

Editorial

Brasilia 1960 – 2010: Modern Movement Universal Ideal

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THE ARGUMENT of this **docomomo** Journal is Brasília. We are very pleased to celebrate its 50-year anniversary.

Since Brasília's World Heritage inscription in 1987, the city has developed public awareness regarding the value of a major accomplishment in the history of urbanism. The singularity of Brasília lies in its ability of being simultaneously rooted in the past while looking ahead to the future, envisioning an approach that should affirm Brazil's industrialization effort and the need to provide access to life quality incorporating a specific genuine cultural tradition; an approach where the new capital should be the image of the homeland. Lúcio Costa, the architect who sensed and perceived the need to rescue architectural heritage, formulated unprecedented theoretical principles, articulating both realities. He was aware of the fact that modern architecture was a powerful means to foster a national identity because, according to modern principles argued in Brazil, a bond should exist between an erudite *avant-garde* and traditional popular features. Costa revealed the structural resemblance between raw architecture from the 18th Century—the plain Portuguese style—and the new constructions, discovering the same logic, rationality, rigor and strictness.

In fact, the construction of the Modern Brazilian Architecture is part of a larger cultural process which links tradition and innovation. Like Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, the Punjab's new capital, Brasília was built according to modern standards, evolving from a perfect articulation between the *Pilot Plan* conceived by Lúcio Costa, the main buildings designed by Niemeyer, the landscape idealized by Burle Marx, and finally, the public art sculptures created by various artists. The grand ideal of modern movement, the synthesis of art, was fulfilled by means of a symbiosis between architecture, urbanism, landscape and visual arts.

In the 21st of April 1960, the opening of Brasília was celebrated as something far greater than the simple inauguration of a new capital. Brasília acquires a great echo, as a symbol of national identity and progressive political program, that, at the time, has exceeded the disciplinary universe of architecture and urbanism. Actually, there was a sense of proud amongst all Brazilian people, as the new city sought to provide a better future and overall progress. The success of this new architecture surpassed regions, social classes and nations! Everyone embraced the modern architectural language: upper class people, constructors or even humble workers.

Today, 50 years after, it is time to debate Brasília's unprecedented modernity and to reflect both on the incomprehension of the critic and on the happiness of the inhabitants. It's time, 10 years after **docomomo** Journal 23 concerned with "the Modern City Facing the Future", to re-evaluate the memory of the past, the present and the future with a wide range of issues dealing with documentation and conservation topics. I wish to thank both Sylvia Ficher and Andrey Rosenthal Schlee who acted as guest editors of the Brasília Dossier. Due to their knowledge and commitment, and the skill of a brilliant range of researchers, it is possible to extend this debate over Brasília's challenge as a modern movement universal ideal, its current reality and its evolving process: analyzing the competition process held in 1956 and presenting the proposals on an international context; reflecting on Brasília's contribution to the symbolic image and the new monumentality; presenting some case studies selected from the large scale buildings to the works of art dimension.

Facing the near future and searching for sustainable solutions, it is time to go deeper on the global design issue, undertaking an innovative conservation research as a condition for building a better future. As Gropius stated, the "design from the cup of coffee to the urban plan" ability is the challenge for the next **docomomo** International Conference that will take place in Espoo, Finland, from the 7th to the 10th August 2012.

Ana Tostões, Chair of **docomomo** International



1. National Congress
Oscar Niemeyer
1958



2. Praça dos Três Poderes
Oscar Niemeyer
1960



3. Palace of Justice
Oscar Niemeyer
1962



4. Planalto Palace
Oscar Niemeyer
1958



5. Itamaraty Palace
Oscar Niemeyer
1962



6. National Supreme Court
Oscar Niemeyer
1958



7. Alvorada Palace
Oscar Niemeyer
1957



8. DNIT
Rodrigo Lefevre
1974



9. National Theatre
Oscar Niemeyer
1958



10. Bus Station
Lúcio Costa
1957



11. SARAH Hospital
João Filgueiras Lima
1980



12. Metropolitan Cathedral
Oscar Niemeyer
1959



13. Nilson Nelson Gym
Icaro Castro Mello
1970



14. City Park
Burle Marx
1976



15. Camargo Correa and
Morro Vermelho Buildings
João Filgueiras Lima
1974



16. Central Bank
Helio Ferreira Pinto
1976



17. Super Quadra
107/108 South
Oscar Niemeyer
1959



18. Costa e Silva Bridge
Oscar Niemeyer
1967



19. Brasilia University (UnB)
AA.VV.



20. Embassies
a.Spain, b.Peru, c.Japan, d.Italy, e.Sweden,
f.Finland, g.Denmark, h.Germany, i.Turkey,
j.Mexico, k.Canada, l.Uruguay, m.Chile,
n.France, o.Portugal, p.Morocco, q.South
Korea



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Listing and Protecting the MoMo.

Brazil / Brasilia

By Andrey Rosenthal Schlee and Sylvia Ficher

It's not enough to plant, we must know how to plant and care and persist, then, yes, the thing works.

Lúcio Costa, Museu do Ouro, *Registro de uma vivência*, 1995

Brazil

ALSO in the field of preservation, Brazil has made an unparalleled contribution to the MoMo. After all, when in 1988 **docomomo** was founded, the country already had a number of modernist works legally protected. And Brasilia had joined the select World Heritage of UNESCO, the first modernist urban complex to be conferred that honor. The precedent was established, and since then other MoMo works—all prior to Brasilia—received the distinction: the Bauhaus in 1996, the Schröder House and the University of Caracas in 2000, the Tugendhat House in 2001, the White City of Tel Aviv in 2003.

A rather bizarre circumstance, but well known and widely reported, where modernists and preservationists were the same people, all joined in a cohesive and hegemonic set of intellectuals from Rio de Janeiro, then Federal Capital. They were in charge of deciding, at once, what to protect from our past and how to design the architecture of our present. In other words, of choosing what could be erased from the country's memory and which should be the rightful aesthetic expression of its future image.

The heritage protection system now in force in Brazil was established by the Decree-Law No. 25 of November 30, 1937, during the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship (1930-45). This legislation created the National Historical and Artistic Patrimony Service (SPHAN), now National Historical and Artistic Patrimony Institute (IPHAN), and the main instrument for its action: the *tombamento*—the legal safeguard accrued to a landmark considered of national value, its register or listing.¹

SPHAN's initial staff comprised architects of modernist leaning, such as Lúcio Costa, Paulo Barreto Thedim, Carlos Leão, Alcides Rocha Miranda, Oscar Niemeyer and Renato Soeiro. From then on until his retirement in 1972 Costa would be head of the Division of Studies and Listing.² Treated reverently as "Dr. Lúcio", he was respon-

sible for setting up the institute's preservation guidelines.

As one of his first tasks, he would inspect and assess the conditions of the Church of São. Miguel (c.1735-50), in one of the Guarani Jesuit missions in southern Brazil. Concurring with innovative preservation practices at that time, he recommended the consolidation of the ruins, ordering the remains to be collected in a small museum designed by him. The listing attained in 1938, after the museum's completion in 1940, was included in the listing as part of the church protected environment. The first step was taken toward registering recent buildings. Yet—as we shall see—only those authored by architects from the same carioca modernist set, clearly identified with the corbusierian manner.

Soon this trend became evident even abroad. Anticipating the *Brazil Builds* exhibition held in 1943 at the Museum of Modern Art of New York, in 1942 Life magazine publishes the article "Modern Brazil is a paradise for young architects". Illustrated with photographs by Kidder Smith, the text praises Brazilian contemporary architecture—above all the work of Oscar Niemeyer— and draws attention to the weight of official patronage in its development and protection.

The preservation of MoMo works was unequivocally assured in 1947 with the listing of Niemeyer's Church of São Francisco de Assis de Pampulha (1942-43), in Belo Horizonte. The matter was controversial, involving not only a monument recently concluded but also the opposing stand of the local clergy and town's population.³ Costa's pragmatic solution was a *preventive listing*—taking into account "the unanimous acclaim for this work in the main centers of artistic and cultural responsibility around the world, particularly in Europe and the United States" and that "the exceptional value of this monument will lead to its register, sooner or later, as a national landmark".⁴

At the onset of Brasília's construction, there were four registered modernist landmarks. Besides the museum and the chapel, the Ministry of Education (1936), designed by a team coordinated by Costa from a draft by Le Corbusier and listed in 1948; and the Hydroplanes Station of Rio de Janeiro (1937), designed by Attilio Correia de Lima and listed in 1957.

If the urge to register modernist landmarks continued, it did not imply the inclusion of works outside the Rio de Janeiro axis. So much so that the Santa Cruz Street House (1927), in São Paulo, by Gregori Warchavchik—considered by many the pioneer Brazilian MoMo building—would be listed only in 1986, together with two other houses by the same architect. Until the listing of Brasília's Pilot Plan in 1990, among the eleven newly listed modernist works, only these three houses are not by architects from Rio. Among the other eight, two are by Niemeyer,⁵ two by Costa, and only one by an architect outside their group.

Brasília

The ultimate step in the enthronement of Rio's modernist architecture would be given with Brasília. In 1956 Oscar Niemeyer was invited to be in charge of architectural designs, and the construction of the first buildings begun. In 1957 Lúcio Costa won the Pilot Plan competition. The city would be inaugurated in April 1960.

Just two months after the city's inauguration, President Juscelino Kubitschek, concerned with his oeuvre perpetuation, recommended its protection by IPHAN, hence under the care of its planner.

*The only protection for Brasília is in the preservation of its Pilot Plan—Adding it to the Heritage Registry would, I think, constitute a safety measure [...] Would you be so gracious as to study the possibility, even if it means slightly forcing the very interpretation of "heritage"? I consider this fortification indispensable against destructive assaults that already seem vigorous. Thank you for your consideration.*⁶

Still, despite the symbolic weight of Costa and Niemeyer and their close association with IPHAN, the federal register of Brasília would be anything but straightforward. At the outset, a working group was created to propose the inclusion of the urban complex in the UNESCO list. But that institution imposed conditions, among them the existence of local protection legislations. Hence the hasty register carried by the Federal District government, with the Decree No. 10829 of October 14, 1987.⁷ Met the requirement, in that same year Brasília—read, the Pilot Plan—was declared World Heritage.

And the federal register just resumed, with a few changes, the Federal District decree, resulting in Ordinance No. 4, March 14, 1990. This rule, though, did not meet the interests of Costa and Niemeyer—actually the

latter architect's interests. Today the Pilot Plan is under the protection of Ordinance No. 314, October 8, 1992. The only difference is to be found in the addition of a paragraph establishing that:

...when approved by the competent legal bodies, exceptionally, and of course as a temporary provision, it will be allowed the proposals for new buildings by the authors of Brasília, architects Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, as necessary complementary additions of the original Pilot Plan...

The Brasília imbroglio seemed to have curbed the MoMo preservation surge. After all, from 1990 onwards there have been few of their listings. However, 2007 was a singular year: while Niemeyer was celebrating his centenary, the IPHAN reached its seventies. And nothing more appropriate than to celebrate the double anniversary with the register of twenty-four works from that architect who had integrated the first staff of the former National Historical and Artistic Patrimony Service.⁸

Notes

1. At that time, other American countries were also creating their preservation institutions, such as Argentina (National Commission for Museums and Historic Sites, 1938) and Mexico (National Institute of Anthropology and History, 1939).
2. Earlier, in 1930, the same Vargas appointed him director of the School of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro, in charge of reforming its academic education into a modernist course. Between 1936 and 1937, he coordinated the team that designed the Ministry of Education building and the University of Brazil campus. He was, therefore a man of trust for those in power.
3. So much so, that the consecration of the temple came only in 1959.
4. Tombamento da Igreja de São Francisco de Assis da Pampulha, 1947. In José Pessôa, *Lúcio Costa: documentos de trabalho*, 2004, pp. 67-68. The strength of Costa's opinions was such that the figure of preventive listing became a legal tenet.
5. Both in Brasília. The Catetinho—the temporary presidential residence, built in only ten days in 1956—was listed in 1959. In the case of the Cathedral of Brasília, in 1962 Costa argued against its listing, since the building was still under construction (Catedral de Brasília, 1962, in Pessôa, pp. 182-83); but in 1967 he changed his mind (Tombamento preventivo da Catedral de Brasília, 1967, p. 212). When consecrated and officially inaugurated in 1970, the cathedral was already registered.
6. Kubitschek's note to Iphan's director, Rodrigo M. F. de Andrade, 15 June 1960. Archives, Casa de Lúcio Costa.
7. With two texts by Costa appended: *Memorial descritivo do Plano Piloto* (1957) and *Brasília revisitada* (1987).
8. All in Brasília, except the Canoas House (1952) in Rio.

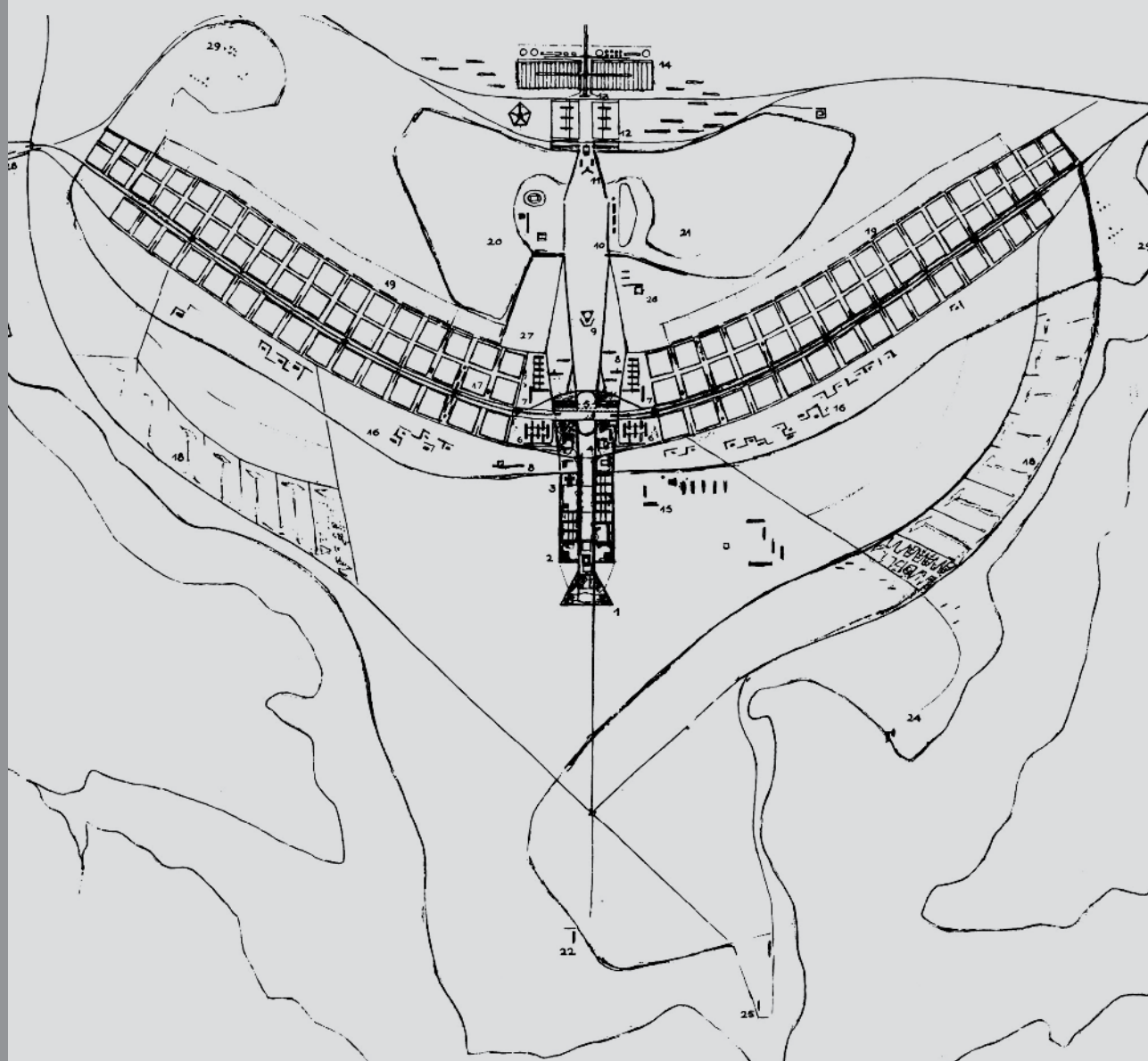
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The Competition for Brasilia's Pilot Plan: Territory and Infrastructure



The Competition for Brasilia's Pilot Plan, 1957, brought together 26 projects for the Federal Capital. These projects, expressing the planning culture of the first half of the twentieth century, contribute to a diverse knowledge of planning solutions. But what element unites these projects? The common factor to them is the urban structure based on two urban axes. The reason for this is the flat territory and the introduction of such infrastructure. A model of planning cities based on their minimum elements that not only organize, but also qualify the place.

By Jeferson Tavares

Injoyed it! exclaimed William Holford on announcing the victory of Lúcio Costa's project in the competition for selecting Brasilia's Pilot Plan. In expressing his opinion as one of the members of the review panel, the renowned English urban planner not only praised one city idea, but also sanctioned a new model for conceiving all cities.

Thus, on 16th March 1957, a controversial debate that simultaneously bequeathed to Brazil the project for its Capital and represented a synthesis of western urban thought of the first half of the 20th century was drawn to a close. Now, after five decades, it has become possible to place in a national and international context all of the proposals then presented, and to identify their predominant values.

The Competition

When he was elected President of the Republic in 1956, Juscelino Kubitschek promised to carry out the Federal Capital transfer to a location on the Central Plateau allowing it to be equidistant from the country regional capitals, as established in the Brazilian Constitution. The first step was the creation of the development company, *Companhia Urbanizadora da Nova Capital, Novacap*, which would be the main tool in fulfilling this ambitious undertaking.

His initial intention was to assign the design of the entire city to Oscar Niemeyer. The latter suggested, however, that a competition should be held to select the urban plan, whereas he would be in charge of designing the city's main buildings. Novacap thus became responsible for organising the National Competition for the Pilot Plan for the New Capital of Brazil. The competition rules, approved on 24th September 1956, required a minimum of elements with regard to the city's structure:

- a A basic layout of the city, indicating the arrangement of the main items of the urban structure, the location and interconnection of the various sectors, centres, installations and services, the distribution of open spaces and lines of communication, to the scale of 1:25,000
- b A supporting report.

A maximum population of 500,000 and the creation of a lake later named Paranoá, amongst other details, were afterwards defined as complements.

The requirement of so few elements not only encouraged the subscription of a large number of teams—62 in total—but also allowed for flexibility in the projects conception. This can be observed in the distinct approaches to presentation and detailing. While some competitors developed lengthy and detailed regional plans based on economic studies and statistics, others limited themselves to a descriptive text accompanied by some maps of the future city.

The review process was polemical. At first, the Brazilian Institute of Architects (Instituto de Arquitectos do Brasil, IAB) proposed a commission with Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, Percy Johnson-Marshall, Max Lock, Alvar Aalto, Clarence Stein, Le Corbusier or Mario Pane as international names. The actual review panel, established by Novacap, consisted of the engineer Israel Pinheiro, Novacap president, who did not have the right to vote; two Novacap representatives: Oscar Niemeyer and Stamo Papadaki; Luiz Hidelbrando Horta Barbosa from the Society of Engineers; Paulo Antunes Ribeiro from the IAB; and, at last, two international urban planners: the Englishman, William Holford, responsible for the Plan for the City of London and working in Canberra at the time, and the Frenchman, André Sive, an adviser to the French Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing¹.

After five days of analysis, the review panel shortlisted seven projects, declaring Lúcio Costa the winner. The minutes were signed by all members except for Paulo Antunes who, disagreeing with the selection process, expressed his opinion separately, recommending that the definitive plan should be elaborated by a team made of

< Lúcio Costa – Winner
Pilot Plan in Brasilia, *Cidade que Inventei*, 1991

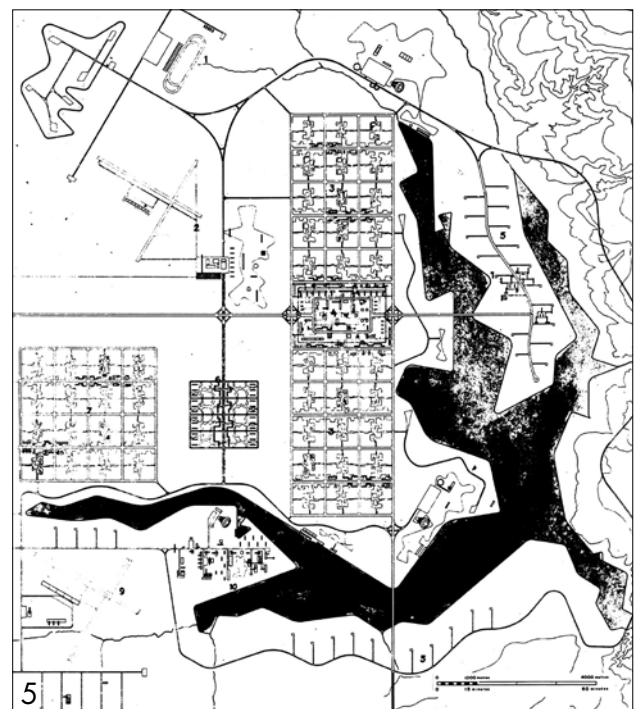
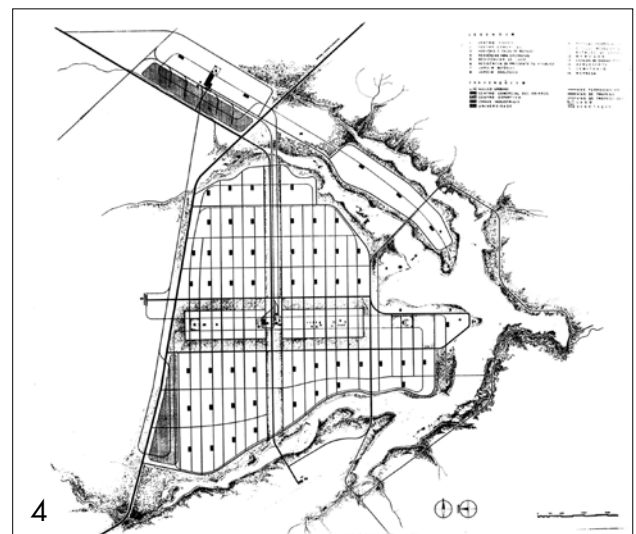
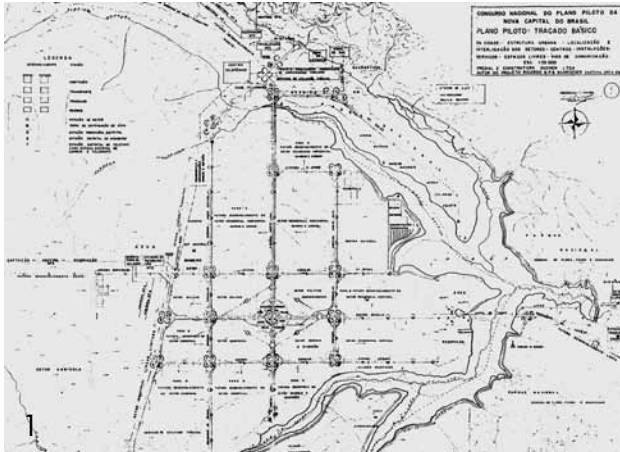
the seven finalists and three other competitors whom he put forward. With Antunes outvoted the original selection prevailed.

It is worthwhile to mention Le Corbusier's only direct contribution to the competition. In 1955 in his correspondence to the Brazilian government, the Swiss urban planner expressed his willingness to prepare a Pilot Plan for the city. That is, the definition of the main urban guidelines, whose development would then become the responsibility of Brazilian experts. Even though this offer was not ac-

cepted, the competition brief adopted the term *Pilot Plan* to denominate the document that presents the conception of the city. Its residents still use it today to indicate the part of the city designed by Costa, which, since 1987, has been on the UNESCO Cultural Heritage list.

Urban Axes

Of the 26 submitted entries, 19 are known today. As a whole, they represent a selection of the main planning trends of the first half of the 20th century. They refer—either directly or indirectly—to Brazilian baroque cities, to academic and avant-garde plans, to rational and picturesque repertoires, to new capitals—such as Washington, DC—to the Regional Planning Association of America, to the CIAM, to the Charter of Athens, to Neighbourhood



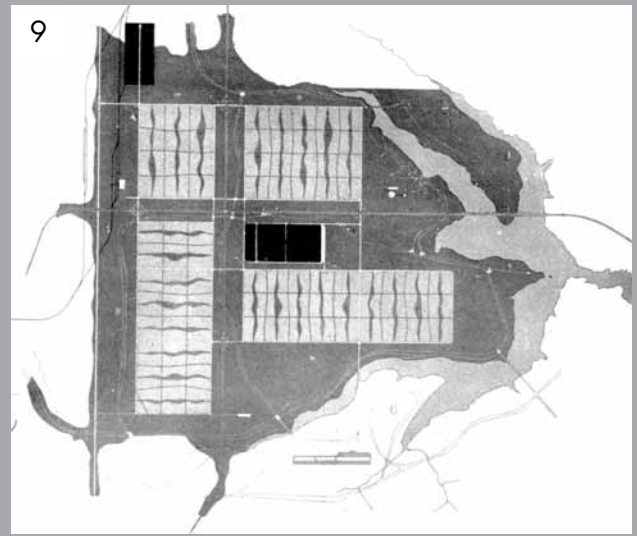
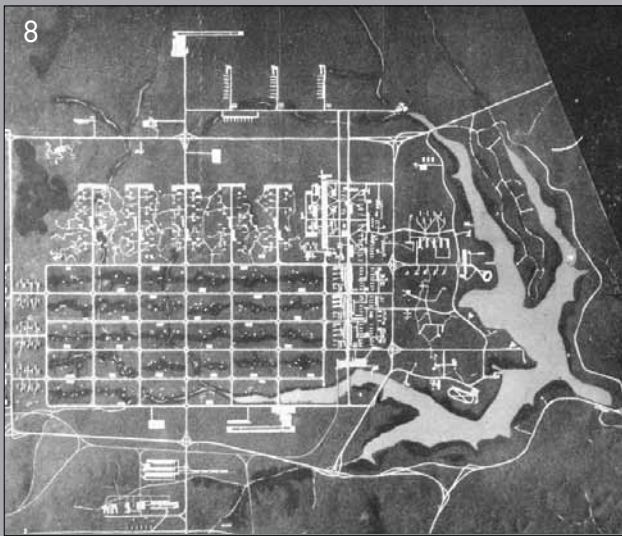
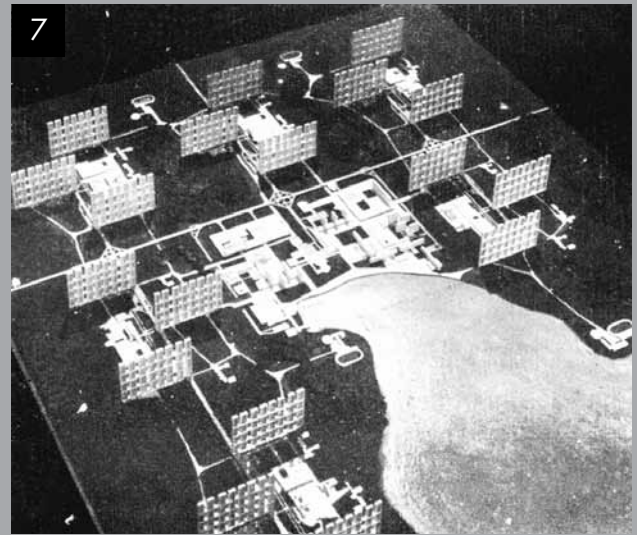
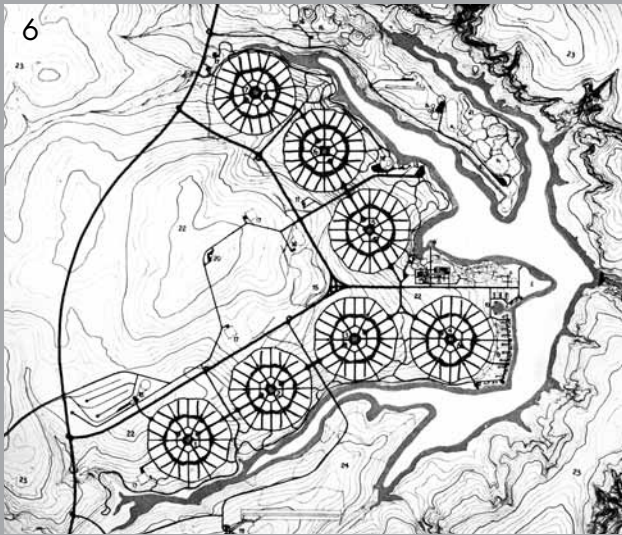


Figure 1. **Construtora Duchen Competitors.**
Image: Pilot Plan, 1957

Figure 2. **Pedro Paulo Saraiva and Julio Neves Competitors.**
Image: Plan Pilot in Engenharia Mackenzie Magazine n. 132, 1957

Figure 3. **Jorge Wilhelm and team Competitors.**
Image: Plan Pilot in Habitat Magazine n. 40, 1957

Figure 4. **Pedro Paulino Guimarães and team Competitors.**
Image: Pilot Plan, 1957

Figure 5. **Arquitetos Associados — Boruch Milmann, João Henrique Rocha and Ney Fontes Gonçalves Runner-Up.**
Image: Pilot Plan, 1957

Figure 6. **MM Roberto Third Place.**
Image: Plan Pilot in Habitat Magazine n. 42, 1957

Figure 7. **Rino Levi, Roberto Cerqueira Cesar and Luis Roberto Carvalho Franco Third Place.**
Image: Plan Pilot in Modulo Magazine n. 08, 1957

Figure 8. **Carlos Cascaldi, João Vilanova Artigas, Mário Wagner Vieira da Cunha, Paulo de Camargo e Almeida Fifth Place.**
Image: Pilot Plan, 1957

Figure 9. **Construtécnica S/A — Milton C. Ghiraldini Fifth Place.**
Image: Pilot Plan, 1957

Units and to New Towns. Names of international town planners appear, such as Camillo Sitte, Ebenezer Howard, Soria y Mata, Le Corbusier, Lewis Mumford and Patrick Abercrombie. Brazilian town planners are also quoted, including Saturnino de Britto, Anhaia Mello, Leberet and the Sagmacs, and the Centre for Urban Research and Studies at the University of São Paulo (CEPEU/USP, established in 1955), among others.

Despite differences both in their theoretical approaches and aesthetic conceptions, all competitors opted for a city whose form adheres to the site geometry, structured upon two large orthogonal road axes and organised according to the idea of functions separation. In some cases such a solution is disguised by long explanations of regional planning, by meandering routes or by formal exaggerations. Yet, the resemblance between all of them in using the infrastructure as the main element to space arrangement is undeniable.

What underlies in such a degree of consistency among such diverse solutions? Firstly, the territory must be considered. The place designated for the construction of Brasília is predominantly flat, bordered by a central elevation (altitude: 1170 m) to the west and the Paranoá Lake (altitude: 1000 m) to the east, which are approximately 10 km apart, creating a gentle slope.

Secondly, when establishing a new agglomeration in an area never before urbanised, the introduction of such an infrastructure is fundamental to the subsequent characterisation of the urban structure. Circulation lines, sanitation networks, energy distribution, communication systems, housing and urban facilities are the basic and structural city components.

Combining these two aspects within the context of urban thought, the layout of regulating orthogonal axes and the functional definition of urban spaces become an almost automatic response. In the particular case of Brasília, two axes arise from the features of its territory: a north-south axis, accommodated on a levelled site, which enables a straightforward distribution of urban functions, and an east-west axis, running along the terrain sharper slope, which enables a hierarchical functions organisation. This is the predominant framework, the issue shared by the majority of the competing entries.

The Competitors

Let us begin with examples from the non-shortlisted entries. The projects by Eurípedes Santos and by the *Construtora Duchon* are organised on the basis of such infrastructural elements as water reservoirs, bus stations, energy and communication facilities. Despite the differences, both projects present a city design led by orthogonal lines.

Edgar Rocha Souza and Raul da Silva Vieitas create an underground road system, which, on emerging above ground, forms an elliptical design, also organised by perpendicular axes. Pedro Paulo Saraiva and Julio Neves establish a vast public park over the perpendicular lines, giving the city a monumental and, at the same time, bucolic character. Pedro Paulino Guimarães also relies on an orthogonal grid created by the two axes intersection.

The *Equipe STAM*, led by Joaquim Guedes, takes the route of the underground lines as a starting point, which is a pioneering solution not included in other projects. The team led by Jorge Wilhelm uses the infrastructure to integrate the different administrative sectors. José Geraldo da Cunha Camargo makes use of the sanitation network to arrange the functional cells; these, in turn, in spite of their irregular distribution on the site, maintain the rigid design of the perpendicular axes.

Hence, the circulation, sanitation, transportation and energy distribution networks, even if invisible, led to the creation of rational designs that dialogued with the territory.

The Finalists

The selection of the finalists represented diverse qualities. In spite of the clear polarisation between William Holford and Paulo Antunes Ribeiro, who held antagonistic positions, the *avant-garde* discourses predominated. Nevertheless, the solutions themselves go beyond the modernist label to which they were subjected. It is possible to observe, as well, that the proposals prioritised the implementation of infrastructure while appreciating the area natural characteristics.

Lúcio Costa, Winner. With the poetic justification of comparing the plan to the colonial cross, Lúcio Costa also started from the definition of perpendicular road axes. In relation to other entries, his plan is a simple answer to the competition brief, based on the idea that a Capital city should be a *civitas*. The result is original in its design, although it does not conceal the affiliations of many of the adopted solutions.

Despite the overpowering presence of the Monumental Axis, the key contribution of the plan lies in its network of superblocks. They bring innovation with regard to land use, density and scale, the relation between public and private space, architectural composition, and building heights. It is fair to say that the plan's precedent is Parque Guinle, a residential scheme in Rio de Janeiro, designed by Costa in 1948—which, in turn, is inspired by the North American experiences of neighbourhood units and Le Corbusier's proposals for the *unités d'habitation*. Yet Brasília's superblocks surpass their models.

Arquitetos Associados—Boruch Milmann, João Henrique Rocha and Ney Fontes Gonçalves, Runner-Up.

The runner-up scheme, by a team of young architects, may almost seem to be a variation on the winning plan, having similar scale and urban structure. As in Costa's project, there are two perpendicular axes. They would, however, guide the city's expansion, as in the linear city model by Soria y Mata.

MM Roberto, Third Place. Rino Levi, Roberto Cerqueira Cesar, Luis Roberto Carvalho Franco, Third Place.

The shared third place highlights unprecedented and challenging proposals. In both entries an urban model formed by the reproduction of a unit is evident—a cell in Roberto brothers' project and a building in the project by Levi's team.

The first presents a detailed demographic study and mobility solutions based on the use of conveyors. The seven cells that form it were, according to the authors, inspired by African nomad tribes, but they also resemble the organisation schemes of Howard's garden city.

The second one is, without doubt, the most unusual of all. No other project showed such a high degree of technological ambition. Proposing 300-metre-high and 400-metre-long buildings, it pushes to the extreme the idea of a vertical city. Each building is a virtual vertical district that would replace the traditional urban fabric. This approach may, perhaps, stem from the experience of Rino Levi's studio as one of those in charge of verticalising São Paulo's city centre from 1940 to 1960.

In both projects the circulation lines play a fundamental role in providing unity to all cells and buildings. These, despite independent grids, are also defined on the basis of two principal structuring axes.

Henrique Mindlin and Giancarlo Palanti, Fifth Place. Carlos Cascaldi, João Vilanova Artigas, Mário Wagner Vieira da Cunha, Paulo de Camargo e Almeida, Fifth Place. Construtécnica S/A — Milton C. Ghiraldini, Fifth Place. Grouped in the fifth place are the projects that provided solutions for some type of regional extension. Even so, all of them take the two central axes as a starting point and develop themselves through the use of orthogonal blocks, only slightly diverging to accommodate to the site topography.

The pragmatic city conceived by Mindlin and Palanti reveals a very similar structure to that of Costa's plan. The proposed civic centre echoed the concepts propagated by the CIAM, with which Palanti was greatly involved. The difference lies in the proposition of legal instruments and urban solutions to control the land use on a regional scale.

Being the only one to emphatically address the ques-

tion of social housing for the city's builders, Cascaldi's team presents an urban plan linked to a rural plan for the development of the Federal District.

Following the principles of the CEPEU/USP—based upon the Garden City concept and the American Neighbourhood model Unit—Construtécnica also links the city to its region by means of a green belt and rural areas in its vicinity.

The Legacy of the Competition

In the end, and from the point of view of town planning thought, what is the meaning of Brasília's competition? Historical perspective gives us the privilege of being able, in spite of the variety of repertoires and choices made by the competitors, to catch a glimpse of the planning culture of the 1950s.

Although they remained on paper, the 25 entries reveal how the program for a new Capital was approached from different political, demographic and urban standpoints, and rendered in different forms by means of monumental plans or linear buildings.

Despite the differences, it is possible to state that all proposals relied on a refined technical knowledge of the site and on a close dialogue with the structural solutions of networks. The introduction of the two urban axes (in all projects) reflect a sensitive look at the Centralit. Plateau territory.

As representatives of the concepts and values of that period, those projects become perennial as they bear witness to particular ways of conceiving cities.

Notes

1. Holford and Sive replaced Maxwell Fry and Charles Asher.

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Architect and urbanist (Universidade de São Paulo, São Carlos), Master in Architecture and Urbanism (Universidade de São Paulo, São Carlos, 2004). He is the author of *Projetos para Brasília: 1927-1957* [Projects for Brasília: 1927-1957], in press, and currently works on urban infrastructure projects and is researching the regional planning of the State of São Paulo, Brazil.

The Dislocation of Brazil's Capital: A Long- Standing Project

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Dislocating the capital to Brazil's interior highlands is a long standing project in the country's history. The project was first linked to the transfer of the royal court from Lisbon to the Portuguese America, where a metropolis would be established in what until then had been a colonial purveyor of goods. Until 1953, the quest for a worthy capital involved many factors such as the establishment of a Portuguese empire in the Americas, Portugal's repudiation of an *Ancien Régime* monarchy in the South Atlantic, the formation of a counter hegemony in a former colony, or the construction of a unified, republican, and modern Brazilian nation. As Lúcio Costa—the architect of the final iteration of Brazil's new capital—once put it: “it was a century-old purpose, always postponed.”

By Farès el-Dahdah

IN November 1892, the writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis announced to his readers and fellow Cariocas that, to his surprise, Rio de Janeiro was merely the “interim capital of the Union.”¹ Based on Article 3 of Brazil's 1891 Constitution, a law had only recently allowed the creation of a federal commission in charge of demarcating a future Federal District. The *Exploratory Commission of Brazil's Central Plateau*, as it was called, was led by the Belgian-born Luiz Cruls, director of Rio de Janeiro's Astronomic Observatory, whose expedition began in June 1892 and lasted until March 1893. Addressing to the National Congress, on 7th May 1894, Marshal Peixoto reported that Cruls had collected exhaustive information concerning the future Federal District's “geographic position, climate, geologic composition, natural resources, and so on.”²

Considering that the report published by the Cruls's Commission was addressed to a scientific community centered around the Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute and a public at large avid for news of territorial discovery, Cruls's introductory remarks relied on history as a rhetorical device to legitimate the commission's findings. His report defines, in fact, the master narrative that was to subsequently be employed by politicians and historians alike, i.e., that the central plateau was somehow predestined to become the center of a unified Brazil. A ‘destiny’ would from then on have a recognizable image and its narrative was repeatedly, and retroactively, reinforced by a series of successive causes, be they those of Pombalian reform, imperial dislocation, republican integration, or national identity. If Cruls, the scientist, felt the need to recall historical figures such as Hipólito José da

Costa or Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen who similarly shared interiorizing tendencies, it was out of a desire to plug into, if not help to construct, a common nation building project.³ Just as history had been co-opted to demonstrate why the central plateau was an ideal site, its climate and geography were the scientific tropes used to attract eventual European immigrants. Auguste Glaziov, the landscape architect who joined Cruls's second expedition, articulated such a Europeanized view of the central plateau by comparing its picturesque qualities with those of Anjou, Normandy, and even Brittany. While a quadrilateral was indeed demarcated by the commission, the selection of the actual site for the future capital was ultimately hampered by competing government-sponsored railway projects, which diverted the expedition away from the newly demarcated Federal District. It was not until the celebration of Brazil's independence centenary (7th September 1922) that a foundational stone was laid for the future capital, nine kilometers from the city of Planaltina. The idea of moving the capital to Planaltina was an idea that had circulated widely enough to be suggested by the French artist Fernand Léger to Le Corbusier, informing him of Brazil's desire to build a new city from scratch. In 1929, the year Le Corbusier first traveled to Brazil, he mentioned “Planaltina” as a “dream that has been on my mind.”⁴

The revolutionary events of 1930 resulted in Getúlio Vargas taking over the presidency and putting an end to the country's first republic. The “Vargas Revolution,” as it was called, sought to define a new urban Brazil wary of its national security and willing to modernize its economic, social, and administrative structures. During Vargas' first regime (1930–1937), discussions regarding the future capital occurred in reference to Brazil's geopolitical redistribution and national security. Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, Director of the Ministry of Education and Public Health's Directorate of Information, Statistics, and Dissemination, suggested, for example, that the Brazilian

< Lúcio Costa, Brasília Pilot Plan, 1957, school children celebrating on the Plaza of the Three Powers on inauguration day. Photographed in 1960 by Mário Fontenelle. © Casa de Lúcio Costa.

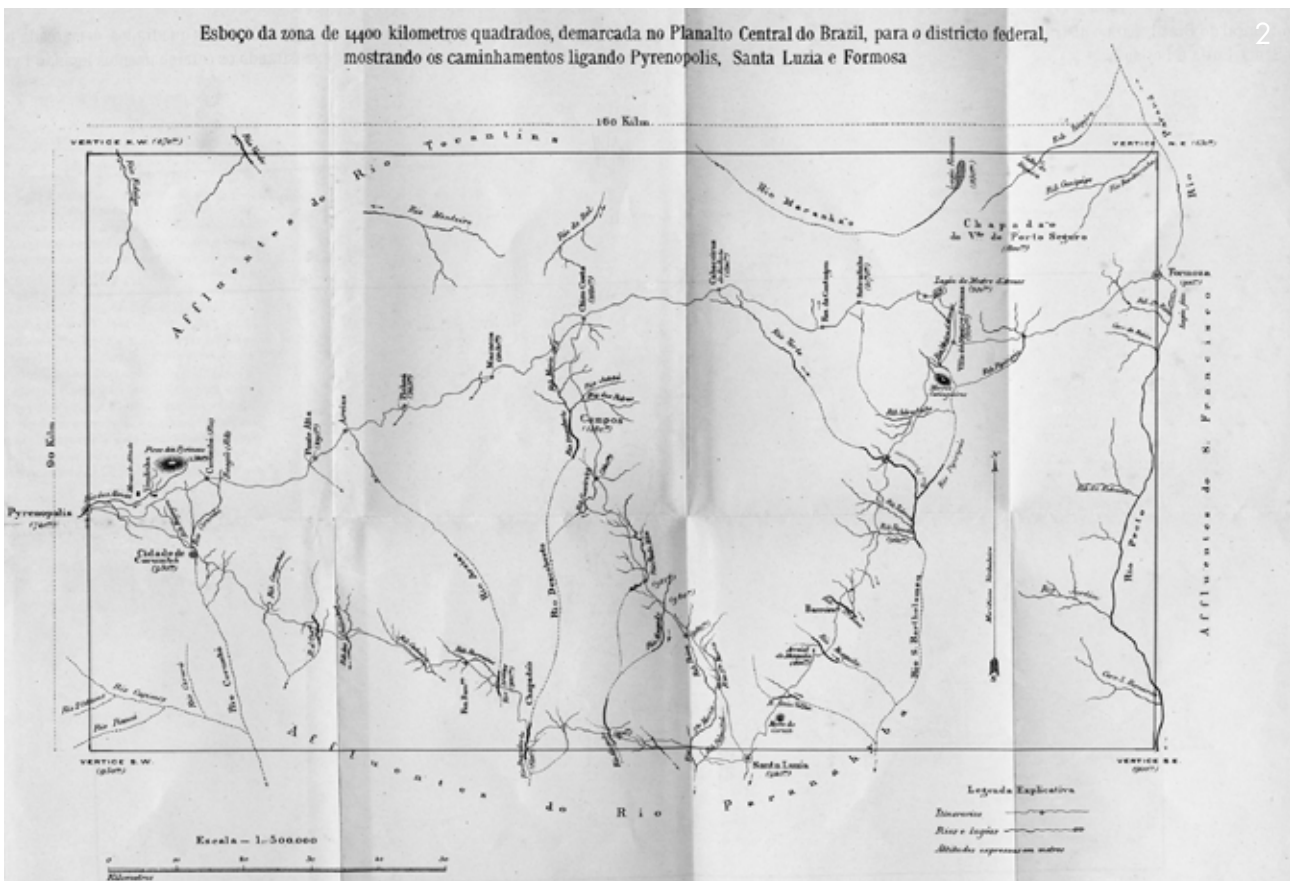


Figure 1. The Crul's expedition on the bank of the Parnaíba River, 1892-93. © University of Indiana Library.

Figure 2. Comissão Exploradora do Planalto Central do Brazil, *Draft of the 14400 square kilometers demarcated in Brazil's Central Plateau, for the Federal District, showing trail taken between Pirenópolis, Santa Luzia, and Formosa*, 1894. © University of California Berkeley Libraries

Figure 3. Serviço Geográfico do Exército, *Central Brazil Region with an indication of the proposed area for the new Federal District and the connections between this District and neighboring regions*, 1948. © University of Kentucky Library.

territory should be subdivided into thirty "units" which would involve moving the capital temporarily to Belo Horizonte before finally settling it in Cruls's quadrilateral, where it would adopt the name of "Ibéria" or "Lusitania."⁵

Four years into Vargas' presidency, the National Assembly enacted a new constitution which stipulated under Article 4 of its "Transitional Dispositions", that "the Union's Capital will be transferred to a central point in Brazil."⁶ This short-lived Constitution kept alive the capital transfer idea in addition to legitimating Vargas's otherwise provisory mandate. Seeing no prospect for reelection and citing communist-fearing events, Vargas led the coup d'état of 1937, which inaugurated the *Estado Novo* and led to yet another Constitution that made no mention of Brazil's

future capital. With Vargas deposed in 1945, Congress reintroduced the question of the future capital under Article 4 of the 1946 Constitution's "Transitional Dispositions." A new demarcation commission was formed and Cruls's quadrilateral became part of a much wider territory. On January 5th 1953, Congress finally authorized the executive branch to undertake the definitive studies for the site selection and set the new capital's population at half a million. Vargas created the New Federal Capital Localization Commission led by General Aginaldo Caiado de Castro who contracted the American firm *Donald Belcher & Associates* for the selection of six possible sites for the future capital. In 1955 the Belcher Report was submitted to the commission's new chair, Field Marshal



José Pessoa Cavalcanti de Albuquerque, and among the six color-coded sites, the “chestnut” site was finally chosen on April 15th. In the previous year Cavalcanti de Albuquerque also created a number of advisory sub-commissions including one for Urban planning, which contacted Le Corbusier hoping to have him supervising the planning of the new Brazilian capital despite the commission’s president staunch and decisive opposition. Le

Corbusier however went as far as to propose a five stage process in which he would be responsible for the city’s schematic design and a “pilot plan,” as he called it. The use of such terminology came to represent Le Corbusier’s only direct contribution to the final “Pilot Plan” of Brasilia design competition.

It was the newly elected President, Juscelino Kubitschek, who finally began implementing the capital dislocation

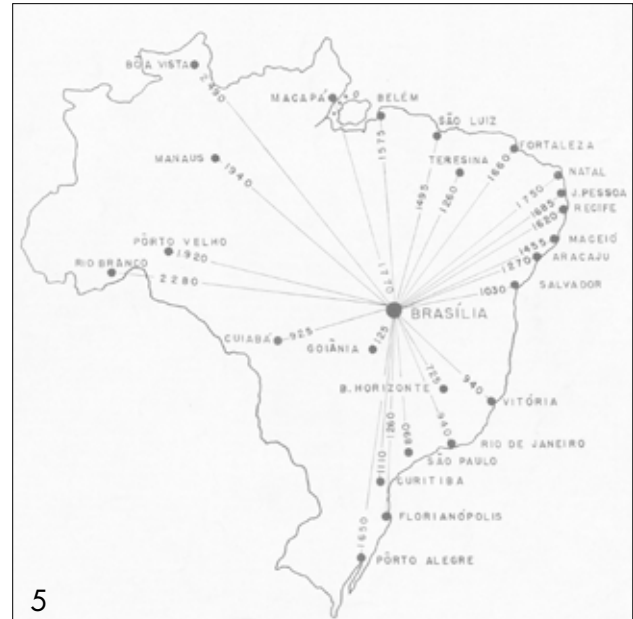


Figure 4. **Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas**, *Draft of Brazil’s new political map*, 1932. © University of Texas Libraries.

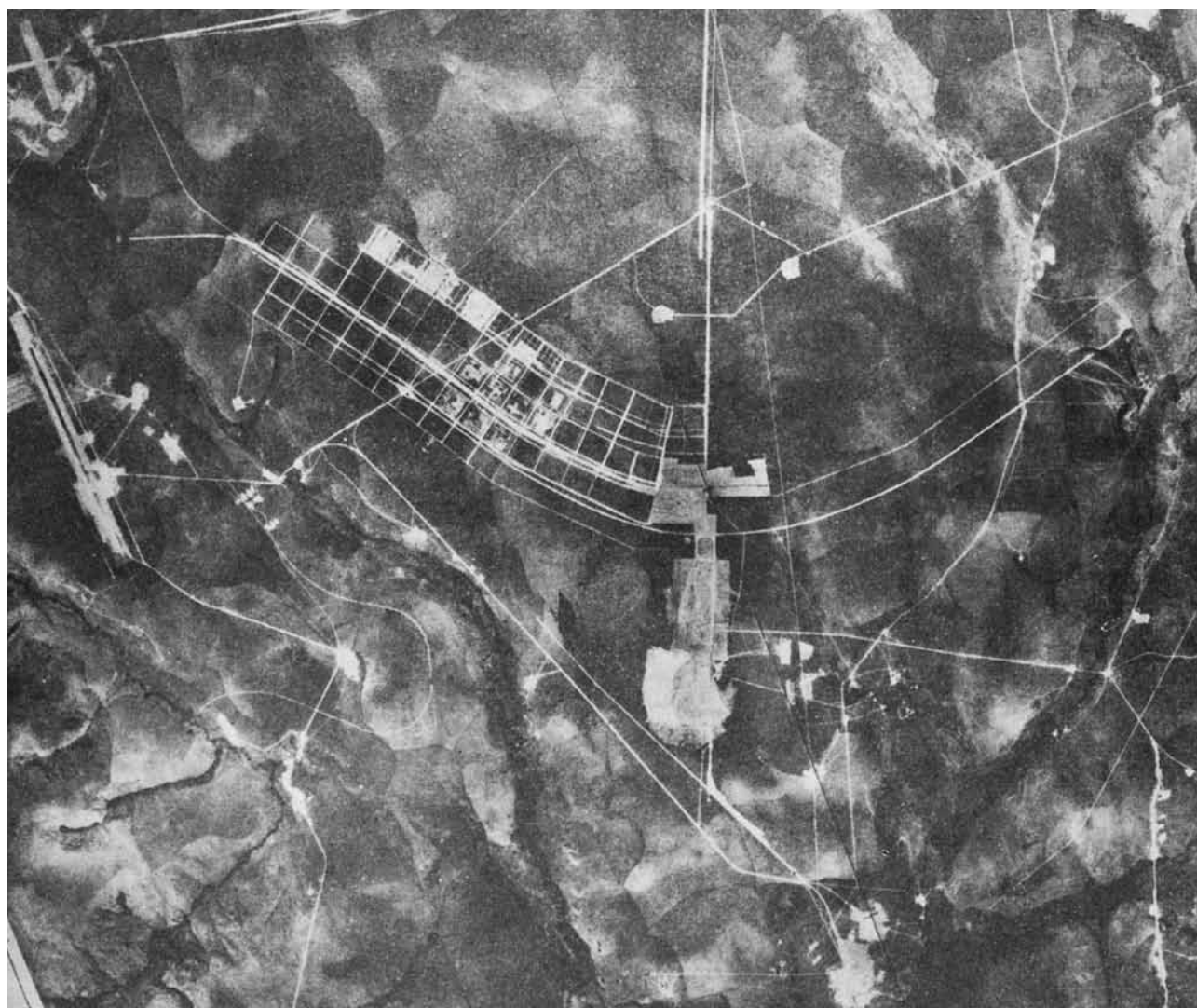
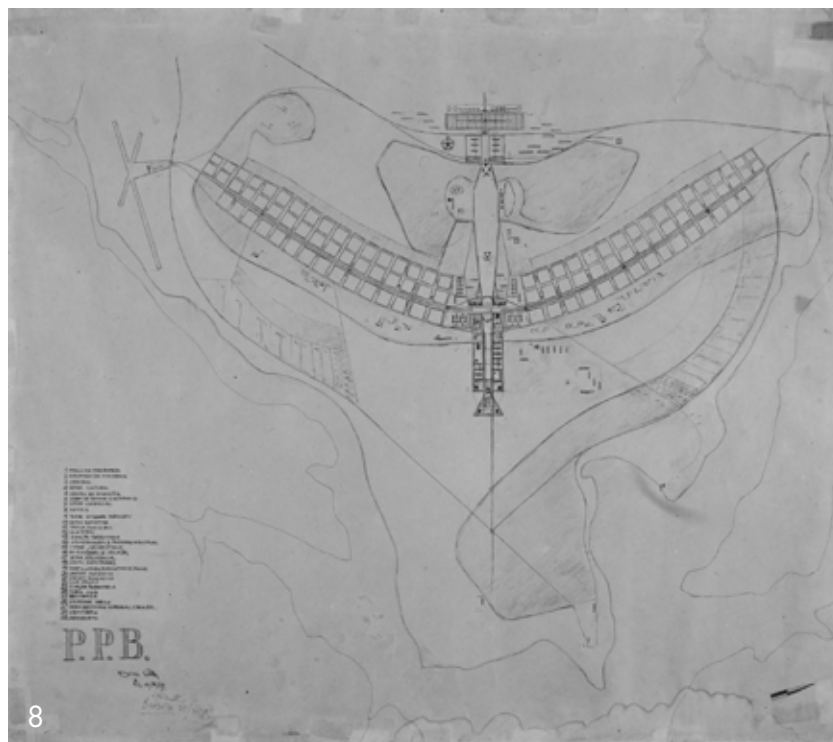
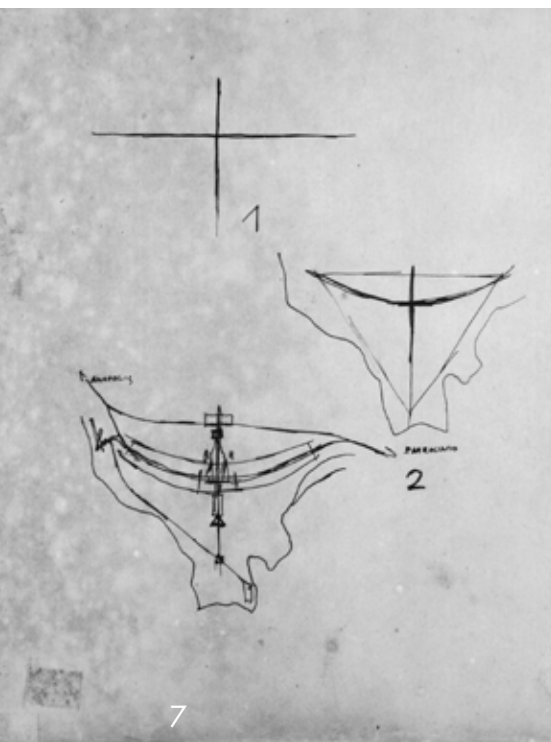
Figure 5. Map of Brazil showing distances between various cities and the future capital, 1957. © Fundação Oscar Niemeyer.

Figure 6. Covers of the first three issues of *Brasília* showing the area of the Federal District, January 1957; the location of the future capital, February 1957; and Lúcio Costa’s winning project, March 1957. © Fundação Oscar Niemeyer.

Figure 7. **Lúcio Costa**, *Brasília Pilot Plan*, 1957, vignettes # 1 and 2 of the competition brief. © Casa de Lúcio Costa.

Figure 8. **Lúcio Costa**, *Brasília Pilot Plan*, 1957. © Casa de Lúcio Costa

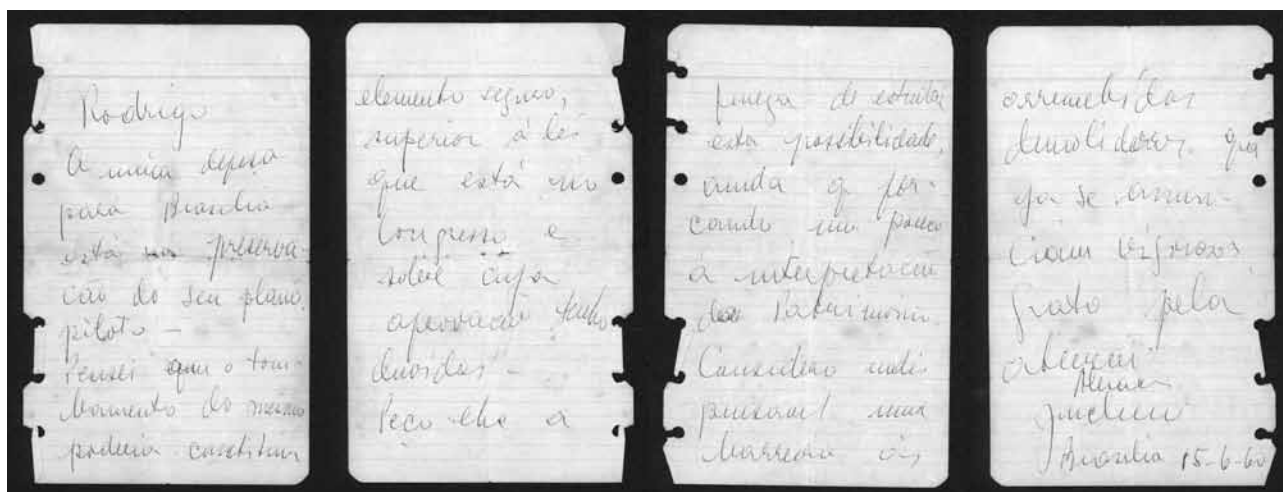
Figure 9 **Lúcio Costa**, *Brasília Pilot Plan*, 1957, bird’s eye view of Brasília under construction. Photographed in 1958. © Fundação Oscar Niemeyer.





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project in 1956. A few months into his presidency, Kubitschek approved the statute of the national development company, NOVACAP, which was given the task of executing the project for the future capital. NOVACAP organized a national design competition for the city's "pilot plan" and out of the 63 registered participants, 26 presented projects that were evaluated on March 12th, 1957. The jury deliberated until March 16th when it pronounced Lúcio Costa's entry as the winner. Among the other twenty five entries, far more complex and detailed projects were proposed but none was able to encapsulate, as well as Costa's project, a variety of cultural tendencies. Principal among these was Costa's contribution to the symbolic construction of that national void in the center of the country. The first two vignettes—a cross and a triangle—that illustrate Costa's competition brief, for example, operated as two foundational symbols in the construction of a nation building project. While Costa describes the cross as an act of possession, it also refers to Brazil's earlier name of *Terre de Sainte Croix*. The triangle is, of course, an idealized diagram for a democracy tripartite organization but it is also the literal representation of the triangularly shaped map of Brazil. Both cross and triangle therefore occupy a rectangle that since 1893 existed as a void charged with the mandate of contributing to the construction of a national identity. With simple sketches, therefore, Costa was able to load the Brazilian capital with an initial moment of monumental *brasilidade*.

Brasília was finally conceived, designed and built within the five year span of Kubitschek's presidency. On inauguration day, 21st April 1960, all government officials

and foreign ambassadors made the trip and so did thousands of people who caused the city's first traffic congestion. Festivities had, in fact, begun a day earlier at 4:00 pm on the Plaza of the Three Powers where Kubitschek received the keys to the city from the head of NOVACAP, Israel Pinheiro. That night, at 12:45 am, Pope John XXIII addressed the people of Brazil from the Vatican via live radio. The following morning, at 8:30 am, Kubitschek received the diplomatic corps in the Planalto Palace and an hour later, at 9:30 am; all three branches of government were simultaneously installed in their executive, legislative, and judiciary powers. Military parades were held that afternoon, culminating in a massive fireworks display. That evening, while Brasília's population partied on the Plaza of the Three Powers, dignitaries dined in tail suits in the Planalto Palace. Barely two months later, had President Kubitschek sent the following note to Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade, head of the Ministry of Education's DPHAN:

The only protection for Brasília is in the preservation of its pilot plan—Adding it to the Heritage Registry would, I think, constitute a safety measure, more so than the law in Congress, the passing of which I doubt. Would you be so gracious as to study the possibility, even if it means slightly forcing the very interpretation of "heritage"? I consider this fortification indispensable against destructive assaults that already seem vigorous. Thank you for your consideration.⁷

It was not until 1987, that the project of Brasília was finally protected by the Federal District Government Decree Law No. 10.829/1987 and that the city was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Figure 10. Ambassadors waiting to present their letters of credentials outside the Planalto Palace. Photographed in 1960 by Mário Fontenelle. © Casa de Lúcio Costa.

Figure 11. Juscelino Kubitschek, note to Rodrigo Melo Franco de Andrade regarding the preservation of Brasília, 15th June 1960. © Casa de Lúcio Costa.

Notes

1. Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, "A Semana," *Gazeta de Notícias*, 20th November 1892, 1.
2. Field Marshal Floriano Peixoto, Message to the National Congress, 7 May 1894.
3. As the editor of the *Correio Brasiliense* from 1808 to 1823, Hipólito José da Costa promulgated the idea of a "Brazil-centric" Portuguese world and called for a new capital inland. In 1849, Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen published his Organic Paper in which he spelled out in detail the advantages of siting the capital in the interior.
4. Le Corbusier to Paulo Prado, 28 July 1929, Fondation Le Corbusier Archives, Paris.
5. Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, "O Reajustamento territorial do quadro político do Brasil" (1932); quoted in *Serviço de*

Documentação, Antecedentes Históricos 1896-1945, 206.

6. *Constituição da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil* (16th July, 1934).
7. Juscelino Kubitschek to Rodrigo de Mello Franco de Andrade, note, 15 June 1960, Casa de Lúcio Costa Archives, Rio de Janeiro.

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Lúcio Costa and the Question of Monumentality in his Pilot Plan for Brasilia

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The urban design for Brasília emphasizes the role of the city as a capital, that is to say, as an expression of State identity and power.

Lúcio Costa considered monumentality as a characteristic inherent in urbanism, but this should not be achieved by any ostentatious grandiosity in terms of the volumes and sizes designed, and rather by providing a more singular external expression in the building concept used incorporating nature, capable of both pleasing and moving their occupants. The dimension of monumentality is a fundamental question in understanding the urban solution adopted in Brasília.

By José Pessôa

LÚCIO Costa's design for Brasília emphasizes the role of the city as a capital, that is to say, as an expression of State identity and power. In fact, in the presentation text for his pilot plan at the design selection process, he defends the idea that an urban conception envisions the city "not only as *urbs*; but also a *civitas*", possessing a Capital's inherent attributes. He identifies the need to confer the "desirable monumental quality" of the urban environment, associating the idea of monumentality with factors propitious to create a suitable culture for reverie and intellectual speculation in the future city, thus favoring an important dimension of urban life.

It is interesting to note that, the link between modern urbanism and monumentality proposed by Lúcio Costa, sparked one of the most heated debates during the construction of Brasília. In the years the Modern Movement was affirmed, the idea of monumentality was entirely associated with totalitarianism and/or the beaux-arts culture, to the extent that Lewis Mumford stated in his book published in 1938: "The Culture of the Cities" is that "if it is modern, it cannot be a monument."¹ The aims of modern architecture and urbanism are to be functional, based on adequately providing the material needs of a contemporary design for collective life, and that would dispense with monumental gestures in terms of any identity statement.

As such, the perception of the possibility of modern urbanism to incorporate the monumentality dimension—without this being an expression of a totalitarian state, such as the experiences under the fascist, Nazi and Stalinist regimes in the 1930/1940s, or eclectic/beaux arts culture before the first-world war—is a fundamental question in understanding the urban solution adopted in Brasília.

The monumentality of modern architecture was an American issue, that is to say, in the Americas and not Europe. It is not a coincidence that in New York in 1943 the exiled Europeans Josep Lluís Sert, Sigfried Giedion and Fernand Léger discussed the question of the new monumentality and produced a manifest.

In 1948, the English magazine, "The Architectural Review"² sought to air this debate in Europe by publishing a special edition about the issue, coordinated by J. M. Richards. This introduced the question by stating that the battle against the historic revivalists had already been won and, therefore, the time had arrived for the modern movement to develop a richer and wider vocabulary to expand on answers beyond merely material functions, also including the moral and emotive building, functions, particularly for the programs involving government headquarters, cinemas, sports arenas, and public libraries. Seven architects and scholars with ties to the modernist movement were invited to answer three questions: "what is monumentality?"; "is monumentality desirable?" and "how to achieve monumentality?"

Lúcio Costa was, among these, and described in the magazine as: *Divisional Director of the Department of Artistic and Historical Monuments* and leader of the modern architectural movement in Brazil.

The symposium would also have been the first rather curious meeting between the judge, William Holford, and Lúcio Costa, the winner of the Brasília selection process, which never actually happened, as the participants sent their answers in writing.

Lúcio Costa's answers provide important reading material to understand his conception of modern urbanism and the guidelines for his future project in Brasília. In his own words: *what characterizes the modern conception of urbanism, stretching from the town to the suburbs and thence into the country, is that it abolishes the picturesque by incorporation the bucolic into the monumental*. The main innovation for him would be the union of nature with urban life. However, in a vision distinct to the work carried out building modern garden cities, Lúcio Costa offset the bucolic idea—trees, undergrowth and fields in the natural setting—against the idea of the picturesque—comprised of winding streets, individual houses and gardens in districts. In addition, his notion was that this particular dimension of nature, the bucolic, eliminated the picturesque dimension in the cities. The garden city of Howard, Unwin and

Parker, would be replaced by the concept of the city park proposed by the Brazilian architect in his memorial pilot plan.

He considered monumentality as a characteristic inherent to urbanism, but this should not be achieved by any ostentatious grandiosity in terms of the volumes and sizes designed, and rather by providing a more singular external expression in the building concept used incorporating nature, capable of both pleasing and moving their occupants.

Ten years later, it was around this perception of monumentality in the design of the Brazilian capital that a heated national and international debate began. It was not until after the 1970s that the main accusation about Brasília was made clear, as being an excessively and rigidly zoned city. At the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, what really caused the most controversy was the perception of monumental aspects in the design project. As stated by a competitor, the architect Marcelo Roberto, the design proposed by Lúcio Costa appeared to be more appropriate to obsolete and out-of-date 19th city planning than for a modern Brazilian capital³. Lúcio Costa rebutted these and other accusations by asking: "why in a democracy a city necessarily needs be spoiled by grandiosity, perhaps by ostentatious and emphatic grandiose styles, but not those that naturally occur from a simple and functional design conceived with these intentions. This is particularly true when dealing with a capital city, always unique, despite the differing levels of socialization throughout the rest of the country".⁴

If we analyze Lúcio Costa's Pilot Plan we see that, in fact, it was not a design for a large-scale 19th city either in terms of the public buildings suggested or its overall scope; or with the skyscrapers of Le Corbusier's city living design. In fact, most of Brasília buildings were modest in their proportions. What Lúcio Costa provided, with his concept of park city, was a mixture of images from 19th century urbanism capitals.

The residential superblocks are not as monumental as modern skyscrapers, for example. According to the architect, they reflect the scale of the 19th century Paris in their six-floor design, but not in any of the distinct forms or building-street relationship in Brasília, which are completely subverted by the presence of nature.

The more direct reference to 19th century urbanism is the concern to build monumental and residential axes by using terraces on several different levels, which not only help to build highways and service roads without crossings, but also to guarantee a series of monumental landscape views, notably from the ministries esplanades. This idea corresponds to the classic-baroque urbanism tradition. Along with this esplanade—a Mall, as the Eng-

lish call it—were broad sweeping lawns to be used by pedestrians and parades, with the congressional building at the end. It is interesting to note that the development of the design for Congress, by Oscar Niemeyer, would alter the original dimension determined by Lúcio Costa for the Esplanade. The design project will occupy far more space than in the original plan, implying a consequent broadening of the esplanade for the ministries.

At a lower level than the Esplanade, this is thought of as an open square, and it is modern in the sense that it is styled similar to Luis XV's 19th century *Place de la Concorde*, the limits of which are not defined in its architecture. One of the buildings was placed at each angle of a square—*Praça dos 3 Poderes*—with Government House and the Supreme Court occupying the base of the triangle, and Congress at the apex. It is open to natural low-lying and stunted vegetation, a microcosm of the type of confrontation between the governmental offices and nature, reaffirming the American odyssey to conquer and assert land ownership rights. This stark original contrast has been somewhat smudged by a series of unplanned occupations on the first level.

A final element used to translate and convey the idea of monumental in its urbanism is the television tower, as its design was part of the original sketches presented by Lúcio Costa for the design selection process. The tower is thought of in its urban dimension, reflecting the image of obelisks in terms of its huge scale, pure form and symmetry, as well as classic illuminist abstract designs from the 18th century. A modern characteristic in a world with television and radio; being the only real monument building in the city. In a sketch of the monumental axis done for the selection process, the television tower is the only vertical element in the composition.

An understanding of Brazil's contribution to the experience of modern urbanism in the 20th century, and in Lúcio Costa's design for Brasília, is shown in a reading of his contribution that goes well beyond any translation of the Athens Charter principles, by his unique way of recovering certain aspects of urban tradition consolidated in the 19th century.



Figure 1. Photo by Marcel Gautherot, Arquivo Central do IPHAN.

Figure 2. The monumental area today, with the Judiciary Esplanade on the right. Photo by Joana França.

Notes

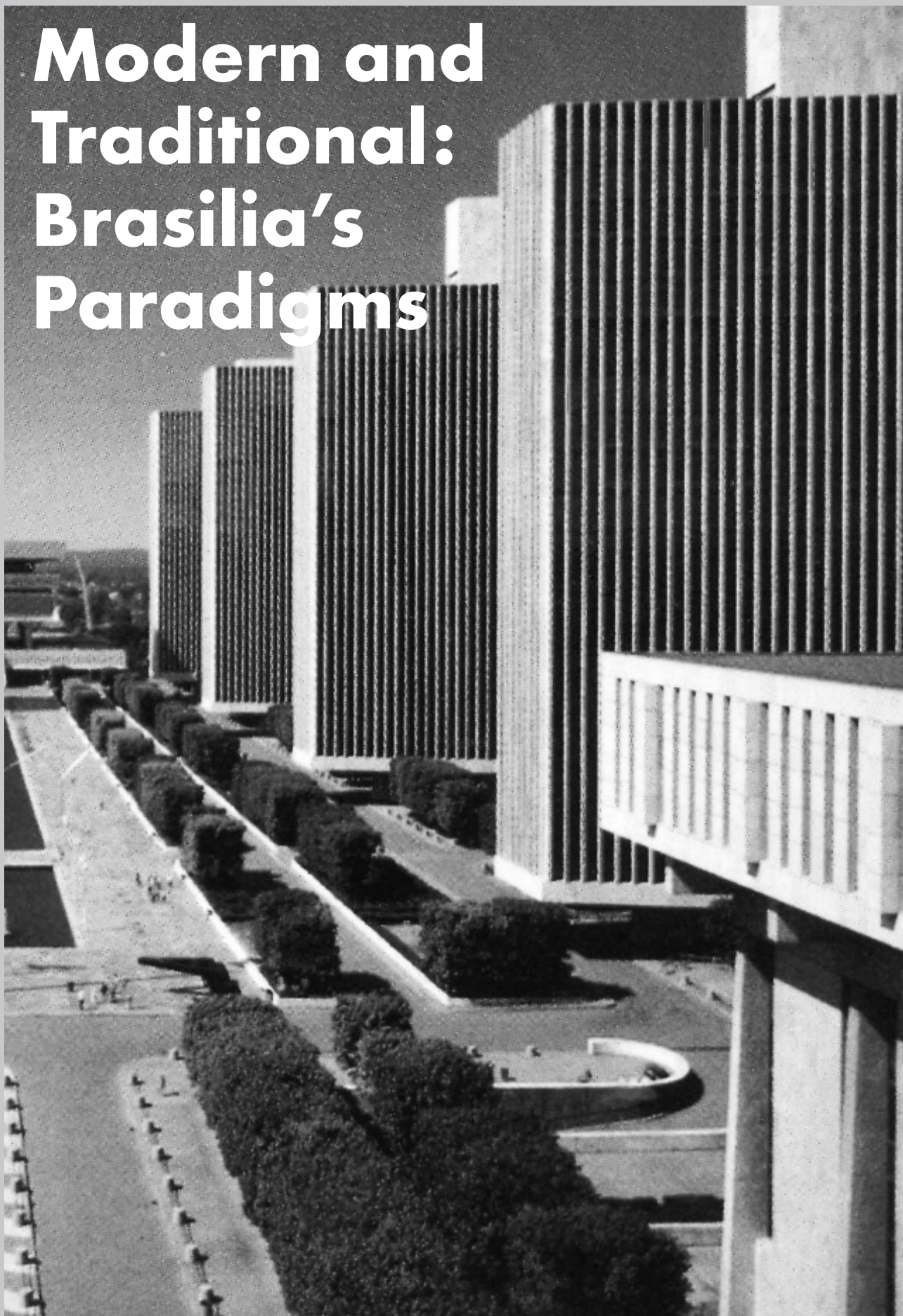
1. L. Mumford "A cultura das cidades". Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1961 (1938).
2. J M Richards, "In search of a new monumentality" in *The Architectural Review*, vol 104, n. 624, September 1948.
3. Interview published in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), March 24th, 1957.
4. Letter published in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), March 27th, 1957.

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Modern and Traditional: Brasilia's Paradigms

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By the 1950s, a shared culture spreading internationally through teaching and specialized literature became common currency in professional circles and gave rise to a repertoire of urban theories and practices. An examination of Lucio Costa's winning entry for the pilot plan of Brasilia attest to the existence of these paradigmatic formulae. Further more, not only was Brasilia a product of this culture, it grew to become itself archetypal. Yet, this high tide would be short-lived. In late 50s and early 60s, this veritable urban designer's toolbox began to lose its legitimacy to become target of critical scrutiny.

