When intervening heritage, the prospect of mere conservation is often the most obvious answer. However, a building declared as a historical monument should not necessarily remain frozen and oblivious to the changes that happen around it. The restoration work of the Palacio Pereira, in downtown Santiago, proposes that caring for a monument includes its reintegration into the socio-cultural fabric and, thus, into the life of the city.

The recovery of the Pereira Palace is a relevant heritage rescue operation of a historical monument, which understands absences and persistences as opportunities to understand and reveal the complex relationship between past, present, and future. In his 1903 manifesto “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” Alois Riegl developed a visionary approach that contextualizes the concept of the monument and historical value to the observer’s time and cultural reality, differentiating two types of monuments: on
Registro fotográfico del Palacio antes de la restauración / Photographic record of the Palace before restoration. © Felipe Fontecilla
the one hand, the ‘intentional’ monument, which is born as a monument and materializes a historical and cultural moment; and, on the other, the ‘unintentional’ monument, historical monuments that, in opposition to the intentional ones, become a monument, acquiring their value through the collective imaginary and history that assigns meaning and transcendence to an event considered irreplaceable.

Thus, the denomination of ‘monuments’ does not have an objective meaning, but rather a subjective and cultural one. It is we, as modern subjects, who attribute and participate in dynamic processes of ‘patrimonialization.’ Contemporary reality places us at a turning point regarding our physical and symbolic ecosystems, calling into question the role of the monument. In the face of museumification, reintegration; in the face of the frozen piece, recycling and reuse; in the face of the private, the public.

In this context, the meaning, transcendence and, above all, viability of unintentional monuments – such as the Pereira Palace – does not have to do only with the preservation of their heritage and symbolic values, but with the will and ability to reinsert them through processes of adaptive reuse associated with care and physical, social, and cultural sustainability. With this, we retain the energy embodied in the historic building, incorporating new activities, bringing it back to life and regenerating the urban fabric, along with democratizing access to spaces of high heritage value.

The Pereira Palace held a special place in the collective memory of Santiago. It was an abandoned and mysterious fragment that embodied the aspiration towards a city that was never really consummated. Its patrimonialization process was consolidated when it was declared a historical monument in 1981, but it only became relevant when the state bought it and called for an architectural competition. At this point, the historic building sought to be understood as part of cycles capable of adapting to cultural, technical, economic, and environmental requirements that necessarily evolve over time, thus providing connections with our past and supporting our future. ARQ
Planta nivel primer subterráneo / First underground floor plan
E. / S. 1: 500

Planta nivel ±0,00 m / ±0,00 m level plan
E. / S. 1: 500
Planta nivel ±5,98 m / ±11,74 m level plan
E. / S. 1:500

Planta nivel ±8,86 m / ±11,74 m level plan
E. / S. 1:500
LEYENDA / LEGEND

1 Oficinas organismos estatales
2 Auditorio / Auditorium
3 Sala traducciones / Translation room
4 Sala control / Control room
5 Servicios / Services
6 Centro de documentación / Documentation Center
7 Patio / Courtyard
8 Acceso / Access
9 Oficina partes / Fees office
10 Sala de exhibición / Exhibition Area
11 Crucero / Transept
12 Cafetería / Coffee shop
13 Sala de lectura
14 Control de acceso
15 Sala de reuniones / Meeting room
16 Oficina Dirección Servicio Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural
17 Secretaría / Secretariat
18 Oficina Gabinete Servicio Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural
19 Oficina Subsecretario del Patrimonio Cultural
20 Secretaría Ministerio
21 Gabinete Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio
22 Oficina Ministra de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio
23 Sala sesiones del Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales
24 Gabinete Subsecretaria del Patrimonio Cultural
25 Terraza
26 Comedor / Dining hall
27 Cocina / Kitchen
Corte AA / Section AA
E. / S. 1: 500

Planta emplazamiento /
Site plan
E. / S. 1: 2,500
Escantillón longitudinal edificio nuevo, patio oriente-poniente (cafetería y museo) / Longitudinal detail of new building, east-west courtyard (coffee shop and museum)

E. / S. 1:75
Escantillón longitudinal edificio
nuevo, patio oriente-poniente

/ Longitudinal detail of new building, east-west courtyard
E. / S. 1: 75
Líder de equipo / Team leader: Cecilia Puga
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Asesores de restauración / Restauration consultants: Alan Chandler, Fernando Pérez, Luis Cercós
Ingeniería estructural / Structural engineering: Pedro Bartolomé, Cristian Sandoval
Arquitectos colaboradores / Collaborating architects: Sebastián Paredes, Osvaldo Larrain, Emile Straub, Danilo Lazcano

Maquetas / Physical models: Alejandro Luer, Francisca Navarro
Simbología / Signage project: Gonzalo Puga, Claudio Cornejo
Diseño interior / Interior design: Alexandra Edwards, Carolina Delpiano
Serigrafías cielos / Silk-screened ceilings: Neftali Garrido, Alejandra Jobet
Iluminación / Light project: Pascal Chautard
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