



**THE SYSTEM HABITATION
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF BULGARIA**

1976

PEOPLE`S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MINISTRY OF BUILDING AND ARCHITECTURE

THE SYSTEM "HABITATION"
OF THE PEOPLE`S REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA

Sofia, May 1976

HOUSING POLICY AND THE SYSTEM "HABITATION"

The life cycle of Man consists of three harmonious spheres of vital importance: work, habitation, and recreation. Habitation is particularly important as it includes all activities developed in relation to the dwelling. The system "habitation" is the physical environment of those activities, and is an integer part of the entire living environment of Man, as similarly the activities of habitation are inseparable from the entire activity of life and cannot find an explanation out of the context of the way of life as a whole.

The development of the system "habitation" in the People's Republic of Bulgaria reflects the characteristics of the socialist way of life and social system, as well as the particular social and economic objectives of the development of the country.

The Eleventh Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party formulated the basic social and economic target of the current Seventh five-year plan (1976-1980) as follows: "...to carry steadily into effect the Party principle of an ever better satisfying of the material and cultural needs of the people by ensuring a dynamic and proportional development of the national economy, a rapid raising of the productivity of labour, and of the efficiency and high quality of production by means of modernization, reconstruction, concentration, and accelerated implementation

of scientific and technological attainments; by raising the socialist moral principles of the working people and establishing the socialist way of life." The accelerated economic development combined with the solution of important social problems is a basic characteristic of the state policy of Bulgaria. On the one hand, this is connected with an all-round intensification of the national economy. On the other hand, it means the realization of a whole programme for the raising of the living standard of the population, taking into consideration not only the quantity of production, but also the present and future demands of the working people as regards its higher quality, under the conditions of the ever increasing part of the public funds of consumption.

An important target of the above mentioned programme is the solution of the housing problem, which is treated as a strategic problem of the national social policy and requires a rapid and complete solution, taking into consideration a vast number of factors and conditions. This calls forth a complex and systematic approach to the housing problem that can be solved thanks to the advantages of the socialist planned economic system, which make possible to regard the housing stock of the country as a linked system "habitation" subject to unified management in accordance with the targets of a consistent housing policy. The National Housing Programme is being fulfilled at present and it will ensure by 1990 the accomplishment of the basic targets of the housing policy: for each family a dwelling, and an individual room for each

inhabitant. More than 242 thousand flats were built during the Sixth five-year plan (1971 - 1975), and it is envisaged to build some 420 thousand flats more during the Seventh five-year plan (1976 - 1980). Those are rates, corresponding to the sped-up social and economic development of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

The specific character of the socialist way of life is decisive for the approach to the physical and social organization of the system "habitation" in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. The socialist way of life caused deep changes in all fields of human activity; exploitation of man by man was done away with; the unfair distribution of material and cultural wealth was eliminated; and social segregation and anti-human relations were liquidated. These changes called forth changes in the way of thinking, mentality, behaviour, and social character of the people. The old patriarchal way of living disappeared, and it was too primitive to be idealized today. A new way of habitation came into being, which required a new spatial environment and new scientifically motivated normatives for its organization.

The process of gradual formation of a social uniformity of the society develops dynamically. The social character of agricultural workers is changing, and their way of life, work, and cultural level become more and more like those of the working class. The discrepancy between physical and mental work becomes smaller and this provides for an overcoming of the essential differences between towns and villages, for

the formation of an equivalent social standard of the system "habitation". And indeed, the process of full reconstruction of Bulgarian villages according to the requirements of the modern way of life is being completed now on a scale unknown in the past.


Social relations of a new character and quality are developed among people: relations of friendship and cooperation, of collectivism and mutual aid. The part played by the social factors in the formation of the human personality becomes more and more important without decreasing the importance of the family. The self-confidence of Man as creator, participating actively in the fields of management, culture, and art, and needing a wide sphere of activities for his harmonious development, becomes higher.

All this determines the trends of development of the habitation environment, and the requirements of its functional and physical organization. The process of development of the socialist way of life calls for a constant improvement of the complex and harmonious living environment, needed for its activities.

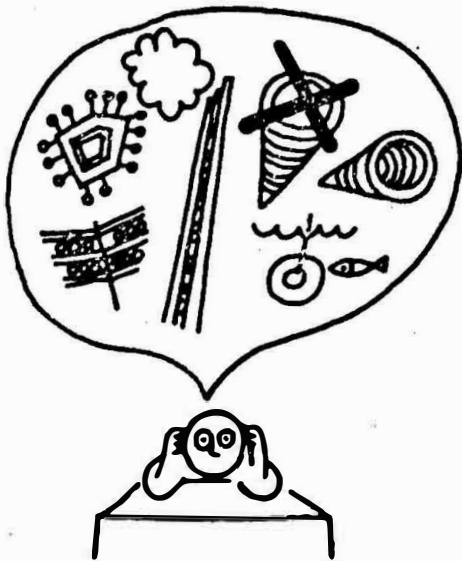
With a view to the above, the present material deals with some of the more important aspects and problems of the national housing policy and the development of the system "habitation" in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

