

Garden city urbanism?: Barry Parker and Oporto

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As Portugal's second city, Oporto possesses an eclectic urban tradition, influenced by English Palladianism in the 18th century, and by 'Haussmania' at the turn of the 19th. The Avenida dos Aliados, and the rebuilding of the Camara Municipal, was one of the most important landmarks of the city's early 20th century urbanism, involving Barry Parker (1867-1947), who with his partner, Raymond Unwin was internationally renowned for masterplanning Letchworth Garden City (1902) and Hampstead Garden Suburb (1907).

The Oporto City Council (Camara Municipal) began planning city improvements in the late 1880s. In 1889, the engineer, Carlos de Pezerat proposed a grand boulevard between the Praca Don Pedro [Praca da Liberdade] and Praca Trindade. Jose Marques da Silva, City architect 1904-7, and his successor, Correia da Silva were influenced by French beaux-arts architecture, and began to update Pezerat's proposals as part of a comprehensive plan for the city improvements. In 1913, an Aesthetics Commission was formed to evaluate the design of city buildings, followed by a Technical Commission in 1915, to examine city improvements in detail. Councillor Elisio de Melo, in charge of public works, urged the appointment of an eminent foreign consultant.

The First World War disrupted architectural practice in Britain. Unwin was seconded to the Ministry of Munitions emergency housing programme. Parker arrived in Oporto in late August 1915, for an eleven-week stay. He reworked Pezerat's plan as a wedge-shaped boulevard, and sited the new Camara Municipal centrally at the head, facing a new town square. Links were made to the off-axis Praca da Trindade beyond. Parker's design concept included a low-key Camara Municipal, to provide axial visibility of the Trindade church tower. The architectural style was Palladian Classical, with vernacular touches.

Parker's initial plan attracted criticism, but a revised version was approved in November 1915. Back in England, Parker developed the scheme in detail, and it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1916. Parker's final report also included reconstruction of the cathedral district, and a new road to the Ponte Luiz I.

Construction of the Avenida dos Aliados commenced in 1916, and construction of the new Camara Municipal, designed by Correia da Silva began in June 1920. The elaborate Franco-Flemish building with its central tower contrasts with Parker's simpler concept, but confirms the appropriateness of the tapering boulevard and axial gardens of its setting. Parker had achieved mediation between the vista and the closure of urban space.

An Englishman Abroad

The traveller pauses in the centre of Oporto, Portugal's second city. A double boulevard rises towards an impressive building, with a soaring central tower, in an elaborate Franco-Flemish style. The Lonely Planet Guide reads

Porto's handsome central avenue/square, Avenida dos Aliados, was carved out starting in 1915, initially under the direction of an Englishman named Barry Parker and later at the hands of the Portuguese architect Marques de Silva, during a period of general infatuation with the French Art Nouveau style. (1)

For the aficionado of planning history, this is intriguing. Barry Parker ... could this be the partner of Raymond Unwin, the firm responsible for masterplanning the seminal English garden cities and suburbs, New Earswick (1902), Letchworth Garden City (1904) and Hampstead Garden Suburb (1905-7)? Surely it was Unwin, who wrote *Town Planning in Practice* (2) with its analysis of European cities, and primer for Garden City housing layout ... wasn't Parker more interested in the artistic home?

Through disruption of private architectural practice by the Great War, Barry Parker (1867-1947) developed an international career. The partnership was dissolved in May 1914, when Unwin became Chief Inspector of Town Planning to the Local Government Board. In July 1915, the Minister of Munitions, David Lloyd George, appointed Unwin as his Chief Architect.(3) Unwin took charge of munitions workers' housing. Parker's wife held that Lloyd George had encouraged her husband to develop professional liaison with Britain's allies.(4) After Oporto, Barry Parker spent two years in, from January 1917 to February 1919. He supervised planning and development of Jardim America, the garden suburb of Sao Paulo. Coincidentally, in 1916, Unwin became involved in drafting planning legislation to control rebuilding Sackville (O'Connell) Street, Dublin, destroyed during the Easter uprising. (5)

Late in August 1915, Barry Parker, accompanied by his wife, arrived in Oporto, via Biarritz, Burgos and Salamanca. He had been invited by the city council (Camara Municipal) to advise on replanning the commercial heart of the city. On 12 August 1915, the President of the Camara, Santos Silva, had announced the imminent arrival of 'the English engineer [sic] Parker ... an authority on matters of building, equipped to assess critically and revise a project for realisation'.(6) Parker's involvement represents a rare example of Garden City urbanism.

