



Casa Árabe  
البيت العربي

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CASA ÁRABE IS A CONSORTIUM COMPRISING:



## CASA ÁRABE

Casa Árabe is a consortium formed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Spanish Agency for International Development, the autonomous communities of Madrid and Andalusia and the town councils of Madrid and Cordoba. It is run by a Governing Board and a General Directorship. Its High Board of Trustees is presided over by Their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain.

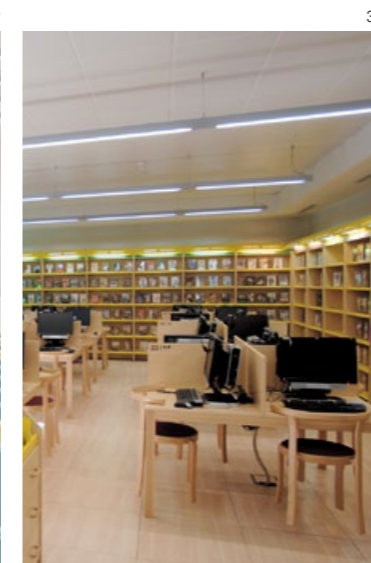
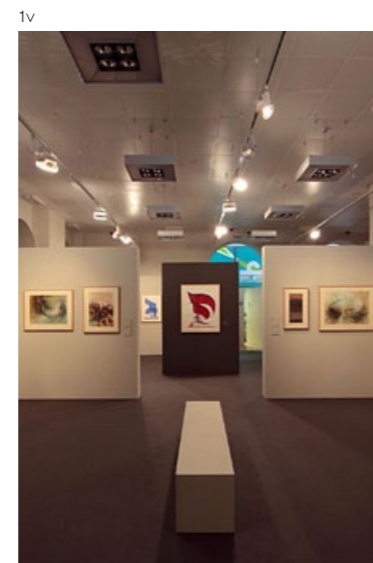
The main goals of Casa Árabe, with headquarters in Madrid and Cordoba, are to strengthen bilateral and multilateral policies, to promote economical, cultural and educational relations, as well as supporting the development of training and knowledge on the Arab and Muslim world. In short, Casa Árabe aims to be a space for mutual knowledge and shared reflections: a meeting point.

The logo of Casa Árabe, which evokes the concept of "casa-home" is also a stylized version of the Arabic letter *ayn*, the initial of the word *arabi*, "Arab".

## HEADQUARTERS IN MADRID

Situated at number 62 Alcalá Street, the Aguirre Schools arose from the initiative of the philanthropist Lucas Aguirre y Juárez, whose legacy enabled the schools to be built in 1881. This incredible example of neo-Mudéjar architecture inspired several other buildings in Madrid in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Madrid City Hall handed over the Aguirre Schools to Casa Árabe in March 2008, after the building insides had been completely renovated. Since then it has been the institution's headquarters in Madrid.

1. EXHIBITION ROOM
2. AUDITORIUM
3. MEDIA LIBRARY
4. AMBASSADOR'S ROOM



## SERVICES AND WEB

**Media Library.** It is a multimedia centre specialised in contemporary Arab cinema and culture, as well as in resources related to the Arab world's politics and society. Open to the public, it has a bibliographic collection of reference works, in addition to sound and video archives.

**Arabic Language Centre.** It teaches modern standard Arabic (*fusha*) and Arabic dialects. The centre organises also workshops and study sessions on Arabic didactics.

**Balqís Bookshop.** It is a specialised bookshop which has a large collection of titles currently being edited in Spain and related through different topics to the Arab and the Islamic world.

**"Shukran" Restaurant.** In the semi-basement of the building, it has an interior area and a terrace. It offers a wide selection of Lebanese and Mediterranean dishes.

**Auditorium and Cinema hall.** With space availability for 150 people, it is a double-use venue, which serves both as a conference room and as a cinema.

**Exhibition rooms.** Venue used to host exhibitions and artistic performances.

**Multiple-use assembly hall.** It is a multiple-use space where debates, forums or small exhibitions can be hosted.

**Garden.** There is a spacious garden where open air cinema as well as musical and artistic activities take place.

**Premises to be hired.** The different spaces within Casa Árabe can be hired to organize meetings, workshops, cultural events and so on.

**Website.** [www.casaarabe.es](http://www.casaarabe.es)

Casa Árabe's website offers detailed information on the whole range of activities which are organized and announced by the institution. It is also a reference site of different resources available online, on economics and business, on Arabic language and on Arab countries' contemporary culture and socio-political latest news.



MADRID





THE AGUIRRE SCHOOLS BUILDING

Casa Árabe's headquarters in Madrid is located on the building which was known as former Aguirre Schools building, an emblematic piece of work built up in 1881 out of the initiative of Lucas Aguirre y Juárez (1800-1873). When he died, he bequeathed a part of his personal fortune to support educational centres.

