

LX FACTORY PLOT 10

LISBON RIVERFRONT, PORTUGAL

2023

The site for the office building is a waterfront plot perpendicular to Tejo's riverbank and adjacent to the bridge. It is part of Lisbon's celebrated LX FACTORY complex, a 19th-century former industrial facility that has been renovated and devised as a creative hub, leasing space to a wide range of start-up companies of fashion and lifestyle, advertising, gastronomy, communications, multimedia, art, architecture, music, etc.

The design competition compelled us to reflect on the role of the office space in post-pandemic times and the deep impact it had on services, namely the acceleration of remote working, with companies now struggling to bring back employees to their headquarters. To compete against the quality of life granted by remote work, the future office space needs a level of fluidity and conviviality very different from the past. While there are still professions that require a certain privacy in the workspace, — lawyers, for example —, in most cases, the culture of WFH (Work-From-Home) and its relaxed informality, compelled the new office layout and its amenities to match, if not supersede it. Another strong signal from the pandemic was the value that everyone places on access to outdoor spaces in the workplace. The idea of being able to open a window and breathe outside the HVAC environment is treasured by employees. Another key issue is energy efficiency. While fully glassed expansive views are highly valued, they cannot come at the expense of excessive sun exposure or inimical hyper-reflective glass.

Based on these premises, we aimed to create a building that was equally sustainable and humane, both for its daily users and for the community as a whole. Moreover, we sought to design a new urban structure that was not only elegant and iconic, but integral to the ethos of the LX FACTORY. Thus, the 7-storey volume is sheltered on its 3 sides from direct sun exposure (south, east and west) by a system of *brise-soleils* in micro-perforated steel sheets, substantially and passively reducing thermal gains. Metal grating balconies on these same sides allow users access to outside in a controlled way. In the latter, large plant pots with automatic irrigation enliven the façade and the views from the inside. On the rooftop, in the spirit LX FACTORY's DNA, we propose a destination bar/restaurant with a large pergola fully covered by photovoltaic panels which simultaneously serves as shading for the terrace.

Notwithstanding the concrete column-and-slab system of the structure, — with the parking basement ingeniously ramped to maximize the number of spaces —, the metal façade, painted in mate light green, is evocative of the so-called cast-iron architecture which was dominant in 19th- and early 20th-century industrial facilities, while echoing a visual connection with the nearby steel bridge. Last but not least, working together with the English conceptual artists Paul Harrison and John Wood, we devised an art project that is integral to the building. The artists, whose use of humour and language, is their *modus operandi*, created a series of perplexing phrases that are both funny and sophisticated, with the letters welded onto the *brise-soleils*, thereby reinforcing the youthful and cheerful spirit of LX FACTORY.

Location: Lisbon riverfront, Portugal

Client: Krep Portugal – Sicafi, SA

Scope of Services: Architecture, landscape architecture and coordination

Project Brief: Office building and retail

Plot Area: 2,155 sq. m

Gross Floor Area: 10,800 sq.m (plus 8,600 sq. m basement parking)

Project Status: 2023 (shortlist competition, 2nd-prize)