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## MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF RECREATIONAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE REGION OF WARSAW

In the geographical studies of the phenomenon of second homes there is a clearly distinguished morphological direction, related on the one hand to geography of recreation and on the other hand to geography of settlement systems.

Studies on spatial structure of settlements of second homes are often concerned not only with description of the spatial setting and the nature of buildings, but also with natural, socio-economic and historico-cultural conditions (Albarre 1977, Haider 1978, Soulier 1974).

Recreational plots appearing in the same country, but in different historical periods or in various economic and political conditions, may significantly differ as to their magnitude, shape and the manner of development. This concerns also the settlements of second homes in Poland which, for instance, before 1945 were often created in connection with the concept of garden-cities, while nowadays planners advise to take over for recreational purposes first of all the abandoned farm houses. Simultaneously, in all the socialist countries the principle dominated in practice according to which clusters of second homes were being set up independently of the village settlement systems. This tendency was especially disadvantageous from the point of view of environmental protection, for it often happened that areas of high natural or agricultural value were taken for recreational plots. In this manner settlements were being established turning frequently into estates of up to several hundred houses. This constituted a threat to local ecosystems and lowered the quality of recreation (Dingsdale 1986, Kowalczyk 1990a).

The beginnings of recreational settlements in the region of Warsaw date from the turn of the 20th century (Kowalczyk, 1990b).

Localities with high concentration of second homes, which have been established in various periods, differ among themselves not so much as to their magnitude, but first of all as to their outlook.

In the course of the broadly conceived studies concerning the development of recreational functions in the suburban zone of Warsaw (Kowalczyk, 1990b), one of the main research problems undertaken was definition of morphological types of the settlements of second homes.

In order to have a better insight into the nature of local conditions influencing the outlook of recreational settlements the following examples were selected:

(1) the town of Konstancin-Jeziorna (24 kms from the centre of Warsaw), where construction of second homes started already at the end of the 19th century;

(2) the village of Izabelin in the commune of Stare Babice (17 kms from the centre of Warsaw) — already in the period before 1939 a plan was elaborated of development of recreational functions in this area, but the phenomenon of construction of second homes really intensified only starting with the beginning of the 1970s;

(3) the locality of Rynia in Nieporęt commune (36 kms from the centre of Warsaw), in which development of recreational functions started in the second half of the 1960s;

(4) the village of Kopki in Wiązowna commune (38 kms from the centre of Warsaw) — development of second homes since the middle of the 1970s;

(5) the village of Lipowo in Wiązowna commune (40 kms from the centre of Warsaw) — development of second homes since the beginning of the 1980s;

(6) the locality of Hornówek in the commune of Stare Babice (19 kms from the centre of Warsaw) — recreational settlements started to develop after 1980.

In the communes subject to detailed studies in 1990 there were altogether more than 1700 second homes (up to 15% of all the second homes in Warsaw voivodship).

Localities listed are all contained within the radius of 40-50 kms from downtown Warsaw and differ as to their natural features and economic functions. Konstancin-Jeziorna (16,000 inhabitants) borders with Warsaw and is located in the urbanized zone with domination of housing function, with intensively developed agriculture and industry. The town has also health resort functions and the status of locality with stricter environmental regulations and standards. Rynia, Kopki and Lipowo are localities which until now have had primarily agricultural functions. Izabelin and Hornówek are located in the direct vicinity of the Kampinos National Park. Recreational functions coexist there with many other functions: with housing, industry and service (Izabelin) and agriculture (Hornówek), these functions not only colliding with each other, but also being in opposition to the environmental protection requirements resulting from the presence of the national park.

Localities taken as examples represent the essential types of second home settlements, which can be encountered in the suburban zone of Warsaw (Kowalczyk, 1990a). According to the typology adopted they differ first of all with regard to the degree of linkage between the recreational housing construction and the previously existing houses, with regard to internal structure of groups of second homes (area of plots and their shapes, nature of constructions, size of houses), and with regard to the degree of adaptation of the recreational function to the natural assets of the environment.

