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Title: 10 years of restoration of Park of Pena – Sintra

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Abstract

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The King consort Ferdinand II carried out a radical change of the Sintra landscape, listed by UNESCO, since 1995, as a World Heritage Site in the cultural landscape category. From 1839 the Pena Park, with 85 hectares, was built out of the ruins and grounds of a 16th century Hieronymite monastery. The scenographic dimension of this eclectic creation, from the Romanticism period, turned this area into a theme park of history and architecture, created as a total work of art (Gesamtkunstwerk), resulting in a place where visitors are frequently surprised to find themselves amid a scenery so intensely luxuriant and dramatic as to be worthy of a Wagnerian Opera.

Since 2007 the company Parques de Sintra¹, has developed systematic studies, projects and actions leading to the restoration of the Park.

- 15 standard pages maximum (1 800 characters, including spaces / page, i.e. 27 000 characters (with spaces) altogether.

Documents have to be readable in the MS Word. (preferably formats .doc, .rtf)

Fernando Augusto Francisco Kohary of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1816-1885) became the king-consort Ferdinand II of Portugal after marrying Queen Maria II of Portugal in 1836. The monarch was born in Vienna, Austria, on 29 October 1816, as the first son of Duke Fernando Jorge Augusto (1785-1851) and Princess Antoinette Gabrielle, Princess of Kohary (1797-1862).

He was a patron of the arts, a keen painter, drawer and musician, who became known popularly as the Artist-King, having begun his production of engravings at the age of

¹ Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, S.A. (PSML) is a state-owned company, established in 2000, following UNESCO's recognition of the Cultural Landscape of Sintra as a World Heritage site in 1995. The company's shareholders are the public institutions responsible for preserving and managing the region's natural and cultural heritage. PSML has been entrusted with responsibility for the management of the state properties in the area, in order to restore, maintain and promote them, keeping them open for public fruition. The Company is thus responsible for the management of the Park and Palace of Pena and the Chalet of the Countess of Edla, the Park and Palace of Monserrate, the Gardens and Palace of Queluz, the National Palace of Sintra, the Moorish Castle, the Capuchos Convent and Vila Sassetti among many other properties, covering a total area of 660 hectares of gardens and forests.

nineteen, and extending his work to modelling, drawing and painting. His taste as a collector reveals an eclectic tendency that can be identified with Romanticism.

In 1838, the king consort bought the abandoned Hieronymite monastery of Pena, transformed it and built a new palace. After he had successively acquired several neighbouring properties, the convent's original estate became a part of the 85 hectares of the Park of Pena. All together, the Park and Palace of Pena became a new royal residence.



Figure 1 – Layraud J.F. (1877). *King Ferdinand II*. Oil on canvas, 2300x1355mm, from the National Pena Palace collection.



Figure 2 - Clémentine Brélaz (1840). *The Monastery of Pena*, Painting from the Pena Palace collection.



Figure 3 – Parques de Sintra (2017). View of the Palace of Pena seen from the High Cross.

The changes that he planned into the original landscape of Sintra reminded Ferdinand II of his homeland and the Park and Palace of Pena became the object of the monarch's close attention. After the queen's death in 1853, Ferdinand II met Elise Hensler, in 1861, when she was performing the role of Oscar in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Royal Opera House in Lisbon, thus beginning a new chapter in his life.

Elise Hensler, born in Neuchâtel (Switzerland), had lived since her childhood in Boston (USA) and married the king in 1869, bestowed with the title of the Countess of Edla by King Ferdinand's cousin, the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Ernest II. Together, they continued the work of landscaping the Park of Pena, which included the building of a chalet for the Countess, together with new gardens, the Ornamental Farm, the Farm Greenhouses and the Tea Hill.



Figure 4 - Parques de Sintra (2017). Chalet of the Countess of Edla.

