

CONTEMPORARY DWELLING PLANNING SCHEMES ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In the years of rapid construction the building's large scale comes to the fore, shifting the importance from the individual dwelling as a building component unit. The stress is laid on the quantitative rather than on the qualitative aspect of the project, thus neglecting the floor plans; the planning schemes optimization is often at the expense of the individual dwelling size and functionality. The purpose of this work is to analyze the specific dwelling planning schemes in modern residential buildings and to trace the trends in their development.

Key words: planning schemes, trends, dwellings

The last ten years in Bulgaria are characterised by large and fast-growing construction. It is mostly concentrated in the big cities and along the Black sea coast, due to the progressive migration towards the capital and the major regional centres of the Bulgarian population, due to social and economical reasons. The quantitative rather than the qualitative aspect of the buildings comes to the fore, thus neglecting the floor plans, and the planning schemes optimization is often at the expense of the individual dwelling's size and functionality. After the rapid growth in the construction sector until 2009 there follows a more moderate period, which makes it possible to make a summary on the subject. There is a decrease in the number of new buildings arising from market saturation and greater supply than demand. This fact can be observed for both office and residential buildings. The available housing stock, however, provides a quite rich database giving information about the rooms' size, number, distribution and disposition.

On the basis of this information the present work aims to analyse, summarise and classify the specific dwelling planning schemes in Bulgarian modern residential

buildings, and trace the trends in their development.

Globalization is inevitable during the years of fast developing technologies and communications, enabling instantaneous access to virtually unlimited quantities of information overcoming space and time. Fashion and trends are transferred between continents, countries and people and lead to mixing of different cultures and traditions. This can be observed in any strand of human life – from clothing, music and food to construction, product, interior or other design.

- **Construction**

In the construction sector property developers have a tendency of towards originality and uniqueness. This leads on the one hand to a wide variety and choice of housing, but on the other - to a lack of uniformity in style and colour with respect to the buildings in the immediate vicinity, which harms the overall vision of neighbourhood and streets and gives a feeling of disorganization and disorder.

- **Planning schemes**

As mentioned above, as a result of the fast-growing construction in the last years the scale of a given construction comes to the fore, thus shifting the importance from

the apartment as a component unit of the residential building. In the planning schemes there is also a great diversity in the distribution of spaces and their shape, which is a logical consequence of the buildings variety. However, an important role here plays not only the personal vision of the architect and the trends in construction, but also the legal, sanitary and hygiene, fire safety and other requirements.

- **Furnishing**

For just twenty years this sector has undergone tremendous changes. From mass production, limited to a few varieties, today there are infinite possibilities not only for the finished furniture, but also for custom furniture. Today's consumer, driven towards originality and customization of the interior, has high requirements for style and quality. Adequate responses to these requirements are the 'furniture programs' which by configuring could be the optimal solution for every home, preserving its personality while also maintaining an affordable price.

Planning schemes classification

For the purpose of the study multi-storey multi-family residential buildings

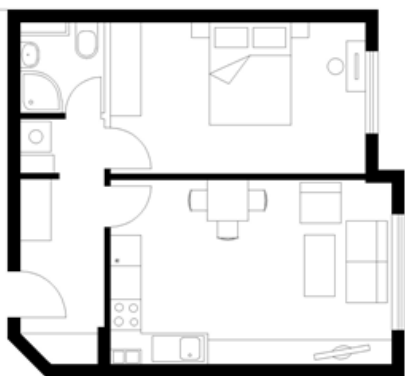


Figure 1: One-side oriented dwelling

3. According to number of rooms and surface area

According to this criterion the standard dwellings can be divided into studios (up to 56 square meters), one bedroom (43 ÷

constructed during the last 10 years in Sofia and other cities were examined. Using the data obtained a classification of the standard planning schemes of the contemporary Bulgarian dwellings has been made, taking into account the following criteria: orientation, natural lighting, surface area, number of rooms, disposition, level of room integration, form.

