

PARQUE EDUARDO VII AND THE NEW CONVENTION CENTRE OF LISBON

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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The following report is written as part of the academic work developed in the scope of Projeto Final 2 (Final Architectural Design Studio 2), inserted in the last semester of the master's degree in Architecture of Instituto Superior Técnico. Its aim is to reflect on the project carried out during the 2014/2015 academic year and to justify the strategies and choices made in the design solution.

The project refers to a public building to be located in Parque Eduardo VII de Inglaterra in Lisbon, intended to work as a Convention Centre, as a result of the reconversion of an obsolete multi purpose building - Pavilhão Carlos Lopes – built in the 1930's. The theme was selected in coordination with the Lisbon City Council, while trying to respond to an architectural design with relevance in the context of the current urban dynamics of Lisbon and contribute to the discussion about the city. In fact, apart from the design of a complex building, this is also an urban design problem, as it is an opportunity to rethink Parque Eduardo VII as one of the central public spaces of Lisbon.

The approach adopted was within the premises established by the Lisbon City Council, exploring new hypotheses of implantation and design of the new Convention Centre.

The building, because of its dimension and impact in the city, requires an extensive review of the Park and its connections to the city. The redesign of

the public spaces is intrinsic to the design of the new Convention Centre, taking advantage of its centrality, of its proximity to several tourism units and of its accessibility by all of the main types of transportation.

Along the first semester special emphasis was given to the analysis of the Parque Eduardo VII and to the research and proposition of a design brief regarding the improvement of the intervention area, assuming the reconversion of Pavilhão Carlos Lopes in a new Convention Centre. In addition, it was approached the redesign of the public spaces in order to find new forms of articulation between the different existing infrastructures, trying to find solutions to give urban continuity to this area of the city.

Then, the work carried out in the second semester, was concentrated on the conception of an architectural design solution for Pavilhão Carlos Lopes. The proposal was taken individually, having as support the intervention strategy developed in the

previous phase, taken towards a new reality of the Park, with a programmatic definition developed.

Therefore, the development of the architectural design solution has

implied the understanding and domain of the constraints and requirements of a programmatic, functional, compositional and constructive way of thinking, including the integration of a wide variety of specialities.



Image 1. Intervention area

The Marquês da Fronteira Street delimited the area of intervention in North, the António Augusto de Aguiar Avenue in the East, Marquês de Pombal in the South, and Castilho Street in the West. The area integrates the 25 hectares of Parque Eduardo VII de Inglaterra and the 5,7 hectares of Jardim Amália Rodrigues.

The work is organized in three parts. The first one aims at building the theoretical argument that supports the strategy adopted in intervention in Parque Eduardo VII, including the development of the Convention Centre.

Particular emphasis is given to the role of public space in the perspective of the urban requalification process. Later, some strategies and case studies in Lisbon are analysed, reflecting the current context of urban thinking.



Image 2. Expo 98 evolution

Subtitle: The case of Expo 98 was one of the case studies analysed, where an urban plan was initiated by an ephemeral event with great possibilities and urban implications. With this event, Lisbon had not only the possibility of boosting its development in a cultural level, but also in a level of urban transformation through major infrastructures, creating a new centre and a connecting hinge of development to the riverfront, causing a huge change the city's relationship with the river.

The second part focuses on an investigation of theoretical and practical nature. It is a characterization of the intervention area, emphasizing the strategies that formally outlined this area of the city and the analysis of its formal characteristics and functional conditions. Its aim is to obtain

information in order to evaluate its ability to change in order to accommodate the new public building – the Convention Centre – from the reconversion of the Pavilion Carlos Lopes, evaluating the implications and conditions of the proposed strategies.

To this purpose, the evolution process of the intervention area is described complemented by the morphological and space-use analysis; and finally the

changing conditions are assessed in order to define the intervention strategy.



Image 3. SWOT analysis

The third and main part of the report focuses on the description of the proposal – architecture project – thought for the Convention Centre, detailing its formal, functional and constructive conditions. Its aim is to present and justify the choices made, with the support of graphic elements. It is divided into five parts.

The first addresses the program proposed by the Lisbon City Council for

the new Convention Centre inserted in a preliminary study¹, as it was taken as a guide for the development of the project.

¹ Before launching a public competition for the conception of the new Convention Centre, the City Council made a preliminary study that established the programmatic division of spaces. In this study the whole project was developed in Pavilhão Carlos Lopes, with the majority of spaces located beneath it. It was the intention of the City Council to take advantage of the new building as a way to develop and rethink this central area of the city of Lisbon.

The program proposed by the City Council considered eight functional areas with their own valences, serving a total gross area of 43.200m² with more 14.770m² of outdoor areas. Since it is an academic project, it is important to understand, interpret and transform the pre-existing data in order to avoid a rigid implementation of the program.

In this way, the program worked as a system to understand the diversity of activities proposed for the Convention Centre and their associations, as well as their functional requirements and dimensions. These instructions were mediated by the understanding of the intervention area, allowing readjustments on the program and on the configuration of new spaces.

The second part is based on the concept for the development of the proposal. In an academic context, but very close to reality, it is intended to develop a viable project, conditioned by the current situation in which we live, rejecting the utopian character often associated with the academicism. As such, the choices made and the fundamental ideas that make up the design of the new

Convention Centre in Lisbon, for the redevelopment of the Pavilion Carlos Lopes, aim to reach a real solution that does not escape the monumentality of the proposed program, but refuses the megalomania of the "spectacle architecture" as a premise for the success of the proposal.