The Park was landscaped from 1839 onwards, with the addition of extensive water supplying systems and water features, such as canals, cascades, ponds, lakes and fountains, embellished by Neoclassical, Neo-Gothic, Islamic and Romantic pavilions and small garden buildings: Temple of the Columns, Fountain of the Small Birds, Water-wheel, Manueline Chapel, the Monk's Grotto, among others; farm buildings: barn, aviary, and small huts and animal sheds; greenhouses and many other ornamental features, such as bridges and pergolas. The locations of these garden structures were defined by a complex visual system organised around a series of different axes.

The link between constructed architecture and landscape architecture was an unexpected coherent feature of this great project. The project included a desire to return to nature and enhance the surroundings of the Palace of Pena through the systematic planting of a wide variety of species, originating from all kinds of different terrains and imported from all over the world. In this sense, the Camellia and Fern collections are particularly notable.

The landscape works in the park continued practically uninterrupted until the mid-1870s and dramatically transformed the landscape of the Sintra hills from their original barren and rocky state into a completely different reality.



Figure 5 - Parques de Sintra (2017). Valley of lakes.

Although the design of the Park of Pena was inspired by many contemporary influences, most of the plantations and numerous garden structures appear to have benefited from the contribution of Baron von Eschwege, a great geologist, geographer, architect and metallurgist with profound knowledge in fields like hydrology, botany, gardening, farming and forestry. Eschwege became in 1802, at the young age of 25, 'Director of Mines' in Lisbon.

It is also believed that the gardens were laid out with the assistance of his French gardener Jean-Baptiste Désiré Bonnard and Wenceslau Cifka, who, as well as being an artist and an

amateur photographer, had the necessary professional skills, since he had been the chief administrator of the forests of the German Reichstadt before settling in Portugal. The scenographic dimension of this creation and the eclecticism of the different styles that were used have turned this area into a theme park of history and architecture. The Park of Pena was created as a total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), resulting in a place where visitors are frequently surprised to find themselves amid a scenery so intensely luxuriant and dramatic as to be worthy of a Wagnerian Opera.

Following the death of the King Ferdinand II in 1885, the Palace and Park of Pena are left in his will to the Countess of Edla. In 1890, after a judicial process, the Countess agrees to the sale of the Palace and Park of Pena to the state and receiving the lifelong right to reside in and benefit from the Chalet and Garden (which she rescinds in 1904).

As a consequence of the regicide of King Carlos I and the Royal Prince Luís Filipe, on the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon on 1st February 1908, and the declaration of the Republic, the royal family departs for exile with King Manuel II thus becoming the last king to reside in Pena in 1910.

In 1911, The National Palace of Pena opened to the public as a museum, being managed by the Portuguese National Museums.

Until 2000, the palace and the park around it, were managed by two different entities: the palace was detained by IGESPAR (Portuguese Institute for the Management of the Archeological and Architectonic Heritage, before known as National Museums), and, the Park was managed by ICN, the Portuguese Institute for Nature Conservation (the former National Forests). These institutions had different management goals, and led to an ineffective conservation and safeguard of the site.

At that time, the visitable area was mostly the route between the actual main entrance of the park and palace, representing less than 10% of the total area. From 1911, the park and gardens were managed as a nature reserve and all the built structures were highly neglected.

As mentioned, in 2000, Parques de Sintra was created with the intention to assemble management decisions with a singular vision. During that period, the Park of Pena management was assigned to our Company. Through time, the visitable area started to expand until we had 100% of the Park opened to the public in 2017.

To achieve those results, since 2007 Parques de Sintra has developed systematic studies, projects and activities dovetailing the implementation of the Recovery Plan of the Park of Pena, elaborated in 1995. It was fundamental an approved application for EEA Grants funds in 2008, that allowed to start the restoration project of one of the most neglected areas of the park: the Chalet and Garden of the Countess of Edla (from 2008 until 2012) and the Ornamental Farm (from 2009 until 2013).

