



# 1

HERITAGE  
ROUTE  
IN THE  
OLD TOWN

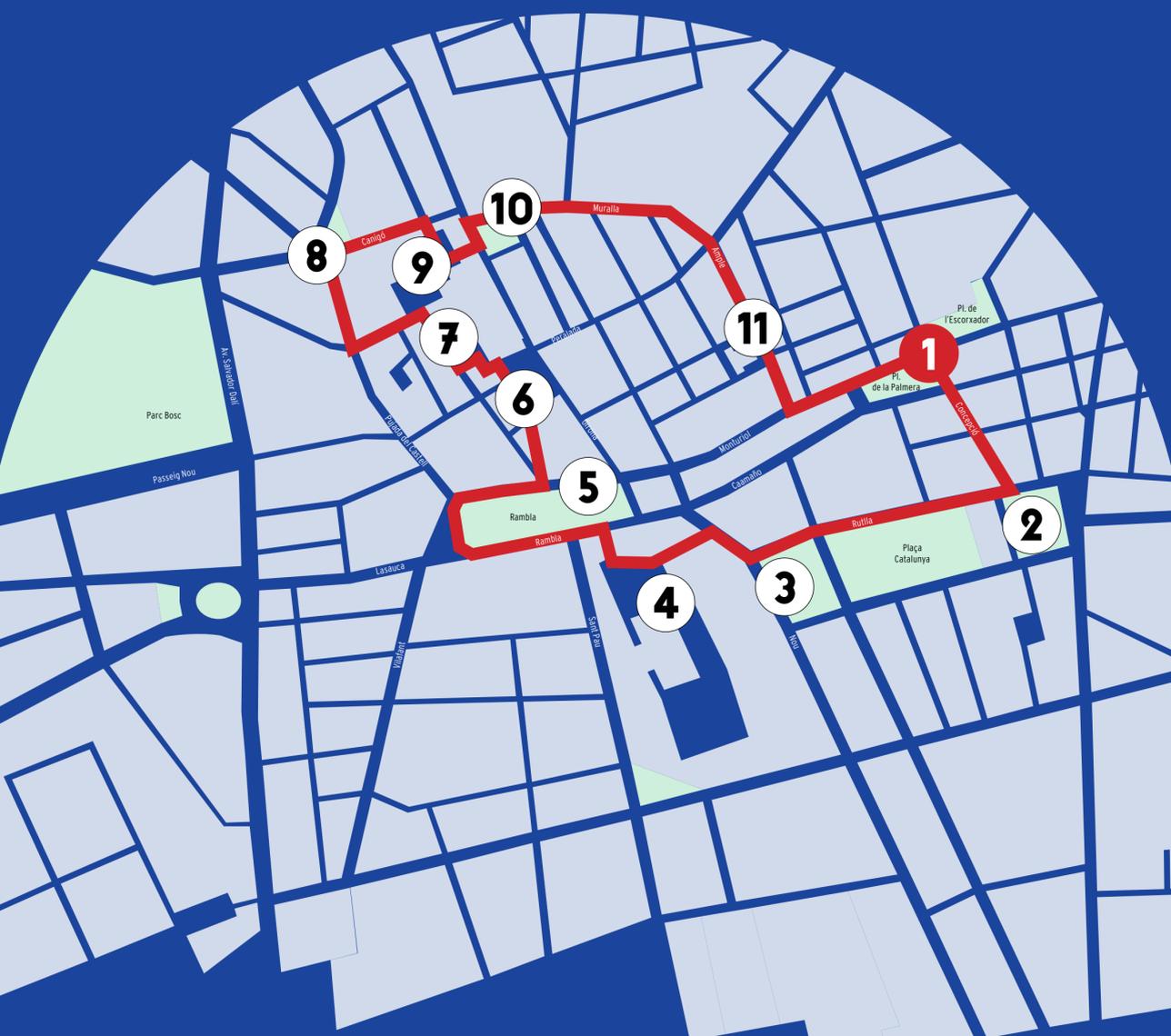
General view of Plaça de l'Escorxador  
Photographer: J. Carreras (c. 1910)  
Figueras Municipal Archive.

## Plaça de l'Escorxador and Plaça de la Palmera

The first industrial suburbs

These two squares came about from the covering of different sections of the Galligans riverbed, which once crossed the city outside the walls from west to east and constituted the main manufacturing areas of Figueras in modern times. When work began to cover the Rambla, starting in 1831, the sources of drinking water were channelled to this area, so that the public wash-house was installed where we now find the offices of the National Tax Agency and in the area where the municipal slaughterhouse was located, which opened in 1846, giving the square its name. The outlying location and the availability of water drew new industries during the 19th century, notably the large Bassols tannery, but also the gas factory, the ice factory, the Geli tannery, the Fèlix Jaume foundry and numerous small workshops. The nearby square, Plaça de la Palmera—closer to the town centre and the Rambla—once covered over in the early 20th century, gradually incorporated residential and trade uses with a markedly bourgeois nature, outstanding examples of which remain, such as the teenage residence of Salvador Dalí, which makes up the west façade of the square, and the art nouveau balcony of Casa Jiménez.

The former slaughterhouse, rebuilt and expanded between 1904 and 1907 by the architect Josep Azemar i Pont (1862-1914) and in operation until 1976, is considered one of the most outstanding works of Catalan modernism. A civic campaign prevented its demolition and, after the precarious squats of 1980, it has had public uses. Since 1991 it has been the seat of the Alt Empordà Regional Archive and, after a recent renovation in 2016, it also houses the Tourist Office and the Escorxador Exhibition Hall.



