

Quinta da Piedade consists in a notable ensemble, today municipal heritage and classified as public interest property. It integrates a manor house with eighteenth century characteristics and inside covered with tiles of the time; recreation areas with lakes and fountains; chapels - Nossa Senhora da Piedade, Senhor Morto and São Jerónimo, all from the sixteenth century. Nossa Senhora da Piedade Church is from the eighteenth century. This erected ensemble was the center of Póvoa primogeniture, instituted in the fourteenth century, which gave birth to the township with the same name.

Gardens

Until the sixteenth century, it was a manor, which presented a considerable woods, where the vegetation was fed by a natural spring. In the seventeenth century, the woods started to be destroyed to start the implantation of pleasure gardens. In this century the wild near the religious areas is turned in a boxwood garden, of geometrical implantation (square shaped) bounded by beds of myrtle. In the eighteenth century, the gardens are reformulated by the French gardener Alexandre Lasala, who unites all the complex, allowing the gardens to accomplish a pompous extension, crossed by two wide perpendicular groves. The orchards are rearranged in citrus and pear-trees square shaped parcels, moving them away from the main front of the palace. In the nineteenth century, it is build a duck pond, but the manor is abandoned and the garden was gradually being destroyed, giving place to the cereal implantation.



Nossa Senhora da Piedade Hermitage

The owner of the manor, D. Francisco de Castelo Branco, erected this hermitage in a perfect place for worship and prayer. It was built in 1531, and there was the daily mass, in charge of chaplain Vasques Anes, who was also Póvoa overseer. It is a manueline hermitage, with symbols, which intend to communicate something, such as the vegetable beans from the outside of the presbytery dome, which reveal a wonderful nature. Entry with three arches, representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and the Sun represents Jesus Christ. Until 1729, this temple kept its religious activity, celebrating the masses for the soul of the nobleman, which gathered the Póvoa residents on Sundays and Holy Days.



Bastion shaped courtyard

Between 1565 and 1578, are erected the ramparts and bastions of the courtyard, during a period when the aristocracy was looking for the reinforcement of their military role and for the defense of their possessions, due to the threats, which the Portuguese military power was facing in North Africa, with the evacuation of some castles. The courtyard had all the infrastructures necessary to the administration of the primogeniture: house of the overseer, barns, oil and wine mill, cellar and stables.



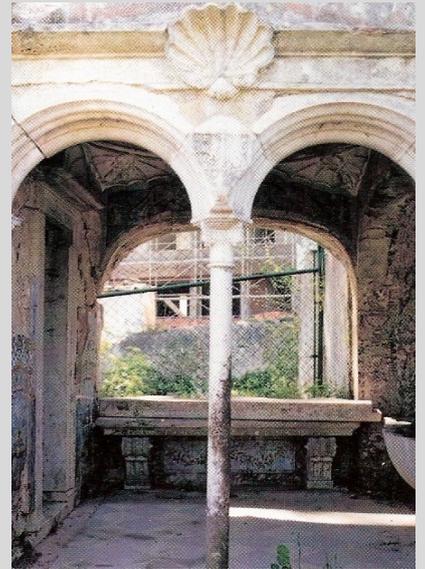
Senhor Morto Grotto (Nossa Senhora da Piedade Oratory)

Senhor Morto grotto (1531), was erected by the nobleman D. Francisco de Castelo Branco. It intends to recreate the local and moments that anticipate Jesus Christ burial. It recreates the cavern where lies the body of Jesus Christ and it can be observed the Virgin Mary, Saint John and Mary Magdalene (sculptures in Ançã stone). Its outside walls are covered with tiles, representing miracles of Nossa Senhora da Piedade, such as the rescue of a child, who fell into a well, the rescue of a fishing boat in the middle of a storm, and the cure of a crippled old lady (Valentim de Almeida and Sebastião de Almeida, were the tile painters – eighteenth century).



São Jerónimo Oratory

It is a tiny oratory (1530-1540), isolated, built for the lonely chamberlain (D. Francisco de Castelo Branco) to perform his prayers. The buds dome above the presbytery, already used in the watchtowers of Torre de Belém, from architect Francisco de Arruda, reminds the Moroccan conquests, and the spiritual victory of Christianity. On the seventeenth century, the oratory was adapted for the mass celebration, and is decorated with patterned geometric tiles. On the eighteenth century, the oratory was covered on the inside with figurative tiles from the life of São Jerónimo.



Nossa Senhora da Piedade Church

The increase of Póvoa population, moved the lords of the primogeniture, D. Luís (1644-1704) and D. Pedro de Lencastre (1697-1752), to erect a new and bigger hermitage (1729). This church was designed by the royal architect João Antunes. It is a modest temple of single nave with the inside covered with blue and white tiles, which form panels alluding to the life of the Virgin and also with motifs related with the instruments used in the torture of Jesus Christ (tiles of Teotónio dos Santos). In 1851, there were expansion works and the tomb chapel of Abrantes Marquis is inserted on the shape of the tower bell.



Palace

It was erected between 1745 and 1752, by order of D. Pedro de Lencastre. It intends to copy the noble buildings, which were built in Lisbon. The residential area was situated on the upper floor, with lots of comfort. There were vestibules, chambers and a big hall where were done big parties. The several rooms were covered with painted tiles of the painter Valentim de Almeida, that picture images of leisure and entertainment, and also motifs related with the French tapestry and classic mythology. In total, the manor has around 20 000 tiles. It was mainly a palace for short stays, where people could breathe healthy air, of big gardens, hunting, riding, bull-fights, games, dance and music. In 1755, due to the earthquake, Abrantes Lords, came to live in this palace.

