

:HOMLIKZAT:

**THE FIRST COOPERATIVE HOUSE IN
BUDAPEST**

PRVÝ DRUŽSTEVNÝ DOM
V BUDAPEŠTI

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The Condominium Idea in the First Half of the 20th Century in Budapest

Myšlienka kondomínií v prvej polovici 20. storočia v Budapešti

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Od roku 1907 sa v Budapešti začali objavovať ako nové riešenie bývania strednej vrstvy družstevné domy – kondomíniá ako požívame v tejto štúdii keďže sú bližším ekvivalentom k maďarskému výrazu *társasházak*. Prvá vlna rozšírenia výstavby kondomínií sa začala od roku 1909, ukončila ju však prvá svetová vojna. Druhá vlna ich šírenia nastala v prvej polovici dvadsiatych rokov, keď sa po vojne bytová výstavba na viac ako desať rokov zastavila a existujúce nájomné domy sa prebudovávali na kondomíniá. Od roku 1926 opäť nahradila nová bytová výstavba, ktorú spravovalo masové budovanie kondomínií. Ich rozmach podporil zákon o kondomíniách z roku 1924, ktorý uzákonil novú právnu formu vlastníctva bytov. Tento proces ukončila druhá svetová vojna a následné politické zmeny, ktoré na približne dvadsať rokov zastavili nielen organizáciu a výstavbu kondomínií, ale aj rozvoj bývania vo všeobecnosti. Zmena nastala v šesťdesiatych rokoch s upevnením Kádárovho režimu. Na jednej strane začala kondomíniá stavať štátna banka socialistického štátu, na druhej strane vláda otvorila dvere svojpomocnej výstavbe kondomínií. To znamenalo nový impulz k šíreniu tejto formy vlastníctva nehnuteľností. Kondomíniá sa však stali dominantnou formou vlastníctva až privatizáciou bývania, ktorá sa začala v prvej polovici osemdesiatych rokov a plne sa rozvinula so zmenou režimu v rokoch 1989/1990. Išlo o lacný odpredaj nájomných bytov, ktoré boli znárodnené v roku 1952 a spravované prevažne mestskou radou, do vlastníctva nájomníkov v nich bývajúcich. Práve privatizácia zmenila systém bývania v Budapešti z nájomných domov na kondomíniá: kondomínium nahradilo nájomný dom a stalo sa hlavnou formou bývania v Budapešti, ktorá dominuje dodnes.

Kým pred prvou svetovou vojnou bolo hnutie kondomínií determinované svojou zakotvenosťou v myslení o bytovej reforme a spoločenskej sebaorganizácii, nový povojnový kontext priniesla snaha o jeho integráciu do bytovej politiky. Z nedostatku finančných prostriedkov videli štát aj hlavné mesto v kondomíniách vhodný typ povojnového bývania pre strednú vrstvu. Sociálno-politická idea pramenila z myšlienky vlastníctva domu, ale rodinný dom nahradila kondomíniom.

Právny základ na to vytvorila štátna sociálna politika prostredníctvom zákona o kondomíniách v roku 1924. Tak vznikla popri už existujúcom družstevnom vlastníctve nová právna forma vlastníctva domov. Bytový dom, ktorý sa dovtedy považoval

za nedeliteľný majetkový celok, sa mohol rozdeliť na množstvo malých majetkových jednotiek na základe architektonických celkov, t. j. bytov. Tak sa kondomínium stalo samostatnou majetkovou jednotkou rovnako ako rodinný dom. Zákon o kondomíniu právne vyriešil zredukovanie rodinného domu na byt v bytovke: ideál rodinného domu ako domu obývaného vlastníkom sa pretavil do mierky jedného bytu v bytovom dome.

V komunálnej bytovej politike sa kondomínium javilo na jednej strane ako možnosť nového systému bývania a na druhej strane bolo spojené s konkrétnymi programami bývania. Viacerí politici považovali kondomíniá za hlavnú formu bývania budúcnosti a hovorili o nich ako o systéme bývania, ktorý treba v hlavnom meste presadiť. Politici, ktorí sa k tejto otázke vyjadrili, predpokladali prechod od neudržateľného systému nájomného bývania na systém kondomínií. V rozhodovacích procesoch hlavného mesta sa v dvadsiatych rokoch myšlienka kondomíniá prelínala aj s aktuálnymi otázkami sociálnej politiky a urbanneho plánovania a v diskusiách spojených s týmito otázkami našla svoje miesto v oblasti mestského rozvoja. Otázka výstavby kondomínií bola úzko spojená s výstavbou predmestia pre štátnych zamestnancov a s prestavbou asanovanej štvrť Tabán. Koncepty bývania či urbanistického rozvoja sa však nerealizovali a výstavba kondomínií sa stala doménou súkromného podnikania.

Kondomínium ako zredukovaný rodinný dom bolo od začiatku alternatívou ideálu strednej vrstvy vlastníť dom. Vo svojej viacrodinnej podobe pripomínalo nájomný dom, ale zároveň ponúkalo pocit vlastníctva a nezávislosti rodinného domu. Zákon o kondomíniách pretavil túto myšlienku do legislatívy tým, že po vzore rodinných domov vytvoril z kondomínií samostatné vlastnícke jednotky. Zároveň došlo k transformácii rodinného domu na kondomínium aj z architektonického hľadiska, a to odstránením uzavretých dvorov. Nové kondomíniá boli propagované ako naplnenie túžby po rodinnom dome. Ideál vlastného bývania sa nezmenil ani po prvej svetovej vojne, ale forma bývania sa zmenila: rodinný dom nahradilo kondomínium a prevzalo všetky charakteristiky, ktoré dom definovali. Novou realitou sa stala skôr viacrodinná bytová budova v zeleni, než predmestie s rodinnými domami. Podnety tohto procesu viedli k tomu, že rozvoj bývania sa v Budapešti uberal inou cestou ako v iných európskych mestách.

