

Plano dos Centenários: Contribution of the Lisbon Municipal Archive's documentation to a case study

“Plano dos Centenários”: Contributo da documentação do Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa para um estudo de caso

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‘Now, finally: in the new primary schools that are going to be built in Lisbon and in the old ones that are going to be remodelled and expanded, the representation of Christ Crucified will be the greatest lesson that the children who attend them can receive, a lesson that will enable them to sweetly and joyfully undergo the arduous task of living this life.’

Artur de Oliveira Ramos, member of Lisbon Municipal Council. Excerpt from *Actas de reuniões da Câmara* (26 outubro 1953, p. 14).

Illiteracy in Portugal was an ‘old problem’ that affected most of the population in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Although primary education had been established in 1772 and subjected to successive reforms in order to ‘promote culture among our people’ (Decreto-lei n.º 38968, 1952, p. 1067), its failure could be clearly seen in the nation’s literacy rates. In 1890, 75.8% of the Portuguese population in the metropolis aged seven and over were illiterate, and in 1930 this figure was still very high, with 61.8% still illiterate. The causes of this situation were said to be:

Political instability and insufficient financial resources, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the study of questions at a predominantly theoretical level, with a clear disregard for reality, discontinuity in action, constant changes in guidelines, a succession of laws that were contradictory in their principles and even in their details – in short, the lack of a firm public education policy – explain the failure of the various reforms of primary education attempted until 1926 (Decreto-lei n.º 38968/1952, p. 1067).

Due to the nation’s inadequate and insufficient responses, the illiteracy of the Portuguese population persisted over time and was a problem inherited by the governments of the National Revolution. By order of the Ministry of Primary Education, the first steps were taken in 1928, to ‘organise the school map in order to show the existing schools and to define the location of the schools to be built, the number of classes and the areas of influence of each one’ (Decreto-lei n.º 29011/1938, p. 1320). However, this was a difficult and slow process, caused by ‘fluctu-

ations in pedagogical orientation, so frequent among us, and not always stimulated by a persistent and encouraging will' (Decreto-lei n.º 29011/1938, p. 1320). It was only in 1934 and 1935 that joint efforts were made by the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Public Instruction to proceed with that survey, making it possible to envisage 'the beginning of the implementation of the general plan for the new buildings to be constructed' (Decreto-lei n.º 29011/1938, p. 1320) in 1936, thereby facilitating the decision about which 'buildings to construct or expand in all parishes in the country' (Decreto-lei n.º 29011/1938, p. 1320) and enabling the implementation of the standard designs for regional schools, as well as some rural schools and the necessary budgets. However, the survey was delayed in the largest urban centres: Lisboa, Porto, Braga, Coimbra, Guarda, Setúbal and Viana do Castelo. Based on the results obtained, the Government considered the sum of 10,000 *contos* to be sufficient to begin the 'implementation of the general plan for new primary school buildings' (Decreto-lei n.º 29011/1938, p. 1320).

This megalomaniac project seemed to be well on track, but the transformation of the Ministry of Public Instruction into the Ministry of National Education (Lei n.º 1941/1936, 11 abril), 'the definition of new principles in the education of young people and the profound reforms announced in all branches of education' (Despacho do Conselho de Ministros, 1941, p. 666) led the Government to suspend approval of the plan. It was only after the foundations had been laid for the new primary education reform in 1938 that the Ministry of National Education appointed a special commission to work on the organisation of the school network, which meant a further two-year delay in the initial project, because:

[the] organisation of the school network and the definition of the necessary building plans are in fact complex tasks, not only because they involve thousands of buildings and classrooms scattered all around the country [...]. Population growth increases needs at every moment, and the slightest fluctuation in pedagogical orientation has an immediate impact on the solutions adopted. Economic criteria and the principle of distributing expenses between the State and local authorities also cause results to vary. In short, it is recognised that the problem encompasses other issues of a pedagogical, technical and financial nature, which must be precisely defined and assumed to be fixed at a given moment. Only under such conditions is it possible to formulate a plan and implement it (Despacho do Conselho de Ministros, 1941, p. 666).

In December 1940, the Government decreed that the following year would see the start of 'the implementation of the general plan for the school network, to be known as the *Plano dos Centenários*, which will establish the number, location and types of schools to be built in order to fully equip primary education' (Lei n.º 1985/1940, 17 dezembro, p. 1475). That same year marked eight centuries of Portuguese independence, as well as three hundred years since the restoration of the nation's independence from Spain, with a vast programme of commemorative events, which included the Portuguese World Exhibition held in Lisbon. That 'great national jubilee was not only a cause for festive celebrations, but also a decisive impetus for numerous achievements of the utmost national interest' (Despacho do Conselho de Ministros, 1941, p. 667). Therefore, due to the scale of the project and the great importance that the construction of the school network had for the country, the completion of which coincided with those celebrations, it was given the title of *Plano dos Centenários*.

In 1941, the contents of the Plan were known: in addition to the construction of new buildings, it included the enlargement of already existing ones in order to create more classrooms. By order of the Government (Diário do Governo, n.º 174, 29 julho 1941), the maps and specifications were disclosed, showing the amounts to be spent annually by the State and the local councils on its implementation, as well as the number of buildings and classrooms, by district and by municipality.

In this order, António de Oliveira Salazar, the President of the Council of the Government of Portugal, spoke publicly about the shortcomings and conditions of the nation's primary schools and stressed the need for a plan to resolve them: he admitted that the country did not have 'the buildings necessary to educate the entire school population' (Despacho do Conselho de Ministros, 1941, p. 665), and that many of the buildings in use, which

were owned by the State or local councils, did not meet essential hygienic and educational standards. These situations had not been resolved because 'the solution to the problem, when left to its own devices and subjected to local preferences or favours from the Administration, proved to be insufficient, disjointed and out of step with the needs of education and the possibilities of the country' (Despacho do Conselho de Ministros, 1941, p. 665). According to Salazar, the effective response to these problems would be to devise a plan that would allow for 'the equitable distribution of benefits and expenses, the most economical satisfaction of all needs, and even the best possible use of public interest in the construction of primary schools and the generosity of benevolent benefactors' (Despacho do Conselho de Ministros, 1941, p. 665).

Although the *Plano dos Centenários* was a government initiative, its implementation required the cooperation of the local authorities concerned, which, in addition to being tasked with reporting on their needs, had to contribute half of the funds required for the construction of primary schools within their administrative area.

For the Lisbon Municipal Council, 'compulsory primary education, school attendance and illiteracy' had long been recognised as matters of 'national interest and dignity' to which it would try to respond in the respective administrative area by using its budget, 'since pursuant to paragraph 1 of article 48 of the Administrative Code it was the council's responsibility to decide on the construction, maintenance, repair or lease of school buildings, the purchase of furniture and teaching material and the establishment of institutions providing educational assistance' (Actas de reuniões da Câmara, 1953, p. 10). In keeping with the government's proposal, the Lisbon Municipal Council considered it extremely important to join in this project for the construction of the national school network. To this end, it appointed 'a commission for the study of a plan of achievements, with a view to the improvement of the schools already existing in the city and the construction of others, thus giving greater impetus to what was being done in this area at a pace that was in keeping with the budgetary possibilities' (Actas de reuniões da Câmara, 1953, pp. 7-8). In Ata No. 203 of 26 October 1953, where some details of the plan for the city of Lisbon were presented, it was mentioned that, in 1952, school groups had already been built in Alto de Santo Amaro, Rua Actor Vale, Praça do Ultramar, and at Célula 1 and Célula 2, in Alvalade; that the Grupo Escolar da Calçada da Tapada, the Grupo Escolar da Rua da Bela Vista à Lapa and Escola N.º 1 in Rua do Saco were being remodelled and expanded; that the Grupo Escolar da Célula 7 in Alvalade was under construction; and that the creation of school groups was under study in Alto dos Moinhos, Bairro Santos, Campolide, Célula 4 and Célula 6 in Alvalade, Areeiro, Avenida A, Arco Cego, Picheleira, Vale Escuro and Calçada da Cruz de Pedra. It was also mentioned that the respective draft proposals had been delivered to the Delegação das Obras de Construção de Escolas Primárias do Ministério das Obras Públicas (a delegation of the Ministry of Public Works) in August 1953, shortly before that meeting. After this,

the Minister of Public Works informed Lisbon Municipal Council that, in principle, this Ministry would be able to contribute the sum of roughly 12,000 *contos* towards the construction of new primary schools in the city. Five projects have already been approved for the construction of new School Groups, and the respective building contracts are ready to be put up for tender; the remaining projects are due to be completed within a very short time (Actas de reuniões da Câmara, 1953, p. 14).

