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ARCHITECTURE HERITAGE and DESIGN

Carmine Gambardella

XXII INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Le Vie dei  
Mercanti



WORLD HERITAGE and  
CITIES IN EMERGENCIES

XXII INTERNATIONAL FORUM

NAPLES 14 - CAPRI 15 June 2024



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Carmine Gambardella

World Heritage and Dwelling on Space  
World Heritage and Cities in Emergencies  
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# WORLD HERITAGE and CITIES IN EMERGENCIES

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14 Giugno 2024 | 15 Giugno 2024

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### **Peer review**

Scholars has been invited to submit researches on theoretical and methodological aspects related to the impact of natural ecological disasters and armed conflicts on Cultural Heritage, and show real applications and experiences carried out on this themes. Based on blind peer review, abstracts has been accepted, conditionally accepted, or rejected. Authors of accepted and conditionally accepted papers has been invited to submit full papers. These has been again peer-reviewed and selected for the oral session and publication, or only for the publication in the conference proceedings.

### **Conference report**

300 abstracts and 550 authors from 20 countries:

Albania, Algeria, Austraia, Belgio, China, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New York, Portugal, Romani, Serbia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom.

**From the XXI FORUM WORLD HERITAGE and DWELLING ON EARTH  
to the XXII FORUM WORLD HERITAGE and CITIES IN EMERGENCIES.**

World Heritage and Dwelling on Space – World Heritage and Cities in Emergencies: this is the title of the International Forum “Le Vie dei Mercanti” which reached its XXII Edition in 2024. A story of love for the Earth, its Inhabitants, Landscapes, Architecture, Cultural and Archaeological Heritage told by more than 7000 Scholars and Lecturers from all over the World to with the aim of integrating expertise, sharing and disseminating scientific knowledge and implementing best practices to protect and safeguard our planet.

The focus of the Forum is no longer be only Inhabiting the Earth but is stretched and extended to Inhabiting Space, in a broader sense, to reflect on the impact of natural ecological disasters and armed conflicts on Cultural Heritage. Now more than ever, with the war in Ukraine, geographically closer than others, and with the latest events in the Middle East, the theme of wars and conflicts has become even more present in our lives.

Armed conflicts, synonymous with death and destruction, as well as weakening the social and economic fabric, put at risk the cultural heritage of besieged countries whose destruction has a strong symbolic as well as strategic significance because of the enormous identity value that resides in cultural heritage which stimulates a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

And it is precisely in order to deal with the tragic devastation of entire cities and territories and the terrible wound inflicted on the cultural heritage of peoples that the scientific community must create starting points to implement important and immediate actions aimed at safeguarding monuments, architectural works, archaeological sites, works of art, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest, as well as scientific collections of all kinds. If the future is an eternal now, as I remind every year, it is good for the Academy, Scientific Institutions, civil society, and stakeholders involved to make their knowledge and expertise available to promote a more widespread and in-depth knowledge on the issues regarding the safeguarding cultural heritage during armed conflicts.

**Dal XXI FORUM WORLD HERITAGE and INHABIT THE EARTH  
AI XXII FORUM WORLD HERITAGE and CITIES IN EMERGENCIES**

World Heritage and Dwelling on Space – World Heritage and Cities in Emergencies: è questo il titolo del Forum Internazionale “Le Vie dei Mercanti”, che nel 2024 ha raggiunto la sua XXII Edizione. Una storia d’amore per la Terra, per i suoi Abitanti, i Paesaggi, l’Architettura, i Beni Culturali e Archeologici raccontata da oltre 7000 Studiosi e Docenti da tutto il Mondo per integrare competenze, condividere e diffondere conoscenze scientifiche e mettere in atto best practices volte alla protezione e salvaguardia del nostro pianeta.

L’obiettivo del Forum non è più solo quello di Abitare la Terra ma è proteso e si estende verso l’Abitare lo Spazio, in senso più ampio, per riflettere sull’impatto dei disastri ecologici naturali e dei conflitti armati sul Patrimonio Culturale. Oggi più che mai, con la guerra in Ucraina, geograficamente più vicina di altre, e con gli ultimi avvenimenti in Medio Oriente, il tema delle guerre e dei conflitti si è fatto ancor più presente nelle nostre vite.

I conflitti armati, sinonimo di morte e distruzioni, oltre che di indebolimento del tessuto sociale ed economico, mettono a rischio il patrimonio culturale dei paesi assediati la cui distruzione ha un forte significato simbolico oltre che strategico per l’enorme valore identitario che risiede nel patrimonio culturale che stimola senso di appartenenza e coesione sociale.

