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'Obama, Please Tax Me!' Architecture and the Politics of Redistribution

Tom Avermaete and Dirk van den Heuvel

The current economic crisis saw a new phenomenon: mega-rich tycoons such as Warren Buffett asked the American president and Congress to raise their taxes, in order to fairly balance the burden. After decades of neoliberal dogma, this was a truly refreshing moment. Arguably, capitalism and the redistribution of wealth are not necessarily opposites, yet it seems as if this had been forgotten during the triumphalist years, which followed the demise of state communism. If the banking crisis of 2008 made one thing clear once again, it is the fact that unruly capitalist development cannot do without state intervention and back-up. This certainly is not a new observation because Henry Ford famously built his empire on this recognition. Hence, it was nothing but appropriate that the Big Three US car companies let themselves be bailed out from utter collapse by the American government as part of managing the collateral damage from the banking crisis.

Even though neoliberal habit tenaciously persists in the global arenas of finance and corporate governance, the ongoing crisis puts the politics of redistribution back on the agenda. The search is for alternative models, such as Noreena Hertz's proposition of a 'Co-op Capitalism' or the still strong Rhineland model of Germany. By the same token, one might revisit the recent history of the welfare state and its redistributive politics, not to dwell in nostalgia, but indeed to look for alternatives to the current rule, by which private debt of banks and multinationals is collectivized, whereas collective assets such as public housing are further privatized. Take, for instance, the Dutch right-wing government, supported by the populist Freedom Party, which only recently decided that all tenants of social housing should have a right to buy, as if nothing was learned from the Thatcher years.

If we are in a period of transition, we would do better to use it to reconsider past models, in order to be prepared for the future opportunity to redefine the balance between state provision, intervention and free market domination. The Western European welfare state as an ideologically highly charged ompromise model may offer food for thought, inspiration, a touchstone to rethink and develop new collectivity models. The welfare state project was a reaction to the processes of modernization in the early twentieth century, and the destruction of two world wars. Caught between American corporate capitalism and Soviet communism, the welfare state project was also an attempt to devise a specific Western European answer to Cold War politics and emerging postcolonial realities.

The welfare state involved a wide array of collective policies and programmes. In most Western European countries this resulted, among others, in the construction of planning institutions and a new bureaucracy, facilitating the redistribution of wealth, knowledge and political power, and implementing new building programmes such as (social) mass housing, cultural centres, schools and universities, but also new energy infrastructure as well as

industries and businesses. This placed architects on the front line of innovative collective models, and initially endowed them with wide-scale praise for their creative work. However, when the political consensus over the welfare state became strained or even collapsed - as notably occurred during the crisis of the 1970s - architects and their work came under sustained attack. They were considered trailblazers of a welfare state that was too bureaucratic, too much one-size-fits-all, and too reformist.

Today, as we look back on the historical phenomenon of the welfare state, we can start to re-assess both how architects positioned themselves within the politics of building, and, crucially, the nature and characteristics of the work that they produced. As a condition of exceptional material production, the welfare state has left a substantial and permanent imprint on the built environment. A vast built legacy of complete cities, neighbourhoods and infrastructure requires an update through strategies of renovation and preservation - both as heritage and as everyday living environments. Much of the current research projects on welfare state architecture and urbanism stem from this need. Initiatives, such as the Twentieth Century Society in England, Docomomo and the Jonge Monumentenproject in the Netherlands, and the recent publications, e.g. those based on research conducted in Belgium and Sweden, are all proof of a renewed interest in this built legacy of the welfare state.

This issue of *Footprint* is based on the conference session 'The European Welfare State Project - Ideals, Politics, Cities and Buildings' as organized by the editors at the first EAHN Conference in Guimarães, Portugal in 2010 and as elaborated in the second EAHN Conference in Brussels, Belgium in 2012 (together with Mark Swenarton). These sessions were proposed as part of the research programme 'Changing Ideals - Shifting Realities' conducted at the TU Delft that aims to further disclose, map and question the architectural culture of the second half of the twentieth century. It focuses on how the welfare state in Western Europe represents a unique time frame in which manifold shifts within the modernist discourse in architecture and planning were paired with societal changes that established new assemblages between producers, designers, governments, clients, builders and users.

This selection of papers illustrates that these new assemblages were multivalent, but often also ambiguous or even contradictory. The welfare state model was not only perceived as a straitjacket that resulted in unfreedom for individual exploration and endeavour. It was also an infrastructure that enabled the local and accommodated individual projects. Just as the welfare state model was characterized by 'repressive tolerance' and unnecessary uniformity, there was also room to manoeuvre, depending on specific contexts, particular alliances and local conditions. In this issue of *Footprint*, Lucy Creagh questions in her paper the allowed freedom of the emancipation model of the new town of Vällingby in Sweden. Sven Sterken delivers a particular case study on Belgium, demonstrating how the office of Groupe Structures was caught by the logic of productivity and a first concern for local community shifted to rationalist mass production output. Pierre Chabard discusses the paradox of the freedom for architectural experiment under authoritative French state planning, and the introduction of regressive, orthodox urban models under a new fragmented and hybrid regime of a diverse collection of government bodies and private initiative. Pedro Baía and Mark Swenarton bring positive models: Baía expounds on how modernization and the ideas of Team 10 were considered a way out of the deadlock under the Salazar dictatorship; and Swenarton demonstrates how the possibilities of individual action within government bodies resulted in a most specific series of modernist housing ensembles of an innovative typology.

In retrospect, one can identify New Brutalism and structuralism among the foremost new formations within the architectural discourse and practice of the period. However, at the same time these two labels were never clearly, unambiguously defined. Part of the conceptual confusion is the critical engagement or unwilling involvement of architects with the project of the welfare state. Groups like Team 10 fiercely criticized (aspects of) the welfare state system, while building under its very conditions. A complication in assessing the exact qualities of the built legacy of those years arises from the very different national and local contexts in which welfare state policies were developed, as well as from the variety of intellectual and disciplinary contexts that engendered architecture. Such complication brings an enrichment that allows us to view the perceived uniformity of the hybrid welfare state models in a new light. At the intersections of building practice, architectural viewpoints, national and local cultural contexts, a nuanced image of welfare state architecture emerges.

From *acceptera* to Vällingby: The Discourse on Individuality and Community in Sweden (1931-54)

Lucy Creagh

In Sweden, the relationship of modern architecture to the welfare state starts with their common ascendance around 1931-32. It was in this period that the group responsible for the design of the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930 - Uno Åhrén, Gunnar Asplund, Sven Markelius, Gregor Paulsson, Eskil Sundahl and Wolter Gahn - penned the functionalist manifesto *acceptera*, and the Social Democrats achieved their first majority in the Stockholm municipal elections, also forming their first national government under Per Albin Hansson. The essential terms for the debate on modern architecture in Sweden after 1931 - and indeed the welfare state itself - are set out in word and image on the frontis to *acceptera*: [fig. 1]

The individual and the mass …
The personal or the universal?
Quality or quantity?
-Insoluble questions, for the collective is a fact
we cannot disregard any more than we can disregard
the needs of individuals for lives of their own.
The problem in our times can be stated as:
Quantity and *quality, the mass* and *the individual.*[1]

If all the permutations of the so-called 'Middle Way' or 'Third Way' lie between the two poles enunciated here, what kind of balance did the Swedish welfare state strike over the course of the 1930s, 40s and early 50s? How did architecture achieve the 'both-and' called for in *acceptera*?[2] How can major postwar projects such as the suburb of Vällingby - lauded by critics and considered a 'yardstick' for new housing developments in the 1950s - be seen as the horizon of the discourse on 'the individual and the mass', not only reflecting but, it might be argued, enforcing the social contract that was established between the citizen and the state?[3]

Public collectivism, private individualism

The Social Democrats inherited a desperate housing situation upon their ascension to government. Despite a surge in housing construction and an increase in real wages for workers over the course of the 1920s, affordable, hygienic and spatially adequate housing was beyond the means of the vast majority. A housing market dominated by private speculation resulted in some of the highest rents in Europe, with an apartment of two rooms and a kitchen consuming 38% of the yearly wage for an industrial worker in 1928. Dwellings in the city of Stockholm were small, with around half comprising one room and a kitchen, or one room alone. Overcrowding was rife, as working class families squeezed themselves into inadequately sized apartments. The fact that almost 70% of all dwellings lacked proper bathing facilities and 60% had no central heating only exacerbated a housing problem reported at the time to be the worst in Europe.[4]

The metaphor the Social Democrats deployed for the society they would build was that of the *folkhem*, a good home, 'the people's home', of a nation-family living under the shared roof of social equality and welfare solidarity. Its deployment is notable

not only for the timely emphasis it placed on one of Sweden's most pressing social problems, but for the way in which it conflated the notion of the state with 'the people'. The authors of *acceptera* saw the three-way relationship of the individual, the state and the home in similar terms:

[…] *the relationship of the individual to the state has changed radically compared with the past* […] *the most important thing is that* ***society takes care of certain elements in the lives of individuals*** *that were formerly their own responsibility or that did not exist at all. This means that individuals have a greater chance of keeping their homes intact, both economically - they can be helped through crises they have not caused - and also functionally, as the home can be for rest and family life.*[5]

Yet this notion of society/the state relieving the individual of certain burdens and replacing personal responsibility with collectivized provision clearly entailed more to the authors of *acceptera* than the social securities of old-age pensions, poor relief and so on. Phenomena associated with the gains of the labour movement such as leisure time and adult education, as well as mass culture in all its forms - the cinema, clubs and associations, scouting, football matches, formation gymnastics, group ramblings in the forest - were all discussed and illustrated in *acceptera*. These, and the ongoing transformation of household work through an array of technologies and efficiencies such as collectivized kitchens, laundries and child care, were all changes to everyday life which had, in effect, removed certain practical, recreational and social functions from the home. The notion of the *household* as the self-sufficient yet vulnerable economic cornerstone of agrarian society had been transformed under the dual processes of industrialization and democratization to become *home*, a physical entity set aside from the world of work, a place of relaxation and privacy.

With a new and sharp division between what took place in the home and what was now relegated to the collective realm, the domestic interior became the site for the cultivation of individuality, and in this the *acceptera* authors were influenced by the aesthetic theories of the Swedish social reformer Ellen Key. Key's turn-of-the-century writings on the interior and furnishings were proto-functionalist: utility, truth to materials, the moral dimension she attached to the expression of purpose as 'honesty' and 'truth', and the ends to which she was directed - 'beauty for all' - were goals shared by the *acceptera* authors, especially Paulsson, who professed a particular debt to Key's thinking.[6] She proposed that beauty in the home was as essential to the democratic cause as employment, better working conditions and educational reforms, for beauty was the innate and common longing of all people, a necessity that transcended the logic of class and wealth. Beauty in the home was 'not at all an extravagance' she said, but acted as a foil to the world of work outside, 'lift[ing] your spirits even in the midst of the heaviest drudgery'.[7] Critically, beauty in the home could only be achieved through the expression of personality. Each interior must be different to the extent that its inhabitants were individuals, with different needs and different personal histories. 'A room does not have a soul,' she said, 'until someone's soul is revealed in it, until it shows us what that someone remembers and loves, and how this person lives and works every day.'[8] Her exemplars in this respect were the Mora cottage at Skansen, a dwelling in which people, she said, 'have satisfied their real needs in accordance with their own preferences', and the home of the artist couple Carl and Karin Larsson, the interiors of which were an idiosyncratic mix of simple, inexpensive vernacular pieces, more refined Gustavian period examples and furnishings to their own design.[9] [fig. 2] While these examples are seemingly far from the modern interiors illustrated in *acceptera* - many of which were the model apartments fitted out with mass-produced furnishings seen at the Stockholm

Individen och massan . . .

Det personliga eller det allmängiltiga?
Kvalitet eller kvantitet?
— en olöslig frågeställning, ty vi kan icke komma ifrån kollektivitetens faktum lika litet som vi kan komma ifrån individens fordran på självständigt liv.
Problemet heter i våra dagar:
kvantitet *och* kvalitet, massa *och* individ.
Det är nödvändigt att söka lösa det även i byggnadskonsten och konstindustrin.

Fig. 1: Frontis to *acceptera*, as published in the original Swedish edition (Stockholm: Tiden, 1931).

Exhibition [fig. 3] - the authors argued, very much in the spirit of Key, that standardization did not preclude individual expression, rather:

[i]*f we furnish our home with the things we really need, the selection will be an expression of the life in the home as we live it*. *In this way the personal home evolves naturally and authentically - just as much if each item is also one in a series of humble, impersonal manufactured pieces of furniture.*[10]

The schema of 'private individualism and public collectivism', a binary that is said to define social relations in the Swedish welfare state, can also be seen to guide the housing future presented by the authors of *acceptera*.[11] Although they acknowledged the preference of the majority of people for an *egnahem*, a detached owner-occupied house with its own garden, they believed that the garden suburb was at odds with the frugality that must be the basis of modern housing, also fostering bourgeois pretensions. The house exteriors of the garden city, they said, 'alternate between borrowings from manor houses, farm cottages, Italian villas, and the like', achieving only a superficial individualism based on visual variety and whim, not the individualism that emerges from the satisfaction of genuine, personal need.[12] For these authors, housing could no longer be formed from the outside-in, with badly designed dwellings forced into a form determined by the class organization of public space, be that the axiality of Baroque autocracy, the bourgeois romanticism of the picturesque, or the closed perimeter block that had become, in their conception, a symbol of a pre-democratic society. Each apartment, designed to maximize space while carefully differentiating functions, would be arranged in long extrusions, known in Swedish as *lamellhus*.[13] These parallel slab blocks would be orientated purely objectively to maximize sun and air, forming a more democratic spatial matrix and becoming the building block of a new 'open-city planning system'. A neutral and unadorned façade should face the collective realm.[14] [fig. 4]

Construction and auto-critique

The housing situation was perhaps so acute in 1931 that the collective component of the equation presented in *acceptera* - the building types associated with mass culture and recreation, and how different collectivized functions could be deployed in relation to housing - was left deliberately unexplored by the authors.[15] In the burgeoning cooperative housing sector, particularly in projects initiated by HSB (Hyresgästernas sparkasse- och byggnadsförening), certain communal facilities such as laundries and playrooms were incorporated into apartment blocks from the end of the 1920s onwards. In general, however, standards of collective provision remained basic throughout the 1930s, and this was certainly the case in the first generation of parallel slab blocks realized in Stockholm in areas such as Kristineberg and Fredhäll.[16] [fig. 5] As the 1930s progressed, debate swirled around the appropriate depth for the parallel slab block, and whether the greater ration of sun and air achieved in the narrower *smalhus* (lit. 'narrow building') where a floor plate depth ranging from 7 to 10 metres allowed apartments to have windows on both sides [*genomgående lägenhet*] could be justified against the more usual 14 to 16 metre thick *tjockhus* (lit. 'thick building'), where inferior apartment layouts were compensated for by greater density.[17] After 1931, in equal measure under the influence of the Stockholm Exhibition and a visit to the Deutsche Bauausstellung in Berlin, the narrow slab block would be championed by the Social Democrat Axel Dahlberg, the director of Stockholm's municipal real estate office, becoming the template for new areas of housing in districts such as Traneberg and Hammarbyhöjden, both of which were designed in 1934. By the end of the 1930s, Dahlberg's uncompromising attachment to the narrow block as a solution to workers' housing would become the subject of parody in the conservative press,

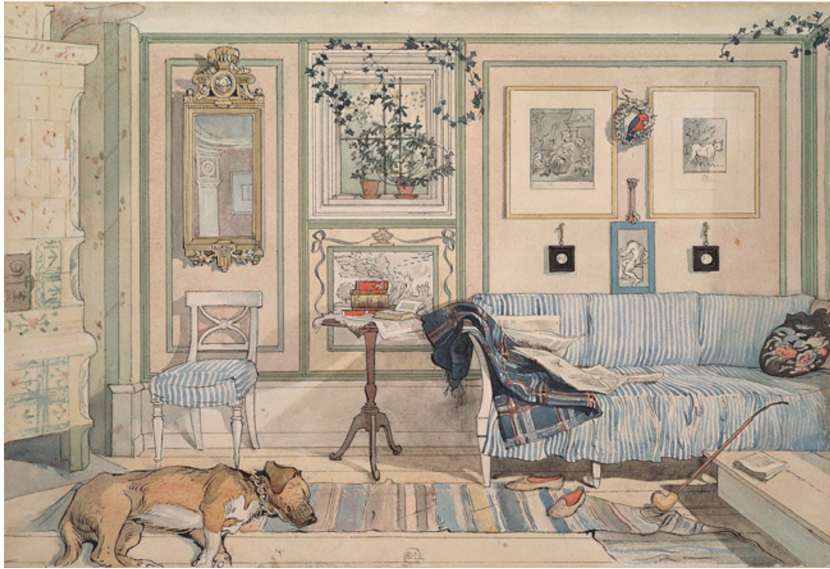


Fig. 2

Fig. 3

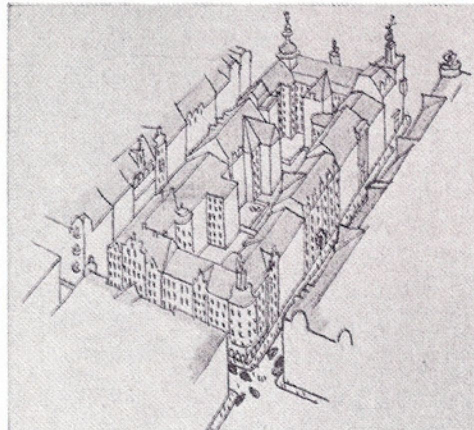
Fig. 2: Interior from the home of Carl and Karin Larsson, as published in Carl Larsson, *Ett Hem* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1899).
Fig. 3: Erik Friberger, interior, apartment 1, Stockholm Exhibition, 1930. Photographer: Karl Schultz. Courtesy Arkitektur-museet, Stockholm.

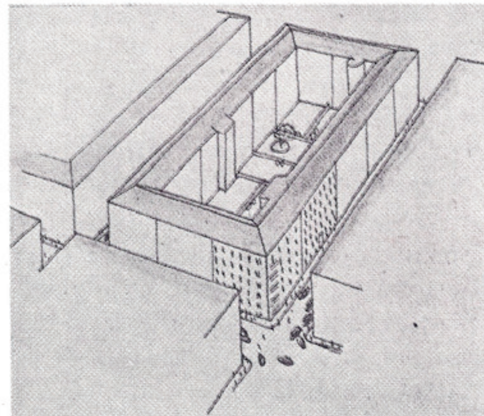
not only for the uncompromising zeal with which he dispersed these three-storied, pitched-roof constructions across Stockholm, but for the monotonous environments they engendered.[18]

Paradoxically, it would also be some of the *acceptera* authors who would become the harshest critics of these new housing developments. In a lecture delivered at a meeting of the Swedish Association of Architects only five years after the publication of *acceptera*, Asplund argued that while this approach to housing offered great increases of daylight and fresh air, the lengths of identical apartments, representing 'the infinite repetition of the standardized element, mass crowding without expression of individual life', were not only marked by an aesthetic 'monotony, gloominess' but were sociologically dangerous.[19] Recalling Siegfried Kracauer's notion of the 'mass ornament', Asplund warned of the dangers of lost individuality by evoking the popular dancing troupe the Tiller Girls, whose coordinated routine, while initially attractive, was ultimately a dehumanized surface effect where 'the individual in the ensemble is […] lost or degraded to ornament - an ornament of some hundred arms and legs and a hundred smiles'.[20] Instead of the balance that had been called for in *acceptera* between 'quality and quantity/the individual and the mass' there had been a one-sided emphasis on the technical and quantitative. Åhrén, at the same meeting, agreed that the democratization of housing could not be realized through mastery of technical issues alone. He identified that the 'democratic will' that had been at the foundation of functionalism had been waylaid by certain systemic difficulties, not the least of which was the continued status of land as an object for private speculation. The most decisive factor in furthering the intentions of *acceptera*, Åhrén argued, would be a fuller understanding of prevailing social structures and the current systems of economic and political power.[21]

Group thinking

The totalitarianism that had descended over Europe and the Soviet Union since 1931 had brought with it the 'mass effect' as a fundamental aesthetic trope. And as Asplund's lecture attests, by 1936 the revolutionary and transformative implications of the very notion of 'the mass' - of the banding together of individuals to effect social and economic change, found in Sweden in particular strength and number in popular organizations such as the labour and cooperative movements - had given way to what Raymond Williams has identified as an etymology of 'a wholly opposite social and political tendency'.[22] Mass culture, mass meetings and mass rallies were now considered diversionary, inculcating anonymity, and a threat to genuine democracy. With the onset of war, *acceptera* group members Åhrén and Paulsson joined the influential philosopher and sociologist Torgny T. Segerstedt to form a discussion group that set out to understand the future of democracy in Sweden. Meeting regularly in Uppsala between 1939 and 1943, and joined in these discussions by architects such as Eskil Sundahl, Jöran Curman and Helge Zimdahl, the economist Alf Johansson, the educator Harald Elldin, and housing researcher Brita Åkerman, the notion of Swedish collectivity was recast from 'the mass' to 'the group', and these findings were published in 1944 as *Inför framtidens demokrati* [Towards the democracy of the future].[23] For Segerstedt, the modern industrialized metropolis, or 'A-Europe' as it was referred to in *acceptera*, had betrayed its role as the home of the democratic human; instead, the cities of Europe had become incubators for atomized individuals, disengaged from the smaller, primary social groups that once provided the finer grain of order in society. For Curman and Zimdahl, the remedy for this contemporary *grupphemlöshet* or 'group homelessness' lay in the reorganization of daily life through adaptations to the physical environment. Smaller, discrete groupings of housing that shared common amenities and services would reinstate a sense of belonging to a primary group, they argued.[24] Writing his own





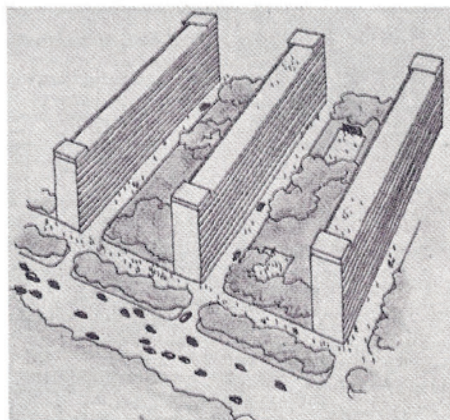


Fig. 4: Drawings showing the evolution from the old closed city planning system to the new open city planning system, as published in *acceptera* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1931).

account on the subject of architecture and democracy in 1942, Åhrén concluded that the housing of the 1930s had been planned

as if it were only a matter of putting a certain number of people in a certain number of apartments. It was forgotten that in reality living entails a shared life, in different forms, between individuals. The need to arrange residential buildings into groups around local centres, where there were possibilities for such a shared life - playgrounds, club rooms, study circle rooms, meeting rooms, a library, cinema and so on - was overlooked.[25]

In all of this, Lewis Mumford's *Culture of Cities* of 1938 was decisive. It was translated into Swedish as *Stadskultur* in 1942, with a foreword written by Paulsson.[26] The work is often cited as a major influence on wartime discourse in Sweden, a book the planner and historian Göran Sidenbladh has said was found 'on the bedside table of all interested and responsible people'.[27] In equal parts an attack on fascism and capitalism, in *Culture of Cities* Mumford idealized the medieval town in which every inhabitant identified themselves as a part of a group, be it the household, the guild or the monastery. The enclosing walls of the city symbolized a society organized according to corporatism.28 The individual dwelling, although in such a different form from the contemporary home that they were hardly comparable, nevertheless had its rudimentary nature complimented by a range of collectivized public facilities - ovens, baths and so on. More than any later incarnation, Mumford argued, the medieval town provided a higher standard for the greater number and was more essentially democratic in nature.[29] Mumford saw in the group and its constructed corollaries in the community centre and the neighbourhood a foil to the excessive abstraction of capitalism, its sense of limitless space, limitless wealth, limitless power:[30]

we need, in every part of the city, units in which intelligent and co-operative behaviour can take the place of mass regulations, mass decisions, mass actions, imposed by ever remoter leaders and administrators. Small groups: small classes: small communities: institutions framed to the human scale are essential to purposive behaviour in modern society.[31]

What Mumford proposed was not a 'mono-nucleated' city but a 'poly-nucleated city'; not a city with satellite towns but a conurbation where 'each unit, though ranging in size from five thousand to fifty thousand, will have equal "valence" in the regional scheme'.[32]

This concept of the 'neighbourhood unit' was not, strictly speaking, a new one. Clarence Perry had promoted a similar idea in the United States in the 1920s, and in 1944 Forshaw and Abercrombie were to use the same principle as the template for the reconstruction of London in their County of London Plan. However, while the American and British permutations were viewed as direct descendents of the garden city, in Sweden neighbourhood planning was primarily conceived of as a continuation and expansion of functionalism, not simply because pioneering figures such as Åhrén and Markelius would be at the forefront of its promotion and implementation, but because the neighbourhood unit would be achieved with the same tightly planned apartments that developments in the 1930s had consisted of. What did change after the process of re-evaluation and auto-critique in the late 1930s and early 1940s was the way these apartments were combined to create groupings at a range of scales and public space of varying experiential quality. The interplay between the private home and public amenities became a primary object of experimentation.

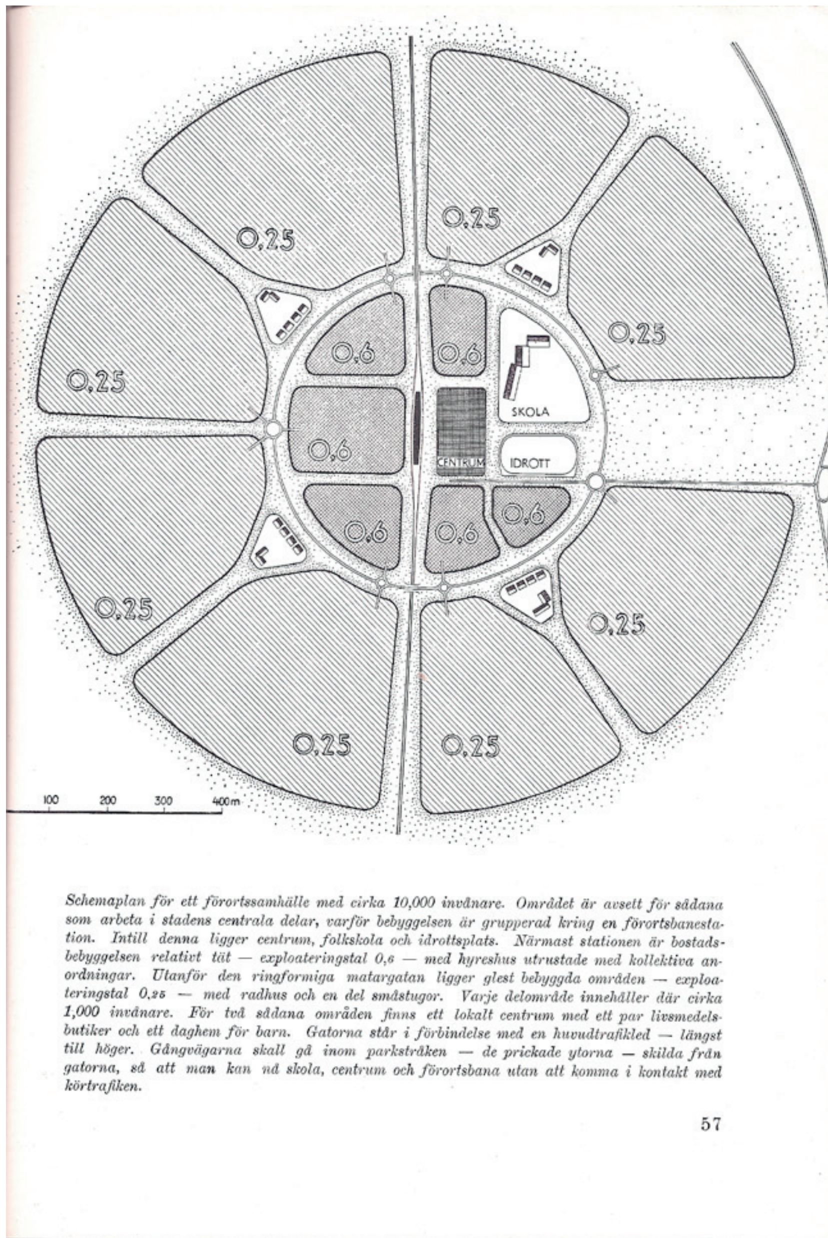
Fig. 5: Aerial photograph showing slab block housing developments in Kristineberg and Fredhäll, Stockholm, 1933.
Photographer: Oscar Bladh. Stockholms stadsmuseum.

The social democratic suburb

By the end of World War II, younger architects such as Sven Backström and Leif Reinius were developing new variations on the apartments that were the ideal presented in *acceptera*. In their *stjärnhus* or 'star-house' plan type, three apartments were clustered around a central staircase on each floor, this arrangement not only allowing for windows to at least two, and sometimes three sides of each apartment, but also giving varied combinatorial possibilities in terms of the block. The basic module could be simply stacked to form a point block or combined to form a regular honeycomb grid of housing and protected courtyards, and both deployments are found at Gröndal in Stockholm, which was planned in 1944 and completed in 1946. The module could also be used in a freer, more irregular and extended way, as seen later at Rosta in Örebro, built between 1947 and 1951. The undifferentiated 'mass effect' of the parallel slab blocks of the 1930s was adapted in these instances to form more identifiable clusters or sub-groupings of apartments.

The Social Democrats enshrined the 'collective' compliment to housing in their own postwar programme, the so-called '27 points', promising community and leisure centres, playrooms and crèches, in addition to committing to slash the ongoing housing shortage by half.[33] And certainly by 1944, the mechanisms were almost in place for the state to effectively take control of the housing market. In the face of the private sector's failure to solve the housing shortage, in 1942 the Social Democrats instituted a complex of state-funded mortgages and subsidies that favoured the growing non-profit municipal and cooperative housing sectors (most notably HSB and Svenska Riksbyggen), at once putting the private entrepreneur at a disadvantage but without directly nationalizing the industry. What this did was unlock the potential for control that resided in the now huge reserves of land, which cities such as Stockholm had been gradually accumulating since 1904, a programme of land acquisition 'on a scale […] unparalleled in Western metropolises' according to the urban historian Thomas Hall.[34] State loans were granted for development on municipally owned land, and all loans, whether to public, cooperative or private sector builders, came with caveats about the number, type and size of the dwellings to be constructed, with a clear bias towards multi-unit dwellings. Rent controls were introduced and in Stockholm in 1947 the process of renting itself came under municipal control, with all housing constructed on city land to be allocated through a central agency. Critically, as the Social Democrats moved closer to the universal provision of welfare, the concept of 'public housing' as housing for the poor was completely altered; rents were fixed at a level deemed affordable to those in the lowest income bracket, eliminating the need for means testing, with access to new housing stock effectively opened to all, regardless of class or economic status. The mechanism for allocation became what was viewed as the inherent democracy of the housing queue.[35]

The essence of a plan for the expansion and attendant reorganization of Stockholm according to the neighbourhood principle was also in place by 1945 in the form of *Det framtida Stockholm* [Stockholm in the future], a document chiefly authored by Markelius, who had been appointed chief city planner in 1944.[36] The notion of 'community centre' had already guided Åhrén in the 1943 master plan he prepared for new housing in the Stockholm suburb of Årsta, the centrepiece of which would be an intimately scaled public square with a range of commercial, civic and leisure facilities around it.[37] Yet Markelius now approached the issue of housing at a scale commensurate with the problem, which at the end of the war still saw 32% of all apartments in Stockholm comprising only one room and a kitchen, and a further 20% only one or two rooms without any kitchen at all, while only about half of all apartments had bathing facilities.[38] The solution lay in the large-scale expansion of the city to the north-west,



Schemaplan för ett förortssamhälle med cirka 10,000 invånare. Området är avsett för sådana som arbeta i stadens centrala delar, varför bebyggelsen är grupperad kring en förortsbanestation. Intill denna ligger centrum, folkskola och idrottsplats. Närmast stationen är bostadsbebyggelsen relativt tät — exploateringstal 0,6 — med hyreshus utrustade med kollektiva anordningar. Utanför den ringformiga matargatan ligger glest bebyggda områden — exploateringstal 0,25 — med radhus och en del småstugor. Varje delområde innehåller där cirka 1,000 invånare. För två sådana områden finns ett lokalt centrum med ett par livsmedelsbutiker och ett daghem för barn. Gatorna står i förbindelse med en huvudtrafikled — längst till höger. Gångvägarna skall gå inom parkstråken — de prickade ytorna — skilda från gatorna, så att man kan nå skola, centrum och förortsbana utan att komma i kontakt med körtrafiken.

