Marie Andreé Soundy Escobar

Building Continuity in Central America: Architectural Practice Inspired by the Regional Vernacular

Construir la continuidad en Centroamérica: Una práctica arquitectónica inspirada en las tradiciones vernáculas de la región

A construção da continuidade na América Central: Uma prática arquitetónica inspirada no vernáculo regional

Abstract | Resumen | Resumo

This essay reviews 25 years of contemporary practice by the architect Marie Andreé Soundy Escobar, rooted in Central America's vernacular traditions. Drawing on personal and professional experience, she argues that the erosion of millennia-old building knowledge, replaced by standardized modernist models, has led to a loss of cultural identity, environmental responsiveness, and urban cohesion across the region. Through a series of projects built and proposed in Guatemala, Panama, and Costa Rica, her work demonstrates how traditional principles—such as climate-responsive design, use of local materials, and established urban types—can inform innovative architectural solutions. By reestablishing vernacular continuity, contemporary practice can foster sustainability, cultural identity, and resilient urbanism across Central America.

Este ensayo recorre 25 años de ejercicio profesional de la arquitecta Marie Andreé Soundy Escobar, arraigado en las tradiciones vernáculas de Centroamérica. A partir de su experiencia personal y profesional, la autora sostiene que la erosión de conocimientos constructivos milenarios, sustituidos por modelos modernos estandarizados, ha provocado en toda la región una pérdida de identidad cultural, adaptación al medio y cohesión urbana. A través de una serie de proyectos construidos y propuestos en Guatemala, Panamá y Costa Rica, su trabajo muestra cómo principios tradicionales –como el diseño adaptado al clima, el uso de materiales locales y los tipos urbanos consolidados– pueden servir de base para soluciones arquitectónicas innovadoras. Al restablecer la continuidad con lo vernáculo, la práctica contemporánea de la arquitectura puede favorecer la sostenibilidad, la identidad cultural y un urbanismo resiliente en Centroamérica.

Este artigo analisa 25 anos da prática contemporânea da arquiteta Marie Andreé Soundy Escobar, com raízes nas tradições vernáculas da América Central. Com base na sua experiência pessoal e profissional, a autora defende que a erosão do conhecimento milenar do domínio da construção, que foi substituído por modelos modernistas padronizados, conduziu a uma perda de identidade cultural, de sensibilidade ambiental e de coesão urbana em toda a região. Através de uma série de projetos propostos e construídos no Guatemala, no Panamá e na Costa Rica, o seu trabalho demonstra como os princípios tradicionais –tais como o design sensível ao clima, a utilização de materiais locais e as tipologias urbanas bem estabelecidas– podem inspirar soluções arquitetónicas inovadoras. Ao restabelecer a continuidade vernácula, a prática contemporânea pode promover a sustentabilidade, a identidade cultural e um urbanismo resiliente em toda a América Central.

Introduction: Contemporary Practice of Tradition

The streets of the colonial town of Antigua Guatemala (known as "Antigua"), lined with stone arches and baroque details, were the backdrop of my childhood. I grew up immersed in the region's volcanic landscape and the language of beauty in my town's vernacular architecture (Figs. 1-3), unaware that this would shape my calling as an architect, as my current practice is committed to preserving Central America's vernacular traditions.

Figure 1. Agua Volcano, Antigua, Guatemala

Figure 2. Arch at Santa Catarina Convent, Antigua, Guatemala

Figure 3. Typical window, Antigua, Guatemala







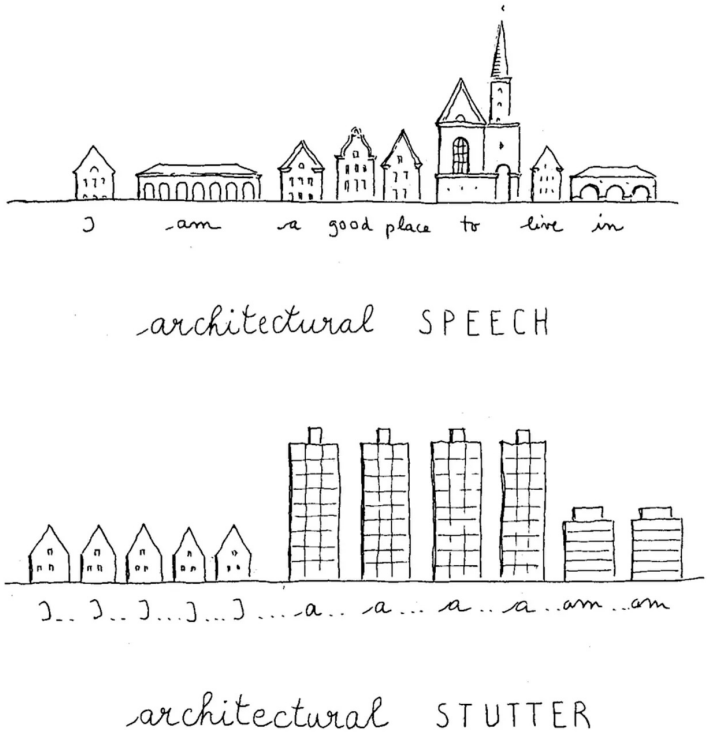


Figure 4. "Architectural Speech vs. Architectural Stutter" (Krier 2009)

After taking opportunities for international study and employment, I returned to Central America in 1999, aspiring to learn from and contribute to the tradition of our designers and artisans. I was distressed at the erosion I saw of age-old vernacular architecture and urbanism, being replaced by foreign, standardized modernistic practice with the consequent loss of a sense of place. The lack of urban design and the introduction of foreign suburban models have transformed Central American towns into inhospitable anti-cities, undermining communal living. This phenomenon, erroneously regarded as "progress," has fostered a soulless architecture devoid of regional identity that has eclipsed our traditions. In the transition to an "architecture of nowhere" (Kunstler 1993), new structures are disposable commodities for short-term gain rather than buildings with enduring value and local character.

How might new design proposals help reverse the erosion of our vernacular knowledge? The late Léon Krier argued that the traditional city (Fig. 4) is a timeless solution for human wellbeing and communal identity, with architecture that belongs to all time (Krier 2009). City-making should be a "craft culture which consists in the repetition of a limited number of types and in their adaptation to local climates, materials, and custom" (Krier 2025: 68-69). He concluded that "traditional" means not "obsolete" but "proven." Thus regional vernacular knowledge in architecture and urbanism is indispensable as a precedent for new design, as part of a continuum encompassing sense of place, regional identity, sustainability, and culture.

Knowledge of architectural details and building crafts characteristic of the region has inspired my work for 25 years. I have been able to explore and develop my heritage through a fruitful partnership with Ricardo Arosemena at our firm Arosemena & Soundy Arquitectos (2006—2018) and in my own practice, S Arquitectos (2019—present).

