

The Formentera Council's Office of Infrastructure has announced that from tomorrow, Friday October 21, the administration will begin overseeing urgently needed conservation work on a local monument known as torre des Trituradors. Salinera Española Ltd, the leaseholder of the tower, will pay for the work. The Formentera Council decided to undertake the work, in the words of patrimony councillor Susana Labrador, “given the tower's serious state of disrepair and its value as a local heritage site”.

In 2012 the Council granted a construction permit to Salinera Española. “However”, explained Councillor Labrador, “the permit was never claimed and the building works never took place, the result of which has been a progressive deterioration of the tower”. For that reason, the Office of Patrimony pursued legal action in 2013 to compel Salinera Española to move forward with the project. The company, for its part, opened administrative litigation that is still today pending judgement.

Improvement works

The project would entail a temporary structural consolidation of the building to prevent its collapse, including correcting the levelling of the structure's perimeter, in five points and above ground level, to keep the tower's upper arches from falling. Cracks have been detected in the arches that not only seriously compromise their stability and the tower's successful conservation, but also pose a public safety threat. The project will have a €41,037.15 price tag and a duration of two months.

In compliance with Formentera's code of subsidiary regulations and the local catalogue of cultural heritage sites, the Office of Patrimony carried out an archaeological and historical study of the monument, a requirement given it forms part of Formentera's historical patrimony.

Legal background

The order issued by the Council, in which the administration sought to force Salinera Española to execute the conservation work, is based on a number of legal precepts, among which are articles 26 and 27 of Law 12/1998 [December 21] on historical patrimony in the Balearic Islands. That law establishes that owners, leaseholders or anyone else in possession of cultural interest sites must conserve and maintain them in a way that safeguards their value. If that fails to

occur, the public administration can order the owners, leaseholders or those in possession of the property to carry out the necessary work. If those who are so obliged do not execute the work, the administration can itself oversee the project, in which case the owners, leaseholders or property holders must defray the costs.

History of the tower

Given the architectural and engineering elements it contains, the so-named torre des Trituradors in la Savina is classed as a historical building in Formentera's catalogue of cultural heritage sites, a listing that was adopted in a plenary session of the former Council of Eivissa and Formentera. The exact wording used is “element AI-S-5, fitxa núm. 737” and the site is marked for level A protection. The goal of the tower, built in the mid 20th century, was to improve upon the productivity levels of mechanised salt milling at two other local mills, Molí d'en Marroig and Moli des Carregador. The latter, the older of the two, is currently known as Molí de Sal and was also used to grind salt.