

HOTEL LUX FAIAL

HORTA, AZORES, PORTUGAL

2021-2020

The project comprises the renovation of the former Convento do Carmo in the city of Horta, in the Azorean island of Faial into a 5-star hotel with 95 guestrooms and suites. The latter dates back to the 17th-century, being the first venture of the Carmelite Order outside Portuguese mainland. It started with a small chapel built in 1639, as a bequest of Captain Francisco Gil da Silveira. Later, in 1678, the building was enlarged to become a convent and house a permanent community of friars. The church, however, only began two decades later. With the extinction of the religious orders in 1834 and the State's subsequent impounding of their property, the building was converted into army barracks, remaining as such until 2008. The 1926 earthquake damaged severely the original building in Largo do Carmo, eventually rebuilt by the military in the 20th-century. At present, the L-shaped *loggia*, together with the ground floor vaulted rooms, are the only significant elements that remain of the old convent.

The L-shaped terrain of the convent and adjacent land is steep and East facing, with commanding views of Horta's bay and the scenic skyline of Pico island across the sea. As a consequence, the new buildings are positioned in parallel to the slope. Despite some excavation to accommodate service areas, the design respects as much as possible the terrain's natural profile, with the new volumes carefully imbedded in the topography. In essence, the ensemble is comprised by three different parts, namely: (a) the old U-shaped barracks and convent *loggia*; (b) the common services, technical and parking; and (c) the U-shaped new wing.

The barracks and the *loggia*, forming the historical nucleus, are renovated to accommodate the entrance lobby, the meeting rooms and rooftop bar, besides guestrooms and suites. The cloister is partially reconfigured in exposed concrete arches that in a sort of 'soft' reconstruction, suggest how its original form might have been. Similarly, the army barracks are reconstructed with an attic of traditional dormer windows, known in the island as "*torrinhas*".

The common area is a 2-storey volume imbedded in the topography, with parking, loading dock and kitchens and mechanical rooms below, and all-day dining, function centre, meeting rooms and a covered terrace above. In addition, the Spa and indoor pool are tucked away in the back and are accessible to all rooms through an elevator and stairs excavated deep in the topography. On the 3rd-floor, a garden serviced by bar uses the roof of the function centre as a panoramic and relaxation area. Above this floor, a U-shaped guestroom wing rises 3-storey, culminating on the 6th-floor with a rooftop indoor-outdoor pool and garden. The façade of the new volumes is formed by deep verandas clad in an anthracite tinted precast concrete and volcanic basalt stone of the region.

Location: Horta (Faial island), Azores, Portugal

Client: Lux Mundi Hotels SA

Scope of Services: Architecture, interior design and landscape architecture

Project Brief: Renovation of a 17th-century convent into high-end hotel and Spa

Plot Area: 6,860 sq. m

Gross Floor Area: 10,550 sq. m

Landscape: 4,600 sq. m

Parking: 568 sq. m

Project Status: 2019 (concept design) – 2021