

TRANSFORMATION OF THE HISTORIC CENTER AND URBAN LANDSCAPE OF VALLADOLID (SPAIN) WITH THE INTERNAL REFORM PLANS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

ALICIA SAINZ ESTEBAN

Address: 47003, Valladolid, Spain

e-mail: saestal@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Cort Plan of Valladolid in 1939 supposed an about-turn in the conception of the historical city and main lines of its future growth. It was a proactive plan, straddling the Haussman internal reform in the historical city and the new areas expansion plan of many Spanish cities of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This plan was approved by the municipality, but was not implemented due to major shortcomings in the management mechanisms that were required. However, its proposal for internal reform of alignments was taken up by the municipal authorities and technicians, who a few years later adopted another plan based on The Cort Plan, this time more feasible: The Alignments Reform Plan of 1950, and other plans that came later for the same purpose. With this alignment reform instrument began a complete transformation of the medieval landscape of the city, giving rise to an entirely new landscape, a mixture of medieval urban structure and modern buildings. Today, in this urban landscape, we can hardly guess the city that existed in the past. Despite changes in development plans which have since then occurred in the city and its different philosophy, it is certain that the municipal practice has confirmed the alignments reform strategy that began with the Cort Plan in 1939: even today the city is still being built based on its principles.

Existing urban areas that were the result of such a process are characterized by wide streets (20 to 25 metres wide) with straight track, parallel alignment, small twists to match the original medieval structure, buildings with great width (25 - 70 metres) and height (8 to 10 floors) and overhang elements in facades (windowed balconies, terraces). These residential buildings relate very poorly to the existing monuments, which are often dwarfed by these big buildings.

The process to reform the alignments of the historic center, which started in the mid-twentieth century, has led to a pendulum municipal policy, most of the time in favor of reforming all the streets and finishing the started task, and in other moments in favor of stopping the destructive reform and recovering what little remains of the medieval landscape. The end result is a point of no return, the almost complete disappearance of the medieval city is today a reality.

INTRODUCTION

Valladolid was a city with a high historic value. It had an important economic, social, and cultural development in the sixteenth century. Later, the city went through a decline that allowed the preservation of the city until the mid-twentieth century. In this century, a traumatic transformation of the historic city occurred. This study mainly aims to explain how this transformation started and took place. The specific objectives are:

- To define the transformation systems of the historic city of Valladolid: a group of plans were designed whose objective was to completely destroy the whole historic city.
- To establish the extent to which the interior reform planning affected the destruction process of the medieval city: The floor area ratio increase system, together with the systematic widening of streets.
- To show how the current landscape of the city is the result of a group of factors:
 - The dictatorial system of government of the city during the Franco Dictatorship (1939-1975)
 - The explosive economic development in the period 1960-1973
 - The social characteristics of population in those years, coming from a period of poverty and autarchy.

VALLADOLID CITY

Valladolid as a capital city

The city of Valladolid was the capital of Spain for a short period of time, approximately 40 years during the sixteenth century. Indeed, before this period, the monarchy had not designated a capital city, but moved from one city to another, staying short periods of time in each, bringing the whole Court to each new place. However, from 1525 King Philip II established the capital in Valladolid, where he was born, building a palace for his residence and steadily establishing the various apparatuses of government. That decision, which marked an important advance in the organization of organs of state power, was a major economic and urban boost for the city. It was the same king who moved the Court to Madrid in 1561, because of the location of that city in a more central position which allowed a more appropriate territorial control.

The formation of a city

Following the establishment of the Spanish capital in Valladolid during those years, the city experienced a major population increase, with the construction of numerous new buildings and the occupation of new urban areas. The population increased to 40,000. The extension of the city reached its peak in

those years in terms of number of inhabitants, as well as in terms of the urban surface area. The growth process was disrupted abruptly with the departure of the Court. From 1561 onwards the city experienced a significant decline, with a continued loss of population, the interruption of the spatial growth and the ruin of many of its buildings. This decline lasted for a long time: until the nineteenth century the city did not again reach the size it had in the sixteenth century.

