

## Proper Names of Housing Estates in Contextualized Analysis (From Appearance to Usage by the Members of a Community)

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### Abstract

The subject of our research is proper names of the housing estates in the Moscow region. The study of the data (more than 1300 units) collected over different periods of time made it possible to examine the proper names not only from the point of view of their structure and the principles and the patterns underlying their naming but also diachronically. For instance, it enabled us to observe the change of their usage.

The name given to a housing estate results from an immediate decision, and therefore personal and subjective factors prevail in the naming, e.g. *Zhemchuzhina* ('pearl' – implying the pearly facade). The analysed material allows us to observe the process of artificial nomination, its motivation and the real usage of names in spoken or written language: no change of name, e.g. *Korona* ('crown'); change of name, e.g. *Dirijabl'* ('airship') was turned into *Bastion*; name variants, e.g. *Bashnya VDNKh / Tower* (*bashnya* means 'tower'); distortion of name, e.g. *Village* was turned into *Villange*; reduction of name, e.g. *Saltykovka-Prestige* was turned into *Saltykovka*; substitution of name "established" by speakers, e.g. *Grand Park* was turned into *Sigarety* ('cigarettes') – four skyscrapers whose form and colour are similar to that of cigarettes.

The collected data enables us to find out that artificial names do not live long and they are not used by the members of the community, whereas natural names are well-known and widely used by the residents.

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### Introduction

The name of a housing estate or a cottage village is, first of all, a commercial name which has to attract the attention of consumers, as a rule wealthy people. This type of proper name has appeared in Russia recently together with the so-called onomastic boom associated with the dramatic changes in the socio-political situation in the country. The purpose of this article is to look at the formation of a new type of names for Russia – commercial names of housing estates – to reveal what they are in their structural and semantic aspects, which models and types of motivation dominate in this category of names, how new names are used and perceived by homebuyers and those who cannot afford to buy an apartment or a country house, and how these names are used in every day speech.

We have examined the names of the housing estates situated in Moscow and near Moscow. The use of the data collected over different periods of time made it possible to examine the proper names not only from the point of view of their structure and the principles and the patterns underlying their naming but also diachronically. For instance, it enabled us to observe the change of their usage.

We collected the data using the method of continuous sampling (Superanskaya, 2007) from Russian periodicals, including advertisements (e.g. "Недвижимость и цены" ("Nedvizhimost' i Tseny") 'estate property and prices'; "Дайджест недвижимости Российской и Зарубежной" ("Digest of Russian and Foreign Real Estate Magazine"), [www.d-n.ru](http://www.d-n.ru)) as well as Russian websites (e.g. [www.irn.ru](http://www.irn.ru); [www.posiolki.ru](http://www.posiolki.ru); [www.kvartirobzor.ru](http://www.kvartirobzor.ru); [www.apartment.ru](http://www.apartment.ru); [www.villagio.ru/villages](http://www.villagio.ru/villages)), forums and informal conversations and interviews.

The names of housing estates belong to the category of advertising names (Kryukova, 2004), so they are characterized by the features of artificial naming. Following Golomidova (1998, 31 – 47), we refer the result of wilful solution of the nominator to such features of artificial naming, which is dominated by subjective factors. The name given to a housing

estate results from an immediate decision and therefore personal and subjective factors prevail in the naming and the immaterial qualities of the object can be overemphasized in the name. The collected data make it possible to observe the process of artificial naming and to find out the motivating qualities underlying the proper names as well as to see the way those names are made use of by native speakers (Rut, 2008) and the way artificial naming mixes with the natural one for commercial purposes.

The collected names show the mixture of languages. Names in the Russian language predominate; the article contains their original spelling in Cyrillic and their transliteration and translation are given, for example: *Четыре ветра* (*Chetyre Vetra*) ‘four winds’; *Лайм Хаус* (*Lait Haus*) ‘light house’; English, French, Italian names are given in the original form in which they are used in the names of Russian housing estates, for example: *Hyde Park*, *Cote d’Azur*, *Arco di Sole*.

Some names of residential complexes have two forms of spelling and use: in the foreign language and in Russian. In such cases both options are given as equal, for example: *Агаларов-Хаус* / *Agalarov House*, *Трувиль* / *Trouville*.

### **The formation of names of residential complexes in modern Russia**

In the 1990s the names reflected the new stage in language situation, a kind of onomastic boom. The diversity, mixed character and chaotic state of the language situation with names in Russia were the result of extra-linguistic factors: changes in the sphere of social and political life, forms of property, development of relations with other countries and, which is most important, liberation of the sphere of nomination from ideological supervision (Sokolova, 2002). It was in the 1990s when a layer of people who had an opportunity to build or buy a house (a cottage, a luxury apartment in a luxury house) appeared and the housing market started developing.

