Housing situation in Moscow  
Desk research  
by Elena Tsatsura

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Historical background of housing situation, “slums” and state programs for renovation of the city

Before 1992, almost all houses in Moscow were state owned, municipal or corporate. There were practically no private houses in Moscow for 70 years. In ten years, two thirds of the housing stock became private through privatization and new construction. Poor people generally stay in state-owned flats that they rent (social/public rent, they pay only for communal services).

There are no slums in Moscow. Housing space in Moscow is fully electrified and provided with control heating, running cold water and sewerage system for 99,7%, gas for 59,4%, electric cookers for 40,6%, hot running water for 98,6%, and bath-rooms for 99,7%. However, there are several types of deteriorated housing. Among these are:

- Shabby and dilapidated houses result from inadequate maintenance (about 11% of houses);
- Shared (communal) apartments that are used by two or more families who share the kitchen and other facilities (about 12 000 flats);
- Primitive first generation industrial houses that nowadays looks outdated and falls short of modern building codes for housing (286 buildings in December 2013);
- Squatter flats are the result of an incorrect usage of housing stock by owners or tenants who practice illegal subletting (no data)\(^1\).

Peculiarity of Moscow is mosaic structure where deprived block of houses and good or elite may be near (over the road for example).

The most urgent problem of Moscow housing space is its rapid obsolescence. A large number of houses, which were built of prefabricated panels, frame-panel or industrialised housing constructions

\(^1\) http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Moscow.pdf
in different periods of time are now almost unsuitable for living. Almost 50% of housing stock has deterioration more than 40%, 10,6% more than 60% (dilapidated condition)\(^2\).

Residents of dilapidated houses are entitled to housing improvement or free alternative accommodation, but queues are long and move slowly according to availability of municipal housing stock.

There are some types of 5 level buildings that were declared as inadequate and being destroyed as part of state program. The program is called “Liquidation of entitled to demolition first generation industrial houses” and it is a part of state program “Housing”. People who live there are given flats in new houses that are built in the same district. Historically these buildings were built fast as temporary solution of housing crisis in Soviet Union. Their working life is 25 years and they serve for 50 years now.

As Krasheninnikov (2003) states: “the most common structural problems in these houses are: flooding of the cellars and foundations due to the rise of the water table in the neighbourhood and leaks from sewage pipes; bad insulation of walls especially external corners and slab joints; cracks in the ceiling panels with lowering of height in rooms. Other problems include the lack of elevators, premises for the handicapped, low maintenance and vandalistic behavior by the residents”\(^3\).

At the end of 2013 83,5% of this housing stock was destroyed, 286 houses left (and the date of total destruction was postponed several times, at the moment till 2017)\(^4\).

It is interesting to mention that at the moment there are still 79 buildings left in Western part of Moscow which is one of the best (speaking about ecology, criminal situation) while all or almost all were already destroyed in the worst parts (Southern and South-East)\(^5\). Other (5 level and 9 level) buildings that are not in very good condition are located all around Moscow and need full repair and modernization. By the way, in the South part of Moscow housing per capita is minimal (at average 16,7 sq m/person).

People who live in buildings in emergency condition also are resettled by state authorities (at the moment 26 buildings are officially declared as being in emergency condition\(^6\)). In that case people may be resettled in any district of Moscow, authorities are not obliged to give them flat in the district they lived.

**More about state programs**

The main is the federal program “Housing”, each region develop a part of it on regional level, including modernizing housing stock and resettling citizens from shabby and dilapidated housing stock.

There are 3 types of registered citizens in need of housing:

- In need of improvement of housing conditions (registered before 1.03 2005) - have the right for housing improvement at the expense of the city (they can be given an apartment as social rent or allowance to buy a flat).

\(^2\) Moscow state program "Housing" for 2012-2018 years
http://housing.mos.ru/legislation/osnovnye_normativnye_dokumenty/784105/

\(^3\) http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Moscow.pdf

\(^4\) Moscow state program “Housing” for 2012-2018 years
http://housing.mos.ru/legislation/osnovnye_normativnye_dokumenty/784105/

\(^5\) http://stroi.mos.ru/destruction

\(^6\) http://www.reformagkh.ru/myhouse/dangerous
• In need of housing (registered after 01.03.2005 when current Housing Code was enacted, must be low-income) – can be given a flat from state housing stock (as social rent or in free use).
• In need of help from Moscow authorities to buy flat (citizens who live in overcrowded flats – less than 10 m² in individual apartments, 15 m² in shared apartments and not low-income) – can rent a state apartment, can be given allowance for buying an apartment, can be helped with mortgage loan.

‘Low-income citizens’ are defined through the criterion of minimum subsistence level, that was estimated as 10965 rubles per person at the end of 2013 (about US$350 using the rate of exchange in 2013).

Usually business companies build block of flats and have to give to state some % of flats for “Housing” program for the right to use the land and can sell other flats. Consequently, almost every new construction represents a partnership between public and private capital. But after crisis in 2009 some contracts with investors were canceled and some buildings for resettlement, for example, are financed from the budget.