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Fig. 6: ‘Diagrammatic plan for a suburban community of around 10,000 inhabitants’, as published in Markelius, *Det framtida Stockholm* (Stockholm: K.L. Beckman, 1945).

south and south-west, and the construction therein of new housing for in excess of 150,000 people.[39]

Perhaps in an effort to differentiate the Swedish iteration of neighbourhood planning from that associated with the British New Town, Markelius developed the acronym 'ABC': A for *Arbete*, or work; B for *Bostad*, or housing; and C for *Centrum*, the centre.[40] Certainly Vällingby, which was planned between 1949 and 1952, was not really a New Town as it was located a mere 10 kilometres to the north-west of the old town centre of Stockholm.[41] Nor was it, with its sizeable civic and commercial centre, its offices and industrial area, anything like a dormitory suburb. As the regional centre and midpoint of a cluster of five new suburbs, Vällingby was what the *Architectural Review* in 1958 called 'a sort of super-suburb', connected to Stockholm city by rapid transit on one side and an arterial road on the other, and projected to have sufficient jobs, social services, leisure and consumer opportunities for it to have a life of its own.[42] The future population for central Vällingby was estimated at 42,000, and it was proposed that 50% of the employable inhabitants would work in the area.[43] The land on which the Vällingby cluster was situated was entirely owned by the city, and the construction of the town managed by the municipally owned company Svenska Bostäder.

The essential planning principles conveyed in the early diagram found in *Det framtida Stockholm* were echoed in the detailed planning of Vällingby, where density was arranged concentrically around a central hub, with a number of secondary nodes of activity around it. [figs. 6, 7] The final organization of the centre as well as the design of several of its major buildings was carried out by Backström and Reinius. Considering the influence of Mumford on wartime debate in Sweden, it is likely no coincidence that one of the earliest ideas for Vällingby Centrum alluded to medieval precedent, with a continuous, three-story wall of housing proposed that would encircle the centre, punctuated by a series of towers - all a direct reference to the fortified wall or *ringmur* of the Swedish medieval town of Visby.[44] Even though only a segment of a continuous wall can be seen in the final scheme, the string of 11-storey apartment blocks around the edge of the centre - looming and visible at every turn - act to mark its limits, and can be seen as an attempt to achieve a certain urbanity, both in density and image, for Vällingby. [fig 8] This string of high-rise apartment buildings contained small units ranging from one room and a kitchen to three rooms and a kitchen, and would be allocated to singles, couples and small families.

In the next zone, the outer reaches of which lay no more than 500 metres from the centre, three- and four-storey apartment blocks dominated, including some based on the low-slab block model, but now more loosely arranged to form courtyards rather than in parallel rows. There are many different housing types here - from Paul Hedqvist's cruciform apartment blocks, to Höjer & Ljungqvist's Mörsilgatan stepped row housing and Gunnar Jacobsson's circular apartment buildings - but all are deployed in discrete sub-groupings, resulting in a range of distinctive environments within the zone. It is in this area that the next tier of community facilities were deployed, particularly those such as schools, child-care centres, shared laundries, and other facilities catering to families.

In the third zone to the north-east, a relatively small number of row houses and detached dwellings were located, these too with shared facilities but on a more intimate scale, such as shared gardens, playrooms and saunas. The notable projects in this area include Höjer & Ljungqvist's Atlantis row housing and Ragnar Uppman's Omega row houses. Although here on the outer edges the densities were more traditionally suburban, these dwellings were still small and standardized. Only families with children were eligible to live in projects such as Atlantis and Omega.[45]

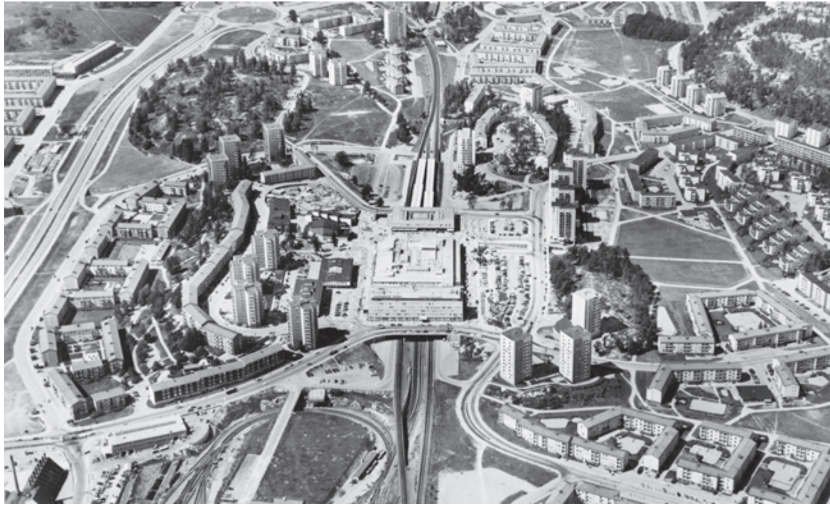


Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 7: Aerial view, Vällingby. Photographer: Oscar Bladh. Stockholms stadsmuseum.

Fig. 8: Vällingbygången, Vällingby Centrum, 1957. Photographer: Lennart af Petersens. Stockholms stadsmuseum.

Connecting these three roughly concentric zones were footpaths and cycle ways separated from vehicular traffic. Crucially, the need for intermediate modes of transport to reach the centre, such as cars or buses, would be theoretically eliminated by setting the distance of the outer reaches of the suburb to the metro as that which could be walked - about 800 metres.

The leitmotif of the entire development of Vällingby was variety: variety in housing types and their arrangement, and variety in the spatial experiences of the public domain. This principle also marked the architectural resolution of the centre itself. A large, open pedestrian plaza is bound on one side by the metro station, to another by a cinema, civic centre and a church (and behind these. up a level, a youth centre, library and workers' educational association building), and on the other edges a large block of department stores, a restaurant, other smaller blocks of shops, offices, medical and social services. Pushed to the very outer edge of the plaza, the monolithic brick form of Peter Celsing's St Tomas church, one of the last buildings completed here, stands in marked contrast to the architectural language of the other buildings, almost all of which were designed by Backström and Reinius in a style that might be classified as 'late New Empiricism'. The department store building, for example, is an amalgam of different forms, receding and protruding volumes, of juxtaposed fenestration patterns and awning styles, with the varied roofscape given filigree extension through an array of neon signs. [fig. 9]

Yet this central area also indicates that by the time Vällingby was inaugurated in 1954 - the 32nd year of a 44-year stretch of virtually continuous governance by the Social Democrats - what constituted the collective had changed significantly from the initial musings found in *acceptera*, as well as the first attempts to define 'community' at Årsta Centrum. At Årsta, the neighbourhood centre comprised a central square lined with civic facilities such as a library, meeting rooms, a theatre and cinema, but with only a modest component of shopping. It had been deemed a financial and social failure because of this. Considerable lobbying by the Stockholm Merchant's Association saw the original shopping area projected for Vällingby increased by a factor of almost seven, the logic being that with Stockholm so close, Vällingby had to present a comprehensive range of retail options if it was to keep people there.[46] In an account of the development of Vällingby, the director of Svenska Bostäder, Albert Aronson, stressed that the amount and quality of shopping was not only critical to the economic viability of the venture, but also its social, and indeed political, success. He felt the young people who would populate Vällingby would feel 'banished' to the outskirts by the local housing authority lest they were offered some degree of

the richly-facetted commerce, culture and entertainment of the big city. To win them over to the idea of Vällingby, it would be no use talking about *edifying environments, home life and invigorating walks in green open spaces. They would not wait for the ideal society while planners, technicians and builders figured out what would be best. They wanted a centre which corresponded to what they wanted to do with their money, not only being able to satisfy their essential needs, but enjoying, within a festive atmosphere, the possibility of choosing what they need and being lured by that which they had not thought of, taking even more pleasure in being able to obtain it immediately, putting impulse into action.*[47]

And indeed, public interest in Vällingby would be centred on its nature as a shopping and entertainment destination. Thousands of people visited Vällingby, from within Sweden and abroad, because it represented not a drab socialism, but a sort of up-to-the-minute showcase of affluence. Vällingby was sufficiently luxurious, as generous and universally available as the benefits of the Swedish

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 9: Vällingby Centrum, 1957. Photographer: Lennart af Petersens. Stockholms stadsmuseum.
Fig. 10: Kitchen in Vällingby, 1954. Photographer: Lennart af Petersens. Stockholms stadsmuseum.

welfare state itself, to ensure that every individual, regardless of social or economic status, identified with this project of community. Vällingby was ultra-modern for its time, well integrated into the structure of Stockholm, and achieved relatively high densities without crushing monotony or lack of open space. The private realm of the dwelling was better designed and better equipped; the collective realm was characterized by efficiency, freedom of choice, and convenience, with all sorts of conflicts designed out. It represents Social Democratic welfare policy at its zenith in Sweden.

To conclude, however, that this microcosm of the 'Middle Way' was able to effect an uncompromised balance between individualism and collectivism would be to ignore that the much-touted qualities of efficiency, freedom of choice and rationality can mask the patent 'unfreedoms', as Herbert Marcuse has called them, of the modern welfare state.[48] He argues that the generally elevated standard of living in the welfare state, achieved through 'government spending and direction […] comprehensive social security, public works on a grand scale' acts as a form of compensation for the total administration of life and the reliance of the individual on the state.[49] The pleasurable means through which the private individual is cohered to the public apparatus is echoed in Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co's description of Vällingby as a place where 'urban space mimes itself and becomes a sort of permanent theatre, open to all sorts of pleasant urban distractions', a comment not only on the construction of urbanity *ex novo*, but the illusion of a freedom of choice in a place where everyday life was in fact carefully orchestrated.[50] And while Vällingby did not contain social housing, a new and no less clear set of social stratifications was set in place. Housing was allocated to further a range of other Social Democratic social policies, from encouraging large families and thus population growth to female participation in the workforce. The very viability of Vällingby as an example of the 'ABC principle' was engineered by giving those who could find work in the area preferential housing allocation.[51] The vast majority (92%) of dwellings at Vällingby were *hyreshus*, or rental apartments, most consisting of two rooms and a kitchen. Only a small proportion of *egnahem* and *bostadsrätt*, owner-occupied and cooperatively owned dwellings, were constructed. Certain social differences were 'built in' as Ulrika Sax has suggested, with rental apartments largely allocated to workers and mid-range professionals, while row housing and detached cottages went to the families of higher professionals and academics. The Atlantis development, which was allocated according to family size, was popularly considered the 'cream' of the district.[52]

In Sweden, unlike Britain, neighbourhood planning was not about reconstruction *per se*, but as Henrik Widmark has noted, a 'mental reconstruction', about the shaping of citizens who would identify themselves with the project of the welfare state through their membership of the group at a range of scales - of the family, the study group, the club, the neighbourhood, the cooperative, the *folkhem*.[53] In a society where social life was thus structured, the home became something of a last resort for individuality according to the architect Hakon Ahlberg, arguing in the 1949 that the domestic interior was fast becoming the only place in which personal expression was sanctioned.[54] Yet while the housing shortage remained acute (which it would until the so-called *Miljonprogram* of 1965-75), and when it could take eight to ten years to reach the top of the housing queue, it could be argued that the individual had little choice but to partake of a vision of society in which all aspects of life had been planned for. [fig. 10]

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Helena Kåberg, Henrik Widmark, Mary McLeod, Ulrika Sax and Barbara Miller Lane for their feedback and assistance, both during the initial preparation of this paper for delivery at the European Architectural History Network Conference in June 2010, and its subsequent revision for publication here. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated. Aspects of social democracy and the Swedish welfare state continue to generate new research in the field of architecture. Publications since 2010 include: Nicholas Adams, 'Modern rätt och modern arkitektur', in *Tiden, platsen, arkitekturen*, ed. by Claes Caldenby (Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet, 2010), pp. 69-85; *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State*, ed. by Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein (London: Black Dog, 2010); 'The Scandinavian Welfare State and Preservation', special issue of *Future Anterior*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Winter 2010), ed. by Jorge Otero-Pailos and Thordis Arrhenius.

Notes

1. Uno Åhrén, Gunnar Asplund, Wolter Gahn, Sven Markelius, Gregor Paulsson, Eskil Sundahl, '*acceptera*', in *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*, ed. by Lucy Creagh, Helena Kåberg and Barbara Miller Lane (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), p. 143. All references to *acceptera* in this article are taken from this translation. For the original in Swedish see Gunnar Asplund et al., *acceptera* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1931). See also the later facsimile edition Gunnar Asplund et al., *acceptera* (Arlöv: Berlings, 1980).
2. Åhrén et al., '*acceptera*', p. 265.
3. 'Hubs without wheels: a comparison of the Market Square, Harlow, with the town centre at Vällingby', *Architectural Review* (June, 1958), p. 373. Vällingby was well documented in the international architectural press after its inauguration in 1954. See, for example: Rolf Jensen, 'Vällingby', *Architect and Building News*, vol. 208, (14 July 1955), pp. 47-54; J. Ludwig and M. Ahlgren, 'Das Zentrum von Vällingby', *Baumeister*, vol. 53 (April, 1956), pp. 209-16; 'Vallingby, cité satellite de Stockholm', *Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, vol. 26 (December 1955), pp. 66-71. See also George Kidder Smith, *Sweden Builds*, 2nd ed. (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1957), pp. 94-113. For their work on Vällingby and the general expansion of Stockholm, Sven Markelius (Stockholm chief city planner 1944-54) and Göran Sidenbladh (Stockholm chief city planner 1954-73) were awarded the inaugural Sir Patrick Abercrombie Prize by the Union Internationale des Architectes in 1961.
4. For a review of the housing situation in Sweden in the years up to 1930, see: Alf Johansson, 'Bostadsbehov och bostadsproduktion', *Tiden*, vol. 22, no. 2 (27 January 1930), pp. 70-86; Allan Pred, *Recognizing European Modernities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 105; Owe Lundevall, *HSB och bostadspolitiken: 1920-talet* (Stockholm: HSB:s riksförbund, 1992), p. 27.
5. Åhrén et al., '*acceptera*', p. 180.
6. For Key's influence on Paulsson, see Gregor Paulsson, *Upplevt* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1974), p. 14. See also Helena Kåberg, 'An Introduction to Gregor Paulsson's *Better Things for Everyday Life'*, in *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*, ed. by Lucy Creagh, Helena Kåberg and Barbara Miller Lane (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), pp. 60-61.
7. Ellen Key, 'Beauty in the Home', in *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*, ed. by Lucy Creagh, Helena Kåberg and Barbara Miller Lane (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), p. 55.
8. Ibid., p. 35.
9. Ibid., pp. 38, 41-42.
10. Uno Åhrén et al., '*acceptera*', p. 242.
11. Mauricio Rojas as quoted in Henrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh, Är svensken människa? (Stockholm: Nordstedts, 2009), p. 27.
12. Åhrén et al., '*acceptera*', p. 238, 241. See also p. 341, n. 19.
13. Sw. *lamellhus* is difficult to render concisely in English. As a building type and planning approach, it is directly related to the German *Zeilenbau*. A literal English translation would be 'lamellar building', but the sense of thin, closely arranged parallel layers that is conveyed in the English world 'lamellar', and today most commonly

used in field of biology, is not a widely understood term in architecture. 'Parallel slab block' has been used here.

14. Åhrén et al., '*acceptera*', pp. 194-95
15. Åhrén et al., '*acceptera*', p. 180.
16. *HSB*, ed. by Lennart Holm (Stockholm: Hyresgästernas sparkasse- och byggnadsföreningars riksförbund,1954), pp. 216-22, 235-38.
17. The relative merits of these two apartment types are discussed and illustrated in Nils Ahrbom, 'Några anteckningar till bostadsplanerna', in *Olle Engkvist byggmästare*, ed. by Inga Mari Lönnroth (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers, 1949), pp. 41-51. For a detailed discussion of the debate see also Ulrika Sax, *Den vita staden: Hammarbyhöjden under femtio år*, (Stockholm: Kommittén för Stockholmsforskning, 1989), pp. 51-57.
18. Göran Sidenbladh, *Planering för Stockholm 1923-1958*, (Stockholm: LiberFörlag, 1981), p. 93; Mats Deland, 'The Social City: Middle-way approaches to housing and suburban governmentality in southern Stockholm, 1900-1945' (Dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Stockholm, 2001), pp. 171, 230-31; Thomas Hall and Martin Rörby, *Stockholm: The Making of a Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 95-97.
19. Gunnar Asplund, 'Konst och teknik', *Byggmästaren*, no. 14 (1936): p. 170.
20. Ibid.
21. Uno Åhrén, 'Konst och teknik', *Byggmästaren*, no. 14 (1936), p. 175.
22. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 1986), p. 196.
23. Many of these discussants were also active in the group known as Plan, which was established by Åhrén in 1942. The *acceptera* author Markelius, the sociologist Alva Myrdal and Rickard Sterner from the LO research institute were also among its members. See Eva Rudberg, *Uno Åhrén: en föregångsman inom 1900-talets arkitektur och samhällsplanering* (Stockholm: Statens råd för byggnadsforskning, 1981), pp. 156-57.
24. See Jöran Curman and Helge Zimdahl, 'Gruppsamhällen', in *Inför framtidens demokrati* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundet, 1944). For a detailed analysis of Inför framtidens demokrati, see Henrik Widmark, *Föreställningar om den urbana världen: identitetsaspekter i svensk stadsbild 1903-1955* (Uppsala: Fronton, 2007), pp. 185-88.
25. Uno Åhrén, *Arkitektur och demokrati* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundet, 1942), p. 21.
26. Lewis Mumford, *Culture of Cities* (M. Secker & Warburg: London, 1938); Swedish translation Lewis Mumford, *Stadskultur* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundet, 1942).
27. Göran Sidenbladh as quoted in Ulrika Sax, *Vällingby: ett levande drama*, (Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998), p. 25. Sidenbladh's 'family tree' of Swedish town planning also positions *Stadskultur* as an essential document in the growth of Swedish urban design. This illustration is reproduced in Lennart Holm, *Eftersläntrare: om arkitektur och planering/ Skrivet 1996-2005* (Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet, 2006), p. 32. It should be noted that Mumford's thesis did not go unopposed in Sweden. While confirming Mumford's importance, the art historian Göran Lindahl criticized Mumford's position as a 'pathetic protest against the big city, which flowed out of a Rousseauian and vitalistic utopia. The book was clearly understood by many interlocutors as a scientific work: in fact, Mumford is a romantic cultural pessimist in the same vein as Spengler or Toynbee. His influence on an entire generation of Swedish architects has been so great as to be disastrous'. Göran Lindahl, 'Stadsplanering i det blå', *Dagens Nyheter*, 21 August 1951, here taken from *Svensk arkitekturkritik under hundra år*, ed. by Peter Sundborg (Stockholm: Stiftelsen Arkus, 1993), p. 139.
28. Mumford, *Culture of Cities*, pp. 29, 54.
29. Ibid., p. 44.
30. Ibid., p. 93.
31. Ibid., p. 475.
32. Ibid., pp. 489, 491.
33. Ernst Wigforss et al., *Arbetarrörelsens efterkrigsprogram: de 27 punkterna med motivering* (Stockholm: Victor Petterson, 1944), pp. 8-9.
34. Hall and Rörby, *Stockholm*, p. 92. See also Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization: Culture, innovation and urban order* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), pp.

858-59.
35. Hall, *Cities in Civilization*, pp. 854-56.
36. Sven Markelius, *Det framtida Stockholm: riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan* (Stockholm: K. L. Beckman, 1945).
37. See Rudberg, *Uno Åhrén*, pp. 175-80.
38. Erland von Hofsten, “Town-planning in Stockholm. Some Statistics,” in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*, ed. by Th. Plænge Jacobson and Sven Silow (Stockholm: SAR, 1949), pp. 56-57.
39. Sven Markelius, ‘Stockholms struktur: synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem’, *Byggmästaren*, no. 3 (1956), p. 73.
40. Hall and Rörby, *Stockholm*, p. 102.
41. By way of comparison, the British New Town of Harlow lay 40km from Charing Cross.
42. ‘Hubs without wheels’, p. 373. The five suburbs that constitute Greater Vällingby are Blackeberg, Räcksta, Vällingby, Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand.
43. Hall, *Cities in Civilization*, p. 866.
44. Sax, *Vällingby*, p. 43. Personal correspondence with Ulrika Sax, 14 October 2011.
45. Sax, *Vällingby*, pp. 47-48.
46. Hall, *Cities in Civilization*, p. 866.
47. Albert Aronson, ‘Vällingby centrum - från idé till verklighet’, *Byggmästaren*, no. 4 (1956), p. 78.
48. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), p. 49.
49. Ibid., p. 38.
50. Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, 2 vols., vol. 2, (New York: Electa/Rizzoli, 1986), p. 331.
51. Sax, *Vällingby*, pp. 51-52.
52. Ibid., pp. 63-66.
53. Widmark, p. 184.
54. Hakon Ahlberg, ‘Stadsplan och bostad’, in *Olle Engkvist byggmästare*, ed. by Inga Mari Lönnroth (Stockholm: Alb. Bonniers, 1949), p. 39.

Biography

Lucy Creagh is an architect and PhD candidate at Columbia University. She is the co-author and co-editor of *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*, published in 2008 by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Architecture and the Ideology of Productivity: Four Public Housing Projects by Groupe Structures in Brussels (1950-65)

Sven Sterken

Introduction

Despite our taste for geniuses and landmark buildings, the bulk of the built environment of the postwar world has been designed by unidentified architecture firms that produce buildings rather than discourse. Belgium forms no exception to this rule. Its landscapes are littered with constructions that testify to a mentality that values pragmatism and common sense more than inspired commitment or long-term vision. This is especially true in the field of public housing. However, this does not mean that it is of no interest to the scholar of the postwar period. Quite the contrary: the public housing sector formed the backdrop *par excellence* for two crucial phenomena in the shaping of the welfare state in Belgium: first, the compartmentalization along socio-political lines of any aspect of society in the course of the 1950s, including housing and town planning; second, the adaptation of the Belgian industry to the economic conditions of the postwar world, necessitating a profound renewal of the country's outdated manufacturing apparatus. This was especially true for the building trade. Whereas the cultural aspects of the housing problem have been well studied during the last decade - notably the ideological dimension of the discourse on housing - research on the impact of the technical and economic constraints on its production remains scarce.[1]

This paper looks into a couple of public housing estates by Groupe Structures. The largest architectural firm in Belgium at its peak, it played a central role in the transformation of Brussels into a tertiary centre in the 1960s. As it will be argued, the stylistic and typological evolution in these schemes - evolving from traditionalist interpretations of the 'garden city' concept to straightforward applications of the CIAM doctrine - reveals the growing impact of a 'productivist ideology' on the public housing sector in Belgium in the course of the 1950s. Paralyzed by the steeply rising cost of land, labour and building materials, the central buzzwords in the discourse became standardization, industrialization and prefabrication. However, as we will argue, the productivist doctrine failed to live up to its expectations as the public housing sector's turnover remained too marginal to put sufficient pressure on the construction industry in the adaptation of more rational methods of production and construction.

Groupe Structures, Gaston Bardet and the 'Nieuwenbos' estate

Groupe Structures was founded in 1949 by Raymond Stenier (1921-), Louis Van Hove (1920-2010), Jacques Boseret-Mali (1917-2003) and Jacques Vandermeeren (1920-2004) after graduating from the Institut Supérieur d'Urbanisme Appliqué (ISUA) in Brussels.[2] The ISUA, directed by the French urban theoretician Gaston Bardet (1907-89)[3], was the first institution to offer courses on urbanism in Belgium. A typical exponent of the conservative 'culturalist' tradition in urban planning, Bardet openly rejected CIAM's functionalist and universalistic aspirations, as in his eyes it had transformed urbanism into an elitist, soulless 'planology'.

In Bardet's view, the city's material form was only subordinate to its fundamental role as a harmonious environment for social interaction. Thus, in the context of postwar reconstruction, the urbanist's primary role was to create a backdrop for the spiritual and social regeneration of the population: 'It is the love of our fellow man that stands at the heart of community and it is the task of the planner to arrange the form of the town and the region in such a way as to promote and nurture the strength of community.'[4] Condemning large urban concentrations for reason of their supposedly alienating effect and their role in the exodus from the countryside, Bardet proposed an equal dispersion of people and industry in a network of smaller settlements covering the entire territory. In this manner, he sought to create 'an open form of society based on a federation of structured communities, shaped to the scale of man'.[5]

In the early 1950s, Groupe Structures integrated Bardet's ideas in a couple of projects for the Société Nationale de la Petite Propriété Terrienne (SNPPT) [National Society for Small Land Ownership], such as the 'Nieuwenbos' estate in Grand-Bigard, nearby Brussels.[6] A public institution founded during the economic recession of the 1930s, the SNPPT focused on public housing in rural areas, outside the major agglomerations. Its mission was to halt the exodus from the countryside by establishing a network of smaller communities based on solidarity and mutual self-help. This way of modernizing the rural areas connected well with Bardet's ideas.[7] Groupe Structures' projects for the SNPPT thus served as ideal vehicles for putting his principles into practice in the Belgian context.

Typically, 'Nieuwenbos' consisted of semi-detached houses in a neotraditional style, located on a large plot of land (800 m2). [fig. 1] This had to do with the compulsory (!) keeping of small livestock and crop growing - part of the SNPTT's strategy towards self-sufficiency and economic independence. The master plan for 'Nieuwenbos' was designed in accordance with Bardet's theory of 'échelons communautaires' ('scales of community'), a hierarchical set of spatial and social subdivisions. The smallest scale was the 'échelon patriarcal' of the street or hamlet (10 to 15 families); then came the 'échelon domestique' of the housing block or village (50 to 150 households) and finally the 'échelon paroissial' of the neighbourhood (500 to 1,500 families).[8] The 'échelon patriarcal' in 'Nieuwenbos' was formed by several clusters of semi-detached dwellings of different types, situated along dead-end streets. On the 'échelon domestique' in turn, these clusters were distributed around a central open area with commercial and communal infrastructure (not realized).

The lay-out of the six different house types was informed by Bardet's principle of 'social topography', a 'scientific' method combining various surveys of the historical, economic and social characteristics of the community under study.[9] Finally, the design process was inspired by Bardet as well. Following his principle of 'organisation polyphonique', a permutational system of work organization, each team member alternately either coordinated the entire (design) process or collaborated on a specific part of the job.[10] A team member would, for instance, manage the 'échelon paroissial' in one part of the project, while working on the 'échelon domestique' in another. In opposition to the monotony of many a modernist scheme, this plurality of visions was supposed to engender a variety of spatial concepts within a single project.[11]

In the SNPPT's magazine *Landeigendom*, 'Nieuwenbos' was commented upon as follows:

'Nieuwenbos' offers the families of Brussels sound housing, an open-air cure, a constructive use of leisure time, and a wholesome and abundant diet. An ill-accommodated family that moves into a SNPPT property improves its standing and human dignity.[12]

Fig. 1: Groupe Structures, *Nieuwenbos estate (1953-1955)*, contemporary photograph. Source: *Landeigendom* 1 (1957).

A similar comment appeared in the architecture periodical *La Maison*:

Given the choice between life in a flat in a fifteen-storey building located on the edge of town and life in a small land ownership of 800 m2 acres, the 91 families that occupy the first section of Grand-Bigard did not hesitate. The city is not made for the child.[13]

The anti-urban undertones in these comments reveal the polarized debate about (public) housing in Belgium in the postwar period. Whereas the state-controlled block of flats became a symbol for a socialist, collectivist way of life, the single-family house in a rural setting remained the image guide of the Catholic Block. As the latter dominated the social and political climate in postwar Belgium, individual home ownership became the norm, leaving only limited room for typological en technical experimentation. Although committed modernist architects such as Renaat Braem, Willy Van der Meeren and Groupe EGAU did receive large commissions, their work had only a limited impact on public housing policies in Belgium.

In such a context, it comes as no surprise that the SNPPT promoted 'rural' estates like 'Nieuwenbos' as an antidote to the alienating effects of the industrial city, since it was believed that closeness to nature enhanced the inhabitants' moral strength and stimulated family values. However, as can be derived from the lay-out and equipment of the dwellings (e.g. hot running water in the bathroom, a novelty at that time), 'Nieuwenbos' aimed at an urban rather than a rural public. Indeed, the first project by the SNPPT to be located so close to a major agglomeration, its ambition consisted less of modernizing the countryside than offering a suburban alternative to the lower middle classes in the Belgian capital.[14]

The crisis of the building sector and the ideology of productivity

Soon, however, the garden city paradigm for public housing came under pressure as the price of land around the major cities rose dramatically. In the Brussels area, for example, land prices doubled between 1955 and 1965.[15] Although the rise in spending power partly compensated for this increase, it also resulted in higher expectations with regard to equipment and finishing. Added to this, the office building boom in the 1960s caused a considerable price increase in building materials. The biggest issue, however, was the growing shortage of qualified labour due to a massive outflow to upcoming sectors such as the automobile assembly and petrochemical industries. Estimated at 20,000 to 30,000 heads, this shortage put serious pressure on the building trade, as in the postwar period most contractors still utilized traditional, labour-intensive methods.[16] It was estimated that 85% of the trade's turnover was realized by enterprises employing four workers or less.[17] Such a decentralized and small-scale organization prevented any meaningful impulse with a view to boosting the construction industry's productivity level. As a result, the total building cost of modest dwellings rose by 10% between 1953 and 1955, to attain an annual increase rate of almost 10% in the early 1960s.[18]

This poor productivity record did not concern the building trade alone, but the entire Belgian economy.[19] As a remedy, in 1951, the Belgian Service for the Increase of Productivity (BDOP) was founded within the framework of US Marshall Aid. Just like its sister institutions in the neighbouring countries, the mission of the BDOP was twofold: first, informing the different economic sectors about more efficient methods of design, production and distribution, and, second, propagating concepts such as productivity and scientific management as fundamental conditions in the pursuit of prosperity and progress.[20] Thus, apart from their economic role, these 'centres of productivity' also acted as

Trojan Horses in the introduction of the American consumerist model in the early days of the Cold War.