Ancestral and Colonial Vernacular Identity in Central America

Architectural identity in Central America is characterized by an amalgamation of Indigenous ancestral and Spanish colonial culture (Fig. 5), expressing millennial wisdom with a character rooted in tradition, a climate-responsive approach, and the use of local materials. These recurring themes and their manifestation in regional design are precedents in my practice, but before discussing my work we should mention some general aspects.

Cultural Practices and Traditions

The fusion of ancestral and colonial architectural and urban types reflects a unity of culture in practices and traditions. Towns and cities and their constituent buildings have traditionally been rooted in community, religious worship, and domestic and commercial agriculture, closely knit with the landscape. The region has long been known for its craftsmanship in textiles and weaving (Fig. 6), carpentry, welding, and stonemasonry. In architecture, these practices have historically been associated with intricate iconography of both Indigenous and Spanish character as well as vibrant color palettes (Fig. 7).



5



6

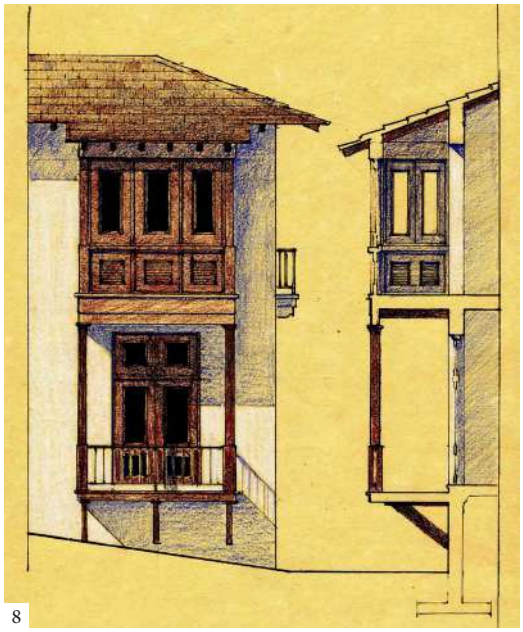


7

Figure 5. Mayan temple, North Acropolis, Yaxhá, Petén, Guatemala

Figure 6. Typical woven textile, Chichicastenango, Guatemala

Figure 7. Capuchin Convent courtyard, Antigua, Guatemala



8



9



10



11

Figure 8. Eave and bay window, Cacique, Panama

Figure 9. Eaves and bay window, Casa Sirena, Las Catalinas, Costa Rica

Figure 10. Vaults, Capuchin Convent, Antigua, Guatemala

Figure 11. Antiseismic buttressed wall, Antigua, Guatemala

Climate-Responsive Approach

The traditional vernacular approach to urban and architectural design is suited to the region's tropical, humid climate. Drawing on combined Mayan and Spanish legacies, its towns have historically been laid out as walkable, cohesive environments, with urban fabric integrated with adjoining farmland and countryside. Mayan cities employed sophisticated engineering methods expressed through urban space, such as vast paved urban reservoirs (*aguadas*) and canals.

Architecturally, buildings were traditionally constructed to withstand the elements. Conventional practices include protection from torrential rain and humidity in the form of wide eaves, bay windows (Figs. 8 and 9), and thick masonry walls rendered with lime, sealing interiors against mold and insects. The region also developed advanced climate-control techniques using adobe, clay, wood, and stone to attenuate temperature fluctuations. Structures typically achieve cross-ventilation through suitable fenestration, high ceilings, and the use of chimneys, cupolas, porches, and courtyards with fountains to enhance airflow (Fig. 12).





Figure 12. Kitchen chimney, Antigua, Guatemala

Figure 13. Handmade clay roof tiles

As Central America is seismically exposed, communities over the centuries have developed advanced methods of seismic reinforcement. Elevated stone bases and thick, sturdy arches (Fig. 10) and masonry walls reinforced with buttresses are characteristic (Fig. 11). Antigua's 200-year-old walls of stone and brick attest to resilience in the face of multiple earthquakes. Adobe and rammed-earth systems with timber reinforcement are typical in rural areas and draw on both Mayan and Spanish traditions.

Local Materials

Central America is notable for its luxuriant flora and quarries of volcanic rock. Regional vernacular techniques rely on local materials: volcanic stone from the Pacific coast and limestone from the Atlantic lowlands as primary materials for foundations, walls, and renders in both Mayan and colonial architecture over the centuries. The region contains various clays—red, brown, and white—used to produce sun-dried adobe as well as oven-fired bricks and tiles (Fig. 13). Organic fibers from palm thatch (*palapa* or *rancho*) and bamboo shoots have been employed as wattle to reinforce adobe and rammed-earth structures (*quincha* in Panama, *bajareque* in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and *taquezal* in Nicaragua). In ancestral traditions, palm thatch has been used to make waterproof, breathable, mud-resistant roofing. Local cotton has fostered a regional textile craft culture.

Tropical hardwood forests, including mahogany and cedar, have supplied timber for structural framing, fine carpentry, sculpture, and decorative elements over the centuries. Welders have shaped iron and other metals to reinforce walls and roofs and craft details such as railings, balconies, hardware, and lamps.

It was within this cultural and natural heritage that my architectural practice took root and flourished. My design proposals have consistently been considered controversial. They do not conform to the prevailing modernist approaches and often diverge from the trends and fashions associated with the misconception of "progress" mentioned earlier. I remain committed to architecture and urbanism that belong to the continuum of our heritage and have been fortunate to collaborate with clients and patrons who understand the importance of preserving our architectural identity. The following are examples of projects I have undertaken, each the result of precedent studies of remarkable vernacular traditions.

Central American Urbanism: Masterplans for New Communities

Historic Center Renovation Charrette, Pesé, Panama

Founded in 1558, Pesé is a town in Herrera province on the Azuero Peninsula (Fig. 14), a center of sugarcane plantations and rum-making. Civic and governmental buildings, the Church of San José de Pesé, shops, and single-family homes flank its central square/park.

Although it still houses the headquarters of the rum producer Varela Hermanos, it is in dire need of urban revitalization. My firm was commissioned jointly by the municipality and Varela Hermanos to organize a design charrette and propose a masterplan that would transform the central square with new development and provide a roadmap for the future (Fig. 16). Rather than the usual gated communities of residential pods and modernist blocks along the square, our charrette aimed to reconnect Pesé with its vernacular character, restore the old church, and recover the historic center's vitality.

Our team first conducted a study of the existing types of squares/parks in Pesé and elsewhere in Panama and the region. We examined urban configurations and documented the siting of civic and religious buildings, typically adjacent to a central square, along with the local architectural vernacular, combining load-bearing masonry, mud, clay, and the local construction technique with wood and vines known as *quincha*, as well as light timber-frame post-and-beam systems (Fig. 15).

