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MAGNITOGORSK HOUSING

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Ivan Leonidov’s Collective House proposal for Magnitogorsk

In 1930, the Russian architects group OSA, with Ivan Leonidov as team leader, took part in the competition of the urban design of the chemical and metallurgical settlement of Magnitogorsk, a new city on the extreme south of the Ural mountain range. When Stalin started out his plans for the industrialization of the rural Russia, he planned the foundation of several settlements based on a single industrial activity and Magnitogorsk was one of the most significant and ambitious.

The master plan proposed by the OSA group was a 15-mile linear city which connected the industrial hub and the state farms. In this linear city, the square geometrical principle organized the different scales of inhabitation, from the outline of the city to the layout of the housing units. The buildings were arranged in a low-density setting that responded to disurbanist theories. It also led the logic of the potential expansions of the whole city, which can be augmented through the addition of other squares, making it an open system (Gozak).

In the central strip of the city were the residential buildings constructed in timber and glass. On both sides of the housing were public buildings and spaces for leisure such as stadiums, sports facilities, parks and zoological and botanical gardens.

In the residential stripe, each housing complex was designed to accommodate 250 people in eight separate housing units. In each housing unit, sixteen small cabins located at the corners on two floors. Each cabin was shared between two people. In the center of the housing unit was the communal dining room which connected to two sanitary rooms with showers, a room for morning exercise and a room for collective leisure and cultural work (Gozak).

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“Ivan Leonidov’s Competition Proposal for the Town of Magnitogorsk (1930)”, SOCKS, last modified: April 12, 2016, <http://socks-studio.com/2016/04/12/ivan-leonidovs-competition-proposal-for-the-town-of-magnitogorsk-1930/>.

Andrei Gozak and Andrei Leonidov, Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works (New York: Rizzoli, 1988).