

THE EARLY YEARS OF “CIA. CITY” IN SÃO PAULO (1911-1915): REVIEWING A LACUNA

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Abstract

The present text proposes a historical review of the development and implantation of the first projects of the City of San Paulo Improvements and Freehold Land Co. Ltd., later known as Cia. City, together with its authorship, in view of the lacuna observed in the initial process of the company's operation, between 1912 and 1915. Jardim América was considered the first project implemented by Cia. City in São Paulo and was developed in 1915. During the years prior to this, the company commercialized small previously urbanized lots, similar to many other real estate companies operating in São Paulo at the time. The review and collation of primary sources have demonstrated when the company's technical framework began operating in São Paulo, and the initial guidelines that marked the design and implementation of the first projects, namely, Pacaembu, Butantã, Alto da Lapa and the Garden City, named Jardim América in 1917.

Keywords

São Paulo; 20th century; Urbanization; Cia. City; Joseph Bouvard; Garden-City.

OS PRIMEIROS ANOS DA CIA. CITY EM SÃO PAULO (1911-1915): A REVISÃO DE UMA LACUNA

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Resumo

Este texto propõe o resgate histórico do desenvolvimento e da implantação dos primeiros projetos da City of San Paulo Improvements and Freehold Land Co Ltd, posteriormente conhecida como Cia. City, bem como de sua autoria, em face de lacuna observada no processo inicial de operação da companhia, entre 1912 e 1915. O Jardim América é considerado o primeiro projeto implantado pela Cia. City em São Paulo e teria sido gestado a partir de 1915. Nos anos anteriores, sua atuação teria se limitado à comercialização de lotes pequenos, já urbanizados, assim como tantas outras imobiliárias em operação naquele momento. Com base no exame e no cotejamento de fontes primárias, procurou-se demonstrar quando o quadro técnico da companhia começou a operar em São Paulo e quais as diretrizes iniciais que marcaram a elaboração e a implantação dos primeiros projetos, a saber, Pacaembu, Butantã, Alto da Lapa e a Garden City, denominada Jardim América em 1917.

Palavras-chave

São Paulo; Século XX; Urbanização; Cia. City; Joseph Bouvard; Garden-City.

THE EARLY YEARS OF “CIA. CITY” IN SÃO PAULO (1911-1915): REVIEWING A LACUNA

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Introduction

The proposal of this text is to review the history of the development of the first projects of Cia. City¹, in view of the lacuna observed in the initial process of the company's operation, between 1912, when it was granted authorization to operate in Brazil (BRASIL (UNIÃO), 1912), and 1915, when the project developed by Raymond Unwin for the area now known as Jardim América (CIA. CITY, 2014) was launched, considered by current historiography as the first project implemented by the company in São Paulo. Although it is known, as a result of several studies, that Pacaembu was the vacant lot of land that gave rise to the creation of the first project, it is generally recognized that it was abandoned due to technical difficulties imposed by the urban legislation of the time (BACELLI, 1982b; SOUZA, 1988; ANDRADE, 1998; WOLFF, 1998)².

The above-mentioned lacuna is made up of the years when the company's activities were few or of little significance, in contrast to the huge bulk of the initial operation - the acquisition of more than 12 million square meters of urban land in one single transaction. According to Bacelli (1982b) and Souza (1988), over the previous years, the Cia. City had dedicated itself solely to the commercialization of small previously urbanized pieces of land, much like so many other real estate

1. The name “Cia. City” was adopted by the City of San Paulo Improvements and Freehold Land Co Ltd in the mid-1920s.

2. The dates refer to when the respective dissertations and theses were defended.

companies operating at that time in the city. Initially, a certain selection was conducted in the stock of land acquired in late 1911, and the company disposed of pieces that were outside the valorized areas of the southwest quadrant of São Paulo. Both authors assumed that, at that time, the sector was already the most valorized growth vector in the city.

The present text offers a somewhat different interpretation, supported by information contained in a relatively unexplored set of documents: (i) the book *Uma temerária aventura forense* [A daring forensic adventure], authored by Plínio Barreto (1933), the lawyer who, in 1932, acted as defense for the Cia. City in a lawsuit brought against it by the wife of Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye, Amália Keating, in an attempt to invalidate the land acquisition transactions of 1911, on the grounds that the contracts did not contain her signature³; (ii) the company's works log, organized since 1912, which mainly attested that during the period in question, the office's activities were not only limited to administrative work and the intermediation of the sale of lots or projects, but also extended to coordinating the implementation works on the first acquired lands, as will be seen below. The third documentary corpus used was the newspaper *Correio Paulistano*, which, in addition to bringing the daily news of the city, published minutes, decrees and other legislative documents produced at the City Hall and the State Assembly. It was also possible to access reports from the Cia. City issued in London, resulting from the company's annual board meetings.

By collating this material, it was observed that from the time that Cia. City was founded, the activity had remained constant to the purpose of developing - and implementing - new land projects. In this perspective, discerning between project and works has made it possible to understand that, in addition to being the company's first project, developed between 1912 and 1913, Pacaembu was also partially implemented, although the project and works were abandoned in 1916 and resumed only years later (SIMONI, 2002). Testimony to these initial actions is the current Traipu Street, which is wider than the other streets in the neighborhood because it had already been opened up when Barry Parker took over the project in 1917. Its width complied with the legislation in force at the time, one of the reasons that made it impossible to proceed with the works (SIMONI, 2002).

3. Barreto demolished this argument in view of the fact that the marriage laws in force at that time, both in Brazil and in France, dispensed with the wife's signature in commercial transactions. He further demonstrated that the couple had submitted fraudulent documents. After winning the legal dispute, Barreto wrote the book, in which he reported on the progress of the case and his defense strategy with a considerable amount of documentation, including that regarding the constitution of Cia. City. With this process, Laveleye saw the possibility of recovering from the liquidation of his bank, which he was unable to manage, and two years later, in 1934, he died, in Rio de Janeiro.

This article thus aims to indicate how the company's technical framework was organized and when the operation began in São Paulo, with the participation of Joseph-Antoine Bouvard during the first projects: Pacaembu, Butantã, Alto da Lapa and the Garden City, which was renamed Jardim América in 1917. It also presents the context in which these projects were conceived and changed due to the wide-ranging crisis brought about by World War I.

1. Opportunities in São Paulo

In 1910, the Belgian banker Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye acquired control in Curitiba, Paraná of the tram transit systems, paving and the distribution of electric energy, a business in which the French architect Joseph Bouvard had personal interests, since he was on the Management Board of the Laveleye company. In March 1911, after requesting his retirement from the Seine City Hall, Bouvard accompanied the Belgian to Brazil to prospect for the contracting of an improvement plan for Curitiba, the capital of Paraná.