The frozen city

In these circumstances of no urban development and cessation of growth, the city of Valladolid remained frozen for several centuries; it was preserved as it was in the sixteenth century, during the period of maximum splendour. No significant transformation took place, apart from the progressive deterioration of its streets, and the ruin of many of its buildings. A similar decline was also experienced by other cities in the region. One of the most important for its significant growth at first and its subsequent decline was Medina del Campo. In this city, in the eighteenth century, it was said that every day a palace could be heard falling down. In this period many buildings collapsed due to lack of care.

The historical city and the decline of the Church

The processes of transformation of the city began with the accumulation of capital, which had its origins in agriculture, with a timid incipient industrialization during the second half of the nineteenth century. The construction of the Canal de Castilla (1835) and later the railroad (1864) marked the beginning of an economic and spatial transformation of the city. One of the most important transformation processes took place as a result of the decline of the Church. The confiscation of the Church properties by the liberal governments led to these properties being sold at public auction to finance the Carlist War. Because of these circumstances large convents, occupying large areas inside the city, changed hands. This fact enabled the use of these great spaces for the new class, the bourgeoisie, and for other uses. Indeed, because of the gradual loss of power and influence of the Church in Spanish society, many of the convents and institutions in the town of Valladolid were auctioned, sold, demolished or used as housing for the bourgeoisie.

Disabling the historic city

In Valladolid at the end of the nineteenth century, it was thought that the historic city that had been inherited was unacceptable: the city must be radically transformed. The historic town was lame in the opinion of municipal leaders. Many similar principles were set out in the early twentieth century on the city's defects. They usually enunciated that the historic town had narrow streets unacceptable for modern traffic and stinking places which were dark

and unsafe. Wide and straight streets of European capitals were envied. The buildings were of poor quality. Public spaces were not acceptable¹.

THE REGULATION OF THE CITY WITH THE NEW INSTRUMENTS

Municipal ordinances of the city of Valladolid, 1886

In 1886 the City Council approved ordinances that represented a first attempt to regulate the urban development of the city. The most unique aspect of these ordinances is the regulation of building heights in relation to the widths of the streets. The health and safety of the streets and homes of the city appears as one of the most important goals. There is also a concern about the aesthetics of buildings and the good image and cleanliness of the city. However, the focus of these ordinances is the regulation of building height and the width of the streets, setting the following proportion:

Table 1. Ordinances in building height and street width

Street category	Street width	Building height
First category	> 13 metres	5 stories (max.) - 3 stories (min.)
Second category	from 8 to 13 metres	4 stories (max.) - 2 stories (min.)
Third category	< 8 metres	4 stories (max.) - 2 stories (min.)

The way of measuring the height of the buildings includes the ground floor. This legislation included the adoption of the regulatory criteria of the Enlargements of the twentieth century that took place in other Spanish cities, such as the Enlargement of Cerdá in Barcelona and the Plan Castro in Madrid. As a result of this regulation, many convents and confiscated Church properties were transformed into streets with buildings that had more than 5 floors, (ground floor + 4 floors). These ordinances were the model for the first transformed urban fabric since the end of the XVI century city.

¹ Basilio Calderón Calderón: Cartografía y ciudad. Valladolid en el siglo XIX. Transformaciones espaciales en el inicio del proceso urbano contemporáneo. Ayuntamiento de Valladolid. 1991. Pages 56 and 57.

