Conservation serves several purposes. In the social context, the fabric of mans built past is meaningful to him in same fundamental way as the landscape he inhabits, and people deprived of the environmental asset of their past lack a part of the understanding of their own history. The sense of loss can be tangible, resulting in instability and a yearning for environmental security. The distinctive shapes of the earth villages of sub-Saharan Africa provide their inhabitants with evidence of their origins in just the same way as do the mellow brick walls of some great Spanish town whose citizens sense in the environment the deep roots of their past. No conservator need be ashamed of admitting that one fundamental purpose of his work is the retention of a fabric which meets the deep psychological needs of those who inherit it and pass it on.

The primary objective in consolidating or strengthening structures is to improve their stability. Where a visible intervention is called for, as is usually the case, a series of questions is raised. These lie outside the structural problem itself. The intervention now seek to explore. Structurally the strength of the building and probably also its longevity will have been enhanced. The intervention must raise ethical considerations which by definition relate to the rights of the action and the honesty of its handling. Other practical considerations then follow.

A building has four functions to perform: structural, practical, aesthetic and evidential. Ideally every activity in strengthening a building will meet these performance criteria which fall within practical and aesthetic dimension. The intervention will be: i. economical- a practical dimension; ii. it will be durable: also a practical dimension; iii. it will be effective in its designated use – a further practical dimension; iv. it will be sympathetic or visually acceptable – an aesthetic consideration; v. it will be explicit – an ethical and aesthetic consideration; vi. it will retain historic values – an ethical consideration; vii. it will not diminish the authenticity of monument – also an ethical consideration.

If these criteria are met the investment in strengthening will be a success. Restrengthening of a structure must achieve an immediate objective in restoring or enhancing the ability of the construction to perform the task required of it. It must also be given longevity consistent with acceptable costs. In practical terms the building must work well: in aesthetic terms it should please the user and viewer. In ethical terms its retention is important because it is tangible of the past. It is a surviving artefact.

- The visual quality of the structure may be enhanced or diminished;
- The interpretation may make a positive statement in terms of method, or time and of its function.
- It may also enhance or alter the function of the structure. In doing this it may change the way it serves society and the reasons which justify its retention.

While the social purpose may be to provide continuity within the historical past the cultural purpose is to retain the creative achievement represented by the buildings, the town or the landscape. The intellectual endeavour which will have gone into the creation of architecture can only be fully represented by that architecture itself. The level of cultural achievement may not be high but it may nevertheless be important. In the oasis villages of Northern Arabia the patterns and repetitive devices applied by tribesmen to their woodwork and to the mud which coats their buildings has a quality which makes them unique in time and place; and in that sense they are as important as the great terracottas displayed on Italian Renaissance buildings. The culture is commensurated in the artefact, and the qualities of the society that created it were measured in the architecture left behind as much as in their literature or their music. Societies may disappear but the cultural artefact remains to provide a direct access to those who created it.

The very rarity of some fragments of past societies may in itself be a special reason for, and give a particular purpose to, conservation. The city of Bokhara in Uzbekistan preserves a mausoleum with an extraordinary intricacy of patterned brickwork attributable to the tenth century King, Ismail the Samanid. No other comparable building survives. Were it not for this one rich example, patterned like a tribal rug in solid brickwork, there would be almost no evidence of culture known otherwise only by fragmentary remains in poetry and literature. Rather more is known of the civilization in Mesopotamia but of Sasanian building skills the one structure that gives measure to their achievement is the great parabolic brick vault standing today at Salman Pak, south of Baghdad. This single remaining structure of the great palace of Chishtan the single building by which the structure achievement of that world power can now be assessed. These arguments of purpose are historical and to them must be added one other – science. Any historic fabric is evidence of the circumstances and techniques of its age of construction. The circumstances of its building, determined by available materials and the use of techniques inherited or invented, are the prime evidence of the movement of civilisations and one purpose of conservation must be to retain this evidence. But the artefact encapsulates scientific information. Fragments of organic material permit dating by the measurement of atomic decay- the Carbon 14 technique. Other analytical techniques include Thermoluminescence and Optical Dating, both of which use the effects of long burial to provide alternative methods of dating by sampling. Other techniques are known but little used – such as the qualitative measurement of saline impregnation; others have yet to be perfected or even to be discovered. The analysis of pollen deposits such as pollen can provide evidence of conditions and dates of construction. These and other forms of scientific analysis provide information on sources of material and distribution of the origins of materials which in the long future of conservation will add to man’s knowledge of the past. The loss or destruction of such evidence is to be deplored.

Conservation can serve one further purpose, sometimes treated as a justification; the economic utilisation of the structures. As has been discovered by many builders in the past it can be less expensive to reuse a building than to build anew. The adaptation of historic structures to new or enhanced usefulness is often a economic purpose of historic continuity and cultural retention.

Earth architecture

Strong in compression and weak in tension, massive by nature and generally heavy, earths and brick are, with stone, the characteristic material of walling. Being inert in a practical, if not a chemical sense, they are durable and take on special hues and characteristics with age. The methods of assembly – bonding – and forms of construction have produced a variety of characteristics intrinsic to appropriate to the context and produce a result that is acceptable in terms of the historic qualities of the place or building.

If man’s earliest constructions were of mud simply piled together and dressed into an homogeneous mass the next step was to provide for the use of hardened mud, easier to transport, to be laid in place and joined with a wetter mud. So the first mortar was created. Only where mud is used in plastic state can a mortar be avoided, so the form of a masonry structure from earliest times has been significantly dependent on the bonding and the nature of mortar used as well as the character of the brick whether of mud or of burnt clay. Early bricks were of a type known as plano-convex, that is to say having curved upper surfaces, being hand moulded like a lump of dough. These have been the most important in all excavations of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates valleys in buildings dating back several millennia but these and many other forms of unbaked earth bricks have been covered with mud or render as an external coating so that the intrinsic nature of the wall structure has been concealed from the outset. It is the nature of mud brick construction to be rendered over with a mud plaster and the quality that arises in earth structures, therefore, is that of a superficial layer or coating designed to be sacrificial and to be frequently renewed. This layer may be of exactly the same material as the wall. It may be reinforced, perhaps with straw to give it greater cohesion to reduce the nature and size of the cracking and so to give it more weathering resistance and the straw will, itself, become a telling feature in the quality of the surface. It may be coated with a hardened mud, perhaps containing a calcareous material such as crushed lime or chalk. It may have been coated with a material based on burned lime, at the simplest a lime wash, providing decoration and a coating weather resistant qualities.

The handworked nature of such operations has given a special quality to such walls, many of which defy the normal rules of level and plumb bob, being battered back as they reduce in thickness with height to shape the building, curving and being dressed into subtle contours that suit the hand and please the eye. Such buildings with natural organic shapes possess special qualities of their own which are best and, perhaps only able to be perpetuated by the same methods as were used to create them. The batter or inward inclination frequently given to walls built in unbaked earths reflects the natural instincts of the builder in handling material of uncertain compressive strength and although earths under suitable compaction can achieve remarkable values in compression, their tendencies to become fissiparous mean that they are relatively weak structures in tension, capable, nevertheless of being carried to heights of 30 m.; but it is out of this characteristic that the need for massive lower courses derives and hence the tendency of builders towards the use of a batter (awn usau) rarely found in more robust forms of masonry.

The softness of earths, likewise, causes builders to round corners so that parapets, quoins and sharp edges are softened off with the simple objective of dispersing wear and erosion over a broad surface and thereby minimising the effect. The occasional introduction of other materials to provide drip moulds and to reinforce quoins provides a sharper counterpart which distinguishes some local styles of building. Likewise the formation of openings in earth structures takes on special...
characteristics due to the materials. Openings are generally narrow and where and where no other material is used for the arch or lintel they tend to be sharply pointed. In consequence some distinctive forms have evolved such as the multiple triangular perforations used in the traditional architecture of the Nejed in Saudi Arabia.

In the centuries when the traditional roofing, domes and vaults have been elaborated, at times to an astonishing degree. Unreinforced, thin-shelled domes often take a parabolic form, the increasing compressive stress in the lower zones being reflected in greater thickness of the haunch. The parabolic arch of such structures is sometimes reflected in the ground plans of the buildings and in consequence in general structural patterns. In barrel vaulting the thickness of a haunch may be lightened by secondary vaults introduced into the structural roof. In the formation of domes and vaults, ribbing, perhaps using especially dense blocks, has in this turn has given rise to wide vocabulary of design dominated by the interlocking and intersection of ribs and arches.

Other practical features have evolved from need to maintain such buildings. Coatings and renders are an inherent and natural method of protecting earth structures from erosion and because of the frequency of treatment, particularly in the case of mud renders, the support systems, have themselves become decorative features, their colour and characteristics varying with locality. Even in the handling of the rendering, patterning makes becomes distinctive – from the characteristics of providing drips-courses and drip-moulds to the finger making left by the application of material.

And even wider variety of character flows from the introduction of many other materials which go with earth construction. The combination of earth and timbers produces distinctive systems of support from panels of wattle to massive timber framing. These characters vary from region and tribe to tribe, and sometimes village to village, often intermixed and betraying the long historical evolution which is one of the great social generators of vernacular building.

Ethical and Aesthetic in the Conservation

In conservation the policies applicable relate to the degree of urgency, the nature of the defects, the type of threat and the intended use of the building, but in deciding on a course of action a number of overriding principle apply. Foremost among these are the principle of reversibility, coupled with reversibility. The ideal is that the historic fabric is interfered with as little as possible and that any intervention made should be capable of being withdrawn leaving the fabric as it was. Conservation must always be undertaken with integrity – the determination that materials appropriate to the purpose are used in a fitting manner. Couple with this must go sympathy to ensure that new work is consonant with the old. The character and tone of the building are determined by the original work and any intervention must accord with the overriding qualities of the original. Honesty dictates that all work is what it purports to be and datability allows that, on analysis, the age and nature of any intervention can be prove. A further principle might be defined as location, to underscore the relationship of a structure to its site. It is argued that a building is an integral part of its location, being created for and welded by use to its site. While there are some exceptions, in the case of buildings that can be moved, this concept of location does encapsulate an important aspect of integral relationship of a building to its surroundings. Fundamentally these principles aim at honesty in expressing the time and nature of the work of conservation, sympathy in ensuring that it does not obstruct, integrity in its being of the appropriate calibre and reversibility where possible so that future conservators need not necessarily be bound by current work. To these some conservators would add a minimalist approach, arguing understandably for doing only what is most essential for structural reasons leaving undone even work necessary to control decay – a philosophy describable as decelerated erosion. Sometimes such principles are clearly in conflict with other objectives and for this reason the conservator must understand the priorities which govern his work and will be prepared to use his principles as the overriding criteria.

There can be instances where no action whatever is justified. An example might be analysed by remote sensing techniques, such as magnetometry and be left undisturbed; but most structures will require some form of repair or restoration if they are to survive.

An example might be a mud-brick structure of antiquity exposed in archaeological excavations. The minimum intervention would be careful exposure and recording followed by careful rebuiling. Such action, however, would be unattractive to authorities wishing to exploit the site for tourism. They might seek the stabilisation of the remains for purposes of permanent access and this, in turn, might entail the irreversible introduction of chemical compounds and the reversible building of shelter structures for protection.

The acceptability of such proposals would be weighed against their desirability and the impracticable proposal might be the construction on top of the genuine material of a replica or reconstruction of the original building. However unacceptable this action might appear it could be preferable to a policy of apparent non-intervention – i.e. of leaving the original structure exposed at the mercy of the elements and visitors. Such a policy would quite likely result in total destruction of the original material. Even rebuiling might, however, carry with it severe disadvantages where, for instance, the pattern of drainage or vegetation was changed by new circumstances altering the water table or layer allowing root penetration. Sometimes destruction is unavoidable. One archaeological layer might have to be removed in favour of the retention of another! Where major constructional works will eradicrate the site the option may be abandonment or removal of material to an alternative location. The nature of the intervention to stabilise or secure the original construction will be determined by the circumstances and overriding imperatives but the nature of the material also pays a part. Mudbrick structure may be recovered with great difficulty and inherent damage to its nature, even though in the final event it may be restored visually. Brickwork, however, may be removed on bloc or piecemeal and reassembled skilfully to recreate the original arrangement, recreating the pattern of wear and weathering very precisely. In process the mortar may be partially or largely renewed but this renewal is no more than would have been the case had building remained in situi but required repointing.

In postulating this simple series of possible events a wide range of options become apparent and important definitions arise. The may be summarised:

-Deterioration: Controlled or uncontrolled. There is no philosophical compulsion to preserve the artefacts of the past. It is accepted that mountains should deteriorate naturally; that someachange is less acceptable a ruined structure may reach a state where its contribution to the landscape is one of decay. Occasionally man is moved to counteract erosion upon a mountain, (particularly if he is cause of it), and likewise he may feel inclined to slow down or halt the erosion of a monument. Alternatively the structure may be left to decay naturally out of a policy of non-interference or simply as a result of economic necessity.

-Preservation: a ruined structure may be 'frozen in time' by judicious protection from erosion. It may be stabalised in a particular state, perhaps paying special attention to the degree of ruination. It might, indeed, be encasulated in another enduring structure. This process becoming more common as urban archaeology reveals more structures relating to urban history. By the removal of the weathering, decay can be halted without the introduction of special stabilising techniques, but even when the structure is so encased, the use of careful use of techniques which protect the core of the structure can slow down the rate of erosion in brick so that it proceeds very slowly. In earth structures patently this is less easy but more sophisticated techniques of control based on chemical and physical methods of protection will increasingly be able to protect and restrain the rate of loss.

-Maintained utility: this is most common and desirable circumstance for built structure and presents the ideal circumstance.

