



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Ford Foundation and the Community Facilities Program in Chile: a proposal between local needs and foreign technical assistance (1964–1969)

Alejandra Monti¹ and Ursula Exss² 

¹CURDIUR, FAPyD, Universidad Nacional de Rosario, CONICET, Rosario, Argentina

²Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile

Corresponding author: Ursula Exss; Email: uexss@ead.cl

Abstract

Between 1964 and 1969, the Ford Foundation developed the Community Facilities Program in Chile, which articulated technical and financial assistance in the field of architecture and the training of local experts, in addition to its action in the renovation of state structures related to housing and urban planning. In this context, the design strategy introduced innovations based on architectural research that were a pedagogical novelty, which contributed to the discussion on the role of technical assistance in the Southern Cone, redefining the relationship between philanthropy, state and University.

Introduction

Between 1964 and 1970, the Ford Foundation (FF) developed the Community Facilities Program (CFP) in Chile with the primary objective of increasing ‘the abilities of individuals to carry on all aspects of community improvement at local, regional and national levels’.¹ Framed within transnational as well as architectural and urban history, the present article proposes a review of the links between philanthropy, expert knowledge and state programmes, in the international context of the Cold War and in the local process of modernization of the state, in which urbanization and housing are indeed fundamental elements in the Chilean debate.

Extensive research broadens the outlook for a more ‘panoramic vision’,² adding to the traditional discussions of new actors as cultural or academic agents who

¹Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), Ford Foundation records (FFR), Cataloged Reports (CR) 1–3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research – First Five Projects*, Texas, 1964, 5.

²G. Joseph, ‘Lo que sabemos y lo que deberíamos saber: la nueva relevancia de América Latina en los estudios sobre la Guerra Fría’, in D. Spenser (ed.), *Espejos de la Guerra Fría. México* (Porrúa, 2004).

collaborated in the physical and symbolic intrusion of the ‘informal American empire’.³ Reviewing the contributions of the CFP allows, firstly, an analysis of its actions in the context of Eduardo Frei Montalva’s government in Chile, identifying local traditions and particularities that made its integration possible within Chilean bureaucracy and housing programmes; and secondly, an advancement in the recognition of the philanthropic activity of the FF in Chile and the central role acquired by specialized knowledge in concrete operations and the new fields of expertise that imply adaptations and translations of ‘material and symbolic goods beyond national borders’.⁴

Following the Cuban Revolution (1959), the FF significantly increased its presence throughout Latin America, motivated by the Alliance for Progress (1961) and a new programme of technical and financial assistance to the United States’ continental neighbours.⁵ The effects and available funds varied across the continent. Brazil, Colombia and Chile were the main beneficiaries of these US agreements and recipients of US currency. In parallel, private agents were also deployed; their philanthropic activities contributed to the expansion of the North American reformist model – a transformation of the ways in which ‘non-state actors are incorporated in international relations and the power of knowledge networks’.⁶

At the time, Santiago was well on its way to becoming a regional hub for the development of social sciences, evidenced by the arrival of foreign intellectuals, academics and experts linked to new headquarters of supranational organizations, local universities and new state offices.⁷ In 1963, the FF established its headquarters in the city, expanding its philanthropic activity into Chile.⁸ This new setup fostered the proposals for institutional strengthening through professional training and research projects at the higher education level.

The historian Jeffrey Taffet points out that:

The United States determined two main priorities during the 1960s in Chile – both of them political. The former was to ensure that Salvador Allende and his coalition of Marxist parties were not to win the 1964 presidential election. The latter was to help the winner of that election, the reformist Eduardo Frei, set out the necessary conditions to ensure long-term stability in Chile.⁹

³V. De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

⁴A. Chastain and T. Lorek (eds.), *Itineraries of Expertise: Science, Technology, and the Environment in Latin America’s Long Cold War* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2020), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2396112>; M. Plotkin, ‘US foundations, cultural imperialism and transnational misunderstandings: the case of the Marginality Project’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 47 (2015), 65–92, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X14001473>.

⁵The foreign policy of the US Alliance for Progress had as its precedent the Good Neighbour programme during the Roosevelt presidency and the Point IV of Truman, which progressively consolidated its position as a political, economic and technical power.

⁶I. Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York, 2015).

⁷G. Cáceres, ‘Santiago de Chile. La capital de la izquierda’, in A. Gorelik and F. Arêas Peixoto (eds.), *Ciudades sudamericanas como arenas culturales: artes y medios, barrios de élite y villas miseria, intelectuales y urbanistas* (Buenos Aires, 2016), 384–402.

⁸The FF opened a total of four branches in Latin America: Buenos Aires and Bogota in 1962, Santiago in 1963 and Lima in 1964.

⁹J.F. Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America* (London, 2007).

The FF took a leading role in this process, transforming and adapting its programmes to the needs of the Chilean state within President Frei Montalva's framework. Having reached several agreements with the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) in the areas of housing and urban development beginning in the early 1960s, Chile fulfilled a role as a strategic ally of the northern country through technical and financial assistance programmes that included new actors outside the state structure.

This modality followed precedent set in Puerto Rico and Colombia.¹⁰ The Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeamiento Urbano, created in the latter, expanded into the region as a model of local–international collaboration that articulated policy, technical, academic and social organization.¹¹ Housing and urbanization were incorporated into the transnational debate as a variable for cultural transformation in the modernization and development discourse.¹² These ideas exerted a profound impact on Latin American urban thinking, but the impact was not limited to these latitudes. From the mid-1950s, the FF played an active role in the debate on the 'urban crisis' in both developed and 'less-developed' countries through the creation of the Office of Public Affairs & Education headed by Paul Ylvisaker. The Office's main objective was to identify strategic approaches to manageably and productively address rapid urban sprawl through applied research and to develop training and research institutes both in the United States and in the 'less-developed' world.¹³ We propose an analysis of the CFP's activities in Chile, incorporating the tension between the FF's interests, the transnational context of the Cold War and the development of Chilean housing and urban policies, and acknowledging the asymmetries between the debates on housing projects and community facilities.

To bring about understanding and discussion of the technical assistance provided by the FF, the role of the CFP and the resulting architectural forms, we propose to first go in-depth into the modes of institutionalization of community facilities within the Chilean state structure. Once the institutional framework is understood, we approach the reconstruction of the FF's activity in this area, from its inception and first actions to its evolution into a much more complex structure. We then provide an interpretation of the FF actors and their project practices that placed them in the line of inquiry. Finally, based on institutional documentation, letters and reports, we analyse the methodologies of action and the architectural projects proposed, identifying the theoretical and methodological contributions incorporated by external consultants in the building proposals for Chilean facilities.

¹⁰A. Gorelik, *La ciudad latinoamericana. Una figura de la imaginación social del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires, 2022), <https://sigloxxeditores.com.ar/libro/la-ciudad-latinoamericana/>.

¹¹M. Healey, 'Planning, politics, and praxis at Colombia's Inter-American Housing Lab. 1951–1966', in Chastain and Lorek (eds.), *Itineraries of Expertise*.

¹²L. Benmergui, 'The Alliance for Progress and housing policy in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires in the 1960s', *Urban History*, 36 (2009), 303–26, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926809006300>.

