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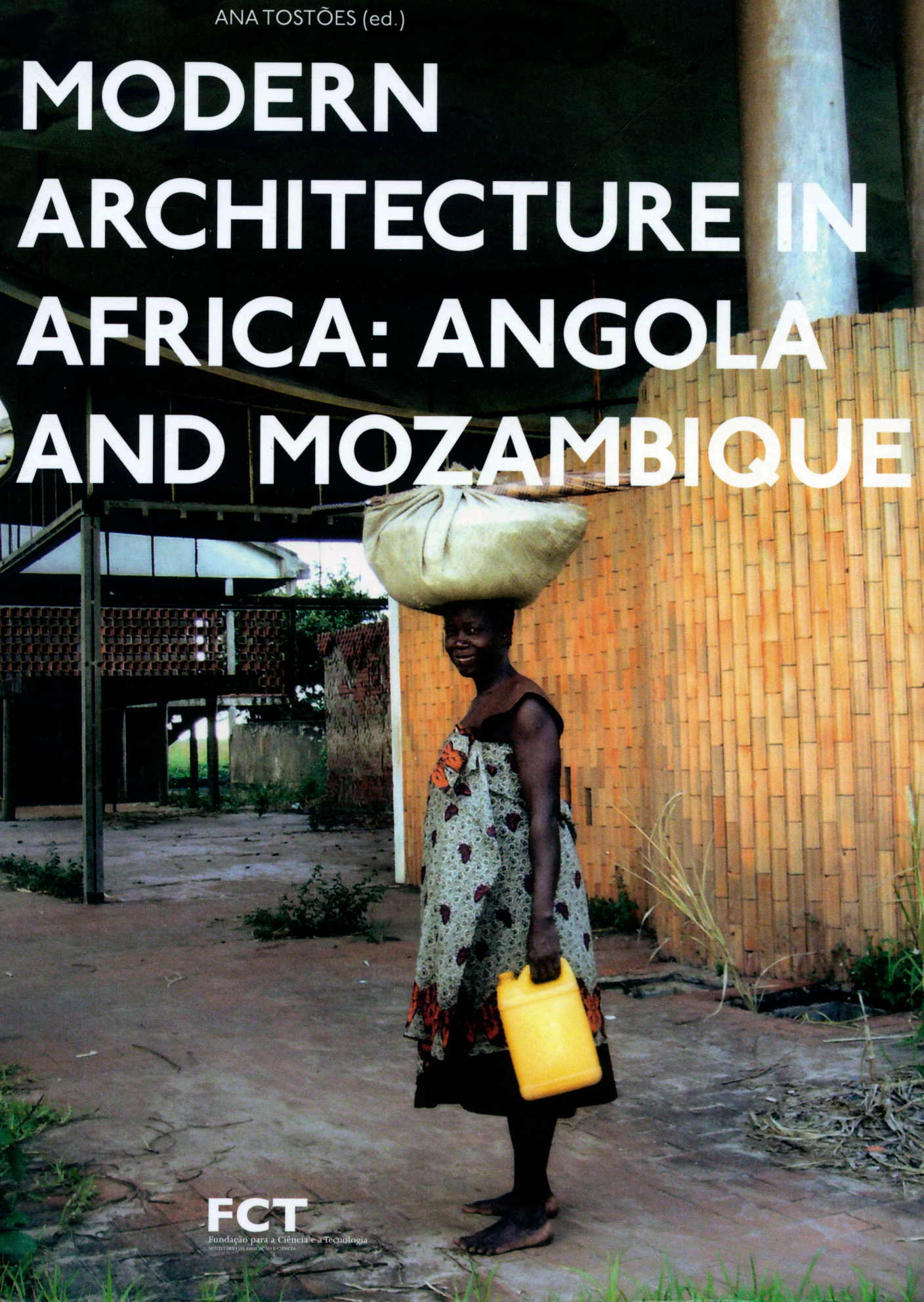

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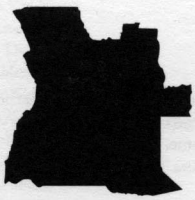

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PALACES OF PUBLIC OFFICES [1] IN MOZAMBIQUE Functionalism and Representativeness

