

EX MENSA CRDA

# IN THE SHADOWS

Integration House for Women\*

Andrea Huber

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### Diplomarbeit

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# ABSTRACT

The following work deals with the design of an integration house for refugee women\* in the city of Trieste. The issue of women\* on the run, which is often marginalised in our society, is to be brought into the limelight through this work.

Trieste is considered one of the first safe havens for refugees. Every year, around 16.052 people arrive in the city, of which 1% are women\* travelling alone (as of 2023).<sup>1</sup> As women\* on the run face additional risks such as gender-based and sexual violence, this hidden issue needs to be brought to light.

The city of Trieste has a high number of vacant buildings and a lack of emergency accommodation for refugees. The focus is therefore on the transformation of the canteen in the San Vito district, which has been vacant for over 50 years. The reactivation of the former canteen includes a safe place for refugee women\* to rest, wait, develop, and find shelter. In addition, the neighbourhood of the former canteen is involved in the project to create a sustainable integration of refugee women\* into society. All in all, the topic is made visible rather than marginalised.

The aim of this work is to demonstrate how architecture can respond to critical social issues and offer solutions for a dignified, sustainable future. Through the intentional reuse of vacant buildings, the project helps create an inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to feel welcome. The work aims to serve as an example of how architectural interventions can create not only functional but also social value by providing spaces for protection, encounter, and participation.

1 "Il Contesto," in *Vite Abbandonate* 2023 (Trieste: June 2024), 16.

# KURZFASSUNG

Die vorliegende Arbeit befasst sich mit dem Entwurf eines Integrationshauses für geflüchtete Frauen\* in der Stadt Triest. Die oft marginalisierte Herausforderung geflüchteter Frauen\* soll durch diese Arbeit ins Licht gerückt werden.

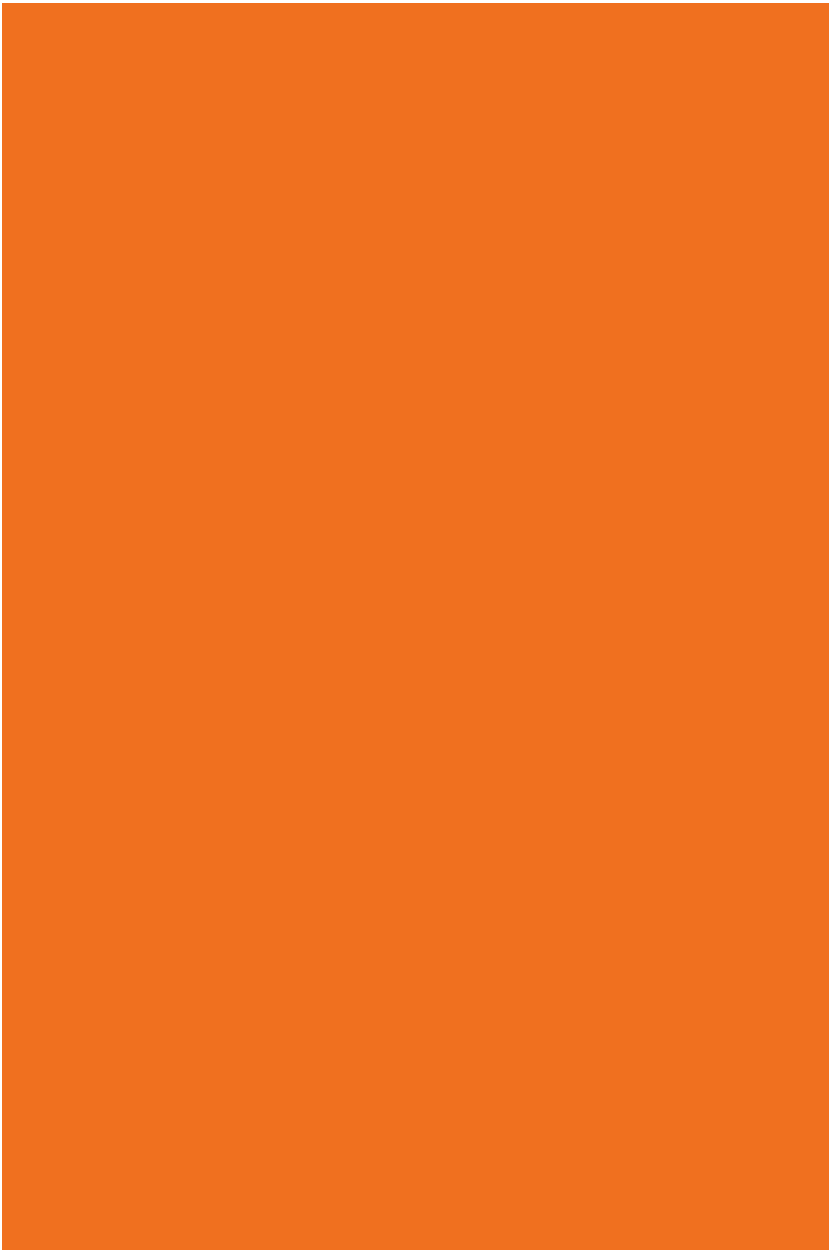
Triest gilt als eines der ersten sicheren Ankunftsorten für Geflüchtete. Jährlich erreichen etwa 16.052 Menschen die Stadt, von denen rund 1 % alleinreisende Frauen\* sind (Stand 2023).<sup>2</sup> Da Frauen\* auf der Flucht zusätzlichen Risiken wie geschlechtsspezifischer und sexueller Gewalt ausgesetzt sind, bedarf dieses verborgene Thema einer stärkeren Sichtbarkeit.

Die Stadt Triest weist eine hohe Anzahl leerstehender Gebäude und einen Mangel an Notunterkünften für Geflüchtete auf. Der Schwerpunkt liegt daher auf der Umnutzung der seit über 50 Jahren leerstehenden Kantine im Stadtteil San Vito. Diese Reaktivierung schafft einen sicheren Raum für geflüchtete Frauen\*, in dem sie Ruhe, Schutz und Entfaltung finden können. Zudem wird die Nachbarschaft in das Projekt eingebunden, um eine nachhaltige Integration der geflüchteten Frauen\* in die Gesellschaft zu ermöglichen. Insgesamt wird das Thema sichtbar gemacht, anstatt es zu marginalisieren.

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, aufzuzeigen, wie Architektur auf kritische soziale Herausforderungen reagieren und Lösungen für eine würdevolle, nachhaltige Zukunft bieten kann. Durch die gezielte Transformation leerstehender Gebäude trägt das Projekt dazu bei, eine inklusive Umgebung zu schaffen, in der sich jeder willkommen fühlen darf. Die Arbeit soll als Beispiel dienen, wie architektonische Interventionen nicht nur funktionalen, sondern auch sozialen Mehrwert schaffen können, indem sie Räume für Schutz, Begegnung und Teilhabe bereitstellen.

2 "Il Contesto," in *Vite Abbandonate* 2023 (Trieste: June 2024), 16.





The following work is written in gender-inclusive language. The spelling women\* is intended to include all people who self-identify as such.

The choice of the color orange is based on the UN campaign "Orange the World" to raise awareness of one of the most widespread human rights violations, violence against women\*. The campaign takes place every year between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women\* on 25 November and the International Human Rights Day on 10 December. During these 16 days, buildings all over the world are lit up in orange. In Austria, there were more than 250 buildings in 2021. The campaign helps to break the taboo surrounding the issue and sets a visible sign against violence against women\*.<sup>3</sup>

3 UN Women Austria, "Orange the World," accessed October 11, 2024, <https://www.unwomen.at/unserearbeit/kampagnen/orange-the-world/oesterreich/>.

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Fig. 1 | Freedom

# I. INTRODUCTION

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During my Erasmus stay in Trieste, I became increasingly aware of the problems of migration in Italy. The visibility of this issue can be recognized on public streets, squares, and places. While I was always aware of male refugees, I asked myself whether there were any refugee women\* in the city at all. After a brief conversation on site with a refugee from Syria, I was told that women\* are not mainly staying in the empty silos like refugee men but are hiding in the city to find protection.<sup>4</sup> This personal conversation was the decisive impulse for the following diploma thesis.

At the beginning of the work, the city of Trieste is examined from six different perspectives. City walks lead through the different districts and show the cultural and architectural diversity of Trieste. This part was recorded as group work and is understood as a collaborative part.

Another issue relevant to the work is the flight of people. The following section looks at international migration, the Balkan route, and the current situation in Trieste. The final topic in this chapter is the shadowy issue of women\* on the run. As women\* on the run are exposed to additional dangers, the need for a safe place becomes obvious. The vacant canteen in the San Vito district was chosen to provide shelter for refugee women\*.

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The aim of the work is to create a safe waiting room for women\* and, at the same time, respond to their needs. A filter ranging from isolation to integration helps to provide the necessary retreat while still allowing interaction with other refugee women\* and the neighborhood. The transformation of the building follows the design principles of architect Marcello D'Olivo, and in this way, space and use are brought into relationship. An attempt is made to interweave the functions of living and working in order to provide sustainable integration.

The following work is intended as a contribution to social architecture that responds to current socially critical problems and enables vulnerable groups to integrate appropriately into society. The aim is to show how architecture can contribute to creating an inclusive environment where all people have the opportunity to feel welcome.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with a Syrian refugee, April 12, 2024, pers. communication.

## II. TRIESTE

### Walking Impressions through the City

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„Zone d'ombra dimenticate, immobilizzate in un limbo urbanistico colmo di contraddizioni.

Forgotten grey areas, immobilised in an urban limbo full of contradiction.“<sup>5</sup>

Chiara D'Inca

## COLLABORATIVE PART

Jakob Traxler, Marcin Jatzczak, Liselotte Bilak, Keti Beka,  
Orsolya Nyulas, Andrea Huber

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This diploma thesis is the outcome of a collaborative project by a group of six students focused on systematically exploring the wide range of vacant buildings and derelict spaces in Trieste. Through shared research, field excursions, and direct engagement with the local community, key issues and challenges facing the city were identified. This collaborative analysis provided the foundation for the development of six individual design projects, each targeting specific neighbourhoods. The collective goal is to achieve a sustainable reactivation of urban spaces through precise interventions.

Trieste was particularly interesting for this work due to several factors. The city presents a compelling case for the study of adaptive reuse, driven by its shrinking population and an excess of vacant building volumes. While much attention has been focused on the city's historic harbour as a symbol of its quiet decline, it is far from the only area illustrating this trend. A walk through Trieste's streets reveals numerous abandoned buildings—old palazzi, former factories, and empty residential properties—each a testament to a bygone era. These forgotten spaces, scattered throughout the city, also tell the story of Trieste's crumbling urban fabric.

The initial impulse for the current project came from the work "Buchi Neri - Indagine sui luoghi incompiuti o abbandonati della città di Trieste" by the architect Roberto D'Ambrosi. This work documents the unfinished and abandoned places of Trieste, which visualise the gradual decay of the urban landscape. D'Ambrosi maps and classifies these so-called "black holes", which have been created by unfinished construction projects, political instability and demographic changes.

5 Chiara D'Inca, "La Trieste Dei Buchi Neri: La Parte Decadente Dell'urbanistica Cittadina," February 18, 2020, <https://www.triesteallnews.it/2020/02/la-trieste-dei-buchi-neri-la-parte-decadente-dellurbanistica-cittadina/>.

More than 90 such places have been identified, including important buildings such as the Palazzo Parisi, the Rotonda Pancera and the Palazzo Kalister, as well as large areas such as the former refugee camp in Padriciano or Piazzale Greta. These abandoned spaces cover a total of more than 850,000 square metres. D'Ambrosi is analysing the causes of the vacancies and developing proposals for reactivating these sites in collaboration with the local population.<sup>6</sup>

The following part of this thesis presents a collective investigation of Trieste through a series of urban walks, so-called "passeggiata urbana." These explorations offer a comprehensive overview of the city's historical, urban, and social development, providing insight into its evolution and current condition. By examining its architectural heritage and the key forces that have shaped its urban landscape, this section seeks to capture the essence of Trieste.



Fig. 2 | Trieste from above

6 I.Rossi, A. L. Govoni, D.Legovini  
R.Dambrosi, "Buchi Neri – Indagine  
Sui Luoghi Incompiuti o Abbandonati  
Della Città Di Trieste" (Trieste: Un'altra  
città-portovecchioimpressacollettiva,  
February 18, 2020).

*"Ho attraversato tutta la città.  
Poi ho salita un'erta,  
popolosa in principio, in là deserta,  
chiusa da un muricciolo:  
un cantuccio in cui solo  
siedo; e mi pare che dove esso termina  
termini la città.*

*Trieste ha una scontrosa  
grazia. Se piace,  
è come un ragazzaccio aspro e vorace,  
con gli occhi azzurri e mani troppo grandi  
per regalare un fiore;  
come un amore  
con gelosia.  
Da quest'erta ogni chiesa, ogni sua via  
scopro, se mena all'ingombrata spiaggia,  
o alla collina cui, sulla sassosa  
cima, una casa, l'ultima, s'aggrappa.  
Intorno  
circola ad ogni cosa  
un'aria strana, un'aria tormentosa,  
l'aria natia.*

*La mia città che in ogni parte è viva,  
ha il cantuccio a me fatto, alla mia vita  
pensosa e schiva."*<sup>7</sup>

*"Then I climbed a steep slope,  
crowded at first, deserted further up,  
closed by a low wall:  
a nook where I sit  
alone; and it seems to me that where it ends  
the town ends too.*

*Trieste has a surly  
grace. If one likes it,  
it is like a rascal, harsh and  
voracious,  
with blue eyes and hands too big  
to offer a flower;  
like a love  
with jealousy.  
Up from this slope every church, any street  
I discover, whether it takes to the huddled beach,  
or to the hill where, onto the rocky  
top, a house, the last one, clings.  
All around  
circles all things  
a strange air, a tormented air,  
the native air.*

*My town that is in every of its part alive,  
has a nook made just for me and my life,  
pensive and reserved."*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Saba Umberto, Trieste. in Trieste e una donna. 1910-12 in Il Canzoniere. Einaudi tascabili. Torino. 2004. 79.





- ① Walk through the Borgo Medievale
- ② Walk through the Borgo Teresiano
- ③ Walk through the Borgo Giuseppino
- ④ Walk through the Periphery



# ARRIVING, THE IMAGE OF A CITY

Jakob Traxler

There are various ways to get to Trieste: via bus, train, or car. Upon arriving, the view of a city unfolds, characterised by its special geographical position. Wedged between the Karst plateau and the Adriatic Sea, Trieste stretches amphitheatrical from the harbour up to the hills, with the various districts reflecting the diverse and historical development of the city. The city is located in the northernmost point of the Adriatic Sea, the Gulf of Trieste, close after the border of Slovenia and is part of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region.

The Gulf of Trieste covers around 20-25 km<sup>2</sup> from Grado to Piran and reaches a maximum depth of 25 m. The shallow and semi-enclosed basin has a notable and important influence for the region. It causes significant variations in temperature, salinity and the associated water density.<sup>8</sup> In Trieste in particular, this leads to frequent outbreaks of the katabatic north-easterly to easterly wind, the so-called Bora or Burj in Slovenian. The Bora is a dominant meteorological phenomenon, especially during winter, where it induces coastal upwelling and intense air-sea heat fluxes. It typically persists for two to five days, with wind speeds reaching up to 100-120 km/h. The Scirocco, a southeasterly wind originating from the sea, is the second most prevalent wind, though considerably less intense. It is usually associated with rainfall. The alternating presence of these winds defines the region's winter climate.

Looking up the hill, behind the city of Trieste, a unique landform emerges: the Trieste Karst, a limestone plateau known for its weathered landscapes. This rough terrain is defined by sinkholes, caves, and underground rivers, caused by the slow erosion of limestone. Because of its transitional nature between the Mediterranean and continental climates, the karst region provides a unique climatic feature to Trieste. The draughty soil and continuous dry breezes keep humidity at a low of 65%.

The average yearly temperature is 12.6 °C. Winter is harsh and persistent, summer starts suddenly after a short and stormy spring, is quite hot and often extends into autumn. These climatic peculiarities are clearly visible in the cityscape.<sup>9,10</sup>

Descending the hill and heading towards the centre, the view of the city gradually clarifies. The diversity of Trieste's neighbourhoods underlines the city's layered and complex history. The districts tell the stories of the different cultures and empires that shaped it over the years. The Borgo Medievale, the oldest quarter, has kept its medieval urban fabric, while Borgo Teresiano and Borgo Giuseppino, shaped by Habsburg influence, exhibit neoclassical architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries. Borgo Franceschino, centred around Piazza Oberdan, showcases a blend of historical and modern elements. Further out, in the periphery, different typologies and neighbourhoods characterise the cityscape.

Continuing the way, the old harbour, 'Porto Vecchio', is not to be missed going through the city. Empty and derelict for years, this large area, once a vibrant centre of trade, is now a symbol for the development of the city. It symbolises the demographic development of the city, the steady decline in population since the middle of the 20th century due to the loss of its strategic importance and economic role after the Second World War. Here, the endless warehouses and abandoned buildings are shut down, as they are frequently brought up in discussions about the challenges of a shrinking city.

However, it is not only the much-discussed historic harbour that illustrates this quiet decline. Walking through Trieste's streets, frequently abandoned buildings come across: old palazzi, former factories, and empty residential buildings, witnesses to a bygone era. These forgotten spots, scattered around Trieste, also tell the story of a city.

8 F. Raicich and F. Crisciani, "Time Variability of Atmospheric and Marine Parameters over the Adriatic Region," vol. 22, 1999.

9 Livio Poldini, "ÜBERSICHT ÜBER DIE VEGETATION DES KARSTES VON TRIEST UND GORZ (NO-ITALIEN)," 1980.

10 "Klima Trieste Daten Und Graphen Zum Klima Und Wetter in Trieste," accessed September 19, 2024, <https://de.climate-data.org/europa/italien/friaul-julisch-venetien/triest-1130>.

# BORGO MEDIEVALE

Marcin Jatczak



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Walk through the Borgo Medievale

Standing on the hill of 'San Giusto' – the place of Trieste's origin, the historical past and former importance of the city are clearly legible. The architectural ensemble, constructed on its top, represents a true mosaic of different periods – roman ruins, monumental medieval cathedral and fortress walls, dominating over the urban landscape.. Although visible traces of the presence of initial creators have not survived until today, this area has been inhabited long before the Romans arrived.<sup>11</sup> Located on the hill settlement lived from maritime trade, profiting from its access to the Adriatic Sea. To keep control over the Gulf, the inhabitants raised a castle, called 'Castelliere', which was situated at the same place as the today existing fortress. It endured until the roman times, when the landscape of the colony changed significantly.

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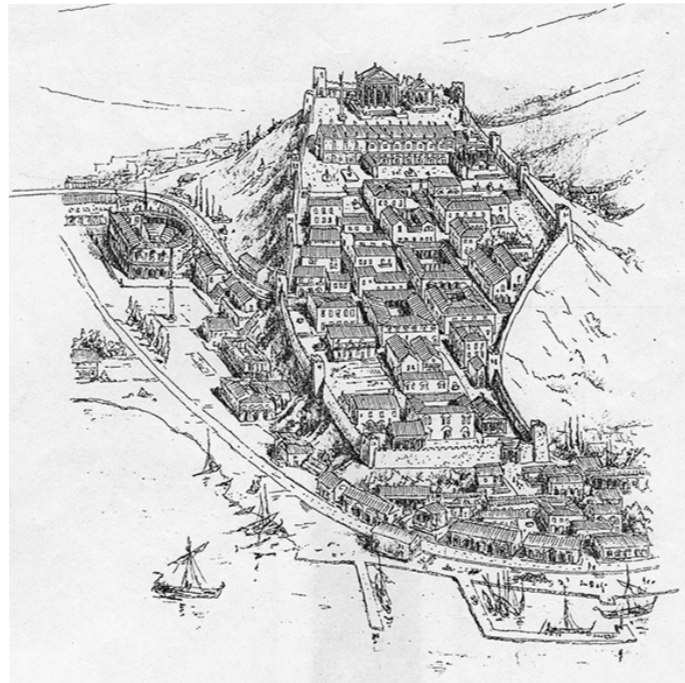
## IL FORO

Located throughout the whole city centre remains witness of the Roman presence. On the hill, the few preserved pieces of the walls and columns mark the floor plan of the ancient forum – antique most important political and social public space. One might think, the roman remains were always a part of the landscape of 'San Giusto'. However, they have been excavated barely 100 years ago, on behalf of the fascist authorities and partially reconstructed with bricks to make them easier recognisable as such. This act was predominantly a part of Italian propaganda to underline Trieste's roman heritage and in consequence, 'justify' its belonging to Italian State. For the same reason, after the excavations, directly next to it, was placed the monumental statue to the Fallen Soldiers of Trieste during the 'liberation war' against Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>12</sup>

11 Istituto regionale per la storia della Resistenza e dell'Età Contemporanea nel Friuli Venezia Giulia 'Trieste. Città', <https://www.regionestoriafvg.eu/tematiche/tema/414/trieste>.

12 Comune di Trieste, Discover Trieste, 'Hügel San Giusto', <https://www.discover-trieste.it/entdecke/wilkommen-in-trieste/we-are-trieste/hugel-san-giusto>.





## CASTELLO DI SAN GIUSTO

Not as old, but how characteristic for the city landscape is the 'Castello di San Giusto'. It's a common work of previous rivals for hegemony on this territory – Venetians and Habsburgs. Firstly, at the end of 14th century, the Habsburgs constructed a fortified tower, simultaneously, as a residence and for control and protection of the city. During a conflict in the 16th century, Venetians developed an extension project to create a fortress. They managed to finish only one tower, before they had to retreat from the city. Nevertheless, the construction of further two towers and fortifications was continued under the Austrian rule. In this state, the building survived up to the present moment.<sup>13</sup>

## CATHEDRAL SAN GIUSTO

The cathedral of San Giusto completes the landscape of monuments of the hill. Formerly serving the ancient polytheistic cult, today it's the most important Christian temple of Trieste. The building presents itself as an architectural patchwork. The outer walls are an assembly of stones from different ages. Beginning with the propylon columns of the roman temple, that are included in the campanile build in 3rd and 4th century, built by the Romans. The church's building itself is a compound of two independent medieval structures, united in the late Middle Ages.<sup>14</sup>

Right in front of the cathedral a wide stair leads towards rest of the 'Città vecchia' and the harbour. Following the steep via della Cattedrale, the landscape changes gradually. The far view over the red tile roofs, green hills and the blue sea turns into a narrow and crooked urban street. At the end of the way, at a square, there is another roman relic embed partially in the wall of a house - the Arch of Riccardo, marking the former entry to a sanctuary of 'Magna Mater'.<sup>15</sup> This little polygonal square is usually filled with people eating during the day, or enjoying a drink during the night.

13 Civico Museo del Castello di San Giusto-Armeria, 'Castello di San Giusto' - visit brochure.

14 SOCIETA FRIULANA DI ARCHEOLOGIA, 'TRIESTE. La Basilica di San Giusto', <https://www.archeocartafvg.it/portfolio-articoli/trieste-la-basilica-di-san-giusto/>, 2018.

15 SOCIETA FRIULANA DI ARCHEOLOGIA, 'TRIESTE. Arco di Riccardo', <https://www.archeocartafvg.it/portfolio-articoli/trieste-arco-di-riccardo/>, 2014.



Fig. 3 | Trieste Antica  
Fig. 4 | Teatro Romano

Only few steps behind the arch, on the corner of Piazza del Barbacan and via Felice Venezian, there is a building distinguishing itself from other by the form and detail. A neoclassical palace, that resembles through its rounded corner and ionic columns, a roman temple. The designed by Matteo Pertsch and named after its founder 'Rotonda Pancera' hides on the inside rich and unique for the city interiors, decorated with elaborate frescoes.<sup>16</sup> But there is no one, that inhabits this urban palace. All windows are shuttered, it seems to stand abandoned since many years. The plaster has fallen off from the façades. The downpipe at the wall is broken and the running down water has left moss and mould traces. On the balcony in the first floor, the nature has inhabited the façade, manifesting it with grass growing on stone balustrade.

Going down via delle Mura and passing through an arch, unexpectedly, a jungle appears. An wild urban jungle fills the space of the square. Trees, ivy and voluminous bushes emerge, dominating the view. But there is no entry to this green space in the dense city centre. It's enclosed by a high, falling apart wall, that used to be a façade of a house, viewed the bricked up window and door openings. With the vegetation growing and putting pressure on the walls, it seems to be only a question of time, before it degrades entirely and opens up.

## TEATRO ROMANO AND CASA DEL FASCIO

The via del Teatro Romano being today in the middle of the city centre, used to be at the sea border. Throughout the centuries, the coast line has moved around 250m, revealing new ground. In this street, as the name indicates, stand the ruins of the Roman theatre. Initially, facing the sea, the rounded and and inclined cavea was built in the hill of 'San Giusto'.<sup>17</sup> On the other side, the scaenae frons was giving a scenographic background for the plays. In the course of time, the meaning of this, once culturally crucial, structure has been forgotten, and step by step, new housings have covered the roman remains. First, in the 19th century the theatre was identified by an Austro-Hungarian architect Pietro Nobile. However, the excavation and reconstruction works were initiated only in the 20th century by the fascists as part of the urban renewal,

16 Comune di Trieste, Catalogo dei Beni Culturali 'Fabbricato di Via Venezian 27, Rotonda Pancera', [https://beniculturali.comune.trieste.it/architettura/?s\\_id=366320](https://beniculturali.comune.trieste.it/architettura/?s_id=366320), 2005.

17 IRSREC FVG, 'Trieste. Città', <https://www.regionestoriafvg.eu/tematiche/tema/414/trieste>.

including demolitions of all the housings in this area.<sup>18</sup> Streets, so crooked and narrow, that only pedestrians could pass vanished and gave place to unused reconstructed ruins, that can be seen only from behind a fence. Just in front of the theatre stands the building of 'Palazzo della Questura' - massive volume from fascist time, in its architectonic principles, looking similar to the 'Castello di San Giusto'.

Originally, it housed the local headquarter of the Mussolini's party and was an architectonic and political statement in the city centre with cosmopolitan tradition.<sup>19</sup> Since the Middle Ages in these area lived the Jewish community, until the project of reorganisation of the 'Città vecchia' implied the removal of the whole Jewish quarter and replacing it with new constructions, representing the dominance of fascist Italy over the city.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, due to the lack of economic resources and change of power, the masterplan could not be realised entirely.

The 'borgo medievale' may be described as a complex of contradictions. On one hand, the long and continuous architectural activity in the Trieste's old town presents itself in an organic continuity of the urban development, but on the other hand, the vast interventions in the fascist period interrupt this picture and introduce contrasts, that are not easy to comprehend in this urban context, but at the same time these contradictions are undeniable part of Trieste's cultural identity.

18 SOCIETÀ FRIULANA DI ARCHEOLOGIA 'Trieste. Teatro Romano', <https://www.archeocartafvg.it/portfolio-articoli/trieste-teatro-romano-2/>, 2017.

19 PromoTurismoFVG, 'Palazzo della Questura', <https://www.turismoFVG.it/it/65422/palazzo-della-questura>.

20 Alessandra Marin, 'PROGETTI, CITTÀ, IDENTITÀ: SPAZI URBANI E IDEOLOGIE NAZIONALI A TRIESTE TRA XIX E XX SECOLO', 2012, p. 6-9.



# BORGO TERESIANO

Liselotte Bilak

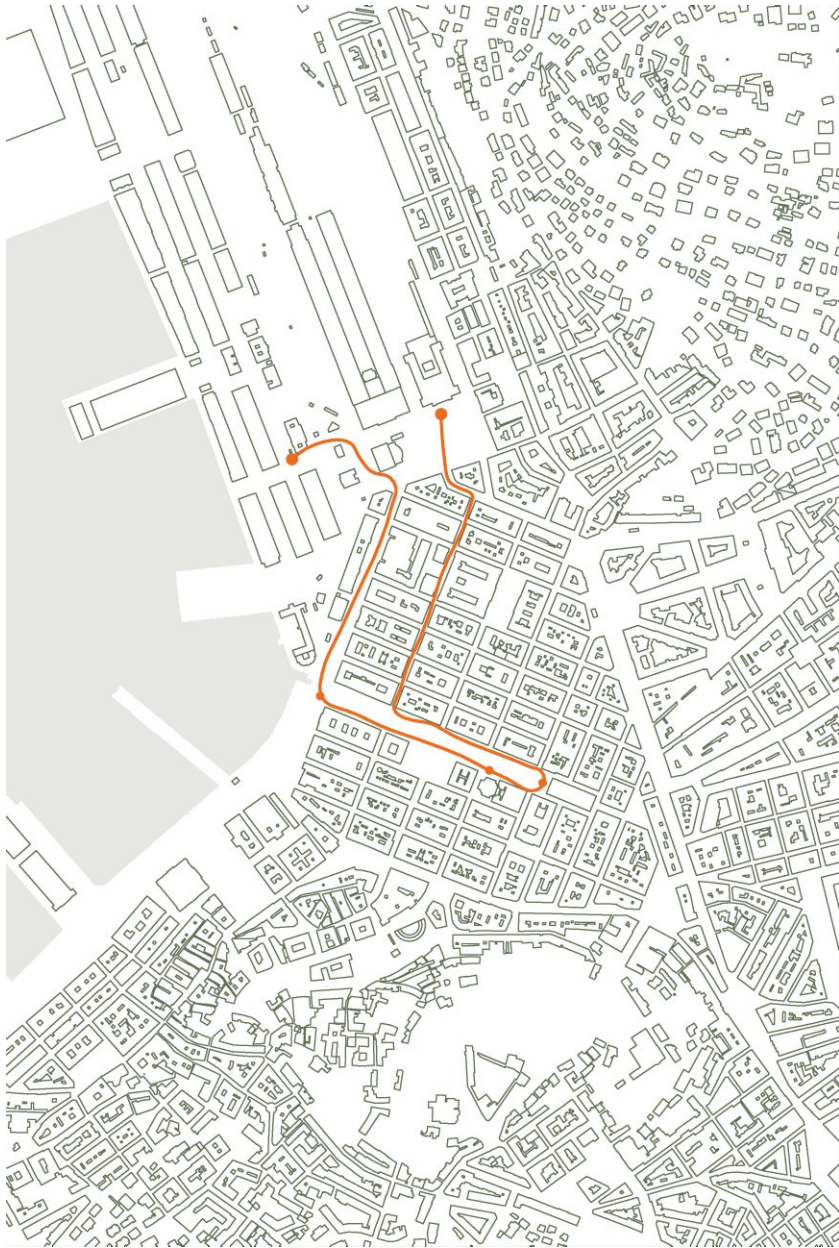
## TRIESTE CENTRALE

After a journey of two hours, the train arrives in Trieste Centrale from Venice. The imposing-looking but manageable station concourse through which one reaches the station exit acts as a buffer zone between the train and the city. It was designed by the German-Austrian architect and construction director of the Südbahn-Gesellschaft, Wilhelm von Flattich, and opened on 19 June 1878.<sup>21</sup>

In 1857, the first train arrived in Trieste at a provisional railway station. However, the beautiful landscape visible from the window upon arrival posed challenges during the construction of the railway network. Extensive interventions in the topography were necessary.

As the city is encircled between the sea and the mountains, the station buildings and parts of the railway network had to be built on a total of 145,000m3 of sea bed. This caused problems during the foundation work for the buildings. In addition, parts of the mountain on the opposite side of the sea were removed to enable a rail network into the city, and torrents flowing from the mountains towards the sea were channelled into the sea in widely arched canals under the station.<sup>22</sup>

The railway station as built urban history, as the starting and final destination of the southern railway line between Vienna and Trieste. The line ran through the crown lands of Styria, Carniola and the coastal region, opening up areas that had previously been off the main transport routes.<sup>23</sup> The completion of the southern railway led to the establishment of a significant trade route to the Orient, while also boosting tourism. This marked the rise of the ‚Austrian Riviera‘.<sup>24</sup> Initially known as



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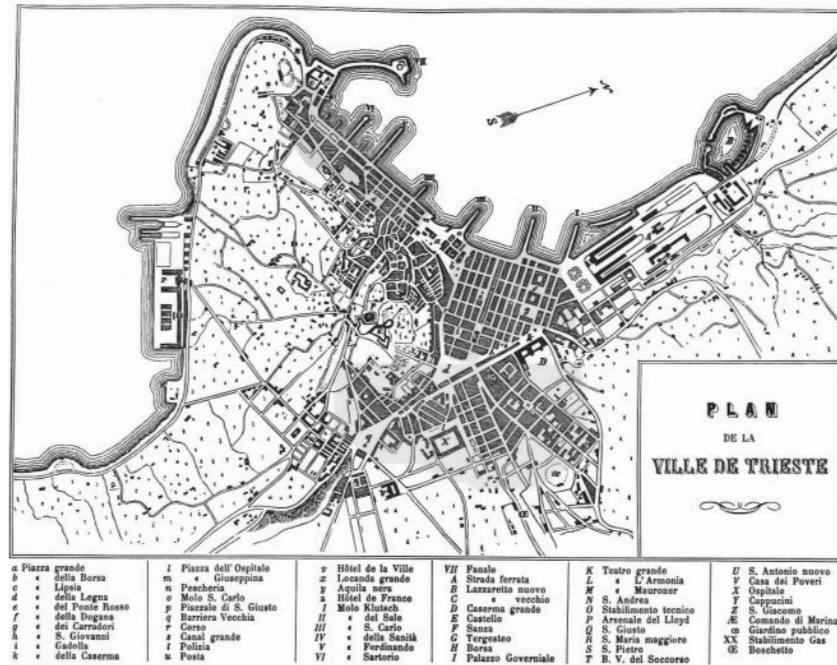
Walk through the Borgo Teresiano

21 [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahnhof\\_Trieste\\_Centrale](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahnhof_Trieste_Centrale) (21.09.2024).

22 Kerstin Ogris, Der Bahnhof der Südbahn in Triest - Teil 1, <https://www.suedbahnmuseum.at/at/blog/der-bahnhof-der-suedbahn-triest> (21.09.2024).

23 [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahnstrecke\\_Spielfeld-Stra%C3%9F%E2%80%93Trieste\\_Centrale](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahnstrecke_Spielfeld-Stra%C3%9F%E2%80%93Trieste_Centrale) (20.09.2024).

24 Christian Rapp, Nadia Rapp-Wimberger, Astrid Göttche, Alexandra Hönigmann-Tempelmayr, Österreichische Riviera, <https://www.wienmuseum.at/oesterreichische-riviera> (22.09.2024).



34



Fig. 5 | Trieste in 19th Century  
Fig. 6 | Canale Grande

a health resort and vacation spot for Empress Elisabeth of Austria, Trieste evolved into a popular family-friendly tourist destination.<sup>25</sup>

The influence of Trieste's former affiliation to the Austro-Hungarian Empire is still noticeable as walking through the station concourse and into the open air. The square in front of the station is marked by grand, Wilhelminian-style buildings, giving it a Viennese character. It's no wonder Italians call the city 'il piccolo Vienna' (the little Vienna). Although the reality is completely different. Some of the buildings are surrounded by construction scaffolding and draped in billowing sheeting, while others appear abandoned and uninhabited.

## BORGO TERESIANO

It is the border to Borgo Teresiano, also known as città nuova. This 'new city quarter' also dates back to the rule and urban planning of the Habsburgs. As early as 1382, Trieste was incorporated into the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and remained under Habsburg rule until its fall.<sup>26</sup> In 1719, Emperor Charles IV declared Trieste a free port and ordered the construction of a naval harbour in 1734. This led to a significant economic boom, causing the city to expand and the population to increase. Emperor Charles' daughter, Maria Theresa, took further steps by expropriating the salt fields outside the old city walls and initiating the construction of a new city district to serve as a commercial centre. However, the construction of this new district was delayed due to a shortage of labour for draining the newly dedicated fields and shore areas.