Lisbon Municipal Council made 100,000 m² of land available in various locations around the city, together with a sum 'equal to or larger than that provided by the State', for the construction of school groups within two years, because 'the exceptional scale of the project [...] was designed to benefit many thousands of children in Lisbon, mainly those originating from the most disadvantaged backgrounds'. Although the Council was already pleased with 'the competence that its services had displayed in the organisation of the plan' (Actas de reuniões da Câmara, 1953, p. 14), the implementation of the project took longer than the two years that had been forecast.

According to the Presidential Decree of 29 July 1941, through the *Plano dos Centenários*, the city would make 887 classrooms available, out of a total of 12,500 planned for the mainland and islands. The implementation of that Plan required the participating municipalities to produce and accumulate various types of documents, which

were fundamental for illustrating the decisions, projects, budgets, the people responsible for the management of the plan, the evolution of the works and the deadlines established for their execution, among other elements. The following selection is part of a vast group of documents that have been useful for the writing of the history of the *Plano dos Centenários* in the city of Lisbon.

PLANO DOS CENTENÁRIOS: DOCUMENTATION OF THE LISBON MUNICIPAL ARCHIVE

REUNIÃO DE 26 DE OUTUBRO DE 1953		9
2.º—Que se agradeça também ao Ministério da Educação Nacional a concordância que se dignou conceder ao mesmo plano. 3.º—Que, desde já, seja confirmada a aprovação dada aos anteprojectos e projectos definitivos, dos grupos escolares a construir, em conformidade com o plano referido. 4.º—Que prossigam com inquebrantável decisão as diligências e formalidades indispensáveis para inteiro e completo cumprimento do plano aprovado.		
Programa dos novos grupos escolares iniciados ou a iniciar em Lisboa em 1953		
N.º de ordem	Localização	Novas salas de aula
I — Em construção:		
1	Célula 7 — Alvalade	16
II — Em estudo:		
a) Novos edifícios:		
2	Alto dos Moinhos	16
3	Bairro Santos	16
4	Campolide	16
5	Célula 6 — Alvalade	16
6	Célula 4 — Alvalade	16
6	Areiro — Avenida A	16
8	Arco do Cego: 2 grupos de 8 salas de aula	16
9	Picheleira	16
10	Vale Escuro	16
11	Calçada da Cruz da Pedra — Palácio Manique	16
b) Remodelação e ampliação:		
12	Calçada da Tapada	8
13	Rua da Bela Vista à Lapa	8
14	Escola 1 — Rua do Saco	10
Total		202

Figure 1 Programme of school groups, under construction or to be built, in Lisbon, in 1953, published in Ata n.º 203 of the Lisbon Municipal Council meeting of 26 October 1953.

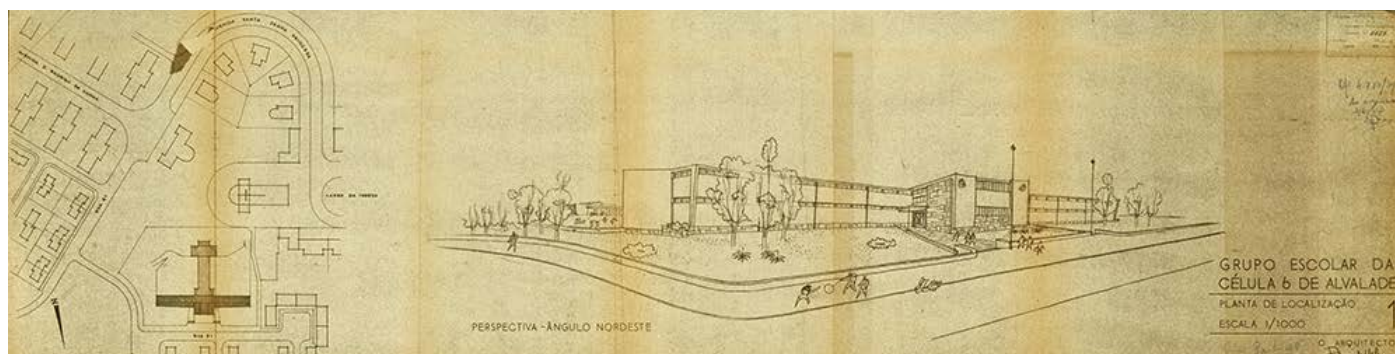


Figure 2 Plan for the location of the Grupo Escolar da Célula 6 in Alvalade, architect Cândido Palma de Melo, [1954]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04066, page 2.

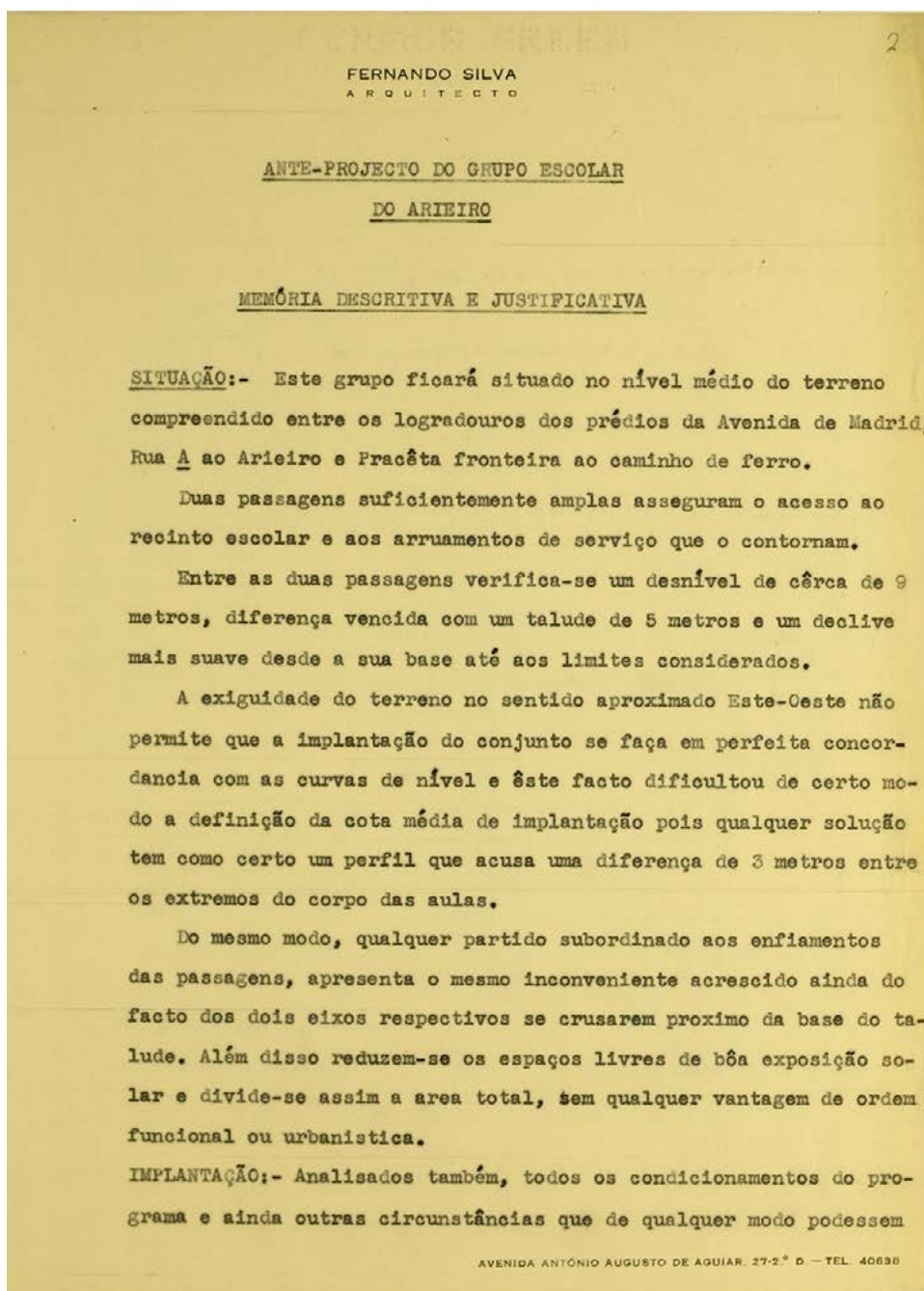


Figure 3 Project brief, preliminary design for the Grupo Escolar do Areeiro, architect Fernando Silva, 7 August 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04067, page 2.