In the meantime, in the state capital, São Paulo, a debate was underway on proposed interventions for the central area of the city - the so-called Improvements of São Paulo. Because of his visit to Brazil, Bouvard was invited to visit the city and share his opinion on several proposals on the agenda. Observing the economic and commercial conditions that São Paulo had to offer, it may be assumed that the Bouvard-Laveleye duo was able to implement the plans originally conceived for Curitiba, where their proposal had received a cold shoulder, thereby giving rise to the elaboration of a plan for São Paulo. Thus, "in order to take advantage of the valorization that certain lands in São Paulo would obtain as a result of executing the plans [elaborated by Bouvard], Snr. Fontaine sought an understanding with several of the landowners in S. Paulo"⁴ (BARRETO, 1933, p. 182). After his return to Paris, despite being remembered in discussions on the implantation and the changes made to the plan he had drawn up for the city, Bouvard played no further part in the matter.

However, he remained connected to his private businesses in Brazil, in a clear inflection of his interest towards private matters to the detriment of the debate regarding the ongoing transformations in São Paulo. Indeed, his proposal for land in Pacaembu was included in the 1911 *City Hall Report* (SÃO PAULO ((MUNICÍPIO), 1912), in which an example may be observed of the private sphere interfering in the public, in the management of the city.

4. This, and all other non-English citations hereafter, have been translated by the author.

The capital needed to set up the company was raised by Laveleye through several European markets. The largest contribution was made by the Boulton Brothers Bank, whose president, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, was also in charge of the São Paulo Railway. Bouvard prepared a report accompanied by an overview of all the acquisitions (BARRETO, 1933), with which he brought the British up to date with the plans he had produced with Laveleye. Thus, the founding of Cia. City was celebrated in London, on September 25, 1911. Shortly thereafter, in December, company titles were launched for sale in Europe. In an article commenting on the shares on offer in Paris, the *Jornal do Brasil* referred to the newly organized enterprise as “a new English society, whose main members and organizers are French...” (ALMEIDA JUNIOR, 1912, p. 4). On that occasion, Laveleye and Bouvard entered into an agreement regarding the distribution of profits from business in São Paulo (BARRETO, 1933), as shown in Chart 1, below.

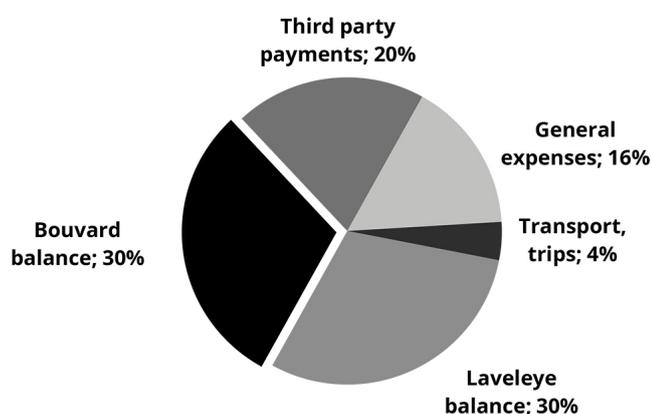


Chart 1. The distribution of Cia. City profits between Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye and Joseph-Antoine Bouvard.

Source: Barreto, 1933.

In São Paulo, Horácio Sabino, the main Brazilian partner, became Laveleye’s attorney, while Sancho de Barros Pimentel, former president of the Province of Paraná⁵ and partner of the Belgian banker in other businesses, presented himself as attorney for the City of São Paulo Improvements and Freehold Land Co Ltd. In January 1912, both signed the definitive deed of lands acquired months before. Finally, in March, the company was authorized by the Federal Government to begin operations in Brazil (BRASIL (UNIÃO), 1912) with 45 lots, distributed across 14 large

5. During the imperial period Paraná was a province, and was transformed into a state under the Republic, from 1889.

vacant lots (BARRETO, 1933). It is important to note that Cia. City had three headquarters: in London, where the board met annually and where financial matters were concentrated; in Paris, where the technical office was established, under the supervision of Joseph Bouvard, and in São Paulo, the stage of the company's actions, where there was to be another technical office, subordinate to that of Paris. Thus, once the financial backing had been secured, the land holdings were acquired and the governing body was established, the next step was to organize the technical and administrative staff in Brazil, thereby setting the business in motion.

It was decided that the technical direction of the Brazilian office would be in the charge of Bouvard's son, Roger, also an architect, while the engineer Louis Vergé would take charge of the administrative area. Both had to move to São Paulo. Indeed, Vergé came to Brazil as soon as he was hired. However, due to personal problems, Roger Bouvard only remained a few days in Brazil, and then returned to Paris, where he joined forces with his father in drawing up the projects. This situation therefore created a significant development: structuring the Brazilian office took longer to take effect due to the empty post in technical management.

Alone in Brazil, with no technical director, Vergé could do little towards the progress of the technical works, i.e., the field surveys of the acquired lands, and developing the draft of the Pacaembu estate project, designed by Joseph Bouvard, which caused a delay in the initially proposed work schedule. Considering him "indolent" and "unreliable" (BARRETO, 1933, p. 295-296), Herbert Guedalla, director of the London office, wrote to Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye in June 1912, pressing him to replace Vergé with Douglas Gurd⁶. Two architects, Émile Rouch and Pierre Troy, were hired to take over the direction of the technical department in São Paulo to replace Roger Bouvard, but only arrived in Brazil in mid-September, thereby causing delays in the procedures that should have provided a basis for the project design process. It is assumed that there was no coordinated action in order to perform the field surveys before that and, therefore, structuring the Brazilian office took a long time to materialize. Despite this, the 1912 Report of the Directors notes that "Mr. Bouvard's original valuation of £4,756,887 is well maintained, as the price of land generally in the city of São Paulo has risen during the period under review" (SAN PAULO IMPROVEMENTS, 1913, pp. 595-596), thanks, apparently, to the atmosphere of speculation that had been installed in the São Paulo real estate market ever since the news had been made public about the acquisition of the incredible amount of land.

6. A letter from Herbert Guedalla to Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye, dated June 28, 1912 (BARRETO, 1933).

Without the presence of a technical director in São Paulo, it was natural that the lands previously subdivided by Horácio Sabino, located in Vila América, along Bela Cintra Street, for example, would be offered up for sale. There was a need to ensure a certain visibility without, however, taking more effective actions, which was later recorded in the minutes of a meeting held in London (THE BRAZILIAN REVIEW, 1913).

