Needs and Expectations of Visually Impaired Persons

Peter Colwell - Accessibility Officer

ACAPO – The Portuguese Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted

What is visual impairment ?

What are the needs of visually impaired persons (VIPs)?

- Getting around
- Enjoying heritage sites

What are their expectations?

- Safe and informed access
- Respect for heritage
- Participation

Needs and Expectations of VIPs

- Obstacle free pavements
- Pedestrian crossings
  - Tactile paving
  - Audible signs
- Wayfinding
  - Tactile paving
  - Signage
- “Alternative” information
  - Models
  - Raised maps and drawings
  - Audioguides

Needs

and

Expectations

of VIPs

Comfort

Contrasts

Consistency

Common sense

Complementary information

Are their needs and expectations compatible with good design?

What is visual impairment?

Allianz
P

Our vision

Total blindness

Perfect vision

Visual impairment

A visual condition that affects our ability to perform daily tasks, which is aggravated by the environment in which we live.

Our vision

Total blindness

Perfect vision

Visual impairment

Our vision

Total blindness

Perfect vision

Visual impairment

A visual condition that affects our ability to perform daily tasks, **which is aggravated by the environment in which we live.**

Comfort

Comfort

P
RETIRE AQUI
O SEU BILHETE
P

QUARTOS
CHAMBRES
ROOMS
RESTAURANTE
BAR

VIPs want to walk on the pavement in safety, without having to concentrate

SOTTOMAYOR

RESTAURANTE

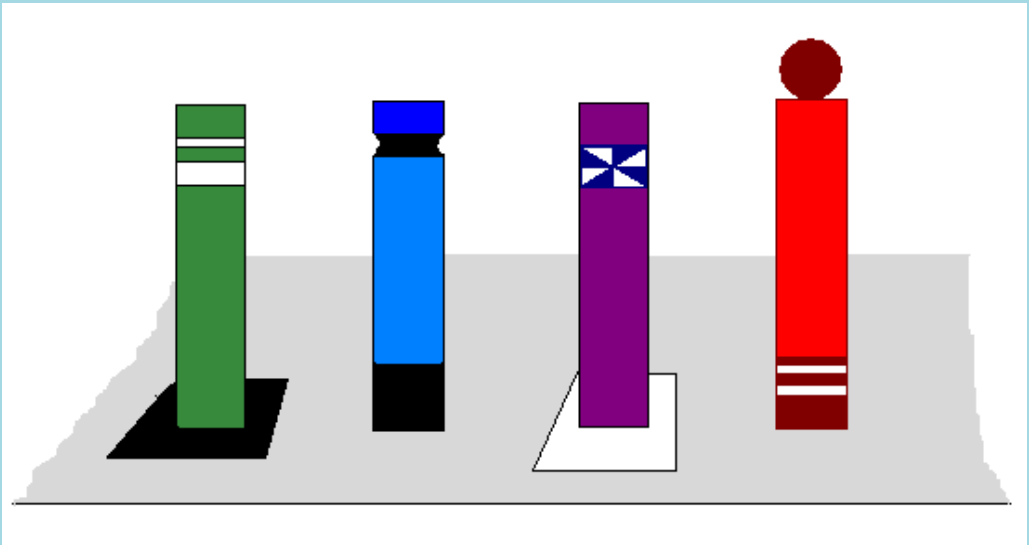
TURISMO
CASTELO
PARQUE
POUSADA
TURISMO

TURISMO
CASTELO
PARQUE
POUSADA
TURISMO

VIPs want to walk on the pavement in safety, without having to concentrate

A safety issue

A safety issue

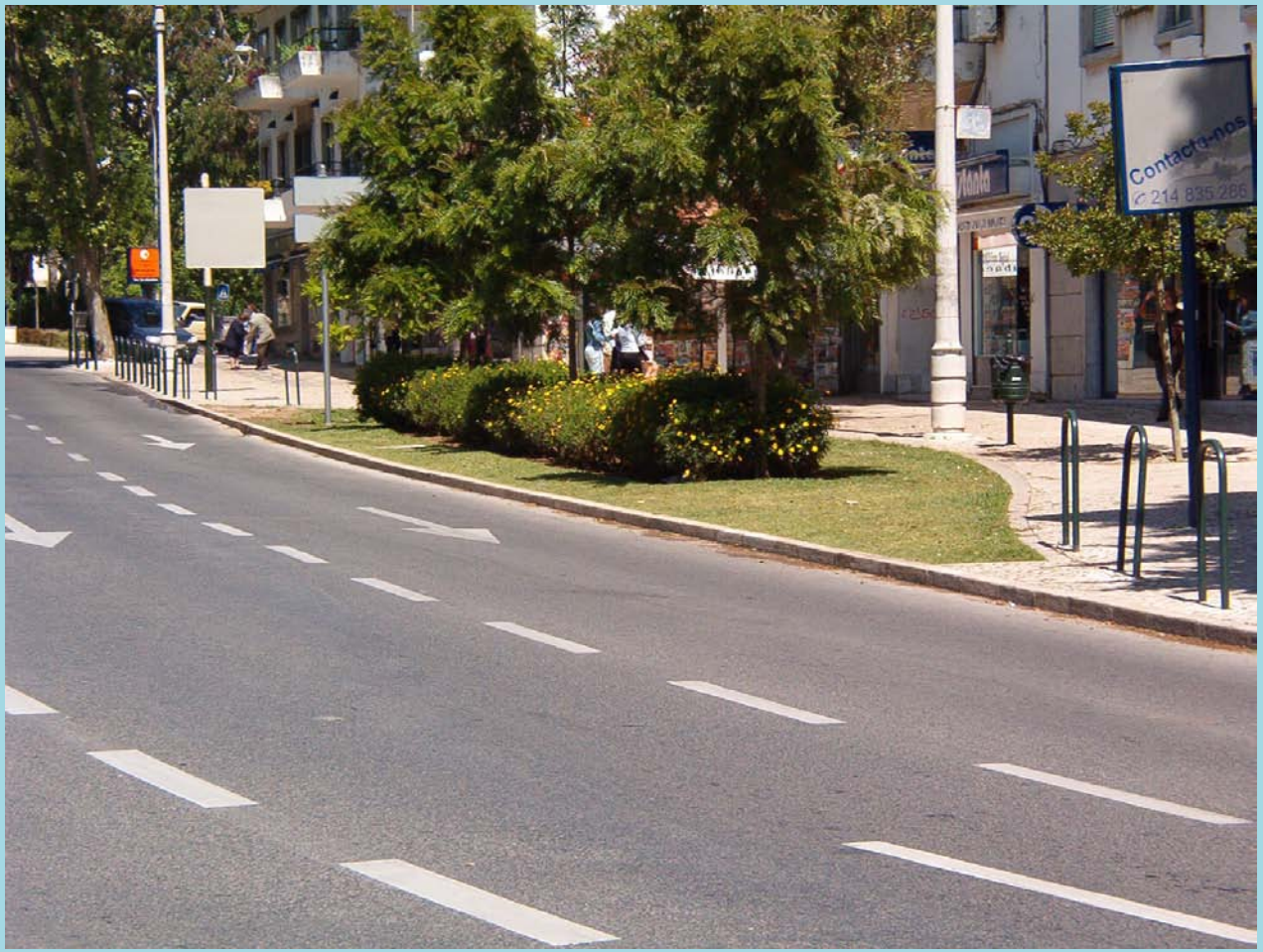


Do they work?

