

# Planning and Development of Prewar Manila: Historical Glimpses of Philippine City Planning

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*Many of Manila's physical and social problems may be traced to past as well as contemporary forces. Efforts to deal with them began early, with King Philip II's 16th century ordinance on town planning in the Spanish colonies. But subsequent programs, oblivious of historical experience, have tended merely to rework old approaches. Hoping nonetheless to glean instructive guides from the past for grappling with present-day urban problems, this paper surveys the evolution, from pre-Spanish times to the Commonwealth and the immediate post-World War II period, of city planning in the Philippines as a concept of development and as a professional and institutional practice.*

## Introduction

In order to understand the present and chart the future, we must recall salient lessons of the past. The problems of Manila and other Philippine cities today must be explained partly in terms of contemporary factors such as the national and international political and socioeconomic forces that have made Manila a metropolitan "primate city." Yet many urban problems are also traceable to the distant past and may be initially appreciated from a physical standpoint.

For all its moments of glory and beauty, for example, the Spanish colony was once viewed as a "sewer of men and ships." The Americans called turn-of-the-century Manila a "pest-hole." Today, despite various efforts to spruce up its image, the city has remained ugly with its malodorous *esteros* and flood-prone areas, unkempt, cratered and sidewalk-less streets, open manholes, deteriorating dwellings, dearth of vegetation, and the growing number of beggars prowling even its saving graces (e.g., the Luneta) — to name only the most obvious signs of physical and social decay.

Unfortunately, plans and development programs have tended to paper over such persisting urban problems instead of solving them. Postwar proposals for urban renewal, resettlement, new towns, and metropolitan, regional, and human

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settlement development have given the impression of offering new and more effective solutions. But giving short shrift to history as something of purely antiquarian, "background" interest, planning reports and project studies have often merely reworked old approaches to equally familiar problems and issues. On the other hand, opportunities for real innovation (or basic renovation) have slipped by as a result of disabilities in plan implementation.

This paper proposes to bring the background of Philippine city planning to the foreground, so to speak, for instructive guides that they may provide to contemporary planners. It surveys the evolution of city planning as a concept of development and as a professional and institutional practice from pre-Spanish times to the Commonwealth and immediate postwar period. It leaves gaps and matters of detail to the historiographer, and does not provide an account of the current period. Nonetheless, it concludes with some reflections for those concerned with charting Manila's future.

### Pre-Colonial Planning

Some scholars doubt that pre-Spanish Filipinos had any tradition of urbanism, community design, or monumental architecture (Reed 1967; Arguilla 1950). Their settlements, however, followed discernible patterns that hinted of planning. A Spanish chronicler had noted in 1609 that their dwellings were "built in a uniform manner" and their settlements were always located on seashores or between rivers and creeks. Dwellings were typically dispersed, their concentration depending on ecological and economic conditions, including the prevailing mode of cultivation. Due to their relative economic sufficiency, wet-rice cultivators showed greater latitude in their settlements and architecture (Keesing 1962). An American observer went so far as to say that pre-Spanish Filipinos "built and lived in planned houses (and) dwelt often in ordered cities and towns...." (Russell 1922).

No evidence was cited to support the latter assertion, but Manila supplied some of it. The original settlement, which existed before the 13th century, was situated on the south bank of the Pasig. This bank was mostly mangrove swamps. A larger island closer to the river's mouth was created by filling and there a village and trading post set up in 1500. This served as the seat of a kingdom (Sapa) extending to the south and east, while across the Pasig was the capital of Tundok going north. When the Spanish advance party came in 1570, Manila had been well established and was protected by fortifications, moats, and culverins. The inhabitants resisted, but succeeded only in getting their settlements burned down and their leader, Sulayman, killed (Alip 1971).

The skills of artisans like *Panday Pira* (the cannon-maker) and native builders were acknowledged by the Spaniards when they returned to rebuild Manila as their

colonial capital. They built 150 houses just like the native ones found there. According to an apocryphal source, a relative of Sulayman's called "El Admirante" was commissioned to level and strengthen the foundations of the future walled city (Intramuros). He was authorized by the new royal city's *oidores* to ask all shipowners of the provinces within his jurisdiction to bring bundles of rattan to fill the site. These were placed in low places and covered with gravel and dirt. "This," El Admirante wrote, "was considered a great work by everybody and me, even if it cost a great deal of work and expense" (Shepard 1937).

Subsequently, the Spanish colonists continued to use local (though not always indigenous) construction technology and materials. Insofar as Western-style urbanism, planning, and architecture were concerned, it remained for the Spaniards to super-impose their concepts and standards on Manila and on other cities that received the royal charter. The problems of low elevation, poor drainage, and flooding, along with efforts to reclaim land from water, have however persisted to this day.

### *Spanish Colonial Town Planning*

The Spaniards evolved a common set of ideas for town planning and construction throughout their empire that seem remarkably familiar to-date. Inspired by Italian Renaissance theorists and by their own experiences in the Americas, these ideas were codified in ordinances promulgated by King Philip II two years after Legaspi formally organized Manila (24 June 1571; see Nuttall 1922). These laws provided guidelines for site selection; layout and dimensions of squares, streets, and other land uses (principal buildings and houses, recreation space, cultivation and pasture lands, sites for garbage-producing uses); and the main phases of planning and construction. They also prescribed the appropriate Spanish relations with the natives to be maintained in the plans and processes. This feature may seem peculiar to colonial planning, but perhaps its only difference was that it was more explicit (and more humane in some respects) than the relations set between modern urban enclaves and outsiders.

According to the royal ordinances, each town should be located on vacant and high ground, properly oriented to sun, wind, and water areas, and on or near fertile land, sources of fuel, timber, water, and means of access. It should have a grid layout, with the main plaza as the starting point for construction. The main and smaller plazas should be surrounded by the principal buildings — the main plaza by the principal church, Royal and Town Council House, Custom-House, Arsenal, and the hospital adjoining the church. The surrounding lots were reserved for these structures and for merchants' shops and dwellings; the rest were raffled

among other settlers or disposed of as the Spanish King pleased. There were to be as many farm lots as town lots and each house was to have a stockyard as well as courtyard.

Each town should be planned with "cord and measure." Before building their houses, the settlers should erect temporary tents or huts around the main plaza, build a palisade or dig a ditch for protection against "Indians," sow seeds and send their animals out to graze. Their houses should be able to serve as fortresses; built with solid foundation, adobe walls, and uniform structure; and placed within yards large enough for health and cleanliness. The main church should be visible from the landing place in sea-coast towns or on high ground from the main square in inland towns. It, too, should be a fortress as well as a thing of beauty. Slaughterhouses, fisheries, tanneries, and the like should be so located that their wastes could be disposed of in the river or sea below the town.

Although they fell short of preventing water pollution, Spanish colonial planning and regulations thus aimed to provide sustenance, health, safety, order, and beauty. The design and building activities should be implemented by "executors," architects, and other persons who might be deputed by the colonial governor. They should be "most scrupulous in carrying out the above instructions and in hurrying both field labor and house building so that the town may be completed in a short time."

As to the colonists' relations with the natives, the ordinances said that they should try to establish the settlement peaceably and with the natives' consent, informing them of the settlers' aim to teach them the ways of civilization and of God rather to deprive them of their property. The settlers should inflict no unnecessary harm on recalcitrant natives and their belongings, but should nonetheless be prepared to defend themselves. They should avoid contact with the natives and prevent them from entering the town while it was still under construction.

The opening of a town was meant to elicit wonder, respect, and friendship from the natives and to impress upon them the permanence of the Spanish settlement. Although contact was then permitted, "a form of apartheid was practised" in Hispanic America after the initial confusion in the earlier days of colonization (Houston 1968). The settlers were kept out of the native barrios, and the Indians were kept out of the Spanish towns. Such segregation in the New World was not meant "to protect whites from contact with the Indians, but rather the reverse." It was designed to clear the way for the Spanish missionaries' conversion work, and to prevent the natives' exposure to European diseases that in Mexico nearly decimated the Indian population (reducing them from 11 million in 1520 to 2.5 million in 1650). Nonetheless, the presence of a native population close by was a necessary element of town location, since they provided labor pools for the *ciudades españolas*. These cities served Spanish policy as the instrument of colonization and the staging ground for exploiting mineral and land resources.

There were other influences on the formation of urban settlements in the Philippines, and Philip II's town planning guidelines probably could not and were not followed in all instances. From 1589 onwards, the Spanish religious orders sought to bring the dispersed native communities "under the bells," resulting in about 695 *reducciones* of six million souls. But core elements of the colonial town plans have come down to us in the form of the "plaza complex" of church, town hall, market, and *principalia* dwellings. This design is a familiar site in the *poblaciones* of many towns (Hart 1955; Reed 1967). Manila, of course, received the brunt of Spanish influence, although it also underwent periodic transformation.

### *Planning and Development of Spanish Manila*

Whether Manila and other cities conformed strictly with any one "Hispanic masterplan" is an interesting question. According to one author, the plaza complex was a 17th century invention transmitted to the Philippines via Mexico. But Philip II's ordinances, following 15th and 16th century Italian urban ideals, did prescribe a uniform style for construction, street width, cornices and moldings, and town plazas. Towns and cities throughout the empire followed a standard gridiron layout (Reed 1967).

Another author, however, challenged this view of a single master plan for the empire. This so-called master plan was itself the product of eight decades of experimentation allowing for adjustments to terrain, climates, native societies, and changes in town location and for variations in town sites, building location, and street dimensions (Houston 1968). Philip II's instructions provided for such variations, e.g.: "In cold climates the streets shall be wide; in hot climates, narrow" — but better wide for purposes of defense and where horses were kept (Nuttall 1922). Manila was built according to the grid pattern, with narrow streets, and conformed in other ways, but its development took time.

The city was made the colonial capital in 1595. Legaspi marked out its perimeter and main public places, and left further subdivision to the city council. Despite his town planners' "broad vision," the original city was crudely constructed. When he died in 1572, only a small section (Fort Santiago) had been enclosed. A palisade was built around the city in 1574, after a nearly successful attack by Limahong, the Chinese pirate. In subsequent decades, architects and engineers were brought over from Spain to plan a Manila of stone and thus correct the city's "poor impression on pagan Indians and Chinese." It was completely enclosed by thick stone walls only after 1600, following a local Chinese uprising and a damaging fire.

With Manila's reconstruction, stone came in more frequent use in new buildings, fortifications, and other structures. Thus was laid the basis for the Intramuros of

ramparts, bastions, moats, redoubts, gates, and "monumental" military, religious, and civic architecture. Stone was imported from China, Mexico, and perhaps even Spain. The local Sangleys (Chinese merchants) supplied materials and labor for house construction. By 1608, the city streets had been "completely built up with houses, mostly of stone, although some are wood" (Morga 1609).

The city's development was periodically interrupted by various events. For a while, the whole colony was viewed as a costly "sewer of men and ships," and only religious zeal and trade with the Chinese saved it from abandonment. The British attacked and occupied the city in 1762-1764. This prompted the revival of a 1639 proposal to transfer the capital to Cavite as a chief port with better land and access to stone for building. Intramuros was also vulnerable to Muslim sorties, devastating earthquakes and fires, and uprisings by Chinese (1603, 1639) and Japanese inhabitants.

These threats drew constant attention to the city's defenses. After Limahong's attack, the authorities hired the Macabebes of Pampanga in palisade construction instead of the local natives, who displayed a disturbing neutrality during the siege. Although the latter continued to work and live in Intramuros (over 6,000 native residents by 1603) as domestics, the Spanish authorities later kept them and the Chinese at a safer distance.

The Sangleys in Tundok were relocated several times, to the south bank after 1590, and later, farther away from the city walls onto a marshy site. Here they built a larger and better Parian with perpendicular streets and an estuary that could be navigated from the Pasig. Then, as a result of their rebellion in the 17th century, 20,000 Parian residents were "either killed or exiled," (Shepard 1937) but an exclusion policy was abandoned by the Spaniards when they felt the necessity of the Chinese's trade and agricultural products. The Japanese village (Dilao) was burned in reprisal for their uprising. It was rebuilt in 1621, only to be subsequently abandoned; a French visitor in 1767 "witnessed the departure of the few who had still remained" (Gentil).

Manila and its suburbs expanded despite their constraints, partly due to the profitable galleon trade. Their population was racially and occupationally diverse, though the Spanish colony itself continued to be small and fluctuating and the Tagalogs formed the majority. In 1662, there were about 600 city dwellings, housing "gentlemen and nobles," 200 merchants, soldiers, royal officials, prebends, and other groups. There were another 600 houses in the suburbs outside the Parian. In 1769, there were some 800 Spanish city residents, excluding the friars who were "the masters of the city" and owned all but a handful of city dwellings. Other Spaniards, Indians, and Chinese were living in suburban Santa Cruz and Binondo.

By the mid-19th century, the suburbs had grown with the opening of the colony to foreign trade and greater attention being given to agricultural development. Tondo alone had 31,000 residents, who were engaged in cotton and silk manufacture, dairy industries, or cigar-making in neighboring Binondo. A state monopoly from 1780 to 1882, the cigar factories were employing 9,000 natives including commuters from distant pueblos. Services had apparently become specialized; suburban Sampaloc was the *Pueblo de los Lavanderos* for Intramuros residents.

At the turn of the century, the Manila area population was 300,000, with 14,000 in Intramuros and the rest in a dozen suburban districts. Modern facilities had been introduced, including a privately-donated waterworks system, a railroad, a 17,200-meter long street railway (for horse-drawn vehicles; electric streetcars came in 1903); and a telephone system.

### *The Spanish Legacy*

Except for such artifacts, it is hard to assess the progress of city planning and development under the Spanish regime. Their most concrete legacies, of course, were Intramuros, the plaza complex, and their accompanying architecture much of which were still reminiscent of medieval Europe. But at least, Manila had undergone some degree of modernization and new ideas were in the air toward the end of the period. Glimpses of both the enduring and the flitting may be gleaned from Rizal's works.

In Rizal's novels, Manila is still the city of friars, churches, and convents owning most houses or occupying a third of the walled city's area. But the city is in ferment. Its notables envision board-covered streets *a la Paris*, a thousand cities and towns rising along the railroad, a great canal carved out of the western isthmus of Luzon up to the Laguna de Bay in the east.

However, a city official — a Liberal Peninsular whose many offices include health and education — betrays signs that such visions would be slow to materialize. He is brimming over with files labelled "Projects":

The first file, thick, swollen, overflowing, was labelled *PROJECTS Projected ...* The second file, also quite full, was identified as *PROJECTS Under Study ...* Then came *PROJECTS Under Development ... PROJECTS Submitted ... PROJECTS Rejected ... PROJECTS Approved ... PROJECTS Suspended ... PROJECTS In Execution ...*

The thinnest file is the one labelled "PROJECTS In Execution."

Rizal, of course, also gave voice to a litany of native grievances against Spain about their settlements, lands, and habitations. The reducciones were not

accomplished without bloodshed, and land-grabbing by Spaniards and their local cohorts was rampant. Spanish urban design left a lasting mark on the physical and cultural landscape, but little of positive economic and social value to the natives save for the principalia in the town centers and Manila. Spanish city planning was done "first for the purpose of defense and second for grandeur .... Housing was not considered at all, as a public responsibility.... The badly-housed were not the concern of the municipality" (Arguilla 1950:14). The better intentions of Philip II's instructions were forgotten.

The colony took care only of its own, and then only for a while. The Spanish citizens and merchants of Manila were once one and the same: "City and Commerce" (Schurz 1959). Even the poor and widows among them shared in the profits of the galleon trade, which also sustained the charitable works (*obras pias*) of the religious institutions. Eventually, however, commerce, crown, and clergy quarreled over the lucre of the commonwealth, and control of the trade passed into the hands of the merchants and then to the friars, the most affluent and hated landlords of both town and country. In the late 18th century, the friars were "the masters of the city" owning all but "five or six" of all its houses and letting them out for the handsome rents of two to four hundred pesos (Gentil).

While the church brought its converts "under the bells," Manila largely walled out the natives and other foreigners. Charitable hospital services were extended to both the natives and Spaniards, but on a segregated basis. In *El Filibusterismo*, Rizal hints darkly that, in their greed for profit, members of the colonial elite are not above ordering the destruction of native nipa houses to bring business to a building materials merchant. Manila is "an accursed city" with its share of *tulisanes*.

