

NERUDA IN CONSTRUCTION:

The case of Isla Negra

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Abstract

If my poetry has a meaning at all, it is this spatial, unlimited tendency, which is not satisfied with one habitation
Pablo Neruda

Among Neruda's many quotes about his houses, the quote above explains much about the intrinsic relation between his poetry and his living spaces. The dynamic of his houses, with their incremental processes through time, is the concrete expression of this "spatial, unlimited tendency". Neruda's poetry was so extended, intense and plural that it needed different, emblematic and creative spaces. It is as if Neruda spatialized his poetry; therefore, it does not become "satisfied with one habitation".

Neruda's houses enchant and acquire a sort of idiosyncrasy, reflected on their form, on the mixture of building materials, and also on their growth process, with multiple construction stages. They have been the object of several books and articles (Bottiglieri, 2009; Vial, 2010; Canales, 2007); however, the approach has been fragmented, analyzing them part-by-part or space-by-space. Valenzuela (2000), for instance, believes that the fact that the houses have been built in parts, or little by little, prevents them from being analyzed as a global project. This understanding seems also to prevail when Mayorga (1996) explains that her analysis would be made by plans in an independent spatial reading, due to the absence of related spaces among the floors.

For some scholars, Neruda's houses were built based on his collections: those elements that he found and wished to gather in one same space (Vial, 2004). There is no doubt that "things" – as some refer to the acquisitions of collections, furniture and memorabilia brought home from many places – play a fundamental role in the work and life of Pablo Neruda (Vial, 2010). In fact, some authors consider that his houses were not houses in a strict sense, but numerous parts, each one a sort of trunk to keep and shelter the things that he had collected along the years (Bottiglieri, 2009). This line of thought is supported by the fact that although Neruda wrote abundantly about "things" (the snails, the ship figureheads or the ode to onions), he did not write about space.

The premise of this paper is that space, as much as the collections it contains, has much to say about Pablo Neruda. His direct participation in the conception and construction of his houses gives us the opportunity to try to understand the poet as an architect and not only as a builder. Given the importance of the history of these spaces in the life of the poet, the present paper is a contribution to the studies about Neruda's houses through a perspective that privileges both the

totality (instead of the parts) and the process (instead of the final product). The parts, and the stages of growth are analyzed in their relation to the other parts or stages of the houses. Space Syntax methods and approach have much to offer in this perspective.

The paper corresponds to the first part of a post-doctorate research in progress, using the Space Syntax theory and methodology. Although this paper only refers to one of Neruda's houses, Isla Negra, the intention is to study his other houses as well: Michoacán, La Chascona, La Sebastiana and La Manquel.

In the following paper a morphological study of the house of Isla Negra¹ is presented, considering each stage of its growth and change, until the last of Neruda's intervention in 1973.

Keywords: *Design Synthesis, generative urban design, Neural Networks, Complex systems, GeoComputation, Space Syntax*

Theme: *Spatial Analysis and Architectural Theory*

¹ This house is located Isla Negra a small town at the sea side located approximately 130 km from Santiago de Chile.

1. Context

Pablo Neruda was the name adopted by Ricardo Eliécer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto as he signed his first poems. The name became official in 1946 (Bottiglieri, 2009). He was born in 1904 in the city of Parral, in the south of Chile, and passed away in September 1973 at the age of sixty-nine, in the capital city of Santiago, brought from his house in Isla Negra.

Pablo Neruda's life was directly linked to the cultural and political history of Chile. In the period between 1927 and 1943 he was first consul and then ambassador to several countries²; and in returning to Chile, he was elected Senator in 1945. In 1969 he withdrew his candidacy for the presidency of the country in support of Salvador Allende, a socialist democratically elected for President in 1970³. In spite of the years Neruda lived outside of his country, he declared himself as an "integral Chilean" ("*un chileno integral*"), who enjoyed living with his friends in his homeland (Neruda, 1952).

There was a sentimental, poetical and physical relation between Neruda and his country, and the houses are among the elements that make it concrete. The house of Isla Negra emerged out of Pablo Neruda's need to have a place where he could dedicate himself to one of his most important books⁴: *Canto General*.⁵ The book was largely written at this house. The period also coincides with the intense political activity of the poet, including his time as a Senator of the Chilean Republic. The book also marks an important moment of his poetry,

I had already been for long treading the terrain of the irrational and of the negative. I had to detain myself and seek the path of humanism, unearthed from contemporary literature but deeply rooted in the aspirations of the human being (...) the idea of a key poem to muster the historical incidences, the geographical conditions, the life and struggles of our peoples, presented itself to me as an urgent task (Neruda, 2008, 191).

Originally, the house in Isla Negra belonged to a Spanish merchant sailor named Eladio Sobrino. The year 1939 appears as the year of the official purchase of the house, but according to the daughter of the previous owner, the purchase must have taken place in the years of 1937-1938⁶. The original plan was designed by Luz Sobrino and considered a dining room, kitchen, a bathroom and two bedrooms (see Figure 3a).

The Neruda houses increase in the course of the years, similarly to a living organism. It was how he saw the house of Isla Negra: "*the house went on growing, as we do, as the trees do...*" (Neruda, 2004, 89). The original house with approximately 68m² increased in size to over 440m².

According to Mayorga (1996, 104), the house of Isla Negra underwent four large processes of expansion: (i) in 1943, with the project by Rodríguez Arias; (ii) between the years of 1945 and 1965, with the changes that were made by Neruda and Rafael Plaza (Rafita), his builder; (iii) between 1965 and 1973, with the projects by Sergio Soza; and (iv) the final intervention, which was started by Neruda and Rafael Plaza in 1973.

2 Pablo Neruda started his diplomatic life in 1927 as a consul in Rangum, Burma. His following stations were Ceylon (1929), Buenos Aires (1933), Barcelona (1934) and Mexico (1940). (Silva, 2011).