1. According to the geographical orientation

The orientation of the dwelling is set by the design of the building. It determines the natural room lighting and the following dispositions are widely accepted: kitchen, bathroom, toilets, cabinet and studio - on the north; master bedroom - on the northeast; nursery, living room - facing east, southeast and south; living room - southwest.

2. According to the natural lighting the dwellings can have single, double, triple, quadruple or angular orientation. Four-side oriented dwellings are rare and these are mostly individual residential buildings (houses). The unilateral ones cannot comply with the orientation requirements for each room, so some compromises are admitted.

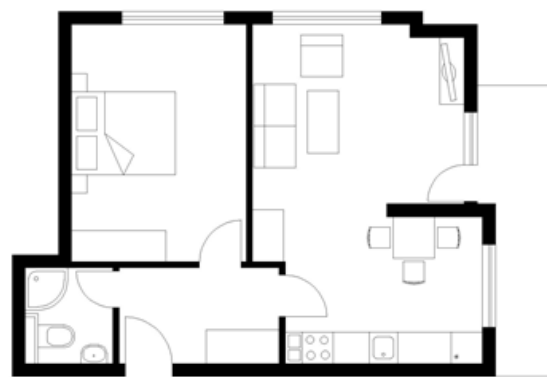


Figure 2: Angular oriented dwelling

98 m²), two-bedroom (55 ÷ 132 m²), three-bedroom (80 ÷ 135 m²) and four or more bedroom apartments (110 ÷ 260 m²)*.

* The limit values of the surface area are based on the residential buildings examined, including both unusually small and unconventionally large dwellings.

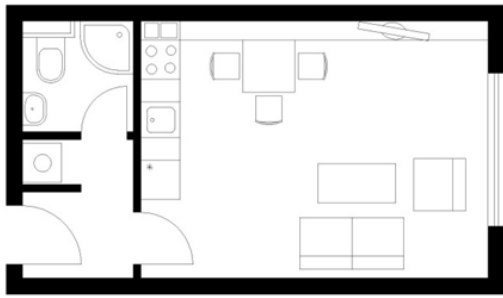


Figure 3: Studio

Due to the large number of one- and two-bedroom apartments, these in turn could be divided into:

- one-bedroom – small (43÷60 sq.m.) and large (60÷98 sq.m.)
- two-bedroom – small (55÷90 sq.m.) and large (90÷132 sq.m.)

After the transition period and the subsequent changes (1989 - 1992) there has been an increase in the percentage of two, three, four and more bedroom apartments. This is due to the emerging of more wealthy Bulgarian citizens, who could afford larger luxury homes. Most common, however, remain the one-bedroom apartments, whose number is preserved unchanged during the years. The implication here is that this type of dwelling remains the optimal one for the

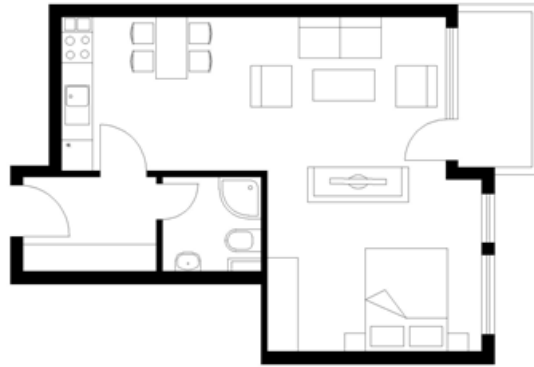


Figure 4: Spacious studio with a sleeping corner

needs and requirements of the average Bulgarian family.