¹³A. O'Connor, 'Community action, urban reform, and the fight against poverty: the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Program', *Journal of Urban History*, 22 (1996), 586–625, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614429602200503>; S. Collings-Wells, 'Developing communities: the Ford Foundation and the global urban crisis, 1958–66', *Journal of Global History* (2020), 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022820000200>; C.P. Loss, '"The city of tomorrow must reckon with the lives and living habits of human beings": the Joint Center for Urban Studies goes to Venezuela, 1957–1969', *Journal of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 623–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144218808752>.

The place of community facilities within the Chilean governmental structure

The genealogy of community facilities in Chile is linked to the understanding of housing and its institutions. State, housing and community facilities would transform their relationships over time. Referencing economist Jorge Ahumada's 1958 remarks, Gonzalo Cáceres underscores that only programmatic changes allowing the state to play a role beyond co-ordination and a consolidation of the field using systematic interventions could have prevented the Chilean crisis.¹⁴ The first signs of change would surface during President Carlos Ibañez del Campo's second term (1952–58) when the goals of the Ministry of Public Works (Ministerio de Obras Públicas, MOP) were redefined as the result of an increase in territorial planning instruments.¹⁵ At the same time, a National Housing Plan was promoted to encourage private investment and state production of dwelling units. The design of public facilities fell under the purview of the Department of Architecture, as its purpose was the 'study, construction and preservation of public buildings'.¹⁶

The expansion of housing-access mechanisms was complemented by the activities of the Housing Corporation (Corporación de la Vivienda, CORVI), created in 1953 as an autonomous entity under the aegis of the MOP, which combined resources and experts to execute housing programmes throughout Chile.¹⁷ Although CORVI was focused on housing production, it also had the authority to develop school buildings and public social facilities. It became a laboratory for the planning and execution of projects but relied on foreign funding such as the Self-Help and Mutual Aid Program promoted by the Organization of American States in 1954.

The arrival of Jorge Alessandri to the presidency and the enactment of Law Decree Number 2 in 1959, which established the National Housing Plan, encouraging investments through the National Savings and Loan System and the involvement of the private sector in the construction of permanent housing units, began a new episode in this institutional reorganization.¹⁸ In 1964, the Department of Architecture was created within the General Office of Public Works at the MOP. The transformation of the institutional organizational chart indexed the growing attention to facilities, as one of its tasks was the study, design, construction, repair and conservation of public buildings sponsored by state funds.¹⁹ In 1965, during Frei Montalva's presidency, the creation of the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism (Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo MINVU) recognized both the central role of

¹⁴G. Cáceres, 'Política y ciudad bajo el reformismo urbano', *Estudios del hábitat*, 15 (2017), 1–13.

¹⁵The Ministry of Public Works is organized as follows: the Undersecretary's Office; the Legal Department; the Department of Common Services; the Planning Department; the Architecture Department; the Railway Works Department; the Port Works Department; the Sanitary Works Department; the Urban Paving Department; the Irrigation Department; and the Roads Department.

¹⁶The Ministry of Finance DFL 150 (1953) established the organization and set the attributions of the Ministry of Public Works and Dependent Services, www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=4819.

¹⁷CORVI was created through the merger of Caja de la Habitación and Corporación de Reconstrucción; Ministerio de Hacienda, 'Sobre organización y atribuciones de la Corporación de la Vivienda', Pub. L. No. 285, 12 (1953), <http://bcn.cl/2hskl>.

¹⁸Ministerio de Obras Públicas (MOP), Decreto 1101, 'Fija el texto definitivo del decreto con fuerza de ley N.0.2. del año 1959, sobre plan habitacional', 1960; Ministerio de Hacienda, 'Sobre organización y atribuciones'.

¹⁹MOP, Ley 15840, 'Aprueba organización y funciones del ministerio de obras públicas', 1964.

housing as a basic need to which every family was entitled and the indispensability of community facilities to family life and community development.²⁰

As geographer Rodrigo Hidalgo states, during Frei Montalva's administration 'the provision of facilities gained momentum and was considered an important element in the social and territorial integration of housing complexes into the cities where they were built'.²¹ This was reflected in the state's new structure with the clustering of housing policies, facilities works and urban development within MINVU. In this framework, two offices oversaw equipment-related tasks: the General Department of Planning and Budget, which incorporated the Department of Community Facilities Planning in its services; and the General Department of Urban Works, which incorporated the Department of Community Facilities. Likewise, CORVI's prerogatives were redefined as 'the design, execution, creation, development, urbanization, construction of facilities, restructuring, remodelling and reconstruction of neighbourhoods, towns, buildings and housing in urban or rural areas, and the promotion of these activities within the plans and agenda designed by the Office'.²² The Corporation of Housing Services (Corporación de Servicios Habitacionales) was also to co-operate with public, municipal and private institutions in the creation and – if necessary – financing of health centres, kindergartens, nurseries, schools, trade workshops, leisure and recreation centres, co-ops and other organizations and institutions aimed at community welfare in low-income housing areas.²³

As demonstrated above, between the mid-1950s and 1965, the institutional organizational chart for housing and urban planning was redefined, gradually consolidating the responsibility for community facilities within its structure. Community facilities were linked to housing programmes and, consequently, the increase and expansion of housing developments became a platform for the planning and design of social spaces and buildings as key components in the development of community life and the dynamics within the new urbanizations. Although institutional oversight was consolidated with the creation of the above-mentioned department within MINVU, the juxtaposition of governmental offices and autonomous entities designing and executing public facilities through these years outlines a complex institutional map. In that sense, as historians Ernesto Bohoslavsky and German Soprano argue, 'as a result of a permanent process of challenge, restoration and re-legitimization carried out by individuals, groups and governmental and non-governmental organizations, the borders of state action become porous'.²⁴

The arrival of the Ford Foundation and the development of the Community Facilities Program (CFP)

The establishment of the Ford Foundation's headquarters in Santiago launched a period of co-operation and technical assistance that co-ordinated philanthropy, the

²⁰E. Haramoto, 'La necesidad de información en el proceso habitacional chileno', *AUCA*, 39 (1980), 22–40.

²¹R. Hidalgo, *La vivienda social en Chile y la construcción del espacio urbano en el Santiago del siglo XX* (Santiago, 2019), 306.

²²Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo (MINVU), Ley 16.391, 1965.

²³*Ibid.*, Art 34, 1965.

²⁴E. Bohoslavsky and G. Soprano, *El Estado con rostro humano. Funcionarios e instituciones estatales en Argentina (desde 1880 a la actualidad)* (Buenos Aires, 2010), 30.

state and local universities, where CFP offered an intersection between foreign guidance, local actors and institutions and architectural design.

In April 1964, the FF and the Chilean government signed the Terms of Reference for the implementation of the Community Facilities, Planning and Action Advisory Program in Chile under US-AID, targeting the need to ‘include, as appropriate, schools, clinics, stores, government offices, libraries, meeting places, recreational areas, plus possible provision for other types of activities. They will be designed to encourage community life and social cohesiveness.’²⁵

The CFP was designed to meet the community needs of families within the new urban and rural districts by encouraging the incorporation of public and school facilities alongside the state’s housing works. Two stages in the development of the CFP can be identified: one connected to the genesis and implementation of the project, and one linked to its restructuring and incorporation into the activities of the Ford Foundation Urban and Regional Advisory Program in Chile (URDAPIC). These stages express the internal and external transformations of the FF’s actions in Chile, and the modification of its objectives, role and practices.