There were also problems in Europe. The participation of Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye was revealed as being conflicting and resulted in his withdrawal. The manner with which he conducted business in Paris played a significant part in this. There was mention of a disagreement regarding his participation quota in the partnership (BARRETO, 1933). Apparently, the relationship between Laveleye and Guedalla had begun to deteriorate ever since the episode involving Vergé's resignation in 1912, and continued until 1915, when, in the middle of the war, the situation became untenable: without consulting London, Laveleye issued company shares onto the Parisian market, offering income incompatible with the policy approved by the Administrative Council of Cia. City. As a result, debenture holders were paid amounts above that which was programmed. Moreover, Laveleye's negotiation foresaw that Cia. City would bear the taxes related to this transaction. The closure of the company was therefore contemplated, given the delicate financial situation that had been triggered by the higher than expected payouts, caused by the disastrous actions of Laveleye (LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, 1915). Lord Balfour however, insisted that payments to the French shareholders should be honored and that the pending matters of the company with the Belgian partner be settled definitively. While there is no textual confirmation within the consulted documentation, it is evident that Laveleye profited from the situation he had created, because he himself was one of the largest debenture owners in France.

Joseph-Antoine Bouvard's advanced age, coupled with his son Roger's refusal to move to São Paulo, an indication of his disinterest in the company founded by his father, and Laveleye's unethical behavior, which culminated in his dissociation from the partnership, are factors that may have defined the future of the French partners in the business. Hence, with Bouvard's gradual distancing during the initial period of the company, between 1912 and the outbreak of World War I, in 1914, when Bouvard died in 1920, he was the only Frenchman in Cia. City, still as Vice President, a clear deference to the fact that he was its creator. In the opposite direction, there was a growing involvement of the English in the correspondence and reports, which may have corroborated the decision regarding the collaboration of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker.

2. Initial actions and strategies

According to previous surveys (BACELLI, 1982b; SOUZA, 1988; ANDRADE, 1998; WOLFF, 1998), the first step in achieving the deal was to guarantee the possession of the vacant lots in the southwestern quadrant of the city, where the most valorized lands were to be found and with the most favorable prospects for occupation. For the above authors, the lands outside this quadrant, to the south and east, had been acquired solely to enable the purchase in block, with the aim of achieving a more favorable global price. Thus, soon after the company started operating, they were discarded. According to Souza (1988), between 1912 and 1915 the initial actions of Cia. City were limited to the sale of “gross”⁷ land – land that would require considerable investment in order to become marketable (BACELLI, 1982b; SOUZA, 1988), or that would be of little interest because of its location. The sale of land was underway in Vila América and Vila Nova Tupy, areas previously subdivided by Horácio Sabino and Cincinato Braga before Cia. City was formed, but with the street layout being re-planned by the Cia. City team, as was the creation of the Pacaembu project, which did not move forward due to the need for a curved street layout (BACELLI, 1982b; SOUZA, 1988; ANDRADE, 1998; WOLFF, 2001). Simoni (2002) offered different reasons as to why the project and works became paralyzed, and presented certain elements, which demonstrate that the fieldwork - measurements, staking and earth movements - was already being carried out. In terms of the estate projects, only the Jardim América project was drawn up, and sales were opened in 1915 and, according to the aforementioned authors, it was considered the most important area of the company, which had given it special attention. Souza (1988, p. 56) revealed that “it is precisely in the western quadrant of the city that the Cia. City acquired its land, as reported in the prospectuses for the issuance of debentures. More precisely, it is in the SOUTHWEST vector that the first enterprise would be undertaken - ‘Jardim América’” (capitals in the original).

The table below summarizes the chronologies presented in the abovementioned studies. In addition, it also includes the Cia. City chronology, which was contained in the company’s promotional catalog published around 1975-1980 (CIA. CITY, 2014), the dates for which appear on the company’s website.

When collating the authors, the abovementioned lacuna may be observed in Table 1. It would appear that no significant project production took place during the early years, immediately after the organization of the company. Although it is assumed that the problems related to organizing the Brazilian office took over the entire year of 1912, the question remains: what was Cia. City, which owned more than 30% of the area of the city, doing between 1913 and 1915? The Cia. City itself

7. The term is used by this author in reference to plots of land sold without installment plans.

offers no information regarding the initial years, prior to World War I, and even consulting the company's archive, searching for the original projects for the first garden neighborhoods implemented in São Paulo, proved unsuccessful. A three-year period would seem too long a period for the administrative organization of a company with such a large holding and considerable financial backing, on the stock exchanges of London and of the main European capitals.

Chronologies proposed by previous studies, raised by the present research					
Year	Cia.City (+/- 1980)	Bacelli (1982)	Souza (1988)	Wolff (1998)	Andrade (1998)
1911					Pacaembu - interrupted
1912		The sale of isolated or "gross" lots	The sale of isolated or "gross" lots	The sale of isolated or "gross" lots	
1913		Pacaembu - interrupted	Pacaembu - interrupted		Alto da Lapa
1914					Garden-City
1915	Jardim América	Jardim América	Jardim América	Jardim América	
1916					Garden-City
1917					Pacaembu and Alto da Lapa-Bela Aliança
1918	Butantã		Butantã		Anhangabaú
1921	Alto da Lapa		Alto da Lapa	Alto da Lapa	
1925	Pacaembu			Pacaembu	Pacaembu

Table 1. Chronology of the first Cia. City estates.

The date next to the name of each author indicates the year that the respective doctoral theses or master's dissertations were defended. Anhangabaú, in 1918, refers to the estate between Augusta Street and Nove de Julho Avenue, for which the main street is the current Avanhandava street.

Source: Bacelli (1982a); Souza (1988); Andrade (1998); Wolff (1998); Cia. City (2014); Companhia City [1976].

Souza (1988) and Wolff (1998) followed the chronology proposed by Bacelli (1982b), in view of this author's pioneering spirit. Given the study object of the authors, the first which examined the relationship between financial capital and Cia. City, and the second that analyzed the architecture employed in Jardim América, it is understandable that they took Bacelli as a reference regarding the history of that neighborhood. His study, dealing precisely with the constitution of Cia. City, and the documentation available at the time, led him to affirm that Jardim América was the company's first enterprise, in which was followed by subsequent researches.

The investigation by Andrade (1998) is more comprehensive and presents somewhat different dates from those indicated by the other authors. Unfortunately, however, it does not delve deeper into the issue, since it focuses on a later period, by dealing with Barry Parker's stay in Brazil.

This chronology, adopted by other authors (TOLEDO, 1981; SIMÕES JR., 1995; CAMPOS NETO, 1999; SEGAWA, 2000), came to be questioned only more recently, when, from the turn of the new century, as the collections were made available in digital format, studies were able to benefit from a greater volume of information.

It should also be mentioned that researchers have encountered certain difficulties in the Cia. City archive collection and in its organization which, according to Wolff (1998, p. 76, note 2), was conceived "to meet the needs of the company's real estate business" [...], "which limits access to documents [...]" and are not necessarily referred to in other studies". Similarly, the research that originated this text was unable to access the maps consulted by Wolff, although, on the other hand, it was possible to access the daily work log and some of the Reports for the Directors from the 1910s.

