En la arquitectura tienes que ser libre.
Diego Ponce Bueno

Edificio La Filantrópica

Tipología: Edificio institucional privado
Ubicación: Av. 10 de Agosto y calle Briceño, Quito
Arquitecto diseñador: Diego Ponce Bueno
Arquitectos colaboradores: Fernando Barrera, Alfredo Arellano y José Salinas
Área del terreno: 634 m²
Área construida: 5900 m² - 15 plantas
Año de construcción: 1973

El edificio está ubicado en el perímetro del centro histórico, donde comienza la parte moderna de Quito. Esta ubicación marca un hito referencial en la ciudad. Su ubicación es estratégica pues se encuentra en una zona altamente comercial, bancaria, cultural, cerca de parques públicos, de instituciones públicas y privadas, con todos los servicios de transporte público.

El edificio fue la matriz del Banco La Filantrópica, debido a la pequeña área del terreno se determinó que el área de servicio a clientes se divida en dos niveles. Los restantes pisos estaban destinados para las oficinas ejecutivas del Banco; el subsuelo se determinó para bodegas, archivos y cajas fuertes. En el último piso se planteó un restaurante con servicio al público independiente del banco.

Se planteó una estructura con 4 columnas de gran sección con una ligera inclinación que se manifiesta en las fachadas, se plantearon voladizos de 3 metros en los cuatro sentidos, con lo que lograba áreas libres en beneficio de un mejor aprovechamiento del área, ya que permitía una gran flexibilidad en la implementación de sistemas modulares, que podian ser cambiados en la medida de los requerimientos funcionales del banco.

En las fachadas se implementó el sistema "cortina de vidrio" conformada por perfiles de aluminio y vidrio polarizado bronce que atenuaban la fuerte insolación de la ciudad de Quito, debido a su latitud. Se utilizaron duelas de aluminio como revestimiento de fachadas, que ayudaban a un mejor mantenimiento. Las áreas de servicio al público estaban comunicadas por un vacío entre los mismos y centrado en un *hall* de atención al cliente.

La ubicación del edificio permite una vista panorámica de 300 grados, que fue tomada en cuenta con la implementación de cortinas de vidrio en las fachadas y con la la eliminación de antepechos que hubiesen seccionado la vista.

Para aprovechar estas condiciones de vista panorámica se planteó en el último piso un restaurante giratorio.

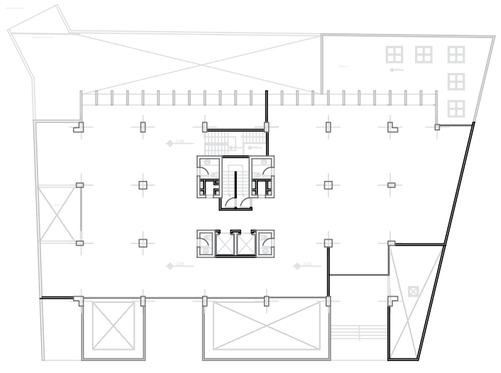
Edificio Computec

Tipología: Edificio de oficinas
Ubicación: Calle Gran Colombia, Quito
Arquitecto diseñador: Diego Ponce Bueno
Arquitectos colaboradores: Fernando Barrera, Alfredo Arellano y José Salinas
Área del terreno: 1184 m²
Área construida: 6100 m² - 10 plantas
Planta tipo: 512 m²
Año de construcción: 1977

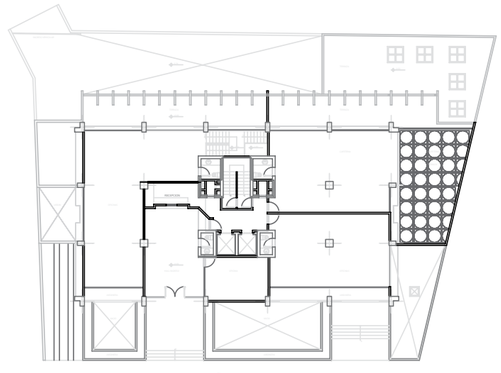
El terreno tiene una ligera pendiente, lo que permite una presencia del edificio en el paisaje. Originalmente se planteó como edificio de oficinas y atención al cliente para la empresa Computec en las plantas principales, oficinas profesionales en el resto de plantas, Centro de Computo (Burroughs), estacionamiento para 42 vehículos y el *penthouse* destinado al estudio de arquitectura de Diego Ponce Arquitectos.

