

English summary

Editorial

Felipe Leal

Translation by: Pedro Huerta

Once again we have to be capable of dreaming utopias and of breaking our soul to obtain change. In Mexico we live a lack of harmony, of justice. The ineffectiveness in many fields is not only due to the urban, ecological deterioration, but that everything forms part of a kind of culture of cynicism, of closing our eyes to imagination.

Fernando González Gortázar

The absence of careful consideration has been one of the greatest setbacks in the scope of our architecture; the recent lectures of Fernando González Gortázar in the Faculty of Architecture of the UNAM helped to lessen this case. Thanks to the Cátedra Extraordinaria Federico Mariscal of the year 2000, a large sector of the student and academic community had the chance to meditate together with González Gortázar of our culture and our future. Celia Facio interviewed this polyfaceted artist compiling a series of rich and interesting considerations of our profession. It's worth mentioning the importance of the Cátedra Federico Mariscal for our School, by which a renown and distinguished specialist is invited annually to share during ten sessions, once every week, his experience and knowledge with the university community.

Last November, the ceremony of the sixth edition of the Biennial of Mexican Architecture took place. This event offers us every two years a wide panorama of our most recent architecture achievements. *Bitácora* presents the works and publications awarded on this occasion.

Fifteen years ago, the Major in Landscape Architecture was founded in the Faculty of Architecture; to commemorate this anniversary, Alejandro Cabeza and Marcos Mazari's articles are presented.

Jeanine Bischoff presents a review of the exhibition of Ruy Ohtake and a panoramic vision of the vigorous architecture of Brusil, a country that just recently celebrated 500 years of its foundation.

The relationship between the media, particularly the seventh art, and architecture is a most suggestive topic. Based on the latest James Bond series, *The World is not Enough*, Peter Krieger offers us a ludic essay on this subject.

Urban expansion is one of the serious and more complex problems that our cities suffer; the overwhelming growth has crossed, both physical and reasonable limits, that seriously affect the social wellbeing and urban balance. Ignacio Kunz proposes, through his detailed text, the creation of instruments to control this cited expansion.

In the section *Estudiantes*, Pipola Gómez's winning project in the competition-workshop organized by the magazine *Ambiente* is presented.

On this occasion, *Letras* counts with the collaboration of a distinguished personality of the Mexican contemporary literature that views the city as a body: Vicente Quirarte shares with the readers of *Bitácora* his vision of the chroniclers of our city.

We have decided to open, on this number, the section *Correspondencia* where we will present the most significant messages of our readers referring to the contents of this publication.

A bit before the closure of this edition, *Bitácora* received a *Mention de Honour* in the XII Biennial of Architecture of Quito. We are pleased with this acknowledgment. ☺

Felipe Leal



Landscape architecture builders in Mexico

Alejandro Cabeza

Landscape architecture integrating buildings with nature has existed in our country since prehispanic times. Public elements such as public plazas and roads, and private ones such as patios and gardens had high achievements as of their integration to landscape. Some of these transcended into colonial times through spaces as the atrium or the plaza, and were joined by promenades, parks, and public gardens throughout the XVIII and XIX Centuries.

On the second half of XX century some works tried to build a national identity involving prehispanic elements, shapes or materials. Some of this works are the open-air stage in the Parque de las Américas (Merida, Yucatán) by Manuel Amabilis inspired on Mayan architecture, and University City, in Mexico City, with a prehispanic understanding of opened space based on plazas, stairways, patios and esplanades. The Anthropology Museum was also built in this line, keeping the central patio, the umbrella, a pond that reminded of the Mexico Valley basin and a lattice-work taken from Usmal.

Landscape architecture became a formal career in 1899 when Frederick Law Olmsted founded it in Harvard University; but it didn't arrive to our country until 1970, when graduates of the Universidad Autónoma de México such as Carlos Bernal Salinas

and Eliseo Arredondo González got specialized in this discipline. The first works built in our country by Mexican landscape architects were made in communications, housing, parks, gardens, and urban design. At the end of the 60s two very important works on reforestation of federal highways were made by Eliseo Arredondo: the México-Querétaro highway and the Tijuana-Ensenada highway. They both dealt with big scale reforestation with very different environmental conditions. Other work from that time was the Paseo Toluca (Toluca) by Carlos Bernal.

