

Bairro da Bouça

Porto

Scheme I (unbuilt), 1972–74

The Bairro da Bouça is situated on an urban site to the west of Porto's city centre. In 1972, Siza was commissioned by the *Fundo Fomento da Habitação* (Housing development fund), or FFH, to develop a scheme to provide low-cost housing for lower-middle class inhabitants.

Siza's design proposed two four-storey and two six-storey rows of housing configured as stacked maisonettes. At the end of each row is a small pavilion designed to house communal facilities, including a laundry room, social centre/library and the headquarters for the housing association. On the north side of the site, the housing blocks meet a concrete wall which creates a buffer between the housing and the adjacent railway line.

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Scheme II, 1977–79/2004–07

Following the Carnation Revolution in April 1974, the temporary socialist government established the *Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local* (Service for Local Mobile Support), or SAAL, programme to address widespread housing shortages and poor living conditions across Portugal. The programme connected local communities with technical brigades of architects to design housing with the direct input of residents. Siza was commissioned by SAAL to adapt the unbuilt FFH Bouça scheme to rehouse the inhabitants of the workers' housing known as the *Ilha da Bouça*.

In 1976, following the election of the first democratic government, the SAAL programme was reorganised, and its responsibilities were brought under municipal control, effectively ending the programme. The construction of the housing in the Bairro da Bouça took place between 1977 and 1979, but only two of the four housing blocks were built. In 2007, under Siza's supervision, the remaining two housing blocks, the rear wall buffering the trainline and the communal facilities were completed.

Quinta da Malagueira Évora 1977–2000

The Quinta da Malagueira is located outside the city of Évora in the south of Portugal. Following the dissolution of the SAAL programme, local cooperatives and citizens' associations commissioned Siza to design low-cost housing on land consigned to them by the Communist mayor of Évora. Political friction between the local Communist and Socialist parties meant that the project was under threat every four years. As a result, the first phase of the project concentrated resources on building the housing cheaply and quickly. The development comprises 1200 low-rise dwellings designed to a limited number of housing types that could be adapted to residents' preferences.

Conduta

Quinta da Malagueira

The 'conduta' (conduit) is a concrete block structure that provides services across the estate. It serves as a spine connecting the blocks of housing and creates covered walkways for pedestrians at street level. During the design phase of the project, it was argued that elevating the services would lead to lower maintenance costs and be more affordable than groundworks, but the 'conduta' also relates the estate to the old city of Évora and its Roman aqueduct.

Cupula

Quinta da Malagueira

The 'cupula', or half dome, is one of several unbuilt public buildings at Malagueira—although Siza remains hopeful that it might one day be constructed. The idea for the cupula was conceived at the beginning of the project and is intended to be the civic core of the estate, providing a sheltered public space with a café. It is designed to be constructed in white concrete with turquoise tiles lining the interior, inspired by a visit Siza made to Morocco.

Seven Early Sketchbooks

17m 35s

This film was produced for the exhibition 'Opening Lines: The Sketchbooks of Ten Modern Architects' at the Tchoban Foundation in Berlin (30 June – 7 October 2018). During the exhibition the film was displayed next to a vitrine containing Siza's sketchbooks. The pages of the sketchbooks were turned over the course of the exhibition to line up with segments of the film.

Caderno Sketches

Amongst Siza's drawings for architectural projects, his sketchbooks contain numerous sketches made from both observation and his imagination. Some drawings depict Siza's friends, family and colleagues; often, however, he draws himself, either from a disembodied point of view or through his own eyes, looking down at his hands while drawing.

Bairro de São Victor

Porto

1974–76

The Bairro de São Victor is another project commissioned by the SAAL to provide low-cost housing in Porto and, like Bouça and Malagueira, it was designed in collaboration with local residents—students from the nearby School of Fine Arts carried out surveys of residents and gathered information about the area. Initially, the project was planned to be constructed in two phases, the first providing 32 dwellings and the second a further 20. Ultimately, only 12 houses were built on land that had originally been cleared by the municipal council to build a car park. Three houses were rebuilt and five houses were restored in the neighbouring streets.

Columns

In 2014, Siza was invited to participate in the exhibition 'Sensing Spaces: Architecture Reimagined' at the Royal Academy, London. The columns were later installed at Shatwell Farm, Somerset, Drawing Matter's home until 2024.

My first reaction as I wondered what to do was almost panic. Then the notion of the column emerged and I wondered if I could make an installation that referred to the birth of the column. I have placed one column lying down with its capital beside it, another standing, and a third with the capital in place. I hope that these three elements create an entity which also relates to the courtyard as a whole.

For me, making architecture means starting with what is there. Unless you are building in a desert, there are always lots of things to consider, sometimes too many. Here I am introducing a new element inspired by the sensation I had the first time I entered the courtyard.

When you exit the courtyard it is also the entrance to London, so I see my installation as related to the street as well as respecting the architecture of the Royal Academy. For instance, while I was standing in the courtyard I glimpsed a yellow bus through the archway and I had the perhaps crazy idea of painting the columns yellow. I see my installation as a continuity of a lot of movements—people visiting the exhibition, but also eating lunch, sitting in the courtyard for a rest, or to smoke a cigarette if it's still allowed!

This is the reality of the city. In a city the atmosphere is all around you and is ever changing. New things will become only things, so the idea of continuity is very real. When you finish a piece of work, it always seems a bit schematic because it's lacking the work of time, the flux of things that builds the city's changing presence. Time is a great architect. – Álvaro Siza

Caderno 1

I began using sketchbooks in 1977, and this is the first of them. I had been asked by the new communist mayor of Évora to plan a very large social housing development—Quinta da Malagueira—as an extension of the medieval city on an abandoned agricultural estate. Until that point all my work (it was not much work) had been in or around Porto. Évora was about a half-day from Porto by car—very far for us Portuguese.

I had to take notes because of the complexity of the project. We needed the participation of the neighbours, the plans, all the houses and programmes for the 1,200 families who would live there. Note-taking was necessary because, even then, I did not have a great memory. I bought this red school exercise book, filling its 70 pages in the first three days of the visit. I continued work on the project for over 20 years. As I arrived on the site for the first time I wrote on the flyleaf under the date ‘construir a nova E(vo)ra’—to build a new Évora.

I have always worked using drawing. At the beginning of the 1950s, I had the opportunity to read a wonderful text by Alvar Aalto in which he speaks about his own work and how important drawing is for him. Sometimes this drawing was not specially for a project but to re-examine the development of a project that had been blocked—so important is this relationship between the hand and the mind.

– Álvaro Siza