

Worker Village Maria Zélia: Urban Environmental Heritage?

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Abstract

This work intends to show how the working villages of the city of São Paulo have become urban scars today, since the fast and aggressive process of evolution of the city made the elements that made up the historical landscape of the city disappear, such as the records of different ways of thinking, or even other aesthetic perceptions that had the merit of building an entire cultural framework that directed urban behaviors that are now completely disappeared and that transformed their areas of implantation into degraded places, both in physical, moral and urban form.

As a reference, we study the case of Vila Maria Zélia, set opened in 1917, which housed the employees of the National Jute Fabrics Company, owned by businessman Jorge Street. With several collective types of equipment, the village was considered a great feat for the time.

After losing its link with the factory that gave it its existence and having its original dimension diminished, the town began to gradually decline, until it was “rediscovered” by the city in the 1980s through the protection granted by state and municipal preservation agencies. a fact that, ironically, accelerated the updating and mischaracterization of residential properties and the complete abandonment of collective properties, such as schools, both currently in ruins.

Today, Vila Maria Zélia exemplifies a situation of urban “schizoid”, since the parameters that established the reference of the original occupants with their place of residence, were lost with the degradation and destruction of some of their collective landmarks and the significant changes in the typology of many of the residences, as a result of the change in the profile of the residents, no longer linked to the factory reality, which leads them to deny the cultural and social importance of that space, facing with disinterest any attempt to value the built heritage. Thus, the question that arises is whether the fragments that still exist in this type of urban complex can be preserved and whether they truly constitute an urban environmental heritage.