

Adamo Boari, Mexico City and Canberra

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Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin's victory in the 1912 international design competition for Australia's new capital city Canberra propelled the couple out from under the shadow of their former employer Frank Lloyd Wright. Central to their submission's success, the Griffins' plan encapsulated an almost worshipful regard for the future city's rugged site. Most striking is the plan's symbolically-charged, crystalline geometry. Crucially, this modular system not only accommodated, but was also informed by, and accentuated the site's irregular landforms. The remarkable structural dialogue between the plan's geometry and the site's topography has attracted considerable scholarly attention. When seeking to identify its compositional origins, many have concluded that the Griffins' design cannot be 'understood simply in terms of either late nineteenth century City Beautiful models or Howard's Garden City principles'.

Given this, some have ascribed the design's structure to the 'secret' formulas of ancient cosmological and other esoteric sources. This paper, however, argues that the Griffins drew upon more immediate, exoteric sources. These sources, in turn, are to be more accurately identified through an investigation of the couple's own pre-Canberra projects. This alternative interpretation features works produced during Walter Burley Griffin's early (ca 1900) and little-known tenure with Italian-American architect Adamo Boari.

Adamo Boari is today remembered almost exclusively (if at all) as the architect of Mexico City's Palace of Fine Arts. Almost no attention has been given Boari's considerable experience as an urbanist. Beginning with work on national infrastructure projects in Brazil, Boari next practiced in Chicago. There, he apparently worked for Daniel Hudson Burnham at the time of the World's Columbian Exposition. Later sharing an office with Frank Lloyd Wright, Boari was soon immersed in Chicago's progressive design milieu. Although recognised as a singular achievement, Boari's Palace of Fine Arts was, in fact, but one component of his broader initiative to transform the city centre of the Mexican capital. In this urban design endeavour, Boari also developed, partly informed by ancient Meso-American technique, a modular geometric system as an urban ordering device. Sharing his elder employer's Meso-American enthusiasms, the young Griffin similarly formulated his own proportional systems. In parallel with re-establishing Boari's position within a town planning, this paper concludes that his Latin American urbanism offered the Griffins an important precedent when conceptualising their exoteric design for the Australian capital.

Introduction

Within accounts of modern Latin American architecture and urbanism, Adamo Boari is remembered almost exclusively (if at all) as the architect of Mexico City's Palace of Fine Arts. Although recognised as a singular achievement, Boari's monolithic edifice was actually conceived as but one component of a larger urban design initiative. In this enterprise, Boari sought to employ architecture and urbanism as design instruments of national identity; to refashion the city's ancient fabric into a series of 'monuments to the progress of the Republic'. This aim led Boari to develop a modular geometric system as an urban ordering device, partly derived from Meso-American technique.

Before his Mexican tenure (1899-1916), Boari practiced in Brazil and then Chicago. In the latter metropolis, he apparently worked for the celebrated urbanist Daniel Hudson Burnham at the time of the World's Columbian Exposition. Later sharing an office with Frank Lloyd Wright, Boari was immersed in Chicago's progressive, nativist design milieu. In 1899, Boari hired the newly-graduated architect and landscape architect Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937) to assist with his Mexican projects. Sharing his employer's Meso-American enthusiasms, the young Griffin similarly formulated his own proportional systems. Griffin would later achieve international acclaim for his prize-winning design (1911) for Australia's new national capital city, Canberra. Despite Boari's significant position within this important early twentieth century design discourse and contemporary interest in national identity, almost no attention has been given to his considerable experience as an urbanist. As well, the potential influence of his thought upon Griffin's work has also been overlooked. This preliminary study aims to (re)position Boari as a town planner and to identify potential points of convergence between his civic design approach and Griffin's design of Canberra.

Boari's education and Brazilian experiences

An Italian native, Adamo Boari (1863-1928) began his remarkable career with a study of civil engineering at the University of Ferrara and later at Bologna Politecnico and graduated in 1886.¹ By 1877, Boari's aesthetic concern expanded to embrace the wider landscape. That September, for instance, the young designer produced a number of sketches of rural scenes and panoramas of European villages, predating his university study.² The newly-graduated civil engineer departed Italy to pursue new professional opportunities in Brazil, which was unusual for the time, in 1887.