First stage: from genesis to initial implementation (1964–65)

The period of 1964–65 was characterized by the project’s conception, the definition of its objectives and the selection of agents and participating institutions, representing the first experience of collaboration between the state and the FF in the field of architecture and planning. The FF acted as an external consultant in co-ordination with the Office of Community Facilities, which was part of the MOP organizational chart.

Advisors worked under a scheme that connected professional practice, academia and state bureaucracy. Consultancy in the professional field was led by the American architectural firm Caudill, Rowlett & Scott (CRS), based in Houston, Texas. The academic partners were organized on two distinct fronts: Rice University via its School of Architecture had the task of designing a training programme in community facilities for North American and Chilean professionals, while Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology through its Social Economic Research Center and the Institute of International Education advised on graduate programmes and the granting of scholarships and short-term study trips.

In 1964, the first foreign experts – Lawrence Mann (urban programming and methods), Walter Stöhr (regional analysis) and Michel Marié (popular outreach) – arrived in Chile together with the leaders of the CFP, Dan Stewart and Paul Kennon, and local partner René Eyhéralde, who co-ordinated a rural housing programme for the FF. The scheme threw into relief the programme’s intricate composition and organization, based on a multiplicity of work areas and the consequent duplication of the articulation with local departments and their technicians.

The CFP operated along two lines. The first line, of a design nature, was oriented towards planning and advising Chilean agencies in the construction of community centres throughout the country, a task entrusted to both Rice University and CRS. The second line was directly associated with MOP and aimed to develop a long-term,

²⁵RAC/FFR/CR 1–3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, 3.

national plan to guide the country's urban and rural growth. After less than a year of operation, criticisms of the CFP identified its objectives to be conflictive, ambitious and disjointed, since they encompassed everything from architectural design to the definition of a territorial scheme for Chile.

In March 1965, planner and economist William Alonso presented the first external evaluation, recognizing that, in addition to the difficulties with the scale of work, the involvement of different governmental spheres caused institutional conflict and a gap existed between the roles of academia and state action vis-à-vis the communities.²⁶ Alonso touched on the production of buildings, identifying that the initial proposal 'intended to build a large number of multipurpose community centres that were to be built with foreign funds'.²⁷ This premise did not come to be as expected, since the Chilean state was ultimately in charge of subsidizing buildings, increasing conflicts in both operational and institutional terms. Alonso reviewed the actions of the first 11 months of operations, acknowledging that:

The importation of foreign architects to a country in which there was already a surplus of architects; the ambiguities and conflicts of such a situation threw severe doubts on the advisability of continued foreign inputs to the architectural function unless they be in special and well-defined areas such as prefabrication... It resulted in a program that called for a major capital investment into a function which was not directly productive, without integrating it into other national programs of capital investment... It resulted in an emphasis on the physical facilities for community development at a moment when national purpose and ideology stressed social action for this purpose; while the commonality of goals presented a fine opportunity for the integration of the programs of facilities and social action, confusion and apparent cross-purpose resulted from excessive emphasis on instrumentalities... The urgency with which the program was undertaken resulted in the drawing of the Ford Foundation resident staff into the operational or 'line' aspects of bureaucratic management, programming, and construction, and away from the advisory or 'staff' functions.²⁸

Despite the criticisms, Alonso also highlighted two positive aspects: the training of Chilean professionals abroad and a focus on national and regional planning as a matrix for investment in community facilities. Perhaps the greatest challenge during the CFP's first year of operation was connected to the complex political climate surrounding presidential elections. During this period, the project moved forward but faced serious difficulties to meet its stated objectives, doing instead 'the minimum and indispensable because they did not want to assume important commitments before the elections'.²⁹

²⁶At the time of the evaluation, William Alonso (29 Jan. 1933 – 11 Feb. 1999), Ph.D. in regional science from the University of Pennsylvania, joined the Joint Center as assistant professor of Regional Planning at Harvard University. His career as professor in the Department of Regional and Urban Planning at the Bandung Institute of Technology in Indonesia (1961) and his activity as visiting professor at the Universidad Central de Venezuela (1962) made him an experienced figure in the realities of 'less developed' countries.

²⁷RAC/FFR/CR 3255–6261, W. Alonso, 'Consultant Report to the Ford Foundation', in J. Friedmann, *Urban and Regional Development in Chile: A Case Study of Innovative Planning* (Santiago, 1969).

²⁸*Ibid.*, 202.

²⁹RAC/FFR/CR 1–3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, 3.

Second stage: between state modernization and the FF programme (1965–69)

The second stage was characterized by both external and internal restructuring of the projects. Frei Montalva took office on 3 November 1964, establishing a political programme that addressed the modernization of the state's organizational chart. The transformation materialized with the creation of a National Planning Office (Oficina de Planificación Nacional, ODEPLAN)³⁰ and MINVU, which gained the responsibility of outlining the country's planning policies on the economic, social, territorial and urban-housing fronts using technique and science as their principles for action.

In February 1965, FF advisors met with the new president to outline the continuation of the programmes underway, emphasizing that:

The Government of Chile has followed with the greatest of interest the efforts which the Ford Foundation has undertaken in the fields of regional planning, community facilities and popular promotion. Since these activities correspond to programs that have been assigned the highest priority among the plans of the present Government, the Foundation is invited to continue and expand the cooperation already initiated in the fields mentioned. The Government is disposed to furnish the necessary means so that this cooperation may be utilised to the fullest extent by the respective agencies.³¹

In addition to this political commitment, the FF had the opportunity to expand its activities in the country to test a model of technical and financial assistance that could then be replicated in other Latin American nations. The political alignment between the ideas of the Christian Democracy party and the FF's objectives, together with Chile's political stability and the increasing appraisal of Santiago as an intellectual epicentre, resulted in the restructuring of the FF's consultancy into URDAPIC (1965–70). The objective was to 'strengthen the professional and institutional capacities available within Chile to deal with problems of regional and urban development, within a context of national planning'.³²

The work of the advisors was distributed between the two novel institutional structures of ODEPLAN and MINVU. In 1966, with the formalization of MINVU, the entire Chilean team at MOP was integrated into the Department of Community Facilities Planning headed by the Chilean architect Federico Lorca. During this transformation, Paul Kennon relocated his activities to CORVI alongside the Chilean and foreign students who were part of the project.³³ The CORVI Community Facilities Office thus comprised five Chilean architects, a Rice graduate and a consultant from the FF.

The team's activities were entirely devoted to the so-called *Operación Sitio* (Operation Site),³⁴ developing preliminary work on architectural modules and site

³⁰ODEPLAN was designed in 1965 but became legally effective in 1967.

³¹RAC/FFR/CR 3255–6261, Friedmann, *Urban and regional development in Chile*, 9.

³²*Ibid.*, 1.

³³The Chilean architects who participated in the CFP include Tadashi Asahi Senda, Leopoldo Benitez, Erich Krohmer, Sergio Miranda, José Medina, Luis Gomez, Horacio Schmidt, Alfredo Solar, Hugo Saa, Jorge del Fierro, Sven Jacob and Jaime Matas. The foreign students from Rice University who participated in the programme were Andrew Belschner, Charles Redmon, Gray Henry, Clay Wellborn and Tom Daly.

