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Residential Landscapes Sponsored by Companhia União Fabril (CUF) in Barreiro (1945-1972). Promotion of Multi-Family Working-Class Housing in Post-WWII Portugal

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Introduction

1 Companhia União Fabril (CUF), a chemical company whose origins go back to the second half of the 19th century, grew to be one of the largest private companies in Portugal until its nationalization after the April Revolution in 1974. The company was founded in 1898 by Alfredo da Silva (1871-1942), an adept of the industrial paternalism model, who remained its charismatic leader until his death. He was then succeeded by his son-in-law, Manuel de Mello (1895-1966), who alongside his two sons, Jorge (1921-2013) and José (1927-2009) de Mello, gradually transformed the company into a very large conglomerate with more than 150 companies and about 40 thousand workers.

2 With Alfredo da Silva in command, CUF grew internally, went international and expanded to colonial Africa, while simultaneously addressing some of the needs of its workers, including housing. Its following administrations trailed the same path, devising solutions that were adjusted to the evolution of the Estado Novo regime and to the shifting national and international socioeconomic contexts. Historiography has

confirmed the adhesion of Alfredo da Silva to the "traditional" model of the *vilas operárias* (row houses with back-to-back patios) located very close to the factories, in a dual strategy between social assistance and restriction of workers' freedoms. It was his successor that promoted construction in the outskirts of the traditional city and the factory grounds. Manuel de Mello favored suburban workers' neighborhoods, which were aesthetically and programmatically modern, as part of a national recreation of the Functional City. This imported the *siedlung* residential scheme to the Portuguese territory, which had marked the central-European suburban landscape between the wars. These new housing models were one of a number of benefits that promoted an image of the CUF worker as closer to the middle-class, an idea that emerged after World War II.

3 Lastly, Jorge de Mello used the new legislative tools to gradually emancipate this class from CUF's protection, withdrawing the housing agenda from the strategic plan of the company and promoting individual initiatives towards homeownership (construction and/or acquisition). This last cycle witnessed a policy in which CUF systematically sold the housing units it managed, thus gradually abandoning its landlord position. Even though the company was nationalized in 1975, this policy was eventually resumed, culminating during a full democratic period (throughout the 1980s and 1990s). This transfer of house ownership to residents — by both public and private powers — can be framed within global tendencies that, in the case of some authoritarian regimes, seem to begin even before democracy.[1]

4 This article addresses gradual, albeit significant changes in CUF's strategies regarding its housing promotion policy — a hallmark of the company since its early days — within the context of the evolution of its welfare programs in a post-World War II Portugal. The starting point of the research corresponds to the housing projects developed by CUF for its workers between 1945 and 1972 in Barreiro, a town on the southern bank of the Tagus River, opposite to Lisbon, where the company had been gradually establishing its main factory grounds since the beginning of the twentieth century.[2]

5 We argue that the publication of the Law no. 2092 of April 9th 1958, which called upon welfare institutions to provide answers to the housing problem, was a fundamental step in the transformation of the Portuguese urban, suburban and rural environment, with massive consequences that historiography has yet to fully address. This law, which allowed private companies to obtain loans for the construction of employee housing, was used by CUF and many other private firms within a context of providing benefits to their workers. In CUF's case, the highly propagandized "*Obra Social*" (social work) offered tangible benefits regarding housing, healthcare and education, among many others.

6 The article identifies workers' neighborhoods constructed on the Barreiro factory grounds, namely Santa Bárbara, distinguishing them from those later built on the Lavradio farmland. The former was located on the land of Quinta do Gandum and underwent several construction phases (1908, 1928 and 1943-1945), while the latter was built between 1951 and 1956. The article goes on to describe the operations that were carried out after the implementation of the aforementioned law, between 1958 and 1967, and its repercussions up until the eve of the 1974 April Revolution.

7 Taking into account the absence of systematic studies regarding both company housing projects in Portugal and the full impact of the 1958 law, the article tries to claim that the implementation of this law was a main driver in the fundamental transformation of

the housing programs carried out by the country's largest employing companies. Using CUF as an example, we can argue that the benefits provided by the 1958 law to employers came with a higher degree of state control, namely over architectural and urban design. This meant that the companies had to — and were probably happy to — relinquish control over such issues, while at the same time reorienting their welfare programs to the newly emancipated middle-class among their workers.

8 In CUF's case, this situation marked the final stages of its paternalistic approach, leading affordable housing for the working-class to increasingly become a public, centralized responsibility. This resulted in the creation of centralized organisms, whose lack of on-the-ground knowledge was balanced — at least from the point of view of its technicians — with the most recent studies in architecture and urbanism, by then strengthened by an increased multidisciplinary character. This distance signaled, however, the further establishment of a discontinuous and fragmented landscape that paralleled the housing landscapes usually associated with the periphery. By restricting the companies' strategies and scope of action, the 1958 law consequently conditioned the urban and architectural design of the projects that it helped to promote.

Residential strategies of a Portuguese industrial company: CUF and its architects

9 In 1963, the April edition of the monthly bulletin, *CUF Informação Interna,* introduced housing as one of the social concerns of the company, alongside healthcare. Referred to as "reduced rent neighborhoods", the topic was printed between "assistance to pregnant women" and "access to public baths". Accompanying the text was a photograph of the four blocks of what was popularly called "*Bairro Novo da CUF*" (new neighborhood) in Lavradio. These were the first housing units built by the company outside factory grounds, relatively far from the noxious smoke that characterized the industrial facility.[3] The design of these blocks had been developed by architect Fernando Silva (1914-1983) in the decade before (Fig. 1), following an initial urban arrangement by Luís Cristino da Silva (1896-1976) which was restructured by Fernando Monjardino (a civil engineer and employee of the company).[4]

Figure1. CUF Bairro Operário – *Perspectiva dos Blocos de Habitação Tipos A, B, C* [Perspective of housing blocks in Lavradio], Fernando Silva, 1951



FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive: LUE5359

10 In those years, CUF had about twenty thousand workers scattered throughout different production units located in the metropolis and, as of 1942, in the African colonies. In Barreiro alone, there were 8,400 CUF workers, benefiting from various social services which were publicized by the propaganda means of the company, including the aforementioned bulletin, created to disclose the outcomes of the Comissão Interna da Empresa (CIE, internal commission of the company) meetings.[5]

11 With the end of World War II, and in a context of postwar optimism and modernization goals, the various leaderships after Alfredo da Silva gradually adjusted to evolutions in Portuguese legislation, which were spearheaded, in many sectors, by CUF itself. On April 9th 1958, the government launched Law no. 2092,[6] with the objective of enabling the "cooperation of welfare institutions in housing provision", within the corporatist organization and stratification that characterized the dictatorship. The new law framed a new loan practice through the "assignment [of the] capital" of these institutions to the production and/or improvement of housing units. The number of possible agents who could provide solutions to the housing problem was greatly increased, benefiting from the involvement of private companies, some of which — like CUF — already had experience in housing promotion. Funding was achieved via loans conceded by "welfare unions or retirement funds".[7] Besides the private companies themselves, other beneficiaries included employees of "taxpaying companies" or associates of the several corporatist organizations laid out in the early days of the Estado Novo in the 1930s (such as the Casas do Povo, which organized rural labor). The range of possible housing typologies was also diverse, from single-family, isolated homes to apartment blocks. Construction or acquisition of new houses by the future owners was promoted, as was affordable rental units and the rehabilitation of existing homes.

