

Location of single-family house settlements from 60s to 80s of 20th century in Wrocław's urban space

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Abstract: Housing construction in the second half of the twentieth century was intensively developed in Europe and in the whole world. The expansion of industry and the development of cities, initiated at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, had a huge impact on urban planning, the creation of housing estates and their location in the city structure. In Wrocław, new post-war housing estates, including single-family housing, were inscribed in the existing urban layout of the city from the inter-war period. Wrocław in the 1920s and 1930s increased its area several times. New, connected areas were intended, above all, for housing construction. After the war, Wrocław's planners drew on pre-war plans to expand the city, but also updated and modified them, adapting them to the current needs of residents. The article focuses on the urban development of Wrocław from the 1960s to the 1980s in the field of organized single-family housing.

Keywords: single-family housing, Wrocław, urban planning, development plan.

Introduction: Single-family housing in Polish socialism period

At the beginning of the 1950s, the scale of individual housing construction in Poland wasn't large. After 1955, there was a double jump in the number of completed investments of this type¹. At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, co-operative single-family housing began to develop on a large scale, often implemented as part of workplace housing co-operatives. In order to promote and develop this type of construction activity, in 1963 the Ordinance of the Minister of Public Utilities was introduced on the maximum amount and conditions for granting a bank loan for the construction of single-family houses². The rules for financing housing construction changed in 1970, when Edward Gierek assumed power in the country. The scope of activities of cooperative housing construction was increased, which then became the main engine of the housing economy. Single-family housing was still considered secondary, but its development was favored by the housing policy of the state and the development of cooperative housing using social initiatives. So-called co-operatives of social initiatives could deal with the construction of small blocks of flats and single-family houses³. Single-family housing erected in cooperative or individual forms was to be treated as an important link in the housing construction program. The emphasis, however, was placed on the development of intensive forms of single family houses, such as terraced, atrial or semi-detached housing realized by building cooperatives. The industrialization

1 E. Przesmycka, *Przeobrażenia zabudowy i krajobrazu...*, s.122.

2 Pursuant to the Ordinance of the Minister of Public Utilities of May 29, 1965, building and housing co-operatives and cooperative associations of single-family houses may obtain a bank loan for the construction of single-family houses or premises in small residential houses in the amount of: 1) up to PLN 110,000, and for construction on sites unarmed up to 130,000 from one single-family house – in cities, housing estates and clusters located in the Western and Northern Territories, 2) up to 100,000 PLN, and when building on area not equipped with a network of sanitary installations – up to 120,000 PLN per one family house.

3 Resolution no. 22 of the Central Board of the Union of Housing Cooperatives of 06/04/1981 on the implementation of additional cooperative housing with the use of social initiatives.

process of single-family housing was to be accelerated and intensified. The resolution also puts emphasis on the promotion of labor associations of house construction for employees. Assistance provided by enterprises in this matter was to be a factor stabilizing the employees of the plant. Workplaces were to provide financial assistance as part of the company's housing funds, sales at the expense of unnecessary building materials or make available labor's construction equipment for the employees. In the last decade of the Polish socialism period, legal acts in the field of single-family housing mainly concerned the development of single-family housing, in which the government saw an important link in the development of housing economy in the country. The process of typization of this development also served to popularize single-family housing. Its aim was primarily to improve the construction process and optimize its costs. To this end, typical project catalogs and nationwide competitions for cheap, typical single-family housing were implemented. Single-family housing has met many barriers on its way to realization. According to the assessment of the Ministry of Public Utilities, the most serious were difficulties in obtaining suitable plots (incomplete spatial development plans prevented the division of plots), areas offered for individual construction were usually not quipped with sanitary installations and in a much worse location than those, intended for multi-family housing. Other problems were related to the insufficient amount of construction materials rationed by the state and the loan taken, which was also unable to cover the investment costs. As a result, in the country were created much fewer single-family housing estates than it was originally planned.