The Urban Tradition

Oporto originated as a Roman fort, on the rocky northern bank of the River Douro, a few kilometres inland from its estuary. The mediaeval city prospered, particularly as Portugal developed overseas trade and Colonial settlements. Penavenosta Hill, in a strategically prominent position, was developed with the fortress cathedral of Se, with congested streets running down to the waterfront, the Ribeira. During the early 18th century, Italian Baroque influence brought the Igreja dos Clerigos, with its soaring 75 m. tower, designed by Niccolo Nasoni. Expansion of the port wine trade, and heavy British investment, resulted in Anglo-Palladian architecture in the late 18th century, in which John Whitehead, the British consul, and the architect, John Carr of York (1732-1807) played leading roles. (7)

Whitehead was a close friend of Joao de Almada e Melo, Governor of the Militia and Justices of Porto, who was responsible for urban development in the city between 1763 and 1786. In 1767, John Carr was chosen to design the Hospital of San Antonio; the plans were shown to King George III. Begun 1770, the hospital is Carr's most imposing building, with an arcaded front, climaxing in a grand central pediment. Built in several phases, and left

incomplete in 1843, it influenced reconstruction in Oporto for a generation, including the University building, the English Factory, and the Stock Exchange. (8)

During the 19th century, the influence of French city planning became dominant in Portugal. The remodelling of Paris by Baron Haussmann during the Second Empire of Napoleon III between 1853-1870, with grands boulevards linked by ronds points was a potent model, eagerly emulated by all progressive municipalities. Under a Decree of 31 December 1864, 'General Plans of Improvement' became obligatory for the cities of Lisbon and Oporto. As Rui Tavares has commented, these plans showed 'the notorious dependency of Portugal ...on typical solutions of urbanistic Haussmania'.(9) The trend began with the Avenida da Liberdade in Lisbon. Oporto was not to be outdone, but its hilly topography and congested streets posed problems. Nevertheless, in September 1881, Jose Augusto Correa de Barros, (10) President of the Camara Municipal, inaugurated the Oporto City Improvement Plan, which set the context for the late 19th century improvements, and subsequently for Parker's involvement.

There was municipal funding for rationalisation of markets, public health and sanitation, security, and improvement of communications and transport. In 1885 the opening of the high level Ponte de Dom Luis I, designed by an assistant of Gustave Eiffel, underlined the necessity for improved links to and through the congested city centre. In December 1889, the Camara formed a Technical Committee to advise on major buildings, street widening, and a restructuring of the central zone. That month, Carlos Felipe Julio de Pezerat (d.1896) submitted a plan for a grand avenue connecting the Praca Don Pedro [Liberdade] to the Praca Trindade. (11) This involved clearance of a congested area, including demolishing the Casa da Camara, across the north side of Praca Don Pedro. Dual roads would flank a central 'plaisance', with trees and fountains, and an axial walk aligned on a line between the statue of Don Pedro and the central tower of the Igreja Trindade. On the west would be a new Casa da Camara, and buildings for the Civil Governor and District Administration.

No immediate action was taken. Pezerat's proposals suffered from the awkward relationship of the avenue to the Praca Trindade. Moreover, the public buildings were sidelined between new Avenue and the existing Rua da Alameda. Nevertheless, as Tavares concluded, Pezerat fixed the key image of the avenue in replanning Oporto. (12) The avenue (or boulevard) became a thematic leitmotif for civic improvement. Between 1907-10 studies were made for 50 km of principal, and 70 km of secondary avenues. This 'Haussmania' reflected the dominance in city affairs of the architect, Jose Marques da Silva (1869-1947), who added yet another overtone to the eclectic urban traditions of Oporto. (13) Trained at the Oporto Escola de Belas Artes, and the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris (1890-96), da Silva spent his working life in his native city. His graduation project was the new terminal station of San Bento, facing the narrow Praca da Alameda Garrett. In the French style, the building was completed in 1900. From 1904-7 he was Municipal Architect. He took a leading role in the finalisation urban redevelopment, after his appointment to the Aesthetics Commission in 1913. Another key player was Elisio de Melo, a member of the Camara, in charge of Public Works (14), a man of progressive, republican sympathies, dominant following the 1910 Revolution, which established the Republic of Portugal. The concept of the central avenue was revived in the proposal for a public competition for 'A Plan of Improvements and Enlargement of the City of Porto', made by de Melo in December 1914. In language which might have been taken from Unwin's Town Planning in Practice, the plan was to be prepared in conformity with modern principles of the art of building cities, yet fitted to local conditions. (15)

Early in 1915 the project for the central 'Avenida da Cidade' was approved in principle, updating Pezerat's plan, and itemising the demolition required. To improve east-west communication, the lengthening of the Rua Passos Manuel was proposed. De Melo had already stated that 'a foreign professional, renowned in his art' would be appointed, and by August

1915, the convening of a Technical Commission was announced, to assess the Camara's plans for improvement. Members included Marques da Silva, Barry Parker ('an illustrious English technician [sic], who would be brought to Oporto at the invitation of the Camara') (16) and Antonio Correia da Silva, the Municipal Architect.

At 2-00 a.m. on 23 August 1915, Barry Parker (accompanied by his wife) arrived at San Bento Station, and was driven to the Hotel do Porto. (17)

Parker in 'Porto

Parker was requested to evaluate current urban projects, and develop his own proposals. This first phase was undertaken in Oporto, and was restricted to the Avenida Cidade. He prepared three schemes for discussion, from which a preferred scheme emerged, approved by the Camara on 29 November 1915. The Camara's brief sought

To open out and enlarge a part of the city which is badly congested ... to lay out a broad Avenue, above all, very dignified, tearing down the centre to create a true civic and business centre. (18)

Behind the eastern side of the existing Camara Municipal, on the north of the Praca da Liberdade, the Rua da Laranjal ran upwards. A narrow street, with slender property subdivisions, typical of mediaeval urbanism, it emerged into the Praca da Trindade. The topography involved a small hillside cleft, channelled into the Liberdade at its lower end. The Improvement Plan of 1914, essentially Pezerat's, cut a broad swathe through the district, slightly narrower than the Praca da Liberdade. There was an awkward oblique approach to Trindade, bisecting the praca into triangular spaces. A detailed plan, approved in February 1915, (19) was marked up with the 96 properties, to be acquired for demolition.