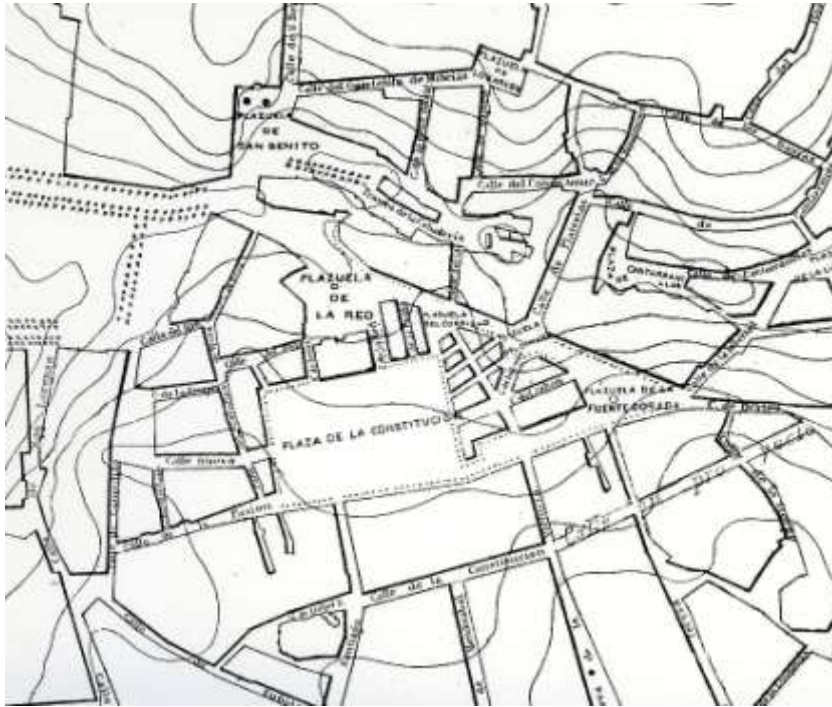


Figure 1 Part of the Pérez Rozas Plan, 1863.

Numerous alignment changes in the historical part of the city were initiated with these ordinances. It is important to say that many alignment reforms were carried out before the settlement of the 1886 municipal ordinances, justified in the narrow medieval streets (at least 48 projects carried out by the City Council²). For example, comparing the plan of 1864 by Perez Rozas (Fig. 1) and the plan of 1915, it is possible to see that widening of streets were developed through systematic reform alignments. The system involved the adoption of a new alignment plan by the City Council in the whole city. Thereafter, any new construction was set back by the new alignment, so that the two alignments (the old one and the new one) co-existed for many years. This is the case of the street “Cánovas del Castillo”. In the 1915 plan, we can see the alignment transformation that was taking place on that date: new buildings were built with the new alignment rule. By the addition of medieval plots, which were narrow and deep, new plots were obtained which were larger, square, and appropriate to the new building model at the time. In the plan, we can see how the new buildings were set back, while many of the old buildings remained with the old alignment (Fig. 2). The case of “Duque de la Victoria” Street is also emblematic; the street was also widened through the setback of the buildings, which ceded land from their plots to the street. At the same time, a typological change abandoning the medieval plot type was taking place, with the

² Basilio Calderón Calderón: Cartografía y ciudad. Valladolid en el siglo XIX. Transformaciones espaciales en el inicio del proceso urbano contemporáneo. Ayuntamiento de Valladolid. 1991. Page 55

construction of new buildings in larger plots. The new buildings were constructed in connection with the business of rental housing, aimed for affluent social classes, with heights limited by the lack of elevators, and in conformity to the ordinances of 1886. The urban model that was followed in these alignment reforms was the same as the one followed for street openings made in the large confiscated convents.

