

## NEW HOUSING ARCHITECTURE IN POLAND AFTER 1990 – ATTEMPT AT CLASSIFICATION

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### Abstract

The scope of the paper is to present the results of studies on modern Polish housing architecture emerging after 1990: the classification, description and analysis of characteristic features of new houses and housing estates in their urban context. In the majority of cases new housing architecture is blended into the existing urban and social structures and, together, they provide a new quality of the housing environment. To describe and analyze Polish housing architecture examples representing the classified categories were selected out of abounding works of architecture, i.e. the houses and estates that are typical of a certain category and representing different concepts of space, unique in view of some urban and architectural solutions and novelty of form.

Rapid changes that occurred in the Polish housing architecture in the last 20 years were supported by creative attitudes: openness to architectural trends worldwide, ability to implement new technological and material solutions. The conditions for effective use of knowledge and abilities of specialists involved in the construction process, especially architects, were created by new institutional and administrative solutions. However, liberal economy in the period of transition did not result in many council and communal housing ventures. The role of the state investor was taken over by developers who build houses and housing estates for sale or rent. This is a typical feature of the Polish housing architecture in the discussed period.

### Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest prezentacja wyników badań współczesnej polskiej architektury mieszkaniowej powstałej po 1990 roku: klasyfikacja, opis oraz analiza cech charakterystycznych nowych budynków i zespołów mieszkaniowych w kontekście otoczenia urbanistycznego. Na potrzeby opisu i analizy współczesnej polskiej architektury mieszkaniowej, spośród bogatego jej dorobku, wybrane zostały przykłady reprezentujące wyodrębnione kategorie. Wybrano najbardziej charakterystyczne dla swoich kategorii budynki i zespoły mieszkaniowe: reprezentujące różne koncepcje kontekstu przestrzennego, unikalne w warstwie rozwiązań urbanistycznych i architektonicznych oraz charakteryzujące się nowatorstwem formalnym.

Zmiana w polskiej architekturze mieszkaniowej ma szeroki zasięg i dokonała się bardzo szybko. Sprzyjały jej postawy kreatywne: otwartość na idee architektury światowej, zdolność do implementacji nowych rozwiązań technologicznych i materiałowych. Warunki do wykorzystania takiej wiedzy i umiejętności przez specjalistów zaangażowanych w proces budowlany, a przede wszystkim przez architektów, powstały dzięki nowym rozwiązaniom instytucjonalnym na szczeblu państwowym i samorządowym. Liberalna gospodarka okresu transformacji nie zaowocowała natomiast wieloma inicjatywami budownictwa komunalnego. Rolę inwestora państwowego przejął inwestor prywatny wznoszący domy i mieszkania na sprzedaż oraz na wynajem. Jest to cecha charakterystyczna dla budownictwa mieszkaniowego w Polsce omawianego okresu.

**Keywords:** Housing architecture; Period of economic transformation; Classification of new housing architecture in Poland; Categories of housing estates.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Polish Post-War housing architecture was constructed under the dictate of the economic circumstances and the reality of the command and control economic system. Insufficient investment funds set against a great demand for flats and ineffective policy of erecting pre-cast estates exerted a negative impact on space and spatial solutions, leaving a legacy that have disfigured the urban landscape for many decades. The economic and political transformations implemented after 1989 led to qualitative changes in housing architecture.

Due to the economic and political transition, new forms of housing architecture have emerged all over Poland, and their most representative examples may be found in the biggest cities and agglomerations: Warsaw, Krakow, Wrocław, Three City (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot), Poznan, Łódź. The tendencies manifested in the spatial solutions of modern Polish architecture are consistent with general trends prevailing in Europe. As far as an architectural style is concerned, there are many examples of anti-modernism post-modernism and neo-modernism, with the first two oriented towards regionalism and historicism [15, p.69]. The historical inspirations are particularly strong in the towns that have explicit forms of settlement complexes dating back to previous centuries and in areas of expressly developed regional style. References to suprematism and expressionism often encountered in European architecture are a rarity in Poland.

The subject of the paper is to analyze and characterize new Polish housing architecture established after 1990. Complementary downtown buildings, housing complexes complementing the existing housing estates and housing settlements embedded in low-intensity development of various types of uses will be reviewed. By downtown, in the spatial meaning of the expression, we understand the central zone convergent with the historically formed urban tissue of greatest urban and cultural values, with compact settlements used for administrative, commercial, service and housing functions. One-family houses and settlements are not included in this analysis because of their irrelevant meaning for the purpose of this paper (described below).