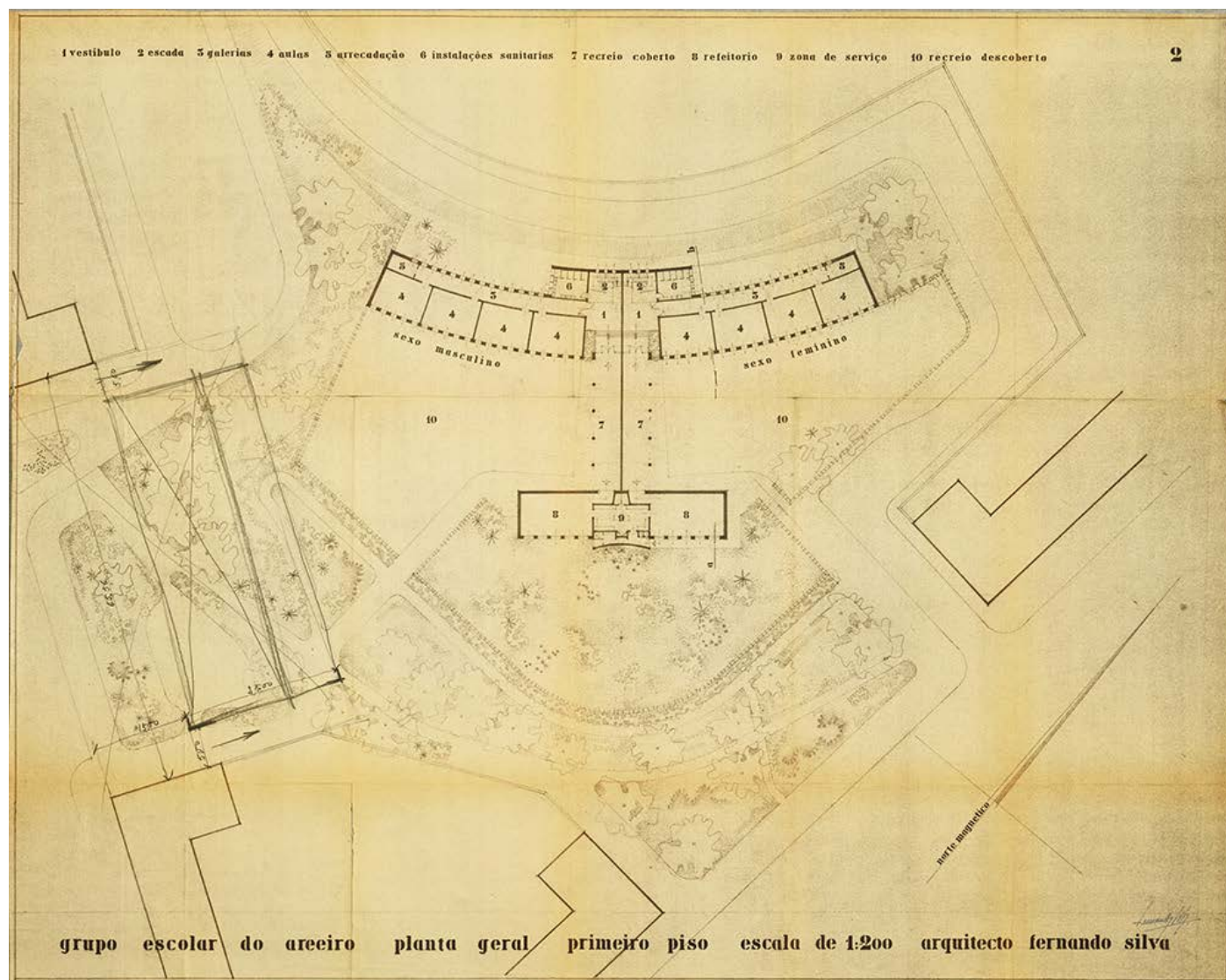


Figure 4 General plan of the first floor, preliminary design for the Grupo Escolar do Areeiro, architect Fernando Silva, 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04067, page 9.

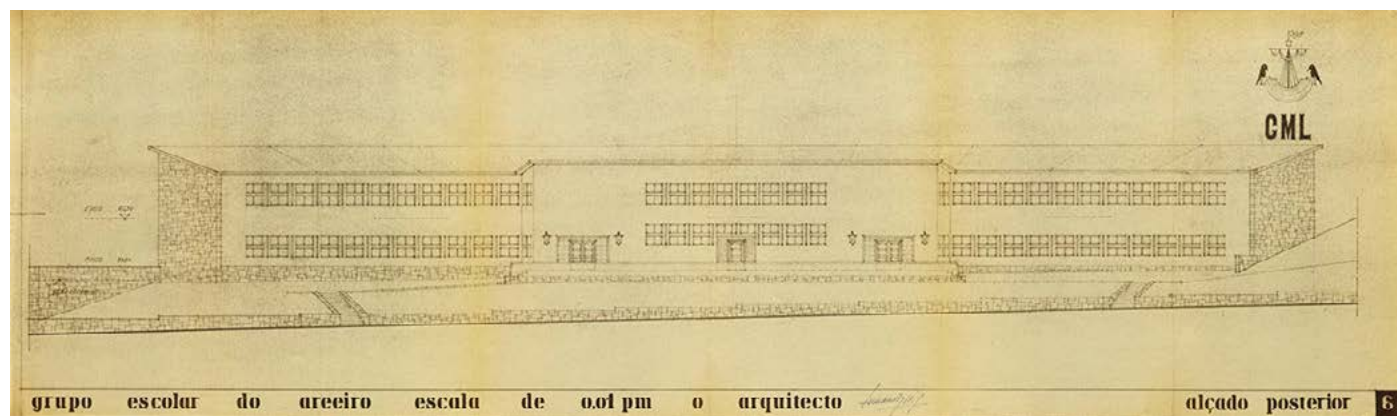


Figure 5 Rear elevation, preliminary design for the Grupo Escolar do Areeiro, architect Fernando Silva, 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04067, page 211.

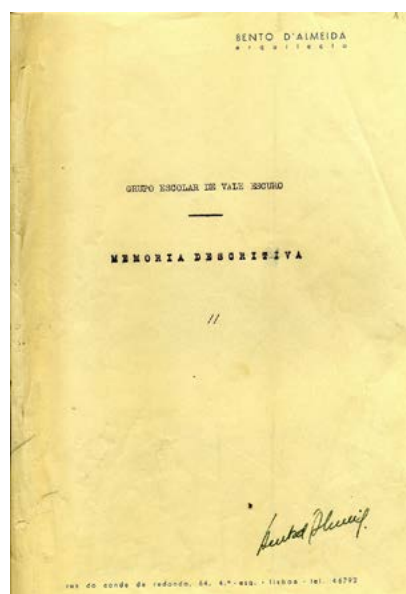


Figure 6 Descriptive report of the Grupo Escolar de Vale Escuro project, architect Bento d'Almeida, 5 August 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04071, page 1.

