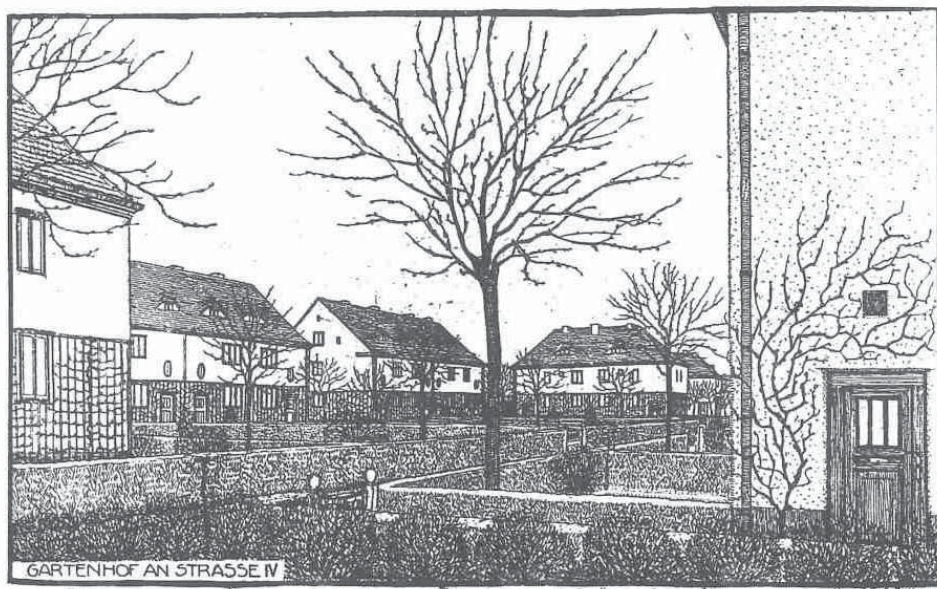
The floor plans of dwelling units from Księża Małe were presented at the international exhibition „Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum” in Frankfurt a/Main (1929).¹⁰ (Fig. 6)

Composition of layout

Księża Małe is the first example in Wrocław



2 Sępólno – bordering houses at south side / Sępólno – stambene zgrade na jugu naselja



4 Sępólno – „Gartenhof”. Drawing by Wahlich and Heim, 1920 / Sępólno – „Gartenhof”. Crtež Wahlich & Heim, 1920.

of the housing estate with multi-family buildings of Zeilenbau type. Three-storey, brick buildings with flat roofs are standing in long rows orientated in N-S direction. The courtyards were filled with common green. Air, green and sun – it was a principal motto of such kind of housing estate. Two types of interblock space may be distinguished here: a representative space connected with frontage (Figs 7-8) and homestead space at the rear. Here were clothes-lines (Fig. 9), here were also vast lawns for playing. The buildings at the ends of internal roads were L-shaped what makes the layout more close and imparts intimacy to the green courtyards. The houses standing along the skew Opolska Street were arranged in a zig-zag in order to provide a sufficient daylight inside flats.

Social space

The program included 10 shops and the meeting hall situated at the entry point, central heating boiler-room coupled with baths and laundry, nursery with children house and 6 workshops.

III. Polesie Konstanty nowskie in Łódź (Fig. 10)

The project was preceded by the competition announced by Town Council in 1928 for development of two residential quarters: Polesie Konstantynowskie and Nowe