Ed è proprio per far fronte alla tragica devastazione di intere città e territori e alla terribile ferita inflitta al patrimonio culturale dei popoli, che la comunità scientifica deve creare spunti per mettere in atto azioni importanti ed immediate volte alla salvaguardia di monumenti, opere architettoniche, siti archeologici, opere d’arte, manoscritti, libri e altri oggetti di interesse artistico, storico o archeologico, nonché collezioni scientifiche di qualsiasi tipo. Se il futuro è un eterno presente, come ricordo ogni anno, è bene che l’Accademia, le Istituzioni Scientifiche, la società civile, gli stakeholders coinvolti, mettano a disposizione le loro conoscenze e competenze per promuovere una più diffusa e approfondita conoscenza sui temi della salvaguardia del patrimonio culturale durante i conflitti armati.

Prof. Carmine Gambardella  
General Chair XXII Forum ‘World Heritage and Cities in Emergencies’  
President and CEO of the Benecon University Consortium  
UNESCO Chair on Landscape, Cultural Heritage  
and Territorial Governance



UNESCO Chairholder on Landscape, Cultural Heritage, and Territorial Governance; President and CEO of the Benecon University Consortium - Research Centre on Cultural Heritage, Ecology, Economy (Pegaso University, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", University Federico II of Naples, University of Salerno, University of Sannio). Full Professor of Drawing at the Pegaso University and at the University of Campania. President of the International Forum 'Le Vie dei Mercanti' since its first edition in 2003 to the XIX edition in 2022. Editor and Founder of the series "Surveying is/or Project", "Knowledge Factory" and "Architecture, Heritage and Design". Component of the Scientific Committee of International A Class Magazine 'Abitare la Terra'/'Dwelling on Earth' (Gangemi Editor International Publishing). He covered various roles for the University of Campania, including the Pro Rector of Institutions, Academic Senator, Director of the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design Luigi Vanvitelli, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture Luigi Vanvitelli, Director of the Department of Culture of Design, Director of Doctoral School in the Discipline of Architecture, Coordinator of the PhD in Protection, Safety and Representation of the Environment and Structures and Territorial Governance, Coordinator of the PhD Program in Surveying and Representation of Architecture and the Environment. He is author of numerous scientific international papers, publications and proceedings on surveying and representation of the built and natural heritage.

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# World Heritage and Dwelling on Space World Heritage and Cities in Emergencies

Architecture | Culture | Health | Landscape | Design | Environment |  
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Le Vie dei  
Mercanti

XXII INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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## **FAR.Enough**

### **Housing moments of uncertainty.Adaptive reuse\_**

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#### **Abstract**

This article investigates adaptive reuse as a solution to the complex challenges associated with abandoned public buildings, focusing specifically on the Fascist-era Houses and, in particular, the "Nicola Bonservizi" Regional Fascist House located in Sturla, Genoa. Initiated in 2021, the research aims to develop a replicable model, offering an innovative strategy for managing and enhancing these architectural assets, currently left unused. Through a detailed analysis, intricate connections emerge between physical measures, human needs, and urban context, highlighting the importance of both measurable and immeasurable values.

The examined work proposes an innovative approach to the refunctionalization of abandoned buildings, emphasizing spatial flexibility and adaptability as crucial tools for addressing periods of fluctuation and emergency situations. Founded on a strategic vision and a replicable model, the project aspires to transform these buildings into attractive centers, contributing to urban growth, territorial reorganization, and socio-economic development. The proposed methodology aims to reconcile concepts and techniques, providing an adaptable solution to future circumstances and events, intending to offer an innovative response to contemporary living challenges.

**Keywords:** Representative model of social and architectural valorization, Design for dynamic

reconfiguration, Representation of rationalist architecture, Schematized decision process, Scalability of modular systems

**1. Introduction**

This research aims to examine the presence of Fascist-era Houses in Italy in the first half of the 20th century, providing an in-depth overview of this significant architectural typology. Focusing on a vast construction production distributed over a short period, the analysis of these structures constitutes a significant chapter in Italian history. With over eleven thousand Fascist Combatant buildings scattered throughout the country, their central role in the regime's ideology is evident, akin to ancient basilicas for political, religious, and social affairs. Despite the 1932 competition attempting to standardize these buildings by promoting rationalist solutions, architectural fragmentation persisted, highlighting the complexity of defining a unique typology. (fig.1)



**Fig. 1:** Typological representation of the Case del Fascio houses. Each building was to bear pivotal punctual elements of the political party itself. The piazza-agera, facing the building, which was to serve as a place for gatherings, the arengario from which to harangue the crowd during rallies, and finally, the Torre Littoria containing the war memorial, which was usually represented as a punctual monolith towering over the city skyline. (Image produced by the author)

The attention then shifts to the recovery of the Fascist Regional Houses, aiming to confer economic and social value to currently abandoned public structures. The crucial challenge manifests in the dichotomy between the stringent architectural measures of the past and the various scenic possibilities of the future. (fig. 2) The crucial question naturally emerges:

why preserve these structures without giving them a meaningful purpose?



Fig. 2: Press report and image related to the Installation for the Performing Arts Festival "Short Theatre". Image taken from Dire\_National Press Agency on Sept. 10, 2019, © Annalisa Ramundo (Collage produced by the author)

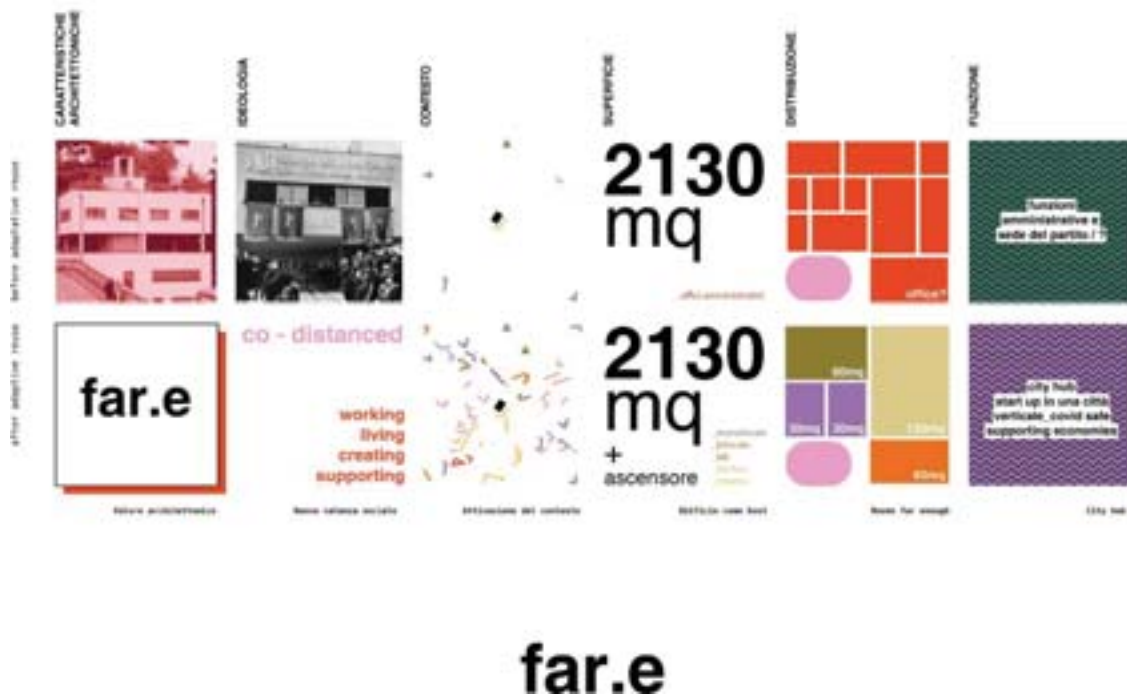
Therefore, through a detailed analysis of the context and the development of architectural principles during the Fascist era, specific attention is given to the Littoria House in Genoa. The goal is to promote the reiteration of the analyzed module, contributing to the future evolution and adaptation of similar buildings.

## 2. Methodological Proposal – Casa Littoria Rionale di Genova

The Nicola Bonservizi Regional House, once a symbol of political power, now stands as a testament to the ongoing challenge of rehabilitating historical buildings. The narrative unfolds with the presentation of a visionary project called "far.e = far enough\_ distant enough." The project seeks to study which idea can best adapt to the building, considering its strong architectural and historical value that one wishes to preserve, avoiding radical changes to the existing structure.

Firstly, a case study analysis was conducted on the former Fascist Regional House located in Genoa, Sturla. Originally known as the "Nicola Bonservizi Littoria House" designed by architect Luigi Carlo Daneri between 1936 and 1938, the building represents an intriguing example of regime architecture. From a Soldier's House post-war, the building has been abandoned since 2009. Situated in the main square of Sturla, in the residential district of Genoese Levante, the building played a prominent role as an organ of the fascist party. Its strategic position made it an attraction point, providing assistance and associative services to the community. (fig.3)

## *Casa Littoria Rionale, Genova*



**Fig. 3:** Graphic restitution of the major differences reported before and after the inclusion of the Far.e start-up within the building analyzed, both in terms of architectural values and in terms of added social values. (Image produced by the author)

The architect's original approach was based on innovative rationalist forms, with solid lines alternating with sinuous elements, especially in the interiors, characterized by the absence of heavy partitions between spaces. The skillful use of natural light from ribbon windows dominated the spaces. This construction, located on a plot with significant slopes, spans multiple levels, most of which are below the street level of Piazza Sturla. The suspended floor on pilotis emphasizes the surrounding landscape, emerging as a reference to Le Corbusier's "Villa Savoye."

