

Scientific Education and Research Centre of the National Institute for Cancer Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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Abstract The article seeks to analyze the importance of the former headquarters of the Board of Public Health – DGSP (Diretoria Geral de Saúde Pública), in implementing and institutionalizing Brazilian public health policies, and the importance for Brazil of its restoration and reuse as the Centro de Difusão Científica [Scientific Education and Research Centre]. Constructed (1905-1914) at the initiative of Oswaldo Cruz and designed by the Portuguese architect Luiz Moraes Júnior, the following aspects of the old headquarters of the DGSP are examined: the original site; economic and technical means used in construction; the reasoning, programmes and purpose behind its use; economic, physical and conceptual limits and conditions of space; the creators, their ideas and programmes; the architects, their training, works and methods; the buildings and their environmental surroundings throughout the 20th century; with the City of Rio de Janeiro. The article also analyses the various proposed interventions: structural reinforcement, modernization of the installations, recovery of the construction materials and systems, as well as historic and architectural values; the original forms, volumes and spaces of the buildings. The current initiative taken by the Instituto Nacional do Câncer - Inca- of the Health Ministry, current owner of the property, recovers and preserves a reference point for the origin, evolution and institutionalization of Brazilian public health policies. A modern scientific education and research centre for researchers, health professionals, doctors and residents, as well as the general public, is to be installed in the buildings.

Keywords: Preservation, memory, Brazilian public health

Introduction

In 1902, Rodrigues Alves was elected President of the Republic, and, in a manifesto to the nation on the 15th of November, emphasized the necessity for sanitation in the Federal capital and the commitment of his government to this task. The mayor of Rio de Janeiro appointed the engineer Francisco Pereira Passos to oversee the urban reforms, and the young doctor Oswaldo Gonçalves Cruz to coordinate the sanitation reforms. The two were granted wide-ranging powers for the realization of the reforms, begun in 1903.

On the 23rd of March, Oswaldo Cruz assumed the position of Director of the Board of Public Health, with the proposal of eradicating the three principal pestilential diseases in Rio de Janeiro: yellow fever, bubonic plague and smallpox. To achieve these objectives, the new Director considered it essential to reform the sanitation services and reorganize the legal regulations so as to increase the power of the sanitation authorities, as well as restructure and reinforce those infrastructures designed to ensure the success of his new public health projects. Oswaldo Cruz began a large scale architectural remodeling of the former Instituto Soroterápico Federal [Federal Serum Therapy Institute] – today the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation – and the construction of the headquarters of Diretoria-Geral de Saúde Pública (DGSP) [the Board of Public Health] at n° 128 Rua do Resende.

In the ministerial reports of the time, Oswaldo Cruz demonstrated a preoccupation with the infrastructure and public health policies to be adopted. He planned to construct buildings that adhered to “modern concepts of the safest hygiene”, at various points in the Federal Capital, “in order to promptly meet the needs of the other Health Districts”.

Starting in 1892, Oswaldo Cruz proposed the division of the urban areas of the Federal Capital into five large districts, each to be provided with a conveniently located public disinfection facility,

completely equipped with an ambulance for the sick, transport for material and personnel; with annexes for disinfection, bathrooms and incinerators.

The Construction of the DGSP Headquarters

Work began on 19/11/1905, with the demolition of the colonial building standing on the site and the laying of the foundations in July of 1906. The architect Luiz Moraes Junior was commissioned for the project, first drawing up the following designs dated 17/10/1905; plans for the foundations, the ground floor and the first floor: principal, rear and side facades, cutaway sectional view AB and CD.



Figure 1: lateral facade, scale 1:50. Source: Biblioteca Nacional

The original structure planned by Luiz Moraes envisaged facades with stone foundations and covered with brickwork crowned by balustrades and pediments with bulls-eye windows in the centre. The openings (doors and windows) were designed with diminished arches crowned by stone bosses (ground floor) and brickwork (first floor). The majority of windows were divided by mullions and transoms in the form of a cross, while balustrades were planned for the first floor.

In the original project, the emphasis was placed on the block and facade facing the Rua de Resende, by means of characterization of the middle element, using broad arched windows and pediments composed of side turrets crowned by a larger turret. To be further noted is the use of stone above the foundation for the two “towers”, one on the principal façade and the other on the rear facade. In this facade an entrance canopy was planned using a metallic structure resembling that of the present.

The planned building is projected along a longitudinal direction and is articulated in three blocks; that of the principal facade in the form of a quadrangle, linked to the larger dimension with a rectangular form that is linked in turn to a rectangular, but smaller, lateral block. The building was planned in an eclectic style, and its design employs recesses at the boundaries of the site to provide ventilation and natural lighting.

The programme adopted was advanced for the time, requiring spaces to have modern equipment and areas for a library and even a museum.

This first plan was not implemented, very probably as a result of the expansion of the original programme due to the emergence of new uses that required additional space. The site of the DGSP was originally planned with a ground floor and first floor, but in fact was built with a ground floor and two upper storeys.