By Sylvia Ficher and Pedro Paulo Palazzo

IN the 1950s, a shared culture spreading internationally through teaching and specialized literature became common currency in professional circles and gave rise to a repertoire of urban theories and practices, a veritable urban designer's toolbox. In Thomas Kuhn's terms, this was the prevailing urban paradigm, a set of "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provided model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners."¹

A case in point: in 1956 a competition was held to select a master plan for Brazil's new Capital, to be built in the country's hinterland.² An overview of all submitted designs known today shows their basic affiliation to a functionalist urbanism as presented in the Athens Charter. A further examination of the implements in that paradigmatic toolbox—as evidenced in Lúcio Costa's winning entry for Brasilia's pilot plan—might help us to better understand its genesis and *modus operandi*. Still, it should be noted that the categories expounded bellow are analytical in nature, as dissimilar implements can be mixed together in a single project, thus emphasizing the organic, imbricate logic of their possible articulations. Moreover, the discussion has as reference solely the plan for Brasilia and not the town actually built.

Urban Form

From the late 19th century up until the mid 20th, in the context of unprecedented urban population growth in Europe, most proposals and actions dealing with its consequences fall into three recurring patterns: interventions within the fabric of consolidated towns, schemes to address needs of expansion, and the creation of wholly novel urban types.

Urbanistica and town. Considering Brasilia's civic dimension as a Capital city, the issue of monumentality comes to the fore. As old as urbanization itself, the treatment given to representational spaces has been the preferential theme of urbanism as a discipline. And its paradigmatic solution has been monumental composition, by means

of regulating axes, symmetry, geometric ordering, separation of parts, artworks or imposing buildings to close perspectives, all these ingredients deployed according to solid-void correlations that set these spaces apart from ordinary urban fabric. As in the Porta del Popolo, where Manetti rectified the confluence of three streets (1538), and Fontana complemented the arrangement by the positioning of an obelisk in their focal point (1589).

Monumentality from the 17th to the 20th century. The convergence of 3 streets onto a plaza, with singular perspective effects, results in the figure of a trident or *patte d'oie*. From the 17th century onwards, this configuration would become almost mandatory for representational spaces, at times extended into the whole urban fabric by means of diagonal avenues. An influential example among countless others is the plan for Versailles (1671). In L'Enfant's plan for Washington (1791), the whole supply of monumental gestures—up until then a feature of absolutist states—was exploited to give shape to a democratic nation's Capital. As the 1900s march on, monumentality remains on the agenda, as in Lutyens's New Delhi (1911) or Griffin's Canberra (1912), up to Speer's plan for Berlin (1939)[figure 1].

Modernist monumentality. Amidst ruptures with tradition and the renewing of formal repertoires, monumentality would continue to be expressed in Beaux-Arts terms, losing nothing of its preeminence. Symmetry, regularity and separation of parts are staples of modernist schemes, such as van Eesteren and Doesburg scheme for Unter den Linden, in Berlin (1925). The really remarkable break with tradition is that, instead of being an exclusive trait of exceptional spaces, the modernist brand came to be employed by and large throughout the entire urban fabric by means of freestanding buildings, giving a monumental character to even the most trivial places and buildings [figure 2].

Urban renewal. From the 1830s on, insertion of railroads in consolidated towns would lead to works ripping the urban fabric on an unparalleled scale, as in Hauss-

mann's Paris (1854 onwards). Going further, the razing and reconstruction of significant stretches of towns, under the misleading label of *urban renewal*, would become a routine kind of intervention in the mid-20th century. Although employed in postwar Europe to rebuild devastated cities, its use generally aims at increasing real estate values in run-down neighborhoods and reorganizing circulation systems.³ This practice would indirectly influence the planning of new towns by spurring the recourse to expressways.

Specialization of roads. Road network, always a privileged subject in urban thinking, gained credence in the notion that separation of pedestrian and vehicular paths would mitigate congestions and reduce accidents. Pre-figured in the 15th century by da Vinci's plan for Milan and paradigmatically employed by Olmsted and Vaux at New York's Central Park (1853), this alternative played a leading part in several prospective studies such as Hénard's *rue future* (1910). Not surprisingly, it was obsessively promoted by Le Corbusier in all his urbanistic musings, as the influential essay *La règle des 7 V* (1953) [figure 3].

Rodoviarismo. Further rupturing the urban fabric, a peculiar manner of dealing with vehicular traffic flow would be the recourse to major inner-city expressways, a mode of intervention that could well be dubbed *rodoviarismo* or *highway oriented urbanism*: by which we mean here the application to intra-urban contexts of solutions better suited to intercity freeways. Besides expressways, its paraphernalia comprises viaducts, overpasses and clover junctions, in general employed as part and parcel of renewal programs. An outlandish treatise on its tenets can be found in Spencer Sanders and Arthur Rabuck's *New City Patterns* (1946). Paradoxically, considering it's proclaimed sanitary rationale, this kind of intervention blights wide stretches of towns and increases traffic accidents, as for its effectiveness, it is summed up in the witty definition of expressway: "the quickest way to the next traffic jam" [figure 4].

Enlargement of cities: the *ensanches*. The extension of a city may be attained by stitching new urban fabric to the existing one, as in Cerdà's Barcelona (1859) or Berlage's Amsterdam South (1913–34). Even though it is notably difficult to make use of this alternative in the case of Brasília's pilot plan—conceived as a self-enclosed figure which ought not, ideally, be altered—it became a sort of laboratory for the manipulation of urban form and, therefore, an indisputable element of the paradigm here under review.

Zoning. In contrast to eminently physical interventions, zoning is an effort to control urban activities by means of establishing permitted uses in buildings. It eventually leads to a functional division of the urban fabric; in extreme cases, it gives way to sectorization—the strict and exclusive definition of single-use districts, solution excessively adopted in Brasília.

The city and the airplane. That prevalent paradigm also entailed taste preferences. As new means of transportation became readily available in the first quarter of the 20th century, they would influence not only urban thinking but also urban aesthetics, as illustrated by the requisite presence of airplanes and airports in the imagery of the futuristic city. Likewise, it is no wonder that Brasília's pilot plan would take on quite literally the outline of an airplane [figure 5].

New urban forms. A Renaissance paradigm retrieved in the late 19th century is the creation of one-of-a-kind models for new cities, neighborhoods, or even urban renewal projects.

Linear city. First formulated for an extension of Madrid, Soria y Mata's concept of a *ciudad lineal* (1882) soon became a generic formula as in Tony Garnier's *cité industrielle* (1901–04). Transposed in the postwar megastructure craze into an architectural solution, it yield housing complexes as Affonso Reidy's Pedregulho (1948) in Rio, or Luigi Daneri's Forti di Quezzi (1960) in Genoa. A curious instance is Niemeyer's Central Institute of Sciences at

Figure 1. **Walter Burley Griffin**, Canberra, 1912
John W. Reys, *Urban Planning, 1794-1918: An International Anthology of Articles, Conference Papers, and Reports*.
www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/griffin.htm

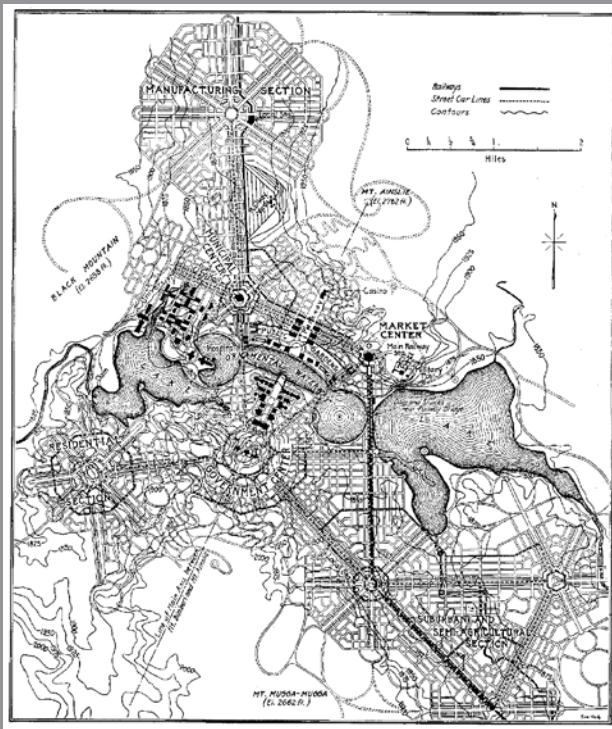
Figure 2. **Le Corbusier**, *Ville Contemporaine pour 3 millions d'habitants*, 1922. Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complete v.1: 1910-1929*. Zurich, Editions d'Architecture, 1937, p. 36

Figure 3. The Future circulation and the cloudscrapers of New York, 1913. *Scientific American*, New York, July 26, 1913

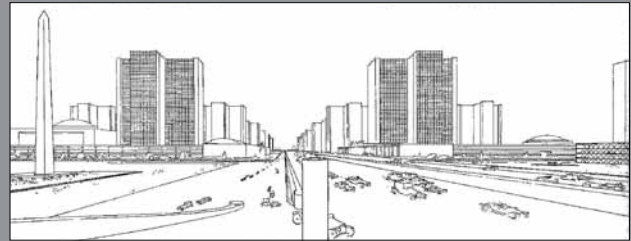
Figure 4. **Spencer E. Sanders and Arthur J. Rabuck**, Redevelopment plan of Area "A", Baltimore, Maryland. Spencer Edward Sanders & Arthur Jacob Rabuck, "New city patterns". New York, Reinhold, 1946, between p. 154 and 155

Figure 5. **Eugène Hénard**, *Une Ville de l'Avenir: Vue a Vol d'Aeroplane*, 1910. Joan Dethier & Alain Guilleux (eds.), *La ville, art et architecture en Europe, 1870-1993*. Paris, Centre Pompidou, 1994, p. 124

Figure 6. **Oscar Niemeyer**, Instituto Central de Ciências, 1962
Centro de Documentação, Universidade de Brasília



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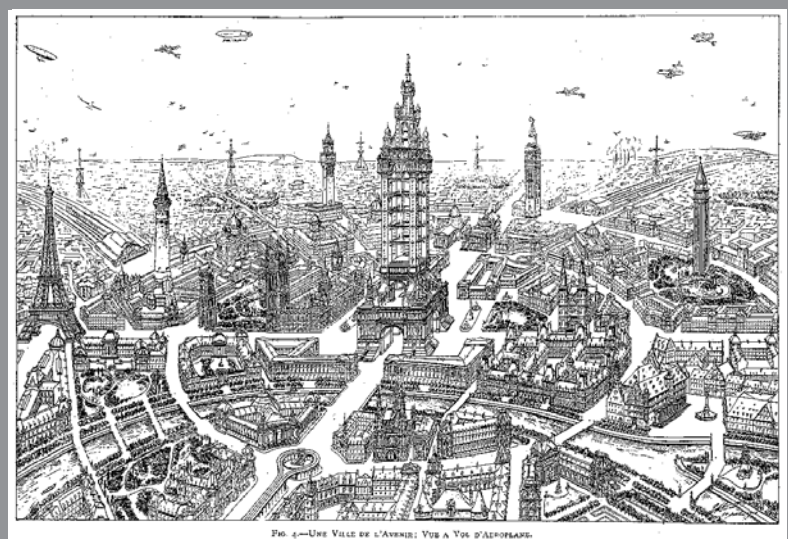


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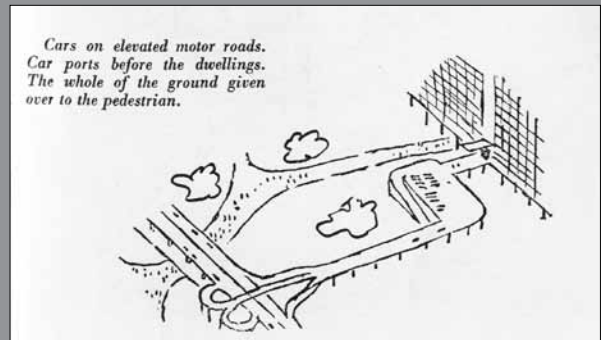
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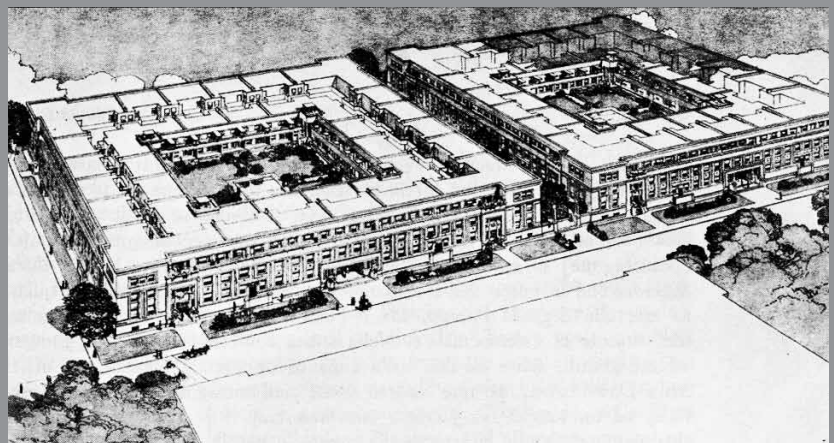




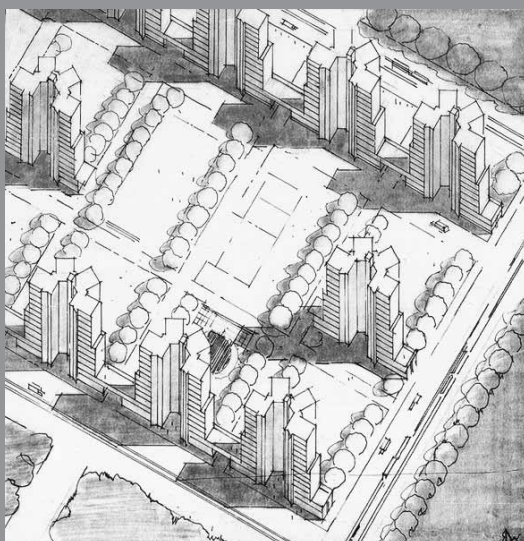
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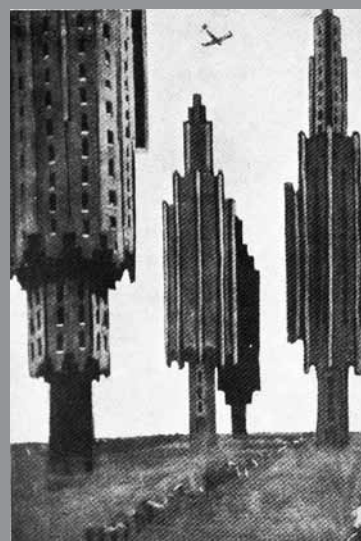
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the University of Brasilia (1962), a kind of scaled image of the city's pilot plan [figure 6].

Suburbs and garden cities. Unlike the foundation of new settlements as embryos of autonomous towns, suburbs are conceived as complete enterprises. In order to achieve the stability and security needed to preserve their status and real estate value, their street network—usually characterized since its early examples, as Llewellyn Park (1853) or Riverside (1865), by winding streets in the naturalistic British landscape tradition—and plot subdivision should not allow for densification or land-use changes. Suburban developments became an urban ideology, and a very popular paradigm, when conflated with the concept of *garden city*, as presented in Ebenezer Howard's *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) and first carried out by Parker and Unwin in Letchworth (1904) [figure 7].

Ville radieuse. Starting with the *ville contemporaine* (1922), Corbusier's theoretical studies are distinguished by the emphasis given to expressways, specialization of roads and freestanding buildings. His prescriptions, propagated through his well known texts, still have a strong influence all over the world.⁴ Nevertheless, his designs for actual sites are few, the most detailed ones being Saint-Dié (1945)—of particular interest due to its obvious influence on Brasilia's pilot plan—and Chandigarh (1952–64) [figure 8].

Satellite towns, new towns and villes nouvelles. Hilberseimer summed up this concept: "The separation or dissolution of the big city in work zones and residential areas leads as a consequence to the formation of the satellite

system. All around the core of the large city, the central city, which in the future will be exclusively a working city, are located, on a circle at sufficient distances, closed residential neighborhoods, satellite towns of limited population... Even though they may have local independence, such residential districts are limbs in a common body, closely tied to the central core, and constitute with it an economic and technical-administrative unit."⁵

Likewise, the *new towns* and *villes nouvelles* built in the 1950s and 60s chiefly in England and France are more like satellite towns than the autonomous towns of yore. Indeed, not only did most entries in Brasilia's competition consider satellite towns as the chief mode of expansion of the future city, such a system of settlements of lesser urban and architectural merit actually arose even before the new Capital inauguration in 1960.

Architectural Form

According to Philippe Panerai, the urban fabric can be understood as being "constituted by the juxtaposition or overlap of three domains: the network of roads, the land subdivision in lots, and the buildings themselves."⁶ Adopting his definition and focusing in the articulation of plots and the range of possible buildings that could be built in them, we can leave aside the larger order of the city, its major frame, to examine what happens in its interstices, in its architectural infill.

Occupying the urban block. Dealing with the division of land in lots leads to the various potential modes of occupation of the block, the area unit *par excellence* of the urban fabric. From the 18th century onwards, experiments with these possibilities appear in plans such as Lisbon's reconstruction (1756) or Edinburgh's New Town (1766). Both Cerdà in his *ensanche* for Barcelona (1859) and Agache in his plan for Rio de Janeiro's downtown (1929) gave particular attention to the filling up of the urban block. From Frank Lloyd Wright's Lexington Terraces (1901) to Corbusier's *immeubles-villas* (1922–25) and Stein and Wright's Sunnyside Gardens (1924–28), architectural massing tends to replace the lot as the basic form-giver of the cityscape [figure 9].

Destroying the urban block. A critical leap is made when the block boundaries are broken apart by a more rarefied distribution than that of the standard densely built up block, eliminating the intermediate step of land parceling into lots with unequivocal perimeters. Many are the examples of this manipulation of the urban fabric which became a prominent trait of vast stretches of contemporary towns, replacing cohesion by spaces void of orientation and meaning, compounded with serious

Figure 7. **Alexander Wadsworth**, Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Mass., 1831. Boston Public Library 3370528616

Figure 8. **Le Corbusier**, Thoroughfare specialization. Le Corbusier & Pierre Jeanneret, François de. *The home of man*. London, The Architectural Press, 1948, p. 131

Figure 9. **Frank Lloyd Wright**, Lexington Terraces, Chicago, 1901 Giorgio Ciucci et al, *La città americana della guerra civile al New Deal*. Roma, Laterza, 1973, p. 361

Figure 10. **Johannes Duiker with Jan Wiebenga**, Hoogbouw, Amsterdam, 1927-29. Joan Dethier & Alain Guiheux (eds.), *La ville, art et architecture en Europe, 1870-1993*. Paris, Centre Pompidou, 1994, p. 332

Figure 11. **Raymond M. Hood**, apartment buildings, New York, c. 1910. Hilberseimer, Ludwig. *La arquitectura de la gran ciudad*. Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 1979, p. 68

accessibility problems. A particularly successful example among so many failures is Lúcio Costa's Parque Guinle (1948), in Rio, the chief precedent for Brasília's superblocks [figure 10].

Object-buildings and *pilotis*. Although buildings set apart in the urban fabric are by no means novelties, in the past their seclusion has almost always been associated with monumental or otherwise exceptional architecture. In more recent times, concern with ventilation, lighting and fire protection, together with zoning regulations, lead systematically to mandatory setbacks for buildings. With the development of steel and reinforced concrete, structures would have among its outcomes, the extensive adoption of the independent structural frame and consequent separation of enclosing elements from supports. Associated these two factors, the next step in this rationale is a lesser occupation of the ground, so as to leave it virtually unimpeded to allow for an increased public space at street level.

The idea was already mature in the early 20th century, as shown in Hood's bizarre apartment building design for New York (1910). Corbusier treaded the same path in his Swiss Student Housing (1930), in Paris, at the same time giving the French word for pillar—*pilotis*—wide currency. In Brazil, the early adoption of concrete structures and the high status of the Modern Movement promoted a prompt use of *pilotis*. Its main showcase is the Ministry of Education (1936–45) in Rio, a milestone design by Lúcio Costa's team of architects, after a sketch by Le Corbusier [figure 11].

Lúcio Costa's Pilot Plan for Brasília

Costa's design was no exception and can be read as a summing up of the entire paradigmatic toolbox, even though translated largely into a Corbusian mode: a *beaux-arts* version of the linear city—complete with symmetry axes and the ubiquitous *patte d'oie*—, together with expressways, specialized roads, stern sectorization and predominance of freestanding buildings. Yet, cities are cities, and some of Brasília' spaces preserve the qualities of traditional urban fabric [figures 12a, 12b].

Contemporary Projects

Further attesting the existence of paradigmatic formulae in urban design in the mid-20th century is the extensive number of instances in which they were deployed. Wiener and Sert's proposal for Chimbote (1953), Peru, brings immediately to mind some central areas of Brasília; the similarity between Alton West housing complex (1956) in London and Brasília's superblocks is compelling [figure 13].

The Impact of Brasilia

Not only was Brasília a product of this paradigm, it grew to become itself archetypal. Its authority can be felt in projects as La Défense (1960) near Paris, Gropius's proposal for Boston (1963) or Harrison's Empire State Plaza (1965–78) in Albany. Examples that illustrate the paradigm's dynamic nature, quick to incorporate solutions acclaimed in the professional milieu. Yet, this high tide would be short-lived. In late 50s and early 60s, the urban toolbox considered, here began to lose its legitimacy to become target of critical scrutiny, confronted by some classic books as Giuseppe Samonà's *L'urbanistica e l'avvenire delle città negli stati europei* (1959), Kevin Lynch's *The image of the city* (1960), Gordon Cullen's *Townscape* (1961), and Jane Jacobs' *The death and life of the great American cities* (1961) [figures 14, 15].



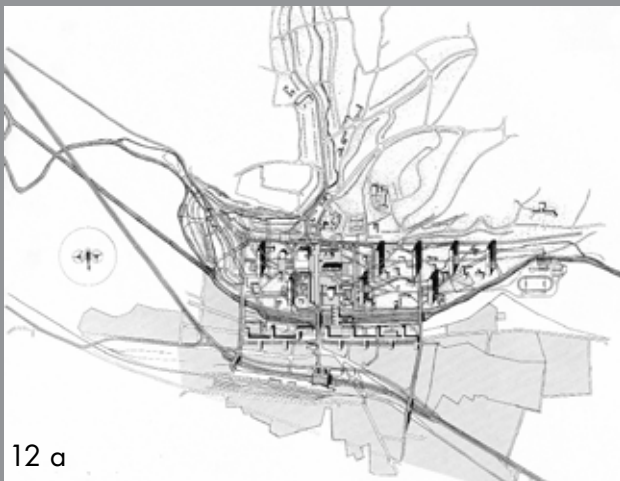
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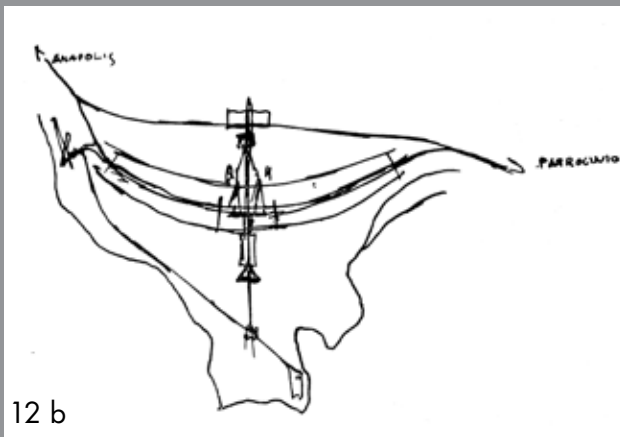
1. Thomas Kuhn, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, 1962, p. viii. The justification for applying his ideas to fields outside the hard sciences is given by Kuhn himself in "Comment on the Relations of Science and Art" (1969; Thomas Kuhn, *The essential tension*, 1977, pp. 340–51).
2. For a more complete survey of Brasília's urban history, see Geraldo N. Batista, Sylvia Ficher, Francisco Leitão and Dionísio Alves de França, *Brasília: A Capital in the hinterland*. In: David L. A Gordon (ed.), *Planning Twentieth Century Capital cities*, 2006.
3. A good appraisal is to be found in James Q. Wilson, *Urban renewal: The record and the controversy*, 1966; a passionate critique in Robert Goodman, *After the planners*, 1972.
4. Most of them published in Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète*, 1935–70, 8 v.
5. Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Großstadt Architektur*, 1927.
6. Philippe Panerai et alii, *Analyse urbaine*, 1999, p. 103.

Pedro Paulo Palazzo

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12 a



12 b



13

Figure 12 a. **Le Corbusier**. Urbanization plan for Saint-Dié, 1947 *Le Corbusier. Œuvre complète v.1: 1938-1946*. Zurich, Editions d'Architecture, 1946, p. 137. and 12 b. **Lucio Costa**, Pilot Plan sketch, 1957. Casa de Lucio Costa

Figure 13. **Paul L. Wiener & Josep L. Sert**, Chimbote, Peru, 1953 Ernesto N. Rogers, J.L. Sert & J. Tyrwhitt, *El corazón de la ciudad*. Barcelona, Hoepli, 1955, p. 128

Figures 14, 15. **Wallace Harrison**, Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York, 1965-1978. Postcards



14

A Myth that Left the Greenhouse



This is a selection of some writings by authors that visited, commented and analyzed Brasília, collected mainly in non-Brazilian literature. Testimonies and judgments, most of them expressing mistrust, disbelief, disapproval and prejudice about the embryonic capital, and the change of the nature of the critique, looking to a complex city with half a century of existence. Quotations are presented in chronological order and in a dialectic array, contrasting points of views at distinctive moments of the city.

By Hugo Segawa

At the dawn of Brasília, an epic dimension was attributed by governmental discourse, as the “capital of the future and of hope,” advertised throughout the world.¹ Such idealized propaganda backfired: it created an international expectation that the loose urbanity of the early days frustrated even visitors with goodwill. The end of Kubitschek’s presidential tenure and the coup d’état in 1964 altered both the course of the country and the city. The military dictatorship did not abandon Brasília, and even continued developing the original planning in a way or another; but it emptied the cultural magnitude of the undertaking. From mid-1960s on, Brazilian architecture and Brasília withered from the international scene. The decrease of discussion froze those early antipathetic narratives and established an imaginary to Brasília that mutated to prejudices reproduced all over. Brasília was the presumed example of the failure of modern urbanism. In fifty years of existence, Brasília is still a synthesis of the paradoxes of a nation that is at once hyper developed and underdeveloped. It did not surpass its contradictions, but it is not anymore an announced utopia: it became a real city. A changing city, as dynamic as historiography and criticism must be. As well, Brasília is a case of misunderstandings, misgivings and lack of knowledge in the history of architecture and history of the city. This writing is a short recount of the critique on Brasília.

First Year

In 1960, Adolfo Bioy Casares (1914–1999), intellectual fellow and collaborator of Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), traveled to Brazil for a Pen Club congress. The first four days he was supposed to take part of the boring meeting. But two days after his arrival in Rio de Janeiro, he made a reservation to a one-day round-trip to Brasília.

On Wednesday, July 27th, he woke up at 5 o’clock in the morning to take the flight to the new capital. What could thrill an Argentinean writer to move about 1.150 kilometers to visit Brasília? In his memoirs,² Bioy Casares did not justify the decision. The city had been inaugurated three months before. He captured it at its very beginning: *Brasília actually consists in a certain number of dwellings in construction—not very few, I alert, as it seems from the air view—very apart one from the other. It carries nothing of a modern art dream of an imaginative functionary; or perhaps, of an imaginative demagogue. I ignore to a certain extent how necessary is the new capital and how the consequent extravagance will affect the economy of Brazil; I can corroborate how resentful and unhappy must be the people obliged to move from Rio to Brasília. They say that destroying customs and changing everyday life is a crime. Brasília is an operation of a satrap insensitive to the feelings of thousands and thousands of persons settled down in Rio that must disrupt this life to start again in another place; likewise, it is a demagogic operation, because the multitudes, not at the moment directly affected, feel proud with impassioned patriotism. Brasília is ambitious, future, pitiful of present results, a nuisance. [...]. I photographed, I don’t know with what results, houses worthy of the worst (or the best, it doesn’t matter) Le Corbusier, and native Indians, with perforated one palm-size ears, who were three years ago the sole inhabitants of the zone.*³ It is uncertain, but probably Bioy Casares notes were written during or a bit after the travel. The eight dull days diary of Bioy Casares was issued only in 1991 in a limited edition, without images. Nine of the photos he mentioned came out in the second affordable edition in 2010. His disappointed critique is comprehensible facing the desolate landscape and people he saw, recorded by the few shots published. Publicized later on, the Argentinean testimony did not shape the early imaginary of Brasília diffused all over; otherwise, its contents coincide with contemporary descriptions in its bitterness, uneasiness and disapproval.

A week after Bioy Casares left São Paulo back to Buenos Aires, one of the most admired couples at their heyday landed in Brazil: Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) and Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986). Guided by the Brazilian writer Jorge Amado (1912–2001), they traveled throughout Brazil for more than two months, including a visit to Brasília. Beauvoir shared her misgivings and unsympathetic review of the city in the autobiography *La*

< Photo by Adolfo Bioy Casares, published in *Unos días en el Brasil (Diario de viaje)*, La Compañía, Buenos Aires and Páginas de Espuma, Madrid, 2010.

Force des Choses, published 1963: "A life-size model", I noted down. I learned with regret that I had overlapped Lacerda's phrase: "An architectural exhibition, life-size".⁴ She was uneasy to agree with Carlos Lacerda (1914–1977), an anti-communist politician, opposition to Juscelino Kubitschek. Hers is one of the earliest testimonies spread all over the world: *This inhumanity is the first thing that strikes one. The main avenue, 400 feet wide and 16 miles long, is curved, so slightly that it seems quite straight; all the other main roads are parallel to it or cross it at right angles, all danger of collision being removed by the use of cloverleaf crossovers. The only way to get around is by car.*⁵ Aware of the American way of life, avenues of Brasilia did not inspire Beauvoir to relate the new capital circulation system to the automobile culture of the United States. Her point of view was traditionalist: *They intend to build a section for pedestrians only, on the model of Venice and its network of calle; so you'll have to get in a car and drive six miles just to be able to walk. But the street, that meeting ground of riverside dwellers and passers-by, of stores and houses, of vehicles and pedestrians—thanks to the capricious, always unexpectedly changing mixture—the street, as fascinating in Chicago as in Rome, in London as in Peking, in Bahia as in Rio, sometimes deserted and dreaming, but alive even in its silence, the streets do not exist in Brasília and never will.*⁶

Brasilia, five months after its inauguration, was a disperse city, more to an encampment than to a place with real urban life. A scenario for social comments by Beauvoir: *While he was with us, Niemeyer sadly wondered out loud: "Is it possible to create Socialist architecture in a non-Socialist country?"; he answered his own question: "obviously not." Social segregation here is more radical than in any other city, since there are luxury blocks, middle-income blocks and low-income blocks. The people who live in them do not mix; rich children do not rub elbows with poor children on the school benches; nor does the wife of the highly placed civil servant brush against the clerk's wife at the market or in the church. As in American suburbia, these communities allow their members only the absolute minimum of privacy; since they are all the same, they have nothing to hide from each other. Brasília is like the crystal city Zamiatine envisaged in *Nous Autres*: great glass windows take up the whole façade of the buildings and people feel no need to draw their curtains; in the evening, the avenues are so wide that you can see all the families from top to bottom of the buildings living inside their brightly lighted rooms.*⁷ *Nous Autres* is a science-fiction dystopian novel by Russian levgueni Zamiatine (1884–1937), written in 1920–1921 as a critique to the Soviet Revolution totalitarianism.

While Beauvoir was skeptical to the accomplishment of the residential superblocks ("In any case, what possible interest could there be in wandering about among the six-or eight (sic) story quadra and super quadra, raised on stilts and all, despite superficial variations, exuding the same air of elegant monotony?")⁸, she was excited about the main monumental architecture: *However, each of the public buildings Niemeyer had designed is individually very fine: the Palace of Government, the High Court building, the two skyscrapers of offices, the inverted hemispheres containing the House of Representatives and the Senate, the cathedral in the form of a crown of thorns. They are made to balance*

*and harmonize with each other by a series of subtle asymmetries and bold contrasts that are completely satisfying to the eye.*⁹

Seclusion and distances were other negative features pointed out by Beauvoir: *The Brasília Palace, half a mile from the Dawn Palace, is also a Niemeyer building and very lovely, but suffocating inside; and what a long way to go! Even by car, buying a bottle of ink or a lipstick was an arduous expedition because of the heat and the dust. The wind and the soil have not proved amenable to the planners' decisions, which are flouted everywhere by incandescent whirlwinds of dust. On the Plaza of the Three Powers it would take fortunes to cover the red laterite with asphalt. Man wrested this most arbitrary of cities from the desert, and the desert will take it back from him if ever his determination begins to weaken; it lies there on every side, menacing. The artificial lake is no refreshment to the eye; this sheet of blue water seems no more than an earthly reflection of the burning sky.*¹⁰

What Beauvoir calls desert is in fact the cerrado, a savannah-like landscape, the second greatest biome in Brazil. Its climate is hot, semi-humid, with a dry winter season between May and October. Sartre and Beauvoir were visiting Brasília on September 23rd, during the driest seasonal period. Adding up to human devastating action to build the new city, the landscape Beauvoir saw made her compare (or confound) it with a desert, as well as to the Western United States "Far West": *If you need an airplane ticket, medicine or anything at all, you go about twelve miles out the "free city" where building is not officially regulated. As soon as the plan of Brasília had been laid out, the workmen hurried threw up a lot of wooden huts which were made into stores, hotels, restaurants, agencies, homes. It looks almost a frontier town, except that instead of horses and carts, there is a deafening stream of automobiles, vans and trucks plowing up the red roads, stores belch out ear-shattering music, the advertising vans shriek slogans at you. The sidewalks are a madhouse; your feet get trampled, the dust turns your shoes red, gets in your ears, and makes your eyes smart, while the sun bludgeons the top of your head; yet you are happy here, simply because you are back in the land of men. Often there are conflagrations; wood, in such dry weather, ignites quickly; just before we got there, a whole neighborhood had burned down; no victims, but charred remnants, twisted wood, blackened furniture, ironwork, disemboweled mattresses.*¹¹ And she highlighted the paradoxes: *The gloom of these sights was dispelled, however, as we watched the candangos¹² slapping each other on the shoulder in the street. No one laughs in Brasília. During the day, people worked; sometimes in the evening they would wander dismally around this world that they were building and that was not for them.*¹³ Her insights were supported by the current debates within the country and were a preview for many other paradoxes discussed thereafter: *I heard many discussions about Brasília. [...]. His opponents reply that the work has already cost a sum, in human lives as well as in cruzeiros,¹⁴ that no practical advantage can ever repay [...]. The capital that has been sunk into Brasília should have been used to give the Northeast a network of local roads, to irrigate it and set up industries there. [Jorge] Amado admitted that Brasília was a myth, but he added, Kubitschek was able to obtain support, credit and sacrifices from the people only because it was a myth he was selling; any more rational, less fascinating project, and the nation would have rejected outright. Perhaps. I*

still retain the impression of having seen the birth of a monster whose heart and lungs are made to function artificially by methods devised at breathtaking cost. In any case, if Brasília survives it will fall prey to speculators. The lands along the lake, which in Lúcio Costa's original plan were to remain public property, are already being sold off by the municipality to private buyers. Yet another example of the contradictions prevalent in Brazil: the number-one city of this capitalist country was built by architects who were also adherents of the Socialist cause. They have accomplished beautiful work and built a great dream, but it was never possible for them to win out.¹⁵ In an intimate and sharp-tongued letter to her American affair, Nelson Algren, Simone de Beauvoir recalled in few sentences what she later wrote down in *La Force de Choses*, and confided: *I'm in Brasília, the most insane lucubration that human mind ever conceived [...]. But I will leave Brasília with great pleasure—this city will never have soul, heart, flesh or blood.*¹⁶

Sartre and Beauvoir were the archetypes of leftist political engagement and intellectual activism at the time. The leading position of both made them spokespersons of Marxist circles, authoritative and influential in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Opinions coming from dissimilar ideological spectrums found common ground on criticizing Brasília in its early days. Bioy Casares and Beauvoir echoed several remarks that circulated at that moment, and their personal comments sounded like distinctive voices in a choir of incredulity and unfavorable criticism.

First Decade: Suspense

Those early years were of uncertainty and anxiety to the consolidation of the new capital. The military coup in Brazil in 1964 changed the expectations over the new era Brasília symbolized. After the incertitude about the political destinies ruled by the coup d'état, Oscar Niemeyer recalled the comment by (the minister of culture affairs of France) André Malraux to Le Corbusier: "reportedly, Brasília will be abandoned. It's a pity, but what a wondrous ruins it would become".¹⁷ In 1970, Clarice Lispector (1920–1977), a cult following novelist enthroned to the Brazilian literary canon recently, chronicled in "The primordial beginnings of Brasília" her amazement at the embryonic city: "I look at Brasília as I look at Rome: Brasília begun as an ultimate simplification of ruins. The Ivy has not grown yet. [...] Brasília is of a splendorous past that does not exist any more."¹⁸ It was Clarice Lispector who better formulated the Brasília's riddle: *If I say Brasília is beautiful, you immediately would know I liked Brasília. But if I say Brasília is the image of my insomnia, people presume it as an accusation; however my insomnia is neither beautiful nor ugly—my insomnia is I, myself, it is experienced, it is my astonishment. Both architects did not think in building glamour, it would be easy; they raised their astonishment, and they left astonishment unexplained. The creation is not a comprehension, it is a new mystery.*¹⁹ Her puzzling challenge was above the current comments: *Brasília is artifi-*

*cial. As artificial as it would have been when the world was created. When the world was created, it was necessary to specially create a human being to that world. We are all deformed by the adaptation to God's freedom. We don't know how we could be if we were created first, and thereafter the world deformed according to our requirements. Brasília does not have yet the man of Brasília.*²⁰

Second Decade: Suspicion

Artificial city, a city of artifices: Brasília was a target to specialized international criticism in mid-1970s. *Modern Architecture*, a textbook by Manfredo Tafuri (1934–1994) and Francesco Dal Co (b. 1945), epitomizes corrosive judgments on the new capital: *[It] was sited in the interior of the country, beyond the jungle (sic). Born out of demagogic intentions, as symbol of pioneer vitality dressed in bureaucratic garb, it was laid out by Costa on a puerile allegorical ground plan—that of an airplane—and filled with a system of residential superblocks perhaps intended to reinterpret the urbanistic model tried out in the Soviet Union beginning in the 1930s. Niemeyer produced the Plaza of the Three Powers—a pair of skyscrapers flanked by a spherical vault and by the slice of inverted cupola of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies—along with the cathedral, presidential palace, and other public buildings. In these, the gratuitous is tinged with sophistication. Although they make a fine show, it is one of superfluous velleities.*²¹

Tafuri never visited Brasília, and Dal Co probably not at the time they wrote the book. They must have read and reproduced comments propagated in European media, as perceived in the "jungle" recurrence or the flaw in Soviet background to the superblocks. Maybe Simone de Beauvoir's memoir was a source.

