

research book

# by the margins

passages & permanences in the  
outskirts of são paulo

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Support



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## a prelude

By the margins of Guarapiranga, a monumental reservoir in the south of São Paulo, Brazil, lies an abandoned leisure club from the 1960s. Hidden behind high walls, the decaying concrete structure can be seen through glimpses for those that pass by the busy avenue that surrounds the waterfront. The complex itself, formerly called Santapaula Yacht Club, also has an impressive monumental scale and a deep symbolism behind its history.

With a built area of over 20.000m², it was once one of the largest private country clubs of Latin America with a privileged position in the most upscale balneary of the booming metropolis. Originally designed to be a hotel, its unfinished structure was renovated in the early 1960s by renowned architect Vilanova Artigas, only to fall into decline two decades later and be closed for good.

In the meanwhile, the idyllic Guarapiranga went through a quick and overwhelming urbanization process, abandoning its spot as the exclusive getaway they were in the first half of the 20th Century and becoming a typical suburban area of São Paulo. Nowadays, the deep social inequality and urban problems that exist in Brazil are now also reflected in the shores of the reservoir.

However, when I recalled the two visits I took to Guarapiranga, I became immediately captivated by the monumentality of the place and the endless potential the site of the former Santapaula club held. Suspended between past significance, a complex present and future possibility, when I joined the Explore Lab graduation studio I was already particularly drawn to this place.

Furthermore, from all the possible approaches to the diverse layers of the former leisure complex and the city that surrounds it, I felt particularly drawn to better understand it through the scope of passages and permanences, both spatially —through the ways we navigate and occupy the urban landscape—but also temporally, influenced by the layers of heritage and meaning attributed (or not) to a place over time.

An approach that was not completely foreign to me. For my previous graduation project at the University of São Paulo, I investigated the spatial and temporal aspects of passages and permanences in the context of abandoned movie theaters in São Paulo's city center. For this project at TU Delft, I felt intrigued to shift my focus toward an area that held a lesser protagonism: the outskirts.

Although I had lived in São Paulo for three years—a city whose metropolitan population surpasses that of the entire Netherlands—much of its vast

territory still felt unfamiliar. This sense of estrangement is perhaps a reflection of the city’s expanded urban fabric, which, having grown in a fast and uncontrolled manner throughout the 20th century, appears to have redefined its own patterns of passages and permanences multiple times over the decades.

Moreover, my interest lies in understanding how these two forces can come together to shape meaningful urban public spaces—what has been named “spaces of urbanity.” Such places possess a high spatial quality for the flourishing of urban life, naturally inviting people to take action in everyday life through gatherings, interactions and exchanges. Most importantly, I wondered how this sense of urbanity plays out in the outskirts of the city—areas that urban planning researcher Regina Meyer defined as victims of a process of “urbanization without urbanity”.

With these ideas in mind, a central research question began to take shape: “In the context of spatial practices in the outskirts of São Paulo, how can the dynamics between spaces of passage and spaces of permanence create affordances for urbanity?”

In a city like São Paulo, the subject of passages and permanences is nuanced with diverse layers, many of them seemingly invisible at first and marked by socio-political tensions that demand careful and thoughtful interpretation. From the wide array of literature, data, and references related to the city, one of the most significant challenges proved to be the process of curating and structuring them in a coherent way with a strong connection to the theme.

Furthermore, in the international context of TU Delft, it became essential to provide sufficient contextual background for an audience that may not be familiar with São Paulo’s urban conditions or socio-spatial dynamics. A condition that required a careful balance between specificity and accessibility. With these considerations in mind, the research was consolidated around five main branches, each explored through different methodological approaches. These strands are presented across the five essays that compose the research paper, each contributing to a layered understanding of the relationship between passages, permanences, and urbanity:

*A Theme* – This section involved a review of key literature on the concepts of passages, permanences, and urbanity, forming the theoretical foundation of the research.

*A Context* – Here, an exploration of the evolution of passages and permanences in São Paulo and its outskirts is developed, setting a broader backdrop for the study.

*A Case Study* – Using the case study of Parque da Juventude as an example of a consolidated public space in São Paulo, a graphic analysis was used as a tool to

investigate how design can shape spatial practices of passage and permanence in the outskirts setting.

*A Place* – In this part, a socio-cultural analysis and historical study on the conditions of the Guarapiranga Reservoir area was developed.

*A Site* – Finally, the study zooms in on the former Santa Paula Club, examining the architectural project by Vilanova Artigas and the layered history of the site itself.

Together, these five strands aimed to build a comprehensive and situated understanding of how spatial dynamics of passages and permanences can incentivize, or hinder, urbanity—particularly in the often-neglected outskirts of São Paulo.

a theme

# spatial practices & urbanity



Boys playing soccer on a sidewalk in Bixiga neighborhood. São Paulo, 1991.

The picture that opens this essay features a group of boys playing football on a sidewalk of the Bixiga, a traditional working-class neighborhood of São Paulo. Cristiano Mascaro, the photographer, manages to capture the unexpectedness of having a traditional space of passage occupied by a brief moment of leisure. The fast flow of the freeway, relegated to the far background, loses its usual urban protagonism to the movements of the boys, who embrace the open possibilities public space can offer.

“Social space is what permits fresh actions to occur while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others” wrote Henri Lefebvre<sup>1</sup>. In this research, the affordances urban space creates, and the actions of its users are understood within the developments of *spatial practices*. A concept that started to be shaped in the 1970s by scholars such as Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, who connected the experience of the city to a social dynamic and a political context. Not only in the way we actively practice the space but also in how the space shapes our actions. “To practice space is then to repeat the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is, in a place, to be and to move toward the other”<sup>2</sup>. To spatially endure and to become.

In a broader sense, the common areas of a city shape spatial practices that can encourage movement or invite for a longer stay: the passages and the permanences. For instance, institutional buildings and parks represent places whose uses, and significance are related to longer permanence, while streets have as their primary function the organization of urban flows. Yet, the way of moving is done in a multi-lane freeway or in a pedestrian street with cafés and shops relates to completely different experiences of urban rhythm.

The complexities of the city cannot be easily summarized by a black-and-white duality of usage. There is a nuance in it, and the intertwinement of movement and stillness brings vitality to the cities. Certeau argued that the practice of space is related to how one experiences its surroundings through movement by writing that “The opacity of the body in movement, gesticulating, walking, talking in pleasure, is what indefinitely organizes a here in relation to an abroad, a “familiarity” in relation to foreignness”<sup>3</sup>. This sense of familiarity can be strongly connected to the unfolding of lasting permanences. After all, if it is through movement that familiarity starts to develop, it is only after a certain repetition of a movement that meaning is given to a permanence.

In this case, it involves not only spatial permanences as well as temporal ones, for the temporalities of a city also influence how space is practiced. Rossi, for instance, understood that “The past is in part experienced now and that, from the point of view of urban science, may be the meaning to give to permanences: they are a past that we still experience”<sup>4</sup>. A permanence becomes a recognizable part of urban life, indicating the passing of time and playing a part in creating a sense of legacy. The meaning of such permanences

is neither universal nor timeless, yet it can be a cornerstone for how we practice space.

In the movie *Patterson* (2016, dir: Jim Jarmusch), for instance, we see the uneventful life of a bus driver who enjoys writing poems in his free time. At the first glimpse, the crowded bus might seem like a fleeting passage as its users head on to other destinations. Yet, it is in the daily repetition of the movement of the bus through the city, carrying familiar and unfamiliar faces, that the driver finds inspiration for his poems. Even in the urban infrastructure of transport, which could be read as merely a space of passage, there are always breaches for permanences to be developed.



Scenes from the movie “Patterson” (2016) by Jim Jarmusch

Spaces of passage also have a notable role when it comes to strengthening the importance of urban spaces of permanences. For instance, if a metro, bus, or boat station is located close to cultural, leisure, or institutional centers, there is a bigger chance people from different areas of the city will come to use them due to their accessibility. On the other hand, with the increased speed of such vehicles, the users of these transportation modes experience most of the urban areas as disconnected passing scenery.

The opposite ways a certain surrounding can affect its users was compared by Hannah Arendt to the character of a table. As the German philosopher wrote “To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.”<sup>5</sup>

In the book “The Human Condition”, Arendt particularly traces several connections between the nature of social human activity and the space that serves as a stage for it: the common space. Through the concept of the “Public Realm”, the utmost space of human relation, she encapsulates a dying connection that “gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak”<sup>6</sup>. As explained by Teerds, Grafe, and Koekoek, the Public Realm represents “the place for unfettered debate and democracy, for the free exchange of opinions, for the unplanned seeing and being seen.”<sup>7</sup> especially because “The city is a political, public place par excellence: it is a space of appearance that allows people to appear in all their plurality and unpredictability.”<sup>8</sup>

And even though Arendt did not delve into spatial descriptions and did not strictly connect the public realm to the city, spaces that create such affordances for appearance and exchanges show themselves as epicenters of urbanity.

As a key concept for this research, urbanity in its quintessential essence means “which belongs to living in the city”. Deriving from the Latin word *Urbanitas*, the word urbanity was first used in the Middle Ages and initially meant the “government of a city”<sup>9</sup>, not much later it would be used to indicate “something that has an urban character”<sup>10</sup>. Having an urban character in the Middle Ages was related to the freedom of citizens, as stated in the German medieval saying “Stadtluft macht frei”<sup>11</sup>, the air of the city frees the men. “Urban life suggests meetings, the confrontation of differences, reciprocal knowledge and acknowledgment (including ideological and political confrontation), ways of living, “patterns” which coexist in the city.”<sup>12</sup>.

Urbanity is then the display of urban character in its most embracing sense, as the link between *civitas* and *urbs*<sup>13</sup>. Places of urbanity are the everyday stages in the common grounds of cities which leave an open invitation for spatial practices to take place. Consequently, those are places where an affective relation between the city and its inhabitants is formed, a relation which further enhances senses of familiarity and permanences. “Urbanity comes from a civility, an affability towards the existing city which it does not seek to evict but on the contrary to enhance, to associate with its processes.”<sup>14</sup>, as defined in the 1982 Centre Pompidou exhibition “*A la recherche de l’urbanité*”. Most importantly, it is where spatial practices tend to happen with unmatched freedom.

Urbanity, as opposed to urbanization, is a non-tangible phenomenon that has a vital correlation to spatial quality. It is important to note that spatial quality which is essential for urbanity is not only limited to well-developed areas in big cities. For instance, urbanity can be found in the gathering of strangers to play chess in a square, or when a market takes place in the cities’ public spaces, and even more so when people gather together in the streets for a protest. It is in the practice of the public space while sharing it with others, either strangers or not, that urbanity thrives best.

Such dynamics between spatial practices of passages and permanences can be observed in the whole built environment, from a house to a city. Yet, the places that manage to set out lasting stages for urbanity are extremely rare, as their existence is conditioned by several factors, including design quality, urban connections, and public policies. As Richard Sennett points out “The built environment is one thing, how people inhabit it is another”.<sup>15</sup>

Lefebvre for instance argued that “There is no urbanity without a centre”<sup>16</sup>. It was not a feature strictly limited to the original central area of the city; however, it did need to be a meaningful place of gathering and exchanging, a centripetal force which attracts people. As Rau writes “For him [Lefebvre], the specific criteria of urbanity lay in centrality: centers in which humans and things come together, where exchange takes place, where signs and symbols are created. Urbanity can also take the form of a nodal point in a regional or global network.”

Lefebvre wrote about the way peripheral neighborhoods lacked urbanity especially because of their lack of a centrality space: “urbanization without urbanity”. They were separated from the city, physically by their distance to the

center and in essence due to the lack of qualified common spaces, both of passages and permanences. In such areas, spatial practices happen in different ways, as the common areas are characterized by a feel of constant passages and the common urban space loses protagonism to interiorized spaces.

To better understand the notions of spatial practices of passages and permanences in the outskirts, the object of study of this research will be the peripheral areas of São Paulo, Brazil. A city whose macro metropolitan scale “emphasizes a challenge to be faced: the poly nucleation of life systems and the equipment that serves them, as well as the construction of the infrastructure network intended to cover this entire area.”<sup>17</sup>



Different uses of the free span at the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP)

How can the current dynamics between passages and permanences in the outskirts of São Paulo configure affordances for places of urbanity?





a context





## passages & permanences in the outskirts of são paulo



A building is demolished at João Dias avenue in São Paulo, 1970s.

In an untitled photograph taken by Stefania Bril in the 1970s, a series of row houses at São Paulo's João Dias Avenue are in the process of being razed to the ground. Inside the half-demolished walls, life goes on as clothes are still hanging to dry and a child attentively stands in the rubble. An evocative image of a place of permanence losing its physical tangency and starting to inhabit only the realm of memory. In the foreground, a car passes through the bottom part of the frame, as its passengers inadvertently look ahead without noticing either the demolition scene or Bril's lenses.

Few images have been able to represent in such a direct manner the layered character of São Paulo's urban transformation. In a city whose population has multiplied almost a hundred times in the past 125 years<sup>18</sup>, the way how its inhabitants and planners interpret what are permanences and what are passages in the urbanscape became malleable to the fast rhythm of the city's changes. As captured by Bril, the fast-moving car assumes a position of protagonism while the still-inhabited building turns to dust in the background.

"Everything here looks like construction but it is already a ruin"<sup>19</sup> sang Caetano Veloso in the song "Fora de Ordem". Similar remarks were made by French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss while living in the city, that "What astonished me in São Paulo in 1935 (...) was not the newness, but the rapidity with which time's ravages had set in. (...) For their only ornament was their youth, and youth is as fugitive for a city as for the people who live in it."<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the 20th Century, São Paulo became a city built on the immediate necessities of its fast-growing population while in an ongoing quest to prove its own modernity. Yet, for the richest and most industrialized city of the country, progress never fully arrived. The actual result was a city of modern ruins, where buildings have a disposable character and automobiles became the protagonist of urban space. The space of the car, which usually represents a passage, becomes an overtaking permanence in everyday life as the average *paulistano* spends almost 2.5 hours a day inside a vehicle.<sup>21</sup>

Public space in São Paulo increasingly became limited to its bare function: circulation, turning into a liminal zone solely of passage as it became taken over by freeways, viaducts, and parking lots. As speeds grew higher, the street increasingly became a background blur for those inside a moving vehicle. As pointed out by Richard Sennet: "The technology of modern motion replaces being in the street with a desire to erase the constraints of geography."<sup>22</sup>

The impoverished quality of urban life in the common spaces of São Paulo can be traced back to the 1930s when Mayor Prestes Maia started to implement the Avenue Plans. The plan was based on a radiocentric structure of the city's

main avenues, which further strengthened the protagonism of the city center. In the 1950s, the plan was revised by the office of American developer Robert Moses, who proposed the implementation of high-speed freeways on the borders of the city.

In the growth boom that the city experienced between 1950 and 1980, the occupation of the outskirts was urbanized since its conception based on a car-centered logic of public space. Regina Meyer, who researches the urban processes of São Paulo, traced out the dichotomy of the city consisting of “a consolidated central area undergoing vertical growth, concentrating a large amount of investment, and a large and diffuse peripheral area undergoing a permanent process of expansion with minimum investment.”<sup>23</sup>

Such minimum investment can also be seen in the accessibility of the outskirts by public transportation. In the outskirts, access to the metro and train lines is still quite limited, as the network has been slowly growing since its openings in 1974 and 1934, respectively. After the tram network was taken out of circulation in 1968, buses became the most prevalent means of transportation for São Paulo’s inhabitants<sup>24</sup>.

The reality in the peripheral zones of São Paulo is then made up of unqualified spaces: the rush of its uncontrolled growth resulted in spaces that fail to offer neither quality passages, nor inviting common permanences. Resulting in another type of urban life: an internalized one, where life in houses, institutions, and even commerce happens behind high walls. As Meyer argues, “Deprived of infrastructure, public equipment, and adequate and sufficient transportation services, the outskirts of São Paulo are the expression of the “urbanization without urbanity” mentioned by Lefebvre”<sup>25</sup>.

In both very rich and very poor peripheric neighborhoods, spaces of passages and spaces of permanence have an extremely disconnected relationship with each other. In the poorer ones, governmental negligence leads to segregation from the possibilities and opportunities urban life can offer. Fernando de Mello Franco, architect and former secretary of urban development, argues that “Many of the favelas of São Paulo, like so many other informal settlements, lack public space because they were not planned; any land that can possibly be built on usually is.” In these spaces, urbanity is found in mere traces, such as the popular soccer fields traced out on the dirt.