During resettlement those who have owned the flat are given the new flat in ownership also. Those who have lived in state housing stock (social rent) continue to live as social renters of the new flat. That is one of the reasons why people do not hurry to leave deteriorated buildings – they are waiting in a queue for housing improvements.

Homeless families can’t apply for being registered as in need of housing (the rules state that you need to be registered in some dwelling).

Initiatives in housing are too expensive for grassroots organizations or NGOs.

**Statistics**

Not a lot of data is available. Moscow population is estimated as 12 million people. Before July 2012 area size of Moscow was 108.1 thousands hectare (residential zone occupied 23%). In July new territories were connected to Moscow and now the size is 255 thousands hectares. At the end of 2012 there were 73217 residential buildings (including 40 035 residential buildings in “old part”). 15% of housing stock is municipal property.

Krasheninnikov (2003) states that “of 1,000 Muscovites, 860 live in a separate apartment, 102 in common (shared) flats, 33 in dormitories, 1 in individual houses, 1 in part of an individual house, 3 lease a residential premise (information from “Town-planning of Moscow: the 90-s’ years XX centuries “, 2001). Population census (2010) showed that 85,7% lived in separate apartment, 0,4 lived in individual private houses, 2,2% in individual houses (state or municipal housing stock), 2.9% in communal flats (share room), 2,1% in dormitories, 2% live in accommodation cabins, barges etc.

There is no official data on rented housing.

Population in need of housing in Moscow:

- In need of improvement of housing conditions (registered before 1.03 2005): 64 805 families / 212 591 persons;
- In need of housing (registered after 01.03.2005): 12 128 families / 41 377 persons;
- In need of help from Moscow authorities to buy flat: 10 579 families / 45 218 persons.

At the average only 8% of families in need of improvement of housing conditions improved housing conditions during years 2005-2012. In 2012 – 5,4%.

Shabby and dilapidated houses in 2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All shabby and emergency housing stock, thousands sq m (gross floor area)</th>
<th>Including</th>
<th>Share in all housing stock, %</th>
<th>Including</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shabby</td>
<td>emergency</td>
<td>shabby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>99923,8</td>
<td>77734,7</td>
<td>22189,1</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central federal district</td>
<td>17537,9</td>
<td>14633,7</td>
<td>2904,2</td>
<td>1,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>860,2</td>
<td>639,9</td>
<td>220,3</td>
<td>0,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnic ghettos**

There are no ethnic ghettos in Moscow. However, concentration of foreign migrants are higher in some parts of Moscow - South-East, South and some districts of North-East part. Usually in districts near to Moscow Automobile Ring Road where cost of rent is lower. Such factors as unhealthy ecological situation, less transport accessibility and location of food or consumer goods wholesale marketplaces lead to gradual formation of districts with high population of foreign migrants. Generally they live in 5-9 level panel or 5 level brick-built buildings in poor condition flats in need of repair.

**Homelessness**

Nobody knows how many homeless people live in Moscow. There are no official statistics about street homeless or hidden homeless. Experts estimate the number up to 100'000 people leaving on the streets. The only statistics available are the number of people who lived in state shelters during the year. In 2013 there were around 12000 persons (the number is not published officially, but announced by authorities during meetings). Social research (conducted by Moscow department of social assistance) shows that approximately 80% of street homeless people are migrants (foreign migrants are about 10%, internal migrants 70%) who often have homes in other region or country.

10 http://housing.mos.ru/regcitizensinfo/statistika/
Transport system

Moscow has an advanced and relatively cheap system of public transportation that covers the whole city. For example, a ticket for all types of public transportation underground, bus and trolley-bus costs 1300 rubles for 60 rides. So any citizen can use this transport system to reach work located in any part of the city.

The selection of district and family for the interview

People living in deteriorated buildings are generally the same as average Muscovites. As Krasheninnikov correctly wrote in 2003 not all of them are poor people. In general it can be suggested that people remain in shabby buildings for several reasons:

- “They were promised a better place to live at the city’s expense when their turn in the queue comes.
- They have not got enough money to buy a new flat. They could not borrow money because they have low salaries and no collateral.
- They are old or handicapped and afraid to loose their only “property”.
- They want better housing than that offered by the city.
- They let their flat to other tenants and live somewhere better, but still are considered as residents”.

I propose one of 4 potential variants of interviewee. Please specify the one you think is the most interesting for the project and I will try to make the interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Tenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(who can’t buy better flat or wait for improvement of his housing condition from the state)</td>
<td>(hire flat in poor house in bad district and can’t afford better one)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 levels building entitled to demolition (in part of Moscow, where ecological and criminal situation is rather good) | 1 | 2 |
---|---|---|
| Owner | Tenant |
| Good district but bad house | Good district but bad house |

5-9 levels building with high deterioration but not emergency (in part of Moscow where ecological and criminal situation is bad) | 3 | 4 |
---|---|---|
| Owner | Tenant |
| High deterioration house in bad district | High deterioration house in bad district |

I will also try to make an interview with 1 homeless family.

The most interesting source of information in English

Useful report about the same topic, published in 2003 (by Krasheninnikov), not much changed since then. So if you need more information about housing and related topics you can read: