1. INTRODUCTION

The main goals of this report is presenting and analyzing strategies developed throughout the Final Project subject along the school year of 2011/2012.

The Project created presents an urban plan to restructure Lisbon’s North-West Ring, under the theme “designing public space and its surrounding elements”.

The chosen territory is fragmented, never planned until now, with segregated areas which are weakly articulated with the consolidated urban tissue. This is a consequence of overlapped elements which have been done through time to solve punctual situations, unaware of the bigger plan. It becomes therefore necessary to develop a strategy which will allow the territory to rise to its maximum capacity and congregate with the existing urban dynamic. In choosing the interface square of Pontinha as the area of intervention for this urban project, and knowing well the great potentiality of this territory, this proposal intends on transforming Pontinha into a new centrality.

The structural elements of the public space were identified and the road network was reorganized, guaranteeing continuity in the ecological system. This being, this project considered various issues regarding the intervention area, such as: conditionings, new predicted uses, new urban continuities, different typologies and the redesigning of the infrastructure.

Considering that transforming a peripheral area into a new centrality is the core of this proposal, it becomes relevant to conduct a critical reflection on the emergence of centralities connected to knots, interfaces and infrastructures.

On a further phase, and with case studies as a support, the proposed assignment was evaluated at a deeper level, seeking to validate it with stricter arguments.

2. DEVELOPMENT

2.1 PERIPHERAL CENTRALITIES | this chapter is responsible for offering a contextualization of the matter in study, searching for a clear approach of the “city center” concept and its evolution. In fact, with the city’s growth, what was before peripheral can now be considered as center.

In this section, the new relation between the city’s center and its periphery is observed, as well the emergence of centralities connected to knots, interfaces and infrastructures.
After a deep insight to the theme, and so that a clear perception of its concepts could be concluded, two interface studies were analyzed. Although this was done at a later stage, it permitted a better framing and critical approach to the project.

2.2. AREA IN STUDY – ANALYSIS | In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the territory was conducted in order to establish a greater knowledge of the issue and becoming this way able to create a Project more complete. Therefore, the explored themes were: Mobility; Road Network; Public Transports Network; Pedestrian and Cycling Network; Parking; Green Spaces Structure; Building Structure.

This section finalizes with an evaluation of the principles formulated by the Municipal Director Plan regarding this area as well a mention to two projects intended for this area.

2.3 PROPOSAL | This exercise was done throughout one year for the Final Project subject 2011/2012. It was developed in three phases and its main goal is to present a plan which integrates Lisbon’s North-West Ring with the rest of the city.

PHASE I – NORTH-WEST RING OF LISBON | At an initial phase, a gathering of information was done in group, followed by an interpretation on the field of study. This analysis conducted to the evaluation of the region’s problems and functionalities, becoming now possible to indicate the project’s general objectives concerning the urban, road and green structures.
Synthesis | PHASE I

It may be observed that all these interventions can be seen as consolidation gestures of the territory which combine past and present, living with this same past rather than subjugating it. This meaning that in the entire intervention, the already existing built mass remained practically unaltered. With the new building proposal, there is an intention of not only consolidating the streets’ fronts but also requalifying the existing ones.
The reorganization of the streets offers a whole new dignity to the buildings and its surrounding public space becomes more comfortable for people. On plant, it is quite perceptible that the qualified public space invades all spaces of the Telheiras-Monsanto axis.

The enhancement given to two intervention levels is also important – in a broader sense the “heavier” intervention of Avenida Gomes Pereira, Avenida do Uruguai and Avenida Cidade de Praga, and in a stricter sense, the fact that it proposes a connection between green spaces and a comfortable pedestrian path along the curves – allowing the ground’s unevenness to become less perceptible for those who cross it. For the city to grow in a more sustainable way, these interventions are needed.

With these interventions, there is an attempt to requalify this Lisbon’s centrality. There are great advantages, not only at a local level but also at a subway level because with this Telheiras-Monsanto axis, some of the traffic happening in the “2a Circular” may be overcome.

**PHASE II – PONTINHA, A NEW CENTRALITY |** This second stage was done individually. Different areas were distributed by the group for each one to explore. In this case, the area chosen was the Pontinha transports interface square and its entire surroundings. This is considered to be a privileged area thanks to its joint role between the periphery and central city, as well as its position in relation to the main mobility axis. It is to call out the growing role of Benfica as a strongly equipped and developed territory.

