

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture  
***Honors theses***

---

**Brasilia's square: a possible revitalization where man becomes protagonist of space**

by Carlo Burini

Tutor: Silvia Gron

Co-tutors: Maria Assunção Pereira and Piergiorgio Tosoni

To put hands in an urban area of a city protected as World Heritage, unique urban example of the last century, requires some intense previous research about its design and concepts. That is what I have tried to achieve for the 'rodoviaria's square in Brasilia, dealing with its real problems encountered during the initial period of study at Brazil's capital.

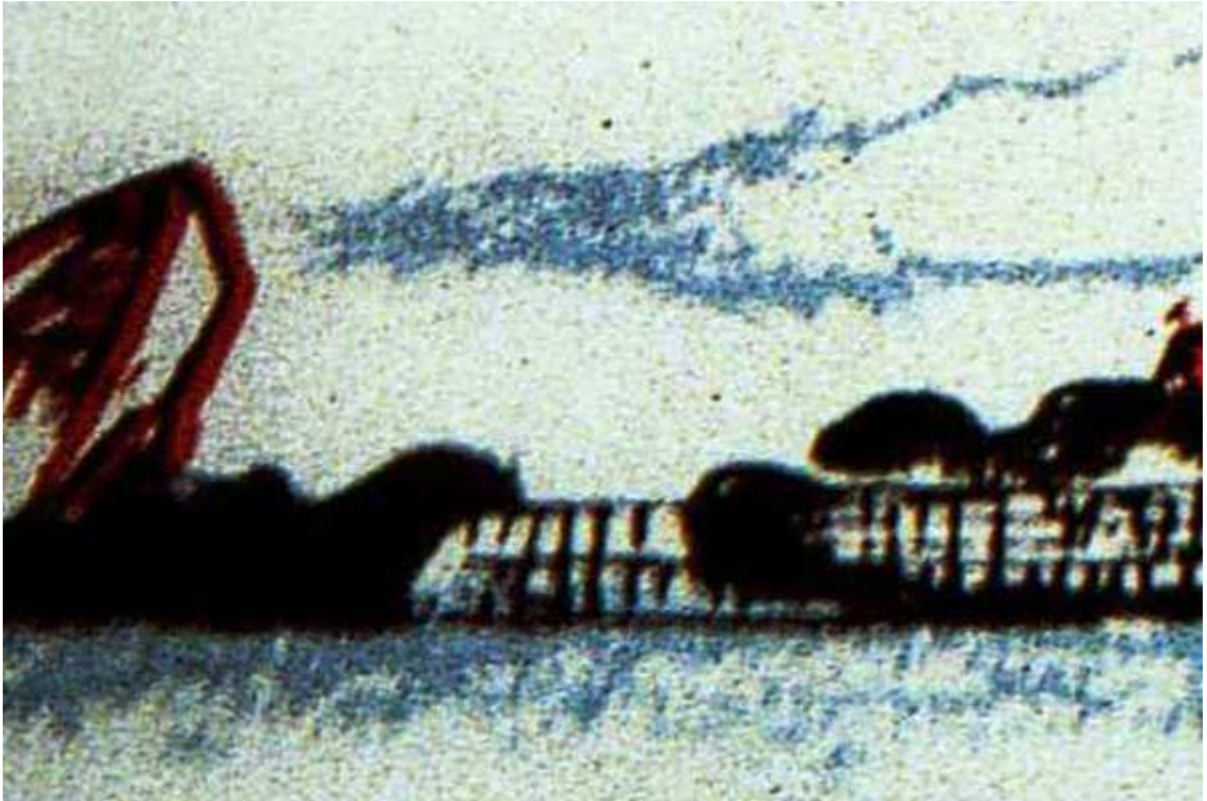
The Lucio Costas' monumental plan, which can be resumed as a meeting of two axes, carries the concept of a focal place which provides multiple choices and a node propitious for cultural exchange.