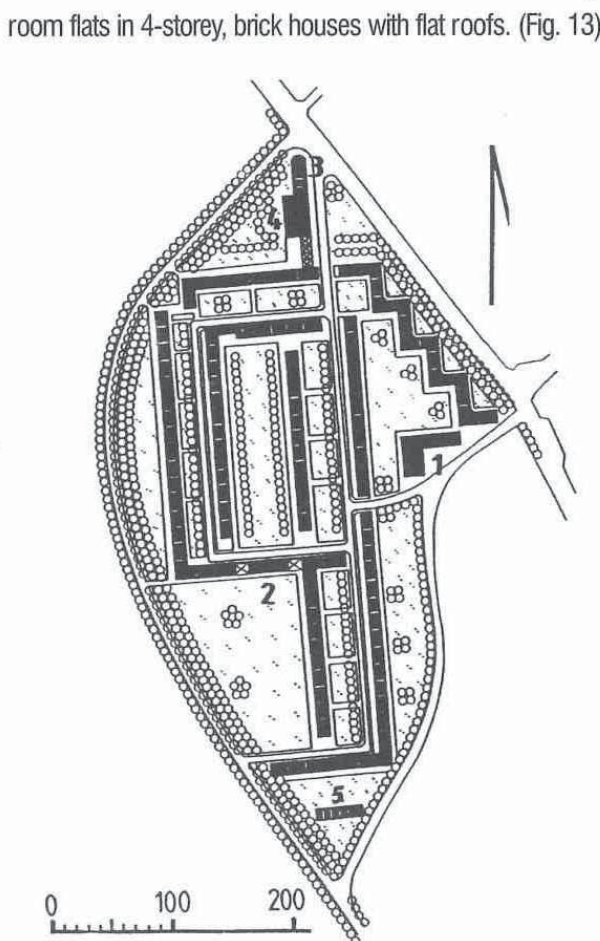
Rokicie in Łódź¹¹.

The housing estate was located in the north-east part of the town in vicinity of the spacious People's Park covering 237 ha which was founded at the same time. (Fig. 14)

General data

The designers of the project were winners of II and III prize in the competition: Jerzy Berliner, Józef Łukasik, Tamira Słońska and Witold Szereżewski.

The estate was laid out on the triangle site (15 ha) for about 7,500 inhabitants. There were 264 single-room, 1069 double-room and 156 triple-room flats in 4-storey, brick houses with flat roofs. (Fig. 13)

