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A new acquisition for DIST: Emilio Clara's archive

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new Dist

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DIPARTIMENTO INTERATENEEO DI SCIENZE
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POLITECNICO E UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO

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A NEW ACQUISITION FOR DIST: EMILIO CLARA'S ARCHIVE

http://www.dist.polito.it/il_dipartimento/strutture_interne/labc

Emilio Clara's professional archive

Emilio Clara's professional Archive was donated by his family to Politecnico di Torino Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning in June 2016. Graduated in "Industrial Engineering" in 1949 at the same Politecnico, Emilio Clara (1925-2014) obtained, a few years later, a second degree in "Aeronautics Engineering", but he chose to pursue a career as a structural engineer, specialized in reinforced concrete calculation and, in 1950, he opened his own studio in Turin.

The Archive contains more than 3300 projects, dating between the Fifties and 2006, mainly located in and around Turin. The majority of these projects is devoted to residential buildings (1626), others are for businesses, farms, factories, sports facilities and offices (361), religious buildings (16), military barracks (2), school buildings (7), health and social care institutions (12), funerary monuments (123). In addition, as a technical consultant for construction and yard companies, he prepared 684 certificates of structural testing and 441 technical reports.

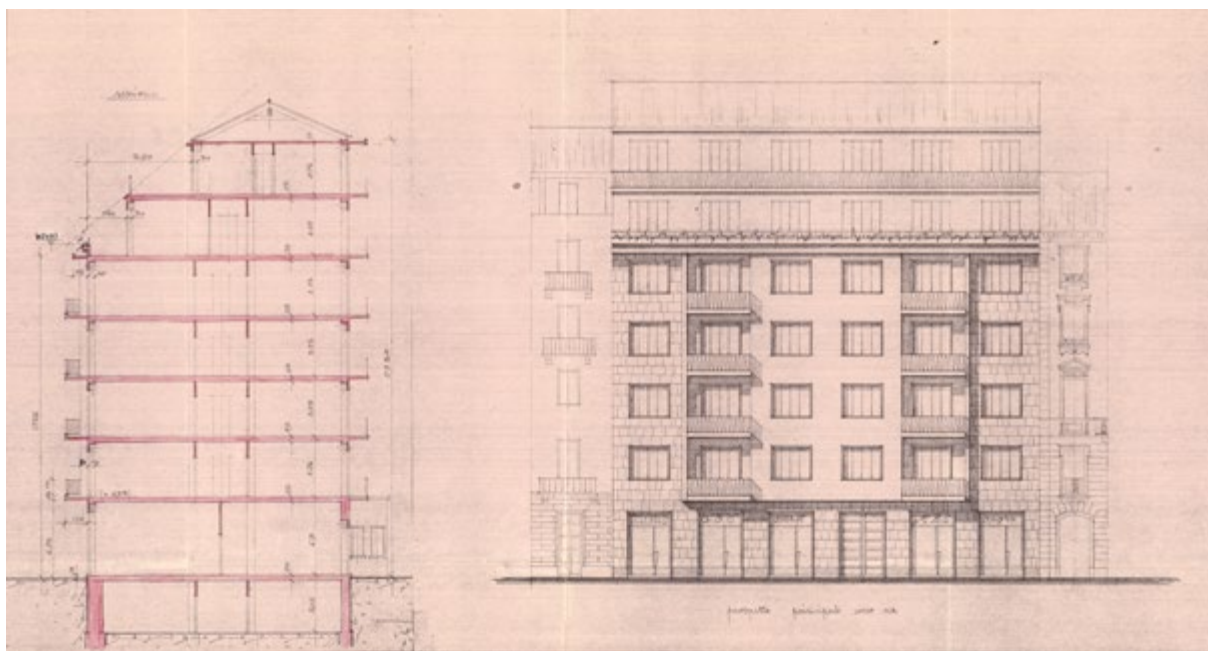
Emilio Clara's Archive adds an important new tile, between the archives already owned by Politecnico di Torino, useful to the research on urban development and transformation in the second post-war period both in Turin and in Piedmont Region.

