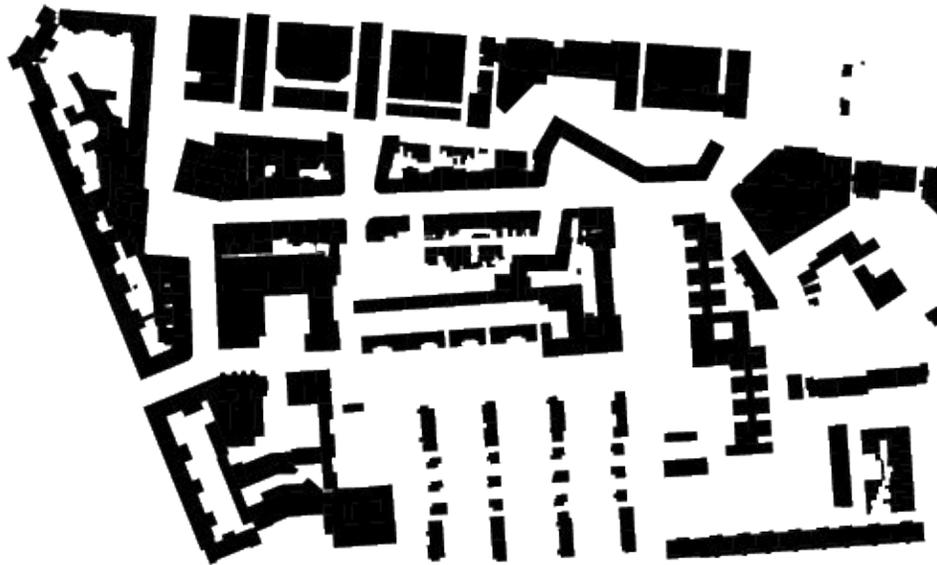




# Urban Design:

## Walk, Experience, Design

*Observation and Analysis: ALVALADE*



## **Task 1\_ Observation**

# Observation

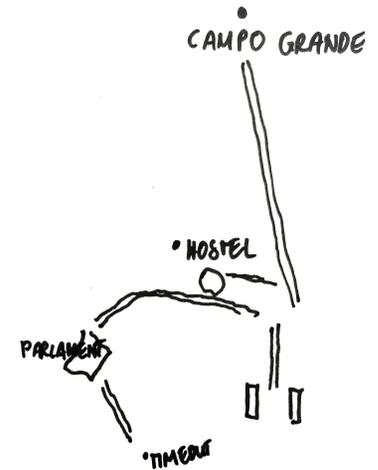
## *Legibility and Coherence*

As an outsider of town, the first thing considered in perception is the awareness of physical form in order to create a mental map. How fast can central Lisbon be visually processed and internalized?

Generally speaking, Lisbon is an organic shaped web that interconnects paths and streets with plazas and important buildings. Many small paths in the historic center are nestled into the natural hilly geography and far more legible for pedestrians than for vehicles. Continuous housing blocks enclose the streets and can confuse an outsider who has to use the topography and sun orientation to find his way to the nodes. These are defined by plazas that are usually connected to outstanding buildings like a church with a historical significance. They serve as focal points for orientation and coherence between the pattern of building types.

Considering not only the historical part but the functional site of Lisbon which is daily used by inhabitants as well as tourists. Zooming into a smaller scale the train station serves as a complex overlay of activity patterns that need to be visually ordered. Transparency is a key element in order to orientate.

However, in recent times the building scale is not depended on its usage anymore, in the housing developments of the '98 exhibition site freestanding apartment blocks are lined up in a sprawling order. In terms of street organization and open space between the building the place is very legible, but at the same time it creates a monotonous image that does not invite one to explore the area.



*Mental Map after a few days*



*Gare do Oriente by Calatrava*



*Small path to Castelo de S. Jorge*



*Housing Block at the '98 Expo site*

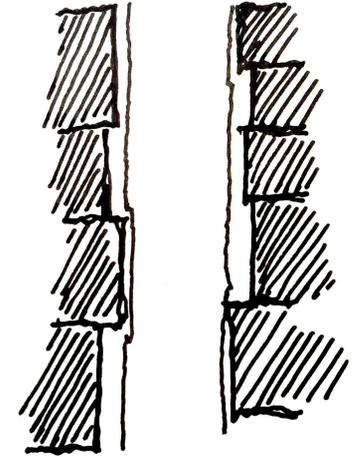
# Observation

## *Complexity and Stimuli of Sense*

There is no denying the fact that Lisbon is a complex city that requires full attention of the tourist when exploring the historic parts. How the townscape is perceived is dependent on cultural background, for the American the organic growth it is much more unfamiliar than for the European citizen. Especially on street nodes the small line between visual chaos and richness of diversity can stress or satisfy the foreign explorer. The natural human scale of the historic townscape stimulates our sense of rhyme and variety.

Because of the overwhelming impression of colors and ornamentation of the facade the eye has to differentiate between visual interesting points. As a result it is exciting to wander around and absorb the impression. However if you just want to go from point A to point B city pattern can distract one from the actual path, one has to be more conscious of his way, sharing the small streets with many tourists and cars.

