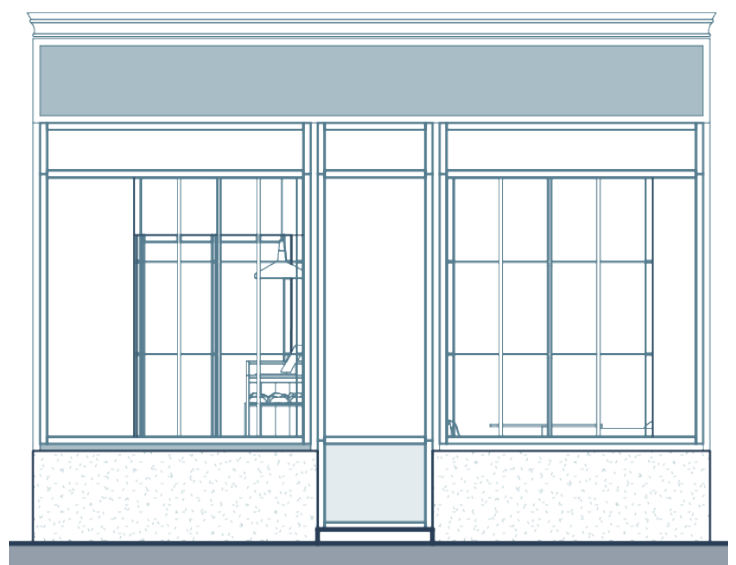


historic shops in turin:
a study for a reinterpretation



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01 introduction

1.1 abstract

This thesis project explores the architectural and cultural significance of 19th century commercial establishments in Turin, Italy. There is a particular focus on the evolution, typologies and urban context of these historic shops, especially along Via Po, as a key commercial axis in the city's development. Combining bibliographic and archival research, on-site documentation, and a historical analysis, the study examines the transformation of commercial spaces in response to changing social dynamics during the long nineteenth century.

The thesis project concludes with an architectural intervention proposal for a shop on Via Po, which has lost its values and identity over time. This aims to align the preservation of its lost heritage with contemporary urban and commercial needs. The proposed design framework is structured by six main actions: remove, protect, reinterpret, adapt, showcase, and attract, allowing a revitalization of a commercial space. This project highlights the potential of heritage-informed design to uphold the identity and character of historic sites while projecting their relevance in a modern context.

1.2 justification

In a faster moving world each day, that is always seeking higher goals and how to achieve them, it is a good idea to stop sometimes and look back at where we have come from and how we used to live in order to keep moving forward. The word heritage comes from the French 'hériter' which means to inherit, in that sense and as defined by UNESCO "heritage is the legacy that we have inherited from the past, with which we live today, and which we will transmit to future generations" ^[1]. Architectural heritage can be moveable or non-moveable and is part of what is identified as cultural and material heritage. Like most fields in architecture, heritage is an ambiguous and subjective area with varying approaches on how a historic site should be intervened, creating a constant discussion on the differences between conservation, preservation and restoration. There is no right or wrong approach, as they all have valid points coming from diverse backgrounds and variable, and the final decision of intervention should be taken keeping in mind what is best for each individual site, to keepsake what was left for us and to protect it as a source of information for times to come. Heritage is not only a cultural reference of memory, but also of identity, building on our sense of belonging.

Architecture has always been a reflection of social interaction, as it is a spatial response to human needs. That being said, architectural heritage is not limited to grand monuments or buildings of historic significance, but also everyday spaces that shape urban life. As stated by Alessandro Barberis in the preface of Guide to historic shops "the history of a city and its people is revealed to a considerable degree in the places where trade is conducted" ^[2]. Commercial spaces have historically represented places for social interaction, which have a

[1] (UNESCO, own translation)

[2] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)

significant impact on urban dynamics and development. When speaking of the rise of modern cities, commercial architecture plays an important role in defining the urban scene, it becomes a "driving element of a new image" ^[3] as it transforms from being just a place of trade to become a place to draw attention.

Turin is a city with a rich history dating back centuries and has been lucky enough to preserve testimonies from different times that represent various aspects of how they used to live in each of these; this does not necessarily mean that all that has been maintained has been done in the most correct way, nor that it is in a good state today. As we dive further into the dynamics of the city, we will see the crucial role that commerce played, especially during the major changes of the Lungo Ottocento, period defined between 1789 with the French Revolution and 1914 with the beginning of World War I. This has been a topic of research studied by a few academics such as Chiara Ronchetta, Andrea Job, among others and has led to the publication of various investigations, guides and exhibitions on historic shops, their classification and characterization; some of their justifications being their historic, artistic and social richness, and that one of the best ways to ensure conservation and protection of architectural heritage is through public awareness. ^[4]

All this regarding heritage documentation, but why intervene a historic site? As a space starts becoming obsolete for its original purpose, it begins to suffer from a series of risks that include lack of recognition, consciousness, and protection, as well as a change in the perception of the space itself, a ghost of what it once was and often becoming a void within its context. When speaking of a shop that has become obsolete, it can be due to various reasons like a change in commercial dynamics, no longer needing that type of establishment, a change of ownership or even a simple change of use, all of which imply different levels of reformations needing to be made to adopt its new beginnings. This is all related to the life cycle of any space. What if the original characteristics of a shop were considered as an opportunity to evolve, rather than a past that must be erased to start over? What if there was a way to reinterpret commercial characteristics from that past that defined certain typologies and interactions to bring them back into modern day commerce? In this sense we could be speaking of architectural heritage not as an untouchable piece frozen in time, but as a spatial response to modern needs that evolves with time, while maintaining its salvageable values that made it grow and work in the first place and could do so once again.

[3] (Job & Ronchetta, I luoghi del commercio, 1989) own translation

[4] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)

The main objective of this thesis is to design a pilot project of intervention on a case study on Via Po that is able to reactivate a historic shop that has lost its values within its current context. To achieve this, research was conducted studying the historical development of the city of Turin, with particular focus on its urban development during the 19th century and the influence of growth axes on urban activities. Another key component of this investigation involved the specific study of commerce in Turin, specifically focusing on historic shops and their typological classification. This provided a framework for informed decision making in the identification and selection of the case study, by evaluating different criteria that will be elaborated throughout subsequent sections of the thesis.

justification mind map

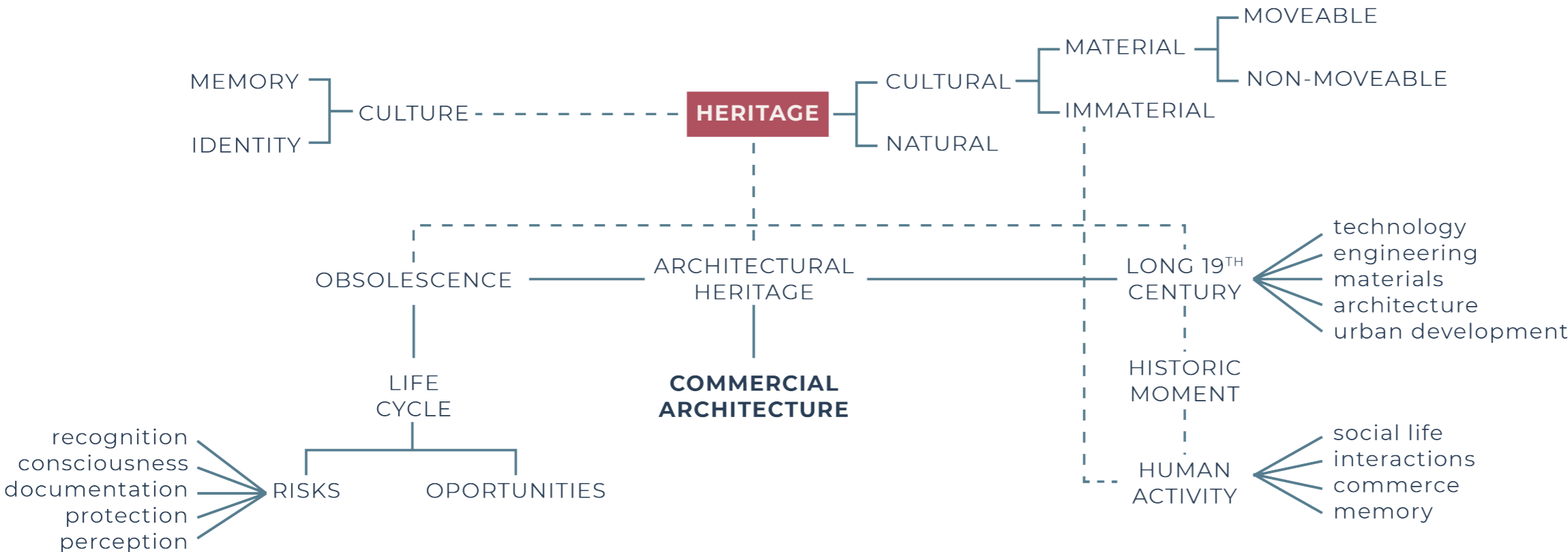


Figure 1 - Thesis justification mind map (by the author)

1.3 methodology

This thesis is divided into two main parts, first is the investigation and second, is the project proposal. As for the investigation, first bibliographical research was conducted regarding the history of the city of Turin, mostly focusing on the sequence of expansions that the city went through as well as major changes that occurred during what is known as the *long nineteenth century*. The topic of the thesis being historic shops, a more specific investigation was carried out in which various publications and university thesis were found. One of the most repeated authors found was Chiara Ronchetta, an architecture professor of the Politecnico di Torino, who led and collaborated with other authors like Andrea Job and Maria Luisa Laureati in the development and update of documentation on Turin's historic shops, her first publication on the topic being from 1985 and the most recent ones from 2006. Another helpful source was a series of handbooks or magazines published by the Department of urban furniture of the city of Turin during the 1980s and 1990s in which these same authors also participated.

Apart from a strictly bibliographic approach, archival research was conducted, with visits to the *Archivio Storico della Citta di Torino*, which as its name specifies, has a collection of all material directly associated with the city, from photographic documentation, cartography, to construction projects and permits. Archive material has been organized by categories and types of resource, and some has already been digitalized into a database for easier consultation. In the category of construction projects, there is a subdivision dedicated to projects of commercial establishments where it was possible to see a glimpse of the original design for shops during the long nineteenth century.

Another helpful resource from the city's archive was the documentation on the bombings and fires from the Second World War. There is a plan of the city from 1943 that depicts the buildings that were hit by bombs, set on fire, and the degree of damage that they suffered. This was crucial when understanding some of the changes that could have taken place around the area of the selected case study, as the need for reconstruction could have led way to changes on original designs.

In addition to the bibliographical and archival research, an on-site study was carried out visiting various historic shops around the city of Turin, while evaluating their current state and considering potential case studies for the project. After having undergone a deeper analysis which will be further explained throughout the document, a single shop was chosen as a case study to propose a project of architectural intervention. Said shop went through a survey process for photographic documentation, as well as to take measurements and with said measurements elaborate the planimetry.

The last step for this thesis project was to design the intervention. The design process developed from a concept that was planned in six specific actions: to remove, protect, reinterpret, adapt, showcase and attract. All of these helped the project pass from an idea to physical and material transformations.

commerce during
the 19th century 02

02 commerce during the long 19th century

2.1 political and economic transformations

The long nineteenth century is a 125-year period between 1789 with the French Revolution and 1914 with the beginning of World War I. This term has been used as a way to gather all the circumstances that made this century such a dynamic period in Europe. Overall, it was a transformative period from a political, economic and social point of view, and Turin was not the exception to this phenomenon, along the way the city evolved from a strictly political scene into a significant commercial and industrial hub.

Turin began the 19th century with its occupation by Napoleon up until 1814. During this period, there was a reorganization of public finances, as well as the adoption of French political and economic structures. Some of these can be considered as promoters of modernity and development. The Savoy resumed control with the crowning of Vittorio Emanuele I after the Vienna Congress, bringing a period of restoration of old policies which stagnated the city's development.

In 1831 the reign of Carlo Alberto began, bringing a period of lots of changes and actions that promoted the city's modernization and coming to an end of recession. "Some of the most notable measures taken by Carlo Alberto were the reduction of customs, reduction of duties on foreign products, repeal of bans on the export of certain local products, the abolition of guilds while seeking to create a more open job market, and the establishment of numerous commercial treaties with European and American countries." [5]

Probably the biggest transformation that Italy went through during the long 19th century was the unification as a republic in 1861, making Turin the capital. This ultimately solidified the city's position as a commercial and political center. During these times there was even a sort of second industrial revolution in which there was a high technological and economic impulse, reshaping the city and its dynamics.

[5] (Margotto, 2016)

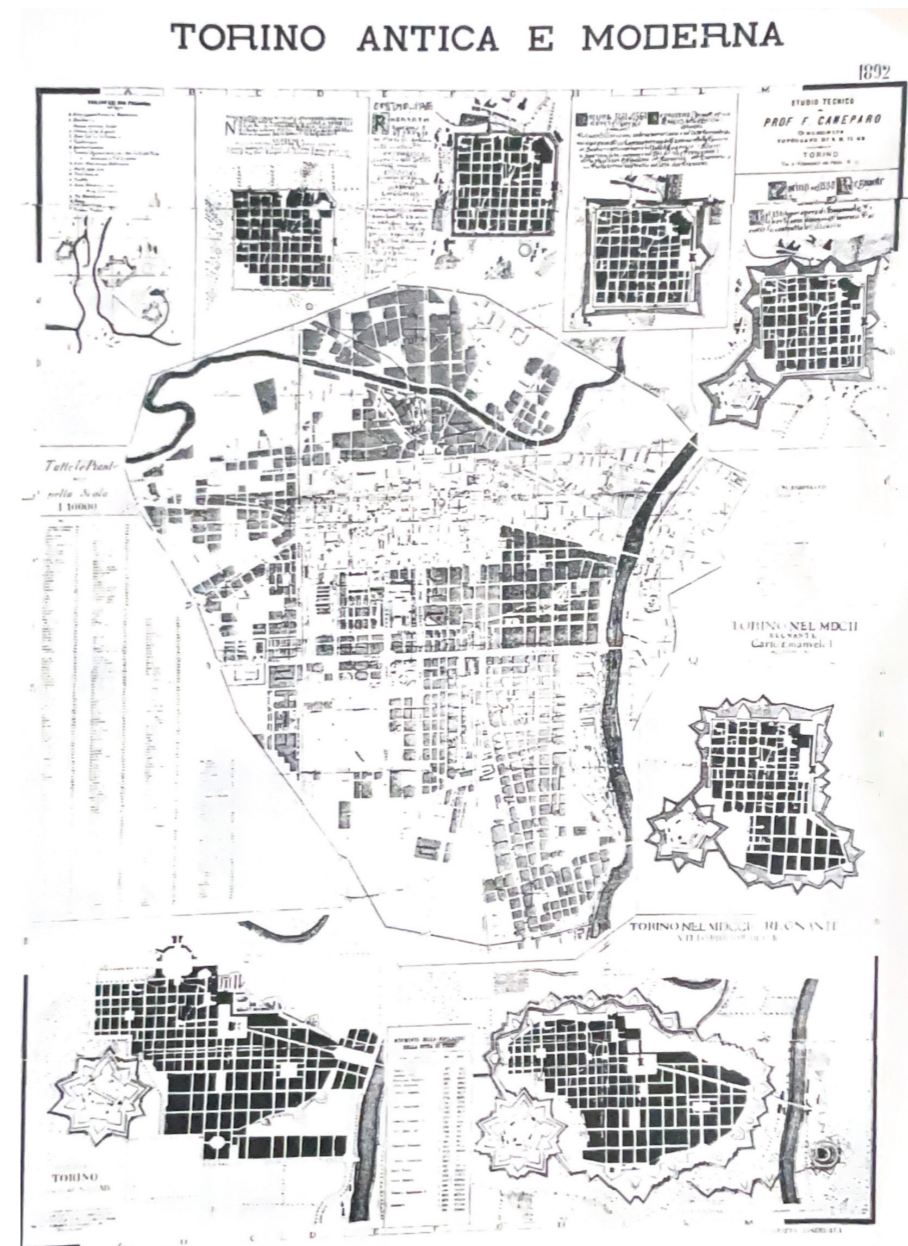


Figure 2 - Compilation of plans of the expansions of Turin

(Comoli Mandracchi, 1983)

2.2 commerce and the urban scene

Commerce in Turin became a defining element of the city's urban image during the 19th century. The influence that commerce had on the city is partly due to the strategic location of shops, as they became places of meeting and as Ronchetta noted "coincide with the historically most important urban spaces."^[6] Historically concentrated near locations of political and administrative power, such as Piazza delle Erbe (now Piazza Palazzo di Città), commercial activities began shifting in the 1830s to newly developed axes, including Via Dora Grossa (now Via Garibaldi), Via Po, and Via Nuova (now Via Roma).

Due to the social shifts taking place during the 19th century, urban embellishment projects such as "street paving, lighting, parks, tree-lined avenues, the colors of the buildings",^[7] among others, enhanced the city's image to appeal to pedestrians. At the same time, the architecture of commerce became an integral part of Turin's landscape and urban identity.

The implementation of arcades was also part of these programs for renovation and requalification in different areas of the city, both in the areas of expansion and in the preexisting urban fabric. This all took place in a time when the urban and architectural image helped define or represent political power. The adoption of arcades in the urban design are still present today in streets like Via Po, Via Pietro Micca (former Via della Diagonale) and Via Vittorio Emanuele II, as well as in Piazza Castello.

Some of the other common tools implemented with the idea of consolidating the city's image were the unification of facade design, regularization of spaces and a rectilinear urban layout. These were expressed according to the architectural language of the moment and the methods that came with it. There was also a constant lookout towards other states such as France and Spain, who kept strong political, familiar and artistic relations and alliances, and who were simultaneously building the image of European capitals.^[8]

[6] [7] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)

[8] (Cuneo, 2023)



Figure 3 - Drawing of Piazza delle Erbe market by Marco Nicolosino, 1820

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)



Figure 4 - Photograph of Piazza Carignano during the 1800s

(Ronchetta, Le botteghe in Piemonte : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2008)



Figure 5 - Photograph by Mario Gabinio of the porticoes in Piazza San Carlo

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)

2.3 evolution of commercial spaces

Turin, along with other major European cities, redefined physical and functional aspects of its commercial spaces during the 19th century. As explained in *le tipologie dell'arredo*, city regulations modifying ways of commerce in the beginning of the 19th century forced sales to take place inside an establishment rather than through the door or on the streets, how it used to work, transforming traditional botteghe from production and storage areas into sophisticated retail establishments.^[9] This shift emphasized the importance of shopfronts and portals as thresholds between public and private spaces.

Mass production and industrialization also influenced the nature of commercial production and consumption, this often meant less quality, larger quantities, lower costs and a wider range of products. As Job states in the book *Botteghe e Negozi*, markets and non-prestigious trade were relocated to the city's margins, while luxury goods and items that required induced consumption were concentrated in the city center. This highlighted the incompatibility of certain activities with the criteria of decoration and hygiene.^[10]

The social scene of the 19th century in Europe was led by the bourgeoisie, who became the primary drivers of commerce. Commercial establishments therefore strove to appeal to this class. Their demands redefined the city's commercial landscape, preferring refined spaces and goods. Shopping was no longer just the activity of trade itself, but also became a form of leisure, social interaction and cultural experience.

Overall, 19th century commerce was strongly influenced by the expansion of transportation infrastructure. Railroads and stations created connections between longer distances, facilitating the transportation of goods. In the case of Turin, the traffic of merchandise grew a lot due to its central position in the region. This led to the need of further regulating trade, creating the Camera di Commercio e Agricoltura in 1825 and the Borsa di Commercio in 1850.^[11]

[9] (Laureati, 1982)

[10] (Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)

[11] (Margotto, 2016)



Figure 6 - Minor commerce under porticoes of Via Palazzo di Citta in the 1820s taken by Mario Gabinio

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)



Figure 7 - Illustrations of cafe as a place of congregation in the nineteenth century

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)

03 historic shops

3.1 inventory

A preliminary inventory of historic shops in Turin was elaborated through the compilation of listings from various sources in comparison with on-site visits. These sources include multiple publications by Chiara Ronchetta in collaboration with other authors, such as Andrea Job and Maria Luisa Laureati, among others. These sources are rather outdated in terms of inventory, as the most recent ones are from the mid-2000s and then jumping back to the late 1980s. Due to the constant transformation of the city, along with recent changes in commercial dynamics, many of the shops originally listed in the publications have either changed use, ownership or even disappeared with unfortunate renovations, making it difficult to keep close track of all. It is also possible that through renovations of an otherwise “normal” establishment, fossils of historic shops have been rediscovered.

Having said that, the city currently has over 250 historic shops, most of which are concentrated in the city center, taking us back to the origin of commercial dynamics in the nineteenth century city. This list of shops has been organized in a database according to criteria like the address, use, shop typology and date.

no.	address	current use	typology
1	Cso Giulio Cesare, 3d	Tabacchi Riparazioni Radio	Others
2	Cso Giulio Cesare, 3f	Porta Palazzo Macelleria	Food
3	Cso Giulio Cesare, 5a	Stoffe Tessuti Orientali	Artisans
4	Cso Giulio Cesare, 5d	Caffe	Caffes and restaurants
5	Cso Moncalieri, 47	Curletti Macelleria	Food
6	Cso Moncalieri, 47	Peyrano Cioccolateria	Candy stores and pastry shops
7	Cso Re Umberto, 25	Samantha Merceria	Clothes and accessories
8	Cso Regina Margherita 218 bis	Monge Farmacia	Pharmacies
9	Cso Regina Margherita, 130b	Negro Ditta Gianduja Tessuti	Clothes and accessories
10	Cso San Martino, 5c	Tabacchi	Others
11	Cso San Martino, 9a	Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
12	Cso San Maurizio, 46	Coppo Bottiglieria	Food
13	Cso San Maurizio, 63	Trifiletti Ferramenta	Others
14	Cso Vinzaglio, 21	Amici Granata Pizzeria	Caffes and restaurants
15	Cso Vinzaglio, 21	Casa del Caffe	Caffes and restaurants
16	Cso Vinzaglio, 31e	Farmacia Montanaro	Pharmacies
17	Cso Vinzaglio, 33d	Lovera Macelleria	Food
18	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 27	Viarani Cappelleria	Clothes and accessories
19	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 29	Vitteman 29 Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
20	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 55b	Bar Gelateria	Caffes and restaurants
21	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 62c	Calzedonia Intimo	Clothes and accessories
22	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 62l	Intimissimi	Clothes and accessories
23	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 63	Gran Corso Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
24	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 66a	Boniscontro Farmacia	Pharmacies
25	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 68bis b	Dimensione Europa Agenzia di Viaggi	Others
26	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 68c	Immagine Arredamento	Others
27	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 70g	Tabacchi	Others
28	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 72	Platti Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
29	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 76a	Parola Bottiglieria	Food
30	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 78b	Blc Parrucchieri	Hair salons and perfume shops
31	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 78f	Les Lunettes Ottica	Others
32	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 78g	Piera Giacobino Profumeria	Hair salons and perfume shops
33	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 78i	Il cucciolo Articoli per l'infanzia	Others
34	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 80a	Viaggi Chiara Agenzia Viaggi	Others
35	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 82	Primavera Corsetteria	Clothes and accessories
36	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 86	Ghio Cartoleria	Book stores and stationary stores
37	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 86	Opto's Ottica	Others
38	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 88	Gerla Pasticceria	Candy stores and pastry shops
39	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 88h	Emporio Gastronomico	Caffes and restaurants
40	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 66b	Leporati Casalinghi	Others
41	Cso Vittorio Emanuele II, 80c	Magnacarta Cartoleria	Book stores and stationary stores
42	Galleria Subalpina, 24	La Casa del Libro	Book stores and stationary stores
43	Galleria Umberto I, 31e	Farmacia dell'Ordine Mauriziano	Pharmacies
44	Largo Saluzzo, 32c	Bar	Caffes and restaurants
45	Piazza Borgo Dora 3A	Albergo ristorante San Giors	Others
46	Piazza Carignano, 2	Ristorante - Caffe del Cambio	Caffes and restaurants
47	Piazza Carignano, 2a	Malan Viaggi	Others
48	Piazza Carignano, 8	Pepino Bar gelateria	Caffes and restaurants
49	Piazza Carlo Felice, 19	Fogola Libreria	Book stores and stationary stores
50	Piazza Carlo Felice, 33	Bergallo Arredamenti	Others
51	Piazza Carlo Felice, 35	Arbiter	Clothes and accessories
52	Piazza Carlo Felice, 36	Roma Gia Talmone Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
53	Piazza Carlo Felice, 49	Malabar Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
54	Piazza Carlo Felice, 50	Avvignano Confetteria	Candy stores and pastry shops
55	Piazza Carlo Felice, 63	Nuova Farmacia Cosmesi	Pharmacies
56	Piazza Carlo Felice, 69	Giordano Confetteria	Candy stores and pastry shops
57	Piazza Carlo Felice, 9	Foresto Cappelleria	Clothes and accessories
58	Piazza Castello, 27	Baratti & Milano Bar	Caffes and restaurants
59	Piazza Castello, 33	Anili	Clothes and accessories

no.	address	current use	typology
60	Piazza Castello, 36	Barbisio	Clothes and accessories
61	Piazza Castello, 37	La Via Maestra Calzature	Clothes and accessories
62	Piazza Castello, 43	Camaieu Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
63	Piazza Castello, 46	Camaieu Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
64	Piazza Castello, 51	Mc Donald's Fast food	Food
65	Piazza Castello, 75	Mauro Calzature	Clothes and accessories
66	Piazza Castello, 9	Intimo in Stock	Clothes and accessories
67	Piazza Castello, 9	Mulassano Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
68	Piazza della Consolata, 5	Al Bicerin	Caffes and restaurants
69	Piazza della Consolata, 5	Erboristeria della Consolata - Rosa Serafino	Food
70	Piazza Emanuele Filiberto, 11a	Conserveria	Caffes and restaurants
71	Piazza Emanuele Filiberto, 2	Rinaldi Drogheria	Food
72	Piazza Palazzo di Citta, 5e	Casalegno Incisioni	Artisans
73	Piazza Palazzo di Citta, 7	Antica Piazza delle Erbe	Caffes and restaurants
74	Piazza Paleocapa, 2	Stars & Roses Ristorante	Caffes and restaurants
75	Piazza San Carlo 156	San Carlo Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
76	Piazza San Carlo 191	Stratta Confetteria	Candy stores and pastry shops
77	Piazza San Carlo, 196	Paissa Drogheria	Pharmacies
78	Piazza San Carlo, 204	Torino Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
79	Piazza Solferino, 3	Colenghi Cereria	Artisans
80	Piazza Statuto, 10g	Frehus Cartoleria	Book stores and stationary stores
81	Piazza Statuto, 12c	Ghione Ferramenta	Others
82	Piazza Statuto, 3	Almasio	Pharmacies
83	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 10	Algostino De Michelis	Pharmacies
84	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 11	Operti Farmacia	Pharmacies
85	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 13a	Tabaccheria	Others
86	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 2	Porto di Savona Ristorante	Caffes and restaurants
87	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 2	Vittorio Veneto Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
88	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 5	Elena Caffetteria Bar	Caffes and restaurants
89	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 5 (mobile)	Vetzeria Berruto	Artisans
90	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 5b	Stile Liberty Parruchiere (Doro)	Hair salons and perfume shops
91	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 8	Filofax Agende ed ogettistica per ufficio	Book stores and stationary stores
92	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 9 (bacheca)	Ceretto	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
93	Piazza Vittorio Veneto, 9c	Sarah Pacini Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
94	Piazza XVII Dicembre, 1c	Xstore Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
95	Piazza XVIII Dicembre, 3a	Dolcidea Pasticceria	Confetterie e pasticcerie
96	Piazza XVIII Dicembre, 3c	Majerna Cacia e pesca	Others
97	Via Accademia Albertina, 29a	Victoria Confetteria	Candy stores and pastry shops
98	Via Accademia Albertina, 37	Bar Hilton	Caffes and restaurants
99	Via Accademia delle Scienze, 3b	Capello Gioielleria	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
100	Via Accademia delle Scienze, 4a	Free Map Company Agenzia viaggi	Others
101	Via Accademia delle Scienze, 4a	Grom	Caffes and restaurants
102	Via Arsenale, 42c	Casalegno Incisioni	Artisans
103	Via Assarotti, 19	Drogheria	Food
104	Via Barbaroux, 20	Massia Vittorio Passamanerie	Artisans
105	Via Baretti, 1n	Macelleria	Food
106	Via Bava, 7a	Ferraro Tapissier en Tissus	Others
107	Via Bellezia, 37	Tre Galline Ristorante	Caffes and restaurants
108	Via Berthollet, 14e	Crai Supermercato	Food
109	Via Berthollet, 16e	La Pelletteria	Artisans
110	Via Berthollet, 17g	Miloud Pizza e panini orientali	Caffes and restaurants
111	Via Berthollet, 18a	Materassaio	Others
112	Via Berthollet, 20c	Oggettistica	Artisans
113	Via Berthollet, 20e	Kakote Gioielleria	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
114	Via Berthollet, 23e	Bottega delle Carni	Food
115	Via Berthollet, 23f	Lavanderia	Others
116	Via Berthollet, 23f	Macolli Ferramenta	Others
117	Via Berthollet, 8c	Imm. Connex Agenzia immobiliare	Others
118	Via Bertola, 23	Hotelplan Agenzia viaggi	Others
119	Via Bogino, 10e	Sharon Antichita	Artisans
120	Via Bonafous, 1f		Ideal Tipografia
121	Via Carlo Alberto, 34		Caravan Company Abbigliamento
122	Via Carlo Alberto, 35		Grand Hotel Sitea
123	Via Cernaia, 14a		Farmacia Pensa
124	Via Cernaia, 22e		Querio Pasticceria
125	Via Cernaia, 24		Delper Panetteria
126	Via Cernaia, 30e		Caffe
127	Via Cesare Battisti, 7		Girardi Ferramenta
128	Via Corte d'Appello, 22		Levi Aprile Cartoleria oggettistica per ufficio
129	Via Corte d'Appello, 2b		Torrefazione Moderna Caffetteria Bar
130	Via del Carmine, 1		Ferrero Farmacia
131	Via della Rocca, 17a		Moretti Arredamenti
132	Via della Rocca, 22b		Della Rocca Farmacia
133	Via della Rocca, 37b		Molinatto Macelleria
134	Via della Rocca, 37b		Varese Antichita
135	Via delle Orfane, 2		Busters Coffe
136	Via delle Orfane, 21		Bottega del Presepe
137	Via delle Orfane, 25		Farmacia della Consolata
138	Via Fratelli Vasco, 2		Giappichelli Libreria
139	Via Garibaldi, 20		Trend Abbigliamento
140	Via Garibaldi, 20		Yamamay
141	Via Garibaldi, 20b		Sisley Abbigliamento
142	Via Garibaldi, 22		Corrado Calzature
143	Via Garibaldi, 26		Bosio Farmacia
144	Via Garibaldi, 29c		Tabaccheria
145	Via Garibaldi, 29e		Class Collection Camiceria
146	Via Garibaldi, 3		Lattes Libreria
147	Via Garibaldi, 31		Tamborini Pasticceria
148	Via Garibaldi, 31l		Camicia e oltre
149	Via Garibaldi, 35e		Optional Abbigliamento
150	Via Garibaldi, 43		Angela Ansaldi Corredo Casa
151	Via Garibaldi, 43l		Sogni di donna Abbigliamento
152	Via Garibaldi, 5		Bar Francia
153	Via Garibaldi, 51		Intimissimi
154	Via IV Marzo, 23		Valleverde Calzature
155	Via Lagrange, 1a		Guido Gobino
156	Via Lagrange, 27		The Body Shop Profumeria
157	Via Lagrange, 39		Defilippis Pasticificio
158	Via Lagrange, 40		Rocca Gioielleria
159	Via Lagrange, 40g		Euophoto Articoli fotografici e telefonia
160	Via Lanzo, 88		Valgranda Osteria
161	Via Madama Cristina, 18b		Bigiotteria
162	Via Madama Cristina, 6g		Picard Surgelati
163	Via Maria Vittoria 31		Drovetti Ferramenta
164	Via Maria Vittoria, 13		Arte Antica Antiquario
165	Via Maria Vittoria, 2		Steffanone Salumi e Formaggi
166	Via Maria Vittoria, 3		Regia Farmacia Masino
167	Via Mazzini, 17a		Messegue Erboristeria
168	Via Mazzini, 19bis		Spaccanapoli Pizzeria
169	Via Mazzini, 26e		L'Artisan parfumeur Profumeria
170	Via Mazzini, 2h		Emporio del Pane Panetteria
171	Via Mazzini, 34g		Brandy Abbigliamento
172	Via Mazzini, 36a		Ortofrutta
173	Via Mazzini, 38		Gertosio Pasticceria
174	Via Mazzini, 46c		Tabaccheria
175	Via Mazzini, 8		Provasoli Tessuti
176	Via Milano, 10		Globaltel Telefonia
177	Via Milano, 10		Kebab Sindbad Tavola Calda
178	Via Milano, 11		Anglesio
179	Via Milano, 11b		Cremolose Pasticceria Siciliana
			Artisans
			Clothes and accessories
			Others
			Pharmacies
			Candy stores and pastry shops
			Candy stores and pastry shops
			Caffes and restaurants
			Others
			Book stores and stationary stores
			Caffes and restaurants
			Pharmacies
			Others
			Pharmacies
			Food
			Artisans
			Caffes and restaurants
			Artisans
			Pharmacies
			Book stores and stationary stores
			Clothes and accessories
			Clothes and accessories
			Clothes and accessories
			Pharmacies
			Others
			Clothes and accessories
			Book stores and stationary stores
			Candy stores and pastry shops
			Clothes and accessories
			Clothes and accessories
			Clothes and accessories
			Candy stores and pastry shops
			Hair salons and perfume shops
			Candy stores and pastry shops
			Jewelers and Goldsmiths
			Artisans
			Caffes and restaurants
			Artisans
			Food
			Others
			Artisans
			Food
			Pharmacies
			Food
			Caffes and restaurants
			Hair salons and perfume shops
			Food
			Clothes and accessories
			Food
			Candy stores and pastry shops
			Others
			Clothes and accessories
			Others
			Caffes and restaurants
			Pharmacies
			Candy stores and pastry shops

no.	address	current use	typology
180	Via Milano, 16b	Juvarra Caffè Pasticceria	Candy stores and pastry shops
181	Via Milano, 18	Gisel Casalinghi	Others
182	Via Milano, 1d	Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
183	Via Milano, 3	Genta Camiceria	Clothes and accessories
184	Via Milano, 4b	Casa del Caffè	Caffes and restaurants
185	Via Milano, 7	De Benedetti Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
186	Via Milano, 8	Fineco s.p.a. Banca	Others
187	Via Milano, 8e	Meriglio Oreficeria	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
188	Via Monferrato, 14a	Salasamentario Ristorante	Caffes and restaurants
189	Via Monte di Pietà, 5	Abello Erboristeria	Food
190	Via Napione, 37a	Ferrero Drogheria	Food
191	Via Nizza, 108	Gani Farmacia	Pharmacies
192	Via Nizza, 11b	Peruzzo Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
193	Via Nizza, 11e	Mc Donald's Fast food	Food
194	Via Nizza, 15	Bargis Farmacia	Pharmacies
195	Via Nizza, 17f	Market Piccolo supermercato	Food
196	Via Nizza, 1g	Acchitto Video Stereo System	Others
197	Via Nizza, 27	San Salvatore Farmacia	Pharmacies
198	Via Nizza, 39c	Giampy Bar Pasticceria	Candy stores and pastry shops
199	Via Palazzo Citta, 19	Welcome Agenzia Viaggi	Others
200	Via Palazzo di Citta, 14b	Zanzara Laboratorio di Cartapesta	Others
201	Via Palazzo di Citta, 26b	Sede de Partito Politico La Margherita Uffici	Others
202	Via Palazzo di Citta, 6bis	Taverna Fiorentina Ristorante	Caffes and restaurants
203	Via Palazzo di Citta, 7	De Santis Parrucchiere	Hair salons and perfume shops
204	Via Pietro Micca, 10f	Tabaccheria Nencioni Andrea	Others
205	Via Pietro Micca, 12	Centro Impermeabili	Clothes and accessories
206	Via Pietro Micca, 12c	Idea Moquettes tendaggi e moquettes	Others
207	Via Pietro Micca, 14	Gli Specchi Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
208	Via Pietro Micca, 15	Boidi Profumeria	Hair salons and perfume shops
209	Via Pietro Micca, 20d	Oro Tuo Gioielleria	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
210	Via Pietro Micca, 6	Eiki Bar Caffetteria Tavola Calda	Caffes and restaurants
211	Via Pietro Micca, 6	Prochet Oggettistica	Others
212	Via Pietro Micca, 6d	Montano Gioielleria	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
213	Via Po, 1d	Musy Padre e Figli	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
214	Via Po, 3b	Caffè Regio	Others
215	Via Po, 3	Antica Torrioneria Piemontese	Candy stores and pastry shops
216	Via Po, 5a	Caffè Roberto	Caffes and restaurants
217	Via Po, 21	Blah Blah (gastrobar)	Caffes and restaurants
218	Via Po, 31	Farmacia degli Stemmi	Pharmacies
219	Via Po, 39	Agrisalumeria Luiset	Food
220	Via Po, 53	Capa Toast	Caffes and restaurants
221	Via Po, 53	Museo di Arti Decorative Accorsi	Others
222	Via Po, 55	Rizzi	Clothes and accessories
223	Via Po, 57	Kryolan	Hair salons and perfume shops
224	Via Po, 59d	GV BrowBar & Beauty Service	Hair salons and perfume shops
225	Via Po, 59d	Capelleteria	Clothes and accessories
226	Via Po, 4d	Caffè Bar Università	Caffes and restaurants
227	Via Po, 4	Profumeria dell'Università	Hair salons and perfume shops
228	Via Po, 8c	Caffè Fiorio	Caffes and restaurants
229	Via Po, 8bis	Tim	Caffes and restaurants
230	Via Po, 10	Pasticceria Abrate (Tavola calda / restaurant)	Candy stores and pastry shops
231	Via Po, 10b	Focaccerie Tipica Ligure	Jewelers and Goldsmiths
232	Via Po, 10c	Reale Annibale erboristeria	Food
233	Via Po, 12b	Niche Profumeria	Hair salons and perfume shops
234	Via Po, 14	Farmacia dell'Università	Pharmacies
235	Via Po, 14a	Venezia a Torino	Artisans
236	Via Po, 18	Scali (shoes)	Clothes and accessories
237	Via Po, 18g	Emporio	Artisans
238	Via Po, 18	Gelateria delle Alpi	Candy stores and pastry shops
239	Via Po, 20	Caffè Nazionale	Caffes and restaurants
240	Via Po, 32f	Libreria Antiquaria	Book stores and stationary stores
241	Via Po, 52b	Ghigo Pasticceria Cremeria	Candy stores and pastry shops
242	Via Po, 52e	Caffè Vittorio Veneto	Caffes and restaurants
243	Via Principe Amadeo, 11	Dibi Center Centro Estetico	Others
244	Via Principe Amadeo, 22c	Erbavoglio Decoration Arredamento	Others
245	Via Principe Amadeo, 29	OOLP Libreria	Book stores and stationary stores
246	Via Roma, 376	Sir Wilson Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
247	Via Romani, 2	Borgo Po Farmacia	Pharmacies
248	Via Sacchi, 16b	Tre Novembre Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
249	Via Sacchi, 18c	Tina Profumeria	Hair salons and perfume shops
250	Via Sacchi, 2	Negrita Bar Caffè	Caffes and restaurants
251	Via Sacchi, 42	Pfatisch Pasticceria	Candy stores and pastry shops
252	Via Saluzzo, 1	Farmacia del Corso	Pharmacies
253	Via San Francesco d'Assisi, 11b	Computershop Megastore	Others
254	Via San Francesco d'Assisi, 17b	Barberis Confetteria	Candy stores and pastry shops
255	Via San Francesco d'Assisi, 2c	Bubble tea	Caffes and restaurants
256	Via San Massimo, 12	Irac Profumeria	Hair salons and perfume shops
257	Via San Massimo, 30	Carte Cartoleria	Book stores and stationary stores
258	Via San Massimo, 36	Ipsoa Libreria	Book stores and stationary stores
259	Via San Massimo, 36F	Fleur de Coucou	Others
260	Via San Massimo, 51	Frasca Pasticceria	Candy stores and pastry shops
261	Via San Massimo, 53	Dohbran Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
262	Via San Massimo, 8	Bianco & Marzano Colorificio	Others
263	Via San Quintino, 6a	Old Corner Bar Caffè	Caffes and restaurants
264	Via San Secondo, 13h	Villa Cornicera	Others
265	Via San Secondo, 17	Rosso Arti Grafiche	Artisans
266	Via San Secondo, 20c	La Bottega di Taste	Food
267	Via San Secondo, 3b	Ferramenta	Others
268	Via San Secondo, 9	Farmacia San Secondo	Pharmacies
269	Via San Tommaso, 2	Bisa Ottica	Others
270	Via San Tommaso, 4d	Massia Giuseppe Passamanerie	Artisans
271	Via San Tommaso, 4d	Pizza al taglio	Caffes and restaurants
272	Via Santa Croce, 2a	Chez Gaby Birreria	Food
273	Via Santa Teresa, 18	Exclusive Abbigliamento	Clothes and accessories
274	Via Santa Teresa, 19c	Moda del guanto	Clothes and accessories
275	Via Santa Teresa, 21	Farmacia Solferino	Pharmacies
276	Via Santa Teresa, 22h	Puccio Calzature	Clothes and accessories
277	Via Santa Teresa, 24	Musa Ceramiche	Artisans
278	Via Vanchiglia, 12	Pasticceria del Borgo	Candy stores and pastry shops
279	Via Vanchiglia, 29a	Farmacia Chimica Nazionale	Pharmacies
280	Via XX Settembre, 6	Transatlantica Robotti Agenzia Viaggi	Others
281	Via XX Settembre, 8	Ferrer Oggetti per la casa	Others
282	Via XX Settembre, 87	Regia Farmacia XX Settembre	Pharmacies

3.2 shop typologies

cafes and restaurants

Cafes in Turin were not just places to enjoy a quick drink, but actually key social hubs. Architecturally, they were designed to project elegance and comfort, attracting the bourgeoisie. Historically, cafes in Turin played an important role in the city's cultural and political life, becoming places of gathering for news and discussions. During the 1800s these establishments began to expand, embellish, and improve hygiene standards to respond to the likes and needs of the bourgeoisie. [12] The dimensions and furnishings of the shops also gave the visitor insights of what they served, for example, bars were much smaller establishments and had more simple furnishings and decoration than cafes. [13]

The interiors often featured vaulted ceilings which were adorned with painted frescoes and stucco moldings. Typically, the walls were covered in wooden panels, patterned tapestries or even mirrors which were strategically placed to create a visual effect that expands the space.

The shops were furnished with velvet upholstered chairs and sofas, placed in different arrangements to create diverse environments. These were designed to encourage conversation and comfort. The seating was accompanied by small tables, usually with marble or wooden tops.

Cafes and restaurants were divided into multiple rooms, each with a characteristic theme or function, such as smoking rooms, reading rooms, or a space for general dining. This ensured a unique and more personalized experience for visitors. [14]

The main commercial space was characterized by having ornamented counters and exhibition spaces behind them. These counters were often made of wood, some with metal accents and marble tops. Behind the counters stood the shelves displaying bottles and containers, sometimes with a mirrored backdrop that would multiply the reflections to be perceived as abundance.

The facades were usually very detailed, with large windows that allowed the bourgeoisie to see and be seen. The elaborate signage was used to identify what we would now call a brand, creating an identity for the shop and inviting passersby to step inside.

[12] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)

[13] [14] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)



Figure 8 - Photograph of Caffè Nazionale under the porticoes of Via Po

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)



Figure 9 - Interior photograph of Ristorante del cambio

(Ronchetta, Le botteghe a Torino : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2006)

candy stores and pastry shops

Like most types of shops from this epoch, sweet shops were designed to attract customers by exhibiting their products. This was mainly done with glass showcases and counters, usually strategically placed along the sides of the shop, creating a path for the visitors inside allowing them to see all the goods.

The interior walls of the shops were adorned with boiserie or wooden panels and mirrors, similarly to those used in cafes, making the space appear broader and more appealing. The goods sold in candy stores also played a key role in its embellishment, as the use of jars and elaborate packaging of the products themselves were used as decorative elements. Painted frescoes or stucco moldings accompanied by glass chandeliers decorated the ceilings and enhanced the ambience of luxury that these shops conveyed.

The facades of candy stores and pastry shops were characterized by featuring monoblocks, with ornate ironwork or wooden carpentry and glass display windows. These displays of colorful merchandise were used to catch the attention of pedestrians, acting as advertisements for both the brands of products and the shop itself. Initially these shops had rather small storefronts which slowly grew throughout the 1800s. ^[15]

Turin's pastry shops are part of the city's identity, as stated by Chiara Ronchetta in Guide to historic shops, "The shops of pastry bakers, confectioners and spirits vendors have had an exceptional development in Turin, since the art of sweet making has long been practiced at a very refined level, inspired by the proximity of French traditions". ^[16] Pastry shops also evolved serving coffee along with their sweets. ^[17]

[15] [17] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)

[16] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)



Figure 10 - Photograph of the facade of Liquoreria Confetteria Caffè Platti

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)



Figure 11 - Interior photograph of the facade of Liquoreria Confetteria Caffè Platti

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)



Figures 12-13 - Detail photograph of the interior decoration in gilded stucco of Liquoreria Confetteria Caffè Platti

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

pharmacies

Pharmacies were one of the types of shops that strongly showed the evolution of the profession, the change in commercial dynamics and society's growing preoccupation for health and hygiene standards; they transformed at the same pace as the health sector did. [18] Before them being known as pharmacies, what used to be apothecary shops used to be places of production of pharmaceuticals instead of them becoming more and more industrialized. [19]

Early shops had two or three separate zones for each activity, one was a spacious sales area, another room for medicine preparation and maybe even another for storage. The laboratory was usually located at the back of the establishment and used materials like stone for countertops and tiled floors for hygiene. As for storage rooms, these tended to use strong wooden shelving to support the weight of glass or metallic containers and equipment.

As the commercial dynamics shifted, pharmacies began to incorporate decorative elements, adding ornamentation to plain functionality, they slowly became more elegant. Counters for example, which were placed as a physical division between the pharmacist and the customer, as well as for their exhibition function, began to be crafted in fine woods carved with symbols related to medicine. [20] Behind them, were closed wooden cabinets and rows of shelves lining the walls, displaying porcelain, glass and metallic jars, sometimes even enclosed with stained glass showcases. [21] This was key, as this design choice transformed storage into an attractive architectural feature instead of something that had to be hidden from the public.

Pharmacies exteriors were characterized by having ornamented signs that recalled its function with the use of symbols as well as glass windows in the monoblocks.

[18] [21] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)

[19] [20] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)



Figure 14 - Interior photograph of Farmacia Almasio

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)



Figure 15 - Interior photograph of Farmacia Chimica Algostino De Michelis

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

food

Food shops include a wide range of commercial categories, each a bit different than the other depending on their specialization, some of these are: butchers, delicatessens, herbalists, and wine shops.

Butchery transformed during the 19th century, leaving a back space for conservation and preparing the cuts of the meat that was hidden from the customer, and a sales space in the front of the shop with refrigerated showcases and a counter. The base of the counter was usually either in stone or in wood, although not as common, and was ornamented with carved symbols related to the service, such as animal heads.

As for delicatessens, these had different spaces, such as a kitchen, a storage room and an exhibition area which was the main space of the shop. This area implemented shelving along the walls to exhibit packaged goods and had a counter where you could find a scale and the register.

Herbalists on the other hand, also had wide exhibition spaces with showcases and shelves, a laboratory to prepare the mixes, but their storage rooms were a bit different. These had to be ventilated spaces to dry the herbs, which is why they were located in the back of the establishment, towards the building's courtyard.

A common feature among most food shops was the use of marble surfaces, especially on counter tops which evoked hygiene thanks to it being easy to clean. [22]

[22] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)

book and stationary stores

Bookshops were very popular during the 19th century, most of them had similar characteristics regardless of their specialization in types of literature, wooden bookshelves along the walls, wooden counters, wooden or metal devantures for the storefront to exhibit the books. [23]

[23] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)



Figure 16 - Interior photograph of Ditta Rosa Serafino Erboristeria

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)



Figure 17 - Interior photograph of Macelleria Oreste Curletti

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)



Figure 18 - Interior photograph of G. Giappichelli bookstore

(Ronchetta, Le botteghe a Torino : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2006)

artisans

Industrialization was a huge challenge for artisans, as products could now be made faster, cheaper and in larger quantities, often replacing artisan's work. However, some were lucky enough to survive modernization and maintain their position in commercial dynamics selling quality, tradition and craftsmanship. Because this can be such a wide category, there isn't necessarily a model of what the shops were like, instead, each type of merchandise had different needs related to their craft and therefore possibly different spatial distributions inside the botteghe. [24]

[24] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)

jewelers and goldsmiths

Jewelries, goldsmiths, silversmiths and watchmakers had to emphasize their elegance as they were directed to high-end clientele, their main intention was to express a sense of luxury and exclusivity to their customers. The interiors were therefore carefully divided into different salons according to each of their specific activities.

There was a main exhibition and commercial space, as well as isolated rooms that would offer a more private and personalized shopping experience. These private rooms were finely furnished with small tables and chairs, along with glass display showcases. The interior of these types of shops was richly decorated to resemble elegant salons. The counters and showcases were often works of art themselves, being crafted by prestigious artisans in wood with leather or soft textile tops to allow a delicate manipulation of the jewels.

As for workshops, these were only present if the stores sold original pieces, in which cases they were located either above or beside the shop in a separate establishment. If on the other hand they resold pieces from another brand, they usually required less workspace. [25]

The storefronts were just as elaborate, incorporating elegant signs, gilded details, or stained-glass elements. The facades not only attracted the wealthy clientele, but also established the shop's reputation.

[25] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)



Figure 19 - Interior photograph of trimmings shop Passamaneria Massia Vittorio on Via Barbaroux

(Ronchetta, Le botteghe a Torino : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2006)



Figure 20 - Photograph of the facade of Musy Padre e Figli jewelry store on Via Po

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 21 (left) - Interior photograph of Musy Padre e Figli silver showcase

Figure 22 (right) - Interior photograph of Orologeria Antica Rocca Grandi Magazzini watch store

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

clothes and accessories

Fashion retail along with the textile industry made a turn during the 19th century, changing the type of products being sold and therefore the shopping experience itself. Rather than being tailoring workshops, these shifted into sales-oriented establishments. Clothes were no longer necessarily tailor made, but instead brands began selling clothing that was “ready to wear”. This transition mostly affected smaller tailors, who were forced to become just resellers. More recognized tailors evolved into Parisian style fashion ateliers.

These shops had long wooden shelves to display garments and counters to unfold them for the customer to have a closer look. Clothing was therefore also exhibited in the popular monoblocks to be admired from the storefront and attract potential customers. Another popular feature of these types of stores was the exhibition in narrow showcases around the pillars under the porticoes, as clothing needed little space and could be hung flat against a surface. [26]

[26] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)

hair salons and perfume shops

Originally during the 1800s, barber shops and hair salons were directed only to a male audience. In that moment, the interior distribution consisted of one single space, furnished with “large mirrors, sinks, chairs, stools and highchairs for children”. [27] Slowly along the beginning of the 20th century, salons began accommodating these types of establishments for women as well. They offered new aesthetic procedures; the only main difference was they tended to use curtains on the storefronts to guarantee privacy. [28]

During the 19th century, perfume shops had separate spaces for laboratories where they made the final products out of extracts and oils, a room for exhibition and sales to high class clientele and sometimes had a separate space dedicated to beauty treatments like baths and massages. With industrialization, these shops slowly transitioned to selling ready-to-use products instead of preparing the products themselves between the 19th and the 20th century. The main furnishing consisted of cabinets and shelves along the walls with a marble top counter that also had smaller glass showcases.

[27] [28] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)



Figure 23 - Interior photograph of Arber leather goods accessories store

(Ronchetta, Le botteghe a Torino : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2006)



Figure 24 - Interior photograph of Niche Profumeria perfume shop on Via Po

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

3.3 common characteristics

components

storefronts

With the changes of commercial dynamics, there was a physical evolution of the commercial spaces, establishments were no longer generic bottegas that served as deposits of workshops, but rather began to be designed during the beginnings of the 19th century. The storefront was one of the most important changes, as its decoration became part of the city's urban landscape and could be considered as the most simple form of furnishing.^[29] As the expert Chiara Ronchetta states, "The devanture was used to attract attention, to highlight the quality of the product, demonstrate the status of a prestigious business, extend the display space; but often it was also used to hide with skillful decorative structures the adaptations of the building to the requisites of "modern" business, which were sometimes very demanding".^[30] Commercial furnishing had a huge impact on the city's image, especially due to the strategic location of commercial axes, making them not only places of trade, but also places for encounters. This takes us to understand why commercial furnishing could be considered even a testimony of the city's culture.

Multiple solutions for these new storefronts were being implemented. The first idea was a simple window frame that was inserted within the original openings of the building; this solution was characterized for having minimal structural modifications. As for the shop sign, it would either be placed on the building over the lintel of the window or at the side of the opening.

Other solutions were to surround the original openings of the building or to build a portal in situ, usually in marble or stone; these often implied more complex designs. Last but not least are the monoblocks, which became widely popular in all typologies of shops during the long 19th century. Monoblocks receive their name from the fact that they were prefabricated independent structures that were subsequently applied to the building's facade. These structures were initially fabricated in wood in carpenter's workshops, slowly evolving with the technological innovations of the 19th century, they began to be produced industrially in iron.^[31] These structures for storefronts gained their popularity thanks to the fact that they "responded to the new requirements of the 19th century trade: wide display space, visible shop signs, immediate publicity impact",^[32] they also allowed rapid installation, making the adaptations to new commercial needs much easier and cheaper.

[29][31] (Laureati, 1982)

[30][32] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)

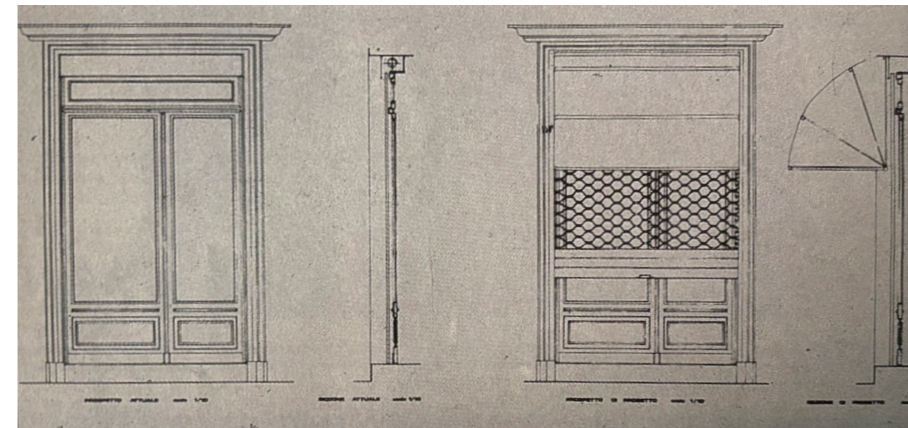


Figure 25 - Archive drawing of a project for a storefront inserted into the building's window openings



Figure 26 - Archive drawing of a project for a wooden monoblock design

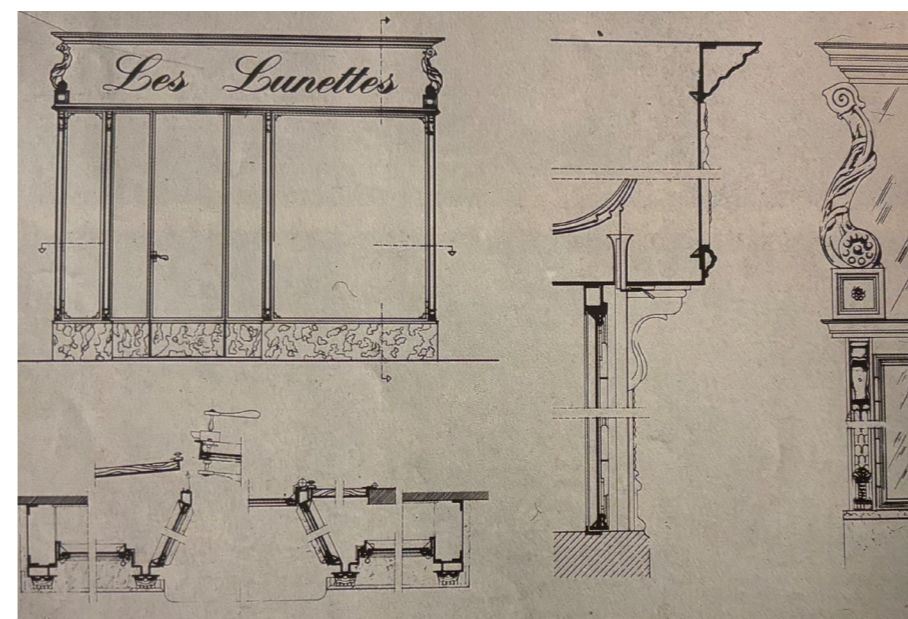


Figure 27 - Archive drawing of a project for an iron monoblock design

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

decoration

The 19th century is also the time of the rise of designers and notable names. Shop decoration was initially done by craftsmen and specialized workshops, during the Lungo Ottocento, these began to be specifically designed for each shop. The participation of notable designers, artisans and architects was related to the prestige that the shop was projected to have.

Exterior decoration played a key role as a form of signage, while interior decoration and furnishing aimed to imitate the habitat of its consumers.^[33] As decoration could be understood as a sort of accessory for architecture, these elements tend to be more susceptible to damage or loss over time due to their fragile nature. This has made it more difficult to identify the original characteristics of these elements. Another obstacle to their clear understanding is the overlapping and superposition of various decorative elements and techniques that could have taken place during renovations.^[34]

Regardless of these difficulties, some common techniques have been identified in various historic shops. The use of stucco was very popular, this is a mixture of gypsum, water and an adhesive, it was sometimes reinforced with different fibers to add resistance while giving it lightness. Stucco was used to create ornate decorations; it was usually cast in molds that were pre-made. Its original color is a cream tone, so it was often painted or gilded to give it the wanted finish. Another popular finish was done through gilding. This is the application of thin gold sheets over a given surface. It was often applied over stucco, glass or even over certain metals.

Glass was also a popular decorative material in shops during the nineteenth century. This material is widely flexible in its finishes depending on the technique used. Its decorative techniques can be divided into two, hot and cold. Hot techniques, like oven firing, can give the glass different colors and even shapes. Cold techniques, on the other hand, include engraving and acid etching, allowing the creation of artistic designs onto the material. Glass was either used as a single element of decoration or to create mosaics, in this case lead or brass was used for bonding the pieces together.

As for painting, it was mostly used in interiors although some specific exterior applications can be found. Two main painting techniques were found to be used for commercial settings during the long nineteenth century, tempera and oil. A common application for tempera painting was in frescoes, due to its lower cost, as well as its vivid and durable colors. Preparing the surface before painting was crucial to ensure proper adhesion. Oil painting is much more durable on

different surfaces, common applications include plaster, iron, wood, stucco and glass. The diversity of the materials that it could be applied on allowed it to be used for different types of decoration, even for commercial signage. Depending on the surface that it would be applied on, there were different primer mixtures to avoid excessive absorption of the paint.^[35]

[35] (Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)



Figure 28 - Photograph of ASSC artisan workshop

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)



Figure 29 (left) - Detail photograph of gilded stucco decorative element around clock in Farmacia Operti

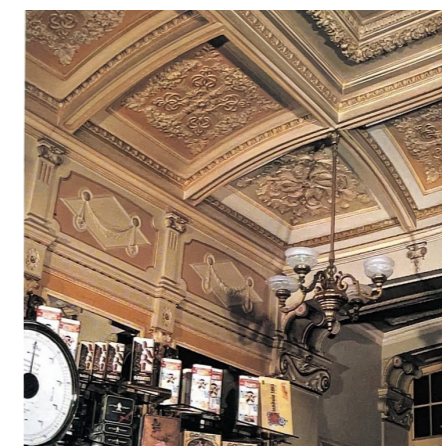


Figure 30 (right) - Detail photograph of decorative ceiling panels in stucco in Confetteria Avignano

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)



Figure 31 (left) - Detail photograph of frosted glass



Figure 32 (right) - Detail photograph of painting over ceramic wall tiles in Malabar, ex Casa del Caffè in Piazza Carlo Felice

(Job & Ronchetta, L'arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

[33] [34] (Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)

signage

Before the use of designed signage, commercial spaces used to be recognized with a symbolic object or painting depicting a relation with the typology. Up until the beginning of the 17th century, the methods of signaling were somewhat standardized as moveable elements; they were typically simple and made from less valuable materials. These furnishings evolved with the commercial dynamics, making them each time higher quality and with more design to attract customers. They also moved on from being purely functional into an important piece of decoration in the shop's image. [36]

The craftsmanship also changed over time, initially they were artisanally crafted in woodwork and towards the end of the nineteenth century, started to be industrially produced iron frames. Different decor techniques were implemented to enhance the signs image, such as painting over different materials, adding metallic accents or carving to give different reliefs.

The sign could be positioned in different parts of the shop's facade depending on its design. In some cases, this was an additional element added onto the building's facade, either laterally or over the storefront window. In other cases, the sign was part of the design of the storefront, as occurred with monoblocks. This way, the prefabricated structure already included a sign box and there was no need to further touch the building. Another option was for the sign to be painted onto the glass of the windows. In any case, signage in the nineteenth century not only gave the customer an idea of what was sold inside, but also gave the shops a recognizable identity.

Overall, signage was an important aspect in the shifting commercial dynamics of the nineteenth century, contributing to the changes in consumer habits as it was a way of communication. This is considered to be one of the predecessors of modern advertising and graphic design.

[36] (Ronchetta, *Le botteghe a Torino: esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930*, 2006)



Figure 33 - Detail photograph of metal sign box of Les Lunettes on Corso Vittorio Emanuele II



Figure 34 - Detail photograph of wooden sign with cornice and gold-colored accents of Stratta confetteria in Piazza Carlo Felice



Figure 35 - Detail photograph of painted sign of Al Bicerin confetteria in Piazza della Consolata



(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)

Figure 36 (left) - Detail photograph of gold plating on glass on a shop sign

(Job & Ronchetta, *L'arredo commerciale storico*, 1988)

Figure 37 (right) - Detail photograph of painted iron sign of Ditta Rosa Serafino Erboristeria

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)



Figure 38 (left) - Detail photograph of Oldengland wooden shop sign in Piazza Carlo Felice

(Job & Ronchetta, *L'arredo commerciale storico*, 1988)

Figure 39 (right) - Figure 39 - Detail photograph of decorated sign in iron with gold lettering

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)

materials

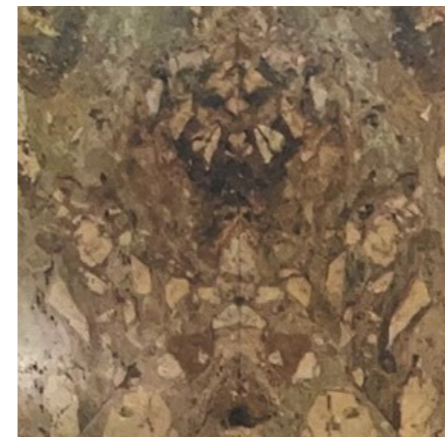
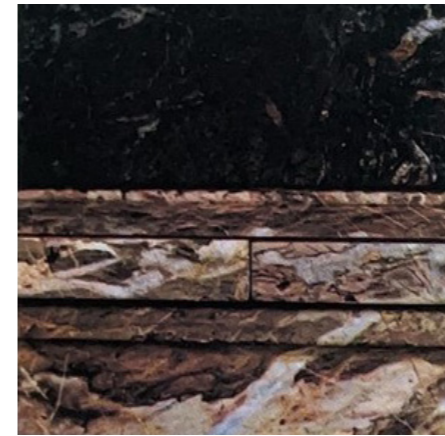
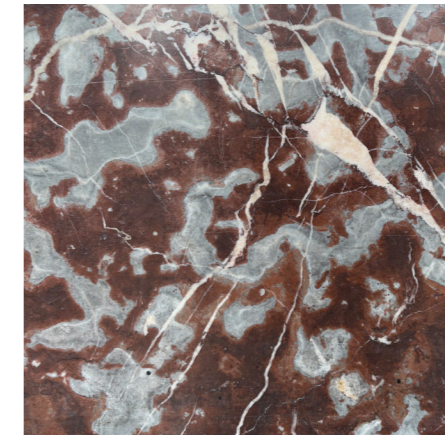
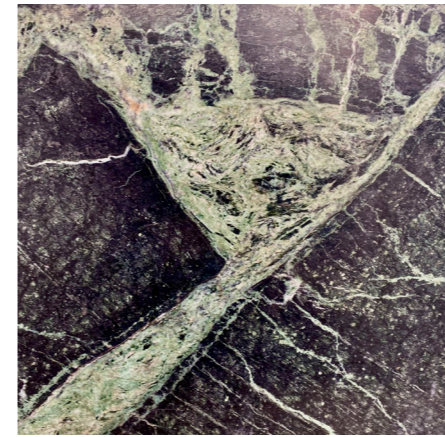
stone

The use of various types of stones and marbles in commercial architecture was very popular in Turin during the nineteenth century for a series of reasons including its aesthetic, functional and regional significance.

The choice of stones as construction materials was heavily influenced by the geological characteristics of the Piedmont region. The mountainous terrain allowed the extraction of stones and marbles from different quarries. Marble refers to rocks that can be easily polished, other stones include granites, gneiss, and quartz which are much harder and therefore can not be polished, making them opaque surfaces. The most common stones found were Gneiss and Ortogneiss which were used for overall construction in Turin, specifically in commercial architecture they were used for plinths and floors, both interior and exterior, giving the buildings a unified look. On the other hand, more rare stones were found around the outskirts of the region and were mostly used for decorative purposes.

These materials gave a nice finish thanks to their natural chromatic effects. These same effects were often decisive in the application of certain stones in specific typologies, for example the use of multicolored marbles was very popular in cafes, while white marbles were used in pharmacies.^[37] To illustrate, Limestone Alabaster from Busca (alabastro calcareo di Busca), also known as Alabastrite Agatoidea and later as Onice del Piemonte, depending on its origin, was highly used for decorative elements and can still be recognized on the table tops of Caffè Mulassano in Piazza Castello. Another highly used stone was Green Shale from Val Roja (Argillascisto Verde), very popular due to its opaque green color scheme with darker toned veins; it was commonly used for the plinths under the monoblocks of the shop's facades.

The use and choice of such a variety of stone was also influenced by the technological advancements of the nineteenth century, which allowed more powerful extractions and easier transportation of the extracted material. Although most stones used in Turin were extracted in the Piedmont region, as was mentioned previously, others were brought from further regions such as the Rosso di Verona, Giallo di Siena or even Onice from Marseille.^[38]



Figures 40-45 - Compilation of detail photographs of different types of marbles used in commercial nineteenth century architecture

(Top left and right taken by author, 2024)

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)



Figure 46 (left) - Detail photograph of marble counter of Macelleria Oreste Curletti

(Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

Figure 47 (right) - Detail photograph of marble counter of Caffè Mulassano

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)

[36] (Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

[37] (Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)

wood

Wood has always been a constant building material, and the nineteenth century was no exception, it was traditionally used for both moveable and fixed elements. In shop exteriors, wood was used for window frames, decorative or signage panels, and sometimes even for carved ornamentation. On the other hand, in shop interiors, wood was widely used among the store's furnishings. Some of its most popular applications were in counters, shelving, cabinets, showcases, and general furniture like tables and seating. The craftsmanship and artistry that carpenters had to sculpt moldings and other elements was highly valued, all in the aim of creating appealing spaces for potential shoppers.

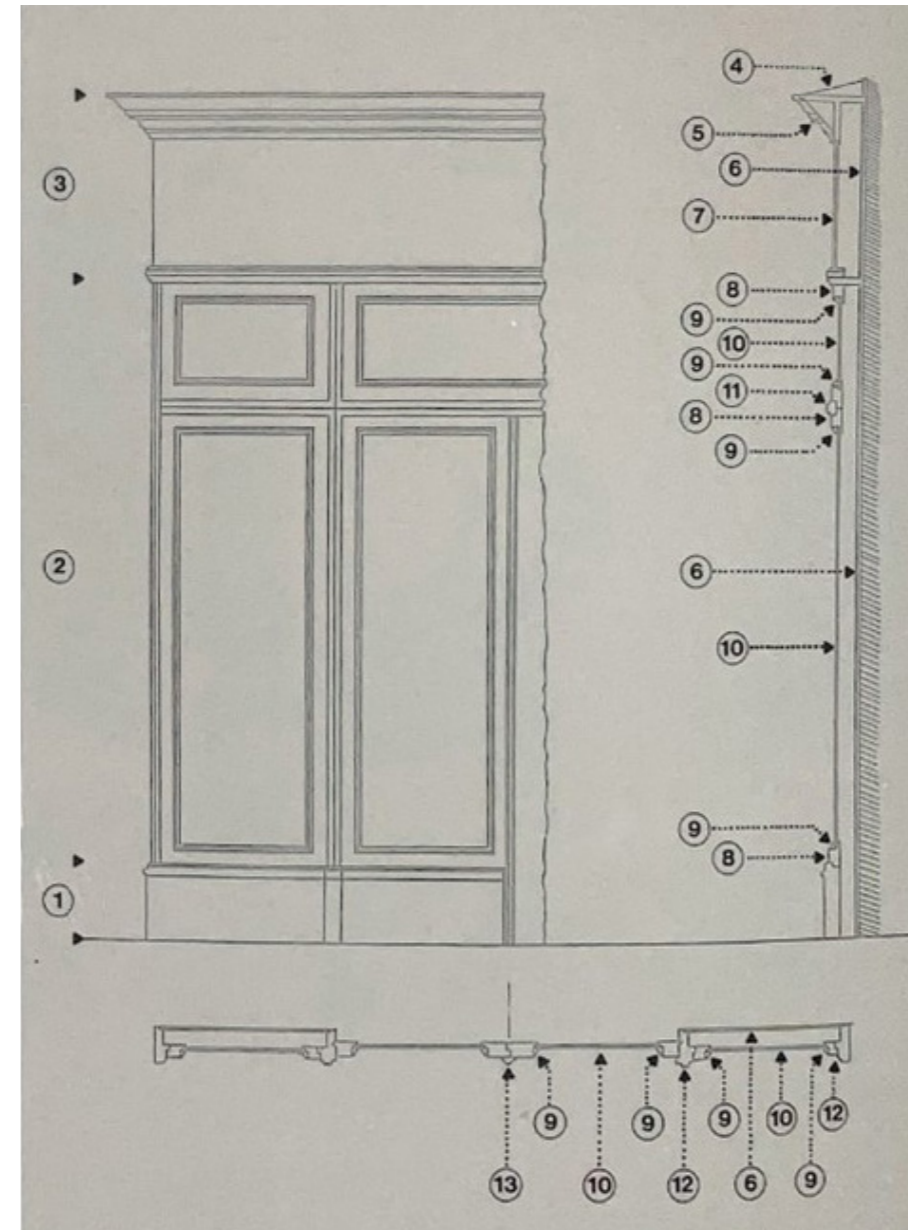
The nineteenth century was characterized by the aim of improving urban hygiene conditions which directly influenced the architecture regulations. It could no longer be tolerated to expose and sell merchandise in baskets on the sidewalks, creating norms and regulations for commerce. These new needs translated into functional and aesthetic changes of both internal and external furnishing, creating different forms of wooden display cases.

Common types of wood used in historic shops in Turin include walnut, mahogany, larch, poplar, fir, and cherry. Each one was used for different elements depending on its durability and resistance. Walnut and mahogany woods for instance were popular in exterior furnishing, while cherry wood was mostly used indoors. It was also common for certain details of the wooden furnishing to be complemented with lead, copper or other metallic materials, for example for window mullions.

Most of the woods were varnished to reach a desired tone and to prime the material for protection. There were different techniques and ingredients depending on the wood that it was being applied on, as well as the goal of the varnish. Oil lacquering and wick painting was a popular solution as it maintains the wood's natural texture and color. On the other hand, some methods gave more coverage, often used in lower quality wood. As for decorative wooden elements, the use of gold leaf was very well liked.

Another implementation of wood was for the shutter or closing systems. One solution was to create mobile panels that were fixed over the glass parts of the facade with iron bars and hooks; these panels could either be removed completely or folded in a sort of accordion mechanism and hidden behind the lateral showcases. This example of shutters is still in use today in Musy, the traditional jewelry store on Via Po. ^[39]

[38] (Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)



- 1 Plinth
- 2 Window frame
- 3 Sign box
- 4 Cover
- 5 Cornice
- 6 Fixed frame
- 7 Sign panel
- 8 Window crosspiece
- 9 Mullion
- 10 Glass
- 11 Molding
- 12 Mullion

Figure 48 - Detail drawing of wooden elements of the typical monoblock structure

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)



Figure 49 (left) - Detail photograph of an example of wooden shutters used in a barber shop in Piazza Vittorio Veneto

Figure 50 (right) - Detail photograph of wooden column capital of Casa del Caffè in Piazza Carlo Felice

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, *Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione*, 1985)

metals

Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, iron and cast-iron began to be introduced into construction. In commercial establishments, it began to be used for window frames, and more specifically for monoblocks, replacing wooden structures. Some of the incentives for the shift in material was its possibility of thinner section elements, low deformability, fire resistance, and easy repetition of elements. Initially it was not a low-cost solution due to the scarcity of the material. [40] As the metal industry was just taking off in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century, materials were imported at a very high cost. The three most used metals were iron, cast iron, and wrought iron.

Cast iron is a material that is relatively easy to melt, consequently making it easy for casting into sand molds. It is characterized by exceptional surface hardness, but also for being brittle. Its pattern provides significant resistance to corrosion, maintaining its condition over time.

Wrought iron, on the other hand, is a malleable material that can be processed effectively through rolling, hammering and drawing techniques, as well as weldable at red heat. Its structure with embedded particles also contributes to its resistance to corrosion.

The adoption of ferrous materials in architectural design of commercial shops was not only driven by the novelty appeal of them, but also by their properties. Unlike wood, metals are resistant to deformation and corrosion caused by atmospheric or external agents, such as fluctuations in temperature, water, or fire. Additionally, allowed for the creation of slender structural elements, commonly used in features like mullions. Another notable advantage was the ability to replicate decorative elements through repeated castings using a single mold, rather than going through the artisan labor-intensive production required for wooden decorations. Other popular implementations of metal in decoration were adding gilded or binding accents to frames or glass features.

The introduction of new materials represented certain challenges as well, such as the lack of knowledge on how to make connections between metallic elements. The inability to join elements correctly created instability of these structures as a whole. This was quickly solved with the insertion of angled metallic sheets that were concealed as decoration.

Another important part of the facade that began to be made out of metal was the closing system. Rollable shutters made of corrugated metal sheets were introduced, these needed an

extruded box over the lintel of the door or of the whole glass storefront to hide away the roll when it was open. According to Ronchetta, this introduction was practically an evolution of the wooden monoblock, as it maintained the same components as before, yet modified them to adapt to new needs.

The sign holder was another component of the shop facades that was modernized with the use of ferrous materials. In this case, the structure of the sign holder is hidden within decoration creating continuity from the monoblock's mullions upward.

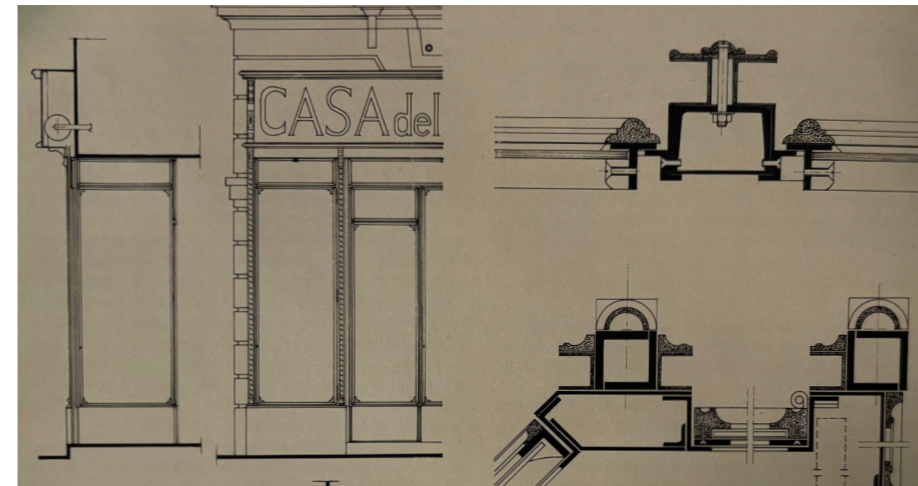


Figure 51 - - Detail archive drawing of a project for a storefront in iron



Figures 52-55 - Compilation of detail photographs of the application of iron on facades of historic shops

(Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)

[39] (Job & Ronchetta, L' arredo commerciale storico, 1988)

04 via po

4.1 via po as a commercial axis

As has been mentioned throughout the document, Via Po is considered one of the main commercial axes of the city, along with streets such as Via Garibaldi, Milano, Pietro Micca and Roma, as well as piazzas like Vittorio Veneto, Carlo Felice, della Repubblica and Statuto. It is also a symbol of the city's emblematic urban image, as it is one of those streets that have a clear urbanistic plan and architectural design which focus on developing an urban landscape. This chapter will examine Via Po's historical evolution, architectural significance, and its role as a vital commercial artery, underlining the challenges and considerations in safeguarding its cultural and architectural heritage. ^[41]

Via Po was projected during one of the city's expansions, making it a crucial axis that would structure Turin's growth as well as its relation between the city center and the Po River through its physical connection of Piazza Castello and Piazza Vittorio Veneto. In the guide from 1989 *I luoghi del commercio*, Job and Ronchetta identify Via Po, along with the other aforementioned streets and squares, as the ruling axes of the baroque and nineteenth century. According to them, some of the main characteristics that the axes had are maximum functional specialization, maximum concentration of furnishing, signage, commercial and advertising elements, concentration of historical commercial furniture elements, unitary or uniform architecture, rich in visual references; all of this making them highly present in Turin's collective memory.

Architecturally, Via Po is characterized by its continuous porticoed design, a unifying element that connects the buildings along the street, and which reinforces its importance as one of the city's most visually cohesive streets. Apart from

this aesthetic appeal, the porticoes also serve a clear functional purpose, to create a covered walkway. This allows an integration between shops, and encourages pedestrian interaction, all of which ultimately generates strong commercial dynamics. For this reason, porticoes can be considered the commercial and social spaces of excellence of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. ^[42]

The porticoes are supported on large pillars, forming an arcade of arches in between, which create a rhythm and are only interrupted by perpendicular streets, offering a sense of continuity. These are around seven meters high, offering shelter without the sensation of being in a closed space. The symmetrical design is also a visual strategy to elongate the public space and draw the viewer's eye towards the architectural landmarks found at both extremes of the street, Palazzo Madama and Chiesa Gran Madre di Dio.

Another key characteristic of Via Po's aesthetic appeal is the use of commercial signage and furnishings along its facades on the ground floor. As noted by Ronchetta and Job, "there are no elements of commercial connotation on the external facades of the buildings,"^[43] which allows the architectural design and rhythm of the porticoes to remain visually dominant. Instead, commercial signs and furnishing elements are primarily situated within the porticoes, where they serve both practical and decorative functions without detracting from the street's architectural unity.

Via Po's commercial identity has long been integral to its architectural and social role within Turin. This axis has seen the evolution of commercial dynamics and how these behavioral

[40] (Job & Ronchetta, *I luoghi del commercio*, 1989)

[41][42] (Job & Ronchetta, *I luoghi del commercio*, 1989)

changes have impacted architecturally. Ronchetta and Job described Via Po as a place of commercial interest with high density and qualification. They further detail the types of commerce present and highlight the absence of mass distribution. One of the most common types was the presence of specialized commercial establishments, often linked to historical uses such as historic book shops, jewelers, perfume shops, and cafes, many of which have operated since the early nineteenth century. The absence of mass retail chains at the time contributed to a distinctive local commerce culture, making Via Po a bastion of Turin's traditional and artisan-driven retail landscape. Although some of these historical uses are still present today, unfortunately much of them has been lost.

By responding to modern day commercial needs, shops have transformed, losing much of its historic value and efforts to maintain the axis' emblematic character. This shift has raised concerns regarding the preservation of the street's historic identity. While efforts are underway to safeguard the heritage and atmosphere of Via Po, the ongoing transformation of commercial spaces poses challenges to maintaining its emblematic character. There is also a constant debate on how these historic shops should be preserved, this has led to some excellent examples of restorations and others that end up being failed attempts. Conservation efforts must balance the need to support contemporary commerce with the imperative to preserve the street's character as an emblematic feature of Turin's urban landscape. This balancing act underscores the importance of urban policies that prioritize both economic viability and heritage conservation in the face of modernizing pressures.

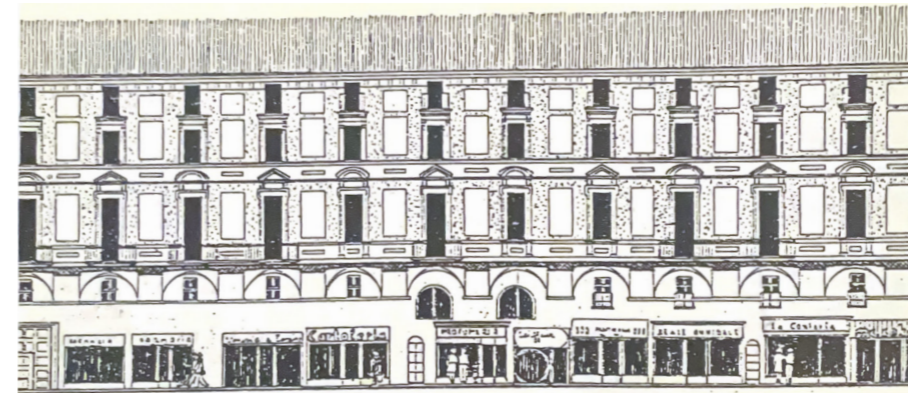


Figure 56 - Schematic section drawing of a commercial arcade in Via Po

(Torino: Assessorato all'arredo urbano, 1992)



Figure 57 - Photograph of Via Po

(Taken by author, 2024)

4.2 historic shop inventory of Via Po

Currently Via Po has a total of twenty establishments considered as historic shops, many of the ones which had been previously listed in bibliography have been lost. Out of the remaining shops, at least a sample of each typology is still present. The most repeated typology being cafes and restaurants, reminding us of the importance that commercial axes had in social interactions during the nineteenth century.

Figure 58 - Diagram of current historic shop typologies on Via Po

(by the author)

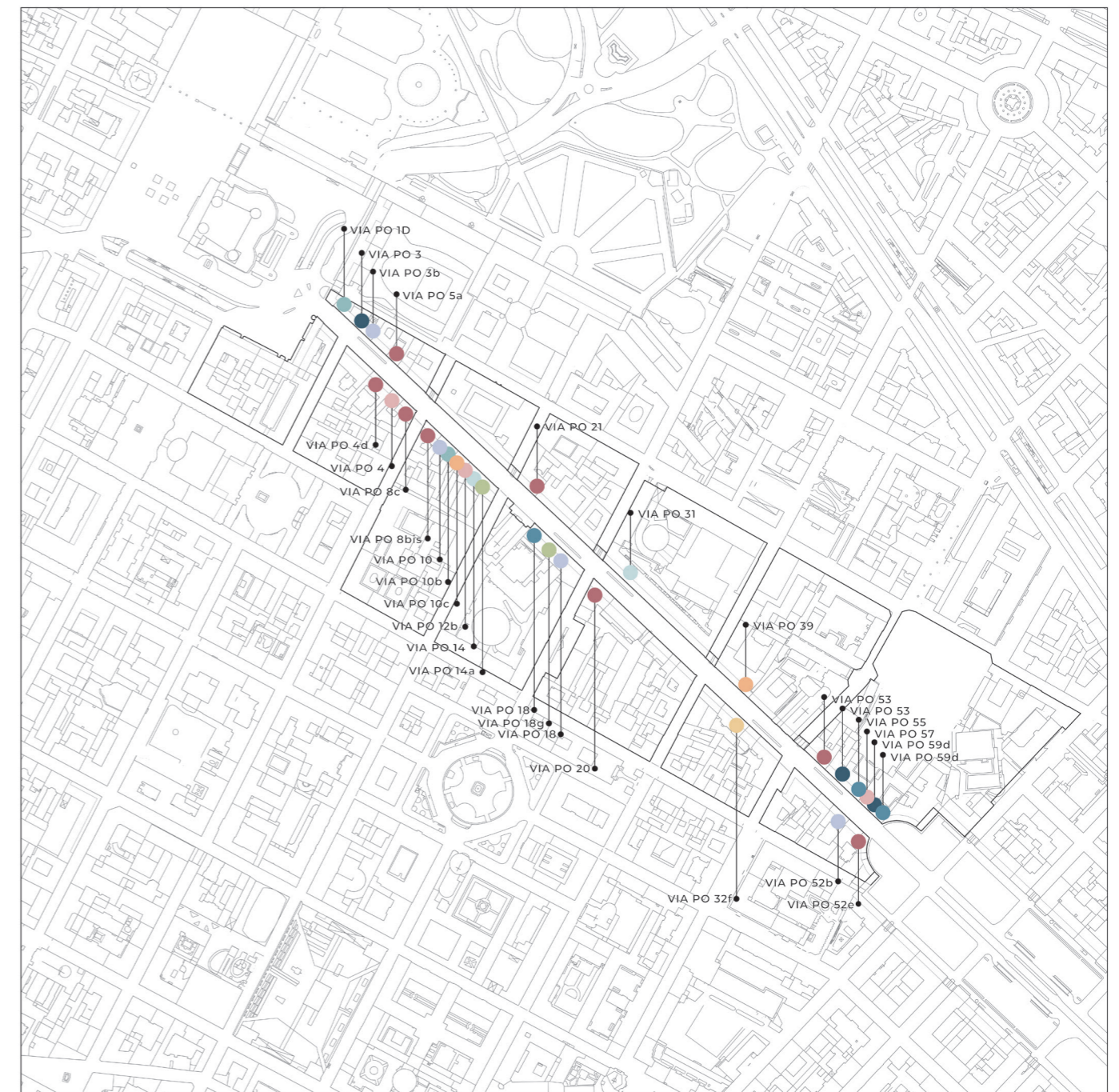
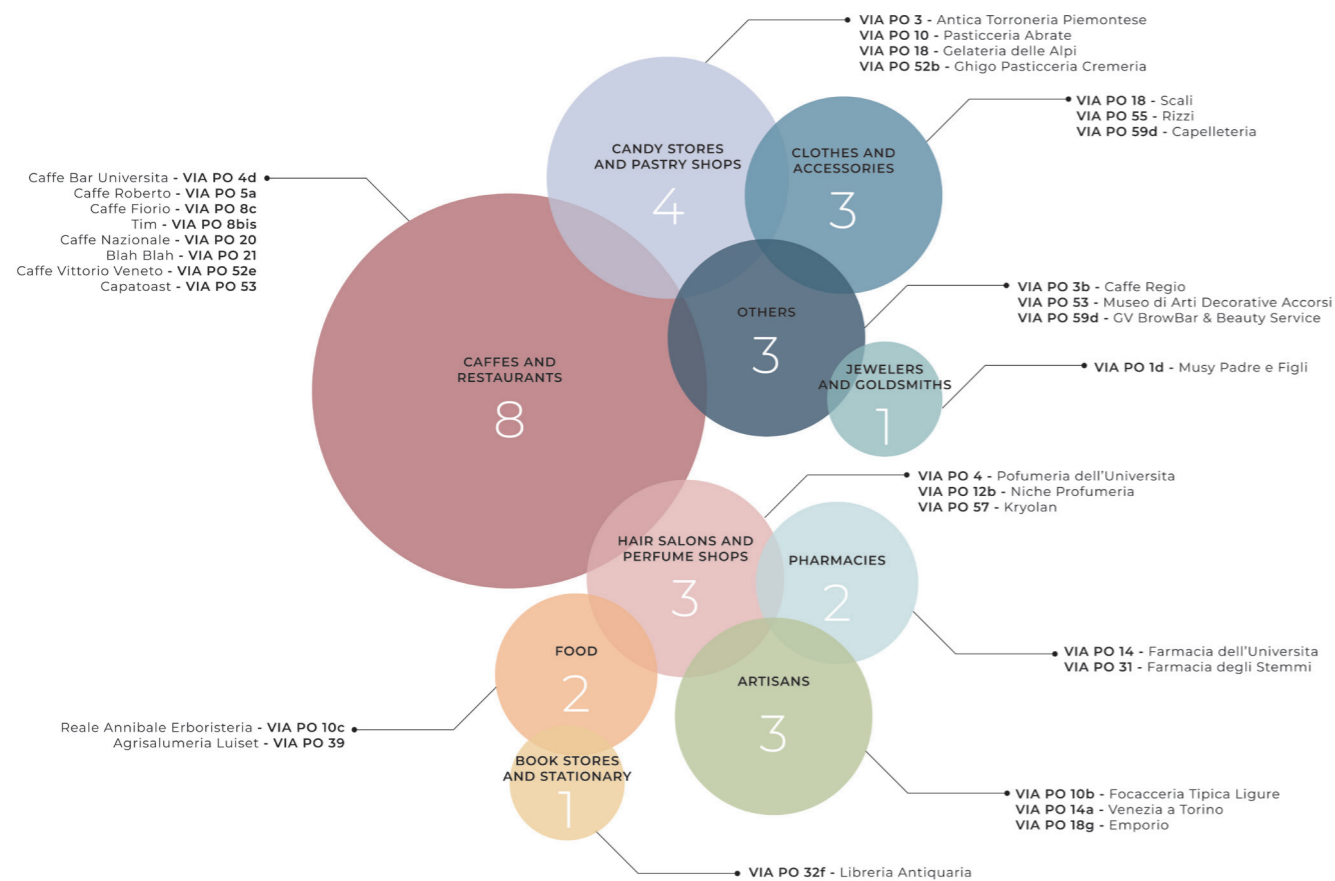
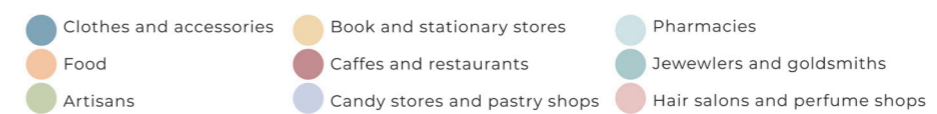


Figure 59 - Map of historic shops inventory on Via Po

(by the author)



block no.	no.	address	current use	original use	other uses	typology	date	renovations
1	1	Via Po, 1d	Musy Padre e Figli	Musy Padre e Figli	-	Jewelers and Goldsmiths	1818	1865 2011
	2	Via Po, 3b	Caffe Regio	Augusta Edizioni Musicali	Perez Ika Frav abbigliamento giovanile	Others	1852	1976 2018
	3	Via Po, 3	Antica Torroneria Piemontese	-	-	Candy stores and pastry shops	-	-
	4	Via Po, 5a	Caffe Roberto	Caffe Roberto	-	Caffes and restaurants	1876	1892 1922
3	5	Via Po, 21	Blah Blah (gastrobar)	Caffe Ristorante Parigi	Cinema Ambrosio Biograph Cinema per le famiglie Cinema Po KingKong Cinestudio	Caffes and restaurants	1907	1916 1941 1985 1994 2011
4	6	Via Po, 31	Farmacia degli Stemmi	Farmacia del Regio Ospizio di Carita	Farmacia degli stemmi Alleanza Cooperativa Torinese	Pharmacies	1886	1920 1991
5	7	Via Po, 39	Agrisalumeria Luiset	-	-	Food	-	-
6	8	Via Po, 53	Capa Toast	-	-	Caffes and restaurants	-	-
	9	Via Po, 53	Museo di Arti Decorative Accorsi	-	-	Others	-	-
	10	Via Po, 55	Rizzi	-	-	Clothes and accessories	1992	-
	11	Via Po, 57	Kryolan	-	-	Hair salons and perfume shops	2018	-
	12	Via Po, 59d	GV BrowBar & Beauty Service	Drogheria Dalmasso o Damosso	Libreria Nero Vinile (vinyl record shop)	Others	1880	1991 ?
	13	Via Po, 59d	Capellereria	-	-	Clothes and accessories	-	-
12	14	Via Po, 4d	Caffe Bar Universita	Caffe Bar Universita	-	Caffes and restaurants	1900s	-
	15	Via Po, 4	Profumeria dell'Universita	Profumeria dell'Universita	-	Hair salons and perfume shops	1907	-
	16	Via Po, 8c	Caffe Fiorio	Caffe Fiorio	-	Caffes and restaurants	1780	1845 1920 1930
11	17	Via Po, 8bis	Tim	Caffe delle colonne	-	Caffes and restaurants	1800s	-
	18	Via Po, 10	Pasticceria Abrate (Tavola calda / restaurant)	Calvi e Abrate (Bakery)	-	Candy stores and pastry shops	1866	1920 1930 2002
	19	Via Po, 10b	Focaccherie Tipica Ligure	Reale Ombrelleria Artigiana	Gioelleria La Conterja	Artisans	-	-
	20	Via Po, 10c	Reale Annibale erboristeria	-	-	Food	late 1800s and early 1900s	-
	21	Via Po, 12b	Niche Profumeria	Profumeria Mira	Ottica Bonino (1989-2005)	Hair salons and perfume shops	1920	1989 2005
	22	Via Po, 14	Farmacia dell'Universita	Farmacia dell'Universita	-	Pharmacies	1800s	-
	23	Via Po, 14a	Venezia a Torino	Venezia a Torino	-	Artisans	1916	-
10	24	Via Po, 18	Scali (shoes)	Scali Abbigliamento	-	Clothes and accessories	1900s	-
	25	Via Po, 18g	Emporio	Ditta Sciunnache Cartoleria	Tilde tondino ceramiche	Artisans	1880	1937
	26	Via Po, 18	Gelateria delle Alpi	-	-	Candy stores and pastry shops	-	-
9	27	Via Po, 20	Caffe Nazionale	-	-	Caffes and restaurants	-	-
8	28	Via Po, 32f	Libreria Antiquaria	-	-	Book stores and stationary stores	-	-
7	29	Via Po, 52b	Ghigo Pasticceria Cremeria	Latteria Ghigo (the expansion is on what used to be Macelleria Carlo Pia)	-	Candy stores and pastry shops	1870	1950s
	30	Via Po, 52e	Caffe Vittorio Veneto	Caffe Vittorio Veneto	-	Caffes and restaurants	1878	1948 1996

4.3 fragment of via po

The isolation of the case study area was guided by the updated inventory of historic shops along Via Po. Given the objective of proposing a pilot project aimed at reactivating a historic shop that has lost its original values, it was necessary to identify a block that not only demonstrated historical richness but also possessed the potential to serve as a model for future restoration initiatives.

