



# **Art Deco and advertising: damaging the characteristics of the modern heritage of Passo Fundo/RS**

***Art Déco e publicidade: a descaracterização do patrimônio  
moderno de Passo Fundo/RS***

***Art Deco y publicidad: la alteración del carácter del patrimonio  
moderno de Passo Fundo/RS***

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## Abstract

The theme of this paper is advertising and historical heritage, focusing on the city of Passo Fundo in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The objective was to identify and map the buildings with references to Art Deco in Passo Fundo, and to analyze the impact of advertisements on this modern heritage. Thus, it was necessary to conduct a bibliographical study related to the themes of advertising, Art Deco and the formation and transformation processes of Passo Fundo, in order to understand the importance of Art Deco in the context of the city, and to expose how the lack of regulatory laws on advertising has changed the characteristics of buildings of historic value. On-site surveys were also conducted of the identified Art Deco buildings, together with documentary surveys of municipal laws related to heritage and current advertising controls in Brazil. Most of the identified buildings are either in a poor or terrible condition and are covered in non-standardized, excessively large advertisements, thereby damaging the perception of the architectural lexicon and, consequently, its historical and cultural value.

**Keywords:** Art Deco; Advertising; Preservation; Passo Fundo.

## Resumo

*Este artigo se insere na temática da publicidade e do patrimônio histórico, tendo como foco a cidade de Passo Fundo/RS, Brasil. Objetivou-se identificar e mapear as edificações com referência ao Art Déco na cidade, bem como analisar o impacto dos anúncios publicitários neste patrimônio moderno. Para tanto, foi preciso realizar estudos bibliográficos relacionados às temáticas da publicidade, do Art Déco e do processo de formação e transformação de Passo Fundo, com o intuito de entender a importância da mencionada linguagem arquitetônica no contexto da cidade e expor o poder de descaracterização que a falta de normatização publicitária exerce nas edificações de valor histórico. Também foram realizados levantamentos in loco dos exemplares Déco identificados, bem como levantamentos documentais de leis municipais relacionadas ao patrimônio e ao controle publicitário em vigor no Brasil. Grande parte das edificações identificadas estão em ruim ou péssimo estado de conservação e possuem anúncios excessivamente grandes e despadronizados, comprometendo a percepção do léxico arquitetônico e, conseqüentemente, seu valor histórico e cultural.*

**Palavras-Chave:** Art Déco; Publicidade; Preservação; Passo Fundo.

## Resumen

*Este artículo es parte del tema de la publicidad y el patrimonio histórico, y se centra en la ciudad de Passo Fundo / RS, Brasil. El objetivo era identificar y mapear los edificios con referencia al Art Deco en la ciudad, así como analizar el impacto de la publicidad en este patrimonio moderno. Por lo tanto, fue necesario realizar estudios bibliográficos relacionados con los temas de publicidad, Art Deco y el proceso de formación y transformación de Passo Fundo, para comprender la importancia del lenguaje arquitectónico mencionado en el contexto de la ciudad y exponer el poder de la caracterización errónea que la falta de reglas para la publicidad provoca en los edificios de valor histórico. También se realizaron búsquedas in situ de los edificios Déco identificados, así como levantamientos documentales relacionados con el patrimonio y el control publicitario vigentes en Brasil. La mayoría de los edificios identificados están en malas o muy malas condiciones y tienen anuncios excesivamente grandes y sin estándar, comprometiendo la percepción del léxico arquitectónico y, en consecuencia, su valor histórico y cultural.*



## 1. Introduction

Brazilian cities founded during the period of time between the arrival of the Portuguese and Brazil's independence (1500-1822) possess a specific urban design. Essentially, spatial zoning took place around a church, which generally stood facing the central square, very close to the buildings that represented the local authorities, and to the most affluent, well-situated commercial establishments. With economic development, these small urban centers naturally began to take on a greater mercantile vocation, and thus the first commercial centers in the country were formed. Within this context, advertising became inherent to the retail practice, and it may be stated, except for the due proportions, that it has been present since the period of colonial Brazil, developing alongside the abovementioned economic growth and the expansion of commercial practice within our cities.

It should be noted that, in the Portuguese language, the term "*publicidade*" (advertising) is commonly interpreted as a synonym for "*propaganda*", even though these two definitions have different meanings. In general, advertising messages aim to prompt its target audience to take some quick action, such as buying a car or a journey, for example. Propaganda, on the other hand, does not aim at carrying out individual and immediate actions, but rather at changing the attitudes of an audience by promoting an idea (SANTOS, 2005; AMBRÓSIO and ZALITE, 2018).

