

Socialist in content, national in form: Small-scale housing estates in Budapest between 1945 and 1960

Bence Bene^{1*}

¹ *Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Urban Planning and Design, Budapest, Hungary*

*Corresponding author

E-mail: bene.bence@urb.bme.hu

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Abstract:

In the second half of the 20th century, solving the housing crisis became a significant social issue and political task throughout Europe, particularly in the countries of the Eastern Bloc. Although due to its quantity, prefabricated large mass housing estates became overrepresented, dozens of smaller, experimental, and diverse mass housing forms also emerged. It is hypothesized, that these small housing estates, due to their scale and quality, are urban planning projects that were realized across political, economic, and architectural changes. To demonstrate their adaptability, this paper presents the small housing estates built in one of the capitals of the Eastern Bloc countries—Budapest—during the most turbulent one-and-a-half decades of the socialist era (1945–1960). The research consists of three main parts: (1) Hungarian politics and housing policy, (2) Budapest's urban policy, and (3) a brief presentation of the urban planning and architectural aspects of Budapest's small housing estates. The result of the research is the creation of a complete small housing estates portfolio, illustrated archive articles, archival plans, and photographs. It becomes evident that although the times from World War II to the consolidation of power saw vastly different political eras, directives, and ideals realized, along with various architectural styles and housing policies, the small housing estate as an urban planning product was able to adapt and survive. Moreover, it is a valuable architectural, housing, and urban planning imprint of the era, the only mass housing form realized in numerous examples in Budapest.

Keywords: post-war, socialist realism, socialist modern, Budapest, housing estate

INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that in 20th-century Europe, the tool for addressing housing poverty became the construction of (large-scale) mass housing estates (Glendinning, 2021). These buildings took various forms from Portugal to Sweden, and from Serbia to Israel in the post-war decades (Rodrigues et al., 2023). In the case of state-socialist countries, where housing ceased to be a commodity, housing enjoyed priority politically and ideologically (Tsenkova, Polanska, 2014). The result of this is also widely acknowledged: the emergence of monotonous, grey, ten-storey pre-fabricated panel buildings on the outskirts of cities, which began to resemble ghettos (Hess et al., 2018).

The criticisms levelled at large housing estates (HEs) considered the solution would be reducing scale: in small housing estates (Szelényi, Konrád, 1969). Due to their scale, they can be designed with diverse architectural and urban forms, making these architectural projects become part of the urban fabric (Klein, Bauer, 2023). In Hungary, the popularity (or the promotion) of small HEs dates back to the 1970s (Szabó, 1978), but their presence is not limited to this era at all. In fact, in Budapest, smaller housing

estates could be found from the end of the 19th century (e.g., railway worker settlements—Bene, Szabó, 2023) through the early 20th century (e.g., temporary slums—Umbrai, 2008) to contemporary residential complexes (Erő, 2004). In my doctoral dissertation, I present an architectural and urban planning examination of all the small HEs built in Budapest during the state socialist era (104 in total). This publication, that individually presents the state socialist small housing estates planned until 1960 in Budapest (22 in total) (Fig. 1) is part of that larger, comprehensive research.

The period between 1945 and 1960 is unique because Hungary's housing policy was characterized by immaturity, rough ideas, a lack of resources, and frequent political directive changes (Kocsis, 2009). In this dysfunctional system, alongside reconstructions, new socialist cities, and private family house constructions, only the construction of small HEs can be considered a relevant urban planning project. 60% of the 37 HEs built in Budapest between 1945 and 1960 were small-scale (Fig. 1). The map clearly shows that while these smaller interventions were scattered across a wide area of the city, the medium and large HEs served sort of a model, clustered in a few focus areas. This dispersion further emphasizes the uniqueness and independence of the

small HEs. My hypothesis is that the small housing estate is a persistent urban form that withstands political and architectural changes, adapting to and continuing to meet their requirements.

This research focuses on the 22 small HEs in Budapest, which can be referred to not only as the socialist ideals of the time but also as successful and realized precursors of later solutions (large HEs) addressing the housing crisis. Some HEs of the era are well-

known to the Hungarian public due to their low numbers and exciting architectural (and political) backgrounds. However, this research sheds light on the small HEs that have been left out of the existing literary canon. My goal, besides illustrating the political and housing policy changes through these small HEs, is to highlight the diversity, adaptability, and resilience of this urban form. I believe that due to their scale, exemplary urban planning and architectural situations have emerged in the case of Budapest's small HEs, making them worthy of international attention.