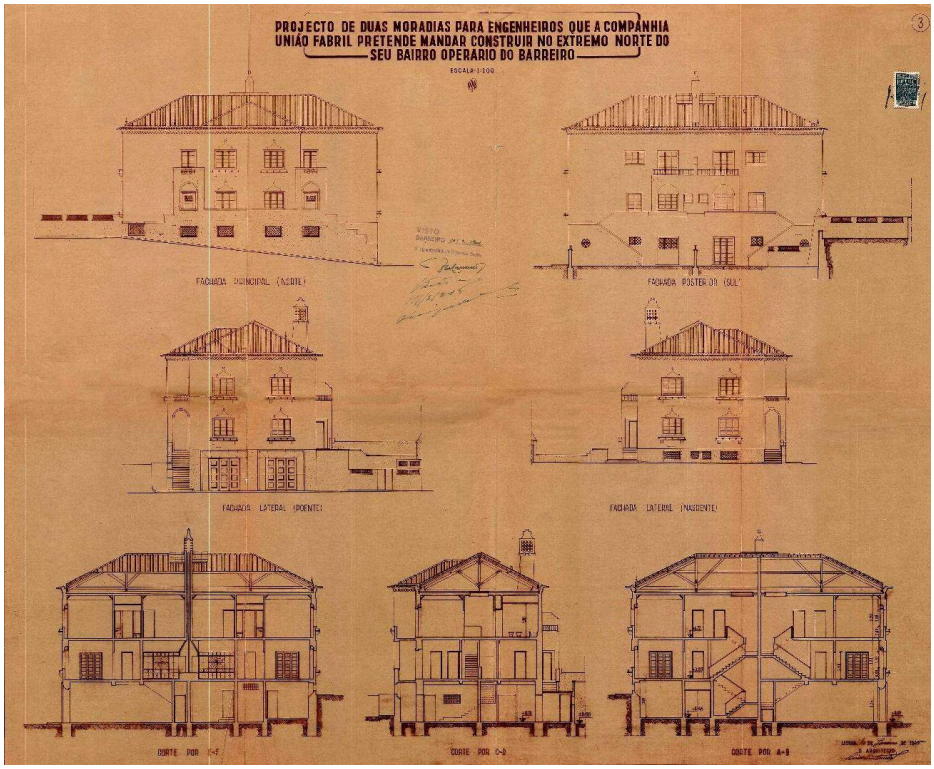
12 With its own Caixa de Previdência (welfare fund), established in 1940 under Alfredo da Silva's administration, CUF could naturally benefit from the 1958 law, seizing the opportunity to change the strategy that it had been following up until then: that is, to completely control and finance the process of housing provision, from design to construction. After the inauguration of the second phase of the Bairro Novo in Lavradio, the company began encouraging its workers to access the different types of housing allowed by the new law, evaluating their individual financial capacity through

tenders and surveys. The subject was addressed in articles and questionnaires aimed at those interested in applying. The shortage of housing — caused by the migration of rural populations to the city, attracted by industrial jobs — was addressed by the company as a problem of utmost importance. Understood as a "social duty", the allocation of houses by CUF was seen in 1963 as a contribution to "the well-being of its staff".[8]

13 Until then, the allocation of houses followed Decree no. 13.980 of July 25th 1927, in which the provision of housing by private companies depended on the work contract itself. In this way, Portuguese legislation continued to promote protocols that curtailed the freedom of workers receiving this kind of "social benefit", functioning as a means to control mobility and work.[9] It was only under Jorge de Mello of the last administration, and with the decision to end rental contracts – inciting workers to acquire their units from the company –, that the cycle of employees' dependence on CUF for housing was broken.

14 The profiles of the architects hired by CUF, from the 1940s until the publication of the 1958 law, reflected the immediate fluctuating objectives of the company, whether they were practical or symbolic. While in 1951, when drawing the first sketches of the Lavradio neighborhood, Fernando Silva was still a young architect consolidating his status in the postwar professional milieu, Cristino da Silva, on the contrary, was already a very relevant actor.[10] As the most important figure of the Lisbon architectural school at the time, Cristino's being from the same generation as Manuel de Mello was a coincidence which may have aided in their initial contact. This seems to be indicated in Ana Lourenço Pinto's research, when describing his hiring after the death of Alfredo da Silva. One of Cristino's first projects for CUF — if not the first — was the late administrator's mausoleum, designed to honor the founder's memory with a monument worthy of his work. At the same time, in 1943, Cristino drew two semi-detached houses for engineers (Fig. 2): four residential units that followed an *Art Déco* aesthetic, characteristic of this period.

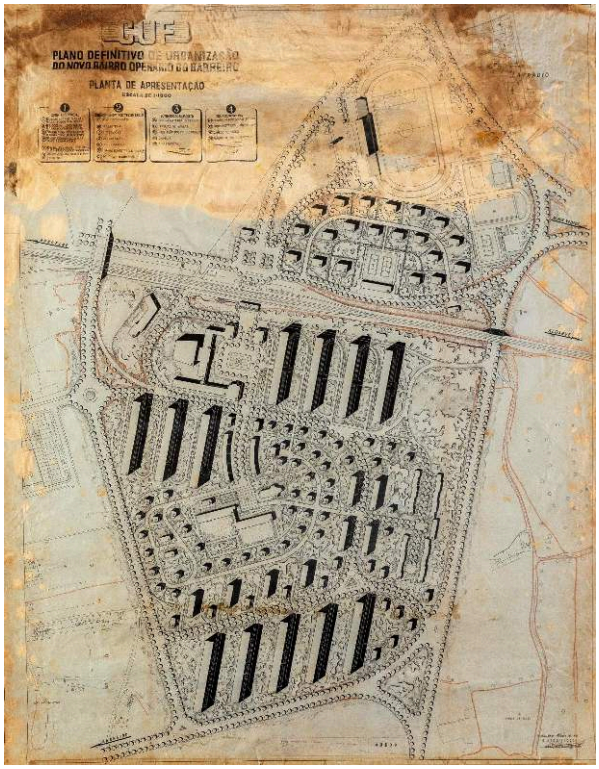
Figure 2. *Projecto de duas moradias para engenheiros que a Companhia União Fabril pretende mandar construir no extremo norte do seu bairro operário do Barreiro* [Santa Bárbara Neighborhood: Project of Two Houses for Engineers], Luís Cristino da Silva, 1945



Barreiro Municipal Archive: CT-1526/46

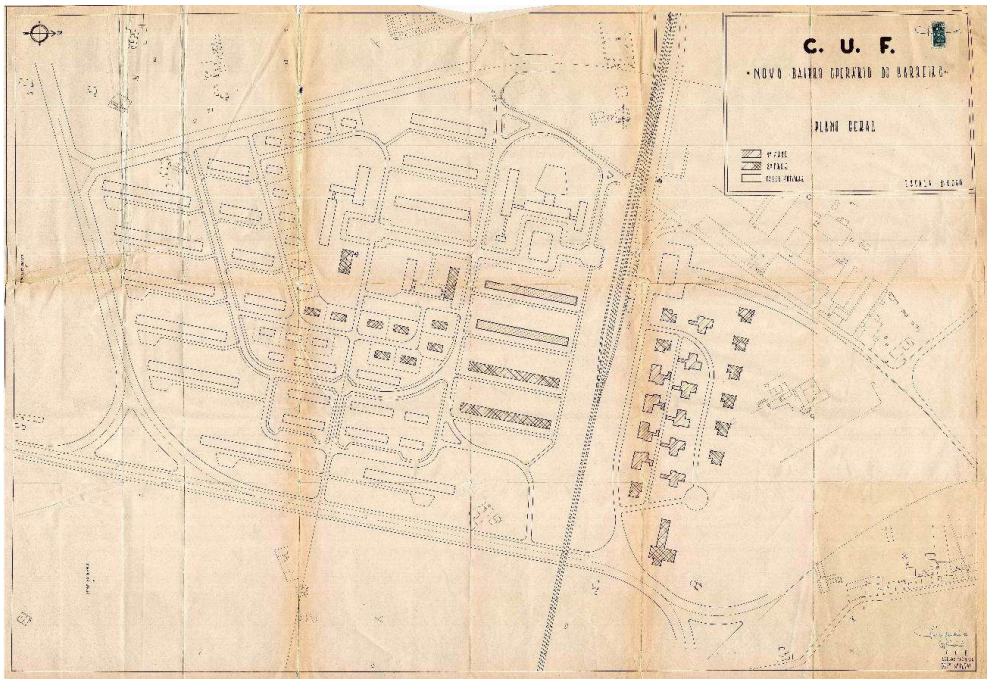
15 What is important to highlight here is the way in which, throughout the successive administrations, CUF followed the "spirit of the time", accompanying the shifting concepts of different periods. An example is the conception of the Lavradio neighborhood, carried out at the same time as the First National Congress of Architecture, held in Lisbon in 1948. Housing was the main theme of that congress, which witnessed the promotion of the urban model of the Athens Charter, translated to Portuguese by different actors throughout the 1940s and fully integrated, by the time of the event, in Portuguese architectural culture. In Lavradio, after a lengthy process with many alternatives, the urban and residential models ended up returning to the modern urban guidelines and its correspondent language, meeting the progressive image sought by the company in the postwar period. These models were more consonant with international architecture and urbanism, and were defended by new generations of architects. They ultimately became associated with the new suburban setting that could be found in places such as Lavradio, where a *tabula rasa* intervention could occur (Figs. 3 and 4). They were also present in the beginnings of the large residential urbanization that would characterize urban growth around main Portuguese cities in the decades that followed.[11]

