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Minimum Documentation Fiche 2003

International working party for
documentation and conservation

of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

composed by national/regional working party of:
Docomomo Italia

0.1 Picture of building/site



depicted item: Aerial view of the complex
source: Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Fulvio Palma
date: 1988

1. Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden

1.1 current name of building	University Residences
1.2 variant or former name	
1.3 number & name of street	Colle dei Cappuccini
1.4 Town	Urbino
1.5 Province/state	Pesaro Urbino/Marche
1.6 zip code	61029
1.7 Country	Italy

1.8 national grid reference	latitude 43.7213665, longitude 12.6239643
1.9 classification/typology	EDC (Education)
1.10 protection status & date	Listed for its important artistic qualities under art. 20 of Law n. 633/14 – Ministry of Cultural Heritage

2

History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose	University Residences for the University of Urbino (Collegio del Colle, Collegi Il Tridente, Le Serpentine, La Vela, L'Aquilone)
2.2 dates: commission/completion	Collegio del Colle 1962-1965, Collegi Il Tridente, Le Serpentine, L'Aquilone and La Vela 1973-1983
2.3 Architectural and other designers:	Giancarlo De Carlo; <i>Collegio del Colle</i> . Collaborators: Francesco Borella, Astolfo Sartori, Lucio Seraghi. Consultants: Vittorio Korach Structural Engineering, Emilio Vian Mechanical & Electrical Engineering. <i>Collegi Il Tridente, Le Serpentine, La Vela, L'Aquilone</i> . Collaborators: Giancarlo Montagna, Kathy Mueller, Astolfo Sartori, Antonio Vecchi, Yasuo Watanabe, Carla Zamboni. Consultants: Vittorio Korach Structural Engineering, Emilio Vian Mechanical & Electrical Engineering, Susanne Wettstein interior furnishings.
2.4 others associated with building	
2.5 significant alterations with dates	
2.6 current use	University Halls of Residences
2.7 current condition	poor state of conservation

3

Description

3.1 General description

This complex of University Residences – a “city of students” – is situated near the ancient convent atop the Cappuccini Hill facing the city of Urbino from the south-west. Commissioned by the Rector of the University Carlo Bo to host the school’s students, construction took place in two successive phases: the nucleus of the Collegio del Colle, with 168 beds followed by a second group comprised of different halls known as the Tridente, the Serpentine, l’Aquilone and the Vela, providing a further 982 beds. While conceived separately, the various halls belong to the same system and are very closely linked. Their insertion within the site is based on the adoption of systems of settlement typical of the historic city. This is evident in the visual approach to the landscape and the variety of typologies, the central position of common areas and the structuring role of circulation spaces.

3.2 Construction

The construction of the residences is based on a number of invariants. In each hall the common spaces (administration, reading areas, dining areas and facilities, conference room) occupy a dominant central position from which pedestrian circulation spaces branch out as a system of ramps and stairs in a succession of terraces, spaces of pause and belvederes offering views of the landscape. The paths winding along the hillside are an alternation of light and shadow, internal and open spaces and public and private environments. The complex is characterised by a variety of the spatial conditions generated by the offsetting of the units and

the multiple articulations of the circulation routes and sections.

The building materials used in the project unify its design: exposed concrete and brick, the latter a direct reference and link to the primary material of the historic centre of Urbino.

3.3 *Context*

The complex of residences is intimately linked to the landscape and its hillside site. The open structure adopted consents the buildings to rest on the slope, following the contours as they descend toward the valley. The result is a co-penetration between built volume and the environment that defines a progressive confluence of nature and artifice. With the passing of time nature has gradually overpowered architecture, wending its way into interstitial spaces with maple trees, broom and Holm oak, clinging to the walls in the form of ivy and vines, modifying its colours in moulds and lichens. Today it is possible to observe how the process of inserting the project within the site, to the point of their inseparability, now represents one of the most particular aspects of the architecture of the residences.

