2011 Lisbon Urban Design Summer Program: Between History and Modernity

Vicente del Rio

PhD; professor, CRP.

Jenna Hahn

Senior, BACRP

The CRP Department promoted a one-month summer international urban design program in Lisbon. Students learned about planning and design by visiting a series of great places and towns in Portugal, and by participating in an interdisciplinary studio project with students from a local university. Vicente del Rio, program coordinator, and Jenna Hahn, one of the participating students, write about this unique experience.

From June 18 to July 15, 2011 an interdisciplinary group of nineteen Cal Poly undergraduate students from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design lived and studied in Lisbon, Portugal. Led by City and Regional Planning faculty Vicente del Rio and Zeljka Howard, with the support of the Universidade Lusofona and faculty from their Department of Urbanism, the group was able to immerse in the culture of the city.

The summer program provided the opportunity for students to have an educational and professional experience abroad which resulted in continued enrichment and understanding of design and social elements through a different lens. The main part of the program consisted of an urban design studio at the university campus that lasted the four weeks of the trip. The class was organized into five interdisciplinary teams, each including a student from the Universidade Lusofona Department of Urbanism. All participants agree that the summer program was a positive addition to their education and left with lifelong friends, memories, and a wider breadth of knowledge of the planning and design field.

The program included a series of lectures by local professionals and faculty, as well as visits and studies of projects and places within Lisbon and other cities. Accompanied by local faculty and Portuguese colleagues, the students experienced cityscapes, castles, palaces, parks, museums, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, modern developments, and the warm Portuguese culture. In Lisbon we visited and studied the Alfama and its old moorish castle, Bairro Alto, Baixa Pombalina, Belem, Rossio, and Parque das Nações --the new mixed-use district that resulted from the redevelopment of the Expo 98 site by the riverfront-- among other places. We also visited the cities of Cascais, Obidos, Lourinha, Sintra, and Porto. Working in groups

of two, the students analyzed urban places of their choices, according to a given set of urban design qualities: enclosure and definition, imageability and identity, habitability and human scale, transparency and connectivity, and sociability and usage. Moreover, the students had to draw sketches of places and observe and discuss manifestations of globalization in its different forms.

The urban design portion of the program took place in a studio at the Universidade Lusofona. Students were required to design a mixed-use development for the site of the Feira Popular (Popular Fairgrounds), now demolished. Located in a busy central area and served by important avenues and a multimodal transit station (train, subway, and bus) the site remained vacant for years due to legal issues. The project was challenging for the students because of their immersion in a totally new context for them, exposed to different design regulations and a very different culture than most had been used to, in addition to the short time-frame available to complete the task. Students had to be sensitive to the site's context and history, and to its potential as one of the last large land reserves in the mostly built-out Lisbon. The students went through a typical design process: site

Figure 1: The group at a view point in the Alfama, Lisbon.

See also the book *Lisbon: Between History and Modernity*, edited by Vicente del Rio with J. Hahn, W. Kavadas, D. Rinauro, and N. Tonnemacher (City and Regional Planning Department, Cal Poly / Creativespace; 2011). Available from the CRP department and <www.amazon.com>.

analysis, case-studies, visioning and conceptual design, and a final design proposal including development and parking estimates. The class responded to the site's opportunities and constraints extremely well, and came up with five creative, but feasible, solutions that impressed the local faculty and propriety owners who were invited to the final presentation.

The Project Site

The project site is located along a major axis approximately three miles north from the Baixa District on the Tagus shoreline, in the Entrecampos district. It is approximately twelve acres, the equivalent of three city blocks, and is bordered by two major avenues. The site has historically been occupied by the city's largest cattle market. In 1943, the market was replaced by a fairground, the Feira Popular, which became one of Lisbon's most cherished entertainment places until it was demolished in 2003 when the city decided to sell the property to private development. Because of community opposition and a series of legal battles, the site remains vacant.

The site is surrounded by mixed-use development, including residential, office/service, retail, a major public park, and several notable historic elements such as the historic bull-fighting arena that has been renovated for modern entertainment. To the south, the site is bordered by a multimodal transit station that creates a great development opportunity. Three universities are also nearby which provide a demand for housing, amenities, jobs, and commercial venues. Poor pedestrian connectivity, lack of residential amenities, and safety during night hours from the nearby park were some of the major concerns noted.

The following summaries describe each group's design proposal. They reflect the group's understanding of the site's context and history, local culture and needs, and economic and social aspects gathered from visits to the site, studies of Portuguese urbanism, and lectures from local faculty and professionals.

Campo Central

Tiago Martins (Lusofona), Jordan Cowell (CRP), Emily Gerger (CRP), Kaylyn Keller (LA), and Tessa Salzman (CRP)

The urban design proposal for Campo Central strives to create a thriving public space and a commercial center in the heart of Lisbon. The major elements proposed to generate the desired atmosphere in Campo Central include: public and private plazas, water features, and well landscaped pathways to attract visitors from around the city and make Campo Central an enjoyable place for residents and employees alike. The 8,600 square meters of open public and private space will promote social interaction as well as a safe setting for families in the city. Buildings allocated for commercial use, the easily accessible metro station and semi-private courtyards will create an appropriate setting for an office park and commercial activity.

The development includes approximately 480 residential units, 28,000 square meters of retail and restaurant space and

Figure 2: At the top of the Castle of the Moors in Sintra, with the Pena Palace in the back.

Figure 3: In Oporto, across from a famous local wine cellar.

Figure 4: The project site. (source Google Earth)

Figure 5: Campo Central project proposal.

