

Historic Suburban Villas and Manor Houses of Azores Identification, valuation and revitalization of an architectural heritage

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Rehabilitation Strategies; Azores

Partner Institutions

Universidade dos Açores

Expected Future Partner Institutions

Câmara Municipal de Ponta Delgada
Câmara Municipal da Ribeira Grande
Câmara Municipal de Angra do Heroísmo
Câmara Municipal da Horta

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this project is to make an analytic research about the Suburban Villa and the Manor House of this period recognized as place. This study objectively refers to the way these architectonic structures are designed in function of a structured well and defined spatial model and from the specific place that works as a physical support. The specific architectonic culture of the region where the Villa is inserted, the landscape context in which it is inserted and the relations with other Portuguese Villas as well as with other urban places are also taken into account in the process of understanding and characterizing the Place.

This research project also aims to identify and enhance the value of an architectural heritage - the Quinta de Recreio and the Solar dos Azores built in the 17th and 18th centuries - which has as its reference the Italian Renaissance Villa. The aim is to reveal their place in the context of Portuguese architectural culture from the perspective of Integrated sustainability - patrimonial, environment and cultural.

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ABSTRACT + IMAGES

Starting at the *Villeggiatura* on a ideological basis and Italian Renaissance Suburban Villa as an architectural reference model, revealing structural principles of architecture over the territory, it is recognized in Portuguese Suburban Villa [Quinta de Recreio] the conceptual interpretation and architectural realization of this ideal, visible in architectural practice of design with the place.

The Portuguese Suburban Villa [Quinta de Recreio] like its Italian conceptual model, stood out, in different periods of architecture history as a cultural symbol. This expresses, through its architecture, emerging signs of its compositional elements and the meanings attached to experiences that are peculiar, the myth that it took to build, reflected in attraction to Nature, the dialectic nature/culture or artifice and the prerogatives of privilege/power or class pride.

The same applies to other architectural types with cultural interest in Portuguese and Brazilian rural space, such as the Manor House [Solar] and Farmhouse [Casa de Fazenda].

The meanings of those architectural complexes vary with the place and with the way to build, including gardens and all details as a whole. They are highlighted by their individual characteristics, expressed by a revealing architectural grammar of representativeness inherent to socioeconomic status and cultural level of their owners.

These share architectonic structures and spatial systems very similar. The way they are projected in function of a careful reading of the intervention place and of physical, landscape and cultural contexts, that determine, together with the interpretation of a paradigm or humanistic reference of villeggiatura, the conception of an whole architectonic complex that integrates various spatial and functional parts that constitute them – buildings architecture, the gardens, plantation areas and landscape environment – as a spacial integrated and indissociable whole. In this project it will be analyzed that Place and its particularities, putting in evidence the architectonic and landscape values, in a very rich and particular environment - S. Miguel and Terceira islands in the Azores.

These Portuguese Suburban Villas and Manor Houses are recognized, valued and identified as having by reference the model of the Italian Renaissance Suburban Villa, but this value is not scientifically proved. That is one of the main objectives of this investigation project.

In order to proceed with a profound study of this theme, a rigorous research about existent Portuguese Suburban Villas, built after the period of renaissance influence - it doesn't exist yet a technical and scientific inventory - is necessary. It's missing to identify its location, the physical limits of each one and its spatial and functional structure. The current uses and its potential of assimilation in what concerns a functional and viable utilization of contemporaneous character also need to be identified. Moreover, it must be defined the way that should the safeguard and revitalization of every case studied should be made, and the ways to find the financial supports available and possible, as well as the means to economic viability as a cultural and touristic incentive.



SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE FOR THE DISCIPLINE

With a double focus both on the history of the renaissance Villa in Portugal, and its contribution to the erudite residential architecture in rural areas of Azores (17th and 18th centuries), as well as the current potential of specific sites, the research deals both with architecture history as with preservation, conservation and retrofitting. This study can have a significant relevance for the international academic community, especially in the fields of Architectural Theory and architectural rehabilitation design project practice.

EXPECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The possibility of applying the knowledge produced will most certainly be useful for the business sector in terms of tourism, commercial and public functions.

RESEARCH PLAN AND TASKS

This research develops a complementary and interdisciplinary strategy that uses the specific knowledge of History, Architectural Theory, Landscape Architecture and Architecture aiming the integrated understanding of the project designed for each place studied, gathering all the realities that confer identity, value and character - the architectonic space, landscape and the cultural context in which is inserted.

It is aimed to create a combined knowledge nurtured by the referred scientific areas, which has been dispersed and that is essential to the understanding of the architecture of the Portuguese Suburban Villa and the Manor House of renaissance influence as an architectonic Place, and the recognition of its fundamental contribution on the construction of a projective culture with the Place, pointed out and methodologically developed in the Portuguese architecture from the renaissance to nowadays.

