

**Multifamily blocks of the IESS**  
(Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security)  
Guayaquil-Ecuador



0.1 Image of the building

Source: MULTIFAMILY BUILDINGS IN ECUADOR  
Three cases between the decades of 50 and 70  
Guayaquil, Quito and Cuenca  
Date: October 2008

**1. Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden**

It is a set of multifamily blocks aimed for low-income social sectors.

The nomenclature code is **RES**

**1.1 Current name of the building**

Multifamily blocks of IESS (Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security).  
Guayaquil-Ecuador

**1.2 Protection status and date**

The mentioned buildings are not under inventory.

**1.3 Number and names of the streets**

Av. Quito, Venezuela, J. Antepara

**1.4 Town**

Guayaquil, Ecuador

**1.5 Province / State**

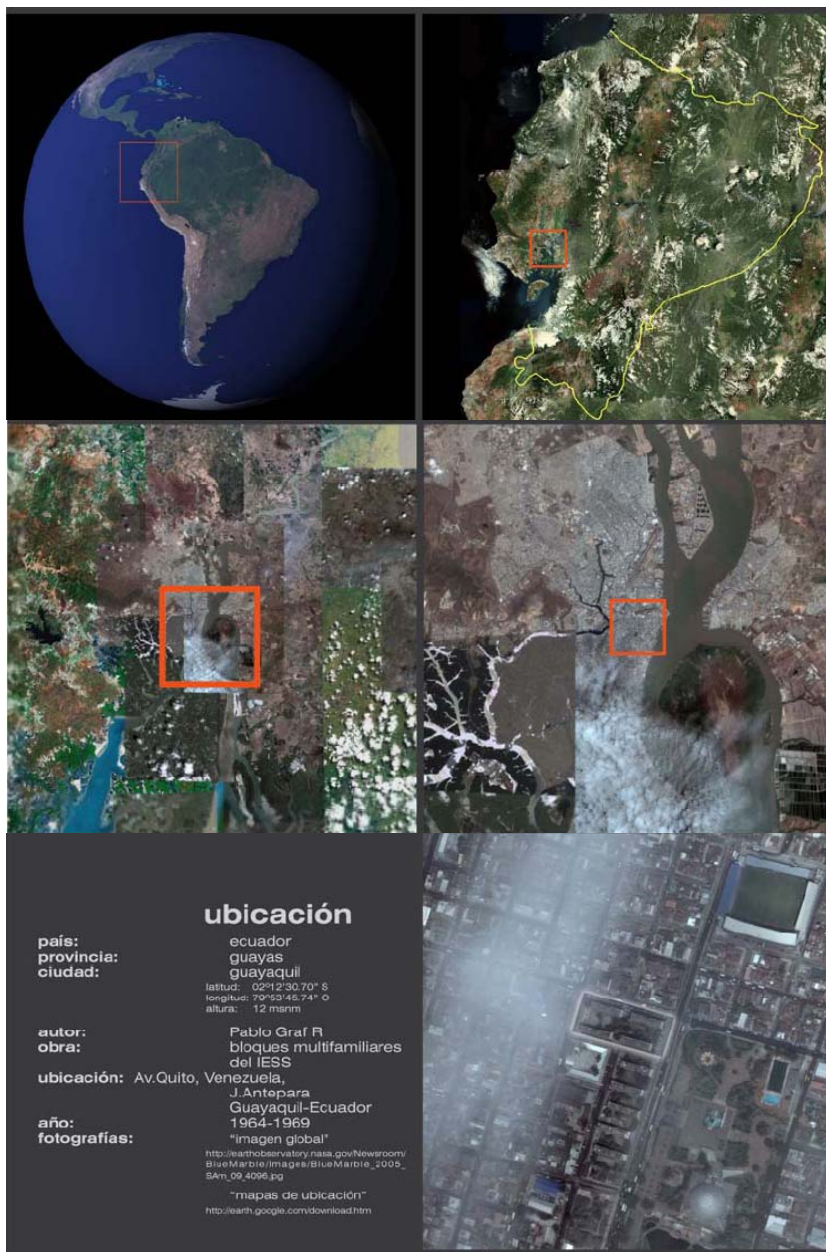
Guayas

**1.6 Zip Code**

**1.7 País**

Ecuador

## 1.8 National grid reference



## **1.9 Classification / Typology**

RES

## **1.10 Protection Status and Date**

The buildings mentioned are not under inventory.