As pointed out before, the housing problem of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is treated as a strategic problem in the National Economic and Social Programme for raising the living standard of the population. The measures for its solution are connected with the state policy of economic and physical planning. The housing programme is a part of the Plan for social and economic development of the country, which ensures all necessary material and financial resources for it. In this respect, the basic target of the national housing policy is: raising of the living standard by means of a rational use, preservation, and reproduction of the system "habitation" which includes all dwelling and their immediate environment. This is one objective of the main target - to raise the living standard of the people. The main aspects of the housing policy of the People's Republic of Bulgaria are:

- Application of an all-round approach for the solution of the housing problem with taking into account all influencing external factors and conditions;
- Effecting of a constant housing programming on the basis of the Unified Plan for Perspective Development of the Settlements in the People`s Republic of Bulgaria in connection with the entire mechanism of physical planning at all levels;
- Equivalent and harmonious including of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the housing problem;
- Carrying-out of a thorough social and economic analysis of the contents, structure, and volume of the needs for the building of houses;
- Setting-up of scientifically motivated indices and normatives for a complete organization of the dwellings and environment - now and in perspective;
- Optimal use of the resources for housing construction and a rational use of the reserves of housing stock;
- Wide application of new types of technologies in the field of building, a constant increase of the rate of its industrialization and cost reduction;

 Improvement of the types of organization and management of the building stock, its maintenance and modernization.

In this connection, the evolution of the concepts and ideas of the dwelling in the future is closely related with the strive towards a realistic housing policy, aiming to combine the desired with the practically possible. by taking into consideration the complex effect of diverse factors.



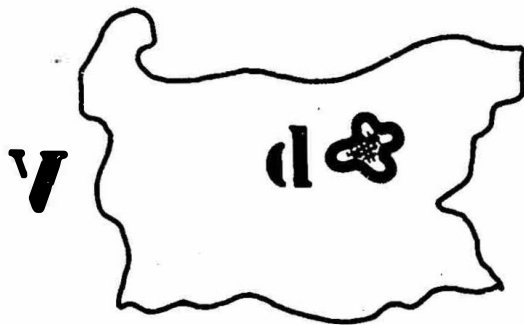
Thus the housing forecasting and programming turns into an abjective and law-governed process, covering both the targets and the means for their fulfilment. A prerequisite therefore is the complex and systematic character of the accepted method of approach, possible only in the conditions of planned socialist economy.



The national housing policy regards the dwelling and its immediate environment as an unified complex.



This complex includes a multiple of necessary interrelated elements forming a definite system: dwelling, elements of recreation, work, public service, infrastructure, natural environment.



This inseparable integrity determines the contents of the system "habitation" in all its levels - from the primary (I) to the national (V) .

The mechanism of physical planning established in the People's Republic of Bulgaria provides for an actual covering of the national, regional, and local levels with the purpose to build up the integral system "habitation" on the territory of the country. The system is subject to unified management. A stable basis for the accomplishment of this unity is the Unified Territorial Plan of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, on the ground of which the whole strategy of development of all components of the environment is organized. The Unified Plan is a basic document of the development of the society in space. It serves also for the long range forecasting and programming of all social subsystems and activities, the territorial allocation and building up thereof, the formation of the perspective settlements network of the country as well as the local settlements systems included in the latter. Of particular importance are the prospects of the interaction of the system "habitation" on the one hand and the other spatial systems (work, recreation, public service, infrastructure) on the other hand, which ensures the building of a complex environment and its constant growth and improvement.

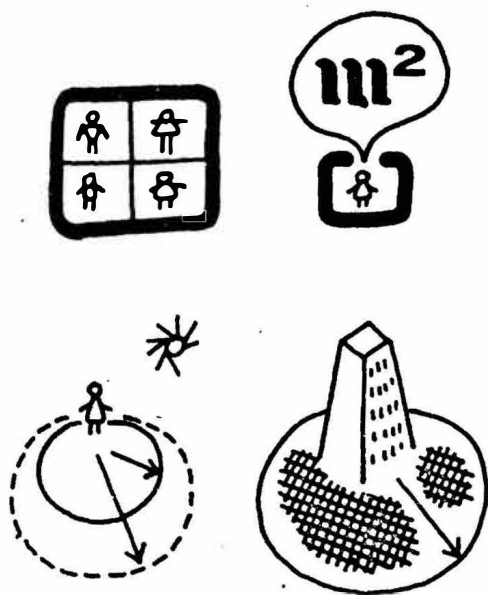
STANDARD OF THE SYSTEM "HABITATION"

The national housing policy is based on the thorough social and economic analysis of the contents, structure and volume of the housing needs of the population, studied in the process of their constant dialectical development. Therefore, the programming of housing in the People's Republic of Bulgaria is effected on the basis of a set of criteria, indices, and normatives (minimum and maximum) for an optimal spatial organization of the vital process "habitation" - the standard of habitation, which is an integer part of the living standard of the developed socialist society. By means of the standard the development of the system "habitation" is being controlled according to the objectives of the national housing policy. This complex includes both qualitative and quantitative aspects and covers all elements of the system "habitation", without exception. The two basic strategic targets of the national housing policy have been embodied in it: a flat for each family, a room for each inhabitant. The standard of the system "habitation" is subject to constant improvement.

and reflects the present and future qualitative and quantitative changes of the housing needs of the population and the ever growing importance of the public funds of consumption.