3 Salvador Allende governed Chile for three years; he was deposed by a military coup commanded by general Augusto Pinochet on September 11, 1973.

4 "In that year of danger and hideout, I finished my most important book, *Canto General*" (Neruda, 2008:239).

5 "I started working in my *Canto General*. I needed a working place for this. I found a stone house before the ocean, in a place that was unknown by everyone, named Isla Negra..." (Neruda, 2008, 191).

6 For more details on the history of the purchase of the house in Isla Negra, see Mayorga (1996).

But the history of the enlargements in Isla Negra was more complex and not linear. Among non-build projects, projects that were executed with changes, and modifications without a project, there is a long history of construction of the residence. In a more detailed chronology, seven stages of enlargement and modifications of the house of Isla Negra were identified ranging 30 years: from 1943 to 1973.

Given this long process the first research questions arise: what is the underlying structure of the house? What are its morphological characteristics? Are there structural and/or morphological changes in each stage? To approach the questions, the research will use the resources of Space Syntax theory, specifically the technique decomposing the systems into convex spaces, analyzing the depth⁷ of the system and integration⁸ of spaces (Hanson, 1998).

2. The stages of growth: from 1943 to 1973

In order to link the space modifications to the poet's work and life, we have carried out an estimation of the dates of the changes in the house based on bibliographical data and archive images.

I Enlargement: In 1943, Neruda forwarded a sketch for the first enlargement to the house in Isla Negra to the architect Germán Rodríguez Arias⁹. In the same year, the architect presented his proposal of enlargement, based on Pablo Neruda's sketches (Figure 1).

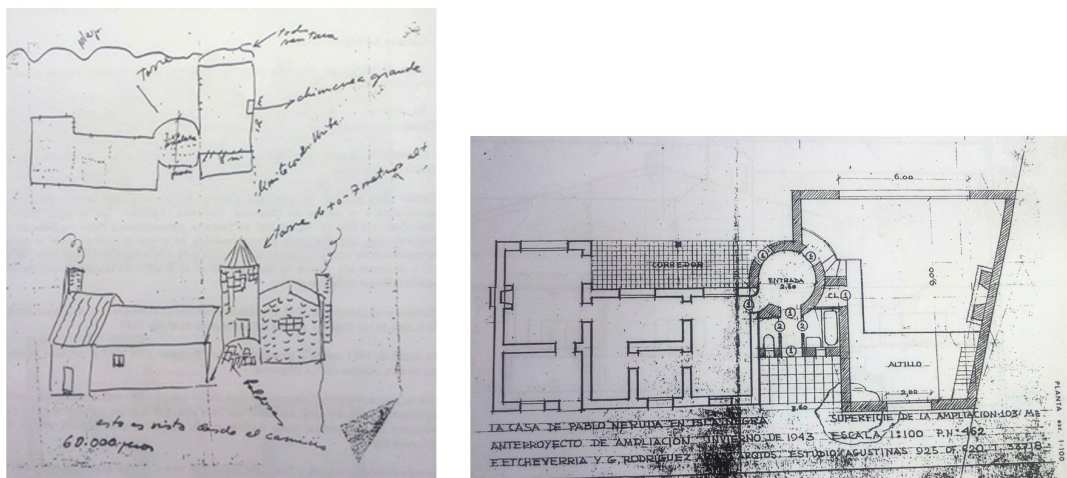


Figure 1: 1943-Pablo Neruda's sketches (a) and Rodríguez Arias's proposal (b)
Source: Mayorga(1996); Calderon and Folch (2004)

By comparing the proposals of Neruda and Rodríguez Arias, one finds what Canales (2007) called a "negotiation that the latter kept with the poet, showing the attempts of the Catalanian in order to solve some of the creative ideas proposed by Neruda". Both in Neruda's sketch and in the preliminary project by Rodríguez Arias, it becomes clear that the enlargement integrated the new volume (to the right) to the existing one (to the left). But Rodríguez Arias added other

7 The Depth is the topological distance, measured by the number of convex spaces which separate the spaces within the system and these spaces in relation to the outside. All syntactic measurements and the graphs were generated by JASS software (Justified Analysis of Spatial Systems, version 1.0)

8 The Integration measure is an index which defines the degree of inter-relation between the different spaces of the system.

9 Germán Rodríguez Arias was a Catalanian architect. He was an important figure of the Nerudian world, having become a friend and partner of Neruda in the process of building his houses.

spaces: the mezzanine (*altillo*); the tower bedroom; the veranda (*corredor*); a more intense use of the tower as an element linking the volumes (several points of access); a front porch; and the bathroom close to the entrance.

From the standpoint of form, there are only a few differences between the project by Arias and Neruda's sketch: (i) in the living room, the rupture of Neruda's orthogonal drawing on account of the wall at the limits of the property; (ii) the roof of the tower, which is flat in Arias' proposal, differently from the traditional covering proposed by Neruda¹⁰. There is photographic record of the tower with the flat coverage proposed by Arias¹¹, but the traditional covering proposed by Neruda prevailed.

More than aesthetical aspects, the first enlargement shows that: (i) the veranda/corridor that linked the two volumes, in Arias' preliminary project, was not built, and the initial proposal of Neruda prevailed; (ii) another space was also built near the tower bedroom, which is not found in the perspective of Rodríguez Arias' preliminary project (Mayorga, 1996); (iii) the internal modification that was made during the building of the first improvement project, like the main dining room (Plaza, 2013)¹²; iv) and an external stair to access the tower bedroom also existed (Plaza, 2013) .

