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**ARISTOCRATIC LIVING
IN RIO DE JANEIRO –
A PALACETE IN
THE FLAMENGO
NEIGHBORHOOD**

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Abstract: This work focuses on a manor house in Rio de Janeiro built in 1928 by order of the couple Sylvia de Faro Lacerda (single, 1901-1988) and Galeno Martins de Almeida (1870-1948); with two floors, it was located at Travessa Januária nº 16 and 18, in the neighborhood of Flamengo and was located in the alignment of the road in a terrain with a front of 26m; its main façade had a large number of doors and windows with some ornaments and austere finish, almost a fortress facing an inner courtyard. The interiors, in contrast, had numerous integrated elements and rich furniture. The iconographic material of the family's collection proves the compartmentalization of internal spaces into reception, library, billiards room, music room, living and dining room, among others. Several publications in newspapers, after the death of its owner, also describe the many environments and the refinement of its interior and the receptions that took place there. This article is part of a research on Transformations in the Fluminense Ways of Living in the 20th century – from the House to the Apartment Building, which the author coordinates at the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the Fluminense Federal University (EAU|UFF).

Keywords: Aristocratic way of living o Rio de janeiro; mansion; Manor house.

INTRODUCTION

This work investigates a manor house in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) built between 1928 and 1929 by order of the couple Sylvia de Faro Lacerda (1901-1988) and Galeno Martins de Almeida (1868-1948). The two-story building was located on Rua Princesa Januária nos.16 and 18, in the Flamengo district, and was located along the alignment of the road in a terrain with a frontage of about 26m; its main façade had a large number of doors and windows with some ornaments and an

austere finish, almost a fortress, facing an inner courtyard. The interiors, in contrast, had numerous integrated elements and rich furniture. The plans obtained from the General Archive of the City of Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ) and the iconographic material from the family's collection prove the compartmentalization of the internal spaces in reception, library, billiards room, music room, living and dining room, among others. Several publications in newspapers also describe the many environments and the refinement of its interior and the receptions that took place there. After the owner's death (1948) the building was rented and, in 1973, sold for the construction of an apartment building.

The landowners, like many of the elite of their time, traveled frequently to Europe and cultivated French habits. With a conservative and monarchist profile, they were well connected in the social and political circles of the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Galeno was a farmer, lawyer and public prosecutor, and in his maturity he devoted himself to collecting art, books, silverware, crockery and crystal; he described the origin of the research and purchase of most of the pieces in his collection.

This article presents the state of the art of research in development, which seeks to deepen the study of living spaces in the 20th century in Rio de Janeiro. The analyzes were based on primary sources such as the owner's inventory, the deed of the house, iconographic material from the family's collection and plans of part of the mansion obtained from the General Archive of the City of Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ).

THE OWNERS

Galeno Martins de Almeida (1868-1948) was born in a small town in the state of Rio de Janeiro, but spent his childhood and youth

in the city of São Paulo. A well-connected figure in social and political circles, he was a meticulous collector of art, books, silverware, crockery and crystal; he described the origin of the research and purchase of most of the pieces in his collection. According to the newspaper O Globo of 01.02.1948, he was a fan of Fine Arts, turned his house into a museum of objects of the finest taste and had the merit of gathering in his library most of the existing works on our country, including the valuable Brasiliana Collection.

Sylvia de Faro Lacerda (maiden name, 1901-1988) grew up in an environment of culture and art at Chácara da Cabeça, which still exists at the top of Rua Faro (in the Jardim Botânico neighborhood), acquired by her grandfather, Luis Pereira de Faro. In her youth, she frequented her cousin Henrique Lage's mansion (currently Parque Lage); her father-João Baptista de Lacerda-was director of the National Museum. Graduated in chemistry, she helped Galen catalog his collection.

Galeno and Sylvia got married in 1927, the same year that the land on Rua Princesa Januária was acquired and they had two children (fig.1).



Figure 1 - Martins de Almeida family, late 1930.

Source: Family collection.

THE LOCALIZATION – THE FLAMENGO NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE CITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

Between the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, the city of Rio de Janeiro expanded from its central core due to factors such as the development of means of transport, the opening of new roads and the modernization of construction techniques in the Brazil.

In the 1920s, the first mixed-use skyscrapers began to appear in Cinelândia and in the coastal neighborhoods of the South Zone, but, especially in the more traditional neighborhoods such as Flamengo, luxurious private residences were still being built, referenced in the compartmentalized spaces, in the coverings and furniture found in European palaces from the 19th century. Residential occupation in the South Zone occurred differently between neighborhoods due to several factors, including the history of each place and the fact that its inhabitants belonged to different social strata.