35

Building commissions laid down precise guidelines for newly constructed buildings, which defined two building types: Residential and commercial buildings. The clients, who were mostly wealthy merchants, commissioned renowned artists and architects to design their buildings.<sup>27</sup> The splendidly designed facades of the palaces catch the eye as one walks towards the city centre. Some of the window openings on the buildings are boarded up with wooden slats, indicating vacancy. This emptiness is noticeable not only near the train station but also in the centre of the Teresian borough.

25 Regio Augsburg Tourismus GmbH, Triest, <https://www.sisi-strasse.info/de/triest.html> (21.09.2014).

26 [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichsunmittelbare\\_Stadt\\_Triest\\_und\\_ihr\\_Gebiet](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichsunmittelbare_Stadt_Triest_und_ihr_Gebiet) (21.09.2024).

27 [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borgo\\_Teresiano](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borgo_Teresiano) (20.09.2024).



Comparing the population figures of the last few centuries, this does not seem surprising. Trieste's population has been shrinking continuously since the 1960s. Back then, the population was just under 280.000,<sup>28</sup> but today the city only has 228.000 inhabitants.<sup>29</sup>

Realising the strictly orthogonal street network of the 'new city' with every step one takes, as every alley one walks down runs in a straight line of sight to the next intersection. In contrast to Vienna, but also to the 'old town' in Trieste, where it can often happen getting lost in the narrow, winding alleyways, here one is having no problems finding the way. Getting the feeling that everything follows a strictly organised, gridded logic. At the end of an alley, a canal is crossing. It is the Canale Grande. A visible aisle between the city and the sea. From here, goods were transported directly from the harbour to the city.<sup>30</sup> Whereas in the 18th century, merchants and traders bustled about in the lively market, this is now a canal promenade characterised by bars, cafés and restaurants. Tourists and locals alike linger over an aperitivo in the outdoor cafés.

However, the canal as a connection between the city and the sea also marks two defining parts of the new city with its start and end points. If one looks towards the end of the canal, towards Piazza Sant'Antonio Nuovo, as the name suggests, the imposing 'Sant Antonio Nuovo'<sup>31</sup> church catches the eye. Built by the Ticino architect Pietro Nobile, it was consecrated in 1842 and is the largest Catholic church in Trieste. Built in the neoclassical style, the interior contains numerous paintings by Venetian painters of the 18th and 19th centuries.

### BUILT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The fact that Trieste, then as now, was characterised by a multitude of different cultures can also be seen in the churches of various religions. With Trieste's appointment as a free harbour, a large number of traders from Herzegovina, Bosnia, Montenegro and Dalmatia, as well as Greece, also arrived in the city.<sup>32</sup>

28 [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triest#Demographische\\_Entwicklung](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triest#Demographische_Entwicklung) (20.09.2024).

29 Stand 1.1.2024, [https://www.citypopulation.de/de/italy/admin/friuli\\_venezia\\_giulia/032\\_\\_trieste/](https://www.citypopulation.de/de/italy/admin/friuli_venezia_giulia/032__trieste/) (20.09.2024).

30 Borgo Teresiano s.r.l., <http://www.palazzoteresiano.com/location/?lang=it> (21.09.2024).

31 [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sant%E2%80%99Antonio\\_Taumaturgo](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sant%E2%80%99Antonio_Taumaturgo) (22.09.2024).

32 Comunità Religiosa Serbo Ortodossa, <http://www.comunitaserba.org/comunita/> (22.09.2024).

Maria Theresa's liberal attitude towards the freedom to practise religion prompted the various religious communities to build their own places of worship in the newly established quarter.<sup>33</sup>

The Serbian Orthodox church of San Spiridione the Miracle Worker is located just a block away from the Catholic church. It was built in 1869 by the Trieste engineer Pietro Palese, with decorative elements executed by the Milanese Antonio Caremmi. The intention was to construct a building inspired by Byzantine architecture, representing monumentality and splendour. The exterior of the temple was covered with stones from the quarries of Santa Croce in the Karst and Brioni in Istria, while the interior is adorned with mosaics and frescoes. The mosaics and frescoes are depicted in large formats, and the gold of the mosaic surfaces is reproduced in the paintings.<sup>34</sup> Due to differences in customs and languages, the Serbian and Greek religions, which initially worshipped together, separated in 1770. In 1784, the construction of the 'San Nicolò and the Holy Trinity' temple of the Greek Orthodox religious community began, which is located not far from the canal, directly on the promenade.<sup>35</sup>

### PORTO VECCHIO

Looking to the starting point of the canal, the point where the waterway runs into the sea, one can see the old harbour of Trieste for the first time. Although parts of the Porto Vecchio could already be seen from the train, the enormous size of the area and the ruins, some of which are now in ruins, are only now becoming apparent due to the current location and the line of sight.

Countless buildings, built between 1860 and the beginning of the 20th century,<sup>36</sup> can be found on the site directly next to the railway station, the arrival point for the journey to Trieste. After the completion of the southern railway, the city was developed into a transit port, and in 1861 the expansion of the harbour as the most important Austrian seaport, the Pun-to Franco, began.

33 Borgo Teresiano s.r.l., <http://www.palazzoteresiano.com/location/?lang=it> (21.09.2024).

34 Comunità Religiosa Serbo Ortodossa, <http://www.comunitaserba.org/comunita/> (22.09.2024).

35 Comunità Greco Orientale di Trieste, Chi siamo?, [http://www.comgrecoTrieste.it/vw\\_Page.php?tp=W](http://www.comgrecoTrieste.it/vw_Page.php?tp=W) (22.09.2024).

36 AZW, Porto Vecchio, [https://past.azw.at/Sonntags\\_Triest\\_Gangart/Trieste/Porto.html](https://past.azw.at/Sonntags_Triest_Gangart/Trieste/Porto.html) (21.09.2024).

The site consisted of storage facilities, functional buildings, warehouses, hanger-like transit sheds, office buildings, a canteen and buildings for customs clearance, as well as a hydrodynamic power station.<sup>37</sup>

Looking closer at the individual buildings, it's not easy at first. Walls, barriers, and a multitude of car parks and cars that now use parts of the former harbour area initially block the way. When arriving between parked coaches and wasteland, the sight of the dilapidated buildings and ruins gives the feeling of being in a ghost town. Some of the balconies of the administrative buildings are adorned with scattered items of clothing and food packaging.

The decline of the harbour began with the loss of Austria's connection to Trieste after the First World War. With the reunification of Italy in 1918, the border town was finally isolated due to its peripheral location and lost its economic importance.<sup>38</sup> Due to the expansion of the new harbour in the south of the city, the Porto Nuovo, the old harbour was increasingly relocated and finally ceased operations in 1983.<sup>39</sup> Although a large number of competitions and reutilisation concepts have been dedicated to the site in recent years, none of them has been realised.

Shouts from a distance attract attention. It is a group of young men on the roof of one of the old silos. They are trying to remove wooden slats from the roof to hand them to their colleagues on the ground, who are using the material as firewood. It is an image that will remain etched in the memory. Although the issue has been published in newspapers and television reports for some time, it is only from this perspective that now realising the extent of what is happening. Thousands of migrants are stranded every year in Trieste, the end point of the Balkan route. Too few facilities, but also no clear strategies on the part of the city government for the reception or integration of these refugees, force those arriving to spend the night in the old silos of the railway station and be left to their own devices.

37 Dirk Schubert, Trieste Porto Vecchio. Neue Hoffnung für Erhalt und Umgestaltung? In: RaumPlanung 176 / 5 (2014) 61-62.

38 Maria von Hartmann, No se pol? Der Porto Franco Vecchio. In: Bauwelt 4 (2007) 7.

39 AZW, Porto Vecchio, [https://past.azw.at/Sonntags\\_Triest\\_Gvvvvvangart/Trieste/Porto.html](https://past.azw.at/Sonntags_Triest_Gvvvvvangart/Trieste/Porto.html) (21.09.2024).



Fig. 7 | Porto Vecchio

Fig. 8 | Refugee Camp in Silos



# BORGO GIUSEPPINO

Keti Beka



Leaving the Piazza Unita d'Italia means leaving the Teresiano district and entering Borgo Giuseppino. Its name comes from Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg-Lorraine, the son of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, who continued the legacy that was initiated by his mother in Trieste. Like the previous one, this area follows a fixed grid system with the planning and expertise of the architect Domenico Corti, a street named in his honour in the neighbourhood.<sup>40</sup>

Compared to the Teresiano district, the grid is stretched more into longitudinal rectangles than a fixed blocks-grid. It mainly consists of residential buildings overlooking the seafront in two rows along two parallel streets: Riva Grumula and Via del Lazzaretto, the latter also mentioned by Umberto Saba in one of his poems:

„There is a road in Trieste called the Lazzaretto Vecchio that I used to walk on long days of despair“

“C'è a Trieste una via dove mi specchio nei lunghi giorni di chiusa tristezza; si chiama Via del Lazzaretto Vecchio.”<sup>41</sup>

Umberto Saba

<sup>40</sup> Zubini, F. (2002). Borgo Giuseppino.

<sup>41</sup> Saba, U. (2019). Trieste, Tre Vie. Mimesis.

## CAVANA DISTRICT - OLD TOWN

The route continues from the piazza down Via di Cavana, where the urban noise gradually diminishes. This is where the small old city buildings meet the bigger Giuseppino blocks. The narrow street is lined with colourful facades, featuring a variety of pastel yellows, deep ochres, and soft terracottas, all of which have been weathered over time but remain in good condition. Above, shutters are open, allowing light to enter, and from the upper floors of the old buildings, one can hear the soft clatter of dishes or see laundry flapping in the wind.

The historic Cavana district is now a thriving commercial hub, with a vibrant local community and a rich cultural heritage. Many popular streets are lined with bars and cafés, which extend onto the pavement and are occupied by locals sipping espresso and going about their day. The narrow alleyways are characterised by their winding routes and cobbled surfaces, creating an ambience conducive to a slower pace and offering insight into Trieste's maritime history. Here and there, abandoned houses falling apart and being taken back from nature, await their end by demolition.

Following along Via della Pescheria, where once the centre of the city's fish market was - hence the name, it is now filled with the sounds of conversation, laughter, cutlery and the steady rhythm of Trieste's daily routine filling the air.

Another small square takes place in between the blocks, Piazza Attilio Hortis, where the city noise appears to exhale. A market is held here each morning, offering fresh produce from local farmers, and still, the square is less populated than the surrounding streets. It helps that it is lined with tall trees that sway gently in the breeze, casting long shadows against the pale stone buildings.

## PIAZZA VENEZIA

A small, intimate square follows - Piazza Venezia, also known as Piazza Giuseppino, sharing the Emperor's name together with the Pier in front of it. The mild breeze, carrying the salty

aroma of the sea and the sounds of gulls overhead, lightly shakes the heads of the surrounding trees of the piazza. While the gaze is lost on the blue water, the gulls try to steal the lunch of the bystanders out of their hands, sometimes successfully.

Highlighting the Habsburg presence, in the middle of the square, a statue of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico from 1875, (brother of Franz-Joseph of Austria-Hungary) was built to commemorate him, dressed in his uniform as an Austrian fleet Admiral with his arm stretched into the direction of the sea and his former castle, Miramare.<sup>42</sup> The water stretches out behind his arm and various white sailboats bob gently in the harbour.

Some fishermen are fixing their nets while residents stroll along the harbour, as time seems to stand still in the warm spring sun.

## MUSEO REVOLTELLA

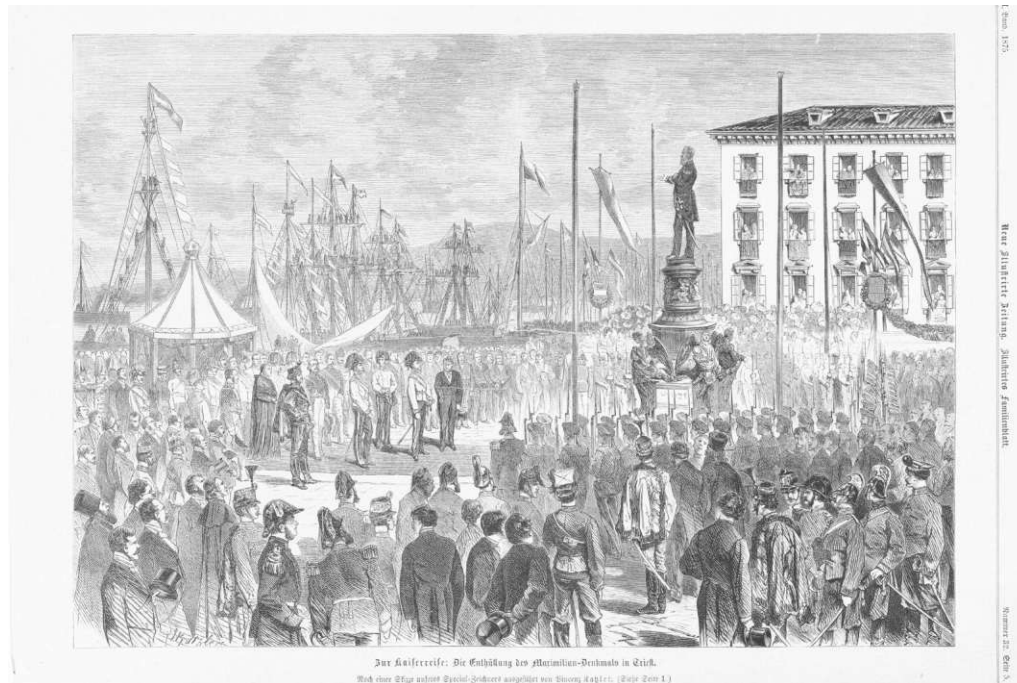
In the afternoon, the sun casts a soft glow over the neoclassical facade of the Museo Revoltella, illuminating it with a subtle radiance. This monument belonged to Baron Pasquale Revoltella, who after his death left his house and all the possessions in it to the Municipality of Trieste with the condition of making them accessible to the public, which later became one of the most prestigious modern art galleries in the country.<sup>43</sup>

The museum is made up of three buildings from the second half of the nineteenth century, namely the Palazzo Revoltella by architect Hitzig, the Palazzo Brunner, and the modest Palazzo Basevi.

The architect Carlo Scarpa was given authorisation for renovating the museum in 1963. The Brunner underwent extensive measures, whilst the Revoltella was almost entirely saved and is also maintained in the museum as a memory of the Baron Revoltella and Pinakothek of the 19th century. A reinforced concrete skeleton was inserted into the empty shell, highlighting it and turning it into an ornament that shielded the inside (which was lined with stone walls) from the outside. In order to establish a formal distinction and a substantial comparison with the light-filled entrance situation from the

42 MisterKappa.it. (2024, March 21). MisterKappa: ieri e oggi - Il borgo Giuseppino <https://web.archive.org/web/20080526225004/http://www.misterkappa.it/storio03.html>.

43 Revoltella Museum. (2023, November 19). Architectuul. Retrieved October 1, 2024, from <https://architectuul.com/architecture/revoltella-museum>.



Der Kaiserreich: Die Enthüllung des Maximilian-Denkmales in Triest.  
Nach einer Skizze von Spezial-Gezeichnet ausgeführt von Giuseppe Kappeler. (Seite 201 1.)

44



Fig. 9 | The unveiling of the Maximilian monument in Trieste, 1875

Fig. 10 | Coastal Strip

roof, Scarpa employs the Palazzo Revoltella as the motif of the inner courtyard for the vertical orientation. This space and the theatre on the ground floor are those parts of the museum which were most obviously realised in the context of Scarpa's planning.<sup>44</sup>

## COASTAL STRIP

Josefovstadt (as it was known in the Austrian-Hungary Empire) - or Borgo Giuseppino - was broken down into two areas parallel to one another: the internal zone - with more representative and residential buildings; and the coastal strip - composed of a linear chain of buildings that were more linked to the port activity.<sup>45</sup>

The previous residential villas and palaces belonging to the city's wealthy residents have been transformed due to its advantageous location on the seafront. It now consists mostly of hotels, offices and various shops, which have been constructed on the site of the former residences.

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In the direction of the hilly area situated farthest from the sea, there were several villas belonging to the wealthiest families back then. These Villas are characterised by a simple and dry style, which were not designed as seasonal vacation spots; rather, they were intended for use as Sunday retreats, which is why they were located near the city centre.<sup>46</sup>

## SACHETTA

Continuing at the end of one of the two parallel roads to the shorelines, and exiting the Borgo Giuseppino, the area remains predominantly residential, with newer buildings from different decades situated at the foot of Sant'Andrea Hill. Despite the variety of architectural styles, almost every building features a long balcony, a typical characteristic of a warmer climate with more generous weather conditions.

44 Revoltella Museum. (2023, November 19). Architectuul. Retrieved October 1, 2024, from <https://architectuul.com/architecture/revoltella-museum>.

45 Trieste nell'800. (2016, April 7). MOVIO. <https://movio.beniculturali.it/pmfvg/viverelottocentoatrieste/it/9/introduzione>.

46 MisterKappa.it. (2024, March 21). MisterKappa: Ieri e oggi - Il borgo Giuseppino <https://web.archive.org/web/20080526225004/http://www.misterkappa.it/storie03.html>.



There is a twenty-plus-storey building, difficult to miss as it's one of the tallest in the neighbourhood, extending its neck as if reaching for the sea, almost like making a statement for the area.

While the waterfront is visible from the balconies, direct access to the beach within the city is highly restricted (if one excludes the possibility of jumping headfirst from the pier into the sailing water). The seashore extends from the Old Port to the numerous piers, which accommodate a multitude of sailing vessels. Still, only a narrow strip of beach remains to the public throughout the entire area of the inner city. On the other side of the beach strip, the therapeutic swimming pool "Aquamarina" was previously in operation. However, it was subsequently abandoned and demolished, making way for new construction and a significant change to the appearance of the neighbourhood with the name of Sachetta.<sup>47</sup>

## CAMPO MARZIO

On the other side of the street lies a former industrial area with the Campo Marzio Station. This station was the second most important railway station in Trieste, previously known as Trieste Sant'Andrea, commenced operations as the terminus of the railway Opicina and was linked to the Central Station via a dedicated track, the Linea delle Rive. Furthermore, it facilitated connections to Pula and Rovinj. After the First World War, the station was incorporated into the operational framework of the Italian State Railways (FS), subsequently undergoing a renaming to Trieste Campo Marzio. Since 1960, the station has been closed to passenger traffic and is now used for the operation of historical trains.<sup>1</sup> The station also houses the railway museum, which bears the same name. Some of the wings are currently undergoing renovation, while the northern side has been demolished recently, whereas the rest of the industrial area remains an empty, abandoned space.<sup>48</sup>

47 Al via l'abbattimento della "collassata" ex piscina terapeutica acquamarina in "Sacchetta" a Trieste. (2023, July 24). Comune Di Trieste. <https://www.comune.trieste.it/it/comunicati-stampa-14829/al-via-labbattimento-della-collassata-ex-piscina-terapeutica-acquamarina-in-sacchetta-a-trieste-205433>.

48 Porto Franco. (2005). Autorità Portuale Trieste. [https://web.archive.org/web/20070217172853/http://www.porto.trieste.it/site/sez cms.php?menu\\_id=743278](https://web.archive.org/web/20070217172853/http://www.porto.trieste.it/site/sez cms.php?menu_id=743278).

## NEW PORT

The start of this industrial area leads to the beginning of the New Port, Il Punto Franco Nuovo, also known as the Free Port of Trieste. Starting from the Campo Marzio Area and stretching further south until the Servola neighbourhood, the whole coastline is in service of the port.

The view of white sailing boats has been replaced with that of containers and big yellow cranes operating daily shipments from all over the world.

One of the initial measures implemented by Maria Theresa upon assuming control was to expand the boundaries of the Free Port region to encompass the outskirts of the town, effectively integrating the emporium, the port, the newly established city, and the existing one. As previously mentioned, the enactment of the law of "Editto di Tolleranza" which guaranteed the freedom of worship, the ability to engage in commercial transactions without interference, and the right to possess personal property, attracted a diverse population from various countries and a range of socioeconomic backgrounds.<sup>49</sup>

## SANT'ANDREA

Because of the railway, and the importance of the port, the whole area around Sant'Andrea developed rather quickly. The residential blocks took over the industrial areas, and the remainder of a whole factory quarter is just a forgotten abandoned structure of the Mensa from the famous architect Marcello D'Olivo.

A lot of these blocks, around the neighbourhood, were built to house the railway workers, like the ones opposite the Ricreatorio Edmondo De Amicis, that have now been empty for some time, and for sale as a whole unit. Similar to the Gründerzeit-Viennese ones, these four-to-six-storey buildings had shared bathrooms in the hallways, and laundry in the basement and were divided into one-to-two-room apartments with small kitchens. With fewer renovations made, bathrooms being moved inside the apartments and the ones in the hallways used as storage or laundry rooms for example, the structure

49 Ansa, A. (2017, April 16). Trieste e i 300 anni Maria Teresa d'Asburgo - Friuli Venezia Giulia - Ansa.it. Agenzia ANSA. [https://www.ansa.it/canale\\_viaggi/regione/friuliveneziagiulia/2017/04/15/trieste-e-i-300-anni-maria-teresa-dasburgo\\_f4c12ba5-67f7-421d-bf32-f9fa8e7022c1.html#:~:text=Visto%20il%20grande%20afflusso%20di,tutti%20gli%20abitanti%20di%20Trieste](https://www.ansa.it/canale_viaggi/regione/friuliveneziagiulia/2017/04/15/trieste-e-i-300-anni-maria-teresa-dasburgo_f4c12ba5-67f7-421d-bf32-f9fa8e7022c1.html#:~:text=Visto%20il%20grande%20afflusso%20di,tutti%20gli%20abitanti%20di%20Trieste).

remains the same still to this day. Even the ground floor remains taller and is mainly used for storage or many other functions rather than apartments. In the wealthier blocks, the courtyard hides their private green areas, with high trees casting shadows in the harsh summers, while the others have given up their gardens for more parking space.

Walking further away into the neighbourhood, the typology of the building changes. Now, two three-storey Villas with small gardens in front of them take the place of the blocks. Although the buildings are of different typologies and were constructed at various points in time, the residents exhibit a consistent pace of life.

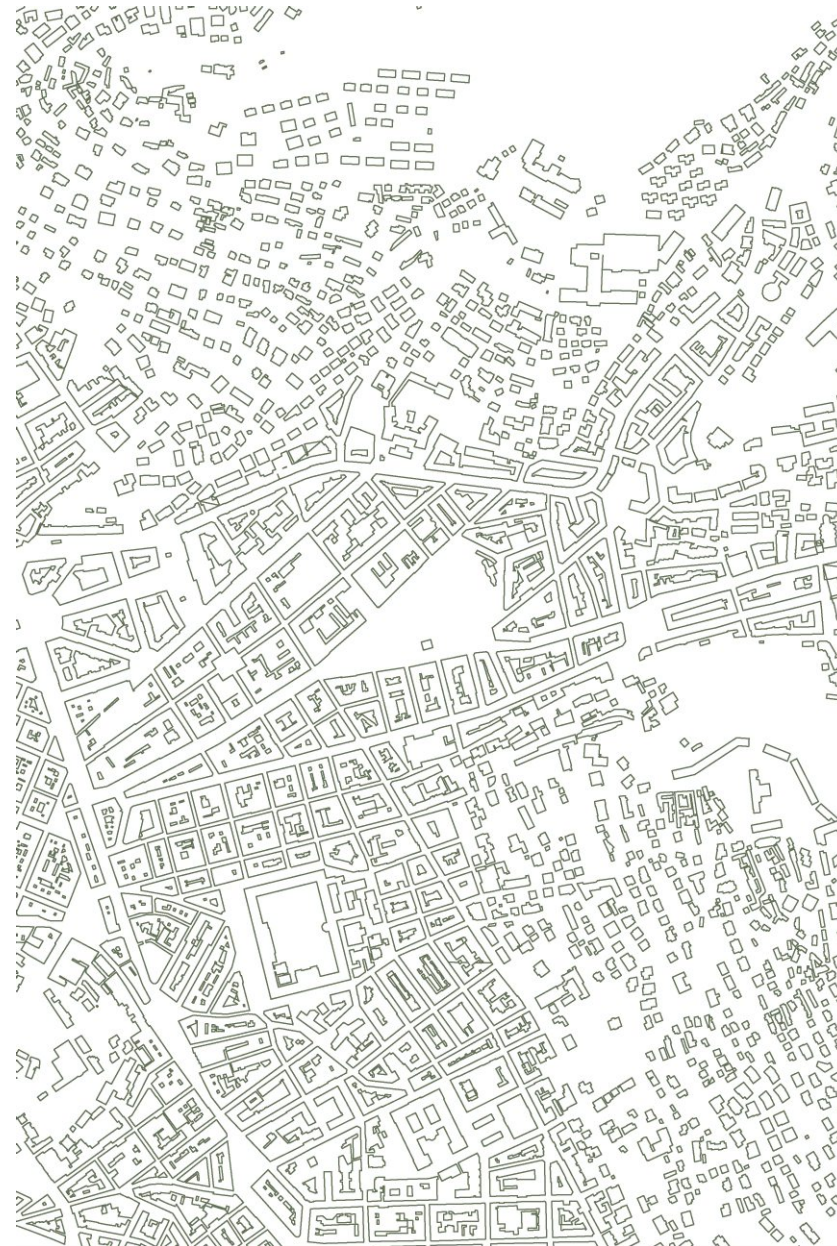
The entire area becomes noticeably quieter, almost as if it is standing still, and the salty breeze is now barely perceptible. From a distance, it is easier to catch a glimpse of the vast expanse of blue water, with the contrasting yellow cranes in the distance emerging their metal masts from the port.



Fig. 11 | Between the Blocks  
Fig. 12 | View from up the Hill

# BORGIO FRANCESCHINO

Orsolya Nyulas



50

Walk through the Borgo Franceschino

In the northwest inland area of the city, Borgo Franceschino took shape. Built in 1796 with a primarily residential character, thanks to a concession from Emperor Francis II, it was designed similarly to Borgo Teresiano, although with larger block sizes. In the district, between 1817 and 1827, the new city theatres (the Mauroner and the open-air Arena) were established beside the promenade along the Aqueduct (constructed on the initiative of Domenico Rossetti) and numerous caf  s.<sup>50</sup>

Borgio Franceschino is a historic district in Trieste. Its development was facilitated by a concession from Emperor Francis II (Franz II), the first Emperor of Austria. Similar in design to the nearby Borgo Teresiano, Borgo Franceschino featured larger block sizes and was built during a period of significant urban development in Trieste, which reflected the growing importance of the city within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>51</sup>

51

The area developed significantly during the Habsburg period (from 1382 to 1918) when Trieste was the main seaport of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This expansion was part of a broader effort to modernise Trieste and support its growing role as a crucial hub for trade and commerce in the empire. Under Habsburg rule, Trieste underwent well-planned urban development that included the creation of new districts like Borgo Franceschino. The planning reflected the need for orderly expansion, efficient infrastructure, and attractive architecture to showcase the city's prosperity.

Like other parts of Trieste developed during the Habsburg era, (like Borgo Giuseppino or Piazza della Borsa) the district follows a structured grid layout. The plan was intended to facilitate easy navigation and efficient movement of people

50 Vivere l'Ottocento a Trieste - Percorso tra residenze nobili e borghesi- translation.

51 <https://movio.beniculturali.it/pmfvg/viverelottocentoatrieste/it/9> introduzione.



and goods, which is crucial for a growing port city. The district's streets are relatively broad, reflecting the urban planning principles of the time, which prioritised accessibility, ventilation, and light. These streets allowed for smooth traffic flow and provided large spaces for pedestrians.<sup>52</sup>

As Trieste grew, Borgo Franceschino became a vibrant district, home to merchants, artisans, and officials who were integral to the city's economy. The district reflects the diverse social fabric of Trieste under Habsburg rule, with a mix of Italian, Austrian, Slovenian, and other communities. This diversity was further enhanced by the district's proximity to Piazza Oberdan, one of the critical squares in Trieste. Located near Borgo Franceschino (in the northeastern part of the city, near the city centre), Piazza Oberdan acts as a central transport hub and a symbolic site in the city's history, linking the district to other parts of Trieste and serving as a gateway for movement in the town. The square's strategic position facilitated the flow of people and goods. The square is named after Guglielmo Oberdan, an Italian irredentist martyr, symbolizing the complex nationalistic tensions in Trieste during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Piazza has historically been a focal point for mobility, featuring tram lines, buses, and other forms of public transportation. It connects Borgo Franceschino to essential transit routes, from historical view the Opicina tramway, or nowadays several public transportation lines, which are strengthening the district's accessibility and integration with the rest of the city.<sup>53</sup>

The area around Piazza Oberdan includes several significant buildings (Palazzo Panfilli, Palazzo Vianello, Tempio Israelitico di Trieste, Casa di Cura Triestina) that embody the influences of Habsburg architecture and modern architectural styles. As an example Palazzo Panfilli and Palazzo Vianello, both located near the Piazza, exhibit features typical of the neoclassical and historicist architectural styles. These buildings reflect the glory and elegance favoured by the Habsburg Empire, characterised by symmetrical facades, detailed cornices, and arched windows. The use of neoclassical elements like columns and decorative sculptures reflects the Austro-Hungarian influence, with a focus on monumental urban development.<sup>54</sup>

52 <https://upcommons.upc.edu/bitstream/handle/2099/3931/annex.pdf;jsessionid=F3597D671BC284504258F48325752323?sequence=1>.

53 [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza\\_Oberdan\\_\(Trieste\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza_Oberdan_(Trieste))

54 [https://elearning.unite.it/pluginfile.php/273198/mod\\_resource/content/0/presnitz\\_piazza\\_nostalgia\\_trieste.pdf](https://elearning.unite.it/pluginfile.php/273198/mod_resource/content/0/presnitz_piazza_nostalgia_trieste.pdf)



Fig. 13 | Piazza Oberdan  
Fig. 14 | Parco di San Giovanni

Borgo Franceschino, alongside Piazza Oberdan, represents a crucial part of Trieste's urban history, particularly under the influence of Emperor Francis II and the broader Habsburg Empire. The district's urban expansion under Habsburg rule, reflects a structured city planning, neoclassical architecture, and a blend of modernist influences that began to emerge in the so called " Otto Wagner Areal", deeply intertwined with the empire's legacy and the evolving needs of a modern European port city.

### OTTO WAGNER AREAL

The Otto Wagner Areal refers to an area of Trieste influenced by Otto Wagner's designs. Although Wagner did not directly design buildings in Trieste, his architectural philosophy and urban planning principles significantly influenced the city's development during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Wagner, a professor at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, mentored several architects who later brought his ideas to Trieste, including Max Fabiani. Fabiani played a significant role in Trieste's urban transformation and was directly influenced by Wagner's modernist approach, emphasizing functionality, simplicity, and integrating new materials.

"Max Fabiani introduced the elegant and rational style of his master Otto Wagner to Trieste, and Giorgio Zaninovich (also a student of the Wagnerschule in Vienna) embellished certain residential buildings on Via Commerciale with an imaginative and, at times, surprising interpretation of the Secession Style. A Wagnerian play of solids and voids and exterior shells that seem to disintegrate into large windows on the ground and mezzanine floors (which were intended for commercial activities) are just two of the features that characterize some of Trieste's most beautiful Art Nouveau buildings."<sup>55</sup>

Fabiani's buildings often feature straightforward, practical designs with restrained decoration, embodying Wagner's belief that architecture should serve its purpose while remaining beautiful. Inspired by Wagner, Fabiani was among the early adopters of materials such as reinforced concrete, steel, and

<sup>55</sup> The TERNI - DEI ROSSI building, where Palace Suite is located, is one of Trieste's most beautiful buildings.

glass in his designs in Trieste, pushing the boundaries of traditional construction methods. His approach to blending buildings with urban context ensures that each project contributes to the city's broader visual and functional coherence.

Max Fabiani's work around Piazza Oberdan shows his approach to modernist architecture and urban planning. His contributions to the district helped shape Trieste's urban character, blending functionality with a modern aesthetic. Fabiani's projects (for example, Casa Bartoli or Narodni Dom) are emblematic of the rapidly changing cultural and architectural shifts Trieste underwent during the early 20th century.<sup>56</sup>

The Parco di San Giovanni in Trieste plays a significant role in the broader narrative of the "Otto Wagner Areal" and the city's architectural transformation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Originally, the area was the site of the psychiatric hospital complex (Ospedale Psichiatrico di Trieste), which was designed in the late 19th century and remained in use until the late 20th century. The hospital complex reflects Otto Wagner's philosophy, which emphasised functionality, rationality, and the harmonious integration of buildings within their natural surroundings. The park itself represents a blend of historical and modern architectural elements, embodying the city's transition from its imperial past to its modern identity. The area has been repurposed in recent decades, transforming the former hospital grounds into a public park and cultural hub. This reimagining of space ties into the broader modernist principles of adaptive reuse and the integration of old structures into new, functional urban landscapes. In line with the architectural values of Otto Wagner and his disciples like Max Fabiani, the park is now an area where history and modern use intersect, demonstrating how public spaces can evolve while maintaining respect for their original design and function.<sup>57,58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> <https://martinrandall.ontigerbay.co.uk/content/files/ITTheImperialRiviera.-1.pdf>

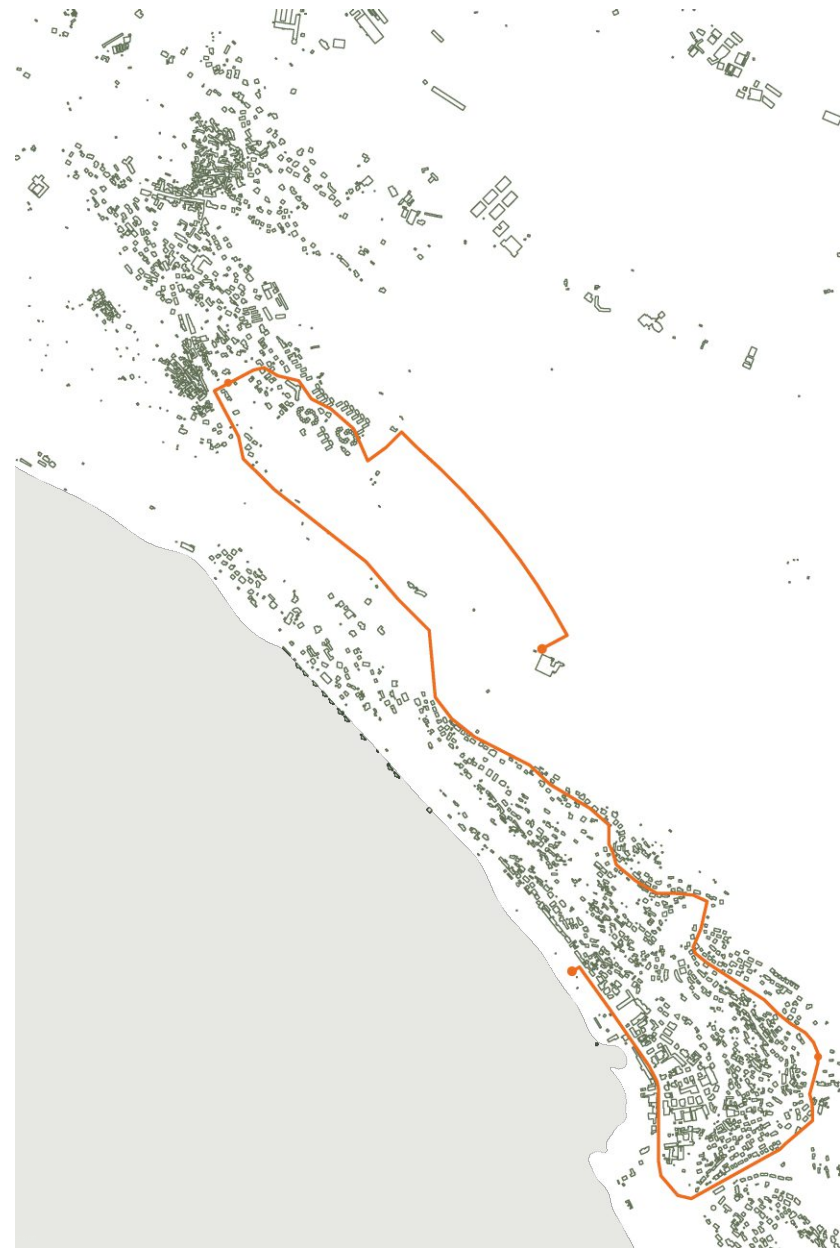
<sup>57</sup> <http://www.toujoursetreailleurs.com/2017/09/trieste-artnouveauiluberty.html>.