The city of Passo Fundo is located in the northwestern region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and the local scenery, especially its historic and commercial center, is composed of many buildings with Art Deco characteristics. It is a highly verticalized region with a great diversity of uses that is undergoing a process of valorization on the real estate market and which is thus, subject to speculative interests. In view of this scenario, several buildings are, in short, fated to lose their characteristics and identity, arising from a lack of both laws and regulations on advertising, and of discussion on safeguarding buildings of historic and cultural value.

Emphasizing the importance of research, the problem in this article involves the non-identification or recognition of Art Deco buildings as part of the historical heritage and cultural landscape<sup>1</sup> of Passo Fundo. Advertising, combined with changes in use promoted by real estate speculation and the verticalization process of the city - intensified during the 1990s and ongoing until today -, have contributed significantly to the abandonment, modifications, restructuring and/or complete changes in the characteristics of this heritage, even reaching the point of demolition, without ever being registered. A similar picture may be observed in several other Brazilian cities, as identified by Correia (2008), Salvador (2012), Tirello and Costa (2017), Ambrósio and Zalite (2018) and Citron, Mendes and Talamini (2018).

Although Passo Fundo presents major regional economic representativeness, in terms of socio-spatial studies and architectural references, few studies have been conducted with regard to the city. Local historiography has focused mainly on studying the occupation processes of its territory and the influence of European immigrants within this context. The theoretical reference points regarding the modern heritage of Passo Fundo have indicated its historical value and have provided case studies on some of the city's buildings, such as those by Lech, Czamanski and Czamanski (1999), Machado and Miranda (2005), Lorenzi, Gonçalves and Piccinato Junior (2018) and Lorenzi and Piccinato Junior

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<sup>1</sup>The term "cultural landscape" defines a territory, as understood by people, the character of which results from the interaction between natural factors and human action over time, and which is in constant transformation (FOGAÇA, 2019). Thus, the Art Deco buildings studied, which have an historical value and are the result of human action, are part of the construction of the cultural landscape of Passo Fundo.



(2019). However, no research has been conducted involving the issue of modern heritage, particularly Art Deco architecture and advertising in the context of Passo Fundo. The present study is therefore contextualized and justified within these aspects.

Hence, this article aims both to identify and map the buildings that refer to the Art Deco lexicon in the city of Passo Fundo, and to analyze how the different forms of advertising have impacted this modern architectural heritage in order to clarify how its characteristics have been changed by advertising in this location.

With regard to the methodological procedures, the article has been developed in three main stages: bibliographic study, documentary study and field study. First, bibliographic studies in the area of advertising were undertaken, based on the texts of Silva and Lopes (2007) and Ambrose and Zalite (2018), in order to contextualize the characteristics, emergence and development of the various forms of advertising in Brazil. The theme of Art Deco was approached from the perspective of Correia (2008) and Pissetti and Souza (2011), and a study was conducted on the formation and transformation processes of Passo Fundo, mainly through the works of Gosch (2002) and Ferretto (2012), so as to understand the importance of the abovementioned architectural vocabulary within this context. Subsequently, a documentary survey was carried out of municipal laws regulating the installation of advertisements, specifically on the facades of historic buildings, aiming to exemplify means by which the government may intervene in safeguarding its built heritage. The third stage, in turn, comprised the on-site surveys and photographic records of the most important Art Deco buildings in the commercial center of Passo Fundo. Once identified, the mapping and recording of the elements that make up the Art Deco lexicon was undertaken together with a diagnosis of the lost characteristics brought about by advertising.

By identifying, mapping and analyzing the impact of advertising on the Art Deco buildings in Passo Fundo, it is hoped that this article will contribute to the valorization of this architecture and, moreover, corroborate the drafting and granting of regulatory legislation on advertising, based on the experiences of other Brazilian municipalities.

## **2. Advertising in Brazil: historical and current aspects**

According to Silva and Lopes (2007), advertising in Brazil appeared during the colonization period, in an oral form. Gradually, written advertisements began to appear in newspaper classifieds and presented a simple form of language, with no persuasive techniques. It was only around the 1900s that the characteristics of Brazilian advertising language began to change, incorporating elements such as political satire through cartoons and humorous verse.