The sophistication that surrounded the neighborhood [of Copacabana], (...) was not, however, strong enough to soon threaten the primacy of the old residential areas along the Guanabara Bay, which for decades disputed with the Atlantic neighborhoods for the plots of land. wealthiest of the carioca population. Botafogo, Laranjeiras, but, above all, the coastline of Flamengo and Morro da Viúva, remained for many years as a stronghold of essentially urban and elegant apartments, giving Copacabana the aura of beach living. (MARINS, P., 1998, p.193).

Since the 19th century, the neighborhood of Flamengo has been home to a social group with high purchasing power – initially people belonging to the Portuguese court and, in the 20th century, members of the diplomatic corps of embassies –, which is explained by its

proximity to the area. city center and by the presence of the headquarters of the Federal Government of the Brazilian Republic (1889-1960) – Palácio do Catete – on the coastal strip of the neighborhood. According to a study by Flávio Villaça (1978), the neighborhood of Flamengo, at the beginning of the 20th century, had the status of a place to live in a luxurious and fundamentally traditional and aristocratic way. Its inhabitants had a great attachment to the place and did not move away from it even when the urban area expanded to its surroundings. This author also concluded that this group had a specific demand for requirements for their housing: amount of space for the house, quality of the environment, type of neighborhood and residential exclusivity. Therefore, in this period it was natural for a couple with a traditional profile and high purchasing power to choose the neighborhood of Flamengo as the address for their residence (fig.2).

The edification It was located near Av. de Ligaçao, current Av. Oswaldo Cruz, at Rua Princesa Januária nos. 16 and 18. Initially Travessa Januária, it was renamed Rua Princesa Januária on the initiative of Galeno Martins de Almeida, who, a monarchist, wished to honor one of the daughters of Emperor Pedro I and D. Leopoldina (Decree 2649 of 12.09.1927).

It can be observed that, at the end of the 1920s, there were still very few tall buildings in the neighborhood (these marked in red in the previous image), probably due to the conservative profile of its residents and the many mansions in the area, especially near Morro da Viúva, as can be seen in figures 2 and 3.

THE IMPLANTATION

The Martins de Almeida Residence was located in three contiguous lots located on the small Rua Princesa Januária (one block) in the Flamengo neighborhood of numbers 16 and 18 (this result of the re-membering of the land no. acquired in 1927) (fig. 4).

THE PROJECTS FOR THE TERRAIN OF Nº. 18

On 18.08.1927 the owner presented a project to the City Hall for the land no. 18; in the same year he acquired an adjacent land and presented a new project, obtaining the occupancy on 02.22.1929¹. The plans of the first project are archived in the General Archive of the City of Rio de Janeiro (AGCRJ), those of the second were not found. However, analyzing the aerial images obtained by the perimeter of the building actually built, it was concluded that the initial project may have been used, but in a mirrored way and the new added area would have given rise to a garage on the edge of the plot of land. number 16.

The project carried out by the construction company J.Baerlein & Co. Engineers builders is filed at the AGCRJ, but partially damaged, which does not allow its complete reading (fig.5); The first floor plan presents the following spaces facing the road: entrance hall with stairs, billiards room with *fumoir* attachment, *size cochère*, salon; there are still other spaces inside with the name erased. Despite the argument that this floor would be a basement for the exhibition of objects, the project was rejected due to the proposed ceiling height of 2.80 m (it was not in accordance with municipal decree no. 2087 then in force).

1. According to the initial project, the land of the house located on lot no. 18 average 12m (front) x about 17m (depth) x 15,15 (funds). On 09.16.1927, according to the General Property Registry, the purchase of a 5m x 17m strip was included. So the terrain of no. 18 now measures 17m(front) x 17m (depth) x 15,15 (funds).

