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## Heritage Values and Rehabilitation: Architectural Intervention in the Archaeological Museum of Seville (Spain)

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**Abstract.** The present investigation examines the role of museum buildings in their consideration as heritage institutions. A particular interest in rehabilitation processes and conversion of international exhibition pavilions into museums will be assessed. The Archaeological Museum of Seville will be taken as a case study. The Ibero-American Exhibition of Seville (1929) was a paramount event in the city, with a vast development of the southern area of the city as well as a display of flourishing regionalist architecture. Its powerful image has transcended from this temporary event, embracing relevant institutions over decades, such as the Archeological Museum. Plus, historical preservation has enhanced its heritage value. Within the grounds of the historic María Luisa Park, the museum has undergone a remarkable evolution as an institution that requires a new relationship with its building, together with an adequation to new museological perspectives. During the lifetime of the museum, the former exhibition pavilion has experienced a succession of rehabilitation processes in the 20th century, always searching for a continuity with the concept of the original building. However, the evolution of the institution faces new challenges for the 21st century: display of the collection, technological issues, public and community services, network affiliation, etc. A series of cultural heritage protection measures that affect the property and its collections, its immediate environment, and the urban environment in which it is located, condition the building and its urban context. Nowadays, a new architectural intervention is in process, with the main goal of putting together all these requirements. The project also deals with the production of a new architecture of representation, respecting and rehabilitating the original regionalist building but also creating a contemporary image for the institution. The relevance of the museum, together with its urban role, make the Archeological Museum of Seville an important agent of cultural requalification. In conclusion, this paper will show how urban culture has been renewed, experiencing a decisive transformation of public spaces and cultural facilities, for leisure, education, or tourism. A new reconsideration of the Cultural Property in question is an experience that can be extrapolated to other museum experiences that emerged in the 20th century and that are currently undergoing a comprehensive reexamination.



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## 1. Introduction

The Archaeological Museum of Seville occupies since 1942 the old Renaissance Pavilion of the Ibero-American Exhibition of Seville of 1929, designed by the Sevillian architect Aníbal González in 1911. This state museum has undergone a remarkable evolution, which urges to undertake the complete renovation of its building. The Sevillian architect Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra won the architectural competition for this transformation in 2009. However, the building has a series of cultural heritage preservation measures that affect the building and its collections, which are making it difficult to move to this new stage.

The cultural redefinition of museums in the 21st century, through the renovation of their buildings and the creation of new spaces, responds to three major institutional changes: the modification of conservation practices, reorganization of collections and the organization of temporary exhibitions. In addition to the complexities of this change, the aim is to bring the museum closer to society. [1] The need for change in the architecture of museums addresses the problems of the growth of the collection, the new functions of the museum itself, as well as the updating of the institutional identity. These actions have a cultural impact and contribute to the socio-economic development of the territory [2].

The study shows that it is possible that a building conceived as a pavilion for a temporary exhibition, with heritage recognition and over a hundred years old, admits to function as a museum with the current requirements, from a renegotiation between the building and the institution. It is necessary to establish a true relationship between the building and the collection it houses, in a mutual effort to produce a unitary conception, with capacity for evolution.

## 2. Objectives.

The present investigation is intended to examine the role of museum buildings in their consideration as heritage institutions. To consider as a significant matter the heritage value as relevant architectures of museum buildings in rehabilitation processes and conversion.

More specifically, the keys of the conversion of temporal international exhibition pavilions into permanent museums will be assessed. The process of renewal of the Archaeological Museum of Seville will be taken as a case study that can be extrapolated to similar experiences that may undergo a comprehensive reexamination.

## 3. The Archaeological Museum of Seville renews its heritage dimension

The Archaeological Museum of Seville occupies one of the buildings that make up the Plaza de América, accompanying the Royal Pavilion, on the East side and the current Museum of Popular Arts and Customs that closes its North side. The square was designed by the prestigious French landscape architect J.-C.-N. Forestier between 1913 and 1916, on the occasion of the celebration in Seville of the Ibero-American Exhibition (figure 1) that took place from 1929 to 1930 and to whose exhibition hall it belonged. The building was planned as a Renaissance Pavilion for the Palace of Fine Arts, by the Seville architect Aníbal González in 1911. Its architectural formalization stands out for a rich ornate language of the flourishing regionalist architecture.

