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Santiago de Chile, 2024

MODERN FUTURES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Editor

Horacio Torrent

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TAKE THE HEAT: ADAPTING MODERN PUBLIC SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE OLDER ADULTS' NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

How can the parameters of public space influence the lives of the most vulnerable populations and promote sustainable ageing? Urban overheating requires a multi-layered understanding of climate change and its impact on cities' physical, ecological, social, and economic structures. This concern is at the heart of the ongoing multidisciplinary research project "Climate Adaptation for Older People Living in Vulnerable Urban Areas" (CAOP). Considering that the built environment is prone to disruptions brought by urban heat islands (UHI), this paper argues that while most spatial and social structures may experience these phenomena, they primarily affect the most vulnerable and thus, the design that takes their needs into account may produce a more inclusive, resilient, and adapted built environment. Therefore, the authors propose to analyse one of CAOP's case studies – the São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood in Porto, Portugal – as the laboratory to discuss the renovation and retrofitting measures of public spaces inspired by modern principles with a view to responding to present and future demands of the health, comfort, and well-being of the most vulnerable. The paper discusses the methodology generated within CAOP's research to identify morphological units with specific spatial characteristics. In parallel, the proposed process analyses the relationship between the spatial configuration and microclimate of urban spaces and community perceptions (through urban ethnography), thus crossing tangible and intangible dimensions to establish a new typo-morphological classification of a heat-prone neighbourhood. Due to their extensive green areas, this paper argues that such modern public spaces carry great potential to be adapted to creating age-friendly spaces, which could be enhanced through a comprehensive framework tool for multidisciplinary assessment. This tool will contribute to urban design research by highlighting principles to support sustainable urban strategies to prepare for change.

1. INTRODUCTION

The financed research project "Climate Adaptation for Older People Living in Vulnerable Urban Areas (CAOP). Designing a climate-responsive and community-based methodology" [PTDC/GES-URB/2038/2021] aims to investigate how planning and urban design can increase resilience in public – open, semi-open, and green spaces – urban places, considering that the collective use of these spaces can influence the health and well-being of older people living in vulnerable urban areas.

Climate change caused by urbanisation affects the urban thermal environment more directly than global climatic changes[1], influencing the entire population's quality of life, health, and well-being. It also impacts subsistence and the main infrastructure[2] [2], depending on the magnitude, intensity, and frequency of the event. Extreme heat is the one event that more seriously impacts the population, alongside ranges between night and daytime temperatures, landslides, extreme waves, excessive rain, storms/tornados, and extreme cold. In Portugal, and more specifically in Porto, the studies of Monteiro et al.[3] have highlighted the influence of the extreme heat phenomenon on the health conditions of populations. The literature also supports that older people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change[4,5]. Recognising the importance of developing a multidisciplinary approach to climate change, CAOP involves an integrated set of analysis methods of urban morphology, ethnography, and co-creation, as well as design and simulation methods, that will allow for the establishment of adaptation measures and facilitate their implementation. As the current percentage of adults over 65 in Portugal is high, a considerable portion of this population can be negatively affected by climate change. Against this background, the outreach of the ongoing research is expected to be high. The ultimate goal is to develop a "Handbook for Climate-Responsive and Community-Based Urban Planning / Design" that will contribute to creating accessible and inclusive environments. As part of broader research and an ongoing process, the present paper seeks to discuss the potential of modern public spaces in fulfilling that goal.

The design of public space integrated into planning emerges as an essential dimension that can contribute to the quality of life of older populations, mitigating the effects of climate change. Its importance is highlighted in international agendas. This complex framework requires the study of several areas of knowledge framed within a holistic approach to public space, considering the social, physical, and environmental aspects that interact and change over time. The solutions to climate adaptation may involve strategies that facilitate "socio-ecological" approaches that are more integrated into urban design. Therefore, from a holistic point of view, it is essential to establish strategies for designing public spaces, with the contribution of collective information from their users. References to public housing outdoor spaces, which are usually vulnerable to climate change impacts, serve as an example. Public housing estates, as social support mechanisms, tend to accommodate vulnerable populations (such as lower-income families, older adults, and dependent individuals with special needs, among others) but they are also strategic laboratories where public

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1. Benita Y. Tam, William A. Gough, and Tanzina Mohsin, "The impact of urbanization and the urban heat island effect on day to day temperature variation," *Urban Climate* 12 (June 2015): 1-10. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212095514001126.

