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# QUINTA DA RIBEIRA, SAMEICE, PORTUGAL

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Your Vision Is?



APRIL 1, 2024  
BOSQUE VERDE, LDA

## Quinta da Ribeira



The large "Tortoise" rocks at the south-western corner

### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Over 50 hectares of extensive land, about 20 workable agricultural terraces, tranquil riverside woodland, an expansive wilderness containing wild bush and large boulders, many tracks and secluded natural areas, springs, and glades. It has four registered buildings and room for more.

The land itself is a north facing valley in the foothills of the Serra da Estrela (Mountain of the Star). Its northern boundary is the Rio Seia (315m) and to the south by the camino antiguo from Sameice to Travancinha (417m). The Rio Seia valley is classified as an ecological reserve.



View from the Tortoise rock looking East across the valley to Serra da Estrela

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The landscape is one of large granite boulders and a sandy fractal soil with regenerating Portuguese oak woodland on the terraces and pine/medronho/sobreiro/pyrenaica on the ridges. A forest fire in 1985 led to the land being abandoned, except for use by local shepherds and their flocks. In the whole length of this rural valley at present there are only seven occupied houses and a few quintas that are minimally managed. As a result the land is a wildlife haven for many species including wild boar, otter, owl and genets.

We have also seen Swallowtail butterflies and Lesser blue's in the natural wild heather, a variety of wild bees, perhaps two varieties of kingfishers, many types of frog and small blue and rainbow lizards, not to mention the tall Blue Heron, and hearing the otters chirruping by night when out at the just that moment.....

The site has seven primary valleys running south to north. The four western valleys run from the top of the ridge to the river. These are the least developed valleys with terraces only to the lower end. The three valleys to the eastern end are more developed with terraces from top to bottom.



Looking over the Rio Seia to the Quinta land

The riverside is lined with alders, ash and oak with three dams (suds) and their levadas feeding over 1km of river terraces and at least two mills (moinhos) plus the remains of many more in and adjacent to the river. The woodland is mostly made up of young oaks, though along the riverbanks there are the protected White River Alder growing tall with their roots in the river itself.

Along the river are also to be found what once must have been quite productive fruit growing area. There is one large walnut tree just up from the river.

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The site may be viewed as a large teardrop, with the drop itself being to the West, the four existing buildings to the East. The rural area is registered as being 53.87 hectares. The Eastern boundary is marked by a 10+ metre high dam. Work was completed in the summer of 2017 to clear the lake upstream from the dam. Since when visitors use it for swimming and occasional boating. Walking and cycling trails have been created on the Northern side.