At one point everyone has to escape the busy town center with its sense of enclosure and relax their eyes in a more calm environment. The waterfront at the 98' Expo site. Generally experienced as a straight line with grand vistas at the sea front and differing landscape architecture. The wide setbacks of the buildings allow the observer to experience the site more or less as an open field



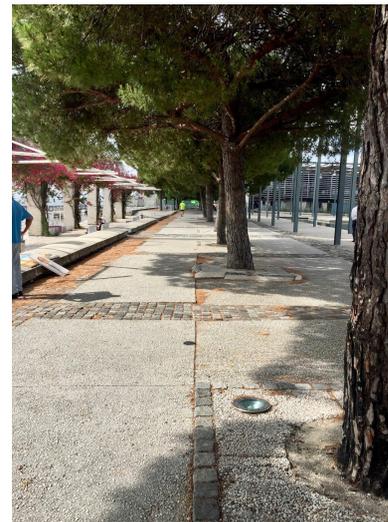
*Enclosed blocks and small pedestrian paths*



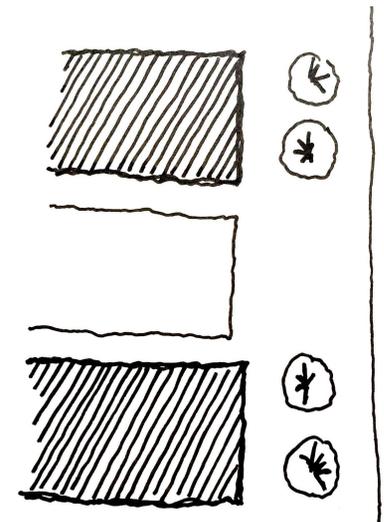
*Central street scape*



*Wide vistas at the Oceanarium*



*Waterfront walkway*



*Wide pedestrian paths and open field view*

# Observation

## *Transparency and Vistas*

Historic Lisbon was constructed on a valley surrounded by many hills that overlook the Tagus River and estuary. Lisbon has winding streets, small corridors, many corners, edges and incredible monuments made centuries ago. These factors lead Lisbon to have a plethora of vistas scattered throughout the city. In the Alfama neighborhood one can find many vistas. As you round any corner there is a possibility of an incredible vista to appear with views of the river, across the valley, or of grand monuments. A flaneur will wonder through the streets attaining glimpses of far off places that may attract him to change his path and try to get a more expansive look at the view. With so many vistas throughout the city one will never know when they may come upon a view of a far distant place.



*Vista of the Tagus River taken from R. de Santiago in the Alfama neighborhood.*



*Picture of shopping street in Lisbon. Lots of windows and transparent shop fronts. Strong connection between private and public space*

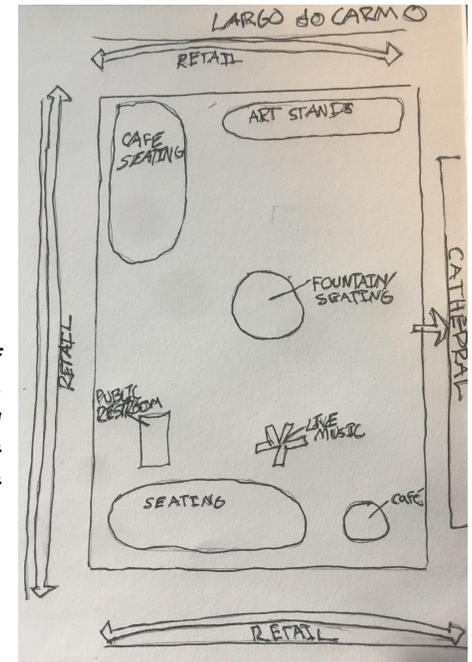
Lisbon's traditional style buildings provides a strong connection between public and private spaces. They are littered with windows looking over the streets. Most of the restaurants and store fronts have large glass windows for people to see the happenings inside, as well as, for those inside to see what's happening outside. Having outdoor seating on the street adds to the strong connection between the outside and inside. Transparent buildings not only provide engaging pedestrian travel, but also increase the sense of safety with so many eyes on the street watching.. Historic Lisbon is a wonderful example of how transparent buildings and a multitude of vistas can help provide an incredible pedestrian experience.

# Observation

## *Vitality and Robustness*

When one is walking in the neighborhoods around the Parca do Comercio the streets and plazas are packed with people and activities. The streets are lined with a diversity of shops, restaurants, and cafes, all selling different products and meals. Many times there are street vendors and performers. As you walk down the street you are constantly engaged with the changing activities around you. Eventually, as you walk you will come upon one of the many plazas. I noticed that almost all plazas contained at least one cafe and a large center piece that attracted people to sit on and enjoy the goings on in the plaza. Sometimes there was live music happening, which would attract a crowd to stand around and enjoy. The Plazas were surrounded by mixed use buildings with shops on the first floor and street vendors would also be found in the plaza. From the shops, to the music, to the cafes, the plazas and streets in historic Lisbon were very robust and had a strong sense of vitality.

