

ALCÁCER RIVERFRONT
ALCÁCER DO SAL
2014–2010

Riverfront renovation
of an ancient Portuguese township
in the Alentejo region

Alcácer do Sal is a time-honoured city gracefully nestled on the north bank of the Sado river. Around the turn of the 19th-century, a stone embankment reshaped the riverfront and formed a promenade around which most of the civic life of this community has evolved. Over the years, this embankment became dilapidated, with excessive traffic, worn-out paving, improper parking and poor lighting, seriously compromising the quality of life of its residents as well as its value as a tourist attraction.

The project, won by the practice as the outcome of an open international competition, comprises an ambitious renovation and revival of the city's riverfront, involving a number of different components, including the paving design, parking, lighting, street furniture, pergolas and railings, in addition to a new tourism centre building, a kindergarten and a rowing school.

In order to create a pedestrian walkway, the project involved reducing the former two-way car lanes to one-way, single-direction routes, while also regulating and reducing parking — a much-needed modification to lessen car traffic in the historical centre, but nonetheless felt to be detrimental by the community. The project suggested the demolition of a 1920s promenade wall and its replacement with a wrought-iron railing to make the river freely visible. In addition, large limestone-paving pathways enable pedestrian circulation, tree planting and street benches. On the opposite boundaries of the riverfront, the programme is completed with public car parking and a kindergarten to the west, and a pentagonal-shaped tourism booth fronted by an informal square to the east.



Location: Alcácer do Sal (Alentejo), Portugal

Client: Municipality of Alcácer

Scope of services: Master plan, architecture, landscape architecture and product design

Project brief: Public space urban renovation

Site: 2 km of historical riverfront

Construction cost: EUR 4m

Project status: 2010 (public competition, 1st prize) – 2014 (built)

Illustrations and photography: Promontorio