Figure 3. ***Plano Definitivo de Urbanização do Novo Bairro Operário do Barreiro – Planta de Apresentação*** **[Definitive Urbanization Plan of the New Workers' Neighborhood of Barreiro]. Luís Cristino da Silva, 1951**



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Figure 4. CUF – ***Novo Bairro Operário – Plano Geral*** **(1ª, 2ª, 3ª fases) [CUF – New Workers' Neighborhood – General Plan]. CUF, Secção Técnica, des. Nº 17744. Fernando Monjardino, undated**

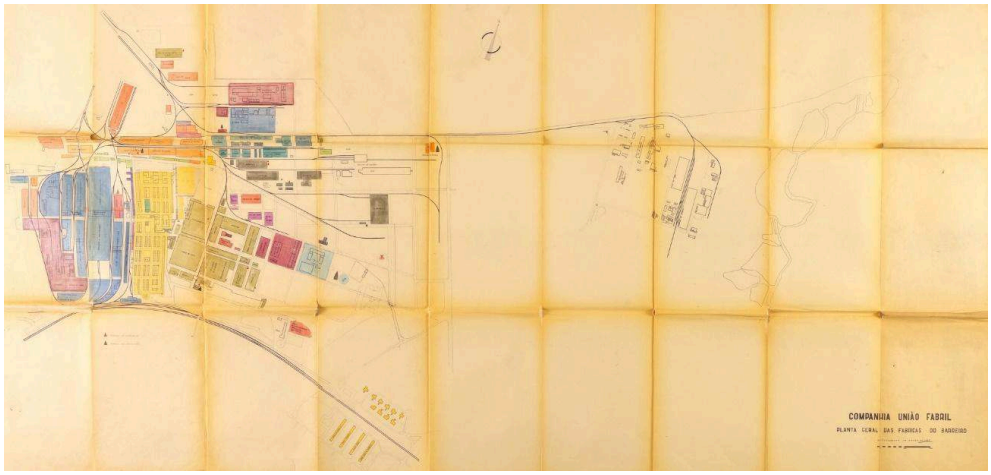


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16 The four blocks of the "Bairro Novo da CUF" exemplarily combined the urban design of Cristino with the architecture of Fernando Silva.[12] His hiring (via a limited competition) was a deliberate choice made by the company as an alternative to Cristino, who was by then an old professor at the Lisbon School of Fine Arts.[13] In truth, what remained of the successive urban designs carried out until the end of the 1940s was only the location of the four blocks and the Senior Staff Neighborhood north of the railway line. In an initial phase, Fernando Silva also designed two standard projects for this last ensemble, composed of single-family, detached houses. When the 1958 law was launched, the new Bairro Operário envisioned by Cristino da Silva and revised by Monjardino remained incomplete, producing a truncated urban landscape, open to new interpretations.

CUF neighborhoods before and after the publication of Law no. 2092/1958

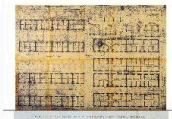
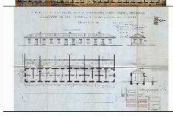
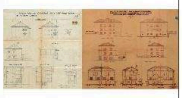
Figure 5. Companhia União Fabril, *Planta Geral das Fábricas do Barreiro* (General Plan of CUF's Factory Grounds in Barreiro), unsigned, 1958



Residential structures are shown in yellow.
FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive: 2VIC3441

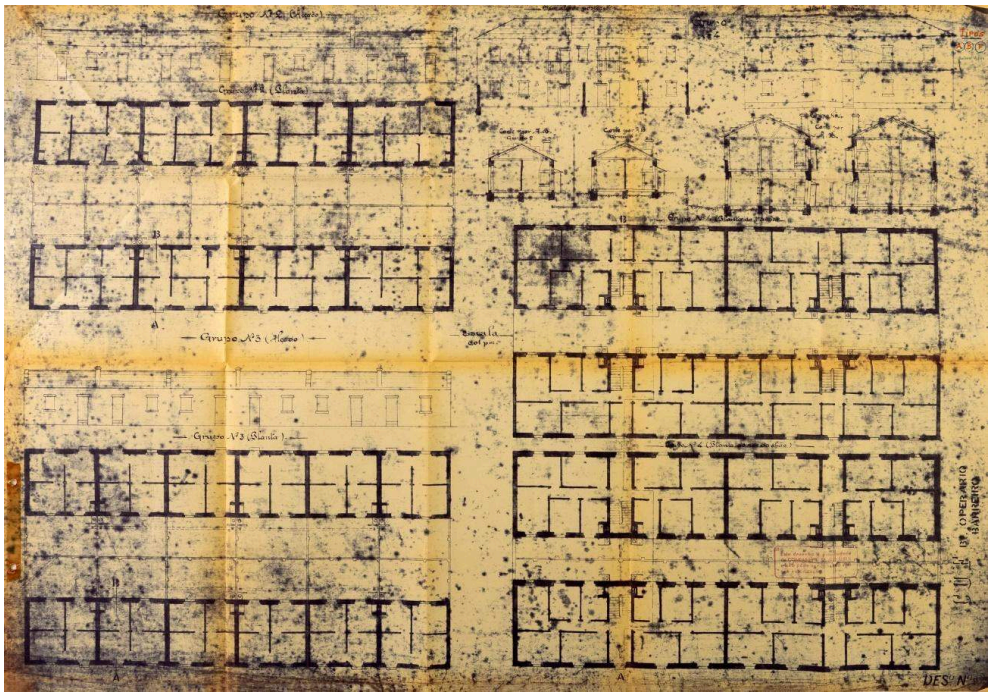
17 In 1958, an updated cartographic plan, outlining in detail CUF's Barreiro factory grounds, showed the accumulation of residential operations carried out by the company over the previous 50 years, from *vilas operárias*, to single-family detached houses and multi-family housing blocks (Fig. 5). Through a total of five chronologically autonomous residential developments, we can see a synthesis of the strategic decisions taken by the different CUF administrations, reflected in the aesthetic investment, program and users destined to each operation. (see Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of the housing developments promoted by CUF for its employees throughout the 20th century in Barreiro

	NAME OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD	LOCATION	DATES	PROJECT AUTHOR	NO. UNITS	LEGISLATION
	PRIMEIRO BAIRRO OPERÁRIO (1st Workers' Neighborhood)	LOWER AREA OF QUINTA DO GANDUM (close to the factory grounds)	INITIATED IN 1908	AUGUSTE LUCIEN STINVILLE ?	c. 210	
	BAIRRO DE SANTA BÁRBARA (2nd Workers' Neighborhood)	UPPER AREA OF QUINTA DO GANDUM (close to the factory grounds)	INITIATED IN 1928		c. 90	Decree no. 13.980 of July 25 1927
	ENGINEERS' HOUSES AT BAIRRO DE SANTA BÁRBARA	UPPER AREA OF QUINTA DO GANDUM (close to the factory grounds)	1929 - 1946	CRISTINO DA SILVA AND JOÃO PADRÃO	9	
	BAIRRO NOVO DA CUF (Bairro dos Católicos housing blocks)	QUINTA DA FONTE LAVRADIO	INAUGURATED IN 1955 - 1956	FERNANDO SILVA	184	
	MORADIAS QUINTA DA FONTE (Bairro dos Engenheiros houses)	QUINTA DA FONTE LAVRADIO	MID-1950s - MID 1960s	FERNANDO SILVA AND OTHERS	46	Law no. 2092 of April 9 1958
	BAIRRO ALFREDO DA SILVA (bairro das HE-FCP)	QUINTA DA FONTE LAVRADIO	INAUGURATED IN 1966	HE-FCP CENTRAL OFFICE	204	Law no. 2092 of April 9 1958

