*Architectural History* 64 (2021), 163–186. © The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain 2021
doi:10.1017/arh.2021.8

# *The Iron Hand of Power: US Architectural Imperialism in the Philippines*

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ABSTRACT

Architects and urban planners in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly those working in the City Beautiful style, held lofty ambitions yet struggled to carry them out. In cities such as Washington DC and Chicago, political resistance made executing their plans onerous. In the US colonies, however, they operated with greater liberty. This article follows the spatial vision of Daniel Burnham (1846–1912) from the mainland US to the Philippines. In that colonial setting, Burnham was able to realise his vision far more easily, as neither he nor the officials executing his plans were ultimately accountable to Filipinos. Forced labour, confiscated land, repurposed public money, unchecked political power and wartime social disruption all aided US architectural imperialism. Rather than regretting this, Burnham and his associates celebrated the opportunities that their undemocratic setting provided. This article treats not only Burnham but also William E. Parsons (1872–1939) and Cameron Forbes (1870–1959), who extrapolated and enforced Burnham's plans, and Juan Arellano (1888–1960), the Filipino architect who, to his later regret, helped remake Manila in the colonisers' image.

From Washington DC, at the start of the twentieth century, things looked bright. Over the previous hundred years, the country had risen from a small society on North America's eastern seaboard to a continent-spanning power with territories in the Caribbean, Arctic and Pacific. Its population had grown prodigiously, skyscrapers mushroomed up from its city streets, and its economy was the world's largest.[1]

To some, prospects seemed unbounded. One of the era's bestselling novels, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), described a man falling asleep in Boston in 1887 and awakening in the year 2000 to an exhilarating future. Bellamy forecast easy jobs and long retirements. He imagined shoppers summoning forth whatever they wanted via pneumatic tubes, paying with 'credit cards'. Most impressive of all was his vision of the city. Bellamy described the 'miles of broad streets' of the twenty-first-century city, containing 'large open squares filled with trees' and 'public buildings of a colossal size and architectural grandeur'.[2] Clean, spacious and carefully planned — it was an urbanist's dream.

The dream was widely shared, yet hard to realise. The large plazas and wide streets of Bellamy's fantasy could not just be built; they would have to be torn from an already densely settled urban fabric. Monied interests would have to be convinced, machine

Fig. 1. *The White City, Jackson Field, Chicago, Daniel Burnham, 1893, photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnston (Library of Congress, Washington DC)*

politicians mollified and fractious city-dwellers displaced. This was the constant impediment for ambitious reformers of the Progressive Era: the stubbornness of society.

Still, urban visionaries in the United States found that their society's stubbornness was not evenly distributed. The US, although nominally a republic, was in fact an empire. Over the course of the nineteenth century, it had collected overseas territories: first dozens of small islands, then Alaska in 1867. In 1898, it had fought a war with Spain and claimed the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam, taking the non-Spanish lands of Hawai'i and American Samoa at the same time. In all, this amounted to a formidable empire, awaiting the imprint of the coloniser.

For US architects and planners, the empire was an invitation — one they accepted. Daniel Burnham (1846–1912), one of the era's most ambitious builders, went to the largest colony, the Philippines, and produced a plan for its capital city, Manila, and its new summer capital, Baguio. There, Burnham and his supporters in government could act as architectural dictators. They coerced labour, confiscated land, drew on public money earmarked for other purposes and operated without any democratic accountability. To their evident joy, the colonial setting allowed them to implement their visions with little compromise. It was where the political implications of those visions were on fullest display.

https://doi.org/10.1017/arh.2021.8 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Fig. 2. *C. Graham, drawing of the McMillan Commission's proposal for the National Mall, Washington DC, 1900 (Library of Congress, Washington DC)*

## FROM THE WHITE CITY TO THE COLONIES

In *Looking Backward*, Bellamy had sketched out an urban utopia, a modern city unlike any his readers had ever seen. But five years later, in 1893, they caught a glimpse in the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, staged (a year late) to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas. To erect the massive ensemble of buildings housing the exposition, the fair's organisers hired Burnham, then known as one of the first builders of skyscrapers.

Working big appealed to Burnham. He was enchanted by size, seized by what his fellow architect Louis Sullivan diagnosed as a 'megalomania concerning the largest, the tallest, the most costly and sensational'.[3] With 686 acres of marshy parkland on Chicago's South Side to play with, Burnham did not need to limit himself to individual buildings. He could found his own city. It was, to be sure, a temporary city, made not of brick but of spray-painted plaster. And he needed other architects to build it. Still, Burnham managed to place his indelible stamp on it. The city's structures were enormous, they were neoclassical, and they were, per his instructions, all white (Fig. 1).[4]

This was the showcase of an ascendant style, the City Beautiful — the American Renaissance's architectural and planning arm.[5] By all accounts the exhibition made a deep impression. What was so impressive was not any single building. It was, rather, the sight of them all together: more than two hundred structures, designed in a single style, rendered in a single colour and laid out according to a single plan. For the critic Lewis Mumford, the White City marked the dawn of the 'imperial age' in US architecture.[6] The resemblances to ancient Rome went deeper than classical flourishes, in Mumford's

