

Streetscape of the Óbuda Experimental
Housing Estate in the early sixties

Uličný pohľad na experimentálne sídlisko
Óbuda na začiatku šesťdesiatych rokov



Source Zdroj: Kiscelli Múzeum, Photography Collection, Inv. no. 61.162.5

PLANNING OF STANDARDIZED HOUSING TYPES IN HUNGARY IN 1948 – 1960

PLÁNOVANIE ŠTANDARDIZOVANÉHO BÝVANIA V MAĎARKU V OBDOBÍ 1948 – 1960

Článok poskytuje prehľad o hromadnej bytovej výstavbe v Maďarsku v období 1948 – 1960 z hľadiska typových podkladov. Historické práce o architektúre a štúdie sídlisk dosiaľ nevenovali detailnú pozornosť pôdorysom bytov tohto obdobia, hoci na ich základe v rámci sídlisk vznikli desiatky tisíc bytov. Príčinou využitia typových podkladov pri projektovaní bytových domov bola obnova po druhej svetovej vojne, ktorá jasne ukázala, že drahé individuálne stavby nemôžu splniť požiadavky masovej výstavby. V roku 1948 bola koalíčná vláda nahradená prevažne komunistickým režimom pod kontrolou Sovietskeho zväzu, čo znamenalo zavedenie ďalších a ďalších totalitných metód. Prijímanie riešení sa stalo centralizovaným a výrobné zložky vrátane plánovania a výstavby bytových domov boli znárodnené. Vznikli štátne projektové ústavy, ktoré vyrábali typové podklady občianskych aj obytných budov. Posledná kategória zahŕňala predovšetkým mestské viacposchodové budovy s relatívne veľkými miestnosťami, ktoré mali funkčné pôdorysy vytvorené na základe princípov modernistickej architektúry. Všetky plány, ktoré od roku 1950 schválila „komisia pre schvaľovanie typových podkladov“ boli označené ako typové a stali sa povinnými pre novú bytovú výstavbu financovanú štátom. Lacné stavby očakávané politickou mocou mohli vzniknúť predovšetkým vďaka pôdorysom, ktoré umožňovali ich rýchlu realizáciu. V dôsledku toho sa základom typových bytov stali veľmi zjednodušené pôdorysy, ktoré sa zakladali na troch paralelných nosných stenách.

Hoci prvý kabinet Imreho Nagya (1953 – 1955) zdôrazňoval dôležitosť bytovej výstavby, prostriedky na to chýbali. V dôsledku toho vznikali typové plány bytov s redukovaným príslušenstvom – kúpeľňa bola nahradená umývacou nikou, ktorá bola prístupná z kuchyne. Tieto plány však neurýchlili výstavbu nových domov, sociálne napätie sa stupňovalo, a v roku 1956 vypukla revolúcia, ktorá bola potlačená s pomocou sovietskych vojenských jednotiek. Počas konsolidácie sa otázka bývania stala záležitosťou najvyššej priority. Ministerstvo stavebníctva si preto stanovilo za cieľ výstavbu väčšieho množstva bytov najmenšej veľkosti, ktoré by mali moderné

vybavenie a vhodný pôdorys. V roku 1958 ministerstvo vypracovalo program rozvoja výstavby pomenovaný „plán C“. Pod záštitou tohto programu odštartovala niekoľkofázová súťaž, ktorej cieľom bolo experimentovanie s novými materiálmi, konštrukciami a stavebnými metódami, a to ešte pred vytvorením pôdorysov nových bytov. Bolo dôležité, aby plány, ktoré získali prvé ceny v súťaži, mohli byť implementované a štandardizované a aby sa masová výroba mohla začať až po zhodnotení získaných skúseností. Byty malých rozmerov tiež vyžadovali transformáciu výroby nábytku a kultúry bytových doplnkov; preto sa paralelne so spomenutou súťažou rozbehli ďalšie súťaže, zamerané na projektovanie typového vstavaného kuchynského nábytku (1958) a nábytku do spálne a obývačiek (1959).

Súčasťou „plánu C“ bolo vyhlásenie otvorenej súťaže pre bytový dizajn v roku 1958. Cieľom bolo vytvoriť plány „dobře zariadených, ekonomických a kultúrnych bytov“ v tehlových budovách postavených na malej ploche, s povinným použitím štandardizovaných konštrukcií a zariadení. Kuchyne mali obsahovať vstavané moduly kuchynského nábytku, ktoré vyhrali predchádzajúcu súťaž, izby mali mať vstavané skrine, keďže predpísaná plocha bola veľmi malá, v priemere 43 m². Do tejto súťaže bol podaný mimoriadne veľký počet projektov – 180. Súťaž vyhral projekt trojposchodových blokov, ktoré mali byť postavené v mestskej časti Óbuda medzi ulicami Bécsi a Vörösvári; neskôr dostali názov experimentálne sídlisko Óbuda. Tri z týchto obytných budov, postavené v prvej fáze, vychádzali z typových plánov, takže sa mohla porovnať cena nových prototypov. V druhej fáze boli postavené dva bloky malých bytov a štvorcový blok, ktoré vyhrali súťaž. Za nimi nasledovali štyri osemposchodové obytné bloky; ich projekty boli vypracované v rámci súťaže stredne veľkých obytných blokov, ktorá sa konala v roku 1960. V novembri 1960 sa v dokončených budovách experimentálneho sídliska Óbuda konala vynikajúca výstava domáceho dizajnu. V zariadených bytoch boli vystavené kusy nábytku, ktoré dostali cenu v Národnej súťaži dizajnu domáceho nábytku.