Flat roofs have become a canon of the external form of multi-family modern housing, including attic roofs, roofs with prominent cornices, green roofs. The optical effect of lowering facades is achieved by a clear horizontal composition. Multi-faceted facades of fan-

ciful forms are becoming more and more popular, often of flora racks. Balconies, loggia, bay windows and risalits often highlight the horizontal or vertical composition of facades or legible partition of the building body. Various materials are used for facades, in more prestigious locations vintage and durable finishes of front facades have become standard. The finishing elements and decorations of balconies, loggia and details of smaller architecture are usually made of visually warm materials, especially wood [4, p.90]. Staircase arrangements prevail in the internal communication routes of new housing complexes as they are most desirable by future owners and economically rational. Sometimes corridor, corridor-staircase solutions, as well as gallery solutions are applied, even in segments of very expensive apartments.

## 2. SELECTED CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA FOR HOUSING ARCHITECTURE ERECTED AFTER 1990

Out of numerous criteria of the classification of housing architecture [7, 13, 14, 16, 17] two basic one were selected for the sake of this study focused on identifying the directions in the housing development after 1990, on the basis of literature studies (books and other publications). It is important to mention, that all the yearbooks of *Architektura – Murator* journal printed after 1990 were analyzed in terms of identification and characteristics of new housing architecture in Poland.

The new housing architecture may be classified on the grounds of two types of criteria: location criteria and quality criteria.

### 1. The location criteria:

1.1. **Spatial context** (location in the central zone or beyond urbanized areas, spatial relations with neighbouring settlements and with natural surroundings, relations with adjacent facilities and green zones, driveways and access);

1.2. **Topographic and climatic properties of the area** (land surface layout, shape and size, orientation towards the parts of the world, geological conditions, sun exposure, airing and ventilation conditions, air and noise pollution) [11, p.44].

2. The **quality criteria** that may be further subdivided into:

2.1. **measurable (tangible) criteria**: the standard of housing complexes, health conditions, safety level and ecological qualities.

2.2. **non-measurable (intangible) criteria** – aesthetic.

The **quality criteria** may be sub-divided into measurable and immeasurable ones. Among the **measurable quality criteria** the following should be mentioned: standard of housing complexes, health conditions, safety level, ecological properties [11, p.50]. The **immeasurable criteria** involve the aesthetic ones, as it is aesthetics that is inseparably connected with quality and constitutes its intangible expression. Thus, the assessment of the forms and spatial arrangement of new housing complexes in aesthetic categories is a legitimate criterion of their appraisal. Multi-family housing estates erected in Poland after 1990 are mostly situated in urban zones, characterized, in the majority of cases, by disorderly settlements and vicinity of huge slab tower block estates and the variety of their forms results both from the location and quality criteria, and, first and foremost, the spatial layout.

On the grounds of the classification criteria, the following categories of new housing complexes erected in Poland after 1990 may be distinguished (Fig. 1):

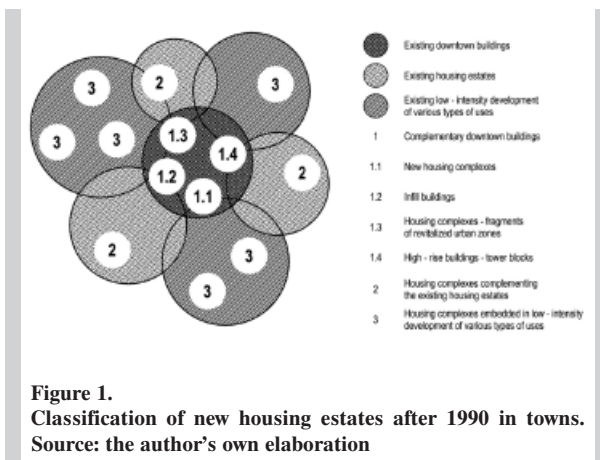


Figure 1.  
Classification of new housing estates after 1990 in towns.  
Source: the author's own elaboration

1. Complementary downtown buildings (by downtown, in the spatial meaning of the expression, we understand the central zone convergent with the historically formed urban tissue of greatest urban and cultural values, with compact settlements used for administrative, commercial, service and housing functions)
  - 1.1. New housing estates and complexes
  - 1.2. Infill buildings
  - 1.3. Housing complexes – fragments of revitalized urban zones
    - Renovated downtown housing quarters
    - Lofts

- 1.4. High-rise apartment buildings – tower blocks
2. Housing complexes complementing the existing housing estates
3. Housing estates and housing settlements embedded in low-intensity development of various types of uses

### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN POLISH HOUSING ARCHITECTURE ON THE BASIS OF SELECTED EXAMPLES

(The choice of examples is based on the literature. It was assumed, that disseminated examples are equivalent to the agreement of their representativity.)