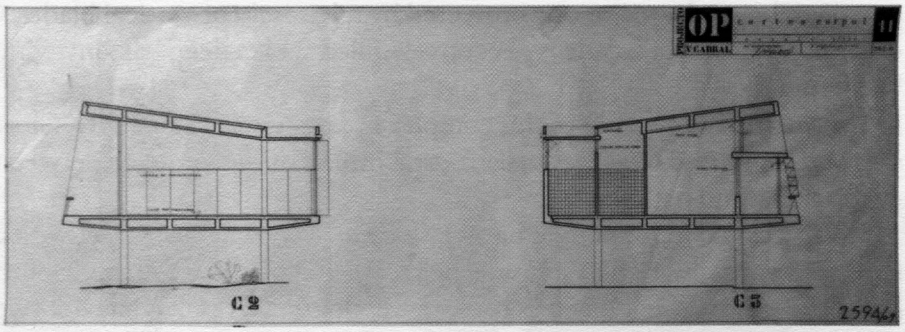
The Palaces of Public Offices built in Mozambique during the third quarter of the twentieth century contained, in a sole infrastructural building, programs with special functional and representative requirements: facilities for the different departments of public offices, with a functional articulation between areas of private work and of public attendance, and the headquarters of the various district governments, with the consequent need for institutional expression of forms and spaces.

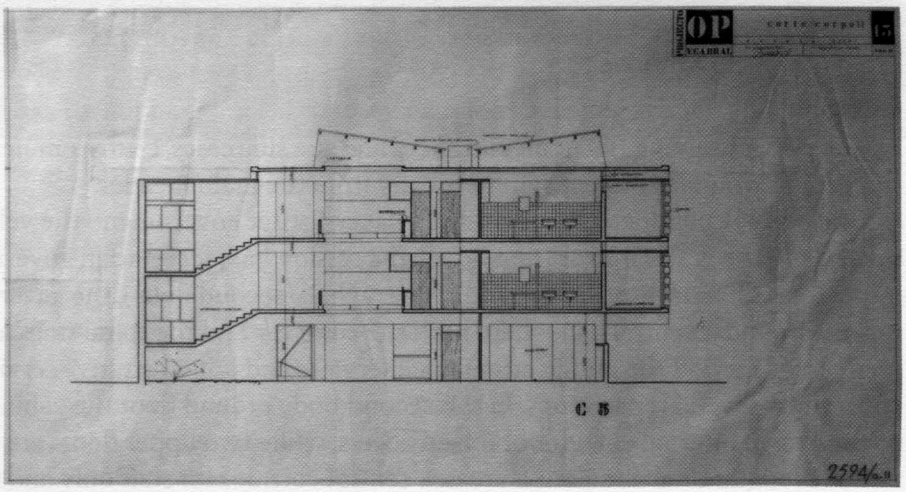
Palace of Public Offices of Vila Cabral, 1959

The Palace of Public Offices of Vila Cabral, current Lichinga, was designed by Maria Carlota Quintanilla and João José Tinoco, a couple of architects then living in Lourenço Marques. The design of the building was being developed in mid 1959 with the tender for its construction being released by the Direction of the Public Works Services on the 15th of September of the same year. The skeletal structure was already erected in June 1961 and its inauguration took place about 1962.

The palace building occupies a five front block of Lichinga city radio concentric and centralized closed plan. The complex is composed by two rectangular volumes settled on different angles linked by an irregular passage: identified as body II on the technical drawings and having three floors, the main volume locates at the ground centre, parallel to the North and South fronts of the block, while the minor volume, named body I and having two floors, faces the first one obliquely, perpendicular to a reference line beginning at the square centre and trespassing the middle point of the block Northeast front. The building complex is surrounded by a gardened area, extending and contrasting its geometrical figure.

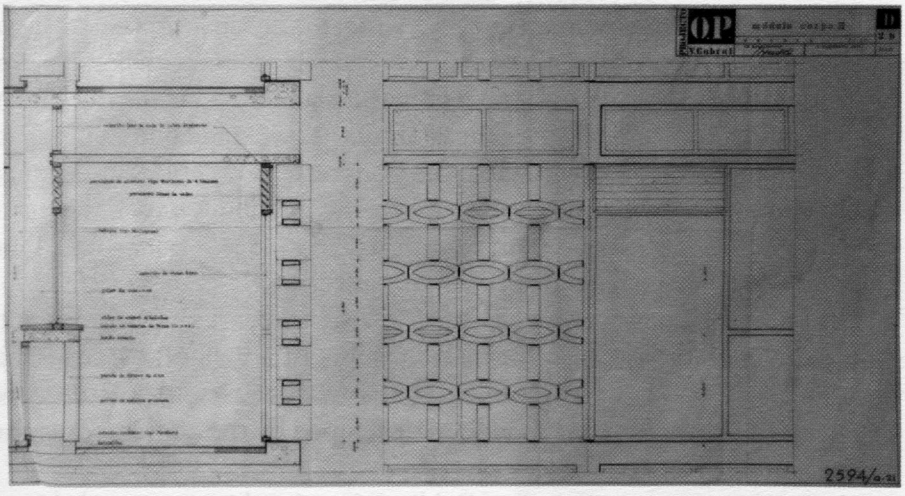
The body I has the shape of a prism of almost trapezoidal vertical section, suspended over an open ground floor by two rows of *pilotis* set back in relation to the larger front volume. From this body base a sculptural spiral stair is released, flanked by a water mirror, allowing free access to the upper floor. Having closed side elevations the building opens up at the rear elevation through occasional





Sections through body I, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012

Sections through body II, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012



Module of body II, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012

openings, being the major one protected by a *brise solei* of vertical blades. On the other hand the main façade is deceptively filled with a deep balcony with glassed background.