Do they work?

Do they work?

Other methods



Other methods

Other methods

+

Comfort

Contrasts

Consistency

Common sense

Complementary information

Contrasts

Colour contrast

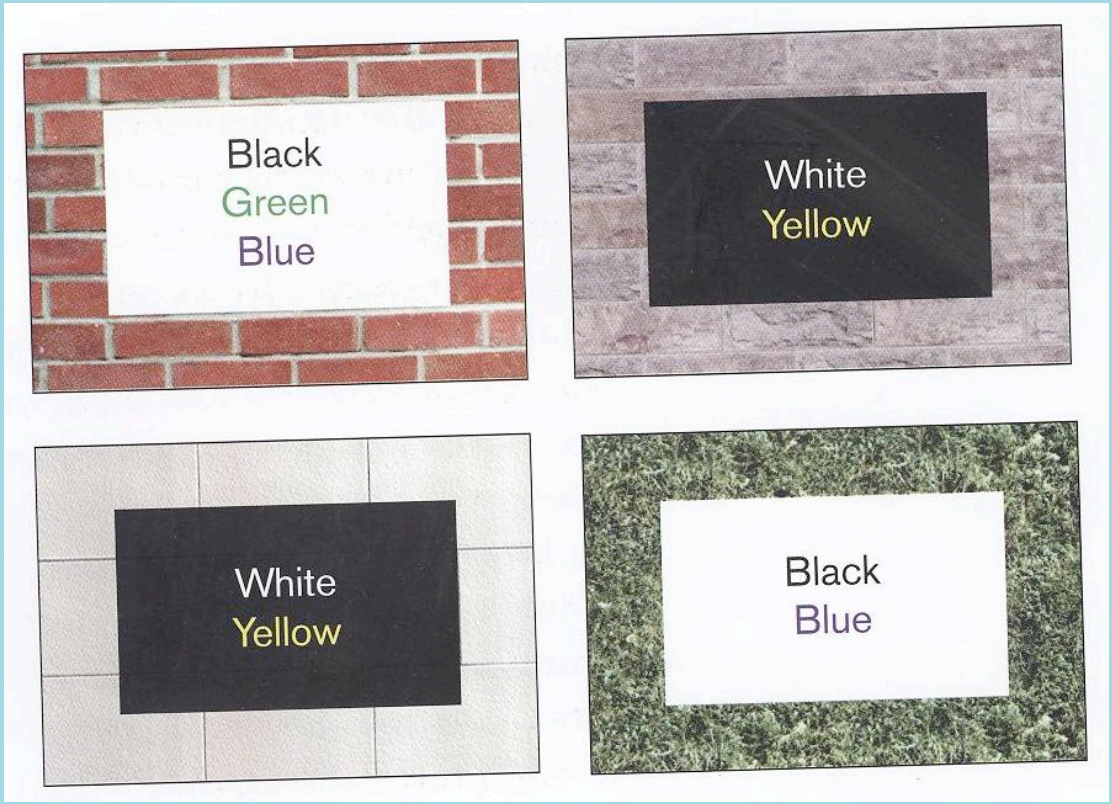
Tactile contrast

Aubible contrast

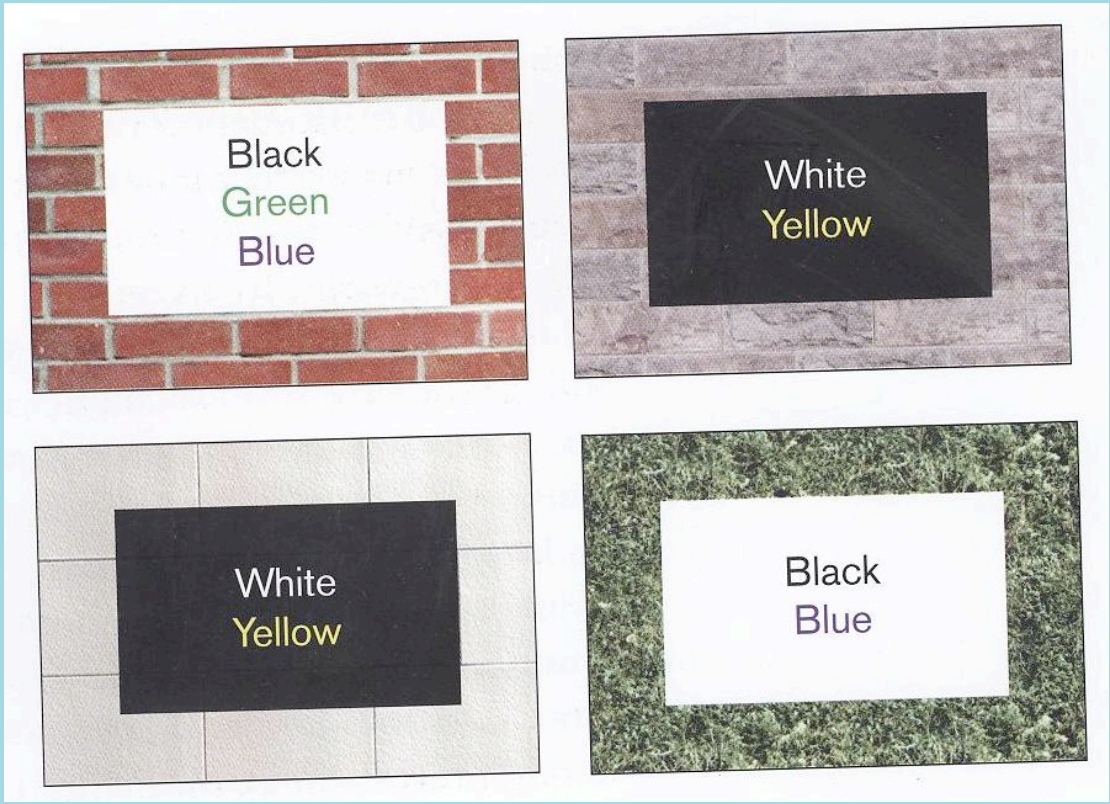
Contrasts

Colour contrast

- Signage
- Doors and door handles
- Light switches,sockets, call buttons and walls
- Floors and walls
- Stair noses
- Hand rails and walls


Black
Green
Blue
White
Yellow
White
Yellow
Black
Blue

White



But respect the hierarchy...