³⁴The programme of credits for settlers to acquire land with basic urbanization and basic services (layout, access to services and basic equipment) was titled 'Operation Site'. During the 1960s, 70,000 sites on the

studies for community facilities that would be integrated into housing projects to become their social core. This move coincided with the renewal of the agreement between the Chilean government and the FF in September 1966, reasserting the CFP's tasks of promoting, creating and operating community facilities in new and existing rural and urban settlements.

The new objectives put great emphasis on the design programme, noting that buildings must be functional and aesthetically pleasing, as these features are considered inseparable parts of a design project. In addition, 10 community facility developments were proposed to serve as laboratories for programming, design and construction methods, whose goal was to develop alternatives for design and execution within two years.³⁵

It should be noted that by 1968, the FF's community facility activity had shrunk both in terms of economic resources and technical assistance, yet co-operation with other MINVU offices continued. Although the FF initially financed short-term scholarships for young Chilean professionals, between 1965 and 1968 it instead promoted the expansion of the financing programme targeting government officials such as Juan Astica, Federico Lorca and Gonzalo Cristi.³⁶ In the second period, an expansion of FF's scope of action is observed, focusing on the training of technical bodies and the internationalization of the Chilean experience. This is achieved through increased circulation of participating actors, both with the presence of North Americans and Chileans in North and South America.

Architecture and technical assistance: the activity of the design team

The different reports presented by CFP allow for the characterization of the ideas, methodology and projects during the programme's first years. The initial focus on project research would, as mentioned above, later lose momentum to other dimensions of action such as the generation of standards for the programming and evaluation of built community facilities. Although relatively brief in time, the work of the North American CFP is of great interest as it has made it possible to use a scientific approach to architecture to identify design methodology. The community facility projects of *Feria Sur* in Santiago and *Almirante Gómez Carreño* in Viña del Mar are examples of the tenets proposed by the design team to consolidate the social role of the facilities for the new development in Chile. Operatively, technical advice from North American universities and private architectural firms was divided by task, in which Rice University and CRS took part in architecture and construction, while the Harvard team and assistant consultants were in charge of planning and organizing the project.³⁷

outskirts of Santiago were given out. For more on this policy and its criticisms, see F. Quintana, 'Urbanizing with chalk', *ARQ (Santiago)*, 86 (2014), 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-69962014000100005>.

³⁵RAC/FFR/CR 3255–6261, Friedmann, *Urban and regional development in Chile*, 206.

³⁶Juan Astica was director of MINVU's Urban Development Planning Office; Federico Lorca received a grant to attend the UN Building and Planning Committee, in addition to touring institutions associated with community equipment programming in Europe; Gonzalo Cristi received a grant to attend the programme organized by the United Nations Department of Housing and Urban Affairs.

³⁷RAC/FFR/CR 1–3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964.

During CFP's early days, the team headed by Charles Thomsen – director of the Community Facilities Program at Rice University – published a draft report titled *First Five Projects*, summarizing the theoretical and methodological outlines of the work. Other team members included Bob H. Reed, from CRS, and Bill N. Lacy and Anderson Todd, associate professors at Rice. The selection of these individuals was intended to emphasize the close link between academia and private firms in this project, as represented by the founding partners of CRS, who were also important professors at Rice. This connection was replicated among the firm's architects, most of whom had also been students at Rice. With an outstanding performance in the professional field, especially in educational architecture, CRS established itself as one of the most recognized American offices of its time. CRS's major contributions included both innovation in design processes and the development of research and design techniques that would later be published in academic papers. In these publications, CRS took a robust stand for an architectural approach based on research.³⁸ In the mid-sixties, the firm expanded its activity to different international projects, mainly in the Middle East and Latin America, the latter of which included the FF funding of a university campus for the Bariloche Foundation in Argentina and CFP in Chile.³⁹

CRS's approach to the five projects in the report provided the first analysis of the local Chilean context to visitors, followed by the project proposals for community facilities.⁴⁰ Focusing on Central Chile, the paper reported on the climatic diversity of the country, with a more detailed characterization of the semi-arid zone where the cities of Santiago and Viña del Mar are located. These conditions were linked to basic design criteria suitable for the indoor enclosures such as sun lighting and artificial lighting, and cross ventilation. Likewise, suggestions were given on the design of green areas, such as suitable species and irrigation techniques, based on what were determined to be the major needs of the new housing complexes: access to both vegetation and water in public spaces.

The potential of the Chilean industry was carefully explored with regard to materials and construction, with particular attention to reinforced concrete for its expressiveness and variety in contemporary buildings, as well as its low costs *vis-à-vis* the United States. Steel was also highlighted, since lightweight sections presented an important development in Chile, attracting the attention of foreigners. The seismic condition of the Chilean soil was also analysed as a main factor in the construction of buildings in the country. It was deemed vitally important to consider the expertise of local professionals. The methodology proposed to carry out the analysis in correlation with work strategies in North America, using the photographic record as a catalogue of the visitors' observations. This use of graphic material, including drawings and conceptual diagrams, was characteristic of the techniques that CRS had consolidated as a distinctive axis of design research.⁴¹

³⁸A. Sachs, 'The postwar legacy of architectural research', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 3 (2009), 53–64.

³⁹C. Schmidt, 'La Universidad de Utopía. Un proyecto para el Campus de la Fundación Bariloche (1962–1966)', *Revista Pasado Abierto*, 11 (2020), 1–11.

⁴⁰Neighbourhoods Florida, Presidente Ríos and *Feria Sur* in Santiago; Presidente Kenned (known today as Hospital) Paine commune; and Neighbourhood Almirante Gómez Carreño in Viña del Mar.

⁴¹P. Tombesi, 'Capital gains and architectural losses: the transformative journey of Caudill Rowlett Scott (1948–1994)', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 4 (2016), 540–63.

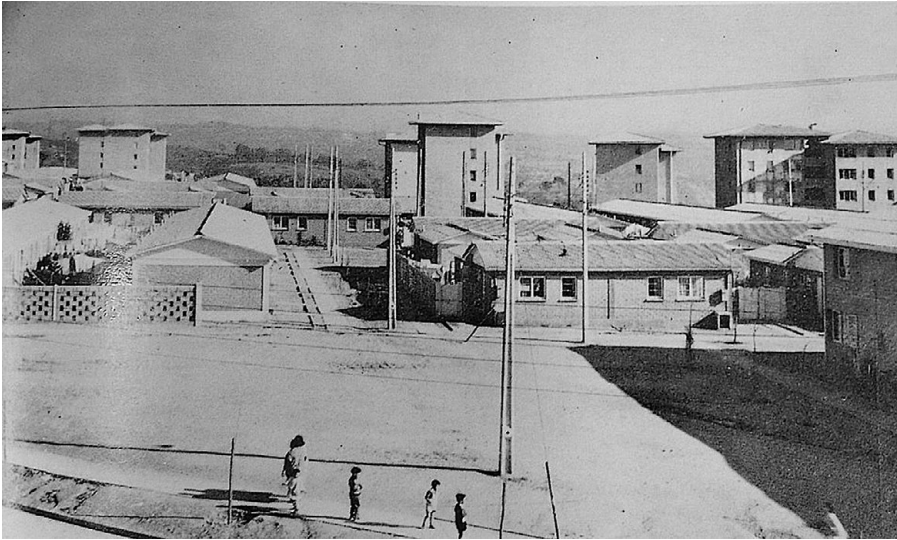


Figure 1. View of the Población Almirante Gómez Carreño (1966).

