



## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

### **URBAN PROJETO IN VILA VIÇOSA**

ARCHITECTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE IN THE CONTEXT OF PAÇO DUCAL

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PROJECT REPORT OF THE FINAL PROJECT IN ARCHITECTURE II  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This report supports the Final Master Project in Architecture of Instituto Superior Técnico developed during the academic year of 2016/2017 and intends to present a proposal for an urban and architectural intervention that allows an articulation between architecture, heritage and landscape in the context of the Paço Ducal of Vila Viçosa, in Portugal.

The proposal comes up as part of Vila Viçosa's application as World Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO and the need to promote and revitalize the Village to accomplish this process. In this context, it is presented this reflection about the Village, with the aim of understanding its Heritage as an integrated whole and that proposes the requalification and creation of new public spaces that allow to emphasize the importance of pedestrian routes and green spaces.

It is intended to strengthen the "green hall" that links the Mata Municipal to the Tapada Real, and the discovery of a succession of public spaces of permanence articulated by a pedestrian route. The project rise up at the intersection of these axis, proposing the creation of a cultural pole at the entrance of the Village, with a Theater / Auditorium, a Municipal Library, and spaces to support the Paço Ducal such as parking lots, Restaurant and Store, Ticket office, Audiovisual Space, Spaces for Temporary Exhibitions and Space for the Archive and Exhibition of the Photographic Collection.

The promotion of the Paço Ducal's Set of Monuments has direct repercussions on the economy and social development of Vila Viçosa. It is therefore intended to create an integrated space with the Paço Ducal complex that allows to help with the dynamics of the predicted increase of the number of visitors, promotes the enjoyment of the surrounding green spaces and values the entrance space in the Village.

The proposal has two main components, one of rehabilitation and adaptation to new uses of the existing buildings and another one of new construction, focusing in detail the rehabilitation of the old arena as a new Ticket office and the construction of the new building for the cafeteria and store. The project aims not only to respond to the proposed uses, but also to serve the successive transitions of levels between the gardens and spaces that surround the Palace, understanding the importance of landscape integration in the design process.

The purpose of the intervention is to integrate the landscape and the interaction of contemporary architecture with the built Heritage.

## **KEY WORDS**

Local Economy | Heritage | Intervention | Permeabilities | Cultural Equipment | Ducal Palace

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 MOTIVATION

The application of Vila Viçosa as UNESCO World Heritage Site according to the classification of URBAN, ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE is a unique opportunity to reflect on the urban development of the Village as well as the role of the Heritage in urban context, valuing it. In addition, there's the interest on the possibility of introducing new structures of contemporary architecture into cultural landscapes with Heritage charges. It is also a challenge, the interaction between the buildings of historical and cultural value with public spaces and green spaces, revealing a particular interest on the articulation of the urban project with the Paço Ducal gardens.

## 1.2 THE PROBLEM

The main problem is the need of dynamization and revitalization of Vila Viçosa, in order to revert the panorama of a "static village" and the lack of adaptation to the current social, economic and cultural requirements of nowadays.



### POPULATION:

The municipality of Vila Viçosa is dealing with the desertification phenomenon that the interior of the Alentejo has witnessed. Families have been progressively abandoning this territory so the majority age group in Vila Viçosa are the elderly people. Despite the growing investment in school equipments to improve the conditions for the education of young people, there is no return on this investment, since the younger generations don't want to live in the village.



### ECONOMICS:

The lack of opportunities to create jobs, make the village less appealing to the inhabitants themselves. The local economy has stagnated with the reduction of the business sector, mainly related with the extractive industry of marble.



### ACCESSIBILITY AND PUBLIC SPACE:

It is worth to highlight the need of upgrading the infrastructures and accessibilities, which allow Vila Viçosa to be integrated with nearest cities, to benefit from joint tourist packages.

