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FINAL STAGE

INTERNAL COLONIZATION IN MONTALEGRE ARCHITECTURAL (RE)VALUATION

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

AGRICULTURAL COLONIES, SETTLEMENT, ESTADO NOVO

DDR STATEMENT

The Design Driven Research (DDr) is a coherent knowledge-building strategy, used academically in architecture and the arts, where design is used to implement technical-scientific knowledge. Obviously, not neglecting the theoretical component of knowledge, but instead complementing it, acting as an important investigation strategy in what is the study of Architecture.

In this investigation, the DDr concept was a decisive process to consolidate the knowledge about an architectural design. If we assumed the classical and literary strategy of building knowledge about a real and built architectural design project, research would probably be more difficult and would need more time to prove and propose a hypothesis of evolution for the former agricultural colony of Montalegre.

Using DDr, the process of identifying of transformations between an initial project and final built product is not only possible but also faster. In this case, it made it easier to find the transformations from the original construction of the old agricultural colony of Montalegre.

On the other hand, it helped this investigation to identify the changes made over time and help to define the strategies for a proposed refurbishment that looks to the initial Projecto-tipo do Barroso, takes into account the needs of the current population and guided by theoretical foundation and brings forward a proposed solution. It sets out to (re)create guidelines and architectural limits and boundaries to the evolution of the settlements and to preserve it's identity as a unit.

With this in mind we conclude that DDr was an essential tool for the acknowledgment of the architectural evolution of these places and with it propose a strategy that brings back it's wholistic design approach and fundamentally it's identity.

ABSTRACT

In Portugal, during the dictatorial period (1926-1974), were designed and built a set of eight agricultural villages by the Junta de Colonização Interna (1936-1974). These agricultural settlements were an attempt to modernize and repopulate the interior of Portugal. One of these colonies is part of the Colonização dos Baldios de Montalegre e Boticas Project, foreseeing the construction of seven new villages using two standard housings types for the building of 130 houses. This document analyzes five of these settlements where the built units follow the format Projecto-tipo do Barroso. Nowadays, these settlements show clear evidence of the transformations that have taken place through the years, in light of new social and cultural ways of life, having gradually distorted their unity and identity. In summary, this research seeks to identify these disruptive elements and to develop new strategies that aim to regulate the unit's identity and also the integrity of the ensemble.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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INTERNAL COLONIZATION IN MONTALEGRE

ARCHITECTURAL (RE)VALUATION



IMAGE 1 Transformative Diversity on *Projecto-tipo do Barroso* building types;

KEYWORDS

Agricultural Colonies; Settlement; *Estado Novo*

INTRODUCTION

In Portugal, during the *Estado Novo* (New State) administration, there were eight agricultural colonies built by the *Junta de Colonização Interna* (1936-1974). One of such colonies took place in the Montalegre district under the initiative *Projecto de Colonização dos Baldios de Montalegre e Boticas*, where there were built seven new villages with a total of 130 rural housing units. The construction of these settlements units had two underlying housing types, of which the most predominant and object of this study is the *Projecto-tipo do Barroso*.

There is an exceptional character to these developments as they were purpose designed and built in a region victim of the strong rural exodus that took place in these interior regions of Portugal. Therefore, this study seeks to, in a generic perspective, identify two key issues. First, the real architectural value of these settlements, what is their value today and what truly defines their identity. Secondly, what is their state today and how true are they still to the *Projecto-tipo do Barroso*. To answer both these questions, this study seeks to identify the main disrupting elements to the original construction and potential ways of its “recuperation”. The aim of the “recuperation” depending upon each specific situation state may range from renovation to restorations is also regulate them, helping to safekeep the architectural identity of these villages.

This is therefore an investigation based on an architectural strategy, that intends not only to contribute with a research by design lead proposal but also with the foremost intention to raise awareness to the need to protect and revalue these *sui generis* settlements of the rural Portuguese architecture.

