

PRO MON TORIO

BLOCO CARNIDE

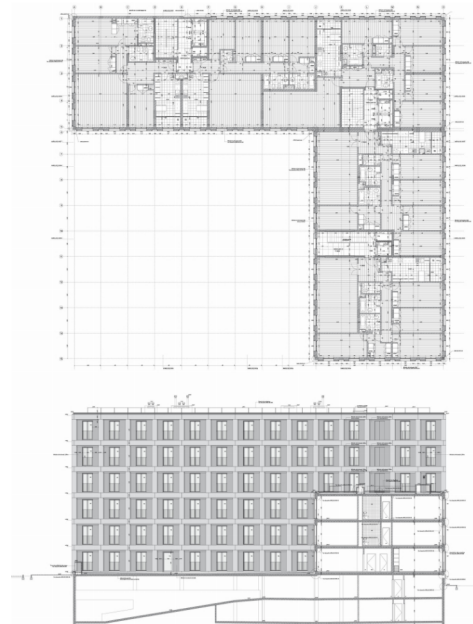
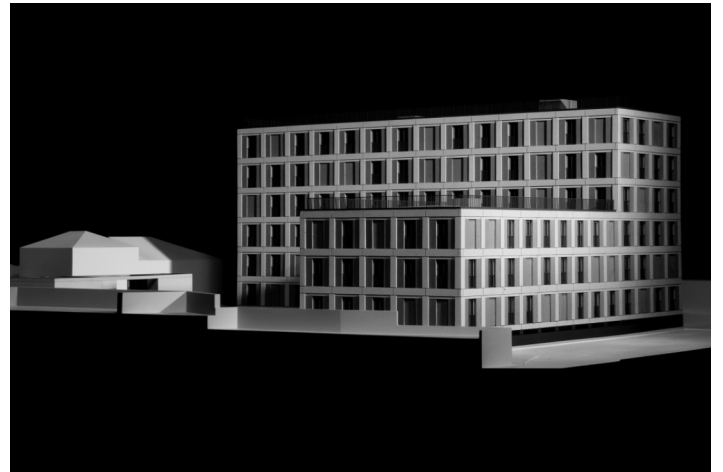
LISBON, PORTUGAL

2003–1999

This residential programme was developed by a housing cooperative for a site located on the edge of the historical district of Carnide, next to Lisbon's administrative boundary. Along with the vacant site, the programme included the renovation of a row of historical houses that remains from what was formerly Vila Rosa. Situated in a small historical centre, the plot is adjacent to the backyards and annexes of the old nucleus of Carnide, listed by the Portuguese heritage institute.

The ensemble comprises the new block with 24 apartments, the renovation of the old houses in Travessa do Pregoeiro, and a small shop to be rented for local commerce. The surroundings are a mix of different periods and the corresponding urban policies — from the 18th-century fabric of small palaces and farming hamlets to the fierce 1970s suburban expansion that followed. Due to its location and volume, the new building is conceived as a protective screen for the historical nucleus vis-à-vis its dense and disqualified surroundings. Its L-shaped configuration guarantees a tolerant urban arrangement, both in relation to the historical surroundings and the resulting courtyard, where the public space is not only agreeably scaled but also plays a mediating role between the interstitial spaces of the old and the new.

With three stair-and-elevator cores and direct entrances to the courtyard and basement parking, the living rooms of the two-, three- and four-bedroom units predominantly face south and west, with the bedrooms facing north and east. The concept of the new block is based on the idea of monolithic proportions and repetition. The monumentality that emanates from the compositional system of the façades suggests the representational transposition of the load-and-bearing system running across the building, with its mineral skeleton resting on a heavy plinth with a pronounced stereotomy. Thus, far from being a literal representation of structure, the aim is to create a tactile and visual representation capable of generating a solid and stable urban type-form. This configuration evidently suggests a remission of the heavyweight tectonics in the sense that the fragile tympanums of the modules — formed by a combination of aluminium *porte-fenêtre*, steel handrails and wood panelling shutters — are visually supported by a powerful skeleton of precast concrete elements. At the same time, a randomness springs from the different positions in which the occupants leave the shutters, a phenomenon that is also indicative of the physical expression of dwelling.



Location: Carnide historical district, Lisbon, Portugal
Client: Cooperativa de Habitação Vila Rosa, CRL
Scope of services: Architecture
Project brief: 24 apartments and renovation of adjacent historical houses
Plot area: 1,020 sq. m
Gross floor area: 3,200 sq. m
Construction cost: EUR 630.00 per sq. m
Project status: 1999 (concept design) – 2003 (built)
Model: Norigem
Photography: Fernando Guerra, Rui Morais de Sousa (model) and Leonardo Finotti