

# Restorations

## Restoration



[1] By the early 20th century, the Alcazaba had reached a major degree of deterioration. The entire upper part of the fortress was a slum. Its streets were perfectly identified in the city's cadastral map, there was no running water, no electricity, no sewerage, and what could be seen from the outside was a chaotic and picturesque complex, with crumbling walls and towers.

Following threats of complete demolition, the future seemed to have only one solution. However, this situation changed radically when, on 3 June 1931, it was declared a Historical-Artistic Monument, belonging to the National Treasury, in a Decree that resulted in a large number of monuments being protected throughout Spain. At the same time, Juan Temboury Álvarez (Málaga, 1899-1965) was appointed as an academic at San Telmo, and together with the architect Antonio Palacios (Pontevedra, 1874-Madrid, 1945) he became interested in the ruins of the Alcazaba. His selfless and continuous collaboration from that time until his death in 1965 was crucial to the various restorations carried out during those years. His dedication was rewarded by the Malaga City Council when it granted him the honorary title of Conservator of the Alcazaba, with a bust and a plaque at the entrance to the monument.

In 1932, motivated by the fortuitous discovery (following heavy rains) of some Arab burials on Mount Gibralfaro, and in order to avoid the construction of "cheap houses" in the vicinity of the monument, Temboury (with the support of the Academy and the Monuments Commission) supported the initiative of asking Ricardo de Orueta (Malaga, 1868-Madrid, 1939), who was from Malaga and who at that time was Director General of Fine Arts, to take an interest in the monument. After this request in August 1933, Orueta visited the city together with

Leopoldo Torres Balbás (Madrid, 1888-1960), architect and restorer of monuments of the Bar Zone, Professor of Art at the Superior School of Architecture of Madrid and Director of the works in the Alhambra. The visit only produced a moderate amount of enthusiasm from the architect, but it did lead to a visit the following year, in 1934, so that work could begin on the “Project for the recovery of the Cuartos de Granada (Quarters of Granada)”, whose technical direction was carried out by Torres Balbás along with the architect José González Edo (Madrid, 1894-1989). The results were more spectacular than initially thought, prompting Torres Balbás to publish articles that year in the magazines *Residencia* and *Al-Andalus*.

The works focused on the Plaza de Armas, where the silo at the entrance was discovered and cleaned, as well as the Torre del Homenaje (Keep), which contributed a large amount of ceramic material even though it was only superficially cleaned, and the Cuartos de Granada, in which the Casa de la Mezquita (House of the Mosque) was bought and explored, along with two more dwellings in what was known as Callejón del Zagal. As stairs were dismantled and partitions were chipped away, high quality decorative remains started to appear, because the humble inhabitants of these houses had covered and walled off arches and columns, since this was cheaper and easier than demolishing and rebuilding the structures. They also made a spectacular discovery: on the south side of the Patio de los Surtidores (Courtyard of the Jets of Water) there was a room that was accessed through a triple arch with an alfiz (moulding that encloses the outward side of an arch), with wooden columns and capitals covered in plaster. There were also vousoirs of arches decorated in plaster and painted, as well as the pavilion of lobed arches, and the remains of the Taifa Palace of King Badis from the 11th century.

The project continued the following year, acting on the military area around the access from the city. The three floors that occupied the military pavilions were dismantled, leaving the Puerta de la Bóveda Vaída (Gate of the Sail Vault) and the Puerta de las Columnas (Gate of the Columns) inside them. The start of the Civil War brought a break of a few months, but the work was later resumed by order of the City Council. Work resumed in March 1937, under the technical direction of the young architect Fernando Guerrero-Strachan Rosado (Málaga, 1907-1941), who, advised by Juan Temboury, set out to complete the project for the reconstruction of the Puerta de los Arcos (Gate of the Arches) in the Torre de los Cuartos de Granada (Tower of the Quarters of Granada), which had been demolished in 1854 due to its ruinous condition. To accomplish this, they based their work on a lithograph published by Guillén Robles in his book *Málaga Musulmana* in 1839. The interior was fitted out as a museum. Other works were also carried out, such as the expansion of other gates and towers, like the Puerta de la Bóveda, Puerta de las Columnas and the Torre de la Vela (Watch Tower).