Once in Brazil, Boari was soon at work on a number of railway and road building projects in the regions of Santos and Campiñas (near Sao Paulo).³ These large-scale infrastructure projects became catalysts for Boari's new interest in town planning. In 1888 and despite now residing in Brazil, Boari made a submission to the design competition for the Italian House of Parliament in Rome.⁴ His design interest in governmental buildings would prove an enduring one and he would continue to regularly participate in design competitions. In 1890 Boari also prepared drawings for a Universal Exposition, which was commended by its assessors.⁵ Whilst working in Brazil, Boari also travelled to Montevideo and Buenos Aires.⁶ Visits to the Uruguayan and Argentinean capitals no doubt heightened his interest in urbanism. In parallel, Boari continued to develop his ability as an architect. Designed in 1891 in Belem, Rio de Janeiro, a Moorish-inspired villa and tropical garden was one of Boari's first 'architectural' projects.⁷ Preoccupied with climatic response, Boari would continue to explore the means by which garden idealisations of the natural world could be integrated with architecture.

Work in Chicago

In 1892, Boari moved to the United States and settled in Chicago. Around this time the chair of the Department of Agriculture of Kentucky corresponded with Boari to conduct a study on the cultivation of hemp, broadening Boari's idea about plants.⁸ In Chicago, the civil engineer began formal training in architecture at the University of Chicago and became a licensed architect in 1899.⁹ At the time of Boari's arrival, the burgeoning metropolis was gaining national recognition as an epicentre of progressive architecture and urbanism. In preparing to host the now legendary World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, Chicago was the locus of considerable design activity. It was at this time that Boari apparently gained employment with the fair's consulting architects, Daniel Hudson Burnham and John Wellborn Root, and became involved with the project. In 1895, Boari again entered a design competition for a government edifice, this one for a new City Hall for New York. One imagines that Boari's formative experiences in Latin America made his work unique and slightly exotic.

The path that would lead Boari to Mexico City actually originated in Chicago. In 1897, his entry in the international design competition for Mexico's 'National Capitol' building (*Palacio Legislativo*) was awarded first prize. Although unanticipated, his victory would re-direct his career and, by 1899 he would be living in Mexico City. Owing to its significance, the Legislative Palace will be discussed in this paper.

Adamo Boari's success continued in 1898 when he was awarded second prize in a national competition for the innovative architectural use of 'Luxfer Prism' glass. Most notably, Burnham and Wright were amongst the judges. Only months after the Luxfer competition, Boari designed a model tenement housing development for another national contest. Although it failed to attract a prize, the competition assessors 'highly commended' his plan. A closer examination of these competitive designs offers insights into Boari's ideas on civic design.

The 1898 'Luxfer Prism' competition solicited designs for singular buildings. Despite the contest's somewhat narrow scope, Boari's submission nevertheless expressed his civic design interest. Boari actually prepared two different competition entries. The first was a design for a ten story office building. The second submission proposed a twenty-four story tower with a roof garden summit. Although Boari's two Luxfer towers are significant as separate entities, the pair are no less important as a collective. In supplement to the requisite plans and elevations, Boari also included an aerial perspective rendering. Rather than as isolated objects, both buildings are represented in the single image as components of a broader urban scene. Apart from its height, Boari awarded the taller tower additional prominence by designing an expansive open plaza surround at its base. He positioned the smaller building in visual dialogue on the opposite side of the plaza's bordering thoroughfare. Through this strategic placement, Boari's taller tower gained additional function as an iridescent civic landmark. Although in excess of the competition scope, Boari's dualistic submission encapsulated an urban design vision as much as it did an architectural proposition. As such, it undoubtedly held dual appeal for the architect and urbanist juror Daniel Burnham.

Boari's continuing interest in urbanism next led him to enter the Charity Organization Society of New York's 1899 contest for a 'model tenement' development. Boari's design grouped individual tenement dwellings into a series of inter-locking modules. Each module, in turn, enclosed and spatially defined an open 'terrace court' garden. The overall plan's resulting pattern resembled a sort of Aztec hieroglyph or segments from a Mayan palace. The 'terrace court' garden configuration of his model tenement, together with his Luxfer tower roof garden, suggests that, for Boari, the natural world as idealized in the garden was an essential component in the urban environment.

