



# The Castle of Groppoli

MULAZZO

**Location:** The castle of Groppoli is located on top of a hill overlooking the right bank of the Magra valley.

**Type of castle:** residence and fortified structure.

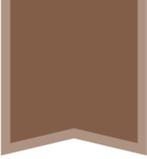
**Construction period:** The first structure dates back to the Middle Ages, while the palace was built after several works. The last one could date back to the restorations of the 18th century by Matteo Vinzoni.

**First appearance in historical sources:** The oldest element of the building is the central quadrangular tower dating back to the 13th or 14th century.

**Strategic role:** Residence and watchtower for the Malaspina between Mulazzo and Lusuolo in the Magra valley.

**Further use:** The main function of the castle was the residential one until the half of the 17th century, when the marquis Antonio Giulio I asked the architect Giovan Battista Bianchi to build a new palace. Then the castle was used just as representative office until the 18th century. In 1773 the marquisate was abolished.





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**Current condition:** Recently restored.

**Viewing:** Yes

**History:** The history of Groppoli is linked to the rule of the Malaspina. Groppoli was part of the territories belonging to the Spino Secco and followed the destiny of Mulazzo, until when it was assigned to the Landi in the 16th century. The fief continually changed owner until 1577, when it was assigned to the Grand Duke Francesco I by the emperor.

In 1592, the Grand Duke assigned the castle and the fief to a Genoese Lord, Giulio Sale, whose daughter married Giovan Francesco Brignole, an important lord of the Genoese aristocracy. Due to testamentary dispositions the fief was assigned to his son Anton Giulio, a cultivated man who was portrayed by Van Dick. He probably was one of the most important members of the Brignole-Sale family. This family kept the fief until 1773, when the marquisate was abolished.

**Structure:** The castle is a large residential building equipped with a quadrangular tower in the middle, which overlooks each side of the manor. In the current structure there are defensive elements and typical features of the residences built in the 16th century.

The tower once had only a military function, but then was included in the palace equipped with corner sentry boxes and watchtowers in order to strengthen the military aspect of the structure.

The tower was part of a more complex defensive system, as well as the medieval castle of Groppoli.

After the rule of the Sale, the castle was modified and a new quadrangular scheme was introduced. This was in contrast with the pre-existing medieval structures, which remained in the castle until the 18th century. The main medieval building was trapezoidal with an acute prong and strong walls. This phase ended in the 17th century and then there were other works that finished the project of the architect Bianchi. In the 18th century the plan was modified again and the corner watchtowers were added by Matteo Vinzoni between 1627 and 1761.