There is no indication of a definitive project drawn up by the architect Luiz Moraes Junior for the site of the DGSP; in all probability, the alterations and changes were carried out during construction at the request of Oswaldo Cruz, who closely followed the undertakings that he had conceived and exercised a strong influence on the architect. Due to lack of resources construction was more or less halted in 1907 and proceeded slowly in 1908 and 1909. In November of 1909 Oswaldo Cruz resigned his position as Director of the Board of Public Health, and in 1910 Luiz Moraes Junior, designer of the project, handed over the direction of the construction to sanitary engineer and Polytechnic

Professor Domingos da Cunha and his assistant sanitation engineer João de Almeida Pizarro. Serafim do Couto oversaw the work from its inception.

Despite the reduction in funds, Oswaldo Cruz's successor, Carlos Seidl, inaugurated the first and second floors on 18/03/1914. The urgency behind the inauguration was due to the poor hygienic conditions of the first installations of the DGSP. The inauguration of the DGSP headquarters was attended by the President of the Republic, Marshall Hermes da Fonseca and was widely reported in the press of the time.

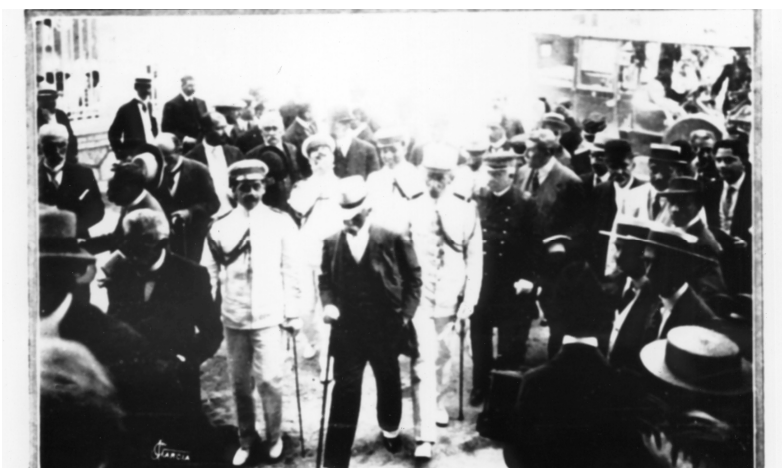


Figure 2: The President of the Republic, Marshall Hermes da Fonseca at the inauguration ceremonies. Source: Revista Fon-Fon, 01/04/1914

Despite the addition of another floor, the formal language proposed by Luiz Moraes Junior was maintained throughout construction, the initial installations, the initial design of the planned openings and the emphasis on the block facing the Rua de Resende. The facade for the additional floor added during actual construction bears a strong resemblance to the facade of the original first floor.

However, several alterations were made, the principal ones being the following: the pediment of the main facade was built without the crowning turret, and the two lesser turrets were moved further apart in order to flank the initials DGSP; the block contiguous to Rua de Resende continued to be emphasized over the rest of the building and was faced entirely in masonry; the areas to be roofed with tiles were reduced and the terrace areas were increased; the side and rear facades previously designed to be faced in masonry and along its larger length in brick, were faced in plaster and an elevator, not provided for in the original design, was installed as an aid in vertical circulation.

Among the construction materials employed, were highlighted wood and granite from Brazil, the tiles, bricks and floor tiles which came from Marseille, France: steel, the frames for the openings and Villeroy-Bosch tiles which came from Germany.

Neither the final plans for the headquarters building of the DGSP nor those for the annexes have been found.

The Transformations over Time

It is important to point out that on the very day of the inauguration of the headquarters, the *Jornal do Commercio* pointed out the need to construct annex buildings for storage, as well as a garage for the service automobiles that were slowly replacing animal transport and were necessary to meet the needs of the suburbs and rural areas of Rio de Janeiro. The same publication also indicated the need to incorporate the adjoining site to the left of the building so as to isolate future private buildings from the disinfection facilities and the animal facilities of the bacteriological laboratory.

In a photograph on the cover of the publication of the National Department of Public Health, entitled Hygiene Archives, *Archivos de Hygiene*, year 1, no. 1 of 1927, one can see the incorporation of the adjoining sites to the left of the DGSP headquarters. In the same photograph can also be seen a

central flower bed with trees, today replaced by parallelepiped shaped paving stones on the present internal patio of the Rua de Resende complex.



Figure 3: The building in 1927. Source: Archivos de Hygiene, year 1, n. 1

The first image of the annexes are documented in a survey titled “Photographic Mosaic – Federal District”, folio 25, from August 1928 published by The Aircraft Operating Co. Ltd. London – Rio de Janeiro, Bulawayo – Cairo, today located in the General Archives of the City of Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ).

The same images also appear in the cadastral survey of 1929, printed by the same British company and in the 1930 survey which show the improvements in progress by the administrator Antonio Prado Junior, today part of the collection of the Instituto Pereira Passos.

These images show us the annexes including those located alongside Rua Washington Luis. In the original image of the “photographic mosaic”, the external and internal patios, the planted trees of the period and the surroundings of the buildings of the then National Department of Public Health are identified.

For these annexes construction materials of lower quality and less sophisticated construction systems than those used in the DGSP headquarters were used, but a similar architectural style was adopted, demonstrating the strong presence and influence of the DGSP headquarters on its surroundings.