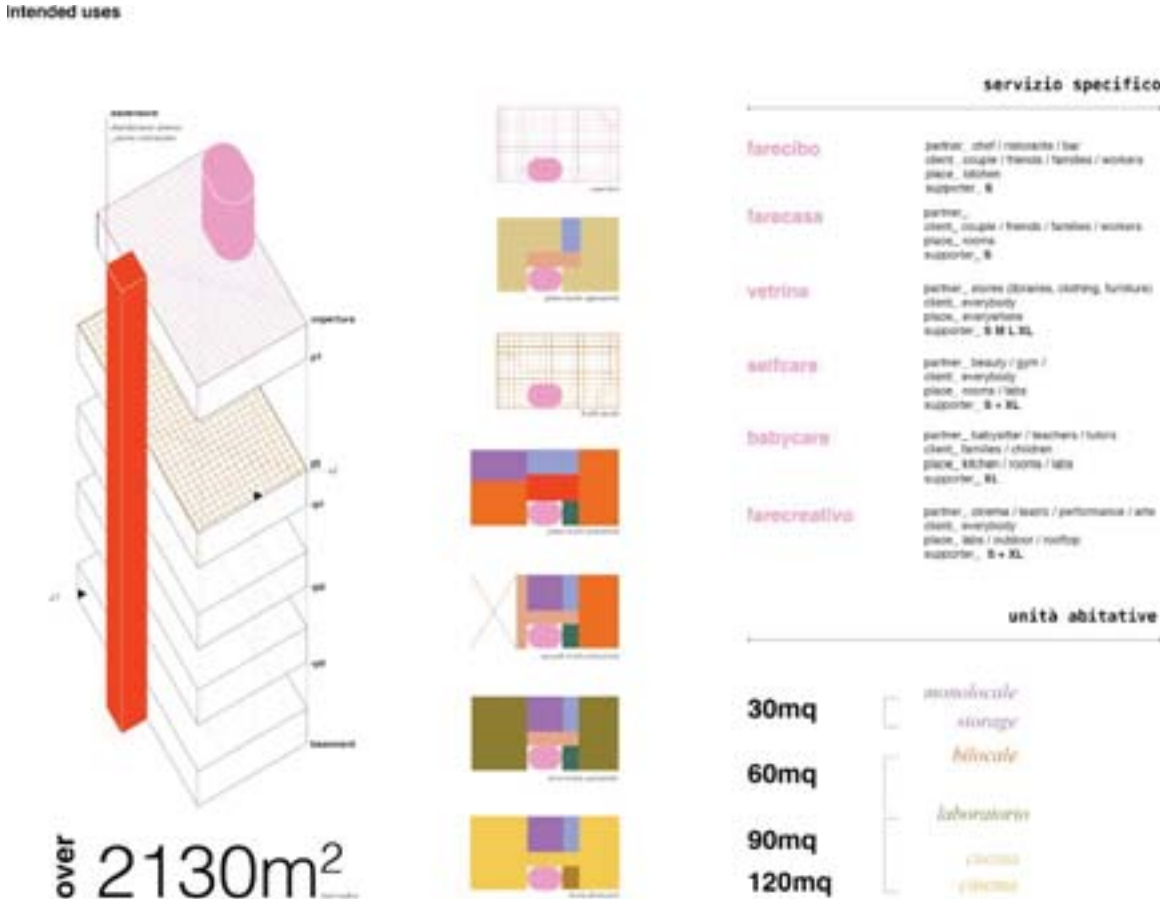
The main features of the House are identified in both the square footage, marked by almost residential expansiveness due to social and administrative activities within, and the aesthetic attention of the Littoria House. Architectural properties are mainly linked to Italian rationalism.

The concept was then developed for the building to become a kind of vertical city, addressing the situation when the project was conceived, in a pandemic and post-emergency period. This counters the abandonment of historically and architecturally significant buildings in favor of new construction, increasing the use of land for concrete and against the natural expansion of nature on it.

This is accomplished by envisioning a start-up called "far.e," functioning as a city hub that collects all actions typical of a city -work, relationships, culture- while maintaining enough distance. The concept of codistance, coworking, coliving, cocreating, and cosupporting identified the users of this building: collaborators, supporters, and customers.