The first houses of the “new Russians” appeared in the 1990s. As a rule, they did not have their own names but were differentiated by the name of the owner (*dom* (‘house’) and possessive genitive), e.g. *Дом Васильева* (*Dom Vasilyeva*) ‘Vasilyev’s house’. This name was unofficial, was not advertised, and it was not placed on road signs. Apartment complexes were also mostly anonymous – addresses of newly erected buildings performed the function of names, for example, *Дом на улице Бахрушина, 19* (*Dom na ulitse Bakhrushina, 19*) ‘the house on Bakhrushin Street, 19’, *Дом в районе Щукино* (*Dom v rajonie Shchukino*) ‘the house in the Shchukin district’. The exception is the building in 1997 in Moscow of the elite house *Агаларов-Хаус* / *Agalarov House*, where *Agalarov* is the name of the founder and owner of the Crocus Group company. With the formation of the real estate market, developers (using naming agencies) began to use commercial names for parts of residential complexes. There appeared cottages in the vicinity of large cities, especially Moscow and St. Petersburg. The word *коттедж* (‘cottage’) was borrowed from the English language in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at that time was used in the literal meaning of ‘a small house for one family, usually with a loft’ (GDR: 464), but in the 1990s the word *cottage* acquired a new meaning in the Russian language: ‘a large house, a castle, usually red-brick, a mansion of a “new Russian”’ (Russian National Corpus [www.ruscorpora.ru](http://www.ruscorpora.ru)). Then in the 2000s the first protected country cottage villages appeared as a new type of country housing in contrast to the Soviet-era housing estates. And they all got their own names.

By its quantity, price level and type of cottage housing the Moscow region has no equal in the country. We have examined the names of the housing estates situated in Moscow and near Moscow. In 2001 there were 30 units, in 2004 – 300, in 2005 – 390, in 2007 their number exceeded 600 units, in 2011 – 1300.

### The structure of residential complexes' names

From the point of view of the name structure a housing estate is a multicomponent unit, e.g. *Элитный дом Royal (Elitnyj dom Royal)* 'class A upmarket house royal'. As a rule, the name contains an obligatory and a distinctive part. The obligatory part is represented by a type term; it is a common name, a generic term referring to the type of a commercial object (*house, living quarter, housing estate, residential complex*, etc.) which may be supplemented by the specific term which characterizes the features of a building or complex of buildings (*exclusive house, comfortable living quarter, de luxe-class housing estate, mixed-use complex, business-class residential complex*, etc.). The distinctive part is a proper name, a unique name for the object: *Астра / Astra, Forest gate, Грин Хиллс / Green Hills, Вельвет / Velvet, Вестерн / Western, Аквамарин (Аквамарин) 'aquamarine', Зодиак (Zodiak) 'zodiac', Бумеранг (Bumierang) 'boomerang', Золотое Руно (Zolotoje Runo) 'golden fleece', Каравелла (Karavella) 'carvel', Каскад (Kaskad) 'cascade', Панорама (Panorama), Планета (Planieta) 'planet', Радуга ('rainbow'), Ретро (Retro), Талисман (Talisman), Челси (Chelsi) 'Chelsea', 10 ярдов (10 yardov) 'yards', Club 56, La Promenade, Melody, Zapadnyj stil' ('Occidental styling'), Суета / Siesta, Чехов-Лайф / Chekhov-Life, Moscow Country Club, Papillon*, etc.

### The peculiarities of terminology of the names

In 2004 30 terms were registered in the names of housing estates. A type term or generic term (Superanskaya, 2008) is usually represented either by commonly used words in their direct meaning: *дом (dom)* 'house', *квартиры (kvartiry)* 'flats', or a metaphorical one: *город (gorod)* 'town', *городок (gorodok)* 'small town', *поселок (pos'olok)* 'settlement' or archaic words, dating back to the 'Russian old days': *посад (posad)* 'trading quarter', *усадьба (usad'ba)* 'farmstead', *палаты (palaty)* 'chambers'. Terms such as *высотка (vysotka)*, a diminutive form which stands for a large apartment house and was used in the 1940s to denote a building in Stalin's empire style (<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/kuznetsov>), and *башня (bashnya)*, a high and narrow apartment house, usually with only one entrance typical of the 1960s and 1970s (<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ogegova/10582>), were coined in the Soviet era as unofficial, colloquial names of houses. *Vysotka* was meant for the Soviet elite (politicians, scientists, writers, etc.) and *bashnya* (very simple) was meant for common people – the so-called 'working class'.

Foreign 'prestigious' terms such as *резиденция (residentzia)* 'residence', *плаза / plaza*, have come into extensive use; some of them, unknown to a Russian consumer, required a special explanation: *таунхаус (taunhaus)* 'townhouse', *пентхаус (penthaus)* 'penthouse'. For instance, *Таунхаусы в Куркино (Taunhausy v Kurkino)* 'townhouses in Kurkino' – *a townhouse is a cottage of 2 floors adjoined by other cottages on two sides*. The fashionable term *палас / palas* 'palace', e.g. in the names *Триумф-Палас / Triumph-Palace, Академ-Палас / Academ-Palase* ([www.osk.ru/.../zhiloy\\_kompleks\\_akadem\\_palas](http://www.osk.ru/.../zhiloy_kompleks_akadem_palas)), did not become firmly established in everyday use as it required an obligatory explanation: "If you choose Triumph-Palace, you will live in a fairy-tale palace" ([www.triumf-palace.ru](http://www.triumf-palace.ru)). Transcribed into Russian and represented in Cyrillic letters this word turned out to be homonymous to a Persian word which had entered the Russian language long ago *палас (palas)* – 'a carpet without pile' (GDR: 775). When we searched the Internet using the keyword *палас (palas)*, we found information about carpets and rugs only, i.e. "Palas: fluffy, charming and exclusive!" (<http://site-vizit.ru/8722/966311.html>). So different informal names appeared, e.g. the unofficial name of *Triumph Palace* is *Novaya Vysotka* ('new vysotka').