The most visible part of the BDOP's mission consisted of regular study trips, which it organized to investigate the technical and social mechanisms behind the United States' high performance level.[21] In the summer of 1954, one of Groupe Structures' partners took part in such a study trip with a particular focus on the problems of mass housing. During a period of eight weeks, the delegation meticulously studied different aspects of the American construction industry, such as its position within the general economic climate, its financing mechanisms, and the methods of design, construction and site organization. Issues related to American urbanism, especially the phenomenon of suburban sprawl, were investigated as well. The delegation also met with numerous representatives of professional bodies and an extensive range of officials, design professionals (such as partners from SOM's New York and Chicago offices), contractors and academics from MIT, Harvard and IIT.[22]

In its account, the commission reported in the first place on the cultural differences in the building trade between the USA and Belgium. It stated, for instance, that the USA's economic prosperity had perhaps less to do with technical superiority than with the existence of a stimulating entrepreneurial climate based on optimism, objectivity, a sense of enterprise, responsibility and mutual trust.[23] This led the commission to state that productivity perhaps had less to do with technological advantage than with a particular *attitude*. In its findings, it therefore focused primarily on methods and processes rather than on the resulting output. Or, as the delegation put it, it was less interested in *what* the Americans did, than in *how* they did it.[24]

A first critical difference concerned the client. As the delegation noted, American clients generally came up with a highly detailed programme that needed no further modifications.[25] This contrasted greatly with the inconsistency of Belgian government institutions when it came to budgets and time schedules. As all the delegates knew from personal experience, the success of a public commission in Belgium depended greatly on the dynamics of the political barometer. The role of the architect was also different: it was not so much the highly gifted artist that outsourced most technical aspects of the project, but a highly skilled designer that produced well-thought-out and meticulous plans. Designing with modular systems and recurring as much as possible to mass-produced building parts, the American architect played a fundamental role in the transition of the traditional building trade from craft to industrial assembly. A last fundamental cultural difference concerned the contractors, invariably operating within the agreed cost estimates and time schedules. As the delegation stated in its conclusions, such a close collaboration between all the actors of the construction process, based on the common pursuit of maximum economy, contrasted quite sharply with the architectural culture at home, characterized by improvisation, empiricism, envy and conservatism.[26]

In the eyes of the commission, one project in particular seemed to embody this rational, straightforward approach to architecture, namely the Hollin Hills allotment in Alexandria, VA by Charles Goodman. Located 10 miles outside Washington, DC, it comprised 390 individual homes and communal amenities, such as two elementary schools, a small shopping centre and a swimming pool. Apart from its distinctly modernist vision on American suburban life, the dominant element that set Hollin Hills apart from other developments was its general lay-out. Based on the complexities of the hilly site, Goodman had savagely taken advantage of the wooded, rolling character of the land, siting the houses to the fall of the land rather than to the street. As the individual properties were not fenced

off, private and public spaces merged with each other, resulting in a unified landscape unburdened by visual boundaries. The roads featured two other innovative elements for a speculative development: independent pedestrian routes and the use of the 'cul-de-sac'. Goodman's plans further went against local customs by maximizing the houses' rear frontage and not the valued front footage. To emphasize the sense of community, the houses were of a uniform aesthetic and placed on similar lots throughout. The interior lay-out followed the principle of the 'service-core plan': it was divided into three separate zones for living, sleeping and services. Besides its interest as an experimental building site for the delegates, Hollin Hills represented a totally different approach to dwelling: in opposition to the Belgian idea of the home as a long-term investment and a status symbol, its American counterpart appeared to be more of a product for mass consumption, reflecting the nation's preference for instant comfort over status, aesthetics or sustainability. Or as the delegation put it: 'They apply to the latter the proverb: "every generation its home"'.[28]

The study trip to the USA would prove to be of invaluable importance for the further career of Groupe Structures. Not only did this 'crash course' in standardization, industrialized construction and prefabrication of building parts provide the firm with technical knowledge most of its local competitors were totally unaware of, the team also understood that the upcoming welfare state required a different type of architect: a smart and pragmatic businessman ahead of events rather than a talented genius waiting for the enlightened elite to give him a chance.[29] The mission was also an incomparable networking opportunity as it opened doors to some of the country's most influential actors in the building trade.

The 'Croix de Lorraine' estate, La Hulpe

Upon its return from the USA, Groupe Structures was invited by the SNPTT to implement its findings in a bungalow prototype, in anticipation of the construction of a new garden estate of 300 dwellings in an area called 'Croix de Lorraine' near Brussels.[31] This ambitious project (at least compared to Belgian standards) had a dual goal: first, increasing the SNPTT's market share in the outskirts of Brussels; second, stimulating research into standardization and prefabrication, as the increasing cost of land and labour put a heavy burden on the SNPTT's operations.

Looking much like a nondescript cottage at first sight, the bungalow contained a range of novelties inspired directly by what the architects had seen in the USA. [fig. 2] The simple rectangular plan was divided into two parts: the kitchen, dining and living area on one side, the bedroom and bathroom area on the other. The centrally located hearth, along with the few load bearing walls, formed the only masonry units in the house. They were erected on a simple concrete slab by means of insulating concrete blocks (YTONG), a material that had only recently become available on the Belgian market. For the interior subdivisions, plaster board partitions were used, requiring no further finish.[31] The prefabricated floor-to-ceiling window units, whose lower part was filled in with wood siding, gave the bungalow its particular 'frame and infill' aesthetic. The roof, finally, was composed of light, pre-assembled wooden trusses developed in close collaboration with the National Institute for Timber Construction. The result was an almost 'dry' construction site and a significant reduction in manual labour on-site. The entire house, including finishing, was completed in only 40 days. Although it came with a fully equipped kitchen, washing machine, central heating and built-in cupboards, it was 10% to 15% cheaper than comparable constructions in the period 1955-59.[32]

Whereas the prototype was widely published as a decisive step in the shift from traditional craft to industrialized assembly, it took another three years before the 'Croix de Lorraine' project continued

in a reduced version (100 dwellings only). To this aim, five new prototypes - each corresponding with a different house type - were built on-site with a view to fine-tuning the design and optimizing the construction process. This was no wasted effort: whereas construction of the prototypes took 100 days, the remaining 95 dwellings took only 200 days to build.[33] Although upon completion, the contractor offered to build the remaining 200 dwellings on far more favourable terms than the first lot, the SNPPT was unable to obtain the necessary credits from the National Public Housing Company, thus missing out on the potential return on investment.

The 'Ban Eik' estate, Wezembeek-Oppem

Apart from the 'Croix de Lorraine' project, Groupe Structures' American experience also led to another assignment, namely the 'Ban Eik' estate in Wezembeek-Oppem, also in the vicinity of Brussels. It formed part of the municipality's attempt to counter the steep increase in land prices, largely due to the influx of middle-class commuters from the capital. As chairman of the influential Association of Belgian Cities and Municipalities, however, the mayor's ambition went further than remediating a local problem. In his view, the project should have proposed a more general template for the problem of low-cost housing in the periphery. The challenge consisted in realizing a 'green' neighbourhood unit with a sufficient number of dwellings, so as to make prefabrication a viable option.

Groupe Structure's proposal consisted of a 'mixed development' scheme, comprising 289 single-family dwellings of five different types and two high-rise blocks with 89 and 60 rental apartments of four different types.[34] Whereas the one-family dwellings were arranged in rows of three to seven houses around intimate 'greens' and connected to a network of pedestrian routes, the apartment blocks were situated in the centre of the estate, next to the communal facilities: a primary school, a nursery and a self-service supermarket - another novelty imported from the United States. Garages for cars were tucked away at the least favourable spots of the site. [fig. 3]

Designed according to similar principles as the 'Croix-de-Lorraine' estate, the different house types shared the same window frames, roof trusses and exterior finishings. Again, fully furnished prototypes of each variety were built on-site, providing hands-on training for the contractor and a full-scale catalogue for interested buyers. In the high-rises, the architects went a step further, eliminating almost entirely on-site manual work. The first implementation of the 'Barets' prefabrication technique in Belgium, the building's shell was assembled by means of walls, partitions, stairs and floors, cast entirely on-site and fully equipped with wiring, ducts and cavity wall insulation before being hoisted into place.

From the start, 'Ban Eik' attracted much attention. Put on display at the 1958 Brussels World Fair as a prime example of the nation's progressive policy in housing matters, it was rewarded with the First Prize of the National Housing Institute and extensively documented in its periodical *Wonen*.[35] At first sight, the project indeed seemed to have lived up to its ambitions as a 'model estate'. Even though all dwellings came with a fully fitted kitchen and bathroom, central heating and built-in cupboards, they were on average 10% cheaper than comparable projects on the private housing market, a surplus that enabled the financing of communal services.[36] Despite the average density of 29 inhabitants per hectare (considered as 'urban' in Belgium), the built area counted for only 12% of the total surface of 15 hectares, whereas more than half of it was kept as communal green space. To reinforce this 'rural' feel and strengthen the impression of uniformity, openness and order, both sides of the single-family houses were almost identical, with no distinction between front and rear sides. The houses only differed from each other by the colour of the skin-plate infills, depending on their location within the

estate. The estate's homogeneous aspect was further ensured by a set of regulations related to maintenance and use. Residents were obliged, for example, to border their small private gardens with a specific type of hedge not higher than 60 cm, and to hang out the laundry on one single type of fold-away drying rack (type 'Stewi'). As a counterpart to this formal homogeneity, the typological variety of the dwellings allowed accommodation of single persons as well as families of eight, thus ensuring a certain social mix. [fig. 4]

Mindful of Groupe Structures' American experience, however, the interest of the project lay not only in its architectural features. The close collaboration and commitment of designer, contractor and client also proved to be a key factor in the estate's success. Steering the project with perseverance and vision, the mayor was like an enlightened client with a forceful eye on its coherence. To this effect, he charged Groupe Structures not only with the design of the dwellings, but also the roads, the sewerage, the colour schemes and the landscaping. The contractor's unusual commitment to participate in such an experimental undertaking should also be mentioned here, as its net result was absolutely uncertain.

Nonetheless, 'Ban Eik' failed to live up to its expectations as a model project. In the first place, the basic conditions to make prefabrication economically viable, namely continuity and repetition, were not fulfilled. As funding for the second phase of the project (an additional 150 single-family houses) could not be secured in time, the advantage of prefabrication could only be played out in the high-rises. As it appeared that the uninterrupted use of moulds and formwork would result in savings of 4%, construction of the second apartment block was started immediately after the first one had been completed, rather than in a later stage as originally intended. Furthermore, even though many housing companies sent representatives to 'Ban Eik' for inspection, none of them had been able to secure sufficient funds to repeat the experience. Finally, it was also questionable to what extent the scheme had offered a sustainable solution for public housing in the outskirts of a large agglomeration. A sophisticated manoeuvre to reconcile city with countryside, collectivity with individuality, and tradition with innovation, 'Ban Eik' in fact revealed how the dream of Arcadian living in the periphery was becoming untenable.

The 'Rempart des Moines' estate, Brussels

The presence of two apartment blocks in 'Ban Eik' is emblematic of the breakthrough of the high-rise scheme as the standard recipe for public housing during the 1960s in Belgium, both in the city centre and in the periphery. The 'Rempart des Moines' estate in Brussels, designed by Groupe Structures in 1962, is one of the characteristic examples of this emerging paradigm.[37] The pinnacle of the 'lutte contre les taudis' ('battle against the slums') by the City of Brussels in the first half of the 1960s, it made short work of a dilapidated 19th century industrial quarter in the western part of town. In the housing company's attempt to maximize the return on investment, the ideology of productivity reached its peak here. The estate's master plan resulted, for instance, from an almost mathematical equation between the allowed occupation density, maximum building height and optimum exposure. [fig. 5] The same applied to the 320 apartments: distributed over five identical 10-storey blocks, the idea of a 'social mix' became reduced to the most economical distribution of four different types of apartments around a single elevator cage.

A textbook example of standardized conception, designed entirely with a view to prefabrication, the 'Rempart des Moines' estate nevertheless became another missed opportunity for raising the building industry's performance level. Quite surprisingly, the cheapest contractor's proposal suggested erecting the buildings according to conventional techniques

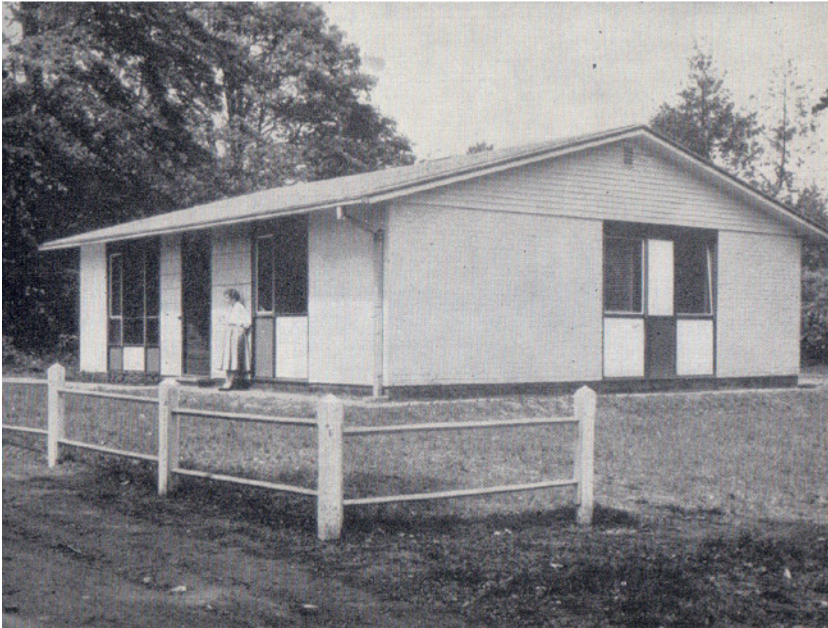


Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 2: Groupe Structures, *Bungalow prototype (1957)*, contemporary photograph. Source: *Bouwen en Wonen* 4/5 (1957).
Fig. 3: Groupe Structures, *Ban Eik estate (1957-1960)*, model as shown at the 1958 World Fair. Source: *Architecture* 33 (1960).

(i.e. in situ poured concrete) without recurring to any form of prefabrication. Even taking into account the necessary additional calculations, the contractor still outrivaled his competitors.[38] The 'Rempart des Moines' estate thus made it painstakingly clear that most public housing schemes in Belgium were simply too small scale to make prefabrication a viable option.

Apart from a technical disappointment, the 'Rempart des Moines' estate also constituted a failure in terms of town planning. The five apartment blocks, together with the central heating plant and the car park, only left a few residual open spaces for the inhabitants to appropriate. The dichotomy between the estate's rational morphology and the surrounding 19th-century fabric was also left unresolved, as it was believed that the latter would soon disappear anyway. The technocratic, almost unworldly, spirit of the project became only too obvious in the solution conceived by the public housing company to address the residents' feelings of alienation and nostalgia: it suggested to name the apartment blocks after the streets that had been erased for their construction.[39] Given these social and spatial discontinuities, it is safe to say that rather than revitalizing the city's fabric, the 'Rempart des Moines' estate advanced its further decline. So here, quite paradoxically, Groupe Structures delivered a perfect demonstration of the kind of urbanism their mentor Gaston Bardet had tried to steer them away from hardly 15 years earlier.

Concluding remarks

In the postwar period, public housing became a crucial instrument in the democratic distribution of wealth and prosperity. However, as has been shown, this ambition could only be realized by imposing the same productivity standards on the building trade as on the other economic sectors. The fundamental question thus became: how can we build more, faster and cheaper? As Groupe Structures' partners discovered, this had as much to do with technical innovation as with a shift in mentalities. Determined by economic constraints rather than humanist aspirations, the issue of public housing demanded a pragmatic attitude towards architecture. Thus, rather than asking *why* a dwelling should be as cheap as possible, Groupe Structures asked *how* this could be done. Modelling the home to the laws of mass production, it substituted the notion of architecture as the product of artistic creativity and individual expression for a well-planned, collaborative effort based on economic reasoning and industrial planning. Groupe Structures' capacity to act as a reliable, business-minded partner would provide the clue to the firm's rise in the 1960s, when it became the preferred designer of Brussels' political and financial establishment. In this capacity, it continued its research into prefabrication in the vast Berlaymont monastery and school campus in Waterloo, designed and realized in only a year's time (1962). This, however, was only a prelude to the group's most impressive achievement, namely the design and construction of the expansive NATO headquarters in barely nine months' time (1966).[40]

Nevertheless, the 'ideology of productivity' did not find fertile ground in Belgium, and particularly not in the (public) housing sector. Contrary to the UK and France, the Belgian government continued to stimulate private ownership and the building of individual homes until deep into the 1970s. It thus undermined any meaningful typological and technical innovation in the field of public housing and prevented the sector from putting sufficient pressure on the construction industry to boost its performance level. Consequently, the ever-growing demand for low-cost dwellings resulted in an inverse correlation with the quality of their design and construction. In this respect, the increasing triviality of Groupe Structures' public housing projects towards the 1960s embodies the tension between the welfare state's ideal of equal distribution of wealth and the seemingly unavoidable matter-of-factness of its material implementation.

Fig. 4

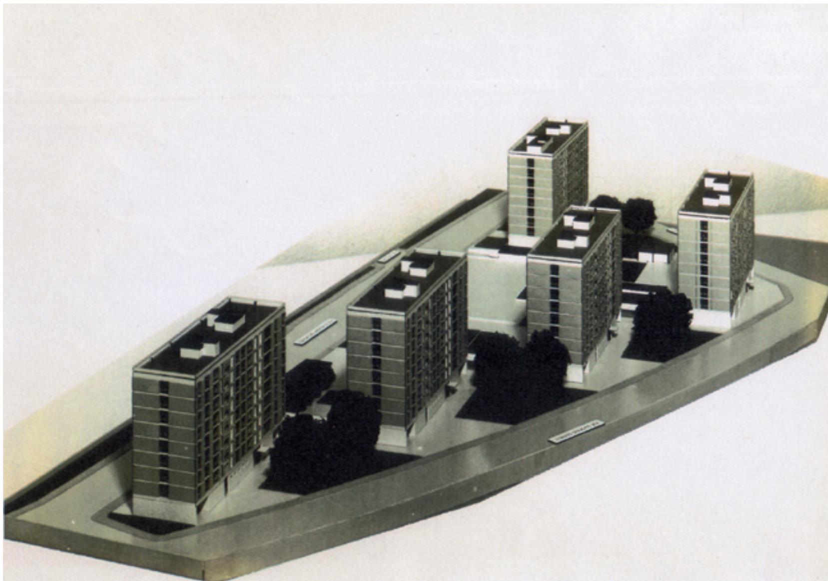


Fig. 5

Fig. 4: Groupe Structures, *Ban Eik estate (1957-1960)*, contemporary photograph. Source: *Wonen*, 26-27 (1964).
Fig. 5: Groupe Structures, *Rempart des Moines public housing estate (1962-1965)*, model of scheme as realized. Source: Foyer Bruxellois Archives, Brussels. Used with permission.

Notes

1. For a general overview of (public) housing culture in Belgium in the 20th century, see Bruno De Meulder, Pascal De Decker, Karina Van Herck, 'Over de plaats van de volkswoningbouw in de Vlaamse Ruimte', in: *Huiszoeking: een kijkboek sociale woningbouw* (Brussels: Ministry of the Flemish Community, 1999), pp. 10-86; *Bouwstenen van sociaal woonbeleid. De VHM bekijkt 50 jaar volkshuisvesting in Vlaanderen*, ed. by H. Lyben (Brussels: Vlaamse Huisvestingsmaatschappij, 1997), and *Wonen in welvaart: woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen 1948-1973*, ed. by Tom Avermaete, Karina Van Herck (Rotterdam: 010, 2006). For a more discursive analysis, see Fredie Floré, *Lessen in goed wonen. Woonvoorlichting in België 1945-1958* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 2010).
2. This paper results from the first systematic study devoted to Groupe Structures, undertaken by the author. As no central archive has been kept by the original partners, most of the information has been gathered from the archives of the public administrations and housing companies involved, as well as from secondary sources, such as contemporary architectural magazines. I am greatly indebted to Louis Van Hove, founding partner of Groupe Structures, and Jeanine Robyns, his lifelong secretary, for giving me insight into the history and the daily routine at the office in its early years. I am also grateful to Christine Boseret-Mali for sharing with me the personal archives left by her late father. Unfortunately, Louis Van Hove passed away during the research for this paper. I am grateful for his generosity in sharing with me his recollections during our long and instructive conversations between January and May 2010.
3. Gaston Bardet was appointed director of the ISUA in Brussels in 1947 and occupied that position until 1974. He was a prolific theoretician, writer and lecturer, but had little opportunity to put his ideas into practice. His most significant project was the garden city of Le Rheu in Brittany (France). His vision of urbanism is best exposed in his book *Le Nouvel Urbanisme* (Paris: Fréal, 1948). For an introduction to Bardet's work and ideas, see Jean-Louis Cohen, 'Le nouvel urbanisme de Gaston Bardet', *Le Visiteur*, 2 (1996), pp. 134-45; Nicholas Bullock, 'Gaston Bardet: Post-war Champion of the Mainstream Tradition of French Urbanisme', *Planning Perspectives*, 25, 3 (2010), pp. 347-63.
4. Bullock, p. 354.
5. Bardet, cited in Bullock, p. 355.
6. On 'Nieuwenbos', see J. Boseret-Mali, 'Groot-Bijgaarden. De NMKL bouwt aan de poorten van Brussel', *Huisvesting*, 6 (1952), pp. 475-480; *Habitat et Habitations*, 15, 7-8 (1955), p. 107; 'KLE-bungalow in Groot-Bijgaarden', *Landeigendom*, 116 (Aug. 1957), p. 296; '350 PPT à Grand-Bigard et Dilbeek', *La Maison*, 12, 8 (1956), pp. 240-1.
7. On the SNPPT, see Guy Dejongh, Peter Van Windekens, *Van Kleine Landeigendom tot Vlaamse Landmaatschappij* (Brussels: Vlaamse Landmaatschappij, 2001).
8. The principle of the 'échelons communautaires' is exposed by Bardet in *Le Nouvel Urbanisme*, pp. 214-26.
9. In his account of the project, one of Groupe Structures' partners stated that the different house types in 'Nieuwenbos' were designed in cooperation with their future occupants. We were unable to verify this statement so far. See Jacques Boseret-Mali, 'Groot-Bijgaarden. De NMKL bouwt aan de poorten van Brussel', *Huisvesting* 6 (1952), pp. 475-80.
10. On this concept, see Gaston Bardet, 'L'organisation humaine est polyphonique', *Culture humaine*, 8 (1950), pp. 339-348; 'La dernière chance: l'organisation polyphonique', *Connaître*, 3 (1950), pp. 5-9; 'Une nouvelle démonstration. L'organisation polyphonique'. *Architecture, Urbanisme - Habitation*, 10, 2 (1950), pp. 29-36.
11. The clearest demonstration of this working principle can be found in the joint thesis project by the four later associates of Groupe Structures. Their proposal for a 'Cité de l'Air', hosting the employees of the new airport of Orly (in the South of Paris), was put on display at the Journées Internationales de l'Urbanisme Appliqué (Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, November 1949) and published in Gaston Bardet, 'Une nouvelle démonstration. L'organisation polyphonique', *Architecture, Urbanisme - Habitation*, 10, 2 (1950), pp. 29-36.

12. Comments on the verso of the cover of the January 1957 issue of *Landeigendom* (author's translation). Original quotation in Dutch: '[Nieuwenbos] biedt aan de Brusselse gezinnen gezonde huisvesting, een openluchtkuur, nuttig gebruik van de vrije tijd, gezonde en overvloedige voeding. Elk slecht wonend gezin dat in een kleine landeigendom komt, verhoogt zijn standing en zijn menselijke waardigheid.'
13. Author's translation. Original text: 'Entre la vie en appartement dans une tour-building de quinze étages située en bordure de la ville et la vie dans une PPT de 8 ares, les 91 familles du premier quartier de Grand-Bigard n'ont eu aucune hésitation. La ville n'est pas faite pour l'enfant.' Source: '350 PPT à Grand-Bigard et à Dilbeek', *La Maison*, 12, 8 (1956), p. 241.
14. This is clearly stated by officials of the SNPTT in 'De wijk van de NMKL te Overijse en Terhulpen. Een proefneming die zonder gevolg bleef', *Landeigendom*, 207 (March 1965), p. 99.
15. Ibid. See also Dejongh & Van Windekens, p. 58.
16. See on this matter 'De NMKL en de evolutie van de bouwmethodes'. *Landeigendom*, 248 (July 1968), p. 302.
17. Stephanie Van de Voorde, *Bouwen in Beton in België. Samenspel van kennis, experiment en innovatie*, PhD dissertation, Ghent University, 2010, pp. 452, 468.
18. 'De NMKL en de evolutie van de bouwmethodes', p. 302. See also Dejongh & Van Windekens, pp. 58-9.
19. Compared to the US Level (100), the labour productivity in Belgium was estimated at 48%. Compared to its neighbourhood countries, this was not that bad a score: only the Netherlands (51%), Sweden (56%) and the UK (62%) performed better. France was estimated at 45%, Germany at 35%. Source: Bart van Ark and Nicholas Crafts, *Quantitative Aspects of Post-war European Economic Growth* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 45, cited in Bent Boel, *The European Productivity Agency and Transatlantic Relations, 1953-61* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press/University of Copenhagen, 2003), p. 292.
20. On the notion of productivity in the Belgian context, and the Belgian Service for the Increase in Productivity in particular, see Hubert Cécile, 'La campagne de productivité en Belgique: modernisation autour du modèle américain (1948-1958)', in *Milieux économiques et intégration européenne*, ed. by Eric Buissière, Michel Dumoulin (Arras/Louvain-la-neuve, 1998), pp. 197-213; and Kenneth Bertrams, 'Productivité économique et paix sociale au sein du plan Marshall. Les limites de l'influence américaine auprès des industriels et syndicats belges, 1948-1960', *Cahiers d'Histoire du Temps Présent*, 9 (2001), pp. 191-235.
21. Between 1951 and 1955, 21 such missions were organized, related to fields as diverse as food distribution, the production of cement agglomerates, market survey techniques and the sugar industry - overview in Bertrams, 'Productivité économique et paix sociale au sein du plan Marshall', pp. 213-4.
22. Amongst the 13 participants in the mission, the following names are worth mentioning: Lucien De Vestel (chairman), a confirmed architect who would later go on to design the Berlaymont Building, seat of the European Commission; Jean Gilson, whose architectural firm Groupe Alpha participated in many large public building projects in the 1950s; Jozef Paquay, chairman of the 'Nationaal Instituut ter Bevordering van de Huisvesting' (National Housing Institute); Ado Blaton, chairman of NV Blaton-Aubert, one of the principal contractors in the Brussels area; Victor Roisin, a partner in NV François & Fild, another major contractor. Groupe Structures delegated its youngest partner, Raymond Stenier, securing an invitation through its good connections with Jozef Paquay. The mission toured the USA from 12 July until 18 August 1954, and made stops in New York, NY, Washington, DC, Dayton, OH, Lafayette, IN, Urbana, IL, South Bend, IN, Chicago, IL. Its findings were published as *Verslag van de zending Constructie van Gebouwen* ['Report of the Building Construction Mission'] (Brussels: Belgische Dienst Opvoering Productiviteit, 1957).
23. *Verslag van de zending*, p. 14.
24. *Verslag van de zending*, p. 13.
25. *Verslag van de zending*, p. 16.
26. *Verslag van de zending*, p. 167.
27. On Hollin Hills, see 'Bungalow, Hollin Hills, Virginia. Architects: Charles M. Goodman Associates', *House*

& Home, 1 (1954), pp. 140-3, and Gabriela Amendola Gutowski, *Hollin Hills, the Future that is Now the Past: Challenges of Preserving a Post-war Suburban Community*, Unpublished master's thesis in historic preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2007. Last accessed through http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/78 on 20 September 2011.

28. *Verslag van de zending*, p. 66. Translation by the author. Original text: 'Zij passen naar de letter het gezegde toe: "iedere generatie haar eigen huis."'
29. On this aspect, see the following comments by Jacques Boseret-Mali, one of Groupe Structures' founding partners, reflecting on his career: 'La condition première pour pouvoir exercer son métier d'architecte et d'urbaniste étant d'obtenir des contrats, nous nous sommes fixés (dès le départ) comme objectif de nous hisser au niveau des plus grands. (...) Nous estimions, et cela s'est vérifié, qu'une stabilité constante ne pouvait s'établir que par l'obtention de contrats importants; que c'était à ce niveau que la concurrence était la plus réduite et que pour des raisons politico-socio-économiques il y aurait toujours sur le marché un nombre suffisant de grands travaux.' Undated note by Jacques Boseret-Mali, personal archives of the architect, probably December 1980.
30. Note of the Board of Directors, 22 July 1955, Archives of the SNPTT, Brussels.
31. The bungalow prototype was published in *La Maison*, 8 (1956), pp. 246-7; *La Maison*, 4 (1957), pp. 118-9; *Bouwen en Wonen*, 5 (1957), pp. 174-5 and *Landeigendom* 10 (1957), p. 375.
32. 'De NMKL en de evolutie van de bouwmethodes', p. 303.
33. This was significantly shorter than the average construction time of a comparable dwelling, estimated at 338 working days. Source: 'De NMKL en de evolutie van de bouwmethodes', p. 302-3.
34. Although presented in the contemporary press coverage as the first application of the mixed development concept in Belgium, it had already been experimented with in the 'Oud Oefenplein' estate in Mechelen (arch. Jos Chabot, 1950) and the 'Casablanca' estate in Leuven (arch. Léon Stynen, 1956), both featuring high-rises amidst an array of single-family houses.
35. A model of 'Ban Eik' was presented in the Pavilion of Public Housing and Health, where it figured next to an impressive, widely published model of the Cité Modèle, a high-rise proposal for 5,000 inhabitants right next to the fairgrounds. Together with Renaat Braem, René Panis and other architects, Groupe Structures was involved in this scheme as executive architect.
36. Details of the cost calculation in *Wonen*, 26-27 (1964), pp. 24-5.
37. The 'Rempart des Moines' estate was only one of a series of large public housing schemes destined to clear up the old city centre. On this campaign, see Maureen Heyns, 'De krotwoning als "sociaal probleem nr. 1"', in *Wonen in Welvaart*, ed. by Tom Avermaete, Karina Van Herck (Antwerp: VAI, 2006), pp. 147-65. Amongst the other projects realized within this framework, we can name the following: rue des Potiers (90 flats, also designed by Groupe Structures), rue Haute (designed by Charles Van Nueten) and rue des Brigitines (150 flats, designed by Gaston Brunfaut). For more details, see *3000 Foyers Bruxellois* (Brussels: La Fonderie, 1997), pp. 49-56, and *La Maison*, 12, 10 (October 1957).
38. As communicated to the author by Louis Van Hove, founding partner of Groupe Structures. Personal communication, Brussels, 14 January 2010.
39. This anecdote is related in *3000 Foyers Bruxellois*, pp. 51-52.
40. On the Berlaymont monastery, see *La Maison*, 22, 6 (1966), pp. 167-72; *Architecture*, 62, 44 (1962), pp. 61-3. On NATO Headquarters, see *La Technique des travaux*, 44, 5/6 (1968), pp. 155-66.

Biography

Sven Sterken received a PhD in Achitectural Engineering from the University of Ghent. He is affiliated with the University of Leuven and teaches history of architecture and urbanism at the architecture department Sint-Lucas of the Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst (Brussels, Ghent). He is also a member of the research group ARP (Architectural Cultures of the Recent Past), in which capacity he focuses on postwar public housing and religious infrastructure.

Reforming the Welfare State: Camden 1965-73

Mark Swenarton

'The period from 1965 to 1973,' wrote David Harvey, 'was one in which the inability of Fordism and Keynesianism to contain the inherent contradictions of capitalism became more and more apparent.'[1] As the state struggled to deliver to the population the fruits of the Keynesian settlement in the form of collective goods and benefits - housing, schools, education, etc. - inflation spiralled and the world was shaken in 1971 by the collapse of the Bretton Woods international financial system. At the same time, social critiques pointed to the deficiencies in the Keynesian model and called for a radical re-appraisal. In Eric Hobsbawm's terms, the West was undergoing a structural change from the 'golden age' of postwar welfare capitalism, marked by plenty and consensus, to the 'crisis decades' of the 1970s, marked by polarization and conflict.[2]

The period 1965-73 was also that of the incumbency of SAG Cook as chief architect of the inner-London borough of Camden. Cook was in charge of one of the largest social housing programmes in the country, and as such was in the maelstrom of these developments and conflicts. In terms of housing provision, Camden's housing programme aimed to demolish the worst of the existing stock with as many new homes as it could produce; and as such, it conformed to the Keynesian model of maximizing the provision of collective goods for the population. But in terms of design, Cook's team rejected the characteristic form associated with postwar welfare housing - the high-rise slab or tower - in favour of an attempt to re-connect with recognizable features of traditional urbanism, above all streets with front doors. While the architectural trajectory was therefore away from the *tabula rasa* and back towards the street, and in this sense formed part of the critique of the Fordist/Keynesian settlement, the programme itself could not escape the growing sense of crisis surrounding the welfare state project as a whole; and by the time the most important Cook projects were completed, towards the end of the 1970s, they were caught up in the attacks on the welfare state consensus coming from both sides, the New Right (Margaret Thatcher) and the Hard Left (Ken Livingstone).

In essence, the Cook projects sought a new model for urban family housing. In contrast to the Corbusian model of towers or slab blocks standing in acres of empty space, which characterized much municipal housing at the time, the Camden schemes typically consisted of low-rise linear blocks of family dwellings, each with its own open-to-the-sky external space. These schemes - including Fleet Road, Alexandra Road, Highgate New Town, Branch Hill, Maiden Lane - were designed by the talented architects appointed by Cook, most notably Neave Brown, Peter Tábori, Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth, who joined the council's staff, as well as by private architects including Colquhoun & Miller, Edward Cullinan and Farrell Grimshaw.