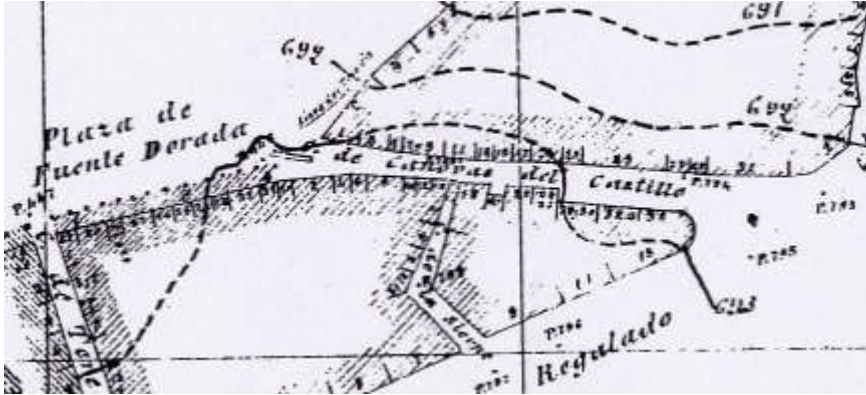


Figure 2 1915 Plan, detail of Cánovas del Castillo street.

These ordinances of 1886 were valid until 1945, when they were replaced by The Cort Plan³ ordinances.

The ordinances of 1886 were the result of the adaptation of the nineteenth-century city model to the city of Valladolid and to its spatial and historical particularities. At the same time, they were the minimal regulation of trends that, as in other cities, were also taking place in Valladolid. The opening of new streets like Miguel Iscar, López Gómez, Gamazo and Muro respond to the need to modernize the medieval city.

It is very important to note that the transformation brought about by the ordinances of 1886 was based on a particular relationship between the street width and the height of the building. This relationship establishes a maximum of 13 metres width of the street with a maximum height of five stories, which is approximately 15 metres in height. This ratio is $15/13 = 1.15$. Undoubtedly, this was a ratio that exceeded the relationship between streets and buildings in the Middle Ages, but it was still a moderate proportion.

THE CORT PLAN

The Cort Plan was the answer to the problems of a historical space that the city leaders judged inadequate. It was drawn up in 1939, during the Civil War, taking advantage of the war situation. The architect César Cort Boti, Urban Planning Professor of the School of Architecture of Madrid, had taken refuge in

³ José Luis García Cuesta: De la urgencia social al negocio inmobiliario. Page 58.

Valladolid in the Spanish Civil War. The City Council of Valladolid, with the presence of this teacher in the city probably for a long period, commissioned a study of internal reform and enlargement project from him. The cartographic base of this study was the plan of 1915, which represented at that time the most faithful document of the urban reality of the city. It was supplemented with the plan that was initiated by the council in 1937. The end result was two collections of plans; the first one showed the state of the city at that time (Fig. 3) and the second one was a proposal plan. Both of them were drawn up in great detail, to a scale of 1:2000. More manageable plans were made together with this collection of plans, but in less detail, to a scale of 1:5000⁴.



Figure 3 The Cort Plan, state of the city in that period.

Cort's proposal, entitled "General Plan of enlargement and internal reform", materialized the prevailing opinion in the city, incorporating a wide reform within the existing city and also proposing enlargements for new growth. It was the first instrument of general management of the city, which was considered at the same time the last Enlargement Plan and Internal Reform in Spanish urbanism. This plan applied the reform of alignments, which until then was carried out street by street, to the whole historical center. The report of the

⁴ Basilio Calderón, Salvador Mata, José Luis Sainz: La Cartografía de Valladolid (Parte Tercera). Ayto. de Valladolid, 1986.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION: Controversies, Contrasts and Challenges

Plan states that "any improvement seems impossible if it is not based on the total destruction of what exists". And indeed the proposal was a wide-reaching reform, leaving only a few elements standing. The plan used two colors, red for the new alignments and black for the alignments that were conserved. As can be seen in a fragment of the plan (Fig. 4), red dominates on black. The regular planning done during the nineteenth century was preserved, such as road openings like López Gómez Street, or extensions in Santa María Street, Montero Calvo Street, Duque de la Victoria Street and Teresa Gil Street. Most of the streets of the medieval old town were reformed. Very few remained with their original alignments within the historic center and only one street of medieval origin remained: Gardoqui Street (Fig. 5), which attracts attention because it is an L-shaped street, clearly medieval.