<sup>58</sup> The Man Who Closed the Asylums: Franco Basaglia and the Revolution in Mental Health Care.



# THE PERIPHERY

Andrea Huber



Leaving the center of Trieste and heading northeast, you reach the coastal suburb of Barcolana. Here, the noise of the city gradually fades away and is replaced by the sound of the sea. While the surrounding area is characterized by hilly vegetation in the middle of the Karst and small detached houses and blocks of flats, there are some striking landmarks. These have cultural and historical significance, create a sense of identity, and serve as landmarks. On the pine-tree-lined promenade of Barcola, high up on the hill, stands one of the town's landmarks, the Sanctuary of Monte Grisa.

## THE SANCTUARY OF MONTE GRISA

The Sanctuary of Monte Grisa, commonly known as Cheese Corner, is one of the most remarkable Brutalist buildings in Europe. Antonio Santin, former mayor of Trieste and Koper, promised in 1945 to build a church if the city was not completely destroyed in the Second World War. The sanctuary was built between 1963 and 1965. Since then, it has become a symbol of peace and unity among all people. The Sanctuary was designed by Antonio Guacci, who used triangular modules to symbolize the letter M for the Holy Mary. The triangular shape also recalls the Trinity in biblical symbolism. The building is 40 meters high and is made of reinforced concrete, modular, and self-bearing.<sup>59</sup> The Sanctuary of Monte Grisa is undoubtedly part of the legacy of Brutalism, which sought to offer a new beginning to a society wounded by war.<sup>60</sup>

59 Architectuul, "Temple of Monte Grisa." Last modified November 19, 2023. <https://architectuul.com/architecture/temple-of-monte-grisa>.

60 Domus, "20 Brutalist Works in Italy." Last modified May 18, 2023. <https://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/gallery/2023/05/18/20-brutalist-works-in-italy.html>.



Fig. 15 | Barcola Promenade

Fig. 16 | The Sanctuary of Monte Grisa

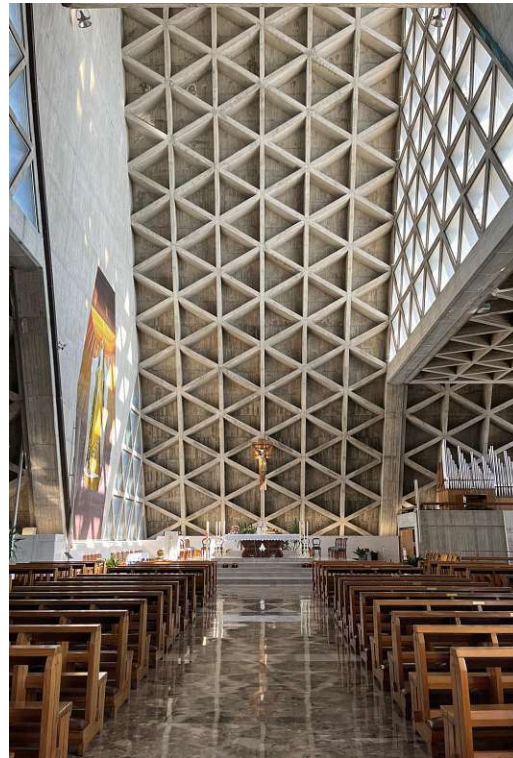


Fig. 15 | Barcola Promenade

Fig. 16 | The Sanctuary of Monte Grisa

## EXCOURSE BRUTALISM

Brutalist architecture sought to free itself from rigid modernism and reduce it to its essentials. In the 1960s and 1970s, Team 10 promoted structuralism and brutalism with theoretical contributions.<sup>61</sup> In Europe, brutalism was influenced by Le Corbusier. One of the most important Brutalist buildings is the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, which was built in France and Germany between 1947 and 1965. The aim was to alleviate the housing shortage after the Second World War.<sup>62</sup> The idea was to create housing for the masses, a classless society. The purpose of building for everyday use came to the fore. The English architectural theorist Christopher Beanland argued that the style was characterized by aggression against the city, not against people. Brutalism emphasizes the right to the city and to housing and reflects the desire and belief in a society based on justice and solidarity.<sup>63</sup>

Heading south from the Sanctuary towards the Slovenian border, another of the city's landmarks rises from the hilly vegetation: the Rozzol Melara social housing complex. The Brutalist building was built in the 1970s and, due to its geographical location, offers a panoramic view over the city as far as the Adriatic Sea.

61 Brutalismus.com, "Brutalism. Architecture of Everyday Culture, Poetry and Theory." <http://brutalismus.com/>.

62 Domus. "20 Brutalist Works in Italy."

63 Katharina Schmidt, "Rozzol Melara Transformation, Zukunftsfähiges Wohnquartier im Haus," (Master's Thesis at Leopold-Franzens University of Innsbruck, February 2018) 55.

64 Katharina Schmidt, "Rozzol Melara Transformation," 14-17.

65 Ministry of Culture, "Chiesa Parrocchiale di San Giuseppe Lavoratore." National Census of Second Twentieth Century Architecture, <https://censimentoarchitetturecontemporanee.cultura.gov.it/scheda-opera?id=4539>.

## ROZZOL MELARA

The Rozzol Melara social housing complex, which resembles a fortress, stands out visually from the rest of the city. Also known as quadrilatero, it consists of two L-shaped volumes facing each other, 200 meters long and over 40 meters high. The volumes rest on massive concrete supports designed to represent tree trunks. The building was designed and built between 1969 and 1983 by the Triestine architects Celli and Tognon. At the time, it was one of the first to be built on the outskirts of the city, which was gradually being urbanised.<sup>64</sup> The idea was to create an independent city within the city for 2500 inhabitants.<sup>65</sup>



60

Fig. 17 | Rozzol Melara

The lower floor is open to the outside with large portholes, while the other floors are subject to a strict façade grid. In the centre of the building is a big courtyard, which makes the vast dimensions of the complex tangible. The interior of the building is divided into private and public areas. The uses are fixed and therefore severely restrict flexibility. As a result, many common areas are empty and subject to vandalism. Human appropriation of the spaces is difficult to discern, and the lives of the residents seem closed off. The housing complex thus demonstrates the complex relationship between Brutalist architecture and the needs of a socially disadvantaged society.<sup>66</sup>

## EXCOURSE DEMOGRAPHY

The great housing shortage after the Second World War was due to the influx of Italians from Istria, Dalmatia, and other areas that came under the control of socialist Yugoslavia after the Paris Peace Treaty. The migration was partly voluntary and partly forced. Many Italians moved to Trieste because of discrimination and communist rule, which led to a sharp increase in the city's population.<sup>67</sup> However, in 2023, the population increased again due to migration from abroad. The population on 31 December 2023 was 199.400 <sup>68</sup>, including the influx of 16,052 refugees from the Balkan route (as of 2023). To sum up, the city of Trieste has always been living from migration and its cultural diversity.<sup>69</sup>

61

66 Schmidt, "Rozzol Melara Transformation," 14-17.

67 Gustavo Corni, "The Exodus of Italians from Istria and Dalmatia 1945-1956," in *The Disentanglement of Populations*, 2011, 71-72.

68 Trieste Prima, "Trieste: Popolazione Cresciuta Grazie agli Stranieri." Last modified March 31, 2024. <https://www.triesteprema.it/cronaca/trieste-popolazione-cresciuta-stranieri.html>.

69 "Analisi degli arrivi nel corso del 2023," in *vite abbandonato 2023*, June 2024, 16.

The traffic signs in Italian and Slovenian point to the city center, and the way back passes two empty Buchi Neri. A final view of the city reveals landmarks such as the Castle of San Giusto, the University, and the Cattinara Hospital.



## EX FIERA

The Ex Fiera in Via Rossetti is made up of several buildings that once housed the Trieste Trade Fair Centre. The area played an important role as a venue for local and international fairs, events, and exhibitions. However, with the passage of time and changes in the use of exhibition centers, the importance of the site diminished, and it was eventually closed.<sup>70</sup> Since then, the buildings have stood empty and derelict. In recent years, the former Fiera site has been the subject of public debate. The site is now being transformed into a multifunctional shopping center. It will include areas for leisure, sports, shopping, children's play, restaurants, and gyms. The mayor of Trieste, Roberto Dipiazza, said the project would boost the local economy and create a new leisure center.<sup>71</sup>

## EX GASOMETRO

The ex-gasometer of Trieste, in via Barolomeo d'Alviano, is a remarkable industrial monument that was once part of the city's gas supply system. The building dates back to the end of the 19th century and is characterized by its cylindrical shape, with a diameter of 45 meters and a height of 35 meters. The gasometer held around 20,000 m<sup>3</sup> of gas and was decommissioned in 1952.<sup>72</sup> Since then, the building has stood empty, and it has architectural resemblances to the Viennese Gasometer and is a listed monument.<sup>73</sup>

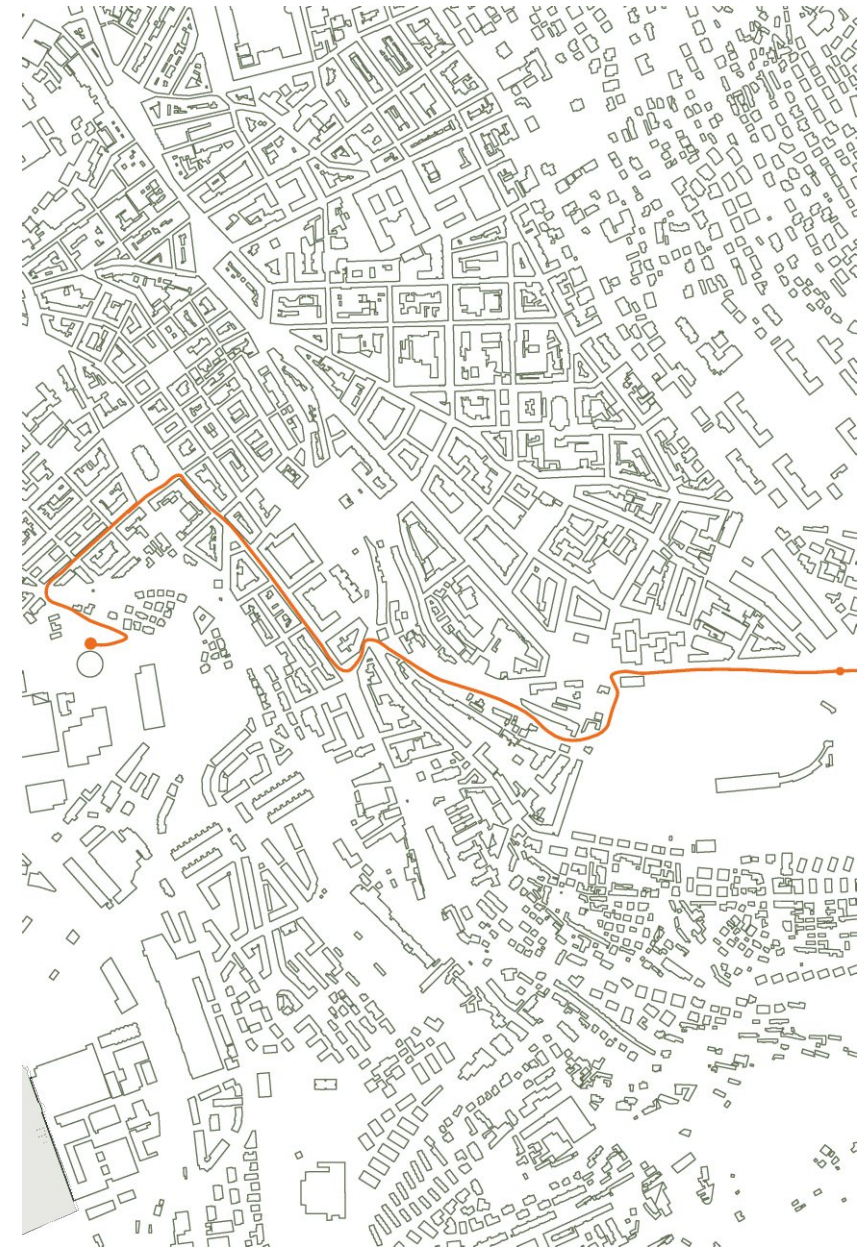
Finally, the peripherality has been left behind, and the dynamism of the city has been regained. The green spaces are disappearing, and the dense buildings and narrow alleys are closing in. In short, Trieste combines the vibrancy of a historic port city with the rural, nature-loving periphery—an interplay between urban and rural diversity.

70 Roberto D'Ambrosi, "Ex Gasometro" in Buchi Neri, indagine sui luoghi incompiuti o abbandonati della città di Trieste, (Trieste, 2020).

71 Giraldi, Nicolò. "Fiera di Trieste: al via i lavori per il nuovo centro congressi." TriestePrima, March 22, 2024. Last modified [19.10.2024]. <https://www.triesteprema.it/cronaca/fiera-trieste-lavori.html>.

72 Italy for Movies, "Former Gasometro of Broletto, Trieste." <https://www.italyformovies.com/location/detail/18035/former-gasometro-of-broletto-trieste>.

73 D'Ambrosi, "Ex Gasometro."



Walk through the Periphery

# LEARNING FROM TRIESTE

## Experience Report

As part of our master's thesis, we had the opportunity to engage in a collaborative group setting in Trieste. This enriching experience proved to be an invaluable component of our final academic journey, both in terms of the wealth of information we gathered and the profound insights we gained through teamwork. It was a unique opportunity to merge our individual expertise and learn from one another, creating a dynamic and multifaceted approach to our research.

One of the most significant advantages of working as a group was the diversity and richness of exchange among team members. Each individual brought their own perspective, specialized knowledge, and distinct approach to problem-solving. This diversity allowed us to collectively gather and process a far greater volume of information than any one of us could have achieved on our own. We were able to pool resources, share insights, and brainstorm ideas in ways that broadened the scope and depth of our research. The interplay of our different perspectives often led to fresh interpretations and innovative solutions, which enhanced the overall quality of our work.

A particularly impactful aspect of our time in Trieste was the cooperation with Roberto Dambrosi and Giulio Polita. Their intimate knowledge of the city, specific architectural structures, and urban contexts was instrumental in deepening our understanding of the subject matter. These discussions provided us with valuable contextual information, anchoring our research within the unique social, cultural, and historical fabric of Trieste. The insights they shared allowed us to view the city through a more nuanced lens, enriching our analysis and helping us draw connections we might have otherwise overlooked.

Of course, the collaborative process came with its own set of challenges. One of the primary difficulties was achieving consensus on a shared conceptual framework for our work. With six individuals contributing their own ideas, priorities, and methodologies, it was not always easy to settle on a unified direction. Ultimately, we decided to focus on individual projects while maintaining a thematic connection across all our efforts. This compromise allowed each of us to pursue our personal areas of interest and expertise while still contributing to a cohesive body of research. The thematic linkage ensured that our work retained a sense of unity and purpose despite being developed independently.

Despite the shift toward individual projects, the group collaboration remained immensely valuable and rewarding. Our initial brainstorming sessions, shared discoveries, and collective problem-solving efforts provided a solid foundation for each of our individual theses. These interactions not only inspired and enriched our personal projects but also offered a support network that proved crucial throughout the process. The constructive feedback and encouragement from our peers helped us refine our ideas and approach, adding layers of complexity and depth to our work that would have been difficult to achieve alone.

In conclusion, the experience of working as a group in Trieste was both inspiring and inspiring. It underscored the power of collaboration and the importance of diverse perspectives in academic research. While the transition to individual projects allowed us to focus more deeply on our specific interests, the groundwork laid by our collective efforts significantly enhanced the quality and impact of our final theses. Trieste, with its rich cultural and historical backdrop, served as the perfect setting for this collaborative journey, leaving an indelible mark on our academic and personal growth.



Fig. 18 | Working Group Trieste

Fig. 19 | Working Group Trieste



# III. ON THE RUN

## Beyond the Familiar: Crossing Borders

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*„Beeing a refugee is much more than a political status. It is the most pervasive kind of cruelty that can be exercised against a human beeing. You are forcybly rubbing this human beeing of all aspects that would make human life not just tolerable but meaningful in many ways.“*<sup>74</sup>

Human Flow, directed by Ai WeiWei

# INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Almost every country in the world is affected by migration, and this is set to increase in the future partly due to climate change and expected climate refugees. International migration is inextricably linked to issues of human rights, development, and poverty. On the one hand, migration poses major challenges, such as labour exploitation, human rights violations, and integration in destination countries. On the other hand, migration enriches cultures, enables economic development, and revitalises societies.<sup>75</sup> The impact of migrants is particularly evident in the social and cultural spheres of life. Cities are becoming dynamic, innovative, and cosmopolitan places with a degree of ethnic and cultural diversity. An interconnectedness of people, places, and cultures is emerging.<sup>76</sup> The link between migration and security is often discussed in public. Irregular migration is increasingly perceived by politicians as a threat to national and public security and is linked to terrorism. Even if these concerns are justified, the issue is being given too much attention. It should not be forgotten that many people leave their home countries because they have no other choice. Many migrants die on the journey and find themselves in inhumane situations in destination countries, such as enslavement in the sex industry and human trafficking. Migrants are also often subjected to abuse and violence in private households. In conclusion, many migrants face discrimination and prejudice, and sustainable integration in destination countries is essential.<sup>77</sup>

69

## REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

The United Nations defines a refugee as a person "who is outside the country of his nationality owing to fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." Such a person is

74 *Human Flow*, directed by Ai Weiwei (2017; Berlin: NFP Marketing & Distribution GmbH), DVD.

75 Khalid Koser, "Warum Migration ein wichtiges Thema ist," in *Internationale Migration* (Stuttgart: Reclam Sachbuch, 2011), 7.

76 Koser, "Warum Migration ein wichtiges Thema ist," 21.

77 Koser, "Warum Migration ein wichtiges Thema ist," 22-23.

protected by the 1951 United Nations Convention, although it should be noted that this Convention, which defines refugee status, is over 70 years old. Persons persecuted because of their gender or sexual orientation, such as women\* under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, are therefore excluded. Climate refugees and internally displaced persons are also excluded. These are people who have fled their place of origin but have no way of leaving their country. There are other legal norms, such as customary rights and norms, that confer refugee status. These are not legally binding but still apply. They include, for example, the right to leave one's own country and enter other countries.<sup>78</sup> Three so-called solutions are being discussed for the migrant group of refugees. The first solution is a voluntary return to the country of origin. It is important to emphasise that voluntary return does not mean deportation to the country of origin. The second is local integration. In practice, most refugees in Europe remain in the host country. In the UK, for example, refugees can apply for citizenship after seven years. The third and final solution is permanent resettlement in a third country, usually a developed country. In terms of public opinion, this third option does not mean an increase in the number of refugees to be resettled.<sup>79</sup>

A refugee is often perceived as poor and destitute because they have no economic resources. However, a refugee has a different kind of wealth. Hardt and Negri describe this non-monetary wealth as "their desire for something more, their refusal to accept the way things are." This means that flight should not be reduced to a struggle for survival, and the displacement of the refugee should not be seen as poverty. On the contrary, we are still talking about people who have chosen a positive desire for peace and freedom. This act of refusal is incredibly powerful and leads us back to an ethic of self-transcendence and self-transformation.<sup>80</sup>

The very term "refugee" implies a fundamental difference from non-refugees. This concerns economic conditions as well as social, political, and legal status. The relationship between refugee and non-refugee communities needs to be rethought. Warner emphasises the importance of focusing on the similarities between the two groups rather than the differences.<sup>81</sup>

78 Koser, "Flüchtlinge und Asylsuchende," 107-112.

79 Koser, "Flüchtlinge und Asylsuchende," 122-127.

80 Inna Viriasova. "Introduction." *The Refugee's Flight: Homelessness, Hospitality, and Care of the Self*. Journal of Global Ethics 12, no. 2 (August 2016): 224.

81 Viriasova, "Hospitality and care: the refugee's plight," 230.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

### WHO IS A MIGRANT?

The United Nations defines an international migrant as a person who has spent at least one year outside his or her country of usual residence. Migrant status can also be lost, for example, by returning to the country of origin or becoming a citizen of the country of destination. In general, three groups of migrants can be distinguished.<sup>82</sup>

### MIGRANT GROUP: REFUGES

The refugee migrant group includes people who have been forced to leave their home country. This may be due to political conflict and persecution or environmental factors such as drought and famine.<sup>83</sup>

### MIGRANT GROUP: LABOR MIGRANTS

A second group of migrants are those who move for economic reasons. These people are looking for work, better career opportunities, or better working conditions. In addition to economic and political migrants, there are also people who migrate for social reasons. These are, for example, people who bring their families together.<sup>84</sup>

### MIGRANT GROUP: IRREGULAR MIGRANTS

The group of irregular migrants includes people who enter a country without travel documents or with forged travel documents, or people who enter legally but remain in the host country with an expired visa or work permit.<sup>85</sup>

### WHAT IS INTEGRATION?

Integration is a process by which migrants are accepted into society as individuals and groups. It is described by the Global Commission on International Migration as a long and complex process. Both sides, migrants and members of society, need to accept and respect each other in order to achieve a positive and peaceful coexistence.<sup>86</sup>

82 Koser, "Wer ist ein Migrant?," 30.

83 Koser, "Wer ist ein Migrant?," 30.

84 Koser, "Wer ist ein Migrant?," 30.

85 Koser, "Wer ist ein Migrant?," 31.

86 Koser, "Wer ist ein Migrant?," 43.



# BALKAN ROUTE

Several routes from the Middle East to Europe via the Balkans are referred to as the Balkan route. In 2023, around 30,800 people used this route: 43% from Syria, 14% from Morocco, and 13% from Afghanistan.<sup>87</sup> Due to the geographical and climatic conditions, the route is very physically demanding. In addition to the natural challenges, refugees and migrants face additional dangers such as physical and sexual violence, illegal trafficking, and arbitrary repatriation. In the summer of 2015, the Balkan route came under the spotlight of the European media and the global public. The European border agency Frontex reported that more than 760,000 people were trying to reach Europe from Turkey via Greece. After Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia closed their borders in March 2016, the Balkan route shifted further west through Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia or across the Adriatic Sea to Italy. The Balkan route was used less and less in the following years. In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic also contributed to the decline in refugee numbers.<sup>88</sup> With Croatia's accession to the Schengen area on 1 January 2023, the travel and route planning of refugees changed again. Police checks at border crossings with Slovenia and Hungary were abolished. Instead, Croatia has increased police checks at the EU's external borders with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.<sup>89</sup>

The routes from Greece through the Balkans to Europe are constantly changing. One major corridor runs through Greece, northern Macedonia, and Serbia. Further south, a second major corridor runs through Greece, Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. To the north, a third corridor passes through Bulgaria and Romania. This constant change makes the Balkan route a "Balkan ring." The routes are characterised by refusals, irregular movements, the creation of new routes, and also desperate returns to Greece.<sup>90</sup>

87 UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe. "Balkanroute." last modified October 2023. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/themen/fluchtrouten/balkanroute>.

88 UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe, "Balkanroute."

89 "Il Contesto," in *Vite Abbandonate 2023* (Trieste: June 2024), 9.

90 Hameršak, Marijana, Sabine Hess, Marc Speer, and Marta Stojic Mitrovic. 2020. "The Forging of the Balkan Route: Contextualizing the Border Regime in the EU Periphery." *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5 (1). Accessed October 6, 2024. <http://movements-journal.org/issues/08.balkanroute/01.hamersak,hess,stoic-mitrovic,speer-the-forging-of-the-balkan-route.html>.

## LIMITS OF HUMANITY

There are numerous reports of precarious conditions and brutal violence along the Balkan route. In addition to appalling sanitary conditions, illegal and violent repatriations are commonplace. People are deported back to neighbouring countries without due process.

Yet the Geneva Refugee Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights, and EU asylum law require that migrants fleeing serious human rights violations should not be sent back, even if they have entered the country irregularly. European states have also committed themselves to the principle of non-refoulement. This means that people fleeing serious human rights violations will not be sent back, even if they have entered the country illegally. Unfortunately, the reality at the borders is different, and protection needs are rarely assessed. Testimonies also confirm that the Croatian police, for example, have been responsible for beatings.<sup>91</sup>

## BORDER VIOLENCE MONITORING NETWORK

The Border Violence Monitoring Network was established to draw attention to pushbacks, human rights violations, and violence against refugees. The network's mission is to observe, document, and publish the situation on the ground. Evidence and testimonies are collected to hold those responsible to account. The aim of the network is to put an end to violence and injustice and to stand up for human rights and human dignity.<sup>92</sup>

91 UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe, "Balkanroute."

92 Border Violence Monitoring Network. "What We Stand For." Accessed October 6, 2024. <https://borderviolence.eu/about/what-we-stand-for/>.



*"I was afraid that they would kill me and no one would know I am in their country. I don't have no rights." <sup>93</sup>*

*"You know, they (male officers) were touching my wife everywhere." <sup>94</sup>*

*"My son was scared and crying. I tried to console him by telling him it was all just a game." <sup>95</sup>*

*"It was difficult for her to walk because of the snow. The officers were screaming: "hajde!" and shooting their guns." <sup>96</sup>*

*"The officers forced teenagers to strip naked by threatening to beat them more if they did not comply." <sup>97</sup>*

*"I am alive by a miracle and I suffered police violence because they have no humanity and no mercy." <sup>98</sup>*

*"They were forced to cross the river by foot, with the water level at chest height." <sup>99</sup>*

*"They were beating us severely, as if they were beating animals." <sup>100</sup>*

93 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence at European Border." Accessed September 2024. <https://borderviolence.eu/testimonies/>.

94 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

95 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

96 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

97 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

98 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

99 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

100 Border Violence Monitoring Network, "Testimonies of Pushback Violence."

# ARRIVING IN TRIESTE

Trieste is considered one of the first safe havens for refugees from the Balkan route. In 2023, a total of 16,052 refugees arrived in the city. Trieste is an important hub for those who want to apply for asylum in Italy, but also for those who want to continue their journey for various reasons.<sup>101</sup> The refugees have made a dangerous journey and need first aid, information about their rights, and medical care. A hot meal, new clothes, and a safe place to recover from the stress of their flight are essential. Psychosocial support is also helpful in dealing with the trauma and emotional stress they have experienced. Access to education and employment, as well as integration into social networks, are particularly important to ensure the integration of refugees into society.<sup>102</sup>

Although the number of registered arrivals has increased by 22% compared to 2022 (13,127 registered persons), there has been no increase in the necessary initial public assistance measures in the city. On the contrary, the institutional actors that are legally obliged to provide protection and assistance to arrivals continue to respond inadequately. There are currently four shelters, only two of which are open all year round. The lack of humanitarian assistance and timely accommodation means that a large number of people are waiting for emergency accommodation in Trieste.<sup>103</sup> Many refugees have no choice but to sleep and wait on the streets. Some have settled in an abandoned warehouse, the Silos, near the main railway station. But conditions there are worrying. There is no electricity, running water, or sanitation, and people sleep in tents on the floor.<sup>104</sup>

The San Martino al Campo Day Center, run by the Municipality of Trieste, is also located near the main railway station. It is open all year round and offers various services to people in need. These include a small clinic, medical examinations,

clothing distribution, language courses, and information on the asylum procedure. The centre's dormitory has 25 beds, and each guest's stay is limited to three days. In justified cases, the stay can be extended.<sup>105</sup> The day centre also helps to allocate free places in the city's hostels and carries out an inventory of the general needs of migrants on the street.<sup>106</sup> In addition to the San Martino centre, there is also the Casa "Marana Tha," run by Caritas, which is also open all year round and has 24 beds.<sup>107</sup> Most of the places in the two shelters are allocated to people who live in the municipality. There are therefore only a few places available for refugees. These are allocated on a rotation basis, meaning that the most vulnerable people get the free beds.<sup>108</sup> Among the most vulnerable are asylum seekers and transients, but also EU citizens. The latter are often prioritised in the allocation process, leaving the many others back on the streets.<sup>109</sup> Caritas also runs another shelter, the Hotel Alabarda, which provides overnight accommodation for families and women\*. However, from August to October 2023, it received mainly unaccompanied minors, which meant that it was not possible to offer shelter to families and single women\*.<sup>110</sup> It is clear that, despite this system and the existing centres, there is not enough emergency accommodation available, and most asylum seekers wait months to be admitted to the first reception system.

The 2023 Migration Report clearly shows that the city of Trieste is an important arrival and transit point for refugees. The rights of those who arrive must be respected, and the institutions must take measures to achieve this. A public plan is needed to ensure adequate humanitarian assistance and accommodation for refugees. In addition, a functioning first reception system for asylum seekers must be guaranteed and social integration promoted in order to avoid forms of marginalisation.<sup>111</sup>

The shrinking city of Trieste could also see the influx of refugees as an opportunity and potential to reduce its demographic deficit. While the local population is shrinking and ageing, low birth rates and increasing life expectancy are putting pressure on the social balance. Of course, migration cannot solve the demographic deficit, but it can be a starting point.<sup>112</sup>

101 "Il Contesto," in *Vite Abbandonate* 2023 (Trieste: June 2024), 8.

102 "Il Contesto," 8.

103 "Il Contesto," 10.

104 Il Post. "Trieste, accoglienza migranti e rotta balcanica." Last modified September 13, 2023. <https://www.ilpost.it/2023/09/13/trieste-accoglienza-migranti-rotta-balcanica/>.

105 San Martino al Campo. "Accoglienza." Last modified 2024. <https://www.smartinocampo.it/cosa-facciamo/accoglienza/>.

106 "I servizi di bassa soglia e il Centro Diurno," in *Vite Abbandonati* 2023 (Trieste: June 2024), 42.

107 Fondazione CR Trieste. "Inaugurata la Casa di Accoglienza Marana Tha." Last modified November 24, 2023. <https://www.fondazionecrieste.it/2023/11/24/inaugurata-la-casa-di-accoglienza-marana-tha/>.

108 "I servizi di bassa soglia e il Centro Diurno," 43.

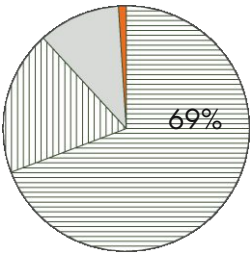
109 "I servizi di bassa soglia e il Centro Diurno," 44.

110 "I servizi di bassa soglia e il Centro Diurno," 45.

111 "Raccomandazioni," in *Vite Abbandonati* 2023 (Trieste: June 2024), 56.

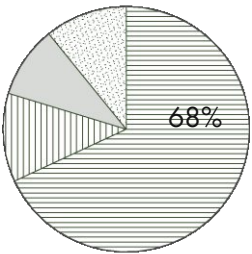
112 Koser, "Migranten in der Gesellschaft," 152-155.





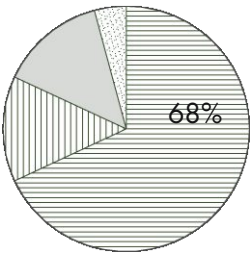
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- 69% Single adult Men
- 19% Unaccompanied Minors
- 11% Families
- 1% Single adult Women\*



COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

- 68% Afghanistan
- 12% Pakistan
- 10% Turkey
- 10% Other countries



MIGRATION INTENTION

- 68% Other countries
- 14% Trieste
- 13% Unfamiliar
- 5% Other cities in Italy

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In 2023, there will be a sharp increase in the proportion of vulnerable people compared to the previous year. This includes unaccompanied foreign minors, single women\*, and families. Of the total 16,052 people, 69% were single male adults, 19% unaccompanied foreign minors, 11% families, and 1% single adult females. Compared to 2022, the number of minors has increased by 112% and the number of families by 120%. The number of 158 single women\* has remained relatively stable compared to 2022 and represents only 1% of all arrivals.<sup>113</sup>

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The majority of people registered in Trieste come from Afghanistan, with 10,929 people. They represent 68% of the people from other countries of origin. This high number is due to the Taliban's seizure of power in August 2021 and the ensuing humanitarian crisis. The second largest group of origin is Pakistan, with 1,870 people in 2023. This group shows a downward trend of 12% compared to 25% in the previous year. The third largest group of origin is the Turkish nationality, with 9% of people. Here, too, there is a sharp increase from 517 people in 2022 to 1532 people in 2023. In addition to the predominantly Kurdish families who face discrimination and oppression by the government in Turkey, there were also climate refugees following the earthquake on 6 February 2023. Other nationalities represented include Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Iraq, and Iran.<sup>114</sup>

MIGRATION INTENTION

The majority of respondents travel via Trieste. Around 68% say they want to go to a country other than Italy. Half of the respondents want to go to Germany, followed by France, Switzerland, and Belgium. Only 19% of respondents said they wanted to apply for asylum in Italy. Of these, 14% want to stay in Trieste, and the remaining 5% want to move to another Italian city. Around 13% of respondents did not know where they would go or did not want to give details.<sup>115</sup>

113 "Profili demografici," in *Vite Abbandonati 2023* (Trieste: June 2024), 20.

114 "Nazionalità," in *Vite Abbandonati 2023* (Trieste: June 2024), 18.

115 "Intenzione migratoria dichiarata," in *Vite Abbandonati 2023* (Trieste: June 2024), 24.