Residential and commercial buildings are slightly elevated above grade. Single-story dwellings have ceilings of about 12 feet and clay-tiled roofs that allow passive cooling. They face the street or square with long front porches for shelter from the tropical sun and rain. Windows are typically casement-style, with wide-opening wooden shutters, while eaves over 1 meter long also protect from the elements.

Our charrette proposal consisted of a masterplan for the central square/park, with new paving and enhanced landscaping (Figs. 17 and 18). We proposed restoring the interior of the Church of San José and adding a loggia on the side facing the square (Fig. 19), along with a community center with a courtyard and a long shady loggia also toward the square (Fig. 21). Also included were a two-story 20-room corner hotel with views over the square from its balconies (Fig. 22) and a courtyard corner house to serve as rectory and archbishop's residence, completing and enclosing the square while drawing on the local vernacular (Fig. 20).

Figure 14. Existing urban plan, charrette intervention area, Pesé, Panama (Google Earth)

Figure 15. Typical vernacular wood-frame house, Pesé, Panama



14



15



Figure 16. Proposed renovation and masterplan, Pesé, Panama

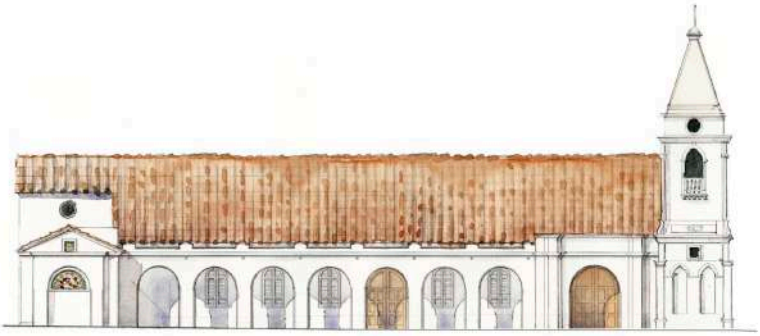
Figure 17. Proposed masterplan, Pesé, Panama



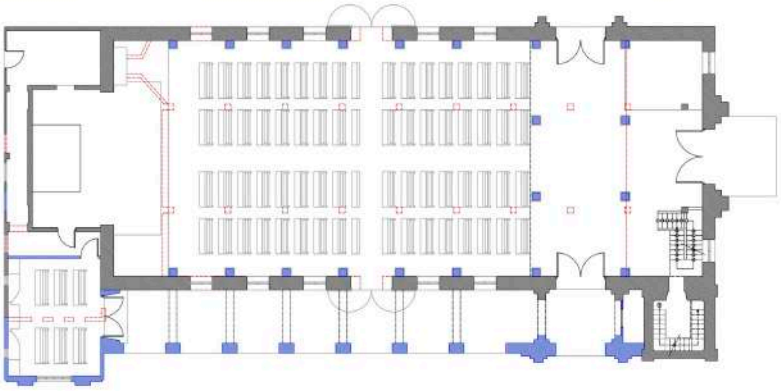


18





19



21

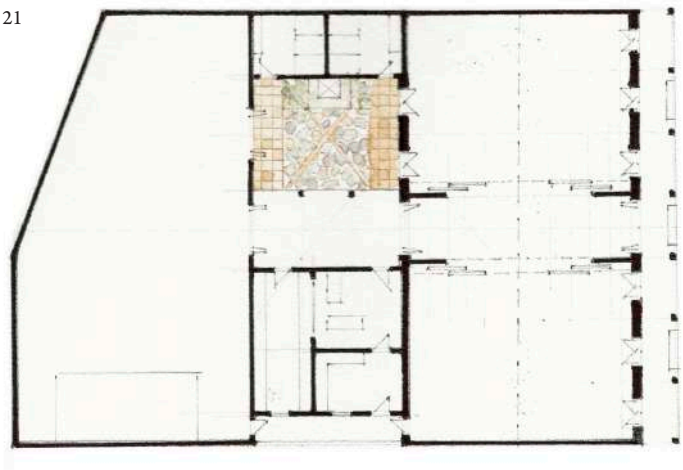




Figure 18. Renovation proposal for Aristides Arjona park, Pesé, Panama

Figure 19. Proposed renovation of San José de Pesé Church, Pesé, Panama

Figure 21. Proposed community center, Pesé, Panama (plan and front elevation)

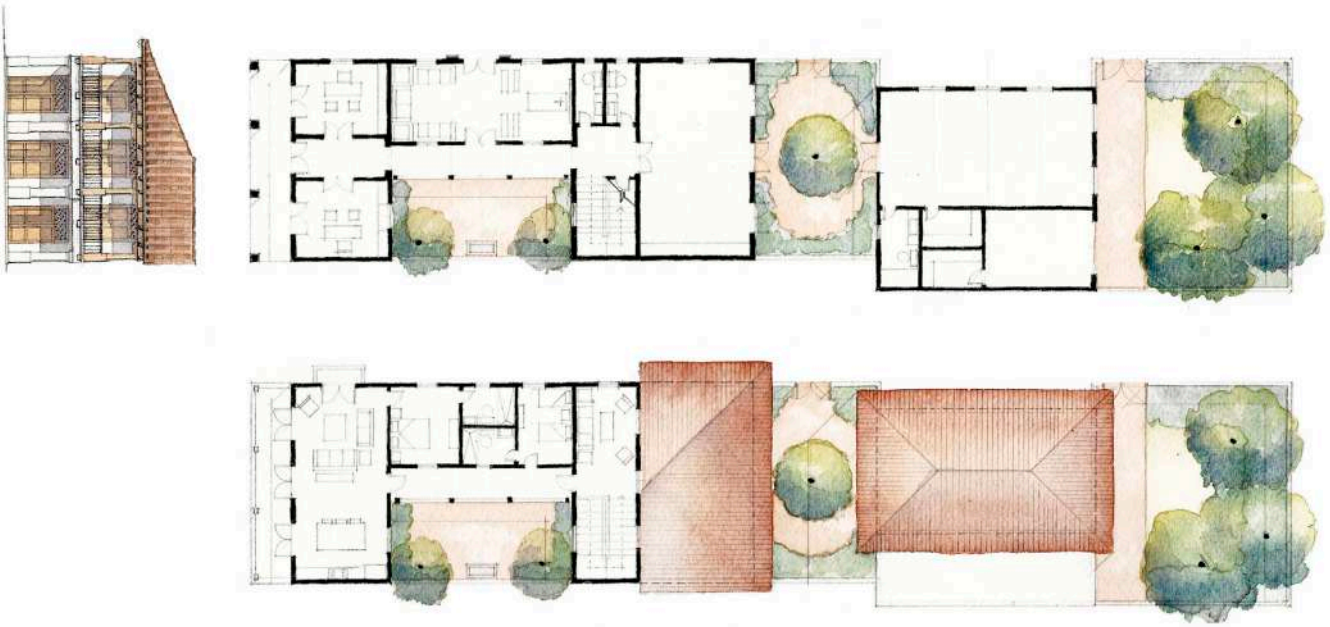


Figure 20. Proposed rectory, Pesé, Panama (plans and street elevation)