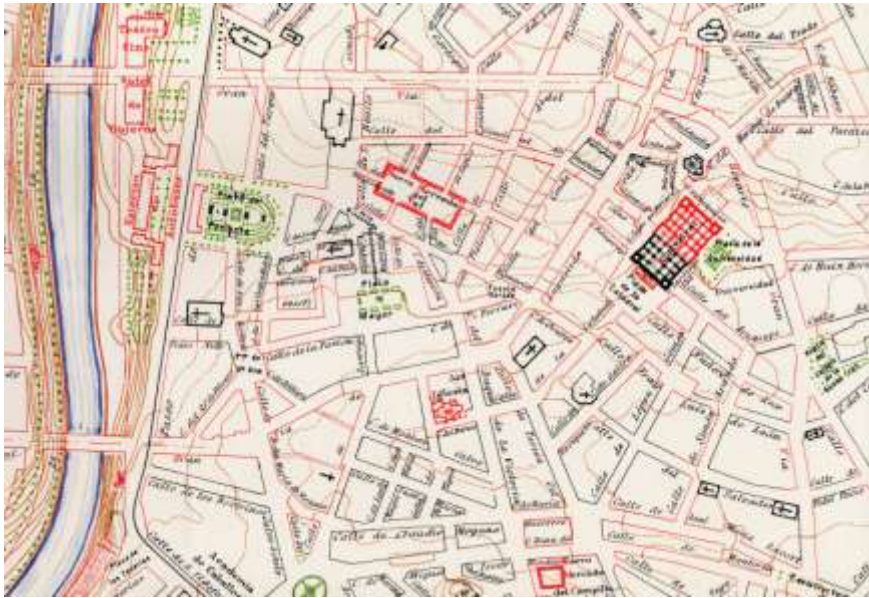


Figure 4 Piece of the Cort Plan with the alignment reform proposal.

In the proposal, there were two streets that were particularly significant for their structural role, as shown by a greater width in relation to other streets, and for their function as connectors between neighborhoods: Rosario Avenue and Angustias Avenue. Both streets were connected with the future extension district of Huerta del Rey by two separate new bridges over the river Pisuegra. The unique buildings received a special treatment. Worthy of note is the proposal that was made concerning the Cathedral of Valladolid, designed by Juan de Herrera in the sixteenth century. The completion of the unfinished building was proposed, which is represented on the plan (Fig. 4) by half the cathedral in black (the part of the building that existed) and the other half in red (the proposal). an intense complete urban reform was developed around the cathedral to enable the construction of two new squares in the two facades of the cathedral.

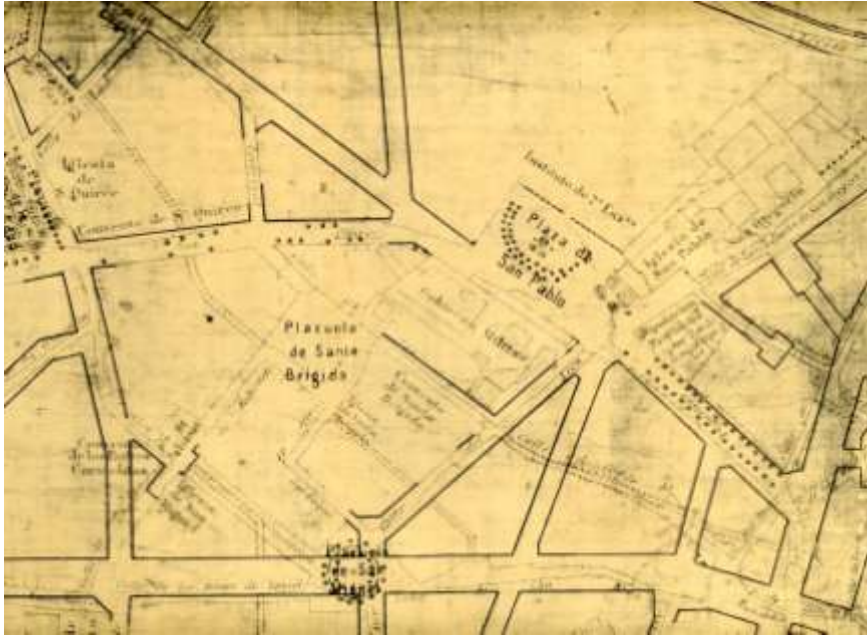


Figure 5 Piece of the Cort Plan with the alignment reform proposal.