An on-going preoccupation with improving and expanding the spaces reserved for public health is manifest.

In 1939, the Health Centre was transferred from the Federal sector to the municipality. In the following years, the obstetrics, epidemiology, gynecological cancer prevention, pre-natal, perinatal, dermatology, and venereal disease departments as well as a school of medicine and a sanitarium for pulmonary diseases were housed on the premises.

In the 1950s the Health Centre became the Oswaldo Cruz Health Centre. The cadastral survey of 1953 shows the presence of new annexes and identifies with the abbreviation P.M the former site of the Board of Public Health, indicating that it was the property of the Municipality of the City of Rio de Janeiro. Again, in the less precise survey of 1975, new uses relating to the National Institution of Tuberculosis are shown.

At present, the main building houses the General Administration Management Office (Coage), and the annex buildings, the Rehabilitation Centre and the Teaching and Scientific Publication office (CEDC) of the National Institute for Cancer (Inca).

A Place of Memory

The first attempts to ensure protection of the former site of the DGSP were taken in 1953. O *Diário de Notícias* of the 15th of May of that year reported that a request for heritage classification was made by a state representative from Paraíba, Jundui Carneiro. This request was turned down by the Consulting

Council of the then Diretoria de Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (DPHAN) [Directorate for National and Historic and Artistic Heritage], today known as IPHAN.

The classification project was taken up again on the 18th of January, 1983 by Doctor Luiz Carlos Bevilacqua, at the time director of the Oswaldo Cruz Municipal Health Centre, who sent a formal request signed by the employees of the same organization to the Director of the Instituto Estadual de Patrimônio Cultural do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Inepac) [State Institute for Cultural Heritage of the State of Rio de Janeiro]. The architectural, historical and cultural importance of the former site of the DGSP was recognized by Inepac with a provisional historic classification on the 13/02/1989 and a permanent designation on the 7/03/1991 – process nº E-18/3000.28/84.

State of Conservation and the Restoration Project.

The Rua de Resende architectural complex comprising the former site of the Board of Public Health (DGSP) and its annexes were found to be in a poor state of conservation as the result of the deterioration in the construction materials, lack of preventative maintenance, and above all due to the various faulty interventions over the years. The main types of deterioration of the buildings are; alteration in the original construction materials, cracks and deterioration of the balustrades, presence of vegetation, air conditioners and pvc tubes in the facades, closing of the original openings, alterations in the internal spatial arrangements and the terrace, and disorderly use of the interior. It fell to the present administration of Inca with the support of the CGDI of the Ministry of Health to undertake the initiative of restoring the former DGSP headquarters and its annex buildings. A complete restoration project was undertaken, observing modern principles in the preservation of cultural heritage. The project visualized a rigorous architectural upgrading, damage mapping, analysis of the construction material, diagnostic of the causes of deterioration, identification of the constructional systems and the various transformations that the architectural complex underwent over the years. This work was essential for drawing up an intervention methodology and a complete restoration project including the following interventions: repair of the terraces, treatment and reinforcement of the structures; repair of the tile work; repainting in the original colors; repair and filling of gaps in the original ornamentation; restoration of the skylights, metallic and wood frames; replacement of the electrical and plumbing installations, installation of central air conditioning, building illumination, landscaping, treatment and up-grading of the surroundings.

The main objectives of the project were recovery of the historical and architectural aspects; the original forms, volumes, aspects and internal spatiality of the building and its surroundings; modernization of the installations and infrastructures conforming to the new planned uses; protection of the birthplace of Brazilian public health and its memory.

A New Use - Centre for Scientific Education and Research

Much of its current use is incompatible with the original typology of the architectural complex on Rua de Resende. Presently it is overcrowded, contributing to the physical and spatial deterioration of the buildings, with the result that the management of Inca have proposed redefining its use so as to preserve this valuable piece of Brazilian cultural heritage. The proposal to change the purpose of the building suggests that a more valuable use would be to target the public, such as researchers, health professionals, doctors, residents and above all the general population, who would benefit from the creation of a modern Scientific Education Centre (4,232.65 m²), aimed at the prevention, early detection and monitoring of cancer.

The programme proposed for the three buildings is distributed as follows: support centre (619.62 m²) with cafeteria and auditorium; a hall for temporary exhibitions (127.77 m²), which can also be used for talks, conferences and the main building (3,485.25 m²) for scientific and community education, housing spaces for teaching and research, as well as permanent historical and scientific displays. The external areas will be used for parking, playground, gardens, recreation areas and an open air theatre.



Figure 4: Proposal for reuse as a Centre for Scientific Education and Research. Source: Instituto Nacional do Câncer – Inca

The proposals for the new usage will contribute to the conservation and appreciation of this invaluable part of Brazilian cultural heritage, a reference point for the origins, evolution and institutionalization of Brazilian Public Health policies. The restoration and reuse of the architectural complex on Rua de Resende 128 will contribute to the revitalization of its urban surroundings, and further act as an important vector in the revitalization of the historic centre of Rio de Janeiro.

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