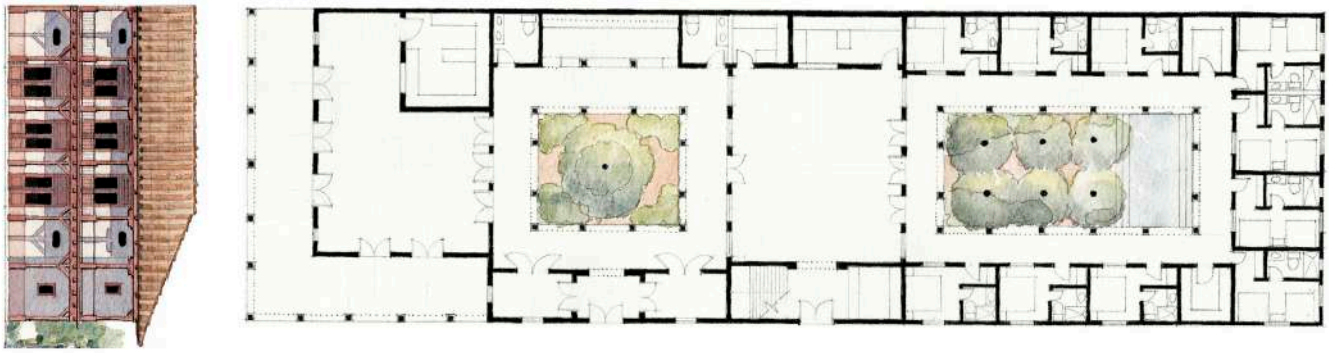


Figure 22. Proposed hotel, Pesé, Panama (plan and front elevation)

Los Islotes Charrette, Veraguas, Panama

Another charrette commission took us to the hilly terrain of the Veraguas Peninsula on Panama's Pacific coast. We were to design a traditional town masterplan to be developed in phases over decades (Figs. 23 and 24). Following a study of towns in the wider region (Fig. 25), we prepared a proposal for the center, the founder's house, and a series of peripheral villas.

Most new residential projects in the area follow the unfortunate trend of gated cul-de-sac developments with no true center. In contrast, Los Islotes was planned as a compact town pursuant to the "10-minute neighborhood" concept, drawing on Léon Krier's principles for walkable city-making. His thinking in *Choice or Fate* was essential in shaping the plan, alongside precedents from dozens of regional towns such as Antigua.





Figures 23 and 24. Proposed masterplan, Los Islotes, Veraguas, Panama



25

Figure 25. Central square and palace of the Captaincy General, Antigua, Guatemala