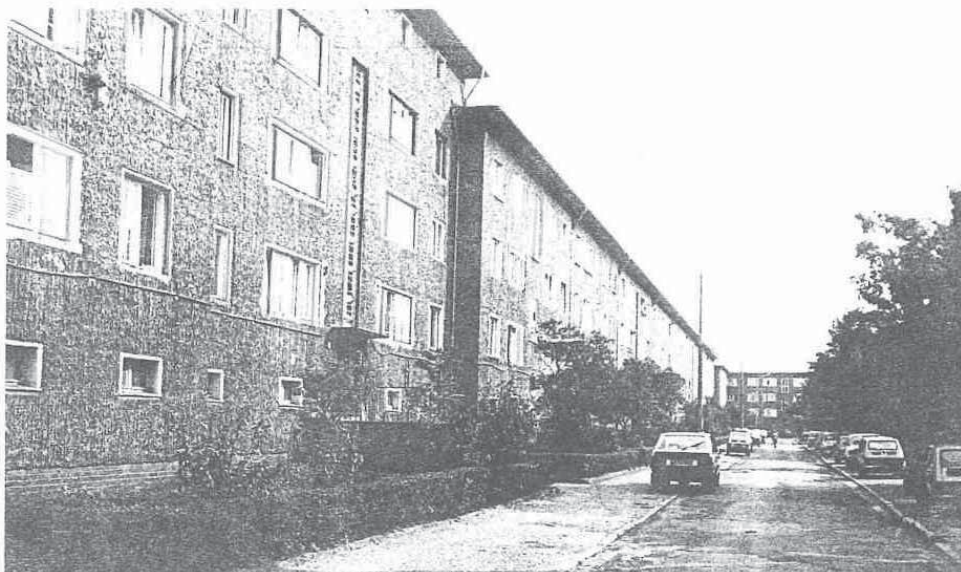


5 Księża Małe – plan 1928 / Księża Małe - sytuacja 1928.

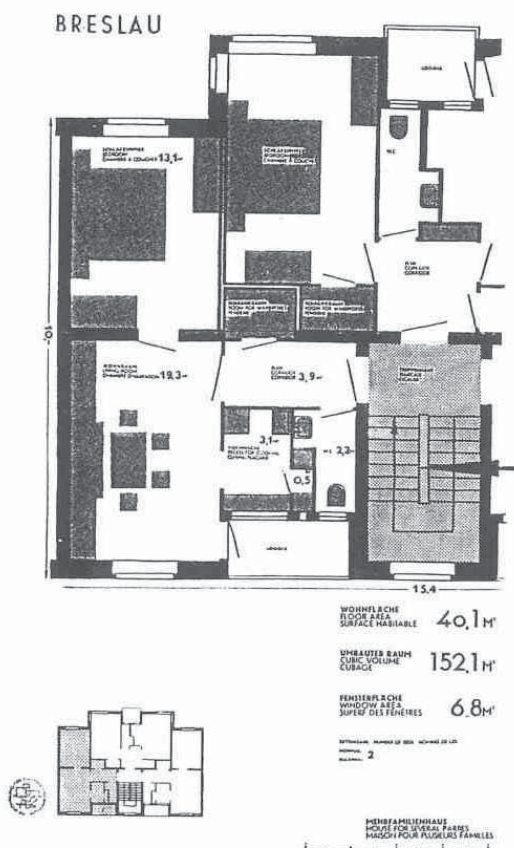
1 – baths and boiler-room / kupaonice i kotłownica, 2 – nursery / dječji vrtić, 3 – shops / dućani, 4 – meeting hall / zgrada za sastanke, 5 – workshops / radionice

Composition of layout

Most of buildings were arranged in rows orientated in N-S direction. Some buildings were L-shaped and those situated alongside the diagonal, bordering street were arranged in zig-zag. (Fig. 11) Between buildings, there were vast, green courtyards with various kinds of trees selected individually for each courtyard. (Fig. 12) To add some intimacy, the courtyards were isolated from the main street by means of low walls with pergolas covered with Virginia creeper¹².



7 Księże Małe. Houses in Katowicka Street, front view (representative space) / *Księże Małe, kuće u Katowickoj ulici, glavna pročelja (javni prostor)*



6 Księże Małe. Plan of flat presented at international exhibition in Frankfurt a/M 1929 / *Księże Małe, tloczt stana predstavljen na međunarodnoj izložbi u Frankfurtu a/M 1929.*

Social space

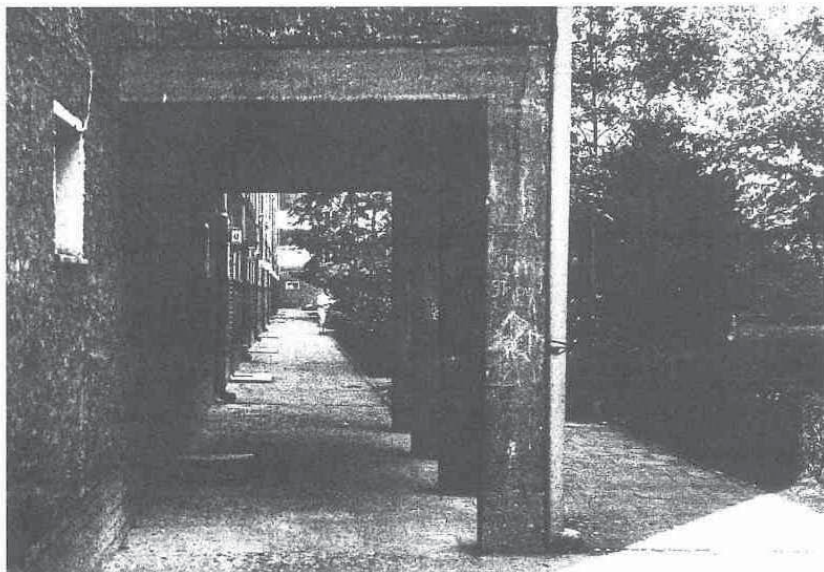
The program included such utility buildings as cinema with cafeteria and reading-room, co-operative, mother-and-baby care station, two primary schools (for boys and girls), evening-school, nursery, administration. Until the World War II, about 60% of dwelling houses were erected but none of the utility building was constructed and such functions as school, nursery, ambulatory, administration and shops were located in suitably adapted premises on the ground-floors of dwelling houses. The school, nursery and market-hall were erected only after the war.