Introduction

Cooperative apartments, or as this paper terms them condominiums (*társasházak*), have been present as a form of housing in Budapest since 1907. The first wave of their expansion was the building of cooperative houses in the half-decade before World War I, which was ended by the outbreak of war. The second wave of expansion took place in the first half of the 1920s, when housing construction stopped for more than a decade after the war, in the form of the conversion of existing tenement houses into condominiums. After 1926, this process then gave way to the resumption of housing construction, accompanied by the mass condominium building. This process was terminated by the Second World War and the political changes that followed, which brought to a halt not only the organisation and construction of condominiums for some twenty years, but also housing in general. A change came in the 1960s with the consolidation of the Kádár regime, when on one hand, the state bank of the socialist system started to build condominiums, and on the other, the state opened the way for self-supported condominium construction. A new impetus, as a result, was thus given to the spread of this form of ownership. However, it was the privatisation of housing, starting in the first half of the 1980s and expanding further with the change of regime in 1989/1990, that made this ownership form the dominant one. A further aspect included the sale, usually below the actual value, of rented housing, which had been nationalised in 1952 and mainly administered by local councils, predominantly to the current tenants. It was this privatisation that transformed the housing system in Budapest from rental to ownership: the condominium replaced the tenement and became the dominant form of housing in Budapest, even today.

During the long period of the spread of condominium ownership in Budapest in the first half of the 20th century, its socio-political embeddedness remained uneven. Between the periods of their emergence and their greater spread, separated by the First World War, a fundamental transformation took place: the social policy discourse around the idea of condominiums changed and the legal basis of condominiums was transformed. While before the First World War the condominium movement was shaped by its immediate context in housing reform proposals and social self-organisation, the new post-war context was formulated by the attempt to integrate it into housing policy. In the absence of financial resources, both the post-war state and capital saw condominiums as a viable method of providing housing for the middle class. The impetus for this process, however, has led Budapest's housing situation to follow a different path from that of other European cities.

The Emergence of Condominiums in Budapest

Condominium building in Budapest in the early 1900s was partly driven by the housing reform movement and self-organisation, partly by business. The city's first condominiums were established in 1907 with backing of a public servants' lobby. This group, the National Public Servant's Association, had as its aim to help with the housing problems of the middle class, primarily high rents and the high proportion of housing costs in household expenditure. However, these difficulties formed only one side of the problem in the rental housing system that dominated housing in Budapest at the time. More damagingly, renting made it impossible to acquire property assets, which immediately put housing in jeopardy as the family head's livelihood faltered.¹ The rental housing system was interpreted as an existential threat for public servants, who made up the bulk of the middle class.

A potential alternative was the family house. Owning a home was seen as a promise of financial independence, not only eliminating dependence on the landlord – as expressed by the slogan 'all tenants are landlords' –² but also constituting a heritable asset. Critiques of tenancy praised the family house as the ideal dwelling, against the tenement, condemned on moral and sanitary grounds; similarly, the family house embodied the ideal of home ownership against the tenement, identified with vulnerability. Yet, in the end, without much success, considering the tension between the desire for a home of one's own, fuelled by the housing discourse, and the unattainability of this goal. Even for the Budapest middle class, the family house was already out of reach. Moreover, city building regulations encouraged the construction of only tenement houses and villas in certain building zones, not of detached houses, which required smaller plots and therefore cheaper building solutions.³ Hence, the demand for detached houses could only be met outside the city limits. However, the architectural quality of the houses here remained low, and neither public utilities nor public transport were available, a situation constantly attacked by professionals and the press.

In comparison, the condominium was a new alternative to the suburban detached house that still offered an owner-occupied home. Cooperative housing could combine multi-family rental housing with home ownership, since even in its multifamily form it could free cooperative members from the disadvantages of renting. Essentially, cooperative ownership emerged in response to the impact on the middle class of the housing issue, already a long-lasting problem for the working classes, and encouraged by the international housing reform movement. The condominium shifted the terms of the discourse grounded in the binary opposition between the tenement and the detached house. Indicative of the essence of this new form of housing was the term 'perpetual dwelling' (*öröklakás, örökös lakás*): compared with rented housing, subject to termination and rising rents, these dwellings were neither threatened with eviction nor with rent increases, functioning as a kind of perpetual tenancy.

Condominium building in Budapest followed the German model, and from the beginning it was associated with the cooperative form.⁴ However, unlike the German version, the cooperatives were not large associations capable of building entire streets, but small groups of the interested parties themselves, each within the framework of a single building. At the same time, however, the creation of condominiums soon became a business venture. In 1909, banks and building societies started to set up and build condominiums, with cooperative flats as the intended result. However, this trend was soon interrupted: after 1909–1910, the 1911 foundations were not even completed with a small number of new ones. Meanwhile, self-organised foundations were evenly spread between 1907 and 1913. The number of condominium foundations before the First World War was small in itself – twenty-four condominiums were built in total, and five more were attempted but left incomplete – yet nonetheless, the number of company foundations was the smallest (38%). The number of firms involved was also very low, at just five, strongly indicating that condominium construction had not yet become an established business before the First World War.