These localities differ significantly in terms of the parameters mentioned. Besides natural factors there are other ones — even more important — which in-

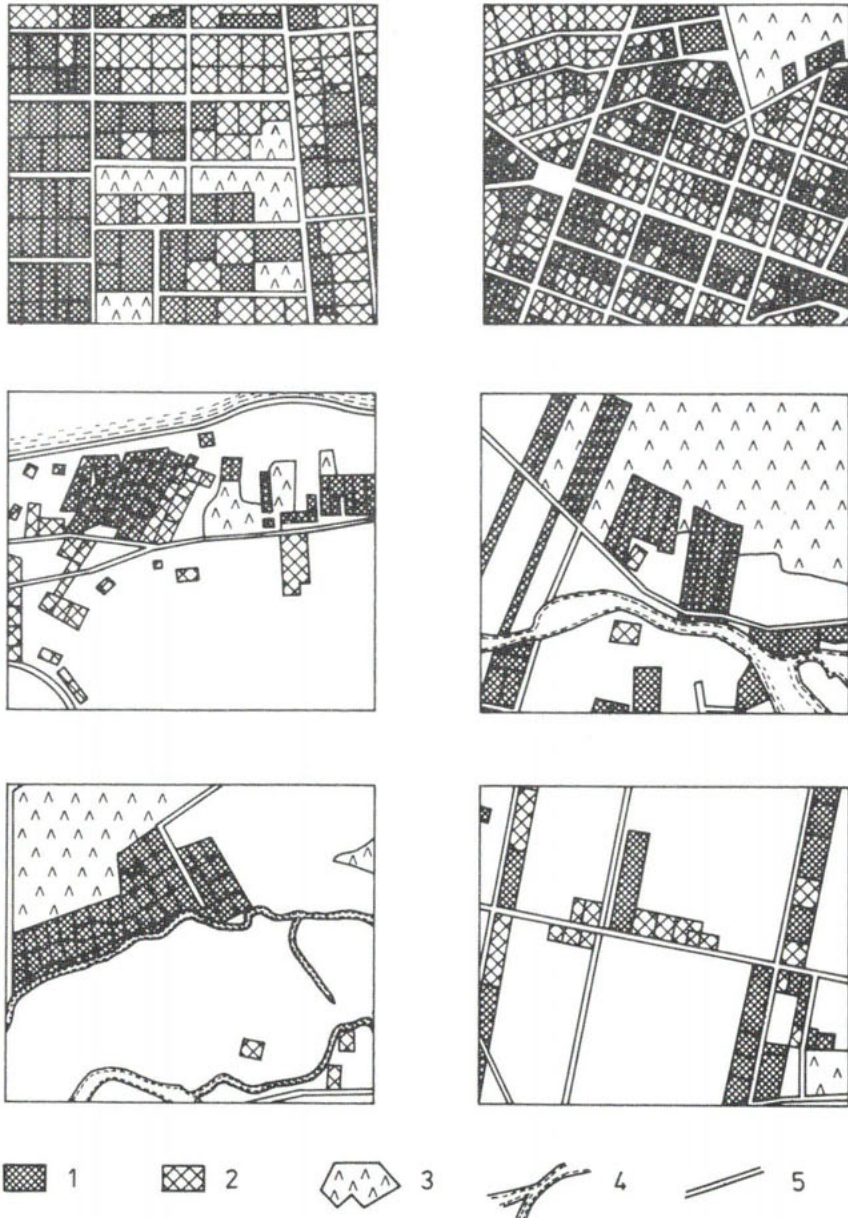


Fig. 1. Morphological types of recreational localities in the region of Warsaw (scale of 1:10,000), 1 – second homes, 2 – areas of permanent residence, 3 – forest, 4 – rivers, 5 – roads

fluenced this differentiation: socio-economic factors as well as the period of time during which the recreational function developed.