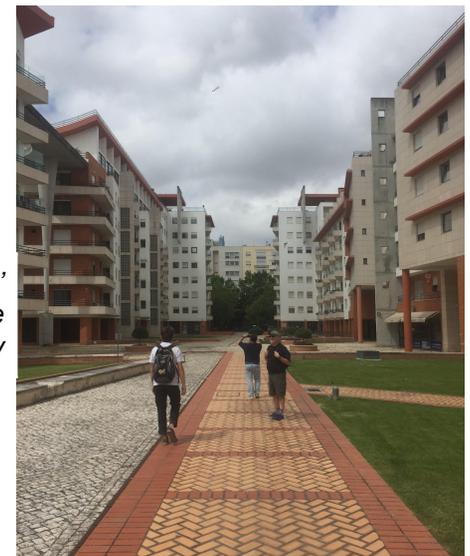
When we traveled to the housing around the 98' Expo we found that this area lacked places with strong robustness or perception of vitality. We would come upon a plaza between a housing development and there would be few to no people out in the plaza. There were many problems with the plazas, but a major issue was they lacked having multiple types of activities happening, if any activities at all. Some would just have one small cafe or just a couple of small shops. With little activities and lack of people around, the plazas in this part of Lisbon lacked robustness or sense of vitality. The plazas were barren and were a very unpleasant place to be.



*Site Plan of Largo do Carmo Plaza and all the different activities that make it such a robust place.*



*Picture of Plaza Largo Do Carmo*



*Housing development near 98' expo. Lack of activities decrease robustness and sense of vitality*

# Observation

## *Enclosure and Linkages*

The Alfama neighborhood of Lisbon is defined by an urban form language with a strong sense of enclosure and linkages. The wandering flaneur can explore plazas and enclosed areas with clear edges and visible entrances. In that matter the space can be overseen and one is in control of its urban surrounding which can make the traveler more comfortable. The building typology is in harmony with the human scale and provides a good sense of enclosure. No plazas found in the neighborhood where to large and felt uncomfortable. The roads and walkway were clearly defined and connected the plazas.

In contrast the 98' Expo site and its surrounding area lacks enclosure and linkages. The distance between the building is designed to large to create a sense of streetscape. Furthermore the building facade are monotonous which gives the optical illusion of the buildings being even wider. The similarity between streetscapes and plazas creates a confusing state of imbalance. Furthermore links between paths and plazas were separated by elevated stairs that hide the above resulting in a disconnecting state.

Considering all of the above Lisbon is faced with a duality of historic human scale and experimental modernism more focused on functionality than comfort. In the same matter it is a result of the tabula rasa - the empty space that has to be designed in contrast to the natural growth of a city center.



*Picture taken in the Alfama Neighborhood. Has clear edges and linkages. Provides good sense of enclosure and safety.*



*Housing development near 98' expo. Very large scale has no clear linkages and so large provides bad sense of enclosure*

# Observation

## *Architectural Richness*



Lisbon's historic neighborhoods have a distinct architecture, distinguishable by features such as red tiled roofs and iron guarded balconies, as seen below in an area between the Baixa and Alfama districts. Many buildings make use of tiles, like the beautifully polished example below on a skinny street in Alfama. Thanks to the hilly topography of the old city, views from high points reveal layers upon layers of buildings in this style, punctuated by grand squares with taller monuments and churches.

These squares are paved with the city's iconic limestone sidewalks but also feature black stones forming orderly mosaics. The late 19th and 20th century areas of Lisbon, located North of the historic neighborhoods and where many of the metro lines intersect with each other, there is also beautiful architecture. Old and new buildings are magnificently juxtaposed next to each other, though the urban design is not as inviting or comfortable here because of the wide, busy avenues. In Parque das Nações, the architecture often feels dull and imposing due to large blank walls, especially at the street level which hurts street life. Hiding these walls with greenery could improve this, though more entrances, transparency, and detail would improve the architectural richness here more.



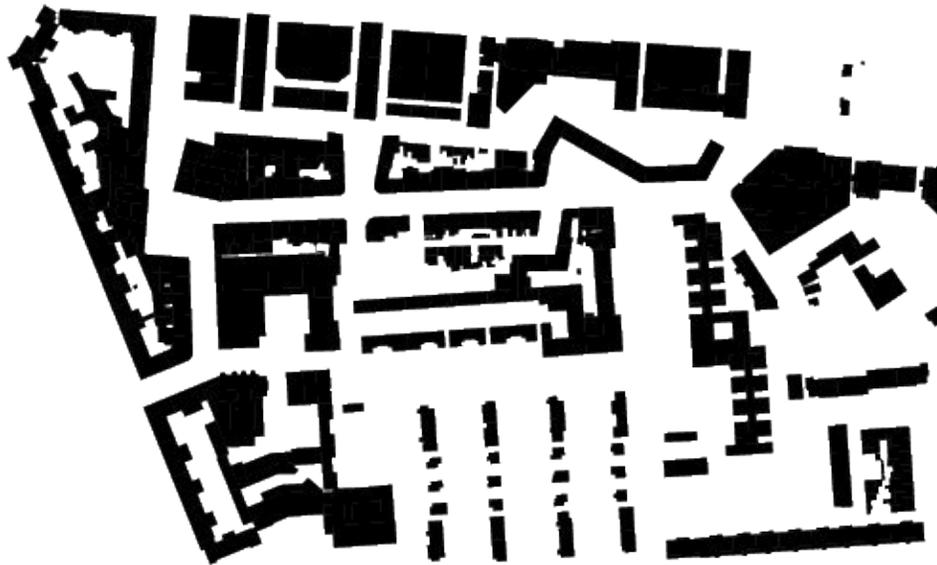
# Observation

## *Personalization and Community Values*



Two forms of visualization by residents in the urban space of Lisbon where found: The practical use of balconies and window fronts and the use of street art. In Lisbon graffiti elements are not a form of violation, but a expression of urban structure in order to beautify and appreciate the decay of facades or unpleasant elements. In the Alfama neighborhood street art personalizes intentionally torn down buildings. However, there is a thin line between peasant street art and disorienting one. It can brighten up the small run down paths, but it can also enhance the “shady” character.





