

Concurrent with this general worsening of living conditions, there has also been a reduction in the amount that the professional and lay public gets involved with the culture of residential dwellings, with the questions of neighbourhoods as a whole, and the integrated relationship between houses and open spaces. Most new research focuses entirely on the structural features of projects, and particularly the economic aspects of various processes, the typological and location preferences of buyers, and very rarely deals with issues of space, design, and appearance (Stanovanjski sklad Republike Slovenije, 2004).

The real estate market in Slovenia is too small and the housing shortage (especially in larger cities) too great for the market to regulate the quality of new construction. Previous urban standards have become obsolete and have been replaced by new modified standards regarding the number of garbage repositories, parking places, technical street elements, etc. Sadly, the previous standards regarding the quantity and quality of open spaces are neither used nor updated. So it is no surprise that older settlements tend to have a better physical appearance than the new ones with their narrow streets, high houses, sidewalks used for parking, and whatever is left over for poorly-conceived common areas. After nearly twenty years of following the logic of the market, it seems clear that market mechanisms do not function in the area of quality construction of residential settlements in Slovenia, or in any case that they do not improve the quality of what is available.

There remains one key dilemma for future urban development and planning: it is the relationship between market-construction with its transitional spatial characteristics on the one hand, and, on the other, a set of organized and regulated construction standards that would preserve past solutions with proven quality.

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Notes

^[1] The analysis of single-family house settlements includes 43 settlements in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Novo mesto. The analysis was conducted in the framework of a graduate thesis with the title *Single-family housing construction in Slovenia after the year 1990 and green open space design* (N. Cigoj, mentor: D. Gazvoda) for the Department of Landscape Architecture of the University of Ljubljana's School of Biotechnology. The analysis was conducted using data from the land and building register of May 2007.

^[2] d = average distance between units, h = average height of buildings in analysed settlements.

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Housing and Urban Development trends in Czech republic

1. Introduction: Dwelling – Human Living Environment par Excellence

A residential flat or apartment is the primary and major environment for human life. A home satisfies the basic needs; (space for physiological functions – sleeping, eating, rest and care of family); higher needs (sense of belonging, satisfaction of the need for self-implementation, need for life in an aesthetic environment, etc.); and human needs; thus becoming the means and stimulation for further evolution.

It is a generally recognised fact that home, or dwelling, is one of the major determinants of the quality of life, affecting every dimension of both psychical and social health. The quality of dwelling affects mental peace and family life, as well as occupational and educational accomplishment. In the same way, a dwelling deficit is reflected in all of the above-mentioned areas. Dwelling demand is increasing due to the deep demographic and social changes our society is now facing. This is why the issue of the 21st century dwelling requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

2. Quality of Life and the role of the Dwelling

Dwelling is a complex activity that reflects even the subtlest changes in a society, its culture, and its technology. Dwelling means: all the life procedures taking place at home. A home, or flat, is a combination of mutually interconnected rooms; a separate locality with defined frontiers for the enjoyment of sustained individual security for the duration of necessity. The general term dwelling describes all social action and behaviour taking place every day where man permanently lives. "... Dwelling is the mode of existence of you and me, of us, the people of the Earth ..." (Heidegger, 2002) Dwelling, in the sense of the values and concepts of our culture, can, therefore, be defined as a localised, private, free existence in a place constructed as separate from its surroundings. Sociologic studies show that satisfaction with the home is paramount for the satisfaction of all residential environment within which man lives. Home is the place where the basic dwelling processes take place, and where the most intense emotional relationships develop. If a home fails its purpose, there is nowhere to find substitution or alternative satisfaction.

3. Transformations of the 21st Century Home and its Functions

The flat or an apartment used to be a public space. In the pre-industrial period, flats had versatile use for various purposes which included both professional and leisure time activities. Flats were used as customer contact places, as well as places for social representation. Flats were venues for social custom, and more intimate pursuit. Today the flat is primarily a private space. The flat is home for the family and the individuals who comprise it. The society has moved the previously important public, representative functions, elsewhere. The structure of the group living in a home (mainly the family); and the function of the home as a private living space, is the basis for the derivation of the various functional requirements that allow certain lifestyles, and particular types of behaviour. There is the strong link between the functional connection of the space and its users that manifests itself in the process of dwelling. That is why the prime focus of the sociological perspective of home and dwelling is the relationship between the living space and its user in the processes of existence and behaviour at home. This relationship includes both the technical/functional aspects and the oft referred to social or psychological aspects and needs. Dwelling is, therefore, a social activity, which for most homes includes numerous persons that usually form a family. To live at home implies the performance of a number of very heterogeneous social activities and types of behaviour, which typically feature privacy ideally secluded from any affect of that alien to the group. Home includes the option of privacy, desired loneliness, seclusion from others; as well as, being with others when it is desired and decided. Home is the privileged, closed surroundings of man, or of a small privatising primary group, or family, if that forms the household. The barrier and seclusion from the outside offers the possibility of achievement of the often-unrealised sense of secure environment. The need for acceptably suitable, individual dwelling is one of the elementary needs of man.

