

POLITECNICO DI TORINO

Master's Degree Course
in Architecture for Heritage

Master's Degree Thesis

**"Villa dei Laghi: Adaptive Reuse and
Architectural Restoration**



Relatore

Prof. Arch. Elena Vigliocco

Correlatore

Prof. Arch. Manuela Mattone

Student:

Sara Farhadi

Academic Year 2025/2026

1 . Abstract

2 . INTRODUCTION

3 . Villa dei Laghi in La Mandria Natural Park

- 3 . 1 . Site Localization
 - 3 . 2 . La Mandria History
 - 3 . 3 . Property Privatization
 - 3 . 4 . Management of Marquis de' Medici del Vasello
 - 3 . 5 . Changes From The Beginning to Today
 - 3 . 6 . Territorial Framework
 - 3 . 7 . Strategies to Improve Accessibility
 - 3 . 8 . Accessibility
 - 3 . 9 . Population
 - 3 . 10 . La Mandria Jungle
 - 3 . 11 . Hydrography
-

4 . The historical-architectural heritage and the farmhouse system

- 4 . 1 . The Savoy Residences
 - 4 . 2 . Hunting Repositories
 - 4 . 3 . The Functional Buildings and the Church
 - 4 . 4 . The Farmhouse System
-

5 . Villa dei Laghi and its History

- 5 . 1 . The Creation of the “Hunting Reserve” of Vittorio Emanuele II and Rosa Vercellana.
 - 5 . 2 . The Medici del Vascello Family's Neo-Gothic Palace Underwent a Farming renovation.
 - 5 . 3 . From the Castle to the Villa of the Bonomi-Bolchini Family
 - 5 . 4 . Present
-

6 . INTERVENTIONS ON THE VILLA DEI LAGHI

- 6 . 1 . Renzo Mongiardino's Speech
- 6 . 2 . Method
- 6 . 3 . Architecture of the Spaces
- 6 . 4 . Mongiardino's Project For the Villa dei Laghi

- 6 . 5 . Pietro Porcinai's Speech
- 6 . 6 . The Working Method of Pietro Porcina
- 6 . 7 . Design Proposals For the Villa dei Laghi

7 . Project of Valorization

- 7 . 1 . Diagram
 - 7 . 2 . Current situation
 - 7 . 3 . Current state of the Lower Building
-

8 . concept House for Artists in Villa dei Laghi

- 8 . 1 . SWOT
 - 8 . 2 . Three Case Studies.
 - 8 . 3 . describing the villa dei laghi.
-

9 . Project

- 9 . 1 . floor plans
 - 9 . 2 . Lower Building Plans
 - 9 . 3 . Circulation Plans
 - 9 . 4 . Zoning Plans
-

10 . Analysis of the Decades and Intervention.

- 10 . 1 . Analysis of the Degradation Present on the Main Facade.
 - 10 . 2 . Conservation and Interventions on External Environments
-

11 . Conclusion

12 . Visual archive

13 . Bibliography

1 . Abstract

This thesis explores the restoration and adaptive reuse of Villa dei Laghi, an architecturally significant and historically rich site located within La Mandria Park in the Piedmont region—part of a UNESCO World Heritage landscape. The research began with an in-depth historical, territorial, and architectural analysis of the villa, supported by direct on-site surveys and archival studies. The intervention was developed under the guidance of academic supervision and focused on restoring the damaged main façade while preserving the villa's original character.

Recognizing the villa's isolated location and limited accessibility, the project proposes a new function that embraces these qualities: an artist residency. This decision was informed by the analysis of three comparable case studies and guided by the idea that solitude and immersion in nature offer a powerful environment for creativity, reflection, and artistic production.

The new layout was carefully designed to meet the specific needs of different types of artists—such as painters, writers, and architects—by incorporating both private spaces (including personal rooms and meditation areas) and shared spaces (such as studios, leisure areas, and communal kitchens). This balance allows for individual focus as well as community interaction, fostering a dynamic and supportive creative environment.

Through this transformation, the project not only safeguards an important piece of cultural heritage but also aligns with broader regional and national strategies that promote sustainable development, cultural revitalization, and the reactivation of underutilized historic assets. The result is a vision for Villa dei Laghi that bridges history and contemporary use, giving new meaning and function to a forgotten site while reinforcing the cultural identity of the Piedmont territory.

2 . INTRODUCTION

In the past, restoration work has mostly focused on important and historic buildings, especially those considered unique and special. These projects often aim to protect monuments with great historical and artistic value.

However, restoring and reusing an old building can be more complex than building something new. It requires working with what already exists, respecting its history, and carefully adding new functions. A project that looks at both the building and its surroundings can help avoid the problem of placing a restored building in an area that is damaged or disconnected from its context.

In Italy, many historic buildings are abandoned or in bad condition due to a lack of care and regular maintenance. In front of these buildings, we must ask: is it better to let them continue to decay, or can we find new uses for them that give them value again?

My thesis focuses on one of these buildings: Villa dei Laghi, a beautiful and historic villa located in the La Mandria Regional Park, northwest of Turin. The villa sits on a small peninsula surrounded by artificial lakes, creating a peaceful and unique natural setting. I carried out this project under the guidance of Professor Elena Vigliocco and Professor Manuela Mattone, with the goal of bringing the villa back to life through both restoration and reuse.

In my work, I focused first on the restoration of the villa's facades, fixing the damage and protecting the original architecture. Then, I worked on reusing and reactivating the building by giving it a new function that fits with the place and its history.

The new purpose I gave to the villa is that of an artist residency—a place where artists can live and work, surrounded by nature. The residency offers artists time and space to focus on their creative work, while also creating a new cultural use for the building. This gives new life to the villa and helps connect it to the public in a meaningful way.

This project combines two goals: to protect the historical identity of the villa, and to make it useful again in today's world. The artist residency brings together art, nature, and history, helping both the local area and the people who visit it.

Throughout my research, I also studied the history of the villa and how the area around it has changed. This helped me understand how to design a project that fits well with its past and its surroundings. I believe this type of approach can be a good example for restoring other buildings in La Mandria Park.

In the end, my project tries to build a bridge between the past and the present—protecting the villa's history while creating a new story for its future. It shows how old buildings can be saved and reused in smart and creative ways.

3 . Villa dei Laghi in La Mandria Natural Park

This section is important for understanding where the Villa is situated and its surroundings. The Villa's history is closely tied to the development of the Park where it's located. The Piedmont Region has set up protected natural areas like parks and reserves to conserve biodiversity, including the Park.

The Park was established by the Piedmont Region in 1976, split into two main sections: the pre-park, covering 3446 hectares outside the city walls, aiming to gradually connect the equipped area with the surrounding land, and the equipped area, the main part of the park, spanning 3124 hectares, enclosed by the Mandria border wall. This wall, commissioned by King Vittorio Emanuele II in the mid-19th century, is around 30 kilometers long, making it the largest enclosed historical park in Italy and the second largest in Europe. It's also home to one of the Savoy residences, the Castello della Mandria, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, along with the nearby Royal Palace of Venaria Reale and other Savoy residences.¹

1.F. Pernice, A. Vanelli, *La Venaria Reale: lavori a corte 2, the projects, the construction sites, the destinations*, Turin, 2006, pp.1-11.

The Piedmont Region's Landscape Plan Regional 2017 maps depict the extension and distribution of landscape assets, highlighting the region's rich landscape and naturalistic value. These areas serve as opportunities for slow tourism relaunch, kilometer zero, and business ideas related to agriculture, food, and wine. They preserve and communicate these areas, promoting communication and preservation of these valuable resources.

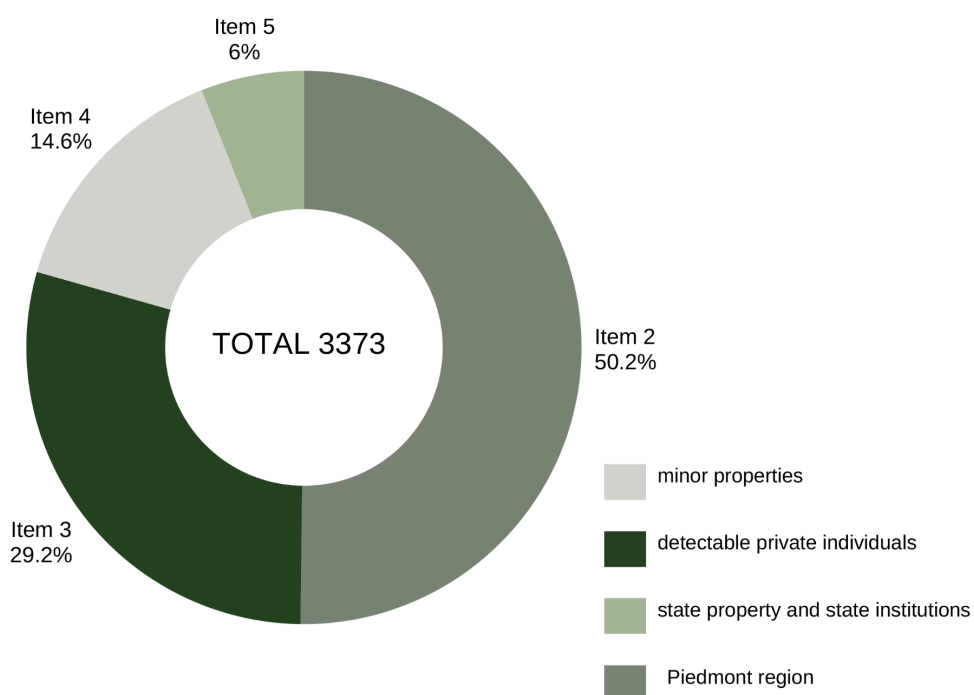
3.1. Site Localization

The Park is situated at the bottom of the Piedmont Prealps, mostly on the flat land of the Stura di Lanzo and Dora Riparia rivers. It touches Venaria Reale to the south, which is around 15 km from Turin by subway. The area ranges from 254 to 402 meters above sea level and showcases the typical landscape of Piedmont's Upper Po Valley. It's characterized by hills formed by glaciers and plateaus that spread out like a fan from the bottom of valleys.²

The park covers five towns: Venaria Reale, Robassomero, Fiano, San Gillio, and Druento, each having direct access to it. The distribution of land ownership is detailed in the conservation plan for the area known as La Mandria. About 56% of the park's 3373 hectares are owned by the public (the Piedmont Region and the government), while 30% belong to large private entities like FCA and golf clubs. The remaining portion is owned by smaller private individuals. The park is mainly covered by forests, with some areas along riverbanks and meadows.³

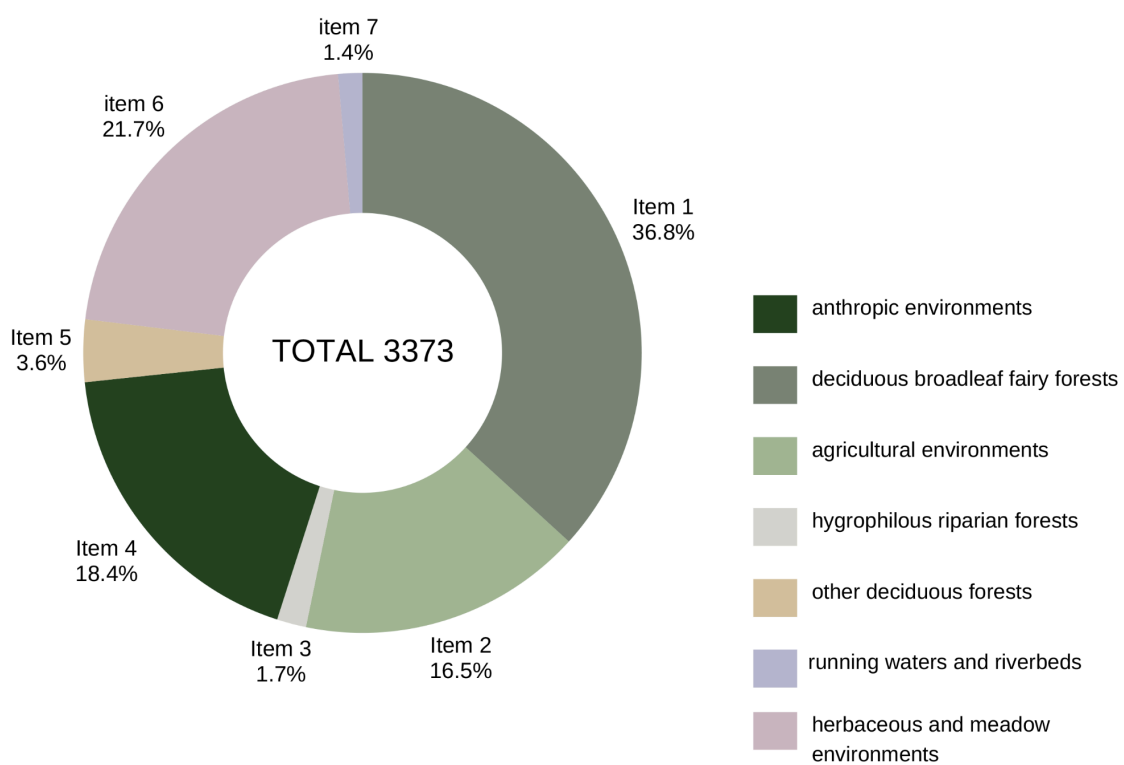
2. *La Mandria Regional Park* (edited by), La Mandria, Edizioni EDA, Turin, 2002. P.12.

3. E.G.A.P. *Royal Parks*, 2019 – ZSC 1110079 La Mandria. Management Plan. E.G.A.P. *Royal Parks* and Piedmont Region, Turin, October 2019, pp.36-38



Picture 3

Surface distribution . Graphic rework



Picture 4 Surface breakdown by macro-environments. Graphic reworksource:..E.G.A.P. Royal Parks, 2019 – ZSC 1110079 La Mandria. Management Plan.E.G.A.P. Royal Parks and Piedmont Region, Turin, October 2019.

3.2. La Mandria History

In the second half of the 1600s, Duke Carlo Emanuele II built Venaria Castle as a new residence for “pleasure and hunting”⁴. The Herd's origins can be traced back to when a group of horses and troops were assembled for the Sardinian Army. The castle, built by Filippo Juvarra⁵ and Castellamonte⁶, is located on the lands. The first sources to confirm the construction of the structure are from registers of 1708-1709 relating to work accounting⁷. During this period, the forest was deforested for meadow areas and work began on tracking hunting routes, which were completed in 1719. Two undated iconographic sources provide evidence of this historical phase and development planning of the estate between 1702 and 1720. During those years, economic resources were used to arrange agricultural assets and build structures.

New farms were built, including the Savonera farmhouse near the Druent road under Vittorio Emanuele II.⁸

3.3. Property Privatization

Over a century, the castle was built to include horses breeding infrastructure. At the request of King Vittorio Emanuele II, it was converted into a large hunting reserve in the nineteenth century. Emanuele II moved the horse breeding plant to Stupinigi's former residence in La mandria. Carlo Alberto ordered the construction of the castle, and the plant was later relocated to Stupinigi's residence.

In the past, Carlo Alberto had placed them in La mandria. This was the first step towards privatizing the fund by transferring functions to other locations. The estate was designed to become a favorite hunting and vacation spot for the owner, free of social responsibilities and close to nature.

“In 1861 the in charge purchased the state forest of Venaria Reale from the State Finance; and two years later the same La Mandria state estate”.⁹

4.F. Pernice., *La Venaria Reale, lavori a corte*, Turin, 2003. P.7.

5.First Architect of King Vittorio Amedeo II of Savoy

6.First Architect before Filippo Juvarra

7. C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. II, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.139.

8. C.R. Bardelli, M.G. Vinardi, V. Defabiani, *Ville Sabaude*, Rusconi libri, Milano, 1990, p.347.

9.Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.6.

Over the years, the king's private estate developed. The addition of new agricultural lots has contributed to a more uniform shape. In addition to Druento and Venaria, the neighboring municipalities of La Cassa, Casa Torinese, Robassomero, Fiano, and Lanzo were also purchased. King Vittorio Emanuele II ordered the purchase of large amounts of forested land to promote game development. This resulted in the Park's environmental heritage being valued. The Park has grown to approximately 3000 ha and is surrounded by a 3 meter high wall that extends for 30 km ¹⁰. The walls provided two roles: protecting the king's family connection during a time of political claims, and preventing the introduction of game and allowing breeding and development. To create a hunting estate, the Mandria went through regeneration, farm closures, plant reduction, artificial lake creation, and construction of internal roads and hunting routes. Every aspect of the estate's agriculture was gone, including random parts of prior farming. Between 1860 and 1870, the King's residence was built to match the front curtain of the "Castle." During this time, the villa was dedicated to his morganatic wife of the lakes and the hunting lodge, now known as "La Bizarreness."¹¹

3 . 4 . Management of Marquis de' Medici del Vasello

The Herd's structure made it a pure liability for the Royal House budget. As a result, when the great King passed away in Rome on January 9, 1878, from acute pleuropneumonia, the House Sale administration tried to make some money from it by turning it into a single large rental and then taking over management with direct economy.¹²

10. F. Pernice F., A. Vanelli, *La Venaria Reale: lavori a corte 2, i progetti, i cantieri, le destinazioni*, Torino, 2006, p.9.

11. Regione Piemonte (a cura di), *La Venaria Reale: Ipotesi per il Recupero*, Regione Piemonte, Torino, 1999, p.30.

12. C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. I, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.132.

Following each one of these efforts in the years following, King Umberto I, who had never had any interest in La Mandria, decided to sell the estate on Minister Rattazzi's proposal. Senator Marquis Luigi Medici del Vascello had bought it in 1887¹³, and the sale promise made on June 18, 1879, was converted into a deed published on October 26, 1882¹⁴. In the end, every effort to handle the La Mandria estate failed. Senator Marquis Luigi Medici del Vascello bought the property in 1887 after King Umberto I, who had little interest in it, decided to sell it. On June 18, 1879, an initial sale agreement was signed, and on October 26, 1882, the public contract was completed. Although Medici's administration made a number of changes to improve the estate's agricultural facilities within its hunting reserve, the high maintenance costs of the land kept going. The land needed a lot of repair and was infertile. Land reclamation, deforestation, new roads, and waterways improvements were among Medici's interventions. In order to address unsuitable permeability of the soil, he also put in place strategies to collect rainfall. The property was handed to the Medici's five nephews following his death in 1915. Giuseppe and Francesco were the only two who attempted to invest in it in order to restore it. Sadly, they were unable to reduce the estate's cost. With the start of World War I, the property was occupied by military forces, and all attempts at management were stopped for a time.

13. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.7.

14. C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. I, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.132.



picture 5 .Umberto of Savoy prince of Piedmont together with doctors of the ship. Year: 1930.

Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

3.5. Changes From The Beginning to Today

Beginning in 1923, a land restoration plan was developed to "revitalize"¹⁵ the dry landscape of La Mandria. This effort present more than just watering dry areas or draining dead water; it also required physical and chemical transformation to get rid of strong soil sterility. Land reclamation began in 1934 in several phases. First, teams cleared the jungle and remaining plants. Then, farmers, unemployed workers, and small landowners removed trees and roots, creating thousands of jobs and transforming a private project into a social assistance leadership. Over four years, approximately 300 hectares were recovered, needing 20,000 workdays of forest clearing and land preparation, including large-scale planting.¹⁶ To manage rainwater, many irrigation water sources have been dug to move it away from reclaimed land. After reclamation had been finished, Giuseppe Medici del Vascello aimed to transform La Mandria into an innovative, self-sufficient agricultural company.¹⁷ The estate was divided into 32 farms¹⁸, four of which were directly managed and the rest had been hired or worked under farming. These developments led to a population grow, reaching 896 residents by 1938.¹⁹ The estate had transformed from a hunting reserve to a successful farm that included agriculture, dairy process, and breeding animals by the time of Giuseppe's death in 1931.²⁰ However, military forces got control of the region when World War II passed out. The Medici del Vascello family had to start the process of divide and selling the property because of the damage.

15. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.22.

16. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.128.

17. C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. II, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.30.

18. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.40.

19. M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990. p.14. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, pp.34-43.

20. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, pp.34-43.

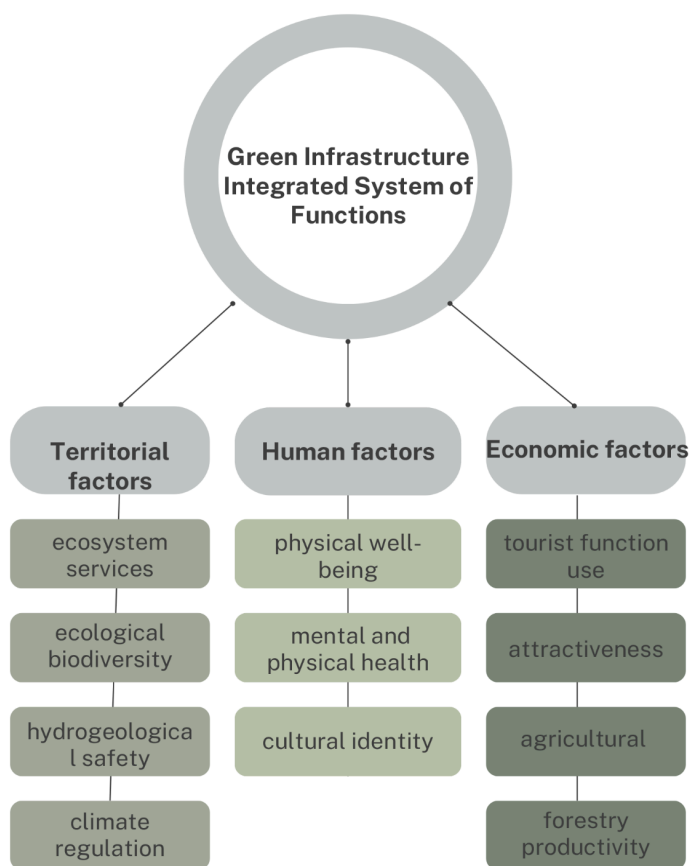
3 . 6 . Territorial Framework

La Mandria Regional Park is situated at the foot of the Piedmontese Prealps, on the flat land of the Stura di Lanzo and Dora Riparia rivers, that heights from 258 to 402 metres. The territory extends into the municipalities of Druento, Fiano Torinese, Robassomero, and San Gillio Torinese, and it surrounds Venaria Reale to the south. Covering almost 3000 hectares, the park has a large, irregular pentagon shape and measures about 12 by 15 kilometers. A 3-meter-tall wall that is almost 26 kilometers long and a metal fence that is roughly 6 kilometers long cover the entire area. The park's 70 kilometers of waterways, which include canals, brooks, and streams, are some of the most remarkable features. These water features, which were initially only meant to be decorative, have now become important resources. The two main channels that are used for watering are the Ceronda, which flows through the lower part of the park, and the Naviglio di Druento, which runs through the northern part. There are also five lakes, most of them are man-made and now used as water reservoirs after being used for fishing. Lago Grande is the biggest and most impressive, and Villa Laghi is situated next to it, making for a lovely scene. Despite being surrounded by walls, La Mandria is still a park that is open to the public and has multiple entrances. Visitors can enter through "Ponte Verde," "Tre Cancelli," "Cascina Rampa," and "Ingresso Brero" from Venaria Reale; some of these have free parking. From these public access points, visitors can also go on several kinds of guided paths offered by the park. These paths have been carefully chosen to highlight the grounds' many historic buildings as well as the natural setting (from an educational point of view).²¹

21. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.40.

3.7. Strategies to Improve Accessibility

The Park situation is part of the larger Corona Verde 2025 project. This intervention plan seeks to improve the landscape, ecology, and economic status material of the area, with the goal of increasing local standards to European levels. In this context, the environment becomes an important, rather than secondary, part of an economic growth strategy. The plan seeks activities that combine with agricultural and forest operations to generate earnings while also supporting land maintenance. This approach believes green spaces not as areas to be filled, but as places for activities that benefit health, mental well-being, and the community in general. The 2025 strategic plan promotes environmental improvements, accessibility, and the creation of urban green spaces, as well as an increase in local, community-organized efforts. With the goal of creating a large system of development paths that go about 500 kilometers, the plan includes electricity bike and pedestrian paths and shows new connections and links among all of the Corona Verde's protected and unprotected green areas.²²



picture 8. Tree of factors relating to a green infrastructure. Graphic rework.

22.I. Ostellino, P. Terzuolo, P. Castelnovi, E. Porro, M.N. Mantelli, G. Quaglio, Bistagnino L., A. De Rossi, *L'infrastruttura verde per l'area metropolitana torinese, Corona Verde 2025*, Associazione Torino Internazionale, Torino, giugno 2016

3.8. Accessibility

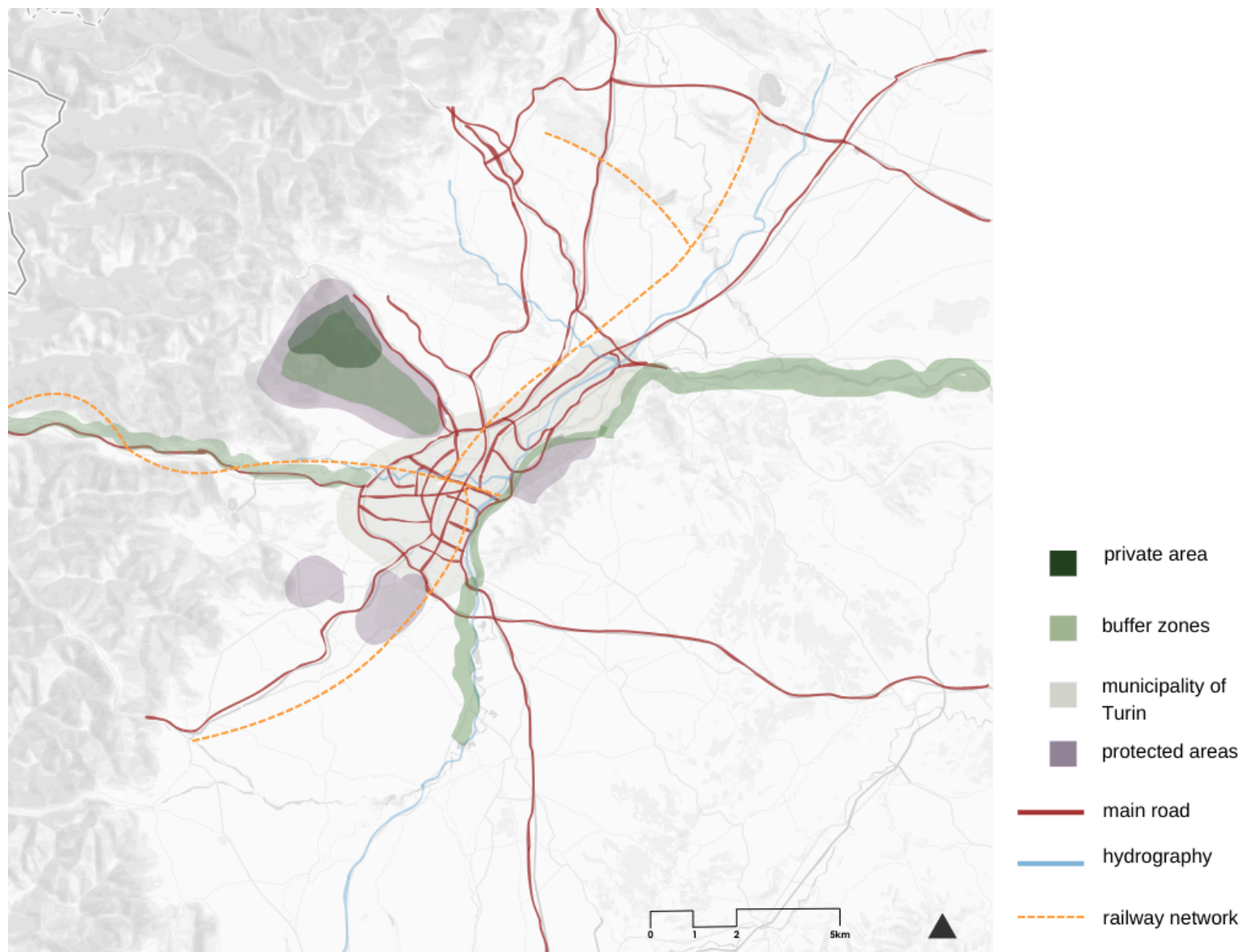
Access to the Park is currently free and only available on foot or by bicycle via Rent Bike.²³ Forests and gardens are also available near Borgo Castello. The entire area is available through six entry points:

- Ponte Verde Entrance
- Tre Cancelli Entrance
- Druento Gate
- Bizzarria Gate
- Cascina Brero Entrance
- Tre Laghi Entrance

The Druento and Bizzarria gates in the municipality of Druento, as well as the Ponte Verde and Tre Cancelli entrances in the municipality of Venaria Reale, are currently open to the public, but not all of them are. The Park has a line of main roads and views of the city and mountains thanks to the internal road network, which is mainly made up for a while, historic avenues, straight roads, and linked hunting paths that have been added to those that were already there. The road system, which covers about 130 km²⁴, links points of entry and existing farmhouses. La Mandria provides lots of journey options that combine historical, cultural, and architectural heritage with natural elements. Three itineraries have been created for the visit, each of which focuses on a different theme to provide a more thorough experience.

23. <http://www.parchireali.it/parco.mandria/itinerari>

24. Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.13.



picture9. Zoning of the la mandria Source: Protected Areas and Network Natura 2000 obtained from QGIS software. Graphic rework.

The first route takes you through nature, with stops at Castello dei Laghi, Cascina Brero, Lago Grande, Torre dell'Acqua, Viale dei Pini, and Cascina Rampa. A part of this plans is only accessible when guided by leads, and it covers 15 kilometers.

The second route focuses on culture and nature, with stops at historic farmhouses, the Ponte del Violino, the Chapel of St. Giuliano, Cascina Rubbianetta, and Cascina Peppinella. The section near Cascina Vittoria can be finished totally on horseback. This route is 10 kilometres long.

Visitors can explore Borgo Castello, including its royal apartments, the Medici Museum of the Vascello, and the hydro power plant, by taking the last route, which includes historical and architectural exploration. The total distance of this route is 4 km.

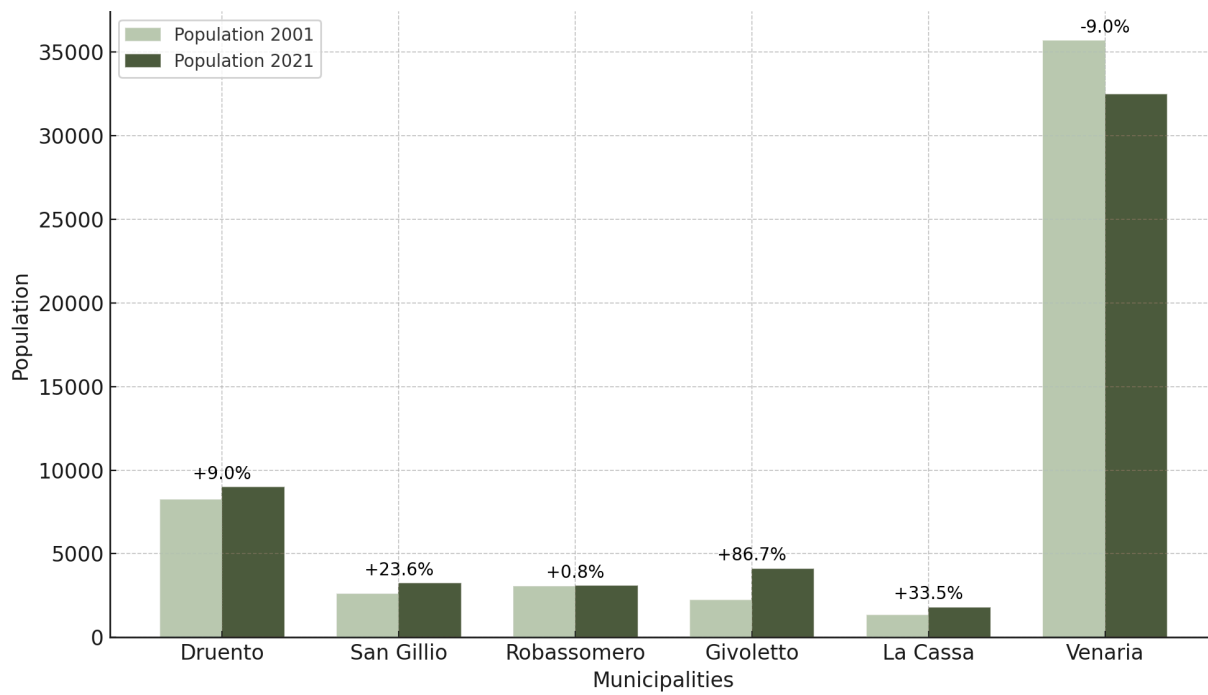
Keeping the park's architectural and historical heritage is essential because it would improve the services it provides bike sharing, new wildlife observation places, more paths and spaces for visitors, environmental education efforts, and scientific promotion. This would enhance the use of the bike and walking paths by improving internal routes and overall access.²⁵

3 . 9 . Population

Between 2001 and 2021, the population growth rate in most of the municipalities under evaluation was either positive or, in particular circumstances, stable.²⁶

25.il termine Greenways può essere interpretato come un sistema di territori lineari tra loro connessi che sono protetti, gestiti e sviluppati in modo da ottenere benefici di tipo ricreativo, ecologico e storico-culturale.