2. Claudia Baldwin, Tony Matthews, and Jason Byrne, "Planning for Older People in a Rapidly Warming and Ageing World: The Role of Urban Greening," *Urban Policy and Research* 38, no. 3 (July 2020): 199-212. https://doi.org/10.1080/08111146.2020.1780424.

3. Ana Monteiro, Vânia Carvalho, Teresa Oliveira, and Carlos Sousa, "Excess mortality and morbidity during the July 2006 heat wave in Porto, Portugal," *International Journal of Biometeorology* 57, no. 1 (January 2013): 155-167. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00484-012-0543-9.

decision-makers may implement qualification actions and inspire private investments and the broader production of the built environment.

The selected neighbourhood is situated in an urban rehabilitation area ('ARU', in Portuguese) of Corujeira, in the parish of Campanhã, Porto, Portugal.

The "Popular Housing Estate of São Roque da Lameira" was built by the Porto Municipality between 1959 and 1962 – during the "Estado Novo" authoritarian regime – under the "Improvement Plan for the City of Porto" (1956-66), promoting municipal housing for the lower-income population. This neighbourhood emerged in an area considered peripheral to Porto at the end of the 1950s. **(Fig. 1)**.

The design of the general site plan reflects the fragmented and low-standard appropriation of some of the guidelines of the Modern Movement and the Charter of Athens principles, whereby several medium-rise blocks are created and dispersed across generous green areas[6]. However, the modern plans encountered some problems regarding the design of the public spaces as they "pushed for innovation in indoor conditions while leaving the outdoor environment behind"[7]. This study aims to identify the specific vulnerabilities and potential in adapting public spaces to face extreme heat, while discussing the resources that can be activated to mitigate the impacts of climate change on older people.

2. A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING PUBLIC SPACE ADAPTATION UNDER INCREASING HEAT

Evaluating the interplay between public spaces and the communities is mandatory to create opportunities for cities to reassess their role. Developing evaluation methods that capture the public space as a critical tool for adapting to climate change is urgent, given its inner capacities, qualities, and resources. This ongoing research addresses the morphological analysis of physical spaces from a relational point of view, considering different socio-spatial analysis solutions. Therefore, to understand the adaptive capacity of cities' public spaces in climate change, they must be regarded as social and ecological urban environments that implement and capture interactions between people and place. In this context, one might question urban morphology's influence on this adaptive capacity. As previously noted, cities will face different challenges and commitments in the future. Thus, if their adaptive capacity is improved, adjustments to new circumstances and changing conditions will be enhanced without significant disruptions.

The qualities of public space can be evaluated through its assets, in other words, through the assets of its tangible capital – physical and ecological – and of its intangible capital – social, institutional, and economic. The physical and ecological elements, regarded as tangible resources, can contribute to the functionality and resilience of public spaces. The intangible resources are also essential for the renewal of public space. From this point of view, existing resources represent a potential for the successful adaption of public space.

This section proposes an assessment methodology of the physical features of public space based on quantitative and qualitative criteria, using

4. Sarah Harper, "The Implications of Climate Change for the Health of Older Adults," *Journal of Population Ageing* 16, no. 3 (August 2023): 565-568. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12062-023-09425-6.

5. Teodora Figueiredo, Luís Midão, Pedro Rocha, Sara Cruz, Gisela Lameira, Paulo Conceição, Rui J. G. Ramos, Luísa Batista, Helena Corvacho, Marta Almada, Ana Martins, Cecília Rocha, Anabela Ribeiro, Fernando Alves, and Elísio Costa, "The interplay between climate change and ageing: A systematic review of health indicators," *PLoS One* 19, no. 4 (April 2024): e0297116. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0297116.