All historic building need care and skill in their maintenance and differing types of structure demand different skills and appropriate routines of care. Both brickwork and earth structures are of such age and continuity that long traditions of maintenance routines have evolved relating both to the nature of the materials and nature of the materials and these routines have become an established part of the lifestyle and a feature of the configuration in the buildings themselves. The projecting poles and stone corbels of walls and domes that need frequent rendering with mud are instantly recognisable as design features in the vernacular architecture of the regions where they occur. Many more subtle features model or effect the design of buildings right through the social scale. The drip moulds, which protect openings in the brickwork in wet climates, have become distinct as the material itself. Building conservation, like medicine provides for preventive treatment, which is often overlooked at great cost. The maintenance of sophisticated machinery on which human life depends has accustomed recent generations to the concept of planned inspections and planned maintenance and also to the idea that a professional inspectorate is the most efficient answer to the need for planned advice and continuing care. The earliest signs of problems arising are often slight and it is necessary to differentiate between symptoms of importance and those which can be disregarded.

Changes in the levels of ground water or loss of wind protection which have little significance on a brick structure can lead to rapid failure in earth buildings. A bulge in an earth wall may appear to be nothing more than a natural contour but it may presage a significant movement following a change in loading pattern or a loss of integrity. The nature of cracking in brickwork will be a consequence of the distribution of loads and stress. The movement or strain will have direct implications for the trained observer alerting him to the nature and point of the application or application or pressure, the degree of movement and the possible cause.

Other forms of maintenance depend on assessing the nature and rate of weathering or erosion and the consequences of the failure of other building components on the brickwork or earth structure. The effects of previous interventions are often ignored, it being assumed that they have been affective. In practice incompatibilities in materials or parts of structure may not become apparent for some considerable time. Both brick and earths can withstand the incompatibilities of thermal movement to some degree before the effects are readily visible. But in earth structures the resulting fractures are prime source of water entry and decay. In brickwork such discontinuities can alter the loadings on the structure and on other components with further long term consequences, but the direct effects of water entry may be less significant. As essential part of the continuous care needed by historic buildings is a...
programme of management. Regular inspections at intervals determined by the nature of the structure must be recorded and reported. Appropriate work, scheduled perhaps well in advance, and a coordinated work programme carried out will economise in labour as well in advance, and responses where necessary and effective economic repair.

Historic building is, by nature and definition, long lived, outlasting the generations who use and care for it, and therefore records of work done are of more than passing interest to future management and historians; they become an important tool and store of knowledge in the operation of the high price programmes. They should contain information as to the sourcing of materials, the nature and extent of work, the types of work carried out and its sequencing.

The architecture of earths gathers strength. Last century has witnessed two countervailing currents already evident in the preceding 100 years; the decline of the vernacular and the rise of designed, which some might see the decline of building and rise of architecture.

Vernacular building in earths has been restrained for social reasons rather than technical. The common perception of earth structures has been of an inferior material lacking durability. They have been seen as the product of poverty and shunned for that reason. The antiquity has seen earths as historically important and ecologically desirable. The study of earth building has been lifted to the high planes of university discipline and scientific practice. While the craftsman has taken up the trowel, the level and concrete block, the surveyor supervises a tractor pressing straw into soil with its heavy rubber treat. The antiquity has imbued earth building with aesthetic qualities unmatched in any parallel form of construction.

So at the dawn of this new century we find ourselves legislating to protect, establishing understanding of historic significance, developing technologies of repair and promoting skills of specialist construction. This growing phenomenon rooted in the vernacular and promoted by the enthusiasm of individuals may mark the beginning of an era which revalues this humble and long serving building technology of the past and lays open important forms of construction in the future.

Mario Manieri Elia

Restoration As A Recuperation Of ‘Common Sense’

In order to inhabit the world—the word in the broad sense that Heidegger gave it of being there in the context of being, the world is characterized by the intensity with which it manifests the value of an affirmative stability, present in every constructed form and expressing the force of a symbolic investiture granted to the fundamental nature of needs and the intentionality entrusted to architecture. But these expressions of the high societies devoted to work fittingly in time, in relation with the evolution of real processes and contextual situations. Restoration—whatever the not only universal value of this human activity that interests us and is the reason we meet to discuss it—seems to occupy a controversial or at least ambivalent, place in this clearly evolutionary chart. Indeed, on the one hand it can be seen as one of the oldest and most diffuse of social activities, by means of which mankind relate to their physical environment in order to “inhabit” it, gradually adapting it to their own needs; that is to say, it can be seen as a vehicle of the evolution of the environment. On the other hand, however, in an interpretation closer to our interest under the auspices of historic contexts, restoration can be considered as the main activity of conservationist defence and, as a result, it can be understood as a bastion against evolution.

According to architectural technical duplicity, which exists to a certain extent, the restorer must stock up with equally duplicitous theoretical and operative equipment: in other words, he must acquire equipment suitable for guaranteeing both conservation and transformation. Which is why he is bound to act, in the intervention on buildings, although the restorer may not always be aware of the ambivalence and although it may be difficult for him not to have a set of methodological rules and principles such as he has been trying to formulate for nearly two centuries with a view to drawing up precepts that will guarantee proper restoration.

All the more so if, on the subject of architectural restoration, our action must work on a real context which is usually a complex system whose value does not only reside in the material elements but rather in complex systems of meanings that require the same amount of conceptual procedures as a discretionary, selective and not sufficiently cautious intervention could obscure or interrupt. In fact, the context to operate on is nearly always composed of change, be they continuous or discontinuous, apart from acting on the objects on which our action is performed, condition us equally, although we may be convinced we are the subjects—and not the objects—of transforming phenomena. That is to say, they combine both things and human beings. It is, then, this fundamentally evolutionary phenomenal chart that must measure the theories and methodologies that strive to systematize scientifically the relationship between what exists, which is the specific success of the history of the past, the timeless human operativity, deliberately occupied in “inhabiting” the world, entering to form an active part of evolution.

However, we descend from a tradition of intervention on ancient monumental heritage that—unlike the complex operations of medieval re-synchronization, which expressed the “naturalness” of the evolutionary process and, from the Renaissance onwards, of classical style—has run the course of continual re-assertion of the models of the past, assumed as a predominant or even an absolute value. And in two ways: on the one hand, with decisions that issue from the flow of selective conservation; and, on the other, with project decisions deliberately oriented at resuscitating the work in a situation considered “ideal” for it. Quite clearly it was a cultural prejudice, responsible for an ideologically exaggerated intellectual distance, in the sense of establishing in history strict scales of values. An attitude that in Italy may well go back to the humanistic renovation with its cultural consequences still, we might say, not quite surpassed by twentieth century development of thought about restoration, and which therefore tends to survive. Up to the point that there still seem to be those who believe in “liberalizing” restoration works or, at least, the so-called “critical restoration,” which legitimizes a selective analysis of historic stratifications, with the clear aim of discovering the magic moment of determining one condition of the work that is to be conserved with preference over any later addition or alteration, so that the work can be defined as “original”. A condition regarding which all later phases of a building are already marked by an implicit, potential condemnation. A condemnation that, as we said above, tends to have the greatest rigidity. And this rigidity, the harshness of architectural construction—conceived to last in time—can be found above all in classical monumental and similar buildings, which have indeed produced privileged models used by selective attitude; whereas greater plasticity can be found in the less canonical and mostly “naturalistic” civic lexicons, such as medieval sites.

The fact is that, in any case, assuming the function of language in that of “providing meaning,” architecture—especially in its most affirmative expressions—has always taken shape in relation with the aim of optimizing its role in terms of definition and stabilization of the meaning. And that, due to its ritual “classical” aim of pursuing the affirmation of the high and absolute value—i.e., the continuity of life—free from all contamination in time and space, from all technical imperfection and those arising from deterioration and, finally, from the confusion that stems from complexity.

The values of separation and selectivity, in fact overshadowing the evolutionary fact of reality, have always tried to refer to a defined and definitive “beauty” understood as a canon and a precept. Indeed the traditional act of protecting values—put into practice by institutional trustees—has made use of a dissonant...
faculty capable of grasping, and defending in its programmed stability, the architectural meaning of linguistically assertive productions; showing itself to be rather unwilling, or rather rigid as regards the automation of pure material conservation, to stand before the object submitted to their protection and consider it in its plural, evolutionary nature in space and time. The action of protecting has preferably referred to meaning of objects in order to develop their artistic quality.

In these cases, which constitute the majority of the situations to be found in historic heritage, something like a chorus of voices arises in the context, whose harmony and dissonance can only be heard by an attentive listener. An overabundant, discontinuous semantic contextuality often arises from the “site,” in whose sphere, if we deliberately reject selective explicitation of the discriminatory traditional short cuts that have caused so much damage to historic buildings, we find that the most assertive and compact flows of meaning are interlinked; whereas the sonority of the ensemble lets us glimpse the meaning, and the communicative task of integrating objects in time that speaks to us of historic courses of time that have left significant traces also and precisely in their way of interlocking, of counteracting each other, of forming unexpected, complex relationships. At the end of the day, common sense emerges as a value. As an overall value, identified precisely in its controversial and unstable being.

The capacity to listen, even when one’s hearing is good, will not determine a decision regarding intervention, but it is the essential condition to permit it. The decision may also be not to choose by prolonging, as we said apropos of ruins, the cognitive tension while the options evoked or proposed by the context multiply. The project itself, on the other hand, does not necessarily end up by putting a stop to the hermeneutical and project process: it can also be seen, and what it more, this is the most authentic condition, as a moment of gradual and dialectic qualification in the flux.

To sum up, if restoration is taken as a process of knowledge and project and if it is capable of listening, it is in itself a project that sets off a transformation, the relationship with the historic context becomes real in the cognitive tension started up by the process of “providing meaning” or recuperation-recognition of meaning, as opposed to a reality that reaches us in a fragmented or interrupted manner and whose recomposition we can decide to postpone so as not to stop the communicative flux emanating from it. At a methodological level, we can take the Italian term recuperare to orient us; this word, in the place of the word “restoration” and used in the etymological sense of (ri-comprendere), proposes an action in process of rescuing attention but also reconquering the project.

Recupero del senso, therefore, as a way of rethinking the site, is not a compromise or a political stance, but a positive opinion was given by the Foundation of the Vich palace carried out by historian Joaquín Bérchez; a proposal for the reinstallation of the courtyard in the Museo de San Pío V, a document about this Renaissance courtyard; new interpretative studies on the architecture of the Vich palace carried out by historian Joaquín Bérchez; a proposal for the reincarnation of the courtyard in the Museo de San Pío V drawn up by the architect Gómez-Ferrer; a project for the dismantling of the existing pieces in the refectory of the Convento del Carmen; the technical reports compulsory for this type of operations, which, by the way, were unfavourable, were drawn up and a positive opinion was given by the Foundation of the Museo de San Pío V and the Board of Directors of the IVAM, a necessary courtesy since the Carmen refectory is currently located on premises belonging to the IVAM (fig. 1). Before stating my technical, restorational or museological reasons against this intervention, I must start by recalling the political opinions in favour of moving and reassembling the courtyard. After all, the historic analysis and evaluation of the heritage so rigorously carried out over many years by Professors Bérez and Benito had not gone any further until the latter was appointed to take over the directorship of the Museo de San Pío V and found there several pieces from the Vich courtyard, at the transcendental moment at which the expansion of the museum was being prepared. The abovementioned catalogue of the exhibition contains the previously mentioned project of the Vich court and the recollection of the fragments conserved in the refectory of the Convento del Carmen; the technical reports compulsory for this type of operations, which, by the way, were unfavourable, were drawn up and a positive opinion was given by the Foundation of the Museo de San Pío V and the Board of Directors of the IVAM, a necessary courtesy since the Carmen refectory is currently located on premises belonging to the IVAM (fig. 1).

At the end of 1996, the Museological Project for the Valencia fine arts museum, known as Museo de San Pío V, was completed. This project, important to carrying forward the necessary ambitious transition of this transcendental level of the Convento del Carmen in Valencia. This text contains my reflections about this project, from an absolutely personal viewpoint, explaining why I do not understand or agree with this initiative, and above all to let people know and value the results of the insertion of these remains into the Museo del Carmen at the beginning of the 20th century by the architects Luis Ferreres and Francisco Almenar. This proposal involves at least three major operations. The first is the dismantling of many of the pieces of the courtyard conserved in two of the main temporary exhibition rooms of the IVAM, Centro del Carmen, rooms that were originally used as the refectory and chapter room of the Carmelite convent and currently belong to the Generalitat Valenciana. The second is the treatment that should be given to these spaces after removing the arches, resolving the connection with other rooms in the museum. And the third is the reconstruction of the Embajador Vich imposers that now structure the permanent exhibition rooms that will be built behind the current site of the Museo de San Pío V, after they have been related to the rest of the pieces conserved in the museum. All these operations are technically feasible, but absolutely incongruous in view of what must be eliminated from the present and future situation.

When the political authorities of the Culture Department first considered the reconstruction of this architectural fragment in the Museo de San Pío V, I was invited to a meeting where Fernando Benito, the current Director of the Fine Arts Department, was asked to expound at length and in a cordial fashion our different opinions about the present and future installation of these remains. I cannot say, then, that I did not have a chance to air my opinions on this subject, or that nobody listened to my passionate and probably unconvincing defence of leaving Embajador Vich where it was once and for all did not convince any of those present, and from that moment onwards, the initiative proposed by the director of the museum reached the status of a decision of cultural policy. From that time until the present day, the process has advanced slowly but surely. The following steps have been taken: a detailed study of the existing pieces and a graphic hypothesis for their reintegration, which served as the basis for a splendid exhibition and a documented catalogue about this Renaissance courtyard; new interpretative studies on the architecture of the Vich palace carried out by historian Joaquín Bérchez; a proposal for the reinstallation of the courtyard in the Museo de San Pío V drawn up by the architect Gómez-Ferrer; a project for the dismantling of the existing pieces in the refectory of the Convento del Carmen; the technical reports compulsory for this type of operations, which, by the way, were unfavourable, were drawn up and a positive opinion was given by the Foundation of the Museo de San Pío V and the Board of Directors of the IVAM, a necessary courtesy since the Carmen refectory is currently located on premises belonging to the IVAM (fig. 1). Before stating my technical, restorational or museological reasons against this intervention, I must start by recalling the political opinions in favour of moving and reassembling the courtyard.
remains conserved and their future contextualization is a clear example of how our memory is still our best tool when dealing with the passage of time.

