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The Imperial Façade: Daniel H. Burnham and American Architectural Planning in the Philippines

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“NO SOONER had the United States come into the possession of the Philippines,” wrote the American architect and planner, Daniel Burnham, “than the War Department set about adapting the city of Manila to the changed conditions brought about by the influx of Americans, who are used to better conditions of living than had prevailed in those islands.”¹ The charming but functionally “primitive” capital city of America’s new tropical empire had lacked, in short, the amenities and the modern conveniences needed and demanded by the presumably more civilized and civilizing colonizers. Burnham’s mission to the Philippines as an architectural consultant in 1904 and 1905 and his subsequent planning proposals for the cities of Manila and Baguio constituted indeed an architectural corollary to the earlier more salient programs of the United States for the islands’ political and economic development.

When Burnham embarked for the Philippines in the late autumn

¹ Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, *Plan of Chicago* (Chicago 1909), 20. Many of my ideas about Burnham’s Philippine endeavors were stimulated, challenged, or confirmed by my wife, Dorothy Taylor Hines, a student of, and former resident in, the Philippines. I am also indebted to Mr. Eugene Pucay, a Filipino who has spent all his seventy years in Baguio. This article deals only with the origins of American planning in the Philippines. Additional studies covering architectural planning before and after Burnham’s work for the American government are badly needed. A comparison of Spanish, American, and indigenous Philippine planning would be an interesting and useful exercise in comparative colonial and cultural history.

of 1904, he carried with him impressive credentials and a formidable reputation as an architect, city planner, cultural administrator, and man of affairs—qualities and talents that would greatly affect his ultimate Philippine achievement. In the 1880s and 1890s, for example, Burnham and his gifted partner, John Wellborn Root, had shared the limelight with the firm of Louis Sullivan as major pioneering innovators of the Chicago School of architecture. Burnham and Root's epochal, ten-story Montauk Block of 1882 had, in fact, been one of the first buildings to be popularly labeled a "skyscraper." In the early 1890s, the two partners had assumed the joint directorship of the Chicago World's Fair, the famous World's Columbian Exposition, and, after Root's premature death in 1891, Burnham had continued that task alone. As chief of construction, Burnham had directed the work of dozens of architects and hundreds of artisans and builders, and the resulting "White City" of 1893 had dazzled visitors with its classically inspired architecture and its ambience of imperial pomp and splendor. For his achievements at the fair, Burnham received numerous awards, including honorary degrees from Yale and Harvard and election to the presidency of the American Institute of Architects. Gravitating, for a number of complex personal and professional reasons, from the earlier indigenous clarity of the Chicago School, Burnham's "classicism" at the fair had met with overwhelming popular approval.²

Later critics would rightly lament the fair's pervasive "classical" architectural influences, taking their cue from Louis Sullivan's brilliantly acerbic retrospections, but they would also fail, as Sullivan did, to appreciate the fair's more positive contributions. In creating the fair, Burnham had had to build a temporary city, with actual buildings, streets and canals, and whatever other facilities or conveniences its transient "citizens" would need. The apparent

² My assessment of Burnham's reputation and earlier achievement as summarized in the following paragraphs (especially his turn toward neoclassicism) is developed in detail in my 1970 University of Wisconsin doctoral dissertation, "Daniel H. Burnham, A Study in Cultural Leadership." I am currently revising that study for publication as a critical biography of Burnham. My sources of data for the larger study are located, for the most part, in the Burnham Collection at the Chicago Art Institute. Helpful published sources that treat the same problems in an abbreviated form, and sometimes with different conclusions, include: Carl W. Condit, *The Chicago School of Architecture, A History of Commercial and Public Building in the Chicago Area, 1875-1925* (Chicago, 1964), John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, 1965), and Mellier G. Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

success of that gigantic undertaking had convinced Burnham and numerous other Americans of the need for a new movement of real city planning, which would draw upon the White City experience and attack the problems of the larger, darker cities that covered the nation. Numerous visitors to the Chicago Fair had returned to their own cities greatly excited by the vision that the White City had created but the long, crippling depression of the 1890s had dampened the immediate prospects of the incipient city planning movement. Only with the increased prosperity after the Spanish-American War had the legacy of the White City begun to exercise its promised influence upon American urban development and ultimately upon the extension of such ideas and programs to the Philippines.

In 1901, for example, Burnham had served as chairman of an architectural commission to replan the city of Washington, and in concert with his distinguished colleagues, Charles McKim, Augustus St. Gaudens, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., had presented an impressive updating, revival, and enlargement of L'Enfant's original scheme for the capital city. Though developed more than a century apart, both plans for Washington had coincided with great transitional periods in the nation's history, moments when Americans were especially conscious that their country was entering upon exciting new eras of internal development and of increased power and prestige in the affairs of the world. The quest for order and efficiency embodied in Burnham's Washington Plan and its ideas for correcting the District's obvious functional and esthetic chaos had complemented the growing concern in the nation at large for reforming social, political, and economic abuses in American life. And Burnham had been conscious of his role as a participant in that "progressive" movement. The monumental scope, on the other hand, of the commission's architectural and landscaping proposals for Washington, significantly suggestive of Rome and Paris, had evoked an image of imperial splendor that the planners had deemed fitting and proper for the capital of the emerging American empire. While echoing the neoclassicism of both L'Enfant's time and of the recent Chicago Fair, the Washington Plan had reenforced the effects of the Exposition in awakening the American public to the need for and value of new urban planning. It had conditioned Americans, as the fair had done be-

fore it, to accept and then to demand the type of planning that Burnham and his followers advocated. It had further prepared Burnham in an art and skill that found fulfillment in plans for Cleveland, San Francisco, and ultimately for the Philippines.

After the completion of the Washington Plan, the first progressive reformer to exploit Burnham's talents as a city planner had been Tom L. Johnson, mayor of Cleveland. Just as Burnham's work in the Philippines became the architectural expression of the American imperialist thrust, his 1903 "Group Plan" for Cleveland reflected the paradoxes of the related and contemporaneous progressive movement at home. The Cleveland report had in fact been a classic illustration of several different aspects of the progressive mentality, combining in its rhetoric the fuzzily defined elements of both pragmatic realism and romantic idealism. It had championed "efficiency" and "the people's interests" in elitist terms of the most luxurious, aristocratic taste. It had stressed the need for political realism and "accommodation" in a doctrinaire, reformist tone that brooked no compromise. It had also suggested the same contradictions in its actual physical dichotomies. Burnham's energetic call for changing the face of Cleveland's urban landscape had assumed the dimensions of a real reform movement or at least an important arm of Mayor Johnson's larger movement. His resort, however, to classical detailing and to antique academic formulas as the recommended style of the New Metropolis were self-defeating and contradictory. Most contemporaries, however, had failed to see the paradox, and Burnham's stature and reputation had flourished.