Parker was aware of the difficulty of striking a balance between a broad vista and enclosed discrete spatial sequences:

My object has been to devise a scheme [to] ... connect the Praca da Trindade with the Praca da Liberdade by a broad avenue, without sacrificing the pleasantness of the forms of these 'places' or destroying the sense of enclosure ..., and this avenue had to be part of a comprehensive scheme for improvements extending from end to end of the city. (20)

His first proposal went too far with enclosure. (21) Parker proposed a replacement for the demolished Camara Municipal, with a central loggia, through which the major axis ran along the broad central avenue beyond. At the north end two crescents, and angled blocks, constricted the vista, through a garden, towards the Praca da Trindade. Vehicular traffic took very constricted access from the corners of Praca da Liberdade. One innovation was a suggestion for the extended Rua de Passos Manuel, necessary to improve cross-city communication, to run above the pedestrian avenue on a bridge, a feature dropped from the revised scheme. The breaking away from a boulevard with parallel building lines was Parker's most radical departure from Pezerat's scheme.

Reception was critical. Joaquim Gaudencio Pacheco, an engineer member of the Technical Commission, wrote that Parker had turned the proposed avenue into a 'perfect cul-de-sac', (22) which would bring commercial failure, by separation from the principal traffic routes. He proposed introduction of diagonal roads, connecting to Rua do Almeda and Rua do Bonjardim. Marques da Silva saw problems in relating the avenue to the existing city, and advocated holding an open competition to obtain a complete scheme. (23) He was critical of Parker's handling of the axis, particularly of the way he had blocked mutual visibility between the principal squares, which he felt increased difficulties.

Parker's revised scheme retained the diverging building line, projecting it into the Praca da Liberdade, where the twin roads merged, improving visibility along the central axis, and enhancing the Avenida's presence. The crescents at the head were retained, but a major new praca (now Praca General Humbert Delgado) was created between them, with diagonal connectors running in from the south, on either side. The Camara Municipal was brought centrally to the head of the Avenida, with links to the Praca da Trindade, at each side, (24) an ingenious solution. As Tavares has observed Parker's Camara Municipal was a building of two facades, dominant over the new avenue, but reticent in the remodelled Praca da Trindade. (25) Moreover, Parker advocated keeping the façade low, to allow the tower of the Trindade visually to terminate the central axis. He suggested a low key classical building, with pedimented ends, above recessed arched entrances, detailed with overtones of the Viennese secession. The centre had a linking loggia - the mayoral terrace looking down towards the Praca da Liberdade. Behind the terrace a polygonal council chamber occupied the triangular central courtyard. The architectural treatment for the façades of the avenue was sketchy: cramped classical facades, with prominent pantiled roofs, stepping uncertainly up the hillside, with corners emphasised by circular turrets and pinnacle roofs.

Nevertheless, this plan pleased: Parker's concept satisfied the Technical Commission, and was approved on 29 November 1915, (27) a few days after his return to England. Meantime Elisio de Melo and the Camara were 'taking advantage for the municipality and the city of the distinguished English engineer [sic] Mr. Barry Parker, to look at other projected avenues and improvements'. (28) Chief among these was a new avenue from the San Bento Station to the Luis I bridge over the Douro, which Parker worked up in England. Confidence in the Avenida da Cidade was sufficient to inaugurate its construction on 1 February 1916, in the presence of Dr. Bernardino Luiz Machada Guimares, President of the Republic. It was many years before the scheme was completed, however (29).

Royal Academy Exhibition, 1916

During the First World War many architects and technicians were called up for military service. Parker's chief assistant in Letchworth was Robert Brierly Hall, who had joined him in August 1911. (30) During thirty years with the firm, Hall proved competent, if conventional, and added classical overtones to Parker's designs. The scale of the Oporto project suggests recruitment of additional help. Initial sketches were transformed into firm proposals for the Camara Municipal and the flanking buildings. An elaborate model (31) was shown at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Illustrated descriptions appeared in the leading architectural and town planning journals. Perspectives were drawn by Thomas Raffles Davison (1853-1937), an architect who specialised in presentation of important schemes. (32) Parker gathered his reports, offprints from *The Builder*, and his proposals for the San Bento route, into a Report on Oporto. (33) Parker's Report perhaps provides a clue to collaboration with colleagues:

Since I had the pleasure of receiving your hospitality in Oporto I have carried my plans for your city further, and I have had the good fortune to discuss them with most of my leading professional brethren in England. I am pleased to be able to tell you that the reception ... has been most gratifying. (34)