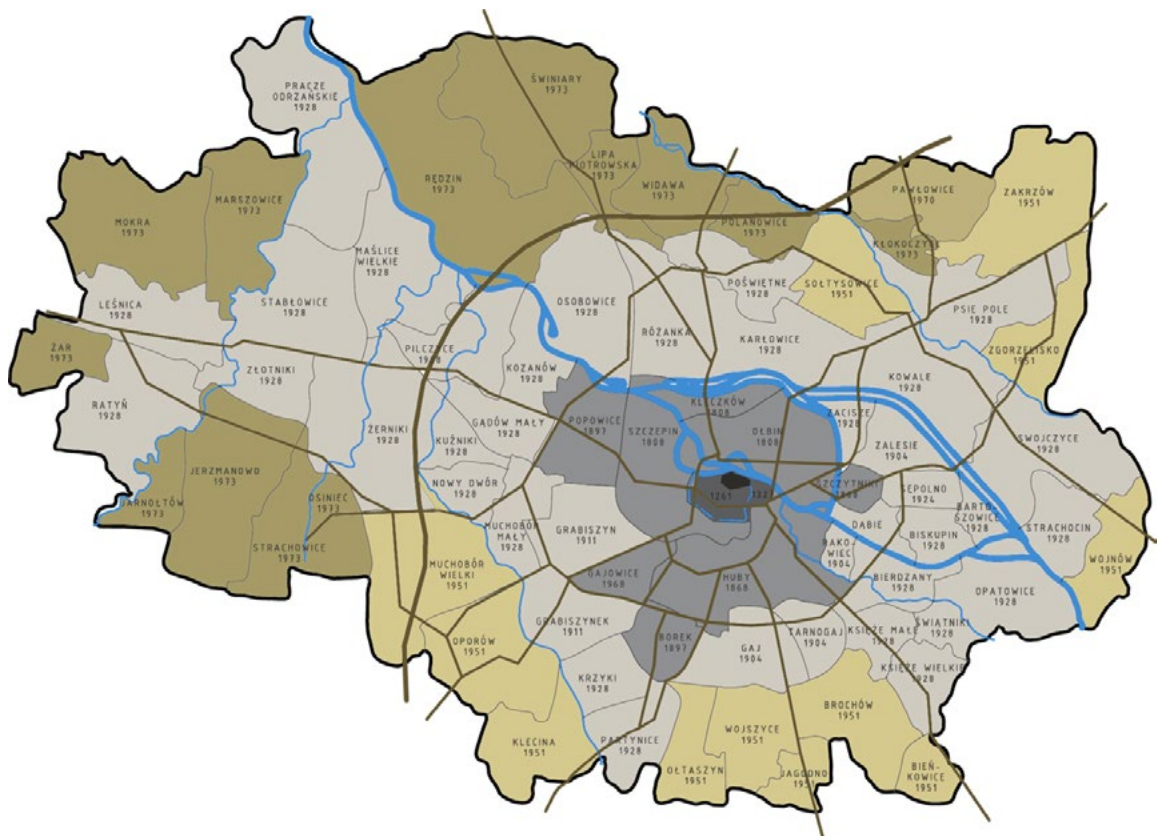


Fig. 1. A map showing the territorial development of Wrocław in the years 1261–1973; source: author

Wrocław's cooperative, single family house settlements.

Urban processes and architecture of the interwar period had a major impact on the development of Wrocław's present spatial layout. Until 1945 Wrocław was a German city. An important figure for urban planning and city development for this period, was city architect Max Berg. On his initiative in 1921 a competition for

the development of Great Wrocław was announced. In his vision, Breslau was to be enlarged by adjacent to the city suburbs, in which new, social housing estates would be created, surrounded by greenery. In 1928, the area of the city was enlarged almost four times by joining the neighboring areas: in the west – Leśnica, Pustki, Ryn, Żerniki, Kuźniki, Gądów, Nowy Dwór, Muchobór Wielki; in the south – Krzyki and Partynice; in the east – Księża Małe and Wielkie, Świątniki, Bierdzany, Opatowice, Biskupin, Bartoszowice, Swojczyce, Kowale; in the north – Psie Pole, Karłowice, Różanka, Ligota, Poświętne, Osobowice, Pilczyce, Kozanów, Maślice Wielkie and Małe, Pracze Odrzańskie, Janowa Góra.

