

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT EXHIBITION OF BANK GOSPODARSTWA KRAJOWEGO (NATIONAL ECONOMY BANK) IN KOŁO, WARSAW, IN 1935 – TOWARDS THE IMPROVEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

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The collection of few tens of single family houses located alongside Obozowa, Bolecha, Dobrogniewa, Dalibora and Dahlberga Streets in Warsaw's district of Wola nowadays forms a portion of Koło neighborhood named "Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego Estate" (il.1). Shape of the dwellings, layout of the streets and parcels form material testimony and heritage of Housing Development Exhibition organized in 1935 by the Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (further: BGK). Grand scale exhibition was devised as an extensive prop event, and at the same time was a valuable step forward in the painstaking process of education on popular individual residential development. Its idea, shape, scale and finally message occupy an interesting page in a history of Polish architecture in the interwar period.

The concept of residential development exhibition originated in the Western Europe just after the I World War. In the first half of the 1920 it proved to be a great success in Germany and it was implemented in Poland in the beginning of the 1930s. The purpose of such events was to spread the solutions for more affordable and better quality housing¹. The developments constructed for the purpose of the exhibition were built to 1:1 scale, first to demonstrate and subsequently populated grew over time in a manner set forward by given architectural, compositional and social patterns.

In Poland, throughout the 1930s, only two full scale housing development exhibition were successfully put together and were turned into regular residential estates afterwards. Both were located in Warsaw: Exhibition "Affordable Own House" in Bielany district in 1932 and BGK Housing Development Exhibition in Wola district in 1935².

State of residential housing in interwar Poland

Interwar Poland was preoccupied with insufficient number of dwellings amid ever growing needs. Single room apartment, inhabited by 3,93 persons on average, constituted a significant portion of the entire stock³. The chasm between the representative city center and adjacent poor neighborhoods was dramatically evident. Poor state of housing substance directly reflected rather dire state of national economy and general lack of knowledge in modern construction craft. In 1935 one of the comments reads: "We dwell wrong and expensive in Poland. There is no other country in Western Europe where so many are crowded in single room flats, in no other country small flats are so overpopulated"⁴. The construction costs for a house were way over the top when compared to Western European countries. "It turns out that we set the world record both ends. The cheapest labour – the most expensive material and utility connection. As a result running water and sewage for a small house cost here 4484 units, where, for example, in Stockholm only 915. For the city utility connection we pay 2000, where Swedes pay 182"⁵. The quality standards of popular housing development in Poland cried for action. Driven by cost reduction, the development process was unorganized and careless, both technologically and architecturally but also with regards to spatial composition. Such houses "caused revulsion with architects aware of modern Western standards, reluctance of city authorities that envisioned different priorities and more structured developments. Eventually however, occasional hurdles did not put an end to an uncontrolled development practices"⁶.

¹ M. Rozbicka, *Wystawy-osiedla w międzywojennej Polsce: geneza, historia, przekształcenia*, in: *Architektura pierwszej połowy XX wieku i jej ochrona w Gdyni i Europie*, edit. by Maria Jolanta Sołtysik, Roberta Hirsh, Gdynia 2011, p. 27.

² Ibidem, p. 27.

³ J. Nowicki, *Środowisko mieszkaniowe. Osiedla warszawskie, projekty, doświadczenia XX wieku*, part 2, Warsaw 2003, p. 11.

⁴ T. Lechnicki, *Problemy polityki budowlano-mieszkaniowej*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej Banku Gospodarstwa Krajowego w Warszawie na Kole 1935 maj-sierpień*, edit. by Tomasz Bober, [Warsaw 1935?], p. 5.

⁵ Z. Skibniewski, *Wystawa Budowlano-Mieszkaniowa Banku Gospodarstwa Krajowego w dzielnicy Koło w Warszawie*, „Architektura i Budownictwo”, 1935, No 5, p. 147.

⁶ T. Lechnicki, op.cit., s. 5.

