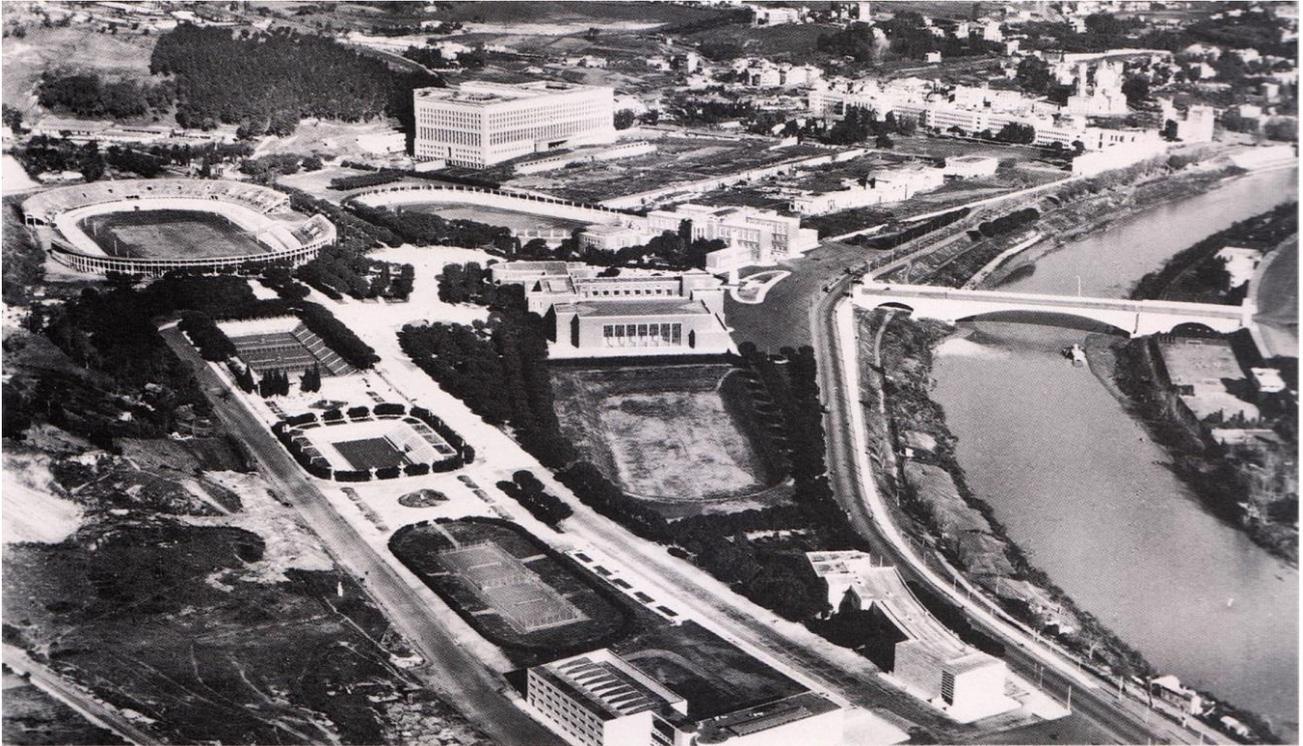


Minimum Documentation Fiche 2015

composed by national/regional working party of:
Docomomo Italia

0.1 Picture of site



depicted item: Aerial view of the complex
source: Caporilli, Simeoni 1990
date: before 1950

1. Identity of group of buildings

1.1 current name of group of building	Foro Italico
1.2 variant or former name	Foro Mussolini
1.3 number & name of street	site delimited by Lungotevere Maresciallo Cadorna, Piazza Lauro de Bosis, Lungotevere Maresciallo Diaz, Largo Maresciallo Diaz, Via della Macchia della Farnesina, Viale dei Gladiatori and Via Roberto Morra di Lavriano,
1.4 town	Rome
1.5 province/state	Rome/Lazio
1.6 zip code	00135
1.7 country	Italy
1.8 national grid reference	latitude 41.932024; longitude 12.458589
1.9 classification/typology	REC, EDC / Sports Centre and University

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1.10 protection status & date

protected by Law no. 1089/1939, Ministerial Decree of 31st January 1989 (architectonical and historical interest); by Law 1497/1939, Lazio Regional Committee resolution no. 10591 of 15th December 1989 (cultural and landscape value); included in the Piano Territoriale Paesistico no. 15/8 called "Valle del Tevere", approved by the Lazio Regional Council resolution no. 25 of 12th July 2006. In the 2008 Piano Regolatore Generale (Municipality Master Plan) of Rome, it was included among the "Special Buildings and Complexes" of the historical city, as an "Urban Architectural Landmark"; in the Quality Charter of the Master Plan was recommended the conservation of the historical, architectonical, urban and landscape characteristics of the complex.