6. Gisela Lameira, and Luciana Rocha, *Mapping Public Housing. Guide to specific terminology in state-subsidized residential architecture in Portugal [1910-1974]* (Porto: Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, 2019), 79. https://mappingpublichousing.up.pt/images/Guia/Lameira_Rocha_MapaDaHabitação_GuiaParaUmaTerminologiaEspecifica(2019).pdf

7. Daniel A. Barber, *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). ISBN: 9780691170039.

the São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood as a sample. Several steps, including ongoing and future observations and interviews, are foreseen to validate the quantitative results and provide qualitative information to complement the analysis. The result of this assessment specifies the relationship between physical features and perceived qualities related to physical and functional vulnerability, considering the existing vulnerabilities and potential **(Fig. 2)**.

Focusing on public housing and its construction period, the outdoor space features and neighbourhood characteristics, this study identifies the physical/spatial vulnerability indicators of the units under study by considering predetermined urban form elements: street, neighbourhood, block, building, and open/green space **(Fig 3)**. More specifically, the analysis of the street system will provide the means to evaluate the degree of accessibility, centrality, and redundancy. Streets, squares, and green spaces will be analysed on the basis of proximity, porosity, and diversity elements. Following the methodological approach of Monteiro and Pinho[8], in this step, the spatial syntax will also contribute to unravelling the potential of the spatial accessibility of the street systems. Axial maps will be created, i.e., detailed maps of the spatial structure in the selected study areas[9]. The e-spatial analysis will also operate to evaluate the open spaces. After evaluating the correlations between the urban form characteristics and the social and environmental processes, the typo-morphological units will be classified, in line with the works of Eldesoky, Gil and Pont[10].

In operational terms, the Geographic Information System (GIS) will enable a study of the correlation between the values of the structural and configurational analysis and the results of the typo-morphological analysis, namely the correlation between i) the characteristics of accessibility to social infrastructure for the population over the age of 65 years, ii) the characteristics of semi-private and semi-public space, iii) the characteristics of public space and the results of the typo-morphological analysis. It should be noted that this framework will be completed with a microscale three-dimensional model using the Envi-Met programme. This is currently being developed by the Faculty of Engineering of Porto University under the same project.

Additionally, the qualitative assessment of the selected public spaces involves participatory processes – ongoing and future interviews and workshops with different agents, including the residents – and observations in the field, seeking to understand the influence of public spaces on people's quality of life and well-being, that could explain their *functional vulnerability*. Also, these observations and interviews will bear in mind urban design qualities such as imageability, visual enclosure, human scale, visual permeability, and complexity[11,12]. The assessment focuses on an open public space within a five to ten-minute walking radius (equivalent to 400-800 meters). The interviews will be conducted with key informants. Depending on the local context, the assessment will allow us to select, add, and prioritise specific indicators, given that a walking interview offers excellent potential to understand the population's connections with the place[13].

Figure 1. "Improvement Plan for the City of Porto" (1956-1966). © Porto Municipal Archive.

Figure 2. São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood areas. © authors, using municipal cartography

Figure 3. Street, neighbourhood, block, building, and open/green space indicators: classifications, measurements, and sources

Figure 4. The "Popular Housing Estate of São Roque da Lameira" (1959-1962), Arch. Vasco Mendes, Miguel Romão Pinto, Alberto Rosmaninho, Rui Paixão. © GISA, Porto Municipal Archive (left); São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood, 2023 © authors

Figure 5. The "Popular Housing Estate of São Roque da Lameira" (1959-65): deployment area (top); Day-care Centre, playgrounds with wooden equipment (down left) and ramps for people with reduced mobility. © Porto Municipal Archive

8. Ana Monteiro, and Paulo Pinho, "MAP: a methodology for Morphological Analysis and Prescription," *Urban Morphology* 25, no. 1 (September 2021): 57-75. https://doi.org/10.51347/UM25.0004.

9. Bill Hillier, Alan Penn, Julienne Hanson, Tadeusz Grajewski, and Jianming Xu, "Natural Movement: Or, Configuration and Attraction in Urban Pedestrian Movement," *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 20, no. 1 (February 1993): 29-66. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1068/b200029.