Technological advances brought radio onto the Brazilian advertising scene, a period known as the era of jingles, which became increasingly popular after the 1930s. At the time, the first advertising associations became established, such as the Brazilian Advertising Association (known as the ABP) and the São Paulo Advertising Association (APP). However, the major milestone in the history of advertising was the advent of television. This was a singularly important step in transforming the advertising landscape, which developed rapidly after the 1950s and brought with it the first advertising and communication schools in Brazil (SILVA and LOPES, 2007).

Thus, it may be stated that advertising followed technological development and was transformed in order to be increasingly present in the daily lives of the population. It may be noted, however, that the manner most used to spread information on a service, a product or an idea, in the commercial areas of



Brazilian cities, is still materialized in signs, banners and illuminated display signs on the facades of buildings.

According to Ambrósio and Zalite (2018), the facades and shop windows of buildings - whether historic or not - are widely used as a way of attracting customers. The authors also emphasize that the appearance of the establishments has the power to cause different visual and psychological impacts on customers, a determining factor for the population to decide to buy something. Thus, a lack of knowledge on the effects of advertising may result in facades and shop windows causing serious problems of visual pollution, which in many cases leads to the devaluation of the establishment and building, thereby compromising the landscape of our cities.

Brenner, Marostega and Almeida (2017) specify that, nowadays, advertising has caused damage to cities with regard to the quality of the urban landscape. Often, advertisements are arranged in an unregulated manner, thereby prejudicial to the identification of the buildings, principally its historical value. However, the solution to this phenomenon is not to prevent the installation of advertisements, but to find a way for the external media to relate in a sustainable, honest form with the public space, respecting culture, local identity and the urban planning of cities.

In this context, a large part of the specialized bibliography, citing the aforementioned authors, argues that the impasse between advertising and the preservation of the landscape in our cities occurs at a time when there are no advertising regulations. With regard to the Art Deco buildings in Passo Fundo, the lack of relevant legislation ultimately allows the visual identity of these historical testimonies to become lost amongst the signage, billboards and other forms of advertisements. On the other hand, there are examples of municipal laws, already sanctioned and in force, that could serve as a basis for creating a specific law for Passo Fundo, as will be seen in the following item.

### **2.1. Advertising regulatory laws: the cases of São Paulo (SP), Erechim (RS) and Bento Gonçalves (RS)**

There are many ways by which the municipality may intervene in the standardization of advertising in order to safeguard buildings, especially those with historical and cultural value. Taking this into account, of particular note is Municipal Law N° 14.223 in 2006, in the city of São Paulo, which dictates rules for placing indicative advertisements on the façades of both public and private properties. As of 2007, the year in which the law came into force, it was determined that each establishment may have only one or two standardized advertisements, depending on the extension of the facade. For buildings considered small, with a width of up to 10 meters, the advertisement may not have an area larger than 1.5m<sup>2</sup>. This measurement increases proportionally with the size of the building. In the final case, the owner or lessee of the establishment may appeal to the public authorities to fix two advertisements, should the width of the building be more than 100 linear meters. Furthermore, through the aforementioned municipal legislation, it is also forbidden to display any type of advertising that may harm or detract from, even partially, the appearance or integrity of the listed building, or that damages the building onto which it has been fixed, or its surrounds (SÃO PAULO, 2006).

Five years after the referred law came into force, the City Hall of São Paulo was awarded the European seal “Deutscher Werkbund” in recognition of its results. The prize is awarded every two years by the German Federation of Works in the state of Baden-Wurtemberg and selects initiatives that are outstanding for innovation, social engagement and respect for nature. This was the first time that the seal was granted to any city outside German territory (PORTAL DA PREFEITURA DE SÃO PAULO, 2012).

In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, there are two municipal laws that may be considered as examples for other cities with regard to urban advertising standardization. The first was granted in Erechim, a municipality in the Alto Uruguai region, presenting aspects common to São Paulo legislation. The municipal law “Erechim, Cidade Limpa” [Erechim Clean City] (Law No. 6,093), from 2015, became an important milestone in the process of requalifying the city's historic and commercial center. In general, according to the aforementioned document, every indicative advertisement on commercial buildings must observe, amongst others, the following basic criterion: not to harm the integrity or the appearance of the buildings, especially those of historical and cultural value.

In addition, this standardization also prohibits the placement of any type of adhesive on the windows of historic buildings. Banners and other advertisements of a similar nature are only allowed inside the establishment, at least 1.00m away from the window. Lastly, stickers on non-historic façades are also subject to analysis by the Municipal Council for Historical, Artistic and Cultural Heritage, COMPHAC, with regard to their receiving permission or not, should these buildings be located in the vicinity of historic buildings within the radius defined by the current master plan (ERECHIM, 2015).

