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# Il Magistero: De Carlo's Dialogue with Historical Forms

John McKean

If there is one architect of the twentieth century who can lead us, through his work, toward a grown-up discussion of how we might further our built heritage, it is Giancarlo De Carlo. Since the 1950s, when he was a member of CIAM's rebellious Team X, De Carlo has been a consistent advocate for engagement with the historical forms of the traditional city.<sup>1</sup> But this advocacy has gone far beyond simple notions of conservation. De Carlo has challenged us to understand, and extend, the complex conversation between culture and built form.

In a 2001 editorial in his journal *Spazio e Società*, the ever-active 82-year-old reaffirmed his belief in the deeper dialectic between space and society:

*The essential purpose of architecture is to organise and shape space for use, to consign it to individual and collective experience, to expose it to the effects of time: so that it ages, becomes stratified, continues to be enriched with meanings, until at a certain point it begins to design and redesign itself, seemingly by its own volition, to endure and hand down the most eloquent records of human events.*<sup>2</sup>

The more you read this statement, the more extraordinary appear its claims, and the more far reaching its implications. And yet the more right it seems.

De Carlo's long career has been marked by an effort to ground his designs in a dialogue with what exists: from farming's marks on a landscape, to the aspirations of tenants for housing. His architecture cannot "live" without the participation of those who inhabit it, and whose lives it serves to record. The more layers of humanity that accrue to a topography, the more it embodies a vital history of place. To design responsibly in such a landscape, one must view history less as a "past" which can be dammed, than a stream one alters when one steps in.

Few buildings illustrate De Carlo's ideas about the role of architecture in social and physical renewal better than Il Magistero, the School of Education for Urbino University, completed in 1976. A quarter of a century since its completion, the Magistero still provides a benchmark of sorts against which to measure subsequent efforts at using the techniques of modern architecture for place-making.

## Town of doubles, *urbs bina*

To understand De Carlo's achievement, one must begin with its setting, the hilltown of Urbino, the

Renaissance city-state of Duke Federico di Montefeltro, with its ancient university.

Built on the saddle between two hills, Urbino is a binary, double town (that its name is derived from *urbs bina* was a pseudo-antique joke). Today, arriving along the road that snakes up from the Adriatic coastal plain, the physical shape of the Renaissance city still appears miraculously among the wonderful forms of the Marche hills. From here, Urbino's silhouette ornaments the skyline with spires and the tops of the unmistakable twin fairy-castle towers, the *torricini* of the Ducal Palace.

However, the paradox of this tiny city is that it is always ambiguous, double-imaged; while wonderfully comprehensible, it remains powerfully elusive. In particular, the town seems to exist in a landscape of surprise and variety that changes as one's viewpoint moves. Thus, an urban window may look out horizontally to a field. Or after descending steeply to its ramparts, one may still find the market square and Valbona Gate far below.

Characteristically, the town's natural and built areas reflect these contrasts, juxtaposing the wild and cultivated, and "inside" and "outside" become difficult categories despite the obvious clarity of rampart and gate.

Even with its buildings, inside and out can seem to reverse. Thus, San Bernadino, a quiet brick church on the outside, inside reveals Francesco di Giorgio Martini's formal Renaissance facades and spaces. And along Via Saffi the strong, unfinished facades of Duke Montefeltro's Palace give no clue to the precise, classic cortile within. This great palace faces into the town with a restrained, even domestic expression, while to the countryside it offers "a magnificent and glorious lack of restraint."<sup>3</sup> It is the signal achievement of De Carlo's Magistero that it interprets these qualities perfectly in a building that burrows into the ground with the same drama with which the Ducal Palace reaches to the sky.

Most visitors reach the Magistero by continuing past the Ducal Palace along the Via Saffi. Just past its crown this timeless city spine reveals a view of distant hills through the narrow slit between masonry walls. Descending, one passes the plain, freshly scrubbed Palazzo Battiferri, recently reformed by De Carlo as a setting for the university's business school.<sup>4</sup> Then, at the next equally reticent, domestic-scaled block on the left, two steps lead up to the discreet double doors of the Magistero.

In 1528, Castiglione wrote that Duke Federico's palace appeared "not so much a palace as a city in itself."<sup>5</sup> Such reciprocity is central also to the Magistero. Inside, De Carlo has created a modern spatial narrative that continues the spatial experience of the historic town.