### The American Period

The Americans were initially impressed by their predecessors' achievements in Manila. The Philippine Commission's first reports spoke of wide streets, houses of solid construction, elegant suburban residences, and modern facilities. An American scholar, however, later remarked that the Commission wrote its reports without proper study or, for the benefit of the public back in the United States, made Manila out to be a better prize than it actually was (Shepard 1937). Subsequent reports struck a different note, describing the city as a "pest-hole" whose salvation required the American equivalent of Spanish missionary zeal (Daniels 1905)

In their own efforts to guide the growth of Manila and other Philippine cities and towns, the Americans gave greater emphasis on other values, on sanitation, housing, and aesthetic improvements. By the close of their own direct rule, they had introduced "radical departures" in social policy as well as urban planning and



development. These derived part of their impetus from municipal and social reform movements begun in the US in the late 19th century, which in turn may be traced to European antecedents. Sanitation legislation in Europe had supplied "the direct forerunner of modern town-planning" (Benevolò 1967), and European socialists had experimented with utopian communities on American soil: Some of these influences were transmitted to the Philippines via the US.

The Americans, however, did not develop and apply their own "master plan" such as was codified in Philip II's edict on colonial town planning. Nor did they completely break away from Spanish antecedents in the Islands. There were several strands in the just-emerging American practice of city planning. Of these, the clearest was, as in the Spanish tradition, architectural in expression and European in origin. Civic architecture only gradually flowered into a comprehensive design profession and institution. Nonetheless, American-style city planning had important social as well as physical dimensions, not least because its aesthetic was imbued with secular and functional values, especially those of commercial efficiency. Like the economic interests that colored (or marred) Spanish policy, these values curbed the "radical" pretensions of American policy and practice.

American city planning was brought to the Philippines by exponents of the "City Beautiful" movement in the US shortly after army and civilian engineers had begun physical improvements in Manila. We will first describe the efforts and ideas of architects, then those concerned with sanitation, housing, and social development.

### *Burnham's Plan*

In December 1904, the famous architect, Daniel H. Burnham, together with his associate Pierce Anderson, came to the Philippines at the invitation of War Secretary William H. Taft and Commissioner W. Cameron Forbes. They were to prepare plans for the growth of Manila, whose jurisdiction had been extended beyond the city walls, and for a new city in the Baguio mountains up north. After a brief survey of these places, Burnham and Anderson returned to the US and sent back their preliminary general plans in June 1905. Later that year, a consulting architect, William E. Parsons, was appointed to "interpret" the Burnham plans and to provide architectural supervision over all public buildings and parks in the Islands.

Burnham had played a leading role in promoting city planning among architects, businessmen, and civic groups in the US. Starting his public career in 1892 in the World's Fair in Chicago — a "plaster fantasy" reminiscent of classic Greece, imperial Rome, renaissance Italy, and Bourbon Paris — Burnham helped prepare Chicago's first official plan 16 years later. Meanwhile, he also prepared

plans for Washington, DC, at the turn of the century, for Cleveland, and for San Francisco in 1904-1905. Apparently, he interrupted his work on San Francisco and Chicago to visit Manila and Baguio (Scott 1969). Seen through the eyes of successors and historians, Burnham's perspectives may be summed up as follows:

A disciple of Parisian "Beaux Arts aesthetics and Hausmannesque urban planning," Burnham led a civic design movement focused on parks, public buildings, malls, and the like. The "City Beautiful" campaign stressed "monumental grouping of buildings" and typically ignored traffic and transportation problems until the Chicago plan was prepared (1904-1908). Burnham's first chance to plan for a whole city came only with San Francisco. Here was suggested a "Parisian complex of radial boulevards and round point" superimposed on a grid, of civic buildings, a park thrice the size of Golden Gate Park, and parkways linking hilltop parks (Scott 1969). His plans for this city and for Manila and Baguio, however, were already characteristic of the grand manner Burnham advocated.

"Make no little plans," was Burnham's famous motto. He would advise students of Paris to look down upon the city from vantage points like the Eiffel Tower and to "Spend a lot of time up there, map in hand..." (Parsons 1915) — an Olympian detachment he himself apparently took toward San Francisco and, even more, toward Manila and Baguio (which he, like latter-day instant experts, probably did not visit again). However, Burnham was also known to have had the proper connections and organizational skills to have his plans accepted and implemented. A man of "sound business judgment and experience," he wielded influence among "practical men of business" (Parsons 1915). With him, American city planning was crucially informed by "the values of the businessmen," (Scott 1969) just as "Hausmannesque urban planning" marked the embourgeoisement of European town planning (Benevolo 1967).

Burnham thus sought to make cities "convenient for commerce and attractive and healthful as a place of residence...." From a focal concern with government buildings, his plan for Manila soon expanded into a broader scheme anticipating its growth. It sought to preserve the city's heritage, such as Intramuros, and to express its natural qualities including those in its waterways. But there was no evident desire in his plans to return to medieval picturesqueness, nor did his highly formal lines betray subservience to nature (Parsons 1915). The plan for Manila provided for a population expected to increase rapidly and "eventually scatter" with the development of industry, agriculture, and transportation.

An integrated spatial pattern was prescribed by Burnham for the city, with classic long, straight lines and rectangular units and, on top of a basic grid, a circulation system radiating from a government building site near Intramuros. Circumferential and diagonal arteries and parkways would link this and another building group to the northeast with parks and different sections of the city. The

Intramuros moats would be converted into greenswards, and Bay areas reclaimed for the extension of the Luneta park. There would be a new port area and a boulevard along the south shore. Manila was divided by the major arteries into five broad sections with rectangular street and block arrangements. The formal lines, especially the diagonals, recalled Burnham's plans for San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington, DC (Parsons 1915; Shepard 1937).