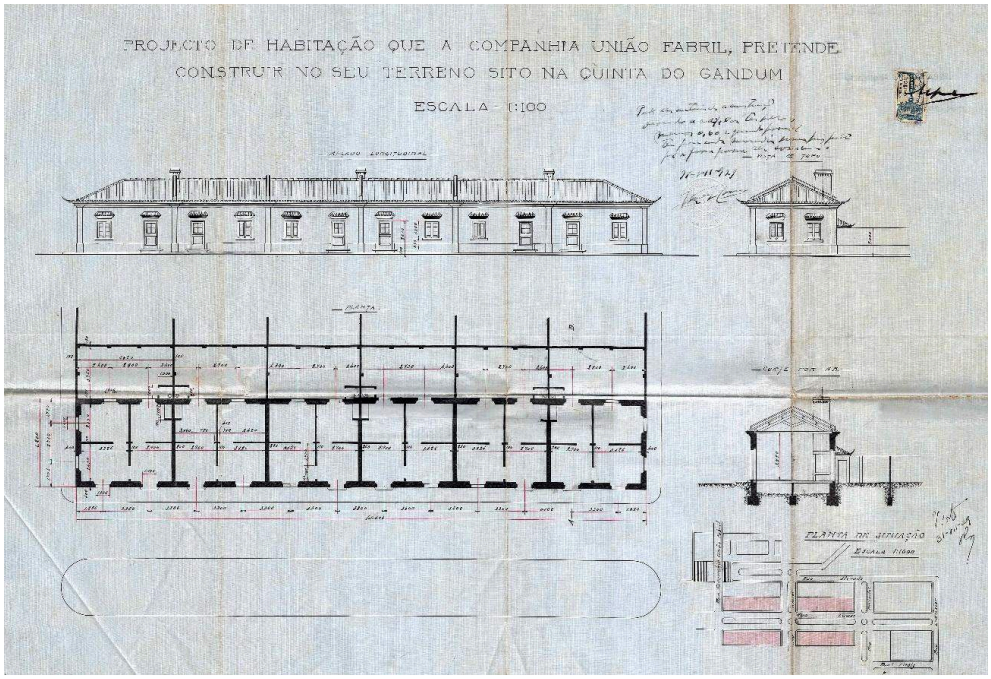
18 The "first generation" neighborhoods could be found on industrial land, occupying part of an old farm, Quinta do Gandum. These were operations that linked workers to the factories through proximity strategies: initiated in 1908, the first neighborhood already had social distinctions, distributing 88 units for workers and four to senior staff, growing to about 182 units which were gradually torn down over the course of the years and are almost completely demolished today (Fig. 6); another neighborhood (Figs. 7-8) whose construction began in 1928; and the engineers' homes, which were restricted to a few semi-detached houses in the northwest end, with projects by draftsman João Padrão (1908-1992) from the 1930s (Fig. 9), and by Cristino da Silva in the decade that followed (Fig. 10).

Figure 6. The first workers' neighborhood at Quinta do Gandum (lower area), initiated in 1908.



Plans, elevations and sections of the rowhouses. Unsigned, undated.
FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive: 2VIC3490

Figure 7. *Projecto de habitação que a Companhia União Fabril, pretende construir no seu terreno sito na Quinta do Gandum* [Row Houses in the Santa Bárbara Neighborhood].



Plan, section, elevations and site plan. Unrecognizable signature, 1929.
Barreiro Municipal Archive: CT-507/29

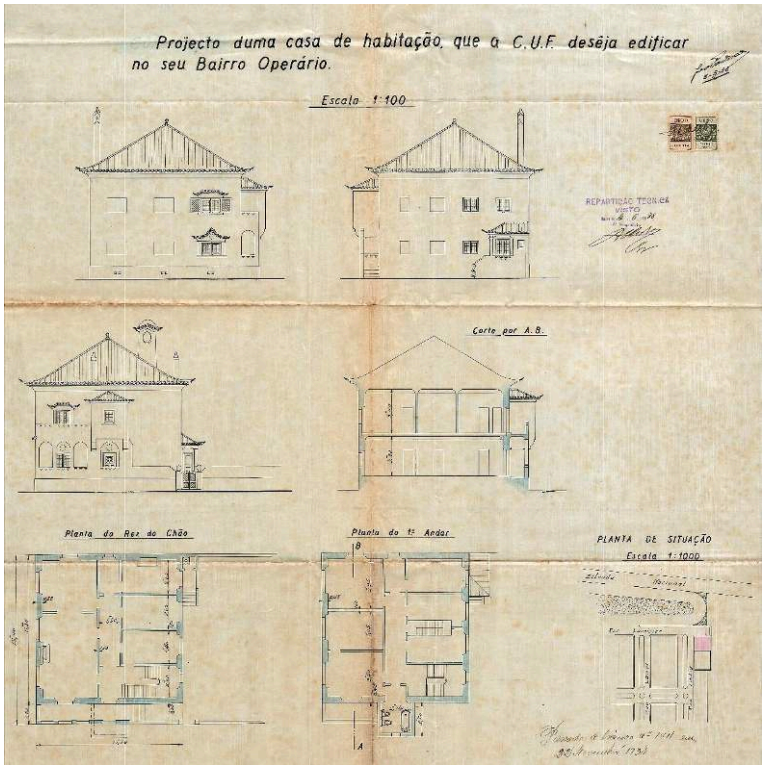
Figure 8. New workers' neighborhood (Santa Bárbara) at Quinta do Gandum (upper area), initiated in 1928.



Current view of one of the houses, with the cinema-gymnasium building (completed in 1949) on the right and the water tower in the background

João Cardim, 2021

Figure 9. *Projecto duma casa de habitação que a C.U.F. desêja edificar no seu Bairro Operário* [House for Engineer in the Santa Bárbara Neighborhood]. Plans, section, elevations and site plan. João Padrão, 1938



Barreiro Municipal Archive: CT-1067/38

Figure 10. Santa Bárbara neighborhood, current general view



In the left end of the plateau, we can see the five residential buildings for engineers (one green and four yellow) built between 1929 and 1946, in a total of 9 dwellings.
João Cardim, 2009

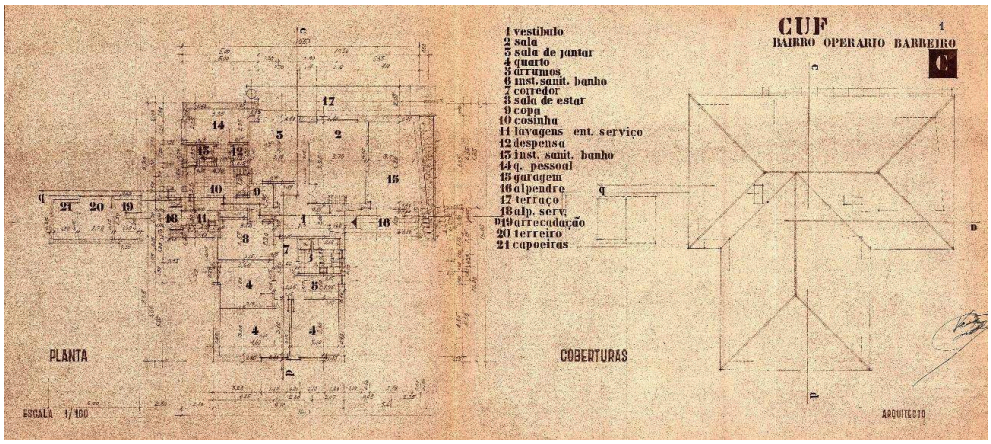
19 In 1945, this group of residential operations had about 277 units, the most recent of which involved a greater aesthetic investment, although the homes' interiors maintained an elementary functionality. Units were subdivided into four indefinite compartments, and came with primitive exterior bathrooms and a small backyard.[14]

20 The "second generation" neighborhoods were located in Lavradio, further away from the factory in a large area divided by the railway line, corresponding to the postwar operations with the referred contributions by Cristino and Fernando Silva. Its suburban setting was aligned with the guidelines of the new Barreiro Urbanization Plan, coordinated by architect Paulo Cunha (born in 1909) and approved in 1958 after a difficult process that took 13 years to conclude.[15] In addition to other strategic decisions, Cunha applied a more precise zoning approach, based on hygienist and rational arguments which prohibited the construction of residences near the industrial grounds. The environmental question was also addressed, paying attention to the prevailing winds that guided the factory smoke, and thus keeping houses outside these wind corridors.