The decision to focus on the block with the highest concentration of historic shops on Via Po was strategic, as it offers an opportunity to expand the impact of preservation efforts. The selection of a site that already presents strong historical character could help the project attract public interest and promote cultural engagement. All these criteria position the project and case study area as a focal point for revitalization of Via Po's historic character and as an example that demonstrates the viability of restoring lost values in a contemporary context. The block in question is the second from Piazza Castello, it is bordered by Via Bogino and Via Francesco da Paola, and directly in front of Università degli Studi di Torino.

The chosen block measures around 90 meters along Via Po. It is no exception to the unified facade composition of the street, with buildings being four stories high plus the attic level. The ground floor is open under the public porticoes that connect the axis and holds a total of fifteen commercial shops, in addition to three doors to access the rest of the buildings. Two of these doors are narrow arched openings, while the other is a much wider and larger portal.

fragment inventory

There is a total of fifteen shops on this block, seven of which can still be classified as historic shops. While the others originally were also bodegas and commercial establishments, the amounts of changes over the years have led to a loss of its characteristics as historic shops.

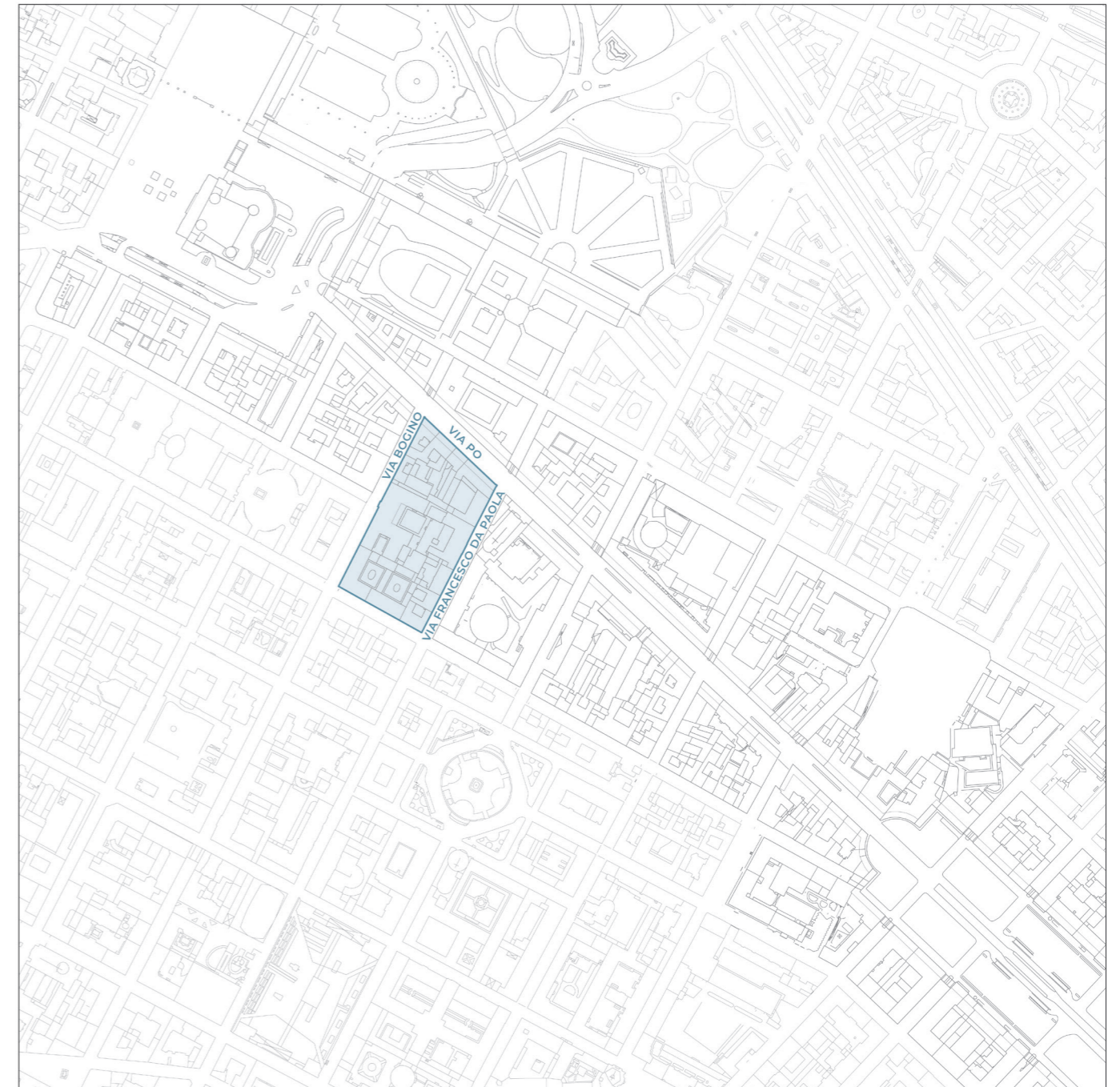


Figure 60 - Map of Via Po highlighting the chosen fragment

(by the author)

Tim – Via Po, 8bishistoric shop

Caffe Gianduia, also known as Caffe delle Colonne, now TIM, was one of the pioneer cafes in Turin, [44] however there isn't much documentation on it. This shop is characterized for having an unusual facade with stucco and cement decorative columns, which seem to imitate the architectural style of the Carlo Alberto period with the new materials of the moment. This is an excellent example of the use of cement in ornamentation typical of the long nineteenth century, as it became more and more popular, not just structurally, but even in street furnishing. (guide to historic shops) Unfortunately the interior of the shop has been vastly modified over the years, without leaving a trace of what it once was. [45]

[43] (Job, Laureati, & Ronchetta, Botteghe e negozi: Torino 1815-1925 Immagine del commercio fra architettura e decorazione, 1985)

[44] (Centro Tim, già caffè, N.D.)



Figure 61 (left) - Photograph of the facade of Tim, ex-Caffe delle Colonne

(Taken by author, 2024)

Figure 62 (right) - Detail photograph of column capitals on Tim façade in taken by Roberto Cortese

(Cortese, Centro Tim, già caffè, particolare dell'esterno, 2017)

Porticotto Lounge Bar – Via Po, 8bis

Porticotto Lounge Bar is a cafe currently composed of two properties, one for the main commercial activities such as exhibition, storage and preparation, while the other one is strictly for seating. The two properties are connected through an opening in the wall which was recently done in 2023. Both venues have a door that connects them to the building's courtyard. The first venue has an area of 28 square meters, while the second one is a bit smaller with just 20 square meters. The two properties have maintained their vaults, while adding flat ceilings towards the main entrance.

In terms of the storefronts, the first one has maintained the monoblock structure, although not in the best state. This facade is composed of a green marble plinth, on top of which rests the windows between carved wooden mullions. This first venue is subdivided into three spaces, the main area with preparation and exhibition counters, a compact room with the refrigerator and oven, as well as a door towards the courtyard, and lastly, a small bathroom. The walls have very minimal decoration with a shelf for liquor bottles and some decal stickers.

The second venue's interior was probably demolished, leaving it as a complete open space that would eventually be considered as flexible or adaptable for modern commerce. Its walls are free of any sort of decoration, with a white finish. The vault on the other hand, does not have plaster, leaving its brick structure visible, giving the space a rustic feel. This venue is also connected to the courtyard through a narrow metal door.



Figure 63 - Photograph of the facade of Porticotto Lounge Bar

(Taken by author, 2024)

Focacceria Tipica Ligure – Via Po, 10bhistoric shop

This whole eighteenth century building has a rich historical background, as it was originally a noble residence and then transformed into the lazaretto, or quarantine station, for the San Giovanni Hospital. This shop on its ground floor housed the Reale Ombrelleria Artigiana, and later other commercial establishments of different typologies, including a shoe and leather goods store and La Conterja jewelers.

These changes of activity of the shop have meant repeated changes to its architecture. During a restoration in the early 2000s, modifications were made to the glass storefront to accommodate the commercial use as a contemporary jeweler, introducing new divisions in the glass panels.^[46] While the shop had been adapted for Gioielleria La Conterja, it has since been repurposed again, currently operating as a focacceria. This latest transformation has further altered the store's design, with some of the historic elements and values being lost in the process. ^[47] Despite the changes, the wooden monoblock from 1897 stands as the only testimony to the original craftsmanship and architectural design of the Reale Ombrelleria Artigiana. This explains the symmetrical design of the monoblock with a centered entrance and display windows on both sides. The monoblock rises from a green marble plinth and extends upwards with carved wooden frames. On top of the monoblock is the sign strip which now hosts a flat green sign and is capped with an ornamented wooden cornice. ^[48]

[45] (Focacceria ligure, ex gioielleria La Conterja, già Reale Ombrelleria, N.D.)

[46] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005))

[47] (Ronchetta, Le botteghe in Piemonte : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2008)



Figure 64 - Photograph of the facade of Focacceria Tipica Ligure, ex-Reale Ombrelleria Artigiana

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 65 (left) - Photograph of the facade of Gioielleria La Conterja in 2005 taken by Marco Corongi

(Corongi, Gioielleria La Conterja, vista dell'esterno, 2005)

Figure 66 (right) - Detail photograph of the wooden frame and sign box of Focacceria Tipica Ligure

(Taken by author, 2024)

Reale Annibale Erboristeria – Via Po, 10chistoric shop

Reale Annibale is another one of those historic shops that has not been well-documented throughout its times. It was founded in 1872, and due to its name was thought to sell musical equipment, nowadays it is an herbalist, selling different natural products like soaps and lotions.

The storefront maintains its original wooden monoblock, symmetrical with a receded centered entrance. The plinth is made of Bardiglio venato, a gray veined marble. A notable feature of this storefront is the sign holder, which is also crafted from wood but is enhanced with a gold finish over black glass; it was elaborated by the Pignatta company. Its interior has been completely redone, eliminating its original furnishings around 1960. However, its current design brings back design elements from the long nineteenth century, such as the wooden paneling and shelving used to exhibit the merchandise along the walls. The shop's functionality has also been enhanced with the installation of a small elevator to the left of the entrance, which provides access to both the underground level and the first floor, replacing a spiral staircase.^[49]

An additional feature of this shop is a three-sided glass showcase that surrounds the portico pillar, extending the shop's visual reach into the arcade and providing a unique platform to display merchandise, engaging passersby with the shop's offerings.^[50]

[48] (Ronchetta, *Le botteghe in Piemonte : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930*, 2008)

[49] (Ronchetta, *Guide to Historic shops in Turin*, 2005)



Figure 67 - Photograph of the facade of Reale Annibale Erboristeria

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 68 - Photograph of the interior of Reale Annibale Erboristeria

(Taken by author, 2024)

Pasticceria Abrate – Via Po, 10historic shop

Calvi e Abrate was founded in 1866 as a bakery, it was originally a narrow opening in the facade to sell the goods with a large production space behind hidden to the public. Between the 1920s and 1930s, the bakery was transformed into a pastry shop; following typological changes, the shop transformed its spaces to accommodate this new type of use and facade to become more appealing to the public.^[50] The sales space grew larger and the new monoblock style devanture, which is still in place today, was inserted. This devanture is made of walnut wood over a green marble plinth, it has two symmetrical glass showcases on each side of the diagonally receded entrance. There is a strip over the monoblock where the golden wooden sign is placed, as well some ornamentation like three tinted glass elements and a wooden carved rhombus on each side.

In 2002 the pastry shop closed and led the way to its transformation as a bar-tavola calda or cafeteria. Once the original owners no longer wanted to continue with the business, they found buyers that were willing to maintain as much as possible from the original design. With this new use, the shop expanded, joining part of what used to be the preparation laboratory and the sales area, basically they moved the old paneling back, keeping a division between the kitchen and the cafeteria area. Luckily this shop has been able to conserve historic furnishings such as its counters and panelings, given that its modifications throughout the years have focused on repositioning elements to accommodate the new uses.

The interior design has mahogany wood wall panels with walnut counters adorned with tin side panels elaborated by the Strola company and carrara marble countertops. There is some open shelving along the walls which are supported on thin ornamented mahogany columns.^[52] Some original antique glass jars and tools are still exhibited on the shelves. Other elements of the shop which are still testimony of its past are a trapdoor on the ceiling and a niche that used to be the opening of the oven and is now just a fireplace. During its last renovation, the floor was also recovered, removing various layers and restoring the original eighteenth century pavement, “an alteration between Lucerne stone and terracotta flooring (...) form a pleasant pay of colors”.^[53]

[50] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)

[51] (Ronchetta, Le botteghe in Piemonte : esterni e interni tra 1750 e 1930, 2008)

[52] (Abrate, bar-tavola calda; ex pasticceria, N.D.)



Figure 69 - Photograph of the facade of Pasticceria Abrate

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 70 - Photograph of the interior of Pasticceria Abrate taken by Roberto Cortese in 2017

(Cortese, Abrate, bar-tavola calda; ex pasticceria. Interno, 2017)

Starshop

Starshop is a comics store located in a modernized venue between two historic shops. It specialized in different styles of comic books as well as all action figures and collectables related to the topic. The interior of the shop is divided into two stories, the second floor is visible from the window located under the portico's arch. The storefront is a simple metallic frame with a wide window and a glass door to the right. On top of it rests a large sign box which is mostly blank currently, due to the shop sign being significantly smaller than the whole frame. It has two metallic corner pieces forming rounded corners on the space for the signage. The actual brand sign is positioned in an additional box that extrudes from the original sign box.

The interior is pretty minimalist, with white shelves along both sides and a wooden bookcase in the center. The window decoration changes according to the season or new release, using decal stickers on the glass, but has no special structure



Figure 71 - Photograph of the facade of Starshop

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 72 - Photograph of the interior of Starshop

(Taken by author, 2024)

Niche Profumeria – Via Po, 12bhistoric shop

Niche Parfums et Baute is described by the brand as jewelers of perfumery. It was founded as Mira Profumeria in 1920 and was the perfumery for the Royal House; it kept this identity until 1980 being the dependence of the nearby Profumeria dell'Universita.^[54] According to Ronchetta, Niche can be considered as “one of the most interesting examples of shop decoration in the Via Po area, including the articulation of the elements of its furnishing.”^[55] Like other perfume shops of the times, it had two main areas in the shop, one for sales and another lounge for women to take baths and undergo cosmetic procedures.

In 1989 the shop transformed into Ottica Bonino, rearranging the interior of the shop while restoring some of its furnishings that characterize it, however unfortunately eliminating the original decorated stucco ceiling leaving the wooden beams and planks visible.^[56] Nonetheless, it was considered to be one of the best examples of restoration of a historic shop in Via Po.^[57] Finally in 2005, the shop was brought back as a perfumery with Niche.

The storefront is composed as an asymmetric monoblock in walnut wood, with a wider showcase on the left of the recessed entrance and a narrower showcase on the right. The plinth is made of a calcare brecciato marble in a terracotta tone with gray details. The wooden frames are ornamented with capitals on the top. The strip over the monoblock is divided in two, a wider fragment over the left showcase and entrance which holds the sign, and a narrower fragment on the right with an art nouveau style frieze of a woman with a rose made of gilded plaster made by the sculptor Alloati. This shop is complemented by a showcase around the pillar of the portico in front of the shop.

As was mentioned previously, the interior of the shop was divided into two parts, a first area for sales in the front and two rooms in the back. This first room still maintains the original French cherry wood and mahogany furnishings. The style of decoration directly corresponds to its founding times, including the wood and glass shelving, some thin columns with stylized bases and capitals, the brass work details for glass binding. These elements could hint that they might have been elaborated by Antonio Vandone, the same designer of the famous Caffè Mulassano.^[58]

[53] [56] (Ronchetta, Cerrato, De Luca, & Bonafini, 2006)

[54] [55] [57] (Ronchetta, Guide to Historic shops in Turin, 2005)



Figure 73 - Photograph of the facade of Niche Profumeria

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 74 - Photograph of the interior of Niche Profumeria

([Interior view of Niche Profumeria])

Kapadokya

Kapadokya is a fast-food restaurant selling kebabs, pizzas and sandwiches. It opened in 2024 after the venue had been closed for about a year. This shop has also been remodeled, with some efforts to maintain the facade's shape with a receding entrance. The facade is framed by two vertical wooden elements on each of its sides. The storefront has a stone plinth, over it are the windows also with a wooden frame. The sign box rests over the window frames and fits into the space provided by the lateral wooden elements without exceeding their height.



Figure 75 - Photograph of the facade of Kapadokya

(Taken by author, 2024)

Venezia a Torino – Via Po, 14

historic shop

Venezia a Torino is a shop that specializes in venetian objects such as Murano glass, art, lamps and traditional carnival masks, it was founded in 1916. This is another one of the historic shops that has unfortunately not been well documented.

Its storefront can be characterized for having a simple symmetric wooden monoblock with a centered receded entrance. Its thin wooden frame rises from a stone plinth that matches the wall cladding of the rest of the ground floor of the building. The monoblock is topped with a simple sign strip with a matching wooden frame. It is possible that these elements are not original, as they might have been altered throughout the shop's history, possibly removing some of its wooden decor. Although there is no documentation on the change process, the interior also seems to have undergone significant changes. Currently it no longer has the distribution characteristic of an artisan shop of the early twentieth century.



Figure 76 - Photograph of the facade of Venezia a Torino

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 77 - Historical photograph of the facade of Venezia a Torino, possibly from 1918

([Historical photograph of Venezia a Torino], 1918)

Farmacia dell'Univerita – Via Po, 14historic shop

Farmacia dell'Universita was founded in the 1800s and took its name due to its location on the block in front of the University building. Originally this pharmacy was probably only half of its current size, as its interior distribution, as well as the storefront, gives signs that it was expanded laterally. The storefront corresponding to the original portion of the shop maintains a simple symmetric wooden monoblock structure with a recessed entrance in the center and a sign strip to top it. As for the new storefront, it keeps the overall design with the plinth, sign strip, and thin wooden frame, but the showcase itself is much larger than what was used during the nineteenth century, without any further divisions. Like the shop beside it, the stone plinth matches the cladding of the building.

The interior is characterized by having wood paneling along the walls and some carved wood or plaster ornamentation depicting symbols related to medicine like amphoras and snakes, typical details of pharmacies from the long nineteenth century. Another particular feature is the use of stained glass on the doors of some cabinets, these were crafted by the master glass maker Carlo Joergher. [59]

[58] (Chi siamo - Farmacia dell'Universita, N.D.)



Figure 78 - Photograph of one of the storefronts of Farmacia dell'Universita

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 79 - Photograph of the two storefronts that make up the facade of Farmacia dell'Universita

((Exterior view of Farmacia dell'Universita))



Figure 80 - Photograph of the interior of Farmacia dell'Universita

((Interior view of Farmacia dell'Universita))

Casciola

Casciola Gioelli is a jewelry store that currently takes up two window spaces. It is located in the building furthest east which has a unifying stone facade along its ground floor, making shop windows seem to fit into openings on the wall, rather than over it. The storefront has a fairly simple design with a wooden frame and a stone plinth that matches the rest of the wall. The right storefront is just the exhibition behind the window with the sign box on top. The left storefront is symmetrical with lateral showcases and a central door that is recessed from the facade.

Crocca

Crocca is a pizza food chain restaurant with a very characteristic look. The interior is decorated with bold colors like oranges and greens, bright modern wall art, and floor to ceiling bookshelves. The restaurant also takes up two window spaces. The right shopfront has the same stone plinth as its neighbor and a wooden window frame divided into three vertical sections, as well as a horizontal window on top, filling the space that would be destined for the shop sign. The left storefront serves as the entrance, being narrower due to the rhythm of the cross vaults of the portico. The doors have a wooden frame and glass panels creating continuity to the storefront. The shop sign is boxed behind the horizontal glass over the door, leaving no interruptions on the actual facade, and appearing as if it were part of the showcase decoration.



Figure 81 - Photograph of the facade of Casciola Gioelli

(Taken by author, 2024)



Figure 82 - Photograph of the facade of Crocca

(Taken by author, 2024)

05 case study

5.1 identification and characterization

The chosen case study shop is the second business from Via Bogino, between Tim and Focacceria Tipica Ligure, two of the historic shops found on this block. As was described in the previous section, this is a cafe and restaurant that recently expanded, joining two establishments.



