

Ayuntamiento de Avilés



www.savi.es

Avilés Tourist Information Centre
(GUIDED TOURS)


Ruiz Gómez, 21 - 33402 Avilés
Phone: +34 985 544 325 - Fax: +34 985 546 315
www.avilescomarca.info - turismo@ayto-aviles.es



Casco Histórico Avilés



RECOMMENDED ROUTE

- 1 Spain Square
 - 2 Avilés City Hall
 - 3 La Ferrería Street
 - 4 Valdecarzana Palace
 - 5 Franciscans's Church
 - 6 Los Alas Chapel
 - 7 El Muelle Park
 - 8 Old Sabugo Church
 - 9 Carbayo Square
 - 10 Santo Tomás de Cantorbery Church
 - 11 Eladio Muñiz House
 - 12 Market Square also Hermanos Orbón Square
 - 13 Maqua Palace
 - 14 La Cámara Street
 - 15 San Bernardo Street
 - 16 Camposagrado Palace
 - 17 La Fruta Street
 - 18 Ferrera Palace
 - 19 San Nicolás de Bari Church
 - 20 Los Caños de San Francisco Fountain
 - 21 Municipal House of Culture
 - 22 Balsera Palace
Municipal Conservatory of Music
 - 23 Arias de la Noceda House
 - 24 Galiana Street
 - 25 El Carbayedo Square
 - 26 Ferrera Park
 - 27 Rivero Street
 - 28 García Pumarino House
Llanoponte Palace
 - 29 Palacio Valdés Theatre
-  Tourist Office



Texts: Alberto del Río Legazpy and Avilés tourist office.

A city with a long history.

The streets and buildings of the old part of Avilés (which, along with Oviedo's, are the most important in Asturias) have been declared Historical and Artistic Monument by the Spanish Government. The city preserves important remains from the past, some of them really magnificent.

During the Middle Ages, in the 11th century, King Alfonso VI granted the city a Municipal Charter that brought valuable social and commercial privileges. The city became fortified and began to develop an important commercial activity that made it the second municipality in Asturias. A fundamental contribution to this fact was the strategic emplacement of its sheltered

port -at that time, and for centuries-, the most important port in the region and one of the most active ones in the Atlantic area. Its commercial influence reached all Castilian markets.

In the 17th century, the population growth made necessary to build outside the medieval citadel. The first building to be erected was the City Hall, and soon afterwards Ferrera and Llano Ponte palaces. This urban development was the origin of the present "Plaza de España" (the town's main square, called El Parche by Avilés people) as well as the beginning of two streets, Rivero and Galiana. This growth is known as the "Baroque urban expansion".

In the late 19th century, the city enjoys a new boost: "the bourgeois urban expansion" which was the origin -by draining the wetlands- of some urban spaces such as the Muelle (harbour) park, the Marketplace... and beautiful and magnificent buildings. At that time, Avilés was one of the first cities in northern Spain to become modern: public lighting, railway, telephone, tram, etc.

In the middle of the 20th century, big iron and steel factories settled in Avilés. The arrival of thousands of workers from all over Spain made the population number increase fivefold. This "industrial

expansion" made necessary to build a big amount of working-class quarters on the periphery of the city, and caused a vertiginous urban growth in the city centre. However, most of the traces from the past have succeeded in surviving this huge development.

So we are in a thousand-year-old Atlantic city, peaceful and ideal for wandering, where one of its most singular architectural features -the arcades- will always shelter us from sun and rain while order to discover the art and history that Avilés still accumulates.

:AVILÉS:
your trip starts here



Spain Square

1



This square has been the historical centre of Avilés for centuries. This original and popular square offers the visitor a great deal of options for going for a walk.

First of all, a spectacular beauty dominates this space. Three noble buildings (the Municipal Palace or City Hall-, García Pumarino House and Marquis of Ferrera Palace) constitute a sort of triangle-shaped space. Streets under arcades have joined for a long time these three buildings -all of them erected in the 17th century-

We can admire here an unusual picture. The writer and journalist

Juan Cueto Alas describes this square like this: "If the first thing that we see in Avilés were this ancient square, we would surely believe that we are in the wrong century, or that somebody is shooting a film in a Renaissance or even Baroque atmosphere.

Besides, this square acts as an excellent street-distributor: at least six streets, all of them pedestrian, originate here. Three of them (La Ferrería, San Francisco-Galiana and Rivero) take us to past ages. Another two streets, La Fruta and La Cámara, are shopping streets. As well as shops, La Fruta Street also has a high

density of hotels. La Cámara Street is the main shopping street in the city together with other streets that cross it (Dr.Graíño, Fernández Balsera, La Muralla, Cuba, José Cueto and La Merced Square).

In Plaza de España, apart from the aforementioned palaces, there are singular building in several and different styles, such as the sober Campa's house (facing the noble García Pumarino's house) and the house on the corner of La Fruta and La Cámara streets.



2

Avilés City Hall



It was the first noble building to be erected out of the city walls, in its southern side. It was the beginning of a great urban development in Avilés.

The City Hall was built in the 17th century, according to the plans of the architect Juan de Estrada, following the same architectural style of Oviedo City Hall.

Most of the Council services are held in this two-floor building. The ground floor -under arcades- and the additional rooms placed on top were hired in the past for commercial activities. This organization was reproduced some centuries later in the Market Place (or Hermanos Orbón Square). The first floor has two big rooms and several small

meeting rooms where the slender municipal activity took place.

A clocktower was added on top of the building in the 19th century. Nowadays, the palace is entirely devoted to politic and



administrative labours. Inside the building there are also a remarkable Receptions Hall and a magnificent stained glass window that dominates the central staircase.

The subsequent construction of the noble García Pumarino House and Marqués de Ferrera Palace were the beginning of the first development of the medieval city, which was till then hampered by the fortified ramparts. This urban development is known as "the Baroque expansion". It was the origin of the "Plaza de España" (the town's main square) and two streets: Rivero Street (the Royal Road to Oviedo) and Galiana Street (the way to Grado's farming area).

The City Council suffered serious damage in 1936 because of the bombing during the Spanish Civil War.

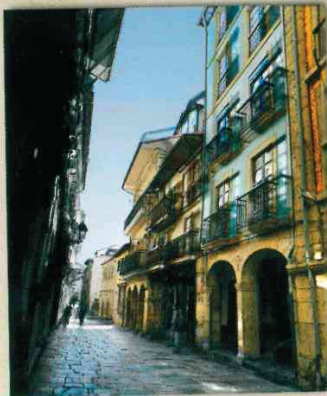
La Ferrería Street

3



This is the street that preserves most of the traces and vestiges from medieval Avilés; in fact, it was the most important of all the streets placed inside the walls of the medieval city. The defensive ramparts were unfortunately demolished in the 19th century.

Going for a walk along La Ferrería is like entering the time tunnel if we take a look at its centenarian buildings and urban layout.



of about 800 metres and a surface of 41,000 m².

