

HEADQUARTERS OF THE PORTUGUESE NATIONAL BANK 2007-2013, Lisbon – Portugal

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Client Banco de Portugal

Engineering A2P. Estudos e Projectos (structures), Joule, Projectos, Estudos e Coordenação (electrical installations, security), José Galvão Teles, Engenheiros (mechanical installations), G.R. Estudos, Projectos e Consultoria (water), João Barrento da Costa (acoustics), Fernanda Fragateiro (artistic intervention), Arqueohoje (archeology), CaCo3, Conservação do Património Artístico (restoration)

Contractor HCI - Construções, S.A.

Photography Duarte Belo

The requalification of the headquarters of the Portuguese National Bank seeks to strengthen the political, institutional, representative and cultural centralities of the *Baixa Pombalina* in the city of Lisbon, reinforcing the heritage, memory and identity of this particular area, as also a stimulus to transformation, creativity and innovation.

The design is inspired by the architectonic and urban presence of the admirable *Pombalina* “factory”, built after the 1755 earthquake through a visionary idea by Marquis of *Pombal* and what had become one of the most notable examples of the European Age of Enlightenment. The block-building concept, integrating *S. Julião* church, is characterised by its unitary presence, a careful design and hierarchy in the facades’ scenography and a longitudinal open patio, allowing the connection and articulation of the whole block.

The opening of the building into the city, safeguarding the privacy and security inherent to the functioning of an institution of this kind, was the basis of the design along the desire to reveal and make available the magnificent spaces of the old church and its connection to the lobby of the block. The proportions and the sequence of empty spaces, like in an urban order, constitute the backbone of the whole building.

The extension of the public space (of the square *Praça do Município* and *S. Julião* church which is also a public space, functioning as a multipurpose cultural space, hosting exhibitions, conferences and other events), and its qualities of light, permeability and materiality, to the interior of the *Pombalino* block, through the spatial sequence of the church entrance, narthex, nave, main altar and axial connection to the hall, allows to structure the succession of spaces as well as to adhere the vertical circulations to this main longitudinal axis.

In a contemporary context of careful debate around rehabilitation and interventions in heritage buildings, this project tries to value the pre-existence by taking full advantage of the lioz stone as natural material, with its different shades and textures, and by assuming its scars as testimonies of the passage of time. Above all, it seeks to achieve harmony and a global balance, using the various techniques available, between conservation, repair, restoration, reconstruction and renovation.

In order to correct acoustically the spaces of the church and the museum, the artist Fernanda Fragateiro was invited to create a set of curtains in pure silk, gold and silver, that radiates light, warmth and lightness, in contrast to the opacity, weight and cold of the stone, where she painted by hand excerpts of the *Book of the Desassossego*, by Bernardo Soares (heteronym of Fernando Pessoa).