# WOMEN\* ON THE RUN

Half of the world's refugees are women\* and girls. They flee for the same reasons as men and are also exposed to gender-based and sexual violence. These additional risks are often actively used as weapons in wars and often lead to violence and discrimination. Female refugees often have limited access to basic rights such as security, shelter, and education. A lack of sensitivity to gender-specific needs increases the risk of women\* and girls being exposed to danger and abuse.<sup>116</sup>

Women\*'s migration has long been invisible in migration research and has received little specialised attention. This is probably due to the fact that traditional gender roles saw the man as the breadwinner and the main actor in migration. Women\*, on the other hand, were seen primarily as wives and housewives, economically dependent on their husbands, and passive in the migration process.<sup>117</sup> However, the reasons for women\* to migrate are many and varied. For women\*, no factor is as fundamental and profound as gender.<sup>118</sup> Even in the host countries, the social and economic situation of migrant women\* is largely determined by gender. The gender segregation of the labour market clearly restricts women\* to a few sectors of the economy, such as the informal service sector, e.g., as domestic workers.<sup>119</sup>

In order to respond to the needs of refugee women\*, it is important to first address the additional risks that women\* and girls face when fleeing. These include gender-based violence, trafficking, isolation, discrimination, pregnancy, and health risks.<sup>120</sup> Gender-based violence is one of the most serious human rights violations. While gender-based violence is often a driving force behind the decision to migrate, women\* on the move are at high risk of falling victim to physical, sexual, and psychological violence. Subsequent integration is often

complicated by the trauma they have experienced, traditional roles, and gender discrimination.<sup>121</sup> Gender equality means the equality of people regardless of their sex. Discriminatory gender norms and increasing restrictions make it difficult for refugee women\* to access work and education.<sup>122</sup> Even in everyday life, refugee women\* can be victims of sexual and psychological violence. There is a lack of awareness of women\*'s specific needs in the area of sexual and reproductive health. This includes, for example, the provision of sanitary products and support for pregnant women\* or victims of abuse. Targeted intimidation and rape are also part of the war strategy. According to a UNHCR study, one in five refugee women\* has experienced sexual violence. However, this is only a rough estimate, as many cases go unreported. This makes it difficult to accurately assess the extent of violence faced by refugee women\* and highlights the urgent need for targeted support and sensitive assistance programs.<sup>123</sup>

## SITUATION IN TRIESTE

In Trieste, single adult women\* accounted for only 1% of total arrivals in 2023. There are still 158 women\*, mainly from Nepal (59%), Turkey (15%), and India (12%). Only 9% intend to stay in Italy. Portugal is the final destination for 60% of the women\*. This is because the Portuguese government has made it easier to obtain residence permits and to work in the agricultural and fishing sectors. A further 20% of adult women\* intend to go on to Germany.<sup>124</sup>

Nearly 60% of single adult women\* from Nepal are increasingly living abroad as sex workers in slave-like conditions. In Nepal, women\* are considered inferior to men. Therefore, attempts are made to marry them off as early as possible. Many families, especially in poor rural areas, send their girls to work abroad. This often leads to Nepalese women\* being exploited in brothels and subjected to sex slavery. Extreme poverty, high unemployment, and the poor implementation of Nepal's anti-trafficking laws are the main reasons for this serious development. It is difficult for the women\* themselves to escape the situation, as stigma and shame play a major role.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>116</sup> UNHCR. "Frauen auf der Flucht." Last modified 2024. <https://www.unhcr.org/dach/at/frauen-auf-der-flucht>.

<sup>117</sup> Petrus Han, "Einführung" in *Frauen und Migration*, (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius, 2003) 1.

<sup>118</sup> Petrus Han, "Geschlecht als zentrales Strukturprinzip", 12.

<sup>119</sup> Petrus Han, "Geschlecht als zentrales Strukturprinzip", 24.

<sup>120</sup> UNO - Flüchtlingshilfe. "Flüchtlingsfrauen." Last modified 2024. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/fluechtlings-schutz/fluechtlingsfrauen>.

<sup>121</sup> UNO - Flüchtlingshilfe. "Geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt." Last modified 2024. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/fluechtlings-schutz/fluechtlingsfrauen/geschlechtsspezifische-gewalt>.

<sup>122</sup> UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe. "Gender Equality." Last modified 2024. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/fluechtlings-schutz/fluechtlingsfrauen/geschlechtergerechtigkeit>.

<sup>123</sup> UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe. "Gesundheit von Flüchtlingsfrauen." Last modified 2024. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/fluechtlings-schutz/fluechtlingsfrauen/frauengesundheit>.

<sup>124</sup> "Profilo demografico," in *Vite Abbandonati 2023* (Trieste: June 2024), 23.

<sup>125</sup> D+C Development and Cooperation. "Sexuelle Ausbeutung." Last modified 2024. <https://www.dandc.eu/de/article/junge-frauen-die-menschen-handeln-die-hande-fallen-finden-sich-oft-sklavenaehnlichen>.







# IV. THE WAITING ROOM

## Rediscovering a forgotten Witness

84

*„For me, a waiting room is a space waiting to be discovered and designed. Everything is still possible.“* <sup>126</sup>

Maria Olchowska Malgorzata

# THE FORMER CANTEEN

## CURRENT VIEW OF THE EXISTING BUILDING

The former canteen is located in the southern district of San Vito, along Gian Rinaldo Carli Street, and is about a 20-minute walk from the city center. Located in a vibrant neighbourhood, the existing building is surrounded by a swimming centre, a soccer field, residential and office buildings, and a primary and secondary school.

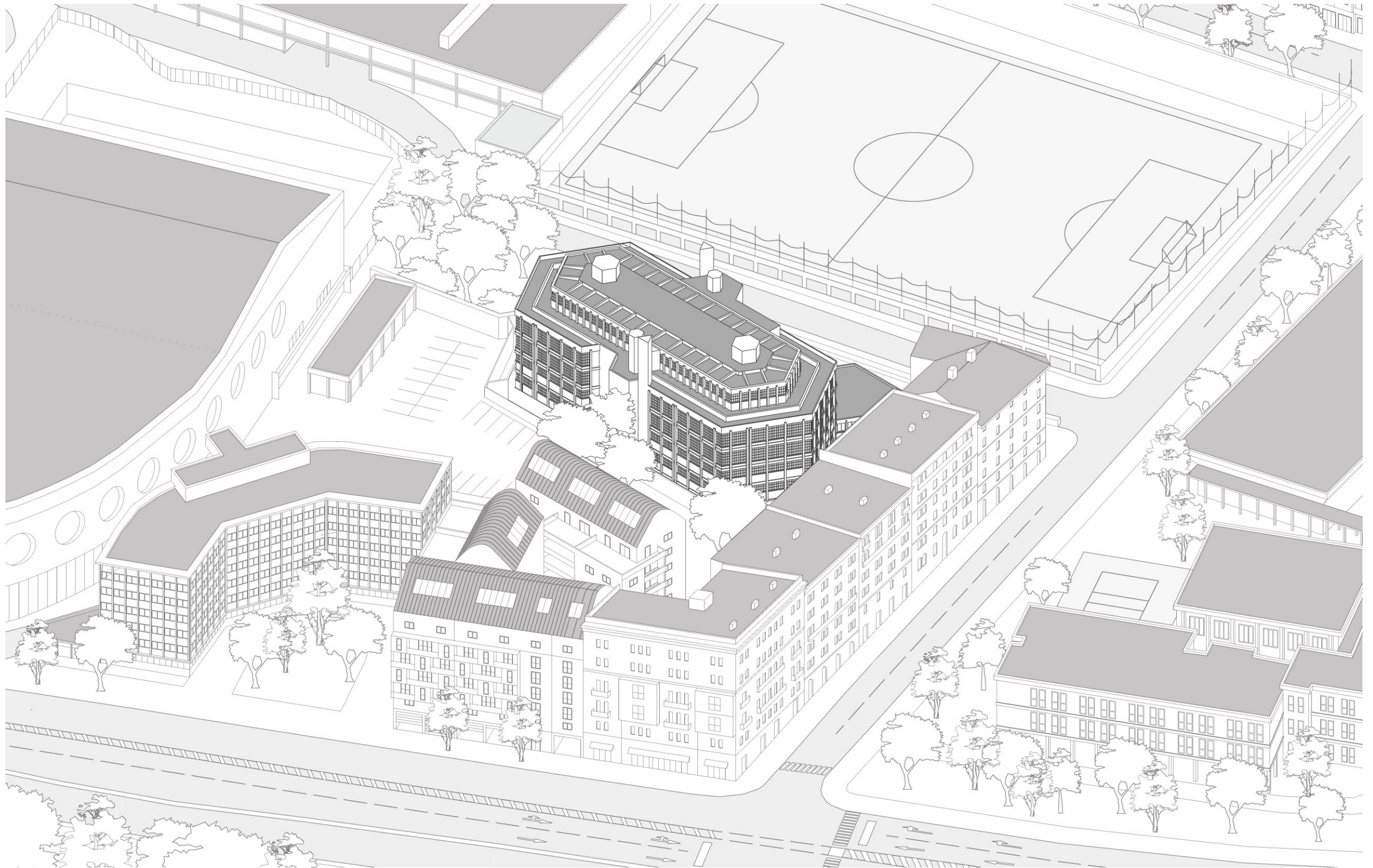
The building itself consists of a five-story main volume with a basement and a one-story entrance area. The main structure is divided into two flanking hexagons, between which there is a connecting volume with two hexagonal staircases. The two hexagons form an open space, except for the load-bearing reinforced concrete columns, which are arranged radially in the centre of the space. These six columns support radial beams and are connected to the external support structure. Large window openings allow for bright, light-filled interiors. The top floor is set back from the rest of the building, while two staircases and chimneys protrude vertically from the volume.

The canteen, originally built for industrial workers, housed locker rooms with showers on the first two levels. The floors above were used for dining, while the kitchen was on the top floor and the heating centre was in the basement.

Today, the vacant canteen resembles more of a ruin, heavily marked by decay and neglect. Nevertheless, the architectural qualities of the building offer a wide range of potential for transformation and reuse.

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<sup>126</sup> Malgorzata Maria Olchowska, interview by Egon Verleye, "Interview with Malgorzata Maria Olchowska," Flemish Architecture Institute, 14.02.2023, <https://www.vai.be/en/news/interview-with-malgorzata-maria-olchowska-about-the-expo-in-red-star-line-museum-antwerp>.



## THE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX OF SANT'ANDREA

In 1815, the long-serving captain Georg Strudthoff settled in Trieste and built a factory in the south-west of the city for the production of ship components. Strudthoff was born in Bremen in 1785.<sup>127</sup> Over the years, the factory he opened developed into a metal foundry specialising in the production of ship engines. Among other things, large water wheels, driving wheels, and water pumps were built. The shipyard was called Fabbrica Macchine di Sant'Andrea.<sup>128</sup> The favourable location and the increase in trade led to the rapid development of the Strudthoff company. The shipyard employed about 400 workers at that time. In 1846, the first steam engines produced in the region were built here. In the same year, Georg Strudthoff founded a similar foundry in the neighbouring town of Muggia, employing 80 workers. After Strudthoff's death, his sons took over the company in 1847.<sup>129</sup> The Strudthoff company gradually expanded. Two shipyards in Muggia, San Rocco and San Marco, were added to the center. Together, they formed the „Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino.“<sup>130</sup>

After the First World War and the transfer of Trieste to Italy, the yard entered a new phase of development. The company has now secured international orders by acquiring foreign licenses. In 1930, the company merged with Cantieri Riuniti dell'Adriatico. In the following years, they specialised in the production of warships. After the Second World War and a period of stagnation, Fabbrica Macchine, under the management of engineer Edoardo Sinigaglia, experienced an economic upturn. This led to the construction of new production halls in Sant'Andrea and the need for a canteen with changing rooms. The contract was awarded directly to the architect, Marcello d'Olivio. The design was completed in 1956, and construction began just one year later, in April, although the architect was not involved.

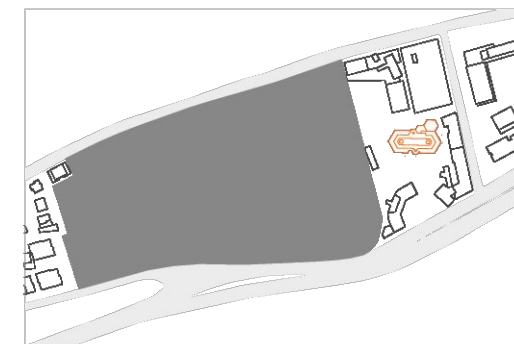
Following the completion of the canteen, the yard entered a period of economic expansion. Strudthoff restructured itself and decided to decentralise its production centre near the Slovenian border. As a result, the shipyard closed in 1972, and the buildings were dismantled and demolished, with the exception of the canteen.<sup>131</sup>



1900 - Fabbrica Macchine of Sant'Andrea



1957 - Extended Factory and completed Canteen



1973 - Demolition with the Exception of the Canteen

<sup>127</sup> Alessandra Biasi, Caterina Driutti, and Andrea Maserati, *La Fabbrica per Spogliatoi e Mensa di Marcello D'Olivio*, Fra Oblio e Salvaguardia (Milan: AngeliFranco, 2022), 97.

<sup>128</sup> Fabio Francescatto, and Bruno Pizzamei. „Giorgio Strudthoff“ *aTrieste.eu*. Last modified September 2023. Accessed July 2024. [https://www.atrieste.eu/Wiki/doku.php?id=storia\\_ts:biografie:strudthoff\\_giorgio\\_simeone](https://www.atrieste.eu/Wiki/doku.php?id=storia_ts:biografie:strudthoff_giorgio_simeone).

<sup>129</sup> Francescatto and Pizzamei, „Giorgio Strudthoff.“

<sup>130</sup> Biasi, Driutti and Maserati. *La Fabbrica per Spogliatoi e Mensa di Marcello D'Olivio*, 97.

<sup>131</sup> Biasi, Driutti and Maserati. *La Fabbrica per Spogliatoi e Mensa di Marcello D'Olivio*, 98.



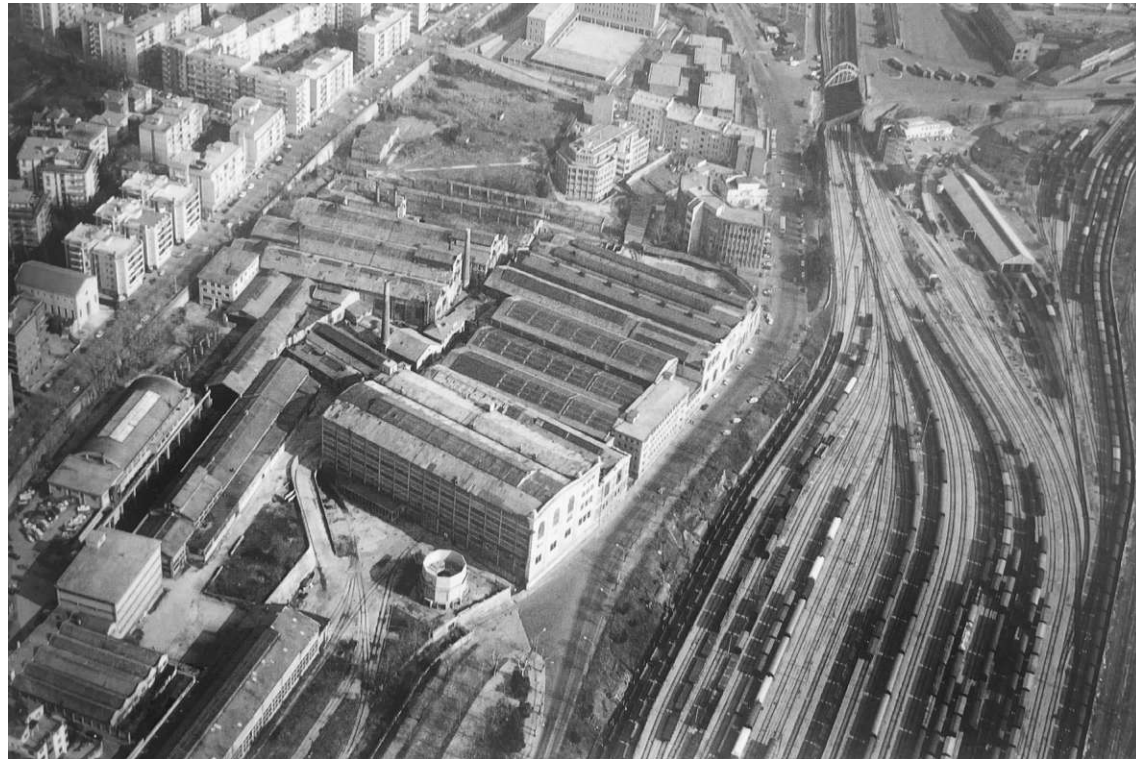


Fig. 20 | Industrial Complex of Sant'Andrea

Fig. 21 | Demolition of the Complex

FROM CANTEEN TO DECLAY

The canteen, designed by d'Olivo in 1957, is the link between the industrial complex and the port city. With the closure of the industrial complex, however, the building lost its original function and has been vacant ever since. The building slowly fell into disrepair, accelerated by neglect and vandalism. Today, the building is in danger of being completely forgotten. Its 14 years of use as a canteen, followed by over 50 years of vacancy, are worthy of note.

In 1977, the canteen was converted for the first time into a residential area. Twenty years later, in 1997, due to its proximity to the Guardia di Finanza, the building was reused as a military building. This conversion was part of an effort to give the building a new function and maintain its importance in a changing urban environment. An important step was the signing of a 20-year lease between the City of Trieste and the Guardia di Finanza in 2005, which provided for the transformation of the canteen into barracks and a financial office.<sup>132</sup> In 2006, the City of Trieste submitted a request for a review of the canteen's cultural value. This request was initially postponed because less than 50 years had passed since the building was completed. In 2008, a comprehensive renovation project was drawn up, which also required a declaration of cultural interest. However, the numerous contradictions between the requirements of monument protection, the need to reorganise the interior, and the security requirements led to the failure of the military conversion.<sup>133</sup>

The building became increasingly isolated and deteriorated, while the will to maintain it diminished. At the end of 2008, after fifty years, the City Council renewed the request for a review of its cultural interest, which led to the refectory being declared a protected cultural asset on January 28, 2009. The then Regional Director, Roberto di Paolo, recognised the architectural value of the building and declared it to be a heritage of special protection, whose preservation should be guaranteed.

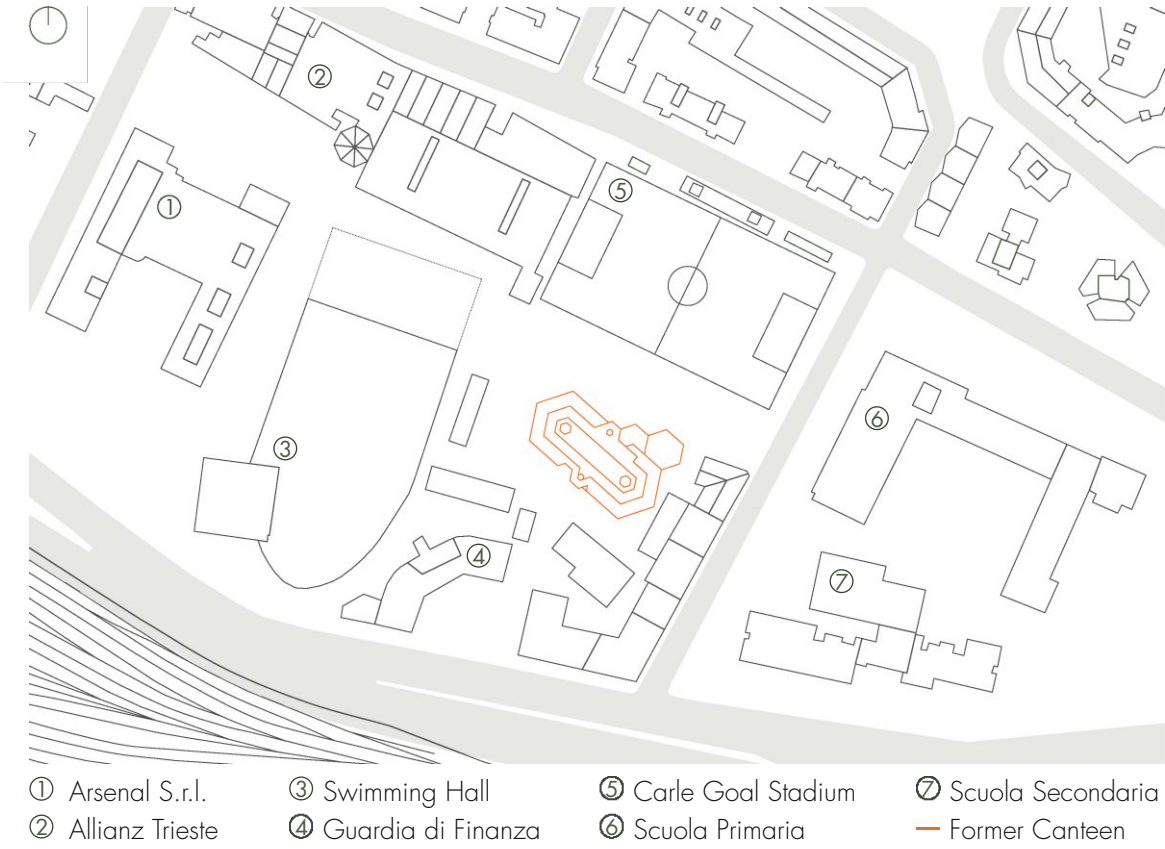
In October 2009, the Historic Preservation Board approved the planned restoration. However, the strict use requirements proved to be an obstacle to the preservation of the building.

The update of seismic safety requirements in 2010 required extensive adjustments to the structural project, resulting in profound changes that compromised the original qualities of the work and ultimately contributed to the abandonment of the project. By 2013, six years after the lease was signed, the project had not been completed. The delays and rising costs led to the abandonment of the project and the inclusion of the building in the City Council's Disposal and Improvement Plan.<sup>134</sup> In 2016, DOCOMO became interested in the canteen, but by then it had fallen into serious disrepair.<sup>135</sup>

The story of the former refectory illustrates the challenges of preserving a historic building in the area of conflict between historic preservation, changing usage requirements, and modern safety standards. Despite repeated attempts to preserve the former rectory, it continues to deteriorate.

134 Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell' architettura come patrimonio culturale," 47-55.

135 Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell' architettura come patrimonio culturale," 19-25.

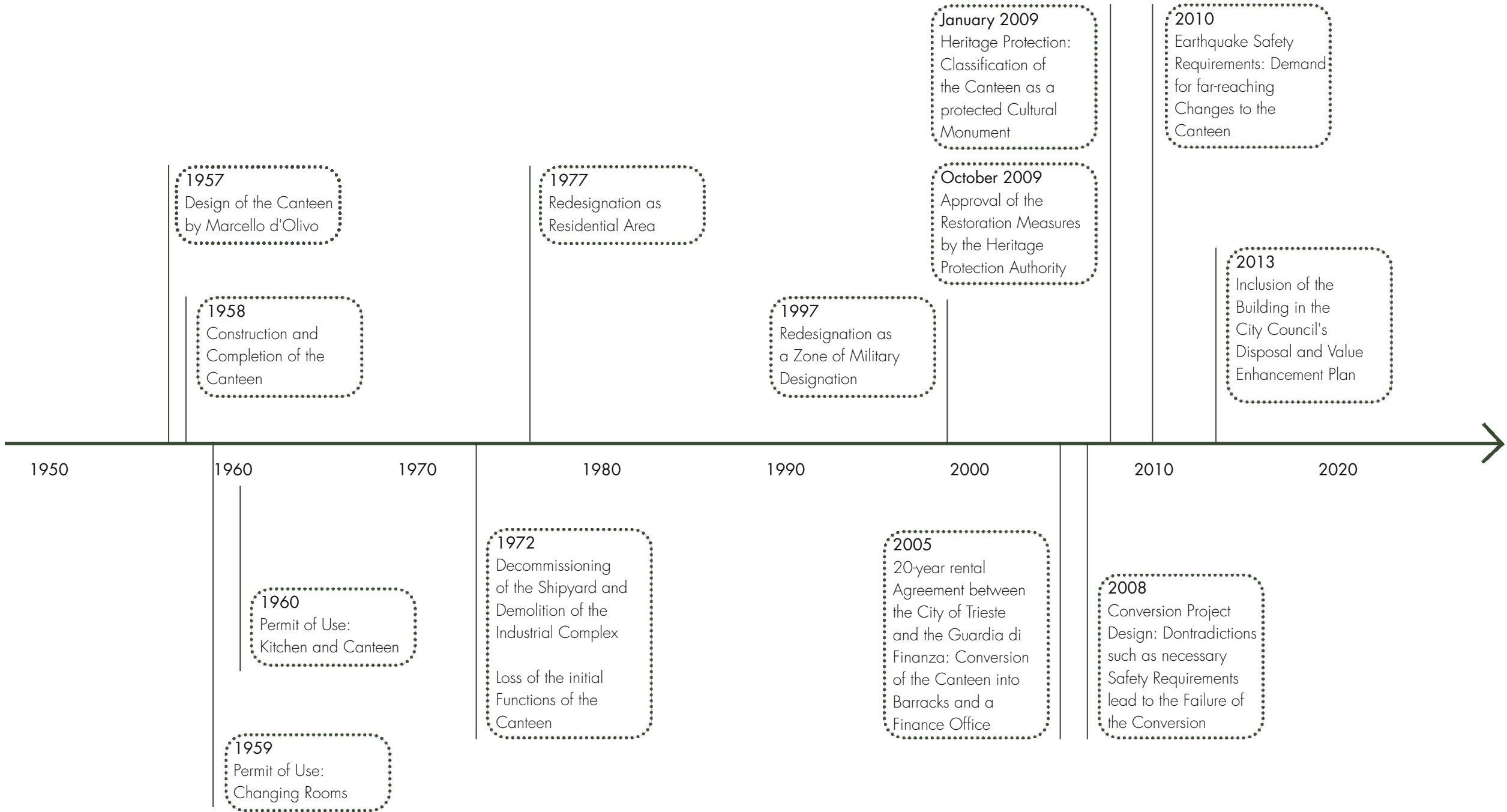


132 Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell' architettura come patrimonio culturale," 39-46.

133 Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell' architettura come patrimonio culturale," 47-55.

LIFELINE OF THE FORMER CANTEEN

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ABANDONED, NEGLECTED, FORGOTTEN





Fig. 22 | Canteen and its Neighbourhood

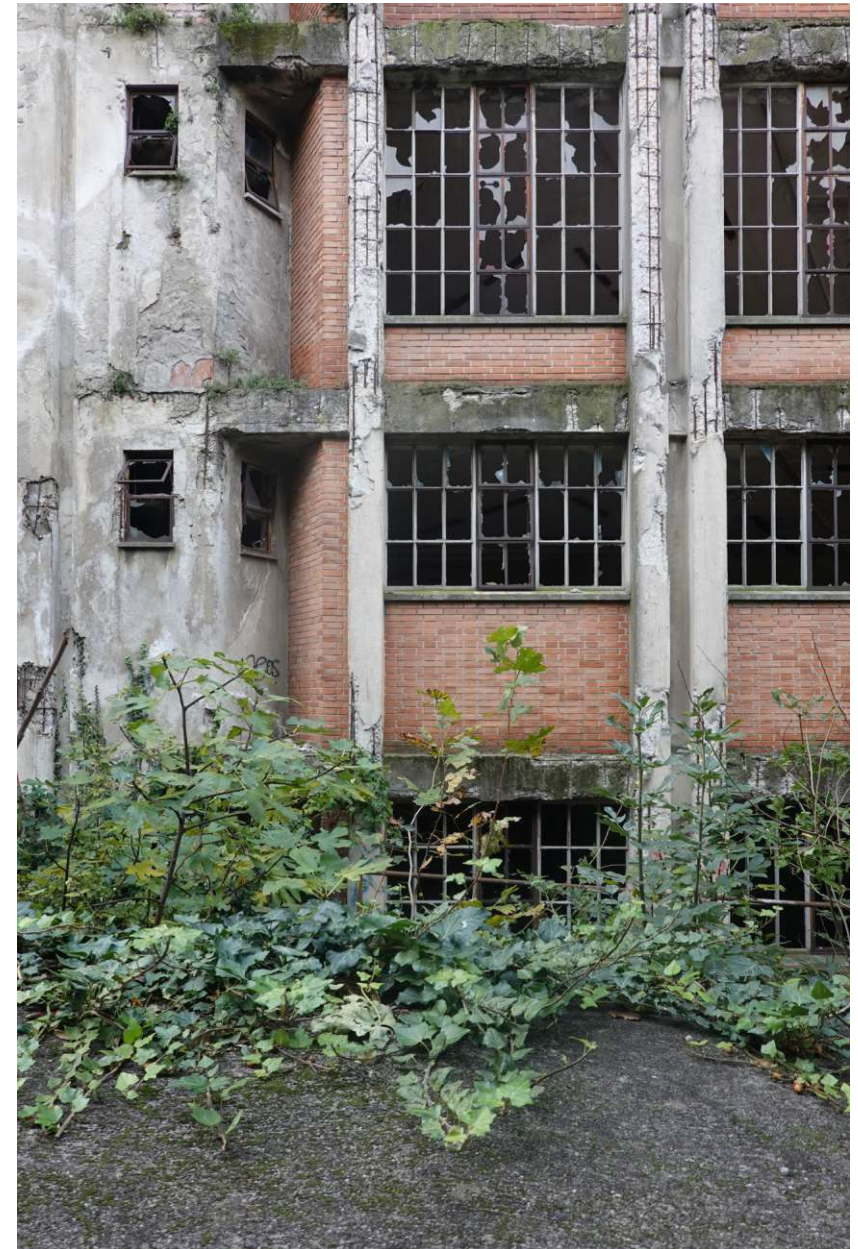


Fig. 23 | Facade, detailed View









Fig. 24 | Canteen, northern View (Previous Page)  
 Fig. 25 | Entrance, detailed View



Fig. 26 | Foyer, triangular Module Ceiling Offset  
 Fig. 27 | Foyer, Labour Time recording Boards

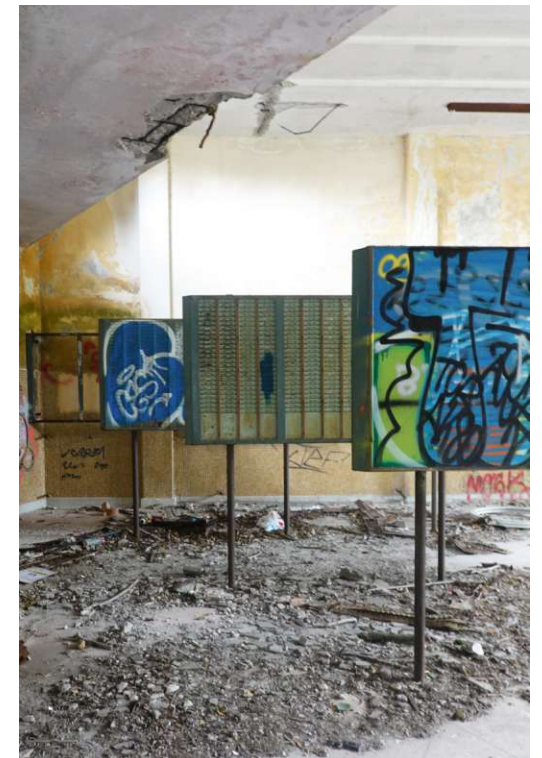






Fig. 28 | Foyer, two-storey Entrance Hall



Fig. 29 | Access Corridor









Fig. 30 | Hexagon, open Structure (Previous Page)  
 Fig. 31 | Hexagon, Chimney and Concrete Columns



Fig. 32 | Hexagon, Chimney and Concrete Columns



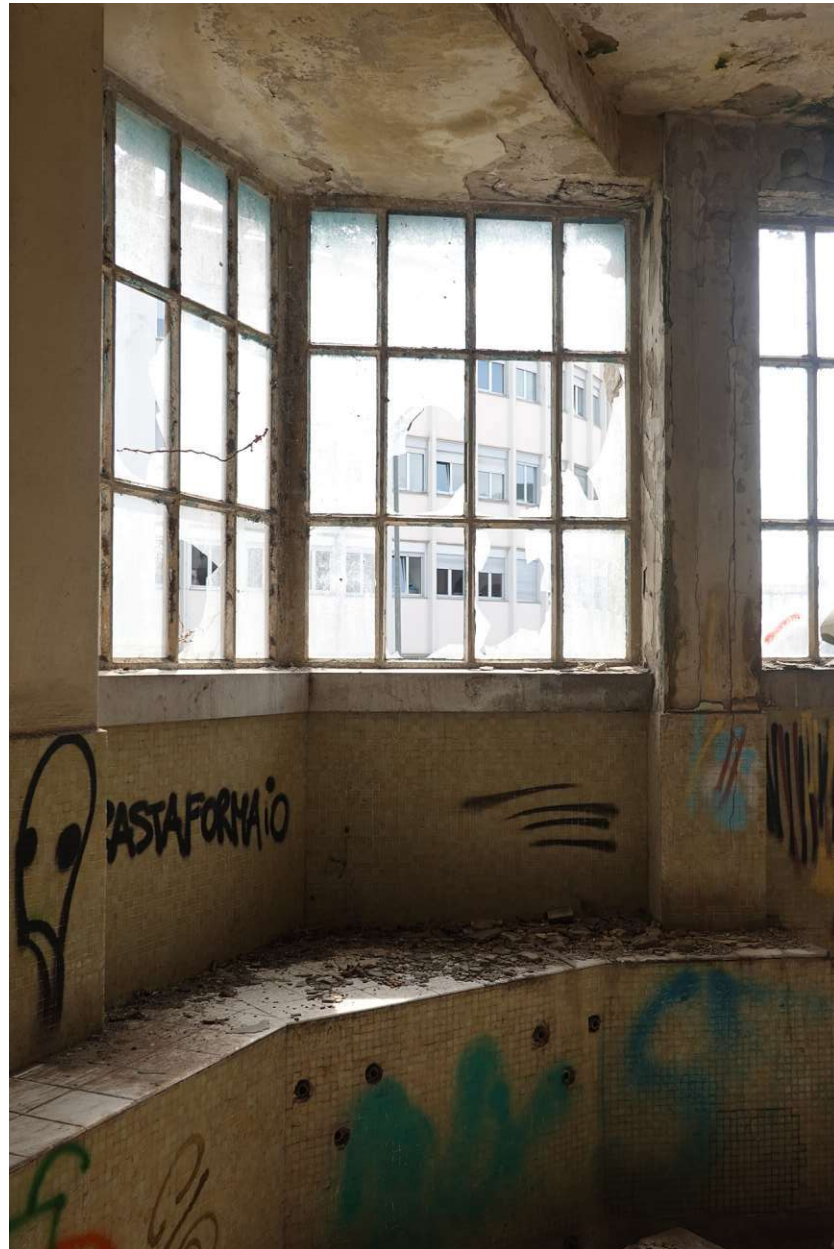


Fig. 33 | Hexagon, Proximity to the Neighbourhood  
Fig. 34 | Kitchen, open Structure (Page 65)

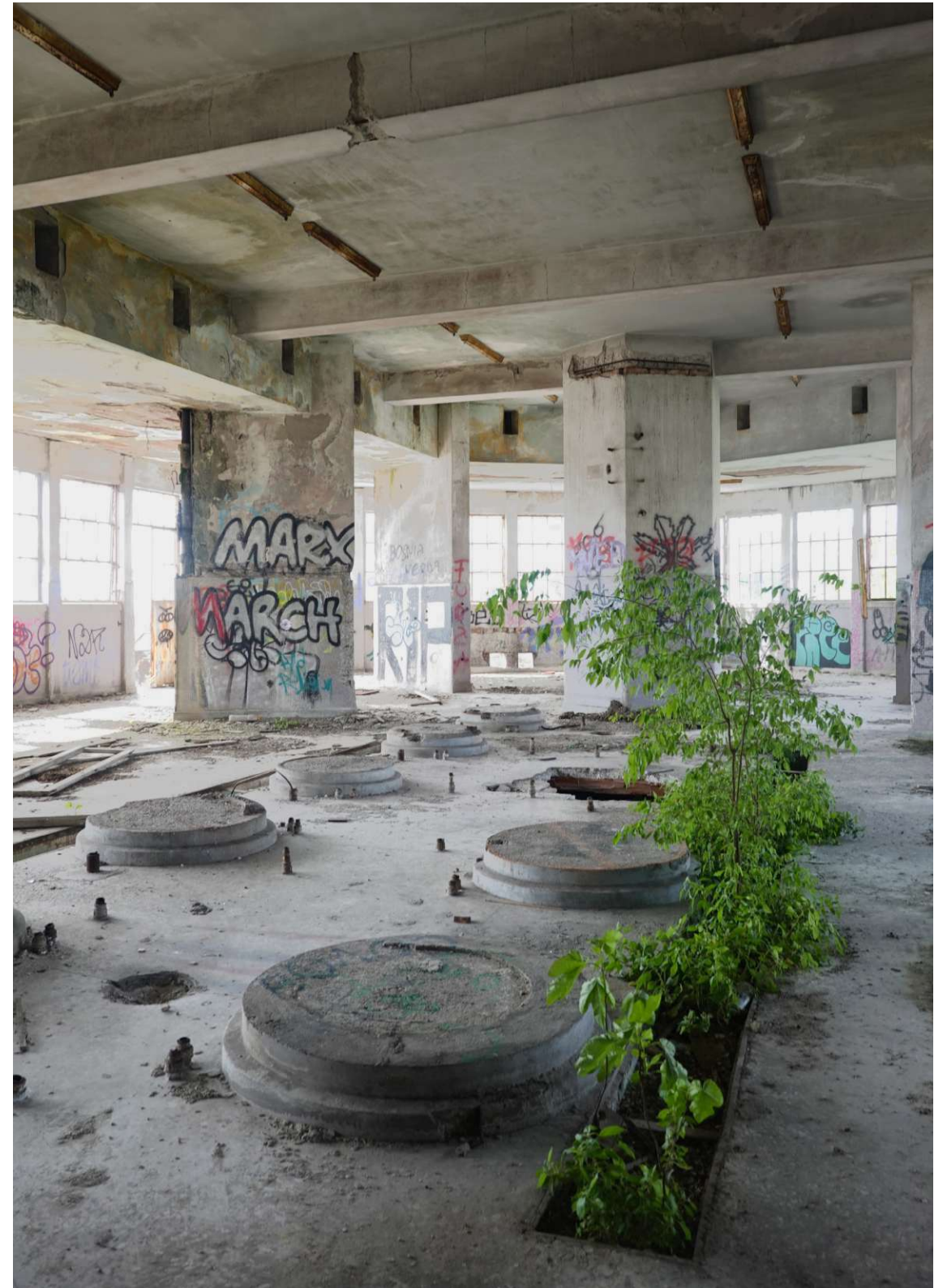




Fig. 35 | Marcello D'Olivo

# THE ARCHITECT D'OLIVO

One of the most important representatives of experimental organic architecture in Italy is Marcello D'Olivo. His architectural design is an attempt to restore the balance between humankind and nature. D'Olivo derived geometric figures and mathematical rules from nature, which in turn found expression in his built architecture. The architect showed great interest in painting and biology. His works show an obvious reference to Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. From Wright, D'Olivo adopted the principle that the building should be a harmonious whole in the context of its surroundings.<sup>136</sup> He was also a member of the Association for Organic Architecture (APAO), founded by Bruno Zevi.<sup>137</sup> D'Olivo published texts such as 'In Discorso per un'altra architettura' [D'Olivo 1975], in which he describes the relationship between buildings and the natural world. He stresses the analogy between the tree and the city, the leaf and the house. In his built architecture, we find the search for harmony and humankind's participation in this search.<sup>138</sup>

## BIOGRAPHY

Marcello D'Olivo was born in Udine on 27 February 1921, the son of Giuseppina Del Toso and Antonio. His father was a painter and decorator. After finishing primary school, D'Olivo dropped out and worked as a salesman in a food cooperative. He later returned to school, graduating in 1939. In 1942, D'Olivo completed his studies at the art school in Venice. In the same year, at the age of 23, D'Olivo decided to study architecture at the Faculty of Architecture in Venice, graduating in 1947.<sup>139</sup>

Three years after graduating, D'Olivo began work on the Villaggio del Fanciullo in Opicina. This brought him recognition and national criticism. According to Zevi, the building was an

136 Riavis, Veronica. "Introduzione." In *Geometrie e transizioni dal paesaggio all'architettura: l'abitare a Lignano per Marcello D'Olivo, 1970-1985*. Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2023.