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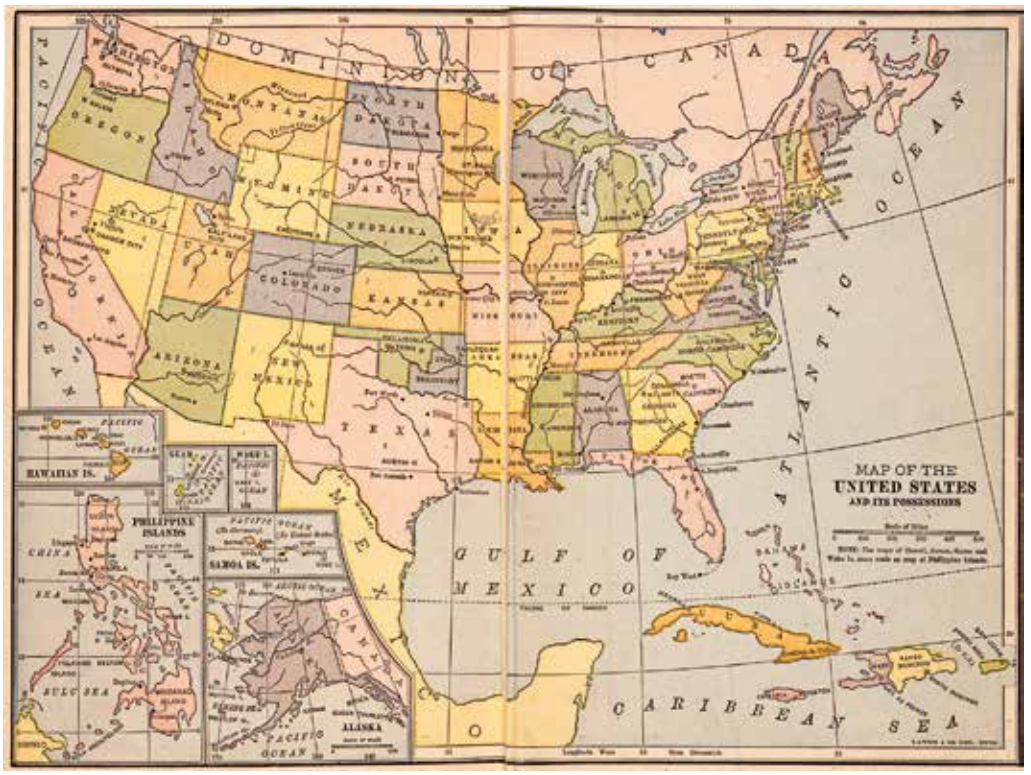


Fig. 3. *Textbook map of the United States showing overseas possessions in 1900, from Allen C. Thomas,* An Elementary History of the United States, *1900*

view. Behind the Progressive Era pursuit of order, Mumford detected the power of the Gilded Age economic oligarchy. Burnham, who worshipped 'most whole-heartedly at the imperial shrine', in Mumford's words, had instinctively grasped this and offered an architectural reflection of the new social order.[7]

But whatever its meaning, the White City, sited on unused land, was only a demonstration, a proof of concept for how urban space might look. Realising the City Beautiful would prove far more difficult. A sense of the challenges can be got from Burnham's next major commission, in Washington DC. There, Burnham chaired a commission to redesign the National Mall, the parkland connecting the US Capitol to the White House.[8] The Mall had been originally planned, back in the eighteenth century, as open space. But that was when Washington was a small, malarial swamp town with some eight thousand inhabitants. As the city grew, the Mall filled up. By Burnham's day, it held botanic gardens, an arboretum, a well-stocked fish pond, an old lock house occupied by Black squatters, statues to men great and small, endless trees and the Baltimore & Potomac's rail station. At one edge stood Centre Market, the largest grocery in the city. At another, spilling into the park, was an African-American slum bearing the evocative name Murder Bay.

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Fig. 4. *Cameron Forbes (in the back seat without a hat) in Manila (American Historical Collection, Ateneo de Manila University)*

To nature-lovers, the tree-filled Mall was a respite. To tourists, it was romantic — by the 1880s, Washington surpassed Niagara Falls as the top honeymoon destination.[9] But to Burnham, it was cluttered. Its disorganisation was ill-befitting 'the dignity of the chief city of America', the capital of an ascendant empire.[10] Alongside the leading urbanists and artists of his day — Charles McKim, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr and Augustus Saint-Gaudens — Burnham sought to tidy it. The McMillan Commission, as Burnham's group was called, convened in 1901 and unveiled its plan in 1902. Everything would have to go: the trees, the statues, the ponds, the gardens, the market, the rail station and Murder Bay.

Only the Washington Monument, which the McMillan Commission deemed 'one of the most beautiful of human creations', could stay.[11] The team envisioned the Mall as a shrine to national glory and they sought to connect its grand edifices — the Capitol, the White House and the Washington Monument — by clear sight lines. They envisioned a new monumental anchor, too: the Lincoln Memorial. Elms in rows would guard the perimeter, but the central corridors would have nothing but flat planes of grass and a large, rectangular reflecting pool (Fig. 2).

The commission was largely successful in remaking the National Mall, which now is a cleared and ordered space with impressive sight lines. Yet getting it that way was not

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easy. Although the plan had enthusiastic presidential backing from Theodore Roosevelt and his successor William Howard Taft, and although its main interventions were to federal parkland rather than private property, it still met with sustained resistance. 'Tree butchers and nature butchers', the *Washington Star* called Burnham and his colleagues. 'It would be an outrage of good taste and the rights of the public to destroy this grand arboretum,' another paper scolded.[12] Congress voted to preserve the botanic gardens, forcing the plan's supporters to circumvent the democratic process and have the preservation bill killed in committee.

In all, it took nearly four decades to clear the Mall. Even that slow pace made it a success. When he drew up a city plan for San Francisco (1904–05), Burnham estimated that it might take half a century to implement — and that proved optimistic. Despite an enormous earthquake in 1906 that cleared the ground for Burnham's plan, and despite considerable support from City Hall, the city was too tough a clay to be remoulded as Burnham hoped and the plan foundered.[13]

So it went in the Progressive Era. In one corner stood the reformers and planners, bent on order. In the other, a discordant multitude of cross-cutting interests and publics. It was not just architecture. From battleground to battleground — party politics, public health, the factory floor — the war raged on. Yet there was one arena where the fight was markedly less fair, where social engineers indisputably held the upper hand: the empire. The overseas territories that Washington had acquired by 1900 contained more than eight million people, the great bulk in the Philippines. Washington was eager to train its colonial subjects in their new nationality: to raise flags, erect buildings and circulate currency with US images.[14] Yet in the territories, US nationality meant something different. It did not mean the right to participate in government. It meant, rather, the dubious privilege of being governed by a distant power (Fig. 3).

Lacking republican rights, the territories functioned more as laboratories. They were places where ambitious men from the mainland could go to test bold ideas with practically no resistance, oversight or consequences.[15] Burnham experienced this himself. His work on the White City and the Washington Mall had vaulted him to the top of the planning profession. Cities sought his guidance and he sketched a plan for Cleveland (1902–03) as well as for San Francisco, stressing in both the need for radial boulevards, open vistas and commanding edifices. Yet something appealed to him about working in Asia and so, in 1904, at the height of his fame, he accepted an invitation to plan Manila and the new 'summer capital' that the colonial government sought to establish in the mountains at Baguio. The White City was going to the Philippines.