The spatial program of the estate related with the active recreation was supplemented by allotments stretching in a long belt alongside the railway line. (Fig. 14)

Neighbourhood identity

The origin of presented below examples of Wrocław's neighbourhoods was a consequence of a general vision of the town planning concept consisting in the „island-shaped” housing estates surrounded by greenery and situated on the outskirts of the town promoted by City's Building Counsellor (Stadtsbaurat) Max Berg and his successor Hugo Althoff. The urban nature of individual neighbourhoods and their social features resulted from common efforts of investor – Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau A.G. – and designers Wahlich, Heim and Kempster.

In case of Sępolno estate, the identity was to some extent a combination of various identities. For instance, the places defining the identities of various religious groups were two churches: Protestant and Catholic situated in different parts of the site. A location of the Protestant church at the closing end of the main composition axis of the estate reflected the fact that the believers of this religion were in majority in the neigh-



8 Księżę Małe. Entrance door and fragment of representative courtyard / *Księżę Małe, ulaz u zgrądu i dio zajedničkog dvorišta*

bourhood. The higher order identity was represented by the initially planned „People’s House” (Volkshaus) which was to be erected at the opposite end of main axis.

This building was designed for cultural purposes and its intention was to unite the community during common meetings and celebrations. It was to be a sui generis „Stadtkrone” in Taut’s conception – a very popular approach after the World War I. In fact, we can say about a complete cultural and educational centre since it was to include also a Catholic church, a school and a kindergarten. Eventually, only the school was built, which represented a lower level of identity than the Volkshaus as it united only the youth of the neighbourhood.

In case of Księżę Małe estate, the integrating elements were to be an „Estate Room” (Saalbau), shops and also, or perhaps above all, an object strongly associated with

everyday’s life of the community – a baths with laundry. It is worth to remind, that almost all dwellings in this estate were without bathrooms. The church was situated beyond the estate limits and serviced the territory of whole former community Księżę Małe and Księżę Wielkie. It cannot be, therefore, stated that it represented the identity of neighbourhood Księżę Małe.

In the Polesie neighbourhood in Łódź, the intended integration places were to be: cinema, cafeteria, reading-room, co-operative as well as schools, nurseries, etc. The church, alike as in case of Księżę Małe neighbourhood, was beyond the limits and assembled the believers from various districts of the town so, also in this case it cannot be stated that it represented the identity of this neighbourhood.

The built space of the environment

Up to a certain limit, the living in the neighbourhood with terraced housing and in the neighbourhood with apartment blocks is similar in terms of sense of identity, provided that the apartment blocks are not higher than 4-storey and the environment is arranged in an resident-friendly way.

An anonymity and alienation appear together with the following development methods:

- (1) continuation of the town planning approach characterized with high-density housing on unlimited space and not isolated with green belts from the busy city,
- (2) realization of residential districts with apartment blocks 5- to 11-storey high, with vast interblock spaces, unfamiliar and lacking cosiness. Very often, a general arrangement of such blocks introduces a very interesting ornament in the urban plan but in the space observed from the perspective of common resident this arrangement is sometimes perceived as „strange” and „dimmed”, what additionally intensifies a feeling of being lost among the human „termitaries”.

