Urban Project between the Belém Tower and the mouth of the river Jamor

Hotel and Sea Center in Cruz Quebrada

Extended Abstract

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Project Report to obtain the Master of Science Degree in

Architecture

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PREFACE

This report was made within the course Final Project in Architecture II, during the last semester of the Master Degree in Architecture from Instituto Superior Técnico, between 2015 and 2016. The document consists in a reflection and description of the options and strategies selected for the project developed throughout Final Project in Architecture I and Final Project in Architecture II.

The project is a critical reflection of a neuralgic area of the city of Lisbon, in the riverfront between Foz do Rio Jamor and Torre de Belém, through an intervention at urban scale, where the design of the public space takes a special relevance. In this continuity, with a closely scale, an equipment was designed for this urban proposal.

PURPOSE

The project's theme arises from the need of reclassifying a disqualified area on the riverfront. It takes advantage of the potential of this landscape, restoring the city's relationship with the river lost with the time due to successive changes in this border, essentially marked by successive landfills and the implementation of different infrastructures.

The intention is to return the name of “the city of the Sea” to Lisbon and make Algés “the new entrance of Lisbon”, based on the excellence of this place and the natural conditions – the wind and the proximity to the sea - which supply sailing activities. This intent is intensified by the desire of bringing to Lisbon the headquarters of the Volvo Ocean Race, the largest sailing regatta and one of the five largest Sport events in the world.

With view to host these activities, it is essential for the city to build complementary infrastructures. In order to achieve it, was developed new outdoor spaces, a new hotel and a nautical structure associated to the hotel.

This topic is relevant because it covers a territory and a program that nowadays is in discussion by the city of Lisbon and the municipality of Oeiras, presenting a promotion and competitiveness between cities.

This theme arises in the context of various urban interventions which have taken place throughout the world since the mid-nineteenth century, which aim to revert the city's unconventionality to the river, recovering spaces and the valences of a space by the river, taking advantage of the empty and obsolete spaces left by post-industrial deactivation or displacement of port spaces.
THE THEME

Since the genesis of the cities that the water plans present an important factor of evolution of the cities, besides being one of the reasons of their location. The presence of water is fundamental for port and industrial activity. With the evolution of the times and the intensification of these activities the spaces through the coastline were occupied by industries and large containerized areas, making the contact of the city with the river unviable and losing the existing relations between them.

With the introduction of the railroad parallel to the water line and with the increase of road flows, the city-river disconnection was further intensified, since they represent from there great physical barriers.

With the changes in the maritime transport and port activity through the deactivation of ports or displacement to other places arose in these spaces together of the river territories and obsolete infrastructures and great urban voids.

The processes of regeneration of waterfronts arise in order to solve these abandoned spaces, allowing to re-integrate them in the cities and to rescue them for the citizens, especially through new public spaces.

These spaces emerge as an opportunity to create new centralities and a new image for the city, placing it in economic competitiveness tourist policy business with other cities. They allow for the resolution of urban conflicts and eliminate barriers between the city and the water course, bringing the population closer to the water landscape and the dynamics it can offer, restoring the landscape and recreational potential of these places.

The process of urban renewal of waterfronts dates back to the late 1950s, in the United States of America, extending to Europe later. In Portugal this intention manifests itself with the accomplishment of the Universal Exhibition of 1998 in the Urban Project for the Park of the Nations, in Lisbon.

Subsequently, these interventions served as a reference to other projects around the world and influenced small-scale interventions on the riverfront.

The public space assumes a fundamental role in these interventions, organizing the territory and articulating it, and providing different forms of contact and relation with water. It is through his correct design that the city takes over.

The most recurrent programmatic mix in these spaces is characterized by tourism, commerce and services sectors, and new cultural and leisure facilities.

It is in this context that the project statement is developed.
THE PLACE

The analysis of the extensive riverfront of about 3 km that defines the area of study identifies a neuralgic area where the morphological heterogeneity, the urban discontinuities and the presence of several infrastructures associated to the mobility assume particular relevance, in relation between the city and the river.

This relationship, once existing, due to the dynamics of the beach, recreational activities, leisure and fishing activity, was lost due to the changes that the riverside front was suffering causing their distancing.

The implantation of private industrial structures through new landfills along the river, as happened in the now inactive and obsolete Dock of Pedrouços, complemented by the iron and road infrastructures create great physical barriers and discontinuities of public space, along the riverside line, and this with the city. This discontinuity is very visible in the Algés node, where the pedestrian is despised and the roads stand out creating a great road and congestion conflict, which is intensified by the confluence of spaces dedicated to public transportation.