The practice of house parcelling

In the first half of the 1920s, a new form of condominium organisation emerged in Budapest in the context of the wartime conditions of halted housing construction and a controlled housing market.⁵ From 1922/1923, the practice began to spread of converting apartment buildings into cooperatives and selling the individual dwelling units.⁶ The post-war control and restriction of housing continued to hamper construction, resulting in a lack of new housing units, while the maintenance of rental property became prohibitively expensive due to the freezing of housing turnover and rents. In addition, the anticipated elimination of the controlled housing market stoked a strong fear among the population of evictions and sharp rent hikes. Some entrepreneurs found a solution to the situation in the sale of apartment buildings piecemeal, by each individual dwelling. On the one hand, this process allowed the landlord to get rid of his building, which was unlikely to be sold as a whole. On the other hand, the negative experience of the controlled housing market meant that those wishing to buy a home could do so even in the absence of housing construction, and thus be protected from eviction and rent increase.

This practice did not create new housing, but only transformed the ownership of existing rented housing, and thus did not fit in with the social-policy approach. Known at the time as house-parcelling, this phenomenon was based on the existing cooperative form, but soon gave rise to a new ownership method through the creation of condominiums, as a legal corporate entity existing independently of house parcelling. Its origins lay in the practice of the house-parcelling business as a means of circumventing the registration of cooperatives by not being accepted by the court of registration in some cases. And it had an essentially different ownership structure from that of a cooperative. In the cooperative, members obtained the dwelling through share ownership, in many cases renting the dwelling from the cooperative, while the registered owner of the house was the cooperative itself. In this case, however, the members of the company themselves became part-owners of the entire building, registered in the land register, in proportion to their shares of ownership. They did not, however, form a company under the Commercial Code, but a so-called private company, the internal relations of which could be determined by the members themselves without any legal provisions.

Emerging as an alternative to the cooperative, this form of ownership was accompanied by the practical development of the legal framework. At the same time, adapting to this situation also proved a way to meet a social need. The use of the private company form by entrepreneurs engaged

in the real estate business also began to fill a gap in the ownership structure, via this shift from collective ownership to individual ownership. Indeed, public demand took the legal void into account: they wanted individual ownership rather than the collective nature of the cooperative form. As it emerged, the practice can thus be seen as an element in the process towards the new legal framework for condominium ownership created by the 1924 Condominium Act. As a lay practice, it took the same path when it tried to resolve the land registration of individual property using an existing legal framework. And shortly after, this legal problem was solved by the Condominium Act, which established the legal relationship between individual and communal property in a multi-family house.

Condominiums among the Instruments of Public Social Policy

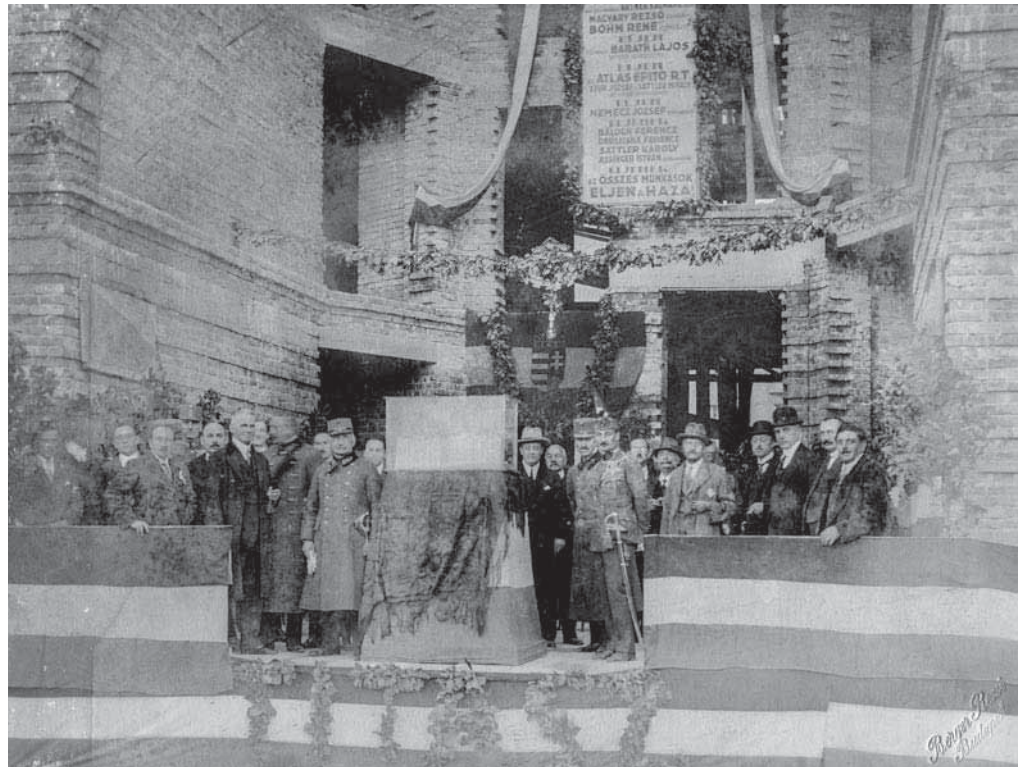
The state's response to the problem of property rights was the creation in 1924 of a special law on condominiums – Act XII of 1924 – which created a completely new form of ownership for multi-family houses. The law settled the debate of the detached house or the apartment in favour of multi-family houses. Up until today, the new form of ownership has shaped the development of housing in Budapest as one dominated by condominiums.

