

| Defining a methodological model for the protection of contemporary residential heritage: 20th-century public housing

Project team

Abstract

Designing a methodological model for the protection of contemporary residential heritage, specifically 20th-century public housing, is the general objective of this project, based on applied research into a particular case study: the neighbourhood of El Carmen in Seville. The past experience spearheaded by the IAPH made it possible to transfer the current model of built cultural heritage to the specific requirements of modern heritage. The results show a heritagisation process which, in this case, should lead to a specialised knowledge of contemporary architecture, in order to propose courses of action in keeping with the contemporary definition of heritage protection.

Identifying the object of study

The first phase of work is always focused on identifying, describing, gathering necessary data and justifying, if necessary, the case or object of study on which heritage work is to be done. This process will involve, at the very least, the following tasks:

Presenting and describing the public housing element to be studied

This is a basic presentation and general description that summarises what is known about the residential complex under study at the time. If necessary, it should also include a justification or explanation of the reasons why this property needs to be worked on.

Compiling technical data

Fact sheets or other methods will be used to systematically compile specific data on: the origins of the residential complex; subsequent interventions, extensions and alterations; agents involved in its design, construction and modifications; total number of houses and types, when appropriate; net and gross floor areas and open spaces; number of floors; location within the city/territory; number of occupants; presence of community services and/or city facilities; and other information, depending on the specific characteristics of the object of study, which will have to be evaluated by the technical team in charge.

Verifying administrative/listed status

This entails obtaining precise information on the property's status with regard to its level of administrative protection, reviewing the potential sectoral effects of all applicable heritage laws at the national, regional and local levels. It is particularly important to determine the degree of heritage protection, indicating the status, class and type of legal protection it currently enjoys, as well as any mentions of listed or protected status in urban planning documents. This report must also indicate if the object of study appears in inventories, lists, catalogues or any other documents that certify its merits and value as an example of 20th-century or Modern Movement architecture.

Background research and theoretical framework

Before establishing a specific methodology for this particular case study, materialised in the work plan, we will need to study the background and determine the theoretical framework in which the work is to be carried out.

Background research in the field of study

We will need to compile documentary sources on the object of study: contemporary heritage and 20th-century public housing. Specifically, we will consult lists and inventories in which the residential complex is included, with special reference to the characteristics and values, when applicable, that justified their addition to said lists.

We will also read up on the work done by institutions specialised in modern heritage conservation, in particular Fundación DOCOMOMO Ibérico. Additionally, we will include the guidelines established by the UNESCO and other organisations that may reveal similar experiences which can be used as a benchmark.

Background and framework of theoretical notions and concepts

We will study the theoretical foundations, existing literature and state of the art with regard to: the revision of the concept of heritage as applied to contemporary residential architecture; the architecture of the Modern Movement or other cultural movements related to the object of study; urban history and the integration of contemporary architecture; urban outskirts and related social aspects; urban obsolescence; and any other subjects deemed relevant in light of the specific characteristics of the object of study.

Theoretical-methodological frame of reference

Any planned intervention and/or action involving a heritage asset, particularly in the case of 20th-century architecture, requires a profound, comprehensive and integrated knowledge of the theories and methodologies that have been published (whether by government agencies or in the technical and academic fields) on contemporary heritage in general and public housing in particular. At the very least, we will consult the following:

Guidelines for heritage projects and heritage intervention methods established by international, national or local organisations (UNESCO, IPCE, IAPH, etc.) of acknowledged expertise.

International charters and standards, especially those related to interventions on built heritage and contemporary heritage. We recommend including the following documents, among others:

- Krakow Charter (2000)
- Brasilia Charter (1995)
- Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)
- Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro (27/05/2005). Council of Europe Treaties Series no. 199
- Davos Declaration “Towards a High-Quality *Baukultur* for Europe”, Conference of European Ministers of Culture, Davos, Switzerland (20–22/01/2018)
- Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture: Managing the Historic Urban Landscape (2005)
- UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a Glossary of Definitions (UNESCO General Conference, 10/11/2011)

Leading national and international projects and experiences of acknowledged methodological rigour, which increased or improved the heritage value of the objects of intervention

Developing a methodology and work plan

Although the aim of this chapter is to set out a general methodology of action and research on 20th-century public housing, before undertaking a specific project it is essential to establish a methodology and work plan adapted to its unique characteristics. The general principles for designing the methodology, creating a multidisciplinary work team and determining which research and intervention methods should be applied are described below.