26. Rielaborazione dati demografici al 01/01/2023, <https://www.tuttitalia.it/piemonte/>



picture 10. Population change in selected municipalities(2001 vs 2021)

<https://www.tuttitalia.it/piemonte/>

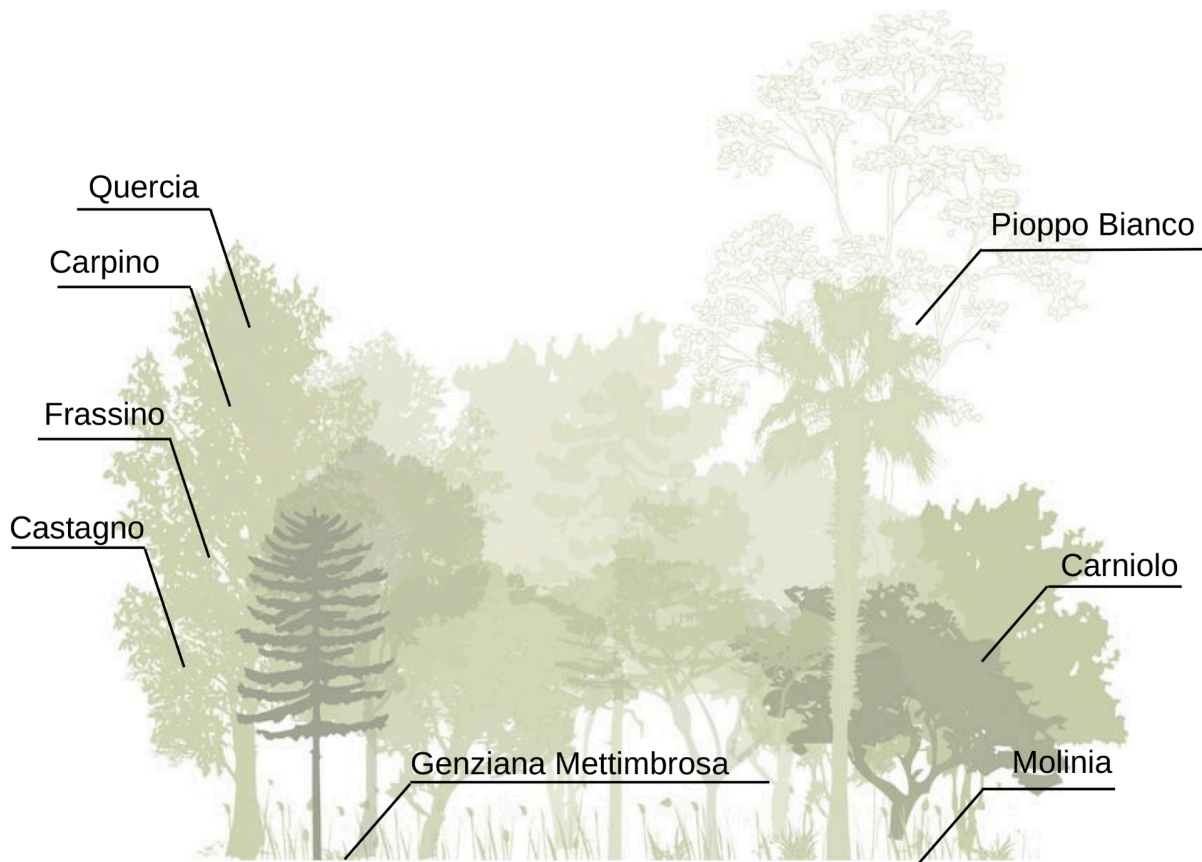
3.10. La Mandria Jungle

Considering human activity, the forest of La Mandria, Italy's largest lowland forest, is a respected environment. The original size and structure of the forest have been changed all over time with a number of factors, including forest cutting, poor feeding, a high number of wild mammals, many forest fires, poor ecosystem management, and the addition of foreign plant species.

The park's forest is known as a "Querco-carpinetum," which means it is surrounded by oaks and hornbeam trees. Other leaves that grow with these species are *Fraxinus excelsior* (common ash), *Prunus avium* (wild cherry), and *Acer campestre* (field maple), with mature groups of *Tilia cordata* (small-leaved lime) and *Ulmus minor* (field elm). Trees that grow in the forest are *Corylus avellana* (hazel), *Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn), *Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn), *Cornus mas* (cornelian cherry), and *Euonymus europaeus* (spindle). Black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) woods and ash groves are designated as important species for protection under the Environment Directive.

According to the map below, the park's agricultural operations are controlled by a management plan designed to maximize protection of biodiversity and preserve the park's permanent grasslands.²⁷

27. La Direttiva 92/43/CEE "Habitat". La Direttiva del Consiglio del 21 maggio 1992 Conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche detta Direttiva "Habitat", e la Direttiva Uccelli costituiscono il cuore della politica comunitaria in materia di conservazione della biodiversità e sono la base legale su cui si fonda Natura 2000. Scopo della Direttiva Habitat è "salvaguardare la biodiversità mediante la conservazione degli habitat naturali, nonché della flora e della fauna selvatiche nel territorio europeo degli Stati membri al quale si applica il trattato" (art 2).



picture 11.Conceptual representation of the set of species of La Mandria Park. Graphic rework.

3.11. Hydrography

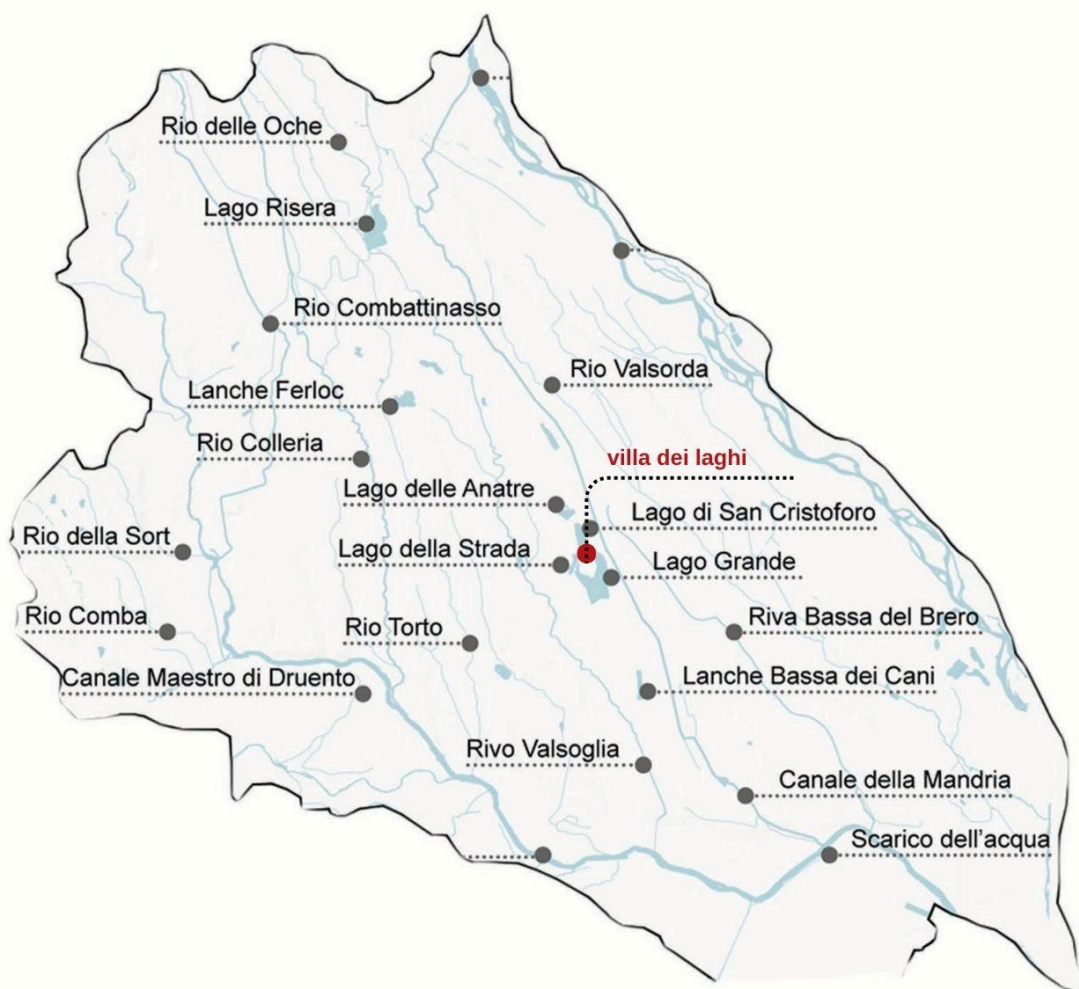
There are many canals and streams in the Mandria region, with a total distance of about 70 kilometers.²⁸ The two most important streams in terms of size, flow, and length are the Ceronda to the southwest and the Stura di Lanzo to the northeast. Although it borders the park instead of passes through it, the Stura di Lanzo in particular is essential to the Mandria's water supply system.

On Vittorio Emanuele II's control, one of the branches produces the Mandria Canal, an artificial canal. The main purpose of the canal is to keep water flowing to Borgo Castello and the artificial lake system that surrounds the Castello dei Laghi. Unlike the Stura, the Ceronda stream reaches the land shortly (near the Castello della Mandria) before flowing into the Stura di Lanzo. Additionally with the waterways, there are five lakes—nearly all man-made—that developed when the land was organized to make space for Vittorio Emanuele II's royal house. Both aesthetic and functional goals were achieved by these lakes. The romantic 19th-century style, which considered sources of water as elements that enhanced and improved green settings, was aesthetically reflected in the gentle, flowing curves of the waterways. In regard to function, the lakes were mainly reserve water rivers, even though fishing was done there. The main one is Lago Grande, which is situated in the middle of the estate and has a maximum depth of roughly 16 meters.²⁹

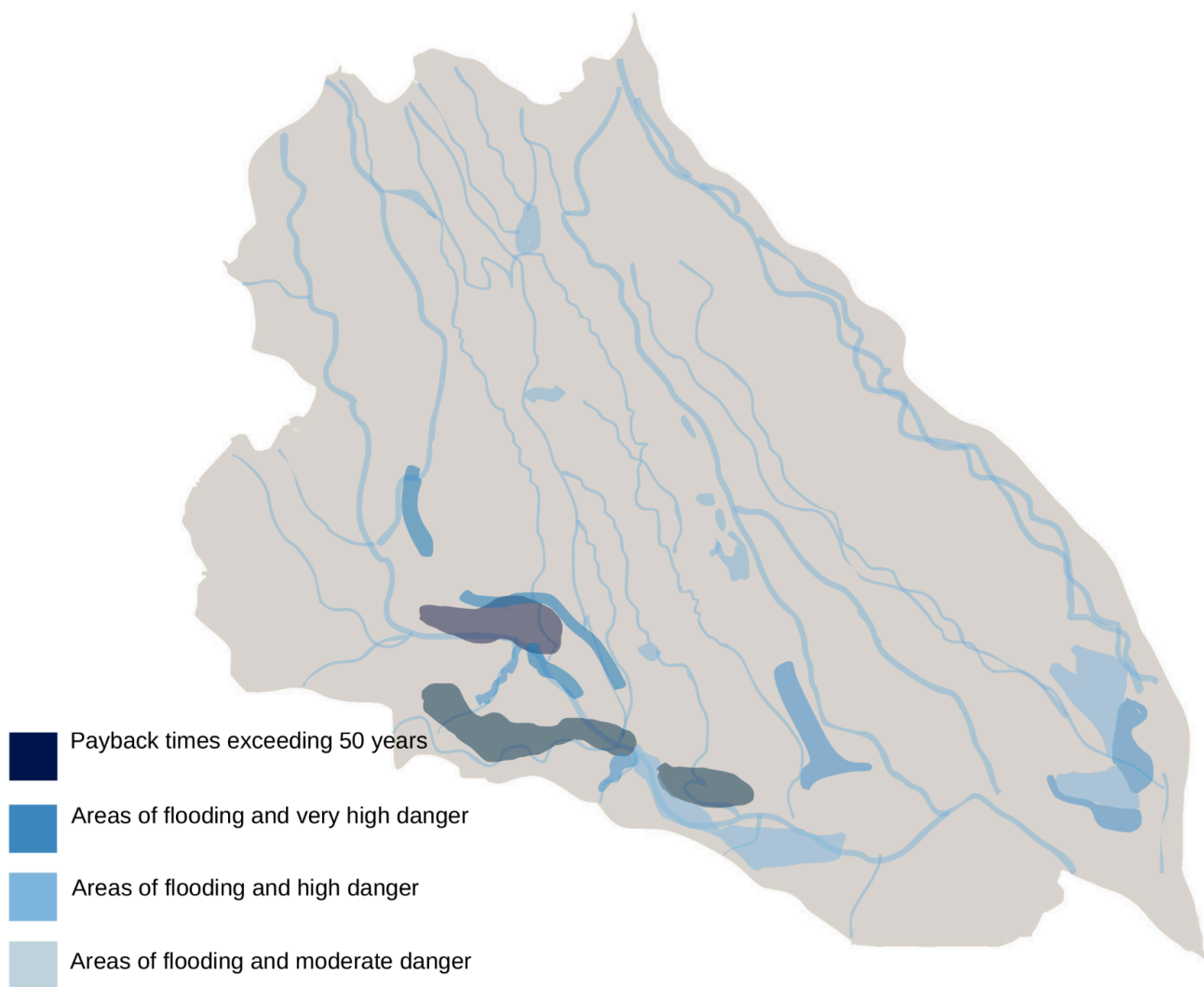
The park has an important level of hydrological risk, according to analyses. Large flood-prone areas with high, medium, or low risk levels can be found on the Hydrogeological Risk Map

28.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano*, 1990, p.85

29.Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, p.15.



picture 12. Analysis of the hydrographic network present in the la mandria. Source: Piedmont Region for Cartographic reference base BDTRE 2021. Graphic rework.



picture 13.Hydrological hazard. Source: Piedmont Region for Cartographic reference base BDTRE 2021. Piedmont geoportal, defense of the soil. Graphic rework

A review of the Hydrogeological Management Plan's (PAI) Map of limitations and Regulation shows that many locations are subject to hydrogeological limits and some are at very high danger of flooding. These areas are mostly along the Stura di Lanzo and Ceronda streams. The park's lakes are all important landscapes that support natural diversity. They are home to a diverse range of rare helophytes and hydrophytes and provide breeding, feeding, and watering grounds for several animal species. Projects such as the between 2014 and 2020. Rural Growth Program, which focuses on the functional restoration of lentic lakes with programs to protect native fish and animal species, are focused on these places. The project also aims to evaluate the underwater environment's health, highlighting the importance of increasing public knowledge of the significance of Natura 2000 regions and the variety of life they support.²⁹

29.POR FESR 2014-2020, Asse V (OT6), Azione V.6c.6.1, *Deliberazione della Giunta Regionale*, Regione Piemonte, 12 ottobre 2018, n.20-7685.

4 . The historical-architectural heritage and the farmhouse system

The article coming next is not meant to be a full architectural and historical analysis of all the buildings in the Park. In order to help the reader understand the location of the Castello dei Laghi and following project proposals for the site's future usage, it also seeks to give historical background.

With more than 20 protected buildings, the Park's landscape is home to a rich architectural legacy. Several Savoy homes, two hunting lodges, and dozens of farmhouses built in various stages may be seen inside the Park. Some were built under Vittorio Emanuele II's direction, while others were created to help with the Marquessate era's agricultural development.³⁰ These structures are reminders of the past that are still clearly apparent today, telling visitors of the events, battles, hunts, fairs, and loves that have shaped these locations.

As part of the effort to sustain and preserve these historically and culturally significant locations, the Piedmont Region renovated many of these valuables after buying the land. Both the architectural design and the practical arrangement of the Park's outdoor areas reflect the varied landscape of the Mandria Estate. The present structures and the large regional park that surrounds them have an individual character than the Royal Palace of Venaria; they are less formal, appear more disorganized.³¹

30.A. Ballone, G. Racca, *All'ombra dei Savoia. Storia della Venaria Reale dalle origini a oggi*, Allemandi, 1999, pp.95-104.

31. F. Pernice F., A. Vanelli, *La Venaria Reale: lavori a corte 2, i progetti, i cantieri, le destinazioni*, Torino, 2006, pp.1-3.

4.1. The Savoy Residences

the Savoy Residences became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, and they have since received European Union grants dedicated only for the preservation of UNESCO sites. The Savoy Residences are a large collection of structures that represent luxurious Baroque and Late Baroque architecture. In addition, they represent an individual but unified royal history that demonstrates a true union of culture and nature through urban space mastery and large rural design. This enormous heritage is remarkable for its outstanding order and concentration, which are results of great political and dynamic reason.³³

- Royal Palace of Venaria Reale



Picture 14. The Royal Palace of Venaria Reale Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority

The Venaria Reale is an enormous site near Turin that includes 80,000 square meters of royal architecture and 60 hectares of gardens. It is close to the Park's 3,000 fenced hectares and Venaria's 17th-century historic city. One of the most beautiful architectural and landscape design wonders, it was recognized as the most important cultural heritage restoration project in Europe and opened to the public in 2007.³⁴ Duke Carlo Emanuele II ordered architect Amedeo di Castellamonte to create the Royal Palace, which he intended to use as his hunting house, starting in 1659.³⁵

33. <https://www.patrimoniomondiale.it> Associazione Beni Italiani Patrimonio Mondiale, Beni Italiani, *Resi Le Residenze della Casa Reale di Savoia in Piemonte* (1997).

34. F. Pernice, *La Venaria Reale, lavori a corte*, Torino, 2003, p.17.

35. F. Pernice F., A. Vanelli, *La Venaria Reale: lavori a corte 2, i progetti, i cantieri, le destinazioni*, Torino, 2006, pp.3-11

- Borgo Castello



Picture 15. Borgo Castello. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority

The Borgo Castello in Mandria It was the major place for housing the Royal Family of Savoy's horse breed, and was inspired by the French Haras—equine stables that existed in the main European courts in the 17th century.³⁶ Between 1882 and 1887, Marquis Luigi Medici del Vascello purchased the entire estate, converting the hunting areas into an active business supported by the several neighboring farmsteads. Today, the Castello houses the Park Authority's offices and offers public tours of the Royal Apartments. The total usable area is 35,000 square meters.³⁷

36.A.L.G. Grossi, *Guida alle cascate e vigne del territorio di Torino e contorni dedicata a S.A.R. il Duca del Ciabrese*, vol. II, Guibert, Torino, 1791.

37.C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. I, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.29-80.

4.2. Hunting Repositories

- Villa dei Laghi



Picture 16. Villa dei Laghi. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

king Vittorio Emanuele II ordered the construction of the Villa and the Bizzarria as hunting lodges in 1861.³⁸ The Villa is located on an island in the middle of four man-made lakes: Cristoforo, Grande, Strada, and Superiore. It is approximately 2,680 square meters in size. With four tall towers above, the center has a diverse collection of architectural forms similar of a medieval castle. In 1963³⁹, Anna Bonomi Bolchini hired architect Renzo Mongiardino to add two additional wings, and Pietro Porcinai was given the task of designing the surrounding grounds. After multiple ownership changes, the Bonomi Bolchini family gave the Villa to the Piedmont Region in 1995⁴⁰, after which it was abandoned for years. In 2019, the Villa was chosen as the location for Roberto De Feo's film *The Nest*, and some restoration work was approved thanks to mediation by the Torino Piemonte Film Commission. In February 2021, the Piedmont Region published a request for proposals to restore and develop the facility.⁴¹

38.AST, Corte, Real Casa, cartella 2610, Registri contabili dei lavori eseguiti alla Mandria nel 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 'Castello al Lago', redatto dall'architetto Barnaba Panizza.

39. Comune di Milano, Raccolta delle Stampe "Achille Bertarelli"

40.<https://www.regione.piemonte.it> Amministrazione, Patrimonio, Patrimonio immobiliare, Villa Castello dei Laghi

41. Disciplinare di gara, CUP J85C19000150001, febbraio 2021.

- La Bizzarria



Picture 17. The Bizarre Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The Bizzarria was built in 1860 by Swiss architect Leopoldo Galli for King Vittorio Emanuele II. It is an eclectic-style central pavilion with three round towers that measures about 290 square meters. It remained to serve as a hunting lodge during the Medici del Vascello family's control. In the 1920s and 1930s, the estate never done a productive purpose due to clear structural limitations, instead focusing on managing the properties along the Val Ceronda, known as "Basso la Cassa." The sale of these properties, driven by the construction of a Fiat testing track at the end of the 1950s, led to the villa's natural break down.⁴²

The Bizzarria's current look is the product of a restoration conducted between 1976 and 1978 under the direction of Gabetti and Isola, who aimed to "restore every recoverable structure and finish in a philologically accurate way." They repaired the wooden doors with glass and provided inside lighting to bring out the center altar and the first-floor's different round apartment. The Park Council now manages continuing restoration and conservation activities.⁴³

42.C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. I, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, pp.162-171.

43.R. Gabetti, A. Isola, *Un caleidoscopio di specchi per il belvedere della Bizzarria. Immaginoso e spaesante intervento di restauro di Gabetti e Isola per l'ex palazzina di caccia e piacere di Vittorio Emanuele II*, Casa Vogue, n.130, maggio 1982, p.248.

4.3. The Functional Buildings and the Church

- Ciabòt delle guardie



Picture 18. Ciabòt of the guards. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The last building you'll see between the Ciuchè ramp and Viale dei Roveri is the guards' hut, near Borgo Castello. Originally, it was planned as a kennel for the marquis, a simple rectangular building designed for practical use. Nowadays, the whole place serves as the Park Visitor Center. Here, you can explore exhibitions about nature and take introductory classes in photography and environmental studies.⁴⁴

44.<http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Ciabòt delle Guardie.

- Torre dell'acqua



Picture 19. Water tower. 45 Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.
The water tower is a place where they used to collect water from the Lago Grande pipeline and distribute it. Because it's small, it can't be used for any specific activities in the park⁴⁵

45. <http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Torre dell'acqua.

4.4. The Farmhouse System

In the park, there are lots of old farmhouses that have been fixed up and turned into spots where people who visit the park can stop and learn stuff. The big bunch of farmhouses came about in the 18th century when the park got rearranged. They added on more land to the farms they already had (like the Mandina farm in 1728 and the Cascina Bruna in 1742) and kept the old buildings in good shape (like in 1743 they did work on the Pitture farmhouse and in 1758 on the Moroccan farmhouse)⁴⁶. So, basically, these farmhouses are from back when they were sorting out the park's stuff in the 1700s. These farms likely go way back to when at least six of them were first established. These farms include Brero, Comba, Fornace, Grangetta, Ramp, and Hermitage. They were all built in a basic style known as a "farmer's house" or "isolated cottage."⁴⁷ These houses were simple, with just one part where the farmer lived, along with a stable and barn attached. Sometimes, the roof was separate from the rest of the house. The walls were made of brick and stone, often left partly unplastered, while the roof was made of tiles, and the other parts were mostly made of wood. The mix of old farmhouses and nature found in the Park has a bunch of different aspects. It's not just about history or the environment - it's also about how people live, what's right or wrong, how things are done, and how everything fits together. Because of this, there are a lot of tricky questions and issues that come up, and they're not always easy to figure out. According to the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) way of thinking, protecting both the physical and non-physical parts of this heritage helps us remember important things about who we are and where we come from.⁴⁸

46. S. Petrarulo, Santagada E., *Il "Cascinone" nel Parco Regionale La Mandria di Venaria Reale: un'ipotesi di restauro e rifunzionalizzazione*, tesi di laurea, Facoltà di Architettura II, Politecnico di Torino, a.a. 2004-2005, rel. Carla Bartolozzi, p.32.

47. Tale impianto si diffuse nella pianura piemontese dalla metà del XVII agli inizi del XVIII secolo, consolidando la tipologia di habitat dispersi che caratterizzò i due periodi di crescita demografica rurale (fine del XII e metà del XVI secolo).

48. ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (a cura di), *Approaches to the Conservation of Twentieth - Century Cultural Heritage*, Madrid-New Delhi, 2017.

- Cascina Rampa



Picture 20. Cascina Rampa. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

the Rampa farmhouse sits in a beautiful spot near the Tre Cancelli entrance of the park. It's been around since the 1700s and originally had a simple rectangular layout with a stable and barn attached. Over time, it got renovated a couple of times - first in the mid-1800s and then again in 1976 - to make it better for showing off educational stuff and exhibitions⁴⁹. Nowadays, besides giving visitors info about the park, the farmhouse has lots of different things to do. There are spaces for kids to play, you can rent bikes, and there's a place to grab a bite or a drink. Plus, you can buy local products there, too. Recently, they added new stuff like changing rooms and showers, making it a great stop for hikers and bikers. It's also the starting point for a cool walk where you can feel different textures under your feet.⁵⁰

49. <http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Cascina Rampa

50. <https://www.cascinarampa.it>

- Cascina Brero



Picture 21. Cascina Brero. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The old building from the 1700s got fixed up in the late 1800s to make it into a place for guests to stay. More recently, they've made some changes to get it ready for teaching about nature. Plus, you can rent bikes there and have fun playing mini golf or going for walks. In 2021, they did even more upgrades, adding new things to do, like a library about nature and a cool walk where you can feel different textures under your feet.⁵¹

51.<http://www.parchireali.it> Parco Mandria, Guida alla visita, Punti di interesse, Centri visitatori e mostre, Cascina Brero.

- Cascina Prato Pascolo



Picture 22. Cascina Prato Pascolo. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The place was built in the early 1900s with two covered areas. Luigi Medici del Vascello built it to take care of animals and the people who looked after them. Nowadays, after some fixing up, it's become a restaurant and bar with a big outdoor space. It's in a handy spot between the Castello della Mandria and the Royal Palace of Venaria. It works together with the bike rental service. On some of the park's recommended routes, like the "Carrozza dei Golosi" or "Trekking to the top of a mountain pasture with meal," the restaurant also helps out by providing tasty food.⁵²

⁵²<http://www.parchireali.it> Parco Mandria, Guida alla visita, Punti di interesse, Cascine interne, Cascina Prato Pascolo.

- Cascina Fornaci



Picture 23 .Cascina Fornaci. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The main part of the building was built in the 1700s. Then, in 1860 and 1885, they added on to it.⁵³ They built a covered area with a little terrace on top and a section for animals like a stable and barn. At first, they used it to make bricks for building Borgo Castello and other nearby places. But now, it's used as homes and storage for the Park Authority.⁵⁴

53.A. Cutropia, *Carrozze in mostra: restauro e allestimento museale: Cascina Vittoria de "La Mandria"*, tesi di laurea, Facoltà di Architettura II, Politecnico di Torino, a.a. 2009-2010, rel. Maria Adriana Giusti, p.93.

54.<http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Cascina Fornaci.

- Cascina Oslera



Picture 24. Cascina Oslera. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The building, which was originally built in 1943, is situated behind the park entrance near the Robassomero industrial area. In 1965, the farmhouse was torn down and rebuilt without much artistic significance, along with adding a new rural building and a shed, following the directions of Anna Bonomi Bolchi, the former owner of the "Tenuta dei Laghi."⁵⁵ The complex grew even more in 1974 when they built another building for farm-related tasks.⁵⁶ In 2006, the Park Management Authority decided to fix up the Oslera farmhouse. They restored and renovated it for various uses. Nowadays, the building serves as an entry point for the park, with parking lots nearby. It also has different functions like a bar, an artisan ice cream shop, a yogurt shop, a playground, bike rentals, a tavern with an inn, and rooms for parties.⁵⁷

55. S.P. Borghino, *La Cascina Oslera e io suo giardino. Il recupero di un'opera di Pietro Porcinai all'interno del Parco della Mandria*, tesi di laurea, facoltà di Architettura II, Politecnico di Torino, a.a 2008-2009, rel. Laura Guardamagna. Pp.87-92.

56. Ibidem, pp.108-110.

57.<http://www.parchireali.it> Parco Mandria, Guida alla visita, Punti di interesse, Cascine interne, Cascina Oslera.

- Cascina Peppinella



Picture 25 .Cascina Peppinella. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The Peppinella complex was built in 1926 and it's the biggest bunch of buildings in the park.⁵⁸ The original buildings are set up like a "U" around a big open area. Later on, they added two grain silos and a small building for making yogurt. Nowadays, they're fixing up one of the buildings to use as a farm where people can learn, and also as a place where they can stay overnight.⁵⁹

58.A.B. Varotto, *La Mandria, Regione Piemonte*, 1991, p.26.

59.<http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Cascina Peppinella.

- Cascine Collera e Carbonera



Picture 26. Cascina Colleria and Cascina Carbonera Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The two identical buildings, constructed in 1940, were originally used as countryside houses and for hunting events. Now, they're getting fixed up to be used as a farm where people can learn and also as a place for organized groups to stay overnight.⁶⁰

60.<http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Cascine Carbonera e Colleria.

- Cascina Grangetta



Picture 27. Cascina Grangetta. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The design of the Cascina Grangetta goes way back to the 1700s, but it got changed into a country house during the 1800s. Nowadays, it's a place that offers lots of different services. It's a center where people can come for help, learning, farming, and getting better. They focus on helping people with disabilities and others who need support, along with their families and friends. It's also open to groups from schools, organizations, and anyone who's interested in nature and the environment.⁶¹

61.<http://www.parchireali.it> Parco Mandria, Guida alla visita, Punti di interesse, Cascine interne, Cascina Grangetta.

- Cascina La Rubbianetta



Picture 28. Cascina La Rubbianetta. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

The big curved building called Cascina Rubbianetta was constructed in 1863. At first, it was named "Emmanuella" after Emanuele Alberto Guerrieri, the son of Rosa Vercellana (Bela Rosin), the Countess of Mirafiori and Fontanafredda. Nowadays, Cascina Rubbianetta is home to the Vivere La Mandria Agricultural Cooperative and the Horse Center.⁶² The Horse Center provides services like stabling, horse training, riding lessons, pony rides, care for older horses, horseback riding, and carriage rides. Plus, there are two towers on each end of the building where you can spend the night.⁶³

62. F. Pernice., *La Venaria Reale, lavori a corte*, Torino, 2003. Pp.163-166.

63. <https://www.larubbianetta.com>

- Cascina Comba



Picture 29. Cascina Comba. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority. The Comba farmhouse was constructed way back in 1673. Towards the late 1800s, it got fixed up, adding a covered area with columns and a big terrace on top, totaling 440 square meters. Nowadays, it's where the park's maintenance team works. They've got offices there, as well as a workshop for making things out of wood and storage spaces for their tools and materials.⁶⁴

64.<http://www.parchireali.it> Parco Mandria, Guida alla visita, Punti di interesse, Altri punti di interesse del Parco, Cascina Comba.

