

Minimum Documentation Fiche

composed by national/regional working party of SECTION BASILICATA-PUGLIA



01. Picture of building

Depicted item: INA Building (Palazzo Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni)

source: Nicola Cavallera

date: 2020

1. Identity of building

1.1 current name of building

ex INA (Istituto Nazionale Assicurazioni) Building

1.2 variant or former name

INA (Istituto Nazionale Assicurazioni) Building

1.3 number & name of street

via Augusto Imperatore 6-30, via Sacro Regio Consiglio, piazza S. Oronzo

1.4 town

Lecce

1.5 province/state

Lecce/Puglia

1.6 zip code

73100

1.7 country

Italy

1.8 national grid reference

40°35'27.55"N 18°17'20.01"E

1.9 classification/typology

Building for commercial activities, residential apartments and professional offices

1.10 protection status & date

No one

2 History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose

Building for commercial activities, residential apartments and professional offices

2.2 dates: commission/completion

1938/1941

2.3 architectural and other designers

Eng. Oronzo Pellegrino (1900-1968), eng. Mario Sarno (1900-1957), arch. Giuseppe Machin

2.4 others associated with building

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2.5 significant alterations with dates

No one

2.6 current use

Building for commercial activities, residential apartments and professional offices

2.7 current condition

Medium

3. Description

3.1 General description

According to the urban development planning of the 1934 General Regulatory Plan concerning the areas around Piazza S. Oronzo, the civic and commercial heart of the historic city and home to the biweekly market, the intervention involves the demolition of the ancient "Governor's Island" to allow the partial excavation of the Roman amphitheatre. The National Insurance Institute is invited by the city authorities to present a project for its local representative office.

3.2 Construction

The project is signed in 1938 by the Real Estate Technical Service's Projects Office of the INA in the person of the director, Arch. Giuseppe Machin, while the archival documentation shows that the building was drawn by Eng. Oronzo Pellegrino, INA superintendent in Lecce, with the contribution of Eng. Mario Sarno as technical manager of the Municipality. Officially Eng. Pellegrino is only in charge of the construction supervision and structural calculations of the building; in fact, he studies the optimal insertion of the building volume in the architectural context of the new square, provides the company with the final proposals, develops several solutions for the crown of the Tower, and sends to the central offices in Rome the drawings of the project and samples of the local stone to be used on the facade.

The INA building occupies a single block and is spread over an area of about 1.900 square meters, has a total cubage of about 39.000 cubic meters and consists of five floors above ground and two internal courtyards: in the basement are housed the thermal power station, private cellars, warehouses and three anti-aircraft shelters, autoclave rooms, elevators engines and the electrical substation. On the ground floor there are 12 shops and entrance halls; on the upper floors there are 27 apartments with two bathrooms each and, on the top floor, the concierge's apartment and common services including laundries, drying racks and warehouses.

At the time the INA building was considered the most technologically advanced construction in the city: served by three stairwells with lifts, it is equipped with centralized heating and hot water systems, autoclaves, intercom and concierge service, and the interiors are characterized by refined finishes.

3.3 Context

In the redesign of Piazza S. Oronzo following the excavation of the Roman amphitheatre, the INA building establishes a dialogue with the urban context, and with the adjacent sixteenth-century buildings of the Sedile and of the Chapel of S. Marco: the comparison with Roman times creates a curved facade that follows the shape of the imperial age structure in front of it, while the arcades with shops resemble the arcades of the demolished blocks and reflect the centuries-old merchant character of the square.

Like a theatre set inserted in the background of the uncovered portion of the Roman monument, INA building's high tower is in axis with via Fazzi and in visual relationship with the bell tower of the Cathedral behind it, while the cladding of the elevations in càrparo stone links the new intervention to the facades made of traditional local stone materials.

4. Evaluation

4.1 Technical

The bearing structure is made of reinforced concrete beams and pillars, with flat brick-and-concrete floors, while the facades are covered with a masonry of càrparo stone blocks.