The final product of this first stage of enlargement was the junction of both proposals, in which the following elements prevailed: (i) the compound of two volumes connected by the tower, of which the first was the original house; (ii) the second volume, consisting of the tower, bathroom, porch, the large living room with a two-store high ceiling and with a mezzanine (*altillo*), providing access to the bedroom of the tower (Bottiglieri, 2004, 129; Calderon and Folch, 2004, 26) and the space in the upper floor, which, according to a worker of Casa Museo de Isla Negra, had been Neruda's first office, and the place where he wrote the book "Alturas de Macchu Picchu"¹³.

From the standpoint of Space Syntax, this first enlargement reveals that Neruda's proposal, Rodríguez Arias' suggestions, and what was effectively built are three quite different things. The graphs in Figure 2 show the original house (graph 0), both proposals (graphs a and b) and what was finally build (graph I). In fact while Neruda's proposal (Graph a) brought the mean depth of the nodes from 2,3 to 2,2, by almost doubling the nodes (from 7 to 11) but keeping the same total depth. On the contrary Rodríguez Aria's proposal (Graph b) increased the nodes to 19 and the depth of the system to 7, increasing the mean depth to 2,8; but at the same time also increased the rings in the system.

It is important to signal that Rodríguez Arias specifically increased the depth of the branch leading to Neruda's bedroom. The build house, that constitutes the first stage of the process of the house (Graph I), is a compromise from both proposals: it brings the mean depth to 2,5 but keeps the ringiness of the system. It is important here to signal that the deep branch leading to Neruda's bedroom is turned into a deep ring.

10 The tower is a reference to Neruda's childhood in Temuco (Mayorga, 1996, 152).

11 Photographic archive of Pablo Neruda Foundation.

12 According to Rafael Plaza, the poet's builder, when he started to work with Neruda in 1946, the main dining room also existed. This information was obtained directly from Rafael Plaza in an interview done in 28 July 2013 at Isla Negra house by Franciney França.

13 The information was obtained with a worker of Casa Museo de Isla Negra, in a visit on 29 April 2013.

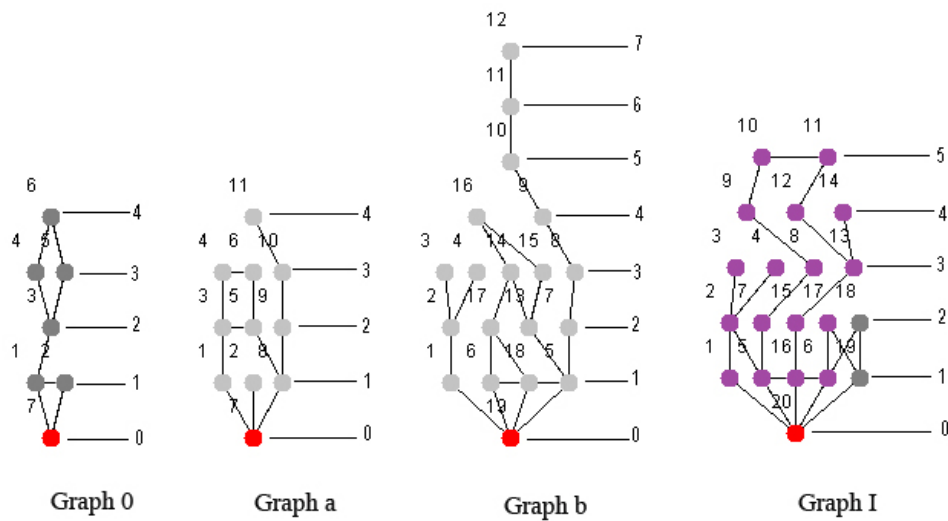


Figure 2: Graphs of original house (0), Neruda's proposal (a), Rodríguez Arias's proposal (b) and final construction (I)

The dynamism of the creative and constructive process of the partnership Neruda/Rodríguez Arias managed to produce a house that more than double its convex spaces to accommodate the new functions (from 7 to 20) but kept the system shallow (from 4 to 5 in total depth). Beside with several rings on its basis, there is a big ring starting at the mezzanine (Node 10), which includes the spaces of the second floor, such as the bedroom of Neruda-Delia del Carril (Node 12), the office (Node 13), the stairs (node 16) and the exterior (node 20).

In terms of depth, it can be seen that what was effectively built (Graph I) is closer to Neruda's proposal (Graph a) with 4 levels than to Arias' (Graph b with 7 levels and a tree structure). If compared to the morphological structure of the original house (Graph 0), it is found that Neruda's proposal comes much closer to the initial house, as he adds new spaces but keeps the depth in relation to the outer side. Graph I also shows the new spaces after the first enlargement (in grape) and the spaces of the original house (in gray) revealing the significant increasing the convex spaces.

The tower consolidates itself as an important morphological element in the proposals, as it potentializes the permeability of the system. It is the linkage between the two volumes, and, both in Neruda's proposal (Graph a, Node 8), and in the final building at this first stage (Graph I, Node 5) it is an important element in the relation with the exterior. In the final version, Neruda's initial proposal prevailed, in which the tower is directly accessed from outside, even though this access had to be made by the rear of the house – and not by the main façade, as he had proposed.

II Enlargement: According to Mayorga (1996, 96), in the period between 1945 and 1965, the house experienced the modifications made by Neruda and Rafael Plaza.¹⁴ This period encompasses four enlargements: i) the construction of the first bedroom of Matilde-Neruda; ii) the second bedroom of Matilde-Neruda; iii) the enlargement of the kitchen of the original house; iv) the bar and the modifications in the dining room of the original house. According to Valenzuela (2004), these changes were made in the years 1950, 1952, 1958 and 1965, respectively.

¹⁴ Mr. Plaza confirms that it was Neruda who brought the plants and said how he wished things to be done, and Rafita then did the work as sketched by Neruda (In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 10 July 2004).