Source: 'Realización del plan habitacional en Valparaíso', *Revista de la construcción*, 52 (1966), 59.

In Chile, CFP was conceived as a complementary programme for the growing processes of urbanization in the country. The definition of layouts, basic infrastructure and family facilities (housing) were the main focus of the state efforts, leaving aside the development of community facilities and public spaces (Figure 1). The formalization of the programme in 1964 gave way to the recognition of the importance of facilities for the populations, not only in terms of services provided but most importantly as channels for the social and economic development of the communities.

Of the five original community facility proposals, *Feria Sur* and *Almirante Gómez Carreño* projects were given much greater analysis and design development. In the analysis of a large empty area associated with *Feria Sur* in a recently formed urban environment close to Santiago, the architects at CRS highlight that 'none is in more urgent need of community buildings and services' due to the high density and lack of facilities in the area, in which there only was a small school.⁴² The large trapezoidal property was delimited by roadways and surrounded by new residences. The environment was homogeneous and lacked outstanding features, because of both the regularity and repetition of the architecture and the flatness of the topography of Chile's central valley (Figure 2). The monotony posed one of the main challenges since the aim of the new construction was to consolidate and qualify the urban space in terms of social representation.

The programme integrated health facilities, welfare agencies, clinics and potential police and fire stations, in addition to a school, playgrounds and recreational centres proposed by the community. In architectural terms, the analysis incorporated a range of proposals for building configuration, from partially closed to open location schemes, with meeting areas for inhabitants serving as the focal points of the

⁴²RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, D-46, 29.

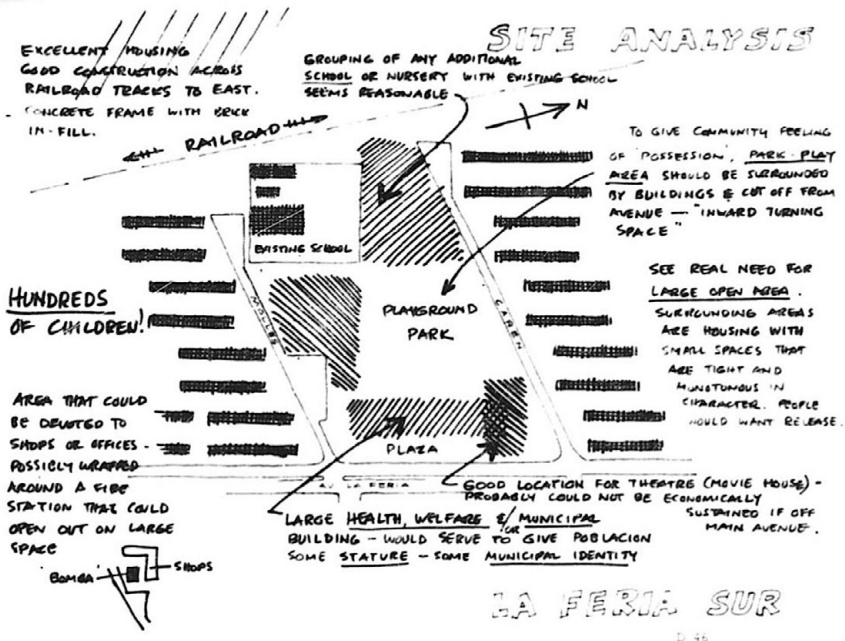


Figure 2. Site analysis in the Población La FERIA Sur.

Source: RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, Rice University and CRS, Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research, 1964, D-46.

complex. In these proposed project alternatives, the pros and cons of the functional relationships were carefully weighed. Finally, in the formulation of the preliminary civic centre project, it was decided to create a distinctive image from the surrounding houses, through 'the buildings grouped irregularly around a main square and other smaller terraces' (Figure 3).⁴³ The landscape and vegetation also played a central role in the project with a series of proposed strategies ranging from the creation of barriers separating the property from the railroad, to tree-lined pedestrian avenues, to the configuration of recreational areas with playgrounds and small-scale squares in order to create 'areas of easy protection and economic maintenance'.⁴⁴

The second project that went beyond the programming (or analysis) stage to the design (or synthesis) stage was the community facilities for *Almirante Gómez Carreño* in Viña del Mar, 120 km from Santiago (Figure 4).⁴⁵ Unlike the previous case, the intervention site was characterized by the unique features of a sloping topography and the breathtaking view of the Pacific Ocean. As a result, the geographical aspects of the site were highly valued, and the connection with nature was taken into consideration in the building design (Figure 5). As at *Feria Sur*, the first stage at *Almirante Gómez Carreño* tested the resolutions for the implementation of the project, identifying that 'the obvious solution for such a site situation is a terraced

⁴³ 'Centro cívico para La FERIA Sur', *Revista de la construcción*, 45 (1966), 16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁵ J. King and P. Langdon, *The CRS Team and the Business of Architecture* (College Station, TX, 2002).

POSSIBILITIES OF SITE

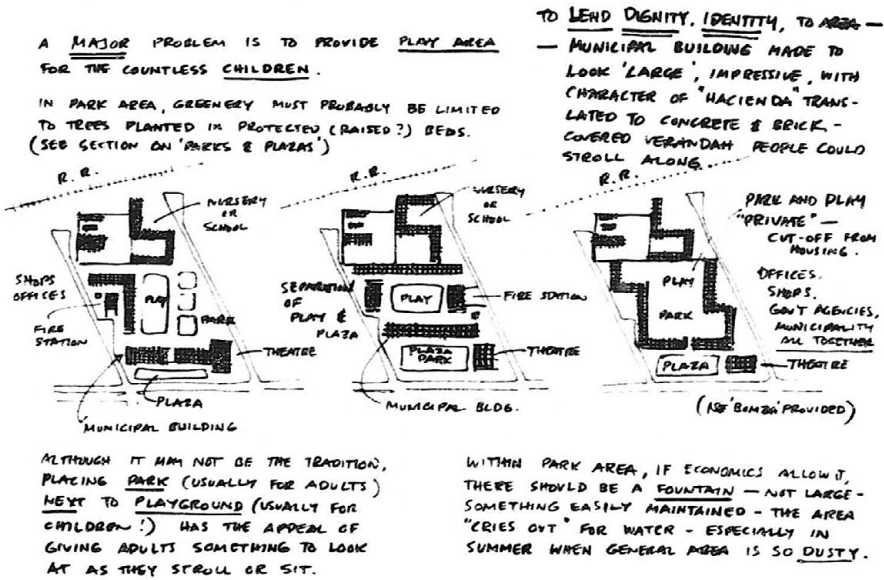


Figure 3. Three possibilities for the site of Población La Feria Sur. Source: RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, Rice University and CRS, Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research, 1964, D-47.