The intermediate body of this complex is a passerelle covered by a horizontal slab and supported by elegant *pilotis*, establishing the accordance between geometry, heights and pathways.

The ground floor of body II has the shape of a rectangular prism, with three hallowed porticos on the West side, being opened on the North and South fronts by *fenêtres en longueur*. Over this base stands an irregular polygon, with two floors and six fronts, cantilevered along the North and South façades. The elevations, glassed and rhythmically marked by transversal beams, are protected by external grids made of precast elements. The volume is topped by a double cover consisting of a flat slab and a butterfly roof with two surfaces converging to a longitudinal gutter. Containing the main entrances and the staircases, two prominent and trapezoidal volumes project symmetrically from the main façades.

The body I contained the services of Niassa district government: the vehicles shelter and the water mirror (first floor); the session hall, secretariat, governor and inspectors cabinets disposed around a central hall (second floor), the latter arranged around a central hall where both the *passerelle* and the spiral staircase end.

In body II stood the public attendance services and administrative services concerning several repartitions. In this second body ground floor the cabinets are opened to an internal corridor of mixed access, while two upper floors are opened to three longitudinal circulation areas: a central corridor for staff only and two side galleries for public access, disposed along the building's two main fronts.

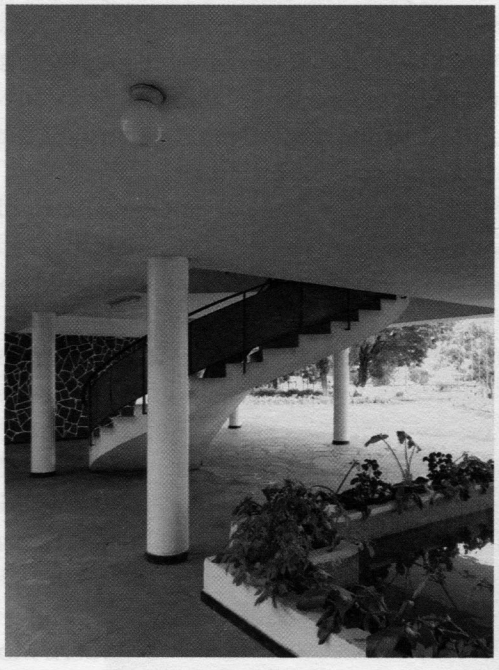
Each cabinet module, transversally located to the pathways, has a front facing the internal corridor and another one facing the public gallery. The two side walls of each middle cabinet are closed by partitions, allowing several spatial associations in *plan libre*. The three pathways are trespassed and united by a transversal hall, along with main entrances and staircases contained in the trapezoidal volumes.

The structures supporting both bodies, independent from inner and outer walls, were raised in reinforced concrete, using traditional constructive systems and standard industrialized elements. The protection from sun impact over the *pan de verre* is achieved with the retreat of the plan of the façades and with the overlapping grids and *brise-solei*. The roofs of the two main bodies are shadowed by a set of ventilated doubled slabs. The transverse ventilation of the inner spaces is obtained by the extensive use of tipper spans and blinds of glass blades, either fixed or mobile, on the upper part of external and interior frames and, more else, by using a doubled coverage on the public galleries.

The volume suspension by the use of *pilotis*, oblique slabs an gables, butterfly roofs, grids and *brise-solei* protecting long *pan de verre*, an autonomous structural skeleton and a spatial organization on *plan libre*, show the architects orthodox loyalty to Le Corbusier tropical models as developed by the contemporary modern architecture of Brazil.

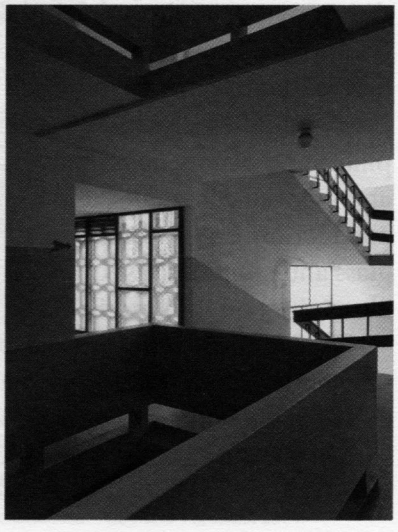
The modernity of the Palace of Public Offices' architecture, and above all, the design of body I main façade, with his representational asymmetrical balcony

Body I,
Elisiário Miranda, 2009



Spiral staircase,
Elisiário Miranda, 2009

Hall of body II,
Elisiário Miranda, 2009



destined to public appearances of the state leaders, expressed at that time the modernity of the development policy of the colonial regime in the distant octagon of former Vila Cabral.

