

## Nowa Huta in Krakow

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The construction of the metallurgical plant was launched in 1949 in the area formerly occupied by three villages: Mogiła, Pleszów and Krzesławice. In direct neighbourhood of the plant, a residential complex was located, which was the first new urban area built from scratch in post-war Poland, called Nowa Huta. Starting from 1950, the building development was based on an urban design elaborated by a team managed by Tadeusz Ptaszyci. The project included elements of the “neighbourhood unit” concept and the garden city movement. It assumed the development of self-sufficient settlement with all necessary public utility facilities, schools, shops and service outlets. The first completed housing estates were the following: Wandy, Willowe, Młodości, Na Skarpie and Sportowe. The development of Plac Centralny (Central Square) was carried out in 1950–56 and buildings of the Huta Administrative Centre were erected in 1955. By the end of 1950, in accordance with the original urban project, the housing estates of Centrum A, B, C, D were developed, including such estates as Ogrodowe, Hutnicze, Stalowe, Słoneczne, Szkolne and Zielone, Zgody, Uroczysko, Teatralne, Górali and Krakowiaków.

In 1956, designs of housing estates located west of Plac Centralny, i. e. Handlowe, Kolorowe and Spółdzielcze, were drawn up (carried out starting from 1957), according to the project taking into consideration urban planning concept changes following the political breakthrough that took place in October.

Investments carried out in the following decades of the 20th century were focused on the areas beyond the urban arrangement of “old” Nowa Huta.

The Nowa Huta urban plan is the largest urban spatial development of the post-war period in Poland and a leading one among similar developments carried out in Eastern Europe. According to the socialist-realist ideology, it refers to European concepts of modern times; however, it differs from corresponding projects by showing a more creative transformation of historical forms. This is an outstanding example of creation in the domain of city development in Poland at the time of ideological oppression in the first half of the 1950s.

### Urban planning

The plan of Nowa Huta is based on a concept of five avenues radiating from Plac Centralny, situated on the periphery of the development plan, next to the edge of the Vistula escarpment. The avenue called Aleja Róż (Rose Avenue) is a symmetrical axis running approximately towards north, to

Bulwarowa Street. Two avenues are located at 45° against the axis, of which the western one (Aleja Andersa – Anders Avenue) leads to newer housing estates of Nowa Huta, while the eastern one (Aleja Solidarności – Solidarity Avenue) leads to the Huta Administrative Centre. Aleja Jana Pawła II (John Paul II Avenue), constituting a basis of the plan, is slightly curved at the point of junction with Plac Centralny. The perspective of Aleja Solidarności ends with two twin buildings of the administrative centre. A geometric midpoint of the plan is constituted by a square without any buildings, located at the intersection of Aleja Róż and Aleja Przyjaźni (Friendship Avenue), the spot of the planned but never erected town hall. The symmetry of the plan was partially distorted by including in the urban concept the buildings erected during the first stage of the urban area development (1949–51), located on the eastern and southern peripheries. Each of the avenues starting at Plac Centralny has two dual carriageways, separated by tramway tracks, apart from Aleja Róż having a single carriageway without any tracks.

A completely symmetrical part of the urban plan is Plac Centralny and the first section of Aleja Róż. The right (eastern) side of the square is exactly the same as the left side. The run of the street surrounding the square, its junctions with radiating avenues, the location of buildings, their facades, details, the position of lamps have their exact counterparts on both sides of the square. Apart from Plac Centralny, such a perfect symmetry of the urban plan is not reflected in the development of particular parts of the complex.

None of the housing estates is independent in urban terms and is linked to adjacent housing estates through view corridors usually forming distant perspectives with many openings and links to other estates and buildings.

The largest architectural structure of Nowa Huta, a municipal hospital, located south of the Na Skarpie housing estate, is not related in urban planning terms to adjacent residential buildings; its main structural axis does not correspond to any of the city’s urban planning axes.

### **Nowa Huta development stages: stage one (1949–50)**

The oldest housing estates, situated in the south-eastern part of Nowa Huta – Wandy, Willowe and Na Skarpie – started being erected in mid-1949. One and two-storey buildings with high roofs were built on dispersed plans, in a rhythmically arranged way. Cosy estates, surrounded by large green areas, make a reference to the tradition of modernist workers’ housing estates located in industrial cities of inter-



*Fig. 1: Nowa Huta – bird's eye view*  
*Abb. 1: Nowa Huta aus der Vogelperspektive*

war Poland, but one can also notice some impact of the garden city movement and workers' colonies from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The first representational public space was today's Plac Ożańskiego (Ożański Square) near the post office building, also called the "Nowa Huta Market Square".

