

# **The Palace of *Quinta do Marquês do Alegrete*: restitution strategies for space, time and memory**

Aleixo, Sofia<sup>1</sup>; Mestre, Victor<sup>2</sup>

(1) *Universidade de Évora, Oxford Brookes University, vmsa arquitectos*

(2) *Universidade de Coimbra - CES, vmsa arquitectos*

*mestre.aleixo@mail.telepac.pt*

## **Abstract**

Palaces, as an architectural typology, can be found in recreation *Quintas* that surrounded the main cities in Portugal, which preserved its rural character since the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Consisting of cultivated land and farm buildings, the palace of the *Quinta* was the owner's temporary residence, for summer holidays and festive events, with gardens, pavilions, fountains and lakes for recreational purposes and leisure.

The focus on palaces, as a historic building and as in need of new uses, clearly shows how current the debate on contemporary interventions in this heritage typology is. Interventions in architectural heritage require multidisciplinary teams to identify conservation strategies which enable a qualified use of its spaces, such as for example the experience of security and well-being, which can contribute to a better quality of life and simultaneously to the quality of the urban environment. This paper presents the Palace of *Quinta Alegre* and its rehabilitation project for contemporary use and public esteem, both of which are considered fundamental prerequisites for its sustainable maintenance in space, in time and in memory.

**Keywords:** architectural heritage, cultural significance, new uses, design strategies, intervention ethics.

## **Palácio da Quinta do Marquês do Alegrete: estratégias de devolução de espaço, tempo e memória**

### **Resumo**

Sob a denominação de tipologia arquitectónica, o edifício Palácio pode ser encontrado nas Quintas de Recreio que rodeavam as principais cidades Portuguesas, tendo preservado o seu carácter rural, desde o século XVI até metade do século XIX. Consistindo as Quintas em terra cultivada e edifícios rurais, o Palácio da Quinta consistia na residência temporária do proprietário, para férias de verão e eventos comemorativos, dispondo de jardins, pavilhões, fontes e lagos para recreação e lazer.

O tema dos Palácios, entendido como edifício histórico que procura novos usos, demonstra como é actual o debate sobre intervenções contemporâneas nesta tipologia de valor patrimonial. A intervenção em património arquitectónico requer a definição de estratégias de conservação por equipas multidisciplinares que permitam estabelecer um uso qualificado dos seus espaços, proporcionando experiências sensoriais de bem-estar e segurança, contribuindo para uma melhor qualidade de vida e, simultaneamente, para a qualidade do ambiente urbano em que se insere. Este artigo tem por objectivo apresentar o Palácio da Quinta Alegre e o projecto de reabilitação, devolvendo-o a um uso contemporâneo e à estima pública, factores fundamentais para a sua manutenção sustentável no espaço, no tempo e na memória.

**Palavras-chave:** património arquitectónico, significado cultural, novos usos, estratégias de projecto, ética de intervenção

## 1. Introduction

'New uses for architectural heritage' was one of the proposed topics in this conference held in Évora, World Heritage City since 1986. The focus on palaces, as a historic building and as in need of new uses, clearly demonstrates how current the debate on contemporary interventions in this heritage typology is. Aware of the importance of establishing a qualified use for historic buildings which in addition contributes to the quality of the urban environment, palace's stakeholders face several challenges that need to be overcome. Firstly, owners are challenged to establish the suitable use for the property, and secondly, architects need to define a tailored intervention methodology, according to conservation ethical principles and to the cultural significance of the place, based on conservation design strategies. Additionally, these challenges raise important questions: What architectural heritage are we talking about? What is the meaning of 'qualified use'? What type of use can be implemented in historic buildings when the original use is no longer in place? And, in this view, what criteria should be applied in the adaptive change of the physical environment to provide qualified and contemporary uses?