Sometimes managers create an artificial word, trying to achieve a greater commercial success. The example of the artificial term *экофлэт (ecoflet)* is quite illustrative. The people who created it work in an investment company SOBOR-SM. They explained their idea in the

following way, *Ecoflety v Kurkino* ‘ecoflats in Kurkino’. “Why Ecoflet? It is a new type of accommodation completely different from the main part of residential real estate. We coined a new term *ecoflet* to refer to this type of accommodation. There are two roots in it, *eco* and *flet* (*flat*), which stand for ‘ecology’ and ‘flat’ correspondingly. It means that such a flat is designed to enable its owner to make good use of all the advantages of ecology. At the same time the meaning of the term *ecoflet* is broader than just ‘ecological flat’. It is a certain combination of clean environment, constructional materials and the newest technologies used while designing and building the flats as well as top-ranking provision of urban amenities and services (security, exploitation and communication infrastructure), to say nothing of affordable prices and purchase conditions.” There was a slogan: “The best you can find in Kurkino is gathered together in *ecofletakh!*” ([www.soborsm.ru](http://www.soborsm.ru); [www.marketing-ua.com/marketingnews.php?id=1660](http://www.marketing-ua.com/marketingnews.php?id=1660)). However, when the colourful billboards with the coined term *Экофлэты* (*Ecoflety*) on them appeared in the streets of Moscow, a great deal of discontented Russian native-speakers started a discussion on an Internet forum ([www.trworkshop.net/forum/viewtopic.php?f...t](http://www.trworkshop.net/forum/viewtopic.php?f...t)):

- *The term “Ecoflety” is neither English nor Russian. Find a suitable definition for this shame yourself!*
- *What analogues do we have for ecoflet? A forest hut?*
- *How did those people come to invent such nonsense as “Ecoflety in Kurkino”?*
- *Ecoflety! Pah! What a shame! What does it have to do with Russian?*
- *Good-bye to the Russian language!*
- *Eco-flet + Bio-toilet = I live in the open air!*
- *The slippers in the picture are made of ‘Canada-green’ grass.*

If the borrowed *eco* entered the Russian language and does not cause any rejection among the native speakers, the *flet* is perceived as a foreign element, a barbarism. The Russian case endings joined to it destroy the relationship of the neologism *ecoflet* with the English language. According to the data collected in 2011, the artificial term *ecoflet* was not included in modern Russian usage ([www.kommersant.ru/doc](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc)), and the company stopped using its “invention” and now offers *Taunhausy i kvartiry v Kurkino* (‘townhouses and flats in Kurkino’), for instance in the housing estate *Novaya Palmira* (‘new Palmira’) (<http://www.poselkimsk.ru/poselok%20/novaya-palmira/>).

As for the usage of other type terms, we found two differently directed tendencies: further specification (breaking) and globalization (unification). On the one hand, type terms increase in number – 27 more were added to the previously existing 30, including descriptive ones, such as *клубный поселок закрытого типа* (*klubnyj pos’olok zakrytogo tipa*) ‘closed-type club village’, *элитный жилой комплекс* (*elitnyj zhyloj kompleks*) ‘upmarket housing estate’ etc. New terms were coined for separate parts of housing estates as independent units for purchase or rent: *особняк* (*osobnyak*) ‘manor’, *квартира* (*kvartira*) ‘flat’, *студия* (*studija*) ‘studio’, *апартаменты* (*apartamenty*) ‘suite of rooms’. For example in the *Millennium Park* complex there is a collection of cottages named *Импрецио* (*Impressio*); each of them has its own name: *Моне* (*Моне*) ‘Monet’, *Сезанн* (*Sezan*) ‘Cezanne’, *Ренуар* (*Renuar*) ‘Renoir’. In the housing estate *Молочный Дом* (*Molochnyj dom*) ‘milk house’ one of the flats was named *Безе* (*Beze*) ‘meringue’; in another housing estate there is a penthouse *Silver Place*.

On the other hand, the range of productive terms is narrowing down: the standard term which can already be called generic – *жилой комплекс* (*zhyloj kompleks*) ‘housing estate’, ‘residential complex’ – has taken hold and may denote a whole settlement (the housing estate *Янтарный Город* *Yantarnyj Gorod*) ‘amber town’, or a micro-district (the housing estate *Волжский* *Volgeskij*), a complex of several buildings (from 2 to 9). The housing estate