The Archaeological Museum of Seville, as an institution, has undergone a remarkable evolution that is now expected to acquire a complete renovation of its building. The building has a series of measures of heritage preservation that affect the cultural property and its collections, as well as the immediate urban environment in which it is located. All these protection measures should be considered as a whole, with the museum becoming a driving force for cultural retraining.

On the other hand, the architecture of the museums is gestated from its origin at the end of the 18th century as a typological search, through three previous models: gallery, temple and palace. The first

museum experiences served to create the first 19 international exhibitions (1851-1928) [3]. The architecture of the pavilions imported many precepts of museum architecture, although shaded by its vocation to be ephemeral. In general, at the end of these exhibitions, most of the pavilions were dismantled or demolished, with very specific cases in which they were reused. In this sense, the case of Seville is quite relevant because of the large number of buildings that have been preserved and adapted to new uses.



**Figure 1.** General Spanish Exhibition: poster. Retrieved from [www.todocoleccion.net](http://www.todocoleccion.net)

In this context, the Palace of Fine Arts is planned as a pavilion for the Ibero-American Exhibition in Seville. With the basic ideas about the museum that his author had, he provides a hybrid response between the typological resolutions of temple and gallery. In addition, it stands out the imprint of the regionalist language, sign of identity of all the creations of the event in Seville. This feature differs from the contemporary International Exhibition of Barcelona, where there was a greater presence of modern architecture, without prejudice to the participation of academic and traditionalist architectures.

### *3.1. From exhibition pavilion to archaeological museum.*

Aníbal González would project this pavilion with a neoplateresque image of the so-called Sevillian regionalism, which echoed imperial Spain, reinforced by the theme of the Exhibition. It is also part of the Hispanic atmosphere encouraged by the Hispanic Society, created by Archer Huntington in Manhattan in 1904 and with a public visit since 1908. This traditionalist stylistic trend would leave other works throughout Europe and America: the Spanish Pavilion at L'Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900, the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington or the Teatro Cervantes in Buenos Aires, among other examples. Even before the 1929 exhibition, the architectures on which the Sevillian architect was inspired received expressions of interest [4].

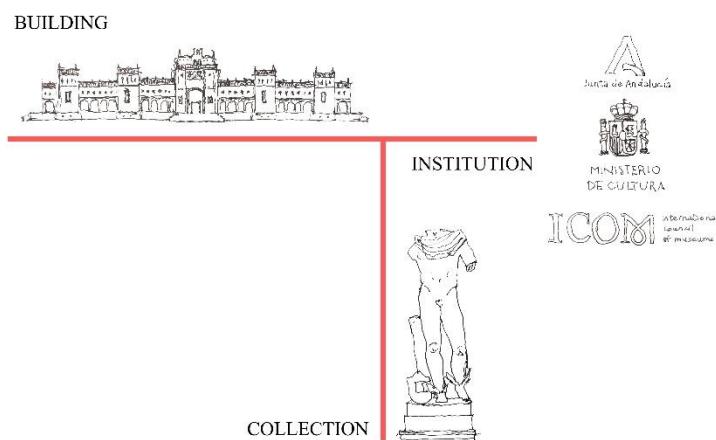
The project and work of the Renaissance Pavilion (1911-1919) culminated in its definition as the Palace of Fine Arts for the Ibero-American Exhibition in Seville (1929-1930). During the exhibition, it housed the Ancient Art Exhibition of painting, sculpture, and other movable goods. The exhibit included sumptuous arts and documentary heritage, from the 16th to the 18th centuries. For this exhibition purpose, Aníbal González studied various museum aspects, looking for sobriety, minimal ornamentation, and clear itineraries [5]. Supported by this concept of palace, the conception of the building appears, limited to certain aspects that have marked its subsequent museum conversion.

Between 1942-43 began its process of adaptation to the Archaeological Museum by the government of the Francoist state, from a clear perspective of developing neoclassicist interiors and aware of the changes required for natural lighting. The building will receive statuary and Roman imperial portraits, as more prominent pieces.

### *3.2. The Archaeological Museum of Seville in the 20th century.*

During the second half of the 20th century, the Archaeological Museum of Seville was adapted to the successive museological plans and museum projects. As a result, several modifications have been made to the building by various architects. In general, these projects have had a continuist character with the original building and have addressed it partially, not globally. There has been an image problem and there is a lack of authorship recognition. Likewise, the traditional image and the arrival of a contemporary architecture have not generated general consensus, with different social perception of one and other formalisations.

#### THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF SEVILLE



**Figure 2.** The three main components of the Seville Archaeological Museum (diagrams by the authors)

The current characteristics of museums as urban facilities and cultural resources require a process of requalification and modernization. The transition from a Palace of Fine Arts to a museum, in the case of the Archaeological Museum of Seville, comes up against a conceptual gap, which in the present is not resolved, considering the possibilities offered by the building, which requires an architectural renovation.

### *3.3. Basis for a new museum project.*

With the perspective of creating a common identity for the future of the Archaeological Museum of Seville, it is necessary to establish some bases between the two realities that converge in the building, interconnecting them (figure 2).

First, there are common factors between a Pavilion and a Museum building from which it comes. The development of major international exhibitions coincides with a stage of creation of cultural institutions by states and private actors. Museums, galleries and art centers are significantly expanding the access to culture for citizens, from the enlightened and industrialized world. Museums and international exhibitions ran on parallel roads, competing. Although many pavilions had a temporary destiny, soon these realities would be connected. It became opportune to use them in an ephemeral event and then to acquire a vocation of permanence as museums. In this sense, the Pavilion and the subsequent museum share outstanding experiences in terms of their transcendence at the urban level, enhancing their host cities [3]. However, there are frequently conflicting readings of the outcome of these events in exhibitions held simultaneously or near in time, such as those in Barcelona and Seville in 1929 [6]. Normally, pavilions were located within areas that often maintain parks or gardens with a modelic sense of the public sphere. This asset is fulfilled in the Sevillian case.

On the other hand, with its presence today, the museum recalls this event of national and international impact, perpetuating its image. The use as headquarters of a state museum institution makes this effort to achieve a representativeness of its image and the sense of meeting place of its spaces. The exhibition purpose of the building remains, being in origin temporary and now starred by an important permanent collection of archaeology. Similarly, both destinations share that they were and are support for urban cultural tourism. This is an increasingly widespread and socially present reality.



**Figure 3.** Seville Archaeological Museum at the America Square (picture by the authors)

Secondly, it must also be recognized that there are differences that impede the development of the building. In a Pavilion for temporary use, almost the entire space is for exhibiting and it relates to other nearby pavilions in the exhibition hall. Meanwhile, the Museum, with a permanent use, although subject to renovations, needs spaces where the collection appears as protagonist; but there are also requirements of spaces for the management of the museum (administration, reservations, research, etc.). In turn, by the very nature of the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Seville, the identity of the museum as an institution is associated with the references of the collection established in other points of the territory. This is the case with the link between other works and certain archaeological sites (Italica, Munigua, Carmona, etc.), other museums (Cádiz Museum, National Roman Art Museum of Mérida, National Archeological Museum, etc.) and collections (Antiquarium). If the pavilion acquired its identity as a legacy of the exhibition (figure 3), that is, associated with a greater reality, which is the entire enclosure and its relationship with other pavilions,

the situation changes with the museum. They are therefore different expressions, but they converge in the same architectural reality.

The Seville pavilion was born in a cultural context in which museums were still experimental typologies and even more so in terms of museography. International exhibitions were in the process of standardization. In 1928 the Convention establishing the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) was signed, with the intention of regulating these major events, laying down principles on the quality and theme of expositions, as well as to ensure the rotation of the host countries. In 1930, the League of Nations set up the Office International des Musées and in 1934 the first International Museum Conference of that body took place in Madrid. In this meeting, the principles of planification and the modification of museum building were discussed, according to new needs. It was defended in the 1950s after the Second World War and until the 1970s [2].

At the time when the Archaeological Museum of Seville was installed in its definitive building, this meant a reuse of a large building that did not seem to imply major changes. To a large extent, this was due to the little development of the institution in particular, as well as to the little technification and normativization that the museums had by then.



**Figure 4.** Current volumetric definition of the Seville Archaeological Museum (rendering by the authors)

During the second half of the 20th century, museums have undergone important changes, and today they are main actors in urban change. All this has extremely complicated the degree of intervention in the transformation of a monument into a museum, so it can be said that, in our days, the museum has ceased to be a "soft" use for this type of property [7], it's a new tenant to whom it has become hard to live in the building. Museums are currently highly technical and their museological programmes analyse and plan their needs in detail. The evolution in the strategies of treatment of the public has changed a lot (access to the collection, support services) and this factor determines numerous changes in the management of the museum spaces.

