

**A PROPOSAL FOR THE REVITALIZATION
OF THE AREA CONTAINING THE PAULISTA MUSEUM
AND
THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL**

- A PROJECT OF PATRIMONIAL EDUCATION -

**Advanced Training Programme of Conservation & Management of Historic
Buildings**

*Author: Marina Peixoto – Researcher through Architecture and Urban Planning from
Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil and mural paintings conservator*

April/ 2006



Paulista Museum - The North and main façade

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Abstract

São Paulo City is one of the largest metropolises in the world and contains a large number of public spaces that offer entertainment and culture to its population. Amongst these spaces, more than 60 parks and museums/ historic houses, amongst them the Paulista Museum, its parks and the Natural History Museum.

This project intends to elaborate a space that will bring together the two museums, not interfering with the park between them, but creating a connection that does not exist and it would be of great help in the process of revitalization of the spaces and the improvement of the structures for a more advanced implementation of heritage education programmes.

Introduction

The city of São Paulo has suffered great loss of its patrimony throughout time – its history is registered by fast and somewhat disoriented growth that didn't keep most of its material patrimony intact. Today, the largest area of historic buildings is located downtown, like in most cities; their buildings are in their majority from the late XIX c. and early XX c. and are in a deteriorated and under occupied status.

In this context, the city continues to grow towards the periphery area, a growth that is not planned and that generates spaces with lack of infrastructure. It has become more and more clear that the financial costs and the price paid for the decrease of the life quality that derive from this growth are too high to pay compared to another strategy, that is to keep the population downtown, where the infrastructure is already implemented and where the population would be closer to their work.

Based part in this prerogative, the municipality has developed several downtown development plans, from recover of buildings and parks up to revitalization of entire areas – usually areas that used to be industrial and have lost their function throughout the years and face a decay status. Many of these initiatives have come to an end successfully (as the intervention on the complex containing Estação da Luz – a train station - , Parque da Luz and Pinacoteca – respectively, a park and museum). Others, maybe due to the dimension of the project, are still under preliminary stages (as happens with several and entire



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Estação da Luz, revitalized (day/ night pictures)



Parque da Luz, revitalized

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5 Children using drugs in one of the problematic areas

The object of study of this project is not located downtown. It is located in a district that emerged in a second moment of the city's history, but that is of equal importance within its history.

The Area of Study: its History, Architecture and Construction

1. Paulista Museum and its south garden



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The main façade



7

The south façade

Built to represent Brazil's independence towards Portugal, the Paulista Museum is one of the few examples of such magnificence and it was built in a city that, in 1880, was not much more than a small town, struggling to project itself to the future. Installed quite far from the city centre, the building was responsible for its growth towards its surroundings, attracting many

houses to the region, not to mention, later on, the number of industries, which stimulated local development. D. Pedro II, the emperor, urged for a modern city.

In a Neo-Classical style with eclectic features, the palace was built by an Italian engineer-architect named Tommaso Gaudenzio Bezzi, followed by Italian workman and capimaestri. This work was responsible for the renewal of the aesthetic and building patterns of the new city, causing a great influence on many of its districts. Its importance lays not only on the figure of a monument, but for its historical background.

The *Museu Paulista* belongs since 1963 to *Universidade de São Paulo*, the State's University. Since 1989, the



influence of the University in the Museum has faced towards researches in the Material field as well as for the preservation of the building's physical preservation. Its patrimony – initiated as a representation of an epoch and constituted by elements with scientific and encyclopedic features - is also one of the most important references in studies of the Brazilian history and culture.

The building was never concluded as aimed in the original project. With the arrival of the Republic, the works stopped in 1889 and, under the new political regime, the building was officially turned into a museum in 1893.



9 *The playground in the south garden*

The first gardens to surround the museum were built between 1906 and 1909 and reflect landscaping conceptions inspired in the French baroque gardens, as in Versailles. In 1922, these gardens were enlarged in 1500m².