*Смоленская Застава (Smolenskaya Zastava)* ‘Smolensk Gates’ is a modern 9-sectioned complex; the housing estate *Синяя птица (Sin’aya Ptitsa)* ‘Bluebird’ (8 houses); the housing estate *Воробьевы Горы (Vorobievu Gory)* ‘Vorobievu Hills’ (7 buildings); the housing estate *Светлый Город (Svetlyj Gorod)* ‘light town’ (6 sections); the housing estate *Баркли Плаза / Barkly Plaza* consists of 5 residential one-sectioned blocks (the foreign term *plaza* is a Spanish word which means ‘an open market square’ (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plaza>); in Russian and English the word acquired an additional meaning as ‘office centre’ or ‘shopping complex’ (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plaza>; [www.collinsdictionary.com](http://www.collinsdictionary.com)). Nominators use it as a term in the area of housing estates, making its meaning even broader. But Russians associate with the word *plaza* ‘commercial-centre’, and thus this term is not suitable for a living complex). The housing estate *Четыре Солнца (Chetyre Solntsa)* ‘four suns’ includes 4 buildings, the housing estate *Северное трио (Severnoje Trio)* ‘north trio’ includes 3 buildings, the housing estate *Два капитана (Dva Kapitana)* ‘two captains’ includes 2 buildings. The term *жилой комплекс (zhyloj kompleks)* ‘housing estate’, ‘residential complex’ may also denote a quarter (the housing estate *Английский Квартал (Anglijskij Kvartal)* ‘English Quarter’), a farmstead (the housing estate *Усадьба Трубецких (Usad’ba Trubetskij)* ‘Trubetskij’s Farmstead’) or a separate house (the residential complex *Шато на Сretenке (Shato na Sretenke)* ‘chateau on Sretenka Street’; chateau is ‘a French castle’, [www.inslov.ru/html-komlev/q/qato.html](http://www.inslov.ru/html-komlev/q/qato.html)).

The type term *house* has become the most productive: it is explicitly represented as a name component mainly in the Russian variant *дом Дом Газпрома (Dom Gazproma)* ‘Gasprom’s house’, *Дом на Пресне (Dom na Presne)* ‘house on Presnya’, Presnya is the name of a Moscow district, *Дом над водой (Dom nad vodoj)* ‘house above the water’, *Дом удачи (Dom Udachi)* ‘house of luck’, *Римский Дом (Rimskij Dom)* ‘Roman house’, *Дом с французскими окнами (Dom s frantsuskimi oknami)* ‘house with French windows’, *Серебряный Дом (Serebrjanyj Dom)* ‘silver house’, *Венский Дом (Venskiy Dom)* ‘Viennese house’, *Клубный дом с каминами (Klubnyj Dom s kaminami)* ‘club house with fireplaces’. Thus, the model of house naming which has been formed in everyday speech on the basis of a characteristic feature takes hold in commercial names: *Дом со львами (Dom So Lvami)* ‘house with lions’, *Писательский Дом (Pysatel’skiy Dom)* ‘writers’ house’, *Дом-яйцо (Dom-Yaitso)* ‘egg house’. The name may vary and be abbreviated as in everyday speech: *Дом на Карамышевской набережной (Dom na Karamyshevskoj naberezhnoj)* ‘the house on Karamyshevskaja quay’ → *Дом на Карамышевской (Dom na Karamyshevskoj)* ‘the house on Karamyshevskaja’ → *Дом на набережной (Dom na naberezhnoj)* ‘the house on the quay’; *Улица Академика Анохина, 26, жилой дом (Ulitsa Akademika Anokhina, 26, zhyloj dom)* ‘street of academician Anokhin, 26 – a dwelling house’ → *Дом на Академика Анохина (Dom na Akademika Anokhina)* ‘the house on (street of) academician Anokhin’ → *На Анохина (Na Anokhina)* ‘on (street of) Anokhin’.

The number of names including the component *house* (*хаус* or *хауз* in Cyrillic transcription) is increasing: *Вектор Хаус / Vector House*, *Кристалл Хаус (Kristal Haus)* ‘crystal house’, *Агаларов-Хаус / Agalarov House*, *Курс Хаус (Kurs Haus)* ‘course house’, *Аркада-Хаус (Arcada Haus)* ‘arcade house’, *Лайт Хаус (Lait Haus)* ‘light house’, *Лейк Хаус / Lake House*, *Грин Хауз / Green House*, *Sky House*. The term *дом* (‘house’) may be represented implicitly in elliptic names of housing estates: (‘House’) + preposition ‘on’ + the name of a street *На Гвардейской (Na Gvardeyskoj)* ‘on Gvardeyskaja (street)’; (‘House’) + preposition ‘in’ + the name of an area or district *В Сокольниках (In Sokol’niki)*; the name of a street + a number (of the house) *Шмитовский 16 (Shmitovskij 16)*, *Никулинская-6 (Nikulinskaja-6)*.

In our view, lengthening of the terminological part of a name does not favour the item’s greater individualization, and, as a rule, in informal speech this part is omitted; for instance,

the ponderous name *Элитный дом клубного типа класса А “Счастливы дом”* (*Elitnyj dom klubnogo tipa klassa A “Schastlivyj Dom”*) ‘class A upmarket house of club type happy house’ turns into just *Dom na Ostozhenke* ‘house’ and the landmark ‘on Ostozhenka’ (Ostozhenka is an ancient, well-known and currently prestigious and expensive district of Moscow). This variant is more successful as a trade name ([www.irn.ru](http://www.irn.ru); [www.estatet.ru/catalog](http://www.estatet.ru/catalog)).