METHODS

This research focuses on 4 phases and their respective analyses methods:

First it looks for the true architectural value of these settlements by using the method of architectural state of art validation, specifically aimed at the concept of an Agricultural Colony.

In a second instance, the investigation looked for the architectural identity of the Agricultural Colonies themselves, focused on how these settlements were being designed and what was their purpose, based upon archives photographs drawings and paintings. From this evidence, the investigation was able to interpret the value and character of these settlements. on the Montalegre region where there is a bigger presence of the *Projecto de Casal - Tipo do Barroso* and how to better preserve its true identity

The third part of this research uses the evidence of these Montalegre settlements and compares them to the international examples of similar types of Agricultural Colonies. This helps to understand and validate the true nature and character of these

settlements and how they were reinterpreted and restored in recent years, educating the proposals in this study.

The last part puts forward a research by design strategy aimed at preserving the value of one of these settlements as a unit. This case study takes place in one of the five villages that comprises this investigation.

ARGUMENT

The *Colónia Agrícola do Barroso*, built during the *New State* (Estado Novo) period, were an architectural experiment that aimed to characterize the Portuguese agricultural landscape in light of the new totalitarian regime.

Located in Montalegre, region in the northern interior part of Portugal, the governing body responsible for the development of the Agricultural Colonies for the *New State*, found a pre-existing cluster type of settlement typical of these mountainous regions of Portugal, called *Barroso*. These seven small clusters of villages scattered along the territory were a determining singular feature for the development of this *Barroso* Agricultural Colony and not one single of bigger proportions, like the case of others in Portugal. Parallel to this, some authors like RAPAZOTE suggest other basis concepts like the Garden Cities, HOWARD¹, for these smaller settlements.

Although, as a State-owned, developed in the capital city of Lisbon, the design team always had in consideration the regions character and ways of life. These were key for the layouts of these settlements but also of the units/houses themselves. The proposed housing types had two main functions that were equally important. They needed to provide shelter and decent housing conditions for the occupants, but still 50% or more of the living unit was devoted to agriculture. In the *Projecto-tipo do Barroso* this was kept and made a priority as the local economy was still of subsistence based mainly on farming and cattle.

The development of design types made it easier and cheaper for the government to replicate them over the territory creating a sense of equality, unity, rhythm and proportions, both social and architecturally. This and the attention to local features and customs is where the true value of this architectural endeavour lays, with a strong sense of organization and awareness of the Portuguese territory, regardless of being driven by a political agenda.

Seventy years have now passed since the original construction of these villages and a deterioration of their sense of unity is now showing.

¹ The theory of the Garden Cities is a method of urban planning based on a rural lifestyle, in which the objective is to create self-organized cities, of an organic design, engulfed in a presence of nature. Published in 1898, with the book "*Garden Cities of To-morrow*" by Ebenezer Howard.

² By considerable alterations it reads those that interfere with the volumetric approach of the building, it's areas, the composure of the elevations by opening or closing fenestrations, changing colours or materiality, especially with extensions or refurbishments out of tone with the original project.

Transformation analysis of *Projecto-tipo do Barroso* modules

	Nº of units with Wall fencing	Nº de units with extensive changes ²	Nº of units with little to none changes ³	Nº of units in ruin	Nº of units with extensions and/or new constructions ⁴
Lugar de São Mateus	7	5	3	2	4
Aldeia Nova do Barroso	19	23	13	4	23
Lugar do Vidoeiro	6	4	5	0	6
Aldeia de Criande	20	23	4	0	18
Aldeia de Montalegre	12	17	1	2	5

TABLE 1: *In situ* verified transformations on the analysed *casais agrícolas*;

³ No or little alterations are those seen to have only small remedial works and improvements in the adjacent areas of the building, that use original materials or similar, that keep the original proportions of the building, both on the inside compartments and outside elevations and plan.

⁴ Annexes and/or new constructions are all the volumes created away from the original project and nor part of them nor immediately adjacent to them.