2. History of group of buildings

2.1 original brief/purpose

sports complex for the education of the O.N.B.'s instructors

2.2 dates: commission/completion

1927/1943

2.3 architectural and other designers

Enrico Del Debbio

(Master plan 1927-33; Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica and Stadio dei Marmi 1927-32; Stadio dei Cipressi 1931-32; Foresteria Sud 1933-34; Colonia Elioterapica 1933-35; Magazzini di Casermaggio 1933; Palazzo Littorio, with Arnaldo Foschini and Vittorio Morpurgo, 1937-1943 and completed 1956-59)

Luigi Moretti

(Master plan 1936-42; Casa delle Armi 1934-36; Stadio Olimpico, with Angelo Frisa and Achille Pintonello, 1932-38; Palestra del Duce 1936-37; Piazzale dell'Impero 1937; Cella commemorativa 1940)

Costantino Costantini

(Monolith 1931-32; Palazzo delle Terme 1933-38; Impianti della Racchetta, 1933-35; Foresteria Nord 1934-37)

Vincenzo Fasolo

(Ponte Duca d'Aosta 1936-39)

Mario Paniconi, Giulio Pediconi

(Fontana della Sfera 1933-34)

2.4 others associated

with group of buildings

numerous artists collaborated with the architects in the Foro:

Eugenio Baroni (statues: Impianti della Racchetta)

Angelo Canevari (mosaics: Stadio dei Marmi; indoor swimming pool and music academy in the Palazzo delle Terme, Casa delle Armi, Piazzale dell'Impero)

S. Canevari (statues: Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica, indoor swimming pool in the Palazzo delle Terme, Palestra del Duce)

Achille Capizzano (fresco: Casa delle Armi; mosaics: Piazzale dell'Impero; graffiti: Palestra del Duce)

Giulio Rosso, (mosaics: indoor swimming pool in the Palazzo delle Terme, Fontana della Sfera, Piazzale dell'Impero; curtains in the Palestra del Duce)

Gino Severini (mosaics: Piazzale dell'Impero, Palestra del Duce)
Twenty-six artists collaborated to realise the sixty statues in the Stadio dei Marmi, including: Oddo Aliverti, Eugenio Baroni, Aroldo Bellini, Carlo de Veroli, Silvio Canevari, Nicola D'Antino, Romano Romanelli, Attilio Selva.

2.5 significant alterations with dates

Sport facilities built for the 1960 Olympic Games:
Stadio del Nuoto (Enrico Del Debbio, Annibale Vitellozzi 1957-59); Casa Internazionale dello Studente (Enrico Del Debbio, Piero Maria Lugli 1957-59); expansion of the Stadio Olimpico (Carlo Roccatelli, Annibale Vitellozzi 1950-53).

Other alterations: the sports area has been enclosed by railings; further expansions of the Stadio Olimpico for the 1990 Soccer World Cup (Annibale Vitellozzi, Maurizio Clerici 1988-90); conversion of the Casa delle Armi into a high security court for terrorism trials since 1981; it has been assigned in 2005 to Comitato Olimpico Nazionale (C.O.N.I.) and partially restored in 2013; inauguration of the new Stadio Centrale del Tennis (2010) and of the Ponte della Musica (2011).

2.6 current use

The sports facilities of the Foro Italicco are used for national and international sports events (over the year the Foro Italicco hosted the 1960 Olympic Games, the 1990 Soccer World Cup, the 1994 and 2009 World Aquatics Championship; from 1935 it hosted the Tennis Italian Open, from 1953 the Italian Football League - Serie A and from 2012 the home matches of the Italian National Rugby Team for the Six Nations Championship).

The former Palazzo delle Terme houses the Università degli Studi di Roma "Foro Italicco" dedicated to sports and movement sciences. The music academy's auditorium inside the Palazzo delle Terme is used by the R.A.I. (Radiotelevisione Italiana). The swimming pools, assigned to the Federazione Italiana Nuoto (F.I.N.), are used for swimming courses and competitions.

The former Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica is the headquarters of the C.O.N.I.

The former Foresteria Sud, used as youth hostel until 2011, is now unused, whereas the former Foresteria Nord houses a school and offices. The former Casa delle Armi was used for many years as high security court; recently restored is occasionally opened for guided tours.

The Palazzo della Farnesina (the former Palazzo Littorio) maintains its function as headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.7 current condition

The original characteristics of the Foro Italicco has been altered by inadequate additions. The complex is subjected to a general degradation process due to the lack of maintenance and to the incompatible use for mass events.

3. Description

3.1 general description

The Foro Mussolini (Foro Italico, after 1943), designed and built between 1927 and 1943, was the primary sports complex realised by the Opera Nazionale Balilla (O.N.B.).

