

Patio de Armas



This esplanade is nowadays fully landscaped with a beautiful Hispanic-Arab garden, and is known as Plaza de Armas, also called Plaza de San Gabriel during Christian times. The garden was designed by the architect Fernando Guerrero-Strachan Rosado. The architect based his work on the engravings that exist depicting Malaga in the 16th century, and he gave the space a pergola that he interpreted as being there. When the Plaza de Armas was restored, the remains of two Christian burials were found, which must have belonged to the Parish Church of Saint Louis, the former mosque of the Alcazaba, which was consecrated to Saint Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, the patron saint of the day the Catholic Monarchs entered the city (19 August). This esplanade was fortified on its southern front in order to install a battery of small calibre cannons, since the Muslim construction could not support the vibration that occurred when firing them. When we look out from this bastion we get another perspective of the entrance fortifications, and of the line that the sea must have had, and we can really appreciate the construction of the corner of the Torre del Cristo, reinforced with small and regular ashlar in a stretcher and header bond.

The most striking feature of the Plaza de Armas is the ornamental richness offered by the simple materials, stone and brick, combined in a geometrical design, with the central area recessed, like a garden with crossing paths. The garden is furrowed with channels that lead the water from the upper area of the palace to the fountain that forms the centre of the garden, framed by four flowerbeds containing low hedges.

The Plaza de Armas is a surprise to visitors, since it is the first sight of a landscaped space, with beautiful panoramic views over the port of the city, rather than merely a defensive space, as has been the case until now along the route. We have no information regarding how it may have been arranged during the Arab period. The fountain in the centre dates back to the 19th century and was brought here from the gardens of the secondary school located on Calle Gaona, where it had been installed by the French during the Spanish War of

Independence, in the former Convent of the Philippine Friars, since the French had used it as an official building during the occupation of Malaga. With the modern development of the secondary school and the need for a sports area, the garden was renovated for school use. At that time the fountain was installed in the precinct that was being recovered, at the same time as the other three fountains it contains.