

Minimum Documentation Fiche

composed by regional working party of ABRUZZO, Italy

01. Picture of building



Depicted item: Photo of the construction site

source: old photograph shown in book: GIANNANTONIO, Raffaele, Tradizione e Modernità. L'architettura del ventennio fascista in Chieti e Provincia, Fondazione cassa di Risparmio della Provincia di Chieti, Casa Editrice Tinari, 2003.

date: 1933-1934

1. Identity of building

1.1 current name of building

Museum of University of Chieti Pescara

1.2 variant or former name

The building, known as the Palazzo OND-Chieti, was formerly dedicated to Benito Mussolini's brother, Arnaldo. After the second world war the building changed hands taking the new proprietary name, the ENAL, a national authority for the assistance of workers. The building is currently known as the Museum of University of Chieti and Pescara.

1.3 number & name of street

Trento and Trieste square

1.4 town

Chieti

1.5 province/state

Chieti/Abruzzo

1.6 zip code

66100

1.7 country

Italy

1.8 national grid reference

42° 20'47.21"N 14°09'54.74"E

1.9 classification/typology

Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro - Recreational Club (1934 - 1945)

Enal building (1945-1995)

University Museum (2005-today)

1.10 protection status & date

Statement of cultural interest (art. 10 comma 1 - DL 42/04 Verifica art. 12 DL 42/04) date:
29/03/2007

2 History of building**2.1 original brief/purpose**

The project is a part of an extensive program of construction of recreational clubs for workers, the headquarters of OND, a national corporation established in 1925 and finally organised in 1931. In order to achieve this program, the new building in Chieti was chosen as headquarter for "the provincial directorate", which had to control municipal and local branches and different associations that were organised by OND members. Aims of OND organisation were the promoting of a healthy and profitable use of playtime for workers with activities for the development of their physical, intellectual and moral skills. The OND building, a manifesto of Modern Movement in Chieti, is also linked to urban transformations of the fascist period, which were functional to the construction of a new "city of work". Concerning it the OND Palace was the first episode of a large program which allowed, through the replacement of existing buildings, the construction of important architectures, such as headquarters of the Provincial Council of Economy and Postal Service. According to this program the location of the OND club was strategically situated in front of the Trento and Trieste square, at the urban intersection of the historical Marrucino main road, the new Amendola boulevard and the IV Novembre Street, the access to the municipal Villa. The OND Palace was designed as a new urban gate which had to renew the aspect of the ancient city. Designed by the architect Camillo Guerra, construction began in 1933 and was inaugurated a year later, 24th November, in the presence of Achille Starace, high commissioner of the OND institution.

2.2 dates: commission/completion

Design start: 1930

Final design 1933

Opening ceremony: 24th october 1934

2.3 architectural and other designers

arch. Camillo Guerra

2.4 others associated with building

Site manager: eng. Giuseppe Florio

Contractor: Di Mario Odorisio's company

Building services contractor: Di Renzo e Marcantonio's company

Furniture: Giuseppe Granata's company

2.5 significant alterations with dates

The first function of OND headquarters was left at the end of the Second World War, when a state of abandon followed. The story of the building is directly linked to events of its owners: in 1945 the OND headquarters in Chieti changed hands and the proprietary became the ENAL, a national

institution that finally closed in 1978. A year later the Abruzzo region became the new owner and carried out a significant transformation of the functional layout with the addition of different functions: an High School before, municipal offices, a nursery school and an underground movie theater later. In 1991 a fire started in the ceiling of the movie theater hall which not affected the use of the entire building that indeed remained opened till 1995, partially occupied by offices of AIRES (Abruzzese Institute for Research and Development). After 1995 a period of abandonment followed although in the same year the Region assigned a designers group to prepare the project of renovation and restoration of the entire building whose contract in 1996 was undertaken by a company of eng. Mario Nuti.

2.6 current use

Since 2005 the building has hosted the Museum of Natural Sciences and History of Science of the University "G. d'Annunzio". In particular exhibitions are particularly focused on relationships between biological-medical aspects and archaeological, anthropological and paleontological researches.