The Foro was conceived to provide spaces for the fascist education of the O.N.B.'s instructors and, at once, to symbolise the modern nature of the institution. The construction site was an area in the north of Rome surrounded by the Monte Mario Hill and the Tevere Valley. Several plans were developed at first by E. Del Debbio and then by L. Moretti, and were all characterised by the research of an harmonious relation between the complex and the landscape. Numerous statues and mosaics, representing athletes, sports competitions and allegorical figures, were also integrated in the complex. The buildings and the sports facilities were organised along two axes: the east-west axis and the north-south one. The main east access, was marked by a monolith and two symmetrical buildings: the Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica, connected to the Stadio dei Marmi, and the Palazzo delle Terme, housing the swimming pools and the music academy. Along the east-west axis, the Piazzale dell'Impero led to the Fontana della Sfera and to the Stadio dei Cipressi (Stadio Olimpico, after 1932). The Impianti della Racchetta and the Foresteria Nord were organised along the north-south axis. The access on the south side was marked by the Foresteria sud and the Casa delle Armi. The Palazzo Littorio, built in 1937 adding a political function, was converted in 1940 into the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the post-war period the Foro maintained its sports functions, undergoing considerable extensions. For the 1960 Olympic Games the Stadio del Nuoto and the Casa Internazionale dello Studente were built, and the Stadio Olimpico was expanded. From the Eighties on, a series of incongruous transformations have been realised: all the area has been enclosed by disfiguring railings; a huge steel structure has been built above the Stadio Olimpico for the 1990 Soccer World Cup; the Casa delle Armi has been used for a long time as a high security court for terrorism trials; finally, in 2010 a new invasive tennis stadium has been realised.

3.2 construction

Due to the topography of the area and to the proximity of the Tevere, the site chosen for the construction of the Foro Mussolini was frequently flooded by the river. Hence, new river banks were realised and the level of the whole area was raised of 5,50 metres. Since 5th February 1928 - when the construction of the Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica started - the works proceeded rapidly, thanks to the representative role of the complex. The new artificial level was exploited to include the sports stadiums, aiming to preserve the landscape. The stadiums' structure consisted in a reinforced concrete mat foundation, brick and tuff masonry terraces (Stadio dei Marmi) or reinforced concrete terraces (Impianti della racchetta) covered by Carrara marble panels. In the Stadio dei Cipressi, the original terraces dug in the ground and covered with grass were then expanded, in 1932, with a new reinforced concrete structure covered by Carrara marble panels. The buildings had in reinforced concrete and masonry structure, covered with red "Terranova" plaster (Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica, Palazzo delle Terme, Foresteria sud) or Carrara marble panels (Casa delle Armi, Foresteria sud after 1937, Foresteria Nord, Palazzo Littorio). The Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica by E. Del Debbio and the Casa delle Armi by L. Moretti are two noteworthy examples in the experimentation on the reinforced concrete technology. In the Accademia's gymnasium, the structure designed by A. Giannelli consisted in eight 22 meters Vierendeel girders enclosed by a curved beam, to form a rigid system supported by sixteen pillars [Capomolla, 2004]. The structure of the Casa delle Armi was designed by G. Baroni. Because of the presence of a sewer, Franki piles were used instead of a mat foundation. The fencing room was characterised by a daring structure consisting in two systems of independent cantilevers, whose the main ones extradosed and 12,50 meters long.

3.3 context

The design and the development of the Foro complex were highly influenced by the Monte Mario Hill and the Tevere Valley, which delimited the construction area. This site was chosen by Enrico Del Debbio because of its wide extension, its landscape value and strategic position: the area, characterised by the thick vegetation of the hill, was historically the north gate of Rome along the via Cassia. The hill and the valley had been specifically protected since 1932, date of the last plan by E. Del Debbio. In the Fifties several Ministerial Decrees were issued to protect this landscape and later gathered in the Lazio Regional Committee resolution no. 10591 of 15th December 1989, based upon Law 1497/1939. In 1997 a nature reserve on the Monte Mario hill was instituted by the Regional Law no. 29 of 06th October (approved by the Lazio Regional Council resolution no. 55 of 12th November 2008). The park included 150 hectares of woods and shrubs and many monumental buildings, like the the sixteenth-century Villa Madama, the Chiesa del Rosario and the Colonia Elioterapica by E. Del Debbio. In 1998 the whole area laid between the hill and the valley was included in the Piano Territoriale Paesaggistico no. 15/8 called "Valle del Tevere", approved by the Lazio Regional Council resolution no. 25 of 12th July 2006.

On the north side, the Foro was connected to the Flaminio district by the Ponte Duca d'Aosta, realised to join the Stadio Olimpico to the Stadio Nazionale (later Stadio Flaminio). Although a south connection was designed since 1928, only in 2011 was inaugurated the Ponte della Musica, a pedestrian bridge which directly led to the MAXXI by Zaha Hadid, to the Auditorium by Renzo Piano and to the Villa Glori Park.

4 Evaluation

4.1 technical

In accordance with the protectionist politic first, and then with the autarky, the structural systems used in the Foro complex were the reinforced concrete and the masonry. The structural opportunities offered by the reinforced concrete were employed to realise wide spaces for the collective activities, borrowing technologies from the civil engineering. Traditional structures were combined with experimental ones as the Vierendeel system in the Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica and the extradosed cantilevers systems in the Casa delle Armi, generally used in stadiums' constructions.