The decade of the 1950s marked Pablo Neruda's life indeed. The years 1949 to 1952 were a period of strong political activity and intense amorous life including his clandestine love life with Matilde Urrutia. Neruda only returned to Chile in 1952, and in 1955, he officially divorced Delia Del Carril, who had been his wife, to assume his romance with Matilde.¹⁵

The information shows that the second enlargement was the construction of Matilde and Neruda's first bedroom, located on the upper floor, in continuity to the spaces close to the tower (Fig.5). This construction was carried out because Matilde did not wish to inhabit the same bedroom that had been used by Neruda and Delia Del Carril (Mayorga, 1996, 96). Also, according to Calderon and Folch (2004, 30), in 1955 with the end of his marriage, Neruda requested Rodríguez Arias proposals of changes in the house of Isla Negra. Furthermore, until 1952, Neruda was exiled from Chile, which prevented him from actively participating¹⁶. According to Matilde, in May 1952 they were in Capri when the symbolic wedding took place:

“In Capri there was an old jeweler who made us a wedding ring, in which we read: ‘Capri, May 3, 1952, your captain’” (Urrutia, 1990, 96).

This second stage of enlargement in Isla Negra started with the construction of the bedroom of Pablo Neruda and Matilde. According Mr. Rafael Plaza (2013), this construction started in 1952, when Pablo Neruda came back from his exile. So, it is more likely that it took place after that, and not in 1950, as described by Valenzuela (2000).

III Enlargement – After the second modification, they decided to build another bedroom in the second floor, on pillars, and with a view to the ocean (Valenzuela, 2000). This must have taken place close to the years 1958 (Plaza, 2013) – the date to be used in this study. The access to the bedroom of Matilde-Neruda is reached internally by a staircase that was placed in the old dining room of the original house. According to the information obtained during a visit to the house of Isla Negra, even though the door that provided access to the outer side of this dining room has remained, this access was interrupted with the construction of the staircase that leads to the second bedroom of the couple. Therefore, in this stage, one finds significant interventions from the standpoint of the syntax of the original house (Fig. 5). According to the chronology of Plaza (2013), it was in 1958 that the kitchen of the original house also underwent changes and was enlarged with the construction of a “comedor de diario”, a smaller dining space adjoined to the kitchen, or ‘copa’, as named in Brazil (Fig. 5).

IV Enlargement: Between 1958 and 1965, a bar was added and modifications were made in the old dining room of the original house, which then started to have two wine cellars, or “*bodegas*” (Mayorga, 1996). With this enlargement, two important elements which were also found in his other homes – bar and cellar – appeared. As well as the cellar, which was also present in La Chascona, the bar was present in all houses and became an important element of his way of living: a place for receiving close friends.

In Isla Negra, the bar was a product of this way of living, and became a necessary space in the residence. It is mentioned that at first Neruda and his friends used to meet by nightfall under the room of the couple (on pillars) to drink and talk (Mayorga, 1996; Vial, 2004). Eventually, they felt the necessity of closing and delimiting this space. With its glass walls, the bar became one of the most privileged places of the house with a free view to the Pacific Ocean (Fig. 5).

Although, the chronology on the enlargements provided by Mayorga (1996) and Valenzuela (2000) are very clarifying, they do not encompass the changes made in the internal space of the

¹⁵ See the bibliography available at the website of the Pablo Neruda Foundation, www.fundacionpabloneruda.com.

¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Rafael Plaza on the BBC, 10 July 2004. In: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.

house, unless they were directly linked to new spaces. The focus of these chronologies, therefore, is not on the changes in the interior of the house, for instance, the actual large dining room, as already mentioned. In this sense, it is significant that after the fourth modification, the first volume of the house of Isla Negra (before the arcos) was built. This stage included new spaces and modifications to the existing. If we compare the original house with what is after the fourth enlargement, we may see several differences (Fig. 3).

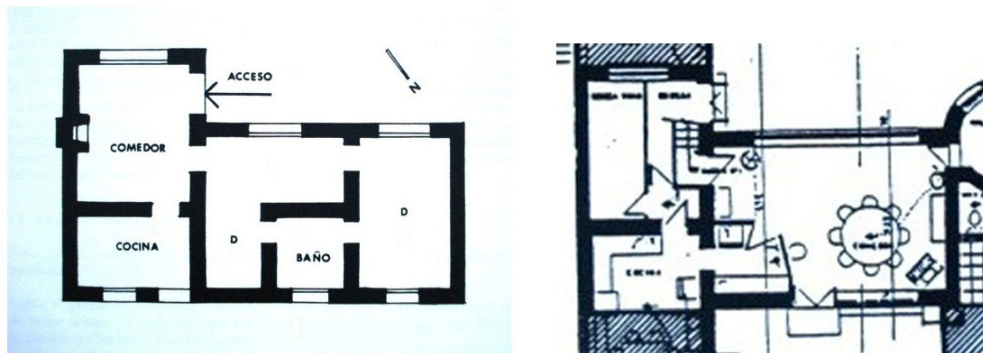


Figure 3: Original plan (a) and the main dining room (b)
Source: Mayorga, 1996

Fig. 3 summarizes the big changes that took place in the original house: i) in place of the two bedrooms, the large dining room; ii) in the place of the old “comedor”, the bodegas and the staircase that provides access to the bedroom of Pablo-Matilde; iii) the intermediary space between the comedor hall establishing a new access to the kitchen. These changes are important for the present study, as they reveal that until 1966, the house of Isla Negra underwent profound modifications in its morphology, with changes of use and function in several spaces.

The period is characterized as one of the most important in the history of the expansion of the house. Firstly, because it is a spontaneous intervention without the presence of an architect, built at a time when Pablo Neruda freely exerted his architectural creativity. Secondly, because it is the materialization of the main nucleus of the house, where one finds the most important intimate and social spaces (the bedrooms, the main living room, the large dining room and the bar). Therefore, this modification adds itself as one of the most important of the period, along with the changes that have been mentioned by Mayorga (1996) and Valenzuela (2000).

