

Restoration of sortita Santa Croce inside the ancient fortification

Lucca , Italy

The project encompasses three bastions of the five hundred year old fortification of the city of Lucca. The parts targeted by the project are three gates, or rather, the underground spaces hidden in the embankments of the bastions. The design was developed in successive steps between 2013 and 2014. The operation is part of the redevelopment process of the walls implemented on the 500th anniversary of their construction. The areas were in an advanced state of decay. One of them (sortita Santa Croce) having never been open for use in the modern era was particularly degraded with mould on the walls and with vast areas of it flooded. The restoration aims to:

1. salvage the ancient walls,
2. provide the technological equipment and lighting so that the underground spaces can be used for temporary exhibitions and other activities,
3. renew the architecture so that it enables the underground spaces to provide everyday access to the old city,
4. enhancement of the archaeological remains.

The work started by carrying out a careful survey, using laser scanner technology, since a complete documentation of the gates didn't exist . In parallel, a thorough analysis of degradation was carried out in order to identify the restoration tasks most suitable for the conservation of this monumental historical treasure. The architectural elements introduced by the project are made of weathering steel, upon whose use the whole restoration is structured: self-contained elements that stand out against the background of the historical masonry as contemporary objects but still in full respect of their previous historical life. In this project no new element is created or added. Everything is removable and changeable, and what is more, thanks to the features of weathering steel, surfaces of the new elements will change due to the exposure to humid conditions of the surroundings and so will the way they look over time, thus making them integrate gradually with the historical parts and becoming part of them.

Credits

Client: FCRLU

Architectural design, restoration: MICROSCAPE architecture urban design AA

History:

Project assignment: 2014

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