La Ferrería Street started at the Alcázar Gate, the main entrance to the fortified grounds, which had five more entrances. The city's clocktower, formerly located at the entrance to the present La Fruta Street, was moved here several centuries later. La Ferrería Street finished at another entrance, the

one giving access to the sea, next to the Franciscan Church. The ancient port was located there until the 19th century.

This street is a straight avenue that went across the old medieval village at that time (La Villa). It has several arcades that change from the right to the left side when it meets El Sol Street. The street is called "La Ferrería" after the craftsmanship developed there by the ferreros or blacksmiths. Like in most of old Avilés's streets the arcades provided the artisans with shelter from rain and sun, while taking advantage of natural daylight for work.

The street was at that time the main shopping and trading street in town. It still keeps nowadays old remains that give the visitor the strange feeling of travelling through time.

4

Valdecarzana House



It is also known as Valdecarzana Palace. It dates from the 14th century and is the oldest civil building of the city. Nowadays it houses the Historical Records of Avilés.

Valdecarzana House is the clearest trace of Gothic architecture in this city. The building stands out because of its well-kept geminated windows in the first floor. It is a medieval building believed to belong to a rich merchant who used the ground floor as a warehouse and

the first floor as the family house. The evidence that supports this theory is that the building lacks defensive structures. It seems that the building originally had quadrangular symmetry and that it was later extended until arriving to the present structure.

The only façade that remains intact since its construction faces La Ferrería Street. The remaining façades have been

modified in several occasions, hence losing their original flavour. The inner part of the building was changed in the 19th century. Nowadays, the building has suffered a total renovation, to house the Municipal Historical

Archive, one of the most important archives in Asturias.

Valdecarzana House helps us understand how urban architecture was like at that time (in fact, it is the most remarkable example in the Principality of Asturias). But we cannot exclude the possibility that the old part of Avilés had buildings similar to it, now disappeared without any notice.



It has been said that the king of Castille, Pedro I The Cruel, stayed here for several days after having reconquered Avilés, taken by arms by his half brother, Enrique de Trastámara, several months before, even though the citizens of Avilés had offered him great resistance.



Franciscans's Church

5



This is the oldest building in Avilés that has arrived to present. It was the parish of San Nicolás de Bari for centuries. The church was built between the late 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century, and its original design was in the Romanesque style.

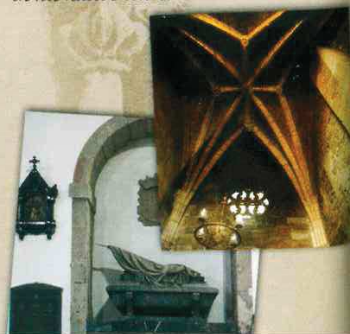
It has a very notable Romanesque main façade that has been partially restored. Some primitive capitals with identifiable allegorical representations still survive, in spite of the stone erosion – it should be noted that this church was next to the harbour for centuries. One of the capitals represents a feline but the most remarkable one is the first one on the right, which shows the original sin, with Eve giving the apple to Adam. The rest of the capitals have been worn out.

Some parts of the church have suffered as the majority of old churches profound changes that have completely distorted the original work, consisting of a single nave.

However, other modifications were very fortunate, specifically two of the chapels that were added later. On the left side lies Pedro Solís's Chapel (also named "de Los Angeles"). It was built between the late 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century in Gothic style. It has a pointed door in the outside and fine constructive works inside, such as the notable dome, a magnificent rose window, a niche and the entrance door to the church, in the same architectonic style of Oviedo's Cathedral main door. Christ's Chapel is on the right side. It was built in the 18th century in Baroque style. Inside we can appreciate a small

and beautiful dome that culminates in an octagonal-shaped lantern that lets through natural daylight.

This church also houses a mausoleum on the left side of the high altar, containing Pedro Menéndez's mortal remains. He was an admiral from Avilés who founded the first town in the United States, San Agustín de La Florida. He died in 1574 and included in his testament the wish of being buried in his native town.



6

Los Alas Chapel

This small chapel is one of the most important architectonic gems of medieval Avilés but also of Asturias. It dates from the 14th century, a period of transition from Romanesque to Gothic style. In this chapel we can appreciate the outline of the new constructive patterns.

One of the most important and powerful medieval merchants in Avilés, the Alas family, wanted a funeral chapel to bury their relatives in it. They built it in the cemetery of the medieval village, placed next to the left side of San Nicolás de Bari Church (today the Franciscans's Church).

This chapel is a small and restrained building with a square ground plan and a really remarkable architectonic beauty. The family's coat of arms stands out in its façade



(added in the 17th century), and it has a beautiful proto-Gothic entrance door, decorated with bearded or winged faces. The entire monumental piece looks very simple, but the apparent simplicity in the layout of stones and carvings hides a perfect work of art.

Inside we can appreciate two couples of niches under arcades, and gravestones carved with

inscriptions on the ground. The Franco-Spanish dome is also remarkable. Its centre shows an effigy of Christ watching downwards, looking as if he was protecting the people buried in the chapel. The four ends of the ribs lie on corbels adorned with expressionist faces of different sizes.

Its state of preservation is excellent in spite of the dramatic natural disasters (earthquakes) and human conflicts (the Spanish Civil War in 1936) that it suffered. An extraordinarily valuable piece – probably dating from the 15th century – disappeared during this war: an engraved alabaster altarpiece from England.

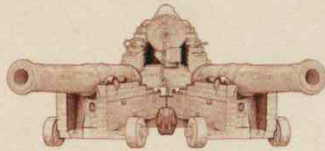


El Muelle Park

7



It was the customary park in Avilés since the end of the 19th century until the 70's, when Ferrera Park was opened to the public.



This park was built up on the former wetlands and is one of the principal symbols of the urban expansion that took place between the 19th and the 20th century. The park formed part of the grounds reclaimed from the sea to the town. Its construction moved the medieval port (placed next to the Franciscans's Church) to the left side of the "ría" (the estuary).

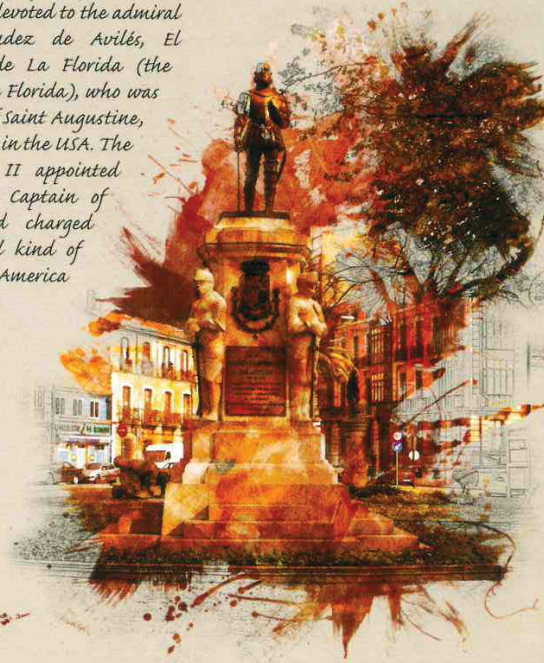
It has a surface of 14,000 m². After a design of the architect Bausá, the park mixes together a beautiful gardening work -which includes arcades made from vegetation- with a notable group of sculptures. It was the leisure area preferred by the townspeople to establish social relationships until the seventies. Every Sunday and feast day the municipal music band played concerts at midday and people used to crowd around the magnificent bandstand (designed by Federico Ureña), an architectonic gem and one of most notable bandstands in Asturias.