The information contained in the Engineers Dept. Weekly Reports (OELSNER, 1923), prepared between 1912 and 1923, were compared with those obtained in specialized journals and with those presented in the Reports of the Directors issued in London (CARTER, 1913; 1914; 1916b; 1916a; 1917), with the purpose of creating a more detailed picture of the company's movement during those early years, in which the established guidelines, the difficulties faced and the decisions taken by the management appear. It was possible to verify some preliminary procedures that may be considered guidelines for the performance of Cia. City in São Paulo during the period prior to hiring Raymond Unwin and that put into question the idea that, by 1912, the southwest sector of the city was by now recognized as being more valorized.

Having overcome the initial setbacks, a number of steps were taken to guarantee the progress of the business. It was not a matter of creating land stocks and waiting for the city to grow to promote sales according to the market flow. On the contrary, Cia. City was an undertaking that should have offered constant, immediate returns, as there was a need to remunerate the buyers of the debentures issued at the end of 1911. Therefore, it was necessary to "kick start" an entire business plan, based on a perspective of sales estimated by Joseph-Antoine Bouvard and announced to the English in the aforementioned September 1911 report (*Lancé to London ...*, 1911). It was realized that there was no immediate option to sell the land acquired in the eastern and southern quadrants of the city, as advocated by Souza (1988), and, even less so, that the implementation model of the new areas for an

estate, later known as the “City standard”, had already been defined and was ready to be implemented.

Souza (1988) corroborated Bacelli’s claims (1982a, p. 35) that “the company’s primary concern” was focused on structuring model neighborhoods, with the existence of a previous division of the estate due to the location of the vacant lots. Bacelli based this on the Statistical Summary of Works and Public Services drawn up by Cia. City⁸, according to which Jardim América, Pacaembu and Anhangabaú would be “first class” neighborhoods, aimed at a portion of the high-income population; Alto da Lapa, Bela Aliança and Alto dos Pinheiros would be destined for the “middle class”; while Vila Romana and Butantã would be working-class neighborhoods (BACELLI, 1982a, p.35). It should be noted, however, that the author used a report prepared in April 1937, when the model for the project and the design of the vacant lots, introduced by Barry Parker in 1917, was already fully in force and had been established for two decades.

Contrary to the idea that the area of Jardim América would be the most aristocratic, valorized holding acquired by Cia. City in 1911, what in fact was discovered when analyzing the primary sources, was that Pacaembu was considered “...the principal high-class residential district belonging to this Company.” (LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, 1914, p. 2), to which all attention should be turned. Indeed, Barry Parker was originally hired to design a project for this vacant plot.

Caring for Cia. City’s land holdings materialized within four guidelines, discussed below, some of which were maintained for a considerable period of time. They were (i) a survey of the acquired holdings; (ii) the promotion of retail business; (iii) maintaining a good relationship with public administration; and, associated with the latter, (iv) the blocking of similar initiatives by third parties.

2.1 Survey of the acquired holdings

It was discovered that even the areas that had not been the object of treatment, i.e., they received no “changes in the form of parceling or street layout”, according to Souza (1988, p. 65), were, along with the others, the object of a new survey, aimed at ascertaining any deviations or incompatibilities between the lands and their deeds (OELSNER, 1923). Thus, in the daily work log, it was possible to discover remarks related to adjustments or any possible existing litigations regarding the demarcation of the land, such as the following: “Alto da Mooca final settlement in our favour of limit with neighbor” (OELSNER, 1923). This note, dated at the end of 1915, reveals that the company had not disposed of these lands quickly; on the

8. Souza (1988), Appendix 3.

contrary, it had made significant investments in carrying out these surveys. This was due to the ever-present concern with maintaining the value of the vacant lots and with the strict control of the company's properties in Brazil.

The ground plans prepared in Brazil could be archived, to control sales, and, still, sent to England, where they represented the realization of Brazilian property holdings in the eyes of the English shareholders (OELSNER, 1923). The year 1913 was entirely dedicated to surveys and conferring the vacant lots and lands alongside the development of the Pacaembu project. Based on this first survey, some sparse lots were acquired, purchased for strategic reasons, in order to preserve the value of contiguous lots, according to a document from that same year: "I may say that it will be our policy in future to acquire from time to time any piece of land which we think necessary to enhance the value and assist the development of our present holding" (LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, 1913, p. 2).

Thus, it was found that until the arrival of Barry Parker in 1917, the company had decided not to give up any of land located outside the city's western quadrant. It would seem that the main reason for this was to control the acquired holdings and to maintain their value.

2.2 Retail Business

Smaller lots were also subjected to surveys, such as those originally owned by Horácio Sabino and Cincinato Braga, respectively Vila América and Vila Nova Tupy, in addition to others distributed across several other neighborhoods, mostly isolated lots.

Although there were no major improvements to be made in the Sabino and Braga properties, since the street layout had already been decided, formulating a system of streets that simply gave "continuation to the pre-existing urban design on a chessboard" (WOLFF, 2001, p. 77- 78), there was a delay in effectuating a more constant sales flow due precisely to the survey operations. It seems reasonable to assume that the company, needing to raise some cash, would enter the São Paulo real estate market and, in order to become known, would start to buy, sell and rent properties, i.e., enter the "retail businesses". Furthermore, such actions did not require work on the part of the technical team, whose initial organization encountered difficulties, as previously mentioned.

On the other hand, this option may indicate an unwise attitude by the French, especially the manager Louis Vergé, who apparently did not understand the bulk of the operation conceived by Bouvard and Laveleye and treated the company as a common real estate company (Figure 1, left) , which would recognize Pacaembu as the only piece of land with high added value. This is proven by the fact that,

in 1913, when this neighborhood was launched, it received differential treatment, including the creation of a contest to choose the names of its streets (Figure 1, right). A more aggressive and elaborated sales model would only be effective to sell the lots in Jardim América, after the intervention of Barry Parker.



Figure 1. Advertisements for Cia. City, 1913.

On the left, an advertisement for the City of San Paulo Improvements offering lots on the company's first three estates, together with offers with little added value, such as the sale of beds and mechanical services. On the right, an advertisement for the launch of Pacaembu in the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, in January 1913, with a call to competition.

Source: *O Pirralho*, January 25, 1913. Public Archive Collection at the *O Estado de S. Paulo* (left) and the *O Estado de S. Paulo* Collection (right).

Prior to the formation of Cia. City, in order to promote his plots of land, Horácio Sabino decided to sell them on installment plans (ANDRADE; CARVALHO; SOARES NETTO, 2009). This system was incorporated by the company and, “implemented on a large scale, associated with providing building loans and well-planned promotional campaigns, was part of the success strategy of [its] future commercial structure” (WOLFF, 2001, p. 78)⁹.