137 Sarno, Carlo. "Marcello D'Olivo (1921-1991) Architettura," *Amici della Architettura Organica Blog*, July 2019, <https://amicidellaarchitetturaorganica.blogspot.com/2019/07/marcello-dolivo-1921-1991-architettura.html>.

138 Riavis, "Introduzione," 2023.

139 Sarno, "Marcello D'Olivo (1921-1991) Architettura."



outstanding example of rationalist architecture and organic tendencies in Italy.<sup>140</sup> At the same time, D'Olivio also built the CRDA canteen as an extension to the Sant'Andrea industrial complex. The completion of the canteen marked the end of D'Olivio's design experience in the city of Trieste,<sup>141</sup> and he later met Leonardo Sinisgalli in Milan, who saw D'Olivio as the new architect on the Italian scene. In 1952, D'Olivio was commissioned to design the development plan for Lignano Pineta. Three years later he designed the satellite cities of Rome and Canberra, and in 1957 D'Olivio won the competition to restore the Omar Dome in Jerusalem. He went on to design the university town of Ryad and built the Mouasher Hospital in Amman.

Other projects included the construction of the village of Manacore in the Gargano (1959-1963), the design of the Zipser in Grado (from 1960), and the tourist centre in Ravenna (1962-1963), which he built with Ludovico Quaroni. In 1965, D'Olivio founded his own firm in Rome and began planning the capital of Gabon, Libreville. He went on to work on numerous projects in Africa, publishing pioneering texts and seeking a harmonious relationship between nature and architecture.<sup>142</sup>

The architect also took part in the 1978 and 1982 Venice Biennales. Saddam Hussein commissioned him to design the Unknown Soldier Memorial in Baghdad in 1979. For this work, he was awarded the prize of the Convention Européenne de la Construction Métallique in 1983. In 1986, he planned to move to the United States, where he organised an exhibition in Los Angeles and presented a new version of the tower he had designed in 1960 for the Fermi Memorial Competition in Chicago. After the exhibition, he returned to Udine and designed his last major building, a school complex in Gorizia, from 1986 to 1991.<sup>143</sup>

In the last years of his life, D'Olivio devoted himself more and more to painting. In 1991 he created two large paintings: "Destruction of Nature," which is kept in Udine, and "Chernobyl," an unfinished work that is considered a modern "Guernica." D'Olivio died in Udine on 24 August 1991. He was 70 years old.<sup>144</sup>

140 archINFORM, "Marcello D'Olivo,"  
archINFORM database, accessed  
October 12, 2024, [https://dev.  
archinform.net/arch/18335.htm](https://dev.archinform.net/arch/18335.htm).

141 Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell'architettura come patrimonio culturale," 39-46.

142 archINFORM, "Marcello D'Olivio."

143 An Exhibition at Udine Castle Celebrates Marcello D'Olivio, Visionary Artist and Architect," *Finestre sull'Arte*, March 5, 2022, <https://www.finestresullarte.info/en/exhibitions/an-exhibition-at-udine-castle-celebrates-marcello-d-olivio-visionary-artist-and-architect>.

144 archINFORM, "Marcello D'Olivo."

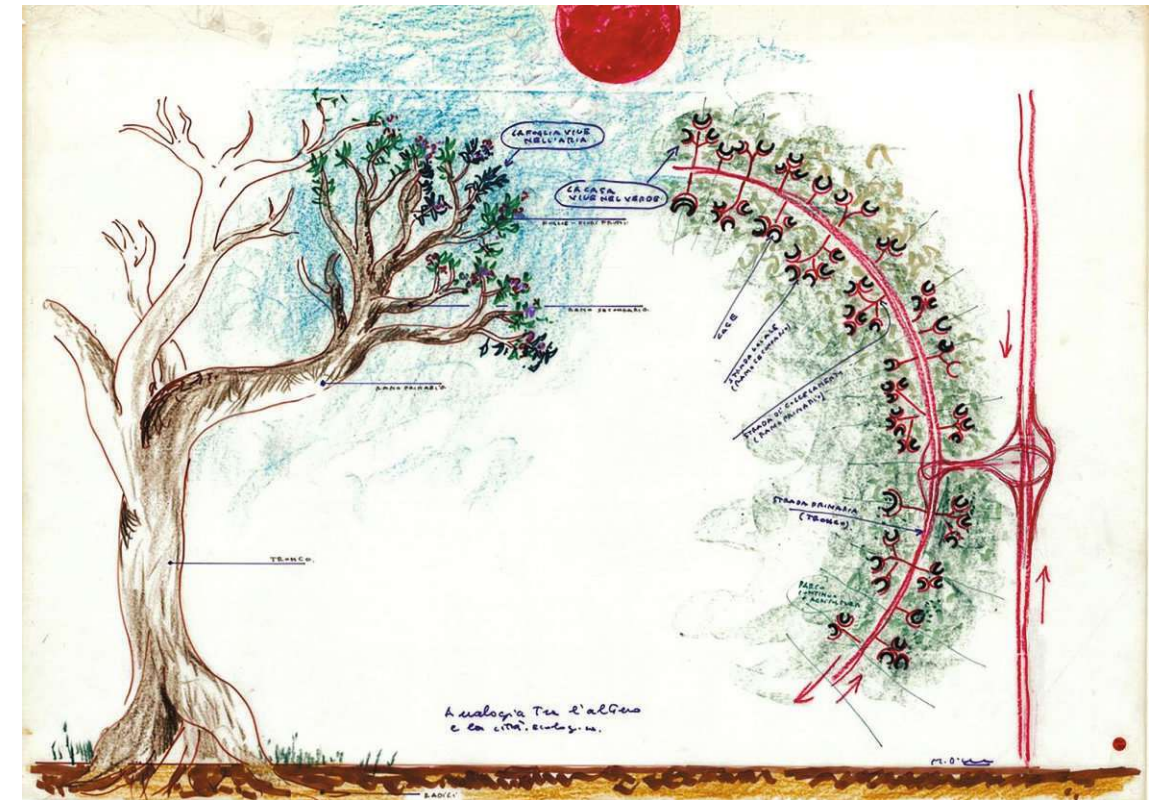


Fig. 36 | Marcello D'Olivio, "Analogy between the tree and the ecological city".





Fig. 37 | Villaggio dei Fanciulli, View from Outside  
 Fig. 38 | Villaggio dei Fanciulli, View from Inside



The Villaggio dei Fanciulli at Opicina, near Trieste, was founded as a charity for refugee children from Istria. The educational and vocational center was designed by Marcello D'Olivo between 1950 and 1957<sup>145</sup> and consists of an ensemble of buildings, including a school with a kindergarten, three houses, a workshop building, and a printing press. The central building is the canteen, which clearly shows the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. In the plan, two squares, one above the other, form the main rooms, which are connected by an elongated structure. The resulting 45 degrees became the defining design element, from the smallest detail such as the handrails to the external appearance.<sup>146</sup> The superimposition of several grids creates a variety of communal spaces with different room heights. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete with sloping walls, angular projections, and large expanses of glass.

The construction of the seaside resort on the tip of the Lignano Pineta began in 1952. The strip of land between the Friulian lagoons and the Adriatic Sea was to be developed. Until then, the area had been characterized by untouched nature. Investors planned to develop the area with roads to prepare it for sales and camping sites. The competition was won by Marcello D'Olivo, who experimented with organic forms. The whole project is based on an ever-widening spiral. This shape avoids conventional road construction and integrates with the existing landscape. The architecture blends into the terrain without obscuring views of the different landscapes.

The architect's aim was to create infrastructure such as houses, hotels, and shops that would blend into the pine forest; buildings that would blend into the environment, without coatings, well ventilated, and partially elevated to leave space for nature. After the construction of a commercial building along a spiral main road, holiday homes, terraced houses, and a camping center were built. The peninsula is characterized by

<sup>145</sup> Ministry of Culture of Italy, "Sacramento Militare di Redipuglia," Censimento Nazionale delle Architetture del Secondo Novecento, accessed October 20, 2024, <https://censimentoarchitetturecontemporaneecultura.gov.it/scheda-opera?id=1522>.

<sup>146</sup> Martin und Werner Feiersinger. *Italo Modern*. Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 2012, 38.



Fig. 39 | Lignano Pineta  
Fig. 40 | Monument of the unknown Soldiers

its varied vegetation and geographical diversity, reminiscent of different regions of the world.<sup>147</sup> One of the buildings constructed in Lignano Pineta is Villa Mainardis, designed and built between 1953 and 1955. D'Olivio designed a circular layout with a central courtyard. The villa is flat and has two levels. The garage and laundry room are on the lower level, while the living and sleeping areas are on the upper level. The centerpiece of the villa is the spiral staircase, which is located in the middle of the floor plan and connects the two floors.<sup>148</sup> Although the original landscape was altered by the construction of the villa, the existing pine trees in the garden are a reminder of D'Olivio's efforts to harmonize architecture and nature.

#### MONUMENT OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIERS, BAGHDAD, 1978 - 1982

The Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Baghdad was created by D'Olivio and Hisham Munir at the request of Saddam Hussein in 1978. The original concept came from the late Iraqi sculptor Khalid Al Rahaal. The Monument to the Unknown Soldier is a monument in the centre of Baghdad dedicated to the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq War.

The monument stands on a circular base 13 meters high and 250 meters in diameter. This artificial mound is surrounded by sloping triangular beams. These are covered with marble. In the centre of the base is a large cantilevered dome. This symbolises a dira'a, an Iraqi shield, falling from the hands of a dying warrior. Red granite steps and elliptical platforms lead up to the dome. The cantilevered dome is made of reinforced concrete and has a diameter of 42 meters and an inclination of 12 degrees. The exterior of the dome is covered in copper. The inner surface has a slab of alternating pyramidal modules of steel and copper. The promenade is covered by a semicircular flat roof supported by a triangular steel strut. The roof is covered with copper sheeting, and the soffit is made up of V-shaped panels in stainless steel and Murano glass. A flagpole representing the colours of the Iraqi national flag is made of steel covered with Murano glass panels.<sup>149</sup>

147 Domus, "A Lignano, Il Progetto di Marcello D'Olivio," Domus, July 11, 2023, <https://www.domusweb.it/it/dall-archivio/2023/07/11/a-lignano-il-progetto-di-marcello-dolivio.html>.

148 Ministry of Culture, "Villa Mainardis."

149 Archnet, "Unknown Soldier Monument," last modified April 24, 2014, <https://www.archnet.org/sites/693>.



# V. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

References throughout the Design Process

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Fig. 41 | The Primitive Hut



# ELEMENT OF TRADITION

## LINA BO BARDI, OXCART STAIR, SALVADOR, 1959

Architect Lina Bo Bardi was born in Rome in 1914 and moved to Brazil in 1946. She worked in various creative fields as an architect, stage designer, illustrator, furniture designer, and curator. In her work, Lina managed to weave traditional values into modernity. She organised spaces without hierarchies and created a culture of sociable diversity. An environment that integrates all people. Her ability to engage with cultures and see the potential in all people is reflected in her approach to architecture.<sup>150</sup>

In 1958, Lina Bo Bardi discovered and restored the Unhão complex in Salvador, Brazil. It became the new home of the Popular Art Museum and the Popular University. The installation of a new spiral staircase, known as the Oxcart Stair, illustrates Lina Bo Bardi's approach to using architecture as an expression of social and cultural identity. The location was once a gathering point for slaves, and the construction of the staircase was meant to reference their oppression, making its design a poignant historical and social commentary. The spiral staircase is sculptural and free in space. The staircase is inscribed in a rectangle measuring 410 x 470 cm, bounded by four existing square columns. These are part of the original structure of the building. The staircase winds around a central circular column, and each perimeter beam supports four trapezoidal steps. These are supported by a spike-like fixture fixed externally with vertical wedges. The fittings and pins used are inspired by the technique of oxcart construction.

The use of wood and the oxcart fastening system are examples of the harmonious integration of tradition and modernity. Lina Bo Bardi has thus succeeded in redefining the limits of architectural expression.<sup>151</sup>



Fig. 42 | The Oxcart Stair  
Fig. 43 | Detail inspired by the Oxcart

<sup>150</sup> Noemi Blager, Lina Bo Bardi: Together (Vienna: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2021), [https://past.azw.at/data/media/cms\\_binary/original/1368871465.pdf](https://past.azw.at/data/media/cms_binary/original/1368871465.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> Ivana Kudlacek, "Lina Bo Bardi and Her Helicoidal Wooden Staircase: Tradition and Modernity," ArchDaily, December 12, 2019, <https://www.archdaily.com/959306/lina-bo-bardi-and-her-helicoidal-wooden-staircase-tradition-and-modernity>.



122

Fig. 44 | Facade of the Cité du Grand Parc

*„Transformation is the opportunity of doing more and better with what is already existing. The demolishing is a decision of easiness and short term. It is a waste of many things—a waste of energy, a waste of material, and a waste of history. Moreover, it has a very negative social impact. For us, it is an act of violence..“*<sup>152</sup>

Anne Lacaton

## IN BETWEEN

### LACATON & VASSAL, CITÉ DU GRAND PARC, BORDEAUX, 2017

The French architectural duo Lacaton & Vassal is one of the most important proponents of social and sustainable architecture; the firm stands for minimal interventions that question the economic and ecological background of construction.<sup>153</sup>

Using simple and industrial materials, the firm creates affordable yet high-quality living spaces, pursuing an architectural philosophy of addition where the existing building is respected and extended in order to increase and improve the quality of life.

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The Cité du Grand Parc project in Bordeaux illustrates how architectural value can be added through transformation and minimal intervention: instead of demolishing the three occupied social housing buildings, it was decided to renovate them. Lacaton & Vassal opted for an add-on remodelling strategy, defining responsible living for the future by adding extended conservatories and balconies. The living situation was fundamentally changed by this minimal intervention. Each apartment has gained more natural light, a more pleasant living situation, and a view of Bordeaux.

With this project, the often criticised social housing has been transformed into pleasant and efficient apartments. The typology has been renewed, the quality of life has been improved, and the urban image has been enhanced.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Anne Lacaton, quoted in "Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal Receive the 2021 Pritzker Architecture Prize," ArchDaily, March 16, 2021, <https://www.archdaily.com/958565/anne-lacaton-and-jean-philippe-vassal-receive-the-2021-pritzker-architecture-prize>.

<sup>153</sup> Vorarlberger Architektur Institut, "Lacaton & Vassal – Ausstellung," accessed October 27, 2024, <https://v-a-i.at/ausstellungen/lacaton-vassal>.

<sup>154</sup> Lacaton & Vassal Architectes, "Awards and Distinctions," accessed October 27, 2024, <https://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=80#>.



# TEXTILE SHELTER



## LUCY ORTA, REFUGE WEAR INTERVENTION, LONDON 1992-1998

British artist Lucy Orta's work explores the interaction between the individual body and community structures. She explores multiple identities and ways of living together. Her work focuses on marginalised and vulnerable people and communities, such as prisoners, the homeless, and refugees. Lucy Orta works in a variety of media, including drawing, sculpture, photography, film, and performance. She founded Studio Orta with her partner Jorge Orta in 1992. Her work has received numerous awards, including the Andy Warhol Foundation Visual Arts Award.<sup>155</sup>

The 1998 intervention *Refuge Wear* explores individual shelters as a response to increasing situations of human misery and inadequate social environments. The series was created during the Gulf War and the subsequent stock market crash. With this project, Lucy Orta wanted to symbolise a humanitarian appeal for the Kurdish refugees who often sought shelter on the streets of Paris. The *Refuge Wear* art project illustrates the temporary shelter that can be transformed into clothing to provide protection from harsh conditions in emergency situations. The aluminium surface of the tents creates a wind and waterproof poncho. The arms and hooded appendages represent the relationship between the outside and the environment. *Refuge Wear* is thus a portable shelter and stands for the concept of freedom of movement.

The public interventions staged in the 1990s were intended to combat the disappearance of social groups and make invisible populations visible. The aim of the intervention was to draw attention to social problems in society.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> "Lucy Orta," accessed October 27, 2024, <https://researchers.arts.ac.uk/740-lucy-orta>.

<sup>156</sup> Lucy Orta, "Refuge Wear: Intervention, London East End, 1998," Studio Orta, accessed October 27, 2024, <https://www.studio-orta.com/en/artwork/86/Refuge-Wear-Intervention-London-East-End-1998>.

Fig. 45 | Refugee Wear Intervention

# ALTERNATIVE LIVING



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Fig. 46 | Ground Floor: Possibility Nucleus Flats  
Fig. 47 | Ground Floor: Possibility Branch Flats

## OFFICE JULIANE GREB AND SUMMACUMFEMMER, SAN RIEMO, MUNICH IN 2020

The office of Juliane Greb was founded in Ghent in 2015 and stands for anti-exclusive architecture that is accessible in a social, physical, and emotional sense. The central starting point of the work is to build on and critically question existing architectural and social structures.

The aim was to create a topology that moves away from heteronormative, classic nuclear family layouts and offers openness so that as many people as possible can find themselves in it, the question of participation is addressed, and access for all is achieved.

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The apartments in San Riemo are characterised by the fact that they can grow and shrink and that living spaces can be shared. A floor plan structure was developed that can be inhabited in different ways. The various rooms are not hierarchical and are accessed via the kitchens.

The office of Juliane Greb shows that much of the architecture that represents our society today no longer corresponds to our social images and is not accessible to everyone in the same way. The question of participation and the weaving of social issues into architecture was an essential part of their design philosophy. The office won the DAM Architecture Prize in 2022 for the San Riemo project. The firm won the DAM Architecture Prize in 2022 for the San Riemo project.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Juliane Greb, "Wechseljahre," lecture,  
TU Wien, November 28, 2023.





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Fig. 48 | Grindbakken  
Fig. 49 | Traces of Gravel and Sand

*„For me, a building that has been given a new function is interesting if the traces of its history are still visible.“<sup>158</sup>*

Malgorzata Maria Olchowska

# TRACES OF HISTORY

## ROTOR, GRINDBAKKEN, GENT, 2012

The Belgian architectural collective Rotor, founded in Brussels in 2005, specialises in sustainable conversion strategies. Their aim is to focus on the reuse and recycling of building materials. The aim is to reduce the ecological footprint, and instead of disposing of building materials, Rotor conducts research to reuse some of the high-quality building elements. Rotor also bridges the gap between architecture, design, and sustainability. The collective is a pioneer in the development of ecological renovation strategies and inspires a responsible approach to building materials and existing buildings.

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The Grindbakken project, realised in 2012, was part of a master plan for the docks of Ghent. The plan involved converting the Grindbakken, a 160-meter-long concrete structure, into a multi-purpose area open to the public. The new use would be supplied with water and electricity, and the entire existing building would be painted white. In the past, the concrete structure was used to transfer gravel and sand between ships and trucks. The depots were used to store gravel and sand. A bright red colour in the depots also indicates the storage of iron ore. This is just one of many colours visible on the concrete walls. There is also a prominent seam running through the wall, as the concrete was poured in two stages. The concrete above the joint was of poorer quality and contained more gravel.

In order to preserve these traces of the existing structure, Rotor decided to intervene in the painting process, deliberately leaving certain areas exposed and documenting them. This approach to the existing building allowed traces of the industrial past to be captured and gave the historic site a multi-layered meaning.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Malgorzata Maria Olchowska, "Interview" Vlaams Architectuurinstituut, accessed November 8, 2024, <https://www.vai.be/en/news/interview-with-malgorzata-maria-olchowska-about-the-expo-in-red-star-line-museum-antwerp>.

<sup>159</sup> RotorDB, "Grindbakken," accessed October 21, 2024, <https://rotordb.org/en/projects/grindbakken>.



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# CULTURAL IDENTITY

## DJEMAA EL-FNA, MARRAKESH

The central market square in Marrakech reflects the traditional life of the Moroccan city. It is located in the historic centre and is surrounded by the narrow, labyrinthine alleys of the medina. The buildings surrounding the square blend into the background, providing a neutral backdrop. As an open space, the Djemaa el-Fna has both functional and cultural importance for the city.

Much more than a marketplace, the Djemaa el-Fna is a lively social meeting place. During the day, it is a hive of activity: vendors sell their wares, including spices, fresh fruit, handmade textiles, and jewellery. In the evening, the square is transformed into a stage for street performers and entertainment. Musicians, storytellers, snake charmers, fortune tellers, and more mingle with the merchants. This lively mix of crafts, music, gastronomy, and storytelling makes the Djemaa el-Fna a vibrant cultural centre that attracts both locals and tourists and reflects the diversity of Moroccan traditions.

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In terms of architecture and urban planning, the Djemaa el-Fna is a striking example of the functional and cultural role of a marketplace in Islamic urban planning. The structure of the square has hardly changed over the centuries, and today it functions as a living museum of the traditions that characterise it. Its inclusion on UNESCO's intangible heritage list underlines its international recognition. The Djemaa el-Fna illustrates how urban space can serve as a stage for daily life and how architecture and urban planning can help to preserve a vibrant cultural identity.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>160</sup> UNESCO, "Cultural Space of Jemaa el-Fna Square," accessed November 9, 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/cultural-space-of-jemaa-el-fna-square-00014>.

Fig. 50 | Djemaa el-fna

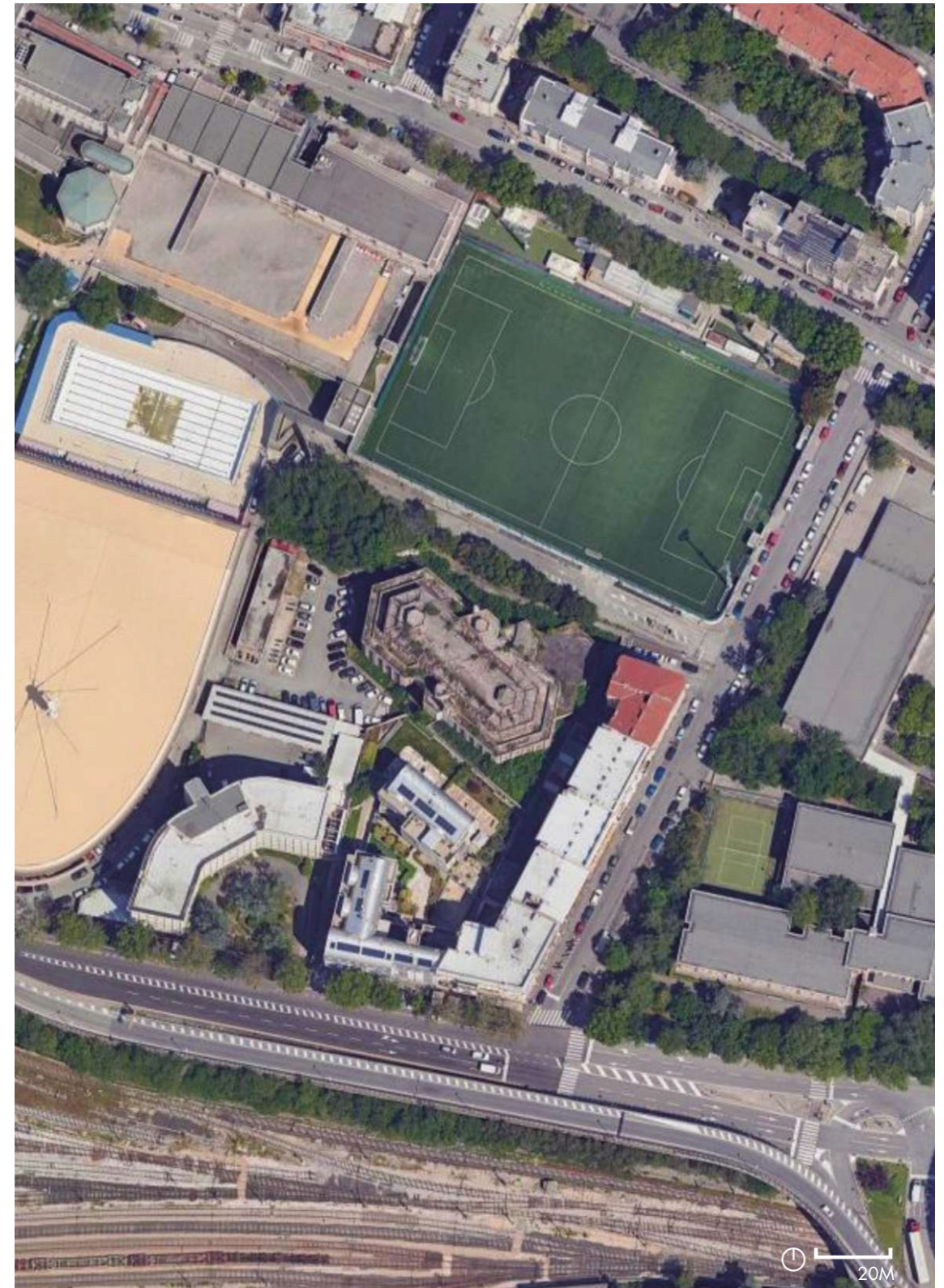


# VI. DESIGN RESPONSE

## Transformation of the former Canteen

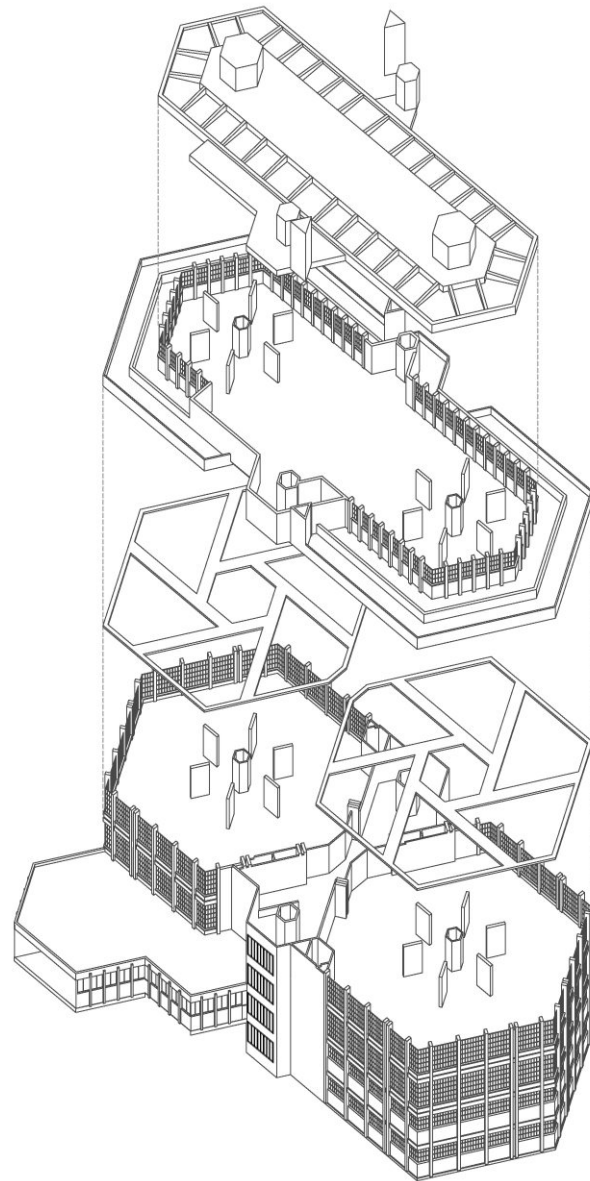
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Fig. 51 | The Surrounding



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# THE EXISTING



## D'OLIVO'S ORGANIC GEOMETRY

The existing building is characterised by its organic shape and strict geometric floor plans. The entire building is based on a modular grid of equilateral triangles with a side length of 1.5 meters. When designing the canteen, architect D'Olivo aimed for the human scale.<sup>161</sup>

Inspired by Paul Valéry's 'Dialogue de l'arbre,' a relationship between man and nature is intended. The image of the tree is used as a structural and symbolic element that is reflected in the architecture, particularly through the radial structure within the two hexagons. This way of working is typical of D'Olivo, and a reference to Wright's style is recognisable.<sup>162</sup>

## CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS

The building was designed with an umbrella structure: the six central load-bearing wall panels are connected to radial beams, which are connected to the facade with double columns. These bear the entire load of the building and give the former canteen its stability.

The structural part of the building was realised in exposed concrete. The facade made of red exposed brick and window openings made of concrete and glass contrast with the dominant reinforced concrete. The interior was fitted with customised furniture and partition elements.<sup>164</sup>

## DEALING WITH DECAY

The current condition of Marcello D'Olivo's former changing room and canteen building is characterised by neglect and structural decay. In addition, the canteen is often criticised as there is a discrepancy between D'Olivo's original design and the realised architecture. This raises questions about the building's listed status, as discussions about its authenticity and originality arise repeatedly.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell'architettura come patrimonio culturale," 47-55.

<sup>162</sup> Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell'architettura come patrimonio culturale," 34-37.

<sup>163</sup> Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell'architettura come patrimonio culturale," 15-17.

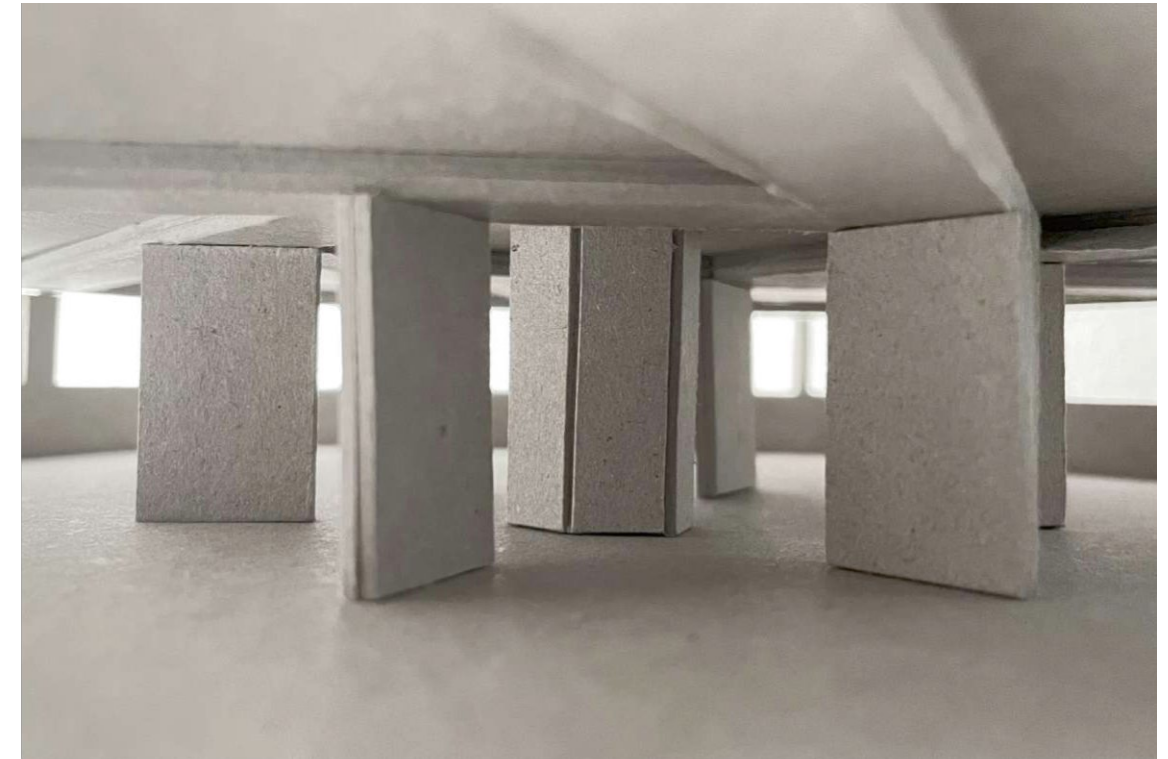
<sup>164</sup> Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell'architettura come patrimonio culturale," 64-68.



## SPATIAL PROGRAMME

### THE ENTRANCE AND CHANGING ROOMS

To the north of the main building is a single-story volume on the ground floor, which formed the main entrance to the entire factory. Workers could clock in here (Fig. 26). The hexagons on the ground floor and basement were used as changing rooms for the workers. In addition to sanitary facilities and cloakrooms, there were shower cubicles in the centre of the chimney. An exit in the basement led the workers to the rest of the factory premises.