Burnham's plan eyed both function and beauty. The esteros gave Manila the flavor of an Oriental Venice. Unthinkable as it may seem today, Burnham thought that some of the esteros offered environmental "refreshment" and should be widened and dredged for commercial transport while others should be filled. He proposed the development of nine parks, two new playfields, and playing fountains throughout the city for public "recreation and refreshment."

The plan envisioned colonial comfort in the grand style, for both visitors and residents. Sites were set aside for national and municipal buildings near Intramuros and for a group of hospitals, sanitarium, asylums, and college buildings. Spaces were also allotted for a new residence for the Governor-General, a potentially "world-famous" hotel (Manila Hotel), city clubs, a country club, a casino, small boat clubs, and public baths. (The Army and Navy Club had been built by Admiral Dewey almost as soon they landed.) Resorts accessible to Manila should be developed, Burnham indicated, but Baguio City would be the ultimate escape from lowland discomforts as the summer capital and equivalent of India's Simla.

Convenience for commerce was another aim. There were hopes of restoring Manila's regional commercial supremacy which neglect had relinquished to Hong Kong. Burnham did not specify locations for businesses in the civic center (Daniels 1905), but sought to preserve Binondo's position as the business center by extending wharfage north of the Pasig and improving warehouse, harbor, and other port facilities (Shepard 1937). The port would be linked by a circumferential railroad line to existing lines extending to northern and southern provinces.

Burnham looked to private initiative and cooperation as well as public measures to carry out his plan. He hoped, for example, that wharfage could be built northward through the action of shipping lines. As in Chicago, reclamation was proposed for the proposed Bayshore boulevard to avoid condemnation of existing private frontage (Parsons 1915; "The New Manila" 1911). On the other hand, Burnham hoped that street lines would soon be extended to the city periphery to minimize the costs of both reclamation and public acquisition.

Though Burnham left his plan for others to carry out, the values it expressed apparently prevailed, notably among the colony's chief officials. While realizing the priority of public health and order in Manila, "they were quick to feel the importance ... of making the old Spanish city a modern city, conveniently arranged

for commerce, as well as attractive to residents and tourists. Under such conditions, residents who have acquired wealth there are contented to remain and continue their interests" ("The New Manila" 1911).

### *Implementation of Burnham's Plans*

The man appointed to follow through on Burnham's plans was another Beaux Arts diplomate with "the best heritage of a thorough French training" (Rebore #I 1917). William E. Parsons, drawn from his practice in New York City, was Consulting Architect to the Insular Government from November 1905 to February 1914. His role was to elaborate on the plans, prepare plans for other cities, and supervise architectural design work on government buildings (Rebore #II 1917). Staying much longer than Burnham did, he had ample opportunity to introduce modifications in the latter's designs.

Parsons viewed Burnham's plans as preliminary. Since Burnham and Anderson stayed in Manila for only a few days, the plan for Manila "had been drawn from general impressions, rather than from accurate and detailed surveys." Burnham intended his plan "to be adjusted to meet the developed real estate and other controlling conditions. However, it is remarkable how closely the executed work follows the plan" (Parsons 1915). Burnham incorporated specific projects that had already been in the works. He had brought to the US detailed plans, descriptions, and sketches for the conversion of the Intramuros moats, the Luneta extension, and the Bayshore boulevard construction. Surveys of city streets had been completed for the purpose of establishing building lines and expropriating or extending rights-of-way (Manila-MB 1905).

Work on the Manila plan began three days after its approval. (Rebore #II 1917). In June 1905 provisions were made by the Philippine Commission to continue harbor improvements, to begin the Luneta extension, and set aside a site for the Manila Hotel. Additional park areas were allocated in 1907 and 1908, the city subsequently acquired extensive suburban areas, and reclamation for the port area began in 1913 (Shepard 1937; Parsons 1915; "The New Manila" 1911).

The years up to 1914 were ones of rapid achievements for Parsons. By then, much of the arterial framework had been built with public and semi-public buildings. Large moat areas had been converted, and land reclaimed for the Luneta, Manila Hotel (completed in 1912), and the Bayshore boulevard. According to one observer, Manila was among the first cities under American rule to systematically develop and execute comprehensive plans. (Parsons 1915; "The New Manila" 1911). On the other hand, Baguio had the distinction of being the first new city planned by Burnham and of being built within eight years.

Departures from the plans were made in both Manila and Baguio City. For example, the number and alignment of railway lines in Manila were altered, and a station instead of a terminal was built in Paco. Changes were also made in the zoning of Pandacan from residential to industrial and park uses. (Arellano 1919; Mapua 1920:21).

In 1914, Parsons resigned apparently for political reasons, because "there seemed to be no further progress to be made under the scuttle policy of the present administration" (Rebore #I 1917:399). "Distortions" in the Burnham plan came under criticism. Instead of a new Bayshore residence and office, Governor General Francis Harrison (1913-1921) built a "luxurious" executive office in Malacañang, and Governor General Dwight F. Davis (1929-1932) followed suit by turning this country house into a "real palace" (Roxas). The proposed Pasig-side boulevards never materialized. The most glaring omission from the plan was the central building group, major elements of which (e.g., the Congress building) were built outside the specified site (Rebore #I 1917; Roxas).

Construction activities in Manila levelled off during the second decade, but most improvements that occurred followed Burnham's plan as closely as possible. Upon the Governor General's urging, general plans for Cebu and Zamboanga cities were prepared before Parsons left, and master plans for others like Iloilo were made in the third decade. A "Metropolitan Plan" for Manila was also prepared by the Division of Architecture, Bureau of Public Works, but its outcome is unknown (Rebore #II 1917; BPW 1929).