## **2.0 History of building**

### **2.1 Original Purpose**

The original purpose of this project dates back to the decade of the sixties, epoch when the Ecuadorian state evidences obvious intentions of giving solution to the housing problem in the whole national territory; in this way they undertook projects developed in diverse regions of the country. Several examples take place in the main cities of the country, in which housing proposals are considered, directed to low-income sectors, therefore, there is an implied condition of optimizing the space and generating considerable increases in relation to the population density; under these conditions, it is noticed the advances obtained with the Modern Architecture at an international level, at the point of taken it as one indisputable referent for the execution of the required architecture; one of those examples is without a doubt, the one corresponding to the Multifamily Blocks of IESS, located in the city of Guayaquil and in use still up to this date.

### **2.2 Dates of commission / completion**

The dates of execution comprise an approximate period of five years; having it started in 1964 and completed in 1969; at a later time another phase is undertaken, but in it, modifications that distort the original nature of the project appear; an important referral to the Habitat of Marseille that, with the mentioned modifications demonstrates to lack the characteristics and good qualities expressed in the first phase, precisely the one corresponding to the period from 1964 to 1969.

### **2.3 Architectonic and other designers**

The work was commissioned to an architect from Guayaquil, Pablo Graf, and it was made by means of the promoting entity, IESS.

(Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security). Pablo Graf R was the chief designer, who at that time gets involved at an exceptional grade with an enterprise of public character; in fact, the great majority of his works are directly related with the private area.

## **2.4 Other associates to construction**

## **2.5 Significant alterations**

The most important alterations are those referred to a second stage of the construction; beyond that and in the four blocks corresponding to the first phase, we can notice the addition of a business purpose for the first plants, spaces that, in the original design were conceived as free areas.

## **2.6 Current Purpose**

The main purpose of the blocks continues to be principally that of low-cost housing, but as it is stated in the previous item, with the passing of years and in correspondence with dates difficult to specify, the above mentioned business purpose appears, which is one that is notorious at the areas adjacent to the public road.

## **2.7 Current Condition**

The building, affected today, between the chaotic growth of the city and other transformations brought with it, even when considering its FAIRLY GOOD state – due to lack of maintenance – it is still an example to consider, one referent and an incentive for the generations able to assume the challenge of living in a way different to what is commonly considered conventional.

## **3.0 Description**

### **3.1 General Description**

Set of four housing blocks inserted strategically in the plot of the city – Guayaquil -; their lay out follows the directions of the streets; a suitable distance and position between each block is made, which has the intention of enabling an effective exposure to the sun and ventilation. Each block has six housing elevated plants, in addition to a ground floor, initially free, there is also a multiple purpose terrace.

The housing solutions are duplex apartments. This practice makes it possible the space optimization, as well as a most effective sun exposition in the conditions in which the apartments are distributed- in rows, conforming longitudinal layouts -.

In the ground floor the use of pilotis is clearly visible; although for the Multifamily blocks of the IESS, regrettably, plants do not keep free; one of the reasons is certainty is security, connected to an arguable conception in relation to space optimization, which is another reason, from which commercial usage appears, but in the main referent they did not exist.

Horizontal common circulation areas are displayed, by which access to the apartments is possible.

Closedowns with wall curtain practiced in the lateral façades of every block; for the Multifamily blocks of the IESS a predominance of fullness is noticeable over the openings.

### **3.2 Construction**

The construction system, principally made of reinforced concrete, is on a good extent at sight, up to the point that in the lower plants the structural pillars are exposed, once that condition was given, they have been coated by mosaics.