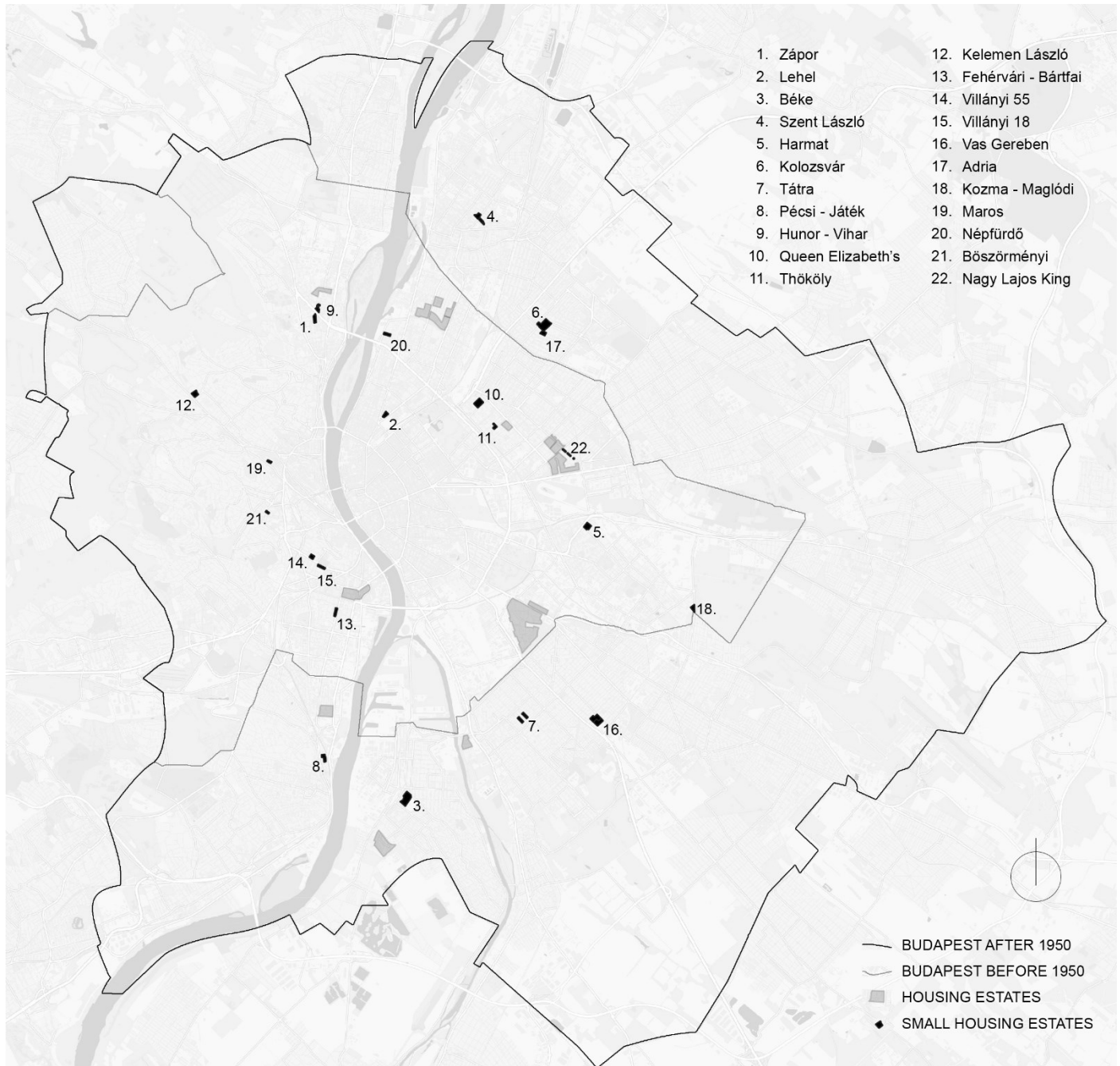


Fig. 1. Map of the 50s housing estates in Budapest, Hungary. (Source: Author, 2024)

METHODOLOGY

The paper consists of three main parts: (1) Hungarian politics and housing policy, (2) Budapest's urban policy, and (3) a brief presentation of the urban planning and architectural aspects of Budapest's small HEs. The descriptions of housing and urban pol-

icy are mainly summaries and reorganizations of domestic contemporary (post-regime change) literature, and to a lesser extent, the context is supported by archival documents and laws. Despite the length restrictions, all the 22 small HEs built in Budapest between 1945 and 1960 are presented with brief architectural or urban planning descriptions and a picture each. The materials used for the varied presentation of each small HE include

original architectural plans from the Budapest City Archives, archival official documents, publications from archival professional journals, archival maps and satellite images, contemporary literature, my own site visits, and photographs taken at that time.

To accurately define the case studies, it is necessary to define the term "small housing estate" first. After reviewing various domestic and international literary classifications, the 1971 law provides the most precise definition in this regard. I supplemented this with definitions from other researchers to obtain the most logical and consistent definition. I consider a small housing estate to be a group consisting of at least 90 apartments, spread over a contiguous area, comprising a minimum of 3 separate multi-storey, multi-apartment buildings (4/1971 decree). Additionally, it is important that these estates are distinct from their surroundings (Ferkai, 2005), have unified urban and architectural plans (Körner, Nagy, 2006), and consist of no more than 500 apartments (Egedy, 2000). The case studies presented in the publication are all located within the administrative boundaries of (Greater) Budapest and were either completed no earlier than 1950 or their planning commenced no later than 1960.

HUNGARIAN HOUSING POLICY

Following World War II, Hungary came under Soviet occupation. During the transitional period between 1945 and 1948, the dismantling of democratic frameworks and the multiparty system, already severely affected before, took place. In 1948, the dictatorship became formalized, characterized by unrestrained terror under the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi (Gyarmati, 2021). The end of this era was marked by the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the subsequent arrival of Russian tanks crushing the streets of Budapest. Following this, state socialist politics consolidated until the regime change of 1989–1990. The first decade of the regime underwent turbulent power struggles; political, and socio-economic changes, which also had a hard impact on the architecture of the 1950s. Just as we can divide the 10–15 years following the war into three periods in the political arena - (1) the formation of state socialism, (2) Rákosi dictatorship, (3) consolidation - so too can we apply this triad to architecture. Although the temporal boundaries of each period (style) may blur, we can speak of (1) post-war modern architecture, (2) socialist realism, and (3) socialist modern architecture.

Transitional period

In the aftermath of World War II, the bureaucracy concerning architecture did not undergo significant changes, and political directives did not become mandatory. Architects had two prominent tasks: firstly, to continue pre-war projects and plans (e.g. defining the principles of urban development in the capital based on the 1940 plan), and secondly, to mitigate and address the damage caused by the war (e.g. regulation 2481/1945 concerning restoration works that could be carried out without permits). Between 1945 and 1949, the focus was on the restoration of the housing stock (Saád, 1985), and only a negligible number of new—mostly prestigious—buildings were constructed (such as the People's Stadium, and the bus terminal). For instance, out of the 4469 new apartments in Budapest in 1949, only 250 were newly built (the rest were created by redistributing existing apartments) (Preisich, 1998). The newly constructed buildings were characterized by modern spatial forms, minimalist design tools, and puritan material usage. These components align with the progressive (and inherently leftist) architectural trends of the early 20th century while also fitting well with the intellectual emptiness, material poverty, and emotional distress prevalent in the post-war period.