Palace of Public Offices of Quelimane, 1960

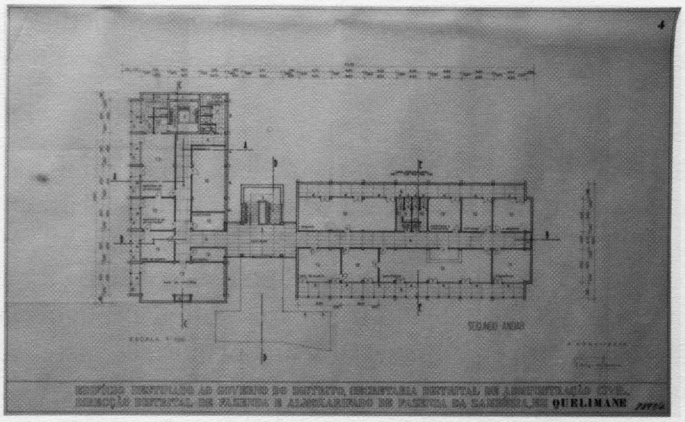
The Palace of Public Offices of Quelimane was built in the central area of the city, next to former *Vasco da Gama* School and *Mouzinho de Albuquerque* Square, current Mozambican Heroes Square, on the ground left vacant by the demolition of the old Market Hall. Its project, designed by the Beira architect João Garizo do Carmo, was delivered in mid-1960 at the Direction of the Public Works Services. The tender for its construction was opened on September 2, 1960, and the work was awarded to the Overseas Construction Company, Inc. later that year. The works, that began immediately, were still underway in early 1962. The building was inaugurated in a date still unknown.

The palace consists of two perpendicular bodies with three storeys high, deployed along the North-Eastern and South-Eastern fronts of a gardened city block, articulated by a smaller volume, from which projects a slab with an autonomous design that signals and protects the main entrance. The ground floor was originally opened, establishing a visual and physical continuity between the urban fabric and the garden. A large covered space rhythmically punctuated by *pilotis* and by three stairwells enclosed by masonry walls of granite was thus defined.

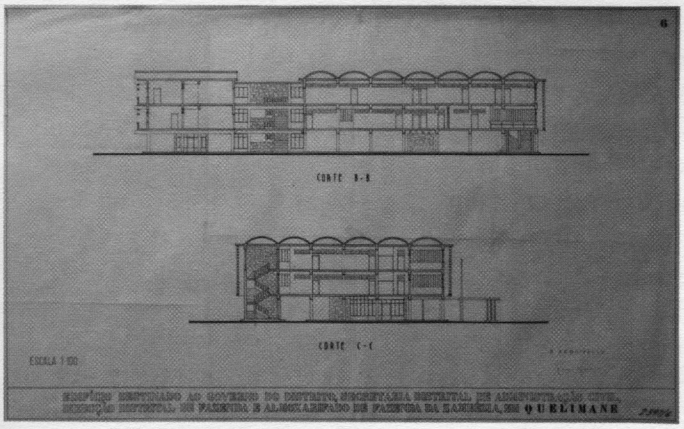
The outward expression of the two upper floors is marked by the dense grilles that protect the continuous balconies running along the two main façades. This defence is complemented in the Northwest and Southwest façades by *brise-solei* made of movable vertical blades of fibre cement sheet. The double roof is composed by a sequence of emptied arched vaults shadowing the flat slabs that cover the top floor, six on the minor body and seven on the larger.

The program was distributed by the two upper floors: cabinets for public offices and sections on the first floor and for government facilities, inspectors, translators and secretariat on the second floor. All these spaces open to axial corridors that converge in the volume that connects the two main bodies, in which the floor lobbies and the main staircase are located. The internal circulations are complemented by smaller staircases of different height, placed on the opposite tops of the two bodies. The building was erected with an exposed concrete structure of pillars and beams, covered by flat slabs of ceramic elements and hollow plastered and painted cap vaults. It was predominantly finished with materials of industrial production: hollow brick walls plastered and painted, moulded concrete grids, glass and aluminium shutters and window frames made of glass and anodized aluminium on iron profiles.

The language of this Palace of Public Offices is close to the Modern Movement international architecture of earlier decades: it features a particular affinity with the clipping volume, structural expression and roof design of Golconde Dormitory at the Aurobindo Ashram in India (1936-1945), by Antonin Raymond (1888-1976). Under the intense tropical light these elements, already present in earlier



Second floor plan, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012



Sections B-B and C-C, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012

Northeast façade, Elisiário Miranda, 2009

works of João Garizo do Carmo, give the building a unique dramatic form that signals its institutional function in the surrounding urban fabric.