This fact, complemented by voids with no defined function, the absence of programs or qualified public spaces of stay, green zones by the river, and the disuse of the beaches due to the pollution of the river, make the space without experience and without use.

This place has a large flat area with immense regeneration potential. It presents a wide and unoccupied space, its location on an aquatic landscape creates unique spaces in the quality of life and environment of the city, in continuity due to its flat morphology, creating a new centrality and a new image of the city. Another of its virtues is given by the Tejo's potential for activities and water sports.

This fact is underlined in the strategic documents for the site, which aim at urban reconversion through the development of activities related to leisure, culture and tourism, nautical recreational and sports activities, and complementary trade and services, giving those spaces a determining multifunctional character for their qualification. This fact leads to the interest of implementation in the Pedrouços Dock and in the Docapesca buildings of a new Atlantic port for recreational and competition nautics leveraged by the installation of VOLVO OCEAN RACE, an important economic and dynamising engine for the city.

This event can also act as an economic stimulus for all the reconversion and urban plan of this riverfront with the intention of creating a new Atlantic port in the city, similar to other plans proposed for the same area.

The Algés embankment, every year hosts the temporary event of NOS ALIVE, so it is intended to continue this event through the creation of a public space, which also allows other uses to be feasible during the remaining days of the year.

In this way, the proposal focuses on designing a set of public spaces, creating new continuities along the riverside strip and this one with the city. In the Algés node, this area is expected to be relieved by reorganizing the different mobility infrastructures through the installation of an interface for transferring pedestrian, cycle and road ferry mobility, complemented by car parking.

The whole area can thus become a new centrality, multifunctional, dynamic and of great importance for the city of Oeiras and Lisbon.
Image 1 | Intervencion Area
Source | Author - Adapted Google Maps
THE URBAN PROPOSAL

In order to relate the city and the river and to integrate the new proposal in the pre-existing one, the design of the public space was based on a system in the form of comb, allowing a continuity along the riverside band with new uses and creating punctual permeabilities for the interior of the city, breaking the barriers, through air connections.

To this system is combined a green corridor in continuity to the arboreal massifs of Jamor, Belém and Monsanto and a new urban park in the city scale, where temporary events can be developed, such as continuing the Nos Alive festival, fairs and other temporary outdoor events. Some new cultural equipment and other activities throughout the park complement this space.

The new waterfront design was based on the creation of water mirrors, such as marinas or squares of water. These delimit new spaces and approach the city of the Tagus and vice versa, creating a greater connection of the present urban front with the river. This fact is made possible by new landfills, especially in front of Dafundo, recreating the old sand arm that made the beach, to finish off the urban front of Dafundo and Cruz Quebrada and create space for new dynamics along the river, in continuity to the design from the mouth of the Jamor. Here is created a new morphology based on different levels, which allows the continuity of the public space to the quota of the river and the quota of the city, interconnected, and allows the separation of the public space from the private, through an intermediate quota where the buildings are located of housing.

This morphology allows the creation of a program along the bank, without obstructing the view of the city on the river. At the edge of the promenade, embedded in the terrain, new commercial programs, restaurants or services associated with marinas and water sports, and their coverage, at the city's height, generate public spaces, belvederes, squares and a green corridor.

The built volumes, in turn, are oriented perpendicular to the river thus allowing an opening between the existing city and the river.

The adoption of new uses and activities together of the river, aims to recreate the dynamic city-river, formerly generated by the beaches and spaces of leisure, fun and conviviality by the river.

At the level of the iron and road lines, the strategy was to maintain them, because it is an economically more viable and conservative proposal, creating more crossings and more together, on these. The marginal avenue was restored to the south of the railroad so as to enter directly in the overpass of the CRIL and to release flow next to the river, directing the traffic and decongesting all the marginal road line.

From Monsanto to the river, it is proposed, a set of successive squares. At the Algés junction, the road-rail barrier is crossed by an "aerial square", which consolidates in its interior the intermodal transport space, namely train and bus station, taxi rank, and possibly the future metropolitan terminal of the city of Lisbon.

A programmatic mix, given the extension of the intervention area and the urban dynamism that is intended, characterizes the proposal. This extensive multifunctionality is provided by a real estate infrastructure that enables intervention, and a way of producing urbanity, offering housing, hotels, studios, ateliers and tertiary and a range of functions such as business, commerce, services, catering, cultural, leisure, tourist and sport buildings.