The proposal is characterized by the primacy given to public spaces and their connection with the park as well as spatial diversity of indoor and outdoor areas explored through considered and integrated measures in the design of the park.

The new Convention Centre will arise as a way to connect the spaces and the main arteries of the park, but to do so, it should be thought of as crossable space, away from the pure idea of an architectural object.

The idea of a path formed by public spaces, becomes premise to the design of the buildings – a succession of squares and public spaces that serve and configure the Convention Centre, becoming simultaneously a way of crossing the park.

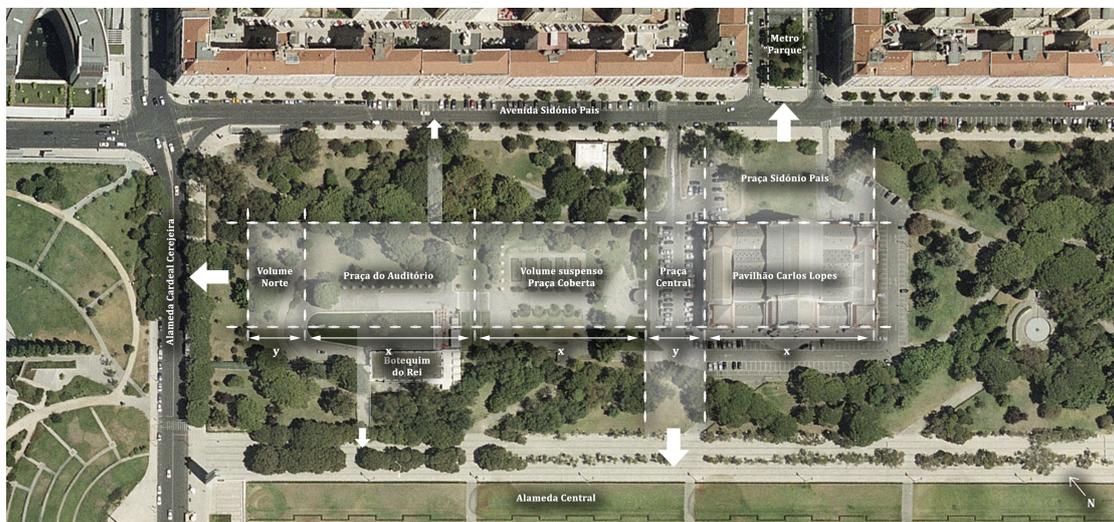


Image 4. Concept

The next three parts are divided into form, function and construction. Although divided, these are inseparable, and sometimes it becomes confusing to give primacy to a formal, functional or constructive choice as a base option for the design of space. However, an effort was made in order to divide the options in the three subjects, corresponding to different levels of depth in the project drawings.

The form focuses on the implantation drawings and general schemes of the proposal, reflecting about the volumetric choices made during the design. The function analyses the functional distribution of spaces by the buildings, relying on general plants and sections of the proposal, in order to understand how the spaces appropriate the volumes and its division by floors.

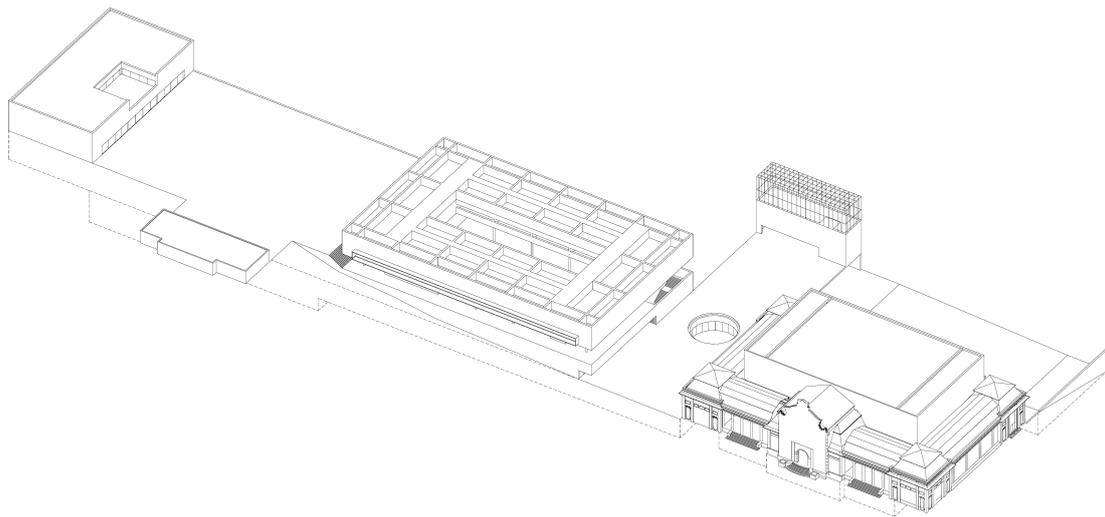


Image 5. Axonometry of the Convention Centre

Finally, in the construction, it is given emphasis on structural and materialization options through drawings with greater detail of a project previously chosen sector.

The work presented can be considered a consolidated work. Consolidated not only because it gives an answer to the program or the needs of the place, but also because the proposed Convention Centre lives for Parque Eduardo VII, as the park lives for it.

The result is the sum of a particular perspective of the place, with other ideas of inspiration and convictions. It is a project that refuses the dominant idea of mega architectural structure, striving to become a mega urban structure, a symbiosis between public spaces and built spaces.