In addition to the intense internal reform of the old town, through the reforms of alignments of almost all of the streets, the Cort Plan proposed new extensions, most notably that of the Huerta del Rey neighborhood, west of the city. This was a new growth area, organized by the two streets that came from the newly created bridges on the river Pisuerga. To the east, two other enlargement areas were proposed, with industrial and residential use. To the south, extending Zorrilla Avenue⁵, two new areas were developed as well. In all cases, large blocks were used.

Municipal Building Ordinances, 1945

Along with the current plans and proposals, the Cort Plan was accompanied by ordinances, the Municipal Building Ordinances of 1945. This was a document that accompanied the graphic documentation of the Cort Plan, but it was, nevertheless, not officially approved until 1945.

What most interests us in these ordinances is to highlight the new regulation of heights, expressed in Article 51. This article stated that the height of the building in the areas of extension may not exceed the width of the street, as a general rule. In the historical town, in the case of newly opened roads, the maximum height is also the width of the street. In the case of streets whose width has been increased by a reform of alignments, the maximum height will be one and a half times the width of the street, and the minimum height will be

⁵ José Luis García Cuesta: De la urgencia social al negocio inmobiliario. Page 62.

the width of the street⁶. A fixed relationship between building height and width of the street was established, according to the European urban tradition.

THE ALIGNMENTS REFORM PROJECT

After the Civil War, the political and economic conditions in the city changed dramatically. Many difficulties came up when implementing the Cort Plan, whose radical proposals for urban transformation became an obstacle to new building. The post-war city (represented after the Civil War by a small group that was dominated by the promoters) needed simple urban instruments for its development, and the transforming ambition of the Cort Plan became an obstacle. The basic problem was the economic management of the alignments reform. The private land needed to widen the streets could not be expropriated by a ruined municipality. Many plots that were going to be ceded to widen the streets required extremely difficult agreements between land owners. Essentially, a system of economic management of the transformation was lacking. On the other hand, the land and housing market had collapsed after the war. In a few years, the need for a new plan was evident; a new plan which would apply the urban transformation in the city, in the real conditions of the latter.

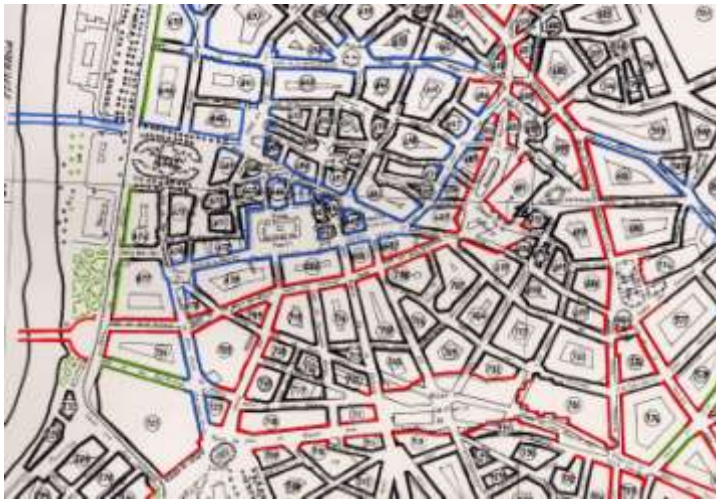


Figure 6 Piece of the Alignment Reform Project plan.