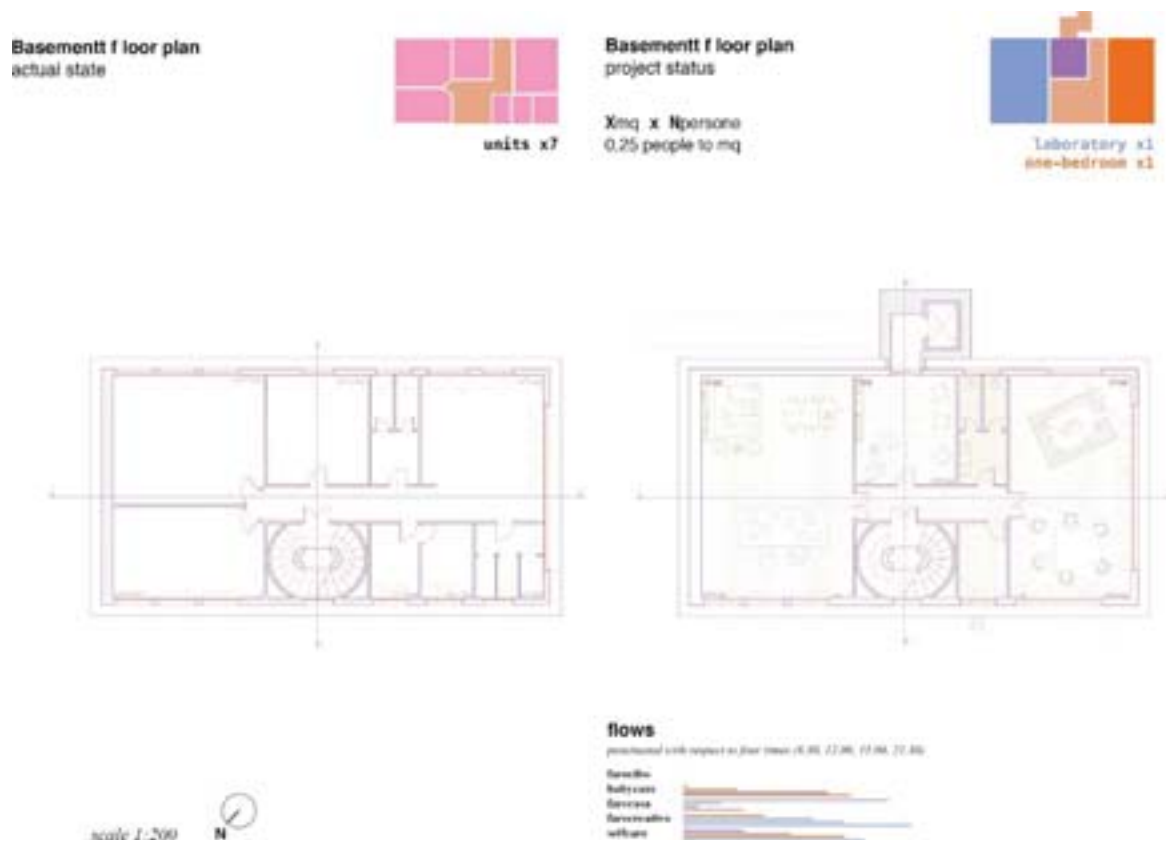
The first are citizens or small local businesses that decide to provide a service but no longer have a place to do so. The second are small, medium, or large enterprises that can also be

local businesses providing a product or considered as sponsor companies. Finally, the last category is represented by citizens themselves living in the vertical city. (fig.4)



**Fig. 4:** Spatial diagrams of project uses. Graphic analysis reported through the use of indeformed plan axonometry in which the colored levels identify the floors located above street level and the orange parallelepiped represents the new elevator insertion to ensure a uniform in favor of compliance with architectural barriers. In the center are shown the graphic diagrams that in the thesis work were, conducted from archival floor plans at a scale of 1:100, in which the different interior distribution types are summarized. Lastly, at the far right are shown the analysis data and legends useful for understanding spatial operation. (Image produced by the author)

The building thus becomes a container hosting housing units conceived, given the existing distribution, of small dimensions conceptualizing four types of standard and replicable areas that can respond to the required needs. They have been divided in size into 30, 60, 90 and 120 square meters.



**Fig. 5:** Comparison structure of spatial solutions, on a scale of 1:200, of a typical plan before and after the adaptive reuse project. (Image produced by the author)

This research also used an analysis of national and international trends functionally to study possible internal distributions, identified in six main functions. These functions shape through different dynamics of this application through space and the building's places.

Regarding trends, the most requested values revolving around four macro-themes were analyzed: cinema, food, childcare, and self-care. This takes into account the post-pandemic emergency and also considers future perspectives, where the continued use of smart working is foreseeable. This study aims to design and idealize a place where professionals and students can coexist while working, and children can be cared for without disturbing the parents' work schedule.