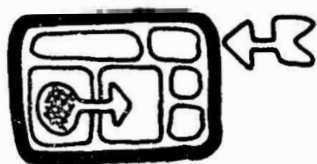
The standard of the system "habitation" regulates the following:

- the correspondence between the number and social structure of the population on the one hand and the size and structure of the dwellings and the environment. At present there is an average of 13.3 m^2 of floor-space pro capita of the population, and during the recent 4 or 5 years the average useful area in a new dwelling is about 65 m^2 and the living-space is about 50 m^2 .

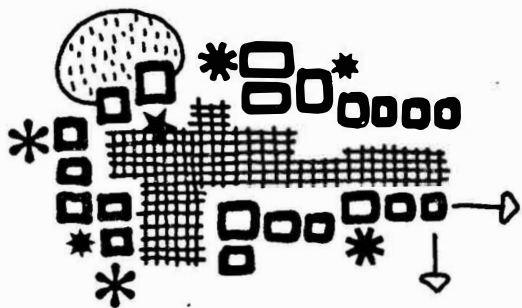




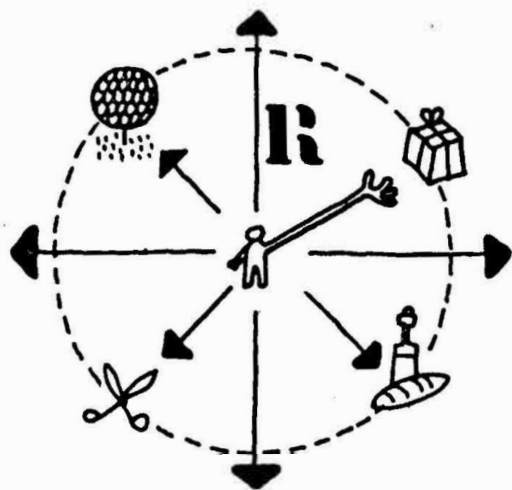
- the optimum biological properties of the dwelling and its immediate environment;



- the functional structure of the dwelling and its environment;

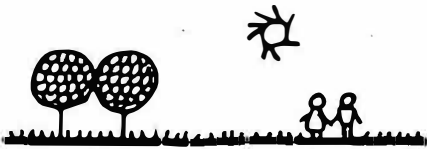


- the use of individual functional elements and the interaction between them;

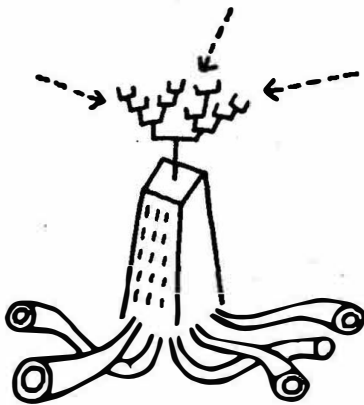


- functional links between the dwelling and its environment;

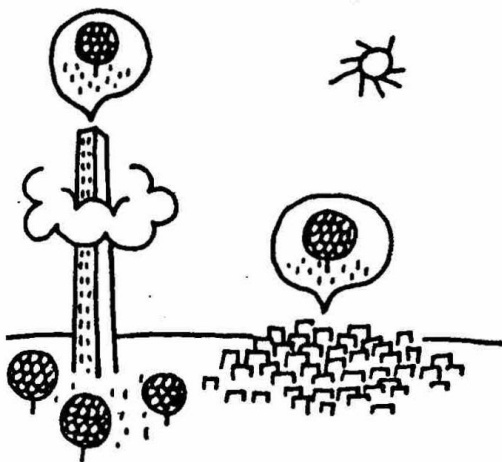
● infrastructure systems belonging to the dwelling and to the environment;



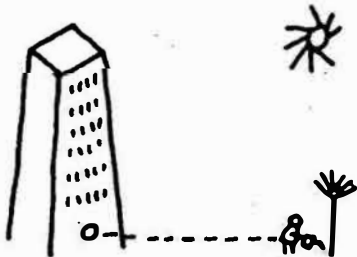
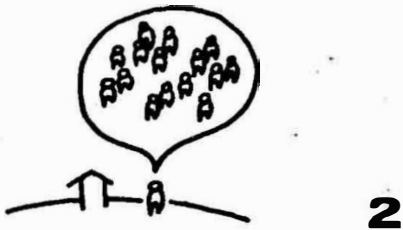
- transport and communication systems;



- supply systems for water, energy, information, etc.;



● Criteria for the efficient use of the territory, for regulating the number of storeys and of building density and intensity.



● Criteria for social efficiency of the dwelling environment;

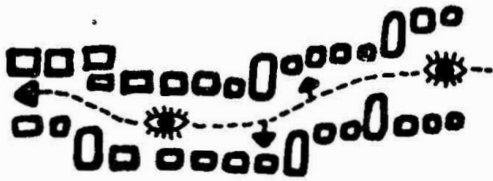
- necessity to answer to the individual sociological, psychological, and physiological needs of the inhabitant, and to ensure his harmonious development;

- necessary prerequisites for the setting up of active social communities on the principle of "neighbourhood" in the dwelling environment;

- possibilities of creative participation of the inhabitant in the building of the environment;