In searching for a new use that will retain the place significance while enabling the sensory experience of an historic building, the legitimate concerns of the owners regarding the investment required and its economic sustainability, need to be considered. Furthermore, architects, as project design coordinators, need to address heritage issues in order to respect the existing material and immaterial cultural values. This is currently one of the most difficult problems that owners of abandoned palaces in Portugal are facing. Derelict buildings, now only a distant memory of places of power and knowledge, sometimes listed as of national or regional heritage value, are owned by heirs and managers who are often unable to finance their rehabilitation. This situation is made even more complex due to the legislation in force that defines several constraints to conservation design - affecting architects, engineers, urban planners, conservation and restoration technicians - who seek technical responses to existing anomalies and ethical answers that may contribute to the definition of adaptive and viable new uses for these places.

Some owners, aware of the importance of palaces for the history of our past, search for cultural and social answers to the aimed 'qualified use' that enables to conserve the significance of these places, allowing an investment return, as well as providing sensory experiences that preserve the memories of the past. In this case a triangulation between *new use - economic viability - safeguard of cultural heritage* is observed throughout the design process. The adaptation of architectural heritage to a social purpose will allow the public to enjoy a place that was previously old and degraded, providing some income with the renting of its spaces, while simultaneously preserving its historical value in the community memory, contributing to a qualified identity of the place.

Today, degraded and abandoned palaces found in *Quintas*, are the focus of several conservation interventions in Portugal. In the capital Lisbon, the amount of derelict palaces is considerable, for which the topic of 'historic palaces' have become of interest and debate, as observed in a conference held in the Municipality in January

2015<sup>1</sup>, where it was stated that in Lisbon alone there are about 90 palaces in an advanced degradation condition. This happens to be the case of the Palace of *Quinta do Marquês do Alegrete*.

## 2. Heritage of Recreation *Quintas*

According to the historian Marieta Dá Mesquita, a 'recreation *quinta*' is 'a rustic property that, regardless of size, includes land for cultivation, vegetable gardens and orchards, farm buildings for agriculture equipments and machinery, livestock structures, rural workers dwellings and, near the owner's residence, recreation areas, namely gardens, pavilions, fountains, lakes, dovecotes and woodlands' (1992, p. 231). In most cases, it is a secondary residence, since the family would have a palace in the city, where they lived, using these facilities as a temporary place, for summer holidays and festive days. While retaining its rural character until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such uses of recreation and leisure, identified by this author as taking place in Portugal since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, fostered interventions in the landscape, where the water, orchard or garden, were essential elements in the structure and identity of these outdoor, and out city, spaces.

The designation of 'palace' is used in the residential buildings in the rural *quintas*, regardless of its size. They were usually located in the highest areas of the property, overlooking the surrounding production fields, becoming an easily identifiable landmark in the landscape. In some cases, the location of the palace was parallel to the road, where the facade, the surrounding walls of the property and a main gate offered privacy and protection to the family from the outside view (CALDAS, 1999). Side entrances through reception courtyards provided access to a small garden located at the rear of the palace. The garden was designed according to the architectural composition of the facade, to which was adjacent, and included recreational water infrastructures, such as the lake, the tank, or the well. The first floor of the palace, the noble floor, provided a view towards the property and to the near garden where the relaxing sound of the water made the property owner and his family forget the stressful city life.

In these palaces, the Pombaline architectural expression from the 18<sup>th</sup> century is kept until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as observed in the geometric composition of the windows on the facades. A reception courtyard was used to receive and impress visitors on their arrival displaying tiled figurative ornamentation, inviting to enter into the *Quinta* (ARRUDA, 1993), further decorated with statues, flowerbeds and *calçada*, a Portuguese pavement designed with black and white stones of limestone. Inside, the palaces offer comfortable and elegant living spaces, with clear circulation areas and warm decoration in the rooms, often in figurative mural paintings representing themes of idyllic landscapes, with naturalist or arts motifs.