There is no great diversity of architectural solutions in the area of first housing estates of the new city, which gives a sense of monotony, accompanied by a rather schematic land development plan, in particular in the Na Skarpie housing estate where two-storey houses form long rows and groups of repetitive structures around yards.

Facilities designed separately included nurseries, kindergartens and schools (the first one was opened in 1950) and a post office (1951), as well as the "Gigant" department store with a restaurant (1952).

### **Stage two (1950–1956)**

Arbitrarily imposed, intensely promoted as of mid-1949, the socialist-realist doctrine enforced the abandonment of the garden city concept. Also the priorities regarding residential buildings changed; the aim was to create a more dense building development as a result of a modified programme of the new city, which was to service a metallurgical plant larger than originally planned. In March 1951, concept design works regarding the inner city were com-

pleted (a general urban shape was elaborated a year before). The first public show of the mock-up was held in 1952. Plac Centralny and adjacent housing estates of the Centre were erected in 1952–56. The team headed by Tadeusz Ptasiński created a masterpiece, meeting the requirements of the doctrine, according to which the socialist city centre was supposed to form a frame of manifestation of people's support for the authority.

The development of the city centre was preceded by the erection of the Krakowiaków and Górali housing estates (C-2 complex) started in mid-1950. The first references to historical architecture, in the form of profiled cornices and attics covering already flat roofs occurred at that time. A breakthrough consisted in joining buildings situated on the periphery of the estate into long screen rows, separating the inner part of housing estates from main streets. The estate also became the first in the Nowa Huta field of attempts to withdraw from dispersed building development (disciplined only by intersections of perpendicular streets) towards compact structures designed with the consideration of curves and non-straight angles resulting from a general urban concept of the city. The urban planning principle elaborated when developing the C-2 complex was used from 1955 onwards in all housing estates erected at that time. Each of them had a unique structure resulting from an individual adjustment to the concept of the entire city. Urban interior areas of particular housing estates are located along intersecting axes, while passages situated at the axes allow for forming distant per-



Fig. 2: Nowa Huta, Rose Avenue  
Abb. 2: Nowa Huta, Rosenallee

spectives and view openings, usually terminated with dominant features. The architecture conforming to urban planning emphasises the effects planned.

The most prominent developments of the socialist-realist period, apart from Plac Centralny, comprise two twin buildings of the metallurgical plant's administrative centre (1951, erected in 1952–55) and the Ludowy Theatre (started in 1954).

A municipal hospital (now the Stefan Żeromski Hospital), started being built in late 1951, is a specific combination of Polish and European architectural traditions. Originally intended as a complex of dispersed pavilions, it was finally formed into a multi-wing complex. The Polish influence is seen in a simple architecture of the building wings, referring to traditional forms.

At the end of stage two (after 1954) the doctrinal approach was relaxed and buildings with a scarce number of style references, with simplified forms of historical architecture were erected, e. g. twin seven-storey blocks (design dated early 1956) built in residential estates of the middle

Fig. 3: Nowa Huta, Willowe Housing Estate with  
Piotr Ożański Square  
Abb. 3: Nowa Huta, Willowe Wohnsiedlung mit  
Piotr Ożański-Platz



belt of the city development, namely Hutnicze, Słoneczne and Uroczce. They perfectly matched the urban plan designed in 1951 and along with older buildings formed a frame of Aleja Solidarności and Aleja Róż, marked out five years before.

### Stage three (after 1956)

Decisions made during the Polish Nationwide Congress of Architects in March 1956 and a political breakthrough that took place in October was almost immediately reflected in the building development of Nowa Huta. A design of the so-called Swedish block (the Szklane Domy housing estate) was started in November 1956. Fully functional architecture making use of the motifs of Le Corbusier as well as new technology contributed to the building being considered a real Nowa Huta avant-garde masterpiece and its “revolutionary” colours became a standard for many future developments.

