

# Heritage Recognition of Mass Housing Neighbourhoods in Spain. Urban Planning as an Instrument of Protection

Daniel Navas-Carrillo <sup>1</sup> | Juan-Andrés Rodríguez-Lora <sup>2</sup> | José Peral-López <sup>3</sup>

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## Abstract

The initial aim of this article is to evaluate the degree of recognition and legal protection given to mass housing neighbourhoods built mainly in the second half of the 20th century in Spain. Even though this is one of the historical periods of greatest urban growth, it presents a level of protection that is clearly lower than previous residential developments. The research takes as its starting point the architectural records of the 20th century, in order to place special emphasis on the protection possibilities offered by urban planning. To this end, the research focuses on three case studies: Madrid, Zaragoza, and Malaga. The ultimate aim is to get a glimpse of the potential of urban planning to overcome the difficulties usually associated with heritage protection, as well as introduce new conceptual approaches. The paper concludes by emphasising the power of urban planning instruments in the conservation of the inherited city, especially in the case of residential neighbourhoods characterised by strong processes of obsolescence. Compared to the protection figures of state or regional legislation, given the obligations and burdens they entail, urban cataloguing offers a greater degree of adaptation to the particularities of each case and, consequently, allows more effective protection to be articulated from contemporary approaches.

**Keywords:** residential neighbourhoods; urban catalogue; contemporary heritage; heritage protection

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## El reconocimiento patrimonial de las barriadas de vivienda masiva en España. El planeamiento urbanístico como instrumento de protección

## Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo inicial evaluar el grado de reconocimiento y protección jurídica del que gozan en España las barriadas de vivienda masiva construidas mayoritariamente en la segunda mitad del siglo XX. Se trata de uno de los periodos históricos de mayor crecimiento urbano, sin embargo, presenta un nivel de protección claramente inferior a desarrollos residenciales previos. La investigación toma como punto de partida los registros de arquitectura del siglo XX, para hacer especial énfasis en las posibilidades de protección que ofrece el planeamiento urbanístico. Para ello la investigación se centra en tres casos de estudio: Madrid, Zaragoza y Málaga. El objetivo último es vislumbrar el potencial que tiene el planeamiento urbanístico para superar las dificultades habitualmente asociadas a la protección patrimonial, así como para introducir nuevas aproximaciones conceptuales. El trabajo concluye poniendo el acento sobre la fuerza que tienen los instrumentos urbanísticos en la conservación de la ciudad heredada, especialmente en el caso de barriadas residenciales caracterizadas por fuertes procesos de obsolescencia. Frente a las figuras de protección de la legislación estatal o autonómica, dadas las obligaciones y cargas que conllevan, la catalogación urbanística ofrece un mayor grado de adaptación a las particularidades de cada caso y, en consecuencia, permiten articular una protección más efectiva desde aproximaciones contemporáneas.

**Palabras clave:** barrios residenciales; catálogo urbanístico; patrimonio contemporáneo; protección patrimonial

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, University of Malaga, Spain (ORCID: [0000-0002-9704-3204](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9704-3204); Scopus Author ID: [57196946543](https://scopus.org/57196946543), WoS ResearcherID: [AAC-1955-2019](https://orcid.org/AAC-1955-2019)), <sup>2</sup> Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Seville, Spain (ORCID: [0000-0003-2770-748X](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2770-748X); Scopus Author ID: [57211243270](https://scopus.org/57211243270), WoS ResearcherID: [CW-3721-2022](https://orcid.org/CW-3721-2022)), <sup>3</sup> Associate Professor, University of Seville, Spain (ORCID: [0000-0002-1547-4183](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1547-4183); Scopus Author ID: [57214719000](https://scopus.org/57214719000), WoS ResearcherID: [S-8146-2016](https://orcid.org/S-8146-2016)). Contact e-mail: [danielnavas@uma.es](mailto:danielnavas@uma.es)

## 1. Introduction

The largest housing production of all time, with the exception of the latest developments of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, is the one with the lowest level of protection in general terms. Approaching the heritage preservation of these housing complexes from the perspective of integrating the different agents involved in them over time, in their different scales and levels of complexity, will allow us to rethink the criteria adopted to date for their protection.

So far, a significant effort has been made to recognise them by drawing up the registers of architecture of the Modern Movement. This is an undeniable step towards the enhancement and conservation of these neighbourhoods. However, it has been detected that these registers have mainly been understood as a compendium of 20th-century masterpieces, and, therefore, it is difficult to find a place for the mass production of public housing, an issue that is especially acute in the case of municipalities of an intermediate scale.

Despite the progress and breadth of the contemporary notion of heritage, it is clear that its recognition is articulated on the basis of mainly object-related considerations, based on its formal characteristics and, therefore, closer to an outdated approach to heritage from the monumentalist view of the beginning of the last century. It is a complex heritage, which presents some weaknesses in terms of its recognition and protection. In addition to the assumed need to establish a temporal distance in order to analyse it from historical values (Feilden, 1995), it is difficult to apply criteria of representativeness and singularity due to its mass-produced nature. As José Luis Oyón Bañales (1998) states in relation to the case of Barcelona and Colonia Castells “protecting housing on the periphery is difficult, because the periphery is, by definition, the non-unique, the generic” (p. 10).