Concrete is used, either for foundations, beams, slabs and pillars.

Lighter materials are used to accomplish the goal of defining spaces, distributing plants and closing openings left by the supporting structure; the plastered block predominates, the tile, the metal protections, the common metal doors and the individual wooden doors.

The structure projects to the exterior in a framework that models and confers horizontality to each block.

### **3.3 Context**

The project proposes a balanced use of the land where it is constructed; in this way they generate spaces that enable ventilation, access of light and strong connections with the urban surroundings.

It is obvious that under these conditions, the withdrawal distances are adequate and generous; therefore the perimeter area or other related ground rules are solved.

His height is moderate, although bigger than the existent one at the close buildings, which, it is not a problem, but a mode of showing up like milestone at a surroundings where there does not exist an architectonic or natural component that represents bigger contributing factors.

#### **4.0 Evaluation**

##### **4.1 Technical Evaluation**

The structural system carried out, remaining at sight, defines a regular set of openings, treated according to specific needs. It ends up by defining upright projections where the variations delimited in a fairly good plot (6.50x3.00m), for this case, is brightened by the use of another color. Zooming also evidences the detail with which semitransparent diagrams resolve, everything based on a thin plot of concrete (21x21cm), where a design with still smaller elements is inserted, into the distance we can distinguish a particular texture; this is an additional hit, where the contextualization of material is used again, resulting in elements with a greater contact with the exterior, in favor then of an effective access of light, ventilation and visual relation with the exterior.

##### **4.2 Social evaluation**

The multifamily blocks belonging to the I.E.S.S. present a set of conditions that make it an exceptional example to consider for future interventions; in the first place and highlighting what was asserted, its relation with the surroundings is close and dynamic, even when we know about the present problems of security in a city like Guayaquil; even though, there are still parts of the complex that intensify its contact with the urban plot.

It is necessary to recognize the interest demonstrated by the Ecuadorian State at that moment - back in the sixties - interest regarded to the feasible and practical responses, directed to solve the problem of housing. In this context, it is valid to consider examples for the present-day possibility of retaking ideas to offer effective solutions to a still existing problem.

##### **4.3 Cultural and aesthetic evaluation**

The observation of the different images allows the verification of the obvious separation existing between the possible uses, having all the lower plants assignments related to an eminently collective purpose, where the same standard solution defines it, in a way of delivery on behalf of the volumes of room toward the zone of implantation and urban plot. In this way a virtual vacuum

is obtained where the main delivery comes true by means of the structural pillars, around which the spaces in the lower plant fit in; the section of the resulting plants, being minor than the upper plants, permit the generation of peripheral circulations that favor the user access, an effective mode to strengthen the potentially public character of these zones.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to notice the existent interrelation between the volumes considered originally, the distances studied as to allow the inclusion of natural elements, adequate ventilation, an effective exposure to the sun, guaranteeing the accessibility to the different zones of the buildings, that is, by permanent or eventual users; finding each of these groups, zones with great potential for being used with various purposes ranging from simple circulation, commerce, recreation or actual housing.

Given the functional guidelines exposed in the project, the solutions of the elevations differ between NORTH and SOUTH, being the latter aimed to the general circulation that give way to the accesses of every department; the modulation is maintained.

The lateral elevations involve floating façades where the different levels are marked and unlike the longitudinal ones, another relation with the urban surroundings nearby are established; there are visual portions more controlled and adequate withdrawal.

As regarded to the favorable aspects of the relation established with the public street, the set integrates in a better way in a larger context, at the point of harmonizing when faced with the presence of other urban objects like an overpass; in general, it has been proposed an adequate transition reflected in elements like vegetal species and generous accessible withdrawals for the passerby that occasionally circulates close to the block of buildings.

#### **4.4 Historical Evaluation**

Even in the urban environment, it is evident that the spirit of these buildings constitutes a real milestone for the zone; being there, the strong contrast existing between the presence of the traditional downtown architecture as opposed to the scale and disposition of the multifamily blocks can be noticed, where a special treatment is intended to the vacuums generated by the distances between blocks.