**Upper:** The Magistero, with its several levels of roof terraces and giant fan of glass, reconstructs a portion of Urbino in a modern vocabulary.

**Inset:** The hill town of Urbino, with the Magistero center right.

**Below:** From the floor of the Congress Hall looking up.

Photos by Fulvio Palma.









Entering, one first passes through the thickness of an old house whose form has been retained to provide a continuity of external forms. But then space opens ambiguously, formed less by its edges than by the shapes embedded in it. To the right, a bright hollow drum reveals the upper branches of two trees whose bases are rooted far below. Ahead is a much larger curved form, offering—as such convex shapes always do—a sense of pregnant anticipation for what it encloses.

There are no corridors here. Amidst the “urban” palette of materials—site-formed concrete structure and circulation, spray-plastered walls—both the cylinder and the larger, focused semi-cylinder occupy space like buildings in an internal town. Between is an urban landscape, lit by casual “street” lighting. And the levels of this internal city are linked by a curving ramp, which is stepped in section like the town’s steep streets.<sup>6</sup>

As in the city at large, one feels both inside and outside this space. But then, continuing on, one finds oneself on a narrow bridge looking into a lecture room—which itself seems to hang within an even vaster hall, the *aula magna*, which vanishes far below. It is here that one realizes how the dominant forms of the Magistero are paradoxically

hollow. The great glazed half cylinder, in particular, focuses light rather than gathers solid form.

The building’s surprises do not end here. As one continues out beyond the great waterfall of inverted conical glass, one discovers a secret garden where small trees grow. There, straight ahead over a parapet, sits the distant church of San Bernardino, with the extraordinary shapes of the Marche hills beyond.

### History and Form

For De Carlo the ability to reinterpret the past for the needs of the present begins with a deep “reading of the territory.” He has described this as an iterative process, involving tentative design and feedback. Since the forms themselves are participants in this dialogue, it is critical that the architecture not be misunderstood. Yet neither can such a dialogue survive mere repetition: as with a human relationship, it requires recognition and understanding to move forward. The concern is always how far can things be changed without losing balance, without rupturing the thread of continuity.

In 1992 De Carlo explained these principles to Benedict Zucchi:

*I believe a lot in the revelatory capacity of ‘reading’...If one is able to interpret the meaning of what has remained engraved, not only does one come to understand when this mark was made and what the motivation behind it was, but one also becomes conscious of how the various events that have left their mark have become layered, how they relate to one another and how,*

**Above:** A secret garden lies beyond the inverted cone of glass on the entry level. Photo by Antonio Garbasso.

**Opposite:** The Magistero blends with the historic urban fabric. **Top Left:** Via San Girolamo. **Top right:** Via Saffi. **Bottom left:** Via S. Maria. **Bottom right:** Main entrance on Via Saffi. Photos by Chris Sensenig.





*through time, they have set off other events and have woven together our history.*<sup>7</sup>

Shortly before designing the Magistero, in his parallel role as town planner, De Carlo noted how contemporary activities in Urbino had become disconnected from the city's pattern of historical forms. In his words: "the pattern of urban activities [had] progressively slipped out of its original morphological mould, dissolving people's originally sharp awareness that urban forms are where they are because they clearly fulfil a given role."<sup>8</sup>

The site for the Magistero had once been the eighteenth-century convent of Santa Maria della Bella. Acquired by the university in the early 1960s, it was surrounded by distinguished, even-older buildings (many of them in poor repair). As a convent, the western edge of the site, which sloped steeply toward the south, had been built up in large domestic blocks that climbed the Via Saffi from the south. There was a small church at its top corner and some buildings along its top edge and in its eastern corner. Its southeastern corner had long been occupied by a terraced convent garden.

In more recent times the convent's domestic structures had been adapted as an orphanage. But when the university acquired them, they had been abandoned for a number of years. Only the church remained in restorable condition. To the university, the ruins on site were *un ammasso di rottami*, a mass of rubble. Nevertheless, the site's great peripheral brick street walls still defined the urban spine of Via Saffi, the tight urban streets of Via S. Girolamo and

Via S Maria to the north and south, and the court to another church to the northeast.

The Magistero project eventually involved a complete reconstruction of the territory within these street walls. Conceptually, it involved three main forms. First were a series of domestically scaled spaces that wrapped the site from the southwest, and that today contain small classrooms and meeting spaces. Second was a deep partially indented cylindrical court, onto which face four stories of professors' offices. Third was the great half circle containing the major teaching spaces, all lit from above by a great fan of glass.