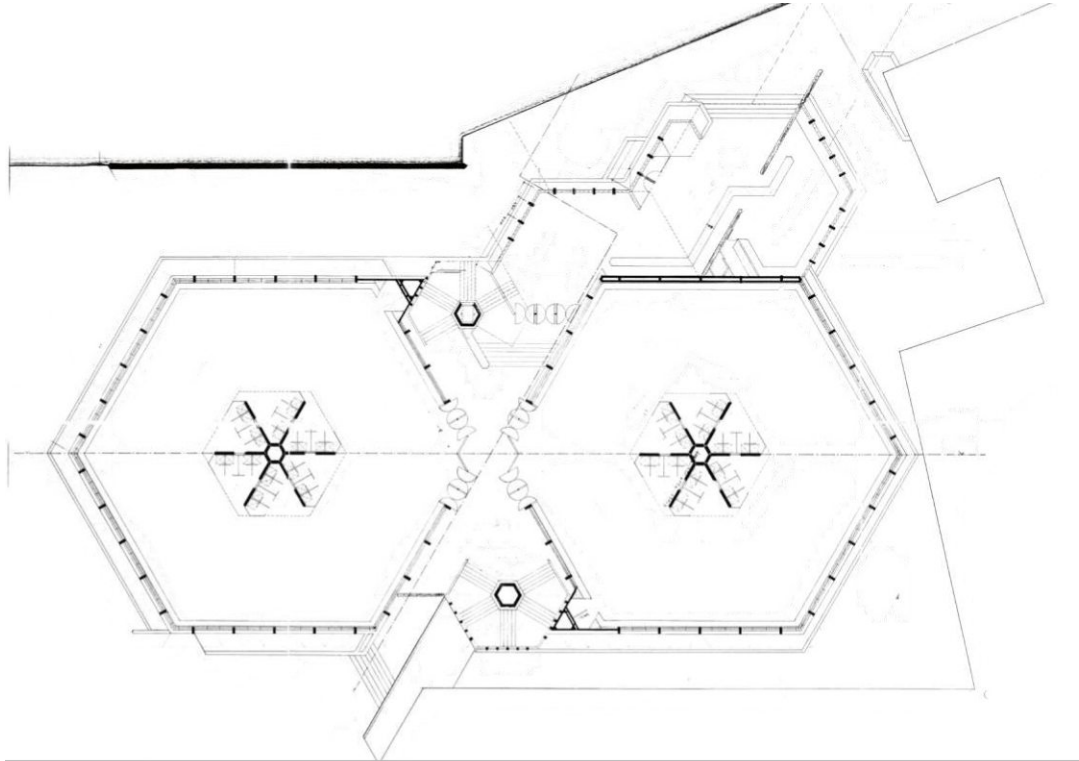
### THE CANTEEN

The two upper floors housed the canteen, where the tables were arranged radially around the central fireplace and the wall panels. Some of the wooden furniture is still preserved in the basement. The main connecting volume between the hexagons was used for access. The work flow of the workers was controlled, a flowing circulation was created, and access to the two flanking canteens was made possible.

### THE KITCHEN

On the top floor of the former canteen is the kitchen, where food was prepared for the factory workers and then distributed to the canteen. The volume of the top floor is offset inwards, creating a surrounding outdoor area. This outdoor area in turn reinforces D'Olivo's design principle of creating a relationship between the interior and exterior spaces. It also offers a panoramic view of the city of Trieste.

Working Model: Umbrella Structure



138 Fig. 52 | Ground Floor

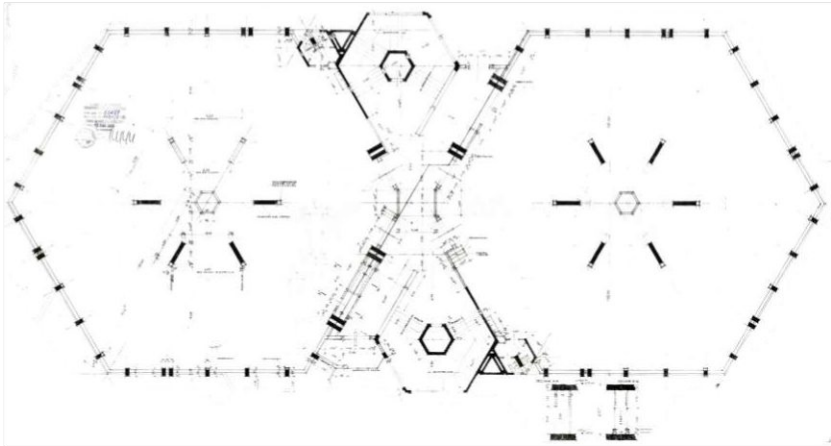


Fig. 54 | Typical Floor

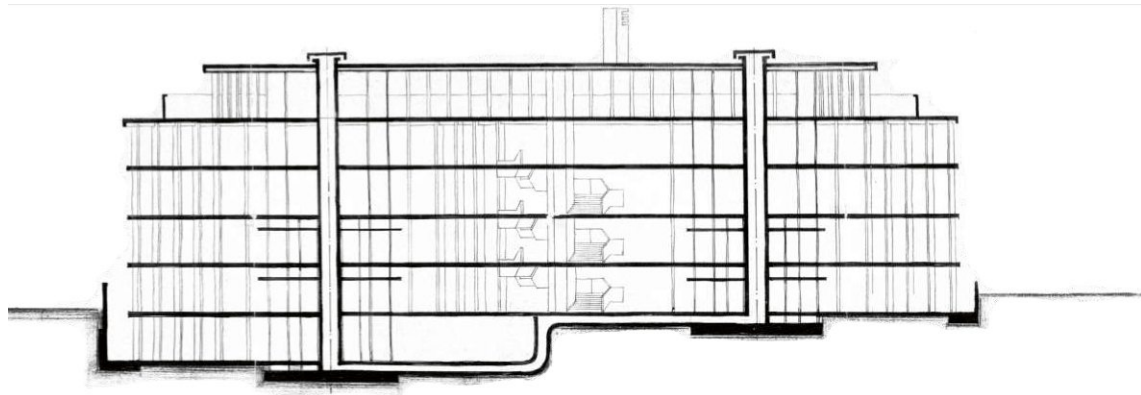


Fig. 53 | Longitudinal Section

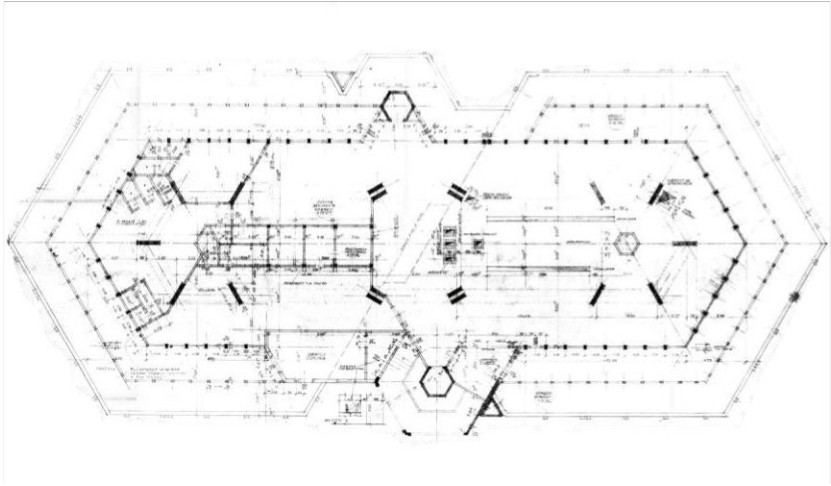


Fig. 55 | Top Floor



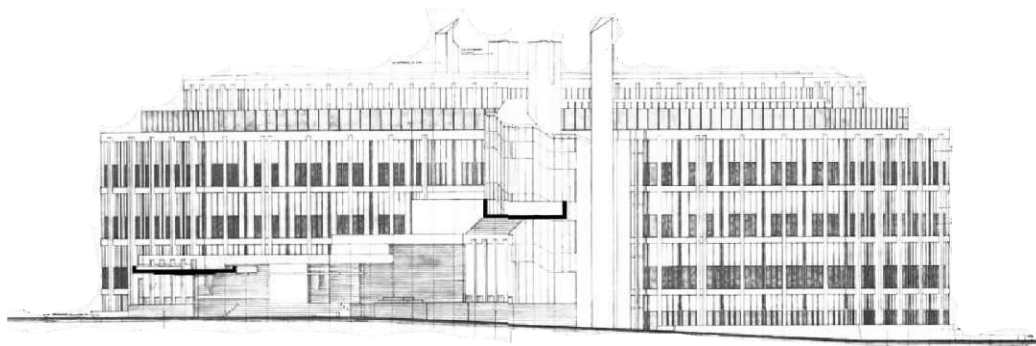


Fig. 56 | Elevation by D'Olivo

## THE FACADE

### THE DRAWN FACADE BY D'OLIVO

D'Olivo's drawn facade reflects the rhythmic and geometric order of the building outward. Originally, the facade was designed entirely in exposed concrete, which was intended to create unity with the structure and establish an organic harmony. The main material, concrete, was to appear in graduated shades of gray. Various surface treatments, such as sandblasting and polishing, were planned to create additional shadow and light effects, giving the facade a dynamic, lively appearance. Between the load-bearing columns, modules of concrete parapets with overlying glazing were planned. The modular elements were to be assembled without interruptions; through the positioning of the columns and the uniform sequence of the elements, a continuous wall-column structure was intended to emerge.<sup>165</sup>

The deviation from the original facade raises questions about the authenticity and preservation of D'Olivo's creative legacy. No statement from D'Olivo regarding the discrepancy between the drawn and realised facade is known. With the completion of the canteen, D'Olivo ended his architectural work in the city of Trieste.<sup>166</sup>

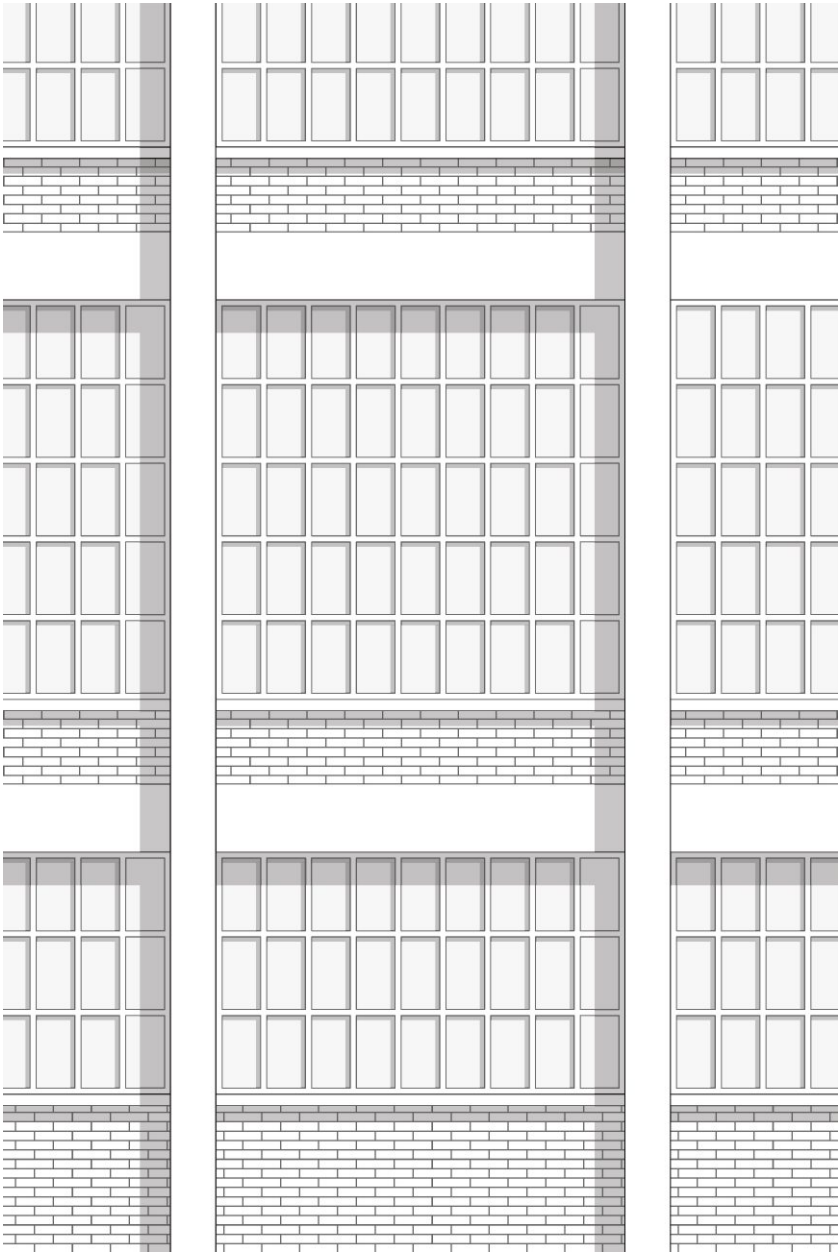
### THE BUILT FACADE

The built facade shows a discrepancy compared to the drawn facade by D'Olivo. It consists of load-bearing reinforced concrete columns arranged in a regular rhythm. (Fig.22)

The space between the concrete columns, instead of being filled with modular concrete and glass panels as D'Olivo intended, was constructed with iron-frame windows and a brick parapet below. This creates a clear distinction between the load-bearing and non-load-bearing elements, as well as a deviation in materialization. The modification of the facade altered the originally planned appearance of D'Olivo's designed canteen.

<sup>165</sup> Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell' architettura come patrimonio culturale," 88-89.

<sup>166</sup> Biasi, Driutti, and Maserati, "Il riconoscimento dell' architettura come patrimonio culturale," 39-46.



The build Facade





# THE TRANSFORMATION

## EUROPA '51 BY ROBERTO ROSSELLINI

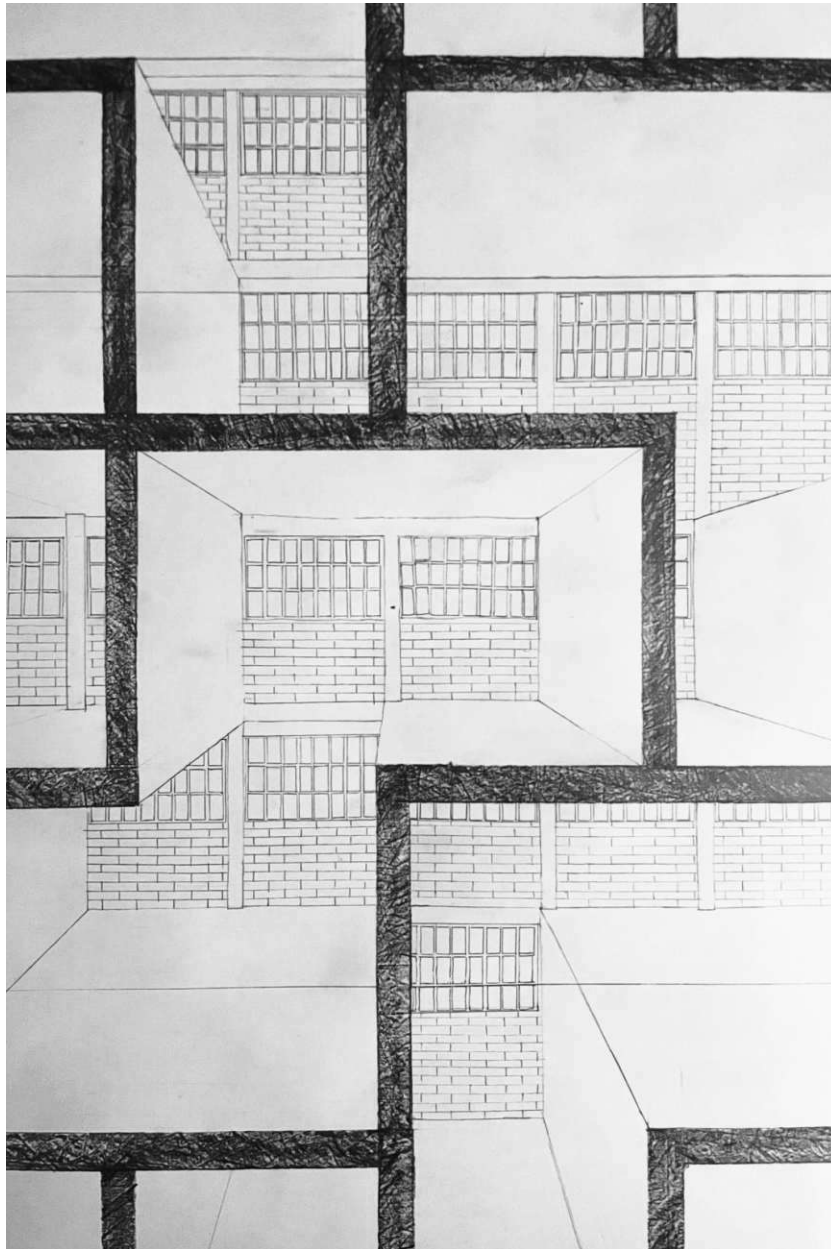
Europa '51 (1952) is a social realist drama that explores the themes of social alienation and the search for human meaning in modern society. The film follows wealthy Irene, played by Ingrid Bergman, who undergoes a radical change in her life following the suicide of her son. From then on, she dedicates herself to helping socially disadvantaged people, but her idealism meets with resistance from society, which increasingly sees her as crazy. Rossellini addresses the alienation of the individual and the challenges of a society that perceives compassion and responsibility for others as a threat.

## THE SCENE IN THE WAITING ROOM

The scene in the waiting room, where Irene looks on impatiently and anxiously as she awaits her future, impressively captures the uncertainty of the situation. Surrounded by cold, functional surroundings, Irene faces the possibility of a clinical diagnosis or even imprisonment. This scene is a powerful symbol of the sense of isolation and powerlessness she feels in the midst of her own mental and emotional crisis. The uncertainty of what will happen to her represents the character's inner fragility and emphasises the theme of alienation that Rossellini explores in Europa '51. In this waiting position, in which life suddenly turns into a threatening ambiguity, Irene becomes a symbol of existence in a society that does not understand or support the individual.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Europa '51 (1952)  
Roberto Rossellini, Full Movie (English Subtitles)," YouTube, uploaded by Film&Clips, January 6, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oziPgZduO9Y&t=5711s>.

Fig. 57| The Scene in the Waiting Room



Sketch: The Interleaving

"I step inside and hear the lock slam into the steel door behind me. Carefully, I take small steps down the corridor. The first thing I notice is the rough, industrial atmosphere. The walls and ceiling are exposed concrete, simple and raw. At the far end, I can see a staircase. I turn left and enter one of the two hexagonal structures.

The creaking door startles some pigeons, and I watch them fly out through a half-open window. My eyes are drawn to the outer wall, where the cold grey concrete shifts to layered bricks. At about one meter high, the bricks give way to an industrial steel-framed window. Seven vertical and three horizontal bars divide it into small rectangular glass panes.

I move closer to the window and look outside. Cold light fills the room, and I hear the wind whip through the trees outside. The chill makes me shiver, so I decide to explore further.

The next room is similar. The only difference is the brighter light and the two-story structure. Otherwise, the same clash of materials repeats, and the space is equally empty. The following rooms differ only in how they interconnect, but the emptiness remains. Slowly, a sense of disappointment grows as I realize I'm inside a lifeless shell. The urge to leave becomes stronger."

## URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

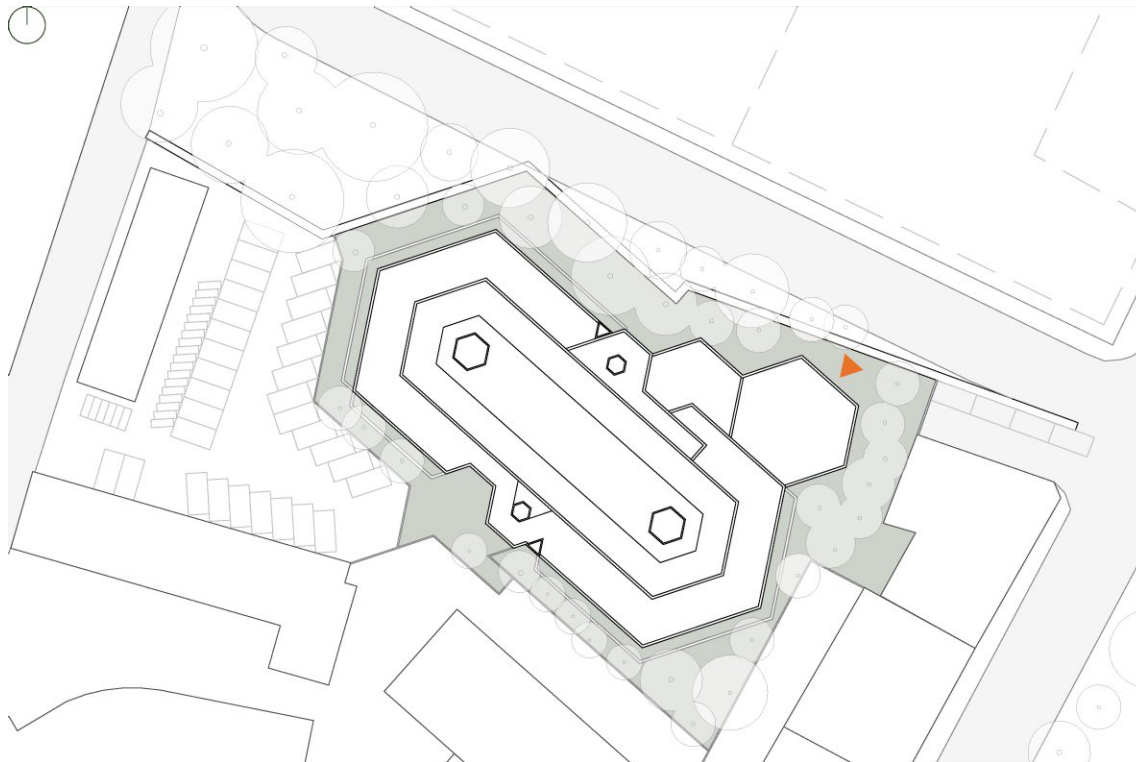
### THE EXISTING

The existing building is in a kind of spatial exile: surrounded by massive retaining walls that act as barriers, it is literally cut off from its surroundings. These walls not only prevent physical access to the neighbourhood but also deprive the building of any connection to its urban surroundings. In the midst of a lively, dynamic neighbourhood, it appears like a foreign body— isolated, cut off, and symbolically marginalised. Despite its central location, it remains invisible and excluded, both in terms of its physical presence and its social function. So how is it possible for a building that is at the centre of a functioning neighbourhood to be so alienated and marginalised from it?

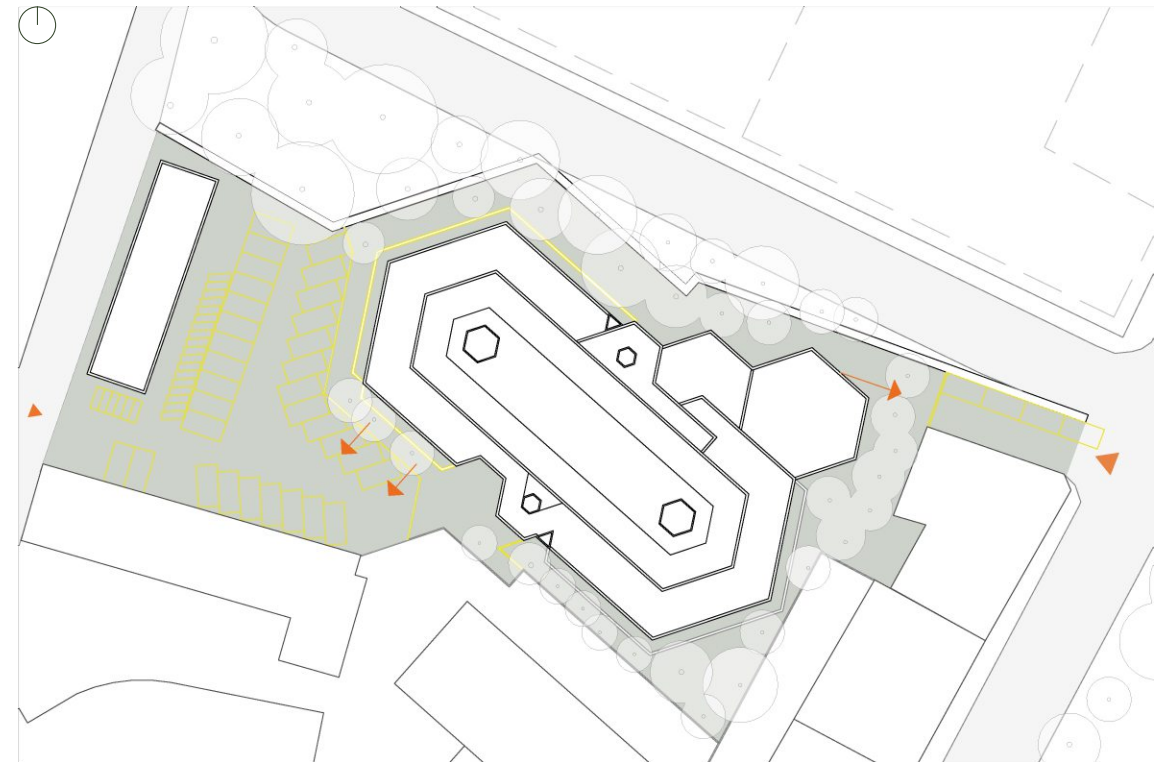
### THE CONCEPT

In the urban context, the marginalised building will be reintegrated into the neighbourhood and incorporated into the lively urban space. The entrance area will be moved to the street side to make the building more accessible and inviting, while new paving will make the entrance friendly and welcoming. The existing car park will be used as an outdoor area for the planned canteen, creating a space for social interaction and encounters. These measures will free the building from its isolation and enable a direct dialogue with the neighbourhood. The aim is to make the building not only physically but also symbolically part of the community and to actively integrate it into the social and urban dialogue.

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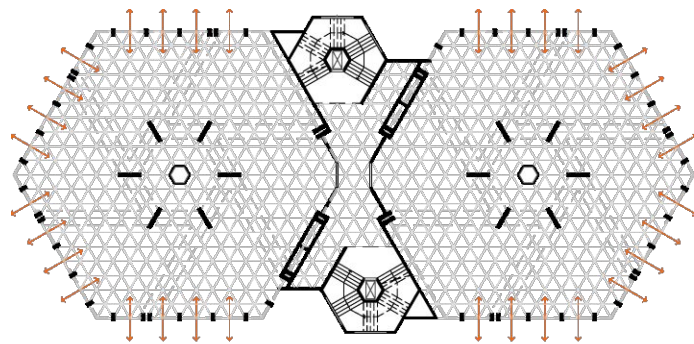




## DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF D'OLIVO

### INSIDE - OUTSIDE

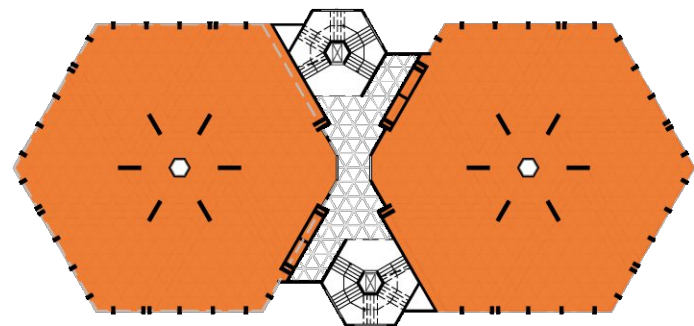
The relationship between the interior and exterior spaces was one of d'Olivo's guiding design principles. In order to follow this principle and strengthen the existing quality, an additional layer is inserted between the interior and exterior spaces, the so-called in between.



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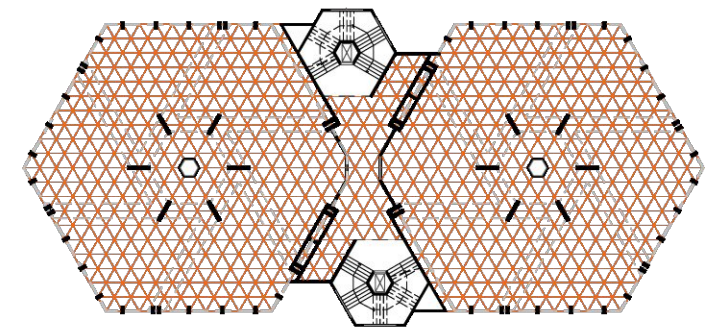
### OPENNESS

Other existing qualities are the open, light-flooded interiors. Closed spaces have been kept to a minimum, and this basic idea is continued in the design by not scattering closed spaces but organising them compactly.



### THE TRIANGULAR GRID

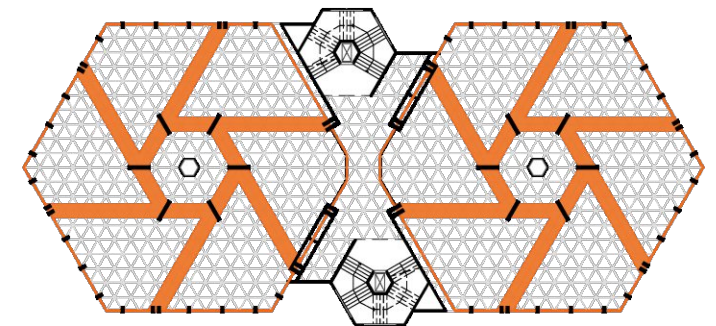
The entire building follows a grid based on an equilateral triangle with a side length of 1.5 meters. All elements of the building are aligned to this grid, and the search for harmony is consistent. The following design follows the given grid but is alienated in terms of design.

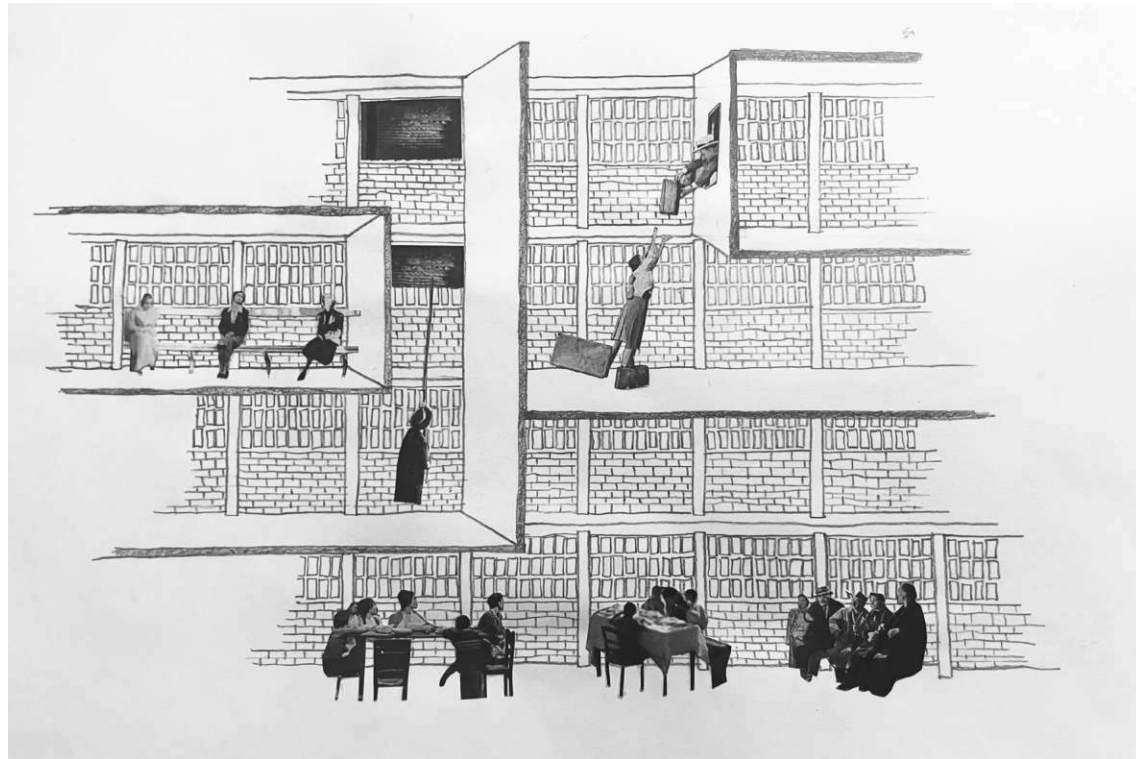


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### THE SPIRAL

A chimney has been placed in the centre of each hexagon, forming the centre of an imaginary spiral. The pursuit of an organic form is reinforced by radial wall panels. This central focal point also becomes a special place for meeting and exchanging ideas in the design.





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Sketch: Imaginary Rooms

## THE STRATEGY

The transformation strategy for the existing building aims to enhance the existing qualities and create added value. The concept is based on Marcello D'Olivo's design principles and takes them a step further. The building is reinterpreted and transformed into a symbolic waiting room. This waiting room represents a safe retreat for refugee women\* who stay here indefinitely in the hope of a new, better chapter in their lives.

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The existing building will be transformed through targeted interventions. The aim is to create a waiting room that is worth living in. The building itself is waiting to be rediscovered and revitalised, while the women\* who seek shelter there are hoping for a future that will enable them to move on with their lives.

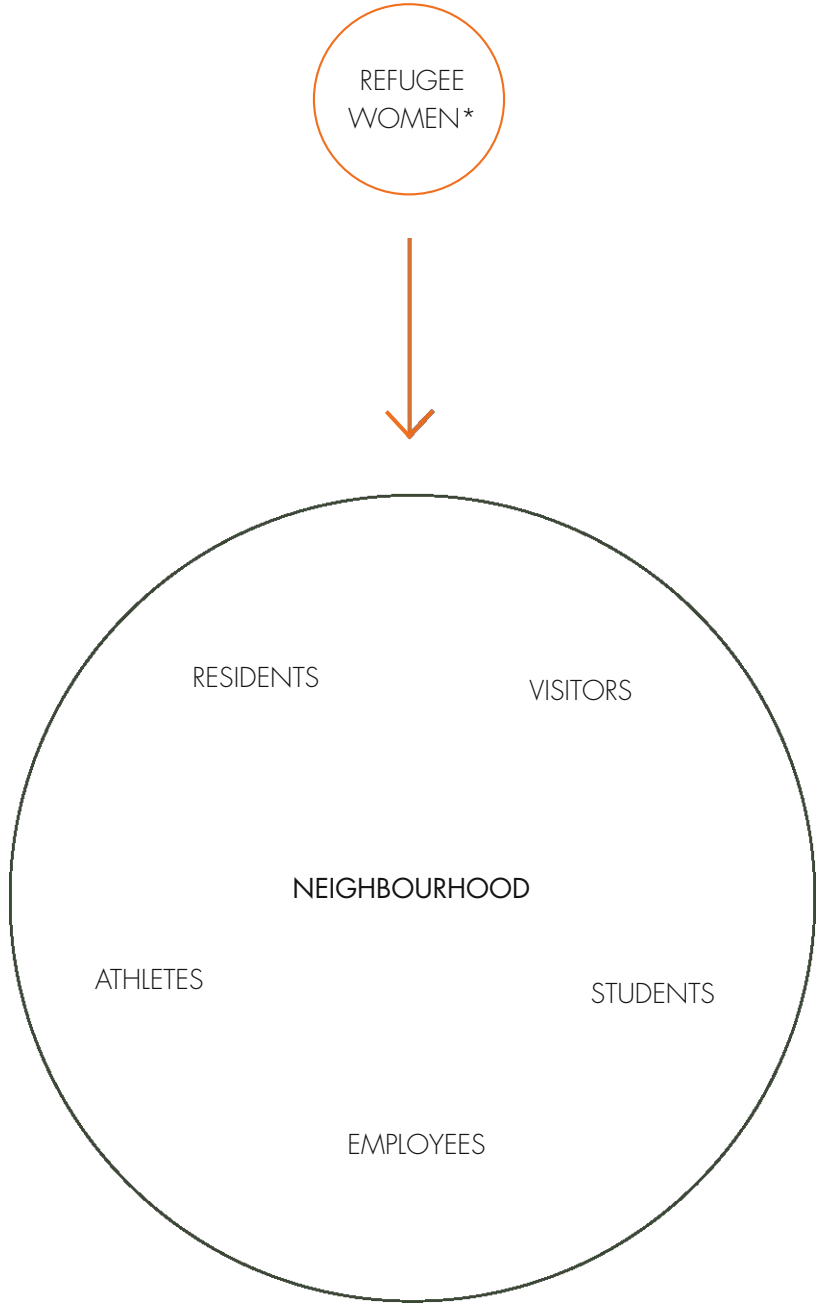
The spatial program follows a filter from isolation to integration: retreat spaces are deliberately created to allow for individual recreation and personal freedom. However, there are also communal areas that function as shared spaces and encourage dialogue and communication between the women\*. This mix of retreat and communal spaces promotes a gentle transition from isolation to social integration and supports the women\* on their path to emotional and social stabilisation. This strategy enhances the building not only in its form but also in its meaning, serving as a place of temporary refuge and emotional reconstruction.