Having practiced elsewhere in Chicago for about three years, Boari shifted his studio to Steinway Hall in 1899. The location of his office is in itself vitally important. By 1899, Steinway Hall was known locally as a lodestone and haven for Chicago's progressive architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright. That same year, Walter Burley Griffin entered Boari's employ. Actually, Griffin likely was already present in Boari's office at the time of the 'model tenement' competition.

The significance of the Legislative Palace design

Although Adamo Boari had won the 1897 Legislative Palace competition, the Mexican government controversially elected to nullify the result.¹⁰ Sited on an elliptical lot, the grand Neoclassical design of the five storey Legislative Palace in the form of a Greek cross consists of four interior patios.¹¹ Initially, according to Walter Burley Griffin, Boari was actually commissioned for the building and was 'sent to Europe to gain the best knowledge of Parliament Houses available'. Griffin explained that shortly after construction began, a 'national scandal' arose 'as the cost of the work and other considerations made it evident that the proper policy had not been followed'. Griffin continued that 'the work was ultimately taken out of his hands, and the commission given to M Benard, the French architect, who won the Phoebe Hearst competition [1900]'. Curiously, Benard had not participated in the original competition. Regardless, Griffin's account is important as Boari was most likely the source of his knowledge.

Despite this disappointing outcome, the competition transformed Boari's career in terms of work prospects in Mexico.¹² Compensation for the repeated frustrations that Boari experienced in implementing the Legislative Palace probably led him to design the Mexico City's Transportation Building, an unexecuted project designed in Chicago.

Boari's success in the Mexican capitol competition apparently was his catalyst to visit the country and meet its president, Porfirio Diaz, around 1898. Boari's time in Mexico and direct contact with Diaz led to a series of projects there. Two such commissions came in 1899, one was for the design of Mexico City's new Central Post Office (*Palacio de Correos*) and another to design the sanctuary of the Virgin of Carmen in Atotonilco, Jalisco. This intriguing Neo-Gothic sanctuary contains a patio at the altar and the exterior walls almost appear to grow out of the natural topography (connecting the sanctuary to the earth), a seemingly early example of 'organic architecture' influencing Griffin, and prior to Wright's 1939 lecture about the importance of ground and site.¹³

Throughout 1900, Boari's projects in Mexico burgeoned. That year he designed a monument to Diaz himself designed in Mexico City. Boari's design comprised a sculptural group set atop a pyramidal garden pedestal. The composition featured an equestrian statue of Diaz, ornamented with representations of an Aztec goddess. The dictator responded the same year with another commission, this one for a new National Theatre (*Teatro Nacional*), later renamed the Palace of Fine Arts (*Palacio de Bellas Artes*). The theatre and post office were not unrelated propositions. Boari later explained that these 'public buildings' were among 'a number ... designed for the substantial improvement and adornment of the City of Mexico', intended as 'perpetual monument[s] to the progress of the Republic'.¹⁴

These substantial commissions increasingly required Boari's presence in Mexico. His lengthy absences from Chicago are what likely led Boari to enlist Griffin's assistance with the 'drawings for [Boari's] monumental structures in Mexico'. Griffin's direct involvement with Boari's Mexican projects was a catalyst, if only by imagined proximity, for his interest in the ancient architecture of Meso-America. In concert with their mutual nativist interest, Boari's synthesis of gardens with architecture also undoubtedly appealed to Griffin. Like Boari, Griffin would gain

prominence from success in an international competition for a national capitol and, as a consequence, spend the majority of his life as an expatriate.

The Mexican work continued to press and by 1904, Boari had closed his Chicago practice and settled in Mexico. Once in Mexico, he was soon enraptured with its climate and landscape, developing a design and archaeological interest in its Meso-American architecture. Boari later would become a professor of architectural composition at the San Carlos Academy in Mexico City.¹⁵ Boari's *magnum opus* consists of a wide-range of projects from the Latin and North American Beaux-Arts, to the Neo-Gothic and Neo-Byzantine to early modern Mexican design.

Boari's designs for the Legislative Palace (1897) and the new National Theatre (1904) and its Alameda Park surrounds (1908) provide an opportunity to discuss Boari's urban design approach which, in turn, may have influenced Griffin's thinking.¹⁶ These designs encapsulate a sophisticated composition of urban spaces blended with Meso-American techniques. Boari's urban design intent to link Mexico City's centre with its early twentieth century suburbs, specifically Roma and Condesa, appears to have informed Griffin's own later approach. Certain aspects of Mexican urbanism will be discussed to understand the historical context and to illustrate some of the rich complexity that Griffin's plans reveal.