## **Task 2\_ Analysis**

# Analysis

Mapping of Route



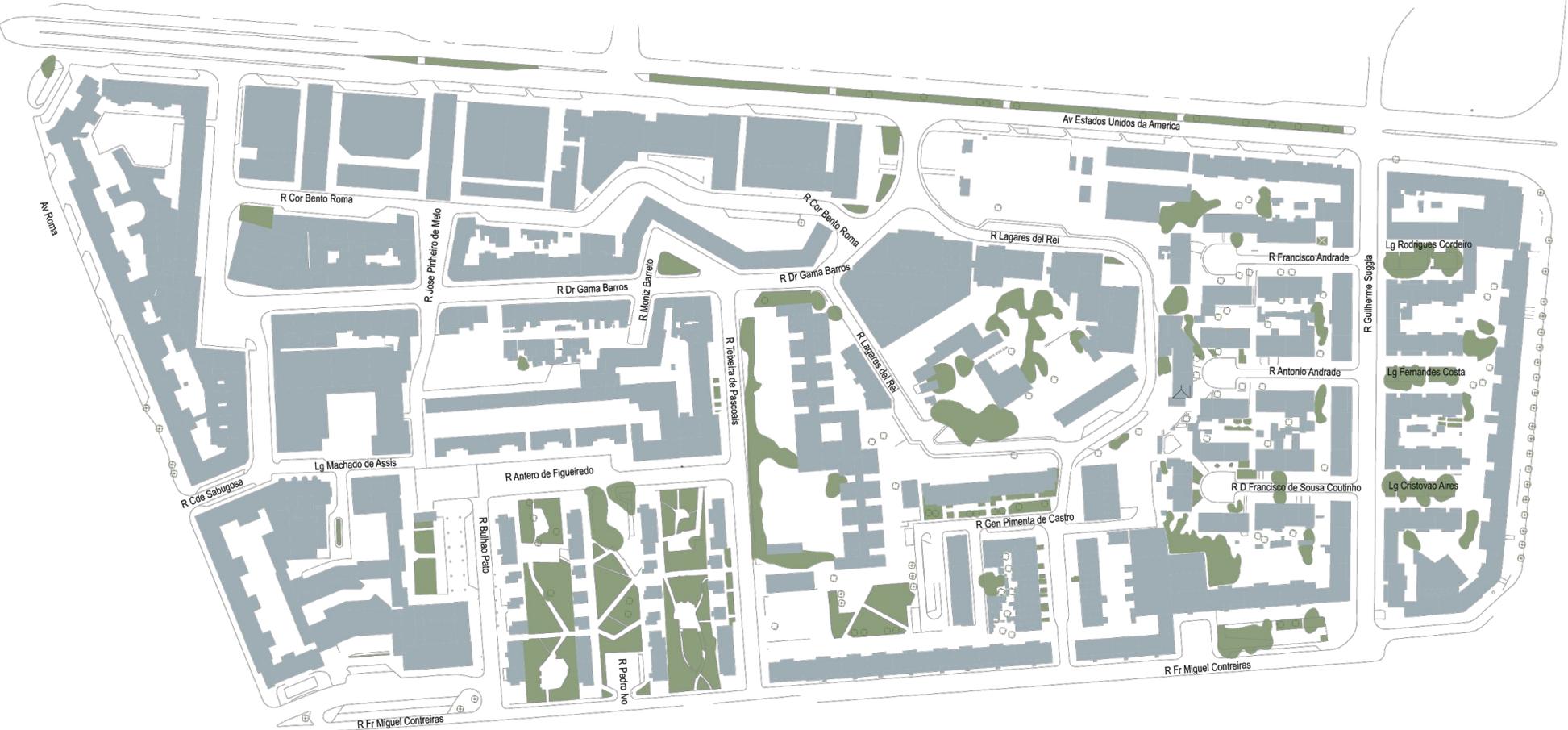
LEGEND

- Travel Path 
- Picture Location 

# Analysis

## Mapping

Relationship: building mass, sealed ground and green areas



# Analysis

## Challenges

### 1. Pedestrian linkages and pathways

a.

Pathways are sometimes hidden and unclear where they lead.

b.

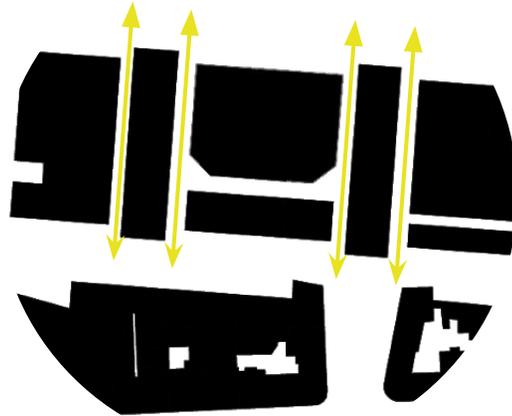
No clear pedestrian route between certain areas was found.

c.

