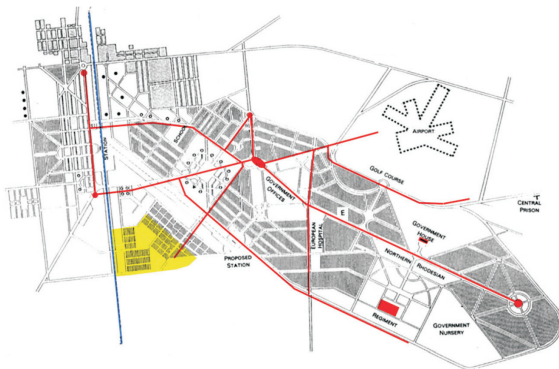


GARDEN CITY SETTLEMENTS

THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF URBAN DESIGN POLICY IN LUSAKA

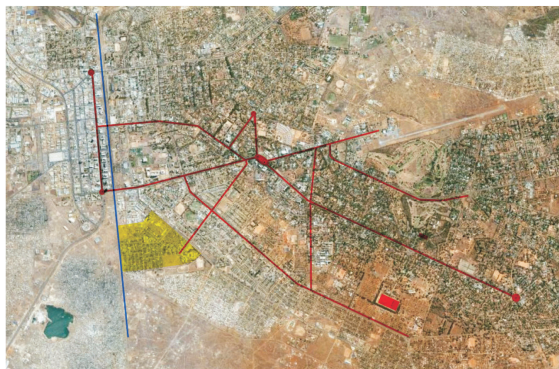


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Left: The original garden city plan for Lusaka, drafted in the 1930s. The highlighted area in yellow was the only area slated for African residents. Major boulevards implemented in the initial construction are shown in red.

Above: Luburma market area, near the city center.



Left: A satellite photo of Lusaka today, with the highlighted areas from the original plan superimposed. Major components of the garden city plan were implemented, but the majority of the city developed independent of the larger urban design gesture.

Above: Kamwala neighborhood, near the city center.



Left: Today, almost a quarter of the land around the city center remains undeveloped, having been set aside as open space in the original urban design. These under-utilized force additional settlements towards the periphery

Above: A large tract of under-utilized land lies adjacent to the railroad built in the early 20th century.

Lusaka: A Case Study in Urban Design

The history and resulting contemporary form of the Zambian capital of Lusaka presents a condition particularly relevant to urban designers and policy-makers. One of the few cities in the subregion to have grown almost entirely from a single urban design gesture, the lasting effects of these early planning decisions have left myriad imprints upon the city. Proposed as a garden city upon its selection as the Northern Rhodesian capital in the 1930s, the layout of Lusaka went largely unimplemented but remains residually strong: much of the intended physical form of the city did actually take shape. In spite of this – or, more likely, because of it – the character and social relationships within the city have evolved into quite the opposite of the original intentions. The sweeping, scenic boulevards of the garden city have become vacuous tree-lined streets, edged by block walls topped with razor wire; the conveniently unplanned 'African' areas of the original plan, with their intended irrelevance, have flourished into dense, vibrant middle-class communities; the grandeur of the administrative areas has been compromised by the sheer distances between spaces; and the original preserved farmlands have morphed into heavily populated squatter settlements. Planned as a leisurely, picturesque administration town, it has developed into a systematic but blighted metropolis.

Modern Lusaka grapples with the challenges of density, housing, transportation, and infrastructure (among other issues) inherited from the physical layout, segregation, and colonial enframing of original planned city. In this way, the shaping of today's squatter settlements around Lusaka – and, indeed, the city's entire physical form – can be traced back to the beginning of the relatively young city's colonial history. Reflecting on its origins, Lusaka provides a case study of urban design that is – paradoxically – both representative of, yet entirely unlike, any other African metropolis.

Peri-Urban Settlements

The original garden city plan operated with high levels of intent. That the preliminary intentions didn't produce the desired effects has been, depending on the instance being studied, both beneficial and detrimental to the city's development. With the periphery of the city predominantly designated as farmland and owned by Europeans, the first groups of Zambians moving to the city were forced to become squatters either along the periphery of the 'urban farmland' of the garden city diagram, on land belonging to Indo-European owners who were willing to allow the aberrant settlement, or risk settling on unused Crown land. Despite the presence of large open spaces near the center and even within the planned city, primary urban growth occurred outside the city in isolated townships. Thus began the

Lingering Effects

Overall, the ghost of the garden city plan has not been favorable to Zambians of lesser means. The intention of pleasant, low-density neighborhoods, wide boulevards, and extensive undeveloped 'natural' areas has translated in modern times into high transportation costs for impoverished workers, inefficient schedules, and difficulty in provisioning the infrastructural needs of the expanding squatter settlements. The issue of mobility – a common one among squatter settlements – has been exacerbated by the intended spaciousness and realized goal of separated urban sections. The few settlements which do encroach upon the urban core were settled illegally – leaving the authorities reluctant to equip them with services – either on land left barren due to poor planning, or on open parcels previously designated as European farmland. Still today, nearly a quarter of the land immediately surrounding the central business district remains undeveloped. The lingering effects of the garden city plan are still being felt.