Boari and the Mexican Capital

Mexico City's early modern development was a progressive urban spoliation of Meso-America techniques. The city was organised spatially by the rectilinear colonial grid, emanating from the main Zocalo (or plaza). Towards the west of this plaza is an avenue, which was originally the path of an ancient causeway, directing traffic to the southwest end of the city (now known as the *Paseo de la Reforma*). Later the Zocalo was developed into a thoroughfare.¹⁷ The *Paseo de la Reforma* may have been inspired by Eugene Haussmann's similar urban transformations in Paris.¹⁸ It was set out as a diagonal thoroughfare in relation to the colonial grid and incorporated landscape plantings and *glorietas* (roundabouts). These *glorietas* were positioned so that trees could be planted to shade pedestrian paths. The *Paseo de la Reforma* became the major avenue and the *Avenida Juarez*, an east-west street, marked the southern edge of the Alameda Park.

The Alameda Park was the most important of the expansionary movements in the Porfirian regime. The extension of the rectilinear grid included the site for the Legislative Palace. This park was planted with poplar trees (*Alamos*) in the late sixteenth-century. The area surrounding the Alameda Park became significant in that it portrayed Porfirio Diaz's plan of 'order and progress.' The *glorietas* later served as potential sites where various sculptures could demonstrate a national identity.¹⁹ For example, Boari's design of the Monument to Diaz (1900) was planned to be located on one of the *glorietas* along the *Paseo de la Reforma*, facing the Legislative Palace (now the location of the Monument to the Revolution in the *Plaza de la Republica*).

The new National Theatre is the most remarkable of all his Mexican works. Working from Steinway Hall and in transference of Chicago's nativist impulse, Boari sought to acknowledge the indigenous in the theatre's design. Adhering to 'no absolute historical style', he grafted Meso-American motifs onto the theatre's larger frame of European classical tradition. Boari's response to the building's locale was not limited to culture, but also embraced nature. As earlier employed in his Luxfer design, he again sought to incorporate a garden within the theatre itself. In acknowledgment of Mexico's salubrious climate, Boari designed the foyer separating the auditorium for the ballroom as what he described as a 'a sort of conservatory

benefiting from Mexico's unique climate, which allows plants and flowers to grow indoors throughout the year with no need of heating'.²⁰ Boari's 'winter garden', however, would remain unrealized.

Crucially, Boari did not conceptualize the domed monolith as an isolated object. In fact, he was equally concerned for the theatre's 'fit' within the national capital city's ancient urban fabric. For Boari, the building's position was 'exceptional in every way.' His description of the theatre's location evoked a larger urban vision:

'it is flanked on one side by a large old park [the Alameda], the main city streets lead into its square, and it will be the real centre of the capital. Thus, what is required is a magnificent building which will epitomise and express the progress of this modern metropolis.'²¹

The redesign of the Alameda Park

The National Theatre 'occupies a central location in the Alameda or park, its four approaches following the parabolical lines employed in the general architectural design of the structure.'²² Boari designed Porfirian institutional buildings that transformed the urban form of the city of Mexico. His buildings articulated part of that urban form. The designs of the Legislative Palace (1897), Postal Palace (1899) and the Palace of Fine Arts (1904) established the city centre. For instance, Boari's design interventions in the Alameda Park (1908) - a plaza in front the theatre, two fountains, and a serpentine-form pergola - reflect a preoccupation with Meso-American culture. His designs reveal uncanny tensions between various cultures by merging Mexico's native plants within its interiors and / or exteriors. All these projects, very different from one another, and only slightly similar to the works of European masters who had inspired them, created a Mexican identity, making the work harmonious with the Mexican landscape. As Boari wrote, 'Eastern forms have mingled with those of the West . . .'²³ This statement suggests that Boari was thinking of architectural styles other than that of Europe. The transformation of traditional and early modernist ideas in his compositions was therefore a prominent aspect of Boari's urban design to attract both indigenous and elitist admiration. The Alameda Park zone reflected a shift in the location of Porfirian buildings.