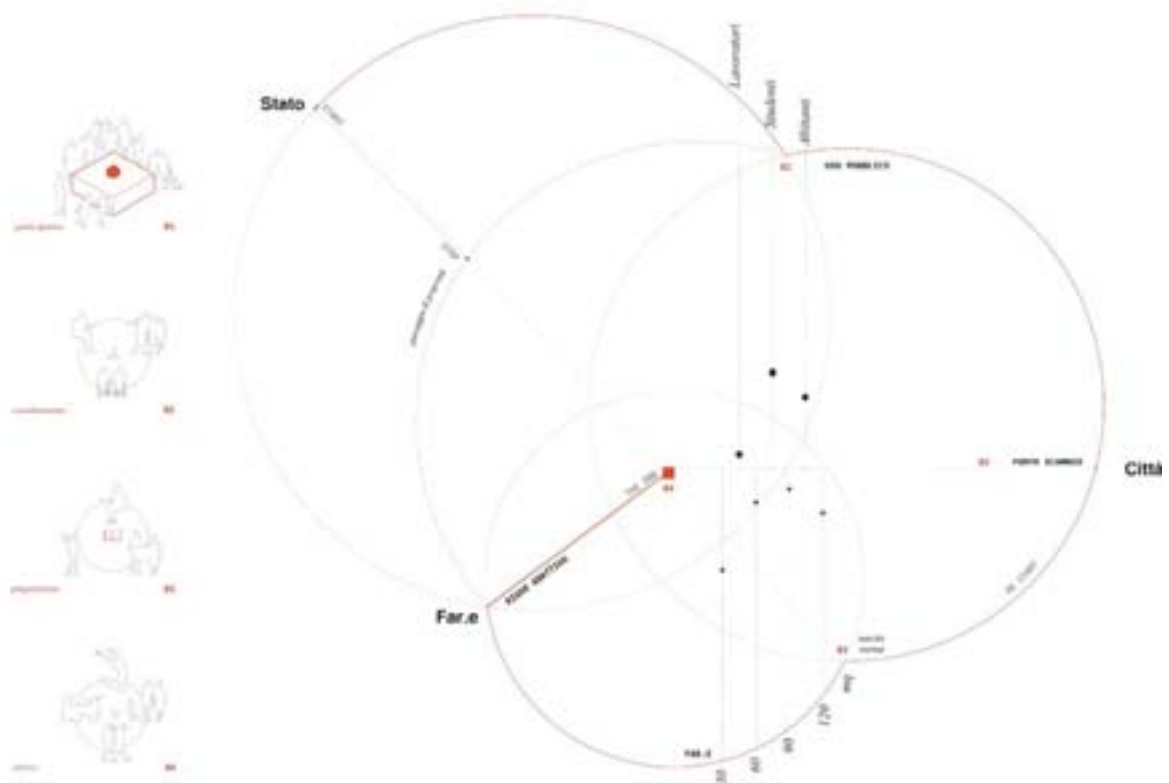
Project analysis



**Fig. 6:** Bold graphical representation of a useful bar chart outlining the analysis conducted on national and international trends for defining prices and costs that cannot be traced to specific architectural domains. The chart groups modules into four macro-categories: cinema, food, babycare, selfcare. Each category is examined through specific commercial reference sites (see the logos on the left of each group), which are critical to understanding annual statistics and the, dominance or otherwise of their products/services. The goal is to define values and dimensions responsive to citizen demand, creating a base solid to adapt the offer to the needs of the population. (Image produced by the author)

The conception of the vertical city emerges as a bonus, designed to support people and activities in difficulty, both during pandemic emergencies and normal periods. The management plan emphasizes collaboration between the State, the City, and the far.e startup, highlighting adaptability over time as a fundamental element. The ultimate goal of the project is to serve as a replicable model for future initiatives, demonstrating how a single idea can adapt to different abandoned buildings with similar characteristics.