In the rich neighborhoods, which are mostly composed of gated communities and high-end residential towers, moving through the city is mostly done with the freedom of private vehicles, while the permanences usually take place in segregated areas for common activities that are usually offered within the development grounds and are limited only for their inhabitants. Any gaps where diversity, unexpectedness and consequently urbanity could happen are quickly closed down.

Despite the deep social inequality in the city, some exceptional spaces still try to accommodate a more democratic space for urban life to thrive. Among those, some examples are worthy of mention, such as the SESCs and the CEUs.



Top: Aerial view from a soccer field in a favela.

Middle: CEU Cidade Dutra

Bottom: SESC Guarulhos

The SESCs (Social Service of the Commerce) are non-profit cultural, sports, and leisure centers belonging to São Paulo's Union of Commerce which offer diverse activities and spaces of public character, creating a unique setting for permanences. Even if the most famous SESCs are in central areas, the existing 24 units are spread out throughout the whole city, being located mostly in middle and upper-middle-class neighborhoods. The CEUs (Unified Centers for Education) are educational, leisure, sports, and cultural equipment aimed at the population that lives on the outskirts of São Paulo, especially in middle and lower-middle-class neighborhoods that lack quality public equipment. They were developed to be centralities for urban life in the periphery, mixing formal and non-formal education. Since its initial implementation in the early 1990s, 46 units have been built.

Even if those buildings became references in São Paulo especially because of their importance as places for gatherings and exchanges, those examples create a strong interiorized sense of urbanity without really establishing very strong ties to the oppressive urbanized space that surrounds it. Even in the CEUs or the SESCs, the city is still physically separated behind gates, gratings, and walls. As argued by researcher Luiz Recaman, “The self-absorbed, introverted building recreates on the available land (...) a sociability distinct from the unfair one that shapes and destroys the city around it.”<sup>26</sup>

How are passages and permanences experienced in the public spaces in the outskirts of São Paulo?



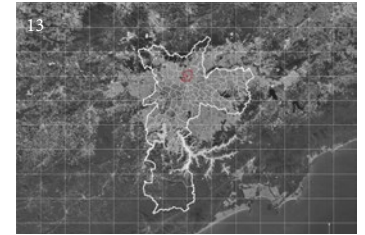
# a case study



Digital image of winning project for Parque da Juventude  
Source: Aflalo Gasperini Architects



# the case of parque da juventude



Location in the northern area of  
São Paulo



Pavillions of the Carandiru Penitentiary Complex being demolished, 1999.  
Source: Folha de São Paulo

In São Paulo, it is uncommon to find a public space that successfully proposes a less interiorized experience of urbanity in the city. While most streets have been designed to have cars as protagonists, the parks frequently become fenced off and the squares lack basic maintenance. As a pedestrian, there are rare spaces that feel welcoming for either passages or permanences. A condition that is even more jarring on the outskirts.

For this part of the research, the aim was to select a consolidated public space on the outskirts of São Paulo and analyze how the nuanced negotiations between passages and permanences, both spatial and temporal, frequently take place in non-central areas of the city. The outcomes from such an analysis can be defined for establishing guidelines for the design.

From a small shortlist of three projects on the outskirts, Parque da Juventude (Youth Park) was the one that stood out for several reasons: the diversity of its programme, the scale of the park, and, most importantly, the complexity behind spatial and temporal passages and permanences of the place. As its creation in the late 1990s was born out of heavy debt with the historical permanences that happened within the site.

The popular park exists on the grounds of the former Carandiru Penitentiary, where one of the darkest chapters in the recent history of São Paulo took place. On October 2, 1992, a riot started in Carandiru, then the largest penitentiary complex in all Latin America, housing over 9000 inmates<sup>27</sup>. The prison guards at work quickly lost control of the inmates and had to call for reinforcement from the military police. In the next hours, policemen would storm pavilion #9, resulting in the cold-blooded assassination of 111 of the over 2,000 prisoners who lived in the block. That day would be known as the Carandiru Massacre, a polemic name that still bitterly lingers in Brazilian collective memory.

After the negative repercussions of the massacre, São Paulo's government put into action plans to decommission the prison complex and to transform it into a public space named "Parque da Juventude", or Youth Park. As Liliane Wong, a researcher on architectural reuse, argues "the Carandiru Penitentiary conversion was necessitated by the need to appease the ghosts of the massacre."<sup>28</sup>. The park would house several public facilities, such as technical schools, a library and a theatre, in an open common ground where urbanity could thrive. Defiantly, these new spatial permanences would need to cohabit with the harsh memories that are permanently etched onto the site.

In 1999, the architecture project developed by the architecture office Aflalo Gasperini with a landscape design by Rosa Kliass won an open competition for the park. The design stood out for its sensibility towards the historical



Photos from my first visit to the Park. May 2018.

permanences of the site while also tracing new passages for pedestrians and setting out diverse stages for urban life.

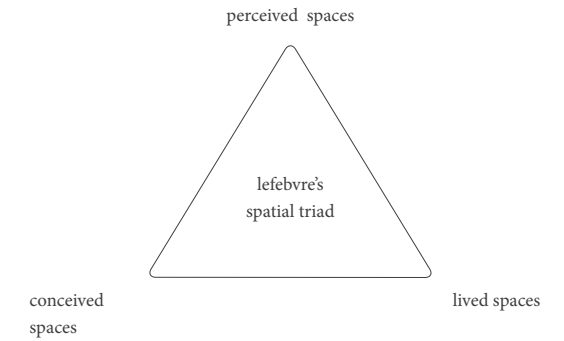
In the project, the grounds of the prison were divided into three areas of different uses. The area located next to the Carandiru metro station, where the main entrance was located, was proposed to be the “Institutional Area” of the park, with a library, two high schools, and a theater. The middle area where an unfinished pavilion stood was proposed as a contemplation area, full of trees with ample canopies and closer to a traditional proposal of a park. Finally, the narrow strip that would connect the park to Zaki Narchi Avenue was proposed to be a sports boulevard.

In 2002, several buildings of the Carandiru prison complex were demolished except for the elevated observation walkway used by the guards and two pavilions, which were later converted into the ETEC<sup>29</sup> schools. The pavilion where the massacre happened was torn down and a public library featuring a small museum about the prison was built on top of its location. The Carandiru River, which runs between the Institutional and Contemplative, was once again uncovered during the construction.

The park’s opening was implemented in three different phases between 2003 and 2010. Despite its harsh past, the park quickly became popular. Attracting about 40.000 visitors per month<sup>30</sup>, the park won the international Rogelio Salmona prize for open spaces and was voted in 2009 the “second best park in São Paulo”<sup>31</sup>. Calliari<sup>32</sup> credits the success of the park due to the close location to a metro station, the preservation of the symbolism of the place, and the distinct activities it houses. In 2022 a circus tent was installed in the institutional area, exactly on the plateau where the theater was supposed to be built, and since then it has become one of the most popular activities in the park. From its fixed programme to spontaneous occupations, the park might seem like an exemplary oasis of urbanity in São Paulo.

However, scrolling through reviews posted on Google, the impressions are far from being unanimously positive. What is actually observed are the downturns related to the dynamics of a very socially divided city. “Don’t come here (...), I was robbed by a group of 8 boys”<sup>33</sup>, writes a user who gave the park a 1-star rating. Even recent reviews that give it a high rating still alert to a less welcoming side of the park, as robberies, drug usage, and prostitution have escalated in the area.

To provide a broader understanding of the nuanced spatial practices in the park, which includes its conflicting passages and the permanences over time and space,



an analysis was developed using Henri Lefebvre’s spatial triad as the guiding framework.

According to Lefebvre<sup>34</sup>, the space we inhabit consists of conceived, perceived, and lived spaces, which coexist and relate to each other. The first one is the “space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers (...)—all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived”, it is better represented by maps and plans. Meanwhile, perceived space is the one more closely related to spatial practices, as it is shaped by how one individual perceives his surroundings and can be extremely malleable to circumstances. However, it is in the last category, the lived spaces, that we start to understand a deeper connection of the individuals to their surroundings as “The lived space concerns how human beings use the space and, most importantly, retrofit and mold the space for their own use”<sup>35</sup>.

Taking the three supports of this tripod into consideration, it was initially my perception of the park that led me to choose it as a case study. In the two times I visited the site, I had very pleasant experiences and left impressed with the designed spatiality and respect for the harsh memory linked to the former prison. Meanwhile, the analysis of the conceived space is easily done through drawings, maps, texts, and data available online.

However, it was the lived space that holds the biggest importance for this research, as it really reveals how communally passages and permanences also take place at the site. It eventually also presented the biggest challenge for being analyzed, as each individual experiences it differently and I would not be able to visit it during the first semester of the research for eventual interviews. A new method of analysis was required.

The first layer of this extended analysis began by carefully reading through user reviews posted on Google. These reviews revealed a multitude of nuanced perspectives that proved crucial in shaping a collective idea of the park. They brought to light not only individual experiences but also recurring patterns, pointing to specific areas frequently described as unsafe and others consistently praised. This preliminary survey underscored the growing significance of social media and digital platforms in shaping spatial perceptions and public reputation.

In order to set out a broader panorama of the user experience within Parque da Juventude, a systematic visual analysis of Instagram posts from the past six months was conducted. This amounted to roughly 750 images, each of which was



# Parque da Juventude

Passages & Permanences in the Surroundings



Carandiru Metro Station



Santana Bus Station



Center Norte Shopping Mall

## transport facilities

- Metro Lane
- Metro Stop
- Bike Lane
- Bus Stop
- Bus Line
- Arterial Lane

## education facilities

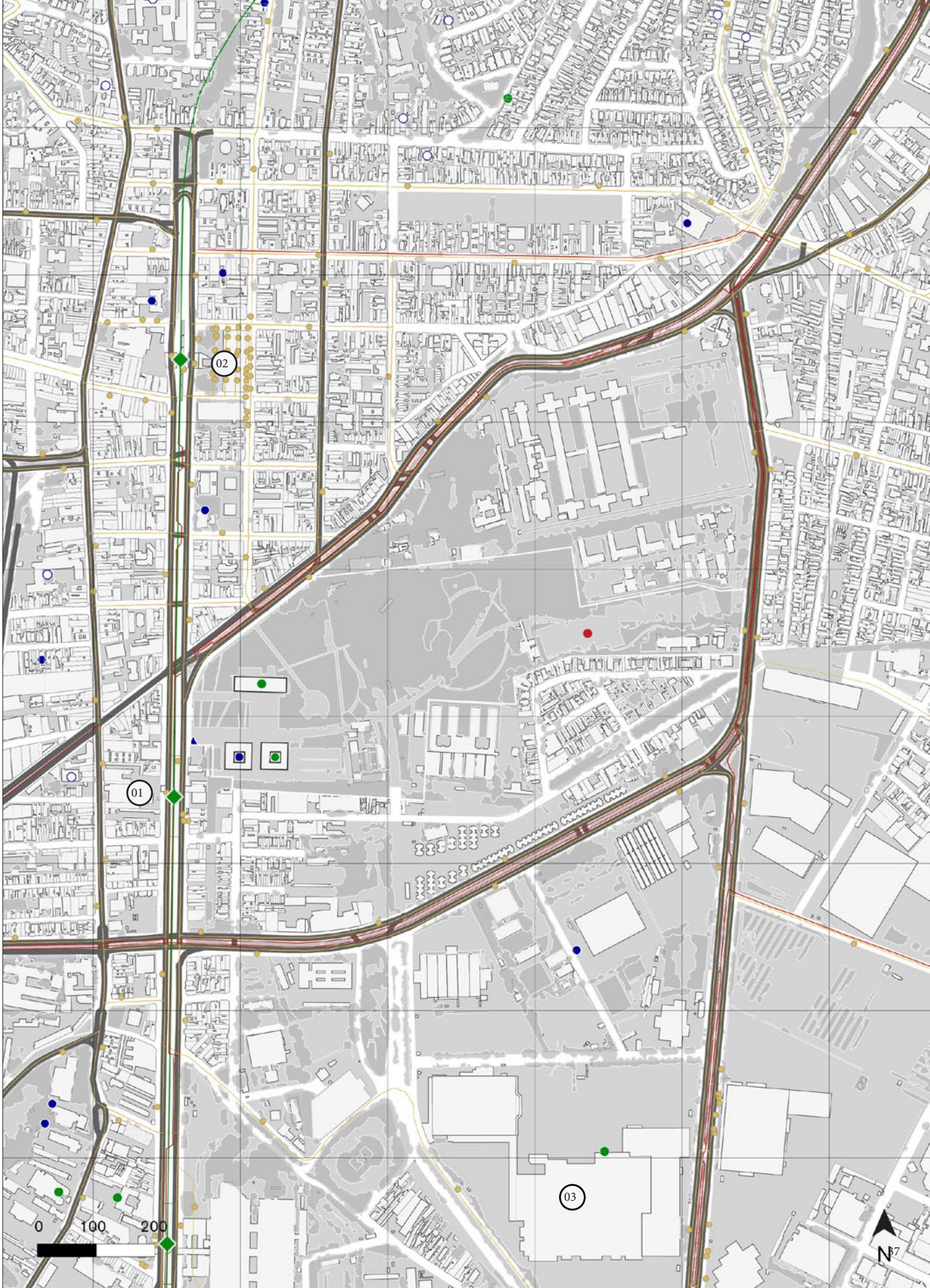
- CEU
- Private Institution
- Public Institution - Kindergarden
- Public Institution - Elementary School
- Public Institution - High School

## sports facilities

- Community Club

## cultural facilities

- Cultural Equipment





# Parque da Juventude

Passages & Permanences in the Surroundings



Horizontal Commerce



Vertical Commerce



Special Uses (Governmental Buildings)



Residential Horizontal - Lower Standard



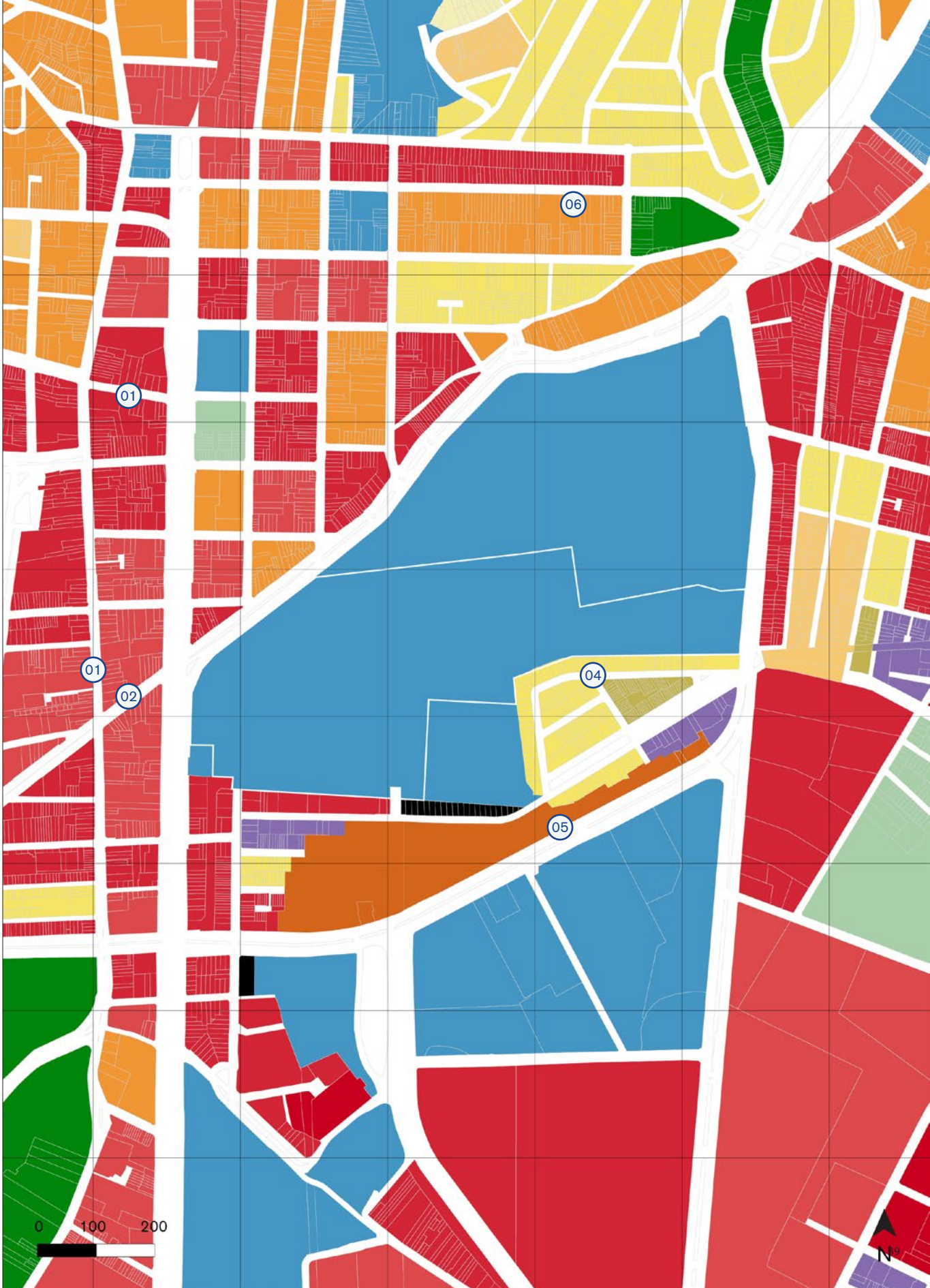
Residential Vertical - Lower Standard



Residential Vertical - Medium Standard

## main use per block

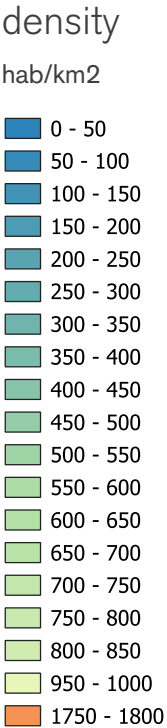
- Warehouses
- Horizontal Commerce
- Vertical Commerce
- Industry Commerce
- Residential Horizontal - High Standard
- Residential Horizontal - Medium Standard
- Residential Horizontal - Lower Standard
- Residential Vertical - Higher Standard
- Residential Vertical - Medium Standard
- Residential Vertical - Lower Standard
- Empty Plots
- Collective Use
- Special Use
- Institutions





