

## Public Buildings and Monuments

Besides the “Historic Center of Macao”, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, Macao has several buildings of renowned patrimonial value, built during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The concern in preserving such buildings includes giving them a dynamic use, installing therein governmental organisms or institutions of cultural or philanthropic nature. Keeping the elegance and splendor that make them very special architectonic pieces, the buildings continue alive in spite of the centuries, lending their dignity to the purpose for which they are used.

This “Public Buildings and Monuments” philatelic collection includes the palace that serves as the Government Headquarters of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the “White House” or “Convent of the Precious Blood” as it became to be known as headquarters to the Monetary Authority of Macao, the Holy House of Mercy Hospice of Macao and the group of buildings at Avenida da República where the Macao Foundation is installed.

**Government Headquarters** – The Government headquarters of the MSAR is installed in a palace commissioned in 1849 by the Baron of Cercal, having been designed by the Macanese architect José Agostinho Tomás de Aquino. In 1881, the Baron of Cercal’s widow is forced to alienate the palace that is bought, in public auction, by the Governor José Joaquim da Graça for 21,000 Patacas. Two years later, the Governor Tomás de Sousa Rosa adopts the palace as official residence, a situation that is maintained until 1937, with the transfer to the Santa Sancha mansion. The building underwent several restorations and alterations that along the years would change significantly its original aspect, with the last restorations taking place in 1983 and 2000, a year when several modifications were made to its interior. Headquarters of the Government since 1937, the palace hosted also in its ground floor, from 1976 to 1999, the Legislative Assembly.

**Monetary Authority** – The mansion that integrates the group of buildings – headquarters of the Monetary Authority of Macao – was built in 1917, designed by the architect John Lemm, to be the residence of Luís Nolasco da Silva, a Macanese lawyer. The “White House” as it was then called, is part of a group of classified buildings in the São Januário/Guia Hill, together with the house of Dr. Silva Mendes and the Ling Nam School. Between the 30’s and 40’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mansion was purchased by the Sisters of the Precious Blood to install that religious community, reason why the building is more known as “Convent of the Precious Blood”. The building, of great elegance, presents a blend of styles (gothic, baroque, victorian) and is valorized with a stone courtyard and a garden.

**Holy House of Mercy Hospice** – The Holy House of Mercy Hospice of Macao is located in São Lázaro district, having been designed in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and considered the first urbanization experience, mainly in terms of social welfare structure. In fact, the name of the district derives from – at the time of the Holy House of Mercy of Macao creation by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – a lazaretto existing therein. Without any written records, is known that, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a Chinese philanthropist donated the land for the construction of a hospice for old women, what occurred between that date and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings that form the hospice were built by phases. The first, after the donation of the land, and the second and third, between 1910 and 1940. By the middle of 2000, the Hospice ceased to be used as an asylum for old people, having its residents been transferred to a new building. In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Hospice was totally recovered and is used now as a cultural and creative space.

**Macao Foundation** – A vast parcel of land, with about 40,000 square meters, where the group of buildings exist, at 6, Avenida da República, which has been operating as the Macao Foundation headquarters, was purchased from William Herbert Dent, in 1923, by the Public Treasury (the organism that preceded the Finance Department). The date of the buildings construction is unknown but photographic documentation from that time reveals that in 1900 the land didn’t had any constructions while photos of 1915 show the group of buildings operating as a Fire Station and Police Station. In 1980, following the creation of the Issuing Institute, the buildings are recovered and underwent small alterations. The smallest building is demolished (eventually a guardhouse), and eliminated a gate and a metallic fence that blocked the access to the inside. The building that flanks Calçada da Praia becomes the main building and a door is open therein and included a staircase with stone columns that give the dignity to the entry that still presents today. During the 80’s the group served as the Issuing Institute headquarters and, since the 90’s hosts the Macao Foundation, maintaining the same visual until now.