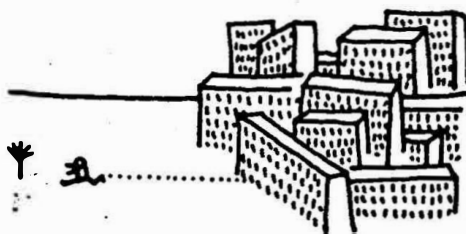
- the need of an attractive and natural environment, stimulating the creative and social activity of the inhabitants;



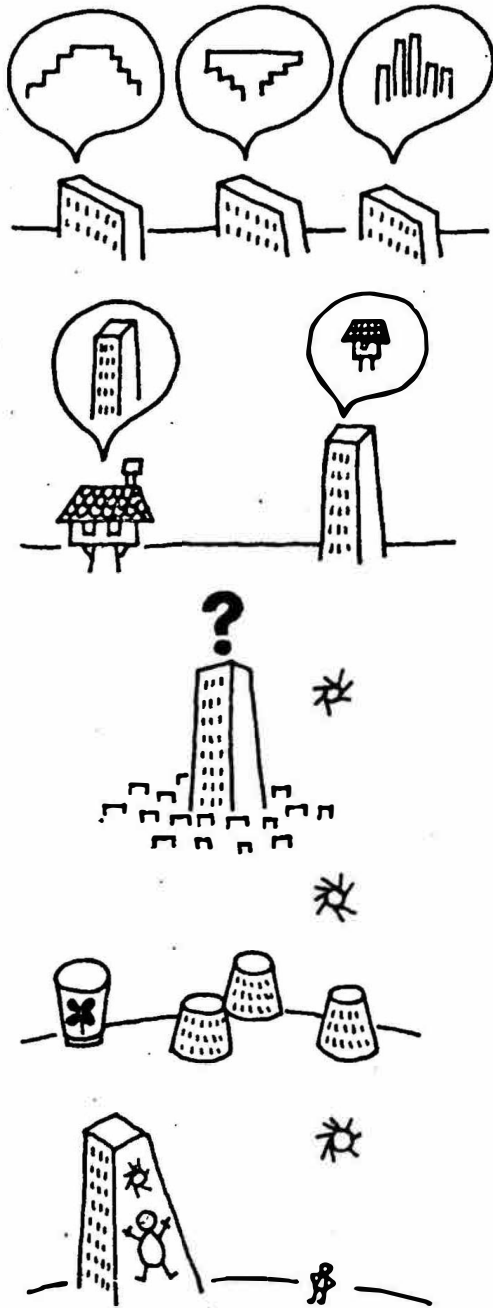
● Design criteria for housing and the environment in accordance with the Unified Programme of National Aesthetic Education:



- Aesthetic dimensions of the interrelation between natural and anthropogenous elements and synthesis thereof;



- Necessity of conservation and development of natural systems and their protection from destruction or from competing;



- necessity to apply new, progressive forms and structures;

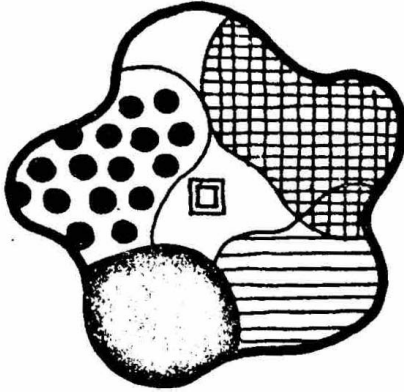
- possibilities for preserving of the national specific character and enrichment of traditions;

- necessity to preserve human proportions in the housing environment;

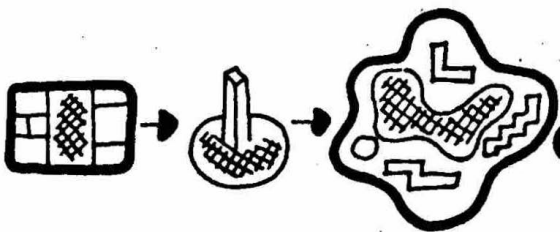
- problems of individual appearance of the dwelling environment in the period of mass construction by industrial methods;

- synthesis of various arts in the dwelling environment.

The aesthetics of the dwelling environment is not looked at as some external property of the latter, but rather with a view to its very essence as an unified material and technological, economical and social system.

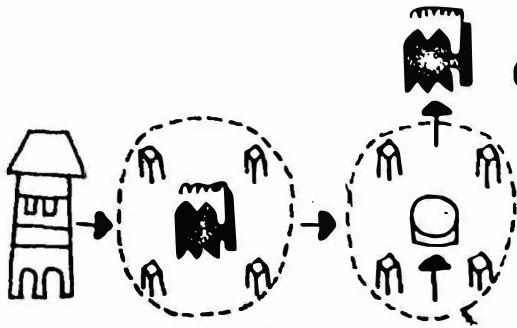


The standard of habitation determines as well the degree of intergration of different spatial systems in the housing environment, namely: work, habitation, recreation, services. infrastructure, natural environment. It is assessed that multiple functions combined in one system ensure a vital environment.