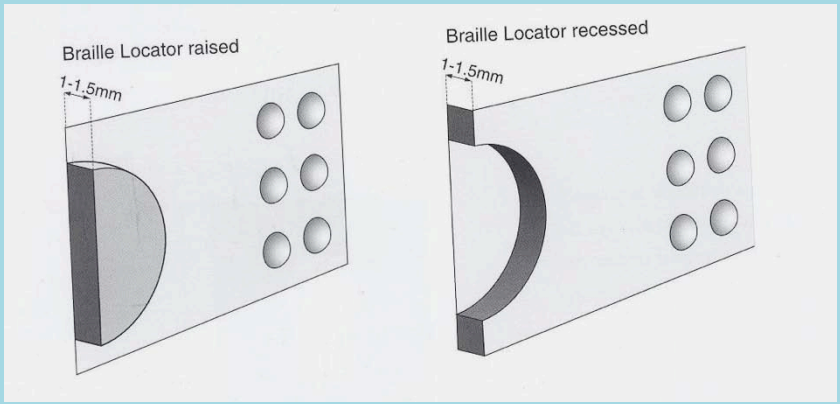
Yellow and black –warnings

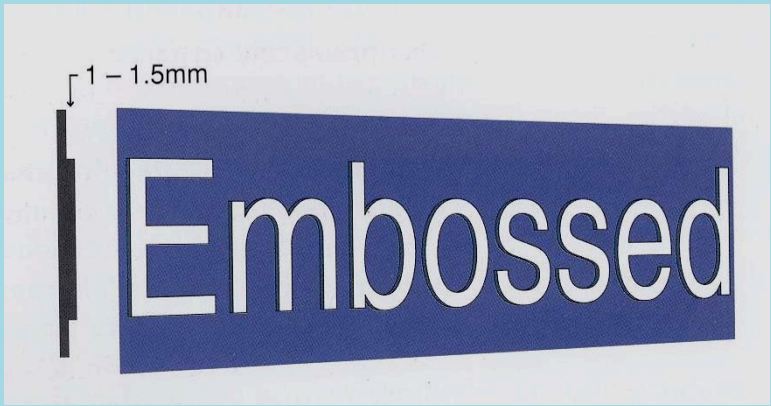
Green and white/cream – emergency exits

Red and white/cream – firefighting equipment

Car Park
Offices
Restaurant

Conference
A
CONFERENCE A

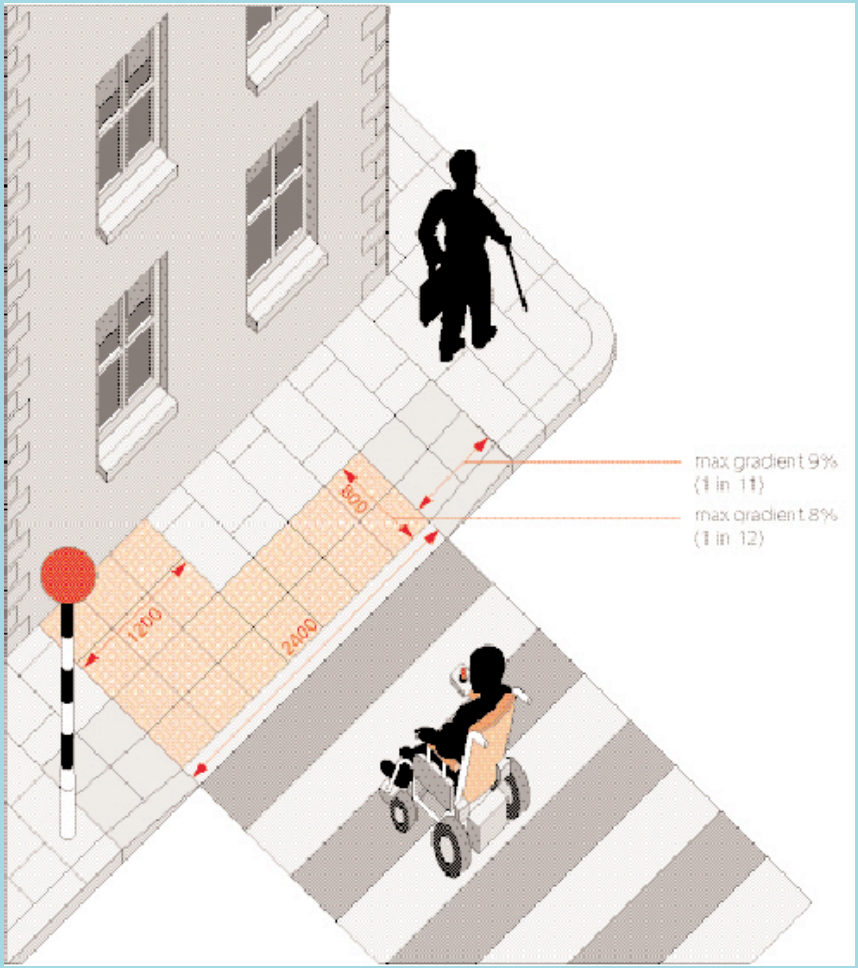

Braille Locator raised
1-1.5mm
Braille Locator recessed
1-1.5mm


1 – 1.5mm
Embossed

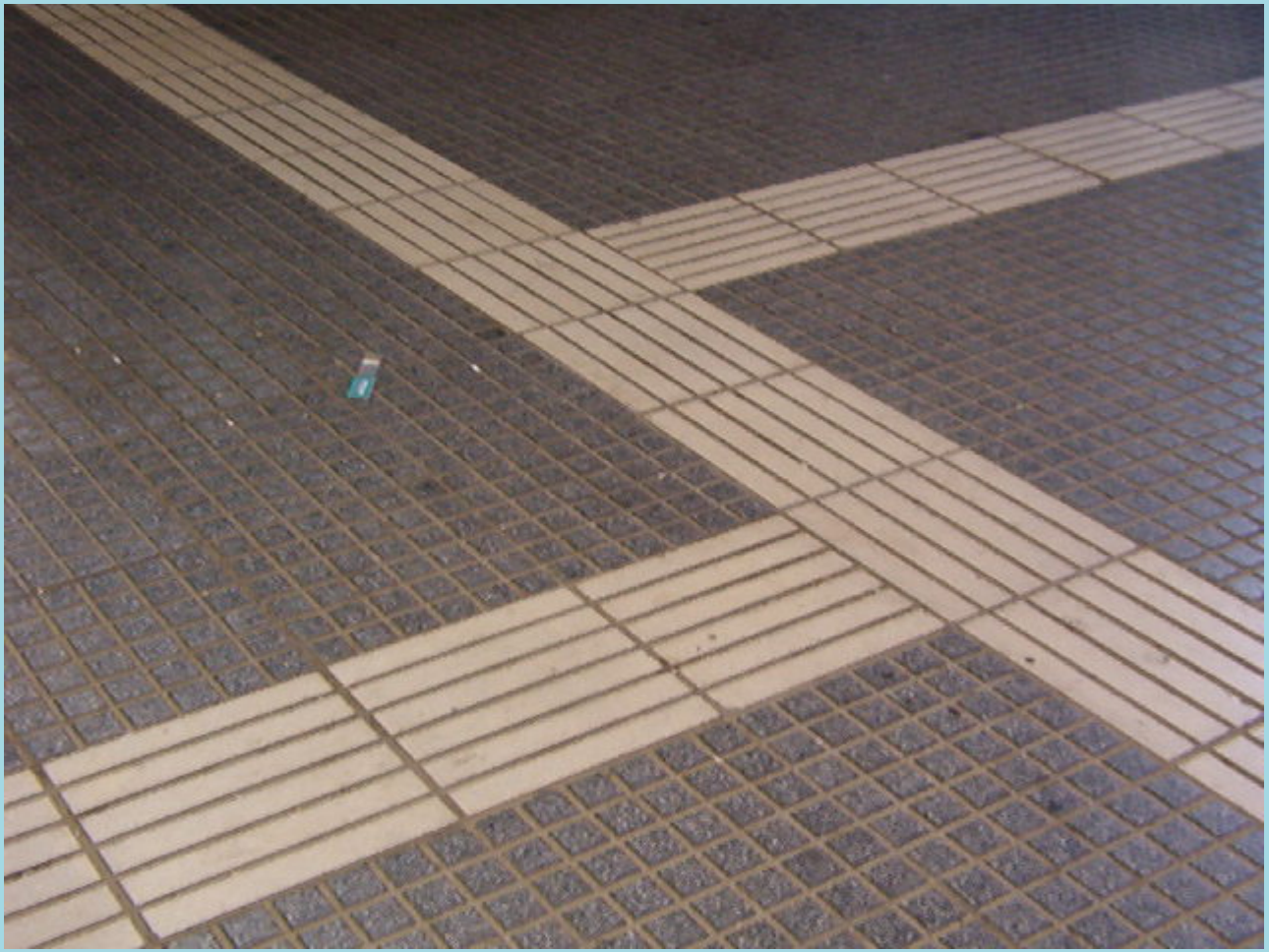
Tactile contrast

- Platform edge
- Top and bottom of stairs
- Pedestrian crossings
- Room categories (floor, door handle)

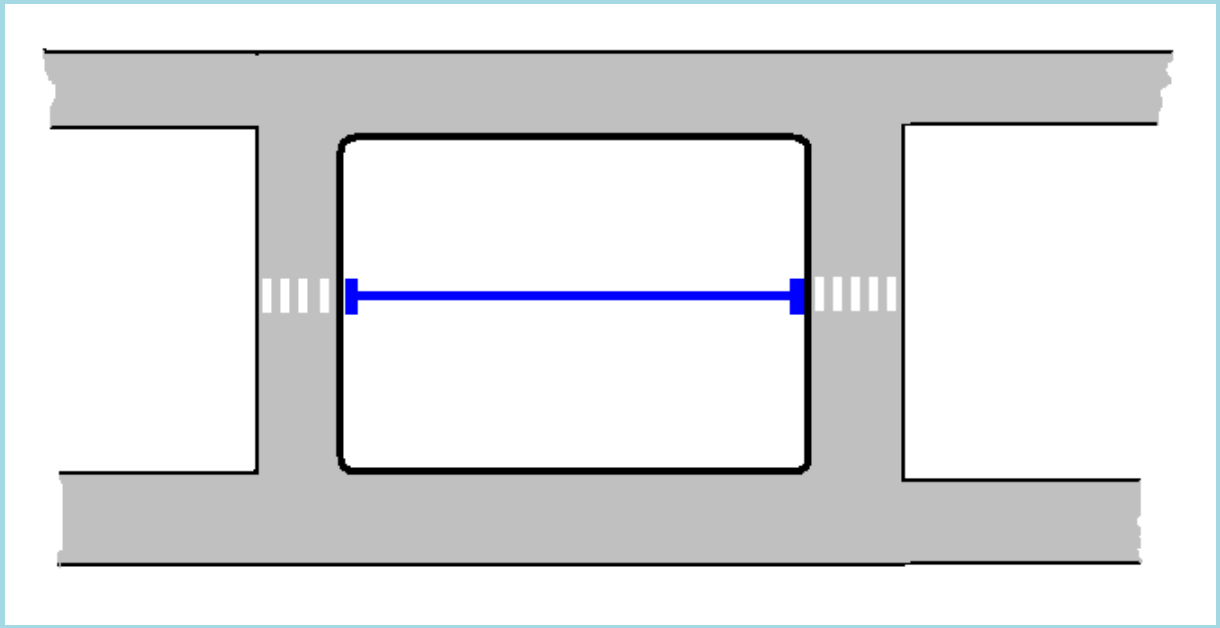
Contrast + Consistency

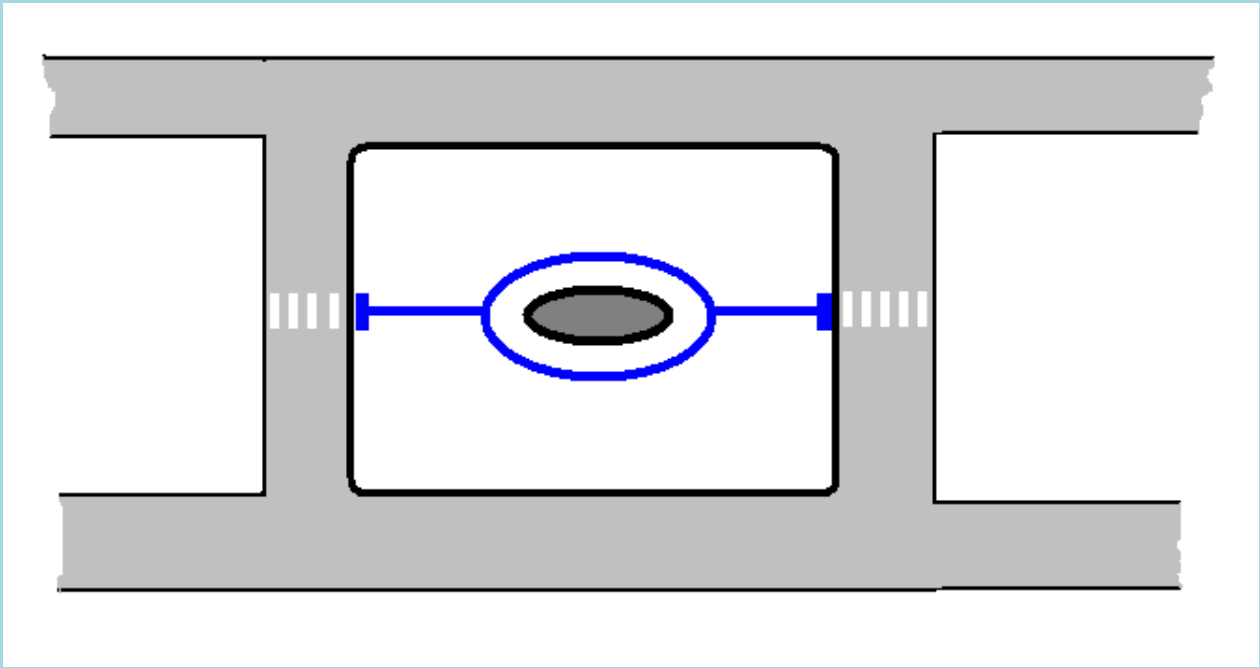


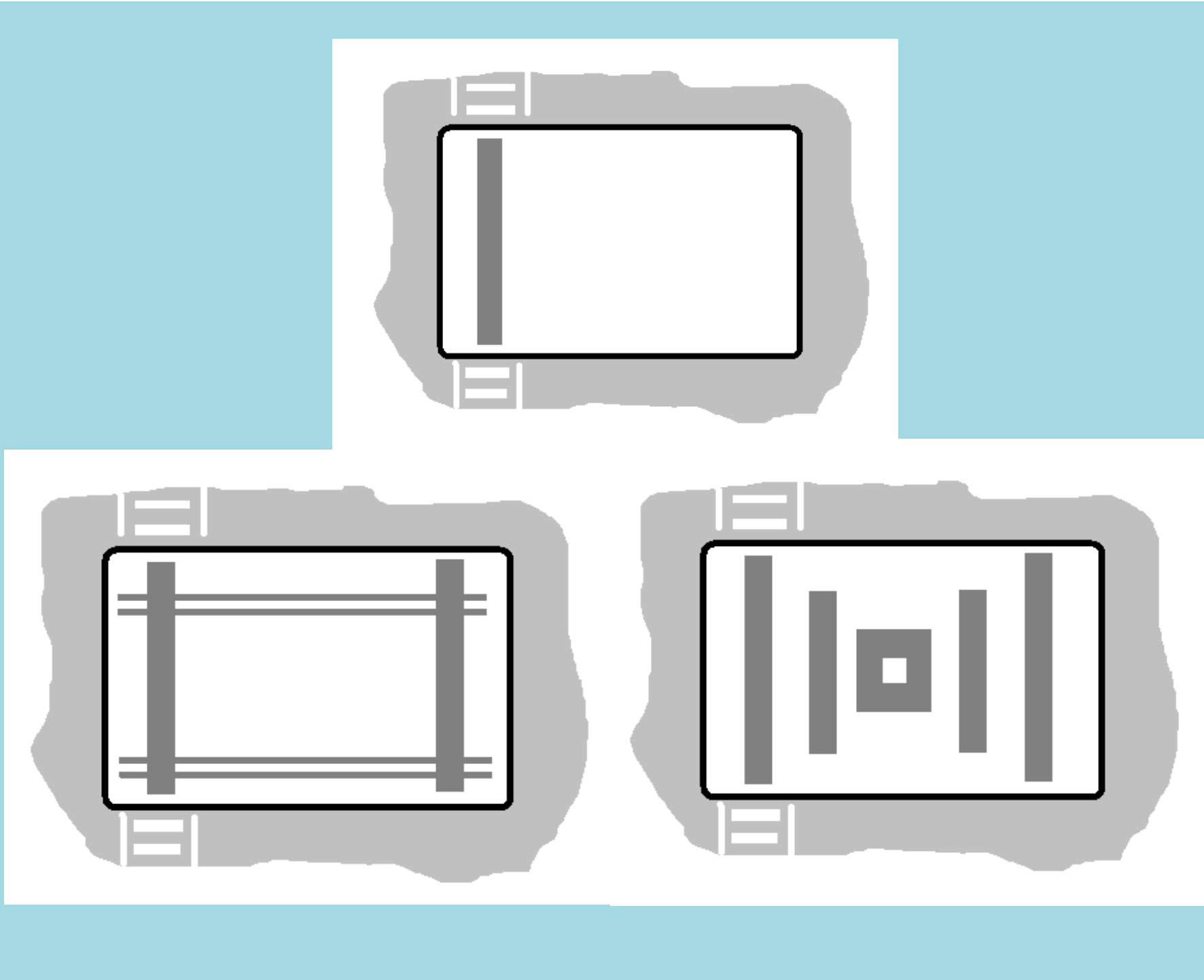
Compatible with good design?



Good Design doesn’t need tactile paving







Compatible in the Old Town?

Consistency

If you need to invent a code,

please remember,

each surface can have

only one meaning throughout the city.

Consistency

Consistency

Signage

- consistent height
- consistent position
- consistent language

Pedestrian crossings

- controls
- layout

Consistency + Common sense

Comfort

Contrasts

Consistency

Common sense

Complementary information

Common sense

VIPs don’t want:

- Tactile paving everywhere
- Braille everywhere
- Complicated navigational systems

Comfort

Contrasts

Consistency

Common sense

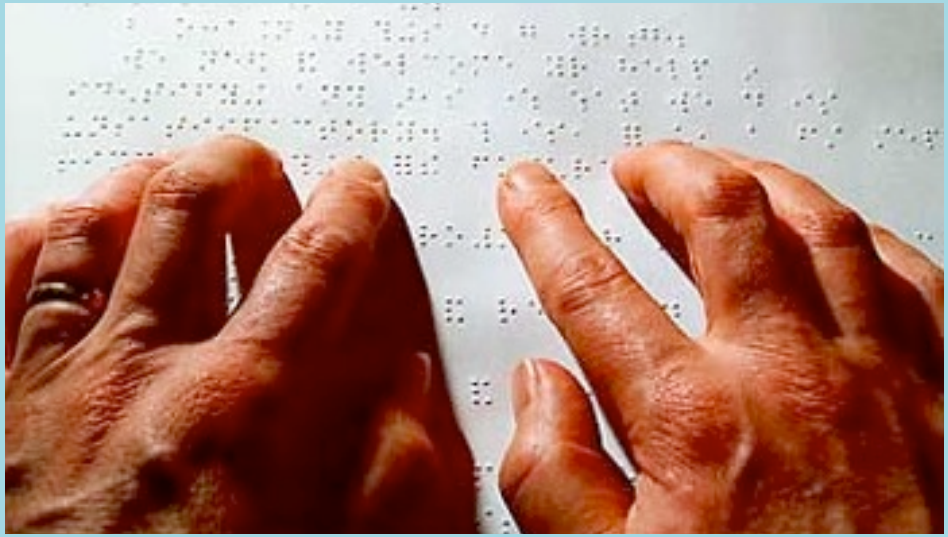
Complementary information

Above all VIPs want interaction ...

... and visual information in other formats

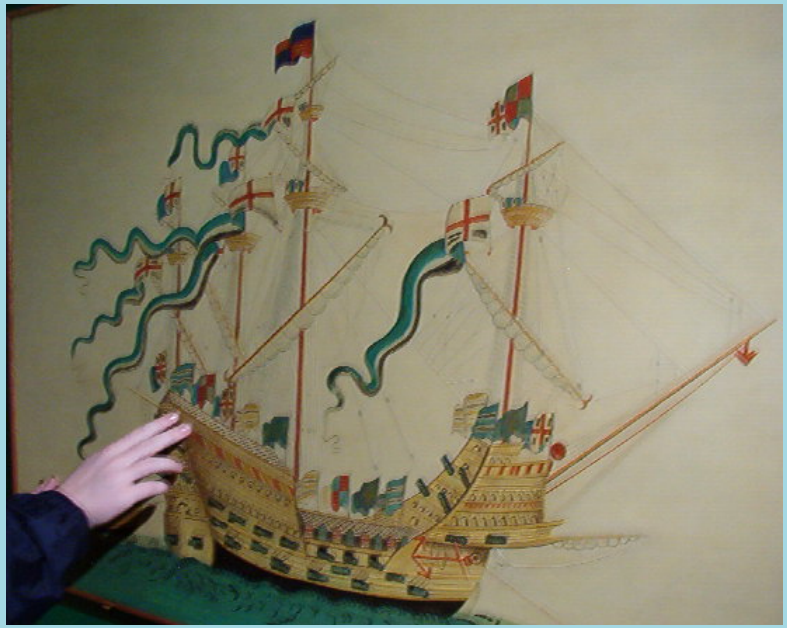
It’s not easy

It’s not easy

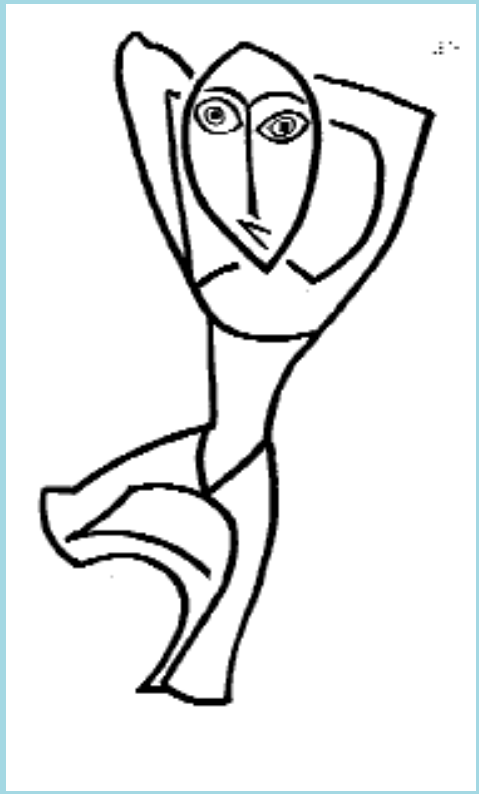


Braille is not tactile information.

It’s simply written information.