Palace of Public Offices of Porto Amélia, 1963

The Palace of Public Offices built in former city Porto Amélia, current Pemba, is located in front of 16th June Avenue, a central artery in the city orthogonal urban plan. Also designed by architects Carlota Quintanilha and João José Tinoco, the project dates from about 1963, according to the drawings conserved in the archives of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing of Mozambique. In November 1966 the public building was completed, waiting for an opening ceremony schedule while the surround area was being cleaned out.

The building volumetric composition relies in the articulation of two volumes, body I and body II, based on oblique angles connected by an upper passage establishing a geometric accordance between both. The deployment of these two volumes integrates the building in the surrounding urban area, simultaneously defining a representational square between the building complex and *16 de Junho* Avenue.

The body I, which has the shape of a rectangular prism with two floors deployed parallel to the main avenue, contains spaces destined to the provincial government services: in the partially hallowed ground floor are set the vehicles shelter, the surveillance cabinet and the glazed entrance hall, in which a spiral staircase gives access to the upper floor; in the first floor are aligned the distribution hall, the waiting room, the governor's office – which originally opened onto a ceremonial balcony –, the governor's secretary cabinet, secretariat and sessions room, along with various support spaces.

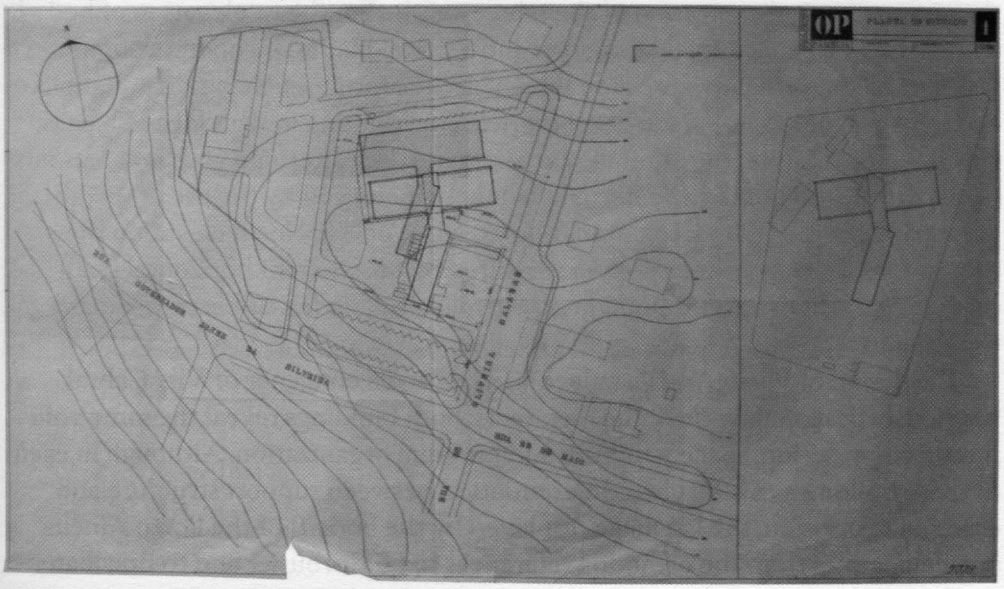
The volume that connects the two bodies, which shields an external atrium that precedes the entrance to body II, contains in the first floor a gallery, an archive and a library.

Body II, a rectangular prism three floors high in which several public attendance areas are located, is axially intersected by a larger transversal volume. This volume contains the staircase and, in each floor, the toilets and a distribution hall.

Symmetrical and longitudinal galleries of public access are disposed along the buildings' South façade; likewise symmetrical longitudinal galleries, but only for staff use, are disposed at its centre. The cabinets layout on this body, realized with partitions independent from the main structure, is based on a *plan libre* compositional matrix, dimensioned according to multiples and submultiples of the structure base module.

The supporting structures of body I and of the interconnection volume are composed by a central double row of cylindrical concrete *pilotis*, beyond which the floor and coverage slabs are cantilevered all along the three fronts of the building; the supporting structure of body II is composed by a three row grid of rectangular concrete pillars, autonomous from the partition and external walls of the building.