2.7 current condition

Medium-Good

3. Description

3.1 general description

The rectangular building, located along the north-south axis, spread over a length equal to about four times its width, with a footprint of 58.65 m to 16.80, on a area of 1000 square meters. The OND headquarters initially consisted of three floors; on the top a large roof terrace for community activities. In the underground level there was a movie theater whose capacity was for 400 people. The groundfloor hosted a large gymnasium, a fencing hall, bars, gaming rooms and for entertainment; upstairs there were cultural spaces: a library, reading and writing rooms and offices. The functional layout was characterized by dual accesses symmetrically disposed on the frontal and lateral sides, corresponding to horizontal paths and linear stairs linking internal levels. Outside a monumental staircase leads to the main entrance, defining the figurative solutions for the basement and two columns, 17 meters high "fasces", to which are enveloped helical stairs that reach to the large roof terrace.

3.2 construction

The structural design is related to a traditional technique which mixes a reinforced concrete structure and masonry walls. The architect Guerra effectively sets up the building on the principle of masonry structures, partially taking advantage of potentials of reinforced concrete frame, only where it is necessary for functional needs. Excepting for the lateral underground wall, the construction is composed by reinforced concrete frames placed on the perimeter of the building and completely concealed in walls thickness. The longitudinal reinforced concrete frame separates the fabric in two parts defining the position for horizontal paths. Pillars have sections ranging from 35 to 60 cm from the basement to the first floor and beams with variable heights. The vertical building envelope is realized with double or triple bonds of bricks, while the longitudinal wall at the interior is realised with hollow bricks which are suitably wedged. Floors are hollow core concrete slabs like "bi-delta" type, with thickness of 45 cm at the interior and 60 cm for the covering. This kind of floors guarantees a high thermal and acoustic insulation and structural performances. Reinforced concrete is the material which allows both the construction of helical staircases around large circular pillars 17 meters high and 1 meter diameter, and the realization of the monumental stair which identify the main entrance, although some details declare also the mixed use of materials and techniques, in particular in the case of thick parapets. In the last version of the project windows are defined with a traditional design and combined in different modules to form the ribbon on the top floor or the large hole in the ground floor on the main front, only interrupted by the double height entrance which is concluded by a curved-profile. The frames of the windows of the first and second floors are fir tree, while those in the basement are iron.

3.3 context

The area of 1000 square meters, formerly occupied by a small public building, is close to the urban center, at the end of the main street and near the Leonelli Palace and Villa Nolli. The building arises for size upon the small built environment and radically changes the planimetric organisation and the perception of the original site, highlighting the will of Guerra to realise a monumental and celebratory intervention. The lacking relationship with the urban context has been compromised by uncontrolled interventions on the square that can't allow the original perception of the building.

4. Evaluation

4.1 technical

High value

Throughout the design Guerra chooses to renounce to technical and expressive potential of reinforced concrete preferring the structural safety of masonry which imposes characters of functional layout and functional distribution of the interior spaces and figurative solutions for exterior walls of the envelope. On the contrary, in the side opened on the square, the reinforced concrete reveals its sculptural and plastic potential, making possible the construction of two helical staircases developing around central pillars which assume symbolic values of the fascist Regime.

4.2 social

High value.

The OND club is a significant example of the social architectures that the fascist Regime promoted since 30's in several Italian cities. These buildings were characterized by the creation of new typological schemes for community, educational and sport spaces. In continuity with its history the building still plays a social role due to its current function, a museum focused on scientific and cultural education.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

High value.

The reconstruction of events related to the project evolution, from the initial proposal to the final, is a significant and emblematic moment of a transition that involved the Italian architecture in the research of a good balance between tradition and Modern Movement, between historicist reminiscences and new expressive codes for contemporary buildings. Camillo Guerra firstly thought to a real "architectural object" functional to the Regime propaganda and organised through the superposition of two pure volumes, a box and a cylinder. Subsequent design steps mark a more careful and rational reflection on typological aspects while the research for figurative solutions show a more complex development: the choice of elements related to traditional architectures as the balcony on the long side, arches and niches that reveal access axes. In final designs Camillo Guerra moves to a modern language for an architecture which recovers again the Propaganda message of first solutions.

4.4 historical

High value.

Its value is the uniqueness of architectural solutions. The design experimentation which was linked to social architectures of the '30s in Italy and in particular to buildings for local communities, shows the possibility of achieving a coherent synthesis between an accurate and continuous research about functional layouts and a slow and sporadic upgrade of formal and technical aspects.