It is proposed the rehabilitation of Pedrouços dock, associated to a new nautical center to harvest the headquarters of V.O.R.
1 – Jamor Marina
2 – Hotel
3 – Habitacion and Turistic Apartments
4 – Marina, Restaurants, Stores
5 – Hotel with Marina
6 – Library
7 – Amphitheater and Stage
8 – Museum
9 – Urban Park
10 – Fish Market
11 – Companies
12 – Aerial Square with Transports Terminal
13 – Nautical Centre
14 – Dock and Technical Suports

Image 2 | New Riverside Line Source | Author
THE PROPOSAL

Based on the nautical and consequently tourist potential that the urban plan foresees, the architectural proposal developed focused on designing and detailing an architectural complex consisting of Hotel, a marina and a square and the Center of the Sea, interconnected in the same event. This new concept aims to associate hotel spaces with a small nautical center, multifunctional, dedicated to events, exhibitions, conferences and even teaching.

The architectural concept assumes that public space is the great channel of connection and interaction between the city and the river, so that the project privileges this interaction, not only functioning as an architectural object, but also as a space that urban structure and public space.

The proposed building is characterized mainly by the way it is implanted on the floor and defines a simple geometry that accommodates a complex experience.

Three distinct layers characterize the set, namely the basement, which is embedded in the floor, the floor at the top of the city, permeable and transparent and the parallelepipedic volume of the rooms, which correspond to three different materials.

The initial premise developed a set of interconnected public spaces. First through a square, which leads to the river and allows a link of the highest quota to the level of the walk and, secondly, a set of platforms and levels that intertwine, interlink and accommodate programs. These spaces define the basement and correspond to more public programs and leisure, permanence and socialization, such as restaurants, bars, terraces, living rooms, games. Its roofs, in turn, form platforms and views of the river and the city.

The square serves as the main link between the proposed programs, despite maintaining its identity. It is here that the Hotel, developed vertically to the west, communicate with each other and where the main entrances of the two programs are.

Horizontally, these two programs are interconnected by spaces that complement them, namely a panoramic restaurant, a large auditorium and a health club, which includes spa, gymnasiums and treatment areas.

The only volume that stands out is the parallelepipedic volume of the rooms, more private, oriented perpendicular to the Talus and raised above it. The volume is thought of as a simple, enamelled solid encased in a uniform skin of collapsible solar shading panels, projecting it to the design of a facade, which is changing during the day. These panels

The floor that supports it is located high in the city and was developed through large glazing, making it transparent and permeable. The buried floors serve the service area and parking areas for the whole set.

The center-of-the-sea program essentially develops large, multifunctional and variable spaces through removable panels.
Marine Panoramic Restaurant Parallelepiped volume of the rooms Square and Auditorium Nautical center

Floor -1 Services of Hotel Floor 0 Social Spaces Floor -2 Parking Hotel Entrance Nautical Center Entrance
CONCLUSION

The proposal is the result of a complex and extensive work that allowed a response informed, aware and clarified through an urban and architectural consolidated proposal, which solves the problems and needs of the site and adjacent areas influence, showing alignment with strategic plans for the site, in a tourist context, business and water sports.

The requalification to this area, creates a new centrality and a new image of the city, through a new urbanity more directed to the river and to the population, where it is recreated the dynamic city.

The entire surrounding area, through new forms of articulation of the proposal with the existing city, benefits of this promotion of the city, as well as have a new contact with the water landscape combines new programs along the River, which act as a new pole of attraction dedicated to various audiences, locals, tourists, lovers of water sports, entrepreneurs and traders.

In the touristic and economic context in which it enters the city of Lisbon, the program set creates a set of new activities on the River, especially dedicated to water sports, leisure, culture and tourist activities and enables temporary events. This leads to a promotion of the city economy and generating investments. The design of the public space presented in this work a particular importance, since through it is possible to generate quality and urban continuity.

This is a relevant theme because it covers a territory and a program relevant to the discussion of the current dynamics of the city, intending this work serve as a contribution to the reading of the city, the current needs and urban and architectural dynamics in this area.

It is believed that this project responds to the initial objectives and that can be “the new Atlantic gate”, and the relationship that the city back to the River, and by the fact that many of the activities concentrate on the river together, working also the River as a public space and lived.

It is hoped that this project will contribute to the question this area’s future of the city of Lisbon as a way to show its reintegration into urban life.

In conclusion, this project is formalized in a “New City Gate”, for water sports and for the entrance of the Volvo Ocean Race in the city, through a new image and centrality of the city that stimulates a new nautical and tourist dynamic, and returns the river to the people.