Raised images are not always tactile information

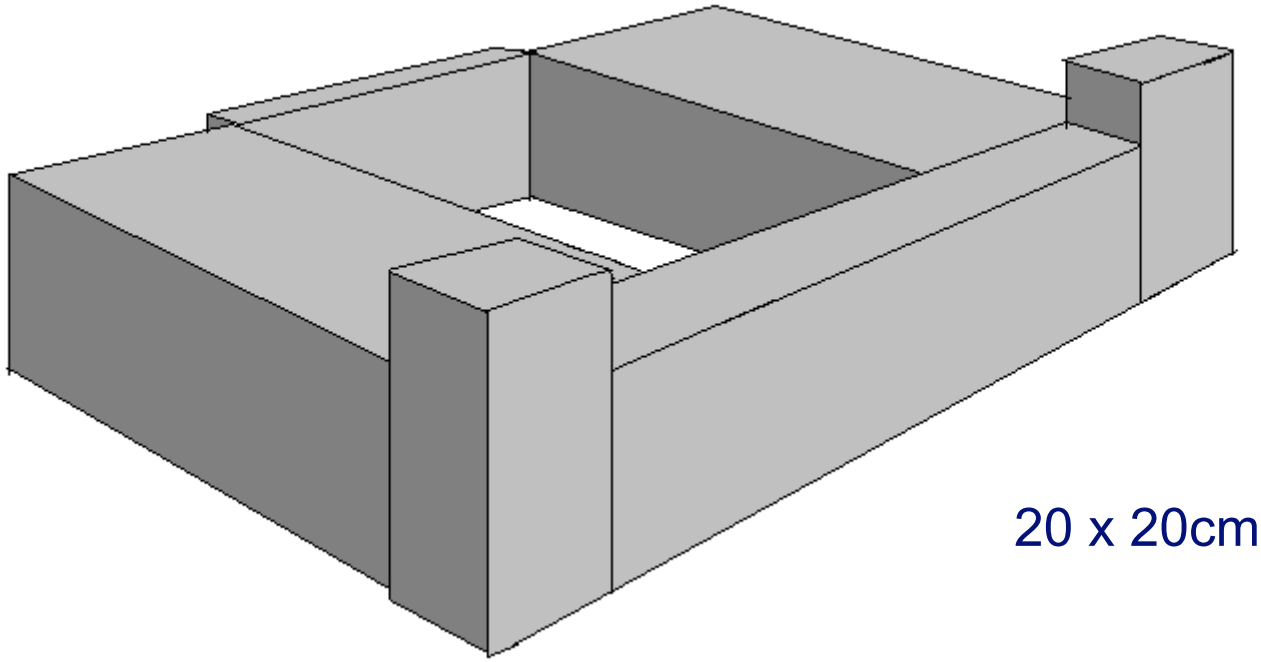


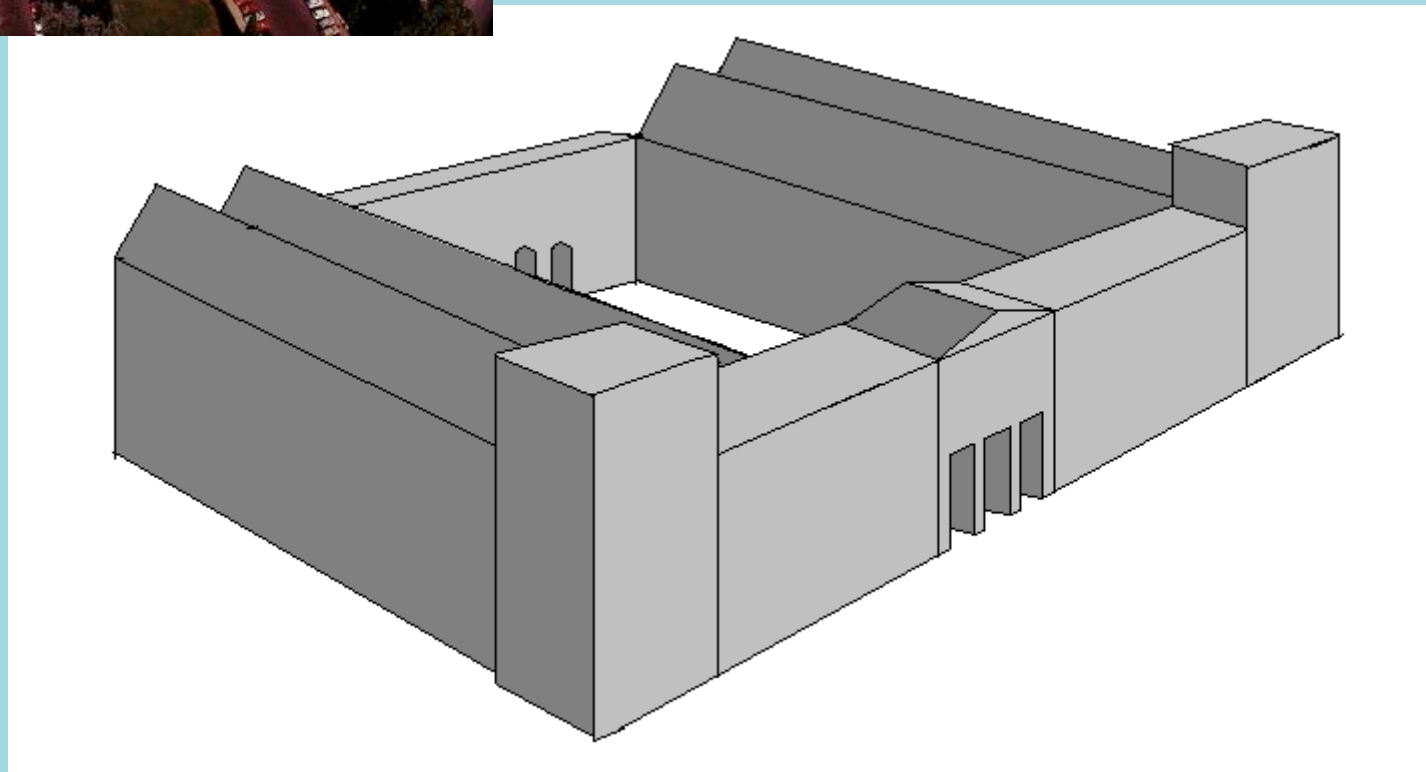
Raised images plus a written and/or audio description, after a lot of discussion, are probably tactile information

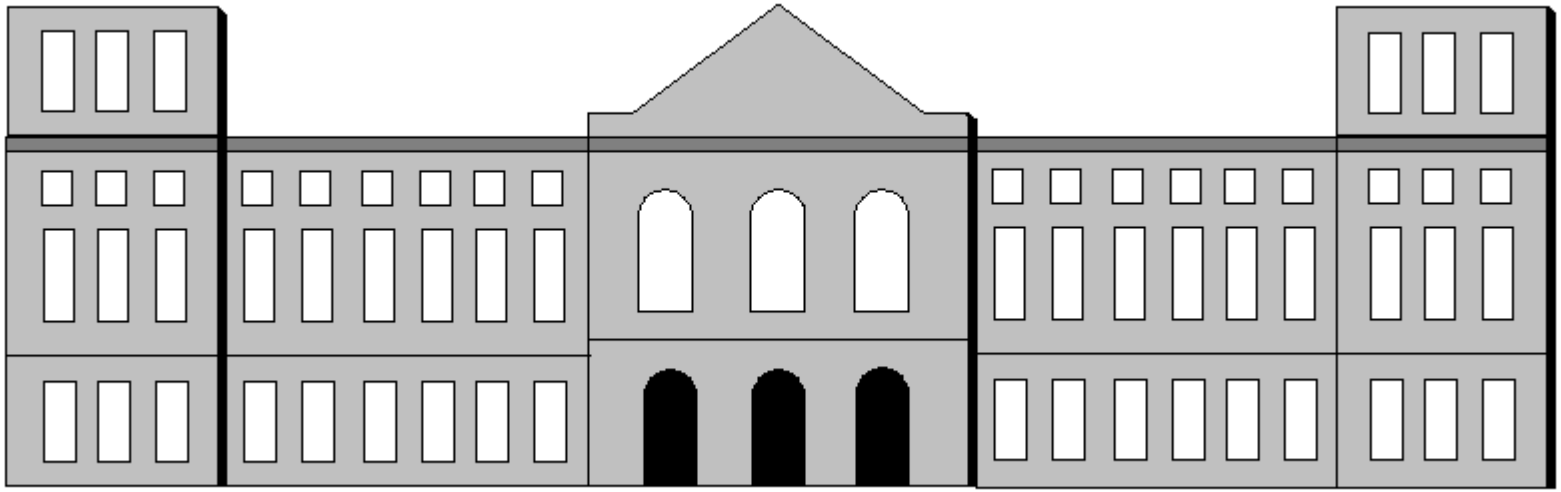
With buildings there is the problem of scale(s)

Ajuda Palace

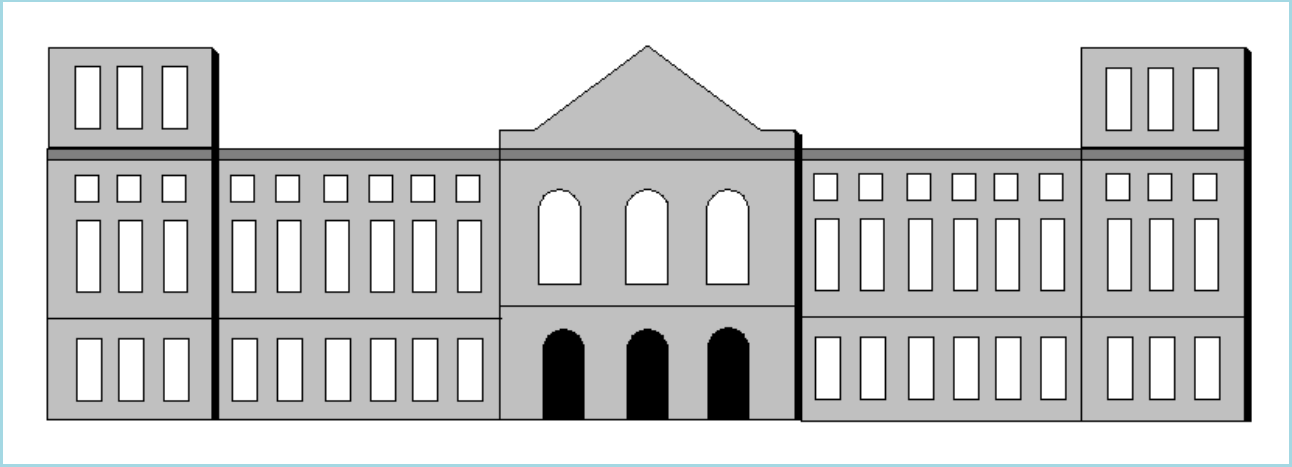
Lisbon

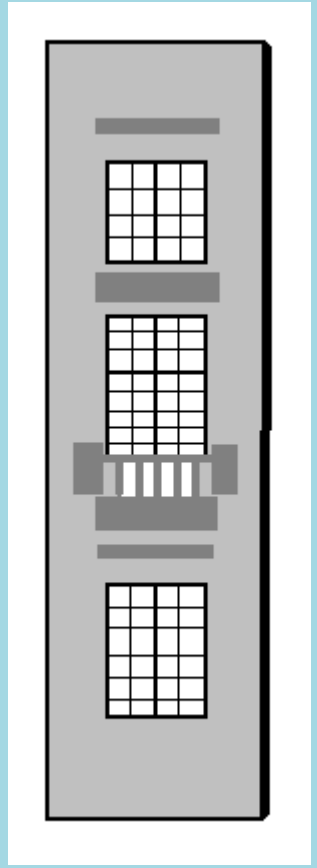

20 x 20cm

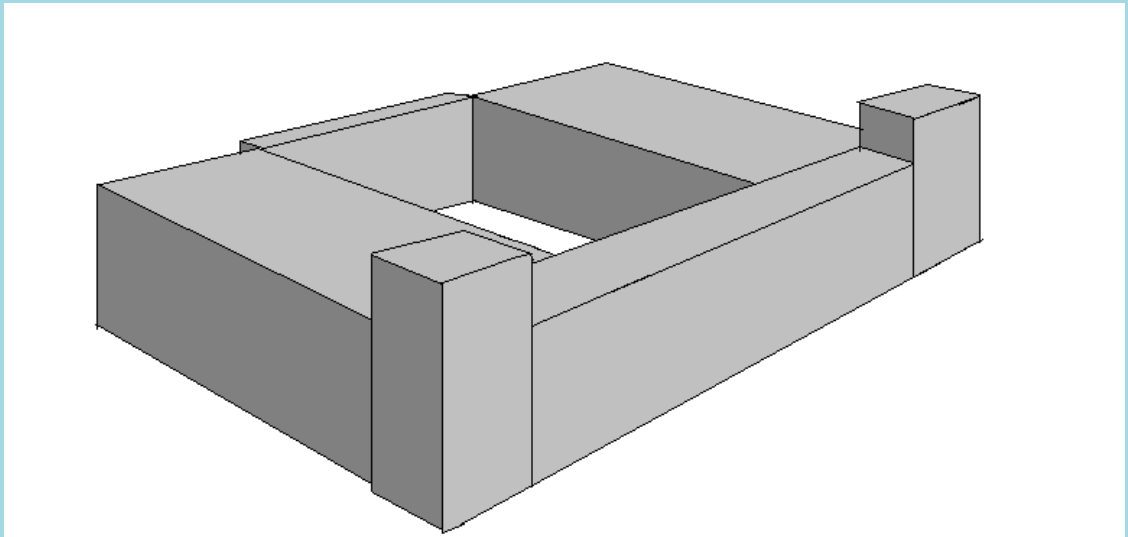


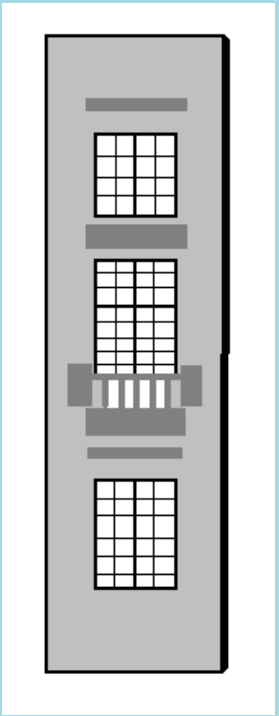


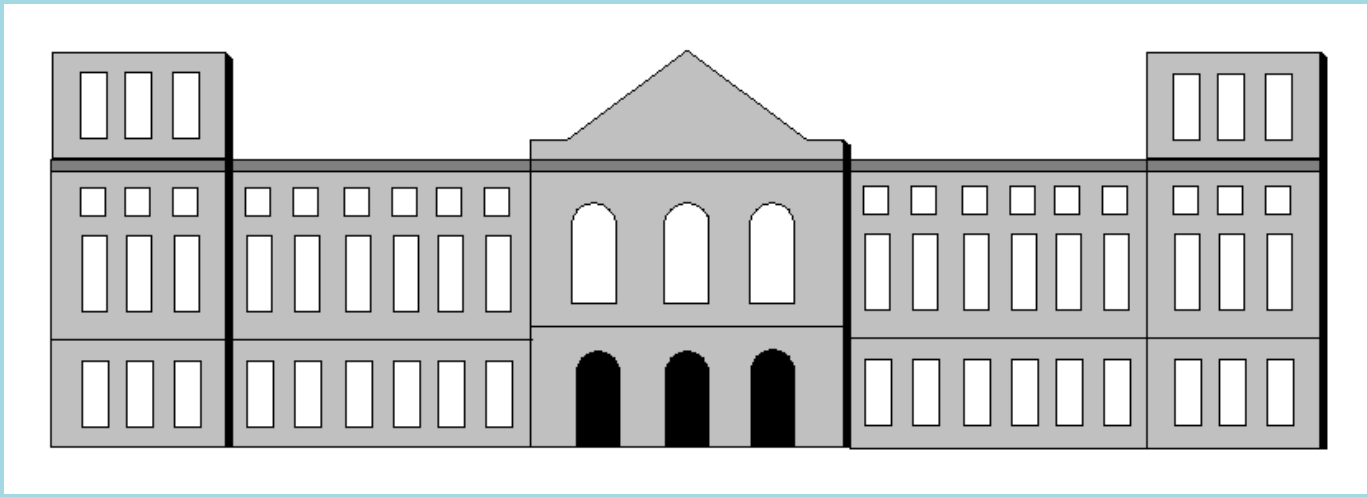
30cm











Needs
and
Expectations
of VIPs

Comfort
Contrasts
Consistency
Common sense
Complementary information

Are their needs and expectations compatible with good design?

Participation

What are the advantages for you?

Participation

What are the advantages for you?

- Gather information
- Make up for gaps in your education
- Test proposed designs
- Introduce a new dynamism
- Generate community interest in your (their) project

Participation

What are the difficulties for you?

Participation

What are the difficulties for you?

- Communciation
  - language
  - means
- Time (apparently)
- Professional status

Thank you for listening.

And remember,

You design the manmade world.

You can change it.

We’re counting on you.