10. Ahmed Hazem Eldesoky, Jorge Gil, and Meta Berghauser Pont, "Combining environmental and social dimensions in the typomorphological study of urban resilience to heat stress," *Sustainable Cities and Society* 83 (August 2022): 103971. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210670722002918.

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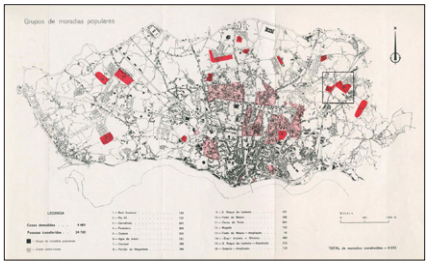

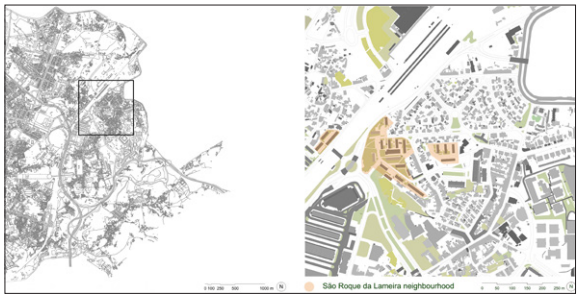

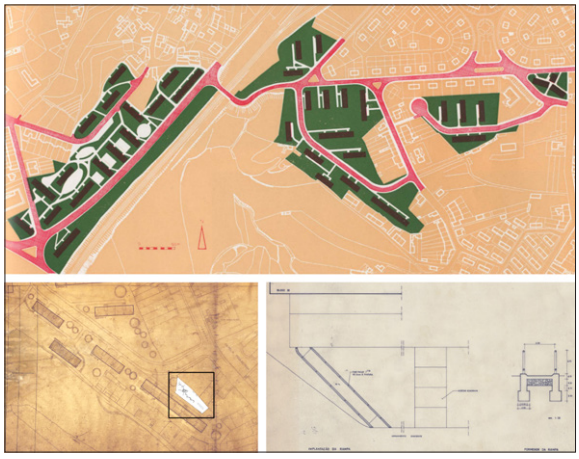

Indicators	Measure	Source
Street		
Street orientation	Orientation	Abdeldayem et al. (2023)
Street length/width	Distance	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Width/building height	Proportion	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Angular integration	Numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Connected node ratio	Numeric	Romice, Porta, and Feliciotti (2020)
Neighbourhood		
Segment intelligibility	Numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Building density	Numeric	Romice, Porta, and Feliciotti (2020)
Block		
Number of blocks	Numeric	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Block length max/Block length min	Distance	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Number of intersections	Numeric	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Space enclosure	Nominal based on numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Ground space index	Nominal based on numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Building		
Building numbers	Numeric	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Average building height	Numeric	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)
Accessible ground space	Numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Accessible floor space	Numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Accessible area of green/open space (m2)	Numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Accessible distance of indoor social infrastructure (m)	Numeric	Eldesoky, Gil, and Pont (2022)
Open/Green space		
Open/green space ratio	Numeric	Li, Wang, and Niu (2023)
Permeable Surfaces ratio	Numeric	Li, Wang, and Niu (2023)
Open/green diversity	Numeric	Li, Wang, and Niu (2023)
Size	Numeric	Romice, Porta, and Feliciotti (2020)
Functionality	Numeric	Romice, Porta, and Feliciotti (2020)
Sky view factor (SVF)	Proportion	Abdeldayemet al. (2023)

Handy, "Measuring the Unmeasurable: Urban Design Qualities Related to Walkability," *Journal of Urban Design* 14, no. 1 (February 2009): 65-84. https://doi.org/10.1080/13574800802451155.

12. Walid S. Abdeldayem, Sherif Morgan, Sawsan Bakr, and Ayman Abdelhamid, "Parameterize walkable urban forms considering perceptual qualities," *Journal of Engineering and Applied Science* 70, no. 1 (May 2023): 52. https://doi.org/10.1186/s44147-023-00221-9.