"Such outstanding aspects as the reaffirmation of the personality and full consolidation of the Italian models, and artistic relationship with the rest of the Continent in the social weft of the Valencian Community..."

I do not know whether their projection into the future and social benefits are more important than the historic fact itself, but it is worth mentioning the opinion of Pierre Nora, who sustains that history is always incomplete and problematic representation of what is no longer there, whereas memory always belongs to our time and constitutes a living link with the eternal present and history is nothing but an unabated representation of the past.

Trying to put in order the reasons for disagreeing with this operation of historic recuperation leads me to take a stance as strongly in favour of its permanence in its current site as against its removal to a new one, two facts which are substantially different although fatally overlapping. What must be made clear, in any case, is that if all or part of the fragments of the demolished courtyards were currently in storage, forgotten or otherwise, the problem would be very different.

The first point to make would be to state that it is not true to think that the remains of the Vich courtyard are "lost" to our memory. Part of them is fortunately inventoried, stored and exhibited at the Fine Arts Museum, and another part is integrated into a museum very much visited by the public. In fact the concerts of the Grup Instrumental Valencià are held there and important exhibitions scheduled by the IVAM include them in the "most innovative trends of modernity" in the words of one of those who want to dismantle it as the expression of an unfulfilled wish. The remains of the courtyard have formed part of the Fine Arts Museum since they were incorporated to the Convento del Carmen in 1904, when the Palace was given ample publicity, and later the gallery where they were located became the Ancient Clothing Drawing Room of the Fine Arts Faculty, so this space has been unused for only nine out of the last hundred years.

Finally, one cannot speak about "rediscovering pages of our history", "a wish to safeguard and protect history" or "inviting all Valencians to participate in an exciting joint activity", as we often hear, if the lack of integrating elements or important accessories and the impossibility of achieving a public and integrative error. His urbanistic works are also conditioned by his eclectic style, in Jaúdenes palace, one of the palaces that make up the current site of Valencia Provincial Council, in which he showed a correct control between the original language of the building and the intervention language, but which in our present stylistic ignorance could be considered an interpretative or integrative error. His urbanistic works are also extremely relevant; with Calvo and Arnau he drew up in 1887 the first Expansion Plan for Valencia and later for Gandia, and he is the author of a project for the Interior Decoration of Valencia written in 1891.

Elected a member of San Carlos Fine Arts Academy in Valencia in 1896, on the recommendation of Martorell and Belda, he made the opening speech of the 1896-99 academic year on the subject "The concept and conditions of the idea and the form in Art," an example of his eclectic style and his tendency to choose the best of every architectural style and then rework it. He became a member of the Provincial Monument Committee, and it is worth mentioning that Ferreres is the only Valencian architect among his contemporaries who dealt with the theory of the restoration of monuments, in two moderate and well elaborated texts published in 1917 and 1921 in the magazine Archivo de Arte Valenciano. During those years he was appointed architect of the Ministry of Public Education and Fine Arts, and was in charge of the conservation of the built heritage of the province of Teruel, and made reports on the restoration of the Mudejar towers and San Pedro church.

Luis Ferreres was a witness and scholar of the polemics between restorers and anti-restorers, Lampérez and Cabello versus Torres Balbás and Martorell, among others, and wrote:

"Restoration on dead monuments is very difficult if not impossible. Reflections of a long gone civilization and a social order, and whoever wants to restore them must acquire a deep knowledge of their spirit and their essence, identify himself with their way of feeling and their manner of expressing; for Architecture is a social art and cannot do without this character; apart from the fact that the lack of integrating elements or important accessories and the impossibility of achieving a trustworthy, absolutely dependable information to restore them must necessarily leave great voids... In such circumstances, we understand that all we can do is put the remains back in place so that they will be sheltered from the elements, out of the way of any sort of profanation by the ignorant, and carefully maintained. Putting them in a museum can only be accepted as a last resort when no other solution is possible."

The location of some of the pieces from the Vich palace courtyard, carried out between 1904 and 1909 on the north and east walls of the refectory, is a worthy and intelligent architectural operation of eclectic syntax, both from a heritage conservation viewpoint and from a museological one. Ferreres’ starting point was the irreversible situation that the palace had disappeared and was never to return, and that he had inherited a few fragments of a courtyard, not a complete courtyard or building, and that both the museum and the fragments would gain from being placed together (fig. 4). Three attitudes led him to choose the solution adopted; one, the consideration of the architectural remains from a humanistic point of view, precisely as the cultural essence of the object to be reinstalled; the second, the understanding of the diaphanographic architecture of the refectory; the third and last, linked to the previous one,
is both the use of the impuestos to gain exhibiting space and a possible future expansion of the museum, which could only be northward due to the free space available. Let us analyse in detail each of these points. Joaquín Béchez and Fernando Benito have explained that the palace was built around 1527, and that the courtyard was reminiscent of Roman courtyards, with a freer interpretation of Vitruvian models, to judge from the closing of the upper floor and the presence of the large windows illuminating the main rooms of the palace, and which were a combination of classical design and traditional medieval mullioned windows in an exercise of stylistic abstraction to Valencian formulas (fig. 5).

Thus we could possibly imagine the simultaneous presence of an Italian designer and a Valencian master builder, the cutting of Italian marble stones, the importation of pieces from Genoa, such as transportable fragments made to order, which were starting to come into vogue at that time, as in the case of the columns of the Colegio del Patriarca. All of this amounts to an eclectic courtyard to begin with, with a more purely Italian part, the part that was later located in the Carmelita refectorry, and another part on the upper floor, which was reminiscent to be more Valencian, and of which fifty per cent of the decorated pieces are still conserved according to the inventory drawn up recently. This courtyard, the Castillo de la Calahorra (Granada) and the Castillo de Vélez Blanco (Málaga) have been considered to be the three most important courtyards of early Spanish Renaissance architecture.

The advantages and disadvantages of the past were studied for the first time in detail during the period of humanism, and its importance resided in the fact that there was actually a past, such, which could be beneficially mastered by admiring it from the present. However, in the Renaissance an exaggerated exegesis of antiquity was considered an error, as humanistic thinking had three views of the past: one was a sense of distance, that is to say, a feeling that the examples admired were a long way away in time, something that permitted considerable freedom to connect with the past. Another one was a theory of imitation, initiated in classical Rome but elaborated by the Renaissance sense of distance. And the third was the idea of literal revival, associated to acts of exhumation and resurrection, metaphors that came to mind through the humanists regarding ancient Rome, and that of the Romans regarding the ancient Greeks. As occurs in the Renaissance with the use of classical models, the most innovative thing was undoubtedly the dialectic emulation and the great achievement of establishing under a new light the links between the Renaissance and antiquity, such a far removed classical inheritance that its importation of pieces from Genoa, such as transportable fragments made to order, which were starting to come into vogue at that time, as in the case of the columns of the Colegio del Patriarca. All of this amounts to an eclectic courtyard to begin with, with a more purely Italian part, the part that was later located in the Carmelita refectorry, and another part on the upper floor, which was reminiscent to be moreValencian, and of which fifty per cent of the decorated pieces are still conserved according to the inventory drawn up recently. This courtyard, the Castillo de la Calahorra (Granada) and the Castillo de Vélez Blanco (Málaga) have been considered to be the three most important courtyards of early Spanish Renaissance architecture.

By the same architect. A front view of the north wall with the Vich arches installed shows two of the bays have been closed up. In any case, Ferreres designed the five chapels open on the refectory side, a presentation that we cannot appreciate today as two of the bays have been closed up. The material insertion of the remains left by Ferreres is most interesting too, regardless of the composition. In the first place, to achieve the great opening communicating the chapter room and the

117

ENGLISH VERSION
refectory at the level of the upper framework, dormitory level in other words, he created a large lintel with compound metal profiles and later proceeded to demolish the fabric between both rooms and place the fragments of the serliana in the resulting gap. The solution in the north wall is slightly different, according to the studies and drawings of Rafael Soler, since in the space between the two pisé-de-terre fabrics were propped on discharging arches made out of brick the same thickness as the arches to be inserted and locating on them the perimeter cornice of the new space, where the skylight glass is set, making the transition to the level of the pisé-de-terre fabric in the resulting chamber between the lower plane of the skylight and the roof with metal profiles (fig. 13). On the other hand, we do not know how much care was taken in the demolition of Vich palace, and although there is little information about the coffered ceilings of the main rooms, we must suppose that in demolition works like this at that time there were no special techniques used to dismantle and conserve the pieces that were taken over by the Academy, so it is not surprising that Ferreres felt quite free to lay out the pieces as he believed they could be used if we accept the layout of fragments made by Josep Martí based on the drawings by Josep Fornés (1801) (fig. 14). On the basis of this supposition, several comments can be made about the new layout. For example, given the individual treatment on arches and columns, we know that the original double prop or corner imposts, of which five are conserved and three have disappeared, were not used. So these voussoirs were not manipulated or refashioned in the insertion to make new imposts but voussoirs of the unused arches were used, the five arches required ten imposts altogether, which correspond exactly to the main voussoirs of two arches, which together with the six installed make up the total number of the eight in the courtyard. Ferreres made the replacements absolutely necessary to assemble them (three cymas, part of the base of a double semi-column and part of the splay of a double semi-column) leaving the rest of the pieces with the losses caused by wear and tear, accidents and man, thus revealing a great sensibility about the material conservation of the fragments.

The task of inserting different fragments of the palace of Embajador Vich which the Academia de San Carlos had collected after it was demolished in 1859 is known to have been performed a few years later in a priceless attempt to save it. The proposal for the dismantling project ends as follows: “...the once wall separating it from the chapter room is closed, what was originally the old church would partly recover its original space (although not its height) if the walls between buttresses were rebuilt in the same line, eliminating the side rooms and passages.” Researchers into the Convento del Carmen came to the conclusion a long time ago that the hypothesis made by Tormo eighty years before regarding the old church being converted into a refectory could only be sustained by the reintegration and construction style and that all the tests have demonstrated that, as in many such cases, the church evolved on its own site and so forms part of the structure of the present church. On the other hand, the operation suggested seems to be especially difficult because it would leave the Ferreres or Goerlich galleries uncommunicated or badly communicated, without mentioning the fact that it would be totally impossible to recuperate the light coming from the north and the unknown buios into the refectory, which can be seen in the only existing photograph of the building taken after Ferreres inserted the imposts. The dismantling project continues: “...once the wall separating it from the chapter room is closed, what was originally the old church would partly recover its original space (although not its height) if the walls between buttresses were rebuilt in the same line, eliminating the side rooms and passages.” Researchers into the Convento del Carmen came to the conclusion a long time ago that the hypothesis made by Tormo eighty years before regarding the old church being converted into a refectory could only be sustained by the reintegration and construction style and that all the tests have demonstrated that, as in many such cases, the church evolved on its own site and so forms part of the structure of the present church. On the other hand, the operation suggested seems to be especially difficult because it would leave the Ferreres or Goerlich galleries uncommunicated or badly communicated, without mentioning the fact that it would be totally impossible to recuperate the light coming from the north and the unknown buios into the refectory, which can be seen in the only existing photograph of the building taken after Ferreres inserted the imposts. The proposal for the dismantling project ends as follows: “...the total recuperation of the spaces will not be effective until the upper frameworks over the old church and the chapter room are reassembled. To what reincarnation? What should be done, then, with the paintings of the 14th century and later that decorate the monks’ cells on the upper storey and which are partly conserved?” I am afraid that it could all end up in the Museo de San Pío V in a strange return to the future. No, since this proposal neither helps understand the dismantling of the Vich courtyard fragments nor involves a step forward in the recuperation of the Convento del Carmen, let us stop these arguments here. The second and last problem to analyse is the reassembling of the palace courtyard in the Museo de Bellas Artes in what may or may not be its final journey, this time across the historic barrier of the river.