Designing the methodology

The process of designing a methodology for the intervention project should, at the very least, address the following aspects.

Defining the scope of research

Chronological/evolutionary phases

We will prepare a timeline of the object of study to serve as a basis for planning the timing of all future work and research on the asset. These phases will be specific to each case, reflecting how it has evolved over time and any significant milestones or substantial changes. Nonetheless, as a general rule, any 20th-century architecture project will have three basic phases (described below), which can be expanded or redefined to fit the object of study.

Phase 0. Basic and detailed design, from the initial concept or programming, the circumstances that motivated the project and its historical and cultural context, to the completion of the design process and the commencement of works.

Phase 1. Material construction of the design and the road to protected or listed status, including any possible alterations made prior to its inclusion in inventories, lists or any other official document acknowledging it as contemporary heritage.

Phase 2. This phase extends from the moment it became a protected or listed asset to the present day.

As stated above, these phases are merely informative guidelines, and others may be defined if there have been major interventions that marked a turning point in the formal and constructive recognition of the object of study.

Scales of approach

We will adopt a multi-scale approach to the object of study, always considering it within the urban and territorial fabric and as an integral part and consequence of its interaction with the surrounding landscape. In this respect, although intermediate scales may be required in certain cases given their particular characteristics, in general we will use three basic scales of approach:

Territorial system and integration in the landscape, considering the object of study on the largest scale in order to identify the territorial systems, infrastructures and landscape units in which it is inserted, as well as how it interacts with that landscape.

Urban scale (residential architecture, neighbourhood and city), considering the building or buildings in their immediate context, their borders, public spaces, urban infrastructures and relationship with neighbouring districts.

Typological scale (housing block and residence), focusing on the individual object of study: multi-family or single-family housing blocks, or the different types of houses found in the residential complex under study.

Characterising the object of study

We will need to define different thematic areas for designing a study strategy in order to properly characterise it. The areas listed below are

proposed as a starting point, although they will later need to be adapted to the particular features and relevant aspects of each case. As the works progress, other elements for characterising or reorganising the information may be added to the existing categories if deemed necessary:

- Functional analysis
- Historical and social analysis
- Study of constructive and technological aspects
- Social value
- Environmental analysis

Identifying and diagnosing the values and attributes of the object of study

In the methodological planning process, the characterisation phase will be followed by the identification of the values and attributes of the object of study. To this end, we will first define the different categories of these values. Next, we will propose a system of thematic classification suited to a 20th-century public housing complex, tailored to each individual case as the work team of each project or study deems best:

- Documentary
- Functional / aesthetic / typological
- Technical / constructive
- Social
- Environmental
- Other

The methodological planning will also include a phase in which, once the object of study has been characterised and its values suitably identified, we will analyse its condition and evolution to come up with a reliable diagnosis of its heritage values.

Principles of heritage intervention for the object of study

The next step in the methodology process will be to establish the heritage guidelines and criteria that will determine any actions proposed during this project or after the fact.

Strategies and guidelines of action

The final step in the methodological design process will be to plan and propose a series of strategic guidelines of action, based on the characterisation,

assessment and diagnosis of the object of study, as well as basic intervention criteria for working on the asset.

Distributing and sharing research results

When planning the methodology of the proposed study or project, we must also plan how the partial and final results of this work will be distributed and shared with the scientific community and society in general. Whenever possible, we will attempt to publish the research results and all documents and data generated in the course of the project in open-access media.

We will also prepare an internal communications plan and a PR and distribution plan. New technology should be used to promote channels of distribution that engage with society and involve citizens in a participatory process.

Creating a multidisciplinary work team

After determining the spatial and chronological characteristics of the object of study and designing the methodology to be used in our research, we must assemble a work team consisting of individuals from various disciplines and with complementary skills. It is also important to ensure that every area or field involved in the project is covered by one or more team members, based on their scientific/technical expertise and past experience on other projects involving contemporary or residential architecture.

The composition of the team assembled to work on the object of study must be justified, providing full details of their respective disciplines, technical or institutional affiliations, skills and, in particular, previous experience and practical knowledge of the different aspects or areas involved in studying and treating the heritage asset.

