

COLLECTIVE HOUSING “THE PINK PANTHER” 1972-1979, Lisboa – Portugal

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Client Lisbon Municipality

Promotor Housing Development Funds

Engineering J. V. Paiva (structure), A. Torres (gas, water, sewage), S. Sanfins (electricity, elevators)

Contractor Edifer – Construções Pires Coelho & Fernandes, SARL

Photography Daniel Malhão

The collective social housing “The Pink Panther” was built under the Brutalist sign and the direct influences of other megastructures such as “Park Hill” designed by Jack Lynn and Ivor Smith (1957 -1961), “Gallaratese” designed by Aldo Rossi and Carlo Aymonino (1967 -1974), “Robin Hood Gardens” designed by Alison & Peter Smithson (1968-1972) and “Runcorn” designed by James Stirling (1972 -1977), remaining, unlike most of the others, in use until today.

The design proposed to rethink the urban planning by that time, creating a homogenous structure able to accept repetition and to stimulate a more urban life, with blocks with commerce at the ground floor and residential apartments at the other levels.

The layout of the buildings starts from the idea of creating a sequence of spaces through several structuring urban elements: street, square, block, internal street and passageways between buildings. The central square opens onto the street, acting as a transitional space around which the volumes are displayed in order to reduce the street’s noise and presence whereas the volumes’ corners are cut according to the diagonals of the square, in order to route the space to the inner street, while in its turn the other diagonal fits a visual alignment to the outer urban space.

A first network of galleries, facing the construction, ensures the main communications, including the connections between blocks through passageways. A second order of circulations provides access to the apartments, ensuring a more intimate character well denoted in the play between exterior and interior, and, as the gallery distributes from the street to the building, small semi-private spaces, defined by a marking of pillars, establish the transition from the gallery to the apartment.

The ensemble relates itself in many different ways to the inhabitants of the city and to those living there due to its degrees of openness and transparency, and to the transitions between public and private through proper scales. To the city, the ensemble exhibits a solid presence firmly anchored in the ground and a compact mass sparsely perforated. The exterior façades act as containers of an interior complexity whereas the internal façades form an intricate of successive overlaps of markings and horizontal lines whose scale is closer to their condition of interiority.

The pink color plays an active aesthetical role, reinforcing the perception of a mass, but at the same time allowing the comprehension of the form itself, of the play between shadows, the differences of scales within the transitional spaces, the interstices, etc., acting as an affirmative component of the architectural design.