The architectural framework appeared in detail. The stepping of the buildings up the slope had been addressed by breaking the front façades, with setbacks around small courtyards, but linked by colonnades, forming a continuous ground floor frontage. Continuity through the blocks was maintained along the rear. For the pedestrian, the colonnades provided shade and shelter, while the courts gave supplementary natural light and amenity to the ground floor

shops. Parker cited the Rue de Rivoli in Paris and Piazza San Marco in Venice, as examples which capitalised on 'the enormous architectural opportunities they [colonnades] offered'. (35) Oddly, he did not instance the heritage of Palladian arcades in Oporto. The building framework would accommodate different sized businesses, offices, flats or hotels. At the rear, Parker showed service roads, a type of functional separation already in use at Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Architecturally, the scheme was Palladian, with vernacular overtones, with strong presence of the arcades, which allowed balconies above the ground floor and mezzanines. The buildings were four storeys high, with a simple treatment of solids and voids giving uniform façades, below the overhanging eaves of the pantiled roofs. Iron balconies and traditional mural decoration could be incorporated. The tapering line of the avenue brought the lowest buildings part way across the north of the Praca da Liberdade, framing the view, and cut back with crescent ends. Small polygonal turrets emphasised the junctions with cross streets. At the head, the sweeping crescents curved around to flank the roads leading into the Praca da Trindade, at either side of the low profile Camara Municipal. Parker remained adamant that

... so large and important a building as the Igreja da Trindade is, possessing as it does a lofty tower, must of necessity be allowed to take its place in the whole conception. Its tower must come on the main axial line of the avenue ... This entails that there should be no central tower on the Camara Municipal ... (36)

In implementation, Correia da Silva could not resist the temptation for a central tower, which now rears impressively at the head of the Avenida.

Design of the central garden indicated Parker's growing interest in landscaping as civic design. A continuous avenue of pleached-trees took the axial path upwards, within which recesses could be created for statuary and seating, as in the gardens at Chatsworth or Versailles. It was important to keep the vista clear of obstruction:

I saw that the path ... must afford throughout its whole length, a view of the full height of the Camara Municipal from its plinth upwards, and not a view ... mutilated by some of its lower part being hidden. (37)

Parker was evidently aware of the fierce controversy over the way in which the ramp between Herbert Baker's twin secretariat buildings at New Delhi cut off visibility of the lower part of Edwin Lutyens's Viceroy's House, beyond. (38)

The Praca Municipal was proposed to become Oporto's principal public square. Its basis of five circles was reflected most evidently in the crescents. On the ground Parker showed elaborate mosaic paving, drawing on a Portuguese tradition. Three ceremonial flagpoles, and positions for sculpture would create 'the splendid effect ... with their enormous bright pennons, [as] in St Mark's Square in Venice'. (39)

Contemporary Evaluation

The scheme had come a long way. Exhibition at the Royal Academy attracted general approval. The Builder, was particularly enthusiastic:

The scheme ... may be considered to be a model of the manner in which a problem should be dealt with ... the great merit ... is that it adapts itself to the levels ... the proposals are suggestive of unusual architectural possibilities, which if adequately dealt with, will make Oporto one of the most beautiful cities in Europe ... (40)

Town Planning Review had been founded in 1910, through the benefaction of Lord Leverhulme (W.H. Lever, founder of Port Sunlight), in establishing a Civic Design department at Liverpool University. The editor, Patrick Abercrombie (1879-1957), one of the most eminent

British planners by the mid-twentieth century, (41) published international planning projects, highlighting the work of leading practitioners. In October 1916, a two-part article on Oporto appeared. (42) Parker wrote a contextual introduction on physical, economic and administrative factors. Abercrombie analysed Parker's designs, commending the tapering 'place', with its sunken gardens, as a major strength, contrasting with the open concourse of the Praca Municipal. He endorsed the low key design for the Camara Municipal:

It must be obvious ... that an injudicious design for the town hall, with a lofty central feature, would destroy the effect of the whole scheme, and consequently a low horizontal treatment has been indicated ... (43)

Overall, Abercrombie found a blend of economic and aesthetic potential in Parker's proposals. However, he cautioned that

unless tight control is preserved over all facades ... the value of the plan will be entirely destroyed. The best results would probably be obtained by the town planner acting in conjunction with a local official as consulting architect with power to revise or reject any incongruous architectural attempts. The general character of the elevations [illustrated] ... might be taken as a guide ... the traditional feeling of southern architecture is suggested and an effect of dignified restraint produced. (44)

Abercrombie's call for 'dignified restraint' reflects Anglo-Saxon attitudes. The more flamboyant persona of Portuguese culture, with a heady eclecticism, became evident in the built scheme.

Estacao de San Bento to Ponte Luiz I

The cramped and circuitous access between the high level Ponte Luiz I and the Avenida Saravia Carvalho, to the recently completed San Bento Station reflected both the piecemeal approach to turn of the century urban improvements and the irregular rocky terrain of the north bank of the Douro. Parker was also requested to design links to north and south from the Avenida da Cidade. (45) A schematic plan appeared in *The Builder*, (46) indicating the formation of a large new praca north of the Egrejia da Trindade and a boulevard, running two blocks northwards largely through undeveloped land to connect with the Rua do Faria Guimareos. The major focus of attention lay south, however. To provide a direct route from the Praca Almeida Garrett, below the station terminus, involved a 20 metre cutting through a granite outcrop, with little value for frontage building. In contrast to the Avenida da Cidade, where Parker had followed the natural terrain, he suggested excavation of a massive area to form a new praca. The stone quarried would be used to construct the flanking buildings. (47) By taking the main route diagonally across the square, the gradient would be reduced to a manageable slope for trams and traffic.