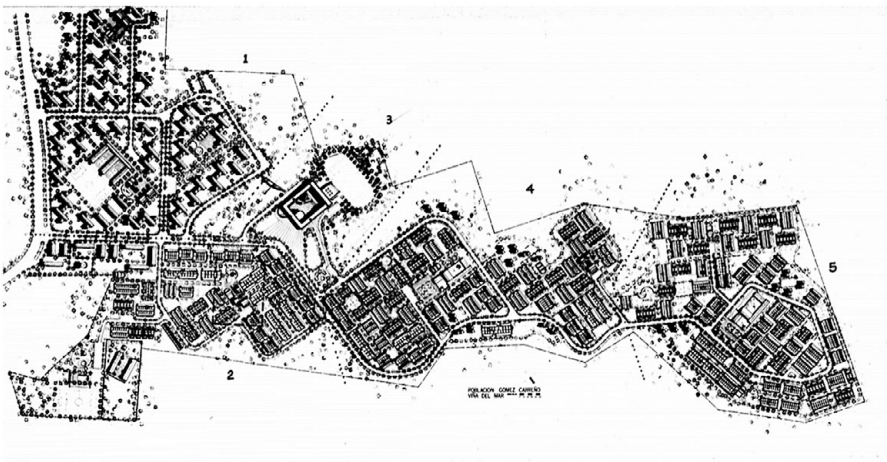


Figure 4. Masterplan for Almirante Gómez Carreño neighbourhood (1966), showing the location of the civic centre in Housing Unit number 3. Source: A.K. Belschner, 'Architecture and exchange: a design proposal for community facilities', Rice University Ph.D. thesis, 1966, 80A.

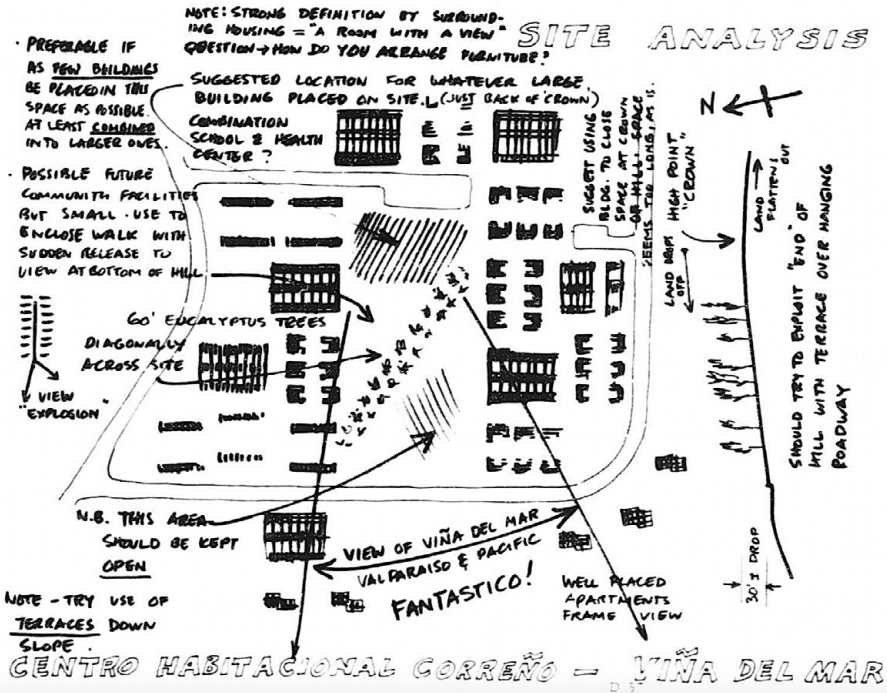


Figure 5. Almirante Gómez Carreño facility site analysis. Source: RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, D-57.

scheme with buildings arranged on the different levels to take advantage of the magnificent view toward the west.⁴⁶ In this vein, the study of alternatives maintained the location of the public facility complex on the highest point of the site as a constant, presenting typological development variations including alternatives such as 'L' blocks forming a cloister, a sequential alternative, or the development of a single building that enhances the terraces. In all cases, the aim was to 'increase the vertical scale and serve as a background for the site to be viewed against' (Figures 5-6).⁴⁷ Unlike the Santiago facility, both the visual and geographic characteristics of *Almirante Gómez Carreño* were described as singular and were considered by the project team to be 'fantástico'.⁴⁸ The identification of design strategies for the terraced public spaces that preserved an unobstructed view of the surroundings was prioritized.

This analytical stage had a profound academic impact as two Rice students wrote their dissertations using *Almirante Gómez Carreño* as a case-study. The academic influence of the project allowed for the development of a preliminary proposal for a civic centre, as well as several neighbourhood facilities that integrated housing, small businesses, a nursery school and public spaces. Without going in-depth into the

⁴⁶RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, D-84.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, D-84.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, D-84.

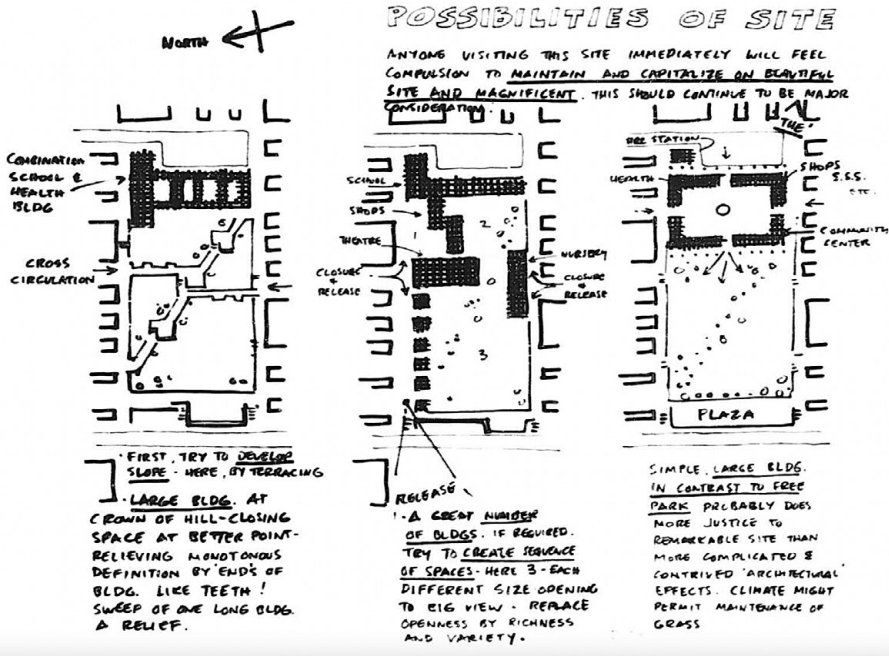


Figure 6. Three initial possibilities for facilities in *Almirante Gómez Carreño*.

Source: RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, D-58.

academic exercise proposed by student Andrew Belschner, it is interesting to identify the role in a community assigned to the building in the process of consolidation – understanding equipment as a representation of society. The architectural proposal suggests a building consolidating a main square, outlining a functional programme that links culture, commerce, housing and education on the six floors of the complex (Figures 7–9). Main stores and walkways are situated at the pedestrian level, evoking the essence of a civic square and the new proposal for a community gathering space. Other stores, specialized workshops, a secondary school and housing for the centre's employees are located on the upper levels of the building. The modulation proposal, based on a 7 by 7 by 3-metre box, was Belschner's approach to provide functional flexibility to the project. The project sought to stimulate interest in the later development of CORVI by firmly stating the foreigners' recommendation to 'continue with research on the needs of communities of larger scales'. Through their observations in Chile, they determined that urbanization of large sectors along with those already existing created new cities which should be treated as such.⁴⁹

The analysis of the North American experts' proposals enables the identification of innovations on the methodological strategies of architecture, as well as a particular conceptualization of the community facilities architecture. This early action shows innovations in working methods where the observation and the study of the context,

⁴⁹RAC/FFR/CR 1-3254, P. Kennon, 'Corvi community facilities program 1965–1966', in *Report to the Ford Foundation: Rice University School of Architecture Activities in Chile*, 1966.