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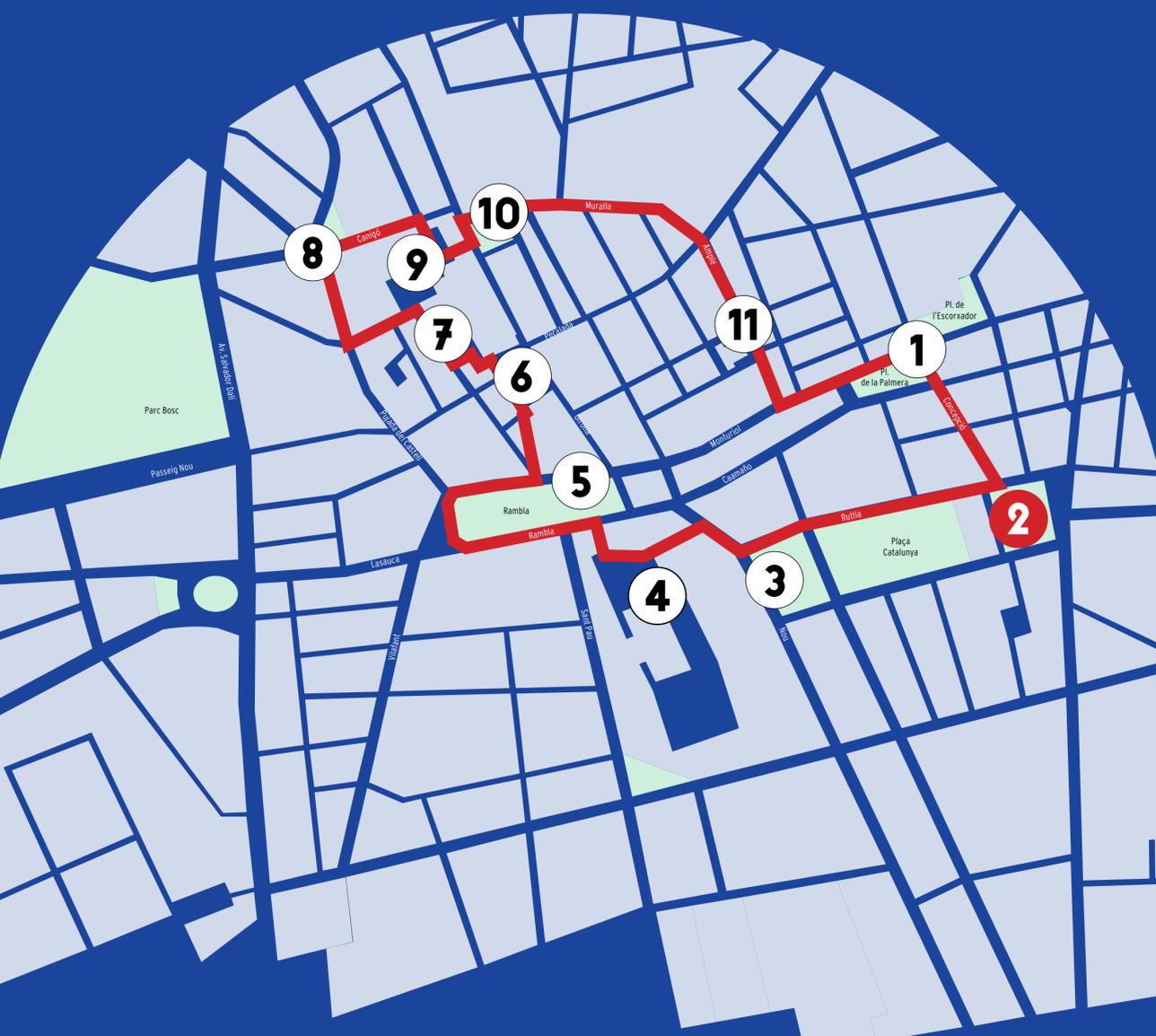
Plaça del Gra market  
Unknown photographer (1911)  
Francesc Guillamet Collection

## Plaça del Gra

Steam, iron and industry. The new urban centrality of the 19th century

The first construction in this area was the convent of the Benedictine monks of Sant Pere de Roda in 1807, who were forced to leave their original monastery in Serra de Roda due to the destruction caused during the War of the Pyrenees (1793-1795). This is how this site became known as Plaça i Calçada dels Monjos, or Monks' Square. The urban growth of this section of the city was first defined in 1856 with the opening of the new section of road from Figueres to the port of Roses and in 1877 with the coming of the railway a little further east, which shifted the functional centre of the city to this sector. Figueres became a key part of the entire region's industry and commerce and the square became a mandatory point of passage to the station and the new industrial district rising up around the railway.

On the site of the convent, the Vilallonga Asylum was built in 1884, promoted by the iron industrialist, and two years later—contemporary with the architecture of Barcelona's markets—the covered square was opened as we know it now, to host the grain market, hence the name Plaça del Gra. Since 1973, it has been used as a fruit and vegetable market on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. In 2014 it underwent restoration to ensure its continued usage and preserve its heritage value. Coinciding with this restoration, the shelter located beneath the square dating from the Civil War was renovated for visitors.



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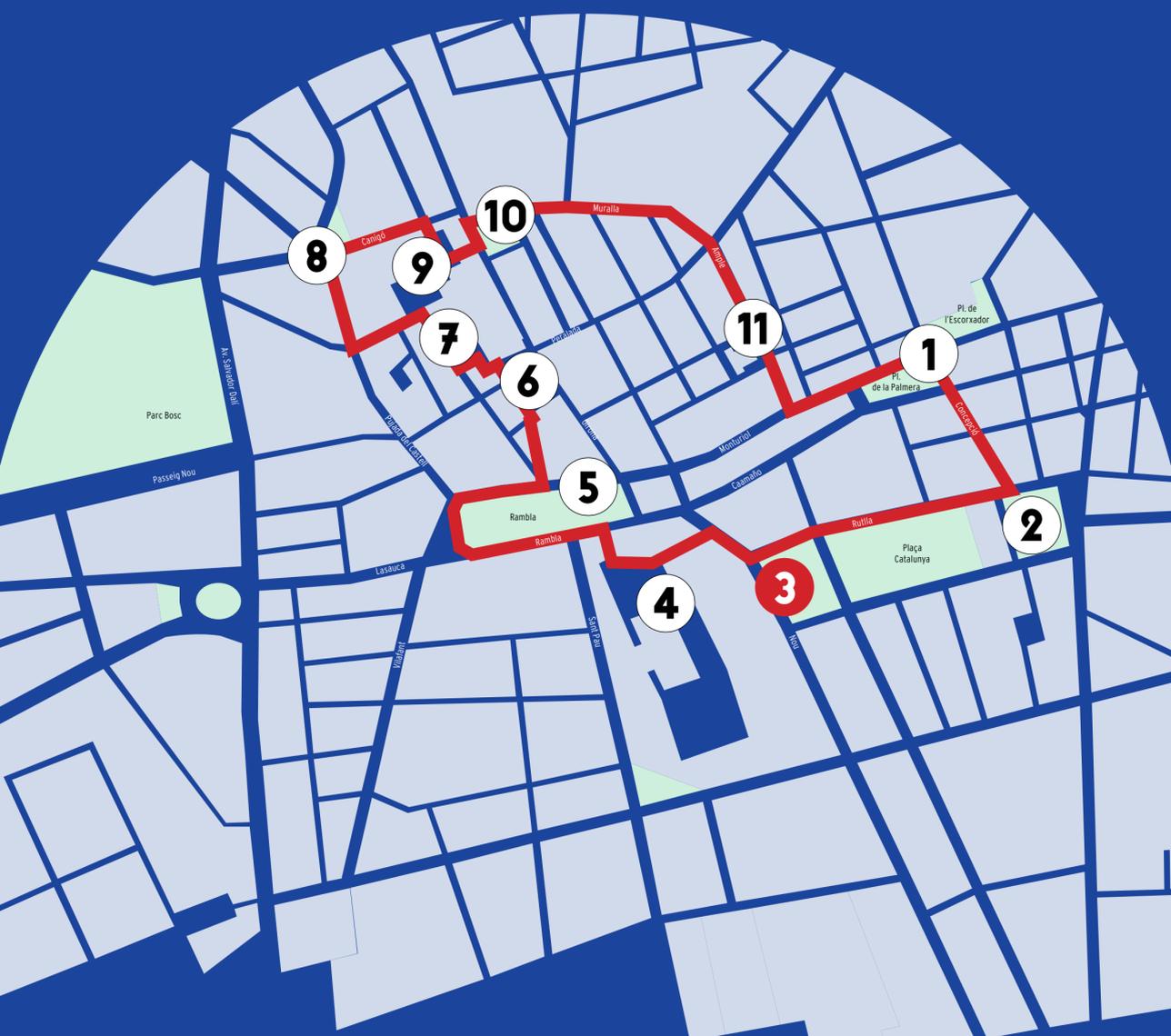
HERITAGE  
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Plaça del Dr. Ernest Vila  
Photographer unknown (c. 1911)  
Figueres Municipal Archive

