

Sant'Andrea dei Vascellari

(Deconsecrated)



Sant'Andrea dei Vascellari is a small deconsecrated church of ancient foundation at Via dei Vascellari 69, east of the junction with Via dei Salumi in Trastevere. The dedication was to St Andrew the Apostle.

History

It was founded as a parish church in 822 during the pontificate of St. Paschal I, and was originally known as Sant'Andrea de Scaphis or "Saint Andrew of the Little Boats" (the Tiber is nearby).

In 1574 the parish was suppressed and the church was granted to the pork-butchers' guild (Università dei Mercanti di Salumi). They undertook a thorough restoration, but lost control to a confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament attached to the nearby church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere which restored it again in 1666. The present façade dates from this restoration, and apparently the Baroque interior furnishings provided were very rich. The church then became the guild church of the potters in the 18th century, which gave it the name of Vascellari (from the Latin vas or vessel).

This guild was dissolved in 1801, and the church's function in the later 19th century is obscure. It was in an abandoned state in the 20th century, until formally deconsecrated in 1942. When examined (September 2010) it appeared to be a private residence in good condition and painted pale blue, although only recently it was a carpenter's workshop and was dilapidated. Many photos online show it in this state. The building is now the Roman branch of a New York art gallery called Gavin Brown's Enterprise.

Exterior

The plan is a simple rectangle.

A Vasi engraving depicts the church before its 18th century restoration. The top of the facade is between the two towers on the left (the other church there closer to the viewer was San Salvatore a Ponte Rotto, which was later demolished for the Ponte Palatino).

The façade provided in 1666 is very simple, having a relief string-course halfway up which continues around the edifice. There is a stone doorcase with a shallow floating lintel having an inscription, and two rectangular windows above the string-course. At the corners below the latter are paired volutes carded in shallow relief. The blank triangular pediment is standard, but very unusually it is part of a rectangular screen wall which occupies the whole width of the façade. As a result, there are two right-angled triangles flanking the pediment, which are there to conceal the fact that the roof of the church has a single pitch upwards from left to right. There is no true gable.

The little bellcote with arched spaces for two bells can be seen at the apex of the roof pitch in the photo of the exterior.

Interior

The interior was, as might be expected, gutted after deconsecration and now has an open roof and plain white walls. However, amazingly the Baroque altar aedicule has survived although the altar itself is gone. This consists of a pair of reddish marble Corinthian columns supporting the cut-off ends of an otherwise phantom segmental pediment.

The single pitch of the roof is interesting, sloping down from right to left.

Location:

Coord: [41°53′17.5″N 12°28′39.7″E](#)

External links

[Roman Churches Wiki](#)

[Italian Wikipedia article](#)

[Vasi engraving](#)

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["De Alvariis" photo on Flickr](#)

[Roman Despatches](#) - blog with gallery