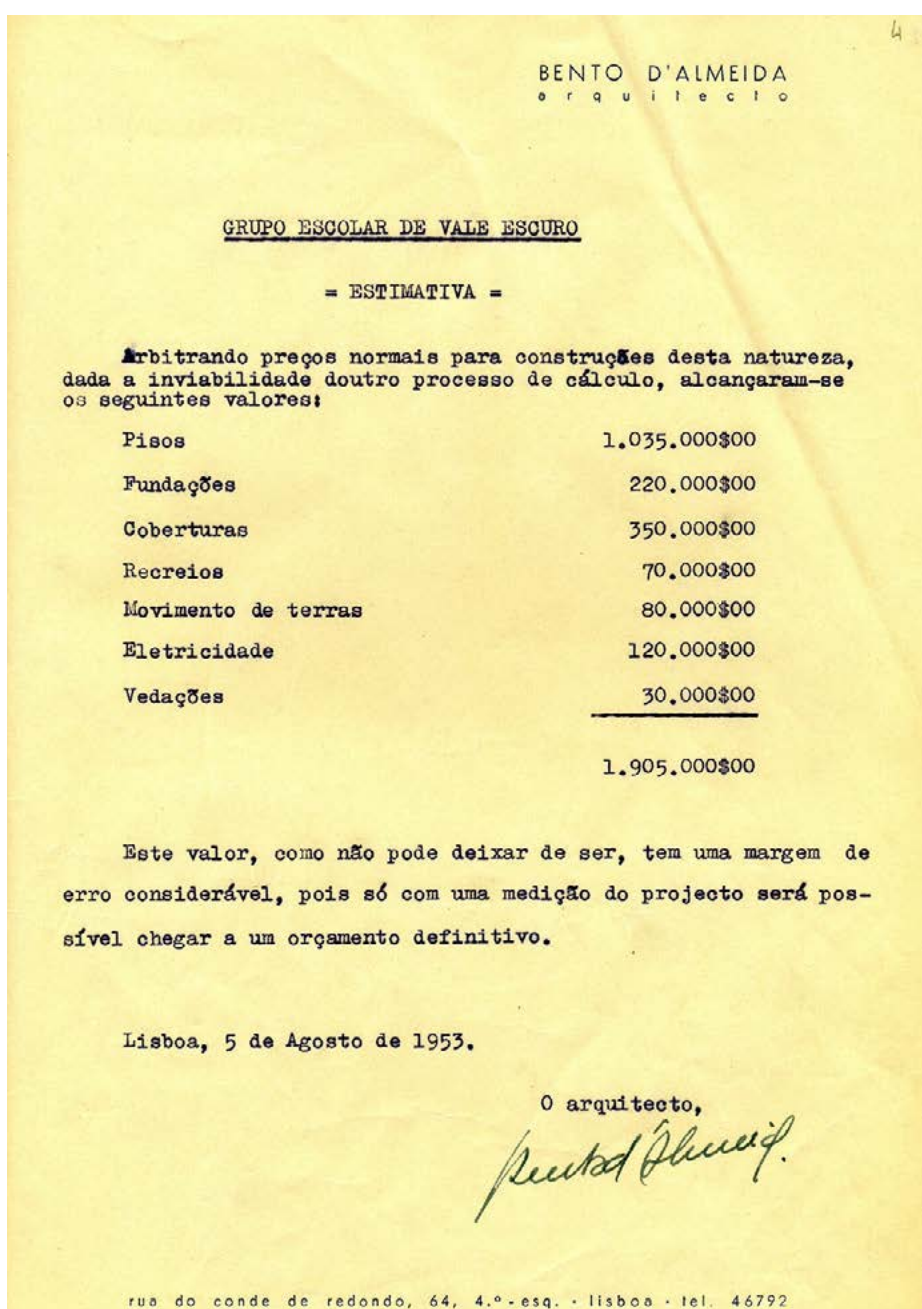


Figure 7 Estimate of the cost of building the Grupo Escolar de Vale Escuro, architect Bento d'Almeida, 5 August 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04071, page 4.

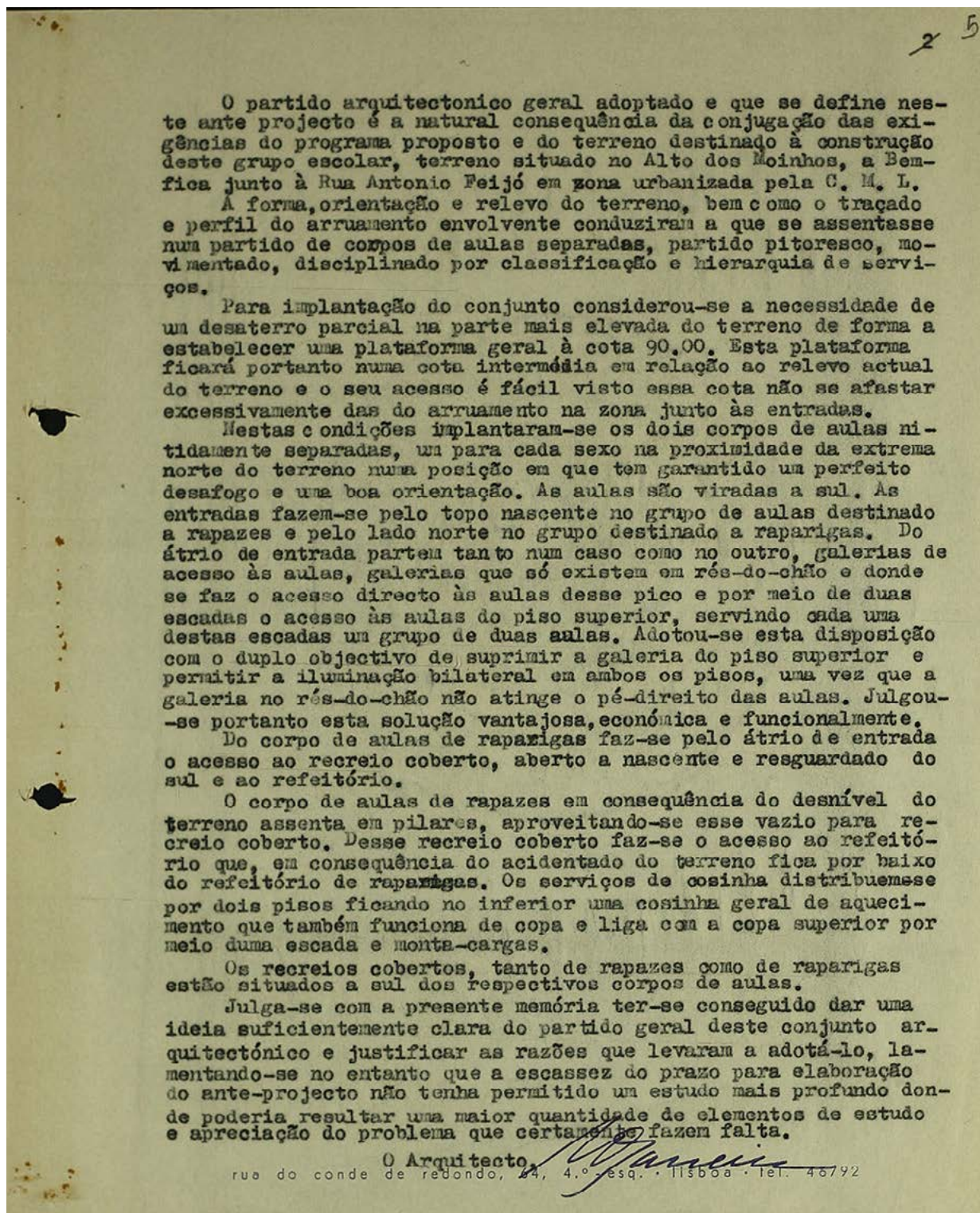


Figure 8 Descriptive report of the Grupo Escolar do Alto dos Moinhos project, architect Manuel Arroyo Bandeira, [1953]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04064, page 5.



Figure 9 Implantation of the Grupo Escolar do Alto dos Moinhos, architect Manuel Arroyo Bandeira, [1953]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04064, page 3.

