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Can the architectural project offer new ways of interpreting, reading, and understanding heritage and the patrimonialization process?

What are the investigation tools and design actions useful for strengthening the relationships between heritage and context?

How can heritage sites best be valorized, while defining ways to sustainably use heritage and actions for its protection?

Starting from an idea of heritage seen as a *sense of time and a sense of place*, this book poses a hypothesis: that the perspective of the project, at architectural, urban and landscape scales, can be taken as an interpretative key through which to analyse potential and critical issues related to the tourist valorization of heritage.



Between Sense of Time and Sense of Place



Between Sense of Time and Sense of Place

edited by
Mauro Marzo
Viviana Ferrario
Viola Bertini



02

DESIGNING
HERITAGE
TOURISM
LANDSCAPES

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Designing
Heritage
Tourism
Landscapes

The series brings together a number of studies dedicated to the phenomenon of heritage tourism. A driving force for territorial regeneration processes and, at the same time, a factor in the alteration of the nature of places, this particular form of tourism represents a field of investigation for a vast number of disciplines. Open to dialogue with different fields of knowledge, the essays of the series present research focused on the relationship between heritage, landscape and architecture. In this framework, the analysis of contexts and the project's cross-scale perspective are assumed as lenses through which to read the potentialities and the critical issues related to the touristic use of material and immaterial assets. Can architectural design offer new ways of knowledge and interpretation of heritage? What are the analytical tools and the design methodologies useful for establishing a dialogue with that sense of past and sense of place proper to the concept of heritage itself? The series answers these questions by illustrating the results of research, teaching experimentations and design explorations which, in light of the complex problems posed by tourism, address the study of the relationship between architecture and the historical city, the transformation of landscapes, and the delicate balance between protection and the use of heritage.

Brazil, Rio de Janeiro from the Corcovado viewing platform, 1934. Fondazione Mazzotti photographic archive c/o FAST – Foto Archivio Storico Trevigiano della Provincia di Treviso

Designing Heritage Tourism Landscapes

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BETWEEN SENSE OF TIME AND SENSE OF PLACE

DESIGNING HERITAGE TOURISM

edited by

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Recycling to accommodate

Gonçalo Byrne: rhythmic of life

Elena Mucelli

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna

Built from the 1940s onward and evenly distributed throughout the country, Portugal's pousadas respond to the desire to guide the development of tourism by promoting a region's unique characteristics, protecting local cultures, and safeguarding the historical and artistic patrimony. A number of recent studies have outlined their history,¹ highlighting how the precise choice to reuse and enhance existing historical buildings since the 1950s has constituted a central strategy for revolutionising the nation's supply of tourist accommodations.

Initially small, welcoming, yet inexpensive hotels occupying buildings which evoked the diversity of local building traditions, Pousadas gradually evolved into increasingly exclusive dwellings. Following a break in the late 1950s, which revealed the influence of surveys conducted on the country's regional architecture, in the 70s Alcino Soutinho and Fernando Távora, as well as Eduardo Souto Moura, João Luís Carrilho da Graça, and Álvaro Siza, inaugurated an accelerating trend of entrusting the design of Pousadas to famed Portuguese architects.² A series of proposals and reflections emerged to address the restoration and reuse of historical buildings dedicated to hospitality purposes.

The experiences of Gonçalo Byrne follow this pattern. The *Pousadas de Portugal* company commissioned him to design a series of hotels within buildings of recognised national historical value. The present contribution analyses three of these: the Pousada Estoi in Faro (2003-2009), Pousada de Viseu (2005-2009), and Pousada de Cascais (2008-2012).

The three projects dealt with a common theme, both from an operational point of view and that of the relationship with pre-existing historical structures. Byrne defined them as *recycling* projects, adopting a term that recentres the problem of transforming and reusing historical buildings on the architecture's typological dimension, and not merely its material consistency. *Recycling*, for Byrne, means restoring life to something that has lost its original use over time, transforming into inert matter; the only way to accomplish this operation is working on type through the exercise of design.³⁻

The very different contexts of the three projects, however, call for a comparative reflection on how to transform local heritage from a tourism perspective, beginning with the promotion of the relationship between architecture and space.