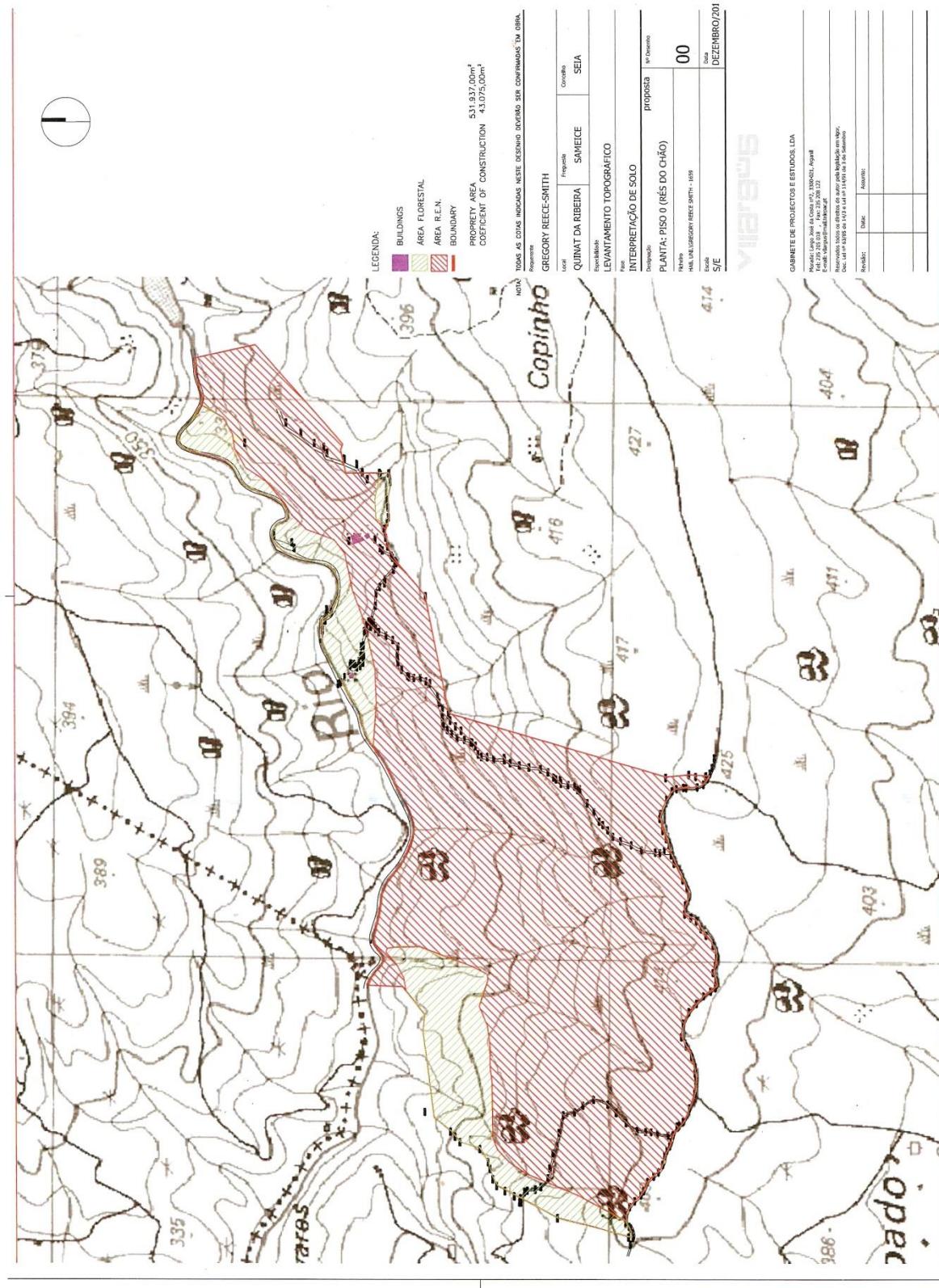
Large Dam at the Eastern End looking over the Lake (not on the property)

A track was cut to access the lake on the southern side. The winter rains make the tracks often only usable by 4WD vehicles. As the lake is supervised by the Bombeiros to hold water for their possible use, they regularly adjust the sluices on the dam. Which means work is completed regularly to maintain vehicular access!

A connection was made from this signposted route from Sameice to the old road which runs through part of the site. Another track accesses the site from the direction of Travancinha and a third is between these two. All three connect to the camino antiguo running along the ridge.

The boundaries were confirmed during the Cadastra exercise carried out by the local authorities in 2016. The principal change was to extend the southern boundary to the camino antiguo rather than the existing track which was built later. Cart tracks are still visible in the stones along the camino antiguo.

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The second dam is near to the second of the rebuilt houses, the Casa da Ribeira. The small lake is often used for swimming. An outline is needed to improve access to make

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the lake more suitable for swimming. This would possibly involve raising and repairing the dam wall and creating a platform for diving/jumping into the water.



The lake behind the middle dam, with the remains of an old stone bridge over the gorge



View from the East through the old stone bridge to the dam

The levada fed by water from the dam was re-opened in the winter of 2016. Repairs have still to be completed to the full 50 metres or so length of the levada. The flow in winter could provide hydro power to supplement the solar generation. The exact nature depends on an engineer's assessment.

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The third dam is in another gorge further downstream toward the Western end of the property.

Near to the first rebuilt house and large ruin are two wells and a water mine. A 50,000 litre water tank has been built to hold water pumped from the wells. Six locations have been identified to the West which could access drinkable water which will flow throughout the year. These are to the top of the valley, away from the existing houses.

There are two access points from the camino antiguo running between Sameice and Travancinha - it is also a designated cycle track.

### BUILDINGS

#### Casa da Ribeira – before:



Looking at the North side of the original structure

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**Completed**



View from the South of the Casa da Ribeira sitting on the rock!