## PLANNING A CAPITAL CITY

Burnham's invitation came from Cameron Forbes (1870–1959). Forbes had gone to the Philippines as its commissioner of commerce and police, a wide-ranging job giving him authority over building roads and quashing revolts. In 1909, he became governor-general. 'Who but a mad dreamer could have planned such a career for me anyway?' Forbes asked his diary on his fortieth birthday. 'Taken from a counting house in Boston to go to the South Seas, and here, at forty, ruling over such a conglomeration of races,

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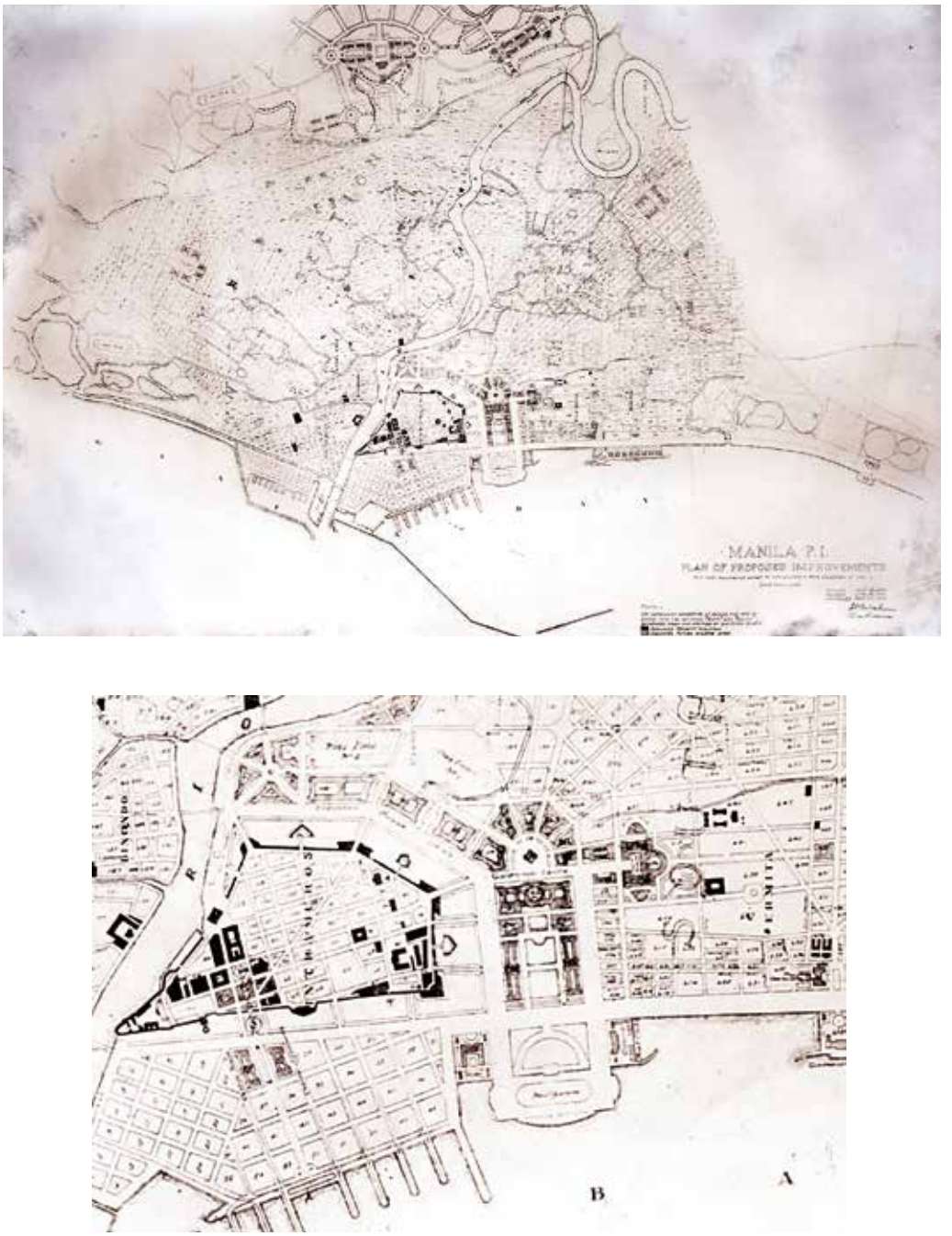


Fig. 5. *Plan of Manila, Daniel Burnham, 1905, with detail showing urban centre (Daniel H. Burnham Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago)*

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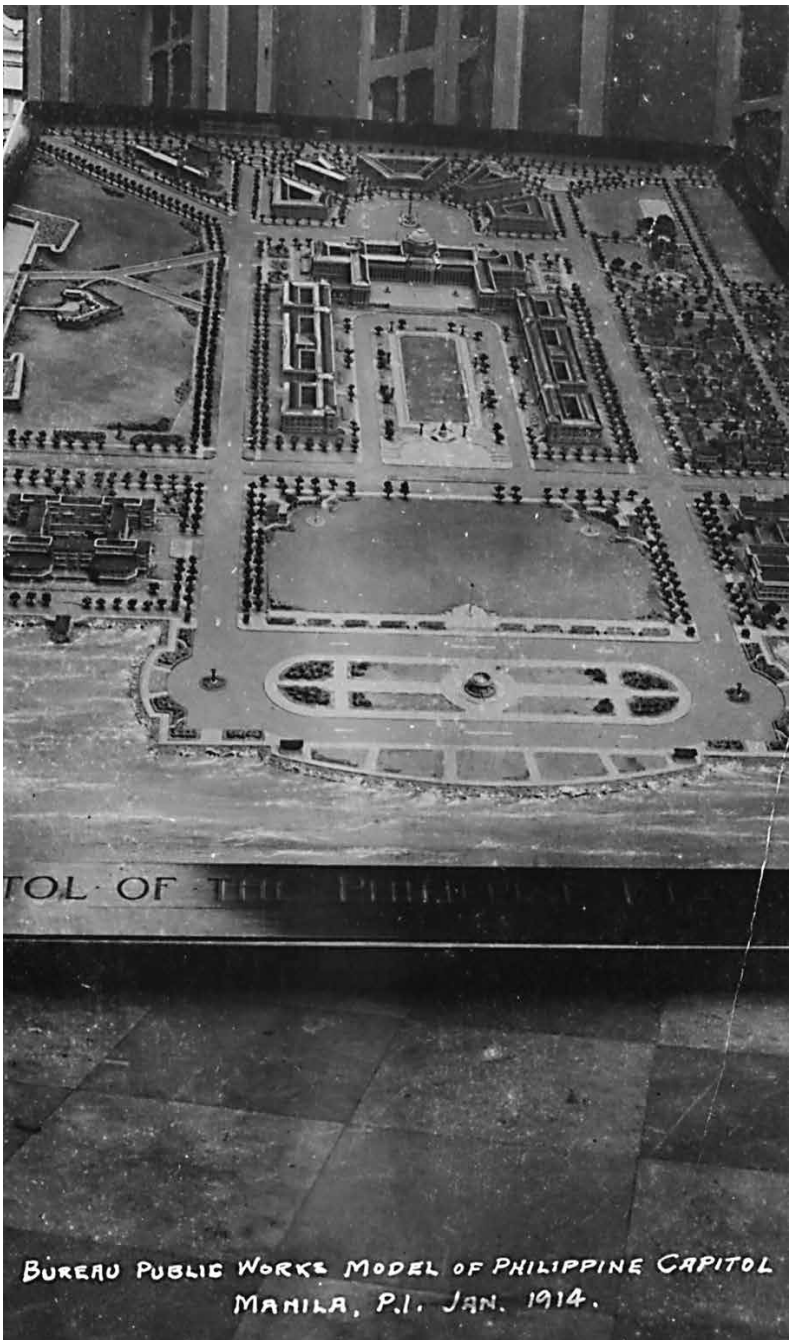