The importance of that intersection of roads is unquestionable, but it is still unable to show all of its potential. It represents somehow an unsuccessful ideal: the square fails to provide contemplation of the city's art; it does not represent a place of meeting and dialogue, neither the focus of natural concentration of citizens. It is an area of intense traffic, victim of frenetic and poorly organized business; and the art of the city, although just a few steps away, remains unreachable and isolated.

The issue is: how to make men protagonist of this place for him designed without disrespecting the original sketches?

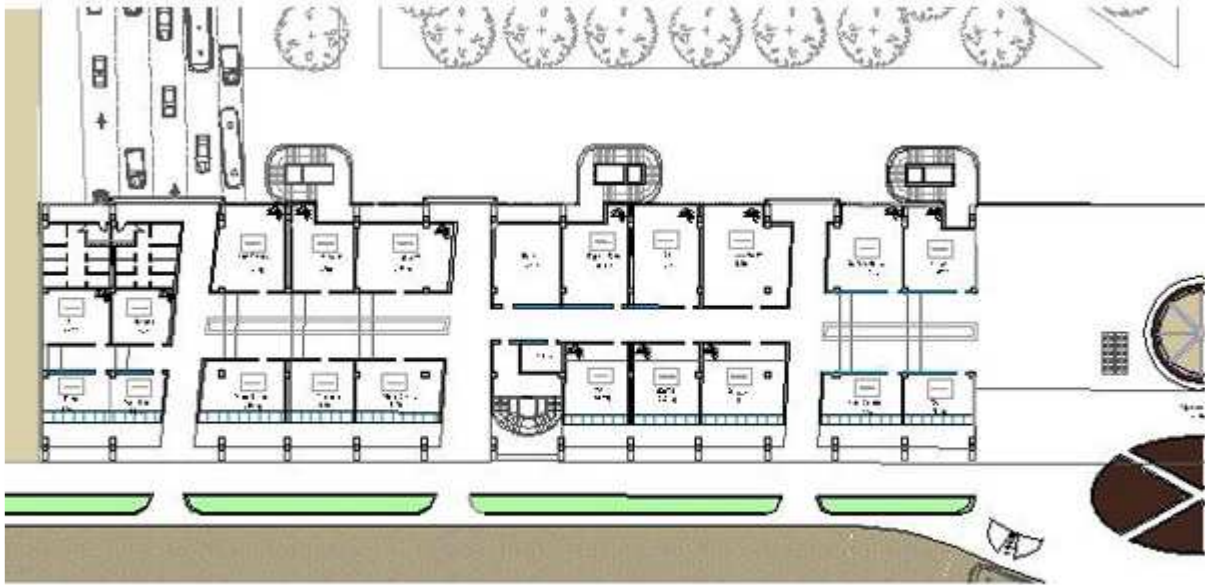
Its delicate surrounding does not allow radical changes, but the subsequent critical analysis of the location made by Lucio Costa has provided the necessary tools to design an additional building to the huge complex, which has helped to leave intact the supremacy and the geometry of the square and to propose an intimate space studied respecting the anthropometric scale.

The architect had in mind the addition of an horizontal element which would dialogue with the verticality of the TV tower, both in evidence at the west side of the Mall of Ministries. A strip-shaped building seven hundred and fifty meters long and approximately twenty-five meters high, that somehow reminds of the horizontality of Le Corbusier's designs for Rio de Janeiro.



