

Utopia or a Good Place to Live: Giszowiec „Garden City” in Upper Silesia.

Magdalena ŻMUDZIŃSKA-NOWAK¹

Faculty of Architecture, Silesian University of Technology, Gliwice, Poland

Abstract

The search for “utopia” as an ideal place for life in the state of happiness and justice has been a subject of deliberations of philosophizers, writers, and even architects and urban planners for many centuries. Urban utopias were often a response to problems prevailing in cities and attempts at their solution. One of the most significant designs in the history of urban concepts of the 19th century was Ebeneze Howard’s Garden City, becoming an inspiration for numerous accomplished projects.

The scope of the paper is a presentation of the earliest, and, at the same time, not well-known example of “the Garden-City” concept - “Giszowiec” housing estate in Upper Silesia.

The estate was designed and constructed in 1905-1908 for workers of the coal mine owned by Georg von Giesche Erben company.

An analysis of the design program assumptions and the process of the development of Giszowiec estate over the 100 years of its operations has been conducted, together with the evaluation of its spatial-functional, economic and social values, as well as the reasons for its decline.

Keywords: urban utopia, garden-city, place, local community,