Dwelling satisfies various elementary and sophisticated secondarily differentiated human needs. It is why home is often defined as 'the environment for the satisfaction of certain human needs.' To give at least a few examples of many (Fürstenberg, 1974; Bahrdt, 1974): "... The family dwelling is an artificial, functionally separate part of the material and spatial environment allocated to a certain social group, namely family, and to certain needs of persons living in the family community ..." The requirement for home is derived from need, and is oriented toward certain aspects of the flat. The primary requirements focus on simple and obvious purpose specification (personal use space, warmth/protection from the cold and humidity, cooking and catering space, sanitary equipment), and serving of the biological needs of the individual. To concur with Chapman, other dwelling needs are secondary to biological needs. But secondary needs and requirements are more than necessity. They include spatial options for leisure time activities, as well as, the indefinable dwelling qualities such as privacy and independence, safety, contact, performance, presentation of power or ownership, social status, etc. While the inevitable primary requirements have been in the foreground thus far; in the future, secondary requirements will need to be more extensively considered – those leisure time activities and the possibilities for personal development through uninterrupted educational pursuit. As mentioned by Mitscherlich, home will not be assessed solely on the basis of satisfaction of natural human need, but also with consideration of the social structure as an expression of prestige, utility, and expression of power.

4. 21st Century Home again Becomes Commodity

The home, or flat, is also a commodity like, for example, food. The flat is a bearer of exchange value because human labour is invested in its development. The flat has a utilitarian value that expresses itself as commodity. Various elements within our political spectrum express the opinion that every man has the right to adequate living space. The free market will never be able to fully satisfy the demand for the benefit drawn from the flat due to its uniquely versatile commodity characteristics. To overcome this inability, well-designed state housing policies are necessary. This peculiarity is justified by the fact that the dwelling is one of the basic human needs whose satisfaction is of paramount importance for the society because it strongly affects the stability of the family, the upbringing and education of children; and, indirectly, the social conscience, morality, and morals of the society.

The social, economic, and cultural changes in the Czech Republic have already manifested themselves in the realm of the dwelling. The determinants used to characterize residential buildings of the 1990's included creative freedom, international architectural expertise, materials variety and quality, and increased client orientation, among others; all taken from both good and poor models. Will 21st century development continue in the same direction, or are the needs of society with regard to the dwelling changing so much that the building of residential blocks will be diverted to a completely different direction in future?

The political and social changes in the Czech society have modified the needs and requirements connected with the dwelling. The income of the population has been changing – already largely differentiated – and adoption of new models has modified lifestyles. Great changes have been taking place in the area of social security; and there have been dynamic changes in the structure and size of the family, and its demographic indicators. Hence, even the conceptual understanding of the dwelling has changed from the perspective of the state; along with attitudes about government responsibility towards its citizens in the area of housing. This shift can be summarised by definition as the change in housing policy from the former state being the provider of housing, to creation of conditions that for stimulate personal apartment acquisition and ownership based upon private financial means (condominium development, mortgage lending, building saving schemes, etc.). This approach first appeared in the 1970's, in market economy countries (such as England in the Thatcher period), and have prevailed today in the emerging Central European democracies. The State is no longer expected to provide housing to its citizens, but is seen rather as provider of a favourable environment for the construction and acquisition of flats. This approach is combined with an emphasis on as much freedom as possible within the housing market; on application of democratic principles to the functioning of society, including, but not limited to, civil initiatives; civic participation and the decentralisation of decision-making. Then housing policy opens to new players not previously active in this arena, such as civic organisations and constituency groups. These structures are directed to the more sensitive, applicable, and focused solutions for specific housing problems of particular population groups. Private individuals are purchasing more than 40 % of newly constructed flats for the purposes of their further letting, or sub-letting.

5. Reduction of Quantity and Quality Debt in the 21st Century

So far, progress in the area of housing and residential construction has been a decreasing. The Czech Republic is in possession of the oldest housing in the Union; most flats being over half a century old; only 5 % of housing stock is represented by new construction. Study of the data from the former joint-stock company, Terplan, shows the number of flats per 100 inhabitants in the period between 1991 and 1997 decreased from 360 to 355. In comparison – during the same period, the number of passenger cars has tripled in this country. The deficit is manifested, for example, by the fact that many families do not own a flat; and also by the still very low level of housing stock in our country as compared to the West, including both old houses, and new housing developments. The share of flats of category 3 and 4, i.e., flats with shared sanitary equipment, without complete accessories, or without any accessories and equipment at all, amount to around 26.6 %. This figure is even higher in some historic cities, where they amount to 50.0 % or even more! The estimated needs requirement requested by psychologists, sociologists and healthcare professional for a separate room for living for each member of every household has remained unfulfilled as yet. An insufficient number of yearly housing construction starts has remained a significant economic characteristic of