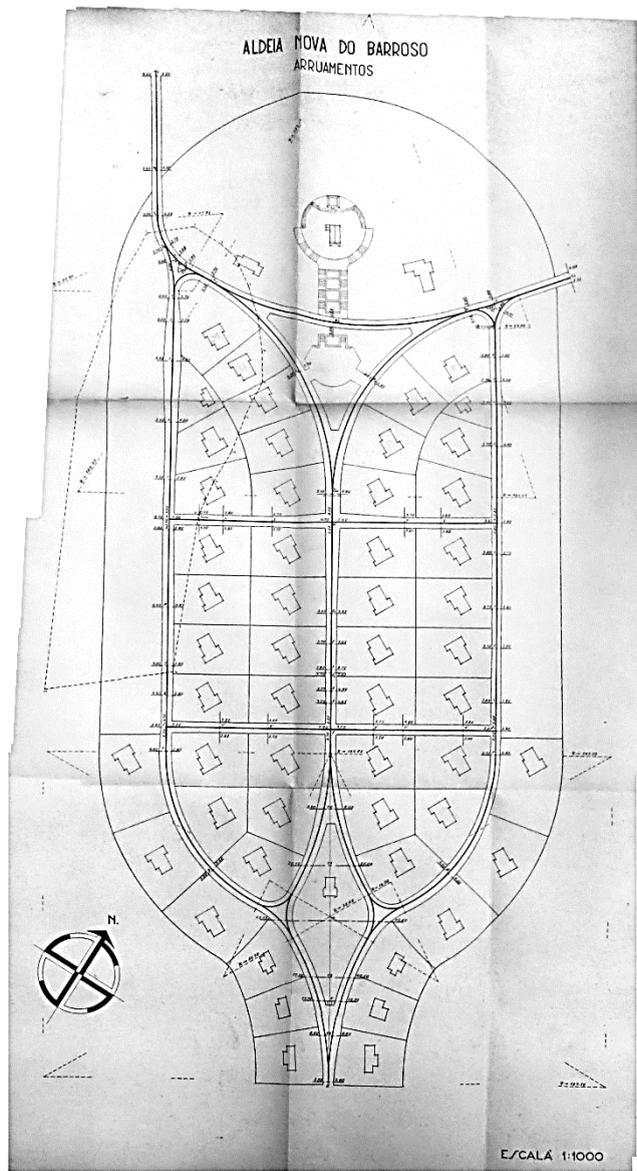


IMAGE 2: Original Masterplan for *Aldeia Nova do Barroso*



IMAGE 3: Study of the evolution of the masterplan Aldeia Nova do Barroso. In pink are the houses in ruin; In green the houses with extensive changes; In black are the houses without significant changes; In blue are the new constructions; In the red hatch are institutional buildings.

CONCLUSION

This investigation has allowed us to understand, after multiple on-site verifications and based on a design driven research, three patterns of modifications to the units. a) construction of fencing; b) extensions of the units; c) new construction within the property lines. In all instances there is no architectural considerations, nor a unity type of solution, in fact quite the opposite. These are all isolated instances with no attention to the surroundings or sense of unity.

Also, other than just putting legislation in place, it is fundamental to fundamental to appreciate the territory as a whole, starting with the awareness of the residing population on the unique character of these settlements. For this, it is crucial the population be a part of the process of change on the territory, as suggested by the REHABIMED methodology, with a personal approach to the needs of the population and focused on a greater common good.

With a collective awareness of the settlement as a whole, the creation of specific guidelines for their transformation on a municipal level is fundamental. The need for modernization that is illustrated by the earlier mentioned patterns of modifications can't be neglected, but ensuring that there is again a unity approach is essential to give it the sense of architectural identity it once had.

Lastly, we believe that it is fundamental to promote these types of forgotten settlements on the interior regions of Portugal, specifically with the intention to praise them and guarantee their protection. In most cases, these settlements will be object of change, purely from a housing market point of view, or touristic, or even agricultural, but nevertheless there should be a guarantee that they remain preserved as part of unified strategy settlement.

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