A full-fledged cliché approach was spread out by BBC television series broadcasted in 1980, *The Shock of the New*, written by the Australian-born documentary maker Robert Hughes (b. 1938). To the passionate examiner of key cultural movements of the 20th century, Brasília was the *Only city in the west that had ever been built from scratch along the strict, new capital: it was necessary, in the opinion of its leader—a narcissistic and touchy supreme named Kubitschek—to show the world some economic vigour by conspicuously "opening up" the interior.*²² Hughes supposed that *Le Corbusier's two most gifted South American followers designed it, under the more or less direct inspiration of the Form-giver [...]. Niemeyer and Costa came up with a Carioca parody (sic) of La Ville Radieuse: the administrative buildings along one axis, and the main traffic artery sweeping across, with the workers' flat on stilts strung along it. The zoning was clear and rigid. One thing in one place. It looked splendid in the drawings and the photographs: the most photogenic New Town on earth. With its sweeping avenues and climatic dome, saucer towers, and reflecting pools, Brasília seemed to the reconciliation of Utopian modernism with the ceremonial State architecture that the Beaux-Arts had wanted to symbolize a century before.*²³ And he stood out the ruined condition of the city in a less metaphorical point of view than Malraux's or Lispector's: *The reality of the place is markedly less noble. Brasília was finished, or at any rate officially opened in 1960, and ever since then it has been falling to bits at one end while be-*

ing listlessly constructed at the other: a façade, a ceremonial slum of rusting metal, spilling concrete, and cracked stone veneers, put together on the cheap by contractors and bureaucrats on the take. It is a vast example of what happens when people design for an imagined Future, rather than for a real world. In the Future, everyone would have a car and so the car, as in Corbusier's dreams, would abolish the street. This was carried out to the letter in Brasília, which has many miles of multi-lane highways, with scarcely any footpaths or pavements. By design, the pedestrian is an irrelevance—a majority irrelevance, however, since only one person in eight there owns or has access to a car and, Brazil, being Brazil, the public transport system is wretched. So the freeways are empty most of the day, except at peak hours, when all the cars in Brasília briefly jam them at the very moment when the rest of the working population is trying, without benefit of pedestrian crossings or underpasses, to get across the road to work.²⁴ The critic's conclusion is apocalyptic and moralist: Thus Brasília, in less than twenty years, ceased to be the City of Tomorrow and turned into yesterday's science fiction. It is an expensive and ugly testimony to the fact that, when men think in terms of abstract space rather than real place, of single rather than multiple meanings, and of political aspirations instead of human needs, they tend to produce miles of jerry-built nowhere, infested with Volkswagens. The experiment, one may hope, will not be repeated; the Utopian buck stops here.²⁵

Third Decade: Vindication

An article published in *Progressive Architecture* in 1991 is probably one of the first international revisionist considerations about Brasília. It was written by Alan Hess (b. 1952), an American architect, lately dedicated to modern American and Brazilian architectures. It was a statement acknowledging the factor time: "Brasília, that architectural Rorschach test, embodied all the passions and most of the signs of Modern architecture as its inauguration 30 years ago. Now that the Brazilian capital has reached a less radioactive half-life, it is safe to journey back for another look".²⁶

Hess knew the restricted literature about Brasília. He endorsed with a relative position and questioned Robert Hughes' analysis on *The Shock of the New*: *It is always informative to see visions built. They usually fall short, but the reasons are always fascinating. A few cracked columns do not constitute a penetrating criticism of Brasília; all of Brazil is rusting these days. Economic chaos takes a toll on visionary architecture. That sort of contradiction has always been part of Brasília: founded under a democracy, the city has spent most of its existence as the capital of a military dictatorship; behind the dazzling façades its offices are overstaffed, but underequipped; in a city designed for the car, most citizens still cannot afford one.*²⁷ Yet in counter-argument to Hughes: Brasília is a city wedded to the landscape. Towering clouds dominate the blue skies over a bowl-shaped horizon, yet nature's prominence does not dwarf Oscar Niemeyer's herd of white monuments visible in the distance; instead they focus the landscape's qualities. The bureaucracy may mirror Kafka's, but the city itself is anything but claustrophobic. Widely-spaced monuments distant panoramas to flow into the public spaces in ways Beaux-Arts planning never made possible. The rectilinear Congress towers, the shallow white domes and

bowls of Senate and Assembly—these are abstracted echoes of their surroundings.²⁸ Referring to Simone de Beauvoir's critique on the lack of traditional streets: *"The streets do not exist in Brasília and never will"*, complaint Simone de Beauvoir, but she was wrong. Streets in the Parisian sense may be absent, but today it is clear that streets in the Los Angeles sense are the glue that holds the city together. Lúcio Costa's initial sketch for the city was a savvy transportation diagram that skillfully distinguished the dual function and ceremonial roles of the car in the modern city. Brasília was the first Roadside Capital.²⁹

An American point of view throws light on another way to envisage Lúcio Costa's proposal: *Imagine Los Angeles built to the program of Washington, D.C. But instead of carwashes and gas stations, Brasília applies the architectural rules of the road to ministries and monuments. The sprawl is artfully composed. North Americans have invented the strip, but Brazilians first grasped its monumental potential.*³⁰ In the following consideration on the superquadras, he argued with Hughes, Beauvoir, and to Tafuri & Dal Co-like critique: *The superquadras, hallmarks of Brasília's housing scheme, are surprises too. Instead of becoming desolate Pruitt-Igoes,*³¹ *they turned into real neighborhoods. Schools, churches, and shopping streets are all within an easy walk. Thought suffering from a general lack of maintenance, the standardized six-story blocks aren't overwhelming; the car-less courts and gardens that tie several residential buildings into one superblock are a model of urban diversity.*³² Alen Hess' report was far from a defense of Brasília. He expressed criticisms extracted from what he experienced from the city. The same way as Bioy Casares and Beauvoir did thirty years before. But in another circumstance, noted by the American: "Yet fears—and hopes—that it would crumble into Brazil's Planalto have proved unfounded. Brasília has become a city".³³

One of the more diffused analyses and deep criticism of Brasília is a Ph.D. thesis presented at Yale University by the American anthropologist James Holston, professor at the University of California, Berkeley. *The Modernist City: an Anthropological Critique of Brasília* was published in 1989³⁴ and translated into Portuguese with wide audience in Brazil. It was elaborated after two years of field survey (1980–1982), which assured a more consistent background than quick round-trips and documentary sojourns impressions. However, that thesis is being disputed by another thesis, presented in 1998 at the Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning in London by the Brazilian Frederico de Holanda (b. 1944), a professor at the University of Brasília: [Holston] *correctly identified a set of myths about the Brazilian capital, but at last he offered what he declared he wanted most to avoid: a reductionist and dogmatic vision of the city and the representations of the city carried by the many social classes.*³⁵ Holanda investigated various studies produced after the 1980s, some of them drawing attention to the positive reception of the city by its inhabitants. According to the Brazilian professor: *Holston saw only the opposite: his material detaches exclusively towards a radical critique made by part of people that live in Brasília,*

which obviously do not correspond to reality. I worked with evidences that will show that his material was extremely selective. Moreover, Holston induced as if all social classes had the same expectation about the form of the city. He ignored the many modes of insertion of social agents acting in a contradictory society, which implies distinctive ways of living and, therefore, distinctive ways to produce, use and evaluate the urban space.³⁶ In his field survey, Holanda found that living in the Federal District is “good” or “optimum” for the majority in all social classes and/or income range, contradicting what he calls “dogmatic criticism”, as Holston’s.³⁷

Fourth Decade: Realization

In 2005 the Getúlio Vargas Foundation publicized a ranking of the 27 Brazilian capital cities’ satisfaction degree of the residents. The survey analyzed twelve indicators: total family income; amount, types of food consumption; electrical supply, water, sewage and drainage systems; street illumination; waste collection service; street issues as noisy neighborhoods; contamination or environmental issues caused by traffic or industry; issues on disturbance and vandalism in residential areas; family habitation conditions. Rio de Janeiro ranked at the 10th position, evaluated 20,50% above the national average. São Paulo stood at the following position, with 18,91%. Brasília reached the best evaluation, ranking at first, with 113,52% above the national average. It means that for

those who live in the Brazilian capital, they are statistically more than two times fulfilled with its city compared to the inhabitants of other capitals.³⁸

Lúcio Costa (1902–1998) for a long time was a lonesome defender of Brasília. He kept himself far from the city during the military dictatorship and until his return to the capital in 1987. The urban vitality he saw made him declare: “Brasília has Brazilian roots; it is not a *flor de estufa*”. “*Flor de estufa*” in literal translation means “greenhouse flower”. In Portuguese, this expression is used to describe a person that grew up without contact to the hard reality of life. He was perplexed admiring the life exuberance after more than twenty year away: “Brasília is working and it will work more and more. As a matter of fact, the dream was smaller than the reality. Reality was greater and more beautiful”.³⁹ Not anymore a dream, nor a utopia, neither the City of Tomorrow or yesterday’s science fiction. Brasília did not become a dystopia, or a wondrous ruin. It is not an ugly testimony of abstract space. It is a city with soul, heart, flesh and blood, besides the unavoidable paradoxes and unsolvable contradictions.

Did the “man of Brasília”, previewed by Clarice Lispector, emerge between the Brasília of Simone de Beauvoir and the Brasília of Frederico de Holanda?

Notes

1. Hugo Segawa, “After the miracle: Brazilian architecture 1960–2000”, in *Brazil Body and Soul*, edited by Edward J. Sullivan, New York, Guggenheim Museum, 2001, 558–569.
2. Adolfo Bioy Casares, *Unos días en el Brasil (diario de viaje)*, Buenos Aires, La Compañía de los Libros, 2010.
3. Ibid., 40–41. Translated from Spanish by the author.
4. Simone de Beauvoir, *Hard times: force of circumstance, volume II: 1954–1962*, New York, Da Capo Press, 1994, 272–273.
5. Ibid., 273 / 6. Ibid. / 7. Ibid. / 8. Ibid., 274 / 9. Ibid. / 10. Ibid., 274–275 / 11. Ibid., 275.
12. *Candango* is the nickname of the first workers who came from other parts of Brazil to build Brasília.
13. Simone de Beauvoir, 275.
14. *Cruzeiro* was the Brazilian currency at the time.
15. Beauvoir, 276–277.
16. Simone de Beauvoir, *Cartas a Nelson Algren: um amor transatlântico 1947–1964*, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 2000, 525. Translated from Portuguese by the author. Original title: *Lettres a Nelson Algren: un amour transatlantique – 1947–1964*.
17. Nelson Werneck Sodré, Oscar Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 1978, 112. Translated from Portuguese by the author.
18. Clarice Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo*, Rio de Janeiro, Rocco, 1999, 293, translated from Portuguese by the author.
19. Ibid., 293 / 20. Ibid., 292.
21. Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Dal Co, *Modern architecture/2*, New York, Rizzoli, 1979, 354.
22. Robert Hughes, *The shock of the new: art and the century change*, updated and enlarged edition, London, Thames&Hudson, 1991, 209.
23. Ibid. / 24. Ibid., 210–211 / 25. Ibid., 211.
26. Alan Hess, “Report: back to Brasília”, *Progressive Architecture* 72, no. 10 (Oct. 1991): 96.
27. Ibid. / 28. Ibid. / 29. Ibid., 96 / 30. Ibid., 97.
31. The imploded American CIAM-inspired housing complex considered by Charles Jencks in his *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* the starting point to post-modernism.
32. Alan Hess, 97. / 33. Ibid.
34. James Holston, *The modernist city: an anthropological critique of Brasília*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989.
35. Frederico de Holanda, *O espaço da exceção*, Brasília, Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 2002, 41. Translated from Portuguese by the author.
36. Ibid. / 37. Ibid., 350.
38. “São Paulo é só o 11º no ranking de satisfação,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 28 Oct. 2005, p. C1. Also <<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/dinheiro/ult91u101796.shtml>>.
39. *Relatório do Plano Piloto de Brasília*, Brasília, GDF, 1991, 8.

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Brasilia. Monumentality Issues

40



Lúcio Costa proposes an *urbs* and a *civitas* in his winning entry for the Brasília competition (1957). The new seat of citizenship was to celebrate the March to the West dreamt by Brazilian Independence's Patriarch José Bonifácio (1823)—who named the new capital—and taken up by president Juscelino Kubitschek (1955)—who promised fifty years of progress in five. Brasília was to be a machine for remembering past, present and future hopes. Therefore, it had to be a memorable object itself, composed of memorable elements; differentiation from context counted in all levels. Like Costa, Oscar Niemeyer knew that common monumental features included volumetric simplicity, unusual size, scale or shape and extraordinary richness, as shown by his *Palácio da Alvorada*, the presidential residence (1956).

By Carlos Eduardo Comas

ENDOWED with a striking colonnade, the *Palácio da Alvorada* proclaims its residential condition by recalling the nineteenth century plantation houses near Rio. In order to make an object's purposes recognizable as monumental, differentiation from context cannot be complete. Beaux-Arts trained Costa and Niemeyer sustaining that designing a monument involved reiterating or evoking formal precedents, as well as reiterating or evoking qualities that are culturally associated with it. Characterization was a statement of lineage and hierarchy, of mood and attributes. Moreover, both knew that those formal precedents could be concrete figures or abstract schemes and needed not to be architectural in either case.

Thus Costa starts with a cross and then transforms it into a bow and arrow pointing westward. The sign of foundation becomes a sign of propulsion. The curved residential highway axis adds the movement imagery. The straight monumental axis accommodates the main institutional buildings and stands for stability. The monumental sector is separated from the ordinary functional city with no loss of visibility. Resemblances to a bird and an airplane reinforce the plan's iconicity and facilitate its recollection.

The National Civic Center sits atop a wide embankment rising above the surrounding savannah like a cruiser riding the waves. The triangular Square of the Three Powers at the western end, is at once stern and quay, with buildings on three sides like Lisbon's old *Terreiro do Paço*—now *Praça do Comércio* before the Tagus river, or Rio's namesake—now *Praça XV de Novembro* before Guanabara Bay. The Esplanade of the Ministries brings to mind the Washington Mall and the first independent American colonies. The depiction of the politic body is quite literal. The Capitol, the Supreme Court and the Government Palace stand at the head of the composition; the ministries

occupy its arms. The equivalence of the three powers is conveyed in an elementary and effective way; and the same applies to the links entertained by the Executive and Legislative branches with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, whose formal treatment contrasts with the standard Ministry building. An obelisk, the Telecommunications Tower at the highest spot, follows the lead of the Eiffel Tower and reaffirms the alliance of the city with technical progress and media. Brasília is presented as the hub of a vast and mostly unsettled nation, proud of its brand-new automobile industry and eager to increase its air routes, marching to the west with a new-found enthusiasm for democracy—but mindful of its heritage.

Niemeyer adds to Costa's rhetoric the representation of the Capitol as balance, emphasizing the duality of the National Congress and the individuality of its constituent parts. The eye feasts on peristyles, domes, arcades, pairings and symmetries, sweeping prospects, marbles, mirrors, gilt, sculptures, pools, fountains, a grove of palm trees. Norma Evenson gave the most perceptive account of the monumental sector nearing completion.

For much of the year, the sky is filled with scudding clouds bathing the site in shifting light and shadow, steam often sustaining the illusion of greater substance than the man-made structures below. The buildings seem to have been placed by a magician's hand, creating an apparition which strikes the vision with hallucinatory clarity. There is no emphatic or secure sense of possessing awareness of the ephemeral, a melancholy and sophisticated perception of how tenuous is man's grasp of earth and how transient are his work.

The exterior colonnade of the Alvorada Palace recalls the lozenges that feature in the national flag since the Independence, the festoons that adorn the Imperial flag, the diamonds that gave the name to Diamantina, Kubitschek's home town. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes its cue from the Neo-classical Itamaraty Palace in Rio. The underground Cathedral is bathed in light coming through glass panes between the ribs that fashion a

< Honestino Guimarães National Museum, Brasília. Photo by Ana

drum-like crown of thorns. Yet, one enters it after going down by a ramp and wandering through dark spaces reminiscent of catacombs. Statues watch over the ramp, evoking the colonial sanctuary of Congonhas do Campo. An egg and womb seem a suitable dome for the baptistery. After all, man has to die before being reborn by a few drops of holy water and the Church pretends to be both the Bride of Christ and the mother of Christendom. It is almost Social Realism gone Modern.

Alvorada, Planalto and Supreme Court are elongated volumes with one-story high galleries or lower basements. At the Alvorada, Planalto and Supreme Court, the peristyle runs along the big sides only; small façades are open. Both the Supreme Court and the Alvorada box rise over partly underground basements. Binary oppositions and similarities create two sets of pairs, answering to the programmatic complementarity of the Alvorada and Planalto palaces and to the situational complementarity of the Planalto and the Supreme Court. The Planalto ground floor gallery reinforces the allusion to government palaces facing a square, like Palladio's Basilica in Vicenza. The kinship of the Supreme Court, with the antique temple is strengthened by the access ramp, aligned with the longitudinal axis of the box; the two rows of columns, point to the reconstructed Etruscan temple in the grounds of Rome's Villa Giulia.

The central void at the Alvorada and Planalto palaces is a common feature shared with relevant Brazilian traditional and modern buildings, whether residential (such as the colonial Casa do Bandeirante), institutional (such as the paradigmatic Ministry of Education building), or mixed ones (such as Costa's Museum of the Missions or Niemeyer's Ouro Preto Grand Hotel). The institutional character is strengthened by the thrust of the ramp and rostrum beyond the Planalto opening, while nothing obstructs the gaze at the counterpart in the residential Alvorada. Gender connotations conventionally associated with work and domesticity are reinforced by the opposition between the columns at both buildings. Stamo Papadaki compared the Alvorada columns to caryatids, and he strikes a right chord, for those are bulging, bellied, folding, static figures in comparison with their counterparts at the Planalto and the Supreme Court. For though both barely seem to touch the ground, these are lean and taut like a Spanish bullfighter or a Minoan dancer and can certainly be compared to graceful atlantes. Lightness and grace go together, and grace, according to Costa, was the special contribution of Brazil to Modern Architecture.

By the way, Le Corbusier himself had set apart *architecture mâle* and *architecture femelle* in his *Modulor*. At the National Congress, the phallic towers connotation contrasts with the feminine domes, connotations. Both bal-

ance and balanced coupling can be read in the composition. Costa emphasizes foundation. Fecundation—and fecundity—definitely count among Niemeyer's concerns. Pampulha, for instance, is a case of plump Dance Hall and angular Yacht Club leading to a Casino.

Binary oppositions and similarities organize the next pair of palaces too. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice buildings are squares, and their peristyles are two-story-high arcades completely enclosing the glass box. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the arcades are sculptural, like the Alvorada colonnades, and display round arches in all sides. In the Palace of Justice, pairs of opposite sides contrast. Flat arcades with round arches in a robust Romanesque spirit at the front and rear give way to a muscular version of the Corbusian "ondulatoires". A reflecting pool surrounds the two palaces. At the Ministry of Justice, water falls noisily from giant gargoyles.

Built with exoskeletons, the Cathedral and the National Theater stand in the adjoining cultural sector. Both display the frame of a tent on a cave-like basement. Spectators also have to go underground to reach their goal. The sanctuary is a hyperboloid of revolution on a circular plan that shares a platform with the baptistery egg and the menorah-like bell tower. The play of volumes points to Renaissance Florence. Glazed surfaces extend between the curved sculptural ribs of the sanctuary and the plain straight ribs on the short sides of the theater.

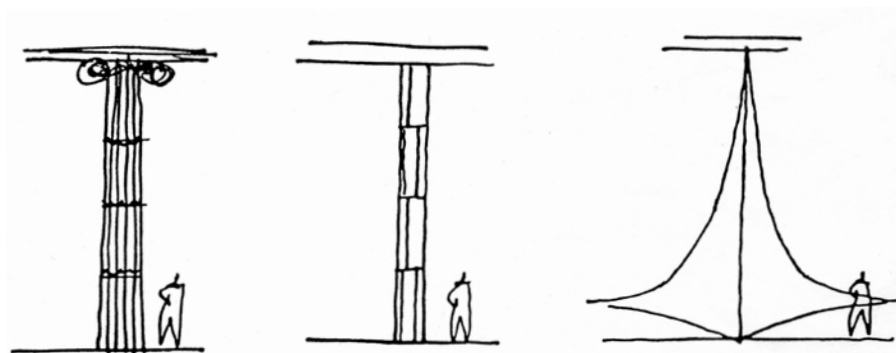
Mostly transparent, the hyperboloid is a modern *Duomo*, a counterpoint to Le Corbusier's assembly hall in Chandigarh. Inside, the intense light celebrates the mystery of Christian resurrection—and the victory over the chthonic Homeric world. Built as a parabolic dome next to the actual burial chamber, it was the largest space without supports before the Pantheon. The kinship with Niemeyer's composition is hardly accidental, as Lucas Mayerhofer insinuates. Mostly opaque, the theater bows to Mies and his Mannheim project, as Niemeyer himself states on his memoir. Two opposite auditoria flank the scenic box, but the fly-tower does not protrude, probably to avoid competition with the National Congress or the Tower of Telecommunications.

Despite the importance of pairing (all connotations admitted) in the whole design process, from a topological point of view, all these buildings have similar *partis*. They can be thought of as particular crystallizations of a single general matrix of parallel plates and rows of supports that stand on the perimeter of those plates. Furthermore, from elongated to squares' box, from pyramid to hyperboloid, a transformation process is being staged, and that staging is a reflection of what the building of the new capital was about.

For Costa, Le Corbusier was the Brunelleschi of the century because his work set the bases of a true style, that is, a coherent system of elements and principles of composition based on elements of architecture reduced to their essential geometry. Studying Le Corbusier's designs as well as his words, Costa and Niemeyer soon realized that, in terms of norm, the *Dom-ino* type structure was preferential rather than imperative. The architectural system had to incorporate both the dome and the load-bearing wall. Costa first claimed that Modern architecture was an inclusive proposition in his memoir of the University City (1937). Monumental Brasília is the outcome of a thinking that prizes diversity of character within a complex but integrated system.

At the same time, in the Cold War context, Brasília is part of an ongoing struggle about the expression of

democratic monumentality, and the cantilever zero situation—the outward expression of structure—is part of a Classicist bent that can be traced back to Perret in the 1930s, including Mies's Crown Hall and Durrell Stone's American Embassy in India in the first half of the 1950s. And the palaces of Brasília precede or are contemporary with works like Lincoln Center and the National Gallery in Berlin. Their affinities are undeniable, as is their antagonism towards the archaizing brutalism of Le Corbusier, who had altered beyond recognition Costa's project for the Brazil House at the Cité Universitaire de Paris. However, Niemeyer's experiments indicate an independent streak, a sort of Free Classicism in comparison to the rather more generic Neo-Classical aura of Mies, but clear of the kitsch that plagues Lincoln Center and American embassies.



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The Campus of the University of Brasilia



The Pilot Plan of the new Brazilian Federal Capital, by Lucio Costa, was selected in a public competition held in 1957. The city was inaugurated barely three years later by President Juscelino Kubitschek, in April 1960, when the official creation of the University of Brasilia became a reality. Preparing to celebrate fifty years of existence, the University campus probably represents the most accomplished set of Brutalist architecture in the country and an excellent sample of the inventive resources of Brazilian architects. A functionalist city inside another. They are distinct from each other, but both dignified and worthy of documentation and preservation actions.

By Andrey Rosenthal Schlee

FOUNDED in 1960 and beginning to function in 1962, the University of Brasilia (UnB) was created based in a progressive conception of higher education. Occupying an immense area of 257 hectares between the Pilot Plan and the Lake Paranoá, its campus would also be innovative, having as a starting point a master plan by Lúcio Costa.

The task of raising from nothing the accommodations to shelter such a major institution in a brand-new town was assigned to the Center of Planning (Ceplan), a department of the School of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU). At the Ceplan, under the leadership of Oscar Niemeyer and with the help of João Filgueiras Lima—better known as Lelé, professors and their assistants, students and other professionals worked in close contact. The aim was to develop new forms of space organization, new structural alternatives and new construction technologies that would allow for the erection of flexible buildings in a very short time to lodge the most unanticipated activities as the campus was been built.

Undeniably, the Ceplan became a reference research center in these fields. And the tradition of team work and experimentalism then established is carried on until today.

1961–1965: starting from scratch

It was necessary to build much and quickly. Thus, the first phase of the campus architecture was distinguished—above all—by the adoption and/or development of pre-fabricated systems. Designing was frantic in that period. A variety of pre-molded pieces were created and tested directly in the construction sites, resulting in works of high importance for Brazilian modern architecture as the wooden *ocas*—or huts, by Sergio Rodrigues; the Faculty of Education, by Alcides Rocha Miranda; the general services pavilions and the minimum students housing, by Niemeyer; the residential complex Colina, by Filgueiras Lima.

The most audacious achievement in those early days would be a project by Niemeyer, concentrating several scientific institutes—mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology—in a single building tackling a complex program that included, in addition to classrooms and auditoriums, a wide range of scientific laboratories with disparate demands of areas and heights.

The Central Institute of Sciences is a low and linear building, slightly curved in plan, some 700 meters long and 60 meters wide. It comprises two parallel sections separated from each other by a landscaped strip of 15 meters. The west section is 25m wide and was intended to house, in its two floors and basement, amphitheatres and professors offices. The east facing east, 30 meters wide, has most of its area with double height and was set to house different kinds of laboratories and classrooms (with varying lengths). When carrying out the work, the east wing also gained a basement, intended for warehouses, accessible by stairs and an internal service road that runs throughout the building. For its construction, it was developed a system of pre-molded pieces of reinforced concrete, combining porches spaced every 3 meters; single anchor beams; T profile pre-stressed beams which span up to 30 meters; and pre-stressed paving slabs with 1 meter module. Longitudinally, the building is organized in three segments: two straight wings (north and south), linked by a bowed one. Between these three segments, two main accesses—handled as dry squares—pierce the building transversally. In each square, there is a cantilevered ramp, as if the architect's signature. The plastic strength of such elements, the soft curvature of the building, the rhythm proposed by the structural porches and the landscaped courtyards ensure a surprising and rich reading. Though still unfinished, the Central Institute of Sciences offers an exciting architectural promenade through its heroic length and surprising spaces.

In April 1964, Brazil was shattered by a military coup. In the same month the UnB was invaded by the political police. A succession of acts of force culminated in the dismantling in 1965 of the institution and the sacking—all

< University Presidency building, 1972–1975, Paulo Zimbres and team



Figure 1. **Oscar Niemeyer and João Filgueiras Lima.** Central Institute of Sciences. 1963-1971. Photo by Andrey Rosenthal Schlee, 2009

Figure 2. **Oscar Niemeyer and João Filgueiras Lima.** Central Institute of Sciences. 1963-1971. Photo by Cláudia Estrela Porto, 2010

Figure 3. **Paulo Zimbres and team.** University Presidency building. 1972-1975. Photo by Cláudia Estrela Porto, 2010

Figure 4. **João Filgueiras Lima.** Darcy Ribeiro Foundation, 2010. Photo by Cláudia Estrela Porto, 2011

at once—of 90% of its faculty, among them Niemeyer and his collaborators. Among its consequences, it precluded the course of architecture and, by extension, the Ceplan team was undone.

1968–1982: occupying the territory

Leaning on the mediation of the Brazilian Institute of Architects, the School of Architecture and Urban Planning was reopened in 1968. The arrival of another faculty opened a new chapter in the campus architectural history. From then on a second phase can be identified, characterized by the preponderant use of reinforced concrete as an expressive device. The new trend was launched with the Central Library building, by José Galbinski, Miguel Pereira, Jodete Rios Socrates and Walmir Aguiar.

There was a unmistakable change in architectural language, whose precedents were those from Rio de Janeiro and should be seek out—in most cases—in São Paulo or Porto Alegre. The period was characterized by intense construction activity, and most buildings of the period are of a Brutalism disposition, such as: the students dormitory, by Léo Bonfim Jr. and Alberto Fernando Xavier; the University Restaurant, by José Galbinski; and the Faculty of Applied Social Studies, by Matheus Gorovitz. Also from that period, the Center for Tropical Medicine, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Technology College, all by Adilson Costa Macedo and Érico Weidle.

The University Presidency building, by Paulo de Melo Zimbres and Érico Weidle, offers a new level of relationship with the campus space. Envisioned as an “oasis”, it was built on low stilts, with pleasant gardens, and organized in split levels facing the campus in a welcoming way. Thought out as to enable future expansions, it shows the “simple and friendly” feeling claimed by Niemeyer.

1980–2000: more demands

Even though the 80's witnessed a dearth in the number of works, the quality level remained unaffected. While

keeping the practice of team work and sustained technological research, this third phase was differentiated by a greater diversity of aesthetic trends. The main characteristics were a constant structural experimentation; the erection of buildings outside the campus, and partnerships with the private sector, which now occupy areas in the campus. As representative of that moment, it should be mentioned the two multiple use pavilions, respectively by Érico Weidle and Paulo Bicca; the expansion of the residential complex Colina blocks, by Paulo Marcos Oliveira; the Center of Tourism, by José Zanine Caldas; and the Arts Complex, the João Calmon Pavilion and Anísio Teixeira Pavilion, all three by Claudio Queiróz.

A new millennium

Currently, a new generation of professors is giving its imprint to the campus. Among the recent additions are the Professors Association, by Raimundo Nonato Veloso; the Institute of Chemistry, by Aleixo Furtado and Marcílio Ferreira; the Institute of Biological Sciences, by Frederico Flósculo, Ivan do Valle, Oscar Ferreira, Cristine Autran, Eimara Messias, Nelton Borges e Vanessa Bhering; the Fiocruz Foundation, by Alberto Alves de Faria and team; and the School of Economics and Business Administration, by Márcio Buson, Andrey Schlee, Cláudia Garcia, Adalberto Vilela e Fabiano de Castro. Commemorating The last building to be concluded is the Darcy Ribeiro Foundation, by Lelé Filgueiras Lima, a technological re-interpretation of Brazilian native shelters conceived to receive the library, archives, and ethnographic funds of one of the university founders.

A functionalist city inside another one, preparing now to celebrate its half-century, the campus of the University of Brasília is an outstanding sample of the creativity of Brazilian architects. A respectable collection of buildings, each with its own character, worthy of documentation and preservations.



Foreign Architecture in Brasilia

48



Surprisingly, Brasilia has a major assortment of foreign architecture, due to the diplomatic complexes it houses in the so-called South and North Embassy Sectors. From an urban point of view, such sectors were envisioned as a great international fair of buildings by renowned professionals. These buildings display a variety of solutions, in which it is always possible to distinguish typical features of the country of origin. In many of them the intention to reflect the modernity of Brasilia prevails; in others, the main objective was to enhance the country's traditional architecture; and finally there are those in which both alternatives have been harmonized.

By Sylvia Ficher and Paulo Roberto Alves dos Santos

FEW remember or even realize it, but thanks to its status as Federal Capital, Brasilia has a major assortment of foreign architecture, almost all of it diplomatic complexes located in the so-called South and North Embassies Sectors. In addition to national representations, these two sectors house international institutions. As the Pan American Health Organization (1971), by the eminent Uruguayan architect Román Fresnedo Siri, also author of Washington headquarters (1965). Besides the architectural interest, these buildings house significant works of art collections, thus incorporated into the assets of Brasilia.

From an urban point of view, such sectors were envisioned as a great international fair of buildings conceived by renowned professionals, and a meeting point of the world's architectural thought. The list of buildings and their authors is extensive, which explains the wide variety of solutions adopted, in which it is always possible to distinguish typical features of the original country. But there are also different emphasis degrees. In many of the embassies the intention to reflect the modernity of Brasilia and the country itself prevails; in some of them, however, the objective was to enhance their traditional architecture; and finally there are those in which both alternatives have been harmonized or live side by side.

Examining this architectural collection, beginning with those obvious examples of modern character, not surprisingly the most significant projects are those of European and Latin American countries.

Among the former, a chief example is the German embassy (1964–71), by one of the great masters of modern architecture, Hans Scharoun. This is his only work outside Germany and was designed precisely at the same time as two of his most highly praised accomplishments—the Philharmonic Orchestra Concert Hall (1956–1963) and one of the buildings of the National Library (1964–

1978), both in Berlin. The embassy, which is composed of the foreign bureau, the official residence and several houses for the diplomatic corps, exemplifies to perfection his exuberant and unorthodox architecture, enhanced by the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx gardens. For its qualities, it integrates the historical and artistic German heritage.

The Embassy of France (1972–74) has a curious history, as the opportunity for a work by Le Corbusier to be built in Brazilian soil was lost. His preliminary 1963 study was abandoned because, in disagreement with local urban regulations, it included a building with seven floors, and because it failed to meet the needs of the French government. With the demise of the Franco-Swiss master in 1965, his associate, the Chilean Guillermo Julián La Fuente, was invited to complete the task. However, he refused to change the original proposal and drafted a new project after the Venice Hospital (Le Corbusier and La Fuente, 1964–65). There are four main buildings: the chancery, an exhibition hall with an auditorium, the official residence, and a block of houses for the diplomatic corps. A striking element in the whole system is the articulation of volumes (mat-buildings) and the consequent use of courtyards, so that the interior spaces are integrated into beautiful gardens. Anyway, the presence of Le Corbusier has been preserved, with one of his tapestries gracing the ambassador house.

For understandable historical reasons, the Portuguese embassy (1972–78) is the one closest to the Monumental Axis, adjacent to Portugal Square, both designed by architect Raul Choro Ramalho. An example of the Brutalist architecture of the 1970s, contained in a single regular volume with exposed concrete blinds to protect the upper floor, the building is integrated into gardens on all sides.

Even the dashing Studio Nervi made its mark in Brasilia, thanks to the Italian embassy (1973–76). As might be expected, the adopted solution, by Pier Luigi Nervi himself, is strongly determined by the structural conception. The building is organized into a single and large block, elevated on a series of sturdy pillars, each one opening



Germany Embassy, **Hans Scharoun**, 1964–1971



Italy Embassy, **Pier Luigi Nervi**, 1973–1976



Korea Embassy, **Chang Sik Han**, 1973



France Embassy, **Guillermo Julián La Fuente**, 1972–1974



Denmark Embassy



Turkey Embassy, **İlhami and Cetin Ural**, 1977



Mexico Embassy, **Teodoro González de León, Abraham Zabludovsky and José Francisco Serrano**, 1973–1976



Portugal Embassy, **Raul Chorão Ramalho**, 1972–1978

into four-pronged brackets, allowing ample inner gardens, designed by landscape architect Ney Ururahy Dutra. In a gesture of friendliness, the embassy houses four large paintings by Brazilian artist Candido Portinari.

As for the Latin American representations, a Brutalist expression predominates. Due to its reinforced concrete structure, formed by wide pilasters and canted fins, the Embassy of Peru (1973–74), by Jacques Crousse and Jorge Paez, has an intriguing volume. The Embassy of Chile (1974–77), by the prominent architects Juan Echenique Guzmán and José Cruz Covarrubias, is deployed in two independent blocks, whose internal areas are connected to ample winter gardens. The elegant architecture of the Embassy of Uruguay (1978–80), a fine representative of the works of its author, Mario Paysse Reyes, is another example of the extensive use of exposed reinforced concrete.

Indisputably, the Mexican embassy (1973–76), by Teodoro González de León, Abraham Zabludovsky and José Francisco Serrano, is one of the most imposing in the sector. The complex consists of three large buildings (chancellery, official residence and eight row houses) and is positioned in such a way that landscape elements partially hide all buildings. This applies to the chancellery, where large pre-stressed concrete beams, supported by graded surfaces covered with grass, give shape to porticos, underlining the building access. This is the only embassy that, leaving aside security concerns, is opened to the fore public space, a perfect opportunity to “*fomentar la amistad mexico-brasileña*” (fostering Mexican-Brazilian friendship).

Less tied to the Modern Movement, some embassies have as a main characteristic the reference to the traditional culture of their countries. That was the clear intention in the case of the Turkish embassy (1977). Its design, by İlhami and Cetin Ural, was selected in an open competition, whose edict expressly recommended the use of representative traces of the country’s vernacular architecture.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea (1973), by Chang Sik Han, is another instance of indigenous architecture, especially displayed in its imposing entrance gate. Likewise, the Embassy of Morocco (1981), by Mustafa Zeghari, showing in its forms, materials and colors, a clear reference to the culture of northwest Africa.

A last group, particularly interesting, is that of embassies seeking in its architectural expression to combine a modern aesthetic to the native tradition of their country—often making buildings coexist with distinct languages. This is the case of the Japanese embassy. From 1970 to 1972 the foreign offices were built in a vernacular character pavilion, by architect Yoshimi Ohashi; in 1976, it was expanded with the building of the chancery and ambassador’s residence, both in modern lines, designed by the prolific and renowned architect Fumihiko Maki.

