

# **House of Pumarejo**

Social and Cultural Community Patrimony

Project three R's (Recuperation, Rehabilitation, Revitalization)

**“From the Light of Memories the Present can be seen that gives a glimpse of the Future”**

**Luis Hornillo, Ateneo Verde**

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## **The House and the Plaza**

The house known as Palace of Pumarejo is a single building with a Seville architectural form that dates to the 18th century. Pedro Pumarejo a gentleman of Cantabrian origin built it. Throughout history the house has served many purposes.

At first it was used as an institution that benefited “los Niños Toribios”. Then in around 1883 it was transformed into an apartment building. From that point on that the building and the plaza that has the same name became a social place for the neighborhood. Besides its residential purpose it also developed a variety of activities such as: commercial, inns, schools, workshops of traditional jobs, and associations... that have lasted till this day.

Like the building the design of the plaza dates back to the same time period. In order for the building to be constructed Mr. Pumarejo demolished many houses of the less favored class; in order for him to have room and enhance his house-palace. Since then it has been an urban reference point for cohesion and meetings in the community.

As mentioned before the house-palace has many purposes and it became a house of neighbors i.e. apartment building. It is thus understood that the house and the plaza are urban spaces and the history of one would not be understood without that of the other.

(Someone once called Plaza of Pumarejo “the prediction of the Macarena amongst the population.)

## **Historic Antecedents of Deterioration and Abandonment. The Call to Speculate (Expo 92, Urban Plan.)**

Around the sixties the building and the way of life of those that live in it began to deteriorate due to the negligence of the property owners. Since they have not been committed to their duties and letting a furniture warehouse company degrade the noblest parts of the house without any consideration. Later in the nineties, there was a lack of renters due to the property owners being too speculative and harsh of their tenants. As a result, the house would be abandoned and then could be sold. That has made the situation worse over the last ten years especially after the Expo 92 and the Urban Plan, which made real estate speculators notice the northeast sector known as “Casco de Antiguo de Sevilla” to create large business. These interests collided and still continue to collide with the vital interests of the neighbors in the community. In addition they foster the forcing and ultimately ruining of the homes which basically leads to the eviction or the tenants leaving on their own.

### **Brief Chronology of the Community's Vindication**

Due to the situation a group of neighbors decided to make a platform in defense of the inhabitants of the House and for the recuperation and rehabilitation of it. There has been a widespread call which representatives of the associations in defense of monumental patrimony of Seville amongst many others have answered. Due to this call there have been mediated repercussions. Beforehand there were neighborhood meetings, which invited the residents to defend their neighborhood. A flyer was created which publicly denounced the deterioration of such an emblematic building. It especially asked for a Plan to Rehabilitate; as well as, denouncing immobility that the neighborhood is

suffering.

Some of these actions coincided with some subsidized works of the Administration, which instead of helping the problem it made it worse. For example, there was an increase in of rain water filtration. In addition there was a lack of handling things delicately and professional criticism of the intervention, deterioration of the tiles in the central patio, the columns, and stairwell banisters that surrounds it...Why keep going? At the same time the “sheep scares” troublesome characters that were sent by the opponents of the rehabilitation in order to minimize the hope of the inhabitants of the house.

On the other hand, at the same time the platform presented the Administration an initiative so the house could be declared B.I.C. (goods of Cultural Interest) an important hotel would buy fifty percent of the house. About two years after the proposition was presented the initiative had a success because it was declared category A (monument), which specified clearly its residential character and many uses in accordance with the proposal that the platform made.

It was after this success that the idea of promoting a project of “puesta en Valor” i.e. investing and Social Revitalization began to take shape, which began an ample debate of future uses, from a perspective of renovation of the associative neighborhood lifestyle, which still continues. In addition to the debates the platform takes a practical important decision in the sense of revitalizing a space that has been given by a neighborhood association. After a year of the initiative the experience has enriched, in terms of the social lifestyle and participation.

But not everything is a triumph. Since the Administration is not that accepting of the project. (Theoretically it is)The Administration has lately manifested that it will file

an expropriation against the owners because of their duty to maintain the house under the Patrimony Law of Historic Andaluz. The platform for the House of Pumarejo knows that politicians talk a lot and make many promises only to later not keep them. Anyways this group will continue to vindicate for the house of Plumarejo with the Integral Rehabilitation Plan.