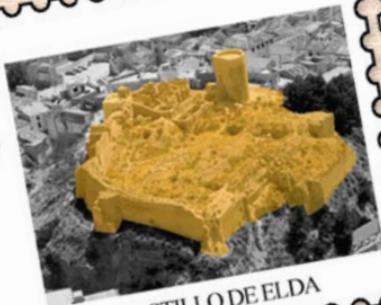


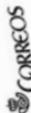


ICONIC ELDA



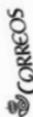
CASTILLO DE ELDA

ICONIC ELDA



PLAZA DE LA CONSTITUCIÓN

ICONIC ELDA

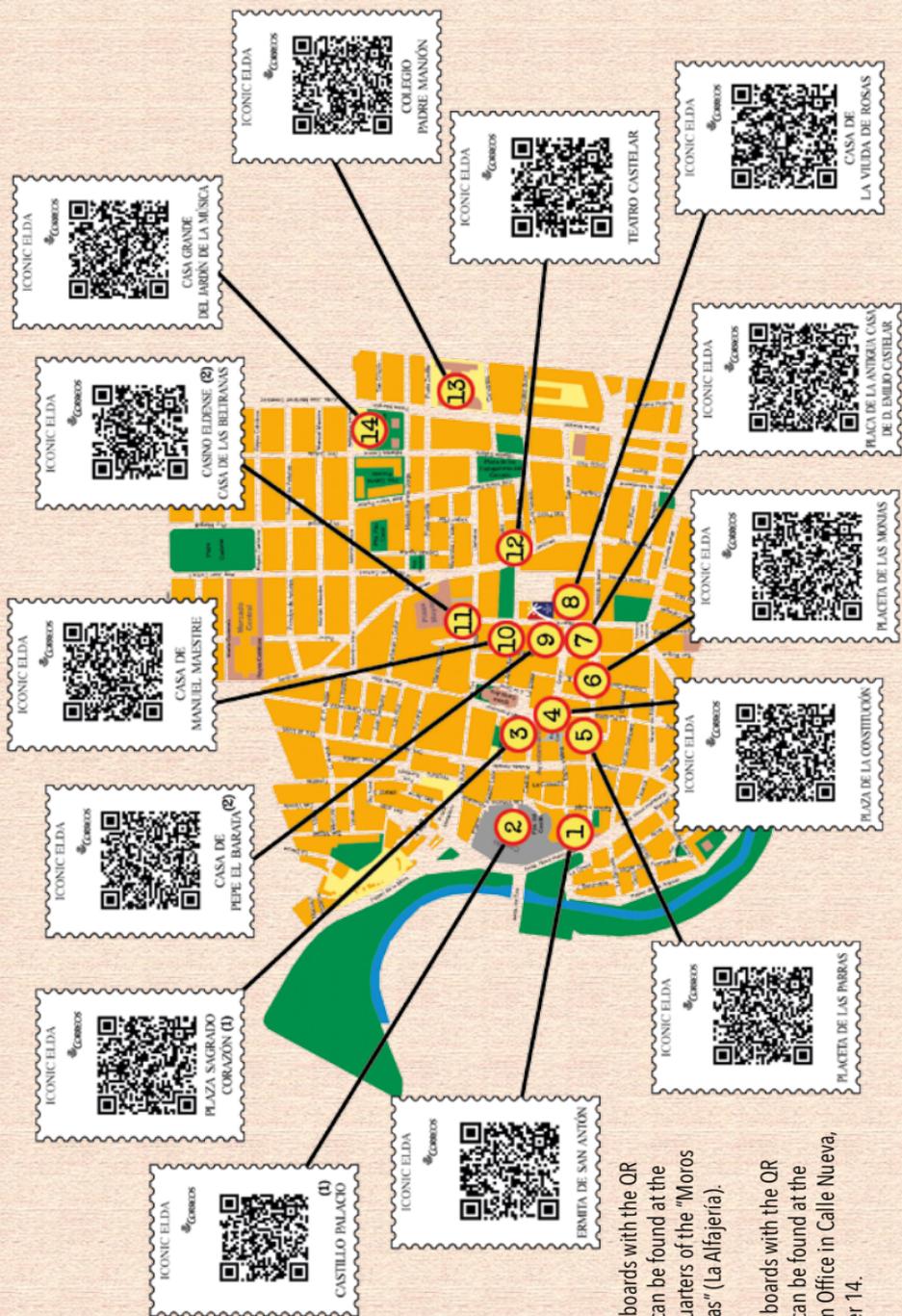


PLAZA DE LAS MONJAS

ICONIC ELDA

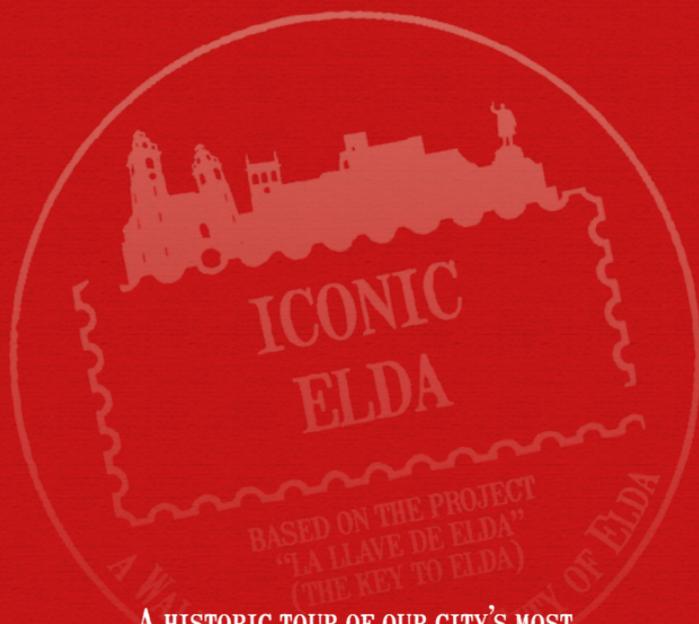


TEATRO CASTELAR



1. The boards with the QR codes can be found at the headquarters of the "Moros Realistas" (La Alfajería).

2. The boards with the QR codes can be found at the Tourism Office in Calle Nueva, number 14.



**A HISTORIC TOUR OF OUR CITY'S MOST  
ICONIC PLACES, EVOKING OUR ROOTS AND  
OUR LOCAL CULTURE.**

**AT EACH OF THE PLACES SHOWN ON THE MAP,  
YOU WILL FIND AN INFORMATION BOARD  
WITH A QR CODE. ONCE YOU HAVE SCANNED  
THE CODE WITH YOUR MOBILE DEVICE YOU  
WILL BE ABLE TO READ A TEXT DESCRIPTION  
AND LISTEN TO AUDIO INFORMATION.**

**TO MAKE THE TOUR MORE ACCESSIBLE,  
YOU CAN ALSO TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR USING  
THE SAME QR CODES IN THIS BOOKLET.**



# 1. “ERMITA DE SAN ANTÓN”



**S**aint Anthony's Chapel stands on the site of an old mosque dating back to Elda's Islamic era, which was converted into a church in 1526 and dedicated to the Great Martyr Saint Catherine of Alexandria. In the late 16th century and in ruins, the church lost its status and became a chapel. By the midway point between the 16th and 17th centuries, the chapel was already sharing its dedication to Saint Anthony (also known as Saint Anthony the Great), which had been transferred from the castle, with that of Saint Catherine, although the latter would gradually disappear over the years.

In fact, throughout the 17th century, veneration for Saint Anthony became more popular in the city, especially after the expulsion of the Moors (1609) and arrival of the new settlers.

Since that time, Saint Anthony has been linked with Elda's historic quarter, with traditional places in the city being named after him, including a neighbourhood, a street, a square and the Saint Anthony (or Tremontana) gateway, an important and historic way in and out of the north side of town.

In the early 20th century, the chapel was already in a dilapidated state. It was such bad condition that it was demolished sometime between the early 1920s and the beginning of the Second Republic.

After the Spanish Civil War, the Saint Anthony association ("Mayordomía de San Antón") began the task of reinstating the devotion to the saint and the festivities in his honour. In 1941, the new image of Saint Anthony by Valencian sculptor Pío Mollar arrived in Elda.

During the post-war period, the traditional connection that had always existed between the Moors and Christians festivities and the festival of Saint Anthony, at least from the 19th century onwards, became stronger, and the Chapel's saint was also made patron of the town's Moors and Christians festival.

