

The 20thC architectural heritage: a 21stC conservation challenge

Buenos Aires experiences



Due to the location of Argentina, far from Western Europe and North America, there was a delay in the arrival of the Modern Movement ideas, but by the early 30's the modern international theoretical principles were adopted and, sooner than later, efforts were made by some professionals to adapt them to the local technical resources and environmental demands.

Modernism produced several remarkable buildings and even though only a few are known at the international level, the importance of this production to the country's built heritage is relevant and has a lasting influence on contemporary architectural ideas.

The Buenos Aires modern architectural heritage is a present physical, social, economical and cultural resource of remarkable interest. Its particular expressive, technological and functional characteristics highly contribute to the identity of our townscape and yet, its values and character are seldom appreciate. Because of all its qualities, but above all due to its efficiency to cope with changing comfort standards, little modification can be seen in most of these buildings today. However, in the last decade, following a rush of hectic renovation to new uses of many of the city's pre-existent buildings, some remarkable modern examples are going through renovation or are being adapted to new uses.



The relation between modern architecture and preservation might have been discontinuous, exceptional and a-systematic along the last decades of the 20th century. The moment has come to make it a fluent and coherent one. Modern buildings are arriving at their middle age in quite a good shape because of the local circumstances. Even the ones which are still keeping their original use, -and quite often their original owners- are in need of maintenance and adaptation. To give response to this demand, fitted and sustainable intervention criteria for the preservation and restoration of modernist architecture must still be discussed and developed with creativity.