In order to achieve the mentioned objectives, the investigation will use four levels of approach, with specific but complementary methodological scopes. These levels have a chronological frame, but along the investigation Project it will be possible to develop a certain vector of previous research it may be found worth of it or necessary to the current work being developed at the moment. The first level concerns a theoretical and historical character investigation, by recurring to a specific bibliographical and documental analysis about the subject of the research; the second level refers to the inventory field work about the Portuguese Suburban Villa as a Place; the third level will make practical application of an analytical model, previously defined and theorized, in the inventoried cases, and the fourth level has as an end to implement a safeguard strategy and patrimonial rehabilitation, supported by scientific rigueur, and build in the previous phases.

Directly related to the defined contents, the proposed research plan has the following structure:

- Level I [Theoretical Research / Architecture and Garden's History and Theory]

This stage of the project aims at the historical and typological framing of Azores Suburban Villa and Manor House, the study of the Renaissance Villa as its architectural and spatial model of reference, and the construction of a cultural identity of designing with the Place from an ideal of Villeggiatura. [Stage already far advanced in previous research]

This stage concerns the following task:

- 1.1- Bibliographic, documental and iconographic research / Dissertation about typological content; Spatial Program; Theory of Place and ideal of Villeggiatura.

- Level II [Technical and Scientific Inventory of Places]

This stage of the project aims to develop the technical and scientific Inventory of the historical valuable Suburban Villas and Manor Houses - architecture, gardens and agricultural areas; landscape integration. [Stage already far advanced in previous research]

Photographic and geometric surveys of the existing buildings and gardens will be carried out on each Villa studied.

This stage concerns the following tasks:

- 2.1- Documental Research;
- 2.2- Field Work – architecture analysis and external space architecture;
- 2.3- Processing the collected information. Writing of conclusion report about the research produced.

- Level III [Analysis / Demonstration of the Architectonic Value]

At this stage, we depart from the theoretical and material research produced during the previous stages and, from a specific method of analysis, developed in particular for this occasion, supported by the epistemological breeding between the Theory of the Place and the Villeggiatura model, conducts the analysis of the case studies, in order to prove the architectonic value of its constituting parts and of the architectonic place as an integrated whole.

This stage concerns the following tasks:

- 3.1- Characterization of analysis default model to apply on every Villa as an integrated space – Architecture/ Place / Landscape. [Applied Analysis Model]
- 3.2- Morphological, typological and spatial analysis / Phenomenological analysis / Semiotic analysis.
- 3.3- Morphological and typological synthesis resulting from the crossing of the three analyses and comparison with other Italian examples.

- Level IV [Practical Usefulness of the Research / Safeguarding and Revitalization of the Place]

In this last stage of the plan, we define the functional adaptation strategies necessary for the contemporary uses, with a special attention devoted to the patrimonial and spatial conservation of the Villas studied, from a safeguard and revitalizing perspective – rehabilitation and recovery of the Villa as an Architectonic Place – architecture, gardens and landscape.

This stage concerns the following tasks:

- 4.1 - Structural, spatial and functional Rehabilitation Strategies.
- 4.2 - Research of suitable architectural and spatial programmes in a perspective of "integrated conservation" (concept defined in the "European Architectural Heritage Charter", September 1970, as a joint action of several rehabilitation techniques searching for appropriated functions.
- 4.3 - Economic viability and cultural and touristic added value - heritage viability (marketing / management / entrepreneurship). Research of technical-financial support programmes from heritage protection funding bodies or patrons.
- 4.4 - Critical and final synthesis – writing the final report of the research / publishing of scientific book .

The methodology thus takes an integrated approach to the different disciplinary areas involved in the interpretation and analysis of the object of study and its spatial and cultural contextualization.

The research team, composed by specialized researchers in the three knowledge areas crucial for the project's development – Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Architecture and Garden History – will provide each task with the specialized contribution, supported by the individuals' particular talent and scientific knowledge about the subjects studied.

Departing from a contextualized knowledge of the current issues, this proposal will incorporate the results achieved by the different specialties of project approach, in the various levels of the research progress, by confronting them with the theoretical-practical model of analysis and with the concrete realities found in the various stages of this work.

The definition of strategic architectural rehabilitation of the cases studied, and its appropriation by programs appropriate to contemporary uses, will only be financially viable if supported by credible economic feasibility studies and carried out in the full knowledge of all components of the research project. This necessity makes it imperative to integrate the team of an economist specializing in such projects.

In this sense, and according to the plan proposed – communications presented in conferences and seminaries, publishing articles in specialized magazines – we seek to systematize a process which begins with the application of the approaches and conclusions achieved in the treatment given to a particular case study into others which share the same structural and morphological nature, inserted in similar realities but differentiated by specifications of its own.

EXPECTED SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

- Communications in international meetings

The planned communications will be indicators of the receptivity of research in the general scientific context. According to their respective stages, they will be framed by specific themes, so that the meetings they are aimed at will be defined later, although with the criterion of being international as a way of accentuating the international dimension of the research.

- Organization of seminar and/or conference

A final conference and/or seminar, promoted by and directly related to the partner institutions, will be considered.

- Papers in international journals

The articles in international journals will allow the dissemination of work phases emphasizing both completion aspects and procedural and methodological aspects related to the various phases of work, with the themes and contents addressed.

- Book

Editing and publication of a book at the end of the project.

BUDGET: € 7.500,00

Human resources: 4.800€

Editing and publication of book: 2.700€

Total: 7.500€