In those years, landscape proposals were integrated to popular housing, by structuring specific spaces for different requirements as in the case of the Unidad Adolfo López Mateos in Tlanepantla (1960), by Carlos Bernal Salinas; the Gardens for the Olympic Village in Mexico City by Eliseo Arredondo (1968); and the gardens of the Infonavit Iztacalco, also in Mexico City, with an artificial lake designed by Mario Schjetman Dantan.

The Landscape Architects Society of Mexico was founded by Eliseo Arredondo, Carlos Contreras, Carlos Bernal, Alfonso Muray, Mario Schjetman Garduño, and Luis Barragán -as honorary member- in 1972. On his own, Carlos Contreras Pagés who was at that time professor for the National School of Architecture in the UNAM, supported the creation of an optional architecture landscape subject in the career.

One of the Society's major achievements was the creation of the BA in Landscape Architecture in the UNAM back in 1985. The practice of this discipline is now extensive, and has generated projects for different situations.

Environmental projects are another field for landscape architects, a couple of such works are the regeneration of the invasion zone "El Seminario" in the mount Ajusco by Carlos Contreras Pagés; and the master plan for the Rio Lagartos biosphere in Yucatán, coordinated by Alejandro Cabeza and Rocío López. Finally, landscape artists have worked in the creation of standards that have helped in orienting and managing created landscapes. Obviously, some important landscape architecture projects have been left out. Nevertheless this selection of works exemplifies the development of this discipline in our country and its growing possibilities into the future. ☺

Green urban areas, a space in search of identity

Marcos Mazari Hiriart

In this new millennium, urban environment will be the one that has a larger impact on the life of the population. It will condition the new generations way of life, fostering and renewing the social structures, and bringing equality and dignity for its

inhabitants; while stressing the possibilities of adaptation, modification and conservation of the natural environment; and also the confirmation or loss of cultural values hold by past generations.

Urban environment is formed by two elements: a solid one -architecture- and an empty one -open space-, the fusion of both defines urban image. This image merges natural media as climate, ground, topography, hidrology and vegetation; with the artificial environment formed by cultural values, social structures, political system, cultural values, and economic factors.

Mexican cities' outline is generated from the squares in historic centers. During the XX Century the shape and size of Mexican cities has been heavily modified by an accelerated demographic growth. The increase in housing demand has given rise to a non-planned expansion towards the margins of the urban spot, thus generating peripheral marginal settlements in high risk zones. On the other hand some high economic resources projects have been developed in environmental reserved areas. These phenomena belong to the long modernization process undergone by our country from the post-revolutionary phase to the turn of the century globalization.

The pre-colonial city had plenty open spaces in its structure. The first colonial city, that followed the renaissance model, also kept the great central square as a point of departure of the urban trace. This central square was also the place where the political, religious, economic and social life of the city concentrated.

During the XVII Century, the most important green urban area was the Alameda Central. From then on, the city kept growing and, according to each period, several types of green areas were included in the new neighborhoods, with a predominantly French influence. A few projects done in that field were: the San Cosme, Guadalupe and Revilagigedo promenades (1793-1845); the first neighborhood central park in Santa María la Ribera (1861); the big Reforma Avenue bordered by trees (1877); and the Mexico Park in the Colonia Condesa (1925)

The city kept growing in all directions, incorporating small towns and farming lands to its trace. After the Revolution, the modern concepts where architecture should integrate open spaces in its projects had a very strong influence. Some examples of this period are the Juárez, Miguel Alemán, and Nonoalco-Tlatelolco Housing Units; and University City.

The problems we face today are saving green areas, while dealing with public insecurity, lack of maintenance, and the deterioration of vegetation. We can't go on using foreign criteria as we did in the past. We need to think in the workings of our society and in the need of versatile and flexible green spaces that answer to the particular requirements of each area or socioeconomic layer, thus keeping the image and the social-environmental values of our cities' open spaces. ☺



007-The World (of Architecture) is not Enough.

Peter Krieger

Elektra King, the villain in the 007-The World is not Enough film, seduces James Bond in her historicist Russian-Asian style villa with no outrageous beds, as the one in Diamonds are Forever (1979).