Simultaneously, the dispute over the housing development ideas continued and involved both the exponents of multifamily housing and individual houses advocates who were able to put forward equally persuasive arguments⁷. In 1932, on the initiative of the Prime Minister, Aleksander Prystor, central government, via certain state and non – governmental institutions, commenced a program aiming at reinvigorating affordable single family housing and improving the quality and structuring spontaneous, sometimes makeshift development⁸. At the same time the idea of supporting multifamily housing was still in place, but the owner occupied, affordable single family house was given a priority, especially in the light of recently decreased construction costs⁹.

Importance of BGK

One of the forms of state intervention in the area of residential housing modernization was by empowering BGK to finance this branch of the economy¹⁰. Since 1924 the Bank credited development undertakings (mainly multifamily housing)¹¹ by applying public funding as inscribed in its own statute¹². Between 1924 and 1934 it granted construction loans totaling 612 220 832 zł. Owing to that initiative 246 830 dwellings (rooms) were created¹³. In the 1930s the Bank intensified the support for single family development by financing private individuals willing to allocate their funds for single family houses that formed a part of a larger and planned estates. The bank also oversaw state owned land subdivisions in various Polish cities and ultimately sold the parcels prepared for housing development¹⁴. As a part of wider educating attempt on rational single family housing, the bank also backed various architectural contests, published catalogues with drawings of winning projects, initiated housing development exhibitions, financed building consulting service run by the Polish Society of Housing Reform¹⁵.

The history of single family housing estate in Warsaw's Koło neighbourhood is closely tied to BGK's patronage, which was assigned with the task of organizing the housing exhibition (by September 1934) as a form of its propaganda and information statutory activities. Owing to labour force strike and then unfavorable weather conditions, the opening date was frequently postponed. Eventually, the official ceremony took place on May 29th, 1935¹⁶ with the presence of the highest representatives, i.e. the president Ignacy Mościcki and the chairman of BGK – Roman Górecki (il. 2). The exhibition was accessible between May and August 1935.

In order to manage the exhibition the Bank established the following governing and advisory bodies" Exhibition Committee (advisory body) consisting of government, local self government, social and public organizations, industry, technical organization and construction experts representatives; Permanent Advisory Board, being a part of the Committee, overseeing the construction works at various stages of the exhibition development; Exhibition Board – the executive entity related to preparation of the Exhibition, Construction Management and the Exhibition Board. Tomasz Bober was nominated as Director of the Exhibition¹⁷.

All exhibition houses were erected in accordance with the designs published in the „Catalog of standard houses for small residential development” (il. 3). In 1933, in cooperation with the Association of Polish Architects Organizations, the BGK announced two competitions for a concept of small standard houses¹⁸. The competition jury, out of over a thousand projects, selected 83 that were then acquired, including 63 that were published in the above mentioned Catalog. All projects were presented with a general drawing, 1:100 scale drawings and summary descriptions with building areas [il.4]. All designs were ascribed a number, e.g. “type 13” or “type 406” etc. They were also approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs,

⁷ M. Rozbicka, *Małe mieszkanie z ogrodem w tle w teorii i praktyce popularnego budownictwa mieszkaniowego w międzywojennej Polsce*, Warsaw 2007, p. 281-284.

⁸ T. Lechnicki, op.cit., p. 5.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 5.

¹⁰ T. Lechnicki, op. cit., p. 6.

¹¹ M. Rozbicka, *Małe mieszkanie z ogrodem...*, p. 286.

¹² R. Górecki, *Słowo wstępne*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 1.

¹³ Z. Skibniewski, op.cit., p. 147.

¹⁴ T. Garbusiński, op.cit., p. 7.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 8.

¹⁶ T. Bober, *Cele, program i realizacja wystawy*, „Architektura i Budownictwo”, 1935, No 5, p. 153.

¹⁷ [author unknown], *Organizacja wystawy*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 2-4.

