



History

Originally conceived as a charitable teaching space, the mining orphanage was adapted and transformed since 1951 as the most ambitious Universidad Laboral (Labour University) of those in existence at the time. The project, managed by architect Luis Moya, was envisaged as a great city, ideally autarkic and self-sufficient, prepared to train generations of workers' sons as highly-qualified professionals.

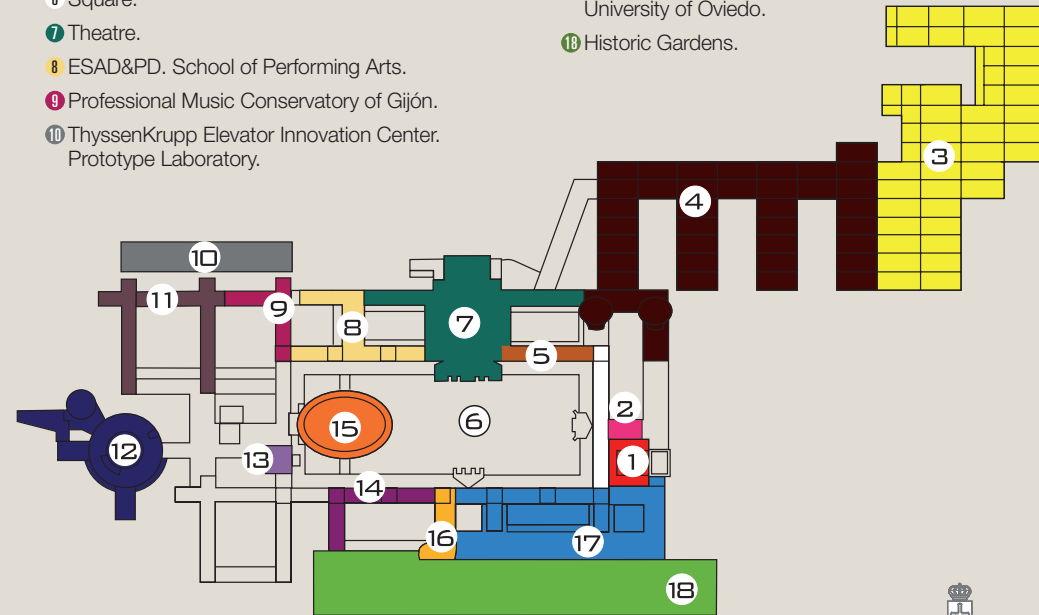
The construction follows the ideals of classical architecture, although a clear eclecticism dominates the entire work. The great central square acts as the organisation focal point for some of the most prominent and singular buildings such as the Church, the Tower or the Theatre. The rest of the dependencies are deployed around this monumental heart of the city, highlighting the bays built for the professional technical training workshops.

The construction of the set of buildings started in 1948 and paralysed totally in 1957 as a result of the dismissal of the Minister of Work, José Antonio Girón de Velasco, who was the main person encouraging the project of Spanish Labour Universities. The first students were already attending classes at the institution of Gijón by then.

Unfinished and in the midst of legendary stories, the Laboral University of Gijón was managed by the Jesuits from its start until 1978, period during which generations of students and qualified professionals were trained in specialities such as welding, boiler-making or turnery.

In the eighties, with the academic adaptation and modernisation, it went on to form part of the National Integrated Teachings Institute and a great part of the installations were left unused, left to the processes of abandonment and deterioration. In 2011, the Government of the Principality of Asturias became responsible for the building and commenced to design an ambitious usage plan with the aim of adapting the spaces to the needs of the 21st century.

- 1 The Reception.
- 2 Sociedad Pública de Gestión y Promoción Turística y Cultural del Principado de Asturias SAU (Culture).
- 3 LABoral Art and Industrial Creation Centre.
- 4 Laboral Vocational Training Centre (CIFP La Laboral).
- 5 Sociedad Pública de Gestión y Promoción Turística y Cultural del Principado de Asturias SAU (Tourism). ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center. R&D Center.
- 6 Square.
- 7 Theatre.
- 8 ESAD&PD. School of Performing Arts.
- 9 Professional Music Conservatory of Gijón.
- 10 ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center. Prototype Laboratory.
- 11 Vipasa Laboral Youth Home.
- 12 Principality of Asturias Broadcasting Corporation (RTPA).
- 13 Tower.
- 14 Public Service Company of the Principality of Asturias (SERPA).
- 15 Church.
- 16 Auditorium. Café
- 17 "Jovellanos" Faculty of Commerce, Tourism and Social Sciences of the University of Oviedo.
- 18 Historic Gardens.



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Welcome to la Laboral

Laboral Culture City is the result of transformation project taken on by the Government of the Principality of Asturias since 2001 in order to provide new life to monumental set of the old Laboral University of Gijón.

In 2007 this space opened its doors once more, converted into a constantly transforming cultural city, where there is room for all kinds of proposal, from training and research to creation and fun.

The guided tours of La Laboral, the Theatre with its varied artistic programme, the exhibitions in Art and Industrial Creation Centre or the conference spaces, all make up a unique puzzle to which can be added supplementary services such as the Reception, the Café of La Laboral, the children's activities, the temporary expositions or the events.



Visiting the historic centre

■ The Corinthian Patio

Oriented towards the east, the patio constitutes the main entrance to La Laboral and stands out due to its Composite Corinthian style colonnade. After the refurbishment works, it has been provided with a glass and steel roofing which contributes towards making this enclosure the real welcoming hall. The Corinthian Patio houses the Laboral Reception, an avant-garde design area offering information on the guided visits and activities of the Laboral Culture City and in which you can also acquire a souvenir of your visit to the building or tickets for the shows in the Theatre.