Los materiales y sistemas constructivos incluyen una estructura de hormigón, cortinas de vidrio y las primeras cubiertas de madera laminada en Ecuador.

Es un edificio de amplia flexibilidad, capaz de permitir varios tipos de adecuaciones como el funcionamiento de una tabiquería convencional. Su flexibilidad se evidencia en la remodelación realizada en el año 2008, en que se crearon 12 consultorios médicos por piso, dada su ubicación frente al Hospital Militar.



Planta semisubsuelo



Planta baja

Quito Tenis y Golf Club El Condado

Tipología: Edificio institucional privado
Ubicación: Quito
Arquitecto diseñador: Diego Ponce Bueno
Arquitectos colaboradores: Fernando Barrera, Alfredo Arellano y José Salinas
Constructora: SEMAICA
Área del terreno: 80 ha
Área construida: 15.000 m² - 3 plantas
Año de construcción: 1977

El Quito Tenis y Golf Club se encuentra emplazado en un terreno ubicado en el extremo norte de la ciudad, limitado por tres avenidas: al oeste la Av. San Francisco de Rumiurco; al sur la Av. Antonio José de Sucre; y al este la Av. Manuel Córdova Galarza. El Quito Tenis y Golf Club es uno de los clubes privados más grandes de Latinoamérica, el cual contempla áreas sociales, administrativas, recreacionales, deportivas, de servicio y de circulación.

Desde el punto de vista funcional el ingreso principal y de servicio se realiza por la Av. San Francisco de Rumiurco, situada al lado este. Desde el control de acceso de socios, se ingresa primeramente a vías internas que conducen a la edificación y a los estacionamientos. El acceso al edificio por parte de los socios se hace a través de un gran *hall* que contiene salas de espera y conduce a través de su circulación hacia varios ambientes como las áreas administrativas, grandes salones (con divisiones móviles para ser subdividas en salones mas pequeños según el evento), restaurantes, cafeterías, salas de espera y salas de juegos.

El acceso a la infraestructura deportiva está al lado derecho del ingreso principal, por medio de ella se llegan a los gimnasios con sus servicios inherentes como hidromasajes, saunas, salas de vapor, peluquerías, salas de masajes, salas de descanso, vestidores por género y edad, con áreas de ventilación e iluminación a través de jardines con luz cenital. La zona de servicio se compone de una cocina industrial y su inmediata relación con las áreas sociales del Club. También se incluye en esta zona bodegas de alimentos, bodegas generales, talleres, locales para bombas, cámara de transformación, generadores, etc.

Un punto importante es el diseño de circulaciones de servicio tanto horizontales como verticales independientes de las sociales, a fin de evitar los cruces de ambas circulaciones. Esto redundó en una mejor funcionalidad en el servicio, que a pesar de la gran magnitud física del Club, se comunica diáfanamente con los diversos sectores tanto sociales, deportivos y con las instalaciones del exterior donde se encuentran la piscina, canchas de tenis y demás instalaciones deportivas con sus servicios afines.

En el aspecto formal, se trató de enmarcarlo en el contexto de la zona, siendo la idea principal crear una "casa grande". Para este efecto se consideró algunos parámetros de diseño como un acceso al *hall* principal marcado por una visera de estructura no convencional, es decir un diseño particular por sus dimensiones, apoyos y volado fue un reto de ingeniería. Este *hall* dispone de salas de espera, jardineras decorativas y al frente de su ingreso tiene un vacío de doble altura hacia el piso inferior, creando espacialmente una integración con el exterior y cuyos ventanales nos permiten ver el paisaje.