Despite the preparation of other plans, city planning was only gradually institutionalized. Parsons' Consulting Architect post was apparently the nucleus of the Division of Architecture in the Insular Bureau of Public Works. It was not until 1920 that the position of City Architect was created in Manila (Shepard 1937; Governor General 1920). The private sector also seemed slow to organize. A park committee was created in 1908 and reconstituted in 1911, but a "Manila Beautiful" movement was organized by a citizens committee only in 1925 (Shepard 1937).

### *Civic Architecture and Policy Issues*

Apart from the departures from the Burnham plan, controversies closer to their professional interests exercised the architects. These pertained mostly to the design of public buildings, but raised issues of principle and policy regarding public and private places.

The Americans were appreciative of their "acquired architecture" in the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Honolulu. They particularly valued the adaptations discernible in both the native constructions and the architecture

brought by the Spaniards. On the other hand, "architectural Americanization," as in Honolulu, was criticized. One often noted feature of Spanish-style residences was the verandah projecting from the second floor. This was a response to the tropical climate, comparable to southern Italian architecture. Instead of thick stone walls and small windows, as in Italy or Spain, however, the Spaniards in the Philippines sought to minimize heat through wide windows shaded by projecting eaves and canopies, high ceilings, and large rooms (Schuyler 1900).

Parsons encouraged similar adaptations. The Normal School, built in 1914, had projecting upper stories and continuous window surfaces. The Manila Hotel also featured horizontal lines of wide, canopied windows and small concrete wall surfaces. The Philippine General Hospital was likewise "designed to meet tropical conditions by means of pavilions connected on both floors and open arcades," with extremely simple exterior and depending alone on arches and tropical foliage for effect. This style was followed by US Army surgeons in Panama and other tropical places (Rebore #I 1917).

Parsons introduced changes in building materials. The colonial government had started to use Oregon pine and GI sheets. The pine attracted *anay*, and GI sheets were viewed as an abomination. Instead, for greater durability, especially against earthquakes, Parsons used Philippine hardwoods and reinforced concrete in all public buildings. Reinforced concrete had the added advantage of being amenable to unskilled labor. (Rebore #I & #II 1917; "The New Manila" 1911).

The architecture espoused by Parsons was viewed as both characteristic of the Philippines and based on classic traditions. It was strictly functional; even the colonnades of the Paco Station (1914), with its garlanded American eagle, were put in "for circulation and not mere decoration." Provincial capitols, public markets, and schools were likewise premised on relations between openings and solids, not decor and color, and were uniformly elegant (Rebore #II 1917).

Parsons' architecture, however, was criticized by his successor, Ralph Harrington Doane (1916-1918) as too severely bare for a people so long exposed to Latin influences. Spanish monuments, particularly the churches, had been hated symbols of forced labor and oppression and were grotesque architectural imitations. But Doane now found them to be popular icons of stability amid nipa huts and "modern claptrap galvanized-iron abortions." He therefore proposed a policy of monumental as well as practical building calculated to elicit civic pride and support among Filipinos (Doane 1918).

To Doane, the lack of ornament and color was unnecessary and undesirable, since good-quality hardwoods, marble, and other building and coloring materials abounded, so that crushed marble was used on roads in Iloilo. There were also proficient bronze, iron, and wood-carving artisans in Manila. These resources were

so neglected that cement was imported from Japan, and the best carvers passed away with their skills. Trained modelers showed that it was feasible to fabricate and transport ornaments, motifs, and specialties, and to replace cold gray concrete with "warm, vibrant" granulated marble particles (Doane 1918).

The Philippine government, Doane believed, could embark on a new architectural era since its coffers were full from the economic prosperity that the colony was enjoying at the time. It had in fact begun to do so with a number of structures (PNB, Insular Government Building, Jones bridge, Post Office, Malacanang Executive Building). The Division of Architecture was staffed by only 50 employees, and only five Filipino architects were trained abroad. With staff expansion and more training, Doane argued, it could meet growing demands for service and get away from the tender mercies of inept *maestros de obras* and monotonous architecture (Doane 1918).

Doane's policy, though generally well received, came in for some criticism from Filipino architects. Juan M. Arellano, Supervising Architect (together with Tomas Mapua) in the Division, viewed the ornamentation in the Legislative Building, Manila City Hall, Supreme Court, and some provincial capitols as "reasonable and commendable," but found it excessive in others, particularly in the poorer provinces. He said that the funds and prosperity then being enjoyed by the government was an abnormal windfall from the First World War, and could be better used for other pressing needs such as the development of irrigation systems, agriculture, and natural resources (Arellano 1919)

Touching a more sensitive spot, Arellano insisted that architecture was "universally accepted as demonstrative of the character and temperament of the people, and expressive of its degree of civilization and culture." Hopefully, both native talents and building materials would be developed to solve the Philippines' architectural problems (Arellano 1919: 16). The Americans had doubted the existence of an indigenous architecture and considered Filipinos "a race without deep artistic tradition or scientific knowledge" (Rebore #II 1917; Daniels 1905; Schuyler 1900). Doane saw some evidence of native genius in Filipinos' expertise in ornamentation and draftsmanship, but agreed that local architecture as such was lacking. Moreover, given the derivative nature of the architecture that was imported, he saw no logic in prevailing sentiments against buildings of "distinctly American character" and against use of electricity "because of its American derivation" (Doane 1918).

### *Plan Implementation and Institutional Form*

Architecture under the American regime was expressive enough of the prevailing culture, but not of Filipino culture. Burnham and his successors articulated values that were American in crucial respects and yet retentive of the

Islands' colonial past. These were supported by a basic consensus at the social, professional, and institutional levels. Top officials shared the planners' solicitude for businessmen, colonial careerists, and "Manila society," for whose comfort and convenience all manner of facilities and a whole new mountain city were provided. However, there were debates and divergencies on matters of both minor and major importance. Here we will be concerned with the institutional as well as professional aspects of urban planning and implementation.

