

Minimum Documentation Fiche

Fish Market, Ancona (Italy)



1. Identity of building

1.1 current name of building

Fish market

1.2 variant or former name

Fish market

1.3 number & name of street

Molo Sud s.n.c.

1.4 town

Ancona

1.5 province/state

Marche

1.6 zip code

60125

1.7 country

Italy

1.8 national grid reference

43°36'46.0"N 13°30'08.0"E

1.9 classification/typology

Market

1.10 protection status & date

–

2. History of building

2.1 Original brief/purpose

Il progetto per il nuovo mercato del pesce di Ancona viene commissionato a Gaetano Minnucci dalla Giunta Comunale presieduta dal sindaco Giuseppe Mario Marsigliani nel settembre 1946. In documenti tecnici e grafici vengono presentati in comune alla fine del 1946 e approvati dai funzionari dell'Ufficio tecnico comunale e del Genio Civile nella primavera 1947. I lavori iniziano il 15 settembre 1947 con una cerimonia ufficiale presieduta dal ministro dei LL.PP. Umberto Tupini e furono eseguiti dalla Società Ferrobeton di Roma. Il cantiere si conclude in buona parte alla fine del 1948 quando la maggioranza degli spazi interni venne utilizzata per l'attività del mercato.

Il volume, estremamente semplice e funzionale, alloca all'interno un unico grande ambiente di lavoro delle dimensioni in pianta di 58x20 metri. Si tratta di uno spazio continuo in cui vengono svolte in sequenza una prima lavorazione e la preparazione del pesce subito dopo essere stato sbarcato dai pescherecci, l'asta pubblica nella parte centrale attrezzata con una gradinata a servizio degli astanti (sotto la quale sono collocate le celle frigorifere) e infine lo spazio per la spedizione del pescato verso i canali di vendita al dettaglio. Lungo la parete sud sono sistemati una serie di piccoli spazi adibiti a uffici, segreteria, l'abitazione del custode e alcuni magazzini. Al livello superiore, accessibili da una scala o da una rampa esterna, ci sono una terrazza per la riparazione delle attrezzature dei pescatori (principalmente le reti) e una serie di piccoli magazzini sovrapposti a quelli del livello inferiore.

2.2 dates

1946: commission

1946-1947: project design

1947-1949: construction

2.3 architectural and other designers

Gaetano Minnucci in collaboration with Antonio Marinelli (structures) and Costantino Forleo (architecture)

2.4 others associated with building

Società Ferrobeton of Roma

2.5 significant alterations with dates

Between 1955 and 1956 Gaetano Minnucci designed a small extension consisting of a two-storey volume (for warehouses and technical rooms) located on the north side in direct contiguity with the external ramp giving access to the upper level.

Since the end of the nineties, a series of small additions aimed at plant, sanitary and work safety adaptations have completely altered the internal appearance, breaking up the large continuous room into a series of separate spaces and invading the visual space with a dense network of installations and technical-functional additions.

2.6 current use

Fish market

2.7 current condition

Although the fish market continues to perform its function, it is in a poor condition due to both the lack of ordinary maintenance to which it should have been subjected for years and the surrounding conditions that characterise that area of Ancona's port basin. In particular, the decommissioning of large parts of the former Fiera della Pesca with the demolition of many of the pavilions, have in fact made that area completely marginal with respect to the port and city structure.

3. Description

3.1 general description

The fish market in Ancona is the first in a series of projects related to the type of work buildings realised in Minnucci's professional career, who up to that point had gained considerable theoretical knowledge of that specific building theme and of reinforced concrete construction techniques. The project is marked by the utmost simplicity, especially to fit within the limited budget made available by the administration. On the outside, the long north-eastern elevation is dominated by the system of vertical fibre cement louvres acting as brise soleil, which have the main purpose of eliminating the direct entry of sunlight into the workspaces, favouring instead an even distribution of light. On the inside, the large supporting arches are almost completely hidden from view by the intrados floor, which is shaped with a curved surface that reflects natural light and contributes to further improving the brightness of the interior space. From the inside, the vertical brise-soleil are clearly visible thanks to the large glazed wall with vasistas openings that allow, with similar openings on the opposite side, the generation of weak air currents that are indispensable for the ventilation of the large market hall.

3.2 construction

From a technical point of view, the structure calculated by engineer Antonio Martinelli is composed of a sequence of eight asymmetrical arches with an axial development of about 26 metres in reinforced concrete, 6.1 metres apart from each other, anchored to the ground by a plinth foundation on piles. The free end at a height of 11 metres is supported by a pillar (pendulum) inclined at an angle of 20° to the vertical, thus creating an entirely original arch-support system. For the roofing, it was initially decided to use a Zeiss-Dwydag type thin vaulting system, but it was finally decided to put in place a more economical SAP type double membrane concrete slab. The infills were made of plastered bricks or ceramic cladding on the inside, while on the outside, with the exception of the travertine basement cladding, the remaining surface is plastered.

3.3 context

The building rises at the southern end of Ancona's harbour basin, in direct contiguity with the Mole Vanvitelliana built to a design by Luigi Vanvitelli between 1733 and 1743. The new fish market is located on the exact spot where the old fish market, which was destroyed during the Allied bombing raids at the end of 1943, had been erected in the late 1920s.

4 Evaluation

4.1 technical

From a technical point of view, the Ancona fish market represents a point of reference not only for Italian engineering, but also internationally. Minnucci was able to bring to bear his considerable technical knowledge acquired since the 1920s when he began to view and document in a punctual and critical manner with dozens of publications in engineering journals the experimental use of materials and construction techniques, in particular referring to the most advanced German construction sites. Decisive for the realisation of the Ancona market was also the contribution of the construction company Società Ferrobeton, a leader in Italy in the field of reinforced concrete structures, and the engineer Antonio Martinelli, one of the many but little-known representatives of post-World War II Italian engineering. In fact, Martinelli carried out many other important projects in the 20th century, especially in Rome, also contributing from a theoretical point of view to the drafting of important scientific treatises such as the 1972 *Prontuario per il calcolo del cemento armato* that updated the 1947 edition by Pier Luigi Nervi.