21 In Lavradio, the modern blocks remained as the uniting element between Cristino da Silva's urban layout and Fernando Silva's architecture. However, the single-family detached houses of the Senior Staff Neighborhood did not follow the siting envisaged by the Definitive Urbanization Plan of the New Workers' Neighborhood of Barreiro, abandoning its initial radial structure. In 1958, ten L-shaped plan single-family houses designed by Fernando Silva (following two one-story standard designs, types B and C) were already completed, of a total of 19 that were envisaged for this initial phase. Both standard plans had a clear tripartite structure: living area, bedroom area and service area — including a maid's bedroom, an integrated garage, and a storage annex (Figs. 11-12). Architecturally, they seem to reflect the renewed postwar interest in Frank Lloyd Wright's "usonian houses" and in an American fenceless suburbia — which never found fertile ground in Portugal. This can be seen through an aerial perspective,

although the houses shown do not necessarily follow the standard plans that ended up being built (Fig. 13).

Figure 11. *CUF Bairro Operário Barreiro*. Single-Family detached house for the senior staff neighborhood, type C. Plans. Unsigned [probably Fernando Silva], undated.



Barreiro Municipal Archive: CT-15/54

Figure 12. Single-Family detached house for the senior staff neighborhood, type C. Current view from the street, with one of the multi-family blocks in the background



João Cardim, 2022

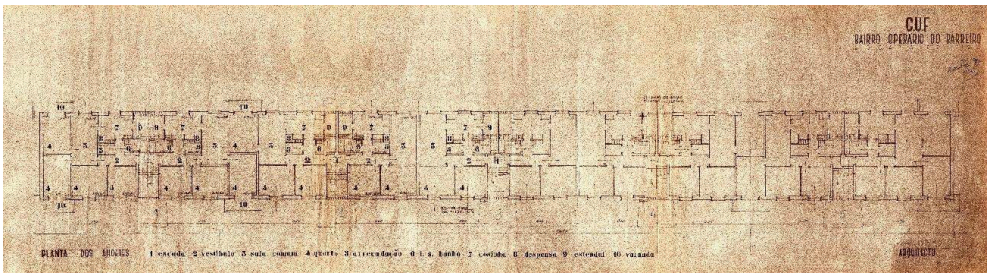
Figure 13. *CUF Bairro Operário – Perspectiva das Habitações do Pessoal Superior* [Senior Staff Single-Family Houses in Lavradio]. Fernando Silva, 1951



FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive: LUE5358

22 As for the multi-family blocks, the first two (called Alferrarede and Mirandela) were inaugurated in 1955. The other two (Soure and Canas de Senhorim) were completed the following year, fulfilling the first phase of occupation outside the factory grounds, with 184 dwellings.[16] The architectural form of the blocks was slightly different when compared with that of the initial 1951 project, varying between four and five floors, taking advantage of the terrain's slope, and displaying a clear aesthetic investment in some elements and details, such as the balconies and entrances (Figs. 14-15).[17]

Figure 14. *CUF Bairro Operário do Barreiro* [Final Project of the Housing Blocks]. Standard floor plan. Fernando Silva, 1954



Barreiro Municipal Archive: CT-15/54

Figure 15. Housing blocks in Lavradio, Current view from the street



João Cardim, 2022

23 These blocks were a first step towards the emancipation of the company's workers, presenting apartments with generous floor areas, typologies with two, three or four bedrooms, corresponding to rents of 150, 175 and 200 escudos in 1972.[18] The characteristics of these dwellings acknowledged the existence of a solid middle-class among CUF's workforce. Individual car garages were later built nearby, proving the expectations and also the economic capacity of the families that ended up living there. This was clearly distinct from the residences of the "first generation" neighborhoods, which were aimed at a more traditional working-class. In addition to the growth of informal and/or poor-condition dwellings in and around Barreiro, the housing shortage in the region (both private and public) also seems to have propelled CUF to build the Lavradio blocks for a new middle-class that did not have many other options. However, there were clear rules in order to access these new apartments, mainly based on the administrators' ideological background and traditionalist values, which largely matched those of the Estado Novo regime. For example, the families housed there were comprised of couples who had been married by the Catholic Church, hence the popular name of the neighborhood: *Bairro dos Católicos*.

24 The option to hire Fernando Silva was also, in a way, premonitory. Silva started his architectural studies in Lisbon but, like many other colleagues at the time, graduated from the Porto School of Fine Arts. From the 1960s onwards, he specialized in the design of several large privately-promoted suburban urbanization developments that became paradigmatic cases in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area.[19] The architect also gradually perfected apartment-types adapted to the various needs of the then newly emerging suburban middle-class. Functionalist apartment layouts, with a clear separation between daytime and nighttime uses, along with optimized building solutions, were part of the work developed by Silva in experiments such as Quinta do Marquês and Alto da Barra, both in the Oeiras municipality, or Quinta da Luz in Lisbon's western limit. The highlight of Silva's large urban plans, however, was the Portela

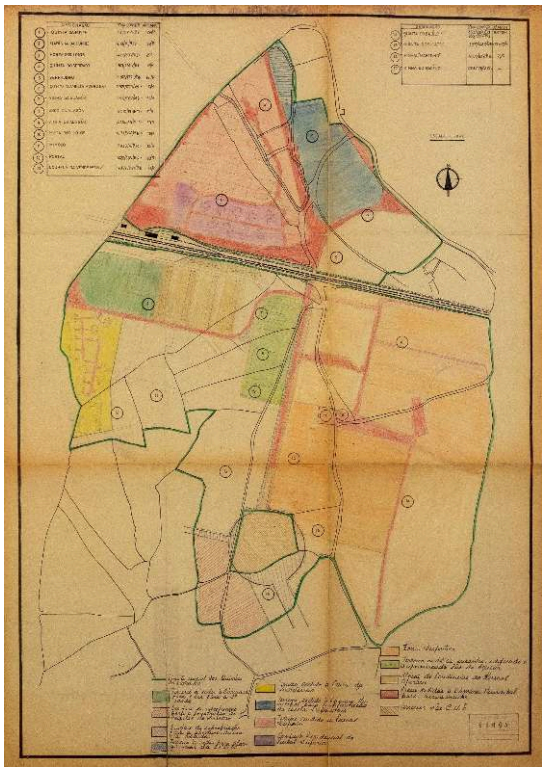
Urbanization (Loures municipality), one of the country's largest privately-promoted residential neighborhoods designed for this social class.[20]

25 The Lavradio blocks — which came after Silva's more famous projects, such as Cinema São Jorge (1947-1950) — were probably Fernando Silva's first steps towards understanding the functional, social and aesthetic expectations of this new class employed by CUF. The blocks display a set of characteristics that represent an updated version of the middle-class tenements being built in large quantities on Lisbon's avenues during the previous decades, adapting them to a free landscape and to its isolated nature. The quality that he managed to achieve within the only four blocks built according to Cristino's last urban plan can explain the relative failure of future housing operations promoted by the company within Law no. 2092 — namely the CUF Caixa de Previdência development, carried out from 1964 onwards and more commonly known as Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood.

26 An almost immediate repercussion of this law's publication was a change of direction in the housing strategies promoted by CUF. Cristino's plan, although revised by Fernando Monjardino, was abandoned, and the company yielded a large part of the land acquired to fulfill its Lavradio expansion to several entities. Consequently, CUF was no longer in charge of hiring architects and other professionals for the design and construction of the new residential projects, leaving that responsibility to public actors.