### The main patterns of residential complexes' naming

The second, distinctive part of the name of a housing estate is more original and has a greater commercial value. Nominators often use metaphors: *Серебряная Подкова* (‘silver horseshoe’) where the name emphasizes not only the shape of the building, but also the positive connotations, as a horseshoe is a symbol of happiness, good luck, *Айсберг* (*Ajsberg*) ‘iceberg’, *Флагман* (*Flagman*) ‘flagman’, *Цветы Москвы* (*Tsvety Moskvу*) ‘Moscow flowers’, *Четыре Ветра* (*Chetyre Vetra*) ‘four winds’, *Сад Лабиринт* (*Sad Labirint*) ‘labyrinth garden’, *Махаон* (*Machaon*) ‘Papilio machaon’, *Коралловые острова* (‘coral isles’), *Жемчужина* (*Zhemchuzhina*) ‘pearl’ (this name has a double motivation: ‘pearly tones of the façade’ and ‘the best, beautiful’), *Аэробус* (*Aerobus*) ‘airbus’, *Лира* (*Lira*) ‘lyre’, *Белый Лебедь* (‘white swan’). But if the house *Lira* does look like a musical instrument lyre, the house *Belyj Lebedь* is not white and is not similar to a swan. An artificial name may turn out quite good, for example *Korona* (‘crown’). The conception of this item is directly connected to the unique architecture of the building of the housing estate. Its outline reminds of a crown, and its original colour scheme emphasizes the “nobility and elegance of its lines”. In this case the name is preserved in its initial variant *Korona* (‘crown’) and transferred to the name of the homeowners association, the newspaper, and the forum on the Internet ([www.tsjkorona.ru/index127b.php?id=13&t\\_id](http://www.tsjkorona.ru/index127b.php?id=13&t_id)).

It is common practice on the Russian property market for the marketing or advertisement boards to work out the names of the items by themselves. In the authors’ opinion their efforts result in “original, unexpected and non-typical variants; for example, the name *Альбатрос* (*Albatross*) reflects “the visual features of the complex – its form and colour scheme, associations with family values (the albatross is the symbol of a close-knit and faithful family) and at the same it is sea-like; the housing estate is situated not far from Stroginskaya flood-lands” ([www.mvn.irn.ru/exclusive/56.html](http://www.mvn.irn.ru/exclusive/56.html)). But in fact the name is far from original: there is a large number of firms, cafes, tourist agencies, etc. with the same name in Moscow, Petersburg, Samara and Yekaterinburg. The common metaphors are even less original: the names of two housing estates *Солнце* (*Solntse*) ‘sun’ and *Четыре солнца / 4 Солнца* (*Chetyre Solntsa*) ‘four suns’ are easy to confuse (Sokolova, 2011, 146).

The name *Шоколад* (*Shokolad*) ‘chocolate’, according to the surveys of the residents and the students of the Law University, is successful and attractive: “The shape of the buildings reminds you of a bar of chocolate, and the word itself calls for various associations, it is easily remembered and can be used with good effect as a pun” (as in Russian this word is a part of an idiom which stands for a happy, carefree life). “Zhit’ v shokolade” (‘to live in chocolate’) means not only to live in a house named *Shokolad*, but to be successful. There is a strong association with success and all respondents said that they would like to live in *Shokolad* ([novosedi.com/build500/theme7025/topic13053](http://novosedi.com/build500/theme7025/topic13053)).

Nominators often use abstract nouns with ‘prestigious meanings’ containing one of the following senses: ‘great’, ‘prominent’, ‘important’, ‘authoritative’, ‘majestic’, ‘notable’, as well as ‘beautiful words’: the housing estates *Идеал* (*Ideal*) ‘ideal’, *Мечта* (‘dream’), *Фортуна* (*Fortuna*) ‘fortune’, *Доминанта* (*Dominanta*) ‘dominant’, *Приоритет* (*Prioritet*) ‘priority’, *Перспектива* (*Perspektiva*) ‘perspective’, *Ностальгия* (*Nostalgija*) ‘nostalgia’, *Респект* (*Respect*) ‘respect’. These names have nothing to do with the appearance of

residential complexes; their locations, according to surveys, do not point to a particular object and are easily mixed. There is evidence that such names are not lasting and are not used in everyday speech. On the contrary, city-dwellers often change these flashy names into slangy ones on purpose: in a huge complex *Grand-Park* / *Гранд Парк* there are four towers called *Sigarety* ('cigarettes') and even *Gnilyje zuby* ('rotten teeth'), a house *Parus* ('sail') was turned into *Kaplya* ('drop') or *Uho* ('ear'). There are houses called *Скобы* (*Scoby*) 'brackets', *Расчёска* (*Rascheska*) 'comb' (*Digest of Russian and Foreign Real Estate Magazine*, 2010, 20; [www.istikon.ru/forum/index.php?PAGE-NAME=read;docent.livejournal.com/109635.html](http://www.istikon.ru/forum/index.php?PAGE-NAME=read;docent.livejournal.com/109635.html); <http://grudolov.livejournal.com>) A housing estate *Академия Люкс* (*Akademija Lux*) 'lux academy' was turned into *Муравейник* (*Muravejnik*) 'anthill'. The name of the housing estate situated not far from Patriarch Ponds, *Патриарх* (*Patriarch*), is not good as the word stands for the title of a high-ranked bishop of the Orthodox Christian church. According to surveys of the students of the Law University (the residential complex is situated not far from the university), the advertisement slogans: "V Patriarche ('in the Patriarch') there is a great sauna", "V Patriarche ('in the Patriarch') there is a bar and a car park" sound unethical, and in the opinion of religious people are blasphemous. The house is characterized by architectural extravagances. That is why it is unofficially called *Торт со сливками* (*Tort so slivkami*) 'chiffon cake' or *Безе* (*Beze*) 'meringue' not only by the students and the residents of neighbouring houses, but also on Internet forums (*Digest of Russian and Foreign Real Estate Magazine*, 2010, 20; [www.4cio.ru/community/viewpost/642/print](http://www.4cio.ru/community/viewpost/642/print) Oct 4, 2010). Prestigious names are often reduced, e.g. *Салтыковка-Престиж* (*Saltykovka-Prestige*) was turned into *Saltykovka* (the old name). A flashy name may be changed into a slangy one because of the associations with its sound. For example, the Russian name *Искры радости* (*Iskry radosti*) 'joyful sparkles' is similar to *Тиски задосту* (*Tisky gadosti*) 'grip of muck' (<http://www.novostroykin.ru/forum/?nid=659>).