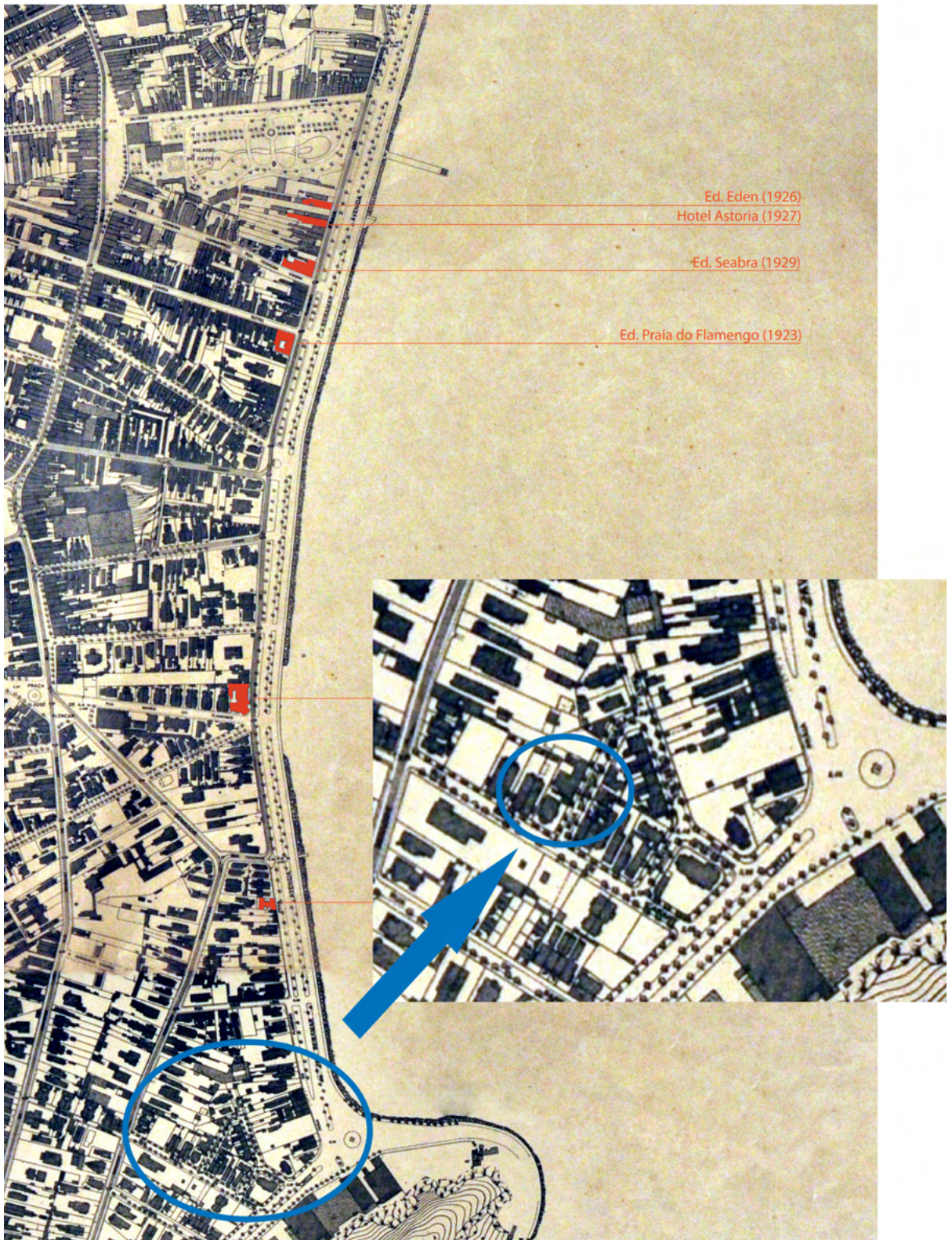


Figure 2 – Bairro do Flamengo, Cadastral Chart of 1935, based on the aerophotogrammetric survey of 1928.

Source: AGCRJ.



Figure 3 – Aerial view of part of the Flamengo neighborhood, 1920s.
Source: Collection of the Navy General Documentation Service.

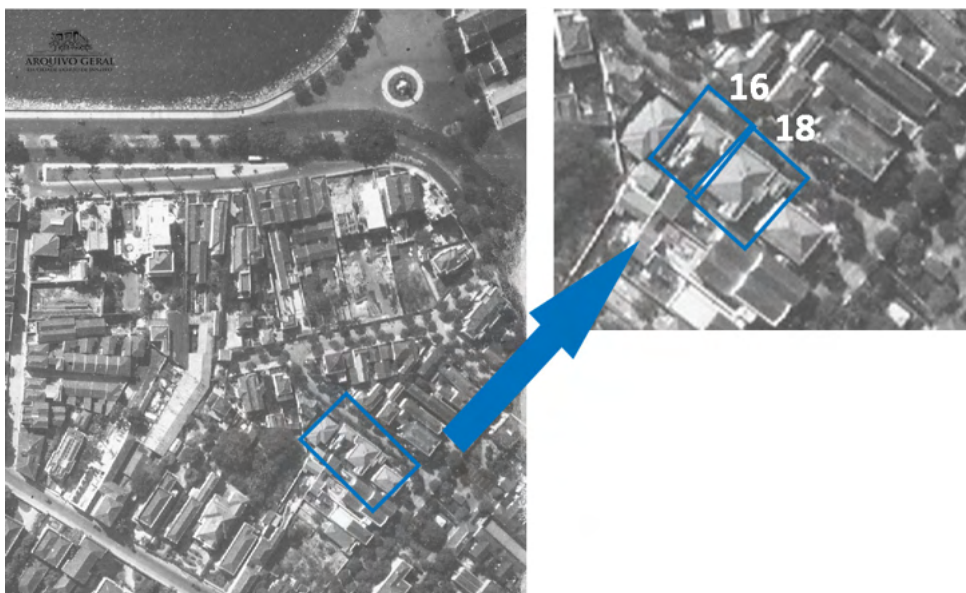


Figure 4 – Part of the Flamengo neighborhood, aerial photo of the late 1920s.
Source: Part of OR14.13, iconography section of AGCRJ.

