

The human scale of the city.

New residential neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Madrid in the 1950s.

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Abstract— During the 1950s large amount of new residential neighbourhoods were built in the Spanish cities which redefined their city limits. This was intended to solve the serious problem of accommodation which, especially in Madrid, had led to the massive arrived of emigrants from rural areas and, consequently the generation of large agglomerations of shacks on the outskirts of main cities. In addition to large official neighbourhoods, a lot of groupings of subsidized housing were built on the outskirts of the cities managed by private entities which collaborated with the State in the construction of social housing. These interventions were carried out by young generations of architects who saw the urgency with which should be lifted these residential neighbourhoods and the economic shortages of the moment, as an opportunity to put into practice the rationalist principles already used in the cities of Europe in the inter-war period. However, the crisis which in those years was crossed the rationalist approaches leads to these architects to seek the answers to aspects of the human being such as a place and its memory in organic architecture from northern Europe and popular architecture. Consequently, we can found in the solutions provided so a right economic answer as a true human habitat thanks to the adequacy of the urban dimensions to the scale of human being and the close dialogue between architecture and place, which translates into pleasant spaces where we can develop as individuals in society. In this way, the constraints of the site are assumed as part of the project, creating sets in which the architecture keeps a relationship of respect with nature environment, adapting to the unique topography of the land, and getting the memory of the place remains present in the character of the generated spaces. This respect for the place leads architecs often to break in a systematic way the rational linearity of the block of flats, looking for not only facilitate its implementation in the field, but get to delimit outer space with a more human scale. The analysis of these interventions is intended to highlight the wisdom of its proposals to build a city proper to the human scale, at the time to propose a reflection about the evolution of the urban habitat for more than half a century.

Keywords- residential neighborhoods, Rationalism, Habitat.