As everybody knows, the old seminary of San Pío V, built between 1683 and 1744, and since 1946 the seat of the Fine Arts Museum, has been undergoing an expansion process organized by the Ministry and the Local Department of Culture since the eighties. In mid 1999 a modification of the 4th Stage was drawn up by the architect Gómez-Ferrer, among other reasons in order to house what has come to be known as the Vich Museum. This modification, which presented, rather than the project and museological determinations of the impost, a reserve of space for this operation and its repercussions on the general layout of the museum, together with the images of the ground plan and...
sections that were published in the catalogue on the Vich courtyard, is the only document available to make an informed guess about the nature of the formalistic style of the museum, and also attached to the new galleries that are going to be opened. The access to the open courtyard room on the ground floor, through two new spaces, acting as transition elements between the Baroque architecture and the Vich courtyard. On the other hand, there is no connection on the upper floors of the Vich courtyard and the upstairs storeys, the Baroque building and the new rooms, and we do not even know whether these spaces will be correctly dimensioned in depth with respect to the palace or what function they are to fulfill, whether a gallery or a stage (fig. 18). Therefore, as far as we know it will be a superficial reconstruction of two vertical fronts of the Renaissance impluvium, and concerns itself with the ends of the ambulatory and the construction system of its vaults, for which Fornés (1801) designed a strange mixture of barrel vaults and Sanz (1809) (fig. 19) a different construction system. The truth is that the mere existence of the fragments of the courtyard in no way guarantees a trustworthy reconstruction of the building structure without making risky and/or reductive conjectures. The formal, stylistic value of the pieces to be reassembled is the only source available and, therefore, the beginning and the end of the operation, whereas the intention is that, instead of Ferreres’ insertion, an orthogonal layout on four walls would be clearer and would permit people to appreciate the courtyard better, which we must not forget is an architectural element that only makes sense if it fits into the spaces around it. On the other hand, unless the archaeological excavations throw more light on it, the pictures by Tosca (1704) and Fortea (1738) do not reveal very clearly where the large entrance was and there is even some doubt about the position of the serliana, because Pizarro’s engraving and Tosca’s plan give contradictory information about it. Many compositional and constructional errors may arise in the reconstruction, probably because the documentary research into the architecture of the palace is not sufficient but in any case an exhaustive analysis. The coexistence of medieval architecture and Renaissance fragments is considered intolerable, but the cohabitation of the latter and the Baroque architecture of the old seminary is deemed permissible when the gallery of little arches crowning the four-storey basilica where the courtyard is to be installed will stand out clearly for any visitors who raise their eyes to see the upper storeys of the Embajador Vich courtyard, thus spoiling the perception of the space, not to mention the difficulty in attaching the new rooms to one of the longer sides of the courtyard. It is undoubtedly an erroneous integration, which, as José Ignacio Casar has pointed out, contains too many historic transgressions. In any case, the aim of this intervention is not to make a profound criticism of the new insertion project, but merely to orient fragments of the courtyard towards the outside. This insertion is made with the intention of being an architectural act, but it is not, since it renounces sophisticated formulas that permit moving fragments, as in the solutions adopted by the Museo Nacional de Arte de Catalunya (fig. 20).

In conclusion, two issues or objectives are at stake. The first states that the reassembly of the Vich courtyard, with a layout similar to the original one when the palace was built in 1527, permits people to appreciate and enjoy this structure better. The second, that carrying out this reconstruction is as easy as putting together a jigsaw puzzle consisting of the Convento del Carmen and the pieces stored in San Pío V. As regards the first point, it is worth recalling the interest that this building has aroused since the history of architecture exists and scholarly studies circulate. In his recent research, Bérchez cites as many as seven publications and quotes about the palace and says: “...Perhaps this phenomenon is somehow connected with the fact that this courtyard from Embajador Vich has been a real problem from the historic architectural valuation of the period and the modern interpretations, working with the scarcity of documentary data about the work, the author or his roots, and it is possible also with the intricate perception of the building itself, taking into account that after it was demolished in 1859 –its presence was fragmentary, leaving behind it a stream of pieces and visual traces, whose localization –in both cases– has involved a complex and irregular archaeological choreo...”

A real situation to which we must add the fact that in recent years nobody has bothered to relate or make links in situ between the fragments assembled in the refectory and the courtyard and palace of Embajador Vich, or with the rest of the pieces later localized in the Museo de Bellas Artes, except to suggest the removal of the former. This would be easy to solve by setting up a permanent exhibit in the rooms or the spaces between the buttresses, with the support of a careful didactic background and using the most sophisticated technology for museums and exhibitions. This permanent exhibition, which is becoming common practice in restored monuments, would permit, after the necessary research, both the understanding of the twin buildings in their different constructional phases and the operations of heritage preservation carried out by the Academy in the 19th century, granting them the merit that is their due without needing to eliminate the architectural understanding of Ferreres’ museological intervention, an irreversible loss that looms ahead. As opposed to the utilitarian eclecticism applied by Ferreres on the Vich courtyard at a historic moment when neo-Renaissance language was one of the most commonly used for projects, which permits us to know the creative freedom practised by this architect in the use of the fragments of a monument, an “unnecessary” intervention on our heritage is proposed for the new expansion of San Pío V, where not even the method used in the de-restoration of Saint Sernin in Toulouse is admissible. In this case, Viollet-le-Duc’s intervention is being removed because it is considered technically poor and aesthetically mediocre; the idea behind this de-restoration is to achieve a pure architecture closer to the original, in the building and on the site restored in the 19th century. As regards the second objective mentioned, the assembly of the pieces with ornamental work, it seems that the promoters of this operation consider that only the cut marble pieces are of any value and the rest is just simple building material, an attitude that would suggest that only the heritage built with noble, decorated materials are of interest, as is often demonstrated in restoration works that leave ashlar or brickwork visible. But besides, it is not so easy and straightforward to take advantage of these pieces in the expansion works planned, however much support they receive from those previously in charge of the cultural policy of the Ministry and now dedicated to other jobs, who radically criticized any other option, especially those who defend the field of architecture, which they dubbed as incapable of understanding historic and artistic phenomena. Heaven will judge those cultural proposals that invite us to imitate the Metropolitan Museum or The Cloisters in New York as references to be followed, promising illusions and modernity, but resulting in postmodern irony. Until the 19th century, those who reflected about the past imagined it similar to the present, but with the advent of this century, the recognition of our difference from the past stimulated us to conserve it and the very act of conserving it made the difference even more obvious. So yesterday, venerated as a source of identity, appreciated as a precious resource, was turned into something more and more different from today, and a creative use was even made of it. Not recognizing Ferreres’ work as heritage to be respected seems to suggest a return to the notorious “querelle” between the Ancients and the Moderns that took place in the 17th and 18th centuries, a battle in which antiquity was considered to be far away and its scattered vestiges to serve as examples only if they were resuscitated and made whole again, and the Moderns were considered to be “dwarfs on the shoulders of giants”. Poor dwarfs and poor giants. Today everything is more complex, but if there is one thing we must agree on, it is that, in spite of the growing interest it arouses, these are not good times for antiquity, either in the form of history or in the form of memory, given the enormous frailty of the latter. The vampire character of the mummies is on its way out, and a more certain present is waiting for us, which we can call the postmodern world.

Salvador Vila Ferreres

The Recuperation Of The Courtyard From The Palace In Embajador Vich Don Jerónimo Vich y Valtierra

The Vich family had come from Catalonia when King Jaime I requested the services of their forebear Guiller, who settled in Valencia. Don Jerónimo Vich, who was born in 1459, served the Catholic Monarch King Ferdinand from an early age and was sent by him to Rome in 1507 as Spanish Ambassador, first under Pope Julius II and later under Pope Leon X. It is not surprising, then, that he was familiar with the works of the artists who worked for these popes. We refer to Michelangelo, Raphael, Brancacci, Peruzzi and Sangallo. It may have been around 1516 that the Ambassador commissioned one of the architects that he knew in Rome to design a Renaissance style courtyard for him to build in Valencia on his return in 1521.

Embajador Vich Palace

The first chronological report of the building of the palace, situated in the street that bears its name today, dates from 1527. There was no graphic record of it until 1704, when we can see it included in the plan of the city drawn by Tomás Vicente Tosca, in which we can see some of the arcades in the courtyard; in the earlier street plan by Antonio Mancelli in 1608, only the volume of the palace can be seen. Fortunately there is a study by José Fornés dating from 1801, while he was an architecture student at the San Carlos Fine Arts Academy, consisting of two drawings, one depicts an elevation of a section of the courtyard and the perimetral galleries with the ground floor, first floor and attic (fig. 1), and the other shows details of the expansion works planned, however much support they receive from those previously in charge of the cultural policy of the Ministry and now dedicated to other jobs, who radically criticized any other option, especially those who defend the field of architecture, which they dubbed as incapable of understanding historic and artistic phenomena. Heaven will judge those cultural proposals that invite us to imitate the Metropolitan Museum or The Cloisters in New York as references to be followed, promising illusions and modernity, but resulting in postmodern irony. Until the 19th century, those who reflected about the past imagined it similar to the present, but with the advent of this century, the recognition of our difference from the past stimulated us to conserve it and the very act of conserving it made the difference even more obvious. So yesterday, venerated as a source of identity, appreciated as a precious resource, was turned into something more and more different from today, and a creative use was even made of it. Not recognizing Ferreres’ work as heritage to be respected seems to suggest a return to the notorious “querelle” between the Ancients and the Moderns that took place in the 17th and 18th centuries, a battle in which antiquity was considered to be far away and its scattered vestiges to serve as examples only if they were resuscitated and made whole again, and the Moderns were considered to be “dwarfs on the shoulders of giants”. Poor dwarfs and poor giants. Today everything is more complex, but if there is one thing we must agree on, it is that, in spite of the growing interest it arouses, these are not good times for antiquity, either in the form of history or in the form of memory, given the enormous frailty of the latter. The vampire character of the mummies is on its way out, and a more certain present is waiting for us, which we can call the postmodern world.

The Remains of the Palace in the Convento del Carmen

The palace was demolished in late 1859, and the marble pieces in the courtyard were saved by members of San Carlos Fine Arts Academy, who placed most of them in the Convento del Carmen, which housed the Fine Arts
Museum at that time. During excavations carried out by the archaeologist Fina Marmolín in 1999, on the site of the demolition of the block of apartments built at the end of the 19th century after the palace had been knocked down, apart from information about the ground plan of the palace, one of the alabaster bases of the palace doorway was found, together with some fragments of marble from local and Italian quarries. These fragments are conserved in the Archaeological Museum. In 1860 the Academy decided to place six marble columns provisionally in the hall leading into the Museum that had been set up in the old convent. This operation was carried out by the architect Salvador Escrig.

The architect Pascual Sanz Barrera must have known most of the drawings and carvings of the palace courtyard mentioned above, which he used in 1909 to make the first graphic reconstruction of the courtyard, with drawings of the facade, a transversal and a longitudinal section (figure 3). The latter shows a view of the composition of the lateral gallery of the cloister for the first time. These drawings were perfectly proportioned, as they were based on drawings by Fornés, which show a graphic scale in Valencian palmos (a local measure equivalent to eight inches). In both cases they are perfectly true to reality, as was verified later.

The architects Luis Ferreres and Francisco Almenar must in turn have known Pascual Sanz’s drawings, but they simply proposed setting up some elements at ground floor level as museum pieces, and locating one of the serlianas (figure 4) and the remaining columns that supported the vousoirs of the arches (figure 5) in the Convento del Carmen, where the City Museum was located at the time. This involved a double architectural distortion: the presence of the springs of the arches had to be made without the impost, which was very different from a formal Renaissance solution for viewers and from the proper assembly of the parts and the courtyard ground plan proportions, to the extent that two false columns that were not even from the palace were inserted and all the pieces were placed on lime-stone pedestals, thus changing their original height (figure 6). The remaining Carrara marble pieces, particularly the windows from the first floor, were at best stored away.

We said that the architectural distortion was double, because in the second place two very important Valencian Gothic spaces were destroyed (figure 7). The Chapter Room, whose doorway into the Refectory was demolished to install the serliana (figure 8), and the Refectory were opened between the buttresses to locate the columns and arches, creating new side chapels, totally out of keeping with the closed space typical of Gothic buildings (figure 9). As far back as 1377 there is data to support the existence of both spaces. No doubt at the moment when the impostes were inserted, this Monastery of the Carmelites Order, whose construction was initiated in 1281, was quite underestimated.

**Valuation of Embajador Vich Courtyard**

The question of whether Embajador Vich courtyard was designed, carved and built by Valencian craftsmen or whether everything was brought in from Italy is not the most important issue. The scientific doubt is difficult to solve and a great deal of research would be necessary to clear it up. In this respect, authors such as Joaquin Bérciz (Arquitectura Renaixentista Valenciana), maintain this doubt. What they all agree on is the architectural quality of the courtyard and the influence it had on the most important buildings at the time.

The books by Serlio and Palladio, in 1537 and 1570 respectively, were too late to provide a Serlian-style ground plan; but similar carving to this can be found in classical architecture since early times (Temple of Hadrian, in Ephesus, C, figure 10). Here we can see how the moulding on the architraves runs uninterrupted from the lintel to the arch like in the Vich courtyard. In Valencia we can find earlier works than the Vich courtyard in the Renaissance Chapel in the cathedral (c. 1515) built out of alabaster, a material found on the facade of Vich Palace during the archaeological excavations. The Centelles Palace in Oliva introduced Renaissance forms (1510-1536), and the carving on the capitals of the marble columns is very similar, so that the material may have come from the quarries in Oliva (1520).

Speaking of reasonable doubt, it is even more difficult to find an Italian cortile the design of the first floor windows and Embajador Vich Palace, which still have Gothic style foiled mullioned windows, crowned by a Renaissance frieze and spandrel. This transition-style window, no doubt inspired by Embajador Vich Palace, can also be seen on the Tower on the Generalitat building, designed by Corbera around 1408.

We can find one of several antecedents of the courtyard in Italy in Michelozzo’s Medici-Ricardi Palace, built in Florence between 1440 and 1460 (figure 12). However, as regards the proportions of the rectangular ground plan and the plan of the arcades, including the ornamentation of the marble columns, Sangallo built the Gondi Palace between 1490 and 1501 (figure 13). This courtyard has three arches on two of the sides and two arches on the others on the ground floor. There are also finely sculpted compound capitals at the top of the columns, arches with architrave moulding and foiled ornamentation on the keystone. All of this is like the Vich courtyard, but without the richness of the serliana in the smaller galleries or the double columns at the corners.

None of the courtyards of palaces from the same period as Embajador Vich in the Valencian Community, such as Bechi Palace (Castellón, mid 16th century) or that of the Condes de Castalla in Onil (Alicante, 1539), are as exquisite an example of Renaissance architecture as the Vich courtyard. The former, no longer in existence, had Ionic columns supporting the modulated arches with foiled keystones. The latter, an example of transition, has moulded arches on quadrangular columns and a frieze with impostes, over which stood Framed Gothic windows like those in the Vich courtyard, but without the upper frieze and pediment (figure 14).