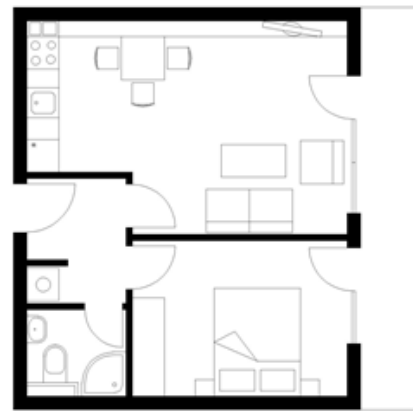


Figure 5: One-bedroom apartment

There is a trend of decline in single-room apartments (studios), due to their lower efficiency and possibly to the raised welfare of Bulgarians, coupled with a desire for more comfortable home.



Figure 6: Two-bedroom apartment

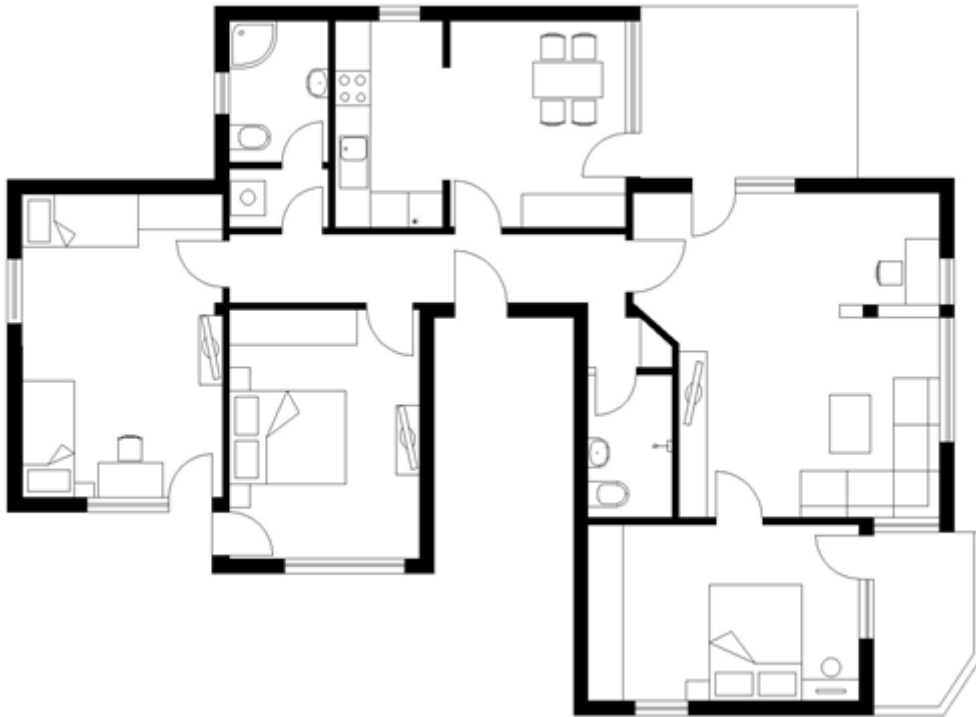


Figure 7: Three-bedroom apartments

4. According to the disposition of the separate rooms

The planning schemes nowadays have a variety of distributions, but they could be generally classified as:

- corridor type apartments – in which the rooms are connected by corridors or hallways, which may be L-shaped, U-shaped, rectangular or any other shape. These types of dwellings preserve the occupants' autonomy of the individual rooms. The fairly large area set aside for communications can be noted as a disadvantage.