It must be recognised that they are devoid of any hint of exceptionality in that they are associated with everyday life (Moya *et al.*, 2017). Nor are they representative cases of authenticity and integrity due to the high levels of alteration that many of the developments present, which is why, compared to other architectural typologies from the 20th century, they lack acceptance by the general public (Hernández, 2011). Similarly, the intrinsic characteristics of social housing neighbourhoods make it infeasible to apply the criteria normally used for heritage protection. Their singularity within the architectural and urban production of the 20th century requires the definition, from a contemporary perspective, of the specific heritage values for which they should be recognised as an asset to be protected (Navas-Carrillo & Rodríguez-Lora, 2021). In this sense, this paper aims to take a significant step in the heritage preservation process of these urban pieces.

Despite these considerations, it should be recognised that social housing neighbourhoods present many possibilities from which to construct the process of heritage valuation, based on the analysis of these projects in their political, economic and social context, linked to the place where they are located and, especially, to the society that inhabits them. Firstly, we are dealing with the result of the modes of city production that have characterised the evolution of European urban planning in the 20th century and –with similar dynamics also present in some cases in the American continent (Bamba Vicente *et al.*, 2021)–, therefore, in accordance with the latest considerations made by Unesco (2011) on the historic urban landscape as part of the historical legacy of cities.

It is also a useful heritage that responds to the function for which it was designed and, therefore, can be the bearer of added values such as the value of use. Likewise, it is also possible that the complexes possess a value of originality or singularity due to the experimental nature (functional, technical or social) that many of these constructions had, which in turn is related to the scientific or technical value in terms of the importance and relevance that their design has had in society due to their aspiration to break away from the traditional ways of living.

The construction of social housing has been reshaping the limits of the city throughout the 20th century. At present, these neighbourhoods have a strategic position in the current urban fabric, either as a hinge between the historic centres and the latest peripheral developments, or by maintaining their role as an urban boundary.

This makes it possible to approach heritage development from the perspective of the values of the place where they are located, in many cases in privileged locations, as well as the values of the context insofar as they are part of a larger unit.

It should not be forgotten that these developments arose from the desire of the public authorities to compensate for the inequalities that existed in access to housing for economic, social, and cultural reasons. This housing represented a qualitative leap in the overall conditions of many people, who until that time had lived in overcrowded shacks without the minimum living conditions.

Especially relevant are the social values that are intrinsic to some developments, which play an important role in establishing the social and cultural identity of the population residing there. These values will determine the interaction between residents and will generate in them what Unesco (2004) defines as emotional ties, that is, an important sense of belonging to the place and to the collective that inhabits it. Such values will also determine the recognition of their identity as a group by the rest of the local population. In this regard, it is worth remembering the origin of social movements in many of these neighbourhoods (Oyón Bañales *et al.*, 2020). The intangible values at play have a strong impact on heritage conservation, insofar as they can be associated with interest and concern for the state of conservation, prompting their maintenance and rehabilitation, allowing the construction of resilient societies that guarantee their survival (Navas-Carrillo, 2020).

## 2. Social housing neighbourhoods as an object of study

To date, the object of study has been extensively approached from various disciplines and approaches, but almost always with approaches characterised by their sectoral nature (Oyón Bañales *et al.*, 2021). It should be borne in mind that social housing complexes share many of the morphological and typological characteristics of their European counterparts. However, the housing policies developed in Spain after the Civil War, within a socio-political context characterised by strong state control, mean that Spanish cities display certain peculiarities in their development.

The main approaches to this field have been based on the analysis of public housing policy (Sambricio, 2003), focusing on time as a privileged dimension between the spatial element and the social element, typical of disciplines that are interested in urban space, such as geography, urban planning or architecture, which approach the past with their own instruments developed for analysing the present (Navas-Carrillo *et al.*, 2023). They have also been based on historiography, through the study of working-class housing as a specific line of urban research addressing, among others, the relationship between urban space and the working class or everyday life (Oyón Bayales, 2003).

Other works have approached the residential city from the analysis of urban forms, focusing on their relationship with the different strategies and techniques of urban planning intervention in existing urban environments and from a historiographical view of the urban fact. Research ranges from the detailed study of urban forms (Díez Medina & Monclús Fraga, 2020), or the urban form of large residential estates in the national context (Guajardo-Fajardo Cruz, 2018), to the analysis of the quality of open spaces (García-Pérez *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, the international comparative view characterises the research carried out to date. Such works are focused on defending the international character of post-war residential complexes (Monclús Fraga & Díez Medina, 2016) or seek to assess the level of adaptation of international references to the social, political and economic context of Spain (Moya González, 2008; Pozo & López Trueba, 2004) or international publications that include the study of the Spanish case (Scanlon *et al.*, 2014; Melotto & Pierini, 2012).

The number and size of the neighbourhoods that were built in cities such as Madrid (Moya González, 1982; Sambricio, 2004; López de Lucio *et al.*, 2016), Barcelona (Ferrer i Aixalà, 1982; Oyón Bañales, 1998), Valencia (Gaja i Díaz, 1989; Pérez Igualada, 2006) and Seville (Queiro Quijada, 2016; Domínguez Amarillo *et al.*, 2017; Capilla Roncero *et al.*, 2019), as a response to the serious problems of overcrowding that these cities experienced throughout the 20th century, justify the fact that a large part of the studies that have been carried out to date focus on the country's main cities.

In other geographical contexts, research on Valladolid (Fernández Sánchez, 1991), Alicante (Varela Botella, 1998), Zaragoza (Monclús Fraga, 2012), Segovia (Álvarez González, 2016), Murcia (García Martín, 2017), Málaga (Reinoso Bellido, 2005; Rosa-Jiménez *et al.*, 2009) and the Galician capitals (García Fernández, 2022) can be mentioned.