Konečným cieľom Národnej súťaže bytového plánovania v roku 1958 a výstavby

experimentálneho sídliska bolo vypracovanie nových typových podkladov pre sídliská, ktoré mali byť postavené z tehál počas druhej päťročnice (1961 – 1965). Ale o dva roky neskôr bol zverejnený 15-ročný národný plán rozvoja bytovej výstavby, v rámci ktorého bola naplánovaná stavba milióna bytov; tá sa mohla realizovať len prostredníctvom masovej výroby, založenej na použití prefabrikovaných betónových panelov.

A special area of post-1945 mass housing was the type-planning of homes, especially in socialist countries where the compulsory use of standardized projects was implemented to simplify the production of new housing within the centrally planned economy. The changes in the floor plans of Hungarian standardized hous-

Pri výstavbe experimentálneho sídliska Óbuda sa objavilo množstvo inovácií založených na princípoch raného modernizmu. Nemohli však priamo vplyvať na štátne financovanie sídlisk v nasledujúcich rokoch. Napriek tomu séria súťaží dizajnu kuchynského nábytku a obytných priestorov, ako aj bytových plánov v rámci „plánu C“ spôsobili zásadnú zmenu v kultúre bývania tohto obdobia.

ing closely reflect the alterations of the domestic political background, for in Hungary at that time the client who ordered housing construction was exclusively the state, hence the compulsions arising from the changing preferences of politics massively influenced the architectural solutions as well. The type-plans of the flats also have great relevance for architectural history, sociology, and the research of living styles, as the construction of tens of thousands of flats in housing estates was based on these type-plans. More recent architectural research literature usually touches on the layout, the style of buildings, the approximate size of flats and the number of rooms, but actual floor plans are rarely published. Understandably, too, because in that time publications flat sizes or floor plans were rarely issued, as such would have undermined the image propagated of comfortable housing-estate flats.

The accurate description of housing estates and the documentation of buildings is, however, impossible without a knowledge of the floor plans, which is also a great help to revitalization. In addition, the architectural historical research of housing estates, the uncovering of existing values may help the tenants realize their assets and strengthen their personal ties to their habitat^{1/}.

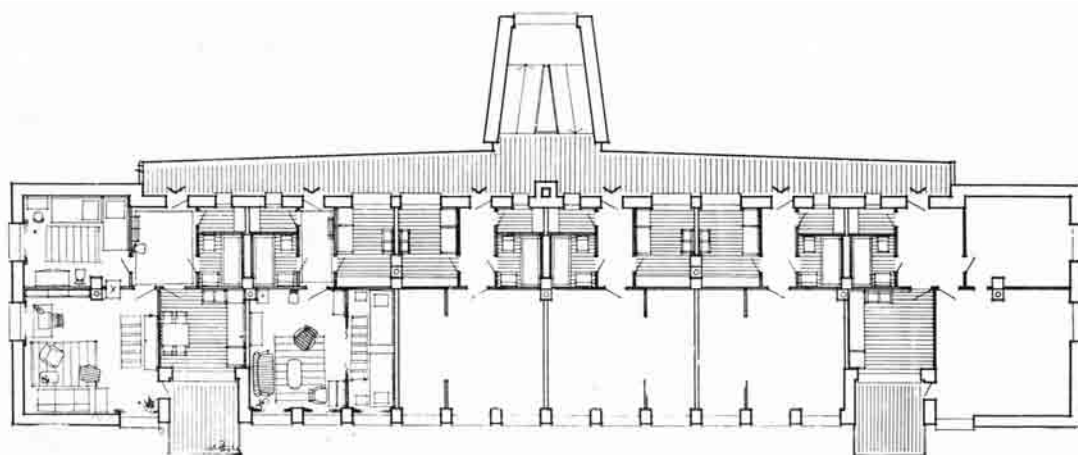
The beginnings of post-war reconstruction with individual plans

When the war was over, it was obvious in Hungary as well that only mass housing could make up for the extremely large amount of buildings destroyed. The task was regarded by the architectural profession as the possibility of creating modern urban housing, a major goal of the Hungarian group of CIAM earlier as well. In their publications and architectural competitions, there was a conscious search for new layouts, floor

Gádoros Lajos – Schall József – Hoch István:
façade of a "Csepel"-type
block of flats with open
access balcony, 1949
Gádoros Lajos – Schall
József – Hoch István:
fasáda obytných blokov
typu „Csepel“ s otvoreným
balkónom, 1949



Source Zdroj: Dr. Szendrői, J. (ed.) Hungarian Architecture 1945 – 1955. Budapest, Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata 1955 (n. p.)



Gádoros Lajos – Schall József – Hoch István: floor-plan of a "Csepel"-type block of flats with open access balcony, 1949

Gádoros Lajos – Schall József – Hoch István: pôdorys obytných blokov typu „Csepel“ s otvoreným balkónom, 1949

Source Zdroj: Dr. Szendrői, J. (ed.) Hungarian architecture 1945 – 1955. Budapest, Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata 1955 (n. p.)

plans. The Building Rationalization Department of the Government Commission for Housing set up by the coalition government and the Building Department of the Budapest Municipal Board of Public Works began to create new building types and prepare standard model plans in 1946 based on the modernist principles of housing prevalent in the 1940s^[2].

In addition to theoretical planning, the construction of new housing also began^[3]. Similarly to the high-priority public buildings, the architectural style of the few residential buildings realized in the frame of the state-financed housing program reflected the forms and planning principles of modern architecture: free-standing buildings, sometimes laid out in strips, with cubic masses, the flats accessed from staircases or open access balconies. The facades were often articulated by clinker bricks or natural stone surfaces, enlivened with coloured rails on parapets and window frames. The flats usually had 1.5 – 2 rooms, rarely 3 rooms, a room area being 16 – 20 m², the kitchen 7 – 8 m². Examples of this era in Budapest are the former Élmunkás (Shockworkers') blocks^[4], the eight-storey tower block (2nd district, Fő utca 61)^[5], the block of flats with the open-access balcony in Béke tér in Csepel^[6] and the two types (A and B) of blocks with open access balconies in the housing estate of Béke út in Angyalföld^[7]. The construction

of the housing estate at Magdolnaváros in the 13th district begun before the war was resumed with standard floor plans designed for this location.