## Plaça del Dr. Ernest Vila

From Madrid to France, by way of Figueres

The square named after Dr. Ernest Vila Moreno (Figueres, 1884-1960) is a point of connection between the new town of the 19th and 20th centuries and the historic old town. It is popularly known as Plaça de la Font Llumínosa, because of the fountain established there during the tourist and commercial boom the city experienced during the late-Franco era. It was erected in 1965 by Carles Buigas, the engineer of the Magic Fountain of Montjuïc in Barcelona. The square occupies the former site of the 16th century church of Sant Baldiri and the 17th century Hospital de la Caritat, which was built outside the walls at the edge of the old royal road from Madrid to France which, coming from the south, crossed the river (now the Rambla) by a bridge towards the gate of Carrer Girona. The hospital was quite often used as a military hospital, due to its proximity to Sant Ferran Castle and the various battles fought nearby due to its border location. As a result of the bombings of the Civil War, it was in a dilapidated state until its final demolition in 1961, its last use being rather precarious housing for some families in the city who were forced into shanty towns during the first two decades of the Franco era. The former area of the hospital gardens is the current Plaça Catalunya, a project by the architect Rafael de Cáceres Zurita from 2011 to cover a municipal car park from 1994, now one of the focal points of the city for its bustling marketplace and as a venue for various cultural and social events.



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Teatre El Jardí  
Photographer: Emili Marimont (c. 1923-1928)  
Figueres Municipal Archive