The new Bond keeps almost all the stereotypes: persecutions on water and snow, helicopters, the casino scene. But this time the futuristic vision of architecture is lacking. We know Bakú, capital of Azerbaijan, and one of the central settings in this film, is not the place for that style. As in every other place in the ex-USSR where post-communist economic power has concentrated, it only has a free mix of historic elements ranging from an international nouveau-rich to the simple occupation of antique palaces.

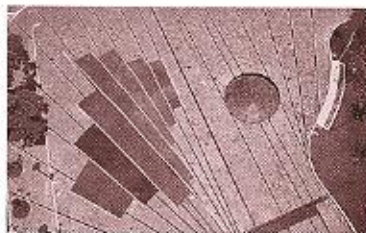
The scene of the new Bond involves another modernity: the industrial vision of oil producing countries. An underground plant of atomic bombs, oil ducts, and even a nocturnal view of a caviar factory strengthen the psychological character of the script.

Regarding architecture, the most interesting scenes are the opening sequences. One brief shot in Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim, and an action scene that starts in the monumental MI6 Secret Service building and ends in Richard Rogers' Millennium Dome. The use of existing buildings strengthens the ubication of sets. Nevertheless, that strategy breaks the successful tradition of Bond films: The creation of fantastic spaces disregarding any economic or constructive restrictions.

In short: Ken Adams designed a shocking illusion architecture for a world wide audience. Ever since he studied architecture in the Bartlett School of Architecture in 1938, Ken Adams decided to focus on the film architecture as a free space for creativity. He always acknowledged the influence The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari and one of its major principles - the building of artificial sets- had on him. In spite of the growing influences of neorealism that favoured proposed making movies in site, Adam chose the virtual and perfect construction of spaces and symbolic architectures.

Millions of spectators around the world had an aesthetic education through Adams' spatial imagination and architectonic experimentation. His creations anticipated the word of tomorrow, or at least allowed envisioning an extravagant avant-garde world. Architecture played a key role in the production of collective desires through the images in Bond movies, and that is why we may still obtain deductions on cultural conditions by analyzing them.

It will not be until the James Bond id back with a new story, and with new sets that we will answer the doubt on the social cultural crisis of architecture. Since the creation of virtual architecture will be one of the most important fields of this practice in the future, it is worthwhile reflecting on the visual values imposed by Hollywood. ☺



Interview with Fernando González Gortázar Celia Facio Salazar

- Regarding architecture and sculpture, and being both subjects of your work, which do you think are the borders between architecture and urban art?

You see, as of the subjects I deal with in my work, in architecture the subject is really the program. Then, the program of my works is my subject. On one hand, it is my inspiration source, a motive for restlessness and reflection. On the other, a challenge you have to face and solve in a creative and responsible way.

Obviously, I don't choose this program. I think this is one of the trade's ambiguous areas. You

might assume that you come to the customer and he/she tells you his/her needs, and from then on your work is turning them into an efficient, reasonably-priced, logical, and beautiful building. But in the real practice it doesn't work like that.

I've had experienced several extreme cases in that sense, customers that tell you: -I want a museum-, or -I want a museum in this place and I want to devote it to the blue color- for instance. That is: total ambiguity. And then, there are times when you research the problem and turn it into a program. In others, you don't do any research, rather, you invent it just like that, in a way that makes creation start from there, long time before you start conceptualization or design.

At times this has been stressing for me, because I feel I don't have enough elements to fulfill the customer's expectations. If I mentioned the word "museum", it is precisely because the Mayan People Museum that I made in Dzibilchaltún, Yucatán, was one of these cases: if I proposed a 300 square meters exhibition area they thought it was fine, and if they were 3000 meters, they thought it was fine too. This is one of those uncomfortable aspects they don't teach you in universities.

- That is why having the collection is important for defining the exhibition area...

Of course. Even considering they didn't have the collection in terms of inventory, the ideal situation would be if they had clear intentions about it: "We want this and that". Here, we didn't know what they wanted, the only thing they had was the decision -that may be called political- of building a museum at that site. Nobody knew what was going to be inside of it.

But I could tell you lots of cases like this one. At other times, there has also been a research done on the program, and this has turned out to be one of the most exciting parts of the work.