At the same period Renaissance palace courtyards in the rest of Spain are not like the one in Embajador Vich Palace, because most of them have arcades both on the ground floor and on the first floor and have a larger ground plan. In the cloister of the Palace of Cardinal Espinosa (Segovia, 1569), of Orellana Pizarro (Tuiñijo) or of Zúñiga (Plasencia, 1577), among others.

**Reconstruction of the former Convento del Carmen**

Apart from the recuperation, completion and restoration which is the main purpose of the works, the dismantling of the architectural elements from Embajador Vich courtyard located in the former Convento del Carmen means reintegrating part of the architectural space of one of the oldest Gothic structures in the city: the old Refectory and the Chapter Room.

Now that the Convento del Carmen is being restored as a cultural site (IVAM, 19th century museum), the time has come to reestablish the typology of the monastery so that its original Gothic design can be better known, studied and restored.

The removal of the impostes from the serliana and reconstruction of the wall into the Refectory will permit the recuperation of the old Chapter Room, so the sealed door connecting it with the cloister must be reopened and restored. The assembly of the columns and the arches from Vich Palace attached to the north wall of the refectory and the reintegration of the piéd-de-terre panels that stood between the ashlar buttresses supporting the roof will restore it to its outstanding role in Valencian Gothic Architecture (figure 15). In his magnificent publication on this subject, Professor Arturo Zaragozá was unable to include this unquestionably unique space in his large repertoire of naves with diaphragm arches because from the start it had an upper storey to house the dormitories. Besides, the refurbishment of this Gothic space should show greater respect for it, because its use as a gallery for many different sorts of exhibitions has led to its diaphragm arches being painted while on occasion of Valencia Biennial, thus concealing the painted red stars that decorated its vousoirs.

**Reconstruction of the Palace Courtyard**

Nearly ten years have gone by since I had the opportunity to study the pieces of the cortile for the dissertation for my Master’s Degree at Valencia Polytechnic University. During this time the painstaking scientific research carried out by Josep Mari Gómez Lozano, commissioned by the person behind the idea of recuperating Vich Palace, Professor Miguel Benito Dornenzeh, Director of Valencia Fine Arts Museum, has made it possible to know more about the palace, and thus grant it the esteem it deserves.

A place has been designed for this purpose in the expansion of the Fine Arts Museum that is being carried out by the Ministry of Culture. The number of columns to be disassembled and moved from the former Convento del Carmen, with their bases, shafts and compound capitals, is eight single (figure 16) and four double corner ones (figure 17). All the capitals have different decorative motifs. The two false columns will also be removed to restore the refectory to its original state. Each column is made up of three marble pieces, the base, the shaft and the capital, and reaches a height of 3.43 m.

Thirty-four vousoirs form the six semicircular arches, including the serliana, with six foliated keystones. Of the straight pieces, two lintels of the serliana and four impostes will be recuperated. Of the oculi, two semicircular ones with a foliated keystone and two interior ones (figure 18). All of this makes up a total of 86 Carrara marble pieces in a good state of repair: all the columns, most of the vousoirs and half the lintels and oculi.

The remaining marble pieces that survived the demolition of the palace, the insertion and the successive changes of location undergone in 142 years are stored in the grounds of the Museo San Pío V. There are 105 pieces, mostly parts of the first floor windows (figure 19), the impostes of the arches (figure 20), lintels and jambes (figure 21) and oculi (figure 22).

The total number of elements, counting the Convento del Carmen and San Pío V, comes to 201 pieces. Since after the detailed studies carried out we can conclude with a very small margin for error that the cortile was made up of 306 marble pieces, we have, then, 66% of the original pieces.

We must point out here that this percentage includes all the pieces, including decorative or minor ones (bases of lamp holders, impostes, cornices, etc.). As regards the major pieces, those with capacity to define the space in their own right, like columns, for instance, we actually have 96% of the pieces. The same applies to the upper windows, because we have 20 (83%) of the 24 arches or the cornella that make up the twelve windows and 19 (79%) of the 24 jambes required to support these arches (figures 22 & 24).

We can say then that we have a little over 80% of the pieces required to support the structure of the courtyard in its original form, permitting a reading of the rhythms established between the bays and the masses of the four walls of the interior facades.

The information we have about the four galleries surrounding the courtyard on the ground floor tells us that they were covered by closed groin vaults following the rhythm set by the arches and lintels of the serliana (figure 25). We have no information as to how the walls...
of the courtyard were made, although we deduce they were about 40 cm thick. There are no remains of the windows on the upper floor or attic that can be seen in the different drawings, so we imagine that they did not have any marble decorations. The restoration of this work, unique in its conception of space, the columns, and arches of Embajador Vich Palace Courtyard were built to join an interior space with the exterior, so that the action of the light and the rain would roll smoothly over the whiteness of the marble (figure 26). The fine carving on the different capitals and the flower petals on the intrados of the voussoirs were designed to be seen. The space in Dr Frantisek Kulka’s villa is an architecture of which we have few samples in our area, and even fewer testimonies of the samples that did exist, justifies this intervention sufficiently. It is necessary to seek the lost essence of an almost obsolescent architecture in order to discover its initial meaning. What is missing here is the “function”. But although the Ambassador no longer lives in the palace, we can at least see the way in which he took a portion of outer space to add to his new mansion (figure 27).

Adolf Loos’ Villa For Dr Muller In Prague And Its Authenticity

As far as restoration is concerned, the most famous building designed by Adolf Loos with Karel Lhotá’s invaluable aid is one of the most exemplary illustrations of the method that should be followed in the preservation of 20th century architectural monuments. The restoration of this building was unique in its conception of space (Raumplan) and the characteristic design of its interiors, was undertaken by a group of architects and restorers with the intention of preserving an extraordinary document of the 20th century and maintaining the gesamtkunstwerk (total art work) as authentic as possible. This task on the historic villa, with the collaboration of a large range of experts and specialists, gave rise to the drawing up of a method that made it possible to investi- gate the current possibilities of the building. In 1997, when preparations for restoration began with in-depth research and examination of all the documentation on the building, the conclusion drawn was, paradoxically, that thanks to the old regime the building had been kept in an extraordinarily good state of repair. A meticulous digital inventory of all the elements of the building con- firmed the hypothesis that in its conception of space works were initiated, working in most cases with histo- ric elements and materials and, in the case of missing parts or elements, the painstaking reconstruction (the landscaping of the garden was carried out according to the original plans) of the replacement of missing parts by studying catalogues and other buildings of the same period, now mostly demolished.

Direct reconstruction through the examination of the indi- vidual spaces in the building and the furniture, based on the old plans but, above all, on photographic documenta-
that time on the occasion of the proclamation of the open floor plan. For example, the integration of technical installations and furniture, eliminating the role of the interior decorator (points 8 to 10) is the principle about interior decorator (points 8 to 10) is the principle about A much remarked advantage of the Prague masterpiece is that all the furnishings are still practically intact. Paradoxically, thanks to the Communist period, but also thanks to a few notabilities (E. Poche...), even details such as light switches, lamps, and other accessories including all the integrated furniture have been saved. The original technical installations, usually absent from Loos’s works (compare for example with those by Dr. Lhotá, Villa Winteritz in Prague, Na Cihláře and the Viennese villas, currently occupied) are real museum pieces. No doubt the last advantage of Prague is the fact that Dr Müller’s house is not renewed in; that is why it maintained the authentic appearance it had in its day, even at the cost of certain non-functional elements and with minimum modern alterations. Thus the public has access to a building that is a splendid sample of the era -undoubtedly often overestimated and contradictory—of Modernism. Its remarkably individualist and traditional expression.

A Short Report on the Restoration and Refurbishment Works

From 1994, Prague City Museum, which administers the building owned by the city of Prague, carried out the overall refurbishment of Villa Müller and its gardens so that it could open to the public in May 2000 as a jewel of modern architecture showing us the work of a world-famous architect as it was when it was first made.

1. Research

In 1996 the history of the construction of the building was studied in detail by two teams, one headed by Petr Urlich with staff members from the Faculty of Architecture of Czech Polytechnic University and the other by Karel Ksantr. made up of professionals from the State Institute for the Preservation of Prague Monuments (SUPP). These two teams found out many hitherto unpublished facts and compiled all the photographic documents and historic plans from Milada Müllerová’s estate that is conserved in the files of the Artistic Industrial Museum in Prague. Once these separately commissioned surveys were completed (early in 1997), a competition was held in 1997 and won by Gisr A studio. At this point in time, nothing stood in the way of drawing up the project and initiating the preliminary studies for the total restoration of Loos’s villa.

2. The Project

The decision to present the villa as a historic monument naturally had a great influence on the overall approach to restoring it. In December 1997 a study for the restoration and refurbishment of the villa containing the general outline of the methodology to be applied at the different work stages, along with the restoration and constructional alterations to be made. Its authors were Vaclav Girsá, Miroslav Hanžl and Petr Urlich, with the collaboration of Vitezslava Ondrejová (reconstruction of the garden).

This study was followed by an application for planning permission, which was granted 14th May 1998. In the meantime, on 18th March the restoration project was debated at the State Institute for the Preservation of Buildings and one week later, on 25th March 1998, it was discussed at an assembly of Prague City Council. At the beginning of April, the author, conservators and the executive staff of the museum went to Vienna, where they met Dr B. Raukschcio, the author of a book about Adolf Loos (Raukschcio, B., Schuchel, R.A., Loos, Leben und Werk, Residenz Verlag, Salzburg 1987) and visited all the refurbished buildings by Loos in Vienna (the Loos Building or Goldman and Salatsch department stores, now the Raiffeisenbank, and the Steiner, Scheu and Moller houses).

In April of that same year, a detailed inventory of the building works by Loos was drawn up by Petr Urlich, Martin Fantysyova, Richard Cibik (the inventory computer programme), Miroslava Srejek and Sveova, in collaboration with the Girsá studio. Thanks to its meticulous, systematic format, presented at the final stage on CD-ROM, the inventory constitutes the basis for carrying out the project, which was completed in July of the same year. The Girsá studio, Vaclav Girsá and Miroslav Hanžl worked on it together with Vitezslava Ondrejová (garden), Jiri Hosek from the Construction Faculty of Czech Polytechnic University (infrastructure, bricks, plaster...) and Zden Kutnar (insulation) from the Faculty of Architecture of the same university. Besides, during this period, Vladimir Uhler and Ladislav Bezd made a comprehensive photographic report on the building and its surroundings, and film director Petr Ruttnier (AD Film) and Vinzenz Hradil made a film showing the initial state of the villa at the same time, with the cooperation of Vaclav Girsá, Petr Urlich and Karel Ksantr.

All the preliminary tasks and the project were now complete. The character of the restoration works had been defined in a precise, methodical manner, based on the intention of preserving the authenticity of the ensemble to the greatest possible extent, from a constructional, architectonic and environmental point of view and of conserving the existing materials, elements and general furnishings and the original furniture. The constructional changes were kept to a minimum. The garden project, based on the documentation of the plans conserved for the overall refurbishment of the villa, involved total reconstruction, on the one hand, and afforded a unique chance of reproducing the sort of garden in the gush in the thirties, on the other. During the preliminary stages of the restoration, many national and international experts were consulted. Anyone who showed an interest in the project was immediately informed of the initial state of the villa. The knowledge of other architects, art historians, museum curators and contemporary witnesses was invaluable for the authors of the restoration project. The extraordinary interest shown by Leslie van Duzer of Arizona University, USA, who visited Prague in July 1998 and found out all she could about the conception of the project, led to her ensuing cooperation in it. In September 1998 a competition for the restoration of all the furniture in the building was held. The Restorers Association, represented by Vaclav Mikuš and specialist sponsor Vera Müllerová, were selected.

3. Works

Works started on 23rd November 1998 with the overhauling of the building’s heating system, including the repair of the gas connection, the prudent location of the boilers in the basement in the basement (the old Strebler boilers will be included in the exhibition of the components of the building’s technical facilities) and connection to the radiator network. From this date forward and during the months that followed, flooring, stairs and pavements (tiles, etc.) were repaired and restored, and some elements were dismantled according to the detailed plans.

At the same time, research was commenced into the different crafts involved in the detailed restoration works (carpentry, upholstery, stonecutting, wall-papering, glass, ceramics). Apart from this, work was continued to turn the monument into a museum (Petr Kraj from the National Technical Museum in collaboration with Prague City Museum) and to condition the interiors of the villa with the identification of the furniture still in existence (Jana Hornekova in collaboration with Prague City Museum).

Finally, some changes in restoration took place during the works, related particularly to plaster applied to wood, which was performed by following the original methods and the typical system of connected bands. The asphalt surface of the roof terrace was also restored. The rest of the works stood out mainly for the least possible destruction and the greatest respect combined with the preservation of the original features, including the technical infrastructure of the building. Karel Ksantr was in charge of the supervision on behalf of the State Institute for the Preservation of Buildings. The entire works came to an end in the first half of 2000 with the inauguration ceremony that opened the villa to the public.

Conclusion

The restoration of a monument of modern architecture today is a problem involving partial judgements and decisions on determined aspects (an analysis-synthesis solution). It is based on several starting points:

1. Above all, a kind of myth has arisen, the myth of the Modern movement and it has become a fetish. In the first place, then, a sober, material and demythicizing view must be achieved. In this particular case this was done to perfection. The discovery of the variety of bright colours (related as regards period to neo-plasticism), traditional furniture (Chippendale from the Gezzel company) and the deliberate "falseness" of details fashioned in wood or stone pillars confirmed the sometimess distorted view of 20th century architecture.

2. Knowledge of monuments is an issue that requires professional methodological research and consistent preliminary studies that make it possible to compile a virtual image of the original building. Digital viewing of the constructionally paradoxically implies the possibility of reconstructing the building as it was originally, using original materials, where necessary in different locations. This is one of the absurdisties in the discipline of monument restoration. These possibilities are reaching their peak at the present time.

