

PRO MON TORIO

PRAÇA DE ENTRECAMPOS
LISBON, PORTUGAL
2011–2004

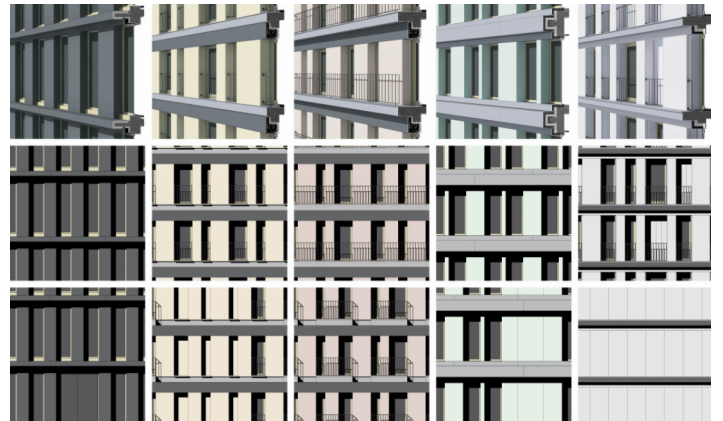
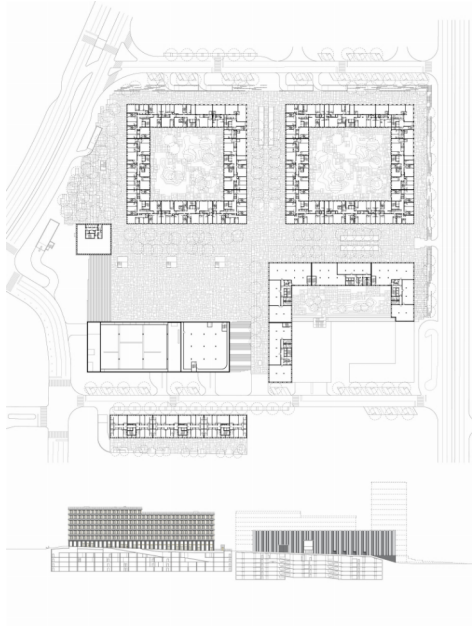
A large-scale residential
and commercial operation
built in the heart of Lisbon CBD

Built next to the campus of the University of Lisbon, the Entrecampos Square is the largest urban regeneration scheme under development in Lisbon since Expo '98. Like so many other cities in Europe, Lisbon has been losing inhabitants to the outer rings of the metropolitan area. In addition to macro-scale factors, like the declining birth rate and the persistence of rent-controlled contracts, the cost of housing in city centres has become prohibitive for young people. In a desperate search for lower mortgages and affordable rents, younger generations have been sadly cast out of the city into the endless suburban sprawl and forced to regionally commute. Lisbon has lost approximately 30% of its population in less than three decades, with its centre left almost exclusively to the waning old and the thriving affluent.

In an attempt to reverse, or at least to lessen these demographics, the municipality's regeneration agency launched a large mixed-use programme in a void left vacant by the relocation of Lisbon's vast wholesale market. Avoiding zoning mono-functionality, the ensemble has been conceived as a truly self-sustainable mixed-use scheme, incorporating the three main spheres of urban life — housing, offices and commerce — thereby allowing its continuous use throughout the day. In addition to offices and street retail, 650 apartments, ranging from studios to three-bedroom units, were allotted to citizens below the age of 40 in a public raffle. An amazing 10,000 people applied for the first 300 available units. The last but equally important element is the Art Forum, the city's new contemporary art centre — a civic building that aims to introduce diversity and inclusiveness to the ensemble by drawing cultural life onto the site. In terms of public use, the project generates a continuous flow from the public sphere of square and streets into the semi-private inner courtyards, also for partial public use.

The plot is situated at a complex junction between the Forças Armadas and Álvaro Pais avenues, two high-density traffic routes at the gateway of Lisbon's CBD, positioned next to its main transportation hub (buses, trains and subway). From a historical and morphological perspective, the site straddles the boundary between the 19th-century perimeter block plan of Ressano Garcia, better known as Avenidas Novas, and an area of erratic zoning of late-1950s Athens-Charter urbanism. Despite the site's steepness, an orthogonal grid generates two large residential blocks and partially completes a third one of offices. These eight-storey blocks form two sides of the large open square fronted by the Art Forum, the civic structure with the highest prominence in the plan. Finally, to accommodate the offices of the city's regeneration agency, a slim tower punctuates the square as an element of exception.

The square is the condenser of the community's social life, with its restaurants, cafés and shops, outdoor cinema, flea market and book fairs, and also accommodates a large underground parking complex. Towards the south, the square forms a long stairway plinth that shelters its pedestrian life from the rigours of peripheral car traffic. Similarly, car circulation around the blocks is confined to the outer perimeter of the ensemble, whilst the inner streets are exclusively for pedestrian use. This pedestrian space flows through archways into the blocks' inner courtyards. Accessible at ground level, these courtyards are to be rented to small offices and open-door businesses, in a self-controlled public space that can be closed after hours.





Location: Avenida das Forças Armadas, Lisbon, Portugal
Client: Empresa Pública de Urbanização de Lisboa (EPUL)
Landscape Architecture: PROAP
Scope of services: Master plan, architecture
Project brief: Mixed-use development with housing (650 units), street retail (12,000 sq. m), offices (24,000 sq. m), art centre (9,000 sq. m) and parking (3,500 places)
Gross floor area: 112,000 sq. m (plus 130,000 sq. m underground parking)
Project status: 2004 (master plan) – 2011 (1st phase built)
Model: Norigem
Photography: Fernando Guerra