Pathways were unpaved and overgrown.

d.

Crosswalks and safe crossing areas are lacking in many streets



Pathways that were exclusively designed for pedestrians tend to be hidden or have unclear ends. In one example (9) the path was not paved but showed evidence of its usage - more like a desired path. In other examples (2/3) linkages between two street are exist and in use for the residents living in the huge apartment blocks. Lacking clear signage and safety (eg. through lights in the night) it is not a common shortcut.

Generally speaking pedestrian paths seem not to be treated the same way as streets even though they are important for a neighborhood lacking of parking spots close to your apartment.



# Analysis

## Challenges

### 2. Parking demand and Walkability

a. Provide pedestrian space without giving up to much parking.

b. Current parking infringes on pedestrian walkway.

It was verbally articulated by the representative parking is a big problem on the study site. The lack of parking space is overall visible with streets lined up with cars even on places infringing with pedestrian pathways while others take up potential community sites. Creating more safe parking situations would not only create a better driving circulation, but also make space for safe pedestrian paths.



# Analysis

## Challenges

### 2. Building Types

**a.** Buildings vary in size, style, and form even when right next to each other

**b.** No coherence throughout the neighborhood of buildings

In the first glimpse the study site seems monotonous when it comes to building typology, but with a deeper look several urban forms were found. At one point large multi story buildings stand right next to small scale row houses giving the site a interesting dynamic in scale and streetscape. Considering social differences that might appear between the different residents it is crucial to think about how interaction can happen in a positive way. Generally speaking no coherence of style was found throughout the neighborhood. The facades have different colors and materials, the typical mosaic stands right next to the pink colored one. That interplay together with a lot of little offset create an interesting streetscape.



# Analysis

## Opportunities

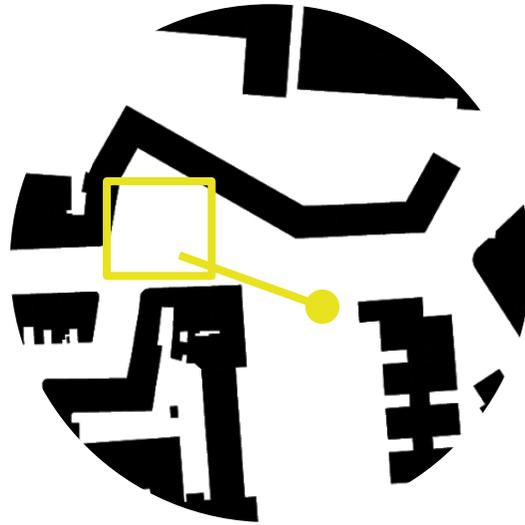
### 1. Many underutilized empty spaces

a.

Spaces easily able to be changed or adapted to better serve the community.

b.

Multiple plazas left empty with little to no activities but in good locations.



The many underutilized spaces are an opportunity to create attractive outdoor space for the residents. The empty plaza (1) is a result of unattractive open space -there is basically nothing to do. Furthermore small spaces left like the corner next to the school (6) have the chance to enhance their social importance with the surrounding. In order to create more livable space between housing blocks, empty concrete spaces (15) could become safe spaces for children to play.



# Analysis

## Opportunities

### 2. Abundance of Residencies

a.

Multi-family complexes show evidence of demographic diversity throughout project area.

b.

Large scale apartment buildings indicate density



Even though huge housing blocks surround the streetscape we did not see a lot of residents outside. There are many large multi-family residents and almost every building in our site has some sort of housing element to them. On the site people tend to hide in their apartments or fences, interaction with other residents seems not desired. Assuming the people tend to leave the site for recreation, the lack of recreational space could be a change to improve their relationship with their neighbors.

# Analysis

## Opportunities

### 2. Ability to improve pedestrian walkability and safety

**a.** Pedestrian pathways need simple improvement in groundwork and safety

**b.** Liability and clear links between the connection

Last but not least the pedestrian walkability and safety needs to improve in the area. Many of the pedestrian pathways are in poor condition and need features to enhance safety. With a glimpse into the future other major cities create transformable streets, today made for the car, but with the ability to become a pedestrian dominated path. In the first place a certain amount of liability would already improve the flaneur experience on the site.





# **TASK 3\_ Design for Alvalade**

# Design

## *Vision Statement and Goals*

The diversity in age and needs challenges the design site located in Alvalade. It is a place where families live, kids go to school and their daily routines takes place.

### **How can their lives be improved?**

Envisioning an active environment allowing the residents to increase their outdoor activities and community interaction. Feeling welcomed in your own neighborhood is a crucial part of growing up. Pedestrian pathways and active social spaces will allow residents to enjoy their time outside and with other community members more. Alvalade should not be a place to live by second choice but an attractive community that rivals the historic center of Lisbon.

**1.**

Increase pedestrian movement through the improvement of **pathways** and **connections**.