A group of twelve sculptures makes the park a special place. Ten of them are allegorical motifs from the Greek mythology, one being part of a beautiful fountain. The monument to the seal (La Foquina), a real legend in town, is also remarkable.

Finally, in the side opposite to the entrance fountain, we



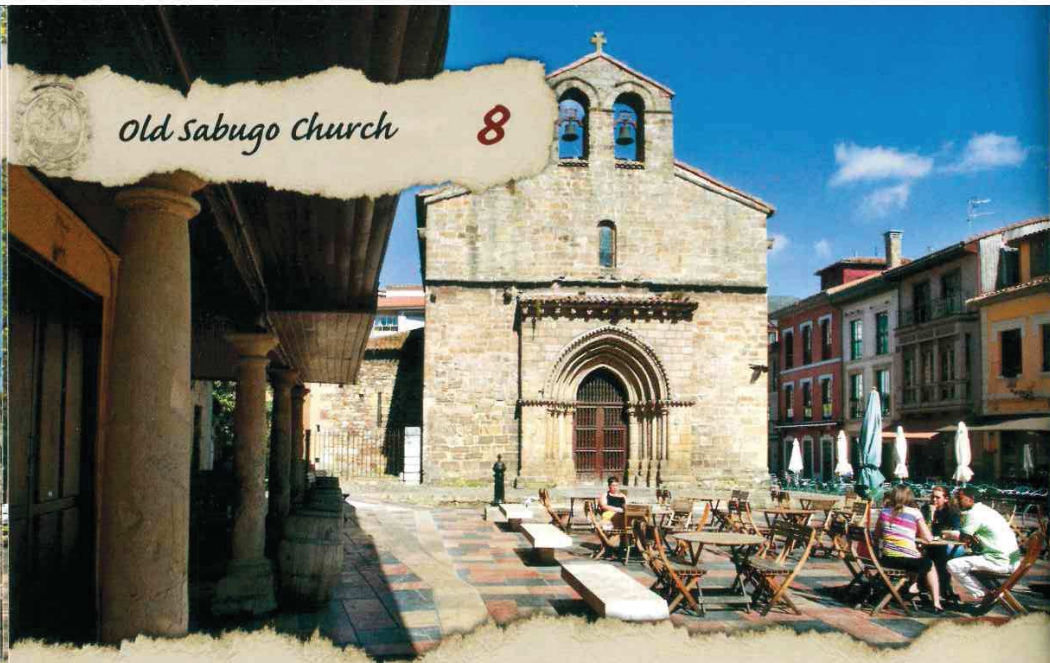
can see a group of sculptures built in 1917. It is devoted to the admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, El Adelantado de La Florida (the governor of La Florida), who was the founder of Saint Augustine, the oldest city in the USA. The King Felipe II appointed him General Captain of the Sea and charged him with all kind of missions in America and Europe.



Some sculptures monuments of the park. To the right, the one that pays tribute to Pedro Menéndez.

Old Sabugo Church

8



It is located in Carbayo Square, in Sabugo's medieval quarter. It is a very well preserved monument of small dimensions, delicate and harmonious.

This church was built in order to respond to the religious needs of the only quarter in Avilés that was placed outside the medieval city walls. Its neighbours were dedicated exclusively to sea-related works. Its construction started in the beginning of the 13th century and took a long time to finish. But we can say that it was well worth it by looking at the final result.

The church, consecrated to Saint Thomas of Canterbury, shows the cosmopolitan character of the medieval village, due to the foreign influences arriving to the port. We should not forget that the main parish of the village

was devoted to Saint Nicholas of Bari, and that both saints came from abroad.

At that time the construction of the churches usually began by the apse, in order to consecrate them as soon as possible. The works



took a long time, and it is for this reason that the temple reflects the influence of two architectural styles: Romanesque and its transition to Gothic, i.e. the proto-Gothic style. The Romanesque influence appears in the semicircular apse and the side entrance. The main entrance is proto-Gothic.

In the inside, the ornamentation is mainly focused on the arcades of the pointed triumphal arch and of the main chapel. Fortunately the church has suffered few changes; among them, the old Romanesque windows, which were blocked off and replaced with new ones, as well as the nave, that has a new roof.

Nowadays the temple is used in some occasions for religious purposes and is an ideal setting for concerts, exhibitions, and social events of relevance for the city.

9

Carbayo Square



This square has a very traditional flavour and is the population centre of Sabugo, Avilés's fishermen quarter in the Middle Ages. It is placed on a small hill outside the medieval city walls.

This square plays a key role within its quarter, being the starting and meeting point for all the streets around: the centenarian street of Bances Candamo (an outstanding playwright from Avilés, very popular in the Madrid court in the 17th century), with sidewalks covered by arcades, and La Estación Street, parallel to the abovementioned one. Both streets are connected a few metres downwards to Carreño Miranda Street (another famous 17th century person from Avilés, who was King Carlos II's painter).

Sabugo's residents have dedicated themselves to maritime

labours for centuries, not only fishing but also building their own wooden boats. The boatbuilders made boats there thanks to the big amount of woodland that Avilés had at that



time, especially in El Carbayedo, one of the most traditional quarters in the high part of the city (carbayos are oak trees in Asturian).

Carbayo Square was the meeting point for social relationships in Sabugo quarter. A wooden porch was attached to the southern side of

the church for centuries to provide shelter to the people who met up there. Nowadays, it is still possible to see along this façade some stone benches attached to the building.

Next to the apse there is a table where the fishermen community congregated to draw up fishing plans. They included whales fishing, as there were plenty of whales in the Bay of Biscay at that time.

Sabugo was virtually separated from the rest of Avilés for centuries, as the two zones were simply connected by a small narrow bridge. But thanks to the development works carried out between the 19th and 20th centuries, in order to gain land from the sea, it was possible to definitively integrate Sabugo into the town.