Figure 83 - Photograph of the facade of Porticotto Lounge Bar

(Taken by author, 2025)

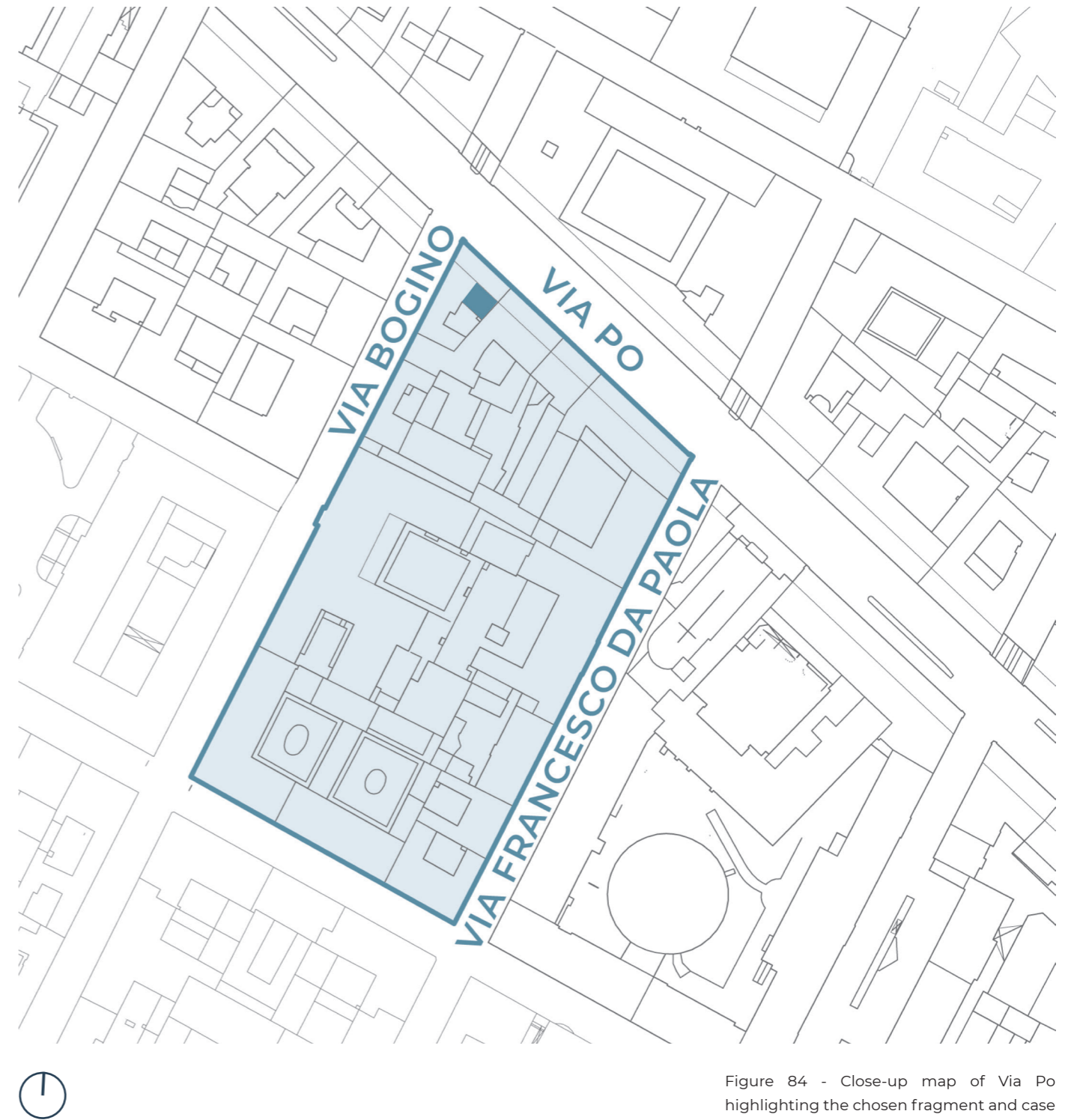


Figure 84 - Close-up map of Via Po highlighting the chosen fragment and case study shops

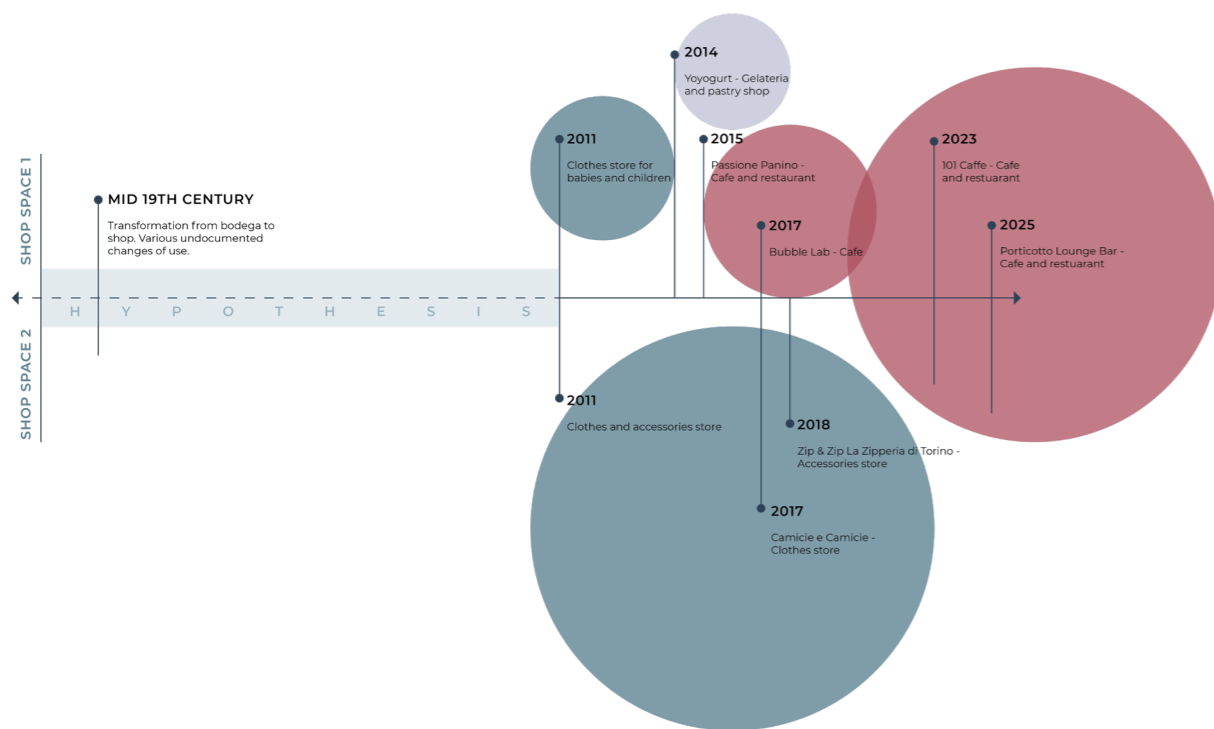
(by the author)

There isn't much information on the history and past of these commercial venues other than previous imagery found on Google Maps. From this source it was possible to reconstruct the venues' commercial timeline during the last couple of years, all the way back to 2011.

The first shop space, being the one furthest west towards Via Bogino, has had the most changes in use compared to the second shop space (furthest east), it has mostly been used for food services, while shop space 2 just began in the food industry in 2023 when it was connected with the other. None of the brands that have established in these venues have any relation with original shops from the nineteenth century, on the contrary, they have mostly been modern franchises or small businesses.

Figure 85 - Timeline of uses of both case study shop spaces

(by the author)



Due to their recent union and to the remodeling of the second shop space, there is no correspondence between the two facades, nor between its neighbors' facades, making them both feel out of place and unrelated. As seen in facade drawing, there is no continuity of horizontal elements nor in the rhythm and spacing of the window elements. The use of materials is completely different, while the first shop space tries to maintain some of the essence of the wooden monoblock over a marble plinth, the second shop space uses a modern metallic window frame with no character. The storefront of the second shop space has a lower height compared to the first one and to its neighbor on the left; both of which have a similar height, creating a rupture along a virtual horizontal continuity.

Figure 86 - Architectural drawing of the facade of the case study shops

(by the author)



The difference in internal distribution is clear from the plan of the shops. The first shop space holds all functions around storage, preparation and exhibition of the food and drinks, as well as a small restroom for guests and employees, separated by a transitional space as specified by the norm. As for the second shop space, there are no internal divisions, leaving it as an open seating space.

The connection between both venues is done through an opening on a structural wall, meaning it needed to be reinforced and carefully dimensioned in order not to disrupt its stress as a load bearing wall. The structure of the shops is also held by the other lateral walls, the back wall against the building's courtyard, and the front wall against the facade of the portico, all of which have a significant thickness, compared to division walls.

From the plan of the shops, it is also possible to see the way in which the storefront is placed as an external structure spaced from the wall. Another interesting aspect is the fact that there is no apparent relation between the shops' structural axes and that of the portico along Via Po.

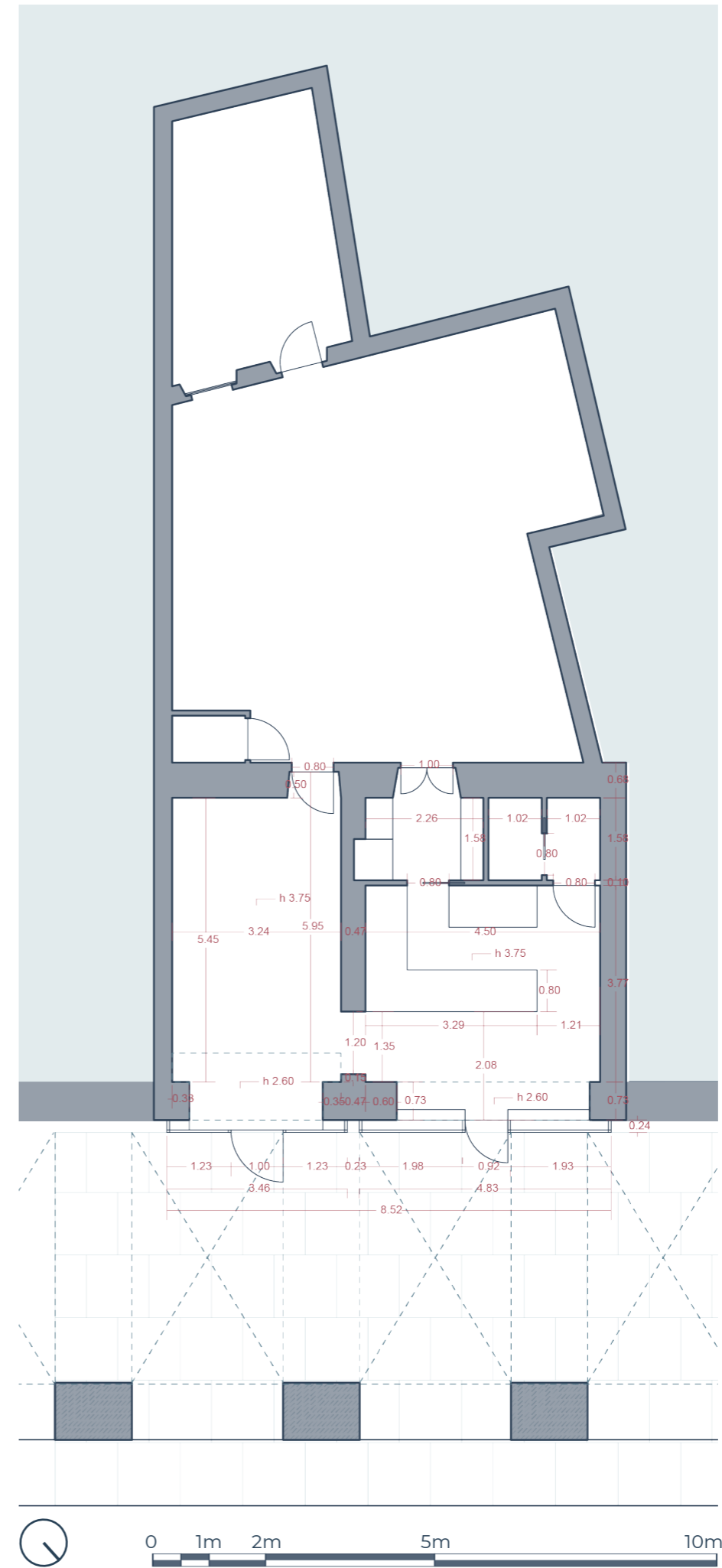


Figure 87 - Architectural plan of the case study shops
(by the author)

5.2 evaluation of current state

When working with architectural heritage, its evaluation requires a multifaceted approach of various criteria in order to assess the property in question. These criteria serve as an analytic tool to understand the values that could be present. For the case study, seven criteria were established to give a thorough analysis of the shops' significance and subsequently study their possible risks and its potential in order to propose a proper site-specific project.

The history criteria is understood as a testimony of the city's past, its contribution or relation with the city's development and its relation with important time periods. Specifically speaking, the background mentioned throughout this investigation, the long nineteenth century and the development of Turin during these times and the evolution of commerce.

The aesthetic value implies that the architecture is representative of the epoch in which it was conceived, in other words, that its physical and formal characteristics, when put together as a composition, reflect design, styles, materials and techniques used during the long nineteenth century for commercial architecture. Some of the characteristics that could be identified were the thickness of the walls, given by the technique of structural masonry; the presence of vaults inside the shops; and the monoblock typology found in one of the case study shops.

The symbolic value entails the representation of customs, preferences, likes and needs. In the case of nineteenth century historic shops in Turin, this could be interpreted as a bourgeois lifestyle, as during the evolution of commerce during this period, spaces would attempt to imitate spaces to appeal to this class.

The commercial value is constructed on the premise that commercial establishments were designed differently according to its merchandise typology in order to respond to specific needs related to its production, storage and distribution and approach by the customer.

The socio-cultural value is related to the sense of identity and representation that a community has with said space. This could be divided into two groups, on one hand it refers to the audience that frequented the shop, and on the other, to the employees.

The value of authenticity suggests the state of conservation and the number of modifications that have been made to the property, changing its original design. Although there is no clear testimony of the shops' stages, comparison with other historic shops' planimetry hint at the possible changes.

Last, is the urban value, which as its name states, is clearly associated with the venue's position in the city. It is important to highlight that Via Po has historically been one of Turin's most important commercial axes, which is why there is a relatively high concentration of recognized historic shops. Not only is it well connected to important areas of the city center but also has good pedestrian accessibility to shops themselves thanks to the porticoed design.

Figure 88 - Table of values criteria of the case study shop spaces
(by the author)

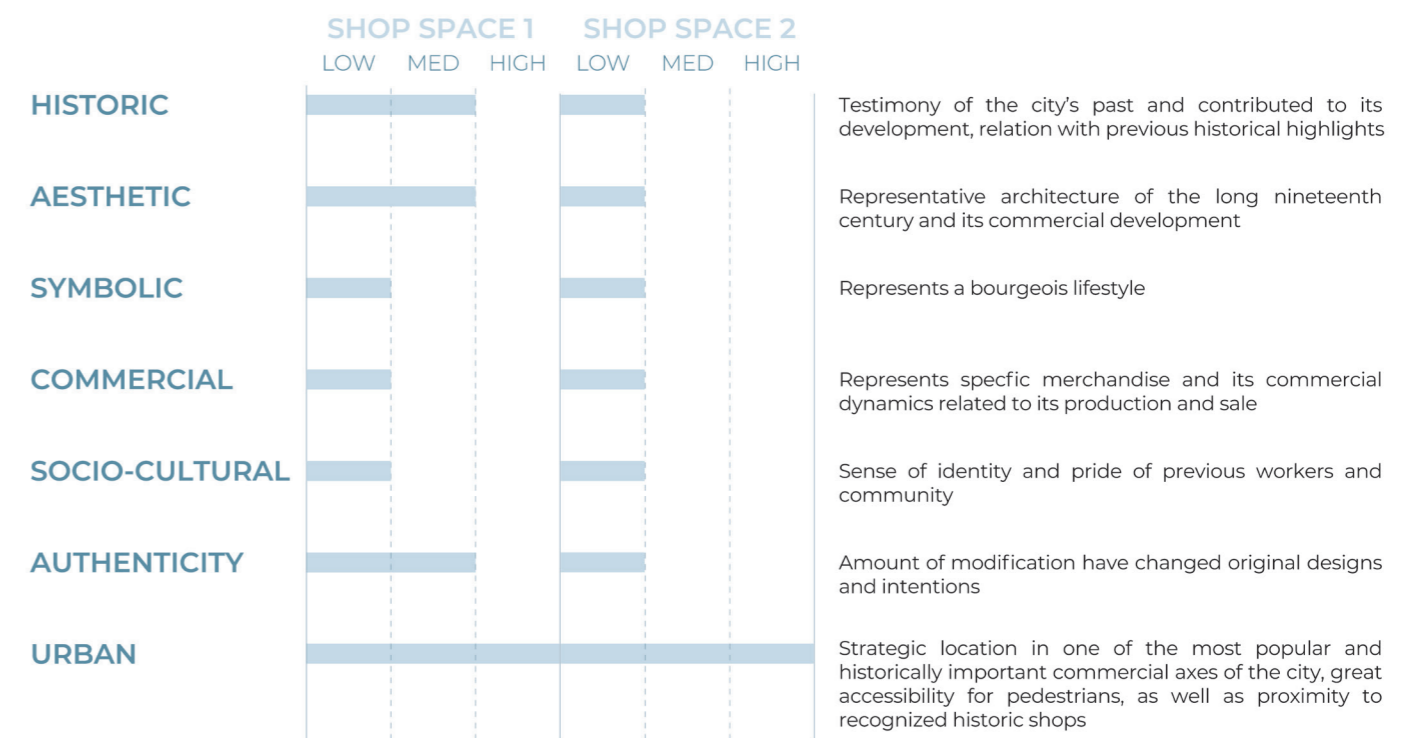




Figure 89 - Photograph of the interior of the first shop

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 91 - Photograph of the interior of the second shop

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 90 - Photograph of the interior of the first shop

(Taken by author, 2025)

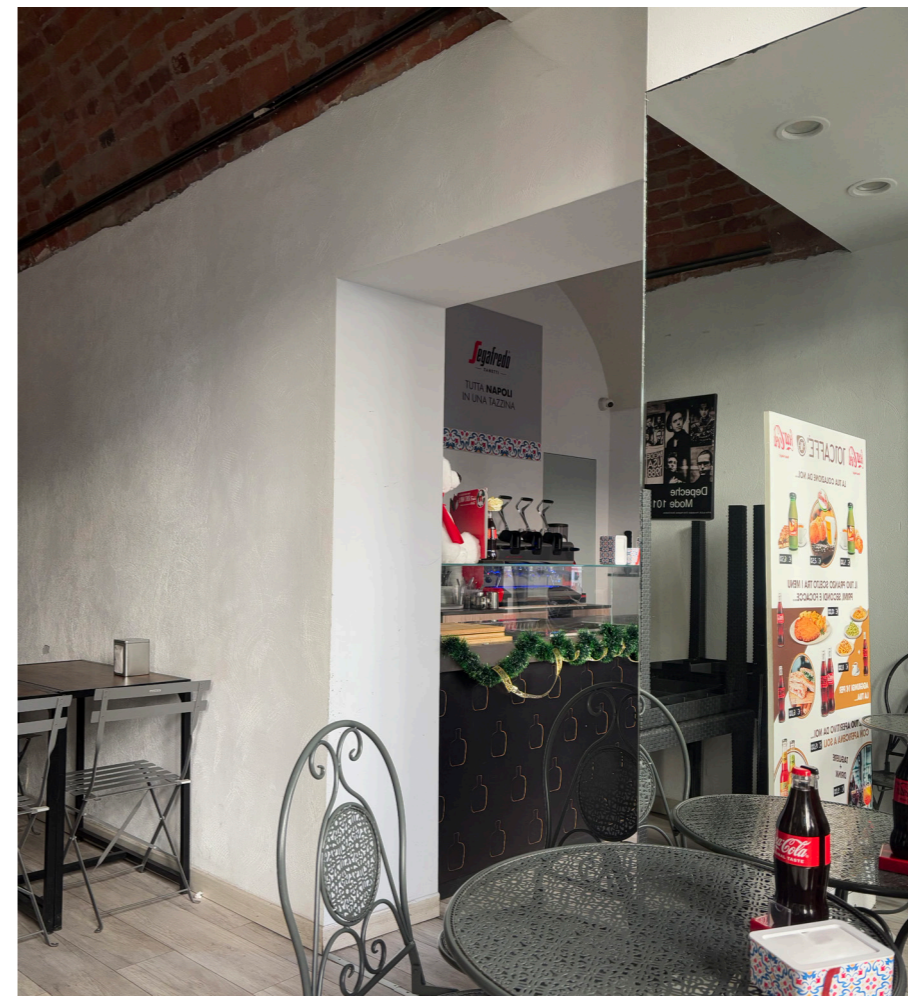


Figure 92 - Photograph of the interior of the second shop

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 93 - Photograph of the interior of storage and preparation space with door to courtyard of shop space 1

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 94 - Detail photograph of the green marble plinth and the wooden frames of the monoblock of the facade of the shop space 1

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 95 - Detail photograph of the wooden frames of the monoblock and the sign box of the facade of the shop space 1

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 96 - Photograph of the courtyard of the case study shops

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 98 - Photograph of the courtyard of the case study shops

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 97 - Photograph of the courtyard of the case study shops

(Taken by author, 2025)



Figure 99 - Photograph of the courtyard of the case study shops

(Taken by author, 2025)

5.3 potential transformation

One thing to highlight about commerce in the nineteenth century was the offer of a complete experience that revolves around the merchandise or specialty of each shop. How the architecture adapted according to each typology, and how architecture itself was the shop's method of promotion. On the contrary, a critique of modern-day commerce in Turin is the lack of identity that some commercial establishments have. Shop owners often underestimate "the impact that interior architecture has on customer experience behavior", [60] which consequently affects sales. How can we bring back this identity into modern day commerce?

There are innumerable trends and currents on ways to switch up and innovate in commerce, however one that stood out was the idea of concept stores. Although the objectives of concept stores are in no sense to bring back principles of nineteenth century commerce, they do have characteristics in which they converge.

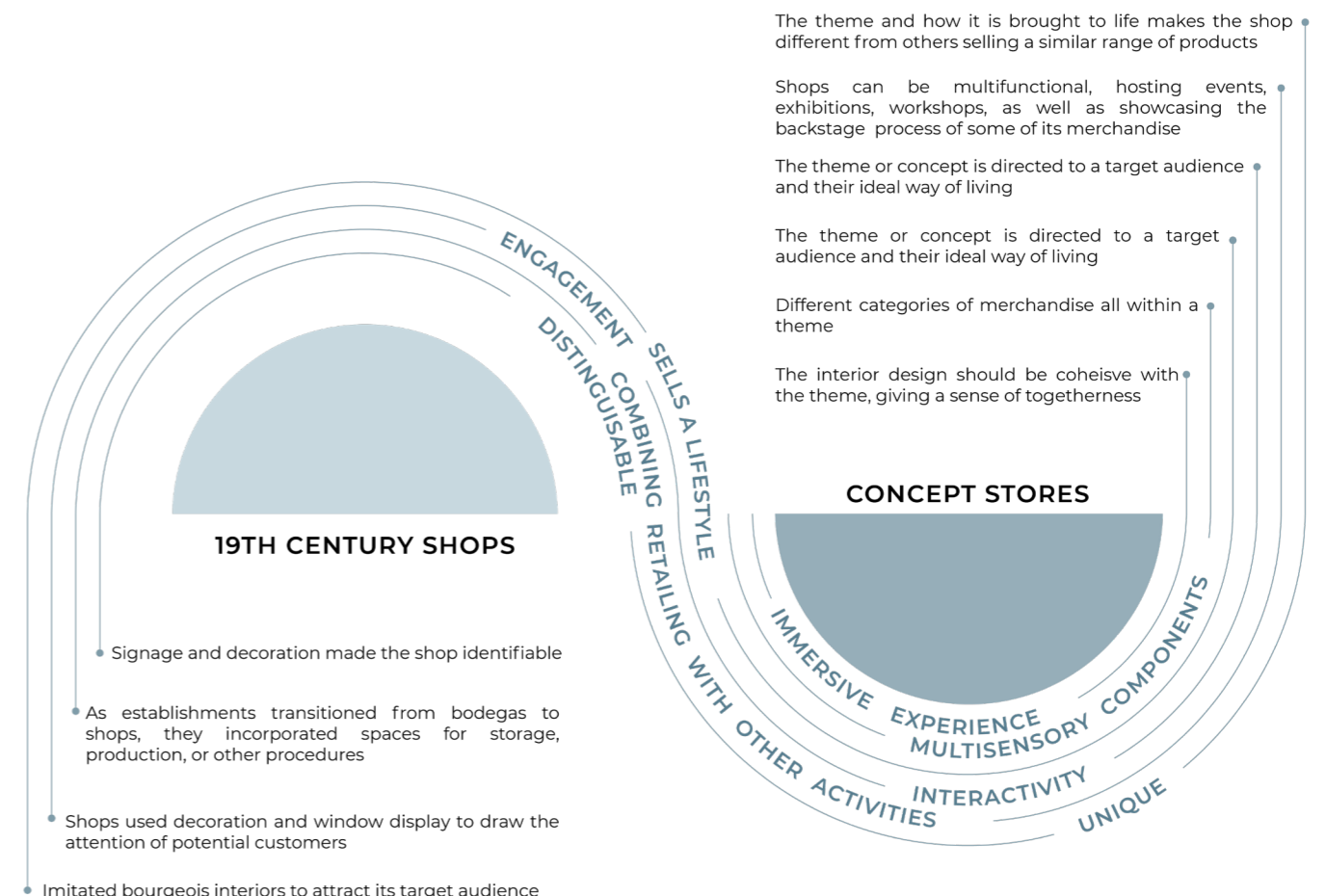
A concept store is a thoughtfully curated retail space designed to offer a complete experience. Its selection of products can range from design, fashion, technology, culture or gastronomy, all following a specific theme. Its main goal is not only to sell merchandise but to create a lifestyle for a specific target audience, appealing to their values, interests and needs. [61] Not only does it sell the product itself, but also creates an atmosphere that inspires creativity, a sense of belonging and reflects contemporary trends. Products and spaces are carefully curated to align with said theme. Shops transcend as simple retail spaces to become multidisciplinary and multifunctional stages to host diverse activities, services, interactions and experiences, such as events, exhibitions or even coworking. Concept stores are constantly evolving and updating their portfolio, turning each visit into an opportunity to explore new ideas. [62]

The insertion of a concept store into a forgotten historic shop could become an opportunity to bring back values from the past with a contemporary twist. It could reactivate shopping spaces and generate new commercial dynamics that resonate with the community.