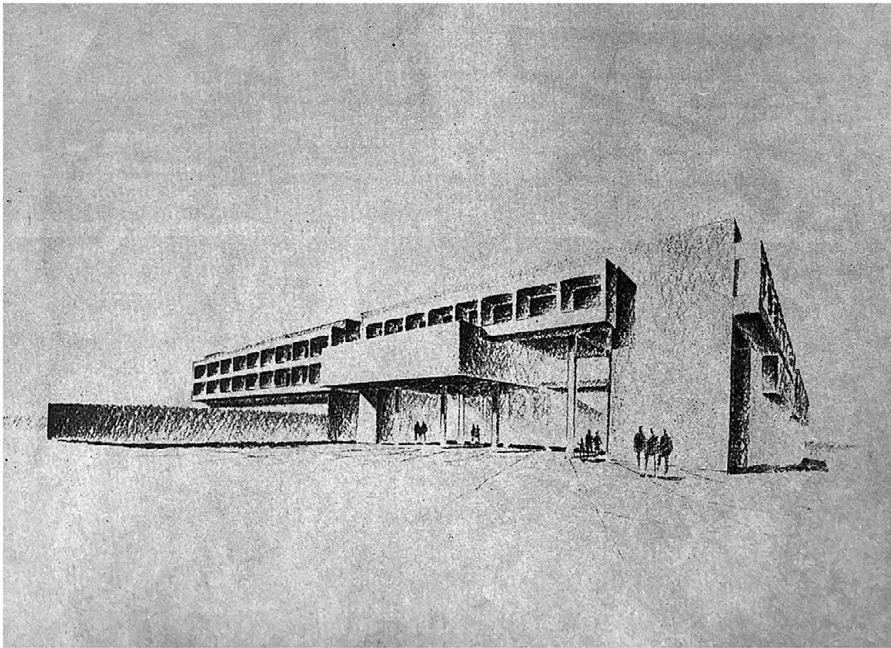


Figure 7. Sketch of the academic proposal for the *Almirante Gómez Carreño* civic centre.
Source: 'Centro cívico Gómez Carreño', *Revista de la construcción*, 45 (1966), 18.

links to the environment and dialogue with the users play a fundamental role in the definition of the project hypotheses. The designs also emphasized the social representativeness of the architecture of the community facilities. In light of this, the team opted for preliminary projects of facilities characterized by large-scale complexes, a diverse architectural programme and generous public spaces – addressing which, the previous analysis had shown to be a primary need.

In their initial state, the projects exemplified the theories that CRS architects proposed in academic articles and books on the design of community facilities: groups of buildings marked by broad programmes, different for each case according to local requirements which included schools, nursery schools, stores and recreation centres – all of which were concentrated in the large area reserved for facilities between the houses already built or under construction. They assumed that the architectural and urbanistic task was to endow the monotonous *poblaciones* with attributes and qualities of the city and urban life. According to foreign experts, the inhabitants of the emerging Chilean suburbs:

have moved to the city not only in search of shelter, as they already had this in the countryside, but because of the association with the urban scene and city amenities, such as telephone, services, health centres, and with better social and economic opportunities. For them, the city means civilization, and civilization is all of these things, including nightclubs, nightlife, and bustling traffic.⁵⁰

⁵⁰RAC/FFR/CR 1–3254, Rice University and CRS, *Chilean Community Facilities Program Architectural Research*, 1964, D-7.

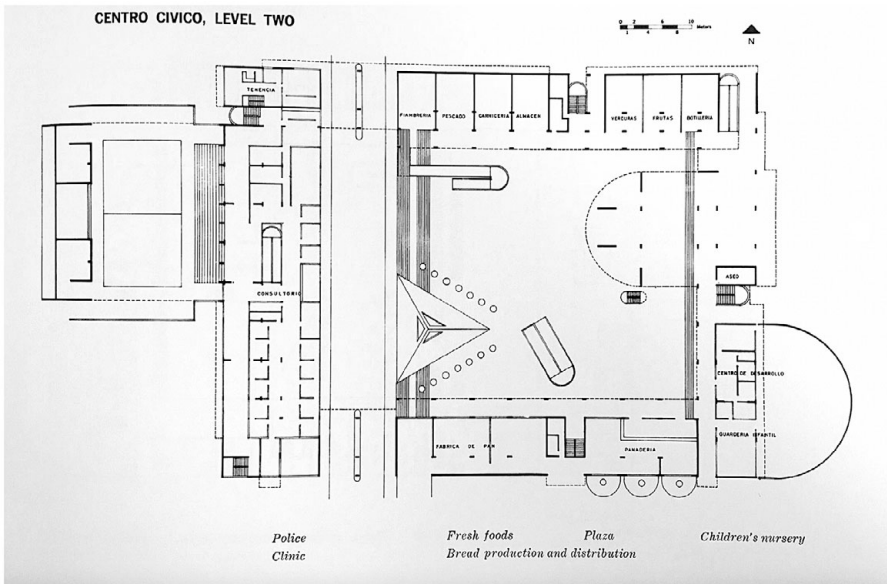


Figure 8. Second floor of the *Almirante Gómez Carreño* civic centre, integrating police, health, commerce and education equipment.

Source: RAC/FFR/ International Division, Rice University, *Población Almirante Gómez Carreño*, Chile, 1966, 19.

The development of alternative projects, also a hallmark of CRS's work, allowed the exchange of ideas early on with its interlocutors (or clients), identifying plausible paths of action in collaboration with the different actors. Even though this was a first approach, the inclusion of community voices in the determination of suitable alternatives for future facilities was repeatedly referred to:

[I]t is clear that architecture will only have value if it meets the real needs of the people – needs that they recognize, not needs that a questionnaire shows they should need...it will be the character of each individual community that determines what facilities are required.⁵¹

These statements revealed tensions between programming – as specifically practised within an architectural project – and the production of standardized buildings based on quantitative variables. Despite the initial nature of the project, the approach promoted by Rice and CRS presented alternatives for each site. These alternatives were analysed, studied and represented in a generic way, and were used to outline the theoretical and methodological matrices put into practice.

In parallel with these proposals, the CFP staff was also occupied with other lines of work. CORVI initiated its own community facilities construction programme (1965–66) using designs by two Chilean firms and the Community Facilities In-Service Training team (CFST) also aided in the co-ordination, programming, design

⁵¹*Ibid.*, D-6.