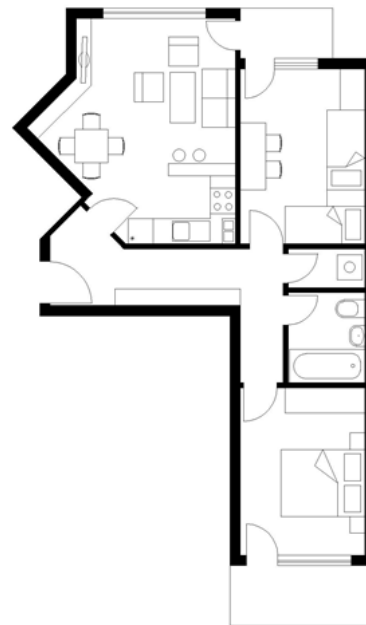


Figure 8: L-shaped corridor apartments

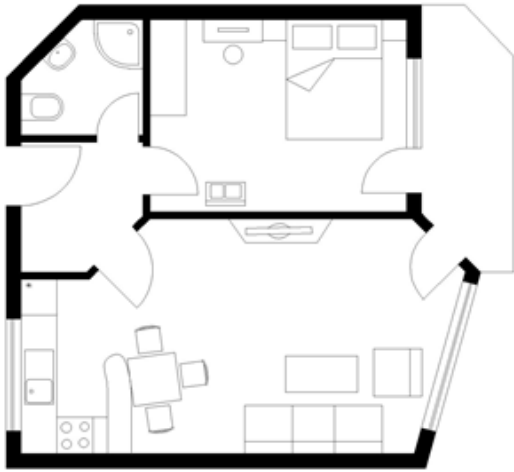


Figure 9: Trapezoidal entrance hall apartments

- apartments without entrance hall – in which the saved area from communications is at the expense of the autonomy of the room, which is accessed directly from the entrance door. This is most often the living room or a space unifying kitchenette, dining room and kitchen. This type of distribution is also suitable for undersized single-room dwellings, where the goal is to optimize the smallest possible area.

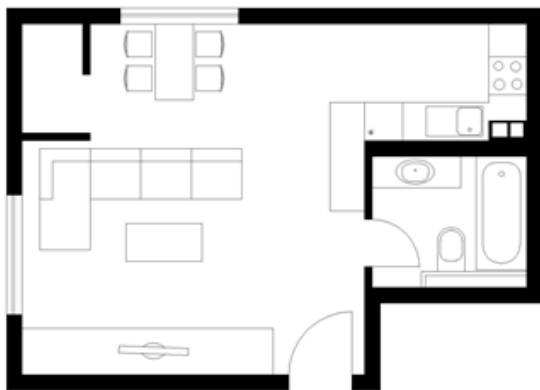


Figure 10: Apartment with direct access to without entrance hall the dining room

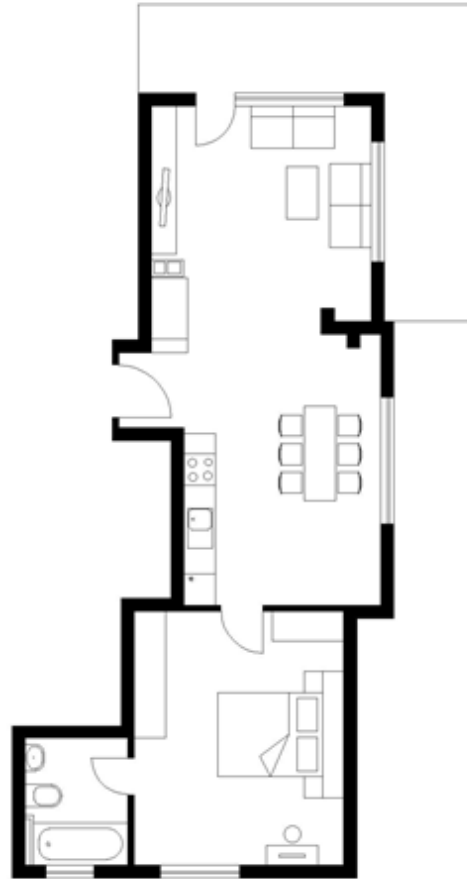


Figure 11: One-bedroom apartment

- free arrangement – in this case the bathrooms, toilets and kitchens are grouped in so-called 'hard cores' (Guenova, 2010) allowing changes in the space configuration according to the occupants' needs and requirements. This is a modern method which makes it possible for greater individualization of the dwelling.

Another specific feature of some dwellings which may be pointed is the passage living room, i.e. there is no direct access from the entrance hall to one or more rooms. In this case the living room plays also the role of communication, reducing the isolation of the occupants and stimulating the communication between them.