From an overall view, other particular views should also be highlighted, for example, on technical and constructive aspects (Azpilicueta Astarloa, 2004; Díaz Gómez, 2008), the image of post-war residential neighbourhoods through documentaries and official newsreels (Zarza Arribas, 2019). Advances in the study of residential neighbourhoods have also had a significant impact on teaching, both in terms of morphological studies and urban regeneration (Bambó Naya *et al.*, 2020).

### 3. Recognition as a heritage asset

Firstly, the role played by the international foundation Docomomo in the recognition of residential neighbourhoods as a heritage object should be valued (Pérez-Cano *et al.*, 2022). Created in 1988 to study and document the architecture and urban planning of the Modern Movement, it is responsible for an extensive scientific production, including monographic studies on collective housing neighbourhoods built in major European cities, especially after the Second World War (Glendinning, 2008; Graf *et al.*, 2016). Since 1993, its objectives have been established in Spain and Portugal by Docomomo Ibérico, also responsible for an extensive scientific production focused on production in both countries. Since 1996, this has given rise to the Docomomo Ibérico Register (1925-1965), the time frame of which has recently been extended (1965-1975).

However, the heritage recognition of 20th-century urban development production was firstly encouraged by Recommendation no. R (91) 13 of the Council of Ministers of the European Union (Council of Europe, 1991) and, twenty years later, by the Madrid Document of 2011 drawn up by the International Scientific Committee on 20th-Century Heritage of ICOMOS. The first of these documents recognises that, despite the difficulties in identifying heritage values in the works of the last century, they are an integral part of the European legacy and, therefore, their conservation should be based on the same conservation objectives as heritage from earlier periods. The second, recognised by Unesco, advocates that the cultural significance of this heritage should incorporate those intangible values that are intrinsic to these assets, especially with regard to the society that uses and inhabits this heritage.

As a result of these milestones, the bodies responsible for heritage matters have made progress in drawing up increasingly extensive and diverse registers and inventories, in which urban-residential production is gaining ground as a reference point for the urban policy of a given historical moment (Navas-Carrillo *et al.*, 2022). Specific registers have also been drawn up, such as the inventory of *grands ensembles* of the French Ministry of Culture (Klein *et al.*, 2011), the inventory of *wederopbouwgebieden* of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage of the Netherlands (Blom *et al.*, 2016) or the register of social neighbourhoods included in the Sistema de Informação para o Património Arquitectónico de Portugal (SIPA) (Instituto da Habitação e Reabilitação Urbana, n.d.).

From this point onwards, it is in the French literature that most reflection on the heritage preservation of these urban complexes has been detected. Vincent Veschambre (2008) defends, from the field of social geography, the historical reconstruction of social development and its relationship with the spatial dimension of each of the actors who unite around the large complexes in order to obtain identity references that will make it possible to achieve a collective heritage construction. For the author, understanding heritage as a process of cultural appropriation inexorably leads to eliminating the symbolic load.

Amougou (2006) approaches the complexity of a heritage that, in the case of France, is legally recognised despite being urban areas that are socially reviled because of the social problems characterising them. Along the same lines, Rachid Kaddour (2013) reflects on the effects of the protection of *grands ensembles* in France, such as Drancy or Firminy Vert.

Through the analysis of two case studies, he concludes that, although the classification has prevented their demolition, the result of the tutelary action has been disparate. He places the differentiating fact in the value of identity under the terms enunciated by Choay (1992) as a place of memory for a group of people and, therefore, recognising the plurality of memories and the sense of belonging.

Several publications (While & Pendlebury, 2008; Pendlebury *et al.*, 2009) allow us to analyse the trajectory of recognition of these complexes in the United Kingdom, such as Byker Wall in Newcastle. These works approach the main aspects to be considered when determining their heritage relevance (architectural, landscape, social, historical, urban, archaeological), as opposed to what can be considered as the main obstacles for a widespread recognition and protection. A holistic approach as a strategy of analysis is also used by Zijlstra and Heinemann (2011) in the analysis of the Slotemeer Complex in Amsterdam.

Going one step further, Bertier *et al.* (2014) argue that the heritage preservation process must be driven politically from above and socially from below. To this end, changing the collective imaginary of social housing to make its protection legitimate is equivalent to linking its functionality, quality and characteristic urban form to the principles of symbolic (re)legitimation. By simultaneously working on symbolic revaluation and material re-qualification, it is possible to arbitrate memory loss, on the one hand, and obsolescence on the other. In this regard, several authors (Benko, 2015; Dragutinovic *et al.*, 2017; Duraj *et al.*, 2017) work on the relevance of identity and social values linked to the local community residing in modern residential complexes.

In the national context, the work of Ainhoa Díez de Pablo (2015) and Daniel Navas-Carrillo (2020) should be cited, from the consideration of the historical approach to socio-spatial evolution as a methodology for defining these complexes as new heritage elements. The first focuses on the heritage preservation of three publicly developed neighbourhoods in the city of Madrid (Poblado Caño Roto – whose facades have been analysed by Noelia Cervero Sánchez (2020)–, Colonia del Tercio y Terol, UVA Hortaleza). The second makes progress in defining a series of criteria and strategic lines from which the heritage preservation process of residential neighbourhoods in medium-scale cities can be articulated, and which, based on the recognition and conservation of their heritage values, will make it possible to resolve the degree of obsolescence that many of these areas present from an integrated and updated view of urban regeneration.