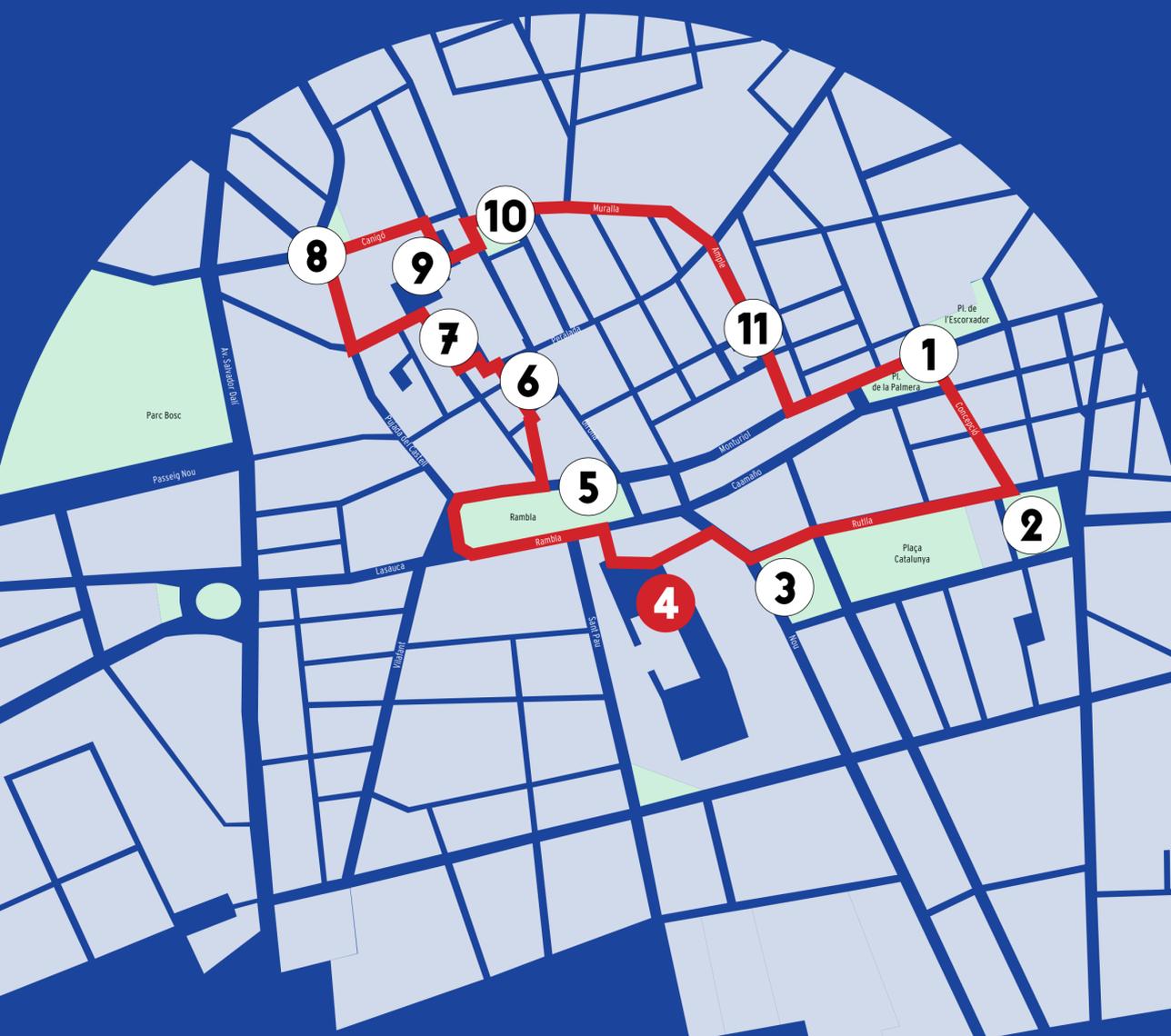
## Plaça Josep Pla

The region's entertainment centre

The present-day Plaça Josep Pla and the Puig Pujades gardens was once an old orchard called Gaiolà that had been used as an outdoor cinema since the early 20th century. The electricity and cement industrialist Pau Pagès built a cinema there: the Teatre Cinema El Jardí, work of the architect Llorenç Ros i Costa, inaugurated in 1916 and currently the El Jardí Municipal Theater since it was renovated in 1991. At the time, it was one of the largest cinemas in Catalonia, with a capacity for 1,784 people. Previously, between the years 1905 and 1914, another cement and electricity industrialist, Carles Cusí de Miquelet, had created another cinema in the garden of a house in the neighbouring Carrer Sant Pau to replace outdoor projections: the Sala Edison, work of the architect Josep Azemar Pont.

These two Theaters were complemented in 1964 by the modern Juncària cinema, setting up an entertainment district that stretched along Carrer Sant Pau with the Las Vegas cinema (1964), the Erato Society ballroom, a bingo hall and a slew of bars and restaurants which, together with the cafés on the Rambla, gathered a crowd on public holidays in search of fun and entertainment which would evoke Barcelona's Parallel, on an Alt Empordà scale.

Beneath the square is a Civil War bomb shelter with a capacity for 300 people.







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General view of the Plaça de l'Ajuntament on a market day  
Photographer unknown (c. 1900)  
Figueres Municipal Archive

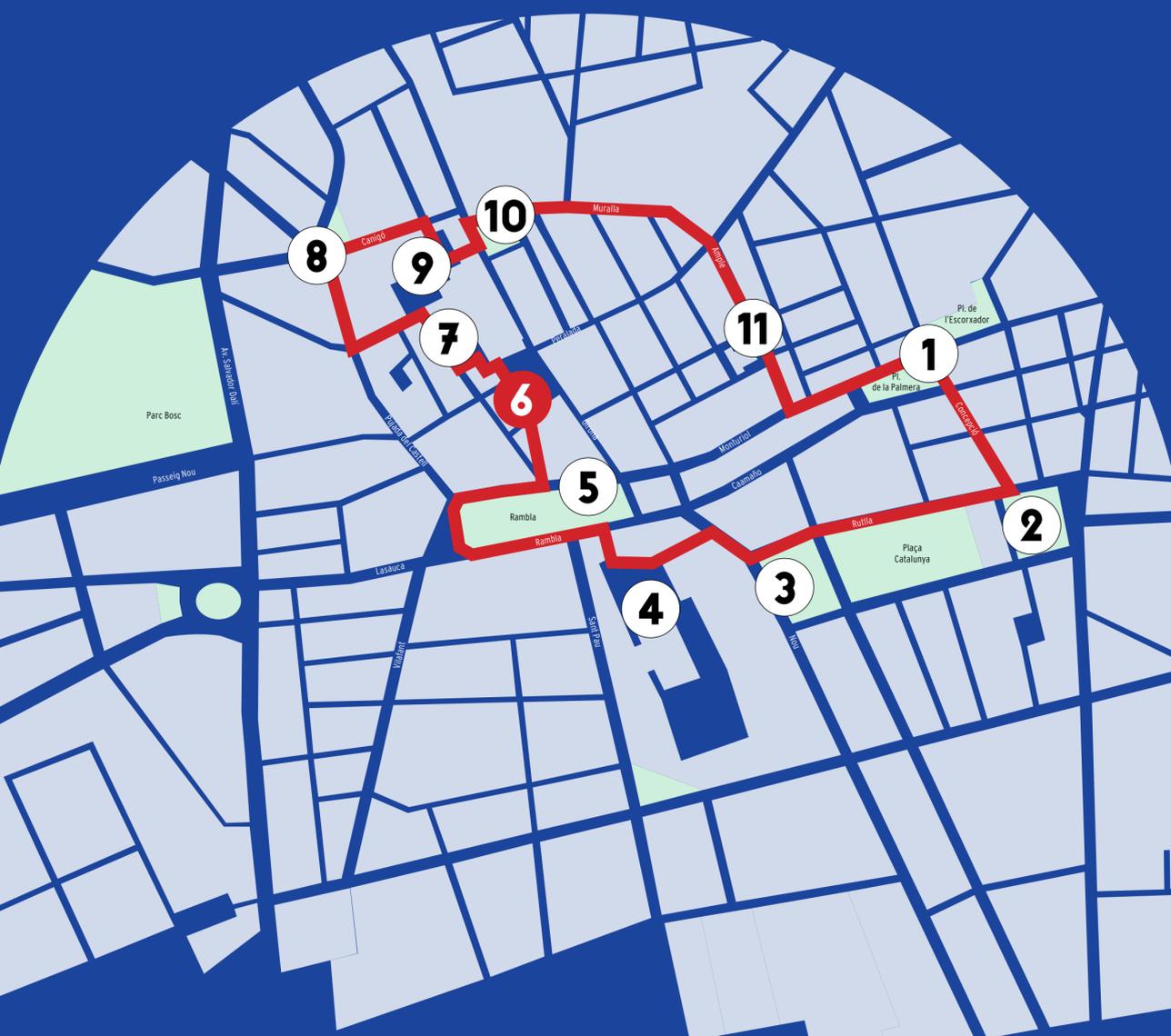
## Plaça de l'Ajuntament

Crossroads

Without a doubt, the most outstanding historical feature of this square is its location. We need only to look at the names of the streets that lead to it - in fact they cross it from the north, south, east and west: Jonquera, Girona, Peralada and Besalú. The focal point of both the medieval and modern town, the town hall square reminds us of the origin and main function of the city: a crossroads. Before the 1960s—when the current Salvador Dalí Avenue was opened—all vehicles wishing to reach France from anywhere in Spain via the easternmost pass of the Pyrenees had to cross this square. The same can be said of the travellers who took the opposite route, coming from the north.