The current chapel was officially opened in 1950, and is now a key religious building for local festivities. It does not stand in its original location, in the square named after it, but rather a short distance away in Calle Independencia, at the end closest to the Vinalopó river.

The chapel was restored in 1988 to a state practically identical to the way it looks today.

## 2. “CASTILLO-PALACIO DE ELDA”



**E**lda's Castle-Palace is an Islamic fortress and refuge, feudal castle and Count's palace. This Asset of Cultural Interest is the result of building work taking place between as far back as the 12th century and the present day, covering an estimated 5,231 m<sup>2</sup>. For more than 800 years it has been one of the monuments that best reflects the historic transformations and changes undergone by Elda, a small farming community in the Medio Vinalopó valley which, over time, has turned into an industrial and tourist city, the region's administrative capital.

The castle was originally an Almohad fortress built with a polygonal outer wall and ten square towers, intended to provide shelter for the people and livestock living in the surrounding area. The predominant building technique used was that of lime plastered stone walls, and the site also features a rectangular water tank.

The Islamic era ended in 1244 with the Treaty of Almizra, and the castle became part of the Castilian kingdom of Murcia. It passed through the hands of various owners, including Guillen el Alemán, the Order of Santiago, the Infante Don Manuel and a number of members of the Royal House of Aragón. In 1424, Violante de Bar, wife of Juan I, sold the valley and the castle to Ximén Pérez de Corella, who owned the monument until 1513, when it became property of the Coloma family. These unstable circumstances (border situation and rebellions, conflict between Castile and Aragón, changes in ownership) resulted in major alterations to the building throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, especially by the Corella family, who began to convert it into what eventually became a Lower Medieval Gothic or early Renaissance palace, home to the Baron of Elda, as part of a process completed by the Coloma family over the course of the 16th century.

The chapel was built and refurbished on an old baths area in the south-western sector of the old site, where more traces of living quarters are preserved. Two of the ten towers were clad



with masonry and took on a circular layout, with the new entrance placed between them. The citadel was surrounded by a second wall or Renaissance style outer wall, together with a monumental barbican access. A major underground cistern was built in the inner courtyard, as well as an enigmatic staircase, known as the Count's passageway. The Medieval cemetery, used from the 13th to the early 16th century, was abandoned. Rooms for stately departments and services, such as general stores, were built around the parade ground. On the whole, the period when the Coloma family, Counts of Elda from 1577 onwards, were in residence was marked by profound physical transformations that accentuated the building's palatial character.

The Counts moved their habitual place of residence first to Valencia and then to Madrid, to the detriment of the palace, which gradually deteriorated from the 18th century up to the land division process began in the 19th century, when it was sold for 121,000 reales in 1848 and partially demolished. From that moment onwards, it underwent a long period of neglect, ransacking, sale of materials and severe ruin until well into the 20th century.

From the 1980s, the current owner, Elda City Council, encouraged and promoted a series of archaeological, architectural and restoration projects at the site, with the aim of recovering its past glory and highlighting its importance. At present, work is underway to preserve this monument and open it to the public, which will not be possible until the project has been completed.



### 3. “PLACETA DE LAS PARRAS”



This is one of the few spots in the old town that has remained unchanged throughout its history, at least since the early 17th century.

This small Medieval square used to have a fountain or drinking trough in the middle. There was also a house with an olive oil press in the square.

One of the most interesting features in the square is the so-called “Casa del Platanero” (banana tree house) with eye-catching stonework imitating a Corinthian capital, plus an old building that still bears the inscription *AÑO 1795* on the lintel over the main doorway.



# 4.

## “PLAZA DE LA CONSTITUCIÓN”



**F**ormerly known both as “Plaza de Abajo” and “Plaza del Ángel”, since the 14th century, “Plaza de la Constitución” (Constitution Square) was built following the typical Valencian Medieval Gothic town planning layout and was historically the political, administrative and commercial hub of the city of Elda, a place where you would find shops, the butcher, the prison and the school.

However, the square has undergone radical change since the 1960s. The current City Hall was built over the site of an ancient Muslim cemetery and has been home to the City Council since the Lower Middle Ages.

Both the annual fair in honour of the Immaculate Conception and the weekly street market have been held here since the 15th century. The remains of an underground air raid shelter dating from the Spanish Civil War are still preserved. Throughout its long history and depending on the political situation, it has also been known as “Plaza de la República”, “Plaza de José Antonio” and “Plaza del Ayuntamiento”.