The flanking buildings were developed from the designs for the Avenida da Cidade, even more convincingly Palladian, with grand orders of columns on the projecting block ends, separated by open courtyards. The pedestrian walkway ran behind, giving access to a rear arcade of smaller shops and kiosks. The lower end of the square was to be closed by a neo-classical church, with a pedimented colonnade. It separated the connecting route towards the Avenida Saravia Carvalho, from another large praca, to be opened out below the Cathedral of Se.

In this respect, the proposals became grandiose and impractical. Parker overlaid the map of existing buildings and streets, indicating substantial clearance and redevelopment. (48) To the north and west of the cathedral citadel, the narrow winding streets were to be replaced with parallel crescents. This mechanistic diagram conflicts sharply with Parker's text. Parker had

travelled widely and had seen many European slums, where public health problems obscured the historic significance of core districts. He was strongly reminded of Edinburgh, where he had witnessed Patrick Geddes's pioneer work of reconditioning tenement buildings and establishing university settlements to promote social rehabilitation. (49) Parker moderated the approach of the drawings which suggested wholesale sacrifice of mediaeval urban structure.

To demolish the old part of the town ... is naturally the first impulse of anyone who realises the horror of the present conditions of life in it. But after a little reflection he sees that this is not necessary and would be vandalism which could by no means be justified ... far better results could be obtained by approaching the work with more reverence for what is old and historical, by retaining that which is good, (of which he will find much), and by eliminating what is bad. No part of your city could be as charming as this mediaeval part ... Its present condition is due to its misuse ..., making it of necessity unwholesome to live in and unfair to look upon. (50)

Parker's Oporto proposals were bound into a Report, which included illustrations from The Builder, and a summary of the favourable press comments. A set of drawings of the modified scheme was sent to Oporto, and the model was apparently exhibited there. (51) However, matters had moved on, both in terms of architecture and politics.

Town Planning in Practice

Compared to Raymond Unwin, Parker wrote comparatively little about town planning - he is often characterised as primarily concerned with housing design. (52) At Oporto he advocated integration of architecture with urban design. As he stated

Perhaps the failure or success of your present undertaking depends more upon a right understanding of the relationship ... between the general 'lay-out' [sic] and the designs for individual buildings ... The more completely the designing of the buildings and the whole 'lay-out' may go hand in hand, the more successful and harmonious will be the results attained. (53)

This, like much else in Parker's Oporto work was a key concern of Unwin's seminal text, *Town Planning in Practice* (1909). Parker's plan reflected the debate between the Haussmann followers, with their boulevards and rond points, and the episodic enclosed spaces advocated by the followers of Camillo Sitte. Unwin encapsulated this as the dichotomy between formalism and irregularity - and wished to have the best of both worlds. Commentators recognised aspects of this in Parker's Oporto proposals.

Mr Barry Parker shows a marked ability in his disposition of masses and a grasp of the fundamental truth that a general Classic [sic] feeling is perfectly compatible with marked picturesqueness of treatment. (54)

Parker's generous use of the term 'place' throughout the Oporto Report is a key to this. He regarded the Avenida da Cidade as an opportunity to constrict the vista in Pezerat's earlier plan. Parker initially misjudged the situation, raising criticism of his 'cul-de-sac'. *Town Planning in Practice* underscored Parker's approach:

Under the influence of Baron Haussmann ... the true idea of a place was quite lost in Paris ... place, then, ... should be an enclosed space ... a general sense of enclosure resulting from a fairly continuous frame of buildings, the breaks in which are small in relative extent and not too obvious. (55)

This explains Parker's efforts to maintain a sense of enclosure. The siting of the Camara Municipal was intended to articulate the irregular space at the head of Pezerat's scheme into two linked places. Parker's concern for the design of the buildings stemmed from Unwin's caution that

... one of the difficulties of the town planner being that he must lay out his streets and places often with very imperfect knowledge of what will be the character and height of the buildings surrounding them. For this reason probably, it will be wise to follow fairly simply straightforward lines in cases where he will have no means of controlling the buildings ... (56)

The broad, straightforward concept underlay Parker's modifications, and was possibly related to Unwin's studies for the central Town Square at Letchworth Garden City, where the civic complex was to be sited facing a broad open place, at the head of the section of Broadway leading axially from the railway station. The proposed breaking up of the building line of the Avenida by the small open courts, and the linking colonnades, was also suggested by a comment of Unwin's

The setting back of some of the individual buildings ... not only has the effect of breaking up the monotonous row, but affords an opportunity for the creation of forecourts ..., which when suitably treated, are very charming in themselves and are a mean of introducing foliage and flowers into the picture. (57)

Parker enthused over the 'charm in coming upon one bright sunny court after another', (58) with statuary, fountains, small trees, or flower beds. These would complement the central gardens, and, in effect, bring some of the verdure of the garden city into an urban context. The character of the central gardens was also significant. Pezerat had shown avenue planting of trees, through which irregular paths and lawns wandered at either side of the central walk. Unwin cautioned against arbitrary picturesqueness and warned that

Many of the streets and places in continental towns are spoiled for lack of restraint in the character of the gardening and planting adopted. Broad stretches of grass and simple masses of foliage are generally successful, if well placed. But spaces cut with numerous beds, and these again worked patterns with variegated leaves and flowers, too often tend to destroy the sense of quiet, which is necessary for good town decoration with foliage. (59)

Parker's axial pleached trees, and broad, unobstructed central walkway, certainly fulfilled these precepts. As so often, the individual work of the partners was complementary.