It is considered that throughout the various phases of expansion of the village, the problem of disqualification of the entrance areas in the Village has been intensified, which is a fundamental aspect to be solved. Public spaces are poorly qualified for pedestrians and there is a lack of shading on most of the footpaths. The qualified green spaces are punctual in the center of the Village. There are few car parkings connected with the historic center.

Referring the example of the city of Guimarães, whose historical center is a World Heritage Site, the public space was thought as a whole, valuing the local architecture and heritage, allowing the pedestrian to enjoy the historical center as the main protagonist. This situation does not happen in Vila Viçosa, for example in the main square (Praça da República), the car's permanence devalues the space, hindering the free circulation of the pedestrian.



#### **CULTURAL EQUIPMENTS:**

The cultural equipments, do not have the capacity to attract the neighboring populations neither to promote the meeting between the inhabitants. Cultural spaces and leisure or recreational spaces are punctual, there are no auditoriums or theaters with the capacity to create events that make the village more attractive at different times of the year.

It is worth to point the lack of tourism attraction in the village, where the Heritage and Landscape set is little valued and does not offer an integrated visit. There is also little interaction between the tourist and the inhabitants.

The role of the Casa de Bragança Foundation in the dynamization process, as a promoter of the tourist activity and job creation, is worthy of mention, since it is the owner of an important group of heritage buildings that can be visited in the Village, as like as the Ducal Palace, the Castle and the Panteão dos Duques de Bragança, which are the main tourist attractions of the Village. The Casa de Bragança Foundation also has important agricultural companies that are relevant employers in the Municipality.

The importance of the dynamization of the Paço Ducal's Set of Monuments has direct repercussions on the economy and social development of Vila Viçosa, reason why the curricular objectives of the Final Project in Architecture 2 focused the study of the Monumental Complex of Paço Ducal, where it's architectural and heritage value, the richness of the urban fabric where it's integrated and the presence of a set of green structures, formal gardens, forests and agricultural areas, have particular relevance.

The tour throughout the Monumental Set of the Ducal Palace could be more attractive, due to the content of interest with the Ducal Palace has to offer and the average time of permanence of visitors, there's a lack of qualified structures of support to the visitor that could dynamize the visit route. Nowadays, the Monumental Set of the Gardens and the Ducal Palace receives around 500 visitors per day, which compared to other national monuments is a number that could certainly be higher, taking into account it's potential.

The parking lot of the Ducal Palace, located in Terreiro do Paço is insufficient and does not value this public space; the Ticket Office does not have capacity to accommodate queues or large flows of tourists. There's no cafeteria or catering space to support the visitor, the bathrooms are concentrated in a single space and the gardens have potentialities that are not being included in the visits.

In addition, the lack of use and few qualification of some of the existing buildings is visible, but they play a necessary role to accommodate the increase of visits predicted.

## 1.3 OBJETIVES

### 1.3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES (G.O.)

Taking into account the problems mentioned, the proposal was based on the following main general objectives:

G.O.1) Dynamization of Vila Viçosa and the Monumental Set of Paço Ducal ;

G.O.2) Promote the conditions of attractiveness of the Village, directed to the fixation of the young people and attraction of the tourists.

G.O.3) Creation of more jobs, as a result of the tourist growth and the reactivation of the local economy.

G.O.4) The aim is to increase the capacity of the Paço Ducal to receive more visitors and to reach a wider public.

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY

After the characterization and comprehension of the theoretical concepts that reflect the site, it was developed a conceptual Masterplan for the Village. The Urban Project was developed with great sense of respect by the objectives of the Masterplan and was articulated with the Ducal Palace. On the Architectural Project, it was developed with more detail part of the Urban Project.

# 2 ARCHITECTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE

Vila Viçosa is a village that is now in an application process to be an UNESCO World Heritage Site , due to its built heritage and urban fabric, and landscape that have been kept like as if the time did not passed through it.

According to this context, *"Heritage, in all its forms, should be preserved, valued and transmitted to the future generations as a testimony of human experience and aspirations, in order to foster creativity in all its diversity and inspire a genuine dialogue between cultures."* (UNESCO (2001) – Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Article 7).