This period between 1943-1945 is also important because it marks a significant change in the morphology of the house. Fig. 4 presents the graphs of the changes that were made in the period and reveals a new profile for the systems after the interventions by Neruda/Rafita. In regard to the first enlargement, the house, still relatively shallow, level 6. Even with the increase in the new spaces, it then moved from 22 to 36 convex spaces, and the depth of the systems remained unaltered after the second change, as can be seen in graphs of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th enlargements (Fig.4).

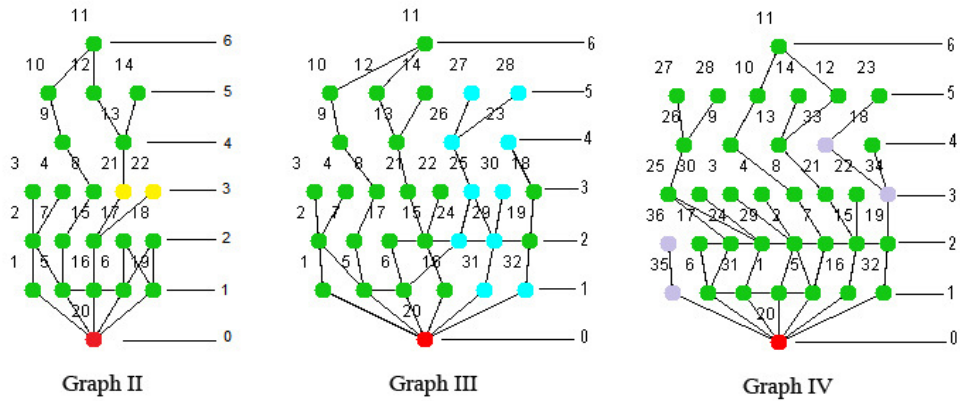


Figure 4: Graphs – enlargement

The house that resulted from this first enlargement (Graph I) increased the privacy of the intimate spaces (Node 12), such as the spaces close to the tower on the second floor (which are the deepest in relation to the outer part). After the second enlargement, these spaces became shallower (Node 21, for instance). The bedrooms of Matilde-Pablo Neruda (Nodes 21 and 25) are even shallower, both at the levels 3 (Graphs II, III and IV).

These intimate spaces are as shallow as the main living room (Nodes 7 and 8), and are also in the levels 2 and 3 (Graphs II, III and IV). Neruda’s keenness for shallower systems, at last, seems to have materialized itself, after he had already manifested it in his sketch for the first modification (Fig. 2- Graph a).

According to historiography (Mayorga, 1996), the second project of enlargement of the house was also carried out by Rodríguez Arias, still in 1945. Yet, this proposal was only retaken in 1965 (Calderon and Folch, 2004; Valenzuela, 2000). As well as in Rodríguez Arias’ first mission, there is a sketch by Neruda, which was handed to the architect (Fig. 8.a). When the project was retaken in 1965, the architect Rodríguez Arias had already returned to Spain, and Neruda then invited his friend and professor at the University of Chile, architect Sergio Soza, to execute the modifications.

V Enlargement: There is not a precise date for the two enlargement stages under the lead of Sergio Soza. However, Mayorga (1996) makes it clear that the last change, the room of snails, was started in 1973, the year of Pablo Neruda’s passing. This means that Sergio Soza’s changes took place between 1965 and 1973, and that the first stage (to the second library) was finished in 1966.¹⁷ Therefore, this first part of the changes proposed by Sergio Soza had been already implemented in that year.

VI Enlargement: The second stage of Sergio Soza’s project includes the horse room and the office (Plaza, 2013).

VII Enlargement: In 1973, the last enlargement of Isla Negra started with the construction of the room of snails under the lead of Neruda and Rafael Plaza. With Neruda’s passing, the

¹⁷ In the records of the Pablo Neruda Foundation, there is a photo of Matilde and Pablo Neruda’s wedding signed with the date of 1966, which took place in the second library. Source: Pablo Neruda Foundation.

construction was interrupted and only retaken in 1995 (Fig. 5).

It is important to highlight that in 1973, there was already a part of the house intended to the caregiver/chauffeur, next to the horse room and the room of snails. However, the existing researches do not mention its date of construction. Therefore, we cannot conclude with precision in which enlargement stage in Isla Negra it was built, but we can consider it in the syntax analysis of this final enlargement, which coincides with the reading of the final version of the house (Fig.5).

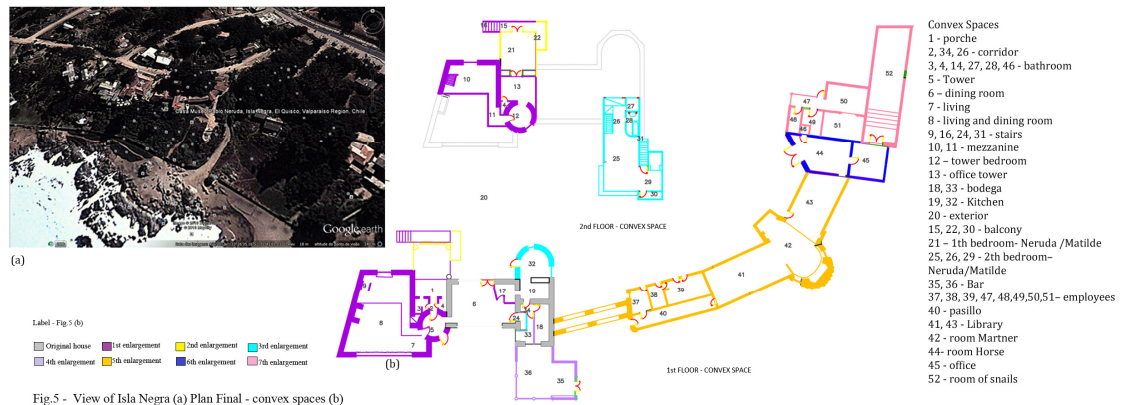


Figure 5: View of Isla Negra (a) Plan Final – convex spaces (b)

In her analysis, Mayorga (1996, 127) separates the house in two volumes: i) the volume that was built until 1965, before the arches; ii) the volume that emerged after 1965, from the arches to the room of snails. According to her, the second volume differs from the first (1943-1965) as it is more introverted, due to the fact that its spaces were thought out based on the objects and collections:

This volume is characterized by the fact that the spaces it contains are turned into it. This is due to the fact that this 'area of the house concurs in function of the objects that it harbors, such as collections or books of the library, and for this reason the spatial meaning inverts itself vis-à-vis the previous volumetry, given that now the space concurs inwards, and not outwards as in the previous case (Mayorga, 1996, 133).