# 5.

## “PLAZA SAGRADO CORAZÓN DE JESÚS”



Once known as “Plaza de Arriba”, this square dates back to Medieval times and now has a very different appearance to its former traditional layout. It was also home to the fair, the market, shops and occasionally to bull fights (the alleyway known as “Callejón del Toril”).

It has also been called other names in the past, including “Plaza de Topete” and “Plaza de la Revolución Nacional Sindicalista”.

Alongside the square stands the current church of Santa Ana (Saint Anne), built in 1944 over the ruins of Elda’s old Great Church, a Renaissance and Baroque building destroyed in the early days of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The church holds a collection of religious art, the bell tower clock and traditional religious carvings including images of the Virgin of Health and Christ of Good Success.



# 6.

## “PLACETA DE LAS MONJAS” OR “PLACETA DEL HOSPITAL”



This square was originally named after Elda's old Poor Folks' Hospital (17th-19th centuries), which no longer exists. The hospital was built following instructions left in the will and testament of Beatriz de Corella, Countess of Elda, and was up and running by the mid-17th century. In 1673, the chapel of the Immaculate Conception was added, and can still be seen today. The hospital was in operation up until 1868, when it was demolished to make way for schools, built years later and which, following the Spanish Civil War, became the Carmelite Sisters' School, popularly known as "the Nuns' school". The building later became home to the music Conservatoire and then to Elda's Easter Week Brotherhoods Association headquarters. It is now temporarily closed.

From the square you can also see the building known as "Casa de las Gusanas" or "Casa de los Maestre", which dates back to the 19th century. The building has three floors and was designed for a land-owning family both as a home and as a farm processing and storage facility. From the hallway a spiral staircase climbs up to the first floor where the living rooms are located. The second-floor space is a typical domestic storage area. The courtyard led to the service rooms and to the farmyard, the wine press and the cellar in the basement.



The building still preserves the structure of a traditional mansion house, although its outer appearance was changed in the early 20th century when it was jointly owned by Rigoberto Maestre Bernabé, who turned it into a classic style house with Modernist touches typical of provincial bourgeois architecture.

# 7.

## “PLACA DE LA ANTIGUA CASA DE EMILIO CASTELAR”



This house was once the residence of Emilio Castelar (Cádiz, 1832-San Pedro del Pinatar, 1899), one of the leading personalities in the history of Elda, where he spent part of his childhood. He was a Doctor of Law, Philosophy and Letters, professor, writer, politician, historian, academic and newspaper contributor. He was elected to the Spanish parliament on 20 occasions. He was a Minister of State, President of the Spanish Congress of Deputies and President of the Executive Power during the First Spanish Republic, from September 1873 to January 1874. Emilio Castelar achieved the status of Statesman and left a strong imprint on the city's memory, visible in monuments and public spaces such as "Plaza de Castelar" and "Teatro Castelar".



The bronze plaque, the work of Alicante-born sculptor Vicente Bañuls, was cast at the Mir y Ferrero foundry in Madrid (1926). The plaque shows the image of the illustrious politician. Underneath, the words *EN ESTA CASA VIVIÓ CASTELAR EN SU INFANCIA* (in this house lived Castelar in his childhood), with the place and date of the commemoration: ELDA, SEPTEMBER 1926, and below the text is the city's coat of arms. The base of the coat of arms serves as the point from which two branches of laurel emerge. Human figures are shown on either side of the text. The naked figure on the left is an allegory of freedom and the breaking of chains, undoubtedly related to Castelar's abolitionist view of slavery. On the other side, a clothed female figure sits holding a large book resting in her lap and can be interpreted as an allegory of eloquence, given Castelar's reputation as an orator.

The plaque was sponsored by a group of admirers and supporters of Emilio Castelar's political ideals; they formed an Executive Commission for the Monument to Castelar (erected in the square named after him in 1932) and decided that it should be placed in his memory on the house where he lived during his childhood.

# 8.

## “CASA DE LA VIUDA DE ROSAS”



**W**idow Rosas' House is a Modernist style building based on Neoclassicism and Academicism. It was built in the early 1920s as homes for Elda's shoemaking bourgeoisie, for purchase and as rental properties.