As in São Paulo, Law No. 0693 also dictates the permitted dimensions of the displayed advertisements. More precisely, for buildings considered as being small, i.e., with a maximum width of 5m, the area of the advertisement should not exceed 0.75m<sup>2</sup>. This dimension increases proportionally with the size of the building and may reach up to 5m<sup>2</sup> for properties with a width of over 50 linear meters (Figure 1). With regard to the colors permitted in the treatment given to the façade, the legislation also determines, amongst other aspects, that ornamentation and architectural details such as openings, frames, balusters and cornices should be highlighted in white, or in various shades of white applied to most of the facade, respecting the color palette suggested within the same text (ERECHIM, 2015).

**Figure 1: Illustration demonstrating the sizes and how signs should be fixed onto historic buildings in the municipality of Erechim. The example below is for a building with a width of between 10 and 20m. In this case, the size of the signs should not exceed 2m<sup>2</sup> (combined). The text of the “Erechim, Cidade Limpa” Law provides 18 illustrations such as this, created to facilitate the understanding and applicability of the permitted dimensions and colors.**



Source: ERECHIM, 2015, p.9.



Another example from Rio Grande do Sul regarding the standardization of advertising signs is Law No. 5,871 of 2014, granted by the Municipality of Bento Gonçalves, a city located in the mountainous region of the state. This legislation also determined the standardization of the dimensions of all signage and billboards on properties of historic value in the city. Furthermore, the law divided the urban fabric of Bento Gonçalves into five zones: ZP1 (Advertising Zone 1), ZP2 (Advertising Zone 2), ZPMUV (Urban and Green Property Advertising Zone), ZP DAER (DAER Advertising Zone RST 470 and RS 444) and ZPI (Institutional Advertising Zone). Each has different characteristics and different advertising patterns. For example, digital panels are only permitted in ZP2, and may remain switched on between 6am and 11:59pm (BENTO GONÇALVES, 2014).

It may be observed, with these examples, that the municipality has the power to dictate the relevant rules for the standardization of advertising signage and for the preservation of the built historical heritage. In the case of Art Deco buildings in the city of Passo Fundo, this is one of the most effective manners with which to create a culture that valorizes, cares for and preserves this heritage, as well as developing a perceptible aesthetic sense on the part of the population.

### **3. The Art Deco movement**

In general, the “Art Deco” movement gained strength from the mid-1920s, essentially in European countries and the United States, and is considered by the specialized historiography as the architectural reference that, in some countries, marks the beginning of the so-called modern period<sup>2</sup> (CORREIA, 2008). Although it was not characterized as a specific exhibition event of Art Deco, the term alludes to the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts, held in Paris in 1925. At the time, the term was used for the first time to designate projects of interior decoration, prints, rugs, ceramics, glass, jewelry, metal artifacts, sculptures and lamps (PISSETTI and SOUZA, 2011).

The simplification of decorative elements and the diversification of sources of ornamental influence is also one of the main aspects and one of the most innovative aspects of Art Deco architecture. Thus, it is possible to include in the characteristic features of this architecture the incorporation of references mainly to steam engines and to ships. Allusions to Egyptian and Aztec constructions are also present, represented in geometric forms, in the use of orthogonal prisms, and in the overlapping, stepped outlines on the facades (CORREIA, 2008).

In the case of Latin America, Art Deco was characterized as the transition between the principles of the schools of Fine Arts and the rationalism of the new architecture that was emerging, practically eliminating its classicist ties and historicist language, but maintaining elements such as symmetry and use of applied decorative ornaments, even if simple and in a small quantity (VENTURINI and LIMA, 2009), as can be seen in the architecture that presents this reference in Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Natal and Porto Alegre, to name but a few examples (ALMEIDA, 2012).