Gonçalo Byrne defined the Pousada Estoi, in Faro, as a *landscape project*. In this case, architecture is the pretext for constructing a landscape that reinterprets existing gardens. The site includes Estoi Palace and a set of buildings and open spaces linked to the palace and agricultural activities historically carried out on the property. The architect studied the site's evolution attentively. Gardens, vegetable plots, and orchards shaped a landscape with a complex system of terraces, furrowed by a dense network of irrigating waterways. The complex dates to the late Baroque period at the end of the 18th century. He focused on the succession of phases that had led to the site's current state, highlighting the significant elements shaping its character. Byrne's project interpreted the palace as the cornerstone of the composition and the topographical nature of the open spaces as a spatial theme, integrating 19th century additions such as the bell tower and

garden statues. He proposed restoring the palace, stables, and gardens, on the one hand; and on the other, erecting a new building to meet the project's functional requirements. The new structures house the reception area opening into the palace, marked by a belltower, spa with outdoor pool, and guestrooms. They are located within a system of terraces on three levels, which integrates into the contours of the land, silently blending into the landscape. The green roofs create a contemporary garden that aims to merge with the historical one without challenging the palace's centrality. The project's objectives were to create a guesthouse according to the highest standards and, at the same time, exalt the union of new and pre-existing buildings, paying homage to the complexity and richness of the open spaces. Rather than spotlighting any single element, the project approached the landscape with discretion.

The Pousada de Viseu project formed part of the urban redevelopment of a neglected area of the city to the south of the historical centre. The *recycling* of the former San Teotónio hospital into a hotel would revitalise the surrounding area, it was hoped. The 19th century hospital had a clear layout consisting of a central courtyard, stone staircase, and thick load-bearing walls. Recognising how easily the building could be adapted to its new function, the project simply added a vertical passage to each corner of the courtyard. The blueprints adopted the architectural elements of the façade. In addition to guestrooms, the building houses spa and service areas. The original pitched roof was substituted by a new floor of guestrooms with balconies. The central courtyard was covered and transformed into a large hall that accommodates the hotel's social functions: the reception area, bar, restaurant, lounge, toilets, and multipurpose rooms.

The last project, Pousada de Cascais, required Byrne to transform a military citadel into a hotel. The system of fortifications was integrated into the city, along the coastline; yet its defensive function meant that the side facing the sea was shielded and windowless, in a decidedly inward-looking organisation of space. Once more, the architect faced the challenge of exploring the transformations the complex had undergone since its erection: repurposed multiple times until finally falling into the state of abandon he observed. The project sought to regenerate the citadel, recovering, redeveloping, and enhancing the existing construction while building a new one that would integrate into the site without masking its own contemporary dimension. All the citadel's elements – the buildings, central square, entrances, paths, and open spaces – were reinterpreted, their roles and hierarchies redefined to create a new order. The newly constructed buildings were designed as neutral elements. Their dry volume recognises the fortress's austere character, supporting it with a display of uniform materiality capable of dialoguing with the military architecture they lay adjacent to.

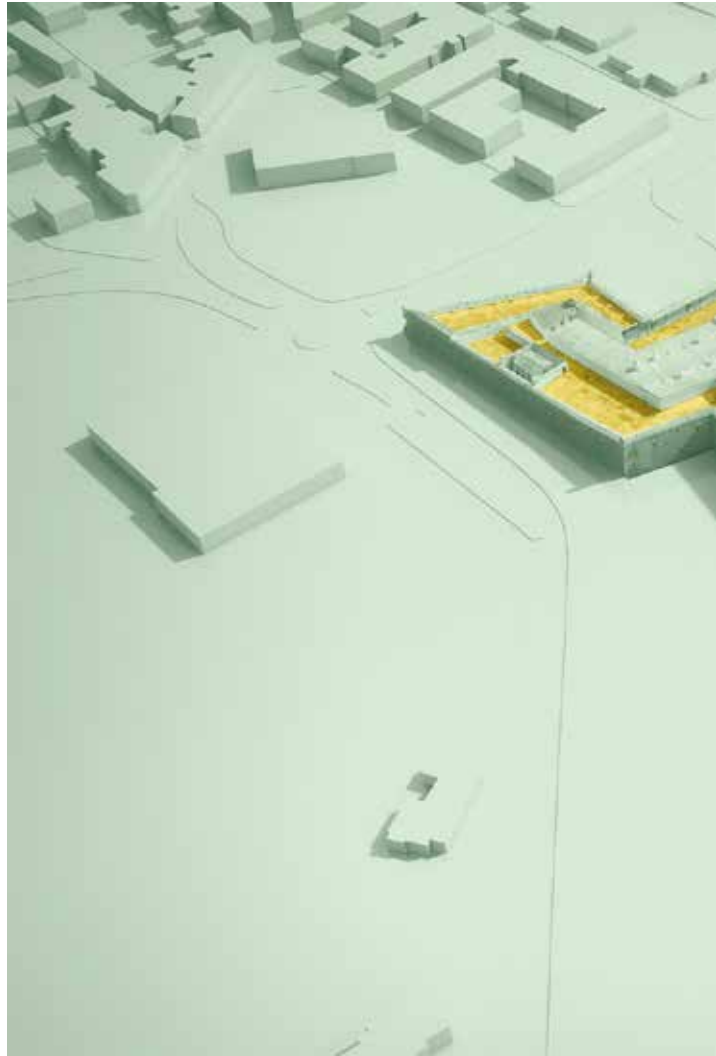
A comparison of the three projects evidences how the architect adopted an identical approach to Faro, Viseu, and Cascais. Byrne's design process is first and foremost a cognitive one, rooted in historical research on how buildings and places evolve across times. The transformation of the extant, in this case, is not interpreted as limiting what has been created, but rather as a stimulus recasting the project