In his urban design endeavour, Boari developed a modular geometric system as an urban ordering device, which was partly informed by Meso-American techniques. Public elements such as plazas, roads and stepped walls, and private elements such as patios and cactus gardens and flat roofs transcended into Boari's work through spaces such as the plaza in front of the Palace of Fine Arts, which was connected by a wide avenue and public garden. Likewise is Walter Burley Griffin's drawing for Canberra, but he substituted cactus plants for Australian native plants and included a large lake. Canberra and Mexico City share climatic similarities and both cities a positioned amidst mountain ranges and rough topography. In any case, the designs must be seen within a larger problem that Boari and Griffin shared: the prominence of the Beaux-Arts formalism. For Boari, 'true national architecture' should be estranged from 'academic taste.' Instead, it should amalgamate with primitive styles . . .'²⁴

In Boari's modern vision, Mexico's new national identity would draw upon Meso-American sources. The Legislative Palace inspired by the Beaux-Arts style and Aztec architecture bestows an understanding of open space based on plazas, including patios and flat roofs. It is possible that Griffin enveloped Boari's principle of national architecture with 'primitive styles' and adapted certain parts of the early modern development of Mexico City into the Australian capital. For instance, Griffin topped his Australian capitol building, not with the 'inevitable dome', but with a stepped pinnacle or ziggurat. Griffin explained that this form expressed 'the

last word of all the longest lived civilisations' such as 'Egypt, Babylonia, Syria, India, Indo-China, East Indies, Mexico or Peru'.

It was Diaz's architect, Boari, who retrieved Meso-American characteristics and 'amalgamated' these into innovative designs, such as the conservatory of native plants in the foyer of the Palace of Fine Arts. Considering Boari's design of the Monument to Diaz marked as one of the *glorietas*, as mentioned earlier, shows many prickly pear plants and Aztec ruins sinking into a pyramid foundation with serpents surrounding the perimeter of the base and above the foundation is a sculpture of Diaz waving a banner. This monument is a comment about the layering of Meso-American architecture and the discovery of new topographies, demonstrating the new depths and heights of Diaz's progressive nation. Both designs represent national icons of Mexican urbanism and address the preceding influences that once inhabited the sites. Future influences in these projects recall the patio and the relation of the topography with Boari's sanctuary in Atotonilco, revealing how the building is sited – the garden being the most important element. The designs of the Legislative Palace and the Monument to Diaz provide evidence that Boari was thinking in terms of a town planner before he designed the Palace of Fine Arts and the circulation areas within Alameda Park. The discussion of the history of Mexican urbanism should therefore include Boari's unexecuted works.

Carol McMichael Reese (2002) advocates the histories of neighbourhoods as the basis for writing Mexico City's urban history. This is to be supplemented with research into 'the evolution of urban infrastructure' and 'the history of the building and administration of cities'.²⁵ She also argues that the 'city's geography as well as its Pre-Columbian and colonial history were significant determinants of its nineteenth-century development.'²⁶ Reese then concentrates on this period, what she describes as the crucial issue facing Mexico's urbanism, when suburban plans demonstrated diverse formal characteristics. The *Paseo de la Reforma* subsequently provided investors to plan elite residential suburbs along its path towards the south, specifically Roma and Condesa. These two areas evolved as Mexico City's most modern *colonias* (suburbs) in 1902, where Boari bought his block to build his own house.²⁷ We must therefore expand upon McMichael's indication of the histories of the *colonias* as the basis for writing the capital's urban history to recognize the commonalities between Mexico City and Griffin's planning of Canberra.

Reese outlines how professional urban planners began to consider how to shape an automobile-oriented city. She also points out that the government's decision to build key public institutions on the periphery of the city played an important role in forming the social and labour geography of Porfirian Mexico City.²⁸ Reese explains:

Government officials who led Mexico City's urban development in the early twentieth century produced no comprehensive plans for a formal civic centre that correspond to City Beautiful planning efforts in the United States Had the Palacio del Poder (Palace of Legislative Power) been completed on the site where it was begun in 1904 – approximately as far to the west from the Alameda as was the Zocalo on the east – the capital might have developed very differently in terms of the spatial dispersion of its official architecture.²⁹