4.5 general assessment

The OND headquarters, its urban location and its figurative potential, remain today a "manifesto" of the will to transform Chieti in a modern city where an urban renewal during the Fascist period led to the construction of new architectures for recreational and cultural activities. The reassessment of the role of the OND Palace in a coherent historical and architectural context can reveal the need of preservation and its current potential into the contemporary urban pattern.

5. Documentation

5.1 principal references

SCIANNAMEA Leonardo, PASCETTA Alessandro, Il palazzo dell'Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro a Chieti: storia e conservazione di un'opera del ventennio fascista, in OPUS Quaderno di Storia, Architettura, Restauro - n. 6/1999.

GIANNANTONIO, Raffaele, La costruzione del regime. Urbanistica, Architettura e Politica nell'Abruzzo del Fascismo, Casa Editrice Rocco Carabba, Lanciano, 2006

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GHIRINGHELLI Olga, Camillo Guerra (1889-1960). Architettura meridionale tra eclettismo e modernismo, Electa Napoli, 2004

FASCIA, Flavia, Il catalogo informatico delle architetture di Camillo Guerra, Luciano Editore, Napoli 1996

BACULO Adriana, Camillo Guerra 1889-1960. Fra tradizione e dinamica funzionale, in 'ArQ Architettura Quaderni', N. 4, Giugno 1990

SERANO M., Rilievo e Restauro del Palazzo ex ENAL in Chieti, Tesi di Laurea, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila, a.a. 1998-99

<https://ingdipietro.wordpress.com/ingegneria/>

<http://www.grupponuti.it/sito/pag41.htm>

Archives

Archivio storico comunale di Chieti

Archivio di Stato, Chieti

Archivio del Dipartimento di Ingegneria Edile-Architettura dell'Università Federico II di Napoli

Archivio del Comune di Chieti

5.2 visual material attached

Fig. 1 Photo of the construction site (GIANNANTONIO Raffaele, Tradizione e Modernità, 2003).

Fig. 2 A sketch of the building by Camillo Guerra (GIANNANTONIO Raffaele, La costruzione del regime, 2006).

Fig. 3 A photo of the building in the thirties (GIANNANTONIO Raffaele, Tradizione e Modernità, 2003).

Fig. 4 Building plans in the nineties (SCIANNAMEA Leonardo, PASCETTA Alessandro, Il palazzo dell'Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro a Chieti, 1999).

Fig. 5 The building in the urban context (Matteo Abita, 2015).

Fig. 6 A lateral view (Matteo Abita, 2015).

Fig. 7 A backside view (Matteo Abita, 2015).

Fig. 8 A view of the conference room of the University museum located inside the building (Matteo Abita, 2015).

Fig. 9 Internal changes of the building due to realization of the University museum (Matteo Abita, 2015).

5.3 rapporteur/date

Danilo Di Donato, April 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:

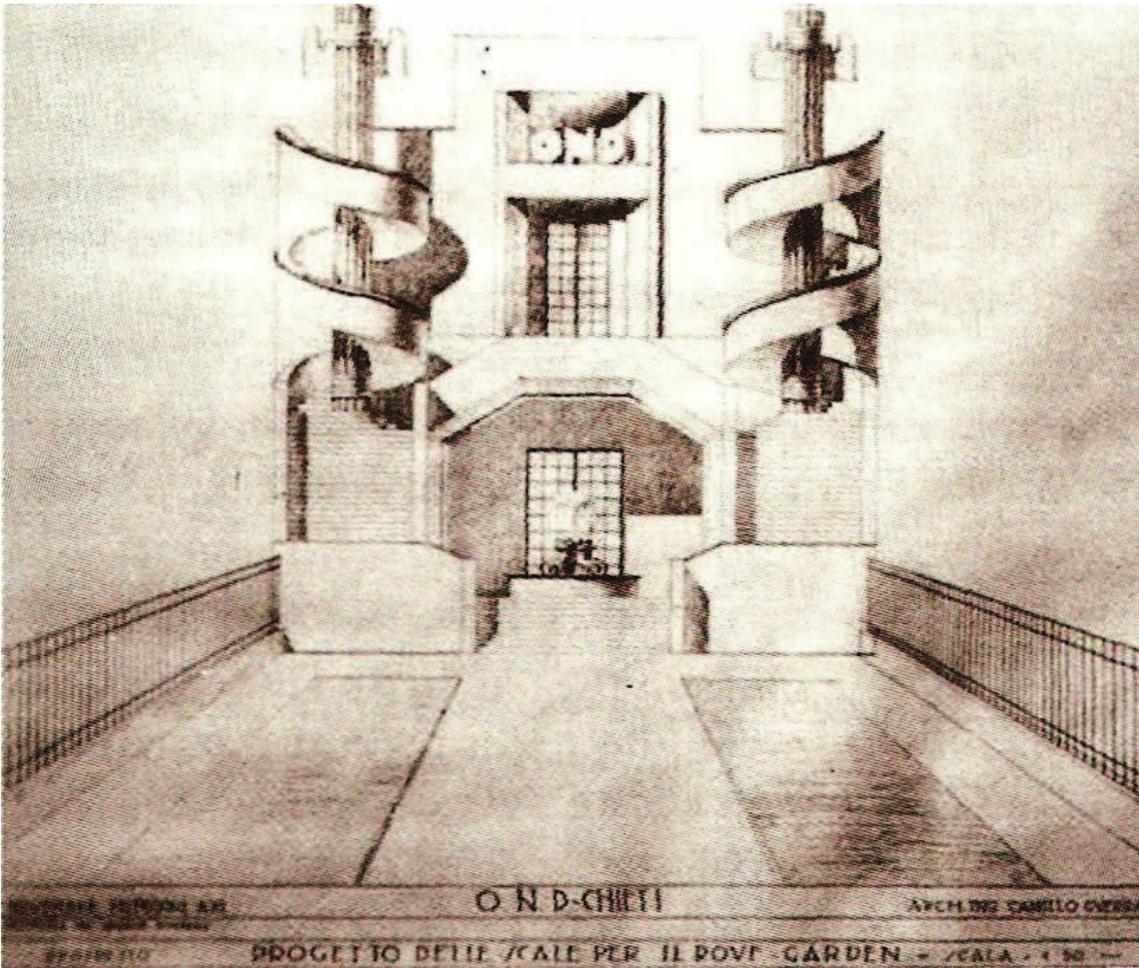


Fig. 2 A sketch of the building by Camillo Guerra.