Mass housing on the basis of standard plans

From the experience of building individual residential blocks, it was concluded that this manner of housing was ill-suited for satisfaction of the demands of mass housing, since the construction and operating costs of such individually designed housing were too high. At the same time, after the communist takeover (1948) there was growing pressure on the building industry, with policies urging for the elimination of housing shortage with ever more dictatorial methods. The officials in charge of housing regarded cheaper standardized mass housing as the solution, in the belief that architects would provide a variety of type-plans that were cheaper to construct, and which from then on would be used all over the country, saving the time and costs of architectural design.

In the meantime, in 1948 planning and building were nationalized and state-owned planning companies were founded. In the departments of the Architectural Planning Institute, standard plans were made for rural peasant cottages, intellectuals' homes, public administration, culture and welfare institutions in villages already in 1948, though most type-plans were of multi-storey urban blocks

Schall József – Piszter István: floor-plan of a tower block with four homes accessed from a staircase, type marked 1949.III.16/b

Schall József – Piszter István: pôdorys vežového domu so štyrmi bytmi, s prístupom zo schodiska, typ označený ako 1949.III.16/b

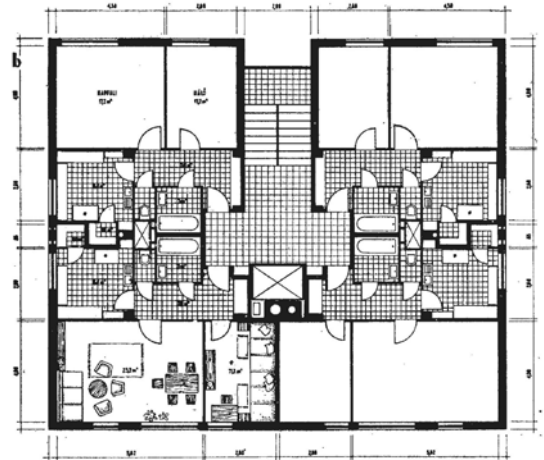
of flats. Relatively large room sizes (living rooms up to 21, even 23 m², bedrooms 12 – 14 m²) and a traditional space layout characterized the floor plans. The construction of housing estates began at that time on the basis of these model plans.

Compulsory standard plans, 1950

The permanent pressure on cutting back building costs required the transformation of standard types. Instead of large free-standing individual buildings, it was necessary to plan complex sections that were economical to build and could be multiplied or combined with each other. As a result, in January 1950 the plans of the section types marked 50.III.5, 50.III.7 and 50.III.6 were produced in the National Residential Building Planning Office (architects József Schall, László Wágner and László Zoltán). The largest housing investment of the period, the estates in Sztálinváros (the first Socialist industrial town, today Dunaujváros) were launched using these type-plans^{19/}. From 1950, the planning of standardized types was no longer the field of architectural experimentation only; the plans consented to by the “committee for approving type-plans” were legally declared as prototypes and made compulsory to be used until their revoking. In theory at least, it was prohibited to modify them or use other floor plans in budget-financed developments. The valid types were made available in annually revised catalogues and the types that were outdated were rescinded. The type-plans could be obtained at the architectural offices that produced them by paying the price of

Schall József – Wágner László – Zoltán László: floor-plan of standardized type marked 50.III.7, 1950

Schall József – Wágner László – Zoltán László: pôdorys štandardizovaného typu označeného ako 50.III.7, 1950



Source Zdroj: Új Építészet, 1949, 2 – 3, p. 85

copying. (The first two digits of their identification mark indicated the year of planning, the Roman numeral referred to the planning office, the last number was the serial number of the type-plan. This system of marking was in use until 1954 when the type-plan marks began to start with the MNOT letters standing for the Hungarian People's Republic's National Type-Plans, replaced from 1958 by MOT /Hungarian National Type-Plan/.) Though the use of type-plans was obligatory, they could not be applied mechanically as they had to be adapted to every site and sometimes the making of individual plans was also unavoidable. To eliminate the latter constraint, the spectrum of standardized models was gradually extended and each unit further elaborated.

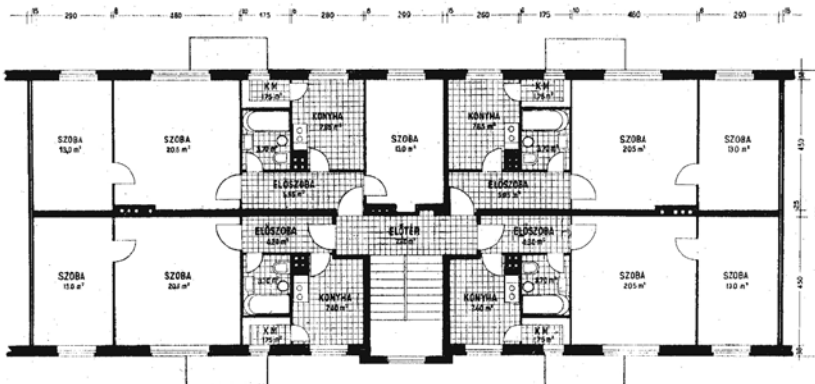
Besides ordering type-plans from the state planning offices as their official assignments, the building authorities also called an open competition for flat prototypes in January 1950^{19/}. The specifications of the competition included two floor plan types (flats accessed from staircase and flats accessed from middle corridor) in two structures (brick masonry and reinforced concrete frame). The prize-winning plans had smaller residential units than earlier customary: they were mainly two-room flats on a scale of 51 – 55 m², with about 20 and 12 m² room areas. In some



Source Zdroj: Szende, László: Az öt éves terv első évének lakástermelése. Építés Építészet, 4, 1951, p. 201

plans the “dead-end” room also appeared that only opened via another room. In spite of that, the architectural design of the building was often highly inventive, but the execution of these plans would have required high-quality constructing work, so they were not developed into prototypes. Instead, ground plans with brick supporting walls built easily by unskilled labour were favoured: the extremely simplified types marked “14” and “16”. The rooms were laid out between three parallel bearing walls, without separate entrances and without a separate toilet.