Although this statement suggests that Mexico City's urban development did not produce comprehensive plans for a formal centre, it was Boari who provided hints of a town plan for Mexico City's westward expansion. The selected site for the Legislative Palace, in the *Plaza de la Republica* reflected a shift in the location of the city's government buildings. The site of this westward expansion almost mirrors the Zocalo with the Alameda Park at its centre, resembling the plan of the ancient city of Teotihuacan. From a formal point of view, Boari's design of the plaza in front of the Palace of Fine Arts, adjacent to the Alameda Park, was perhaps determined by the position of the Legislative Palace towards the west and the Zocalo towards the east. In 1900 Boari painted a watercolour image, which shows his design of the Legislative Palace with the pyramidal Monument to Diaz in the foreground. This 'pyramidal *glorieta*' would have

provided views through to the Alameda Park. Boari was aware of Meso-American architecture during the preparatory stages to study streets and open spaces. The ancient city of Teotihuacan impacted Boari's thought processes as his image of Legislative Palace and Monument to Diaz provides evidence that he was operating as a town planner.

Boari's redesign of the Alameda Park, the Palace of Fine Arts and the Postal Palace punctuated the urban landscape as visual symbols, emblematic of Mexico City as a democratic capital. The urbanistic nature underpinning Boari's projects is revealed in his built works. The Postal Palace, for instance, was positioned for 'maximum urban effect', fronting the Alameda Park's edge and the new National Theatre.³⁰ Inside, the Postal Palace's atrium and main staircase resembles those of a railway station. Opposite from this building is the Palace of Fine Arts, its marble facade reminiscent of an oversized railway station entry. Victor Jimenez and Juan Urquiga have likened Boari's facade to French exposition buildings or to Viennese Secessionist architecture.³¹ Boari's design does not so much reference traditional station architecture as it does the early modern systems associated with the building type. The Palace of Fine Arts, for instance, restructures automobile access between the theatre and the Alameda Park. Pedestrian paths were converted into roads, facilitating traffic flow from the theatre through to the major and minor streets.

One other early modern system was Boari's design of the serpentine-form pergola located along the eastern side of the Alameda Park for passenger access through to the extremities of the park in the north and south directions. Constructed in 1907 (razed 1973), the pergola structure was mantled by tropical plants. In plan, Boari's elegant steel pergola appears as a static animation of the plumed serpent Quetzalcoatl - an early modern connotation of the religious and cultural themes of Mexico's past. According to Boari, the Palace of Fine Arts should be sited close to the Alameda Park but without removing the trees. He also proposed that the streets that lead into the plaza would express the Mexican capital as an early modern metropolis. His sensitive approach of 'amalgamating' architecture and landscape in the Alameda zone marks the beginning of Mexico's early modern 'Garden City' concept.³²

Although Reese suggests that Anglo-American-inspired Garden City planning was undertaken in Roma (a Mexican *colonia*) beginning in the late 1920s, it is argued that Boari had first established early modern Mexican Garden City planning in the historical centre from his urban infrastructure experiences in Latin America.³³

Griffin's Planning of Canberra

Sharing Boari's Meso-American enthusiasm, Griffin similarly formulated his own proportional systems in the winning entry of the new capital of Australia, Canberra competition (1911). The drawing shows a crystalline-formed Parliament building at the apex of a triangular urban plan. Although the Parliament was not built, several of Griffin's principles were adopted for the layout of the new city, an 'organic' conception, revealing the Australian bush informed partly by Boari's Garden City ideal. In this manner, Griffin's use of the 'organic' conception does not appear 'Wrightian' but 'Boarian' in the sense that the Atotonilco sanctuary in Jalisco 'grows out of the site.' A few potential points of influence on Canberra will be identified below.

In some ways Griffin seems to have identified the transfers of Boari's urban ideas and adopted them intentionally for the planning of Canberra. The triangular urban plan of Canberra appears to have been derived from a fragment of the original design of the Alameda Park in Mexico City, or rather from Boari's Garden City plan; the *glorietas* located along the Paseo de la Reforma resemble Griffin's nodes; the pedestrian paths of Mexico City's major park, Chapultepec Park, and the Roma and Condesa *colonias* (specifically the *Parque de Mexico* in

Condesa) are apparent. And there are unforeseen traits found in Griffin's plans; the coupling of the atrium (of the altar) in the Atotonilco sanctuary reappears as a large patio in Canberra's capital centre.

There are other characteristics that appear in Griffin's plan of Canberra from Mexico City's historical centre. The form of Mexico City's penitentiary around 1850, based on Bentham's design, which then became the location of *Plaza de la Republica* and the Legislative Palace, reappear in Griffin's plan as a series of octagonal nodes. Ironically, the panoptic planning of Griffin's nodes seem to be a critique on Australia as being converted from a series of penal colonies into many propitious cities. Such forms taken from the urban development of Mexico City are combined with the Australian landscape to form a capital centre.

Susan Torre (2002) discusses the modernization and modernity of Latin America, which began in the late nineteenth century. Referring to Kenneth Frampton's book *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (1992), she states that

Early manifestations of modern architecture in Latin America were seen as derivative, in a context in which modernism was merely 'one style among many'. . . .

[In Mexico City] Colonial government structures were replaced with parliamentary houses that emulated the US Congress building, further situating the urban culture of Latin America in a modern global (i.e., European and North American) context.³⁴

Boari's manifestation of early modern architecture with Meso-American culture was ultimately unique to Mexico City. And although Torre states that Mexico City's parliamentary house emulated the US Congress building it is perhaps more accurate to mention that Emile Benard adapted Boari's winning entry and also from the dome of the design of the Palace of Fine Arts. Boari's designs in Mexico City formed an important linchpin in the Americas without being 'derivative.' Boari spoliated forms from other nations and amalgamated these innovatively with Meso-American intentions that suited the country's climate. Perhaps it's important to note that both Boari and Griffin excluded a dome for the capital building and instead selected flat roofs, which was certainly an early modern characteristic.

The Mexican Revolution interrupted Boari's architectural activity but not his critical reflection, which, on the contrary, increased. In 1916 Boari returned to Rome, in Italy, where he became a professor of architecture and the president of the Italian Architects' Association.³⁵ His essays of 1918-1923 testify to this, before and after the Mexican Revolution.³⁶ In addition, there is another design worth mentioning – the Palace of Nations Competition in Geneva, Switzerland (1927), which closely resembles the design of Boari's earlier Legislative Palace of Mexico City. Boari, while undoubtedly experiencing occasional moments of brilliance, altogether had a quite sporadic career during which many projects remained unexecuted.

Conclusion

Obviously, Boari's works exemplify the development of the discipline of landscape architecture in Mexico City. Themes of Meso-American architecture and the idea of using exotic indigenous plants within the design of his buildings are mentioned, as in the case of the Palace of Fine Arts. In Canberra Griffin adapted Boari's idea of the conservatory by captivating the Australian bush into suburbia. Boari's plan – a significant design of the Porfirian period's urban concerns – provided the script for a Mexican Garden Cityscape. Thus, the redesign of the Alameda Park set the urbanism of a new era as in the case of Griffin's plan for Canberra. Boari's town planning experiences in Latin America offered the Griffins an important precedent for their exoteric design for the Australian capital.

This paper has suggested one way in which Griffin can be grouped with Boari - the shared belief that national architecture and ground rise up with primitive styles. With as much fervour as the members of the Steinway Hall group, Boari would argue for the 'amalgamation' of primitive architecture and to merge other styles with Mexico's unique landscape. Boari used primitive architecture and classicism for representative or expressive ends - to carry the message of the aestheticisation of the Mexican capital.