As a consequence of the economic policies and of the the O.N.B.'s president R. Ricci's involvement in the marble business, the Carrara marble had in the Foro numerous applications as in the monolith, in the Fontana della Sfera and in the decorative elements of the buildings. Furthermore, the experimentation with thin Carrara marble panels, designed to integrally cover the façades of the Casa delle Armi, was of great interest. It represented a high quality solution to the technological issue on thin stone panel coverings, widely diffused in Italy during the Thirties.

Finally, a remarkable innovative water treatment system was used in the swimming pools in the Palazzo delle Terme, conceived to obtain a fast complete treatment cycle, lasting only six hours [Pica, 1937].

4.2 social

The O.N.B. was the main youth fascist organisation, conceived to educate young people and to obtain the general consensus. During the late Twenties and the Thirties the organisation promoted an extensive national building implementation programme, scattering hundreds of buildings dedicated to its activities throughout Italy and introducing a new typology, the Casa del Balilla. The Foro Mussolini was the first and the main complex of this programme, designed as the only male academy for the O.N.B. instructors. It was meant as a fascist monument, built to immortalise the Fascism and Mussolini and connected to the imperial tradition of Roman Forums [Pica, 1937]. The progress of the works was documented through the national press and the newsreels filmed by the Istituto Luce. The transportation of the monolith was acclaimed by the media as an epic feat lasted four years. Furthermore, the Foro was intended as scenery for mass performances. After the

candidacy of Rome for the 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games, it was designated to host the Olympic competitions. Moreover, in 1936 L. Moretti designed the Arengo delle Nazioni (unbuilt), a huge area for 400.000 people dedicated to national events and Mussolini's speeches.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

The issue of the relationship between architecture and art, central matter of the international architectural debate, found in the Foro Mussolini an exceptional solution. As in the Imperial Forums the interplay between the mosaics, the statues and the buildings, intensified their representative and expressive values. It is possible to refer, for instance, to the refined spaces in the Palazzo delle Terme: the sports played in the Palestra del Duce and in the indoor swimming pool were celebrated by the mosaics representing symbolic figures and athletes which proposed a physical and gestural model.

The architectural research into modern language materialised in the clear volumetrical composition of the buildings, in the quality of the formal and technical design and in the exceptional attention to detail and materials. The architectural and artistic works harmoniously fitted into the natural context which in turn enhanced the theatricality of the complex. This accomplished synthesis of architecture, art and landscape design characterised the Foro Mussolini as a unique urban complex.

4.4 historical

Originally designed as a small complex including the Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica and the Stadio dei Marmi, the Foro Mussolini gradually developed, becoming the north gate of Rome along the urban north-south axis which led, through Piazza Venezia and Via dei Fori Imperiali, to the south gate of the city, the E42 complex.

As the most representative place of the O.N.B., the Foro was a fertile and privileged ground for typological and formal experimentation. In particular, the Accademia Fascista di Educazione Fisica and the Casa delle Armi represented two fundamental models for the following O.N.B.'s complexes and showed the typological and stylistic evolution over the years. The Accademia was the first O.N.B.'s commission and, at once, the first coherent application of the architectural principles formalised by E. Del Debbio in the manual commissioned by R. Ricci to orientate the design of the O.N.B.'s gymnasiums and Case del Balilla [Del Debbio, 1928]. A symmetrical planimetric composition, where the gymnasium was the main room, and an architectural language based on a moderate modernity including classical yet simplified elements.

In the Casa delle Armi (former Casa Sperimentale del Balilla) the typology reached a sort of sublimation [Vittorini, 2008]. L. Moretti used a clearly modern language which generated well-defined volumes, realising an exceptional building where the artworks were strictly integrated in the architecture.

4.5 general assessment

The Foro Mussolini, now Foro Italico, was one of the most emblematic place of the Italian modern architecture during the Twenties and the Thirties and it was the first modern complex built in Rome. Characterised by the exceptionality of urban and landscape design and by the high quality of the architectural and artistic works, the Foro represented a model for the complexes built by O.N.B. throughout Italy. From the Fifties the Foro Italico was assigned to different managing authorities. This partitioned management complicated the planning of a coherent tutelage and conservation programme. The intensive use for national and international mass sports events, the construction of new sports facilities not well integrated and a general lack of maintenance caused over the years a progressive degradation of the complex.

Although the Foro was listed for its architectural and landscape value in 1989, and it was object of numerous studies and proposal of restoration, a clear unitary project based on the conservation of the valuable original characteristics of the complex still has to be proposed.

5. Documentation

5.1 principal references

5.1.1 Archives

Archivio Enrico Del Debbio, MAXXI, Roma
Archivio Luigi Moretti, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma
Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Luce

5.1.2 principal publications

articles

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ARGENTINI F. (edited by), *Foro italico. Città dello sport, tra passato, presente e futuro*, Roma; LVR Advertising; 2011.