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Evaluation

4.1 *Technical*

Currently the residences are in a poor state of conservation because they are not adequately protected. There are mainly two critical points requiring much attention. The first regards structural materials because De Carlo used the concrete in a very thin slabs and without any protection or coating. Not surprisingly, the weakness of these elements led to the corrosion of the reinforcement bars and to the consequent decay of the structures. In the medium and long term it is necessary to find a way to control such a problem that is endemic to the building. The second key point is that the windows and door frames, made of wood and built to design by De Carlo, are generally in poor condition because of wear and tear and the need for regular repairs which were underestimated. Some frames have already been replaced with modern materials, such as aluminium and PVC, which have greatly altered the look of the building's frontage.

4.2 *Social*

The profound relationship that developed with the Urbino University, in the wake of the decisive meeting with its Rector Carlo Bo – a client present during all of De Carlo's artistic activities – led the architect to further investigate themes linked to this institution and to study new solutions. With this series of projects, part of the so-called "Urbino Laboratory", De Carlo clearly applied the principles of the university-territory, by which he considered that all Faculties should open up to the city that hosts them, similar to an open and diffuse organism, even outside the historic centre, based on a model of "correlated multi-polarity".

4.3 *Cultural & Aesthetic*

The design of the residences established a line of research that would run through De Carlo's entire artistic career, and stand as his most fecund legacy. From his participation in the meetings of Team 10 De Carlo developed a progressive critique of the Modern Movement and the uniformity of styles, realised through a concrete response to local context and history, adopting an attitude of anti-dogmatic pluralism, always and in any case beginning with a social vision of the role of architecture.

4.4 *Historical*

My effort - De Carlo writes - has been to build a university settlement indubitably contemporary but run by the echoes of Urbino's history: to the extent that the citizen could consider it another part of the town they already knew and feel it so familiar to want to use it on a daily basis, even

though it was inhabited by students rather than by fellow residents. In other words, the intention was to establish a permanent exchange between the historic city and the University Residences.

Indeed, they are part of an overall redevelopment strategy of the city aimed to transforming Urbino in a “capital of studies and culture,” attracting students from all over Italy and recall the same pattern and rhythms of the historic old town.

So, it is not the physical proximity to the old city to act as a reference but the value of Urbino itself as a place in which the relationship between the urban space and the community that produced it, lives it and continues, in time, to adapt it to their needs, finds perfect expression.

De Carlo conceives the complex as an “organism in the form of the city”, where simple structural models, which repeats themselves - exposed concrete beams and slabs and load bearing facing brick walls – interact with the topography of the site and produce an infinite number of combinations and possibilities.

4.5 General assessment

The Urbino University residences can be considered one of De Carlo’s most important works, and undoubtedly a cause of his international notoriety. They represent one of the first experiences in applied research, where the design responds on the one hand to real needs and, on the other, wishes to influence, through the quality of space, the use of the site and the behaviour of its users. The spaces of interaction are design to favour interpersonal exchanges. The residential units are intentionally minimal in order to stimulate residents to spend more time in the common spaces, situated in a central location and disseminated along the circulation paths linking the various units. It this characteristic that has allowed the project to keep remain valid despite the passing of time.

5

Documentation

5.1 principal references

- MCKEAN, John, *Giancarlo De Carlo, Des lieux, des homes*, Paris, Editions du Centre Pompidou, 2004 ISBN 2-84426-240-6
- MCKEAN, John, Giancarlo De Carlo, *Layered Places*, Stuttgart/London, Edition Axel Menges; 2004; ISBN 3-932565-12-6
- ZUCCHI, Benedict, *Giancarlo De Carlo*, London, Butterworth Architecture, 1992, ISBN 0-7506-1275-4
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- MAVES, Mark & HALL, Spencer, *Colleges That Cascade Down A Hill Neighboring the Town*, *The AJA Journal*, n. 3, April 1981. pp. 52-55
- BRUNETTI, Fabrizio, *Il Centro Universitario dei Cappuccini a Urbino*, *L’Architettura*, Anno XXX, 344, n. 6, June 1984, pp. 414-446