No doubt, this multifamily complex constitutes a contribution as it regards to the housing issues, and even, with all the deteriorations and transformations carried out, in essence it keeps its original purpose, having even the implied acceptance of authorities and citizenship, after forty years of service life.



At a later time to the resolution of the first stage, four more blocks were built, which resemble in disposition and volume to the original ones, but, they lack of their main characteristics, so we can affirm that they do not have the same value; in any case, their presence denotes an obvious intention of continuing to apply similar solutions for the same problems, nevertheless, once that epoch was gone, no longer have been repeated properly, similar cases.

#### 4.5 General Evaluation

The Multifamily blocks of the IESS in the city of Guayaquil- Ecuador, of the year 1964 -1969project whose author is architect Pablo Graf Rosas, which is still in use at present, with the passing of time it has suffered damages, fortunately reversible, nothing that a well focused intervention cannot solve, because its structure and essence remain, to highlight still more their utilization for housing, honoring their author's original proposals and the vocation of a public institution that in several occasions has shown serious interest on the housing aspect.

It is imperative to search and to rehabilitate each case object of an intense intention and of correct proposals; the examples of Modern Architecture in Ecuador are been discovered with each investigation and their benefits seem to be without doubt larger than the problems provoked in connection with this discipline, reason enough as to propose the possibility of conceiving interventions as a whole in order to retake the hits credited to this architectonic position.

We should also remember that, the resulting benefits of projects like this should be potentiated, at the same time considering that an interdisciplinary work would help in a great deal to the strengthening of the connections with the urban plot and public use, having as an antecedent that the theme of security is not of exclusive related to the architectonic work.

Finally, considering the experimentation with new materials and technology, adding them to the modern proposals (knowing beforehand that we count on serious exponents of an architectonic correct form), it would only be a pleasant and practical exercise with a complete guarantee of order and displayed architectonic quality.

5.0 Documents

5.1 Main references





Pictures 1, 2, 3, taken from the thesis:

**MULTIFAMILY BUILDINGS IN ECUADOR**

Three cases between the 50s and 70s decades

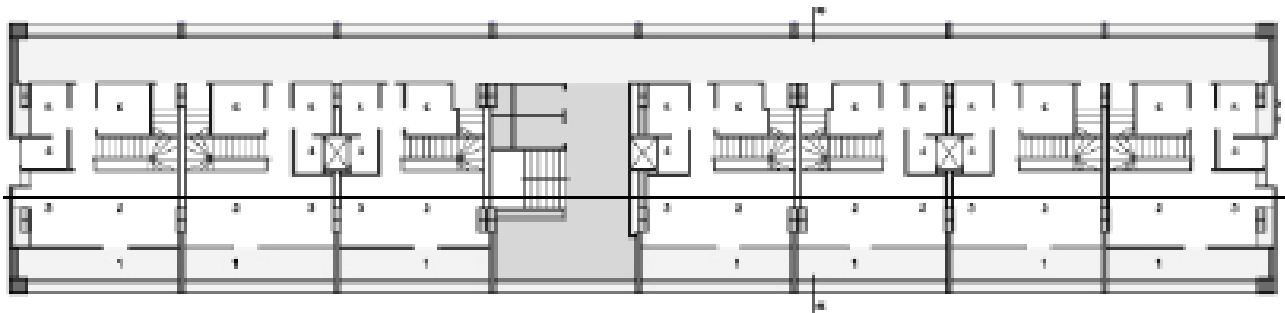
Guayaquil, Quito and Cuenca

Alejandro Vanegas Ramos  
Director: Architect Nicanor Garcia

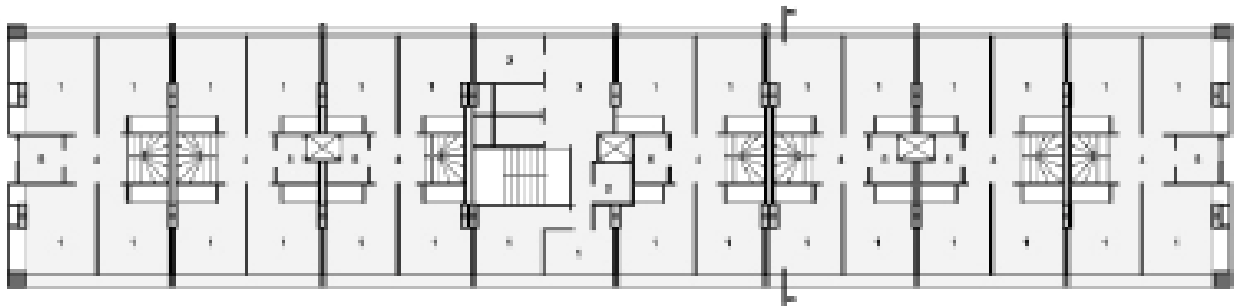
Thesis for the Masters Program in Architectonic Projects.  
State University of Cuenca.  
October 2008

Picture 1 and 3: Alejandro Vanegas; 2: Felipe Cobos

5.2 Additional Material



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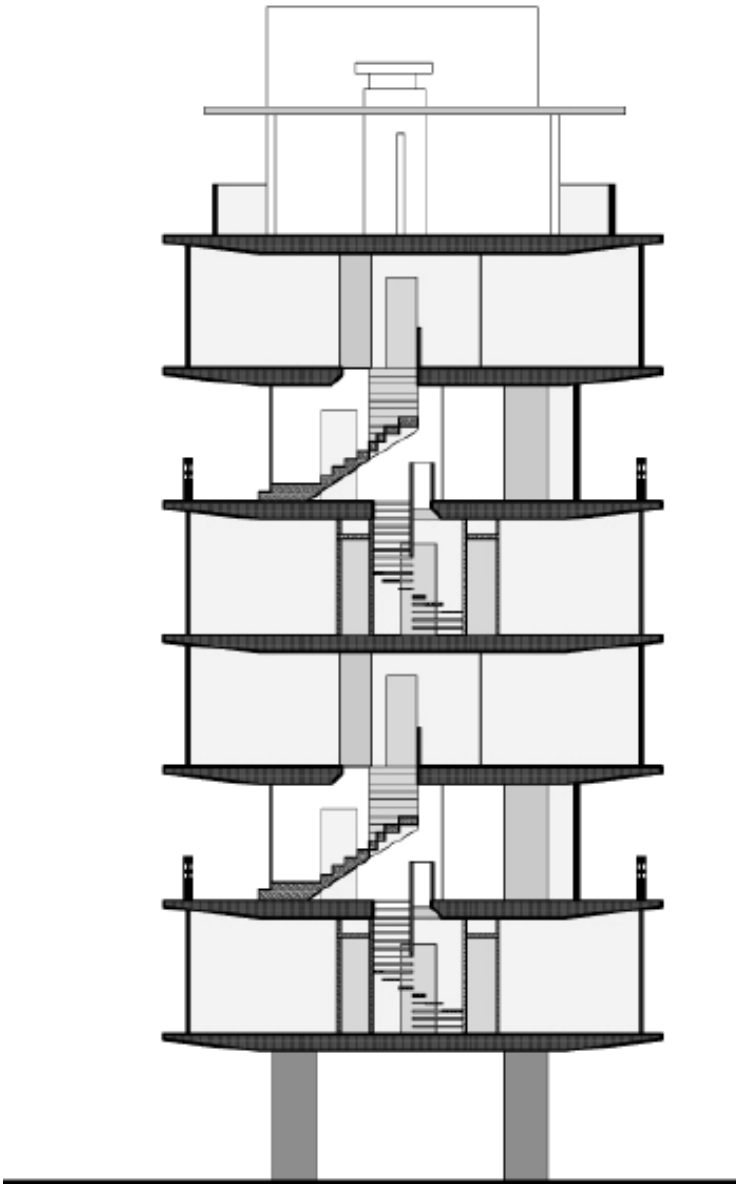