According to Correia (2008), the stepped, geometric and/or rounded shapes, characteristic of this period, are diluted in two main aspects, recognized by the scientific medium as the zigzag moderne and the streamline moderne. In the first case, there are elements that bring Art Deco closer to what later became known as modernist rationalism, presenting lines and right angles in the form of friezes, stepped and/or zigzag elements, mainly along the cornices and around the door and window frames. In

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<sup>2</sup> In architecture, the modern period began in the first decades of the twentieth century. More specifically, in Brazil, the 1922 Modern Art Week is an important milestone for the movement, whereby the greatest expression took place between the 1930s and 1950s (NASCIMENTO, 2011).

such buildings, generally, the main access is centralized, and the awnings and balconies are straight and give a sense of purity and formal simplicity (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: An Art Deco building in Passo Fundo with features demonstrating zigzag moderne references, which are: 1 - straight and staggered cornices; 2 - linear friezes; 3 - straight marquees; 4 - straight, simple volumes along the balconies; and 5 - a centralized main access, even if slightly shifted to the left.**



Source: Author's personal collection (2019), and production, 2020.

On the other hand, buildings with streamline moderne references (Figure 3) have more curved and aerodynamic shapes. The cornices, marquees, balconies and friezes are, as a rule, rounded. For this reason, most of the buildings with these characteristics were built on corners, which were marked by the curved shapes and the main access. In many cases, some windows were also built in the form of an oculus (circular), making reference to the windows of ships (CORREIA, 2008).

**Figure 3: An Art Deco building in Passo Fundo with features demonstrating streamline moderne references, which are: cornice, marquee, curved wall and balcony (numbers 1, 2, 3 and 5); columns and flagpole support (numbers 6 and 4); and railings with circular iron profiles (number 7). It may be noted that, in this case, all the circular elements of the house, added to the columns and the mast, help to demarcate the corner.**



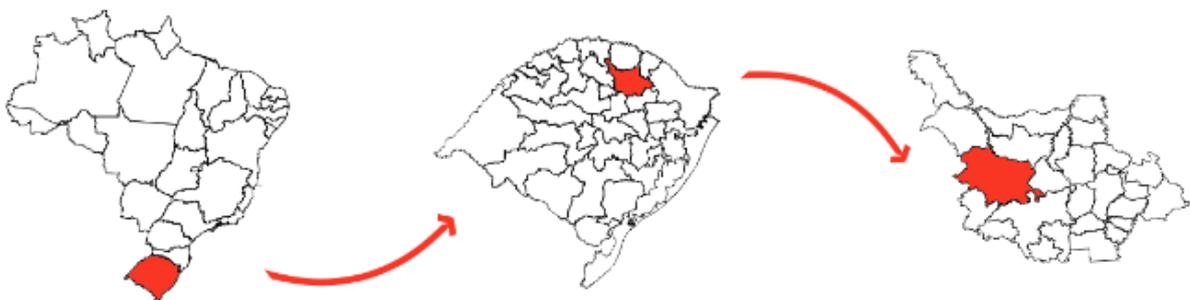
Source: Produced by the author (2020) from personal collection (2019).

As may be observed in the aforementioned examples, the cornices were widely used to crown the façades and, in many cases, contained geometric reliefs with friezes, acting as an extension of the exterior of the buildings. In the south of the country, these architectural references found a wide field of acceptance, and are easily identified in large and medium-sized cities, such as Passo Fundo.

### 3.1. Passo Fundo and the expressiveness of Art Deco

The population of the municipality of Passo Fundo is approximately 200 thousand (IBGE, 2010), and is characterized as a medium-sized city due to the types of horizontal and vertical relations that it presents with nearby municipalities and other Brazilian states (FERRETTO, 2012). Agribusiness and the food industry form an agro-industrial complex in the city, responsible for most of the established vertical relationships. Health, education and commerce services, on the other hand, are the main vectors of attraction for the population from several cities around Northwestern Rio Grande do Sul, thereby establishing horizontal relations (Figure 4).

**Figure 4:** Map showing where Passo Fundo is located, in the northwest corner of the state of Rio Grande do Sul.



Source: Produced by the author (2019).

The occupation process of the region where the city of Passo Fundo is currently located dates from the first decades of the nineteenth century. At that time, the territory served mainly as a passage for the “tropeiros” – drovers transporting troops and food, mainly *charque* (dried meat) - from the south of the state of Rio Grande do Sul to the southeastern region of the country, especially São Paulo. This route became known as the “Estrada de Tropas” and today it forms the main arterial route of the city of Passo Fundo: Avenida Brasil (PARIZZI, 1983; FERRETTO, 2012).

After the first phase of urban expansion, driven by the construction of the Tronco Norte Gaúcha railway line, in the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries, Passo Fundo developed economically and became a regional hub, with emphasis on agriculture and livestock, commerce and services (PARIZZI, 1983). It was within this context of economic growth and the example of what was taking place in the major Brazilian urban centers, except for the due proportions, around the 1930s and 1940s, that the building and spread of architecture began in the city with references to Art Deco.

