

CASTELLET CASTLE TODAY

Located in an exceptional natural enclave, surrounded by the natural area of the river Foix Park, at the tail of the marsh that, because of its characteristics offers a habitat for a variety of birdlife on its banks, Castellet castle provides the best conditions for holding business meetings and conferences in an atmosphere of great contemplation and concentration. This fact gives Castellet Castle an added value as a place for the communication of ideas and experiences.

Thanks to the work undertaken in the transformation of Castellet castle and the new uses allocated to it this Property of Cultural Interest has been turned into a model of sustainable restoration.

Castellet castle does not only house the headquarters of the **abertis foundation** but is also attempting to turn itself into a dynamic factor in the area and a location for the dissemination of knowledge, where new ideas are generated, new concepts are learned, links are established and interest is stimulated in cultural and natural heritage.

A castle adapted to current reality.

The restoration of Castellet castle, which takes up a good part of the Foundation's activities, has not damaged its historical image at all. By recovering the structure that it used to have, its original elements have gained greater recognition, especially the 10th century tower and the 15th century wall. In addition to giving a new use to the castle, its past has been dignified, promoting its history as a dynamic environmental factor and a model for the management of sustainable heritage.

Its link to the road, to the Augusta Way, uncovered after the archaeological excavations of 2007 and 2008, increases its value to the region with 25 centuries of continued occupancy.

The castle restoration is based on four basic parameters:

- Archaeological excavation, the study of ancient structures and the exhibition of those of major historical significance.
 - Preservation and restoration of the original elements that define the castle's importance.
 - Extensive recovery of the ancient structures identified where the features of the new uses that the castle has are defined, ensuring that its aesthetics are not in conflict with the historic landmark.
 - Restoration and adaptation of the structures built between 1928 and 1930 that represents a remarkable medieval recreation.

To be able to fulfil its new functions the restored castle has been divided into two sections of different characteristics and corresponding in origin to different eras: the History Building and the Knowledge Building. The first of these is located in the ancient 11th century castle and organised using the rooms built at the root of the 1928-1930 neo-medieval Restoration. In this part of the building there is an exhibition that shows the history of the castle from its origins until the present day. It also contains an original large 16th century room and a toilet that shows the use of the fortress as a dwelling. On the restored upper floors, the second and third floor, we find the multipurpose room, with an exit to a terrace with spectacular views over the Foix marsh and to the Penedès plain, and the Foundation hall.

At the entrance to this building and under the paving of a wide west facing patio they have preserved the 15th century palace structures

which they have been able to identify after the archaeological excavation of the summer of 2007 and which remained hidden by the 20th century restoration.

The Knowledge Building, a totally new floor, occupies the space and volume of the palace built in the 13th to 14th centuries. The structure of the new building is based on strictly functional criteria that scrupulously respect the elements of the old castle that have survived the passing of time. The different spaces and rooms of this building are used for multipurpose events such as conferences, business meetings, seminars and different Foundation events.

The Knowledge Building houses the Forum Hall with capacity for 70 people, the Classroom with capacity for 26 and the Permanent Seminar Room with capacity for 14 people. A group of multimedia screens enables the use of high technology reproduction systems. On the ground floor the office offers all the technological installations needed to enable the organisation of any type of conference.

Under this building on the east side, the remains of the wall, which was the fortress in Iberian and Roman eras (III BC-II AD) have been put on exhibition.

New uses for Castellet castle

After having completed the restoration work, the wish of the **abertis foundation** focuses on turning this historic building into a model of sustainable management of our heritage. To do this, it was necessary to provide the castle with new functions and uses capable of ensuring its preservation. For this reason, the carrying out of different activities are designed and planned annually, which have a dual objective: to guarantee the maintenance of the castle and to offer to different

people, groups and organisations the chance to enjoy this building as a place for reflection, debate or meeting.

The holding of conferences, symposiums and lectures in which the studies sponsored by the **abertis foundation** are presented, is the main activity that the castle has adopted. Through these types of conferences we attempt to facilitate dialogue and exchange of opinions between different people and groups that, without doubt, constitutes an enriching factor with which to improve our understanding of certain problems. One result of these meetings is the collection of pamphlets "Reflections from Castellet", which gather together the most significant conclusions.

In addition to these conferences, other activities are carried out which try to bring the castle closer to a larger audience and, at the same time, raise awareness of the importance of preserving our country's valuable historic heritage. These activities are:

- Opening to the public through guided tours every weekend.
- Open door days at the request of Castellet y La Gornal Town Council, coinciding with the medieval markets or major holidays.
- Holding of cultural events, with free concessions for non-profit making organisations.
 - Lectures and conferences organised by prestigious organisations such as the Red Cross, the Caroline Foundation or various universities and public institutions from around the country.

With these activities the **abertis foundation** complements its main objective of promoting the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

This work, in which numerous public and private institutions that cover other areas of knowledge need to take part, allows us to advance towards balanced progress for the whole of society.