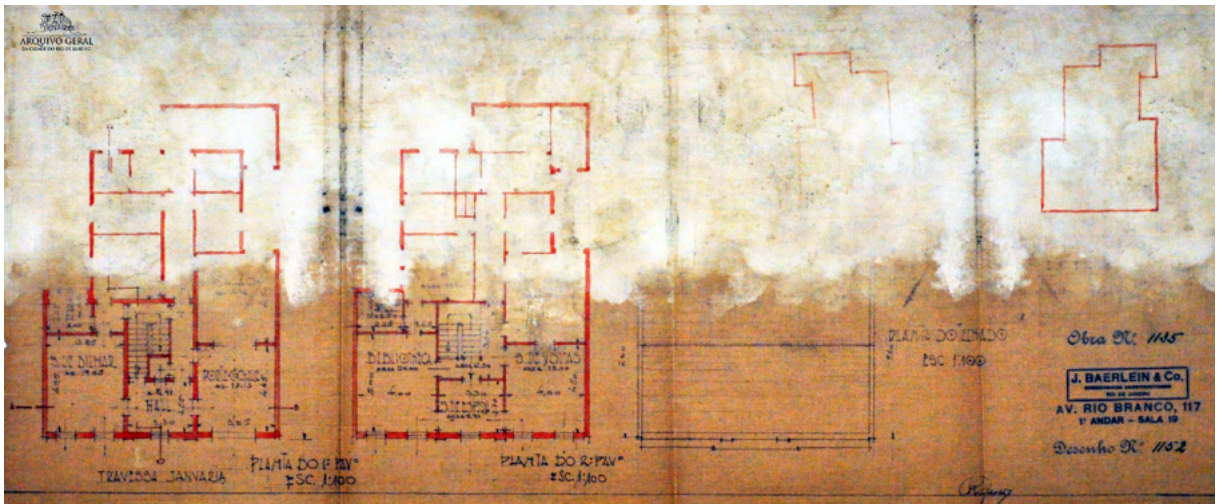


Figure 5 Floor plans and implantation of the house n.º 18.
Source: AGCRJ.

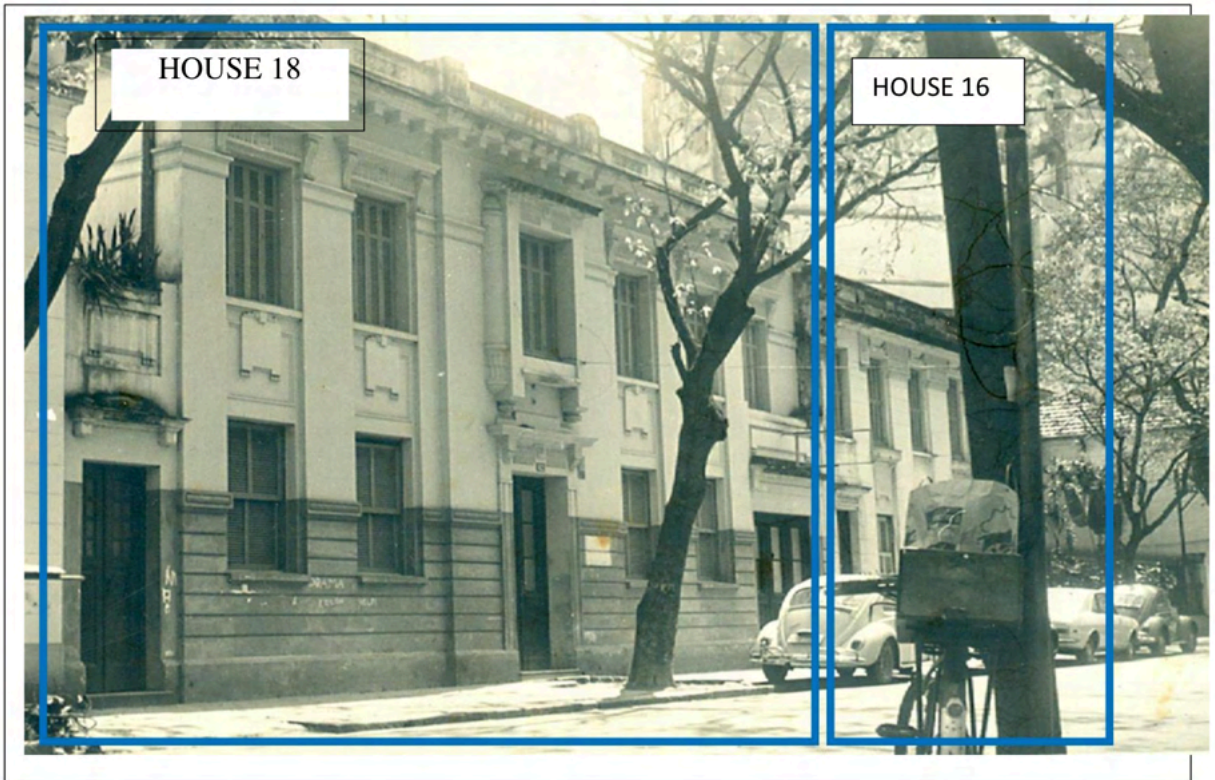


Figure 6 – Partial view of the Residence us years old 1970.
Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida Family.