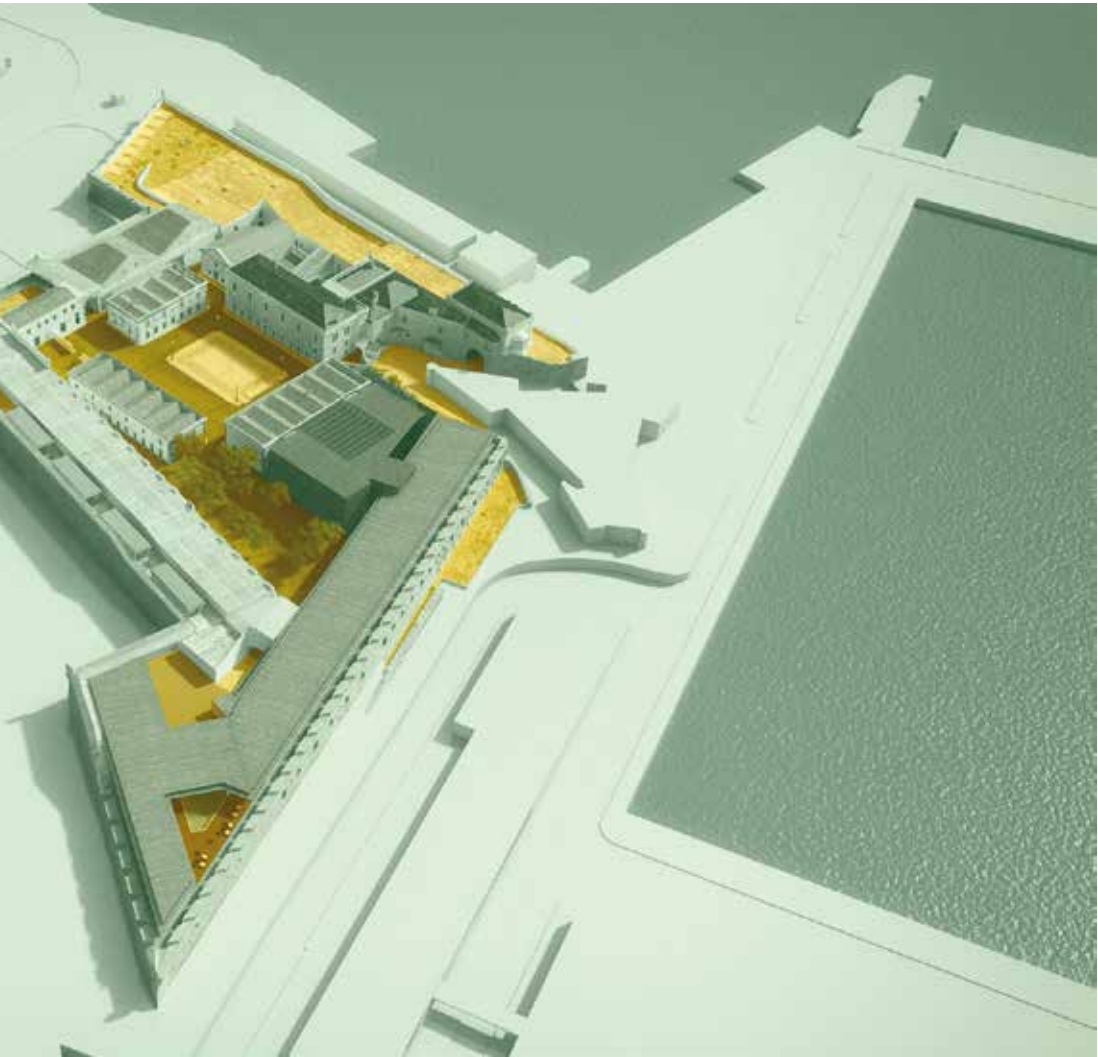
Above: Gonçalo Byrne, *Estoi Palace Pousada*, Faro 2003-2009. © graphics by Elena Mucelli.