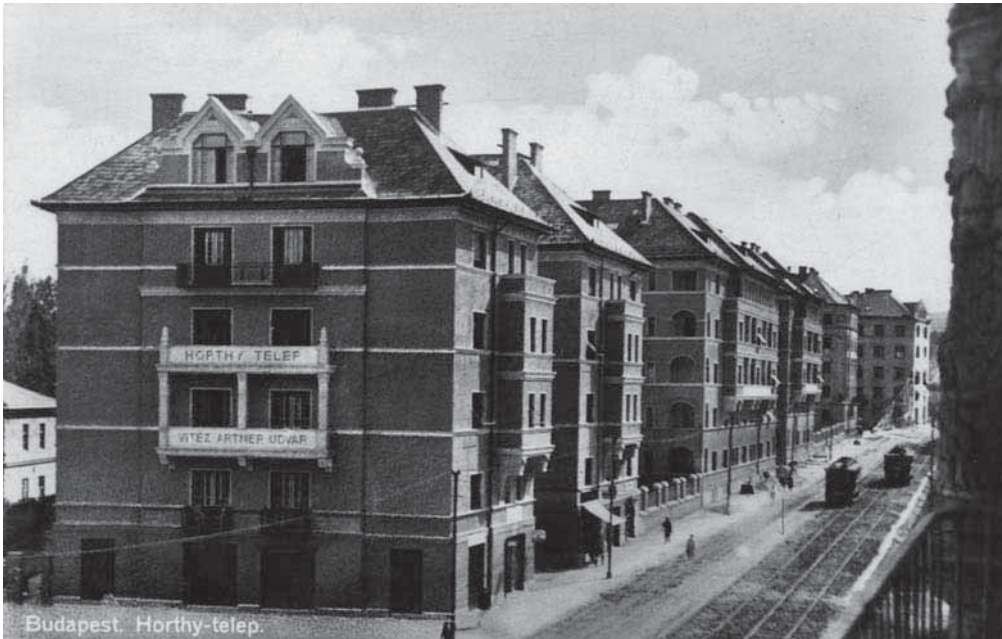
The creation of the law was a key moment in the socio-political embedding of the condominium idea. As a sign of this representation of the state was present at the inauguration ceremonies of the new condominium buildings of the 1920s, even though it was not the builder. The condominium was not simply a market product, but a compromise between public social housing and private rental housing. Behind its popularity lay the dissolution of wartime controlled housing market, the lack of capital to restart housing construction, and the consolidation of public finances. The Condominium Act did not stand alone, but was part of a series of legislative measures, which began in 1921 and continued after 1924, aimed at restarting housing construction. Its stimulus lay in the state being unable to provide sufficient incentives for housing construction by financial means, while private construction was struggling with a shortage of capital and rising costs of building materials and labour. Successive laws provided tax incentives and credit subsidies for housing production and exemptions from the controlled housing market, i.e. to ensure free circulation of newly built housing.⁷ The Condominium Act, on the other hand, was unique in its approach and its legislative

CEREMONY ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF A CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX IN BUDAPEST, 1926

SLÁVNOSŤ NA STAVENISKU
KONDOMÍNIA V BUDAPEŠTI, 1926

Source Zdroj: BFL XIV.93. Available at:
<https://holocaust.archivportal.hu/hu/gr-csaky-udvar-bokretaunnepsege>





TITÁSZ CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX,
AFTER 1927

KONDOMÍNIÁ TITÁSZ, PO ROKU 1927

Source Zdroj: FSZEK Budapest-
képarchívum, K000951

instruments aimed at encouraging housing construction. It did not approach the problem from the angle of financial support for conventional ownership, but created an entirely new ownership form.

The aim of this new type of ownership was to ensure the involvement of small-scale capital in the construction of housing on the scale of a single unit instead of a whole building, to work in partnership to build new multifamily housing. In the view of the legislators, this financing solution would require a completely new form of ownership. Although housing cooperatives had provided a model for small capital housing construction since the beginning of the century, they saw creating a property framework separate from the cooperative form as an issue to be resolved. Unlike the cooperative, where the specific residence did not constitute individual property, the residence was to be created as a separate unit of property within the house. In this way, the apartment building hitherto treated as an undivided property unit could be broken down into many small property units, i.e. the apartments. As such, the individual registration of the condominium apartments in the land register was ensured via sub-units under the main unit formed by the condominium. But since the apartment building also had common spaces such as staircases, corridors, attics, collective ownership had to be ensured alongside the individual ownership. Creating a specific combination and relationship between the two types of property, in short, formed the essentially unprecedented novelty of the legal construction of condominium ownership created by the Act.

According to the explanatory memorandum to the Act,⁸ the creation of this new legal form was necessary to meet a social need, since those willing to build housing and holding the necessary capital, at least for a single apartment, were not willing to start building entire apartment blocks without the security of individual ownership. Collective ownership in the cooperative form did not suffice. Hence individual ownership remained a prerequisite for the idea of a home of one's own, and a condominium apartment had to form as equally separate a property unit as a family house. The achievement of the Condominium Act was to resolve in legal terms the reduction of the family house to the scale of an apartment in a block of flats: the ideal of the family house as an owner-occupied home was retained on the scale of the single dwelling of the apartment block.

The Concept of the Condominium System in the Capital

By the mid-1920s, the forthcoming financial stabilisation and the prospect of an end to the controlled housing market also brought housing to the forefront of metropolitan decision-making. In 1923, the government issued a housing decree, which marked the beginning of the liberalisation of the controlled housing market in November 1926.⁹ In its wake, removal of the constraints on the housing system was required by the so-called Rehabilitation Act of 1924, using the same term.¹⁰ The introduction of the new currency, the *pengő*, as a measure against inflation, took place in January

1927. This opened the way not only to the lending needed for housing construction, but also to concerns about the disappearance of controlled housing market: fears of a drastic rise in rents and mass evictions. And again, these factors exacerbated the persistent problem of housing shortages. Although the Condominium Act had already come into force in the summer of 1924, it had little effect, as construction had not started because of inflation. The turning point for housing action was 1926, the year when one of the leading condominium builders of the era, the Centrum House Construction and Real Estate Company (*Centrum Házépítő és Ingatlanvállalat*), was established and the Officers and Public Servants' Condominium Building Cooperative (*Tiszti és Tisztviselői Társasházépítő Szövetkezet*, i.e. *TITÁSZ*), also created in 1926, began construction of its first condominium.