Within the city limits there were two, once independent cities: Leśnica and Psie Pole⁴. Thus, the Great Wrocław had almost 175 square kilometers. The city enlarged by new areas could afford to extensify the inner-city development, eliminating partially substandard tenement housing from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Urban planners and architects of pre-war Breslau could design housing estates with low building intensity, in accordance with the prevailing trends regarding a green, human-friendly housing environment. Those large and complete residential areas were erected with modernist principles of the functionality of buildings. Despite the huge war damage, many complexes of multi-family, single-family and mixed housing from this period survived.

Post-war single-family housing estates in Wrocław reconstruction and extension urban plan for the years 1959–1985.

In 1946, the Wrocław's Urban Plan Office was created at the Directorate of Spatial Planning, headed by architect Tadeusz Ptaszycki. The interdisciplinary team of designers managed by him proceeded to work on the Plan for Reconstruction and Spatial Development of Wrocław. It was established in specific conditions of simultaneous city learning, determining and assessing the surviving values of urban investment, city programming and designing. The general and prospective plan for Wrocław, which was implemented after the war, was to be a continuation and further development plans of the city initiated before the Second World War. At the design stage, the questions arose whether to rebuild the urban structure with the network of streets according to the state from before 1939? Or because of war damages, changes of ownerships and almost total population exchange, city structure should be adapted to the new needs? The area of Wrocław has been divided into four parts: northern, southern, eastern and western. The subject of single-family housing appeared in the records concerning each area. The northern area was supplemented by the Karłowice housing estate, completed in the years 1925–1939, with one- and two-storey buildings. The project called for the extension of the estate to a full-fledged housing unit, equipped with the appropriate number of services, workplaces and rest areas. The southern area, practically destroyed in 100% during military operations, had relatively good health and construction conditions. The plan postulated, inter alia, for the completion of existing housing estates in 1–2 storeys and the organization of two new housing estates with single and multi-family housing with housing estates in this area of the city. The spatial development plan for the western area envisaged maintaining the industrial character of the district with the simultaneous expansion of housing estates serving workplaces. The project assumed a fundamental change in the communication system through the construction of an external bypass that would connect industrial plants with the southern and northern residential district. Housing units were designed with full service and recreation infrastructure. The preserved eastern area – Biskupin, Zalesie, Zacisze and Sępolno, limited by the flow of the Old Odra and industrial canals, was to remain a complex of single- and two-storey housing estates surrounded by public green areas, allotment and home gardens. The dominant of this district was Szczytnicki Park with the Olympic Stadium, the Centennial Hall and the Zoological Garden. These buildings served as a holiday center, play, sport and didactics. The urban plan had not foreseen major changes in the character of the district. However, it postulated the organization of residential service centers and the implementation of housing construction, supplementing existing urban structure⁵. At the turn of the 1950s and 1960s in Wrocław, because of the possibility of purchasing plots for single-family houses, District Urban Planning Groups developed detailed spatial plans of the most important pre-war housing estates