Following the purposes of the general proposal, and being aware of the huge potentialities of this area, this project focused on transforming Pontinha into a new centrality. Hence, an Urban Project was created, assuming an intermediate scale between the Urban Plan and the Architect Plan.

**SYNTHESIS | PHASE II**

The field of study is an example of what may become a new urban centrality with a planned metropolitan scale, with three strong dimensions to explore: (1) Privileged accessibilities provided by the road network and by Pontinha Station interface (taxis/subway/buses/individual transportations); (2) diversified functional profile: sports equipment, cultural equipment, scholar equipment, business and shopping zones which offer a dynamic facet to the territory; (3) a distinctive urban image due to the buildings’ architecture and urban space where the liaison with the new urban park assumes an emblematic figure.

Therefore, it was intended to create a program which considered the main premises from the group work and explored the area’s potential, reaching conditions which enabled the development of a continuous structure, completely integrated with the city and encouraging the creation of a new centrality. In this sense, the following is suggested: the restructuration of the Road Network and the recreation of some of the local routes; the creation of a Building Structure with a multifunctional program working as a motor of
the evolving territory; the creation of a continuous Public Space system - a big Urban Park which assures pedestrian and cycling paths through the entire territory; a Central Square which will serve the interface and will attract economic activities, contributing to a greater competitiveness in opposition to Lisbon’s other centralities.
PHASE III: APPROACHES | Having a plan defined at the neighborhood’s scale, some key points of the proposal are explored in greater detail: the Interface, which is an essential knot for the appearance of a new centrality; the Central Square, associated to the Subway Station, taxis square and bus stops; the Proposed Buildings, as elements which conform the urban space and introduce new uses; the Underground Parking Lot which serves both square and new buildings; and finally, the Urban Park, a green spot which spreads and merges throughout the whole territory and unifies the public space. Hence, the Interface and its square – a new public space, the park and the continuity towards west- are the fundamental aspects considered capable of giving a minimum unity to the new city. These are new possibilities of urban continuity in the disaggregated territories.

SINTHESIS | PHASE III

Interface | The creation of a new centrality being the key aspect of this project, it is important that the interface shows favorable conditions in establishing a direct and efficient transshipment between the different forms of transport. A new interface is suggested in the same place as the existing one, taking profit of its infrastructures but also allowing a more efficient articulation with the remaining transports.

Central Square | Its drawing is a result of the proposed buildings disposition and the surrounding roads. The new central square will embrace a large amount of fluxes, not only from the interface´s users but also from future inhabitants and workers of the area. Identifying this region as a potential centrality, it is necessary to gather conditions which enable this square to become a reference point, regarded as an example of competitiveness and development in its economic activities. The idea is that this square transforms into a recognizable new urban identity.

Proposed Buildings | Supported by the central square, a new block of buildings is suggested with a mix typology. The ground floor gives place to the tertiary sector, stimulating activity in the central square, whilst the remaining six floors are for housing. The creation of these buildings delimitate the square and give shape to the urban park which will be crossing between both these areas.

Underground Parking Lot | At an underground level, the parking problematic, which lacks of planning, becomes now solved. This parking lot will serve the central square and the other buildings mentioned earlier. Its particularity is that it remains at the same level of the subway platform, enabling its direct access.

Urban Park | Regarding the ecological system, its continuity results from the connection between various green spaces which already exist. This being, a new green corridor arises – an urban park – with cycling and pedestrian paths drawn, permitting an articulation amongst all surrounding spaces, contaminating the entire urban area.
3. CONCLUSION
3.1 CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE PROJECT´S STRATEGIES

A critical analysis of a project is understood as “Critical thinking is a type of reasonable, reflective thinking that is aimed at deciding what to believe or what to do. It is a way of deciding whether a claim is always true, sometimes true, partly true, or false.”

Therefore, a critical reflection implies to take a position from an ensemble of information gathered by research. It is wide, questioning and autonomous.

In this sense, this analysis intends on justifying or questioning specific significant choice as well as indicating other possible answers.