From 1926 onwards, housing became a focal point of municipal policy in Budapest. In line with its importance, a special housing committee was set up, with four areas of action: to propose the management of the municipal housing action, to promote private construction, to manage the transition to a free market in housing, and to reform tenancy law.¹¹ Within this framework, the housing issue was also divided into four closely related areas: municipal housing activities, settlement of a rehabilitated part of the city, the Tabán, the promotion of private construction, and the question of condominium construction. In addition to setting up the committee, a series of proposals were put forward that took as a starting point the official support for private construction and called for the development of support methods. In the process of developing such schemes, the condominium began to play a key role as a housing policy instrument, leading to a boom in the formation of housing cooperatives.

The idea of the condominium itself emerged in municipal social policy debates in mid-1925. It was linked to the question reviving social housing construction in the capital, which had been halted by the war. In the context of a debate on financing the construction of a municipal apartment block with small flats, the idea first appeared of using the construction of condominiums to solve the housing problem. Proceeds from the sale of municipal rental apartments, in essence, could be used to finance new municipal housing construction.¹² According to this concept, the construction of housing for public servants (i.e., the middle class), which was also present in the prewar social housing construction of the capital, would have been transferred to this new framework, which would have basically followed the practice of house parcelling that had developed in the early 1920s.

In the course of 1925–1926, a concept was outlined that housing construction in the capital should be solved not so much by the direct building activities of the authorities, but rather by supporting private construction in the form of condominiums, also brought to the fore by the Condominium Act.¹³ Its proponents saw the way out of the pothole of private and municipal housing construction, increasingly stagnant due to a lack of capital, through the middle class obtaining housing through condominium construction, with the support of local government. At the same time, the idea of parcelling municipal apartment houses remained under discussion.¹⁴ As regards the resumption of municipal social housing construction, several politicians argued that the middle class should be included in the scope of municipal housing construction, as they also need help. If persons in this group themselves had sufficient capital to contribute to housing construction, it would allow the self-sustaining financing process outlined above. The rotation of capital could work as long as the middle class has the financial resources. However, the proposal to turn municipal tenement buildings into condominiums was rejected by the social policy department. The conversion of existing tenement buildings to condominiums was not regarded as a viable option for a number of reasons: partly because of the relocation of the tenants, partly because of the different quality requirements of the tenement and the condominium, and partly because of the slowness of the process, which would make financial recycling impossible. At the same time, it was confirmed that, in addition to the capital's housing programme, condominium construction should be promoted through support for private construction.

From this point, the promotion of condominium construction became a constant theme, based on the public's demand for home ownership. In fact, as the condominium became embedded in housing policy thinking in the capital, it was immediately placed in the context of the housing system. Several politicians also saw the condominium as the dominant form of housing of the future, and on more than one occasion spoke of the condominium as the future housing system of Budapest. Politicians envisaged a transition from the unsustainable rental housing system to a condominium system.¹⁵ Helping people to get their own homes began to emerge as a key pillar of housing policy, and a few years later, in 1929, there was talk of a 'condominium policy'.¹⁶

STREET IN TABÁN, 1910

ULICA V TABÁNE, 1910

Source Zdroj: Fortepan / Magyar
Földrajzi Múzeum / Erdélyi Mór cége
86717



Moreover, the ideas of municipal policy went beyond the urge to support housing construction, aiming as well at creating the means to operate the imagined condominium system. As was proposed, the capital should set up a public authority to supervise condominiums, with the maintenance and management of the buildings as its main function. In fact, the management of condominiums was left to the communities of owners, without any institutional backing. The Condominium Act itself, as a law on property rights, did not cover the internal functioning, leaving condominium operation an area without legal regulation. The outcome was a series of disputes, to which municipal politicians who were sensitive to the issue sought to respond. They saw the solution in regulation and supervision by the authorities, which would have clearly pushed the process towards systematisation of the condominium as a form of housing.

The Condominium in Housing Actions

The idea of the condominium was not only a general concept, but was also linked with contemporary social policy and urban planning issues in the decision-making process of the capital in the 1920s. It was in the debates surrounding these issues that it gained its significance in urban development, becoming closely linked to proposals for the construction of a suburb for public servants and the redevelopment of a rehabilitated part of the city, the district of Tabán.

The issue of Tabán, a part of the city in a state of disrepair since the First World War, was taken up again in 1926 on the agenda at the General Assembly meeting of the capital's borrowing and investment programme.¹⁷ This time, it was linked to the issue of private construction supported by municipal funds. Although Budapest had already adopted a plan for the dilapidated quarter on the Buda side in 1907, it was not implemented until 1914. Moreover, not only did the plan omit any public infrastructure, but while properties were expropriated, neither demolition nor any construction

**MOULAGE FOR THE LAYOUT PLAN
OF TABÁN, 1909**

MAKETA ÚZEMNÉHO PLÁNU
TABÁNU, 1909

Source Zdroj: Vasárnapi Újság, 6 April
1913, p. 279



LAYOUT PLAN OF TABÁN, 1933

ÚZEMNÝ PLÁN TABÁNU, 1933

Source Zdroj: Schuler, D., 1934, annex

of public utilities took place. After the war, the housing shortage hindered the relocation of the district's residents, while a lack of capital prevented construction of either infrastructure or residential buildings. The proposed municipal housing programme, and the related dilemma of using private or public housing, brought the issue of the district back into focus.