27 After 1966, a new cartographic plan not only identified the 17 lots acquired by the company in Lavradio farmland, but also the operations that were already built, as well as the distribution of the several residential areas, retail stores and public facilities (Fig. 16). This document anticipated the kind of urban landscape that was being envisaged, showing empty areas for which CUF did not present any immediate function. The company was assuming a role of intermediary or facilitator, dropping the responsibility of being a direct promoter, and thus of proposing a concrete urban layout for Lavradio.

Figure 16. CUF – New workers' neighborhood general plan, after 1966



FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive: LUE5338

28 In addition to the road infrastructure (on land expropriated by the Barreiro City Council), the construction of schools and a big sports area were imagined. In the meantime, a supermarket — which was large for the standards of the time — had been built by the company, meeting both the needs of the new Lavradio residents and of a larger area, from Alto do Seixalinho to Baixa da Banheira.[21]

29 At the residential level, the plan showed new operations: the 46 lots for single-family detached houses in the Senior Staff Neighborhood, and the eleven hectares of land that were yielded to the Caixa de Previdência (welfare fund) for the construction of the future Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood, of which 70 % was to be occupied by CUF employees. In the case of single-family homes, the new law was already applied via the loans given by Banco Totta — a financial institution of the CUF group — to the employees that were able to apply for them, ensuring the acquisition of land for homeownership purposes. In 1967, 32 of these lots were already built. As they were meant for senior staff, mainly engineers, this neighborhood became known as *Bairro dos Engenheiros*.

30 Within the scope of the Habitações Económicas (affordable housing) department of the Federação de Caixas de Previdência (federation of welfare funds) (HE-FCP), the process that led to the construction of the Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood was truly representative of the paradigm shift that occurred in the mid-1960s. The operation can be seen as the result of the "third generation" of housing promotion within the CUF realm. As of 1964, the new nucleus already appeared in various plans. In December of that year, the bulletin *CUF Informação Interna* announced the contract signing for the first phase of the neighborhood's construction, showing a photograph of a model with the new housing buildings and with Fernando Silva's four blocks, which were already

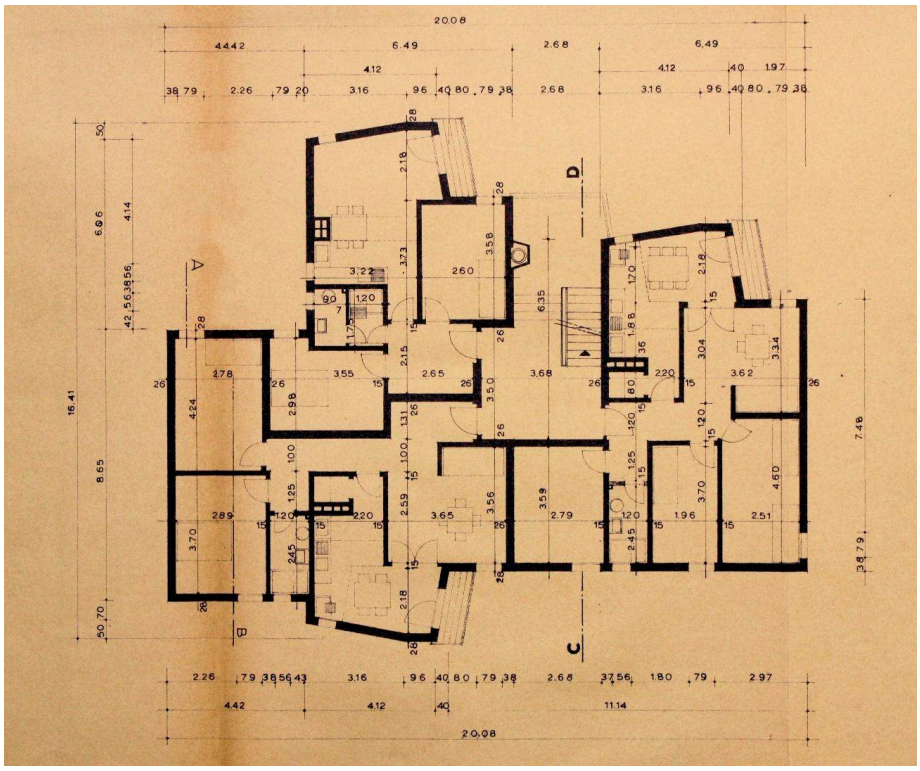
built. This first phase was included in a broader urban plan, also made by HE-FCP, with a total of 1000 dwellings distributed in "towers" — with five floors and four two-bedroom apartments per floor — and "slabs" — with four floors and two apartments of between two and four bedrooms per floor. These typologies were developed in the HE-FCP central office in Lisbon and were the result of an intense research process where cost control was paramount.[22] The urban plan recovered the *tabula rasa* concept and can be viewed within the context of the state-funded mass-housing drive that swept most urbanized countries after World War II and that heavily relied on the "tower and slab" model.[23]

31 Only the first phase, however, was effectively built. Its 204 apartments (in 17 blocks) were inaugurated in 1966 by the President of Portugal, Américo Thomaz, and other high dignitaries. The initiative was thus to be associated with the Estado Novo efforts towards fighting the housing shortage, while commending the progressive and solidary spirit of the Portuguese businessmen. CUF was now headed by Jorge de Mello, known for fostering the company's "social work".

32 The reality, however, already pointed in a different direction. By distancing itself from the responsibilities of housing production, CUF was also relinquishing control over the design and quality of the neighborhood and its dwellings. The Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood apartment-buildings followed a standard-project used by HE-FCP in various towns around the country. This project originated in 1960, from a large publicly promoted urbanization project in the capital, Olivais Sul, where architects Vasco Croft, Justino Morais and Joaquim Cadima — working for the Gabinete Técnico de Habitação (GTH, technical office of housing) of the Lisbon City Council — developed a standard-floor with three different apartments that functioned as a "cell", which could in turn be combined to generate various urban forms.[24] Later, technicians working in HE-FCP's central office, such as Vasco Croft and Bartolomeu Costa Cabral, used this three-apartment layout as a standard-project in diverse contexts. This common practice within HE-FCP — whose most prominent example can be found all over the country in the work of Justino Morais[25] — drew criticism among other professionals that championed affordable housing, such as Nuno Teotónio Pereira.[26]

33 The buildings of the Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood presented two, three and four-bedroom typologies, varying between 45 and 60 square meters of floor area (Figs. 17-18). Although an effort of progressive architects engaged in the critical revision of the Modern Movement — a work which included more attention given to the necessities of future residents — the project was not a success, at least initially. Unlike what happened with the first four blocks of Lavradio, CUF workers did not totally embrace renting the new houses. Already in 1965, criticism emerged with regard to the form and size of their functional spaces, and also of the building's staircase common areas (with shared balconies). The envisioned 700 additional units CUF was supposed to endorse were soon reduced to 200 (which were never built anyway), confirming the unsuccessfulness of the campaign among workers. The private real estate market was also changing in Barreiro and the growing supply forced the company to change their strategy, mainly regarding the construction of new units.[27]

Figure 17. Alfredo da Silva neighborhood. Standard floor plan of the housing buildings. HE-FCP, 1964



Barreiro Municipal Archive: CT-311/64

Figure 18. Alfredo da Silva neighborhood, current view from the street



João Cardim, 2022

Conclusion: the construction of a discontinuous residential landscape

34 The urban landscape gradually built in the old Quinta do Lavradio stems from the evolution of the described process, and from the discontinuities sparked by changes in housing promotion strategies. A survey of the workers in 1963, for example, showed more detailed information. Of a total of 7 631 CUF workers, only 3 993 were interested in accessing housing through the company's various programs. "Conditional property houses"[28] was the preferred regime, followed by "affordable rental houses".[29] In less than ten years, however, CUF's policies started promoting the acquisition of rental units by their workers, encouraging them to become homeowners. Perhaps this was a further step in the emancipation process of an ascending middle-class. Other regimes that pointed in the same direction were equally planned by CUF throughout the 1960s, covering access to loans, the creation of groups for the acquisition of land in order to build multi-family housing blocks,[30] or the support of self-building operations in lots owned by the company. What led to the consideration of these multiple options?