2.3 Approaching public administration

Another initial guideline of the company concerns its relationship with the municipal administration, an aspect observed by Bacelli (1982a) and Souza (1988).

9. In the minutes of the Second Ordinary General Meeting, referring to the year 1913, there are references to the system as a resource to sustain sales and face the period of economic depression. Cf. LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, *Proceedings at the Second Ordinary General Meeting* [1913], 1914, p. 2.

This proximity also extended to the state level. In Cia. City documents, several references to this strategy reveal the company's interests, as may be observed from the following excerpt:

The relations of our Company with the State and Municipality are of the most cordial character and the Company has arranged to cede to the State the land required for the construction of a reservoir at Lapa. We believe in return for this the Company will be accorded favourable conditions for its water supply in that and other districts (CARTER, 1914, p. 2).

When the crisis began to make its mark on Cia. City, due to Laveleye's disastrous business deals, followed by the outbreak of World War I, and its liquidation was under consideration, one of the arguments used by those in favor of maintaining the business was the good relationship with the municipal authorities, from whom "The Company has received the most sympathetic treatment ..." (LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, 1915, p. 3). The partnership with the municipality of São Paulo was highly valued, so much so that the company counted on their assistance for the future.

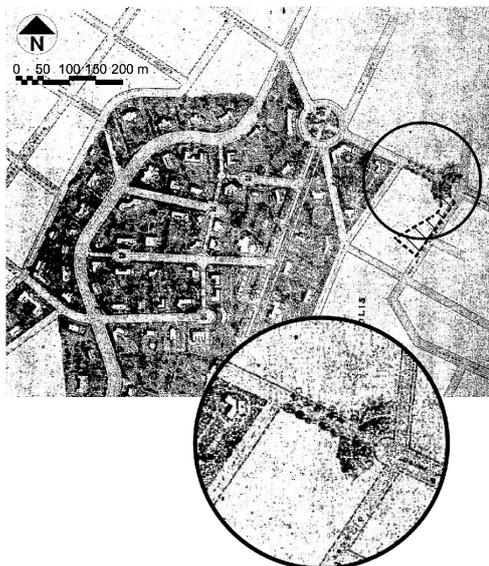


Figure 2. Location of the Rio de Janeiro Street belvedere in relation to the City of San Paulo Improvements land in Pacaembu

The dotted lines represent the current design of the belvedere. In detail, the first indication of belvedere, in the plan published in the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* on January 7, 1913, as a continuation of Higienópolis Avenue, the then Martinho Prado Boulevard.

Source: *O Estado de S. Paulo* Collection.

This proximity had repercussions on actions by the municipality that, as early as 1912, aimed to benefit and enhance the company's properties. One exemplary case was the opening of the belvedere on Rio de Janeiro Street (Figure 2), which, it should be noted, did not make part of the lots acquired in 1911: the area for its implantation was subject to expropriation processes with rapid approval by the City Hall, while some of the actions needed to implement the Bouvard Plan were slow in being decided. This position of the company is closely linked to the guideline examined below.

2.4 Blocking potential competitors

Maintaining good relations with public administration agents made it possible to block any other initiatives that could possibly have competed with the company. As an example, we mention the case of an entrepreneur who requested authorization from the City Hall to open up streets in the Pacaembu region: "The indications and requirements submitted to City Hall were presented in yesterday's session: [...] The papers related to the proposal by Mr. Francisco de Salles Camargo, in order to open up streets in Pacaembu, under the terms of the Works Commission reports, of the twentieth day of this current year" (CORREIO PAULISTANO, Expedient ..., 1911, p. 4).

Probably the request of the interested party, Mr. Salles Camargo, was either denied or "shelved", since there was no further news regarding the matter. This is indicative of the neutralizing actions of other investors who, taking the operations of Cia. City as an example, much discussed at the time, wished to act in the same manner, reducing, even if virtually, the profit projections of the company.

3. The first projects

According to Bacelli (1982a, p. 34), "the first attempt to implement an estate occurred when in 1915 the English board hired the office of the famous architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin to design it in an area located beyond the urban perimeter of the city".

As it turned out, this statement, associated with the belief that Cia. City was an English company that had opened a branch in São Paulo, corroborated the construction of a story, shared by the company itself, that Cia. City, constituted in 1911, only began to operate in 1915, which in no way corresponded to the true facts. Thus, a lacuna in its history was created, which only recently could be reviewed, since the company's works log, which contains entries from 1912 to 1923, proves that a considerable amount of work was completed between that year and 1915, either in the form of surveying the properties acquired, or in formulating estate projects, or

in carrying out works, such as opening up streets, earthworks, staking, covering and leveling with stones, constructing rainwater drainage devices and even planting trees along the streets.

The documentation collected demonstrates that the Pacaembu and Alto da Lapa projects, as well as that of Butantã, preceded Jardim América. This last estate was the first initiative of the company to materialize, because, although Pacaembu preceded it as a project, it underwent several revisions and restrictions, until it was finally archived in 1916.

The omission by the company and other agents linked to it - public or private - in relation to the intensity of work carried out from 1912, both in terms of projects and works, may be related to the financial difficulties resulting from the recession caused by World War I, which led to the shutdown of several work fronts. It would have been an embarrassing situation for the company, which was not in keeping with the strength and organization promoted since Parker's stay in São Paulo. As previously mentioned, there was a moment when the closure of its activities was considered due to the recessionary economic situation. In real terms, this meant that numerous lots were returned by purchasers who had been unable to honor their payments.

Within this context, the hiring of Barry Parker in 1917 may have been part of a reinvention strategy. Parker promoted a fresh remodeling of the Garden City design, previously changed by Raymond Unwin, to more sinuous, organic forms, including with regard to the size and number of lots. Unlike Unwin, who preserved the initial character of that enterprise, i.e., lots aimed at the working class, in accordance with the origins of the ideal garden city, Parker proposed to target it towards the middle class. It is possible, in order to erase any memories of the first, unsuccessful enterprise, that the name was changed to Jardim América, a tribute to the wife of Horácio Sabino.

In general terms, the designs of the first estate followed Bouvard's design pattern, far from the more organic "Sittean" guidelines. However, whether it was due to the insistence of Victor da Silva Freire, director of Municipal Works, who, as other research has shown, was aware of the new project currents under development in Europe (SIMÕES JR., 2009), or whether it was due to Bouvard's contact with such trends, and perhaps desiring to offer something closer to what the English partners were more familiar with, in these first projects there is a hybridization of Haussmannian concepts, fully dominated by Bouvard, and picturesque, arising from the Garden-City movement. This attempt to re-work its design matrix, combined with the abovementioned problems, may have contributed to Bouvard relinquishing coordination of the technical office, remaining only as a Cia. City Administrative Council member, until his death in 1920.

Alongside Pacaembu, other work fronts were opened up: a part of the current Butantã City, which could be considered its embryo; Alto da Lapa and Garden City, an area corresponding to the current Jardim América.

