

# Apartament Typologies in the Officials Houses in Tirana before 1944.

## Case Study: Two Apartments Type Per Floor

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**Abstract:** *This paper seeks to value the design of apartments in a typical housing product of officials in Tirana before 1944 and emphasizes typology dwelling as a mean and important factor towards living conditions. The first phase of the study represents some of the samples that are selected for this paper, providing the data of housing typologies through the characteristics of each building. Examples are collated for the purpose of understanding the dwelling typologies designed for this type of residential building. The information taken from the plans of the housings helped in creating some tables with all the important data for each lodging. Once the general information regarding the number of rooms for each apartment, the surfaces of spaces, number of beds, etc., had been brought into focus, and the statistical data presented through tables collected, the search continues with the results and conclusions. The purpose of this paper is to understand the conditions of living in that period through the designing of apartments and their plans organization and spaces. The search arrives in a conclusion that in the residential houses with two apartments per floor are mostly used the big apartments with five to six beds. The social position of the families accommodated in these houses had a great influence in designing the dwellings because they were not considered just simple labours. Referring the number of rooms and the service spaces inside several apartments the research leads to an evident conclusion that these dwellings for officials fulfilled much more than basic conditions of living for these families.*

**Keywords:** Apartment typology, Officials' houses, Living conditions, Dwellings.

### 1. Introduction

This paper gives a brief overview of the history and characteristics of several residential housings for officials before 1944. The house types chosen to be analyzed in this search have a particular in common: the number two of apartments per floor. This is only a category of the multifamily houses designed in Tirana during the Italian occupation. Still, it is one of the most used in the city, inside and outside the urban area. The political factors and the urbanization affected the whole housing process noticeably. Since the onset of the Italian occupation in Albania, population and housing were a priority for the government. Along with that, the Italian government cooperated with King Zog to solve the problems through the Italian architects and their projects.

Several plans were designed for the new capital city: the 1923 regulatory plan of Wolfgang Köhler; the study of the centre of 1928 by Frashëri, Castellani and Weiss; the regulatory plan of Tirana of 1929 of Esheref Frashëri, Wolfgang Köhler, and Florestano Di Fausto. The last one was the first genuine plan of Tirana. [1, p. 28. 44]. Traces of Italian architecture during 1920-1940 for the requalification and transformation of the Albanian capital represent most of the interventions that have been made in Albania. [2, p. 284].

The case studies in this search were primarily designed in 1939-1943, four years very important for Tirana. The construction activity developed from the Fascist Regime in Albania was measured from the program of a new Institution named the Central Office of Construction and Urban Planning (L'Ufficio Centrale per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica

dell'Albania). [3, p. 37]. All the projects and construction of housings were under the care of this Institut.

### 2. Methodology

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the typology of a dwelling's layout and its interior space in a particular type of collective housing. This study is descriptive and analytic. At the beginning, it provides the data of apartment typologies in two apartments per floor building. The typological classification is based on the specific characteristics of each dwelling as the number of beds and number of rooms. Depending on this result, the paper makes a resume for the total number of each type of apartment designed in Tirana before 1944 in the samples represented in this search. This study reveals the "space-activity" and functionality spaces in order to understand the condition of living and to have an idea of the schemes of the plans designed for this typology. The intention was to investigate all the samples' apartments and get some specific data from their plans. The information was put in two different tables separating the components required to analyze the apartments such as:

- 1) First table – general information for the building: the surface of the entire structure; the number of the floor; the number of different types of apartments
- 2) Second table - specific information for each apartment: the surface of the apartment; the number of rooms; the number of beds, the surface of each function-space; explanation if there is interaction between living; dining and kitchen; balconies and verandas.

These case studies have been chosen to illustrate the architectural design of apartments for the specific category of two apartments per floor that occurred in Tirana for

officials before 1944. In the first phase, there are illustrated only some of the plans studied and analyzed for this search introducing the organization of housing. The second part continues with the collective data and information showing the results of the specific parameters chosen to be attended.

### 3. Materials

The history of modern urbanism is a history of facts because the changes caused gradually by the industrial revolution in towns and villages received attention and are only later on perceived as problems when the influencing phenomena become pretty noticeable. [4, p. 13]. This phenomenon happened in Albania and was accompanied by one of the most important problems, which was housing. Generally, the community itself and its particular environmental conditions are the producers of housing typologies. In this period, in Albania, the political strategy and decisions had a potent influence on the construction of the apartment. [5].

The samples presented in this search are placed in the satellite neighbourhood designed for officials "Littorio Village" and in "New Tirana" neighbourhood designed inside the concept of "city-garden" of the regulatory plan of Tirana 1939-1943. [6]. Before 1944 the architects gave great importance to the distance between houses and buildings. They decided on low density for many zones around Tirana. [7]

#### 3.1 Case studies of the housings with two apartments per floor

As mentioned before, the houses of this period are mostly designed by Italian architects, and some of them are shown in this chapter to give an idea of their design and type.