The shadowing effect of the two bodies results from the use of doubled and ventilated coverage. These roofs form in body I a complex set of horizontal planes that contributes to the formal demarcation between this body and the interconnection volume. The protection mechanisms of the *pan de verre* decisively mark



Site Plan, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012

Southeast façade of body I, EWV, Elisiário Miranda, 2010

the architectonical expression of the whole: on the Southeast elevation of body I a *brise-solei* formed by fixed horizontal and vertical blades of concrete composes a geometrical pattern, an expression which on the Northeast elevation is completed by rectangular plans made of solid brick, contributing for this façade biggest closure; on the South elevation of body II, marked by alternate glass and masonry plans, the protection of the external openings is achieved by the use of rectangular panels with perforated circular holes, while on the North elevation the protection of the *fenêtres en longueur* is assured by *brise-solei* of horizontal blades, defending of the Northern sunlight, and by vertical blades set perpendicularly to the façade, protecting of East and West sunlight.

The design of Porto Amélia palace is based on its congener of Vila Cabral, previously designed by the same architects: both buildings reveal the same volumetric composition, space structure and program organization. Although in each of these buildings exists a clear differentiation between support structure and external expression, the language displayed by the body II of the Porto Amélia palace deviates from the orthodox references to Le Corbusier and to Brazilian modern architecture still present in the design of body I.

The complex representational character is stated through the display of the chiaroscuro obtained by alternating solid and void surfaces, textural and chromatic variations in the main façades of body I. The consistency of the ground setting of the building, the vertical rhythm of the South, North and West façades openings, and the extensive use of solid brick and exposed concrete on the top elevations of body II tend to approach the project of the Palace of Public Offices of Porto Amélia to the scale and expression present in European architecture designed after the middle 50s of the XX century.

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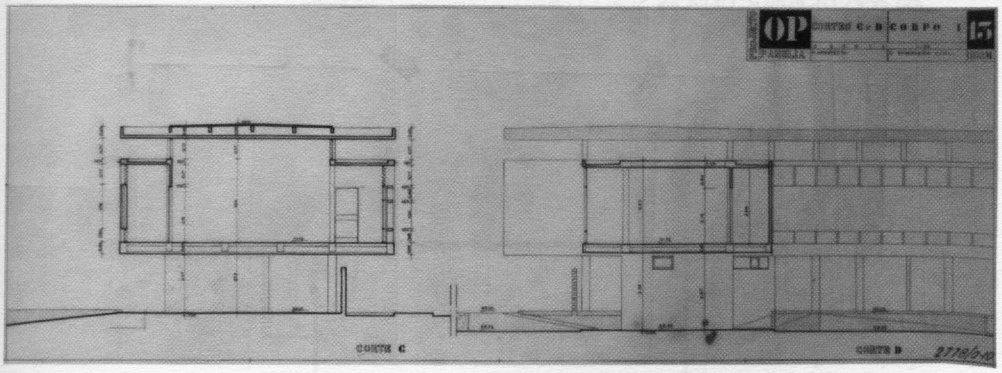
Created to respond to the called program 'Palace of Public Offices' in the colonial period, many of the buildings were converted and reused at present to serve the functions of the Mozambican Government Headquarters of the respective provinces.



Sections C and D of body I, project, undated, AMOPHM, process No. 2594, Maria Manuel Oliveira, 2012