2. The Natural History Museum



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The main façade towards Nazare Avenue



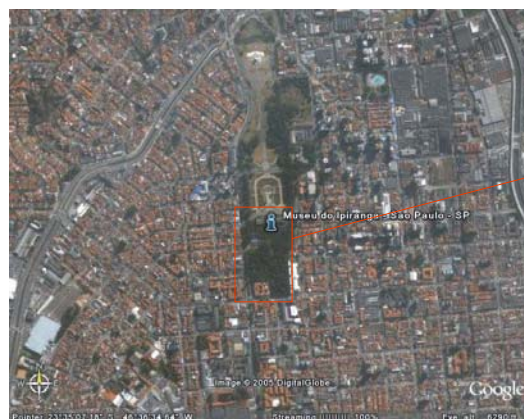
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The main entrance

The museum of Natural History belongs also to the University of São Paulo. Its first zoological material was incorporated to Paulista Museum's collection in 1895 and now, nevertheless belonging to Universidade de São Paulo, is independent from the Paulista Museum. Today the museum shelters one of the largest collections of conserved animals from South America. It contains a Scientific Division, a collection that contains several zoological groups and is responsible for research programs, conservation of its property and scientific publications. The Cultural Division is responsible for the communication through expositions, educational activities and publications, as well as the planning of post-graduation courses and internships.

The Zoology Museum is installed in a building specially designed to be a museum, by the famous architect Christiano das Neves. The work was concluded in 1940 and several architectural details – as the stained glass windows showing animals – reveal the original intention of the project. As shown in the pictures, the building is of an art-deco style and contains a rigid and symmetric disposition of internal space.

Location and Surroundings



Area including Museu Paulista, the park and Museum of Natural History



The area is located in a district called Ipiranga. The Paulista Museum – also known as *Museu do Ipiranga* - is located exactly where the last emperor of the colony supposedly announced the independence of the territory from Portugal. There lies the historical importance of the area and the significance of Paulista Museum.

The complex presents, as shown in the picture above, Paulista Museum at the top of the red rectangle. At the bottom of the rectangle, on the left corner, is the Natural History Museum and in between them lies the park. There is another part of the park that is located in front of the Paulista Museum but that is not included in this project and is shown in the picture outside the red rectangle and right above it, reaching up to the top of the picture.

Presentation of the objects; function, size, materials, status

1. Paulista Museum

As a thematic museum, the *independence* museum holds patrimony that is related to the period comprised between XIX c. and XX c. There are objects related to work and craftsmanship, paintings, objects related to the domestic space and social behavior. There are cars, trains and objects related to public services. There are also some objects from the XVI c. on, such as maps and paintings and indigenous pieces.

The building's original project had a long rectangle facing North and two additional "arms", in an "E"-type. The constructions of the "arms" were abandoned due to financial reasons and the building was finalized with the main body and three projecting smaller-parts. The building is 123m long and 16m width.



13 The building as seen from above

It is composed of the ground floor, first floor, the towers and the basement. The ground floor has an entrance hall and 24 columns. From the hall, the stairways lead to the Noble Room. In the ground floor as well as in the first floor, corridors lead to smaller rooms. The corridors from the first floor are open in a loggia style.

The city's current materials used for construction in the nineteenth century were earth: lath-and-plaster walls, and seldom bricks. Nevertheless, the palace was made of them, probably due to its monumentality. The foundations are made of stones and lime and sand mortar. The bricks from the walls above the foundations are 7cm high X 14cm width and X29cm long. External mortar is made of sand, lime and *roman cement* (hydraulic lime with a high percentage of silicate, calcinated clay or pozzuolana). External and internal paintings were originally lime based.

2. The Natural History Museum

Much smaller than its neighbor, this museum is a rectangle of 50meters long and 52 meters width. It is located on the corner of Nazare Avenue and Padre Marchetti Street (a secondary street), its main entrance is located directly in the main avenue (Nazare Avenue) and the building is inserted in an area not much larger than itself: besides the two narrow side-corridors, there's a small parking lot in the back of the building. The personal entrance is located on Padre Marchetti Street and the whole area of the museum is fenced towards the street and separated by the park with a tall concrete wall.

The building contains a basement, ground floor, first and second pavements. The expositions are held on the ground floor, first and second pavements – the basement is, as in the Paulista Museum, not opened to the public. The vertical circulation is done through the main stairs and through the elevator, today used by the personnel only.

In the twentieth-century, cement was way-introduced into the construction system of the city. The building is made of bricks and plastered with cement.

Current Status of the area

The aim of this project is not the conservation and maintenance of the buildings and park it selves, but a new proposal for the integration and revitalization of them. For this reason,

little change has been proposed within the buildings, and the project has been focused on the external area.

