Restoration of the Indian Drawing Room in the Palace of Monserrate

- Last major Palace space to undergo restoration
- Intervention part of the overall restoration project
- Investment amounting to around €35,000
- Work finished in May

*Sintra, 26th February 2015* – Parques de Sintra has been developing the intervention, restoration and refurbishment of the Indian Drawing Room, in the Palace of Monserrate, since the beginning of the month and is due for completion in May. This intervention project, with an investment of €35,000, falls within the scope of the global Palace of Monserrate restoration project with this being the last major area on the visit route to undergo thorough intervention.

The project seeks to reconstitute and stabilise all of the materials present within this physical space, enabling the recovery of its aesthetic unity. The intervention extends to all the integrated structures, specifically the rebuilding of the ceiling where the plaster panels are applied over the wall supported by small pieces of wood nailed to the beams, with the consolidation and the full treatment of the still surviving sections of the ceiling, the parietal finishings with their gold-leafed friezes and the skirting boards in polished plaster.

The Indian Drawing Room displays problems similar to those encountered in the other already restored rooms of the palace, with overlapping layers of paint (whether applied with the objective of renovating the ambience or simply due to issues over maintaining the integrity of the finishings) or the degradation caused by successive years without maintenance. Furthermore, there was also an earlier intervention project that rebuilt part of the ceiling, probably in the wake of alterations made to the upper floor in which non-traditional materials were applied and also failing to take into consideration the pace of the decorative composition.

The observations made thus far indicate that there was no repetitive metric enabling the production of a scale mould appropriate for reproduction and hence, in order to complete
the task, recourse was made to the Billiards Room, which is of the same symmetrical composition to this room.

As regards the aesthetic surface aspect applied at the end, the various layers of paint shall be stripped away after identifying the least harmful method to the original layer. These layers were applied thickly and with a technique that rendered the surfaces with a difficult to understand texture obscuring both its finishings and simultaneously the profile of the motifs in addition to the background colours of the original composition.

Preliminary soundings revealed the presence of a dark pink colour on the smooth sections of wall and light pink in the backgrounds to the profiled motifs with even these definitions only indicative. The program may only be defined with any certitude after having completely removed the corresponding areas or having at least carried out systematic soundings, repeated for each decorative motif as there may be areas subject to changes in colour. The final definition of the colours utilised, when necessary for reapplying the layer of paint or in cases of reintegration, will be in keeping with the original areas.

The friezes and ends of some feature were finished in metallic leafing and then covered with new layers of coloured paint or even paints imitating metallic leafing in earlier interventions. Following the removal of all paints (imitation) found covering zones where there once had been metallic leafing will be followed by the repositioning, fully or partially, in accordance with that discovered following cleaning. The gold-leafed mirror frame, the marble fireplace and the wooden flooring will also be subject to treatment.

The Indian Drawing Room, also known as the Design Room, displays decorative plaster features identical to the Billiards Room. Prominent are the central floral work and the two vases (of Portuguese manufacture) belonging to the Sir Francis Cook ceramics collection.

Photographs from the period show the room contained furniture of diverse styles and origins standing out among which are the two India wooden sofas and two glass display cases. On the walls, there were Indian Kashmir cloths, woven with silk, and a large mirror with its frame in Venice crystal. There was also a sizeable number of Oriental porcelain pieces with highlights including two large Chinese jars.
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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