The first example of Art Deco built in Passo Fundo was the Lângaro Building (Figure 5), which dates from 1942, and is located on the corner of Brasil Avenue and General Neto Avenue, in the central region of the city. The building was designed by the engineer Annito Petry and also represents the first residential apartment building in the city (GOSCH, 2002). Thus, it may be stated that the Lângaro Building marked the beginning of the verticalization process in the central area of Passo Fundo. Past surveys have revealed that Passo Fundo had more than 200 Art Deco buildings in the decades between 1940 and 1960 (LORENZI, GONÇALVES and PICCINATO, 2018).

**Figure 5:** The Lângaro Building today (2020).

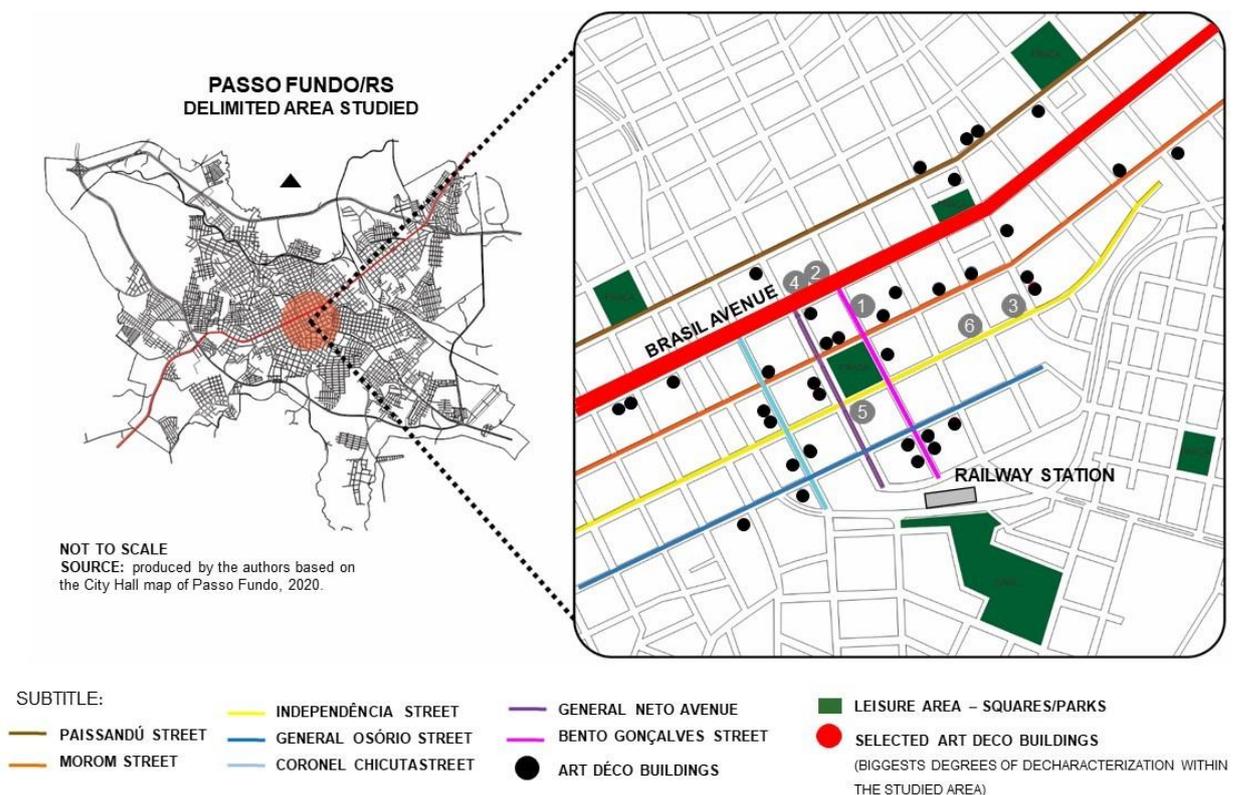


Source: Author's collection, 2019.

At that time, the center of Passo Fundo began to develop between Brasil Avenue and the Railway Station, with General Neto Avenue as the main connecting axis (Figure 6). In addition to these, there were also some other important streets, such as the Morom, Independência and Bento Gonçalves Streets, which contained the main collective and leisure spaces and the city's most traditional commercial and service establishments. Also located in this central area were the old neocolonial, eclectic mansions, occupied by the wealthier families, who frequented the clubs, cafes and cinemas in the city center (GOSCH, 2002; FERRETTO, 2012). It was because of these specificities, that led to the selection of area studied in this article.

