

✓ Maria Droste Site, Lisbon

Carnide

The Maria Droste site is located in Carnide, in the northern part of Lisbon. The site is bounded by Rua Prof. Jorge Campinos, Rua Fernando Namora, Travessa da Luz, Estrada da Luz and Avenida General Norton de Matos.

This site represents a strategic urban dilemma for Lisbon, where national objectives for affordable housing intersect with local environmental challenges and strong community expectations especially regarding the preservation of green and public space.

Identified by the State as a key asset for affordable housing, and simultaneously recognised by the Municipality and local communities as part of the city's green and ecological structure, the Maria Droste site offers a unique opportunity to explore integrated, climate-responsive and socially inclusive urban solutions. Through the competition, the site is positioned as a testing ground for reconciling housing provision, ecological continuity, public use and climate adaptation within a single, multifunctional urban strategy.

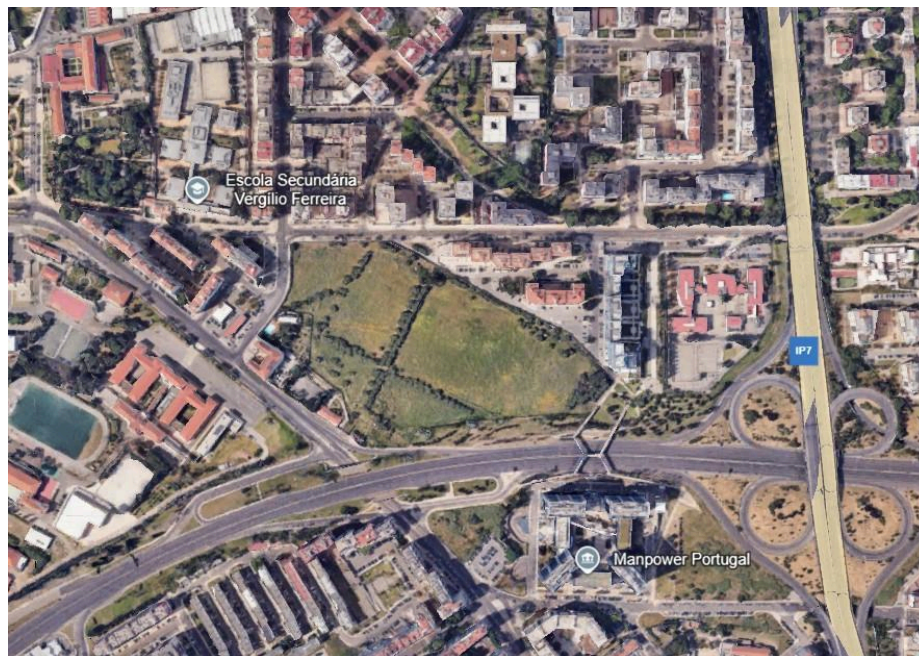


Figure 1) Maria Droste site and its integration into the urban fabric of Telheiras and Carnide. source : google earth

Approx. site area: 62,500 m².

Key Information:

The site is an expectant land reserve situated within a mixed urban context shaped by residential neighbourhoods, major transport infrastructures and Lisbon's Municipal Ecological Structure. Its strategic location places it at the intersection between metropolitan accessibility and everyday urban life, positioning it as a relevant case study for integrated, climate-responsive and inclusive urban transformation that considers housing needs and green solutions.

Presentation of the Site & Development Expectations

The Maria Droste site occupies a transitional urban condition. It is directly influenced by the Estrada da Luz, a major urban arterial road that defines a strong infrastructural edge and conditions mobility patterns, environmental quality, pollution and acoustic exposure. At the same time, the site interfaces with consolidated residential fabrics characterised by lower traffic streets and neighbourhood-scale urban life, particularly along Travessa da Luz. This dual condition requires careful articulation between metropolitan infrastructure and local urban fabric.



Figure 2) Maria Droste Site, Carnide . Photo by [Lisboa para Pessoas](#)

The surrounding area includes existing community and institutional uses, as well as smaller green spaces, reinforcing the potential role of the site as a connector between the built fabric, public spaces with ecological continuity. The site's accessibility to the wider city, combined with its proximity to everyday services and residential areas, highlights opportunities to strengthen active mobility, local connectivity, and climate-responsive public space.

The gently undulating topography further supports the integration of landscape-based solutions for stormwater management, microclimate regulation and environmental comfort.

Over the past decade, the Maria Droste site has been the subject of public debate and civic mobilisation, reflecting enduring tensions over its future use. Local associations, residents and elected representatives have at times advocated for the preservation of the site as a public green space or urban park, emphasising its ecological, recreational, and social value. Petitions and motions submitted at local level illustrate the coexistence of competing visions for the site, ranging from environmental continuity and public use to urban development and housing provision.

At the same time, the site has been identified by the State, through ESTAMO, as a strategic asset to contribute to national objectives for affordable housing. This situation places the site at the intersection of national housing policy, municipal environmental priorities, and local expectations.

Development expectations for this competition therefore focus on **integrated and hybrid solutions**, capable of reconciling housing provision, ecological performance, climate resilience and public use within a single territorial strategy.