In relation to *"Landscape, means a part of the territory, as it is apprehended by the populations, whose character results from the action and interaction of natural and human factors."* ((BARRANHA, 2016) apud 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the European Landscape Convention in 2000). The Gardens, that are a result of the human factor, play an important role on the comprehension of the Monumental Set and are as important as the built Heritage.

In Vila Viçosa and in the context of the Monumental Set of the Paço Ducal, these two main themes should be integrated in the strategy of revitalization proposed.

The main case of studies that motivated the strategy were projects that dialogued with Landscape and Heritage in the surrounding area. Such as the project of Casa das Mudas – Contemporary Art Museum designed by the Architect Paulo David (in 2004) and the project of the

International Contemporary Sculpture Museum (MIEC) and rehabilitation of the Municipal Museum Abade Pedrosa (MMAP), designed by the Architect Álvaro Siza Vieira and the Architect Eduardo Souto de Moura (in 2012).

### 3 MASTERPLAN AND THE URBAN PROJCT

This **Masterplan** is the result of an investigation about how to promote the dialogue between the Historic Center, the Heritage and Landscape of Vila Viçosa. It highlights the most relevant public equipments and the heritage buildings that should be related with footpaths, or even the articulation between them and the green spaces and public spaces that could lead to the integration of the Village Heritage as a whole.

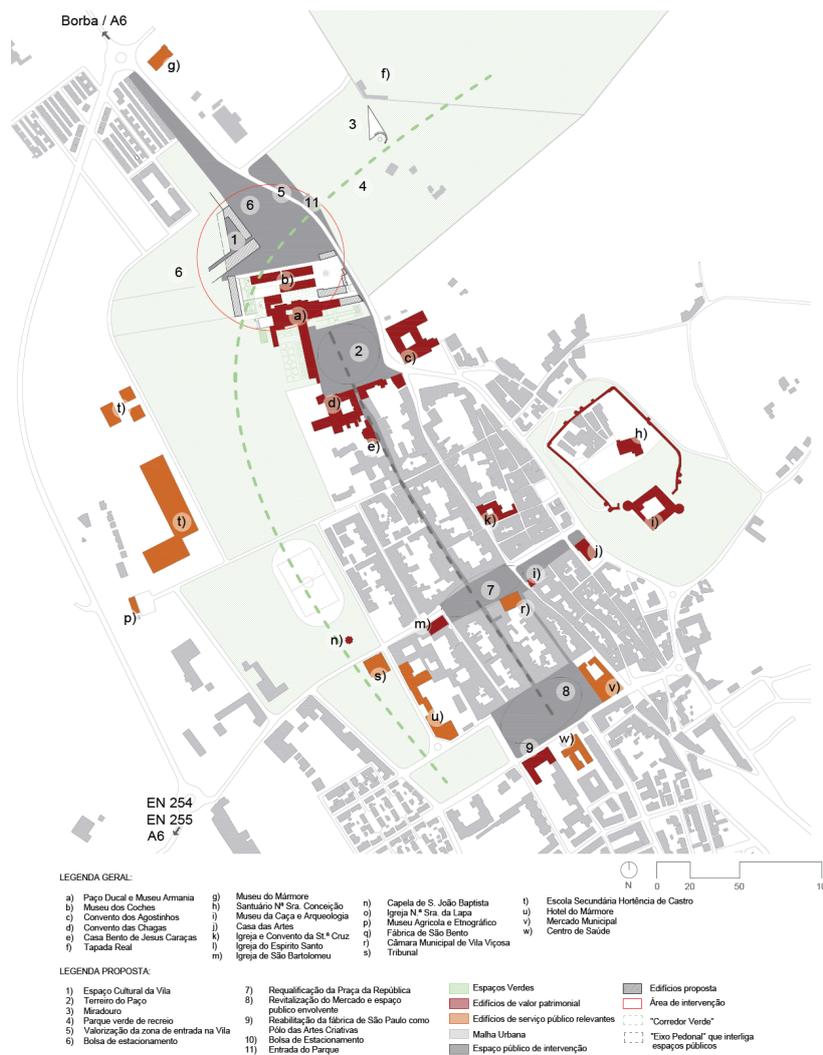


Image 1 - Masterplan for Vila Viçosa (Font: Author, 2017)

