On the site, where the Havanna housing estate was built, had once stood the so-called State Estate, which consisted of makeshift buildings with substandard apartments for refugees after WWI. Havanna was constructed between 1977 and 1983 as a big state investment project, and provided homes for 22,000 people at the time in 6,200 dwellings. A lot of homes were distributed for socially disadvantaged people: some of its residents came from the former State Estate, some from the inner city clearance sites.

Change in the ownership structure of the apartments

On the site, where the Havanna housing estate was built, had once stood the so-called State Estate, which consisted of makeshift buildings with substandard apartments for refugees after WWI. Havanna was constructed between 1977 and 1983 as a big state investment project, and provided homes for 22,000 people at the time in 6,200 dwellings. A lot of homes were distributed for socially disadvantaged people: some of its residents came from the former State Estate, some from the inner city clearance sites.

The composition of residents changed rapidly in the early 90s, mainly as a result of privatisation. Then tenants could buy their units for about 10-15% of the market value from the municipality and sell it the next day for 100% in the market. In the hope of financial gain, a lot of the residents – mainly the poorest layer – sold their apartments and moved away.

Surging utility prices hit (especially hard) many families in the housing estates, as these homes were expensive to maintain. Thus many were prompted to sell the apartments and move to the suburbs.

In recent years the estate has became the target area for lower-middle class people, mainly youngsters with children, as low real estate prices – a result of the estate’s bad reputation – made it possible for these families to purchase an apartment here.

The former State Estate in the beginning of the XX. century

The poster explores, how an ambitious local government tries to change the reputation of a housing estate, which simply inherited its bad image. Due to its history – mostly because of its original population – and its former reputation as a problem spot, the Havanna housing estate in Budapest has been stigmatized in the eyes of the residents in and around the capital. Although its social and physical reality has changed quite substantially from the second half of the 1990s – due to spontaneous social changes caused by the privatization and the well-planned efforts of the local municipality – it is hard to change this reputation. The poster presents an overview of the origins of the problem, the social transformation that occurred after the change of the regime and the steps the local government has taken to improve the reputation of the housing estate.

Havanna housing estate in construction

DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE MEASURES? WHAT WOULD YOU DO INSTEAD? WE NEED YOUR OPINION!