Following the acclaim for his highly publicized Washington and Cleveland plans, Burnham had been commissioned for a similar project in San Francisco. But after completing the initial surveys, the broad sketches, and the general proposals, he had relegated the detailing of the California work to his able assistant Edward Bennett. He would later return to complete the plans and to write the San Francisco report, but in 1904 he directed his full attention to the concurrent project for the Philippines. He had won the commission to replan the colonial capital through an interesting series of social and personal circumstances. Chiefly, he owed his selection for the exotic mission to his own growing reputation and to his

long friendship with a young and ambitious Massachusetts Brahmin, W. Cameron Forbes.

Forbes was a well-bred, well-educated scion of one of New England's most distinguished families. His maternal grandfather had been none other than the philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson. His paternal forebears had been successful merchants and had bequeathed to him both considerable wealth and responsibility in managing the family's holdings. A keen sense of family loyalty, however, did not keep young Forbes from becoming restless and seeking challenges beyond the comfortable orbits of Massachusetts society and commerce. His uncle, Malcolm Forbes, had long been a friend of Burnham, and it was through that relationship that Cameron and Burnham had become acquainted.³

Burnham had early recognized the young man's promise and had sympathized with his restlessness and his desire to represent the government abroad. In 1902, for example, when Forbes applied for a job in Panama, Burnham had advised his friend, President Theodore Roosevelt, that there was "no one in the country better fitted to be United States Canal Commissioner. . . . His appointment will be very popular in the west where his own and his family names are well known." Forbes failed to get the Panama job but he recognized and appreciated Burnham's help and interest.⁴

Burnham and others continued to extol Forbes' qualifications to the President, and in early 1904 Roosevelt appointed him a commissioner to the Philippines. "I have to do largely with the development and improvements of the Islands," Forbes wrote to Burnham, "all corporations, railroads, transportation, etc. being in my hands, besides the Police which are now entrusted to the maintenance of the peace of the Archipelago. I am quite as pleased with this as I should be with the Canal," he wrote, "and think it is a field for the application of energy such as seldom comes to a young man. . . . I want to thank you for the interest you have taken in

³ Robert M. Spector, "W. Cameron Forbes: A Study in Proconsular Power," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, VII (September, 1966), 74-75; Daniel H. Burnham to W. Cameron Forbes, Feb. 24, 1904, Forbes Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. I am grateful to Mr. David Forbes, Miss Carolyn Jakeman, and the Houghton Library for permission to use and to quote from Forbes' papers.

⁴ Burnham to Theodore Roosevelt, Aug. 1, 1902; Burnham to Forbes, Jan. 7, 1903, Forbes Papers.

my affairs and the help which you have given me which I feel had a great deal to do with my securing this appointment.”⁵

Burnham's congratulations were mingled with regret over the coincidental death of his friend, and Cameron's uncle, Malcolm, but he could not conceal his enthusiasm for the immediate and broader possibilities of the Philippines experiment. “The work there,” Burnham argued emphatically, “is constructive in a higher sense than is that at Panama, and you will be responsible and independent in your work. Now young Cameron! We shall see what you are made of.”⁶

Before Forbes left for the Orient, he began the search for an architect who would follow him to the Philippines and prepare appropriate plans. Secretary of War William Howard Taft, whose department was officially in charge of colonies, had originally suggested that he engage a “landscape architect,” and Forbes' thought had rather naturally turned to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Olmsted's reputation by 1904 had come to rival that of his long famous father as the country's most eminent landscape architect, but the resulting commercial demand for his services had made him too busy to accept Forbes' offer. As Forbes continued to ponder the question, however, it seemed illogical to insist specifically on a “landscape architect,” and he broadened his search to include building architects as well. Inexplicably, it had not occurred to him that Burnham might be interested and, on April 1, he wrote to his, and Burnham's friend, Charles McKim: “It is one of the projects of the Philippine government to build a new city 5000 feet above the sea, which will be to the Philippines much what Simla is to India. It is part of the plan for me to get some landscape architect to go out and try to lay out a new city, and in addition to make some plans for the development of Manila. I have been trying very hard to get F. L. Olmsted to go, but he feels that he cannot, and does not know who to recommend. Can you suggest anyone? Perhaps you would like a little trip to the Philippines yourself! If so I am starting about the middle of June and should be proud of your company.”⁷

⁵ Forbes to Burnham, Feb. 17, 1904, *ibid.*

⁶ Burnham to Forbes, Feb. 24, 1904, *ibid.*

⁷ Forbes to Olmsted, March 11, 1904; Forbes to William Howard Taft, March 11, March 25, 1904; Forbes to Charles McKim, April 1, 1904, *ibid.*

On the same day, he also wrote to Burnham soliciting his suggestions and thanking him again for his help and good wishes. "I feel with you," he stated, "that this is my chance to prove myself if I ever am to have one and shall go at it with the idea of doing the best I can." He repeated the summary of the architectural needs he had given to McKim. "I have tried to get Olmsted to go," he wrote, "but he finds his work too exacting, and though I am still urging him he has practically declined. I wish you would let me know who you suggest to undertake this work." He did not mention to Burnham that he had made an informal offer to McKim and he was pleasantly surprised when Burnham intimated that he, himself, might like the job. He was also, no doubt, a bit embarrassed that he had not considered Burnham earlier. "Believe I may be able to arrange for just the right architect," he wired Secretary Taft. "Please communicate with me before closing with anybody." He then arranged for Taft to meet and interview Burnham, and Taft quickly became convinced that Burnham should have the job.⁸

In early May, however, Forbes encountered an almost comical dilemma. "I received a letter from Mr. Burnham in San Francisco," he wrote to Secretary Taft, "that he could not go to the Philippines until the autumn but that if the thing could be postponed until then he would like to know it and would probably arrange to go out. I also had a letter from Mr. McKim," he added, perplexedly, "in which he said that if it could be delayed, he too might like to come out. This looks like an embarrassment of riches." Yet, though he had actually approached McKim first, he wondered why he had not asked Burnham at the very beginning, and he confided to Taft that "Personally I prefer Burnham . . . as he has the business ability to get things done and provides from his organization the artistic ability of the special kind wanted. . . . Please let me know . . . if you think it is wise to wait for Burnham." Taft's earlier interview had convinced him that they should "wait until Autumn for Burnham; he is too good a man to lose." Forbes then made the formal offer, and Burnham accepted.⁹