The Embassy of Spain (1972–76) is one of the most distinctive buildings among foreign representations, and the apex of the research developed by its author, the acclaimed architect Rafael Leoz. Composed by a group of modules of similar hexagonal plan and different heights, despite its clear and evident modernist expression, its spatial organization, particularly the inner courtyards with their fountains finished in decorated tiles in the Moorish style, brings to mind Spanish traditional architecture.

In the Canadian embassy (1970–78), by Thompson, Berwick, Pratt and Partners, the emphasis is on the various buildings dynamic plastic composition, all connected by light wooden walkways. Clearly the concern is in environmental control, as shown with the extensive use of wooden lattice panels, and indoor and outdoor gardens and pools. The landscaping is Ururahy Ney Dutra’s.

An exceptional presence in this group is that of the Nordic countries, whose embassies are closely clustered. They are the Swedish embassy (1974), by Helge Zimdal; the Danish embassy (1971–76), by Jorgen Bo; the Norse embassy, by John Engh and Jon Seip (1974) and the Finnish embassy (1974), by Jonas Cedercreutz—where a mural by Alvar Aalto can be appreciated. All following the same pattern: each one is organized in several buildings, always using a single constructive solution and the same architectural language, only differing in their dimensions. Another common trait is the careful landscaping.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the embassies sectors are not complete yet. Many countries still have vacant lots; others are awaiting the donation of land. And some have their works in progress, as is the case of the Argentine embassy, by the important architecture office, Studio MSGSSS, composed by architects Flora Manteolo, Javier Sánchez Gómez, Josefa Santos, Justo Solsona and Carlos Sallaberry.

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Embassy photos by Joana França

Athos Bulcão and the Architecture of Brasília



This essay aims to show Athos Bulcão's artworks integrated into architecture in Brasília, his career and partnership and the significance of his work as a precious legacy for the city. The artwork of Athos Bulcão not only reveals beauty and colors but an architectural identity that reflects a successful partnership between modern architecture and fine arts in Brazil. Brasília is the high mark of modern movement where Athos Bulcão became a unique artist with the skill to amalgamate his art into architecture.

By Rafael Miura Bonazzi

Modern architecture and artworks

IN Brazil, modernism has provided a good relation between plastic arts and architecture, demonstrating the commitment of Brazilian architects to a creative and innovative way. A pioneer example of the integration of artworks in architecture is found in the Ministry of Education, today known as Gustavo Capanema Palace (1936), designed by a team led by Lucio Costa. The first involvement of Athos Bulcão with architecture is the Pampulha Park (1945), by Oscar Niemeyer, described as "a new opportunity, but more decisively for the integration of arts into Brazilian architecture" (Campofiorito, 1975).

Brasília is the high mark of this movement, "a single instance in the twentieth century of a work that intended to express and signify the culture and aspirations of an epoch" (Campofiorito, 1975). Not by accident, during the International Congress of Critics of Art held there in September 1959, many of the discussions addressed the great opportunity provided by the new Capital for the integration of arts.¹ In this context, Bulcão was a unique artist with the skill to amalgamate his art into architecture.

Athos Bulcão, the artist of Brasília

When Athos Bulcão came to live in Brasília, it was a vast construction site. Collaborating with its principal architect, Oscar Niemeyer, he had an exceptional opportunity to contribute with his talent to several works of art for the city's main civic buildings.

Today his oeuvre is part of the city's history, deemed a precious heritage which embellishes and gives meaning, grace and motion to many of its buildings. Besides his creations "were made in quantity and quality unparalleled that made him a genuine Brasília artist" (Farias, 2002). In fact, his career "blends in with the history of Brasília" (Ficher, 1998).

However, his works are not restricted to the monumental scene, as it is possible to encounter his contribution in

countless residences and commercial buildings, adding aesthetical values, and being the mark of an artist and his art. In Brasília it is natural to run into Bulcão's panels and reliefs, already part of the townscape, many of them not attributed to him by the general public.

Career and partnerships

Art has always been present in Bulcão's life. Some important aspects were decisive to his successful career, such as his forsaking in 1939 of medicine studies, devoting himself to full-time painting. At that moment, he started to attend the landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx's studio, thus enhancing his technique.

As he was fond of saying, things happened to him by chance. By chance he met Niemeyer in 1942, who invited him to design a tile panel for the Municipal Theatre of Belo Horizonte—an unfinished work due to political causes. However, this event led to the opportunity to assist Candido Portinari paintings at the Pampulha Church, in 1945. Also by chance, important Brazilian artists influenced him in his formative years, among others Enrico Bianco, Candido Portinari, Carlos Scliar, Vinicius de Moraes, and Alfredo Ceschiatti.

Amongst Brazilian modern architects, a shared trait is the remarkable partiality for tile walls, in which Lucio Costa was the leading supporter, given their "plastic properties and their relation to the Brazilian constructive tradition" (Costa, 1962). And, luckily again, tile panels were Bulcão's comfort zone.

After Pampulha, Bulcão continued to take lessons with Portinari. From 1948 to 1949 he attended drawing and lithography courses at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, in Paris. Another crucial step in his career happened in 1958, when he moved to Brasília to integrate Niemeyer's team. As an enduring choice, he definitively established there.

The relationship between Niemeyer and Bulcão worked really fine. Among their best-known moments: the tile panel at Our Lady of Fatima Church (1957); the white marble and black granite panel for the National Congress hall (1960); the concrete relief for the National Theater façade (1966), blending together heaviness and

< Sarah Children's Centre (1982), architect **Glauco Campelo**.
Athos Bulcão giving explanations to workers about the tiles' layers.

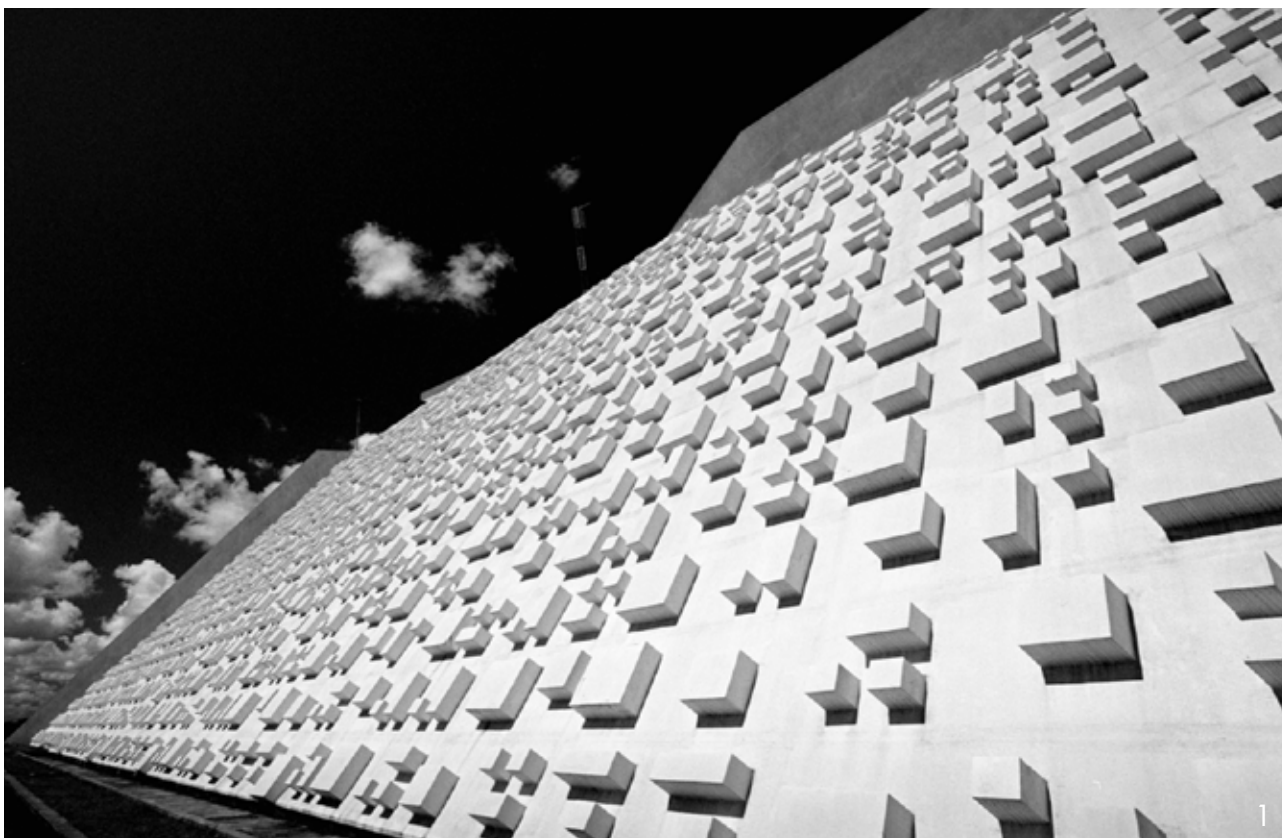


Figure 1. Claudio Santoro National Theater, architect **Oscar Niemeyer**. Concrete relief, 1966.

Figure 2. Itamaraty Palace (1966), architect **Oscar Niemeyer**. Hall marble relief.

Figure 3. Athos Bulcão in front of his panel for the Our Lady of Fatima Church (1957), architect **Oscar Niemeyer**.

Figure 4. National Congress (1960), architect **Oscar Niemeyer**. Hall white marble and black granite panel.

All pictures were gently provided by the Athos Bulcão Foundation

lightness, considered one of his masterpieces; the white marble relief for the entrance hall at Itamaraty Palace (1966); the wooden relief at the Brasília Movie Theater (1976); the tile panel at Flower Market (1983). These examples are enough to “certify the accuracy of Athos Bulcão in understanding and solving spatial problems which were claimed for his fellow architect” (Farias, 2008).

The great artist also collaborated with other important architects in Brasília, such as Lucio Costa (TV Tower), Milton Ramos (school façade), Glauco Campelo (Park of the City) and Sergio Parada (International Airport). Outstanding is his fruitful partnership with architect João Filgueiras Lima, better known as Lelé, initiated in 1962. As Lelé’s designs are thought out with the use of industrial-made elements, the artworks by Bulcão followed the same orientation, as in the Disbrave building. Together, they developed researches on constructive techniques and structural elements and conceived materials especially related to prefabrication. An amazing series of works can be found in the Sarah Rehabilitation Hospitals.

A distinctive mark of his practice was to create modular drawings for tiles and then encourage bricklayers to lay the pieces according to their own taste, somehow diluting the authorship of the final artwork. Many of these drawings would serve as patterns for the tiles manufacturing at an industrial scale. His sophisticated creations included graphic design for books and posters.

“The numerous panels, murals, reliefs, architectural elements that he created later as collaborative interventions in the designs of several architects, were geometrical abstract in style. This fact alone would suffice to place the artist in the forefront of Brazil’s constructive art—both

Concrete and Neo-Concrete” (Farias, 2008).

Athos Bulcão was born on July 2nd 1918 in Rio de Janeiro, and died on July 31st 2008 in Brasília. A man aware of his time, his art was crucial to architectural identity, and he profited of every occasion to create a microcosm of color and beauty, urging and instigating our eyes to feel. He became the protagonist where the artist was supposed to have a supporting role. His works are in constant dialogue with people, and now they are part of our historic heritage.

Notes

1. Rossetti, 2009. The congress took place in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Brasília, and was attended by renowned critics, artists and architects from different countries.

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The Restoration of the Alvorada Palace*

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This article describes the highly successful restoration of Alvorada Palace completed in 2005 by Sergio Valle Brasileiro. After situating the importance of the Alvorada within Niemeyer's overall oeuvre and describing the original design, the dilapidated state of the building at the turn of the 21st century is described. The details of the restoration, including meetings with Oscar Niemeyer about specific design decisions and consultation with IPHAN, and the challenge of sourcing new materials to match the original, such as jacaranda—now protected by IBAMA—are also studied. The Alvorada serves as an example for the restoration of other Modernist buildings in Brazil.

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By Hattie Hartman

TODAY, *Palácio da Alvorada* looks as good, if not better—due to mature landscaping—than it did upon completion in 1958. It is open for public tours, a showcase for the Brazilian presidency and for Modern architecture. Oscar Niemeyer at his best.

The beautifully restored, gleaming building which greets visitors today is in marked contrast to the deteriorating building President Lula found in 2002 when he first crossed the threshold of his official Brasília residence. The Alvorada was so leaky that during a visit by President Clinton in 1997, an array of buckets had to be placed behind a screen in the state dining room to cope with the infiltrations. Completed in 2005, the Alvorada restoration had minimal coverage in the Brazilian press, as politically astute Lula could not be seen to be pouring money into his own residence, when elected on a platform of socialist reform. He cleverly concluded that the best approach was to call on several private-sector companies to assure the bill—which they willingly did.

Despite Brazil's long-established tradition of Modern architecture, restoration of Modernism is only just starting as an imperative concern. Its lack of prestige is clear from the fact that the Alvorada restoration was perfunctorily assigned to a Bank of Brazil in-house architect. Fortunately for the Alvorada, this architect was Sergio Valle Brasileiro, a former University of Brasília professor. Valle himself acknowledges that he initially perceived the project primarily as routine maintenance, without particular interest. Once he realized the project's significance, he moved to have it reclassified from refurbishment to restoration. This meant a review by IPHAN, Brazil's national patrimony institute, and liaison with the Oscar Niemeyer Foundation. Valle took it upon himself to make monthly trips to Rio to discuss design decisions with 'Oscar', who, after several sessions, gave Valle power of attorney to

take decisions in his name. Archival research turned up the original specification: a three-page unsigned document with minimal information.

Alvorada Palace occupies a unique place in Brasília history because it was sited and designed prior even to Lucio Costa's master plan. This helps explaining its isolated position near the lake and away from the city. It was among the first non-timber buildings to be built on Brasília's *cerrado*, and as such, the first monumental demonstration of President Juscelino Kubitschek's dream of relocating the Capital city from coastal Rio to the hinterland. Alvorada also marks an important turning point in Niemeyer's career. Not only did the commission for Brasília, and Alvorada in particular, present the 49-year-old architect with the unparalleled challenge of how to represent Brazil's future in architectural form, but it came fast on his first European tour, where he had digested the lessons of classicism. Niemeyer's reinterpretation of a classical portico with the swooping curvilinear columns of Alvorada has an elegance of proportion and lightness of touch that is absent in much of his later work. Alvorada has nothing to do with "form follows function". This is form for form's sake.

Niemeyer's concept for the palace was straightforward: a long, low rectangular glass box between two plans supported by a distinctive colonnade. Located asymmetrically to the northwest, a miniature chapel enclosed in a spiral of white marble completes the ensemble. The palace's three levels include a main reception floor, an upper residential floor and a basement service area. Walls consist of floor-to-ceiling glazing in anodized aluminum frames, and privacy is provided by pale turquoise blinds. The state rooms, with their views to the landscaped gardens and Brasília beyond, are spectacular gathering spaces, yet the building lacks intimacy as a residence. Given this, it's unsurprising that a couple of recent presidents have opted not to occupy Alvorada, which in turn helps explaining its deterioration.

The architect chose a rich palette of Brazilian materials for the occasion: honed white marble for the exterior columns and polished black granite for the portico floor. The interior floors are jacaranda, an Amazonian hardwood similar to mahogany. However, poorly built at the outset due to the rudimentary site conditions, Alvorada had not weathered well. Brasília's strong sun and heavy rains had yellowed the building's white marble, and a poor detailing at the base of the glazed exterior wall had resulted in extensive water damage to the jacaranda flooring. Inaccessible pipe work had caused leaks inside. Kitchens and bathrooms, lighting and services were all in need of renewal, and air conditioning was required in certain rooms.

With the input of IPHAN, it was decided to retain as many original materials as possible. Though basically cooperative throughout the project, IPHAN did make one surprisingly major *faux pas*, recommending the removal of the 30 imperial palm trees which stand in front of the palace. IPHAN argued that they were not part of Niemeyer's original design and that they obstructed the view of the facade. Fortunately, Niemeyer saw the absurdity of the proposal, and it was abandoned.

Replacing the damaged floorboards was one of the restoration's major challenges, since jacaranda is now protected by IBAMA, the Brazilian regulating agency for environmental matters. Valle considered removing the upper layer of some of the tongue-and-groove boards to make up the shortfall, but found a better solution when, through IBAMA, he was able to locate some embargoed stock which proved adequate for the job. The pink marble of the first lady's bathroom also proved difficult to source. Niemeyer recalled the original supplier, an Italian importer in Rio now in his 80s, who was able to source a pink Turkish marble to match the original stone.

Another work included dismounting and restoring the glazed facades. Valle explains that budget constraints meant that neither the aluminum frames nor the glazing panels could be replaced. The 3.2 x 2.6m x 5mm-thick untempered glass panels did not meet our days building regulations, but in conjunction with IPHAN, it was decided that in order to respect the facade proportions, the original glazing would be retained.

The white marble exterior was cleaned with water spray and the portico's granite floor was polished to a high sheen. Only the lower course of marble on the chapel exterior was replaced. An extensive debate focused on the marble balustrade added in the 1980s along the walkway between the palace and the chapel. Valle considered it should be retained (because if removed it might be replaced with something worse). All water and electricity systems were rerouted to a cavity in the roof and,



as part of the work in the bathrooms, all plumbing was made accessible from the exterior to avoid future damage to marble walls.

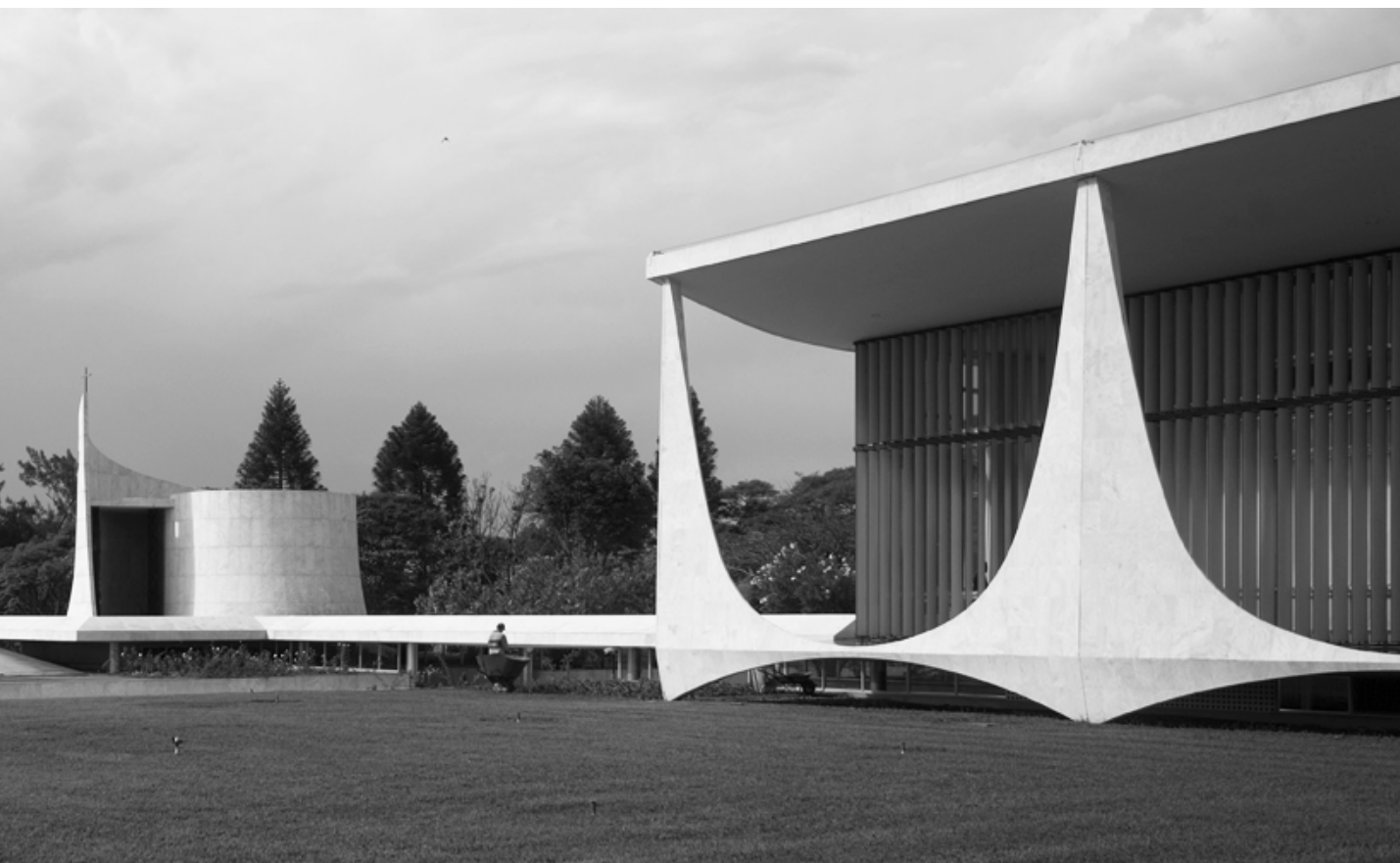
The visitor's first glimpse of the palace is across a vast green lawn inhabited by *emas*¹. Foreseeing its importance, Niemeyer incorporated an imperceptible level change between this vantage point and Alvorada portico to exaggerate the perspective. A reflecting pool mirrors the colonnade. Alvorada is elegant without being monumental, imperial palms included. Now restored to its former glory, the palace is lyrical and moving. These just hints at the emotion it must have evoked across the world in its days.

Notes

1. Big rhea or American ostrich.

Hattie Hartman

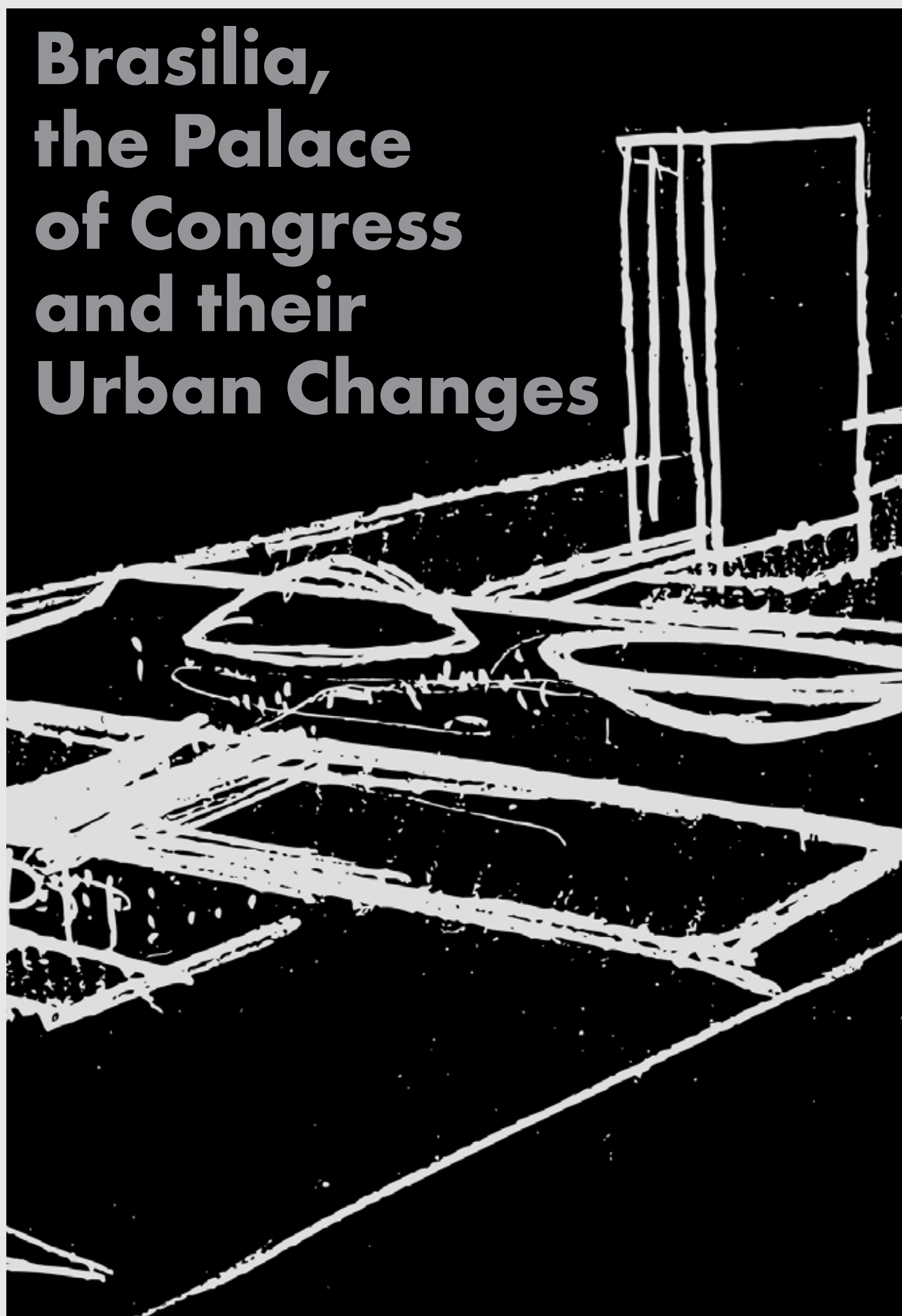
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Alvorada Palace, **Oscar Niemeyer**, 1958. Photos by Enrico Cano



Brasilia, the Palace of Congress and their Urban Changes



The Palace of Congress in Brasília, designed by Oscar Niemeyer in 1958, played an effective role in defining its urban context. Lúcio Costa's original competition sketches show one tower, with a domed horizontal building. Niemeyer conciliated the different levels of the frontal Esplanade and of the lower Plaza behind, rotating it, and placing two domes and two towers instead of one, representing the two legislative institutions housed. The building presence amidst a vast green area became the main symbol of Brasília. In the last 50 years, however, its surroundings gave place to several new institutional buildings designed by Niemeyer himself.

By Danilo Matoso Macedo and Elcio Gomes da Silva

We must build what is superfluous, because what is necessary will be built anyway; the superfluous must be built now, because it will be necessary in the future and if we don't do it now, the town may atrophy, it may not be fully accomplished. I want to do the entire structure, I want to leave the city skeleton assembled, and lightened.

President Juscelino Kubitschek,
commenting Brasília under construction

ONCE President Juscelino Kubitschek received the approval of the National Congress to transfer the Federal Capital of Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to a still non-built city, there was no time to waste.¹ The master plan, by Lúcio Costa, was selected in 1957. As strong national symbols were necessary, Costa's design located all civic buildings along a monumental axis, sited directly on the natural landscape and apart from the urban area. This axial strategy was highly successful, as it allowed this area to be formally configured and almost completed for the inauguration of Brasília, three years and a month later.

Its main ensemble—the Palace of Congress, designed by Niemeyer and his team—would become both an icon of Brasília to the country and a symbol of Brazilian modern architecture to the world. And more, an essential element of the urban plan: *there, urbanism and architecture effectively created the landscape, with the strength of a second nature (...) its presence was incorporated to the horizon...*² Here is presented a brief study of the relationship between Niemeyer's building and Costa's urban plan [figure 1], and their influence over each other.

The Congress in the Plan

Lúcio Costa's sketches of the Pilot Plan already show a preliminary delineation of some architectural elements.³ Among them the Palace of Congress, to be developed by Niemeyer and his team, along with other palaces.

Costa created a tall office building for the Congress, which he displaced to the north side of the mall, leaving

centralized a horizontal prism with a dome on top housing the assemblies—a synthesis between the asymmetrical implantation of the *Cidade Universitária*—of which he kept a "Palm Tree Forum proposed in 1936 by Le Corbusier"—and the articulation of the United Nations Building in New York, where the horizontal building with a dome opens over two plazas. Yet it leaves a 50 meter-wide strip on the south side that integrates both of them—along with the repetition of the mirror pool theme in different places—connecting the *Esplanade of Ministries* and the *Plaza of the Three Powers* in a single public space. Natural vegetation would come near to the Congress building, through a "neck" conformed by the intersection of the linear plateau of the Esplanade and the 9,5 meters lower triangle of the Plaza. In front of the building another square ending the Esplanade would be configured, formed by a mirror pool, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice—both designed as small squared prisms, differently from the ten-storey slabs of the other ministries [figure 2].

Costa's plan has undergone changes from the competition-winning sketches to the initially built town,⁴ and the design for the Parliament building played a role in this process. In Brazil, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were formed as two completely different institutions, which originally occupied different buildings—*Palácio Monroe* and *Palácio Tiradentes*—in Rio de Janeiro.⁵ The new Congress should express not only one assembly, with one dome and one office tower, but two, with two different office towers for both institutions.

Niemeyer's solution⁶ was the horizontal building perpendicular to the Esplanade, so that the two assemblies would be equally viewed, in front of not one but two twin office towers, opened to north and south, with blind walls facing east and west. Over the platform the assemblies were symbolized by two domes—one of them inverted—corresponding to the Senate and to the Chamber of Deputies [figure 3]. The design came along with some changes to the plan: the central mall was enlarged from 180 meters to 200-meter-wide, so that Chamber

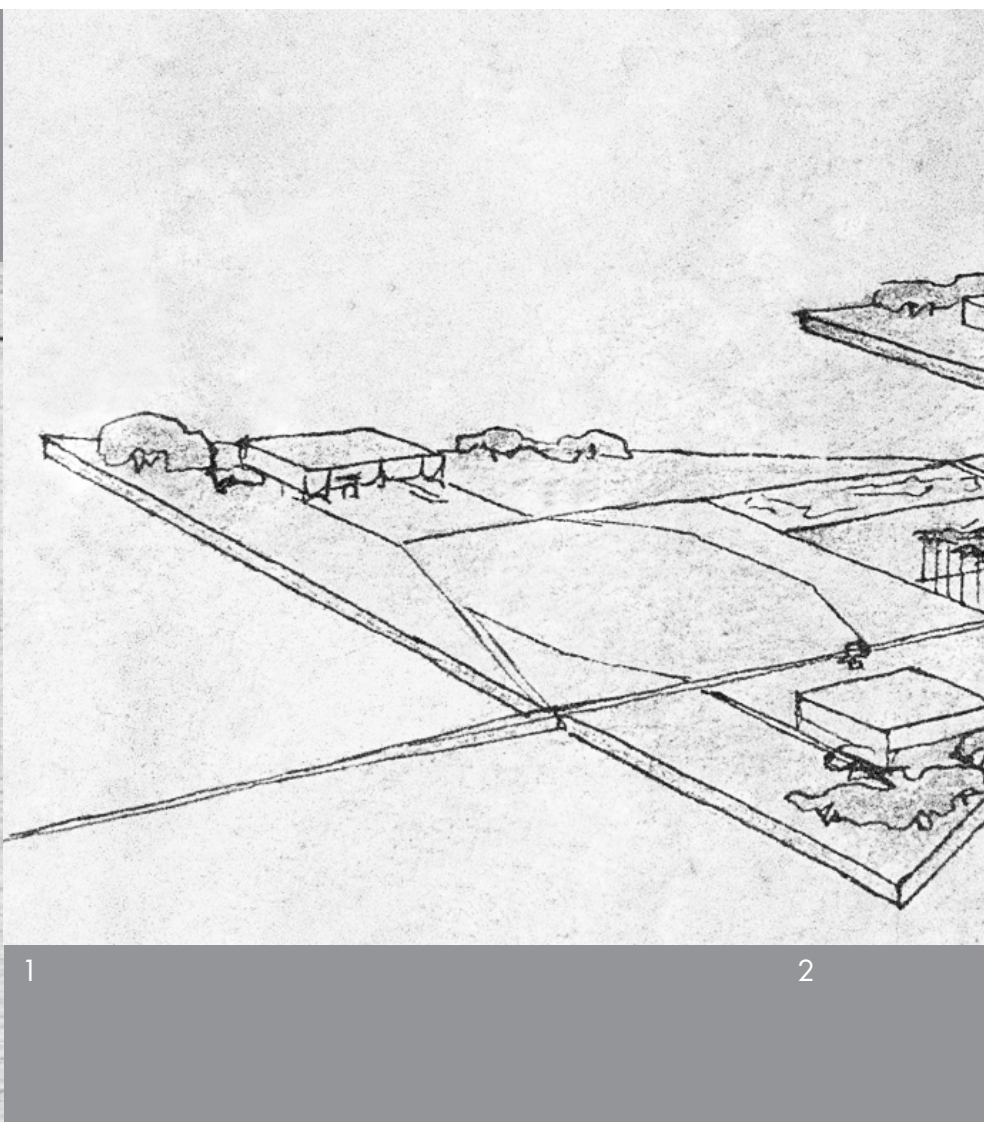
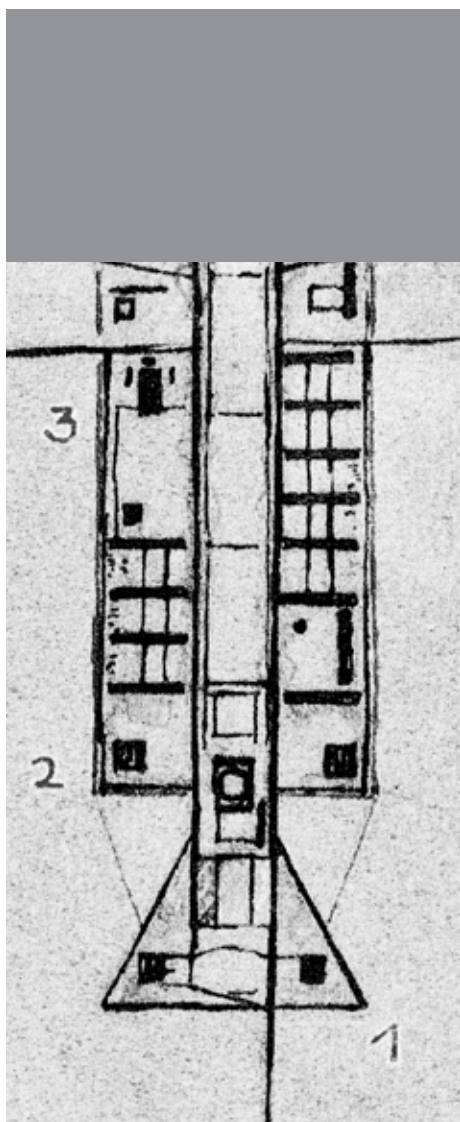
and Senate domes would fit in the platform, keeping the horizontal proportion necessary as a counterpoint for the two towers and holding visual space for the two domes. Costa, however, decided to keep the total width of the Esplanade *Plateau* (600 meters).

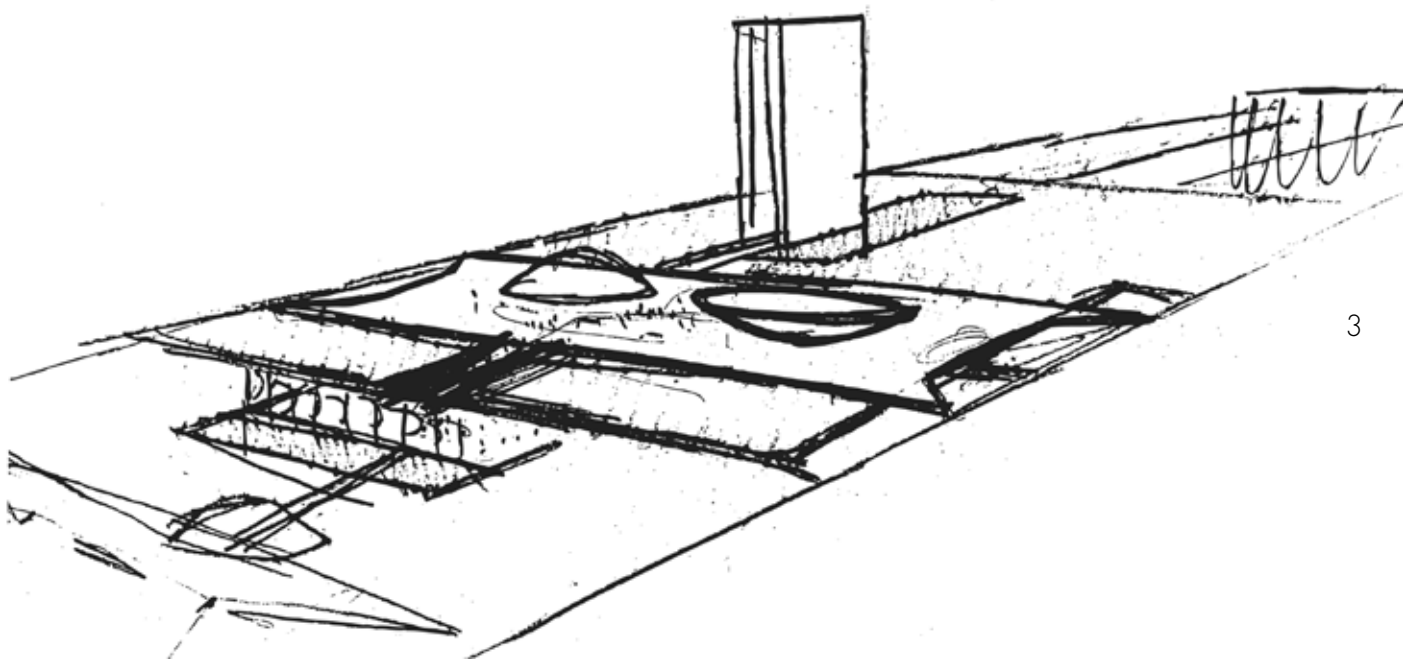
As the platform was placed on the Esplanade level—so that the domes would look as if standing on the ground-level—an earthwork problem came out. The base was kept open towards the west side, unveiling the façade of a horizontal slab at short distance. This generated not only a horizontal area of almost 75 meters in front of the building, on the level of the plaza behind, but also a 175 meter-long slope on the central lawn of the mall: summing up 250 meters to reach the upper level. Another consequence of this strategy was a 75 meter displacement of the Plaza to the east, so that the equilateral triangle could fit the central mall aligned with the corners of the platform.