Many years ago I did a project for a psychiatric hospital for acute mental illness patients. I spent months visiting psychiatric hospitals all throughout the country. It was a devastating experience, but also an interesting one. Now, on my own will, and also by chance it turns out that I have done a lot of works in urban art. You were asking me which were the borders between urban art and architecture. I could tell you that, excepting exact sciences, rigid classifications do not fit reality. The examples are countless. I would tell you that I find some non-radical differences, but approximately clear ones, between architecture and sculpture, and that urban sculpture is the link between both of them. I believe urban sculpture has the same relation with architecture, as it has with sculpture. And, of course, the same it has with urbanism, which is nothing but a part of architecture.

Speaking about my subjects I would like to add that one of the sorrows in my professional life is that I haven't had more opportunities for building houses. Houses for a concrete family: maybe it's the gender I like the most. I believe making a project for a house is not only about making decisions on a building, but on a way of life. Therefore I feel it is a fascinating adventure for the architect and for the family with which he is working. Besides, probably this is the case in which your work is closer to the customer. Having the luck to find a customer that is, at the same time creative and receptive, a stimulating customer, is the best thing that may happen to you.

- Could you mention three architecture and urban art examples of all times that are meaningful to you?

There are wonderful examples that I don't know where to place. For instance, I believe the Egyptian pyramids may never be upgraded. I feel it is one of many examples of an art that was born already mature, finished; and that art changes but doesn't

get better. These masterpieces, the pyramids, what are they?, are they architecture or monumental sculpture? We can't say they are urban art because they aren't in a city, but they are amazing art pieces that work astonishingly well in their landscape. They are one of mankind's major achievements.

I have some favorite buildings that go from the Governor's Palace in Uxmal to the Taj-Majal. This last building also borders with urban sculpture, because its interior space is almost meaningless. On this same line I would certainly include the Ducal Palace of Venice. The Alhambra in Granada and Kenzo Tange's Sport Palace in Tokyo which probably is one of the most beautiful buildings of the XX Century. The Cabañas Asylum in Guadalajara was one of the constructions that made me become an architect. But this list also includes some lesser-known buildings as the Inca ruins of Pachacamac in Peru or the Mozarabic Fortress of Coca in Spain. Of course, the towers of Satellite City by Luis Barragán and at least a couple of his works: his own house and the Sacramental Capuchins Convent.

In several occasions I've made express trips to Zurich to look at the posthumous works by Le Corbusier, the now called Le Corbusier center; I think it is a work of an amazing perfection. And of course, the Barcelona Pavilion by Mies van der Rohe, that is, for me, one of the few works were perfection and emotion do not exclude each other. The Saint Sofia Basilica in Constantinople is probably the greatest inner space ever built. I believe the list is endless and prodigious, but this are works that have touched me and moved me, and from which I have learned so much that I will never end assimilating those teachings.

- Which are the elements you take into consideration for designing a public space?

The elements I consider for designing a public space are exactly the same than those I consider for a private space. That is, I think about context, scale, function, materials, nature, and something that is central for me: the movements of the spectator, that is, the movements of those who inhabit that space. When all this things come together they create a starting impulse. Then, the personal impulses are incorporated.

- How do you define your public art language and your architectural language?

The only thing I can tell you about it, is that I try to follow, in a respectful and humble manner, all the factors I mentioned at the start. That is, I try to make works that really solve a problem without excessive economic or technical efforts, and that offer transcendental values, cultural values to the user or the community. I also try to be coherent with my historical moment and, above all, I try to be coherent with myself, with my way of understanding the world, of understanding life and culture. So each of my works is a sort of spiritual self-portrait in which all the things that I may be or know are present.

I believe in responsible architecture, one that is detached from any triviality, fad, delirium of grandeur or exhibitionism. I believe in an architecture that is, at the same time, creative and service providing. I believe in an eloquent architecture; I would like that all these things together added up to the language you were talking about.

- Which do you consider to be your most important works both in architecture and in urban sculpture?

Almost thirty years ago, I had this exhibition in the Palacio de Bellas Artes that was called Monumental Failures and, as it read, it was a sample of urban art projects. They were not mere abstract speculations, but concrete projects for real sites and with particular budgets that were never built.

