

COOP BAI
LUANDA, ANGOLA
2014

A U-shaped perimeter block
on the bay of Luanda
with wide shading verandas

The Bay de Luanda is a vast site across the waterfront of the Angolan capital which has undergone a major requalification programme developed under a public-private partnership established in 2009 between the Government of Angola and Sociedade Baía de Luanda SA. Environmental reclaim, infrastructure renovation, new public space and landscaping revitalized this once iconic area of the city. Within the master plan, a series of mixed-use plots have been made available to investors and the project is a one of these parcels acquired by a housing cooperative.

The ensemble is a U-shaped volume-cum-podium with a courtyard open to Southwest. Provisionally, out of the four parcels that constitute the perimeter block, there is a missing parcel on the Southeast tip of the U, which will hopefully abide by the design of the remaining. Given the water table height, the ensemble only has one parking basement. The remaining places are located in a compact 3-storey podium imbedded in the volume, which also accommodates condominium facilities such as gym, swimming pool and laundry, while offering street retail at ground-floor level. Except for the smaller 1-bedroom units, typologically all apartments were devised to benefit from cross ventilation, a cost-effective and energy efficient passive cooling strategy for tropical climates, in addition to having views from both land and sea.

The cantilevered verandas of variable length and depth and exposed beams are the key compositional element, creating a broken down volume with a horizontal dominant that summons the sculptural and structural expressionist ethos of Brutalism. The deep shading and privacy of these verandas, especially towards the courtyard, promises an outdoor spatial fruition that aims to meet the intense social life in the tropics.

Location: Luanda Bay (Plot 38 to 42), Luanda, Angola
Client: Novinvest, CRL (Employees Cooperative of BAI-African Bank of Investment)
Scope: Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Project brief: Residential building with 115 units split in three parcels of 11, 10, and 12-storeys, including common facilities such as kindergarten, swimming pool, fitness centre and street retail
Gross built area: 11,000 sq. m (plus podium and basement parking 7,700 sq. m)
Estimated construction cost: USD 20M
Project status: 2014 (shortlist competition)