13. James Evans, and Phil Jones, "The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place," *Applied Geography* 31,

3. CASE STUDY FRAMING

This paper focuses on specific typo-morphological units of the São Roque da Lameira area, namely those corresponding to the construction of social multifamily housing. The "Popular Housing Estate of São Roque da Lameira"/São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood was built with public investment between 1959/61, having been expanded in 1965. (Fig. 3, 4)

Framed within the modernism tradition, the São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood comprises planned architectural ensembles with typo-morphological uniformity, structured by a regular road network. The urban fabric includes large plots of land, blocks, and buildings with 4 to 5 floors, often far from the street. In keeping with a number of multifamily housing neighbourhoods from the 1950s/60s, this neighbourhood displays a low level of integration, with less articulated public space areas and an urban frame more focused on the buildings than on the structure of the streets and their connections.

Nowadays these open spaces are quite degraded and poorly maintained, with unauthorised parking and a lack of shade and amenities, thus usually deserted

and uncomfortable. They show potential for the renewal of public spaces in terms of accessibility, proximity, and conviviality, meeting most people's health, comfort, and well-being requirements, and particularly climate change.

Climate studies of Porto point to an increase in the number of days of intense heat in summer and significant differences in temperature in different city areas14. The type of land occupation conditions the emergence of various microclimates, with the parish of Campanhã being associated with increased temperatures. It is also exposed to other vulnerability factors related to territorial segregation, resulting from both the rugged terrain and the ruptures caused by the fast lane that cuts through the parish territory, thereby contributing to the increase in social segregation within and beyond its area. This study, thus, expresses concerns regarding public space, which is understood as a device for the urban integration of the housing neighbourhood taken as a case study. Despite recent interventions (2013) in São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood buildings (mainly in the exterior envelope) and the installation of some public equipment in the surroundings (clotheslines, benches, sport equipment), this area displays weaknesses in the interplay between people and outdoor open/green spaces, hence discouraging neighbourhood relationships.

The former urban principle of building housing integrated into green areas also highlights the potential for minimising climatic stress. Reference to the documentation regarding the design of adjacent areas and equipment proves that the Modern Movement ideals expressed concern for promoting collective outdoor use spaces for recreational practice and social life. Some neighbourhood plans make the design of social facilities and amenities visible, such as access ramps to buildings and a children's playground with wooden equipment, reinforcing functional concerns.

While underlining the potential for adaptation of this modern movement's outdoor design principles and reclaiming their rearrangement according to the older adults' needs, the CAOP research project proposes to develop a responsive design manual by adopting a typological reconfiguration strategy that considers physical-functional, perceptive, and behavioural aspects, without erasing the modernism ideals to promote healthier lives.

4. FINAL REMARKS

This study delves into the adaptability of urban form and public spaces to climate stress, considering older people's health and well-being. Studies have demonstrated the importance of urban form in climate adaptability, exploring its role in mitigating the impacts of heat islands (IHU) and the influence that its features have on the tolerance of older adults to high temperatures.

This work addresses the indicators of urban form that allow for the assessment of its dynamic adaptive capacity. Notably, this paper proposes a methodology that targets the correlation between the urban form characteristics and measures associated with climate change adaptation and the population's perceptions of public spaces. It seeks to apply their correlation to a case study, the São Roque da Lameira neighbourhood, a morphological unit with modernism origins.

no. 2 (April 2011): 849-858. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0143622810001141.

14. Câmara Municipal do Porto (CMP), *Suporte Biofísico e Ambiente. Estrutura Ecológica e Biodiversidade. Relatório de Caracterização e Diagnóstico, revisão do Plano Director Municipal do Porto*. (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 2018).

Making neighbourhoods more permeable to change, more inclusive and comfortable, with a high degree of interaction among residents, may be achieved through (1) the design of more comfortable and safe paths, (2) the elimination of architectural barriers, (3) the integration of different mobility modes (buses, cars, on foot) and (4) the design of small clusters of comfort in a context of accessibility and proximity, with amenities, trees, shade, resting areas and leisure spaces.