By 1951, nearly all innovations rooted in functionalist housing design that architects had deemed desirable in post-1945 housing (free space creation and spatial connections, bed recess, kitchenette, etc.) had to be abandoned. The main hindrance to free floor plan design was the outdated brick building technology. Simple ground



Source Zdroj: Típustervek katalógusa, 2. közlemény. Budapest, Építésügyi Minisztérium, Jun. 1950, p. 9

plans with longitudinal bearing walls were built as the cheapest solution, similarly to the Hungarian social housing program in the interwar years.

Schall József – Solta Ádám – Zilahy István – Zoltán László: floor-plan of standardized type marked 50.III.14, 1950

Socialist realism in designing standard types of housing

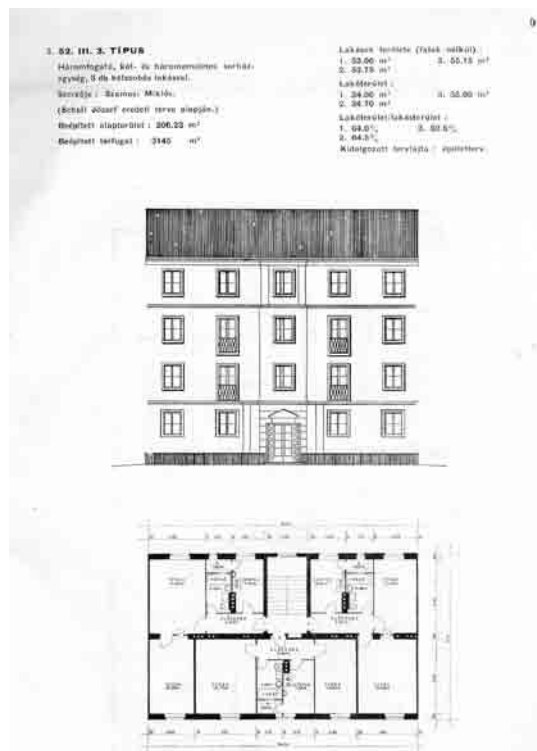
The communist take-over in 1948 entailed the adherence to the current Soviet trend, which meant the dictatorial suppression of the style and planning principles of modern architecture. Two years later, all major state-financed housing development appeared in the socialist realist style using neo-classical building ornaments and a few folkloristic motifs. The imposition of the socialist realist style reached housing design in 1951: the Ministry of Building Affairs (MBA) required that all new developments should adopt the so-called Galaktionov system (imported from the Soviet Union): placing monumental buildings with socialist realist facades in perimeter blocks.

Schall József – Solta Ádám – Zilahy István – Zoltán László: pôdorys štandardizovaného typu označeného ako 50.III.14, 1950

The plan nonetheless had to be carried out with the cheapest possible building technology. This requirement was best met with by type 51.III.3, so until 1953 buildings of this ground-plan were most frequently erected¹¹⁰. An architect of that period described its core in these words: “The structural system of standardized residential housing built in 1951 – 1953 was the following: two outer and a middle brick bearing walls 38 cm in thickness and two prefab ceiling panels of identical size.”¹¹¹

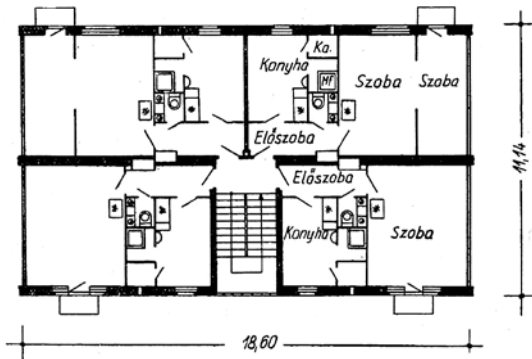
Schall József – Szamosi Miklós: standardized section type with socialist realist façade, marked 52.III.3, 1951

Schall József – Szamosi Miklós: štandardizovaný typ sekczie s fasádou v štýle socialistickeho realizmu, označený ako 52.III.3, 1951



Source Zdroj: Típustervek katalógusa 1952, 1. közlemény. Budapest, É.M. Építőipari Könyv- és Lapkiadó Vállalat, Jul. 1952, p. 9

Floor-plan of so-called Cs-flat, 1956
Pődörös takzvaného bytu Cs, 1956

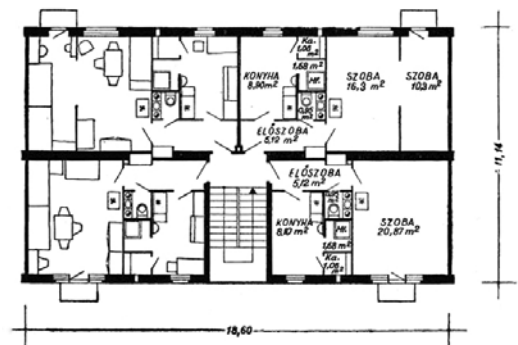


Source Zdroj: Weiszburg, Pál: Lakáskultúra és épületgépészet. Magyar Építőipar, 3 – 4, 1957, p. 155

proposed longer-term planning (for 5 – 6 years) and the replacement of set figures of housing types with quotas. One-room flats had a 66 % rate in urban multi-storey housing, which he proposed to be replaced with 1.5- and 2-room flats with all conveniences but on a smaller floor area (max. 47 m² for 1.5-room flats) with built-in furniture. This was planned to be the largest type group at 35 and 30 %. For comparison, he studied housing in the other European socialist countries and the Soviet Union, where no small flats with half rooms or recess extensions were planned, except in Poland. With these floor plans, he wished to enrich the poor choice of home types (no more than 5!) available for residential blocks or slabs. The most important guideline in his view was “social utility” meeting a variety of demands, the main indicators of which

