

Fortifications

Barbican

The Cracow fortifications were build between the 13th and 15th century so that Cracow became surrounded by 42 bastions and several gates. For the north side of Cracow was often attacked by enemies, the Barbican - a building of Arabic origin - was erected. It was linked to the Florian Gate by a covered passage. At the Barbican all merchants had to enter Cracow and there began the Royal Way - a representative route the king toke to the Wawel Hill.

Florian Gate - St. Florian Church

In the 12th century the relics of St. Florian were carried to Cracow. But not far away from the Barbican the horses suddently stopped what was considered as a sign from God and at this place the St. Florian Church was build. There the future pope John Paul II. alias Karol Wojtyla had his first working place in Cracow. As a vicar he took care of young people.

Demolition of fortifications

In the 19th century nearly all fortifications and city walls were dismantled, but fortunately the Barbican and the Florian Gate were saved. This happened thanks to a clever Cracow citizen who warned the people if they demolished especially the Barbican and the Florian Gate, the cold winds from the north would reach the Market Place and uplift the women's dresses. For this reason the Cracow citizen decided not to destroy this part of the city walls.