

BASSADONE HQ

GIBRALTAR, UK

2021–2016

Headquarters and showroom
for the large automobile dealership
in Gibraltar

Bassadone Auto World (BAW) is one of Gibraltar's major companies. Operating in an increasingly multinational environment, the group represents major automotive brands, and is specialised in the transformation of special vehicles for the UN and other humanitarian operations.

The site, strongly influenced by the military presence of the British Ministry of Defence, is located at the southern tip of Gibraltar in the historical dockyards, with direct access to the wharf and thus facilitating vehicle-shipping operations. BAW group acquired three buildings from the Government of Gibraltar to relocate its companies. Of this ensemble, two buildings are of historical worth and were renovated accordingly, the third being replaced by a new construction to become the aforementioned company's headquarters.

Given the relevant heritage value of the two dockyard buildings, the proposed intervention

is based on the preservation of the built heritage through its renovation and conversion to new uses. The refurbishment extends to both the exterior and interior. Inside, the design concept includes exposing the impressive mechanical overhead cranes, catwalks and gangways, as well as the elegant steel trusses.

In terms of language and materials, the new office building aims to create a bridge between the past and the present. The post-and-lintel system, inlaid in stucco, is subliminally evocative of the austere stereotomy of the adjacent 18th-century bastion in white stone masonry, as well as of the modular character of the warehouse façades. The lustre of these light lintels on the upper floors contrasts with the anthracite GRC elements that form the ground-floor superstructure. Visually, a powerful podium bears a lighter structure, while formalising the connection to the ground's grey asphalt. The landscape architecture of the project is part of a wider vision to regenerate this area of the peninsula. The simplicity of the design is key to turning this once secluded and restricted area into a welcoming public space. Pavements and planters frame the presence of the buildings, while organising the green areas, pedestrian walkways, car parking and circulation.

Location: Queensway Road, Gibraltar, UK (British Overseas Territory)

Client: Bassadone Auto World

Scope of services: Architecture, interior design and landscape architecture

Project brief: Main offices, showroom and car workshops

Gross floor area: 14,780 sq. m (3,300 sq. m office building, 11,480 sq. m renovated warehouses)

Project status: 2016 (concept design) – 2021 (built)

Photography: Promontorio