A search for new ways, 1953

The thawing of the political climate after Stalin's death had its repercussions in housing design as well. The political conception of the first Imre Nagy government (1953 – 1955), laying stress on welfare investments, encouraged the MBA's chief department to work out housing types, of larger and higher quality ground plans. These plans were eventually not enacted as types and even the compulsory use of type-plans was temporarily suspended. As a result, the housing estates built in 1953 – 1954 could be based on individual plans^{12/}. However, there was little to be done if the welfare policy laid greater emphasis on housing when the resources were still scanty. Several flats were built in smaller size or with less convenience, so a so-called Cs-flat type with decreased convenience was developed. Instead of a bathroom there was only a washing recess opening from the kitchen, with a separate toilet room. The floor area of these flats was relatively large with 19 – 20 m² rooms and a 9 m² kitchen. Economy entailed the reduction of comfort rather than the decrease of the floor area^{13/}. Ground-plans with “dead-end” rooms and reduced convenience did not appear to be enough, so by 1955 the only solution was reducing the floor area. Leader of the Design Department of MBA, Tibor Csordás completed a study in May 1955 in which he proposed new guidelines for planning on the basis of the examination of existing housing plans and population statistics. He



Source Zdroj: Szamosi, Miklós – Frieda, Miksa – Balogh, István: Standardized section type with middle bearing wall, marked HNOT 204 – 56. III. EM. LT, including furnishing plan

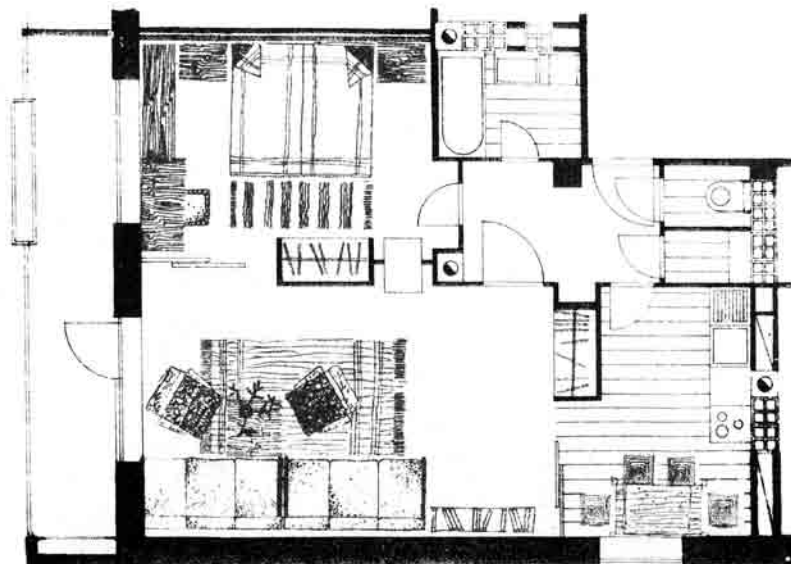
were floor plan, number of rooms and degree of convenience, as well as technical amenities^{14/}.

The professional press also aired the new trend in type-planning. A variant of Csordás's study was published in the most popular architectural periodical, and in early 1956 several publications followed suit, demonstrating the new tendencies in small-flat design with both East and West European examples^{15/}. This change in outlook put a major stress on functionality again, through two designing principles: differentiating the spaces by function (bed recess, kitchenette) and contracting spaces of different function (bed-living room, kitchen-parlour, dining kitchen). These two approaches were combined in later housing plans as well.

Social unrest had been growing and burst out in the revolution in late 1956. After the crushing of the revolution, the government wished to pacify the discontented with welfare investments. Housing production had to be increased, in a program that relied heavily on state-financed small-flat construction in addition to private housing. Reflecting the new demand of housing policy, in 1956 the official type-plans also began to include some with kitchen-cum-living-room, bedsit, or bed recess plans. Some remained in effect unchanged until 1958 and even later. Most of them still had the longitudinal bearing walls, and a lot lacked bathrooms, with a washing or shower recess only.

The Planning Department of the MBA worked out a new plan for housing development, the so-called "C" plan^{16/}. A phased competition program was proposed to test new materials, structures, building technologies and new residential floor plans. An important element was that winning plans were to be implemented for observation, and the standardization of plans into types for mass production was to rely on the experience gained.

The first competition was announced for ceiling and joinery design so that the prize-winning plans could be used for later housing competitions. The new flats with a smaller floor area necessitated the design of minimum-sized furniture and built-in fittings, so in parallel with the former competitions, designers were called for planning built-in model kitchen furniture (1958) and living-room furniture (1959)^{17/}.



Source Zdroj: 1960 Óbudai Kísérleti Lakótelep. Budapest, ÉM. Lakóépítettervező Vállalat 1960, n. p.