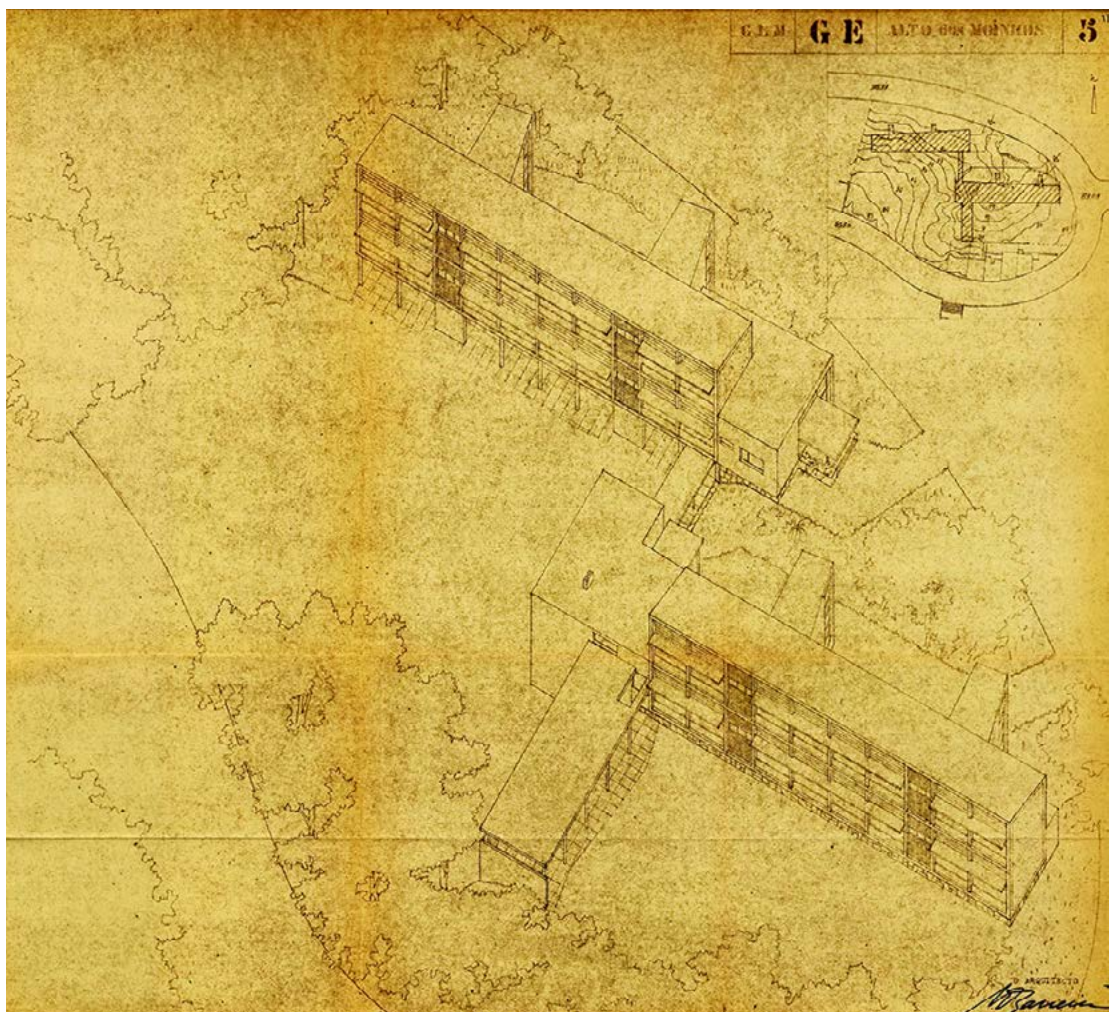


Figure 10 Plan for the location of the Grupo Escolar do Alto dos Moinhos, architect Cândido Palma de Melo, [1953]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04064, page 11.

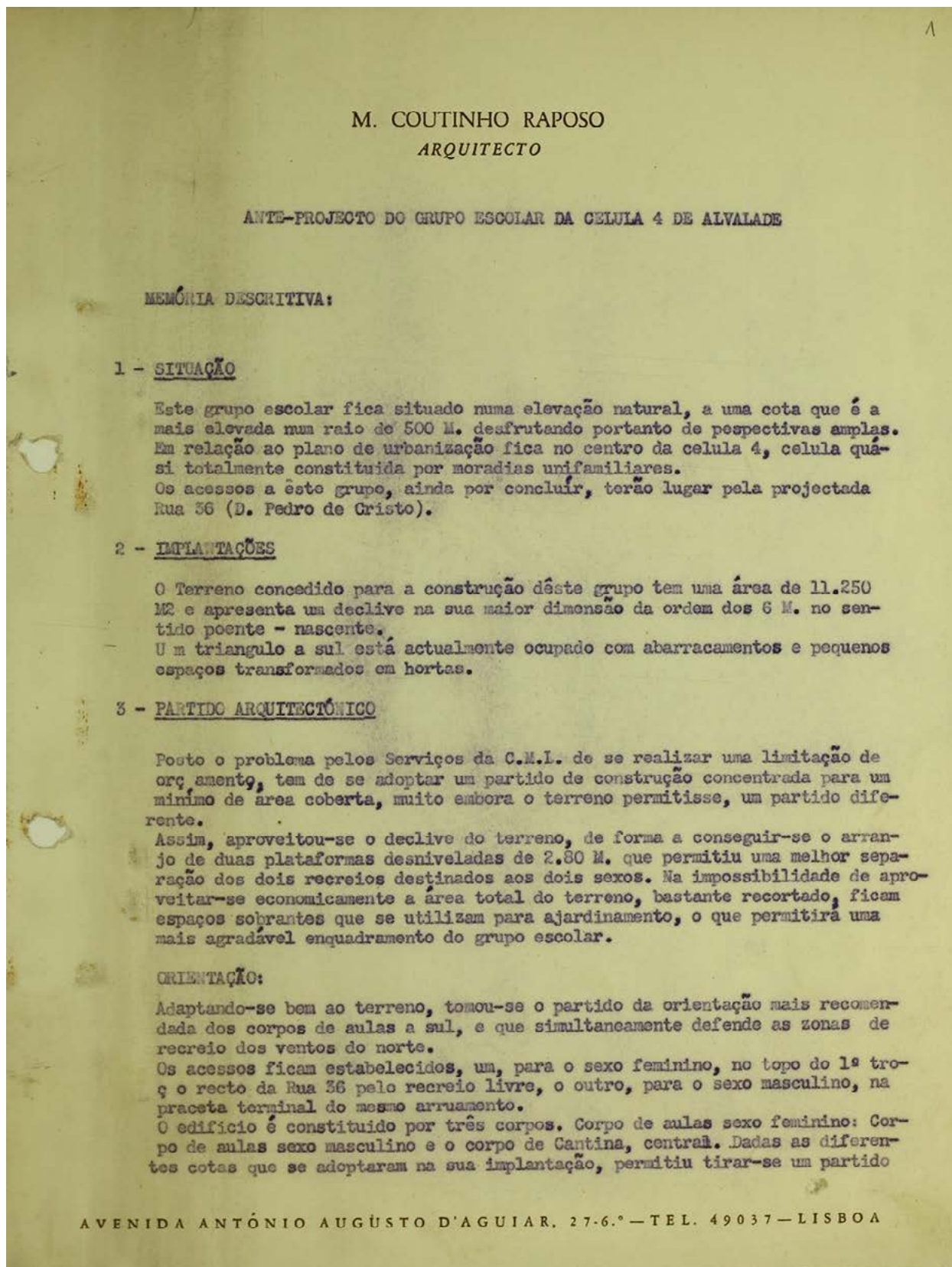


Figure 11 Descriptive report of the Grupo Escolar da Célula 4 project in Alvalade, architect Manuel Coutinho Raposo, 5 August 1953.
AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBH/PURB/002/04065, page 1A.

4

M. COUTINHO RAPOSO
ARQUITECTO

ORÇAMENTO ESTIMATIVA DO GRUPO ESCOLAR DA CÉLULA 4 DE ALVALADE

<u>CORPOS ESCOLARES</u>				
Fundações	958.2	200.00	191.640.00	
Pisos	1.876.9	500.00	938.450.00	
Cobert,	958.2	300.00	<u>287.460.00</u>	1.417.550.00
<u>CANTINA</u>				
Fundações	168	200.00	33.600.00	
Piso	168	800.00	134.400.00	
Cobert.	168	300.00	<u>50.400.00</u>	218.400.00
<u>ARRANJOS DE TERRENO</u>				40.000.00
<u>VEDAÇÕES</u>				48.000.00
<u>INSTALAÇÃO ELECTRICÁ</u>				120.000.00
				<u>1.875.950.00</u>

UM MILHÃO OITOCENTOS E SETENTA E TRES MIL
NOVECENTOS E CINQUENTA ESCUDOS

O ARQUITECTO
Manuel Coutinho Raposo
(Inscrito na C.M.L. c/o nº 102)

AVENIDA ANTÓNIO AUGUSTO D'AGUIAR, 27-6.º — TEL. 49037 — LISBOA

Figure 12 Estimated budget for the Grupo Escolar da Célula 4 in Alvalade, architect Manuel Coutinho Raposo, 5 August 1953.
AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/BAH/PURB/002/04065, page 4.