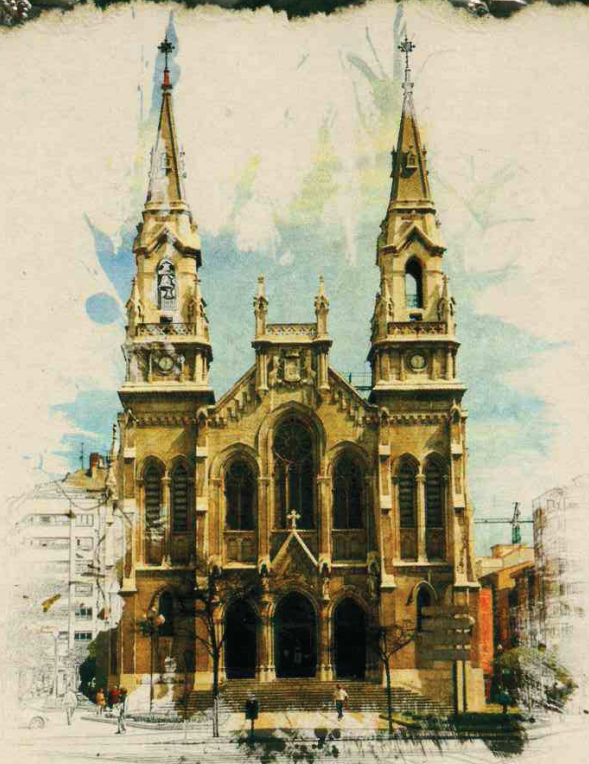
Santo Tomás de Cantorbery Church 10



At the end of the 19th century, the Romanesque temple of Sabugo, placed in the old fishermen's quarter, had become too small to hold its parishioners.

The whole city mobilized to build a new church, which would be the symbol of the progress that Avilés was experiencing at that moment. The City Council, the local bourgeoisie and even the immigrants who had returned from Cuba, did not hesitate to contribute with their money and effort turning this project into a reality. The place chosen for its construction had been occupied by the Convento de la Merced during the 17th and 18th centuries. When this convent was demolished, its stones were used for the new church.

The works started in 1896, according to the project of the



diocesan architect, Luis Bellido González. The church was consecrated the 15th of September of 1903, to venerate Santo Tomás de Canterbury. The local pronunciation changed the name into Cantorbery.

This Neo-gothic style church has a Latin cross-shaped floor plan with three naves in its central part and a polygonal apse.

Some of the most outstanding elements of this temple are its magnificent front which is crowned by the coat of arms of Avilés, two towers which are 47 metres high; and also the paintings and altarpieces by Talleres Granda Buylla, located inside the church and displaying many motifs related to Santo Tomás de Carterbury and La Orden de La Merced.

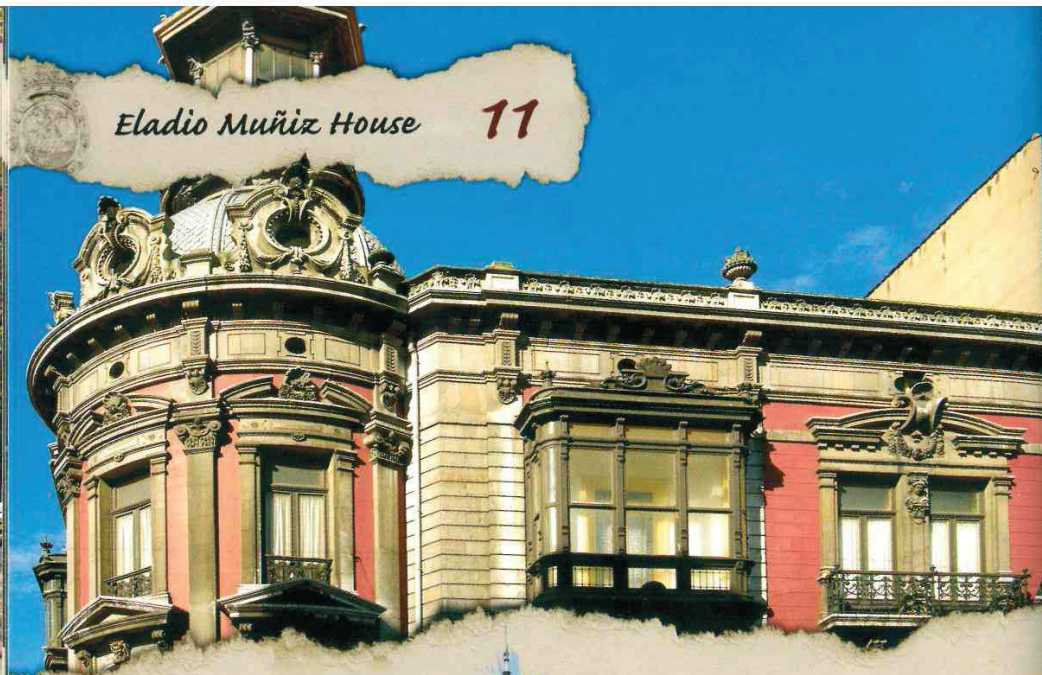
You can also find the image of the Virgen de la Soledad, which is very popular for being part of the Holy Week processions, such as La Procesión de La Soledad, celebrated the night of Holy Friday, and La Procesión de la Resurrección, celebrated on Saturday.



Well-taken care ornamentation of one of its show windows.

Inner framework of cruceria vaults.

Eladio Muñiz House 11



Also known as Josefina Balsera House, this is a splendid mansion built in 1903 in an area that was then beginning to be the city's modern part.

The emigration of people from Avilés to America had in Cuba its main destination. Eladio Muñiz was an indiano (a person who came back from America after making big fortune there) who returned to Avilés and entrusted the engineer and architect Federico Ureña with the building of his palace-like dwelling.

The mansion was a wedding gift from Eladio Muñiz to his wife, and is placed at the corner between La Cámara and Cuba streets.

The mansion has a spectacular three-stored round façade, a



penthouse with a dome and a beautiful tower offering a perfect viewpoint over the town. In 1905, its date of construction, there were no equally-highed buildings in Avilés to hinder the exceptional view from that tower, over most of the city including Avilés's estuary.

The most outstanding pieces in the house are concentrated in the round façade, but the interior deserves also attention because of the quality of its materials and a rare decorative richness. The mansion also had a private chapel, whose altar was lately given by its owners to the small La Luz Chapel, located in Villalegre on a hill with a wonderful view over the city and its estuary.

Eladio Muñiz was one of the benefactors who contributed to the construction of the new Santo Tomás de Cantorbery (Canterbury) Church, also called the new Sabugo Church, very close to his home.

Josefina Balsera later owned the building. It was occupied by a primary school until quite recently.

12 Market Square also Hermanos Orbón Square



It is probably the most singular architectonic space in Avilés. Its perfect symmetry and the fact that this square is completely surrounded by galleries makes it stunningly original.

Likewise Muelle Park, the new market place was built after draining the sea wetlands and the underground channelling of the river Tuluergo, which previously flowed through La Muralla Street.

This original architectonic space was built in



the second half of the 19th century. It has a rectangular shape, and looks into the streets outside with bright and colourful façades. On the inside, beautiful wooden balconies stand up over iron pillars, constituting arcades of considerable highness all along the square dimensions. Under the arcades, there are shops with ground floor and mezzanine. It has four main entrances.

Although townspeople have always called it the Market Place, its official name is Hermanos Orbón Square. The Orbón brothers were born in Avilés but emigrated to Cuba, where they carried out most of their artistic work. One was a musical composer and the other was a journalist.

In the middle of the square there is a building

with numerous stalls for selling goods. The traditional weekly market takes place on Mondays. It was granted more than five centuries ago by the Catholic Kings together with notable commercial privileges for the city, that has been destroyed by a great fire.

