

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY COUNCIL

### CONVENT OF CARMELITAS CALZADOS (CALCED CARMELITES)

The current building housed the convent of Carmelitas Calzados, founded by P. Singler in a house on Cuesta Gomérez street in 1552. In 1572, it was moved to the hermitage of Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza, located in the rear part of the building –Lepanto street–. The ancient convent and church were finished in 1627. The church was located in the rear part and the convent had two inner patios: the old cloister and the new cloister. The new cloister was larger and Martín Díaz Navarrete, architect of the Chancery, played a part in its construction.

The only architectural element preserved of the ancient Convent of El Carmen is a stone façade located under a relieving arch in the north front of the building, facing Mariana Pineda street.

### HISTORY OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF GRANADA

Queen Isabella I of Castile proclaimed the Primer Cabildo (First Council) or Regimiento Moro the 6th of January 1492. It was formed by the chief magistrate and 21 Muslim councillors (2 Muslim doctors, 3 scribes, 1 interpreter and qadis). However, this period of political dualism did not last for too long. It ended in 1497 due to political and social pressure derived from the Castilian repopulation.

The Catholic Monarchs, by means of a *Carta de Merced* (a royal mandate) arranged the Council on 20th September, 1500. It was formed by the chief magistrate, 24 councillors, 20 municipal officers and a scribe.

The first council was located at La Madraza–Madrasah of Granada–, which was the first university of the city –personalities such as Ibn Zamrak studied there. Yusuf I had it built in 1349 and was one of the most remarkable buildings of the city. A small squared prayer room from the original Nasrid building is preserved in excellent condition. It has a *mihrab* with Koranic inscriptions. The room is covered with an octagonal star-shaped dome sitting on a pendentive.

The Catholic Monarchs donated the building in 1500 for the Casa de Cabildos (City Council) and it was enlarged with the addition of adjoining houses. The hall known as Salón de Caballeros XXIV (Hall of Knights 24), where the councillors held meetings, dates from this period and an excellent coffered ceiling is preserved. The City Council was moved to its actual location in 1851.

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Afterwards, the building housed a private storehouse until it was purchased and fully restored by the State in 1939. Later on, the building was associated to the University of Granada. In 2011, the last restoration stage was completed and the building was opened for the public.

### THE CURRENT BUILDING

After the Confiscation of Mendizábal and the secularization of ecclesiastical properties the building was purchased by the City Council. As there was not funds to do refurbishments works, the church and the old cloister were demolished and, afterwards, the current Plaza del Carmen was opened. The works lasted from 1848 to 1858.

The grille giving access to the hall refers to the works in 1884 to build the underground cellar of the river Darro.

The façade dates back from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was renewed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it underwent successive modifications. Architects Modesto Cendoya and Ángel Casas, who was the architect of the bullring of Granada, worked On its remodelling.

Concerning the patio, the main cloister, from the Convent of El Carmen, is structured around a portico with Tuscan columns, made of stone from Sierra Elvira. It has undergone several modifications.

In 2000, to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City Council, the façades of the building were renewed to give it a classic look. The building's rosy colour was changed to grey, friezes were added to the windows and the scallop shell of the main façade was removed. Furthermore, on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2002, the sculptural group *El instante preciso* was added to crown the building. It is made of patinated and polished bronze and it is based on the painting by the artist Guillermo Pérez Villalta. It was sculpted by Ramiro Megías, professor of the University of Granada and Miguel Ángel Moliné was in charge of the foundry.