# Parque da Juventude

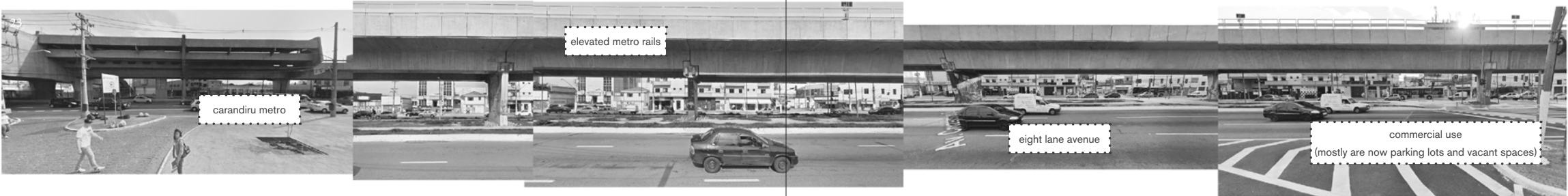
Passages & Permanences in the Surroundings





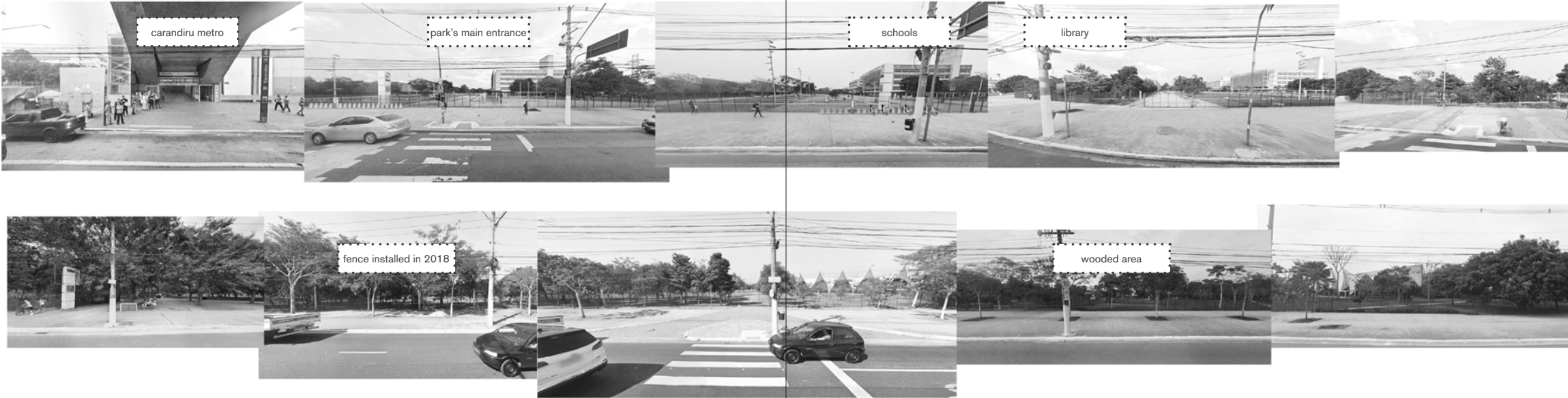
Parque da Juventude

Digital Wander



CRUZEIRO DO SUL AVENUE

CRUZEIRO DO SUL AVENUE



CRUZEIRO DO SUL AVENUE

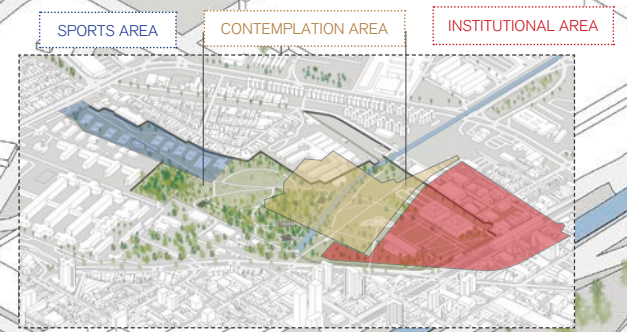
CRUZEIRO DO SUL AVENUE





# Parque da Juventude

Conceived Space



sports alley

arts school

technical school

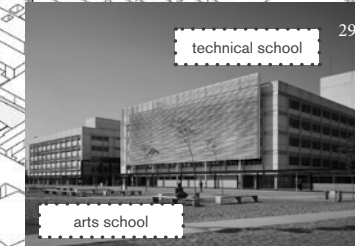
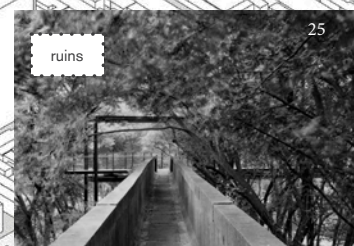
carandiru metro

circus

library

museum

ruins

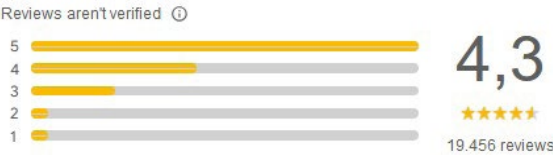
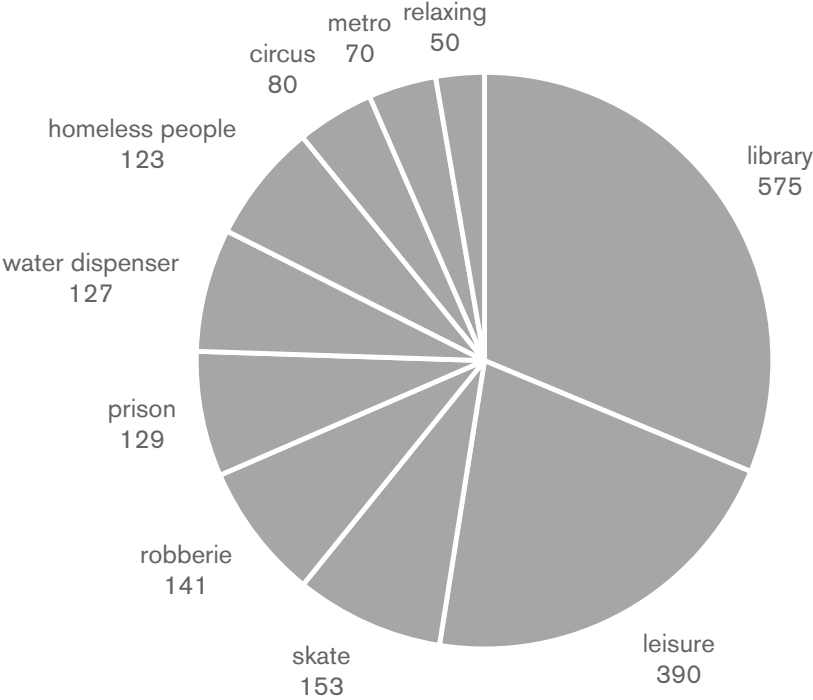




# Parque da Juventude

Lived Space

Most common words used in Google reviews



★★★★★ 2 years ago

Very cool park. Easy to get to. It is **next to the Carandiru station** on line 1, blue, of the subway. It has a **wonderful library** with a large area overlooking the park. There is **a lot of green area, space for walking, running, cycling, skating and skateboarding**. There is a shared bicycle station at the entrance to the park for those who don't have one and want to cycle. It has **many children's play areas and courts** for various types of sports.

★★★★☆ a year ago

It is **very good and very large**, the library is very good and spacious with air conditioning and plenty of computers with free Internet access. **Easy access to the subway, next to Carandiru station**. I here is no snack bar. Negative point, tull of maloqueiros and nolas, which is why **theft is frequent, including at gunpoint**, even with the intense supervision of the PM who patrols inside.

★★★★☆ 8 months ago

**Good and cozy place, especially the library**, but the main building is completely covered in graffiti, taking away Itaú's bicycles, the entrance is completely fenced and **it's full of drug addicts inside the park**.

★★★★☆ 8 months ago

If I could give one tip it would be **DON'T GO TO THIS PLACE**, from Carandiru station to the park, the library is dangerous, I went there a lot when I was a kid, I loved it but **now it's terribly dangerous, I was robbed by about eight boys**, clearly all teenagers, they beat My colleague has no security, it's not worth it, there's no way **DON'T GO to this place**..  
It's not the same, I didn't know, always research until you go to the location, that was in September 2023.

Selection of reviews

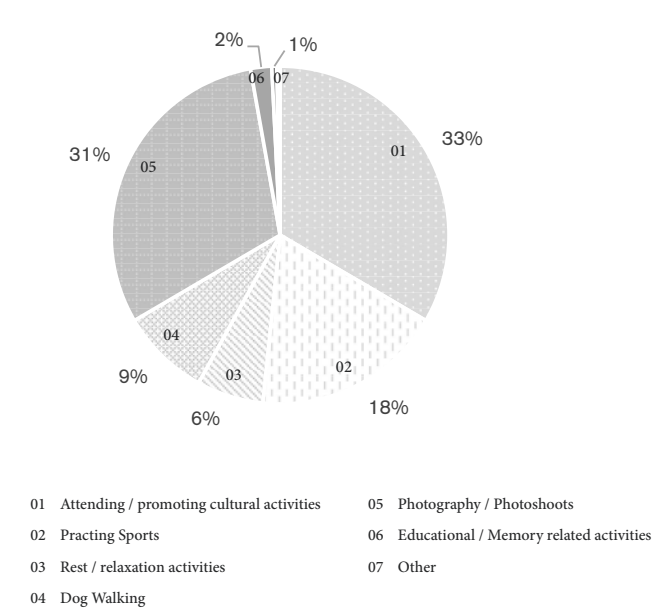
# Parque da Juventude

Lived Space

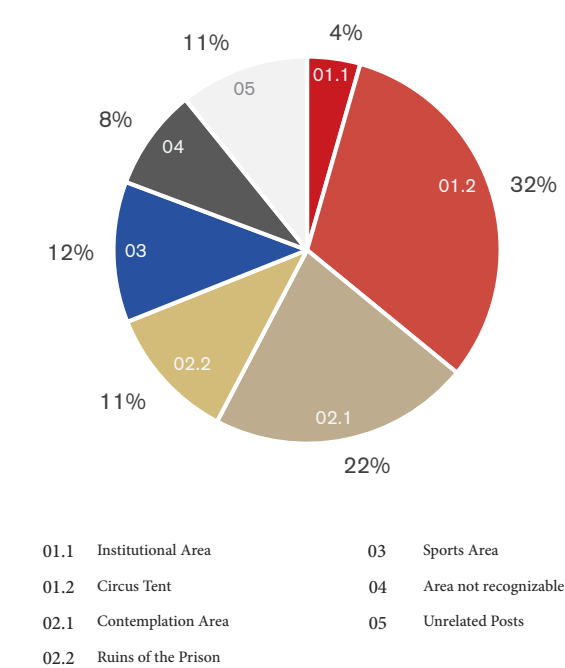


Over 750 Instagram posts from September 2024 to January 2025 that were analyzed for the research

Most popular activities in Parque da Juventude shared on Instagram in the past 6 months



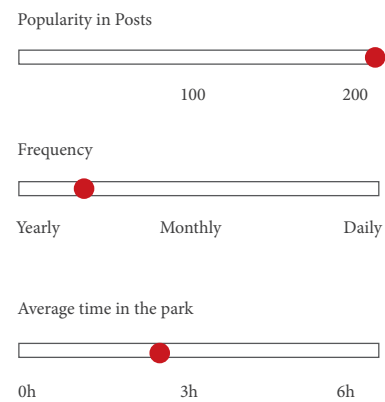
Most popular areas in Parque da Juventude shared on Instagram in the past 6 months



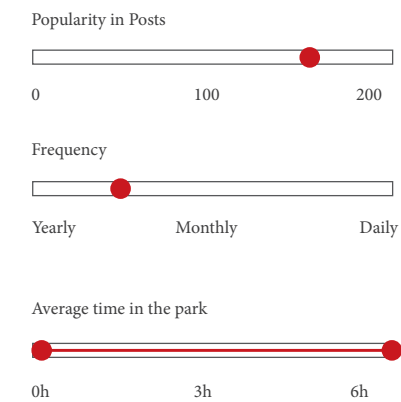
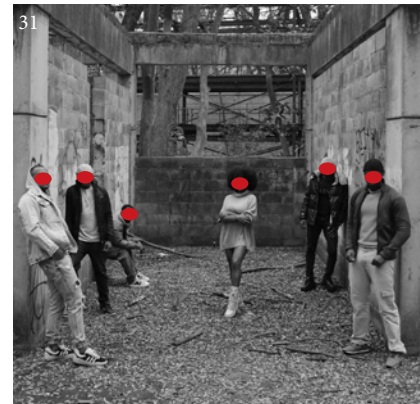
Parque da Juventude

Lived Space

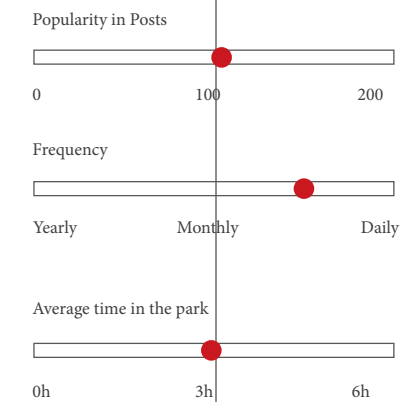
1. Attending/Promoting the Circus



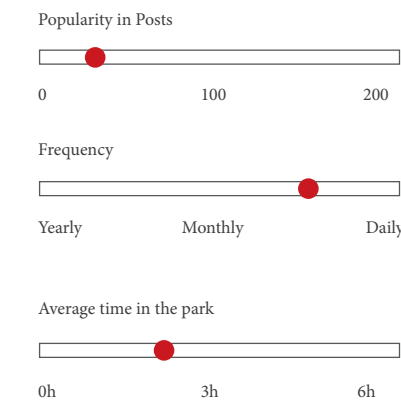
2. Photographing the Area of Contemplation + Ruins