Burnham undertook the new assignment in much the same spirit

⁸ Forbes to Burnham, April 1, 8, 1904; Forbes to Taft, April 6 and 18, 1904, *ibid.*

⁹ Forbes to Taft, May 18, 1904; Forbes to Burnham, May 27, 1904, *ibid.*

that Forbes had undertaken his. As patrician and moderately liberal Republicans, both men identified with many of the reform currents in American life. They believed, however, there were limits to change and certainly to the speed with which it should occur. They also accepted the *fait accompli* of the new American empire, whatever ambivalence they may have felt about the way the new territories were acquired. While believing ultimately in "the Philippines for the Filipinos," they accepted the view that before that could happen, the Filipinos needed a period of tutelage in which the more "advanced" Americans could help effect a "progressive civilization" by instruction and example. As a reader and admirer of Rudyard Kipling, Burnham was no stranger to the "White Man's Burden" frame of mind. Despite the opposition of the anti-imperialists, Burnham and Forbes belonged to the school that believed that "the United States, having overthrown the Spanish government . . . , was under obligation to see that the government established in its place would represent all and do injustice to none." Both men had friends and acquaintances in the anti-imperialist camp, but they never wavered in their conviction that a period of trusteeship was essential for ultimate Philippine success. As advocates also of "progressive" planning for American cities, it seemed natural and proper that the same kinds of urban programs should be effected in American territories overseas.¹⁰

Burnham's commitment to such long-range goals "for the Filipinos" did not prevent his also viewing the enterprise in more immediate terms of American cultural needs and conveniences. In later describing the rationale for the Philippine work, he stressed the need for "adapting the city of Manila to the changed conditions brought about by the influx of Americans," because, he believed, they were "used to better conditions of living" than the Philippines currently provided. Ultimately, he studied the problems and prepared his plans in the light of both of those pragmatic and idealistic goals.¹¹

¹⁰ Spector, "W. Cameron Forbes: A Study in Proconsular Power," 74-75; Forbes to Burnham, Sept. 1, 1905, May 28, 1906, Oct. 10, 1907, and Burnham to Forbes, June 9, Sept. 23, 1905, Forbes Papers; David P. Barrows, *History of the Philippines* (Chicago and Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York, 1925), 267. Burnham was aware of the development of Simla as the British colonial summer capital in India. In part, he considered his work in the Philippines an American version of earlier British colonial examples.

¹¹ Burnham, Diary, July 30, 1905, Burnham Papers, Chicago Art Institute Library;

When McKim learned that Burnham wanted and was being considered for the Philippines job, he discarded his own aspirations to do the work and sent congratulations to both Burnham and Secretary Taft. The encouragement from his closest friend cheered Burnham greatly. "I have no doubt," he wrote McKim, "but that your letter to Secretary Taft will strengthen me in his mind as an artist and a man of good taste, although he has been cordial beyond my desserts already. I have not failed to notice that whenever you come in contact with any of my friends, they seem afterward to have an accession of faith in me. It is a fine thing in this world to have someone strengthen your hands behind your back as you do for me." He also appreciated McKim's personal advice on the Philippines project. "I shall be disappointed," he wrote, "in any large undertaking of mine, if I did not get your word sooner or later."¹²

When Forbes told Taft that Burnham could provide "from his organization the artistic ability of the special kind wanted," he was referring to younger architects such as Pierce Anderson, who went to the Philippines as Burnham's assistant. Leaving Bennett behind to complete the details of the San Francisco plan, Burnham sailed on October 13, 1904, accompanied also by his wife and daughter, and his close Chicago friends, the Edward Ayers. Crossing the Pacific gave him time to ponder Forbes' description of the situation in the Philippines: First, there must be a plan for the physical redevelopment of Manila, a centuries old city of some 220,000 people. Then, there were "several thousand acres of land which Sec'y Taft compares to the Adirondacks in general effect, situated 5000 feet above the level of the sea and 145 miles from Manila by railroad. . . . It is proposed to move the government up there during the summer months[,] putting up buildings for them, hospitals for the Army and for the Navy and perhaps for civil use, and to allow Government employees the privilege of taking a lot of land and building on it . . . and they are very anxious to have this laid out on beautiful lines." The Burnhams enjoyed the Pacific crossing followed by a splendid month-long visit in Japan. In late November,

Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 29. I am grateful to Miss Ruth Schoneman, Mrs. Peggy Rast, and the staff of the Chicago Institute Library for their interest and assistance.

¹² Burnham to Charles McKim, Sept. 14, 1904, reprinted in Charles Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham, Planner of Cities* (Boston and New York, 1921), I, 233.

however, the vacation ended and business began. Burnham's wife and daughter departed to await the men in Hawaii and Burnham and Pierce Anderson started southward to the Philippines. Arriving on December 7th, they stayed in the country for approximately six weeks, talking with government officials, inspecting and surveying the pertinent sites, working over maps and "on the ground," and enjoying, besides, considerable socializing and sight-seeing.¹³

Burnham's travel diary preserved not only his itinerary, but glimpses as well of American colonial life in the tropics. His study and inspection tours were accompanied by much pomp and fanfare. As a visiting dignitary, he was received and entertained with all available turn-of-the-century colonial civility. Province officials arranged lavish "fiestas." Native servants attended to his every wish. After studying the needs of the Manila area, it was necessary to venture north to the future site of Baguio, and Burnham, Anderson, and Forbes spent the Christmas week in the mountains of Luzon. There they faced more primitive conditions and accommodations as the rugged terrain demanded occasional travel by foot and horseback. Even there, however, due chiefly to commissioner Forbes, the amenities were not lacking and Burnham relished the experience immensely. Though the hikes and horseback rides fatigued the aging Burnham, the area's spectacular scenery and architectural possibilities impressed and sustained him. On January 16, after nearly six weeks of study and survey, Burnham and Anderson departed the Philippines and sailed for home, continuing aboard ship to discuss their planning assignments. After short visits to Hong Kong and Japan, they stopped in Hawaii for the Burnham ladies and arrived in San Francisco on February 19th.¹⁴

The trip affected Burnham deeply and forced him to reassess his

¹³ Burnham to Henry C. Frick, Aug. 8, 1904; Burnham to Richard W. Gilder, Sept. 12, 1904, Burnham Papers; Forbes to Burnham, April 8, 1904, Forbes Papers; Burnham, Diary, Oct. 1904, *passim*. Burnham selected his junior partner, Anderson, for the trip because he felt that the senior partner, Ernest Graham, should remain and run the office in his absence.