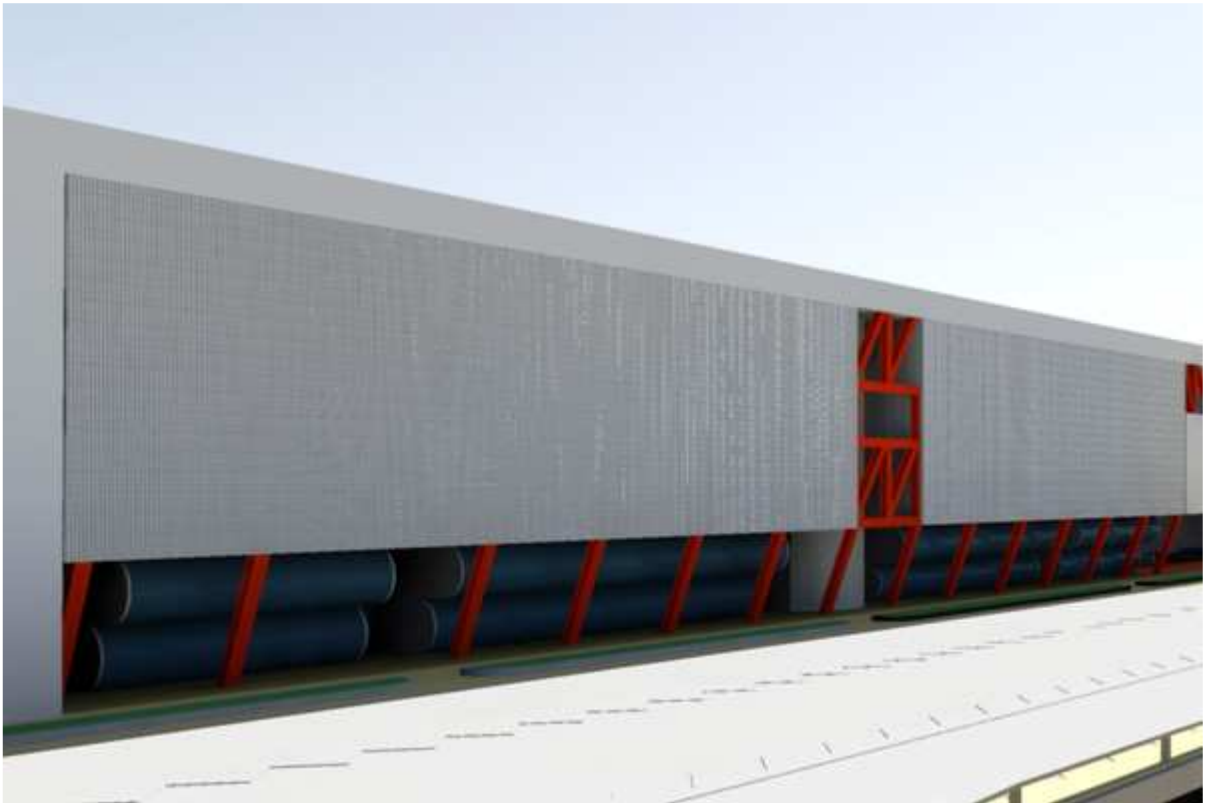
Sketch by Le Corbusier in Rio's urbanism

The building, named '*Brasil*', would break the intangibility of the line created by both north and south wings; and at the same time represent its physical union and continuity. It would be mixed-use with twenty-six offices representing the twenty-six Brazilian States and allow, through the study of the inner square, to get that space for contemplation which is still missing in Brasilia.



### Some commercial place

Although the tower in the background would be visually interrupted, inside the building users would still be able to see it discreetly throughout certain openings at an intimate scale. A red metal structure with double reticular truss would be filtered by a perforated skin similar to Oscar Niemeyer's at the National Library.



A view of the east side of the construction

The frame would support a considerable span of around fifty meters. As the TV tower, it would be only partially perceived by its users, but in its totality comprehended by people in cars driving across the main avenues. The external stairs which break the enormous length of the building are deliberately circular in shape as a reminiscence of simple columns or *pilotis*, an eye trick that softens its visual impact. They also give rhythm and liveliness to the complex and enhance its cultural character.

The building itself nestles the new pedestrian fluxes, illustrates the evolution of structural engineering, and exemplifies respect for the existing by presenting a completely new concept of public space, although still based on the classic square idea. As a final result, it solves some of the many issues that find their point of confluence in the own complex, according with the challenges of modernity: to make architecture 'spin' around men!

For further information, e-mail:  
Carlo Burini: [carloburini@gmail.com](mailto:carloburini@gmail.com)