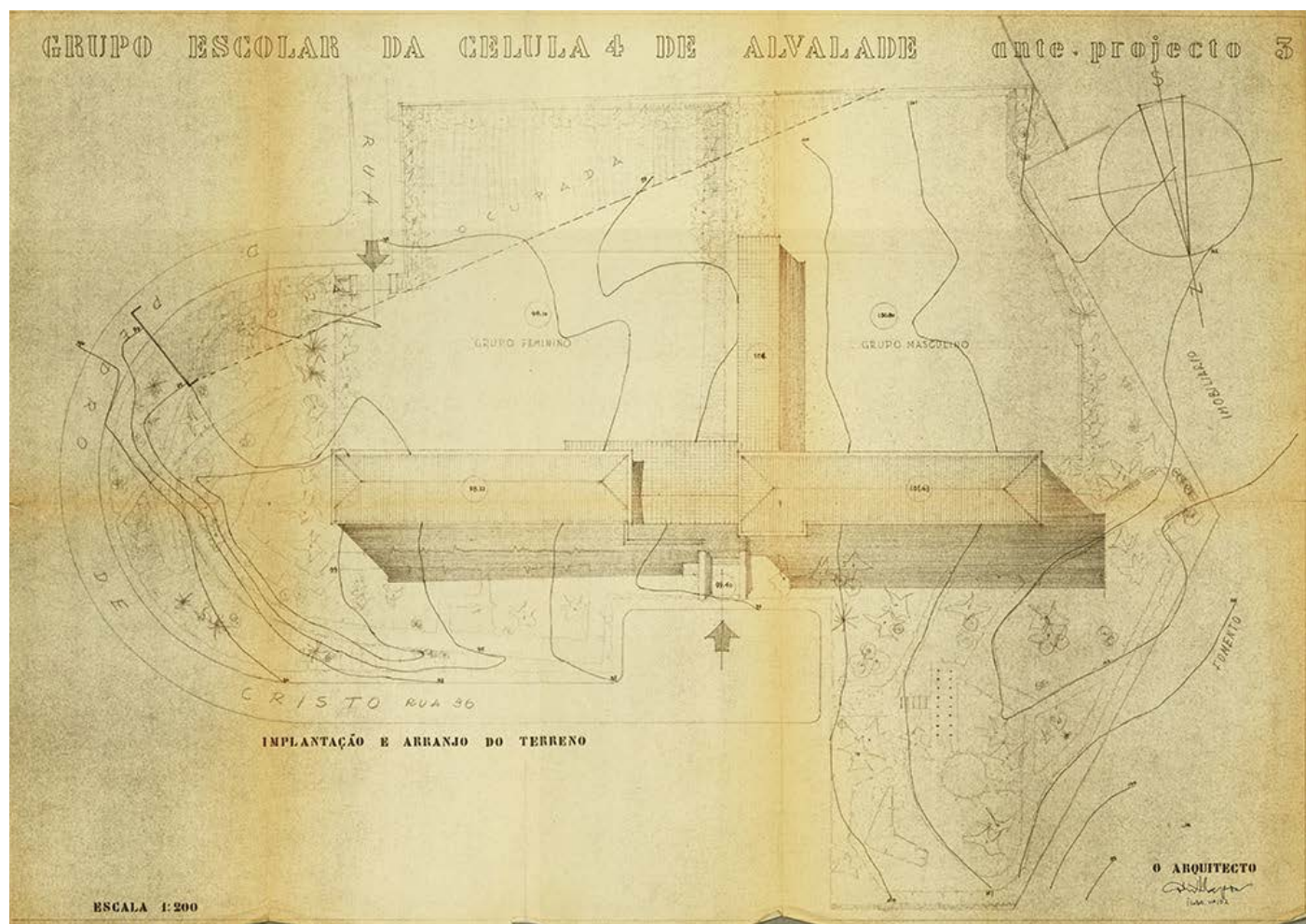


Figure 13 Implantation and arrangement of the plot of land for the Grupo Escolar da Célula 4 project in Alvalade, architect Manuel Coutinho Raposo, 5 August 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04065, page 7.

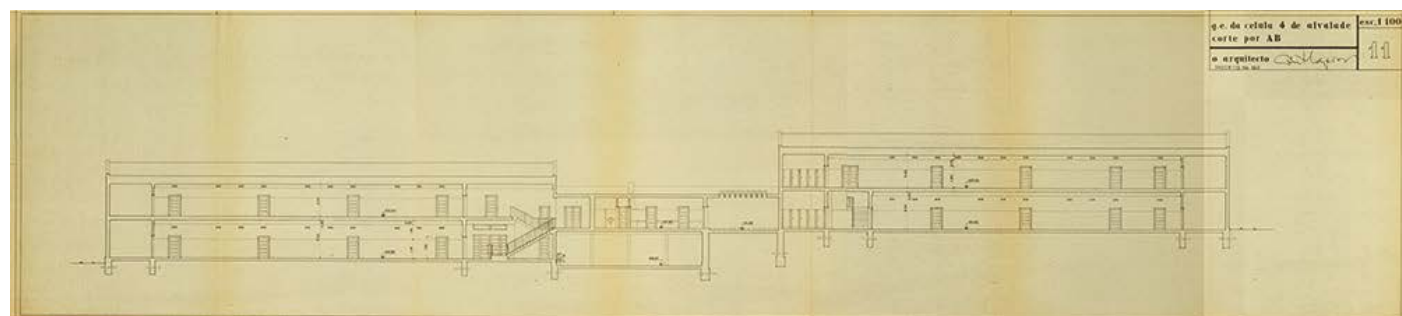


Figure 14 AB Cross-section of the Grupo Escolar da Célula 4 project in Alvalade, architect Manuel Coutinho Raposo, 5 August 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04065, page 22.

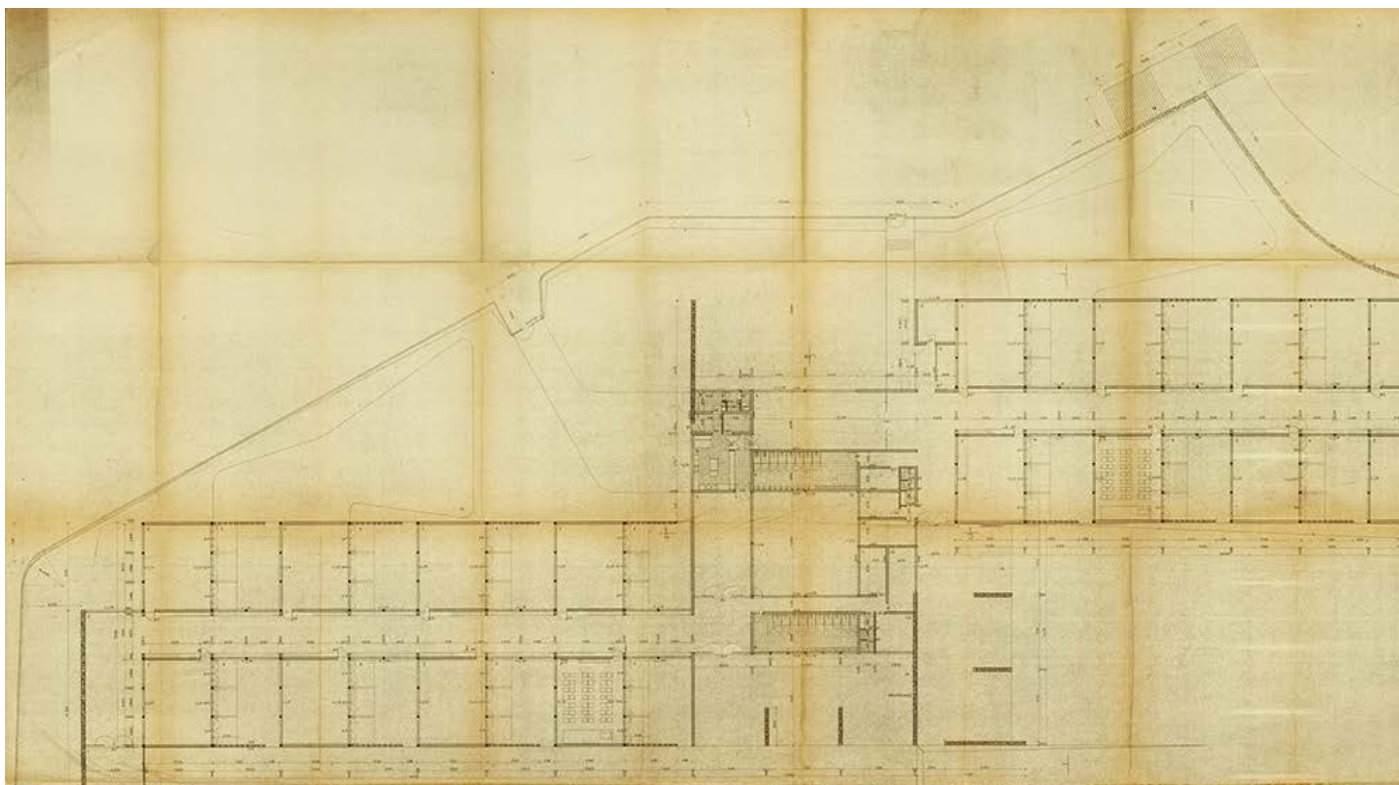


Figure 15 Half of the single-storey floor plan of the Grupo Escolar da Célula 8 project in Alvalade, architect Ruy Jervis d'Athouguia, [1957]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04080, page 3.



