

Part of the Condevilla Señor project April 1963, six months after occupation. The back-to-back provisional dwellings, built and sold to the occupants by the agency, are bamboo and cane mat structures plastered with mud and built in the U of the permanent enclosing wall at the bottom of the plot. Provisional drinking-water standpipes are provided at intervals (bottom right hand corner)

Minimal government-aided settlements

Valdivieso and Condevilla Señor barrios, Lima, Peru

The 1961 law designed to integrate the barrios into the framework of society and the city, mentioned in the preceding section, had one serious defect. It was designed to deal with existing barrios, but it did not make any provisions for their future growth or control. Legally, barrios established after September 1960 could not benefit from this law; for it had been assumed that, from the date that the law was passed, the authorities would be able to prevent the creation of new barrios. In this sense the law was a dead letter before it was even signed, as one major barriada, Pampa de Cuevas, was founded in December 1960 and is now about as highly developed as its neighbour, Comas. And, all over Peru, barrios have continued to spring up as before, if not even more rapidly than ever.

A secondary problem contemplated by the original law has pointed the way which is now being followed up: a number of barrios are, as mentioned above, slums which cannot be improved. These have to be eradicated and their inhabitants moved elsewhere; the agency was empowered to acquire land near the city to resettle the families affected. As might be expected, the inhabitants of 'slum' type barrios are poorer than most and the payment for this new land, whose cost had to be recovered by the agency, and for services and a minimum dwelling, was impossible for many within the period the government could afford to offer. The original solution, therefore, was to provide an absolute minimum within the means of almost all the families—that is, a plot of land 1600 sq. ft. in area, a provisional dwelling within the U of the permanent walls (built by the agency) at the bottom of the plot, and drinking water standpipes near each site; but no drainage, roads, pavements nor electricity. This 'planned squatter settlement' turned out to be a success with the people themselves (except for the form of the provisional house). The system coincides with the traditional and economically logical process of the barrios themselves—but with very important improvements: the lay-out is far better, the plots more regular, there is a minimum supply of drinking water at the start, so that it doesn't have to be brought from dubious sources by tankers which sell it by the 50 gallon drum for anything between a shilling and half-a-crown (15 to 35 cents US), and the development will be completed,

eventually, and at a lower cost, thanks to proper initial planning. Also, those who can start to build their permanent house are given plans and technical assistance from the start. Thus the future owner obtains three important advantages: his financial obligations are kept within his means as he can limit his expenditure to the essentials in order of priority, his investments are kept within economic limits through technical assistance, and their ultimate value is guaranteed by the planning and controls exercised by the agency.

This system was taken a step further when the government agency managed to control the invasion of the area now known as Tahuantinsuyo (see map on p. 364), a development as yet without services of any kind (though these are now financed) for 4000 plots. The invasion was, in fact, recognized, but the invaders were persuaded to adjust to the new plan and to accept the fact that the agency would control further allocation of plots and all future development. The final step, of course, is for the government to adopt this system as a general policy, acquiring land on the necessary scale and allowing its occupancy with an absolute minimum of utilities and then following up with the full set once the occupiers are well enough established—that is, when the majority have built at least a minimum house (for which they might need credit) and are sufficiently well off economically to pay the extra cost of domestic water supply and water borne sewage disposal.

If, as is suggested in the conclusions on p. 389, the government's real job, in the housing field, is to direct and co-ordinate existing forces and resources (and not to abandon them to create havoc or attempt to replace them), then government agencies must work along with those forces accepting existing values and priorities wherever these coincide with the logic and demands of the situation.

NOTE: In the case of the barrios Valdivieso and Condevilla Señor, public utilities are now being installed—before most of the inhabitants have started their permanent dwellings. This is partly due to pressure from international financing agencies which share the commonly held notion that public utilities must, at all costs, be installed before building begins.



The John Turner Archive:

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Dwelling resources in South America, Architectural Design 8, August 1963

Right: part of San Martín barriada in foreground (note design of dwellings with reference to remarks in the conclusions and on the preceding page) with Valdivieso project in background

Right, below: a house under construction in the Valdivieso project: the 'front' wall is, in reality, the back wall of the future house—the family has completed the enclosure as a first step, thereby giving themselves (barring helicopters) a greater degree of privacy, security and comfort (freedom from dust and breezes)

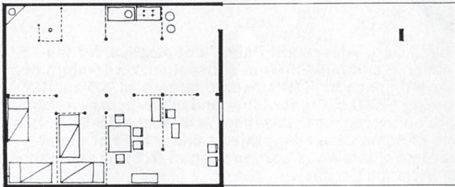
Photos John Turner

Below: plans showing the stages of growth of a house

The sequence illustrated is an interpretation of the system suggested by the projects illustrated on this page and which would avoid the major drawbacks of the form employed. Many of the provisional houses provided by the agency in the Valdivieso and Condevilla Señor projects have been converted into permanent structures by the replacement of the front bamboo wall with a brick one; the owners are loath to part with what is, to many of them, a better structure than they have ever lived in before and for which they have paid, for them, a large sum of money. Consequently permanent back-to-backs have been created, though inadvertently.

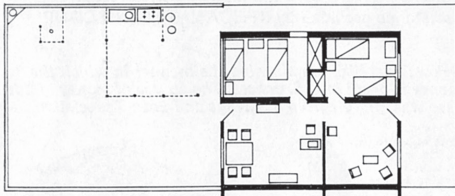
Stage 1

At first a permanent masonry enclosing wall is built by the financing agency, together with public drinking-water standpipes and, if possible, electric light (for security and night-time building work as well as to satisfy the demand for this service which is stronger, very often, than for a laid-on water supply). Within the enclosure the family can erect, at very little cost and in a few hours, a minimum shelter from cane mats and bamboo poles.



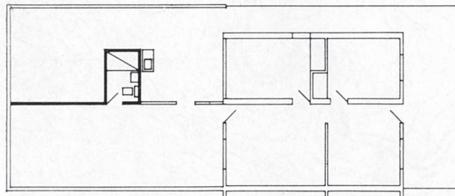
Stage 2

Once installed in its provisional dwelling the family can proceed to build the first stage of its permanent house; being on-site the able-bodied members can lend a hand in any spare time they may have and the family can supervise any hired labour constantly. In this way the family is free to make a maximum contribution in the building of the simplest parts of the construction itself—an advantage lost with the 'shell' house solution.



Stage 3

Once the basic minimum house is built, and the extra financial strain has eased, the family can afford, and will anyway demand, the installation of laid-on water and drainage. The cost of the second stage of the development—secondary water mains and connections, sewers, pavements and roads—is a considerable part of the total cost, especially if the house is built by aided self-help methods. For a majority of families in many areas it would be financially impossible for them to bear the cost of full public utilities and the construction of a minimum house at the same time.



Stage 4

Finally, a first floor can be added, if required, with internal private access or with direct access from the street should the owners wish to rent the second floor—a very common and socially desirable form of investment which is widely practised and which should be encouraged.