#### 3.1. Complementary downtown buildings

##### 3.1.1. New housing estates and complexes

On the basis of available literature and publications it may be stated that the architecture of downtown complexes usually has very **high technological and functional standards** [1, 2, 5, 18]. The finishing of the facades or common property sections of buildings are made of the highest quality materials (for example: stone linings on facades), with a lot of attention paid to architectural details. Prestigious locations in the city centre are popular with investors, and, are perceived by potential occupants as the most attractive lodgings; accordingly, very high prices are charged for the flats situated in such buildings.



Figure 2.  
Oaza Colony, Warsaw, ul. Białobrzaska, (designed by: K. Kucza-Kuczyński, J. Kucza-Kuczyński, M. Krauze, A. Miklaszewski), fragment of the inner courtyard with the connecting wing. Source: "Architektura-Murator" no 12, 2003, p.34, Photo: D. Rumiancew

As far as the developments erected in urban quarters restricted by streets are concerned, the prevailing tendency is to give them a metropolitan character, while maintaining the traditional style of buildings, subordinated, as far as possible, to the lines of the existing streets. Such architecture respects its surroundings: it fits with the dimensions of the neighbouring structures, using forms that refrain from strong contrasts. In view of the scarcity of building lots, garages and car parks are located in the sub-structures of buildings. Depending on the size of the housing complex, the parking lots have one or more storeys. The frontages of streets contain commercial and service sections, whereas the buildings adjacent to busy traffic arteries house office functions. In internal urban quarters **quiet zones/courtyards** are designed – enclaves of peace and green, separated from the city hustle and bustle. If the quarter or site has sufficient square feet, it is divided into sections – i.e. by utilising batten plates between the buildings (Fig. 2). For better lighting, the courtyard level is elevated to the street level, moulding the shape of the roof.

Urban surroundings follow the principle of referring the size of newly constructed buildings to the neighbouring historical settlements and of sustaining the existing street frontages. Architects **adjust the scale of the new development to the existing context**, so, a busy street will hold buildings, whereas a street located in the internal space of the complex will house smaller scale objects, typical for houses. Likewise, if there is enough space, city villa gardens will be arranged.

### 3.1.2. Infill buildings

Infill buildings are erected in the frontages of streets of historical value, but also in styles quarters, mainly dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, located in less prominent parts of cities. The infill canon is strongly determined by the surrounding urban and architectural features [6, p.22]. In each case it is the spatial context that imposes the lines and dimensions of buildings, whereas the size of the lot determines the “internal” solution of the quarter. Infill buildings often refer to the canon of **municipal tenement houses**: mostly modernist or post-modernist in their historicized version. The visiting card of the in-fill buildings are their front facades – parts of the street frontage, often formed in a stair-like manner to “conceal” the real height of the buildings.



Figure 3.  
The „Angel Plaza” Housing/Retail Building,  
ul. Zwierzyniecka 33, Cracow, (designed by M. Dunikowski,  
J. Kutniowski, W. Miecznikowski, A. Nęciński, P. Uherek,  
P. Czerwiński) Source: Architektura-Murator no 5, 2008,  
p.79, Photo: W. Kryński

A good example of the Inter-War period inspiration is “Dom Pod Żaglami” in Cracow, reflecting many modernist forms typical for this city: windows imitating bull’s eyes, rounded corners, withdrawn ground floor in relation to the face of the building, port-windows [3, p.24-25].

As far as particularly exposed and attractive locations are concerned (for example: in the Old Town of Cracow) infill buildings have richer **modern forms**, for example “the Angel Plaza” building (Fig. 3).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century chains of houses do not clash with new buildings which manifest their modern form and expose elements that legibly get down to the neighbouring houses. On the other hand, an example of a complete **contrast** between new developments and their surroundings is one of the houses in Wrocław, in which **post-modernist decoration** was **pasted** onto a “classical” body of the building.