## Development process



**Fig. 7:** Analysis of the development model for the management of the building under examination.

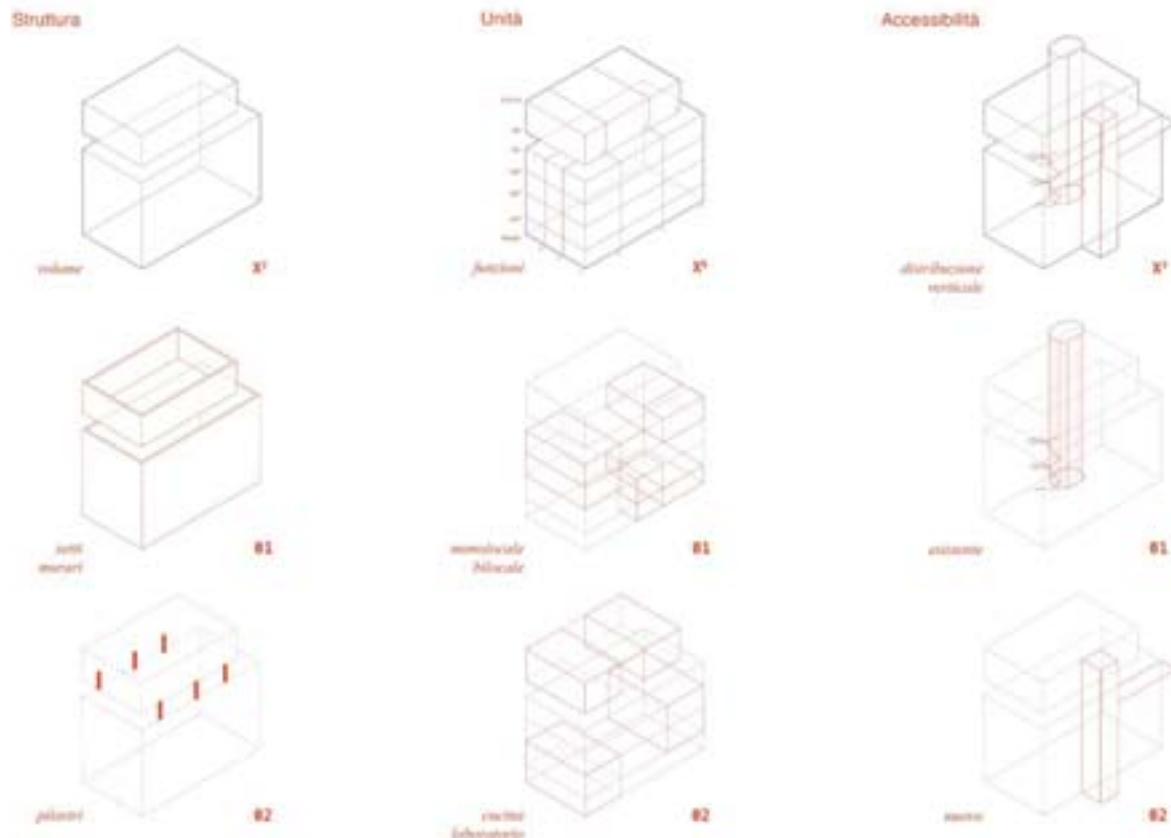
From the assumption that the building has already passed from the state property to the ownership of the municipality. The latter decides to launch a competition for the management of the building, which is won by the start-up Far.e with the absorption of the costs of its maintenance and refunctionalization. The City also enters the adaptive reuse decision-making process, outlining useful elements for participatory planning. (This is a personal hypothesis of the building's development). (Image produced by the author)

In facing this architectural rebirth journey, the Littoria House is not just a historical relic but also an beacon of innovation, connecting the measured past with the boundless possibilities of the future. A repeatable and applicable project is the key to overcoming the challenges of abandoned buildings, offering them a new culturally, socially, and economically meaningful life. The initiative aims to provide a strategic vision, equipping the urban fabric with the necessary tools to flexibly embrace periods of change.

At the heart of this proposal is the creation of a spatial model that can adapt agilely to changing needs, presenting an easily replicable solution. The project develops through the conception of a dynamic organism capable of adapting to the rhythms and needs of the city. The adopted approach focuses on the internal flexibility of spaces and uses, promoting transformation as a key element to remain competitive nationally and internationally.



## Architectural morphology



**Fig. 8:** 1:500 scale axonometric diagrams of Structure, Housing Units, Project Accessibility. (Image produced by the author)

