

REASON 16

WE HELP IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACES IN HISTORICAL CENTRES OF TOWNS AND CITIES

Under the framework of the cultural 1% agreements, from the Ministry of Culture the focus is on buildings, archaeological sites and historical monuments, while from the Ministry of Territory and Sustainability the priority is valorising public spaces and streets in old city centres, focusing on surfaces, regeneration, burying utilities and reinterpreting the space.

Rehabilitation of historical centres is a way to reactivate the economy of towns and cities. These interventions aim to stop the progressive deterioration of old city centres and monumental areas in towns all over Catalonia. On the one hand, they recover and rehabilitate the space and, on the other, they help reactivate the economy. This way, new leisure and work spaces have been created for shopping and crafts, and this new dynamism has revalorised the areas involved and encouraged other actions in the public space by the public and/or private sectors.

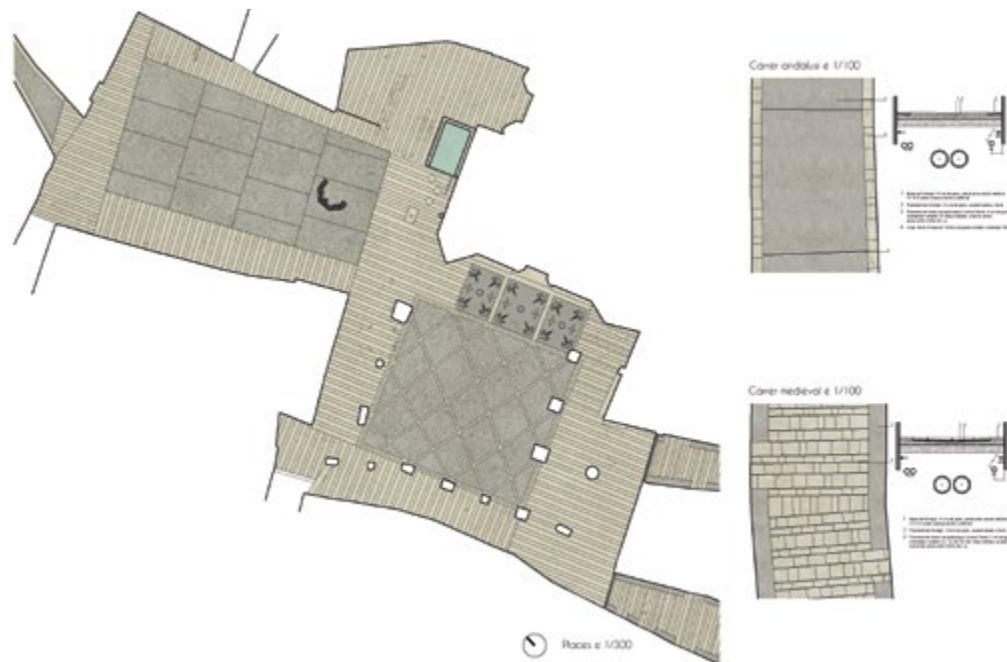
INCASÒL has helped refurbish public space in nearly 250 towns and cities. One good example is the Part Alta neighbourhood of Tarragona, one of the old city centres most densely packed with history in Catalonia, where the Roman, medieval and contemporary cities overlap in an area that has been named a World Heritage site. The City Council and INCASÒL have been working together since 1990 on a series of urban actions that have made the impressive ruins of Tàrraco accessible in top-quality public spaces. The Institute's urban actions in Tarragona, jointly, have updated a city that is listed as a UNESCO heritage site and, the way they have been done, perfectly combines preservation of historical memory, an educational mission that helps visitors understand what the Roman city was like and provides context for the impressive archaeological ruins, and, even more complicated, it does so in a way that is compatible with intensive public and social use by Tarragona residents, ensuring the city doesn't fall into the trap of musealisation and excessive touristification.



Public spaces on Carrer Enrajolat in Tarragona

In small towns, these projects can be even more significant for maintaining their economic dynamism: for many small towns, rehabilitating the streets and city centres can become an economic resource through tourism and, in many cases, helps leverage private resources to use heritage to attract and revive the local economy. This also contributes to territorial cohesiveness and balance: encouraging residents to put down roots and stemming the population loss by generating new economic and work opportunities.

Horta de Sant Joan is a town that exemplifies the extraordinary historical depth of many Catalan towns, with a medieval centre named a Cultural Asset of National Interest that maintains its ties to the agricultural and territorial structure. Historians, archaeologists and architects worked together to make this historical depth clearly visible in the renovated public spaces in the historical centre. The Improvement and renovation plan, promoted by INCASÒL, ensures coherence among current and future projects, using the same conceptual, constructive and formal language for the whole centre. The proposal, of high architectural quality and great historical rigour, only uses two materials, which express the two souls



of the town. The medieval village and Andalusia hill differ in shape: the first is more regular and the latter, more organic, which is expressed in the two types of ground surface: small pieces that adapt to the sinuous lines of the Andalusian area and large orthogonal pieces of stone in the squares and streets of the medieval area.



Rehabilitation of the streets and squares of the historic center of Horta de Sant Joan