Fig. 6. *Model of the Luneta, Manila, 1914, axial view from the south-west (Daniel H. Burnham Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago)*

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Fig. 7. *The Luneta, Manila, aerial view from the west, photograph by George M. Tweedy of US Army Air Corps, 1938. William E. Parsons's Manila Hotel (1912) in the foreground faces his Army and Navy Club (1911) across the plaza (National Air and Space Museum, Washington DC)*

languages, customs, and divergencies as are to be found among the eight millions who live in the Philippine Islands.'[16]

Unlike Britain and France, the US had few colonial careerists. Its officials tended to come and go, seeing their time in the territories as hardship posts that might lead to higher office back home. Still, every once in a while, someone slipped into the role of sahib and played it to pith-helmeted perfection. In the Philippines, that someone was Forbes (Fig. 4). He delighted in life in the tropics: the exotic Orient, the native servants, the languid lifestyle. He loved Filipinos, too — although he loved them, the nationalist leader Manuel Quezon noted, 'in the same way the former slave owners loved their Negro slaves'.[17]

Forbes understood that many Filipinos rejected white rule and were in fact still taking up arms for independence. But he felt that the average Filipino wanted independence 'as a baby wants a candle because it is bright and because it is held out for him to seize at'.[18] He doubted Filipinos 'knew exactly what it meant'.[19] At any rate, Forbes did not 'believe in it for them' and felt that their interests were best served by benevolent men from the mainland.[20] Men, that is, like Daniel Burnham.

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Burnham could start with Manila. If Bellamy's futuristic Boston was the dream, Manila was the nightmare. The 'ancient pest-hole' (as one reformer called it) was crowded, disease-ridden and poor.[21] 'It has the crookedest streets of any city in the world,' a 1906 guidebook exclaimed.[22] Whites blamed all this on Filipinos, but the Manila that Burnham entered in 1904 had been badly mauled by the forces of history. Following its acquisition from Spain, the US in 1899 had started a war to retain the Philippines, an ongoing counter-insurgency campaign that had killed around 775,000 Filipinos from disease and combat by the time of Burnham's arrival.[23] The fighting in Manila had stopped by 1900, but the following years brought their own ordeals to the city: 1901, bubonic plague; 1902, cholera and rinderpest; 1903, the 'Great Fire'. Nellie Taft, the wife of Governor-General William Howard Taft, recalled 'constant terror': the feeling that 'we were living always in the lowering shadow of some dreadful catastrophe'.[24]

Yet what from a human perspective was disastrous was, from an urban planner's perspective, inviting. Large swathes of the city had been cleared by war, diseases and the accompanying public health campaigns (involving, in one case, US troops torching an entire district in the name of fighting cholera).[25] Real estate was cheap and the best land was already in governmental hands, seized by the military at the start of the war. 'Manila has before it an opportunity unique in the history of modern times,' pronounced Burnham: 'the opportunity to create a unified city equal to the greatest of the Western World' (Fig. 5).[26]

With Forbes's backing, Burnham dived in. He was willing to defer to the reigning Spanish style of architecture, but the city's footprint would be radically reconfigured. Under Spain, the centre of power, Intramuros, had been a cloistered, church-studded city within a city, packed within imposing walls and surrounded by a moat. Burnham would fill the moat (insanitary), punch holes in the walls for traffic and give the city a new centre. For this he fixed on the Luneta, a cleared area near the water, where musicians played in the evenings. Moved a thousand feet west and surrounded by governmental buildings, this could serve as Manila's National Mall (Fig. 6). The new core would lie entirely outside Spain's adjacent former centre and, unlike Intramuros, it would offer an 'unobstructed view of the sea' — of the oceanic space linking it to the metropole. As in Washington, broad avenues would radiate out from it, cutting diagonally through the street grid. Why? Because, as Burnham explained in his 1905 'Report on the Improvement of Manila', 'every section of the Capitol City should look with deference toward the symbol of the Nation's power'.[27]

Yet there was one important difference between Manila and Washington DC. Whereas Burnham's Washington had ostensibly served the public, his Manila would transparently serve the colonisers. So, although he had little to say about the many neighbourhoods that had been recently torched or shot up (other than to imagine carving boulevards through them), he fretted at length about Manila's lack of a world-class hotel. He proposed placing one, a 'world famous resort', adjoining the Luneta. He also left room on the waterfront for a country club, boat clubs and a casino — structures he would never have placed on the Washington Mall (Fig. 7). These were not built for Filipinos, and indeed some clubs would refuse to admit them. Such buildings were for foreigners — a promise, Burnham wrote, of 'continuous good times' made in the hope that 'those who make fortunes will stay and others will come'.[28]

Forbes loved it. The plan 'seems to meet with approval all round', he said, beaming.[29]

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Fig. 8. *The road to Baguio (American Historical Collection, Ateneo de Manila University)*

## REALISING THE VISION

'If one has a capital and well-considered plan, the thing does itself,' Burnham had announced confidently the year he erected his White City in Chicago.[30] But subsequent experience taught him the folly of that statement, if he ever believed it. Plans did not 'do themselves'. They needed careful stewardship. It was a lesson he learned in Washington, where, to realise his vision, adroit politicking over many decades was required. And it was a lesson he would learn all over again elsewhere. Soon after drawing up his plans for Manila, he started on another large urban plan, for Chicago (1906–09). Chicago and Manila were his most ambitious projects, and today are the two major cities that most clearly bear his mark.