The building has three floors with a glass fronted bay window on the first floor and balconies on all the other bays on the second and third floors. It makes an attractive backdrop to Calle Colón, as part of an exceptional urban landscape with the City Hall at the other end of the street. It underwent minor refurbishment in 1960 and is currently home to the Central Committee of Elda's Moors and Christians Groups.

The inside of the building was renovated and reopened in 2003 to make it fit for its new purpose, and none of its original interior structure remains. However, the front of the building has been kept exactly the same as it always was, except for the colour. During the Spanish Civil War it was the headquarters of the International Red Aid organisation as well as the residence of illustrator Óscar Porta Carbonell and writer José Capilla Beltrán.



# 9.

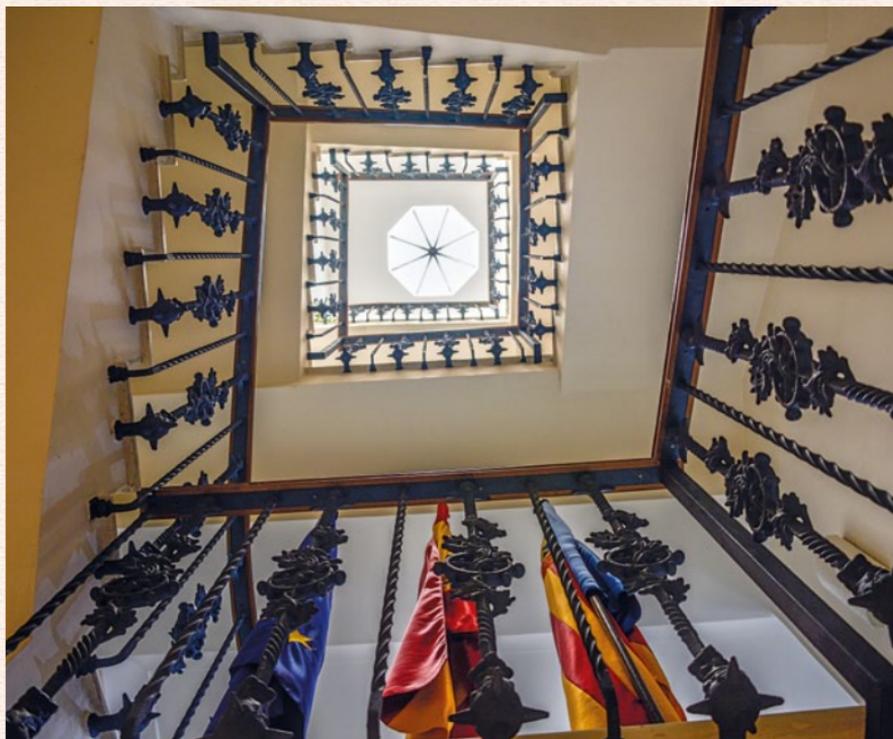
## “CASA DE MANUEL MAESTRE”



**M**anuel Mestre's House is a two-storey building with a small roof terrace and dates back to the first third of the 20th century. It is linked to the figure of Elda-born lawyer, politician and journalist, Manuel Maestre Payá (1883-1918).

The building has a small frontage split into four bays, two on each floor. The main doorway and the windows are decorated with typical Eclecticism motifs. After being renovated in the 1990s, it became the headquarters of the Vinalopó group of municipalities.

It was completely refurbished inside, except for some original features and fixtures, such as the skylight at the top of stairwell and the bannister.



# 10.

## “CASINO ELDENSE”



**T**he origins of Elda's Casino can be traced back to 1863, when a group of well-to-do local residents, all connected to farming in some way or another, started a casino as a members only club for themselves and their friends. Later, in 1901, what we now know as the Casino Eldense Artistic and Cultural Association was founded and moved into its current headquarters in 1904. During the Spanish Civil War it served as a field hospital (Military Clinic no. 4) and an evacuee distribution centre. The building was renovated in 2006.

The front of the building reflects the values of Post-Academic architecture, with Modernist echoes in the decoration of its balconies, edgings and woodwork. The décor in the main function room shows influences from the Viennese Secession movement with respect to the female faces on the impost blocks below the beams. A grand staircase leads up to the first floor and the house also has an outside garden area. The building's location meant it had historic connections with the Castelar Theatre, another of the city's key early 20th century bourgeois buildings.