### 3.1.3. Housing complexes – parts of revitalised urban zones

#### Renovated downtown housing quarters

There are three separate trends in modern architectural interventions into historical parts of some Polish towns. The first one – **conservative** – is based on the assumption of the fidelity of rebuilding the existing settlements, the second one involves **creative interpretation of historical forms** in the language of modern architecture; whereas the third one assumes the **introduction of completely modern forms into old downtown architecture** [8, p.20]. The three trends coexist and contribute to the enrichment of the urban landscape, although the creative interpretation of



historical forms in the language of modern architecture is the most common. The revitalisation of urban quarters and districts is often accompanied by the addition of few functions to housing structures, for example attractive services or sport facilities (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4.**  
Revitalization of housing-industrial block in Bielsko-Biała, Podwale – Gazownicza street (designed by E. Stachura, T. Malec), 2002. Source: Author's own archive

Another interesting trend is the “**non-invasive**” revitalization of urban quarters, in the course of which pavements and roads are given new surfaces, facades, gateways, staircases and some shop display windows are renovated. Following the transformations in the surroundings, positive changes occur in the social tissue of the revitalized zones.

### Lofts

The first Polish lofts were created in the 1990s in Warsaw. One of the most avant-garde solutions is considered to be the flat in the miners' lamp store in the coalmine in Bytom designed by P. Łukasik in 2003. To a great extent, the loft and its surroundings have sustained their original character [12, p.25-26].

Polish developers have been interested in post-industrial buildings since 2006. The adaptation projects of such facilities for housing alter their spatial, social and economic status creating new forms of architecture.

Post-industrial buildings situated in Polish towns and cities include the following forms:

- **Single structures:** water towers, power plants, waste incineration plants, multi-function factory shops, either detached or fitted into frontages or interiors of urban quarters;
- **Post-industrial complexes,** which, despite serving the same function in the past, have diverse dimensions and different architectural qualities. They

make up a complete urban entity located in many square meters (for example; “Manufacture” shopping mall – previously K. Poznański's factory in Łódź).

The adaptation projects preserve **unaltered bodies** of post-industrial facilities, for example: Scheibler's lofts in Łódź, de Girard's lofts in Żyrardów, occasionally correcting the arrangement of windows in some parts, but demolishing all annexes that served auxiliary functions. In some projects architects enhance their post-industrial architecture by introducing elements that contrast with their form, as in case of the lofts of Old Granary in Gliwice (Fig. 5). The post-industrial facilities appointed in the local spatial and urban development plans to fulfil service functions are becoming important landmarks in the district and in the whole town, attracting new housing developments, for example: Powiśle – former Heat and Power Generation Plant around which New Powiśle housing project is being implemented.



**Figure 5.**  
Lofts in Gliwice – adaptation of the old granary for housing building (designed by: Medusa Group, P. Łukasik, Ł. Zagala) Source: [www.lofty-gliwice.pl](http://www.lofty-gliwice.pl), 23.06.2008

Adapted post industrial facilities have retained the main features of the original architecture. **The following elements are subject of protection: facades, partitions (including windows), materials used, details.** Sometimes a new structure is designed to accompany the post-industrial facility referring to its style and highlighting the post-industrial nature of the entire frontage.

Design architects also try to preserve a specific atmosphere of post-factory interiors, although the adaptation of factory shops for housing entails serious changes, especially structural ones.

#### **3.1.4. High rise buildings – housing tower blocks**

In the next few years several high-rise blocks (the height of which will be similar to the Warsaw Palace

of Culture) will be erected in the biggest Polish cities. The drive for such investments is a big demand for luxurious flats. They are arising not only in the Polish capital (Fig. 6, 7) but also in other buoyantly developing cities, Wrocław, the Three city.

Skyscrapers evoke prestigious and urban aspects. New tower blocks are often designed by renowned architects, for example: *D. Liebeskind*. They give an opportunity of becoming the city's visiting card and landmark, a symbol of civilization and cultural transformations, **a determinant of its metropolitan character**. They have a positive impact on the image of the city. From the urban planning point of view, they contribute to the ordering of the city centres, becoming the ovules for new downtown zones and, last but not least, playing a very positive role in the revitalization of brownfields. Single tower blocks or their clusters constitute a dominant in the urban silhouette and may impose their character on the whole downtown zone. The presence of skyscrapers affects the urban space, therefore, nowadays architects are putting more emphasis on combining the designed floors with the surrounding public space [9, p.38].