4.2 Social

Even after the disposal to private individuals, the building continues to maintain its original intended use with commercial premises on the ground floor, and offices, professional studios and apartments for residential use on the upper floors; the attic floor, originally intended as concierge's home and for common services, is nowadays abandoned.

4.3 Cultural & aesthetic

Although typical architectural elements of the fascist regime are recognizable such as the tower with blind facades, the INA building shows various references to local architecture, in addition to the use of traditional materials on the facade: beams and pillars of the open gallery crowning the facade on via Augusto Imperatore form an airy geometric cage, which recalls the traditional stone pergolas of the Mediterranean terraces and loggias; while the allegorical statue of Agriculture (attributed to Gaetano Martinez and the only figurative element on the elevations) highlights the corner between the two sides of the building facing the amphitheatre and the square, and is a tribute to the Baroque decoration of the urban corner with columns, statues and coats of arms.

4.4 Historical

In 1937 a preliminary project was presented envisaging two twin buildings, including an office building and a commodity exchange, connected by a pedestrian tunnel: for traffic reasons, the proposed solution is reduced to a single building, eliminating the tunnel and the exchange. After completing the demolitions of the "Governor's Island" in 1937, the following year the construction contract is awarded to the company of the brothers Luigi and Vincenzo Panzera from San Cesario di Lecce; the works begin in September of the same year and are completed in July 1941.

4.5 General assessment

In erasing the historical image of the square to propose a new space strongly characterized by fascist regime buildings, the INA building is an example of mediation between the old and the new, achieved through a modern and controlled monumentalism, and turning the attention to the main alignments and perspective axes of the urban context.

5. Documentation

5.1 Principal references

MANTOVANO Andrea, *Razionalismo a Lecce. Stile arte e progetto 1930-1955*, Lupo ed., Lecce 2014

TORSELLO A. G., "Palazzo INA" from: *Lecce e l'immagine della città fascista. Le opere pubbliche del II decennio* (a cura di G. ROSSI), Ae6ei ed., Alberobello 2014

PAGLIUCA Antonello, SÀITO Mauro, *9 itinerari x 100 architetture del '900. Basilicata e Puglia*, Gangemi Editore, Roma 2019

5.2 visual material attached

Fig.01 – Main facade (1938, Municipal Historical Archive, Lecce)

Fig.02 – Third floor plan (1938, Municipal Historical Archive, Lecce)

Fig.03 – Model (1938, Private archive, Lecce)

Fig.04 – Model (1938, Private archive, Lecce)

Fig.05 – Aerial photography (1950, postcard)

Fig.06 – Aerial photography (1960, postcard)

Fig.07 – Main facade on piazza S. Oronzo, 2020 (photo by Andrea Mantovano)

Fig.08 – Tower crown, 2020 (photo by Andrea Mantovano)

Fig.09 – Allegorical statue of Agriculture, 2020 (photo by Andrea Mantovano)

5.3 rapporteur/date

Andrea Mantovano, April 2020

6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R

name of examining ISC member: date of examination:

approval:

working party/ref. n°: NAI ref. n°:

comments:

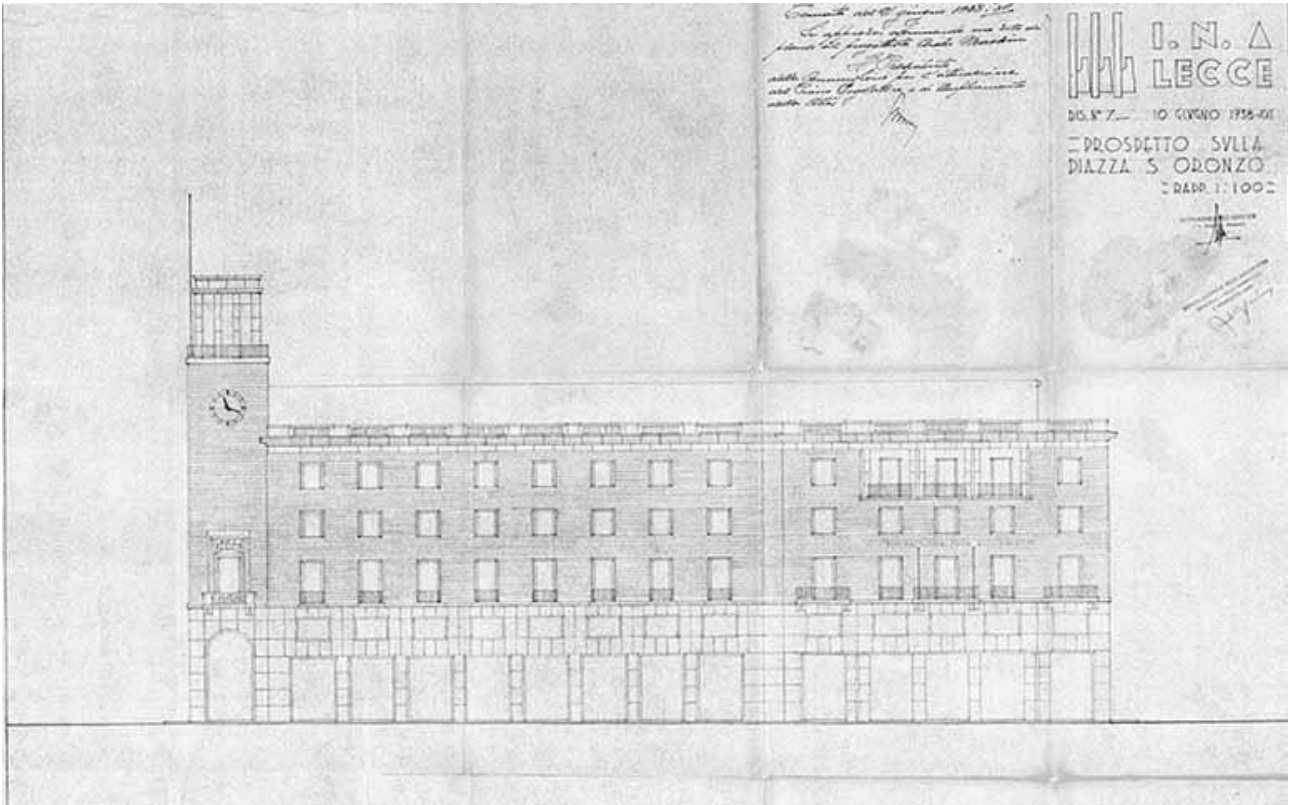


Fig.01 – Main facade (1938, Municipal Historical Archive, Lecce)