The palace, garden, forest and field of agricultural production established a cultural unit that confer identity to the landscape in the periphery of the main cities, outlining the roads that linked the neighbouring urban centres. Horse-drawn carriage rides, and later automobile rides, delighted the citizens who seeked some quiet and rest

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<sup>1</sup> The conference on '*Historic Palaces of Lisbon. Memory, ruin or future?*', held on 24 January 2015, at the Municipality of Lisbon, was organised by the History of Art Institute of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and by Fórum Cidadania Lx.

from the bustle of the city in the bucolic countryside, which became scattered with some impressive, or less meaningful, palaces.

### 3. *Quinta Alegre*

*Quinta Alegre* is located in the place originally named as *Charneca do Lumiar*. This place was incorporated as a parish in the city of Lisbon in 1885 (SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA (LISBOA), [s.d.]) and is currently part of the parish of *Santa Clara*, in the city's Eastern border. The cluster of houses in this place, now known as *Campo das Amoreiras*, was one of several others that surrounded Lisbon in the Northern region, noticeable until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several settlements were then built; starting from East and moving towards West, there are places such as *Benfica*, *Damaia*, *Buraca*, *Pontinha*, *Carnide*, *Telheiras*, *Lumiar*, *Ameixoeira*, *Charneca*, *Camarate* and *Sacavém*, and today, some of their *quintas*, or just their palaces, can still be found<sup>2</sup>. *Quinta Alegre* is one of these settlements, where early 20<sup>th</sup> century cartography clearly show the presence, and therefore the importance, of water identified by a well, a noria and a lake. Throughout the last century the property has been divided into smaller plots and what remains now as the property of *Quinta Alegre* includes some of these hydraulic structures.

### 4. The History and Identity of the palace of *Quinta Alegre*

The palace of *Quinta Alegre*, also known by its founder name as *Quinta do Marquês do Alegrete*, is sited in a high location in relation to the property, facing East/South, with a fantastic view over the Tagus River and *Mar da Palha*, as well as of other palaces of *quintas* linked by countryside alley roads and rural roads. The palace, built by *Manuel Teles da Silva* (1641-1709), 2<sup>nd</sup> Count of *Vilar Maior* and 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of *Alegrete*, is a *Joanino-Pombalino* building, designed by an unknown author, listed as '17<sup>th</sup> century civil architecture' (SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA (LISBOA), [s.d.]). The original *quinta* is currently limited to a small plot, surrounded by a high wall, and has (since 1942) the Lisbon Airport at its East side.

#### 4.1 Architecture

The entrance to the *Quinta* is made through a wrought iron gate with the initials *JBA* and the date 1819 in bronze, in between masonry pillars. João Caldas suggests that the use of wrought iron in *quinta*'s gates was widespread throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in the disappearance of the stone with coat of arms on top of the gates, which is why the 'genealogical statement' (1999, p. 57) of *Quinta Alegre* is integrated in the gate itself. This gate was part of a campaign of work carried out by the then owner *José Bento de Araújo* (VALE, et al., 2004) and emphasizes the main entrance, and the access to the display courtyard, decorated with figurative tiles and Portuguese *calçada*. The

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<sup>2</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century it can be highlighted - Palace *Marquês de Fronteira* (*Benfica*), Palace *Bonjour* (*Benfica*); of the 18<sup>th</sup> century - *Quinta Grande* (*Damaia/Amadora*), *Quinta dos Azulejos* (*Paço do Lumiar*), *Quinta dos Condes de Carnide* (*Carnide*), *Quinta do Bom Nome* (*Carnide*), *Quinta da Boavista* (*Pontinha*), *Quinta do Armador* (*Chelas*), *Quinta da Fonte do Anjo* (*Olivais*), *Quinta dos Alfinetes* (*Marvila*), *Quinta de N<sup>a</sup>. Sr<sup>a</sup>. dos Prazeres* (*Buraca/Amadora*), *Quinta das Laranjeiras* (*Largo de Sete Rios*), *Quinta do Marquês de Angeja* (currently Museu Nacional do Traje, *Lumiar*); and of the transition to the 19<sup>th</sup> century - *Quinta do Conde de Sarzedas* (*Palhavã*).

