

Fogo Island Natural Park Head Quarters - oto arquitectos

Project Team: **André Castro Santos, Miguel Ribeiro de Carvalho, Nuno Teixeira Martins, Ricardo Barbosa Vicente** Area: **3200.0 sqm** Year: **2013** Specialties: **Arq. Jorge Graça Costa | Eng. Amado Alves | Eng. Maria João Rodrigues + Eng. João Parente | Prosirtec | Matriz Engenharia** Contractor: **Armando Cunha** Client: **Ministry of Agriculture** Financier: **KFW | General coordination, GOPA**

Photographs: **FG+SG – Fernando Guerra, Sergio Guerra**

Project Description

On Fogo island at an altitude of 1800 meters, amidst the crater of the volcano, lies a village of about 1200 inhabitants which live on the fringes of legality, occupying State owned land where agricultural activities are organized and carried out, as a means of subsistence, in one of Cape Verde's poorest regions. The status of protected area of national interest forced the zoning of farming, with obvious limitations to construction, and introduced rules against the free occupation of the town, generating collisions of interests with frequent clashes. The outlines for the project therefore rise from the need to consolidate the identity of this protected region, providing a basis for the conciliation of the population with the new park management. Spaces for cultural and recreational interplay were thought of a feasible solution, both for the people of Chã das Caldeiras, as well as for visitors. The natural landscape, strikingly marked by the volcano and its crater, possesses a unique and rare beauty, aspiring to become a world heritage site. The idea was therefore to achieve a balanced solution, where architecture and landscape become accomplices, complementary to each other. The mass of the building is constituted of a continuous skin, composed of local black masonry block - a mixture of cement and ashes from the volcano. During daytime, the long walls outline the building and blend with the road, suggesting the existence of spaces through an interplay of shadows. At night, bright light is avoided as a means to protect native birds. To address the inexistence of any previous infrastructure, the building was thought of as a self-sufficient unit: solar panels and a double water grid system ensure that the buildings' energetic needs are fulfilled throughout the year. The building is divided into two main zones: a Cultural zone, composed of a covered auditorium, an open-air auditorium, library and terrace-caffè, and an Administrative zone, which comprises meeting rooms, offices, laboratory and technical areas.

With the Headquarter fully operational, the Natural Park is increasingly valued, which contributes to enrich the social, cultural and economic sectors of the island, starting to integrate and enhance in a harmonious way the surrounding space. The head office is to be felt as *nôs cása* in the land of Djarfogo“.