¹⁴ Burnham, Diary, Oct. 13, 1904–Feb. 19, 1905, *passim*, as reprinted in Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham*, I, 235–245. The original copy of Burnham's travel diary for the 1904–1905 trip to the Orient has apparently been lost since Moore had access to it ca. 1920 and subsequently published much of it. The original was not included in the collection of diaries and papers that the Burnham family later presented to the Chicago Art Institute.

North Atlantic cultural bias. After returning to Chicago, he wrote his friend Charles Moore that “the dive into the Orient has been like a dream. The lands, the people and their customs are all very strange and of absorbing interest. It surprises me to find how much this trip has modified my views, not only regarding the extreme East, but regarding ourselves and our European precedents. It will take time to get a true perspective of it all in my mind.” Through the spring and summer of 1905, Burnham worked with Anderson on the Philippine plans and with Edward Bennett on the plan for San Francisco. “We design to produce a condition,” he wrote to a friend, “which shall make Manila what the Spaniards used to call it—‘The Pearl of the Orient.’ ”¹⁵

Despite Burnham’s pro-imperialist political sentiments, and the generally “imperial” manner of his and all “City Beautiful” planning, the Manila plan was remarkable in its simplicity and its cognizance of Philippine conditions and traditions. Concise and straightforward, its technical recommendations for streets, parks, railroads, and public buildings echoed many of Burnham’s ideas for Washington, Cleveland, and San Francisco. Yet, its qualifying details took proper note of the tropical climate and the definite “mañana” ambience of the Spanish-Philippine tradition. New public buildings for cultural and governmental institutions would be grouped appropriately into a large civic center near the bay and south of the old walled inner city. The arrangement of such buildings would be formal in the sense of facing on central open squares and plazas, but the actual recommendations called for less pompous and monumental treatment than had seemed appropriate in Europe and America.¹⁶

¹⁵ Burnham to Charles Moore, March 13, 1905, in Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham*, I, 245; Burnham, Diary, Sept. 14, 1906; Burnham to J. G. White, April 10, 1905, Burnham Papers.

¹⁶ Burnham prefaced the plan with a concise statement of objectives: “(1) development of waterfront and location of parks and parkways so as to give proper means of recreation to every quarter of the city; (2) a street system securing direct and easy communication from every part of the city to every other part; (3) location of building sites for various activities; (4) development of waterways for transportation; (5) summer resorts.” Daniel H. Burnham, “Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila,” *Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects* (Washington, 1906), 135–151. Original copies of the official typescript report are in the Burnham Papers, Chicago Art Institute Library, and in the possession

The need for more open and convenient transportation routes in the existing areas of gridiron street arrangement prompted Burnham to recommend superimposed diagonal arteries, radiating from the civic core to all the outlying sections. Such an arrangement, he suggested, "would be entirely fitting for both practical and sentimental reasons; practical because the center of governmental activity should be readily accessible from all sides; sentimental because every section of the Capital City should look with deference toward the symbol of the Nation's power. . . ." In most such situations, he contended, "the planning of a town should be carried out [so] that a person may pass from any given point to any other point along a reasonably direct line." New and future streets would conform as much as possible to the natural contours of the land. While allowing prime space along the river and the seashore for the use of private clubs and the building of a luxury hotel, Burnham also expressed his democratic tendencies by reserving even larger spaces for public parks and recreational facilities. Indeed, the Manila plan included much that was familiar to students of Burnham's other work and involved solutions to urban problems that he deemed appropriate for cities everywhere. And like most other examples of City Beautiful planning, it focused on public facilities alone, unfortunately bypassing as outside its purview the ever crucial social problem of better housing for the poor.¹⁷

The uniqueness of the Manila report, as compared to other examples of City Beautiful planning, rested largely in Burnham's awareness of the uniqueness of Manila itself. "Most of the existing buildings," he noted, "were erected in Spanish times and are of distinctly Spanish type. They were for the most part built of wood with projecting second stories. . . . The roof which still further overhangs the building was commonly covered with beautiful dull red tile, and the effect of the whole is unusually pleasing. . . . The old Spanish churches and the old Spanish government buildings are especially interesting and in view of their beauty and practical suitability to local conditions could be profitably taken as examples of

of the author. The printed version is noted for the convenience of the reader. The complicated problem of social priorities in City Beautiful planning is discussed in detail in my dissertation, cited above (especially chapters 9, 10, and 16), and in my forthcoming book.

¹⁷ Burnham, "Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila," 136.

future structures." In the older sections, "the general effect of the existing well-shaded, narrow streets," he thought, was "picturesque and should be maintained."¹⁸

He prefaced his recommendations for the treatment of the waterfront with attention to "protracted periods of intense heat during which all exertion is accomplished at excessive cost of physical strength." Recognizing that the "climate conditions are unchangeable," he believed nevertheless that "means for mitigating their effects are fortunately within reach. Besides the possibility of abundant foliage and fountains of water," he observed, "Manila possesses the greatest resources for recreation and refreshments in its river and its ocean bay. Whatever portion of either have been given up to private use should be reclaimed where possible, and such portions as are still under public control should be developed and forever maintained for the use and enjoyment of the people." Fountains should be employed whenever possible to furnish, as in Rome and Washington, esthetic and psychological relief from the long summer heat. "If the use of parks as an architectural accessory has long been common," he suggested, "it has remained for the modern city with its immense and congested population to show the necessity of them as breathing places for the people. These parks are oftenest of two types—playfields of moderate size in the heart of the city, and large sylvan stretches located in the outskirts where more ample areas permit the laying out of beautiful walks and drives in the midst of a romantic landscape."¹⁹

One remnant of old Manila that Burnham believed should not be preserved was the ancient moat surrounding the inner city, or "Intramuros." Now stagnant and hazardous to health, Burnham urged that the moat be drained and filled, as the Hapsburgs had done with the moat in Vienna, and planted with trees and grass to provide a useful and novel elongated park. Less drastic modifications, however, should be made to the old city walls. "Certain of the old walls surrounding the Intramuros," he wrote, "have been in existence since the sixteenth century. Viewed as one of the few remaining examples of a medieval fortified town, they possess singular historical and archeological interest while their imposing appearance gives them a monumental value. The objections to their pres-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 137, 139, 140.