our republic's development. The number of completed living units in 1998, which totalled 15,904, represented an increase of 13.3 %, in comparison to the totals for calendar year 1996. In comparison to the year 1989, during which only 28.9 % of the then 55,073 existing flats were constructed, the totals have decreased significantly. In year 2005 the Czech Republic produced three thousand new flats, mostly family houses. The mean living space and the mean number of living rooms per flat, and the mean size of the rooms have relatively low values. The national statistic indicators for 1996 lists mean living space of new flats as 86.7 m², the mean number of rooms per flat as 3.1 and the mean size of a room as 22.0 m². In 2006, the 28 m² of living space per person in the Czech Republic compares to a mean living space in EU of 35 m². Reference from the latest Statistical Yearbook on housing and dwelling in the countries of the Economic Commission for Europe suggests that the largest living spaces are provided by new flats in Belgium, 134.5 m², followed by Norway, 128.0 m², and also by Cyprus, 133.7 m². In our neighbouring Austria the living space per person amounts to 92.9 m².

The main characteristic of new housing construction is architectural structure. By the beginning of the 1990's, the construction of blocks of flats amounted to around 70 % of new housing. Today it is much less. Other housing increases have been the result of the construction of detached family houses. Around 46 % of the population live in family houses. Even though the size of new rental apartments has stayed around 45 m² of living space; the number of rooms has decreased. The development of spatial indicators differs markedly in the case of family houses. The room area of new family houses built by their future owners always used to be bigger than in apartments located in blocks of flats, but even this is not true any more. The current situation is characterised by a doubled number of rooms and living area per flat in a family house, while the size of the individual rooms and living area has stayed about the same in the apartments in the blocks of flats.

For years, sociologists, demographers, psychologists and economists have made the point that most of our population is not happy about the way they live. For example the survey made by Terplan, a.s., (Jiřina Čalfová, 1998) shows that only 5.5 % of young married couples define their living standards as very good, 40.6 % define the same as good, while 28.8 % point to a lack of space, or unfavourable living conditions; and 24.7 % consider their living conditions completely unacceptable. This, in itself, is nothing strange; Europeans are known to be critical, and the same opinions are held by most Central Europeans. The problem faced by our population is that most of it is unable to cope with the idea of a complete change of lifestyle. Most simply have no money to improve their living conditions. The greatest number of unsatisfied dwellers can be found in the 25 to 35 year old age group, with an ever-increasing trend toward dissatisfaction.

A transfer of housing stock to the market economy has been delayed. About 17 % of citizens live in flats with regulated rent. Many economists, sociologists and architects believe that housing construction could be stimulated by a complete liberation of rent controls, because this would transfer expenses within the household use consumption basket. Because countries with fully developed market economies are

able to react much more quickly and flexibly to the needs of the society in the area of housing (the most frequently used method being the reconstruction of residential blocks in the course of the construction utilisation), they have managed to prevent the all encompassing devaluation of housing stock and real estate. The West European, and the typical American model of the mobile citizen, able to regularly commute more than 50 km per day without financial difficulty, does not apply here, either. Apart from a small group of high-income citizens who commute to work in their own cars, it is still economically unfeasible for most Czechs.

6. The Success of a Project will Depend on the Customer and Market Analyses

We are entering a period when adequacy, quality and economy of housing construction will depend on the quality of pre-project, and project, preparation and implementation. In the context of pre-project and project preparation, a broad set of conditions must be analysed for their effect on the architecture of new buildings. Two global mega-trends have crystallised: a societal one defined by changes in the demographic structure (ageing of the population, increase of the number of nuclear families, and lonely dwellers, etc.); and a technological one determined by the exponentially increasing rapidity of technological innovation.

7. Demographic, Social, and Cultural Changes that Affect Dwelling

The initial demographic assumptions are critical: demographic changes in the last decade have led architects, urban planners, and politicians to reconsider the concept of dwelling adequate to the period and the changed condition. The Czech family has undergone a major transformation recently. In many respects we have been taking up models that have asserted themselves in Western Europe. Remarkable changes can be traced in the size and stability of the nuclear family: A typical household consisting of two parents with children has gradually been replaced in the Czech Republic by the, so called, singles, whose number has increased considerably in Western Europe recently; or single parent with a child or children; and the common living of unmarried couples. The model of nuclear family with the father as the family provider and the mother taking care of the children, the cliché of 1950s, no longer represents the prevailing family model. Instead, there are an increasing number of single-parent families, which are mostly female-dominated. There are also an increasing number of childless pairs and families with two working parents. There are many families with adult children staying at home due to an inability to find separate living quarters, and/or pay for them. There are an increasing number of formerly rare solutions: such as rural families with grandparents who move to the city and create city-situated nuclear families.