Many of the best ideas I've had are only in the

paper, probably the best things I've dreamt of have never been made. Among those that have been built my house in Guadalajara is particularly meaningful, although it's no longer mine. Other projects are the South Municipal Cemetery that was destroyed; the Sister Water Fountain, that is abandoned and rarely works; the Government Square of Jalisco, that's in the same situation as the Sister Water Fountain; the Stairs Fountain in Madrid, Spain; the Dislocated Column in Japan, now in the Hanoko museum; the Goblins Promenade in San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo Leon. Other more recent works I could mention are: the Mayan People Museum in Dzibilchaltún, Yucatán; the Public Security Center in Guadalajara; the University Center of the Altos de Guadalajara in Tepatlán, Jalisco; and a very small but endearing work for me: the Palmas Square in Mexico City.

I think all these are the ones that have brought me closer to that ideal I mentioned at the start, and that may be summoned in a very clear phrase: make an architecture that contributes to the happiness of everyone that is affected by it. And by that I mean the ones that use it, but also nature and the city.

Which were your ideas in the creation of the Center of Public Security?

In the case of the Public Security Center I can speak very clearly because it was a case in which this ideas were particularly strong from the start. I do not believe architecture is a passive element in the lives of its users. Instead, I feel it has a very strong influence in the moods of those that are within a particular space. That is why I think architecture may offer quietness or excitement, it may encourage noble or mean feelings, it may be encouraging or depressing, and so on.

In the case of the persons that are working for a police office, architecture should be particularly encouraging, stimulating; that was one of the project's points of departure, lets say, to the interior.

There also was a clear element regarding the outer part: making citizens have a less hostile perception of the police. The building was to contribute in bringing back noble image that the police has lost before us. All this was not just about improving the image of the police, there were projects for achieving a real transformation, and I hope they are being carried out.

A third starting point was making the building interact with the wonderful landscape it has as a backdrop, so the people that worked in it and the visitors could enjoy a very nice view. There were some other considerations: for example, that the building helped to eliminate torture, a very common practice in these lands. The fact that temporary detention cells have great windows facing the visiting zone, was a naive attempt to lessen the possibilities - to say canceling them would be too much- of those awful things happening in there. Other features were intended for protecting policemen and other employees from possible aggressions. For example, the mullion system on the facade doesn't only solve lighting, but it allows looking outwards while no machine-gun fire can enter from the street. There are many other things I could add, but I think these are the most important.

Could you tell us something about your career and the most important events in it?

It is hard to pinpoint the specific moments when you became yourself, but I can think of some.

First of all, I am an intellectual worker; I believe in the value of ideas, in the value of diversity. I believe that those who think differently can live together in harmony. I have very deep political and social concerns, and I believe in culture, I believe in the urgency of harmonizing culture and nature, I believe in the world. I like people and I

like art; I believe in art as a road to happiness and as a way of knowledge. I have learned to be happy, nobody taught that to me. I have learned to reflect that happiness in my work and transmitting it to those that come in contact with it.

All this comes from a provincial boy, that had the fortune to live side by side with nature, with integral nature - landscape, animals and plants. That, for reasons that would be too long to tell now, had a lot of people that loved him and a very peculiar university background at the unique architecture school that Ignacio Díaz Morales founded in Guadalajara. Someone that, by family reasons and by his own will, had contact with persons that marked him forever like Luis Barragán or Mathias Goeritz; that has had the fortune to see a lot of the natural and cultural world; I've been in more than 50 countries, some of which I know thoroughly, México in the first place. I'm a believer, in heart and soul, in popular culture, I have enjoyed the wonders it has created in all areas, and I have tried to learn from it. Well, I can say no more.

- What could you say from your experience in Olivier Seguin's Workshop and your relationship with Mathias Goeritz?

Olivier Seguin is one of the central persons in my life, mostly not because of his artwork, which I find to be very good, but because of his attitude before life. When I met him, he almost didn't speak any Spanish and my French was very poor, he was a grouch and I loved his rebelliousness, his refusal of conventions and commonplaces, his permanent critical attitude, his anarchist and iconoclast air. Mathias Goeritz also had something of an anarchist and an iconoclast, but he was a much more sophisticated man and his ideas gathered long cultural traditions.

I believe both should be in my list of parents. Nevertheless, I think that none of them influenced my work. The strongest influence in my work doesn't come from someone who was a thinker or a critic, but an absolute genius: Luis Barragán. Even though I am proud of considering myself a disciple of Barragán and not just an imitator, his influence is very clear in my first works. I believe that in my most recent works that influence seems to have disappeared. But that is only on a superficial level, I hope that his deepest lessons are still there.

