The Convent of the Capuchos restoration and requalification project enters a new phase

- Restoration of the roofing, installation of internal infrastructures and improvements to the exterior infrastructures and decoration
- Diverse conservation and restoration interventions
- Installation of the museum in the Barn and the construction of a new Visitor Support Centre
- Monument closes to the public on 18 November and due for reopening on 1 June 2020

_Sintra, 15 November 2019_ – The conservation, restoration and requalification project for the Convent of the Capuchos is now entering a new phase that shall see the simultaneous implementation of various large-scale interventions especially for the restoration of the roofing and external infrastructures. Thus far, the work has focused on circumscribed areas that displayed the worst states of conservation and enabling the site to remain open for visits in accordance with the “Open for Works” policy of the Parques de Sintra, which enables visitors to witness close-up the safeguarding and heritage preservation actions as they take place. However, given the architectonic characteristics of the Convent of the Capuchos, some of the intervention work ongoing through to Spring 2020, in particular the restoration of the roofing and the external infrastructures are incompatible with the opening of this monument to the public with the necessary safety and visit experience quality conditions. Thus, visits to the Convent of the Capuchos are suspended as from 18 November with their resumption planned for 1 June 2020.

Following the completion of this phase, visits shall resume and the subsequent actions shall take place in accordance with the “Open for Works” policy whenever this does not call into question the safety of visitors or workers. The application of this concept returns pedagogic benefits as it enables dialogue between the visitors and the technical staff involved and fosters a better understanding of the demands inherent to heritage conservation and the human and financial resources therein required.
Launched in 2013, the global conservation, restoration and requalification project for the Convent of the Capuchos, currently under execution, spans work to the entire built complex, its constituent and decorative features as well as enhancing the visit experience by endowing the monumental complex with new points of attraction. These are due for installation in existing constructions, for example in the Garden House that, among other functions, is to host the education service and with the Barn hosting a museum that shall place on permanent exhibition the pieces found during the archaeological digs that have taken place on this site as well as works from the collection hitherto held in reserve. In parallel, the project extends to beautifying the surrounding landscape and improving the infrastructures - including the installation of directional lighting along the paths – the water, wastewater, energy and communications networks alongside improvements to the car parking facilities. The works also contemplate the construction of a new Visitor Support Centre that is to house a ticket office, store and sanitation installations that provide a better standard of welcome to all visitors. This building shall, while an assumedly contemporary construction, incorporate features that ensure its appropriate integration into the surrounding environment, specifically the cork applied as an external finishing, the granite and the grey tones.

Through to the end of 2020, various interventions are to take place, in particular repairs to the roofing, conservation and restoration of the Guardian’s Cell and the installation of internal infrastructures throughout the Convent; the conservation and restoration of the Courtyard Fountain, the Chapel of Our Lord in Gethsemane, the Bread Oven, the Fresco House, the Garden Tank and the Pottery; improvements to the range of external infrastructures: network of paths and the car park; the installation of a museum in the Barn; the demolition of the buildings formerly housing the Visitor Support Centre and the re-greening of the corresponding area; the installation of a new Visitor Support Centre; the conservation and restoration of the Convent walls and their decorative finishings, the integrated and mobile heritage, the Chapels of Ecce Homo and of the Crucifixion, the walls and the remaining outdoor features.

In total, this project foresees investment in the region of four million euros. In order to undertake such a complex project, a multidisciplinary team was set up to define the global intervention strategy and establish a set of principles. These were determinant to
evaluating the multiple feasible solutions, with all options subject to the extensive multidisciplinary discussion that enabled the reaching of compromise solutions between the stability and security of the structures in which the preservation of the historical and material identity of this heritage always prevailed.

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About Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua
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 2018, 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 around 3.5 million visits, around 86% of whom were international in origin. In 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, 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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