- Cascina Cascinone

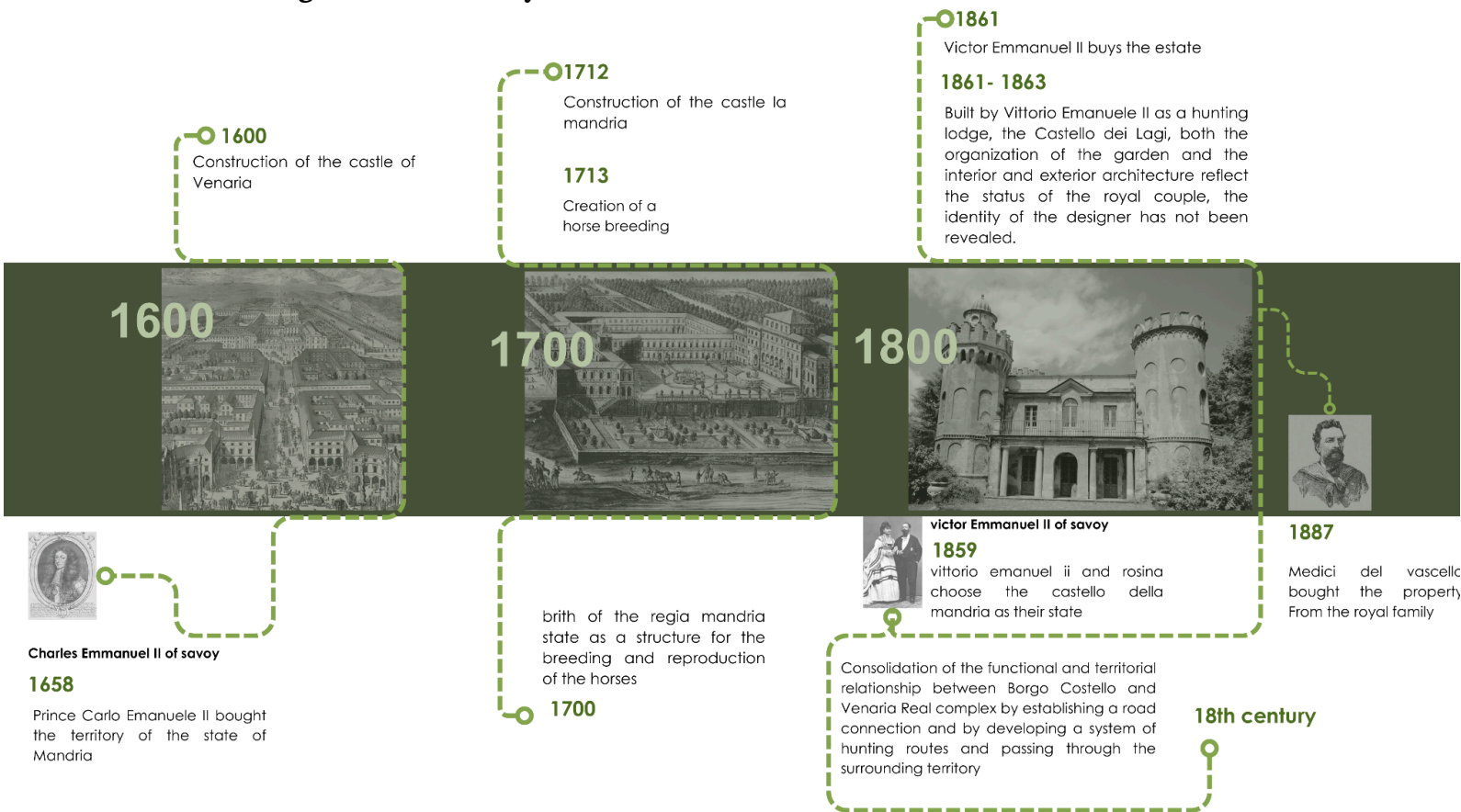


Picture 30. Cascina Cascinone. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

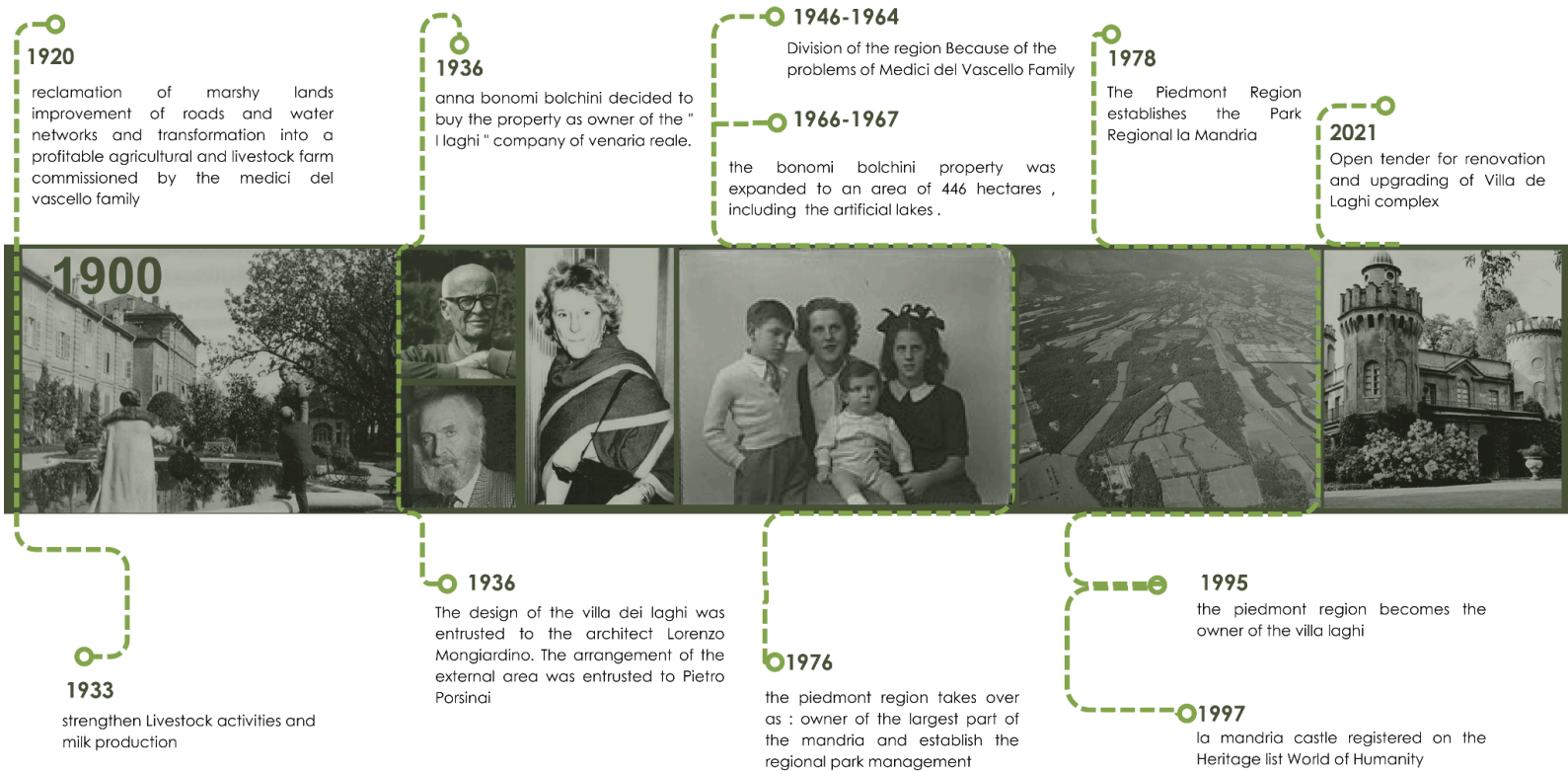
The place, built in 1937, has two main buildings: a bigger one shaped like a "T" used as a house and some parts for keeping birds, and a smaller one shaped like a square used as a stable. Right now, the whole place isn't being used, but there's a plan to turn it into a special center. It'll be a place where people can learn about birds of prey using computers, and it'll also be a place where injured birds can get better. Plus, it'll be used for studying nature, protecting the environment, and for tourists to visit.⁶⁵

65. <http://www.parks.it> Parco Mandria, Mappa interattiva, Cascina Cascinone.

5 . Villa dei Laghi and its History



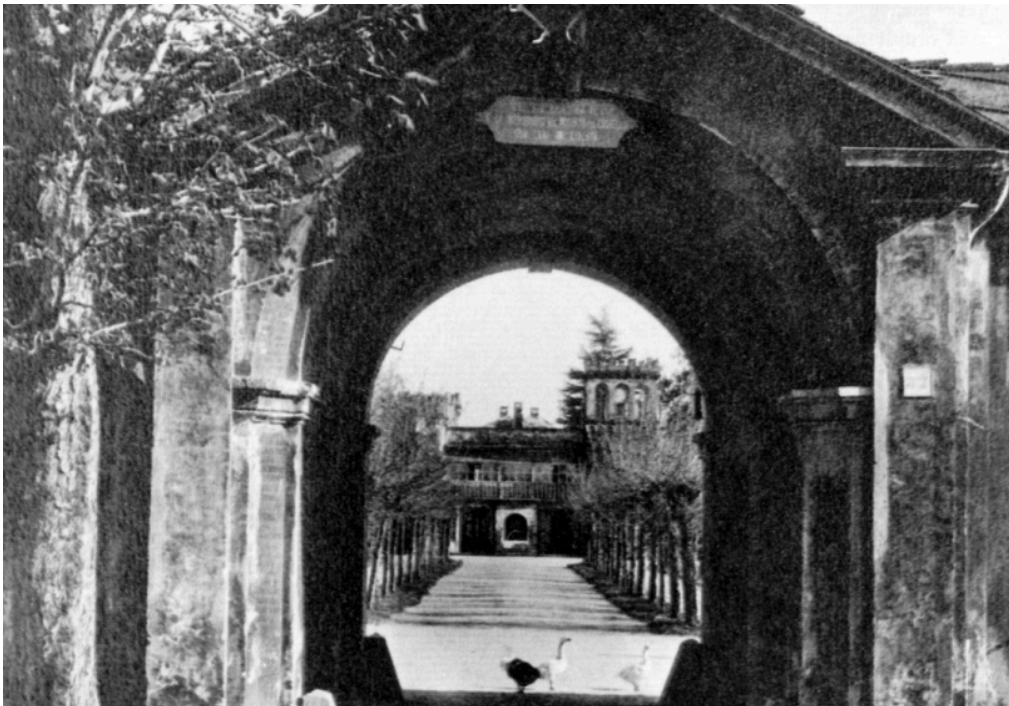
Picture 31 .Historical timeline of the estate La Mandria and the Villa dei laghi. Personal reworking.



picture 32 .Historical timeline of the estate La Mandria and the Villa dei laghi. Personal reworking.

5 . 1 . The Creation of the “Hunting Reserve” of Vittorio Emanuele II and Rosa Vercellana.

To get a full and informed understanding, which is essential for building an effective and practical project plan, we need to deeply investigate the layers of historical events that defined the villa's creation, growing, and ending. The villa's story began with King Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy and Rosa Vercellana's hidden love affair, which grew in 1847. "I met this woman when she was 14. She accompanied her father, a knight and captain of my father's bodyguards, to Racconigi... So I would see her often... That's how it happened... When I saw her, it seemed as if, by some miracle of the earth, a rose of flesh had emerged—fresh, real, fragrant."⁶⁶



picture 33. Access road to the Castelletto neo-gothic. Year: circa 1863-1882. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

66.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, pp.16-17

Victor Emmanuel was 27 years old at the time, and he was still a candidate to the seat of power, although having been married to Maria Adelaide of Austria since 1842. When Maria Adelaide died on January 20, 1855, the king's friendship with Rosa Vercellana, known as "La Bela Rosin," became well-known. Despite the court's objections, Victor Emmanuel II gave her the minor noble titles of Countess of Mirafiori and Fontanafredda.⁶⁷ Several years later, in 1869, the couple married morganatically. The couple decided to live in the royal apartments of Borgo Castello, which are situated inside the park today.⁶⁸ Victor Emmanuel's favorite getaway, the Castle of La Mandria, which was surrounded by forests and woods, gave him the nickname "The Hunter King." He is responsible for the current design of La Mandria. He surrounded the land, promoted regeneration, and brought in many kinds of wild animals because he wanted to establish a spectacular hunting reserve. Later, he ordered the building of the Castle of the Lakes and La Bizzaria, two hunting lodges in the park. The king and his ministers were going to stay in these modestly sized homes during long hunting trips.⁶⁹ The Grande, Strada, and Cristoforo lakes round the neo-medieval castle, which is picturesquely situated in the northeastern corner of the park and shows the distinctly romantic taste of the time it was built. The construction work, which went from 1861 to 1863, was assigned to a construction team commanded by master builder Leopoldo Galli.⁷⁰ Pietro Aghemo, a metalwork specialist, was tasked to handle hydraulic systems and roofing. However, the identity of the building's designer has not been officially determined. The castle was planned with a rectangular central structure surrounded by four unique towers at each corner, creating a romanticized image of medieval castles. The ground level contained the following rooms: dining room, tea room, kitchen, corridor, State Office, sitting room, closet, and a small salon. The first floor included one main room, three bedrooms, a dressing room, a western-facing chamber, a night chamber, a wardrobe, and a corridor.⁷¹ The construction of a short building used as horse stables and storage, placed exactly to the north of the Castello dei Laghi, dates from the same period. The stables' entrance portico offers a dramatic greeting to the estate, leading to an avenue planted with a double row of trees. This road connects the Rotta Bottion to the Neo-Gothic Castelletto by a central route that is roughly 3 meters wide and bordered by two smaller side walkways that are about 1.5 meters each. Rosa Vercellana was compelled to leave the estate after Vittorio Emanuele II died in Rome on September 9, 1878, from acute pleuropneumonia, due to her unhappy relationship with the claimant to the throne, Umberto I. She later relocated to Pisa, where she died on December 27, 1885.⁷²

67. Ibidem, p.18.



Picture 34 Southern elevation of the Castelletto neo-gothic. Year: 1863-1882 . Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.



Picture 35. Access road to the estate of the Lakes during the phase of Ship Doctors. Year: 1940-1963 approximately. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

68. F. Pernice F., A. Vanelli, *La Venaria Reale: lavori a corte 2, i progetti, i cantieri, le destinazioni*, Torino, 2006, p.11.

69. R. Bordone, *Suggerimenti neomedievali alla Mandria. Rosa Vercellana e il Castello dei Laghi*, in «Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino», n.108, Torino, 2010, pp.143-155.

70.Ibidem, Pag. 162.

71.AST, R. Casa, m. 5688, vol. I, *Testimonial di Stato*, 15 Marzo 1883.



Picture 36.the towers of Neo-Gothic castle. Year: circa 1863-1882. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

72.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, pp.27-28.

5 . 2 .The Medici del Vascello Family's Neo-Gothic Palace Underwent a Farming renovation.

Engineer Luigi Medici, Duke of Vascello, who had already held Borgo Castello since 1882⁷³, bought the Mandria estate from Umberto I, Vittorio Emanuele II's heir on October 31, 1887. It was decided to give up the entire estate since, despite efforts to administer it directly⁷⁴, it was still an expense on the Royal Household. Luigi Medici del Vascello also tried, but failed, to turn the land into a profitable agricultural holding. Significant maintenance costs were necessary due to the estate's expensive construction and structure as a magnificent hunting reserve. In addition, the land was unusable for any kind of cultivation and was sterile after being abandoned for generations. After the Marquis passed away in 1892, his nephew Luigi got the property. In an effort to manage the land, he carried out large restoration operations, forest clearing, and upgrades to the estate's internal water and road systems.

The planned results weren't achieved in spite of these efforts. The management was given to Luigi's nephews, Giuseppe and Giacomo Medici del Vascello, upon his death on February 15, 1915⁷⁵. In contrast to their grandparents, they expertly turned the estate into a successful animal and agricultural business. They improved the land with experimental agricultural products, forests projects, and new restoration projects. By 1939, the estate's structures had expanded to include 32 farms, four of which were directly managed, 13 sharecropped, and 15 rented⁷⁶. This development contributed to population growth, with 896 people registered in 1938. Many were hired in local workshops, allowing for the absorption of local labor and lessening the need for citizens to look for work elsewhere.⁷⁷

73.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, p.28.

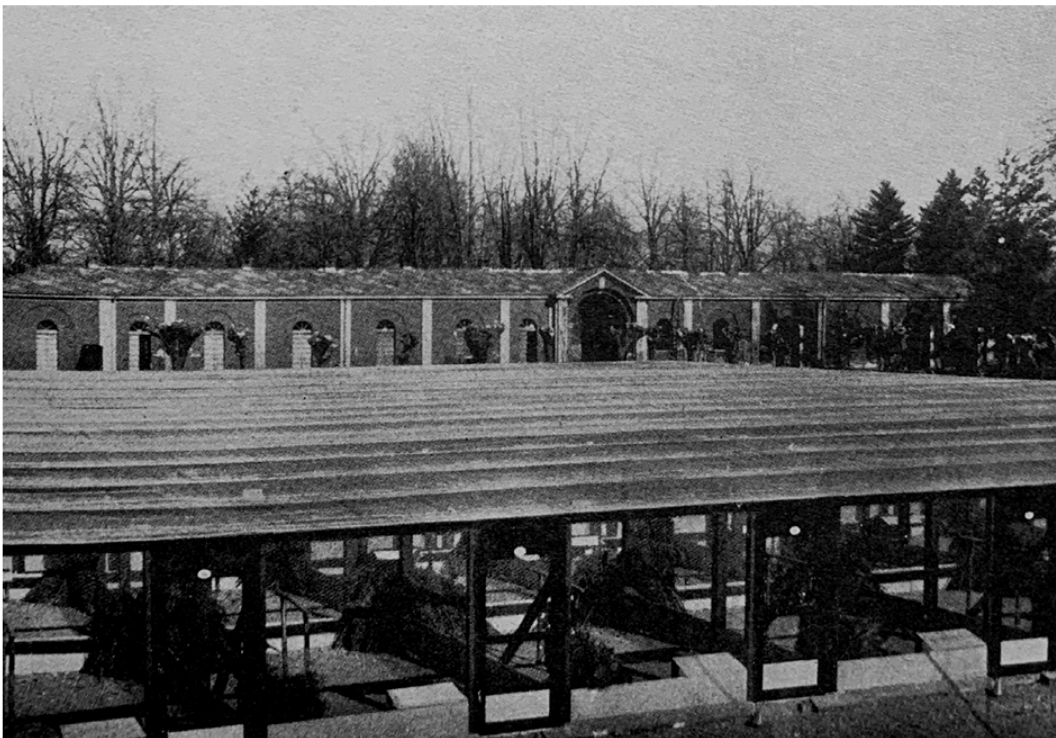
74.C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. I, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.186.

75.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, p.14.

76.Parco Regionale La Mandria (a cura di), *La Mandria*, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2002, pp.7-14.

77.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, p.36

The State Archives of Turin's records from 1940 onwards show the site's transformation into a pheasant farming system, indicating that the original purpose was not primarily related to pheasant farming for at least the first forty years. Additionally, aerial photographs from 1940 to 1963 show the installation of metal aviaries for pheasant breeding within Tenuta dei Laghi, specifically in the western part of the park. A helicopter panorama of the site reveals that the rear section of the garden was dominated by heavy trees vegetation, with the exception of the central axis, which formed a perspective corridor reaching from the southern façade of the neo-Gothic castle to the Lago Grande. The entrance lane connecting the stables to the castle remained divided into three paths, as it had been throughout Vittorio Emanuele II's reign. However, unlike in the past, the tree-lined rows had been replaced with two flower beds surrounded by fences, which were intended to hiding the bird cages.⁷⁸



Picture 37. View of the metal aviaries for pheasant breeding in the Tenuta dei Laghi and on custodial house. Year: 1940-1963 approximately. Source: Anastatic reproduction by the Regional Park The Herd.

78. Le fotografie a cui si fa riferimento sono state individuate da diverse fonti quali: *l'archivio fotografico dell'Ente Parco*, APTT fototeca e dalla riproduzione anastatica a cura del Parco Regionale La Mandria, La Mandria (edizione originaria maggio 1939), Edizioni EDA, Torino 2002, Pag. 153.

5.3. From the Castle to the Villa of the Bonomi-Bolchini Family

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Medici del Vascello family began selling and dividing the estate's land. In 1958, they sold a large strip of land in the municipality of La Cassa to Fiat, which turned it into a car test track. In 1960, they sold 243 hectares of land between the municipalities of Robassomero and Fiano to build a golf course, the Turin Golf Club. Another 400 hectares were sold to create the "Roveri" residential complex and another golf course, the Royal Park Golf.⁷⁹ Additionally, 11.5 hectares were sold to the Zooprophyllactic Institute of the Piedmont and Liguria Region. On September 27, 1963, they sold 400 hectares of land to the Bonomi Bolchini family. This included four artificial lakes, the Castello dei Laghi, the Oslera farmhouse, and large wooded areas, forming the "Tenuta dei Laghi." The neo-Gothic castle was in a state of abandonment and severe decay due to improper use in previous years, contrary to its original purpose. Anna Bonomi Bolchini was the owner of the company "I Laghi," which was created specifically to buy the estate. She was captivated by the atmosphere of the place.⁸⁰



Picture 38 . Anna Bonomi Bolchini. Source: <https://www.150anni.it/web/istampa.php?wid=1939&print=1>.

79.M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, pp.37-38.

80.Le fotografie preliminari all'area di intervento scattate da Renzo Mongiardino documentano lo stato di abbandono e degrado del fabbricato e sono visionabili nell'apposito capitolo dedicato al progettista

The estate reached its peak of beauty, even as the rest of the Park gradually fell into disuse and was split up. This was due to the modernization efforts Anna commissioned from architects Renzo Mongiardino and Pietro Porcinai. Renzo Mongiardino focused on renovating and reorganizing the castle's interior, adding two symmetrical wings to the central structure, creating what is now the Villa. Pietro Porcinai managed the landscaping around the building, removing less valuable plants while keeping quality trees. He also preserved the main path between the caretaker's house and the Villa entrance, adding an octagonal hedge system with a fountain in the center. The roles of these two professionals and their work on the Villa are discussed in detail in their specific chapters.⁸¹ Another significant renovation was the Oslera farmhouse, which was completely updated to accommodate guests, staff, and the Bonomi Bolchini family's luxury cars. In the 1970s, architect Toni Cordero, commissioned by Anna's son Carlo Bonomi Bolchini, reshaped other parts of the Villa. His minimalist style is distinct from Renzo Mongiardino's. Despite these changes, the overall design remains mostly unchanged today, although the estate is now in a state of complete abandonment.⁸²

81.M. Sala, M. Testa, *Il Castello dei Laghi nel Parco Regionale della Mandria. Il restauro del restauro*, tesi di laurea, facoltà di Architettura II, a.a. 2000-2001, rel. Carla Bartolozzi, p.63.

82.M. Sala, M. Testa, *Il Castello dei Laghi nel Parco Regionale della Mandria. Il restauro del restauro*, tesi di laurea, facoltà di Architettura II, a.a. 2000-2001, rel. Carla Bartolozzi, p.64

on April 12, 1976, the Piedmont Region officially bought all the land still owned by Marquis Luigi Medici del Vascello⁸³. To protect the historical and environmental importance of the site, the Piedmont Region established the Park on August 21, 1978, through regional law⁸⁴. This protected area includes all the buildings on the purchased property, such as the Royal Palace of Venaria and its park, the Borgo Castello della Mandria, and other historically significant areas, covering a total area of about 1344 hectares. In 1993, the Park was given the name it still holds today: the "Management Body of the La Mandria Regional Park and the Parks and Nature Reserves of the Lanzo Valleys."⁸⁵ The Park's territory was expanded in 1994 with the acquisition of the Villa, Cascina Oslera, and the neighboring land of the Bonomi Bolchini family.⁸⁶ However, regulations within the park, including bans on hunting, have led to declining interest in the area over time. With these acquisitions, the Park's area increased to 1668 hectares, compared to the original 3124 hectares within the historical walls. However, about half of the original park has been privatized over time, changing its original appearance. In 1997, the entire system of the Royal Residences of Savoy was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. They were recognized for representing a complete example of European monumental architecture from the 17th to 18th centuries, showcasing the prevailing doctrine of absolute monarchy in material form.⁸⁷

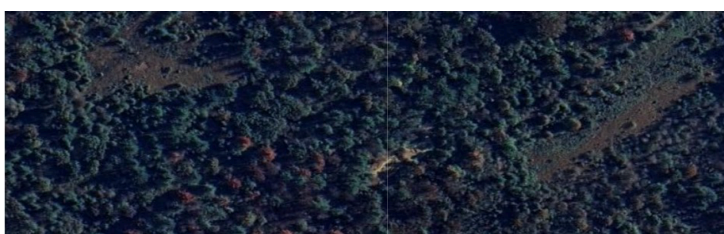
83. M. Lupo, M. Paglieri, C. Apostolo, E. Vaccarino, M. Debernardi, *La Mandria, Storia e natura del Parco*, Nuove Arti Grafiche, Savigliano, 1990, p.38.

84. Legge regionale n.54, 21 agosto 1978.

85. Legge regionale n.24, 7 giugno 1993.

86. C. Laurora, C. Masciavè, M.P. Niccoli, G. Racca, *Le Reali Mandrie dei Savoia - Territorio, caccia e allevamento di cavalli per la corte e l'esercito*, vol. I, Edizioni EDA, Torino, 2005, p.24.

87. <https://www.patrimoniomondiale.it/?p=11>



Picture 39 . Villa dei Laghi. Source: Photographic archive La Mandria Park Authority.

They also show significant evidence of the vibrant creativity in art and Baroque and Late Baroque architecture. In December 2002, the management organization of the La Mandria Regional Park and the Parks and Nature Reserves of the Lanzo Valleys announced an open competition for the restoration and enhancement of the Estate. The estimated cost of the project was €3,265,432.37. The Derossi Associati company won the competition and reached the stage of presenting the detailed project⁸⁹. However, it was never carried out. The same company won another tender announced in February 2021, commissioned by the Piedmont Region. This followed the inclusion, by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, of the historical asset known as the "Villa dei Laghi" in the projects financed under the "Development and Cohesion Fund 2014-2020, Operational Plan for Culture and Tourism."⁹⁰

89. Le informazioni, dal bando di gara fino al progetto esecutivo, sono state tratte dalla documentazione fornitaci dallo studio Derossi Associati.

90. Disciplinare a base gara, CUP J85C19000150001, febbraio 2021, p.3

6 . INTERVENTIONS ON THE VILLA DEI LAGHI

Studying and analyzing the work and methods of the main designers of the Villa is crucial for developing a well-informed project proposal that respects the rules, constraints, and unique features of the complex. Revisiting some of their ideas and adapting them to the current state and needs of the Villa is important. This involves a careful understanding of their original modernization project for the central area, known as Castello dei Laghi, and its surroundings, which was planned after inspections in 1962. A deep, ongoing dialogue with history is essential for the project, helping to grasp its true cultural and practical value and to assess potential risks and misinterpretations. It's important to put into context the significant structural changes made by Renzo Mongiardino to the Villa's central area and the minimal, precise adjustments made by Pietro Porcinai in reorganizing the outdoor spaces around the Villa.⁹¹



Picture 40 . Renzo Mongiardino. Year: approximately 1987.

91.G. Fumo, G. Ausiello, *Il progetto nello spazio della memoria: segni, idee e potenzialità, atti del convegno internazionale, Storia e struttura nel progetto architettonico*. E. Sicignano (a cura di), Napoli, 1995, p.1085.

6 . 1 . Renzo Mongiardino's Speech

"Interest in the past does not come from a nostalgic desire to compete with it, but from the belief that things from the past, if loved, can continue to have their own life and help make the modern world, if not better, at least less hostile,"⁹² is an effective way to describe Mongiardino's design philosophy. Born Lorenzo Mongiardino in Genoa on May 12, 1916, Renzo Mongiardino became an architect and set designer. In order to study architecture, he relocated to Milan, where he lived with Ernesto Nathan Rogers. Under the guidance of architect Giò Ponti, he graduated in 1942 and started his career specializing on interior design and opera scenography. He wrote for *Domus* magazine as well. For wealthy customers like Agnelli, Onassis, Versace, and Rothschild, Mongiardino created some of the most attractive residences of the late 20th century. According to Tommaso Tovaglieri, he was frequently disregarded by the architectural community despite his achievements and was known as the designer of the 1980s jet set. In his 1993 book "Chamber Architecture," he described his method of interior design in a number of anecdotes. On January 16, 1998, Mongiardino died in Milan at the age of 81.⁹³

6.2. Method

Despite starting his career during the Modern Movement, Renzo Mongiardino had a different style. He referred to his ideal style as "surreal neo-baroque" since he wanted to combine old components in a unique manner. He lived in a home with flowers, crystals, velvets, and a warm atmosphere until he was thirty, which shaped his taste in architecture.⁹⁴ For Mongiardino, the home was a haven for exhausted workers. He thought that rather than using a universal design, homes should be customized to meet the demands of their people inside, using different materials and construction methods. Mongiardino made the most of these elements in his home designs by combining commonplace items with artworks, antiques, and rich textiles.⁹⁵

92.R. Mongiardino, *Renzo Mongiardino: un modo di intendere l'antico*, *Abitare*, n.330, 1994, pp.133-135.

93.R. Mongiardino, *Scenografie da camera e da sogni*, *Abitare*, n.560, 2016, pp.110-113.

94.R. Mongiardino, *Renzo Mongiardino: un modo di intendere l'antico*, *Abitare*, n.330, 1994, pp.133-135.

For ideal effect, he thought decorating should be influenced by the structure and mix in perfectly with other architectural features. His work includes the restoration of Casa Scaccabarozzi in Turin, commonly referred to as Fetta di Polenta, in 1979. Despite his original thought, Mongiardino's relationship with the architectural community was frequently stressful. He was frequently regarded as suspicious or overlooked by conventional architectural culture. However, his approach gained popularity and influence, particularly among young architects.⁹⁶

6 . 3 . Architecture of the Spaces

Renzo Mongiardino designed many interiors that have inspired decorators worldwide. His ideas come from Greek, Roman, and Etruscan art, as well as Renaissance and Baroque artists, often drawing from nature. A saying from his mother, who once told him when they moved into a new, empty house, "It's so beautiful when it's empty, it will be difficult to furnish it," influenced his work. They decorated that house, rich in eighteenth-century stucco, with items from their old home, and it still looked balanced. Mongiardino realized that if a house has a good structure, you can make any room look good with any furniture. This sparked his interest in architecture. He understood that our lives are shaped by the spaces around us, even if we're in the countryside. His designs start from an idea inspired by the light at different times of the day, highlighting parts of the room. He begins with a simple sketch, a mix of his and others' ideas. He believes it's crucial to sketch out the room's four walls to understand its shape.⁹⁷

95.F. Taroni, *Coup de Théâtre*, *Vogue Italia*, Milano, fasc. 556, 1996, pp. 206-232.

96.R. Mongiardino, *Renzo Mongiardino: un modo di intendere l'antico*, *Abitare*, n.330, 1994, pp.133-135.

97.Cottidoro S., *Archi-scenici: Renzo Mongiardino*, Central Palc, 2018, pp.1-14.

The changing light throughout the day will make the room look different, but the sketch helps capture its essence, showing both good and bad points. Mongiardino advises making an initial small-scale sketch, like 1:50, to allow flexibility in adjusting spaces and elements. He warns against using large tables at small scales since they are harder to correct. Sometimes, he suggests using a 1:20 scale, which can be more understandable, especially for clients. Unlike choosing a painting or a dress, where customers pick from finished products, designing a new home is based on drawings, making the final result a surprise for the customer. It's better to tackle challenges early on to avoid bigger problems later. Sometimes, the best outcomes come after working through disagreements between the client and the architect.⁹⁸

The architect has a comprehensive understanding of the various rooms required in a home. The Great Room is the focal point of a residence and is typically the largest space, such as a living room, ballroom, or corridor leading to lesser rooms. This space is essential to the functioning of the entire house, comparable to the central hall in royal palaces, which are frequently designed like a rectangle with the main hall on the sides and a succession of rooms running along it. When the Great Room is in the center, it functions as a town square, with streets and lanes branching off. However, when it is surrounded by reception rooms, it can feel lifeless. One time, I changed the entire layout of a two-story house with many small rooms by adding just one large room in the center. The remaining rooms connected to this central room through two low side wings. This was in a small neo-Gothic castle by a pond, with four towers, each different, mimicking medieval towers. Inside, there was a corridor with small rooms on both sides and a modest staircase, repeated on the first floor. Despite the charming, neo-Gothic exterior, the interior was fragmented and lacked creativity and architectural flair. It might have been possible to embrace this style and decorate it like a detailed dollhouse.

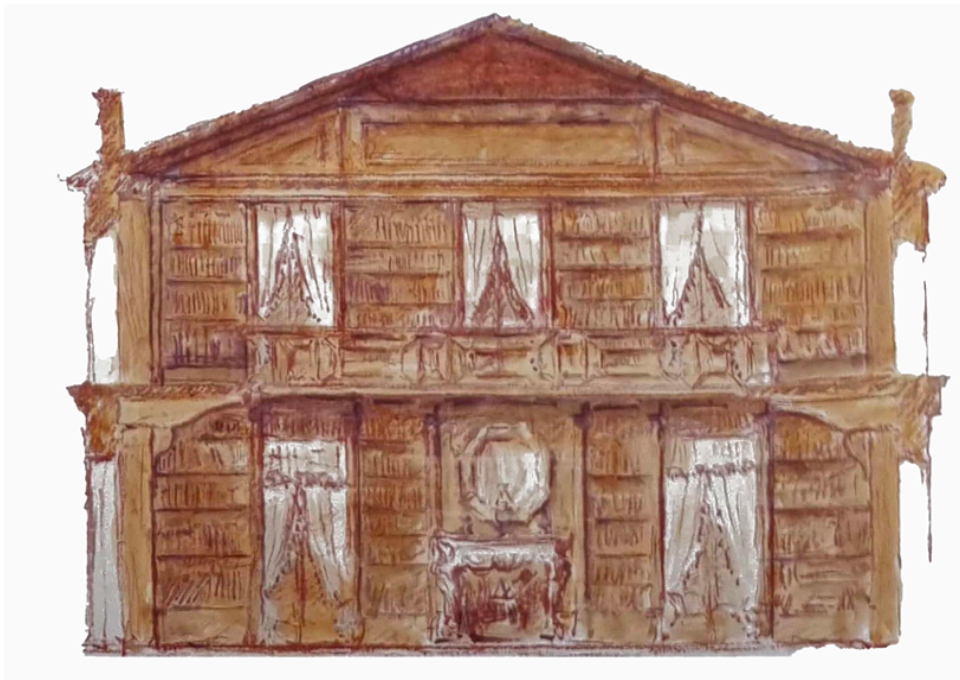
98.R. Mongiardino, F. Simone (a cura di), *Architettura da camera*, Officina Libraria, 2022, pp. 23-34.

Small doors, small pillars, and low bases were not what the future residents wanted. They wanted space to move, breathe, and enjoy large areas. Fortunately, the builder focused all his creativity on the exterior of the castle, so there was nothing inside to lose. Removing the center of the house created a large open area, a two-story room with windows on all four sides and a pyramid-shaped ceiling. The windows on the first floor, set halfway up, needed a gallery, which was part of the plan. From this gallery, a spiral staircase in one of the towers led to the shelves of the library. The large open space in the center looked down on the lower room, while the ceiling followed the four levels of the outside. The gallery corners, with armchairs and tables, were cozy spots for reading, while the ground floor was set up for games, drinks, and music. The room felt alive, connected to the lake and trees, like a pavilion full of life, yet still part of the house.⁹⁹

99.R. Mongiardino, F. Cattaneo (a cura di), *Architettura da camera*, Rizzoli, 1998, pp.29-32.



picture 41 . sketch of the Large room of Villa Laghi realized by Renzo Mongiardino.
Year: 1998. Source: Renzo Mongiardino, Chamber architecture, Pag. 30.



Picture 42 . sketch of the Large room of the villa Lakes created by Renzo Mongiardino.
Year: 1998. Source: Renzo Mongiardino, Chamber architecture, Pag. 30

This is how Mongiardino described his work on the Villa. Opposite the large rooms were the small ones, often shown in 19th-century drawings with fireplaces, desks, and armchairs for relaxing and reading. These small rooms already existed during the Renaissance, typically as tiny studios where favorite paintings and treasured items were kept. Owners loved these cozy spaces, while larger, more architecturally impressive rooms were shown off to guests. The different parts of the house were connected by small passage rooms that looked like little temples, with two walls open to other rooms and a window in a third wall for light. These "all small" rooms were a series of similar spaces, but not always perfectly organized. Sometimes, they created awkward little rooms with doors or windows that seemed out of place; these were called "unhappy" rooms but could be changed.¹⁰⁰ Mongiardino's work often focused on the materials and maximizing their beauty, sometimes using illusions. Over the centuries, skilled craftsmen have expertly worked with wood, marble, iron, leather, fabric, stucco, and paper. Handcrafted work shows a direct connection between the craftsman's thoughts and the object, bringing out the material's natural beauty. In contrast, industrial work produces repetitive molds. Imitation was used when natural materials weren't available, creating illusions through painting to make something look like what it wasn't. This was done not only to mimic materials but also for economic reasons. Since Giotto's time up to the 19th century, imitation of wood and marble became an art. Masters taught how to mimic walnut, chestnut, mahogany, and different types of marble, making them look incredibly realistic.¹⁰¹

100.R. Mongiardino, F. Cattaneo (a cura di), *Architettura da camera*, Rizzoli, 1998, pp.32-41.

101.R. Mongiardino, F. Cattaneo (a cura di), *Architettura da camera*, Rizzoli, 1998, pp.129-132.



Picture 43 .Photo of the biggest Room of Villa Laghi after Renzo's installation Mongiardino. Year: 1998. Source: Renzo Mongiardino, Chamber architecture, Pag. 31.