This would also force the demolition of the eastern porticoes in 1856 to facilitate the passage of carts and carriages. It would not, however, prevent the square from always playing a major role on a local scale. It is said that it was here that Abdó Terradas proclaimed the Republic for the first time in Spain in 1842, the tree of Liberty was planted in 1873 and all manner of festivals, celebrations and demonstrations have taken place.

It also saw tens of thousands of Republican civilians and soldiers pass through, fleeing to France in 1939 and the arrival of the first tourists in search of that “Spain is different” from the 1960s onwards. Thus, in the wake of the tides of history, the physical and symbolic centrality of this square is reflected in the different names it has had: from Plaça Major to honouring the Republic, the Federal Republic, Catalonia, the Constitution, the *Generalísimo* and, finally, Plaça de l'Ajuntament, for the City Hall.



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## HERITAGE ROUTE IN THE OLD TOWN

View of the church of Sant Pere  
Photographer: Josep Maria Cañellas (1889)  
Figueres Municipal Archive

# Plaça de l'Església

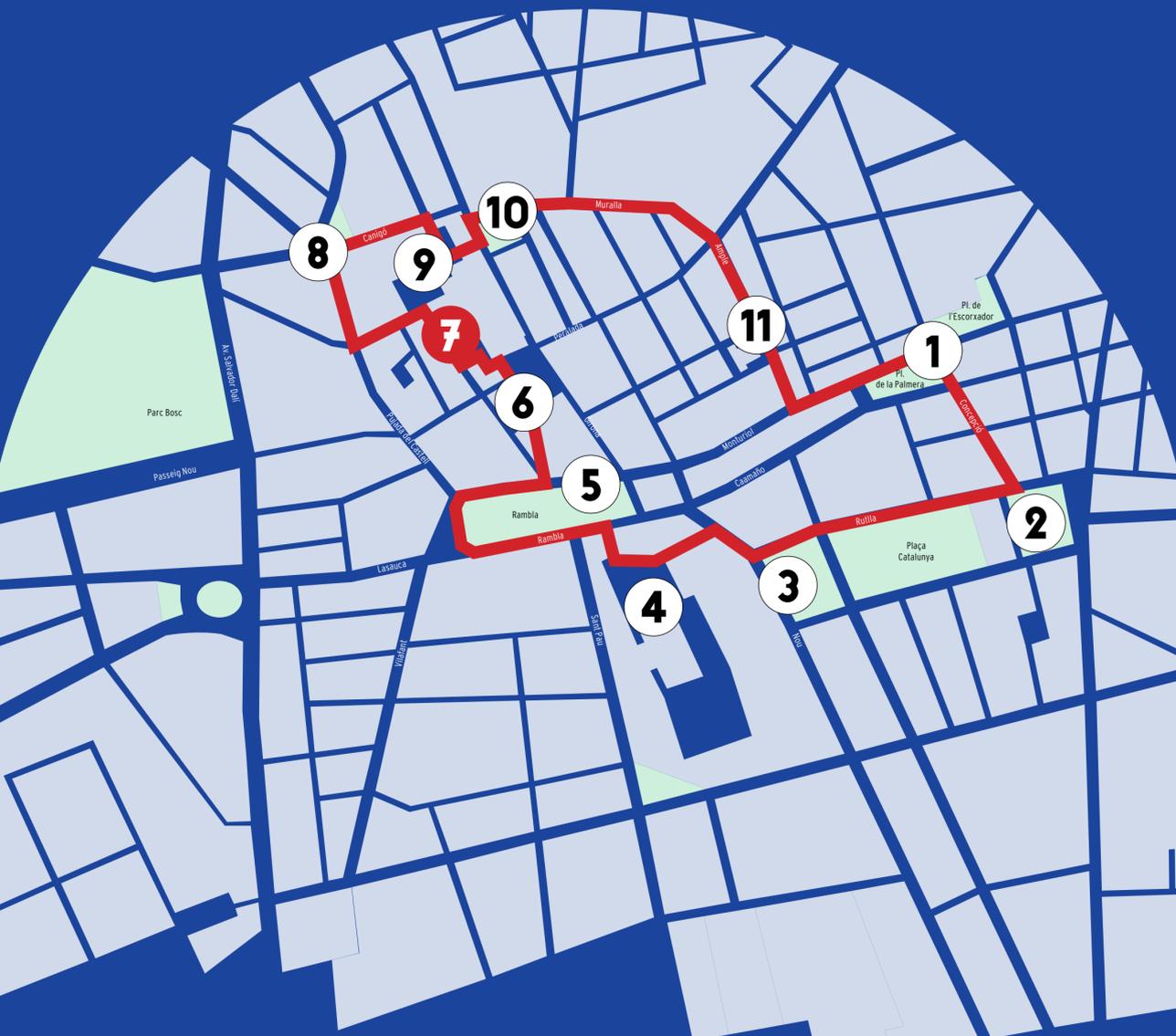
A new square for a new church

The current Plaça de l'Església was basically formed from the demolition of an entire city block of houses during the rebuilding of the church of Sant Pere and the formation of a set of porches which, together with the new bell tower, became one of the icons of the post-war city.

This Neo-Gothic reconstruction of the parish church, developed between 1941 and 1948 by the National Service for Devastated Regions and Reparations and with the forced labour of republican prisoners, radically transformed the complex monument, the product of centuries of renovations and expansions that, by agreement of the municipal government during the Civil War, had been dismantled and its stones used to continue the public works of channelling and covering of the Galligans stream in the easternmost sector of the city.

Subsequently, and as a result of the general economic development and proximity to the Dalí Theater and Museum, it has become one of the main gathering points for tourists in Figueres, but also, since the 2000 refurbishment, one of the squares with the most social life throughout the year.

On the opposite side of the square is the notable former headquarters of the Caixa d'Estalvis i Mont de Pietat de l'Empordà bank, the work of the architect Josep Azemar i Pont from 1915 and one of the country's first examples of a Catholic financial and welfare agency, founded in 1884.