¹⁸ [author unknown], *Wstęp do katalogu*, in: *Katalog typowych domów dla drobnego budownictwa mieszkaniowego*, [no publishing location] 1934, [reprint, Lublin 2007], [no page number].

which in result enabled a simplified permitting period if one of the catalogued project was chosen to be development¹⁹.

The Catalog depicted 5 groups of single family residential buildings: “single family house” (“with a habitable attic”), “detached house” (“half of the house comprise two level apartment, the other half comprise one apartment at the ground and second at the top level”), “semi detached houses” (“each half of the house comprises one two level apartment”), “semi detached houses” (“each half comprises two apartments, one on each floor”), “terraced houses” (“each type in the row section can be adapted as a half of a semi detached house or the last section in the row, each section contains two apartments”)²⁰.

Objectives and results of the exhibition

The objective of the BGK’s Housing Development Exhibition was to popularize family owned small house. This idea was being implemented by the government of II Republic in the first half of the 1930s as a remedy for the struggling housing market. The exhibition proposed a low cost, popular, well designed and affordable for the middle class houses. An offer to acquire the exhibition houses was aimed at those that were able to finance some down payment and take out a loan. There were enough buyers to sell all house after the exhibition closed.

It was expected that when accessible loans lead to some portion of private capital being put to work, the revival of private housing development would propel the crisis stricken economy²¹, as happened in other European countries or the United States. For that reason economic aspects but also Western European good practices advocated the implementation of small, owner occupied, affordable, displaying high architectural standards house. The idea of low cost own house – spreading around Poland – originated in housing development of England, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States²².

The message the exhibition tried to convey was related to housing problem in general. The organiz-

ers showed a complex picture of everything that fits into the category of rational development of small houses estate: subsequent development steps (from land division to house construction), model land subdivision, estate spatial composition, example building designs: detached, semi detached, terraced houses, interiors²³ and backyard landscaping (il. 5). In addition to finished buildings three stages of construction were displayed which let the visitors to familiarize themselves with construction solutions (il. 6). With the unfinished buildings on display the visitors had an opportunity to examine the foundations, vertical and horizontal insulation, wall and chimney construction, ventilation ducts, pointing, brick and wooden ceiling and finishing works: roofing, plastering but also water pipes, sewage system, electricity etc. In addition good and bad practices were shown and highlighted with “good” and “wrong” signs (il. 7)²⁴.

Smaller pavilions and kiosk that accommodated other participants from the construction businesses were adjacent to the model houses complex. Numerous presentations of building materials and structures, fittings, installations but also educational events took part during the exhibition. Furthermore, various industry and trade associations, manufacturers (representing: ceramics, steel, cement, concrete, glass and insulation industry) from the entire country displayed their offering²⁵. In addition, public offices and institutions related to the construction industry presented their conduct on information boards. Building consultancy also offered their time during the exhibition.

The exhibition was situated on the state owned parcels locate at the very outskirts of the city (former village of Koło). Designated area was measured, subdivided, streets were delineated, land plots were connected to water, sewage, gas and electrical utilities, the last step being the construction of the houses²⁶. The sequence of works on the estate was of high significance. Correct management of the project was contrary to popular developments on accidental, unoccupied and unconnected plots. The exhibition catalog reads: “It should be remembered that rational

¹⁹ Ibidem, [no page number].

²⁰ Ibidem, [no page number].

²¹ T. Garbusiński, *Geneza Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej, jej założenia, cele i program*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 7.

²² J. Porębska-Srebrna, Z. Stępiński, *Historia użyteczna – „drobne budownictwo mieszkaniowe” w Polsce w latach trzydziestych*, „Murator” 1995, No 3, p. 23.

²³ The article does not refer to the interiors. Further readings: P. M. Lubiński, *Wystawa budowlano mieszkaniowa BGK na Kole*, „Arkady” 1935, No 3, p. 140-148.

²⁴ W. Żenczykowski, *Konstrukcje i materiały budowlane w ramach wystawy*, „Architektura i Budownictwo”, 1935, No 5, p. 155.