Emilio Clara and the building of "Everyday Turin"

A conspicuous section of Clara's Archives is devoted to a long series of projects (partially of the author both for design and reinforced concrete calculus, both only for the structural aspects of the buildings) concerning condominiums and various size blocks of apartments all around Turin. Just having a quick overlook on his production, we realize that a consistent portion of the city has been built by Clara and its collaborators. It's a heritage of good solutions, not so excellent as others (by great designers and architects of the same period, like Mollino, just to spread a very well know author of the



Damages of the II World War bombing in via San Quintino in Torino and the new building projected by Emilio Clara in 1954.





Fifties), but surely belonging to a serious tradition of “quality buildings”. They represent in fact our everyday life city, a well known and consolidated image of the places we live in and with. In particular, some terrific solutions (well connected to the contest or on the contrary based on a wide, declared rupture) are the result of the cultural ages they belong to, the Fifties and Sixties, and they are laying on a preordained grid: the General City Master-plan of 1959. A program for the expansion, but mainly the re-build, after the impressive damages of the Second World War bombing, of the town in its complexity. Being first of all a “quantitative plan”, the urban program of the Fifties was intended for pulling up as quick as possible enormous quantities of cube meters of apartments, erasing “at lightning speed” the image of a blessed city. In this contest Clara’s projects appear to be quality exercise evidences: the solutions are simply, but well constructed, easy to live, functional, durable and sometimes even innovative. His attention to the parking solutions, to storage spaces, to cupboards (not infrequently obtained along corridors and service rooms) demonstrate he knew the everyday life necessities and he tried to simplify families activities.

We are so very grateful to his family for having permitted us to have a look (not only by the keyhole, but directly in the workshop) to this kind of architecture: not merely building, but surely Architecture.

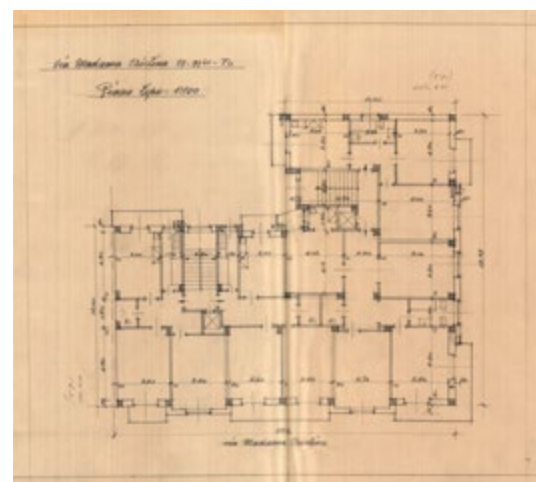
Emilio Clara’s main works

Among the most significant works, reflecting the variety of building types which Emilio Clara was faced with during his practice and the different roles assumed by him in the building process – structural designer (mostly), architectural designer, client – we can mention a series of exemplar solutions. They are the unrealized project for a new Parish Church in Lanzo Torinese (1959); the manufactory plant for Quercetti company in corso Vigevano in Turin (1969-1977), for which Clara collaborated with Felice Bertone; the restoration of the Church dedicated to the Madonna di Loreto in Montanaro (1972-1992), designed by Mario Passanti, appointed by Clara as a client, in memory of his wife Irene, who died prematurely. The work of Emilio Clara reflects a consolidated professionalism, manifesting itself in proven design solutions, sometimes minimal, but always functional and effective, which derive their methodological roots in his Polytechnic education.

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Emilio Clara, Quercetti factory in corso Vigevano, Torino, 1969-1977. Front toward via Pinerolo.

Emilio Clara, Residential building between via Madama Cristina and via Donizzetti, Torino, 1960. Plan and perspective.





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