This small stretch of Butantã was the first project implemented by the City of San Paulo Improvements that has been reported so far, preceding the other estates. The first design for the area dates from October 25, 1913, a few days before the enactment of Law No. 1,749, which established the central and urban perimeters for the city of São Paulo (SIMONI, 2002). The project is of simple design, with four streets parallel to one another and perpendicular in relation to two others that leave the road from Butantã towards the Pinheiros River, constituting, in formal terms, a street along the lines of those that were already being implanted in São Paulo.

It is difficult to establish the precise reasons for choosing the street layout in this area, corresponding to just a small part of the company's land, as Cia. City's first enterprise on the newly acquired land, although two hypotheses may be put forward. The first would be to justify the implementation of a railway branch line in the region of the Pinheiros River valley, which were referred to in the City Hall Report of 1911 as the "bypass", proposed by Victor da Silva Freire (SÃO PAULO (MUNICÍPIO), 1912). The new estate could justify the implantation of a station at that point, aiming at valorizing the company's land, one of the guidelines of the operation in São Paulo. The second hypothesis, which may be combined with the first, would be to force the expansion of the urban perimeter towards the Pinheiros River, which in fact occurred, and may be observed in the 1914 city plan, according to Simoni (2002), which would also have led to the valorization of the vacant lots where Jardim América and part of Alto de Pinheiros are today.

Pacaembu, considered by Joseph-Antoine Bouvard as a continuation of the aristocratic neighborhood of Higienópolis, and destined for the São Paulo elite, was the main vacant lot to be worked on, since Victor da Silva Freire had included it in his city development program included in the City Hall Report of 1911 (SÃO PAULO (MUNICÍPIO), 1912). It may be stated that both Cia. City and Pacaembu were conceived together. The probable date of the elaboration must be between August 1911, when Bouvard returned to Paris, and March 1912, when Louis Vergé and Roger Bouvard embarked for Brazil, because Vergé brought the project with him and presented it to the local authorities.

The Brazilian technical team was involved with surveys, fieldwork and the location of boundaries - probably fences - from 1913 until mid-1914, when the financial crisis in Brazil worsened and the outbreak of war in Europe was imminent (OELSNER, 1923). In August 1914, the team was busy with earthmoving in areas adja-

cent to the property of the Álvares Penteadó family, in Pacaembu, when the works, as well as the project, were suspended by orders from above (OELSNER, 1923). It was not possible to ascertain the exact reasons for this, but it is assumed that guidelines were reviewed due to the crisis, when it was decided to focus efforts on the Garden City vacant lot. The Pacaembu project, however, was not abandoned. On the contrary, efforts were made to push it through until 1916, and it resumed the following year, under the care of Barry Parker, who considered Bouvard's layout because part of the streets had already been opened. This is why much of the current Traipu Street is wider than the other roads in the neighborhood, since it was designed to become a continuation of Paulista Avenue.

The third vacant lot chosen to compose the initial urbanization works of the properties acquired by Cia. City, the project for which was developed in parallel with the Pacaembu project, was Alto da Lapa. From the beginning, it was linked to the idea of suburban urbanization (CARTER, 1913), taking advantage of the proximity of the industrial area of Lapa, below the railway and next to the Tietê river. The abovementioned railway branch line began from a diversion line of the São Paulo Railway from a station to be implemented in this neighborhood. It was also considered, as being attractive, to immediately provide the location with a tram line and, for that, in 1913, an agreement was signed with Light, although it is not possible to specify when the trams arrived.

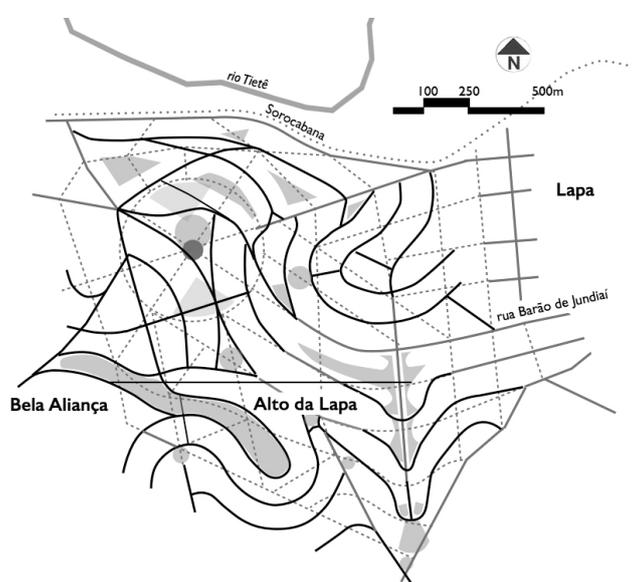


Figure 3. Alto da Lapa: changes introduced by Barry Parker onto the Project by Bouvard.

The dotted lines represent the streets of the original design. The gray continuous line represents sections from the original project preserved in the new project, probably because they were in the works. The black continuous line shows the design of the implanted project. This drawing was produced by the author based on maps of the city of São Paulo from 1914 and 1930. Not to scale.

The same process observed in Pacaembu and Garden City occurred later in Alto da Lapa. As some streets had already been opened up, Barry Parker took them into consideration when formulating his project and, thus, such permanencies could now be observed when comparing the design of the neighborhood with older plans, drawn up under the direction of Joseph-Antoine Bouvard (Figure 3). This is an important finding since it demonstrates that the design supervised by Bouvard, already back in Paris, had not been abandoned and did not constitute a mere study, but, on the contrary, remained the official project for the area until 1917, when it passed on to the personal supervision of Barry Parker. As in the case of Pacaembu, the Alto da Lapa project and works were halted. However, in this case, the interruption was motivated by the deepening crisis triggered by World War I.

In the historiography of São Paulo, the idea was established that in 1915, Raymond Unwin conceived the first project for the area and that any records prior to that date are just “sketches or embryos”, or experiences of lesser significance, recognized as “drafts” duly attributed to Bouvard, given their close characteristics to “an urbanism that sought to create monumental axes” (WOLFF, 2001, p. 128), clearly affiliated with the Beaux-Arts style (ANDRADE, 1998, p. 245).

The inaccessibility to other sources during the period when previous studies were conducted may have led authors to the idea that the company had been preparing to operate in Brazil, from the beginning, by implementing a “refined standard” (SOUZA, 1988), innovative and aristocratic, created by renowned urbanists, with the choice of the vacant lot, between an area known as the São Paulo *espigão* (ridge) and the Pinheiros River, as the favored area. This implied affirming that there, the best portion amongst the acquired plots of land had been identified, with the best location and the best slopes, in short, all the desirable qualities for lots that were aimed at the elite. This idea, however, does not correspond to what is verified in the documentation to which we have had access, according to which Pacaembu was, in effect, the estate designed for this role.