#### A) Konstancin-Jeziorna

Recreational functions appeared in the previous township of Konstancin (new, double name is in force since 1968) at the time of appearance of health resort functions in 1897. In the years 1897-1914, due to the opening of the narrow gauge railway connection with Warsaw, numerous second homes were constructed belonging to the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. Wealth of owners was reflected in the scale of plots (mostly 3200-3500 sq. meters) and comfortable villas, often designed by best architects. This character of the locality was preserved over the period 1918-1939. After 1945 numerous second homes were taken over by the state and given for poorer families to live in. This entailed devastation of a number of historical buildings and a transitory decline in the fame of the town. In the 1970s a new quarter of second homes was created (see Fig. 1, western part), meant mainly for members of government, leaders of the communist party and other representatives of the previous establishment. Houses constructed for them were being built on plots in the pine forest with microclimate having very positive health effects. Average area of plots was at 2250 sq. meters, and floor area of second homes often exceeded 100 sq. meters. In the same period, second homes constructed in other parts of town, where natural conditions were far less favourable, had on the average 40-50 square meters of floor area, while plots had 1200 to 1600 sq. meters of area. There were also numerous plots of 500 to 600 sq. meters only. Their owners were as a rule representatives of intellectual professions, as well as workers.

Table 1

Average area of recreational plots and second homes

Locality	Number of plots	% share of private land taken by plots	Average area of a plot [hectares]	% share of recreational plots with second homes
Konstancin-Jeziorna	805	29.3	0.20	52.3
Izabelin	568	49.5	0.17	36.3
Rynia	44	7.2	0.11	79.5
Kopki	164	24.9	0.20	49.4
Lipowo	53	2.7	0.12	64.2
Hornówek	70	14.1	0.29	44.3

At present, Konstancin-Jeziorna belongs to recreational localities with the highest prestige in the vicinity of Warsaw. Wealth of the owners can be assessed on the basis of average plot area attaining 0.20 hectare, much more than the average for the suburban zone of Warsaw. This results partly from the principles adopted in local planning, stipulating that in view of the health resort function of

the town plots in the centre cannot be too small so as to make the density of buildings not entail degradation of the vegetation cover, of the water system and the microclimate.

The same morphological type as Konstancin-Jeziorna is represented by other localities with similar origins — e.g. Podkowa Leśna, Józefów, Komorów or Zalesie Górne.

The process of emergence of second homes in localities classified in this type is not yet terminated. After a period of stagnation, at the end of the 1970s an investment "boom" for recreational premises occurred in these places. The newly established plots, though, were most often smaller than the ones determined in the initial period of establishment of the settlements, neighbouring plots are not necessarily similar as to their area and shape, and it happens much more often that recreational plots are neighbouring with production and service outlets or with horticultural farms, etc. Thus, development of recreational functions takes now all the features of a spontaneous process and is a by-product of the spatial planning model for urbanized areas, in force for over 40 years. Arbitrary decisions as to which localities should have recreational functions, and the legal and administrative procedures corresponding to this, have resulted in pathologisation of the phenomenon, for second homes emerged either on the basis of locational decisions which were in disagreement with the true purpose of the building (as permanent residence houses, as workshops and the like), or without any construction licenses.

#### **B) Izabelin**

Similarly as Konstancin-Jeziorna, Izabelin was founded in its present shape according to a plan dating from before 1939. Still, the really dynamic development of the recreational functions came only after 1975. Construction of the initial second homes was primarily motivated by natural conditions — the area neighbours at its northern edge with the National Kampinos Park. Besides the recreational functions the locality starts to undergo transformations and to take on the residential and the production-and-service functions. Multifunctionality of the village can be seen, for instance, through the mixture of recreational land use with other forms of land use, and the relatively small area of plots (see Fig. 1b). In view of closeness of Warsaw, Izabelin is getting increasingly similar to the suburbs of a town. The neighbourhood of the national park makes further spatial expansion of the village impossible, and it can be expected that recreational functions could in future be limited, with numerous second homes turned into permanent residences.