Rákosi dictatorship

From 1948 onwards, politics demanded increasing influence in architectural and housing fields. In 1948, the first state Design Institutes were established, which expanded the next years, and architects could only find financial and existential security within this system (Keller, 2012). Due to forced industrialization, housing issues were sidelined (Kocsis, 2009). This occurred despite the dire state of housing in Hungary: in 1949, only 10% of apartments had bathrooms, and 12.6% had indoor toilets (KSH, 1950). The state saw the solution to increasing its power by taking crucial control of the housing market, leading to nationalization (regulation 6000/1948 and 4/1952). With the regulation of rent (12840/1948), property maintenance and construction became unprofitable, leading to the gradual physical and then social decay of older buildings.

In 1951, within the framework of the Great Architectural Debate, organized by the Agitation and Propaganda Department, two renowned architects of the era argued in favour of the desirable architectural style for socialism (cosmopolitan modern and socialist realism). Dictator Rákosi followed the debate with great interest, as a result of which socialist realism became the dominant architectural style in Hungary, marking the formal beginning of style terror. The absurdity of the debate was later characterized by one of the two key participants: "There was neither Debate nor Great nor was it exclusively Architectural" (Perényi, 1984). Architects were required to use socialist realist forms within Design Institutes (Kuslits, 2013).

The slogan of the style became "socialist in content, national in form," following Stalinist principles. Typically framed urban forms, inner courtyards, 3–4 storeys, classicizing façades, high-pitched roofs characterize the style. From the outside, the buildings appear palatial, part of a complex urban composition. However, apartments hidden behind ornate façades, arcades, and corridors are modest, and sometimes even have reduced comfort (i.e., shared bathroom) (Prakfalvi, Szűcs, 2010). Despite being a style dictated by the regime, socialist realism was not the only style, given the structural issues and modernism continued alongside (Honvári, 2006). While the decorative façades of socialist realist buildings may seem anachronistic, their floor plans and spatial arrangements often adhere to modern principles, transcending political boundaries.

Consolidation

After the Hungarian Revolution (1956), the building of a softer dictatorship began in the second half of the decade, called goulash communism. However, because of the transition, the end of the Stalinist era in Hungary occurs only at the beginning of the 60s (Rainer, 2003). This boundary is reinforced by the 15-year plan (1960), which redefined the housing policy of the following decades, envisioning and realizing the construction of one million new homes. After 1956, welfare measures became a priority (thanks to Soviet political initiative), and the budget for housing construction increased several times over (Körner, Nagy, 2006). The State's involvement in housing construction increased steadily, reaching a 50:50 ratio of private and state-built constructions by the end of the decade (Preisich, 1998).

To address the housing crisis promptly, standard designs, mass HEs, and small and reduced-comfort apartments were planned and built (Rákosi et al., 1956). Architects were given the opportunity to work within freer theoretical and formal frameworks (Simon, 2013). Both on an urban planning and architectural scale, we can observe the incorporation of modern and traditional principles. In addition to state projects, as a sign of consolidation, the government facilitated the construction of private homes

(35/1957) and condominiums built by the state bank (OTP), which were offered as inherited properties. Furthermore, cooperative buildings organized based on territorial or workplace criteria emerged (Csizmady, 2008). In addition to the construction of new private apartments, the 27/1959 (V.7.) government decree, in contrast to the decrees on nationalization, facilitated privatization and the alienation of condominium properties.

CITY POLICY OF BUDAPEST

Post-war Budapest architecture was distinctly shaped by two national trends: reconstruction efforts and the continuation of pre-war plans. In 1945, the principles of urban development for the capital were determined based on plans from 1940 (Fabó, Nagy, 2023). This involved defining housing construction along a north-south axis and assigning residential functions to Buda and city functions to Pest. Due to excessive centralization, the creation of sub-centres was proposed. The most ambitious urban plan of the time was the creation of Greater Budapest, where the administrative boundaries of the city were expanded to encompass the surrounding agglomeration (Szekeres, 1996). As a result, the population doubled, and the existing 14 districts expanded to 22.

The concept was conceived in the first decade of the 20th century, but the political environment did not allow for its implementation until the 1940s. The plan for Greater Budapest, completed in 1948, came into effect in 1950. Since then, the boundaries of Budapest have remained constant, making this year a cornerstone in the city's history. After the war, the informal population of the city continuously increased, despite the fact that until 1953, families belonging to the middle class were being relocated from major cities, especially from Budapest (Hantó, 2009). The number of newly built apartments continuously decreased, reaching its minimum by 1953 (Preisich, 1998). By this time, the housing situation in the capital had become critical, which became a source of social tension.

With the onset of consolidation, the State's involvement drastically increased, and between 1956 and 1960, one-third of new apartments were built in the HEs schemes. These HEs were constructed in the most suitable parts of the city, where minimal demolition and infrastructural development were required. This often meant the transitional zone between pre-1950 Budapest and the attached areas. Most HEs were of small or medium size, offering diverse (experimental) or traditional architectural designs, and due to their location, they represented higher quality compared to their later counterparts (Csizmady, 2008). Larger apartments were mainly built in the inner city and on the Buda side, reflecting the existing prestige of their surroundings (Keller, 2012). Even if the HEs had different prestige levels than their environment, their small scale allowed them to adapt and integrate over the decades (Bene, 2023).