Aftermath

There was a parting of the ways after Parker's return to England. Publicity of the proposals exhibited at the Royal Academy, and Abercrombie's warm commendation turned out to be a success d'estime. The Camara Municipal apparently regarded Parker's scheme for the Sao Bento route as undertaken at the personal request of Santos Silva and Elysio de Melo. Parker had worked on additional drawings throughout 1916, with the last despatched to Oporto after his departure for Brazil in January 1917. (60) Parker's account covered draughtsman's fees, both for the Avenida, and the approach to the Luis' I Bridge, and for incidentals including postage, telephone, telegrams, photographs, and publication of the English Report. (61) Between 1917-19, Parker conducted a long distance correspondence from Brazil, through the intermediary of Albert Kendall, the British Consul, trying to secure reimbursement. (62) Mabel Parker stoically commented

... the Camara Municipal that had commissioned the work fell from office and their successors repudiated responsibility for their decisions. (63)

Nevertheless, Parker remained fond of his Oporto scheme. He would periodically refer to it in discussion at the Town Planning Institute. (64) And in 1923, the model was sent to Gothenburg for the Exhibition, held in connection with the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation Conference. The catalogue, edited by Werner Hegemann, noted that the scheme was being carried out, without mention of the radical architectural reworking. (65)

The 1916 competition for the design of the Camara Municipal produced only two entries: that from Correia da Silva, the Municipal Architect, was declared winner. Construction began in June 1920. (66) Many of the buildings flanking the Avenida dos Aliados were designed by Marques da Silva. Today, the massively elaborate Camara Municipal (central tower and all) is undeniably impressive, and more truly civic than Parker's low-key design. And the tapering avenue, Parker's special contribution, shows it off to best advantage. Which brings us back to the beginning - Lonely Planet got it about right after all.

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Notes and References

1. WILKINSON, J., and KING, J., (2001) Portugal, Footscray, Victoria, Lonely Planet, 3rd Ed., p. 390.
2. UNWIN, R., (1909) Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the art of designing cities and suburbs, London, T. Fisher Unwin.
3. Unwin's wartime career is described in Chapters 8 and 9, MILLER, M. (1992), Raymond Unwin: Garden Cities and Town Planning, Leicester, Leicester University Press.
4. Both Lewis Mumford and Parker's son, Geoffrey, independently told the author of this. It was Mumford who encouraged Mrs Parker to compile her typescript notes on material available for a 'memoir' of her late husband. These notes which include a diary and list of works are now held by the First Garden City Heritage Museum in Letchworth.
5. Unwin was brought to Dublin to formulate legislation to control the designs for the rebuilt street. In 1914, he had worked with Patrick Geddes on the preparation of housing schemes for the city. See MILLER, M. (1985), 'Raymond Unwin and the planning of Dublin', pp. 263-306 in BANNON, . J., (ed.) (1985), The Emergence of Irish Planning 1880-1920, Dublin, Turoe Press.
6. Arquivo Historico Municipal do Porto (A.H.M.P) - Acta da Commissao Executiva, Livro 8, fl. 20 Vo, cited by Rui Tavares. Professor Tavares prepared a comprehensive account using archive material available in Oport. See TAVARES, R. (1985-6), 'Da Avenida da Cidade ao plana para a zona central. A intervencao de Barry Parker no Porto', Boletim Cultural da Camara Municipal do Porto, 2nd series, Vol. 3/4, pp. 261-309.
7. HARRIS, J. (1989), 'Port wine and Palladianism', Country Life 89 (12), 23 March, pp. 218-220. FERREIRA-ALVES, J. J. B. (1994), 'L'influence anglaise dans la cite du vin, l'architecture palladienne de Porto, pp. 95-7 in Monuments historiques 94, November 1994.
8. HARRIS, J., op. cit, p. 219.
9. TAVARES, op. cit, p. 270.
10. TAVARES, op. cit. This initiated a cycle of 'boulevardism' in the city.
11. TAVARES, Ibid., pp. 275-6. His 'Adenda I (pp.298-9) gives a biography of Pezerat, and reproduces his report on his plan in 'Adenda II (p.300).
12. Ibid., p. 277.
13. A concise biography of da Silva is given by FERNANDES, J. M., (1996) Vol. 28, p.731 in TURNER, J., (ed.), The Dictionary of Art, London, Macmillan.
14. TAVARES, op. cit., p. 278. He saw de Melo and Parker having personal affinity. It is not clear how the choice of Parker as a consultant was made, however.
15. Ibid., p. 278.
16. Ibid., p. 279 and note 64. It is evident that de Melo had first proposed the involvement of 'a foreign professional of a name acknowledged in his art' in December 1914.
17. PARKER, R. B. (1916c), 'A route from the Estacao de S. Bento to the Port Luiz I', p. 3 in Report on Oporto, Letchworth Garden City Press. Mabel Parker states that she accompanied her husband in her typescript 'notes for a memoir' (FGCHM, Letchworth). The Parkers stayed for two weeks at the Hotel do Porto, and then at the Hotel Mary Castro, for the following 11weeks, 'Adenda IV - Lista das despesas fielas pela Camara com Barry Parker entre 1915-17', (from Municipal Archives), in TAVARES, op. cit.
18. TAVARES, op. cit, pp. 281-2, citing 'Memoria sobre a projectada Avenida da Cidade'.
19. TAVARES, Ibid., Fig. 2 reproduces this plan; see also pp. 279-9 and notes 62 and 63.
20. PARKER, R. B., (1916c) 'Report to the Municipal Authorities of Oporto', in Report on Oporto, Letchworth Garden City Press, p. 6. TAVARES, op. cit, refers to the memoranda and reports written by Parker in Oporto, see note 69, pp. 280-1, and text pp. 280-5.
21. TAVARES, op. cit., pp. 282-4. A sketch of Parker's initial scheme is held in FGCHM, Letchworth. This accords with the description in Parker's initial report tabled in Oporto.
22. TAVARES, op. cit, p. 285 citing 'Consideracoes que fez o engenheiro Joachim Gaudencio Rodrigues pacheco', September 1915, Municipal Archives; see also note 69.
23. TAVARES, op cit., p. 285 citing 'Memorias sobre a projectada Avenida da Cidade', Municipal archives; see note 69.
24. Ibid., note 69, pp. 280-1. It is evident that the first conference was held during September 1915.