27

Figure 27. Street in Antigua, Guatemala

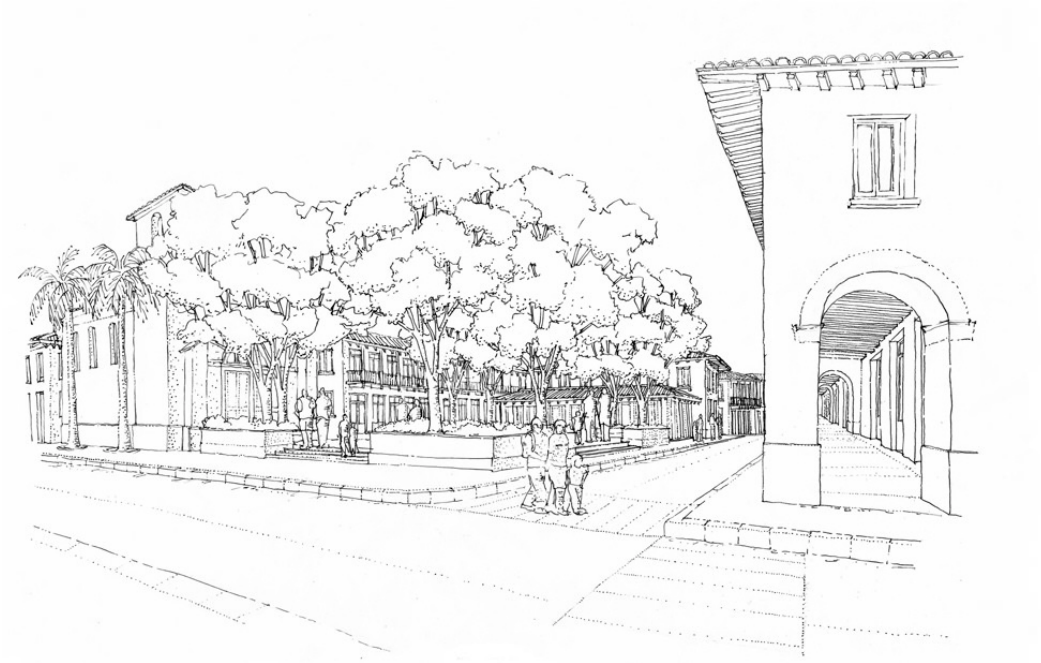


Figure 26. Main plaza, Los Islotes, Veraguas Panama

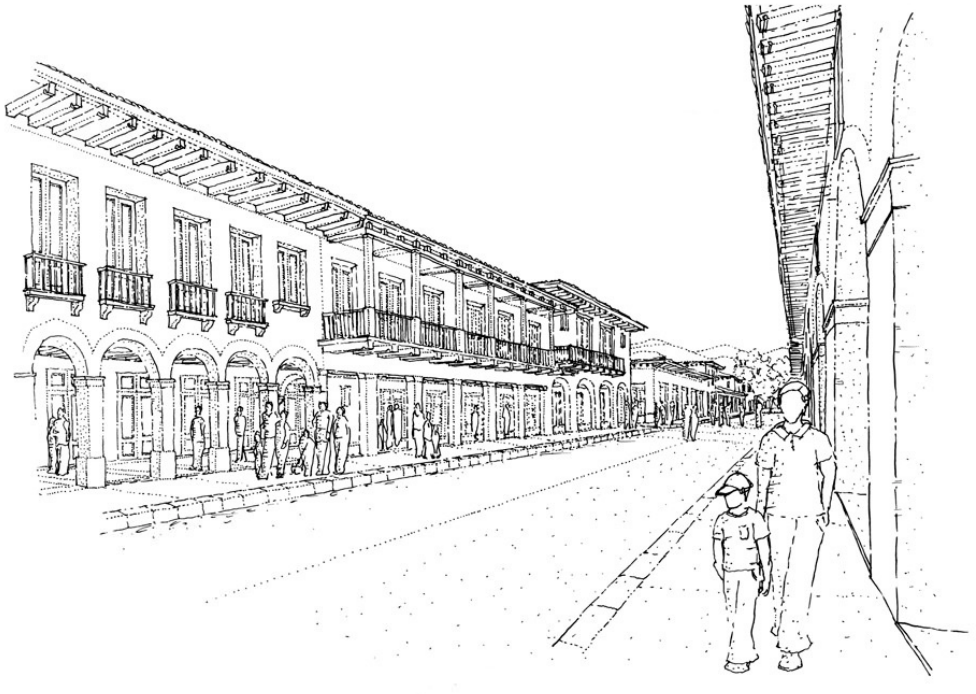


Figure 28. Main street, Los Islotes, Veraguas, Panama



Figure 29. Model house, Los Islotes, Veraguas, Panama

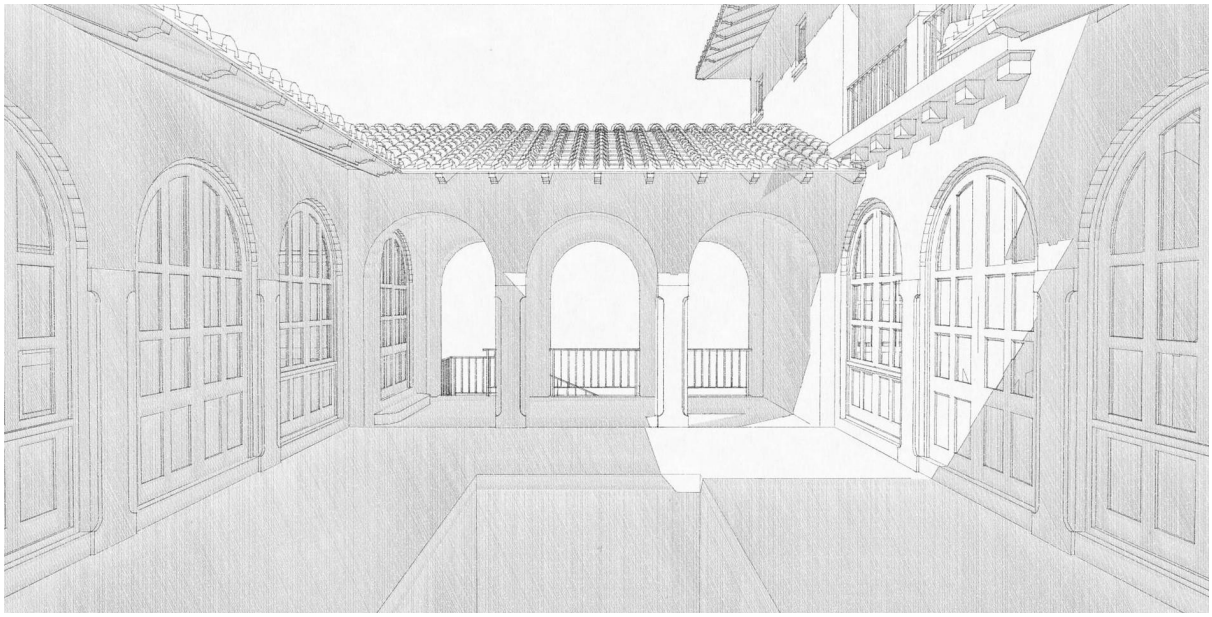


Figure 30. Model house courtyard, Los Islotes, Veraguas, Panama

The newly designed center, with its leafy square and mixed-use streets and avenues, structured the town as a whole (Fig. 26). Inspired by Antigua's human scale and walkability (Fig. 27), the main shopping streets, lined with two-story mixed-use buildings, were designed with arcades, loggias, and deep eaves as shelter from the elements (Fig. 28).

The founder's house, a traditional courtyard residence, was conceived as a model of appropriate design practice for future villas and other peripheral buildings (Figs. 29 and 30). Thus the charrette proposal established urban and architectural guidelines for continuing development in this new traditional Panamanian town.