5.2 *visual material attached*

- Fig. 1 Aerial view of the complex (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Fulvio Palma)
- Fig. 2 Site plan and section (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 3 Il Colle, the central volume (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 4 Il Colle, the network of connections (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 5 Il Colle, insertion in the landscape (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 6 Il Colle, an internal road (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1985)
- Fig. 7 Il Colle, the landscape framed by paths (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Cesare Colombo, 1965)
- Fig. 8 From the Collegio del Colle looking toward the Tridente square (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1985)
- Fig. 9 Il Tridente, the residential cells (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1985)
- Fig. 10 View from the L'Aquilone toward La Vela (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Giorgio Casali, 1985)
- Fig. 11 L'Aquilone, the central space (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Giorgio Casali, 1985)
- Fig. 12 La Vela, section through the residential cells (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 13 La Vela, the terraces above the residential cells (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Giorgio Casali, 1985)
- Fig. 14 La Vela, the auditorium (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)

5.3 *rapporteur/date*

Laura Felci / May 2015

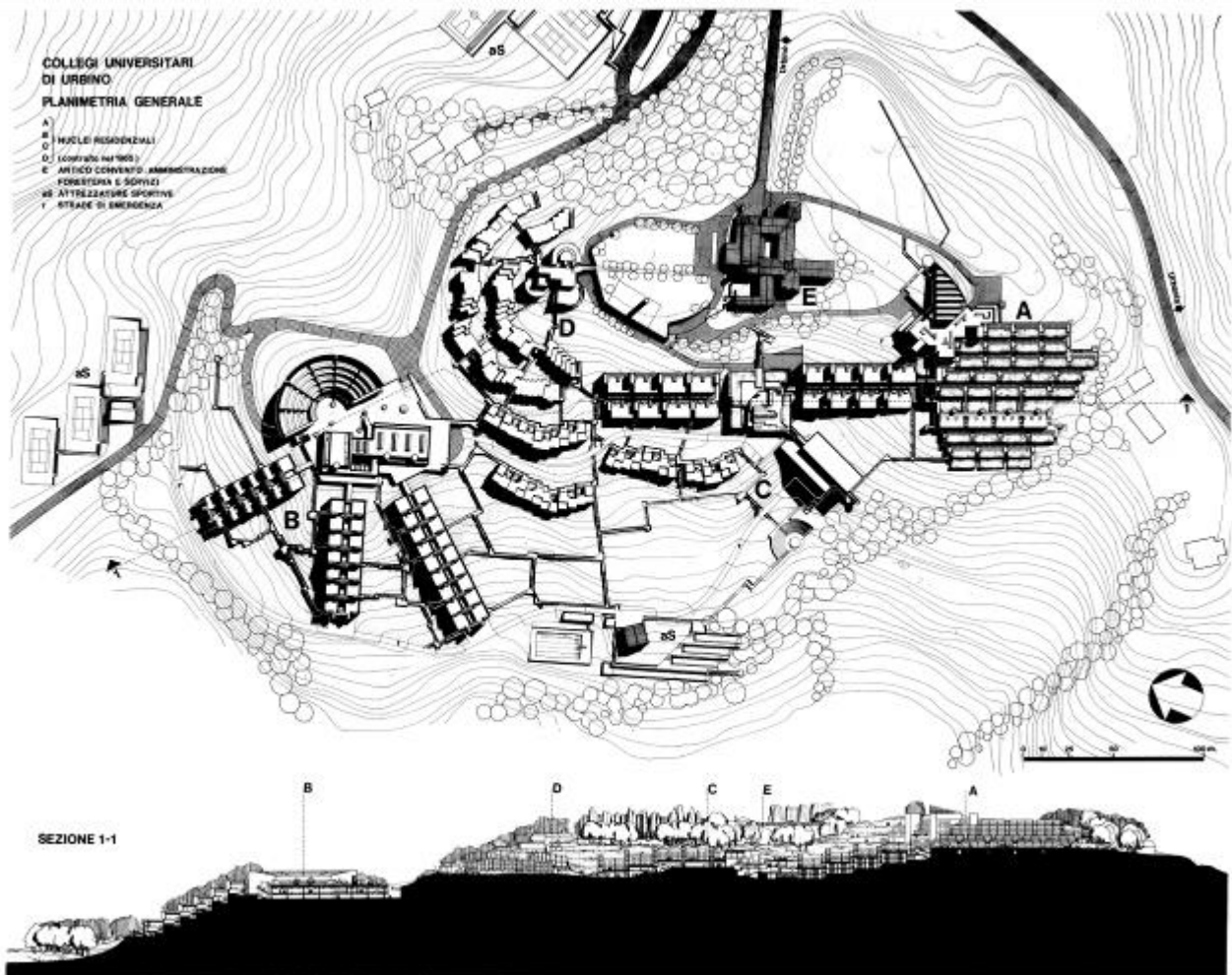


