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# Structures of Community Life in Portuguese Home-Villages: Two Case Studies

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**Abstract**
This study aims to investigate the structures of community life in Portuguese Home-Villages and the consequences of an ageing demographic population; the need to implement home structures for the elderly and on how these can contribute to a revitalization of the depopulated territories. Last datas showed a concentration of the population in the metropolitan areas and a depopulation of the inland rural areas with resident ageing population – mostly in Alentejo-Algarve border. However, this could be perceived as an opportunity rather than a problem in dealing with depopulated villages. Two case studies were selected, the Home-Village of São José de Alcalar and Monte da Palhagueira, both located in the same rural region (Algarve). The characteristics of the urban and population structures were identified, and a comparison with similar structures already existent in other countries was established.A project of intervention was elaborated, aiming to revitalize the Monte do Pessegueiro – already depopulated.
**Keywords:** Home support; Territory revitalization; Spatial Equity; independent living in old age

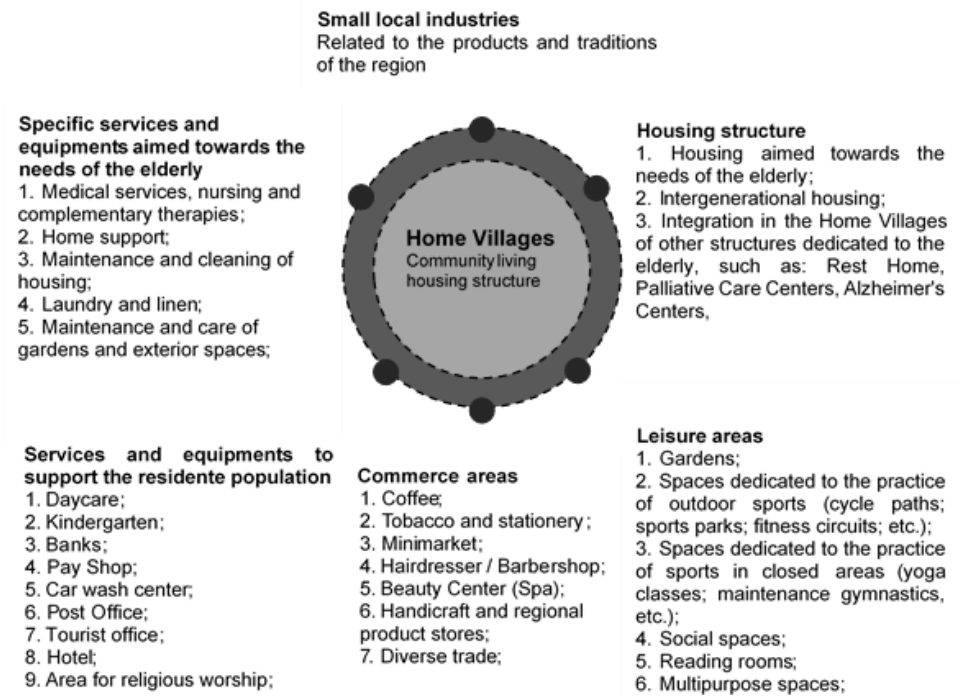
## 1. Introduction

Population aging presents itself as one of the great challenges of the 21st century for the different areas of the social, political and human sciences. In this way, and from the architectural thinking view, the issues related to housing for the elderly go beyond the concerns with the physical and psychological barriers of the housing nucleus and are transversal to the planning and planning of the territory. With the aging process in progress, it is necessary to promote mechanisms that allow the dynamism of the territory in order to avoid the depopulation of the interior.
In the international context, we find housing structures, living in a community, aimed at the elderly population - with consolidated models that are "repeated" and reinterpreted so that they adapt to the needs, characteristics and expectations of the populations they are intended for, as well as the territory in which they are located. In Portugal, these structures are not yet properly consolidated; the closest examples are the Assisted Residences and the Home Villages, where we can find three possible management models: private, public or public-private. The former ones are mostly of private development and closely linked to urban areas, while the Home Villages are more interconnected with rural areas (Karmilah and Puspitasari, 2020). The existing Home Villages do not result from the revitalization of villages or towns in the process of depopulation and, due to the characteristics of their urban form, in the reading of the territory, they lose the character of a village and are identified with the image of “equipment”.

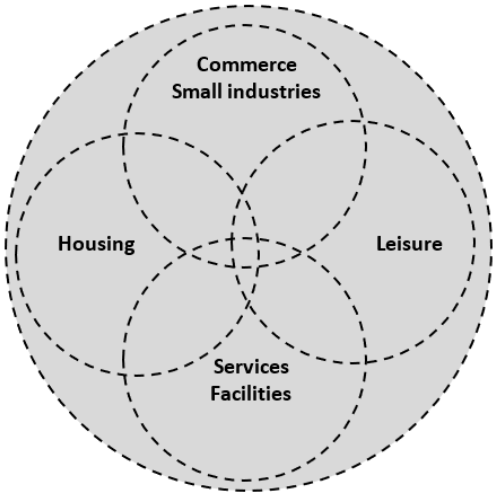
## 2. Physical and structural characteristics of the home villages (aldeias-lar) in Portugal

The concept of Home Villages presented in this investigation is based on the principles exposed by João Martins (2007) and Carminda Cavaco (2009), which can be defined as a housing structure geared towards the needs of the elderly, which values and encourages the community life, where, from the architectural point of view, this valorization should be developed through the characteristics introduced in the organization and distribution of spaces. In other words: in the way in which the distribution of buildings is structured (proximity and neighborhood relations); in housing typologies (generally single-family housing, with one or two floors, with a maximum of three bedrooms per dwelling); in the design and organization of non-built spaces (streets, gardens, vegetable gardens, patios or spaces for outdoor sports); of permanence and conviviality (interior or exterior); and in the detail introduced in the design of public and private spaces (lowered thresholds, sidewalks with the necessary width for the passage and crossing of people with reduced mobility and lowered next to the crossing zones; introduction of mobility support equipment inside and outside of buildings).
There are other factors that are fundamental for valuing community life and are related to the offer of services, the affinity relationships between the resident population, the size of the village, as well as the relationship established between the technical staff, residents and their family members.
The Home Villages seek to oppose the isolation and institutionalization of the elderly; promote its valorization and active aging. At the same time, they can contribute to the valorization and revitalization of the territory - from the physical (built-up), economic and demographic point of view - through the offer of employment that encourages the

establishment of the population, which can be established on the basis of differentiating offers, which promote the well-being of the populations (commerce, services, places of conviviality, day care, kindergarten) – Scheme 1 and 2.




**Scheme 1.** Physical and structural characteristics of the Home Villages Examples of possible structural elements to be introduced in the implementation of a Home Village, as a housing structure that promotes community life aimed towards the needs of the elderly.




**Scheme 02.** Proximity relations between the generating functions of a Home Village
Main functions established for the implementation of a Home Village as a structure that promotes community life: Housing | Services and Facilities | Commerce and Small Industries | Leisure.

These villages should integrate intergenerational housing structures and/or other facilities to support the elderly, in addition to different service spaces, commerce, leisure facilities, small local industries (related to the products and traditions of the region), in a relationship of continuity with the territory - Scheme 01.
For the characterization of these villages, ***it is necessary to understand what distinguishes the Home Villages from the different housing structures dedicated to the needs of the elderly in Portugal.*** One of the main differences lies in the valorization of community life, against the image of institutionalization and isolation, often associated with Homes for the Elderly. In Home Villages, the proximity between residents is an asset, namely through the sharing of

outdoor spaces, close to the dwellings. A feature that was fundamental during the period of isolation, caused by the world pandemic, and that allowed the enjoyment of outer space, with respect for the necessary distancing and isolation rules.

The type of housing used – single-family or single-family dwellings with a ground floor or two floors – presents itself as a potentiating factor for the implementation of community life. These housing models are also used in senior communities in Northern Europe and North America, such as senior cohousing. The proximity between services and people contributes to the improvement of their quality of life – Diagram 02.