3. The conservation (authenticity) of the work is closely linked to this aspect. It is sometimes necessary to choose between making a replacement (it often happens that elements must be taken from other constructions or buildings of the same period) or a replica of the original. The latter option is the more expensive. The originality of the building as a whole is the first factor to be taken into account when evaluating the wisdom of such steps.

4. The pragmatism of the period can also be seen here somehow. Preservation of authenticity requires impairing several parts (which is seldom acceptable to an architect) that may cause the dysfunction of elements that play an otherwise useful and suggestive role in the building. This attitude may be upheld to prevent possible abuse or to achieve authenticity at any cost. Nevertheless, the historic building will remain as an artefact—as a historic subject in itself. This is the approach to adopt.

5. This approach results in very expensive works. In the case of Villa Müller these points were followed exactly. However, the question remains that this approach is absolutely not a model of the ideal attitude or method for restoring monuments of the modern movement? Why?

There is and there is not a simple answer to this question. The simple answer suggests that a monument actually becomes a monument when it demonstrates above all, thanks to its reputation, the high degree of knowledge and skill of the experts who worked on it. The construction is a matter of prestige and this mentallement becomes part of the cost. In other words, this construction work is a good thing in itself. This aspect potentially has an educational value that can be used as
The Alquería and the Historic Memory of Cultivated Lands

The alquería is a part of the remains of rural culture conservation work in the Valencian region. It follows a pattern, perhaps still hesitant, policy put into practice by Valencia Council to preserve traces of the city's construction. The old farm, broken up by different interventions into several separate parts, has been restored for cultural and artistic uses, permitting an approximate although not unitary reading of an ensemble that has taken on different shapes and uses in accordance with the changes in agricultural economy over six hundred years.

The research carried out at Valencia University by the Paisar group of Rural Landscape Gardening and Architecture, focused above all on the study of rural architecture in Valencia and particularly on the analyses and recuperation of the type of house found in the Valencian countryside carried out thanks to an agreement between the University and the City Council. These studies have provided detailed insight into the different types of houses built over the years, detailing the most interesting buildings and furnishing documentation of those that are no longer standing. The elevations, detailed analyses, series of houses belonging to different types, classification according to time, along with a specific follow-up of the buildings of undeniable value still in existence, facilitating their restoration with historical and artistic consideration, drawing attention to their state of neglect in many cases but always highlighting a culture destined to rapid declining unless a change of mentality can be brought about, form part of the line of thought that advocates the permanence of traces of the past in the construction of the new city and even considers it an essential condition of modernity.

A Real Landscape and a Landscape in the Mind.

That broken, fragmented landscape, taken straight out of a rural background and laid in the outskirts of the city, stuck in people’s mind. Situated in Marxalenes, between the station of the old trenet (local electric train) and the current tramway line, until very recently we could see the vestiges of the old road known as the camí dels Montanyana, to the east of which there stood a series of buildings that included an old oil-mill, warehouses, the boundary walls and the remains of an old farmhouse. A sign saying acereta was a reminder of an old farm industry. This was the last transformation of a historic farmhouse that has adapted to the changing economies and cycles connected with the land and farming by the centuries.

The course of the camí dels Montanyana is flanked by the walls around the west of the farm and the adjacent fields. It is sinuousal and narrow in shape, wedged between the walls and the unevenness of the ground, which begins to face west at this point. The first thing we find on the road on approaching from Valencia is the land and its wall and then the back of the farmhouse. The walls of the fabrics of the building and those surrounding the property are unified by the whitewash covering them, which provides a double reading: unitary from one viewpoint, but textured, changing and diverse as we approach it.

After the walls with the remains of pisé-de-terre, with more or less coherent fragments of late medieval brick, we can see traces of slightly pointed arches and some ashlers at the corners, we find the remains of a large cut stone gateway leading into the farm, which was turned into an oil mill during the first half of the 19th century. We are welcomed by a very old, tall, sturdy olive tree whose ancient trunk stands alongside the house, behind which we come upon what used to be a courtyard surrounded by a series of buildings dating from the early 20th century and adorned with large reddish cobble stones. Here we find some Modernist buildings, erected during the refurbishment of the old farm in 1914. Underneath the cast iron and the plaster cornices with their many coats of whitewash we can still detect a compact volume with bays corresponding to different constructional and constructive levels no longer in existence today, which tell the tale of the passage of time and the permanence of memories. Around the rest of the courtyard we find other, cleaner volumes, good work, fabric, corresponding to the oil mill, and on the storey above there is a feather mill. An underground domain. Our project concentrates on the restoration of the old farmhouse and the adaptation of part of it to house the municipal library.

Intervention on Buildings

Building on top of buildings always involves making a series of decisions whose complexity and heterogeneity make it difficult to reconstruct the logic of the intervention and even more so to mark a clear and explicit linear process to follow. The memory of a previously existing landscape with its own particular image and sensorial experience influenced on the work performed. Just as research on rural architecture is being developed in a general way and being applied to certain buildings to set the memory of the slow transformation process mentioned by Aloís Riegl in his essay titled “Modern Cult to Monuments,” that interest that is present in the evolutionary chain surrounding history and whose most interesting moments must be recorded, this research shows that the ground need, without losing the object value of the form, the substance proper to any architecture seen from a certain element, but also it contains, thus striving to create a discourse that would be valid in its own right, and at the same time coherent with history, keeping fragments of other phases, traces that, apart from the value of antiquity, can give us the emotional substance proper to any architecture seen from a modern perspective. We did not search for validation of its documentary character, another asset indeed, but of its own forms, of the tectonic of the fabrics and the construction material, the quality of its craftsmanship, the way architecture handles matter and technique at a moment in history, the quality of the spaces constructed.

The 15th Century, an Attractive Period in Alquería Building

Country houses built in the 14th century have a plain spatial lay-out that already contain the basic construction volumes that we find over the years, three bodies perpendicular to the driveway, one of which, the south one, is longer than the others. A one-storey house with a slightly hipped roof, almost flat, sloping towards the road, on the opposite side from the main entrance facade. At the end of the 15th century it underwent important transformation works to form the architecture that still exists in general terms, apart from small changes in the 18th and 19th centuries and an important subdivision and the transformation of its outside appearance in the 20th. Around the year 1500 the building was radically structured in several levels. The perimeter of the house was stabilized by expanding the west boundary to the drive and the three original bodies were conserved, consolidating the L-of the ground plan right from the start.

The new layout consists of a ground floor containing the farming installations with a noble floor upstairs over the south body where the main reception rooms are to be found. Large, plain rooms with big windows flanked by festoons with small plasterwork doorways connecting them to each other. There is a short staircase leading up to these rooms from the large entrance hall downstairs, a high space with polychrome beams giving on to the rest of the farmhouse: the kitchens, the main reception rooms, the service quarters, the farming areas and even a wine press and cellar, possibly dating from the 15th century, which were quite a find. Stairs and doorways at different levels, original cornices and cornices, traces of closed arches, open arches, loopholes, vents, all form an internal universe of quite fascinating complexity.

The treatment of space of that period has a flavour of its own, where arches play a major role with the weight of...
the big masses of pisé-de-terre walls leaning on them. Strong lines of wall but very much perforated at the bottom by arches of very different shapes and sizes, pointed, semi-circular, basket-handle, highly complex flamboyant Gothic plasterwork that show an almost Byzantine taste in the treatment of space. There are coherent fragments from other periods conserved in the 15th to 16th century architecture that we have taken as a reference for the restoration, such as the kitchen dating from the early 19th century, a fully-equipped, well-conserved rural kitchen with a good example of a fireplace and a splendid domestic hydraulic system in excellent condition. Remains of late medieval staircases, together with fragments of 18th century ones. But above all there are traces of times gone by or even modern times: arches, lintels, fragments of walls.

The System. Metrics and Matter

The intervention on the alquería attempts to achieve a rather ambiguous play: to conserve a unitary reading, not breaking the thread of history, always remaining at a general level, while enhancing the value of certain objects which involves a certain amount of good taste in the treatment of detail. We tried to solve this duality by means of an at times radical, unprecedented intervention that such a great transformation obliged us to follow, striving to make this a new generation, but at the end of the day just one more phase in this architecture that has changed radically in its use, so that it will cease to be just a farmstead and become a building of value in its own right, a building whose main function from now on will be to evoke a certain relationship with the land, to try and recreate the ancient links of man with the earth and its produce.

We took into account two basic points in this intervention: metrics and matter. The former, to help us gauge the scale and proportions. The use of matter, economizing means, limiting ourselves to a single material for the new fabrics and for the reinforcements and extradoses of old walls in a precarious state of repair, facilitated our working freely with the rest of the materials and founding certain elements in the necessary custom of using contemporary methods and materials for details, which results in the refurbishment taking on a more predominant role than the object being restored. We used the logic of classical Valencian measurements, which has been used in the reading of the existing architecture as well as in the actual restoration. By using Valencian measurements, we sought the traces of the first levels of the old framework, working on heights of 3.61 m, 16 Valencian palmos, or 4 varas, measurements frequently found in the construction of late medieval dwelling spaces in Valencia. This permitted us to make exact readings in a complex building, very much altered over the years. In the same way, we were able to discover the width of the loadbearing walls, usually two feet or 45.2 cm, built with bricks of 3.16 cm to generate bonds a foot and a half wide. The width of old doors, 4.6 or 8 palmos, gives us a width of 1.81 m. The concrete mouldings, like the plank moulding of old pisé-de-terre walls, measure one Valencian palmo, which provides a unitary scale for the whole system, accentuated in the measurements of stairs, window bays, girder interspaces, etc. Slightly tinted white concrete is the only material used for the new fabrics and, as we said above, it resolves wall reinforcements. Conserving or restoring or adding new designs or replicas, depending on each case, the rest of the materials to be found in the existing architecture are: pisé-de-terre, brick fabrics, arches, lintels, ashlars masonry, timber girders, brick partition walls, clay, pebble or tiled floors, timber carpentry and wrought iron railings. The link with technology, with industry, is a condition that I think we should never relinquish at any point in history, so in this new millennium the alquería building begins to make use of contemporary materials that help it along on its way through history: concrete in its fabrics, in its new staircases, and stainless steel in windows and railings.

Victor Alguera
La Alquería de Barrinto Archaeological Investigation

No building remains unchanged over the years. Those of us who work on the recuperation and conservation of architectural heritage are well aware of this fact. The initial idea for the composition of a building, made to fill the specific requirements of certain people at a given moment, may no longer be valid after even a single generation. We must add to this the inevitable regulation needed to malfunctions of the structures, mainly of the roofs and fabrics, both exposed to the degrading action of natural elements, especially water. In the Alquería de Barrinto, a historic farmhouse some 650 years old, time and the people who have lived and worked in it have left behind the marks of many operations that reveal the constant use and transformation of its structures.

In this type of rural building, the permanent change of compositional structure that its spaces are submitted to is even more evident. An alquería is above all a building for a farm and that involves not only a place to shelter a more or less extensive farming family but a centre for housing both the tools and the farm animals and storing the crops.

But a farmhouse could contain other spaces with different functions besides these. In the Alquería de Barrinto as well as its function as a country dwelling, a store for tools and crops and a stable for the livestock, the farmhouse had installations for the production or processing of certain farm produce, such as the seller or wine press to make wine and, in this particular case, lordly dwelling quarters located on the mezzanine floor. Such a variety of uses, together with such very different farming and domestic customs throughout historic periods like the low Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Baroque or Capitalism, involved constant adjustment of constructional actions. During the phase of preliminary studies, the archaeological analysis of the rural stratigraphy was carried out to order this series of constructional operations, some affecting the structure and others, mere repair works, but all making a loud “noise” that can sometimes prevent attaining an overall knowledge of the building.

In the case of the Alquería de Barrinto, an archaeological study was performed principally on the walls of the building in order to discover its architectural evolution. By determining the stratigraphic relationships of before, after and simultaneous constructional actions, it is possible to reconstruct the interaction between them, so that we obtain their complete “depositional” sequence in the walls of the building. The study of constructional techniques and the materials used and the architectural styles will provide data to enable the dates of the works to be ascertained. In this way the different building phases the farmhouse has been submitted to were determined, along with the scope of the works each time. Thanks to this knowledge, it is easier to decide on a restoration model, as it is possible to eliminate or emphasize the constructional actions on the basis of all the constructional actions performed.

Since it was first built in the early 14th century, the Alquería de Barrinto was conceived as a large agricultural business with 8 calzadas of arable land, that is to say, a surface of about 48 fanegadas or 5.98 hectares. It includes the lordship of the building, the two small barns and the three transversal bodies. It could be included in the category of farmhouses with a basílica-like floor plan, although the main entrance is not through the central bay but the facade is made up of two independent bays, in the form of a portico with pointed arches that lead into the other bodies.

Around the end of the 14th century or the beginning of the 15th (phase 2), new bodies were added on to one of the old facade bodies and the three transversals were enlarged, so that the building practically doubled in size. This was a token of its importance, which was at its greatest around 1400-1500, at the dawn of the Renaissance (phase 3).

At this time the farmhouse added a new function to the merely agricultural ones and the housing of farmhands by building on a series of noble rooms for the owners, the Figuerola family (Lords of Náquera since the late 16th century). Without getting rid of the old structures, the interior space of the house was redesigned, often with partition walls, to produce something similar to a late medieval urban palace.

The two lateral bodies on the ground floor were reserved as a service and production area and kitchen, with a seller for making wine, made up of two large circular tanks lined with tiles for crushing and pressing grapes that decant into two smaller square tanks. Two independent one-flight stairs lead up to the rooms in the noble dwelling on the mezzanine. Many elements that have been found bear witness to the great luxury of these building works. There are two curtained-type doors with scalloped convex arches and a door with an ogee arch decorated with plaster tracery, part of whose crown is conserved.