Camden was the most prominent of the 32 new boroughs created by the reorganization of London's government in 1965. Formed from the amalgama-

tion of three metropolitan boroughs - Hampstead, St Pancras and Holborn - it was also one of the richest boroughs, with a rateable value nearly 30% higher than even wealthy boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea.[3] Whatever Camden wanted to do, it seemed that there were the resources to do it. And what Camden wanted to do was build housing. At the heart of the programme of the new Labour-controlled council was housing: as former Labour councillor Enid Wistrich put it, 'the main aim was more housing - beginning and end'.[4]

The person appointed to take charge of this ambitious programme was the former Holborn borough architect, Sydney Cook. Cook was not an outstanding designer but he was an excellent judge of quality, of both design and designers. He was determined that Camden was going to be a different kind of local authority office, with the emphasis on youth and the production of ideas.[5]

In this he had a number of advantages. Camden was home to two of the leading architecture schools in London - the Architectural Association and the Bartlett (University College London) - and only a stone's throw from a third, Regent Street Polytechnic (now University of Westminster). It was also the location of many architectural practices and a favoured place of residence for architects. A lot of London's most talented architects thus already lived or worked in the borough.

While the 1960s are often regarded as the era of high rise, in fact by 1965 there was already a strong movement against high flats. From 1964 onwards, the *Architectural Review* was promoting a move away from high flats towards high-density low rise, and the 1965 housing white paper produced by the new Labour government envisaged removing altogether the additional subsidy for high flats.[6]

Criticism of the Corbusian model of high blocks or towers set in open sites was already widespread in avant-garde architectural circles well before then. The critique of functionalist planning formulated by Team Ten had attracted the attention of historians,[7] but the Smithsons were by no means the only people in Britain dissatisfied with the urban model inherited from the modernist masters. At the Architectural Association School in London a group of students in the early 1950s, including Neave Brown, Kenneth Frampton, Adrian Gale, David Gray, Patrick Hodgkinson and John Miller, were forming their own versions of this critique, in which Aalto was seen as a corrective to the reductive urbanism associated with Le Corbusier.[8] The goal was to re-establish continuity between the new and old, the project and the city.

When Camden was formed in 1965, Brown had under construction a group of five family houses designed for himself and friends, including engineer Anthony Hunt and architects Michael and Patty Hopkins and Edward Jones. The Winscombe Street houses provided a radical reinterpretation of the traditional London terraced house, placing the children's rooms on the ground floor, the kitchen/breakfast room plus roof terrace on the first floor, and parent's bedroom and reception on the top floor. As well as the private roof terrace, there was a communal garden at the rear. In embryo, Winscombe Street offered the basis of a new model for urban housing inspired by London's housing traditions: high-density, low-rise, street-based family accommodation.[9]

Brown joined Cook's team early in 1966 and soon after was given the project at Fleet Road to design. Three parallel blocks with a stepped section provided a mix of maisonettes (two and three bedrooms) and one-bedroom flats (70 units in all), with a private garden or courtyard to every unit (in many cases on the roof of the unit below), and every unit accessed directly from the outside via pedestrian alleyways. As Brown put it at the time (1966): 'The houses are in terraces as near traditional as possible. Every

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth, Branch Hill, 1971-78, stepped-section semi-detached houses accessed from pedestrian route (photograph: Martin Charles).
Fig. 2: Peter Tábori and Kenneth Adie, Highgate New Town, phase one, 1968-80, view from pedestrian street with staircase access to flats (photograph: Martin Charles).

dwelling is identifiable with its front door on an open route, continuous with the main pedestrian system. Every dwelling has a paved garden, not overhung by a balcony above, and fenced for privacy.'[10]

Following Fleet Road, Brown moved onto a much larger and more complex project, Alexandra Road. With 520 dwellings at a density exceeding 200 ppa, as well as a community centre, childrens' home, home for the physically handicapped (designed by Evans & Shalev), workshops, shops and park, this was more a piece of city than a mere housing estate. Brown took his inspiration from the continuous urbanism represented by the great set pieces of the Georgian era - Bath, Bristol, Leamington Spa. At Alexandra Road, a 350 metre-long curving pedestrian street running roughly west-east gives access to four- and six-storey terrace blocks on either side, with a linear communal garden and another parallel block to the south. Family units are organized on the same principles as Fleet Road (bedrooms on the lower floor, living rooms above), with open-to-the-sky private external space to the family units.[11]

Brown was not the only talented designer at work on the Camden programme. The young Hungarian architect, Peter Tábori, a former student of Richard Rogers at Regent Street Polytechnic, designed Highgate New Town, which comprised a series of parallel terraces at right angles to the street, accessed by pedestrian streets, with the stepped section giving each flat an open-to-the sky balcony.[12] Two of Eldred Evans' students at the AA, Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth, joined Camden to work with Brown on Alexandra Road and then went on to design schemes of their own, notably Branch Hill in Hampstead, comprising a series of courtyard houses stepping down the hillside, reminiscent of Le Corbusier's Roq et Rob scheme of the late 1940s as well as Atelier 5's Siedlung Halen in Berne.[13] This typology was then further developed in their much larger Maiden Lane estate, where family houses were combined with slab blocks for single people and couples in a tour de force of tectonic design.[14]

Following Cook's retirement due to ill health in 1973, Camden's architects lost much of their impetus. Both public opinion and government were turning away from redevelopment to rehabilitation[15] and from modernism towards a more traditional palette of materials. As the worst examples of the Victorian inheritance were eliminated, proposals to demolish yet more came under increasing criticism. Moreover, as the Cook projects came through to completion towards the end of the 1970s, it turned out that many were costing far more than originally estimated, providing an easy target not just for the right-wing press but also for the new generation of hard-left politicians, who saw in them an opportunity to denigrate the Labour 'old guard'. The leader of this new tendency in London was Ken Livingstone, who in 1978 added to his role at the Greater London Council by becoming Camden's chair of housing, a move that was soon followed by the appointment by Camden of an independent enquiry into the cost and timetable overruns of the as-yet unfinished Alexandra Road.[16]

Although major schemes were started after Cook's departure, notably Benson and Forsyth's Maiden Lane phase one, much of the energy drained away and many of the most talented designers moved on. With Margaret Thatcher's accession to power in 1979, the construction of social housing by local authorities was brought to a halt and the heroic projects of Cook's Camden were left looking like monuments to a vanished era.

How are we to view the Cook projects today? At the level of contemporary architectural discourse, they continue to fascinate current practitioners and students, with Alexandra Road and Branch Hill in particular being regular destinations on modern architecture tours of London. Given the constraints within which they were operating, the achievement

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 3: Neave Brown, Winscombe Street, 1963-66, garden front showing sequence of external spaces (roof terrace-individual garden-communal garden) (photograph: Martin Charles).
Fig. 4: Neave Brown, Fleet Road, 1966-75, pedestrian alleyway giving access to flats, with bridge link to upper-level maisonettes above (photograph: Martin Charles).

of Cook and his team was extraordinary: within the bureaucratic requirements and procedures of social housing provision, and under the ever-watchful eye of the Housing Cost Yardstick, to have come up with the invention and attention to detail of schemes like Fleet Road or Highgate New Town is an exceptional achievement. But, whatever the ambitions of the architects may have been, they were not free agents; they formed part of the machinery of the local state and part of a politically devised welfare system and could not escape the contradictions that this imposed. However laudable the social objectives of the Camden architects, to many people in London, Camden appeared to be simply a huge development machine devouring huge swathes of the capital like any property developer. As such, the Camden projects were seen as part of the machinery of the oppressor as much as the helpmate of the oppressed.

Yet to see the Camden projects simply in this light would be to miss their value. Cook, Brown and the others were addressing the key issue on which they believed social housing had failed: how to design housing in the inner city that families would want to live in. Hence the avoidance of high rise; the emphasis on legibility (front doors) and connections with the city (the street); and the drive to give every home its own outdoor space - a veritable garden in the city. Much of this was experimental, and inevitably not all of it was successful; but at its best it showed how, at least in part, this goal could be achieved. It is moreover a goal that still awaits solution. As we await the next upturn in housing production, the ideas of the Camden architects form a necessary benchmark in the search to improve our urban housing.

Acknowledgements

Mark Swenarton's paper at EAHN 2010 represented a preliminary overview from his ongoing research on Camden housing, which has also led to the exhibition, 'Cook's Camden', with photography by Martin Charles, shown at the Building Centre in London (2010), the Architecture Centre in Bristol (2012) and elsewhere. A related exhibition focusing on Neave Brown and Alexandra Road was shown at Holborn library and in the tenants hall at Alexandra Road (www.alexandraandainsworth.org/history.html). Parts of the paper that Mark Swenarton gave at the 2010 EAHN conference were subsequently developed into a much longer article, 'Geared to producing ideas, with the emphasis on youth: the creation of the Camden borough architect's department under Sydney Cook', published in the *Journal of Architecture*, 16, 3 (June 2011) pp. 387-414. An article on Neave Brown and the design of the Fleet Road project, also in the *Journal of Architecture*, is forthcoming in 2012-13. (www.tandfonline.com/rjar)

Notes

1. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 142-3. Thanks to the RIBA Research Trust Awards and Oxford Brookes University for financial support for this project at an early stage, and to Kaye Bagshaw and Angela Hatherell for invaluable research assistance.
2. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1989* (London: Abacus, 1994; 2000), p. 286.
3. Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Welsh Office, *Rates and Rateable Values in England and Wales 1965-66* (London: HMSO, 2 vols, 1965), vol. 1, p. 9, and vol. 2, p. 9.
4. Enid Wistrich, telephone interview, 8 January 2009; Enid Wistrich, *Local Government Reorganisation: The First Years of Camden* (London: London Borough of Camden, 1972), p. 202.
5. Mark Swenarton, 'Geared to producing ideas, with the emphasis on youth: the creation of the Camden borough architect's department under Sydney Cook', in *Journal of Architecture*, 16, 3 (June 2010), pp. 387-414.

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Neave Brown, Alexandra Road, 1967-79, stacked maisonettes with stair access from main pedestrian street (photograph: Martin Charles).
Fig. 6: Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth, Maiden Lane phase one, 1972-80, family houses and slab blocks seen from the west (photograph: Martin Charles).

Also Stephen Games, ‘Cook’s Camden’, *RIBA Journal*, 86, 11 (November 1979), pp. 483-90, and Christoph Grafe, ‘Les Terraces de Camden’, *Oase*, 61 (Spring 2003), pp. 73-95.

6. ‘Preview’, *The Architectural Review*, 137, 815 (January 1965), p. 38; Patrick Dunleavy, in *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain 1945-1975* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), p. 162.
7. John R. Gold, *The Practice of Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 232-45; *Team 10 1953-81. In Search of a Utopia of the Present*, ed. by Max Risselada and Dirk van den Heuvel (Rotterdam: NAi, 2005).
8. Neave Brown, interview, 6 August 2008.
9. Christopher Woodward, ‘Life in N19: Five houses in Winscombe Street, London, by Neave Brown’, *Architectural Design*, 33 (July 1968), pp. 330-4. Also Miranda H. Newton, *Architects’ London Houses* (London: Butterworth, 1992), pp. 58-65.
10. Edward Jones, ‘Neave Brown’s Fleet Road: The Evolution of a Social Concept of Housing’, *Architectural Design* 48 (1978) p. 523. See also Neave Brown, ‘The form of housing’, *Architectural Design*, 37 (September 1967), pp. 432-3.
11. Robert Maxwell, ‘Alexandra Road’, Architectural Review, 166, 990 (August 1979), pp. 78-92; Andrew Freear, ‘Alexandra Road: the last great social housing project’, in *AA Files*, 30 (1995), pp. 35-46.
12. Su Rogers, ‘Preview: Highgate New Town’, *Architectural Review*, 154, 919 (September 1973), pp. 158-162.
13. ‘Housing at Branch Hill, Hampstead, London’, *Architects’ Journal*, 169, 25 (20 June 1979), pp. 1261-76.
14. ‘Housing, Maiden Lane, Camden, London’, *Architectural Review*, 173, 1074 (April 1983), pp. 22-29.
15. London Borough of Camden, Housing Committee, 29 June 1976, p. 340.
16. London Borough of Camden, Housing and Development Sub-Committee, 12 June 1978; Andrew Hosken, *Ken: The Ups and Downs of Ken Livingstone* (London: Arcadia, 2008), pp. 58-61.

Biography

Mark Swenarton is James Stirling Professor of Architecture at the University of Liverpool. He started his career teaching history at the Bartlett School of Architecture, and in 1989 he co-founded *Architecture Today* magazine, which he edited until 2005, becoming head of architecture at Oxford Brookes University in that year. His books include *Homes fit for Heroes*, *Artisans and Architects*, *Dixon Jones*, *The Politics of Making*, *Feilden Clegg Bradley*, and *Building the New Jerusalem*.

Appropriating Modernism: From the Reception of Team 10 in Portuguese Architectural Culture to the SAAL Programme (1959-74)

Pedro Baía

This paper aims to map the relations between the Portuguese appropriation of Team 10's architectural ideas and the housing policies initiated by the state, especially through the famous SAAL programme. The SAAL programme was launched after the Carnation revolution of 1974, which brought democracy to Portugal. SAAL intended to offer better housing conditions to underprivileged urban dwellers through an ambitious building programme of new houses and infrastructure, including the use of participatory models.[1] SAAL stands for Ambulatory Support to Local Residents Programme and ran for a brief period between 1974 and 1976, yet had a major impact on the country's architectural culture. The fervent anxiety of the revolution demanded quick results from the state. Therefore the 1950s and 60s architectural debate naturally emerged as the basis of the SAAL strategy.[2]

This paper seeks to demonstrate, through intellectual speculation based on an analysis of the historical discourse, how the critical and interpretative reception of Team 10's ideas by the Portuguese architectural culture played an important role in the process leading up to the SAAL programme. Team 10 will therefore need to be defined in order to provide a reference framework for the study of its impact in Portugal. This will make it possible to understand Team 10 in a wider sense, as a palimpsest built up over time. The aim of this approach is to encourage reflection on the various ways in which Team 10 and its ideas were received and critically interpreted, disseminated and assimilated by the Portuguese architectural culture.

From the mid-1940s onward, during Salazar's dictatorial regime, modern architects in Portugal organized themselves in Porto through the Organization of Modern Architects (ODAM), and in Lisbon, through the Arts and Technical Cultural Initiatives (ICAT).[3] The architects who assembled in these groups sought to develop an alternative to the conservative and nationalist cultural policies of the regime by looking beyond the confines of their country. From the mid-1950s onward, a new generation of architects emerged, with a common interest in following the international architectural debate prompted by the third series of the magazine *Arquitectura* (the most important Portuguese architecture magazine at the time). Active exchanges took place between participants, who took on special, but different roles. Nuno Portas, in particular, who was appointed Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Planning after the 1974 revolution, was to play a highly decisive role in this process. In his capacity as Secretary of State, he became one of the key people responsibles for implementing the SAAL programme. One of his more difficult tasks was mediating between politicians, architects, sociologists, social workers and representatives of the resident associations.

Team 10: 'The story of another idea'

An examination of the significance of Team 10's influence on Portuguese architecture encounters a number of difficulties. As Dirk van den Heuvel and Max Risselada pointed out in the introduction to their book *Team 10: In Search of a Utopia of the*

Present. 'The group's history,' they write, 'challenges conventional historiography, as well as the more specific historiography of modern architecture.'[4] One could say that the Portuguese context and Team 10's architectural ideas have an oblique relationship. However, there are some signs that confirm the importance and pertinence of Team 10's presence.

Indeed, there is no obvious way in which to approach the object of study. First, Team 10's composition was diffuse, having a central core of several architects who stood out as a result of their greater presence and militancy, and a number of invited participants whose presence was of a more irregular or occasional nature. As a heterogeneous group, Team 10 brought together architects from a variety of origins, with diverse concerns and viewpoints. Second, Team 10 was averse to dogmas, doctrines and technocratic guidelines. As such, its intention was not to present an alternative to the Athens Charter, such as the much debated proposition of a Charter of Habitat, or any other explicit new programme of action. It can be said that the absence of answers and the 'right to be vague' as Aldo van Eyck phrased it, enabled a multifaceted, frank and open debate in the first Team 10 meetings.[5]

In opposition to CIAM's bureaucratic and rationalist model, Team 10 redefined the semantics of architectural discourse, favouring anthropological notions and developing perspectives more sensitive to the socio-psychological needs of identity, neighbourhood and belonging. It also raised questions concerning context, history, mobility, everyday life, spontaneity, as well as questions about habitation on a large scale, the structure of a community, the participatory process and the connection to a specific place.

Hence, the richness of Team 10's legacy and its influences may be understood in terms of an open-source legacy that permits a variety of intellectual appropriations, not only with regard to the group's impact on the postwar debates about modern architecture, but also with regard to the Portuguese context. This specific quality of Team 10's influence is defined by the structure of Team 10's discourse. In an introductory text to the *Team 10 Primer*, Alison Smithson wrote how important the exchange of ideas was to the group: 'In a way it is a history of how the ideas of the people involved have grown or changed as a result of contact with the others, and it is hoped that the publication of these root ideas, in their original often naïve form, will enable them to continue life.'[6]

Team 10 frequently uses the term idea to set itself apart from CIAM's doctrinaire concepts of *norm* or *guideline*. *Idea* suggests something more inclusive, something that can be appropriated, something open to derivation and novel interpretations. In this sense, the first issue of the new series of the Dutch magazine *Forum*,[7] (called 'The story of another idea', which was distributed among the architects attending the 1959 CIAM in Otterlo) represents a turning point. This manifesto-like issue marks a programmatic change in both the *Forum's* discourse and the approach of its editorial team, led by Aldo van Eyck and Jaap Bakema. The issue's cover consisted of a series of words cut out and arranged circularly, which illustrated some of Team 10's typical signature concepts such as 'cluster', 'change and growth', 'identity', 'hierarchy of human associations', 'identifying devices' and 'mobility', among others. This cover summarized what might be considered the essence of Team 10 - a set of ideas gravitating around an undefined centre, left blank and open to appropriation. [fig. 1]

So, when we speak of the reception of Team 10, we are speaking of the reception of their ideas, developed and elaborated both within the group and individually, within the broader context of a critical revision of the modern movement. Team 10

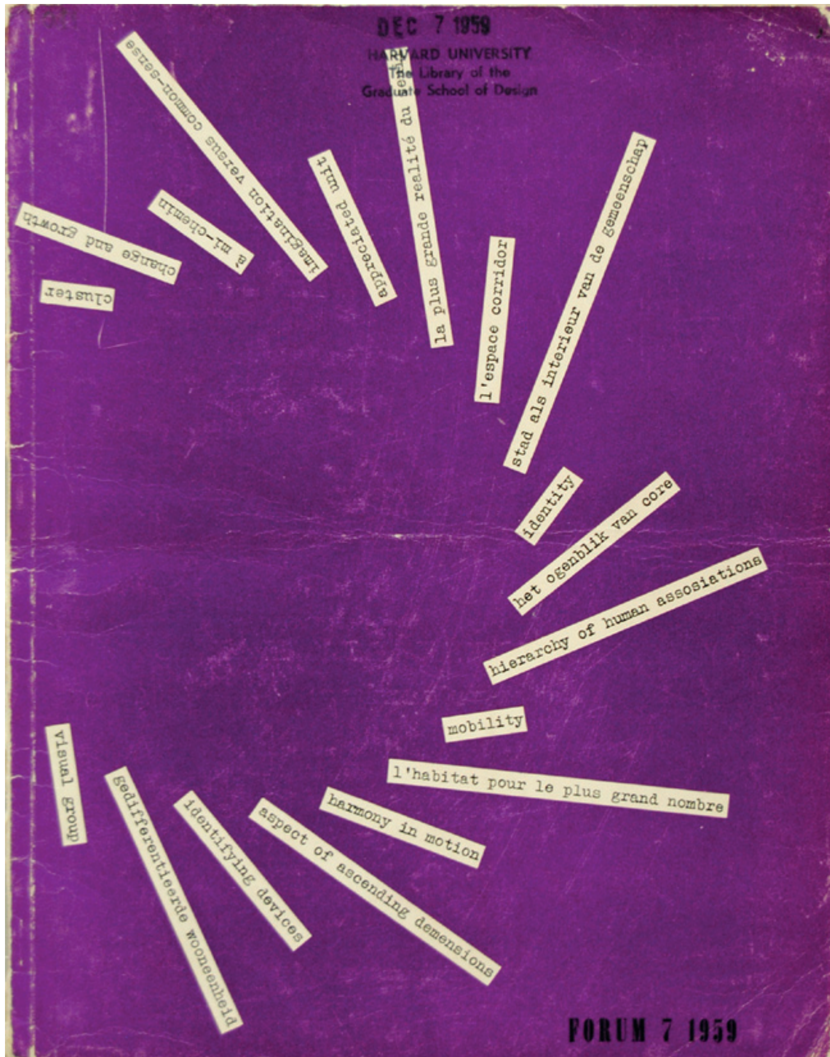


Fig. 1: Cover of *Forum*, ‘The Story of Another Idea’, 7, 1959; designed by Jurriaan Schrofer. Courtesy Foundation AetA.

has been associated with the easily recognizable form languages of Brutalism and Structuralism, or the concept of mat-building. Nonetheless, Team 10 did not aspire to any kind of specific pattern, style or formal code. Instead, it represented a socially committed ethical stance based on deep critical reflection, which made it possible to supplant the strictly functionalist character of CIAM, the Athens Charter and architecture associated with the International Style.

The Portuguese presence at the postwar CIAM meetings

The revision of modernism, as initiated by several Team 10 members in postwar CIAM meetings, left its mark on Portuguese architectural culture in the 1950s. In Portugal, ODAM provided the first opportunity to come into contact with this profound programmatic revision. ODAM, whose members included former CIAM delegates representing Portugal, was founded in Porto in 1947. This youthful group, comprising around 40 architects born between 1908 and 1925, included some of the most important and active architects in Porto in the 1950s, both in terms of practice and teaching, such as Arménio Losa, Viana de Lima, Agostinho Ricca, Mário Bonito, Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, Fernando Távora and José Carlos Loureiro.[8]

ODAM played a vital role in Portugal from 1947 to 1956. It affirmed the spirit of modern architecture and opposed the monumental and nationalistic architecture promoted by the authoritarian regime of Oliveira Salazar. In 1972, Cassiano Barbosa, one of the group's oldest members, published a book outlining ODAM's main goals: 'To disseminate the principles upon which modern architecture should be based, seeking to affirm, through the work of its members, how the professional conscience should be formed and how to create the necessary understanding between architects and other technical experts and artists.'[9]

This role was shared with the ICAT group, founded in Lisbon in 1946 and mobilized by Francisco Keil do Amaral, Celestino de Castro and Hernâni Gandra, among others. ICAT took over the second series of the magazine *Arquitectura* (nos. 1-58, 1946-57), and used the magazine to publish texts and works by the major authors of the modern movement, in addition to being in charge of the publication and Portuguese translation of the full version of the Athens Charter, which was published in a series of twelve issues between 1948 and 1949.[10]

A new generation of architects thus came together in these two groups, in Lisbon and Porto, all of whom were equally involved in promoting the ideas of modern architecture as an antidote to the regime's nationalistic guidelines. This political stance formed the ideological core of these groups' architecture and identity. In 1948, they both played a decisive part in the first National Architecture Congress organized and promoted by the National Architects' Union.[11] The meeting was sponsored by the government, however, thus revealing the political ambiguity of the congress. Not only did the congress express strong support for the modern principles of the Athens Charter and commit itself to resolving the housing problem, but it also represented a turning point, a collective awakening of architects that wanted to reconquer freedom of expression and express a renewed and more intense opposition to the Salazar dictatorship.

However, the group's sensibility began to change during ODAM's final phase, from 1952 to 1956. According to Edite Rosa, this shift was triggered by the *Survey of Portuguese Vernacular Architecture*, as well as pioneering work by Távora, such as the Ofir Summer House (1957-58).[12] Naturally, it was also influenced by the attendance of a number of ODAM architects at CIAM VIII in Hoddesdon (1951), the Sigtuna meeting (1952), CIAM IX in Aix-en-Provence (1953), CIAM X in Dubrovnik (1956) and CIAM XI in Otterlo (1959).[13]

In Sigtuna, Viana de Lima, the leading figure of the Portuguese CIAM group, presented the work 'Contribution à la Charte de l'HABITAT',[14] a project he carried out in collaboration with Fernando Távora, João Andresen, Eugénio Alves de Sousa and Luís Praça, and which provided an alternative to the normative 'CIAM grid'. It was used at the Sigtuna meeting to denounce the government's repression of modern architecture in Portugal.[15] 'Although our work offers nothing new,' de Lima said of CIAM's work, 'it is still the result of a considerable effort, given the limited time available and the very special circumstance of being the first work of a GROUP still "in progress", which is leaving its country for the first time.' After his presentation, de Lima also took the opportunity to 'acknowledge our imperfections and also the possibility of errors; but our presence at this meeting reflects our desire to benefit from your experience and your advice'. Though ODAM did not significantly interfere with the revisionist debates at CIAM, it was an important player in the Portuguese architectural debate.

De Lima belonged to the older ODAM generation. According to Sergio Fernandez, de Lima was 'an absolute fan of Corbusier'.[16] Fernandez, who also attended the 1959 Otterlo conference, worked with him while a student between 1956 and 1957. Fernandez recalls that Távora, as de Lima's younger guest, displayed a different sensibility, a more youthful unrest and theoretical involvement with the basic issues, which was reflected in his profound enthusiasm upon his return to Portugal.[17] This different sensibility is why Távora became a key interpreter of the Modern Movement revision in the 1950s.

In 1945, Távora published his seminal essay 'The Problem of the Portuguese House' in the newspaper *Aléo*.[18] Two years later, Manuel João Leal and Nuno Teotónio Pereira paid tribute to its importance by publishing a rewritten and expanded version of the text in *Cadernos de Arquitectura*, this time with a wider distribution and hence greater impact.[19] This manifesto-like text issued the appeal: 'Everything must be remade, starting from the beginning.' It denounced the 'false architecture' of the nationalistic movement of the 'Portuguese House', a movement supported by the Salazar regime and theorized by Raul Lino.[20] Jorge Figueira points out that Távora used this text to 'position himself [...] on an extremely insinuating and tactical plane'.[21] In fact, Távora was defending a 'third way', an alternative, in-between position. This is because there were two facets to his statement that 'the vernacular house will provide great lessons when duly studied, as it is the most functional and least fanciful'.[22] On the one hand, it expressed a quest for genuine Portuguese architecture, and, on the other hand, it stated that Portuguese architecture would, 'when duly studied',[23] reveal a debt to functionalist logic.

These concerns, in line with a text published in 1947 by Keil do Amaral, formed the basis for the above-mentioned *Survey of Portuguese Vernacular Architecture* promoted by the National Union of Architects.[24] Work on the survey began in 1949. The initial attempt by the union leadership, presided over by do Amaral, failed. The survey project - an ambitious mission consisting of six teams geographically distributed throughout the country undertaking a scientific study of vernacular Portuguese architecture - was officially launched six years later in 1955,[25] and its results were published in 1961.[26] Távora led the team for the Minho region, alongside his colleague Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, in charge of the Trás-os-Montes regional team. These two northern teams shared a particular appreciation for anthropological concerns, attested to by their focus on the relationship between human associations and their spatial appropriations.[27] Thus, it is interesting to note that these questions related to identifying devices and community structures were in line with those discussed by Team 10.

A still young Álvaro Siza collaborated with Távora from 1949 to 1955. Siza recalls that Távora, as a member of CIAM, felt a powerful need to share his experiences.[28] His critical appropriation of the 1950s CIAM debate was of vital importance to the formation of the Porto School of Architecture. According to Siza, Távora 'had direct and personal information which he conveyed to the school, especially those who worked with him'.[29] It is no coincidence that some members of the school, such as Arnaldo Araújo and Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, were reflecting on concerns raised during the final CIAM congresses, such as identity, sociology or the social role of the architect. As Jorge Figueira states, this 'was decisive to creating a kind of cultural synchronization, via Porto, between the European vanguard and the fragile ideological tradition of Portuguese architecture'.[30]

Távora recalled the appearance, during his first CIAM congress in 1951 in Hoddesdon, of a new generation of English and Italians. According to Távora, the meeting, the subject of which was 'the heart of the city', presented 'contributions with a certain human warmth, unfamiliar to the rationalist mind'.[31] In 1956 in Dubrovnik, along with de Lima, Filgueiras and Araújo, Távora presented the 'plan for an agricultural community'32 based on the *Survey of Portuguese Vernacular Architecture*. The plan argued that 'the architect is no longer the dictator imposing a form of his own, but the natural, simple, humble man devoted to the problems of his peers; not to serve *himself*, but to serve *them*, creating a work which may be anonymous, but is above all intensely experienced'.[33] [fig. 2] As Távora recalled in 1971, the project was 'an extremely specific, regionalized and in no way international project'[34] and was greeted with enthusiasm by Aldo van Eyck.

In 1957, Távora wrote a fundamental text in which he explained his design approach for the Ofir Summer House (1957-58).[35] 'In Portugal,' wrote Fernandez, 'the Ofir House was undoubtedly a kind of starting point for all of us. It represents a milestone in the historiography of Portuguese architecture. I believe Távora felt this too.'[36] The project was related to the 'third way' defended ten years before in his 1947 text. However, as Távora recalled in 1986, the survey was decisive since it 'had an immediate and direct influence on the Ofir Summer House'.[37] In his 1957 text, Távora likened the house to a chemical 'compound', 'where an infinite number of factors would be involved, meaning of course factors with variable values but all of which must be taken in account',[38] factors which 'are not within the scope of the architect's responsibilities; others belong to the field of the architect's training, as well as to his own personality'.[39] Jorge Figueira described this text as a 'manifesto on the handling of references without losing the identity of the whole'.[40] Listing these factors, Távora pointed out in an autobiographical tone that 'the architect has his own cultural, plastic and human background (as far as he is concerned, the house is more than just a building). He knows the meanings of words, such as organicism, functionalism, neo-empiricism, cubism, etc., and at the same time he experiences a deep-rooted feeling of unparalleled love for all spontaneous architectural manifestations which he finds in his own country'.[41]

In this way, according to the 'compound' logic developed by Távora, the various factors were critically filtered, leading to different forms of appropriation adapted to the Portuguese setting. Indeed, one could argue that Távora's critical appropriation mirrored Van Eyck's stance in his quest to reconcile architecture with the basic values represented in the Otterlo Circles by the 'classical tradition', the 'modern tradition' and the 'vernacular tradition'.

In 1961, Nuno Portas pointed to the privileged position of Távora as a mediator of ideas between Porto and Team 10; Portas wrote in *Arquitectura* that Távora, 'having participated in the four CIAM

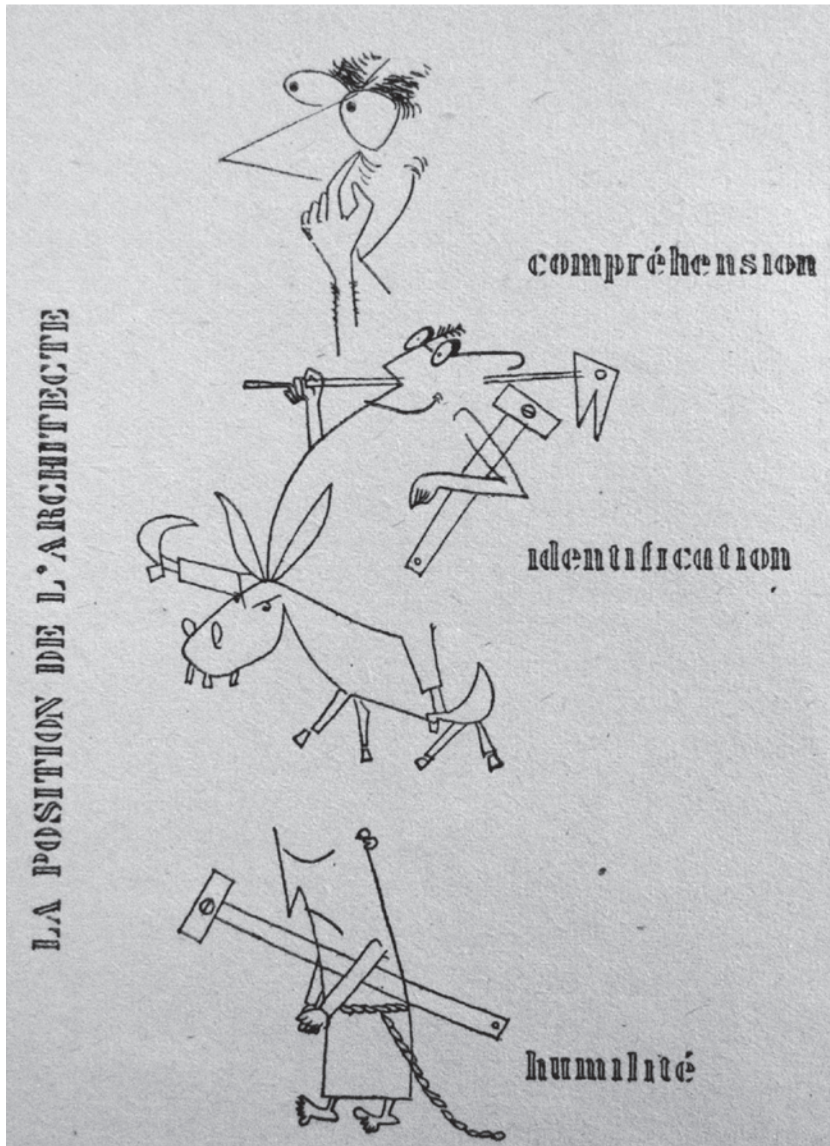


Fig. 2: Detail of panel 4: ‘The Positioning of the Architect – Comprehension, Identification, Humility’ (Groupe CIAM Porto, Portugal - ‘Habitat Rural: New Agricultural Community’, panel 4, 1951.) as published in: *Arquitectura*, 64, 1959.