On the second floor, the entrance hall of the stairs works as a place for the distribution of flows: it gives access to the following spaces facing the road - library, waiting room, visiting room - and to several others, whose nomenclature is not readable - possibly to bedrooms and bathrooms, however making clear the great compartmentalization of the floor.

The original design of the main facade presented in project no. 1927 was altered in construction; the final version closely resembles the design of the facade of house no.16 (fig.6). Only the door layouts on the first floor were changed. There is a service door on the left and the garage entrance on the right (viewed from the street point of view). The main access door is located in the center of the facade. The decorative elements refer in a simplified way to the ornamentation known as Luíz XVI with consoles and medallions. The basement cladding mimics stone up to about 2m high, being then replaced by painted plaster. The roof is hidden by a platband.

Faced with the difficulty of fully understanding the internal spaces of the Residence, its description was sought in the inventory of the owner's assets located in São Paulo, which contains a description of the environments; for the first floor: Hall, 2 rooms, 3 bedrooms, service stairs, 2 bathrooms and tank; the second floor would consist of 3 rooms, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, pantry/kitchen, balcony and front area.

THE PROJECT FOR THE TERRAIN OF N.º.16

In 1928, the deed was signed on land no.16 and in 1929 the building's occupancy was granted, whose land measured about 188m². Despite being an isolated construction, the project found filed at the AGCRJ reveals a connection between the land and that of

no.18, belonging to the same owner, through the opening of doors, both on the first and second floors. Therefore, it can be said that the Residence was constituted by the two buildings.

The project of this house appears signed by a builder – Manoel Pedro Gonçalves. According to the family's report, the first floor would be used for the driver's dwelling (entrance, sitting room, bedroom, dining room, bathroom) and service area (clothes, kitchen, etc.) single sister of the owner (stairs, hall, dining room, toilet, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, wardrobe, terrace) (fig. 7).

The main facade proposal presented in the house no.16 project is very close to what was actually built and its elements were, as already mentioned, replicated from the facade of house no. 18 seeking continuity. The wooden fenestration is elongated, five units in number and are repeated on the same axis on both floors, and on the first floor there are two doors, each placed at one end, with three windows in the center. (fig. 8).

ANATOMY OF THE INTERIORS

The city of Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the 20th century sought references in Haussmann's Paris to shape its new cosmopolitan face both in urban aspects and in its interior spaces.

As point Monique Eleb and Anne Debarre (1995), at Paris of century XIX, both the large urban residences and the more modest ones approached, with regard to the distribution of spaces, of the type *hôtel particulier*, that characterized the luxury housing of the French nobility and high bourgeoisie of the century XVIII until the beginning of century XIX. The adaptation of its spaces to the Parisian rental property, also known as an apartment haussmanniano e *hôtel Parisien* (LOYER, 1987), represented the spread of a luxurious way of life among the bourgeoisie,