Cities are fiendishly complex and planning them takes care. In Chicago, where Burnham had lived and worked for decades, he was painstaking. He asked nine shipping firms about their ships' dimensions. He asked a doctor where his patients came from. He inquired into the backgrounds of the students at Northwestern University and the

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University of Chicago. The acknowledgments of his *Plan of Chicago*, which took two years and a staff of dozens to produce, thanked 312 people for their help.[31]

Burnham needed that help. The Chicago plan was by necessity a group effort, in conception and implementation. Carrying it out would take decades. A commission of four hundred prominent citizens took charge of executing the plan. To drum up support, they sponsored lectures and produced a film. They arranged to have a book, *Wacker's Manual of the Plan of Chicago*, introduced into the curriculum of the city's public schools, presumably on the theory that the children would preach the Gospel of Burnham to their parents.

Mostly, it worked. Not entirely — large parts of the plan were never realised, such as a Luneta-style core of civic buildings at the intersection of Congress and Halsted Streets. But between 1912 and 1931, Chicago voters approved some eighty-six plan-related bond issues, with a total cost of $234 million.[32]

In the Philippines, however, it was different. There were no voters to persuade. Burnham spent just six weeks in the colony, a place he knew little about before arriving. He toured Manila with Forbes and spoke with some officials, but his contact with Filipinos other than servants was scant. No living Filipino warranted mention in his letters, in his diary, or in the plan itself.[33] In all, Burnham worked on his plan for six months (1904–05) and that left time for travel, tourism and his simultaneous work in Baguio.[34] Burnham never could have got away with such haste in Chicago. In Manila, it was fine. Three days after officials approved his plan, with no changes, construction began.[35]

Things could move quickly because power over the built environment lay in the hands of a single man, the consulting architect (initially called the insular architect). No such position existed on the US mainland. But in the Philippines, Forbes explained, 'we so fixed it that the Insular Architect prepared plans for all public buildings, whether insular, municipal, or provincial'.[36] Small towns could not even modify their walls or parks without the consulting architect's approval. And, by law, the consulting architect was 'charged with the interpretation of the Burnham Plan'.[37]

Not only did Burnham get an architectural dictator to execute his plan, he got to choose his man. On his recommendation, the government appointed William E. Parsons (1872–1939), an architect trained at Yale and the École des Beaux-Arts, who served from 1905 to 1914.[38] Parsons saw the job as an 'architect's dream'.[39] He had sole control over all public construction in the colony. He also operated, with Forbes's encouragement, a private firm, so he could erect commercial buildings to match the public ones.

Parsons went on a spree, building in nine years many of Manila's major landmarks: the Army and Navy Club (whites only), the Elks Club (ditto), the Manila Hotel (de facto whites only), the YMCA (separate entrance for whites), the Central School on Taft Avenue, the University Hall of the University of the Philippines, the railway station and the Philippine General Hospital. He also issued plans for Cebu City and Zamboanga City, along Burnham-style lines. Soon, Parsons worried about the 'large and rapidly increasing number of buildings' under his supervision.[40] One solution would have been to delegate. Instead, he standardised. Schools, markets, hospitals and even provincial capitols could simply be duplicated. His office circulated blank forms to collect basic information about building sites and then returned the appropriate blueprints.[41] It made a certain sense. After all, did a market in Davao really need to

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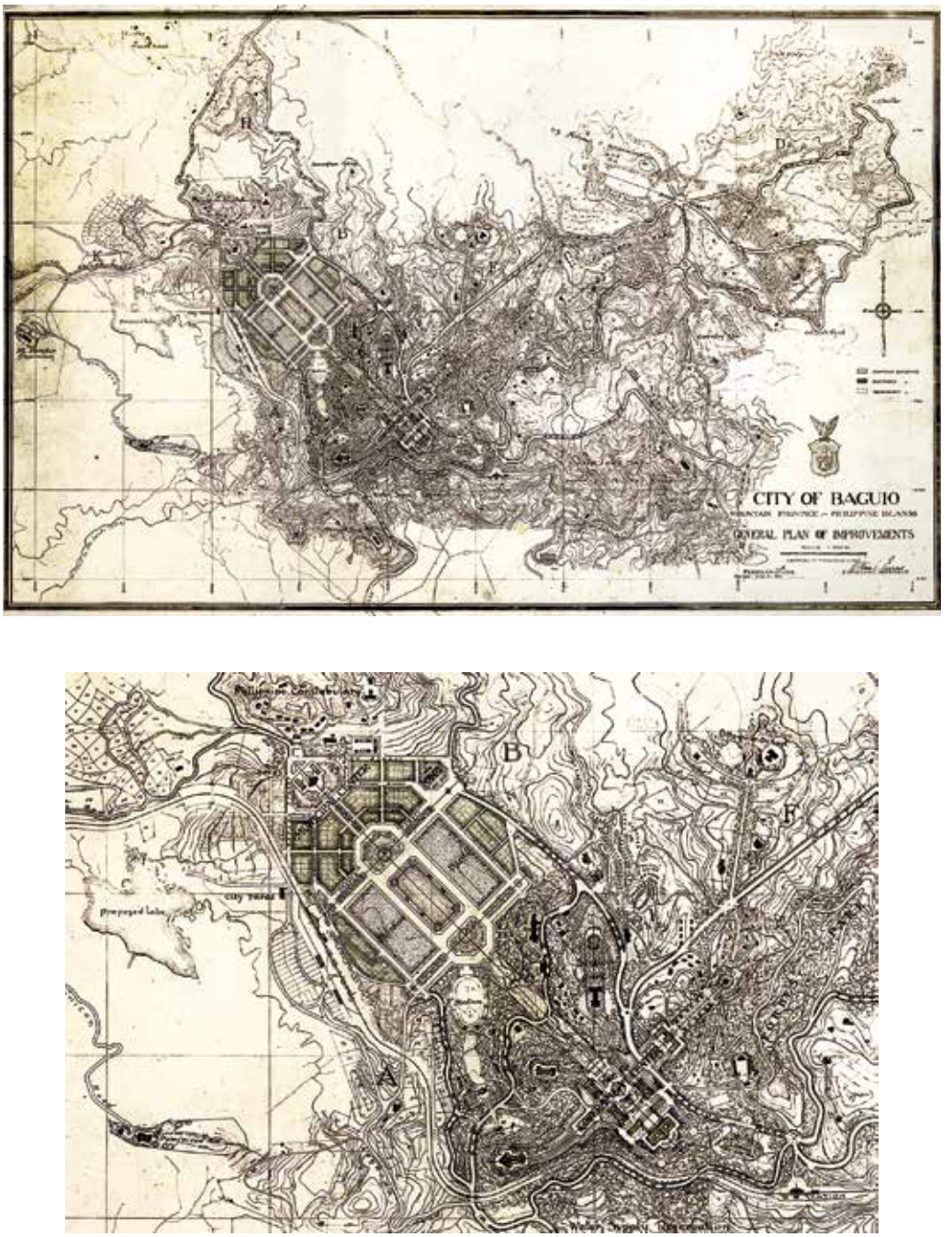