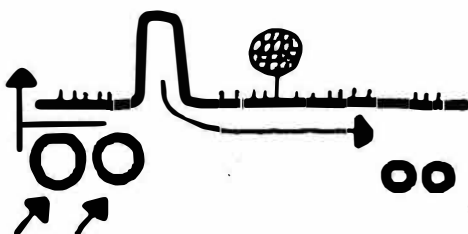
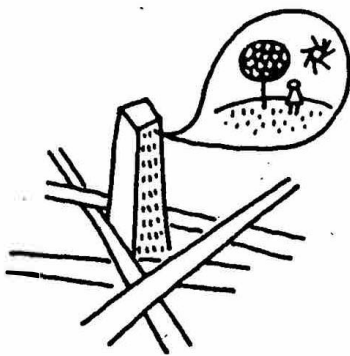
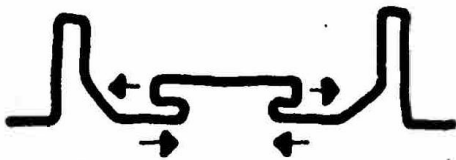


Habitation and recreation are integrated at all levels: dwelling - building - environment. This calls for an appropriate approach for preserving and development of the natural systems and the harmony between Man and Nature.

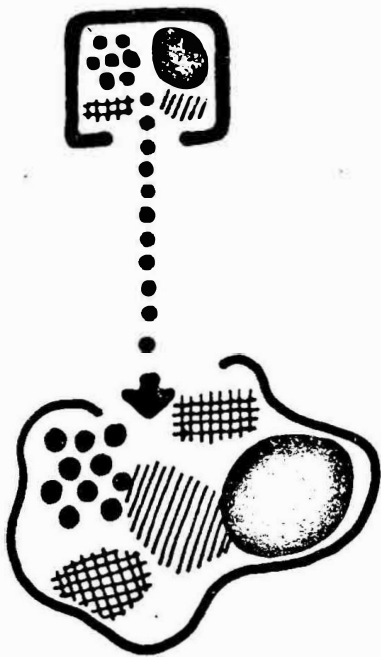




● The integration habitation - work-
ing place is recommended under
the condition that it is not being
effected on account of the ecologi-
cal and aesthetic requirements. The
elements of production provide for
a functional enrichment of the en-
vironment and lead to a reduction
of transportation time to the work-
ing places of inhabitants involved
in them.

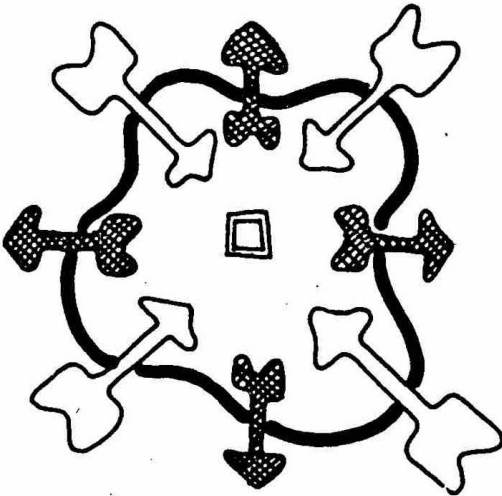


● The infrastructure systems in the
dwelling environment are adapted
to the safety requirements, noise
and vibration protection, etc.



● The system of public service determines the relation between the functions of the dwelling and the functions of its immediate environment. An important criterium in this respect is the requirement to reduce the individual and family losses of time in the sphere of everyday life and to increase the time for recreation. In this respect it is relied to a great extent on the efficient unified system of all-round public service which includes a number of activities connected with house-keeping.

Generally speaking, two interrelated trends can be observed:

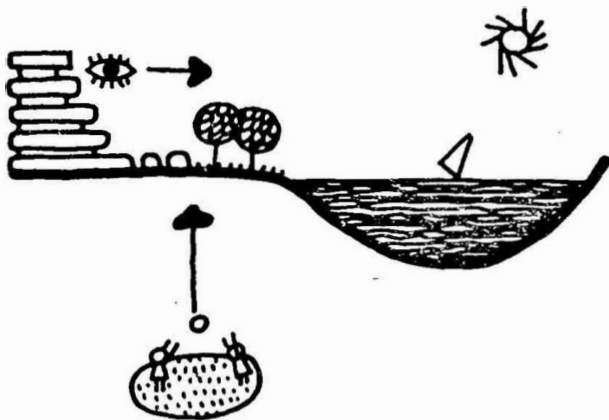


- the dwelling environment is cleared up from unsuitable elements having a negative impact upon its ecological balance;

- an enrichment of the dwelling environment by elements contributing to improve its functional, social, ecological, and aesthetic properties.

The various types of interaction of the system "habitation" with other spatial systems (work, recreation, public service, infrastructure, environment) change the structure of the standard of habitation. The indices of this standard are dealt with as variables: they develop in time and are transformed in space under the influence of different territorial conditions. This leads to a change of their minimum and maximum normative values. As a complex and differentiated approach to the habitation standard this provides for a realistic housing programming. It ensures a rational distribution of capital investments for housing with respect to time and location, with a maximum efficiency of use of the reserves and concealed possibilities for the development of the system. On the other hand, a high degree of social efficiency is aimed at by the building up of an equivalent standard for diverse territorial conditions throughout the country, corresponding to the social homogeneity of the socialist system. Conditions emerge for a thorough consideration of the appearance, individual features and national character of the respective towns and villages.