Se planteó en la estructura principal luces entre columnas de hasta 9 metros. Las ventanas de las fachadas van entre columnas y se componen de aluminio y vidrio claro de grandes dimensiones. Las terrazas y jardineras exteriores perimetrales rompen la verticalidad entre los dos pisos de la edificación en el sector de salones. Extensos muros revestidos en piedra rostrilla, a lo largo de sus fachadas, y piedra redonda en muros decorativos, como la cascada de la piscina y en determinadas circulaciones exteriores, le dan un matiz muy campestre. Los antepechos de las terrazas y jardineras son pintadas en color blanco marcando intencionalmente una gran horizontalidad.

La gran cubierta es un elemento dominante en el contexto del edificio. Es una estructura con vigas de madera laminada que permite áreas libres de 20 metros, o más, de luz entre columnas y apoyadas en cada columna; cubriendo las áreas de salones, comedores, *hall* principal, área administrativa y deportiva. Su revestimiento interior es de paneles de duela de madera y por el exterior tiene un revestimiento de tejas de cemento color marrón. Sus aleros de gran magnitud llegan a tener hasta 3 metros de volado desde las fachadas y cubren las terrazas y jardineras perimetrales del área de salones configurando interesantes efectos de luces y sombras. Todo el perímetro de la cubierta es rematada con una afasia horizontal que disimula el canal de aguas lluvias de la cubierta.

El exterior del Club, por su propia función deportiva, tiene un hermoso paisajismo generado por áreas como las canchas de Golf, caminos peatonales matizados de pequeños arbustos en su recorrido, canchas deportivas rodeadas de arborización, la piscina recreativa exterior con sus terrazas, una cascada de agua, y una cafetería externa que armoniza arquitectónicamente con el Club.

En el trascurso de los años se han implementado instalaciones adicionales como una capilla, cancha de tenis cubierta, el restaurante "Hoyo 19", hípico, etc. La capilla y las demás dependencias exteriores conjugan con una arquitectura que por sus dimensiones, y su diseño de "casa grande", tiene un carácter dinámico y una personalidad que hacen de este Club algo único en el país.

CHAPTER 2
Beyond international *modern architecture*?

By: Arch. Evelia Peralta

To be part of their time is the challenge of every human being. To live fully in the present having a conscience of the past and a projection towards the future, something that seems so obvious, however, does not always offer consistent answers. To be an architect, in the deepest sense, is to be a designer of spaces that transform the spatial reality of a certain place. To be an architect is to imagine in advance what will be. It is also to have the ability to project a built future.

The reflections about the decisions made by an architect over time, in his place, are always a vision according to ideas, enunciated theories, from a historical stand point, a vision by which a selection of a repertoire is made through which judgments are established. In general, we have analyzed our production based on historical-geographical approaches previously established by the western European countries[1], although the necessity to look for other approaches from our concrete urban and architectural reality cannot be disregarded. Thus, in America other analyses on the architectural production[2] were made taking into consideration national and regional events.

We must not leave aside the fact that architects of the sixties, among them Diego Ponce, have been formed as professionals outside the country, or have continued their post-graduate studies beyond our boarders, which means that the practical theoretical baggage of the West will always be present and will influence each one according to his vision of reality and of architecture. Nor is it necessary to forget that 15 years have passed since the introduction, diffusion and generalization of modern architecture in the country, work of few pioneer architects that changed the panorama of Ecuadorian architecture qualitatively, was anchored until then in historicisms and in the past; nor that the path laid out served as a fertile antecedent to the thought process and experimentation of the generation of the sixties and seventies. This productive generation that developed diverse paths in search of an identity (personal, local, or regional) in architectural work, as well as in the use of materials and available technologies, existed within the framework of the persistence of the modern model and of the search for alternative expressions.

During the second half of the forties, a rupture with the historic past in Ecuador was made in a clear and convincing way, even though the conditions that originated this in developed countries were generally different from those existing in the Latin American countries, and in our country in particular. In the second half of the sixties, a profound and diverse search began in the country, based on and true to the modern model, though adapted to concrete circumstances, and based on individual criteria but taken from local reality or from the institutional and architects' viewpoints. Diego Ponce returned to the country during this time and was soon involved in this search. The opportunity was increased with the oil boom that in the mid sixties, and with stronger intensity in the seventies, created the conditions for which *the society required architectural works in different environments, typologies and magnitudes, both in the public and private sectors.*[3]