By analyzing the house as a whole, we find that it is not the case. Fig. 6 shows that the graphs of the 5th, 6th and 7th enlargements confirm the existence of a morphological standard for the house of Isla Negra.

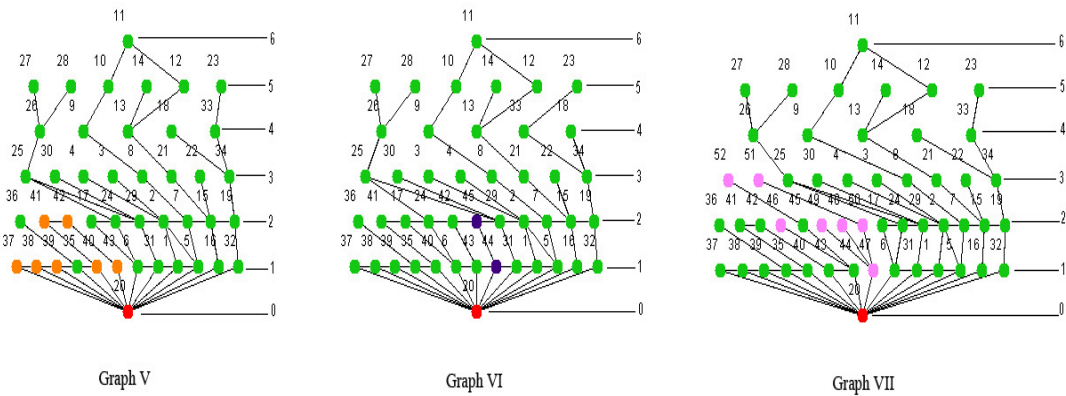


Figure 6: Graphs - enlargements

Even after the inclusion of new spaces and of entirely defined sets, the depth did not change, characterizing the system as a whole and by stages of modifications, as having little depth and being permeable from outside. This is the characteristic that has been kept since the second enlargement, as mentioned above.

Morphologically, the house does not become more vertical (creating or intensifying tree-shaped structures), but more horizontal (increasing its basis with several access points from the outside). The house was expanded and in each enlargement, new entry points from the outside were created. The number of convex spaces directly linked to the outer side leaps from 5 to 14; thus, the connectivity of the system has significantly increased, whereas the depth became stable with six levels.

The access to the house is intensified by the outside, differently from a standard home in which the internal circulation flows make the access to the different spaces. At the house of Isla Negra, this takes place internally without the use of circulation (by directly accessing one space from another, in most cases), and is still potentialized by the outside.

Another very important aspect of the house is that after the modifications, the main spaces did not undergo changes in relation to their depth, indicating an option of keeping them accessible by outside, keeping them shallow in relation to the system. Note that some spaces that were initially deeper became shallower with the following enlargements (the tower bedroom and the Martner room, for instance), while others were kept shallow during the house's entire process of growth (main living room and tower).

As an index which defines the degree of inter-relation between the different spaces of the system, the integration measure also shows the changes of the main spaces along the expansion process of the house, in relation to the exterior (Fig.7a). The analysis shows that there are three types of spaces:

(A) segregated spaces: including the mezzanine (altillo), the tower office and, to a lesser extent, the tower bedroom. Among these three, the tower bedroom is the space with the smaller integration rate during the entire process of expansion of the house (with an average of 0.592). These are the most segregated spaces of the system and they keep their segregation through the process practically at the same level. The mezzanine, for instance, used by Neruda as a first library, differs from the libraries I and II (second volume), which were, on their turn, much more integrated than it in the system as a whole (see graph).

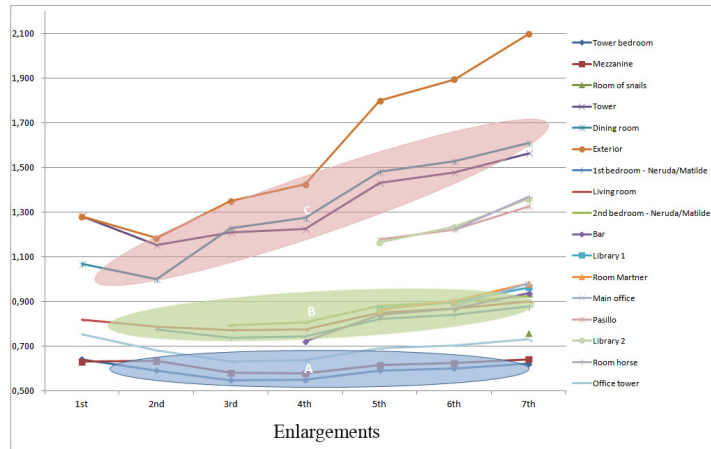
(B) the intermediate spaces: are the main spaces of the house, including Matilde/ Neruda's bedroom, the main working space (office), the library 1 and the bar, which according to all, was the main space for socializing among the closer group to Neruda. Among the spaces that are closer to the integration average, both Matilde/Neruda's room (close to the tower) and (facing the sea), with a final integration rate of 0.877 and 0.926, respectively, differ from the tower bedroom, which was used by Neruda/Delia del Carril. Note that a perspective of more segregated bedrooms does not take shape in the house after the second expansion. In this sense, the Matilde/Neruda's main bedroom is as integrated as the bar, for instance, with a final integration rate of 0.937. This shows that there is not a strong difference among them in the structure of the configuration of the house.