The possibility of the Home Villages being introduced as an integral part of a process of revitalization of a certain region, could present itself as an added value, from the point of view of promoting quality housing and services, as well as economic development. and local tourist. So, ***how can Home Villages function as revitalizing structures in the interior of the national territory in the process of depopulation?***

In Revitalizing our small towns: Recent examples from Southern France, Charles Durrett (2012) presents the revitalization process implemented in the region of French Provence. In this region - recognized for its gastronomy, wine production, political and cultural influence - 67 small towns came together to identify the most critical aspects of their problems, developed solutions and acted to "save" their communities, marked by a process depopulation, with countless vacant dwellings – after the departure of the younger populations, who had no jobs in their cities – and where commerce and services closed. Cities that had more than 3,000 inhabitants now have around 900. The author identifies twelve principles, applied at the urban planning level, which he considers fundamental for the current revitalization process of this region and which present a positive demonstration of results.

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1. The existence of well-defined borders, which demarcate the limits between the city and the countryside – the urban and the rural.
2. The existence of pedestrian streets, as a privileged form of travel and interaction between residents.
3. The existence of an incentive for the development of local commerce, whose presence is reflected on the street scale.
4. The existence of small squares for regular fairs and markets, where local producers can sell their products.
5. The existence of suitable places, different from the other routes for car parking.
6. The existence of adequate vehicles at the scale of the town or city (use of public transport, of adequate dimensions, using fewer polluting fuels, namely electric vehicles).
7. The existence of a project and planning that take advantage of and value the resources available in the territory, in which new uses can be established according to the needs imposed by the revitalization process.
8. The existence of a plan that supports investment, the economy and local industry.
9. The existence of a revitalization, which is also reflected in the local economy, generates an increase in tax revenue - due to the increase in new businesses and new residents - which allows for a continuous investment in infrastructure and its maintenance.
10. The existence of cultural and architectural heritage maintenance provides a unique feeling of place.
11. The existence of schools, employment, housing and opportunities fixes younger populations, which prevents depopulation.
12. Revitalized cities are accessible to all citizens, including the elderly.

Durrett Durrett suggests the transposition of these principles to small towns in the interior of California – with similar depopulation processes – and defends their potential as elements that stimulate the revitalization of the territory, especially when associated to the implementation of communities such as cohousing or senior cohousing, which bring new residents and a new social, cultural and economic dynamic.

These principles may also be transposed and adapted to the needs and characteristics of the interior of the Portuguese territory, which is experiencing a similar process of aging and depopulation, which worsens year after year. If we add factors such as the tourist potential that Portugal offers (climate, architectural, cultural and scenic heritage), the demand by the foreign population, of retirement or pre-retirement age, of Portugal as a permanent or seasonal place of residence; the need to create housing geared towards the needs of the elderly, which simultaneously promote the integration of the elderly in the community, the diversity and intergenerationality of the territory, then we can think about the revitalization and dynamization of the territory through the

implementation of structures such as the Home Villages - which could be valued if integrated into networks with a regional (or national) dimension, as is the case in the French Provence region of Luberon.

**3. Case study: Two Home Villages in Portugal**


**Figure 1.** Location in the territory Village of São José de Alcalar e do Monte da Palhagueira (Portugal, Algarve)
Font: Service Layer Credits.Source: Esri; DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and GisUser Community

Two case studies are presented: São José de Alcalar (Mexilhoeira Grande, Portimão) and Monte da Palhagueira (Santa Bárbara de Nexe-Gorjões, Faro). The choice of these two cases is related to factors that enhance a different experience in two communities built with the same objective, where we find the following points of reference:

- Belonging to the same geographic region: the Algarve;
- They were built at the same time (São José de Alcalar started in 1989 and Monte da Palhagueira in 1990);
- They present distinct urban characteristics of insertion in the territory;
- They have different management characteristics: (São José de Alcalar – Public/private; Monte da Palhagueira – private);

**3.1 Village of São José de Alcalar**

Based on the cartographic reading of the Village of São José de Alcalar, the neighborhood and proximity relations with central support facilities were analyzed: Hospitals, Health Centers, sports facilities, beaches, Marina and Airfield – Table 1.

The village is served by good communication routes (national road and motorway), which allows easy access to central facilities and the city of Portimão, despite the proximity, it is necessary to resort to the car - in a region where the public transport network is deficient, this fact limits the mobility of residents. The village has terrestrial, mobile and internet telecommunications services.

The territory of its reference area, as in much of the Algarve, is marked by the existence of tourist villages, most of which do not obey any local memory (either in the form of occupation in the territory or in the architectural structure of the buildings). They are implanted in the territory in the form of subdivisions / urbanizations built with their own urban order, almost closed in on itself - like islands - and, mostly, with a seasonal occupation.

The reading of the São José de Alcalar microscale was established through a survey. The village extends over an area of about 1.8 hectares and 63% of the total area is unbuilt, of which 28% are for landscaped green spaces and the remaining 35% for residents' gardens, outdoor recreational facilities (amphitheater, geriatric park and squares) and vacant land. The gross construction area for housing represents 17% and the gross construction area for services represents 20% of the total gross built area in the village – Table 02.

**Table 01.** Proximity relations between the village of São José de Alcalar and the central facilities - Analysis of the macro scale of the village

| CENTRAL SUPPORT FACILITIES | DISTANCE | TIME (1) |
|---|---|---|
| Hospital of the Western Algarve | 9 km | 12 min |
| Alvor Private Hospital | 11 km | 20 min |
| Portimão Health Center | 11 km | 17 min |
| Mexilhoeira Grande Health Center | 4,5 km | 6 min |
| Portimão Sports Pavilion | 12 km | 23 min |
| Portimão Municipal Swimming Pools | 13 km | 23 min |
| Portimão Municipal Tennis Complex | 13 km | 23 min |
| Alvor Sports Complex | 11 km | 20 min |
| Penina Hotel Golf Course | 5 km | 7 min |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Golfe do Morgado | 11 km | 23 min |
| Palmares Golf | 15 km | 22 min |
| Portimão Marina | 14 km | 27 min |
| Beach Line (access to Praia da Rocha) | 13 km | 23 min |
| Portimão Aerodrome | 7,5 km | 11 min |

**Note:**
1. Average time to complete the route. Distance traveled by car, in accordance with the regulations and indications of the highway code

**Table 02.** General characterization of areas in the village of São José de Alcalar Village microscale analysis

| **GENERAL CHARACTERIZATION OF AREAS** | |
|---|---|
| Total land area | 18.280,00m$^2$ |
| Gross building area intended for housing* | 3.395,00m$^2$ |
| Gross building area for administration and services | 4.150,00m$^2$ |
| Total gross building area | 7.545.00m$^2$ |
| Implantation area intended for housing* | 2.142,50m$^2$ |
| Implantation area intended for administration and services | 3.395,00m$^2$ |
| Total implantation area | 5.537,50m$^2$ |
| Area for access, spaces and outdoor facilities | 7.042,50m$^2$ |
| Area for green spaces | 5.700,00m$^2$ |
| Total occupancy index | 0,3 |
| Total construction index | 0,4 |

* Permanent own housing

It offers different equipment and support services to the resident population, as well as to the neighboring community: geriatric park; general medicine consultation service, nursing service and a small ward with four rooms (for possible support to the resident population); nursery; kindergarten; leisure activities center for young people and religious celebrations. The existence of the day care center, kindergarten and leisure activities center allow the existence of an intergenerational dynamic that, however, is occasional, since children, young people and their families do not live in the village – Figure 2. Regarding the maximum accommodation capacity, in a permanent housing structure, it is 130 residents, spread over 52 dwellings that are developed in ground floor terraced apartments, consisting of 26 T1, 18 T2 and 8 T3. All dwellings have sanitary facilities adapted to the needs of individuals with reduced mobility. The open kitchen area to the common room facilitates mobility in the space. The porch, in front of the dwellings, is a place of permanence and conviviality between the residents and makes the transition between the private space and the public space – Table and Image 3.

