

Heritage in Danger By Ivan Blasi

The Ofir House – Casa Dr. Fernando Ribeiro da Silva Ofir, Esposende 1956–1958 by Fernando Távora



Photos by Ana Tostões

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The Ofir holiday house was the first work by Fernando Távora (1923–2005) published in the *Arquitetura* magazine (nº 59, July 1957). It was presented as a work that searched a personal language which reconciled the values of traditional Portuguese architecture and new technologic and material achievements.

The house was built during the period of transition between the 50s and the 60s, standing out in its historical context, opening up the path for a renewed Modern architecture and for contemporary Portuguese architecture; between an architecture referred to regionalism and nationalism imposed by Salazar's regime, and rationalist international Modern architecture that sought a different methodology, based on the integration of distinct cultural values, on place contextualization, centered in man and his cultural, social and psychological specificity.

The house was presented by Távora with a well-known text in which he exposed the clarification of the differences between "composite" and "mixture", asserting that the Ofir house was a result of a com-

posite and not a mixture. With these parameters, the architect acknowledged the existence of factors which determine the conception of architecture, those which are alien to the architect and those which are part of his education or personality.

55 years after its construction, the house's state of degradation as a result of a fire, is very high. In 2011 it drew the attention of the *Ordem dos Arquitectos* (Architects' Association of Portugal) which, in January 2011, made contacts with organizations involved in safeguarding and dissemination of architectural heritage in order to create a working group that strived for urgent intervention in the building, reversing the degradation process and searching possibilities for a comprehensive rehabilitation, respecting the original design, in conjunction with either the Municipality of Esposende or with the owners of the property.

The *Ordem* has also been defending the necessary and urgent assignment status as Monument of Public Interest, a process that has still not culminated.

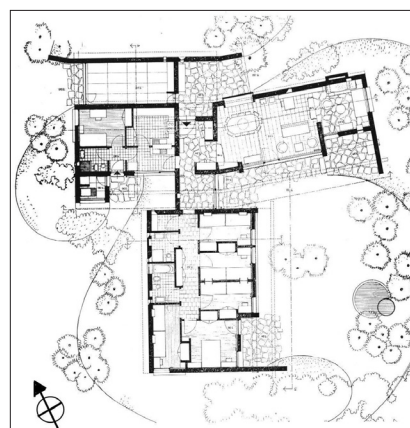


Photo by Alexandre Araújo