Let us analyze in detail each of the main objectives of the project´s program:

**Interface** | The new interface proposed gathers most of the characteristics which contribute for its well functioning. It has an excellent performance as regards the convergence of transportsations network. However, it does not solve the matter of transshipment between the subway station and the bus stop, and the route to take. Now, although there is a greater proximity between these two transportation zones, the interconnection remains insufficient due to the fact it is still an open space, causing discomfort to its users on rainy days.

**Central Square** | Although the new square contemplates flexible spaces, it is not taken into account in this proposal, specific spaces for the activities, which may come out as a failure.

At the city´s scale, this new square must be a place reference, allowing visual contacts at wider scales. Nevertheless, and even so, when comparing the area the proposed square occupies with the area of the projected square in Rome, mentioned in the case study, a huge difference is understood, which may be an indicator of the proposal´s disproportion.

**Proposed Buildings** | A larger tertiary sector is proposed, mainly supported by the interface structure. These new buildings, with a mix use, bring a new dynamic to the square because both housing and economic dimensions will benefit, generating greater competitiveness in opposition to other centralities around the city.

This being, the buildings next to the square are considered to be one of the highlights of this project, namely because of the liaisons they establish. Characterized by the permeability they offer to the movement of spaces, thanks to punctual openings, these elements are a key factor in the drawing of the urban park. It is these buildings which trace and define the area occupied by public space. After executing the model, and although the buildings proposed respect the main physical and visual aspects of the
evolving public space, guaranteeing sufficient distance, its height may be questionable. Due to its proximity to the Square, these buildings may have a greater presence in the new centrality’s landscape.

**Underground Parking Lot** | The underground parking lot solves matters concerning public parking, very poorly planned for this area. It gives a clear and functional drawing and supports the Interface and respective Square. Being at the same level of the subway platform enables a direct passage for those who live at the periphery and use individual transportation to the parking lot, continuing the rest of their trajectory towards the city center by subway.

Car Access, although well localized, is a little limited, as there is only one entrance and one exit available in and out of this parking lot. In case it is full and in an emergency situation, its flow becomes more difficult. Regarding the other parking lots, the one which serves the mixed building is well accomplished. The outside accesses are clearly signaled and having fewer parking spaces available, its three vertical accesses are sufficient to guarantee pedestrian entries. As to the private parking lot which serves uniquely the housing buildings, responds to all matters discussed above but fails in an essential detail: part of it is on top of one of the Urban Park’s zone. This green area, intersecting with the underground parking lot, becomes no longer permeable, causing a reduction in the infiltration area of pluvial waters.

**Urban Park** | The basic principle of the territory’s organization is the urban continuity because this one assures coherence between the various tissues through elements of connection. The new Urban Park is the responsible element for a fluid and uninterrupted territory. Its main function is to certify the connection between the existing green spaces, invading and contaminating the whole surrounding environment.

This being, the Urban Park here recommended is the major coordinating element of this organization, assuring the creation of reference elements and a central point amongst spaces. A flaw to point out is, however, the fact that supporting equipment to the Park was not created, which would at a certain extent boost its highly desired elevated flux.

### 3.2 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The present assignment rose from the necessity of creating a Project at an urban scale, integrated in the Final Project subject. This report’s relevance is justified as being an essential element in the presentation of the project.

This one not only justifies the main goals of the proposal, illustrating them with theoretical background, enabling also the rise of pertinent questions or situations remaining to be solved. In this sense, it is to stress out the usefulness of this report, parallel to the execution of the project, as it allow the confrontation
between theoretical and practical components, permitting more grounded strategies, conscious of the urban tissue transformation.

This way, it became possible to create a structured Project, settled on a solid research analysis and capable of responding to the challenge give at the beginning of the school year. The theoretical reflections, focused on the concepts which supported the project, together with the practical analysis of the case studies, constituted essential tools for the development of this paper. During the project elaboration, these case studies were seen as primordial because they permitted a greater understanding of the viability and conditionings of the proposed infrastructure.

Going through an inner reflection, more conscious of the Project, it is considered that this one reaches with success the objectives it committed itself to, consolidating and solving the main problems of the territory. However, because of the short interval between the submission of the project and the presentation of the report, some aspects regarding the project could and should have been explored at a deeper level, and others reformulated.

This being an academic exercise enables a freer reflection, less regulated by the real panorama, without ever neglecting fundamental matters which define the urban structure.