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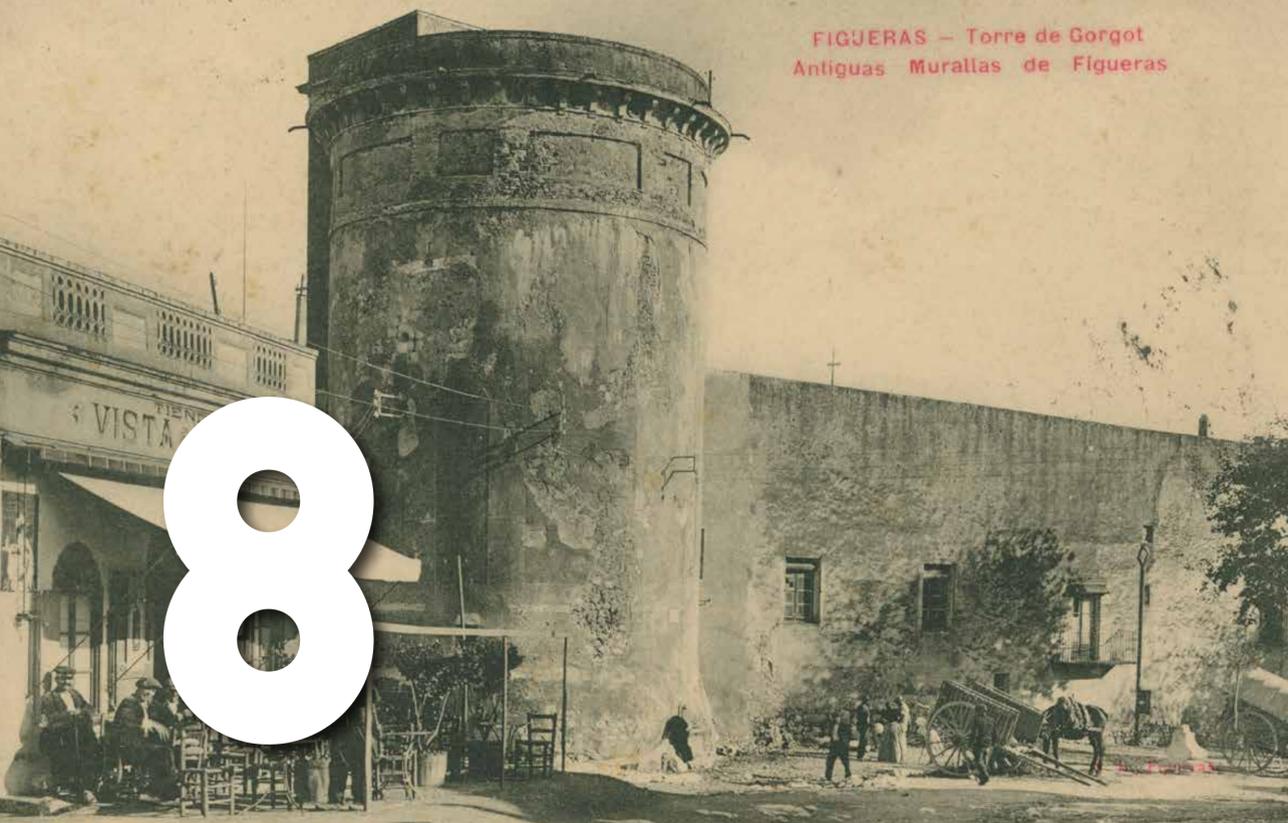


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Gorgot Tower  
Photographer unknown (c. 1910)  
Figueras Municipal Archive