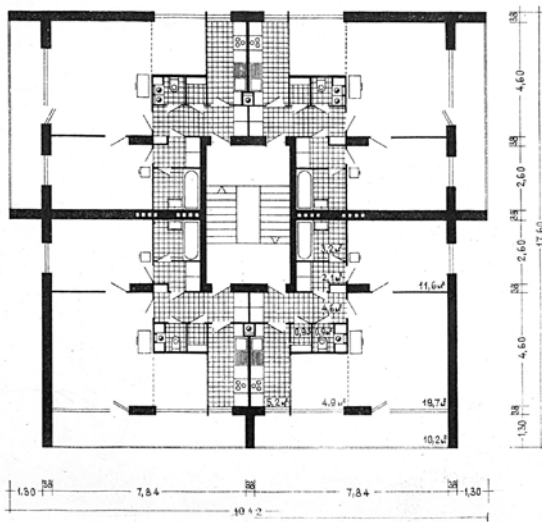
National Home Planning competition, 1958 – return to the principles of modernism

As a new element of the "C" plan, an open competition was announced in July 1958. The aim was to plan "well equipped, economical and cultured flats on a small floor area" with the compulsory inclusion of standardizable building elements and amenities, on the basis of the most recent guidelines of planning^{18/}. The specifications in the competition named traditional brick masonry as well as cast light concrete and monolith concrete structures as prescribed by the "C" plan. Plans could be elaborated for six kinds of building – a higher number than earlier: one-storey terraced houses with one or two-level flats, three-storey sections with home access from staircase or open access balcony, as well as three-storey detached block of flats, and three-storey slabs with open access balcony or a central corridor.

The kitchens had to be planned with the prototype based on the 55/55 cm modules that won the previous competition for built-in kitchen furnishing. For the efficiency apartments, a cooking

E. László Kiss: floor-plan of two-room flat, competition entry marked 511, 1958

E. László Kiss: pôdorys dvojizbového bytu, projekt podaný do súťaže pod č. 511, 1958



Olga Mináry: upstairs floor-plan, competition entry marked 527, 1958

Olga Mináry: pôdorys horného podlažia, projekt podaný do súťaže pod č. 527, 1958

Source Zdroj: 1960 Óbudai Kísérleti Lakótelep. Budapest,ÉM. Lakóépítettervező Vállalat 1960, n. p.

recess or cooking cabinet had to be planned that could be placed in the bedsit or the anteroom! Another prescription was to have floor-to-ceiling 60/60 cm built-in closet, for the required floor area of the flats was very small at 43 m² on the average.

The flat sizes were not determined by the number of rooms but the number of beds and the respective floor area so that a living room had to serve for sleeping as well. A flat for two beds could range between 24 and 30 m², one of 4 beds between 50 and 58 m², the largest, 6-bed flats could be max. 76 m² in floor area. Because of the limitation of floor area, a furnishing sketch in 1 : 20 scale had to be submitted as well. The competition specifications mainly adapted Csordás's principles of 1955 to the practical requirements.

The invitation inspired very many architects, and 180 plans were submitted. The jury found thirty-two of them worthy of some award. The competition was followed with attention by the professional community and the press, with a detailed account in the periodical Magyar Építőipar ^{/19/}. The most successful plan was that of a square building (competition entry marked 514, by Károly Benjamin, Zoltán Boross and László Tarján) in

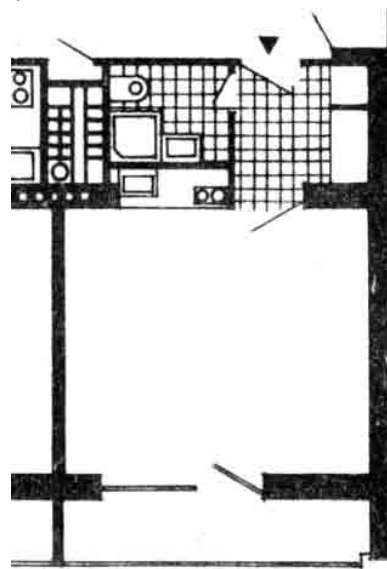
Jenő Rimanóczy: floor-plan of one-room flat, competition entry marked 620, 1958

Jenő Rimanóczy: pôdorys jednoizbového bytu, projekt podaný do súťaže pod č. 620, 1958

which the planners could locate six flats of four different flat sizes to be accessed from the staircase. The most interesting ground plan was the one (competition entry marked 511) by E. László Kiss: in the two-room flat, each room was accessed from the hall but with the help of sliding doors the dining kitchen and the rooms could be opened to form a single space or different spatial connections. Similarly advantageous functional solutions characterized the flats in Olga Mináry's square block (competition entry marked 527). A characteristic feature of her plan was the kitchen – dining room – living room aligned on a single axis. A novel location for a kitchenette was designed by Jenő Rimanóczy in his block of flatlets (competition entry marked 620). In the one-room (two-bed) flats, he placed a 3-module cooking cabinet separated by a curtain in the room.

Home exhibition in the Experimental Housing Estate in Óbuda, 1960

The prize-winning buildings were planned by the Ministry to be built in an outer district of Budapest, Óbuda. The most adequate urban plan – by Albert Kiss and János Pomsár – was selected from among the submissions of a limited competition ^{/20/}.



Source Zdroj: Valentiny, Károly: Lakás-tervpályázat. Magyar Építőipar, 2, 1959, p. 148



Source Zdroj: Koczogh, Ákos: Kísérleti lakások, új berendezések Óbudán. Művészet, 1, 1961, p. 15

The estate was built in two phases (on the 3rd district site bounded by Bécsi út, Váradi utca, Vörösvári út, Gyenes utca, Zápor utca, Reménység utca). First, twenty-one blocks of flats (with 380 flats) were built partly according to the prizewinning plans of the housing competition and partly on type-plans in effect; the role of the latter was to provide a basis for comparison in terms of construction time and costs. In the second phase, the area towards Vörösvári út was built up using two prize-winning plans of the National Home Planning competition, one with a central corridor and a square-shaped block. Another three residential blocks were also built here: three eight-storey tower blocks on the plan that placed first in the Medium-High residential building competition (1960, planned by Dezső Dul, later type MOT I.1.-168/61) and a medium-high fourth block planned reinforced concrete structure by László Borostyánkőy (type MOT I.1.-169/61)²¹. Next to the residential buildings, three ground-floor pavilions for shops and a standard kindergarten build-

ing were also built, followed in 1964 by a primary school²².