Izabelin is an example of a large group of localities in which the original recreational functions start to be replaced by residential as well as production-and-service functions. Such a kind of transformations was described in detail by H.Clout (1974) and it is one of the phases in the process of development of urban agglomerations. In the suburban zone of Warsaw the same morphological type is represented by Łomianki and neighbouring localities, by settlements in the area of Piaseczno and Pruszków or Legionowo, localities situated along the railway line from Warsaw to Wołomin and along the Warsaw-Katowice highway.

Table 2

Differentiation of second homes according to floor area in selected villages

Locality	Number of second homes	% shares of houses with floor area (sq.m.) of				average floor area of second home [sq.m]
		40	41-80	81-120	121	
Konstancin-Jeziorna	421	35.2	36.8	16.7	11.2	72.8
Izabelin	568	56.3	30.5	8.3	4.9	46.0
Rynia	35	27.8	69.4	-	2.8	44.3
Kopki	81	82.7	16.1	1.2	-	29.8
Lipowo	34	58.9	38.2	2.9	-	38.8
Hornówek	31	77.4	19.4	3.2	-	35.9

### C) Rynia

Appearance of recreational functions in Rynia was caused by construction, in the 1960s, of the artificial reservoir on Bug and Narew rivers (Zegrze Reservoir). Second homes started to appear here between the village and the reservoir and only after 1980 the recreational settlement started to expand in the eastern direction. Plots appeared in a spontaneous manner as individual investors started to purchase land from farmers. In view of large demand (proximity of the greatest water body in the vicinity of Warsaw, forests nearby) and limited area of land proper for recreational purposes (an important part of territory along the reservoir and to the south of the road constituting the boundary of the recreational settlement is taken by swamps) the areas of plots are limited and are usually within the range of 1000-1500 sq. m. (see Fig. 1c). There is, though, a part of the second homes which have large living spaces so that many of those are not only visited during weekends and vacations, but are also inhabited during the whole season, from spring till fall.

From the point of view of morphological analysis Rynia can be classified in the type, in which recreational plots were created in the manner only slightly regulated by a plan, with consideration of the local conditions of land ownership.

Very advantageous location of the village from the viewpoint of recreation caused that Rynia (and other localities over Zegrze Reservoir) quickly became one of the most prestigious recreational estates in the area around Warsaw. Land prices are much higher here than in many other places (although lower than in Konstancin - Jeziorna and Izabelin). Still, due to somewhat longer distance from the city only some of the second homes start to be treated as permanent residences and it cannot be expected that transformations similar to the ones previously described could take place here.

### D) Kopki

Recreational significance of the village of Kopki started only in the 1970s. The main advantage of this locality is the Świder river and the neighbouring forests. In the western part of the village (presented in Fig. 1d) plots have been

established in an unplanned manner on the areas bought out by individual investors from farmers. On the other hand, in the eastern part, not shown in Figure 1d the settlement of second homes was created in accordance with a plan. A spontaneous development of the recreational functions is reflected in the shape of numerous plots, which in some cases attain even 300 to 400 meters of length with the width occasionally not exceeding 25 meters. Lack of control over this phenomenon is demonstrated by the fact that some plots end directly at the river shore, which is illegal. Plots are often quite great, which is related to evasion of the normal legal procedure — many of these plots occupy land whose use, according to the plan, should be agricultural and of course such land can be sold at much lower price.