4 O. Czerner, S. Arczyński, *Wrocław krajobraz i architektura*, wyd. Arkady, Warszawa 1976.

5 *Rocznik Wrocławski 1961, Plan odbudowy i rozbudowy Wrocławia na lata 1959 – 1985*, s. 23–24 (*Wrocław Yearbook of 1961, Plan for the reconstruction and extension of Wrocław for the years 1959 – 1985*, p. 23–24)

in Wrocław: Biskupin, Dąbie, Szczytniki, Zalesie, Zacisze, Krzyki, Partynice, Brochów – Bieńkowice, Ołtaszyn, Wojszyce, Grabiszynek, Gądów Mały, Złotniki, Maślice, Stabłowice, Różanka, Karłowice and other smaller ones. The purpose of these studies was to preserve chosen areas for the planned development of communication infrastructure or installation networks, but also to protect existing green areas and historic urban plans against the unplanned and spontaneous development of individual housing. Since detailed local plans for single-family housing estates were usually the only urban projects of these areas, they required to be more precised. Often in the area that goes beyond the statutory framework of local plans. The illustrations show examples of spatial development plans for the housing estates in Oporów and Wojszyce districts.

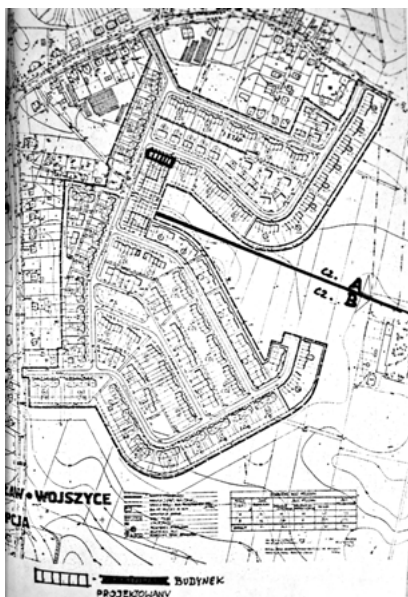


Fig. 2. Detailed development plan of single family house settlement in Oporów district, 1974, designer D. Przyłęcka, source: D. Przyłęcka, *Odbudowa i rozwój Wrocławia w planach zagospodarowania przestrzennego z lat 1945 – 1994*

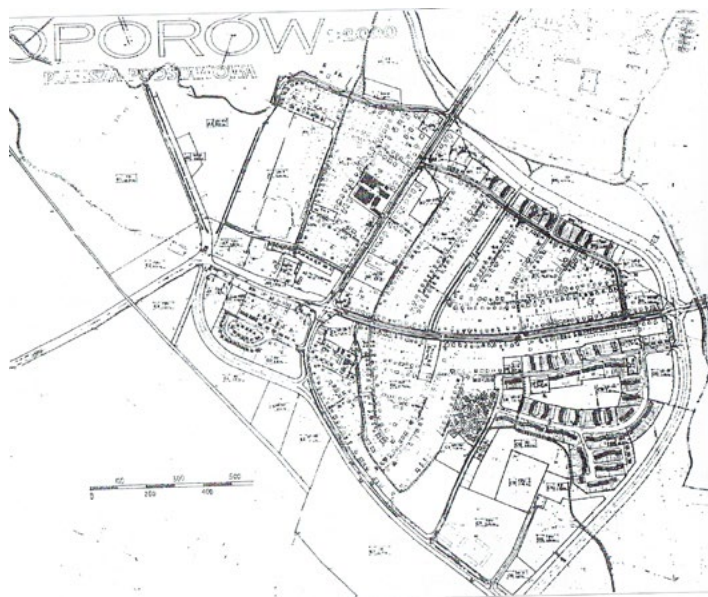


Fig. 3. Detailed development plan of single family house settlement in Wojszyce district, designed by R. Marak. M. Gross – Markiewicz, 1974, source: D. Przyłęcka, *Odbudowa i rozwój Wrocławia...*

Single-family housing estates of the Polish socialism period (1945–1989) in the urban layout of Wrocław