In certain contexts, with extensive experience in urban regeneration, such as the Netherlands, a debate has begun on what the criteria for intervention in protected neighbourhoods should be (Havinga *et al.*, 2020). To date, the studies that have been developed along these lines are limited, focusing exclusively on the architectural dimension. In this regard, we can cite works that address the issue of authenticity and tolerance to change in international references such as Kiefhoek in Rotterdam (Kuipers, 2011), Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam (Kuipers, 2014; Rodríguez Martín & Martín Domínguez, 2018) and Frankendael, also in Amsterdam (Zijlstra, 2013). We can also cite works in Spain, such as the Unidad Vecinal de Absorción de Hortaleza in Madrid (Rodríguez Martín & Martín Domínguez, 2016).

In the state context, the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage has made progress in defining criteria for intervention in 20th-century residential heritage, with the aim of preserving its tangible and intangible heritage values. Although a multidisciplinary methodology has been developed, the advances have focused mainly on the technological and constructive characterisation of the architectural object, the possible obsolescence with respect to the current requirements of comfort and habitability, and its adaptation to the Technical Building Code (Gómez Villa, 2019). This approach is shared by the MoMovivso project, focusing on the revitalisation and energy upgrading of subsidised housing in the city of Valencia (Palomares Figueres, 2021).

#### 4. Protection from the urban planning perspective

The interest of the object of study from the professional sphere also leads us to consider the potential of these complexes to be included in urban planning protection catalogues.



On the one hand, the difficulties of articulating their protection in a widespread manner through the figures contained in state and autonomous community legislation must be recognised (Pérez Cano *et al.*, 2022). On the other hand, their heritage consideration can still be considered somewhat incipient (Díez de Pablo, 2015), given their still limited trajectory in urban planning practice, requiring a greater level of in-depth study due to their particularly novel nature.

This leads us to think of this resource as a potential professional opportunity, as well as an educational one, at a time when urban planning practice is currently being redefined (Ezquiaga Domínguez, 2018). The aim is to detect what criteria have been used and what implications they have entailed for the conservation and enhancement of these complexes. For this reason, the experiences of local protection in Madrid, Zaragoza and Malaga are analysed below. These are the three cities in which the research has identified the greatest number of protected residential complexes (Navas-Carrillo, 2020). Likewise, they represent three different situations in terms of population and residential development during the study period, based on urban pressure, because of rural-urban migration processes: capital of the state (3,339,931 inhabitants), capital of an autonomous community (683,949 inhabitants), and capital of a province on the coast (586,384 inhabitants).

#### 4.1 *The case of Madrid*

The General Plan of Madrid (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1997) includes two figures for the classification of groups of buildings defined as homogeneous, that is, Art. 4.3.25 - “those groups of buildings designed from a unitary project, generally built simultaneously and that transcend the merely architectural fact by including other urban elements, such as a specific road network, landscaped areas, common urban furniture and other similar elements, whose historical, compositional and urban planning values have advised their inclusion as a protected area” (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1997, p. 72).

The “*Colonias Históricas*” (Historic Colonies) refer to unitary developments mainly of single-family and low-density homes and are considered specific planning areas. Therefore, they are susceptible to the drafting of a Special Protection Plan that includes its own Catalogue of protected elements and specific ordinances. This is the case for Colonia del Tercio y Terol, Colonia Belén (within the San Blas I Built-Up Area) and Colonia de Ciudad Pegaso.

It incorporates the figure of a “high-rise building complex”, which is especially intended for the recognition and protection of social housing complexes from the Franco era. In this case, there is no separate catalogue or specific ordinances, assigning the entire building the level of protection indicated in the general catalogue. The Plan establishes three levels of protection, each of which is subdivided into two degrees or sub-levels:

Level 1 of protection includes relevant or high-quality buildings, whether they are considered to be of singular or integral grade. They do not apply to these housing groups.

Level 2 includes those buildings whose constructive and volumetric characteristics are also of greater interest, but in which a more extensive regime of works can be authorised. Within this level, those buildings with sufficient value to conserve both their volume and their most outstanding elements are considered to be of structural grade. This is the case of the neighbourhoods of San Vicente de Paúl, San Cristóbal de Fuencarral and the Satellite Town of Caño Roto.