²⁵ W. Piechota, *Wystawa na Kole*, „Mój Dom” 1989, No 41, p. 39.

²⁶ Z. Skibniewski, op.cit., p. 146.

spatial development, which ought to start with site preparation and utility connections (roads, sewage, water, electricity), than cleaning up the mortgage registry and construction at the end – for years in Poland – has been reverted in contradiction to other countries in Western Europe²⁷.

The exhibition was accompanied by meticulously designed „Catalog of BGK Housing Development Exhibition in Warsaw Koło” edited by Tomasz Bober and the editorial committee of “Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie” monthly (il. 8). This volume included the exhibition guide with the pictures of all building types and their catalog numbers, floor plans, descriptions, cost estimations, landscape layouts for the yards, exhibition layout and the list of all participants and structures. It was fore worded with extensive thesis on housing situation in Poland and the exhibition origins.

Exhibition description

Two and a half hectare parcel designated for the exhibition neighbored with Obozowa Street from the North. The buildings were located along the streets aligned with the square plan: parallel to Obozowa – Bolecha and Dobrogniewa Streets²⁸ and perpendicular to it – Dalibora and Dahlberga (former Falisława) Streets²⁹. However, Dahlberga (Falisława) Street was part of the estate but was not include into the exhibition area itself (il. 9).

Each of the streets was associated with different type of house. southern side of Dobrogniewa Street and eastern side of Dalibora Street, between Dobrogniewa and Bolecha Streets, were developed with detached houses (il. 10). The northern side of Bolecha Street was developed with semi – detached houses (il. 11), whereas its southern side was fenced with two multiple terraced houses (il. 12), including three sections in various construction stages (il. 6).

In total, in 1935 28 single and multi section brick houses were completed, but only 20 were included in the exhibition: 12 single floor detached houses “type 13” (8 were excluded from the exhibition), 5 semidetached, two floor of various types: „type

151”, „type 153”, „type 402”, „type 405”, „type 408”; 1 four apartments house, two floor “type 52”; 2 row, multisection, two floor of various types: „type 403”, „type 404”, „type 406”, „type 411”, „type 412”, „type 416” (il. 9).

Second half of the exhibition was composed of temporary structures. Long pavilion was erected alongside Obozowa Street, comprising main building and two side wings (il. 13). The mail pavilion hosted public institutions such as: BGK, PKO, Work Fund, City Board of Warsaw, Silesia Province, Municipality of Katowice, Municipality of Chorzów, ZUS, Common Saving Bank of Warsaw Powiat. Side pavilion (western) located alongside Dalibora Street accommodated: Installations Department, Educational Department, Good Building Practices Department, among which various stands were located: City Gas Works of Warsaw, „Lilpop, Rau i Loewenstein” S.A. (washing mashines)”, Towarzystwo Kontynentalne dla Handlu Żelazem (Continetal Association of Iron Trading), Kern i S-ka (gas, water and sanitary fittings), „American Union”, Furnace Company, Piotr Ławacz and Sons, Airtight door factory, Ministry of Social Care, Health Department (water provision and sewage removal), Building Advisory Service at Polish Association of Housing Reform, Workers Estate Association.

The continuation of the main pavilion to the East was composed of an open canopy with construction industry stands, offering among others: construction ceramics, stones, concrete, cement, iron, wood, fittings, insulation, glass, tarpaper, lacquers. Other producers were displaying around the open area in over ten free standing kiosks (il. 14, 15). Some of the companies were using prearranged exhibition houses to display their products. Those were offering mainly various types of furniture, lining and table cloths, glassware, lighting fixtures, electrical installations, mattresses, sinks, toilets, boilers, gas and electric stove, even the gas war shelter³⁰.

Eastwards from the pavilion three types of allotment gardens were arranged by the Association of Allotment Garden Organizations. Example garden for an unemployed person was organized (tempo-

²⁷ T. Garbusiński, op.cit., p. 7.