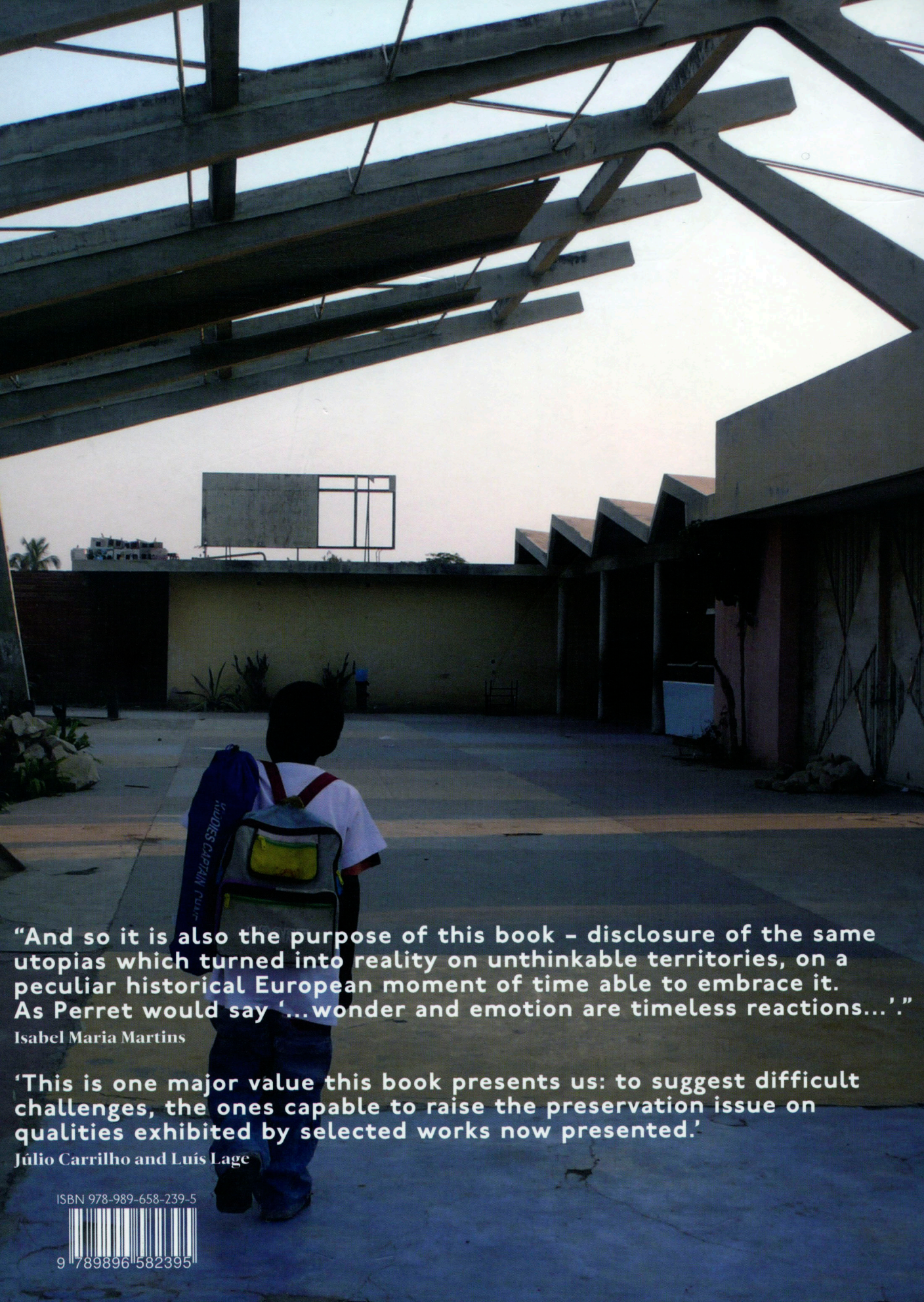
***Brise-soleil* on the North façade of body II, EWV, Elisiário Miranda, 2010**

Staircase of body II, EWV, Elisiário Miranda, 2010

INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Architectural Association
AFCG	Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Archive
AFCML	Lisbon City Hall's Photo Archive
AHCGD	Historical Archive of Caixa Geral de Depósitos
AHM	Historical Archives of Maputo
ANP	Associação Nacional Popular (National Popular Action)
ARA	Acção Revolucionária Armada (Armed Revolutionary Action)
ASP	Associação Socialista Portuguesa (Portuguese Socialist Action)
AVAC	Aquecimento, Ventilação e Ar Condicionado Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
BIRD	Banco Internacional para Reconstrução e Desenvolvimento (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development)
BNU	Banco Nacional Ultramarino
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CCTA	Comissão de Cooperação Técnica na África (Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara)
CDIPAD	Centro de Documentação do Instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento (Documentation Center of Portuguese Institute for Development Support)
CDUA	Centro de Documentação de Urbanismo em Arquitectura (Documentation Centre of Urban Planning and Architecture)
CEA	Comissão Económica para África (Economic Commission for Africa)
CMM	Conselho Municipal de Maputo (Maputo City Council)
CMP	Câmara Municipal do Porto (City Council of Oporto)
CML	Câmara Municipal de Luanda Luanda (City Council of Luanda)
CMQ	Conselho Municipal de Quelimane (Quelimane City Council)
CODA	Concurso para Obtenção de Diploma de Arquitecto (Competition for Getting Diploma of Architect)
COMERO	Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique (Mozambique's Revolutionary Committee)
CONCP	Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas (Conference of Nationalist Organi¬zations of the Portuguese Colonies)
CTT	Correios, Telégrafos e Telefones (Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones)
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DETA	Divisão de Exploração dos Transportes Aéreos (Exploration Division of Air Transport)
DGEMN	Direcção Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos nacionais
EBAL	Escola de Belas Artes de Lisboa (School of Fine Arts of Lisbon)
EBAP	Escola de Belas Artes do Porto (School of Fine Arts of Oporto)
EFTA	European Free Trade Assiciation
EGAP	General Exhibition of Fine Arts
EPUL	Empresa Pública de Urbanização de Lisboa (Urbanization Public Company of Lisbon)
ESBAL	Escola Superior de Belas Artes de Lisboa (School of Fine Arts of Lisbon)
ESBAP	Escola Superior de Belas Artes do Porto (School of Fine Arts of Oporto)
EWV	Exchanging Worlds Visions
FAPF	Faculdade de Arquitectura e Planeamento Físico (Faculty of Architecture and Physical Planning)
FAUP	Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto (Faculty of Architecture of the University of Oporto)
FAUTL	Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Lisbon)
FCPPA	Frente Comum Popular das Populações de Angola (Common People Populations of Angola)
FDLA	Frente Democrática para a Libertação de Angola (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Angola)
FIHUAT	Fédération Internationale pour l'Habitation, l'Urbanisme et l'Aménagement des Territoires
FIUL	Fundo de Investimento do Ultramar (Fund for Overseas)
FMI	Fundo Monetário Internacional (International Monetary Fund)
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (National Liberation Front of Angola)
FPLN	Frente Patriótica de Libertação Nacional (Front of National Liberation)
FRAIN	Frente Revolucionária Africana para a Independência Nacional (Afri¬can Revolutionary Front for National Independence)
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Liberation Front of Mozambique)
FUMO	Frente Unida de Moçambique (United Front of Mozambique)
GAU	Gabinete de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (Office of Architecture and Urbanism)
GAUD	Gabinete de Arquitectura, Urbanismo e Decoração (Office of Architecture, Urbanism and Decoration)
GEU	Gabinete de Estudos e Urbanização (Studies Office and Urbanization)
GRAE	Governo da República de Angola no Exílio (Republic of Angola in Exile)
GUC	Gabinete de Urbanização Colonial (Office of Colonial Urbanization)
GUU	Gabinete de Urbanização do Ultramar (Office of Overseas Urbanization)
HPIP	Heritage of Portuguese Influence/ Património de Influência Portuguesa
ICAT	Iniciativas Culturais Arte e Técnica (Cultural Initiatives Art and Technique)
ICRA	Instituto de Ciências Religiosas de Angola (Institute of Religious Sciences of Angola)
IFHTP	International Federation for Housing and Town Planning
IIVA	Instituto de Investigação Veterinária de Angola (Vete¬rinary Institute of Angola)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estatística (Statistics Portugal)
IPHS	International Planning History Society
IST	Instituto Superior Técnico
JCETS	Junta das Construções para o Ensino Técnico e Secundário (Board of Construction for Technical Education and Secondary)
LEA	Laboratório de Engenharia de Angola (Angola's Engineering Laboratory)
LNEC	Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia Civil (National Laboratory of Civil Engineering)
MAC	Movimento Anti-Colonial