[59] [61] (Egan-Wyer , et al., 2021)
 [60] (What is a Concept Store?, n.d.)

Figure 100 - Comparison diagram between shops in the nineteenth century and contemporary concept stores

(by the author)



06 project of intervention

6.1 concept

The proposed project is structured by six core actions: remove, protect, reinterpret, showcase, adapt and attract. Each of these concepts when translated into architecture will collectively reactivate and revalue these commercial spaces.

The process of transformation starts off by removing elements that are low quality, in a bad state or that have been added unconsciously, none of which contribute to the shops' essence and values. This gives importance to elements that are actually more authentic and functional, and makes way for a conscious design, in which each new element and feature should be thought out to be functional and aesthetically pleasing.

The next step is to protect, this means carrying out maintenance measures with the goal of recovering the shops' ideal conditions and safeguarding it from further deterioration or damage. This action is mostly directed towards the storefront of the first shop, as well as both vaults.

The reinterpretation of a historic shop has been a clear objective since the beginning of the investigation. The proposed design takes inspiration from the past, bringing back material, functional and aesthetic characteristics through a modern lens.

The concept of showcasing or exhibiting was key in nineteenth century commerce, as well as in contemporary concept stores. The retail experience begins by attracting potential customers, whether it is by the products or by the activities taking place inside. The idea of seeing and being seen comes back. Product displays for a concept store are curated as exhibits, with a careful selection of merchandise and its placement. This act of showcasing not only occurs from the storefront, but also on the inside of the shops, where other exhibition settings will be placed.

The ability to adapt is essential to ensure that the shop remains relevant and functional over time. The design integrates flexible spatial layouts that can accommodate diverse uses.

Shelving and furniture are integrated as mobile units, allowing reconfiguration to transition between retail, events and other activities. Lighting solutions should also be adjustable, catering to different moods according to the hours of operation. The result is a shop space that evolves with its users.

Last but not least is attraction, which wraps up all physical intentions towards commercial interaction. Italy is a country that is very ingrained with its traditions, it isn't really necessary to change the current use of the shops, it just needs to be updated. Turin is characterized by its cafes and strong French tradition in pastries, that is what the community likes. Having become a city for students and young workers, people not only look for a place to grab a quick drink and a snack, but an engaging space to sit and work, meet-up with friends and colleagues and extra activities that take them out of their daily routine.

Overall, the architecture of the project is brought up from a holistic perspective, these six actions work in harmony to create a space that honors its past, serves its present and is prepared for its future. The result is a project that is not only a commercial establishment, but an illustration of architecture and design's capacity to be timeless. The solution to renovate is not to tear everything down, but to try to rescue valuable ideas from the past and use them in the project's favor.

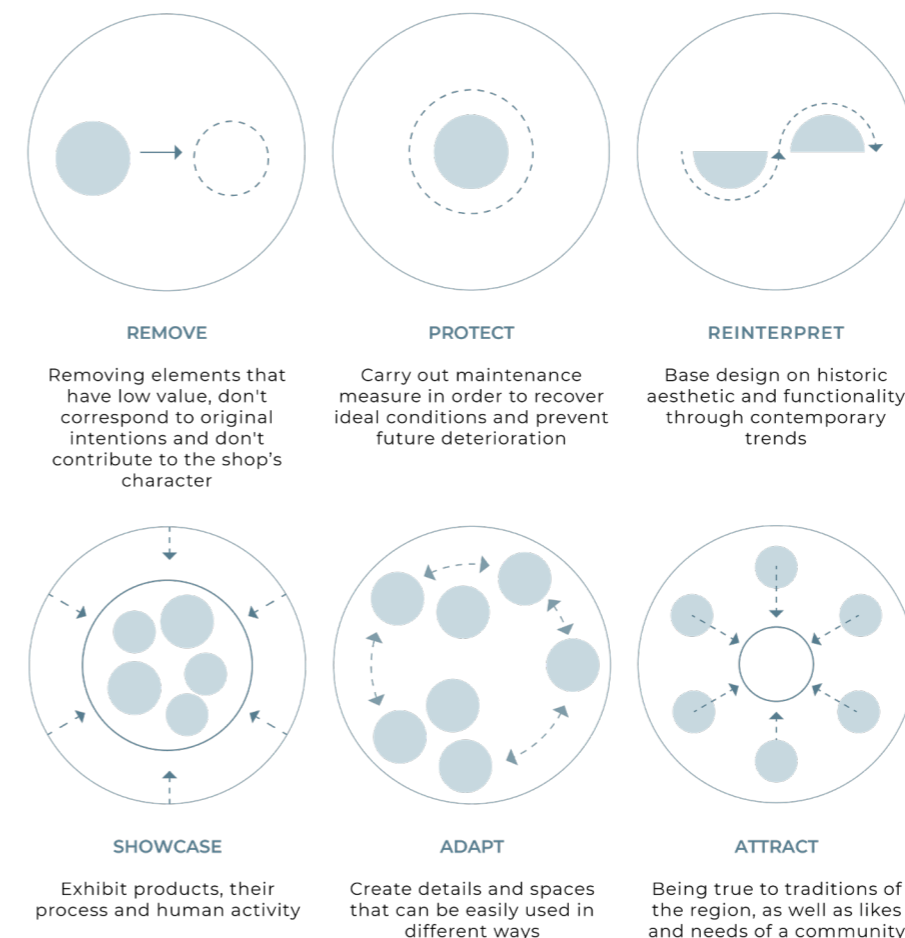


Figure 101 - Concept diagrams
(by the author)

6.2 design

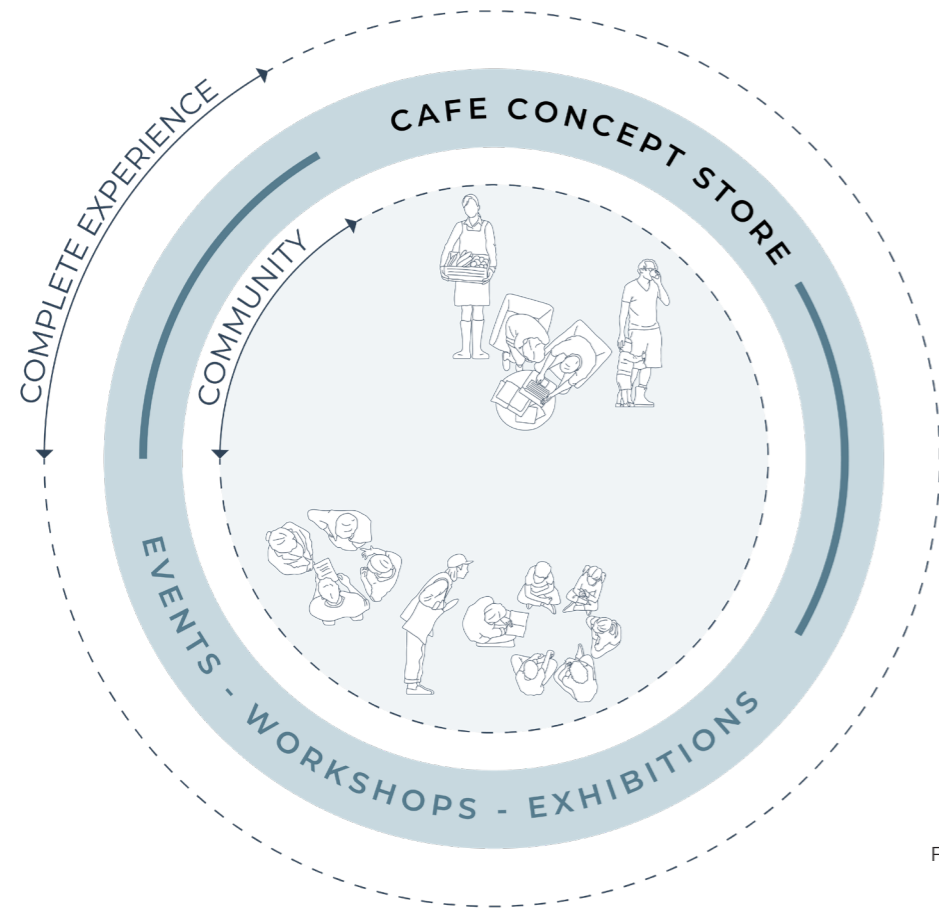


Figure 102 - Program diagram

(by the author)

The architectural design of this project is centered around the needs of a unique hybrid space: a cafe concept store inspired by Turin's rich pastry tradition. The space is designed to serve multiple functions, combining a cafe, a retail area, and an interactive open-space environment. A key feature of the project is the kitchen, which not only prepares the products sold, but also where small-group cooking lessons will be held, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in hands-on experiences focused on traditional pastries or even other types of cuisine.

The cafe itself is designed with flexibility in mind, offering a variety of seating arrangements to cater to different customer needs, from a quick coffee break to extended remote work sessions. Meanwhile, the concept store is tailored for those with a passion for Turin's culinary heritage, featuring a curated selection of cookbooks, kitchen utensils, gourmet ingredients, and even themed merchandise. Beyond its gastronomic focus, the space is envisioned as a cultural hub, capable of hosting art exhibitions, book readings, and even small concerts in the courtyard, fostering a dynamic and engaging atmosphere for the local community and visitors alike.

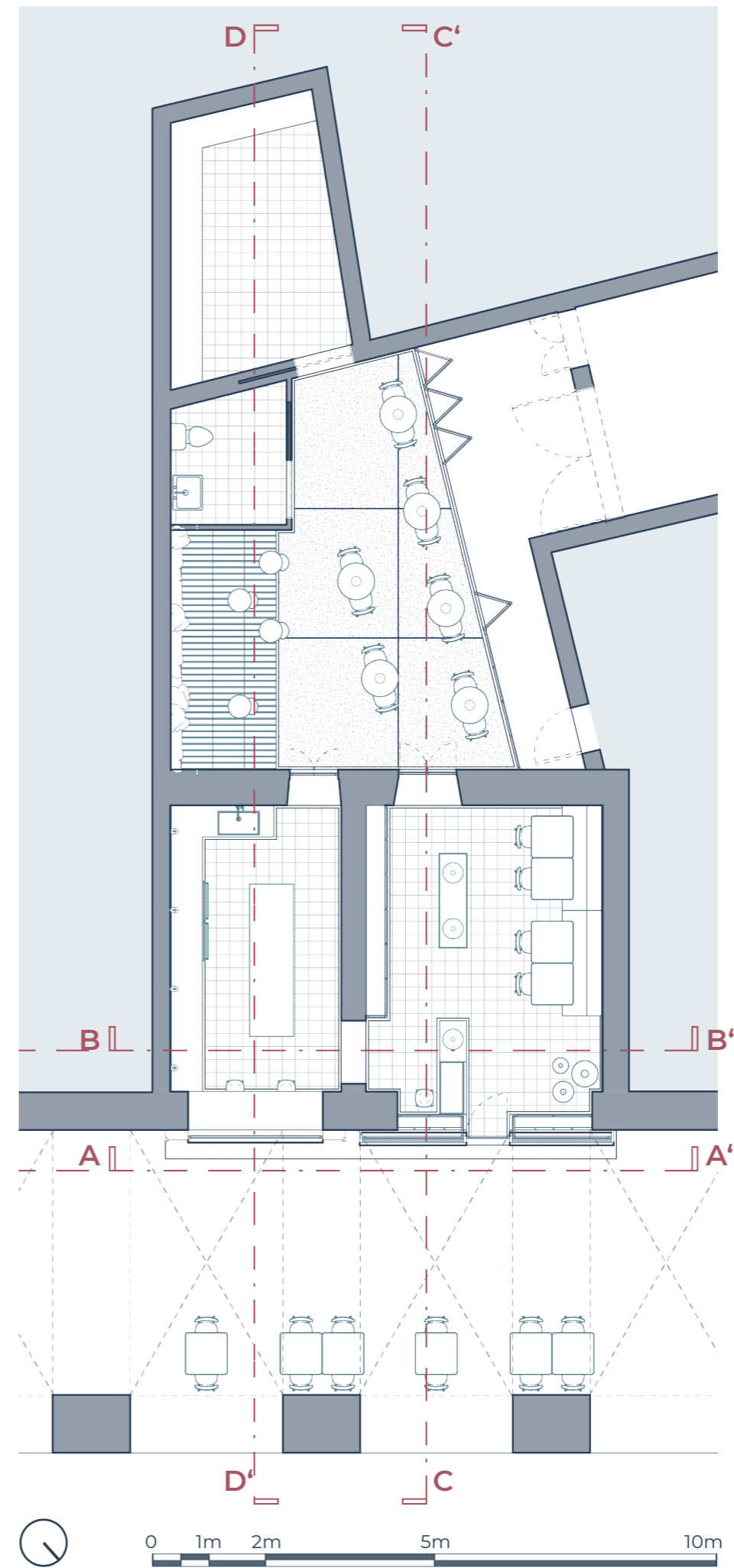


Figure 103 - Architectural plan of the design intervention

(by the author)

sectioned axonometry

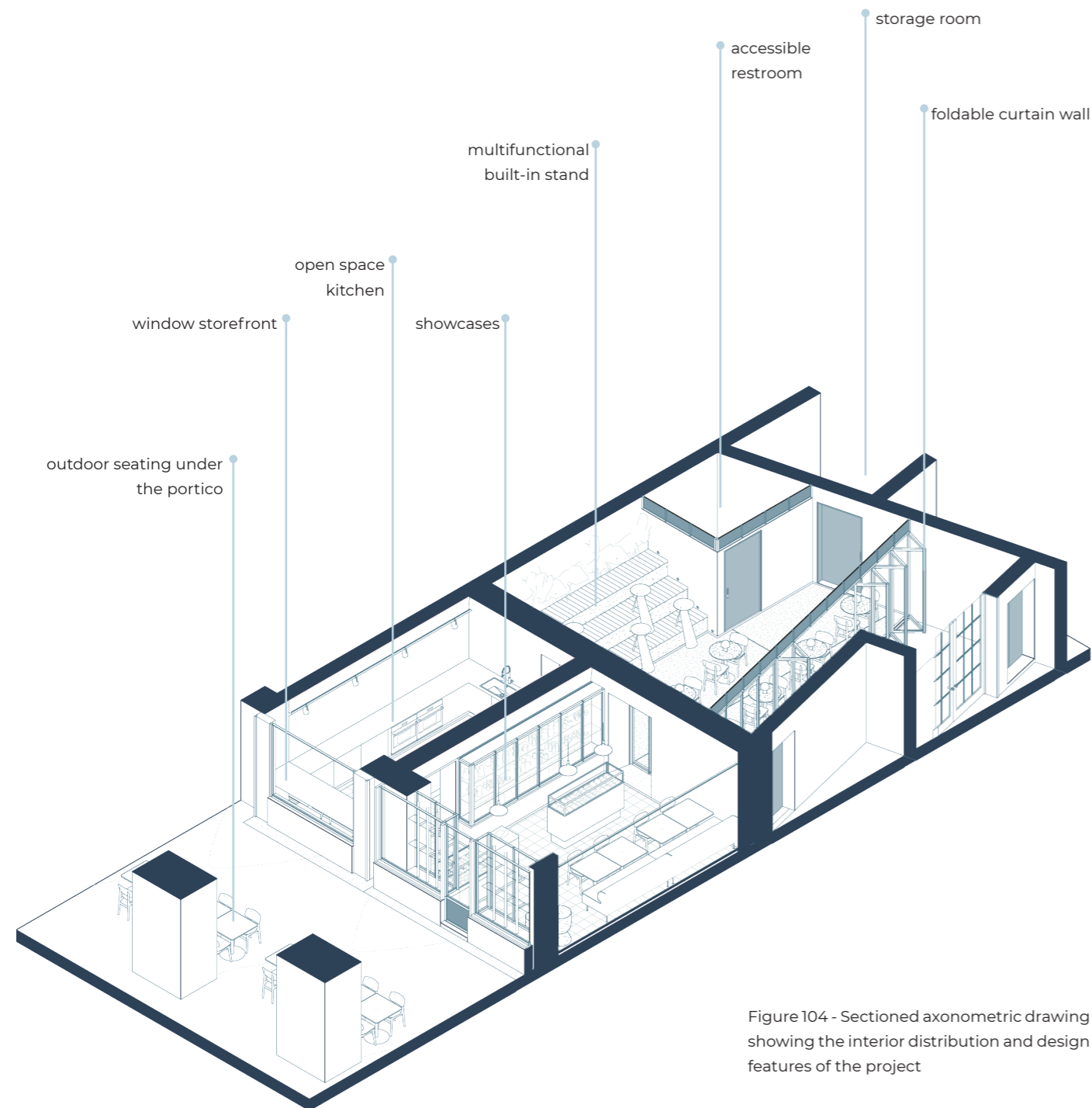


Figure 104 - Sectioned axonometric drawing showing the interior distribution and design features of the project

(by the author)

transversal sections

section A-A'



Figure 105 - Architectural section drawing showing the design of the storefronts

(by the author)

section B-B'

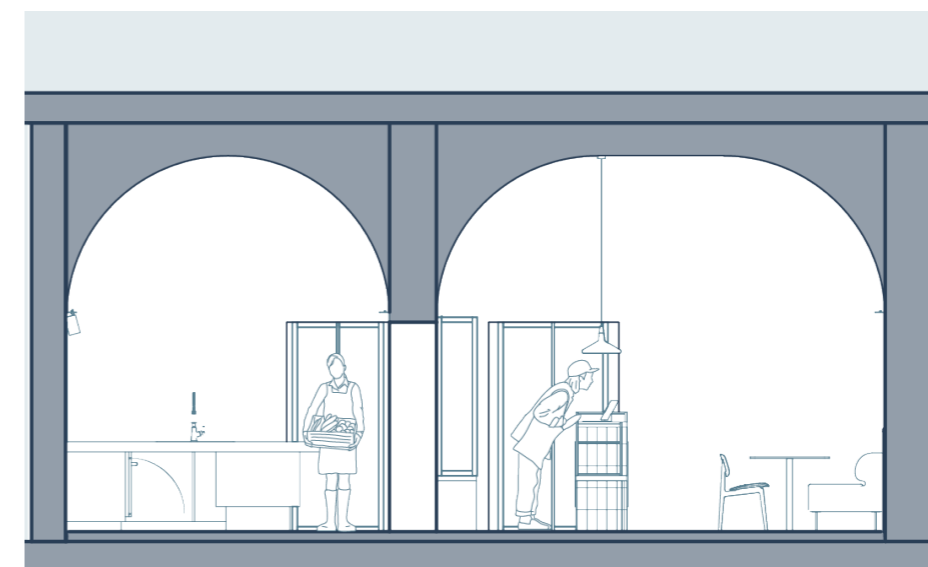


Figure 106 - Architectural section drawing showing both shop spaces connected through a wall opening. On the left, the space for the kitchen; on the right, showcases and a seating area.

(by the author)

longitudinal sections

section C-C'

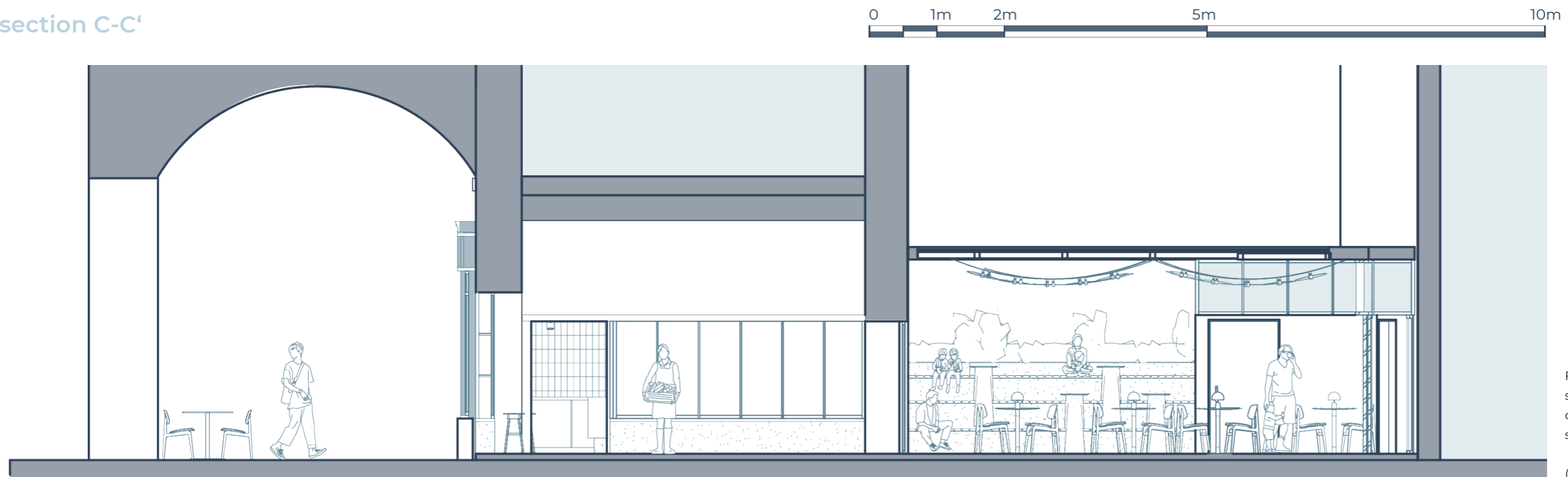


Figure 107 - Architectural section drawing showing the shops in depth, from the arcade of Via Po, cutting the monoblock, shopping space, to the reactivated courtyard.