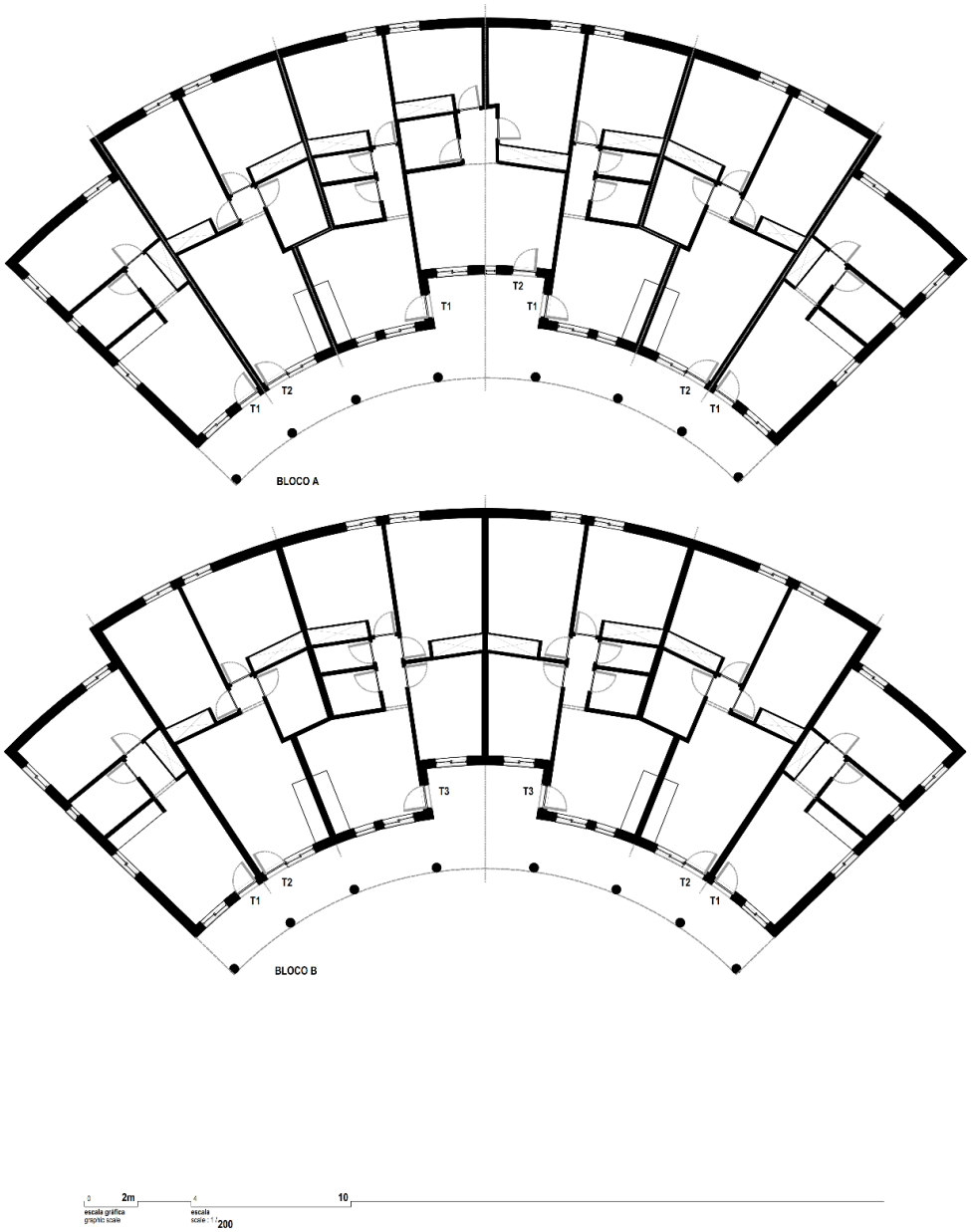

**Subtitle:**
Total land area: 18.280,00m$^2$
1. Parking / Access to the village
2. Central Building: Administrative area; chapel; multipurpose room; library; living room/tv; refectory; kitchen; barbershop; laundry/clothing; hairdresser/barbershop; doctor's office; nursing and treatment room; nursery; technical and personnel areas.
3. Outdoor Amphitheater
4. Geriatric Park
5. Building for small commercial areas: cafe, mini-market
6. Housing: T1, T2 and T3 typologies
7. Multifunctional building: day care; kindergarten; ATL; visitor reception area (dorm, sanitary facilities and living area); multipurpose room; kitchen; refectory; technical and personnel areas
8. Residents' gardens

**Figure 2.** Village of São José de Alcalar - Implementation / Topographic Survey (not geo-referenced)

**Table 03.** Relationship between the existing typologies in a permanent housing structure and the possible number of occupants in the village of São José de Alcalar Village microscale analysis

**TYPOLOGIES OF PERMANENT OWN HOUSING / RESIDENTS**

| | **HOUSING** | **OCCUPANCY** |
|---|---|---|
| T1 | 26 units | 52 |
| T2 | 18 units | 54 |
| T3 | 8 units | 24 |
| Total | 52 units | 130 |




**Subtitle:**
Block A: 4 T1 type dwellings
3 T2 type dwellings
Block B: 2 T1-type dwellings
2 T2 type dwellings
2 T3 type dwellings

**Figure 3.** Village of São José de Alcalar - Plan of a set of two blocks of housing space

### 3.2 Monte da Palhagueira

Based on the cartographic reading of Monte da Palhagueira, the neighborhood and proximity relations with Hospitals, Health Centers, Train Station, Porto and Recreation Marina were analyzed; Trucking station; Faro International Airport; universities; commercial areas; public gardens and parks; coastline; and golf courses – Table 4. The village is relatively close to the urban area of influence: the city of Faro (17km) and the town of Santa Bárbara de Nexe (4km). As in São José de Alcalar, it is necessary to use private means of transport; in this case, the village provides this service, and it is possible to arrange transport. The village is also well served by access roads (motorway and national roads) and mobile, terrestrial and internet telecommunications.

The nearest town, Santa Bárbara de Nexe, has a post office, tax office, bank agencies, insurance companies and different shops. The village's proximity to Faro International Airport is an asset, since the entire resident population is foreign, as well as a large part of the technical team and employees – Table 4.

The organization of its physical structure is marked by the church, in a circular shape, at the beginning of the village, from which the service and housing buildings arise (with a maximum of two floors in height) and through these the streets, which articulate between the built and unbuilt spaces, which contributed to the village having a reading of continuity in the territory. As in São José de Alcalar, in its reference area, there is a strong presence of tourist villages, separated by vast areas of natural and agricultural land. About 1km away, we find small villages, located along the roads.

The Monte da Palhagueira microscale reading was established through a survey. The village occupies an area of about 2.8 hectares and most of the area is unbuilt (78%), corresponds to accesses, public and private gardens, lakes, squares, bandstand area, parking lots, small golf training course, tennis court and swimming pool. It has low occupancy and construction rates and the area destined for housing corresponds to the highest percentage of built-up area – Table 05.

It has a Rest House, with 22 suite double rooms; medical services, nursing, physical therapy and occupational therapies; support and maintenance of dwellings and gardens; restaurant; café-bar with bookstore and library; open-air spaces intended for sports; Anglican Church; indoor pool with water treatment room; and, also, the regular holding of a market with regional products. The maximum occupancy capacity, in own housing, is 126 residents, spread over 33 housing units (6T1, 21T2 and 6 T3). Its construction process was gradual: the first house (1T1) was built two years after the start of construction of the Casa de Repouso, in 1992; in 1995, 3 more units were built (1Q1 and 2Q2), between 2000 and 2005, 22 houses were built and, in 2005, the construction process of the last 8 units began. Of the existing dwellings, 11 have a garage, 9 have a porch for parking and 1 have a basement.