Of course, a garden at the house brings a lot of satisfaction, enables an active relax and provides cheaper food. Own garden meets thus the recreational as well as economical needs. In this respect, such garden estate



9 Księże Małe. Houses in Katowicka Street, rear view (homestead space) / Księże Małe, kuće u Katowickoj ulici, stražnje pročelje (kućni prostor)

Myth and reality of the neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is now underestimated by contemporary town planners and is almost completely abandoned as the outmoded idea. In human mind, however, there is a strong demand to get integrated within the community and to recover thus one's identity. Perhaps it is a longing for the image of ideal community from the past and

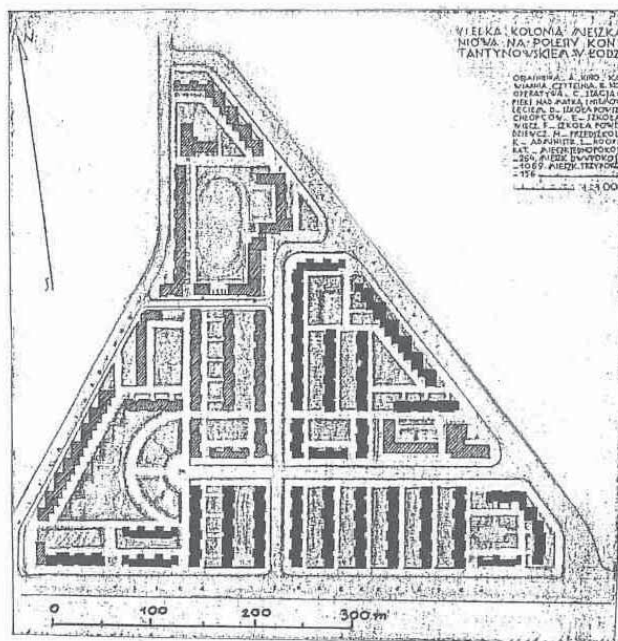
as Sępolno is to a great extent parallel to the rural world. The above mentioned needs may be, however, satisfied also when you live in the neighbourhood with low apartment blocks, such as Księże Małe in Wrocław or Polesie Konstantynowskie in Łódź, where in the close vicinity allotments are situated. Such solution gives the residents a choice. These who enjoy the work in the garden – may rent one whilst those who prefer the urban style of life may play the recreational games on the green yards and sport fields or make a walk in nearby parks or meadows.

I myself grew up just in the Polesie Konstantynowskie neighbourhood in Łódź, which I still recall as a paradise. A vicinity of gorgeous park and allotments, green courtyards full of air and sun allowed to forget of the industrial nature of the town. But if you only crossed the railway line, you saw a quite different world of grey residential district Koziny, where people lived in simple dwelling houses without running water and sewer. Now, there are modern apartment blocks in this place but this district newer had and never will have a feature of the neighbourhood. In the eyes of residents of this district, the Polesie neighbourhood was something special, better, to be envied and living here was thought as a kind of ennoblement (this opinion comes from my schoolmates living in Koziny district).

faith that creating now a new community it will be possible to revive the values lost long before now.

Surely, the arising of sense of community is promoted by the spatial limitations and drop of population. Also, the social uniformity of residents of given neighbourhood increases a feeling of identity.

The garden estate Sępolno in Wrocław has its own



10 Łódź – Polesie. Sketch of building plan 1928 / Łódź– Polesie. Skica situacije 1928.



11 Łódź – Polesie. Houses in Unia Avenue / Łódź – Polesie, kuće u Aveniji Unia

genius loci which attracts new residents. A main attraction is the possibility to enjoy a rural style of life living practically in the city with all benefits and opportunities resulting from this fact. Now, it is quite a fashionable place to live in. This tendency is coupled with modernization of garrets into a living space what generally very unfavourably misshapens the original neat line of the building.

Księża Małe estate is less comfortable than Sępolno due to the lack of bathrooms and access to the kitchen only via the living-room. The residents try, therefore, to improve the living standard by reconstructing the loggias into bathrooms.

Generally the life in the neighbourhood was running differently than in other parts of the town. The same was also in Polesie Konstantynowskie estate. Here, everybody knew each other, people exchanged greetings and children played safely in the green courtyards.