Its proximity to Muelle Park (when this park was the main space for the citizens' leisure) made the arcades of this square a perfect shelter for people with bad weather. For this reason people used to call it "the Winter promenade".

Maqua Palace

13



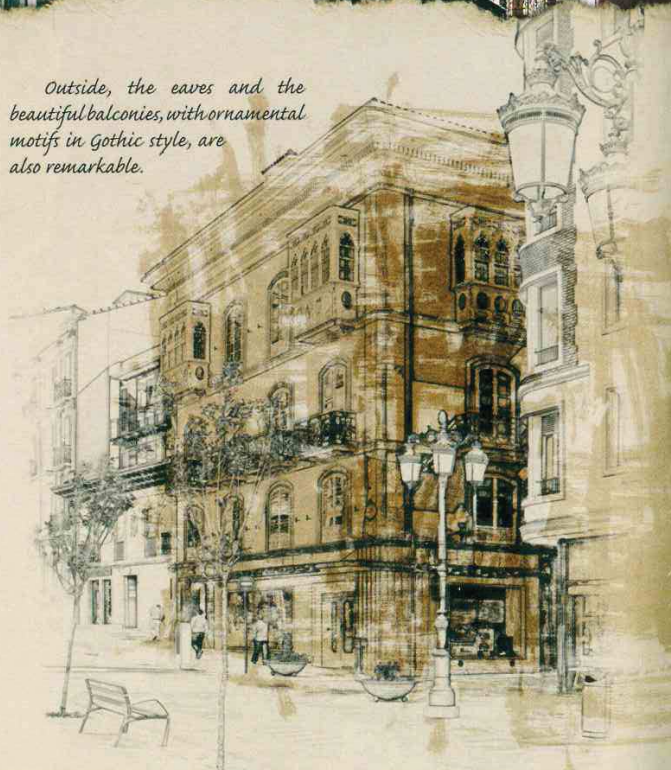
A noble building erected in La Cámara Street when it became Avilés's main street.

Outside, the eaves and the beautiful balconies, with ornamental motifs in Gothic style, are also remarkable.

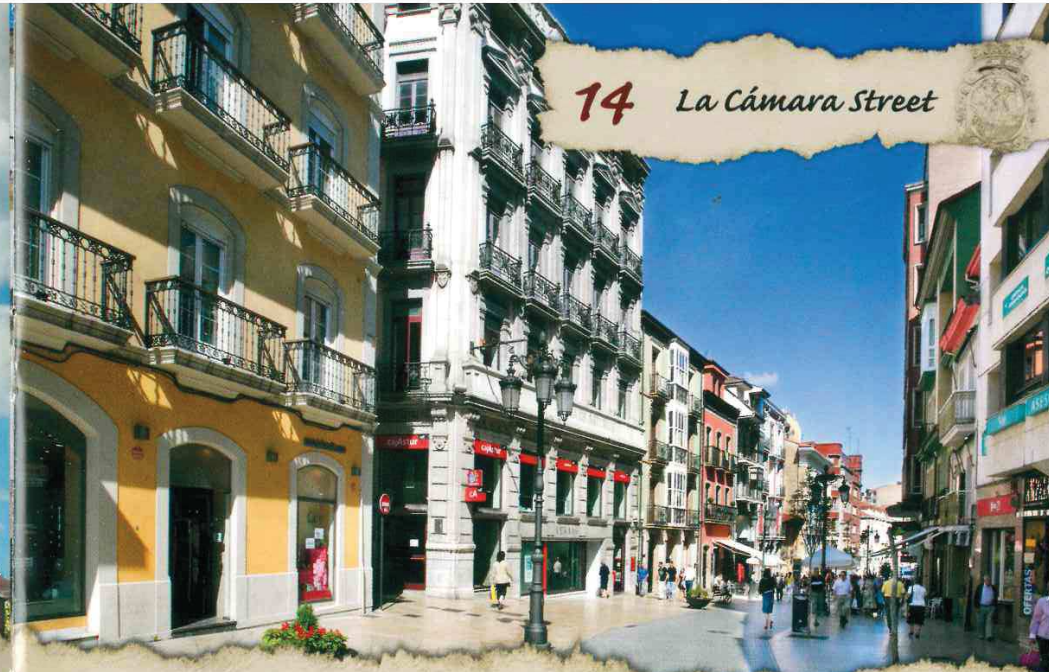


The Maqua family made their home between the 19th and 20th centuries following the fashionable bourgeois taste of that time: a modern building with historicist elements. The Gothic style was chosen in this case.

The inside distribution is arranged around an interior patio surrounded in the upper floors by galleries showing a notable marquetry work. The patio has an original, finely worked floral decoration.



14 La Cámara Street



The length of this street shows the limits of the old fortified part of the town. Its transit sets the south-west limit of the old walled area between Plaza de España and La Muralla Street. Despite not having an important heritage, it is an example of the city's expansion from the 19th century onwards.

communication axis of the old part with the new shopping and growing urban areas of the town.

For that reason, La Cámara has turned into the main and busiest walking area of Avilés.

After big industrial companies set up in the 20th century, the population in Avilés grew up considerably and La Cámara Street became the main shopping area of the city.

Nowadays, still preserving its shopping activity, it is the main



San Bernardo Street 15



This street gives access to the medieval town. Its name derives from an ancient convent of Bernardas nuns, whose front occupied the left part of its first stretch from 1552 until 1869. The monastery was demolished in the 19th century with no remains left.

One of the medieval doors was situated on its south end, right at the corner of La Cámara Street. This street used to run parallel to the west limit of the walled area. The remains of part of this ancient wall can be admired through a glassy floor in a popular cider house or sidrería at the beginning of the street.

Being a pedestrian street, makes the walk along a row



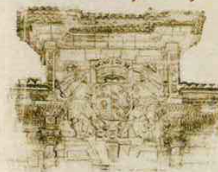
of traditional façades with balconies easy and comfortable. At the end of this street, we can find one of the best examples of Baroque in Asturias: the magnificent back front of the Palacio de Camposagrado.

These are some of the unusual fronts that can be seen when walking along this street.

16 Camposagrado Palace



This building is the most outstanding palace in Avilés since it was finished in the 17th century. Some experts think that its southern façade is the best example of Asturian Baroque. Nowadays it houses the School of Arts of Asturias.



It has two clearly differentiated façades: the northbound one, located in La Muralla Street and the southbound one facing Camposagrado Square. The architectural elegance of the latter façade is amazingly appealing.

Its northern façade has two floors and runs parallel to the old defensive walls. The first one is made

up of a beautiful arcade. The arches were intended for defensive purposes as a supplementary means of keeping watch on any threat coming from the sea (buccaneers or pirates looking for plunder were not infrequent at that time). The whole structure takes us to the Renaissance architectural style. The second floor consists of balconies corresponding to the lintels of the lower arches and spaces, flanked by coats of arms on the sides.

The southern façade shows a splendid structure. It was attributed to Menéndez Camina architects (father and son) from Avilés. It is formed by two symmetrical towers on each side, both with coats of arms, and a rectangular central part decorated with the dweller's (Bernaldo de Quirós, Marquis of



North façade of the Palace, of defensive character.