**Table 4.** Proximity relations between Monte da Palhagueira and central facilities Macro-scale analysis of the village

| **CENTRAL SUPPORT FACILITIES** | **DISTÂNCE** | **TIME** (1) |
|---|---|---|
| Hospital of Faro | 16 km | 25 min |
| HPP - Hospital of Santa Maria de Faro | 16 km | 19 min |
| Algarve Private Hospital - Gambelas | 16 km | 19 min |
| Faro train station | 16 km | 23 min |
| Faro bus station | 16 km | 23 min |
| Faro International Airport | 16 km | 20 min |
| Faro marina and port | 16 km | 23 min |
| Faro Municipal Theater | 15 km | 21 min |
| University of Algarve - Penha Campus | 15 km | 23 min |
| University of the Algarve - Gambelas Campus | 14 km | 22 min |
| Shopping centers | 15 km | 21 min |
| Beach line | 19 km | 25 min |

Note:
1. Average time to complete the route. Distance traveled by car, in accordance with the regulations and indications of the highway code


**Subtitle:**
Total land area: 28.244.00m$^2$
1. Tennis court and support house
2. Lake and garden
3. Bandstand and playground area
4. Outdoor swimming pool (with ramped access)
   Support house (bar and barbecue)
5. Anglican Church (St. Luke's Church)
6. Restaurant
7. Cafe/Bar and Bookstore/Library
8. Rest Home
9. Pool and outdoor terrace
10. Village Square
11. Golf training course (Pitch and Put Court)

**Figure 4.** Monte da Palhagueira - Implantation / Topographic Survey (not geo-referenced)

**Table 5.** General characterization of areas of Monte da Palhagueira Village microscale analysis

**GENERAL CHARACTERIZATION OF AREAS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Total land area | 28.244.00m$^2$ |
| Gross building area intended for housing* | 4.995,50m$^2$ |
| Gross building area for administration and services | 1.975,00m$^2$ |
| Total gross building area | 6.970,50m$^2$ |
| Implantation area intended for housing* | 2.780,50m$^2$ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Implantation area intended for administration and services | 1.268,50m$^2$ |
| Total implantation area | 4.049,00m$^2$ |
| Area intended for access, spaces and outdoor facilities | 6,095,00m$^2$ |
| Area for green spaces | 18.100,00m$^2$ |
| Total occupancy index | 0,14 |
| Total construction index | 0,24 |

* Permanent own housing

**Table 6.** Relation between the existing typologies in a permanent housing structure and the possible number of occupations in Monte da Palhagueira Village microscale analysis

**TYPOLOGIES OF PERMANENT OWN HOUSING / RESIDENTS**

| | **HOUSING** | **OCCUPANCY** |
|---|---|---|
| T1 | 6 units | 12 |
| T2 | 21 units | 63 |
| T3 | 6 units | 24 |
| Total | 33 units | 99 |

### 3.3 Village of são José de Alcalar versus Monte da Palhagueira

The comparison of data established for the Home Villages of São José de Alcalar and Monte da Palhagueira, allows us to establish some considerations regarding these housing structures:

• The type of management entity may condition, from the outset, the characteristics of the resident population, the types of housing, as well as the services and equipment available; in which structures aimed at populations with greater financial availability (private) tend to offer more differentiated services and housing spaces (namely in the size and quality of housing finishes, as well as in the equipment they have; or in the services they offer: gymnasium , swimming pools, complementary supportive therapies or specialist medical care)

• The quality of the living space and outdoor spaces is one of the fundamental factors for the well-being and quality of life of the elderly. The existence of a direct relationship, without physical barriers, between the interior and exterior of the house enhances the experience of the exterior spaces and the consequent interaction with the neighbors. The analyzed Home Villages belong to a region valued for its climatic characteristics, where residents spend a large part of their day outdoors, especially in the transition space (porches and patios) between the private space of the dwelling and the common outdoor space.

• The definition, in the project phase, of the characteristics of implantation of the physical structure of the Home Villages is fundamental so that its reading is defined in continuity with the territory and in accordance with the characteristics of the region where it is inserted.

• The services available must be suitable for the resident population, as well as for neighboring populations. Thus, different interrelationships with the community can be established, in order to promote the revitalization of the territory, namely: the existence of medical services, nursing, complementary therapies, gym, restaurant, commerce, services, leisure and tourism equipment or small industries, which can attract populations to the interior of the villages.

• Proximity to urban centers - where there are large cultural, sports, educational and state facilities, among others - may or may not be preponderant, according to the characteristics of the resident population. However, easy access to hospitals or health centers is essential, especially for the emotional tranquility of residents.

### 3.4 Reflections Based on Case Study

The Home Villages in Portugal present themselves as an opportunity to respond to the need to implement housing structures geared towards the elderly and, simultaneously, to promote the revitalization of territories in the process of depopulation. Its territorial occupation model allows for a better quality of life and physical and human relationships, even in exceptional moments of a pandemic where the appreciation of the relationship with outer space was evident.

These structures respond to the question of housing needs and services aimed at the elderly, as they respect their mobility needs, as well as their specific care needs and the right to active aging, which values community life and avoids isolation and institutionalization.

Since the construction of these villages, the Portuguese demographic scenario has changed significantly, with a high increase in the aging of the population. Another significant change is the worsening of the depopulation of the interior of Portugal. These facts mark a need for a response, not only for people, but for the territory that is also

aging. In the interior, especially on the border between Alentejo and Algarve, there is a significant number of unpopulated villages, with countless vacant houses, without any commercial activity, without job offers, without young populations (who have moved to urban centers or emigrated) and with isolated elderly people, as is the case of the village of Monte do Pessegueiro, in Martim Longo, for which a synthesis of a possible intervention proposal is presented.

**4. Monte do Pessegueiro: existing situation survey**

**Figure 5 to 10.** Monte do Pessegueiro – Vacant housing (Photographs: Ana Bordalo)

Monte do Pessegueiro, in Alcoutim, marked by a long process of depopulation, meets the necessary conditions for the installation of a housing structure dedicated to the elderly.
Here, we identified 33 vacant dwellings, scattered throughout the village. In some areas we can find sets of 3 to 5 adjacent vacant dwellings, which would allow the requalification of the set of housing units in an individual or integrated way, as well as their urban structure (patios and/or streets) – Figure 11.
The dwellings are organized in a continuous street alignment, which seems to arise spontaneously and follows the natural topography of the land. It can be seen that most of the vacant dwellings are in a poor state of conservation, a fact that may indicate that with the passage of time part of the architectural heritage (singular and collective) will be lost. In the village there are 2 community ovens, also abandoned – Table 7.


**Subtitle**

**A.** Sets of three or more vacant dwellings that share common outdoor space next to the main access to housing

**Figure 11.** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim - Location of vacant dwellings in the village

Most of the houses still keep their original structure and constructive characteristics: ground floor; rectangular plant; in self-supporting, exposed or whitewashed shale masonry (exterior masonry, mostly, about 50cm thick); small, with two to four interior divisions; in most cases, the only opening in the house is the entrance door - however, in some cases, we can find a small window in the room that faces the street.

The dwellings are organized in a continuous street alignment, which seems to arise spontaneously and follows the natural topography of the land. It can be seen that most of the vacant dwellings are in a poor state of conservation,

a fact that may indicate that with the passage of time part of the architectural heritage (singular and collective) will be lost. In the village there are 2 community ovens, also abandoned – Table 7.

**Table 7.** Quantitative summary of the characterization of the vacant housings conservation status in Monte do Pessegueiro

**CHARACTERIZATION OF THE VACANT HOUSINGS CONSERVATION STATUS [1]**

| | UNITS | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Good | 2 units | 6,0% |
| Reasonable | 8 units | 24,2% |
| Bad | 16 units | 48,5% |
| Ruin | 7 units | 21,3% |

Most keep the traditional system in exposed shale masonry, whitewashed or with a combination of the two finishes. There are, occasionally, the existence of recent changes in dwellings that do not respect the original structure, either from a constructive point of view - with the introduction of painted brick masonry or coated with ceramic materials - or even the introduction of another floor - Table 8

**Table 8.** Quantitative summary of the characterization of the vacant housings conservation status in Monte do Pessegueiro

**CHARACTERIZATION OF THE EXTERIOR WALLS CONSTRUCTION SYSTEM**

| | UNITS | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Exterior walls in exposed shale masonry | 8 units | 24,2% |
| Exterior walls in whitewashed shale masonry | 12 units | 36,4 % |
| Combination of exposed shale masonry with whitewashed | 12 units | 36,4% |
| Others | 1 unit | 3% |

Only one of the vacant housings no longer has the mortar tile system based on a “plumbing” structure on the roof, and most have only one water (23 dwellings, out of a total of 33 identified). In some dwellings, the roof is already significantly damaged. Another characteristic is the absence of windows, which can be seen in 28 of the 33 mentioned dwellings. In the case of openings, most keep the original wooden frame, however in some cases it is already very degraded – Table 9.

The access span, in wood with a door leaf, with or without a wicket, is normally small – with a width that varies between 75 and 80 cm and a height between 1.75 and 1.85 m. In the referenced dwellings, most keep the original door; in others it has already been replaced by a new wooden door; in five, the option was to replace it with an aluminum or iron door – Table 10.