An already extant zoning plan for the area envisaged the construction of a modern middle-class suburban neighbourhood with a three-tier layout: large apartment blocks in the lower, flat area, planned as solid rows, small detached houses in the middle area along the roads leading up the hill, and villas at the highest elevation.¹⁸ On this basis, in 1926, a new idea was formulated for the development of the district, with the issue of housing brought back on the agenda as an opportunity to move forward.¹⁹ The proposal retained the hierarchy of elevation, but with cooperatively built condominiums replacing both the tenements and the detached houses: specifically, villas of four or five apartments on the middle level and three- and four-storey twelve-apartment blocks on the lower ground. Here, the greatest innovation of the proposal, which otherwise closely matches the existing concept, was the integration of condominium ownership. The issue of Tabán, already central to the debates over municipal housing construction, was now also linked to the condominium.

The Tabán case also gave rise to a crucial concept for the city's urban planning: that the housing construction supported by condominium development would revive the housing mobility cut off by the housing shortage, providing a flow of housing and social groups. Nor would the settlement of Tabán by the middle class merely restart the city's long-delayed wave of development: the housing to be built here would free up an equal amount of residential space for other social classes to move into, improving their own housing conditions. Additionally, it was also decided to make further preparations for the transfer of city-owned plots in Tabán for individual and condominium buildings.²⁰ In this way, the capital's support for the construction of condominiums was almost immediately linked to a specific urban planning project, where a new middle-class district would be developed using condominiums rather than rental apartments. However, none of the planned development was implemented, either then or later. The relocation of the current residents stalled, and by the late 1920s the worldwide depression made any practical steps impossible. Then, from the 1930s, the area was included in the 'Budapest spa town' concept, focused on tourism, and as such, lost its intended character of a modern residential area.

The Condominium as a Reduced Family House

In parallel with the rehabilitation of Tabán, another suburban concept witnessed a replacement of its original built typology, the family house, with the condominium. As part of the post-World War I land reform, the allocation of land, owned partly by the municipality and partly by large landowners, as housing sites for public servants was granted at the end of 1922. However, the transfer of municipal land in the undeveloped outskirts of the city was delayed because the city government opposed the allocation, mainly on planning and regulatory grounds. In the course of a contentious negotiation between the Garden City Association (*Kertváros Szövetség*), an alliance of public servants who had applied for housing, and the municipal authorities, not only was the amount of city-owned land reduced, but even the plots on offer were changed. As a result, the association requested that the housing site allotment in the outskirts be replaced by publicly developed land in the central city, where they could build condominiums, i.e. multi-family houses instead of detached houses. The request was motivated by financial reasons: house construction would have been too costly for the applicants, while condominium construction was already reviving in the city. Thus, very soon, plans to build condominiums replaced the single-family house concept.²¹

The evolution of these two projects, both questions of large-scale urban planning scale that were rooted in the suburban idea, was equally determined by the idea of replacing the family house with the condominium. Although one started out as an program of municipal housing policy and the other as a self-organising initiative, even the latter was regarded as a form of social housing.²² Both plans aimed to solve the problem of middle-class housing, which had already become a social issue. However, the link between the concept of the condominium and the detached house, or the condominium and the suburb, was not new. From the time the condominium appeared in Budapest, it was inseparable from the ideal of the family house, and the relationship between the two concepts persisted in post-World War I thinking.

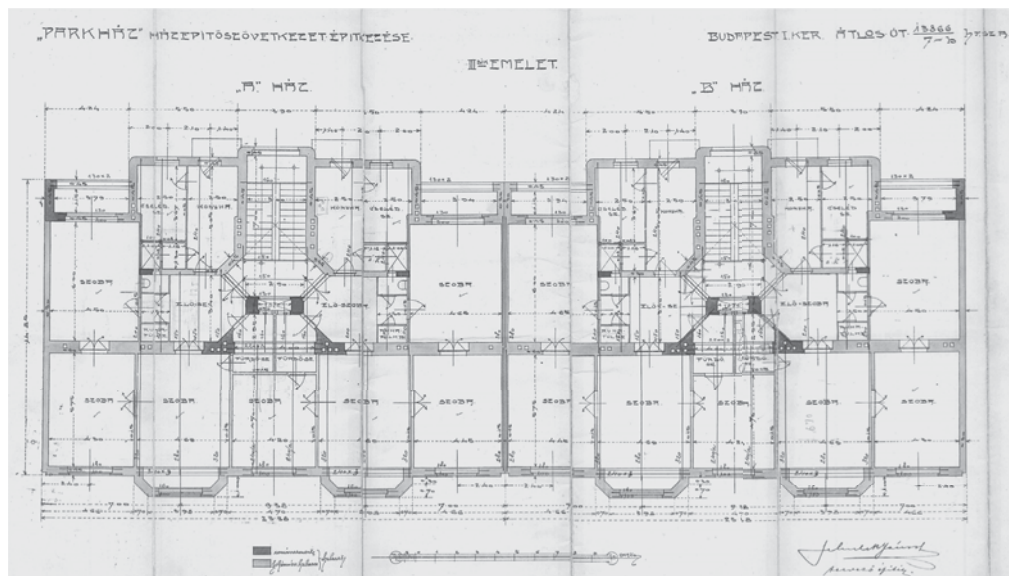
The housing reform movement's critique of tenement housing, and the contrast between the ideal of the family house and the critique of the tenement house, was also present in Hungarian urbanistic thinking from the 1870s onwards.²³ And in the early 20th century, the idea of the garden city also came into the scope of reflection.²⁴ Housing reformers, who at one time had seen the family house as the solution to housing problems, favoured it over the tenement as both an ownership and an architectural form. Indeed, owner-occupation, which was seen as the ideal, and the family house as a built typology, were initially seen as inseparable. The idea had yet to occur that the two basic architectural forms of housing, multi-family and single-family variants, could equally exist in the two legal frameworks of rent and home ownership.²⁵ Combining a block of flats with owner-occupation was out of the question.