This beautiful neo-Mudéjar style building was designed by the well-known architect Emilio Rodríguez Ayuso (1845-1891), who is considered to be the first driving force of this style. Rodríguez Ayuso is the author of, among other buildings, the impressive and already vanished Palace of the Duke of Anglada, built in 1878 and located at the Paseo de la Castellana (Madrid), and one of the architects of the old bullring of Madrid, built in 1874 (and the one that inspired the current Plaza de Las Ventas), as well as the Child Jesus Hospital.



3A

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Spain was the scenery of an important trend favouring the restoration and the spread of the Hispanic-Muslim Art, due to the political and the colonial aspirations, and supported by a society marked by the romantic Orientalism. New styles emerged then, known as neo-Muslim, neo-Arab, neo-Mudéjar or Alhambriism, and they transformed the Orient aesthetics into a national identity element. At the same time, population outgrew extraordinarily the city of Madrid and it requested an urgent urban development, adopting therefore brick as its basic material.

Construction of the Aguirre Schools, catalogued as a protected monument, began on 1881, in some pieces of land that the city council of Madrid handed over for that purpose. They were inaugurated on October 18<sup>th</sup> 1886. It was a building on its own, with just a rectangular ground floor with three spans, a two-floor body

plus a semi-basement and a tower-viewpoint, with brick façades (brownish on the main building and reddish over the lodges) and quality limestone, with a studied composition and a noteworthy decoration. Three years after it was inaugurated, the same architect was commissioned to create the ornamental railings, the garden and the two external pavilions.

Although the building has undergone several alterations and restorations, it is still one of the most relevant examples of the neo-Mudéjar style in Madrid. In its design both of the immutable principles of this style are present: the use of brick as the main construction material and decoration based on farthingale designs on the wall, with motives such as ribbons, rhombus, saw teeth and so on.

It is one of the most visible chamfered street corners, in the famous Salamanca neighbourhood, just by the Retiro Park and close to the

Puerta de Alcalá. Combining brick and reinterpreting past languages with technical skills and artistic talent made Rodríguez Ayuso one of the great artists who spread this new style. The Aguirre Schools building became an excellent example of the ornamentals and decorative solutions which marked the Madrilian housing projects related to the neo-Mudéjar style, quite popular on those late decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1911, the Aguirre Schools building was managed directly from the City Council of Madrid. Since then, it has undergone several improvements designed by professionals such as Bellido, Flórez or Giner de los Ríos. Around 1971 it closed as a teaching centre and offices of the City Council of Madrid were settled there. Between 1998 and 1999 new reforms were made to host the Local Training School. From 2006 on, it is Casa Árabe's headquarters and after the renovations related to its adaptation to

the new use, inside the building there are two floors and a semi-basement, keeping the tower as it originally was, with its three brick bodies with oculus and clocks and a metallic glassed-in attic. The 37 meter-high tower represents today a singular element within Madrid's urban image.

- 1. GATE
- 2. FRONT
- 3. BACK-FRONT
- 4. TOWER'S WINDOWS
- 5. ROOF
- 6. ENGRAVING OF 1929



1A



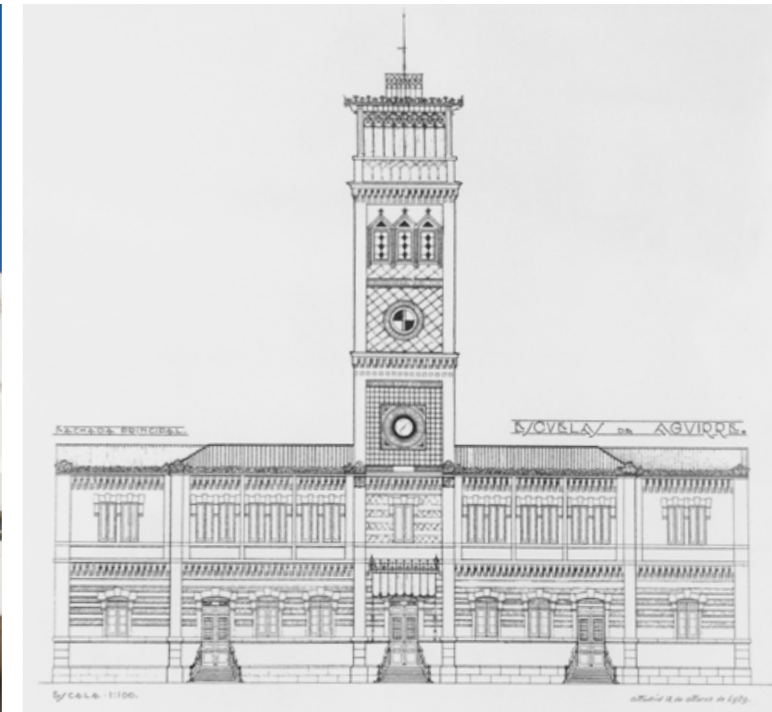
2A



4A



5A



6A