- Which are the perspectives and the future of Fernando González Gortázar as an architect and a sculptor?

Would you mind if I don't answer that question?

- Of course not. Thank you Fernando for letting us get close to your ideas. ☺



500 years of brazilian architecture
Jeanine Bischoff

During the initial process of Portuguese colonization in Brazil, only a part of the coast was occupied, and the buildings followed the religious and military standards of the metropolis. In 1630, the Dutch occupied Pernambuco and a big part of the North-western region. Their 24 year government was marked by cultural and artistic achievements. The reconstruction efforts that followed the expulsion of the Dutch were translated in works of monumental qualities as the Salvador Cathedral in Bahia.

A rapid transformation was to take place at the beginnings of the XX century, when Sao

Paulo's growth fostered the development of several architectonic styles. An eclecticism that brought together diverse styles was a great esthetic vehicle for the assimilation of important technological innovations.

The first group of Brazilian architects that followed the new ideas was formed in Rio de Janeiro during the 30s. The teaching of architecture experimented a total reformulation due to Lucio Costa and the visits that Le Corbusier paid to the former capital of the Country, and brought with him the functionalist conceptions of architecture. In 1942, the Education and Culture Ministry building was finished. Although the original project belonged to Le Corbusier, it was developed with some modifications by a Brazilian team made by Lucio Costa, Carlos Leao, Jorge Moreira, Afonso Eduardo Reydi, Oscar Niemeyer and Ernani Vasconcelos. It was the origin of new concepts in the constructions built in the city's free areas.

In 1943 Oscar Niemeyer conceived a group of buildings surrounding Pampulha Lake in Belo Horizonte. They are considered the first entirely free construction of the modern Brazilian architecture. On this same line, the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi represents the birth of modern religious Brazilian architecture.

After World War II, the presence of a great amount of foreign professionals in Sao Paulo, and a moment when progress allowed the multiplication of buildings at an increasing rate, there was a renovation process in the architecture. Architects like the German-Swiss Franz Heep, the Polish Lucjan Korngolc and the Italian Lina Bo Bardi contributed to this modernization.

Brasilia was the great opportunity offered to the Brazilian architects in the 50s. It was a project aimed at promoting the development of the interior of the country. Following the urban plan by Lucio Costa, the architect Oscar Niemeyer along with the concrete planner Joaquim Cardozo, managed to create the only Brazilian Architecture that has found a great influence abroad, as a legitimate and worthwhile product.

The Faculty of Architecture project in Sao Paulo at the mid 70s made by Joao Batista Vilanova Artigas gave place to a renewal of architecture teaching, and of the professional practice. Sao Paulo was a big metropolis, intensely industrialized, and generated an architecture that, in some aspects, was different from the rationalist school in Rio de Janeiro. The most important architects belonging to this school were architects Rino Levi, Oswaldo Bratke, and Joao Batista Vilanova Artigas.

During the 80s, some enthusiastic architects followed the postmodern experiences and created buildings in this style, but they had no relevance in the context of international production. Past this meaningless stage there was no one-trend that brought them together, so the best architecture nowadays is made by individual talents. These are architects that are able to create beauty from solid references, that have their own interpretation of the role of architecture. We also find, as in many countries, an architecture that gave up before foreign patterns, giving priority to corporate images and the use of High technology as a representation of the globalized modernity. But we also have alternative lines in which two meaningful tendencies are worth mentioning: an expressive minimalism that has its best example in Paulo Mendes Rocha -last Mies van der Rohe Prize winner-, and an architecture that shows concern for the continuity of historical lines, as the work done by Ruy Othake, one of the major architects that works bringing together the aesthetic principles of the Carioca Oscar Niemeyer and Joao Batista Vilanova Artigas. ⊗



VI Mexican Architecture Biennial

Ernesto Alva

Promoting Mexican architecture, and acknowledging architect's work are among the goals of the Federación de Colegios de Arquitectos de México (FCAM), the organism that coordinates architects' associations nationwide. With that purpose, every two years since 1990, the FCAM summons all the architects in the country to participate in the Mexican Architecture Biennial. In it, a prestigious professional jury selects the best works in each category, from which the Great Prize is chosen. There are 20 different categories ranging from one family houses to technological innovation and interior design.