SMALL HOUSING ESTATES

Post-war

Only 5 small HEs bear the marks of post-war modern architecture in Budapest. All of them are located in the working-class areas of the city; moreover, two of them are situated in the newly annexed districts, serving as new sub-centres. Each development comprises freestanding minimalist or modern architectural slabs and cubes surrounded by open space. The first small HE was built in Buda, on Zápor Street (1949–1951) (Fig. 2.). The development, consisting of two three-storey slab houses and three seven-storey towers, faced strong criticism, particularly for its outdated and poor design (external corridors, no elevator) (Gerle, 1950). The first realized initiative aimed at providing housing for (best) workers was the construction of the Lehel Square HE (1949–

1951) (Prakfalvi, 2009) (Fig. 3.). This investment, located close to the downtown, comprised a total of four (out of which 3 were identical) five-storey slabs. Although the two-bedroom apartments were showcased as a positive example even to foreign politicians, 90% of the residents wanted to move out after the first winter due to the unreasonably high heating costs and other technical issues.



Fig. 2. Archive photo of the Zápor Street small HE. (Source: Gerle, 1950)



Fig. 3. Archive photo of the Lehel Square small HE (Photo: Ráth László, FSZEK, around 1950. (Source: Prakfalvi, 2009)



Fig. 4. Aerial view of the Béke Square small HE in 1963. (Photo: MHSZ, 1963)

Other HEs for (the best) workers were built in the newly annexed areas of Újpest and Csepel. Since both the new northern district

of the city (Újpest) and the island tip in the southern part of Budapest (Csepel) were predominantly inhabited by workers even before socialism, it was appropriate to build model HEs there. Furthermore, Csepel was planned to be developed into a new socialist city, with its first project being the construction of a sub-centre, called Béke Square (1951–1955) (Preisich, 1948). The buildings clustered around the church consist of two-storey cubes and three-storey slabs with outdoor corridors (Fig. 4.). These slabs became standardized due to their affordability and were adapted in Salgótarján and Pécs as well (Vámosy, 2016). These slabs can also be found in the aforementioned example in Újpest, also in a new sub-centre situation.



Fig. 5. Archive photo of the Szent László Square small HE from 1959. (Photo: Sándor György, 1959)

Alongside these buildings in Szent László Square, other standardized plans for cubes and slabs were implemented. Despite the identical standardized plans and target residents, what connects these two locations is that different architectural styles were used to finish the HEs. In Csepel, 9 modern and 3 socialist realist slabs were built, and alongside 8 modern and 2 socialist realist cubes were erected. Besides the differences in floor plans and façade styles, it is noteworthy that - unlike the modern buildings - the socialist realist buildings have their own gardens and plots. At the Szent László Square HE, four buildings were constructed at the end of the 1950s, blending socialist realism and modernism (Bene, 1959). Following the line of the street, they are situated on private plots but feature flat roofs, pillar frames, and ribbon windows. Surprisingly, beautiful sgraffito adornments decorate them (MÉ, 1959) (Fig. 5.).

The best example of the mixture of different styles within one development is the Harmat Street HE in Kőbánya (1950–1954). Two different Design Institutes were commissioned to design it even before the era of style dictatorship. One of them planned a representative building next to the main road, while the other planned 6 slab houses for the space behind this building (Preisich, 1955). Due to this duality of having one design plan yet designing and constructing contrasting buildings, they became total opposites of each other (Fig. 6.). While the 6 slabs organized around the square represent a puritan (even meagre) modernism, the representative building stands as one of Budapest's outstanding socialist realist legacies: with arcades, columns, towers, and the piano nobile. The contradictory nature of these developments might have been created by the different political biases and embeddedness of the Design Institutes.