ence is based on alleged obstructions of traffic and ventilation. As obstacles to the free circulation of air, their moderate height compared to adjacent buildings seems to make them comparatively unobjectionable. With regard to their disadvantages as obstacles to traffic, their method of construction" would allow "piercing of an occasional gateway without destroying their effect. . . ." ²⁰

Another feature of the Manila landscape that Burnham saw as unusually promising was the neglected system of canals. "The narrow canals or esteros ramifying throughout Manila, with their almost stagnant water and their unsanitary mud banks, would appear at first sight to be undesirable adjuncts of the city," he wrote. "Yet for transportation purposes they are of the utmost value, and in spite of the serious problems involved in properly widening, bridging, and maintaining them, they should be preserved" since "their availability to the poorest boatman" would make them "peculiarly valuable." The estero, he believed, could be "not only an economical vehicle for the transaction of public business; it can become as in Venice, an element of beauty." ²¹

While taking account of the city's unique facilities and making recommendations for their modification or preservation, Burnham could not resist his penchant for European allusions as he closed his report: "On the point of rapid growth," he wrote, "yet still small in area, possessing the bay of Naples, the winding river of Paris, and the canals of Venice, Manila has before it an opportunity unique in the history of modern times, the opportunity to create a unified city equal to the greatest of the Western World with the unparalleled and priceless addition of a tropical setting." ²²

The proposed summer capital of Baguio, on the other hand, was less "tropical" than Manila but no less exotic. Situated to the north in the rugged mountains of Luzon, the seasonal government and resort town should combine efficiency, Burnham believed, with a deference to the scenic and romantic setting. "The Baguio meadow," he reported, "is about one half mile wide by three-fourths of a mile long, and is roughly elliptical in shape." Within the larger setting of very high mountains, the town was immediately "surrounded on all sides by low hills attaining an elevation of 100 or

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 141–142.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 148–149.

²² *Ibid.*, 151.

200 feet above it. At two points, on the north and south, the encircling ridges sink nearly to the level of the central plain; the south opening admits the new Benguet Road" from Manila "and the northern opening gives exit to a small stream which rises in the valley and makes its way toward the north. The essential conditions are, therefore, an enclosed hollow dominated by low hills and connecting ridges." The central problem, then, was "finding the best location within this area for the principal elements of the town, namely, municipal buildings, and National Government buildings."²³

Burnham assumed that "approximately level ground is the most convenient for the transaction of business," and that the business district should occupy "the level floor of the meadow and the gentler slopes of the ridge to the Northwest. The municipal buildings, while demanding close contact with the business quarter, should yet be given a location and a set of approaches of unmistakable dignity." The government buildings, also, while needing to be "reasonably accessible from the business quarter, should be located and so treated in their approaches and surroundings as to make clear their preeminence over all other buildings of the city." From neighboring elevations, therefore, since "the surroundings of the Baguio plain respond . . . to these conditions, the two principal groups, National and Municipal, thus face one another from opposite ends of the valley." A line drawn between the centers of each composition, in fact, would nearly bisect the valley and form "the natural main axis of the town, and should be treated as an open esplanade. . . ."²⁴

Except for the main axis running northeast and southwest between the municipal and governmental centers, the roads and streets of Baguio would necessarily be of an irregular nature following the contours of the mountainous terrain. Recreational and residential building areas would adjoin and radiate from the main areas of the town wherever practical and esthetically appropriate. Baguio was laid out, Burnham later wrote, "on a plan similar to the plan made by L'Enfant for the City of Washington, in that it pro-

²³ Daniel H. Burnham, "Report of the Proposed Plan of the city of Baguio, Province of Benguet, P. I," *Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects*, 151–156.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 152.

vides for such public buildings as may be needed for governmental offices, for the service of the city itself, and for the healthfulness, convenience, and recreation of the people; and all these functions are so arranged as to make a unified and orderly city." Like the longer and more detailed Manila plan, Burnham considered the Baguio report "frankly preliminary in character," and hoped merely that it might "seem to suggest the general lines along which the new municipality may grow into a composition of convenience and beauty." Indeed, Burnham's closing sentence of the longer Manila Plan embodied his sentiments and his wishes for Baguio as well. "In keeping pace with the national development," he wrote, "and in working persistently and consciously toward an organic plan in which the visible orderly grouping of its parts one to another will secure their mutual support and enchantment, Manila may rightly hope to become the adequate expression of the destiny of the Filipino people as well as an enduring witness to the efficient services of America in the Philippine Islands."²⁵

In undertaking the Philippine work, Burnham charged no professional fees, accepting reimbursement only for expenses directly connected with his work. His assistant, Anderson, received a salary as Bennett had in San Francisco, but Burnham believed that eschewing personal compensation would allow him more freedom and lend greater weight to his proposals. In accepting the reports on behalf of the government, Secretary of War Taft thanked Burnham for his "very great generosity and self-sacrifice." It was, Taft wrote, "one of those rare instances of devotion to the public interest of which I wish we could see more. I wish to give personal testimony to the comfort you have given to those of us who are charged with the responsibility of making improvements . . . in the certainty that we . . . can make no mistake in following your direction and lead for the next fifty years." The *Inland Architect* echoed Taft's praise. Burnham's work in the Philippines, it believed, would establish a plan that would, "in the years to come, develop civilizing influences side by side with commercial advancement. It is too soon to speak biographically of Mr. Burnham's work in these directions," it suggested, "but the country has in him a combination of rare gifts, the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 152, 156; Burnham, "Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila," 151.

development of which will be best appreciated in another generation.”²⁶

In submitting the report to Taft, Burnham ended his official connection with the project. Yet he subsequently assumed almost full responsibility for selecting a permanent architect to go to the islands and begin the job of carrying out his plans. He also maintained, through his friend Cameron Forbes, a lifelong interest in the progress of the Philippine work. He was especially delighted when his protégé Forbes was later appointed governor general of the Philippines.

