

The *Sá da Bandeira* Street in Oporto

Paradigm(s) of the urban transformation on the 1st half of the XX century

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Scope. The present paper is enrolled in the scope of the discipline of History and Theory of Architecture. More precisely, it refers to the domain of Urban History, in an attempt to reconstitute or reinterpret a specific moment in a long process of urban transformations and urban consolidation in the city of Oporto. Therefore, it is defined an understanding of "housing", believing that between buildings and streets exists an inner formal relationship that determines the configuration and the character of both.

Object of study. In a wider sense, we intend to underline the production and transformation processes of a particular street in Oporto, the *Sá da Bandeira* street, and their collective residential buildings - while simultaneously autonomous and related phenomena. This street is the result of the city centre reformulation in the mid-nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. It's particular interest lies in the diversity of its buildings and urban plots. In this long consolidation process, urban plots acquired varied configurations: narrow deep units, larger and wider plots, and border urban plots, which received several building programs. Housing, commerce and office buildings were construct side-by-side, with distinctive urban front, and different relationships with the street and the interior block. These buildings attempt to experiment new solutions and update architecture, by presenting different spatial conceptions, languages and internal distribution.

Methodologies. Aim. In this sense, the analytical methodologies were divided in a second reading of the available information about this street at the "archive" and in a "topological" and a "typological and morphological approach" to the building plans. Using the decomposition and reordering of the documents by which it designs, constructs (urban studies, city projects) and represents the urban space (photography, postcards) this research will attempt to demonstrate the change in planning strategies and the urban building block. This constitutes the main activity of the General Plan of Urbanization Office (GEPGU), established in 1939. The documents analysed in this paper, were made available by the City Historical Archives of Oporto. The Town Plan Services and the Urbanization Office formerly organized them. We also worked with image documents held by the Photography Archive of Oporto. As far as building is concerned, the analysis will be set to evaluate an hypothetical causal relationship between the form of aggregation and building configuration and the size of the available urban plot.

Hypothesis. In what concerns to urban morphology, the research hypothesis is that *Sá da Bandeira* is a "laboratory" in which arise new forms of urban housing, the change of scale (roads and buildings), and amendment of the new streets construction's strategies, a system integrated with the *Aliados* Avenue and the expansion of the urban centre. The adaptability of the urban layout is tested, while setting a city urban fabric transformation process, as well as urban intervention strategies and thoughts. In our view, the urban intervention match with the different kinds of urban plot division, logical occupation of the urban plot, and also images of the city. At the beginning of the 40's of the XX century, at the Oporto downtown, we observed:

- a city transformed from a planned way, simultaneously tearing the existing urban fabric, attempting to solve the circulatory system, and give the urban area a logic, as it can be seen in the extension either of *Sá da Bandeira* and both perpendicular and parallel streets;

- a city updated in what concerns to the urban layout, with planned intervention corresponding to the new urban plot division and building assembling, for example, in buildings that shape the *D. João I* Square (*Rialto* Building and *Atlantic Palace*);

- a city with an updated image, with new languages and figures, which encode the meanings of the new era, to which the rising bourgeoisie want to report to. The upper *Sá da Bandeira's* blocks are representative of this argument.

Relevancy. On this paper, the disclosed inquiry is based on the research of the FORM and FIGURE of the city as simultaneously spatial support and building. It is a formal, topological, typological and morphological analysis. In this point of view, far from restricted to a street and its buildings, it opens pathways and perspectives, providing specific data for new approaches to the subject of the Collective Housing Buildings and Urban Morphology of Oporto. The basic thesis implied in this paper is defined in the study of "city parts", tangible laboratories as the case of *Sá da Bandeira* Street and its buildings, for the existent city's reinhabit and rehabilitation.

Keywords: - *Sá da Bandeira* street; - Collective housing buildings; - Urban transformation; - Topological/typological approach.

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