Nevertheless, a personal parallel research study – to be held beginning in May 2006 and supported by FAPESP through scholarship – has the focus on the maintenance and conservation of the external façades of the Paulista Museum, which after an intervention made not so long ago, already show signs of decay.

1. Paulista Museum

The maintenance and conservation of a building with such dimensions is not simple. In 1996, some repairs were done including electric wiring and cabling, repairs on the roof and replacement of the original material for a copper structure, recovery of the tower's floor. Today, the Museum, in a first glimpse, doesn't show major problems such as structural pathologies. Punctual problems in its interiors can be noted, as ceiling detachment.

In the exterior, on the other hand, there are severe injuries on the plaster. As mentioned before, the original mortar is of sand and lime and is in poor conditions in specific regions due to ascending humidity from the ground, situation aggravated from the last painting, unfitted for the plaster composition. Of an acrylic base, the painting doesn't let the wall "breathe", aggravating the situation. As a result, the bottom surfaces present blisters and unwanted moss. This becomes especially serious on the southern façade, where the sun doesn't strike directly.



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Similar situation is found on the southern balconies from the first floor. The original ducts for water drainage have been modified in a way that the drainage has become inefficient. This situation led to two pathologies:

1. Some “new” drainage holes were made to solve the problem, in a precarious and inadequate fashion;
2. They don't work well, as the base of the balconies present the same humidity consequences.



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Repairs on the surfaces' blisters were made, and cement was used. Some original documents from the museum's archives show that cement was bought at the time of construction; however it is not certain yet that this material was employed in the façades. As a result, the external walls don't seem to “accept” the new material, that doesn't show appropriate adherence and steadiness.



2. The South Garden and the Natural History Museum

The North garden follows the neo-classical style from the Paulista Museum – it is a French-style garden. The south garden, on the other hand, follows a park-style in a sense that contains several types of vegetation in a not-orientated pattern, with massive of plants and trees and pathways along its areas.



16 *The south garden – 1. a roundabout*

and...



17 *2. ...the toilets*

The south park covers a fairly large area of 42.000 m² and, spite of some maintenance issues, the park receives a large number of people that use the space to jog, walk their dogs and stroll on a daily basis. It is considered an important “green area” on a district that doesn’t have many other options of public parks and squares. These are the main values of the area, not to mention that it is listed and very important as a complement of the magnificent building. The vegetation is maintained in good condition, as well as the paving, the playground and the cleaning services. However, there are a lack of garbage pails and the only toilets available to the public – is important to mention that these same toilets serve also the public from Paulista Museum – are in poor condition. There’s one drinking fountain and an improvised altar, with no shelter.

The building from the Natural History Museum is in good condition and doesn't show signs of decay neither in its exterior or interior.

The Proposal

Introduction

As previously mentioned, both buildings and the south garden could be matters of study individually, since each one of them presents pathologies on its material conditions, services and improvements that could be done in relation to heritage education – in particular, Paulista Museum, that has been working with education for three years only, and still has a long path to follow. But due to the dimension of this work, this proposal is focused on the improvement of physical installations that could lead to an improvement of the heritage education for both museums.

It is important to mention that both museums – and particularly Paulista Museum – are very conservative when dealing with physical or ideological changes. Due to their policy, any change within the buildings, in the present time, take a long time to be analyzed, and are seldom accepted. The same path occurs when information about the buildings are required – drawings and pictures of the buildings. Also, the museums possess very little records – drawings - of their buildings. For this reason, this work does not intend to be conclusive. Far from that, it is only the first step towards a change that seems to me to be for the benefit of all. Therefore, it includes only minor modifications on the basements of the museums – where it interfaces with the gallery project itself – and minor modifications in the garden (in this case, because the intention is, in fact, to interfere as little as possible in this space). A second part of the project would be necessary to include more detailed modifications inside the buildings themselves, drawing a more comprehensive picture of the work.