**Table 9.** Quantitative summary of the characterization of the façade spans - windows of vacant housings in Monte do Pessegueiro

**CHARACTERIZATION OF FAÇADE VANS - WINDOWS**

| | UNITS | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Wooden frames (original) | 4 units | 12,1 % |
| Wooden frames (original) and other (aluminium) | 1 unit | 3,1 % |
| No windows | 28 units | 84,8% |
| Others | 0 units | 0% |

[1] For the characterization of the conservation status of vacant housings, four comparative parameters were established: GOOD – When the housing presents conditions of habitability; REASONABLE – When the housing shows some signs of degradation, but still meets the conditions for recovery with small interventions; BAD – When the housing shows strong signs of degradation and requires significant intervention; RUIN – When the housing is heavily degraded.

**Table 10.** Quantitative summary of the characterization of the access span to vacant housings in Monte do Pessegueiro

**CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ACCESS SPAN**

| | **UNITS** | **PERCENTAGE** |
|---|---|---|
| Original in wood | 25 units | 75,8 % |
| Already replaced in wood | 2 units | 6 % |
| Aluminum | 2 units | 6% |
| Iron | 3 units | 9,1% |
| No access span | 1 unit | 3,1% |

The gross construction area of the housings is a fundamental element for their rehabilitation, as well as for the entire structure. The need to provide large spaces - which promote mobility and a feeling of comfort for users and the versatility of spaces is presented as a preponderant factor for the requalification and adaptation of housing to the needs of the elderly. If we consider the values of gross area identified (in 12 dwellings it is less than 50m2 and in 15 it varies between 50 and 75m2) and taking into account that the thickness of the exterior walls is approximately 50cm, it appears that the majority have a reduced usable area; therefore, it will be necessary to consider the aggregation of two or more units to form a dwelling with the necessary and adequate dimensions and spaces – Table 11.

**Table** 28. Quantitative summary of the gross construction area (approximate values) of vacant housings in Monte do Pessegueiro

**GROSS CONSTRUCTION AREA - APPROXIMATE VALUES**

| | **UNITS** | **PERCENTAGE** |
|---|---|---|
| Less than $50m^2$ | 12 units | 36,4 % |
| Between $50m^2$ and $75m^2$ | 15 units | 45,5 % |
| Between $75m^2$ and $100m^2$ | 4 units | 12,1% |
| More than $100m^2$ | 2 units | 6 % |

Due to the formal characteristics of the housings, it will be possible to establish a direct relationship between the exterior and interior spaces. In 20 houses there is a patio (at the back; next to the main entrance common to different dwellings; or both situations), which makes it possible to generate a transition element between the street and the housing or a private outdoor space at the back. Three nuclei were identified with three or more vacant housings that share a common outdoor patio area, which may allow the creation permanence and living areas.
Most of the housings maintain the characteristics of the traditional local architecture, which allows that in a rehabilitation process, it is possible to follow the structural and constructive essence of each housing and, at the same time, give the spaces the specificities of adaptability.

### 4.1 Intervention proposal for revitalization of built heritage

Aiming the promotion of the rehabilitation of the vacant built housing heritage in Pessegueiro, its adaptability to the needs of mobility in space for the elderly (and, consequently, of all individuals) and, at the same time, to enhance the revitalization of the territory through the implementation of a housing structure for community living, in a model that is based on the structural principles of Home Villages, two possible intervention hypotheses are presented.
The proposal (schematically formalized) synthesizes the ideas and concepts exposed and transports them to a possible model of intervention in the territory. In terms of their structural organization, services, equipment and commercial spaces should take into account the current resident population, as well as the one that is intended to attract and settle (intergenerational). Thus, in addition to the local commerce and services necessary for the operation of Home Village, others should be implemented that could leverage the revitalization of the territory (such as the existence of an agrotourism or small industries related to agriculture and local crafts).
Image 12 shows the distribution of the different functional spaces in the territory. It is visible the importance that the space destined to vegetable gardens can acquire, since these are considered of extreme relevance for the population - fundamental element for the maintenance of their daily physical activity and a healthy diet (economically sustainable). Vegetable gardens are also part of the imagination of those looking to move to rural areas. The support facilities for the elderly resident population, medical and nursing services, maintenance and meal services were located in a centralized manner and adequate to the available physical space. Image 13 identifies the

proposed new constructions, as well as the constructions whose uses may be altered or requalified, to meet the proposed objectives.

Small spaces for parking should be considered, so that it is organized and allows easy access to housing, services, commerce and small industries (Image 14). The fact that the village is “torn apart” by the National Road requires greater concern in terms of pedestrian crossings, since residents on the West side (where there is a greater concentration of housing) to access medical services or the social center will have to make your crossing. With regard to the exterior floors, the urban structure is characterized by the lack of sidewalks, which should remain, as this characteristic eliminates architectural barriers, which only occur occasionally, near the entrance of some dwellings (a situation that can easily be annulled) . The streets may maintain, or recover, the characteristics of the region, with shale pavement, ensuring thatt there is no risk of falling (no variations in height and with a non-slip finish). It is proposed to introduce green spaces, with areas of permanence and conviviality between residents (Image 15).

The proposed interventions respect the elimination of physical barriers, such as steps between the different spaces (interior and exterior); placing switches at a minimum height of 90cm and a maximum of 120cm; placing electrical outlets at a minimum height of 45cm; correct dimensioning of spaces in order to allow their versatility (possible changes in furniture arrangement); allow visual contact with the outside, at the level of the seated individual (between 80 and 120 cm of minimum height from the floor); use of equipment with the correct ergonomic dimensions and usable by all individuals (such as door handles, faucets, supports, etc.); and care in the placement of equipment, in order to allow its use without additional effort (such as dishwashers, washing machines, ovens, etc.).

Hypothesis A (Image 16) presents a vacant dwelling, with a gross area of 43.00 m2, in poor condition, inserted in a building complex still inhabited, next to one of the community ovens. Due to its dimensions, it would only be used as a T0 Typology, with a small private patio. Built in exposed shale masonry, whitewashed punctually next to the access opening. It is characterized by the inexistence of windows, where a small shutter recommends a mark on the corner façade.

Hypothesis B (Image 17) presents a set of two houses, also of small dimensions (with gross areas less than 50m2, each), interconnected to allow a T1 type housing. This house can enjoy two outdoor patios: a private one (at the back) and a common one, next to the main entrance.