The governing company may leave it optional for buyers to choose the name for a housing estate; for example the lively and imposing name *Бриз* (*Breeze*) was chosen by the inhabitants as "it reflects its airy architecture and close proximity to the river" ([www.vkomplekse.ru/kompleks/briz.html](http://www.vkomplekse.ru/kompleks/briz.html)). This name is going to survive.

There is an increasing tendency to name housing estates using anthroponyms, including mythonyms and precedent names: *Nansen*, *Аполлон-клуб* (*Apollon club*) 'Apollo club', *Атлант* (*Atlant*) 'Atlas'—'a giant's power', *Наполеон* / *Napoleon*, *Леонардо* (*Leonardo*), *Да Винчи* (*Da Vinchi*) (named after the great inventor and artist Leonardo Da Vinci). Foreign anthroponyms prevail. To attract more potential buyers two parts of *Потаново* (*derevnya Potapovo*) 'Potapovo village' were named after a famous writer *Марк Твен* (*Mark Twen*) 'Mark Twain'. On this billboard the writer as Uncle Sam with the pointing finger proclaims "Mark Twain is waiting for you". Some quotations from Twain's short stories are used as slogans for advertisements ([www.mark-twen.ru](http://www.mark-twen.ru)). This name attracts, is of interest, but officially, according to Russian law, cannot be registered as it exists only while townhouses are on sale; the official address of the residential complex is *деревня Потаново* (*derevnya Potapovo*) 'Potapovo village'.

In recent years, developers have started to actively use Russian anthroponyms: *Форт Кутузов* (*Fort Kutuzov*), *Бунин Парк* (*Bunin Park*). The cottage village *Орловъ* (*Orlov*) returns to the times of Russian noblemen and emphasizes the use of the letter Ъ abolished in 1918; it got its name in honour of the historic family of the Orlovs, the most famous being Grigoryj Orlov, the favourite of Empress Catherine II (the cottage village is located near the ancient manor which used to belong to the Orlovs). The advertising emphasizes another well-known association with the name Orlov – the famous Orlov's quarter horses. This name is commercially successful in the sphere of expensive, elite housing ([www.irn.ru](http://www.irn.ru)).

It is a standard practice to name housing estates after films, books, folklore or songs (in this case the choice is predetermined by the author's or the 'creative group's' personal taste): *Вишневы́й сад* (*Vishniovyj Sad*) 'The Cherry Orchard' – named after A. Chekhov's play, *Миллион Алы́х Роз* (*Million alykh roz*) 'A Million Scarlet Roses' – named after a hugely popular song by Alla Pugacheva, *Земляничная поляна* (*Zemlyanichnaja Polyana*) 'Strawberry Clearing', *Три Богатыря* (*Tri bogatyrya*) 'three bogatyr's' – 'bogatyr' means 'powerful men from Russian fairy tales'. This housing estate was named after the famous picture by V. Vasnetsov "Bogatyr's" which has acquired the unofficial name "Three Bogatyr's". This picture is well-known to every Russian-speaking person. Authors of the name *Лебединое Озеро* (*Lebedinoye ozero*) 'Swan Lake' – Tchaikovsky's famous ballet – used it for the manor and park complex. Indeed, the architecture is reminiscent of Russian manor houses of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The territory has a lake, garden houses and trees, and soon there will be sculptures. It is noteworthy that each of the 11 houses in the village has its own name. Thus the houses are named after famous ballets which were staged at the Bolshoi Theatre: *Онегин* (*Onegin*), *Каменный Цветок* (*Kamennyj tsvetok*) 'the stone flower', *Стюарт* (*Stuart*), *Байрон* (*Bajron*) 'Byron', *Корсар* (*Korsar*) 'corsair', *Тюдор* (*Tudor*), *Дон Кихот* (*Don Kikhot*) 'Don Quixote', *Орфей* (*Orfej*) 'Orpheus', *Персей* (*Persej*) 'Perseus'. Such names, according to surveys of developers, have commercial success ([www.irm.ru](http://www.irm.ru)).