Two large pavements of Manises azulejos combined with plain floor tiles have been conserved, almost unique pieces as regards late medieval Valencian pavements. One of them is made up of “Gothic rose” azulejos with octagonal tiles, located in the room believed to have been a drawing room or the main dining room, and the second of “mitilat” type azulejos with star-shaped decorations combined with square tiles, located in the cambra or bedroom and the room beside it, which we could classify as a recambra or dressing room.

Besides there are windows with the typical festeadors (window seats) and an excellent sample of artistic carpentry with two carved polychrome modillons, one of which conserves on the front part the image of a man with a goatee beard. The sides and lower part of this modillion are decorated with plant motifs, and the ornamentation of what we interpret to be the brocade of the character’s clothes is outstanding. This piece belongs to Flemish Gothic style, which was very much in vogue in Valencia between the second quarter and the end of the 15th century. It follows the patterns elaborated, among others, by Joan Reixach (active from 1431 to 1486) and his circle. In the final decades of the 15th century and the early 16th, this is the point where we date these modillons. “Flemish” style was still very popular in works like those of the Master of Pere or even in those of Vicente Macip before 1525.

In the centuries that followed other expansion or repair works were performed on the farmhouse, some of
which were of great importance, such as those carried out in 1696 (phase 4), as we know from examining a document conserved in the Archive of the Kingdom of Valencia. At this time “per la continuació de les aigües esta inhabitable y amenasa la total ruyna... Y de altre manera no pot continuar dit requirement (tenant Josep Montesinos) en lo arrendament puéu no t’el part segura hom habitar en dita casa ni enseny hom poder lo nueu”.

This state of ruin was due to an important flood that took place in Valencia on 30th December 1695. Logically enough, the works concentrated on rebuilding many walls and replacing the roofs in large areas of the farm. At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th (phase 5), when the property had passed down to the Marqueses de Boil, repairs were carried out on the fabrics, once again because of damage caused by water (in 1819 the farm was inundated when the Rascañia irrigation ditch flooded over).

The last chapter of the story, before its recent refurbishment, was when a section of the south wing of the farmhouse was turned into a group of dwellings as part of an industrial complex (phase 6). These installations were built by the new proprietors, the Alfonso Díaz Segura, descendants of the historic tenants, around 1915 beside the old farmhouse for the production of vegetable seed oil.

Vicente García Ro y Alfonso Díaz Segura

*Restoration Of Morella Town Hall (Castellón)*

There are records of the presence of municipal institutions in the historic town of Morella since the times of the old 13th century Casa del Consell, no longer in existence, but the present town hall has been moved to a new building. Recent rehabilitation works sponsored by the Generalitat of Valencia and carried out by Miguel del Rey and Íñigo Magro have endowed it with new splendour.

The current Casa del Consell or Casa de la Vila, as it is called, is a southern Gothic building with elements of Mudejar origin. It was built in the mid 14th century and, although the oldest part corresponds to the facade of San Juan street, its interior presents interesting original elements in this public building, which was also used as a court of justice and a prison.

In the late 16th century, the building deteriorated seriously and throughout the following century different consolidation works were carried out, among which is worth emphasizing the sloping buttress constructed by J.B. Antonelli in 1602, an impressive element that reinforces the south wall and which has sometimes been considered as a small-scale replica of the walls being built at that time in Pefiñoca, not very far away from Morella.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the state of the building worsened as a result of the partitioning of the rooms and the indiscriminate opening up of bays to take full advantage of the interior space. These interventions brought about progressive loss of the late medieval appearance of the building, which in the case of southern Gothic is usually a large, diaphanous, compact, regular space, examples of which can be seen in the Lonjas (grain exchanges) of Palma de Mallorca and Valencia.

Several repairs have been carried out on the building during the 20th century, some of which, such as those performed on the west facade, were rather controversial. The recent works performed by the Generalitat Valenciana in the nineties have restored to the building its original function as Town Hall and Court and the monumental splendour that adorned it in former times.

The building is made up mainly of two bodies with a more or less square ground plan, of similar dimensions and situated along the Cuesta de la Cárcel. This sloping 19th century street originally led to a small medieval square –called the Fielato (Pointer) square, in reference to the pointer of the municipal scales in the Lonja– on the same level as the entrance to the Lonja. The project drawn up by Magro and Del Rey recovers the urban design of the period by reconstructing the little square where the old Fielato square used to be. The creation of the horizontal plane of the square makes it possible to perceive the true scale of the ogival arches, except for the opening hidden by the buttress added during the Renaissance. The sloping plane was a contemporary situation that distorted the reading of the building.

As a public space, Lonjas have a long-standing tradition along the Mediterranean coast and the territories of the old Crown of Aragon contain many buildings of this type. In the case in question, there is influence of the Tortosa Lonja in the design of the arches mentioned above and that of Perpignan in that it was used as a Casa de Consell. In any case it is a diaphanous structure with ogival arches in contrast with the anachronic geometry of the Mudejar-style mullioned windows of the tower.

The history of the building is printed on the facade of the Lonja. Thus the Renaissance intervention performed by Antonelli after the building had fallen into ruin at the end of the 16th century partly blinded one of these arches; while the sloping street and the end of the 19th century partly concealing another. The intervention criteria adopted has respected these circumstances.

The second main body of the building housed the Court offices and was in the shape of a tower. We do not know its original configuration exactly. Today it is crowned with a single pitch roof joined to the general roofing system and concealing the original shape of the building. The recent intervention allowed us to leave each of these bodies visible, so that the tower is emphasized as an emerging element and at the same time respects the sloping plane of the existing roof.

A cross-section of the building reveals the old prisons on the ground floor, and on the next floor the reception rooms and the chapel. The upper floor is made up of a large room where a central support holds the beams and the modillion system of the now missing coffered ceiling on which the upper rooms of the towers stood. The general intervention criteria followed by Miguel del Rey and Íñigo Magro involved prioritizing the function, accepting the worst possible means and acknowledging History not as a means of archaeological behaviour but as the memory of the building. This attitude resulted in respect and reappraisal towards the building at each and every one of the stages of the works. This neutral approach to history constitutes a coherent response to the difficult chronology of interventions practised on the building.

With an absolutely up-to-date stance, Magro and Del Rey proposed to exploit the poetic side of Architecture expressed by means of a language all their own. They decided to intervene rather than restore, thus establishing, for example, an interesting dialogue between the Gothic fabric, the Renaissance buttress and the new buttresses that they needed to design. In this line it is worth mentioning that other dialogue between the original work of the Lonja and the current ones –limestone for the ashlar or flagstones and timber– differently treated depending on whether it was Gothic or modern fabric, and even the interplay established between the male tower of the Court of Justice and the female one of the Lonja.

Undoubtedly one of the main challenges of the project and the one which the architects have most successfully solved was the section of the building’s interior courtyard. This courtyard had been invaded by some architectonic elements added a few decades ago and which had to be maintained for different functional reasons. The criterion followed was based on their conception as light objects leaning on the old masonry and granting transparency between the main entrance and the back facade. In this way it is possible to read these elements almost as “furniture” contained within a large architectonic space. With this in view, their original walls were replaced by light and visually transparent architecture even though timber and stone were used. Nonetheless, the differential treatment given to these materials both from a constructive and a technological viewpoint allows us to separate them perfectly easily from the original Gothic fabric.

In conclusion, this is an intervention that respects all the historic stages of the building, carried out in an entirely aseptic manner, avoiding all stylistic manias and phobias. At the same time the lack of archaeologist consideration facilitates an overall reading of the building’s history. Even the dual character of the monument as a Town Hall and Court of Justice has been given a suitable coherent solution in its rehabilitation as a Municipal and Judicial centre.

The greatest merits of the work performed by Miguel del Rey and Íñigo Magro in their impeccable rehabilitation of Morella Town Hall can be listed as follows: the recuperation of the building not only in its material aspect but also from a functional point of view; the assumption of an impartial stance towards history while ignoring historicist criteria; the updating of the building without drawing a rigid and arbitrary line between the new and the restored; the conception of the building as a living testimony of its own history; and the emphasis laid on its intrinsic constructive and aesthetic values, while even resolving the conditions imposed with extraordinary skill.

Michel Delgado Martínez

*Havana City Centre: Intervention, Recuperation & Transformation*

“But the historic should go before the architectonic. Why? Because making an architectonic analysis of a building without knowing its history would be like dissecting a corpse; and what matters in this case is not the dead body but what it was like and how it worked when it was alive. Who ordered the buildings to be erected, what problems did they come up against, who made them, which other forces, how do the buildings as they stand today relate to their original condition or the way we remember them... These are the points that matter in our work. In a nutshell, we think buildings have lived a lifetime just like human beings and, like all human beings, they have a personality that is the product of this life.” (J. E. Weiss)

Notes on the historic evolution of the city of Havana

The need to preserve Havana constructions, from a whole building to a facade in ruins, as part of the city inherited and its architectonic heritage involves consolidation work that must be supported by the citizens in general and all those who take an active interest in consolidating a constructive memory. Havana has been losing this memory faster and faster, in some cases due to the serious economic crisis the country is going through and in others simply out of neglect or indifference to this type of campaign.

Havana is a unique and heterogeneous city that escaped the sixties building boom that paid no heed to heritage, during which whole architecturally impersonal districts were erected, destroying the identity of old traditional areas. In this it is different from any other city in Latin America. The profound
political and social changes that came about by Cuba after 1959, the year the revolution triumphed, kept it from this development because there were more urgent issues to be dealt with; paradoxically, this neglect saved it from a worse fate. What was inevitable was the devastation caused by the passage of time; the progressive deterioration of the buildings was obviously accentuated by their old age.

The oldest part of Havana was founded in 1519 beside Carenas Bay, on the site where the Plaza de Armas stands today. The compact network of narrow streets developed into a city with five main squares: Plaza de Armas, Plaza de San Francisco, Plaza Nueva (no longer very new, despite its name), Plaza del Cristo and Plaza de la Catedral. Since olden times the city has been protected by walls and a system of strategic forts, among which we can include four of the six that dominate the canal leading to the bay: Los Tres Reyes de Morro, San Salvador de La Punta, La Real Fuerza, La Dominante and Los Tres Reyes del Morro and, in the meantime, the City Government entered into cooperation agreements with other cities and states, implementing the Office of the Historian, for the restoration of other buildings threatening ruin. During this process, specialized work forces were set up and a skilled team of architects, engineers, archaeologists, mural painting experts and art and social science historians got to work in their different fields. The most important achievement was the awakening of social conscience regarding the restoration of the Historic Centre within the people’s reduced scale of needs. After 1990, during the crisis caused by the disintegration of the Eastern European countries and US foreign policy, the works were not only held up, but almost came to a standstill entirely. For that reason, a special effort was made in these recuperation works until 1994. At the end of 1993, the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba passed a new law that defined the functions of the City Historian’s Office, granting it the maximum authority to promote the preservation and restoration of the Monumental Heritage and endowing it with legal personality and authorizing it to request, obtain and administrate international aid, and at the same time conferring on it faculties to deal with the urgent requirements of the inhabitants of the area declared under its protection.

In 1995, after the 90-94 depression, almost as many refurbishment works were commenced and/or negotiated as had been performed by the State in the previous fifteen years. In order to adapt to the times, the view of the Historic Centre was to achieve an integral self-financed development plan that would ensure the redemption and profitability of the investment made. The Cuban contribution in the negotiation with foreign capital adds the benefits of future use to the tangible and intangible values of the buildings. In no case are the buildings sold, but granted in usufruct for a period of time, taking into account the added value of some buildings is so high as to constitute non-negotiable heritage. This new situation provoked the rapid development of basically official local economy and mixed national and foreign associations, which made it possible to increase even more territorial autonomy where a large part of the product is used to recuperate heritage buildings.

The Urban Planning Situation

“Havana, like any other city, has had many planning projects that have never got off the ground for one reason or another. It was even on the verge of losing its monumental Historic Centre.”

The proposal of the French urbanist Jean C. N. Forestier in 1929 was based on the building of a homogeneous maritime front, a city facade looking onto the sea with ‘modern’ tendentiously European blocks taking the place of the heterogeneous Baroque buildings. The Ordinance Plan that the Town Planning Associates team was commissioned to draw up in 1956, under the directorship of the Spaniard J. Luis Sert, suggested that the street network be replaced by a structure of broad avenues and high-rise buildings, with the territory used for tourist facilities, saving just a few monuments that were representative of economic, political or religious power.”

The recuperation of the Historic Centre and the understanding of its worth is mainly due to its principal institution, the City Historian’s Office, founded in 1938 by Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring. This office was responsible for the initial ideas that led to the protection of the heritage. In 1976, the Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture started the investigations into Old Havana that led to the acknowledgement of its exceptional merits and a proposal for its refurbishment. In order to ensure the preservation of the architectural and urban heritage, in 1979 it was included on the list of National Monuments and in 1981 the State granted the City Historian’s Office funds to invest in the restoration of the Historic Centre and, at the same time, the Monument Restoration Company and the Heritage Architecture Workshop were set up. As we mentioned above, in 1982 it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. That same year the abovementioned National Conservation, Restoration and Museology Centre was created to lay down methodological guidelines for restoration in the country. In 1985 this institution, together with the Provincial Department of Physical Planning and Architecture, drew up the General Outlines for the Recovery of the Historic Centre. Finally, in 1991, the Department of Architecture and Town Planning of the Corporation developed the first stage of the Municipal Development Plan. In 1992 the Workshop School was set up to rescue almost forgotten trades related to the field of restoration. In 1993 the company Habaguanex was established to administrate the hotel, gastronomic and commercial system in order to help finance the territory. In 1995 the Historic Centre was declared a site of great tourist importance.