In 1950 a new Alignments Reform Plan was adopted, characterized, in connection with the Cort Plan, by reducing the width of new streets, (in order to cede less land), by limiting the reform of alignments in most cases to the elimination of irregularities and obstacles to movement (Heroes de Teruel Street, Leon Street, etc), by limiting the reform to one of the facades of the street (Juan Mambrilla Street, Esgueva Street, Duque de Lerma Street, etc). All

⁶ José Luis García Cuesta: De la urgencia social al negocio inmobiliario. Page 64.

of these changes had an essential objective: to facilitate the alignment reform system through building to building intervention, in which each private owner may cede, without big losses, a bit of land⁷. For that purpose, a hierarchy of streets was created, so most of the streets were designed only for small extensions. The most important interventions, with great expropriations of land, were linked to the ideological aspects of the Regime (Cathedral Square, Sanctuary Square) which required action by the Administration. It was precisely the latter which were not carried out (Fig. 6).

One element to highlight in this plan was the regulation concerning the widths of the streets and rules for façade sections established for the project of Sanctuary Square and the surrounding streets. The upper left corner of the map (Fig. 7) shows a generic representation of the sections of streets as "commercial artery," "non-commercial artery", "commercial side-street," "non-commercial side-street", and the representation of two streets that are identified with their names, "Calle Tudela" and "Calle de la Pasión". Next to them, two front sections are drawn corresponding to Sanctuary Square and the side streets of that square. Sanctuary Square was one of the major projects proposed in this alignments reform plan, linked to a religious significance; a fact that the authorities gave great social importance to. In this project, the height of the buildings was increased in relation to the previous ordinances. With this regulation, a height of six and seven floors is reached, breaking the relationship between building height and width of the street.

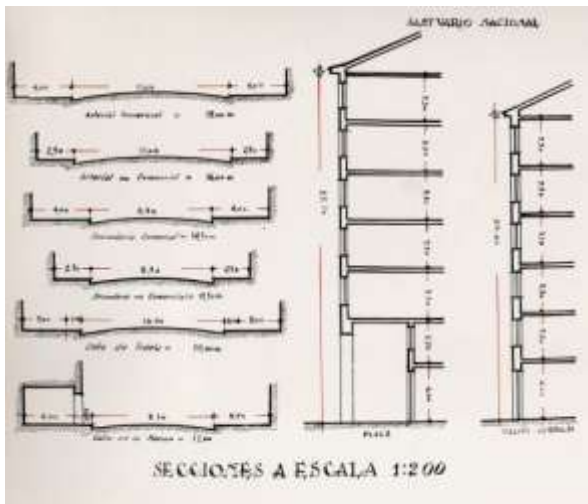


Figure 7 Alignment Reform Project. Street sections.

The mechanism of Floor Area Ratio increase

Through these alignment reform plans and daily practice in the municipal offices, the difficulty of reforming the medieval city without a well-oiled

⁷ Basilio Calderón, Salvador Mata, José Luis Sainz: La Cartografía de Valladolid (Parte Tercera). Ayto. de Valladolid, 1986. Page 45.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION: Controversies, Contrasts and Challenges

economic management procedure was revealed. It was not enough to determine a new alignment, the replacement of the buildings had to be a good deal. The system used throughout the nineteenth century was progressively refined until it reached a certain level of effectiveness, using the following formula: to increase the floor area ratio more and more. The formula was applied, progressively increasing the heights permitted by the City Council for new buildings. It was widely accepted that any new building built in the historic city involved a rise in building heights and an increase in square metres. In view of the difficulties (and most of the time it was absolutely impossible) to get financial compensation from the municipality for the loss of private land that the owners had donated for the extension of the street, a solution was imposed: an increase in the floor area ratio, the acceptance of higher densities of housing and, consequently, the loss of the relationship between building height and width of the street. The municipality even authorized the total occupation of the plot with a building, not respecting the buildable depth, destroying the backyards and the pens of the medieval building. The engine of change in the landscape of the city focused on increasing the floor area ratio as compensation for the transfer of land.