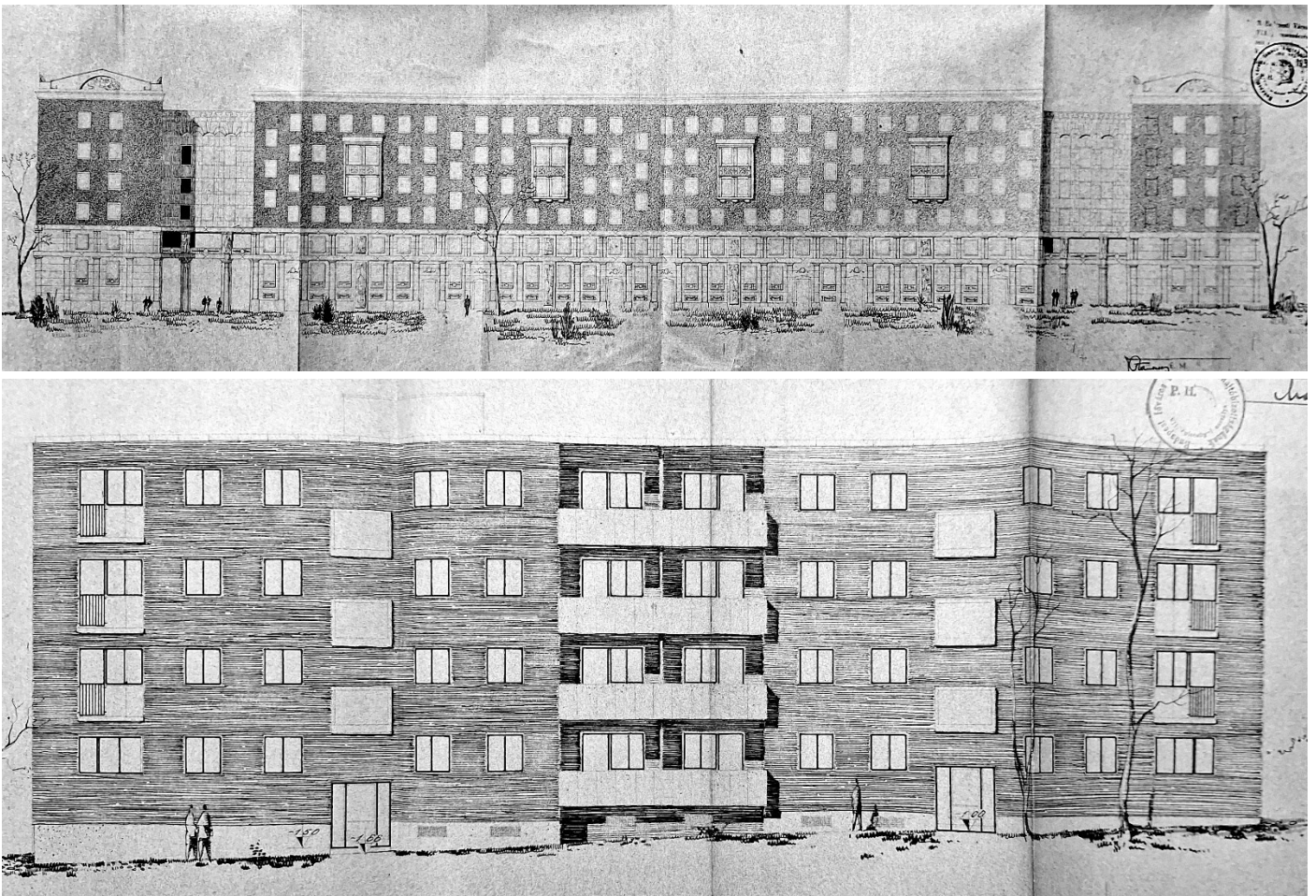


Fig. 6. 1950's plans for the façades of the Harmat Street small HE. (Source: BUVÁTI, LAKÓTERV, 1951)

Socialist realism

The number of investments has doubled compared to the previous era, and in many cases, the scale has also increased. The locations of these 10 projects are less explicitly tied to industry and the working class, but the dominance of the outer skirt remains. Development of the sub-centres continued as a pattern, while on the other hand, densification of high-prestige neighbourhoods in Buda is evident. Apart from the mandatory socialist realist façade design, the case studies are not uniform in terms of scale, layout, density, and land ownership. A great example of the development of new sub-centres is the Kolozsvár Street HE, consisting of 440 apartments (1953–1956), which includes kindergarten, nursery, and services within its buildings (Rátonyi, 2013).

The open and permeable framed urban form, consisting of six square-shaped blocks, is both space and mass-oriented (Fig. 7). Thanks to well-proportioned public spaces and buildings, a unified and pleasant urban composition has emerged, with a green park strip running through the centre adorned with sculptures. The precisely planned public space network reminiscent of French gardens and the anachronistic façades disguise the small, dark, and poorly oriented apartments behind them. The Tátra Square HE in Pesterzsébet can be considered less successful. The two-storey buildings with minimal decoration form the boundaries of one side of a 100 × 200 metre central park.

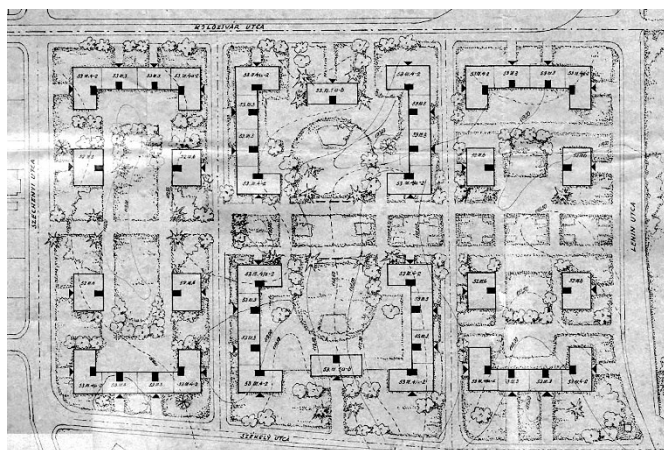


Fig. 7. Photo of the main public space and the master plan of the Kolozsvár Street small HE. (Source: Rátonyi, 2013)

On the other side of the two rows of buildings, away from the street line, smaller parks were created. This abundance of open space, combined with a lack of function resulted in poorly proportioned areas (Fig. 8). Although the HE fits well into the already established urban fabric of the district in the plans, in reality, it turned into a disjointed no man's land. The least successful

socialist realist housing estate is located in the centre of Budafok on Pécsi – Játék Street (1957–1958) (Tarnai, 2023). The 9 slabs, defying the urbanistic principles of socialist realism, are arranged barracks-style, in single rows. The houses consist of one-room apartments without bathroom (Fig. 9.). Due to the intended community (workers) and the minimal budget allocated for construction, the façades of the buildings also exhibit the puritanical simplicity not typical of socialist realism.



Fig. 8. Urban wasteland in the Tátra Square small HE. (Photo: Author, 2023)

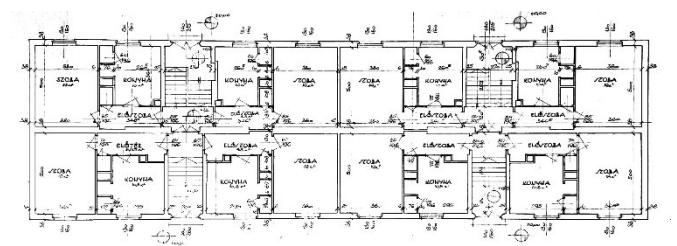


Fig. 9. Façade and floorplan of the Pécsi - Játék Street small HE. (Top photo: Author, 2023; source below: BUVÁTI, 1965)

One of the most excitingly designed HEs can be considered the Hunor – Vihar Street project in Óbuda (1954–1956). The façades of the buildings evoke the restrained ornamentation of Nordic realism, and their layout following the street line fits well into their surroundings (Fig. 10.). Moreover, the construction consisting of four-storey buildings exhibits unexpected sensitivity: when connecting to a lower neighbouring building, it steps down by one floor. The uniqueness of the housing estate lies in the fact that out of the four buildings, two have their own enclosed gardens, while the other two hover in the public space. This duality can also be observed in Budapest's most famous socialist realist housing estate, located on Queen Elizabeth's Road in Zugló (1954–1957).