Fig. 9. *Plan of Baguio, Daniel Burnham, 1905, with detail showing urban centre (Daniel H. Burnham Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago)*

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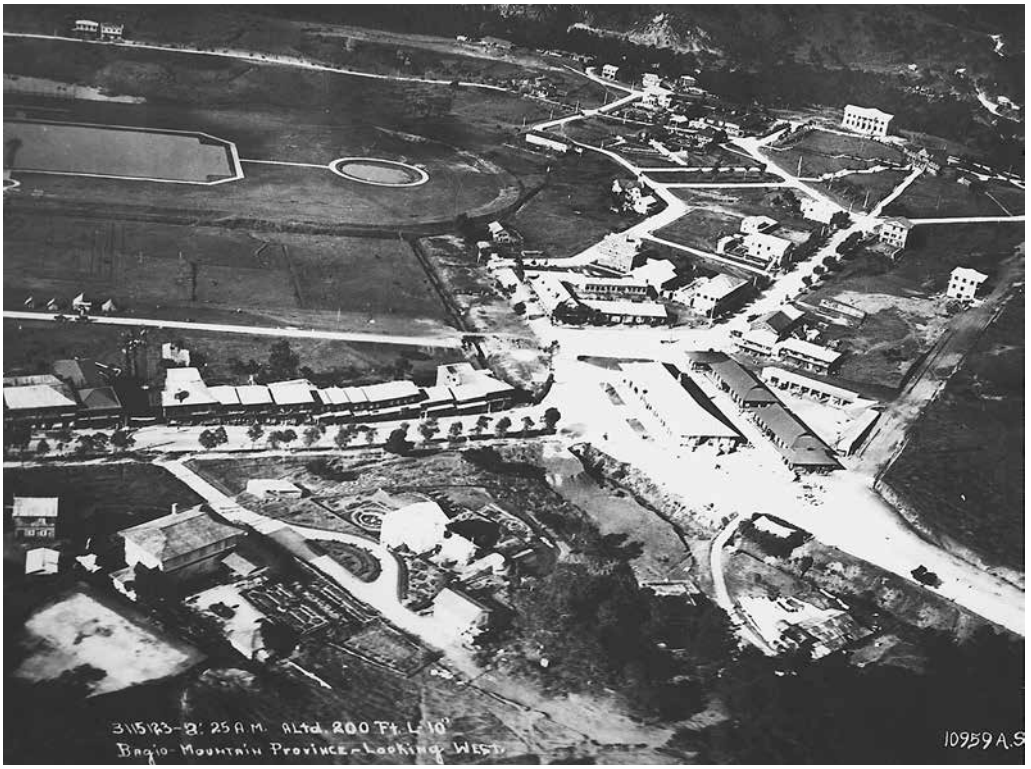


Fig. 10. *The mall, Baguio, aerial view looking west across public buildings at the north end, photograph of 1923 (American Historical Collection, Ateneo de Manila University)*

be different from one in Balanga? Yet when an efficiency-minded Congress proposed standardising governmental architecture on the US mainland, howls of protest were heard. Each place was unique, critics argued — you could not just put the same building everywhere.[42]

Maybe not on the mainland. But in the Philippines, Parsons could do what he liked. It was a fact that his mainland colleagues noted with interest and more than a little envy. 'I doubt if this method would bear fruit in our own city improvement plans, in which everything depends on slow-moving legislative bodies,' observed a correspondent for the *Architectural Record*. 'The iron hand of power, when wielded for the public good, is a mighty weapon.'[43]

## A SUMMER CAPITAL

Forbes kept Burnham apprised of Manila's progress, reassuring him that 'the Burnham plan is sacred and is being strictly adhered to'.[44] Burnham was no doubt pleased to hear it. But Manila was not his chief concern. He was, he declared on arriving in the Philippines, 'more deeply interested in the summer capital project', the city he planned

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Fig. 11. *The mall, Baguio, aerial view on axis looking north-west (American Historical Collection, Ateneo de Manila University)*

at Baguio. Manila offered him a relatively free hand, but Baguio was to be built, like the White City, from scratch. Burnham saw it as his chance 'to formulate my plans untrammeled by any but natural conditions'.[45]

The idea of a summer capital was not new. European colonisers had built a series of hill stations, most famously Shimla in India, from which the British government ruled during the hot months. US officials, fearing the effects of the Philippine climate on their constitutions, sought one of their own; as Forbes put it, 'a new city 5000 feet above the sea, which will be to the Philippines much what Simla is to India'.[46] They chose Baguio, 150 miles north of Manila. In 1903, the government declared Baguio the summer capital, and in 1904 Forbes charged Burnham with planning the still-unbuilt town.