The morphological type represented by the village of Kopki belongs to the one which is most frequently encountered in Poland. A similar setting of recreational plots, strongly related to the ownership pattern of agricultural land, appears first of all in smaller localities, where recreational functions appeared spontaneously and are inadequately taken into account in the plans. When the phenomenon of emergence of recreational settlements does not attain too big dimensions and the second homes coexist with areas of agricultural character and forests, then this type of land use may be not disruptive for the environment. If, however, this phenomenon takes on important scale and there is no control from the part of planning authorities, recreational functions might bring significant degradation of the local ecological system. This is to a large degree caused by the fact that the second homes located in such type of localities usually belong to representatives of not so rich population groups. A reflection of this fact is the relatively lower average floor area of second homes (not quite 30 square meters). This means, for instance, that investors do not dispose of adequately high financial resources or informal capacities that would allow them to construct in a given area the common water supply system or to equip their houses in sewage and similar facilities.

#### **E) Lipowo**

Lipowo is also located in the Świder valley and borders with village of Kopki to the west. The recreational settlement was established in a planned manner, at a certain distance from the river because of wet meadows along the river course. The main factors of location of the recreational settlement were: forest and the landscape around. Recreational functions appeared in Lipowo at the end of the 1970s. Plots were determined within the area offered by the communal authorities and therefrom a majority of plots have similar surfaces (Fig. 1e). The average area of a plot is rather small (0.12 hectare), while the average floor area of the second homes is typical of most of the recreational premises in Poland.

The morphological type represented by Lipowo is similarly frequently encountered as the one previously described (see point D). In numerous cases this setting of a recreational settlement results from the fact that local authorities had offered land to important state institutions (ministries, army, foreign trade

enterprises), to bigger industrial enterprises or to scientific institutes, which would then sell the plots at low prices to their employees. This kind of practice was quite popular in the 1970s, and in many cases money obtained in such a manner did not flow into the budgets of local authorities.

Although this type of recreational settlements may seem optimal from the point of view of potential conflicts between man and environment (provided water supply and sewage systems are adequately designed and realized), the resulting conditions for the wholesome recreation of people may be far from excellent. In view of quite dense house distribution and the fact that plots are owned by employees of the same institution the quality of their leisure might be questioned. This is even more true if owners of these second homes, constructed on plots obtained through the intermediary of their employer do also live in Warsaw in a building owned by the same organism or by a housing cooperative related to this enterprise or institution.

Without entering into the details of legal regulations, which were decisive for the fact that just such direction of development of recreational settlements became popular in Poland, we can only state that they are related to the formulation used in the definition of the second home and to the regulations pertaining to elaboration of the spatial development plans of rural areas. Paradoxically, the law on protection of agricultural and forest land was in fact an advantageous factor for emergence of great clusters of second homes outside of the already existing rural settlements. Thus, it would turn out for a person without farming background or education ("farming license") to be less complicated in practice to reclassify large areas of arable lands, meadows or forests into recreational land than to buy a plot and build a second home within the existing rural settlement.

#### **F) Hornówek**

Hornówek is a village neighbouring with Izabelin (see point B), but it has much worse natural conditions for the development of recreation. It is due to this that the phenomenon of second homes started to really take place there only after 1980. The morphological type represented by Hornówek encompasses villages in which recreational functions are well mixed with traditional farming constructions. Second homes are often owned there by persons originating from countryside, who obtained the building or the land through heirloom. Although this type of recreational settlements is popular in France, Austria or in Scandinavian countries, it is still quite rare in Poland. From the point of view of environmental protection the development of recreational functions within the confines of previously existing rural settlements seems to be optimal and not threatening with mass takeovers of agricultural land for purposes of second home construction, provided plans are being followed.



The morphological types of second home settlements presented here, make it possible to classify recreational localities in the region of Warsaw and over vast areas of central Poland as to their outlook and pattern ("physiognomy"). Applicability of such classification would be much more doubtful for mountain areas or for lake districts, since the types mentioned account to a much lower degree for diversification of natural environment, the main emphasis being placed in their formation upon the socio-economic and planning questions. The effort was made here to demonstrate — as was anyway already done in the studies performed by other authors (see e.g. Dingsdale 1986) — that in the countries of real socialism the general systemic solutions adopted and the planning practice connected with it were of great importance for the shape of recreational settlements.

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