Description

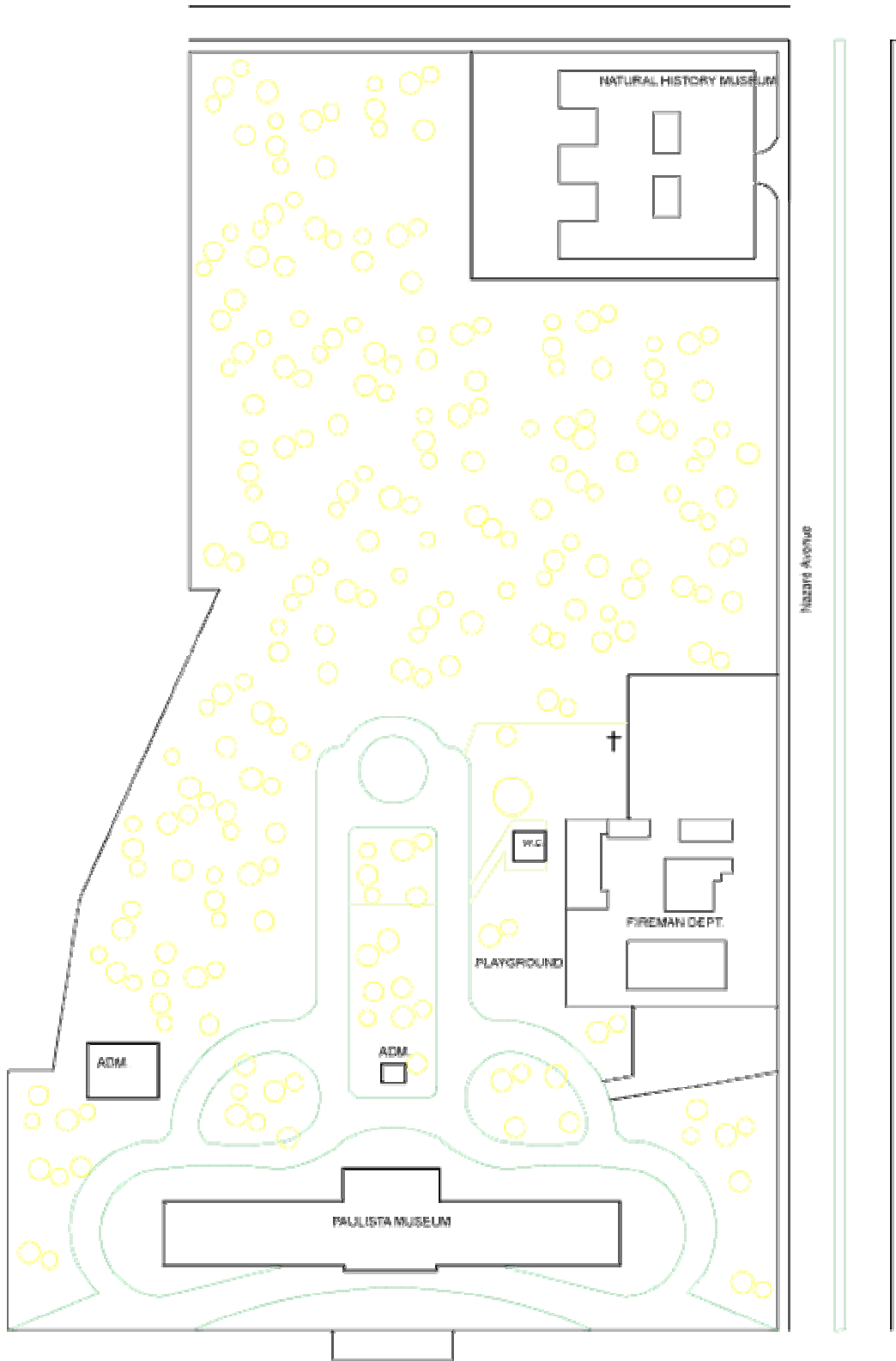
After some research and studies, I could conclude that, among several faults in the structure of the museums, the most significant ones are related to toilets facilities and a great lack of physical space within both buildings. This lack of space is one of the reasons why a more significant work on heritage education is not fully implemented – particularly in the Paulista Museum – and could be useful for other services as well, services that contribute, even if in an indirect way, to the education.