In terms of intervention, with the evolution of museums, the difference arises between the priority of the architect and that of the curator, more closely related to the collection. It is a circumstance that should be considered in the rehabilitation or expansion of museums. Durey has consistently been struck by the nearly always opposite vision of the curator and the architect. So, the architects think in terms of volume, lighting and the overall flow and rhythm of the space. If they spare a moment for certain objects or works to be housed at all, it is merely an afterthought, in Durey's opinion. Their

primary interest is in the packaging. But he remarks that curators, on the other hand, think of their collections first. (...) Their problems stem from the works themselves (...). One of the two things happen: either some sort of dialogue is established between these two different approaches, the architect, or the curator, or it is not. (...) But this kind of dialogue needs mutual concessions, Durey says. (...) This dialogue is the key to museographical design. [8] From the 21st century onwards, the need for collaboration between the architectural team and the curator has taken on new strength [2].

On the other hand, concern for the preservation of collections and compliance with regulations, including those on accessibility, require the provision of mechanisms of control. Also, is is needed the implementation of complex facilities with high technological requirements, difficult to include in a historic building (figure 4) [9].

In the international panorama, extensions and rehabilitation of old exhibition pavilions stand out, which are currently museums recently intervened with projects by outstanding architects. For example, in the case of exhibition halls of the 19th century that are today relevant museums, we find the Victoria and Albert Museum, heir to the Great Exhibition (London, 1851), transformed by Amanda Levete (2017); the Art Institute of Chicago, headquarters of the World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893), expanded by Renzo Piano (2009); or the Grand Palais de l'Exposition Universelle (Paris, 1900), under transformation by LAN Architecture. Other institutions from 20th century exhibitions are the Saint Louis Art Museum, witness of the Lousiana Purchase Exposition /World's Fair (Saint Louis, 1904) and recently intervened by David Chipperfield (2013); or the Palais Tokyo de l'Exposition Internationale (Paris, 1937), with the work of Lacaton & Vassal (2012) [3]. For its part, our case study joins the previous ones, with the Archaeological Museum of Seville, former pavilion of the Iberoamerican Exhibition (Seville, 1929) and with a new project to be accomplished by Guillermo Vázquez (2009-2019).

#### *3.4. The administrative reality of the museum.*

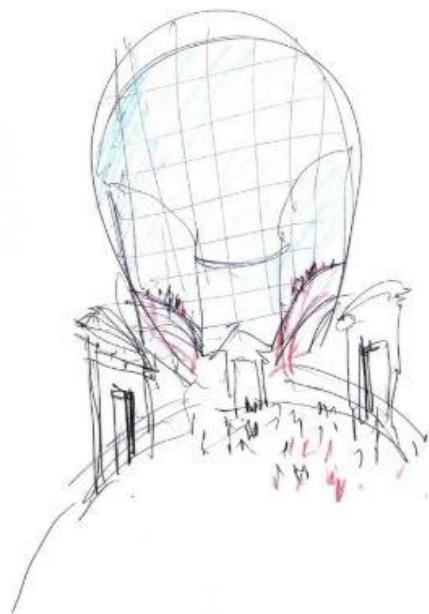
Another factor to consider in the elaboration of the new discourse for the museum building is that of the organizations or institutions involved. Their presence derives from the management model of the museum, which has historically changed, as well as from the building itself. The ownership of the old pavilion was ceded by the City of Seville to the Spanish State, to be the headquarters of the museum. The collection is state-owned, with contributions from the City Council. The management of the institution is transferred to the department of culture of the regional government of Andalusia, in charge of the maintenance of the building. However, the investments in works are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.

The relationship with the international exhibition and its architectural uniqueness has motivated that the building is subject to heritage preservation. In addition, hosting a museum makes by its nature itself a Historical Heritage. Therefore, in the headquarters of the Archaeological Museum of Seville, we find a double implication of its patrimonial condition that complicates the attention to its protection before any intervention of rehabilitation and updating of the museum.

#### *3.5. New stage for the 21st century.*

With the intention of solving the new needs of the museum, the Ministry of Culture of Spain called an architectural competition for the comprehensive rehabilitation of the building. The jury chose among the 12 proposals presented, that of the architect Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra (2009). The project highlights the insertion of contemporary elements to resolve the fragmentation and lack of coherence of the previous rehabilitations with the original building, which is historical and at the same time recent (figure 5). It seeks to enhance a more unitary identity of the building, according to a state museological institution of the 21st century. However, this project of transformation is culturally conditioned by the scarcity of interventions where the current architecture has manifested itself with

evidence. Most of them are merely conservative works, but not in contrast with modernist and regionalist architectures from the time of the original building. Among these few cases would be, in another typology, for example, the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona (intervened by Oscar Tusquets) or the Antoni Tàpies Foundation in the same city (rehabilitation of Roser Amadó and Lluís Domènech Girbau and more recently of Ábalos+Sentkiewicz), both works originally by Domènech i Montaner. In any case, the monument should be applied to the means and languages of contemporary culture, to extract from it all its communicative capacity, ensuring the best conditions of visibility, understanding and conservation of the collection, and preserving its integrity as an expression of an era [9].