Before construction could start, though, there had to be a road. Baguio was accessible only via a long trail zigzagging up a crumbling canyon wall (Fig. 8). Getting there was a feat. When the portly William Howard Taft made the trek, he reported proudly to Washington: 'Stood trip well. Rode horseback twenty-five miles to five-thousand-foot altitude. Hope amoebic dysentery cured. Great province this.' The secretary of war's reply was cruel: 'How is the horse?'[47]

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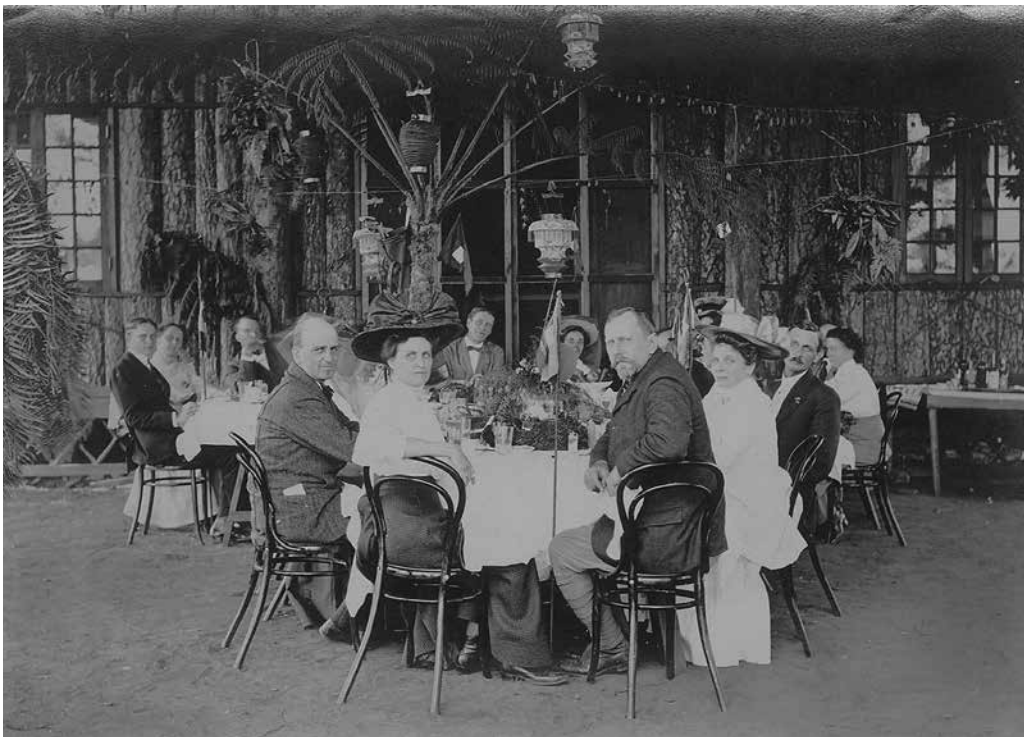

Fig. 12. *Life at Baguio Country Club (American Historical Collection, Ateneo de Manila University)*

The road to Baguio became an obsession for the colonisers. Its steep slopes and regular landslides turned it into an all-consuming, Werner Herzog-style man versus nature affair. At its peak, construction employed some four thousand men from dozens of nations.[48] 'The Filipinos so far are the worst,' complained Forbes. 'They are afraid of heights and rolling rocks.'[49] They had good reason. Workers fell off cliffs, died from dysentery, malaria or cholera, and were crushed by bridges that came skidding down the slopes. One section of the trail earned the name Devil's Slide for the many men it had killed.[50] 'Few days pass without casualty,' Forbes noted in his diary.[51] Still, for Forbes the prize was worth it. Baguio was paradise: perpetual springtime, a cool mist, rolling hills, pine trees galore.

Burnham, for his part, could barely contain himself. This would be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to build a city — a real city, not a plaster one — from the ground up. The land was not empty, as much of it lay in the hands of Igorots, Philippine uplanders. But the white-dominated Philippine Supreme Court held that Igorots, being savages, could not own land.[52] At any rate, the government claimed fourteen thousand acres of it — more than twenty times the area Burnham had for his White City. If built properly, he salivated, Baguio 'could be made equal to anything that has ever been'.[53] He pulled out all the stops: commanding views, a grand axis cutting through the Baguio meadow and governmental edifices surrounding an enormous central plaza — it was like the National

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Mall in the mountains (Figs 9 and 10). He placed the most important buildings on the slopes ringing the meadow. Doing so was costly, Burnham acknowledged, but to build them in the valley would ruin what he called the 'unusual monumental possibilities' of the area.[54] The uneven topography, rather than a challenge, became a medium through which to express power relations. As Burnham saw it, the governmental buildings should be placed high so as to 'frankly dominate everything in sight' (Fig. 11).[55]

Forbes, getting into the spirit, selected a property for himself: a twelve-acre uphill plot overlooking all Baguio. He arranged to have prisoners — many incarcerated simply for not having jobs — sent to Baguio to maintain the grounds.[56] He made plans to open the Baguio Country Club, featuring an eighteen-hole golf course 'equal to the finest in Scotland, where, owing to the clear briskness of the air, no drives will be foozled or balls get dormy'.[57]

The architecture of power, plus golf: that summed it up well. Though technically Baguio was a command centre — the part-time capital of the great US Asian colony — it was also a retreat, with architecture reminiscent of the style of mainland summer camps.[58] Forbes saw it as 'a blessed relief from Manila', where 'the swarm of people who rush in is fearful. Here, people only come if sent for, or if their business is urgent enough to bring them up to the hills.'[59] It does not appear that much business made the uphill trek. The Philippine Commission — the colony's appointed body of lawmakers — convened only 'every three days', Forbes recorded in his diary, 'and we crash through our business in about an hour or less'.[60] The real centre of life was the Baguio Country Club, where frank conversations could be had over rounds of golf. But of the 161 original members of the club, only six were Filipino (Fig. 12).[61]

None of this was cheap. The road cost two million dollars to build and that did not count the expensive repairs required every time a monsoon washed parts of it away, or the many lives lost building it.[62] Then there was Baguio itself, constructed to Burnham's plan under Parsons's guidance. It was a modern engineering triumph straight out of Bellamy: wide streets, an excellent sewer system, an ice plant and, by 1921, hydroelectric power.[63] Added to this municipal investment, which far outstripped that made in other Philippine cities, was the annual cost of hauling the entire top layer of the government up to the mountains for four months. Even a British reporter, presumably accustomed to this sort of thing, could not help but 'admire the audacity' of the men who, with a war still raging in the south of the country, had built Shangri-La.[64]

Filipinos were less admiring as they watched money earmarked for post-war reconstruction flow uphill to the 'refuge of the caesars' — funding a months-long spa retreat for an unelected government.[65] 'Stingy towards the people and lavish toward itself, it has no scruples nor remorse about wasting money which is not its own,' one paper complained.[66] In 1913, the year that Forbes left, the Philippine Commission relented and agreed to conduct its summer business in Manila, though Baguio continued to serve as the government's unofficial nerve centre.

