

Large housing estates in Slovenia

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RESTATE



Between the planned and the realised

The process between the design of the large scale housing estate and its realisation is lengthy and complex. At the same time, it involves many different actors whose interests are often very diverse.

Furthermore, divergence of goals may appear during this time frame, which could be a consequence of economic or political changes. Thus, the entire process is interrupted. This results in an incomplete neighbourhood, leading to many subsequent problems and a degraded quality of life in the estate.

The intention is to present - based on the example of the Žusterna - Semedela estate - the consequences of the gap between what was planned and what was realised. The Žusterna III plan has never been entirely realised. At the same time the physical structure has been altered. As a consequence there are several problems, that the estate faces today. These relate to physical structure, a lack of certain programmes due to inadequate premises, as well to the resulting social problems.

ESTATE BASED ON NEW PRINCIPLES

The Žusterna III was the only large housing estate planned in Koper. The plans for the Žusterna III, drawn up in the 1970s, incorporated an estate with 4,600 dwellings.

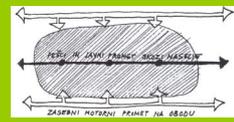


By the 1980s, only a quarter of the planned estate had been completed. The main reasons why the neighbourhood concept was never realised on a big scale in Koper is that housing needs were not as great as had been anticipated and the old part of the town was still considered as the centre and a sufficient provider of services.

The development plan for the Žusterna III, which won the first prize in the town-planning competition (authors: Lučka in Aleš Sarec, 1979), followed the Scandinavian concept of a neighbourhood, particularly in terms of connecting the estate with public transport and limiting car traffic in the area. Parking areas were planned on the outskirts of the estate, allowing only pedestrian and public transport through the settlement. The morphology of the estate design followed the ground configuration and traditional building types of the coastal area with high-density buildings and various building heights with surrounding courtyards, squares, and streets. The design aimed at creating self-sufficiency with the inclusion of all basic and personal services, shops, schools, a day-care centre for children, recreational areas, and so forth.



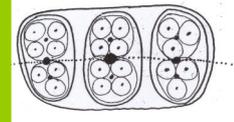
The morphology of the estate design followed the ground configuration



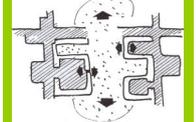
Traffic and transport network



Equal accessibility



Splitting-up of estate by creating small neighbourhoods



Intertwining of green and public spaces with built structure

IMAGES OF TODAY

In the course of the construction, however, the economic interests of the construction company prevailed over the arguments of the architects who had designed the estate. The contractors raised the heights of the buildings by two or three storeys without the authorisation of the planners.



The authors of the project had no influence on architectural design as the construction company selected their own architects. The architecture barely conforms to the archetype of the Istrian house, and lacks autochthonous or contemporary details and has no orientation emphasis at all.



Formation of characteristic city street, squares, courtyards



Ground floor activities along the main street and squares



Diversity of the design of streets and piazzas enables visual orientation within the estate.



The green areas within the estate offer spaces for socialisation and contact with the natural environment.



The design and the equipment of public spaces are very modest. All elements (benches, walls, scarps) are from concrete rather than from the autochthonous stone, as was intended in the initial plan.

Open multi storey garages were built on the edge of the estate. Since they were badly constructed, the residents consider them unsafe and rather park their cars in the green courtyards and areas that were intended for pedestrians and emergency access.

The main road for pedestrians and for public transport which was planned to be the main thoroughfare ended up - due to the discontinuation of construction - as a dead end and edge road of the estate. This may well be one of the causes of the high vacancy rate in the business premises on the ground level, which further diminishes the quality of the estate.



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