The implementation of plans for Manila was facilitated by several factors. One well-noted factor was the bond between the city and national governments. The new charter granted to Manila (Act No. 183, 1901) provided for a board of three members appointed by the Governor General, along with an advisory body representing eleven districts. The national government controlled the city budget and accounts, and supplied health services to the city. In 1916, the municipal board, now with ten members, was made elective, but the mayor remained appointive. In 1927, a metropolitan Manila structure and the centralization of certain municipal functions were proposed, but this move did not prosper (Shepard 1937; Plehn 1901).

Despite the organizational changes, the close ties between the national and governments in Manila, Baguio (1909), and other cities were retained, defended, and praised on grounds of efficiency. The engineer played a prominent role in city governance as ex-officio board member (and in Baguio City, as concurrent mayor). Observers at the time attributed the prompt and successful execution of plans to the engineers' powerful role in pushing them through local councils that might otherwise be unwieldy (Rebori #II 1917). According to others, however, their "iron hand" smacked of "severity, brusqueness and apparent lack of consideration." Moreover, there were other professional groups who had come from the US looking for a piece of the action.

\* Restless young fellows from the universities, lawyers who felt that even in the United States the world was moving too slowly for them, physicians who saw new worlds to conquer in the investigation of tropical disease, engineers who wished to amass fortune quickly, merchants who dreamed that they saw profitable trade — these and many others came to Manila in the army, in the civil service, or as private citizens (Daniels 1905:6629).

The architects, however, came comparatively late. By the time Burnham arrived, many improvements had been started, thanks partly to the engineers — to carry out public works, map the city (1902), establish a building code (1903), build new city streets (1904), formulate subdivision regulations (1905), etc. The architects viewed the engineers' handiwork as sometimes misdirected and potentially "deadly" — e.g., their desire to remove the Intramuros walls and use the stones for road material.



Other groups would come on the stage to attend to matters relatively neglected by the architects and engineers: health and housing for the masses. Insular health workers, for example, left their own mark with new sanitation and building standards, relocation of nipa homes from low-lying areas, and the construction, from 1908, of *sanitary barrios*. These barrios were laid out with streets and alleys and public facilities (public baths, laundries, and closets), and sanitary house models were supplied. The local labor movement, which had agitated for better housing since at least the turn of the century, came up with its own *barrio obrero* in 1915, a scheme picked up by the city government during the following decade (Ocampo 1978).

Although the architects undoubtedly worked at some points with other groups, it took time before the wider perspectives of city planning could get an institutional foothold. A zoning plan was prepared only in 1929. A zoning ordinance proposed in 1935 failed five times to muster enough votes due to opposition from real estate and other special interests. The 1927 proposal to create a "metropolitan corporation" foundered in the national legislature for essentially the same reason. Just the same, the Bureau of Public Works (BPW) Division of Architecture went ahead and prepared metropolitan plans, but nothing apparently came out of these plans (Shepard 1937; Mandelbaum 1929; Arellano 1930).

The national planning unit itself struggled to clarify its job. Burnham's successors had less of his grand vision; Doane, for example, made merely passing mention of "city planning problems" and probably equated these with architectural problems writ large. Formal guides for plan preparation were slow to evolve. While a landmark Standard City Planning Act was passed in 1928 in the US, the Philippine Legislature enacted a law only to "clarify" the planning functions and powers of the Public Works Director vis-a-vis the Interior Secretary. This gave Division-prepared town plans a firmer legal status, but the tersely worded law contained nothing about the substance of planning (Mandelbaum 1929).

### **The Commonwealth and Immediate Postwar Period**

When the Commonwealth was inaugurated, Manila had been far from being the only concern of the national planners. "Town planning" throughout the country was given a boost by an Interior Department order in 1936 to create local planning commissions composed of the Provincial Governor, district engineer, and other local officials. These bodies were to survey local conditions and submit tentative plans to the Director of Public Works. Town planning, however, still had the flavor of recency.

Requests for plans nearly doubled in 1937, but the burden of preparing them remained with the national Division of Architecture. This arrangement continued till the outbreak of World War II, but failed to satisfy planning needs due to lack of trained personnel, "especially city planners, both in the local planning commission and in the Bureau of Public Works itself." Another suspected cause was popular indifference (Santico 1953:4), which persisted despite some effort to generate interest in planning through the school curriculum.

Still another probable cause was the concentration of the planning role that went with its professionalization and institutionalization. Like Doane earlier, the Public Works and Communications Department continued to show concern for the more effective prohibition of *maestros de obras* from performing some of the building design work that architects and engineers should be doing. At the institutional level, the planning job gravitated back to the central division despite the creation of local planning commissions (DPWC 1937; DPWC 1938).

City planning experienced even greater centralization toward the 1940s — no wonder under a Commonwealth President who brooked no "democratic nonsense" by appointing city mayors. By 1940, city planning had shifted upward to Malacañang, with the arrival of another foreign expert, Louis P. Croft. Croft prepared a reconstruction plan for a burned area in Tondo, but this was overtaken by the war. In 1945, Croft reemerged as head of a City Planning Office in Malacañang. With Filipino planners and US military architects, he prepared a metropolitan thoroughfare plan and, later, a downtown Manila plan (Arguilla 1950). Just what happened to these plans is unclear to us.