Now, when the first generation of pioneers almost completely left my home place, the estate has deteriorated. Perhaps it is only my subjective feeling since I ceased to be a member of that community and the life there runs its own route?

Perhaps only buildings got older? But one thing is quite sure, that I always will recall warmly my life in the neighbourhood I will remain an advocate of such idea of housing.

References

- 1 W. Kononowicz, Z problemów urbanistyki dwudziestolecia międzywojennego. Osiedle ogrodowe Sępolno (in:) Roczniki Sztuki Sl'skiej, XV, Wrocław 1991, p. 59-91.
- 2 W. Kononowicz, Ewolucja osiedla mieszkaniowego we Wrocławiu okresu Republiki Weimarskiej – Księża Małe (in:) Architektura Wrocławia. Urbanistyka do roku 1945, Wrocław 1995, p. 445-478.
- 3 ibidem, p. 471-478.
- 4 C. Sitte, Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen,

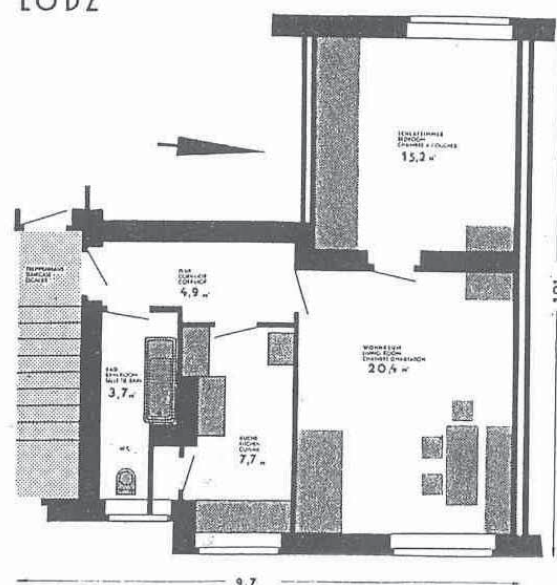
Wien 1889; G.R. Collins, C.C. Collins, Camillo Sitte and the Birth of Modern City Planning, London 1965

5 W. Kononowicz, La cité-jardin Sępolno a Wrocław (1919-1935), (in:) Cités, cités-jardins: une histoire européenne; Actes du colloque de Toulouse des 18et novembre 1993, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitane, p. 173-189.

6 E. Howard, Garden-Cities of To-morrow, London 1909.

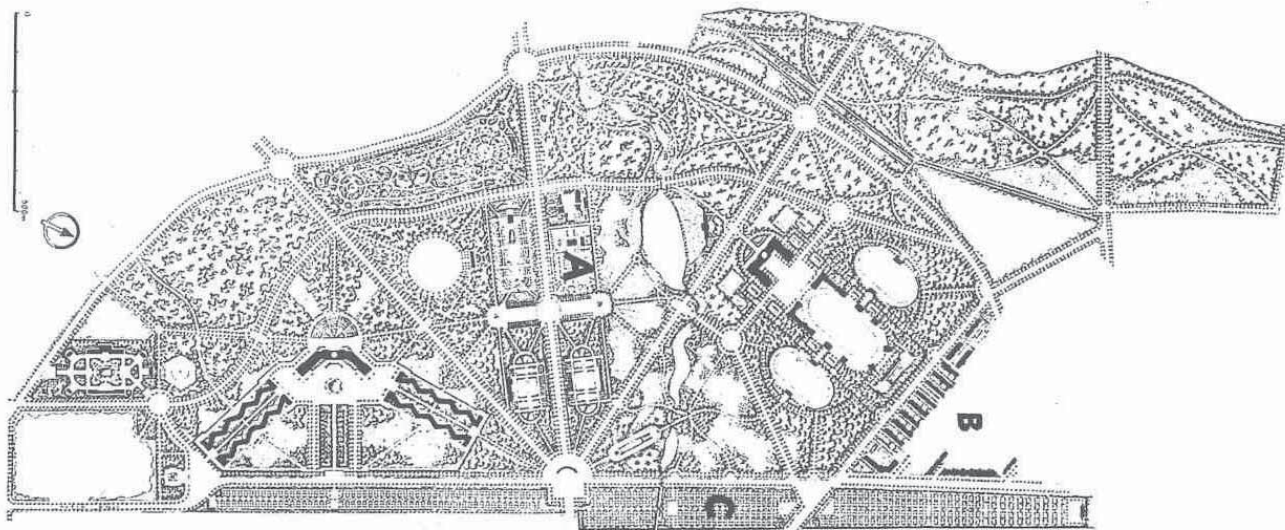
7 W. Kononowicz, Wrocław w projektach urbanistycznych okresu międzywojennego