4.2 social

The high value of the Ancona fish market is demonstrated in the first instance by the fact that it has been in uninterrupted use up to the present day since its inception. The functional datum is accompanied by the media one that Minnucci's work obtained, in particular following its inclusion in a short list of works included in the exhibition "The Modern Movement in Italy" held at the MoMA in New York and curated by Ada Louise Huxtable between August and September 1954.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

The building effectively represents Minnucci's ability to create design solutions that skilfully integrated both technical and compositional requirements. The interior volume, characterised by its rounded roof, not only creates a space of great aesthetic value, but also makes a decisive contribution to both the ventilation and lighting requirements of the working environment, which still lends itself very well today (even if with heavy intervention) to the market's activities.

4.4 historical

The high historical value of the building is testified first and foremost by the number of publications it received in the 1950s. Mentioned in G.E. Kidder Smith's volume in the category of "Markets and exhibition halls" for its formal audacity, the Ancona fish market found wide coverage in the national press (among all the article published in the magazine "Stile" directed by Luigi Moretti) and above all international press. For both its technical-functional and compositional characteristics, the Ancona fish market was published in 1952 in Belgium in the magazine "La Technique des Travaux", in 1953 in France in the magazine "L'Architecture d'Aujourd'Hui" in a monographic issue dedicated to Italian architecture immediately after the Second World War, and in 1956 in Spain in the magazine "Informes de la construcción", the press organ of the Technical Institute of Construction and Cement founded and directed for many years by Edoardo Torroja.

4.5 general assessment

The Ancona fish market has been defined by many as Gaetano Minnucci's best and most mature work. With this building, he restarted his professional activity after the Second World War after the stop imposed by the Second World War. After the considerable success that Minnucci had, particularly in the 1930s, coordinating alongside Marcello Piacentini the large construction sites in Rome for the University City and EUR, as well as other independent commissions in Rome and Apulia, Minnucci found new important stimuli in his home region, the Marche, from the second half of the 1940s, which led him to face new design challenges, as in the case of the fish market in Ancona. The fish market in Ancona is certainly one of the many examples that can be used to summarise the inventive and technical effectiveness of Italian designers in the difficult years of reconstruction when architects and engineers belonging to various generations became absolute protagonists on an international level for the ability with which they were able to realise important chapters in the history of architecture of the second half of the twentieth century in extremely short times and with limited budgets.

5 Documentation

5.1 principal references

Luigi Moretti, *Mercato del pesce di Ancona. Architettura di Gaetano Minnucci*, in «Spazio» n. 5, 1951, pp. 48-53

Antonio Cassi Ramelli, *La halle aux poissons d'Ancone (Italie). Architecte: Gaetano Minnucci*, in «La Technique des Travaux», n. 9-10, 1952, pp. 284-288.

Le marché aux poissons, Ancone, in «L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui», in «L'Architecture d'Aujourd'Hui» n. 48, 1953, pp. 14-15.

Paolo Nestler, *Neues Bauen in Italy*, Verlag Callwey, München 1954, pp. 162-163.

George Everard Kidder Smith, *L'Italia costruisce Italy builds*, Edizioni di Comunità, Milano 1955, pp. 216-217
J.J.U., *Lonja de pescado, Ancona*, in «Informes de la construcción», n. 83, 1956, p.n.n.

Alfonso Stocchetti, *Mercati del pesce*, in Pasquale Carbonara (a cura di), *Architettura pratica*, volume quarto tomo secondo, Unione Tipografica-Editrice Torinese, Torino 1962, pp. 632-638.

Rosalia Vittorini, *Il mercato del pesce di Ancona*, in «Piano Progetto Città», n. 15, 1995, p. 107

Gabriele Milelli, *Nei difficili equilibri della modernità*, in Alessandro Aiardi et alii (a cura di), *Aspetti della cultura europea del Novecento e riflessi nelle Marche*, Accademia marchigiana di scienze, lettere ed arti, Ancona 2006, pp. 219-232;

Antonello Alici, *Il Mercato del pesce ad Ancona di Gaetano Minnucci*, in Antonello Alici, Mauro Tosti Croce (a cura di), *L'architettura negli archivi. Guida agli archivi di architettura nelle Marche*, Gangemi, Roma 2011, pp. 174-175.

Giovanni Bellucci, *Gaetano Minnucci (1896-1980). Vita, opere e scritti*, Steinhauser Verlag, Wuppertal 2023, pp. 139-149.

Archives

Archivio Centrale dello Stato Roma

5.2 visual material attached

Foto 1: Planimetria del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1946 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 2: Sezione del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1946 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 3: Maquette del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1946 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 4: Cantiere del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1947 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 5: Facciata nord-est del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 6: Dettaglio delle lamelle verticali frangisole sulla facciata nord-est del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 7: Interno del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)
 Foto 7: Interno del Mercato del Pesce, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma)

Photo 1: Planimetry of the Fish Market, Ancona 1946 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 2: Section of the Fish Market, Ancona 1946 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 3: Maquette of the Fish Market, Ancona 1946 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 4: Construction site of the Fish Market, Ancona 1947 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 5: North-east facade of the Fish Market, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 6: Detail of the vertical louvres on the north-east façade of the fish market, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 7: Interior of the Fish Market, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)
 Photo 7: Interior of the Fish Market, Ancona 1949 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome)

5.3 rapporteur

Giovanni Bellucci