Pretentious names, including those containing a "foreign component" given either in Latin letters or in Cyrillic transcription, either translated (often with mistakes) or not, are growing in number: *Башня ВДНХ / ВДНХ Тауэр / ВВЦ Тауэр / Тауэр* (*Bashnya VDNKh / VDNKh Tower / VVC Tower / Tower*); *Monteville, Лазурный блюз* (*Lazurnyj Bl'uz*) 'Sky-blue blues', *Долина грез* (*Dolina Grez*) 'valley of dreams', *Millennium Tower, Sky Fort, Fusion Park* – "catch the moment between the past and the future" (<http://estatet.jimdo.com>). They can be distorted as well: *VITRO Village* → *Villange*. The official name *Арбат-Тауэр / Arbat-Tower* or *Grubber House* (named after the building company) is often changed to *Tramp-Tower* because of the associations with the famous American skyscraper (<http://kvartira.remoc.ru/jk.php?id=64>; [bazanda.ru/moscow...complexes/arat\\_tauer\\_grubber](http://bazanda.ru/moscow...complexes/arat_tauer_grubber)). In everyday speech the "beautiful" foreign name is changed into a Russian descriptive one, for example *Amorini Dorati* → *Помпейский дом* 'Pompeian house' (antique style, with porticos) → *Помпезный дом* 'pompous house'; *Arco di Sole* ('sun arc') → *Солёная арка* (*Sol'onaja arka*) 'salt arc' → *Арка* (*arka*) 'arc'.

The name of the housing estate *Эдальго* (*Edalgo*) / *Hedalgo* is quite attractive; misspelled *hidalgo* – a traditional title of persons of the Spanish nobility or gentry who existed in the Middle Ages (GDR: 374). The letter is changed so that the housing estate is not confused with enterprises (for example, producing furniture) or the film with the same name. The housing estate *Versis* is an example of a poor artificial name. According to the experts of "Peresvet-Invest" company, it is an item in the premium segment. The *Vs* logo associates with Versace and reflects individuality and uniqueness. But a recent survey has shown that Russian native speakers perceive the word as a changed *версия* (*versiya*) 'version' and do not associate it with either a well-known brand or the housing estate. One can already find on the Internet the photos of the unfinished housing estate and unofficial names: *Бетонные коробки* (*Betonnyje korobki*) 'concrete boxes', *Помойные контейнеры* (*Potojnyje kontejnery*) 'containers for litter', *Бетонное леги* (*Betonnoje lego*) 'concrete Lego' ([novostroy.su/msk/buildings/Versis/](http://novostroy.su/msk/buildings/Versis/); <http://www.citytowers.ru/viewtopic.php?id=1600>).

There is an increasing tendency to name housing estates using foreign toponyms. If you travel across the Moscow region, it may be difficult to understand that you are still in Russia, as everywhere you see signs like *Маленькая Шотландия* (*Malen'kaja Shotlandija*) 'little

Scotland', *Hyde Park*, *Бельгийская деревня (Belgijskaja Derevnja)* 'Belgian village', *Лондонское предместье (Londonskoje predmestje)* 'London suburbs', *Little Italy*, *Довиль / Deauville*. For example, in the villa community *Ла Манш / La Manche* the famous strait is associated with the river *Молодильня (Molodilnya)* which divides the territory into three parts – *Англия (England)*, *Франция (France)* and *Ирландия (Ireland)* (<http://www.lamansh-village.ru>).

At a distance of 16 kilometres from Moscow one can find a community *Барселона / Barcelona*. "The 'Barcelona' community represents a stylized design of a town with its micro-regions, streets, quarters and squares." However, this famous name has created another real estate scandal in the Moscow region: the investors have been deceived by the former owners and, though they have put their money into the construction of more than 80 country houses in this community, they are not their rightful owners yet (<http://np-barcelona.ru>). Some of the names may represent a case of oxymoron. For example the unit *English Dacha* is advertised as a "cottage community reminding of provincial England", but the word *дача (dacha)* is a Russian word and not translated into English (<http://www.englishdacha.ru>).

### Pun names

It should be noted that traditional "transferred toponyms" (fully coinciding with the name of a state, a city or a province, for example, *Switzerland*, *Lausanne*, *Kent*) cannot be officially registered as a trademark in accordance with the laws in Russia. Thus there appeared a tendency to use a play on words, punning titles based on the foreign-language names. Not *Карловы Вары (Karlovu Vary)* – a well-known Czech spa, but *Карповы Вары (Karpovu Vary)* – from the word *капн (carp)* – fish, which is supposedly found in the surrounding ponds; not *Куршавель (Kurshavel')* 'Courchevel' – a famous ski resort where Russian millionaires love to relax, but *Пушавель (Pushchavel')* – from the word *пуща (pushcha)* 'dense forest'; not *Los Angeles*, but *Мос-Анжелес (Mos-Angeles)* – a portmanteau word from 'Moscow' and 'Los Angeles'; not Iceland, but *Eastland* – from *East* or *Брусландия (Bruslandija)* 'brusland' – from the word *брус (brus)* 'bar' – a type of timber for the construction of wooden houses.