Validity of the Cort Plan today: comparison of the same city block on two dates, 1915 and 2010

Analyzing one of the city blocks from the historic center, which is located between Antigua Street, Duque de Lerma Street and Arzobispo Gandásegui Street (Fig. 8 and 9), we can see how all of that block's alignments have changed between 1915 and 2010. Quevedo Street has disappeared, exactly as proposed by the Cort Plan in 1939 and by the Alignments Reform Plan in 1950. The fact is that the street disappeared in 2008, using the same criteria as those used in the past. This fact shows the extent of César Cort's ideas in the city. The heights of the new buildings that followed the rules of the Cort Plan reached 10 floors inside the historic center.



Figure 8 and 9 Comparison of the same block on two dates, 1915 and 2010

CONCLUSIONS: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HISTORIC CENTER

The aim of the Cort Plan and the Alignments Reform Project was to transform Valladolid into a modern city. The plans described in this study were drawn up with the purpose of transforming the historic city of Valladolid. In the 50s, legal instruments and planning justification were ready. Only the economic recovery to carry out the internal reform in a comprehensive manner was missing.

With the arrival of economic development, the economic interests were the real base of that urban planning. These plans were perfected so as to reach the formula adapted to the interests of Realtors.

Indeed, when the activation of economic development in the 60s of the last century started, the historic city was destroyed. The result was an incomplete urban transformation. The city configuration did not matter. Urban transformation was exclusively a business. The objective of those planning instruments were not to transform the city into a modern city any more, but to make money with urban operations. There was consensus on the technical instruments, there was a need for more social housing, there was a guarantee of huge economic benefits.

In the 80s, with the arrival of Democracy, the intervention criteria changed. From the 80s until today, changes and improvements in urbanistic laws have taken place in order to preserve the urban heritage and to promote a sensible development of the city. However, the formula used to transform the historical city in the 70s is still successfully being applied today, despite the existence of innumerable laws, regulations and plans designed to protect the historical city and monuments.

Unfortunately, the medieval city of Valladolid, which still existed less than 60 years ago, has disappeared forever. It is an unrecoverable landscape, lost forever to our society.

REFERENCES

- Calderón Calderón, B; Sainz Guerra, J.L; Mata Perez, S. (1991): "Cartografía Histórica de la Ciudad de Valladolid", Ayuntamiento de Valladolid, Valladolid.
- Calderón Calderón, B; Sainz Guerra, J.L; Mata Perez, S. (1986): "La Cartografía de Valladolid (Parte Tercera)". Ayuntamiento de Valladolid.
- Font Arellano, A. and others (1976): "Valladolid. Procesos y formas del crecimiento urbano". Tomo I y II.
- García Cuesta, J.L. (2000): "De la urgencia social al negocio inmobiliario. Promoción de viviendas y desarrollo urbano en Valladolid (1960-1992)". Ayuntamiento de Valladolid. Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid.
- García Fernández, J. (1974): "Crecimiento y estructura urbana de Valladolid". Los Libros de la Frontera. Barcelona.
- Gigosos, P; Saravia, M. (1997): "Arquitectura y Urbanismo de Valladolid en el siglo XX". Ateneo de Valladolid. Valladolid.
- Iglesias Rouco, L.S. (1978): "Urbanismo y Arquitectura de Valladolid. Primera mitad del siglo XIX". Ayuntamiento de Valladolid. Valladolid.
- Sáinz Guerra, J.L. (1990): "Cartografía y Ciudad. Valladolid en el siglo XIX. Transformaciones espaciales en el inicio del proceso urbano contemporáneo", Grapheus, Valladolid.
- Solá Morales, M. (1985): "Valladolid: La constante reforma de crecer sobre sí misma". Revista UR. El urbanismo urbano. nº1.

