

## The Church of San Paolo in Ferrara, Restoration and Accessibility

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**Abstract :** The ecclesiastical complex of San Paolo in Ferrara represents a monument of great historical, religious and architectural importance. Its long and articulated story, over time, is already manifested by the mere reading of its planimetric and altimetric configuration, apparently unitary but, in reality, marked by modifications and repeated additions, even of high quality. It follows, in terms of protection, restoration and enhancement, a commitment of due respect for how the ancient building was built and enriched over its centuries of life. Hence a rigorous methodological approach, while being aware of the fact that every monument, in order to live and make use of the indispensable maintenance, must always be enjoyed and visited, therefore it must enjoy, in the right measure and compatibly with its nature, the possibility of improvements and functional, distributive, technological adjustments and related to the safety of people and things. The methodological approach substantiates the different elements of the project (such as distribution functionality, safety, structural solidity, environmental comfort, the character of the site, building and urban planning regulations, financial resources and materials, the same organization methods of the construction site) through the guiding principles of restoration, defined for a long time: the 'minimum intervention,' the 'recognisability' or 'distinguishability' of old and new, the Physico-chemical and figurative 'compatibility,' the 'durability' and the, at least potential, 'reversibility' of what is done, leading to the definition of appropriate "critical choices." The project tackles, together with the strictly functional ones, also the directly conservative and restoration issues, of a static, structural and material technology nature, with special attention to precious architectural surfaces. In order to ensure the best architectural quality through conscious enhancement, the project involves a redistribution of the interior and service spaces, an accurate lighting system inside and outside the church and a reorganization of the adjacent urban space. The reorganization of the interior is designed with particular attention to the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities. To accompany the community to regain possession of the use of the church's own space, already in its construction phase, the project proposal has hypothesized a permeability and flexibility in the management of the works such as to allow the perception of the found Monument to gradually become more and more familiar at the citizenship. Once the interventions have been completed, it is expected that the Church of San Paolo, second in importance only to the Cathedral, from which it is a few steps away, will be inserted in an already existing circuit of use of the city which over the years has systematized the different aspects of culture, the environment and tourism for the creation of greater awareness in the perception of what Ferrara can offer in cultural terms.

**Keywords :** conservation, accessibility, regeneration, urban space

**Conference Title :** ICCRMC 2023 : International Conference on Cultural Resources Management and Conservation

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** August 24-25, 2023