palace main facade is sited on the right, a set of outbuildings is located on the left and, in front, a second gate links the courtyard with the garden. The entrance to the palace is made through this scenic space, where *figuras de convite* (welcoming characters), designed in Portuguese hand painted tiles, in white and blue, welcomed visitors into the private residence. In the main facade, two large central doors open onto a wide masonry lobby, protecting the guests from the outside weather and establishing a transition area, between public and private, already inside the palace.

With a longitudinal rectangular plan, the palace building has two floors, emphasised on the facade by a horizontal frieze, eight wooden framed windows on the ground floor, and eight balcony windows on the main floor with wrought-iron railings. The facade is topped by a cornice and simple eaves of a hipped roof in ceramic tiles, and is framed by masonry pilasters and corners. The outbuildings on the South side of the courtyard, originally built for shelter to of farm machinery, storage and winery, are currently in ruins. These buildings had one floor only, built with traditional solid walls, limestone framed windows, and a timber frame roof, all testimonies of the quality of the construction.

Inwardly, the palace is organised through a central longitudinal corridor which starts in the entrance room and provides access to all the compartments of the ground floor. The access to the main floor is located on the right side and is lit by the window on the first floor. The natural daylight is increased by the limestone masonry on the floor and by the walls, with its multicoloured tiles applied along the stairs, displaying a central rose design and a green baseboard. After the staircase, on the South side, there is the door to the garden, dining room and kitchen, which has a door that leads to an outside courtyard. This courtyard has a service door integrated in the boundary wall of the *quinta*, enabling a direct connection to the road. On the top floor there are the living rooms, sleeping rooms, the remains of an adapted room to be used as a toilet, and a service staircase which gives access to a storage space in the attic and to the kitchen in the lower floor. Historical photographs bear witness to the furniture used in these spaces, framed by painted murals that allow the reconstruction of the uses of these spaces at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup>.

## 4.2 Integrated heritage

The mural paintings on the walls and ceilings are remarkable, not only for the artistic and decorative motifs but also for its current good condition. The rooms facing the courtyard; one is decorated with drapery fabrics with symbols allusive to love, and another with flowers, birds and musical instruments that suggest the theme of Art. Furthermore, the central room facing the garden, decorated with architectural elements, displaying an exuberant environment in the representation of a landscape of trees, plants, birds and figures from classical mythology, demonstrates the quality of the artist. Interestingly, and according to the Institute for Housing and Urban Rehabilitation (IRHU), in the Historic Centre of the city of Évora, there is a neoclassical building with mural paintings of the same period whose trace, motifs and particularly its bird design suggest great affinities with the murals that decorate the palace of *Quinta Alegre* (VALE, et al., 2004).

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<sup>3</sup> More information at [http://www.monumentos.pt/Site/APP\\_PagesUser/SIPA.aspx?id=3200](http://www.monumentos.pt/Site/APP_PagesUser/SIPA.aspx?id=3200).

As previously mentioned, the exterior and interior tiles applied in palaces play a fundamental role as a symbol of aristocratic power and wealth. In this palace, hand painted tiles in blue and white, *figuras de convite*, produced in human scale dimensions and representing men rigorously dressed with 18<sup>th</sup> century costumes, were positioned in the display courtyard in a welcoming pose, as if their gestures welcomed the guests into the house. On the inside, tiles were used to protect and decorate the walls. The kitchen, with a Pombaline starlet pattern, in cobalt blue on white background, illuminates this workspace where cleaning was facilitated. Corridors have ashlar tiles with Pombaline tiles, manufactured according to the sponging and multi-colour technique. The baseboards in rooms and corridors, consisting of three rows of coloured tiles, protect the lower part of the walls. This element, which fits to the contours of the rooms, will play a key role in the rehabilitation strategy.

