

AN OCEAN LINER IN SAN FERNANDO

**Housing in San Fernando, Cádiz. Tomás Carranza, Javier Montero and Miguel
Angel Leonseguí, architects.**

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When I was a child, in Cadiz, whenever I saw the ships coming, I always wondered why the "lows" of those ships were painted black and the "highs" were painted white. And then when I grew up, as an architect, I understood that the encounter of the ship with the sea should be more protected, painted black, waterproofed, caulked. The same applies to buildings. The underneath of the buildings should be protected with a good plinth, built with a more resistant material than the rest.

So it is in this residential building in San Fernando. The upper part is finished with white single-layer mortar. And the wide plinth is dressed in dark stone, black ochavo granite, which is not only very resistant, but also makes the ship well anchored. In black and white, like a big ship, as if it were an ocean liner. A very beautiful ocean liner.

IDEA

The architects were commissioned to design a block of collective housing in the city of San Fernando, on the site of the former streetcar company's depot, which was called Fábrica de la Luz, after the thermal power plant located there. What architects Tomás Carranza, Javier Montero and Miguel Leonseguí have designed and built there is a precise exercise in light, a true "factory of light".

The site is a piece of a block that overlooks Calle Real, the main street of San Fernando, and is completed by another smaller site in front of it.

A well-proven typology of a double band of buildings parallel to the facade with a courtyard band in the center is used. The services overturned to the inner courtyard and the living rooms open to the exterior facade. With transversal connections to optimize vertical communications.

After consolidating the corner, and taking advantage of the non-orthogonal shape of the site, a wedge-shaped caesura is created that connects the street with the large interior courtyard. At the same time, the bands of intermediate courtyards of the building open onto the block courtyard, making the circulations more fluid and the intermediate spaces are well connected.

LOCATION

Perhaps the main success of this project is how it is included in the fabric of the city. A very intelligent reading of the fabric is made so that the new building, being large, does not seem so, and punctually complies with the regulations, with the alignments of facades and cornices. But instead of remaining just a correct exercise, there is something more that all architects want for our projects.

The way in which the project is sectioned, what we have called sajaduras, are made with great wisdom. As if architects had a manual on the "art of cisoria", which is something that architecture has.

The facades overlooking the city are very beautiful and their scale, materials and color are very successful.

PLANTS

The floor plans are impeccable, as these architects are accustomed to. The typology is well known, houses with two facades organized by a central corridor. Adjusted with the precision of a clockwork mechanism.

PORTALS

Special care is given to the portals which, having a larger dimension, offer more spatial interest. The whole complex has a large exterior stone plinth, black granite ochavo, which unifies the operation and adequately protects the meeting of the building with the ground.

AZOTEAS

It recovers the space of the roofs that has always been in the Andalusian tradition. The space in which the house looks to the sky. There takes place a community life that has always been one of the most beautiful customs of Cadiz. And if before they were only places to hang the clothes, now they will serve for so many things. The storage rooms are located there.

FINAL

The architects had already made some collective housing in the López Pinto Avenue in Cádiz, of great quality. So much so that they are currently in an Exhibition on Contemporary Spanish Architecture that is touring the world.

These houses in San Fernando, in addition to starting from a clear idea, of understanding the site very well, of being very well built, of having created some very interesting spaces, are, I insist, very beautiful. A very beautiful ocean liner, I repeat. They are houses in which one would like to live. They are wonderful houses made by very good architects in which we would all like to live. They are so good.