Third Conference of the Portuguese Network of Urban Morphology, Coimbra, Portugal, 27-28 June, 2013

The third annual meeting of PNUM was held in the City of Coimbra, in the oldest university in Portugal. It was hosted by the University’s Department of Civil Engineering in collaboration with CITTA (Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto) and with the ACIV (Association for the Development of Civil Engineering). The Organizing Committee was chaired by Nuno Norte Pinho. The Scientific Committee, which included A. Pais Antunes, J. Correia, K. Meneguetti, M. Fernandes, N. Norte Pinto, P. Pinho, T. Marat-Mendes, V. Medeiros and W. Rossa, was chaired by Vitor Oliveira.

The general theme of the Conference was ‘Urban form in territories of Portuguese heritage: analysis, design, quantification’, while the sub-topics were ‘Analysis, design and quantification of urban form’, ‘Urban form in territories of Portuguese heritage’ and ‘Urban form in Portuguese-speaking countries’, thus taking into consideration the variably-defined universe of Portuguese-related urban structures. This third conference in the series was considerably larger than its two predecessors. There were 153 presentations, in comparison with 60 in the first conference and 96 in the second. Some 55 of the presentations were Brazilian-led, reflecting a close connection with the only Portuguese-speaking Latin American country. The programme was made up of mainly parallel sessions, with a mixture of both established researchers and those in the early stages of their research activity. From the host university came its most prominent urban researcher, Prof. Mário Krüger, who gave the first keynote lecture, and Prof. Walter Rossa, who reflected on the central position in morphological studies held by Kubler’s *The shape of time*. In her keynote lecture, Prof. Staël de Alvarenga Pereira Costa, from the Federal University of Minas Gerais and convener of the ISUF 2007 conference, compared the transformations undergone by the neighbourhood of Islington in London with those of the ‘Bairro dos Escolas, viewed by Conference participants during their guided tour (photograph by Madelema Cunha Matos).
The reports describe the main activities of the Portuguese Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM) between July 2012 and July 2013. The third year of activities of PNUM has consolidated one of the most promising aspects of this network – the linkage between the Portuguese and Brazilian communities of urban morphologists. Three aspects should be highlighted: first, Frederico de Holanda (Universidade de Brasilia) and Stael Pereira da Costa (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) have been elected to the Scientific Council of PNUM; secondly, more than half of the papers submitted to the Revista de Morfologia Urbana over the past year were written by Brazilian researchers; and thirdly, 50 per cent of the presenters in the PNUM 2013 Conference came from Brazil.

One of the major elements for the consolidation and development of this Portuguese-speaking network is the establishment of a biannual journal in the Portuguese language. Over the past year, the Revista de Morfologia Urbana has been receiving papers, viewpoints, and book reviews. The first number of the Revista will be published online in December. It will include four papers – three original articles and the Portuguese translation of the influential ‘British urban morphology: the Conzenian tradition’ (Whitehand, 2001), originally published in Urban Morphology in October 2001. The new articles focus on: i) the dichotomy in historical studies of urban form between ‘regular’ and ‘irregular’ forms; ii) the description and explanation of the informal urban forms of Maputo, the capital of Mozambique; and iii) the presentation of a new method for morphological research and planning practice.