Neologisms, abbreviations and other onomastic puzzles grew in number; some of them are quite effective. Developers note the commercial success of the name *FreeDom* (it is a case of a pun as the suffix 'dom' sounds similar to the Russian word for "house"); the advertisement is as follows: "Freedom for life" (<http://guberny.ru/item/1384>). There are especially a lot of neologisms with the formant *виль (vil')* (French pronunciation of *ville/vill*): *Зубрвиль (Zubrvil')* – from the word *зубр (zubr)* – 'bison' – a European wild forest bull (GDR: 371), *Montevill*, *Primevill*, *Smartville*. Such artificial names can be officially registered as trademarks.

The artificial name *Панфилат (PANFILAT)* relates to the names of the streets surrounding the housing estate – the street of Geroev (heroes) Panfilovtsev, Latsys Street and Turistskaya (tourist) Street, but this abbreviation is difficult to pronounce. The name *O<sub>2</sub>XYGEN* is the poorest of them all; according to the nominators' idea, *O<sub>2</sub>XYGEN* should be associated with "a breath of fresh air in a big city" ([www.nedvishimost.ru/zhilie-kompleksi/Oxygen](http://www.nedvishimost.ru/zhilie-kompleksi/Oxygen)), but Russian native speakers read Latin letters as Cyrillic, so the result is an obscene word.

### Change of names

The name may be changed in the process of construction of a housing estate if the owner or the building company changes, i.e. *Дирижабль (Dirijabl')* 'dirigible', 'airship' turned into *Бастуон (Bastion)* 'bastion', 'bulwark'. The building used to be described as "floating in the air regardless of time and space", but now other features like monumentality and might are

emphasized ([www.citytowers.ru](http://www.citytowers.ru) > 25 posts - 10 authors - 4 Jan 2010). But in everyday speech the name was turned into *Муравейник* (*Muravejnik*) ‘anthill’ or *Бетонный Муравейник* (*Betonnyj Muravejnik*) ‘concrete anthill’ ([moya-moskva.livejournal.com/2791067.html](http://moya-moskva.livejournal.com/2791067.html)).

The new developer who bought the housing estate *Вертикаль* (*Vertical*) ‘vertical’ should not have changed the name to *Wellhouse*. This word, strange for the Russian language, varies *Wellhouse* or *Well House на Ленинском* (*Well house na Leninskom*) ‘well house on Leninsky Street’ ([www.gdeetodom.ru/.../346-vellhaus-na-leninsko](http://www.gdeetodom.ru/.../346-vellhaus-na-leninsko)), but the inhabitants tired of the long construction process call the house *Хаос* (*Khaos*) ‘chaos’ or just *Vysotka*. The name *Z-project* (the house reminds of the letter Z) was even poorer and was changed into a long one *Клубный дом в Хилковом переулке* (*Klubnyj dom v Hilkovom pereulke*) ‘club house on Hilkovsky Lane’, but in everyday speech it turned into *Писательский Дом* (*Pysatel'sky Dom*) ‘writers’ house’ ([vsenovostroyki.ru/.../жк-клубный-дом-в-хилково..](http://vsenovostroyki.ru/.../жк-клубный-дом-в-хилково..)).

Finally, we should mention the following tendency: if a housing estate or a house does not have its own name during the construction process, it may appear in everyday speech as an unofficial one. The house on Nahimovskiy Avenue is a shining example. It acquired the pet name *Бастилия* (*Bastilija*) ‘Bastille’ as it is shaped as half-towers (*Digest of Russian and Foreign Real Estate Magazine*, 2010, 20). Long houses are often called *Китайская стена* (*Kitajskaja stena*) ‘Chinese wall’, and houses set on poles may be called *Дом на курьих ножках* (*Dom na kurjikh nozhkakh*) ‘house on chicken legs’. It should be mentioned that the external features are not necessarily determining. The most important factor here is the social one. For example, a house originally acquired the name *Гармошка* (*Garmoshka*) ‘accordion’, but then there appeared the name *Генеральский* (*Generalskiy*) ‘general’s’ – the house was inhabited by military authorities. In our days the inhabitants are more socially differentiated but the unofficial name took hold. The same situation repeats itself nowadays. The housing estate on Vernadskiy Avenue where the employees of the Embassy of Germany live has an unofficial name *Немецкий городок* (*Nemetskiy gorodok*) ‘German town’. The unofficial name of a quarter in New Cher'omushki region is *Царское Село* (*Tsarskoje Selo*) ‘Tsar’s village’, as the houses were built for Soviet authorities.

## Conclusion

The names of housing estates established in the Russian onomastic space and the number of names is growing fast. A new type of commercial building has led to the appearance of new terms denoting housing as a real estate object, an object of sale. Among the most used, along with the Russian names, there are the English words ‘cottage’ and ‘house’.

The naming patterns are traditional: metaphors, anthroponyms, toponyms.

We have found two contrary tendencies in naming. On the one hand, foreign names, neologisms, abbreviations and other onomastic puzzles have grown in number; on the other hand, simple Russian names are becoming more and more popular. Foreign and pretentious names often attract wealthy buyers, but irritate ordinary people. In everyday speech “beautiful” foreign and pretentious names are changed into Russian descriptive or slangy ones.

Thus, artificial and natural naming mixes in the process of housing estate naming, and it requires special knowledge in the area of onomastics. Artificial names do not live long and they are not used by the members of the community, whereas natural names are well-known and widely used by the residents.

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