ŁÓDŹ



WOHNFLÄCHE 52,4 M² UNTERBAUTER RAUM 204,4 M³ FENSTERFLÄCHE 9,1 M²
FLOOR AREA SURFACE HABITABLE CUBIC VOLUME WINDOW AREA

13 Łódź – Polesie. Plan of flat presented at international exhibition in Frankfurt a/M 1929 / Łódź – Polesie, tloczno stana predstavljeno na medunarodnoj izložbi u Frankfurtu a/M 1929.



14 Łódź – Polesie Konstantynowskie / *Łódź – Polesie Konstantynowskie*, A – Park / park, B – neighbourhood / susjedstvo, C – allotments / parcelacija

nego, (in:) Rocznik Wroclawski No 2, Wroclaw 1995, p. 249-304; W. Kononowicz, Pierwszy plan generalny Wroclawia (1924) i pocz'tki kompleksowego projektowania urbanistycznego (in:) Architektura Wroclawia... op. cit., p. 301-338.

8 R. Unwin, Town Planning in Practice, London 1909; J. Castex, J-Ch., Depaule, Ph. Panerai, Formes urbaines: de l'îlot à la barre, Dunod, Paris 1997.

9 W. Kononowicz, Ewolucja osiedla... op. cit., p. 471-478.

10 G. Wolf, Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Grundrisstypisierung. Vortrag auf der 1. Mitglieder Versammlung der Reichsforschungsgesellschaft (in:) Rfg – Mitteilungen No 13, I, 1928; idem, Vom Weg der Bautypen, (in:) Die Form, I (1926),

H.8; idem, Grundriss katalog, (in:) Der Staedtebau, H.24 (1929).

11 Konkurs na kolonie mieszkalne na Polesiu Konstantynowskim i Nowym Rokicium w Łódzi (in:) Architektura i Budownictwo, 1928, No 4, p. 121. K.K. Pawlowski, Kierunki urbanistyki polskiej a ewolucja osiedla mieszkaniowego, (in:) Sztuka XX wieku, Warszawa 1971, p. 172-175; W. Ostrowski, Urbanistyka współczesna, Warszawa 1975, p. 94-96.

12 W. Kononowicz, Ewolucja osiedla ... op.cit, p. 471-478.

Sažetak

Wanda Konowitz

Čežnja za integriranom zajednicom

(Primjeri urbanog susjedstva u Wrocławu i Łódžu)

U ovom je tekstu predstavljena studija triju stambenih naselja, podignutih između dva svjetska rata, oko Wrocława i Łódza. Autorica pokazuje kako su projektanti ovih naselja nastojali stvoriti zajednice: rasporedom zgrada i međuprostora, ali i podizanjem institucija namijenjenih prilagođavanju i usluživanju zajednica; institucija poput škola, crkvi, dječjih jaslica, javnih kupališta, te praonica. U naše vrijeme anonimnih stambenih blokova oživljava čežnja za integriranom zajednicom, za urbanim susjedstvom ljudskih dimenzija.



12 Łódź – Polesie, Houses in Srebrzynska Street / *Łódź – Polesie, Kuće u ulici Srebrzynska*