6 . 4 . Mongiardino's Project For the Villa dei Laghi

Anna Bonomi Bolchini hired Mongiardino for the design in 1962, after Pietro Porcinai had completed some earlier concepts, as documented. To this day, the reasons for giving the job to the architect remain unknown. Several ideas have been presented, the most frequently recognized being that the architect's popularity comes from his work for families such as the Kennedys, Onassis, and Agnelli. Another theory holds that Porcinai, who had already talked with the customer, recommended Mongiardino. Between 1960 and 1963, the two collaborated on a project called Villa Zegna in Trivero (Biella).¹⁰²

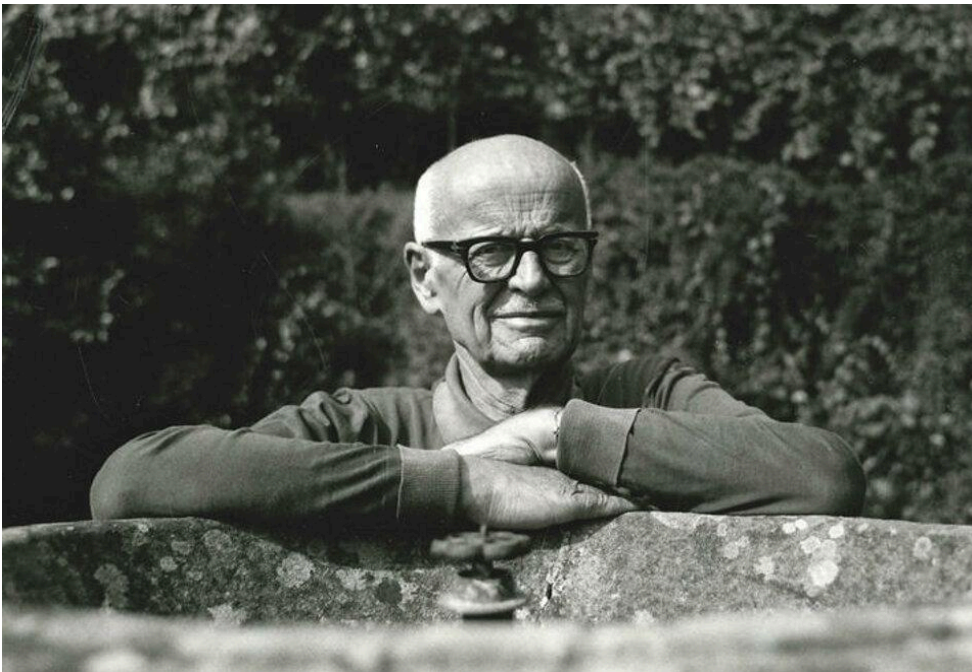
seems implausible given the two designers' strong stylistic differences—Mongiardino, as we have seen, emphasized a more baroque aesthetic, in contrast to Porcinai's modern and modern approach.



Picture 44 . Photo of the north facade of the villa, during an installation of an international exhibition of sculpture, detail of creepers present on building facades. Year: 2 June-27 October 2002. Source: Victor De Circasia, *International sculpture a La Mandria Villa dei Laghi*

102.S.P. Borghino, *La Cascina Oslera e io suo giardino. Il recupero di un'opera di Pietro Porcinai all'interno del Parco della Mandria*, tesi di laurea, facoltà di Architettura II, Politecnico di Torino, a.a 2008-2009, rel. Laura Guardamagna, p.144

From today's perspective, formed by current senses, it appears impossible that a designer would chose to demolish a structure with at least a century of history linked to the House of Savoy. However, Mongiardino's idea was based on exactly this method. By demolishing the existing two-level residential layout, he built a single central room known as the "Grand Room," the residence's main core. The project was finished with the installation of two additional wings that were attached to the old castle structure at an angle of around 45 degrees to the central axis. Mongiardino also maintained a strong relationship between nature and architecture when designing the additions' external facades. He designed a system of climbing plants to cover the wings, with pots affixed to the building to contain the flora. At the time, these ornamental decorations hid the villa's architectural qualities. It is impossible to say how long the climbing plants existed because no evidence of them were uncovered during our checks.



Picture 45 . Pietro Porcinai. Source:internet archive.

6 . 5 . Pietro Porcinai's Speech

Porcinai's concepts and projects are built around a theme. Landscape design focuses on the cycle of life, which includes development, decay, and the ongoing modification of landscapes formed by living elements such as water, light, and plants.¹⁰³Pietro Porcinai, an Italian landscape architect, was born in Settignano on December 20, 1910, in a house near Villa Gamberaia. His grandfather and father worked as gardeners for Princess Catherine Jeanne Ghyka¹⁰⁴, who owned the villa. Living in Villa Gamberaia was a huge inspiration

for him. In a 1985 interview with *Architecture Digest*, Porcinai shared his love for nature and landscapes, saying, “The reason is that I was born in one of the most beautiful gardens in the world, that of Villa Gamberaia. So if the environment has an influence, I took my first steps there and had my first fall from the wall.”¹⁰⁵ After getting a diploma in agriculture, his first job was at the garden of Villa Reale in Lecce. He took his first study trip the same year to Germany, meeting friends and acquaintances of his father. There, he encountered the social movement that combined rationalist architecture with modern gardens, creating functional and useful gardens, which were considered the gardens of the future at that time. Porcinai moved to Florence, first working at the Agricultural Institute and later as a nurseryman for Martino Bianchi. At the same time, he attended the Artistic High School of Florence, followed by the Royal Institute of Architecture, but did not complete his studies. When he returned to Germany, he visited many well-known garden architects from across Europe and discussed various working approaches with them. Beginning in 1930, he collaborated with the journal *Domus*, directed by Giò Ponti.¹⁰⁶

He started a firm in 1940 at the young age of thirty with Nello Baroni and Maurizio Tempestini. This allowed him to meet important business families who became his clients. In 1948, at Jesus College, Cambridge, he helped found the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)¹⁰⁷ to promote landscape culture. He designed many gardens, over four hundred just in Tuscany. Some of his international projects include the Hansaviertel district in Berlin and the outdoor spaces of the Pompidou Center in Paris, designed by Piano, Franchini, and Rogers. He worked with many architects to create famous parks and gardens across Europe. He passed away in Florence on June 9, 1986.¹⁰⁸

103. Comitato Internazionale dei Giardini storici (a cura di), *Carta dei Giardini storici*, Firenze, 1981.

104. Di origini rumene, figlia del colonnello Pietro Keshko e della principessa Pulchérie Stuzdza, Catherine, era sorella della regina Natalia di Serbia.

105. A. Burigana, Pietro Porcinai, *Architecture Digest*, Editore Condè Nast, n.46, 1985, pp.46-54.

106. M. Pozzana, *I giardini del XX secolo: l'opera di Pietro Porcinai*, Alinea Editrice, Firenze, 1998, p.43.

6 . 6 . The Working Method of Pietro Porcina

The process of developing a proposal for Pietro Porcinai was extensive and complex. It began with preparation drawings, sketches, and numerous photographs taken during the initial visit. Then exact measurements were taken. The sketches were refined into precise floor plans and perspectives, which were then shown to clients.

In an interview in 1985, Porcinai stated that many people seek the garden as a prestige symbol, although he dislikes working for such individuals. I frequently turned down jobs to avoid compromises.

Porcinai respected plants highly because they are living. In contrast, he thought non-living items such as rocks were less important. Builders and gardeners on his projects have to be extremely careful not to destroy the environment. He respected not only plants, but also water and soil. His work was founded on the concept that live aspects in a landscape are more important than non-living ones.¹⁰⁹



Picture 46 .Pietro Porcinai. Source: Artibune, “The forgotten of art. Pietro Porcinai”, <https://www.artibune.com/professions-and-professionals/who-is-who/2021/05/piero-porcinai-landscape-architect/>

6 . 7 . Design Proposals For the Villa dei Laghi

Anna Bonomi Bolchini hired renowned landscape architect Pietro Porcinai to renovate her newly purchased mansion and gardens in the early 1960s. Porcinai was tasked with developing an entire strategy for not only the castle park, but also its surroundings, which included Cascina Oslera and the adjoining woodland. Porcinai originally proposed expanding the mansion itself, but these plans were eventually abandoned in favor of Renzo Mongiardino, an architect famed for his "fairytale interiors." The Bonomi family's choice to involve Mongiardino was not intended to cut Porcinai's efforts, but rather to use different expertise to improve the entire project¹¹⁰ Analyzing numerous project concepts enabled us to generate a timeline because many sketches lacked date notes. Porcinai's recommendations for the estate were separated into two phases: the first phase featured designs for enlarging the mansion, and the second phase centered on the garden layout. The first drawings appear to have been created prior to any site inspections, as they do not account for the existing castle construction. Porcinai's primary focus was on the front of the villa, where he installed stone slabs and built the central garden area. For the vegetation distribution, he wisely avoided planting shrubs in straight lines, noting that nature doesn't arrange things in neat rows.¹¹¹

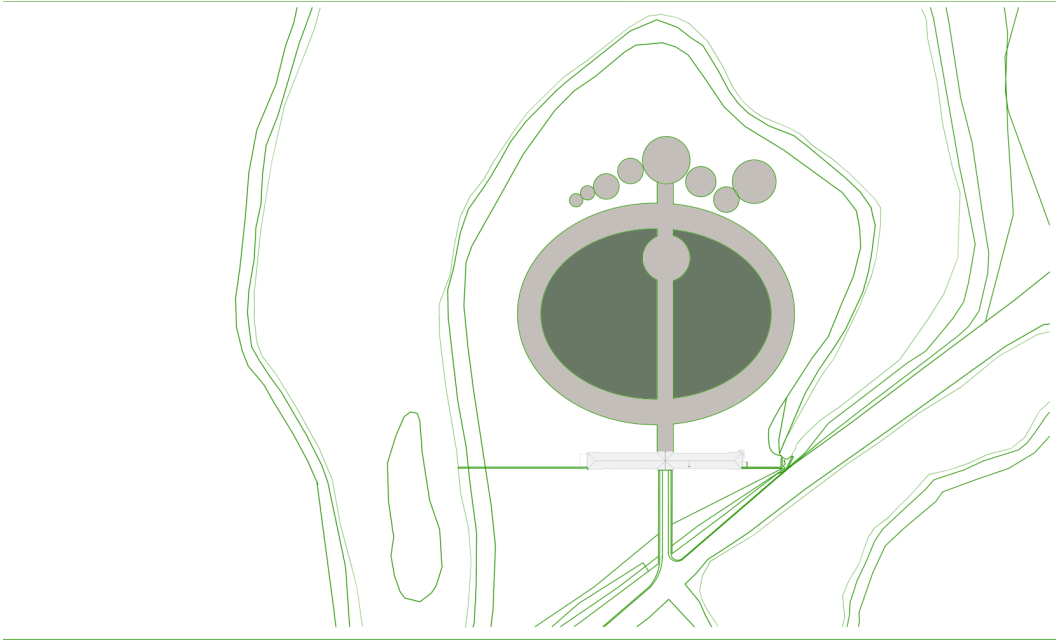
107. Organizzazione internazionale volta a rappresentare la professione dell'architetto paesaggista.

108.M. Matteini, *Pietro Porcinai architetto del giardino e del paesaggio*, Electa, Milano, 1991, pp.9-14.

109.R. Beretta, *Giardini*, P. Porcinai. (a cura di), *note introduttive*, Comunità, Milano, 1959, p.7.

110.S. Ferrero, *Il "Complesso dei Laghi" nel parco della Mandria. Proposta di restauro e valorizzazione di un'opera incompiuta di Pietro Porcinai*, tesi di laurea in Progettazione delle Aree Verdi e del Paesaggio, Università degli Studi di Genova, Milano, Torino, Politecnico di Torino, a.a 2018-2019, rel. Maria Adriana Giusti, p.74.

111.R. Beretta, *Giardini*, P. Porcinai. (a cura di), *note introduttive*, Comunità, Milano, 1959, p.15.



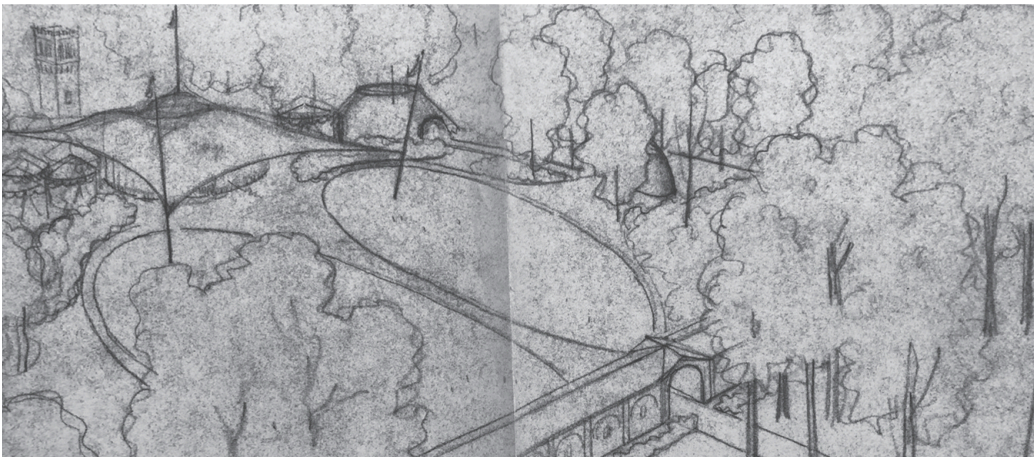
Picture 47 .Re-proposal of the floor plan for Pietro's project n.1 Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive. Graphic rework

Phase 1 - Project 1 - The Circular Rooms

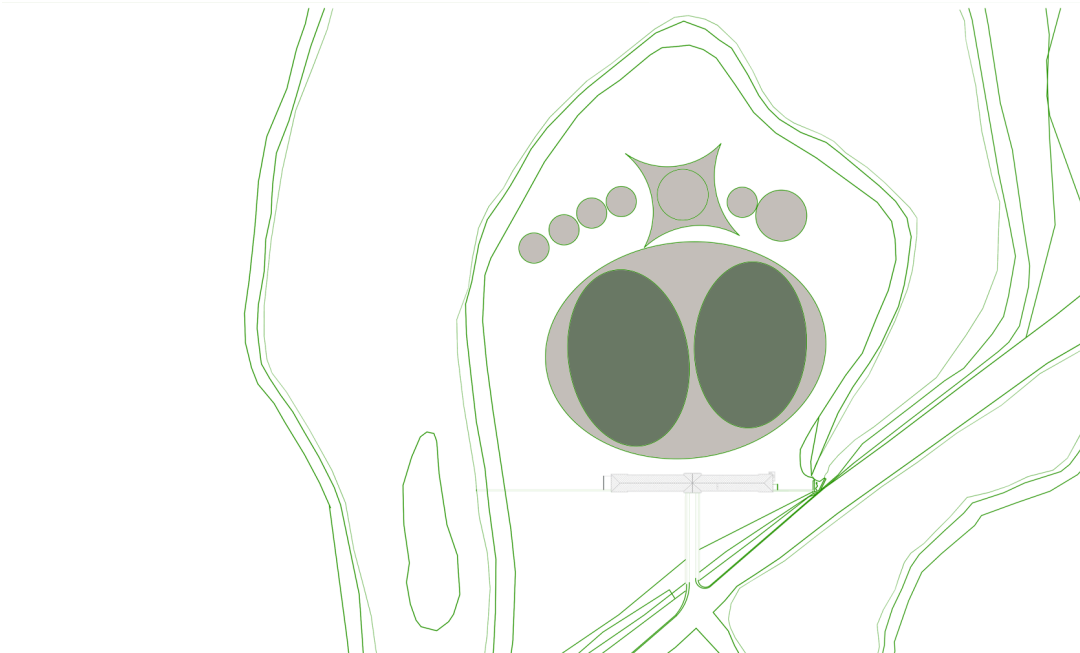
According to the original design idea, a building made up of connected circular rooms, each with a distinct residential purpose, was to be constructed. A central circular hall that serves as a living room is at the center of the residential arrangement. The dining area and kitchens are on the left, and the armory and private chambers branch off to the right. A pathway that connects Building B to the Villa runs along the center axis of the elliptical parterre, dividing it into two pieces. Areas of trees and bushes are used to represent the vegetation. A shrine church is also mentioned in the plan, which is a repeating element in all projects, however no remains of it can be found on the estate now. Porcinai's designs typically feature the circular pattern, which is utilized to delineate water basins, flowerbeds, and transitions in pavement materials.

Phase 1 - Project 2 - The Tents

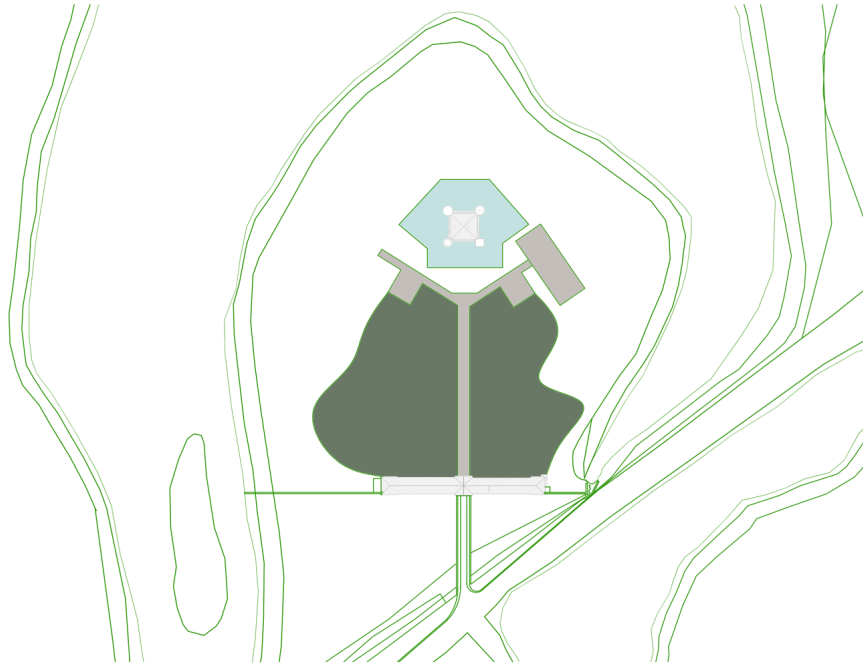
The second design concept is not very different from the first. In this design, the huge central living area and shrine church lose their circular shape in favor of a tent-like construction similar to Mongolian yurts.¹¹² The materials chosen for their construction are unknown. The parterre is divided into two rectangular spaces, with the plan for a primary walkway connecting the two main buildings and a secondary path defining its form. The vegetation still includes groups of trees and plants positioned near the building.



Picture 48. Axonometric sketch of the project n.2 created by Pietro Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive



Picture 49. Re-proposal of the floor plan for Pietro's project n.2 Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive. Graphic rework



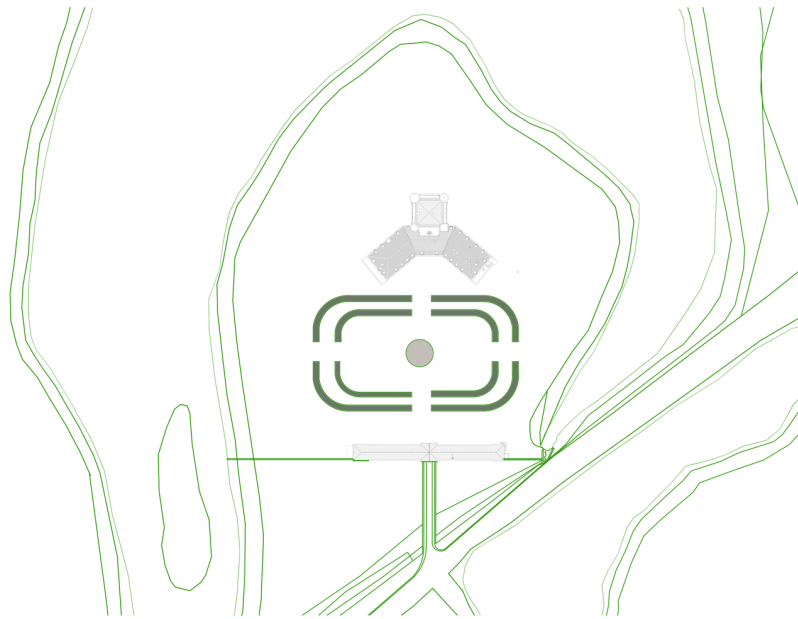
Picture 50. Re-proposal of the floor plan for Pietro's project n.3 Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive. Graphic rework

Phase 1 - Project 3 - Renovation of Castelletto

Porcinai's third concept abandons the circular spaces and tents in favor of a more regular building apart from the little castle. The goal is to showcase the latter's shape without adding any associated constructions. Instead, a moat of water is constructed completely around it. Compared to the other concepts, this one has a more defined internal plan, which is oriented around a central circulation corridor.

The parterre has an irregular shape, is covered in stones, and is still separated by the center road, which in this case goes off. To the right is a more regular-looking shrine church, while the extension is to the left. The vegetation includes plants along the buildings and the moat, as well as trees along the edges of the pebble-covered regions. In an effort to bring the garden into, the recently built structure has green areas within.

112. Yurte, abitazione mobile adottata da molte popolazioni dell'Asia.



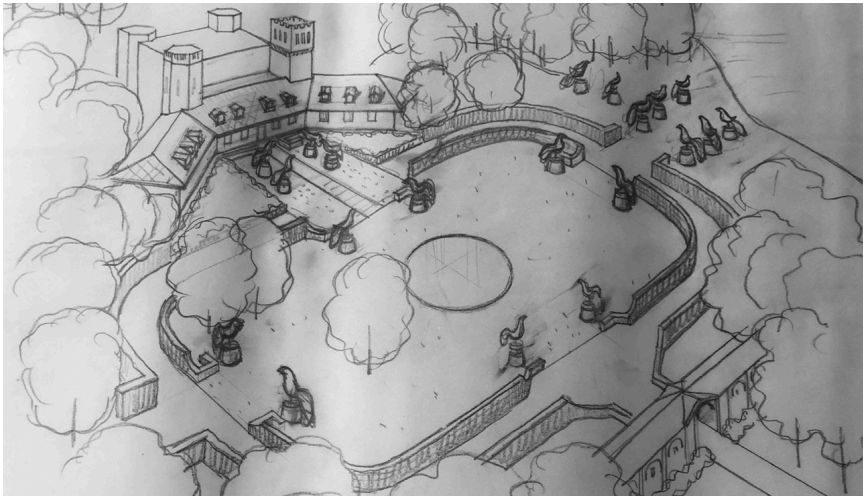
Picture 51. Re-proposal of the floor plan for Pietro's project n.4 Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive. Graphic rework.

Phase 2 - Project 4 - The Double Tree Topiated

Porcinai starts playing with Mongiardino's architecture after receiving this idea. He is currently in a stage of transition between the parterre's eventual regularization and the rounded forms that were previously displayed.

The pathway no longer follows a straight, centralized line, but instead conforms to the rectangular form of the parterre. A double fence that runs down both sides of the pathway and is probably made of Buxus or Taxus¹¹³ is one of the proposal's unique characteristics. The space is also enhanced by a variety of sculptures and perhaps sculpted plants. A circular opening appears in the middle of the parterre. The circular memorial shrine is situated along the ring-shaped walkway.

113.S. Ferrero, *Il "Complesso dei Laghi" nel parco della Mandria. Proposta di restauro e valorizzazione di un'opera incompiuta di Pietro Porcinai*, tesi di laurea in Progettazione delle Aree Verdi e del Paesaggio, Università degli Studi di Genova, Milano, Torino, Politecnico di Torino, a.a 2018-2019, rel. Maria Adriana Giusti, p.88.



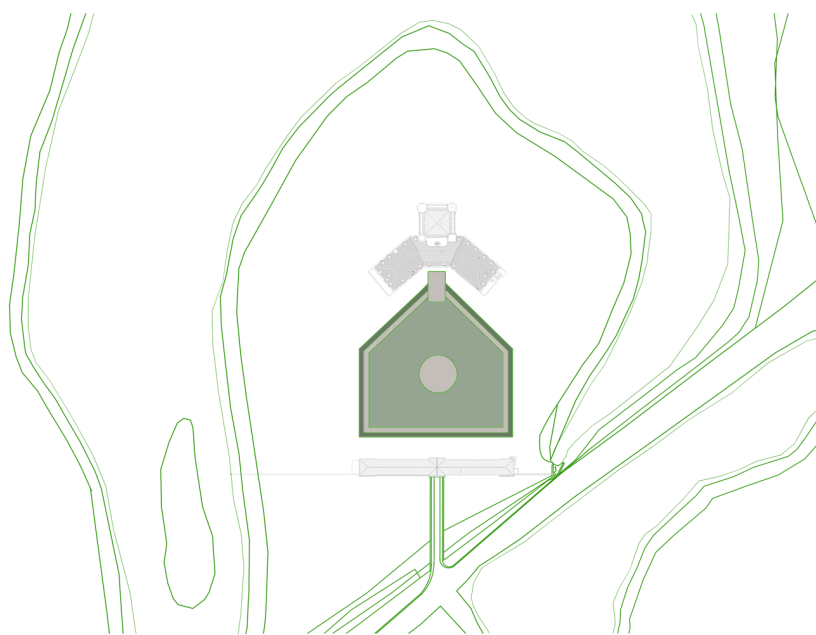
Picture 52. Axonometric sketch of the project n.4 created by Pietro Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive.

Phase 2 - Project 5 - The Carpinì Tunnel

Porcinai chose to use even more organized shapes for this idea, resulting in a parterre that fits perfectly with Mongiardino's design and mirrors the arrangement of the expansion's two wings in the garden's design.

In relation to the buildings, the parterre follows the straight line of the building that kept the stables to the north and reflects the angle of the Villa to the south. The originally suggested open space is changed into a fountain in the middle. A tunnel of *Carpinus betulus* (hornbeam) also appears, surrounding the path and giving it the appearance of a real green tunnel. This also helps define the parterre's boundaries.

Once more having a circular form, the shrine chapel is positioned along the walkway covered with hornbeams.



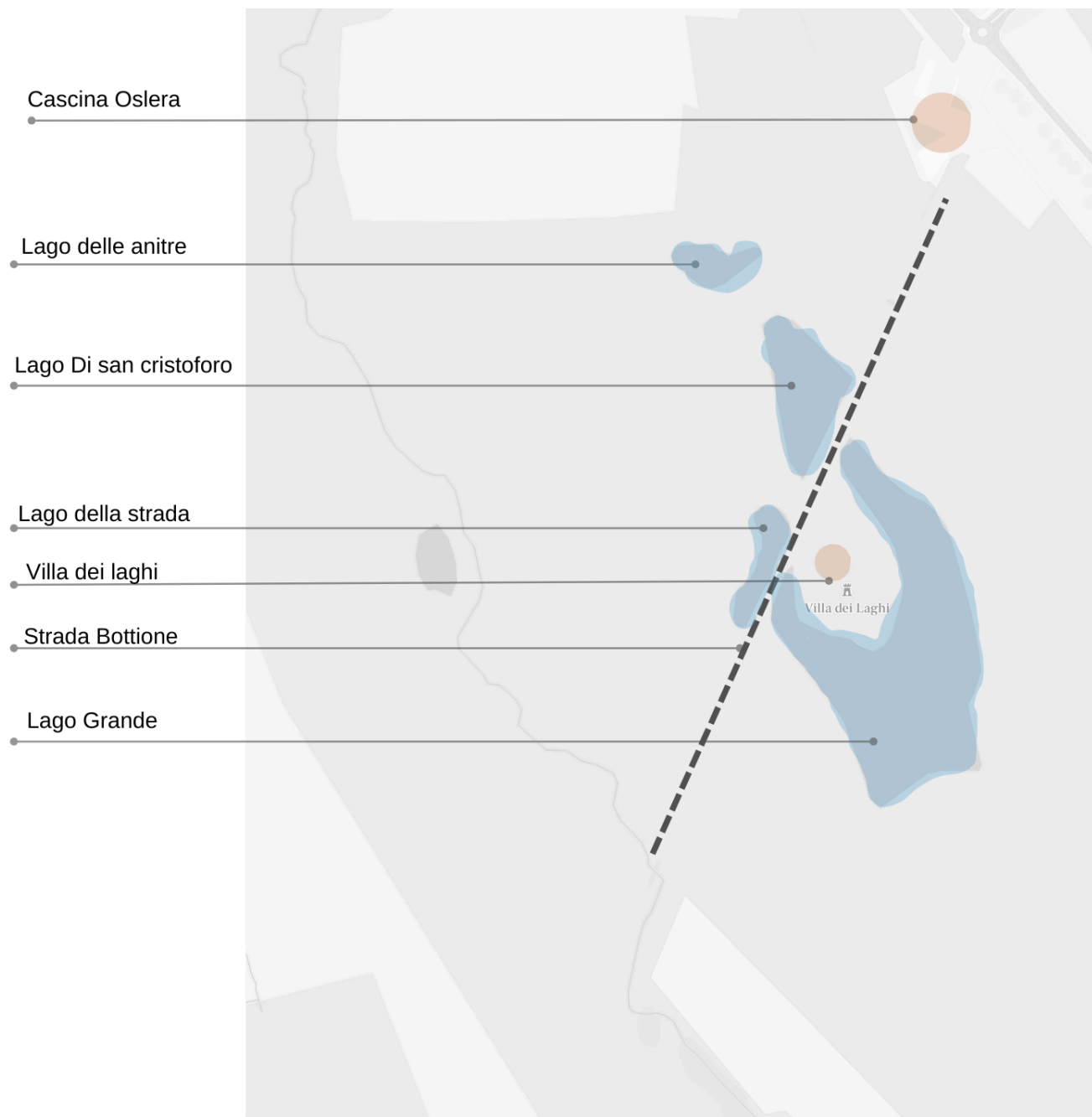
Picture 53. Re-proposal of the floor plan for Pietro's project n.5 Porcinai. Source: Pietro Porcinai Archive. Graphic rework

7 . Project of Valorization

Provincial Road No. 1 of the Lanzo Valleys takes you to the entrance of Cascina Oslera. From there, if you follow the dirt road inside the park, called Strada Bottione, you will arrive at the estate. The estate, surrounded on three sides by the man-made Lago Grande, features a long, low building that leads to the private property and the Villa.

Currently, the garden and outdoor spaces are in a state of partial neglect. After reaching out to tThe property includes a large green area around the villa, covering about 27,000 square meters. It is enclosed on one side by a wrought iron gate about 3 meters tall.The estate is bordered by a lake with a surface area of roughly 84,600 square meters, a maximum depth of 9 meters, and a perimeter of about 1,760¹¹⁴ meters.he Park Authority, we obtained a tree survey for the entire estate, which was last updated in 2021 by Roberto Regaldo, the director responsible for financial resources, property management, and environmental safety.Dying plants go above annual species by around 70%. This has a significant impact on the estate's seasonality, with the landscape appearing nearly naked throughout the winter months. Evergreen plants tend to grow near the main building. In recent years, weather events such as flooding and strong winds have led to multiple of the estate's huge trees to collapse. Despite the serious damage of the trees system, the neighboring buildings remain unharmed.

114.Disciplinare a base gara, CUP J85C19000150001, febbraio 2021, pp. 7-16.



Picture 54 . Framework plan general of the Tenuta dei Lakes. Graphic rework

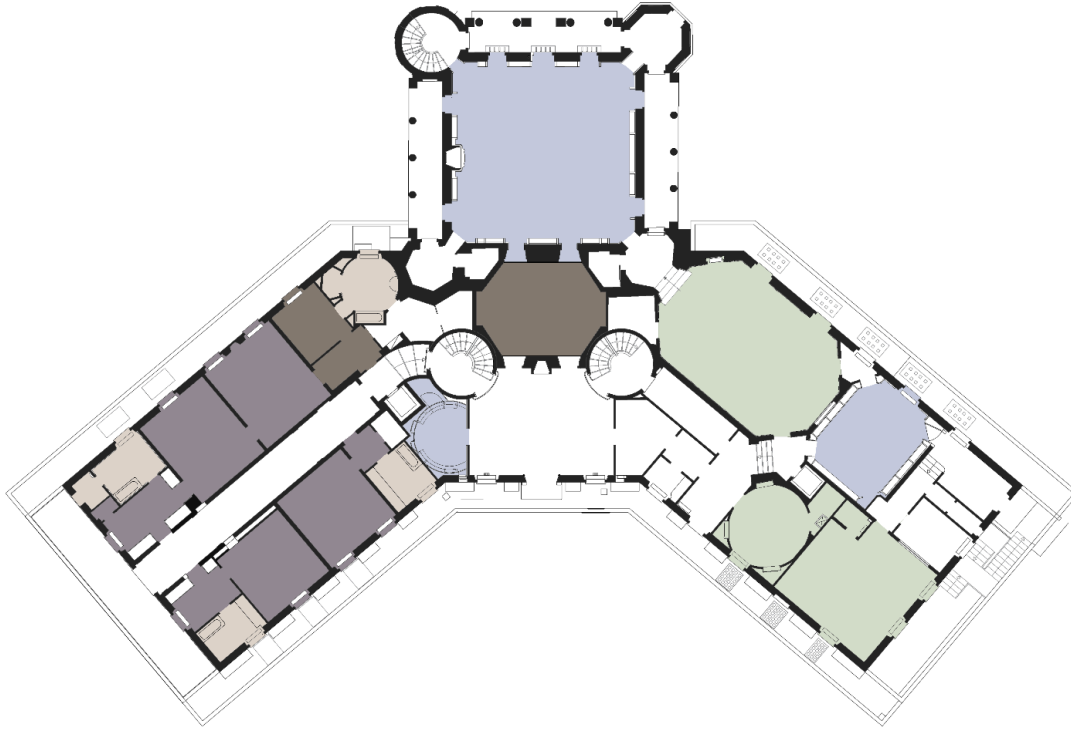
The current garden arrangement, which is circular in shape and includes a rectangular fountain in the center, was created during a 1960s transformation. The fountain includes a sculptural collection that was installed in 1978 and came from a Lombard villa. It is made up of three bronze tritons that support a circular concrete pool, which is decorated by a staff represented as stabbing a dolphin and emitting a water flow. Six souls, representing birth and the vital force of nature, are placed on arranged Luserna stone bases. They resonate the primary sculptural group in a bacchanalian atmosphere. The water fountain is set up with rustic stone walkways, and its borders, which are built of cementitious Groups finished with rough stone blocks, line up with the grassy surface. There are three further statues on the estate: the Statue of the King, the Allegory of Autumn, and the Allegory of Summer. The architectural system is in a very bad conservation condition. The majority of the damage is caused by a lack of regular cleaning and upkeep of humidity-prone surfaces. This led to the creation of biological patinas, salt sparkle, and black layers.¹¹⁵



Picture 55 . Bronze sculptural group of fountain of Villa dei Laghi.