Without a doubt, the remarkable dimension of Diego Ponce's work does not only consider a number of institutional buildings intended for public (Government agencies) and private enterprises (banking, administrative) and the magnitude of the buildings (in height and square meters), but also how he took advantage of these opportunities to make of each one of the works a particular and stunning accomplishment. Citizens and professionals recognized in his designs the presence of a different type of work. From a general point of view, and because Ponce was trained in the international modern architecture, it is interesting to recognize his loyalty to his main precepts and also his transgressions towards *postmodernism.*

When reflecting on this prolific architect's work, the paths are not single or lineal; it is best to listen to him speak about architecture in general or describing a particular project, what was he thinking and wishing creating it. But if this testimony was not registered, his physical disappearance makes it impossible to look for answers; simply, the option is to follow his statements and dialogue with his works, reading the messages that not only involve the creator, but those of us who carried out that reading from what is concrete.

Supporting the idea that *"architecture is learned through practice",*[4] we understand that Diego Ponce noticed that executing the project was what gave value to the ideas that sustained it. He affirmed that value was captured with his architectural construction, specific, real, and demonstrative of the feasibility of what was imagined and projected, therefore multiplying his messages. Also, we could infer that his practice was a school for his future decisions and we could also understand the process in his works, in the treatment of the scale, in the relationship with form and structure, and in the use of materials that define planes that form the volume, aspects that are interesting in high rise institutional, administrative, and financial buildings.

Those of us who were formed under the influence of the modern movement, in some cases, we felt it through the teachings of some of the pupils of teachers of rationalist architecture and in the works that the teachers, or their pupils, carried out in their physical environments. Both, knowledge and the teachers' works, result in an inspiring bibliography of our professional training, much more convincing that the printed bibliography. We had the opportunity to know how the original statements were transformed through the trajectory of the teachers and their pupils into teachings and professional practice, and to learn from the diverse tendencies that would seem contradictory at first as was *functionalism, rationalism, and organicism;* to decant in order to make them our own integrative syntheses. In this way, one of us read the implicit messages that resonated with our experiences and aspirationsbeyond the words and the forms. Some developed the form or the structure, the function or the construction, the art or the technique, or we tried to search for coherence with the ideas and knowledge in each expression, in all aspects of the work.

The contact with works by Le Corbusier or Oscar Niemeyer, or the urban space by Lucio Costa, among others in Brazil, where Diego Ponce studied architecture, was probably unsettling, because through their physical form they communicated their messages with force, the search of order, rationality, and functionality of architecture, the form and the urban space were in vibrant dialogue with the architecture. But it also brings us to believe that creators do not undergo a restrictive framework or work only on the essential, that for which architecture becomes reality, that is, they shape the form with which they configure existing space into a space determined by deliberate limits, where they look to express the beauty of volumes and spaces. The students of that generation were stunned by Brasilia, discovering *the wise and magnificent game of volumes under the light* that Corbusier pointed out, the simplicity and purity of form itself, without ornaments, with their roundness and symbols. When studying in Brazil, the architect had opportunities that, without a doubt, he benefited from.

However, architect Diego Ponce did not want to get tied up to preconceived notions, he worked the volumes and composed them, but he also considered other elements that gave a special character to his buildings. Diego Ponce overlooked the model and did not fall into the repetition neither of monotony, nor of making existent works into models. At some point, when speaking about art, he mentioned that he who makes use of expressions of the past, by using their concepts, methods and materials, is not making something new but repeating it.[5] In that same occasion, he also valued the experimentation and the importance of the existence of diverse forms of expression. In this context, contemporary people, meaning people belonging to his own time, are different from people that belong to another time. We can state that he never looked for repetition or expressions from the past. And that he found it legitimate to experiment and to use diverse forms.

He captured in his works all those precepts that gave origin to international modern architecture. The *point load structure* and the *open floor* plan are present in his high-rise buildings; they were possible because of the use of reinforced concrete that gave impulse to the use of the urban land. Ponce ended up reaching one of the biggest heights in the city of Quito[6] with one of his buildings. If a subjective mention is made in the descriptive memoirs, in general with objective data, it is the adjectival use about *the width and* functional *space versatility and functionality* that with no doubt is achieved with the use of the point load structure.

