Palace of Pena Project wins the 2014 SIL Real Estate Award

- Winner of the category “Urban Rehabilitation – Tourism” at the 2014 Real Estate of Portugal Salon
- Project involved the restructuring and refurbishment of the Palace store, restaurant and cafeteria
- Renovation and optimisation now enable better access and circulation
- Routes between the store restaurant and cafeteria now cater for visitors with mobility restrictions

Sintra, October 9 2014 – Parques de Sintra yesterday received the SIL Real Estate Award for the category “Urban Rehabilitation – Tourism” for its renovation project targeting its store, restaurant and cafeteria of the National Palace of Pena, completed in April 2014.

The awards ceremony took place at FIL – the Lisbon International Fair that currently hosts the 2014 Real Estate of Portugal Salon.

The competition is designed to “award quality and innovation in activities spanning the fields of real estate promotion, urban development, local councils, public works projects, the housing and rental sectors, sustainable construction, urban rehabilitation, energy efficiency and real estate investment funds in Portugal”.

The Palace of Pena store, restaurant and cafeteria refurbishment project

In April 2014, Parques de Sintra completed work on refurbishing the Palace of Pena store, restaurant and cafeteria following a fifteen month long process (ten months of project planning and five months of construction work) involving total investment of around €750,000. The objectives included not only providing a response to the constant rise in the number of arrivals at the Palace of Pena, which welcomed around 780,000 visitors in 2013 (up over 8% on the previous year), but also designed to better cater for citizens experiencing mobility restrictions.

There has been a steady and sustained rise in both the number and the diversity of visitors to the Palace and correspondingly requiring the upgrading and modernisation of the public welcome facilities – in particular, the existing store, restaurant and cafeteria in order to optimise the functional and commercial performance of these spaces. Hence, the
redevelopment project implemented by Parques de Sintra sought to provide answers to this new mass tourism with its swift patterns of consumption and expectations of the immediate provision of quality services and products.

This correspondingly strove to facilitate circulation, whether of members of staff or the public, on and between each floor thus improving the integration of a tourism visit into the food and beverage service and product outlets. This incorporated the prioritising of functional performance (efficient and quick services providing pleasant experiences) and endowing these facilities with a simple and contemporary image. This also proved the opportunity to review the sanitation and technical installations alongside the restaurant and cafeteria equipment and support infrastructures (kitchen and storage areas) in keeping with current functional and normative standards.

The store, restaurant and cafeteria, located in a building almost autonomously structured in relation to the main Palace, are housed in a basement, two floors and a covered terrace in which there is a small structure annexed to the Royal Kitchen.

A connection between the three floors, running from the store, represents an important means of improving the access conditions to the terraces located on the Palace’s ground floor as an alternative to the steeply sloping access route.

Within this context, the project included establishing direct access between the three floors by means of two new channels: through extending the already existing flight of stairs and through the installation of a public elevator able to carry one wheelchair passenger and one other person to all three floors.

In the case of the store, the new spatial layout sought to convey an overall better perception and immediate visitor identification of their respective different needs (products, WC facilities, information, etcetera). This reorganisation of the area extended to the demolition of non-original dividing walls (dating to the previous project intervention) and the relocation of various functional areas thereby expanding the space attributed to products for sale, boosting the flow of circulation and valuing the original architecture of the space. The fittings and furniture chosen, in white, endows a greatest emphasis on the products and appeals in sensory terms to visitors. The service counter is in glazed white glass, a material that fosters a harmonious compromise with the original building.

In the restaurant, the project also sought to free-up the space and improve the capacity for good on-site service. The restructuring of the serving zone incorporated its adaptation
to an assisted quick and high quality buffet service. As regards the counter, this was finished in kambala wood thereby recycling a former panel existing in the restaurant and enhancing its welcoming ambience. There was also the restoration of various copper finishing panels on the shelves before their reintegration into the new furniture.

The installation of sanitation facilities on the restaurant floor, previously non-existing, brought about a higher standard of comfort to visitors as they no longer need to go to the floor below as had been the case. The kitchen was refurbished to accommodate the new elevators and the sanitation facilities and also adapted to meet the new legal and equipment requirements undergoing introduction. This also included an option in favour of electricity powered equipment, in place of gas, minimising the risk of fires and explosions.

The *cafeteria* was restructured in order to both accommodate the new staircase to the lower floors and to implement a new self-service facility in which visitors collect their own products from the refrigerated display cases before making their payment at the checkout for a speedier style of service. This option responds to the demands for service speed made by the tens of thousands of annual visitors to the Palace of Pena who commonly wish to then move onto visit either the Park or other monuments.

In terms of reviewing the infrastructures, this prioritised energy consumption with one example stemming from the energy generation system incorporated into the elevators for their own consumption and hence the energy generated in the descent directly serves its operating (lighting, ventilation and sound). The lighting and ventilation systems in various areas are clock controlled in order to ensure they are turned off when not in usage – which, in conjunction with the LED technology implemented in the majority of lighting sources, results in lower energy consumption than in conventional systems. Another of the innovations implemented ensures the reutilisation of water: water from the washbasins is rerouted before reutilisation in the toilet flush system. This complete renovation of the electrical and mechanical installations of these commercial outlets falls within the scope of a broader project that Parques de Sintra began in 2012 and leading to the review of all of the Palace’s infrastructures.

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**About Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua**

Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua, S.A. (PSML) is a state-owned limited company with exclusively public capital that was created in 2000 following the recognition by UNESCO of the Cultural
Landscape of Sintra as a World Heritage Site. The company was created to assemble the public institutions responsible for preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage in Sintra. PSML has been entrusted with the management of the State’s main properties in the area. Because it does not resort to the State Budget, PSML depends entirely on proceeds from the tickets sale, shops, cafeterias and hiring of venues for events, in order to restore, maintain and promote the heritage it manages.

In 2013, the natural and cultural heritage managed by PSML (the Park and Palace of Pena, the National Palaces of Sintra and Queluz, the Chalet of the Countess of Edla, the Moorish Castle, the Palace and Gardens of Monserrate, the Convent of the Capuchos and the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art) welcomed approximately 1,700,000 visitors, over 90% of whom were from outside of Portugal.

The shareholders of PSML are the Directorate General of Treasury and Finance (Direção Geral do Tesouro e Finanças - representing the State), the Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Biodiversity (Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e Biodiversidade - ICNB), the Portuguese Tourism Board (Turismo de Portugal) and the Municipality of Sintra (Câmara Municipal de Sintra - CMS).

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