Burnham began interviewing prospective managing architects as soon as he returned home, but he wrote to Forbes in August 1905 that he had not yet found the right man. Several promising prospects had “entertained the idea,” he said, “but it is the old question of patriotic duty as against money interests.” Finally, however, he found his man in William E. Parsons, a graduate of Yale, Columbia, and the vaunted French *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. Parsons’ quiet creativity, his apparent fund of practical wisdom, and his *Beaux Arts* credentials impressed Burnham greatly. Persuading the young architect to execute the Philippine work was one of Burnham’s most fortunate accomplishments.²⁷

In concert with Cameron Forbes, Parsons worked intensely for eight years in the islands, designing buildings, executing and detailing Burnham’s larger plans, and using Burnham’s Manila and Baguio reports as instructive models for his own city plans of Cebu and Zamboanga. Following the advice in Burnham’s reports to learn from the better Spanish and Philippine examples, Parsons in general designed wooden and ferro-concrete buildings of warmth, efficiency, and attractive simplicity. Utilizing the vocabulary of earlier Spanish-Philippine architecture, Parsons’ buildings, with few exceptions, had plain, broad surfaces of solid white or pastel

²⁶ Burnham to War Department, Bureau of Insular Affairs, July 31, 1905; Burnham to Taft, Oct. 6, 1905, Burnham Papers; Taft to Burnham, Oct. 13, 1905, Charles Moore Collection, Library of Congress; Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 29; *The Inland Architect and News Record*, XLIV (Oct., 1904), 1.

²⁷ Burnham to Forbes, June 27, Aug. 7, 1905; Pierce Anderson to William E. Parsons, n.d., Burnham Papers; William E. Parsons, “Burnham as a Pioneer in City Planning,” *Architectural Record*, XXXVIII (July, 1915), 17–25; Moore *Daniel H. Burnham*, II, 178.

colors and were usually topped by handsome tile roofs. His most dominant architectural elements, both functionally and aesthetically, were the broad, deep archways and the shaded porches and covered loggias that connected the cool interiors of his spacious buildings with the light and heat of the tropical climate. Suggestive of the more famous contemporaneous work of Irving Gill and his California followers, Parsons' best designs combined a successful mixture and abstraction of Spanish, Oriental, and modern "industrial" building to forge a new architecture appropriate for a tropical climate. Whereas Gill abstracted and drew from Spanish-American examples, Parsons independently drew inspiration from similar features in the Spanish-Philippine tradition.²⁸ Especially in his designs for the Philippine General Hospital, the Manila Hotel, the Army-Navy Club, the Normal School, and the Y.M.C.A. in Manila, and in his plans for schools and public structures throughout the provinces and barrios, Parsons produced buildings of an architectural quality that rivaled the best modern work in Europe and the United States. Drawing from both Spanish examples and the elegant simplicity of the rural Philippine vernacular, the American buildings would continue to serve as models for Philippine building both before and after the Second World War.

As an architect, as a pure designer, Daniel Burnham would not have done as well. Better than Burnham or anyone else in his office, Parsons was able with consummate skill to detail and execute Burnham's plans. Perhaps Burnham's and Parsons' combined architectural success stemmed partially from their overall images of the Philippine adventure. Perhaps the Philippines suggested to both of them an exotic ambience that called for a lighter and less formal treatment than Burnham deemed fitting for American mainland cities. By generally avoiding, at least in the earlier buildings, the derivative and grandiose Beaux-Arts neo-classicism that marred Burnham's plans for Cleveland and Chicago, Parsons helped assure, somewhat ironically, that the "City Beautiful" movement would realize its greatest architectural success, not on American, but on foreign colonial soil.

²⁸ Parsons, "Burnham as a Pioneer in City Planning," 17; A. N. Rebori, "The Work of William E. Parsons in the Philippine Islands," *Architectural Record*, XLI (April, 1917), 305-324 (May, 1917), 423-434. I am currently preparing an article on Parsons, discussing in greater detail his special contributions to American architecture in the Philippines.

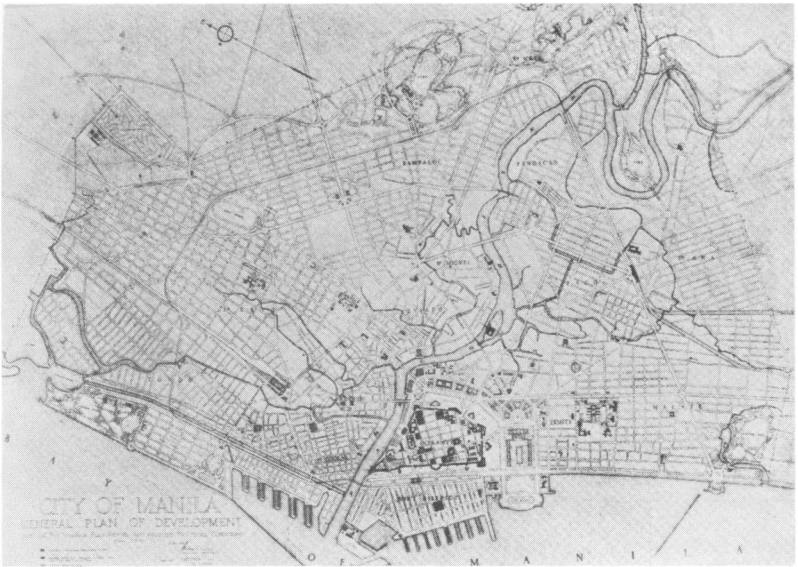


PLATE 1

Burnham's General Plan of Manila (1905) with important public buildings erected between 1906 and 1914 indicated in black. Central Mall and government areas with radiating thoroughfares reminiscent of Washington, D.C. and Cleveland.

(Architectural Record)



PLATE 2

Air view of central Manila (early 1920s). Residential section (lower right). Mall, hotel, and club buildings (upper left). Government buildings (upper right). Shoreline development (lower left) similar to Burnham's treatment of the Chicago lake front.

(National Archives, Washington)