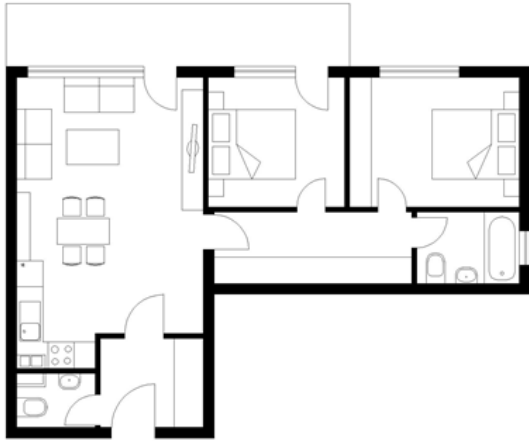


Figure 12: Dwellings with passage living room

5. According to the level of integration of the rooms

In today's world of internet and new technologies that capture every part of our lives, there is an increased feeling of alienation and anti-socialization of people. As a counterbalance comes the trend of merging several functional areas in one room. Thus in a very casual way all occupants gather in one place, despite the different activities they carry out. This occurs most often in the living room. For example the housewife is no longer isolated in the kitchen and cooks in the kitchenette, which is part of the living room; the husband can finish his work in a working area – also part of the living room, while the children can watch TV in the rest area or eat at the dining table.

In most cases the area of the individual rooms grows in proportion to the area of the dwelling as a whole. An exception is the living room, which is always the most spacious place (in most cases over 30 square meters), especially if there is the above mentioned integration of functional areas.

For the single-room dwellings, or the so-called studios, one room incorporates

absolutely all functional areas and so the living room area is higher compared to the area of the entire dwelling (for ex. 18:25 against a one-bedroom apartment, where the ratio is 30:80)

Nearly 90 % of the kitchens set apart as independent rooms are 5 and more square meters, which determines the trend towards greater area intended for the housewife.

In summary, according to the rooms' type and area the dwellings can be divided into:

- Dwellings with separate kitchen and separate dining room
- Dwellings with integrated kitchen and dining room (fig. 7)
- Dwellings with separate kitchen and integrated dining and living room
- Dwellings with integrated kitchenette, dining corner and living room (the most common type)
- Dwellings with integrated kitchenette, dining corner, working corner and living room
- Dwellings integrating all functional areas (in single room)

6. According to the form of the planning scheme and the rooms

Modern dwellings have a variety of shapes. They are determined by the specific architecture of a given building or residential complex, but also by the factors having a direct impact on the architecture in big cities, namely the urban development plan and the construction type. The dynamic form gives greater possibilities for customization of the dwelling, while the improper angles add an artistic touch to the interior.



Figure 13 and 14: Dwellings with different shapes of the rooms.

CONCLUSION

There are numerous criteria by which the modern dwellings can be subdivided, and which affect different aspects of construction, architecture, interior and furniture. The above classification is by no means exhaustive and does not mention all possible options and types of dwellings, but it can give a clear picture of the trends in the contemporary dwellings' planning schemes, namely:

- There is a trend of decline in single-room apartments (studios), due to their lower efficiency and possibly to the raised welfare of Bulgarians, coupled with a desire for more comfortable home.
- Most common remain the one-bedroom apartments, whose number is preserved unchanged during the years. The implication here is that this type of dwelling remains the optimal one for the needs and requirements of the average Bulgarian family.
- There is a trend of merging several functional areas into one room (forming a so-called open plan living most

often combining kitchen, dining and living room) thus optimizing the use of space and making it possible for the family to spend more time together.

In conclusion it becomes clear that the new residential buildings offer a wide variety of floor plans. They allow for freedom and imagination in the interior design and furniture. However, there remains along with this the challenge for optimal furnishing of these dwellings using unified production, while maintaining the individuality of the interior using different configurations of furniture programs.

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