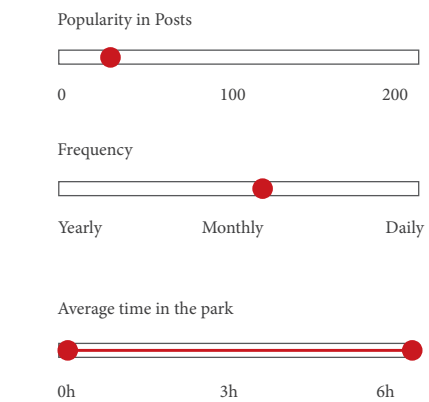
3. Exercising in the Sports Area



4. Exercising in the Contemplation Area



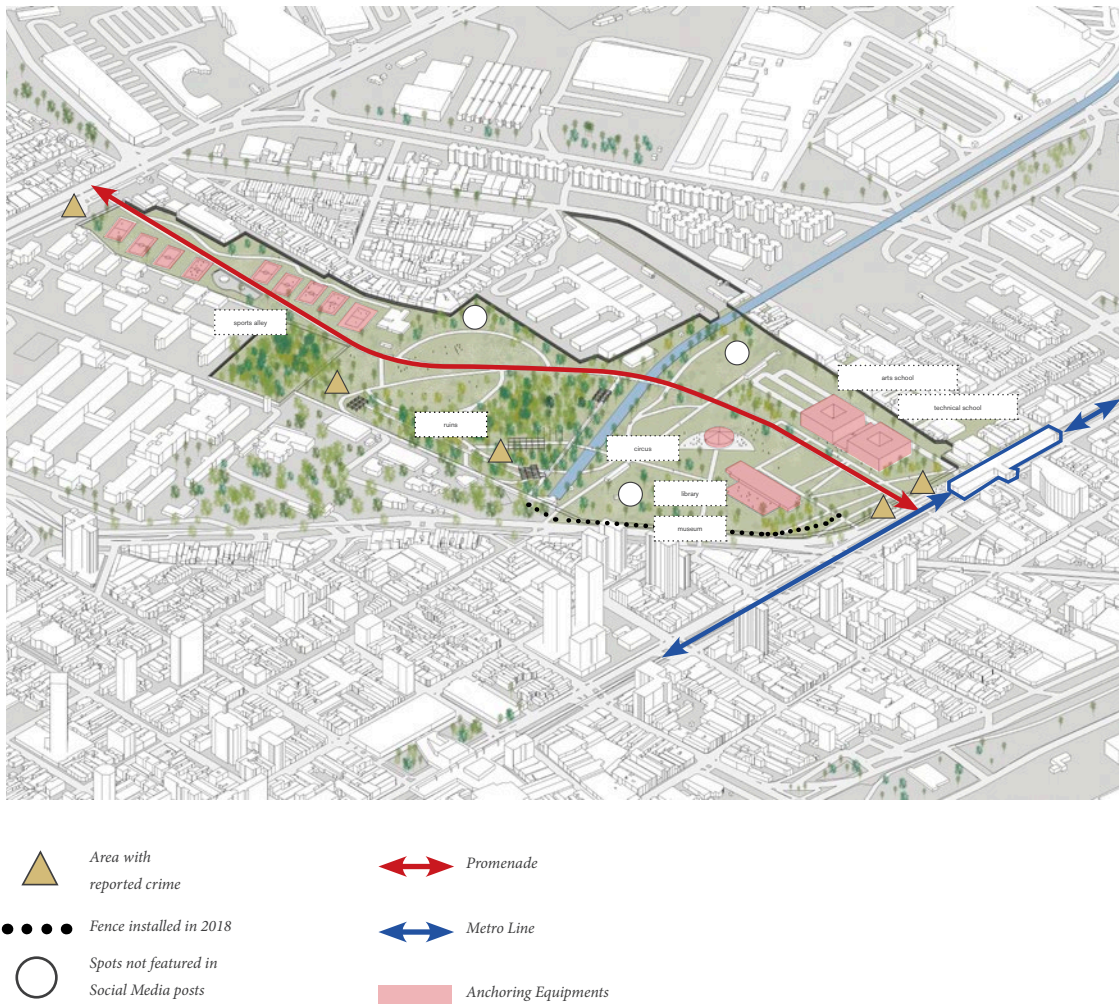
5. Resting / Relaxation Activities





# Parque da Juventude

## Conclusion



categorized according to the activity depicted and the area of the park in which it took place. Through this method, it became possible to understand which spaces are most frequently used and for what purposes.

The data indicated that the most popular activity within the park is participation in cultural events, particularly those linked to the recently inaugurated circus. This is followed by the practice of sports and then rest or relaxation-related activities. In terms of spatial preference, the most photographed areas were the circus tent, the contemplation area, and the ruins of the former vigilance platform.

When these two datasets—activity and location—were cross-referenced, a clearer hierarchy of popular uses emerged:

- 1) Attending or promoting events at the circus
- 2) Photographing the contemplation area and ruins
- 3) Exercising in the sports boulevard
- 4) Practicing physical activities within the contemplation zone
- 5) Engaging in moments of rest or relaxation

While this mapping of digital content does not provide an entirely accurate representation of all that really takes place within the park, it does offer valuable insight into the zones that are popularly occupied and the activities that generate public life within them. Especially when considered through Hannah Arendt’s notion of the *space of appearance*—defined by the act of seeing and being seen—these social media posts help surface the dynamics that shape the park’s vitality.

Interestingly, spaces characterized by fixed, institutionalized uses, such as the technical schools, appeared far less frequently in the social media posts than more flexible or ephemeral activities like yoga sessions or photo shoots in the contemplation area. However, this uneven visibility should not be seen as a limitation. Instead, it highlights the park’s strength in accommodating a diverse range of uses, a key factor in why it stands out as one of the most active public spaces in São Paulo’s outskirts.

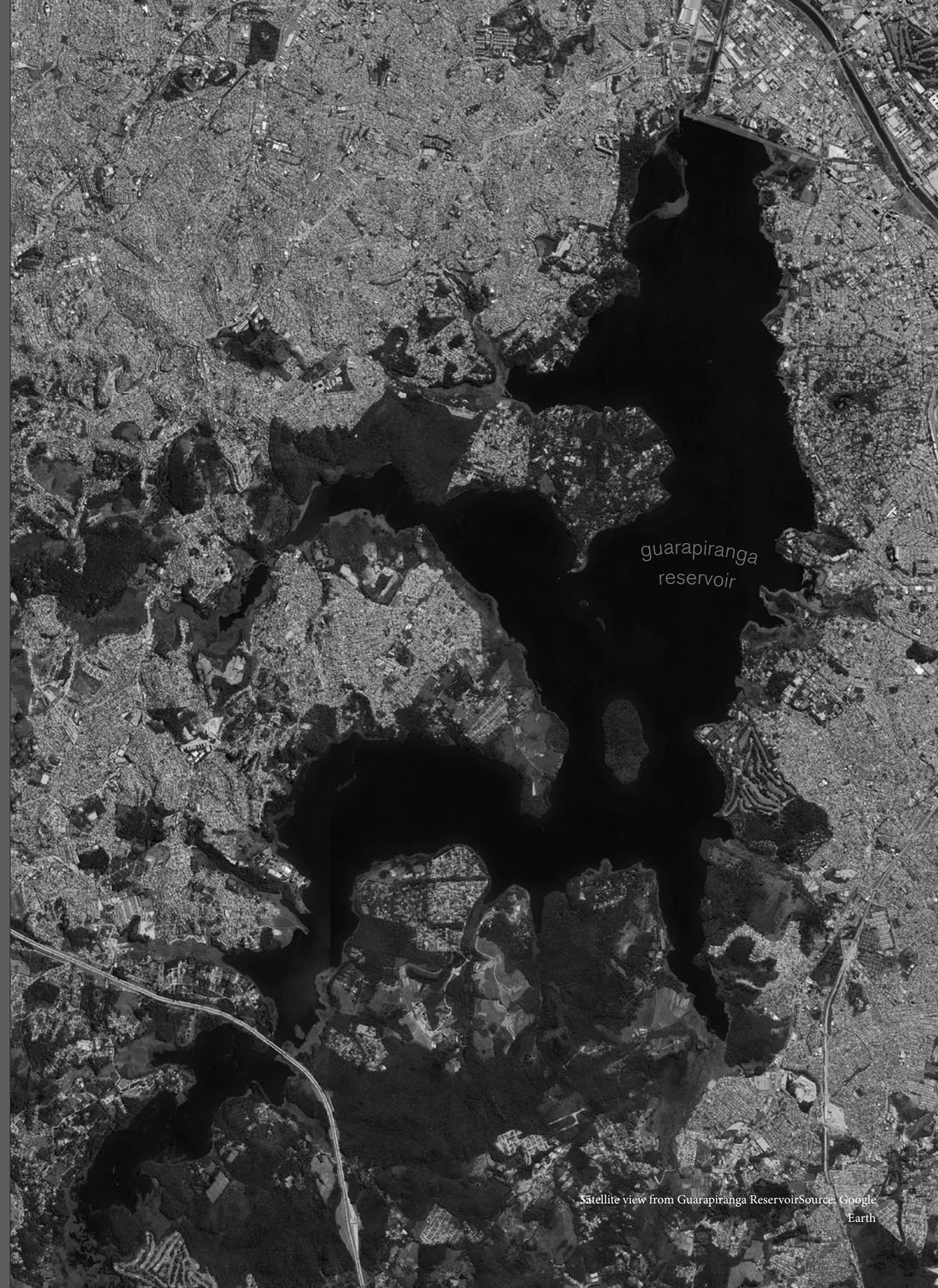
Perhaps the most revealing moment of the research occurred when the social media survey results were juxtaposed with the spatial mapping of areas of passage and permanence. A clear pattern emerged: areas located along the park’s main connective axis—those offering a blend of movement and temporary stay—recorded fewer incidents of theft or violence. In contrast, zones dedicated predominantly to passage, such as the entrance near the metro, or those used primarily for prolonged permanence, like the more secluded wooded areas near the ruins, were more frequently associated with criminal activity.

This finding reinforces the critical importance of carefully balancing spatial conditions of passage and permanence when designing public spaces in complex urban contexts such as São Paulo. It is not merely about offering a diversity of uses, but about how these uses are distributed and interconnected, setting out meaningful stages for public life to take place in.





a place



Satellite view from Guarapiranga ReservoirSource: Google  
Earth



# guarapiranga reservoir

## then, now & possibly



Guarapiranga's location in São Paulo's urban spread.

The urban sprawl of São Paulo when seen from a satellite image can be overwhelming. The buildings and roads of the most populated city in the southern hemisphere get mixed in a cacophonous pattern. Yet, two darker spreads in the south of the city stand out: the vast reservoirs called Billings and Guarapiranga.

Located about 25 km south of the center of São Paulo, the westward body of water is called Guarapiranga Reservoir: A titanic artificial reservoir that up until 115 years ago did not exist. Before being flooded, the area was entirely taken by the lush biome of the Mata Atlântica and the meandering Guarapiranga River. Yet, by the turn of the 20th Century, São Paulo's increasing urbanization and modernization led to new levels of energy demand. The river was chosen for a new hydroelectric power plant and in the following decades, the occupations of its shore reflected the fast-changing and frequently disordered growth of the metropolis.

When built in 1908, the reservoir was set up neither as a place of passage, nor as a place of permanence, but rather as an infrastructural facility. However, it wouldn't take long until new passages and permanences started forming on and around Guarapiranga: with its deep blue waters and changing winds, it was a perfect spot for watersports<sup>36</sup>. In 1917, the British community of the city founded the São Paulo Yacht Club Paulistano (SPYC)<sup>37</sup>, the first country club established by the banks of Guarapiranga. In the next four decades, the elite would have over ten new country clubs to benefit from the idyllic setting for leisure and sports. A temporary escape from the buzzing city.

During the first half of the 20th Century, the reservoir became one of the most coveted weekend getaways near the city. The ways of spending free time were changing and São Paulo's elite wanted to keep up with the novelties: country clubs, sailing schools, boat tours, and artificial beaches were all popular activities for those who could reach Guarapiranga's waters, after all getting to the reservoir was a privilege for only those who had a car at their disposal. Passages and permanences started to be formed in the margins.

The first areas to be urbanized were in the Socorro neighborhood, in the northeast area of the lake. In 1937, the first real estate development was put on the market: Interlagos<sup>38</sup>, a garden city neighborhood of 4 million square meters designed by French urban planner Alfred Agache. The project intended to be a mixed-use high-end neighborhood enhanced by the balneary activities of the reservoir. As explained by Bruno Manso in his doctoral thesis, which included studies on the urban growth of the area, the development resulted in "a winding road layout following the topography lines, resulting in gentle slopes; blocks generated by the road layout divided into lots with at least 600m<sup>2</sup> of private area; and abundant trees."<sup>39</sup> The development wasn't particularly successful at the time<sup>40</sup>, however, it would not take long until the transformation of the metropolis would catch up with the shores.



An engineer of the Light Company stands on the ground that will soon be flooded to become the reservoir. 1906.  
Source: Nossa Guarapiranga Association

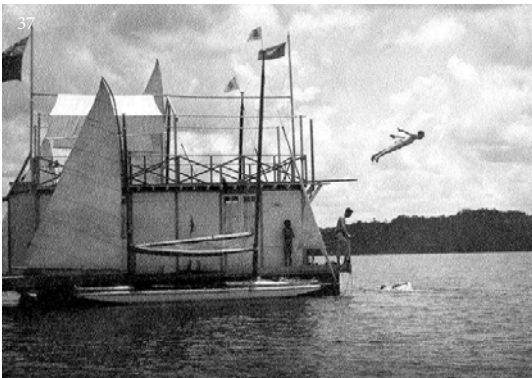
In the second half of the 20th Century, São Paulo's industrial boom would bring a new population to the shores, which was mainly composed of poor immigrants coming from the northeast of the country. The city was experiencing an urban expansion based on the demand for cheaper habitational areas. As stated in the book "Water sources: diagnosis and housing policies in São Paulo": "In the 1970s, the area of the reservoirs, with farms and ranches, seemed attractive for a very profitable low-income housing market: irregular subdivisions, without infrastructure, whose residents could organize themselves to demand it from the public authorities. Furthermore, the farm areas were increasingly closer to industrial areas in the south zone, and little by little they were connected to the expanding road network."<sup>41</sup>

If in 1954 there were 14.000 people living in the surroundings of Guarapiranga. By 2020 there were 988.000<sup>42</sup>. The result of this type of unrestrained occupation were neighborhoods that never really experienced structured or planned passages and permanences, lacking a centrality and living in "a pattern of precarious, irregular occupation, without infrastructure, services, and urban equipment, a pattern that will affect the quality and quantity of water production."<sup>43</sup> Water in the Guarapiranga feels more like a topographical segregating element rather than a potential connecting surface for new ways of moving and experiencing the area.

Nowadays, five neighborhoods surround the shores: Socorro, Cidade Dutra, Jardim São Luís, Jardim Ângela, and Parelheiros. The last one, further in the south, is sparsely inhabited and represents an important permanence of natural preservation and wildlife in the city. Meanwhile, Socorro and Cidade Dutra are located on the upper right side of the reservoir, near the Dam, and are inhabited by a middle and upper-middle-class population, with a development index close to the one of the Netherlands<sup>44</sup>. The two Jardim neighborhoods, built on the rugged left side of the shore, gather a much poorer population, with areas that have a development index similar to the one of Nigeria.

The abysmal social division of these neighborhoods by the margins is further enhanced by the geographical barrier of the Guarapiranga's waters, which is mostly seen as a dividing element rather than a connecting one. A separation that is further enhanced by the fast lanes for vehicles built right next to the reservoir, such as Atlântica Avenue on the right bank or Guarapiranga Avenue on the left.

Despite the natural grandeur of the sloped landscape that surrounds Guarapiranga and the potential of uses in its banks and waters, once again in São Paulo, the passages of vehicles was privileged over designing spaces for longer permanences of its inhabitants. However, with a new ambitious plan currently being developed by the municipality of São Paulo, these conditions could change.