Nowadays, the Casino is open to all Elda residents and blends the elegance of an old building and its typical artistic features with the comforts and conveniences you would expect to find today. It runs a broad entertainment and cultural programme, often free of charge, with events such as gastronomy days, courses, theatre, openings and presentations, talks, competitions, exhibitions and walking routes combining history and nature.

# 11.

## “CASA DE PEPE BARATA”



The home of José Vera Millán, popularly known as “Casa de Pepe Barata”, is in the historic centre of Elda, on the corner between Calle Colón and Calle Nueva. The building stands in a partially changed urban landscape, due mainly to the widening of Calle Colón in the 1960s and to more modern buildings that have appeared in the last 30 years. It is part of a set of residential buildings in Calle Nueva dating back to the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century.

The architectural style is Modernist, similar to the Liberty Style or Stile Floreale. On the ground floor, the building is wrapped round the corner by means of a chamfer, while the two upper floors consist of semi-circular overhanging bay windows projecting from the front of the building in a cylinder shape looking out over the street. The bays are flanked by two simulated pilasters and finished with a curved cornice that runs round the façade.

A top pediment bears the initials JV and the year, 1928. The rest of the pediment also has decorated areas and there is a curved cornice divided by pillars in segments. The windows on the ground floor and the balconies have iron railings and every alternate balcony has a stone balustrade, a composition that is repeated on both sides of the building.

The project was awarded to a leading architect whose name is unknown, although the construction work was done by master builder José Albert “El Romanero”. It was built in two stages as after the Spanish Civil War, a small extension was added in Calle Colón. The bannister on the main staircase is one of the house’s most valuable fixtures.

The original building dates back to at least 1859, when it was owned by Gabriel Tormo y Bernabé. He was followed by 7 further owners until 1928, when it was bought by José Vera Millán, who demolished the old building.

The ground floor rooms were occupied by the photography studio owned by V. Berenguer and by Banesto (Banco Español de Crédito, Spanish credit bank) until the Civil War broke out. Towards the end of the conflict it was used temporarily as a detention centre for Republicans.



# 12.

## “TEATRO CASTELAR”



The Castelar Theatre is one of Elda's traditional social and cultural venues. It is a member of the Spanish Network of Theatres, Auditoriums, Circuits and Festivals, and it also belongs to the Circuit Teatral de la Comunitat Valenciana. Sponsored by *La Eldense* Artistic-Recreational Company, building work began on the Castelar Theatre in 1902 to a specification designed by architect Enrique Sánchez Sedeño. The theatre was officially opened on 11 September 1904.

The original building was constructed using stone masonry and subsequent bases of cement and sand mortar. Its layout was designed according to 19th century style standards and it was sparsely decorated.

It underwent a number of refurbishments over the years. The first in-depth renovation work was carried out in 1921 following the project drawn up by architect Alfonso García, adding boxes, stalls, dress circle and the Castelar medallion. Work was done on the front in 1940.

In the 1950s the theatre was sold to a private company, which used it mainly as a cinema, although some theatre performances and other shows were also held here. After being acquired by the municipal authority, the theatre was updated by architect Mariano Cuevas in 1999, significantly reducing the number of seats and preserving, to a great extent and with good judgement, the original structure and interior.

The current façade has replaced the original one, and has a certain *retro* look, reminiscent of the original Neoclassic one that has been preserved in the front of the foyer leading into the stalls. During the most recent restoration work, a tunnel that was once part of a Civil War air-raid shelter was found under the stage, in the boiler room area.

Nowadays the Castelar Theatre runs a varied programme for audiences of all ages, with nationally and internationally famous shows and actors, while also supporting local theatre companies. Far from offering just plays, the theatre's range of performances covers practically all genres: monologues, comedies, music, zarzuela, opera, musicals, ballet and other shows aimed at children and family audiences.



# 13.

## “COLEGIO PADRE MANJÓN”



The current Padre Manjón School dates back to the 1920s. In 1927, led by local Mayor Francisco Alonso, the idea was revisited of building a group of Primary School buildings in Elda, in response to the city's urgent educational needs. The City Council commissioned Alcoy-based architect Vicente Valls Gadea to carry out the project and land was purchased in the area of "El Campico", otherwise known as "Cañada de Conejo" (1928).

