The Granary Silos in the port of Genoa
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Genoa Port's Granary Silos is a so much challenging building, that raises
questions at first glance, his destiny remains an open issue for the city and the
Genoa Port Authority (GPA). It's located between the old port district and the famous
Aquarium by Renzo Piano and near Galata Museo del Mare by Spanish architect
Guillermo Vazquez Consuegra. Furthermore on Ponte Parodi, next to the silos, it has
begun the construction of the new cruise terminal by Dutch architecture firm
UNStudio.

The discussion about this giant's destiny is still going on, as you can find out
on media reviews, and the resolution is far. Perhaps the building itself stands in the
way of its own changes. Nowadays the GPA, owner of the silos, is going to publish a
competition to grant the silos' right of use. The terms spread different functional areas
on the silos as it were an empty box without considering the concrete structure and
the high transformation cost. If at first glance could seem easy to renovate the silos to
new functions such as a luxury hotel or a museum, soon you become aware that the
difficulties are harder than expected.

The first difficulty is the Superintendency for Architectural Heritage's restriction
that preserves only the façade, leaving out the already demolished pier and the
internal structure free from this restriction. Secondary this concrete pioneeristic work,
built in 1902 by G.A. Porcheddu Company from Turin is made up of an over-
reinforced concrete with pillars on ground level and bearing walls on the upper floor.
The inner space is organized in many rectangular cells in a row, where the wheat are
stored, leaving a small amount of free floor occupied by steam engines and conveyor
belt for handling.

The first stage of our thesis was to understand the building and how it works.
We looked through the records in the Porcheddu Archive kept by Civil and Territorial
engineering department of Politecnico di Torino. Here we found the first blueprint
dated 1901 and the correspondence between Porcheddu and Hennebique and the
project creator engineers Carissimo, Crotti and De Cristoforis from Milan.
In addition we consulted the Genoa Port Authority archives where we found the extension plan, dated 1906 - 1926 built by FerroBeton Company.

In order to full-fill our historical research we searched through old publications where we found a large feedback that this building had. This work made us able to see this silos from every point of view, historically and technically allowing us to redraw the plans in details, despite we hadn’t been able to visit indoor because of the prohibition ban ordered by the GPA. The next step was to understand how to renew the buildings and which functions suits better his problematic structure.

Our approach was minimize the demolition, maintaining the original concrete structure and the façade. The Hennebique silos can become a museum of itself and a token of the history of industrial building and the developing of the port of Genoa also becoming a new landmark of the transformation of Genoa Old Port district. In our mind the new function as to be analogue to the old one, so we think about creating a Public Records Office and in the remaining area a Museum and a hotel.
Plan Height +23m, above: as-built, below: project

Longitudinal section, above: as-built, below: project
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