

Walk to Plan, Plan to Walk: 3rd International Summer Workshop in Urban Design, Lisbon - Summer 2022

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In the Summer of 2022, the authors resumed the successful series of urban design summer workshops in Lisbon, Portugal where the CRP Department has a long-established relationship with the Urbanism program at the Universidade Lusófona. This was the workshop's third iteration and had 21 participating students (19 from Cal Poly and 2 from Lisbon). The following lines is a brief description of the workshop's two intensive weeks.

After two years of suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shutdown of international traveling, this past summer we were able to resume the International Urban Design Workshops series at the Universidade Lusófona (UL) in Lisbon.¹ This third iteration of this two-week workshop happened from Monday, June 20 to Friday, July 1, 2022, including 21 students: 19 were juniors and seniors from Cal Poly (18 from City and Regional Planning and from Landscape Architecture), and 2 were master students from the UL. Coordinated and taught by professors Vicente del Rio (Cal Poly) and Diogo Mateus (UF), the group was assisted by Walber Angeline, an architect from Brazil studying towards his Ph.D. in Urbanism at the UL. Having self-organized in small groups, the students stayed in short-term rentals within walking distance or a short subway ride from campus.

On the first day, after the customary welcome by the workshop coordinators and the university rector, architect urbanist Mario Moutinho, the class was presented with their challenge: coming up with visions for how to expand the campus towards an adjacent area that would almost double its size, creating an opportunity to build new facilities and serve better its current 13,000 students (Figure 1). Having suffered from planning blight and the uncertainties caused by transportation plans, the area contains dirt parking lots (some rented by the university), vacant lots, and derelict buildings. Ideas from the workshop could potentially kick-start the development of a much-needed Plano de Pormenor—the Portuguese equivalent of a Specific Plan—and help solve a real need of the university.

Following the welcoming session, the students were guided on a walk through the campus and the project site for their first impressions. After lunch at one of the campus restaurants, the class enjoyed a visit to the Museum of the City of Lisbon where

Mr. Paulo Fernandes, one of the museum's curators, showed us several historical artifacts from the city's several layers of history since pre-Roman times and talked about its evolution by a room-sized model of Lisbon before its destruction by the 1755 earthquake and tsunami (Figure 2). Next, during a visit to CIU, the city's center for urban information and research run by Dr. Ana Marçal, the students enjoyed seeing their current exhibits and a large-size model of present-day Lisbon (Figure 3). They were also given a presentation on the city's planning efforts until recent days by Mr. Vasco Melo, one of the planners responsible for the district where the university campus and the project site are located. The first day ended with the students enjoying Lisbon's wide variety of food and nightlife options.

Repeating the success of the two preceding workshops, in 2022 we focused on exploratory walking as a fundamental method to study the city and understanding what makes places special, and on using those studies as a base for planning and design goals. As a foundation for this exploration, the class studied a text about urbanity, the flâneur as a method of analysis, and the importance of visual qualities in urban design.² The method was inspired by Walter Benjamin's concept of the flâneur as he/she who wanders and experiences the city, immersed in the anonymity of its crowds and spaces, as a method of analysis of the urban condition. For the next three days and divided into small teams for the rest of the workshop, the students were guided on walks throughout Lisbon in areas representing different historical periods and planning/design paradigms (Figure 3). The teams were able to spend a couple of hours in each to wander around, observe, sketch, and analyze

¹ Details about the workshops at <https://www.ud-workshop-lisbon.net/>

² del Rio, V. (2015). Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design. *FOCUS 12*, pp. 66-72.

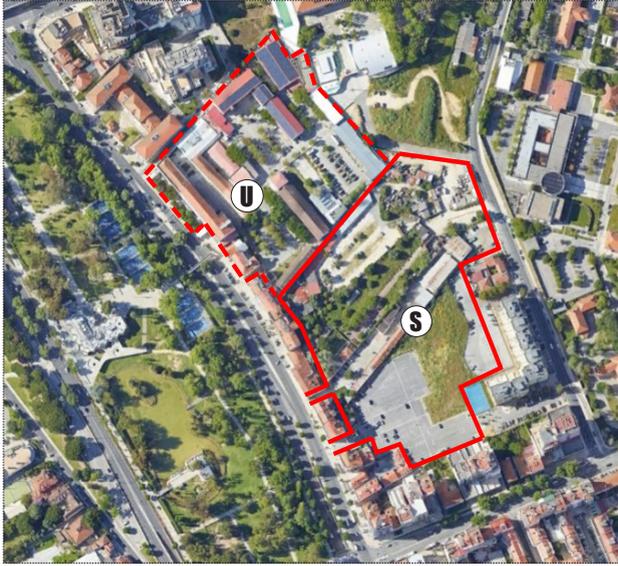


Figure 1: The university campus (U) and the project site (S).