5.2 visual material attached

Fig. 1 Aerial view of the complex, before 1950 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)
Fig. 2 Master plan by Enrico Del Debbio, 1928 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)
Fig. 3 Master plan by Luigi Moretti, 1939 (Greco, Santuccio 1991)
Fig. 4 The Accademia di Educazione Fascista and the Stadio dei Marmi by Enrico Del Debbio, 1933 (Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)
Fig. 5 The construction of the ramp which connected the Stadio dei Marmi to the new level of the site, raised of 5,50 metres (Archivio Del Debbio, published in Mulazzani 2004)
Fig. 6 The Vieerendel system used in the Accademia's gymnasium (Archivio Del Debbio, published in Capomolla 2004)
Fig. 7 Aerial view of the east access to the Foro Mussolini, 1939 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)
Fig. 8 Current view of the east access to the Foro Italico, 2015 (photo credits: Riccardo Pagnozzi)
Fig. 9 The indoor swimming pool by Costantino Costantini (Pirani, Tozzi 1998)
Fig. 10 The Palestra del Duce by Luigi Moretti (Santuccio 2005)

Fig. 11 View of the Foresteria Sud by Enrico Del Debbio after 1937 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)
Fig 12 The Casa delle Armi by Luigi Moretti after completion (Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)
Fig 13 Current view of the south access to the Foro Italico, 2015 (photo credits: Riccardo Pagnozzi)
Fig. 14 Scale model of the Casa delle Armi (published in MARCONI, P., 'La Casa delle Armi al Foro Mussolini', Architettura, no. 8, 1937, p. 435-454)
Fig. 15 View from the Casa delle Armi (Archivio Luigi Moretti, published in Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)
Fig. 16 The fencing room in the Casa delle Armi (Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)
Fig 17 Current view from the Casa delle Armi; on the background the new Stadio del Centrale, 2015 (photo credits: Riccardo Pagnozzi)

5.3 rapporteur/date

Barbara Paroli / march 2015

6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R

name of examining ISC member:

date of examination:

approval:

working party/ref. n°:

NAI ref. n°:

comments:

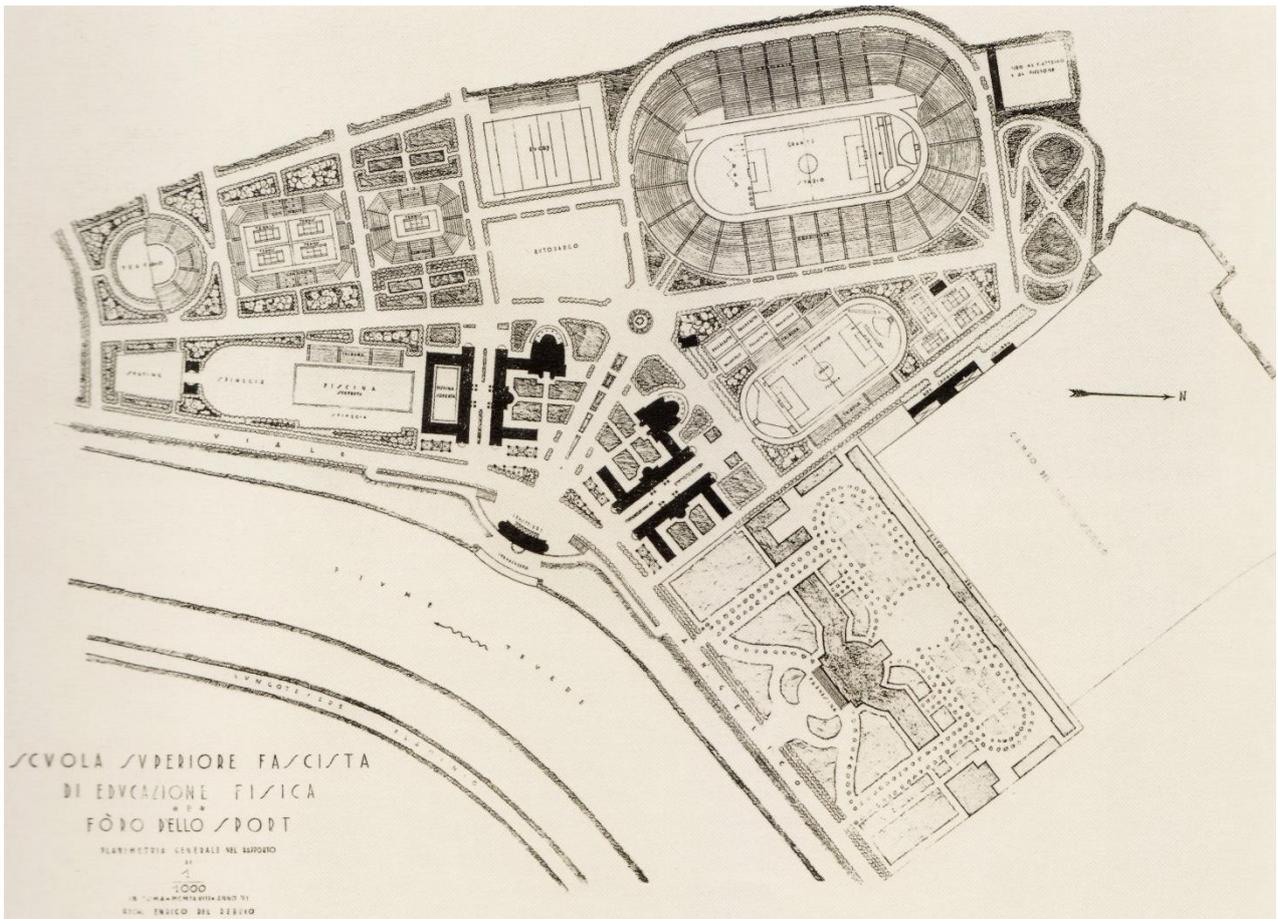


Fig. 2 Master plan by Enrico Del Debbio, 1928 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)