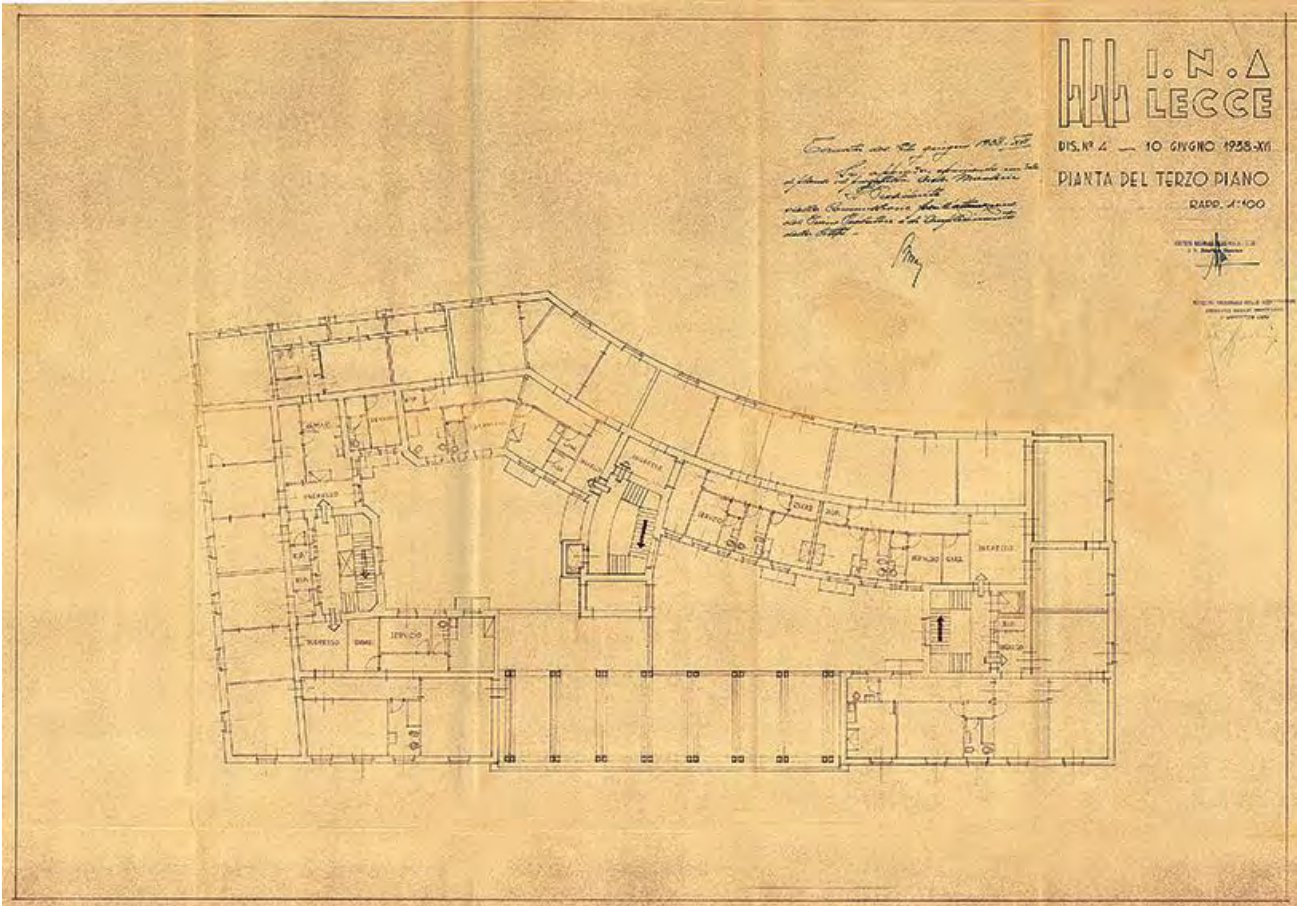


Fig.02 – Third floor plan (1938, Municipal Historical Archive, Lecce)



Fig.03 – Model (1938, Private archive, Lecce)