**2.**

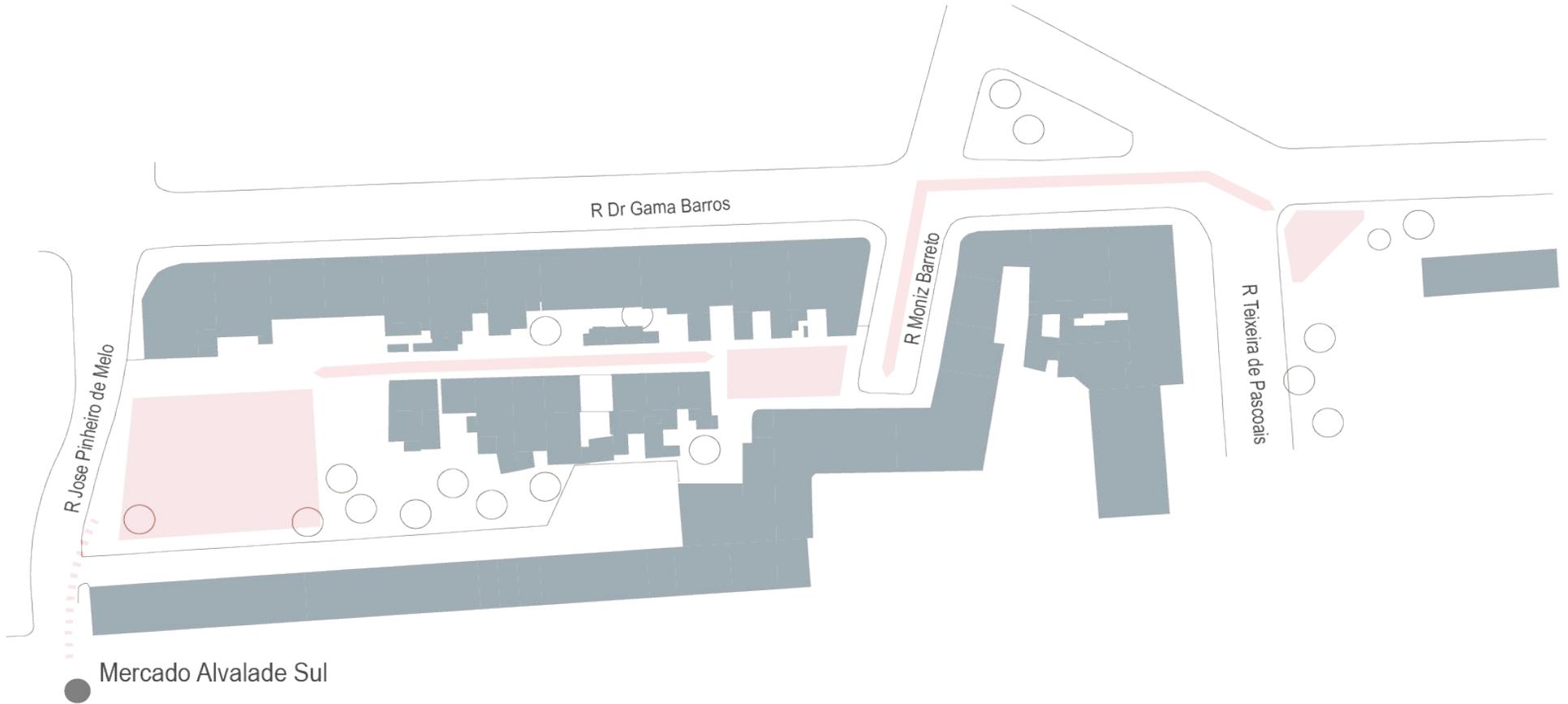
Create walkable lanes and crossings while still providing **adequate parking**.

**3.**

**Activate dead spaces** that are not in use right now.

# Design

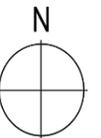
*Creating and interconnected Pedestrian Path*