Fig. 2 Site plan and section

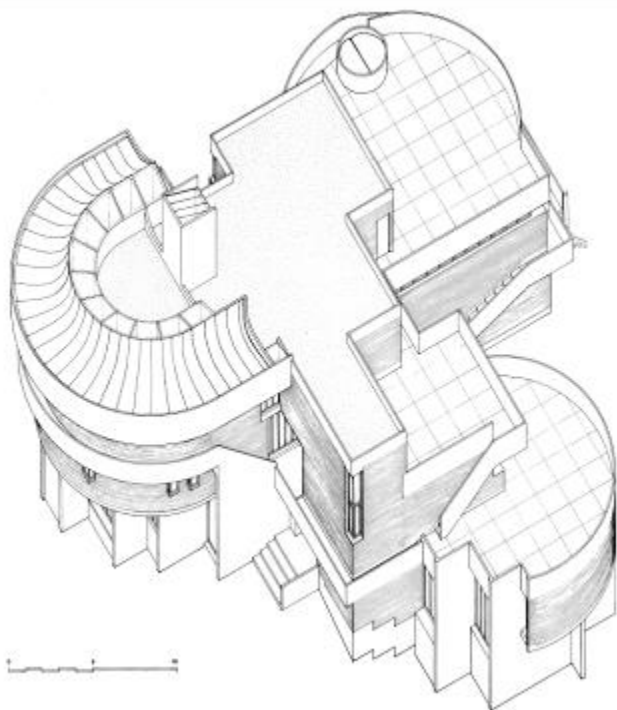


Fig. 3 Il Colle, the central volume

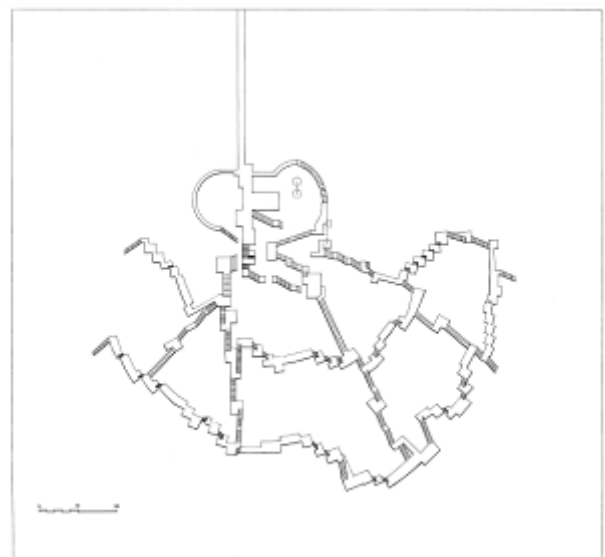


Fig. 4 Il Colle, the network of connections



Fig. 5 Il Colle, insertion in the landscape



Fig. 6 Il Colle, an internal road



Fig. 7 Il Colle, the landscape framed by paths



Fig. 8 From the Collegio del Colle looking toward the Tridente square

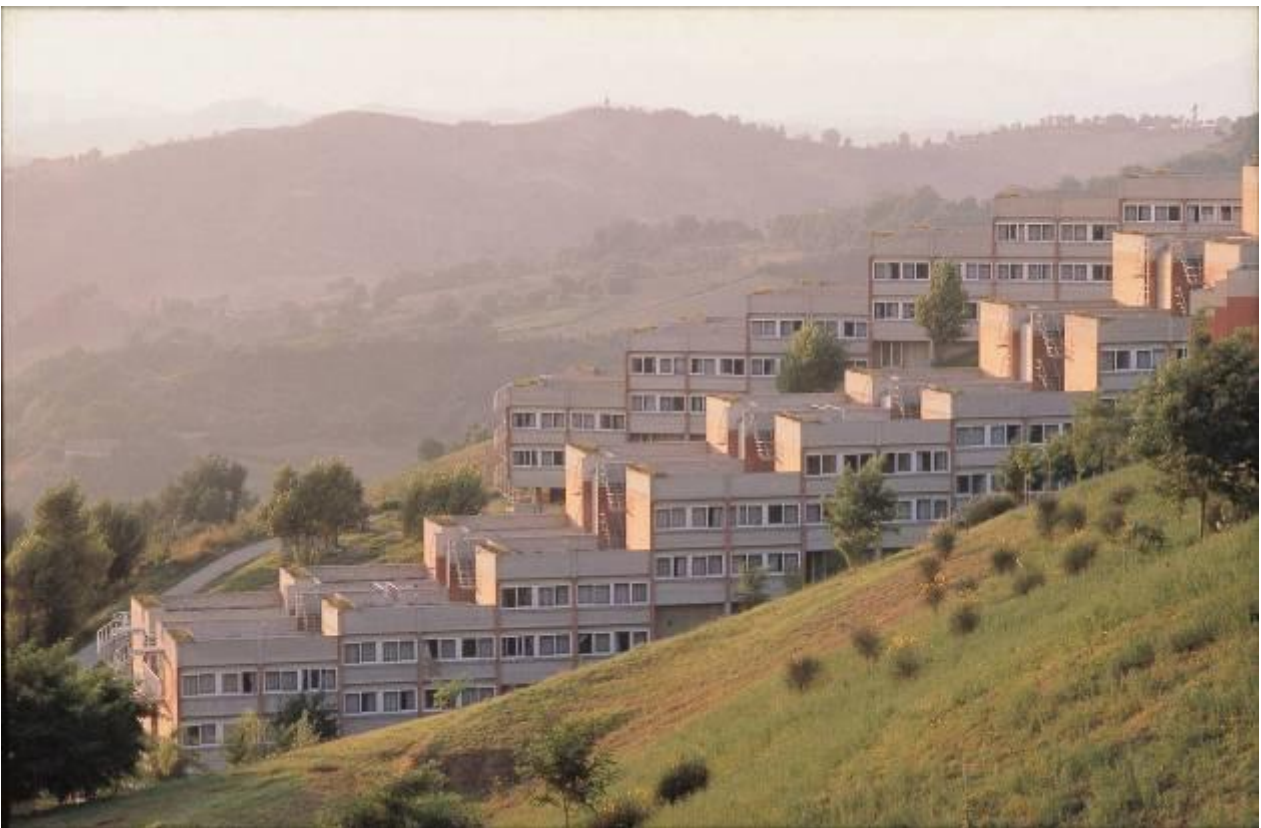


Fig. 9 Il Tridente, the residential cells



Fig. 10 View from the L'Aquilone toward La Vela



Fig 11 L'Aquilone, the central space

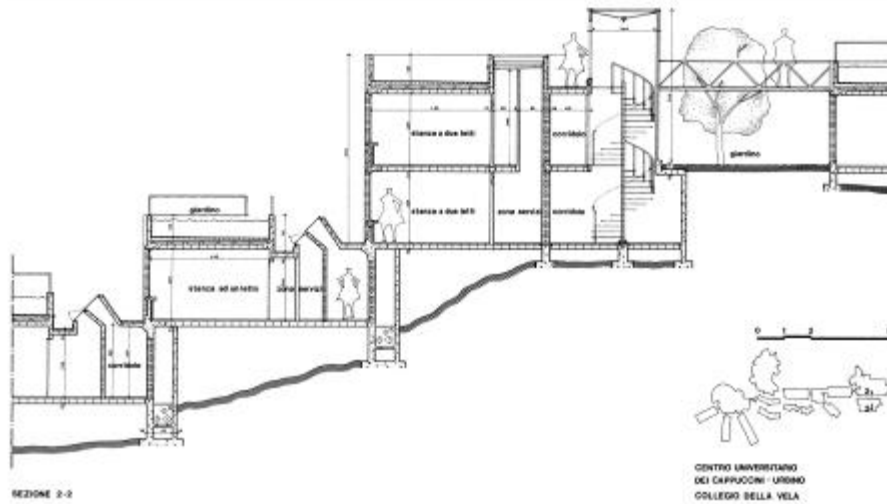


Fig 12 La Vela, section through the residential cells



Fig. 13 La Vela, the terraces above the residential cells



Fig. 14 La Vela, the auditorium