35 In May 1965, CUF's Permanent Commission on Housing summarized the results of the workers' surveys into two priority areas: acquisition of homes and concession of affordable rental houses.[31] The second option intended for the participation of the HE-FCP in the construction of new neighborhoods. The information that was released via the bulletin *CUF Informação Interna* contradicted, however, the company's experience in Lavradio. Efforts were being multiplied to release CUF from the duties it kept in this neighborhood. The problem was assumed in January 1966, at a meeting with the Internal Commission of the Company (CIE), in which the difficulties of controlling the financial situation of the families — in order to meet the "permanent need of adjusting rents"[32] — were highlighted. But there were other reasons not to move forward with the rest of the large operation, the main one being a lack of interest from the workers, an aspect revealed by internal consultations that were carried out from time to time.

36 One of the obstacles were rent prices, which in the Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood exceeded the amounts charged in other HE-FCP developments in Barreiro itself, and even those in the four blocks designed by Fernando Silva. As for the units allocated to CUF that remained vacant, they constituted a burden for the company. From 1972 onwards, the sale of the units to their residents was carried out in all of Lavradio's operations, with the exception of two detached houses that were kept as a "reserve". A new consultation revealed 163 responses, an expressive number considering the 193 families that were already beneficiaries. However, the picture revealed that CUF's asking prices were higher than expected, and that payment conditions made the acquisitions difficult. In turn, the residents proposed monthly payments to CUF with no increase in interest rates.[33] Prices varied between 650 thousand escudos (single-family detached house) and 150 thousand (2-bedroom apartment), reflecting the diversity of typologies that could be found in CUF's residential properties.

37 Naturally, there are formal, plastic and spatial differences between the apartments designed by Fernando Silva and those from the Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood. In contrast with an internal structure based on functional grounds, which characterized the first operation, the residential "cells" developed by the HE-FCP technicians called for "anthropological" meanings that had become popular among the "third way" architects, who were modern orthodoxy critics and social science cultivators. The

house now privileged a different layout surrounding living areas, giving less attention to aspects such as sun and wind orientation. Reflecting discontinuous practices and strategies, a moving architectural culture, and different actors — promoters and technicians —, the neighborhoods themselves expose these different characteristics, appearing as formal "ghettos" in an increasingly fragmented landscape.

38 With the objective to control its own costs with supported housing, CUF pressured the company's Caixa de Previdência (welfare fund) to acquire the units of the Alfredo da Silva Neighborhood. But the concentration of competences in the Fundo de Fomento da Habitação (FFH, fund for housing promotion),[34] through a new legal regime introduced by Decree-Law no. 583/72 of 30/12/1972, would make the proposal unviable.[35] The decision to not go forward with more construction was irreversible, and the company asked for the devolution of the unbuilt land composing the original 11 hectare lot that was yielded to HE-FCP, with the intention of assigning new functions to it — something which would also never happen. The end of HE-FCP in 1972 thus coincided with CUF's decision to alienate its housing properties. This decision was the culmination of a process marked by the progressive delegation of the urban and architectural projects to external agents, from 1958 onwards, taking advantage of Law no. 2092. With the gradual withdrawal from direct promotion of housing for its staff, CUF left their urbanization plans unfinished (Fig. 19).

Figure 19. Alfredo da Silva neighborhood, general view with the "terrain vague" left from the unfinished urban development



João Cardim, 2022

39 Although the company's residential operations today constitute an architectural legacy that is representative of the history of housing in Portugal in the postwar period, it remains an intermittent legacy in terms of the urban landscape it managed to achieve. The heterogeneity and fragmentation of CUF's neighborhoods are widespread characteristics in the suburban landscape of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Current studies are beginning to understand that these features are the result of a multiplicity

of (sometimes concerted) actions by both public and private actors, legislative changes that follow the successive zeitgeists, and regional plans that lacked sufficient detail at a more local level, among other things. We hope that this and future investigations help to further explain the prevailing notion of the periphery as a "chaotic landscape", especially when seen in comparison to the compact and dense order of the city center. The multiple narratives that emanate from the peripheries compose a rich and multifaceted mosaic, that has found a place in recent literature, music and film. Although parts of this mosaic have been the subject of research in several disciplines — from socioeconomic studies to participatory operations –, the peripheries remain far from public attention and relatively obscure. From the point of view of architectural history, its narratives are yet to be collected and analyzed by academia in a systematic, global and meaningful way.

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Florian Urban, *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2012.

NOTES

1. Florian Urban, *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2012, p. 3.

2. From the point of view of the architectural discipline, the theme of the housing projects promoted by CUF was approached by João Vieira Caldas in 2010 and by Ana Lourenço Pinto in 2021. While the former was centered on the participation of architect Luís Cristino da Silva (1896-1976) in the design of the company's first suburban workers' neighborhood, the latter was a substantial effort to analyze the architecture, art and urbanism sponsored by CUF in Barreiro until 1975. See João Vieira Caldas, "O bairro novo da CUF no quadro do urbanismo e da arquitectura operária promovida pela Companhia no Barreiro", in Miguel Figueira de Faria and José Amado Mendes (coord.), *Actas do Colóquio Internacional Industrialização em Portugal no Século XX: O Caso do Barreiro*, Lisboa, Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa/Instituto de Investigação Pluridisciplinar, 2010, p. 311-323; and Ana Lourenço Pinto, *Arte, Arquitetura e Urbanismo na Obra da CUF no Barreiro (1907-1975)*, Cascais, Princípia Editora, 2021.

3. "Benefícios concedidos pela CUF", in *CUF Informação Interna*, April 1963, p. 6.

4. The General Plan of the New Workers' Neighborhood, by Fernando Monjardino, was an adapted version of Cristino da Silva's 1949 proposal. When it was submitted, ten single-family detached houses and two multi-family blocks had already been completed. Two more blocks, along with 17 single-family houses and two semi-detached ones were additionally planned. See Ana Lourenço Pinto, *Arte, Arquitetura e Urbanismo na Obra da CUF no Barreiro (1907-1975)*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

5. The Comissão Interna da Empresa (CIE, internal commission of the company) was launched by Jorge de Mello in 1963. A pioneer initiative in the country, it served as a link between the administrators and the workers, in order to approach the company's problems with a cooperative spirit. One of the outputs of the CIE was a monthly bulletin, *CUF — Informação Interna*, which served primarily to publish CIE meeting minutes, although it also served as propaganda for the company's achievements and granted benefits.

6. See Law no. 2092 of 09/04/1958, in *Diário do Governo* no. 72/1958, Série I, p. 213-216.

7. Researcher Maria Tavares describes the process as follows: "With the publication of the Law no. 2092, in 1958, combined with the accumulation of [welfare] capital, it is possible the granting of loans for the building, acquisition or refurbishment of homes [owned, to be acquired or to be built by] private individuals who are beneficiaries of the Welfare [institutions] and who meet a certain number of requirements stipulated by the law. The [unusual] feature of the law is the granting of loans, under the same conditions, to tax paying companies and to the Casas do Povo [and similar institutions], which owned viable land for construction". Maria Tavares, *Federação de Caixas de Previdência – Habitações Económicas: um percurso na história da arquitectura da habitação em Portugal*, Master Thesis, Lisboa, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 2003, p. 80 (citation translated by the authors).

8. "Situação Actual do problema habitação", in *CUF Informação Interna*, May 1963, p. 2.

9. See Decree no. 13980 of 25/07/1927, in *Diário do Govêrno*, no. 157/1927, Série I, p. 1471.

10. Cristino da Silva, however, was not exactly admired by younger architects, due to his apparent complicity with the regime's aesthetic preferences — a position that the modern neighborhood of Nova Oeiras would soon contradict. See Ana Vaz Milheiro and Rogério Vieira de Almeida, "Nova Oeiras: an Ideal for Living", in José Manuel Fernandes and Maria de Lurdes Janeiro, *O Livro de Nova Oeiras*, Oeiras, Câmara Municipal de Oeiras and Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2015, p. 110-141.