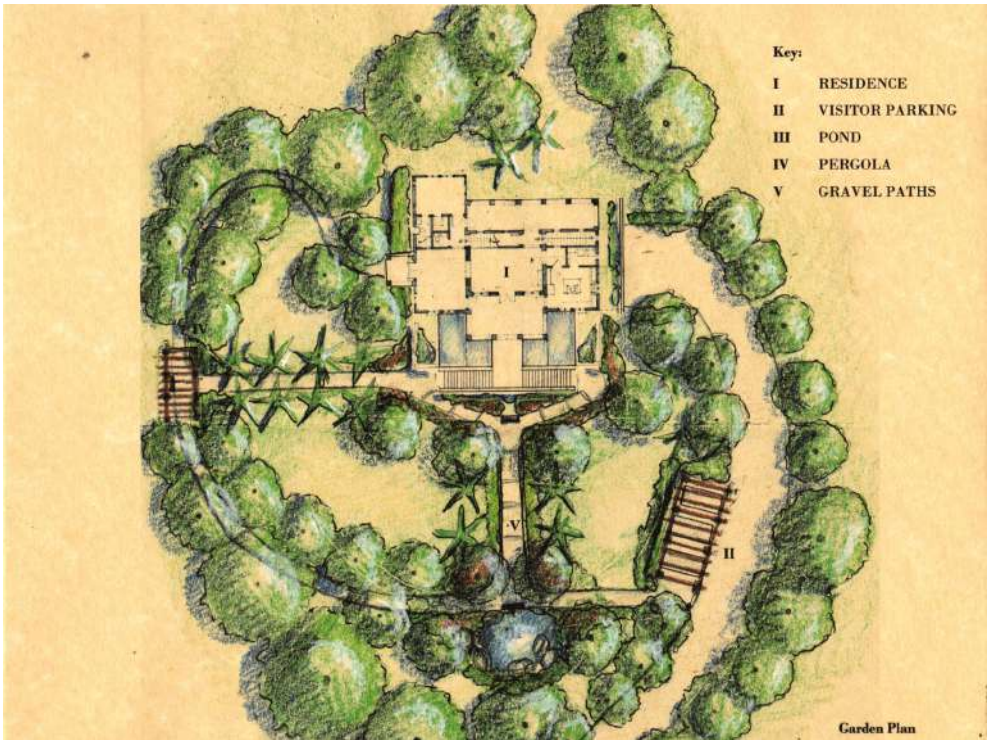


Figure 31. Site plan, Villa Caimitillo, Panama

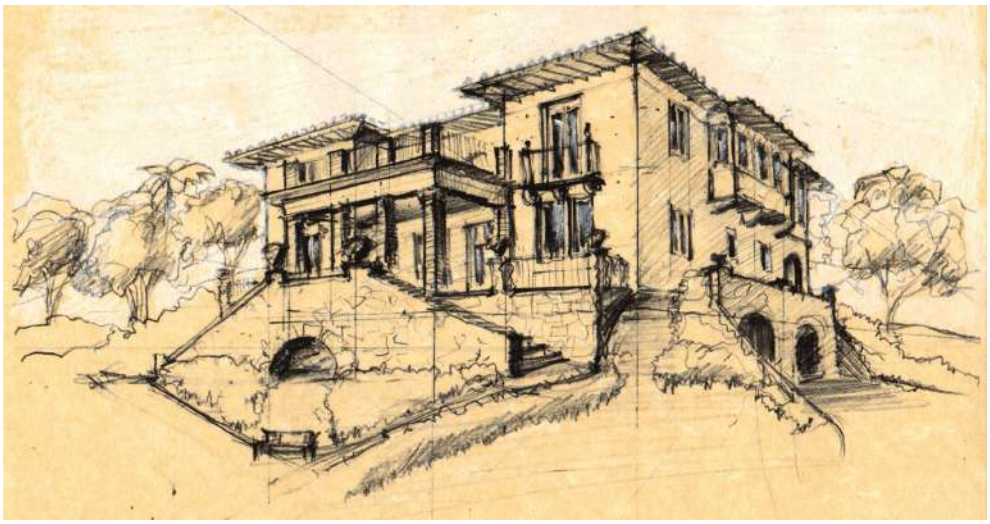


Figure 32. Front view, Villa Caimitillo, Panama

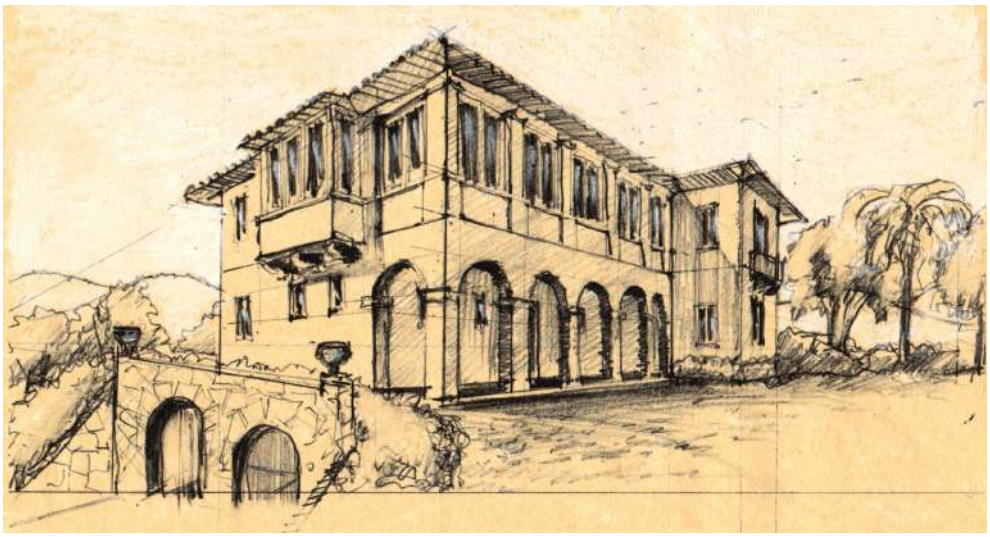


Figure 33. Back view, Villa Caimitillo, Panama

An Intelligent Tradition of Materials: Artisanal Brick, Stone, and Fine Woods

Villa Caimitillo, Caimitillo, Panama

A commission for a luxury villa in the gentle hills of Caimitillo became a journey of innovation with a revival of local brickwork traditions and a quest for a timeless aesthetic (Figs. 31-35).

Pale clay dug and fired on-site informed the villa's design and details (Fig. 36) and the environs supplied a pale volcanic stone used for retaining walls and rustic architectural accents, making the project notable for its environmental responsiveness. The client, passionate about Panamanian vernacular architecture and seeking a design with traditional character, assisted in molding and firing the bricks as the house went up.



34

Figure 34. Front panoramic view, Villa Caimitillo, Panama

Figure 35. Back panoramic view, Villa Caimitillo, Panama

Figure 36. Loggia, Villa Caimitillo, Panama



35



36

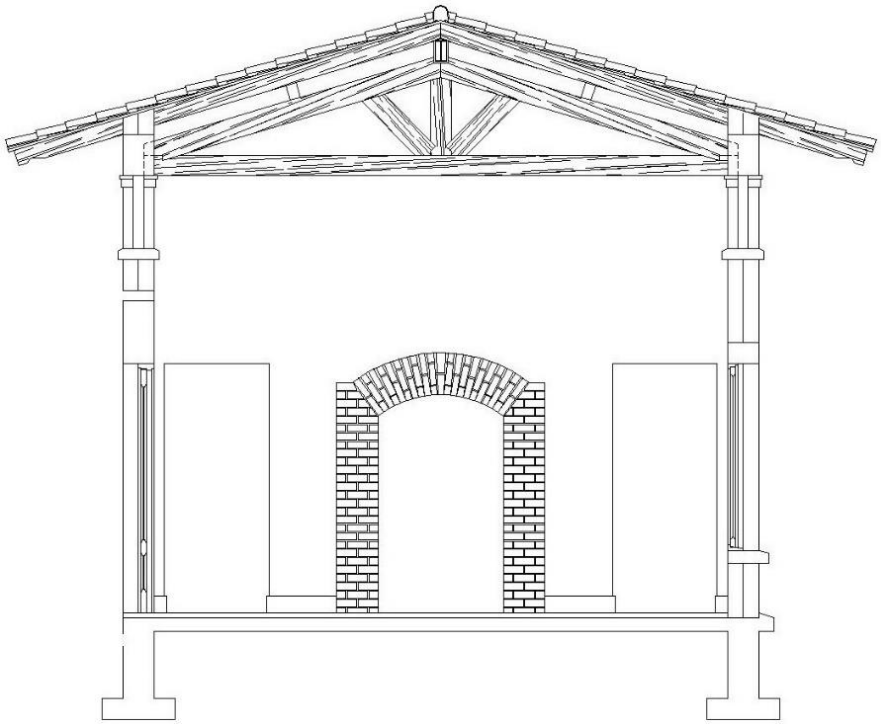


Figure 37. Main living room section, Villa Caimitillo, Panama



Figure 38. Artisanal brick arches in construction, Villa Caimitillo, Panama

The design for Villa Caimitillo became an interpretation and expression of local character and traditional load-bearing construction, drawing on the intelligence of local material culture. The handmade fired-clay bricks were laid radially over wooden centering defining each arch (Fig. 37) and bonded with lime mortar mixed on-site, until the final keystone locked the arch in compression.