On the other hand, tall buildings generate ecological problems. They consume a lot of energy, require complicated monitoring systems, capture light from the neighbouring structures. Due to an increasing sensitivity of prospective buyers to the environmental issues, the designs of Polish housing tower blocks contain modern solutions that significantly reduce the consumption of power, use recyclable materials and renewable energy sources [10, p.75-98].

### 3.2. Housing complexes complementing the existing housing estates

The urban landscape in Poland is dominated by huge housing estates – pre-fab projects erected in the 1960s and 1970s. Such neighbourhood, due to its dull structure, repetitive layout and, in many cases, poor technical condition of facades, constitutes a difficult context for new houses, making it very challenging for architects to combine new solutions with the existing settlements. Moreover, the outskirts of the housing estates are chaotic sites, they often contain low developments or unmanaged brownfields. At such interface, as already mentioned before, new housing complexes occupy sites that in the past served other functions, lots that some time ago might have been attractive for big urban investments, or, currently make up a part of new housing quarters, containing buildings constructed by different developers.

The most important urban design problems that are generated at the interface of the old and new housing settlements is the concurrent neighbourhood of two different urban structures, difference in the height of buildings (the existing and the designed ones) and the intensity of the settlements, diverse manner of shaping the architectural form and arrangement of the public and semi-public space. **The designs of new housing estates are predominately focused on harmonious blending of the new structures into the existing space, and, at the same time, on achieving a new, better architectural and urban quality.** “Łukowska” housing complex erected between narrow Łukowska Street and several storey tower blocks of “Ostrobramska” estate in Warsaw is a good example of combining new developments with the neighbourhood (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Housing Estate Łukowska, ul. Łukowska, Tarnowiecka, Warsaw, (designed by W. Hermanowicz, P. Majewski, A. Wszyński, D. Borysiewicz, A. Piwowarska), general view of the complex. Source: “Architektura-Murator” no 11, 2000 p.40, Photo: W. Kryński

Some newly erected settlements on Ursynów and Natolin housing estates attempt **the dialogue with their surroundings**. Along the KEN Avenue, which has the layout of a slick city artery, new buildings filling up the frontage and the adjacent empty quarters are under construction. From the side of the street they allude to solid bourgeois tenement houses, yet display modern stylistics, with services function on the ground floors. The buildings constructed next to the streets of the housing estates are in distinctively smaller scale, likewise the cosy courtyards. Such **gradation of the scales** is one of the most characteristic qualities of modern housing erected in urbanized zones.

The examples mentioned above are based on **classic**

**urban layouts**, typical of compact settlements and of the **neo-modernist** architectural form, easily recognizable as modern. The coexistence of slab tower block estates with newly erected developments may have diverse forms, for example the two TBS buildings in Szczecin “put on” the form of the neighbouring blocks. Such kind of architecture is an affirmation of simple materials and a replication of pre-cast facades – although in a colourful and more ornamental version, creating the effect of temporariness.

### 3.3. Housing estates and complexes embedded in low intensity development of various types of uses

Growing cities sprawl into the suburbs and suburban areas, as well as into “urban” voids separating particular districts. They also reach open zones of recreational functions: parks and forests. The emerging huge estates constitute a new urban quality; smaller housing complexes are subjected to lesser impacts from the existing urban tissue. Low, stylistically unordered settlements do not stand the chance of contributing to the spatial unification of the new architecture with the existing urban landscape, as the designed settlements (...) are characterised by the assumed **higher development intensity** which may lead to the clash between **their scale** and the existing neighbourhood.

Under such circumstances some housing settlements try to **merge with the surroundings alluding** to the character of the existing architecture, or, **differ in scale and contrast with it**. The complex of apartments at Syta Street in Warsaw is an attempt at dialogue with the surroundings (Fig. 7).



Figure 7.  
Rezydencja Syta Apartment Complex, ul. Syta 99, Warszawa (designed by M. Sondij, J. Wolański), fragment of the eastern frontage of the complex. Source: “Architektura-Murator” no 3, 2004 p.63; Photo: W. Kryński



Figure 8.  
Housing Complex ul. Bobowa in Bielsko-Biała (designed by E. Stachura), view from the west. Source: Author’s own archive



Figure 9.  
Residential/ Retail Building ul. Krucza, Katowice (designed by R. Jurkowski, A. Nurek), northeastern facade. Source: “Architektura-Murator” no 6, 2002 p.31. Photo: W. Kryński

The problem of spatial and visual cohesion between newly constructed buildings and the surroundings has been solved in case of the housing settlement located at Bobowa Street, a residential area in Bielsko-Biała, where on a small lot encircled by detached houses three buildings housing 22 flats were designed. In compliance with the local spatial management plan, the buildings look like detached houses, and their architecture takes after the existing structures in **size, roofs, articulation of facades and finishing materials** (Fig. 8).