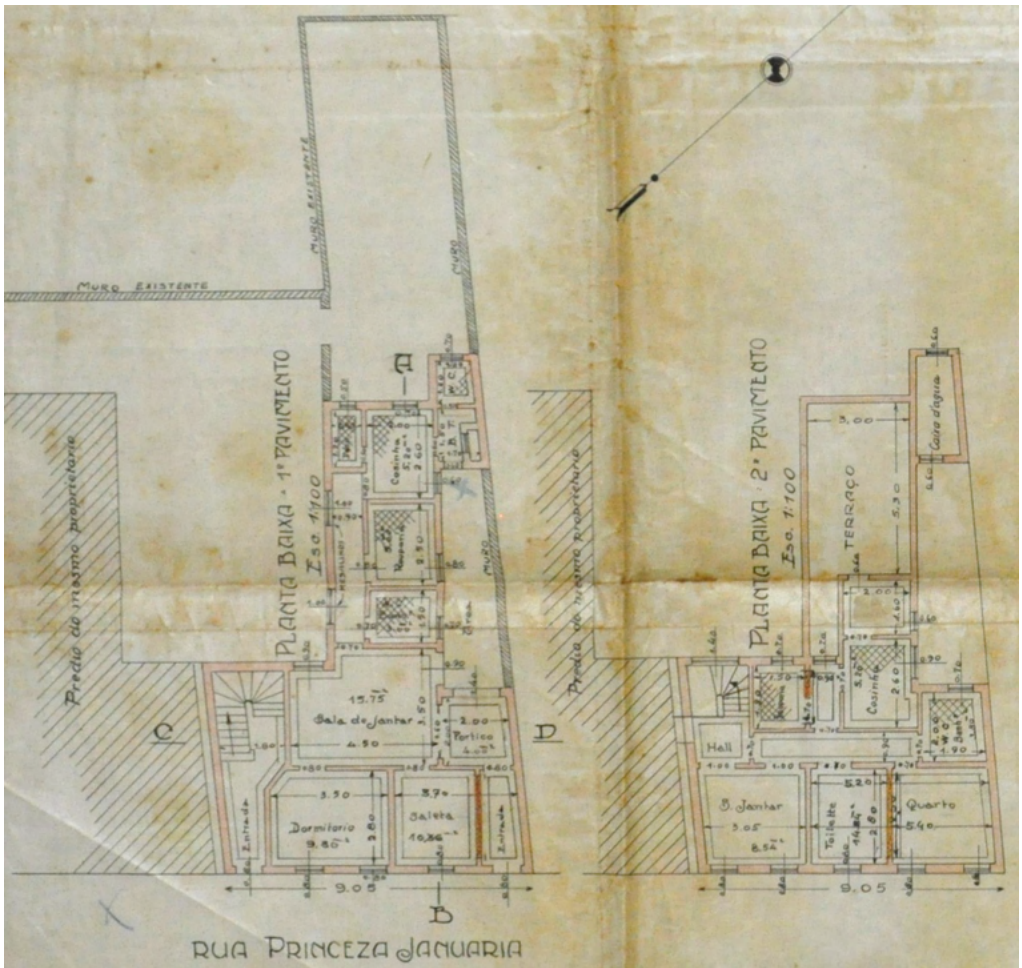


Figure 7 – Floor plans of house no. 16.

Source: AGCRJ.

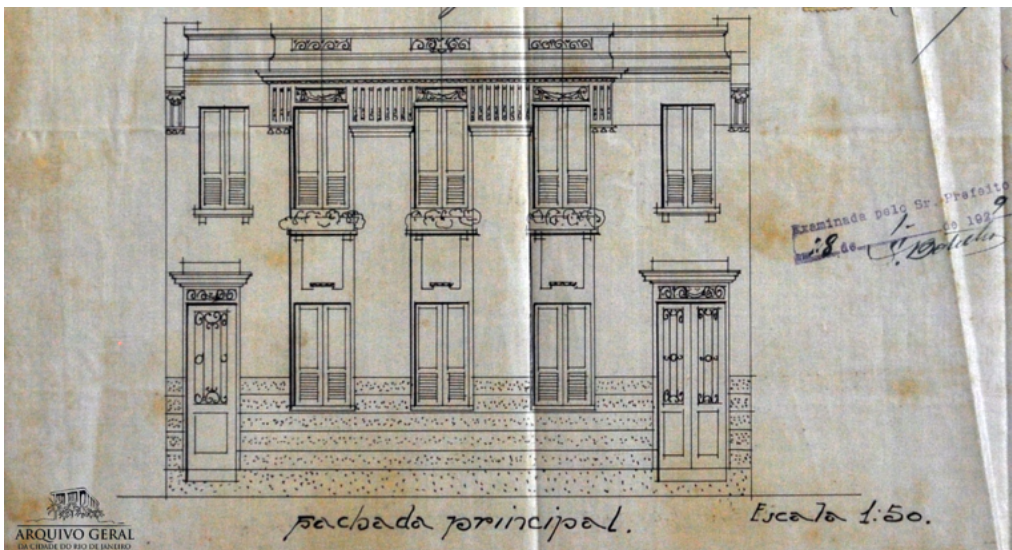


Figure 8 – Project for the main facade of the house of No. 16.

Source: AGCRJ.