# Design

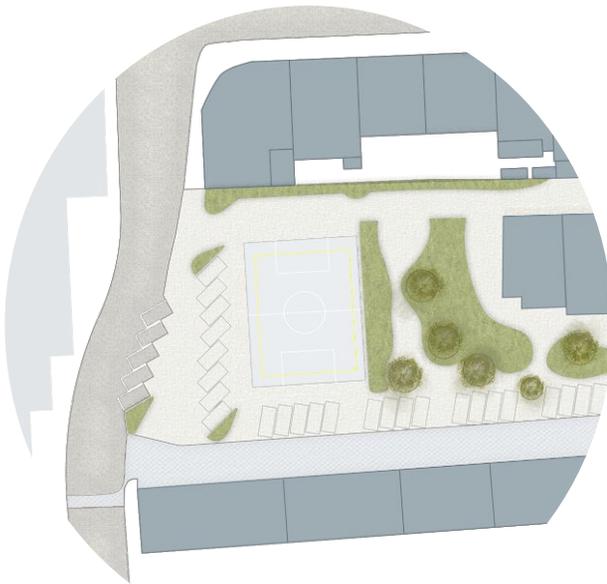
## Masterplan

*Improving the pedestrian circulation in a continuous matter*



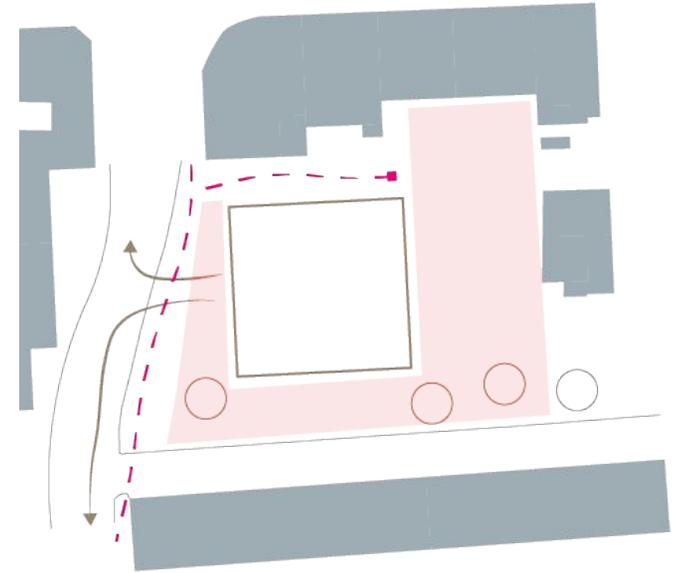
# Design

## *Rethinking the quality of parking*



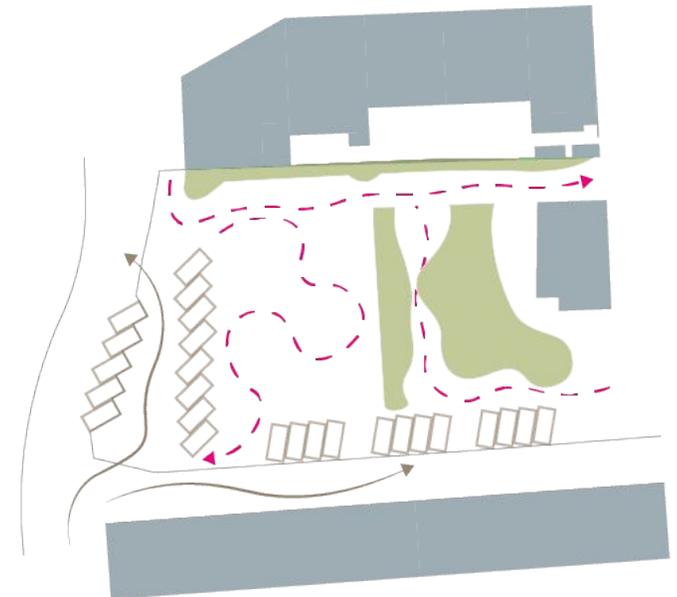
### **before Situation**

Pedestrian circulation overlaps with Parking space entry/exit. Moreover the pavement is too wide in relation to its use. The Parking spot is surrounded by undeveloped ground and vacant buildings on the east side.



### **design proposal**

Car parking moves to the street side and circulates as a one way path. More parking is added to the bottom road. The undeveloped space becomes a recreational quality and the parking spot a multifunctional playground

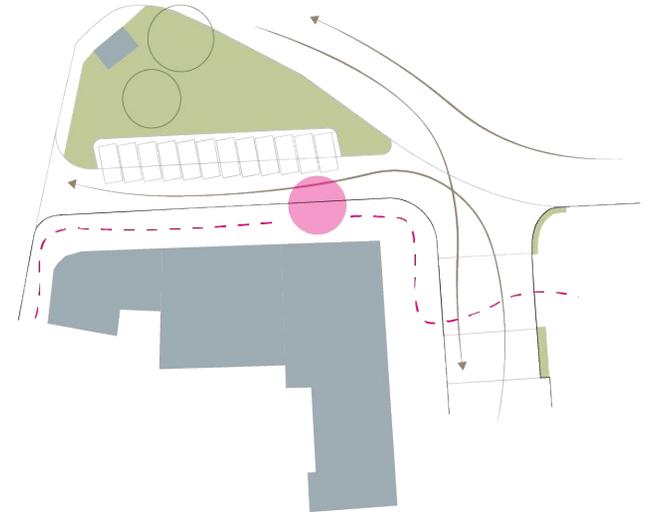
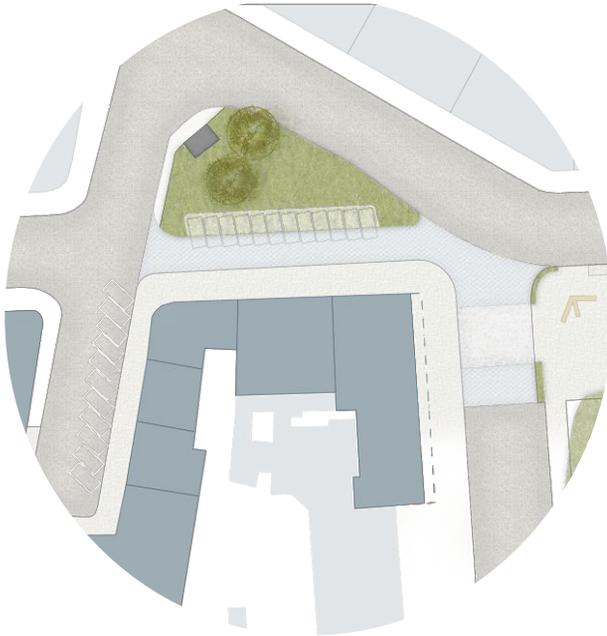


# Design

## Zoom to Street Redevelopment

### circulation proposal

Changing the street pattern at parts will calm the driving speed down. Furthermore it marks the drop off/on zone for the school. The Street Island gets moved more into the street to narrow it down so the traffic flow moves around it. The smaller street becomes a one way parking option.