Below: Gonçalo Byrne, *Pousada at Viseu*, Viseu 2005-200. © graphics by Elena Mucelli.

Gonçalo Byrne,
Pousada at Cascais,
Cascais 2008-2012.
© graphics by Elena
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as one of discovery. Knowledge of the object gives rise to the definition of solutions that respond to both the specific situation and the functional program to be implemented. His emphasis on the evolutionary mechanisms of architecture and, more generally, of places, thus expresses the need to focus on their peculiarities; in the case of recovery and *refunctionalisation* projects, he focuses on understanding why and how pre-existing structures have exhausted their life cycle, as defined by the premises and conditions that contributed to their construction and existence. The comparison of this cognitive heritage with the set of uses and functions that these places and structures must satisfy at present and in the future generates a diversity of solutions that recognises the role of absolute centrality the existing must retain when the project is defined. In light of this process, the project loses any ambition of immortality; it operates in a transitory dimension, as yet another transformation to be metabolised by the building during its long existence.



The ability to apply this knowledge and understand which transformations the structures, and space in general, can undergo without losing their identity is fundamental.⁴

The three projects under consideration display three quite different levels of adaptability. Originally a hospital, transformed several times over, the Viseu building demonstrated a high degree of adaptability to new design functions. The pre-existing Estoi Palace in Faro, while imposing the need to integrate existing spaces in order to respond quantitatively to the defined program, was also easily transformed. This did not hold true for the Cascais citadel, however; the rigidly introverted layout, arising from defensive needs, placed severe restrictions on the spatial relations that normally accompany a destination housing tourists.

As Byrne observed, transforming a fortress into a pousada was *atrocious violence*: assigning an inherently inward-oriented organism a purpose that instead calls for

openness to the surrounding countryside. Given the citadel's seafront location, only an *extreme* solution was possible, one interpreting the residence as a *spread-out hotel* and constructing an urban fabric that, within the powerful defensive walls, created a new communal living space overlooked by most of the rooms. Only on a single horizontal level can the sea be glimpsed beyond the battlements.⁵ What Byrne defined as something of a distortion at Cascais allows us, however, to highlight an important commonality of the three designs. Reading the reports that accompanied the three projects, one notes – in addition to the aforementioned issues of evolution, transformation, and programs – Byrne's focus on open space, empty space, as a place of representation. He recognised its absolute centrality, its value in forging identity. Space is an 'element ordering the connection between man and place',⁶ making the manifestation of life possible, while architecture constitutes its setting: action and construction collaborate in constructing a synthesis with social value. The concern for defining voids thus supersedes that for full spaces.

In Cascais, the composition of parts aims to design the space of the square as a central place, interpreting it as a great welcoming theatre where it is possible to *see and be seen*. In Faro, the project's volume literally dissolves, leaving space to the baroque rhythmic of a spatial composition that, though reaffirming the centrality of the historical building, dissolves into the Algarve landscape. The dynamic of seeing and being seen is also essential to Viseu. The project takes advantage of the building's visual connection with the urban topography's major elements, made possible by its elevated position. The arrangement of the inner courtyard, converted into a covered great hall, finds a new spatial dynamic in which space is once more affirmed as a container for life. The corridors, rooms, stairways, balconies – every space overlooking the large house's central emptiness – collaborate to construct the *social rhythmic* that Francesco Dal Co, evoking Peter Szondi, attributes to Byrne's work.⁷ Rhythmic reveal the ability of architecture, with its porousness and openness to transformation, to appear as a living space: as well as the architect's task of modifying it to guarantee its survival and bring it back to life.

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Notes

1. S. Lobo, 'Pousadas de Portugal: um projecto moderno', in *Arquitectura moderna e turismo: 1925-1965*, Fundação DO.CO.MO.MO. Ibérico, IV congresso, Valencia, 2003, pp. 91-96.
2. From the 1970s on, ENATUR (Empresa Nacional de Turismo) oversaw the construction of Pousadas. ENATUR was created in 1976 and privatised in 2003, transforming into the Pestana Group.
3. D.A. Nogueira Santos, *Pousada de Viseu. Metamorfose e reciclagem de uma memória*, Master's Course in Architecture, Department of Architecture, Department of Sciences and Technology, University of Coimbra, 2012, pp. 153-159.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. 177-181.
6. C. Alho, 'Das geografias vivas à "arquitectura dialogante" na cidade', *Archinews*, no. 11, 2009, p. 2.
7. F. Dal Co, 'Conservare, progettare e "la ritmica della vita"', *Casabella*, no. 798, 2011, pp. 38-39.