**Figure 5.** Sketch for the renewal of the oval entrance room: designed by architect Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra, 2009 (by courtesy of the autor)

#### 4. Results and discussions

Within the architecture of museums, a relevant part corresponds to adaptations of buildings conceived in origin for other purposes. The museum use gives them dignity and capacity to perpetuate themselves, being incorporated as a significant element of urban memory. The interventions of conversion are very plural, but they are typical of a time and a conception of the museum that can later evolve.

The trajectory of buildings converted into museums that require updating due to the evolution of their collection or to museum changes is subject to much-debated architectural interventions. They affect the role of these institutions in culture and to their urban environment. This is an international phenomenon, in which the characteristic cases are a guide to good and bad practices for the museum landscape as a whole.

The original conservation of former buildings has not only a utilitarian basis; the arrival of museum institutions attributes them an additional heritage value. This patrimonial comprehension has to be balanced with the demands of change that the life of the museum demands. The combination of these questions, which converge in our case study in the building of the Archaeological Museum of Seville, in search of a balance capable of evolving, are the main result of this work.

First, its historical values stand out. The building is a paramount example of the Ibero-American Exhibition of 1929. It brings us closer to the urban expansion of a historic periphery with a rich landscape, of which the structure of the park is an evolution to the public dimension. The collective memory of the city summarizes an entire cultural process encoded in architectural regionalism.

Secondly, its architectural values are underlined. The original building was the work of a single architect, a figure that enjoys relative recognition in Spain, more for the spectacular and iconic nature of his works than for the enhancement of his own career as an author. A quarter of a century after its completion, the pavilion became a museum, experiencing in the same period successive partial projects of interventions of up to five architects, as it has happened in many other museums. They sought to ensure and improve its functionality, absorbing increases in its collection and augmenting the exhibition area and administrative and research spaces. These projects resulted in a first phase more linked to historicism and modern formal keys from the late sixties and especially in the seventies. However, there has not been a real connection between the building and the museum institution, both suffering from a pressing outdated response.

The desire for permanence of the museum institution, in the building in which it has been located since the 1940s, reinforces the value of the building's use. This helps to consolidate the cultural heritage of Seville, identifying it as part of the Museums of Plaza de América (next to the Museum of Arts and Popular Customs). It is also an example of ways of adapting temporary exhibition spaces to a permanent museum, with relevant archaeological collections, and a museum repository of various periods in a continuous process in the time that it is necessary to evolve.

The building is understood as part of a greater reality, which includes its immediate environment, but with a transcendence to urban and territorial scales, which supposes an increase of its patrimonial recognition. The revitalizations of the Museum have meant an improvement not only internally, but also in the general conditions of its surroundings. The lives of the building determine its multiple cultural records, in a characteristic multiplicity [10].

## 5. Conclusions

The current characteristics of museums, such as urban facilities and cultural resources, require a process of requalification and modernization, considering the role that these buildings play within the structuring elements of the city.

The interrelationship between museums, the new technical and spatial requirements deriving from the progress of Museology, as general factors, and the changes experienced by the collection itself or the urban environment, are factors that can encourage successive adaptations. The continuity of the building and its recognition as a heritage event may be subject to the preservation of its architecture, which may compromise its evolution as the headquarters of a museum.

The relevance of the museum, together with its urban role, make the Archeological Museum of Seville an important agent of cultural requalification. Nowadays, a new architectural intervention is in process, with the main goal of putting together all these requirements. The project also deals with the production of a new architecture of representation, respecting and rehabilitating the original regionalist building but also creating a contemporary image for the institution.

In conclusion, this paper has shown how urban culture has been renewed, experiencing a decisive transformation of public spaces and cultural facilities, for leisure, education, or tourism. A new reconsideration of the Cultural Property in question is a forthcoming and necessary experience. Finally, a new balance between heritage building and the development of the museum institution must be renegotiated.

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