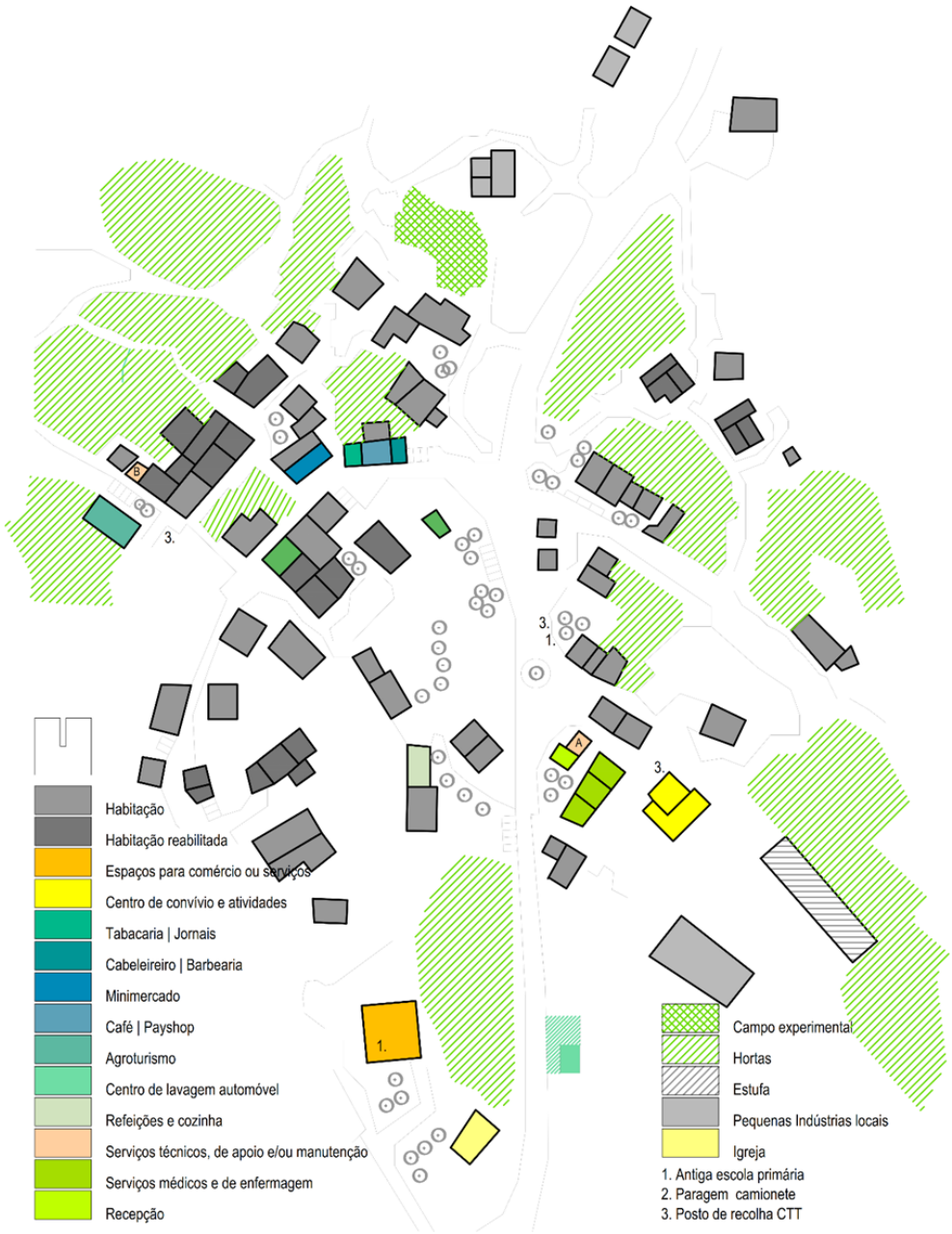



**Image 12** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim - Territory intervention proposal: Urban structure

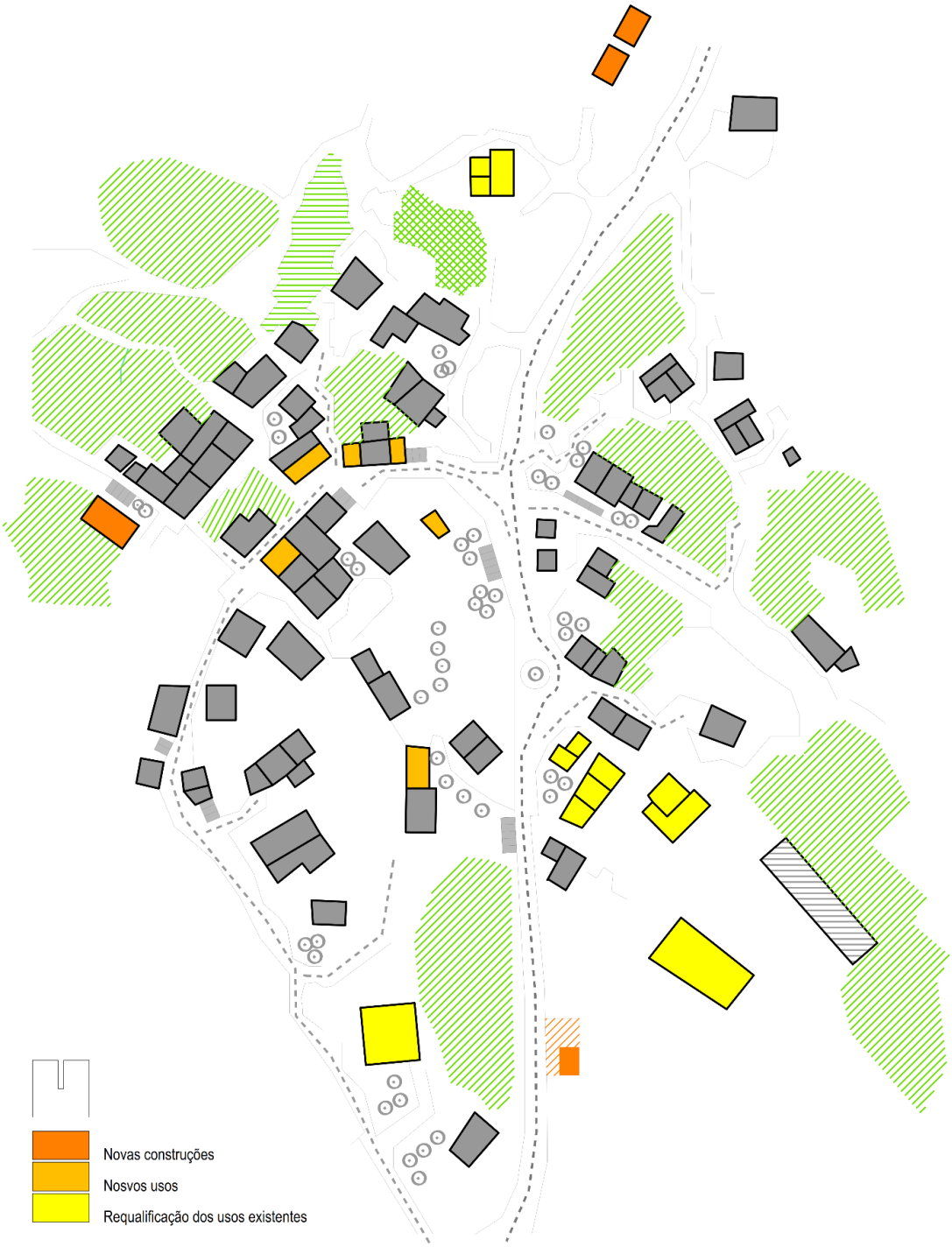



**Image 13** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim - Territory intervention proposal: Urban structure - identification of new constructions, new uses and existing uses