For the access areas to the Palace, in which no remains of interest were found, the creation of a garden with a historicist design was proposed. Fernando Guerrero-Strachan Rosado introduced the concept of a “high garden” in Málaga, and he considered gardening as a means of beautifying and enhancing architecture. He took great care with the paving, fountains, staircases and plants, which he placed in this space with the utmost delicacy. At the same time, he also planned the urbanisation of the surrounding area, the Jardines de Puerta Oscura (Dark Gate Gardens). He laid them out in a tiered manner on the southern slope of the Alcazaba, designing a geometric garden that played with the colours of the species planted, and included staircases, fountains and different types of paving. At the time of inauguration, the houses attached to the external wall of the Alcazaba (on what was then called Haza de la Alcazaba and today is Paseo Don Juan Temboury) were still standing.

During the years of war, considerable effort was made by the City Council to avoid stopping the work, and in 1938 the Engineer of Roads and Works of the City Council, Wilfredo Delclos Ladrón, wrote and executed the “Project of the Mundo Nuevo Tunnel”, which would connect Calle Mundo Nuevo with Calle Haza de la Alcazaba, and with the upper district of Coracha, now no longer in existence. A year later, in 1939, the reforestation of Mount Gibralfaro began, which would forever change the perception of the monumental complex, undoubtedly beautifying the surroundings and giving the city a green space, but causing it to lose its image of an impregnable space.

The works continued actively from August 1941 to March 1968, with restoration projects directed by Francisco Prieto Moreno Pardo, who directed them from Granada, and architect José González Edo, who once again remained in Malaga to direct the works. In total there were 13 projects that took place over 27 years, and Temboursy was highly involved in all of them until his death in 1965. Work was carried out in almost all areas. The Torre del Homenaje was cleaned, rejecting a proposal to elevate it to a height of 12 metres and provide it with 3 rooms on three floors and a viewpoint over the city. The 11th-century Barrio de Viviendas (Neighbourhood of Dwellings) was acted upon in order to protect it, including the remains that appeared attached to the first cleaning of the area of the Torre del Homenaje in 1937 and which provided important archaeological finds, with walls over 1.5 metres high, floors, decorated plinths and a large quantity of ceramic material.

The Nasrid Palace revealed bases of structures, openings for doors, pools, etc., with a distribution of rooms that varied in height from 0.5 m to 1 m. Once there was no longer any remains of modern constructions covering them, the dilemma arose of whether to cover the remains in order to preserve them or whether to reconstruct them from the evidence presented on the ground, trying to ensure the walls and roofs would be as neutral as possible. The second option was chosen, and the reconstruction took place with a clear inspiration from Granada, with the aim of turning the space into a kind of museum.

In 1946 Emilio Miranda Lafuente's project to build a lift to access the upper part of the Alcazaba from Calle Guillén Sotelo was presented. The well and gallery were excavated, but the rest of the project was abandoned in 1948 due to lack of funds. There was an attempt to take it up again in the 1960s, but it was not until the 1990s that it was completed and put to use through the restoration carried out by the Andalusian Regional Government.

The interventions were finished in 1968, with the last one being carried out by the architect Prieto Moreno. From the 1970s to the present day, several interventions have been carried out in the Barrio de Viviendas, such as the project by the architect Rafael Manzano Martos in 1973. In the 1980s, the architect César Olano intervened in the restoration of the northwest walls, the roofs of the Salas del Palacio (Palace Halls) and the Roman Theatre. The last major intervention was carried out by the architects Isabel Cámara and Rafael Martín Delgado, and involved the removal of the Archaeology Section housed in the Palace, the complete refurbishment of the walls and towers, and the replacement of the 1940s flooring in the Palace, as well as the modification of the height of some of its rooms. All this had the fundamental intention of achieving greater purity in the structure by eliminating elements of a purely decorative historicist nature, as well as removing for the most part the cupboards that housed the exhibited pieces in the manner of display cabinets. Lastly, in 2009 there was another intervention in the Barrio de Viviendas in order to protect the decorative plinths in the streets and in the large houses.

[1] *The information presented in these texts was extracted from the book written by Fanny de CARRANZA SELL, Alcazaba de Málaga, Colección Domus Aurea, Ediciones Esirtu, Malaga, 2010.*

*Domus Aurea, Ediciones Esirtu, Málaga, 2010.*