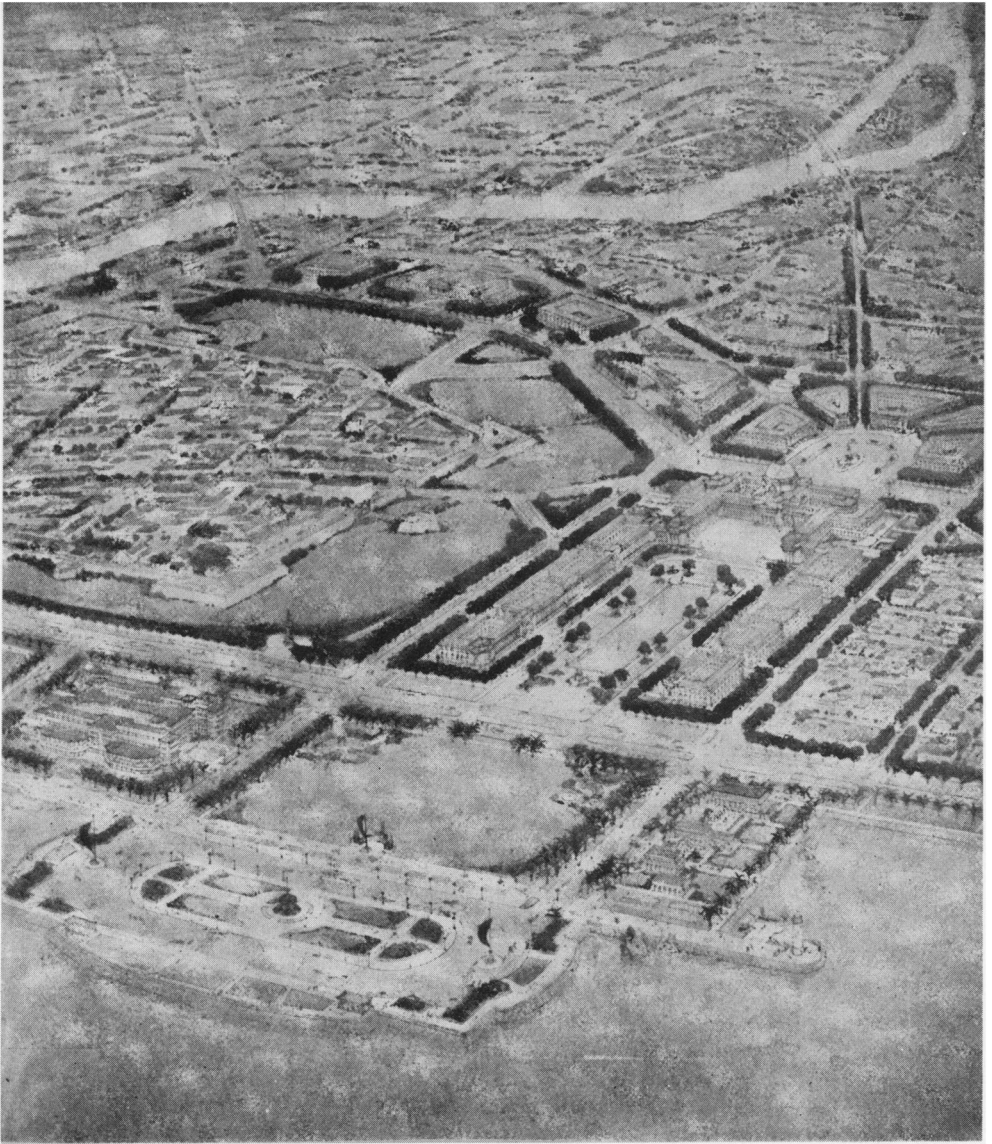


PLATE 3

Birdseye view of central Manila, as planned by Burnham and detailed by Parsons. Mall and Luneta (center). Club buildings (lower right). Hotel (lower left). Projected park surrounding old walled city (left center).

(Architectural Record)

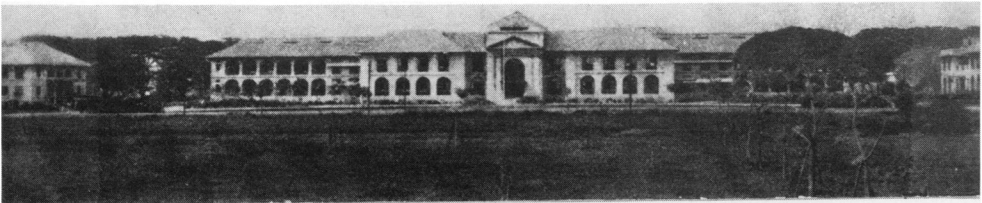


PLATE 4

Philippine General Hospital, front facade. Designed by Parsons. Completed 1910.

(Architectural Record)



PLATE 5

Parson's Philippines General Hospital (1910) showing one of the numerous interior courtyards, surrounded by open-air corridors connecting the sick bays. An abstract reference to the area's earlier Spanish-Philippine buildings, strikingly similar to Irving Gill's California progression from traditional Spanish-American sources.

(author)



PLATE 6

Air view of central Manila (early 1920s). Parson's Manila Hotel (1912) (lower left). Mall and public gardens (lower right) and park surrounding old, walled city (upper center).

(National Archives, Washington)

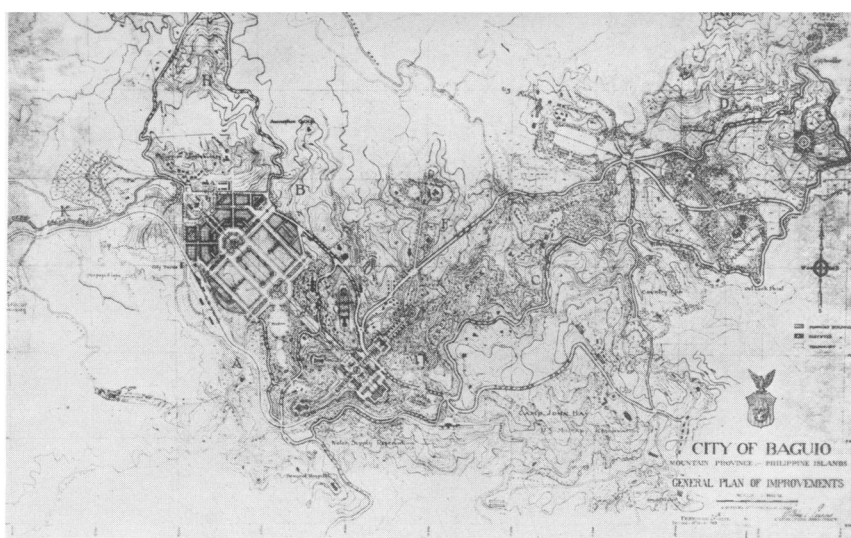
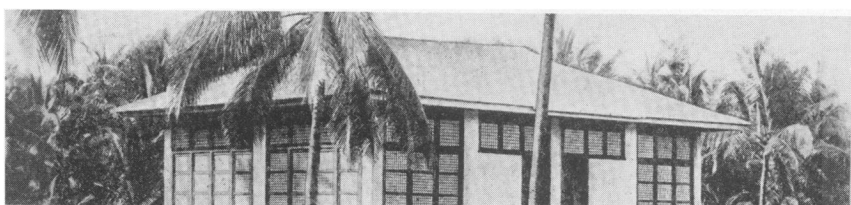
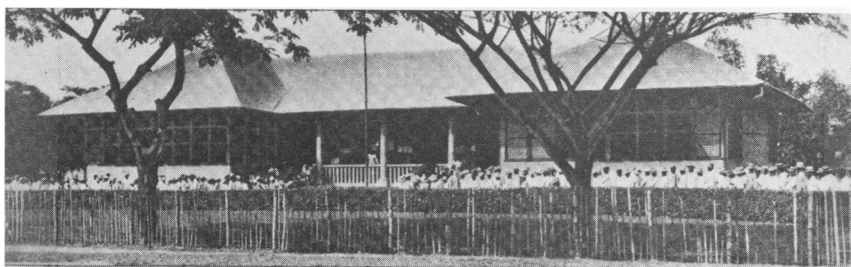


PLATE 7

General Plan of Baguio, as conceived by Burnham (1905) and detailed by Parsons. Government buildings on straighter, main axes. Commercial, residential, and recreational facilities on surrounding slopes.