The **Urban Project** that is presented is a Cultural Pole that has the conceptual principle of ensuring the preservation of the identity of the Monumental Set of the Paço Ducal of Vila Viçosa, responding simultaneously to large-scale programmatic needs in an effective and contemporary way.

It is intended to strengthen the "green hall" that links the Mata Municipal to the Tapada Real, and the discovery of a succession of public spaces of permanence articulated by a pedestrian route. The project rises up at the intersection of these axes, proposing the creation of a cultural pole at the entrance of the Village, with a Theater / Auditorium, a Municipal Library, and spaces to support the Paço Ducal such as parking lots, Restaurant and Store, Ticket office, Audiovisual Space, Spaces for Temporary Exhibitions and Space for the Archive and Exhibition of the photographic archive.

The integration of the Paço Ducal Cultural Pole in the "green corridor", is an intervention in the public space that, by the form and planning of the building in agreement with the pedestrian paths that are meant to emphasize, promotes the participation of the people and simultaneously creates a new image of the intervention area giving it permeability by allowing it to be crossed.

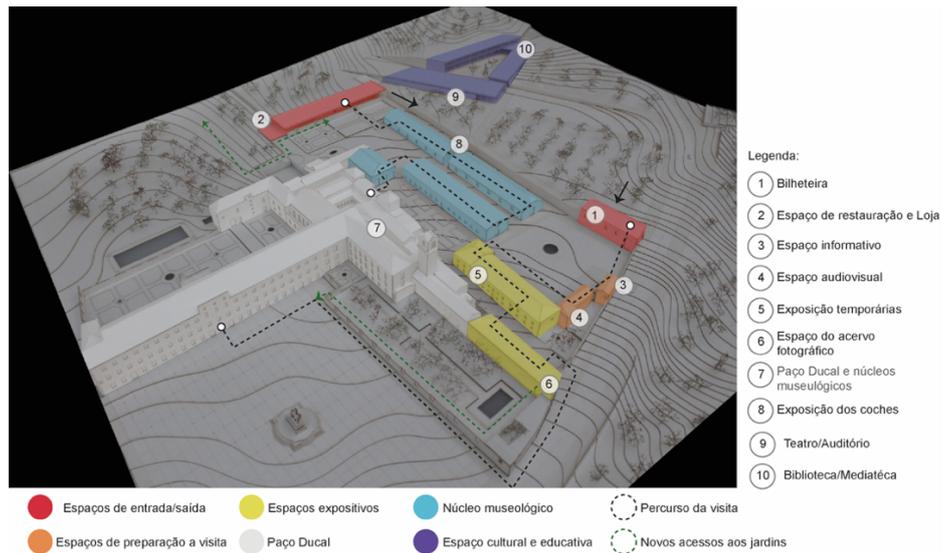


Image 2 - Functional program of the urban project (Font: Author, 2017)

The stairways, ramps and the courtyard of the Library are part of the new buildings and the arrangement of routes of this new public space, completing it and allowing to appreciate the architecture and nature. By taking advantage of the buildings, you can enjoy the surrounding green spaces, the topography and the views.

Looking for to reduce the visual impact associated with the new equipments, the implantation is thought in order to minimize the impact on the vegetation, integrating it in the proposal.

The proposal separates the different functions by the new buildings created and the existing ones, in order to maintain the low volumes in the general context, with one or two floors, aiming that the new buildings do not impose themselves in the landscape neither emancipates in relation to the Paço Ducal.

Inside the buildings, the spaces are whenever possible little compartmentalized allowing them to be thought of as hybrid spaces adapting easily to future programs.