In short, we might say that several plans of greater or lesser importance were working on the zone. It was seen there were more...
The birth of the Master Plan for the Integral Revitalization of Old Havana

In December 1994, the Master Plan for the Integral Revitalization of Old Havana arose in view of the changes that have come about in the way of considering town planning all over the world. The Master Plan for the Integral Revitalization of Old Havana was drawn up at the request of the City Historian's Office and with the participation of professionals from different institutions that have traditionally worked in town planning, such as the City Historian's Office, the National Conservation, Restoration and Museology Centre and national, provincial and municipal offices of Physical Planning; all university faculties and research centres related with the field of heritage recovery were also to be involved.

The Parque Central de La Habana, the Plaza Vieja and the area surrounding them are important nuclei in the traditional old centre of the city. Many of the buildings there today are in a very bad state of repair, which has a very negative effect on the general image of these two squares. The architectural richness of the buildings and the presence of some of the city's most important cultural institutions call for an urgent work plan to guarantee the revitalization of these sites.

Plaza Vieja, an Urban Ensemble with a Unique Identity

The Plaza Vieja stands out as one of the most important examples of colonial architecture in Havana. It is a site with an enormous monumental value that has acquired such urban and architectural importance over the years that it can be considered to represent a typical state of the city.

Its location, originally in 1559, precociously marked the urban development that was to play in Havana, with its port among the busiest in America, and the city itself likely to multiply the number of inhabitants in a short time and to have a large floating population.

High-class families built houses in the vicinity of the square. Rich settlers were attracted by the closeness to the city itself likely to multiply the number of inhabitants in a short time and to have a large floating population.

The most visible changes that can be seen today came about between 1900 and 1915, but badly impair the harmony of the ensemble. The contrast provided by the height of the Palacio Cueto Hotel and the Gómez Mena office building altered the scale of the square. The Palacio Cueto was the only one to introduce period architectural merits. It was a well designed hotel in the style of Catalan art nouveau and did not project its great height directly on to the square, but was discreetly set at a diagonal to it.

The House of the Condes de Jaruco started a recuperation process of the Plaza Vieja as a whole. Thanks to this, in a clear process the square has re-emerged little by little as one of the sites of the greatest architectural, artistic and historic value in Havana.

The House of the Condes de San Juan de Jaruco in Plaza Vieja

Built between 1733 and 1737, it is a typical example of a house with a mezzanine, quite representative of the Historic Centre and corresponding to large colonial-style mansions linked to the advent of a social class enriched by the boom of the sugar industry in the 18th century. This luxurious house has a mezzanine and thus perfects the segregation of functions that came about as a result of the family's new aristocratic habits. Store rooms, service area, coach houses and stables were all on the ground floor. The mezzanine housed the servants' quarters and some local people to carry out administrative tasks. Finally the family enjoyed what was known as the 'noble floor', with comfortable, spacious rooms sheltered from the bustle of the street and the menial tasks on the floors below.

Structural and architectural elements. The courtyard is a large enclosure surrounded by arcades, with three arches on each side, forming broad galleries like the best houses of the time. The reception rooms at the front are covered by excellent discreetly decorated carved ceilings. Some timber railings and doors were preserved for a long time.

The portal is one of a few crowned with broken or interrupted pediments instead of plain entablatures. The alteration of the old balcony on the facade is evident, as it should have been made of timber like in the other houses in the square, since the framework of that floor is still timber. In spite of this, the composition is pleasant with the contrast between the props and the shapes of the columns on both stones. The beautiful stained glass loungers in the upper arches, probably from the 19th century, are outstanding.

The author of the restoration, the architect Daniel Taboada, has based it on a majority of the upper-middle-class domestic architecture of the time, with a large fortified doorway, a loggia on the upper floor, a portal with pilasters and a broken pediment framing the coat of arms, the carriage entrance leading into the open space of the central courtyard, with four porticoed galleries on both floors and a very well-designed stair case, communicating with the courtyard by means of the railing with turned balusters. Of special interest are the original carpentry of carved panels, the refurbished flooring of stone slabs on the ground floor and hexagonal marble slabs in the main drawing rooms on the upper floor. The rooms also featured ceilings with Mudéjar-style construction characteristics.

Technical condition before the intervention. Before the intervention the residence had reached a regrettable state of structural repair, worsened by the closing of the roofed courtyard with an anachronistic structure of timber trusses and zinc plaques. Its restoration was determined by its great monumental merit.

Main work on the structure. A series of activities were performed in coordination with a view to conserving the building and restoring its original image.

Taboada also points out that the restoration works respected the transformations undergone by the house throughout the 19th century, mainly the cast iron railings on the balconies and the closing of the arches of the loggia on the upper floor. He explains that this closing led to the best known and admired motif in the building, the three coloured glass loungers surrounded by wood, the central one with an elaborate floral design flanked by the other two with a geometric pattern and the arches at the end are walled up with brick partitions and blinds without loungers.

Research into the decorative painting of the house led to the discovery of a valuable collection of frescoes and the layout of the stones, engraved and painted black in the arches, columns and partial areas of the walls.

Parque Central Hotel, its Impact on the Urban Environment of Havana Parque Central

The area around the Parque Central has great general merit, as it includes architectural values first expressed in the old Capitolio Nacional, where the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment is currently located, the largest building in the area, and the baroque facade of the old Galician Centre and, to a lesser degree, the Renaissance style of the old Asturian Centre. In the area there are also some elements of remarkable historic value, such as the Arca del Louvre on the ground floor of the Hotel Inglaterra, where important political events have taken place.

Besides, the headquarters of the old Capitolio symbolizes the historic period of the pseudo-Republic. The buildings around the park are a token of the past power of the Spanish bourgeoisie during the Republic, and the Paseo del Prado and the Parque Central have historic importance as part of the urban development of the city.

The atmosphere of the surroundings is closely linked to the Prado and Parque Central area and the gardens of the Capitolio, as well as the Parque de la Fraternidad, a little bit further away.

Café Central & Café Alemán Building. This two-storey building with well proportioned neoclassical arcades was still standing until the late eighties. There were two very famous cafés inside: Café Central and Café Alemán, and the first floor housed for many years the most elegant or aristocratic gentleman's clubs of those years, the Union Club, which later erected its own building on the Malecón and later disappeared in the midst of the changes that were taking place in Cuban society. The area occupied by this building now forms part of the Hotel Parque Central. The part of the facade that was rescued and
incorporated into the hotel belonged to this old building: Hotel Plaza. Still standing, although with alterations. It was originally built with two stores, and in the early 20th century it was occupied by the Spanish hotel Inglaterra. Another neoclassical construction, originally two stores, then three and now four, the Hotel Inglaterra stands on the opposite side of the Parque Central, on the corner of Paseo de Martí and San Rafael street; in colonial times, the ground floor housed a café called El Louvre, a name that has not been lost since the entrance into the hotel is still known as the Acrera del Louvre, a very emblematic place in the city and the site of some major episodes in Cuban history. Spanish Centres (Galician Centre & Asturian Centre). The Spanish group resided in Cuba during the colonial period and until well into the Republic, finding themselves without their families, friends and sometimes not very well off, felt the need to meet for mutual protection, which gave rise to the so-called regional centres, of which were the Galician Centre, the Asturian Centre, the Castilian Centre and the Catalan Centre. Two of these palaces were opposite the Parque Central. The Galician Centre is a four-storey structure, now known as the Sala García Lorca del Gran Teatro de La Habana, whose facade is adorned with several marble sculptures; the author of these was the Belgian Jean Beauf. The co-author of the Presidential Palace; experts attribute many different influences to this building: Spanish Renaissance, French Renaissance and even baroque. The Asturian Centre is also four storeys high, and it was designed by the Spanish architect Manuel del Busto. It is Herero-style Spanish Renaissance. The Park itself. Situated exactly on the border between old and modern Havana, that is to say, immediately after the enclosure behind the old ramps, the Parque Central was just the start of the famous Paseo de Extramuros or Alameda de Isabel II to begin with, and little by little it began to acquire a personality of its own. For many years it separated the two parts of Paseo del Prado, now known as Paseo de Martí, when it spread towards the sea like the present Plaza de la Fraternidad; this second part disappeared when the Capitolio Nacional was built. The Parque Central, at the centre of which stood a statue of a little loved queen, Isabel II, until the end of Spanish domination, little by little became the most popular place in Havana in the final decades of the colonial period and the first half century of the Republic. The first statue erected in Cuba as a homage to the hero José Martí was placed at the centre of this park and still stands there today as the first and most spontaneous popular tribute to his beloved memory. Because of its location, then indeed very central, it was the most important as a favourite meeting place for the Havana dwellers, and because of the important character who presided it, until 1959 it was the site of countless official ceremonies, political assemblies and also the most heated popular protests, especially during the uprisings against the tyranny of Machado and Batista. The development of the city today is leaving the Parque Central behind, as occurred before with the Plaza de Armas.

Second half of the nineties, project for a new hotel: the Hotel Parque Central

The inclusion of this new building in the historic centre met with the logical rejection and indifferent assimilation by the City and its inhabitants. The task presented was complex, but very clear for the team designing the project: to rescue the fragments of the old facade and incorporate them into the new building in such a way as to achieve a symbiosis between the new and the old with each part conserving its own expression and harmonizing with the other. Some formal characteristics of the works.

- Monumentalization of scale (impressive buildings).
- Facade measuring over 12 metres.
- Portico as a compulsory condition.
- Great concentration of hotels and cultural services.
- Interior courtyards with galleries, monumental staircases in new classic, Gothic or eclectic styles.
- Wrought and cast iron fittings for window and balcony railings and staircases.
- The use of the balcony as a link between public and private life.
- Total opening of windows with blinds and double french windows of colossal dimensions with geometric designs.
- In the interiors there are a great many laurel bushes, artistic lamps, stone and marble benches, lions, bronze corbels and beautiful terrazzo paving.
- The average height of the surrounding buildings is 26 metres.
- Facades in a continuous line and homogeneous height and balconies with terraced-style houses, like a closed space interrupted only by the roads.

General description of the project and its integration in the old urban structure

At the request of the company Empresa Mixta Amanecer Holding S.A., the project consisted of a document with the technical data and definitions of the major operations, with a conceptual analysis of such an important site and the following design requirements:

1. To rescue what was left of the original facade for the new building that was going to be erected, thus conserving the scale of pedestrian circulation in the shadow of its pilasters; besides, to create a space with a use defined as an extension of the internal functions towards the outside.

2. To use the porticoed arcade towards the rest of the streets to permit pedestrians to circulate under a height of about 7 metres and a minimum width of 3 metres.

3. The courtyard, as an element of spatial organization, would contribute with its green belt to the view and its interior and exterior integration, permitting harmony of ambiances, protection from the sun and natural ventilation and illumination.

4. To use moulidies, friezes and cornices and fenestration with French windows to sift the light and guarantee ventilation.

5. The use of balconies of minimum dimensions with wrought iron railings.

The premises in the formal-expressive aspect were rather more difficult to determine, especially in a zone of such great historic and architectural value. Several facade designs were presented to the investor and it was agreed that the most suitable for the image desired should be a facade reinterpreting the codes of the area, although this alternative might involve losing the contemporaneity of a work with an identity of its own, the product of a new generation while taking into account the merits and achievements of past generations.

Intervention on the block and building project. The possible solutions for the refurbishment and preservation of any old zone can be summarized in four types of intervention: permanent conservation programmes, integral restoration, partial restructuring and new construction.

Partial restructuring. The new part of the building, opting for a context architecture, would take the codes of traditional Cuban architecture and reinterpret them, using modern, mostly high-tech materials in forms of the past, each based on a form already in existence in the surrounding area thanks to what we call Collective Memory. The treatment of the existing fragments of facade was based on salvaging them with the same materials as were used in the original building technique, and glass was used as a neutral element in the refurbished facade to close the bays. At no time was there any attempt to meld the two languages, but the source or origin of each part was clearly emphasized without trying to conceal the truth from the observer.

New construction. The restoration and incorporation of existing fragments of the old building in the new hotel has the charm of making the tourist feel the atmosphere of the time it was built and has the advantage of rescuing heritage values and at the same time brightening up an important area of the Historic Centre, which also enhances the cultural promotion of the area.

The ground plan of the building strives to rehabilitate the urban design a compact block typical of the city, with a central courtyard and wings parallel to the streets in a theme to be found repeatedly in Cuban architecture. As regards facades, the exterior design of the hotel has been subjected to its location concerning height, facade line and extension, shores, width of the arcades and the existence of the latter as a compulsory condition, the use of balconies, among other things, so that it shows its modernity or contemporaneity without formally attacking the surrounding atmosphere.

Conclusions

Any development project must include among its strategies the recuperation and enhancement of the heritage of the territory involved. In this way, cultural heritage becomes a key factor in the promotion of the socioeconomic situation. The heritage of this historic city, like any other asset, has fluctuated over the years. However, in spite of the considerable loss of heritage in times long past and even not so long past, the legacy that remains today is still remarkable.

In general, the deterioration of most of the buildings in the historic centre of Havana is fundamentally associated with: the age of the buildings, different uses throughout their useful lifetime (unsuitable exploitation), incorrect repairs, the demolition of neighbouring houses and lack of maintenance. The city and urban spaces are, above all else, places for human beings and society to live in. We cannot plan history or produce it, but what we do today will be history tomorrow and will determine the future in one way or another.

The aim of conservation is to maintain the cultural value of a place, and must include steps for its safety, maintenance and its future. All the disciplines that can contribute to the study and safeguarding of a place must come into play.

A suitable conservation policy for a place will be determined above all through an understanding of its cultural value and the maintenance of the whole visual environment. It is based on respect for documentary, physical or any other sort of evidence and the contributions of each period to the site. When planning an intervention, it is always worth considering the idea of setting up a workshop to...
with the problems of the building to be refurbished starting with its historic value and concluding with the technical state it is in, in order to come up with the best architectural and structural solution by means of a multidisciplinary team of workers.