

“TREVIGLIO”

CIVIC CULTURAL CENTRE

Taken from “**Treviglio: storia, arte e cultura**” by Barbara Oggioni - *ed. Clessidra 2002*

The Cultural Centre is found in one of the city's most charming settings: what was ex St. Mary's Hospital and before ex St. Peter's Monastery.

The complex today houses the offices of the Municipal Department of Culture, the Central Municipal Library, the Council Archives and its reading rooms, the “Ernesto and Teresa della Torre” Civic Museum, the Archaeological Museum, the large Crocera Exhibition Hall for temporary exhibitions and other meeting rooms.

The Library, founded by Abbot Carlo Cameroni in 1862, contains 60,000 volumes and in the Archives there are numerous documents, manuscripts and antique books.

The Museum houses art collections which include antique pieces and notable paintings among which are the considerable collection by Giovanni Battisti dell'Era. The only remaining example of art from St. Mary's Hospital is also kept there: a painting attributed to Manetta.

Other historically interesting works of art are displayed in various parts of the complex . On the left side of the central cloister, in what is called the St. Martin's Portico, the former guest-quarters and formal entrance to the monastery, stands a group of 12th and 13th century sculptures of St. Martin and the poor Man which used to be under the portico of the Town hall.

Amongst the numerous plaques and archaeological finds collected here is a stone slab found on one of the walls of the Town Hall carrying the date MCCC (1300 A.D.).

The walls of the complex itself carry testimony to art-work from its past: on the ground floor there are three traces of 15th and 16th century paintings, a shrine niche in the stair-well to the right of the main entrance used to astylar crucifix, on the first floor there are 18th century paintings attributable to the Galliari brothers.

Despite the numerous alterations carried out on the buildings over the last two centuries, the primitive cloistered layout of the complex has been retained around the large central cloister with its interesting architectural details.



Although it is not possible to visit the area, it is worth mentioning the under-ground passages which run more or less along the north western side of the complex.

The history of the complex is closely linked to the fortunes of St. Peter's Monastery which was built on the site of a church called St. Peter's, according to local tradition founded in 1037. The church belonged to the brothers Pazzi da Villa, and, with the land surrounding it, was donated to the nuns of the Benedictine Monastery in Farinate (10 km to the south of Treviglio) in 1125. The nuns had the complex in Treviglio built and later expanded in work that was completed in the second half of the 15th century. The nuns moved from Farinate to Treviglio in 1459 and oversaw the developments and embellishments carried out on the complex.

St. Peter's church was rebuilt and enlarged in 1537 where the Crocera Exhibition Hall stands today, and the public entered from via Bicetti, while the nuns used the back of it.

By the end of 17th century the Monastery had reached significant proportions and was further ornamented in the 18th century: it was suppressed on 21st March 1782 and became the new site of the hospital which had been in Via Beltrame Butinone.

Considerable demolition and reconstruction work, planned by Marcellino Segrè, an architect from Milan, was carried out to adapt the building to its new role.

In 1971 the hospital was transferred to its present site in Via Caravaggio. Alterations and demolition work carried out during the 1970s and 1980s brought the complex to a form suitable for housing the Cultural Centre. The most recent re-organization and adaptation work was completed in 1999, involving alterations to the Crocera Exhibition Hall which made it possible to install the museum with access from the first floor verandah and leaving the ground floor space available for exhibition and meetings.