(Architectural Record)



PLATES 8, 9, 10

Typical eight-room, six-room, and two-room school houses (top to bottom) (ca. 1910) constructed of wood and of reinforced concrete and built throughout the barrios and provinces. Here Parsons acknowledged the elegant simplicity of both the rural Philippine vernacular and the developing “modern” architecture of America and Europe.

(Architectural Record)

Unhampered, under the colonial circumstances, by cumbersome democratic processes, unharassed for the most part by local opposition, as had been the case in San Francisco, the building of Baguio and the redevelopment of Manila proceeded as quickly and surely as Burnham could ever have hoped for. Temporary setbacks occurred, of course, and various elements of the Burnham plans never materialized, but on the whole progress was clear and continuous. Forbes kept Burnham posted for the rest of his life on the progress of his plans both in spirit and detail. "Please remember," he wrote in a typical letter, "that the Burnham plan is sacred and is being strictly adhered to."²⁹

As Burnham had become increasingly involved with the Philippines, he found himself defending more vigorously his and his country's colonial efforts. "I was in Springfield, Massachusetts," he wrote to Forbes on June 9, 1905, "at luncheon with the members of

²⁹ Writing of Manila in 1928, Forbes stated that Burnham's plans had been "in the main adhered to. The central park feature was immediately undertaken, and those improvements are already complete and a blessing to the inhabitants not only of the city, but of all the Islands. . . . Mr. Burnham's great conception called for a park area of nearly thirty acres, which was laid out upon a new area reclaimed from the harbor by the construction of breakwaters filled in by dredging an additional section of the harbor. To this new land was moved the new Luneta or park, where the evening band concerts were held and the population gathered for their evening stroll. A park was constructed in the centre of this so-called Luneta Extension to which the government gave the appropriate name of Burnham Park, and upon which a decorated flag pole has been erected in Mr. Burnham's memory. There was abundant room for beautiful playgrounds, and this new area was flanked on either side by impressive semi-public buildings."

Forbes was also enthusiastic over Baguio. Within ten years of its inception, the few original houses had "multiplied to several hundred buildings and the population of the city had increased with each season. The movement of the government to Baguio stimulated its growth very greatly. Each year a slightly more ambitious programme was undertaken. Following the construction of the government centre, which was economically built of temporary materials around an open park or plaza, space was reserved for later construction of a permanent group of government buildings to be built on a larger scale around the temporary central group. There were not lacking thoughtful Filipinos who felt, as did General Aguinaldo, that Baguio ought ultimately to be the permanent capital of the Islands. A line down the main axis laid out by Mr. Burnham was cleared through the pines, the hills terraced, and an artificial lake constructed in the central valley. The park around the lake has been appropriately named for Mr. Burnham. Buildings and stores sprang up along the line of the main street, and in the business centre markets were built. . . ." William Cameron Forbes, *The Philippine Islands* (Boston and New York, 1928), I, 404–405, 583. William Parsons also noted, as early as 1915, that Burnham's Manila and Baguio "suggestions are being realized either in the acquisition of street areas or in actual construction. In fact, much of the arterial framework has been constructed and nailed down . . . with permanent public and semi-public buildings." Parsons, "Burnham As a Pioneer in City Planning," 24.

the Board of Trade and met your friend Sam Bowles of the *Republican*. I said some very emphatic things across the table and Mr. Bowles said he was very much surprised at what I had to say. I asked him if he was an anti and he said he was, whereupon I laid myself out . . . at least so far as the Governor Wright and the Commissioner from Massachusetts Forbes are concerned. I don't think Mr. Bowles got much comfort out of the conversation." Burnham's support prompted Forbes to write him that he only wished "we had a few more champions like you gathered around."³⁰

Indeed, as the years passed and added their countless demands on his thoughts, Burnham continued to ponder the Philippines and the meaning of what he deemed to be a different kind of empire. His firm, his family, and a plan for his home city would from then on consume his active attention, but a letter of 1906 to Forbes expressed a recurring lifelong sentiment: "My mind turns longingly to the Orient," he wrote, "and I would like to be there again. . . ." Burnham never actually returned, but he did not have to. Administered by Forbes and detailed by Parsons, his plans had become a monument to his presence.³¹

Though an integral part of a dubious American imperial adventure and rationalized always in the staunchest of imperialist rhetoric, the architectural phase of the American mission to the Philippines wrought better than even its mentors knew. While inevitably inhibited, as with much physical planning, by subsequently inadequate or conservative social and economic policies, the Burnham plans for Philippine urban development ultimately helped to improve and reorder the national landscape. Despite their autocratic origins and their initial deference, especially in the new city of Baguio, to elitist and special colonial American interests, their general functional and esthetic improvements would continue to serve the Filipinos well. Though the cities were heavily damaged during World War II, the general outlines of Burnham's innovations survived that conflict as a partial basis for post-war Philippine urban development.³²

³⁰ Burnham to Forbes, June 9, 1905, Burnham Papers; Forbes to Burnham, May 28, 1906; Forbes Papers.

³¹ Burnham to Forbes, n.d. 1906, Forbes Papers.

³² On the basis of maps, photographs, and the recollections of contemporaries, American architectural influences in the Philippines were understandably more ob-

Concurrent with such development, however, the Philippine cities have continued to experience both new and age-old urban problems and have suffered and decayed like most of the world's cities. Burnham's work, like most other planning, did not solve any problems for all time or all problems at any time. But his plans were a new beginning and they made a difference once. As a creature of time and a consciously time-bound figure of history, Burnham could hardly have asked for more.

vious and dominant in the late 1930s than they were following the holocaust of war and the subsequent post-war rebuilding. Though such structures as the General Hospital, the Manila Hotel, and the older school buildings have been poorly maintained in subsequent years, it is something of a tribute to Burnham, Parsons, and other architects of the period that so much of their work was restored and rebuilt in the post-war years.