When analyzing the city map (Figure 6), it may be observed that most of the identified examples of Art Deco are located just between Brasil Avenue and the Railway Station, thereby demonstrating that architecture with Art Deco characteristics was very present in the development of urban centrality in Passo Fundo from the mid-twentieth century.

**Figure 6:** Delimitation of the area studied in the center of Passo Fundo and mapping of the 42 Art Deco buildings identified, emphasizing the six that were selected for facade analysis in this article.



Source: Produced by the author based on the City Hall map of Passa Fundo, 2020.

Even though Art Deco made part of the construction of the modern habitat in Passo Fundo, including the city's verticalization process, none of the 42 buildings identified in this article is listed or has any type of legal protection. Moreover, there is no municipal law project that provides for the standardization of signage, billboards, colors or facing of historic buildings in the city, so as to encourage the preservation of the original architectural characteristics of these buildings. Thus, it may be stated that the historical and cultural value of Art Deco in Passo Fundo is being neglected by both the municipality and the population, who are unaware of their role in the modernization process of the city; the repertoire

being relegated to the interests of the private sector and in danger of disappearing.

During the on-site visits and subsequent analyzes, it was possible to perceive several aggravating factors that are damaging the architectural characteristics belonging to the Deco vocabulary and, at times, the identity of the mapped buildings. Approximately 31 buildings (73.8%) present some type of change caused by the advertising activity. Of these, the characteristics of 15 buildings have been significantly changed (35.7% of the total amount). In order to demonstrate some of the most common damage observed, 6 buildings were registered for analysis as being compromised by advertising objects (Figures 7, 8 and 9).

**Figure 7:** Buildings Nº 1 and Nº 2 presenting significant changes due to advertising activities.



Source: Produced by the author (2020) from personal collection (2019).

Building Nº 1: located at 459, Bento Gonçalves Street, in the Centro neighborhood. This is a two-storied building, originally of mixed use, with commercial use on the ground floor and residential on the first. The building currently houses a rotating parking lot, a home appliance store and a dental clinic. In general, this building presents references of streamline moderne characteristics, due to the rounded elements included in its volume, mainly on the balcony, the window markings and the marquees. As may be observed, the signs are extremely large and follow no form of standardization or harmonization – in relation to neither the shape, color nor material used –, also making it impossible to identify the elements of most of the ground floor and the cornice of the building. In addition, the colors of the facade have been changed and there is a clash between the ground and first floors.

Building Nº 2: located at 434 Brasil Avenue (west), in the Centro neighborhood. This is a two-storied building, originally of mixed use, which has remained until today: a clothing store and a bazaar on the ground floor, with two apartments on the first floor. As in the previous example, this building presents references of streamline moderne characteristics, due to the balconies and rounded markings on the window frames. In this case, the signage on the establishments also follow no type of pattern, they clash with one another and, due to their size, make it impossible to identify the elements that make up a large part of the facade.

**Figure 8:** Buildings Nº 2 and Nº 3 presenting significant changes due to advertising activities.



Source: Produced by the author (2020) from personal collection, (2019).

Building Nº 3: located at 225, Independência Street, on the corner with Benjamin Constant Street, in the Centro neighborhood. Once again, this is a two-storied building, originally of mixed use, remaining so until today, with a bar on the ground floor and a single-family residence on the first floor. The volumetric characteristics are reminiscent of zigzag moderne, presenting straighter lines and greater formal simplicity. In this case, the sign attached to the bar access is not disproportional to the building, but the colors applied to the facing on the façade reveal an appealing advertising treatment, bordering on kitsch. Since the establishment is called “Bar Brasil” the color tones used makes allusion to the Brazilian flag. As verified in the legislation previously analyzed, the colors used on buildings of historic value should follow a coherent pattern, highlighting and facilitating the identification of the architectural elements of the facades.

Building nº 4: located at 349, Brasil Avenue, in the Centro neighborhood. The Berta Building, originally of mixed use, is currently used only for commercial use. The volumetric characteristics are reminiscent of the modern zigzag, due to the stepping of the cornice and the straight lines on the friezes, on the balcony and on the very sign with the name of the building. Due to the change in use, it is possible to notice the use of different coverings between the ground floor and the upper floor, which still preserves the original features. In addition, it is possible to notice the non-standardized advertisements which cover too much of the facade, especially the unoccupied commercial area.