Manila's restoration as the all-seasons capital marked a turning point in colonial politics. It corresponded with Woodrow Wilson's election as US president and his policy of handing over local power to Filipinos. In 1914, more than one in four governmental positions were held by mainlanders. By 1921, it was fewer than one in twenty.[67] Parsons,

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Fig. 13. *Legislative Building, Manila, street view from north, photograph of 1926 (Ayala Center, Manila)*

Burnham's protégé, found Filipinisation intolerable. His top staffers were white and he was unwilling to see that change. 'It is impossible to understand how any man, having at heart the welfare of the Filipino people, can conform to the present policy,' he wrote in his resignation letter.[68]

Still, Parsons left in 1914 feeling his work was done. He reported with pride that the main contours of Burnham's Manila were 'nailed down, as it were, with permanent public and semi-public buildings'.[69] The foundation had been laid. It just remained for his successors to build on it.

As it turned out, Parsons's greatest successor was just arriving in the colony. But he was not visiting the Philippines for the first time. He had been born there.

## ENTER ARELLANO

Juan Arellano (1888–1960) came from one of the most extraordinary families in the Philippines. One brother, Arcadio, was the first Filipino architectural adviser hired by the US. Another, Manuel, would become one of the colony's most noted photographers. Their cousin Jose Palma wrote the poem that became the national anthem. His cousin

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Rafael Palma was one of the six original Filipino members of the Baguio Country Club and the future president of the University of the Philippines.[70]

Juan's *métier* was painting; he was among the first Filipino impressionists. He submitted an early work, *Woman Descending Stairway*, to the St Louis World's Fair in 1904. To his disappointment, it did not win a prize.[71] Three years later, he applied to another fair, the Jamestown Exposition of 1907. This time he succeeded — not as an artist, but as a 'living exhibit'. Mainland US fairs often put Filipinos, Indians and other colonised subjects on display, like animals in a zoo. And so, for seven months, Arellano wore a pineapple-fibre shirt and allowed himself to be ogled. Fair-goers were taken aback, though, when he answered their questions in fluent English.[72]

But Arellano had come to the mainland to study, not be studied. Once he had made enough money at the fair, he moved to Philadelphia and enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He won the academy's annual award for best painting, a prize automatically placing him in the next year's competition for the Prix de Rome. He was yanked from that competition at the last minute, though, when someone noted that, as a Filipino, he was not a US citizen.[73] Arellano then turned to architecture, winning more prizes and securing a diploma from the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia. He got a job in New York and eventually found work with Olmsted, Jr, one of Burnham's collaborators on the plan of the National Mall. Olmsted sparked Arellano's interest in city planning.[74]

Arellano was, in other words, a Renaissance man: painter, builder and planner. His first major architectural commission after returning to Manila was the Legislative Building, part of the civic core Burnham had planned around the Luneta.[75] The project had been initiated by Ralph Doane, the last white consulting architect, in his last year in the Philippines. Doane had designed it as a library and started construction in 1918, but funds quickly ran out.[76] It was Arellano who expanded the building, gave it a classical facade in the style of the White City and raised it into one of the largest edifices in the colony, completed in 1926 (Fig. 13).

This was a massive undertaking, costing as much as the road to Baguio.[77] Yet here the symbolism was reversed. The Legislative Building was in Manila, not up some mountain, and it was designed to house the Philippine Legislature, the only elected part of the colonial government. More to the point, it had been built by a Filipino. Forbes found Arellano's 'ambition' to be a 'defect' and railed at the temerity of a Filipino who acted as though he were Burnham's equal.[78] The press, however, loved it. The Legislative Building was 'the most magnificent and impressive structure ever erected in the Philippines', a Manila magazine raved.[79] 'Here is a stronger and more enduring argument as to the capacities of the Filipino race than any that the most enthusiastic of the American friends of the Filipinos can formulate', wrote the *Philippine Republic* newspaper in February 1927. 'The pessimists who said that Filipinos were not capable of doing anything have not a leg to stand on.'[80]

The Legislative Building was indeed a rebuke to imperialists who doubted the abilities of Filipinos. Yet, in beating imperialists such as Forbes at their own game, Arellano was also playing their game. He conspicuously built the Legislative Building in the style of the White City rather than the Spanish idiom that Burnham and even Parsons had been willing to accommodate, although he later regretted this.[81] The Manila

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historian Nick Joaquin has thus identified the Legislative Building as 'architecturally, the landmark dividing the American from the Spanish era'. It was Arellano's building, not one of Parson's creations, that marked the full shift to the neoclassical style that, Joaquin writes, 'has ever since dominated our public works'.[82]

Arellano became *the* architect in the colonial Philippines, eventually taking Parsons's former position as consulting architect in 1930. He designed the huge post office in Manila (1926). He designed capitols for three provinces. The office of the US High Commissioner in Manila was another Arellano project — today it serves as the US embassy. In the 1930s, the government envisaged moving the capital north from Manila to Quezon City, a planned metropolis of City Beautiful-style plazas and radial boulevards. Arellano served on the planning commission.

## CONCLUSION

Had Burnham lived and returned to the Philippines in the 1930s, he would have been thrilled by what he saw. In Chicago and Washington DC, he struggled mightily for years to realise his vision (and his allies worked for decades to do so after his death). In the Philippines, however, half a year's hasty work, and only six weeks of it in-country, sufficed to remake one city, build another from the ground up and set the model for the whole territory.

Such were the joys of empire. The colonies were, for men such as Burnham, playgrounds, places to try out ideas without worrying about the counter-forces that encumbered action at home. Mainlanders could confiscate land, redirect taxes and waste workers' lives to build a mountain paradise.

Filipinos, for their part, watched from the sidelines. The segregated spaces at the centre of Burnham's plans were not for them, although their taxes paid the cost. The best they could hope for was to win some measure of respect by showing themselves worthy in their colonisers' eyes. In the realm of architecture, that looked like Arellano carrying out Burnham's plans with even greater devotion than Parsons had done. And so, from Burnham to Parsons to Arellano, the torch passed, with Manila and Baguio growing all the while. Looking back at it all, Burnham's biographer concluded that Burnham's vision achieved its 'greatest architectural success' not in Chicago or Washington, but in the Philippines.[83]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Horatio Joyce, Callie Leone, Emily Mann, Rebecca Tinio McKenna, Alex Star, Mark Swenarton and the late Margaret Garb for their help.

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