²⁸ The article uses current name of the street: “Dobrogniewa Street”. Previous name was: „Dobrogniewa Street”. Source: „Plan orientacyjny Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej” in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, [no page number].

²⁹ The article uses current name of the street: „Dahlberga Street”. Previous name was: „Falisława Street”. Source: „Plan orientacyjny Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej” in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, [no page number].

³⁰ [author unknown], *Przewodnik po wystawie*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 61-63.

rarily used plot), regular garden and a garden for a homeless person. Homeless person garden was planted with assortment of vegetables and equipped with a simple wooden arbour. Regular garden was given an habitable arbour. It was to be planted with vegetables, flowers, fruit trees and bushes. The third garden was displayed with a habitable arbour brought over from the estate for the homeless from Naramowice near Poznań³¹.

At the eastern side of Dalibora Street four concrete decorative basins³² and dominating the exhibition area spiral tower made of steel and designed by Antoni Dygat³³, advertising tin sheets, cover with cold rolled steel sheet, so called Sedzimir tape³⁴ (il. 16).

The main entrance to the exhibition led from Obózowa Street through representative column portico located in the main pavilion (il. 17). Five tall masts were situation in front of the portico. In close proximity to the entrance a tram stop of a special line from the city center to Koło and a car park were located. Sightseeing route led through the exhibition area showing major points of interest (il.18), e.g. backyards between Dalibora and Bolecha Streets, usually not accessible for visitors (il. 19). Two houses at Dalibora Street (exhibition numbers 27 and 28 – nowadays 14 and 16 Dalibora Street) were modernized to accommodate a restaurant. An arbour and a terrace with benches were also installed (il. 20)³⁵.

The exhibition area (residential and pavilion sections) with the area set aside for further development was subdivided into residential development plots. The parcels were long rectangular in shape of width corresponding with building type – the widest plots were reserved for detached houses, narrower for semi-detached houses and the narrowest for row houses (il. 5, 18, 21).

Also the nearest surrounding of the building was carefully arranged with ornamental and practical plants³⁶. Stanisław Bukalski was responsible for general layout design, while gardens utensils were created

by St. Schönfeld³⁷. Major composition was organized around lawn clusters. The whole was then divided by paths made of broken stones or concrete slabs. Also low rise supporting walls and stairs were installed (il. 22)³⁸.

Architecture style and its description

The architecture of BGH exhibition estate is a reflection of stylistic trends of the first half of the 1930s, with contemporary modernism tendencies: homely – classical and international³⁹. BGK projects' creators referred to local building traditions (in case of detached houses) and to the functional style (in case of row and semi – detached houses). Completed buildings were designed by young generation architects, mainly based in Warsaw. Following professionals were involved: Barbara and Stanisław Brukalscy, Tadeusz Ćwierdziński, Romuald Gürtler, Tadeusz Kaszubski, Piotr Kwiek, Mieczysław Łokcikowski, Jan Łukasik, R. Pieńkowski, Stefan Putowski, Tadeusz Sieczkowski, Leonard Tomaszewski, Maria Wroczyńska, Wanda and Witold Wszyński, Maria Zachwatowicz⁴⁰. Those involved in the design process for the buildings completed after the exhibitions were: Anatolija Hryniewicka Piotrowska, Zygmunt Stępiński, Jadwiga Tittenbrun, Janusz Ostrowski⁴¹, Konstanty Rozwadowski, Hieronim Karpowicz, Tadeusz Sułkowski⁴².

Exhibition pavilions, kiosk and installations were designed by Stanisław Brukalski, Antoni Dygat⁴³, Jerzy Skolimowski and Andrzej Stypiński, Szymon Syrkus⁴⁴.

All detached houses were built in accordance with „type 13” design from the „Catalog of typical houses for small residential development” by Tadeusz Ćwierdziński and Roman Gürtler (il. 23, 34). This type resembled significantly simplified family style corresponding to traditional cubical structure topped with a pitched roof. “Type 13” houses were roofed with red tiles⁴⁵ and had direct entrance from the street. Their usable area reached 69,23 m².