The next few years of the postwar period would see rapid changes in the institutional framework for urban planning. The City Planning Office was converted into a national Urban Planning Commission in 1946, some of whose functions in turn were shared by a Real Property Board created in 1947 and a Capital City (Quezon City) Planning Commission in 1948. In 1950, these three agencies were abolished and replaced by a National Planning Commission (NPC) created under the Office of the President (EO No. 98, 3/11/46; AO No. 38, 7/12/47; RA No. 333, 7/17/48; EO No. 367, 1950).

Like the prewar BPW Division of Architecture, the new NPC prepared and helped administer plans and regulations for local governments, covering some 85 percent of chartered cities by 1959. Then, however, a decentralization law devolved powers over zoning, subdivision, and building regulation to city and municipal governments. From that point on, NPC "largely kept out of local planning unless asked by the local government authority" (Philippine Government 1965).

### Postscript and Reflections

In this paper, we have provided glimpses of the evolution of city planning and development in prewar Manila and other Philippine cities—"glimpses" because we have left gaps that we hope the professional historian would fill. Starting with the dimmer pre-Spanish past, we gave an account of Hispanic town planning and the development of Intramuros and its suburbs. Then we described the experience under American rule, including the professional controversies and institutional developments that came in the wake of Burnham's plans. The last few sections have dwelt on the Commonwealth and postwar career of planning between the national and local governments.

From all indications, it would seem that city planning had struggled long and hard to be born. Spain gave us the Intramuros and its medieval architecture as a lasting cultural legacy, but these served mostly the defense, religious, and commercial purposes of the small colony within its walls. In the end, Spanish planning could barely cope with the military, social and political challenges of the late 19th century, nor with the physical consequences of urban expansion beyond the old walls. The Americans brought over the more secular values of convenience, commerce, and health, along with the functional aesthetic of their eclectic "acquired" architecture. The professional debates yielded valuable insights into problems of adaptation and Americanization in design and construction, but the grand Burnhamian civic vision tended to be neglected in the process. The Commonwealth and postwar periods saw no new events worth noting (or recording), except for the peregrinations of city and town planning in efforts to give the profession and process an institutional niche in the government.

What lessons may we glean from this survey of the past for guides to Manila's future? Foolhardy as they may be without filling the spots and accounting for succeeding decades, we may hazard a few brief reflections. To start with, some of Manila's contemporary problems are simply physical but obstinately basic. Much of the city was originally "reclaimed" from the sea, for example, so that we should little wonder when or where it claims it back. Reclamation is an expensive process, financially and environmentally, that has nonetheless continued to be done in a big way, in Manila Bay and elsewhere, when the more pressing problems of flooding and drainage have remained unsolved. Current efforts at solving *these* problems have unfortunately given rise to others (e.g., the large and ill-fitting drain covers pock-marking city streets).

Some modern approaches have had unrecognized precedents in the past, so that we may keep repeating them inefficaciously to solve the same persisting problems. Urban master planners should be credited for their vision, but their Olympian attitudes may lead them to put too much stock on appearances for the benefit of tourists and colonial careerists at the expense of the Filipino masses. American perceptions of Manila as a "pest-hole" typified this tendency.

This tendency has been perpetrated by quick-fix methods to patch up "eyesores" in the city, such as were employed during the martial law period. Such measures ill conceal the deeper problems of urban communities. Rather, urban planning should address basic issues of physical and social order. The postwar decades have missed the opportunities offered by physical devastation and political independence for a new order. To take a simple example, the narrow streets of prewar Manila have remained narrow, and transportation has barely kept up with mounting need due to poor land use planning, transport facilities, and demand management.

However, there is also a great deal to be said for attending to the sanitary and aesthetic as well as functional aspects that form part of urban order. The esteros of the metropolis have been far from the Venetian waterways that Burnham envisioned. Postwar architecture has seldom been elegant, distinctive, or remarkable, except for the abominable boxes produced under martial law and today's towering structures with their eyebrows arched at the smelly masses below.

The housing problems of the urban masses were largely neglected by the Spaniards and by the American architects. On the other hand, they did receive considerable attention at smaller scales, in the form of relocation, urban renewal, and the "sanitary" and workers' barrio projects during both the American and Commonwealth periods. Though soundly conceived, these programs could not match growing urban requirements. But postwar planners persisted with certain schemes that they passed off as new — such as "site and services" and resettlement strategies — but were essentially rehashed versions of the prewar models.

City planning and urban development problems have been formidable at the best of times. They call for technical expertise, social sensitivity, political savvy, and ample material resources. We could use foreign inspirations, but need not bring foreign planners and implementors to lord it over us. From "El Admirante" (the self-admiring land reclaimer) of the early Spanish period, to the native artisans and even the persecuted maestros de obras under the American and Commonwealth regimes, to today's Filipino consulting firms, we have shown our ability to do the job ourselves. Yet we continue to import the Burnhams of today, at great financial and cultural cost to our country.

This is regrettable, especially because we may have moved forward with the professionalization of urban planning (but short of official PRC recognition?), through training abroad or at such local schools as UP School of Urban and Regional Planning. But its institutionalization remains a challenge. This has been partly the result of the recentralization of planning and regulation under the Marcos regime, which bloated the scope of the Ministry of Human Settlements into all other fields but obscured the core function and role in the process. The engineer and architect have retained some of their pre-eminence, but where in the government is the "city planner" a major player?

Ultimately, however, the failures and shortcomings of our cities have derived from more fundamental forces than the career of planning. Problems of implementation have been at least equally legion, but are traceable also to our political and sociocultural circumstances. We have learned too well the valuable arts of diversity and competition, but not the equally necessary ones of consensus and cooperation. We cannot plan or replan Manila well, especially with its metropolitan and national dimensions, if we cannot cooperate.

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