The multidisciplinary team must be technically and scientifically equipped to handle the following tasks (among others):

- Historical research into contemporary heritage and associated urban processes
- Planimetric surveys of the property's current condition and proposed design
- Photographic studies (specialised and in the course of ordinary fieldwork)
- Documentation of contemporary heritage

- Documentation and conservation of the architecture of the Modern Movement or other cultural movements related to the asset
- Application of current regulations and codes (such as CTE, the Spanish Building Code) to architectural heritage
- Documents management, including source and reference materials and new documents generated in the course of the project's different phases
- Environmental studies of the complex and its surroundings
- Technological and constructive characterisation of the existing structure
- Housing inspections, conducted with the permission and cooperation of the owners
- Anthropological studies, conducted with the permission and cooperation of the owners
- Plan for civic cooperation and participation in every project phase
- Communication plans, for both the team and the public distribution of results
- Online development to integrate the cooperation and communication plans

Given the complexity of heritage work and its inherently multidisciplinary nature, additional tasks may be necessary depending on the specific characteristics of each object of study, which will probably require teams whose members come from a wide variety of fields, although they will all need to work together and complement each other. These different experts will be coordinated by a supervising team, to ensure that their efforts produce consistent and integrated results.

Determining research and intervention methods/techniques

In close connection to the multidisciplinary team creation phase, we must also anticipate the different methods and techniques that will be needed for research or intervention work on the housing complex under study. The decision to include or exclude different methods from the project methodology, or to add them at a later point when new tasks or research problems come up, will be made on a case by case basis. Some of the skills sets and techniques which, as a general rule, should be incorporated in the design of a methodology for studying 20th-century public housing are as follows:

- Graphic techniques:
 - Professional and field photography
 - Architectural drawing (manual and digital-CAD)
 - 3D surveying
 - Integration of spatial information and data (BIM, SIG)
 - Other graphic techniques

- Archival and documentary research methods
 - Consulting physical archives
 - Consulting digital/virtual documents and archives
 - Periodicals research
 - Document management techniques
- Participatory methods:
 - Participatory observation
 - In-depth interviews
 - Focus groups
 - Surveys
- Fieldwork:
 - Gathering technical data
 - Non-destructive tests
 - Oral sources

Other techniques/methods associated with the specific features of the different residential complexes

Characterising the object of work

The first substantive phase of the work will always be the characterisation of the object of study, with approaches that incorporate different scales, times, areas of knowledge and agents. Thanks to the IAPH's experimental work with an organised set, all tasks have been grouped into five analytical categories, which could serve as a reference for other cases of 20th-century residential architectural heritage, though naturally the content, name and organisation must, as in every other area, be tailored to the specific needs of each object of study.

1. Functional analysis. Bearing in mind that one of the basic principles of 20th-century architecture, and public housing in particular, is functionalism applied to domestic needs, we will have to analyse the distribution and flow of habitat functions in each type of house found in this complex, as well as how those residences are grouped inside the buildings, and how the buildings are distributed and grouped in the larger urban setting, creating open and communal areas, borders, entrances, mobility, connections to neighbouring districts and a distinctive urban landscape, among other possibilities.
2. Historical and social analysis. It is essential to understand the object of study in light of its historical and social context. To this end, we will need to investigate the origin of the residential complex, the political, historical and

demographic circumstances that motivated its construction, the names and profiles of the architects and urban planners who designed it, noteworthy events that occurred during its design and construction, its original occupants and the renewal or maintenance of its social fabric.

3. Study of constructive and technological aspects. This study will review the technical decisions made, in the design phase and in any subsequent modifications, in terms of constructive and technological solutions to complete the structure and design open spaces, if they exist. In particular, it will involve consulting all available technical documentation and assessing the condition of the buildings to see if they meet current standards of safety, comfort and habitability.
4. Social value. We will use research methods to determine how the object of study is viewed and valued by society. This research will focus primarily on the current occupants of the residential complex, but it will also include the first and previous occupants and attempt to gauge the general social perception of the complex's architecture, design, quality, urban planning and all other related aspects. Additionally, it will investigate what people remember about the historical and social circumstances of its design and construction, as well as their past and present experiences of the homes themselves and the surrounding public and communal areas.
5. Environmental analysis. Ambient and environmental factors will need to be considered, with regard to the functionality of the structure itself, the arrangement of common areas and, in particular, open spaces that respect existing flora and fauna. This analysis will also evaluate the creation of a healthy living environment based on urban planning decisions and how the complex is integrated with its surroundings and the landscape.