Figure 16 Plan showing the expropriations for the construction of the Grupo Escolar da Célula 8 in Alvalade, architect Ruy Jervis d'Athouguia, [1957]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSAH/PURB/002/04080, page 4.

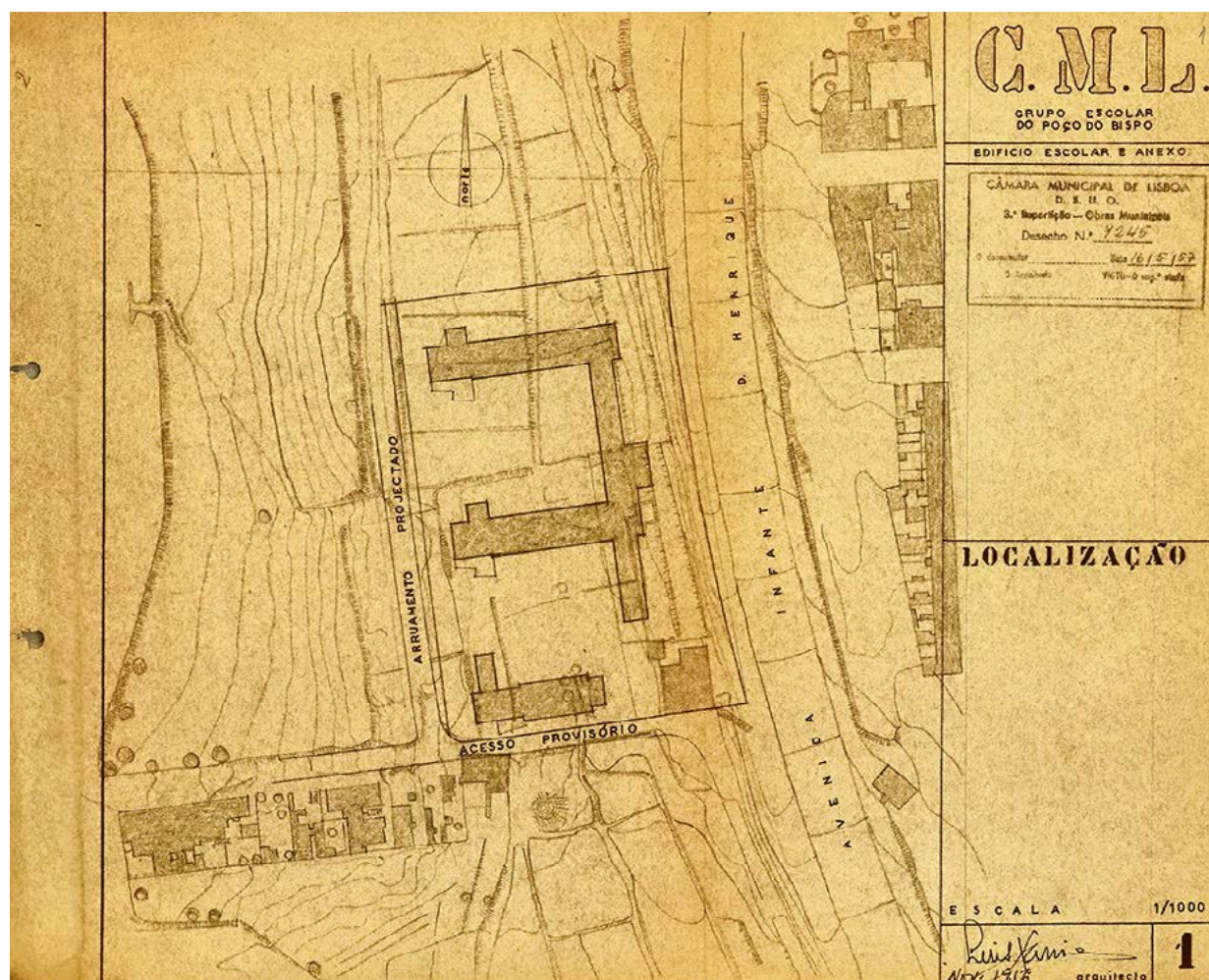


Figure 17 Plan for the location of the Grupo Escolar do Poço do Bispo, architect Luís Américo Xavier, 1956-11. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04081, page 1.

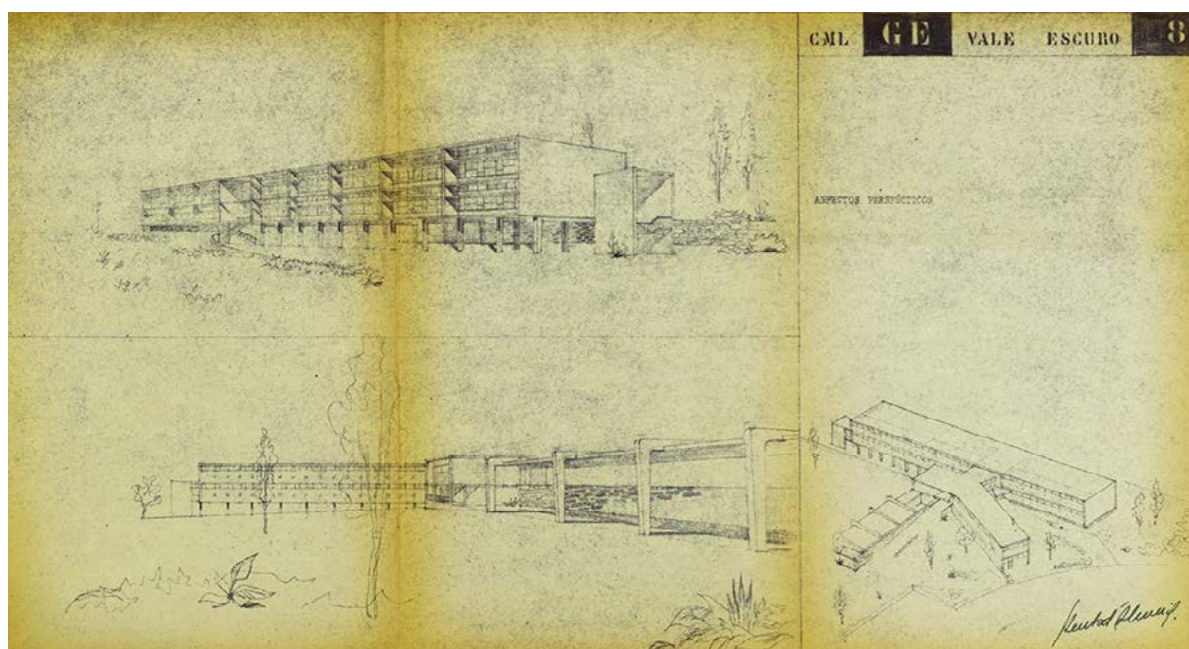


Figure 18 "Perspective views" of the Grupo Escolar de Vale Escuro, architect Bento d'Almeida, 5 August 1953. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PURB/002/04071, page 14.



Figure 19 Instructions for choosing plots of land for the construction of primary schools, Diário do Governo n.º 50, I Série, 09-03-1956, Portaria n.º 15760. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/PAH/PURB/002/04001, pages 9 and 9V.

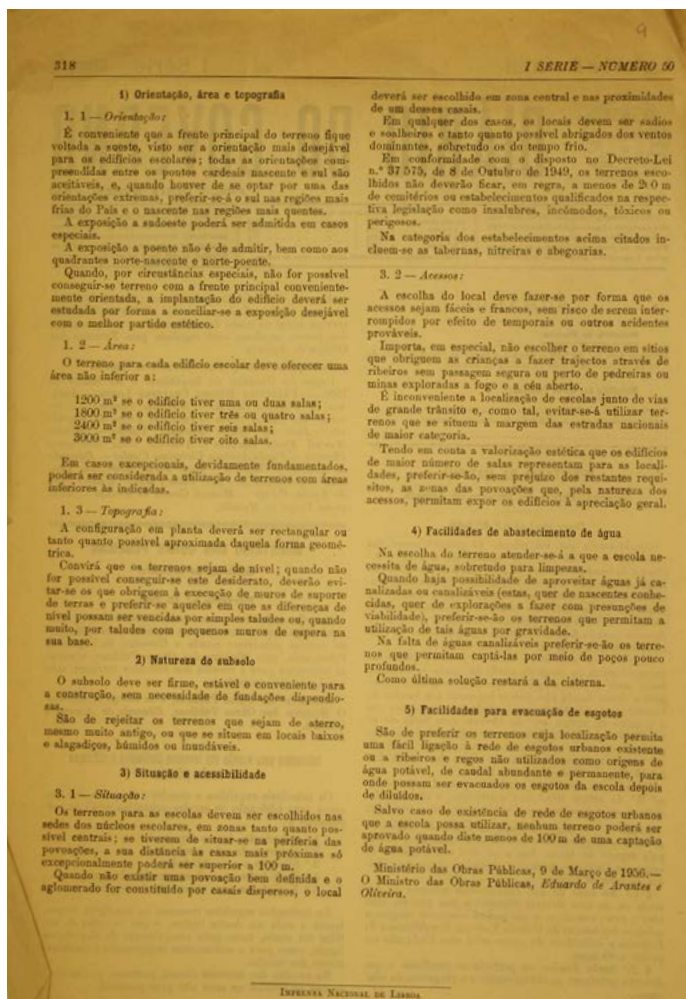




Figure 20 Model of the Grupo Escolar de Vale Escuro, now Escola Básica Arquitecto Victor Palla, located in Rua Francisco Pedro Curado, [post 1941], photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBH/PCSP/004/MAO/000625.