The progress of the construction allowed for certain flats of the experimental estate to be shown to the public. Two flats of each ground-plan type were furnished, one with heavy old-fashioned furniture and the other with light smaller furniture pieces, the prototypes of the Home Furniture planning competition. The 'Home' exhibition was announced by posters, informative booklets, and several news articles and series of photos with people as models were taken of them²³. Each visitor was handed a questionnaire to be filled out so that the planners would be informed of the ideas and opinions of the people about the ground plans and furniture²⁴.

The exhibition had far greater attendance than expected; the press and the construction documentation estimated the number of visitors at some 80 000²⁵. Just calculate: for the one-month period the exhibition was open it meant a daily 4 000 guests! But the number must be

Model of the urban plan for the first construction phase of the Óbuda Experimental Housing Estate

Model urbanistického návrhu prvej fázy výstavby experimentálneho sídliska Óbuda



Source Zdroj: Kiscelli Múzeum, Photography Collection, Inv. no. 63.815.14

Streetscape of the Óbuda
Experimental Housing
Estate in the early sixties

Ulica v rámci
experimentálneho
sídlička Óbuda na
začiatku šesťdesiatych
rokov 20. storočia

acknowledged because one-time visitors also recall that large masses were keen to see it, hoping that they would also soon get a similar home and furniture. The success of the exhibition was also due to the propaganda going on for several years to have the new home culture accepted. It was in this era that the masses could get first-hand experience of the new style of housing and home decoration, of the material culture that came to characterize the sixties.

Evaluation of the experimental program

Neither experimental, nor a housing estate – that was also a critical opinion of the Óbuda estate, with quite some justification. The completed

residential area was more of a model estate, the word ‘experimental’ in its name only owing to the fashion of giving any new standardized housing-type such a name. Already, there were some more radical housing experiments under way, for example, Elemér Zalotay’s plan of a 10-storey concrete-structure ribbon building several hundred metres in length – but it was not tried out in Óbuda at that time^{26/}. It must be acknowledged that the complex program of the “C” plan was unique in the Hungarian architecture of the period with its coordinated, consistently carried out series of competitions. It was called for by the failure of the standardized housing of the previous years, and its value should be assessed with a view to

the involvement for the first time of several innovations rooted in the principles of modernism in the practice of designing type-plans. However, the excessive reduction of the floor area often turned functional solutions in the wrong direction, and it did not help if the flats were comfortable and the spaces grouped well, when excessive economising made them inconvenient.

From among the erected buildings, the plans of only seven were re-worked into type plans. (They included two tower blocks, a terraced house and a block with home access from the corridor.) By the time the houses of the Óbuda estate were completed, it became obvious that the only way to fulfill the plan of one million homes projected in 1960 to be built within 15 years was through mass production based on prefabricated concrete panels¹²⁷¹.

The well-proportioned buildings and functionally lucid small-size homes built in the Óbuda Experimental Estate became the starting point for state-financed elite housing and for small blocks of owner-occupied flats whose construction began in this period. The best example is the type MOT 1/1-119/60 based on the competition entry marked 527 with massive simplification and cost-reducing alterations. For state housing, this plan was only used for small residential ensembles of few – 3 – 4 – elements (e.g. housing estate in Győr, Szent István út, housing estate of the Agricultural Ministry in Budapest, 11th district Ménesi út). By contrast, there are quite a lot of individual buildings based on this type-plan, demonstrating the upswing of private housing that started in Hungary in the sixties.

From Hungarian translated by Judit Pokoly



Furnished home interior at the housing exhibition in the Óbuda Experimental Housing Estate

