

The first documentary evidence of *San Andrés* gate dates from 1120, although its current aspect is the result of the works that were carried out at the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. It is not known for certain if these alterations were undertaken during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs or of the Emperor Charles V, though it is not accurate to describe them as royal works because, in Segovia, the renovation of the gates was the concern of the Counts of Chinchón, who were in charge of their maintenance and restoration, as well as of appointing their keepers.



San Andrés Gate, 1888.



As can be read on this tombstone, the Buscón Don Pablos - the main character of Francisco de Quevedo's book - was born and lived his adventures in the city of Segovia.

On the inner side of the gate facing the city, the *Virgen del Socorro* [Our Lady of Good Remedy] can be seen. The placing of religious images in the gates was very common practice, not only to give protection from enemy attacks, but also from illnesses such as the plague.

Inside the Guard chamber of this gate, is *The City Wall Information Centre*. There one can discover some of its hidden secrets. It is also possible to stroll along the parapet walk, from where amazing views of the Wall can be contemplated along with some of its house-fortresses with the *Alcázar* on the horizon and the old Jewish cemetery.



It is possible to book guided tours to walk along the Wall by contacting the Central Reservations Office.

Access to the City Wall Information Centre and its "adarve" or parapet walk.



During 2010 and 2011 several stretches of the City Wall of Segovia and its surroundings were renovated as part of a project entitled *Recovery of Historical Patrimony in Segovia for its Better Tourist Use* and subsidized by the Town Hall of Segovia and the European Economic Area (EEA Grants).

As a consequence of the works carried out along a considerable stretch, the Wall was restructured and rendered accessible, free of the vegetation which had eroded the mortar between the ashlar that support it, not to mention the obvious damage to sections of the Wall and round turrets.

The alterations corrected problems of durability, rectified structural and functional faults and created access points at the foot of the Wall to ensure effective maintenance, facilitating its preservation, control and monitoring. As a result of these works, today we can contemplate a previously unknown perspective of the monument.

Among the alterations executed, it is worth mentioning the reconstruction of the walls belonging to the *Solar del Socorro* [Aid plot], as owing to this work -which used the same system employed during its original construction-, the original layout of the City Wall -which was lost- has been recovered.

Likewise, the space next to the *San Andrés* Gate, where the *City Wall Information Centre* is housed, formerly in ruins and abandoned, today hosts a new public site which lends an air of distinction to the area and allows a better interpretation of the function of the Wall in conjunction with the *San Andrés* Gate.



SAN ANDRÉS GATE

Opening hours:

Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 11:00 to 14:00h. and from 16:00 to 19:00h.

City Wall Information Centre

San Andrés Gate

Calle de Martínez Campos, s/n.

informacion.muralla@turismodesegovia.com

Tel.: +0034 921 46 12 97

Visitor Reception Centre

Azoguejo, 1- 40001 Segovia

info@turismodesegovia.com

Tel.: +0034 921 46 67 20

Central Reservations Office

info@reservasdesegovia.com

Tel.: +0034 921 46 67 21



AYUNTAMIENTO
DE SEGOVIA
www.segovia.es



www.turismodesegovia.com



www.eeagrants.org



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SEGOVIA'S CITY WALL AND *SAN ANDRES* GATE



VIAJES ILUMINA EL CIELO
SEGOVIA

SEGOVIA'S CITY WALL AND SAN ANDRES GATE

“Este fortísimo sitio que la naturaleza formó inexpugnable, escogió Hércules nuestro fundador, para una ciudad, propugnáculo entonces de los mejores de España”. Diego de Colmenares. Historia de Segovia.

“This strong place which Nature shaped impregnable was selected by Heracles, our founder, to become a city, one of the best propugnacles in Spain at that time”. Diego de Colmenares. History of Segovia.

It is not known whether a simple Celtiberian wall, adapted to the terrain, existed from the very beginning to protect the city; and even though the Romans tended to enclose their towns, it is not known either if a wall existed in that age with the same layout as the current one, only made of wood.

However, in order to talk about the Wall that may currently be seen, we must go back to the 11th century. During the Muslim Conquest the city became practically depopulated. With the Reconquest of Toledo in the year 1085, the frontline of the Christians advanced considerably to the south and it was some years later, in 1088 to be exact, when the city of Segovia started to become repopulated. It was also the moment in which the reconstruction of the City Wall began. It was erected to defend the city from prospective attacks, in spite of the fact that Segovia, set on a rocky promontory, enjoys ample height. Even though its physical location makes Segovia almost impregnable, the canons of the Middle Ages demanded the enclosure of cities, hence why Segovia had to dispose of a wall to protect it.

Count Raymond of Burgundy, Alphonse VI's son-in-law, was in charge of the repopulation of the city, and even though there is no written record of it, he is also believed to have been responsible for the reconstruction of the Wall.