³¹ Ibidem, p. 27.

³² Ibidem, p. 63.

³³ Z. Skibniewski, op.cit., p. 148.

³⁴ W. Żenczykowski, *Konstrukcje i materiały budowlane w ramach wystawy*, „Architektura i Budownictwo”, 1935, p. 159.

³⁵ [author unknown], *Przewodnik po wystawie*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 63.

³⁶ Z. Skibniewski, op.cit., p. 150.

³⁷ [author unknown], *Przewodnik po wystawie*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 29.

³⁸ P. M. Lubiński, *Wystawa budowlano mieszkaniowa BGK na Kole*, „Arkady” 1935, No 3, p. 141.

³⁹ M. Rozbicka, *Małe mieszkanie z ogrodem...*, p. 411.

⁴⁰ [author unknown], *Przewodnik po wystawie*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 30-59.

⁴¹ [author unknown], *Katalog typowych domów...*, [no page number], „typ 206”, „typ 409”.

⁴² The State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw (APW), *Akta Miasta Warszawy – Akta Nieruchomości*, vol. 1, catalogue No. 1433, 396.

⁴³ Z. Skibniewski, op.cit., p. 145, 148.

⁴⁴ W. Żenczykowski, op.cit., p. 154.

⁴⁵ P. M. Lubiński, op.cit., p. 141.

The apartment consisted of three rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom with a toilette. Detached houses were located alongside Dobrogniewa, Dalibora and Dahlberga (this street was located outside the exhibition area) Streets. Out of twenty objects, twelve were designated for visitors and were marked with the exhibition numbers from 27 to 38 [il. 10, 18] (currently these are 14, 16, 18, 20 Dalibora and 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 Dobrogniewa Street).

Semi – detached and row houses represent functional school with compact blocks of simple geometrical forms, large horizontal windows and flat tarpaper covered roofs. There is no architectural detail visible on the buildings with the exception of simple balcony bannisters of rounded edges and sometimes linear clinker tiles.

Semi detached and terraced houses have few common characteristics, despite belonging to different types that vary in composition, facade, interior layout and usable area. Each segment was designed on the basis of a rectangle, often with a shallow rectangular ryzalit or rounded edges ryzalit. Compact shape of two floor buildings was decorated with forward or receding staircases, entrance steps, terraces and balconies. The segments comprised two apartments (sometimes only one). Single apartment consisted of one, two or three rooms, a kitchen, a recess, a toilet and sometimes a bathroom. The usable area of the houses oscillated between 50 and 100 m². Basements were designated for washing rooms.

Six semidetached houses, two segmented formed the northern flank of Bolecha Street and were numbered from 16 to 24 (il. 11, 18). Currently those buildings are (two numbers for a single semi - detached house): 74 and 76; 78 and 80; 82 and 84; 86 and 88; 90 and 92; 94 Dobrogniewa Street. Each building represented a different type from the „Catalog of typical houses for small residential development”: „type 52” (designed by Mieczysław Łokcikowski), „typ 151” (proj. Mieczysław Łokcikowski) (il. 4, 24), „typ 153” (proj. Mieczysław Łokcikowski), „typ 402” (proj. Wanda i Witold Wyszyńscy), „typ 405” (proj. Jan Łukasik), „typ 408” (proj. Barbara i Stanisław Brukalscy) (il. 25).

Terraced houses formed a southern side of Bolecha Street and were numbered from 1 to 15 (il.

18). Currently those are 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59 Bolecha Street. Two terraced houses presented during the exhibition were formed by segments of various types from the „Catalog of typical houses for small residential development”: „type 40” (designed by Leonard Tomaszewski), „type 404” (Barbara and Stanisław Brukalscy) [il. 26], „type 406” (Tadeusz Kaszubski and Stefan Putowski), „type 411” (Mieczysław Łokcikowski and Maria Wroczyńska), „type 412” (Maria Zachwatowicz) (il. 27), „type 416” (Piotr Kwiek, R. Pieńkowski, Tadeusz Sieczkowski).