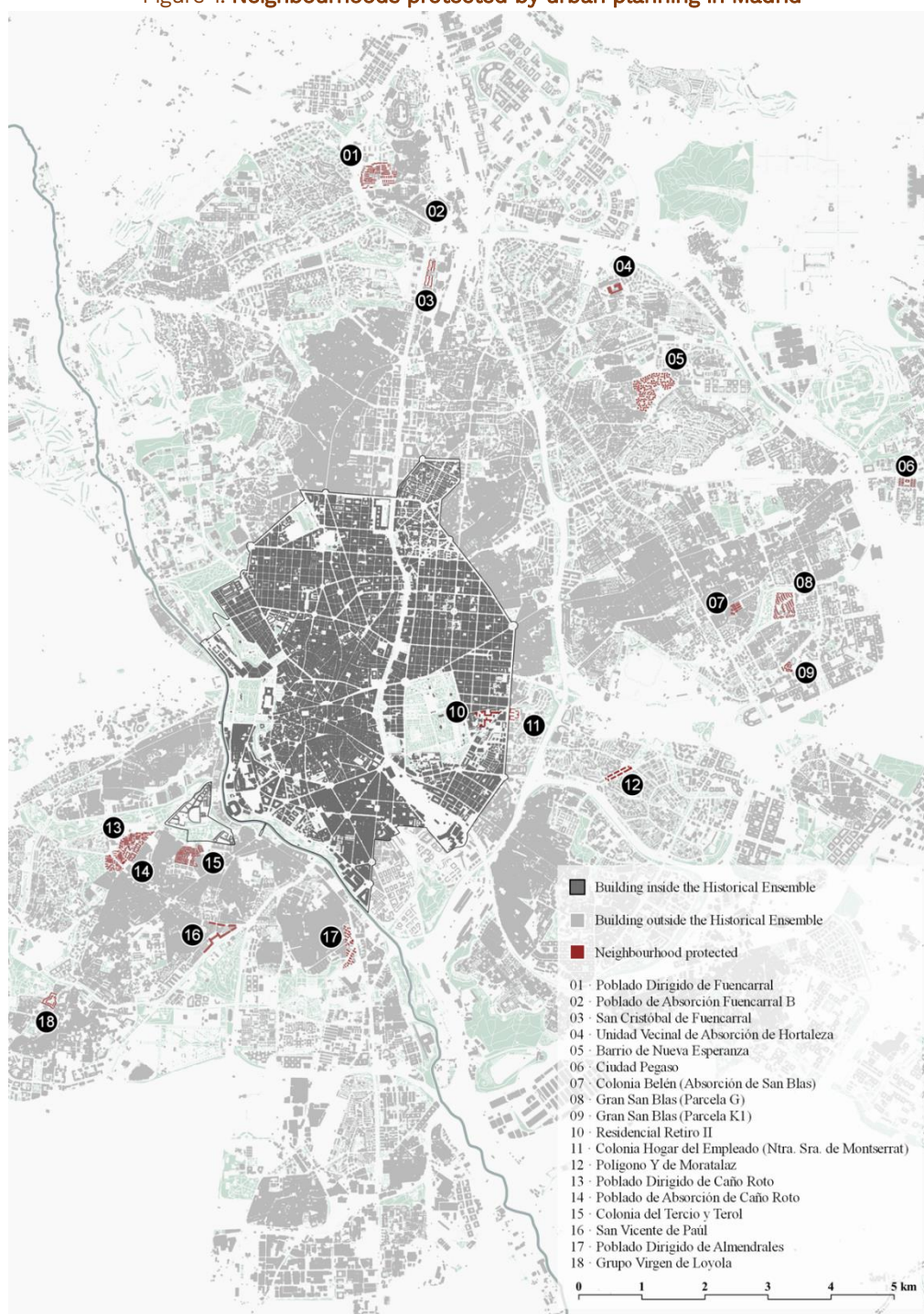
Level 3 does not extend protection to the entire building, but rather highlights certain values. In the buildings classified as partial grade, only certain elements of the building are protected (those that are characteristic, or of reference due to their period, style and function) and in the environmental grade, the façade of the building is protected as elements for the overall comprehension of the urban landscape. The Fuencarral satellite town, the Fuencarral B Built-Up Area and the Hortaleza Built-Up Neighbourhood Unit have been protected with this last grade.

In this Plan, the Almendrales Satellite Town, Gran San Blas (Plot G) and the Virgen de Loyola group are classified as homogeneous complexes, but without any level of protection.

While the figure of the historic colony has a greater scope in the planning of the city of Madrid and allows a greater scope to be achieved thanks to the drafting of special planning, the impact of the latter is still limited. It lacks regulatory development, and its application does not respond to a coherent and systematic analysis of Madrid's social housing neighbourhoods as a whole (Moya *et al.*, 2017).

It should be noted that, although the possibility of drafting a Special Plan is envisaged, it is considered non-binding, and under the assumption of requiring intervention on the building.

Figure 1. Neighbourhoods protected by urban planning in Madrid



Source: Own research based on the Madrid Catalogue of Urban Planning Protection.

Among other reasons, these weaknesses have been addressed in the Modification of the General Urban Zoning Plan for the extension of the Catalogue of Protected Buildings that was approved in 2022, 24 years after its drafting (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2022). The update was prompted by the realisation that there were elements of interest built in the second half of the 20th century that were not included in the catalogue, due to their proximity in time to the drafting of the plan, as well as taking into account the conceptual and legislative advances that have taken place in terms of heritage since then.

The update includes a total of 188 isolated buildings and 11 homogeneous complexes, which include a further 72 standard buildings, many of them repeated within each complex. This is the result of collaboration with various public bodies and associations, including the Madrid College of Architects and the Docomomo Ibérico Foundation. As a result, a total of 691 buildings have been incorporated. Among the 11 complexes, Plot G in Gran San Blas and the Almendrales satellite town, already included in the 1997 General Urban Zoning Plan –PGOU in Spanish–, but whose buildings were not individually protected, are included.

The remaining nine bring the list of protected areas to a total of eighteen (Figure 1), with the incorporations of the Nueva Esperanza neighbourhood, Industrial Area Y in Moratalaz, Plot K in Gran San Blas, Colonia Hogar del Empleado (Nuestra Señora de Montserrat) and the Retiro II Residential Estate. In each case, a series of typical buildings have been selected and studied in detail. However, the level 3 protection assigned, some of which is partial, but mostly environmental, refers to all the buildings included in each of the catalogued properties.