Walls entirely of brickwork were erected for primary, secondary, and tertiary volumes, as well as garden pavilions. Details such as friezes, cornices, and floor patterns were finished with tiles of the same local clay (Fig. 38). The result was a contemporary hilltop villa complex grounded both in its site and in Panamanian vernacular architecture.

Villa San Isidro, Guatemala City, Guatemala

This villa in San Isidro, Guatemala City, commissioned in 2009 by a local family, is a U-shaped house with walls clad in local stone and fine-wood detailing characterized by longstanding regional construction methods (Fig. 39). Drawing on Antigua's traditions of thick concrete-and-stone masonry, clay roof tiles, brickwork, and structural carpentry, the residence's traditional yet contemporary design is rooted in regional character (Fig. 40). The two-story four-bedroom home was built by talented stonemasons and carpenters (Figs. 41-43) with exterior stone walls, retaining walls, and details intended to express strength and permanence. The interiors have mahogany paneling and fine carpentry executed in the tradition of Guatemalan woodworking (Fig. 44). Some exterior wooden details were stained green to enhance the character of the facades and add color and contrast to the massive stone walls.

Along with reinforced concrete core walls as the main structure, the stone-clad facades enable the building to rely on a passive heating and cooling system, keeping the interior warm in winter and cooling it on hot days. Deep eaves, with wood detailing beneath the clay-tile roof, shield the building from the region's torrential rains.



Figure 39. Front view, Villa San Isidro, Guatemala City



Figure 40. Handmade clay bricks and roof tiles, El Tear, Guatemala



41



42



43



44

Figure 41. Central pergola, Villa San Isidro, Guatemala City

Figure 42. Bay window, Villa San Isidro, Guatemala City

Figure 43. Wooden column and beam, Villa San Isidro, Guatemala City

Figure 44. Interior paneling, Villa San Isidro, Guatemala City

Climate-Sensitive Space: A New Courtyard House

Casa de Patio, Contadora Island, Las Perlas, Panama

In contrast to the modernistic, poorly climate-adapted towers being built on the island of Contadora off Panama's Pacific coast, for this residential commission we proposed a single-story traditional courtyard house (Fig. 45). Atop the island's volcanic cliffs, the site has a tropical climate with cool breezes and sweeping views of the ocean (Fig. 46). The courtyard house type, rooted in the colonial vernacular, was a natural precedent, as it readily allows for intimate open spaces and shaded gardens with natural lighting and ventilation.

The five-bedroom house is organized around a lushly vegetated courtyard visible from all the primary interior spaces (Fig. 47). Fronting the street as part of the island's low-density urban fabric, the dwelling is entered from the side through a gate and stair ascending to cliff-top level (Fig. 48). It is sheltered by clay-tiled roofs with wide eaves and loggias, ensuring cool shady interiors.

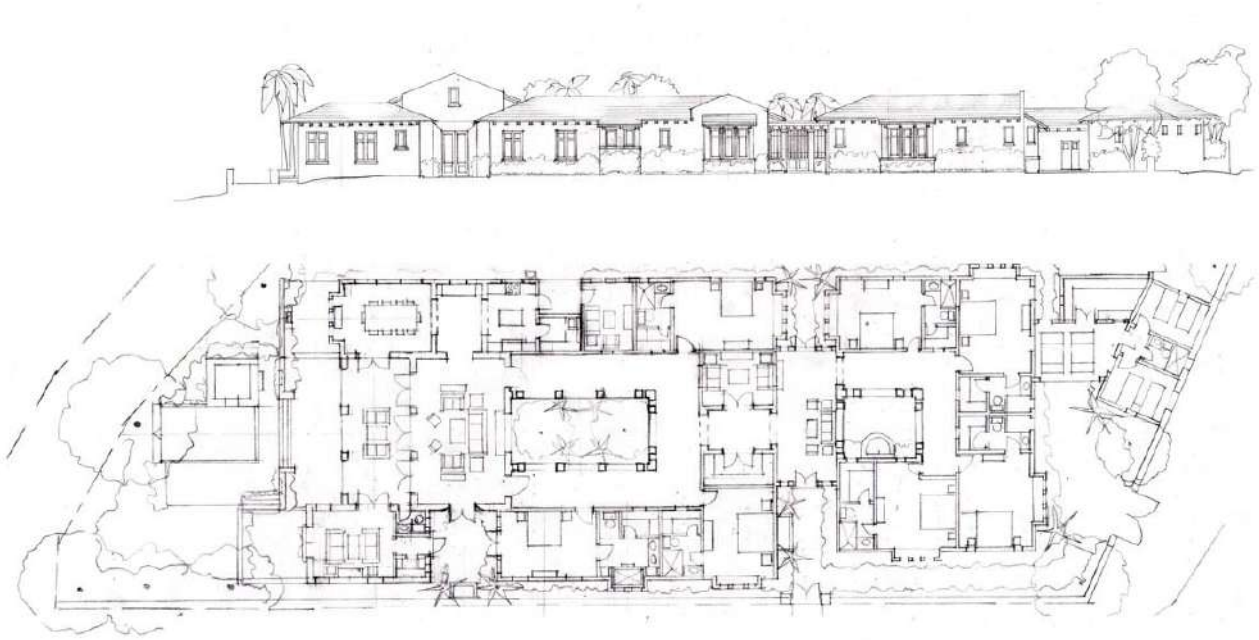


Figure 45. Plan and elevation, Casa de Patio, Contadora Island, Las Perlas, Panama



Figure 46. View from offshore, Casa de Patio, Contadora Island, Las Perlas, Panama



49



50

Figure 47. Central courtyard, Casa de Patio, Contadora Island, Las Perlas, Panama

Figure 48. Street entrance, Casa de Patio, Contadora Island, Las Perlas, Panama


49


50

Figure 49. Casa Los Balcones, El Chorrillo, Panama

Figure 50. Casa Nauplion, Casco Antiguo, Panama

Transformation of a Building Type: Low-Cost Multifamily Housing

Casa Los Balcones, El Chorrillo, Panama; and Casa Nauplion, Casco Viejo, Panama

After this work on luxury single-family homes, our firm was commissioned to design an innovative low-cost multifamily house in El Chorrillo, a run-down red-zone neighborhood in Panama City.

Residing in the adjacent historic neighborhood of Casco Viejo, we naturally referred to its century-old courtyard dwellings. A significant precedent was Casa Nauplion, a 120-year-old corner courtyard family house with characteristic covered balconies protruding over the narrow streets, enlarging the interiors (Fig. 49). The central courtyard, overlooked by balconies, offers shade, cool breezes, and a quiet refuge from the bustle of the street.

In contrast to Casa Nauplion, the new Casa Los Balcones needed to accommodate four stories of efficient low-cost units. The project involved transforming the traditional courtyard house type into a home for as many families as possible (Fig. 50). The design for Casa Los Balcones drew on a study of courtyard layouts and local vernacular character in Casa Nauplion and other Casco Viejo villas, although it was a challenge to provide affordable yet comfortable dwellings with comparable dignity and elegance.