Guarapiranga during its heyday as an upscale balneary from the 1920s to 1960s



Current urbanization situation of the reservoir



In 1950 there were 14.924 inhabitants in the surroundings of the Guarapiranga Reservoir

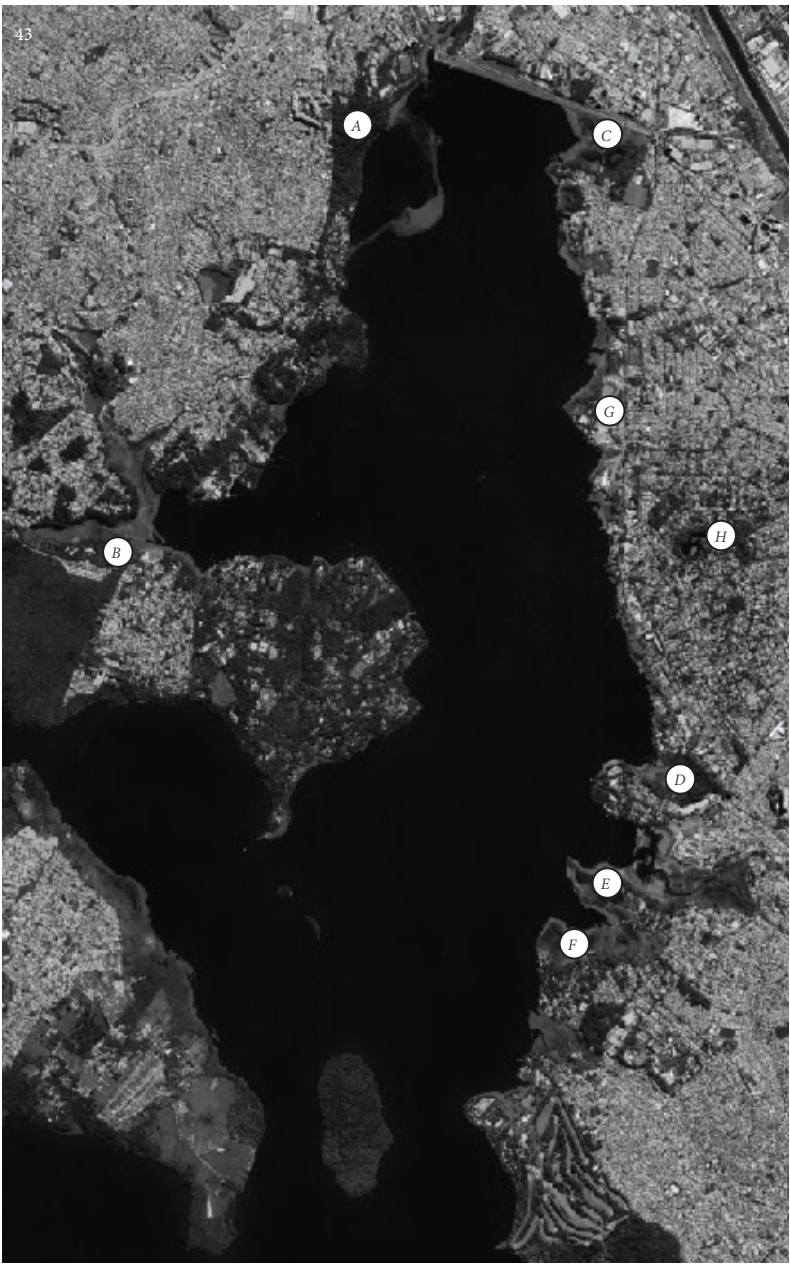


Aerial Photo, 1954.

Private Country Clubs Listed:

- |                                 |                                   |                                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 01_Yacht Club Paulistano (1917) | 04_São Paulo Athletic Club (1937) | 07_São Paulo Country Club (1947) |
| 02_Deutscher Segel Club (1930)  | 05_Yacht Club Paulista (1932)     | 08_Castelo Country Club (1959)   |
| 03_Clube Indiano (1930)         | 06_Yacht Club Italia (1934)       | 09_Santapaula Yacht Club (1961)  |

In 2020 there were 944.938 inhabitants in the surroundings of the Guarapiranga Reservoir



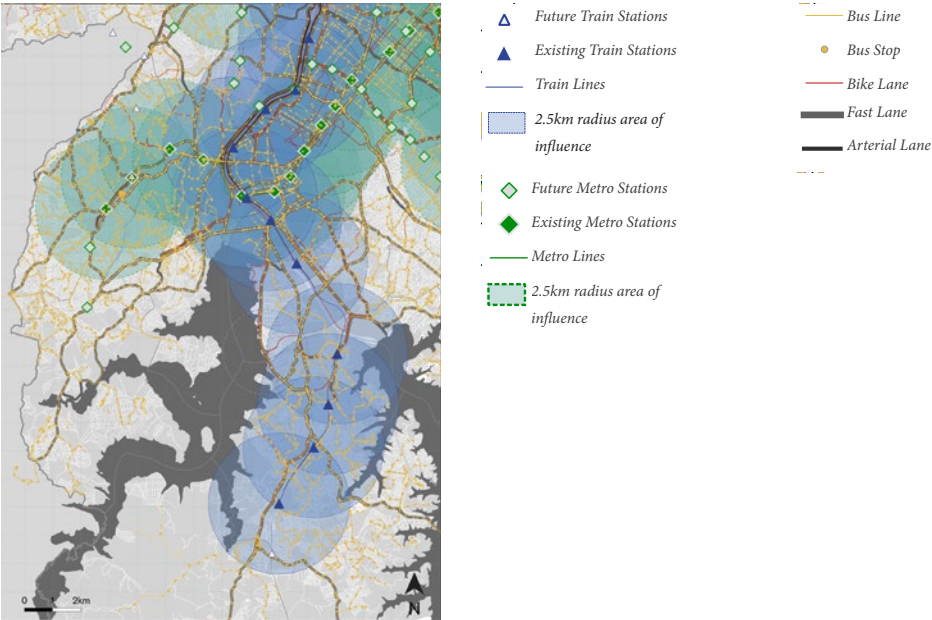
Satellite Image, 2024.

Public Parks:

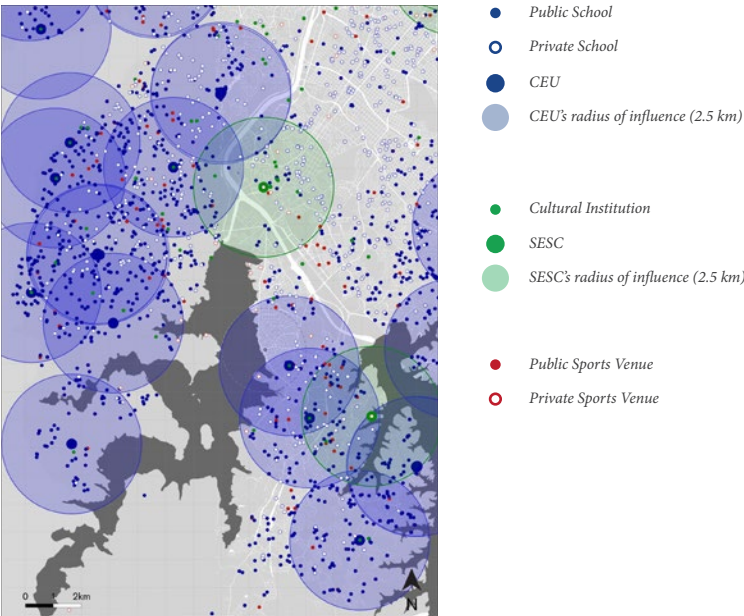
- |                                 |                                 |                                                               |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| A_Guarapiranga Park (1974)      | C_Dam Park (2008)               | F_São José Linear Park (2008)                                 |
| Designed by Roberto Burle Marx  | D_Castelo Linear Park (2008)    | G_Sol Beach Park (2009)                                       |
| B_Guarapiranga Eco-Park (1999). | E_9 de Julho Linear Park (2008) | H_Jacques Costeau Park (2009), former Wildlife Nursery (1927) |



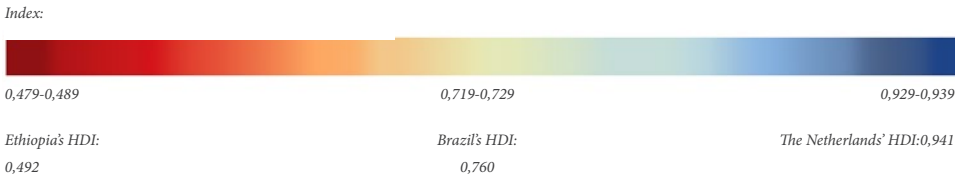
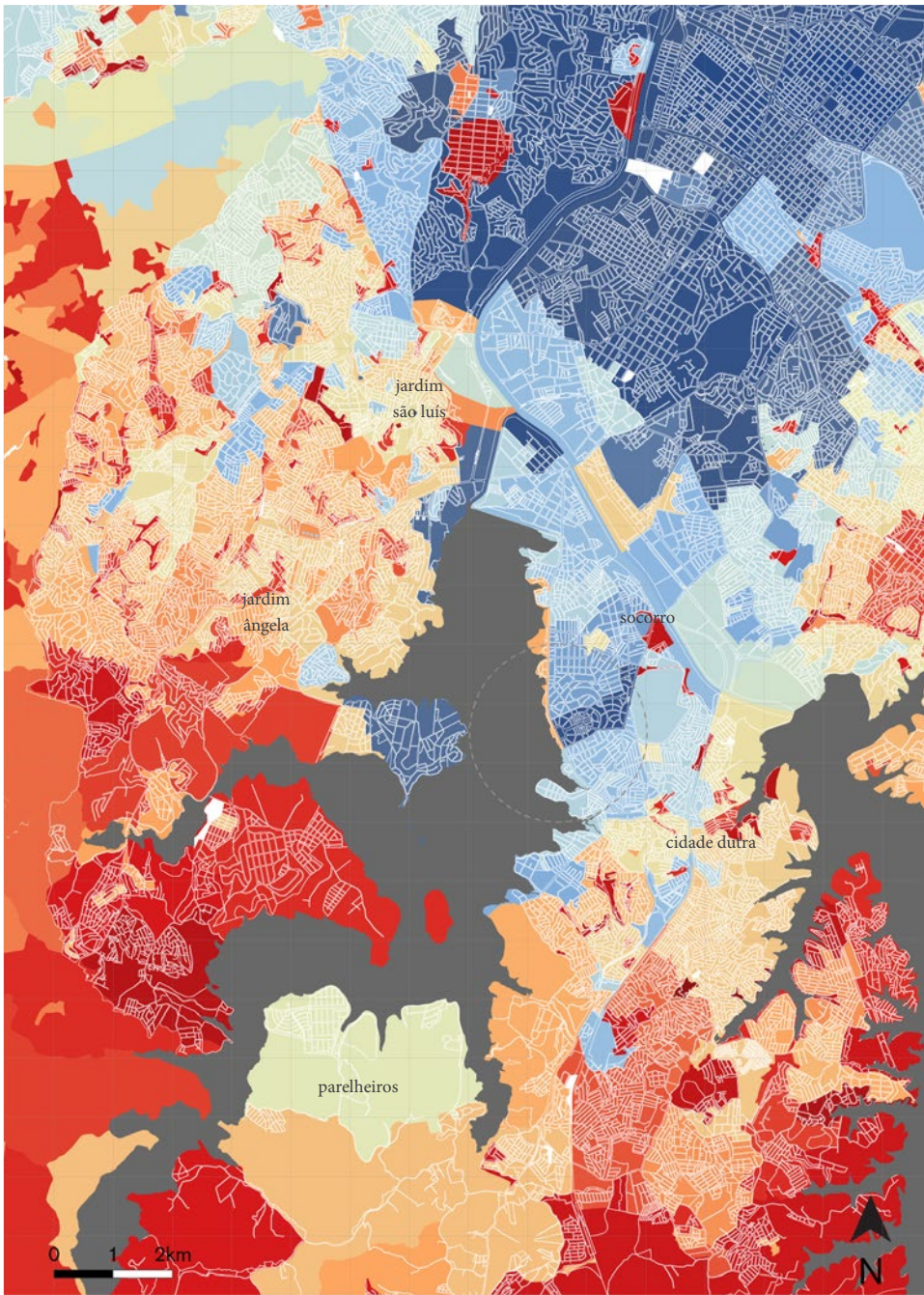
Access to Transportation



Access to Education, Culture and Sports



Human Development Index





guarapiranga possibly

In November 2024, the municipality published an open consultation for a new urban water plan aimed at reshaping the city’s relationship with its water resources over the next three decades. This initiative has been developed with the collaboration of 18 municipal agencies and the LABPROJ research group from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo.

The plan is structured around three primary areas of focus: the development of urban riverfronts, the integration of transportation systems on urban rivers, and the improvement of sanitation. Key objectives include transforming urban waterfronts by implementing a navigation system, enhancing the social and economic benefits of new urban river infrastructures, and preparing the city for the challenges posed by climate change<sup>45</sup>. In this context, new types of passages and permanences start to be conceived along the margins.

In an interview with Wagner Amaral<sup>46</sup>, one of the urban planners from the Metropole Fluvial research group<sup>47</sup> that supervised the development of the plan, he explained that since 2011 there had been studies lead by Professor Alexandre Delijaicov for the implementation of a “hidroanel” (water ring) in São Paulo. However, it would take another 13 years until gathering support from the institutions of the municipality so the plan could finally to start to take shape.

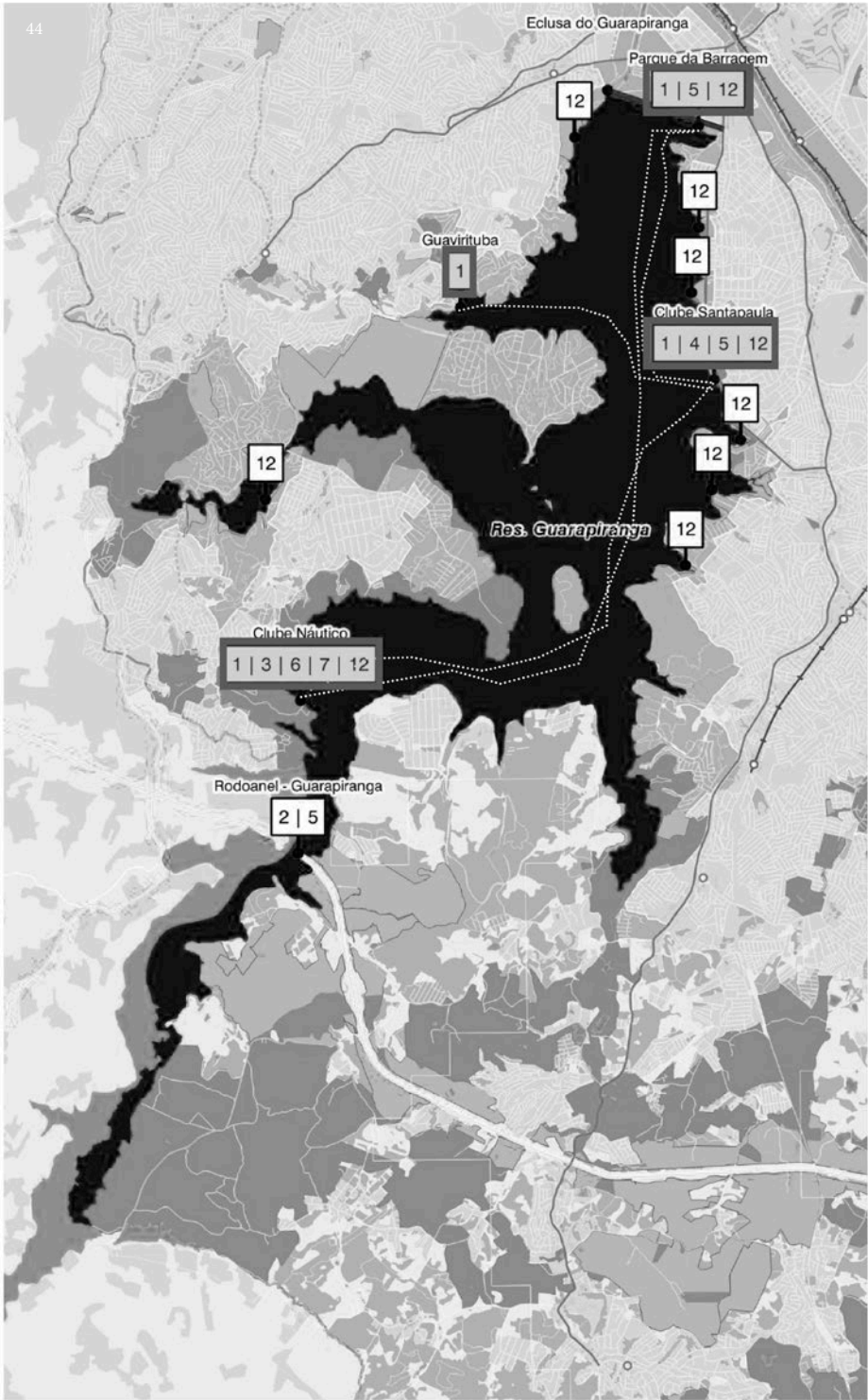
The main proposal of the plan is a system of infrastructural components that try to redefine the city’s relationship with water. These components encompass eco-ports (boat stops), parks, public facilities along the shores, bridges, and dams. The Guarapiranga and Billings reservoirs have been selected as the starting points for the project, with the first phase, titled “Consolidation of Urban Waterways in the Reservoirs”<sup>48</sup> and is set to be implemented sometime in 2025.