### 4.3 From recreational residence to School educational facility

Apart from the rest and recreation of their own family, the garden of the palace of *Quinta Alegre* was the scenario of several social events, meetings and parties, as recorded by photographer *Joshua Benoliel* (1873-1932) in the story '*Uma garden party na Quinta Alegre*' (A garden party in *Quinta Alegre*) published in the Portuguese magazine *Ilustração Portuguesa*<sup>4</sup> (BENOLIEL, 1908). The historical testimony of social life in this palace, contributes for a better understanding of the importance of these places in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lisbon society.

Following its use as a rural and recreational farm, there is a period of which there is a lack of knowledge on its development. In 1984, *Santa Casa da Misericórdia* of Lisbon (SCML), a charitable institution established in 1498 and currently the largest and oldest in Portugal, acquired *Quinta Alegre*<sup>5</sup>. The selling document described the property as composed by an aristocratic house, courtyard with two iron gates, garden and park, outbuildings in masonry and roofless area. In 1995, a project for the rehabilitation and adaptation of the palace to hold SCML new Games Museum was designed (VALE, et al., 2004), although it was not further developed. In the meantime, a professional school was set up in the palace, with workshops for metalwork and carpentry. The introduction of electrical and plumbing installations required for this new use, most questionable in spaces with such artistic significance, had an impact on the existing fabric. However, it seemed not to have been a contributing factor in the deterioration currently observed. Despite the efforts of the owner entity to preserve the place, the lack of use of buildings and gardens that followed after the school was closed in 2005, contributed for the acceleration of the physical anomalies and the degradation of materials. Vandalism and the theft of stonework and other artistic elements led to the present state of degradation and lack of important parts. Two measures were taken by the owner: as a security measure, SCML opted for bricking up the windows in 2008; as a safeguard measure, SCML decided to rehabilitate this heritage as a whole, for which a

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<sup>4</sup> Benoliel was the director of photography of *Ilustração Portuguesa* until 1918. He registered various social events in palaces, witnessing and reporting the period of transition between the Monarchy and the Republic, which led to his current recognition as the pioneer of reportage photography in Portugal.

<sup>5</sup> In the conference on '*Historic Palaces of Lisbon. Memory, ruin or future?*', previously mentioned, SCML informed that owned 465 properties from which **three** are palaces.

suitable functional programme was needed to provide a 'qualified use' of the palace, the garden and the outbuildings.

#### 4.4. Acknowledgement of its heritage significance

As *Quinta Alegre* was listed as a national Public Interest Property (IIP) in 1962<sup>6</sup>, it has since then a Protection Area generally established by Law, of a 50 meters perimeter around the property. Within this boundary, any demolition, alteration, expropriation, restoration or transformation needed to apply for the consent of the Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage (IPPAR). However, it was not clear what was exactly being protected, and in 1968 the Municipality of Lisbon asked for clarification to the then Secretary of State for Culture and Education. Several problems delayed<sup>7</sup> the description of the cultural heritage protected by the listing and the publication in the National Official Gazette (*Diário da República*) only occurred in 1977, where it was established that the listing status protected 'the palace, gardens and constructions or decorative elements in it'<sup>8</sup>.

In 1998 the inherent Protection Area established by Law was redesigned by the Ministry of Culture, and in the next year, the Municipality of Lisbon issued a public announcement with the adjustment of the protection boundary line, now under the designation of Special Protection Zone. As a consequence of being listed at national level, *Quinta Alegre* is also included in the Municipal Master Plan of Lisbon, as a Municipal Heritage Asset<sup>9</sup>, and which illustrates the city's aristocrat architecture typology<sup>10</sup>.