In the samples presented in this search, some common between them contributed to the classification of the same typology:

- Two apartments per floor
- Outside vertical distribution scale

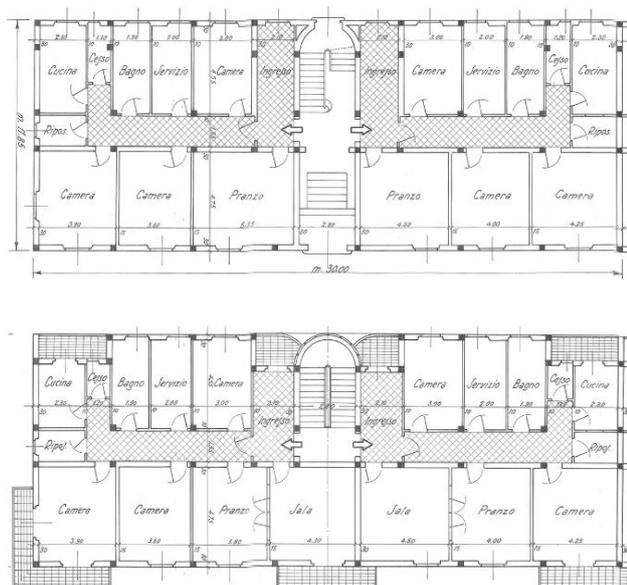


Figure 1: The ground floor and the typical floor plan of a three-storey building for officials, 1939. Source: AQTN

In the above case studies, we can easily understand the design of the plan and the architects' design in creating the spaces needed for apartments. This is a typical house with many rooms in each apartment and a big area of square meters. Every single function in the dwelling is connected directly with a close space, increasing the number of rooms in total. The living room and the dining are sharing the same area in this typology. There are three bedrooms in each apartment related to 5-6 beds (Fig. 1).

This case study presented in figure 2 is one of the several samples designed for "Littorio Village" in Tirana. Although it is shown only a particular house in the search, the results are consequential to the other cases' data. The access on the first floor reached through the outside stairs directly from the courtyard for both the apartments. The first floor of the two-story house is connected vertically through the stairs illuminated with direct light from the window. There are two bedrooms in the apartment, complete with three beds, the dining and living share the same room near the entrance. The bathroom has all the necessary furniture inside the space. All the locals of the apartment have natural ventilation and light (Fig. 2).

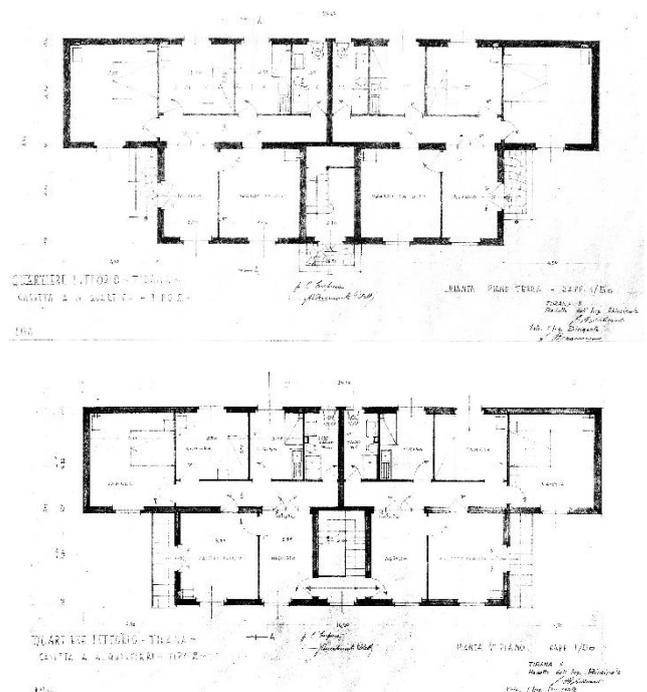
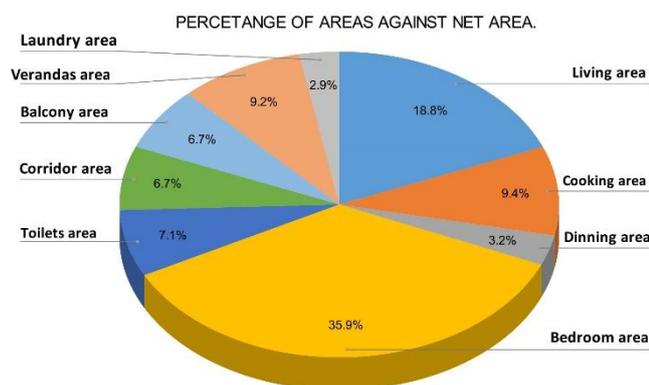


Figure 2: The plan of ground floor and the first floor of a housing in "Littorio Village", 1940. Source: AQTN

The above case studies are placed in the "New Tirana" neighbourhood. The apartments of the example shown in figure 3 are mostly designed with three bedrooms and a considerable surface of the total dwelling. These apartments could accommodate five to six members of families in excellent condition spaces. In this typology apartment, with many rooms, there are two bathrooms.





**Figure 6:** The result of percentages of areas against net area of apartments, Source: Author

The paper is focused too on the interaction between functions inside the apartments to understand which area had priority. The bedroom area occupies a considerable percentage of spaces because of the big number of bedrooms. Many of the apartments have balconies or verandas designed in their plans.

## 5. Conclusions

The results help us understand the conclusions of the apartment typologies in the case studies of official houses with two apartments per floor. From the tables and graphics, it is understandable that the most designed apartment type is the one with three bedrooms and five to six beds. This type of apartment occupies 51.4 % of the total cases designed in Tirana, followed by 32.4% of the type apartment with two rooms and three to four beds and the final type of dwelling with one bedroom and two beds that represent 16.3 % of the cases.

This phenomenon leads to another conclusion that is the importance of big apartments with many rooms designed before 1944. This happens because of two reasons: the present of families with many members in Albania in that period and the social position of official families that were accommodated in these houses.

Based on figure 6, the result of the report between different spaces inside an apartment highlights the strong presence of the bedrooms concerning the main and service rooms.

Worth mentioning how other functions cooperate and how they share the same or different spaces. In conclusion, for all the samples analyzed, the living area and dining area mostly share the same room, and only 3.2 % of the cases have the dining room separately from the others.

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