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The location of new residential areas is related to the occurrence of residences in the spatial development of the city. In architectural terms, 'residence' signifies a luxurious mansion in the form of a single building, country house, town house, city or country palace, castle, impressive villa, and sometimes a complex of palace buildings with pavilions. Depending on the function, architects differentiate between a royal, family, summer, and city residences (S z o l g i n i a 1982). In the classification applied by architects, the most frequently used term is "villa", defined as a residence of rich citizens, prominent clergymen, or high officials, satisfying their owners' need for grandeur and prestige. In appearance, a villa is a detached single-family home, surrounded by a garden (B ł a z k o, S k r z y p e k - Ł a c h i n s k a, 2004). Research papers on the division and classification of urban areas, concerning function and appearance, often classify villas and residences as a single type of residential buildings (L i s z e w s k i, 1978). In economic geography a 'residential area' is considered one with larger and better-furnished houses situated in attractive parts of the city, on plots of land larger than average (M a r s z a ł, S t a w a s z 2006). For the purposes of spatial planning directions, urban planners specify the criteria for an area to meet if it is to be designated as residential. In the Urban Planning Studies maintained by cities, the elements most frequently considered are the size of the plot, the floorspace, and the height of the buildings. However, there are no uniform standards in this respect. In urban planning research papers for cities of various sizes, the most uniform criterion is that of the building ratio, which should not exceed 30% of the total plot area. In case of residential plots, the suggested sizes range between 1500 and 5000 sq. m., and as a rule the smaller the city, the larger the plots of land intended for residential housing. The minimum plot size for residential developments in Łódź is 2000 sq. m. and this figure is most frequently quoted in urban planning papers concerning large cities. As regards the height of residential developments, buildings up to three-storeys are accepted. The postulation that residences must stand out for being exceptionally impressive has been taken into account by determining the minimum floorspace on the level of 300 sq. m.

The year 1990 is considered to be the onset of new residential developments. That year was the turning point in the history of Poland due to the introduction of new property market regulations at the end of 1989, as well as transformations in the whole political, economic and ownership system. After many years of construction norms limiting the house floorspace and the practice of allotting plots of land strictly at the discretion of administrative bodies, under the new circumstances the rising property market generated high-standard housing developments on large plots of land.

New residential housing developments in Łódź were built on greenfields between the ring railway line and the city boundaries. The largest concentrations, built between 1990 and 2007, can be found in the western part of the city, in Złotno, Kochoanówka and Lubinek (68 residences). In the southern part of the city (Górna) there are 36 such houses while in Łagiewniki and Julianów, though commonly perceived as residential areas, there are just 18 (tab. 1).

Table 1. Areas with new residential housing developments in Łódź in 2007.

Area	Number of residences	% of residences	Areas with residential housing [in hectares]	Total area [in hectares]	% of area with residential housing
Łódź	150	100	181.03	29439	0.62
Bałuty	42	28.00	28.74	7895	0.36
Górna	36	24.33	84.36	7186	1.17
Polesie	44	29.33	26.26	4598	0.57
Widzew	28	18.67	41.67	9077	0.45
Śródmieście (city centre)	0	0	0	683	0

Source: Author's own compilation based on MODGiK data and own research.

The spatial distribution of areas with new residential housing developments is related to the availability of undeveloped space for single-family homes. In consideration of the cost of one square metre of land, new residences were usually built on the city outskirts, far from large housing estates, and surrounded by greenery.