As a precursor to the broader plan, a new boat route started to operate in May 2024 on the neighboring Billings reservoir. The boats, which can carry up to 60 passengers and are currently in a trial phase, serve as a rapid connection between the Cantinho do Céu favela and the northern part of the reservoir. Previously, this journey took approximately 80 minutes by bus; now, the same distance is covered in just 12 minutes by boat<sup>49</sup>.

In Guarapiranga, the boat route is expected to become operational by 2025. Four boat stops are planned: two on the left bank and two on the right. On the left bank, stops are planned in the Jardim São Luís and Jardim Ângela neighborhoods, near the public Nautical Club. On the right bank, one stop will be located near the park by the dam, and another in front of the former Santapaula yacht club.

The boat stop in front of the former Santapaula yacht club is envisioned as a new focus point of the reservoir, where passages and permanences will converge. Plans for the site include the creation of a park along the shore, along with a marina and a leisure pier. A challenging accomplishment, as the waters of the right bank of Guarapiranga dramatically change levels over the seasons.

However, this location is significant not only for its central location within the proposed plan but also for its historical relevance in the urbanization of the reservoir. It lies at the heart of Agache’s urban design and was the site of the Club Santapaula,



Proposed plan for boat stops and new equipment  
Source: Municipality of São Paulo

a complex which features outstanding architectural designs by Brazilian architect Vilanova Artigas. Today, however, the building is largely in a state of disrepair, abandoned, and has been inaccessible to the public for the past 35 years.

The current plan does not explicitly address the future of the Santapaula building, though visual renderings suggest it may be repurposed as a hotel—its first intended use that was never fully realized. Given the broader vision presented by the plan to enhance social benefits, one might question whether this monumental and strategically located building could have a more meaningful function that is more fitting for the needs of the population that inhabits the margins.



Images published by the municipality in the Plan Hydro featuring the area of former Santapaula Yacht Club.  
Source: Prefeitura de São Paulo





# experiencing guarapiranga

photo essay from a  
boat tour in february 2025









Former Santapaula Yacht Club main building (center) and boat garage (right) seen from the reservoir

What if the new Santapaula boat station was further integrated into the current needs of Guarapiranga inhabitants so that this incoming node of passages could also configure new stages for permanences?





a site



## santapaula yacht club: the ruins by the margins



Construction site of the boat garage. Early 1960s.

I first visited Guarapiranga Reservoir in early 2022. The COVID pandemic was finally dying off in Brazil and it felt like a good idea to drive 45 minutes on a sunny Sunday to the southern area of São Paulo where Guarapiranga lies. My main aim was to visit Vilanova Artigas' boat garage, a defining building for the mid-century "Paulista School" of architecture<sup>50</sup>.

Approaching the reservoir by the northeastern tip, one can quickly grasp the monumental scale of its deep blue waters; it is not even possible to see where its end is. The recreational qualities are still mostly concentrated in that area: a park, sailing clubs, beach bars, and a cycling lane which sidetracks the waterfront. A different side of São Paulo was opening up. This liveliness soon died off as I approached the area of the former Santapaula leisure complex, what was once the largest sailing club in the whole Latin America.

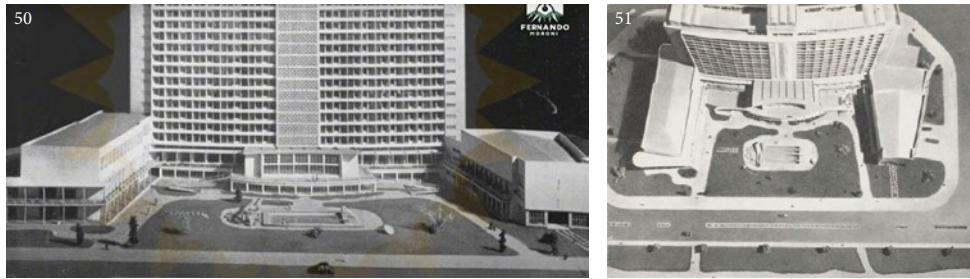
The history of the club dates to the beginning of the 1960s, when architect Vilanova Artigas and his then partner Carlos Cascaldi were approached by real estate mogul Adelino Boralli to design an ambitious project on the shores of Guarapiranga Reservoir. The first years of the decade were particularly a prolific time for the partners: as Brazil faced a time of economic growth and optimism, Artigas and Cascaldi were hired for several large-scale commissions. Many of the buildings were large-scale educational and leisure facilities, a process which culminated in 1962 with the project that is widely considered to be Artigas' masterpiece: the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU-USP).

The design that was commissioned for the club was, however, somewhat different from previous projects. Boralli, owner of the Santapaula real estate company, had bought the most privileged plot of the Interlagos neighborhood, an upper-class garden city located on the margins of Guarapiranga reservoir. In the location stood the unfinished structure of what should have been Grand Hotel Interlagos, a building designed by Polish architect Mieczyslaw Grabowski and originally designed to be 14 stories tall with two adjacent wings.

Only four stories and one of the wings were built until the undertaking proved to be too costly and the plans came to a halt. As Guarapiranga was still a very popular site for leisure activities, the real estate developer saw in the abandoned structure the opportunity to create the largest yacht club in Latin America. Artigas and Cascaldi had to face the challenge of dealing with the permanence of the pre-existing building as demolition would be financially unfeasible.

Not much has been documented about the condition of what had been built so far<sup>51</sup>, but the new project involved the adaptation of the existing structure for leisure use and the construction of two swimming pools, a tunnel that connected the club to the reservoir, and a boat garage with an access ramp. The boat garage was the element in which Artigas further expanded his own architectural language and technical ingenuity, while in the club the architect was constrained to the structure of the previous hotel.





Model of Grand Hotel Interlagos project by architect Mieczyslaw Grabowski  
Source: Acrópole Magazine

In an interview with Rosa Artigas<sup>52</sup>, a renowned architectural critic and daughter of the architect, she reminisced about visiting the construction site as a child and later attending parties in the club as a teenager. Artigas also stressed how her father was not particularly interested in developing the main building, as he could not do much with the existing structure, as he preferred to dedicate most of the project's budget to the innovative garage, which she compared to the light structure of a floating boat.

Eventually, when Santapaula Yacht Club opened in 1966, it was one of the most diverse leisure clubs in Brazil, offering facilities such as a restaurant, a nightclub, shops, a five-star spa, a bowling alley and even short stay apartments for visitors. However, over the next two decades the site went into a steady decline, until it was eventually closed and sold in 1988, initially being occupied by a weaving mill and later into a warehouse.

Manso<sup>53</sup>, in a post-graduate research about the history of the club, listed several reasons for Santapaula's ultimate demise: besides a lack of investments and financial problems, the uncontrolled occupation of Guarapiranga's shores resulted in increasing pollution of its waters, meanwhile, the improvement of roads and the popularization of the private car resulted in a faster connection between São Paulo to the Atlantic coast, introducing the beach as a more appealing leisure activity.

Now a shadow of its former self, the club's main building stands abandoned next to busy Atlantica Avenue. Completely closed off to the general public for the past 35 years, its ground floor was closed off in parts by the tall Cyclopean concrete walls designed by Artigas and by a new brick wall filled with decaying posters of political advertisement.

On the other side of the road, the legendary Boat Garage is still visible through a wired fence. The structure, which at the time represented one of the most technically advanced of Brazil, feels incredibly fragile and much older than its only 60 years of existence. Rusty steel reinforcement threads became visible in several areas while the metal supports became oxidized into shades of purple and grey. Paraphrasing Levi-Strauss, the velocity with which time's ravages take place in São Paulo was indeed staggering.

Framed by the rhythm of concrete beams, a strategic gap also reveals the reservoir's calm waters. A common design device in the projects of Brazilian architect Vilanova Artigas, when there is this clear slit, or gap, between the "chão" (ground) and the roof, creating what in Portuguese is called the "vão" (span). Like in the Boat Garage, the program in Artigas' buildings is usually encompassed by a single all-comprising roof, under which the notion of public and private become frequently blurred. The architect considered the designed space to be a continuation of the common ground of the city, not an exception to it.

Artigas was a firm believer in the power of architecture to gather people together.

There is a strong sense of urbanity in several of his design choices which transform even spaces that frequently lack quality, such as a corridor, into a possibility of human exchange. As Artigas' scholar Miguel Buzzar<sup>54</sup> writes "Artigas' projects, when definitively acquiring a dimension of social use, place the social project, the city project, and the building project in relation. This unification, articulated with other procedures, structured a political content to its architecture".

However, what is now found in the neighborhood of Interlagos, traditionally characterized by its upper middle-class population, is quite the opposite of a place of urbanity. Today, many houses are for sale, and large plots of land remain vacant. Walking through the streets evokes an eerie sense of emptiness, as the lush tropical vegetation that lines the streets rarely sees a passerby. Life, it seems, unfolds behind the closed high walls. Despite the neighborhood's predominantly affluent population, the area is devoid of life on the streets. This can be credited to its characterization in São Paulo's zoning as an exclusively residential area: without commerce, schools, or cultural hotspots, the streets feel disconnected and lifeless.

Architect Arthur Santos, who grew up in a neighborhood that borders the reservoir, gave an interview for this research<sup>55</sup> in which he pointed out how neither the building nor the reservoir never really had a particular meaning for him. Despite passing by Atlantica Avenue almost daily, it still felt like a "background in a space of fast passage"<sup>56</sup>.

In the site of the club, now closed for over 35 years, the building's haunting state of abandonment has overtaken the anchoring meaning it once had for the community. With its members long gone, the complex becomes a distant scenery noise for those that are passing by the busy Atlantica Avenue. The state of decay is even more visible in the boat garage, where the tropical climate weathered the concrete and revealed the steel reinforcement, now rusty and worn off.

Several attempts have been made to call attention to the condition of the site. Officially, in 2007 the tunnel, the boat garage, and the boat ramp were listed by CONPRES<sup>57</sup>, a council of the municipality, as heritage sites to be preserved in "all architectural features of the building, external and internal"<sup>58</sup>. Later in 2016, CONDEPHAAT<sup>59</sup>, a state agency, listed the complex, also adding the swimming pools and the surrounding stone walls to the elements to be preserved and possibly restored to their original state.

In the past decades, some attempts have been made to bring new uses into the club. Vera Domschke, former Artigas collaborator and the current director of Instituto Vilanova e Virginia Artigas (IVVA), revealed in an interview<sup>60</sup> that she had been approached in the early 2000s by Alexandre Delijaicov, idealizer of the CEUs and the Plan Hidro, to study the viability of converting the space into a new CEU unit.



Club in use during the 1970s



Drone Survey of the site. December 2024.

Furthermore, in 2010 new plans were revealed to transform the site back into its originally planned use: a high-end hotel. The design by architect Maurício Xavier included a new convention hall in the building, an exhibition space inside the swimming pool and the transformation of the boathouse into a restaurant. Despite being approved by the city's heritage council, the proposal was rejected due to issues related to the residential zoning of the area.<sup>61</sup>

In a talk with the gatekeeper of the club, Tião, it was revealed that a lengthy legal battle is currently taking place between the municipality of São Paulo and the current owner, as the government tries to repossess the complex. Due to the apparent delicacy situation, I was denied access to the grounds of the club in the two attempts I made to enter the complex during this research, in July 2024 and February 2025.

However, the process of repossession is happening simultaneously with the plans to transform the area in front of the club into a park and the implementation of the boat way, revealing signals that major changes could be underway for the site. If these changes were really to take place, ideally how could they happen?

In the interviews I made during the research trip to São Paulo, this was the last question I asked. Wagner Amaral, the urban planner from Metropole Fluvial, could see it as a place that gathered both the children and the elderly that live around Guarapiranga, perhaps as a SESC or a CEU. Fabricio Pelosi, the driver of the boat used on the tour, thought the place could be used for larger events and a marina. Marco Artigas and Vera Domschke, from the IVVA, said they preferred that the club would have a public use connected to the new park in front of it, they also stressed the importance of having an open architectural competition for the new design.

Taking these into consideration, for the further design development of the project, I asked myself:

Could the former club complex also be reimagined as a public space that instigates passages, permanences and, consequently, urbanity for the diverse inhabitants of Guarapiranga?

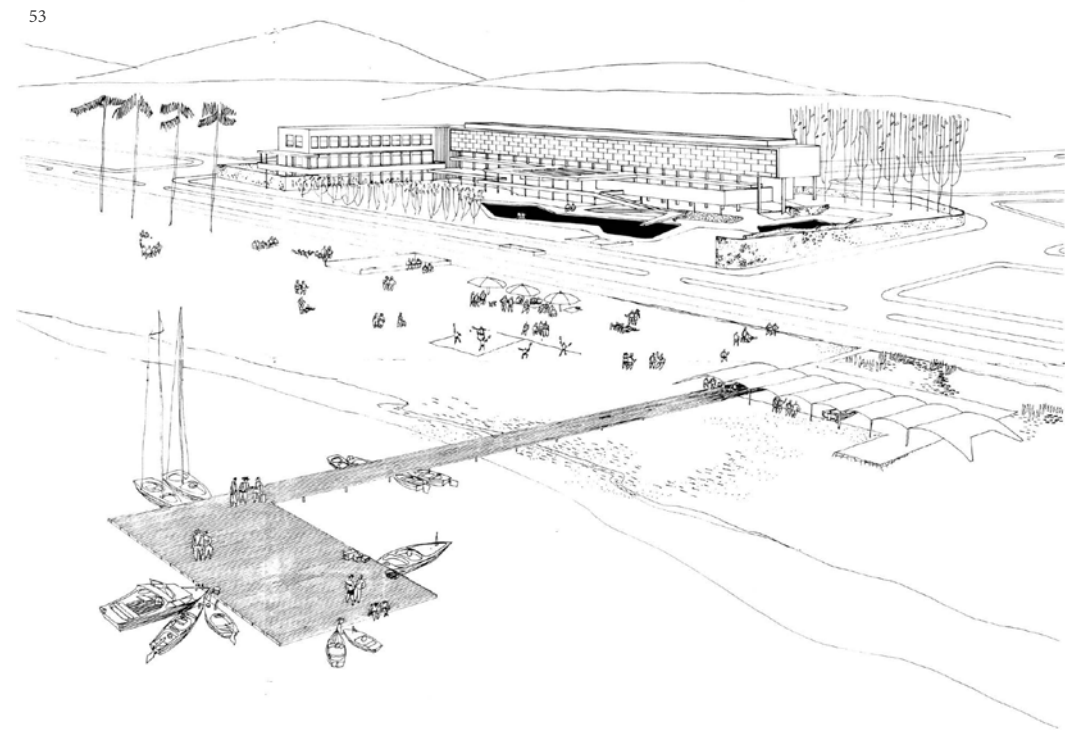
	by architects such as Vilanova Artigas, Paulo Mendes da Rocha and Pedro Paulo de Melo Saraiva. Usually it is considered to be a branch of brutalist architecture, as it is recognized for that an extensive use of reinforced concrete usually designed in a light one-piece solution.
51	In a visit to the archives of Vilanova Artigas at FAU-USP library, only plans of the positions of the existing columns were found. However, when comparing the final design for the club with pictures of a model by Grabowski's office it is possible to see that many of the original elements were kept in the final design.
52	The interview took place in February 2025, in Artigas' apartment in São Paulo.
53	Manso, 2021, p.75
54	2015, p.31 in "Artigas e a Metropole", Recaman
55	Interview done online through a video call on the 1st of December, 2024.
56	Interview with Artur Santos in November 2024.
57	Municipal Council for the Preservation of Historical, Cultural, and Environmental Patrimony of the City of São Paulo
58	Public consultation document by Conpresp, Resolution 03/2007
59	Council for the Defense of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage
60	The interview took place in February 2024 in Vera's office in São Paulo and Marco Artigas, the architect's grandson, also participated.
61	Juste Lores, 2020.

49	FAU-USP Photographical archive.
50-51	Acropole Magazine, March 1953 - N° 179. < <a href="http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br">http://www.acropole.fau.usp.br</a> >
52	Plan for converting the former Santapaula Yacht Club into a technical school and hotel. Prefeitura de São Paulo. 2022.
53-56	Vilanova Artigas' preliminary studies for the club. In: Manso, 2022.
57-59	Vilanova Artigas' preliminary studies for the club. From the architect's archive at FAU-USP.
60	Aerial view of the club in Construction. FAU-USP photographic archive.
61	São Paulo Antiga blog
62-63	Aerial view of the club in Construction. FAU-USP photographic archive.
64	Google Street View. 2024.