Very important issues are also the fact that, even both buildings are neighbor to each other, only Paulista Museum has partial access to the park (only through its only one north entrance), whereas The Natural History Museum has no access at all. This implies, of course, that there's no physical or visual connection between both buildings. This situation is particularly questionable, since visitors from one museum could be visiting the other, situation that nowadays rarely occurs. Because of the little connection between the museums and the

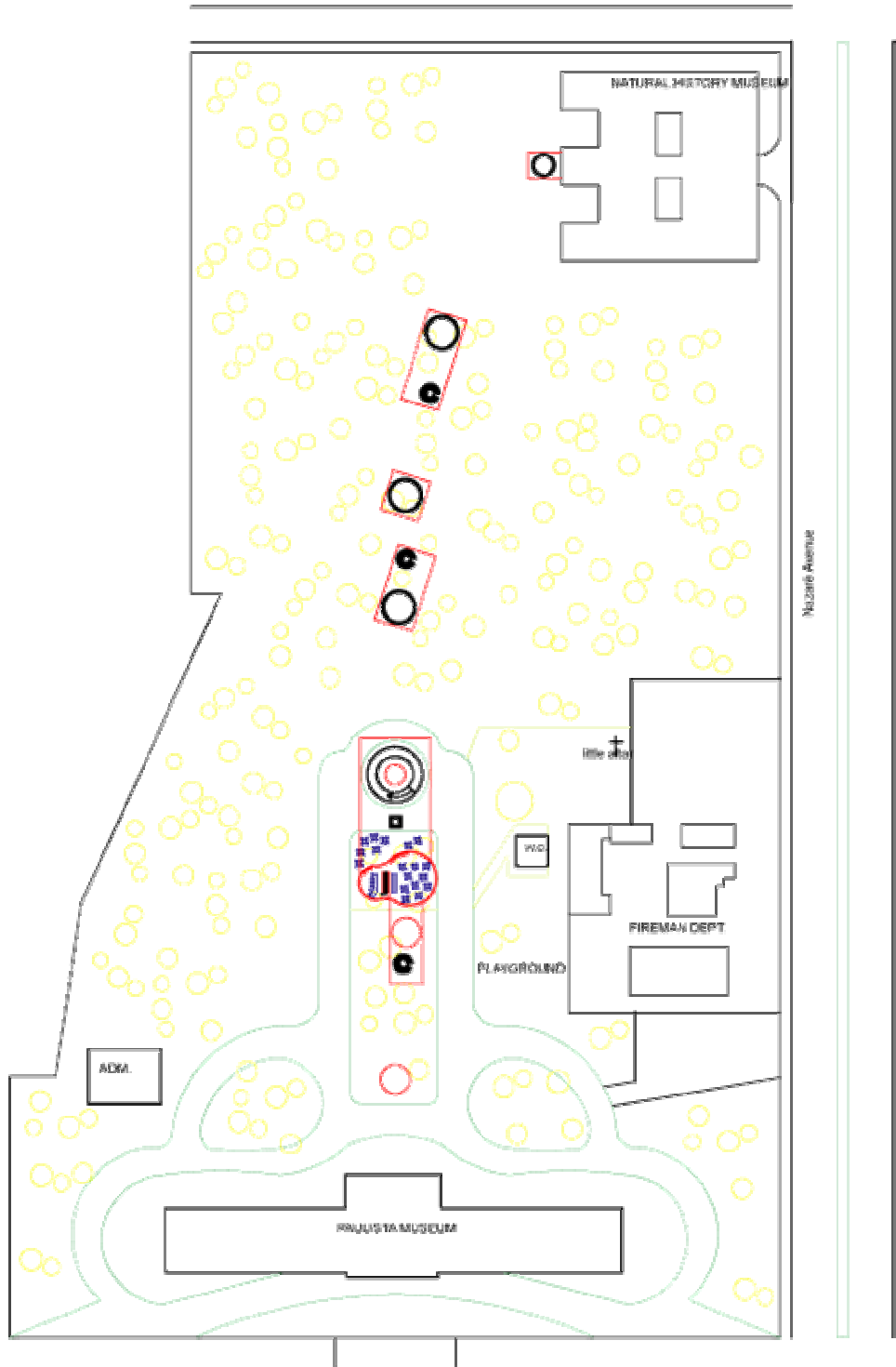
garden, visitors of the garden don't feel inspired to enter the museums and vice-versa. This situation was also revised in the proposal.