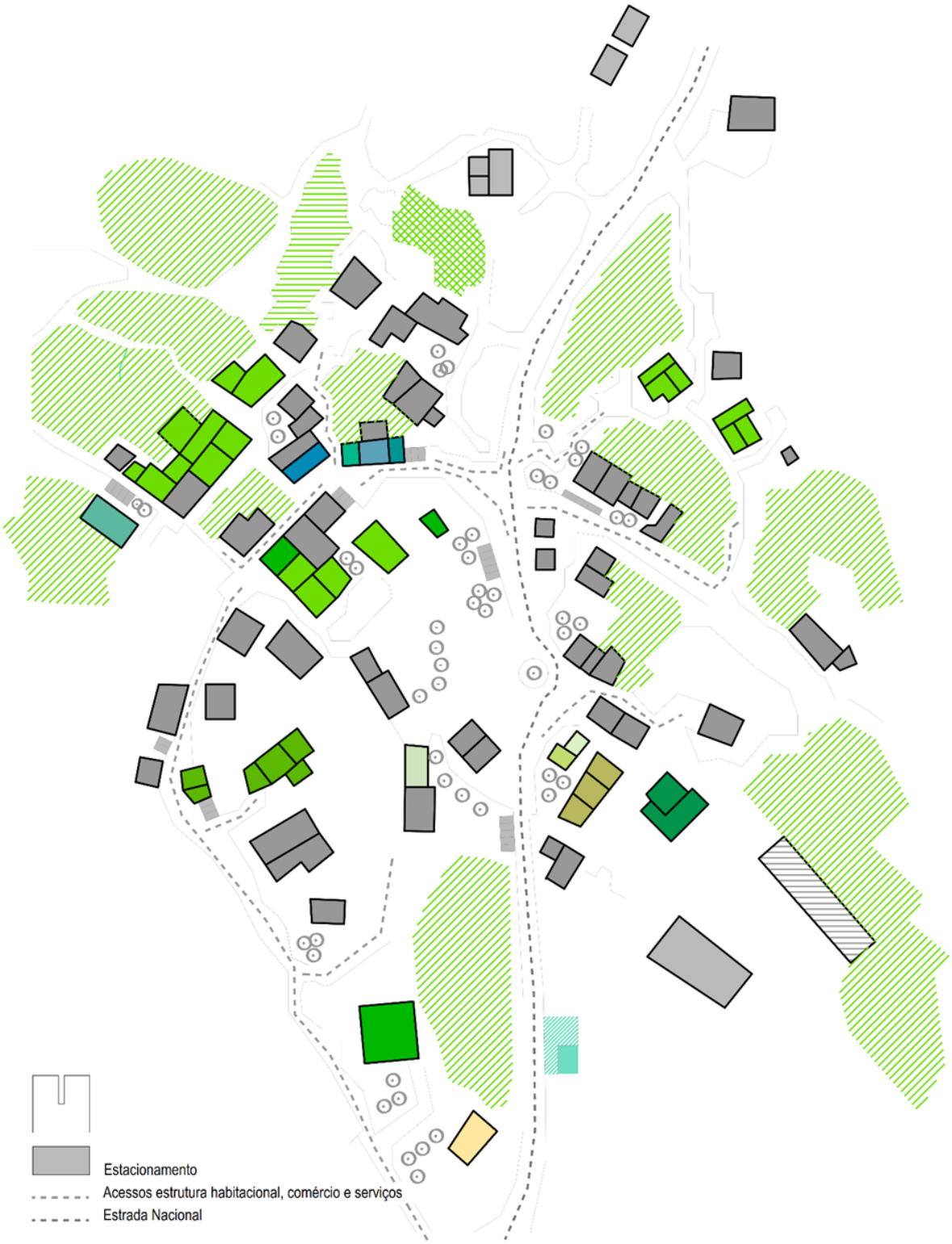



**Image 14** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim - Territory intervention proposal: Road structure and parking

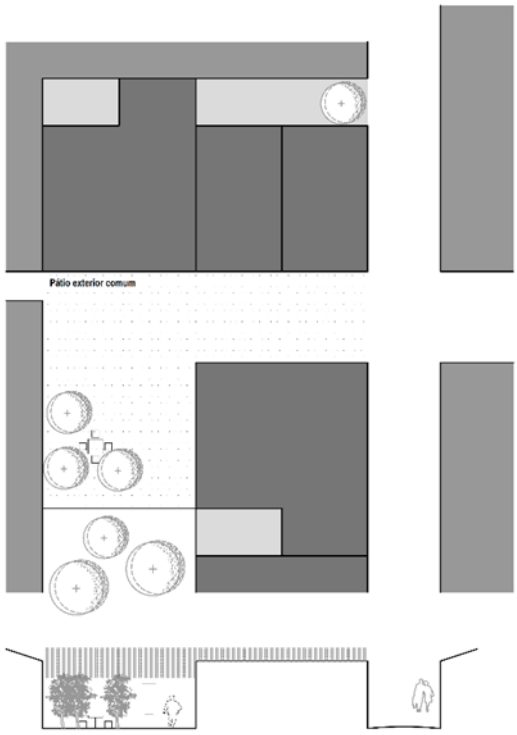



**Image 15.** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim Common outdoor patio, Type proposal

**General description of the intervention proposal | hypothesis a:**
**Exterior:**
1. Regularization of the street pavement in sidewalk (to overcome the 28cm gap between the outer level and the threshold level);
Being a corner dwelling, it is possible to promote this change without causing damage to neighboring dwellings. Thus, it is possible to avoid placing an access ramp, which would always alter the façade and the urban structure;
3. Enlarge the façade spans (main and rear) - free passage span with 85cm wide and resize its height;
4. Change the structure of the façade openings: wooden and glass openings on the inner face of the wall with a wooden shutter on the outside (maintaining the characteristics of the façade but allowing more light to enter the interior).
5. Level and pave the pavement of the outdoor patio;
6. Since the patio cover is in very poor condition, it could be removed, which would allow more light to enter the interior.
**Interior:**
1. Level the floor;
2. Enlarge the interior spans - free passage span with 85cm wide;
3. Opening of a connecting span between the two dwellings, to form a T1 type dwelling;
4. Change the position of the openings between the common room and the kitchen, to allow better use of the space.
5. Change the position of the opening between the bedroom and the sanitary installation, to allow better use of the space.
**General description of the intervention proposal | hypothesis b:**
**Exterior:**
1. Regularization of the level of the exterior patio common to the dwellings - currently in shale and earth pavement - to eliminate the differences in level between the exterior and the interior.
2. Implementation of exterior arrangements that provide a welcoming environment to the common outdoor patio - create a living area for residents with rest spaces and green areas suited to the local weather conditions (shade area).
3. Enlarge the façade spans (main and rear) - free passage span with 85cm wide and resize its height;
4. Change the structure of the façade openings: wooden and glass openings on the inner face of the wall with a wooden shutter on the outside (maintaining the characteristics of the façade, but allowing more light to enter the interior).

**Interior:**
1. Level the floor;
2. Enlarge the interior spans - free passage span with 85cm wide;
3. Opening of a connection span between the two dwellings, to form a T1 Typology dwelling;
4. Change the position of the openings connecting the common room and the kitchen, to allow better use of the space.
5. Change the position of the opening between the bedroom and the sanitary installation, to allow better use of the space.

**General notes (Hypothesis A and B):**
1.Structural and constructive elements - such as shale masonry walls and roofing in mortar tile over a "pipelined" structure - must be recovered or, whenever necessary, replaced in accordance with quality standards and good construction practices.
2. Whenever the roof and its construction system are altered, the traditional system must be replaced.
3. In the sanitary installations, the possibility of introducing walking aids must be foreseen;
4. In the shower area there must be no bump on the floor.
5. All coatings, equipment and equipment used must respect the principles of *universal design*.

**Summary of proposed functional spaces and respective minimum areas**
**Reception building – 50,00m²** abc[2]
Reception; Administrative area; Management office; Sanitary instalation
**Technical, support and/or maintenance services**- **50,00m²** abc
Building A:
2 Technical offices; Meeting room; Sanitary instalation
Building B:
Personnal room; Locker room; Sanitary installation
**Living and activities center** - **250,00m²** abc
2 Activity rooms; Sanitary facilities; Playroom; Living room; Reading room
**Meals and kitchen - 120,00m²** abc
Meal room; Kitchen area; Laundry area; Sanitary facilities; Storages
**Medical and nursing services** - **250,00m²** abc
2 Medical offices; Nursing room; 1 Physiotherapy room; 1 Multipurpose room; Sanitary instalation; Geriatric bath; 2 Single rooms in suite; Storage; Support material
**Housing type t0** - **50,00m²** abc
Bedroom; Sanitary instalation
**Housing type t1** - **70,00m²** abc
Bedroom; Common room; Kitchen; Sanitary instalation
**Commercial areas**
Undifferentiated (100.00m2); Hairdresser (50.00m2); Tobacco | Newspapers (50.00m2); Coffee (90.00m2); Minimarket (100.00m2); Commerce | Services (400.00 m2)

**Notes:**
1. The indicated areas serve as a reference for the definition of spaces;
2. The spaces may work in an interconnected (not compartmentalized) way.
3. Estimated number of dwellings for the elderly: 15;
4. Estimated number of intergenerational dwellings: 25;
5. Estimated number of spaces for commerce or services: 8;
6. Estimated number of spaces for small industries: 4;
7. Estimated number of spaces for tourist accommodation facilities: 1;

[2] a.b.c. – gross building area available (approximate value)