Camposagrado) monumental coat of arms. A key feature of this singular palace are the different styles of the columns on the sides of the balconies under the central coat of arms, looking like an altarpiece. We can also notice the abundant decorative elements on this façade.

In 1809, during the Spanish Independence War, the Frenchmen established here their headquarter against the opposition of the armed citizens.



This is one of the most important streets of the walled medieval quarter, which began to change its appearance from the 19th century.

At the south end of this street, next to the City Hall, La Puerta del Reloj, one the doors of the missing walls was located. Its original layout had arcades,

similar to the Ferrería Street, but these were replaced with beautiful fronts with balconies at the end of the 19th century.

There is a perfect spot to admire the magnificent fronts of the two baroque palaces, Palacio de Camposagrado and Palacio de Ferrera, both dating from the 17th century, that is half way of La Fruta street at the junction with the Sol street.

Nowadays this street has residential, shopping and hotel purposes with a very pleasant atmosphere for those locals and tourists that decide to walk along it.

The School of Ceramics is also located at the north end, next to the Palacio de Camposagrado. It is the only educational centre dedicated to teach traditional

and modern ceramics. For people interested on this subject, they can visit a national ceramics fair celebrated every May.



One of the traditional craftsmanship of Avilés is the black pottery. The colour of the pottery is because of the process used at time of making the ceramics. Different shapes were made depending on the use given: jugs, bowls, pitchers, dishes, barrels. Miranda's neighbourhood played and still does an important role in this activity, which Jovellanos talked about in his book "Diarios" (Diaries).



The Marquis of Ferrera Palace is one of the four palaces (along with the City Hall, Camposagrado and García Pumarino) that form part of the splendid Baroque heritage of the city.

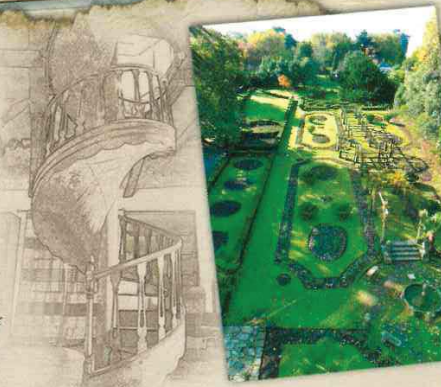
The "Palacio Ferrera" (Ferrera Palace), as is popularly known in the city, was built between the 17th and the 18th centuries, in one side of the town's main square (the "Plaza de España"). This palace dignified the beginning of the road to the village of Grado. This road went through Galiana Street, which dates also from the same time. Its location made it be joined to San Nicolás de Bari's Church when it was still the convent of the Franciscan community.

The Marquis of Ferrera Palace is a building in a sober style, with an outstanding tower because of

its irregular plant. The main façade faces Plaza de España (the town's main square). This façade shows balconies with lintels and the Marquis's coat of arms. The wide main entrance presents a cobblestone floor intended to facilitate the access of carriages to the mansion.

It is however its angular tower what gives personality to the whole construction, one of the best examples of Asturian civil architecture. The tower consists of four floors crowned by a wrought iron balcony, and faces both the town's main square and San Nicolás de Bari's Church. Next to the palace is the fountain known as "Los Caños de San Francisco".

Inside the palace there are beautiful lounges and an outstanding



library. It is a spectacular rectangular room limited by a fine back façade with galleries facing a magnificent French style garden. The municipality has recently acquired the garden in order to join it to the big public park of Ferrera.

The palace has lodged important figures from the Spanish Royal Family in their visits to Avilés. Nowadays it is a five-star hotel.

San Nicolás de Bari Church

19

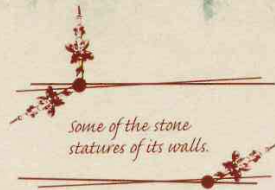


An ancient Franciscan convent erected when this community settled in Avilés in the 13th century. It has suffered continual changes from that time; the latest one was in 1960.



few vestiges of the Roman dominion in the primitive Avilés, in the beginning of the Christian era.

The convent has suffered several changes throughout



Some of the stone statures of its walls.



The church was built in the 13th century, out of the city walls. The Franciscans used to build their churches far from the cities. The Franciscan monks are thought to have used a previous pre-Romanesque church in the present emplacement to settle when they arrived to our city. This hypothesis is based on some evidence such as

the existence of a fragment from a pre-Romanesque inner door, now buried in the cloister walls.

This church still keeps some signs of Avilés's historical identity such as the baptismal font. It is an alabaster capital considered by many experts as one of the

centuries. The only original vestige is the proto-Gothic porch in the northern façade. The cloister dates from the 17th century and includes a Romanesque chapter house from the 13th century. The main façade porch and a recently discovered interesting wet paint are also from the 17th century.



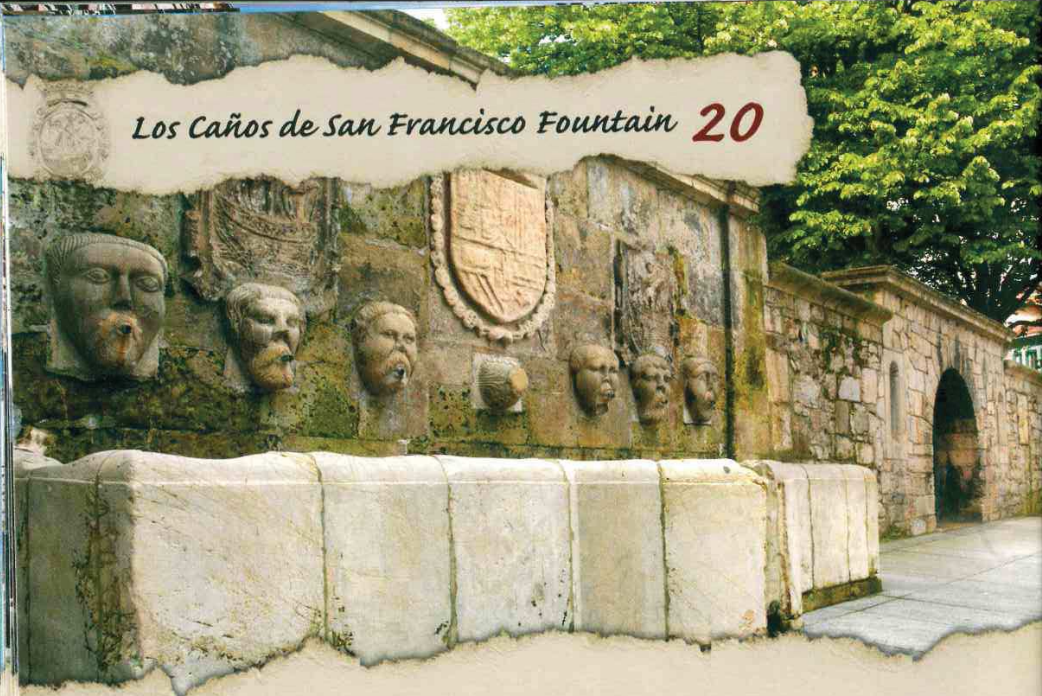
Inside, there are interesting chapels and sepulchres, but the most remarkable one is Martin Alas's sepulchre, dating from the late 15th century. It is a beautiful sample of the Hispanic-Flemish style. The recently restored sacristy is also most interesting.

