

The Secret Life of Concrete

Slowly they got taller. Some stuck together, crawling towards each other into little groups. Other stretched longer and longer across the ground. Overall, their numbers grew, reproducing through the hands of draftsmen and construction workers. What might seem to be a monolithic concrete sprawl, is in fact a coral reef of modernist lifeforms. To aid the explorers of the built environment of Warsaw, we provide you with a map. The genealogy of Warsaw housing blocks.



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1. **TOWER BLOCK**
Sewerynów Street 4, Ludwik Paradistał, 1937.
First residential tower block in Warsaw.
2. **APARTMENT TOWER**
Building on Wiejska Street, Jerzy Kumelowski,
Aleksander Markiewicz, 1958.
Photo: K. Jabłoński, BW Ruch postcard, 1963.
3. **\$/-TOWER BLOCK**
Building on Smolna Street, Jan Bogustawski,
Bohdan Gniewiewski, 1963.
Founded by Polish diaspora.
4. **SKY-SCRAPER**
A 24-storey apartment tower on The East Wall,
Zbigniew Karpiński, Zbigniew Wactawek, 1964.
5. **IGREK/ Y-BUILDING**
At the corner of Świętokrzyska Street and
Emilii Plater Street, Hanna Lewicka, Wojciech
Piotrowski, 1961–1967. (inspired by DOM-KOMUNY
Ivanov-Terechin-Smoln, 1928 Moscow)
6. **X-BUILDINGS**
Jan Zdanowicz, tower on Grójecka Street (single
prototype building) 1962–68.
Torwar Housing Estate, 1971–1973.

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7. **NAKED REALISM**
Housing estate on Bernardyńska Street, Jan
Zdanowicz, 1974–79.
Residential tower blocks, punctual development
erected on farmlands.
8. **RAPIDLY ERECTED BUILDINGS**
Murano C Estate, Bohdan Lachert, 1949.
Propagandist building sites—one building erected
in six days by the proletariat heroes who beat
brick-laying records.
9. **PUNCTUAL TOWER BLOCKS**
Żoliborz Orchards—an estate of Warsaw Housing
Cooperative, Halina
Skibniewska, 1958–63
Punctual layout, box-like forms, central staircase
buildings, individualised surrounding.
10. **PROTOTYPES**
Jerzy Skrzypczak, Aleksander Lyczewski, Zdzisław
Łuszyński, 1961–67.
Warsaw Universal Form system—made of sixty
standard elements. Industrialised methods of
prefabrication and assembly.

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11. **MULTIPLE STAIRCASE BLOCK**
Koto II Estate, Helena and Szymon Syrkus (Praesens Group) 1947–50.
The block is characterised by its avant-corps staircases. One of the first buildings constructed with precast concrete.
12. **POLYCHROMED BLOCK**
Rakowiec Estate, Zofia and Oskar Hansen (Team 10), 1959.
The embodiment of Hansen's Open Form translated into an urban scale. The structure of multiple staircases showed in a play of solids, plus a large variety of mass-produced elements, in a sense anticipating mass customisation technique. Open Form recognised the individual within collectivity and was set against functionalism, based instead upon abstract statistical data.
13. **GLUED PUNCTUAL TOWER BLOCKS**
Zatrasie Estate, Jacek Nowicki and team 1962–68.
5 segments—central staircase units connected into one structure.
14. **CASCADE BLOCK**
Dwelling house on Koza Street, in-fill development, Jerzy Kuźmienko, Piotr Sembrat, 1974–76, four to eight storeys.
15. **STEPPED BUILDING**
Sadyba Housing Estate, 1971–75, Andrzej Kiciński.



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16. **BORDERLINE BLOCK**
Jerozolimskie Avenue, Jan Bogustawski, 1957.
Multiple staircase dwelling house with Praha Bar, a café (mixed-use building).
17. **SCREENING BLOCK**
1948–52
A palace for the working class, Marszałkowska Housing Quarter (social realist), urban scenography, background for propaganda parades. Monumental façade and thin footprint.
18. **SOCIALIST TENEMENT**
Housing development of Muranów district, 1952.
Social realist tenement house with inner "interblock space" courtyard. Overscaled pre-war typology.
19. **ASSEMBLED BUILDING**
Residential block on Kijowska Street, Jan Kalinowski 1973.
508-meters-long elevation "from assembly line" to "block." The purpose was to prevent passers-by from seeing the pre-war Praga district.
20. **NON-STANDARD PREFAB**
Służew nad Dolinka, a housing estate, Jerzy Kuźmienko, Janusz Nowak, Piotr Sembrant, 1974.
The buildings are characterized by a specific shape of balconies.