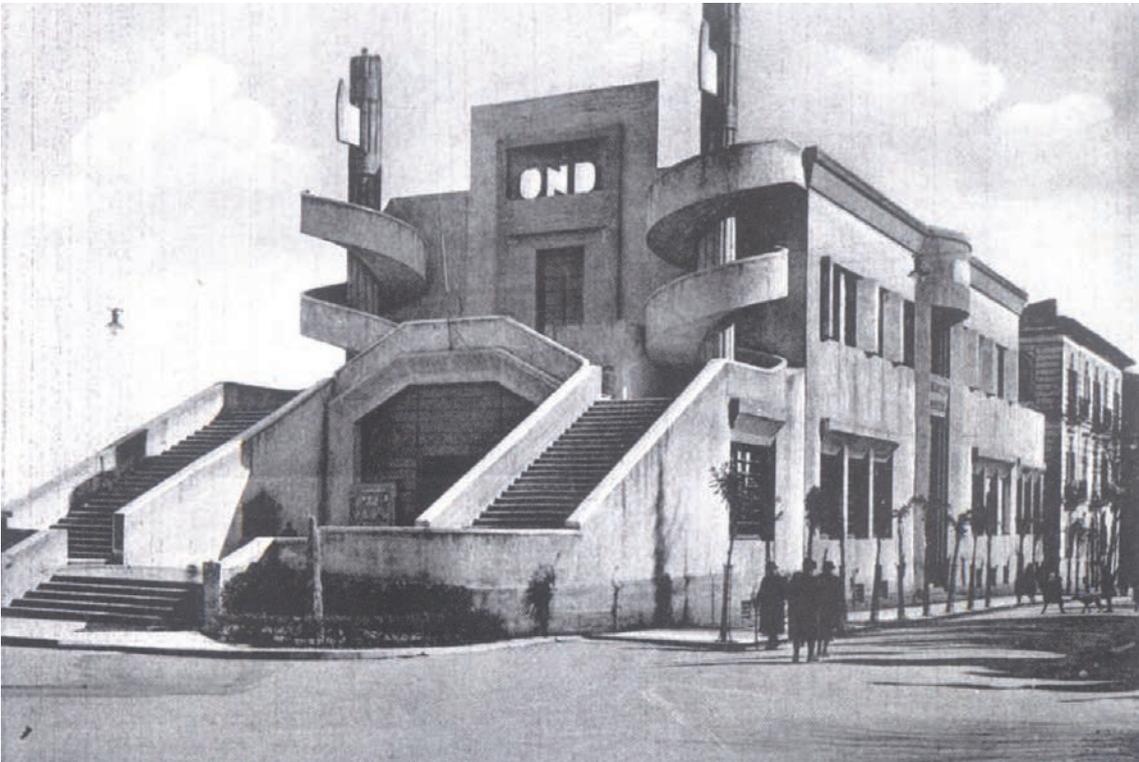


Fig. 3 A photo of the building in the thirties.

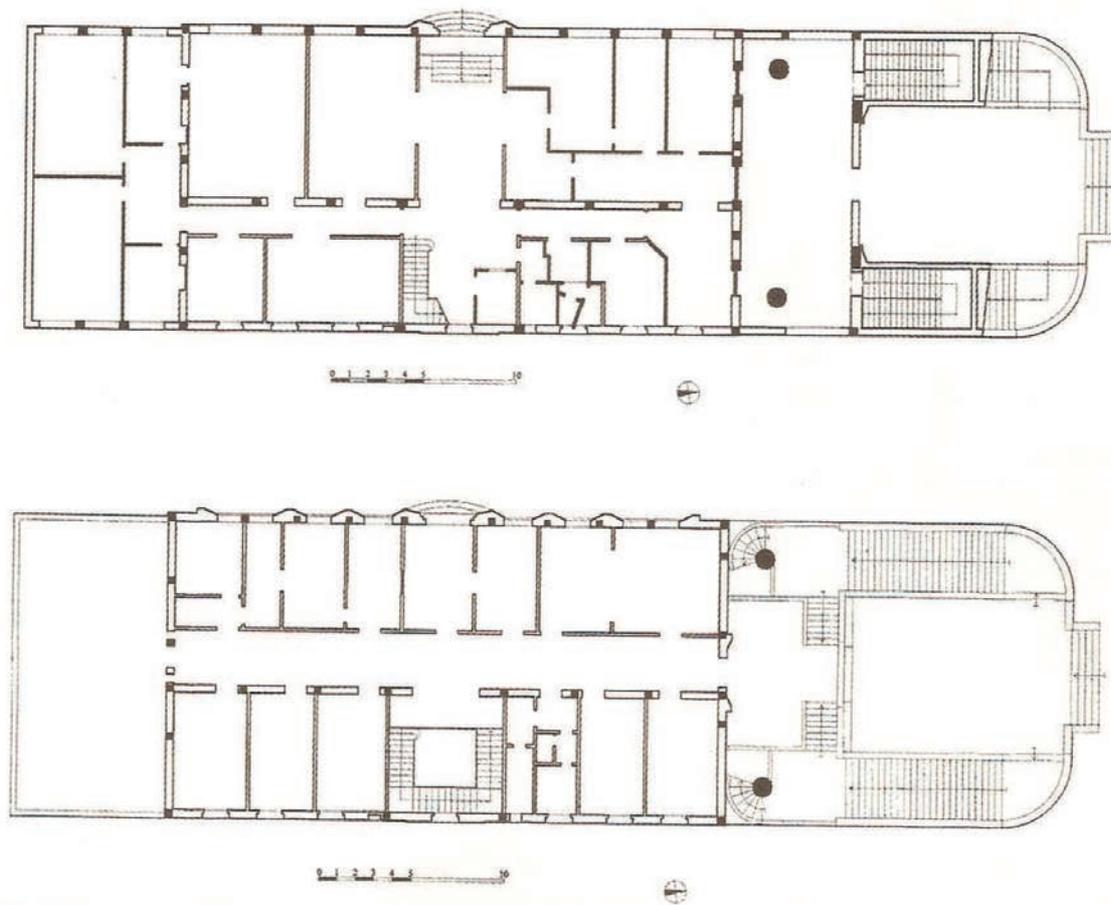


Fig. 4 Building plans in the nineties.



Fig. 5 The building in the urban context.



Fig. 6 A lateral view of the building.



Fig. 7 A backside view of the building.



Fig. 8 A view of the conference room of the University museum located inside the building.



Fig. 9 Internal changes of the building due to realization of the University museum.