The principle of precisely symmetrical shaping of urban planning and keeping a harmony of horizontal and vertical elements was ostentatiously abandoned. New Plac Ratuszowy (Town Hall Square) was supposed to have buildings located asymmetrically against Aleja Róż, but only one block of flats in the Zgody housing estate was erected. The urban planning started to re-apply “dis-urbanisation” trends; yet in 1956 designs of housing estates located west of Plac Centralny were elaborated – Handlowe, Kolorowe and Spółdzielcze (carried out starting from 1957),

A new architectural theme appeared – a church which was intended to be erected in the surrounding of socialist-realist buildings in the western part of Nowa Huta, near the theatre. The winner of an open architectural competition (1957) was Zbigniew Solawa, but the authorities did not allow for the implementation of his design (1958). Instead of the planned church, the first “millennium memorial” school was built (1958–61), one of the most prominent functionalist works

Fig. 4: Nowa Huta, Administrative Centre of ArcelorMittal  
Poland Kraków Branch (former Huta im. Tadeusz  
Sendzimira)  
Abb. 4: Nowa Huta, Verwaltungszentrum von ArcelorMittal  
Polen, Filiale Krakau (vormals Huta im. Tadeusz  
Sendzimira)



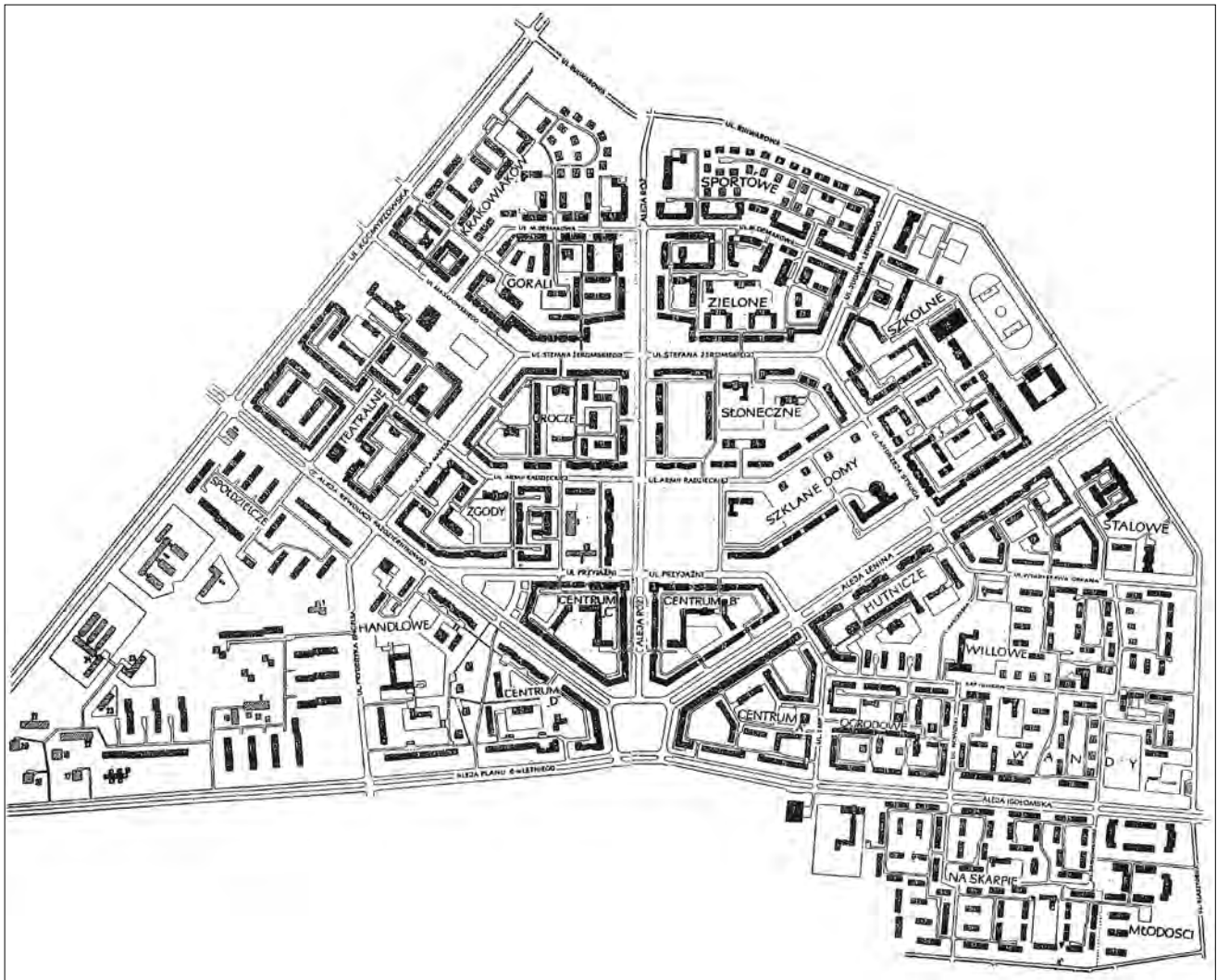


Fig. 5: Site map Nowa Huta (1959): The urban area of the city was listed in 2004 including “the layout of the streets, squares, green areas, location, mass and overall dimensions of the buildings, design of architectural and landscape interiors, arrangement of green spaces”