These trends will be very relevant for preparation of residential construction in future: the population prognoses for the Czech Republic show a quickly increasing number of households that are not responding to the speed of the

population growth; in contrast to the trend of 1990s, which was either stagnation or moderate decrease of population in some regions and periods. The mean size of households and families has continued to decrease. Increment fluctuations, the largest expected after 2010, when the number of households is expected to increase by 109,800, will be followed by smaller expected increments. The mean size of a household will decrease due to splits; quicker acquisition of independence of young people, increased divorce rate, and lowered wedding age, leading to postpone childbirth plans. In the new millennium, firstborn children of new mothers are expected at 34 years or older (Melany Howard, Future Foundation, GB). This is where the Czech population already adopts the Western model. The changes will deepen even further in the future. Melany Howard of the research organisation Future Foundation, in England, has prognosticated that in the future, marriage will lose meaning, and be replaced with a series of partners, three marriages per life being quite common. Professor Richard Scase, of Kent University, supports his predictions with a study that examines changing social structures populated by fewer married couples, and an increasing number of divorcees (already a divorce rate of 60 % in our country); and more and more adults living without partner. This will, of course, affect the structure of housing, which still lacks individual living space for educated and wealthy singles.

User-groups continue to increase, which impacts the architectural creativity of residential projects. One group is the ageing population. The increasing share of elderly people in the total population, especially of European industrial countries, is a well-known fact. An assumed longer life is allowed by progress in medicine and communal hygiene, healthier lifestyle, and changes in the nature of work and manufacturing technologies. Findings of British Future Foundation analysts estimate that a 120-year average lifespan is feasible in the future. Since 2000, there has been a significant increase in the group of people above 65, with limited mobility, increased dependence, geriatric lifestyle, etc. Sociologists have begun to define big cities as the ghettos of the aged. This will result in an increasing number of persons living single persons up to 40 %. The financial standing of the older generation is better than it had been in the past; and retirement age is likely to be increased. Some British studies suggest a future retirement age of 80, following two or three careers in different professions. This will also be reflected in the dwelling area. The share of small households consisting of 1–2 persons will increase to 50 %, following projections of demographers. Definite increase, though not so quick, is also expected in the number of households of two and more members.

8. Flats Tailored to Users – Transport, Social and Demographic Determinants of Progress in Dwelling

Even architectural and urban development must react flexibly to the new conditions. Demand for quality dwelling has increased – and this is likely to last. Residential housing market conditions are determined by a quality preparation of high-standard construction programmes for the selected

housing type. The programmes should be based on a complex knowledge of dwelling functions for individual households, quantitative requirements specification, and qualified need estimates. Residential requirements are being modified by the changing value orientation of the future users. This may substantially change the design process. Empirical research from the Institute of Urban Development, of the Faculty of Architecture, University of Technology, during the period 1998 thru 1999, suggests that respondents showed the following preferences in relation to their future flat (in order of importance):

- Economic aspects – cost saving, simplicity.
- Technical standards, faultlessness, functionality, purposeful layout and furnishings.
- Sanitary and health qualities of the living environment.
- Aesthetic qualities of the living environment; although the responses were based on differing values, with part of the respondents showing preference to historic; and part to modern living environment.
- Comfort and simplicity of operation, easy cleaning.
- Prestigious signs and symbols of success as a means of self-identification and success evidence: double and triple garages, glass houses and winter gardens, historic roof shapes and architectural detail, luxury bathrooms, fireplaces, saunas and swimming pools.
- Cosiness and friendliness of the environment.
- A combination of the above.

9. Technical and Technological Change

The way of life may also be affected by changes in the area of techniques and technologies, work and life styles, etc. In relation to completion of the change in the method of work, and the overall intensification of work with regard to scientific and technological progress: the current condition will probably undergo a profound transformation; which will also manifest itself in modification of dwelling needs. The share of actions, processes, and professions that are characterised by a higher intellectual content, qualification demands, and lengthy skills preparation, will increase together with the demand for concentration, responsibility, and creative initiative. In some categories the number of hours devoted to work activities will decrease, while in others the length of work time will increase^[1]. The incremented time will be used by certain categories of employees for shortening their working hours, and this will result in an increased demand for leisure time activities carried out at home. This will increase the relevance of the home and the activities taking place there. Additionally, these changes will manifest themselves in increased mental stress, and hyper-stimulation leading to stress, that is the result of certain work tasks required of the more qualified part of the population, especially among these holding executive positions. One of the well-known risk factors of market economy, well known to western psychologists and psychiatrists, is the enormous amount of nervous stress among businessmen and professional staff, which can lead to threaten family stability. This will also negatively affect our environment. This trend will increase the need for compensation of excessive demand placed on the organism by work activities, especially those taking place at home. The family will need to be protected from work-generated stress

and information over-saturation. This is why the relevance of some functions of home as the place providing the necessary individual and family background and privacy, the place of spontaneous and selective communication, the place of physical and mental regeneration and relaxation after work; as well as the place of preparation for work; and the place of creative activity, will increase.