The atmosphere of the spaces changes with the program and the building redefines itself accordingly.

The new buildings of the Cultural Pole proposed does not only structure the preexistences but also generate new spaces in the Villa. It is by the succession of spaces and paths designed that serve the buildings, cross them and go along with the morphology of the terrain, being part of its route, that the result is a set of new buildings that are topography.

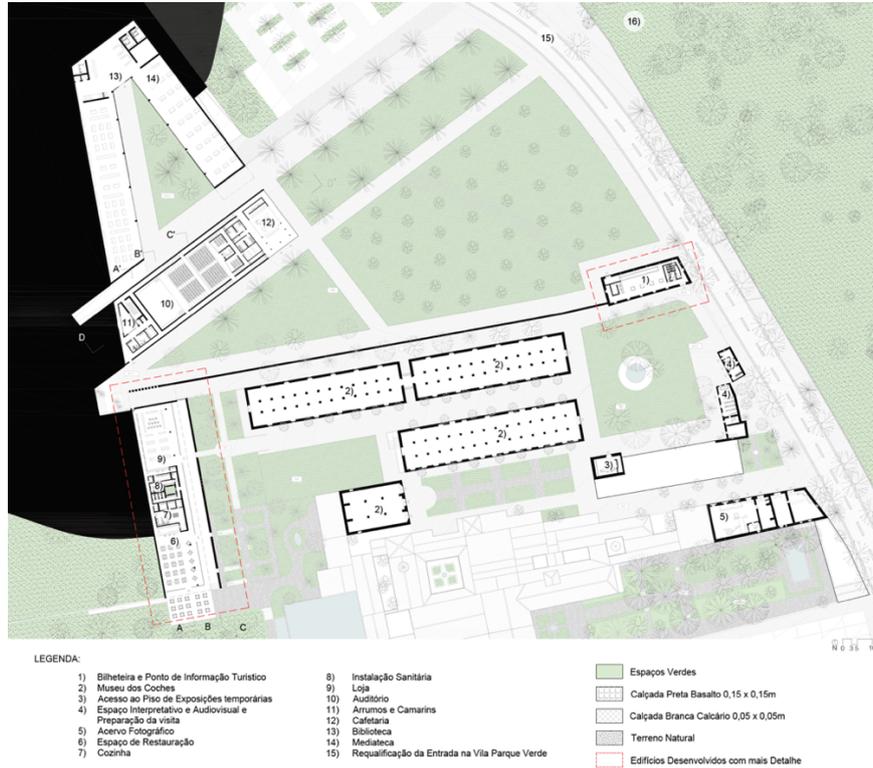


Image 3 - Plan of the proposal highlighting the buildings developed with more detail. (Font: Author, 2017)

## 4 ARCHITECTURAL PROJETO AND DETAILS

The Architectural Project focused the rehabilitation of the old Riding Ring to a new ticket office and a new construction, and also the new cafeteria and store that introduces a new connection to the informal gardens of the Paço Ducal.

### 4.1 TICKET OFFICE

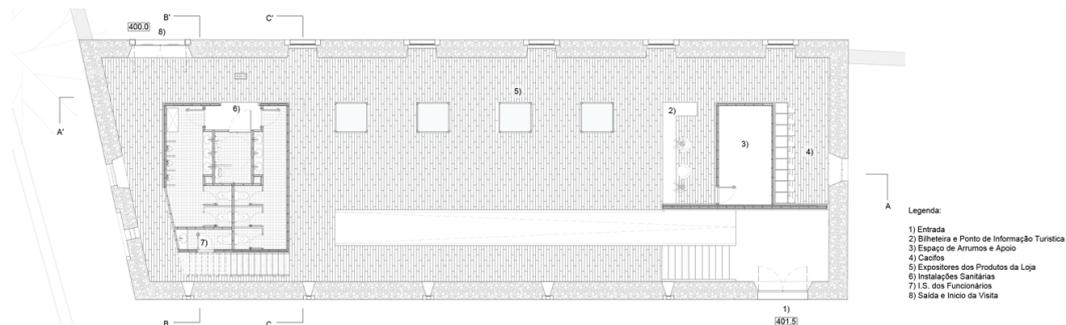


Image 4 - Rehabilitation of the Old Riding Ring to a new Ticket Office. (Font: Author, 2017)