Figure 21 Model of the Grupo Escolar do Bairro de Santos, now Escola Básica Mestre Arnaldo Louro de Almeida, located in Rua Diogo de Macedo, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBH/PCSP/004/MAO/000627.



Figure 22 Model of the Grupo Escolar do Areeiro, now Escola Básica Luís de Camões, located in Avenida Padre Manuel da Nóbrega, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBH/PCSP/004/MAO/000629.



Figure 23 Model of the Grupo Escolar da Célula IV in Alvalade, now Escola Básica Almirante Gago Coutinho, located in Rua Dom Pedro Cristo, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBH/PCSP/004/MAO/000630.

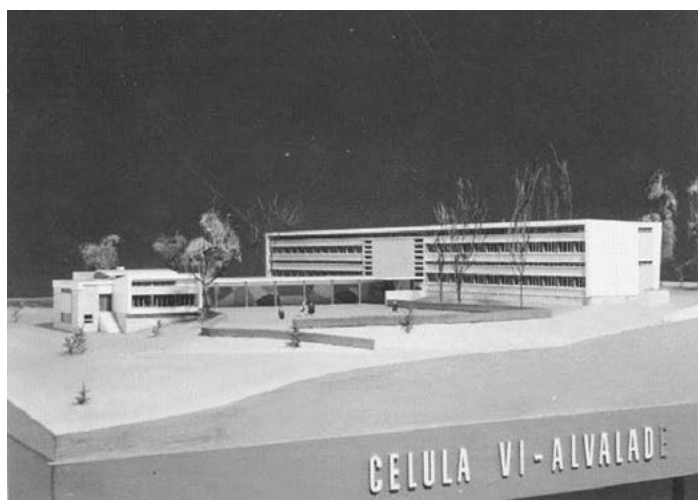


Figure 24 Model of the Grupo Escolar da Célula VI in Alvalade, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo São João de Brito, located in Rua Lopes Mendonça, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/MAO/000673.



Figure 25 Model of the Grupo Escolar da Célula VII in Alvalade, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo do Bairro de São Miguel, located in Rua Jorge Ferreira de Vasconcelos, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/MAO/000632.



Figure 26 Model of the Grupo Escolar de Campolide, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo Mestre Querubim Lapa, located in Travessa Estêvão Pinto, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [post 1941]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/MAO/000672.



Figure 27 Model of the Grupo Escolar do Alto dos Moinhos, now Escola Básica António Nobre, located in Rua São Domingos de Benfica, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [195-]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/MAO/000624.



Figure 28 Grupo Escolar do Alto dos Moinhos, now Escola Básica António Nobre, located in Rua São Domingos de Benfica, 1956, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/PCSP/004/SER/001160.



Figure 29 Escola Básica dos Coruchéus, located in Rua Fernando Pessoa, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [195-]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/PCSP/004/MAO/000274.



Figure 30 Escola do Bairro de Santos, girls' section, now Escola Básica Mestre Arnaldo Louro de Almeida, located in Rua Diogo de Macedo, photograph by Mário de Oliveira, [195-]. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/PCSP/004/MAO/000544.



Figure 31 Escola Primária de Vale Escuro, now Escola Básica Arquitecto Victor Palla, located in Rua Francisco Pedro Curado, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/PCSP/004/SER/012537.



Figure 32 Escola Primária N.º 24, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo do Bairro de São Miguel, located in Rua António Ferreira de Vasconcelos, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSB/PCSP/004/SER/001139.



Figure 33 Escola Básica Nº 111 da Célula VI in Alvalade, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo de São João de Brito, located in Rua Lopes Mendonça, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/001326.



Figure 34 Escola Primária de Xabregas, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo N.º 15, located in Calçada das Lajes and Calçada da Cruz de Pedra, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/001228.



Figure 35 Escola Primária da Picheleira, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco, located in Rua da Fábrica de Estamparia, photograph by Armando Maia Serôdio, 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/001339.



Figure 36 Visit by Lisbon Municipal Council to the construction site of the Grupo Escolar da Célula VII in Alvalade, now Escola Básica do 1.º Ciclo do Bairro de São Miguel, located in Rua Jorge Ferreira de Vasconcelos, photograph by Armando Maia Serôdio, 28 October 1954. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/000794.



Figure 37 Visit by Lisbon Municipal Council to the construction site of the Grupo Escolar de Vale Escuro, now Escola Básica Arquitecto Victor Palla, located in Rua Francisco Pedro Curado, photograph by Armando Maia Serôdio, 28 October 1954. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/000796.



Figure 38 Visit by Lisbon Municipal Council to the construction site of the Grupo Escolar do Bairro de Santos, now Escola Básica Mestre Arnaldo Louro de Almeida, located in Rua Diogo de Macedo, photograph by Armando Maia Serôdio, 28 October 1954. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/000797.



Figure 39 Inauguration of Escola N.º 63 in the Restelo neighbourhood, attended by the Minister of Education, Francisco de Paula Leite Pinto, the Mayor of Lisbon, Álvaro Salvação Barreto, and other members of the government, located in Praça de Goa, in Belém, photograph by Armando Maia Serôdio, 2 October 1958. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/001821.



Figure 40 Mayor of Lisbon, António Vitorino França Borges, and Under-Secretary of State for National Education, Carlos Bastos de Soveral, at the inauguration of the Grupo Escolar de Santa Quitéria, located in Travessa de Santa Quitéria, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 15 June 1961. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/003819.



Figure 41 Inauguration of the Grupo Escolar da Madre de Deus, attended by the Minister of Education, Francisco de Paula Leite Pinto, the Mayor of Lisbon, Álvaro Salvação Barreto, and other members of the government, located in Rua José da Bateira, photograph by Armando Maia Seródio, 26 May 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/003812.



Figure 42 Visit by the Minister of Education, Francisco de Paula Leite Pinto, to the Escola Primária de Vale Escuro, now Escola Básica Arquitecto Victor Palla, located in Rua Francisco Pedro Curado, photograph by Armando Maia Serôdio, 26 May 1956. AML, PT/AMLSB/CMLSBAH/PCSP/004/SER/001260.

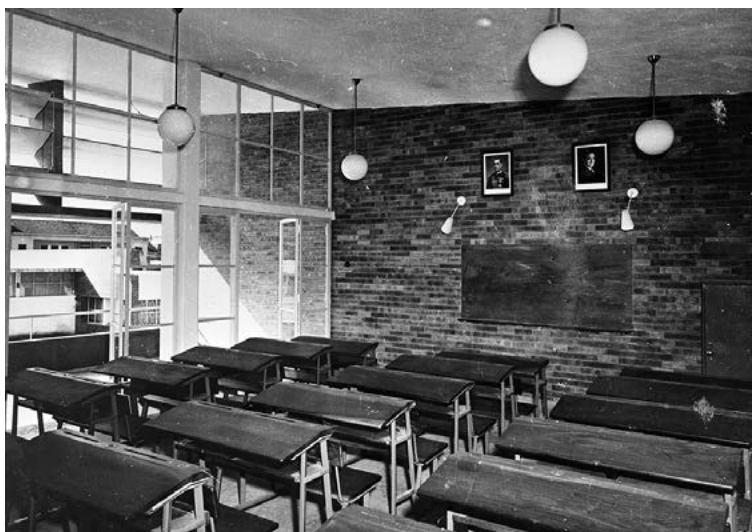


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