The project was developed in the company’s office in parallel to preparing the three previously mentioned projects, and later became known as “Jardim América”. Until 1915, it was part of the large bypass project in the capital’s urbanized area, with a new railway branch line, through which a connection would be established between Lapa and Ipiranga, without receiving greater attention than the other projects mentioned (OELSNER, 1923), due to the fact that these were enterprises aimed at the working classes and the middle strata of the population.

Indeed, Andrade (1998, p. 245-246) noted that the existence of photographs “of the estate already open and with the first houses being built” (Figure 4), “indicates that the project was already being implemented even before the arrival of Parker in São Paulo”.

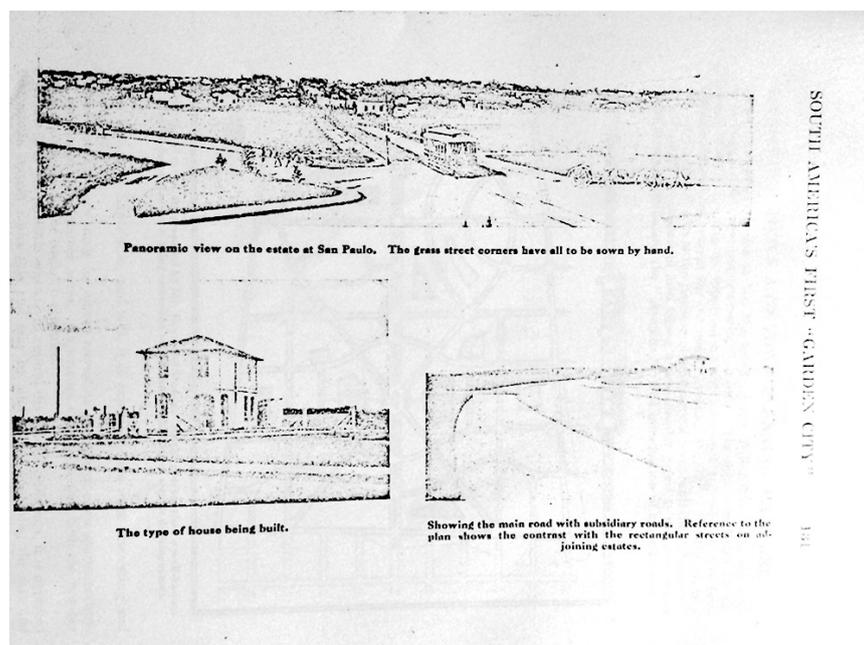


Figure 4. Announcing the estates in Pacaembu.

On the announcement is written: [Top] “Panoramic view on the estate at San Paulo. The grass street corners have all to be sown by hand”. [Bottom left] “The type of house being built” [Bottom right] “Showing the main road with subsidiary roads. Reference to the plan shows the contrast with rectangular streets on adjoining estates” The main street may be observed with secondary streets. And in relation to the plan, the contrast with the orthogonal streets of the neighboring estates is shown.

Source: Photocopy. The Mervyn Miller collection, photographed by the author, 2015.

Andrade (1998) suggested that Unwin was hired at the suggestion of Joseph-Antoine Bouvard and Victor da Silva Freire, as there are reports that, in 1913, the director of Municipal Works visited a number of garden cities, amongst them – Letchworth, and may have suggested to Douglas Gurd, the local manager, that he should hire Raymond Unwin, a reference within Freire’s theoretical frameworks.

However, although relations with the municipal administration were extremely cordial, this proximity does not solely seem to have guaranteed or justified the adoption of this measure. Most likely, the disagreements between the board in London and the first manager, Louis Vergé, together with the impossibility of Roger Bouvard establishing himself in Brazil and the problems concerning the remuneration of the debentures in France caused by Laveleye, irrevocably eroded

the relationship between London and Paris. The situation, aggravated by the widespread economic recession resulting from World War I, must have led the British board to seek alternatives that matched the reputation that the name of Joseph-Antoine Bouvard still inspired.

There is no mention in the consulted documents regarding a direct justification for hiring Unwin; therefore, so far, only a few possibilities may be suggested, supported by the available material. Undoubtedly, the lack of harmony between the English and the French is one of the main reasons, although probably not the immediate cause. What is strange is that this decision was made in the middle of the process of implementing the Bouvard project.

It was not a question of dispensing with a project, be it due to disagreeing with its fundamentals, or to a question of aesthetics or “taste”, and to afterwards hire another. The reports demonstrate that, in all the areas examined in this text, the works were moving along at a good pace and there was a certain urgency to put the land up for sale, since it was necessary to make profits to pay the shareholders, and the main, initial project to be put into place, Pacaembu, was proving difficult to obtain approval.

Considering the projects in progress, it seems that the possible option fell on Lot 3 - the vacant lot where Garden City was established -, not because of its qualities, but almost by exclusion. Alto da Lapa was located very far from the city center, in a practically isolated area, dependent on the railway branch line that the company was unable to obtain in conjunction with the São Paulo Railway.

Pacaembu, a vacant lot on which the company had invested considerable resources, having even initiated the implementation works and achieved some advancement, even before the project was approved, was on hold, according to the documents of the board of directors. This was due both to the difficulty in attending to current legislation (SOUZA, 1988; ANDRADE, 1998; WOLFF, 1998) and to the demand for a large amount of capital, which was scarce in the context of the Brazilian crisis aggravated by the war (SIMONI, 2002).

Investment in the vacant lots to the east of the city, close to Ipiranga, which were equally distant, would only make sense if the railway branch line were implemented, and perhaps its failure to do so led the company to decide, at a later date, on its sale. Finally, Lots 3, 15, 42 and 44 remained, were very close to Paulista Avenue and which, according to Cia. City entrepreneurs, were the continuation of Vila América, i.e., the area corresponding, in current terms, to the quadrant formed by the Augusta and Estados Unidos Streets, and Rebouças and Paulista Avenues – which apparently, were a sales success. The fact must also have weighed heavily that they were originally owned by Horácio Sabino and Cincinato Braga, the faith-

ful Brazilian partners, towards whom the English board had devoted much respect and who, at a certain moment, must have helped the company in its difficulties, during the early years of the war. Note the deference with which Lord Balfour refers to them, when, in 1915, in the facing of the crisis, the possibility of ending the activities of Cia. City was being assessed:

What particularly weighed with those who had to consider what were the best proposals was that the great bulk of the share capital is owned by people in Brazil of some influence who had already done everything in their power to assist the Company. It appeared a most injudicious policy to shut them out now, even if that could be done, when their shareholding merely represented a remote residuary interest which could only receive any value after the Debenture-holders had been paid in full. [...] It has been no fault of the shareholders in San Paulo that they have not been able to help us more; circumstances have been entirely against them, but we must not despair that their assistance will be of the greatest value in more normal times. (LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, 1915, p. 3).