Figure 2: The class at the City of Lisbon Museum looking at the model of the city before the 1755 earthquake and tsunami.

Figure 3: During one of the study walks, the students posed in front of a street car at Elevador da Bica, connecting the Chiado to the riverfront.



their urban design qualities. Students looked into and reported on seven urban design qualities: complexity and surprise, vitality and robustness, enclosure and linkages, transparency and vistas, legibility and coherence, architectural richness, and personalization and community values. In one of these walks, the class had architect Filipa Antunes, a teacher at UL, conduct an urban sketching session at one of Lisbon's many picturesque sites (Figure 4).

On Friday of the first week and for the rest of the workshop the teams carried on with a design charette that included: a) a brief inventory and SWOT analysis of the project site and its context, b) development visions and goals, site plan diagrams, and design concepts (see the accompanying figures for selected examples of the teams' ideas). The teams based the development of their visions and ideas on their walking studies and a preliminary program including functions (office, classroom, student, parking needs, etc) and their approximate square footage previously developed by Vicente del Rio and UL rector Mario Moutinho. On Saturday the students were taken by Vicente del Rio on an optional trip to Sintra to visit the city's quaint medieval downtown, the Moorish Castle (early 11th century, and the Sintra (12th century) and Pena (late 19th century) national palaces.

The workshop culminated with each team presenting a Powerpoint and a poster with their ideas and proposals to the workshop coordinators and a panel of guests, including rector Mario Moutinho, planner Vasco Melo, architect José Lobato Osório, anthropologist Marluci Medeiros, and architect and faculty Pedro Ressano Garcia who is presently in charge of redesigning the current campus. One month later, the teams presented full reports including the results of the walking analysis, project development, and final ideas.

Notwithstanding the quick pace of the workshop and the design charette, the student proposals included interesting and sound design ideas, envisioning feasible possibilities for the expansion of the UL campus. Having Lisbon as a learning laboratory with its multitude of fascinating, walkable, and lively places, together with a unique planning/design challenge, energized the students immensely, presented them with a myriad of learning opportunities, and resulted in a successful academic experience that will certainly mark every participant's life. The International Urban Design Workshops series at Lisbon's Universidade Lusófona (UL) will continue in 2023 with a new design challenge and, hopefully, with another great group of Cal Poly and international students.

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Figure 4: The sketching session at Largo do Carmo led by Filipa Antunes. Left: sketch by Thomas Vernet; right: students and V. del Rio showing their sketched of the same view.



Figure 5: On the last day of the workshop, the student teams presenting their proposals (powerpoints and posters) to a panel of guests including the university rector.

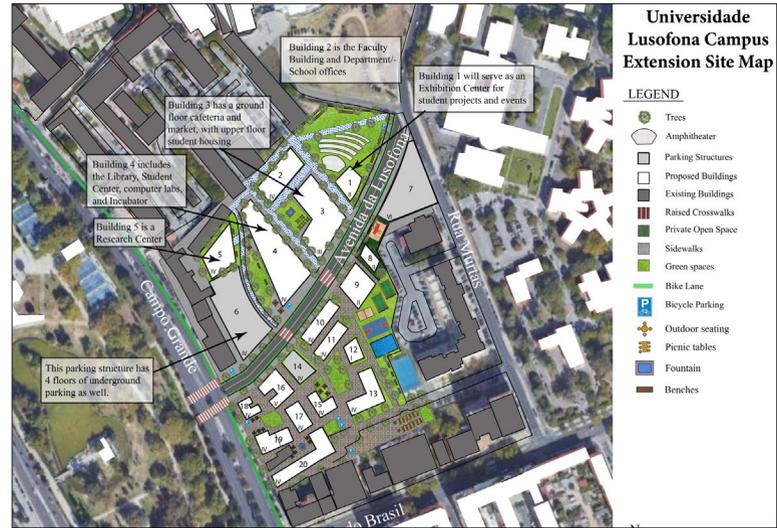


Figure 7: Illustrative site plan for the campus expansion. By E. Rosner, A. Cazares & E. Fatuda.

Figure 6: Proposal for enhancing the connectivity between the campus and Campo Grande park through a new street design. By A. Weizer, E. LaDue & S. Toner.