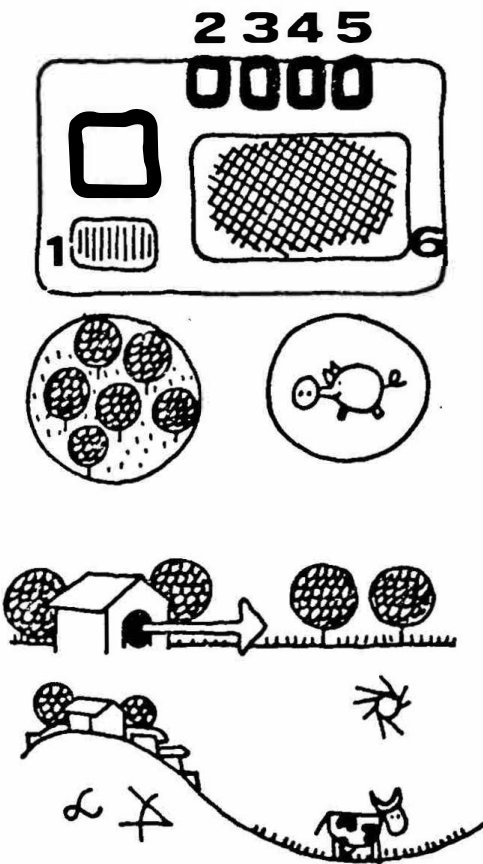
The Unified Territorial Plan of the People's Republic of Bulgaria serves as a basis for classification of specific conditions in the various parts of the country and their effect upon the development of the national system "habitation" as a whole. Studies carried out in accordance with the Unified Plan showed several basic directions of development of the habitation standard:



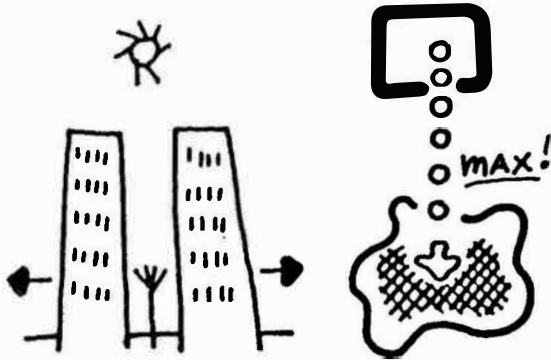
A Development of the system on territories favourable for recreation purposes, where the system "habitation" takes over some of the functions of the system "recreation". Natural elements should be preserved to a maximum degree and be enriched, aiming at the same time at a full integration of the dwelling environment with the character of the locality.

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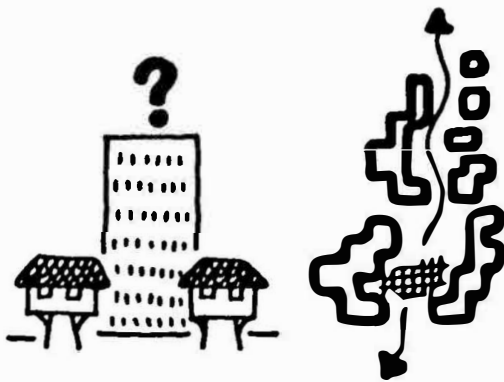
Development of the system on territories suitable for agriculture and cattle-breeding activities, where the availability of individual agricultural pieces of land belonging to the dwelling leads to new functions of the dwelling environment. The intensity of building is relatively low and is connected with a higher involvement of natural elements. The normative values of the standard have been established with a view to the trend of overcoming all basic differences between towns and villages.



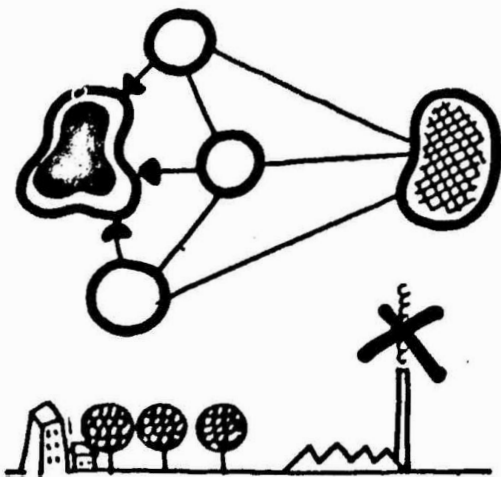
C Development of the system in highly urbanized areas, where the natural element is reduced and requires a special approach. Public services, developed to a high level, include a number of the dwelling's functions.

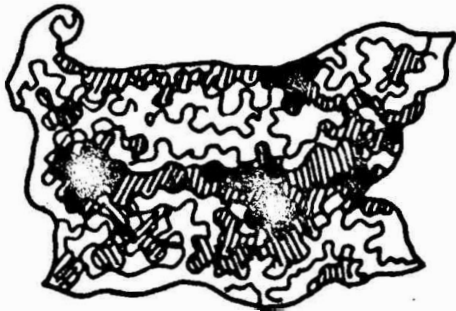


D Development of the system in towns and villages possessing valuable historical sights and requiring a specialized approach.



E Development of the system in the neighbourhood of big industrial formations.



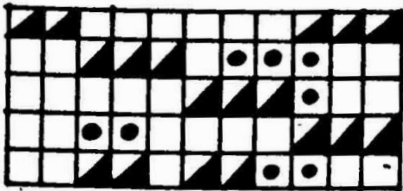


Basic structural and functional - spatial models are built in accordance with the Unified Plan, by means of which the system "habitation" can be programmed in time and space, and with a view to the evolution of the national settlements network.