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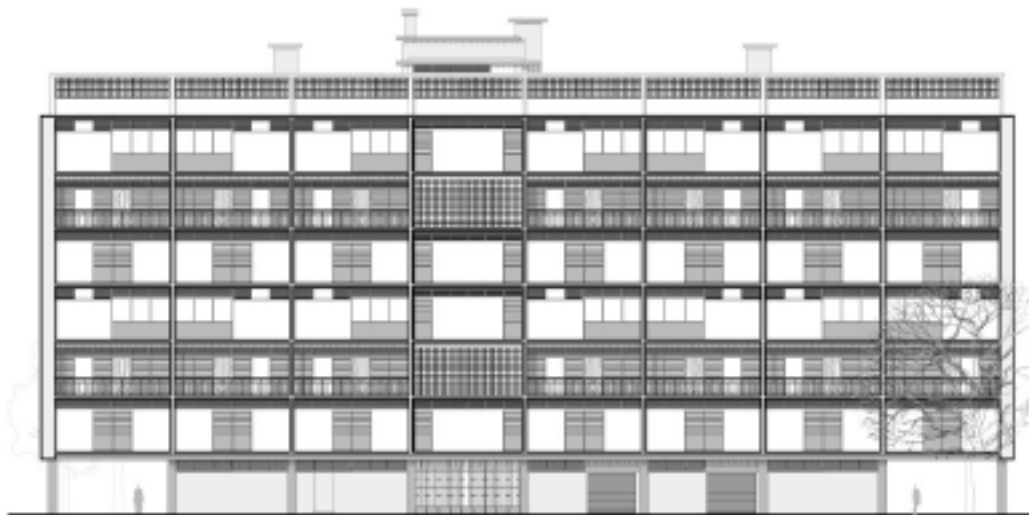


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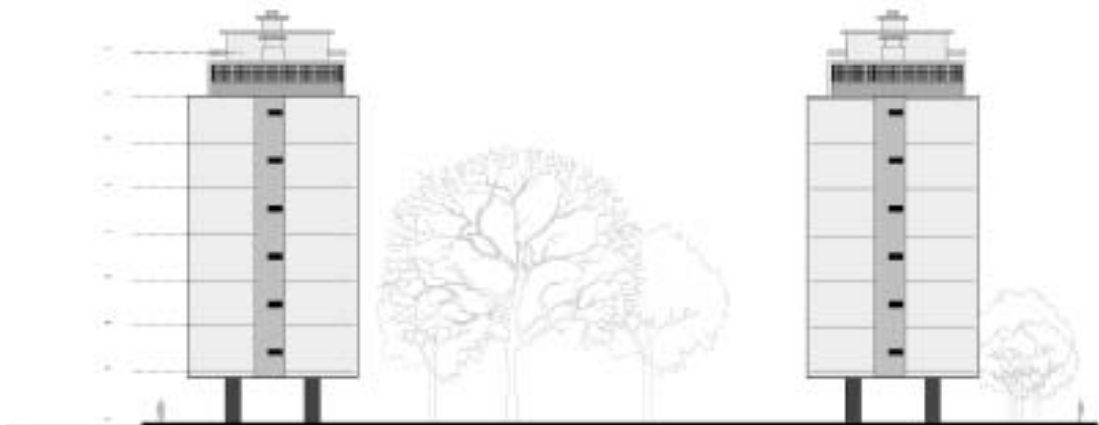
Reference of Architectonic Elevation



Reference of Transversal Cut



Reference of Front Elevation



Reference of the Transversal Projections



Picture 4: Alejandro Vanegas

**5.3 Researcher and Date**

Alejandro Vanegas Ramos

Cuenca, Ecuador

March 2010

**6. Fiche report examination** by ISC/R

Name of examining ISC member: date of examination:

Approval:

Working party/ref. no. NAI ref. no:

Comments: