

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture (Environment and Land)
Honors theses

Sant'Antonio Abate church: a refurbishing project

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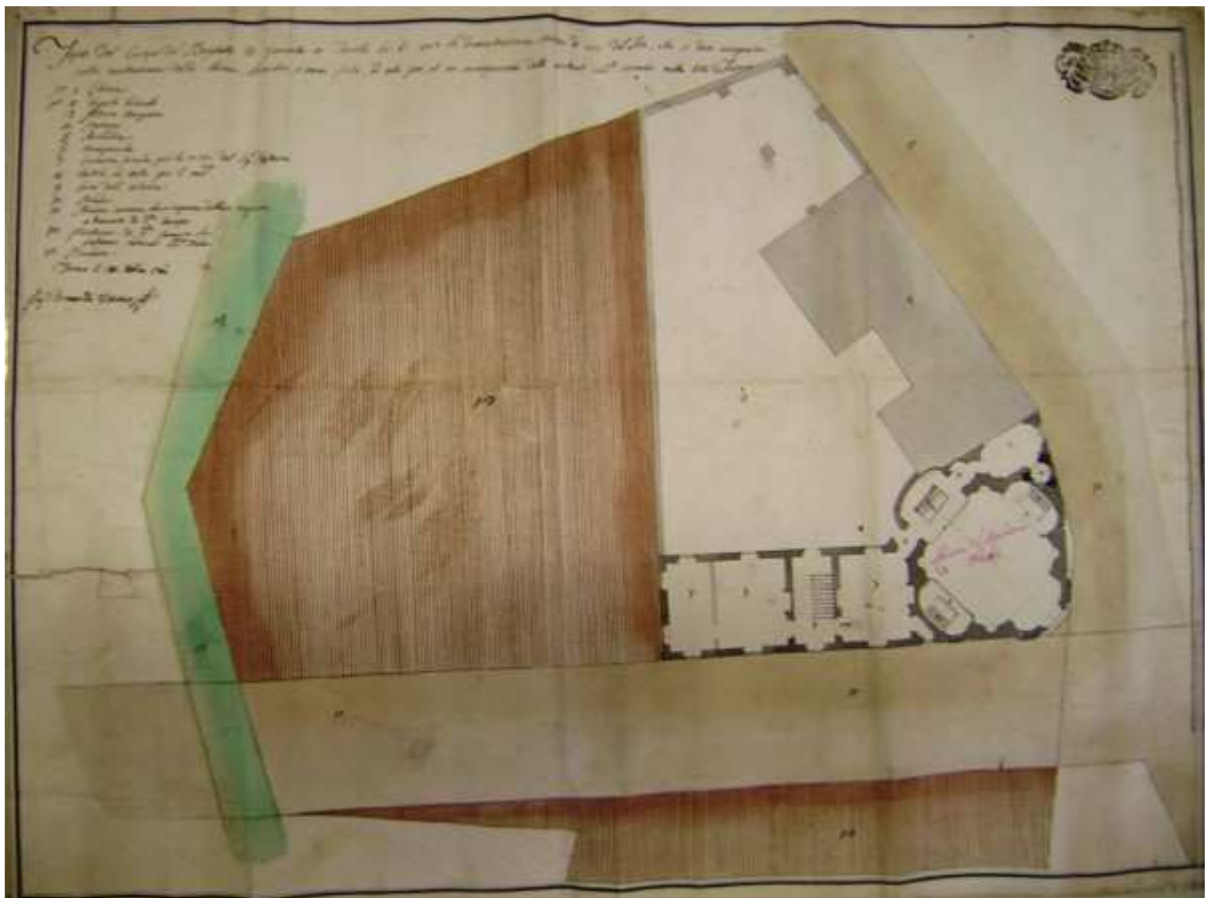
This Master's degree is a continuation and extension of the project started in my Bachelor's degree, which was mainly focused on the historical background which brought the architect Bernardo Vittone to Fossano, his artistic choices and his relationship with the client.



Sant'Antonio Abate church nowadays

The present work, instead, shows a more detailed analysis which has been carried out through an accurate study of the Fossano construction site which gave birth to Sant'Antonio Abate church. This task has been performed with the aid of the documents filed in the Fossano Historical Archive (the architect's report) and in the Turin Public Records Office (metric estimate, which gave me the opportunity to inquire deeply and thoroughly about the building materials, the quantity, the partial and total expense). Vittone reaches Fossano in 1761 because the Poor Clare Sisters require his help in order to widen their monastery within the city walls. The architect, in fact, had already worked for these clients in Alessandria, Torino, Vercelli and Bra (small town 25 Kilometres far from Fossano). So as to be able to build the new construction, though, it was necessary to pull down a little church and its attached hospital which belonged to the Antonines, as the plan was to create a new quarter along the straight stretch which would join Piazza Castello with Ospedale Maggiore.

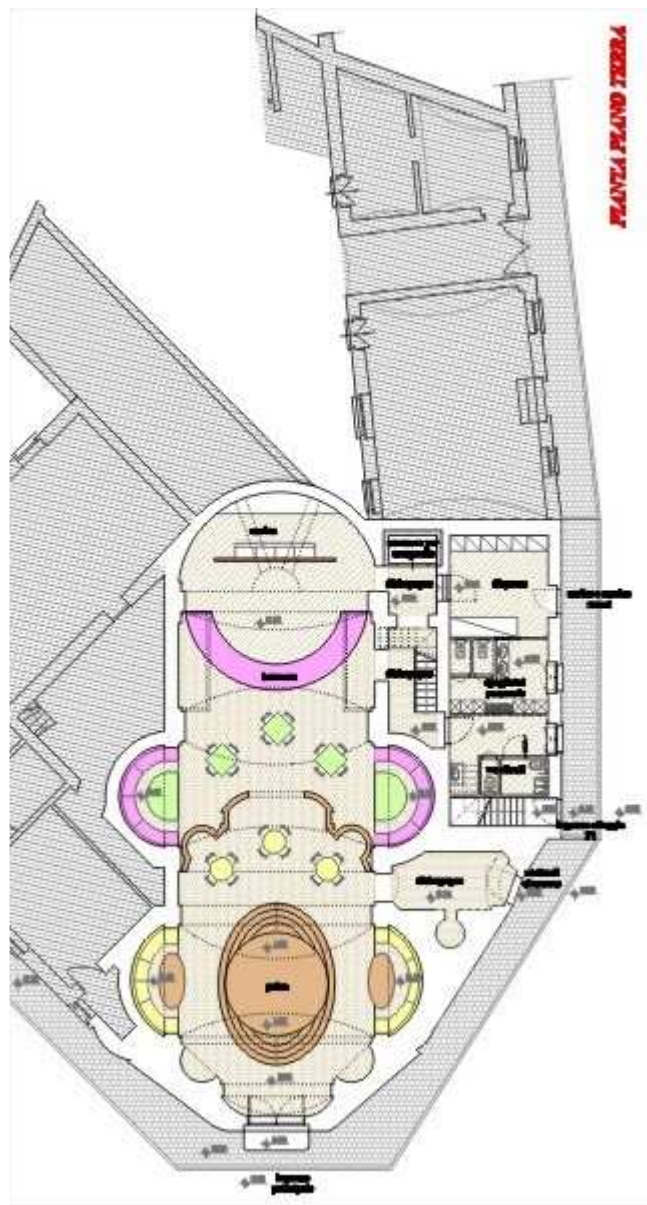
The two monastic orders had therefore stipulated a concordat according which the nuns would own the land hosting the little Sant'Antonio church, provided they funded another one, with an attached house for the Rector outside the city walls, in an area called "Borgato". The Fossano archive, then, files the original autograph layout, a very important document as the various scholars have always analysed and published Carlo Maria Castelli's copy, stored in Turin.



Bernardo Antonio Vittone...(Local Historical Archive)

His work has certainly been deeply affected by the environment which the architect was trained in and operated into: from the Piedmontese construction site regulations to the massive influence coming from Filippo Juvarra, the master who contributed to a renewal of the architectonic taste and to the bureaucratic development of the building procedures.

Willing to be loyal to the documents found concerning this church and its original map, I decided to draw up a refurbishing project able to “recreate” the primigenial environment according to Vittonè’s ideas. The initial centric layout shape has been brought to light again by the evocative choice of using a dividing element made out of wooden shingles which metaphorically trace the niches and apse’s original perimeter.



Project: low ground layout

In this way, we obtain two distinctive spaces. The first one, more intimate, is devoted to listening to the music played by means of the fundamental insertion on an elliptical wooden stage which merges upwards into a circular platform; in the second one, larger, the counter, with an attached kitchen, definitely stands out, and is studded with many radial tables. Two balconies overlooking the hall have been reused in order to make the most of the available space: the one on the left, being a blind alley, has been filled with the speakers; the right one, instead, born as a sort of private space, is reachable from a staircase planned anew and contains other two little tables with relative chairs. Each of the four chapels, then, hosts a wide sofa, which mirrors the curvilinear shape of the walls; in front of each couch it is possible to find a little table, which people can use to eat and drink in order to strengthen the meditation feeling. The additional rooms of the indoor space have been thought both for the clients and for the staff; this space is therefore handicap accessible, includes emergency exits, and rooms refurnished as kitchen, changing room and warehouse, all of them joined to the loading zone.

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