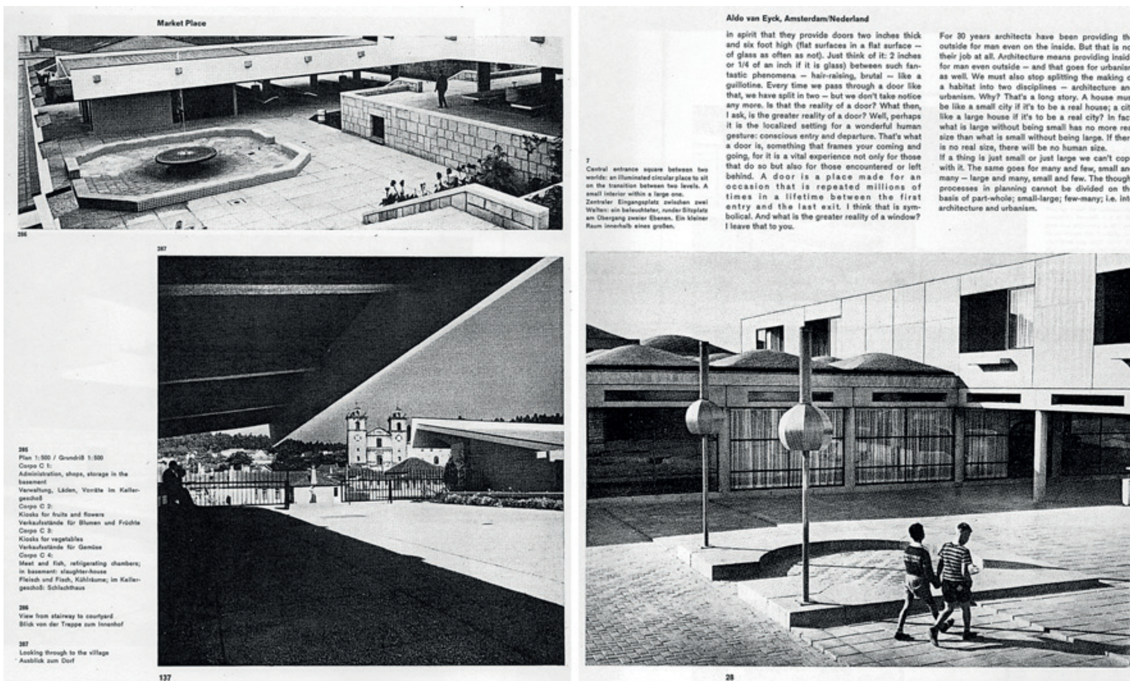
congresses held over the last decade, [...] had the opportunity to follow, live, the crisis which occurred within the very heart of the modern movement (within the very indoctrination that shaped it), since, not being party to Team 10's opposition to "orthodox functionalism" or "Italian revisionism", he was able to gain a better understanding of the profound causes which separated them'.[42] Siza confirmed this interpretation when he recalled that 'from the final CIAM, [Távora] followed the thinking of Coderch of the Catalan houses, and not that of Candilis of the new cities; of the rebel Van Eyck and the new Italians, and not of Bakema and triumphalist reconstruction'.[43] This affirmation reveals the importance of Távora's critical reception as it illustrates the debate's different degrees of permeability sparked by Team 10.

In Otterlo, at the final CIAM congress in 1959, Viana de Lima presented Bragança Hospital, a project that went unnoticed due to its rationalist nature, while Távora presented his project for the Vila da Feira Market (1953-59) and, in a parallel session, the Ofir Summer House (1957-58). 'The CIAM architects,' recalls Fernandez, who also attended the congress, 'thought the market was great, but paid little attention to the Ofir House. I think that to those people, it was vaguely regionalist in nature. The Ofir House, which for us is extremely important, was the height of modernity. It was the leap from Corbusier to so-called authentic architecture. But with those little roofs, people didn't really get it.'[44]

As for the Vila da Feira Market, it provoked a discussion about 'the possibilities inherent in architecture of transcending its simple three-dimensional existence as space, and becoming an element which might encourage the spontaneous meeting and intermixing of people'.[45] The design of the market was central to this debate, in which Van Eyck suggested that 'the notion of space and time no longer carried its original impact and that it be replaced with the more vital concept of place and occasion'.[46] It is interesting to note that this remark by Van Eyck could have described his own design for the Municipal Orphanage (1955-60) in Amsterdam. There are similarities between the spatial configuration of both places, particularly with a view to the gathering place as the central element.[47] [fig. 3]

Bakema, during the final session of the Otterlo congress, expressed a vote of confidence in Portugal's participation: 'Among the panels there is some fine work. The Portuguese plans [...] are examples of work in which I feel there is a force that is continuing on a good line.'[48] This observation by Bakema, as well as Van Eyck's enthusiasm about the Vila da Feira Market, probably led to Távora being invited to the Royaumont meeting in September 1962. Yet, if Otterlo represented a change of guard between the generations, as personified by de Lima and Távora, Royaumont marked another shift in the exchanges between Portuguese architecture and the Team 10 debates. Távora, 'the metropolitan Portuguese', attended the meeting along with Pancho Guedes, 'the African Portuguese'.[49]

Guedes grew up in Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony, and studied architecture in South Africa.[50] In 1950, he returned to Mozambique to work as an architect, a painter and a sculptor. Guedes was introduced to Team 10 by the Smithsons, who came in contact with him in 1960, during a visit to London where he also met Reyner Banham, the assistant executive editor of *The Architectural Review*, and the South African Theo Crosby, technical editor of *Architectural Design*. Guedes recalled that in Royaumont Távora 'listened to everything in silence, and became perturbed'.[51] Indeed, upon his return to Portugal, Távora was asked to write a statement in Arquitectura in which he shared his uneasiness following the meeting. 'The fact that we did not reach a conclusion in Royaumont, nor even tried to reach one, strikes me as profoundly



Market Place

285
Plan 1:500 / Grundriß 1:500
Corpo C 1:
Administration, shops, storage in the basement
Verwaltung, Läden, Vorräte im Kellergeschoß
Corpo C 2:
Kiosks for fruits and flowers
Verkaufsstände für Blumen und Früchte
Corpo C 3:
Kiosks for vegetables
Verkaufsstände für Gemüse
Corpo C 4:
Meat and fish, refrigerating chambers; in basement: slaughter-house
Fleisch und Fisch, Kühlräume; im Kellergeschoß: Schlachthaus

286
View from stairway to courtyard
Blick von der Treppe zum Innenhof

287
Looking through to the village
Ausblick zum Dorf

137

Aldo van Eyck, Amsterdam/Nederland

in spirit that they provide doors two inches thick and six foot high (flat surfaces in a flat surface – of glass as often as not). Just think of it: 2 inches or 1/4 of an inch if it is glass) between such fantastic phenomena – hair-raising, brutal – like a guillotine. Every time we pass through a door like that, we have split in two – but we don't take notice any more. Is that the reality of a door? What then, I ask, is the greater reality of a door? Well, perhaps it is the localized setting for a wonderful human gesture: conscious entry and departure. That's what a door is, something that frames your coming and going, for it is a vital experience not only for those that do so but also for those encountered or left behind. A door is a place made for an occasion that is repeated millions of times in a lifetime between the first entry and the last exit. I think that is symbolical. And what is the greater reality of a window? I leave that to you.

For 30 years architects have been providing the outside for man even on the inside. But that is not their job at all. Architecture means providing inside for man even outside – and that goes for urbanism as well. We must also stop splitting the making of a habitat into two disciplines – architecture and urbanism. Why? That's a long story. A house must be like a small city if it's to be a real house; a city like a large house if it's to be a real city? In fact, what is large without being small has no more real size than what is small without being large. If there is no real size, there will be no human size.
If a thing is just small or just large we can't cope with it. The same goes for many and few, small and many – large and many, small and few. The thought processes in planning cannot be divided on the basis of part-whole; small-large; few-many; i.e. into architecture and urbanism.

7
Central entrance square between two worlds: an illuminated circular place to sit on the transition between two levels. A small interior within a large one.
Zentraler Eingangsplatz zwischen zwei Welten: ein beleuchteter, runder Sitzplatz am Übergang zweier Ebenen. Ein kleiner Raum innerhalb eines großen.

28

Fig. 3: Fernando Távora, Vila da Feira Market (1953-59) and Aldo van Eyck, Amsterdam's Municipal Orphanage (1955-60), as published in: Oscar Newman *CIAM'59 in Otterlo: Documents of Modern Architecture* (London: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1961).

significant. There are moments [...] when the only conclusion possible is… that no conclusion is possible'.[52] [fig. 4] Távora knew that times were changing. 'One can feel,' he wrote 'that this is a moment of inquiry and doubt, of reunification, of drama and mystery. How, then, to conclude with clarity?'[53] Faced with the impossibility of reaching a conclusion, he expressed the desire to continue: 'May this desire to *continue* and to *survive* be the most significant conclusion of our meeting, and encourage us to hold further meetings in the future.'[54]

Távora did not take part in any of Team 10's subsequent meetings, despite being invited to the Berlin meeting of 1965.[55] Guedes, for his part, continued to attend and participate in Team 10's meetings. However, despite his close contact with Team 10, Guedes did not play an active part in the dissemination of its ideas or its critical reception in Portugal. It is interesting to stress that Guedes was not asked to write a statement along with Távora, as one might have expected. Despite this absence of testimony, Guedes was featured in the same issue of the magazine with an unsigned article about his African projects - an article that criticizes the 'sculptural and formal concerns' and that denounces 'a gratuitous fantasy solution' of a specific façade or 'the dubious, even misleading, structural solution' of a given apartment block.[56] [fig. 5] Among others the article referred to issues of *The Architectural Review*[57] and *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*[58] dedicated to Guedes' work. It was written on behalf of the editors of *Arquitectura* since it clearly affirmed: '*We* do not conceive architecture in this way.' The text also stated that Guedes' architecture was opposed to an architecture of social intentions. Therefore it could be argued that the *Arquitectura* editorial board,[59] based on their ideological and architectural viewpoints, missed the opportunity to broaden the debate in Team 10 with Guedes' testimony, thus stifling the exchange between the Portuguese and Team 10's architectural discourse.

From *Arquitectura* to the SAAL programme

By 1963, when Távora's Royaumont statement was published in *Arquitectura*, a new generation had taken over the magazine (third series, nos. 59-131, 1957-74). This new phase in the life of *Arquitectura* was in stark contrast to the second series led by ICAT. This new wave played a central role in the critical revision of the modern movement in Portugal, based on the collaboration of architects such as Carlos Duarte, Pedro Vieira de Almeida and Nuno Portas, among many others. Subsequent issues of the magazine critically monitored the new Portuguese and international architectural output and specialist literature.

Carlos Duarte wrote in the magazine's architectural literature section that 'what most effectively defines an architecture magazine is its ideological stance with regard to the works and problems of its time',[60] calling *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* a panoramic magazine which did not interfere with events, in contrast to *The Architectural Review*, which 'by its more original and consequential attitude, exercises considerable influence on the evolution of architecture'.[61] It was in the latter, more ambitious and involved field of intervention that Arquitectura positioned itself. However, Duarte denounced the idea that *The Architectural Review* was neither original nor of decisive importance to the evolution of the modern movement, as 'the magazine has for a long time defended the validity of the rationalist functional attitude formally codified in what we habitually call the International Style'.[62] In just a few lines, Duarte had clearly mapped out the magazine's anti-rationalist stance.

The new editors displayed great agility and knowledge to remain up to date. For example, José Antonio Coderch's text 'It isn't geniuses we need right now' was published in *Arquitectura* in December 1961, just one month after it was first published in the Italian *Domus*. Another example, Georges Candilis' 'Problems of Today',[63] was published in

DEPOIMENTOS

O ENCONTRO DE ROYAUMONT

arq. Fernando Távora

Dezembro de 1962.

Fig. 4

ARQUITECTURA NO MUNDO

MIRANDA GUEDES, ARQUITECTO DE LOURENÇO MARQUES

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW 770, Abril 61
ARCHITECTURE D'AUJOURD'HUI,
DIARIO DE NOTICIAS 9-5-1963

A ausência de tradição arquitectónica em Moçambique — e em particular na sua cidade mais significativa, Lourenço Marques — reflecte, apesar de alguns esforços louváveis, uma ainda não conseguida entidade cultural. Ao contrário do que acontece em Luanda onde existem restos duma arquitectura tradicional de raiz erudita e popular, a arquitectura de Lourenço Marques é totalmente, ou quase, de importação: salvo raros exemplos que ainda subsistem da antiga arquitectura colonial inglesa apenas se assinalam na cidade edifícios de estilo claramente «internacional», racionalista, adulterado por influências brasileiras ou vagamente mexicanas. As duas culturas, a europeia e a indígena, não se interpenetraram e daqui resultou que a construção espontânea, autóctone, mal conhecida e estudada (a recolha de material está ainda por fazer) tem evoluído marginalmente em relação à arquitectura dita erudita despersonalizando-se.

É dentro deste contexto que se deve inserir a sua actividade profissional e até extraprofissional — trata-se também dum pintor e escultor. Nascido há 37 anos em Lisboa, viveu e cresceu em Lourenço Marques onde, depois de estudar na União Sul-Africana iniciou, em 1950, a sua carreira profissional. A sua obra, já considerável, é também variada sendo particularmente significativos a numerosas as construções habitacionais, em especial as moradias.

1 — Estação de Serviço e escritórios.
2 — Padaria «Saipal».

Fig. 5

Fig. 4: 'O Encontro de Royaumont', testimony by Fernando Távora, as published in: *Arquitectura*, 79, 1963.

Fig. 5: Unsigned article about Pancho Guedes: 'Miranda Guedes, Arquitecto de Lourenço Marques', *Arquitectura*, 79, 1963.

Arquitectura in January 1963, the same year as its publication in the Swiss magazine *Architecture - Formes et Fonctions*.[64] In this text, Candilis focused on the problems of 'habitation', 'number' and 'greatest number'. The text appeared at the very beginning of *Arquitectura*, with an illustration depicting an enormous explosion with the caption: 'We live in an era of extraordinary transformations - a great era - but technique and technical specialists have been caught unawares...'[65] [fig. 6]

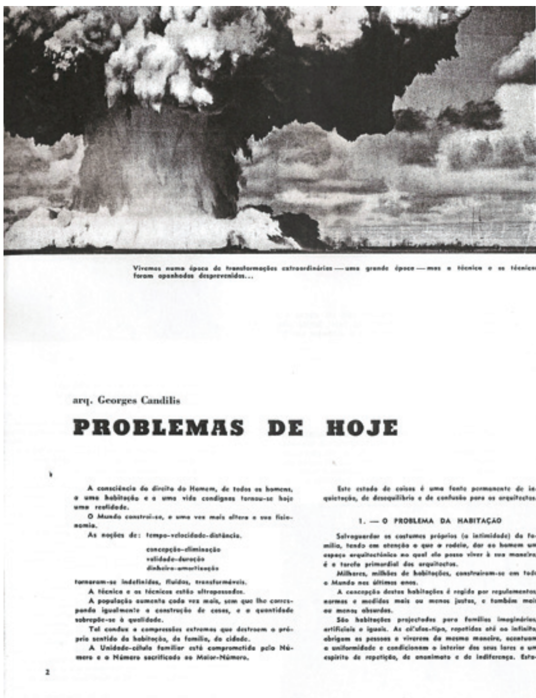
Portas was a central character in this editorial project. In the late 1950s, he studied the evolution of the different ideological positions that converged in *Arquitectura* and beyond, based on the careful critical interpretation of theoretical reflections. His role in promoting the international debate was neither neutral nor passive. On the contrary, Portas' writings in the late 1950s were marked by a committed critical stance influenced by Bruno Zevi's organic school of thought.

In the 1959 text 'The responsibility of a brand-new generation of the modern movement in Portugal',[66] Portas adopted a basic stance - 'to interrogate a brand-new generation - not just its ideas and intentions, but above all its work'.[67] This generation consisted of 'young people who were educated and began their careers in the midst of the revision of the concept of modernity'.[68] As a result of this interrogation throughout the 1960s, the new series of *Arquitectura* functioned as a powerful '*agitprop* tool'.[69] Figueira argues that in this text 'Portas was already indicating the path he would follow throughout the '60s and which would lead him away from the Zevian camp - denoting, for all intents and purposes, a formal dispute - towards methodological concerns which bring him closer to the social sciences'.[70] Indeed, a shift can be detected in which Portas began attaching greater value to method and process to the detriment of form, when he stated that 'urbanistic and architectural modernity is no longer part of a given vocabulary; but it is possible and necessary to define it in relation to methodology, i.e. the connection between the creative act and the processes whereby reality can be known'.[71]

His first book, *A arquitectura para hoje* (Architecture for today), published two years after he joined the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering (LNEC) in 1964, confirmed his desire to distance himself somewhat from issues of form, favouring instead the quest for scientific objectivity. However, Portas still appreciated the proposals of certain architects. Towards the end of the book, Portas cited a number of examples which 'by the novelty and originality of their contribution [...] constitute a response to the "crisis": the British "Brutalist" movement, for example, identified with "Team 10" which catalysed CIAM's agony, and from which emerged the work of Lasdun, Smithson, Stirling-Gowan, the Sheffield team, the Dutchman Van Eyck and the "Frenchman" Candilis-Woods', along with the new Italian and Spanish generations, as well as Távora, Teotónio Pereira and Siza.[72]

In 1969, Portas published his second book, *A cidade como arquitectura* (The city as architecture), which elaborated on the line of thought pursued in the previous book, also based on his experience at LNEC. [fig. 7] However, a shift in thinking could be detected: while the 1964 book explored issues related to the building by means of architectural criticism, the 1969 book used a methodological approach to examining the city and urban planning issues. The title clearly illustrates this change: if the first proposes an 'architecture for today', the second moves one step further, suggesting that 'the city' should be understood 'as architecture'.

In Portas' preface to the 1970 Portuguese translation of Zevi's *Storia dell'architettura moderna*, he identified 'two trends, with almost opposite objectives, though both arising from men characterized by rationalism',[73] and formed in the period from 1955 to 1970. On the one hand, there was Team



Vivemos numa época de transformações extraordinárias — uma grande época — mas a técnica e os técnicos foram apanhados desprevenidos...

arq. Georges Candilis

PROBLEMAS DE HOJE

A consciência do direito do Homem, de todos os homens, a uma habitação e a uma vida condignas tornou-se hoje uma realidade.

O Mundo constrói-se, e uma vez mais altera a sua fisionomia.

As noções de: tempo-velocidade-distância.

concepção-eliminação
validade-duração
dinheiro-amortização

tornaram-se indefinidas, fluidas, transformáveis.

A técnica e os técnicos estão ultrapassados.

A população aumenta cada vez mais, sem que lhe corresponda igualmente a construção de casas, e a quantidade sobrepõe-se à qualidade.

Tal conduz a compressões extremas que destroem o próprio sentido da habitação, da família, da cidade.

A Unidade-célula familiar está comprometida pelo Número e o Número sacrificado ao Maior-Número.

Este estado de coisas é uma fonte permanente de inquietação, de desequilíbrio e de confusão para os arquitectos.

1. — O PROBLEMA DA HABITAÇÃO

Salvaguardar os costumes próprios (a intimidade) da família, tendo em atenção o que a rodeia, dar ao homem um espaço arquitectónico no qual ele possa viver à sua maneira, é a tarefa primordial dos arquitectos.

Milhares, milhões de habitações, construiram-se em todo o Mundo nos últimos anos.

A concepção destas habitações é regida por regulamentos, normas e medidas mais ou menos justas, e também mais ou menos absurdas.

São habitações projectadas para famílias imaginárias, artificiais e iguais. As células-tipo, repetidas até ao infinito, obrigam as pessoas a viverem da mesma maneira, acentuam a uniformidade e condicionam o interior dos seus lares a um espírito de repetição, de anonimato e de indiferença. Esta-

2

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 6: Article by Georges Candilis: ‘Problemas de Hoje’, *Arquitectura*, 77, 1963.

Fig. 7: Cover of Nuno Portas’ book: *A Cidade Como Arquitectura* (The City as Architecture), 2007 edition.

10's work. 'The more positive trend was receptive to the major urban problems, proposing the integration of architecture and urbanism into a single system, translated into new forms of habitat and reviving the opportunities for contact with environmental structures such as the street, gallery, square and courtyard found in historical and vernacular traditions.' On the other hand, however, Portas also discerned a postmodernist tone. 'The other trend, more serious and diffuse [...] is lost in a sterile quest for new layouts, for new volumetrics and, above all, for new façades.'[74]

In 1970, in line with his growing 'anti-formalist' sentiment, Portas appears to retain some confidence in the procedural potential arising from Team 10's ideas. Indeed, Portas' stance during this period can be compared to one of the goals put forward by Team 10 at its first post-CIAM meeting in 1960, to continue the 'struggle against [...] formulas, against formalism'. Portas' growing 'anti-formalist' sentiment led him to include a critical note in his 1969 book about the Japanese Metabolists and Archigram. 'We are not impressed,' he wrote, 'by these science fiction effects,'[75] accusing them of merely 'exaggerating current tendencies found in surplus societies, and formulating hypotheses regarding needs, naturally taking some into the mythical domain, namely those which connote change and mobility'.[76]

Portas began work in 1956 in Nuno Teotónio Pereira's studio, where he had the opportunity to 'combine the practice of planning with other fields of work, which were becoming increasingly open to the influence of other areas in the scientific, sociological or merely political domain'.[77] However, it was by recourse to the practice of planning that the studio was to test the problems of collective habitation, as Teotónio Pereira had extensive experience in this domain through the Federation of Provident Funds, the body responsible for building social housing for pensioners from the various professional corporations and the Lisbon Tenants Association (1956-57).

Another opportunity arose with the Olivais project, the construction of the 'largest satellite district promoted by Lisbon Town Hall in the '50s and '60s'.[78] Olivais represented two different conceptual trends, embodied in the North Olivais plan (1955-58), based on the modern Athens Charter models, and the South Olivais plan (1959-62) by Carlos Duarte and José Rafael Botelho, which strove to socially integrate 'the occupants of the different types of habitation'.[79] According to Portas, 'the main change had to do with the shift from the functionalist concept of "neighbourhood unit" - still clearly visible in North Olivais - to the cluster model, combining the integrative *patio* and the generative street, opting for unitary blocks of moderate height, to the detriment of higher and more isolated buildings'.[80] [fig. 8] The housing complex in South Olivais illustrates this shift to a cluster model, a typical Team 10 concept. It consisted of seven independent blocks designed by Vítor Figueiredo and Vasco Lobo in 1960, which put into practice the 'idea for a pedestrian street in the air for high buildings' developed by the Smithsons in the Golden Lane Project in 1952.[81] [fig. 9]

In the late 1960s, Lisbon Town Hall launched the Chelas plan. Led by Francisco Silva Dias, this plan envisaged an urban structure organized according to continuous linear outlines interspersed with built-up units. According to Portas, the plan 'is closely modelled on the "rhizomatic" structures developed by Team 10 (with clear references to the British "new towns" and the *ville nouvelle* at Toulouse-le-Mirail), while certain sections, such as Gonçalo Byrne's "Pantera Cor-de-Rosa" [Pink Panther] (1971-75) and Vítor Figueiredo's "Pata de Galinha" [Chicken Foot] (1973-80) exemplify the *buildings-as-street* approach'.[82]

Collective habitation was one of the main concerns of Nuno Teotónio Pereira's studio - a dynamic and active group that debated the matter at length in *Arquitectura* and in various forums. In 1960, for example, Nuno Portas and Octávio Lixa

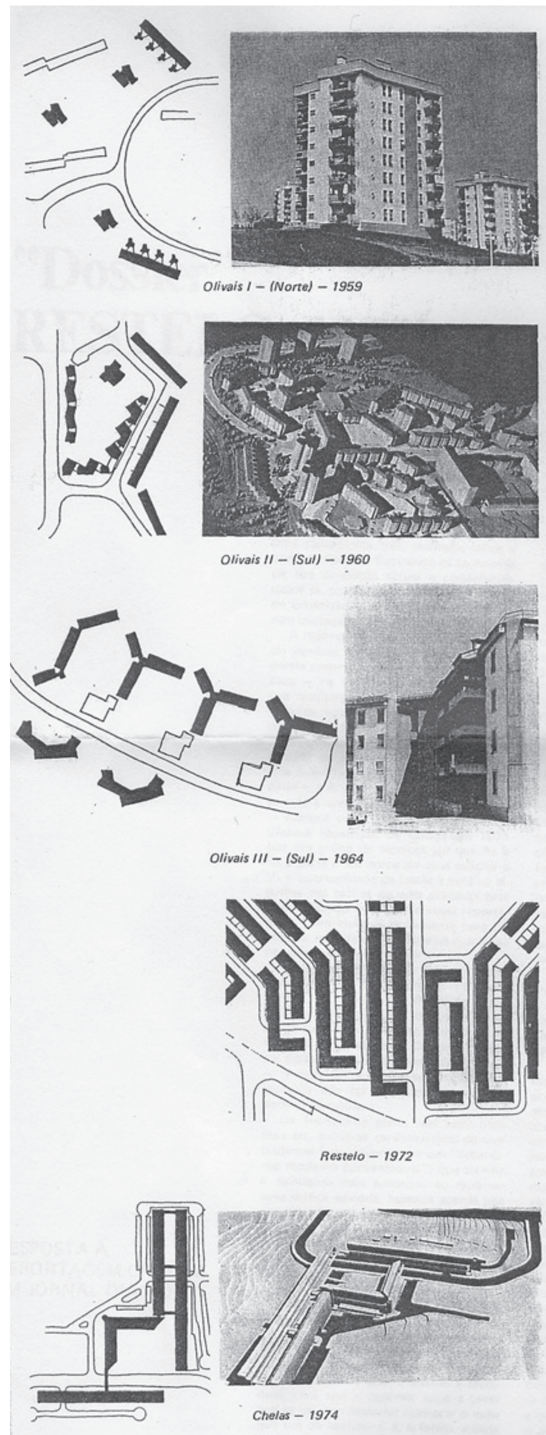


Fig. 8: Illustrations by Nuno Portas showing the evolution between North Olivais (1959) and Chelas (1974), as published in: *Arquitectura*, 130, 1974.

Filgueiras were on a committee that organized a debate devoted to the problem of habitation.[83] The specific topic was 'social aspects in the construction of habitat'. One of the invited speakers was the influential sociologist Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, who spoke of the sociological implications of the use of habitation, based on questionnaires circulated extensively in French residential districts.

In late 1969, the National Meeting of Architects (ENA) was held in Lisbon. The meeting was not attended by Portas, as José António Bandeirinha reported.[84] However, Portas sent 'an incisively critical message, aimed not so much at the social context surrounding the profession, but essentially at the architectural profession's inertia in affirming itself in society.[85] Portas also listed three examples of how a 'competent architect'[86] might contribute to this: by creating evolving habitats as an alternative to the conventional 'completed' neighbourhoods; by developing directional centres, bringing together transport and services; and by singling out the best ideas for the city and the best ways of realizing them.

It is in this context that Portas referred to Team 10's concepts of city. 'The ideas we have today of the city,' he wrote, 'were developed by ten men (Team X) in two or three congresses. They extracted from their everyday alienated professional experience, but also from their unbridled imagination, a few concepts that are a long way from being exhausted or proven invalid.'[87] Portas' message continues by proposing 'a methodological assault to fearlessly overcome the sterile continuation of the theoretical discussion surrounding the profession's social dilemmas'.[88] To this end, Portas proposed two possible ways forward: first, to broaden the debate surrounding architecture to include new horizons for intervention; second, 'a progressive and systematic occupation of positions within the major decision-making centres by competent individuals interested in participating in strategies and coordinating operative tactics'.[89] Meanwhile, Portas' message to the 1969 ENA was to have reverberations five years later, when the dictatorial regime that had ruled for 48 years came to an end.

The revolution of 25 April 1974 paved the way for the appointment of Nuno Portas as Secretary of State for Habitation and Urbanism of the First Provisional Government on 16 May. At that time, the experience he had accumulated over the previous two decades was of vital importance. A key figure in the Portuguese critical reception of the international debate on the transformation of habitat, Portas had a unique opportunity to put into practice in the political arena the issue of collective habitation, the city's responsibility towards its underprivileged urban population and the importance of multidisciplinary teams.

The impatience inherent to all revolutions demanded quick results here as well, and the debate that raged in the late 1950s and 1960s formed the obvious basis for a new housing policy. So, on 31 July, SAAL was launched as 'an alternative system for public promotion based on an autonomous organization of social demand and on the virtual capacity of self-management'.[90] In a process of cooperation between the state and its citizens, the population directly managed operations through housing associations and cooperatives supported by technical teams of architects, engineers and social workers nominated by the state. [fig. 10] According to Portas, SAAL was 'a process intended to produce results in "city design", through the paradigms of evolutionary and participatory habitats'.[91] A common understanding can be discerned here between these concerns and Team 10's concept of 'change and growth'. In both cases, the city is understood as an open entity that depends on the time factor - an urban structure without a preconceived model. Portas' references are part of the research into evolutionary habitats developed at LNEC with Francisco Silva Dias.[92]

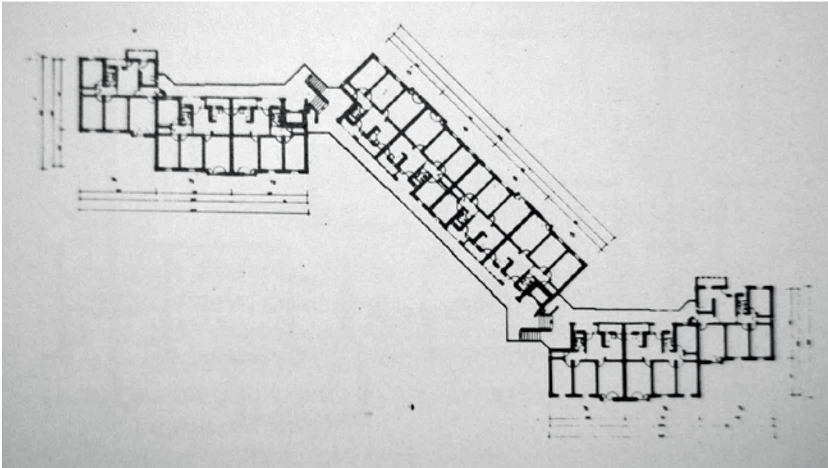


Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 9: Upper floor plan, seven storey housing block, by Vítor Figueiredo and Vasco Lobo, South Olivais, Lisbon, 1960, as published in: *Arquitectura*, no. 135, 1979.
Fig. 10: Film still from ‘As Operações SAAL’, by João Dias (2007).

One characteristic of the SAAL process was its ability to address social needs - 'a methodological characteristic which aims to free itself from preconceptions of formal creation, in such a way as to integrate social demand and the participation of the dwellers in the project'.[93] Indeed, SAAL's stance valued process over form. Portas nevertheless pointed to some formal solutions. 'Although the teams were given no common guidelines,' he writes, 'the majority of the solutions are low-rise with medium or high density and well-defined exterior spaces - which can be reduced to street, square or patio archetypes - and continuous or connected buildings instead of the usual isolated slabs and towers.'[94] It is interesting to note that these lines, written in 1984, remind us of Portas' 1970 preface to Team 10's work: '(…) new forms of habitat that revive opportunities for contact with environmental structures such as the street, gallery, square and courtyard found in the historical and vernacular tradition (…).'[95] These two excerpts reveal a connection between the presence of a Team 10 *idea* within SAAL's formal solutions; an *idea* appropriated by Portas that appreciated the experiments in habitats based on a reinterpretation of the historical structures of street, square, patio and gallery; an *idea* that established a binary opposition between a connected urban logic related to Team 10 and an isolated urban model related to the Athens Charter.