However, the emergence of housing cooperatives in Budapest after 1905 brought about a significant change. In the still-limited discussions that accompanied the construction of the first condominiums, these new housing types were seen as a substitute for the ideal but unattainable family house. Now, the dualistic, indeed contradictory status of the condominium began to emerge. As multi-family houses, they had to replace both the tenement and the family house, and at the same time fulfil the role of the family house. Accordingly, these houses were built mainly in the

**CONDOMINIUM FLOOR PLAN IN
A PERIMETER BLOCK, ELIMINATING
THE ENCLOSED COURTYARD AND
THE SURROUNDING CORRIDOR**

PÓDORYS KONDOMÍNIA
V OVBODOVOM BLOKU, KTORÝ
ELIMINUJE UZAVRETÝ DVOR
A KRHOVÚ CHODBU

Source Zdroj: BFL XV.17.d.329 4374



garden areas of Buda, while on the much more densely built-up Pest side they similarly arose in or on the edge of the garden suburb or free-standing development zone. In the housing market of the capital, the propaganda in favour of cooperative housing as a new option for the middle class promoted these dwellings over both rented apartments and detached houses. Against the standard apartment block, they emphasised not only the freedom from the landlord and the concierge, the absence of the threat of evictions and rent increases, but also the architectural difference: the villa-like character of the houses and flats, as opposed to the apartment buildings with running corridors. In accordance with the hygienic principles of the housing reform movement, the result was the creation of well-ventilated, well-appointed apartments with gardens and balconies, in contrast with the central city's the closed courtyard apartment buildings and their airless and dark courtyard apartments.²⁶

With the resurgence of condominium building in the second half of the 1920s, the architectural and discursive creation of the condominium continued along these lines. In socio-political thinking, it also took the form of an alternative to, indeed a replacement of, the idea of the middle-class suburb of detached houses. The Condominium Act was discussed in the Ministry of Public Welfare as something that would allow the construction of 'detached family hearths' on a large scale.²⁷ The notion that the condominium is essentially a collection of family houses was encapsulated in the saying: 'people with less money who could not afford villas and detached houses built their houses on top of each other'.²⁸ Furthermore, the Condominium Act translated this idea into law, making condominiums a separate unit of ownership, on the model of family houses: 'A condominium is essentially nothing more than a group of separate family houses placed together in a convenient area of the city for transport and health purposes'.²⁹

At the same time, the transformation of the detached house into a condominium also took place from in architectural terms, granting condominiums two of the main characteristics of detached houses: garden access and resident independence. The new condominiums were advertised as the realisation of the desire for a family home: 'The house is only 20 units, so it really is the closest to the idea of a family home'.³⁰ A key element in the discussion of co-operative housing was 'the requirement for each dwelling to be as independent as possible from the others'.³¹ This sentiment was a legacy of the moral and hygienic ideals of the housing reform movement developing since the second half of the 19th century, which called for the removal of spaces of personal contact between tenants on moral and sanitary grounds.³² Separability, the elimination as far as possible of contact with neighbours, was also demanded of the housing offered by cooperative ownership, where 'each tenant would find a pleasant home, as if living alone in his own house'.³³ The condominium, in its multi-family form, was physically reminiscent of the tenement house, but as a dwelling it offered the advantages of a detached home: property ownership and a sense of independence.

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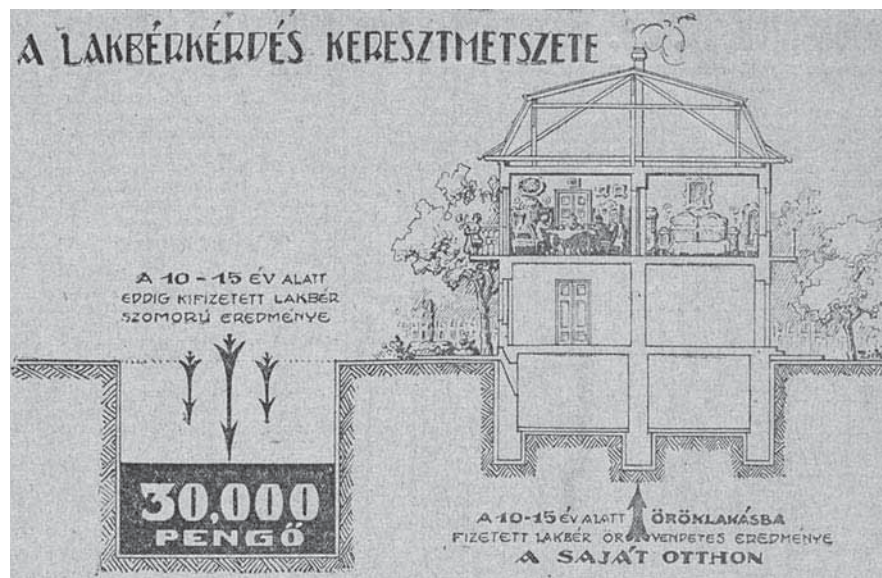
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RENTAL HOUSING VERSUS CONDOMINIUMS. PROMOTING THE CONDOMINIUM AS AN ANALOGY TO THE FAMILY HOUSE, 1931

NÁJOMNÉ BÝVANIE V. KONDOMÍNIA. PROPAGÁCIA KONDOMÍNIA PRIPOMÍNÁJUČEHO RODINNÝ DOM, 1931

Source Zdroj: Az Öröklakás, 5 Mai 1931, p. 4



1 The problem of the lack of heritable property was emphasised, for example: 'Tusculanum' magyar tisztviselők országos házépítő szövetsége. *Műszaki Hetilap*, 14 October 1900, pp. 324–325

2 Szövetkezeti lakóházak. Fischer József fölolvasása a Magyar Építőmesterek Egyesületében. *Építő Ipar*, 15 March 1908, p. 111.