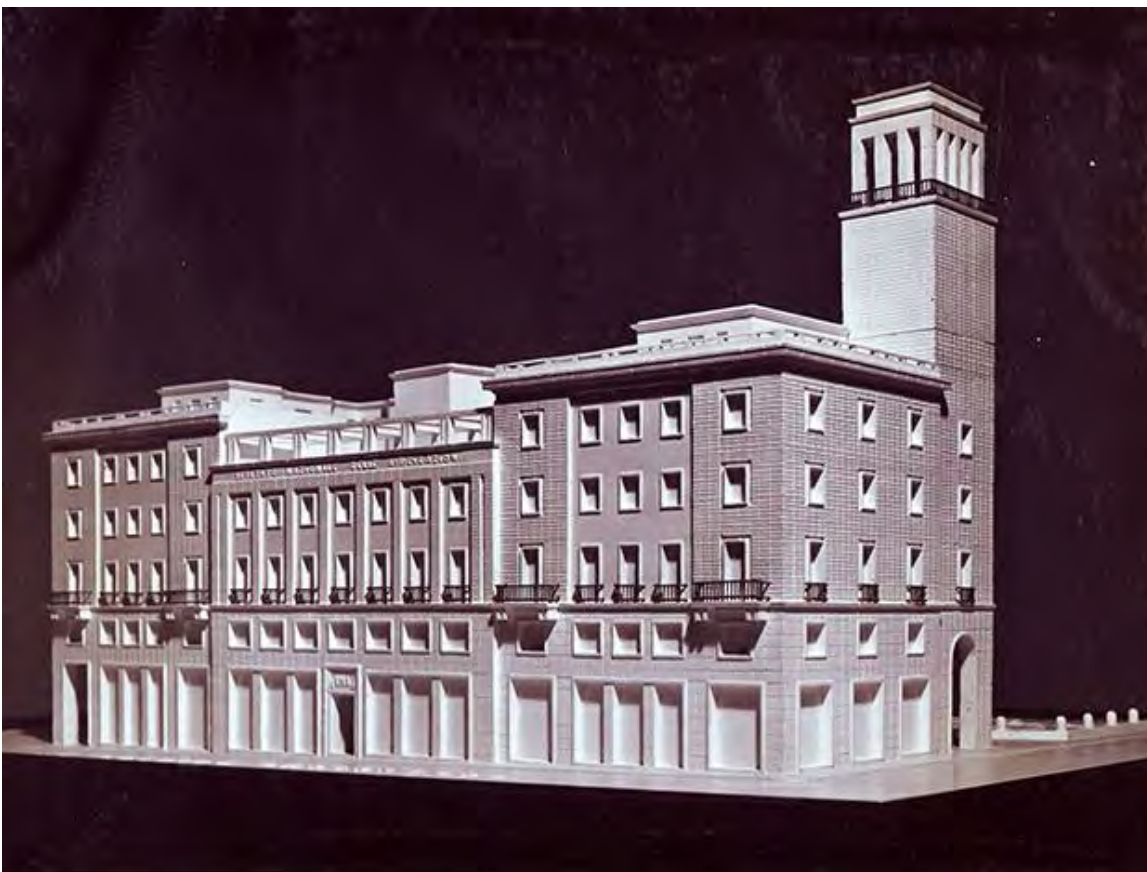


Fig.04 – Model (1938, Private archive, Lecce)



Fig.05 – Aerial photography (1950, postcard)



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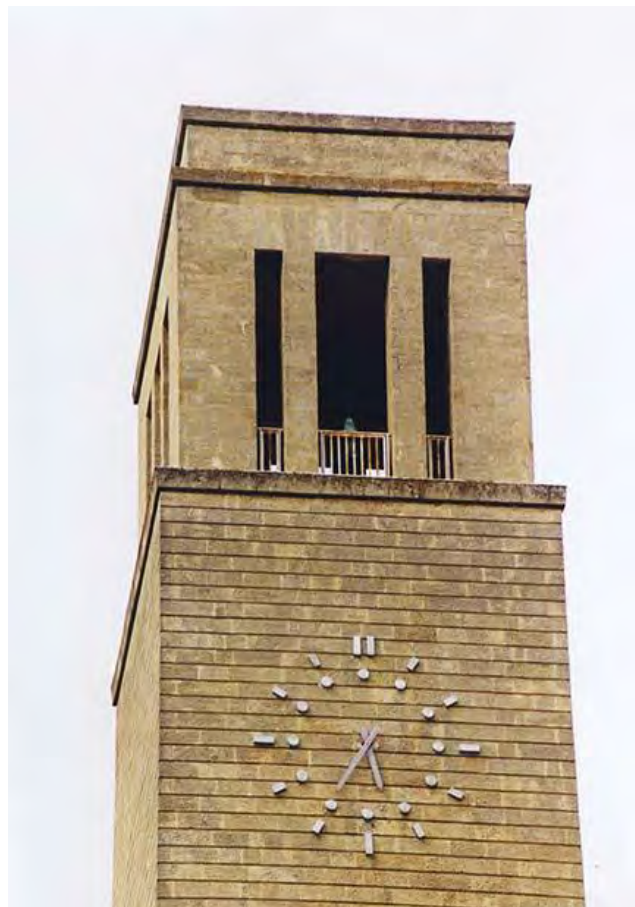


Fig.08 – Tower crown, 2020 (photo by Andrea Mantovano)



Fig.09 – Allegorical statue of Agriculture, 2020 (photo by Andrea Mantovano)