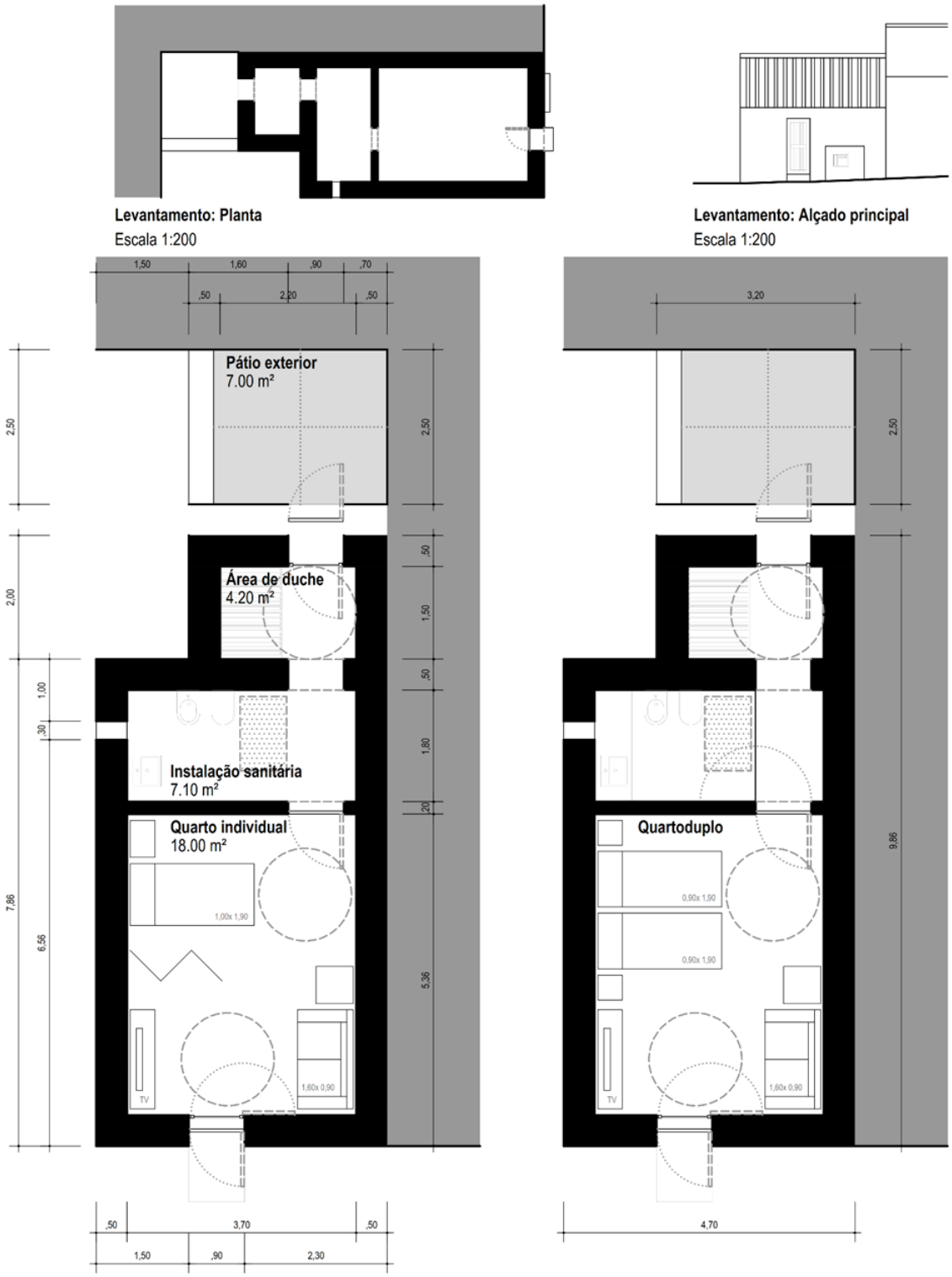
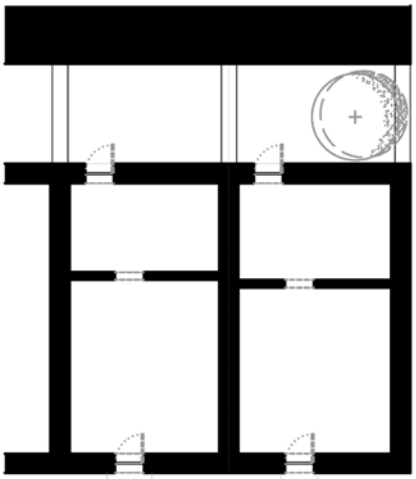
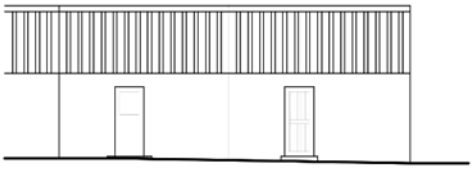


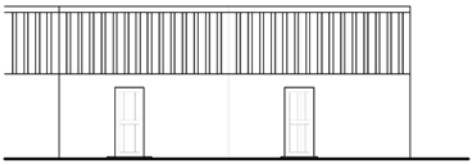

**Image 16** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim | Hypothesis A - Adaptation of vacant housings to the needs of the elderly | Proposal for Typology T0: single or double room with sanitary installation and private outdoor patio



**Levantamento: Planta**
Escala 1:200



**Levantamento: Alçado principal conjunto**
Escala 1:200



**Proposta: Alçado principal conjunto**
Escala 1:200

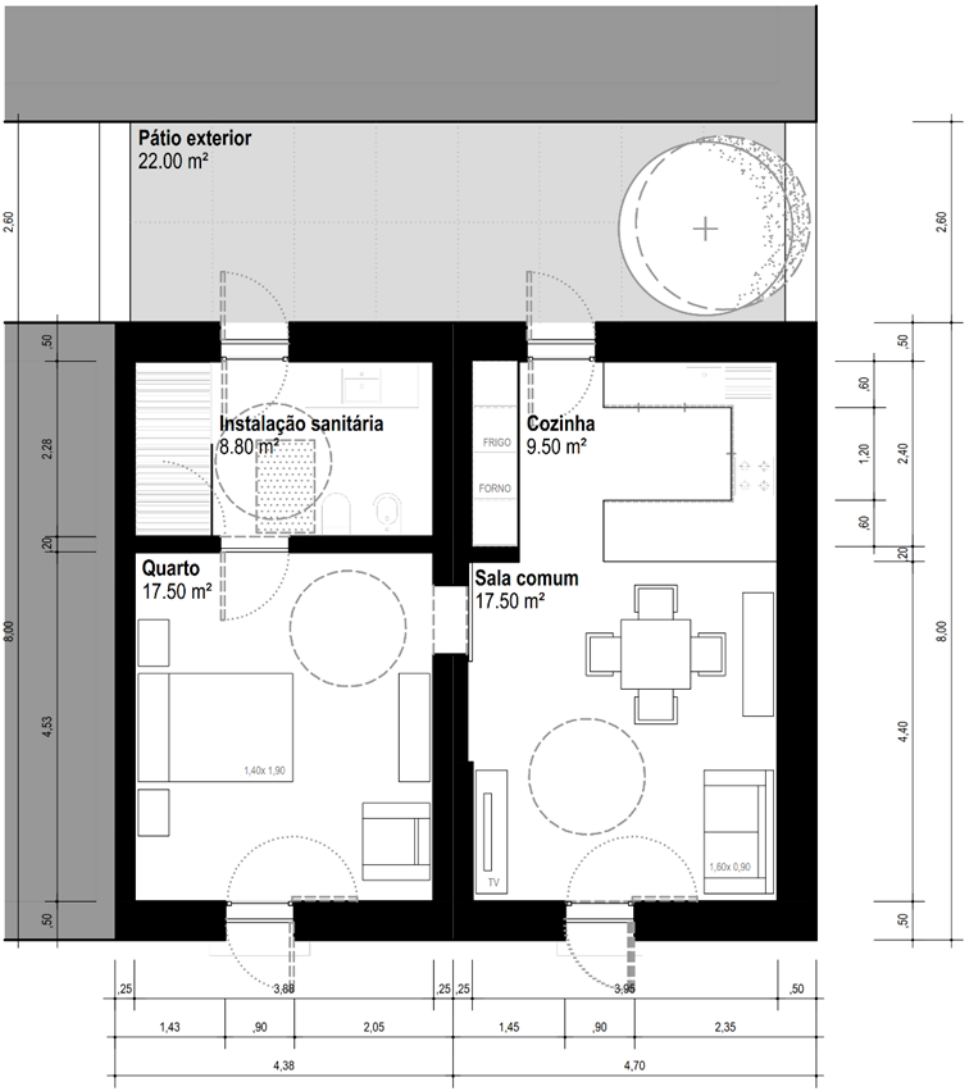



**Image 17** Monte do Pessegueiro – Parish of Martim Longo, Alcoutim | Hypothesis B - Adaptation of vacant housings to the needs of the elderly | Proposal for T1 typology: single or double bedroom, common room, kitchen, sanitary installation, a private outdoor patio (back façade) and a common outdoor patio (main façade)

**5. Conclusion**

The revitalization of a territory can only happens with people. People who can stay and develop a life project. Housing structures properly integrated with a qualified and differentiated offer of services, facilities and equipment directed to the needs of the elderly, could be the leverage element of this revitalization, they could be promoters of job offers, economic and tourist development and, thus, to contribute to the establishment of young populations – life-generating elements | urbanity, therefore revitalization.

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