	(Anti-Colonial Movement)
MANU	União Nacional Africana de Moçambique (Mozambique African Na¬tional Union)
MFA	Movimento das Forças Armadas (Armed Forces Movement)
MINA	Movimento pela Independência Nacional de Angola (Movement for Angola's National Independence)
MOPHM	Ministério das Obras Públicas e Habitação de Moçambique
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
MRAR	Movimento de Renovação da Arte Religiosa (Religious Art Reno¬vation Movement)
MRPP	Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado (Reorganized Mo¬vement of the Party of the Proletariat)
MUD	Movimento da União Democrática (Democratic Union Mo¬vement)
MUNAF	Movimento de Unidade Nacional Anti-Fascista (Anti¬-Fascist National Unity Movement)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OA	Ordem dos Arquitetos
ODAM	Organização dos Arquitectos Modernos (Modern Architects Organization)
OUA	Organização da Unidade Africana (Organization of African Unity)
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)
PCP	Partido Comunista Português (Portuguese Communist Party)
PDA	Partido Democrático de Angola (Democratic Party of Angola)
PIDE	Polícia de Investigação e Defesa do Estado (International and State Defence Police)
PLUA	Partido da Luta Unida dos Africanos de Angola (United Party for Struggle of African Angola)
RTP	Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (Radio and Television of Portugal)
SAAL	Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local (Ambulatory Service Local Support)
SEDES	Associação para o Desenvolvimento Económico e Social (Association for the Economical and Social Development)
SNBA	Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes
SPAN	Serviço do Património Histórico e Artístico Nacional
SPUIA	Secção Portuguesa da União Internacional dos Arquitectos (Portuguese Section of the International Union of Architects)
TAP	Transportes Aéreos Portugueses
UDENAMO	União Nacional Democrática de Moçambique (National Democratic Union of Mozambique)
UEM	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Eduardo Mondlane University)
UIA	União Internacional dos Arquitectos (International Union of Architects)
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	União Nacional para Moçambique Independente (African Union of Independent Mozambique)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
UPA	União das Populações de Angola (Union of Angola's Peoples)
UPNA	União das Populações do Norte de Angola (Union of the Populations of Northern Angola)
USA	United States of America



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'This is one major value this book presents us: to suggest difficult challenges, the ones capable to raise the preservation issue on qualities exhibited by selected works now presented.'

Júlio Carrilho and Luís Lage

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