The west sloped area replaced the now lost frontal square, connected to the special ministries on the sides—which were kept and were specifically designed by Niemeyer a few years later. The loss of this public space, the twisting of the horizontal block, and the triangle reposition completely disconnected the frontal square from the Plaza of the Three Powers. That disconnection still causes some touristic and ceremonial confusion, since the main access to the Congress has almost no connection to the Plaza where the other Palaces are and the visitors just can't find a way to walk from one to the others [figures 4 a, b].

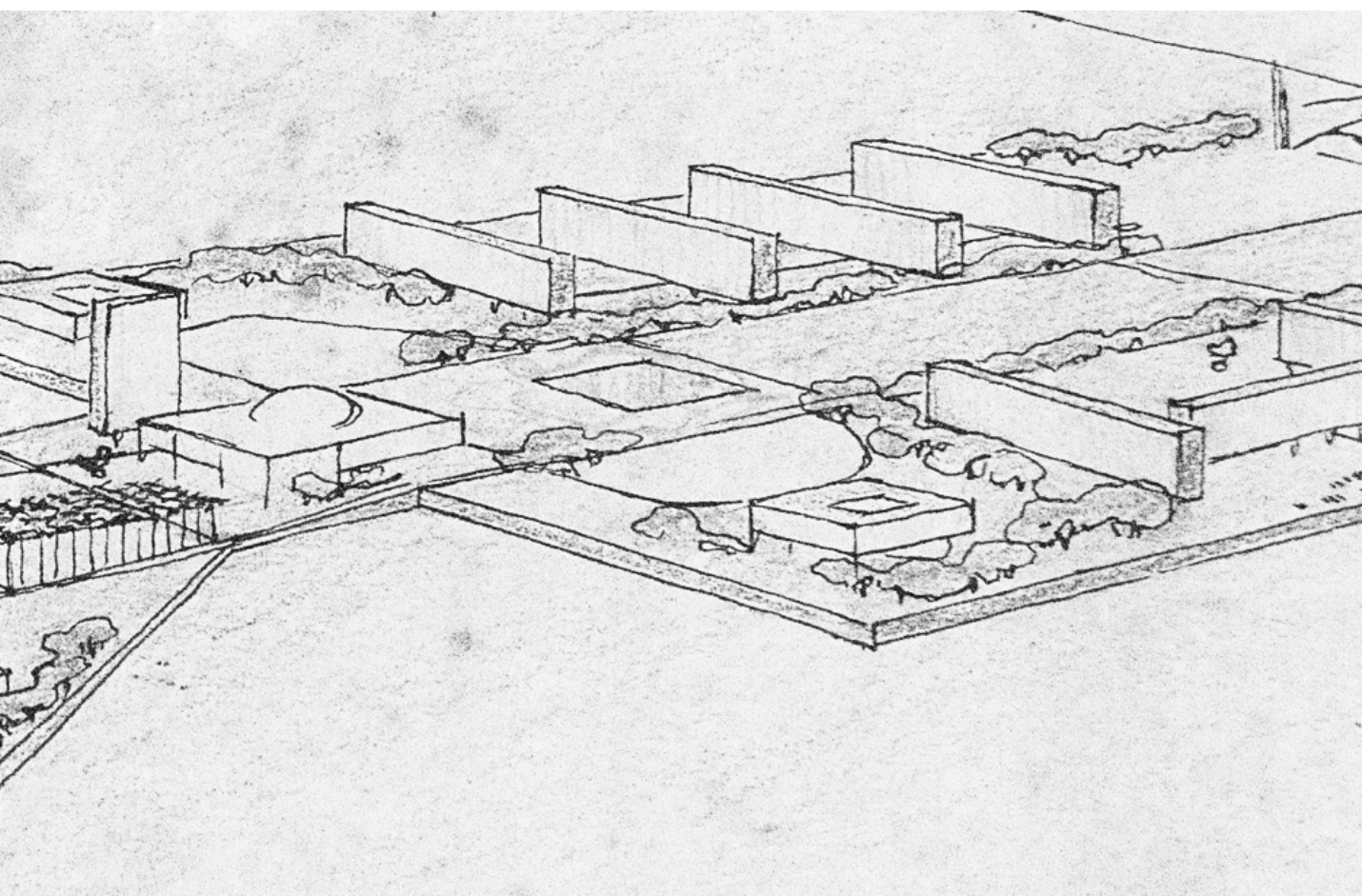
The Congress after the plan

Juscelino Kubitschek's political strategy did work. The symbolic town skeleton was ready in 1960, and it worked as a development focus for the central part of the Brazilian territory, as expected.





3

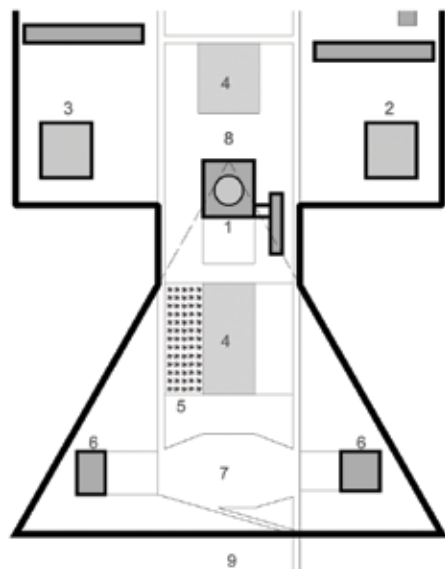


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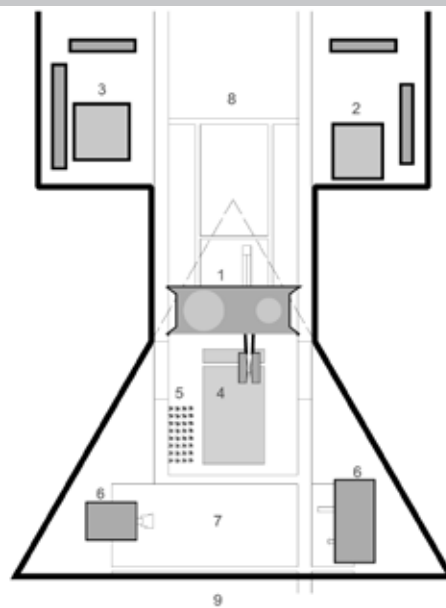
Figure 1. Pilot Plan of Brasília. **Lúcio Costa** sketches. Esplanade and Plaza of Three Powers. Casa Lúcio Costa

Figure 2. Plaza of Three Powers. **Lúcio Costa** sketches. Competition preliminary studies. Casa Lúcio Costa

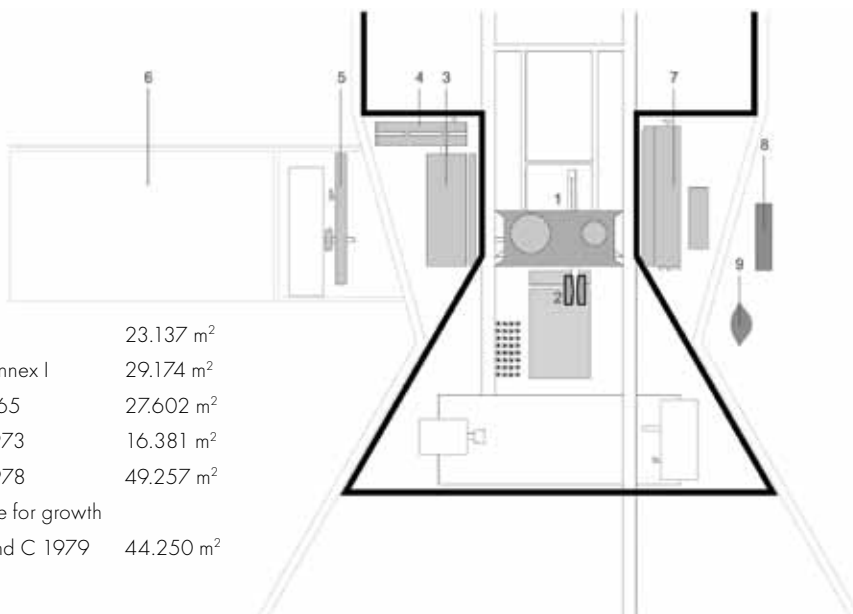
Figure 3. Palace of Congress. **Oscar Niemeyer** study with domes over. Personal collection, Matheus Gorovitz



- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. National Congress Palace | 4. Mirror pool | 7. Plaza |
| 2. Ministry of Justice | 5. Palm Tree Forum | 8. Esplanade |
| 3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 6. Palace | 9. Natural landscape |



4



- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. National Congress Palace | 23.137 m ² |
| 2. Chamber of Deputies and Senate - Annex I | 29.174 m ² |
| 3. Chamber of Deputies - Annex II - 1965 | 27.602 m ² |
| 4. Chamber of Deputies - Annex III - 1973 | 16.381 m ² |
| 5. Chamber of Deputies - Annex IV - 1978 | 49.257 m ² |
| 6. Chamber of Deputies - Area available for growth | |
| 7. Senate - Annex II: A 1970, B 1977 and C 1979 | 44.250 m ² |
| 8. Senate - Annex III: Future building | |
| 9. Senate - Auditory - Future building | |

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Figure 4. Plaza of Three Powers.

Lucio Costa and **Oscar Niemeyer**, 1957

Left: **Lucio Costa**, March 1957

Right: **Oscar Niemeyer**, July 1957 Computer-aided design from originals and sketches.

Danilo Matoso Macedo and Elcio Gomes da Silva

Figure 5. Plaza of Three Powers, Palace of Congress and Annexes, 2010

Computer-aided design from originals and sketches.

Danilo Matoso Macedo and Elcio Gomes da Silva

After the inauguration, however, the actual demands of the institutions revealed to be much bigger than what those emblematic buildings would support. As Brasília would not be for some years a fully functional town, the institutions had to cope with the heavy burden of providing full infra-structure for its populations. This need for support, along with the natural administration growth, soon brought the need for new annexes to almost every building. Such is the case of the Congress, with five new additions. All designed by Niemeyer and his team, when commissioned by authorities [figure 5].⁷

Before Brasília was listed as world heritage, in 1987, the surrounding natural landscape was entirely divided into large lots destined to house several institutions—mostly judiciary—that were originally placed in more central and denser areas, in smaller buildings. Their political power allowed the construction of a full sequence of ten-

storey-high, 200-meter-long buildings at the south side of the plaza—all of them also designed by Niemeyer and in some way formally descendant from Chamber of Deputies' ten-storey Annex IV. A kind of *Judiciary esplanade* is being built today, but with no proper urban or planning strategy. The Congress itself, owning the surrounding areas, will continue to grow [figure 6].

This new reality faces us with different development and conservation problems for that region. Is it possible to triplicate the total original area of the Monumental zone without radically changing its original characteristics? Moreover, some original intentions—those listed by World Heritage—were never fulfilled. Should those intentions—such as a better connection between the Congress and the Plaza—still be pursued? The key to these questions, we believe is to understand both historical values and contemporary demands.

Notes

1. In 1956, before the competition for the urban plan, the presidential palace was already being designed by Oscar Niemeyer. See: Niemeyer, 1956
2. Costa, Lima, e Costa, 1985, 38
3. Cf. Costa, 1995
4. See Costa, Lima, e Costa, 1985, 27. See also: Leitão, 2003, 95
5. Both palaces were Eclectic buildings with single domes. See Macedo, 2010, also Segre e Barki, March 2010. A competition was held in 1904 in order to choose a design for a single Palace of Congress. The design winner, by Heitor de Mello, was a single-domed building inspired on the North-American Capitol. See Brenna, 1987
6. Some of these sketches were published in: Gorovitz, 1985
7. For a study on the annexes see: Silva e Sánchez, 2007

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The Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia

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This article explores the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, the Itamaraty Palace which is one of the most important buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer in Brasília. Besides the constructive complexity, in this project the architect organizes and ranks several spatial correlations, making the palace terrace—the *varanda*—its great architectural surprise.

By Eduardo Pierrotti Rossetti

BRASILIA'S architecture remains impressing to all who visit the city, keeping the original force of its modernity. At the same time the presence of Oscar Niemeyer's architecture also retains its powerful meanings. Of the many works of civic-palaces, temples, courts, ministries, a work stands in a unique way: the design for the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, the Itamaraty Palace, conceived, designed and built between 1959 and 1970.

Overcome the euphoria of Brasília inauguration in 1960, its effective consolidation was contingent upon transfer of the Foreign Ministry. More than one ministry transplanted from Rio de Janeiro to the savannah (*cerrado*), the new palace should meet expectations and political perspectives of the Brazilian diplomacy. Although the Palace of the Foreign Ministry very dense symbolic meaning, the uses of its dependencies must be flexible to work in accordance to the diplomatic routine demands. To this end, the Palace must have space for Brazil to exercise its diplomatic skills with other nations, with space devoted to symbolic exchanges. In ceremonies and social events, different degrees of formality are demanded, making use of the Palace of the Foreign Ministry is mediated by cultural codes and behaviors of those living and those who seek to dominate their space, or through the behavior of guests and hosts. Thus, the Palace architecture has to provide cultural and natural space conditions for the exercise of diplomatic activities.

The Itamaraty Palace complements the representative Ministries buildings, articulating the symbolic transition of power between the Ministries, the National Congress and the Three Powers Square, where the Presidential Palace and the Palace of Supreme Court are located. The Palace of the Foreign Ministry defines a correlation value and importance with the other palaces. Instead of concrete columns coated with white marble, setting a transparent box which touches the ground, Niemeyer works with concrete, designing a building whose shape is defined by a powerful arcade with 14 arches that support the entire symbolic Palace, emerging from a reflecting pool with a water garden designed by Burle Marx.

Oscar Niemeyer designed a palace with free plans according to a structural modulation. These free plans

are organized by transparent glass panels and independent walls defining a continuous space which can only be realized through the experience of promenades. Wandering among the lobbies and halls, stair climbing and inner spaces contemplation become part of the perception of the Palace whose elegance makes no concessions to extravagance. Itamaraty Palace proclaims a decent elegance without opulence, avoiding ostentation, by giving a sense of nobility to the purposes and programmatic practices that civic duties require. Niemeyer picks up several materials to hold on the project and to proclaim a noble meaning of the modern architecture language according to the function this Palace has to achieve. The architect organizes and ranks the spatial correlations, making the palace terrace—the *varanda*—its great surprise.

The veranda is an ancestral space for living in Brazil's sense of living. Originally it is characterized as a pleasant place to stay, a refreshing place that promotes the transition between the exterior and interior. The daily presence of the veranda configures spatial attributes of traditional character and its own, linked to cultural patterns of sociability and public coexistence, collective or private. So the veranda is an important nexus of Brazilian architecture.

The veranda is the most important saloon, the noble saloon of the Palace from where it is possible to realize all the "*architectural spectacle*" that Oscar Niemeyer could achieve at a monumental scale conceived by Lúcio Costa's urban plan, opening up to Esplanade of Ministries, National Congress and Ministry of Justice. The structural aspect of the Foreign Ministry Palace arches become a remarkable intermediary device of interior/exterior relations concerning the Palace, the Esplanade, the city and the landscape, framing the *cerrado* skyline. Thus, the Palace *varanda* ensures privacy for those who can look into the monumental scale of Brasília, leaning on its window-sill, housed under the arcade framework.

Fully integrated with the halls, with the reception rooms and a banquet room, the veranda also becomes a strategic space on the ceremonies dynamics. Inherent informal habits and lifestyles contribute to change the profile of joint operation of the Foreign Ministry, pointing out other possibilities for sociability and interaction in this space.



Figure 1. Itamaraty Palace's above the water garden designed by **Burle Marx** Photo by: EPR-2008

Figure 2. Social saloons viewed from the veranda: transparency, modern art and old furniture in a continuous space. Photo by: EPR-2008

Figure 3. Brasilia Banquet Room opened to the veranda. Photo by: EPR-2008

Figure 4. National Congress viewed from Itamaraty's Palace veranda. Photo by: EPR-2008

Figure 5. Varanda under the arcade's framework and *Meteoro* sculpture.
Photo by: EPR-2008





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Thus, Niemeyer subverts the rigidity of the architectural program and adds another reference to the social and behavioral codes. So much more than an airy space or shade, the veranda becomes an extraordinary spatial device which is able to revolutionize the symbolical function of a palace designed as a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thus, Oscar Niemeyer emphasizes the architectural complexity without exacerbating his usual speech in defense of a free form. While the arcade remains as the Palace's strongest image, the architectural project keeps its constructive materiality. Niemeyer revolutionizes his own architecture, revitalizing and subverting the meanings

that only he can establish with the *praxis*, confirming his political beliefs through the intrinsic uses of the *varanda*.

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Transcontinental Modernism. M&G as an *Unité d'habitation* and a factory complex in Mozambique

By Ana Tostões and Maria Manuel Oliveira

WITH the aim of contributing to the documentation and conservation of the modern architectural heritage, this paper presents *Monteiro & Giro Complex* (M&G), built during the 50's in Quelimane, Mozambique, with the goal of stressing the modernity of the social program and the technological approach. If one wants to gain a better understanding of the worldwide Diaspora of architectural modernism, it is essential to document and analyse the important heritage of sub-Saharan Africa. Modern architectural debates have been reproduced, transformed, contested and sometimes even improved in distant lands and overseas territories. These contradictory aspects of Modernist practice are revealed in the programmatic, technological and structural M&G industrial Complex.

1. context

In line with the ideological content of the Modern Movement revolutionary attitude of architecture, a new era was introduced in Africa's Portuguese colonies, responding to new political conditions after WWII. The link between architecture and revolution became a commitment for Portuguese architects and the statement of modern architecture became a political issue. It included solving the housing problem and extending architecture to the design of the city and land use planning. In fact, the formal, technological and ideological modern movement concepts began to be revealed in the expressiveness of works built in Lusophone Africa, since the late 40's. Personifying freedom and representing a symbol of hope and of a brighter future, modern architecture was envisioned as a means to fight heroically the totalitarian regime of Salazar's New State.

This modern cycle took place in the framework of the advancement of the industrialization process in the country and in the former colonies¹. The emphasis placed on large-scale infrastructures was accompanied by a period of great plastic creativity, in which the renewed modern expression under

Brazilian influence went hand in hand with the technological universe of the Corbusian proposal. Such freedom was translated into a transformation of the modern movement codes in reference to the new Brazilian architecture. After the publication of *Brazil Builds* (1943), the large dissemination of Brazilian projects in foreign magazines, and their exhibition in Portugal, aroused the enthusiasm of the modern architects.

The use of a modern vocabulary acquired a different scale in Africa. The size of the territory (Tostões, 1997) as well as the geographical and climate specifics found their guidelines within this particular context. In a less restrictive society, away from the centre of power, these architects shared the possibility of building with a free attitude appropriating the universality of modern ideas.

Throughout the 50's, many Portuguese architects, who had strong beliefs in the social transforming power of architecture, travelled to Africa's Portuguese colonies where architectonic expression could be implemented more freely than in the old metropolis, where public powers inhibited or even prohibited modern architecture. The reason why architects embarked on this African venture is a paradox that is important to explain. Although most of this work was commissioned by official entities in African colonies which were run by the Fascist regime, these territories were more open to modernization as they were further away from Portugal's central power and influence. This period was a huge and wonderful challenge for this "African generation" of architects (Fernandes, 2002) as not only did they have the possibility to work according to a new modern language with a true progressive edge, but also in *avant-garde* large-scaled project commissions. Furthermore, stimulated by the large open immense African landscape, they had the chance to believe that they were building a new place, a new world, that would make the difference and plunge them into contemporaneity. Fiercely and audaciously, they would create the *Modern Utopia in Africa*.

2. Losa & Barbosa: building the modernity from Oporto to Quelimane

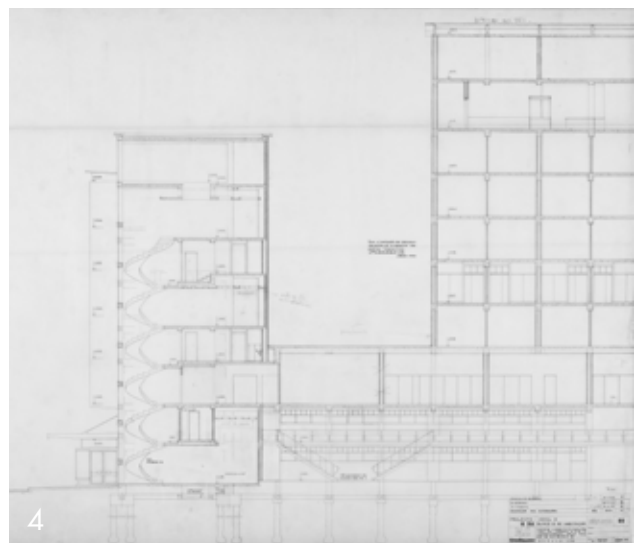
FROM 1945 onwards Oporto gathered projects of an unusual modernity. Arménio Losa (1908-1988) and Cassiano Barbosa (1911-1999) distinguished themselves as stimulating innovative designers and were to be the protagonists in a noteworthy intervention in the city. Manipulating imported models, they developed a new approach in terms of image, spatiality and functional organization, accompanied by rigorous mastery of construction technologies.

The post-war atmosphere confirmed the Modern rupture. It was the moment when the regime was challenged within the context of the First National Congress of Architecture (1948), when architects started calling for the adoption of the Modern Movement Architecture principles and exalted the importance of a functional response to housing issues and city planning.

An analysis of the presented papers reveals the question of the "Utopia of Architecture transforming life and society" as being the most common theme raised by the 35 theses. The transformation of the world with the participation and the leadership of architects now seemed possible. Democratization was aiming for an architecture that "must be within the reach of the greatest number possible". Architecture acquires an eminently social role, overcoming the classical domains of an "architecture that could no longer be limited to serving a privileged few, but the whole population" (Losa, 1948). Losa states that "The country is marching in the rearguard of nations...it will therefore have to rush into a conquering position in the march of progress. What has not yet been done...can be entirely contemporary, modern, perfect. These great assignments include major works of construction: buildings shall rise for sheltering the machines that multiply men's labour, and for man himself, who makes them work; buildings shall rise for housing, for learning, for culture and for recreation of populations drawn by these new sources of production...there is the potential possibility of planning new cities or, at least, important urban sets...The future action field is vast, almost virgin. It provides a place for all conceivable activities...products of mere technique, are beginning to be conceived as if they were real works of art; the utilitarian initial goal is now followed by the unexpected of all human creations: emotion. Emotion that is aroused by great or small achievements...and that demands an appeal to all creative skills. His collaboration will be permanently required: in the dam, on the bridge, on the highway, in the workshop and in the factory."



1. Quelimane, Mozambique, aerial view, 1950's.
2. Monteiro & Giro Complex and Hotel Chuabo, Quelimane, Mozambique. Photo by Eduardo Figueirinhas Correia.
3. Hotel Chuabo hall, Quelimane, Mozambique. Photo by Eduardo Figueirinhas Correia.
4. Section, Hotel Chuabo, Quelimane, Mozambique. FAUP/CDUA/AL/ARQ 115-7. Photo Arménio Teixeira©.
5. Monteiro & Giro Factory, Quelimane, Mozambique. FAUP/CDUA/AL/ARQ 169-23. Photo Arménio Teixeira©.
6. Monteiro & Giro Factory, Quelimane, Mozambique. Under the dining hall dome. Photo by Maria Manuel Oliveira.
7. Monteiro & Giro Factory, Quelimane, Mozambique. Dining hall and housing cell view. Photo by Eduardo Figueirinhas Correia.
8. Monteiro & Giro Factory, Quelimane, Mozambique. Housing cell detail. Photo by Eduardo Figueirinhas Correia.



Losa's political convictions presented in his contribution to the Congress, express the dimension of his commitment.² M&G must be analysed in the scope of this transforming spirit inspired by the idea of building a brave new world where Brasília stands as a reference.

3. M&G, a innovative complex: city and factory

M&G IS simultaneously an industrial complex and a community life proposal, applying the *Unité d'habitation* and the industrial city concepts.

M&G commercial emporium, with its head office in Oporto, dealt with several commercial activities in Mozambique, from raw materials exploitation, such as cotton and sisal, to machinery import. In the 50's, the idea of moving the head office to Quelimane lay both in the strategically geosition of this port city, which attracted the commercial activity output of Zambezia, and in the increasingly

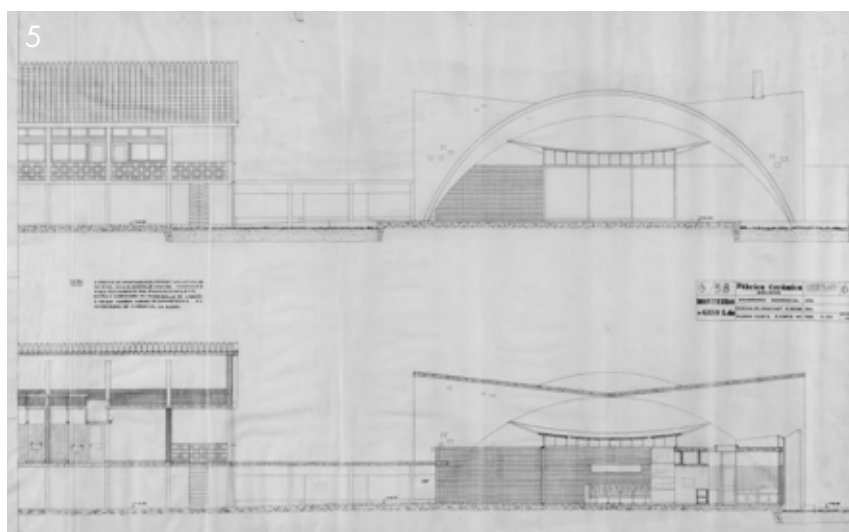
promising results of the business in Mozambique. The ensemble is composed of two distinct poles: the urban pole, located in the centre of Quelimane, facing the Cathedral and *Bans Sinais* river contains an Hotel, collective housing, commercial and social facilities and a garage plus gas station; the industrial pole, located on the periphery of Quelimane, comprises a ceramics factory, housing for the workers and engineers, offices and supporting facilities, where the social centre and dining hall stand out.

The urban pole commission consisted of a compact volume that occupied the entire city block. However, the architects Losa & Barbosa proposed a set of different articulated volumes with different heights and sizes. Initially it was developed along three sides, shaping an "U" ensemble. With further development of the plans, the complex was arranged in a square shape surrounding a large courtyard, where the garage would be built. The programme was organized in layers: the commercial layer on the ground floor, the multifunctional layer on the floor above, and on the upper floors,

the residential area, organized according to various typologies; the circulation galleries, like "streets in the sky", connecting all the uses, are located throughout the interior façades of the buildings, opening onto the patio.

Losa & Barbosa's proposal intended to simplify the built structure's organization, reducing costs and purifying the architecture itself. At the same time, it aimed to detach the building from the rest of the city, granting autonomy and monumentality to the ensemble. The nine floor Hotel block follows the same layer concept, proposing a transparent double ceiling lobby on the ground floor, with a mezzanine, which connected social areas at the gallery level. This volume stands out, not only due to its scale, but also to the importance assigned to the last levels where the dining hall, the bar and the *boîte*, connected by a large terrace that opens onto the river and the immense surrounding landscape, are located.

The diversity of typologies, functions and layers expresses the modern idea of mixing uses. Two of the housing blocks foresaw duplex apartments over a shopping layer. The third block included offices and exclusively one-roomed apartments for single people. Finally, restoring the sense of an interior common patio – which in itself is one of the major planning elements within the African tradition (Kultermann, 1969; Nmandi, 1997) "the service station roof terrace is to be used as a playground for the housing blocks tenants. The access to this playground is directly established from each housing block."



This project was an opportunity to develop a symbiosis between different scales, ranging from the urban scale to the design, exemplified by Hotel *Chuabo*³, where the architects created a global design, from furniture, to cutlery, from graphic design to works of art. The contribution of European and native artists can still be admired in the entrance hall and in the huge mural of the *Chuabo* Hotel dance hall.

The industrial pole was developed around the Ceramics Factory, along a path that led to the dining hall, structuring an important axis flanked on both sides by housing cells. The dining hall area – in the centre of the building – consists of a square that is simply suggested by the ceiling: an inverted suspended concrete dome with a span of 21 meters, four-pointed star shaped. It is defined by large sliding glass surfaces opening the inner space towards the outdoors. According to the architects, the dining hall was “a special building, mainly characterized by a domed ceiling that gives volume and shape to it. The dome covers a square space, of which only a small area is compartmented and enclosed. The facilities are freely displayed under this dome, which plays the role of a large protecting sunshade. The non-compartmented areas are the extension of the main facilities that go beyond the protected covered area.”

The houses are very simple volumes, covered by tiled gable roofs. The domestic space exists on the first floor, a unique elevated level standing on slabs, creating a sheltered area on the ground floor, for servants accommodation, children's recreation, garage and access staircase. The apartments are organized according to sets of four or more housing cells, departing from a unitary volume, though maintaining their total independence.

The construction is designed in order to respond to the tropical climate, and to enjoy the magnificent vegetation. Besides the suspended level, a roofed balcony surrounds the house, and the gable roof is conceived to work as a refreshing air-box, taking advantage of the different ceiling heights and thus, assuring permanent air circulation that is enhanced by the prevailing winds. In fact, beyond the programme and the technological innovations, climate control is an important issue which the architects tried to relate to existing regional conditions. In fact, environmental control was undertaken in order to respond to comfort criteria. *Solair* orientation and solar control underpinned the design of shading devices in order to respond to economical factors (Olgyay, 1963). The evaluating process of shading devices stimulated their creative design in the M&G complex.

The industrial pole buildings run roughly north-

east/south-west so as to catch the prevailing breeze and send it through the block's diverse openings. The social facilities of the Factory complex, such as the dining hall, which is covered by a large dome with open sides, have features throughout to allow maximum shading and ventilation. The comprehensive plan and the individual buildings are attempts to adjust to the extremely hot and humid climate of the Zambezia region by adapting traditional buildings features, such as the pierced walls, or breathing walls, which are used in the factory complex houses as well as in the Quelimane-Chuabo city block. The buildings have the same features allowing shade and ventilation for the interior by means of the deep verandas and *brise-soleil* through all floors on both sides of the building.

4. transcontinental: the modern diaspora

THE M&G Complex in Quelimane must be perceived within the African architectural context, in a wider transformation process. The work of F. Maxwell Fry (1899-1987) and Jane Drew (1911-1996), at the University College of Ibadan, Nigeria (1956), is an obvious reference. In fact, the open language of International Style was introduced but modified by a compromise between cultural, technological and climate considerations, revealing how Western and African traditions were being merged in an attempt to find a new unity. In this context African Modern architecture began to be recognized by the architectural critic, thus stimulating research and comparative studies. Ernst May's (1886-1970) stay in Tanzania and Kenya, the reference work of Rex Martensen (1905-1942) during the 30's in South Africa or Denys Lasdun's (1914-2001) contribution to advanced technology in Ghana, and Vasco Vieira da Costa (1911-1982), in Luanda, Angola, are examples that help identify a specific Southern African Modern architecture. The Mozambique architect Pancho Guedes (1924-) was one of the architects who contributed to develop symbols of the very essence of a new African design as he created imaginative solutions relating cultural local identity to the basic elements of space, considering that “buildings should belong to the people, architecture should become real and alive, and beauty should be warm and convulsive”.⁴

In fact, for Quelimane, M&G complex represents a masterpiece of a new era as it reveals the growing signs of the attention given by modern architects to new contexts, taking advantage of the specific opportunities arising in Africa. The will and possibility to work according to a new modern language with a true progressive edge, and to have *avant-garde*

large-scaled project commissions, represented a huge and wonderful challenge for this generation of architects. It also provides an account of a whole generation of artists, who, as we all know, were partnered by great engineers as well as important and audacious *entrepreneurs*. Connecting and exchanging different world visions, from European's to Brazilian's, or Colombian's, or Mexican's architecture as an inspirational source, one must not forget the affinity Portugal had with its great friend Lúcio Costa, who produced important written work and above all, conceived Brasília which became, in the end of the 50's, the symbol of the Modern expression in the world.

* This paper integrates the research project EWV Exchanging World Visions: modern architecture in Lusophone Africa looking through Brazilian experience (PTDC/AUR-AQI/103229/2008) developed by IST-UM.

Notes

1. The political situation in Portugal after WWII must be analysed in the frame of the foundation of the United Nations (1945) which stressed intense reverberations on the changing status in several parts of Africa. In fact, after WWII, when Portugal was still living under a dictatorship, anachronistically valuing its empire and its colonies, a number of architects went to Africa's lusophone countries and affirmed a modernity that was far from the State-sanctioned architectural models.
2. Losa and Barbosa technical commitment with the modern project and their confidence on a skilled design project communication led them to believe that a local team (arch. E. Figueirinhas and eng. R. Costa) would succeed carrying out the project execution, as it actually happened.
3. E. Maxwell Fry was an expert on tropical design and went to West Africa in 1944 becoming the most active practitioner of new architecture which he, along with Jane Drew, tried to relate to climate conditions.

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The sources used for this research are lacunary and sometimes contradict each other. In the course of the radical political changes of the 1930's, they were often destroyed or dispersed, which makes them rare and difficult to access. This essay is an attempt at a reconstruction of facts using *inter alia* the unpublished bibliography of Philip Tolziner.

Molotov Sotsgorod

By Oscar Buson

Translated by Tatiana Gulyaeva

November 2008

THE sky is low above Motovilikha. Making our way along a muddy street, in the timid light of this part of the Urals we see emerging before us a silhouette of carbonated concrete, an iron structure rusting in the cold, whose plaster panels between pilasters suggest a construction site of dubious standards. It is difficult to believe that eighty years before this old workers' club designed by constructivist architect P. Golosov (Gladyshev, 2008) provided the early Soviet society with up to three hundred thousand meals a day (Semyannikov, 2002). An emblem of the new socialist urbanisation, not only was the workers' canteen meant to rescue the woman

*To those who believed in a better world,
who applied their talent to its realisation
and who paid their lives for it.*

from her kitchen slavery, it was also supposed to be a place capable of generating the new social structure by becoming a venue for festivals and shows in the evenings [figure 1]. Several meters away we find a curvy-shaped building with sharply defined edges. Its faded crimson colour and white horizontal bands prompt its public building status. This is an infirmary at 11 Lebedev Street, built at the end of the 1920s [figure 2].

Then, with our feet still in the mud, we pass in front of a white house with purple lines, 15 Zil'kovsky Street [figure 3], or the agricultural college at 11 Zemlyachka Street [figure 4], the House of the

Teachers [figure 5] and the technical college in Ural Street [figure 6] till we arrive at Lebedev Street, where blocks of flats wet in the mud like bars of concrete [figure 7]. Some of them are embellished by friezes and acanthus leaves [figures 8, 9].

We were not aware yet that we were in the heart of Molotov, a new revolutionary town whose construction started in the mid-1920's. What seemed to us on that November day like a ruined part of a forgotten city, was actually a manifest of the socialist urbanism, built in order to bring people out of the mud. Motovilikha, a workers' community next to Perm, was more suitable for the new Soviet society than the old merchant town of Perm. Its geographic situation was ideal. Between it and the Kama River, a tributary of the Volga, stretched the Motovilikha mechanical plant. The town and the plant were cut through by railway and by a strip of greenery. In his book *Sotsgorod*, Nikolai Milyutin writes that Motovilikha is the most thriving town of Russia, an ideal place where the Soviet society could germinate. In 1938, Hannes Meyer also called Perm an ideal region, as "it has, as is seldom the case, all the elements for the development of planned economy of socialist type, due to the availability of natural resources, both heavy and light industry complexes,



Figure 1. Cantinde Club.
Before 1932, P. Golosov



Figure 2. Clinic.
Before 1932



Figure 3. Administration building.
Before 1932



Figure 4. Agricultural School.
Before 1932, Hannes Meyer team



Figure 5. Teacher's house.
After 1932, Hannes Meyer



Figure 6. Technical School. After 1932.
H. Meyer & A. Urban or P. Golosov

energy resources, an excellent river transportation network, a good railway network, an old cultural centre and well-cultivated countryside" (Maglio, 2002).

However, it is not only their common interest for Perm and its region that unites Meyer with Milyutin, it is the concept of a socialist town: the *Sotsgorod*.

Sotsgorod

It is believed that the author of the *Sotsgorod* concept is the sociologist Leonid M. Sabsovich. In the late 1920s, Sabsovich wrote about complete collectivisation of all forms of social life in a compact town comprised of standardized residential *combinats* (Kruft, 1985).

The principles of *Sotsgorod* had been germinating since the first years after the October Revolution. Between 1922 and 1923, simultaneously with the competition for the Palace of Labor, the first competition for socialist housing was launched in Moscow. According to the brief, the contestants had to plan flats for families with children and for single people. The contest brief required that the principles of a socialist town should be put into practice in two blocks in Moscow: one along Serpukhovskaya street, and the other in Simonov district. The blocks

flats were supposed to incorporate a workers' club, a kindergarten, a domestic services centre, a bath-house and a laundry room. The volumetric relations between the public functions and the housing lay in the basis for the development of communal life, which at that period still took place amid the existing merchant town. This question is fundamental for the concept of the collective city.

Among the submitted projects it is interesting to mention those by Andrei Belograd [figure 10] and Konstantin Melnikov [figure 11], who were awarded with the second prize for the Serpukhovskaya street block. Both projects suggest a hybrid topology of town houses arranged transversely in lines, with flats for single people on the ground floor and larger flats on higher floors and in the loft. Housing units can be accessed through individual entrances separated from the street by a private garden. Both projects propose arranging the communal services in a single building. Melnikov also suggests connecting the individual town houses with the public services by roofed passageways and porticos, in order to create spaces for people to meet in the course of their daily routines, engendered by the rhythms of the life of the emerging socialist society and its new architecture².