Half of the 24 two-storey cube houses are located on private plots, although fences were only erected around them after the regime change (MÉ, 1954). The popularity of the development is owed to its high-quality public space system, spacious three-room apartments, and good community (Fig. 11.). The buildings feature prominent entrances, French balconies, and delicate decorations, but their placement and form follow modern principles. Its success is indicated by the fact that a new HE based on this sample plan was built on Thököly Road just one street away (1956–1960). Although there were no changes in the floor plans, the façades became quieter, decorations were omitted, and the entrance received a modern design (Fig. 12.). The entire HE is organized around a common courtyard, which is enclosed. HES built on private land became characteristic, especially in the wealthier areas of the Buda hillsides.

The Kelemen László Street also features the aforementioned cube house sample plan (1952–1956) (Fig.13.), where 8 such buildings were arranged in a chequered pattern and fenced off (Csordás, 1955). The other projects in Buda returned to framed-row construction following the street line. On the corner of Fehérvári Road and Bártfai Street, on either side, tree three-storey, low-key decorated slab houses were built, symmetrically on shared plots, with shops along the ground floor (Fig. 14.). Later on, one of the plots (probably around the turn of the 1960s), the composition was expanded with two more slab houses, but in a more modern way.

Lastly, the "luxury" housing estates near the Gellért Hill must be mentioned (1953–1955). At 55 Villányi Road, the slab house sample plans from 1953 were placed in a symmetrical composition (Bakay, 2012) (Fig. 15.). The eight houses are organized around two courtyards, and between them—strengthening the symmetry—there is a decorative pool, statue, and pergola. Taking into account the slope of the terrain, the higher buildings have fewer floors. At 18 Villányi Road, a more open-framed construction was created, with setback courtyard-like front yards. Out of the five completed buildings, three are aligned with the street line, and their ground-floor wings open onto the sidewalk with retail spaces (Fig. 16.). Compared to the previous ones, denser construction, and more detailed façades can be observed, giving this elite housing estate a distinctly urban character. Nevertheless, the architectural details of the Villányi Road HEs were strongly criticized by professionals (Abai, 1955).



Fig. 10. The Hunor - Vihar Street small HE during its construction. (Photo: UVATERV, 1956)

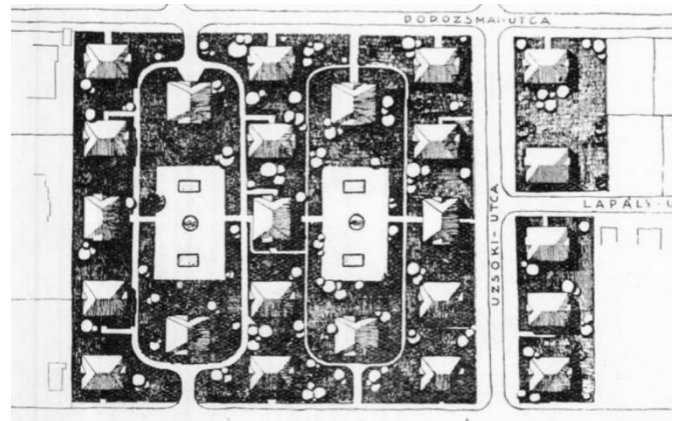


Fig. 11. The Queen Elizabeth's Road small HE master plan and during its construction. (Top source: MÉ, 1954; photo below: József Samodai, 1955)



Fig. 12. The Thököly Road small HE nowadays. (Photo: Author, 2023)



Fig. 13. Sample plan of the Kelemen László Street small. (Source: Csordás, 1955)

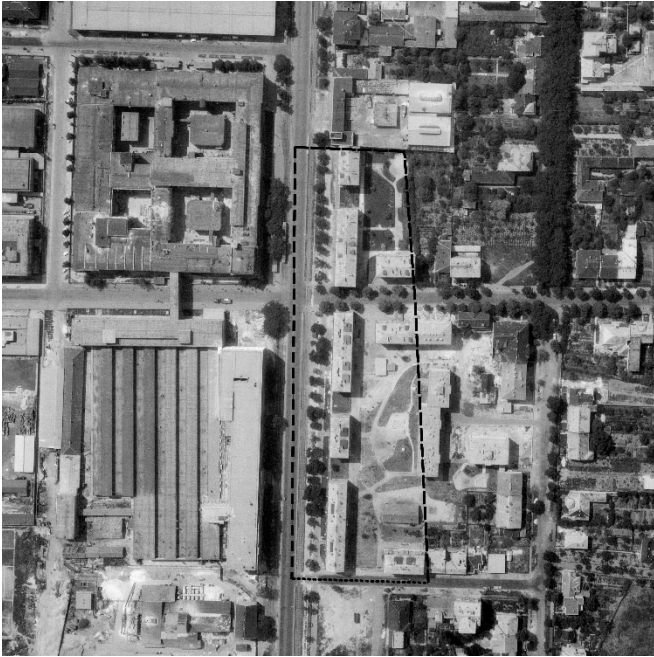


Fig. 14. Aerial view of the Fehérvári Road – Bártfai Street small HE in 1963. (Photo: FÖMI, 1963)

