



MONASTERY* AND FORMER SAINT AMBROGIO'S CHURCH

* This building has disappeared

You find this place of interest in Cantù 2 - Stage 2

INFORMATION

Location: the monastery and church of Saint Ambrogio stood on the southern side of the current piazza Marconi, in the vicinity of the complex of Saint Mary.

Access: -

Services: urban and extra-urban bus stops in via Manzoni and piazza Parini; ATM teller in Piazza Garibaldi and via Corbetta; chemist's shop in via Ariberto da Intimiano and via Matteotti;

Leisure and Food: bars and shops; public gardens in via Dante (Parco Argenti) and via Roma (Parco Martiri delle Foibe).

Other information: the monastery has been demolished, while the church was restructured in 2001 as a room for cultural exhibitions and is generally closed. For more information, see the Contacts section below.

DESCRIPTION

A community of pious women, probably of the order of the Humiliates, that managed in this place Saint Ambrogio's Hospital (already mentioned in the XIII century), not tied to wows and not dressed as nuns, in 1476 decided to obey to the rule of Saint Augustine; in 1505 the Pope Giulio II granted them the right to build a monastery of perpetual enclosure, with a church. The building was erected around the year 1570, thanks to the donation of sister Letitia, from the family Alciati, of local nobility. The church has a square plan and, in its original structure, follows the typical late-Renaissance style of the XVI century, with an imposing dome based over a great cylindrical lantern. In later times, the liturgical rules imposed by the Counter-Reform of Saint Carlo Borromeo (1586) forced the separation of the church in two distinct spaces: the interior church, reserved to the enclosure, and the exterior, open to the faithful and dedicated to the religious functions. The exterior church was furtherly renovated with a rich baroque decoration, reaching its apex in the cycle of the dome, painted by Giampaolo and Raffaele Recchi in 1676, with the unusual iconographic theme of the *Transfiguration of the Virgin Mary*, surrounded by *Saints*; also the stuccoes, ascribed ad Agostino Silva, are precious.

The church fell into abandon after the suppression of the monastery in 1784 during the Cisalpine Republic; deconsecrated at the beginning of the XIX century, it was sold by auction in 1818 and transformed, together with the monastery (that had become a military school) in private homes and warehouses. Around the half of the century the interior church and the bell tower were demolished. There are very few remains nowadays of the pristine splendour of the church; it was bought by the Municipality of Cantù in 1890 and, in 2001, was significantly restored and consolidated under the direction of the architect Marco Dezzi Bardeschi in order to recover it for cultural activities.

The monastery was demolished in 1936, to make room for the current piazza Marconi.