#### 5. New uses: a social response based on the principle of intergeneration

With an unoccupied palace of 868 square meters and a walled garden with 4.536 square meters, both in an accelerated degradation process, SCML posed several questions: what kind of use could be implemented in this site designed for a way of life that does not fit neither contemporary life neither SCML purposes?

Understanding by 'qualified use' the one that respects the cultural meanings, historic values - architectural, social and cultural - of architectural heritage, the initial idea was to use the palace as a SCML official reception room, providing the building with a socio-cultural use, and with the flexibility to enable different types of events to take place, either organised by SCML itself or proposed by external entities (MESTRE and ALEIXO, 2008). This idea allowed for the maintenance not just of the original built structure and functional layout, but also preserved the relationship between the road and

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<sup>6</sup> Decreto n.º 44 452. *Diário do Governo*. 152 (62-07-05) 939.

<sup>7</sup> One of the references is the death of architect *Raúl Lino* in 1974, working in the General Directorate of National Buildings and Monuments (DGEMN) who would be responsible for the detailed definition of the safeguarded heritage in *Quinta Alegre*.

<sup>8</sup> Decreto n.º 129/77. *D. R. I Série*. 226 (77-09-29) 2390-2396.

<sup>9</sup> Annex 1- Municipality Heritage Inventory: List of the properties and buildings (Article 13), in Paragraph 13-*Charneca*, with reference 13.04 - *Quinta Alegre / Campo das Amoreiras*, no. 92 - 96 (IIP).

<sup>10</sup> More information at <http://www.cm-lisboa.pt/equipamentos/equipamento/info/quinta-alegre>.



the garden, where social activities could take place today, such as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century 'garden parties'. The idea was materialised into a planning application, handed by vmsa architects in 2007. However, no further action was then taken, and the project was put on hold.

In 2014, with the intention of defining a wider social use and assuming the role of being a 'pioneer in search of new social responses' (SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA (LISBOA), 2015), the new management team at SCML proposes an innovative functional program for the rehabilitation of *Quinta Alegre* with 'intergeneration' as the guiding concept:

'For this territorial issue, we intend to create a Residential Home for the Elderly with the chance of providing residency to people external [to SCML].

We are looking for an intergenerational relationship between the elderly and young people to ensure a constant interaction, and foster an intellectual and social development, avoiding the isolation and exclusion that the elderly many times have to face.

Therefore, it is essential to share the spaces needed for the functioning of the Home within the different existing buildings, giving a public and community role to the palace building, which will act as a meeting point among generations.

The garden should be considered as a recreational and activity centre for leisure activities (such as *tai chi*, gardening, horticulture, maintenance circuits, among others), promoting the outdoor experience and physical activities' (SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA (LISBOA), 2014, p. 2).

To ensure the technical and financial feasibility of this intervention, SCML established that the intervention in *Quinta Alegre* needed more ground area, and that intervention would be conducted in three phases, each one related to a functional unit of the intergenerational project: the Social Unit, the Assisted Residential Unit and the Residential Unit<sup>11</sup>.

## **6. Intergenerational residences at *Quinta Alegre***

The challenged proposed by SCML to the project team was to design an intergenerational residence facility, an innovative brief in the Portuguese context as there was no specific legal frame in terms of space requirements and construction guidelines. The team took that challenge on board and the responsibility to do so within an ethical framework through the definition of criteria to be used in the adaptation of the physical space to the new uses, while preserving the place integrity and authenticity.

The SCML perception that the existing built area was scarce for such objectives, lead to the design of the extension of the outbuildings. These derelict structures and the palace, all protected by the heritage listing status, needed to be surveyed and understood so that the remaining fabric would be the least affected as possible with the adaptation to the new uses. Furthermore the strategic location of specific housing support services, aimed to be opened to public, needed to be carefully thought so that easy access would be

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<sup>11</sup> More information at [http://microsite.scml.pt/reabilitar/single\\_pages/quinta\\_alegre.html](http://microsite.scml.pt/reabilitar/single_pages/quinta_alegre.html).

provided.