A significant part of Wrocław's post-war single-family houses were created in the neighborhood or as a complement to prewar German villa settlements, that were characterized by low, extensive architecture. An important element in shaping those prewar housing areas was surroundings of the greenery. Residential buildings were integrated with large gardens, common green spaces, parks or avenues. It emphasized the picturesque character of those estates, where all the buildings have been freely led, minimalising the rigid, orthogonal urban space. The examples of complementing prewar residential districts with post-war single family buildings are: terraced houses 'Pod Jaworamii' from 1958, being a supplement to the former villa development of Borek district; atrium and terraced buildings from the 60s and 70s, complementing the prewar, residential district of Karłowice; semi-detached houses 'Budowlani' and 'Radiowiec' settlements from the 60s and 70s, being a form of intensification of prewar residential district Partynice; terraced housing estate 'Osiedle Młodych' ('Youth Estate') and 'Metalowiec' that was a complement of prewar residential district of Grabiszyn, or the housing cooperative from the 1960s which has erected a single-family housing complex for employees of Wrocław's universities (Academic Association of House Constructions) that has been a complement to the villa estate of Bartoszowice district.

Another group of Wrocław's post-war single-family residential complexes was located on the areas designated for this type of buildings after the II World War. These areas were located mainly in the vicinity of the southern border of the city and before the war they were villages adjacent to Wrocław. The detailed, spatial development plans were created by the District Urban Planning Groups. An example of such localized single-family house complexes of the Polish socialism period, erected on former, suburban farmland, are: a colony of so called weave-fabric settlement erected by the Youth Cooperative Association and terraced houses from the 1970s for ZREMB production plant employees. Those two house complexes has complemented the villa and agricultural areas of the former village of Oporów (annexed to Wrocław in 1951). Another example of the placement of single-family houses in the villages adjacent to the city's southern boundaries is the house complex erected by Cuprum – Politechnika building cooperative in Wojszyce district (annexed to Wrocław in 1951), or terraced houses from 1980s in Klecina district (annexed to Wrocław in 1951), erected by the building association 'Wiarus' of the Polish army members.

Some of designed single-family housing complexes were located in the immediate vicinity of multi-family buildings, on the outskirts of large block of flats urban complexes. An example of such mode of designing of urban space are terraced houses at Hermanowska street (Kuźniki district) from 1972. They were located in the immediate vicinity of a multi-family complex designed on the other side of Hermanowska street. Another example are terraced houses at Żubrza street located directly at the multi-family housing estate of Popowice district. Low residential architecture was also located in the neighborhood of former civilian airports, where the development plan have to take into account the requirements of the Civil Aviation Department, due to special buildings hight regulations in the zone of landing. This situation took place in Wrocław, where the single-family house complex for employees of the Pafawag and Elwro production plansts was erected. The settlement consisting of 123 houses Kwiska street (Gądów Mały district) was designed in 1974 in the direct neighborhood of Wrocław's Civil Airport. The urban plan for this area was created in 1968 and it has assumed a bigger sttlement of low residential architecture. However, the decision to liquidate the airport in Gądów Mały district at the beginning of the 1970s and the adaptation of the General Plan for the City of Wrocław in 1973 enabled the implementation of the large scale multifamily housing estate 'Kosmonautów' for 35,000 inhabitants⁶.

Conclusions

The rapid development of single-family houses began in Wrocław in the 1970s. As part of a governmental program related to improving the living conditions of the population in the Recovered Territories after the WWII, in 1976 the Catalog of Single-family House Projects for Wrocław Voivodship. It aimed to promote projects with low material consumption and cost-efficiency. What's more, the regional catalog was also supposed to promote an individualized type of single-family buildings adapted to the local conditions of city of Wrocław⁷. Until 1980, single-family housing in the city, its location and intensification were determined by terrain reserves in peripheral settlements. On all of the urban plans for Wrocław's single family buildngs were designed around 10 000 plots (about 400 sq m each). Based on the analysis of the existing field reserves and the detailed development plans implemented in 1975, an information brochure on the possibilities of development of single-family housing in Wrocław was developed.