(C) the integrated core: including the open space, the big dining room and the tower. The tower and the large dining room are the internal spaces with the largest integration rates, having increased from 1.154 to 1.564, and 1.000 to 1.610 respectively. Along with this striking aesthetic effect for Neruda, the tower also has this fundamental role of integration among the spaces. On its turn, the dining room is a highlight as the most integrated space of activities of the system, which is in conformity with the importance of this space in Neruda's social life.¹⁸ Along with the exterior – the most integrated space of Isla Negra –, it confirms the importance of these spaces for receiving visitors. The large parties, such as the 50th, 60th and 65th birthdays of the poet, took place with a large open-air table in front of the dining room, complementing the living room and the bar, which were the most used spaces of the first volume. It confirms the first volume as a social space of a more intense use.

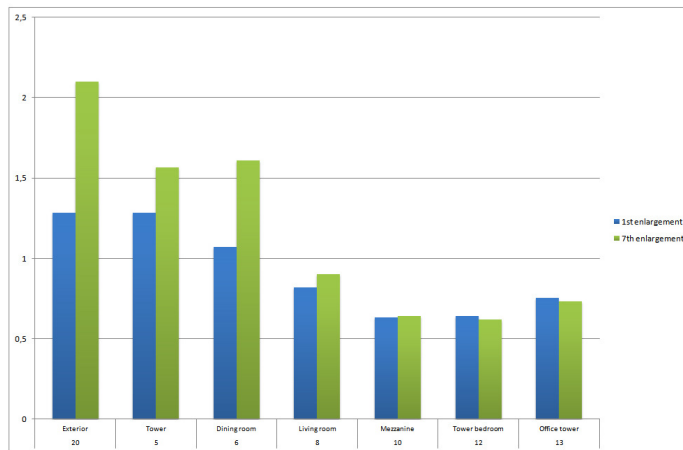
It is possible to see that while the segregated group keeps the level of segregation, the intermediate improves its integration and the integrated core, which corresponds to the more public space, improves its integration significantly (Fig.7a). Another interesting aspect is how the spaces change through time. Comparing the variation of integration in the initial rooms (first enlargement) and the last enlargement, it is possible to see that the exterior tower, dining room and living room improve their integration, and the other three keep the same segregated level (Fig.7b).

¹⁸ There is an abundance of photographic records of the intense use of this space in celebrations by Matilde and Neruda with friends (see the photographic archive of the Pablo Neruda Foundation).

Graphic a - Integration Measure of Main Spaces/Enlargements



Graphic b - integration Measure of Main Spaces - 1st and 7th Enlargements



3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The analysis at this stage has found at least four particular characteristics of Neruda's organization of space: i) the shallowness; ii) the permeability and visibility towards the ocean, iii) a much defined set of levels of public and private places; iv) the integration measure shows three types of spaces.

The syntax of the house was kept in spite of the enlargements, that is, a permeable house from outside; without deep spaces and without many convex spaces when reaching a room from another. These characteristics are clearly after the Neruda's intervention (after second enlargement). On the contrary, there are few spaces of circulation, in a general way, and one room leads to the other, along with the many access points from outside (terrain).

It is a syntax that brings out the intrinsic relation with the territory. In this aspect, the arches are not only aesthetic elements, but they have a double function. Firstly, they do not interrupt the direct relation of the observer with the landscape. Without the arches, the house would be an obstacle in the relation house/terrain/nature. Secondly, with them there is a strong separation between volume 1 and volume 2. In other words, these are strong elements in the syntax of the

house, as they separate the public (lounge, dining room, etc) from the private domains (working space).

In this aspect, Neruda's house calls the attention. It is important to point out that the second volume (with the constructions between 1965 and 1973) brings indeed the mark of the working spaces (libraries, small living room, office and the spaces of the employees), and not of the social spaces. According to Sergio Soza, "*the library was his private world, and few friends were received there*" (Mayorga, 1996, 103). Therefore, for Neruda the spaces of the books and of work are more private. On its turn, in the first volume, there is the large living and dining room, along with the bar, that is, the more social and public spaces. Even the spaces of the bedrooms are as accessible as these mentioned spaces, not because they were not syntactically segregated, as is the usual case with the more intimate spaces. Therefore, the first volume has the more public characteristic of the residence.

The syntactic analysis of the house clarifies another common reading in the studies on Neruda's houses. The metaphor of the "house as a train" (with its different additions as wagons; with its materials; or with the bowed format of the ceiling, and so on) is normally used. However, the metaphor makes more sense on account of its configuration than of its form: the house is clearly accessed from outside in almost its entire extension, similarly to the way each wagon of a train can be accessed from a station.

The sea is the key element for Neruda in the relation with this house, as it is present in the book "*Una casa en la arena*", in which he dedicated several poems to it. In the words of Neruda himself,

"The Pacific Ocean overflowed from the map. There was not a place to put it. It was so huge, disordered and blue that it could fit anywhere. For this reason they'd left it in front of my window" (2004: 82)

Then, it can be said that the "station" is really the external space from which anyone can walk in, have a seat and behold the view of the Pacific Ocean. This situation was made possible by the predominance of the windows that guarantee the visual permeability along the entire façade to the south of the house.

This is confirmed by the integration measure, where the exterior is the most integrate space of the house. The analysis shows that there are at least three types of spaces: i) **segregated spaces**: including the mezzanine (altillo), the tower bedroom and the tower; ii) **the intermediate spaces**: are the main functional spaces of the house, including Matilde/Neruda's bedroom, the main working space (office), the main library and the bar; iii) **the integrated core**: are the open space, the big dining room and the tower.