Melnikov's project, just like that of Belograd, proposes simple architectural forms and is devoid of ornaments. The spaces created by volumes are tense and form a hierarchy, thus giving the first answer to the question about the role of the individual in the communist society. These ideas are notably manifested in the standardised design of the lodgings and the relations between the residential part and the communal services.

The winners of the competition were the projects of Leonid Vesnin [figure 12] and Sergei Chernyshev. The typologies they proposed do not differ fundamentally from the ones used before the Revolution, the only difference being the inclusion of the pre-requisite communal services (Brumfield & Blair, 1993). The project by L. Vesnin has residential buildings arranged around the main regular-shaped semi-public space, with the public building inside it. The facade of the flats blocks is serial, but this design does not propose any standardization. The layout of the flats offers a remarkable level of comfort but does not suggest any communal usage of the residential block. The density in this project is higher than the two previously mentioned ones.

Eventually, none of these projects were realized in Moscow, but in 1928 Chernyshev's design was



Figure 7. Dwellings, built from 1928 onwards. Drawings by **S. Tschernyschew**, 1922-1923



Figure 8. Dwelling, cleaned façade

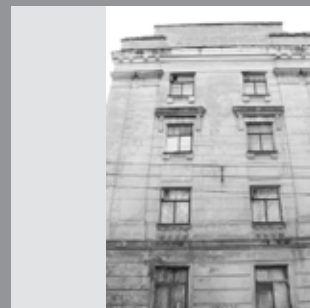


Figure 9. Dwelling, decorated façade



Figure 10. Collective dwelling project. 1922-1923, **A. Belograd**

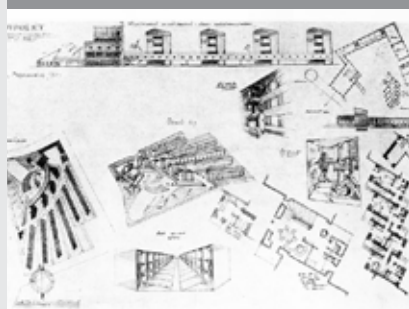


Figure 11. Collective dwelling project. 1922-1923, **K. Melnikov**



Figure 12. Collective dwelling project. 1922-1923, **L. Vesnin**

implemented in the construction of the new centre of Motovilikha³. On that November day we were still unaware of it, yet we found ourselves in the place where the first *Sotsgorod* has been built.

Molotov

BEGINNING with the 1930's, Motovilikha becomes more important than Perm. In 1931 Motovilikha will be renamed Molotov, and from the 1940-s, the town Perm-Molotov is officially called only Molotov. So, we were in the centre of Molotov, whose inhabitants eighty years before had been listening to jazz and European music (Semyannikov, 2002).

Molotov consists of twenty blocks of flats, having the same footprint: 50-meters-long and 11-meters-wide. Thirteen of those are made of brick and have three floors, another seven are made of concrete and have four floors. These seven buildings are remarkable for their construction and layout. They are arranged around semi-public open courtyards. The flats are spacious, each of them is equipped with a water heater, has running water and sanitary system. The builders attached special attention to cost reduction and to "social adaptation" by constructing functional buildings

without decorative elements (Techeun, 1980). However, two houses have neo-classical decorative elements and modification of the distribution system justifying volumetric alterations of their facades. Those latter remind of the architectural language of the project by L. Vesnin submitted for the 1922–1923 contest. So it is possible that the first version by Chernyshev included neo-classical decorative elements, which were later removed for the sake of economy.

Complete lack of ornaments also characterizes the diploma projects executed by Vhutemas students after 1926. Projects created by professor Landovsky's students represent the architectural and urban design research of the *Sotsgorod combinat*. For example, the project by M. Turkus proposes residential blocks consisting of just two types of elements [figure 13]. The different possibilities of arrangement permitted variety in composition, layout, height and volumes (Chan-Magovedow, 1983). Standardization was a major characteristic of the *Sotsgorod*. Later N. Milyutin will criticize this 'unreasonable and useless monumentality' for 'barbarism' and 'squandering of materials' (Milyutin, 1930). Therefore, the presence of ornaments on just two standardized housing blocks in Molotov repre-

sented this stage of transition and the search for an architectural language to suit the Soviet society.

Combinat

THE incorporation of communal programs into housing typologies that followed lead to the development of a housing *combinat*, the primary cell of the *Sotsgorod*. One of the first prototypes of the *combinat* was developed in 1927 by I. Golosov [figure 14]. The project includes ten lines of housing slabs arranged around communal services and connected by passageways.

Each *combinat* included a variety of communal services, like a canteen, a club, a library or a daynursery, while the services of a greater scale, like a stadium or sports facilities, were shared by several *combinats*.

The origin of the public buildings in Molotov cannot be attributed to Chernyshev.

Besides the participation of Russian architects, we must mention Hannes Meyer's brigade⁴. *During the period of industrialization of the Soviet Union special importance was attached to the education of highly-qualified staff from workers to engineers. In order to set up the schools necessary for this purpose, a special institution was founded: the Giprovut. (...) All team members were involved, with Hannes Meyer as the chief architect. According to Meyer's orders, standardization and type design practice were to be applied as much as possible, from the elements of design and construction to the buildings in his ensemble, and only the simplest and the most consistent materials and building techniques were to be used. The Brigade worked on the standardization of technical institutions and developed project types along with individual solutions. (...) One of the most important individual projects was the Higher Technical School of the city of Perm, which was created by Hannes Meyer and Antonin Urban (Tolziner, 1989).*



Figure 13. Combinat project. 1926, M. Turkus

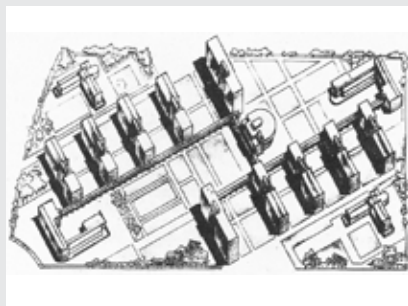


Figure 14. Combinat project. 1927, I. Golosov

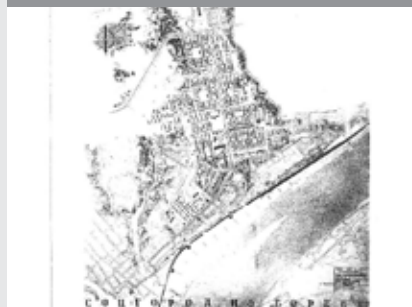


Figure 15. Sotsgorod na Gorkach. 1932, H. Meyer



Figure 16. Sotsgorod na Gorkach. Molotov detail, 1932, H. Meyer

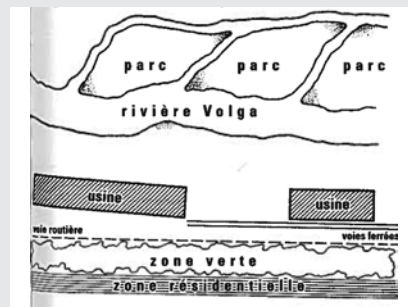


Figure 17. Magnitogorsk plan development, linear city. 1930, N. Milioutine

The House of Teachers situated in front of the workers' club by P. Golossov is also accredited to Hannes Meyer (Kiselev, 2008). If, in our mixed panoply of sometimes contradictory accounts, we take into consideration the fact that the Technical School [figure 4] also housed the headquarters and flats for NKVD officers who guarded the Motovilikha plant and other local industries and institutions (Semyannikov, 2002), we could locate the Technical School in Zemlyachka street. Indeed, this building of concrete constructed before 1932 has a very similar design to the drawings which we found in the archives of Philip Tolziner. The standardization of constructive elements and the industrial language of the facade lead us to the conclusion that the design of this building could belong to Meyer's team, and the team might have never become aware of its construction (Tolziner, 1989).

Sotsgorod na Gorkach

THERE is, however, an indisputable evidence that the project for the Molotov master plan was created by Meyer, and it was called *Sotsgorod* na Gorkakh (translated as «a socialist town on hills”).

Sotsgorod na Gorkach has never been realised, but it is an important witness helping in the understanding of Molotov. Situated between the village of Motovilikha and H. Meyer's project, Molotov is the anchor between reality and imagination.

By superimposing Meyer's plan on the existing layout, we can recognize the buildings that were built before 1932. It is possible to establish the construction dates of the agricultural college, the infirmary, the workers' club and all the blocks of flats (fig 16).

By proposing a plan for the whole *Sotsgorod*, Meyer goes beyond the limits of the *combinat* suggested by projects of Ladovsky's students. The residential blocks of the *Sotsgorod na Gorkach* stretch from Molotov along the plateau between Motovilikha and Perm. Meyer develops a flexible urban plan of a linear city that can be adapted to climatic restrictions, to the topography, the location of the plant and the availability of natural resources (Jung, 1989). Meyer's *Bandstadt* is in fact nothing else than the realisation of N. Milyutin's linear city, which is described in *Sotsgorod*, the manifesto of Soviet avant-guard urbanism.

Sotsgorod na Gorkach develops itself in a linear layout, its main axis being the prolongation of Ural street, which separates Molotov from Motovilikha Plant. Most of the programmatic bands situated between Molotov and the Kama river are the ones proposed by Milyutin: 1. The industry; 2. The railway; 3. The green belt; 4. Residential houses and

public facilities; 5. Green spaces and sports facilities; 6. Agricultural fields (Kruft, 1985) [figure 17]. Between the *combinats* there are public facilities of a greater scale: sports facilities, technical colleges or hospitals. Therefore, we can read the concentration of communal buildings of Molotov as a transition zone between the present and the future of Molotov's urban development. This programmatic alternation between housing *combinats* and public facilities is reproduced along the main axis.

An axonometric drawing coming from Meyer's studio provides the detailed structure of standard *combinats*.

The lines of blocks of flats are rearranged around green courtyards, which are sometimes closed by perpendicular lines. This creates more 'private' courtyards that provide community facilities, like playgrounds and sports grounds, for residents of that particular block. Public buildings situated inside the courtyards are lower than the surrounding buildings. Meyer's axonometric projection also shows that both public and residential buildings are made to a standardized design.

The *combinats* in Molotov are organized in the same way. Standard blocks of flats form semi-public open spaces including lower height public services buildings. The fact that the entrances are situated in the courtyards suggests a hierarchy in the use of spaces graduating from private to public. We can also reconstruct the gleam of the Soviet collectivism, the rhythm of which was created by the places the people visited daily: the individual cell, the communal programs within the *combinat* (crèche, laundry room, public bath house), workers' canteen, the place of work (intellectual or industrial) and then again the canteen (but also the workers' club or sports grounds), finally returning to the individual cell.

Utopia?

THIS organization of life induced by the urban composition of the *Sotsgorod* is now changed, but it can still be traced. While the Motovilikha Plant continues working and the concrete blocks are still inhabited, the public infrastructure is crumbling, and this corps of dilapidated concrete does not inspire hopes for a better society any more.

The contemporary Russia is now regaining its past values, its cities beginning to cherish their pre-Revolution history. Old churches are being rehabilitated, new ones are being constructed, and the houses of the nobility are being restored. However, there is a unique past which seems to be destined to fall into oblivion, a history or a utopia of an egalitarian society that came to be realised, of which

Molotov is an emblem. Molotov is an open book of contemporary history of the first attempts at creating the *Sotsgorod*, where classical forms and avant-guard lines come together. It is a rusty machine of the communal life at the dawn of socialism, but it is also a *combinat* integrating the principles of the functionalist city of the Bauhaus, whose master plan is the manifest of Soviet urbanism.

The stones have been laid. It remains only to hope that the local authorities will realize that Molotov represents a treasure from the point of view of history, culture and the identity of a Russia that was once capable of creating a utopia.

Notes

1. *Sotsgorod, The Problem and the Construction of Socialist Cities* was published in 1930 by the State Publishing House in Moscow and Leningrad. The word Sotsgorod translates from Russian as socialist city.
2. This principle used by Melnikov will become one of the fundamental principles of constructivist architecture, which was integrated in the concept of Sotsgorod named defined in 1928 by M. Guinsburg «social condenser».
3. The first houses of this block were constructed in 1926 as a prolongation of Motovilikha district, at the doors of the neighboring factory of the same name. The first brick houses were constructed in the following year (Semyannikov, 2002). In 1928 the town council decided to build a new workers' block with all the services that its inhabitants would need (Kiselev, 2008).
4. The team was managed by Hannes Meyer and consisted of young architects from Bauhaus: R. Mensch, K. Poeschel, T. Weiner, A. Urban, B. Scheffler, K. Meumann and Ph. Tolziner.

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Belmopan: a New Capital for a New Country

By Shannon Ricketts

AS the British colony of British Honduras prepared for independence, it adopted two important symbols of its emerging identity; the name of Belize was chosen for the new country and a new capital was planned from which this emerging nation would be governed. That new capital was called Belmopan and was to be established inland from the old coastal capital of Belize City. Designed by the British planning and architectural firm of Norman and Dawbarn, this new city followed in the tradition of British Garden City planning, making discrete references to the Mayan heritage of the region, while using the modernist architectural vocabulary typical of so much of the infrastructural development taking place at this time in various nations emerging from colonial status.

New capitals were being designed and constructed around the world: 1954 saw the rise of a new Punjabi capital, Chandigarh, while in 1960 two new capitals appeared, Islamabad (Pakistan) and Brasília (Brazil). In 1970—the same year that Belmopan was officially opened—Dodoma was begun in Tanzania and Obuja in Nigeria. The designs for these new cities followed established European precedents, usually organized on Garden City planning principles, while the architecture reflected the tenets of the modernist movement in both aesthetic and philosophical objectives. New nations were being prepared for independence with shining new examples of “tropical architecture”, providing much-needed amenities such as hospitals, schools, university campuses, and administrative buildings.

While Belmopan was, perhaps, the smallest example of these new planned cities, it followed in the same tradition. This paper will examine the historical, aesthetic and theoretical underpinnings of the work of the architects and planners involved in these designs, comparing the work of continental European architects and their admirers to British-inspired designs appearing in the new Commonwealth countries. Finally, the paper will look at the original plans for Belmopan, its original

architecture, and discuss how the city has evolved over the twentieth century to answer the needs of its growing population.

Belmopan: a New Capital for a New Country

AS the colony of British Honduras prepared for independence in the years following World War II, it adopted two important symbols of its emerging identity: the name of Belize was chosen for the new country and a new capital was planned, to be called Belmopan [figures 1, 2].

Belize in the Era of Emerging Nations

Belize is the single English-speaking country in Central America. It sits just south of Mexico and to the east of Guatemala, facing the Caribbean Sea and those former British island colonies with which it was historically associated. Belize City, reflects this history as it was both the colonial capital and the port from which most of the produce of the colony was shipped. Built on swampy land, virtually at sea level, this city has been swept away by hurricanes more than once. Its architecture and planning reflect its tenuous existence as the city has grown organically, with minimal forethought for the management of sewage, sanitation, or security. In 1961 Hurricane Hattie struck, destroying some 80% of the city's infrastructure and taking nearly 300 lives.¹ Experts were called in to assess the damage and the potential for rebuilding.

Hurricane Hattie had arrived at a critical moment. Like much of the rest of the former British empire, what was then the colony of British Honduras was moving towards independence. Britain was reconciled to this, but wished to ensure continuing

links, politically and economically, with her former colonies. In order to protect her single toe-hold in Central America, she needed not only to deal with the environmental threats to Belize City, but also to resolve a major and long-standing territorial dispute with neighbouring Guatemala. Historically, Guatemala had laid claim to all of the territory of British Honduras. The British had long resisted this claim both through ongoing negotiations and the deterrent of its considerable military might. Behind this ostensibly Guatemalan-British Honduran dispute was the reality of British-American competition for trade in the region. In Guatemala, as in much of the rest of Latin America, U.S. business interests had a decisive influence on the economy.

These two major factors—environmental and economic—bolstered long-standing suggestions that the capital be moved. In 1962 a New Capital Committee was tasked with recommending a suitable site and, in 1964, the cabinet approved Roaring Creek Village as the location for the new capital.² Situated at the junction of two major highways, 50 miles inland, and midway between Belize City and the Guatemalan border, the new capital would open up the interior to agricultural development in much the same way that the construction of Brasília had done for Brazil. It also would ensure an increased presence in the lightly populated interior of Belize. After some 150 years of unsuccessful negotiations, agreement on the current boundaries of Belize was finally reached with Guatemala in 1981.³ The same year, the United Kingdom transferred power to an independent Belize. Both British government representatives and local politicians touted Belmopan as a symbol of the new modern era that now beckoned to an independent Belize. “Progress” was the leit-motif.



Figure 1. **Norman and Dawbarn**, Belize National Assembly, Belmopan, 2009, A. Knight

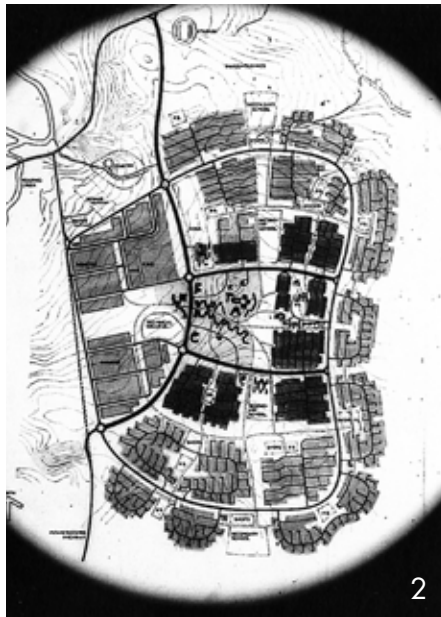


Figure 2. **Norman** and **Dawbarn**. Plan of Belmopan, 1967, Capita Symonds, London, UK

Figure 3. **Norman** and **Dawbarn**. Plan of phase one construction, Belmopan, 1967, Capita Symonds, London, UK

Figure 4. **Norman** and **Dawbarn**. National Assembly Building, Belmopan, Belize, 2009, A. Knight

Figure 5. **Norman** and **Dawbarn**. Departmental Building, Belmopan, Belize, 2009, A. Knight

Figure 6. Ruins of a Mayan temple, Belize, 1994, K. Knight

Figure 7. **Norman** and **Dawbarn**. Norman and Dawbarn, plan of central Belmopan, Belize, 1967, Capita Symonds Co, London, UK

Postwar Infrastructural Development in Emerging Nations

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the imperial powers had accrued considerable experience in the design and construction of administrative buildings, military installations, and residences for their colonial administrators. The existing hospital and schools had often been erected by various Christian missions. However, this infrastructure was often inadequate and, by the 1930s and the lean years of the worldwide economic depression, it became evident that many of the colonies were suffering. Lack of health and educational services, adequate housing, and economic opportunity heightened support for the various nationalist movements that were growing throughout Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Committees were struck: experts travelled, surveyed and reported.⁴ However, results had to await the end of World War II, when a newly created Commonwealth Development and Welfare programme began to export planning as postwar reconstruction, sending British architects and planners throughout the devolving empire.⁵

Amongst the myriad infrastructural projects that resulted, completely planned capital cities appeared throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The new capital of Malawi was built in Lilongwe from 1968–1975. It was decided to locate the new national capital of Tanzania in Dodoma in 1973. The capital of Nigeria was moved from Lagos and built anew in Abuja during the 1970s–1980s, while extensions to old capitals also were undertaken, including Dhaka (1971), Islamabad (Rawalpindi; 1960) and Chandigarh (1950s–1960s). Belmopan, which officially opened in 1970, was one of several new capital cities appearing around the world that marked the move from a state of colonial development dependent on private owners both reaping the benefits of colonial labour and providing what amenities they saw fit, to one of government-run services, along the lines of the then-Labour government in Britain. The aims were congruent—security, democratic government, health care and educational opportunities for all. British planners, architects, and engineers played major roles.

Most of the architects and planners involved had trained at British universities committed to the Modernist movement and shared its objectives,⁶ believing in the benefits of progress as defined by an emphasis on sanitation, healthcare and education in the service of improved standards of living. Since these aims were to be achieved through western-style technology, the resultant projects not only promised improved living conditions in the colonies but also ensured ongoing reliance on European expertise and training.⁷ From the point of view

of many of the citizens of these emerging nations, particularly the aspiring middle classes, modernism left behind the colonial architecture and inadequate services with which they were familiar, and promised them entrée into a bright new post-war future. The many infrastructural developments undertaken present a fascinating testing ground for the Modernist philosophy since large-scale infrastructural development projects were more easily implemented in the developing nations than in the heavily built countries of Europe. Less-developed countries with modest urban areas offered a relatively blank slate, allowing the construction of whole new cities. Consequently, the CIAM (Congrès Internationale d'Architecture Moderne) approach to the city as a machine organized around functions including housing, work, recreation, and traffic circulation was easier to realize abroad than it was at home.

The Design and Construction of Belmopan

In the case of Belmopan, there was no clear local planning tradition to challenge the British model since the major urban centre in the country—Belize City—had grown up in a relatively unplanned, ad hoc manner. At Belmopan, as in most other post-imperial projects, any attempt to introduce local context was of a fairly superficial nature. Here, references to the local were limited and based on an ancient Mayan past known primarily through archaeological research, rather than on any lived urban experience of Belizeans. Even these references were restricted to the siting and design of the National Assembly Building. The overall plan for Belmopan reflects the British Garden City model, with buildings designed in the Modernist convention. As in other emerging nations, British planners and architects turned to what was familiar to them—and to what they regarded as universally applicable modernist standards for an increasingly homogenized world [Figure 3].

By the mid-1960s, 8100 acres of land at the Belmopan site had been purchased through grants and loans from the British Ministry of Overseas Development, Caribbean Division. Finances were administered by Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administration along with the Reconstruction and Development Corporation of British Honduras.⁸ Nevertheless, money was tight and the British team of Norman and Dawbarn (architects and planners), Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Partners (civil and structural engineers), Windell and Trollope (quantity surveyors), and Preece Cardew and Riders (electrical engineers) were instructed to create a capital that was a modest, functional creation along austerity lines.⁹

The architectural firm of Norman and Dawbarn was one that had accumulated much valuable experience in designing and building in the tropical zones. The firm's original partners were well-known modernists who had been active since the 1930s. Sir Nigel Norman (1897–1943), a specialist in airport design, had died during the war, leaving Graham Richards Dawbarn (1893–1976) heading the company. Along with most of Britain's aspiring Modernists, the firm participated in the 1951 Festival of Britain, contributing designs for a model neighbourhood (London's Tower Hamlets) in a modernist vernacular mode, prescient of many of the English new towns that followed.¹⁰

Like many other British architectural firms in the postwar period, Norman and Dawbarn was also active abroad. In 1946, it had been commissioned to design the new University of the West Indies campus in Jamaica.¹¹ There, strategically arranged, rectangular, concrete blocks are classic examples of mid-century modernism.¹² Set on pilotis, they were adapted to the climate with breeze-block façades and brise-soleils. Sometimes local materials and skills were referenced through the use of cut-limestone facing. During the 1950s, the firm also was occupied with additional projects in Jamaica, including a Terminal Building (now demolished) for the airport at Montego Bay as well as buildings for the Kingston College of Arts, Science and Technology where the firm used the same limestone facing on the Engineering Workshops as well as introducing an expressionistic folded concrete roof.¹³ The firm used a similar vocabulary for a library at Makerere College in Kampala, Uganda, and continued to take on significant projects in England, including the landmark BBC Television Centre at Shepherd's Bush in London.

The heart of Belmopan is the National Assembly Building [Figure 4]. Located at the centre of the town, the modestly scaled structure is given an elegant authority by clever optical devices. Dawbarn and his team first created an artificial mound on which to place the building. A series of broad, gently rising steps leads up the mound to the main entrance. Strategically placed diagonal walls on both the façade and along the steps, lead the eye toward the entrance and visually enhance the height of the building [Figure 5]. The building is modest in scale but, with its rigorous symmetry, deep umbrages, and restrained play of textures, it claims its rightful place as the dignified centre of the capital. Along with the flanking low, horizontal departmental buildings, the government complex presents a resonant image, hearkening back to Michelangelo's Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome, which in turn inspired contemporary designs such as Wallace Harrison's

1960s master plan for Lincoln Centre for the Arts in New York City. Most immediately, however, the National Assembly building evokes the more local image of a Mayan temple [Figure 6].

It is instructive to compare the approach to urban planning and design employed by Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemayer in their brilliant 1956 designs for Brasília to the approach followed by Graham Dawbarn and many of his fellow British architects. Brasília bore many of the hallmarks of the Corbusian approach to both architecture and urban planning. The plan and architectural design for South America's best-known planned city was at once reflective of the expansive open plain on which it was built as well as of Niemayer's fascination with geometry and with the distinctive play of light and shade and dramatic gestures found in Brazil's lavish Baroque religious architecture. The resultant images evoked by Brasília, while building on the past, look to the future rather than to specific historical sources.¹⁴

While pre-war British architects often had made reference to the vernacular architecture of the country in which they were working¹⁵, postwar British architects tended to reflect the universalist modernism espoused by the MARS (Modern Architecture Research) Group, the British arm of CIAM.¹⁶ In Africa, for instance, the prolific Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew favoured reinforced concrete building systems with pierced facades to respond to climatic imperatives within a Garden City plan. They and their fellow modernists were convinced that modernist abstraction could provide an international architectural language, despite the fact that when used in developing nations, it resulted in the implantation of a European building technology with which the local community was not necessarily familiar. Attempts to contextualize these designs were often limited to the integration of indigenous decorative materials and artwork.

With Belmopan's Mayan reference, Dawbarn was attempting to use a local point of departure for his design inspiration, even though he chose to reference a pre-contact culture rather than the living one for which he was building. This is not to detract from the inventive conception and aesthetic sophistication of the Belmopan government complex. The National Assembly building shows a willingness on Dawbarn's part to move beyond the strict tents of international modernism into the contextualized so-called Brutalist designs that were being promoted by young British architects like Alison and Peter Smithson.

At Belmopan, Norman and Dawbarn supplied plans for a town complete with schools, a college, a hospital, telecommunications services, churches,

and commercial services [Figure 7]. The National Assembly Building, with the flanking long, low-rise departmental buildings, faces a central green which is bisected by a major urban artery that creates a separation from more work-a-day buildings housing essential services such as the Post Office, Police Headquarters, Hospital, Public Works Department, the Court, and a market. Green spaces and a ring road separate residential sections consisting of modest single-family houses and duplexes [see Figure 2]. True to the spirit of British Garden City planning, neighbourhoods were planned to accommodate their own schools, shops and markets.

Given the restricted budget, what was actually built was more limited and buildings constructed in the rest of the town were more severely functional, lacking any notable attempt to achieve aesthetic distinction. While all structures were designed to be hurricane proof, little money was wasted on extras. Houses delivered basic amenities within plain, reinforced concrete shells. Even so, there were eleven differently priced house styles, most on separate lots so that residents could plant their own gardens. A footpath system linked the residential area to the town centre. The industrial centre is located on the western margin of town, nearest the major highway and separated from the city proper by green space. A wide ring road links the main administrative, commercial, residential and industrial districts.

Belmopan Since 1970

As in the case of Brasília, the move to Belmopan was not immediately popular. In the end, the Belizean government had to put pressure on civil servants to make the move—and not all did. Not only were services and amenities limited in the new town, but people were loath to move away from their long-time communities of family and friends in Belize City. Eventually, this began to change. In 1971, Belmopan had a population of 2300 residents. That number had risen almost four-fold by the turn of the 21st century and now stands at approximately 8,000. The town now has more housing, schools, a hospital, embassy buildings, food shops, a hotel, and a theatre, among other amenities. It has also added some new government buildings—these not always in keeping with Dawbarn's designs—but a sign that the town is developing beyond its original campus-like uniformity. As with many other planned cities of the twentieth century, Belmopan can be seen as a last flourish of empire—an expression of transition to an era in which the local population makes decisions, including those impacting how its capital will look and function. Like other planned cities around the world, Belmopan is maturing in response to the preferences of its own society.

Notes

1. British Honduras Hurricane Assessment Mission Report (London, 1962), p. 2.
2. *Belmopan — A New Capital of Belize* (Belize; Government Information Service, 1967), p. 4.
3. See Janine Sylvestre, *The Cost of Conflict: The Anglo-Belize/Guatemala Territorial Issue* (Belize: Website Productions Ltd., 1997).
4. In 1938, following labour riots in Trinidad and Jamaica, a Royal Commission was headed by Lord Moyne who toured the Caribbean, including what was then British Honduras. The findings of Lord Moyne were so embarrassing for the British government that his report was not released until after the Second World War. In short, the British had not fostered sufficient development in the Caribbean. As a result, a Colonial Development and Welfare fund was established for slum clearance and urban planning; but funds were slow in appearing.
5. See Robert Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (London: E&F Spon, 1997), p. 49.
6. Many of the British architects active in such postwar development projects had been trained either at the Liverpool School of Architecture or at the Architectural Association in London—both schools espousing the Modernist philosophy and approach to design. See Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World: Studies in the Modern Architecture of Latin America 1930–1960* (London: Verso, 2000) and Mark Crinson, *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub., 2003).
7. Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, *Building Dominion and the Colonial overseas: the culture of British fabrics of financial intervention in (South) Africa at the end of Empire* (Forthcoming).
8. Kevin C. Kearns, *Belmopan: Perspective on a New Capital* in *The Geographical Review*, vol. 63, No. 2, April 1973, p. 153.
9. *Belmopan — A New Capital of Belize*, p. 4.
10. *Best Intentions*, in *The Architects' Journal*, 6 Sept. 2001.
11. Graham Dawbarn, *The West Indies Project: Planning a University in the Tropics*, *The Times Educational Supplement*, Oct. 4, 1947, p. 528.
12. Jacquianne Lawton, *Social and Public Architecture in Kingston, Jamaica*, in *docomomo* No. 33, September 2005, p. 60.
13. J.M. Richards, ed., *New Buildings in the Commonwealth* (London: The Architectural Press, 1961), p. 175.
14. At almost the same time (1956), Frank Lloyd Wright was designing a master plan for Baghdad using circular motifs based on the area's ancient Arabic urban design.
15. See Ron Fuchs, *Public Works in the Holy Land: Government Building under the British Mandate in Palestine, 1917–48*, in Louise Campbell (ed.), *Twentieth Century Architecture and its Histories* (London: Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, 2000).
16. Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World*, p. 6.

Civic and Social Infrastructure.

Conservation through Modern Architecture intervention. Embassy of Chile in Argentina 1966–2009

By Elisa Gil Serrano and Hugo Mondragón López

MODERN heritage is not protected in Chile. Most of Chilean modern architectural heritage stands without an official decree protecting it from being modified or even demolished. This is a consequence of having state-controlled organisms in charge of the protection and defense of architectural heritage that use almost exclusively the building's age as main criteria for its appraisalment¹.

From this point of view it seems difficult that constructions that are only between 40 and 90 years old may catch the attention of heritage preservation government officials.

However negative the situation which, in the majority of cases has led to the systematic violation of constructions that constitute valuable records of the status of disciplinary and cultural discussion of Modern Architecture, the following case, paradoxically, couldn't have crystallized the way it did, if the building had been officially protected, and neither could the **docomomo**-Chile group could have played a protagonic role in its management.

A sculpture in a park

For multiple reasons the original building of the Chilean Embassy in Argentina of modern architects Echeñique, Cruz and Burchard² is a singular piece of Modern Architecture in Chile.

Its singularity is due to various factors. For example, it's a building that, at plain sight, was not constructed in Chilean grounds. In fact, the terrain on which the embassy's building was erected lies in the midst of the Parques de Palermo traced by urbanist Carlos Thays, in the beginning of the XX century in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It's a lot donated by the Argentinean State to its Chilean counterpart with the specific claim that the embassy was to be constructed there³.

The fact that the project was erected through a bidding process carried out in 1966, is also very

singular. Only teams of architects of both countries were invited and the jury was also bilateral⁴.

The building stands out from its physical surroundings not only by being isolated in the middle of Parque República de Chile, which lies within the forementioned Parques de Palermo—as if it was a sculpture in the park⁵—but also because it was constructed on the top of a small hill that was, and still is, the only geographic feature of the landscape.

Yet another of the building's singularities lies in the complexity of its program. The bidding's bases stated that four basic functions should articulate in one single compound: 1. Foreign Affairs Office, 2. Protocol Halls, 3. Service facilities, and 4. The Ambassador's residence. From this point of view, the project was considered a multi-program condenser.

As a solution, the winning team proposed three curved storeys superimposed among themselves, all which were assigned different functions. The first storey laid out the chancellery's office. The second superimposes with the previous one and houses the complete set of protocol halls and service facilities. The third storey, which marks the end of the building, is the area of the Ambassador's residence, completely independent of the other areas and activities.

The prolongation of these three strips over the portion of the area of the terrain left unused, gives way to a series of terraced gardens that followed the topography of the small hill on which the Embassy was built. The hill's slope was accentuated by the horizontality of the decks. Protocol halls and the Ambassador's residence open up towards this terraced system of gardens, which merge themselves with the green surrounding park, which configures a visual field of great deep spatial characteristics that stand-out as one of its greatest assets.

In shape terms, this work represents an exception within the dominant rational tendency in Chile between 1930 and 1970. Its organic form lies

closer to some of Wright, Niemeyer or Aalto's experiences than German, Dutch or North-American ones. It's possible that this "freedom of shape" is due to the fact that, as an exception, a team of Chilean architects didn't have to deal with the rigid structural conditions that a seismic country as Chile requires.

A cultural centre within a modern building to commemorate the bicentennial

Within the framework of its 200 years of republican life, the Embassy of Chile in Argentina Cultural Centre is the only piece of architecture built by the State of Chile beyond its borders.

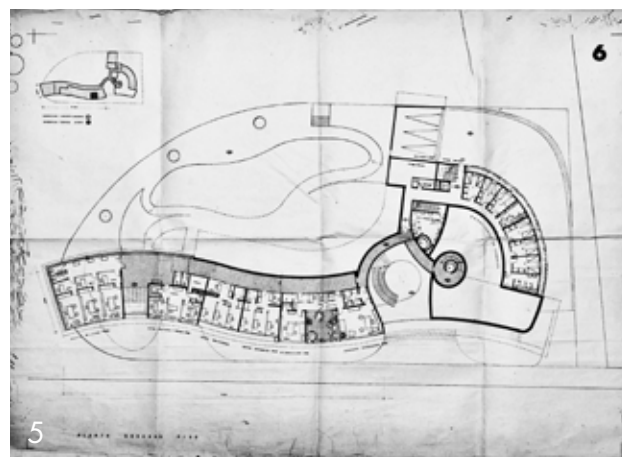
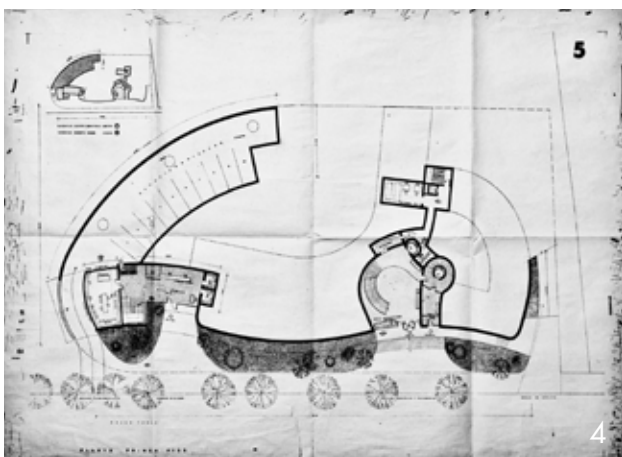
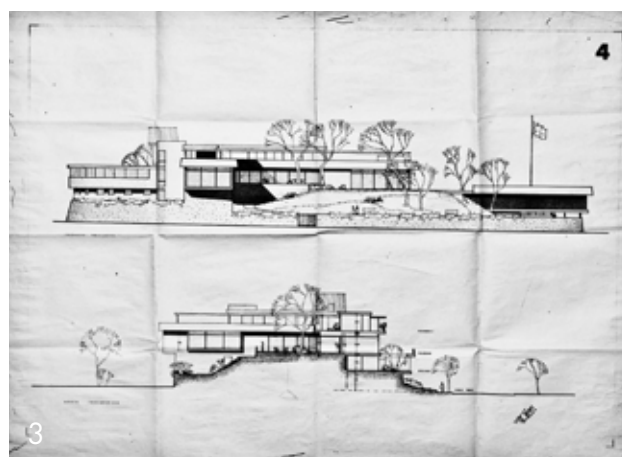
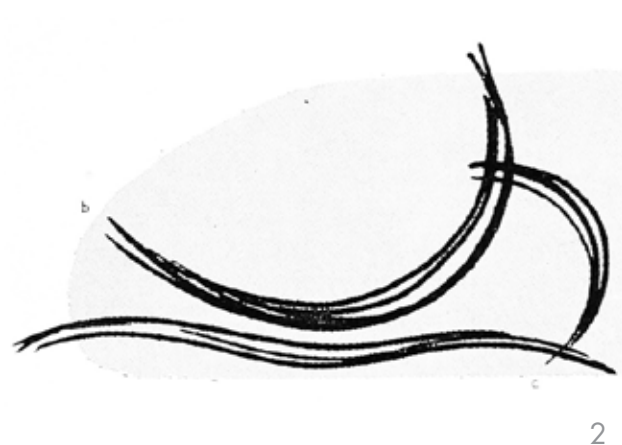
The idea of building this cultural centre of the Embassy of Chile in Argentina, was the brainchild of Chilean Ambassador Mr. Luis Maira. It consisted of a program that would be destined to promote young artists from both countries, and its construction demanded the intervention of the original Embassy building.

Through Elisa Gil Serrano, member of the **docomomo**-Chile group and student of the UC M.A. in Architecture who, in that moment, was developing her master's thesis in the original building of the Embassy, Mr. Maira requested the consultancy of Modern Architecture experts with the purpose of having them design a methodology to guarantee that the modification of the building preserved and intensified its architectural values.