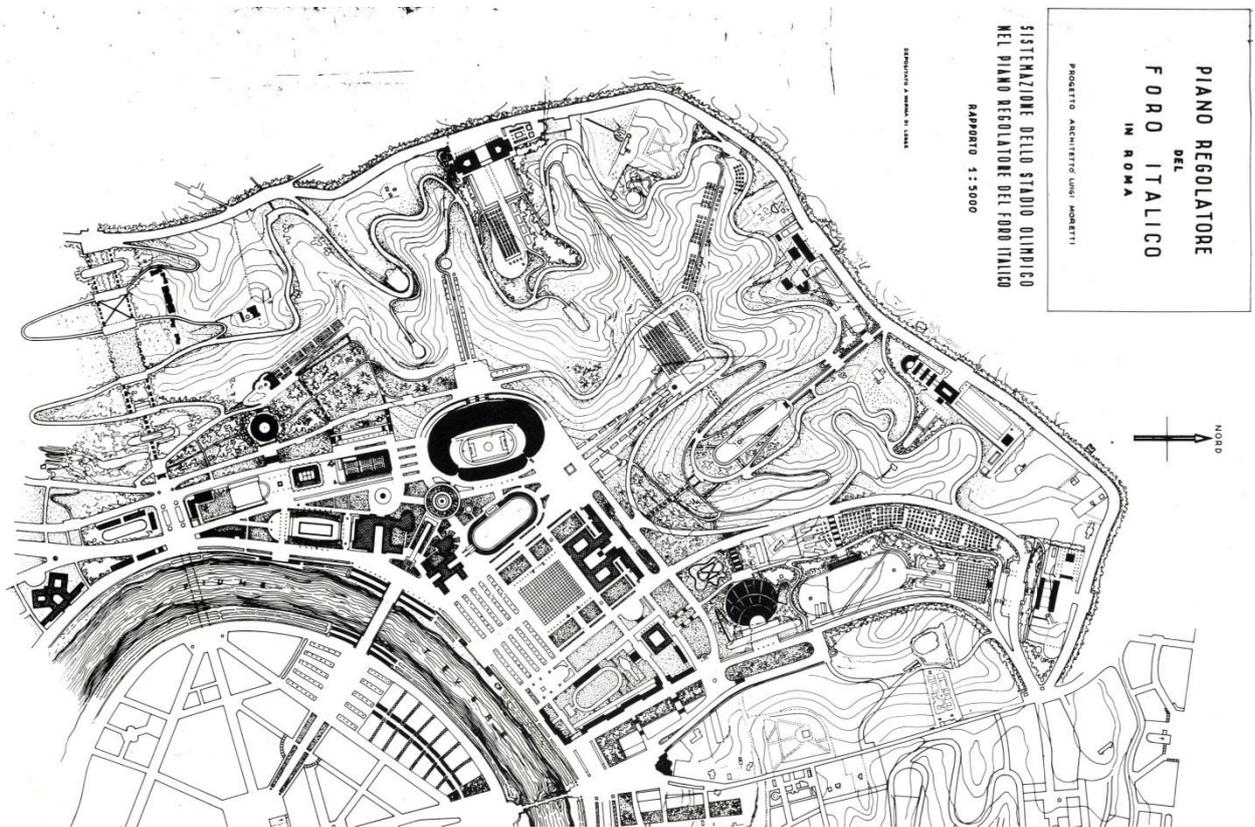


Fig. 3 Master plan by Luigi Moretti, 1939 (Greco, Santuccio 1991)

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Fig. 4 The Accademia di Educazione Fascista and the Stadio dei Marmi by Enrico Del Debbio, 1933 (Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)



Fig. 5

Fig. 5 The construction of the ramp which connected the Stadio dei Marmi to the new level of the site, raised of 5,50 metres (Archivio Del Debbio, published in Mulazzani 2004)



Fig. 6

Fig. 6 The Vierendeel system used in the Accademia's gymnasium (Archivio Del Debbio, published in Capomolla 2004)

