

CASAS DE DON PEDRO

HERMITAGE OF THE VIRGEN DE LAS VEGAS (HERMITAGE OF SAN ISIDRO)

CASAS DE DON PEDRO (BADAJOZ)

DESCRIPTION

Religious building located in the surroundings of the Guadiana River and the Orellana reservoir, in an enclave of great landscape value near the large bridge connecting this sector of the municipality of Casas de Don Pedro. Currently known as the Ermita de la Virgen de las Vegas and Ermita de San Isidro, it constitutes one of the municipality's principal devotional and festive spaces linked to the natural and agricultural environment. The current hermitage emerged as a symbolic and religious continuation of an ancient sanctuary that disappeared beneath the waters following the construction of the Guadiana reservoirs. Its contemporary location maintains the historical connection with the river landscape and with the popular traditions associated with pilgrimages and community gatherings. In addition to its religious function, the surroundings have become a space for social interaction and landscape contemplation, with wide views over the reservoir and nearby mountain ranges.

HISTORY

The former Ermita de la Virgen de las Vegas was located about 18 kilometres from Casas de Don Pedro, near the Guadiana River, in an enclave that was later flooded by the reservoir waters. Historical references place the origin of that construction in medieval times, remaining for centuries as a place of worship and pilgrimage for the inhabitants of the region. There was a caretaker responsible for guarding the hermitage and attending to the image venerated by the local residents. There are also documentary references, such as those collected in the Interrogatorio de la Real Audiencia de Extremadura of 1791, which demonstrate the religious and social importance of the site, especially during pilgrimages and celebrations held at Easter.

With the hydraulic transformation of the territory and the creation of the Guadiana reservoirs, the old hermitage disappeared beneath the waters together with much of its original surroundings. According to local tradition, no precise information or documentation about the original image venerated in the former sanctuary has been preserved. Faced with the loss of the historic building, local residents promoted the construction of a new hermitage in a location near the river and adapted to the new configuration of the landscape. The new construction maintained the traditional devotion to the Virgen de las Vegas, also incorporating the dedication to San Isidro Labrador. According to the Madoz dictionary, a fair used to be held nearby on 24 September, where cloths, ropes, iron and everything related to the needs of farmers were sold.

HISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC DESCRIPTION

The current hermitage corresponds to a contemporary construction of functional and popular character, conceived mainly for the celebration of religious events, pilgrimages and collective gatherings linked to the municipality's traditions. Its architecture is simple, with sober lines and little ornamentation, prioritising communal use over monumental values.

The building's principal value lies in its symbolic and landscape dimension. The hermitage is fully integrated into the surroundings of the Guadiana and the reservoir, functioning as a visual and emotional reference point for the local population. Its location, close to the large bridge and open to wide panoramas of the water and surrounding mountain ranges, reinforces its singularity within the municipality's religious heritage.

The site thus combines spirituality, historical memory and landscape, evoking the memory of the former hermitage submerged beneath the waters. The dual denomination as Ermita de la Virgen de las Vegas and Ermita de San Isidro reflects the continuity between the original historical tradition and the new forms of popular devotion developed after the reconstruction of the sanctuary.

RELEVANT FIGURES RELATED TO THE POI

The building is linked to the devotion of Nuestra Señora de las Vegas, traditionally associated with river and agricultural environments, reinforcing its relationship with the Guadiana landscape and the surrounding rural activities.

Likewise, its current denomination as Ermita de San Isidro links it to the figure of San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of farmers, whose relevance lies in his role as a symbol of rural life and agrarian traditions, especially in the context of the celebrations that take place at this site.

MOVABLE HERITAGE

Liturgical elements and objects associated with current worship, mainly linked to the festive celebrations held around the hermitage.

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

The hermitage maintains a close connection with the popular and religious celebrations of Casas de Don Pedro, especially with the pilgrimage of San Isidro, held every 15 May.

During this festivity, residents and visitors gather around the sanctuary to participate in religious events and social gatherings linked to the rural and agricultural world.

The site also preserves the collective memory of the former Ermita de la Virgen de las Vegas, submerged beneath the reservoir waters, a circumstance that has turned this place into a symbol of historical and emotional continuity for several generations of the municipality's inhabitants.

The pilgrimages, festive gatherings and countryside celebrations held around the hermitage reinforce its condition as an identity space linked both to popular religiosity and to the Guadiana landscape and the agricultural traditions of the region.

GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION



New Ermita de la Virgen de las Vegas, also known as Ermita de San Isidro.

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The hermitage is located in the vicinity of the Guadiana River. © ARZOBISPADO DE TOLEDO. TOLEDO. ESPAÑA



The Guadiana River viewed from one of the arches of the hermitage. © ARZOBISPADO DE TOLEDO. TOLEDO. ESPAÑA



General view of the interior of the hermitage. © ARZOBISPADO DE TOLEDO. TOLEDO. ESPAÑA



Detail of the sculptures, with San Isidro on the left side of the image. © ARZOBISPADO DE TOLEDO. TOLEDO. ESPAÑA