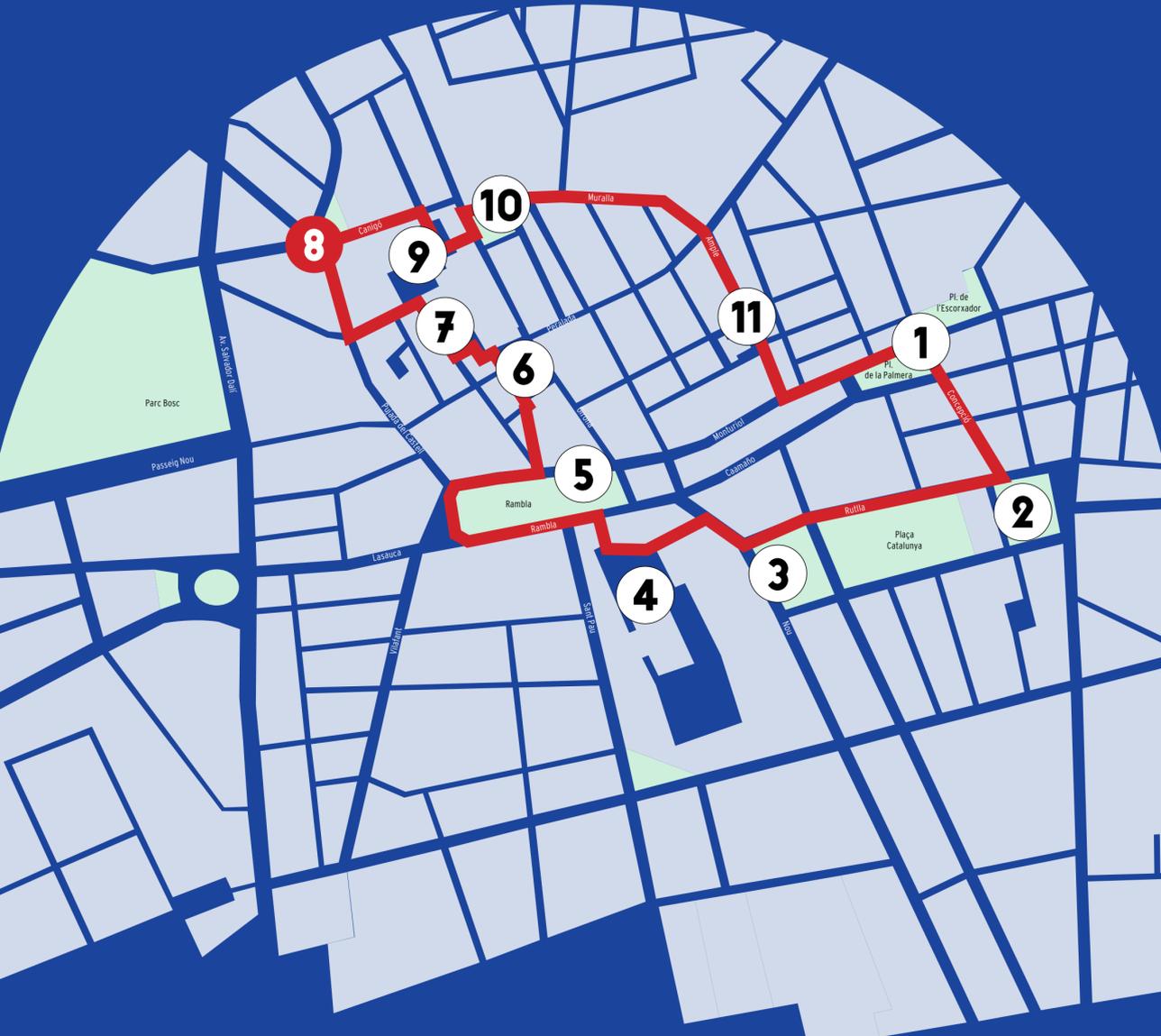
## Plaça de la Tramuntana

The city gates

Located on the outer esplanade at the highest point of the old walled enclosure, the location of the current Plaça de la Tramuntana has historically been the limit, border and gate of the city. It was the city limit prior to the construction of Sant Ferran Castle (18th c.); boundary between the bourgeois city and El Garrigal, the old working-class and marginal neighbourhood and the soldiers' residences installed in the city in the 1950s; and gateway for tourists to Figueras from 1960 to the present day, which receives and welcomes most of the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit the Dalí Theater-Museum every year.

The Galatea tower, the former Gorgot tower and house that currently forms one of the most iconic images of Dalí's Figueras, is the only vestige of the sixteen towers that once formed the medieval fortification. Having lost its military function, it was used as a cistern for the city's water supply system until in 1933 and with a project by the architect Pelayo Martínez Paricio, it was renovated together with a section of the wall and incorporated in the stately home of the Gorgot family.

In 1983, the Figueras City Council and the Government of Catalonia purchased the tower to expand the Theater-Museum's facilities. Dalí played a part artistically by crowning the tower with eggs—the symbol of future life—and bread—symbol of essential nourishment—all over the façade. Named by Dalí himself as the Galatea Tower, in honour of his wife, Gala, this was the artist's residence in the final years of his life and until his death in 1989.



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Plaça de les Patates market  
Photographer unknown (c. 1910)  
Josep M. Bernils Mach Collection

## Plaça de les Patates

Stories on the fringe

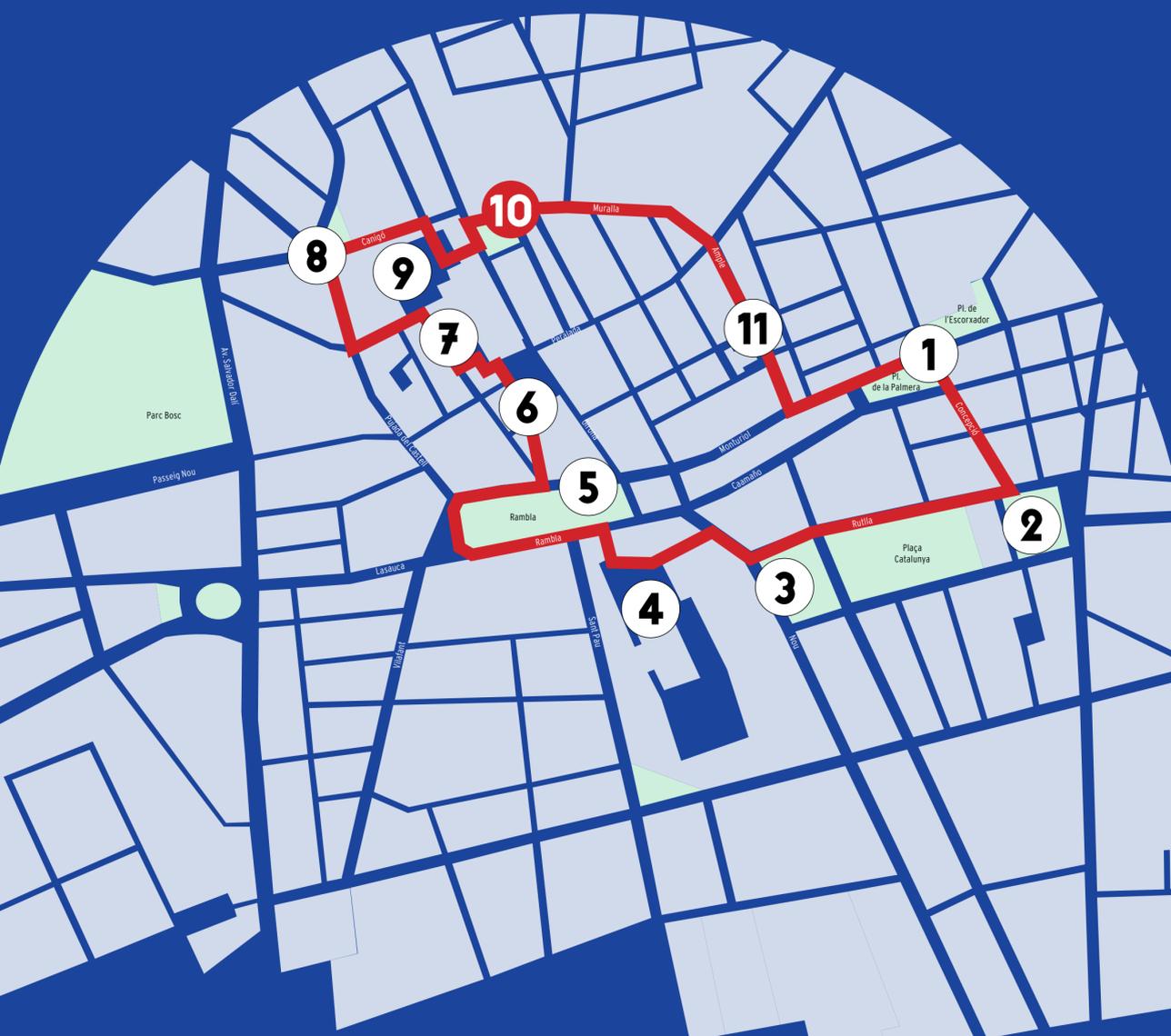
*“That neighbourhood of gypsies and prostitutes, so literary, that they call it the Garrigal, gave off smoke like a big pot of rice.”*

Josep M. de Sagarra, 1931

This square began to take shape in 1817 as a result of the destruction resulting from the Peninsular War (1808-1814) at the northern end of the town's walled perimeter, a fragment of which can still be seen, discovered in 2012. In 1844, the architect Rafael Cantró's project was completed to create the porticoed square as we know it today. Initially, it was used for the sale of cereals and, subsequently, potatoes, hence its name.