In the context of this solicitation, UC's M.A. in Architecture—headquarters of the **docomomo**-Chile—and its director, Hugo Mondragón, called in November of 2008, professionals, academics and architecture students, to participate in a Seminar-Workshop that took on this case study to propose the "Preliminary design for a Cultural Centre in the Embassy of Chile in Argentina" under the title of "Strategies for the Intervention of Modern Heritage"⁶.

In light of the architectonic singularity of the existing building, the Seminar-Workshop's organizers established in the bases of this bidding call, that all proposals should be thought in the general context of the tension between its patrimonial and functional values, considering the fact that this intervention would be carried out over a patrimonial building that would continue its functions during the execution of its construction.

It was established that the intervention should be an extension of the existing building, so, the proposals should consider the construction of spatial, volumetric, structural, material, functional and visual connections between this new piece and the existing complex, without renouncing to its functional or expressive autonomy. It was also established



that this intervention should maintain the visual depth that the protocol halls and the ambassador's residence have over the República de Chile park.

Finally, in structural and constructive terms, it was recommended that they imagined a light supporting structure that could be easily assembled, and, for usage and security reasons, a controlled connection between the cultural centre and the embassy's stair-shaped gardens was required.

Figure 1. Picture of the building in 2010 (after the intervention). Photo: Elisa Gil Serrano.

Figure 2. *Ideograma* presented by the architects in 1966. Image: Revista AUCA n°3, Santiago 1966.

Figure 3. West and south sides of the building. Image: Archives of the Chilean Embassy in Argentina.

Figure 4. First Level of the original building. Image: Archives of the Chilean Embassy in Argentina.

Figure 5. Second Level of the original building. Image: Archives of the Chilean Embassy in Argentina.

3 proposals

Of the 24 proposals exposed and discussed in the Seminary-Workshop, a commission made up of politicians, technicians and academics selected three. The Embassy of Chile in Argentina and the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) invited the authors to a second bidding to further develop their ideas.

The proposal of the group made up by architects Carolina Del Campo, Nicole Labbé and architecture student Antonia Moreno; was the most balanced one in terms of the care it provided to the project's different dimensions. It preserved the geometric curved design, it maintained the residence's view over the park, it also carefully articulated the proposed volume's rooftop with the terraces of the existing building and achieved a generous project capacity proposing some potent spaces and dynamic corridors.

This proposal suggested a well-configured access and a strategically placed advertisement. Its access, half a storey under the park's level, allowed to go down to a well-dimensioned auditorium and to climb up to the exhibition gallery without exceeding the existing building's height. A mezzanine located on top of the exhibition gallery developed a discreet and well-achieved articulation between the cultural centre and the terrace system of the Embassy.

Facing the park, the building's corridor system was dynamic and didn't functionally interfere with the main spaces' usage. The exhibition gallery and its multiple spaces were generous in size and proposed a potent spatial of high-ceiling.

In general, it was mainly about a proposal that was careful with the existing building, improving the terrace system by incorporating a stair-like garden. It also improved the relationship between the complex and the park by extending the cultural centre's activities through a transparent facade.

The group made up of Teodoro Fernández, Philippe Blanc and Sebastián Hernández, presented a very well achieved plan in composition terms, that operated within the organic logic of the original design. The proposal considered a generous exhibition gallery with a suggesting sunlit system—zenithal sunlight sifted by a water film—controlled, but dramatic.

This proposal remarkably enriched the terrace system of the existing building by incorporating a new element (the water tank), that through reflection, doubled the images of the sky and tree-crowns.

This project proposed an intensification of the masonry wall that acts as a façade against the park. This operation emphasized the petrous character of the already present basement which represented

the logic of a building disposed on a park on top of a "small mountain". The logic of the original location (building on top of a hill, like a fortress), was reinforced by a system of terraced gardens that fortified but at the same time articulated the relation between the building and the park.

The proposal of the group made up of Sebastián Irarrázaval and Francisca Rivera, conceived the cultural centre as a unique, simple and austere piece, that didn't run against the existing building's protagonism, but neither did it have pretensions of a timid mimesis afraid of appearing. It followed the original designs, didn't contradict the geometric logic of the existing building and incorporated a new project dimension that built a strong relation of the building against the park.

The green roof proposed linked itself to the existing terrace system, but it introduced a new scale that would intercede between the domestic scale of the residence's gardens and the park's public scale.

The idea of prefabricated construction, if not completely solved in its details, had acquired a sense of veracity if one observed the rationality of the proposed forms and resulted of great value if one considered that the project had to be developed while the building remained in full function.

In February 2009, the three invited teams shared their strategies in greater depth and detail for a jury composed for politicians, academics and technical experts. The jury selected the proposal led by architect Sebastián Irarrázaval as the winner.

...As if it were part of the original

The winning project complied with various elements of formal neutrality, wasn't aggressive to the existing complex, and didn't interrupt the view over the República de Chile Park from the protocol rooms or the Ambassador's residence. It also worked through the program of assigned functionality with great simplicity, and the proposal of semi-prefabricated construction and absence of detail, allowed it to adjust to the restrictive budget constraints imposed for the construction, whilst reducing the impact of the process over the daily lives in the existing compound.

This exercise has proven fruitful: the city of Buenos Aires gained a new cultural facility that enlarges its already vast network of cultural spaces, and the abandoned República de Chile Park, received for the Embassy a façade that it never had before. In a unique, nationwide, exercise, the modern architectural patrimony in Chile and the **docomomo**—Chile Group, gained in experience and public visibility.

Although there are many aspects that are pos-

sibly perfectible, as much in the process as in the results, the bottom line is positive. A valuable, but little known building saw the limelight, the subject of modern patrimonial architecture was brought to disciplinary and cultural debate and the recently finished work of architect Irarrázaval has found space in recent literature.

Finally, Ambassador Maira, who led the project since the beginning, was satisfied with the result and has thanked the **docomomo**—Chile group in various occasions. In his speech, at the launch of the new cultural centre, and in the presence of the President Michelle Bachelet, he said: "For its harmony and formal continuity with the rest of the compound, this new building looks like it was conceived with the original project, designed by architects Cruz, Echeñique and Burchard in 1966...", words that were meant to illustrate to the audience that the building's architectonic values had been preserved.

Maybe, the laws and decrees of patrimonial conservation are of little use, after all, if organizations like **docomomo** concerned with the preservation of modern heritage, cannot count with the knowledge, willpower, and aesthetic sensitivity of company executives or illustrated politicians, such as Ambassador Maira. Perhaps there lays our mission, to educate and raise awareness to the importance of preserving these buildings.

Notes

1. The value of age appraisal used by Alois Riegl in his book "The Modern Cult of Monuments" refers to the evident manifestation of the harsh pass of time on a building.
2. These three architects are also authors of the IBM building in Santiago, Chile and many others that stand out for their technical innovations and daring shapes.
3. The lot in which the Embassy stands was donated by the Municipality of Buenos Aires as a swap for the terrain and house of the Argentinean Embassy in Chile, located in Vicuña Mackenna during the government of president Eduardo Frei Montalva in the early Sixties.
4. The bidding was granted, in 1966, in Argentina by a jury composed by government entities and architects of both nations.
5. Remark made by the architect Juan Echeñique, information published in an article of the Chilean architecture, construction and urbanism magazine AUCA, n°3, of the year 1966.
6. With this seminary, organized and realized in the Universidad Católica de Chile in 2008, it was sought to start a debate among architecture professionals about possible strategies to face the challenge of modifying a modern building.

Arie Sivan 1940–2010

In memoriam

DESIGNER, architect, educator, researcher, critic, polemicist, Arie's multifaceted and ceaseless activity was, sadly, cut short just a week after his participation and lectures at the **docomomo** Congress and Icomos in Mexico, last August.

His formative years at the Architecture faculties in Montevideo, Uruguay, and the Technion in Haifa during the late sixties, were decisive for his long lasting belief in the Modern Movement instrumental role in the creation of "A new society" and, in his words, "A creative relation between people, their environment and their time".

In stride, his professional projects — to name just a few — educational games, tools and therapeutic facilities for the disabled, neighborhood libraries and recreational spaces, bear witness to those convictions. In large projects as well (in collaboration with his partner Horacio Schwartz) the pursuit of social and cultural dimensions is manifest, as in the award winning entry for the renovation of Tel Aviv boulevards formulated as a process of devolution and enhancement of urban public spaces. In the renovation of the historic build-

ings of the Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem, a dialectic interaction between the past and the contemporary is made explicit.

Perhaps his most outstanding achievements were in the field of education. Professor of Architecture at Bezalel for three decades, Head of the Interior Design unit at the Colman College, guest Studio Master and lecturer at American and European Universities and forums while constantly working on the update and creation of new study programs. His persuasive and engaging ways motivated generations of students.

Not surprisingly, Arie was the founder and leading figure of the Israeli Working Party of the **docomomo** involved in the redaction of the local register and in raising awareness for the much needed preservation — and most surely renovation — of important landmarks.

Knowledgeable, witty, ironic and at times confrontational, Arie's presence and contribution will be sorely missed.

As colleagues, we owe him the continuation of his work in the understanding that the goals of the Modern Movement are yet to be achieved.

In the name of **docomomo** Israel



docomomo Conference Mexico 2010: "Living in the Urban Modernity"

By Louise Noelle

THE 11th docomomo International Conference took place in Mexico City from the 19th to the 27th August 2010, under the title "Living in the Urban Modernity", allowing participants to analyze the issues that transformed the city and its architecture during the first part of the 20th Century. Urban area growth brought up an environment that favored the presence of Modern Architecture, in which new materials and developing techniques took new forms. Likewise, and in relation to working and leisure spaces, social changes had a visible transformation influence over education, health, hygiene and housing. In order to explore and to analyze the different elements that transformed the city and its architecture, a workshop was organized and the Conference was divided into five subjects developed in fifteen sessions and five round tables. Three Master Conferences by Barry Bergdoll, Victor Pérez Escolano and Ricardo Legorreta, which dealt with interesting contributions on modernity, also took place.

The Workshop took place between the 19th and 24th August at Casa Barragán Ateliers in Tacubaya, a Modern Movement privileged and stimulating environment, fostered by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. The tasks were coordinated by professors Alejandro Ochoa, Ricardo Pita and Rodolfo Santa María from UAM-Xochimilco, with the participation of Theodore Prudon, Jorge Sánchez Antuñano, Mariano Arias and Miguel Ángel Ronquillo. Roberto Eibenschütz, Louise Noelle and Óscar Terrazas presented conferences on urban and architectural issues. The twenty-student group was divided in four teams in order to elaborate conservation and adaptation proposals for the Melchor Ocampo Square urban space which preserves buildings by distinguished architects of the Modern Movement such as Augusto H. Álvarez, Luis Barragán, Max Cetto, José Creixel and Enrique del Moral.

The inauguration of the Conference took place at the Museo Nacional de Antropología on the 24th August and the events development took place at the *Ciudad Universitaria* of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, two Modern Movement emblematic works which gave a particular meaning to

the conference's theme: living in urban modernity. The formal presentation counted with the participation of Consuelo Sáizar, President of the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes; José Narro Robles, Rector of the UNAM; Louise Cox, President of the International Union of Architects; and Lisandro de la Garza, President of the Federación de Arquitectos de la República Mexicana. docomomo was represented by Ana Tostões, Louise Noelle Gras and Sara Topelson de Grinberg. Mauricio Rivero Borrel, Vice-President of UIA; Sergio Alcocer Martínez del Campo, Secretary General of the UNAM; the directors of the architecture faculties that participated in the organization of the event and other leaders of architectural institutions also took part in this opening event.

The first theme, "Modern Living" referred to the relevance of modern society multi-family dwellings and how organization was the instrument that sought solutions to the incipient proletariat and the developing middle class. Four sessions were introduced: "Housing as a state affair" conducted by Henrietta Moravcikova; "Cultural liberation and architectural diversification", conducted by Carlos Eduardo Comas; "Images of modern living" conducted by Raquel Franklin; and "Modernity and tradition" conducted by Manuel Berumen.

The importance of the "Civic and Social Infrastructure", considered an essential consequence of modernity, allowed an appreciation of the different circumstances in which modern buildings were built. Together with social, political and economical issues, also ideological and urban project significance was discussed in three sessions: "Conservation and Design Issues" coordinated by Maristella Casciato; "Urban Scales" coordinated by Horacio Torrent; and "Education and Recreation" coordinated by Gustavo Luis Moré.

The third theme analyzed the triumphs and failures of urban modernity, considering both architecture and planning: "The Modern City". The ideal city design, where progress and technology were the main statements, and the unbounded growth of some metropolis in this process, gave back answers based on a desire for welfare which was present in the four sessions that took place: "Planning the

Modern City" conducted by Catherine Ettinger; "Temporality and Transformation" conducted by Emilié d'Orgeix; "City and Nature" conducted by Louise Noelle Gras; and "The Modern City from a Contemporary Perspective" conducted by Gabriela Lee.

The essence of the Modern Movement, based on material and technological innovations, is also the origin of docomomo's discussions on philosophical and physical conservation challenges. The theme "Technology for a Modern Habitat", approached theoretical and practical aspects regarding building protection and preservation. It was divided into two sessions: "Conservation Issues for the Modern Habitat" organized by Susan MacDonald; and "Building Climates and System Analysis for Modern Habitat" organized by Kyle Normandin.

The Campus of the UNAM *Ciudad Universitaria*, declared World Heritage Site, also offered the opportunity to introduce a fifth theme, that of University Campus, significant to most countries not only because of the intrinsic architecture and art issues, but also because they have been the melting pot of education and knowledge that have allowed a specific academic richness. These ideas were studied in two sessions: "Evolution and University" led by Janneke Bierman; and "The University and the City" led by Eduardo Luis Rodríguez.

The round-table debates counted with a large number of participants that made them very interesting: "Architectural Magazines, Documental Foundation for Modern Heritage", coordinated by Patricia Méndez; "Movie Theatres, Modern Heritage to be Rescued" coordinated by Alejandro Ochoa Vega; "Brasília: Limits of the Urban Project" coordinated by Carlos Eduardo Comas and Silvia Ficher; and "Modern Movement Architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa" coordinated by Ana Tostões. A fifth round-table on the fundamental issue "Architectural Practice and Conservation" took place in the main auditorium and was organized by Hubert-Jan Henket with the participation of Majja Kairamo, Wessel de Jonge, Gabriel Mérito and Theodore Prudon.

Regarding the diffusion of the 11th **docomomo** International Conference Minutes, a summary of the Papers which had been presented was edited. A DVD with the complete papers and posters presented at the round-tables, together with the coordinator's presentations, was given to the participants at the end of the Conference. The International Specialist Committees on Registers, Technology, Urbanism and Landscape, and Education and Theory have organized working sessions with their representatives and their conclusions were presented at the Council Meeting.

Guided visits around the *Ciudad Universitaria*, declared World Heritage Site in 2007 by UNESCO,

were also offered to participants during the three days of the congress as well as the four Docotours that took place after the congress. The latter were coordinated by Juan Ignacio del Cueto, who personally guided the three visits to works by Félix Candela, Juan O'Gorman, Mathias Goeritz and Enrique de la Mora, and other dwelling projects, together with Raquel Franklin. Louise Noelle Gras was in charge of showing and explaining the works of Luis Barragán. The participants deeply appreciated this activity because it allowed a rapprochement with important buildings and urban areas of Mexico City.

It is important to stress that we are proud that this conference was supported fundamentally by the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, specially the Architecture Faculty and the *Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*; the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*, specially Campus Xochimilco; the *Universidad Iberoamericana*; and the *Universidad*

Anahuac del Norte. We also counted with the generous organizing participation of the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* and the *Gobierno del Distrito Federal* through Seduvi. Many people voluntarily collaborated in the academic part of the event, including foreign members of the Scientific Committee: Janneke Bierman, Maristella Casciato, Carlos Eduardo Comas, Wessel de Jorge, Natalia Dushkina, Carlos García Vázquez, Miles Glendinning, Susan Macdonald, Enrique Madia, Rahul J. Mehrotra, Raúl Monterroso, Henrieta Moravciková, Gustavo Luis Moré, Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, Kyle Normandin, Theodore Prudon, Eduardo Luis Rodríguez, Dennis Sharp and Horacio Torrent; and Lourdes Cruz, Catherine R. Ettinger, Raquel Franklin, Gabriela Lee and Alejandro Ochoa from Mexico. The Organizing Committee was formed by Louise Noelle and Sara Topelson as Co-Chairs; Iván San Martín as Secretary; Lourdes Cruz as Treasurer; Alejandro Ochoa and Rodolfo

Santa María regarding the Workshop; Juan Ignacio del Cueto, Lourdes Díaz, Raquel Franklin and Catherine Ettinger, together with María García Holley, in the Secretariat; Jordi Messeguer Gally with the organization; Gabriela Gutiérrez Saucedo with the accounts and register; Claude Constant as the computer technician; and Celia Facio with the design, among many others. I also want to emphasize the support of Maristella Casciato, former Chair of docomomo International, and her team in Paris, as well as that of the present Chair, Ana Tostões, and the Barcelona team with Ivan Blasi and Laura Arenas.

With nearly 400 people from around 50 countries attending and participating in the events, we were able to come closer to understand the real dimension of the significance of what to live, to act and to enjoy Modern Movement Urban Areas means, emphasizing the importance of its adequate conservation and safeguard for future generations.



Figure 1. Inauguration of the Conference at the *Museo Nacional de Antropología*. Photo: María García Holley.

Figure 2. Master Conference by Ricardo Legorreta. Photo: María García Holley.

Figure 3. Ana Tostões with students at the Conference Workshop. Photo: Ana Magalhaes.

Figure 4. "Architectural Practice and Conservation" round table. Photo: María García Holley.

Figure 5. Docotours: Louise Noelle presenting Casa Gilardi by Luis Barragán. Photo: Ivan Blasi.

Eleventh **docomomo** Council Meeting. August 26, 2010, Mexico City, Mexico

By Ivan Blasi, Secretary General, **docomomo** International

ANA Tostões, Chair of **docomomo** International, welcomed all representatives and auditors to the 11th **docomomo** International Council Meeting. She asked Hubert-Jan Henket, honorary president, to say some words in remembrance of Dennis Sharp. Next to an image of the "architect, scholar, critic, writer, teacher, bookseller, cook and walking encyclopedia" dancing in the tango competition at the 4th International **docomomo** conference in Sliac, Slovakia, he finished his tribute with Dennis' words: "While I breathe, I hope."

After a one minute silence in remembrance of Dennis Sharp (UK) and Eliana Cárdenas (Cuba), Ana Tostões invited Maristella Casciato, former Chair of **docomomo** International, to say some words. She thanked the assistance of Émilie d'Orgeix and Anne-Laure Guillet during her chairmanship and summarized the two main issues that **docomomo** International in Paris had dealt with between 2008 and 2010; on the one hand the organization of the 11th Conference in Mexico, and on the other hand, the relocation of **docomomo** International's headquarters from Paris to Barcelona, including the on-line vote to choose Ana Tostões as Chair and Ivan Blasi as Secretary General of **docomomo** International. The corresponding reports and budgets had been presented to **docomomo** members on July 2010.

The representatives of the Chapters that assisted to the Council Meeting were welcomed by Ana Tostões: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada-Quebec, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iberia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and United States. Peru and Ecuador, provisional chapters after the 10th Council Meeting that took place in Rotterdam in 2008, together with Serbia, South Africa and Venezuela which presented their candidacies during the meeting, were also welcomed.

The chapters with voting rights, according to the **docomomo** Constitution were: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Greece, Iberia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands,

United Kingdom and United States. Serbia, South Africa and Venezuela were also given voting rights, recognizing their new Chapter status.

Four new Chapters had sent their complete candidacy to **docomomo** International in 2010: Egypt, Serbia, South Africa and Venezuela. Egypt was not able to assist to the meeting so it was considered a provisional chapter until the formal candidacy presentation which will take place in the next Council Meeting. The new candidacies were presented by Tanja Conley regarding Serbia, Laura Robinson in relation to South Africa and Hannia Gómez presenting Venezuela. The three chapters were unanimously accepted and welcomed. Ecuador and Peru were also accepted as chapters with full rights and it was agreed that Uruguay would continue being a provisional chapter until its attendance to the next Council Meeting.

Institutional, Individual and Student membership fees were not changed although they will be revised in the next Council Meeting. Institutional sustaining membership fees were increased and a new membership called Corporate was agreed. Reductions, both for new chapters and existing ones, were not changed but they will be discussed in the next Council Meeting.

Regarding **docomomo** International memberships, the Advisory Board decided at its meeting in Mexico that, those people interested in becoming **docomomo** members who live in countries or regions where a **docomomo** Chapter does not exist, may be accepted as **docomomo** International members. Those members interested in becoming **docomomo** members who live in countries or regions where a **docomomo** Chapter already exists will be directed towards the existing Chapter. **docomomo** International in Barcelona will contact the Chapter and if it does not receive an answer in 3 months, it may accept the applicant as an International member. This point was introduced into the Council Meeting Agenda and it was accepted. The fees regarding Corporate, Institutional Sustaining and Institutional memberships can be consulted by the Chapters.

The 2008–2009 **docomomo** International in

Paris Report was approved as well as the **docomomo** International in Barcelona January–July Report of Activities, read by Ivan Blasi. Ana Tostões presented the **docomomo** International in Barcelona Plan of Action 2010, which was voted unanimously. Horacio Torrent and Silvia Ficher, guest editors of **docomomo** Journal 42 and 43 respectively, were thanked by the Chair.

The new Executive Committee for the next two years was also unanimously voted for: Ana Tostões, Chair; Ivan Blasi, Secretary General; Panayotis Tournikiotis, representing the International Specialist Committees; and Timo Tuomi, as representative of the next **docomomo** Conference. Ola Wedeburn and Louise Noelle's close, strong and important collaboration with the Executive Committee in the last years was also appreciated by Ana Tostões.

During the Conference in Mexico, the Finnish Chapter presented its proposal to hold the next Conference in Espoo, Finland, in August 2012 under the title The survival of Modern. From coffee cup to plan. The proposal was voted positively with acclaim by the Chapters with voting rights at the Council Meeting.

No proposal to hold the Conference in 2014 was received at the Council Meeting and we would like to take the opportunity in this summary to invite Chapters to present their proposals.

The Advisory Board members in the next years will be Wessel de Jonge (The Netherlands), Theodore Prudon (US), Scott Robertson (Australia), Hiroyuki Suzuki (Japan), France Vanlaethem (Canada-Quebec) and Louise Noelle (Mexico).

The International Specialist Committees also had the opportunity to present their reports and plans of action during the Conference in Mexico. The new members which were chosen in each committee were all also accepted after the corresponding vote.

Voting Rights were also discussed. It was agreed that in the next Council Meeting changes regarding the homework could be introduced for those Chapters that organize an international major event or produce a major effort such as publications or international conferences.

Finally an amendment was introduced to the Constitution. Point 2.3 of the appendix will now say "The membership fees are administered by the Associació **docomomo** Internacional Barcelona" and point 4.1.2 will say "The **docomomo** International Association is a legally established Association in Barcelona, Spain, in accordance with Spanish and Catalan law."

Ana Tostões concluded the meeting at 11:00pm on August 26, 2010, at Hotel Diplomático, Mexico City.

Community: Building Modern Australia

By Hannah Lewi and David Nichols

Publisher: UNSW Press

ISBN: 978 174223 042 9

Language: English

Year: 2010



Several years ago, during a conference panel discussion, American architectural historian Dell Upton expressed frustration with the use and abuse of the term *community*, remarking that 'every time I hear the word *community* I want to reach for my guns.' His displeasure with the term was based on his perception that too many American academics used the term reflexively, as a synonym for any social phenomenon that they supported. The title of this book, therefore, might give Upton pause. But one of the great virtues of this volume—which consists of several related studies of community building types in Australia—is that its authors do not naturalise the idea, or valorise community as a state of grace. The book's several authors argue that far from being a natural process existing underneath the level of the state, community in Australia's suburbs and towns depended on built infrastructure that was either fully funded or subsidised by governments. In other words the state collaborated with civic groups in the construction of places for community activities and the communal ideal. It was not organic and traditional but rather deliberately constructed and explicitly modern.

For an audience interested principally in understanding architectural developments *Community* is most rewarding not for its explanation of stylistic developments or architectural thinking—though these form strong threads throughout and the book contains an interesting account of modernism in Australia—but for the way in which the authors explain why these community-oriented buildings exist at all: the social rationales and community activity on which their construction was premised. The book also poses some tricky questions about how it might be possible to preserve and revitalise such

community buildings now that many have outlived the time span originally imagined as their useful life and the immediate demands that led to their planning and construction.

The chapters are organized according to building type and, broadly speaking, document places designed to serve the community from "cradle to grave". The chapter sequence is roughly organized to follow from birth through childhood and into maturity, beginning with baby health centres and moving on to discuss kindergartens and local libraries before looking at swimming pools, lawn bowling clubs and civic centres. Taken together they illustrate how the functional orientation of modern architecture was mobilised in a wide range of everyday places that are easily overlooked, but no less significant for their unassuming physical appearance. The book is novel in the Australian context in that it initiates a scholarly investigation into the history of the built environment, setting questions of architectural and planning history alongside those of social and cultural history. In doing so it shares a family resemblance with the work of scholars such as Abigail Van Slyck in North America, who has looked at the expansive Carnegie Library building program and more recently the spatial and social logic of the fabled American summer camp; the work of Hilda Heynen, who has carefully examined the recreational infrastructure of the welfare state in Belgium in the twentieth century; and the great volume of work which was contributed to the 2006 North American conference, 'Preserve and Play'. Likewise, the focus on childhood and social reproduction situates *Community* within the extensive recent literature on the histories and cultural terrain of children, represented most explicitly in the study of the built environment by Marta Gutman's edited volume, *Designing Modern Childhoods*.

But as rich and varied as Gutman's book is, *Community* is a very different kind of collaborative endeavour. Rather than emerging from a conference or from a call for chapters around a designated theme, *Community* is based on a focused collaborative research project in which the authors all participated. In other words, the authors—among them several architectural historians as well as a planning historian and a social historian—did not bring their work together for the purposes of publication, but instead have published the outcomes of their collaborative research. As with any collaboration, there are shortcomings and obvious compromises. Some chapters develop very interesting historical themes that are only partially or weakly linked to architectural concerns. But overall the commitment to locating these highly significant but low key modern buildings within a thoroughly researched political and social context is a strength of the volume. It will enable

much wider understanding of twentieth century architectural strategies at the same time as it gives those interested in architecture and heritage an expanded field in which to consider the diffusion of modernism throughout our everyday environment.

Cameron Logan

Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne

Special Issue of the Journal of Architecture

Volume 15, number 5, October 2010



This review is drawn from the introductory essay of this special issue devoted to 'Keeping the Past Public', guest edited by Hannah Lewi (Chair *docomomo* Australia). The impetus for this issue came from an international symposium, 'Keeping the Past Public: the documentation and conservation of modern places', hosted in Melbourne, Australia, in 2009. Through this forum many challenges surrounding the understanding and preservation of public modern sites regarded of value were raised and explored by international and Australian speakers. Of particular focus was institutional types and sites dedicated to public functions and programs. The themes of the symposium, and the 9 papers in this special issue, accord closely with the aims of *docomomo* and were in part inspired by an emergent theme at the *docomomo* International Conference in Rotterdam, 2008, that interrogated the impacts and after-effects of ideological and social goals respondent to social and political upheaval in the twentieth century, and palpable in public places. Most of the invited speakers to the symposium and paper authors are closely involved with *docomomo* in their respective member countries.

A number of papers in the issue address the need for more comparative thematic analysis of prosaic types such as hospitals, recreation buildings, universities and public housing, and the vexed issues

that surround their conservation. For example the paper 'Designing the Belgian welfare state 1950s to 1970s: social reform, leisure and ideological adherence' by Janina Gosseye and Hilde Heynen examines the how Flemish leisure infrastructure underwent a series of social and architectural transformations after World War II. Comparable to the Belgian case is the paper by David Nichols, Kate Darian-Smith and Hannah Lewi that discusses a cross-disciplinary project that has constructed a significant documentation of Australia's public, modern community buildings and sites between 1920 and 1970. While the paper by Cameron Logan, Philip Goad and Julie Willis examines the complex case of the hospital which reveals the profound coincidence between medical advances and modern architecture in the post-war decades, and questions options for its meaningful conservation today.

Miles Glendinning, in his paper 'The Forgotten Revolution': Northern Ireland's heritage of modern reconstruction', argues that much scholarship about the post-1945 boom years of modern architecture in Western Europe emphasizes its close and positive relationship with the high ideals of post-war reconstruction and the building of the welfare state. His account puts forward an exception in the ambitious reconstruction program associated with the Unionist government of Northern Ireland between 1921-72.

Other papers in the journal issue reflect more directly upon various issues surrounding current approaches to conservation practice, the critical evaluation of heritage listings and assessments in respect of modern public sites. John Allan's article 'Private privilege—public duty' teases out the symposium theme of 'Keeping the Past Public', and what this may mean for conservation practice, but also for the maintenance of public patronage and access. Elaine Harwood's account of English Heritage's initiatives to list and protect significant post-World War II buildings shows how shifting government support has direct bearing on heritage work and priorities. And Julia Gatley's analysis of the heritage identification of modern public housing in New Zealand, also illustrates the instrumental role of various government authorities in documenting and conserving significant housing sites in this country.

These and other papers in this issue offer reflective and international studies that further the scholarship and practice of documenting and conserving modern sites within the public realm.

Details of this issue of the Journal of Architecture can be found at <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/RJAR> (follow links to "online contents")

Hannah Lewi
Chair **docomomo** Australia

Maestros de la arquitectura moderna en la Residencia de Estudiantes

By Salvador Guerrero and AA.VV.
Publisher: Residencia de Estudiantes
ISBN: 9788493747428
Language: Spanish
Year: 2010



Between 1928 and 1934 some of today's critically acclaimed modern architects visited the Casa de Estudiantes in Madrid: Le Corbusier, Erich Mendelsohn, Theo van Doesburg, Walter Gropius, Sigfried Giedion and Edwin Lutyens.

Stanislaus von Moos, Regina Stephan, Jan Molema, Joaquín Medina Warmburg, Sokratis Georgiadis and David Watkin have written essays that are complemented and enriched by historical documents dealing with the lectures that those protagonists of modern architecture held at the Residencia.

Ivan Blasi
Secretary General **docomomo** International

Equipamientos I. Lugares Públicos y nuevos programas, 1925–1965. Registro **docomomo** Ibérico

By AA.VV.
Publisher: Arquia/temas 30
ISBN: 9788493785734
Language: Spanish
Year: 2010

docomomo Iberia organized an exhibition with the same title in Madrid. During the 20th Century, society underwent a modernization process that reached all fields. This transformation was reflected in different built spaces but, above all, in those buildings dealing with health, religion,

civil services and education programs. Each project is superbly presented with a new photographic report and technical data.



docomomo_Slovenia_100

By Natasa Koselj and AA.VV.
Publisher: ab arhitektov bilten/architect's bulletin
ISBN: 9789619229811
Language: Slovenian and English
Year: 2010



docomomo Slovenia organized the exhibition "docomomo Slovenia_100" and published this monograph that presents 100 selected projects, a critically evaluated register from the perspective of architecture and art history, aiming at the preservation and renovation of architectural heritage. Sources, bibliography and introductory studies by well-known researchers highlight the importance of this publication.

Living and Dying in the Urban Modernity

By Claes Caldenby, Ola Wedebrunn and AA.VV.
Publisher: The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts/School of Architecture
ISBN: 978877830242
Language: English
Year: 2010



Nordic-Baltic experiences is the subtitle of this publication, the third of a series of joint experiences held by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. It deals with the 60s and 70s estates and their role in the crisis of modernism, its proclaimed death in the 70s and their possible continued life. The importance of the collaboration between the Nordic and Baltic countries to debate their common urban future under a need of a continuous criticism clearly indicates the strength of joint forces.

Ivan Blasi

Secretary General **docomomo** International

Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century

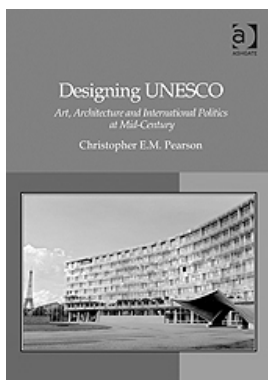
by Christopher E.M. Pearson

Publisher: Ashgate

ISBN: 978-0-7546-6783-4

Language: English

Year: 2010



This publication represents the first full-length monograph on the genesis, construction and reception of the Paris headquarters of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The book traces the long and

complex birth of UNESCO's permanent seat from its conception in 1950 to its inauguration in 1958, showing how its history constitutes a unique nexus of modernist practices in twentieth-century international politics, art, architecture and criticism. Drawing on a wide range of unpublished archival material and examining critical reception of the building in the local and international press, Christopher Pearson's analysis operates on formal, structural and theoretical levels, revealing many of the largely unspoken assumptions of modern architecture at mid-century and elucidating the conflicted relation between art and science in the post-war period. The volume also throws new light on many of the major architects and artists of the period, among them Breuer, Gropius, Le Corbusier and Eero Saarinen, as well as Picasso, Moore, Miró, Arp, Calder and Noguchi. Designing UNESCO is a compelling and original account of one of the most important, yet under-appreciated, buildings of twentieth-century modernism.

Ashgate Publishers

Unos días en el Brasil (Diario de viaje)

by Adolfo Bioy Casares

Publisher: La Compañía de los Libros

and Páginas de Espuma

ISBN: 978-84-8393-071-7

Language: Spanish

Year: 2010



Arquitetura+Arte+Cidade. Um debate internacional

By Roberto Segre, Marlice Azevedo, Renato Gama-Rosa Costa,

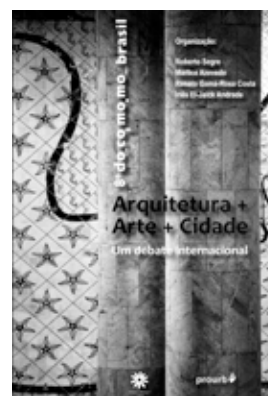
Inés El-Jaick Andrade

Viana & Mosley, Rio de Janeiro

ISBN: 8588721635

Language: Portuguese

Year: 2010



As Áfricas de Pancho Guedes

AA.VV.

Sextante Editora. Lisboa

ISBN: 978-989-676-040-3

Language: Portuguese

Year: 2010



This book, together with the exhibition with the same name, brings together the flavor of the journeys, happenings and personal meetings of Pancho Guedes. The so-called plastic arts, popular art, craftsmanship and traditional ceremonial and daily use objects coexist in Pancho Guedes' collection forged during his intense professional life in Mozambique and South Africa.

Brasil: arquiteturas após 1950

María Alice Junqueira Bastos, Ruth

Verde Zein

Perspectiva, São Paulo

ISBN: 9788527308915

Language: Portuguese

Year: 2010

This publication could become a reference book in the study and teaching of architecture in Brazil. The Catalan critic and historian Josep Maria Montaner describes it as "an important document because, thanks to its quality, it will become a new



tool for the critical interpretations of contemporary Brazilian architecture and a necessary text because it contributes in giving a new necessary vision on the contemporary Brazilian architecture history which remains imprisoned by prejudices, clichés and images that in general emphasize a presumed and unbeatable Golden Age”.

Perspectiva Publishers

Guia de obras de Oscar Niemeyer. Brasília 50 anos

Silvia Ficher, Andrey Schlee
Câmara dos Deputados, Instituto dos
Arquitetos do Brasil, Brasília
ISBN: 978-85-736-5716-6
Language: English, Portuguese, Spanish
Year: 2010



The work of Oscar Niemeyer in Brasília was born as a result of a genial talent. It is historic because it is a monumental milestone for a great era. Original, since fraught with Brazilianness. So beautiful and simple. Incredible lightness. Inexhaustible creative fecundity. Sublime in every stroke. Surrounding the curve. Generous in the infinity

of space. Visible in the light of so many horizons. Incomplete because it is genuinely human. It has everything to make it be admired. It is a privilege to visit it. Knowing it brings up an indescribable emotion. In this guide the IAB-DF combines information elements that explain the significance and unique architectural coherence of the work of the great master. Release the heart, release the soul and live the experience of beauty in the incomparable aesthetic expression of concrete and the concrete masterpiece considered a World Heritage Site.

Igor Soares Campos
President IAB/DF, 2008-2009

Os primeiros arquitetos modernos. Habitação social no Brasil 1930 – 1950

Paulo Bruna
EDUSP
ISBN: 9788531409523
Portuguese
Year: 2010



Seeking an approach in keeping with contemporary architectural critique, Paulo Bruna extends the vision of Brazilian modern architecture history. Therefore, the author reworks the notions of modern and modernity with the background of the Europe of 1920 to 1930. He then goes back to Brazilian architectural culture, showing that since the beginning of the 1930s, a group of architects and engineers pawned to specify the ideas of the modern movement in a concrete and objective form. The book seeks to show the relation between the creation of the IAPs – Institutes of Retirement and Pensions – in the 1930s and the construction of the big dwelling assemblies in Brazil, influenced by theoretical concepts and constructive approaches associated to the modern movement.

EDUSP Publishers

Zonnestraal Sanatorium The history and restoration of a modern monument

By Paul Meurs and Marie-Thérèse van Thoor (eds.)
ISBN 978 90 5662 696 9
Language: English
Year: 2010



Ever since its completion in 1928, Jan Duiker's Sanatorium 'Zonnestraal' in Hilversum has probably been the most canonical and internationally celebrated example of Modern Movement architecture in The Netherlands. After an extensive restoration of more than thirty years, carried out by the architects Hubert-Jan Henket and Wessel de Jonge, the project is completed. The book *Zonnestraal Sanatorium: The History and Restoration of a Modern Monument* describes the process. The book is richly illustrated with historical visual materials, using plans, sketches and photographs that capture the Zonnestraal of today and yesterday in its full glory. You can order this book at www.naipublishers.nl/zonnestraal

'Splendid new monograph'
The New York Review of Books