### **Phase 1. The palace as an intergenerational meeting place**

The first phase envisages essentially the conservation, restoration and services infrastructure of the palace, display courtyard and garden, for which the 2007 restore proposal was still appropriate for a new social unit. The design included the introduction of a unit of toilet facilities as the minimum service required to the leisure activities forecasted to take place in the palace, such as reading, playing games and video rooms, etc. However, SCML now required a more flexible and inclusive use for which the former kitchen was adapted to enable more cooking activities, and an elevator was introduced, making the whole building inclusive.

### **Phase 2: Outbuildings and expansion for the provision of an Assisted Residential Unit**

Currently in ruins and already without roofs, the outbuildings on the South side of the display courtyard were identified as the natural continuity of Phase 1. Since they share the same outdoor reception space, they benefit from the palace proximity and social use. They further allow for the technical spaces of the intergenerational programme to be implemented not on the palace building, where a major impact could be predicted, but on these outbuildings, therefore contributing to the preservation of the range of heritage values that are recognised in the palace building. The core functions of the Assisted Residential Unit, such as technical, administrative and storage spaces were located on the ground floor. Similarly, other type of social spaces continues the activities of the palace in this level: a small gymnasium and changing rooms, a self-service laundry room, and restaurant/dinning room. These services are designed for residents and general public. In fact, it is expected that the provision of a restaurant/dinning room in the former winery, strategically located next to the reception courtyard and enabling the enjoyment of the garden, can offer a service to the community and a meeting place for residents, visitors and local people. The new first floor, set back from the facade, which is aligned with the road, will provide to 62 users a set of single and double rooms. A new building to the South/West will be strategically placed to allow access through a bridge at level 1, ensuring a continuous and accessible use to the unit users.

### **Phase 3. Intergenerational Residential Unit**

The new building of Phase 3 will be an autonomous residential unit mainly targeted for the use of young people. Located on the empty plot facing South/West of outbuildings, this unit will validate the global financial investment. The design of 14 apartments (student residential type) aims to create a pro-active social dynamic infrastructure for its users who can use the services and enjoy the activities installed in Phases 1 and 2. Architecture, as the-unifier of spaces cultural identity, will qualify the use experiences in this new building since the idea of heritage continuity of the design is revealed by the linking of memories from different historical and aesthetic periods. The memories still in place and, at the abstract level, the historical memories that are part of

the mental map of the users of the future complex, will allow residents of this unit to feel as if they are sharing a structure that was initially used by their ancestors.

## **6.1 Intervention ethics, time and memory**

The project team, coordinated by vmsa architects, aimed to match the objectives of SCML with the physical reality in place and current legal constraints, unifying and above all providing the specific identity of an equipment designed for that unique heritage place. This functional program, Intergenerational residences, will allow the most relevant socio-cultural values that still remain to persist and be enhanced, by their physical preservation, offering the opportunity of their enjoyment and recreation to the community. In this regard, the intervention ethics of the architects was reassured, as previously reported in 2008, at the 'SCML 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting on Heritage':

Heritage is to be used, rehabilitated and renewed in the interest of the people. Heritage is not a matter of architects; it's a matter of «gaining another function in order to upgrade its values, for the well-being of the people who inhabit these places, for the collective interest of the qualified experience of cities» (MESTRE, 2008, p. 49).

Between the first visit made to the palace in 2007 and the last one in 2015, there has been an accelerated development of anomalies that have had an effect on the constructive systems and supports of the artistic expressions that characterise this cultural heritage property. As previously described, among factors identified to have contributed to this process of degradation was abandonment, inadequate use and vandalism. This degradation has contributed, over time, and particularly since the building was bricked, to the acceleration of the natural process of physical change, resulting in the modification of the standard qualities of materials, constructive and ornamental structures. Cracks and gaps are mechanical and physical evidence of this process. However, despite the deficient material condition, the buildings preserved the integrity and authenticity of the original construction.