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- 1 See JIMENEZ, V. and URQUIGA, J (1984). *La construccion del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Documentos para la Historia de la Arquitectura en Mexico*, Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, p.295 and Note 180, p.312.
- 2 Drawings by Adamo Boari on paper with his signatures, September 1877. These drawings are located in the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes archives, in Mexico City.
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- 10 For a discussion on the Legislative Palace Competition see ARCINIEGA AVILA, H. A. (1994). "Capitulo IV: La tentative de un palacio," in *Colonia la Tabacalera: Varias lecturas sobre un mismo patrimonio*, Mexico: Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, pp. 123-146.
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- 12 For a reassessment of President Porfirio Diaz's regime and its architectonic evolution in terms of the Beaux-Arts formalism see VARGAS SALGUERO, V. et. al. (1998). *Historia de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo Mexicanos, Vol. III. El Mexico Independiente, Tomo II. Afirmacion del Nacionalismo y la Modernidad*, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico.
- 13 It is possible that Boari influenced Frank Lloyd Wright's notion of 'Organic Architecture.' See WRIGHT, F.L. *A Testament* (1957), New York: Horizon Press, pp.106-108. For a discussion on Wright's lecture in Latin America see IRIGOYEN, A (2000). "Frank Lloyd Wright in Brazil," in *The Journal of Architecture*, Vol.5, No.2, pp. 137-157.
- 14 'The National Theatre, Mexico City by Adamo Boari, Architect,' *The Western Architect* 17, No.6 (June 1911), p.60 (the text likely was by Boari himself).
- 15 For notes about Boari's teaching in Mexico City refer to BAEZ MACIAS, E. (1993) *Guia del Archivo de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos 1867-1907, Volumen II*, Mexico: UNAM, pp.686, 775, 807-893.
- 16 See CONDELLO, A. (2002). "An American Architect in Mexico City (1900-1910): Adamo Boari, the Steinway Hall Group and the Pan-American Identity", in *Planning History. Bulletin of the International Planning History Society*, Vol.24, Nos.2/3, pp.8-17.
- 17 See McMICHAEL REESE, C. (2002). "The Urban Development of Mexico City, 1850-1930", in ALMANDOZ, A. (ed.), *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850-1950*, London: Routledge, p. 144.
- 18 Refer to JOHNS, M. (1997). *The City of Mexico in the Age of Diaz*, Austin: University of Texas; LEAR, J. (1996). "Mexico City: Space and Class in the Porforian Capital, 1884-1910" *Journal of Urban History* (4): 454-492; and McMICHAEL REESE, C. (2002). "The Urban Development of Mexico City, 1850-1930", in ALMANDOZ, A. (ed.), *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities*,

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- 19 McMICHAEL REESE, C. (2002). "The Urban Development of Mexico City, 1850-1930", p.146.
- 20 MOYSSEN, X. (1995). "The Italo-Aztec Theatre," *FMR*, No.63, p.97.
- 21 Boari as quoted in MOYSSEN, X. (1995), p.90.
- 22 'The National Theatre, Mexico City by Adamo Boari, Architect,' *The Western Architect* 17, No.6 (June 1911), p.59 (the text likely was by Boari himself).
- 23 Quoted in MOYSSEN, X. (1995). "The Italo-Aztec Theatre," *FMR*, pp.96-97.
- 24 Translation by the authors. Boari wrote:
"Verdadera arquitectura nacional" ha de ser la que mas se aleje de los "gustos academicos", amalgamando todos los estilos primitivos . . ." *El Mundo*, Agosto 7, 1898.
- Quoted in VALADES, J.C. (1948). *El Porfirismo : Historia de un Regimiento, El Crecimiento Tomo II*, Mexico: Editorio Patria, p. 93.
- 25 McMICHAEL REESE, C. (2002). "The Urban Development of Mexico City, 1850-1930", p.139.
- 26 McMICHAEL REESE, C. (2002). "The Urban Development of Mexico City, 1850-1930", p.141.
- 27 The design of Boari's house and garden in Roma/Condesa (1908) was sited on a trapezoidal block on the corner of Monterrey and Alvaro Obregon Avenue. It is a primary example of an early modern building in Mexico City (demolished in 1923). Currently, the site is now a park dedicated to one of Mexico's renowned figure, Juan Rulfo. A fragment of Boari's garden design still remains in this park towards the apex of this site – a triangular concrete planter and palm tree – flanked by the Avenida Insurgentes Sur (Mexico City's longest avenue).
- 28 McMICHAEL REESE, C. (2002), p.153.
- 29 McMICHAEL REESE, C., p.162.
- 30 McMICHAEL REESE, C., p.164.
- 31 URQUIGA, J and JIMENEZ, V. (1995). *La Construcción del Palacio de Bellas Artes*, Mexico: INBA.
- 32 Refer to Jimenez Note 107, p.311
- 33 McMichael Reese also suggests that Porfirian public debates 'contest eloquently assessments of Mexico City's early modern development as more "French" or "Northern American" than "Mexican,"' in McMICHAEL REESE, C., p.164.
- 34 TORRE, S. (2002). "An Esthetics of Reconciliation: Cultural Identity and Modern Architecture in Latin America", in HENKEL, J. and HEYDEN, H. (eds.), *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, pp.138-139.
- 35 Neumann, Dietrich (1995). "'The Century's Triumph in Lighting': The Luxfer Prism Companies and their Contribution to Early Modern Architecture", in *JSAH*, March (54), p.51.
- 36 *Architettura e arti decorative*