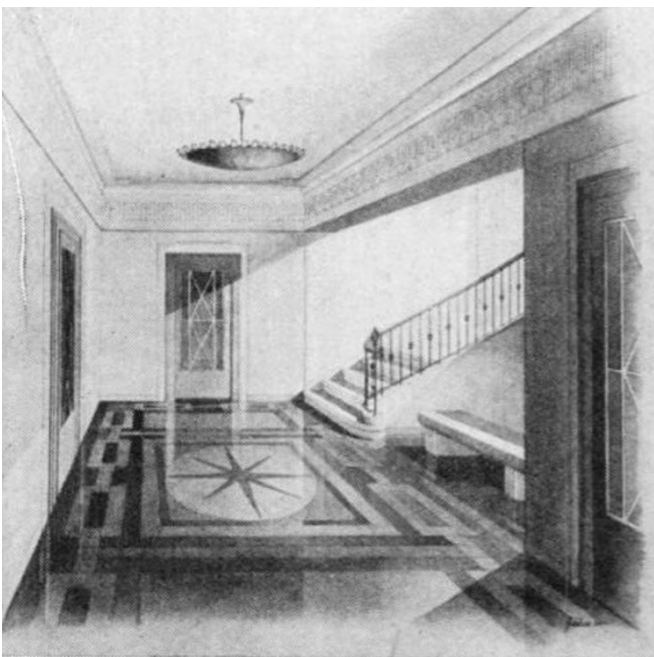


Fig. 15. The 55 Villányi Road small HE in- and outdoor. (Source: Abai, 1955)



Fig. 16. Street view of the 18 Villányi Road small HE. (Photo: Author, 2023)

Socialist modern

In the late 1950s, the architecture bears witness to liberation with the creation of 7 socialist modern HEs in Budapest. With their mixed architectural-urbanistic designs and high quality, they mark the real end of stylistic tyranny. Except for one, all of them were built on enclosed private plots. This indicates that instead of prioritizing the formation of centres and urban compositions, the emphasis shifted towards filling existing larger gaps in the city. The spatial focus is once again placed on the working-class neighbourhoods of Pest. The largest small HE was also realized in an outer working-class district (Kispest), on Vas Gereben Street (1958–1964). Spanning across 7 hectares, this development comprises 21 two and three-storey slab and cube houses, as well as a school and kindergarten. The diverse standard designs are organized around open space courtyards in some cases, while in others they are arranged in rows. You could find both inside and outdoor corridors, high-pitched and flat-roofed buildings. Its architecture is refined yet not monotonous (with prominent staircases, diverse transition spaces, and alternating brick and panel façades) (Fig. 17.).



Fig. 17. Outdoor corridors in the Vasgereben Street small HE. (Photo: Author, 2023)

Adjacent to the socialist realist HE on Kolozsvár Street, another development was erected on Adria Street, consisting of 10 two-storey, pitched-roof houses on a common plot (Fig. 18.). These buildings, each containing 12 one-and-a-half-room apartments with balconies, surround a high-quality inner courtyard featuring a garden pond and playground. While the exact date of this project is unknown (between 1945 and 1960), its construction and architecture suggest it belongs to this era. Similarly, the HE on

Kozma and Maglódi Road built on a triangular-shaped plot, is not precisely dated (between 1945 and 1960). In the 1960s, a cube house was added to the repetitive composition of slab houses in this development. The layout is slightly more fortunate as one row deviates from this system owing to the triangular plot. Its landscaping is well-crafted, with individual apartments featuring unique floor plans (35–60 m²) and tasteful modern façades, rivaling the luxury properties of the Buda Hills in the representativeness of its main entrance (Fig. 19.). Given its peculiar location (bordering a forest, cemetery, and prison), as well as its architectural quality, it is one of the most unusual small HEs in Budapest.



Fig. 18. Façade detail of the Adria Street small HE. (Photo: Author, 2023)

Similarly, unique location and high architectural quality characterize the houses on Maros Street overlooking Városmajor Park in Buda (1958). The four five-storey buildings are perpendicular to the street and the park on separate plots (MÉ, 1959). With its rastered glass brick staircases, slender corner balconies, and point-like small windows appearing on the façades, as well as its diverse apartment sizes, it represents high architectural standards, although the enclosed nature of the façades facing the park remains questionable (Fig. 20.).

The Népfürdő Street HE facing the Danube (1959–1961) is considered outstanding not so much for its architectural qualities but rather for its urban planning aspects. The plot is surrounded by sports fields, a beach, and a pre-war colony. Facing the Danube, the building adopts the parapet height and roof design of the colony's buildings, but as it turns into smaller streets, this accommodating attitude diminishes. A modern flat-roofed slab connects with an additional staircase to the Danube-facing building, creat-

ing a closed-corner block. However, the development then becomes scattered, with standard cube houses alternating within the block or along the street front (Fig. 21.).



Fig. 19. Aerial view of the Kozma - Maglódi Road small HE in 1973 and its main entrance nowadays. (Photo: top – Author, 2023; below: FÖMI, 1973)



Fig. 20. Visual design of the Maros Street small HE in 1958. (Source: IPARTERV, 1958)

The lyrical development balances well between traditional and modern building approaches. The Böszörményi Road HE (1957–1960) fits best with the existing built environment. In a central part of Buda, within one block, you can find grand bourgeois villas, four-storey, densely built tenement houses, and a more complex, colony-like ensemble of buildings. The socialist modern housing estate balances well between these various characters:

while facing the main road, it features a five-storey, closed section; towards the side streets, it opens up green areas, flanked by building blocks maintaining the height of neighbouring structures (Fig. 22.). The interior of the block is filled with a repetition of the main street's front building twice. The density of the plot, the spatial positioning and height of the buildings, and their pitched roof design resulted in a housing estate that seamlessly blends into its surroundings.