3 The Budapest building code was of the zoning type. FABÓ, Beáta. 2020. Budapest építési szabályzatai 1805–1945-ig. *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából*, 45. Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, pp. 83–130.

4 HOLEK, Sámuel. 1936. *A Szentimreváros bölcsőjénél*. Budapest: Centrum Házépítő és Ingatlanvállalat, 31 p. It also refers to following the patterns in Germany: Szövetkezeti lakóházak. Fischer József fölolvasása a Magyar Építőmesterek Egyesületében. *Építő Ipar*, 15 March 1908, p. 111.

5 BORSOS, Endre. 1929. *A magyar lakásügy a háború kezdetétől*. Kalocsa: M. Kir. Népjóléti és Munkaügyi Minisztérium, 523 p.

6 NAGY, Ágnes. 2022. Bérházból társasház: az öröklakások terjedésének új formái Budapesten az 1920-as években. *Levéltári Mozaikok*, (2) [online]. Available at: <https://leveletarimozaikok.bparchiv.hu/2022/03/30/leveletari-mozaikok-59/> (Accessed: 14 August 2022).

7 Act LI of 1921. 1921. évi Országos Törvénytár, 25 (31 December 1921); Act XXXIV of 1923. In: *Magyar Törvénytár (Corpus juris Hungarici)*. 1923. évi törvény-cikkek [Hungarian laws. Law articles of 1923]. Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1924, pp. 217–219.; Act XVIII of 1925. In: *Magyar Törvénytár (Corpus juris Hungarici)*. 1925. évi törvény-cikkek. Budapest:

Franklin Társulat, 1926, pp. 109–115.; Act XI of 1926. In: *Magyar Törvénytár (Corpus juris Hungarici)*. 1926. évi törvény-cikkek. Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1927, pp. 101–102.

8 Act XII of 1924. In: *Magyar Törvénytár (Corpus juris Hungarici)*. 1924. évi törvény-cikkek. Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1925, pp. 160–161.

9 7777/1923. ME. 20. § [Prime Ministerial Decree No 7777/1923, § 20]. In: *Magyarországi rendeletek tára (57)* 1923. Budapest: M. Kir. Belügyminisztérium, 1924, pp. 320–330.

10 Act IV of 1924 on the rebalancing of public finances. In: *Magyar Törvénytár (Corpus juris Hungarici)*. 1924. évi törvény-cikkek. Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1925, pp. 6–44.

11 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 30 July 1926, pp. 1861–1870.

12 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 14 August 1925, p. 862.

13 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 5 February 1926, p. 212.

14 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 19 February 1926, pp. 346–347. Proposal for the conversion of tenement houses under construction into condominiums: *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 16 April 1926, pp. 725–726.

15 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 30 April 1926, Melléklet, p. 39.; 18 May 1926, p. 1083.; 2 July 1926, p. 1448. and p. 1509.

16 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 21 May 1929, p. 941.

17 SCHULER, Dezső. 1934. Adatok a Tabán történetéhez és rendezéséhez. (Statisztikai Közlemények 75/4). Budapest: Budapest Székesfőváros Statisztikai Hivatala, 116 p.

18 The plan was drawn up by László Warga in 1909.

19 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 23 April 1926, p. 845; *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 30 April 1926, pp. 903–905.

20 *Fővárosi Közlöny*, 30 April 1926, p. 927.

21 It must be said that this applied only in relation to the allocation of the land owned by the capital, because the plan for the suburbs on the land granted from the large landowners' property remained, although it did not reach the implementation stage.

22 SCHODITSCH, Lajos. 1924. Néhány szó a 'Kertvárosról'. *Építő Ipar*, 5 April 1924, p. 32.

23 TASNER, Dénes. 1870. *Pesti lakás-reform*. Pest, 62 p.

24 WILDNER, Ödön. 1906. A kert-városok. *Huszadik Század*, 1, pp. 47–60.

25 Tasner, D., 1870, p. 41.

26 For the historical and contemporary structural patterns of urban blocks in Budapest see: BENKŐ, Melinda. 2011. Budapest Urban Blocks and their Sustainability. *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, 45(3–4), pp. 186–199 [online]. Available at: <https://www.architektura-urbanizmus.sk/2021/11/04/budapest-urban-blocks-and-their-sustainability/> (Accessed: 14 August 2022)

27 Petrichevich-Horváth Emil báró államtitkár nyilatkozata az építési akcióról. *Az Újság*, 16 December 1923, p. 4.

28 Budapest Főváros Levéltára XIV.93 Martonosi Baráth Lajos műépítész iratai. 5. nagydoboz [Box 5]. Lajos

Martonosi Baráth' draft in connection with the sale of the house at 1 Ferenc Square IX, n.d.

29 Több mint háromszáz új ház épült az utolsó évtizedben. *Magyarság*, 4 September 1932, p. 26.

30 *Budapesti Hírlap*, 14 February 1932, p. 6.

31 NEY, Béla. 1908. Családi ház és bérkaszánya. *Építő Ipar*, 2 February 1908, p. 46.

32 DUMONT, Marie-Jeanne. 1991. *Le logement social à Paris 1850–1930. Les habitations à bon marché*. Liège: Mardaga, pp. 7–30.

33 Szövetkezeti lakóházak, 1908, p. 113.