Figure 4 presents the distribution of single-family housing complexes from 1950 – 1989 in the spatial layout of Wrocław city. It can be observed that most of them were located in the south-western districts of Wrocław, which were rural areas before the war, annexed to the city in the 1950s and 1970s. The examples of this house complexes are those designed in Wojszyce, Ołtaszyn, Oporów, Klecina and Muchobór Wielki districts. The figure also shows that part of the housing estate of post-war single-family housing in Wrocław was located in a closer distance to the city center, marked in the legend as a complex of cameral buildings. These are prewar

6 D. Przyłęcka, *Odbudowa i Rozwój Wrocławia w planach ...*, p. 159

7 Creation of the catalog was entrusted to arch. Witold Molicki. The catalog included 30 single-family houses projects, of which 20 were designs of single-family houses already existing in Wrocław and Lower Silesia, and 10 new projects were to promote cheap private construction with a small cubature. The houses presented in the catalog had usable surface from 65.0 to 90.0 m², with the possibility of it extension.

villa settlements (such as Borek or Karłowice) or low multi-family and single-family settlements (eg. Sępólno, Biskupin or Bartoszowice).

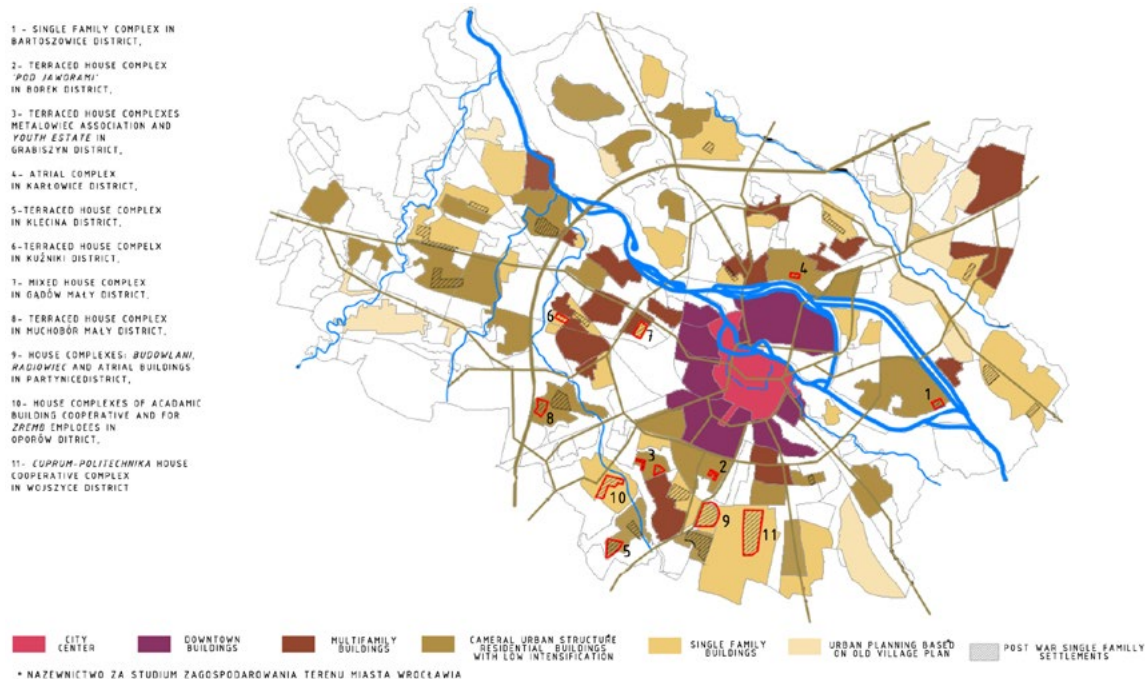


Fig. 4. Location of single-family housing units from the 60s – 80s of the 20th century in the structure of the city of Wrocław, ed. author

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