The foundation stone was laid in 1930 and the inauguration ceremony was held on 7 September 1932, attended by Miguel de Unamuno and coinciding with the centenary of the birth of Emilio Castelar, after whom the school was named (Grupo Escolar Emilio Castelar). The group of school buildings was also known locally as "Escuelas Graduadas", "Escuelas Nuevas" and "Escuelas Nacionales".

The original building, renovated in 2003 by Antonio M. Marí Mellado, consists of a longitudinal block running alongside the street, built on two and three floors with a taller central section and two lower sections on either side that are finished off as towers on the corners. A few Expressionist details on the cornices and pilasters are reminiscent of cultured architecture and factory buildings.

Inside, there is a long central covered courtyard that serves to let daylight in over entrances and corridors. The refurbishment work affected the main entrance, which now has a projecting section with safety glass.

During the Spanish Civil War the building was used as a state school, a canteen used by Quakers (a Protestant religious community that mainly worked in helping



and looking after children) and as a dance hall. It was also used as the Land Army's Sub-secretary's office during the final months of the conflict.

After the war, it housed Franco's armed forces and court-martial proceedings were held there. From 1944 to 1952 it was used as the Elda and Petrel Footwear Professional School.

Plus, it served as the venue for the first editions of the Feria Internacional del Calzado e Industrias Afines - FICIA (International Footwear and Associated Industries Trade Fair) between 1959 and 1963. The eye-catching column topped with the figure of Mercury, Roman god of commerce, is a leftover from that era. Since 1952 the building has been home to the Municipal Public Library, now dedicated to Alberto Navarro Pastor.

It received its current name of Padre Manjón around 1964, and combines its public library function with that of nursery and primary school.



# 14.

## “CASA GRANDE DEL JARDÍN DE LA MÚSICA”



The Big House with the Music Garden, otherwise known as “Chalet de Porta” is in the centre of Elda. The house originally stood on the outskirts of the city, in an area full of this kind of residential buildings before the city started to grow and expand. It oxygenates this part of Elda, which is lacking in green spaces, and lives alongside buildings erected mainly from 1980 onwards following the demolition of chalets, homes and old factory buildings.



The house was built in 1925 as the family home of footwear industrialist Antonio Porta Rausa, whose son, Antonio Porta Vera, was Mayor of Elda between 1959 and 1976. It was seized at the start of the Spanish Civil War and used as a blood hospital run by International Red Aid from 1936 to 1937.

It was restored by the City Council between 1985 and 1991 before being used for years as an exhibition venue. In 2017 it underwent further renovation work.

The chalet, which has two floors and a square layout, faces the street on one side and the garden on the other. The side facing the garden has a spectacular porch with a staircase and viewpoint. The house is surrounded by stone railings with ironwork and finished off with urns. The garden features a mature stand of pine trees, benches and parterres, with Modernist tiling.

# 15.

## “CASA DE LAS BELTRANAS”



The Beltranas' house was built by Pedro Juan y Amat, an Elda-born businessman, in the street formerly known as Calle Vall (1864-1865), alongside another house on the corner of Calle del Marqués for domestic use. Between 1898 and 1920 it was acquired by the family of a local doctor, Beltrán, a distinguished member of Elda society and three times Mayor of the city in the early 20th century. During the Spanish Civil War, it was headquarters of the local FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica), and the street was known at that time as Calle Francisco Ascaso. The first floor was where the weekly anarchist publication "Nuevo Rumbo" and several families were housed on the upper floor.

The building, which was designed in an eclectic, Academicist style with Neoclassic hints, stands at the head of Calle Nueva, giving it visual impact and a dominating position on this traditional street with over a hundred years of history. The house consists

of four galleries running alongside the façade. The great entrance door leads into a hallway connecting the upper floors via a wide, well-lit stairway that ends in a turret at the top, while it also forms a central corridor towards the rear courtyard, where an ancient fig tree stands as evidence of a former orchard or garden.



The house also had a family oratory dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary, in a room that has currently been completely renovated. The house has a number of spacious rooms arranged over three floors, with some being decorated with painted wallpaper depicting landscape themes. The Academicist style façade has white mouldings and coving. Notable features are the long balcony on the main floor, the little openings on the servants' floor at the top and the stone balustrade that hides the sloping railed roof.