- Parker subsequently produced two further schemes, responding to the criticism raised. Note 12 indicates that Parker made 'important modifications which considerably improved the primitive [sic] plan', quoting from minutes of the last Technical discussion on the proposed Avenida da Cidade. This paved the way for approval - see note 27 below.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-6.
 26. Parker's initial sketch for this is in FGCHM, Letchworth. The design is visually reticent, and aesthetically naïve, and the opposite of the beaux arts opulent classicism which Correia da Silva would subsequently produced. Nevertheless, the general design was retained in Parker's working up of the scheme.
 27. TAVARES, *op. cit.*, p.281, and note 73, citing official minutes from the Municipal Archives.
 28. *Ibid.*, p. 287, citing 'Actas da Comissao Executiva'. Livro 8, fl. 88-9, Municipal Archives.
 29. *Ibid.*, pp. 295-6.
 30. Hall's first period with Parker ended in January 1917, when he enlisted in the Army. He rejoined Parker, when the latter returned from Brazil in February 1919, and eventually became a partner in the practice. See Royal Institute of British Architects, Associate application No. 2793, dated 4/1/19 for details of Hall's early career.
 31. The identity of the model maker is not known, but photographs were taken in a workshop, and the background was the retouched for publication. Construction of the model, in card, plaster, and paper mache appears rudimentary today, but was a common technique at the time. A set of original photographs of the model is in F.G.C.H.M., Letchworth.
 32. BRODIE, A. [et al] (2001), *Directory of British Architects 1834-1914 (2 vols.) Vol I: A-K*, British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects, London and New York, Continuum, p. 511.
 33. PARKER, B. (1916c), *Report on Oporto*, Letchworth Garden City Press. The document includes Parker's 'Introduction' and 'Report', both addressed to the 'Municipal authorities of Oporto'. These appear to have originated in reports made while Parker was in Oporto, with revisions to accord with the developed scheme, (pp.1-26). This was followed by 'Extracts from Press Notices (pp.27-31), reproducing the highly complimentary comments from The Builder, The British Architect and Town Planning Review. The illustrations were offprints from The Builder (13/10/16), including photographs of the model. Finally, Parker's report on 'A route from the Estacao de S. Bento to the Porte Luiz I', with illustrations, was bound in, but separately paginated. It is not known how many copies of the Report were printed - there are several in the Oporto material at First Garden City Heritage Museum in Letchworth. Presumably, a translation into Portuguese was made locally in Oporto. Possibly by the British Consul, Albert Kendal.
 34. *Ibid.*, 'Report to the Municipal Authorities of Oporto', p. 5.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 7, p. 25.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
 38. See IRVING, R.G. (1981), *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi*, Chapter 7 'Quarrel at Raisina', New Haven and London, Yale University Press, pp. 142-63.
 39. 'Report to the Municipal Authorities of Oporto, p. 21.
 40. The Builder, 'Sympathetic Town Planning', 13/10/16, cited in PARKER (1916c), *Report on Oporto*, 'Extracts from press notices', p.27.
 41. DIX, G. (1981), 'Patrick Abercrombie 1879-1957, Chapter 5 in CHERRY, G. E. (ed.), *Pioneers in British Planning*, London, The Architectural Press, pp. 103-49.
 42. PARKER, R. B. (1916b) 'Oporto, Part I - Existing factors, physical, economic and administrative', and ABERCROMBIE, P. (1916) 'Oporto, Part II - Mr Parker's proposals for remodelling the central area', *Town Planning Review*, VII (1), October, pp. 28-37; 37-40.
 43. ABERCROMBIE (1916), p.40. The comments were also reproduced in PARKER (1916), *Report on Oporto*, 'Extracts from press notices', p. 31.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
 45. TAVARES, *op. cit.*, p. 290.
 46. The Builder, 13/10/16, reproduced as Fig. 16 in TAVARES, *op. cit.*
 47. 'A note from the Estacao de S. Bento to the Port Luiz I', pp. 3-4 in *Report on Oporto*.
 48. Unpaginated plan in *Ibid.*