Thus, it seems that it would have been wise, when reducing the company's activities in Brazil, to concentrate efforts on the vacant lots which were more likely to bring profit, considering the continuation of an area in which sales were going well and, at the same time, would gratify people who had real interests and had worked hard for the organization and success of Cia. City ever since its inception. It is understood, therefore, that the choice was not made through the qualities of the vacant lots, but through the feasible financial possibilities in the current recessionary situation.

The works continued and, in the work reports (OELSNER, 1923), from mid-1915 references to the other vacant lots ceased; hence, the work became increasingly concentrated in the Garden City. The works to implement the Bouvard-Rouch project were well under way when, in 1915, it was decided to hire Unwin. Roads were staked out and opened, gutters and other parts necessary for surface runoff and water drainage were performed, gravel was distributed over the street bed, and trees were planted (OELSNER, 1923).

At that time, several meetings of the London board were held in order to discuss "alternative schemes" (LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, 1915), both to solve the financial problem caused by the issuance, without the board's consent, of tax-free securities by Laveleye, which affected the progress of the work in Brazil, and, probably, to solve another problem that had dragged on since the beginning of the war, in the middle of 1914: there was, once again, a void in the Brazilian technical management, because the architect Émile Rouch, Bouvard's right-hand man in

Brazil, had returned to France on the eve of the world conflict. It was within this context that Raymond Unwin was hired.

A document was discovered, which was sent to the City Hall requesting a change to the previously approved project. In this letter, addressed to Mayor Washington Luís, the justifications for adopting the changes were very specific, placing Unwin's proposal within the sphere of "modernity". This document is significant since it underlines the project elaborated by this architect within the history of the neighborhood: it is clear that Unwin, who produced it at a distance, as Miller (2012) highlights, took the Bouvard-Rouch project as the basis for his proposal. More than that, he necessarily had to consider the portion already implemented in the project, which is laid out in the aforementioned letter (Figure 5).

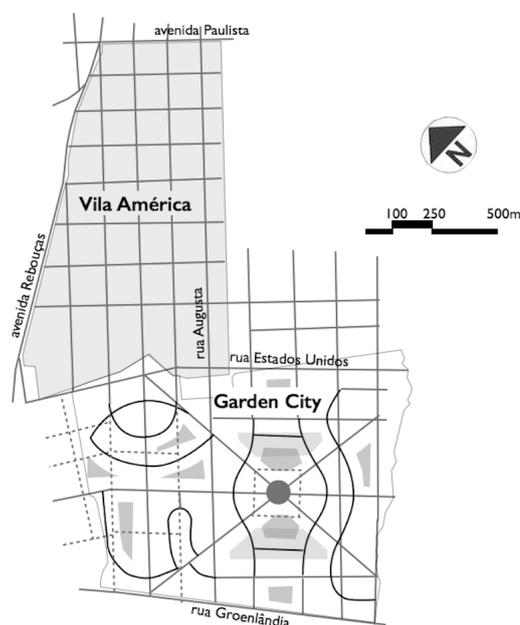


Figure 5. The proximity between Vila América and Garden City, with the changes made by Raymond Unwin in 1915 on the Bouvard project.

The dotted lines represent the original project. The gray continuous lines represent sections of the original project maintained within the new project, probably because work had already begun. The black continuous line represents the design of the implanted project. This drawing was produced by the author based on maps of the city of São Paulo from 1914 and 1916. Not to scale.

The accompanying graphic representation clearly demonstrates how Unwin managed to transform the very geometric design by Bouvard-Rouch into a more organic design, with curved streets and winding paths. However, it is also clear how the original structure of the project was maintained, which clarifies that it is not something totally new, but rather an adaptation of an existing structure.

In an appraisal of the design resulting from Unwin's intervention, a second hypothesis for his hiring is brought to mind. The company had repurchased several lots for future resale as a result of the high default rate, due to the context of a financial crisis aggravated by the war and at the moment when the Garden City had become disconnected from Vila América - originally, Garden City was treated in the work reports as an extension of this area. The company's intention was to emphasize this autonomy and express it physically, or even spatially, as a strategy in order to revitalize sales. Thus, Unwin's design differs in conceptual terms from that of Bouvard-Rouch. While the original project sought to be a natural continuation of the street layout of Vila América, Unwin's design complied with municipal guidelines regarding the location of new streets in relation to those that existed and sought to completely differentiate the new street in relation to Vila América. Although Unwin did not change the land parceling proposed by the first project, Oelsner (1923) mentioned that something had been designed along these lines.

At the same time, a Board Report announced to shareholders in London that Unwin had been hired to organize the property located in the Vila América district "on Garden City lines" (CARTER, 1917, p. 1). By that time, however, Barry Parker had probably already been hired to come to São Paulo, "to survey and design a plan for the laying out of the Hygienopolis Estate" (CARTER, 1918, p. 1). Parker, with the advantage of knowing both the site where the project was implemented, and the reality of the social and economic relations in the city of São Paulo, would bring about new changes to the Garden City project, redirecting it towards a public with greater purchasing power, which culminated in creating the name "Jardim América", and in inaugurating the official discourse of the performance of Cia. City, which became consolidated throughout time.

4. Conclusions

In this article, we have sought to demonstrate how the operation of Cia. City began in Brazil and that the first project, of an "aristocratic" nature, was conceived for Pacaembu, which has already been confirmed by Andrade (1998). However, Butantã was the first street layout to be implemented. Appraisal of the Butantã, Pacaembu and Alto da Lapa projects reveals that there was a significant effort and volume of work produced in those early years, during which, under the coordination of Joseph-Antoine Bouvard, in Paris, assisted by Émile Rouch, in São Paulo, several work fronts were opened.

All these actions were linked to the implementation of a railway branch line - the "railway bypass" planned by Victor da Silva Freire, included in the "Diagram of the general road network proposed by the Directorate of Municipal Works" (SÃO

PAULO (MUNICÍPIO), 1912). It may be understood that, as a strategy to build the ring rail line proposed by the director of Municipal Works viable, and with a view to creating a demand for this undertaking, the streets of Butantã were opened up, in a small part of the vast area acquired on the banks of the Pinheiros River.

It was also possible to verify that the works for implementing the estates occurred alongside the development of the projects, thereby signaling the large amount of invested resources, which needed to be recovered with the sale of the lots. On the other hand, the crisis triggered by the World War I, which caused many of the acquired properties to be returned - lots and houses -, and Édouard Fontaine de Laveleye's reckless attitudes became obstacles to the development of the works, which principally caused the decapitalization of the company, an episode during which the actions of the Brazilian partners were fundamental for maintaining the enterprise.

The hiring of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker may be linked to an effort to "re-found" Cia. City, a new beginning that was established as the official beginning of its history.

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