The fundamental concept of *point load structure* authorizes the *free facade* and the *continuous window,* characteristics of *modern architecture*, allowing the curtain wall to have a maximum expression, a light skin transparent and self supporting, an separate, independent, from the elements of structural support. Diego Ponce generated a special aesthetic of glazed skin, transparent or reflective, that has a different expression in relation to the function. In some cases, the skin has texture (metallic carpentry and glass) and covers the structure, which is not visible from the exterior. In others, the opaque or transparent skin acquires a smoothness that removes all reference of unions or parts, achievement of an appropriate use of technological advances; going from the game of creating macro structures and skin in an expressiveness that marks a different scale and a stunning presence to the eyes of pedestrians. The building Torre XXI, Quito (1991), expressed a macro structure with four vertical elements and beams on the top and in the base that gives a high tech expression.

The horizontality of the repeated slabs (in a condominium) generated a contribution of that modernity: the *terraced garden*, a final plane for contemplation, contrary to inclined roofs. For Diego Ponce, the terraced garden, characteristic of modern architecture, is a finishing touch or an element that forms part of a macro container in the building.

Despite his affinity for the modern functionalist movement, however, the work of Diego Ponce showed at an early time, a characteristic that differentiates it from *modern architecture*. The statement that *form follows function (sentence of Louis Sullivan, 1896)* is applied in general terms since the functionality of the parts is subject to the aesthetic intention and to the configuration of the form. It rebels against abstraction and austerity of the *modern architecture*, based on the standardized repetition of elements, in order to value in each particular case, and although common elements of *modern language* are recognized, each answer has its singularity and in a certain way its subjectivity. His *postmodernism* is affirmed in a certain way when the austere channels of the functionalist order are not followed to grant different dimensions to the parts, so as to alter the homogeneity, although it does not make reference to local or regional cultural aspects.

In the *Banco de Loja* building (1973) the point load structure is characterized by the lineal force of the vertical elements that go from the base to the final horizontal top floor slab, interrupting it with its modulation. The columns or pillars diminish in height, increasing their perspective and their slenderness. In the *Computec* building, Quito (1977) the visible structure is light, and the horizontal elements at the top of the building and of the entrance are stronger. Although the structure modulates the composition, by spreading the glazed plane between columns, a prismatic block of a rectangular plan, two blind facades and two glazed facades are conformed, becoming therefore, a resolution closer to rationalistic architecture. With a certain similarity, the structure marks the verticality from floor to ceiling in the *Electroecuatoriana* building, Quito (1979), and marks the volumetric body and the modulated glazed planes with the vigorous horizontal elements at higher floors and at the lower floors that are set back. In the *Plaza Churchill* building (1991), the break of the prismatic volume takes place because the facade faces the plaza, which evidences the importance of the location of the building in the city.

1 In the architectural historiography there are still important references: Bruno Zevi, Sigfried Giedion, Guilio Carlo Argan, Leonardo Benévolo, Gregotti (Italians), Christian Norberg-Schulz (Norwegian), Nikolaus Pevsner, Emil Kauffmann, Reyner Banham, Collins, Kenneth Frampton, Manfredo Tafuri, etc., among others.
2 Charles Jenks (USA), Roberto Segre (Cuba), Marina Waissman (Argentina), among others, national and international biennials, architecture magazines (Among them: SUMMA, TRAMA), and Latin America architecture seminars (SAL).
3 Peralta Evelia. *Modern architecture should be part of the heritage inventories and under what conditions?* Dialogue in *modern architecture and heritage* organized by María del Carmen Carrión and Fabiano Cueva for the exhibition *Arqueologías del futuro* (Arte Actual Flacso, 2010).
4 Diego Ponce refer to Chapter 1.

5 Diego Ponce in Damian Toro's *Why a Center for Contemporary Art?*
6 The building of the Consejo Provincial (1976) was one of the highest buildings with 81 meters and 22 floors following the Corporación Financiera Nacional building with 82.8 meters and 23 floors, published in Diario El Comercio, November 6, 2012.