From the conceptual and financial perspective, it was concluded that the palace seemed to have the required physical and functional capacity to resume a new cycle of use. From this identification and its theoretical analysis, the intervention methodology was guided by a dedicated ethics of intervention which considered the cultural significance of the site.

## **6.2 Intervention Methodology: space, materials and technologies**

The intervention in the palace is supported on architectural criteria that seek to ensure the best results in the respect for the integrity and authenticity of the constructive and artistic elements, respecting and maintaining the original materials. Since the main strategy relies on the restitution of the palace space, time and memory, restoration was the chosen approach. The project for the adaptation of existing spaces to new uses was guided by the ethical concept of minimum intervention, therefore needing the definition of restrictive areas of sacrifice (APPLETON, 2003). There are several constructive and decorative arts to restore, which include the stucco, mural painting, decorative paintings, decorative tiles, masonry, stonework, and carpentries in the inside. These layers of heritage value influenced the options of intervention, requiring a careful and

respectful attitude. Thus, the units of toilet facilities, one on each floor, will be integrated as a 'piece of furniture', i.e., the units roughly touch the historic walls and ceilings to enable the global view of the small rooms' decoration. Another option was made regarding the water and sewage services. These services were joined in a 'technical canal' opened below the ground floor, minimizing the impact on ceramic and stone pavements (to be replaced), without any impact on the decorative arts in walls and ceilings. On the first floor, non intrusive actions were also defined such as the subtlety infrastructuring of the rooms with the minimum services. For example, standing lighting was the system devised so that a technical rail was placed on the same place as the existing baseboard, enabling the preservation of the artistic and decorative elements on site, by the careful removal and replacement of tiles.

In the exterior, it is also worth mentioning that the display courtyard will have its figurative ornamentation in ashlar of blue and white tiles of the *figuras de convite* back in place, returning to this space the aristocratic reception environment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Missing tiles will be replaced by white tiles, enabling the perception of the whole but avoiding any type of pastiche, assuming the loss where there has been loss.

Although the use of the palace is mainly focused on the users of the unit, the original idea of enabling different types of events—to take place and enjoy such a distinguished heritage, was considered in the project, as for example the possibility of accommodating technical-scientific and/or exhibition events, among others. Opening for public visiting could also be an opportunity to make known this important place, as a representative example of Portuguese Romanticism raising awareness for the historical importance of this period. A Route of Romantic palaces in Lisbon, could include *Quinta Alegre* among others such as palace *Marquês de Fronteira* and palace *Bonsejour* in *Benfica*, and well as the palace *Angeja-Palmela*, which currently houses the National Museum of Costume in *Lumiar*.

## **7. Return of space, time and memory**

In our professional practice in architectural conservation at vmsa architects, the functional and cultural challenges are considered in the context of the specific historic building and attached cultural values. An architectural design which coordinates a design team, including the building services and structural engineering solutions, has to ensure technological compatibility, an integrated response to the law and the provision of quality of life to users while contributing to a qualified urban environment. In the case of *Quinta Alegre*, the objective of the intervention in this site and its historic buildings transcends the narrow technical sense, mainly due to its social impact, through the explicit ambition of SCML in the implementation of an innovative equipment for the elderly.

The phased installation of the functional programme defined by SCML in this site is surely the guarantee for the safeguard of this valuable architectural heritage, as it starts by the palace and its garden, to be open to the public. The final design of this Phase 1 - Rehabilitation and Restoration of the palace of *Quinta Alegre* and Romantic Garden, was widely scrutinized and discussed with representatives of SCML and its technicians, as well as with the technicians of the General-Directorate of Cultural Heritage throughout this lengthy process. A call for construction tender was published

by the end of 2015 and the works for the safeguard and enhancement of this heritage are expected to start shortly.

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