

CONVERSION OF THE CITADEL OF CASCAIS INTO A CHARM HOTEL 2008-2012, Cascais – Portugal

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The Citadel of Cascais, a key element in the military strategy of the defense of the *Tejo* River bay in the vicinity of Lisbon, constitutes a fortified set, whose dimensions, content and interior morphology determine an embryo of an urban network, approaching it to an urban fabric of a city with an introvert development. Its configuration is the result of several construction campaigns over the almost four centuries of existence to fulfill the necessary and required conditions to a defensive structure, culminating in its abandonment and consequent degradation.

Transforming a fortress into a charm hotel implies accepting its conditions (especially when it comes to a monument classified as this), namely the visual segregation from the ocean that prevents the rooms of enjoying a visual relationship with it. Therefore, the conversion focused on enhancing the internal characteristics of the fortress, where one finds all the urban structuring elements of a city, and applying it in a wider operation of urban regeneration, through a careful recycling intervention that converts the primitive military use and adapts the architectural and spatial support to a civil and touristic use.

With morphological and organizational characteristics common to the fortresses of the time, the Citadel of Cascais presents a central square – the square of arms - delimited by four buildings, almost city blocks, according to a defined hierarchy. The building to the south of the square assumes itself as the hinge of the intervention, allowing, from the axis originating in the Gate of Arms (the main and only access to the interior of the citadel), to center the hotel in the space of the square and the citadel, ensuring a strong visibility consistent with the location of the entrance and reception of the hotel, on the ground floor and, on the first floor, of several rooms facing the square.

The reception is extended to a new wing, implanted in the area previously occupied by the military canteen (which was demolished, since it did not have patrimonial value), defining a distribution space to the other spaces of the hotel, through an interior courtyard of triple height, that also becomes the main common space. The new wing, lined with a corten steel grid, is intended to be austere and of unitary reading, seeking to annul itself within the ensemble and therefore enhancing the existing buildings.

Over the building, which was once the South Battery, is added a new body of rooms, extremely horizontal and low, in glass and with subtle metallic roofing, which designs a shadow cornice accentuating the fortress crenels within a gradual transition between the massive volume and the sky. Consequently, the rooms of this new body enjoy the magnificent view over the ocean, while the image of the fortress remains intact.