10. Computerisation and Home Work

The other mega-trend is characterised by the progress of computerisation, data transfer in the various forms; by the Internet boom, so often mentioned in mass media, being only one of multiple aspects. The various branches of telecommunications, data collection and processing, the soaring development of chips, hardware and software, together with the Internet, are the most quickly developing areas of business. This advancement establishes itself much more quickly in the areas of work and dwelling than do demographic changes.^[2] The current progress of communication technologies facilitates telecommuting by a number of different professions. It is no longer necessary to personally visit mid-town offices, the world of work is transforming. Public space becomes vague, and less sensually perceivable; having been integrated with computer networks, modems, mobile phones, videophones, and facsimile transmitters; sometimes being called hyperspace by the informatics. In future, the scope will multiply, especially in the developed countries. According to Professor Katharine Rosenberry, who is seated at San Diego University in California, and has been examining the legal aspects of settlement: up to 80 % of all Americans, especially those with higher education, will work from home, connected by information and communication networks, as early as 2014. Even the conclusions of the study carried out by Essex University Professor Richard Scase suggest that professional staff will spend about half of their working hours at home; and the number of part-time workers will increase, together with term employment and private, self-employed, sub-contractors. Even today, Urban Development Professor Sakkie Badenhorst, of South African Pretoria, has noticed a substantial increase in the amount of home office work and other trade tasks performed in private residential buildings, allowed by a connection to computer networks. Work activities, especially those with high demand for education and professional training, are being relocated to pleasant suburban localities, which offer cheap construction options, and unlimited parking space. The change of relationships in the work arena caused by the new technologies will substantially affect the spatial separation of what we have called place of work and residential space. The soaring development of computer technology that has created the demand for construction of information highways indicates that home work on a computer connected to a computer network might eliminate many negative phenomena of modern civilisation. Hundreds of thousands of people would no longer need to commute to work, jam roads and streets, combust fuel and pollute the environment. Transport of people along roads and streets would no longer be needed, as it would be replaced with transport of information along wires or even wireless satellite connections. And information, as is well known, can do without petrol, a demand for car space, train space, or aircraft

space. And on top of that, it moves in the speed of light; which can never be said about public transport with even a maximum portion of poetic license. Certainly, many people will also welcome the fact that they would no longer need to live near their firm, in an overcrowded city agglomeration, or an ugly housing estate in a polluted environment. They can settle virtually anywhere they like. The huge concrete dormitories will be replaced with countryseats scattered in greenery. Together, with this, the day of the abandoned family model might return; where all family members live and work together; where the parents can be close to their children, and spend time with them; while the children can see their parents working, and, thus, passively prepare themselves for their future work career. This might, in effect, lower the divorce rate, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, and a number of other nightmares of the contemporary world considerably. It is the opinion of experts that the computer network and Internet are still in the cradle, only being used in about 20 % of potential applications. The remaining 80 % is still available for domestic engagement, which is also likely to increase the demand for ergonomics of the domestic work environment.

Electronics and computers will change our dwelling not only with regard to the options for home work, but also to the possibility of home study, or Pic-Tel, the so called e-learning. Education of the populace will increase, and it will be subjected to continuous, lifelong learning. Network connection in the place of residence is the ideal means. On the eve of Internet age, over 200 million people all over the world are connected to the Internet. The number of documents placed in the world wide web increases by one million every day. In 2002, over eight billion documents were already included in the global computer network. Home and the apartment will, thus, again become a place for the meaningful spending of leisure time, recreation, education and culture.

11. Differentiation of Dwelling

In the 1990's, a strong differentiation began to take place inside the complex of dwelling needs with the requirements of the individual groups of households concerning the quality of living (flat size, layout, environmental quality etc.). It is a realistic assumption that this pressure will continue to increase due to the shift of some households to a higher income brackets; and due to the increasing distance between the individual income groups. This increase in family income is expected to be dedicated to flat acquisition and improvement of the quality of dwelling. Change in the demand and needs distribution will reflect the changes in the social and professional structure of the population. Certain forms and qualities in the residential development will be preferred. Despite the expected revaluation increase to economic rent (that has been continuously postponed), there is a significantly higher demand for a greater number of larger rooms, greater storage capacity, and design issues in the flat, as well as, the quality of the wider residential environment (privacy, aesthetic quality, social surroundings, etc.). The people in top income categories have become the pioneers of suburban migration, i.e., moving house to suburban areas. Even today, the significant feature of residential suburbs is