Figures 6 and 7: Coração de Lisboa project proposal. View from the east showing the train station and the metro entrance on the left lower corner (top). View from above the train station showing the mid-block opening towards the Campo Grande park on the north.

about 47,000 square meters of office space. There are also two on-site public facilities: a community health center and a municipal archive and library for public use. Water features such as a pond and an interactive fountain, as well as a carousel are also included on site.

Coração de Lisboa

Jose Dias (Lusofona), Jeannette Finck (CRP), Alyssa Helper (CRP), Jared Sammet (CRP), and Stephanie Terrazas (LA)

Coração de Lisboa, meaning the Heart of Lisbon, focuses development on the east and west portions of the site, leaving a grand north-south pedestrian open space. The development on the west side will be mixed-use with commercial uses on the first floor and residential on the upper floors. On the east side of the site, the buildings have commercial uses on the first floor and offices of the upper floors and placed strategically to help block noise from the busy avenue to the residents on the west side of the site. The buildings will be angled from Avenida da Republica with increasing setbacks so that the design creates a viewshed into the site from the north and terminates in a landmark office building by the train station. This building will be 15 stories high and will feature a rooftop club/restaurant as a major attraction. Next to this building at the south-eastern corner of the site, a new sunken landscaped plaza will provide an open-air amphitheatre and access to shops and the subway station.

The development includes a total of 38,550 square meters of residential space, 9,600 square meters of retail space and 33,400 square meters of office space. A main artery will connect the pedestrian open space. Along the artery, there will be a variety of activities to attract visitors to the area. Some of these features include a reflective water pond, a skate park, and multiple areas of covered seating. The most important feature is a ferris wheel, which not only bring back the essence of fair, but also provide views of the site and the surrounding region.

Entre Campos Plaza

Chanee Malfavon (CRP), Pedro Pires (Lusofona), Derrick Rinauro (CRP), JennSmitheram (CRP), and Sabrina Wise (LA)

Entre Campos Plaza will be a modern urban development that provides affordable housing for students and families as well as luxurious apartment and upscale corporate office options. The luxury three bedroom apartments offer private parking, a private, landscaped roof courtyard with a swimming pool for residents and views overlooking the main plaza. Offices are located near the Entre Campos multi-modal station providing easy access for business people. All throughout the site, various commercial uses can be found on the first floor of the office and residential buildings.

Promenades and paths will connect pedestrians through relaxing landscaped open spaces and an ample amount of public and private facilities including a plaza with a fountain and a large shade structure with an amphitheater located in the center of the site. Amenities to residents and surrounding businesses will be incorporated throughout the site design including: a small library, daycare, grocery store, and a jogging and exercise circuit.

Entre Laços

Mackenzie Kroon (LA), Nicholas Northrop (Arch), Ismael Santos (Lusofona), and Nate Tonnemacher (CRP)

Inspiration for this design, both in layout and meaning, was drawn from the Portuguese flag. Entre Laços means, “between connections,” and focuses on understanding history and the rich culture it encompasses in order to progress into the future. The design incorporates elements of Portuguese history and culture while including modern elements of style and innovation. The proposal includes mixed-use residential, commercial, service and office buildings, all of which have modern or historical architectural designs. The buildings will give the area more functional options for daily life and will be strategically placed and oriented to respond to the surrounding environment.

The development includes 44,000 square meters of residential units, a 3,250 square meter open space key feature, 1,500 square meters of cultural space, and 21,000 square meters of commercial space on the site. The linear design highlights Portuguese history with mosaic pavings, Moorish fountains, varying open spaces, a pedestrian promenade, and a central plaza with a fountain and seating steps.

Viva Entre Campos

Cesar Celis (LA), Jenna Hahn (CRP), William Kavadas (CRP), Joana Menezes (Lusofona), and Gabrielle de Silva (CRP)

Viva Entre Campos (meaning to live between fields) aims to be a vibrant development uniting tradition with modern innovations. A variety of open spaces will connect uses while celebrating the culture of the area through architectural design, public art and amenities to promote sociability and a sense of place. The development will revitalize economic health by offering a mix of uses, highly desired residential amenities, and strong connections to the entirety of Lisbon. The name represents the new life that will be brought back to the area and invites people to live, work and play in Entre Campos. One main goal in designing Viva Entre Campos was to create a development that was both aesthetically pleasing as well as environmentally conscious. In order to reduce the development’s carbon footprint Viva Entre Campos incorporates several sustainable design elements that include: the strategic layout of buildings to provide for natural ventilation and lighting, solar panels, native plants, permeable pavers, and public transportation options.

Viva Entre Campos proposes 384 new housing units including 140 dedicated to student housing. The development is comprised of mostly mixed-use buildings to offer 47,000 square meters of office and retail space to help revitalize use of the site. In order to serve the demand for services in a crowded city, various services and amenities are scattered throughout the site including: a pool, public and private open space, a playground, a gym, parking, tiered balconies and rooftop gardens, a movie theater, a carousel, a hotel, a grocery store, and access to public transportation options.

Figure 4: Entre Campos Plaza project proposal.

Figure 5: Entre Laços project proposal.

Figure 6: Viva Entre Campos project proposal.

Castle of the Moors, Sintra; by Vicente del Rio.

Tower of Belem, Lisbon; by Jenna Hahn, CRP.

Alfama, Lisbon; by Cesar Celis, LA.

Bairro Alvalade, Lisbon; by William Kavadas.

Street in Obidos; by Jenna Hahn, CRP.

Alleyway, Sintra; by Jordan Cowell, CRP.

Rossio Square, Lisbon.