

Working class housing – the Ilhas of Porto

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The 'ilhas' are nuclei of working-class housing that were built on Porto in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the period of greater industrial development of the city. The 'ilhas' were made up of groups of small houses, with an area of about 16 square metres, built along the back-gardens of middle-class houses (or which had been originally built as middle-class houses) in areas of the city that, given their proximity to industries located nearby, had begun a process of physical and social decay that would be further accentuated by the construction of these working-class houses. These houses were built either in a row, along the 5.5 or 6 metres wide urban lots, or in two rows, back-to-back or facing each other, when they occupied two of these plots.

The visit will take us to *S. Vitor*, an area of Porto with one of the greatest concentrations of 'ilhas'. We shall visit the 'ilhas' at n. 80, n. 113 and n. 143 of *Rua de S. Vitor*, and *Bairro Herculano*, a better class 'ilha' built in the neighbourhood. Time permitting, we will also visit *Bloco Saldanha*, one of the first attempts to rehouse the inhabitants of the 'ilhas', in the late 1930s, and the area of *Senhora das Dores*, which was intervened by the SAAL programme, in 1975, with a project by Siza Vieira.



Figure 1. The location of the *Ilhas*.