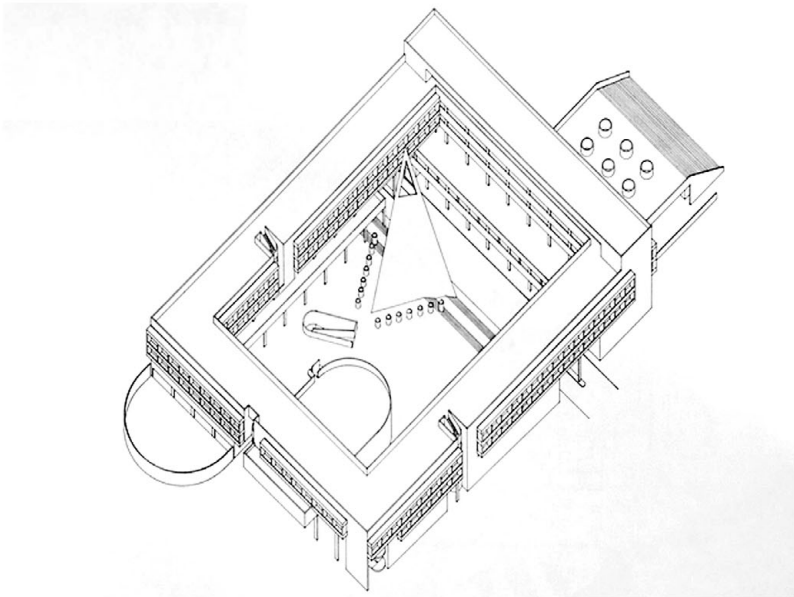
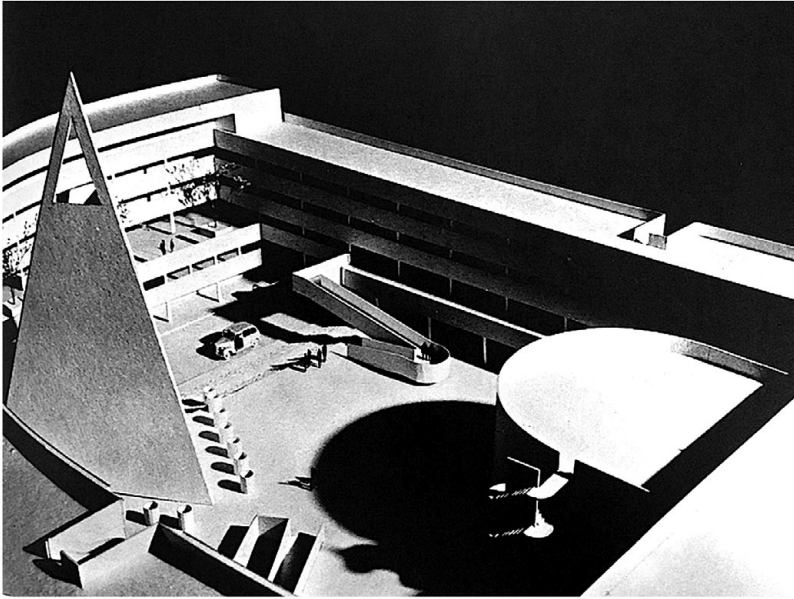


Figure 9. Views of the proposed *Almirante Gómez Carreño* civic centre.

Source: RAC/FFR/ International Division, Rice University, *Población Almirante Gomez Carreño*, Chile, 1966, 24–5.

standards and review of preliminary projects.⁵² Another CORVI extensive programme focused on the massive eradication of *callampas*, *Operación Sitio*, also required the direct assistance of the CFST team for its implementation. The project

⁵²RAC/FFR/CR 1–3254, P. Kennon, ‘Corvi community facilities program 1965–1966’; *ibid.*

focused on the construction of prefabricated schools, community centres, nursery schools and children's playgrounds.

Conclusions: from the building project to programming

The CFP in Chile was developed by the FF between 1964 and 1969, first within a scheme of action organized on the basis of specific themes. Later, in 1965, it was incorporated into a larger-scale programme that was proposed as an urban design and architecture laboratory that could be replicated across the continent.

Additionally, in the context of the Cold War and the expansion of US technical and financial assistance in Latin America, Chile was consolidated as a regional epicentre due to the setup of an Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean office and other regional headquarters of either supranational or Latin American organizations.

With the establishment of the FF headquarters in Santiago in 1964, the philanthropic activity of the foundation was consolidated into large-scale projects such as the 1964 Chile–California Agreement.⁵³ On a much smaller scale, the CFP proposed a collaboration designing community facilities to accompany housing projects promoted by the state, training technical bodies in the field and developing land-management guidelines.

Regarding the articulation between state offices and the technical advisors on the CFP, it should be noted that in the early years the developments were grafted to housing projects, resulting in a limited presence bounded within the MOP offices. Although the CFP gradually acquired greater autonomy, political transformations and the readjustment of governmental offices' organizational charts resulted in the establishment of grey areas in the agents' daily practices. How did these changing dynamics translate into the fulfilment of the CFP's objectives? In the early stages, there was scarce acknowledgment of the interactions between American advisors and the Chilean teams. However, in terms of training, the FF actions brought greater results, with programme exchanges between Chilean architects and Rice University.

The creation of MINVU and the consolidation of community facilities as a topic of interest would increase the links between external and local technicians and contribute to a change in the role of the FF's advisors, who gradually abandoned active participation in the project in favour of roles as overseers. The integration to URDAPIC would redefine consultancies in the field, with only one advisor and one American student integrating into CORVI's activity after 1966.

Although facilities gained autonomy in the institutional organizational chart, the boundaries of the activities of the various offices that host them remained blurred. Problems also arose in financing and maintaining the new buildings, bringing new inter-departmental exchanges.

It is important to acknowledge a dual dynamic between the FF's objectives and the state's actions. After the first year of operation, William Alonso noted the complexity of meeting the programme's ambitious objectives of academic, professional and territorial planning. His criticism pointed to the need to separate building design from territorial planning. The incorporation of the CFP into URDAPIC would

⁵³F. Quesada, *La Universidad desconocida* (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, 2015), 141–60.

underwrite its fate, becoming a node within a complex network of FF activity in Chilean territorial matters.

In academic terms, the CFP enabled the training of Chilean technicians at Rice as well as allowing the University of Chile and the Catholic University the possibility of having foreign teachers in their programmes, where community facilities fostered a local tradition.⁵⁴ With its incorporation into URDAPIC and the creation of the Interdisciplinary Committee for Urban Development (Comité Interdisciplinario de Desarrollo Urbano, 1966) at the Catholic University, the training activity was reduced and displaced to other fields of knowledge closer to regional and urban planning than to architecture.

In connection with the role of architects and their theoretical and methodological matrices, we identify the transformation of action strategies that were initially associated with the programming and design of facilities and, in later years, were redefined on the basis of practices closer to abstract evaluation and diagramming than to the physical and functional definition of architectural spaces.

It is worth noting that the work of Rice advisors and CRS pushed forward a design strategy based on architectural research that was a pedagogical novelty and redefined the role of the design architect in favour of a scientific practice of observation and production of spatial variables that also involved the participation of the users and recipients of the buildings. These characteristics are widely visible in the reports and identify the social role of facilities buildings as the distinctive variable within the housing schemes that were being developed.

The development of the CFP stressed the rhythm of the transformations of FF assistance in Chile, in close relation to the political, social and economic changes in the country. The arrival of the FF as a single facilities programme with a strong architectural component was redefined into a complex consultancy programme that integrated multiple governmental spheres, coinciding with the new political horizon promoted by President Frei Montalva. Such integration of the CFP not only limited its actions in terms of agents and resources, but ultimately displaced the question of the building and its community role with the notion of national, regional and urban planning. Such displacement highlights the complexity underlying the architects' actions and their role as advisors, transitioning from design practitioners to evaluators and developers of action guidelines; and assuming a character much closer to that of experts who can integrate international standards into local structures.

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⁵⁴In November 1964, the Catholic University proposed an agreement with Rice, Harvard and the FF to create a teaching and research programme in the sciences related to the improvement of the material living conditions of low-income Chilean communities.

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