Proposals should detail an urban regeneration process with consideration for the 10 principles for green & thriving neighborhoods defined by the competition. Special attention must be given to environmental impact, inclusivity and the [New European Bauhaus values](#). In their designs, students should integrate the following missions:

Mission 1 – Climate infrastructure and ecological continuity

Proposals should explore how the Maria Droste site can function as an active component of Lisbon's green and ecological structure, contributing to stormwater management, flood mitigation, heat stress reduction and microclimate regulation, while remaining accessible and usable as public space.

Mission 2 – Affordable housing within a multifunctional landscape

Proposals should investigate how affordable and inclusive housing can be integrated into a landscape-based approach that preserves ecological functions, supports climate adaptation and maintains the site as a space of public enjoyment for surrounding communities.

Mission 3 – Governance, proximity, and everyday use

Proposals should examine how spatial design, implementation strategies and governance arrangements can help reconcile national housing objectives, municipal environmental priorities and local expectations, ensuring everyday usability, social inclusion and integration within a 15-minute city model.

To support the development of proposals, teams may consider exploring, among others, the following types of approaches:

- **Nature-based solutions** enhancing soil permeability, stormwater retention, ecological connectivity and thermal comfort.
- **Landscape-led urban design**, where open space structures the organisation of housing, mobility and public facilities.
- **Hybrid housing models**, integrating affordable housing within a multifunctional landscape accessible to the wider community.
- **Climate-responsive public space**, capable of functioning as everyday space and as climate infrastructure during extreme events.
- **Active mobility and proximity strategies**, reinforcing walking, cycling and everyday accessibility to services and facilities.
- **Governance and phasing strategies**, addressing how national housing objectives, municipal environmental priorities and local expectations can be aligned over time.

Find more information on potential solutions in the Guidance to Design a Green and Thriving Neighbourhood.

City Climate Priorities & Specific Environmental Challenges

Lisbon has committed to achieving climate neutrality by 2030 through its Climate City Contract, combining greenhouse gas mitigation with climate adaptation measures. Key climate challenges include increasing heat stress, more frequent and intense precipitation events, and growing pressure on urban infrastructure and public space.

Within this context, expectant land reserves such as the Maria Droste site play a strategic role as potential **urban climate infrastructures**. Beyond their development potential, these spaces can contribute to stormwater retention, flood control, microclimate

regulation and the mitigation of urban heat island effects, particularly when integrated into the city's green and ecological structure.

The site therefore offers an opportunity to explore how climate resilience objectives can be translated into spatial strategies that operate simultaneously as public space, ecological systems and support for urban living.

Key municipal climate and environmental instruments that students can use as reference and framework include:

- [LISBON CITY CLIMATE CONTRACT \(2030\)](#) : establishes Lisbon's commitment under the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, setting an integrated framework that combines mitigation, adaptation, social inclusion, reduction of energy poverty and improvement of quality of life and well-being, with the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2030.
- [MUNICIPAL STRATEGY FOR ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE \(EMAAC\)](#): EMAAC focuses on identifying adaptation options and actions aimed at promoting the minimisation of the effects of climate change. The main concerns in terms of climate change risks for Lisbon are the increase of extreme events, in particular intense precipitation and winter storms followed by heavy rain and wind, the increase in frequency and intensity of heat waves and droughts, as well as the increase of days with high temperature ($\geq 35^{\circ}\text{C}$) and tropical nights ($\geq 20^{\circ}\text{C}$). The increase in mean sea level rise is also a concern, especially when combined with storm surge events. These concerns have always been a threat to Lisbon's resilience and are expected to be aggravated by climate change (Pagani et al., 2018).
- [LISBON SOLAR STRATEGY](#): the Lisbon solar strategy is one of the axes of the Lisbon City Climate Contract and is one of the main strategic axes for achieving climate neutrality and eradicating energy poverty by 2050.
- [GREEN ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE - PRIORITIES](#): the Municipality of Lisbon promotes a set of programs and measures aimed at developing and preserving the ecological structure of the city. Lisbon's ecological structure is composed of three types of articulated and complementary infrastructures: green corridors, green and leisure spaces and horticultural parks. Indeed, Lisbon has a strong focus on green infrastructure, promoting the creation of green spaces near urban areas (maximum 10 minutes walking distance) and green corridors.

Specific Planning Rules & Regulations

From an institutional and planning perspective, the Maria Droste site is state-owned and compatible with the [Lisbon Master Plan \(PDM\)](#). There is no detailed plan in force and no predefined development programme for the site.

At city level, Lisbon has recently approved the [Lisbon Municipal Housing Charter 2023–2032](#) a strategic policy instrument that defines the municipality's long-term objectives for housing, including the expansion of affordable housing, social inclusion and integrated urban development. While the Charter does not establish site-specific programmes or regulations, it provides an important policy framework that informs housing priorities across the city.

In parallel, the Municipality of Lisbon recognises the Maria Droste site as part of a broader local green and ecological system, with functions related to environmental continuity, climate adaptation and public use. This combined policy context requires future interventions to reconcile city-wide housing objectives with the preservation and enhancement of ecological functions and public accessibility, within the existing planning framework.

Version 1 with additional content will be published at the end of January

Language Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in English or Portuguese.

City specific prizes

To be announced at the end of January.