As already mentioned above, adaptation to the existing buildings is not the only way of forming new housing projects. The multi-family house erected in Panewniki, a district of Katowice, is an example of contrasting the old and the new. The new house has



a unique form, completely different from its surroundings. The **contrast** is both of **urban** nature (the house is located along the diagonal of the lot) and the **architectural** one: the front facade is covered with limestone, thanks to which the house gives the impression of being harsh (Fig. 9).

New housing projects of different scale are erected also next to green areas. The neighbourhood of parks and forests poses a good opportunity for securing high quality of occupancy, involving a good ecosystem and easy access to recreation zones. The new projects **expose the view from the windows** important to their inhabitants, for example: VitaParc estate in Warsaw located on the triangular site next to Kabacki Forest.

Special diligence in blending new buildings and apartments with the natural landscape may be observed in tourist resorts. Big newly designed estates have their own vast green sites, for example: “Marina Mokotow” in Warsaw, where the axis of the layout is the park and the lake, around which small housing units are grouped.

#### 4. FEATURES OF POLISH URBAN HOUSING ARCHITECTURE AFTER 1990

In consideration of the above selected overview, several characteristic features may be distinguished in the spatial forms of housing architecture constructed after 1990 (see Table 1). Some of the forms have been influenced by economic and sometimes social factors. For the economic reasons, pre-cast concrete slabs have been abandoned, “releasing” and diversifying urban and architectural solutions. The availability of land on the market has opened up opportunities for developing new sites located in towns and cities. However, the location of new housing projects, set against the background of heterogeneous surroundings in terms of style, has imposed on architects the necessity of choosing the formula of coexistence between the old and the new: the dialogue (adaptation) or contrast. In the free market economy reality architects must also respect the requirements of investors involving the intensification of new developments and construction of the biggest number of flats. Accordingly, numerous complexes of compact settlements have emerged. Due to restricting regulations of the Polish Building Law, concerning, for

**Table 1.**  
The characteristics of the housing architecture development in Polish towns and cities after 1990

| No | Causes  | Effects  | Urban and architectural Consequences   |
|----|---|--|--|
| 1  | Availability of land on the market  | Developments on empty urban lots, in the majority on city outskirts  | Necessity of adapting or contrasting the new and old architecture  |
| 2  | Abandoning pre-cast slab technology   | Diversified technologies of housing construction with the prevailing traditional technology  | Spatial differentiation of new housing architecture  |
| 3  | Investors' requirements: Attempts at price optimization and cost minimization                                       | Intensification of the development of lots   | Peripheral settlements of urban quarters, internal courtyards, zoning of scales  |
| 4  | Prosperity level: well-to-do higher middle class, Poland's attractiveness as a place to live                        | Construction of luxurious apartments, lofts and soft-lofts   | Technological innovations: new forms of high-rise buildings, utilization of the aesthetics of post-industrial facilities, attention to detail  |
| 5  | Changes in the lifestyle and prosperity level of big social groups; increased aspirations associated with occupancy | New formula of urban life: good transportation network to the city centre, availability of services, cosy forms of housing settlements | Buildings erected in recreation zones, favourable solutions in terms of health and leisure, good exposure to sunlight, airing, big balconies, attractive views from house and flat windows |
| 6  | Individualism   | Diversification of preferences associated with the functional layout of flats  | Application of construction systems enabling flexible arrangement of the interiors   |

Source: the author's own elaboration supported by: B. Komar, B. Kucharczyk-Brus (eds.): Housing and environmental conditions in post-communist countries. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej, Gliwice 2007



example, the distance between buildings or fire protection routes, some housing investments in city centres are not undertaken at all.

Furthermore, a new social class has emerged in Poland: higher middle class, which is the target audience for luxurious apartments, lofts and soft-lofts. Their number is constantly increasing in proportion to the economic growth, Poland's attractiveness as a place of living and investing as well as the expansion of the higher middle class. Other important factors are: changes in the life style of the majority of Polish people and in the level of prosperity of big social groups which are expressed by new aspirations associated with the image of urban life.

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