they have been developed in the ecologically more favourable surroundings of big cities; including the fact that the suburbs are built and settled by, so called, *yuppies* – *young, urban, professional people*, i.e. young, educated, upwardly mobile, and wealthy people, who can afford a certain exclusivity of living. The structure of the suburban population is nearly homogenous. A dwelling with a large garden adjacent natural landscape, but maintaining a permanent link to the city; with the characteristic attributes of individualism and material wealth, such as private pools, ideally with counter-stream; residential glass houses and winter gardens; luxury cars; double garages; etc., will not be without effect on the life style of its users. Social exclusiveness, however, may mean that the home will only be used as a dormitory, for the workload of these people is enormous. Another effect might be a developing tension between this prospering minority, and the majority of the population.

12. Family Houses

Blocks of flats, as an alternative to detached family houses, are often rejected as ideal space for family life. One's own house, or a family house, remains the ideal representation for the family. Various international surveys, including some of our efforts, in which respondents from different social and income groups took place, confirm the preference for a family house with a limited number of floors (see for example Cooper, 1972; Knorr-Siedow, 1999 and others). In early 1995 the agency for marketing and social information analyses, AMASIA, surveyed a sample of the Czech population to get their assessment of their dwelling situation; and their opinion of what is required for improvement. The survey



Figure 1: Remodelation and humanization of large housing estates from the socialist past is urgent task for many Czech cities.

showed that the public preferred dwelling in their own family house, in a suburb within 30 km of the city centre (58 % of the respondents). In Germany, the same preference was expressed by 87 %; and in Austria (survey of 1999) by 73 % of the population. A family house is preferred by more than a half of the population – regardless the age, region and size of the place of residence. Even elderly people prefer a single-storey house at the outskirts of the city, with good connection to the city centre. Surveys among residents of multi-storey blocks of flats also showed the preference of these people for family houses as the ideal home (Michelson, 1968). Jiřina Čalfová (1998) arrived at a similar conclusion in her sociological probe into the issue of young married couples and their living condition, which focused on 5 cities of different sizes and geographical situation: Pardubice, Přeřov, Jablonec nad Nisou, Sušice and Hostinné. The young married couples preferred their own family home – 58.4 %, own flat in a block of flats – 20.1 %, communal flat – 12.3 %, cooperative flat – 7.3 %. Little interest was shown in corporate flats – a mere 0.5 %, and social flats – 0.0 %. The survey clearly shows the preference for owned home: nearly 8 of every 10 respondents wished to be owners of their flats. The surveyed group preferred family houses to flats. Communal flats were shown little preference. No one preferred social flats, i.e. cheap flats with low rent. Similar data has been obtained in neighbouring Austria. As reported by Hermann Reining, of the planning office of the Government of the Lower Austria: own family house was preferred by 73 % of the population of the federative region; while 17 % preferred to own a flat in a block of flats; and only 10 % wanted a rented flat in a house.

13. Functional Content of Flat

All of the above trends will probably lead to enrichment of the functional content in future. The flat will be the venue of various different activities. The individual functions of home will be elevated. This will depend on how the positions of these functions change in the hierarchy of values of the population (users of the flats). The change in the value hierarchy will require not only changes in flat layout, but also require an overall increase of residential environment standards (further study typical of intelligentsia). New types of houses will allow for utilisation of the non-residential areas in the house, and within the residential set. The area of residential and utility space will increase. This will be required by the increasing differentiation of activities of the individual members of the household and the demand for increasingly qualified, sanitary and psychological requirements. The number of expensive objects of long-term use will increase. The increased number of rooms, size of some rooms and storage areas will transform this need. The layout and technology of the household will be designed for minimized time loss caused by household chores and cleaning. The regeneration quality of the flat will increase (by improved protection against noise from the outside, improved sunlight access, air conditioning, utilization of open space – atria; improvement of equipment of the sanitary core). The existing range of flats will be complemented with flats for specific population groups, which have been increasing in number (singles, the elderly, the handicapped, lonely dwellers etc.).

14. Low-Rise City Housing

An increase in the size of the middle class is foreseeable. It is not likely that new migrations will take the shape of a mass return to the city centres, but, rather, be represented by the development of villa quarters on the city peripheries. After the discontinuation of complex house building, the focus of residential building has transferred to suburban areas with resulting monocultures of family houses owned by the most prosperous part of the population; and people who had their former family property returned by state restitution. The numerous middle class who, unlike in other European countries, is not very financially strong in our country, still await a solution to their dwelling situation. It may be assumed that after resolution of the issues of financing of middle class housing construction, the focus of activity will shift toward construction of low-rise urban houses appropriate for planned city suburbs. The low-rise residential building creates a precondition for meeting the residential intentions of the middle class. It is based on the idea of a combination of the economic advantages of the block of flats, and the comfort and higher standards of the natural environment of family housing. A great advantage of the low-rise building is its application in various environment types. The building allows for adjustment of the flat to different social classes, and professions of dwellers; it offers solutions for differentiated spatial standards, and variable equipment; as well as, flexible transformations of the flat with the changing needs of the family.