115. Disciplinare a base gara, CUP J85C19000150001, febbraio 2021, Pag. 15.

7.1. Diagram



Each bedroom is characterized by a special feature
Upholstery expected to be restored or replaced
Depending on the case, there are 13 in total



Large room and other rooms that are characterized by the
presence of walls covered with wooden furniture,
3 rooms on the ground floor and 1 on the first floor



Bathroom, Ana Bonomi's bathroom was investigated as an example
But the interventions suggested here will be implemented in all areas.



There are rooms that will be used for catering purposes
4 rooms with this specification.



Living room and common area, there are 2 rooms on the ground floor
and one on the first floor. There are also private lounges inside the
different rooms from the hotel.

Picture 56 .current room identification plan . graphic rework

7.2 . Current situation

There is a noticeable difference between each part of the garden as soon everyone enters through the entrance gate. Despite being an element of the same system, the design purpose and function of these parts are different. The garden in front of the entrance gate stands out by its orderly design and smart use of available space. The entrance to the residential structure is connected by a concrete walk that is about 2.20 meters wide and runs between this wall and the grassy area. In the center of the grass, there is a rectangular area with a marble surface, which houses a water feature with a bronze sculptural group of satyrs. Architect Renzo Mongiardino's circular structure complements the outside design and fits easily with the new building. This construction is made up of a central structure and two sloping, equal wings. The complex's overall site plans show an interesting symmetry along the northwest-southeast axis, which has been maintained during successive developments from the mid-19th century to the present. The structure itself consists of an upper attic floor, a ground floor, and a basement. Stone from the Bergamo valleys was used to build the roof.



Picture 57 . Villa dei Laghi. Source: personal archive



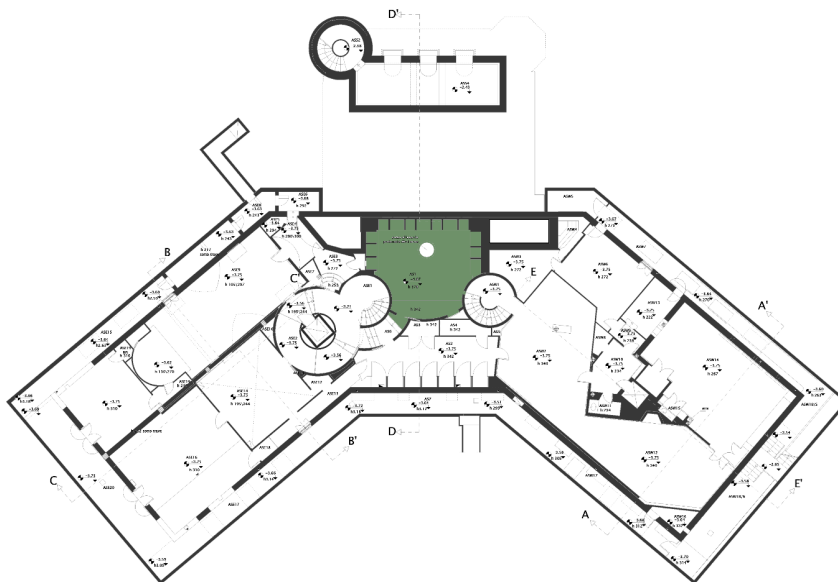
Picture 58 . Villa dei Laghi.Archived documents

The basement

The basement can be accessed via both stairwells and service elevators. However, they are right now not functional due to insufficient machinery maintenance. The basement structure shows that of the main level, with two different wings united by a central structure. One unique feature of the eastern side is that, in contrast to the western wing, a second circular area unites the various floor levels at the end of the staircase. One of the two elevator shafts that service the villa's levels is located in the middle of this area. You walk the remaining steps to the complex's lowest floor, which is at a height of about -4.07 meters. The wine cellar, a space built between the stairway block's circular sections, is located on this level. Because the wine cellar is a particularly humid location, masonry shelves with plenty of room for wine bottle storage has been built to serve its intended purpose. If you look at the flooring, you'll see a hatch in the middle of the space that leads to a well from the 19th century that is around 60 meters deep. The main feature of the



Picture 59. Wine cellar with shelving in brick. Archived documents



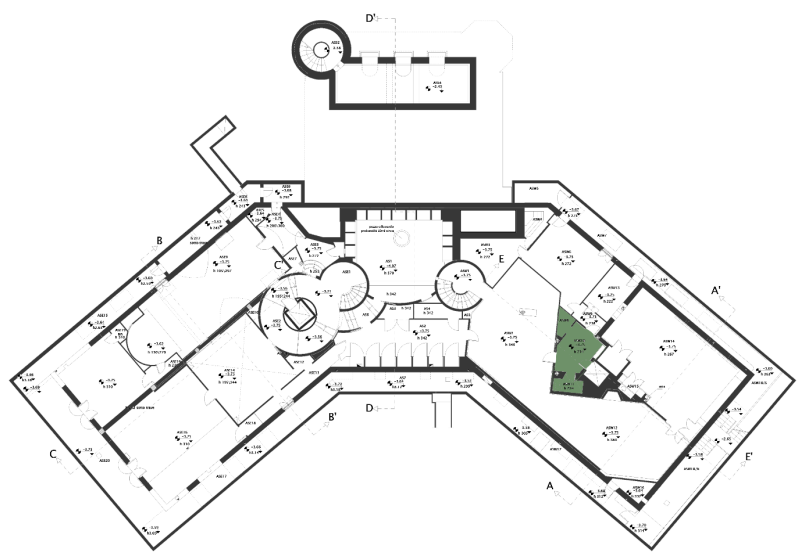
BUILDING A
BASEMENT



The Bonomi family asked architect Toni Cordero to build these spaces in the 1970s. The floor layout shows that in the center of the wing, there is a complicated system of walls that largely houses service areas such as storage rooms and deposits, restrooms, and the elevator shaft. One might mistakenly think that this challenging wall system is totally bearing loads, but this is not the case, since there is a structure made of beams and columns, some of which are exposed, as shown in the image below.



Picture 60.Supporting structure and channel for exposed ventilation.Archived documents



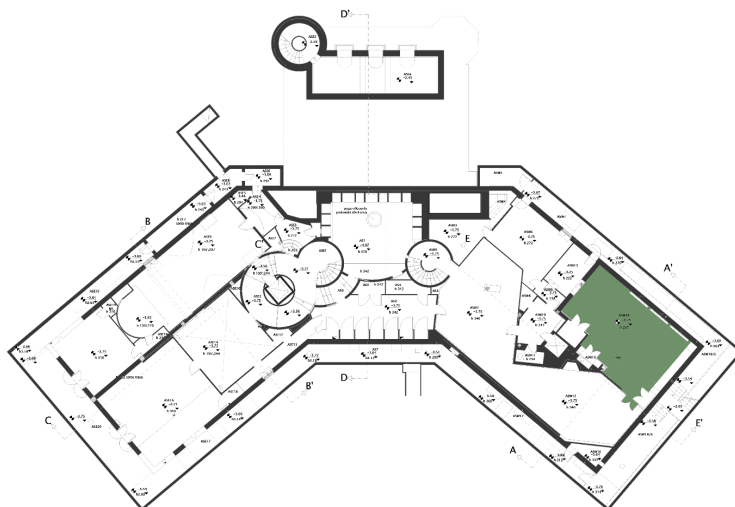
BUILDING A
BASEMENT



The original "cinema room" is accessible from the bar. Inside, it contains film projectors and has a low roof to limit sound dispersal during screenings. The eastern side has a more regular settings of facilities, including a church, an activity room for leisure activities and billiards, and a gymnasium. Mongiardino's original project plans did not contain the church, which is an unusual feature to see in a residential building.



Picture 61 . Films present in the room of projections. Archived documents



BUILDING A
BASEMENT

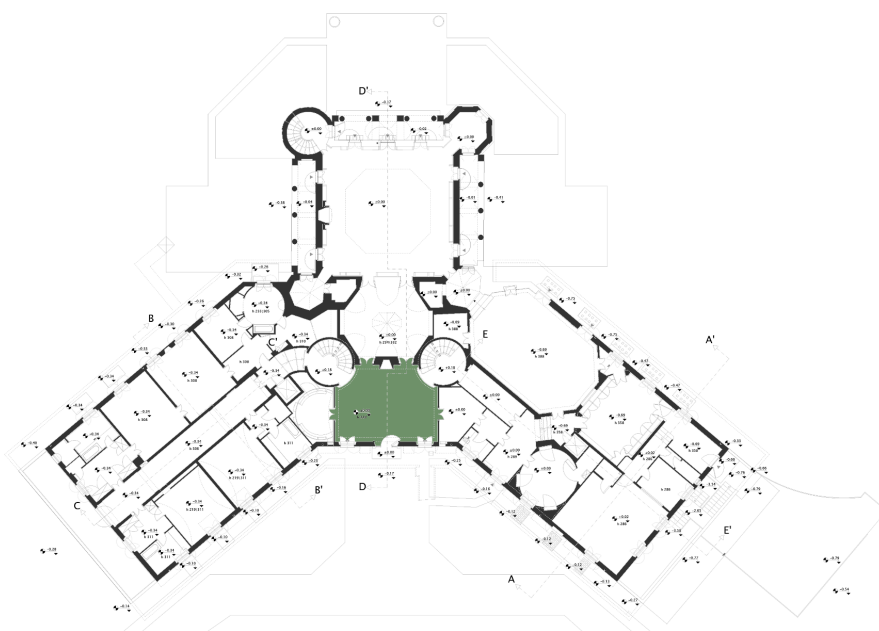


The ground floor

There are two levels above ground and a basement in the Villa's design. The Bonomi family's rooms were located on the ground floor, which had been chosen as the living space. The bedrooms and sleeping areas were located on the first level, while the relaxation and leisure spaces were located in the basement. The main entry goes to the entrance hall, which is currently in poor condition due to plaster separation on the walls and, in specific, on the ceiling. The hall's rectangular shape is offset by two stairwells directly opposite the entrance door, which remove the sharp edges on that side. Access to the stairwells is not at the same level as the entrance hall floor; a step raises it by about 20 cm. The placement of two windows near the entrance door increases the space's brightness.



Picture 62 . Entrance hall of the Castle of the Lakes. Archived documents



Currently, the room is furnished with light-colored wooden furniture that hides a small storage box available via a secret entrance within the furniture. The concern of decor, managed by architect Mongiardino, is obvious in these places, which express the desire to surprise through the clever hiding of "spaces" within walls, furniture, and paneling.



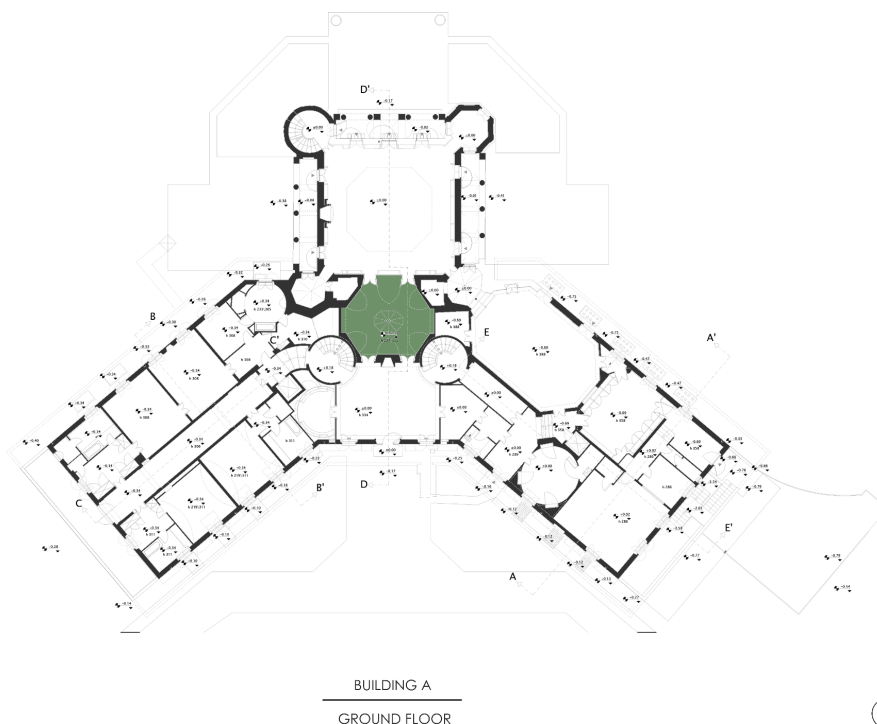
Picture 63. Furniture from the room semicircular with opening service compartment.
Archived documents



A small circular sitting room is located by going north from the entrance. It is clear from the architect's drawings that the circular shape appears frequently. Although the white-backed wall and ceiling coverings with patterns of flowers are missing in certain places, the room is in an average level of conservation. Furthermore, much of the damage on the walls is due to ongoing moisture, which declines their appearance with time. This design connects the ceiling's base to a small, circular window that acts as the main source of light for the room. As may be seen in the picture below, there isn't a chandelier at the moment. The pyramid tower at the center of the dome system is the only source of light in the space.



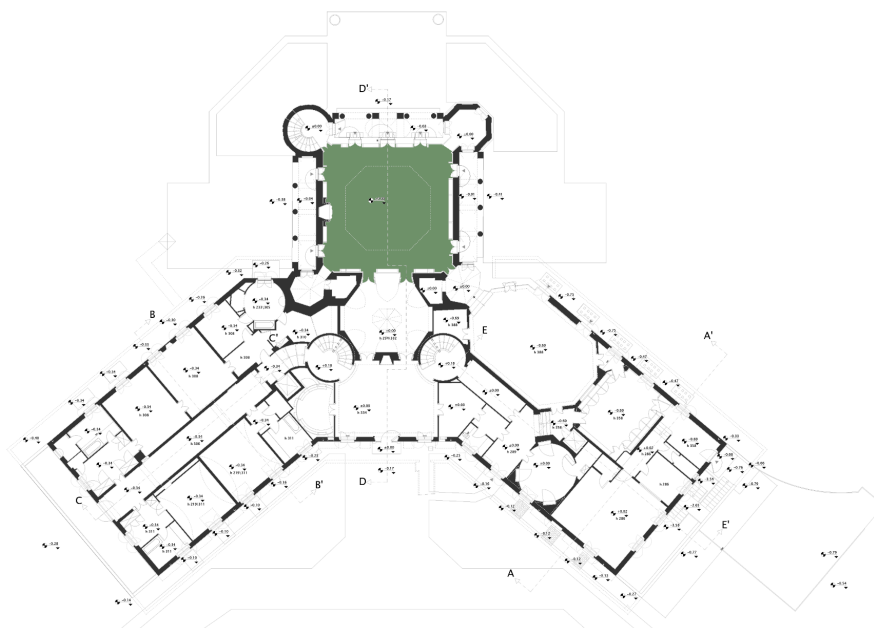
Picture 64 . Current lighting system interior of the living room. Archived documents



The most unique room in the entire villa, the center hall, is located between the entryway and the sitting room. The hall is a double-height area with openings that let light in. The uneven wooden wood flooring is in poor shape; some of the panels have been taken out and replaced with like ones that are a different color. Certainly the furniture, a combination of wooden shelves that completely surrounds the walls on both levels is what makes this space so unique and fascinating. The balcony's extended concrete framework has been covered using the same method, providing an even material aesthetic across the central hall. The wooden fence covers across the entire balcony and is composed of two modules that rotate and repeat.



Picture 65. Shelving and flooring of the central hall. Archived documents

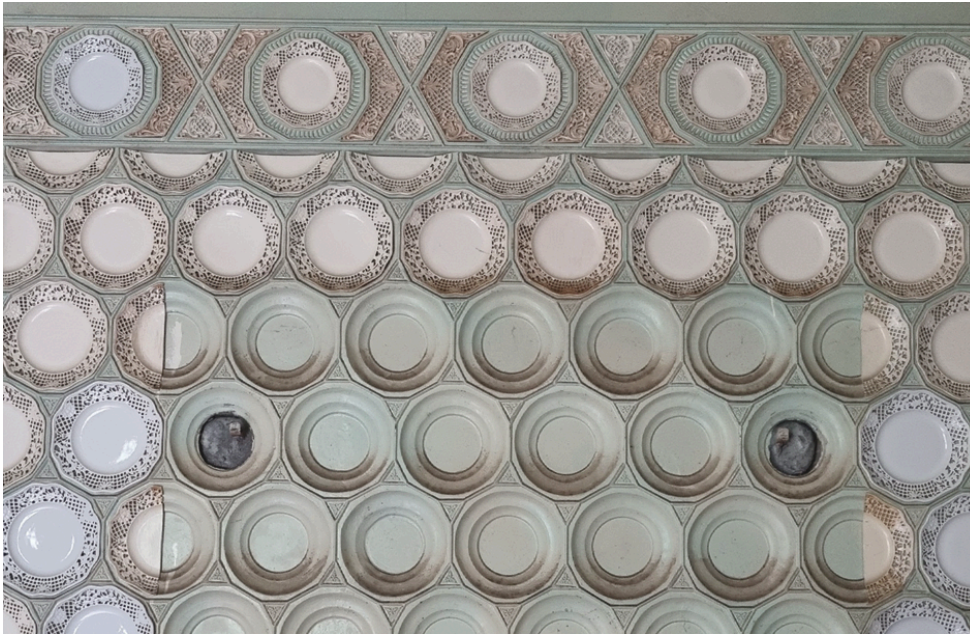


The main dining room can be reached by taking the stairs to the right of the entry .In order to give the space more significance and power, it is thought that it was lowered relative to the entrance's floor level, increasing its height by roughly 70 cm.The area is sometimes referred to as the "plate room" because of the white and bright green ceramic tiles and plates that cover the walls.



Picture 66 . Main dining room, the “dish room”.Archived documents

Aside from the color difference, there is also a typological difference between the tiles used for the covering because two separate kinds were selected: the first is blue in color and is plain without any decoration, while the second is white and has a textured pattern created by many holes along the border. It is also clear that the tiles are not equally located; the color pattern changes according to the wall being viewed. The plaster on the ceiling has detached, which is the main reason for the poor overall condition of preservation.



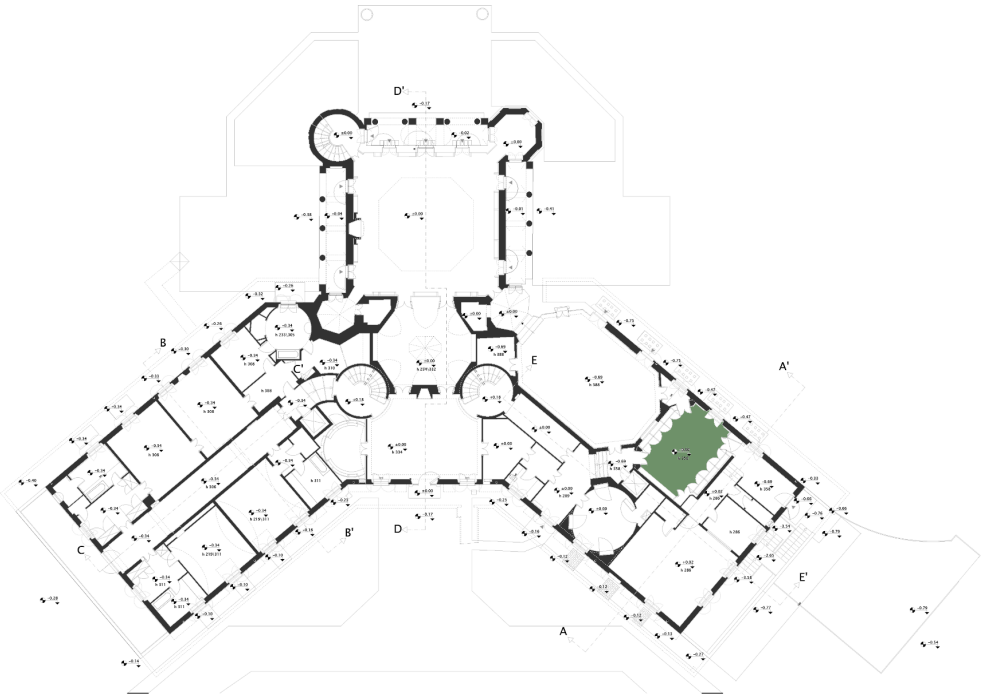
Picture 67 . Wall covering verticals of the “room of dishes”.Archived documents



The second dining room, which is circular in shape, is reached by continuing west through a triangle entryway. This room was usually used for everyday activities because it was smaller and less luxurious than the main dining room. It has a wooden pattern hardwood floor, just like most of the rooms. All the walls are also covered with laminate that looks like wood and built-in closets.



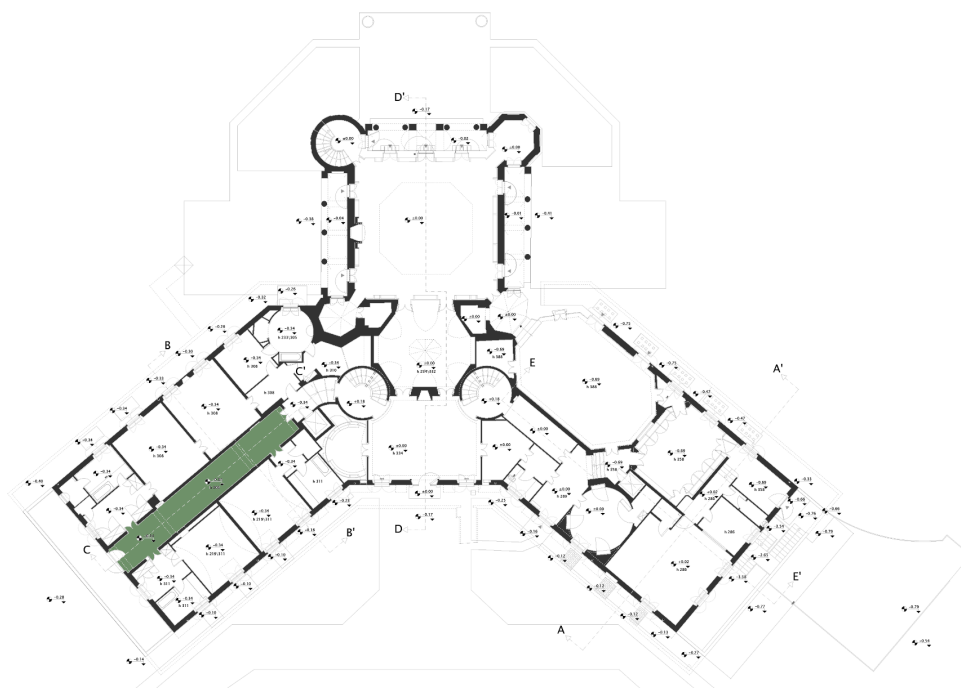
Picture 68 . Secondary dining room with wooden panelingArchived documents



After the additional dining room, you reach the service section, which includes the service rooms and the kitchen. The wing to the east of the entrance contains the bedroom of Anna Bonomi and her husband, as well as the guest rooms. Stepping up one step from the staircase on the left side of the entryway leads to a corridor that runs through the center of the wing, providing access to the various rooms.

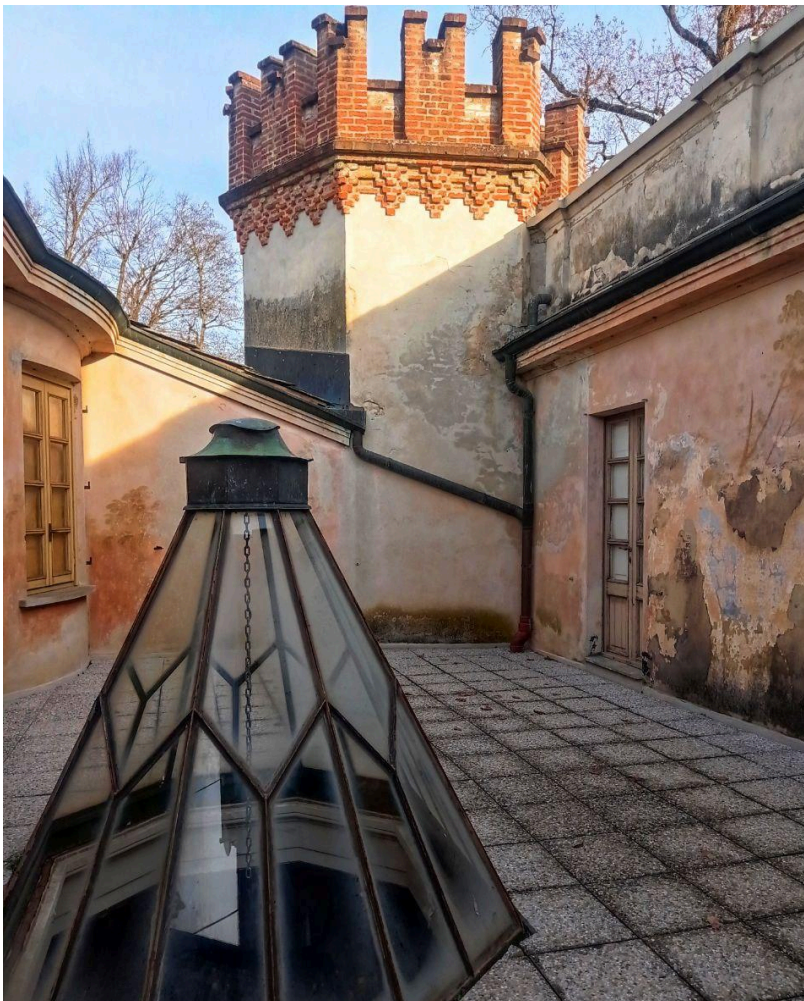


Picture 69. Current status of the corridor e of the glass window on the front east of the Villa. Archived documents

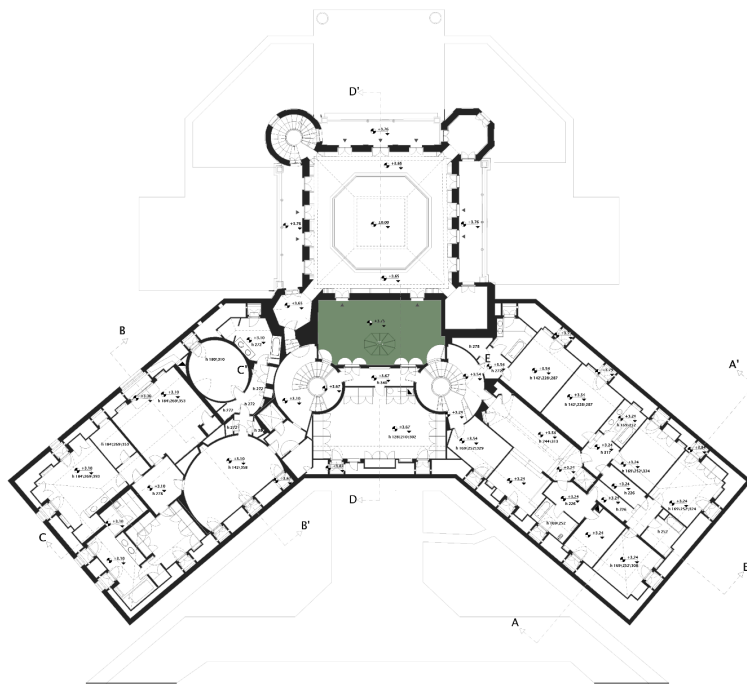


The first floor

There are two circular staircases that lead to the first floor. this floor is different from the ground floor in that it mainly houses accommodations and rooms for service personnel, removing service areas and common areas. There is a noticeable difference between the building's two wings while viewing the floor design. Carlo Bonomi's home is located in the eastern wing, which is not regular because of the adding rounded and circular forms to improve and enhance the spatial quality of some of the rooms. The western wing, on the other hand, is more functional and logical, with a large number of rooms with rectangular designs. On the first level, an open corridor connects the stairs and allows easy access to the outside terrace. This patio offers a view of the pyramid-shaped structure that lighting the ground-floor sitting room



Picture 70 . Terrace external with skylight. Archived documents



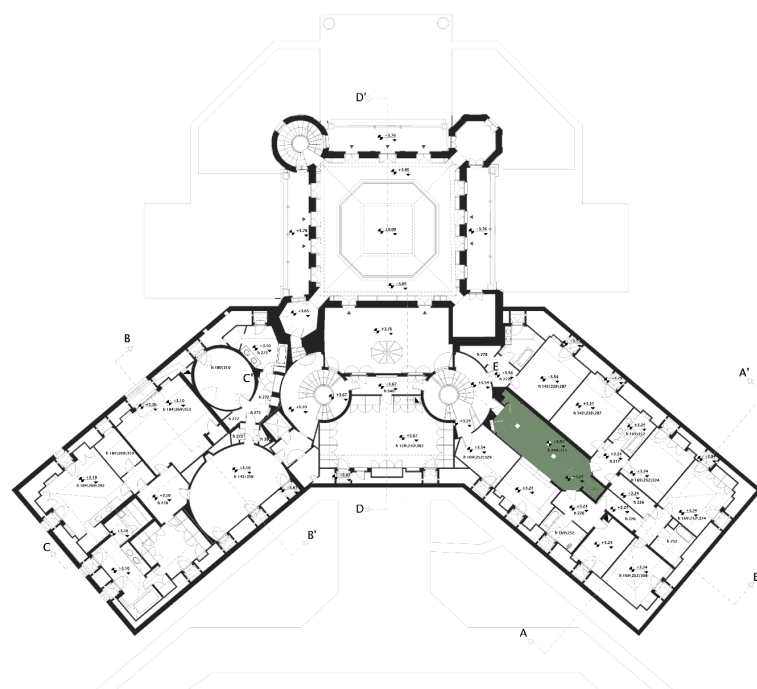
BUILDING A
FLOOR PLANS



The west wing's main noticeable feature is the corridor, which has been designed with a rectangular form and rounded corners. Its walls have openings that lead to useful spaces such as a storage room, an electricity panel, and bedrooms. Toni Cordero, who renovated the house in the 1970s at Carlo Bonomi's request to reorganize the interior spaces, was credited with designing the corridor plan. Right now, the walls are covered in cork paneling, a less traditional material than Mongiardino's usual choice. This room was designed for children playing.



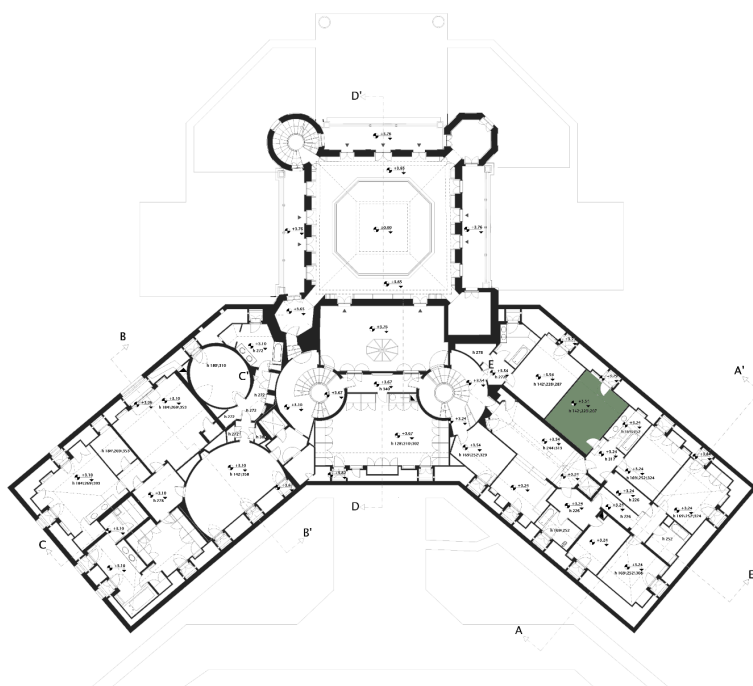
Picture 71 .Access corridor to room and service rooms Archived documents



All of the staff housing, were treated equally. Each of these rooms still has its original fabric wallpaper, with colors like red, orange, blue, and green separating them from one another. As showed in the image, the ceiling heights of these rooms vary according to the roof slopes. Each room has a tiny balcony with a view of the Lago Grande, accessible by a single-pane French door. Carlo Bonomi's unique and spectacular apartment is located in the eastern wing. A room with a fireplace like the one in Anna Bonomi's bedroom is the first room one enters.