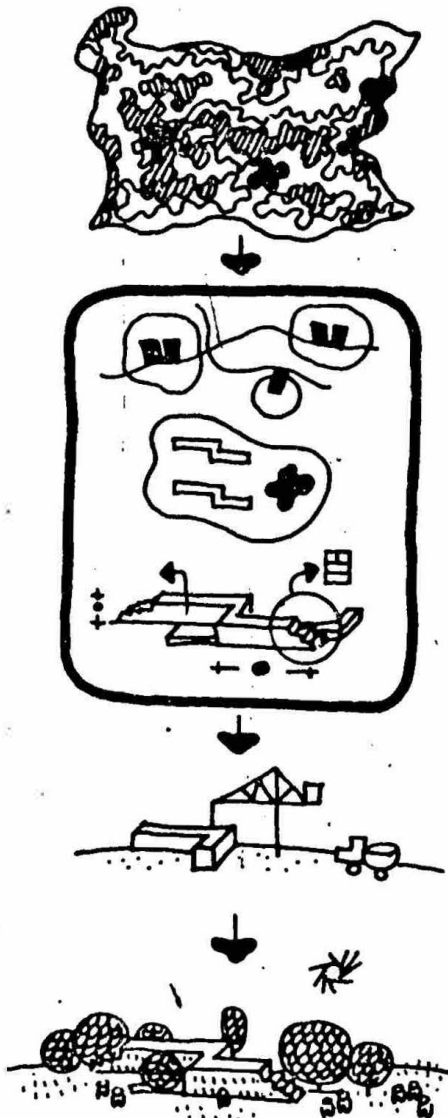
Those models are constantly being improved in relation with the development of the mode of living, and serve for the setting up of a strategy for coping with the housing problem.

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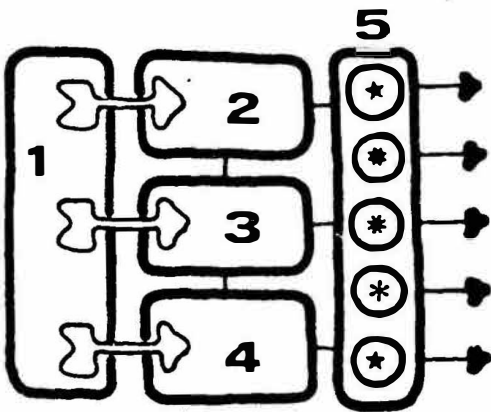
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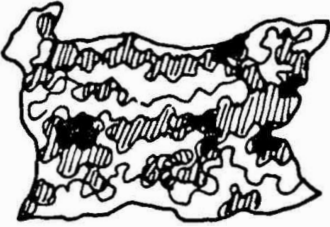
THE PROCESS: PROGRAMMING - DESIGN - BUILDING
 MAINTENANCE OF THE SYSTEM "HABITATION"



The national economy of the Peoples Republic of Bulgaria is planned as an unified interrelated system by means of the Plan for social and economic development of the country which includes all resources for use, preservation, and reconstruction of the system "habitation". This results in the unity of the whole process "programming - designing - building - maintenance" of the system "habitation" and in its agreement with the targets of the national housing policy.



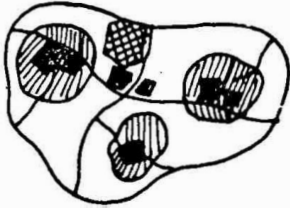
● The programming determines the future state and behaviour of the system "habitation" the strategics and tactics of its development with a view to the objectives of the housing policy, and the means and actual possibilities of this development. It is effected on the basis of the Unified Plan (1) and includes the following main components: information (2) , normatives (3), processing (4), and planning (5), which serve to answer the questions where? what?, how much?, when?, and how? is building going to take place.



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Housing programming includes the following items:

- long-term programmes covering periods of 15 to 25 years;



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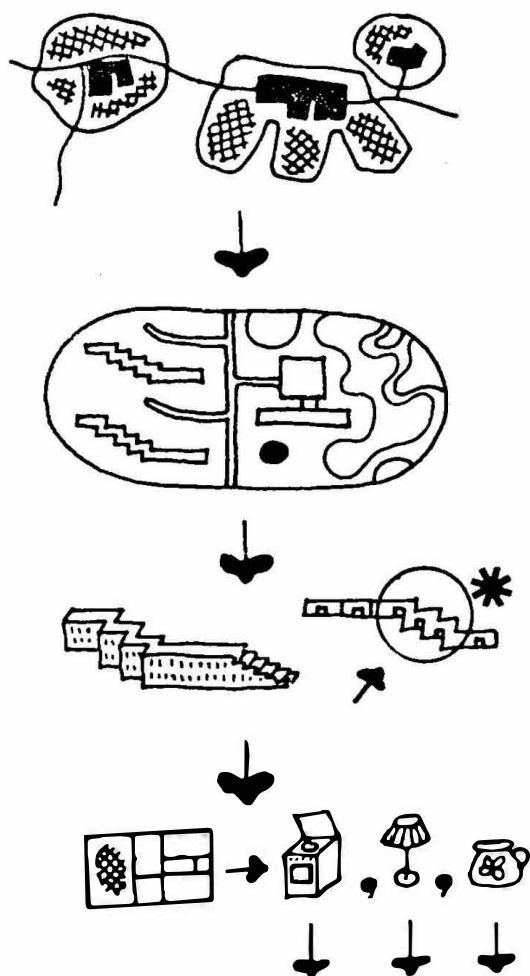
- five-year programmes, corresponding to the five-year plans for social and economic development of the country;



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- annual plans.

