The design of the square's space was guided by a pre-defined “matrix” based on the alignment of the 18th-century road network, by the monumental axis delineated by the Rua Augusta Arch, by the “Estátua Real” statue and riverfront steps (“Cais das Colunas”), as well as by the metrics of the surrounding buildings’ façades.

Three features were of key importance in the project’s concept and design:

- The central square
- The diagonal mesh of the ground’s surface
- The steps transitioning from the central square to Cais das Colunas

Central Square
The “Estátua Real” statue was placed in the middle of a square space bordered by granite streets, and with a square porous surface (courtyard) with a diagonal mesh in limestone.

The square surface gives the statue a central position which it actually does not have in the metrics defined by the buildings.

Diagonal mesh
The diagonal mesh, built of stone, serves two purposes:

- Through a slanted orientation to the square and its monumental axis, to accentuate both the diverging vanishing points in relation to the river
- In addition, the mesh’s size provides a relationship of proximity with people to help “grasp” the scale of the square’s space.

Transition from central square to “Cais das Colunas”

The transition to the riverfront “Cais das Colunas” is done through the square’s central axis, reaffirming the city’s historical connection to the river, which had been lost with the previous five roads to accommodate car traffic.

With four steps designed in large-radius circumferences, it aims to highlight the quay’s presence from inside the square. The end of these steps is tied to the circle where the quay’s surface is engraved.

The difference in height between the square and the quay is due to the haring down of the building’s west turret during construction, as evidenced by the west end of the square’s surface.