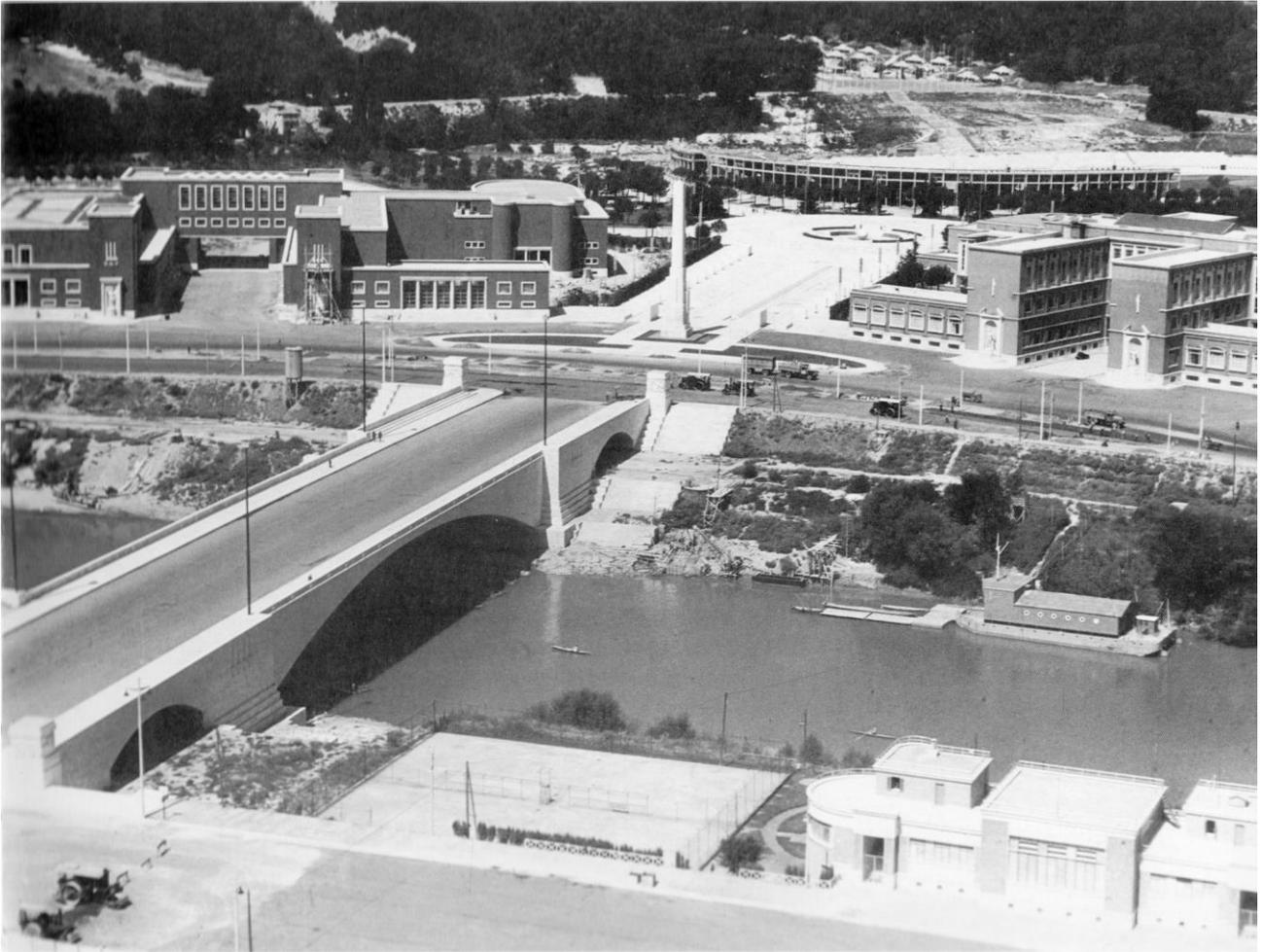


Fig. 7 Aerial view of the east access to the Foro Mussolini, 1939 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)



Fig. 8 Current view of the east access to the Foro Italico, 2015 (photo credits: Riccardo Pagnozzi)



Fig. 9 The indoor swimming pool by Costantino Costantini (Pirani, Tozzi 1998)



Fig. 10 The Palestra del Duce by Luigi Moretti (Santuccio 2005)

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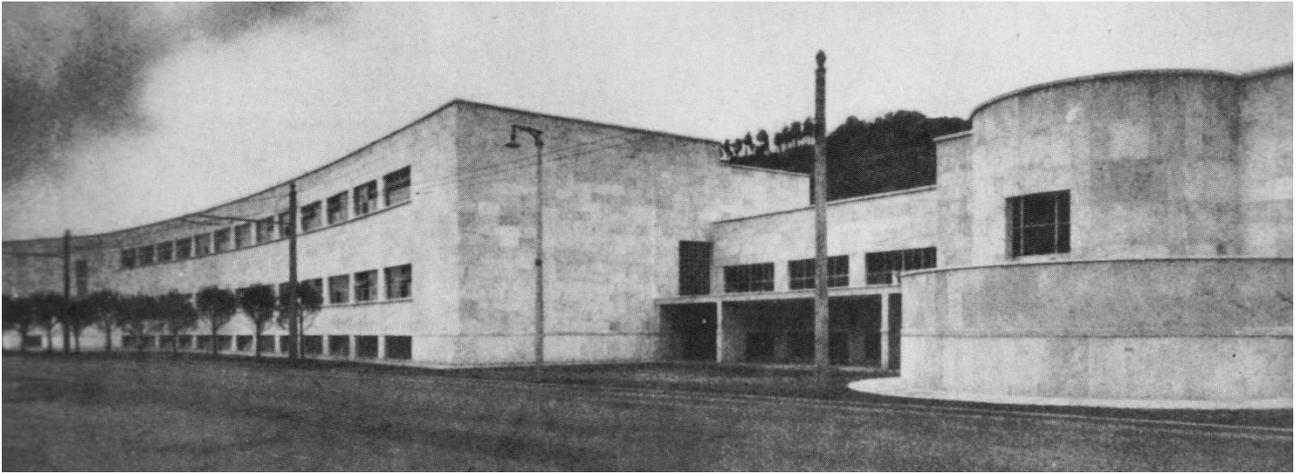