■ The Square

After the Corinthian Patio you access the great Central Square. This is the heart of La Laboral, the nexus and epicentre of the activity in this place and around it are the façades of the main spaces of the set. Being 150 metres long by 50 metres



wide and paved with granite, it follows the design chosen by Luis Moya in the style of Castilian squares, although its main inspiration is the Square of St Mark's in Venice. To the right is the Theatre of La Laboral with its Classical-Hellenistic façade, like the temples of Ancient Greece. Symmetrical and centred we find the Church, inspired in Italian Baroque art. The Tower rises behind the Church with its slender silhouette. To the left is the façade of the pavilion which housed part of the student residence, nowadays occupied by the University of Oviedo and from whose arcades one accesses the Café and the recovered Gardens of the premises.

■ The Tower

Its classical style silhouette is stands out from all points in the surrounding area. Luis Moya designed the volume inspired in the Giralda of Seville, the Tower of Hercules in A Coruña and the Lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Its current height of 130 metres makes it the tallest stone tower in Spain. The old observatory offers new spaces at present destined for offices, archives or even surprising premises like the two floors of the Clock Room, destined to cultural and business events. The miradors located on floors 14 and 17 offer the best views of the Asturian coast and of the different pieces making up the project of La Laboral.



■ The Church

This presents an elliptical ground plan of over 800 square metres and capacity for over 1,000 persons. Its internal Byzantine-style dome stands out, formed by a system of Arab-Hispanic crossed nerves. With a weight of 2,300 tonnes and almost half a million bricks, this makes one of the largest domes in Europe.

The outside appears profusely ornamented with the sculptures of the most important saints and educators of the Catholic Church, which is the work of Manuel Álvarez Laviada. The mosaics of Archangels and Evangelists were designed by Joaquín Valverde and performed by Santiago Padrós; and the Constellations, thought up by the team of architects in charge of the refurbishment, follow the latitudes and coordinates of each arch at the start of the new stage of Laboral Culture City, which commenced exactly on 29th March 2007 at 21.00 h.

■ The Theatre

After the refurbishment of the monumental complex, the old Assembly Hall has become the Theatre Auditorium with greatest capacity in Asturias and one of the best in the north of Spain with re-



gard to spaces, capacity and technology.

The alterations that most stand out are the substitution of the old stage for the present one of 440 square metres, and the large multipurpose pit capable of housing around 100 musicians, 90 seats or to increase the stage platform another 70 metres. All this allows for a wide variety of artistic productions to be performed.

On the noble floor of the theatre is the Hall of Paintings, known for the frescos of Enrique Segura, decorating its walls and allegorically reflecting the story of the foundation of the Laboral University,



which makes this space a truly singular solemn enclosure.

The Theatre of La Laboral stands out for its possibilities as a multiple space to house not only a varied artistic programme, but also to hold conferences, seminars and all kinds of event in a privileged architecture.

■ The Café and Auditorium

The old cafeteria of the Laboral University allows one to enjoy part of the restored original furniture: sofas, chairs, tables, desks, cupboards and beds, carried out by designer Aurelio Biosca. The mural relating to customs performed by painter Francisco Arias In the lounge area, opening to the gardens via large windows, represents the offering of Asturian workers to the Virgin of Covadonga. The spiral staircase inside leads to the Auditorium, a space destined to cultural acts with a capacity for 155 persons seated on the sets of the Assembly Hall. This space, with the participation of architect María Juana Ontañón in its design, stands out for its ship's bow shape and its original windows with a clear maritime influence.

■ The Gardens of la Laboral

In the southern area of the building we find the Gardens of La Laboral, designed by Javier de Winthuysen and Ramón Ortiz Ferré, a dream-like place to take a stroll and enjoy. The water circuits start at the Civic Square and access the channels via jets fountains inspired in the Generalife of the Alhambra in Granada. The ornamental part presents large magnolia and Gramíneae, providing colour games almost all year round.



■ Other Spaces of la Laboral

Apart from these spaces open to the public and which can be known via guided visits, La Laboral includes other places of singular architectural value and which now provide new cultural, educational and tourist uses:

- The south-eastern wing of the building houses the "Jovellanos" Faculty of Commerce, Tourism and Social Sciences of the University of Oviedo. The University Library should be highlighted inside this, an arched space following the original project of Luis Moya and which is decorated with the murals of Juan Méjica. To the south-west, in the building located between the Café and the Tower, are the headquarters of the Public Service Company of the Principality of Asturias.

- In the north-eastern corner of the Square we find the Sociedad Pública de Gestión y Promoción Turística y Cultural del Principado de Asturias SAU (Tourism) and the R&D&I offices of the ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center, apart from Laboral Vocational Training Centre, inheriting the academic tradition of the origins of the complex.
- Neighbouring the theatre, to the north-west of the building, are the headquarters of the School

of Performing Arts, an educational centre bringing together the speciality of Textual Interpretation or the professional Classical Dance studies.

- Near this rises the Professional Music Conservatory of Gijón, with over 600 students in the new installations, from which its 2 multipurpose classrooms and the lecture hall should be highlighted.

- To the west, behind the Church and the Tower, is a beautiful circular building which was the Convent of the Franciscan Clarisas, the community of nuns who were responsible for the management of the Laboral University for decades. This building is now the headquarters of the Principality of Asturias Broadcasting Corporation (RTPA).



LABoral Art and Industrial Creation Centre

With an independent entrance outside the main building and occupying the last bays which, in their day, were professional training workshops, we find the LABoral Art and Industrial Creation Centre, a space of over 14,000 m2 designed to enable the



dialogue between art, design, industry and economic development; this centre is already an international reference and the flagship of the new Laboral. A factory of ideas for artistic production and contemporary creation.