Identifying and diagnosing values and attributes

Based on the methodology established for this phase of the project, we will create a system for identifying the values and attributes of the residential complex under study, as both an existing project and with regard to its possible transformations, at the time of the study and considering future opportunities and threats. The effects of time will be incorporated in the characterisation of the heritage asset, but we will also assess how its values have changed and evolved over the years—in other words, provide a diagnosis.

As a general rule, values should be organised in groups that coincide, whenever possible, with the categories established for analysis, although more may be

added if deemed necessary. Examples of the kinds of values or attributes generally found in these types of buildings are: documentary, functional, aesthetic, typological, technical, constructive, social and environmental. The diagnosis will be structured according to the same groups used to identify values and attributes.

Establishing principles and guidelines for heritage action

Knowing that heritage or heritagisation processes are modern mechanisms of protection, we want to propose a heritage action that will ensure the active protection and urban conservation of this contemporary heritage.

“Urban conservation is not limited to the preservation of single buildings. It views architecture as but one element of the overall urban setting, making it a complex and multifaceted discipline. By definition, then, urban conservation lies at the very heart of urban planning.” (2011 HUL Recommendation glossary)

These principles and guidelines cannot be designed or implemented independently; they must implicate all the different agents involved in conservation, forming what can be described as a heritage community.

“A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.” (Jokilehto, 2016)

A strategic plan will be formulated, based on the values identified in the previous phase, with courses of action that will define or guide projects to be implemented in future.

Proposing strategic courses of action

Based on the identified values and in response to the need for strategic planning, we will reach a consensus on proposed courses of action for future projects involving the object of study. After applying the methodology to the initial case study, these strategic courses of action may involve one or more of the following:

1. Enhancing the value and appreciation of Modern Movement public housing in general, and within the territory of the selected case study in particular. This will involve recording, documenting, analysing and publicising the housing complex under study, as well as the spatial, territorial, political and cultural

context in which it was designed and built. The houses will also be studied from a chronological perspective, underscoring the pertinence of the original technical and design solutions as well as the vicissitudes of the construction process and the alterations made to the buildings and open spaces over time, putting them in context.

2. Condition and adapt the spatial distribution and typology of the houses or housing complexes. This course of action recognises the contemporary merits of 20th-century public housing and aims to improve the habitability of the residential complexes under study while respecting their heritage value. In this respect, reconditioning or adaptation works will not be limited to the distribution or uses of the houses themselves and may extend to the communal areas inside or outside the residential complexes, as well as to associated public spaces, neighbourhood facilities and equipment/resources required to improve access to the complex and its connections with the city and territory.

3. Modernise to improve habitability. From a technical perspective, the buildings will need to be modernised to bring them up to current habitability standards. In this respect, we must consider original technical/constructive solutions or interventions that would allow the buildings to comply with current regulations, but which are also compatible with the need to preserve the heritage values and attributes identified in the specific case study. In general, this modernisation will focus on the performance of the building envelopes and the energy efficiency of the complex, among other factors.

4. Improve conditions of social interaction and address infrastructures associated with the residences. This course of action focuses on the social component of 20th-century housing, drawing on individual and collective memories of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the buildings and the arrival of their first occupants, and proposing measures to improve social interactions among current residents and their relationship with the built environment. This will involve social work as well as efforts to promote neighbourly relations through interventions in public areas and communal infrastructures.

5. Applying environmental and sustainable criteria to public spaces. Another strategic course of action will involve the application of environmental and sustainable criteria, not only focusing on the spatial, technical and constructive conditions of the residential structures, but also and especially on any public spaces within the building complex. This will entail cataloguing and classifying

existing vegetation and studying the possibility of improving or adding to it, as well as reviewing the condition of pavements, street furniture, connections, traffic, pedestrian or cycle paths, creating shade and improving air quality, among many other possibilities.

Bibliography and sources

A record will be kept of all bibliographic sources, databases, guidelines, regulations and any other documentation consulted and/or used by any member of the team as a direct or indirect source of information for the project or research process. This information will be properly systematised, organised and referenced in all reports generated by the project and all documents intended for publication, in accordance with one of the main bibliographic reference systems currently used by the academic community.

