

RECTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO 1992-1998, Aveiro – Portugal

Client University of Aveiro

Engineering BETAR, Estudos e Projectos de Estabilidade (structures), JOULE, Projectos, Estudos e Coordenação (electrics), José Galvão Teles (mechanics), Grade Ribeiro Estudos, Projectos e Consultadoria Lda (water, sewage), Marta Byrne (landscape)

Contractor Edifer

Photography Fernando Guerra FG+SG Photography

The University of Aveiro Campus is governed by a “General Plan of Urbanization of the Campus of Santiago” (PGUC) designed by Nuno Portas, where the rules of settlement, but also for other elements such as the materials, are clearly defined in order to safeguard, both at the level of the public space and the buildings themselves, a clear hierarchy of relationships and a unitary image. Its building process involved a considerable number of renowned architects (Vitor Figueiredo, Álvaro Siza, Eduardo Souto de Moura, Alcino Soutinho, Adalberto Dias, among others) designing a vast set of buildings that today constitute a unique architectural heritage, which led the University of Aveiro to create the “Open Museum of Contemporary Portuguese Architecture” and providing guided visits as well.

The new central building of the University - the Rectory – completes the long construction process of the Campus, representing its closure, both from the programmatic point of view, enclosing the institutional office of the Rector and the Classroom Hall, where the most important academic ceremonies are held, and from a spatial point of view, representing the center and point of convergence of the Campus as a whole.

Taking into account the PGUC, the Rectory building is located orthogonally to the Alameda in the hinge between it and the Central Square, reinforcing its centrality by defining the intersection of the two directions. This effect of rotation is accentuated by the roof which “hangs” over the angle of the building and extends over the entrance and the main atrium. In turn, the curved rooftop of the auditorium volume announces the Campus to those who arrive from outside and mark the main entrance of the building.

The interior reflects in its organization the microcosm resulting from the complex activities of the university community it welcomes, seeking to confer the contemporary expression of what has historically been, by way of example, the convent typology (used in buildings of this type). In this sense, the design follows a mixed typology, crossing the elongated block typology with the closed quadrangular typology, which allows, from a very simple and continuous distributive scheme, to articulate several spaces with different functions and characteristics.

The servant spaces (the monumental atrium, the “*impluvium*” atrium, the “street,” the corridors and the galleries, or even the raised garden on the roof) are understood as continuous extensions of the exterior space, transporting into the interior space the urban sense of an inner “micro-city”.