New economic and social situations may also require a sensible application of all the different types of low-rise buildings such as: an urban block of flats for city centres and outskirts, a poly-functional block of flats integrated with social services (depending on the particulars of the locality), a block of flats for specific population groups (such as wheelchair access houses), collective dwellings for young couples – starting flats; or, for example, experimental settlement in a suburban area with economic function, a villa (high-standard block of flats), or a modern family house for urban, suburban and country locations. Even though the greatest boom is currently being experienced in the area of family housing, a renaissance of the block of flats and rental houses is also expected for the following reasons. A modern concept of the latter may provide a higher living standard and a quality standard of services and equipment, which a middle-income family could hardly afford (underground parking, waste chutes, video – security systems, a more dense network of civic services in comparison to family housing quarters, fitness centres, larger and fully equipped playgrounds, swimming pools etc.).

Urban architecture needs to find forms of symbiosis for low-rise rental houses and family houses within a wide range of types in this new situation, both in the area of new building; and in the field of reconstruction and modernisation of city and municipality centres. So far such construction and reconstruction has been fragmentary, unqualified, and without feasible concept. It is necessary for architects and competent staff of state administration and self-governing bodies, departments of building and development, civil office of cities and municipalities, to react appropriately to the new tasks they are facing.

15. Consequences of Living in Low-Rise Concentrated Estates

Numerous studies draw conclusions about the more favourable effects of low-rise family housing on the way of life and the structure of human activities; about the sphere of social relationships and their relationship to the environment; and about satisfaction with living conditions. Dwellings in low-rise houses have a complex effect on its users, and on a wide range of other elements and aspects that affect their way of life. The dwelling affects the family as a whole; it affects its activities and value orientations. Increased spatial comfort, extended privacy, and contact with greenery allow for undisturbed family life and a development of mutual co-existence; and for the interests of individual members of the household, especially in the case of families with small children. Terraces, gardens, and atria as 'green' rooms connected to interior living space, represent the optimum environment for a number of family, educational, professional, and recreational activities.

This obviously leads to a modification of leisure time activities. It extends the length of recreational activities, for example, in the garden; and increases the intensity of social communication (with friends, relatives and acquaintances), as well as, interest in active rest. As a consequence of this, interest in the passive viewing of sporting events and other entertainment, and the sitting in pubs and restaurants drops. As the desire to co-determine the appearance and layout of own living environment is absorbed, the interest in building and maintenance of recreational cottages drops too.

An environment of low-rise housing creates good conditions for the reinforcement of an orientation toward family life. As a consequence, the time spent on household operations expands. Residents also spend more leisure time in their place of residence, thus decreasing the overall spatial mobility of the population.

A suitable layout of low-rise housing allows for satisfaction of a wide range of living needs; and development of the interests of the individual family members, without fear of disturbing the neighbours. This creates improved neighbour relationships. For not only this reason may increased relevance of neighbourhood to an environment of quality low-rise houses be expected. In such cases, the effect of long-term dwelling in a single place also begins to manifest itself, along with the social structure of the population, as determined by flats tailored to the needs of certain professional groups, etc. Then the social communication function may be expected to develop between neighbours; including mutual assistance, exchange of information, and application of ceremonial functions.

A good social climate may result in emotional link between the dwellers to the locality, to the residential environment and the surroundings of the house. This correlates with a high level of identification with the place of residence. Such environments usually show a high level of settlement stabilisation. People living there are probably less inclined to move, in contrast to people living in different types of housing.

The possibility for creative activity in co-creation, and protection of semi-public and semi-private spaces, leads to increased activity and engagement of the residents. Social appropriation of the semi-public and semi-private spaces by the residents increases, together with interest in their cultivation, maintenance and protection.

Rational, yet at the same time sensitive, solutions for the layout and the ground floors can achieve increased use of surrounding areas for short-term recreational use, social contact, sports, and children's playgrounds. These are preconditions of development of intimate spaces: the aid of visual and symbolic barriers, construction that increase the safety of the users, especially children, etc.

Flexible and variable solution of flat structure and layout will allow for more flexible adaptation to different professional groups and classes of the population. This type of dwelling has a potential to become attractive for different social groups who have differing positions in the division of labour, differing education levels, and differing needs in their living and residential environment. Low-rise urban housing allows for the much-desired integration with certain forms of businesses that carry no environmental load. This can reduce the city division of labour and the volume of transport between the individual parts of the city. Dwelling in low-rise houses may allow for short-term recreation, and relaxation from stress situations caused, for example, by work, as well as, compensate for certain disadvantages of living in big cities.