11. See João Pedro Silva Nunes, *Florestas de Cimento Armado: Os Grandes Conjuntos Residenciais e a Constituição da Metrópole de Lisboa (1955-2005)*, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, 2011; and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, "A configuração urbano-arquitetónica da periferia norte da cidade de Lisboa: Leitura a partir da obra do arquiteto

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12. Fernando Silva was an architect who is also under critical revision in today's historiography. See Isabel Monteiro, *A Obra do arquitecto Fernando Silva (1914-1983): um arquitecto da "geração esquecida"*, Lisboa, author's edition, 2011.

13. As the primary author of the *Urbanization Plan of the New Workers' Neighborhood of Barreiro*, with a multitude of urban proposals between 1945 and 1949, Cristino also submitted a suggestion for the architecture of the housing blocks to CUF for consideration. See Ana Lourenço Pinto, *Arte, Arquitetura e Urbanismo na Obra da CUF no Barreiro (1907-1975)*, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

14. Ana Lourenço Pinto, *Arte, Arquitetura e Urbanismo na Obra da CUF no Barreiro (1907-1975)*, *op. cit.*, p. 185; see also Jorge Morais, *Rua do Ácido Sulfúrico. Patrões e Operários: um Olhar sobre a CUF no Barreiro*, Lisboa, Editorial Bizâncio, 2008. This author affirms that the first neighborhood was initiated in 1909.

15. Carlos Vieira de Faria, "Industrialização – Urbanização: que relações? O caso do (ante)plano de urbanização da vila do Barreiro (1957)", in Miguel Figueira de Faria and José Amado Mendes (coord.), *Actas do Colóquio Internacional Industrialização em Portugal no Século XX: O Caso do Barreiro*, *op. cit*.

16. The names of the housing blocks corresponded to the names of Portuguese towns where CUF was present.

17. Some authors have noted the influence, in these blocks, of the "English basements", which take advantage of a livable floor below the street level. See Jorge Morais, *Rua do Ácido Sulfúrico. Patrões e Operários: um Olhar sobre a CUF no Barreiro*, *op. cit*.

18. "Notas sobre o Bairro do Lavradio" – typed document of 21/09/1972, 1 (FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive, pasta 24696).

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21. "Criação de um Supermercado junto ao Bairro do Lavradio – apresentado pelo Sr. Leonel Coelho", in *CUF Informação Interna*, November 1966, p. 18.

22. See the HE bulletin *Colectânea de Estudos de Habitação. Publicação de Circulação Restrita*, no. 23 (February 1968). HE-FCP had a regular bulletin that circulated among its architects, with technical information, guidelines, standards to follow and past works, in a publication devised to help professionals in their affordable housing projects.

23. Miles Glendinning, *Mass Housing. Modern Architecture and State Power – a Global History*, London/ New York, Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021.

24. João Cardim, "Justino Morais, arquitecto. Perspectivas para o estudo e valoração da sua obra", in *Monumentos*, nº 35, November 2017, Lisboa, Direção-Geral do Património Cultural, 2017, p. 186-193.

25. João Cardim, "Modular Design in Large-Scale Social Housing. The Work of Justino Morais 1960-1980", in Ana Vaz Milheiro (coord.), *Optimistic Suburbia 3. The Researchers' Perspective. Mass-Housing infrastructures (Lisbon, Luanda, Macao)*, Porto, AMDJAC, 2018, p. 236-249.

26. See interview with Nuno Teotónio Pereira conducted by Maria Tavares, Nuno Portas and José Manuel Fernandes, in Nuno Portas (coord.), *Habitação Para o Maior Número. Portugal, os Anos*

de 1950-1980, Lisboa, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa/Instituto da Habitação e da Reabilitação Urbana, 2013, p. 158-185.

27. [letter to the director of Welfare and HE] – typed document of 29/07/1966, p. 1 (FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive, pasta 24696).

28. "Casas de propriedade resolúvel", a regime introduced by the Decree-Law no. 23052 of 23/09/1933 and that remains until today. As an alternative to other public housing policies, it privileges access to individual property, if only after monthly payments throughout a considerable number of years (up to 25 years since 1993).

29. "Situação Actual do problema habitação", in *CUF Informação Interna*, May 1963, p. 2.

30. "Andares para Habitação", in *CUF Informação Interna*, November 1967, p. 3. *Idem*, January 1968, p. 11.

31. "Habitação do pessoal – apresentado pelo sr. Manuel Inácio", in *CUF Informação Interna*, May 1965, p. 17.

32. "37ª Reunião da Comissão Interna da Empresa – CIE – bairros habitacionais da CUF", in *CUF Informação Interna*, February 1966, p. 3.

33. In 1972, 184 apartments and nine detached houses were occupied. "Notas sobre o Bairro do Lavradio" – typed document of 21/09/1972, p. 1 (FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive, pasta 24696).

34. Created by the Decree-Law no. 49033, of 28/05/1969.

35. "Casas do Bairro Novo da CUF" – typed document of 23/03/1973 (FAM – Fundação Amélia de Mello Archive, pasta 24696).

ABSTRACTS

This article deals with the promotion of housing for the working class in Portugal after World War II. The starting point of the research is the strategies followed by Companhia União Fabril (CUF) — a major Portuguese chemical company — between 1945 and 1972 in Barreiro, a town on the southern bank of the Tagus River, where the company had been gradually establishing its main factory grounds since the beginning of the twentieth century. The article argues that the publication of Law no. 2092 of April 9th 1958, which called upon welfare institutions to provide answers to the housing problem, was a fundamental step in the transformation of the Portuguese urban, suburban and rural environment, with massive consequences that historiography has yet to fully address.

The article identifies the workers' neighborhoods built by the company on factory grounds (1908-1946), comparing them to those that were later built on suburban farms (1951-1956), destined not only for the traditional working class, but also a growing middle-class that was emerging among the company's staff. It then describes the operations that were carried out after the publication of the aforementioned law, between 1958 and 1967, and its repercussions up until the eve of the 1974 April Revolution. This law is essentially seen as positive, and had significant results in fighting the housing shortage issues of the time. However, we argue that it also shifted the housing provision responsibilities from private actors — in this case CUF — to public ones, leading to a fragmented urban landscape where the changes over the course of history — in terms of legislation, urban planning, architecture and social fabric — can be witnessed firsthand.

Cet article porte sur la promotion du logement pour la classe ouvrière au Portugal après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Le point de départ de la recherche sont les stratégies suivies par la CUF (Companhia União Fabril) — une grande entreprise chimique portugaise — entre 1945 et 1972 à Barreiro, une ville de la rive sud du Tage où l'entreprise avait progressivement établi ses principales usines depuis le début du XX^{e} siècle. L'article soutient que la publication de la loi n° 2092 du 9 avril 1958, qui convoque les institutions sociales à apporter des réponses au problème du logement, a été une étape fondamentale pour la transformation de l'environnement urbain, suburbain et rural portugais, avec des conséquences massives pas encore entièrement prisent en compte par l'historiographie.
L'article identifie les quartiers ouvriers construits par l'entreprise dans l'enceinte de l'usine (1908-1946) et les distingue de ceux construits plus tard dans les fermes de banlieue (1951-1956), maintenant destinés non seulement à la classe ouvrière traditionnelle mais aussi à une classe moyenne grandissante qui émergeait parmi le personnel de l'entreprise. Ensuite, il décrit les opérations qui ont été menées après la publication de ladite loi, entre 1958 et 1967, et leurs répercussions jusqu'à la veille de la Révolution d'avril 1974. Il s'agit essentiellement d'une loi positive, qui a eu des résultats significatifs dans la lutte contre la pénurie de logements de l'époque. Cependant, nous soutenons qu'elle a également transférée les responsabilités de fourniture de logements des acteurs privés – dans ce cas la CUF — vers les acteurs publics, conduisant à un paysage urbain fragmenté où les changements devenus au cours de l'histoire — en termes de législation, d'urbanisme, d'architecture et de tissu social – peuvent être observés sur le terrain.

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Mots-clés: Companhia União Fabril (CUF), Quartiers ouvriers, Après-guerre, Législation du logement, Culture architecturale portugaise
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