The design ultimately accommodated 38 space-efficient units, each with a balcony and access to a breezy shared courtyard. Built swiftly due to its anticipated popularity, Casa Los Balcones set a precedent for urban revitalization and low-cost housing in disadvantaged neighborhoods, giving hope to El Chorrillo.

A Monumental Hotel Inspired by the Regional Vernacular

Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

We designed the beachside Hotel Santarena for the new town of Las Catalinas in Guanacaste, Costa Rica (Fig. 51). The main precedents were Palacio O'Farrill and Hotel Florida, four-story courtyard buildings in Havana, Cuba. An L-shaped courtyard building in a square, Plaza Almendros (Fig. 52), with a rooftop pool overlooking the Pacific, Hotel Santarena was conceived as an urban anchor. Its facades' ground-floor arches allow permeability between the square and the hotel's public areas. The upper-floor windows open onto bracketed balconies overlooking the beach. An interplay of white lime-rendered walls and dark green windows and doors gives the facades a tropical yet stylish

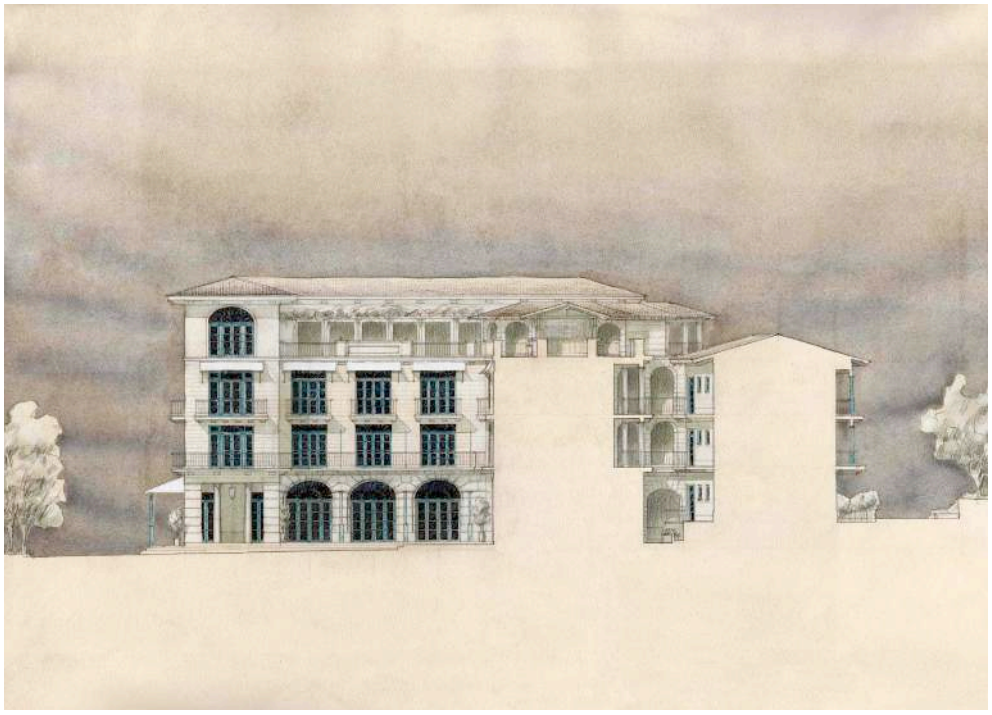


Figure 51. Section of Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica



Figure 52. Square and facades, Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

character. The street facades along the back are more vernacular, featuring wooden loggias and covered terraces inspired by the colonial style of Antigua (Fig. 55).

The interiors, a collaboration with the designer Andrina Fonseca, were conceived with a vibrant palette of deep greens, yellows, and light blues, along with fine interior details to create flexible spaces for events. Inspired by the colorful cement tiles of Granada, Nicaragua, and Havana, Cuba,



53



54

Figures 53 and 54. Courtyard at Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

we designed a flooring pattern to accentuate certain interiors and add color and character. A multi-story octagonal interior courtyard at the angle of the L-shape was included for light and ventilation and as an attractive space for dining and gathering (Figs.53 and 54).

The 45 guest rooms and suites were designed to be cozy but chic. The tower (Figs. 56 and 57) and rooftop ocean terrace with a gabled canopy were detailed with traditional post-and-beam woodwork. Hotel Santarena, facing Playa Danta on the Pacific coast, thus draws on the region's timeless vernacular heritage (Fig. 58).



Figure 55. Back view of Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica



56



57

Figure 56. Tower at Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Figure 57. Roof columns, Hotel Santarena, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Conclusion

By reestablishing continuity with vernacular heritage, contemporary practice can foster sustainability, cultural identity, and resilient urban environments in Central America. Learning from this knowledge and then emulating and innovating upon it allows us to maintain a continuum in sense of place, strengthen community identity, and support sustainability and resilient architecture and urbanism. My practice remains committed to work that favors a renewed architectural ethos engaging with regional traditions to produce enduring, place-based design.

Figure 58. Playa Santa, Las Catalinas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica



References | Referencias | Referências

Krier, Léon. 1998. *Choice or Fate: Architecture and Towers*. London: Andreas Papadakis Publisher.

Krier, Léon. 2009. *The Architecture of Community*. Washington D. C.: Island Press.

Krier, Léon. 2009. *Drawing for Architecture*. Foreword by James Howard Kunstler. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Krier, Léon. 2025. Classical Architecture and Vernacular Building. Translated by Samir Younés. *Archives of New Traditional Architecture*, 8: 68-69.

Kunstler, James Howard. 1993. *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Biography | Biografía | Biografia

Marie Andreé Soundy

Marie Andreé Soundy is an architect, urban designer, and artist with a Bachelor's Degree (1998) and a Master of Architecture (2005) from the University of Notre Dame, with more than 25 years of professional and academic experience. Over her career she has worked with numerous architectural firms in Latin America and the United States, including Robert A. M. Stern Architects (RAMSA) (1998-1999) in New York City, Seis Arquitectos (1999-2001) in Guatemala City, and as Partner and Principal Architect in her own firm Arosemena & Soundy Arquitectos (2006-2018) in Panama City. She has taught as Visiting Professor of Architectural Design Studio, Drawing, and Watercolor in the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture's Rome Studies Program in Rome, Italy (2005-2006), and as Professor of Architectural Design at Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Guatemala City (2020-2022). She is Principal Professor of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture at the Classical Art School (Academia de las Artes) in Guatemala City (2018-present). She is currently Principal Architect of her own firm, S Arquitectos, with architectural projects in Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica (2019-present). She teaches as Associate Professor of Architectural Design Studio and Graphics at the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture's main campus.