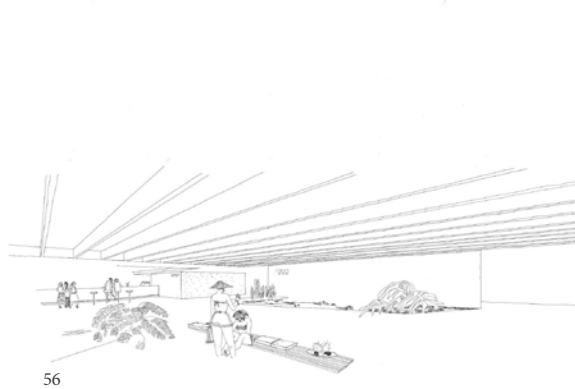
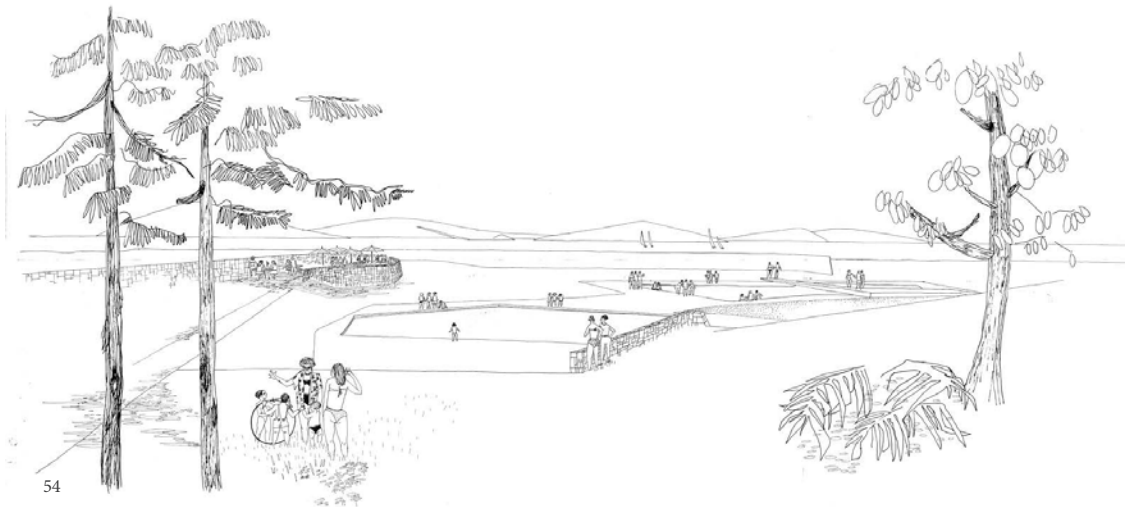


# initial study drawings for the club

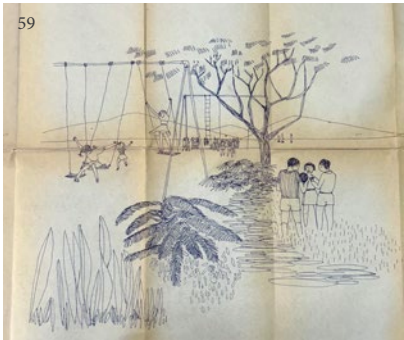
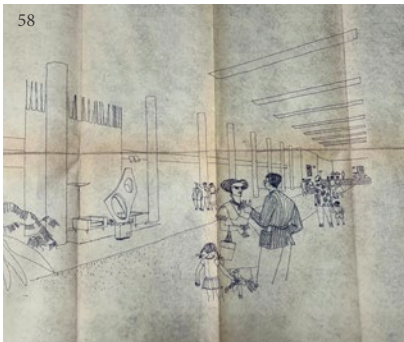
from vilanova artigas' archive at FAU-USP



Initial study developed by Artigas for the club  
Source: Manso, 2022.



Initial study developed by Artigas for the club  
Source: Manso, 2022.



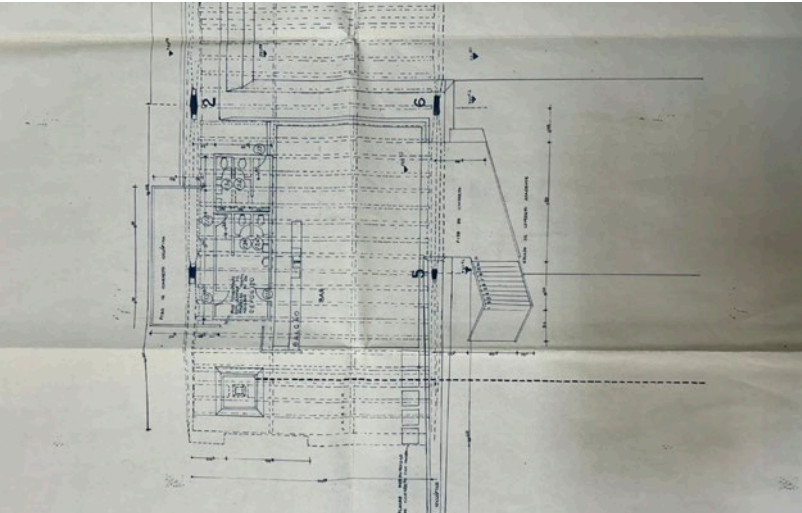
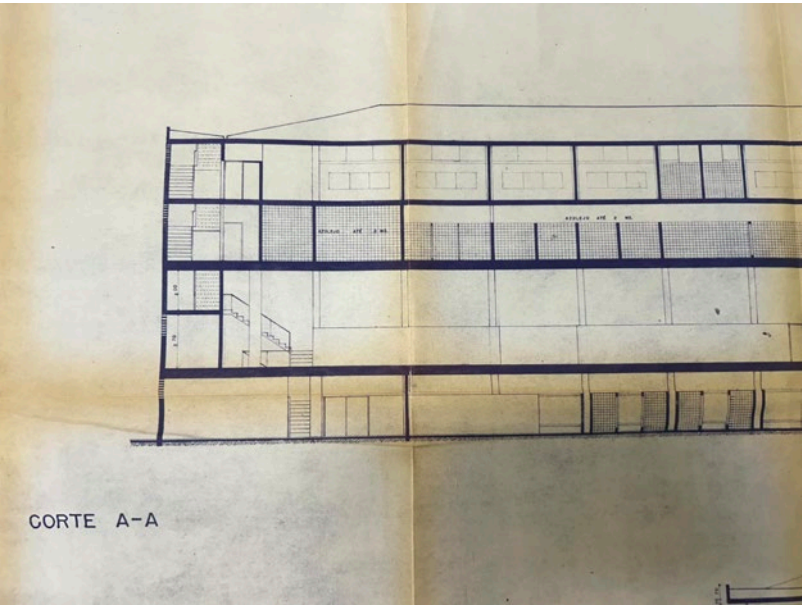
Initial study developed by Artigas for the club  
Source: FAU-USP Library

# surveying the blueprints

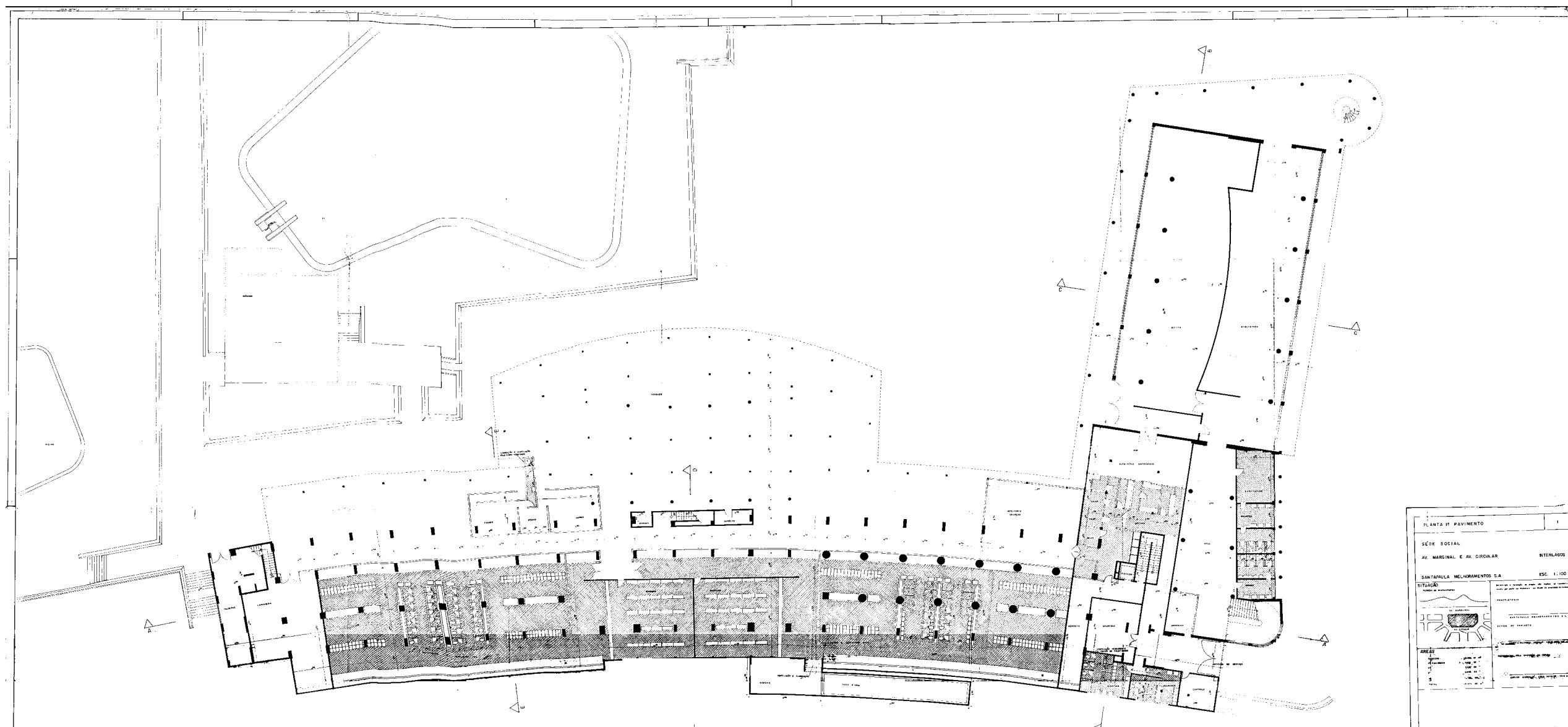
from vilanova artigas' archive at FAU-USP



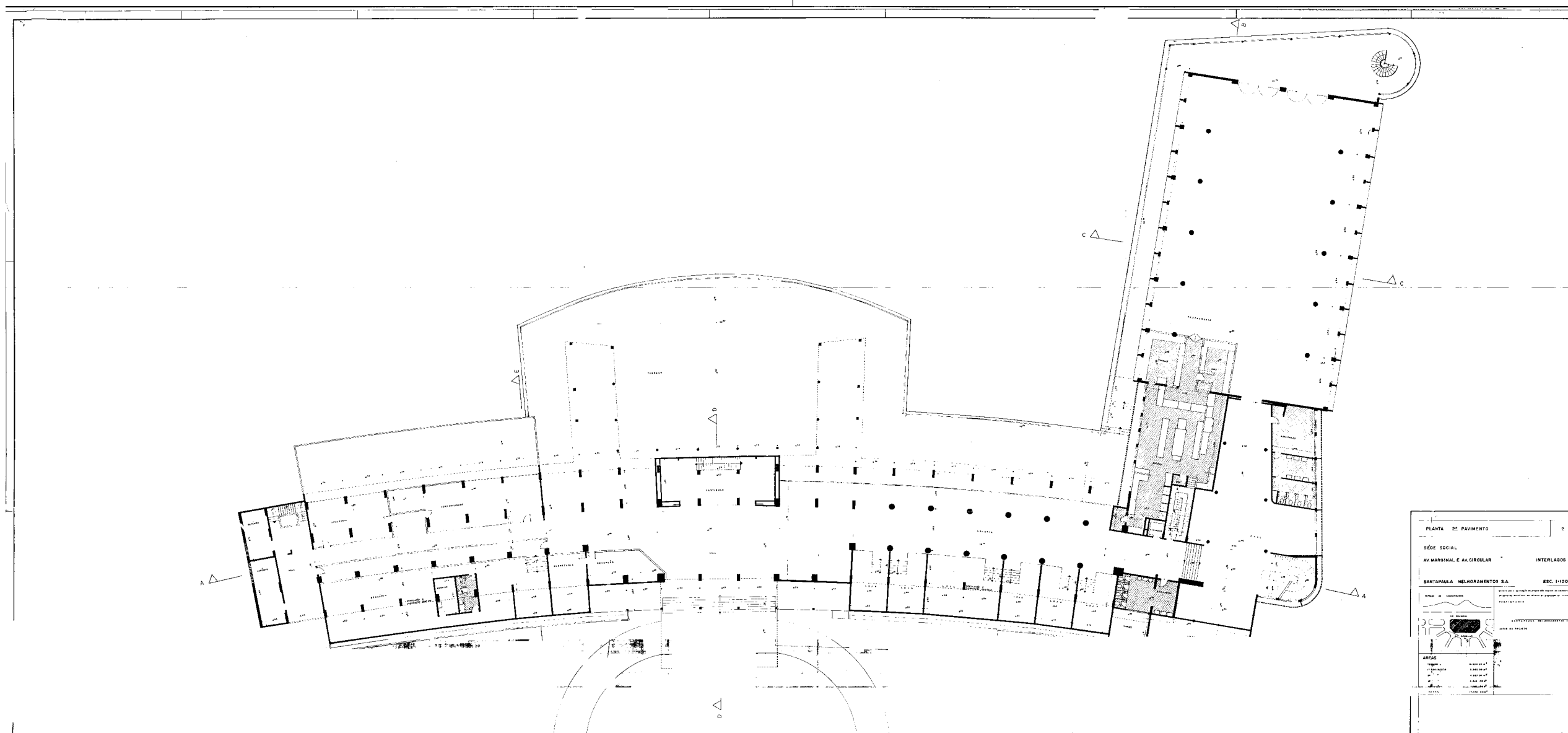
Visit to FAU-USP's architectural archive to research Vilanova Artigas' original drawings for the club. February 2025.







Original building drawings - 1st Floor Plan  
Scans kindly shared by FAU-USP archive.



PLANTA 2º PAVIMENTO

SÉDE SOCIAL  
AV. MARSHALL E AL. CIRCULAR

SANTAPÁULA, MELHORAMENTOS S.A.

INTERLABOS

ESC. 1:100

ÁREAS

ÁREA TOTAL	1.000,00 m²
ÁREA ÚTIL	800,00 m²
ÁREA DE PAVIMENTO	600,00 m²
ÁREA DE CIRCULAÇÃO	200,00 m²
ÁREA DE ESTACIONAMENTO	100,00 m²
ÁREA DE SERVIÇOS	50,00 m²
ÁREA DE RECREIO	50,00 m²
ÁREA DE GARAGEM	50,00 m²
ÁREA DE DEPÓSITO	50,00 m²
ÁREA DE ALUGUEL	50,00 m²
ÁREA DE OUTROS	50,00 m²

Original building drawings - 2nd Floor Plan  
Scans kindly shared by FAU-USP archive.