Abb. 5: Lageplan Nowa Huta (1959): Im Jahr 2004 wurde die Stadtanlage einschließlich der „Planung von Straßen, Plätzen, Grünanlagen sowie Lage der Gebäude, Kubatur und Maßstab der Anlagen, aber auch der Ausstattung mit landschaftsarchitektonischen Freiräumen und Grünflächenplanung“ unter Denkmalschutz gestellt

from the turn of the 1950s and 1960s in Krakow. The introduction of the pattern-based pavilion system (one of the first examples of this application in Poland) made it possible to get a chiaroscuro effect in the school building, contrasting with monotonous, one-dimensional surroundings.

In the 1980s, a residential and service complex known as Centrum E was erected.

Historical values as well as urban and architectural plans, having a significant impact on the cultural landscape of Krakow, resulted in entering the Nowa Huta complex in the register of historic monuments on 30 December 2004, under number A-1132, and making it subject to legal protection pursuant to the provisions of the Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection of monuments and the guardianship of monuments. The aforementioned protection also covers the urban plan, i. e. plan of streets, squares, green areas, location as well as bodies and sizes of buildings, design of architectural

and landscape complexes as well as arranged greenery.

Restoration and maintenance activities, aimed at preserving the original style and look of the historical buildings, are undertaken. Also the works on the elaboration of the local spatial development plan for the “Nowa Huta” area, having a very protective nature, are at an advanced stage of implementation at the moment.

## Zusammenfassung

### Nowa Huta in Krakau

Nowa Huta in Krakau ist das größte neu geschaffene Stadtgebiet im Nachkriegspolen und ein herausragendes Beispiel für Stadtplanung in Osteuropa. Der Ideologie des sozialisti-



*Fig. 6: Urban model of the projected city centre of Nowa Huta in Krakow: in the foreground the “Central Palace” and the towered town hall of the new city in the background*  
*Abb. 6: Stadtmodell der Zentrumsplanung von Nowa Huta in Krakau (1951): im Vordergrund der „Zentralpalast“ und im Hintergrund mit Turm das Rathaus der neuen Stadt*

schen Realismus zufolge verweist es auf die europäischen Planungen der Moderne. Allerdings unterscheidet es sich von den entsprechenden Schöpfungen durch eine kreativere Verarbeitung historischer Formen, basierend auf der These, dass Kunst „sozialistisch in ihrem Inhalt und national in ihrer Funktion“ sein sollte. So ist es ein herausragendes Beispiel für Stadtentwicklung in Polen. Die Anlegung von Nowa Huta wurde durch politische Entscheidungen bestimmt. Es wurde als Basis für ein strategisches Hüttenwerk gegründet. Die Pläne für dieses „Flaggschiff-Gebäude des Sozialismus“, das ab 1954 den Namen Lenin-Stahlwerk erhielt, wurden 1949 genehmigt. Das Werk wurde auf dem fruchtbaren Boden der auf das Mittelalter zurückgehenden Dörfer Mogiła and Pleszów nahe Krakau angelegt. Im Juni desselben Jahres wurden die ersten Siedlungen im Südosten von Nowa Huta errichtet trotz des Fehlens eines Masterplans für die Stadt. Das umfassende städtebauliche Projekt für Stadt und Werk durch den Generalplaner Tadeusz Ptaszycycki und ein Team mehrerer Architekten wurde im Januar 1950 ge-

nehmigt. Das städtebauliche Konzept wurde unter anderem von Bolesław Skrzybalski, Stanisław Juchnowicz und Tadeusz Rembies entwickelt.

Die historischen Werte, die städtebaulichen und architektonischen Voraussetzungen, die die Kulturlandschaft von Krakau beeinflussen, erlaubten es, die Gesamtanlage von Nowa Huta in die Denkmalliste aufzunehmen. Der Schutz betrifft sowohl die städtebauliche Anlage (d. h. die Anlage von Straßen, Plätzen, Grünflächen und die Ensembles) als auch die Blöcke und Dimensionen der Gebäude, den architektonischen und landschaftlichen Entwurf sowie die angelegten Grünflächen. Es hat Konservierungsbemühungen gegeben, um den originalen Charakter und das Erscheinungsbild der historischen Gebäude zu erhalten.

Die Arbeiten für die Erstellung eines örtlichen Entwicklungsplans für das Gebiet Nowa Huta, einschließlich einer Ausweisung des vor allem zu schützenden Bereichs, sind ebenfalls weit gediehen.