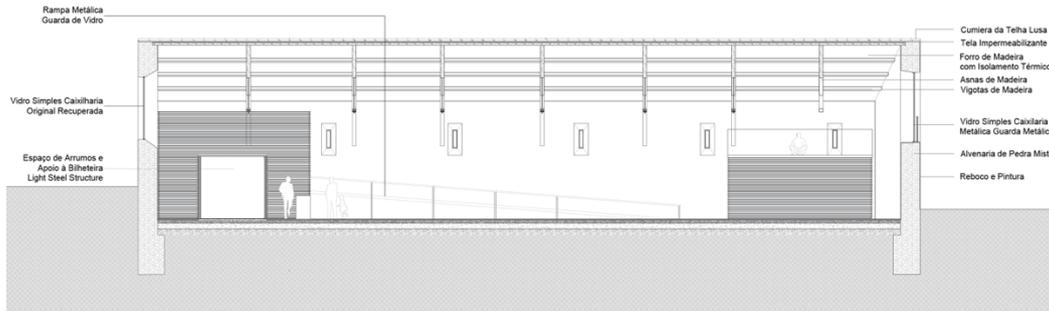


Image 5 - The Light Steel Framing "Boxes" as a hybrid space to be adapted to future purposes. (Font: Author 2017)

## 4.2 CAFETERIA AND STORE

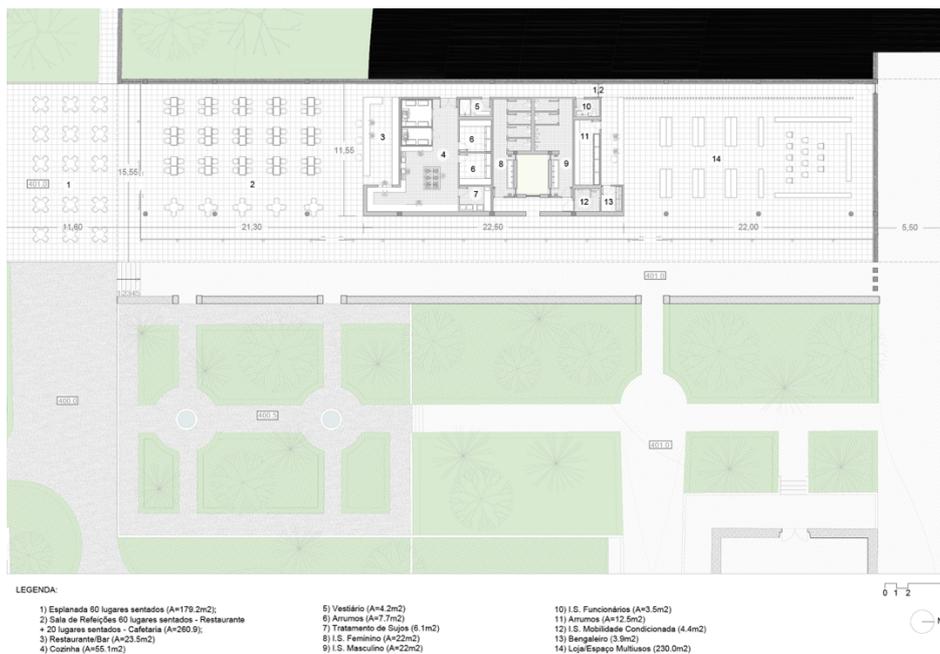


Image 6 - The Cafeteria and Store related with the permeabilities that give access to the Gardens and the Exit. (Font: Author, 2017)

The new building for the cafeteria aims to be integrated with the topography and is located behind the pre-existing limit wall of the Paço Ducal, in order to reduce the visual impact of it in relation to the Monumental Set of the Ducal Palace.

