

# THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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PORTUGAL

Souto de Moura's Braga Stadium Aires Mateus in Lisbon New work in the Azores







1 Bold graphics on metal cladding form a colourful carapace.

SHOPPING CENTRE REFURBISHMENT,  
LISBON, PORTUGAL  
ARCHITECT  
PROMONTÓRIO ARQUITECTOS

## GRAPHIC GESTURES

A skin of superscale graphics animates this remodelled shopping centre.





Promontório Arquitectos was founded in 1990 by a group of five graduates from Lisbon's Technical University. Now grown to over 40 strong, they have amassed a substantial body of work, both in Portugal and abroad, based on pragmatic yet inventive ideas about urban architecture. This revitalization of a shopping centre on the northern fringe of Lisbon is typical of their approach.

The client, a development company, wanted to revive a shopping mall, originally built in the late '80s, but now in physical and financial decline. However, scope for transformation was limited as it was only prepared to make a minimal investment in the project. Promontório's solution was to concentrate on the exterior, turning the building into a supergraphic billboard for the centre's

commercial upscaling, with the aim of attracting new customers and tenants.

The former blank masonry walls are wrapped in a new external skin of ribbed, galvanized metal sheets. This economical, industrial material is appropriated and transformed by superscale graphics that boldly proclaim the mall's manifest delights. Designer Mario Feliciano devised a specific

size and weight of type to fit the cladding modules, and artist Inês Teixeira created a simple but eye-catching colour system of subtle grey and black lettering interspersed with vertical strips of zinging primaries. The effect is arresting without being overpowering, and works both from distance and close up. Though the integration of graphics and architecture is not new in itself (Dutch practice Neutelings Riedijk memorably put poetry on a printing factory, AR March 1999), here it is executed with confident aplomb.

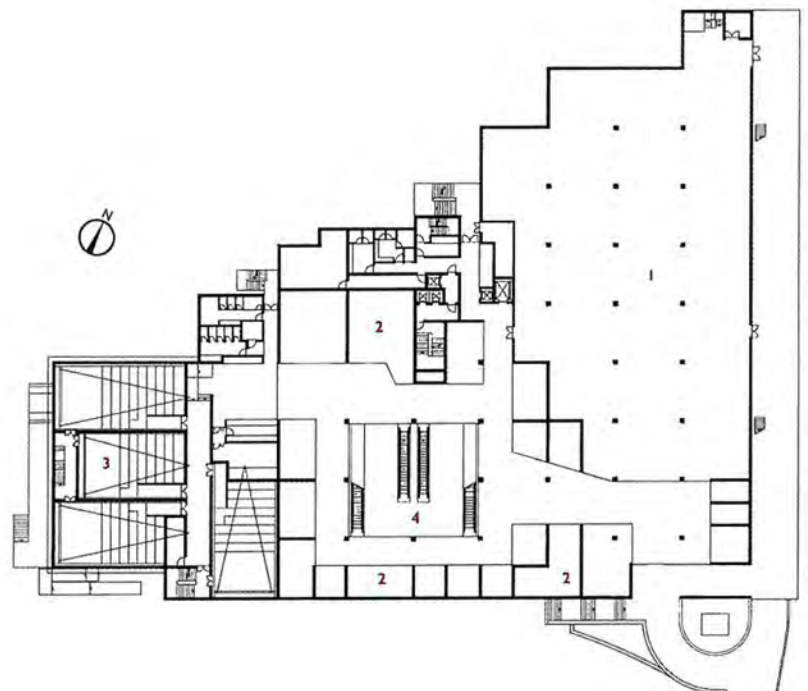
The billboard skin is the most obvious manifestation of the remodelling, but the architects have also added a new cinema wing to enhance the complex's commercial and social appeal. The cinema is the usual blind, introverted box, but in this case it is wrapped in a double-skinned membrane of translucent glass that filters colour from painted walls behind the glazing, echoing the nuances of the coloured graphics. Inside, concourses and shop units are suitably smartened up to indicate the centre's new aspirations.

Though this is an enlightened response to an essentially dreary and dislocated urban building

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ARCHITECT

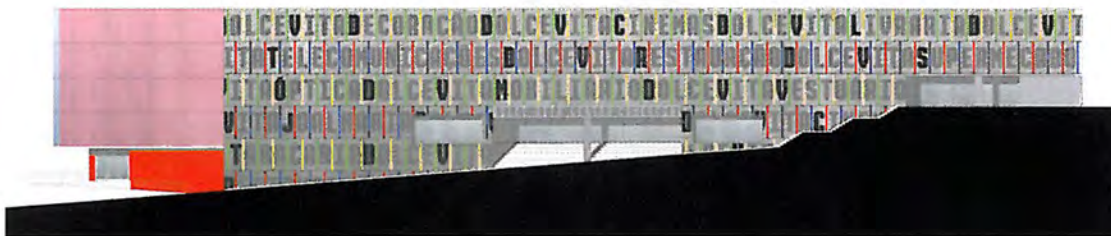
PROMONTÓRIO ARQUITECTOS



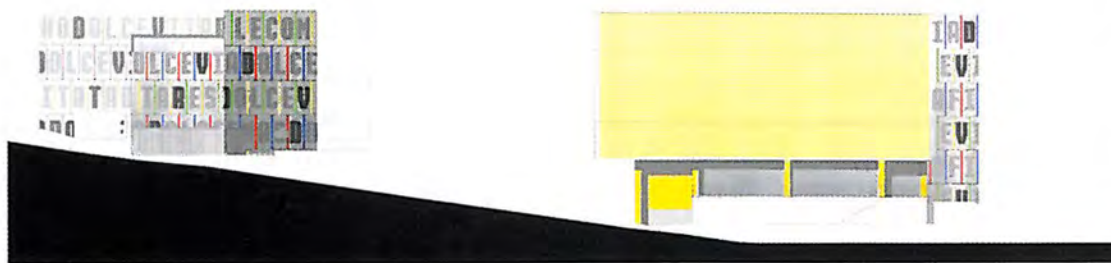
- 1 department store
- 2 shops
- 3 cinemas
- 4 atrium (main entrance below)

first floor plan (scale approx 1:1000)





east elevation



south elevation

type, Promontório are not precious about their work, especially in such a fast-moving and cut-throat commercial context. They acknowledge that their ingenuity will have an inherently limited lifespan, but the trick seems to be to make the moment count. C. S.

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Promontório Arquitectos, Lisbon  
**Graphics**  
Secretonix  
**Colour consultant**  
Inês Teixeira  
**Photographs**  
Sergio Guerra

2 The new skin of galvanized metal sheets printed with superscale graphics proclaims the centre's new commercial ambitions.  
3 A new cinema is contained in a translucent glass box.  
4, 5 Details of facade.