**Figure 9:** Buildings Nº 5 and Nº 6 presenting significant changes due to advertising activities.



Source: Produced by the author (2020) from personal collection, (2019).

Building 5: located at 700 Independência Street, on the corner with General Neto Avenue, in the Centro neighborhood. Originally of mixed use, this building is fully occupied by a mobile phone store. The corner is marked with the main access, as well as the more rounded shapes of the external volumes,

which are reminiscent of the streamline moderne architectural aspect. However, as may be observed, practically 2/3 of the façades have been covered with a panel, which is part of the company's visual identity, making it impossible to identify almost any of the architectural elements.

Building nº 6: located at 337, Independência Street, on the corner with Fagundes dos Reis street, in the Centro neighborhood. Its original use - commercial and residential (mixed) - has been modified and the building currently houses a bar on the ground floor and a printing shop on the first. As in the previous example, the corner is marked with the main access, as well as some more rounded shapes in elements such as the balcony and the marquee, factors reminiscent of the streamline moderne. Due to the different uses, the use of different materials may be noted between the ground floor and the upper floor, in addition to the attachment of different advertisements in size, color and shape.

Hence, these are six examples that demonstrate the need to observe more cautiously the preservation of historic buildings, essentially those that present references to the Deco lexicon, inserted in the urban fabric of Passo Fundo. It should be mentioned that, with the exception of the Berta Building, the signs with the names of the other five buildings cannot be identified, as they have been removed from the façades and/or covered by advertisements.

Observed from another angle, some good examples were also identified of advertising and preservation amongst the identified Art Deco buildings. More precisely, 11 buildings (approximately 26.2% of the total) are in good condition and, in the case of commercial or service buildings, have signs and advertisements in sizes and colors that do not hinder the perception of the original architectural elements and may serve as an example in the city of Passo Fundo (Figure 10).

**Figure 10:** A collection of 11 examples of Art Deco that presented fewer identity problems arising from the practice of advertising and/or its state of conservation.



Source: Produced by the author (2020) from personal collection, (2019).



#### **4. Final considerations**

Art Deco can be seen on many department stores, gas stations, cinemas, clubs, factories and homes built throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and may be considered as an architectural movement that started the modernization process in a number of cities, reflecting a new way of living and changing the urban landscape. In the case of Passo Fundo, the historical value of the buildings presented in this article should be recognized by both the government and the population, since they are part of an architectural ensemble with expressive Art Deco characteristics, dating from the mid-twentieth century, and which helped to build the modern habitat of the city. Furthermore, the buildings identified were designed during a significant period of expansion within the urban fabric and the modernization of the city, at a time when the construction techniques and materials used were different.

It is believed that reuse is one of the manners with which to preserve buildings of historical value, even though there are some divergent conceptions regarding this subject. However, in Brazil, the social and urban problem associated with heritage and the way it is rehabilitated for new functions is linked to a lack of general awareness amongst those who own the buildings, the population that uses them and the government. As previously seen, advertising activities have harmed the appearance of buildings of historical and cultural value, thereby contributing to the visual pollution of cities and visually damaging the quality of the urban landscape of historic centers.

Much of the repertoire of Art Deco identified in Passo Fundo, with regard to commercial and service establishments, has excessively large and disproportionate signage and advertisements, in addition to inconsistent painting and facing, thereby damaging the facades and significantly interfering with the perception of architectural identity. Thus, in Passo Fundo, as in many other cities, the historical and cultural importance of Art Deco buildings has been devalued to the detriment of their material and economic value, leaving their management to the charge of private sector interests. Notwithstanding, as in the cases of São Paulo, Erechim and Bento Gonçalves, the municipality possess the power to dictate the rules for advertising activity, particularly when it comes to the historic centers of our cities.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that, until 1918, Erechim was a district of Passo Fundo (PARIZZI, 1983). However, even after emancipation, many architectural and urban features are common between the two cities, including the expressiveness of Art Deco. Thus, the aforementioned law "Erechim, Cidade Limpa" is indicated as the basis for creating a specific municipal law that regulates the size, color and shape of advertisements fixed onto historic buildings in Passo Fundo, in addition to actions aimed at education on the city's heritage. Therefore, it is up to the public authorities, as well as architects and urban planners and other professionals in civil construction and advertising, to discuss ways of reconciling the safeguard of historic buildings with the practice of advertising, so present and necessary in current times.

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