### Inspired by R. Barão de Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil

On Rua Doutor Gama Barros cars tend to speed even though the street is right around the corner. To slow them down and increase parking, the triangular green island is extended to narrow down the street. When the parking demand decreases the street can be transformed in a pedestrian walkway.



**Google street view: R. Barão de Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil**  
(source: Urb-i/Google Street View)

# Design

## Street redevelopment

### Current Situation



### Future Development



# Design

## *New Typology*

### Housing

Destructing the vacant building in the block center could make space for row housing as it can be found in the south/east of the quarter.

On top of the current parking structures in the south more housing could be developed since the surrounding could tolerate more density.

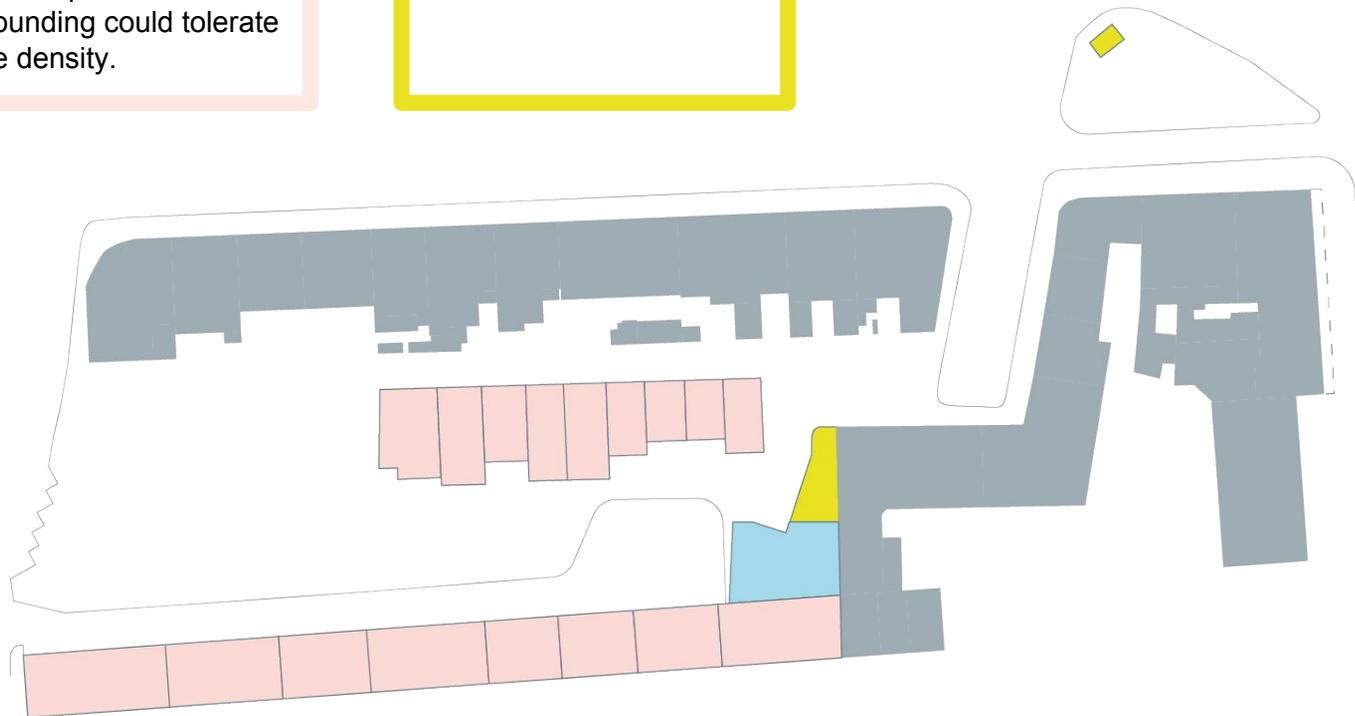
### Retail

On the traffic island a small kiosk could complement the area.

The south corner building that is currently vacant could be renewed as a commercial building on street level to life up the plaza.

### Community

The building in the south corner is because of its location and orientation not ideal for housing or commercial use. Destructing the current building could offer the city new opportunities for a community.



# Design

## *A new plaza*

In the center of the new continuous path connecting the new playground and the school a new plaza will act as a meeting point for residents. In the current situation the two shops on the south edge are vacant. The cafe at the corner is cramping his outdoor chairs to the narrow pathway while the plaza is used for parking, even though its ground pattern refers to a pedestrian use.

Plants and trees will prevent people from parking on the plaza and moreover spend shade. Wooden decks can provide generous seating space for the cafe or small events. The vacant buildings could be demolished and instead a new community center and a small retail shop would revive the area.



# Design

## *Improving children's safety*

This corner has the main entrance into the neighborhoods only school. We saw this as an amazing opportunity to create an active public space. It would be a perfect place for parents to wait for their children after school or a place for the kids to socialize after class.

The site contains two urban furniture pieces. An L shaped double-sided bench would be the main seating area. Then there would be a tiered seating piece as well. The plan would provide an area for motorcycle parking and also have more prominent raised crosswalks. The raised crosswalks would provide safe linkages into the entrance of the school. Overall, it would take an underutilized, empty space and turn it into a active space for all ages.