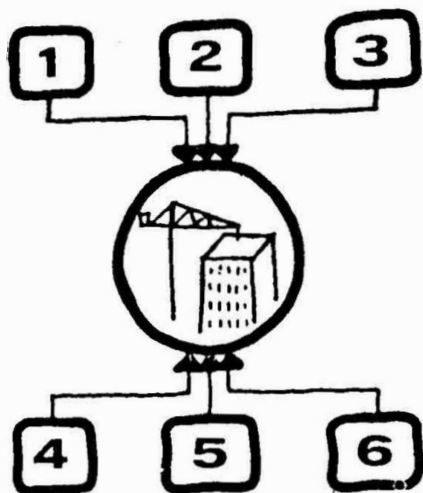
The system of housing programming in the People's Republic of Bulgaria is built in compliance with the principles of universality, systematic approach, continuity, possibility for improvement and automation, hierarchy of the unity of all levels in the spatial organization.



- The research and design of the system "habitation" specify the programming results under particular natural, demographic, social, technological, etc. conditions. The unity of all design levels is regulated: from town-planning to architectural aspects of individual projects and their interior elements.

The improvement of the design work connected with individual projects is effected in the following directions:

- trends towards better functional, aesthetical, technological, and economic indices;
- implementation of standard schemes on the basis of catalogue systems and unified nomenclatures of the elements, sections, details and structures;
- optimal automation of the design process.

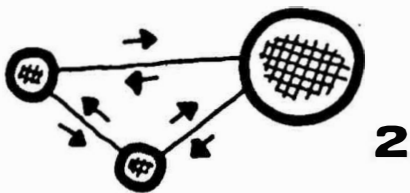
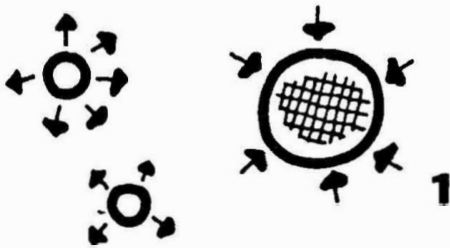
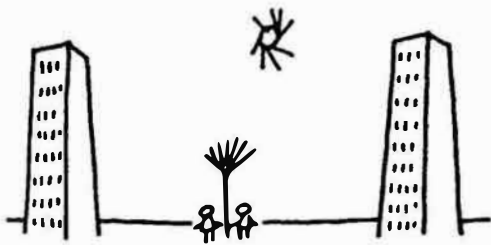


● The building up of the system "habitation" is one of the basis targets of the already completed system "Building" which includes all branches of building activity.

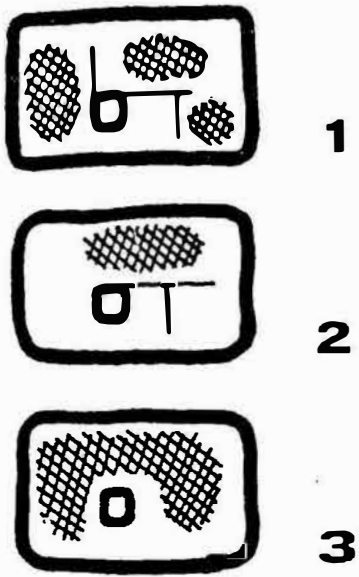
The national building policy includes the following important aspects:

- concentration and specialization of building production, its intensification on the basis of wide application of industrial methods;
- wide unification and standartization of production elements, details, units and structures;
- reconstruction and modernization of production capacities together with the implementation of scientific and technological achievements;
- reduction of the building terms by means of the introduction of new effective construction systems and improvement of the quality of production in compliance with the habitation standard.

Building in the People's Republic of Bulgaria is considered to be a vital national task, engaging the efforts of wide strata of society, and requiring human resources at all levels.



The management, maintenance and updating of the system "habitation" are related to the basic targets of the national housing policy. New methods of creative participation of the population in the management and maintenance of housing and the dwelling environment are looked for on the basis of the unity between the communal and state principle. Special attention is paid to the problem of rational utilization of the reserve housing stock in small settlements by including it actively in the unified settlement systems or by assigning to it new functions - e.g. recreation, production, etc.



The modernization of the housing stock is effected according to the general plans of the People's Councils in accordance with the currently acting normative values of the habitation standard. New forms of dwelling are being investigated and experimented, which possess higher flexibility with respect to their physical wear and obsolescence, and the increased needs of the family.

Thus the principles of the national housing policy penetrate into each one of the successive phases of the unified process of use, protection, and reproduction of the system "habitation", with a view to the strategies and tactics of a full solution of the housing problem, and the improvement of the standard of living of the working people.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Housing policy and the system "habitation" | 1 |
| Standard of the system "habitation" | 10 |
| The process: programming - design - building - maintenance of the system "habitation" | 26 |

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