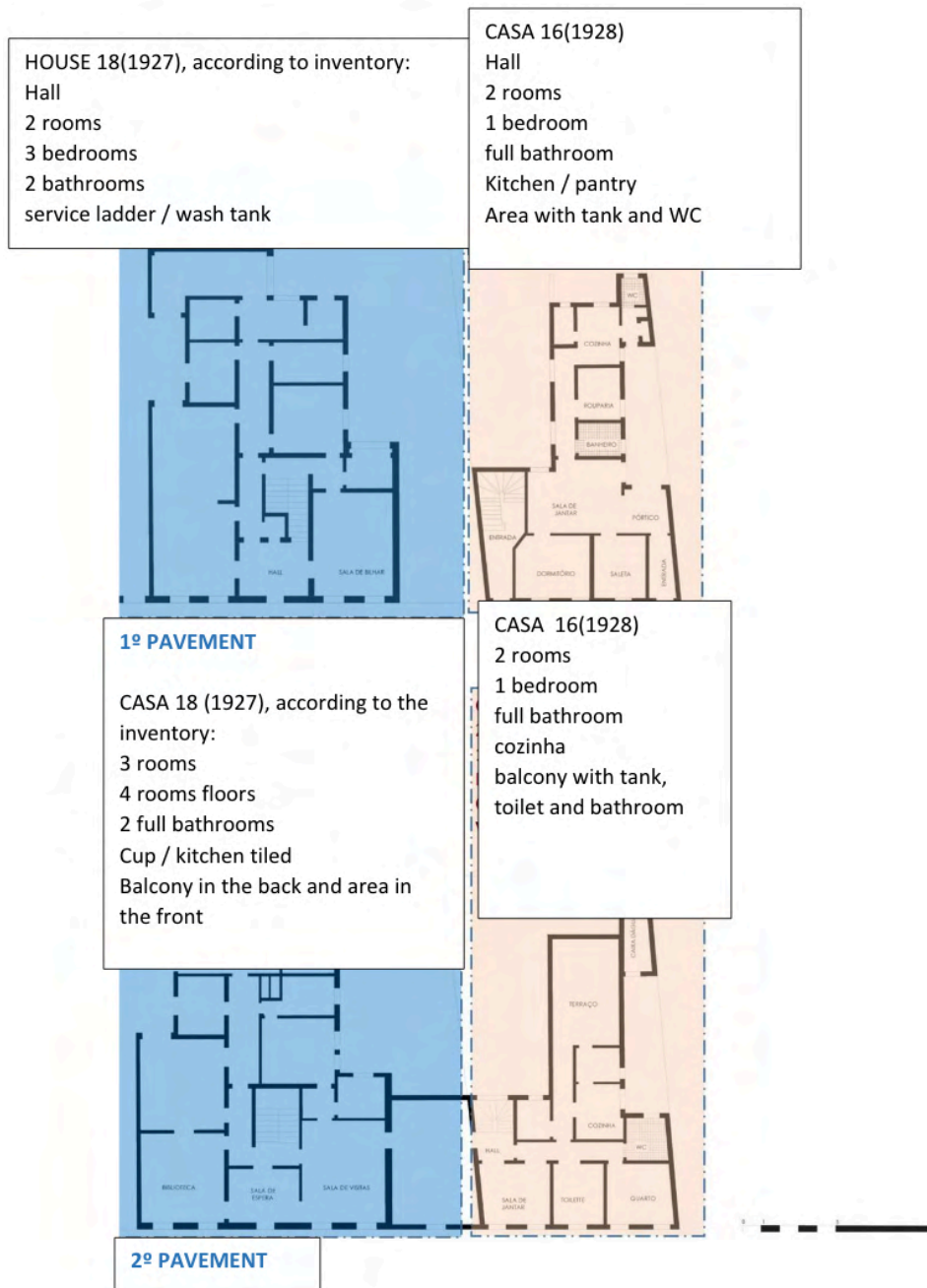


Figure 9 – Floor plans of the Residence consisting of houses nos. 18 and 16.

Source: Larissa Vieira's drawing on plants obtained at the AGCRJ, 2019.

which began to use housing as a showcase for its social success. The garden was replaced by the street and this became the privileged facade occupied by the representation rooms. The building often contained an internal courtyard, which consisted of a less noble space, towards which the intimate and service areas were facing and which accepted irregularities in its form.

The French influence on Brazilian mansions was also studied by Maria Cecília Homem (2010) in defining the concept of a São Paulo mansion: “the mansion had the same system of implantation and internal distribution of the residence of the French bourgeoisie of the 19th century”. In another passage, the author refers to the interiors: “their distribution was made from the vestibule or a hall with a social staircase, resulting in the division of the house into three large zones – living, services and rest”.

A *belle époque* carioca, The period that began at the end of the 19th century, corresponds to years of political and economic tranquility in the city of Rio de Janeiro, which led to the formation of an elite formed by republican businessmen and professionals (NEEDELL, J., 1987). Patrícia Schettino and Celina Lemos (2014) when dealing with the carioca mansion also refer to French ties: “high society had a life of luxury and refinement, based predominantly on foreign cultural models and, as well as other elements of the life of the carioca elite, the national salons were a copy of the French literary salons”.

As in other Brazilian palaces of its time, the interiors of the Martins de Almeida Residence were referenced in compartmentalized and sectorized spaces, in 19th-century French cladding and furniture: *o porte cochère*, a *grand escalier* - a pompous staircase with special treatment, the billiard

room, the library with *fumoir*, o *toilette* conjugated to the bedroom, which refers to the *boudoir*², emerged, according Witold Rybczynski (1986), at the *hôtel particulier* from the eighteenth century (fig.9).