THE SOCIAL CONCEPT

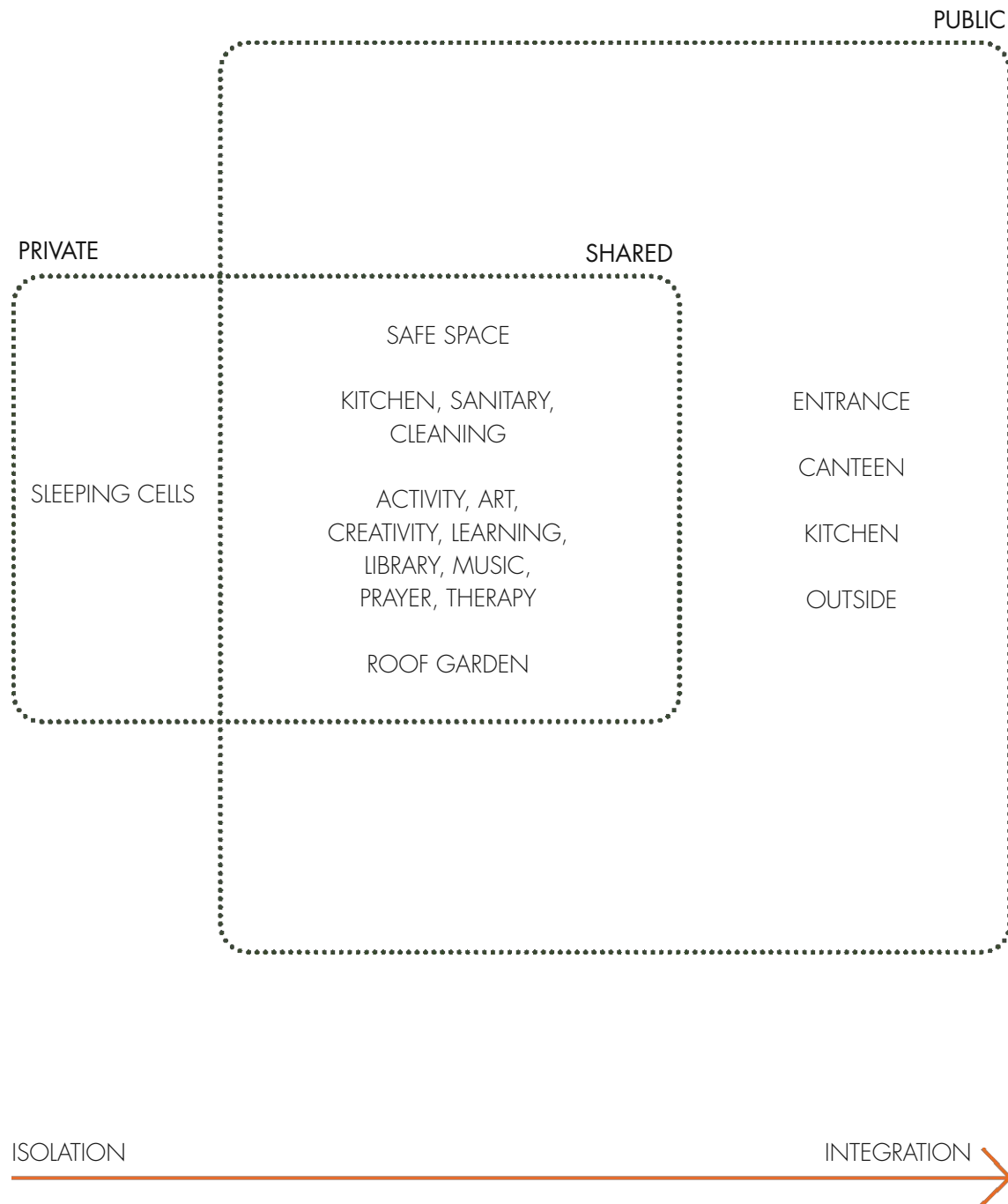
The integration house is not intended to be perceived as an isolated hotspot within the city, but rather as part of a decentralized and sustainable integration approach. For this reason, the number of refugee women\* has been intentionally limited. At the same time, the building offers ample space, so the shared areas, known as the Commons, will remain open to all refugee women\* arriving in Trieste. These spaces are intended not only for community interaction and mutual exchange but also to provide opportunities for personal development and growth. Through this openness, refugee women\* can network, learn from each other, and offer support, which strengthens their social integration.

The social concept aims to offer refugee women\* not only a waiting room but also the opportunity to be actively integrated into the neighbourhood. The two-storey canteen acts as an interface between this marginalised group of people and the surrounding community, which is made up of residents, students, employees, athletes, and visitors. The aim is to overcome the stigma often associated with refugees and break down prejudices.

Through direct interaction with the neighbourhood, the aim is to change perceptions by demonstrating that refugee women\* bring significant added value to society. The space they are given offers the opportunity to make this valuable perspective visible. By creating space for groups of people who have long been marginalized and making their stories visible, prejudices are broken down, and barriers between individuals are overcome.

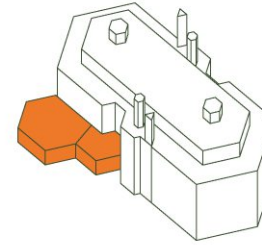






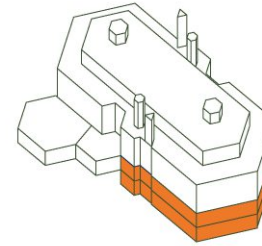
## SPATIAL PROGRAMME

### THE ENTRANCE



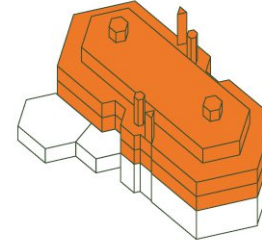
The single-story entrance volume of the former canteen will retain its function. On the one hand, as the main entrance to the canteen and, on the other, as the first point of contact for the refugee women\*. This is where the two main functions diverge.

### THE CANTEEN



The kitchen and canteen functions are combined on the two lower levels. The kitchen creates jobs and makes it easier for refugee women\* to enter the labour market. At the same time, the kitchen is the interface between the refugees and the neighbourhood. This strengthens social interaction and promotes integration. The canteen is primarily intended for the children of the neighbouring schools.

### THE HOUSING



The upper three floors house the private living and retreat areas. The basic idea is to strengthen socialising, togetherness, and community life through increased communal areas. The last level is a spacious roof terrace with a roof garden overlooking the city of Trieste.

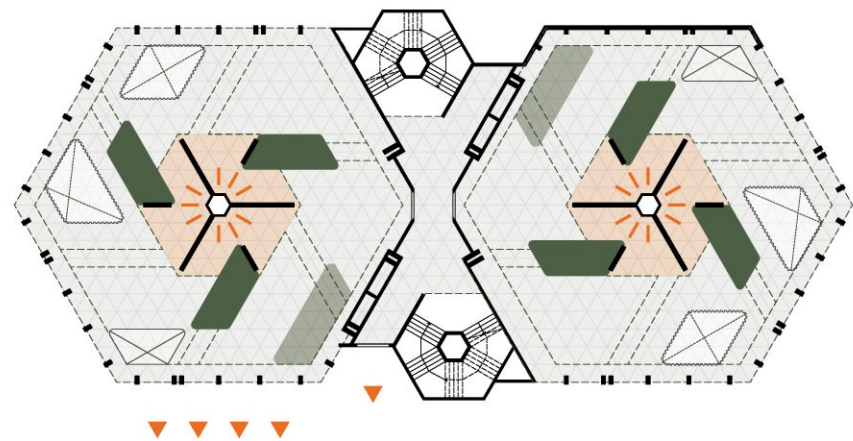
THE CANTEEN: INTERVENTIONS

■ ADDITION

In the canteen, the shape of the beams is echoed by the addition of three food stands per hexagon. The mill structure of the building is echoed as the volumes rotate across both floors. Each stand is dedicated to a different country of origin of the refugee women\* and offers dishes that bring the cultural diversity and traditions of these countries to life.

□ VOIDS

Marcello D'Olivo aimed for the concept that each hexagon symbolises a tree. To emphasise this idea architecturally, openings are created in the ceiling to create a natural clearing inside the building. These openings run through all floors and create two-storey spaces that allow visual vistas and a vertical connection.



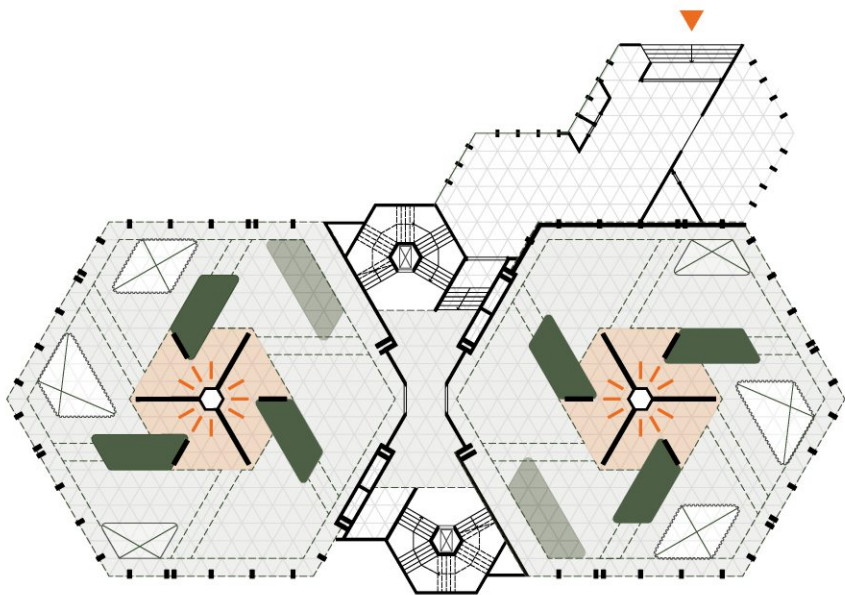
Level 0

■ INTEGRATION AREA

At the centre of the hexagon is the integration area—a place designed to encourage encounters between the refugee women\* and the neighbourhood. The aim is to encourage dialogue, conversation, and friendship.

■ CULTURAL HUB

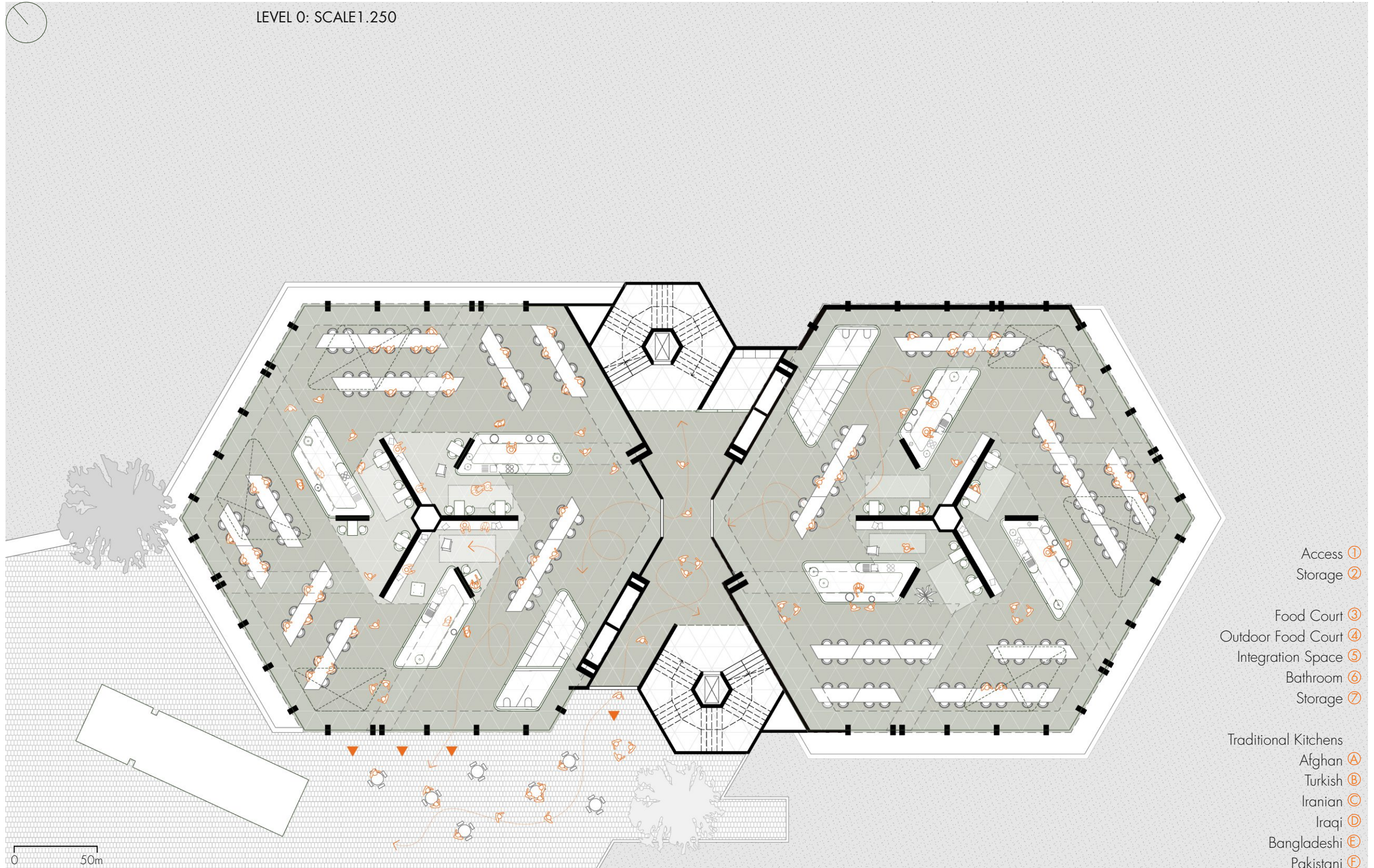
The building's dining room is designed as a lively meeting space where visitors can discover food at various stands and immerse themselves in the respective culture at the same time. This area is flexible and can be used freely, allowing different scenarios and uses to emerge. The space adapts to the needs of its users and creates a diverse ambience that goes far beyond the function of a traditional canteen.



Level 1



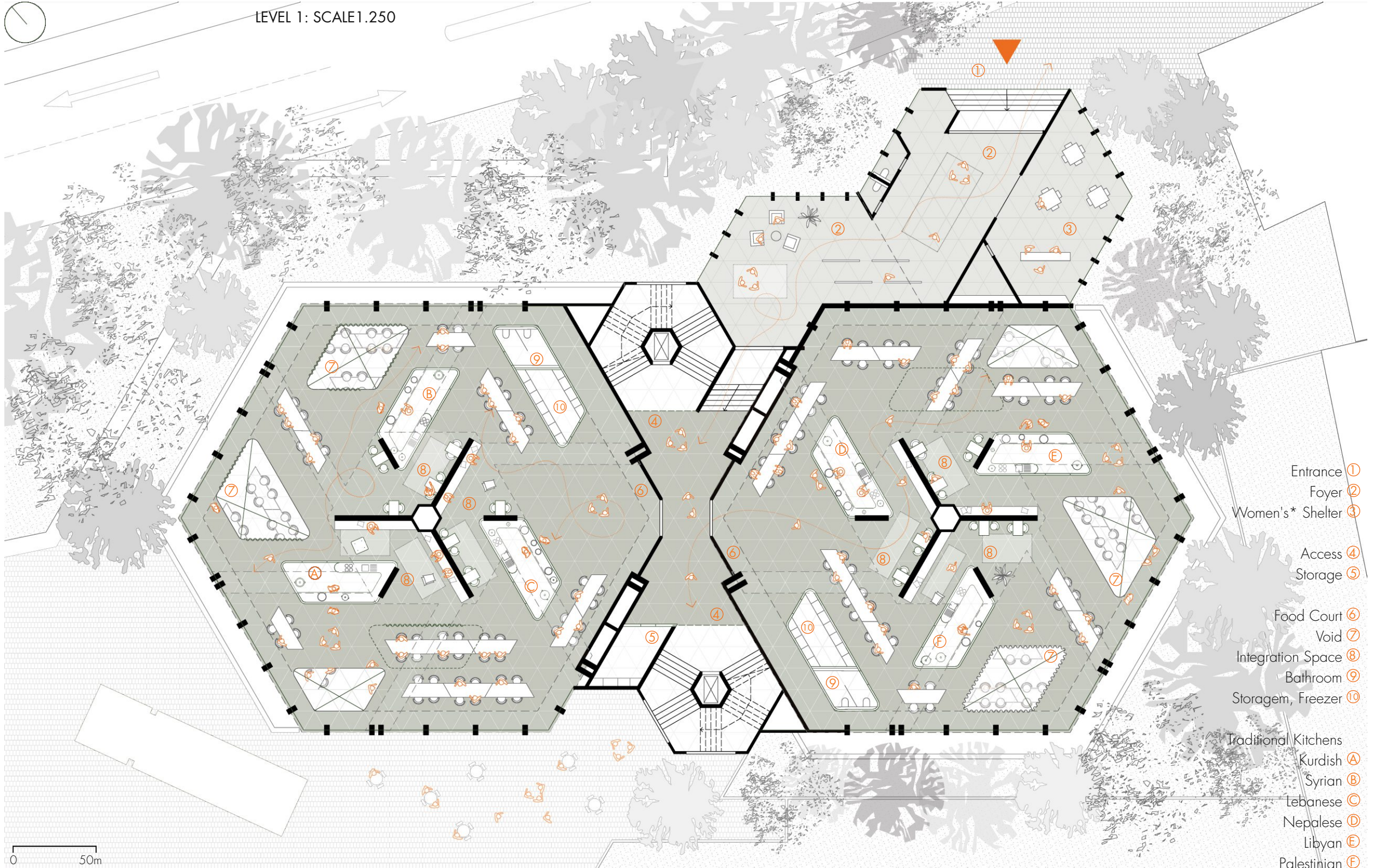
LEVEL 0: SCALE 1:250







LEVEL 1: SCALE 1:250



- Entrance ①
- Foyer ②
- Women's\* Shelter ③
- Access ④
- Storage ⑤
- Food Court ⑥
- Void ⑦
- Integration Space ⑧
- Bathroom ⑨
- Storage, Freezer ⑩
- Traditional Kitchens
  - Kurdish A
  - Syrian B
  - Lebanese C
  - Nepalese D
  - Libyan E
  - Palestinian F

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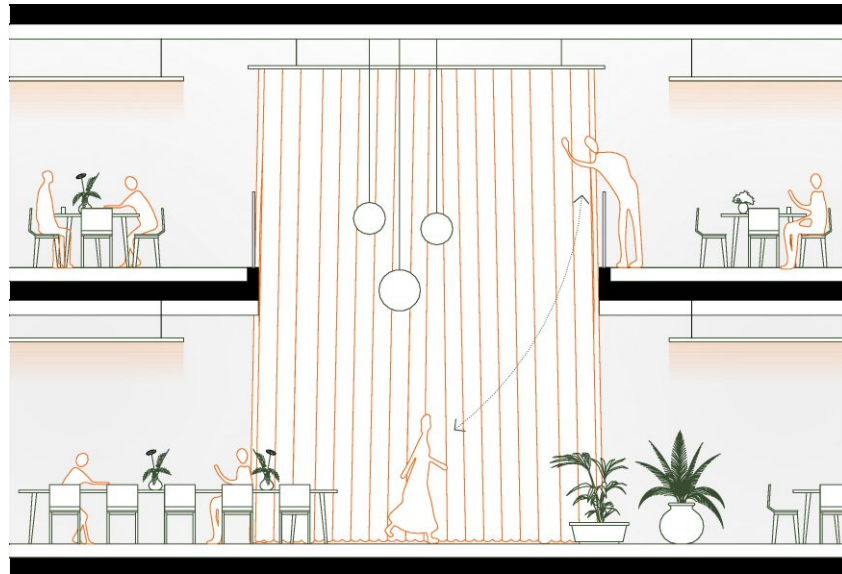
163

0 50m

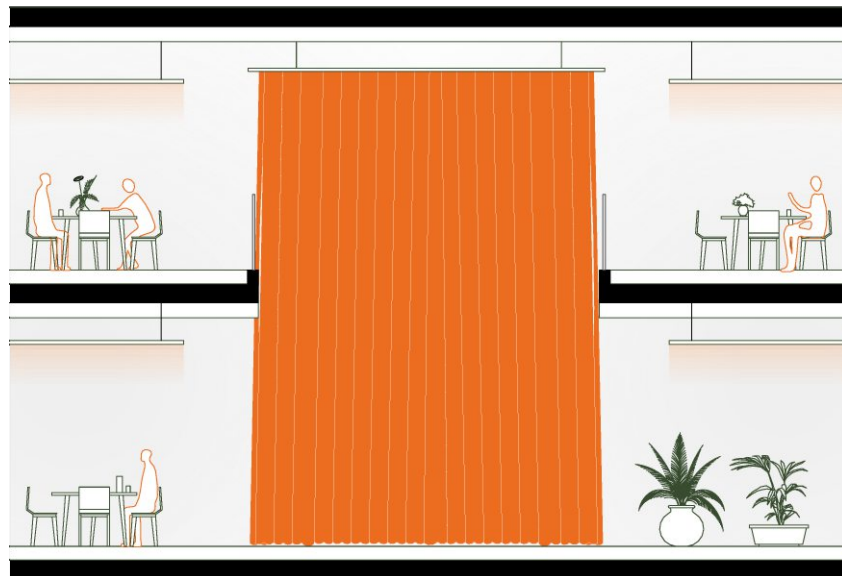




Canteen Scenarios



166



0 20m

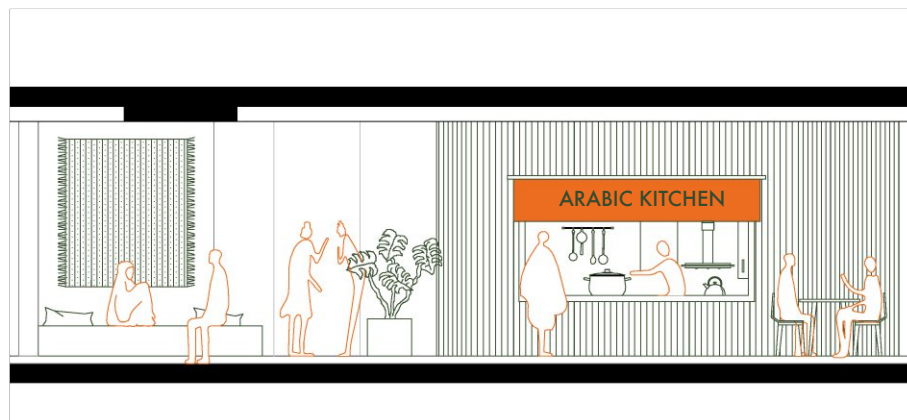
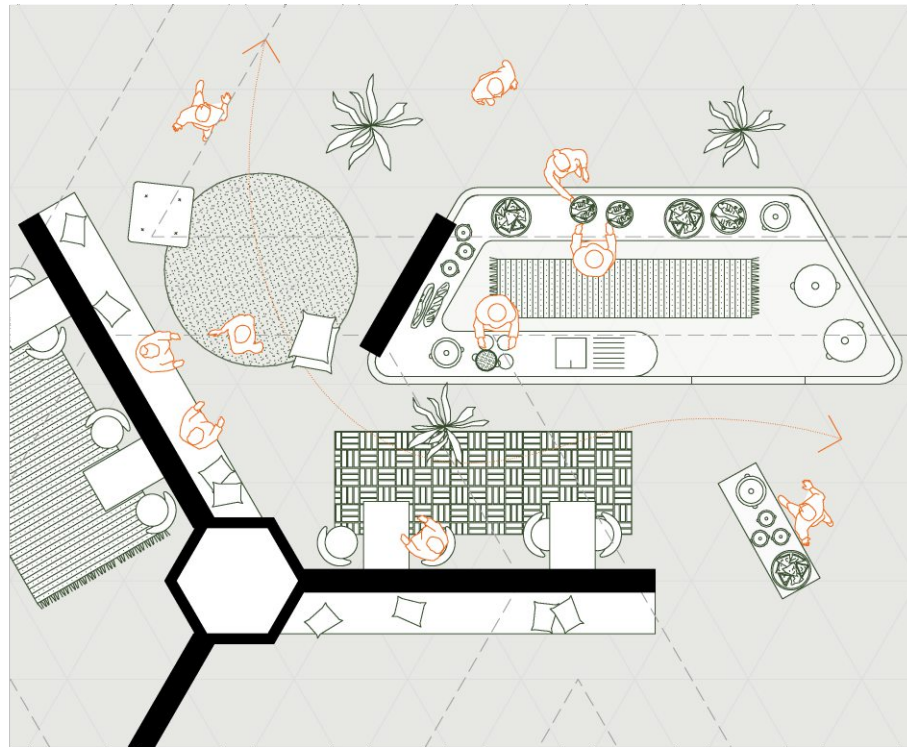
167

## THE VERTICAL SUBTRACTION

Vertical openings are introduced to create spatial tension and enable diverse spatial configurations. With ample floor space available, certain areas are intentionally removed to form double-height spaces.

These spaces can be enclosed with curtains, creating a flexible "room within a room" that offers intimate retreats when needed. At the same time, the vertical openings establish visual connections between the levels, breaking the dominant horizontal structure and adding dynamic verticality to the spatial experience.





## THE CULTURAL TRIANGLE

The Culinary Triangle is a place where visitors and the local community can learn about the stories and roots of refugee women\* through their cuisine. It brings together different culinary traditions, fostering cultural exchange. This dialogue strengthens understanding between people of diverse backgrounds, breaks down barriers, and supports integration.

Through the shared experience of food and culture, cosmopolitanism is promoted, and a sense of belonging is strengthened. The Culinary Triangle is more than just a place to eat – it is a symbol of mutual respect and openness.



Sleeping Hut, Seating Niche



THE HOUSING: INTERVENTIONS

■ ADDITION

Addition is used to structure the open character of the existing hexagons and give them new functions. The purposeful arrangement of compact, enclosed volumes along the facades creates private sleeping areas and enclosed sanitary rooms around the fireplace. These interventions create opportunities for retreat and offer women\* greater privacy.

□ COMMONS

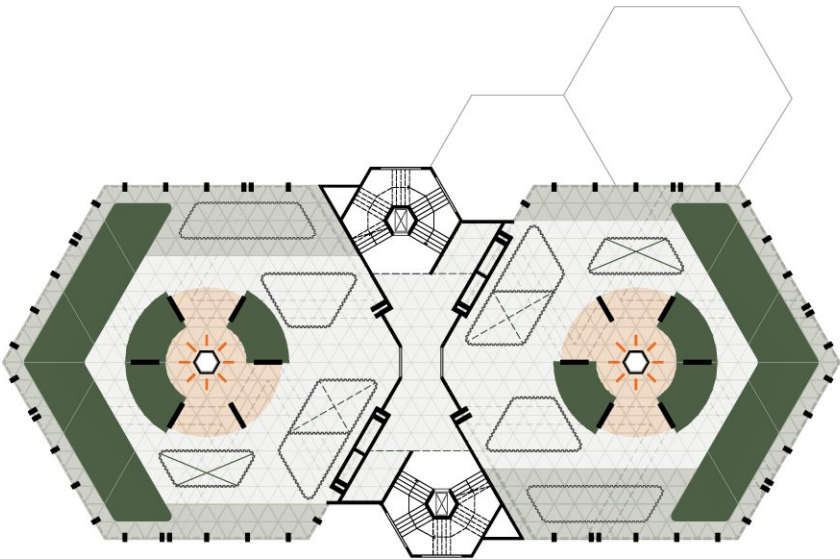
Flexible shared areas are created around the existing fireplace, which can be expanded or reduced as required. The functions are mobile and can be moved around like nomads. Curtain rails and textiles allow these flexible spaces to be open or closed to suit the individual needs.

■ SAFE SPACE

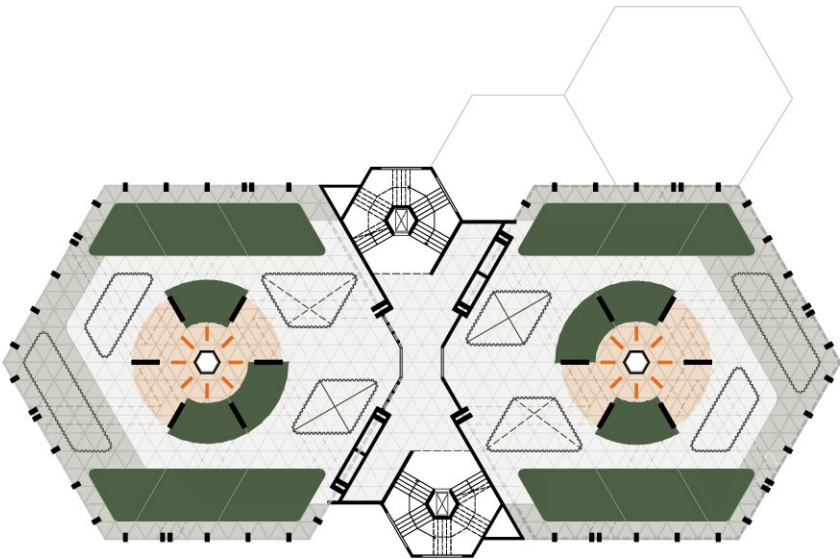
The space around the fireplace creates a protected retreat that serves as a safe space for the refugee women\*. The vertical element of the fireplace provides not only warmth but also a sense of security. This area is designed to give the women\* a safe place to relax and restore their strength.

■ IN BETWEEN

A second skin forms an accessible buffer zone along the facade, reinforcing D'Olivo's concept of the relationship between inside and outside. For refugee women\*, this sheltered outdoor space provides a safe retreat, allowing them to experience the outside world in a protected environment despite their fears.