(by the author)

section D-D'

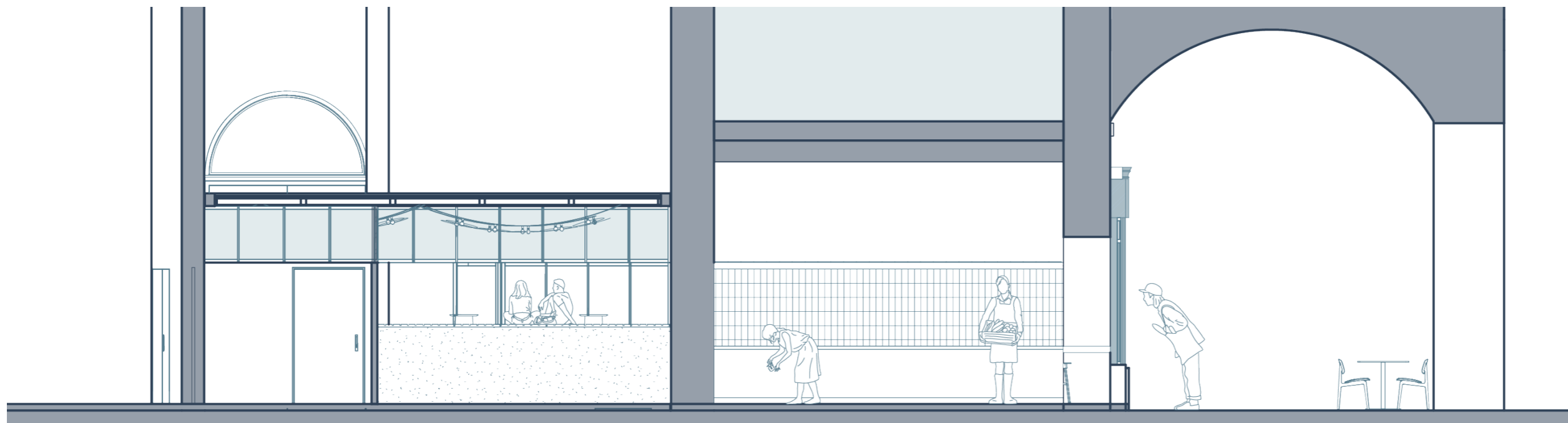


Figure 108 - Architectural section drawing showing the shops in depth, from the storage area, crossing the courtyard, the kitchen, monoblock and reaching the arcade of Via Po.

(by the author)

new storefront

The new storefront is designed to give both shop spaces a sense of continuity, while reinterpreting the historic monoblock into a contemporary aesthetic. The design intends to use the same materials and design axes, following the lines given by the cornice, sign box, window frames and plinth. The main feature of the left storefront is to allow visibility to the inside of the shop, giving pedestrians a clear sight of the activities taking place inside; while the right storefront brings back the showcases to exhibit products.

Figure 109 - Render image of the new facade

Figure 110 - Render image of the kitchen

(by the author)



main space

The shop receives customers with a counter on the left which includes a showcase and the cashier, behind it is the opening towards the kitchen space. Further back, two other showcases are found, one against the wall and one in the center. This has the intention of bringing back the idea from historic shops of exhibiting the products. The space is complemented by a booth seating area.

Figures 111-112 - Render images of the interior of the main space seating area, counter and display cases

(by the author)



courtyard

One of the main proposed interventions is the reactivation of the building's courtyard. The idea is for it to become a flexible space to host different activities, from the main function of seating and coworking for the cafe, to workshops, exhibitions or even small concerts. This idea comes from the recommendations made by Job and Ronchetta in their 1989 guide *I luoghi del commercio*, where they state the importance of generating entertainment venues and potentializing commercial activities within the courtyards as a way



of safeguarding historic shops and projecting them for the future.^[63] The space is covered with a pergola allowing natural light in, while protecting from environmental factors; it is enclosed by a curtain wall which can be opened or closed depending on the weather or on the activity taking place.

[62] (Job & Ronchetta, *I luoghi del commercio*, 1989)

Figures 113-116 - Render images of the intervention proposal of the courtyard during the day and night

(by the author)

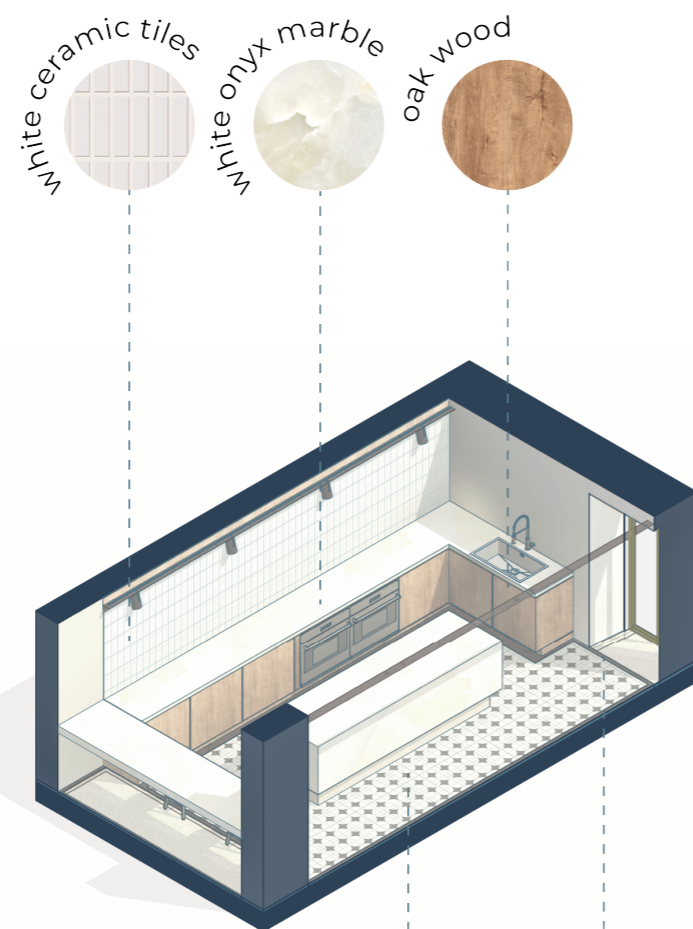


materials

kitchen

Figure 117 - Sectioned axonometric drawing showing the interior design and material selection of the kitchen located in the second shop space.

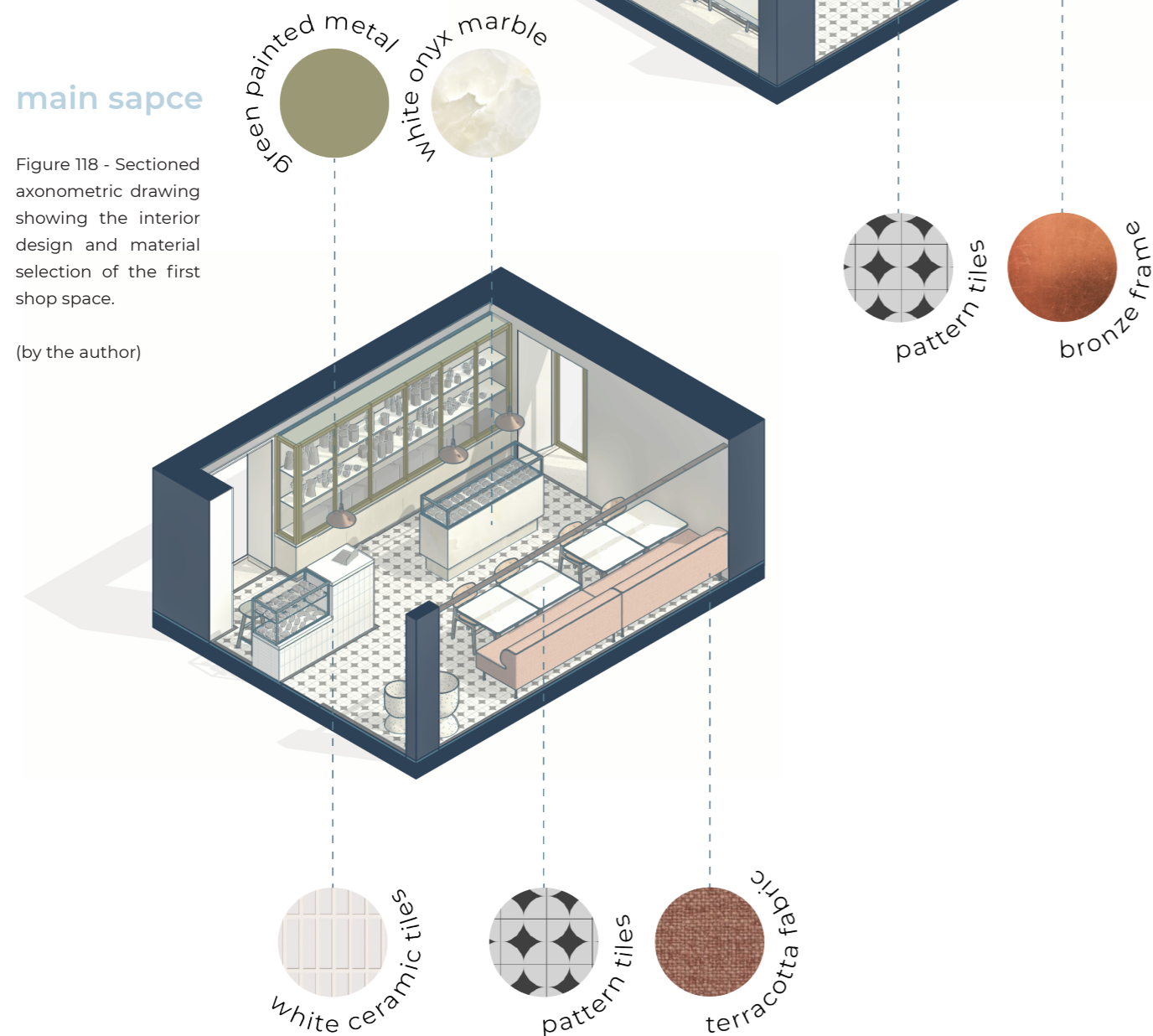
(by the author)



main sapce

Figure 118 - Sectioned axonometric drawing showing the interior design and material selection of the first shop space.

(by the author)

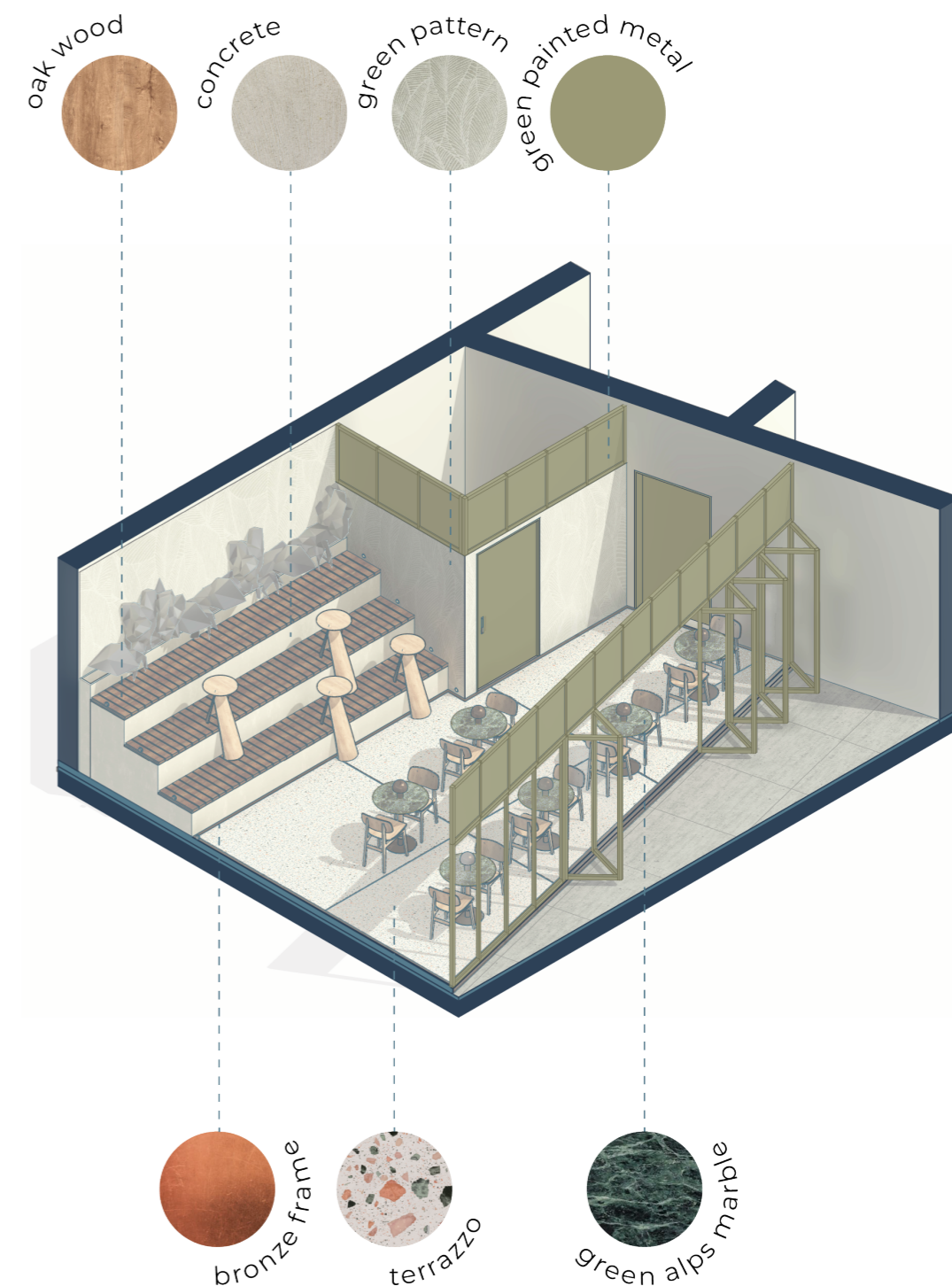


The material choice for the design seeks to integrate modern applications with the rich design heritage of the nineteenth century. To create an inviting ambience, the primary color palette is built on rich, earthy tones, featuring oak wood, green painted framing, bronze metallic accents, and terracotta-hued fabrics. These bold colors are thoughtfully balanced with soft, neutral cream tones along the walls, floors and countertops, ensuring harmony within the space. The use of contrasting patterns and textures adds a dynamic component to its aesthetic, from the organic grain of wood and veining of marble to the geometric design of ceramic tiles.

courtyard

Figure 119 - Sectioned axonometric drawing showing the design and material selection of the courtyard.

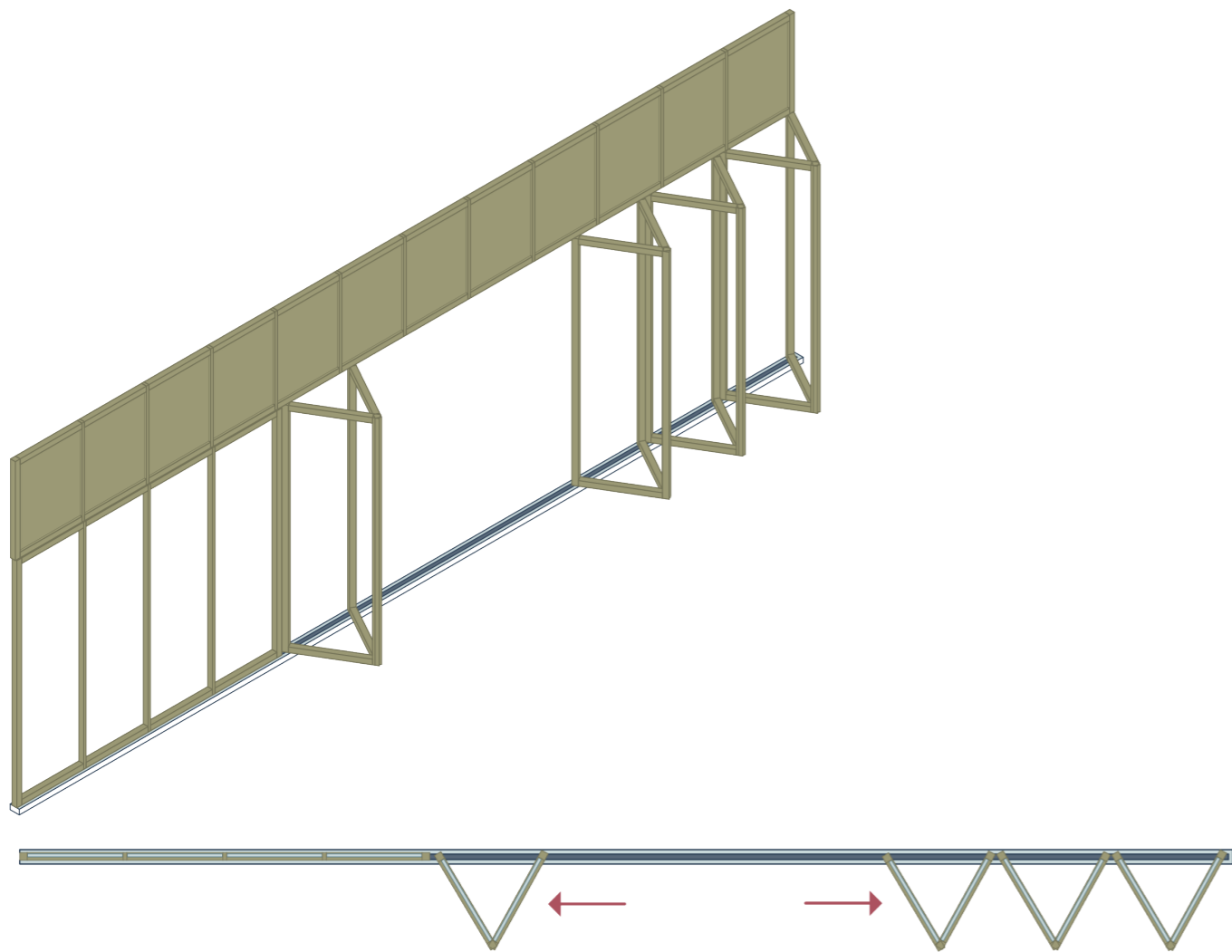
(by the author)



courtyard details

curtain wall

To enclose the semi-private space within the courtyard, a curtain wall system is proposed, offering both functionality and aesthetic integration with the overall design. The system consists of foldable glass panels, each measuring 0.70 meters in width and 2.20 meters in height. There is a total of twelve panels, with six folding to one side and six to the other, allowing for flexible openings that can adapt to various spatial needs. Above these opening and closing windows, a continuous row of fixed solid panels provides additional enclosure while maintaining visual harmony. Both the frames and the solid panels are made from metal and painted green to match other elements of the design. This is an adaptable solution for this versatile area, accommodating different types of activities while also responding to varying weather conditions. It allows the space to be fully enclosed or partially opened as needed, the curtain wall system ensures comfort, practicality and privacy throughout different events and seasons.



Figures 120-121 - Detailed axonometric drawing and plan view of the curtain wall in the courtyard.

(by the author)

terrazzo floor

The existing courtyard floor is composed of gray stone, with large slabs outlining the borders and a central area made of cobblestone. One of the main objectives of the project is to protect the original materials as much as possible, which is why the design proposes terrazzo flooring for the courtyard. Terrazzo is created by mixing small fragments of stones like marble, quartz or granite, with either a cement-based or epoxy resin binder. This process is typically carried out on-site, as the mixture is poured and spread directly onto the designated area. Once the material hardens, it undergoes a grinding and polishing process, revealing the pieces of stone. A protective sealer is then applied to protect the surface. In this project, to ensure the cobblestone remains intact, the terrazzo will be poured into metal forms placed over the existing stone, creating a protective yet reversible layer.

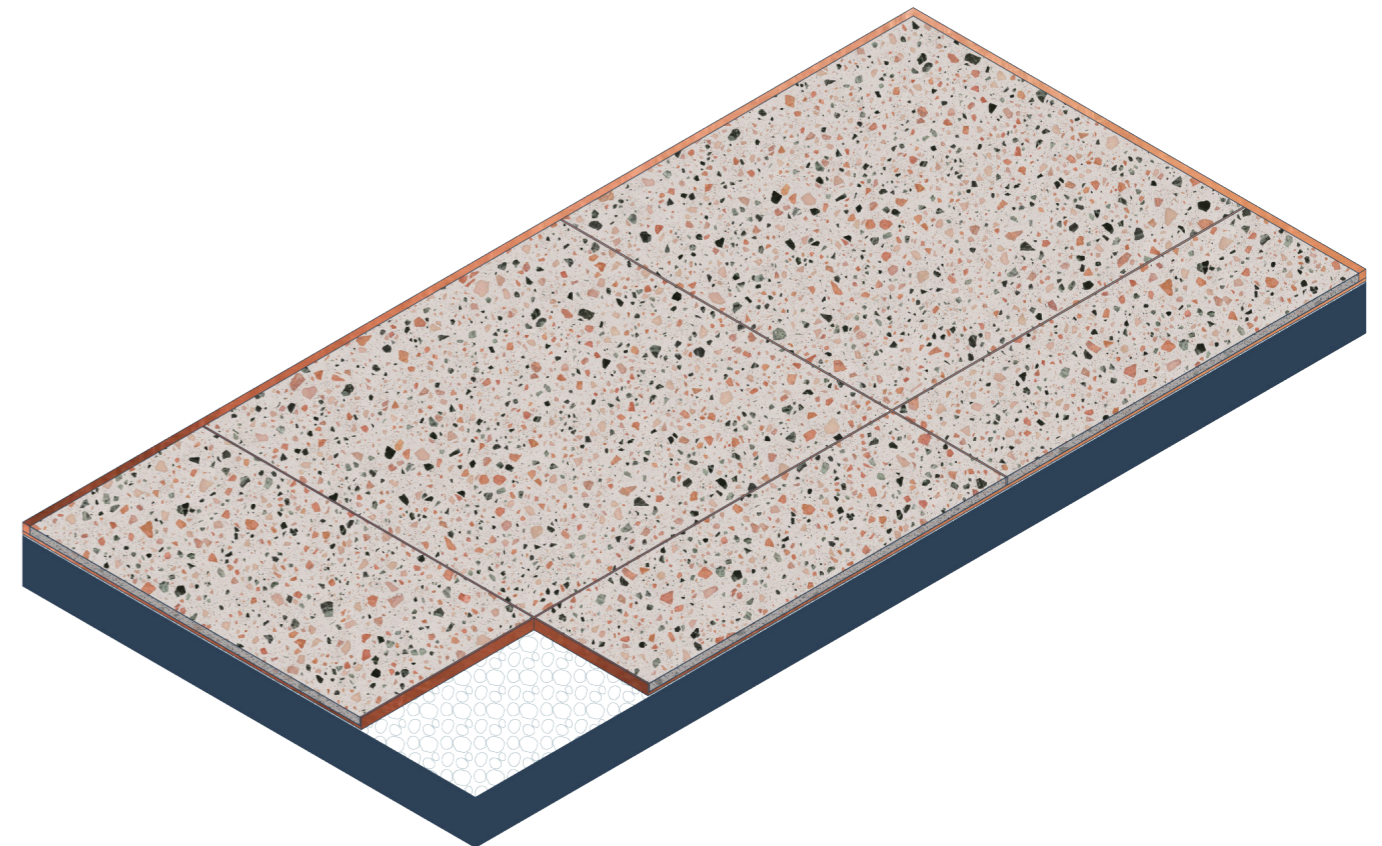


Figure 122 - Detailed axonometric drawing of the terrazzo flooring in the courtyard.

(by the author)

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