The building has two floors and a mezzanine with a registered footprint of 68 sq. mts, within a construction area of 114.3 sq. mts.. To the left of this image is the site of the moinho (mill) which is registered as the fourth building on the site, this has a registered area of 22 sq. mts.. Plans have yet to be prepared for this registered building.

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Main entrance door, door to bedroom and stairs to the mezzanine

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Kitchen area with mezzanine above

The number of fruit trees, apple, fig, pear, plum and peach, suggest this section along the river was once an abundant source of such items. Lack of attention to the vines has resulted in their return to their wild form.

EU funded support for projects to plant fruit and nut trees as well as to re-afforest is available. Connections have also been made to a charity offering free varieties of indigenous trees for re-afforestation.

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View to the South looking up from the river

### **The Big Ruin**

This was the original house serving the needs of all who lived and worked at the Quinta. It has a registered footprint of 252.8 sq. mts.. Outline plans for a two level conference centre were discussed with the Seia Camara in 2016 and received favourable support. Discussion took place about using alternative materials such as straw bales, cob etc. rather than stone or other materials. Some of the original stone door and window frames have been stored on site.

**Casa Central – before**



Entrance to the structure cleared

The first ruin to be rebuilt was that adjacent to the original main house, the largest of the ruins. The new building has two floors and a registered footprint of 131.8 sq. mts., with a total construction area of 181.8 sq. mts.. There are two storage and equipment spaces under the house.

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Looking up to the original Casa Central building and the walls of the big ruin on the right.

This [\*\*drone footage\*\*](#) from February 2022 provides an overview of the space around the Casa Central. The old Renault 4 on the North side of the Casa is “parked” in the area of the big ruin. You will also be able to see the entrances to the two geodesic domes, the henge etc..

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**Completed**



Part of the big ruin is visible in the background

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This solar display has 12 panels

### OTHER STRUCTURES

The solar system was upgraded in early 2021 to 48v and further panels added. A new underground batteria casa was created to house the inverter etc. and batteries for the solar system.

In 2021 a colleague erected her Yurt roughly halfway between the two houses, and near to the new batteria casa. As support, an outdoor kitchen, shower, solar water heater, compost toilet and wood store have been built.



The "henge" ready for the final touches. Outside kitchen in build, the wood is to complete its cord wood wall

### **The Henge**

The "henge" structure was designed as a community space. It has a double reciprocal roof (only one other has been located during a global internet search) and made using wood cut from the surrounding area.

The basic structure and roof are complete, the final covering of cardboard then hessian and vinyl need to be laid on the timber. It will then be possible to cover with earth and so grass. The outside kitchen as well as a small shower and washing block have yet to be completed. Volunteers have completed most of the work.

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Partially complete cord wood wall and window frames of the outside kitchen

Two concrete geodesic domes have been built into the space in front of the first house.

The small one is complete and has been used for to hold vision quest gatherings and workshops of 8 to 10 people, depending on its nature. It has also been used as sleeping accommodation for volunteers when conditions are not suitable for camping.

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Decoration underway on the big dome, on the left. Entrance to the little dome on the right

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Decoration underway inside the big dome

The larger dome was used for storage. Once decoration and flooring is complete it could be used for larger workshops, meeting place etc..



Wall decoration inside the small dome

### **THE INTENT**

From the outset the site was intended to provide individuals and groups from the local area and cities across Portugal and the globe the opportunity to stay in a peaceful, beautiful and rejuvenating setting.

The mission being to use its natural beauty to create a sanctuary for its broad community to re-connect with themselves and Mother Earth.

Visitors being served through activities and events created in the heart of the valley. Other accommodation could be provided in comfortable, though seemingly remote locations around the site. These to be built into the landscape to maintain the sense of tranquillity and peace it provides.

The ethos is to live as much as possible from what is provided by this unique part of Mother Earth. Whilst some vegetable growing has been initiated, to date most volunteer effort has been focused on the building and construction aspects rather than agriculture.

### **YOUR NEXT STEP?**

Is the site what you are looking for to bring your own vision into creation? How would you evolve the foundation which has been established? Then make contact to explore and connect to the property.