Transport service and the level of social service are usually lower in the low-rise housing areas due to their extensive spatial demand. The distance travelled for distribution facilities; schools, nurseries; service and healthcare centres; is usually much longer; which, in effect, leads to decreased safety of transport, especially for children, mothers with children, and the elderly. That is also why the number of respondents happy with social services provided is much lower. Here it may help to adapt the experience of social services in the blocks of flats, to the low-rise housing environment.

16. Conclusion

These outlined economic and social trends and dwelling needs demonstrate the need for a cultivation of the current forms of blocks of flats of urban and suburban variety, and family houses (especially due to increased density and urban economy of housing that provides for increased spatial comfort and increased usability value, as well as, for the preservation of open-space in large cities). This is connected with a search for, and re-discovery of old residential blocks forms with modern shape (hill, cluster and transient) that have family home characteristics. The new approach also means an increased number of types of residential houses that correspond to the increased range of human needs, urban situations, and environmental positions. Legislative amendment is also needed – the existing housing act does not cover many of the unusual, though suitable, housing solutions. Increased standards mean not only increased residential space, but also new equipment and furnishing, high-standard technologies,

surfaces, etc. Non-residential space is demanded in residential houses; such as workshops, and spaces for development of leisure-time activities. This means increased standards for entrance areas, house surroundings, etc.

There is an intense need to conceive residential houses for different kinds of reconstruction; and for the revitalisation of devastated parts of cities, the so-called brown fields. An integration with civic services saves on public transport and the environment; construction plots; investment funds; the workforce; expensive equipment and maintenance. It also provides new possibilities of architectural composition, and an increased attractiveness of poly-functional facilities. It goes without saying that the removal of architectural barriers is necessary for the improved quality of life of the handicapped, mothers with prams, children, and the elderly.

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Notes

^[1] The working hours are assumed to shorten by two to four hours a week, for example many Western European countries have adopted the model of 36-hour work week.

^[2] If in 1969 only four computers with Internet address were registered in the whole world, a decade later there were about a hundred, in 1989 their number had increased to 100,000, and currently there are over 60 million computers of this type.

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Boštjan BUGARIČ

Transformations of structure and programme in three Slovene coastal cities

1. Introduction – social and physical transformations of three Slovene coastal cities

Through the course of history, Slovene coastal cities^[1] have undergone considerable physical and social transformations. In the beginning of the 20th century the medieval city centres with prevailing influences of the Venetian Republic were

struck by industrialization. The perimeter of city centre itself was not a suitable environment for the development of new social contents and new circumstances of trade. After WWII coastal cities experienced a rapid growth due to far-ranging political changes. After this industrial developmental episode further growth was boosted by the establishment of a new seaport in Koper. The socialist era has led to a considerable degradation of city programme in Slovene coastal cities as the requirements of the social structure, which consisted mostly of factory and port workers, were rather modest. Nevertheless, in the sixties some higher educational programmes begun to take shape. These efforts eventually resulted in the establishment The University of Primorska in the nineties. The end of the century was characterized by the economical restructuring as previously public property came into private possession. The consequences of this process included the collapse of large industrial plants due to their poor ability to resist the competition and the ever-increasing privatization of public space in the city. The process of touristification^[2] of city centres has also had an important influence on public space, most notably in Slovene coastal cities.

The unsuitable and outdated legislation arranging the field of urban planning and the lack of methodological tools and criteria to assess spatial development are enabling real estate investors to operate rather freely. The preparations of urban plans are ineffective and lengthy. There is a lack of capacity to endorse flexible strategies and methods of urban planning, so developmental policies are reduced to the pursuit of profit, which subjects the entire coastal region to the mode of managing where urban planning is entirely governed by the financial benefits of investors. Urban planning on a local scale is oriented towards the establishment of long-term spatial plans, which prevents the detection of spatial consequences of the un-directional financial expansionism. In this context the urban planners are prevented from making open and democratic developmental decisions which would include all city actors and not just the elite.

The state of the three discussed Slovene coastal cities reflects the unbalanced nature of spatial planning, contributing to the divergence of different social classes and the continuous growth of the gap between the rich and the poor. The social structure of city centre users is changing because of the processes of gentrification^[3]. After the establishment of independence of Slovenia the housing conditions in the city centres have become unsuitable. This was largely due to a lack of investments into renovation, since the city centre users were mostly members of marginal social groups.

The intertwinement of economical development and political disposition has largely contributed to the formation of the present day appearance of Slovene coastal cities. The organization of space was set on the grounds of economic investments and different formal relations between the city and its users have evolved. After the end of the era of industrialization large buildings remained vacant and have come to represent degraded areas. During the time of transition large shopping areas have been introduced into the urban sphere. Their consumer-oriented nature has caused a further degradation of the city centre programme, as the cities of consumption are displaced from city centres and have no