The architecture of the main exhibition pavilion was inspired by the simplest forms. One level building was L shaped. It was supported by a wooden frame structure, bordered with planks and plastered on the outside⁴⁶. The flat roof was elevated in the middle in some sections of the building [il. 13]. The side wings of the pavilion were partially opened with arcades towards the inner yard of the exhibition [il. 28].

Further history of the exhibition estate

The estate presented during the exhibition was the beginning of a larger scale housing development. The archive references suggest that the final plan (draft) of the entire development must have been completed by 1933⁴⁷. The concept of the estate was mentioned by measurement plan from 1934⁴⁸, which reveals delineated streets and parcels (il. 21). As evidenced by the following years, the BGK exhibition estate evolved towards the vision drafted on above mentioned plan and survived in almost unmodified until today (il. 29). The first inhabitants selected mainly from the military and public services⁴⁹. Further dwellers were able to buy the sites and start construction following strict regulations. Area measurements and estate plan were delivered by surveyor Mieczysław Gałązka in 1934⁵⁰.

The southern frontage of Dobrogniewa Street was the only fully completed one by the time of the exhibition, with the other streets growing over time. The whole estate expanded eastwards.

It the years 1935 - 1939 subsequent houses were build alongside Bolecha Street, but also at Obozowa Street (between Dalibora and Dahlberga Streets)

⁴⁶ [author unknown], *Przewodnik po wystawie*, in: *Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej...*, p. 63.

⁴⁷ APW, *Akta Miasta Warszawy. Akta Nieruchomości*, vol. 1, catalogue No. 388.

⁴⁸ APW, *Akta...*, vol. 2, catalogue No. 4636.

⁴⁹ A testimony by one of the dwellers.

⁵⁰ APW, *Akta...*, vol. 2, catalogue No. 4636.

and at Dahlberga Street (il. 30). Bolecha Street was the one that grew the most (twice in size) with the semi – detached type of houses based on designs mainly from the „Catalog of typical houses for small residential development” and some other projects [il. 31]. The southern front of its section between Dahlberga and Długomiła Streets was formed by multifamily blocks of neighboring working class housing estate of Workers Estate Association.

Even before 1939 the parcelation concept as revealed by the measuring draft from 1934 had been modified. The subdivision at Dahlberga and Dalibora Streets was changed. At Dahlberga Street, between Bolecha and Obozowa Streets, narrow parcels were originally delineated, which suggests that the terraced houses were planned. However, in 1937 another plan appeared, which contained three wide parcels in the same location⁵¹. The site at the corner of Bolecha and Dahlberga Street (5 Dahlberga Street) was developed with three floor house designed by Karol Rozwadowski⁵² (completed in 1938 or 1939⁵³) (il. 32), the site at the corner of Dahlberga and Obozowa Street was designated for a similar size building⁵⁴. This project has never been realized and the area was eventually develop with service and shopping complex.

Until 1938 the square at Dalibora Street, where the pools were located during the exhibition, was standing empty. The area was then divided into four parcels, on which detached houses were planned⁵⁵. On one of them at the corner of Bolecha and Dalibora, a house close to “type 13” was planned. The building design was not taken from the „Catalog of typical houses for small residential development”. It was drafted by Hieronim Karpowicz and Tadeusz Sułkowski⁵⁶. None of four envisioned buildings was erected and the area was developed with a terraced house after 1945.

The development alongside Obozowa Street was shaped differently. The area that was used by pavilions and allotment gardens during the exhibition was divided and build up with semidetached houses after 1935⁵⁷. By 1939 the row of house alongside Obozowa Street was almost complete (except for two buildings) (il. 30).

During the II World War, the estate was not destroyed. As shown on fotomap from dated 1945 the buildings were well preserved and the roofs were untouched (il. 33).