The SAAL programme enjoyed a short life, yet it suffered from a conflict of interest between political factions and economic interests. As Paulo Varela Gomes wrote, 'the circumstances in which SAAL appeared and operated were a phenomenon typical of revolutionary times'.[96] So, on 26 March 1975, Portas was relieved of his post as Secretary of State for Habitation and Urbanism, a fact that jeopardized the revolutionary housing policy aimed at establishing a direct dialogue with organized residents in order to eradicate slums. On 27 October 1976, a government order transferring powers to the municipalities effectively extinguished SAAL's raison d'être.[97]

An oblique line

Portas, and Távora as well, can be regarded as crucial interpreters of the post-CIAM revisions of modern architecture as a result of their critical engagement, their travels, contacts and pedagogical activities, both in academia and in practice. In this sense, they helped to decode the major issues of their time, interpreting them by means of a form of mediation which took into account the peculiarities of their context, their culture and their own personality.

Nuno Portas believes that Portuguese architecture is 'culturally closer to the Italian way'[98] despite having been subject to a huge variety of influences since the 1950s. However, it is significant to note how Portas' discourse throughout the 1960s makes reference to the ideas of Team 10 - from the 'testimonies of the Portuguese delegates to the final and 'decisive' meeting'[99] in 1959, to the message sent to the 1969 ENA, or the 1970 preface,[100] in which he contrasts Team 10's 'more positive trend' to their 'other' formalist one, 'lost in sterile quests for new layouts'. Indeed, as one of the main people responsible for implementing the SAAL programme, one could argue that Portas realized some of Team 10's concepts related to a new architectural sensitivity, as opposed to the strictly functionalist character of modern architecture.

Alexandre Alves Costa, one of the key ideologues of the Porto School, maintains that what profoundly distinguished the school was 'the coordination [of a particular] modernist conviction with the attempt to establish a method rather than to transmit or defend a formal code. It regarded history as a working tool with which to build the present'.[101] Recently, Alves Costa recalled the words of Aldo van Eyck. 'What we wanted,' Van Eyck wrote, 'was a richer, more inclusive functionalism, which could include the past and learn from thousands of years of building.'[102] Reading these lines, Alves Costa commented: 'It is as if we were reading and listening to Fernando

Távora. It is as if we had found the foundations of the Porto School. It is as if we listened to Álvaro Siza today and rediscovered the roots of his thought.'[103] Alves Costa's remark establishes an improbable connection between Van Eyck and Siza, between a more inclusive functionalism and the Porto School. In a way, Alves Costa drew an oblique line that opened an area for reflection, in which the Team 10 discourse is understood in a wider scope. Just as Távora or Portas once did.

Notes

1. For an overview of SAAL's history, see José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, 2007).
2. For an overview of the link between the SAAL programme and the various tendencies in the international architectural debate (and not only Team 10), see Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974*, esp. Chapter 1: 'Os sentidos do debate internacional', pp. 19-59.
3. For a preliminary overview of ODAM and ICAT, see Ana Tostões, *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50*, (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 1997), esp. Chapter 1: 'Sinais de Contaminação do Pós-guerra', pp. 20-46.
4. *Team 10 1953-81. In Search of a Utopia of the Present*, ed. by Max Risselada and Dirk van den Heuvel (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2005), p. 11.
5. Recalling the words of Aldo van Eyck - 'Nous avon le droit d'être vague,' in Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo: Documents of Modern Architecture*, ed. by Jürgen Joedicke (London: Karl Krämer Verlag, 1961), p. 197.
6. *Team 10 Primer*, ed. by Alison Smithson (London: Studio Vista, 1968 [1962]), p. 2.
7. Hans van Dijk, 'Forum, the Story of Another Idea, 1959-63', in *Team 10 1953-81*, p. 83.
8. For an overview of the ODAM history, see Edite Rosa, *ODAM: Valores Modernos e a Confrontação com a Realidade Produtiva*, PhD Dissertation (Barcelona: Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona, 2005).
9. Cassiano Barbosa, *ODAM - Organização dos arquitectos modernos 1947-1952* (Porto: Edições ASA, 1972).
10. *Arquitectura* 20-32 (February 1948 - August/September 1949), translation by Maria de Lourdes e F. Castro Rodrigues.
11. Ordem dos Arquitectos, *1.º Congresso Nacional de Arquitectura [edição fac-similada]*, (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2008).
12. Edite Rosa, *ODAM: Valores Modernos e a Confrontação com a Realidade Produtiva*, p. 260.
13. For an overview of CIAM's history, see Eric Mumford, *The CIAM discourse on urbanism*, 1928-1960 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).
14. gta Archive - ETH Zurich, ref: 42-AR-12.
15. Eric Mumford, *The CIAM discourse on urbanism*, p. 223.
16. Interview with the author, 2007.
17. Ibid.
18. Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa', *Aléo*, 10 November 1945, p. 10.
19. Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa', *Cadernos de Arquitectura*, Lisbon, 1947; Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa' [1947], in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 11-13.
20. For an overview of Raul Lino's contribution, see Raul Lino, *Casas Portuguesas, Alguns Apontamentos sobre a Arquitectura das Casas Simples* [1933] (Lisbon: Cotovia, 1992); Diogo Lino Pimentel, José-Augusto França, Manuel Rio-Carvalho, Pedro Vieira de Almeida, *Raul Lino, Exposição Retrospectiva da sua Obra* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1970). For a critical history of the 'Portuguese House', see Alexandre Alves Costa, 'A Problemática, a Polémica e as Propostas da Casa Portuguesa' (1980), in *Seis lições, 2-Introdução ao Estudo da Arquitectura Portuguesa* (Porto: FAUP, 1995); Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Legenda para um desenho de Nadir Afonso', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp.17-20; Bernardo José Ferrão, 'Tradição e Modernidade na Obra de Fernando

Távora 1947-1987', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 24-32.

21. Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto - Um Mapa Crítico* (Coimbra: Edições do Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2002), p. 44.
22. Fernando Távora, 'O Problema da Casa Portuguesa' [1947], in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 11-13.
23. There are slight differences between the 1945 and 1947 versions. In the 1947 version, Fernando Távora subtly added the remark 'when duly studied'.
24. Francisco Keil do Amaral, 'Uma iniciativa necessária', *Arquitectura*, 14 (April 1947), pp. 12-13.
25. In *Diário da República*, I series - no. 227, 19 October 1955, pp. 903-904 < http://dre.pt/pdf1s-dip/1955/10/22700/09030904.pdf > [accessed 9 October 2011].
26. *Ordem dos Arquitectos, Arquitectura Popular em Portugal* (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2004 [1961]).
27. Bernardo José Ferrão, 'Tradição e Modernidade na Obra de Fernando Távora 1947/1987', in *Fernando Távora*, p. 28.
28. Interview with the author, 2010.
29. Álvaro Siza, 'Entrevista realizada a Porto, l'abril de 1983, per Pepita Teixidor', *Quaderns*, 159, 1983, p. 5.
30. Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto - Um Mapa Crítico* (Coimbra: Edições do Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2002), p. 40.
31. Fernando Távora, 'Entrevista', by Mário Cardoso, *Arquitectura*, 123, 1971, p. 152.
32. Viana de Lima, Fernando Távora, Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, 'Tese ao X Congresso dos CIAM [7/8/1956]', *Arquitectura*, 64, January/February 1959, pp. 21-28.
33. Ibid., p. 24.
34. Fernando Távora, 'Entrevista', by Mário Cardoso, *Arquitectura*, 123, 1971, p. 153.
35. Fernando Távora, 'Casa em Ofir', *Arquitectura*, 59, 1957, pp. 10-13; also published in English in Fernando Távora, 'Summer House. Ofir, 1957-58', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), pp. 78-83.
36. Interview with the author, 2007.
37. Bernardo José Ferrão, 'Tradição e Modernidade na Obra de Fernando Távora 1947/1987', in *Fernando Távora*, p. 29.
38. Fernando Távora, 'Summer House. Ofir, 1957-58', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), p. 78.
39. Ibid., p. 80.
40. Jorge Figueira, *A Periferia Perfeita - Pós-Modernidade na Arquitectura Portuguesa, Anos 60-Anos 80*, PhD Dissertation, Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009, p. 45.
41. Fernando Távora, 'Summer House. Ofir, 1957-58', in *Fernando Távora* (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993).
42. Nuno Portas, 'Arquitecto Fernando Távora: 12 anos de actividade profissional', *Arquitectura* 71, July 1961, p. 16.
43. Álvaro Siza, 'Fernando Távora', in *Catálogo da Exposição, Arquitectura, Pintura, Escultura, Desenho* (Porto: Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, 1987), p. 186.
44. Interview with the author, 2007.
45. In Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo*, 1961, p. 136.
46. Ibid.
47. For a comparison, see Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo*, p. 137 and p. 28.
48. Jaap Bakema, 'Concluding Evaluation of the Otterlo Congress', in Oscar Newman, *CIAM'59 in Otterlo*, p. 218.
49. Interview with the author, 2007.
50. For an overview of Pancho Guedes' history, see 'Pancho Guedes: an alternative modernist', SAM, 3, ed. by Pedro Gadanho (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2007); Pancho Guedes, *Manifestos, Papers, Lectures, Publications* (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2007).
51. Interview with the author, 2007.
52. Fernando Távora, 'O encontro de Royaumont', *Arquitectura*, 79, July 1963, p. 1.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. *Team 10 1953-81*, p. 351.
56. 'Miranda Guedes, arquitecto de Lourenço Marques', *Arquitectura*, 79, July 1963, pp. 29-31.
57. 'Amâncio Guedes, architect of Lourenço Marques', *The Architectural Review*, 770, April 1961, pp. 240-52.

58. ‘Y aura-t-il une architecture?’, *l’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, 102, July 1962, pp. 42-49.
59. *Arquitectura*, 79 direction comission: Carlos Duarte, Daniel Santa Rita, Nuno Portas, Rui Mendes Paula (director) and Vasco Lobo.
60. Carlos Duarte, ‘Literatura Arquitectónica’, *Arquitectura*, 60, October 1957, p. 55.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Georges Candilis, ‘Problemas de Hoje’, *Arquitectura*, 77, January 1963, pp. 2-5.
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65. Georges Candilis, ‘Problemas de Hoje’, *Arquitectura*, 77, January 1963, p. 2.
66. Nuno Portas, ‘A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no Movimento Moderno em Portugal’, *Arquitectura*, 66, November/December 1959, pp. 13-14.
67. Ibid., p. 13.
68. Ibid., p. 14.
69. Nuno Portas, ‘A Habitação Colectiva nos Ateliers da Rua da Alegria’, *Jornal Arquitectos*, 204 (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2002), p. 48.
70. Jorge Figueira, *A Periferia Perfeita - Pós-Modernidade na Arquitectura Portuguesa, Anos 60-Anos 80*, PhD Dissertation, Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009, p. 22.
71. Nuno Portas, ‘A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no Movimento Moderno em Portugal’, *Arquitectura*, 66, November/December 1959, p. 14.
72. Nuno Portas, *A Arquitectura para Hoje* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2008 [1964]), p. 114.
73. Nuno Portas, ‘Prefácio à Edição Portuguesa da *História da Arquitectura Moderna’* [1970], in Nuno Portas, *Arquitectura(s), História e Crítica, Ensino e Profissão*, ed. by Manuel Mendes (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2005), p. 63.
74. Ibid.
75. Nuno Portas, *A Cidade como Arquitectura* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2007 [1969]), p. 155.
76. Ibid., p. 154.
77. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura do 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, 2007), p. 65.
78. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, ‘Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna’, in *Lisboscópio* ed. by Cláudia Taborda, Amâncio (Pancho) Guedes, Ricardo Jacinto (Lisbon: Instituto das Artes - Ministério da Cultura, Corda Seca - Edições de Arte, 2006), p. 72.
79. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL*, p. 101.
80. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, ‘Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna’, p. 73.
81. Alison and Peter Smithson, ‘Mobility: Road systems’, *Architectural Design*, October 1958, p. 388.
82. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, ‘Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna’, p. 73.
83. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL*, p. 101.
84. Ibid., p. 87.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Nuno Portas, ‘Arquitectura e Sociedade Portuguesa - Mensagem por Nuno Portas’, p. 2.
88. José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL*, p. 87.
89. Ibid., p. 89.
90. Nuno Portas, ‘The S.A.A.L. Program’ [1984], in *Nuno Portas, Prémio Sir Patrick Abercrombie UIA 2005*, ed. by João Afonso and Ana Vaz Milheiro (Lisbon: Ordem dos Arquitectos, Caleidoscópio, 2005), p. 104.
91. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, ‘Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna’, p. 78.
92. Nuno Portas, Francisco Silva Dias, ‘Habitação Evolutiva’, *Arquitectura*, 126, October 1972, pp. 100-21.
93. Nuno Portas, ‘The S.A.A.L. Program’ [1984], in *Nuno Portas, Prémio Sir Patrick Abercrombie UIA 2005*, p. 104.
94. Ibid.
95. Nuno Portas, ‘Prefácio à Edição Portuguesa da *História da Arquitectura Moderna’* [1970], in Nuno Portas, *Arquitectura(s), História e Crítica, Ensino e Profissão* (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2005), p. 63.
96. Paulo Varela Gomes, ‘Arquitectura, os últimos vinte e cinco anos’, in *História da Arte Portuguesa, Volume*

III, ed. by Paulo Pereira (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1995), p. 564.

97. For an overview of the SAAL-programme dissolution, see José António Bandeirinha, *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, 2007), esp. Chapter 5: 'O desmantelamento de um processo incómodo', pp. 211-12, and Chapter 6: 'Os projectos dos bairros. Continuidades, evoluções e alternativas', pp. 175-260. For a personal view by Nuno Portas, see Nuno Portas, 'O Processo SAAL: entre o Estado e o Poder Local' [1986], in Nuno Portas, *Arquitectura(s), Teoria e Desenho, Investigação e Projecto* (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2005), pp. 254-63.
98. Nuno Portas, Nuno Grande, 'Entre a crise e a crítica da cidade moderna', p. 70.
99. Nuno Portas, 'A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no Movimento Moderno em Portugal', *Arquitectura*, 66, November/December 1959, p. 22.
100. Nuno Portas, 'Prefácio à Edição Portuguesa da *História da Arquitectura Moderna'* [1970], in Nuno Portas, *Arquitectura(s), História e Crítica, Ensino e Profissão* (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2005), p. 63.
101. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Legenda para um desenho de Nadir Afonso', in *Fernando Távora*, (Lisbon: Editora Blau, 1993), p. 19.
102. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Escandalosa Artisticidade', in *Álvaro Siza Modern Redux*, ed. by Jorge Figueira (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008), p. 34; cf. Aldo van Eyck, 'Everybody has his own story, Interview with Aldo van Eyck', in, *Team 10 1953-81*, p. 331.
103. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Escandalosa Artisticidade', in *Álvaro Siza Modern Redux* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008).

Biography

Pedro Baía graduated in architecture from the University of Coimbra in 2005, where he is currently working on a doctoral thesis entitled 'From Broadcast to Reception: Reflections of Team 10 in the Portuguese Architectural Culture'. Since 2011, he has been teaching at the Department of Architecture and Landscape at Vasco da Gama University School. This paper is part of Baía's PhD research developed under the guidance of Mário Krüger in the field of Theory and History of Architecture, with a grant from FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (SFRH/BD/37213/2007).

La Défense / Zone B (1953-91): Light and Shadows of the French Welfare State

Pierre Chabard

The business district of La Défense, with its luxurious office buildings, is a typical example of the French version of welfare state policy[1]: centralism, modernism, and confusion between public and private elites.[2] This district was initially planned in 1958 by the Etablissement Public d'Aménagement de la région de La Défense (EPAD), the first such planning organism controlled by the state. But this district, called Zone A (130 ha), constitutes only a small part of the operational sector of the EPAD; the other part, Zone B (620 ha), coincides with the northern part of the city of Nanterre, capital of the Hauts-de-Seine district. Characterized for a long time by agriculture and market gardening, this city underwent a strong process of industrialization at the turn of the twentieth century, welcoming a great number of workers and immigrants, a population which today still constitutes the demographic core of Nanterre. As a result, Nanterre is the site of huge contrasts: a communist enclave for the past seventy years in a district mainly dominated by the right wing (les Hauts-de-Seine); a municipal territory, but mainly under the sovereignty of the state and planned by the EPAD; an area marked by poverty adjacent to the richest one in France; a forgotten 'back office' in the shadows of the crystalline skyscrapers of La Défense; an urban chaos, but geometrically anchored in the prolongation of the historical Grand Axe of Paris (beginning at the Palais du Louvre and connecting the Place de la Concorde, the Arc de Triomphe and La Grande Arche de Spreckelsen). [fig. 1]

The history of La Défense Zone B during the second half of the twentieth century gives a very clear - and even caricatural - illustration not only of the urban and architectural consequences of the French welfare state - both positive and negative - but also of its crisis, which emerged in the 1970s and influenced the development of other types of urban governance and planning. Therefore, Zone B offers a relevant terrain for analysing relationships between the political and architectural aspects of this history since the end of World War II. Indeed, this case study suggests a rather unexpected double assumption: while French architecture of the 1950s and 1960s is generally considered by architectural history as pompous, authoritarian and subjected to power, here it can appear incredibly free, inventive and experimental. Conversely, architecture, known as 'urban' starting in the late 1970s, was considered to be committed, democratic, even critical, and led to more stereotypical, sometimes rigid and aesthetically impoverished, forms.

La Défense and the state as planner

The urban doctrines of the French welfare state, which were structured and put in place during the war and just into the postwar years, opened a new chapter in the history of French planning, namely the state's take-over of the field of housing and town planning after a period during which municipal approaches balanced its centralizing tendencies. This phenomenon was emphasized by two key moments. It began to gestate under the Vichy government and came to fruition in 1944 through

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the creation of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism (MRU) and its Board of Urbanism (Direction Générale à l'Urbanisme, l'Habitat et la Construction, DGUHC), which was changed in 1949 by Eugène Claudius-Petit to the Board of Planning (Direction à l'Aménagement du Territoire, DAT).

With the same logic, the Service d'Aménagement de la Région Parisienne (SARP), which as of 1941 included the technical services of the Seine District, fell under the supervision of the MRU in 1944. André Prothin, head of the DGUHC and later the DAT until 1958, and Pierre Gibel, head of the SARP, became key actors of state urbanism in general and the planning of the area of La Défense in particular. In response to the first state decision in 1946 to establish a universal exhibition there, numerous studies were conducted and countless plans drawn up for the sector, until an initial master plan was adopted in October 1956, called 'plan-directeur'. The creation of the EPAD in 1958 was mainly the product of the work undertaken during the previous decade under the authority of Gibel and Prothin. The appointment of the latter as the first director of this public office could be viewed as a sign of continuity.

Nevertheless, Prothin's forced departure from the DAT, over which he had reigned for fifteen years, illustrated another step in the process at hand, which historian Isabelle Couzon described as being 'the eclipse of the MRU urbanists to the benefit of the Ponts-et-Chaussées civil engineers, gradually dominating the array of urban issues from the mid-1950s'.[3] The nomination of Pierre Sudreau as Minister of Construction at the turn of the Fifth Republic exemplified this renewal not only of the elites but also of the doctrines. The head urbanists of the MRU, stemming for the greater part from the Seine district, aimed for decentralization and Malthusian control of urbanization (especially in the case of the Paris metropolitan area). This ideology was reflected in the general organization and development plan (PADOG) of the Paris region (1960), itself the outcome of studies conducted by the SARP for the revision of the Paris Regional Plan (Plan d'Aménagement de la Région Parisienne, PARP).

The Ponts-et-Chaussées engineers, strongly represented in the Direction de la Construction of the same ministry, defended a more centralized and technocratic practice of planning and a metropolis model as a system of urban centres, connected and strengthened by infrastructures. This model triumphed over the next Regional Plan of Paris (Schéma d'Aménagement et d'urbanisme de la Région Parisienne, SDAURP) in 1965, driven by Paul Delouvrier. In this respect, the operation of La Défense must be seen as a compromise, a hybrid product of the political and doctrinal evolution of state planning, aimed at decongesting the business district of central Paris without completely decentralizing it, while maintaining a direct relationship with the centre of the capital city by means of the historical axis.

In 1958, after decades of projects, plans and procrastination, the real beginning of the La Défense operation coincided precisely with a change of regime: the advent of the Fifth Republic, which strengthened the executive power in general and presidential power in particular, and defined the institutional conditions of the French welfare state. Even though it had been in gestation since 1956,[4] the EPAD was only created in late summer of 1958[5] with the aim of planning the future of the La Défense region - a broad operational area of 750 hectares that annexed some of the territory belonging to three municipalities: Nanterre, Courbevoie and Puteaux. Reconfiguring the governance of this area, the EPAD gave weight to the central state that it previously did not have there. The board of the EPAD, which first met on 2 March 1959, and where the three municipalities accounted for only three out of the sixteen votes, was clearly dominated by the state, in particular its Ministry of Construction, led

Fig. 1

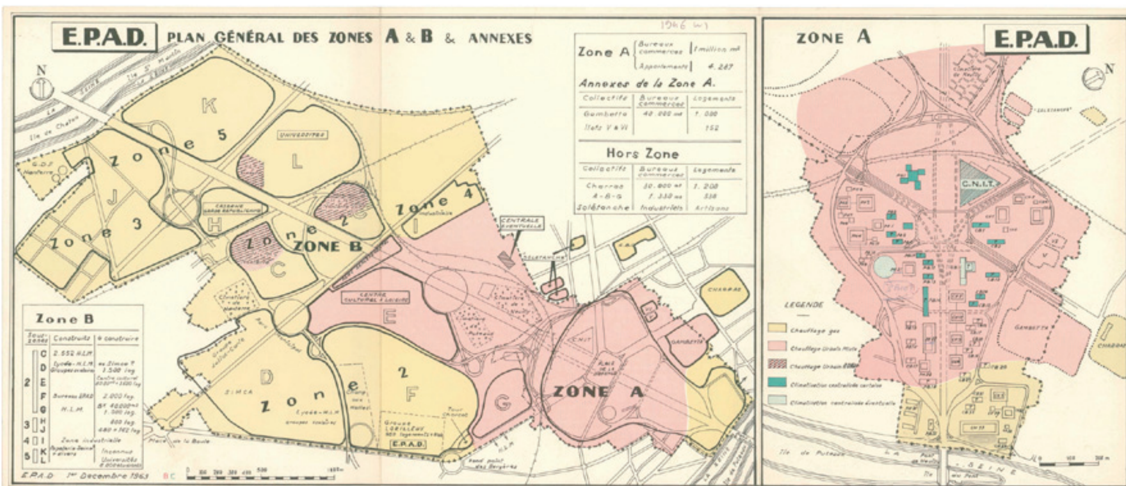

Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Aerial view of the Zone B of La Défense in 1974, looking east (Archives EPAD). The 'Grand Axe' successively crosses the social housing estates built in the mid 1950s, the Zone A with the CNIT and the first skyscrapers of the business district and, in the background, the centre of Paris with the Eiffel Tower to the right.
Fig. 2: EPAD, 'Plan général des zones A & B & annexes', 1 December 1963 (Archives EPAD).

by Pierre Sudreau between 1958 and 1962. The first Zone A master plan was adopted in December 1964. [fig. 2]

Grand Axe: space, time and symbols

The creation of the EPAD coincided with the advent of the Fifth Republic in France and the return of General De Gaulle as head of state. Nicknamed the 'Président bâtisseur'[6] by Pierre Sudreau, De Gaulle benefited from a period of exceptional economic prosperity, the famous 'Trente Glorieuses' as coined by Jean Fourastié.[7] Faced with the pressing need to develop French cities and regional areas, De Gaulle himself embodied the triumphant image of the welfare state, as a dominant actor of urban planning, armed with a powerful, voluntarist and technocratic administration, an image that would also cause his political fall after 1968. This regal posture of state power was illustrated, for example, by the mark De Gaulle, as well as others before and after him, left on the historic and symbolic Grand Axe of the capital city. First drawn by André Le Nôtre, Louis XIV's head gardener, for the purpose of organizing the gardens of the Tuileries Palace, this symmetrical axis was projected (in every sense of the term) towards the western horizon of Paris. Both spatial and temporal, this axis followed the chronology of the history of France.[8] Each political regime, whether monarchical or republican, developed projects that were acts of affirmation or confirmation of the axis, not only as a physical form but also as a symbolic space on a national scale, akin to what Pierre Nora would call a 'place of memory'.[9]

De Gaulle, who marched along this axis as a liberator on 26 August 1944, projected a strong vision for each horizon of this perspective. On the western side, one could cite, for example, the unbuilt Government Palace drawn in 1965 by the architect Henry Bernard on the site of the former Palais des Tuileries (demolished in 1871 after the Paris Commune). On the eastern side, the Grand Axe leads to and crosses the monumental business district of La Défense, planned in Zone A of the EPAD.

Evidently, the axis is 'historical', not because of its timelessness or because it conveys the illusion that it has always existed, but, on the contrary, because of its historicity, because it reflects the singularity of each of the eras it passed through, and mirrors what each period of history had projected onto it: simple 'perspective' for the King's approval in the seventeenth century, it became a 'route royale' in the eighteenth century to give him easy access to his hunting grounds at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. At the turn of the twentieth century it was called 'Voie (or Liaison) Paris-Saint-Germain', since it was associated with a proposed road and rail infrastructure, and then 'Voie Triomphale' when it served to commemorate the 1918 victory; it became an 'Axe', first 'Grand' and then 'Historique', when it embodied the tools, ideals and interests of postwar planners.

As for La Défense, the axis - as geometric and urban potentiality - was both the cause and the effect of all projects: the cause because the very possibility of its extension distinguished this site from others and gave it a particular value, from symbolic and real-estate points of view; the effect because the axis was a favoured composition tool of French urbanism - still called 'art urbain' - the first practitioners of which were predominantly architects or landscape architects. Often symmetrical and always strongly axial, the projects for the competition organized by Leonard Rosenthal in 1930 to plan the Porte Maillot[10] and for the 'Concours pour l'aménagement de la voie triomphale allant de la place de l'Étoile au rond-point de La Défense' organized by the City of Paris in 1931,[11] reflected a design culture rooted in the Beaux-Arts tradition and transposed from an architectural to an urban scale. Julien Guadet, professor of architectural theory at the ENSBA, reiterated to his students: 'The axis is the key of the drawing and will be that of the composition.' Two of the consultant-architects appointed in

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 3: 'L'axe historique de Paris', analysis document published in the brief of the last competition for 'Tête-Défense', Novembre 1981 (Archives EPAD).

Fig. 4: Aerial view of the Zone B1 in 1973, looking east. In the foreground, to the right, the Préfecture des Hauts-de-Seine built by André Wogenscky (Archives EPAD).

1950 by Eugène Claudius-Petit to plan La Défense area were former Grand Prix de Rome winners Robert Camelot (second in 1933) and Bernard Zehrfuss (first in 1939). Even if their architectural vocabulary was modernist or even futuristic, their urban planning tools remained in the tradition of the Beaux-Arts composition (perspective, symmetry, hierarchy, balance, counterpoint, etc.). The compositional virtuosity of these architects, often criticized for its formalism, naturally found in this Grand Axe an immensely interesting design challenge.[12] [fig. 3]

Grand Axe: solution or problem? The case of Zone B

However, the axis form raises other problems that allow us to introduce the special case of Nanterre and Zone B. In the collective imagination, the axis is defined as a radial line that begins at the hypercentre of Paris and projects towards the periphery of not only the Paris region, but even of the national territory itself. A geometrical metaphor of a 'top-down' power, the axis postulates a latent, linear hierarchy between what is near to the centre and what is far away, and, in the case of La Défense, between Zone A and Zone B. Mainly located in Nanterre, the latter were often subjected to this radial hierarchy and have been thought of as subordinate, i.e. a land resource in the service of the great design of La Défense.

We could say that in Nanterre the diachronic movement of the Grand Axe's physical inscription on the territory met with problems caused by the axis itself. The Grand Axe has accompanied urban growth and until the first half of the twentieth century it had been a prime vector for urbanizing relatively available areas. From the postwar period onward, things were reversed. Initially a resource, this axial logic became a problem. Caught up and overtaken by urbanization, the axis then encountered areas already heavily populated. The massive and authoritarian expropriations carried out by the state, which took up much of the energy of the EPAD in its beginnings, merely pushed the problem further out, into Nanterre, to which the dispossessed people had mainly been relocated. The vast linear land reserve, which the EPAD set aside in Nanterre to build the future A14 western motorway exit from Paris in the extension of the Grand Axe, started to be filled up with heterogeneous urbanizing projects: from huge, insular and underequipped social housing estates to the informal development of large shanty towns inhabited by immigrant populations coming from North Africa or Portugal.[13]

Regardless of the projects planned by the SARP since 1950, among which an area reserved for temporary or permanent exhibitions on the plain of Nanterre, the state, exploiting large land reserves or prospects, implemented a number of operations there without any real coordination. As part of the reconstruction policy, it decided in 1953 to build more than 2,500 social housing units under the direction of Robert Camelot, Jean de Mailly and Bernard Zehrfuss, divided into three estates delivered between 1958 and 1960. In November 1963, the foundation stone of the annex of the Sorbonne was laid, the future University Paris X-Nanterre, extending over an area of thirty hectares of former Air Force land. The first students moved into the premises in the autumn of 1964.

André Malraux, De Gaulle's Minister of Cultural Affairs, obtained the approval to build a large cultural complex in Nanterre along the Grand Axe (and the future A14 motorway then expected to be a viaduct) that would be connected to the future RER station.[14] In January 1964, he commissioned Le Corbusier to design this project, including three art schools (architecture, film and television, and music) and the Museum of the Twentieth Century[15] for which the architect proposed a new version of his 'Musée à croissance illimitée'.[16] In November 1964, after the administrative reform of the Ile-de-France region,[17] the state added to this operation the new administrative centre of the new district of the

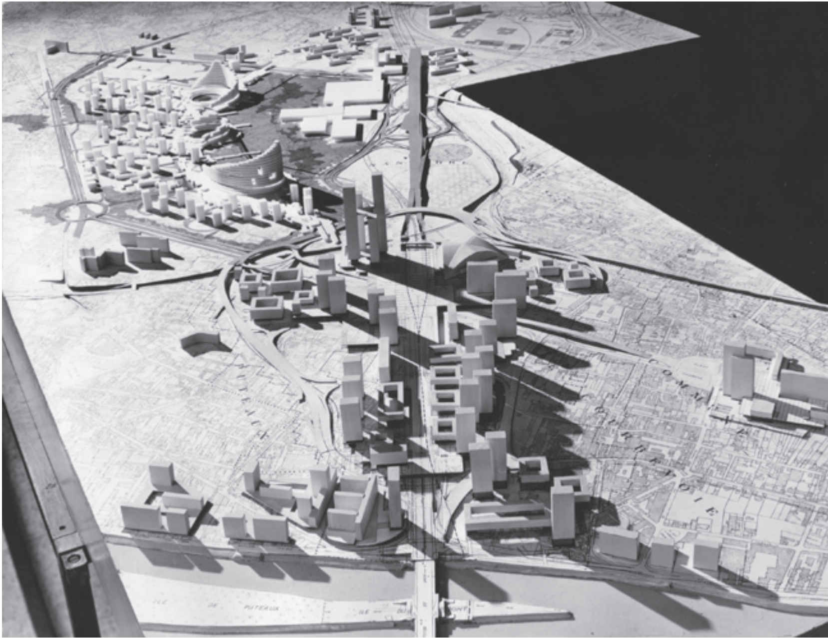

Fig. 5

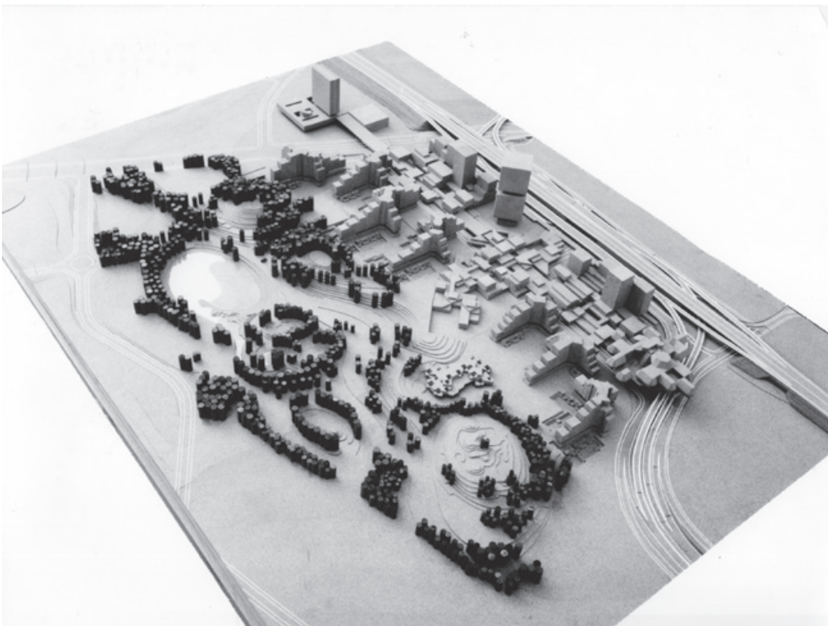

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Photo of a model showing in the background André Remondet's Zone B1 project (from: 'Aménagement de la région de la Défense 2', *Techniques et architecture*, 29/1, February 1968).
Fig. 6: Photo of a model of the Zone B1 urban centre planned by the Atelier Zone B, june 1972 (Archives EPAD).

