

ARCHITECTURE



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Francesco Moroni (1606-1674) commissioned the construction and decoration of this residence following his marriage to Lucrezia Roncalli in 1631. The works were carried out from late 1645 to 1655 on the site at “Porta Penta”, today’s Via di Porta Dipinta, which had been acquired by the Pesenti family in 1645; in 1648 a new section of the property was acquired from the Olmi family. The building’s facade is plain and austere, still betraying the influence of the rigid dictates of post-Tridentine design. Its four storeys correspond to the slope of the street. As is typical in residential architecture of the period, the walls are covered in bare plaster with sculpted stone elements: the portal, the balustraded balcony, and the door and window frames. The interiors are far more ornate. With respect to the original design, the most significant changes occurred during the first half of the 19th century, with the remodelling of the decorations of the mezzanine spaces, and then later, those of the *piano nobile*.



DID YOU KNOW...?

The C-shaped floorplan of the building is irregular due to the pre-existing elements on the site, which even affected the off-centre position of the entrance. In Bergamo’s Upper Town (as depicted in this early 19th-century postcard, left), owing to the lack of buildable land within the 16th-century city walls, most 17th-century constructions were conversions of pre-existing buildings.



Piazza Vecchia, in the Upper Town, with the Colleoni chapel



The Archive, of the Palazzo Moroni Museum Foundation



Neptune's courtyard, created by the sculptor Leonardo Redi

The construction of Palazzo Moroni, along with that of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and Palazzo Terzi, was one of the main **drivers of the baroque in Bergamo**. By the 17th century, property investment had become less risky and more profitable, and so city palazzos came to embody their owners' desire for self-aggrandisement.

Not by chance, at the foot of the grand staircase of Palazzo Moroni (above the entrance), the frescoes include an emblem that portrays a set of scales with the two balanced pans, with coins on one side and a building on the other, along with

the motto *AEQUA LANCE LIBRANDUM*. Palazzo Moroni was designed by the chief of works, the Lugano-born Battista della Giovanna (who worked in the Bergamo region from at least the 1630s), who produced a set of ten drawings for the project.

The Moroni archive, now on the ground floor of the palazzo (managed by the Palazzo Moroni Museum Foundation), includes the ledgers compiled by this foreman, which contain the list of expenses incurred for the works. These important documents chart in detail all the stages of the building's construction and decoration.

Behind the facade of the palazzo, there is a courtyard embellished by a nymphaeum in a niche, by the sculptor Leonardo Redi, commissioned in 1651 to create the perspective of the courtyard with the fountain, whereas we still do not know who sculpted the monumental statue of Neptune.

The courtyard was remodelled during the 19th century: originally it would have been paved in fired brick with a well, two fountains and a stone trough, complete with figure-head, for horses. Along the sides of the courtyard, at ground-floor level, there would have been service spaces.



The courtyard of Palazzo Terzi, in a vintage photo



An extract from the ledgers held in the Moroni Archive



One of the wings of Palazzo Moroni overlooking the courtyard