Beginning of restoration work on the Botanical Garden in the National Palace of Queluz Gardens

- Reconstruction of the four original greenhouses
- Repositioning of the central lake
- Restoration and conservation of the flower pots (including their tiled finishings) and other architectonic features
- Planting of the botanical collection
- Relaying of the pavements
- Installation of a new network of infrastructures

Sintra, 15 December 2015 – In December, Parques de Sintra began work on the restoration of the Botanical Garden in the Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz. This intervention, involving total investment of in excess of half a million euros, falls within the framework of the overall restoration project for the National Palace and Gardens of Queluz, with this work beginning in January 2015.

The National Palace of Queluz Gardens were, from their original construction onwards, considered a favoured location for the leisure of the Royal Family and today constitute an important landscape and heritage legacy and duly considered one of the most interesting of European historical gardens.

This intervention also emerges within the scope of a response to the urgent need to restore, safeguard and protect the cultural and landscape heritage that the Queluz gardens contains within the objective of returning their recreational and interpretative character in full respect for their composition and interrelationship with the surrounding environment.

The intervention
As its main objective, the intervention targets the reconstruction of the 18th century Botanical Garden whose composition and layout were completely lost in the wake of flooding in 1983. To this end, historical research began in 2013 that extended to a
documental and iconographic survey of all the garden structures that culminated in the full identification of the original botanical collection. This then advanced with the corresponding gathering and analysis of various of the now scattered features such as the sections of balustrades, lakes, stone masonry, statues and slabs. The project has been fully accompanied by archaeological soundings whose findings constituted an input into the decision making process.

Hence, the intervention includes the rebuilding of the four greenhouses dedicated to the cultivation of pineapples based upon the existence of several of the original ashlar masonry sections alongside the available historical information (the original design, cartographic surveys, photographs and documental descriptions).

We do know that pineapple, an exotic vegetal species collected in the 18th century, was grown in these greenhouses and became a source of great pride to the Portuguese Royal Household. Proof of such pride comes with the presence of pineapples as decorative features both in the stone masonry and in the tiled finishings applied to the interior of the National Palace of Queluz.

The work also includes the repositioning of the central 18th century lake in worked stone, the statuary, the balustrades, the pavements and the botanical collection that is to be laid out in part among the garden flower beds, the central beds of the greenhouses and as well as the flower pots.

The project also spans the conservation and restoration of other pre-existing features such as the walls, stone masonry, decorated walls by the entrance gateway, the walls and finishings in plaster, benches, flower pots, tiles, sculptures and plinths. Furthermore, the infrastructure network will be scaled in order to meet requirements in terms of the supply of energy and water and drainage facilities.

The construction work in question does not imply any interruption to visitor routes and on the contrary seeking to be in accordance with the usual Parques de Sintra policy of “Open for Works” in which visitors are able to accompany the ongoing progress of the intervention. This thus enables, with full respect for the rules of safety, the witnessing of
work as well as accessing information about the processes involved and, hence, be better positioned to evaluate and recognise the efforts necessary to appropriate interventions in spaces with this type of historical sensitivity and relevance.

Beyond the interventions in the Botanical Garden, with work due for completion in the first half of next year, Parques de Sintra shall shortly advance with the restoration of the Malta Garden, the recovery of the Small Wood, the Cascade, the network of pathways and the planting of green barriers for the visual protection of the surroundings. Studies remain ongoing as to the best means of carrying out improvements to the water system supplying the fountains, lakes and irrigation system.

- End -

Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua, S.A. (PSML) is an entirely state owned company founded in 2000 in order to meet the challenges arising out of the UNESCO classification of the Sintra Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage site. The entity does not resort to the State Budget and the restoration and maintenance of the heritage in its care are ensured by the revenues resulting from sales at its ticket offices, stores, cafeterias and the rental of facilities for the hosting of events.

In 2014, the sites managed by PSML (the Park and National 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 1,928,000 visits, around 86% of whom were international in origin. In 2013, 2014 and 2015, PSML was distinguished with the World Travel Award for the “World’s Leading Conservation Company”. The PSML shareholders are the General Directorate of the Treasury and Finance (representing the Portuguese state), the Portuguese Institute of Nature and Forestry Conservation, the Portuguese Tourism Board and Sintra Municipal Council.


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