## 4.2 *The case of Zaragoza*

The 2001 General Plan articulates the protection of the 20th-century city to the historical city through a specific ordinance zone entitled “Zone C: contemporary characterised urban complexes” (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, 2001, p. 109). These complexes are designed as representative elements of the constructive and architectural evolution of the 20th century and have a value of use and enjoyment for the community. The urban complexes in this area can be classified into two grades according to the conservation measures taken in relation to the predominant building types.

The first grade refers to the conservation of the existing building and corresponds to developments based preferably on multi-family buildings in open planning. It encompasses very heterogeneous groups in terms of scale and size. However, they are residential complexes made up of groups of high-rise housing blocks, organised around open spaces and neighbourhood facilities and promoted by the Public Administration. They are, therefore, the architectural and urban expression of the city of Zaragoza in response to the public housing policies that followed one after the other throughout the 20th century. They have been extensively studied by Zaragoza Housing, promoting projects for their partial rehabilitation (Ruiz Palomeque & Rubio del Val, 2006).

Specifically, the Catalogue of protected elements and groups of interest –within the consolidated text of 2023 (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, 2023)– includes a total of 21 grade 1 complexes: Urbanización Torres de San Lamberto and the Grupos de Viviendas of Ortiz de Zárate, Teniente Polanco, Francisco Franco, Casetas, General Urrutia, Arzobispo Domenech, R.E.N.F.E., Puente Virrey y Rosellón, Fray Julián Garcés, Francisco Caballero, San Jorge (or Severino Aznar), Alférez Rojas, Agustín Gericó, Casta Álvarez, Vizconde de Escoriaza, Aloy Sala, José Antonio Girón, Balsas de Ebro Viejo, Torrero (1st Phase) and Puente Virrey y Tejar (Figure 2).

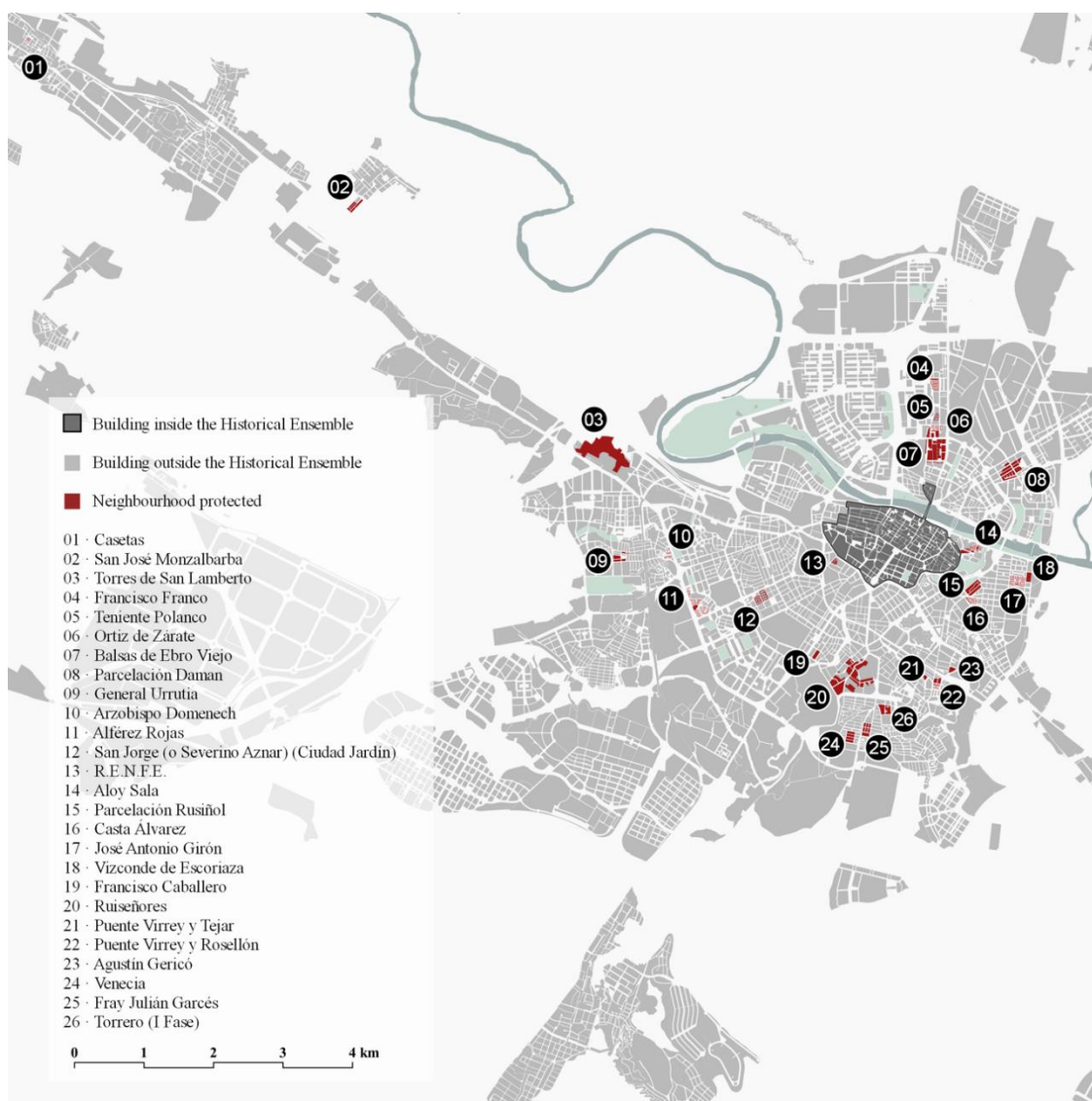
The second grade proposes the conservation of the typological and environmental characteristics, including low-density developments where the predominant type is the semi-detached and/or detached single-family home. Most of them correspond to the first public housing initiatives in Spain, such as the developments under the Ley de Casas Baratas. It consists of a total of 5 complexes: Grupo de Viviendas Parcelación Daman, Grupo de Viviendas San José Monzalbarba, Grupo de Viviendas Venecia, Conjunto Urbano Ruiseñores and Grupo de Viviendas Parcelación Rusiñol (Figure 2).