View of the Wall from the *Cuesta de los Hoyos*.

Between 1088 and 1122 the construction of the perimeter took place and the structure of the city was defined. From that moment, the Wall separated the city from its poor quarters; inside lived the nobility and the civil and religious elite; outside, the commoners surrounded by an important nucleus of market gardens and industrial activity.

The Wall has experienced several alterations throughout its centuries of existence, but it has been preserved completely. Only three cities maintain their walls in their entirety: Ávila, Lugo and Segovia, perhaps the latter being the lesser known.

The Wall is three kilometres long, 2.5 metres wide and 7.5 metres high on average, although this height varies substantially along its diverse stretches to adapt to the rock on which the city is set.

It was declared a Historic-Artistic Monument on the 12th July 1941, together with its entire complex of gates and wickets.

Construction Materials

A wide range of materials were used during the construction of the Wall, although the most frequently used was limestone, which is also the most commonly used in Segovian Romanesque architecture. Also used were granite ashlars, above all at the base, to reinforce the foundations and, among these, several Roman tombstones stand out (see side photograph). Masonry, made from ground limestone and secondary materials, is equally frequent; solid bricks from locally found clays were also used, material which was probably fired in local kilns.

City Wall Gates

Originally, the City Wall had five gates out of which only three have been preserved: the *San Andrés* Gate, the *Santiago* Gate and the *San Cebrián* Gate. The *San Martín* and *San Juan* Gates were demolished at the end of the 19th century in the interests of adapting to the necessities of growth and expansion in the city.

The City Wall also housed several wickets, only some of which have been preserved, like the *Consuelo* and *San Juan* wickets.



San Martín Gate, 1873.



An interesting element is the use of Roman tombstones.



The openings along the sides of the Wall are the putlog holes which are marks from the scaffolding used for its construction.

San Martín Gate

This was the main gate of the city and, in front of it, many royal oaths were taken, as can be seen on the plaque located on the façade of the *Cervantes* Theatre.

The appearance of the inner side of this gate is known through a photograph taken in 1873 in which we can see that it was composed of a large semicircular arch; above it, in the centre, there was a royal coat of arms with the two-headed eagle protected by the columns of the “Plus Ultra”.

This gate was demolished in 1883 as part of a project by the architect Odriozola to alienate the *Real* Street and the *Canaleja* Path and to communicate the urban centre with the *San Millán* neighborhood.

Santiago Gate

It is located on *San Juan de la Cruz* Walk. It has an external façade in the shape of a horseshoe arch, dating from the 13th century, while the inner one displays a semicircular arch and is the result of a Baroque alteration carried out at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries.



Santiago Gate.

This gate is also known as “El Refugio” [“The Shelter”] as it was used by the City Council to give refuge to the poor, the beggars and the destitute. It had two areas, one on each floor, to separate men from women, and a room for the overseer. Subsequently, it was the house of the painter Santos Sanz in the 1950s.

The gate allowed access to the city from the *Arévalo* Road and *San Marcos* neighborhood, with the Mint and *El Parral* Monastery nearby, which made it an important entrance to the city.



The Poets Garden, near the Wall; on the right, Santiago Gate. In the background, El Parral Monastery.

San Cebrián Gate

This gate connects the city with the *Eresma* Valley near the *Santa Cruz* Convent and, therefore, with *San Lorenzo*, from which neighbourhood it was used as the natural access point to the city. Its current aspect is the consequence of the Baroque alteration that eliminated the original Medieval gate.

Near this gate is the *San Matías* wicket built in 1608 by Pedro de la Cuadra and Juan de Mugaguren.

San Juan Gate

This gate, like *San Martín's*, was demolished to meet the needs of the city in its development. Originally, it was a Medieval gate and it was flanked by the House-fortress of the Cáceres family (currently the *Marquis of Lozoya* House) and that of the Marquises of Moya (known as *Las Cadenas* [The Chains] House).

The original gate was replaced by a simpler one at the beginning of the 18th century. Two photographs have been preserved, one of the inner face and the other of the external one, both from 1867, where it can be observed that both the interior and the exterior had the same design: a semicircular arch ending in finial balls.

San Andrés Gate

Of the three gates in the Wall that have been preserved, this one is the sturdiest and the one that displays the most defensive aspect. This is due to the semicircular arch supported on the two towers - one with a rectangular groundplan and the other polygonal - with loopholes and ending in battlements. It was declared a Historic-Artistic Monument on the 3rd of June 1931, ten years before the Wall, together with its gates and wickets were awarded the same denomination on the 12th of July 1941.



San Cebrián Gate.



External face.



Inner face.



Engraved on the stones, different stone-masons' markings can be observed. These are individual symbols engraved to mark their work and thus receive payment for the stones they have carved.