



Time Frames: Conservation Policies
for Twentieth-Century Architectural Heritage

Edited by Ugo Carughi and Massimo Visone

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BRAZIL



Figure 4.2 Oscar Niemeyer, *church of St. Francis of Assisi*, Pampulha, 1942. Listed in 1947
Source: Rodrigo Espinha Baeta, 2012.

The law that defined the protection of historical and artistic heritage in Brazil was the brainchild of the same group of intellectuals and architects who organized the Modern Art Week (1922) in São Paulo. Besides the law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the Office of National Historical and Artistic Heritage was also created, being given the responsibility for the care of monuments and important sites. The main character of this office was Lúcio Costa, author of the Pilot Plan of Brasília. The office was later transformed into an Institute (*Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional*, IPHAN).

The basic law regarding the conservation theme in the country was inspired by the French law of 1913 with some improvements, and it is still in force. Bill No. 25/1937 was quite advanced for its time: it dealt with the preservation of cultural landscapes and natural sites, as well as movable and immovable assets, urban complexes and cities, without any minimum limitation of age. Although there is no specific legislation regarding contemporary architecture, many modernist buildings and gardens are listed by IPHAN.

The current law defines national heritage as being “constituted by the group of movable and immovable goods within the Country, whose conservation is of public interest, regarding their connection to important facts of Brazilian history or their exceptional artistic or bibliographic, ethnographic or archeological value” (art. 1). Then it adds “natural monuments are as important as the goods previously referred to and also subject to classification, in addition to sites and landscapes which may be preserved due to their notable appearance, either natural or transformed by the human action” (art. 2).

The basic text was complemented by specific legislation on archaeological sites (Law No. 3,924/1961) and intangible heritage (Decree No. 3,551/2000). However, there is a lack of specific legislation on city centres and historic cities, which brings socio-economic problems and fails to avoid the systematic distortion of the monuments' surroundings or the destruction of many buildings of contemporary value by real estate speculation, especially homes in rich inner-city zones.

One of the first contemporary buildings listed as a monument by IPHAN was the Ministry of Education and Health (*Edifício Gustavo Capanema*, 1939–1943) in Rio de Janeiro. This building is a national and international landmark of Brazilian Modernist Architecture because it was originally designed by Le Corbusier for another location in 1936, but redesigned within the same principles by a team of Brazilian architects led by Lúcio Costa, with the collaboration of Oscar Niemeyer, Carlos Leão, Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Ernani Vasconcellos and Jorge Machado Moreira. It is the first building in the world to adopt a curtain wall and a whole facade of *brise soleil*. This monument was included in the list of IPHAN in 1948.

The church of Saint Francis of Assisi (1942), in the neighborhood of Pampulha in Belo Horizonte, was listed in 1947. The church was designed by Niemeyer and has tile panels by Cândido Portinar, who painted the mural *War and Peace* in the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Pampulha Complex, built around an artificial lake, comprises the church, the *Cassino* (1942, today Museu de Arte da Pampulha), the *Iate Tênis Club* (1942) and the *Casa do Baile* (1943, today Centro de Referência de Urbanismo, Arquitetura e do Design), and were all designed by Niemeyer with landscaping by Roberto Burle Marx, listed in 1997. Other icons of the early Brazilian modernist architecture in Rio de Janeiro, such as the *Estação de Passageiros de Hidroaviões* of Santos-Dumont Airport (1937, today *Instituto Histórico-Cultural da Aeronáutica*), by Attilio Corrêa Lima, and the headquarters of the Associação Brasileira de Imprensa (1938), by Marcelo and Milton Roberto, were declared monuments by IPHAN, respectively, in 1957 and 1984. Still in Rio de Janeiro, the Parque do Brigadeiro (1965), designed by Affonso Eduardo Reidy with landscape by Roberto Burle Marx, and the Parque Eduardo Guinle (1948–1954), by Lúcio Costa, were to be classified as landscape sites in 1965 and 1986, respectively. Many other contemporary buildings were included in the IPHAN list.

In Brasília, the new capital of the country, the Cathedral Metropolitana Nossa Senhora Aparecida (1958–1970) designed by Niemeyer, was declared a monument in 1967. The whole city, designed by Costa and with many palaces and public buildings designed by Niemeyer, was to be listed by IPHAN as a monument shortly afterwards. Brasília is considered the most important new city of the twentieth century, conceived within the principles of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne. At the request of the Brazilian government, with a dossier prepared by IPHAN, the city was included in the World Heritage List in 1987.

Paulo Ormino David de Azevedo

Link

Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage, heritage list:
<http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/126> (in Portuguese)