The Martins de Almeida Residence was designed for a collector of books, crockery, silverware and other objects; therefore, its interiors were reception spaces, such as in the French examples, where the guest circulated and, therefore, received a fine finish: crown molding, wallpaper, heavy curtains, double doors, decorated parquet flooring, etc. Its typology was of a patio house and consisted of 5 rooms, 7 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms and other spaces, as can be seen in the following images(figs. 10 a 15).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research on the integrated and movable assets of the Martins de Almeida Residence is at an early stage. So far, it has focused on the identification of spaces and the distribution program of the Interiors, in order to make it possible to understand its architecture and the relationship with the rich iconographic material of the family's collection. Galeno Martins de Almeida's inventory has been a fundamental subsidy to complement the information and support the study of the Interiors of this carioca residence. Most of the furniture and movable goods were sold in a large auction held at the Copacabana Palace Hotel in 1955, whose extensive catalog has also contributed to the research. The family still owns part of the movable property that belonged to the Residence.

As a preliminary conclusion, we can point out the way of living of part of the carioca elite of the early 20th century: the urban mansion located in an aristocratic neighborhood, referenced in French parameters of good living: internal distribution tripartite in

2. It is a small dressing room adjacent to the main bedroom or a small intimate room attached to the owner's bedroom, where the ladies started to receive their friends, with an independent entrance, a space for toilet and a dressing room (closet).



Figure 10 – Main access hall located on the first floor.
Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida family.



Figure 11 – Internal courtyard of the Residence.
Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida Family.



Music room.

Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida family.



Figure 13 bedroom.

Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida family.

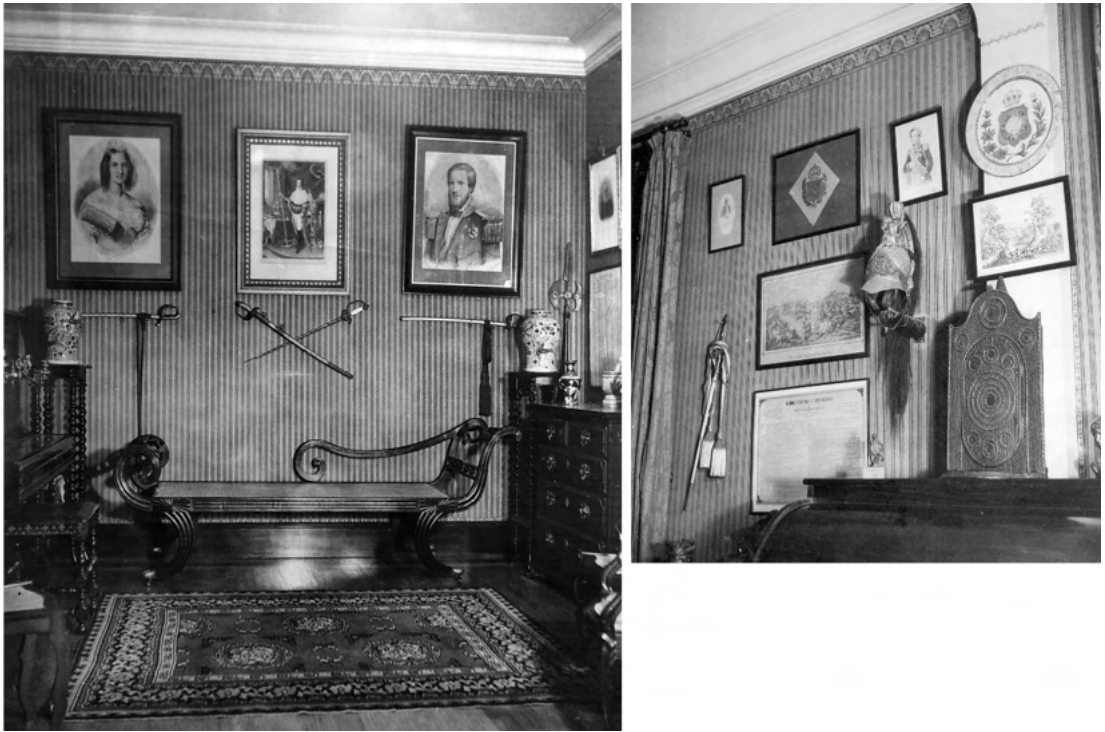


Figure 14 – Weapons Room.

Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida family.



Figure 15 – Dining room.

Source: Collection of the Martins de Almeida family.

social/intimate and service, wide spaces and compartments and interiors with many coverings and furniture. The urban mansion in Rio de Janeiro predates the luxury apartment buildings, which emerged from the 1930s onwards. Therefore, the mansions had a short life and very few have survived, which makes their study difficult. Images from private collections, such as this one from the Martins de Almeida Family, fill this gap.

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FILES

General Archive of the City of Rio de Janeiro - AGCRJ

Private archive of the Martins de Almeida Family

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