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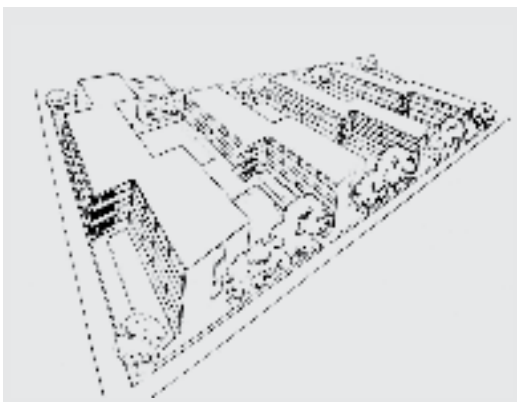
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21. **PANEL HOUSE**
Ursynów Housing Zone, Budzyński and team, 1972–75.
Rescaling of the “link-belt urban construction” concept resulting from industrial production of housing. The notion of “the building” is replaced by “the habitat units.”
22. **CORRIDOR-TYPE BLOCK**
CIAM model housing estate in Rakowiec district, Helena and Szymon Syrkus, 1930–32.
The first functionalist residential neighbourhood in Poland. Layout is geographically oriented, independent from the street network, while Z-shaped plan breaks the monotony of the long corridor and provides additional lighting.
23. **BARRACKS**
T.O.R. Estate in Koło district, Aleksander Brzozowski, Roman Piotrowski and team, 1935–38. Corridor-type blocks designed on a functionalist “comb-plan,” a parallel layout with one block built behind another, and with its shorter side facing the street.
24. **SLAB-BUILDING**
Kępa Potocka Estate, Hanna Graf-Chylińska, Bogusław Chyliński, 1969.
Corridor-type block.
25. **ANT-HOUSE**
Behind the Iron Gate Housing Estate. Jerzy Czyż, Jan Furman, Andrzej Skopiński, 1961–1972.
“Grand ensembles” linear development, nineteen similar corridor-type blocks, each consisting of 320–400 flats.

26. **RAMP-GALLER**
Józef Malinowski (Praesens Group), 1925.
Housing with a balcony, car access, tree-level apartments with garages in a large block and helicoidal driveways at two opposite corners, not completed.
27. **FIRST COMPLETED GALLERY BLOCK**
Żoliborz district, first cooperative housings in Warsaw, Stanisław Brukalski, Józef Szanajca (Praesens Group), 1930–31.
Perimeter development, one hundred thirty linear metres, three staircase towers.
28. **FUNCTIONAL GALLERY BLOCK**
Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca (Praesens Group), 1934–37. Twenty-three linear metres, internal staircases.
29. **“HELENA'S CROOKED SMILE”**
Koło estate, Helena i Szymon Syrkus (Praesens) 1947–50. One hundred fifty-four linear meters, three staircase towers.
30. **SOCIALIST REALISM GALLERY BLOCK**
Muranów Południowy district, Bohdan Lachert, 1948–56. Buildings excessively adorned with a “camouflage” of imposed decorative elements. The architect, in fact, belonged to the CIAM circuit. One hundred twenty linear metres, two internal staircases.

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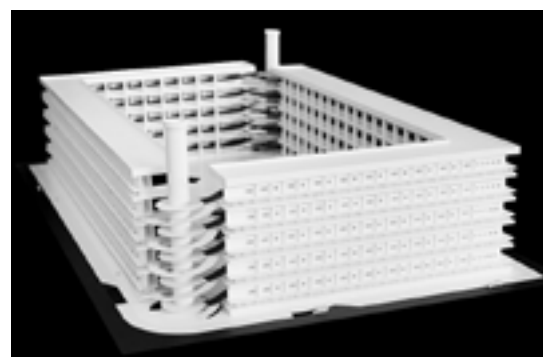
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31. **MEGA GALLERY BLOCK**
Przyczółek Grochowski Estate, Zofia and Oscar Hansen (Team 10), 1963–69. The longest building in Warsaw (ca. 1.5km, though it makes nine 90-degree turns), thirteen staircase towers. The first example of The Continuous Linear System—"a continuity of multifunctional housing structure." The architects were fully aware of nonexclusively individualised approach to public housing, so they sought a form that would enable individuals to find themselves in the process of creating the surrounding environment.
32. **DOUBLE GALLERY**
4 Matejki Street. Romuald Gutt, 1960. "Brussels-style" apartment house with access to balconies from one side and private balconies from other side, internal staircase.



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