This ordinance zone corresponds, in turn, to a specific level of protection, namely that of “urban complex”, given that “its special characteristics of unity and character of the building, urban morphology, building type, setting, etc., are subject to protection aimed at their preservation” (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, 2007, p. 88).

It also advocates the drafting of special conservation and improvement plans, which should address, among other issues, the preservation of characteristic values, the maintenance of the urban fabric, possible road alterations, the identification of unique elements of interest, the recovery of vitality, the avoidance of gentrification processes, the uniformity of the façade, etc. (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, 2007). However, its mandatory nature is not clearly defined.

Figure 2. Neighbourhoods protected by urban planning in Zaragoza



Source: Own research based on the Zaragoza Catalogue of Urban Planning Protection.

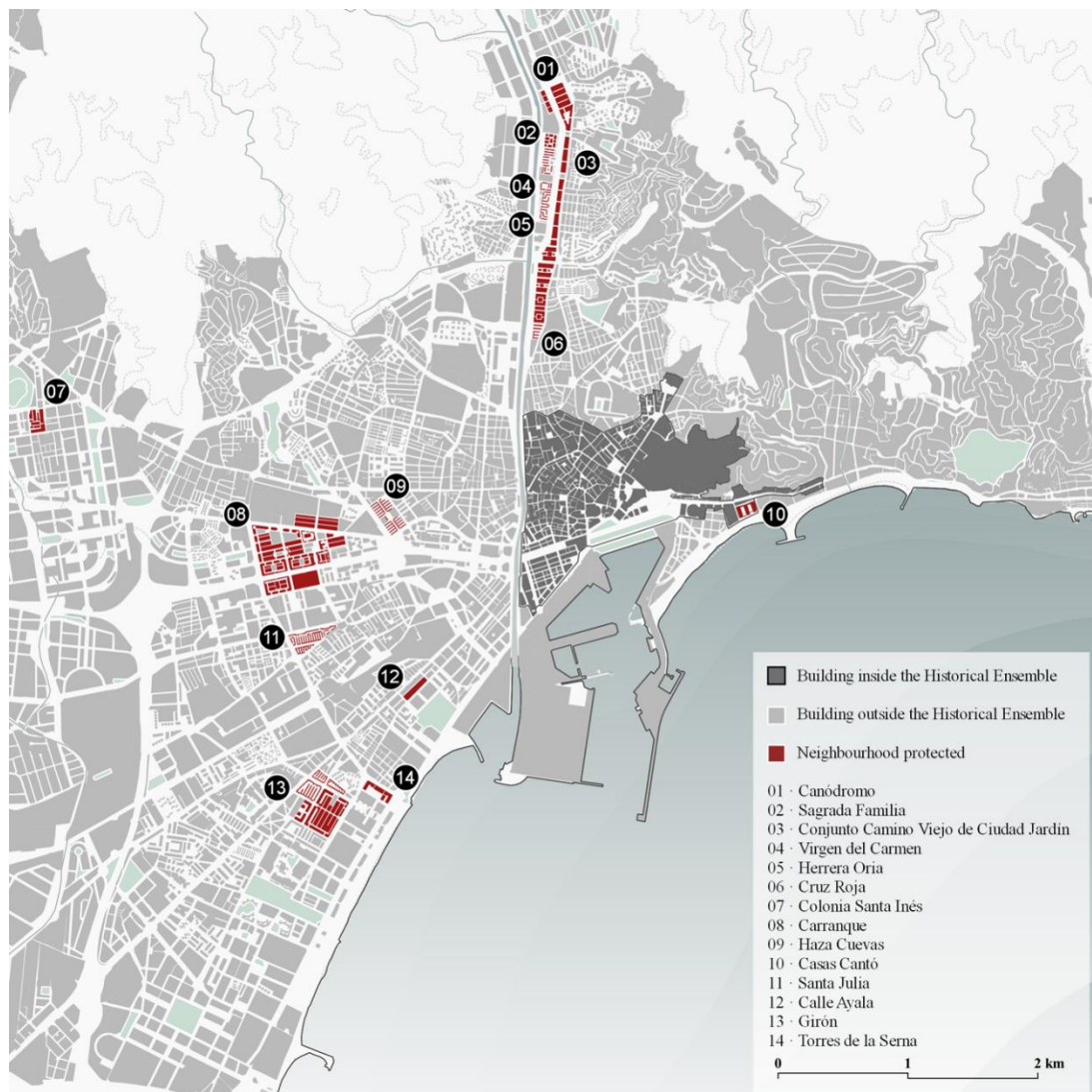
It is important to point out here, due to the scope and repercussions of its actions, the successive housing rehabilitation programmes developed since 2001 by the Zaragoza Municipal Urban Rehabilitation Society, currently the Zaragoza Housing Municipal Society. Specifically, they developed the systematic analysis of more than 8,560 homes integrated in the first group of 21 urban complexes of interest in order to draw up the municipality’s new housing plan (Ruiz Palomeque & Rubio del Val, 2006).