The acknowledgment represented by the Great Prize gold medal given by the Federation has become one of the most important awards for Mexican architecture. Once again, the VI Mexican Architecture Biennial 2000 allows us collecting, selecting, registering, evaluating and judging the most meaningful works of Mexican architecture from recent years.

On this issue, 156 projects from different states of the republic were received. The 41% of works in this contest belonged to three categories - one-family houses, commercial buildings, and office buildings. Other 41% of the projects were distributed among education; multi-familiar houses; interior design and recreation; house remodeling, and building remodelig. The rest of the buildings were in the culture, tourism, workshops, urban design, welfare housing, restoration, technological innovation, health, and museography categories. There were no projects for the planning category. Other 28 mentions were awarded in several categories.

These biennials also have categories for publications, research and bachelors and masters degrees thesis. On this edition, 21 papers were received.

These biennials enable us to make an assessment of the contemporary architecture trends and proposals in our country, comparing them with the ones coming from overseas, and facing our own demands. ⊗



Instruments for the control of urban expansion

Ignacio Kunz Bolaños

This article deals on different proposals on how to establish growth control instruments for the metropolitan zone of Mexico City. It has been divided in three parts: the problem's outline, its political background and the proposal of particular growth control devices.

The difficulty to buy land in Mexico City for most of the population due to poverty has favored the informal solutions to this problem. This situation was first intensified in the 1940s due to industrialization, immigration, increase in birth rates, and decrease of death rates. Then, the government had to accept irregular settlements on lands that it expropriated and regularized once they had been occupied.

Between 1940 and 1960, the population was

still growing and able to find jobs and a place to live. This cheap labor concentration fostered industrial development; but from that moment on, the concentration of income made the absorption of more workers impossible, and the increase in service demand by a rapidly growing and impoverished population gave rise to social conflicts.

The main causes of the worrying horizontal development of Mexico City are: the difference between the demand of real estate and its cost and population growth. Both situations fostered subsidized real estate government policies.

Paradoxically, the horizontal growth of the city stemming from informal situations has raised prices, fostering the increase in the difference between central and peripheral land values and expelling the poorest population towards the city margins.

The governments of the city have offered different sorts of measures for planning and controlling the growth of the city. The first planning law was enforced in 1933 by the DDF (Federal District Department) that, in turn was created in 1928. The definitive version of this law where housing, industrial and commercial areas were defined dates from 1940. On that same year regulations on planning and divisions of the urban area were published. A decree on the control of rental prices to support lower income population also dates from the 40s.

The liberal State model sought by the government after the 1940s was very interested in avoiding conflicts and promoting social stability, thus transferring the responsibility of land ownership in the poorest zones from private sellers to the government and formalizing the tolerance regime that allowed and fostered the extensive model of expansion and its consequences.

Some reforms were made to the planning law for the Federal District during the 70s, involving the creation of a consultative board; a General Planning Office; an urban development law for the Federal District; a master plan; and a the creation of a suburban zone. The Master Urban Development Plan was modified again in 1979 and in 1982.

Both defined three zones in the F.D.: 1) an urban area, b) a low density transition zone and 3) an ecological conservation zone. The regulations for the transition zone were not followed, generating a major growth in this area during this period.

Several growth, conservation and improvement policies for reaching growth control goals settled in the plans were established between 1980 and 1982. Several devices for controlling and orienting growth through taxes are specified in the 1982 plan. On those years policies were oriented towards redensification and growth control. Some important conclusions come from what happened between 1979 and 1982. Although the problem was better understood and strategies improved by redensification and non-administrative instruments, those measures were still not enough for solving the problem.

By 1986, irregular ownership was still a common practice and the city was still growing. On that year, the Urban Development Plan for the Federal District was modified changing the "transition zone" for a "conservation line" and creating several programs with a defined strategy.

By the end of 1991 Article 27 of the constitution was modified allowing to sell and trespass common lands legally. Even though it may seem this measure went against informal occupation by raising the prices, what it really did was allowing the best lands to be purchased at commercial prizes thus pushing the lower income population to the worst parts, perpetuating the illegal occupation scheme.

The conclusion stemming from these facts is that the problem of growth in Mexico City is due, on one hand, to a typical process in underdeveloped countries; and to the lack, not of planning, but of effective and concrete instruments. ⊗