Hauts-de-Seine.[18] Dated 29 June 1965 (two months before his accidental death), a sketch signed by Le Corbusier[19] - probably one of his last drawings - showed the principles of his project, subsequently taken up and amended by André Wogenscky, one of his close collaborators: flat volumes extending horizontally, suspended on stilts, and developing along the axis. Its roof would form a pedestrian platform connected to that of La Défense. Suspended at 9.50 m above the denied real ground. Plugged into the abstract highway, the project reflected how little consideration Le Corbusier had for this site, or rather his conviction that it was not good. In fact, he had never stopped trying to convince Malraux to relocate the project elsewhere in central Paris.[20] The 'University of the Arts' project, as redesigned by Wogenscky, prevailed until the late 1960s in the master plans of the EPAD, even though the Prefecture building of 1972 would be the only part actually constructed.[21] [fig. 4]

1964-69: First global visions

In 1968, the Situationists were very critical of what resulted from these erratic public operations: 'Onto "grands ensembles" [housing schemes] and slums that were complementary, urbanism of isolation had grafted a university, as a microcosm of general conditions of oppression, like the spirit of a world without spirit.'[22] This statement is paradoxically similar to that made by André Prothin himself in 1964: 'The few fragmented operations that one can find were carried out according to the most pressing needs expressed either by local collectivities or by the government. In short, this vast land, more or less equipped, gradually transformed itself into a large, heterogeneous, underequipped and rather incoherent subdivision.'[23]

The architect André Remondet was then commissioned by the EPAD to elaborate a master plan for Zone B, subdivided into three subzones (B1, B2, B3),[24] following a laconic 'schéma de structure' conceived in June 1965 by the Institut d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme de la Région Parisienne (IAURP). The project was first published in 1967,[25] at a time when the EPAD had some difficulties to develop Zone A on the basis of the too rigid and overdesigned 1964 master plan.[26] [fig. 5]

This chief architect of civil buildings and national palaces, and winner of the Premier Grand Prix de Rome in 1936, projected a bold vision of the neighbourhood, organized into programmatic strips extending from east to west: first, a property dedicated to the famous Tour Lumière-Cybernétique, a monumental and 'spatiodynamic' building, 347 metres high, designed by the architect and artist Nicolas Schöffer;[27] second, the motorway as a megastructure (with parking below); third, Wogenscky's project, presented as an 'intellectual Versailles';[28] fourth, a large public park of 45 hectares (on the unbuildable zone of the old quarries); fifth, facing the park and in the foothills of Mont Valérien, amazing crater buildings, 10 to 40 storeys high, emerging from a platform extending that of Zone A; and finally behind this colossal inhabited wall, a 'forest' of fifty social housing towers scattered in 'green' spaces.

Envisioning a large homogenous architectural landscape, this first master plan for the entire area was characterized both by optimism, authoritarianism and a kind of generosity. Vigorously making a radical tabula rasa of the existing site, its objectives were only partly achieved. Actually, by the 1970s, the Fifth Republic took on another profile. May 1968 and the political retirement and the death of General de Gaulle were French symptoms of the progressive disengagement of welfare states in Europe. Within the executive staff of the EPAD, André Prothin and Georges Hutin, who respectively directed and chaired the institution from the outset, were succeeded in 1969 by Jean Millier. Representing a new, more pragmatic generation of senior officials, he embodied the deregulation of the business district master plan to adapt it to

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 7: Perspective by Rémi Masson, member of the Atelier Zone B, showing Jacques Kalisz's Sphinx buildings facing the Parc André Malraux, winter 1972 (Archives EPAD).
Fig. 8: Ricardo Bofill's unbuilt proposition to the EPAD for developing the Grand Axe in Nanterre, 1974 (Archives EPAD).

the international real-estate market. He first broke with the rigid principles of the original composition of Zone A (identical towers, limited to a height of 100 m). He obtained from the state not only a quantitative revision of building envelopes (the programme increased between 1969 and 1971 from 800,000 to 1,500,000 m2 of offices buildings), but also a greater openness to the actions of private developers.[29]

1969-78: Crisis and the 'architecture urbaine' experiments

However, Jean Millier, who later chaired the French Institute of Architecture (1988-97), also introduced a new generation of architects into the EPAD's operations, at a time when the French architectural milieu experienced a radical doctrinal turn. In 1969, Millier set up the Atelier Zone B. This architectural team was responsible for the revision of the Zone B master plan and included personalities such as Jacques Kalisz and Adrien Fainsilber,[30] who were acutely aware of the failure of the state's architectural modernism, and who in the early 1970s explored design alternatives that broke with the normative monotony and the productivist seriality much decried in the postwar mass housing operations. The atelier's research focused either on project methodologies, on purely geometrical experimentations, or even on psycho-sociological analyses of perception. These efforts were brought together under a common label: 'l'architecture urbaine' [urban architecture]. The French magazine Techniques & Architecture dedicated two special issues to this matter,[31] publishing, in particular, texts and projects by Fainsilber and Kalisz, talking about 'an architecture of relationships and communication', as a means of 'taming the excesses'.[32]

The Atelier Zone B conserved three elements from the previous master plan: Wogenscky's Prefecture project, begun in 1968 and completed in 1972,[33] the public park (eventually designed in a neo-picturesque manner by Jacques Sgard in 1971 and inaugurated in 1976), and part of the 'forest' of residential towers (built by Emile Aillaud between 1972 and 1978). But they incorporated them in a totally new master plan, called the 'organic scheme',[34] which prefigured the plan (plan d'aménagement de zone, PAZ) for the Zone d'aménagement concertée (ZAC) B1, created in December 1972. [fig. 6]

Adopted in 1973, this plan reflected the doctrines of these architects and defined the new urban centre 'not as a whole building but as a set of functions and activities grouped around small squares or pedestrian streets at different levels'.[35] They substituted the abstract geometry of Le Corbusier's 'University of the Arts' with a linear and complex urban centre that proposed a resolutely labyrinthine urban landscape, while retaining the principle of a pedestrian deck platform. Called the 'Axe urbain' (urban axis), this proliferating cluster would unfold from east to west, according to a 45-degree pattern, intended to create the qualities of intricacy, complexity, polycentrality and flexibility of traditional cityscapes. An office complex was planned on the northern side of this axis, whose form was supposed to be revised to adapt to the real-estate market. On the southern side, Jacques Kalisz designed impressive 'Sphinx buildings'[36] rising to 17 storeys and housing more than 2,500 units, five of which were actually built between 1974 and 1977. He also designed a School of Architecture. A remnant of André Malraux's programme, this steel-framed architectural environment, organized by a modular and organic pattern, was, along with the Wogenscky's Prefecture, one of the first buildings erected in Zone B1.[37] [fig. 7]

The 1973 oil crisis and its repercussions on the real-estate market undermined this optimistic architectural imagery of the 'Trente glorieuses' and launched a new era in the history of La Défense. In the case of Zone B, one sign marking this change was the EPAD's commissioning of Ricardo Bofill and the Taller de Arquitectura with a series of projects for the urban centre of Zone B1. One of them was

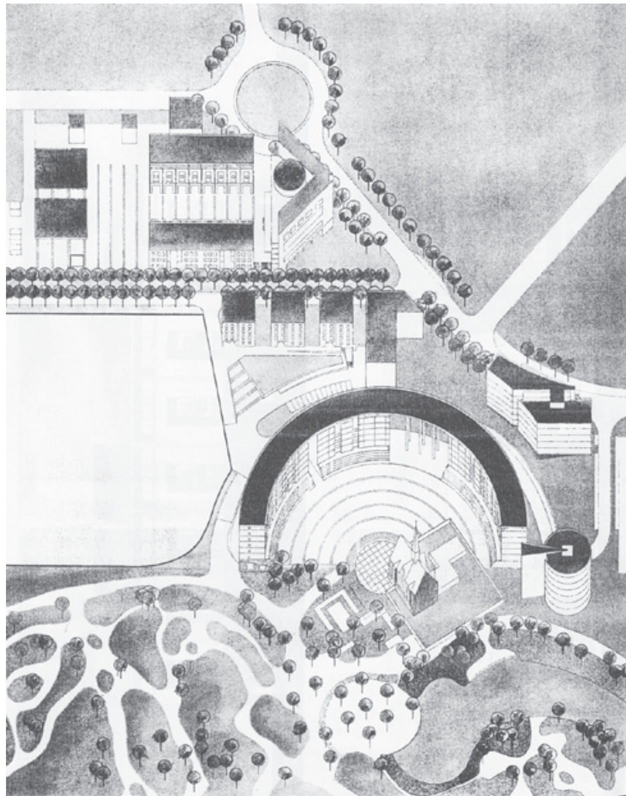

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 9: Jean-Paul Viguier and Jean-François Jodry's winning project for the competition 'Ilôt Chapelle', October 1986 (Archives EPAD). The purpose of this consultation, organized by the EPAD, was to design the south urban centre of the Zone B1.
Fig. 10: Photo of a model of the Zone B1, showing (in white) new projects for the Point M RER station, not dated [ca. 1987] (Archives EPAD).

the Forum Blanc project (1973), east of the RER station, which proposed a monumental and grandiose office building, inspired by ancient Roman architecture, breaking radically with the projects of the Atelier Zone B. The Point M project (1974) proposed a multifunctional complex to the right of the RER station, inspired, especially in its second version, by the formal rhetoric of French Neoclassicism (colonnades, Platonic geometrical forms, etc.). Transgressing the commission, this unbuilt vision of Bofill emphatically reconfigured the Grand Axe landscape from the Pont de Neuilly to the Seine river banks in Nanterre. It also illustrated the paradox of a politically weak but architecturally strong urbanism. Bofill understood the situation very well: ‘The programme was formalized in a weak and unclear way, so it should give the project a “voluntarist” unity of perception.’[38] [fig. 8]

1979-91: Postmodernism and the advent of the ‘projet urbain’

Despite the strong boost in real estate from the late 1970s, the increased political instability of the state and the gradual decentralization of its powers were illustrated by the EPAD’s history, not only by the rapid renewal of its chiefs (six directors and six presidents from 1976 to the late twentieth century), but also by the increasingly difficult negotiations with the city of Nanterre, reinforced in 1981 by the election of the first president from the Left, François Mitterrand. Ultimately, in December 2000, this new shift in the balance of power would lead to the creation of a completely new Etablissement Public d’Aménagement (EPASA), enabling Nanterre to regain its territorial sovereignty. The creation of EPASA, however, was preceded by a series of revisions of the 1973 Zone B1 master plan.[39] A first revision took place in February 1982, based on a new site plan designed by Jean Darras (1980-81), which followed a study that was conducted by Claude Vasconi & Radu Vincenz and commissioned by Jean-Paul Lacaze (EPAD Director, 1979-83). In October 1985, a second revision was made on the basis of a study by Bensimon-Simoni architects (within the framework of the Atelier Zone B, October-November 1984) under the mandate of Jean Deschamps (EPAD Director, 1984-86).

Two common features characterize this rapid and varied succession of plans. First, the return to a composition of urban blocks at street level and traditional public spaces (streets, squares, etc.), in conformity with the ‘urban turn’ that characterized the post-1968 generation of architects and urban planners.[40] Second, the re-orientation of the whole area around a transversal north-south axis, perpendicular to the Grand Axe, in order to create a dialogue between the various programmatic layers (offices, homes, services, park, homes), and also to translate Nanterre’s greater involvement in the decision-making process into the urban form.

Within the framework of the 1985 master plan, this area took its final form particularly with the double competition in June 1986 for the north and south ends of the transversal axis. The two winners, Jean-Paul Viguier (associated with Jean-François Jodry) and Christian de Portzamparc, respectively, were the perfect representatives of this new notion of the ‘projet urbain’, which, in opposition to modernist and technocratic postwar urbanism (especially the slab urbanism), revived the urban composition and advocated a somewhat formalistic and typically postmodern architectural eclecticism. [fig. 9]

Observing the urbanization of Zone B actually shows a parallelism between the gradual deconstruction of the French welfare state and a kind of postmodernization of urban and architectural doctrines in France that was characterized not only by a somewhat mannerist persistence of the modernist vocabulary (very clear in Portzamparc’s architecture), but also by a radical return to a block urbanism. But most of all, because it was no longer fed by a strong political vision and support, this architecture without ideology was more akin to an

'architecture for architecture's sake', an architecture that Rem Koolhaas would later criticize as having endorsed 'a drastic erosion of its powers, a gradual dismantling of its ambition'.[41] [fig. 10]

Conclusion

Zone B1, which looked like a lunar landscape in the early 1970s, an almost virginal wasteland, was urbanized step-by-step, following the vicissitudes not only of political history but also of the history of architectural and urban doctrines. Each stage of this double history has left traces of never completed designs in the territory. Wogenscky's modernist tower and Sgard's neo-picturesque park co-exist along with Emile Aillaud's cloud towers and Kalisz's Sphinxes, but the pedestrian platform was never built to connect them. The urban block composition of the 1980s, intended to repair this urban chaos, finally failed to give it coherence.

There is something paradoxical about the history of La Défense's Zone B: a kind of contradiction (or non-symmetry) between political governance and urban and architectural intentions. In periods characterized by the strong dominance of the EPAD, which is to say of the central state, the projects for the area were ambitious and even authoritarian, but very experimental from a formal point of view (from the organic forms of Remondet to the cybernetic bristling of Schöffer's tower passing by the geometric abstraction of Le Corbusier's cultural complex or Kalisz's proliferating structures). However, from the late 1970s, this territory entered a radically different period of its history. The progressive deconstruction of European welfare states reflects the increasing complexity of modern democratic life: ideological tensions, a new balance between economy and politics, conflicts between local, national and global scales, a strong demand for decentralization, bottom-up processes, etc. While the number of private and public actors in urban planning was increasing, although none of them enjoyed a clear leadership position, the Zone B master plan, while highly debated and redesigned by several and varied architects, progressively stabilized itself into a fairly rigid urban form, made of regular and often closed blocks, symmetrical public spaces and monuments, a domesticated form organized by axial logics. Indeed, it submitted itself to the Grand Axe, preparing its extension, despite long delays, into the territory of Nanterre. It seemed that the axis, as an expression of central power, became more strongly formalized in the territory as this power grew weaker, relativized by other scales of public governance (municipality, district, region, etc.) and by the predominance of private actors.

Notes

1. For a general history of La Défense operation, see: Bénédicte Lauras, *Genèse et étapes de l'opération urbaine de La Défense*, PhD dissertation, Université Paris X Nanterre, 1973; Danièle Voldman, 'La lente genèse du "Paris de demain"', in *Paris La Défense: Métropole européenne des affaires*, ed. by Félix Torres (Paris: Cofer/Le Moniteur, 1989), pp. 17-26; Danièle Voldman, 'La genèse', in *La Défense: L'Avant-garde en miroir*, ed. by Jean-Claude Béhar (Paris: *Autrement*, 7, 1992), pp. 22-35; Virginie Picon-Lefebvre, *Paris-Ville Moderne: Maine-Montparnasse et La Défense, 1950-1975* (Paris: Norma, 2003); *La Défense, Un dictionnaire. Architecture / Politique*, ed. by Pierre Chabard and Virginie Picon-Lefebvre (Marseille: Parenthèses, 2012), to be published.
2. The professional trajectory of Albin Chalandon was a good example of this confusion between public and private elites. As De Gaulle's Minister of Building and Housing (1968-72), and Member of Parliament for the Hauts-de-Seine district (1973-76), he was a key actor in the real-estate deregulation of the La Défense area at the end of the 1960s. He then became director of Elf-Aquitaine (1977-83), one of the largest French industrial groups, which occupied one of the highest skyscrapers at La Défense.
3. Isabelle Couzon, 'La place de la ville dans le discours des aménageurs, du début des années 1920 à la fin

des années 1960', in *Cybergeo. European journal of geography*, document 'aménagement et urbanisme', 37, 20 November 1997, p. 17, < http://www.cybergeo.eu/index1979.html > [accessed winter 2011].

4. See Bénédicte Lauras, *Genèse et étapes de l'opération urbaine de La Défense*, p. 370ff.
5. Décret no. 58-815, 9 September 1958.
6. Cf. 'Le général de Gaulle, un président bâtisseur (entretien du 2 juillet 1996 avec Pierre Sudreau)', in *Pratiques architecturales et enjeux politiques, France 1945-1995*, ed. by Jean-Yves Andrieux, Frédéric Seitz (Paris: Picard, 2000), p. 46.
7. Jean Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).
8. Cf. Pierre Pinon, 'L'axe majeur d'une capitale', in *Les traversées de Paris: deux siècles de révolutions dans la ville* (Paris: le Moniteur, 1989), pp. 129-99; *La perspective de La Défense dans l'art et l'histoire*, ed. by Georges Weill (Nanterre: Archives départementales des Hauts-de-Seine, 1983).
9. Cf. Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-92).
10. Cf. Jean-Louis Cohen, 'La porte Maillot ou le triomphe de la voirie', in Pierre Pinon, *La Traversées de Paris*, pp. 180-2.
11. Cf. 'Concours pour l'aménagement d'une voie triomphale de l'Étoile au rond-point de La Défense', *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 4 (1932), pp. 62-72.
12. For an analysis of these projects, see: Virginie Picon-Lefebvre, *Paris-Ville Moderne*, pp. 161-7 and 184-195.
13. Serge Santelli, 'Des bidonvilles à Nanterre', in Pierre Pinon, *Les Traversées de Paris*, p. 187.
14. Réseau Express Régional (RER) is the name for the regional subway system in the Paris region.
15. The museographical programme of this huge institution (65000 m2) was set up by Jean Cassou, Bernard Dorival and Maurice Besset, then curator of the Musée national d'art moderne. Cf. Dominique Amouroux, 'Le ministre, l'architecture et le musée du XXe siècle', in *André Malraux et l'architecture*, ed. by Dominique Hervier (Paris: Le Moniteur, 2008) p. 145.
16. Cf. Gilles Ragot and Mathilde Dion, *Le Corbusier en France* (Paris: Le Moniteur, 1997), p. 398.
17. The Décret of 10 July 1964 subdivided the Île-de-France region into six districts, each administrated by a Prefecture and a Conseil Général. Prefectures of the Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne districts were built, respectively, in Nanterre (arch.: André Wogenscky), Bobigny (arch.: Michel Folliasson) and Créteil (arch.: Daniel Badani), in the early 1970s.
18. Letter from Max Querrien to Le Corbusier, 9 November 1964 (Archives Fondation Le Corbusier).
19. This drawing was published in his *Œuvre complète 1965-69* (Zurich: Boesiger/Artemis, 1970), p. 163.
20. Cf. B. Hérold, 'L'initiative d'André Malraux: un projet, des hommes, un lieu', in *La Préfecture des Hauts-de-Seine: André Wogenscky, une architecture des années 1970* (Paris: Somogy, 2006), pp. 17-8.
21. The ultimate absence of financial resources and much criticism against the choice of site finally led to the abandonment of the plan. Later, the programme of the 'Musée du XXe siècle' became a part of the Centre Georges Pompidou project (cf. Dominique Amouroux, 'Le ministre, l'architecture et le musée du XXe siècle' and François Loyer, François, 'L'architecture française au début de la Cinquième République', in *André Malraux et l'architecture*, pp. 131-53 and pp. 14-36, respectively).
22. René Viénet, Guy Debord, et al., *Enragés et Situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 30.
23. André Prothin, 'L'intervention de l'établissement public pour l'aménagement de la région de La Défense', *Urbanisme*, 82-83 (1964), p. 101.
24. Zone B1 corresponded to the area around the RER Station Point M (now Nanterre-Préfecture); Zone B2 to the sector of the Prefecture and the three 1957-58 housing estates; Zone B3 to the extreme part of Zone B, between the Paris-Saint-Germain-en-Laye railway line and the Seine river.
25. Cf. 'Paris dans 20 ans', *Paris Match*, 952 (8 July 1967), pp. 52-53; 'Zone B', *Techniques & Architecture*, (February 1968), pp. 117-24.
26. With its 100-metre-high, strictly uniform buildings, this plan hardly convinced private developers and firms seeking greater architectural distinction.

27. This project, to which the EPAD had attributed other locations before (inside Zone A), was a highlight in the famous issue of *Paris Match*, 952, 1967 on ‘Paris dans 20 ans’, pp. 39 and 50-1).
28. Ibid, p. 53.
29. Cf. Virginie Picon-Lefebvre, *Paris-Ville Moderne*, pp.174-5.
30. Atelier Zone B included architects Claude Schmidlin, Adrien Fainsilber, Jacques Kalisz, Henri Robert-Charrue, Xenia Grisogono, Rémi Masson and Guy Riboulet.
31. Cf. *Techniques & Architecture*, 306 (October 1975) and 307 (January 1976).
32. *Techniques & Architecture*, 307, pp. 37 and 43.
33. Cf. ‘Préfecture des Hauts-de-Seine’, in *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui*, 135 (December 1967-January 1968).
34. EPAD, *La Défense Zone B. Schéma organique*, (December 1969).
35. Adrien Fainsilber, ‘l’Axe urbain du Point “M”’, *Neuf*, 40 (November-December 1972), p. 20.
36. The first occurrence of this metaphor was in Marcel Cornu, ‘Habiter La Défense’, *Urbanisme*, 189 (1982), p. 104.
37. Cf. ‘École d’architecture de Nanterre’, *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui*, 160 (March-April 1972), p. 80.
38. Cf. *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui*, 182 (November-December 1975), p. 88.
39. For an analysis of these successive plans, see: Loïc Josse, Olivier Boissonnet, *ZAC B1, étude historique et architecturale*, (Paris: EPAD report, December 1986).
40. Cf. Jean Castex, Jean-Charles Depaule, Philippe Panerai, *Formes urbaines: de l’îlot à la barre* (Paris: Dunod, 1977).
41. Rem Koolhaas, *S,M,L,XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), p. 47.

Biography

Pierre Chabard, architect, historian and critic, took a PhD in urban history from the University of Paris VIII (2008). Lecturer at several institutions in Paris (EHESS, ESA, ENSAPB, ENSAPLV), he is a professor in architectural history and theory at the School of Architecture of Marne-la-Vallée (Université Paris-Est) and leads the research team ‘Observatory of the suburban condition’. He is a founding editor of the architectural review *Criticat* (www.criticat.fr).

Review Article

The Odd One Out? Revisiting the Belgian Welfare State

Cor Wagenaar

Why is it that Belgium is often seen as the odd one out, the country where practically everything is dealt with in slightly different ways than in the rest of Europe? And what makes foreigners think that these ways are not only out of sync, but also less efficient than they might be? Of course, the country's curious make-up of two semi-autonomous parts with their own language and culture, with Brussels acting as a universe in its own right, does not help much. Moreover, the Belgians themselves tend to cultivate their special status, even if this results in statements like that of the famous architect Renaat Braem, who, in 1968, claimed that Belgium was 'the ugliest country in the world'. And so, Belgium's special properties appear to have become something like a gimmick its inhabitants tend to cherish.

In a way, this gimmick figures quite prominently in Michael Ryckewaert's recent publication on the transformation of the nation into a full-blown, modern welfare state in the years between 1945 and 1973: Building the Economic Backbone of the Belgian Welfare State. Infrastructure, planning and architecture 1945-1973. The dates are no coincidence: though liberated in 1944, the reconstruction years started only after the defeat of the Germans, and in 1973 the infamous oil crisis virtually wrecked the premises on which the welfare state had been built - not only in Belgium, but everywhere in the Western world. From the very first pages, Ryckewaert paints a picture of a process that perfectly reflects what had been going on in the neighbouring countries as well, but he also makes clear right from the start that actual processes at stake followed an inner logic of their own, one that is, obviously, typically Belgian.

By implication, the spatial qualities of the welfare state, the topic of Ryckewaert's book, also show peculiarities that are characteristic of the country that produced them. Some of these are quite striking: the virtual absence of public housing and the dominance of privately owned (and often privately built) single family houses, the way these houses fan out over the countryside, the lack of integrated neighbourhood centres that concentrate all provisions needed for everyday life - all these features set Belgium apart from its neighbours. Ryckewaert maintains that the widespread use of the industrial park is also typical of the Belgian welfare state. Inspired by British and American examples, these parks were well planned. Both the low-density sprawl and the industrial parks depend heavily on the use of the car, which was accommodated by the construction of a network of unusually spacious motorways (which, another quality often viewed as typically Belgian, are exceptionally well lit at night).

How to explain the characteristics of the Belgian welfare state? Ryckewaert goes at great lengths to outline some of the tools that might assist him in finding the right answers. He refers to the 'regulation theory', a characteristically French approach to economic planning, as a model that explains the reconstruction of the economy after each crisis, and mentions periods allegedly epitomized by a

'coherent spatial economic development mode'. By far the best decision he then took, however, is to discard these instruments, since, as he more or less ruefully concedes, they did not seem to work. And so his study turned out to be a historical survey in which some of the usual historical qualities seem to be lacking: only few of the trends and tendencies he outlines are related to the mindsets of the people responsible for them. The book contains no lengthy biographies, nor excursions into the peculiar processes of policy-making. Instead, the author focuses on precisely those aspects he put forward in the title: infrastructure, planning and architecture, all of them presented, in the first instance, as phenomena that just simply happened, and only then defined as developments that need to be explained. For once, this approach appears to work quite well; reading between the lines one is led to believe that it saved the author from drowning in a swamp of political intricacies that would have been inexplicable to foreign readers, while probably not very helpful in explaining the situation.

Building the Economic Backbone of the Belgian Welfare State. Infrastructure, planning and architecture 1945-1973 explains how the spatial reconstruction of Belgium contributed to the construction of the welfare state, a by now historical social model so well known that he refrains from elucidating what exactly it entailed. This may well be one of the very few aspects open to criticism. The welfare state, whatever its local characteristics, was essentially a collective model, the essence of which was that it opened the consumer products market to the masses of the working classes, who, only a few decades before, had not even dared to dream that they would be given a fair share of the pie. Everything was geared to the needs of what, in the Anglo-Saxon world, became known as the 'common man' or the 'man in the street'. The welfare state had decidedly collectivist traits, culminating in the provision of social security networks and a vast expansion of the public domain. Schools and universities opened their doors to the lower classes, and when private car ownership spread to the lower classes - the ultimate symbol of their rise to dominance - the authorities embarked upon a road construction campaign unprecedented in scale and ambition. The crux of the model, therefore, was that it combined collectivist tools and mentalities with a capitalist system that was left intact. The reasons to promote this model were obviously political in nature, and it is more than doubtful if it would have survived without the context of the Cold War. Ryckewaert is right in pinpointing the crisis of 1973 as a marker of change, but only after 1989 did these changes imply the definitive end of the welfare state.

If collectivism is one of the key elements of the welfare state, its Belgian variant immediately appears to become somewhat problematic. By definition, the welfare state implies centralized planning, but this appears to have been incompatible with the Belgian way of doing things. The memories of wartime planning, when the Germans ruled the country, made it very unwise for politicians to promote strong central control, Ryckewaert argues, citing the virtual lack of central policies in the realm of architecture and urbanism to prove the point. From a practical point of view, the need for planning also appears to have been less abundantly clear than in the Netherlands, Germany or France, since Belgian industry escaped the level of destruction typical for these countries. Ryckewaert even maintains that this explains why the dollars channelled into the country thanks to the Marshall Plan were not used for the modernization of its industries: they were doing quite well and actually benefited from the dramatic situation abroad; obviously, the country had to catch up after its neighbours had managed to revitalize their economies. Since industry was the main pillar supporting the economy, the Walloons did a lot better than the Flemish during the first postwar decades, and only later did they have to pay the price for relying solely on economic activities that, in the end, were bound to fail.

In Belgium, planning therefore did not appear to have been the primary instrument in building the welfare state, as had been the case in most countries. But nevertheless, the assumption that the Belgian variant was marked solely by the capitalist aspects of the model is hard to defend. Spatial planning at the national and regional planning levels may have been limited to a few exemplary projects, such as the lower Meuse regional survey, for example, or the ten-year innovation project of the Port of Antwerp, but the social and economic policies that promoted the working classes, turning them into the dominant forces of a new economic environment, were affecting Belgium in much the same way as other countries. If one were to summarize the consequences of the welfare state for architecture and urbanism, this would boil down to the impact of the 'man in the street', and there is not a shred of doubt that this impact was as deep in Belgium as it was elsewhere. Obviously, housing and the new infrastructure were the fields where this impact was most visible. The housing explosion that needed to accommodate the 'man in the street' was channelled mainly towards public housing, and the results can justifiably be labelled as 'modern' - not because they bore the mark of modern designers, but mainly because the production of collective housing estates necessitated standardization, industrialization and mechanization, three qualities prewar modernists had already favoured, and which were now being realized, thanks to the combined forces of centralized planning and the modernization of the building trade. In Belgium, this 'modern' filter was notably lacking. Instead, the 1948 De Taeye Act sponsored the construction of individual, detached houses, offering mortgage guarantees and individual subsidies. Not surprisingly, most clients preferred traditional architecture and refrained from modern experiments; modernism has never been a really popular style, with the exception of the golden years of the International Style, which was uniquely suited to endow formerly 'monastic modern' design with the frivolous, optimistic aura of the consumer state. In Belgium, therefore, the impact of the 'man in the street' as the architect's new client did not result in the massive modernization movement that is so typical for its neighbours. The second main area where the 'man in the street' conquered space was literally the street. Since car ownership became universal even at the lower end of the social ladder, the construction of road networks became imperative, and we have already mentioned how this changed the Belgian landscape. Moreover, thanks to the car, even the remotest regions were opened up for the mobilized crowds, resulting in the spread of a lifestyle designated at the time as characteristically urban.

Centralized planning may not have been the primary agent in the construction of the Belgian welfare state. Ryckewaert's study clearly demonstrates that there was no shortage of sometimes brilliant proposals. Particularly interesting was the idea to fill the Belgian territory with a system of linear cities. This occurred at about the same time this model was enthusiastically promoted in the Netherlands as well. Equally fascinating was a plan by the well-known Dutch urbanist Van Embden for a satellite town. Had it been realized as planned, a typically Dutch, fully-fledged and complete city would have been built in a country where it would have been strangely out of place, almost as if a space vehicle had landed on the wrong planet (the comparison of the new housing estates with spacecraft was quite popular around 1960).