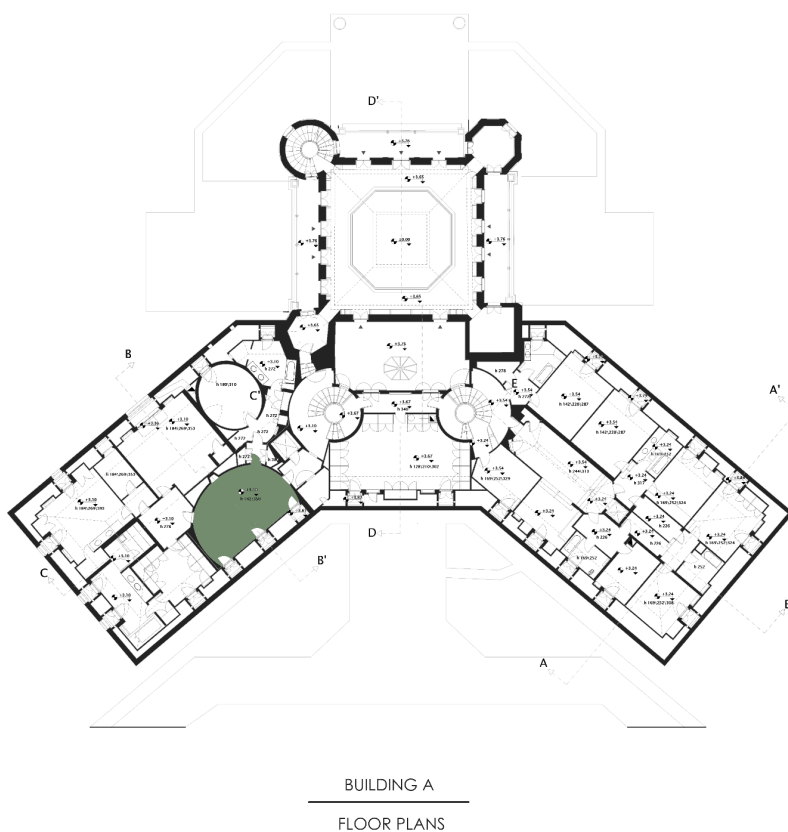
Picture 72. Type of room for the service staff. Archived documents



Except for the curtains, the room looks to be empty of its original furnishings. The vaulted ceiling system is different from the other rooms on the first floor; the vault's base is not defined by a decorative profile, instead it slopes to match the angle of the roof. The floor level is situated at a different height than the balcony, which allows heating units to be placed below the French doors.



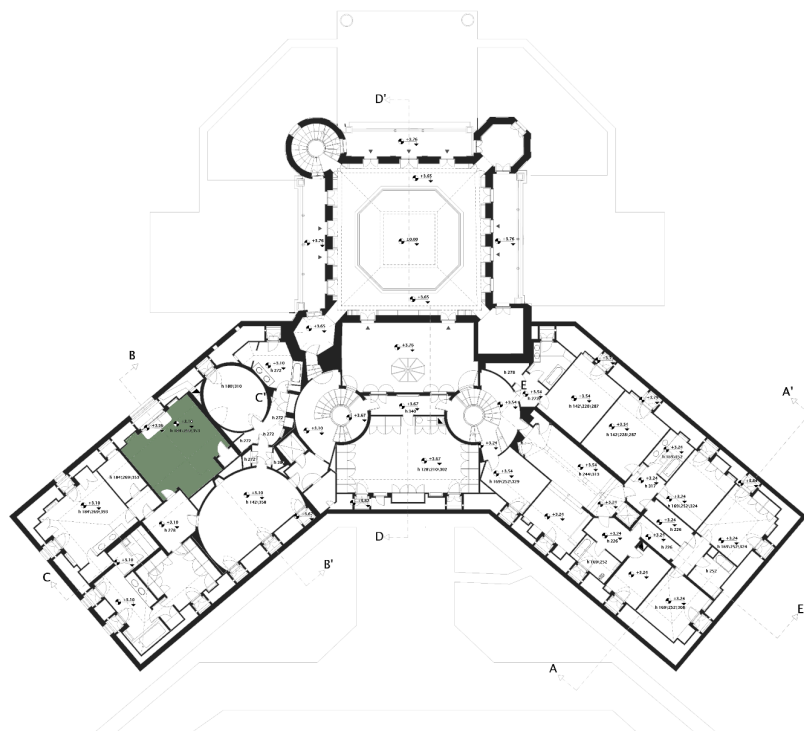
Picture 73. Room in the apartment of Carlo Bonomi. Archived documents



One enters Carlo Bonomi's master bedroom beyond the neighboring corridor. Unlike any other room in the villa, this one has a balcony. Mongiardino designed and built it as a wide glass window rather than a single-panel door to give a better view of the lake and the surrounding nature.



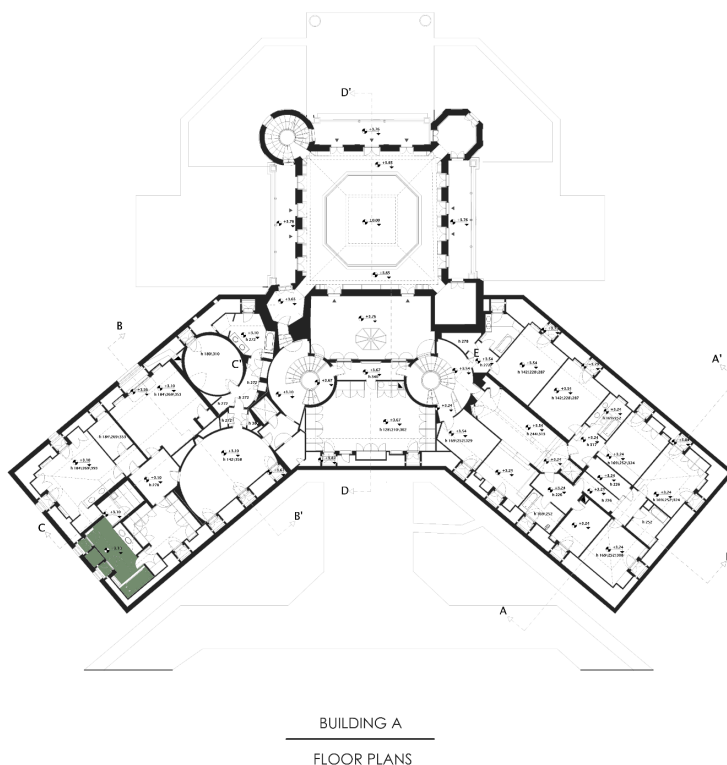
Picture 74 . Opening onto the balcony of the Carlo's master bedroom Bonomi. Archived documents



Lastly, there are two restrooms at the most eastern end. Originally designed as a bedroom, the larger of the two is now Anna Bonomi's personal bathroom. The room's focal point, the bathtub, is enhanced by the rich and colorful floral-themed wallpaper that covers the walls. It gives the impression that one is taking a bath in the middle of Lago Grande, surrounded by rich woodland greenery. The architect purposefully positioned these facilities inside a separate space that, when closed, physically hides the existence of a bathroom, so the area is not identifiable from the outside.



Picture 75. Bathroom by Anna Bonomi representing the upholstery relating to vegetation. Archived documents

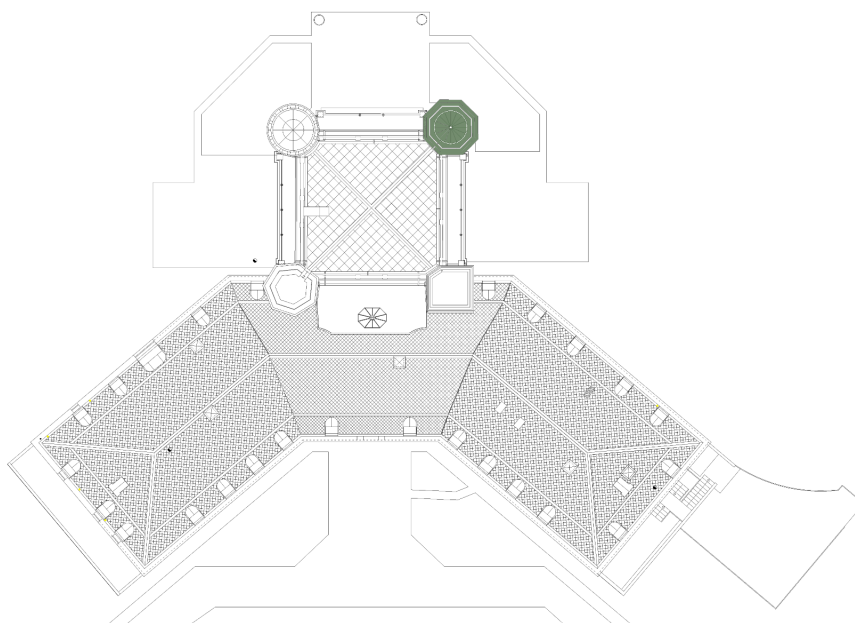


The roof plan

The villa's roof is identified by a double slope on either side. In the center, the slope is more gradual, but it increases close to the attic connections. The entire roof is covered with roughly 60-centimeter-long slabs of Luserna stone. This kind of roofing, which is common in the Turin region, requires overlapping the slabs to remove any exposed areas. The slabs are now supported by concrete that was fully rebuilt in the late 1960s. Architect Casetta fixed the roof and the building's insufficient rainfall draining system in 2019 because of problems caused by the building's high interior humidity.



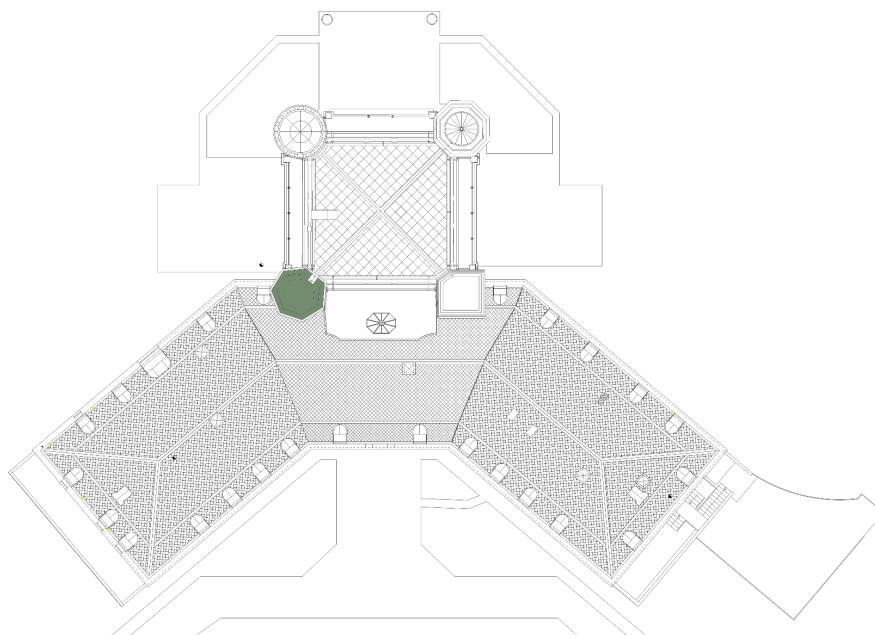
Picture 76 . View of the octagonal tower Source: personal archive.Archived documents



The skylights in two of the rooms in the western wing are made of tiny glass tiles that blend in perfectly with the stone slabs and mirror their geometry. I went to the roof for the first visit and looked at the four towers. From the roof a little wooden door leads to the first tower, which is triangular in shape. It has a tiny storage space within that holds supplies used for building in the 1960s. The lowest tower, with its heptagonal design, increases the feeling of being surrounded in nature. Finally, the circular tower includes a stairway that connects the first level directly to the roof. A walled-in corridor allows all of the towers to be accessed and connected.

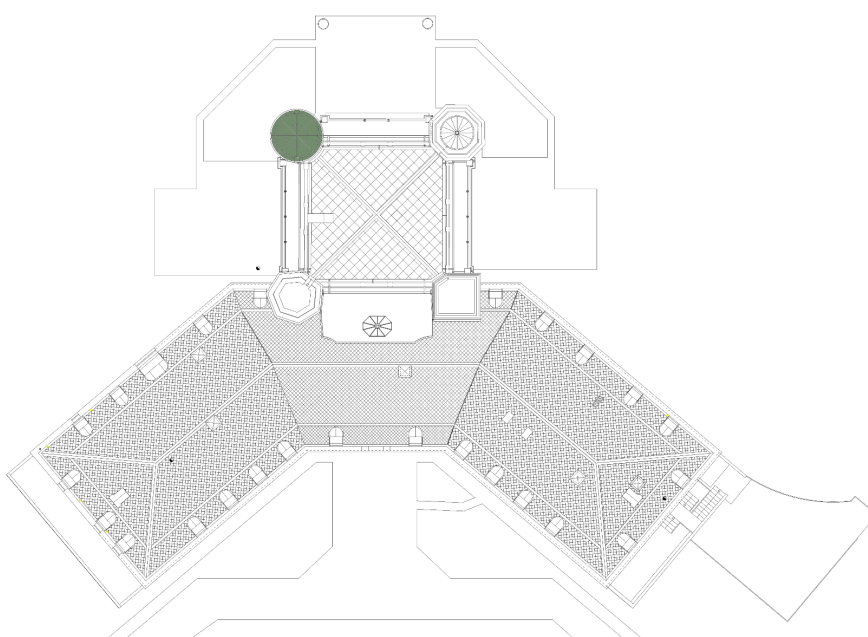


Picture 77. View of the heptagonal tower Source: personal archive. Archived documents





Picture 78. Circular tower seen from the floor first.Archived documents



BUILDING A



7.3. Current state of the Lower Building



Picture 79 . Entrance access to the Estate of the Lakes. Archived documents

The poor condition of the low building and the difficulty in accessing it were mainly caused by an increase of going up greenery, which had reached the structure's exterior walls as a result of the surrounding outdoor spaces' lack of maintenance. The front is almost fully covered in greenery including nettles and brambles.

The low building, located on the northern façade of the The property was built about the same time as the 19th-century castle. The structure, made of load-bearing masonry, has a rectangular form and defines the property's external boundary, with entrance via a metal gate located in the center of the building.

The section to the west of the road entrance used as a caretaker's living. The façade is damaged, with several parts showing browning due to high humidity and the growth of biological oxide. There are also signs of cracking, which can lead to severe breakdown such as plaster detachment and collapse. These concerns indicate a level of damage that beyond typical aging. The entire low building is defined by a vaulted system supported by massive arches.



Picture 80 . Entrance access to the Estate of the Lakes.Archived documents

Plaster is starting to split and crumble as a result of the damage, showing a level of decay that beyond typical decay carried on by time and exposure to external pollution. The window and door elements are arranged in a regular and repeating pattern, as each space covered by the arches has a window or door. The hardwood floors surface has significant peeling, and several of the French doors' glass panels are broken in part. The inside floor consists of gray ceramic tiles, while the underground parts have raw cement flooring. In both situations, no significant damage of the flooring was noticed. Moisture is seen on the walls and ceilings. The arched structure near the complex's main gate had begun to settle down therefore various interventions were made to repair it.



Picture 81 .Inside view of the east sleeve.Archived documents



Picture 82 . Internal view of the system vaulted with arches of the sleeve east.Archived documents

8 . concept House for Artists in Villa dei Laghi

The concept of this project centers around the adaptive reuse, restoration, and thoughtful intervention of a historic heritage villa, transforming it into an artist residency designed for architects, painters, writers, and VR artists. Surrounded by three lakes and a vast garden, the villa offers a unique and tranquil setting where artists can reconnect with nature, find solitude, and engage in deep reflection and creativity. This residency is more than just a place to stay—it is an immersive retreat that encourages inspiration from the natural environment while fostering artistic exploration and collaboration. The villa features 12 rooms, each accommodating an artist for a stay ranging from two weeks to one month, upon acceptance through an application process that includes a CV, resume, or portfolio. Within the residency, artists benefit from access to specialized workspaces, studios tailored to their disciplines, and a variety of enriching activities including cooking classes, wine tastings, exhibitions, performances, and shared meals. Additional amenities such as a cinema, gym, meditation areas, laundry services, and a fully equipped kitchen—with opportunities for both solo and communal cooking—support a balanced lifestyle. A dedicated 24/7 staff ensures comfort and smooth operation. Ultimately, this artist residency is envisioned as a sanctuary for creative growth, self-discovery, and the nurturing of ideas through the harmonious connection between heritage, nature, and artistic practice.

This setting not only fosters artistic production but also encourages a balanced lifestyle that blends creative intensity with mindful living and connection to nature. By reactivating a culturally significant structure through adaptive reuse, this project preserves the architectural heritage of the villa while breathing new life into its function, transforming it into a living canvas where tradition and innovation coexist. Ultimately, this artist residency is envisioned as a creative sanctuary a place where artists can think freely, be inspired by the natural surroundings, and engage in meaningful artistic exchange, whether in solitude or community.

8.1. SWOT

Strengths.

1.Unique Historical and Architectural Identity.

- Built in 1860 with a rare eclectic style, blending medieval and French château elements.
- “Y”-shaped layout, four-tower structure, and original landscaped gardens offer high spatial and aesthetic value.

2.Protected Heritage Status.

- Legal recognition as a heritage site elevates its cultural prestige and potential for funding or tax benefits (from government, EU, cultural foundations).

3.Natural Immersion and Isolation.

- Located in the heart of La Mandria Park, surrounded by three lakes – a highly inspirational setting for artists and thinkers seeking silence and solitude.
- Minimalist and evocative architecture is naturally aligned with creative practices.

4.Sustainable Reuse Philosophy.

- No demolition, exterior restoration only, and interior reactivation – aligns with sustainable and conservation-first adaptive reuse principles.

5.Cultural Destination Potential.

- Venaria Reale already draws tourists thanks to the Reggia di Venaria and surrounding sites – artist residencies can tap into this audience indirectly via events or exhibitions.¹¹⁶

116.https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19463138.2024.2329661?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Weakness.

1. Structural Degradation and Humidity Damage.

- Advanced decay due to moisture, both inside and out, requiring significant restoration expertise and potential ongoing maintenance.

2. Limited Accessibility.

- Narrow access roads, no direct vehicular access or parking near the villa. Artists and logistics may require special transportation planning.

3. Funding Constraints.

- Budget limitations may hinder the speed and scope of restoration and program development, especially since it's a large villa with heritage requirements.¹¹⁷

Opportunities.

1. High Potential for Grant Funding.

- EU cultural heritage, green infrastructure, or arts and culture funds may be applicable due to the nature of the project (cultural reuse, preservation, sustainability).
- Regional or national Italian heritage restoration programs may offer financial or technical assistance.

2. Growing Demand for Artist Retreats.

- Internationally, artist residencies in remote, nature-immersed settings are highly sought after for their uniqueness and tranquility.
- The combination of architecture, nature, and history is particularly attractive for cross-disciplinary artists.

3. Soft Tourism and Cultural Events.

- Potential to host seasonal events (open studios, exhibitions, lectures), aligning with soft tourism trends in Northern Italy.
- Partnerships with nearby institutions (e.g., Reggia di Venaria, Turin-based art schools) could generate attention and programming.

4. Educational and Research Hub.

- The site could evolve into a place not just for artists, but also for architecture students, historians, and conservationists interested in 19th-century Italian eclecticism.¹¹⁸

117. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adaptive_reuse?utm_source=chatgpt.com

118. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0197397523001868?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Threats.

1.Climate and Environmental Stress.

- Humidity and natural erosion could continue to threaten the building's fabric unless constant environmental management is implemented.

2.Regulatory and Bureaucratic Constraints.

- As a heritage site, any intervention (even interior) may face delays or rejections from heritage authorities. Adaptive reuse requires careful negotiation with preservation guidelines .

3.Risk of Underutilization.

- Without proper marketing and institutional partnerships, the villa may not attract enough artists to be financially sustainable or culturally vibrant.

4.Remote Location as Double-Edged Sword.

- While isolation is a strength creatively, it could be a weakness in terms of emergencies, daily needs, or accessibility for less mobile individuals.

Final Thought:

This villa has the potential to become a flagship site for thoughtful reuse in Italy balancing historical preservation, architectural storytelling, and creative reactivation. The isolated character is not a limitation but a core asset especially when framed as a “retreat for deep creation.”

8 . 2 . Three Case Studies.

1.Castello di Potentino

located in the secluded valley near Seggiano on the slopes of Monte Amiata in Tuscany, Italy, is a historically rich structure with origins tracing back to Etruscan times and major developments during the 11th century. Initially built as a defensive medieval fortress, it later passed through several noble families including the bishops of Chiusi and the Visconti of Milan, eventually being restructured during the Renaissance. In the early 2000s, the castle was restored by the Greene family (descendants of the writer Graham Greene) and repurposed as a dynamic cultural estate. Today, it serves as a boutique residence, organic vineyard, and artistic retreat. Architecturally, the castle features classic fortified stone walls, an internal courtyard, battlements, a loggia, and a small consecrated chapel dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua. The interiors retain period character, with ten individually furnished guest rooms and two apartments showcasing original frescoed ceilings, antique furniture, and vaulted spaces. Facilities include a library with a custom-built staircase, wine cellars, olive oil production, gardens, and a seasonal swimming pool. The estate also offers cooking workshops, wine tastings, artist residencies, concerts, and private events, making it both a historical monument and a living cultural



Picture 83.Castello di Potentino.source:wikipedia archive

119.https://potentino.com/blogs/about/the-literary-connections?srltid=AfmBOoqWIDGP8WUH4B_WCi8TNYJo7pIgaBNnPFelvrzax7zjwCNBRIMD&utm_source=chatgpt.com.https://www.histouring.com/en/historical-places/castello-di-potentino/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

https://montecristomagazine.com/travel/castello-di-potentino-tuscany?utm_source=chatgpt.com

2.Château de La Napoule

located in Mandelieu-la-Napoule along the French Riviera, is a restored 14th-century fortress that merges medieval architecture with early 20th-century artistic transformation. Originally constructed as a coastal defensive stronghold, the castle underwent significant modifications over centuries before falling into disrepair and being used as a glass factory in the 19th century. It was revived in 1918 by American sculptor Henry Clews Jr. and his wife Marie, who not only rebuilt it but transformed it into a surrealist monument filled with sculpture, symbolism, and Gothic-Romanesque fantasy. Today, it is managed by the La Napoule Art Foundation, serving as a museum and international center for art residencies, exhibitions, and cultural events. Architecturally, the château includes elaborately sculpted towers, galleries, the Spencer art salon, the Marie salon, and a monumental dining hall. The gardens are a defining feature, comprising four hectares of classified “Remarkable Gardens of France,” with sections styled in French formal, English romantic, Moorish, and Venetian traditions. Facilities include museum and studio spaces, classrooms, a sculpture atelier, gift shops, visitor amenities, and event hosting infrastructure for concerts, weddings, and conferences. The castle grounds, positioned directly on the Mediterranean coast, offer an exceptional blend of historical structure, lush landscape, and artistic innovation.¹²⁰



Picture 84.Château de La Napoule.source:wikipedia archive

¹²⁰.https://www.lnaf.org/chateau-history/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

https://www.berthoninternational.com/about-berthon-international/berthon-publications/berthon-magazine/le-chateau-de-la-napoule/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

3.Civitella Ranieri

located in Umbertide in the Umbria region of Italy, is a 15th-century hilltop castle that has evolved from medieval fortress to a modern center for contemporary arts. Originally recorded in 1053 and reconstructed by the Ranieri family in the early 1500s, the castle retains thick stone walls, arched doorways, family crests, and Renaissance-era frescoes. The structure includes a central courtyard, an intimate chapel of Saint Christopher housing relics, and a network of towers and agricultural outbuildings. In 1995, philanthropist Ursula Corning established the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, transforming the castle into a renowned international artist residency. Each year, the foundation invites writers, visual artists, composers, and thinkers to live and work on-site in a supportive and secluded environment. Residential accommodations are modest but comfortable, with guest apartments and artist studios adapted from former granaries, stables, and farm structures. Facilities include a large communal dining hall offering regional Umbrian cuisine, a well-stocked library, exhibition spaces, gardens, and private and shared studios. The Foundation also organizes public events such as open studios, readings, and performances. Unlike many preserved castles, Civitella Ranieri serves primarily as a creative incubator, continuing the historical tradition of patronage within a framework of cultural exchange and artistic advancement.¹²¹



Picture 85.Civitella Ranieri.source:wikipedia archive

¹²¹.https://civitella.org/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

https://www.transartists.org/en/air/civitella-ranieri-center?utm_source=chatgpt.com

villa comparison

	1. Castello di Potentino	2. The castle of La Napoule	3.Civitella Ranieri Foundation
location and Year established :	Tuscany, Italy - 11th century	France , 12th century	15th century , Umbria, Italy
rooms:	8 private room for 2 with bathroom inside	private room with bathroom inside	private room with bathroom inside
Mission and Vision :	slow living, heritage, and creativity	nurture artistic talent through residencies and community outreach, fostering the creative process as a catalyst to advance intercultural understanding	enable the artist to pursue their work and to exchange ideas in this unique and inspiring setting. Residencies are by nomination only. The residency previously hosted musician/composers under the framework of UNESCO.
Target Audience :	writers, artists, and thinkers in a Tuscan valley	international artists	writers, composers, and visual artists
Duration :	12 artist , 2 week / 1 month	10 artists per residency session	15 artists per residency session
Facilities and Resources :	Cooking and Cheesemaking classes , Wine Tastings , Winemaking Historical Tours , Horse Riding , Bicycle rental , Yoga Lessons , Massages Personal Training.	wedding , prívte events , museum preserving the work and legacy , studio space to work , specific workspace	library and galleries , kitchen and gardens , apartements and studios
Funding and Costs :	self-funded	they provides each resident with a stipend	self funded
Sustainability and Innovation :	A medieval castle restored and used as a private cultural residence.	restored medieval castle turned into an artist residency and international artists and exhibitions.	Eco-conscious design
Selection Process :	Open call , website	submit application in spacific deadline , Artists can apply once a year.	submit application in spacific deadline , Criteria for selection
Meal :	individual	often eaten together in dining room, providing opportunities for group time	often eaten together in dining room, providing opportunities for group time and Supporting local farmers and producers of cheese, wine, meat, eggs, flour, and olive oil, and traveling no more than 50 kilometers to secure the best, healthiest products available.

Picture 86.Villa comparison table

8 . 3 . describing the villa dei laghi.

Location.

- Inside La Mandria Park (a vast royal estate)
- Near Venaria Reale, 15 km from Turin

Accessibility

- Limited public access (inside a protected area)
- Accessible by foot, bike, or special guided tours
- Private vehicle access restricted

Positive Elements

- Surrounded by nature (lakes, forests, wildlife)
- Historical royal villa (built by King Vittorio Emanuele II in 1860s)
- Secluded, peaceful atmosphere
- Part of UNESCO heritage site linked to Reggia di Venaria
- Faces small natural lakes (the name "Villa of the Lakes")
- Romantic landscape design with a mix of wild and curated vegetation

Negative Elements

- Remote and isolated
- Hard to access without a guide or permit
- Not maintained for public use—interior not regularly open

9 . Project

9 . 1 . floor plans

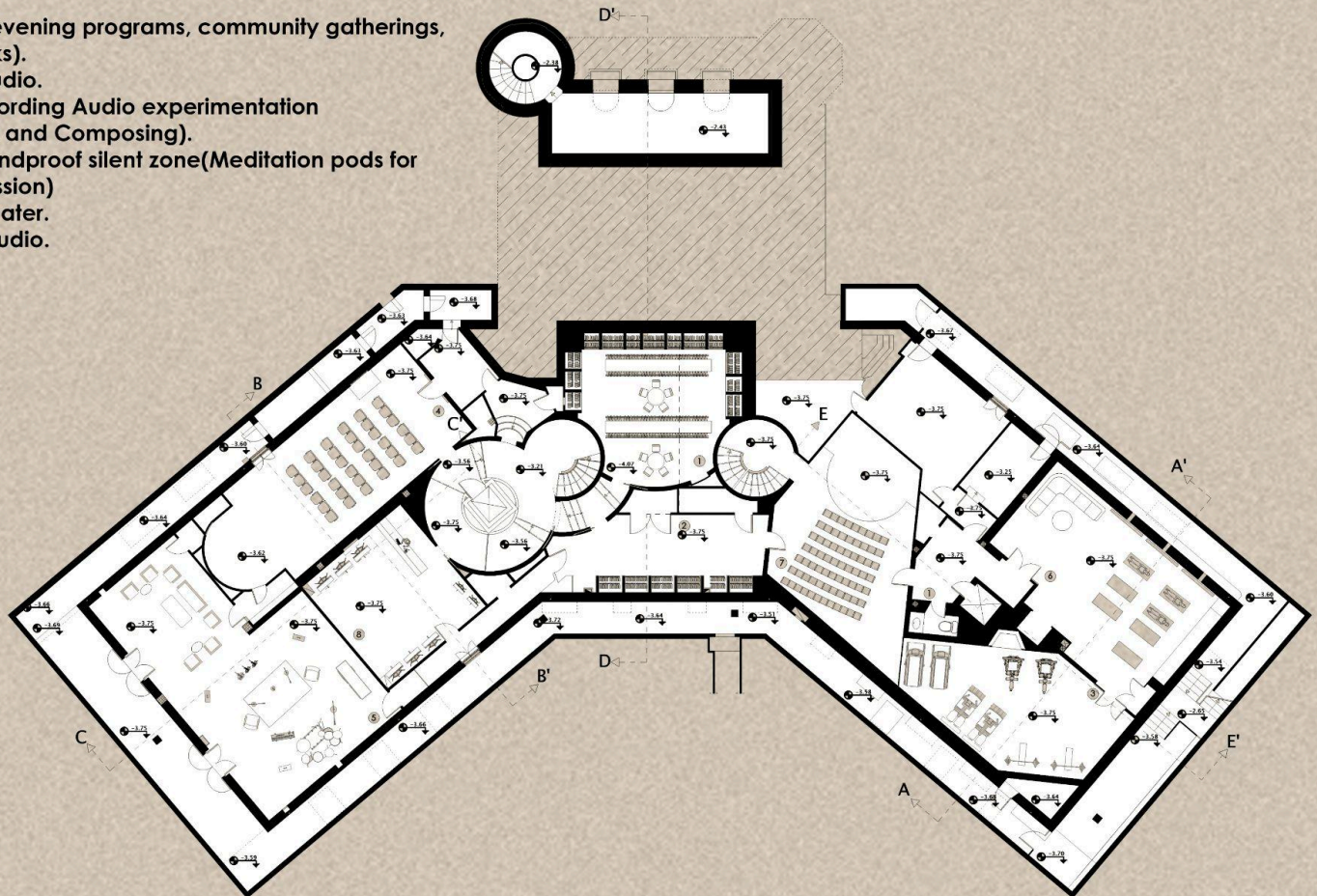


“Site Plan of Villa dei Laghi within La Mandria Park – showing spatial organization, access points, landscape elements, and the relationship between the villa and its natural surroundings”



“Close-up of the Villa dei Laghi site plan highlighting access routes within La Mandria Park”

- 1.wine testing.
- 2.casual wine exhibition.
- 3.gym.
- 4.cinema.
- (Great for evening programs, community gatherings, or artist talks).
- 5.Sound Studio.
- (Sound recording Audio experimentation Podcasting and Composing).
- 6.Dark, soundproof silent zone(Meditation pods for decompression)
- 7.amphitheater.
- 8.painter studio.