Zariadený bytový interiér na výstave na experimentálnom sídlisku Óbuda

NOTES POZNÁMKY

- ¹ On housing estates, see: KÖRNER, Zsuzsa – NAGY, Márta: Az európai és a magyar telepszerű lakásépítés története 1945-től napjainkig. Budapest, TERC 2006. 464 p. and FERKAI, András: Lakótelepek. Budapest, Budapest Főváros Önkormányzata Főpolgármesteri Hivatala 2005. 80 p.
- ² GÁDOROS, Lajos: A korszerű lakás térszükséglete és berendezése. Budapest, Országos Építésügyi Kormánybizottság 1946, 40 p. and ifj. KISMARTY-LECHNER, Jenő: Városi lakástípusok. Budapest, Országos Építésügyi Kormánybizottság Építésracionizálási Osztálya 1947, 54 p. Precedent to Gádos: NEUFERT, Ernst: Bauentwurfslehre. Handbuch für den Baufachmann, Bauherren, Lehrenden und Lernenden, Berlin, Bauwelt-Verlag 1936. 300 p.
- ³ For detailed discussion of the period: Építészet és tervezés Magyarországon 1945 – 1959. Eds.: PRAKFULVI, Endre – HAJDÚ, Virág, Budapest, OMvH, Magyar Építészeti Múzeum 1996, PRAKFULVI, Endre: Alapok – tervek épületek. In: A fordulat éve. Eds.: STANDEISKY, Éva KOZÁK, Gyula – PATAKI, Gábor – RAINER, M. János. Budapest, 1956-os Intézet 1998, pp. 285 – 309.
- ⁴ Architects: Schall József, Piszter István, ÉTI Lakásépítési osztály, 1949. About the history of its construction, see: PRAKFULVI, Endre: Lehel (Élmunkás) tér 2. A., B., C., D. Budapesti Negyed, 2009, 63, pp. 123 – 136.
- ⁵ Architects: Németh Pál, Szilágyi Jenő, Skultéthy János, MATI, 1948, description: GERLE, György: A pontház. Építés Építészet, 1949, 6 – 7, pp. 36 – 43.
- ⁶ Architects: Gádos Lajos, Schall József, Hoch István, 1949, description: Építés Építészet, 1949, 1 – 2, p. 12.
- ⁷ Architects: Vidos Zoltán and Tarján László, FŐTI, 1949, description: GERLE, György: A Béke-út a forradalom útján. Építés Építészet, 1950, 8, pp. 500 – 513.
- ⁸ On the buildings constructed in Dunaújváros. In detail: BARKA, Gábor – FEHÉRVÁRI, Zoltán – PRAKFULVI, Endre: Dunaújvárosi építészeti kalauz 1950 – 1960. Dunaújváros Önkormányzata, Dunaújváros, 2007, 148 p.
- ⁹ Tervpályázati hirdetmény, Építés Építészet, 1, 1950, p. 1.
- ¹⁰ 35 % of flats built in 1953 – 1954 were based on type 53.III.3. HEGEDŰS, Ernő: Többszintes lakóházak tipizálásának problémái. In: MÉSZ Lakásépítési anket, Budapest, LAKÓTERV 1955. p. 4.
- ¹¹ CSORDÁS, Tibor: Lakóépületek szerkezetei. Magyar Építőipar, 1953, 10, p. 315.
- ¹² CSORDÁS, Tibor et al.: A tömeges lakásépítés tervezése – többszintes lakóépületek. Budapest, 1955 (manuscript). Magyar Építészeti Múzeum, n. Inv. no., p. 1.
- ¹³ WEISZBURG, Pál: Lakáskultúra és épületgépészet. Magyar Építőipar, 1957, 3 – 4, pp. 154 – 160.
- ¹⁴ CSORDÁS, Tibor et al. op. cit. 33 p.
- ¹⁵ CSORDÁS, Tibor: A tömeges lakásépítés tervezési kérdései. Többszintes lakóépületek tipizálása. Magyar Építőművészet, 1955, 9 – 10, pp. 257 – 272. MISKOLCZY, László: A franciaországi lakásépítés főbb szempontjai (Main criteria of housing in France), Magyar Építőművészet, 1956, 2, pp. 60 – 62 and RÁKOS, János – SAFÁRY, István – SZEKERES, József: A kislapterületű lakás kérdései. Magyar Építőművészet, 1956, 6, pp. 188 – 194.
- ¹⁶ Az É. M. Kollégiumának IV/1/1958. sz. határozata a lakásépítkezések és egyéb kommunális létesítmények távlati gazdasági-műszaki fejlesztésének „C”-tervéről /1958 – 1959. évre/. The decree entered into force on 1 January 1958 although it was only signed by ministry of building affairs Rezső Trautmann on 22 March 1958. Documents of Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL), É. M. Műszaki Fejlesztési Főosztály iratai XIX-D-3-11. 6. doboz. That the plan came into effect earlier than it was endorsed by the minister was not rare in the chaotic “socialist planned economy”. But no explanation has been found during the research for the designation (why “C”?), or whether it was preceded by other (possibly “A” and “B”) plans.
- ¹⁷ Description of the five competitions: Magyar Építőipar, 1959, 2, pp. 110 – 156.

- 18 Országos Lakás-tervpályázat. Announcement, Budapest, Építésügyi Minisztérium 1958, p. 4.
- 19 VALENTINY, Károly: Lakás-tervpályázat. Magyar Építőipar, 1959, 2, pp. 125 – 150.
- 20 EGRESSY, Imre: Az óbudai kísérleti lakótelep. Magyar Építőipar, 1959, 2, pp. 151 – 155.
- 21 Both standard plans: Magyar Országos Típustervek katalógusa. II. kötet. Budapest, ÉM Építésügyi Dokumentációs Iroda 1960, n. p.
- 22 The preliminaries of the competition and the construction history of the estate was shown in the exhibition of the Kiscell Museum (2011) and its catalogue: BRANCZIK, Márta – KELLER, Márkus: Korszerű lakás 1960 – az óbudai kísérlet. Budapest, Budapesti Történeti Múzeum – 56-os Intézet 2011. 202 p.
- 23 1960 Óbudai Kísérleti Lakótelep. Budapest, ÉM. Lakóépülettervező Vállalat 1960, 40 p. and Kísérleti Lakások – Új berendezések, Budapest III. Bécsi ú. (n.d., n.p.) catalogue of the exhibition of 1960 (MOL, XIX-D-3-u 53-as doboz).
- 24 Two kinds of the questionnaire compiled by the Planning Department of the MBA can be found in the archives of the Museum of Applied Arts: one about the flat (Inv. no. KLT 2754) and one about the furnishing (Inv. no. KLT 2755). Unfortunately the filled-out questionnaires have not yet been found.
- 25 BÁLINT, Sándor: Az Óbudai Kísérleti Lakótelep első ütemének építészeti értékelése. October 1961 (manuscript), É. M. Típustervező Intézet, Tudományos Iroda, Értékelő Osztály (MOL, XIX-D-3-u. 54-es doboz, É. M. Tervezési Főosztály anyaga).
- 26 Egy “nehéz ember” – Zalotay Elemér nyílt levele. Új Írás, 1965, 6, pp. 67 – 77 he cites Zoltán Farkasdy's above opinion.
- 27 Council of Ministers' decree no, 1002/1960/I.10. on the 15-year plan of housing development.