The notion of how "to live spaces" takes on greater importance, not only as a socialising factor but also for climate change reasons. It is assumed that open, green public spaces will become agents of urban and sociological transformation and prevent the effects of climate change. We believe that establishing principles based on determining the degree of influence of urban form characteristics on the resilience – adaptation and transformation – of typo-morphological units to extreme heat will enable a strategic approach to proposing new possibilities for the design of public space as regards thermal confrontation. Some challenges related to the different comfort levels in public spaces have required an integrated legibility process of the characteristics of the open/green spaces for enhanced social interaction toward climatic adaptation. In fact, it is acknowledged that modernism's ambition was to create healthier environments for future society, shaping inner comfort. Nowadays, the focus is expected to be on indoor and outdoor spaces, promoting their articulation and improving shared areas. ■

BIOGRAPHIES

Ana Martins is a post-doctoral researcher at the Center for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism / Faculty of Architecture at the University of Porto (FAUP–CEAU, Portugal). She graduated in Architecture from FAUP and holds a PhD in Civil Engineering, specialisation in Land Use Planning and Environment at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto. Her research focuses on national and local land use policies for resilience cities, planning assessment methodologies, urban resilience, generative resilience concept and its operationalisation, urban regeneration strategies, sociospatial dynamics, adaptation and innovation processes of dispersed territories.

Gisela Lameira is an architect and a contract researcher at the Center for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism/ Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP–CEAU, Portugal) and holds a PhD in architecture from FAUP. Her research interests include the study of architecture and urban theory and history, specifically the genesis and transformation of multifamily housing. Research fellow on the FCT project Mapping Public Housing [P2020-PTDC/CPC-HAT/1688/2014] and is currently undertaking research for the research projects CAOP [PTDC/GES-URB/2038/2021], "Ageing in Place/Architecture4Ageing" and "Housing Think Tank: knowledge integration on multifamily residential buildings" (HoTT)," at FAUP.

Ana Silva Fernandes is an architect and researcher with postgraduate studies on architectural heritage rehabilitation, a PhD on policies for the improvement of urban self-produced areas and training in evaluation of public policies (IPPSISCTE, 2020) and analysis of public policies (London School of Economics, 2023). She is a member of several FCT-funded research projects, namely on colonial dominance and its lasting impact ['ARCHWAR', PTDC/ART-DAQ/0592/2020], public space adaptation to climate change and for older people's demands ['CAOP', PTDC/GESURB/ 2038/2021], and governance in municipal housing strategies ['LOGO', 2022.03719.PTDC].

Rui Jorge Garcia Ramos is an architect and Full Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP). Its main areas of study are the spatial devices of the house, the relationship between culture and ways of living, housing programs, and the "inclusive architecture" from ageing to sustainability. He is a researcher at CEAU-FAUP and was the PI of Mapping Public Housing: A Critical Review of the State-Subsidized Residential Architecture in Portugal 1910–1974 (FCT, 2016-2020). He was Vice-Rector at the University of Porto between 2014 and 2018. He is currently President of the Scientific Council of FAUP.

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Docomomo international is a non–profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement. It aims to:

- Bring the significance of the architecture of the Modern Movement to the attention of the public, the authorities, the professionals and the educational community.
- Identify and promote the surveying of the works of the Modern Movement.
- Promote the conservation and (re)use of buildings and sites of the Modern Movement.
- Oppose destruction and disfigurement of significant works.
- Foster and disseminate the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation and adaptative (re)use.
- Attract funding for documentation conservation and (re)use.
- Explore and develop new ideas for the future of a sustainable built environment based on the past experiences of the Modern Movement.

Docomomo international wishes to extend its field of actions to new territories, establish new partnerships with institutions, organizations and NGOs active in modern architecture, develop and publish the international register, and enlarge the scope of its activities in the realm of research, documentation and education.

In pursuit of the mission of **Docomomo** international, as updated in the Eindhoven–Seoul Statement 2014, the theme of the 18th International **Docomomo** Conference is “Modern Futures: Sustainable Development and Cultural Diversity.”

The Conference takes place in Santiago de Chile, from 10 to 14 December 2024, at the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Estudios Urbanos of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

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