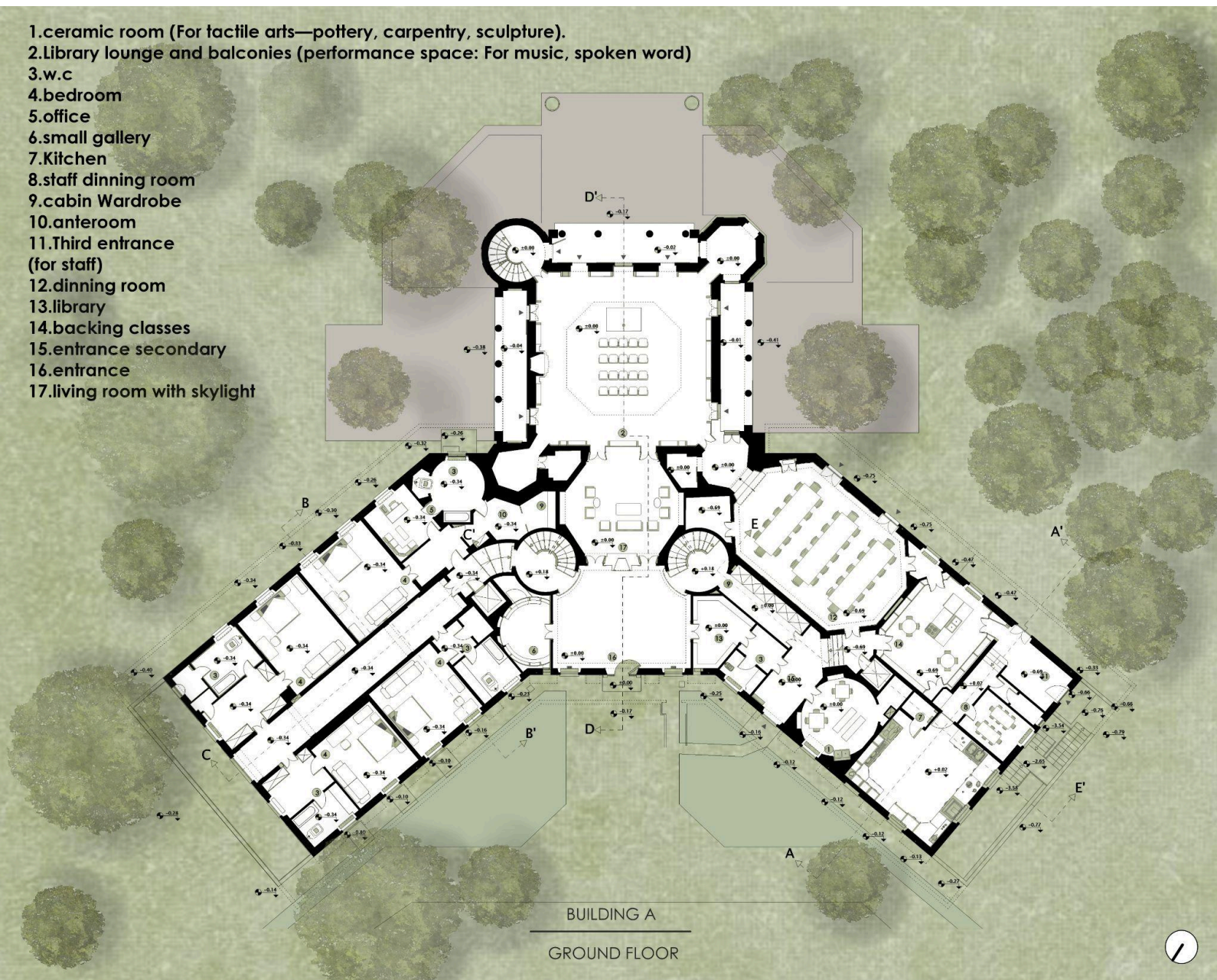


BUILDING A
BASEMENT

“Basement Plan – Wellness, Culture & Leisure Spaces

The basement hosts a variety of specialized functions dedicated to relaxation, creativity, and well-being. These include a wine tasting area, gym, cinema room, sound recording studio, and a yoga/meditation space, offering both individual and communal experiences tailored to the needs of the resident artists”

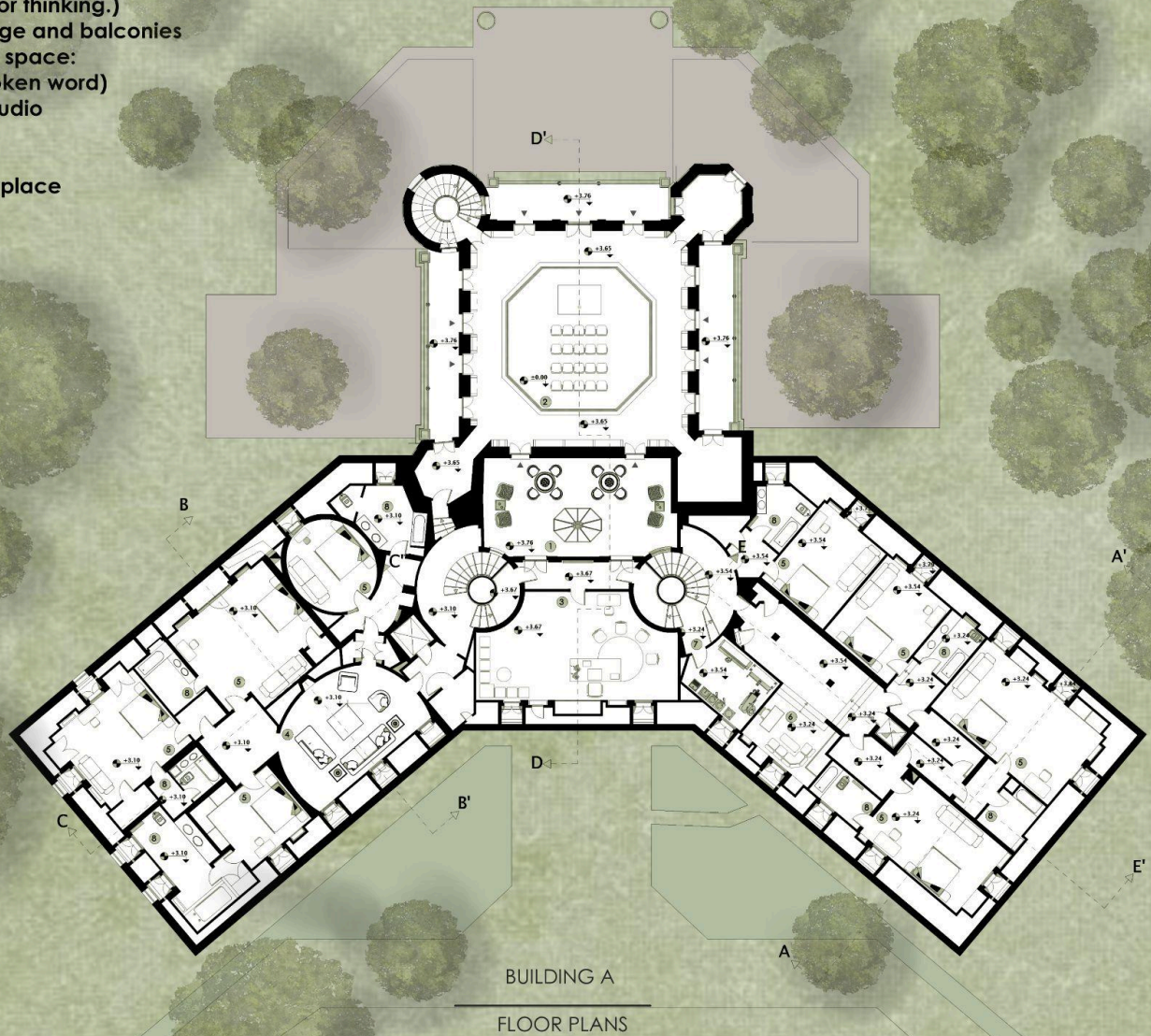
- 1.ceramic room (For tactile arts—pottery, carpentry, sculpture).
- 2.Library lounge and balconies (performance space: For music, spoken word)
- 3.w.c
- 4.bedroom
- 5.office
- 6.small gallery
- 7.Kitchen
- 8.staff dinning room
- 9.cabin Wardrobe
- 10.anteroom
- 11.Third entrance (for staff)
- 12.dinning room
- 13.library
- 14.backing classes
- 15.entrance secondary
- 16.entrance
- 17.living room with skylight



“Ground Floor Plan – Artist Residency Layout

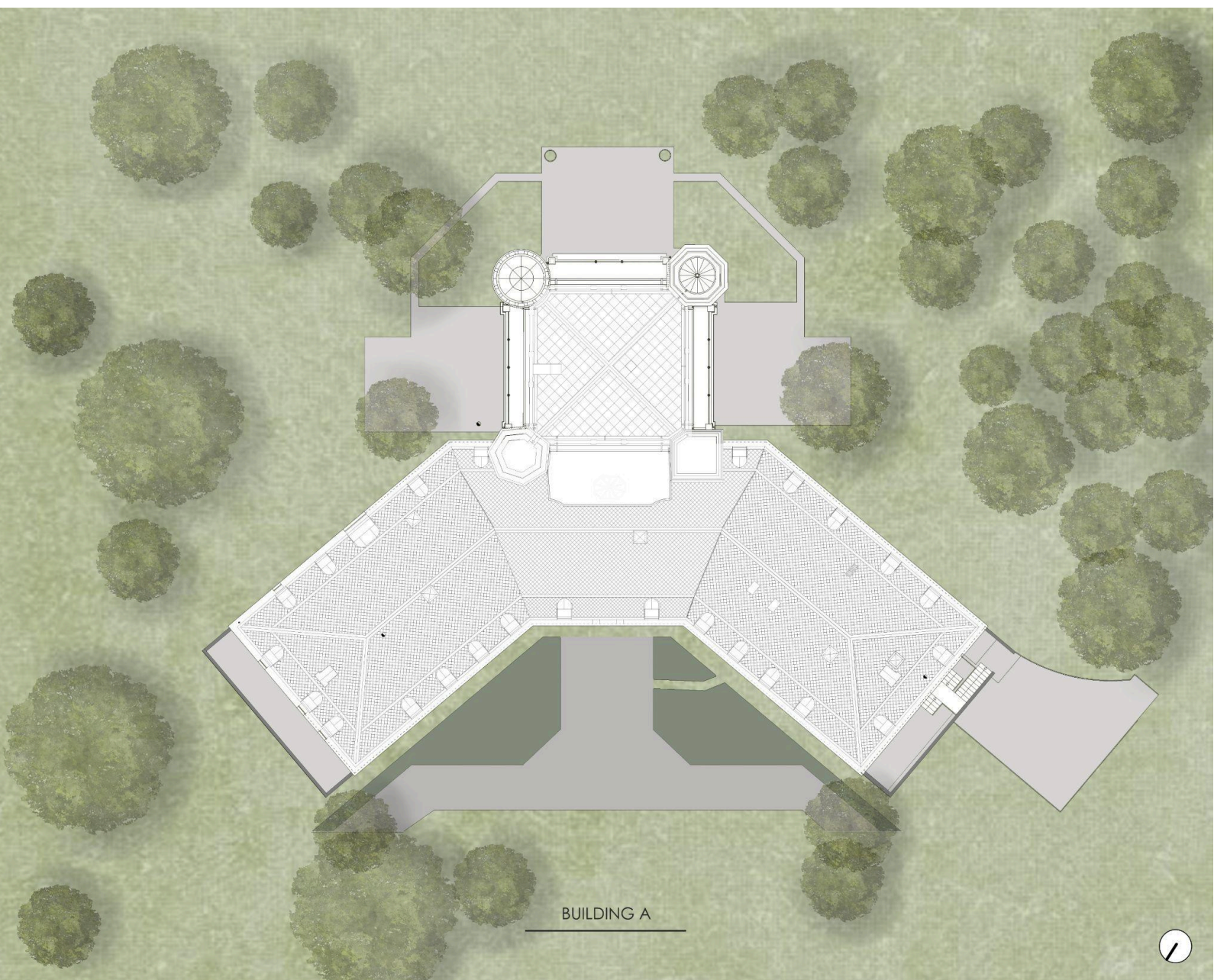
The ground floor includes key communal and private spaces designed to support daily life and creative work for resident artists. The layout features private bedrooms, a shared kitchen and dining area, a living room, a library for study and inspiration, and dedicated spaces for art-related activities such as baking classes, fostering both individual retreat and collective interaction”

- 1.terrace
(Private reflection spots perfect
for journaling or thinking.)
- 2..Library lounge and balconies
(performance space:
For music, spoken word)
- 3.architected studio
- 4.living room
- 5.bedroom
- 6.writers work place
- 7.laundry
- 8.w.c



“First Floor Plan – Artist Residency Layout

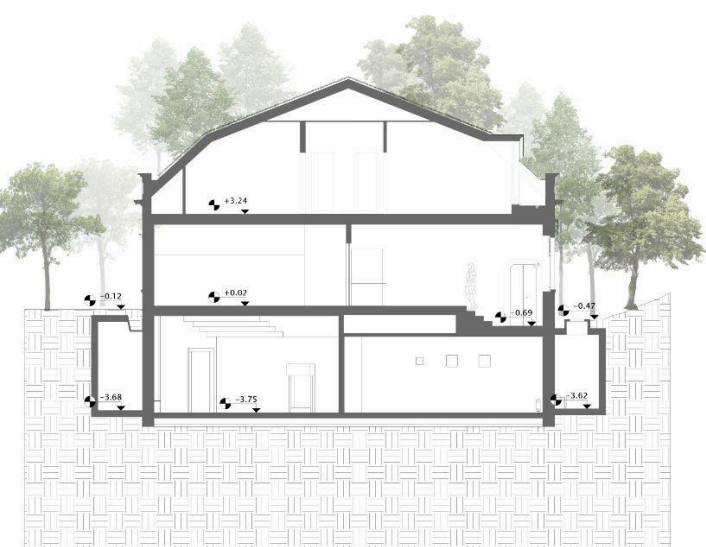
The first floor is organized to support daily living and creative work, featuring dedicated workspaces for architects and writers, private bedrooms, a shared living room, and essential service areas such as laundry. The design balances functionality with comfort, fostering both individual focus and communal interaction”



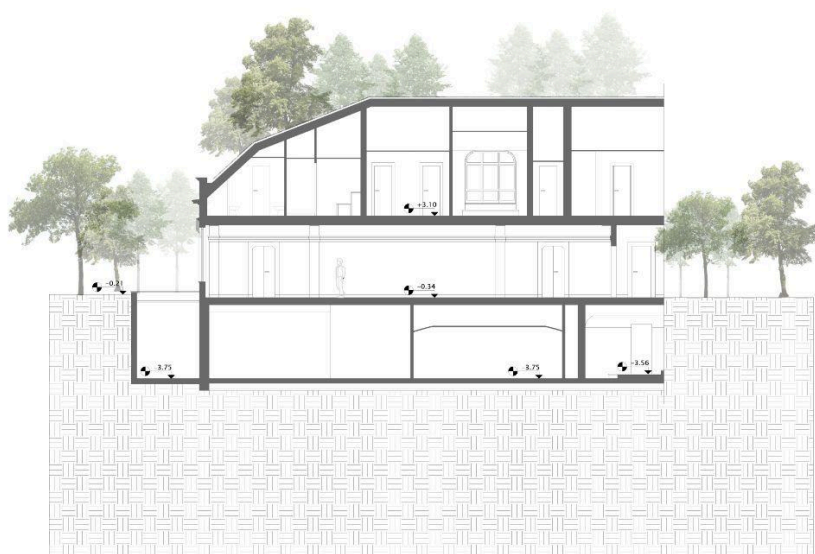
“Roof Floor Plan of Villa dei Laghi”



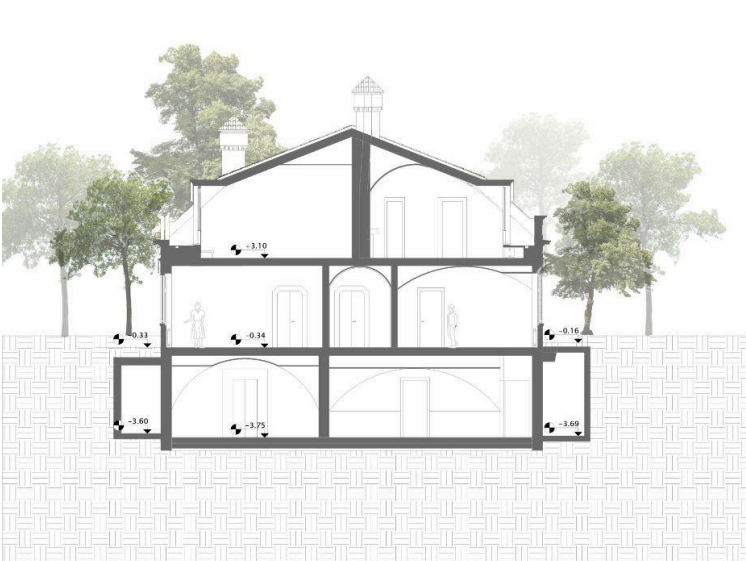
Section D-D



Section A-A



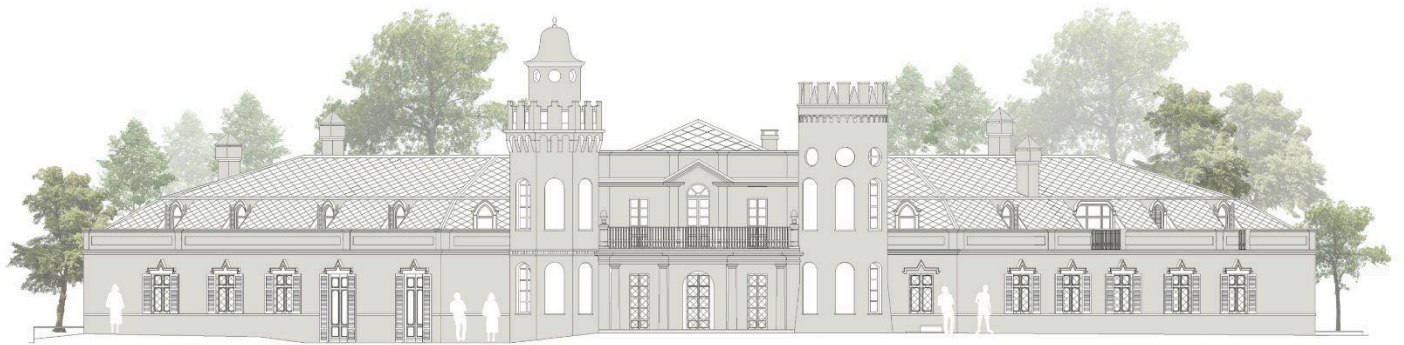
Section C-C



Section B-B



Section E-E



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

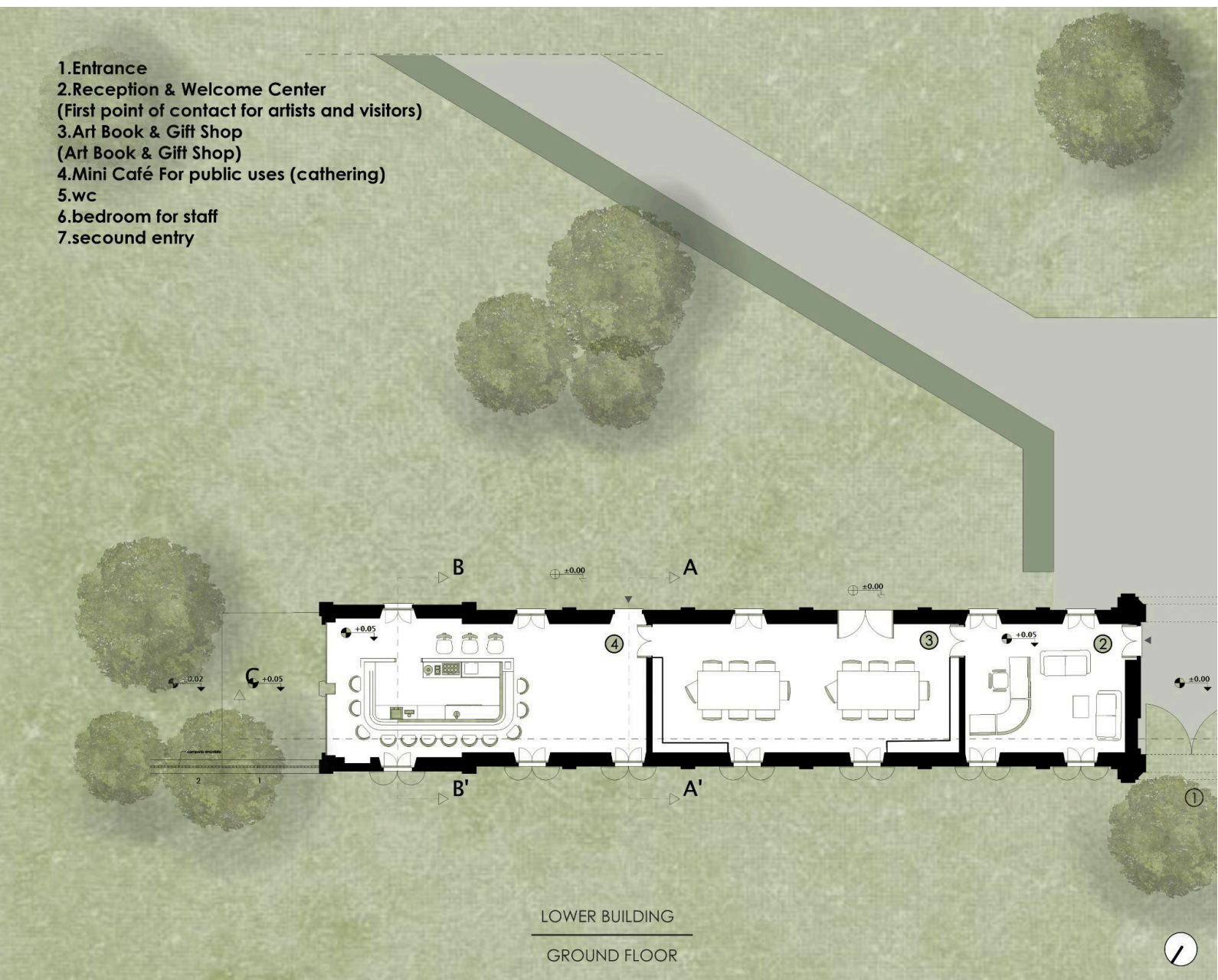


WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

9 . 2 . Lower Building Plans



"Ground Floor Plan – Entry Building: Public Welcome Area with Reception, Art & Book Shop, Mini Café and Catering Zone"



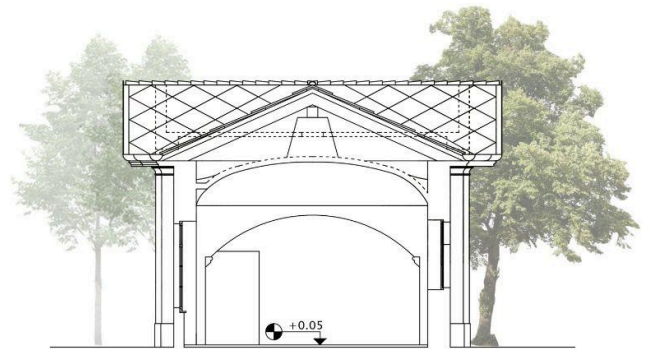
WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