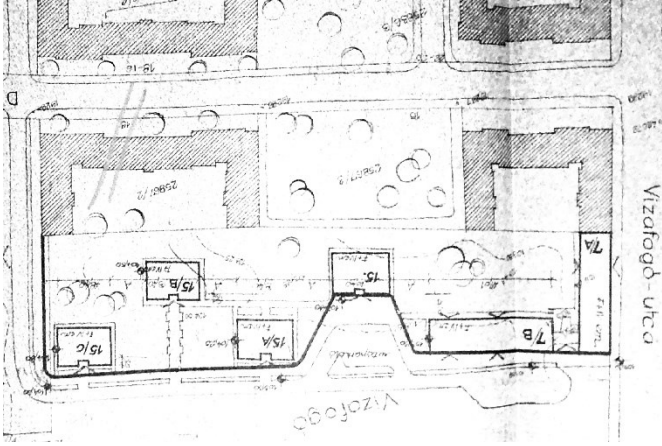


Fig. 21. Master plan of the Népfürdő Street small HE from 1959. (Source: BUVÁTI, 1959)

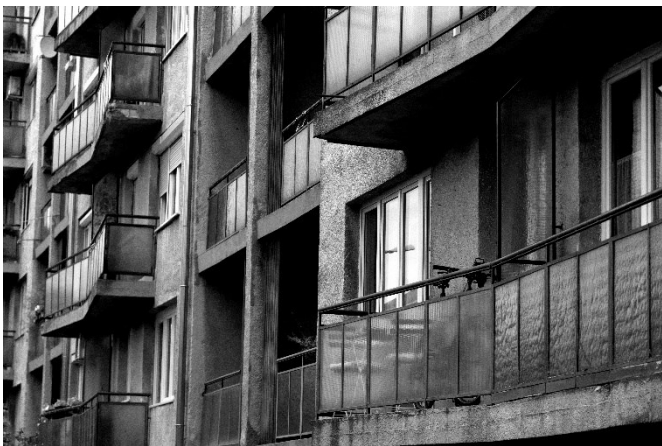
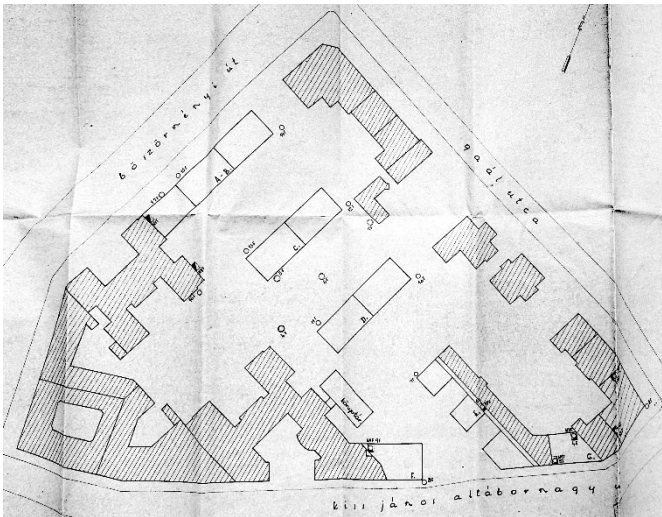


Fig. 22. 1959's master plan of the Böszörményi Road small HE and its façade detail nowadays. (Top source: ÉM, 1959; photo below: Author, 2023)

The Nagy Lajos King Road HE is also an excellent example of integration, although it is nestled into a suburban environment rather than an urban one (1959–1961). Several smaller and larger HEs are linked to one of Budapest's new representative boulevards. However, historically, this area had a suburban atmosphere with family homes and semi-detached houses. This housing estate bridged this dual character by erecting eight identical buildings on eight different private plots. Referencing the semi-detached environment, the buildings are freestanding and distinctly divided into two parts, connected by staircases, while their contemporary material use, appearance, and two- to three-storey height evoke the character of the representative main road (Fig. 23.).



Fig. 23. Street view of the Nagy Lajos King Road small HE. (Photo: Author, 2023)

CONCLUSION

After outlining the housing policy in Hungary and Budapest between 1945 and 1960, the research presents the small HEs built during in Budapest this period based on urban planning and architectural considerations. The small-scale housing estates can be divided into three groups, corresponding to political—(1) transition period, (2) Rákosi dictatorship, (3) consolidation; and architectural—(1) post-war, (2) socialist realism, (3) socialist modern—changes. During the establishment of state socialism, the post-war small HEs were mostly implemented in the centres of working-class neighbourhoods. The buildings adhered to modern architectural and urban planning principles, but the quality of their construction was poor. During the harshest years of state socialism, the style terror of socialist realism prevailed. The target audience of the small HEs built during this period was more diverse: alongside elite HEs hiding behind decorative façades with statues and fountains on private plots, there were also barracks-like estates consisting of one-room apartments with reduced comfort. During the years of consolidation, socialist modern small HEs represented consistently high quality, perhaps due to their placement on private plots. They featured diverse architecture and urban form.

Overall, it can be stated that these small HEs were built in diverse styles, architectural quality, layout, and budget, catering to both the party elite and the working class. Given this universality, they provide an excellent layer of housing and city policy in Budapest of the 1945–1960 period. Over the years, there has been an improvement in the architectural and construction quality of the buildings, with the emphasis shifting from developments floating in public spaces to private plot constructions. Except for the downtown area, small HEs can be found in all areas of Budapest, which demonstrates their success. Examining the individual small HEs, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis has been confirmed, namely that a small housing estate is a persistent urban form that withstands political and architectural changes,

adapting to and continuing to meet their requirements. Focusing on the 22 small HEs built in Budapest built between 1945 and 1960, the paper highlights the diversity of their inhabitants, the adaptability of their architecture style, and the resilience of their urban form.

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