San Nicolás de Bari's Church is nowadays a parish, after changing its name and functions with the present Franciscan church in the 19th century



Precious inner patio of the Church.

Los Caños de San Francisco Fountain 20



This fountain is one of the emblematic architectural symbols in the old part of Avilés. Its location, next to Ferrera Palace and attached to the walls of San Nicolás de Bari Church, sets off even more this original monument from the 17th century.

The works aimed to channel the streams in Avilés begun in the late 16th century. The works took as a starting point the highest area surrounding the town in a place called "Valparaíso".

The water flowed down freely previously, what was unhygienic and a source of infection. The channelling works lasted seven years and public fountains were erected during this period. This fountain dates from that time and is the only one

that has arrived to us. Another fountain, Los Caños de Rivero, was built some years later.

Los Caños de San Francisco Fountain is a very singular monument. On its frontal part there are six human heads made of stone, from which the water flows down into a rectangular-shaped basin. Over the heads, there are three heraldic elements: two coats of arms of Avilés, one at each side, and the third one in the middle representing

the kingdom of Castile. People from Avilés used the water from these fountains for household purposes for centuries. The basin used to serve also as trough for cattle in the past.

Due to its symmetry and originality, this small monument is really charming. Thus, it is not surprising that this fountain has become Avilés's iconic monument in publications and television programmes whenever somebody wants to show the city's old part.



21 Municipal House of Culture



The building has an architecturally very remarkable avant-garde design, with two very different and magnificent façades. The way of interconnecting the different spaces inside is remarkable, as well as their transparency.

The City Council decided in the eighties the construction of a new House of Culture that could meet the increasing demands for culture of the society. The public contest announced to select the building design was won by the architects José Luis Arana and María Aroca.

The philosophy behind the winning project was that the building had to be a meeting point and a link between the city

centre and Ferrera Park, while taking advantage of people passing through for a higher dissemination of cultural events. The glass panels in the hall link it in a way with the first floor thanks to a good use of natural daylight.

Its main entrance, located in Alvarez Acebal Square, is in harmony with the environment due to the simplicity of the stone façade. Modern balconies project out from it, following a very characteristic



architectonic pattern in northern Spain. The back façade facing the park has in contrast a really impressive avant-garde finish.

This building houses a library, reading rooms for adults and children and several other spaces in a surface of about 5,000 m². Different activities are carried out in the auditorium (677 seats), the conference and lecture hall (108 seats), the exhibition hall and the meeting room, which is currently used by different societies (philately, numismatics, etc.).

This is the most functional cultural building in the Principality of Asturias from an architectural point of view. It was inaugurated in 1989.

*Balseira Palace
Municipal Conservatory of Music*

22



This palace, built in the early 20th century, has a well-balanced structure, highly decorated and crowned by a fine and brilliant historicistic tower.

The City Council purchased this palace in the 80's to house the Conservatory of Music. It offers secondary degree musical education: mainly basic orchestral instruments, together with piano, guitar and percussion instruments.

Balseira Palace is a fine example of the booming bourgeois class of Avilés in the early 20th century. Middle-class people were aesthetically



much cultivated; therefore, they raised stunning buildings, usually following fashionable models or historical architectural styles. The splendid gardens designed in the Versailles style that completed the mansion have been virtually lost today. They used to extend over the right side of Julia de la Riva Street.

Victoriano Fernández Balseira, who made fortune thanks to Spain's neutrality during the First World War, built the palace. He owned a company that imported and exported colonial goods. We can still see some of his impressive and beautiful commercial plants at the beginning of the road to San Juan

Its recent restoration allows us to better notice its striking decorative features. In the inside, the elegant V-shaped stairs and the stained glass vault stand out when seen from the ground floor. The balconies and the tower are an exceptional viewpoint to watch its beautiful and historical surroundings.

23

Arias de la Noceda House



In Galiana Street not only the arcades are important. There are also some notable buildings that enhance its attractiveness. Arias de la Noceda House, constructed following the "Indiano style", is one of these buildings.

The city of Avilés also took part in the migratory exodus of the late 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. Emigrants left the city mostly for Cuba in their looking for a job. Avilés's port was the place of their departure. Some of them made big fortunes in America and once back they played a fundamental role in the development of the city in the beginning of the 20th century. This urban development was named the "bourgeois expansion".

In addition to the singular arcades going upward the right side of Galiana Street there are some notable buildings of different styles on its left side. This was in fact a residential area more than a century ago, when it contrasted sharply, both socially and economically with the other side of the street, where poor people used to live.

The most flamboyant of these buildings is Arias de la Noceda

House, built in 1883. It is an Indiano's house with a palm tree on one side - a recurrent element of this kind of constructions. The main façade consists of a central and two lateral sections with some metallic elements in rococo style, such as the glass and iron porch of the main entrance. The lateral and back façades are also very interesting. The latter has a large balcony with views over the landscaped property bordering Ferrera Park. Inside there are impressive stairs that gain access to the first floor and a dome.

Nowadays this building houses offices of social and environmental services that depend on the City Council.

splendid gardens of the back patio.

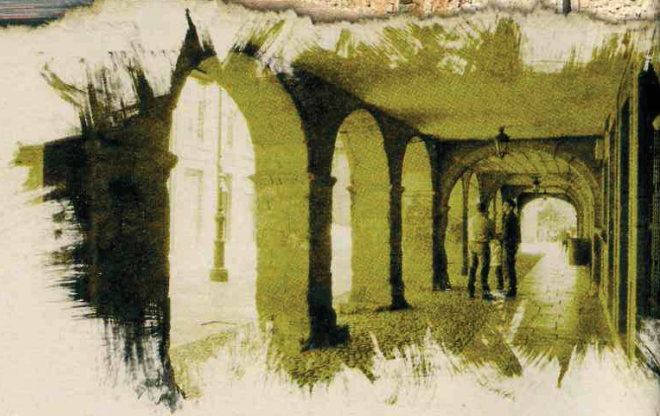


Galiana Street 24



Galiana is along with Rivero one of the most singular and popular streets in the city. The side under arcades forms a charming, never-ending maze when viewed from Alvarez Acebal Square.

The street was built in the 17th century when the town was spreading out of its walls. 252 metres of its surface are covered by arcades. Most of the buildings built at that time are still there without appreciable alterations.



The constructive design was based on the town's traditional model: arcades to provide shelter from rain and sun. Since handicraft activity was very intensive in Avilés local craftsmen could work comfortably outdoors. They used to have their warehouses in the ground floor and lived in the first floor. Galiana Street is singular when compared with other streets under

arcades: the houses had their own vegetable gardens in their backside. The garden served both as a pantry and a space for keeping cattle.