Current state

Spatial plan of the estate has survived in its original shape. Also the street interiors have maintained their original character. The initial idea of assigning different building type for each is still visible. The relation of one house to one parcel has been maintained although next to houses other facility buildings have sprung up – mainly garages but in two cases new houses with separate numbers have been built. Initial type of subdivision has not changed significantly⁵⁸. In the 1970s few high rise multifamily residential blocks were erected which sharply contrast with low single family houses.

Unfortunately, the architecture of the estate has not been preserved as well as its spatial planning. In the last twenty years, coherent style of house has been chaotically diversified. Multiple extensions and modifications have diluted original building proportions, verified sizes, façade colours or even led to complete distortion of style characteristics. On the other hand one has to admit that many of the buildings have been preserved in a good conditions (those are mainly social houses).

Detached houses of „type 13” have been the most affected by area extensions of initially small houses (il 34). In case of over ten houses alongside Dobrog-niewa Street only the triangle shape of the gable walls have remained visible (with few exceptions) (il. 35). Out of 20 houses of this type only two buildings have remained unchanged: 20 Dahlberga Street (il. 34) and 5 Dobrog-niewa Street (the latter having its roof cladding changed).

Semi – detached house has been modified to much lesser extent, especially those building that existed during the exhibition. In few cases additional floor changing building proportions was addend or a garage was attached.

Front facades of terraced houses remained almost untouched. The composition, number of floors, sec-

⁵¹ APW, *Akta...*, vol. 1, catalogue No. 1433.

⁵² Ibidem.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ APW, *Akta...*, vol. 1, catalogue No 1432.

⁵⁵ APW, *Akta...*, vol. 1, catalogue No. 396.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ APW, *Akta...*, vol. 2, catalogue No. 4637.

⁵⁸ Narrow strips of land (with individual numbering) were further subdivided alongside Bolecha Street in the 1960s, which was related to eventually uncompleted plans of installing a water pipe - a testimony by one of the dwellers.

tion sizes have all been preserved. Some windows have been widened once attics have been turned into habitable rooms.

Conclusion

Housing Building Exhibition in Koło, which in 1935 initiated the modernistic BGK estate was applauded by contemporary observers and was acclaimed as the first valuable building exhibition in Poland⁵⁹. It was a flagship educational effort orchestrated by Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego. It successfully combined in its agenda a display of model architecture of small single family houses designated for less wealth citizens with informational and educational event on construction techniques and materials, construction area preparation and a fair for companies representing wide construction industry. Unfortunately, after 1945 the subject of both the estate and the exhibition turned dormant. It came back to the agenda over the last 20 years⁶⁰. Despite that, the housing complex that survived until today and formed for the exhibition (year 1935) and in the years after (years 1936 – 39), together with land subdivision features, street layout and frontage sequence, is an exceptional item among Polish monuments of similar type. It is one of two exhibition estates organized in Poland in the 1930s (excluding Wrocław), the one that survived in much more better shape than the housing estate shown during “Affordable Own House” exhibition from 1932.

Unfortunately, the BGK is not listed as a historical monument, not as an area, nor as particular protected buildings. Regional (voivodship) historical monument registry contains only two buildings from the estate: 2 Dahlberga Street tenement house and the detached house at 20 Dahlberga Street. Since 2010 the estate has been protected by the provisions of local masterplan (City Council resolution nr XCIII/2738/2010 from 21 Oct 2010). The masterplan is imprecise in describing protected buildings, i.e. the above mentioned building “type 13” which survived in the most original shape is not considered as a monument, similar to the semi detached houses completed between 1936 – 39 alongside Obozowa Street.

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⁵⁹ P.M. Lubiński, op.cit., p. 148.

⁶⁰ E.g. W. Piechota, op.cit.; J. Porębska-Srebrna, Z. Stępiński, op.cit.; M.Rozbicka, *Wystawy-osiedla...*; też, *Małe mieszkanie z ogrodem...*

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