

# L'EX NOVIZIATO DEL SAN NICCOLÒ DI PRATO: CONOSCENZA, CONSERVAZIONE E RIUSO

MARTINA LAZZARI

Specialista in Beni Architettonici e del Paesaggio, SSBAP Politecnico di Milano  
martina.lazzari@hotmail.it

## **Abstract.**

This paper is about the conservation and continuing use of the former Noviciate of San Niccolò in Prato. The San Niccolò is a monastic complex of the thirteenth century, later transformed into a girls' school for noble families. Despite this fact, the community of nuns continued living there, supporting the institute until last year. Nowadays, the buildings are used by a private school offering courses from kindergarten to high school. Extracurricular activities are managed by a private foundation that, in accordance with the original purposes of the school, promotes social activities related to education, history and arts. The building hosting the former Novitiate is part of this complex and it is not used for that purpose anymore. A compatible use is necessary for the building conservation, therefore the aim of the project is to study a defined and controlled transformation. The project is based on an overall strategy which will take into account all these factors. The primary aim is to have as few changes as possible, in order to keep the historical structure but provide for the needs of the present uses for the architectural complex. As the San Niccolò is collaborating with the cultural and educational institutions of the City, the rooms of the former Novitiate are well suited to increase the possibilities of hospitality. A part of the building – the north one, with large rooms and a separate access – will be used as a space for seminars and training courses. On the opposite side, the novice rooms are of a size which makes it difficult to use them in a similar way. There is also the issue of the preservation of the wooden ceilings in that area. The rooms will be restored as temporary accommodation for visiting professors or guests whose visits are related to the activities of the San Niccolò. The preliminary plans have been prepared so that the new building works respect the original architecture of the building. The restrooms will be located in one place so that the reconstruction of the necessary pipework is in place and they will be built with lightweight and dry-assembled elements. The accessibility problem is solved with an external staircase: a light and reversible structure, with a good level of transparency, allowing one to appreciate the facade with its historical signs.

**Keywords:** *Novitiate, conservation, reuse*