

BONJARDIM – CITY CENTER LIVING

PORTO (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE), PORTUGAL

2025–2017

Mixed-use residential,  
hospitality and retail in a perimeter block  
in the heart of Porto

Located in the historical heart of Porto, the plot consists of a large perimeter block, neighbouring the city hall and Avenida dos Aliados, Mercado do Bolhão, Praça Dom João I, and the busy Sá da Bandeira and Santa Catarina streets. An allotment plan was approved by Porto's city planning department, which established clear urban parameters and design guidelines, as well as defining a mixed-use programme comprising hospitality, retail, residential and a three-level underground parking area for both private and public use. Other mandatory requirements included the preservation of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century façades on Sá da Bandeira and Formosa streets, as well as public passages through the block's courtyard.

The ensemble forms a jagged perimeter block that, with a series of setbacks, encircles the back courtyard of Palácio Atlântico, a 1940's modernist building that dominates Dom João I square. In order to coalesce this disparate set of buildings, languages, programmes and topography into a cohesive whole, the key concept was to devise the courtyard as a centre stage set on two levels, corresponding to the different street heights. With four distinct entry points, this space fosters truly permeable pedestrian flows, bringing people across from the Bolhão fresh-food market and into the Rivoli theatre, before ultimately descending towards São Bento railway station. One of these passages reconstitutes the historical alleyway of Formosa, connecting Sá da Bandeira and Formosa streets. With the ground-floor retail mostly earmarked for restaurants and cafes, with double frontages to both the street and courtyard, and with the upper floors occupied by residents, students and hotel guests, the project ensures the desired balanced occupancy.

Architecturally, the different buildings are unified by a façade system of steel panels in a red-rust pigment evocative of Porto's 19<sup>th</sup>-century cast-iron tradition. This material/colour system extends to embrace multiple aspects: both the attic floors of the historical façades; the mandatory curved volume on the junction between Bonjardim and Praça Dom João I, where it is devised in a zigzag pattern of curved glazing; and the courtyard, where it generates a system of continuous balconies, similarly in the spirit of cast-iron architecture.

Within the consolidated context of both the Rua Bonjardim and Travessa of Bonjardim, the façade composition has been devised in *portes-fenêtres* inspired by the scale of Porto's baroque geometry, introducing *azulejo* tiles of different sizes and textures framed in light grey GRC panels that blend with the surrounding granite façades. In order to break the compositional scale down, the setback floors are also clad in the same red-rust steel panels.



Location: Rua do Bonjardim, Porto, Portugal

Client: Avenue/TSH (The Student Hotel)

Scope of services: Architecture and landscape architecture

Project brief: Mixed-use with housing, retail, hotel/student housing and public parking

Gross floor area: 28,000 sq. m (plus 19,480 sq. m underground parking)

Construction cost: EUR 36m (estimated)

Project status: 2017 (concept design) – 2025 (built)

Rendering: 4+Arquitectos

Photography: João Morgado