In this picture, the project consists of an extension of the museum through an underground-gallery that runs above the south garden. This gallery was shown to be a quite efficient way to solve the faults explained above, since it has some of the features:

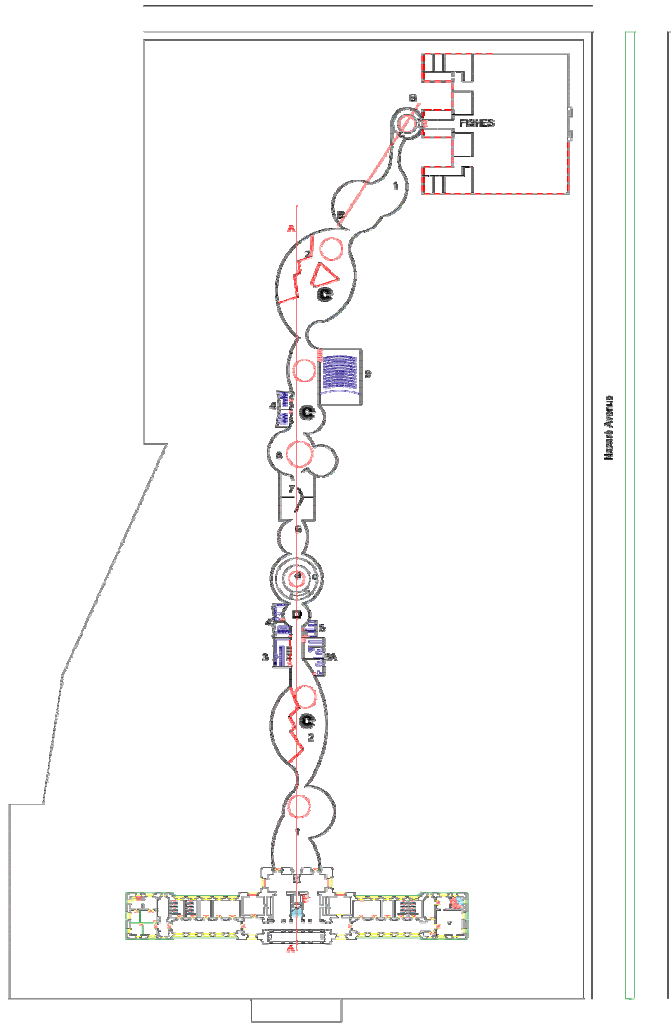
- It runs all the way through the entrance of the Paulista Museum to the entrance of the Natural History Museum, in a linear-path where the visitor passes through the varied rooms and can observe and interact with every activity and exposition held in the spaces;
- Contains several areas, each of them described as follows, that nowadays lack in the present spaces (areas of services – toilets, restaurants and shops, for example; as well as areas for activities and expositions);
- Provides a connection with the garden through large skylights and spacious staircases, where the visitors from the underground feel inspired to go up to the park and the other way too.



1. The actual situation: the drawing shows the Natural Museum on the top, right side; the area of the south park with some equipment and the Paulista Museum in the bottom.

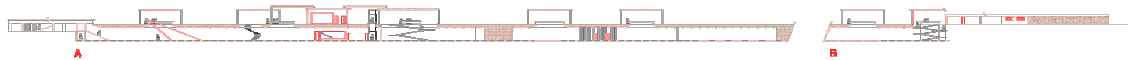


2. The proposal: ground floor. The drawing shows little interference in the park area. The largest interference (the restaurant and ramp as shown) was strategically located in an area with little amount of trees. Circles represent the skylights and the stairs, right next to them.



- THE GALLERY PROGRAM IS AS FOLLOWS:**
- c ramps
 - ut giftshop-cafe
 - 1 edge of pieces from the pottery that are kept away from the public and "hands felt", where the visitor can touch some pieces
 - 2 Conservation and restoration department – wood, paper, paintings and textiles for the Independence Museum and for the Natural History Museum courses, internships and technical advice
 - 3 Restaurant services: kitchen, cashier, storage, etc.
 - 3A Storage room and office
 - 4 Restrooms
 - 5 Classroom
 - 6 Teacher's space where he can find his material (vouchers, CDs etc) and guides to help him with his work
 - 7 The Life Museum
Scenic spaces reproducing ambients from the epoch (living room, bedroom, kitchen, school etc) where children could have activities such: tea watching from the Independence times/ the eating/ watching games etc.
 - 8 Body activities for children and storytelling
 - 9 Theater

3. The proposal: underground.



4. The proposal: underground.

-Proposals available in AutoCAD version for better comprehension.

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