

Track 4. CITY HALL AND SURROUNDINGS.

We are now standing in City Hall Square, previously called Tower Square because there had been such a defensive element there. You can find it on point 10 of this guide.

We can see the building that presently lodges the City Hall. This elegant house of renaissance style was built between the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th. But it is not until the 20th century that it is used as the City Hall. There still remain structural elements from the original construction, visible on the façade with squared pieces of slate, as well as in the interior (vestibule with low arch), which give it elegance and beauty.

The current Abbey House is also found on this square. It is an elegant home, possibly from the 17th century, which was rehabilitated at the beginning of the 21st century.

The majority of the elegant homes were built between the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th for the most economically and socially prestigious of the town. The Abbey House is a clear example of this, with the existence of a chapel dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua. Initially this chapel was private, but at some particular time, perhaps during the 18th century, it was opened to the public. A consequence of this is the construction of a large window-door, the perimeter of which is made of large blocks of perfectly squared sandstone. A stairway is needed to enter this door. Nowadays it is opened to the

public on certain saints' days, for example Saint Anthony Abad (in January) and Saint Anthony of Padua (in June).

Also near the City Hall Square is another grand house built at the beginning of the 17th century, the "Sala Quatre Cantons". In 1901 it underwent a great renovation, directed by the architect Francisco Tomás Traver, with the purpose of refurbishing the house as a school for both boys and girls, with living quarters for the teachers. During the 60's of the 20th century it was home to the Wine Museum. In the year 2012 there was a first intervention to prevent its deterioration and make it available for some provisional use.

This is the end of the City Hall and Surroundings. You can proceed to point 5 QR, the Contemporary Arts Museum.