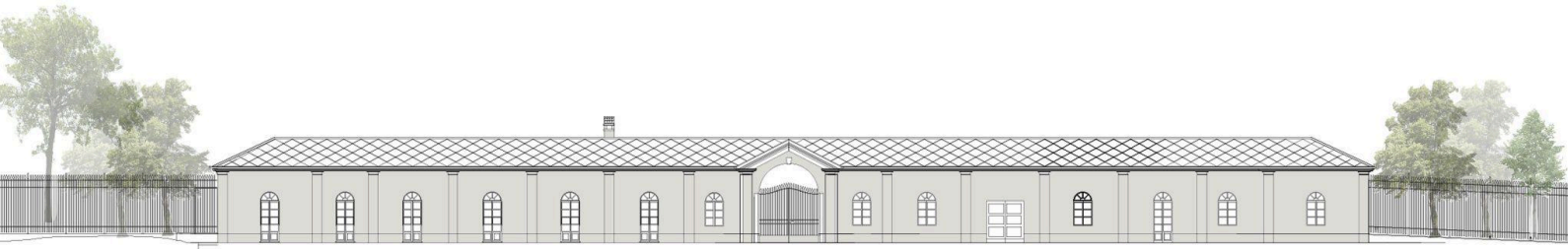
Section A-A



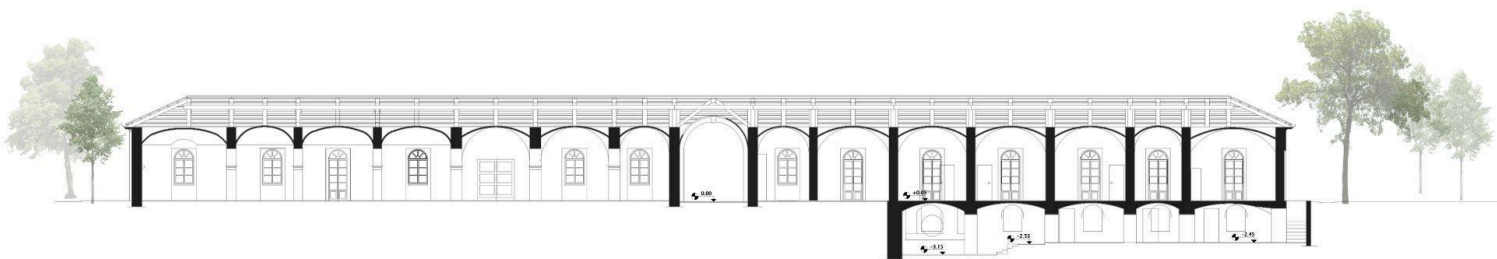
Section B-B



ELEVATION NORTH

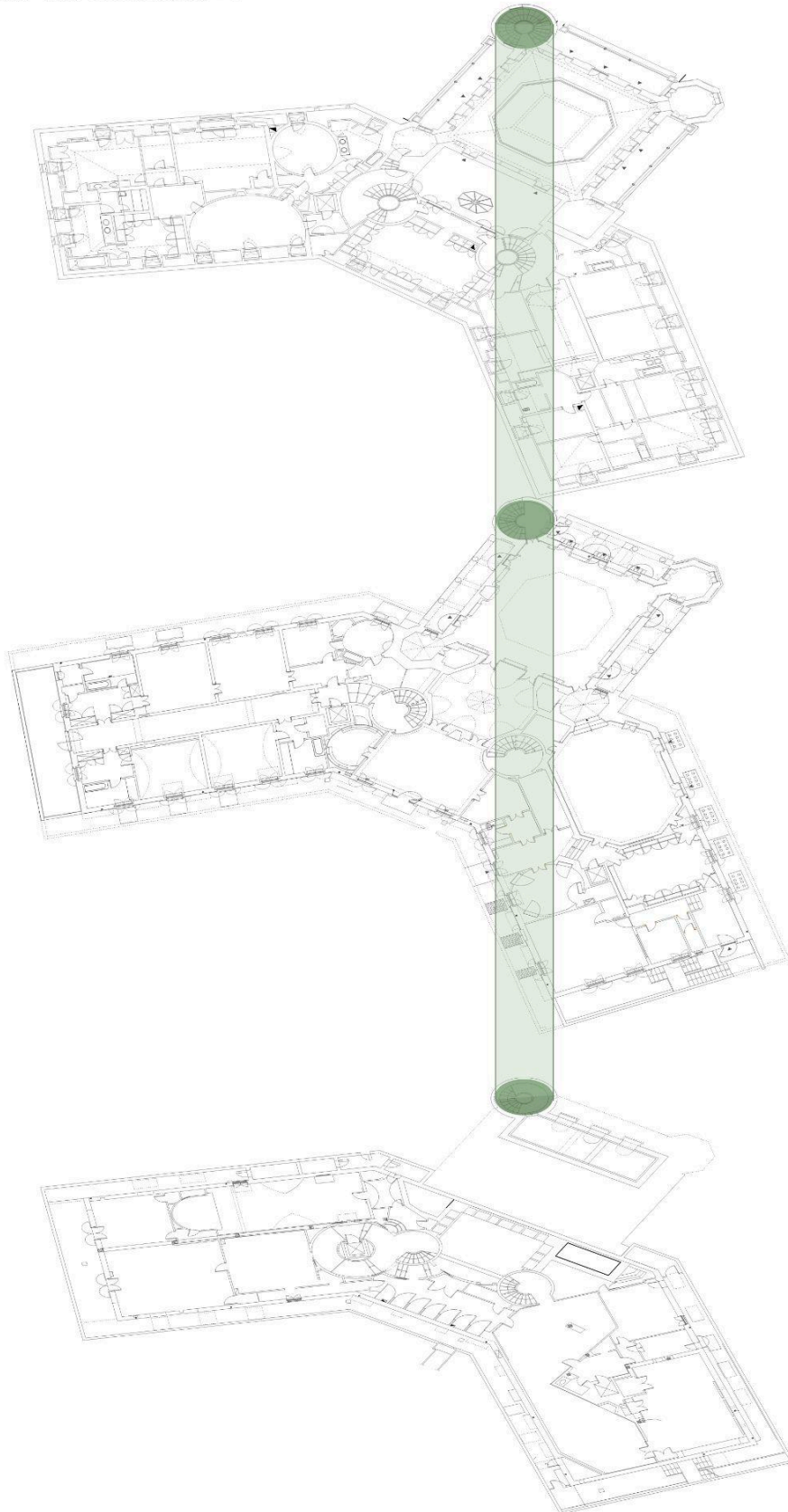


ELEVATION SOUTH

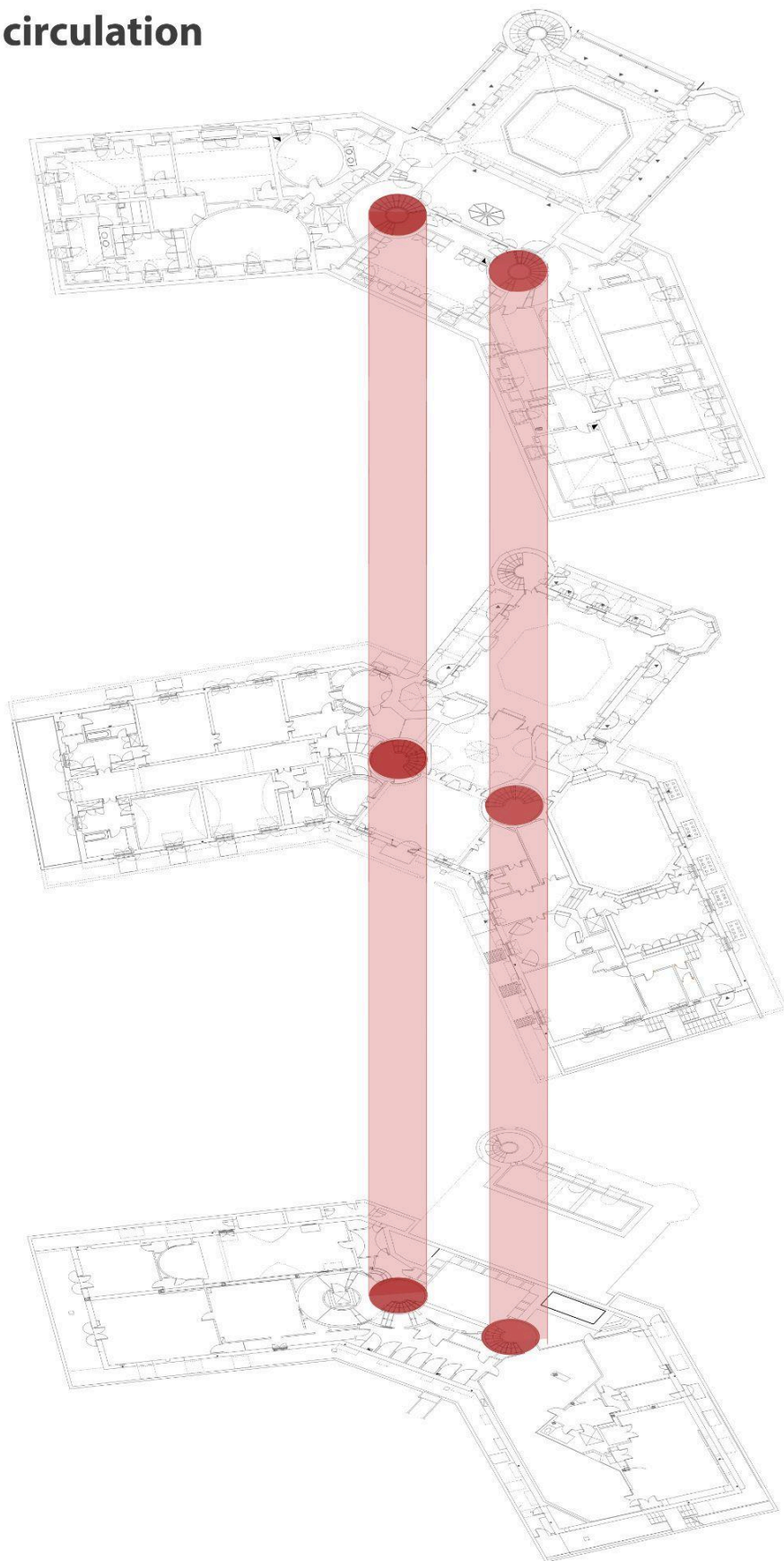


SECTION C-C

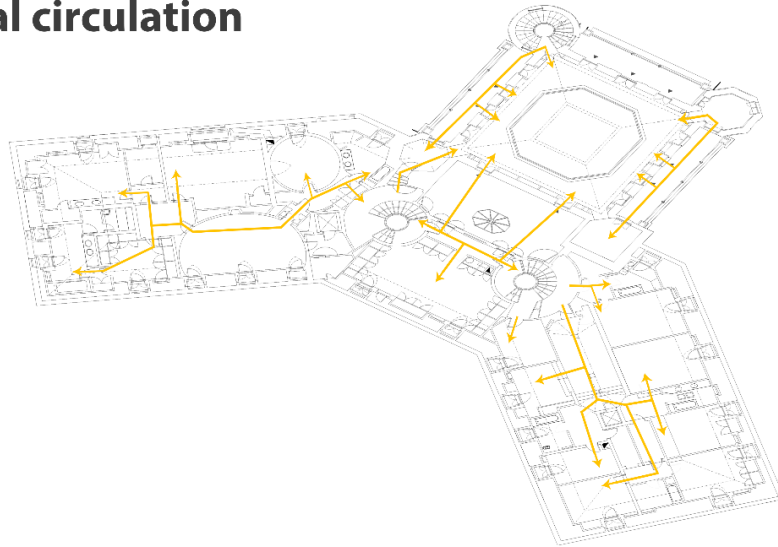
vertical circulation



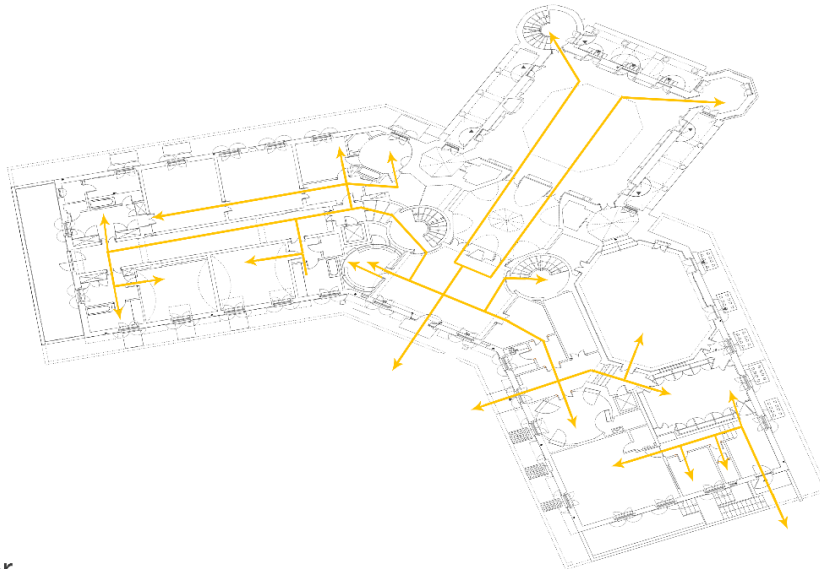
vertical circulation



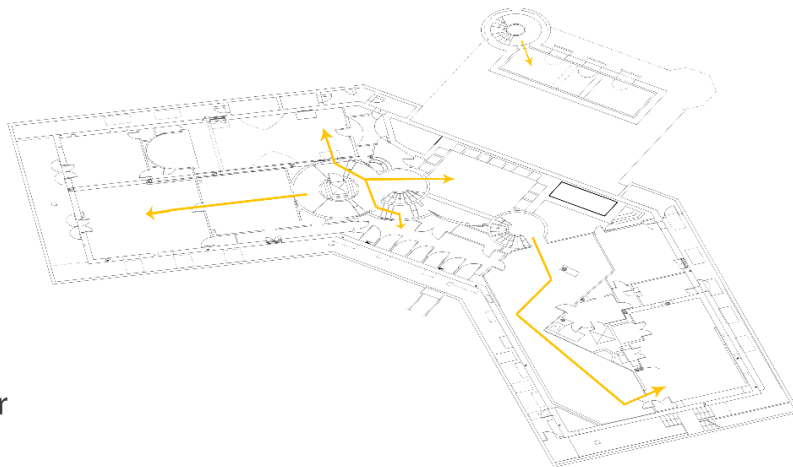
horizontal circulation



first floor



ground floor

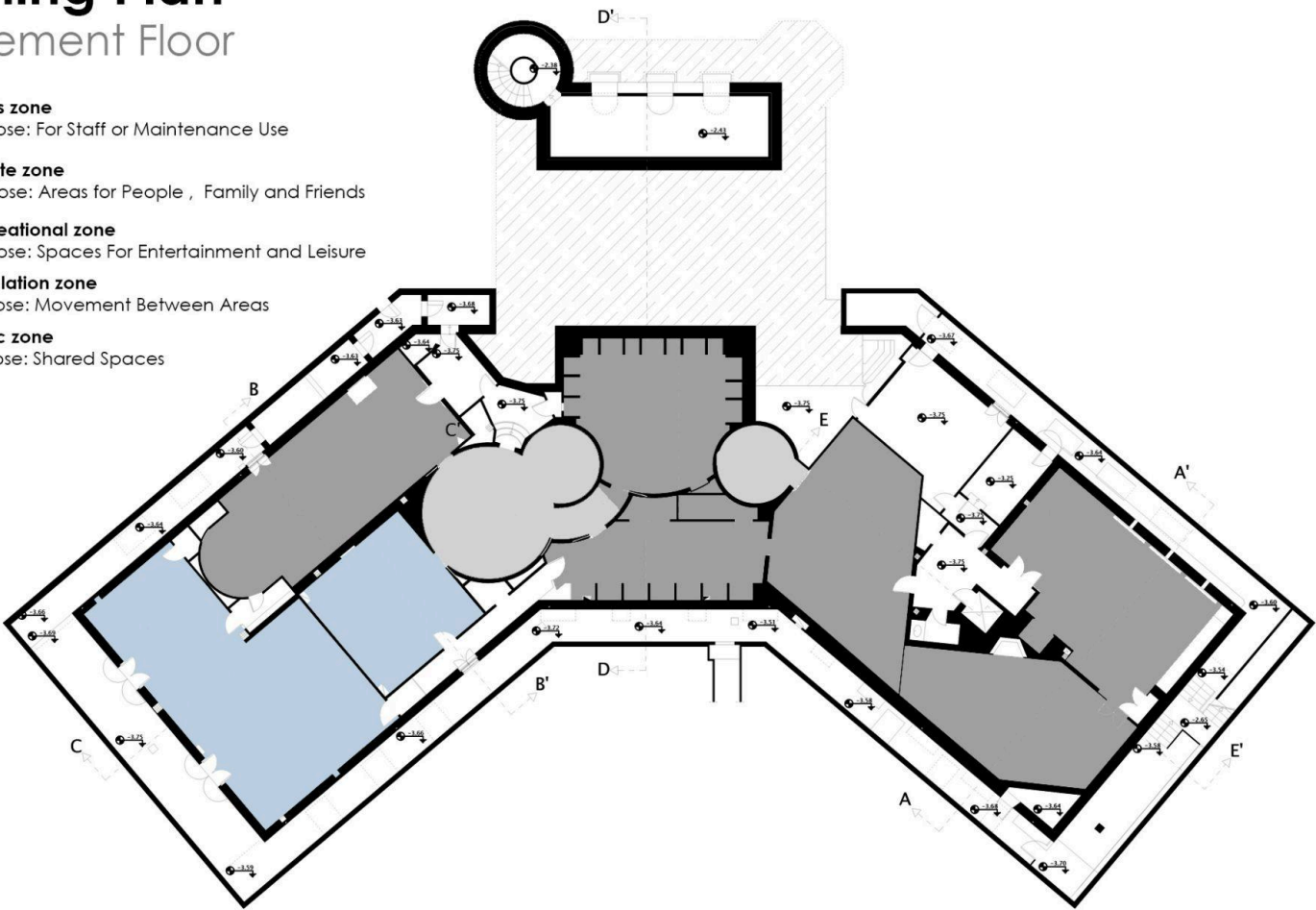


basement floor

Zoning Plan

Basement Floor

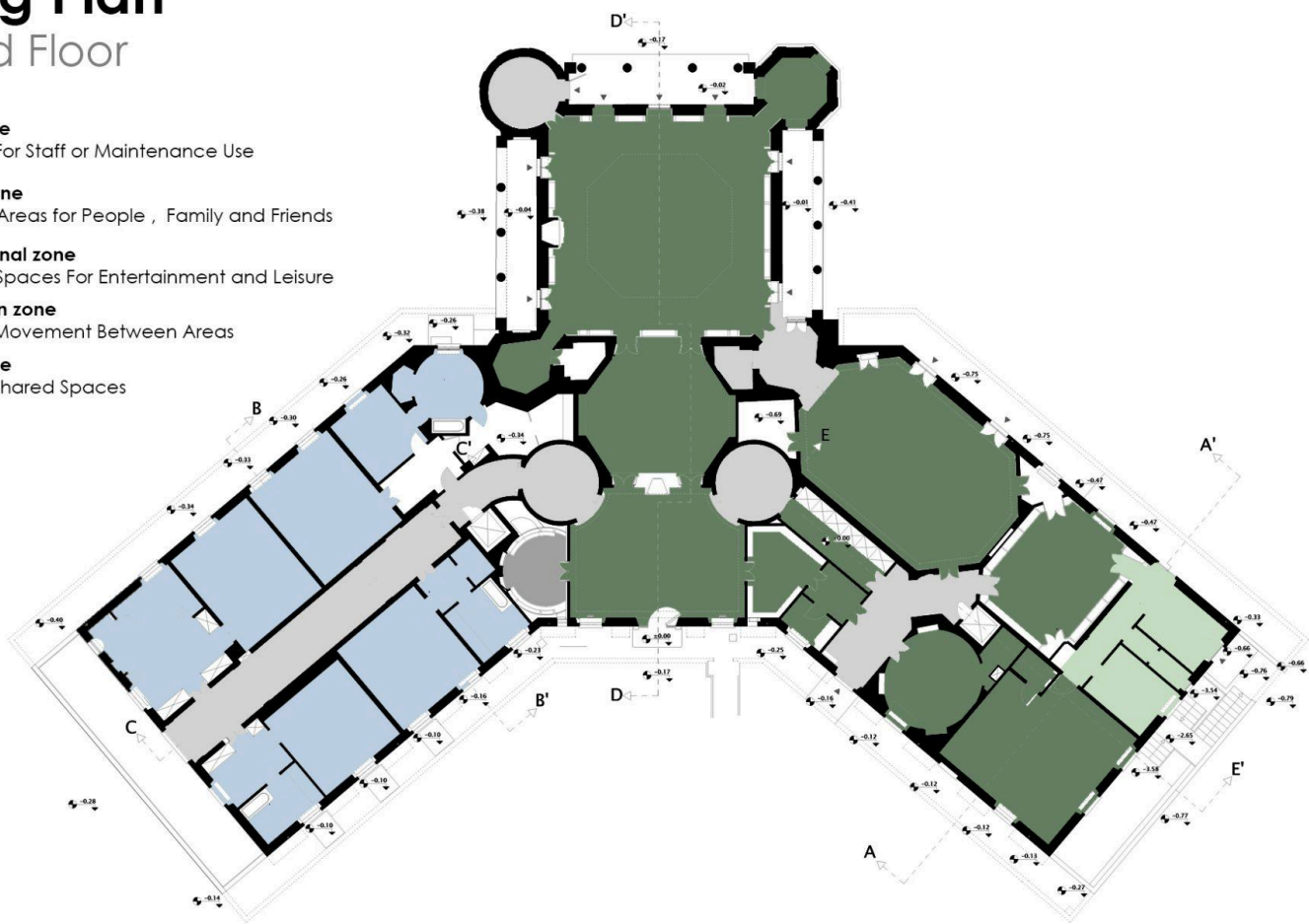
- 0% **Servis zone**
Purpose: For Staff or Maintenance Use
- 25% **Private zone**
Purpose: Areas for People , Family and Friends
- 65% **Recreational zone**
Purpose: Spaces For Entertainment and Leisure
- 10% **Circulation zone**
Purpose: Movement Between Areas
- 0% **Public zone**
Purpose: Shared Spaces



Zoning Plan

Ground Floor

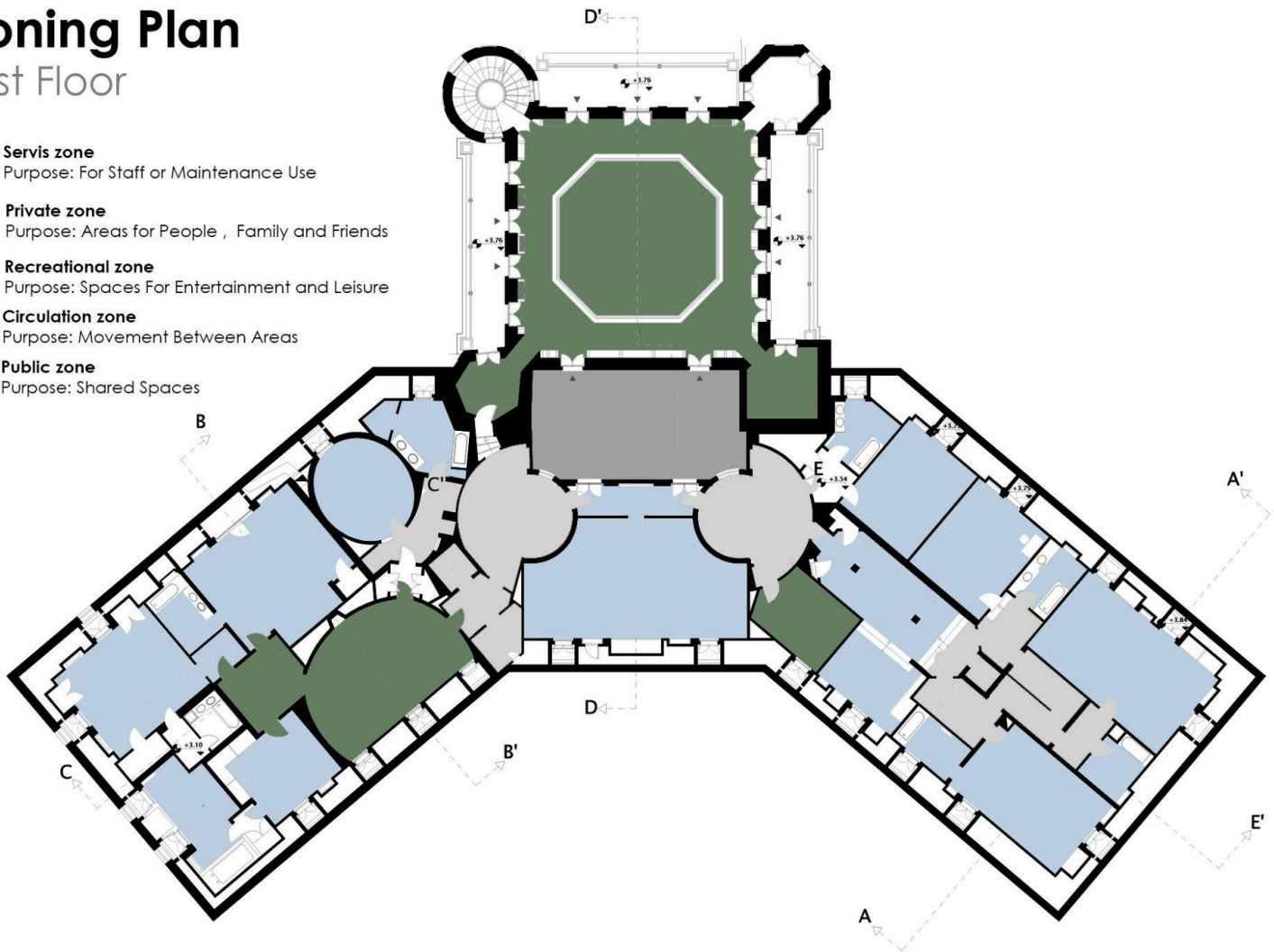
- 6% **Servis zone**
Purpose: For Staff or Maintenance Use
- 28% **Private zone**
Purpose: Areas for People , Family and Friends
- 4% **Recreational zone**
Purpose: Spaces For Entertainment and Leisure
- 12% **Circulation zone**
Purpose: Movement Between Areas
- 50% **Public zone**
Purpose: Shared Spaces



Zoning Plan

First Floor

- 4% **Servis zone**
Purpose: For Staff or Maintenance Use
- 48% **Private zone**
Purpose: Areas for People , Family and Friends
- 10% **Recreational zone**
Purpose: Spaces For Entertainment and Leisure
- 20% **Circulation zone**
Purpose: Movement Between Areas
- 18% **Public zone**
Purpose: Shared Spaces



10 . Analysis of the Decades and Intervention.

Changing existing architectural and environmental heritage has always brought up challenging questions. To make sure a project doesn't feel outdated by the time it's finished, any work on historic buildings must consider how time has changed the way we see and use them. As society changes culturally, economically, and socially, our techniques, styles, and approaches to restoration also need to adapt. At the core, it's important to protect and value what's already there in order to reconnect the past with the present. The building being studied shows how this modern approach is different from the more destructive methods of the last century, when many old buildings were either heavily altered or torn down. Today, the goal is to *learn from and build upon* existing structures, rather than ignore or erase them.

10 . 1 . Analysis of the Degradation Present on the Main Facade.

The Villa's south-facing facade was chosen for the degradation analysis since it shows the most external degradation of the entire structure. Washout is the first of the five examined phenomena that is linked to a physical decline. This problem only affects the circular tower locally. Rainwater-induced mechanical processes lead to the erosion or removal of material fragments of different sizes from the surface. Water declines the paint layer by breaking lime-based binders and acting as a solvent. This issue damages the paint's aesthetic appeal in addition to compromising its functionality. Rainwater or runoff action; wind action brought on by intense air turbulence in contact with the surface; and atmospheric pollution that targets and degrades the mineral binder. The circular tower's first story is where the runoff phenomena is found. It primarily manifests as a type of degradation brought on by rainfall run off.¹²²

122. Norma UNI 11182-2006 "Beni culturali - Materiali lapidei naturali ed artificiali - Descrizione della forma di alterazione - Termini e definizioni"



Picture 87 . Archived documents

During my site surveys, i found that one of the main repair needs is restoring the entire painted and decorative designs on the exterior façades. As shown in the photos I took during my inspections, the artwork often features plant and vegetation themes. These exterior murals, which date back to the 19th century, have suffered a lot over time. They've been exposed to weather and have gone through different repairs, leaving them in very poor condition with various types of damage. The condition of the exterior plaster varies, especially on the south-facing wall. Some areas show clear signs of deterioration. In certain spots, the paint is missing because the plaster has separated from the brick wall underneath.



Picture 88 . Archived documents

The surface can be prepared, cleaned with low-pressure equipment, and then cleaned with a moderate-pressure water wash using clean water to address this kind of degeneration. The superficial degradation of the plaster is frequently seen throughout the façade, although it is most apparent on the towers' blocked windows. This appears as the mechanical action of solid particles carried by the wind removing material from the surface.



Picture 89 .Archived documents

The following are some of the primary reasons of the occurrence: poor surface layer tightness, significant air turbulence in contact with the surface causing wind action, air pollution that breaks down the mineral binder's structure, erosion and precipitation or runoff infiltration.

Evaluating the masonry structure and its covering for any potential discontinuities is the first step in developing intervention solutions. In order to remove significant dust deposits, it will then be possible to go in and use dry cleaning with brushes or somewhat low-pressure compressed air jets. Patching with mortar that is suitable with the current masonry structure will come next. Salt efflorescence is a phenomenon that occurs widely on the first-floor masonry and close to the upper portion of both towers. On the surface of the structure, this degradation shows as the development of materials that are typically crystal in appearance and white in color. The connected surface parts may separate as a result of efflorescence that also takes place inside the material.



Picture 90 .Archived documents

Some of the main reasons for the problem are:

Water getting inside and moisture building up in the masonry support.

Installing the materials in bad weather conditions, like when it's too hot or too cold. Water or moisture moving into the material. Mistakes like using the wrong mixes or combinations, painting on dusty or crumbling surfaces, and applying the paint unevenly.

After figuring out the causes, the solution is to remove the loose paint carefully without damaging the layers underneath or any remaining stains. Then, repaint the area, either partially or fully, using colors that match the surrounding surface as closely as possible.



Picture 91 . Archived documents.

One or more features—such as color, clarity, or visible color change—can make the degradation easy to notice. Depending on the situation, this change can appear in different ways. It doesn't always mean the material is getting weaker; sometimes, it just looks different because of changes that affect how we see it.

The main reasons are as follows: Long-term exposure to sunlight, Chemical attack from rainwater runoff, Natural aging of the painted surface, Development of fine dust and fumes, Unfair absorption by the underlying substrate, Changing thermal transmittance of materials used in infill walls.

After an extensive review of the reasons and degree of deterioration, any damaged paint layers can be carefully removed without causing any damage to the wall substrate. After that, restoration can move forward with full or partial repainting, avoiding sunlight-sensitive paints and utilizing methods and hues that are similar to the original.



Picture 92 . Archived documents

Poor or no maintenance, along with dry deposits of dust and other natural or man-made pollutants, affect the area. Large dust buildups will be cleaned off using brushes to restore the surface to its original condition. If harder deposits like gravel or isolated plants are found, they will be removed as well.

The first type of damage noticed is called detachment, which happens because the property hasn't been properly cared for. This damage is most visible on the round tower and the two square columns supporting the first-floor balcony. Detachment shows up as gaps between layers of material, which can eventually cause those layers to break apart.



Picture 93 .Archived documents

Decay Analysing



Surface deposit

Deposit of a number of foreign materials, including dust, soil, and garbage. The material changes in thickness and has poor consistency and surface attachment. It appears repeatedly throughout the element.



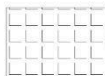
Detachment

The solution of consistency between the material's surface layers, both amongst themselves and with relation to the base, usually occurs before the layers' fall. It appears at regular times around the tower curtain walls and columns. Resulting from a lack of routine maintenance



Whashout of paint

removal of more or less fragments of material from the surface due to the mechanical and chemical processes caused by water from rainfall. water acts as a solvent and causes the paint to disintegrate.



Pouring

Rainwater runoff causes pouring pathology. The runoffs usually follow a vertical pattern, but their path can be uneven even on apparently flat surfaces. It occurs at regular times on specific walls.



Plaster surface erosion

removal of material from the surface due to mechanical actions of solid particles transported by winds. it appears in a widespread manner on the facade.



Salt efflorescence

Creation of materials on the artifact's surface, which are often white in color and appear crystal or powdery. In the case of salt efflorescence, crystal can occur inside the material, causing the most exterior elements to separate. It occurs in unequal wavy lines.



Degradation of the decorative pictures

Paintwork change caused by environmental activities causes a small portion of the graphic part. It happens in a limited area of the facade.

Intervention

A	B
C	

A.

Construction element:

A- vertical structure (VC)

B.

Material:

BR - Bricks

PL - Plaster

C.

Type:

1. Bricks

2. Lime plaster

a: apply Mortars.



b: Dry brushing



e: soft spray water



c: Patching



d: uniform thickness



f: painting



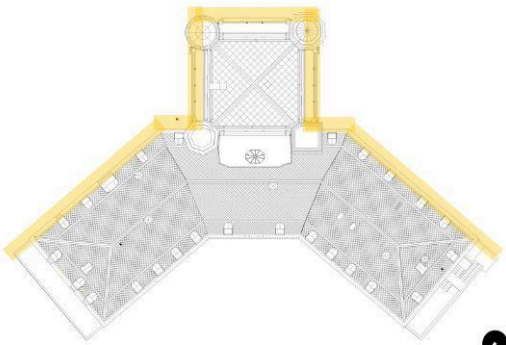
g: wet sandblasting



h: apply new plaster

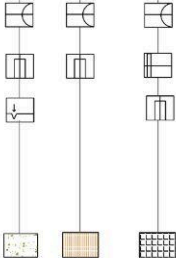


key plan



2

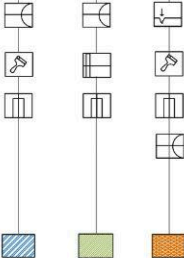
VS	PL BR	VS	PL	VS	PL
2	-	2	-	2	-



Intervention

Degradation

VS	PL	VS	PL	VS	PL
2	-	2	-	2	-



VS	BR
1	-





Material

plaster

Legend

VS vertical structure (wall)

PL Plaster

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

salt efflorescence

Type of Process that led to Degradation

Creation of materials on the artifact's surface, which are often white in color and appear crystal or powdery.

In the case of salt efflorescence, crystal can occur inside the material, causing the most exterior elements to separate.

It occurs in unequal wavy lines.

Proposed intervention

b: Dry brushing

e: soft spray water

use chemical liquid for removing the salt and stop them.

Brush off dry efflorescence using a stiff brush or dry cloth with special chemical liquid.

Symbolism





Material

plaster

Legend

VS vertical structure(wall)

PL Plaster

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

plaster surface erosion

Type of Process that led to Degradation

removal of material from the surface due to mechanical actions of solid particles transported by winds. it appears in a widespread manner on the facad.

Proposed intervention

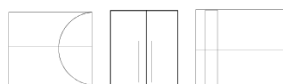
b:Dry brushing

d:reintegrat the missing part and uniform thickness

e:soft spray water

Clean the surface to remove dust, salts, or contaminants and cleaning with soft water spray then Carefully remove the damaged plaster and apply a new plaster layer using compatible materials (e.g., lime-based plaster for historic buildings) and reintegrat the missing part

Symbolism





Material

plaster

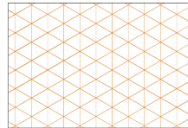
Legend

VS vertical structure(wall)

PL Plaster

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

Degradation of the decorative pictures

Type of Process that led to Degradation

Paintwork change caused by environmental activities causes a small portion of the graphic part.
It happens in a limited area of the facade.

Proposed intervention

b:Dry brushing

e:soft spray water

a:apply Mortars

f:painting

consolidate foundation color.

weak plaster layers with compatible consolidants..

and Improve ventilation and reduce exposure to direct sunlight if necessary.

Fill cracks and losses with compatible lime-based or mineral-based mortars. and repaint it with spacial product

Symbolism





Material

plaster

Legend

VS vertical structure(wall)

PL Plaster

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

whashout of paint

Type of Process that led to Degradation

removal of more or less fragments of material from the surface due to the mechanical and chemical processes caused by water from rainfall. water acts as a solvent and causes the paint to disintegrate

Proposed intervention

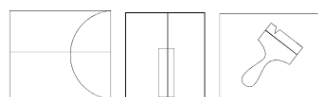
b:Dry brushing

e:soft spray water

f:repaint the surface

Surface Preparation.Remove loose or peeling paint by scraping and soft spray water then Apply a Suitable Primer. For water-damaged plaster, use a stain-blocking primer.

Symbolism





Material

plaster and Brick

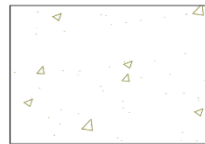
Legend

VS vertical structure(wall)

PL plaster / BR brick

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

Surface deposit

Type of Process that led to Degradation

Deposit of a number of foreign materials, including dust, soil, and garbage. The material changes in thickness and has poor consistency and surface attachment. It appears repeatedly throughout the element.

Proposed intervention

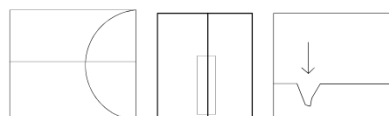
b: Dry brushing

e: soft spray water

a: apply Mortars

Remove dirt, dust, and contaminants using soft spray water .For minor cracks: Use epoxy injection and For larger cracks: Apply polymer-based mortar.

Symbolism





Material

Bricks

Legend

VS vertical structure (wall)

BR Bricks/ PL plaster

Bricks

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

Detachment

Type of Process that led to Degradation

The solution of consistency between the material's surface layers, both amongst themselves and with relation to the base, usually occurs before the layers' fall. It appears at regular times around the tower curtain walls and columns. Resulting from a lack of routine maintenance

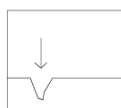
Proposed intervention

a: Apply Mortars.

f: repaint the surface

Prepare a new mortar mix that matches the existing structure for compatibility. and Apply fresh mortar and repaint the surface

Symbolism





Material

plaster

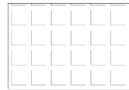
Legend

VS vertical structure(wall)

PL Plaster

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

pouring and Detachment

Type of Process that led to Degradation

Rainwater runoff causes pouring pathology.

The runoffs usually follow a vertical pattern, but their path can be uneven even on apparently flat surfaces. It occurs at regular times on specific walls.

Proposed intervention

b:Dry brushing

d:reintegrat the missing part and uniform thickness

e:soft spray water

Clean the surface to remove dust, grease, or debris for better adhesion with dry brushing and water spray.then

Use a consistent pouring technique to ensure uniform thickness and reintegrate the missing part.

Symbolism





Material

plaster and brick

Legend

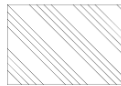
VS vertical structure (column)

PL plaster / BR bricks

1.bricks

2.Lime plaster

Symbolism



Degradation Detected

Detachment

Type of Process that led to Degradation

Parts of the artwork fall and are lost when the innermost layers of plaster or support are exposed.

It occurs at regular intervals on the facade.

Due to failing to undertake regular maintenance.

Proposed intervention

b:Dry brushing

e:soft spray water

c:Patching

h:apply new plaster

after dry brushing and soft spray water , Re-plastering the Lacunae: For voids in plaster (lacuna), patching the area with the right type of plaster is required.Larger areas may require the use of mesh or reinforcing materials to ensure stability and prevent cracking.

Symbolism



11 . Conclusion

This thesis has been a comprehensive exploration of Villa dei Laghi, a historically rich and architecturally valuable site nestled within the vast and ecologically significant La Mandria Park in the Piedmont region. Recognized as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site system, the villa not only embodies the artistic and structural values of its time but also reflects the broader cultural and natural heritage of Piedmont—an area deeply rooted in royal history, landscape preservation, and regional identity. The research began with a strong desire to understand how the villa had evolved into its current condition, shaped by decades of neglect, various functional transformations, and shifting regional priorities. Through detailed archival research, analysis of historical proposals, and an on-site survey, the project built a solid foundation of knowledge from which a thoughtful design intervention could emerge.

La Mandria Park, with its rare balance of wilderness and royal legacy, provided a unique context for the project. The decision to intervene in Villa dei Laghi could not be detached from the broader ambitions of the Piedmont Region, which seeks to revitalize underused heritage assets through sustainable, culturally relevant initiatives. The project responds to this regional strategy by proposing a new function for the villa—one that honors its solitude and historical charm, while also contributing to the cultural fabric of the territory. The restoration of the main façade was a key architectural gesture. Years of weathering and decay had diminished the dignity of the villa's exterior. Careful conservation work was carried out not only to recover its original character but also to reinforce its symbolic presence within the park. This intervention underscores the importance of preserving authenticity while preparing historic buildings for new uses.

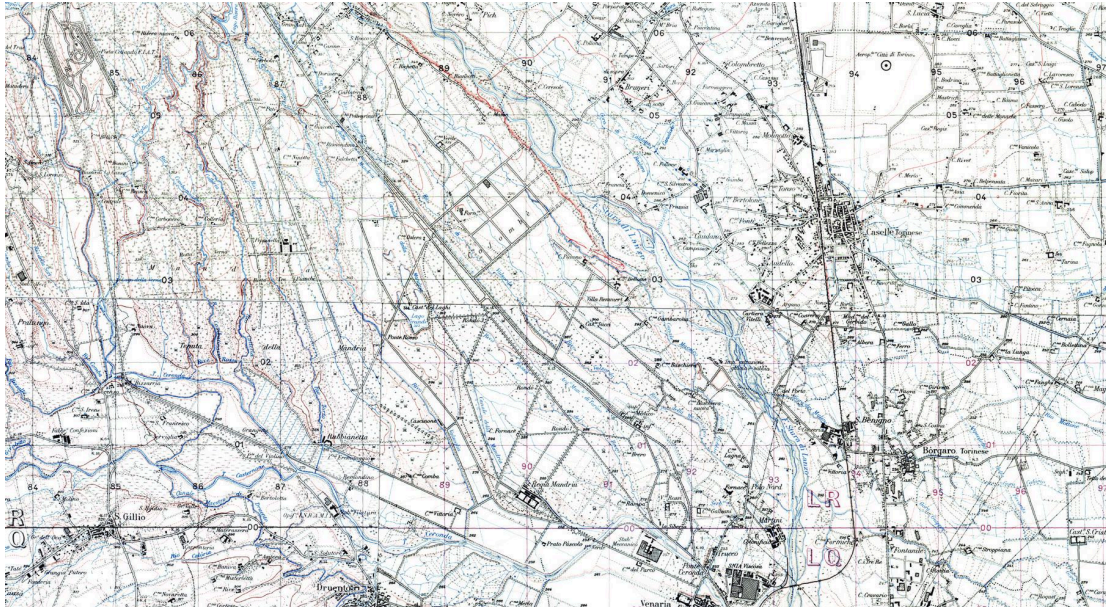
After evaluating multiple potential reuses—based on accessibility studies, site isolation, and cultural needs—the villa was reimagined as an artist residency. This choice aligns closely with both the spatial qualities of the villa and the identity of La Mandria as a place of retreat and contemplation. The residency leverages the peaceful, inspiring atmosphere of the park and transforms the villa into a hub for artistic innovation, critical thinking, and cultural production. In doing so, the project also responds to broader societal values: the need for creative spaces that support well-being, intellectual exchange, and cross-disciplinary dialogue. By integrating artistic activity into a UNESCO-protected natural and historical landscape, the villa is reactivated in a way that bridges past and future, heritage and innovation.

This work thus offers more than just a design proposal—it represents a vision for how architectural heritage in Piedmont can be rethought with sensitivity, creativity, and sustainability. It contributes to ongoing regional and national conversations about the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, aligning with objectives set forth in plans like the PNRR and local initiatives for cultural regeneration.

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that through rigorous research, context-aware restoration, and visionary programming, even a forgotten estate like Villa dei Laghi can once again become a living part of Piedmont's cultural landscape—serving not only as a memory of the past but as a catalyst for contemporary expression and regional identity.

123 . PNRR stands for Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza — Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan. It is part of the European Union's Next Generation EU initiative, created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to support member states in economic recovery, modernization, and sustainable development.

12 . Visual archive



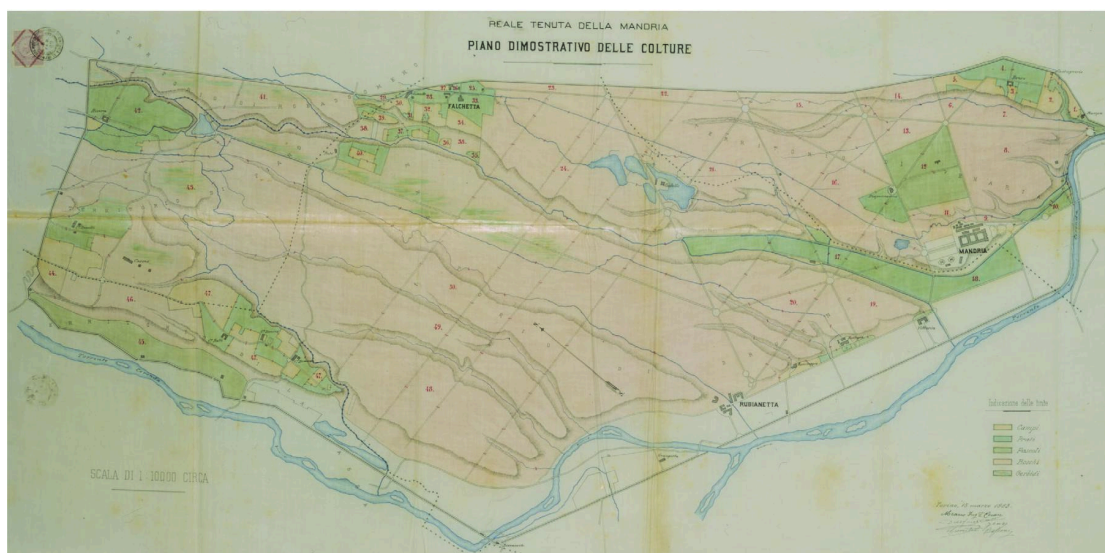
Document 01

Title: IGM Map,

scale 1:25,000

Year: 1955 - 1969

Location and archival data: IGM Map Extract, historical layout, 1955 - 1969, Province of Turin



Document 02

Title: Reale Tenuta della Mandria, Demonstrative crop plan.

Year: 15 March 1883

Location and archive data: AST, Casa di S.M., m. 5688



Document 03

Title: La Mandria at the Venaria Reale property of H.M. the King of Italy.

Year: 1868

Location and archival data: AST, Topographical maps. Department of the second arrondissement communal of Turin Canrol de la Venarie, Plan Geometrique del la Comune de la Venarie



Document 04

Title: contains the territory of Venaria Reale with part of that of Altessano, Robassomero, La Cazza, S. Giglio and Druent.

Year: Approximately drawn up in the period between 1710 and 1716 (Venaria in Garovano layout but the church of Sant'Umberto, the citroniera and the Juvarrian stables do not yet appear).

Location and archive data: AST, Corte, Carte topographic segrete, 23 A red, ladder in trabucchi, watercolored pen drawing on linen paper, s.f., 82.3x64.5 cm



Document 05

Title: Topographical Map in Measure of the Course of the Bealere of Druent, Fiano, and Robassomero, which derive from the Stura River
Year: s.d.
Location and archive data: AST, Corte,
Secret topographical maps, 25 A VII red, sixteenth-century trabucchi scale, drawing on paper mounted on canvas, in black ink, colored with watercolor in several colors. s.f., 833x1953 mm

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