Another characteristic of Galiana is its pavement. The pedestrian part is divided in two sides: one is covered by cobbles and was the passage for cattle at that time while the other is covered by floor tile and was used by



urban space. It turned into an entertainment area some years ago. A singular feast event, the "Fluvial Descent," takes place in it during Carnival (known as Antroxu in Asturian). Avilés is one of the most remarkable Carnival feasts in northern Spain.

Jesusin de Galiana Chapel.



people. The splendid row of balconies facing the street is also remarkable. Some of them date from the 17th century. Jesusin de Galiana's Chapel is found at the end of the street. It was originally built in the 17th century but the present building dates from the 19th century.

Every aspect of Galiana Street makes an incomparable

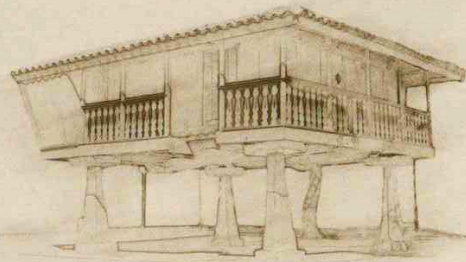


Carbayedo square

25



Preserving the signs of what the rural area of this old fishermen quarter was, nowadays this square represents one of the main meeting and leisure spots of the city.



At the end of Galiana Street, we can find the park of Carbayedo, a big green area surrounded by traditional houses with a strong and old agricultural identity. Today this area has turned into a place with lovely restaurants and wine houses where everybody can enjoy at daytime

but it also offers a lively atmosphere in the pubs at night.

The Carbayedo area has been part of the urban centre since the 17th century. Before that time it used to be a wood with a strong agricultural activity. Until the middle of the 20th century the cattle



One of the areas of the park in which we can enjoy a pleasant afternoon.

market took place in this square and the fountain where the animals used to drink remains unaltered.

Likewise, an example of the traditional Asturian architecture, the symbolic horreo, can be seen in this square. This unusual type of construction, used as a granary to store vegetables like corn, avoids the products to get wet and mice to reach them.

At the top part of the square, there is a chapel consecrated to the image of Jesús of Galiana, which was build in 1892 to replace the old chapel of San Roque. In this small temple the three more popular images of the holy week processions can be admired: Jesús of Galiana, La Dolorosa and San Juan Evangelista





Avilés has thirteen public parks, which have a total surface of 272,000 m². Ferrera Park is the biggest (81,000 m²), the most used by the citizens and one of the most important and beautiful parks in Asturias.

Citizens go to this park en masse. This fresh-air area oxygenates the whole city. The park opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 11:00 p.m.

The park was a private property of the Marquisate of

Ferrera for centuries. Each Marquis had the right to enjoy the back part (the present park) of his palace, whose main entrance is located at Plaza de España. This huge forest

property was completely abandoned in the middle of the 20th century when its owners left the city. The park had since deteriorated so much that it became a virgin forest

and, even worse, it was a big private island located in the middle of the city, thus separating several densely populated quarter.

The City Council purchased most of the park after arduous negotiations in order to utilize it as a leisure area for the citizens. The King of Spain Juan Carlos I

inaugurated the public park on May 19th, 1976. A small green area (the closest to the palace) called "the French garden" was reserved for private use but it also became municipal property in 1998.

Ferrera is a typical English park. It is equipped with abundant street furniture and service areas such as a signposted track that includes gymnastic equipments. The park has also a newspaper and periodicals reading room, a pond for aquatic birds, a complete children's playground, a musical bandstand, an environmental room, etc.

One from the 5 accesses to the park, this one from the well-known Rivero street.

The French garden, one of the precious corners that the place offers to us.





This is one of the most traditional streets in the city. It is the most walked among the old streets because of its proximity to important quarters with high population densities.

This street is at least five centuries old. The first mention to it can be found in a Council's Act back in 1485. It was a poor quarter outside the city walls. Some houses were built on it in the 17th century, becoming part of the Royal Road to

Oviedo, a road that started from Plaza de España (the town's main square), built at that time.

This street passed next to Avilés's estuary, which at that time reached many of the surrounding areas covering a large part of the present town. The street is called "Rivero" (i.e. "river side") after its old location.

As other old city streets, it was a street of craftsmen. It is one of the most popular streets in Avilés, and its neighbours know it, so they are very proud of their "Rivero". Rivero Street is often a very busy way, since it is a forced passage for the residents of the surrounding districts in their way to the city centre. As other historical streets in Avilés, it is a pedestrian way, what makes

a stroll through it a pleasant and calm experience.

Old Christ's Chapel (altered in the 19th century) is a charming spot that lies also in this street. Close to this chapel there is a fountain called "Los Caños de Rivero" in semicircular space surrounded by stone-benches. Ferrera Park has its main entrance door few metres further down the street.

Fountain and Chapel of the Christ or San Pedro, located towards half of the street.



García Pumarino House
Llanoponte Palace

28



The Menéndez Camina, excellent architects from Avilés, designed this smart building in the 17th century, following the City Hall Palace. Both buildings share a really notable harmony in their façades.

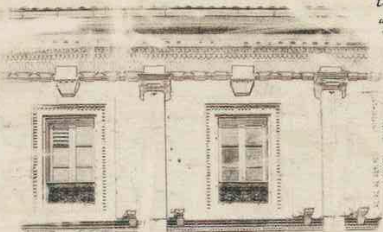
Rodrigo García Pumarino was an indiano from Avilés who made a huge fortune in Peru. When he came back to his birthplace he entrusted the local architect Menéndez Camino, Jr. with the construction of his house, located at the beginning of Rivero Street.

Its main façade (the only original part of the building that still remains) is plentifully decorated with smart ornaments, following the same architectural style of the City Hall, erected thirty years before. Therefore the building has also arcades. It has a porch with

seven arcades, with a window over each one, and balconies on each sides of the second floor.

The inside -very spacious in spite of the small dimensions of the narrow façade- had a small chapel and many rooms, with an outstandingly enormous lounge.

Later, a noble family known as the Llano Ponte's bought the house and used it as their residence, caused changes in the street.



The building is nowadays a cinema, today called "Marta" and formerly "Marta y María", after the name of two characters from a novel written by Armando Palacio Valdés, an Asturian writer who lived for some years in Avilés in a house opposite this building. It is said that he was inspired by this magnificent building to write the novel of the same title "Marta y María".

Although the writer was not born here, he spent his childhood and first youth in Rivero Street. Another work, "A novelist's novel", describes his childhood adventures in this street and other places in Avilés.

29 *Palacio Valdés Theatre*



This brilliant and colourful theatre surprises the visitor when he is told that the building was built when Avilés had only 12,000 inhabitants.

Inaugurated in 1920, the theatre closed its doors in 1972. It was opened again in 1992 once it underwent a complete restoration. Its return to theatre use was possible thanks to a strong popular campaign for its reopening.

The building presents a magnificent neo-Baroque façade designed by the architect Manuel del Busto. The theatre has the structure of an Italian-like coliseum in the inside: a horseshoe-shaped main room with several elevated floors of boxes and galleries. It holds some 750 people and is part in the National Theatres Network.