Fig. 11 View of the Foresteria Sud by Enrico Del Debbio after 1937 (Caporilli, Simeoni 1990)

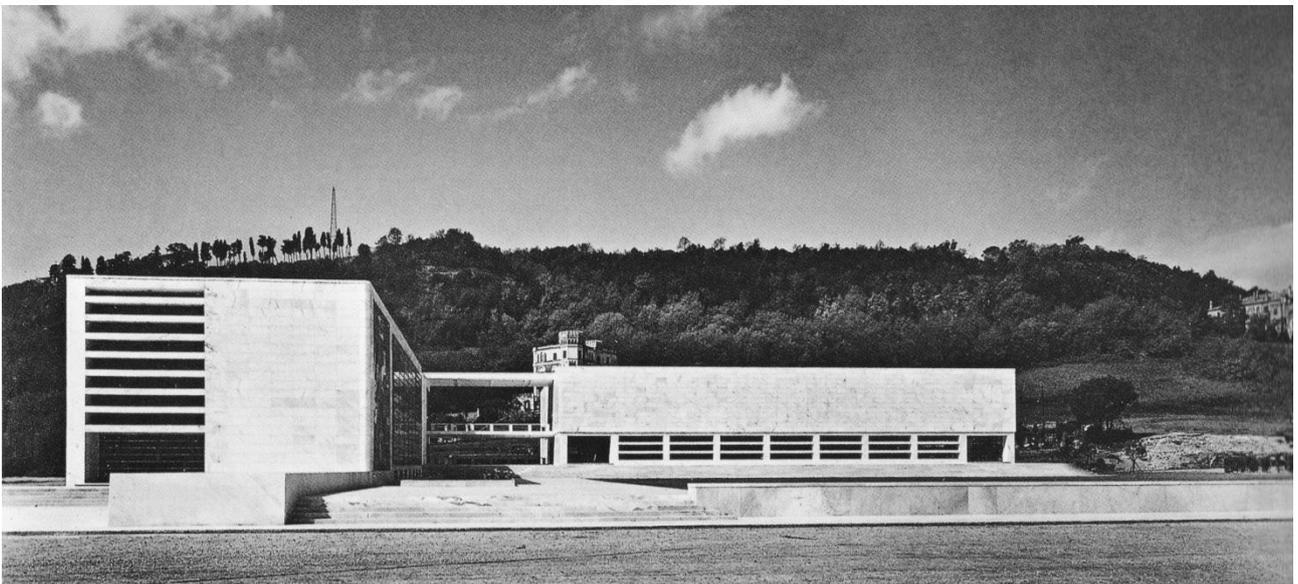


Fig 12 The Casa delle Armi by Luigi Moretti after completion (Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)



Fig 13 Current view of the south access to the Foro Italico, 2015 (photo credits: Riccardo Pagnozzi)



Fig. 15 View from the Casa delle Armi (Archivio Moretti, published in Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)

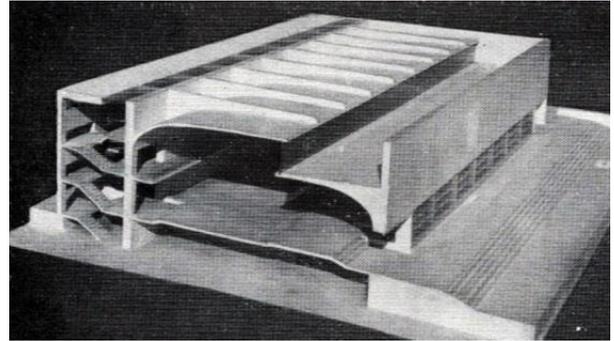


Fig. 14 Scale model of the Casa delle Armi (published in MARCONI, P., 'La Casa delle Armi al Foro Mussolini', *Architettura*, no. 8, 1937, p. 435-454)



Fig. 16 The fencing room in the Casa delle Armi (Capomolla, Mulazzani, Vittorini, 2008)



Fig 17 Current view from the Casa delle Armi; on the background the new Stadio del Centrale, 2015 (photo credits: Riccardo Pagnozzi)

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