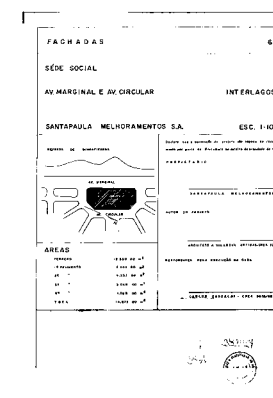
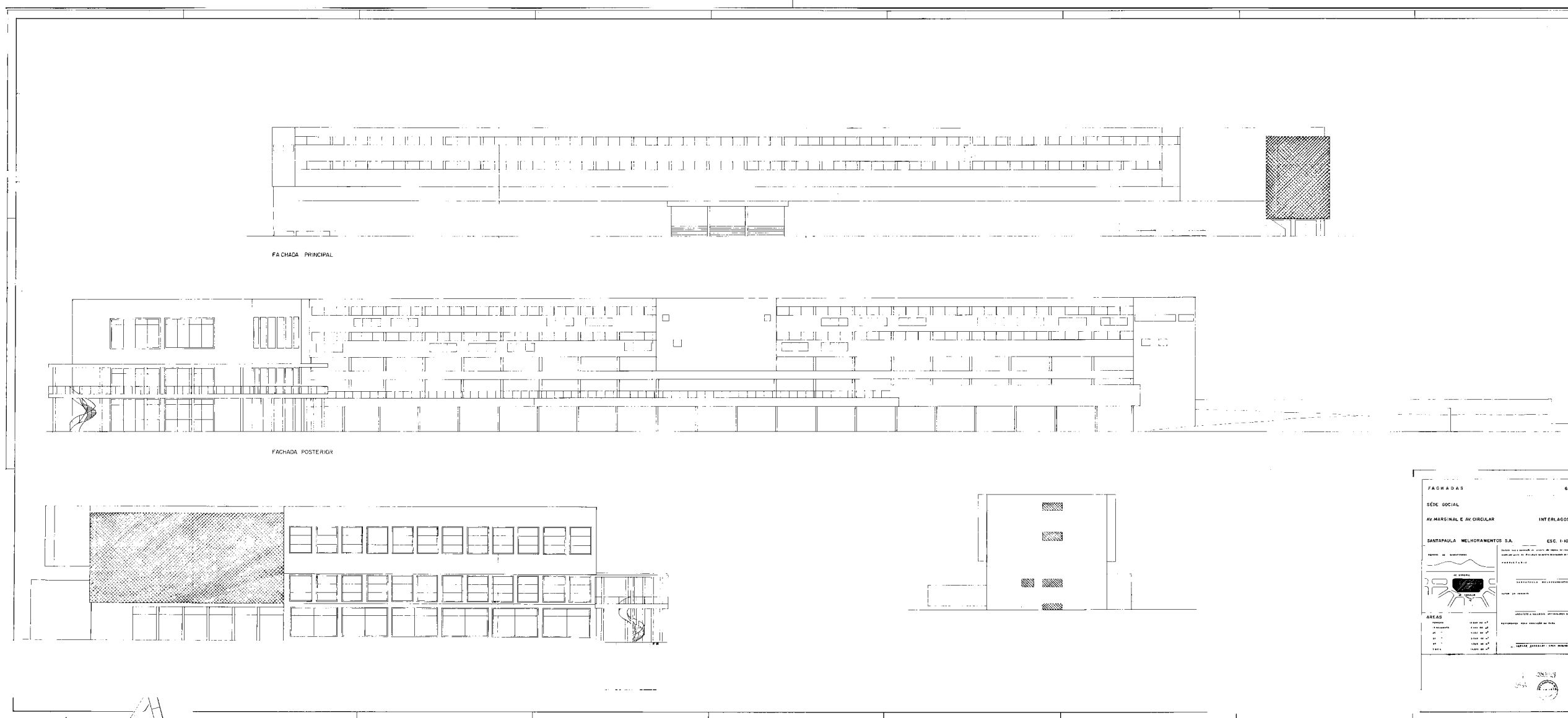












Original building drawings - Sections  
Scans kindly shared by FAU-USP archive.



now & then by the margins:  
a photographic survey



Aerial view of the club in construction. Early 1960s.



Aerial view of the club in use



Drone survey of the club, December 2024.



Drone survey of the club. December 2024.



Aerial view of the club in construction. Early 1960s.  
Source: FAU-USP library



West façade seen from the swimming pool. 2022.  
Photo kindly shared by Ciro Miguel.





Situation of the restaurant and the staircase. 2011.  
Photos kindly shared by Tuca Vieira.



Situation of the main building of the club. 2022.  
Photos kindly shared by Marco Artigas.



Site visit to the Boat Garage.  
July 2024.







Aerial view of the club in construction. Early 1960s.  
Source: FAU-USP library

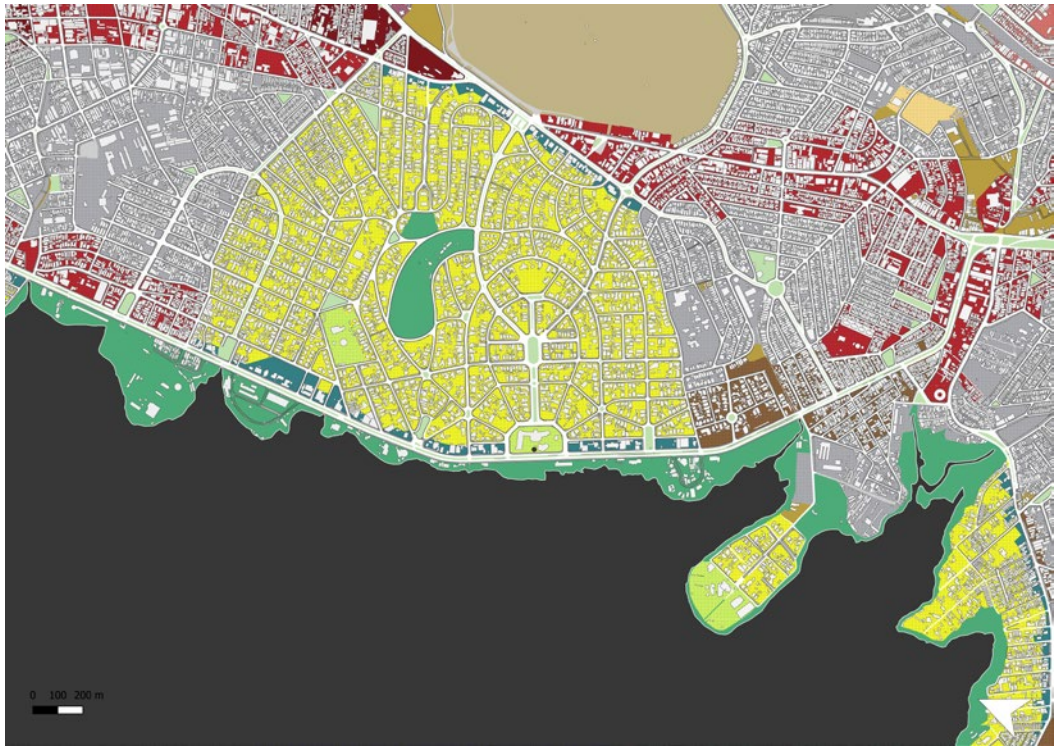


Drone survey of the club. December 2024.

# urban analysis

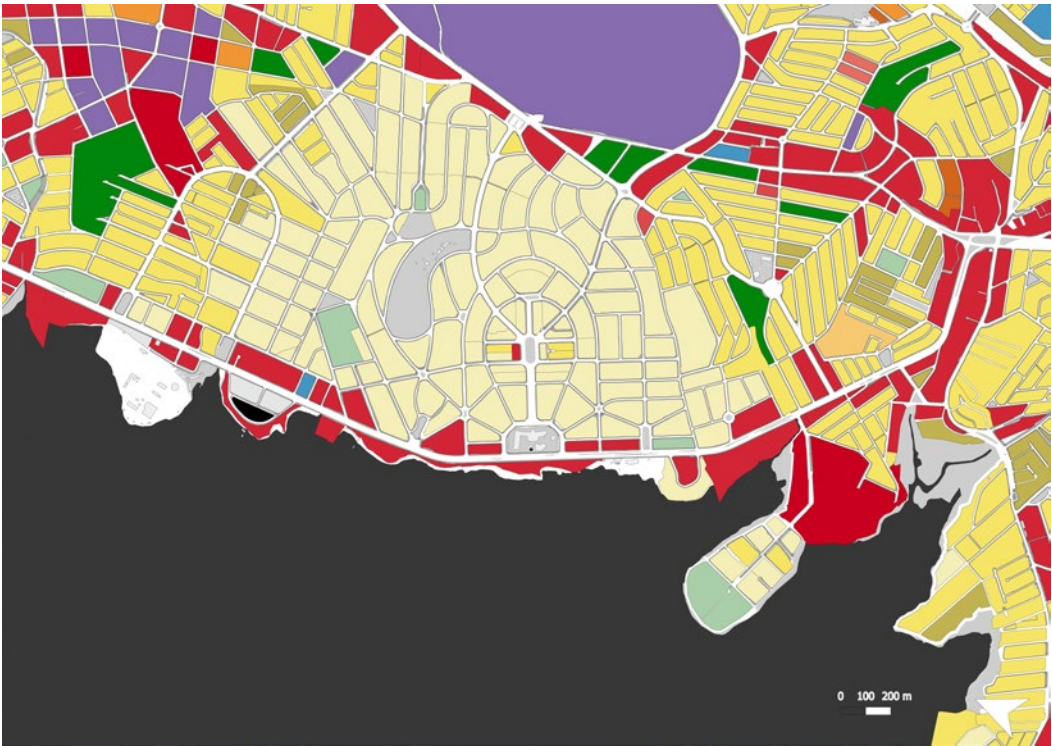
Passages & Permanences in the Surroundings

## Zoning



- ZEU
- ZEUa
- ZEUPa
- ZCa
- ZCORa
- ZM
- ZMa
- ZEIS-1
- ZEIS-4
- ZEIS-2
- ZOE
- ZERa
- ZEPAM
- AC-2
- Square

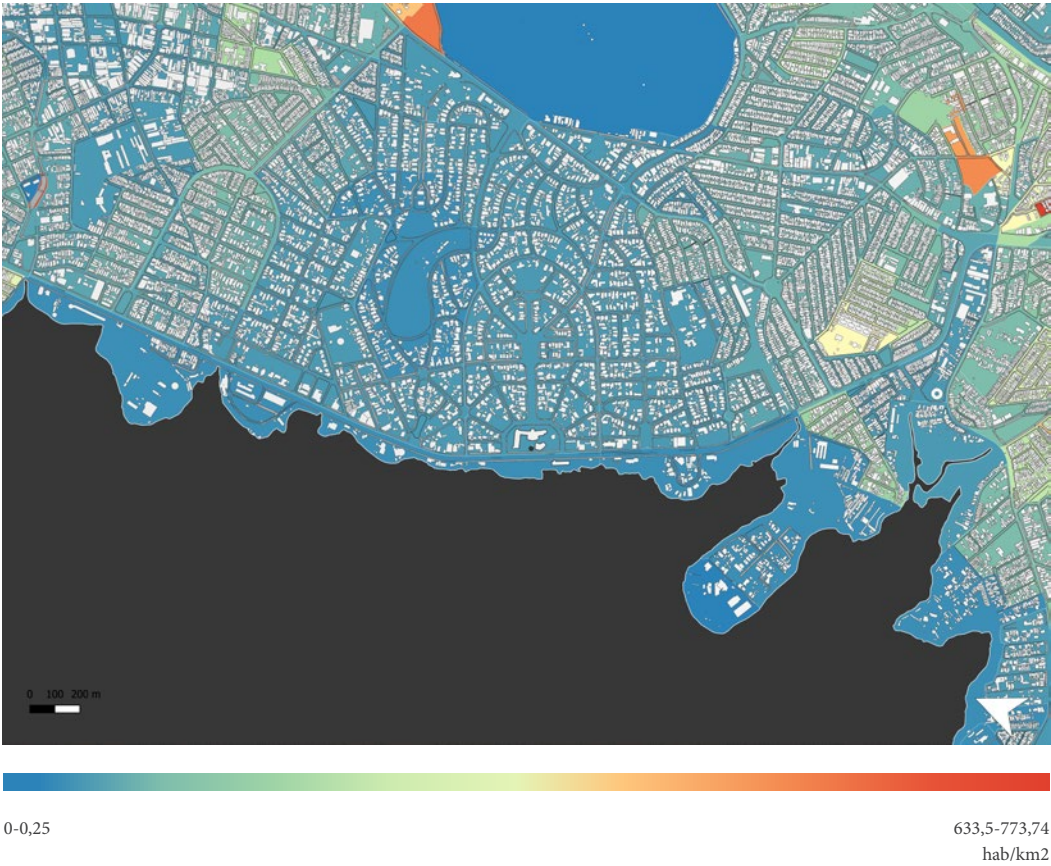
## Most common uses



- |                                            |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Warehouses & Depots Commerce (Horitzontal) | Residential (Horizontal Middle End Resi- |
| Commerce (Vertical)                        | dential (Horizontal Low End)             |
| Garage                                     | No correspondence                        |
| Industry                                   | Empty Lots                               |
| Residential (Horizontal High End)          | Collective Use                           |
| Residential (Horizontal Middle End)        | Special Use                              |
| Residential (Horizontal Low End)           | Schools                                  |
| Residential (Horizontal High End)          |                                          |



Density



Houses for Sale & Empty Plots



# a digital walk through atlântica avenue



ATLÂNTICA AVENUE

ATLÂNTICA AVENUE







heritage listed rock wall

ATLÂNTICA AVENUE

ATLÂNTICA AVENUE



ciclying lane  
inaugurated in 2018

visual connection  
to the water

ruins of the heritage listed boat  
garage



a possibility



# a foreword to the design

The images from this page are featured in the movie “Buena Vista Social Club” (1999, dir. Wim Wenders). In the depicted scene, a bolero piano song is heard as the camera starts panning through the neo-classic hall of an imponent, but decayed, palace in Havana. As a lone pianist shows on camera, a certain melancholy of the passing of time echoes through this aging space.

However, just as the feeling starts to settle, something unexpected happens: the hall becomes filled with children that jump, twirl, dance and do acrobatics. The palace, which moments ago felt so empty and obsolete, is revealed to have been turned into a sports training center for children. The melodic piano music is followed by giggles and enthusiastic high-pitched screams in the background, as life blossoms within the old building.

In a similar vein, the aim of the proposed design is to bring the movement of life, in all its range of passages and permanences, back into the site of the former Santapaula yacht club in São Paulo. Considering the site’s ampleness and the symbolism of the building, the potential seems endless. However, it is especially when I imagine it occupied by movement, meaning and giggling children from the diverse margins of Guarapiranga that I feel more hopeful for a sense of urbanity to flourish there.



Scenes from the movie “Buena Vista Social Club”  
Dir: Wim Wenders, 1999.

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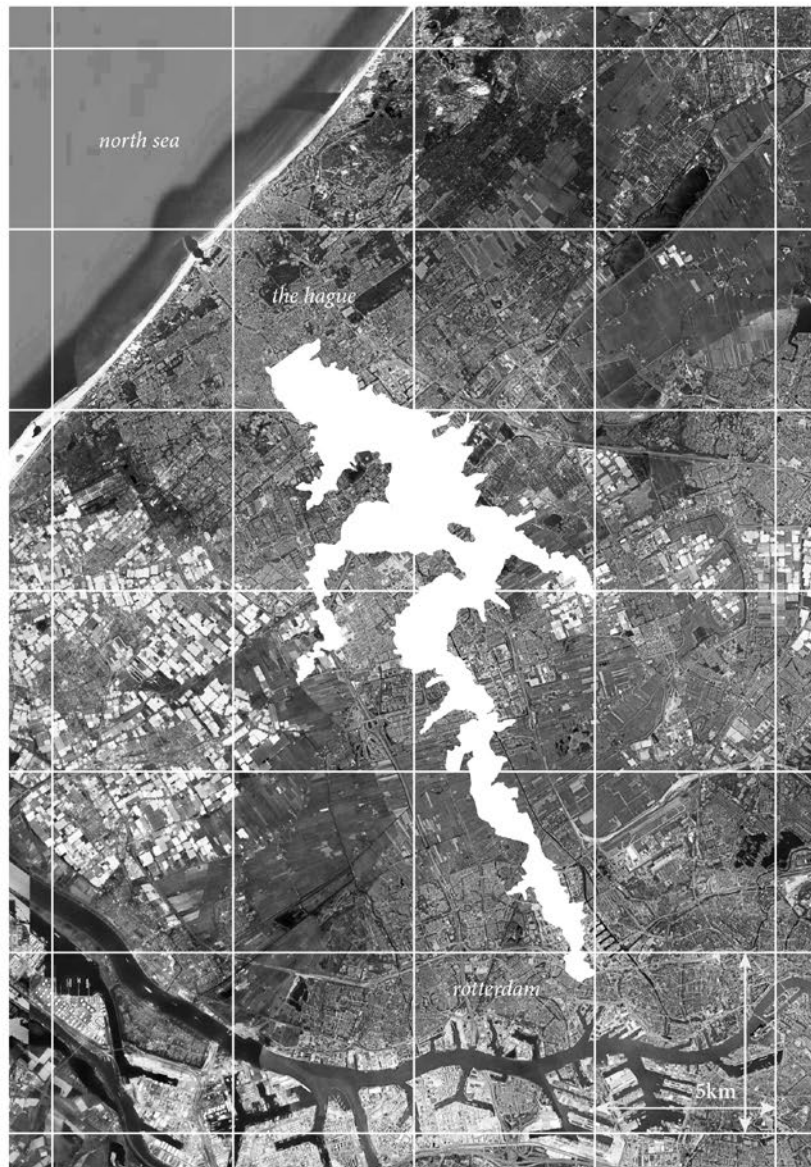
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Guarapiranga Reservoir (in white) placed over Delft and its surroundings  
for scale comparison