

Borromeo House

This house has belonged to the Borromeo family since the end of the fourteenth century. For 600 years, the house has been occupied by the family that first decided to build it here. The house stands in the eponymous Piazza Borromeo and the family name is repeated in the names of surrounding streets that used the flank this family citadel in the mediaeval Milan through which Leonardo da Vinci once walked.

The exposed brick facade, which is a common feature of many Milanese buildings, is the surviving original from a time when Milan was a city filled with flaming kilns producing not just basic construction materials but also all the decorative elements for embellishing the buildings. Fornace Curti (the Curti Kiln), producer of the friezes of the Ca' Granda designed by Solari and Amadeo (author also of the frieze in Santa Marie delle Grazie), continues to exist to this day.

The elegant pointed-arch portal from the early 1400s, which is made of alternating blocks of Candoglia pink and Verona red marble, is one of the few to have survived intact to this day. Crowned by a wide ornamental band composed of a cordon, a ribbon of vine tendrils, and a garland of acorns and oak leaves, the arch culminates with the heraldic emblem of the Borromeo family: a dromedary bearing the comital crown.

The courtyard, which survived the bombings of the summer of 1943 (the "Apocalypse of Milan") that razed the rest of the building, contains a wonderful cycle of frescoes from the mid-15th century, known as the "Borromeo Games " depicting a courtly parade of enchanting maidens and elegant knights.

This, along with Casa Parravicini and Casa Fontana Silvestri, is one of the few remaining examples of a medieval noble house in Milan.

Piazza Borromeo 12

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