During this challenging project, was identified a lack of information about the diversity and value of the park's botanical collection, and was developed a botanical survey based in a GIS system resulting in the identification of more than 35.000 trees.

Simultaneously, was developed the study of the neglected complex water supplying system (excavated mines, canals, aqueducts and lead pipes) for watering purposes and animate the decorative water features, always based on historical research (historic cartography, iconography, photography and bibliography) and archeological surveys.

In 2007 was initiated the recovery of the original structure of paths on the park. As a source of data, was fundamental the backup of historical cartography, being used to identify the original layout of the paths, followed by the confirmation in site of its existence. The original

layout of the paths turned very complex and it wasn't necessary the addition of any new paths, being always used traditional techniques to restore its original pavements, which in many cases were covered with asphalt during the 1950s and 1960s.



Figure 6 - Parques de Sintra (2011). Aspect of the paths network in the Queen's Fern Valley at Park of Pena, before the restauration.



Figure 7 - Parques de Sintra (2014). Aspect of the paths network in the Queen's Fern Valley at Park of Pena, after the restauration.

Specific garden areas were identified and ranked by risk of losing patrimonial value, and projects were sequentially developed and implemented for the following areas: The Camellia Garden (in 2013), the Queen's Fern Valley (in 2014), the Valley of the Lakes (in 2015), The

Farm Greenhouses (in 2015), The Hill of the High Cross (in 2015), the English Garden (in 2016), the Tea Hill (an ongoing project since 2016).



Figure 8 - Parques de Sintra (2013). Aspect of the Camellia Garden at Park of Pena, before the restauration.



Figure 9 - Parques de Sintra (2015). A view to the Duck's house at Valley of the Lakes, Park of Pena, after the restauration.



Figure 10 - Parques de Sintra (2015). The view to Palace of Pena from of the High Cross.

As the park became entirely available for the delight of visitors, considering the access to arts and culture a right for all citizens, regardless of their characteristics and capacities, Parques de Sintra deemed turning the Cultural and Natural Heritage of the properties under its management, into inclusive access a fundamental priority. It was developed the evaluation of the accessibility conditions and was changed the Cultural Heritage assets under its management into more inclusive facilities. That involved the creation of several action plans for people with special needs, which lead to the implementation of the “Parques de Sintra Welcome Better” project, being executed in site from 2012, including orientation and directional signage, adapted vehicles circulating inside the park.



Figure 11 - Parques de Sintra (2016). Help Point for visitors of the park.



Figure 12 - Parques de Sintra (2016). Directional signage.



Figure 13 - Parques de Sintra (2016). HOP ON HOP OFF service.



Figure 14 - Parques de Sintra (2016). Device for wheelchair.

Following a violent storm that hit Sintra in the 19th of January 2013 the existing conditions have changed dramatically. The once very dense arboreal crown has opened up due to the fact that many trees either fell during the storm or were felled for safety reasons thereafter.



Figure 15 – Parques de Sintra (2013). After the storm.

Even do, the storm had some good consequences. Some of the most iconic views in the park, were lost in time due with the growing of the vegetation and trees. A lot of trees fell down, including some of those that were blocking the views. Henceforward, by removing the fallen trees some of the most iconic views inside the park to the palace and the view to the shorelines of Cascais and Sintra, were restored. During the past 10 years, Parques de Sintra has been accomplished the key goals defined by the Recovery Plan of the Park of Pena (1995), however there are some fundamental challenges to accomplish in the near future, such as:

- Develop a visitation management method looking forward to the compatibility with the growing of the Sintra's tourism, which in recent years has raise exponentially

- Stabilization of our financial sustainability, allowing us to continue with our labor and management model
- Invest on the excellence of our work, including give to our staff advanced training
- Stating our mission with the development of new action plans for all citizens.
- After years of great investment in restauration and conservation projects is it necessary to invest in the future in maintenance of the accomplished works.

Literature cited

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