Large plots of land are a typical characteristic of residential housing areas – they are mostly about 3000 sq. m. with the largest reaching 60,000–80,000 sq. m. They are situated in areas with poorly developed infrastructure (lack of paved roads, sewage and water supply systems), but in proximity to green areas and on the outskirts of detached housing estates. Residences are large, usually two-storey buildings (ground floor and loft) of irregular shape, decorated with large oriel windows. Typically, they boast roofed terraces and tiled roofs. They are usually built at the far end of the plot and surrounded with high and whole fences isolating the property from its surrounding. The front fences are usually brick or stone walls with steel or wooden elements, while the less visible parts of the properties are protected by high concrete fences. The development frequently comprises a swimming pool, pond, sports ground, tennis courts, private sewage treatment system and/ or water source, and sometimes a security lodge. Most of the fences feature security agency logos. Access to many residences is very difficult because they are built by dust roads, and the high fences make it difficult to exactly define the nature of the house hidden behind (photos: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

The spatial distribution of new residences in Łódź was defined based on the land stock inventory taken in the summer of 2007. This included all finished buildings with roofs, windows, and doors. Whether they were occupied or not was impossible to determine. The pointwise locations of new residences are shown against the distribution of single-family housing developments, also including detached and terrace houses. When preparing the map, taken into account was the prevalent form of development in the given surveying district. The area of the land occupied by residences was determined utilising MODGiK (Municipal Geodesic and Cartographic Documentation Centre) reports. The properties were often found to sit on two or even three plots of land. Therefore, the entire fenced surface area of the residences was taken into account to determine their sizes. Such an approach has an additional advantage of showing the "as is", rather than "as documented", residential locations within the administrative area of Łódź. Many residential buildings are already fully functional and occupied, but due to the absence of technical and surveying approvals they have not been put on record, yet.

For the purpose of preparing the land stock inventory, a questionnaire survey was conducted in 2007 at fourteen real estate agencies in Łódź, in order to obtain information regarding the market perception of the residential areas distribution. The information so obtained in 2007 suggests that in Łódź the locations perceived to be residential areas include as follows: Złotno, Łagiewniki, Nowosolna, Julianów, Stoki, Ruda, Andrzejów, Kochoanówka, Romanów, Wiskitno, and Jagodnica. The data so collected are indicative of a convergence of market evaluations and the actual distribution of residential areas (fig. 1).

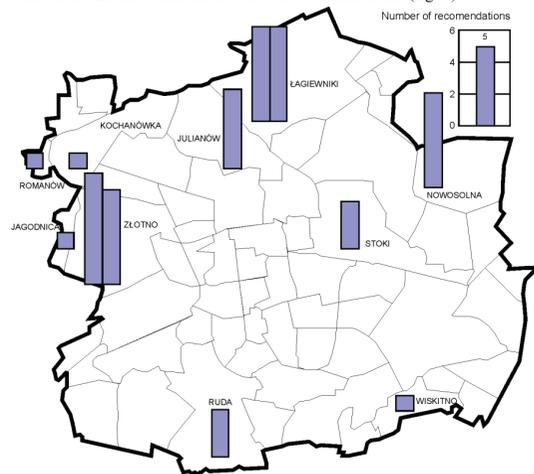


Fig. 1. Residential areas in Łódź in 2007 as per the data obtained from fourteen real estate agencies in Łódź
Source: Own compilation based on own research

Residential developments are a proof of the owners' prestige and affluence. Presently, however, the location and physiognomy of this kind of developments primarily reveal the owners' desire to be isolated from the surroundings. The actual prestige, then, becomes conspicuous only after crossing the barrier of a solid perimeter fence. Only then those isolated and well developed enclaves reveal their wealth and impress visitors. However, the very areas in which new residences have been built are often devastated and lack urban infrastructure, and so they do not help increase the prestige of the residences themselves. Probably for this reason Julianów and Łagiewniki, with well-developed localities, are still commonly perceived as residential areas. On the other hand, the most recently discovered large residential areas in Łódź include Złotno and Nowosolna.

Literature

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Photo 1. Example of residential development in Łódź



Photo 2. Example of residential development in Łódź



Photo 3. Example of residential development in Łódź



Photo 4. Example of residential development in Łódź



Photo 5. Example of residential development in Łódź



Photo 6. Example of residential development in Łódź