



The Formentera Island Council has given special one-off approval for construction of 14 units of officially-protected public housing in Sant Ferran. In the interest of minimising disturbances for residents and visitors of the neighbourhood, the authorisation will be valid only from 1 May until 15 June and uniquely for construction by the Balearic Institute of Housing (Institut Balear de l'Habitatge, or IBAVI) of the building's foundation.

Regrettably, although building permits for the project were granted by the Council in 2011, until today's date IBAVI had neglected to move forward with plans. It was not until recently – the start of the tourist season – that the housing authority requested permission to begin construction.

Formentera's code of municipal ordinances normally prohibits the execution of any building project between 1 May and 15 October in the interest of reducing noise and vibrational pollution. However, the Council decided to grant approval for the public housing project because it was feared that financing by the European Union might expire.

Since its inception, the Sant Ferran housing project has always had the full backing of the Formentera Council; for a time it required, nevertheless, the commitment of the Govern Balear and IBAVI.

In 2011 the Formentera Island Council supplied IBAVI a plot of land which, together with another neighbouring plot owned jointly by IBAVI and the Council, formed the basis for the project's construction. In order to free up additional space for construction work, the Council has already begun relocating the Bob Baldon Children's Park that had previously occupied the bordering lot.

It was also in 2011 that all of the administrative formalities and necessary building permits were conceded, IBAVI affirming at this time that construction would begin in winter of 2012/2013. The project received the status of 'priority project' on IBAVI's programme of new works.

Demand is extremely high for this type of lodging on Formentera and difficulties abound for those attempting to gain access.

Since entering office in 2007, Gent per Formentera (GxF) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) have endeavoured to increase the amount of officially-protected public housing on the island. It is for this reason that the Council decided to give the green light for construction of the building's foundation, despite a start date that comes three years late and that coincides with the normally off-limits months of May and June.

The Sant Ferran housing project was designed in congruence with the urban environment of Sant Ferran. The building will remain faithful to tradition while simultaneously incorporating important environmental advances and energy-saving measures. The materials, construction techniques and even the future management of the building all reflect an increased level of environmental consciousness.

As outlined in the convention that preceded building plans, the dwellings will be for rent. Preference will be given to residents of Formentera, especially younger renters. The Council's total investment in the project (acquisition of land and construction) is 1.75 million euros.