Level 2



Level 3



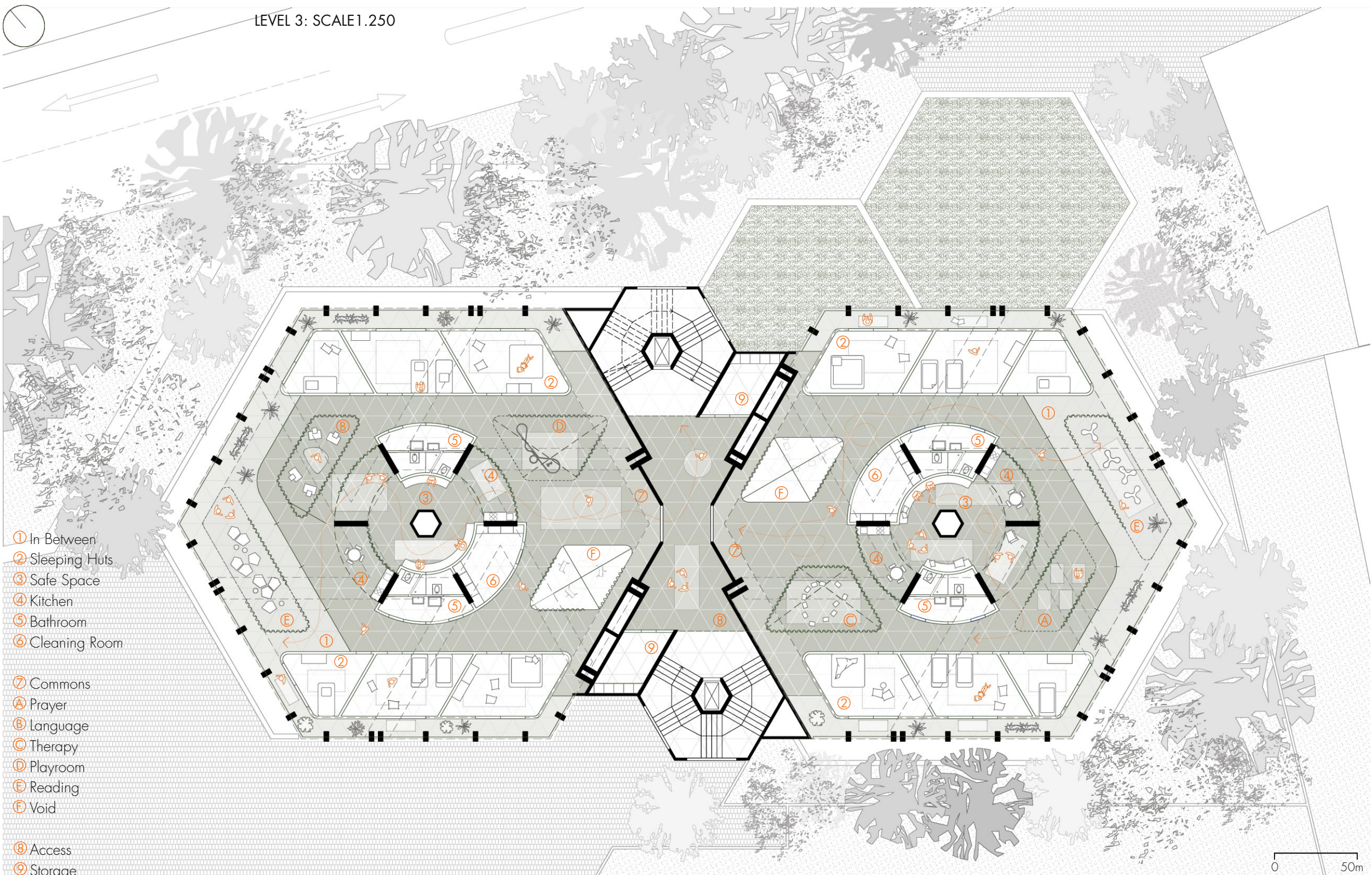


LEVEL 2: SCALE 1:250

- ① In Between
- ② Sleeping Huts
- ③ Safe Space
- ④ Kitchen
- ⑤ Bathroom
- ⑥ Cleaning Room
- ⑦ Commons
- Ⓐ Prayer
- Ⓑ Art
- Ⓒ Therapy
- Ⓓ Music
- ⑧ Access
- ⑨ Storage

0 50m





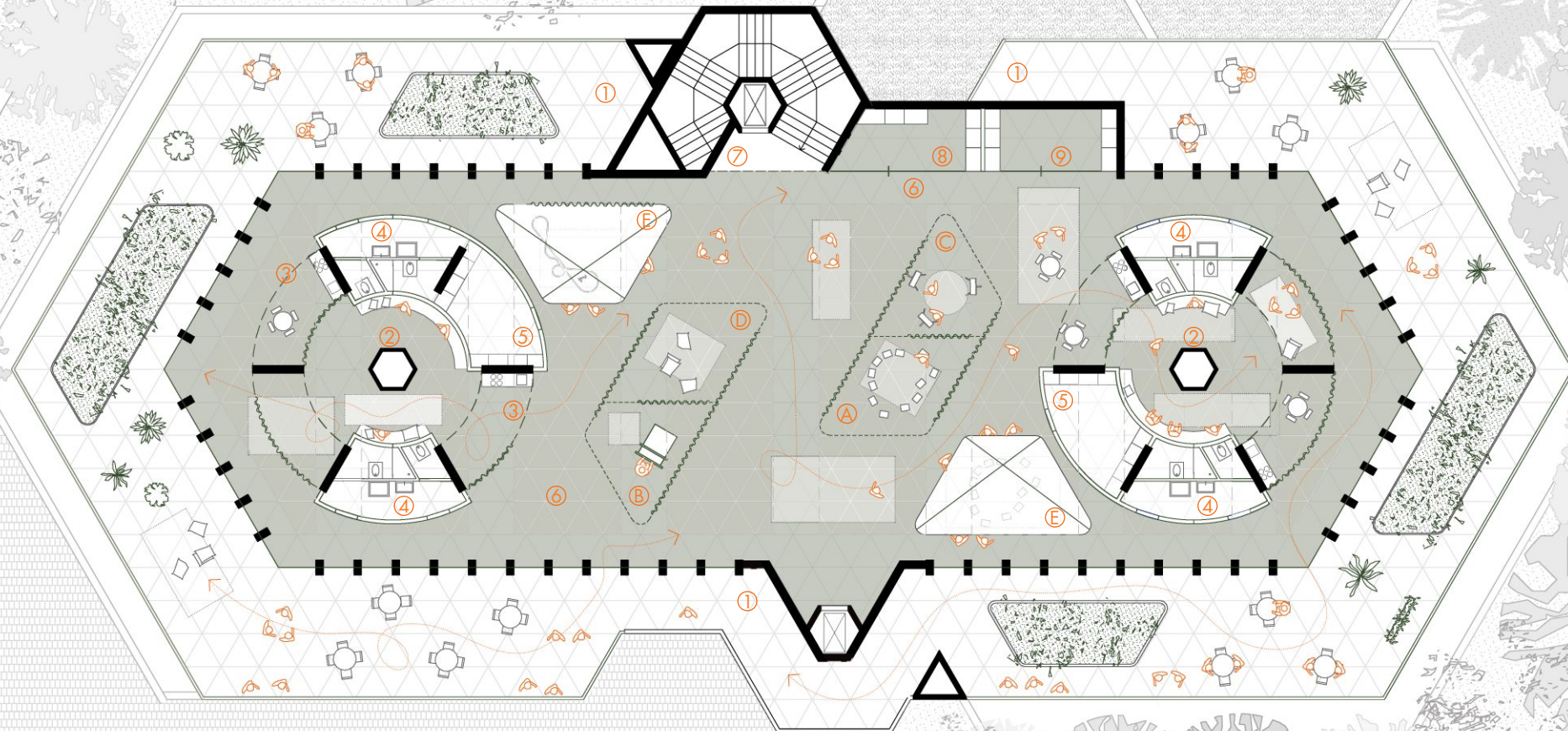




LEVEL 4: SCALE 1:250

178

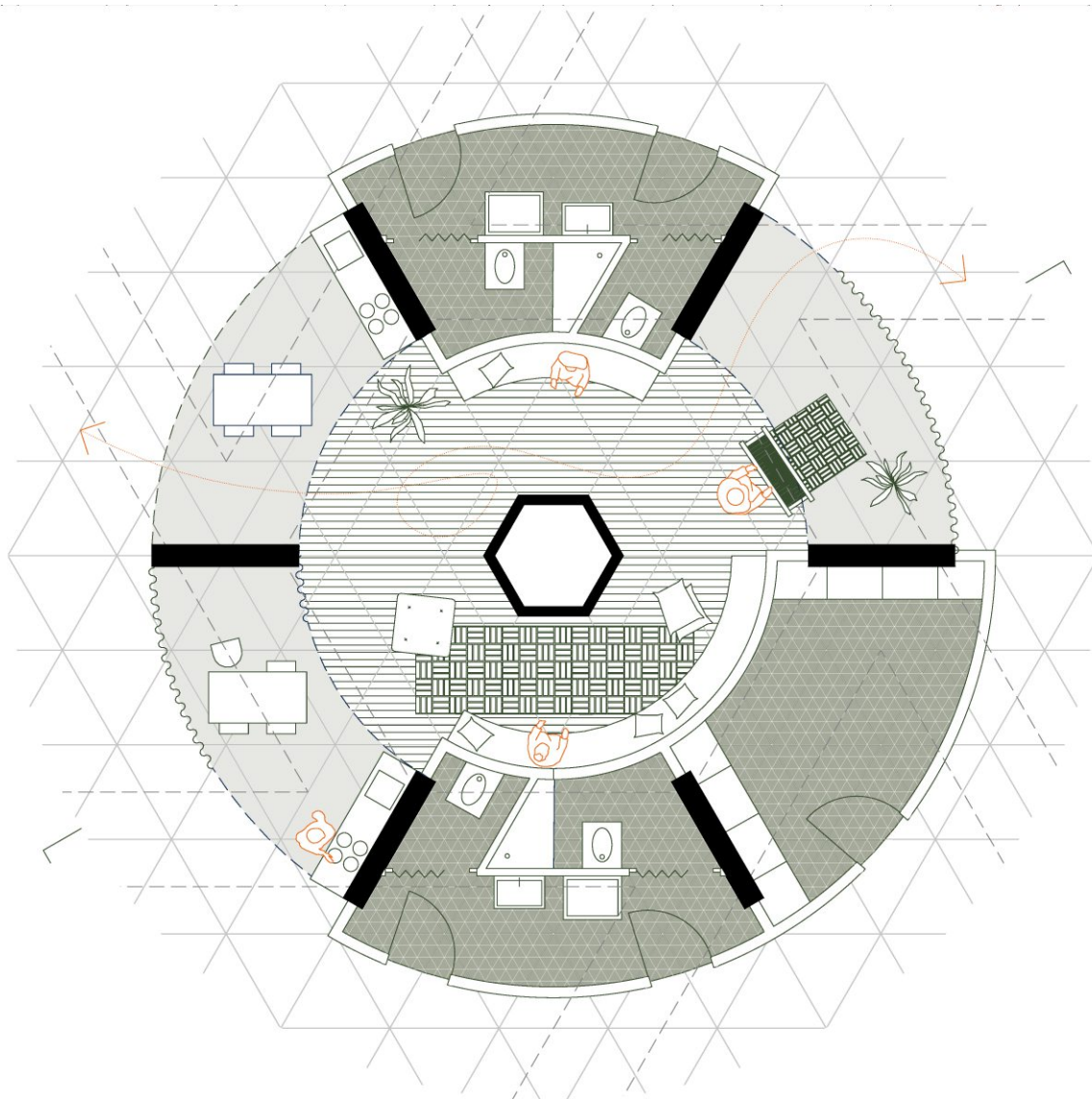
- ① Outdoor, protected
- ② Safe Space
- ③ Kitchen
- ④ Bathroom
- ⑤ Cleaning Room
- ⑥ Commons
- Ⓐ Therapy
- Ⓑ Weaving
- Ⓒ Art
- Ⓓ Meditation
- Ⓔ Void
- ⑦ Access
- ⑧ Storage
- ⑨ Clothing Distribution



0 50m

179





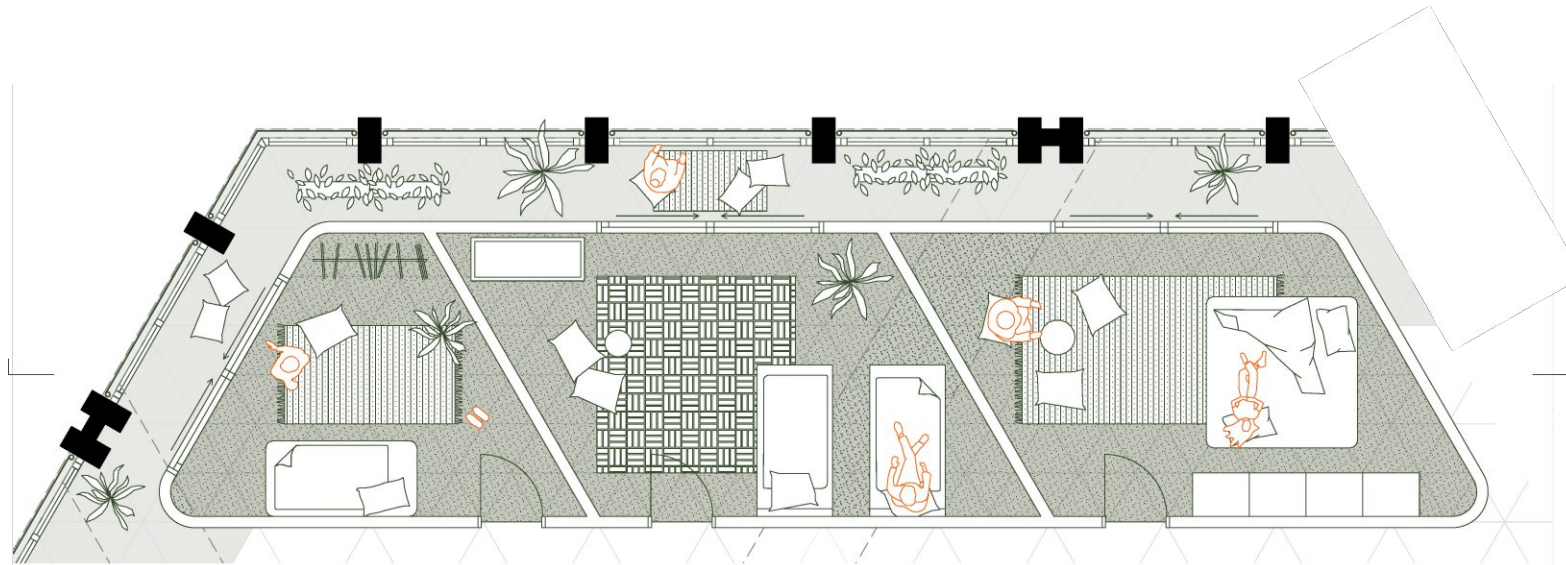
0 20m

## THE SAFE SPACE

A flexible, sheltered, and safe space is created around the existing fireplace, which serves as a retreat for the refugee women\*. The vertical element of the fireplace not only provides warmth but also a sense of security, creating an atmosphere that provides a safe space for the women\* to unfold.

Textile dividers allow the area to be opened or closed as required, creating an intimate and protected atmosphere. The fireplace becomes the central, warming element of the room and promotes a sense of security.





182



0 20m

183

## THE SLEEPING HUTS

The sleeping huts are compact, self-contained rooms arranged along the front of the building and can be used as single or double huts. The design of these cells is based on Eastern traditions, with solid wooden walls and carpeted floors creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Instead of Western beds, mattresses are placed directly on the floor, in keeping with the traditional sleeping habits of many Eastern cultures.

This adaptation is intended not only to provide the refugee women\* with a functional retreat but also to give them a sense of familiarity and security so that they can feel at home in their new surroundings.



In Between



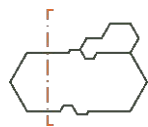


Sleeping Hut



Sleeping Hut, Seating Niche





CROSS SECTION, SCALE 1:250

190



191

## FROM ISOLATION TO INTEGRATION

The concept of the house is based on a spatial filter that transitions from integration to isolation. On the ground floor, the canteen promotes interaction between refugee women\* and the local community, while the outdoor space is revitalised as a communal area, encouraging the neighbourhood to take ownership of it.

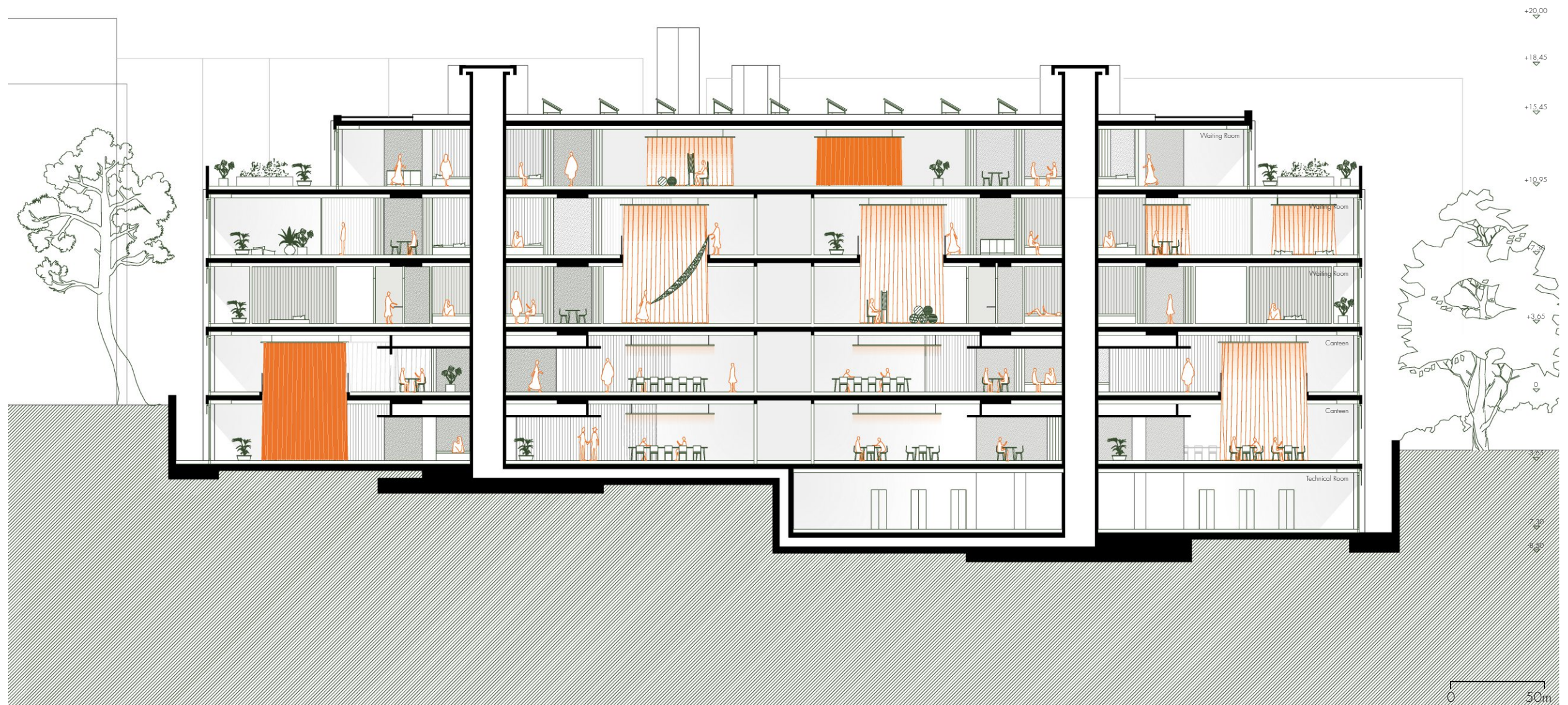
In the upper floors, the focus shifts towards private retreat spaces that offer safety and privacy. The rooftop features a sheltered outdoor area, providing a secure environment for the refugee women\* to rest and reflect.





LONGITUDINAL SECTION, SCALE 1:250

192

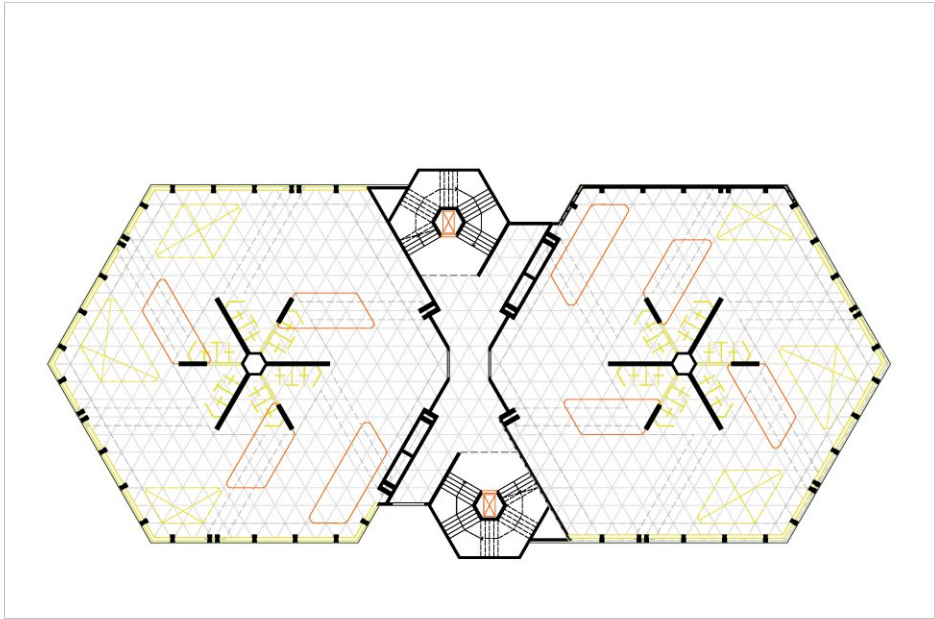


193

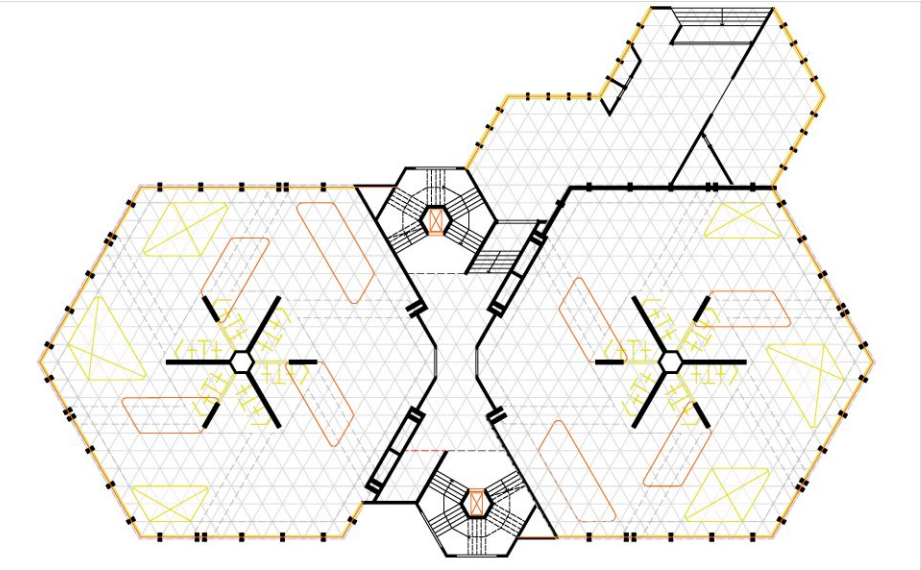


CONVERSION PLANS

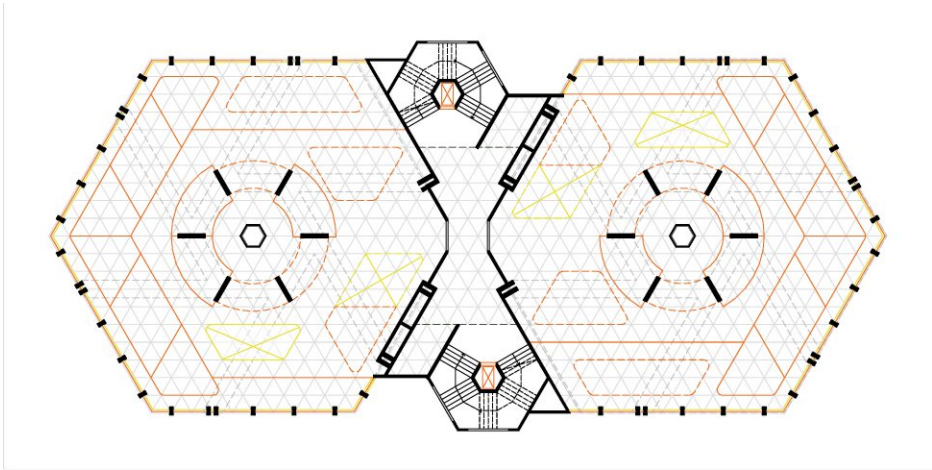
Transformation Demolition



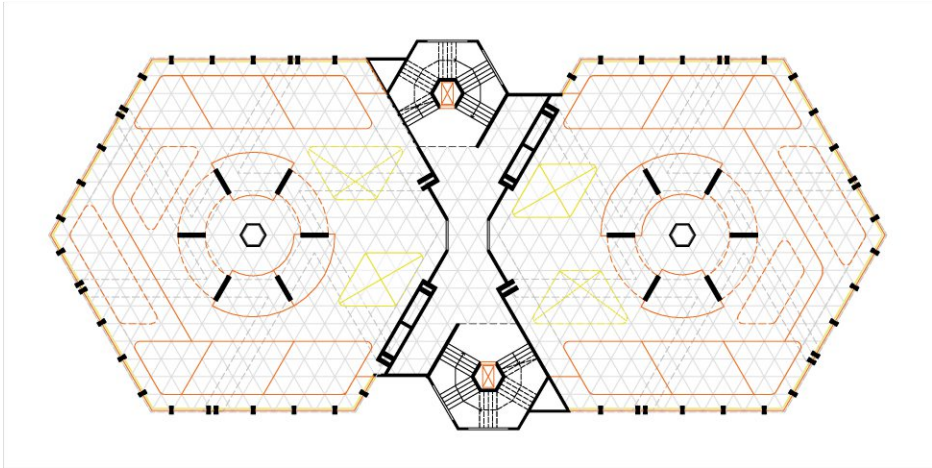
Level 0



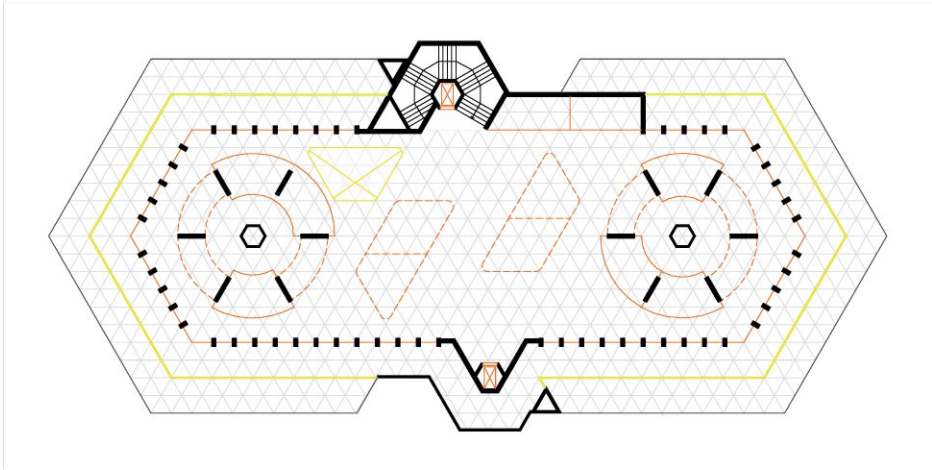
Level 1



Level 2



Level 3



Level 4

THE WRAPPING OF THE FACADE

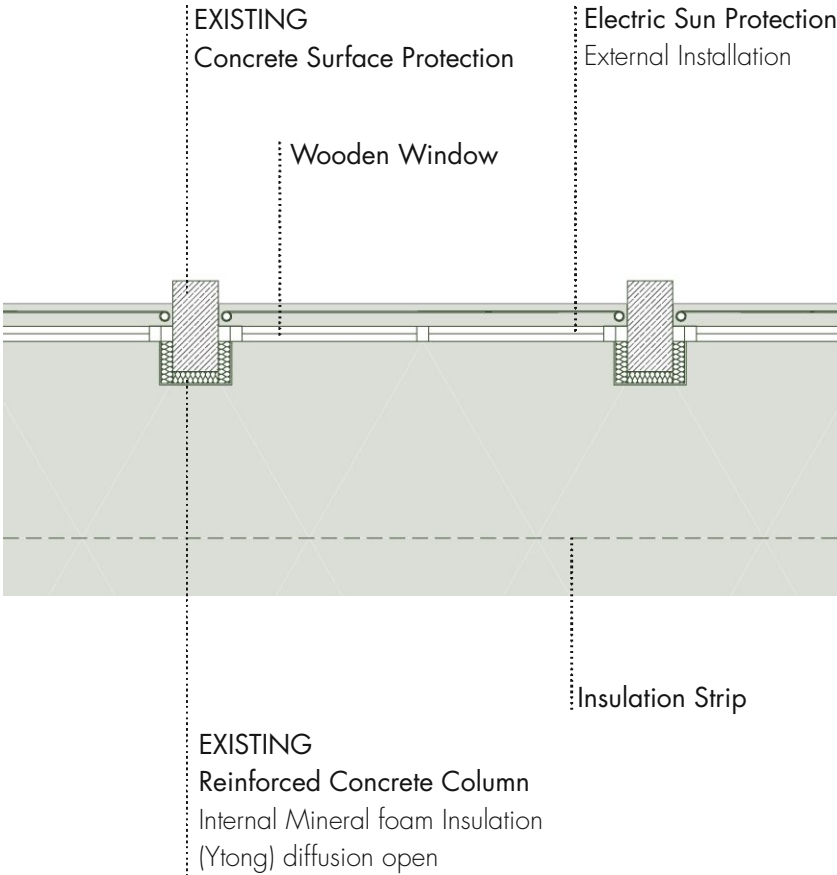
The facade of the integration house becomes a central means of expression, bringing awareness of the marginalised issue of violence against women\* into the public space. The building is fully enveloped in a textile sunshade. The colour orange symbolises a future free of violence for women\* and girls. This transformation alters the building’s external appearance and extends its spatial program outward.

The existing concrete structure by D’Olivo is preserved to maintain the site’s architectural substance and history. The brick wall is removed and replaced with floor-to-ceiling wooden windows, enhancing openness and light. To provide a complete thermal envelope, the concrete supports are insulated from the inside. A 1,30 meter insulation strip is added to the ceiling to prevent thermal bridging. The original structure remains visible from the outside and is treated with a protective surface coating.

The integration house thus becomes a visible symbol of integration, solidarity, and dialogue—a place that transcends urban and social boundaries, bringing marginalised issues out of the shadows and into the centre of public attention.

ENERGY CONCEPT

The two solar chimneys are creating a chimney effect by utilising rising warm air, drawing fresh air through the building. This air is directed into the interior via the floors. An air duct regulates the temperature of the air—it cools the air in summer and warms it in winter. Excess heat is dissipated through a heat exchanger. This creates an energy-efficient and comfortable indoor climate throughout the year.







Facade, orange Wrapping

ELEVATION NORTH EAST, SCALE 1:250





ELEVATION NORTH WEST, SCALE 1:250

202



203

0 50m

FACADE SECTION, SCALE 1:50

■ Existing   ■ Transformation

FLOOR CONSTRUCTION LEVEL 1		
204	- Floor covering	1
	- Cement screed with underfloor heating	7
	- PE foil / separation layer	
	- Impact sound insulation	3
	- Insulation	6
	- Reinforced concrete slab	25
	- Insulation	20
	- Plaster	1
FLOOR CONSTRUCTION LEVEL 0		
	- Floor covering	1
	- Cement screed with underfloor heating	7
	- PE foil / separation layer	
	- Impact sound insulation	3
	- Insulation	6
	- Waterproofing	
	- Reinforced concrete slab	25

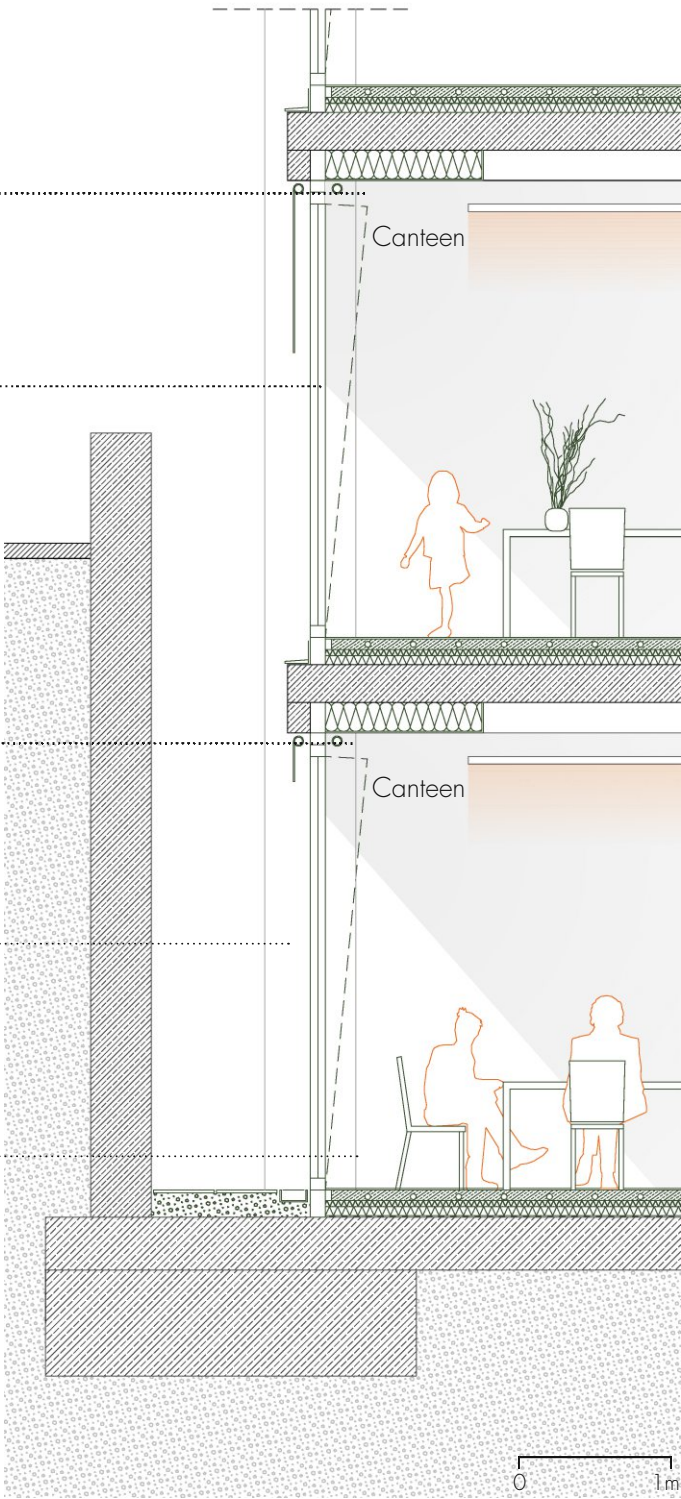
Electric Sun Protection  
External Installation

Wooden Window  
Tilt Sash

Mechanical Glare Protection  
Internal Installation

EXISTING  
Concrete Surface Protection

EXISTING  
Reinforced Concrete Column  
Internal Mineral foam Insulation  
(Ytong) diffusion open



205



## ROOF CONSTRUCTION

206	- Vegetation layer	6
	- Filter fleece	
	- Drainages layer	5
	- Protective and filter fleece	
	- Waterproofing 2 layers	2
	- Insulation with slope	20
	- Vapor barrier	
	- Reinforced concrete slab	25

## FLOOR CONSTRUCTION LEVEL 2, 3, 4

	- Floor covering	1
	- Cement screed with underfloor heating	7
	- PE foil / separation layer	
	- Impact sound insulation	3
	- Insulation	6
	- Reinforced concrete slab	25
	- Insulation	20
	- Plaster	1

Photovoltaic Elements

Electric Sun Protection  
External Installation

Wooden Window  
Sliding Window

Mechanical Glare Protection  
Internal Installation

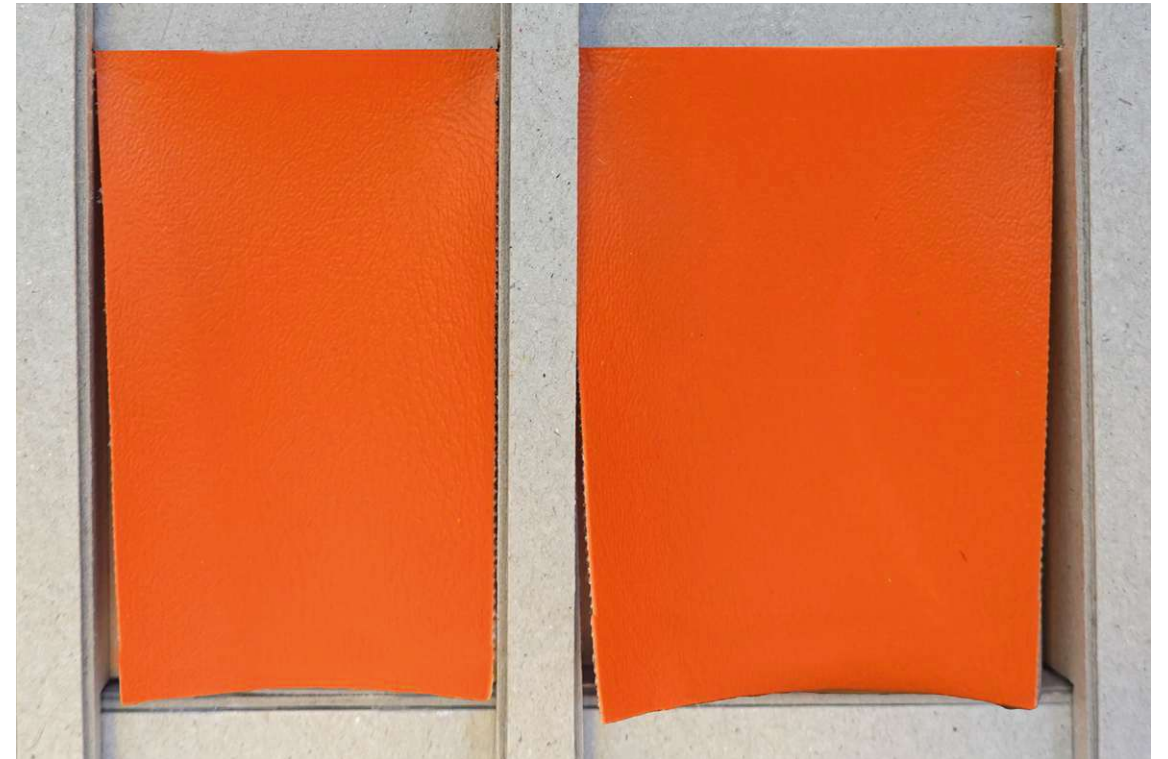
EXISTING  
Concrete Surface Protection

EXISTING  
Reinforced Concrete Column  
Internal Mineral foam Insulation  
(Ytong) diffusion open

Shared  
Spaces

Sleeping  
Huts

0 1m



Facade, Orange the World





PERSONAL RESUME

Since the beginning of my studies, I have been fascinated by architecture as a social tool that makes the invisible visible. The central question that has consistently occupied me is how to integrate socially critical themes into architectural design through a conceptual approach in order to achieve an impact and create profound societal value. My focus has been on how architecture can offer more than just functional space, but act as a catalytic factor that encourages reflection, inspires change, and opens up new perspectives.

Working on my thesis has brought me back to the fundamental idea of architecture – to create shelter for people that protects them from external influences and provides security. Throughout this process, I have learned to take responsibility, as a future architect, for those whose voices are often unheard.

# VII. APPENDIX

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