All these morphological characteristics of Neruda's space confirm that the construction is not random. The whole idea of the building exists from the beginning. Neruda's sketches (Fig. 1 and Fig. 8.a) express well what he intended: i) Sketch 1 adds a large living room to the small house; one bedroom at the tower; the tower as a linkage between the volumes and the fireplace, as marked events for Neruda; ii) Sketch 2 defines the program of needs: a dining room; library; space for employees; and also the striking elements of the proposal: the arches, a transition space and the lighthouse.

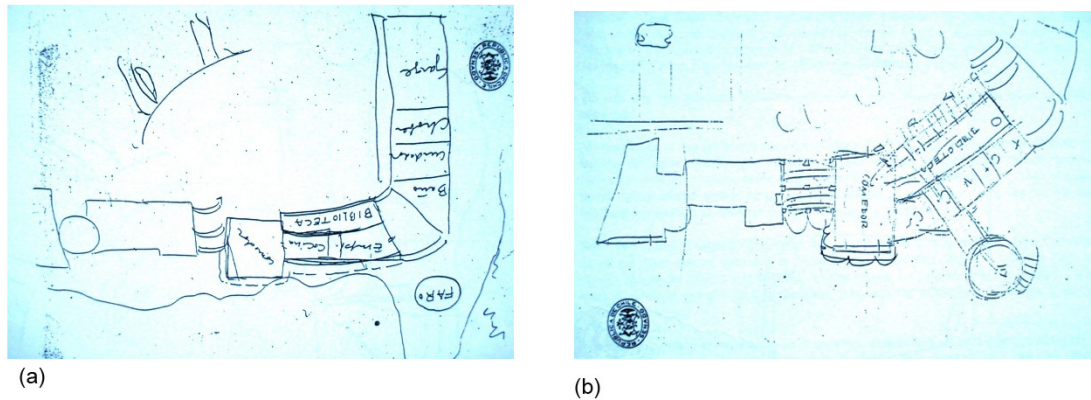


Figure 8: 1945 – Pablo Neruda’s sketches (a) and Rodríguez Arias’s proposal from Neruda’s sketches (b)
 Source: Mayorga, 1996

In Sergio Soza’s enlargements (7th and 8th), it can be seen that the result as built comes closer to Neruda’s sketch than the proposal by Rodríguez Arias (Fig. 8.b). The spaces of the employees are separated by the trapezoidal space, in conformity with Neruda’s sketch of 1945. A significant change is the inversion of the library’s position, favoring the view of the Pacific Ocean (and not as a sketch by Neruda and by Arias). It is also the case of the dining room (*comedor*), which was not built as proposed by Neruda but as a part of the trapezoidal space, and remaining defined as a small living and dining room.

The architect Sergio Soza clarified that the project was changed in the course of the work: “yes, it is different, as the project was a guide and was adapted to the terrain, including the rocks and plants” (Mayorga, 1996:103). This confirms that the constructed result is a product of Neruda’s direct influence on its execution.

In short, the program of needs was kept, with slight changes in Sergio Soza’s second enlargement, with the inclusion of the horse room and office. The other spaces (library and spaces of the employees) remain, with the remark that the library was constructed, separated by the living room with the fireplace and the Martner mural.

Therefore, it seems to us that the final result is a house that followed a plan sketched back in the 1940s, in opposition to the discourse that it is a house that has grown by force of the circumstances and without a previous plan. The house had been entirely conceived for Neruda since the first enlargement and its sketches confirm this. After all, the projects jointly undertaken with Rodríguez Arias and with Sergio Soza are, in brief, the desire expressed by Neruda in 1943 and 1945.

With Soza, Neruda retook the same idea twenty years later. It was not a random act merely emerging from the need to store things. This is partially true in relation to the second volume, with the creation of the horse room¹⁹ and the inclusion of the second library. But in general lines, what happened was a process of adapting the original idea.

The additions to the first volume (before the arches) can be attributed to the changes in his love life (such as the overwhelming passion for Matilde and separation from Delia). Matilde was not in Neruda’s plans in 1945, but after 1949, when they first met. According to Hermann Loyola

¹⁹ According to Matilde Urrutia (1990), the horse room emerged after the earthquake that took place in Valparaíso in 1965, which compromised spaces of Neruda’s other house, La Sebastiana, where the horse was at the moment.

(Neruda, 2004, 150; notes), with the poem "love a this book", Neruda not only granted the investiture to Matilda as queen of the house, as was the maximum deference to a female figure in his poetry, at connected her with the house of Isla Negra and "his" Pacific Ocean. Therefore, Neruda not only did this in its literature, but also in physical space. Therefore, the changes between 1956 and 1966 are so important in the process of building Isla Negra. Maybe this was the part that Neruda had not yet planned in the early 1940s.

This view is confirmed by the syntax analysis of the house. Even with the adaptations, the house did follow its initial proposals and the graphs reveal that the house does have a morphological standard. Neruda did not compromise this standard with the adaptations that he needed to make in the original plan. He follows the project, his project. His concept of Isla Negra is an open home, permeable and shallowness. He did not build the house; he designed it. Thus, he is the architect of Isla Negra.

These are the first discoveries based on the research that have been made to the present about the house of Isla Negra. But facing these findings, a number of questions emerge: how did some of the important spaces for the poet serve their purpose after each new addition? Considering Neruda's peculiar way of living (his love life, his friends, his poems), how can one qualify the spaces based on the analysis of the position of his furniture? That is, an analysis of the use and occupation of space becomes necessary.

Further, what is the importance of nature – in the case, the sea – through the transparencies made available by the house? It is also necessary to research more deeply on the relations between the inhabitants, employees and visitors, using the Space Syntax theory and its tools. The background question is if there is a Nerudian architectural space. In other words, there is still plenty of work ahead.

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