49. Ibid, p. 7. According to Mabel Parker, Barry Parker had become familiar with the work of Geddes in Edinburgh at the turn of the century, see her typescript notes for a memoir, in FGCHM, Letchworth.
50. Ibid., p. 8. The Se district retained its integrity, together with the Ribiera quayside, Oporto has been designated as a World Heritage site. See WILLIAMS, A. (1980), 'Conservation planning in Oporto. An integrated approach', *Town Planning Review* 51 (2) April, pp. 177 et seq.
51. Exhibition of the model both in London and Oporto seems to indicate the possibility that two might have been made - a most unusual proceeding. However, TAVARES, op. cit., p. 295 and note 105, cites Minutes of the Camara Session of 24 May 1916, Municipal Archives, as stating that the model had been sent from London and his Adenda IV, showing Parker's expenses records reimbursement for sending the model to Oporto. At the same time, The Builder, 5/5/16, 'Architecture at the Royal Academy' refers to 'an excellent model' - see PARKER (1916), p. 27.
52. Like Unwin, Parker was a founder-member of the [Royal] Town Planning Institute in 1914. He had already written a paper on town planning, PARKER, R. B. (1907), 'Town Planning', *The Garden City*, NSII (18 July) pp. 366-7, and expanded in his views on the architectural aspects in PARKER, R. B. (1916a), 'Horizontality and verticality in the treatment of town planning schemes', *British Architect*, NS (85) 2, June, pp. 45-8; and Papers and Discussions of the Town Planning Institute, 1915-16, II, 133-50.
53. 'Introduction', p. 4 in Report on Oporto.
54. 'Architecture at the Academy', The Builder, 5/5/16, cited in PARKER (1916), 'Extracts from Press Notices', Report on Oporto, p.27.
55. *Town Planning in Practice*, p. 194, 196.
56. Ibid., p. 208, 215.
57. Ibid., p. 254.
58. 'Report to the Municipal Authorities of Oporto', p. 11.
59. *Town Planning in Practice*, p. 270.
60. The Departamento Municipal de Arquivos of the Camara Municipal do Porto holds 18 original drawings by Parker, mostly for the Avenida dos Aliados and the Camara building. Information from Rute Reimao, Archivist, 28/11/03. This is a far more extensive collection than the Oporto material in FGCHM, Letchworth.
61. TAVARES, op. cit., 'Adenda IV and V', pp. 302-3. These documents were reproduced from Municipal Archives.
62. Ibid., 'Adenda VI-IX', pp. 304-9 reproduces letters from Parker, sent from Sao Paulo, Brazil during 1918, and two postcards from Kendall, addressed to the President of the Camara Municipal, dated December 1918 and December 1919. It is not clear from these whether a final payment was ever made. Tavares reproduced this material from the Municipal Archives.
63. PARKER, C. M. P. (n.d. c.1970), 'Material available for a memoir of R. B. Parker at 296 Norton Way South, Letchworth', typescript, p. 7.
64. See Papers and Discussions of the Town Planning Institute, 7 (1920-21), pp. 94, 97, 114-5; *Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute* 12 (5) (1925-26) pp. 118-9; 14 (3) (1927-28) p. 53.
65. HEGEMANN, W. (ed.) (1923), *Catalogue of the International Cities and Town Planning Exhibition*, Gothenburg, pp. 36-7, London, Mezala..
66. Email information from Rute Reimaro, Departamento Municipal de Arquivos, Porto, 06/01/2004.



Fig 1: Avenida dos Aliados and Camara Municipal today

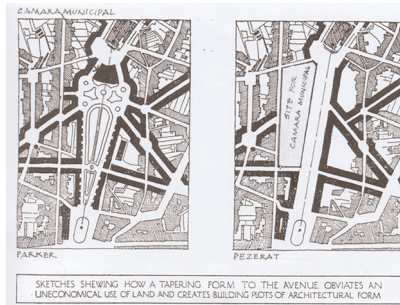


Fig 2: Parker's and Pezerat's schemes compared [partly redrawn from Report on Oporto]

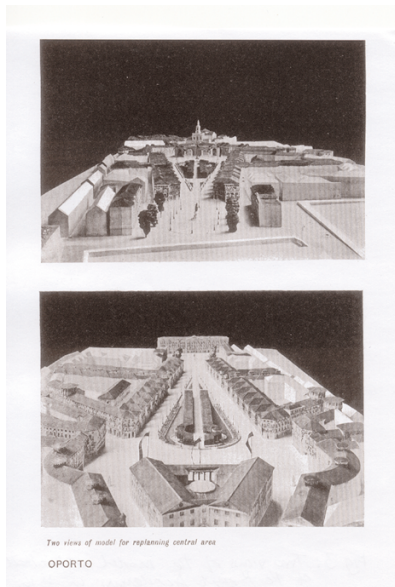


Fig 3: Two views of the model exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1916 [from Town Planning