### 3. Application – Modular Interaction

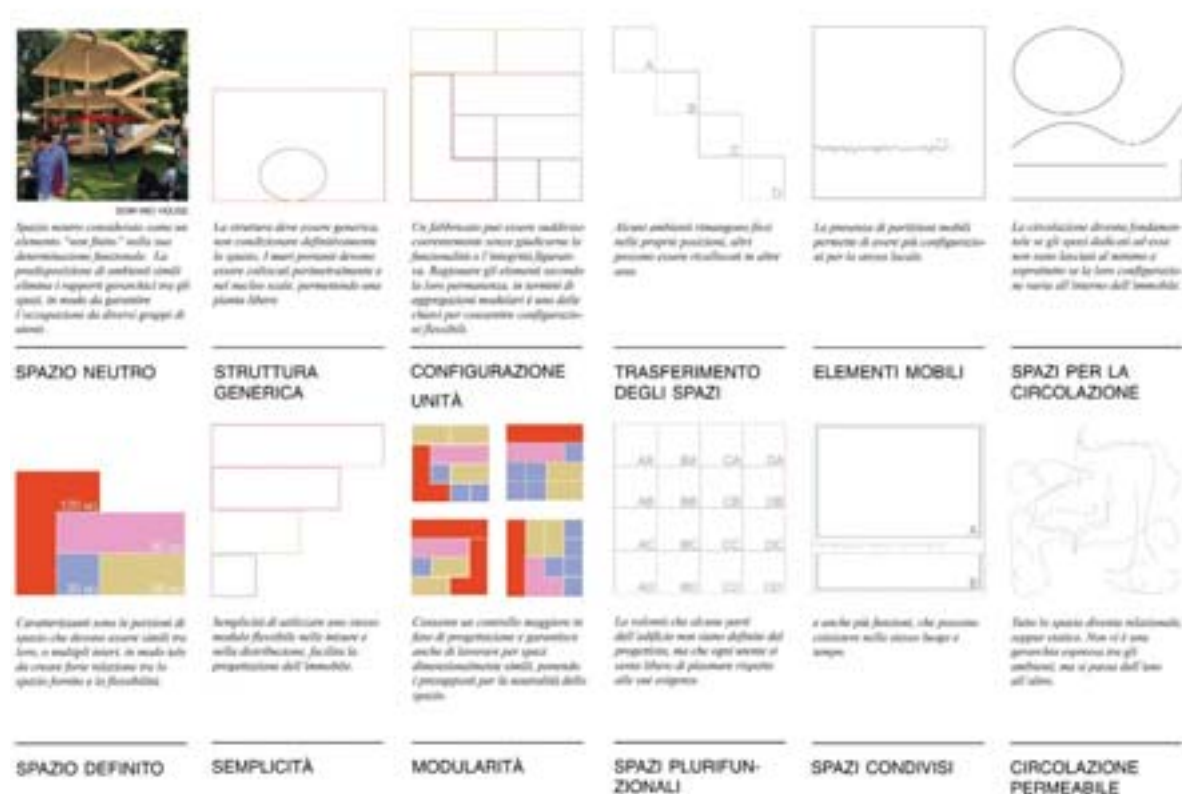
However, uncertainties about the complex's final destiny and the replicability of the model for other similar buildings present concrete challenges. In fact, at the beginning of drafting this work, two crucial questions were posed:

What will be the fate of the complex?

Can the idea become a reusable model for other similar buildings?

Answering these questions is complex, as the future is inherently unpredictable and uncontrollable. The scholar Lauria argues that, faced with the indeterminacy of the future, attempts are made to respond with configurations capable of change, seeking to reconcile the conflict between the dynamism of user demand and the rigidity of spatial supply.

**Flexibility and adaptability**



**Fig. 9:** Parameters for defining the free plan and an adaptive design. (Image produced by the author)

Designing for uncertainty means immersing oneself in a changing society, seeking new ways of living by accommodating in architectural space all intentions and stimuli contributing in this direction. Regarding the second question, the answer seems affirmative: the idea can be considered a reusable model for similar contexts. Reusability emerges as a solution designed to mitigate uncertainties related to the project's success, leading to the enhancement and new functionality of buildings and contributing to a broader vision of urban regeneration.

The origin of this research, emerging within an academic context, initially did not seem oriented towards such concrete and pragmatic decisions. Initially, the lack of in-depth preparation on the subject generated uncertainty about the project's real purpose. However, it is now possible to assert that the main purpose was, and perhaps still is, the search for a pilot project. A project characterized by implementation and distribution modalities that could transform into incremental work in different contexts.



**Fig. 10:** Schemes of reiteration of the project on other plans of abandoned Case del Fascio houses on the national territory. (It should be noted that attached to the thesis project are historical plans, with their drawing scales, of the buildings under examination and their respective area fills for defining possible ideas for adaptive reuse of them). (Image produced by the author)

#### 4. Conclusion

The intriguing relationship between "reuse and emergency" emerges as a common thread running through various facets of human life, from architecture to social behavior. Reuse, with its adaptability and regeneration capacity, presents itself as the pursuit of innovative and sustainable solutions in times of emergency, encouraging the requalification of disused spaces to face contemporary challenges. On the other hand, emergency represents the need for rapid and flexible responses, emphasizing the importance of adaptive strategies in managing critical situations. The confluence of reuse and emergency thus becomes fertile ground for innovation and creativity, where the tension between these two dimensions generates resilient solutions capable of facing sudden changes. This ongoing dialogue offers new perspectives and stimulates critical reflection, paving the way for extraordinary results and the evolution of approaches and practices in managing and enhancing public real estate heritage in times of uncertainty. Ultimately, in the delicate balance between reuse and emergency, the possibility of significant progress and enrichment of our understanding of how to address emerging challenges becomes apparent.

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