Years later, these studies led to the signing of a collaboration agreement with the University of Zaragoza for the creation, in 2011, of the Zaragoza Housing Chair, which promotes training and research in different thematic areas in the field of housing and urban regeneration (López-Mesa & Tejedor Bielsa, 2015).

### 4.3 The case of Malaga

In the case of the 2011 Malaga General Plan (Ayuntamiento de Málaga, 2011), of the 4 levels of protection established, the so-called Complex Protection Level is intended to protect “urban complexes outside the scope of the *PEPRI Centro* that, due to their architectural value, the typological interest of their urban planning, or their monumental character, deserve to be protected in order to control actions contrary to the causes that motivate this interest” (art. 12.3.13). With this level, 13 complexes are protected throughout the city: Haza Cuevas, Carranque, Girón, Santa Julia, Colonia Santa Inés, Cruz Roja, Sagrada Familia, Herrera Oria, Canódromo, Virgen del Carmen, Torres de la Serna, the workers’ housing in Calle Ayala, in addition to the Conjunto Camino Viejo (Casas Baratas) in Ciudad Jardín built at the beginning of the 20th century (Figure 3). It is also worth considering the Casas Cantó complex, in the east of the city, included with architectural protection I.

Figure 3. Neighbourhoods protected by urban planning in Malaga



Source: Own research based on the Malaga Catalogue of Urban Planning Protection.

This level allows for rehabilitation works, that is, putting the building into use while maintaining its structural, typological and decorative characteristics. Extensions to the buildings are permitted in cases of improved habitability or functionality, as long as this is justified in the unitary logic of the complex, and the replacement of the building only in the case of ruin. Generally, the protection conditions apply to the floor plan, volume and height of the complex, the composition of the façades and the configuration of the open spaces between the blocks. These conditions respond to the heritage values detected.

They are protected because they are archetypal examples of the different types of public housing built during the Franco era. Consequently, the first large-scale post-war operations are included, as well as the last ones with an evolved model and others that constitute a compendium of the urban planning and typological solutions tested previously. The scale and density of the developments, their functionality as a whole and the relationship with the free space articulated between the buildings are highlighted. The selection also responds to criteria for preserving the original physiognomy, reflecting the spirit of each period. The breadth of criteria is positively valued, although the developments typical of the developmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s are excluded.

Once again, one of the most important contributions, at least on paper, is the proposal to draw up a Special Plan for each of these neighbourhoods, establishing a list of assets to be protected and the ordinances regulating interventions in the area.

## 5. Conclusions

The recognition of residential neighbourhoods as historical references of 20th-century urban planning production has allowed progress to be made in their heritage protection, having favoured the inclusion of those of greatest relevance in the planning protection catalogues of their respective cities: eighteen in the Catalogue of protected elements of the PGOU of Madrid (0.5 cases per 100,000 inhabitants), twenty-six in the Catalogue of buildings and sites of interest of the PGOU of Zaragoza (3.8 cases per 100,000 inhabitants), and fourteen in the Catalogue of protected buildings of the PGOU of Malaga (2.4 cases per 100,000 inhabitants).

In both absolute and especially relative terms, the case of Zaragoza clearly stands out. As has been pointed out, this is a consequence of the efforts made by the local government to conserve and rehabilitate residential neighbourhoods.

It is worth noting here the potential of Municipal Planning to overcome the difficulties derived from the obligations and burdens entailed in classifying buildings by means of the figures set out in state or regional legislation. One of the most relevant contributions, at least on paper, of the three cases is the proposal to draft a Special Plan for each of the neighbourhoods under study. This extends the considerations discussed for the case of the Historical Colonies of Madrid or urban complexes of interest in Zaragoza, characterised by their non-binding nature, although they are necessary for comprehensive urban renewal processes. In practice, these instruments have yet to be developed in all three locations.

Nevertheless, emphasis should be placed on the power of any urban planning instrument in the conservation of the inherited city as a whole. In addition to enabling a greater degree of adaptation to new daily needs and current living standards and, consequently, to aspire to more effective protection. Special planning is also necessary to regulate the processes of integral regeneration.

Through ordinances it is possible to regulate interventions on consolidated urban land and, therefore, limit urban renewal or regeneration operations that, driven exclusively by speculative purposes, are committed to replacing the urban fabric. This strategy would have a place in the framework of the Spanish Law on Urban Rehabilitation, Regeneration and Renewal (Law 8/2013), allowing for the privatisation of regeneration action in the event that citizens cannot afford to renovate their homes on their own (Gaja i Díaz, 2015).

By working at a local level, municipal planning also makes it possible to clearly identify the heritage values on the territory, with special emphasis on those derived from the analysis of its context, identifying the links with the place where they are implemented and, especially, with the society that inhabits it. In this sense, it facilitates the approach to heritage, such as social housing, in which a heritage protection process is defended by taking sense of belonging or identity as its main heritage values.

Consequently, it is deemed possible to articulate a specific protection instrument for 20th-century residential complexes, contemplating the drafting of a Special Plan as a necessary instrument for acting on these housing examples. A figure that is designed for use in local planning protection catalogues, but that is defined, regulated and disseminated by the Cultural Administration in order to avoid divergences in the criteria used.

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Conceptualisation and methodology: first author; formal analysis, investigation, and resources: first author; visualisation: second author; writing—original draft preparation: first author.; writing—review, editing and supervision: second author, third author and first author. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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