Ryckewaert's highly illuminating book unquestionably demonstrates how the Belgian welfare state came into being and also makes clear why, in some respects at least, it developed as a very specific variant of the general model. That in itself is a major achievement. However, some questions remain, but answering them probably fell outside the scope of his book. One of the book's puzzling aspects is the use of the word 'modern'. Since the eighteenth century, the term has come to designate a way of

doing things that breaks away from convention, prejudice and religious dogma, and instead intends to promote a rational, scientific view of the world. In the course of the twentieth century, it also became the household name for a new design approach in the arts, literature, the cinema, architecture and urbanism. In the 1950s and 1960s, it became the 'style' of the socially more balanced model of the welfare state, and for a short time both meanings of the term appeared to coincide almost perfectly (contrary to the barbarian, totalitarian regimes that dominated the preceding decades and represented themselves with heavy, megalomanic variants of classicism, allegedly providing the ultimate proof of modernism's political correctness). From today's perspective it has become quite clear that modernism has never been as politically innocent as its protagonists in the 1950s led us to believe; modernism lost its moral authority and became a style in much the same way that the Renaissance or the Baroque had been in previous centuries. Thus, one might argue, the two meanings of the term should be separated. In its original meaning, the Belgian welfare state is a typically modern phenomenon, since it broke with the conventions and traditions of prewar society. In terms of style, however, a considerable part of what has been designed is a lot less modern than what we find, for example, in the Netherlands; most of the housing stock, for instance, is highly traditional. As we have pointed out, even this traditional architecture is nevertheless an expression of the welfare state - and thus Ryckewaert may have wanted to explain why he completely ignored it, while presenting numerous examples of buildings and plans that follow the general outlines of the modern style. The simultaneous use of the two meanings of the term 'modern' reads like an echo of the distant past.

The heydays of the welfare state are long gone. All over Europe, the model has been dismantled and even left-wing politicians appear to accept a return to the 'normal' social relationships where, for ideological reasons, the state's role is presented as a very modest one (although, of course, it is still effectively in charge). In Belgium, not only the welfare state has become a historical memory, the state that created it is also a thing of the past. It has been replaced by three semi-autonomous communities that forever frustrate the prospects of a unitary state. What started as a national project, has now split up into three separate societies that all confront the legacy of the past in their own, specific ways. For the time being, there is no better way to understand this legacy than reading Ryckewaert's thorough and very well-conceived book.

Biography

Cor Wagenaar is Associate Professor at the Institute of History of Art, Architecture and Urbanism at TU Delft. His PhD-thesis of 1993 focused on the reconstruction of Rotterdam. He co-authored the monographic exhibition and catalogue *J.J.P. Oud. Poetic Functionalist 1890-1963* (2001). He is the author and editor of numerous books, among them *Healthcare Architecture in the Netherlands* (2010) and *Town Planning in the Netherlands since 1800. Responses to Enlightenment Ideals and Geopolitical Realities* (2011).

Review Article

The Multiple Modernities of Sweden

Janina Gosseye

Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State is an edited volume dedicated to - in the editors' words - a 're-reading of the formative moment of a particular Swedish modernism in architecture, and some of its echoes, nationally as well as internationally'. (p. 8) This restrictive description, however, does not do the intricacy of the volume justice, as the group of international scholars who have contributed to this book paint a much richer picture, including not only architecture and design, but also political history, social sciences and media studies in their accounts. The editors believe that such an intricate reading is necessary to respond to the need for diversifying the history of modernism. Based on the premise that the history of modernism cannot be chronicled in one single overarching trajectory, Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein - an architect and a philosopher, respectively - launch a plea for the conception of 'multiple modernities' that can deconstruct the well-known story of modernism into several (national) narratives. These narratives, they argue, might resonate with the existing anthology of modernism or could, conversely, oppose common assumptions.

The concept of 'multiple modernities', which aspires to reconstruct national accounts on modernism is - by the editors' own admission - closely related to Kenneth Frampton's concept of 'critical regionalism'. Mattsson and Wallenstein, however, argue that it is necessary to expand this concept, as '[r]egional inflexions are not just simply inflexions of an underlying curve, but must be thought of as autonomous responses, which means that they both react to and integrate tendencies emanating from "centres", as well as reinterpret "local" histories as points of leverage for their own operation'. (p. 13) *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State* should thus not be read as a 'top-down' Swedish variant of the ostensibly monolithic history of modernism, but as a 'bottom-up' history of the development of modernism in Sweden, which contributes to a more diversified understanding of the 'modernist' welfare state and its ties to architecture and consumption. The book is composed of three chapters, each of which comprises three to five essays: 'Constructing the Welfare State', 'Consumers and Spectacles' and 'Towards a Genealogy of Modern Architecture'.

The three essays in the first chapter combine sociology and political science (1) to trace the origin of the Swedish welfare state back to its formative moment in the 1930s ['The Happy 30s. A Short History of Social Engineering and Gender Order in Sweden', Yvonne Hirdman], (2) to demonstrate its uniqueness by anatomizing its underlying moral logic ['Pippi Longstocking. The Autonomous Child and the Moral Logic of the Swedish Welfare State', Hendrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh] and (3) to challenge existing historiography on the Swedish welfare state by proposing a novel reading ['In Search of the Swedish Model. Contested Historiography', Urban Lundberg and Mattias Tydén]. Even though the essays by Lunberg, Tydén and Hirdman offer valuable insights into the unfolding

- and the different modes of interpretation - of the Swedish model, the most compelling paper in this chapter is undoubtedly the contribution by Berggren and Trägårdh. Following the legendary story of Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, the authors effectively reveal how processes that occurred in Sweden differed from contemporary developments in other parts of the Western world. Beggren and Trägårdh argue that the unfolding of the Swedish welfare state paradoxically hinged on the notion of individual freedom; Swedish citizens were to obtain greater individual autonomy through greater dependency on the state. The Swedish model, the authors indicate, thus not only differs radically from developments in Anglo-American countries, which displayed an absolute apathy towards state intervention, but also from the 'conventional' European welfare state model, which focused on the family as the means and end of its policies. The authors trace the origins of this notion of individual freedom back to 19th-century political culture and social philosophy in Sweden. Furthermore, they tie it to the peculiar 'Swedish theory of love' which bases the ethos of love on the principle of egalitarianism and rejects the idea of 'dependency' in relationships as it corrupts the ability to love someone 'truly' - *no strings attached*. The underlying moral logic of the Swedish welfare state is thus its ambition to liberate the individual citizen from all forms of subordination in civil society. The authors consequently proceed to demonstrate how this 'statist individualism' - by rendering relationships within the family as equal and voluntary as possible - fomented a conundrum concerning its applicability to children's rights.

The second chapter 'Consumers and Spectacles' combines five essays which - each in their own manner - relate to one (or both) of the subtitle's keywords. Helena Mattsson opens this section with an essay on the 'reasonable consumer' ['Designing the Reasonable Consumer: Standardisation and Personalisation in Swedish Functionalism', Helena Mattsson]. She argues that in Sweden commodities were used as an intermediary between the individual and society, and, building on this reasoning, predicates that consumer objects were to contribute to the formation of a 'collective'. However, for this 'system' to function, the Swedish welfare state was to shape 'reasonable consumers'. The 'reasonable consumer' would be able to distinguish an 'unsound' - aimed at expressing individuality - from a 'sound' commodity, which allows him or her to partake in the envisaged collective order. Referring to the modern apartment on display in the 1957 Without Borders Exhibition in Stockholm, Mattsson cites the home as the arena for the development of controlled consumption and its concomitant reasonable consumers. It is precisely in the realm of the home that the individual learns to mediate between desires and needs. From a reader's point of view - assuming that the reader reads the book back to back - it would have been pleasant if Penny Sparke's essay on domestic consumption, which invites the reader into the home, had followed. Mattsson's text ['Designing "Taste". Domestic Consumption, Modernism and Modernity, Penny Sparke']. By contrasting Elsie de Wolfe and Lena Larsson's stance on interior design, Sparke identifies the home - despite its foreseeable submission to taste - as the locale where the individual negotiates between subjective concerns and rational programmes.

At this point in the book, where the correlation between commodities, consumers and the individual constitutes the prime focus, a peculiar omission surfaces. At the risk of summoning stereotypes, one cannot help but wonder how IKEA, the world's largest Swedish-'born' furniture retailer and, not surprisingly, one of the country's best-known export products, would frame into the story? Is it merely a coincidence that this company, which provides rational designs for each individual's taste, was founded in Sweden in the 1940s? An essay relating the Swedish 'reasonable consumer' and associated notions of 'individuality' and 'rationality' to IKEA

might have formed a welcome bridge between Mattsson and Sparke's texts and Reinhold Martin's essay, which traces the correlation between the individual and mass customization in corporate culture from modernism to postmodernism ['Mass Customisation: Consumers and Other Subjects', Reinhold Martin]. Martin turns the reader's attention away from both the home and Sweden as he traces the development of the Union Carbide Corporation's headquarters in the United States over a time-span of thirty years. Martin succinctly illustrates (using no images whatsoever) how despite an increasing focus on 'personal customization' in the architecture of the buildings, the individual is - paradoxically - gradually reduced to 'a techno-economic figure composed of numbers inside and out'. (p. 108) Even though Martin's story flawlessly illustrates the evolution of the notion 'individuality' from the mid- to late-twentieth century, it is not entirely clear how this essay contributes to the formation of a specific Swedish modernity.

The final two essays in this chapter mainly revolve around the concept of 'spectacle' as they explore (1) the set-up and effects of the Modern Leisure Exhibition in Ystad in 1936 ['The Exhibition Modern Leisure as a Site of Governmentality', Ylva Habel] and (2) the development of the Skansen Open Air Museum in Stockholm in the 1930s ['The Vernacular on Display. Skansen Open-air Museum in 1930s Stockholm', Thordis Arrhenius]. Both essays focus on exhibition strategies. Following Foucault's concept of 'governmentality', Ylva Habel exemplifies how the Modern Leisure Exhibition, designed to offer visitors first-hand leisure experiences by offering them a set of 'performative spaces', moulded an active Swedish audience that favoured the approval of the Vacations Act merely two years later. Thordis Arrhenius' article is closely related to Habel's as it demonstrates how, by offering visitors 'authentic experiences', the Skansen Open Air Museum - showcasing vernacular Swedish architecture - pinpointed the vernacular home as a predecessor of the mass-produced, industrialized buildings of the modern movement. Skansen thus became an important instigator of the country's modernizing aspirations in the 1930s.

The third and final chapter 'Towards a Genealogy of Modern Architecture' relates the pervasiveness of modern architecture in Sweden to the socio-political developments in the country, incorporating ideas - such as the 'reasonable consumer' - that were introduced in the first two chapters of the book. Eva Rudberg's essay immediately sets the tone as she challenges the common assumption that functionalism and social democracy in Sweden were two sides of the same coin ['Building the Utopia of the Everyday', Eva Rudberg]. Rudberg not only describes the manner in which functionalism was introduced in Sweden by revisiting the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and the 1931 Swedish manifesto *acceptera*, but she also traces the resistance it evoked (even within the Social Democratic Party) and suggests that 'Swedishness in functionalism is a question of what perspective one chooses'. (p. 155) In the following two texts, David Kuchenbuch and Joan Ockman compare the developments in Sweden to contemporary developments in foreign countries; Germany and the United States, respectively. Through this comparison, Kuchenbuch demonstrates how, contrary to Germany, the unfolding of modernism in Sweden engendered a culture of self-education. Clearly affiliated with the concept of the 'reasonable consumer' introduced by Helena Mattsson, Kuchenbuch postulates that 'Good Swedes [...] would teach each other how to be capable of questioning the appropriateness of their wishes, and thus make reasonable demands on the architects'. (p. 165) ['Footprints in the Snow. Power, Knowledge, and Subjectivity in German and Swedish Architectural Discourse on Needs, 1920s to 1950s', David Kuchenbuch]. Joan Ockman, in turn, develops a comparative architectural historiography of the US and Europe to study the effects of the increasing pressure of an advancing

consumer culture on modern architecture from the pre- to the postwar period ['Architecture and the Consumer Paradigm in the Mid-Twentieth Century', Joan Ockman]. Ockman emphasizes the exceptional state of affairs in Sweden as she attempts to unveil why the Swedish model of the social welfare state eventually collapsed. Sven-Olov Wallenstein finally closes both the chapter and the volume with a theoretical/philosophical re-reading of the manifesto *acceptera*, employing Foucault's concept of biopolitics as a vantage point ['A Family Affair: Swedish Modernism and the Administering of Life', Sven-Olov Wallenstein].

Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State offers an in-depth reading of the peculiar development of the 'Swedish Middle Way' in the twentieth century and thus forms a prominent contribution to the existing anthology of modernism. The essays in this volume engagingly illustrate how architecture and consumption were instrumental in the formation of the Swedish 'Folkhemmet' and identify the home, or the domestic sphere, as one of its main arenas. However, it seems that the editors have had to choose between a 'narrow' but intricate understanding of the underlying moral logic of the Swedish welfare state and a broader perspective on the different (building) 'programmes' that such a welfare state (must have) produced. A significant part of postwar architectural discourse in Europe revolved, after all, around notions of 'community' and 'encounter' and led to the development of a variety of projects, designed to facilitate community interaction - from utopian dreams to factual (often state-initiated) building programmes. Surely, Sweden must have a multitude of collective spaces - such as schools, cultural centres, sport facilities and holiday camps - where the collective of 'reasonable consumers' could meet? Unless we are to believe that the Swedish 'statist individualism' did not allow community-oriented notions to touch ground. An essay on the development of such spaces could have not only broadened the scope, but also opened the discussion to include (besides architecture) the urban scale. This could have balanced the comprehensive and diversified study of the private sphere and would have illustrated its reciprocal dependency on notions of collectiveness as well as collective practices and spaces. I am nevertheless well aware that it is nearly impossible to examine all facets of Swedish modernism and the 'Swedish Third Way' in the intricate fashion as has been done in this book in one single volume, and would therefore like to conclude by saying that I am looking forward to *Swedish Modernism*, Volume 2.

Biography

Janina Gosseye is a PhD-researcher at the department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning, KU Leuven and a lecturer in architectural theory at PHL in Hasselt. Her research focuses on the development of leisure spaces in postwar Flanders. She has published her findings in the *Journal of Architecture* and the *Journal of Urban History* and recently co-organised an international seminar together with Hilde Heynen on 'Architecture for Leisure in Postwar Europe, 1945-1989' at KU Leuven.

Review Article

The Ruins of the British Welfare State

Tahl Kaminer

In Owen Hatherley's tour of British cities, on which his recent book *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* is based,[1] the author reaches ex-steel city Sheffield. Here he encounters the Mancunian urban regeneration specialists, Urban Splash, presiding over a dubious project that perfectly embodies and represents the aporia of recent urban development, regeneration, and architecture in Britain and elsewhere: the regeneration of Park Hill, the notorious council housing slabs overlooking the city from their hill-top position, perched above Sheffield's main railway station.

The process Hatherley unfolds is fascinating, but his analysis of the material he assembles is lacking. Architecturally, Park Hill's regeneration destroys the ideas that animated the original architects, Jack Lynn and Ivor Smith (with Frederick Nicklin), such as 'truth to materials', or a simplicity that is about 'the man in the street' and the experiential. Socially and economically, it transfers council flats to the free market and replaces collectivity with individualism. [fig. 1] Historically, it annihilates the memory of the welfare state.

While Hatherley encounters the products of the work of Urban Splash on a number of occasions during his tour, it is useful to outline at this point the specific *process* of regeneration this cutting-edge developer initiated. An urban renewal project by Urban Splash typically begins with the demolition of the 'dullest' among postwar slabs in an area redlined for regeneration. Residents are driven off. New buildings are built: cheap apartments, yet cool and smartly designed, tailored for the lower-middle class, a social group with limited choice regarding the purchase of property. As Nick Johnson, the current deputy chief executive and previous development director of Urban Splash, described it, the new buildings express 'a variety of architectural styles reflecting the city - a little bit messy here and there, because that's what cities are like, not standardised - with lots of colourful structures and water'.[2] This is accompanied by an investment in culture, either by organizing street parties or other events, in order to transform the image of the area in question by infusing it with vitality and vibrancy. Once a substantial number of lower-class residents have moved out, the lower-middle class moves in, and the image is improved through cultural content. After that, luxury housing, which offers the developers wider profit margins, is built. This process is, of course, gentrification: the banishing of the working class, the migrants, and the poor from areas with real-estate 'potential', and their replacement with a stronger social group.

The regeneration of Park Hill is marred by several contradictions. As much as it is a paradigmatic gentrification project of the 2000s, it is also an anomaly, because of its English Heritage listing in 1998. The listing, carried out despite vocal objections by Park Hill's antagonists, meant that the obliteration of the welfare state could not follow straightforward demolition procedures, as in the case of Robin Hood Gardens, and therefore had to take on a very

different form. Urban Splash had to figure out what aspects of Park Hill prevented its real-estate value from rising, and how to remove these 'nuisances' from the complex. Thus, the tensions are positioned within the project itself: between the demand, on the one hand, to conserve the listed council-housing complex, and, on the other hand, to increase its real-estate value by transforming it into something very different. Park Hill had to remain the same, yet it also had to change. The apparent conclusion was: that the more current residents were removed, the better; that the dour greyness of the concrete and grime-covered bricks had to be alleviated; that the monolithic aspect and horizontal repetition of the blocks needed some treatment; and, most visibly, that the robust heaviness and sobriety required some lightness and brightness. The solutions provided: the concrete frame, the skeleton of the original, was kept, the rest emptied; shiny, colourful aluminium panels replaced the sober brick wall infills; [fig. 2] the elevated streets were severed from the streets below; some additional height for lobbies added vertical features breaking the horizontality of the blocks; many council apartments became free-market apartments.

In the specific context of Britain in the 2000s, the Park Hill complex had few alternatives. As a listed building, it could have escaped demolition, but probably would not have undergone large-scale renovation, and would have been left to decay. City councils, unable to take loans since the Thatcher days, cannot carry out such projects without the involvement of private capital, and private capital, including both non-profit and for-profit developers, requires a means of financing projects. Hence, the necessity to substitute council housing with free-market apartments and to adjust the building accordingly. In this sense, Urban Splash's Park Hill endeavour can be considered both courageous and symptomatic: courageous because of the risk involved (there are, after all, safer ways for urban developers to make a profit), and symptomatic because the only alternative for the listed complex was a slow death - a typical choice between two evils, or, rather, no choice at all.

The project therefore demonstrates the destruction of the welfare state - not just symbolically, but in a very concrete manner, by transforming council housing to free-market housing, hand in hand with a transformation of the architecture itself. It enables identifying specific elements of the architecture of the welfare state era that are no longer acceptable in a postindustrial, neoliberal order. It explains the relation of architecture to a political economy, a world view, an ideology, a specific society at a specific moment, unfolding the precise ideological differences between the 1950s and 2000s in Britain, and delineating the manner in which these ideological differences materialize in architectural design and built form.

Hatherley does not engage with these issues and questions, and avoids providing a thorough analysis. His visit to Park Hill is brief, and after lamenting the loss of the old housing complex, he swiftly moves on.[3] *A Guide to the New Ruins* is a tour of British cities, emulating J. B. Priestley's classic *English Journey*. Born out of a commission by *Building Design* in 2009, its subject is architecture and urban development, and it includes some broader cultural, political and economic references, as well as personal anecdotes and memories. It includes many encounters with the remnants of the British welfare state. Hatherley adores these old relics of an era now receding from experience and sight. As an extension to his blog postings and a sequel of sorts to his previous *Militant Modernism*,[4] Hatherley's book sharpens his polemics: his antagonists here are not so much neoclassicists such as Quinlan Terry and their patron, Prince Charles, or postmodernists, but the semi-official architecture of New Labour, which he terms 'pseudomodernism': an unimaginative, inferior, and, in its own specific way, also tacky architecture of

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Interior photograph of a new apartment in regenerated Park Hill. Courtesy and copyright Peter Bennett, Urban Splash.
Fig. 2: View of Park Hill. Courtesy Isabelle Doucet.

white stucco, steel and glass. Within the context of the contentious and often vile debate in Britain about modern architecture, Hatherley's voice has been unique in its belligerent defence of the most despised of British modernist architecture. Here, he attacks the Faustian bargain of Richard Rogers and his allies with neoliberalism, a pact that produces the type of compromise the Park Hill regeneration project perfectly epitomizes: a modernism devoid of social content, reflected by the unimaginative, speculation-driven architectural design. While Hatherley produces the promised indictment of recent British architecture, the book is, at the end of the day, primarily a eulogy to the disappearing postwar architecture he so evidently loves. He discovers objects and environments that please him in unexpected places, such as the much disliked new town Milton Keynes, or in his own Southampton.

The chapter dedicated to Manchester stands out. By addressing culture, or, more specifically, popular music and the culture developed around it, Hatherley's rich tapestry manages to produce a story that relates architecture to the music of early 1980s Manchester in a manner that, despite being mostly associative and by no means 'tight', is nevertheless impressive. Here, Hatherley is at his best, tying the bridges and skywalks of Hulme's Brutalist Crescents to Joy Division's gloom and edginess. Many of his arguments, despite the romanticism lurking in their shadows, are sound. Hulme's devastated cityscape offered the kind of freedoms found in contemporary urban areas such as London's East End or New York's Williamsburg. While the relocation of students and artists to the latter areas eventually brought about gentrification, in the absence of real estate pressures in the late 1970s, Hulme's artist community was not implicated in such processes, at least not directly. However, regenerated Manchester did have its musical legacy - Factory Records, The Fall, the Smiths, the Hacienda, Madchester, Oasis - tattooed into the names of the streets, the buildings, the entire regenerated city and its collective memory. Hatherley points out that there is no music being created in this regenerated city; the music that the city mythologizes took place in a very different setting, now destroyed by the new Manchester. Hatherley concludes: 'Hulme Crescents was one of the places where Modernist Manchester music was truly incubated and created, and its absence coincides almost perfectly with the absence of truly Modernist Mancunian pop culture.'[5]

The book is littered with smart and perceptive observations as well as misrepresentations.[6] Apart from the excessive use of neologisms and the rather questionable genealogy he suggests for 'pseudomodernist' architecture,[7] Hatherley succeeds in identifying the architectural consensus of the Blair era. Yet despite his best intentions, the book has difficulty in avoiding a slippage into an unproductive debate about taste, which does not go unnoticed by the author. With regard to a shopping mall in Southampton, he professes:

I don't like it, obviously, but the language that is used to attack it is remarkably similar to that which is used to attack some of the architecture I love. It's out of scale, it's too monumental, it's fortress-like, it's Not In Keeping, it leads to abrupt and shocking contrasts, it's too clean and too shiny […][8]

Hatherley frequently ridicules polemics in television programmes, newspaper articles or books that savaged postwar architecture 'in the name of the people', and cites residents' and former residents' approval of the same buildings.[9] Consequently, one of the questions *A Guide to the New Ruins* raises is whether a 'public opinion' or 'public taste' actually exists, or whether it is, rather, manufactured. Was it indeed the public that turned against postwar modernism, or was it an opinion constructed by a conservative media masquerading as 'the voice of the people', in a manner similar to Prince Charles' rebuke of modernist 'carbuncles' supposedly at the behest of the public, but from the heights of British

monarchy? Ample evidence can be provided to corroborate and support each of these arguments, though it seems Hatherley believes the latter is the correct conclusion. Yet the author is also aware of the complexity of the question of taste. FAT's design for homes in Urban Splash's New Islington development was based on patterns found in a local resident's interior décor, but, as Hatherley points out, the resident replaced his tacky interior with Ikea furniture when moving into his new FAT-designed home - an ironic comment on the trickiness of the issue.[10]

Rather than focus on issues of style and taste, Hatherley attempts to relate architecture to society and politics in several manners, such as citing the specific social intentions of the architects of Park Hill, or identifying postmodernism with Thatcherism. Throughout the book, such a relation is mostly taken for granted; the argument is primarily delineated in the introduction, laid out in a confident manner, though with only limited rigour, avoiding an in-depth engagement. Here, Hatherley indicts New Labour's policies in the built environment as an 'attempt to transform the welfare state into a giant business'.[11] He identifies the specific policies and organizations involved in the effort, including the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), the Urban Task Force, Pathfinder, English Partnership, and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). He claims that bodies such as CABE 'enshrined in policy things which leftist architects like Rogers had been demanding throughout the Thatcher years - building was to be dense, in flats if need be, on "brownfield" i.e. ex-industrial land, to be "mixed tenure", and to be informed by "good design"'.[12] In other words, good intentions and what seemed to be decent ideas, ended up producing the 'pseudomodernist' cityscapes the author loathes. Pathfinder, as an instrument of gentrification, receives particularly scathing critique, and is called 'a programme of class cleansing'.[13]

So what went wrong? Did the problem begin with ideology? Was it caused by the complete subordination of urban development and regeneration to the logic of the free market? Or could it have been the fault of badly structured technocratic bodies and policies? And if the 'pseudomodernist' cityscape was produced primarily by the market, then why in tandem with New Labour and not earlier, under Thatcher? The different answers supplied by Hatherley are partial and incomplete. The overwhelming evidence he collects, as in the Park Hill case, is never completely parsed and analysed. The inferred conclusion is that the policies and programmes in question prioritized business interests at the expense of civic society and the welfare of society's weaker segments. But that is only part of the story.

The major shift at issue is the transition that began even before Thatcher's ascent to power: from industrial to postindustrial society, from Keynesian to neoliberal economic theories and policies, from welfare state to free market, from Fordism to post-Fordism. Hatherley, exclusively focused on British architecture and politics, avoids engaging this broad and general transformation. Yet approached in this manner, the scale and totality of the shift becomes perceptible. The aporia of Western cities in the 1960s and 70s was necessarily related to their de-industrialization, a process that already began in the 1920s and 30s with the relocation of factories and their skilled labour to suburbia, in line with the Fordist ideas of the time. This relocation, which commenced long before the general de-industrialization of the West, meant cities lost their role as the locus of industrial production and as regional centres. The solution offered by the new order emerging in the 1980s was in the form of international hubs hosting the headquarters of major multinationals, and bringing into the cities a new class of white-collar employees. These employees, in turn, had to invest long hours of work and were compensated via lifestyle options absent in subur-

bia but offered in gentrified neighbourhoods.[14] This is, in a nutshell, the process in question, described in the most general sense. Landmark buildings, the mobilization of the 'creative industries', and the emphasis on the tertiary sector are all part of this story. Not all cities could follow the same path: in the contemporary neoliberal, postindustrial globalized condition, there is need for only a limited number of global hubs. The politicians' world view, and to some extent their specific ideology, is based on the consensus that emerged in the 1980s: free markets mean individual freedom, an argument trumpeted by Milton Friedman and adopted by Thatcher; the desires of the public can be satisfied via consumption in a free market, based on a belief in 'choice', however limited it may be in reality; individualism trumps collectivity; difference is a virtue, repetition and sameness a vice;[15] class has supposedly been replaced by social groups defined by their cultural identities. These dictums are the outcome of a post-political era, in which economics were freed from the dictates of politics and society, and 'culture' replaced 'society' as the horizon, benefitting from the belief, argued already in the 1970s by the neoconservative Daniel Bell,[16] that 'culture' can be understood as an area autonomous from political economy and thus open to diverse manipulations and desires, however idiosyncratic or perverse.

The very general and schematic explanation above does not, of course, account for the specificities of the new-built environment shaped by local contexts and considerations, nor does it explain why the 'pseudomodernist' architecture emerged in the 1990s and not already under Thatcher. Hatherley, focusing on the political aspect, claims Blair's government was neither a simple continuation of Thatcherism nor a return to 'Old Labour'. New Labour is characterized as the merging of the Thatcherist emphasis on the free market with a rhetoric of compassion and caring for the weaker classes, perhaps better described as a support of progressive culture, accompanied by a very limited progressive social agenda, if at all. 'Pseudomodernism' is similarly a development of - 'Thatcherist' - postmodernism via deconstruction, emphasizing progressive aesthetics but voiding the progressive social content. The modernism salvaged - or deformed, according to Hatherley - by deconstruction and 'pseudomodernism' is specifically an aesthetic modernism - work that expresses the autonomy of the singular building as well as the architect's and client's creativity, rather than an attempt to merge city and building. This reflects the rise of the creative industries and their economic and symbolic importance in contemporary society, visible by the mid-1990s, the era of 'roll-out neoliberalism', but still under-developed and a second-tier sector in the 1980s, the era of Thatcher and 'roll-back neoliberalism'.

The policies of the current British government, which already announced the abolishment of strategic planning in its coalition agreement, will not reconcile Hatherley. But in the postpolitical age, a change in government is no recipe for finding a new trajectory for society; the governments' ability to steer society is limited. To satisfy Hatherley, and to reignite socially responsible architecture and urban development, what is needed is no less than a major shift in the political economy, a shift which contemporary politics are not delivering, but which the crowds in Barcelona, Athens, Tel Aviv, Santiago de Chile, and New York are loudly demanding.

Notes

1. Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (London: Verso, 2010).
2. Peter Hetherington, 'Manchester Unveils Plans for a Radically New Islington', *The Guardian*, Tuesday 17 September 2002, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/sep/17/communities.arts?INTCMP=SRCH> [accessed 30 November 2011].
3. More of Hatherley's opinion of the Park Hill regeneration can be read in Owen Hatherley, 'Regeneration? What's

Happening in Sheffield's Park Hill is Class Cleansing', *The Guardian*, Wednesday 28 September 2011, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/28/sheffield-park-hill-class-cleansing?INTCMP=SRCH> [accessed 30 November 2011].

4. Owen Hatherley, *Militant Modernism* (London: Zero Books, 2009), and <http://nastybrutalistandshort.blogspot.com> [accessed 29 November 2011].
5. Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, p. 131.
6. For examples of misrepresentations, see the attribution of the coining of the term 'urban renaissance' to Ricky Burdett and Anne Power or Richard Rogers in the late 1990s (p. xxx), whereas it was actually borrowed from the United States 1980s; or the claim that 'Charles Jencks's *Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, meanwhile, turned to full-blown neoclassicism' (p. xxv). In contrast, Hatherley demonstrates his observational powers when identifying the mediating role of deconstruction between postmodernist architecture and the architecture he calls 'pseudomodernism' (pp. xxvi-xxvii), by pointing out that 'the Situationist critique of postwar urbanism has curdled into an alibi for its gentrification' (p. 117); or, in another instance, claiming that'[t]he idea that a city should exist for youth and "vibrancy" is a tired combination of baby-boomer nostalgia and romantic guff about the virtues of poverty's dirt and noise, a superannuated idea that is amenable to knock-it-up-cheap developers as are developers' cul-de-sacs' (p. 62).
7. Picking up the thread of an American discourse, he uses the term 'Googie', relating to a crass, commercial, though also frivolous and sometimes witty American modernism in which he identifies the forefather of 'pseudomodernism'. In some cases, Hatherley certainly has an argument, whether referring to the most blatantly commercial architecture of recent times or the individual development of Frank Gehry or Morphosis via an interest in a Californian vernacular to the 'high-aesthetic' of the Vitra Museum and later work. But such a genealogy, beyond its usefulness in undermining the claim to high culture of the architectural stars, is not easily extended to explain the Jean Nouvels, the Daniel Libeskinds, the Zaha Hadids, the Herzog & de Meurons, the Sejimas, or the Peter Zumthors. A sharp angle, an idiosyncratic corner, a weird materialization found both in the American commercial 'vernacular' modernism and in a work by Hadid, can indeed be linked associatively, but fall short of solid proof. A more intricate argument can be found in Owen Hatherley, 'No Rococo Palace for Buster Keaton: Americanism (and Technology, Advertising, Socialism) in Weimar Architecture', available at http://themeasurestaken.blogspot.com/ [accessed 18 October 2011]. Hatherley's previous book, *Militant Modernism*, explored this territory and attempted to differentiate between an aesthetic and a social modernism.
8. Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, p. 41.
9. See, for example, Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, pp. 99, 129.
10. Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, p. 145.
11. Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, p. x.
12. Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, p. xiv.
13. Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, p. xvii.
14. Peter Marcuse, 'Do Cities Have a Future?', in Robert Chery (ed.), *The Imperiled Economy: Through the Safety Net* (New York: Union of Radical Political Economists, 1988), pp. 189-200.
15. Hatherley correctly underlines the fact that, at the end of the day, the emphasis on difference has resulted in repetition. He writes: 'How do you react to something which already tries incredibly hard not to offend the eye, or respond critically to an alienated landscape which bends over backwards not to alienate, with its jolly rhetoric, its "fun" colour, its "organic" materials?' (p. 156).
16. Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* [1976] (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

Biography

Tahl Kaminer is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft. Routledge recently published his PhD dissertation as *Architecture, Crisis and Resuscitation: The Reproduction of Post-Fordism in Late-Twentieth-Century Architecture*. He is a co-founder of the journal *Footprint*, and edited the volumes *Urban Asymmetries* (010, 2011), *Houses in Transformation* (NAi, 2008), and *Critical Tools* (Lettre Voilee, forthcoming).

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