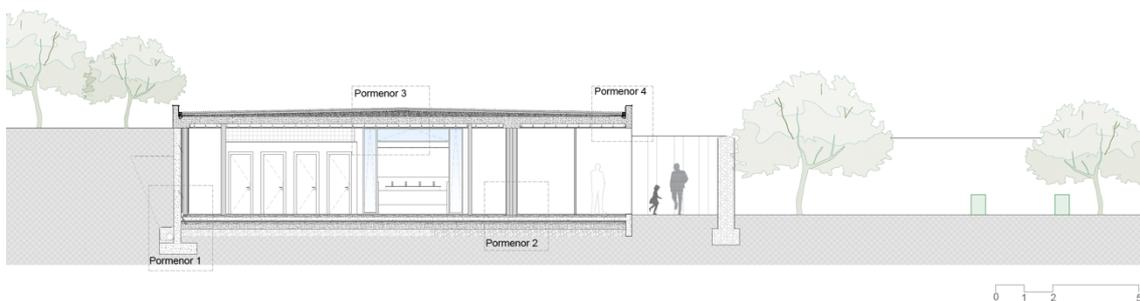


Image 7 - The new buildings are integrated with the Topography and it's roof can be accessible to enable new ways of observing Paço Ducal and the Landscape. (Font: Author, 2017)

## 5 CONCLUSION

The proposal presents itself as an consolidated, conscious and informed work that responds to the strategy elaborated, the program and the needs of the place, in agreement with the future plans of the Town Hall of Vila Viçosa and of the Casa de Bragança Foundation in the tourism and economical context of the Village.

The new Cultural Pole of Vila Viçosa assumes itself as an urban structure, delineating simultaneously private space and public space belonging to the Monumental Complex of the Paço Ducal, and is also a structuring element for the connection between the new Green Park, the Paço Ducal and the Village, reducing the obstacles and discontinuities.

The construction of the new buildings of this Cultural Pole and the creation of the new Public Green Park represent an added value which the entire surrounding area benefits. Promoting this space in the Village, it's expected that it function as an attractive pole, satisfying the needs of different audiences, from tourists, citizens, culture and reading / research enthusiasts and Theater / Auditorium users. The creation of events in this Cultural Center also works as a way of promoting the cultural offer of the Paço Ducal and consequently of Vila Viçosa, attracting more investment and a greater tourist and users adhesion to this type of equipments.

It's important to mention that this exercise helped to understand the potencial of the pre-existing buildings to embrace the new functions that were requested by the Foundation of Casa de Bragança and also the understanding of the integration of the visit of the gardens in the visit route of the Monumental Set of the Paço Ducal.

To intervene on a territory that in itself is already a centrality in Vila Viçosa, such as the Monumental Set of Paço Ducal is a challenge and a privilege because of the potential of transformation in the relationship between the Palace and the Village.

Both of the proposal and the final report have allowed the understanding of the responsibility and meaning of what it is to act in an area with such a wide influence, showing that it is not only the urban building itself that achieves urban quality but rather the public space generated by it . It is important to reinforce the pertinence of the theme as well as the interest that the area of intervention represents for the accomplishment of this exercise, since it offers the possibility of, through an academic project, to participate in the reflection of a current architectural and urbanistic problem. It is hoped that this project may contribute to question the future of this area in Vila Viçosa, as a way of visualizing its reintegration into the urban experience and that it will contribute to the efforts applied in the application of Vila Viçosa to World Heritage of Humanity.

As a future development of the present work, it is suggested that the Creative Pole proposed in the Masterplan for the São Paulo Factory could be developed in more detail so that, together with the Cultural Pole of Paço Ducal developed in the proposal, they could fundament an even more embracing strategy for the dynamization of Vila Viçosa.