The square's outlying location made it the boundary and a main point of entry to the red light district of Figueres during the 19th and 20th centuries, formed mainly by the street of La Jonquera and the Garrigal district. A legendary neighbourhood in L'Empordà and across the border, it was a place where poverty, prostitution and the picturesque mingled, drawing night owls and the curious, and eyes eager for experiences, like those of Dalí himself, the local bourgeois youth and a good part of the peasantry on market days. But it was also a place of great humanity and the charitable nature of a poor neighbourhood that welcomed all sorts who, for one reason or another, did not fit in with the modus vivendi of the majority.

The persistent marginality of the sector of Plaça de les Patates and, consequently, its lack of appeal as a place for real estate speculation, has enabled it to remain one of the city's best-preserved heritage districts from the 19th and first half of the 20th century, and in one of the most picturesque and liveliest corners of the 21st century tourism of Figueres, with a wide variety of restaurants and entertainment options.



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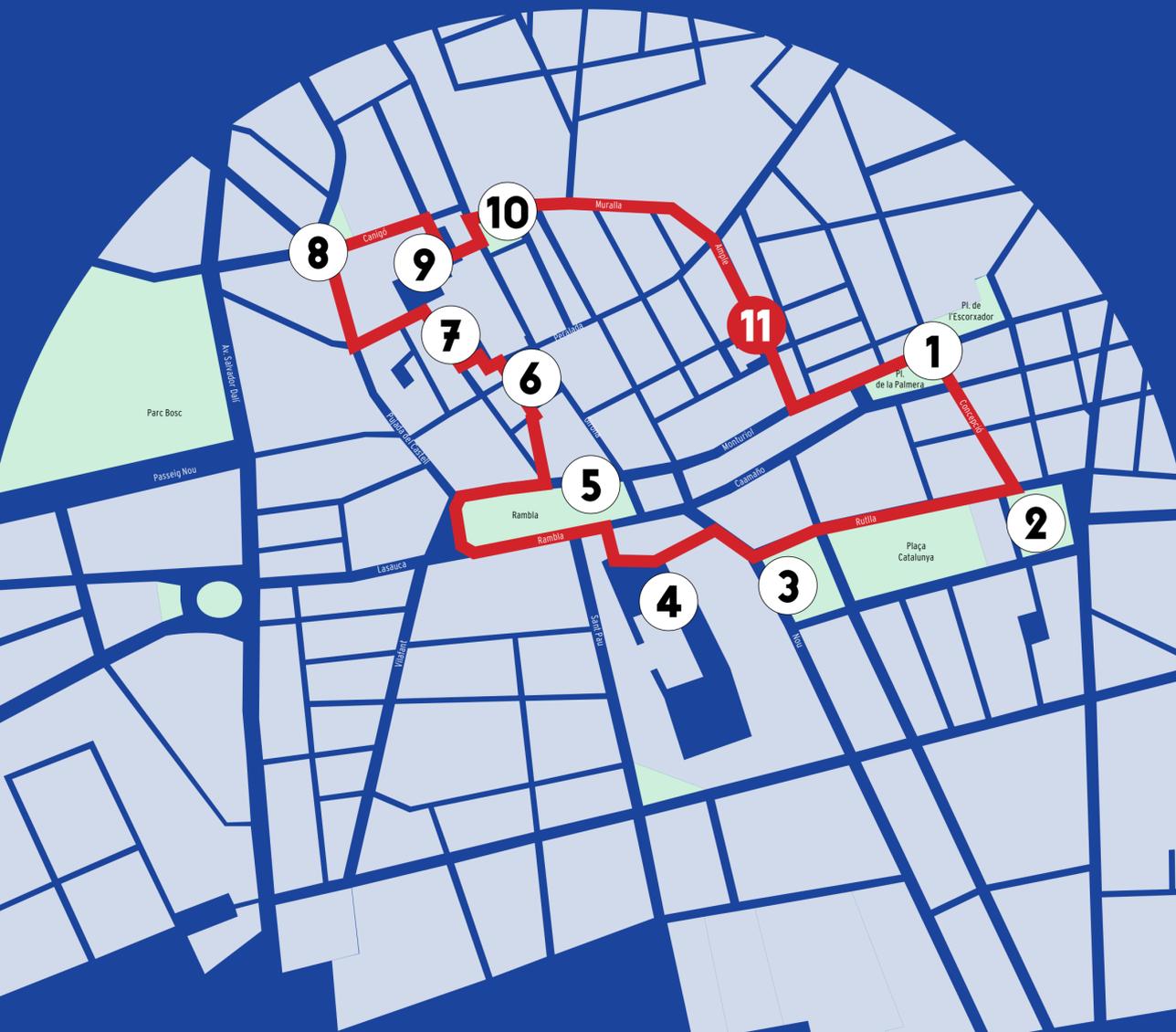
General view of Carrer Ample  
Photographer unknown (c. 1900 - 1910)  
Figueras Municipal Archive

## Carrer Ample / carrer Joan Maragall

Working-class culture, popular reading

The confluence of the streets Carrer Ample, along the perimeter of the city walls, and Carrer Joan Maragall, formerly known as Carrer de la Presó, in reference to the prison located here from 1579 until 1914, became home in 1922 to the Popular Library promoted by the Commonwealth of Catalonia. Damaged by aerial bombings during the Civil War (1936-1939), it was rebuilt by the Provincial Council and retained the same use until 2001, when it was moved to the new county library in Plaça del Sol. Currently, the building houses the Municipal Archives. A bustling street, undoubtedly its most prominent element is the Casino Menestral Figuerenc (1904), a building located on the corner of Carrer Peralada, the work of Josep Bori Gensana (1866-1938) and home to one of the city's most important socio-cultural institutions, founded in 1856 with a markedly popular and republican character.

At the other end of Carrer Ample, on Carrer Monturiol, we find the birthplace of Salvador Dalí, currently converted into a museum and open to visitors, home to the Dalí family until 1912. Following Carrer Monturiol in the direction of the Rambla, we find some of the most notable bourgeois mansions in the city, among them the Casa Roger (1895), the work of the architect Josep Azemar i Pont, and home to one of the most influential members of Catalonia's commercial and industrial bourgeoisie at the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century.



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