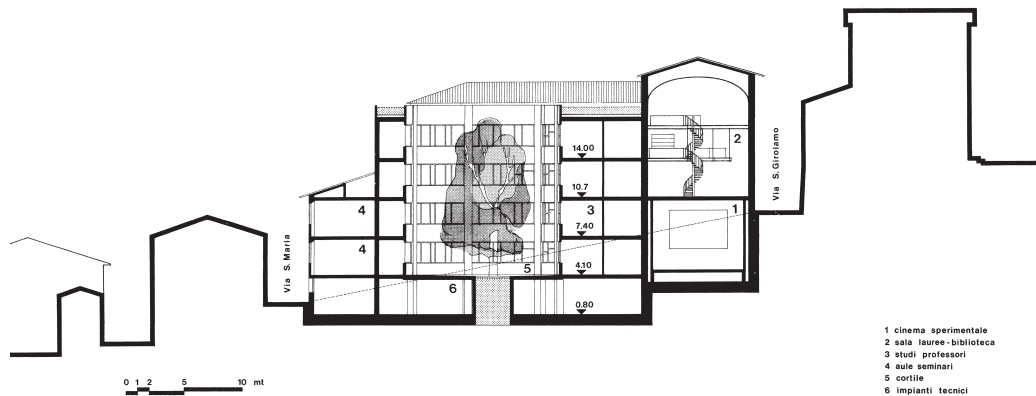
In planning, De Carlo neither works from inside out, as a classic modernist, nor by infilling an existing carapace, as a classic postmodernist. Instead, the Magistero exhibits a dynamic tension between the skin of the city and the needs of building component activities.

Within this overall tension, however, the figures upon his urban ground are clear and identifiable. Thus, the semicircle suggests a gathering place, a focus, which one can locate from anywhere by the direction of beams and the shape of walls. Meanwhile, the deep indented cylinder of the internal court, with its central trees, implies a private, quiet space; and one always feels as if one is intruding when one looks across it to the windows of the academics, screened by transoms and curtains.<sup>9</sup>

But this dynamic overall geometry does not settle simply. The components do not align absolutely, and so the bold shapes imply a sense of slower, more piecemeal development. Between the given envelope and the formal figures, space billows and tightens, creating a range of unexpected spaces, corners and niches, in which students gather to talk or study. Windows, too, are individually placed to frame views (as to a church pediment beyond), or link spaces and enhance their prospect (as with the tall, keyhole windows to the south, with their semicircles cut from the upper floor).

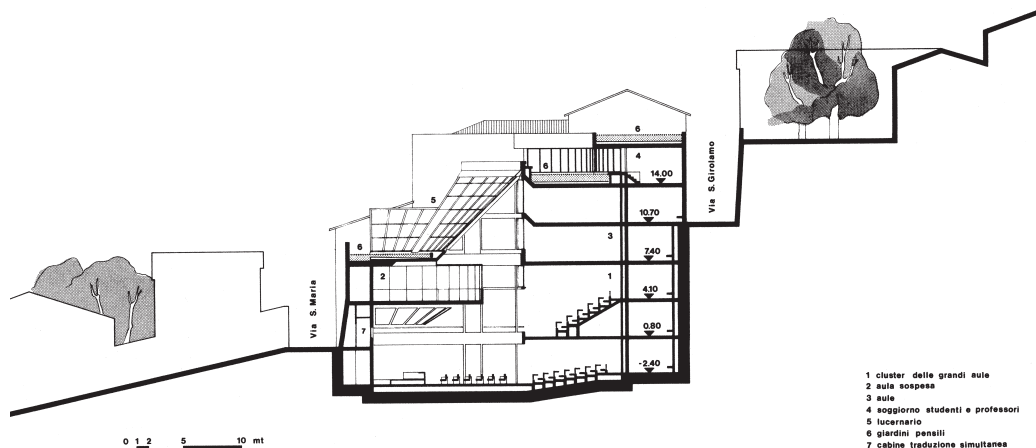
In a further extraordinary gesture, De Carlo carved out space for an experimental cinema beneath the little church on the Magistero's most prominent corner. Meanwhile above, within the space of the former church, he inserted two floors of library above a meeting room. Here book storage and forty study spaces float over a hall where the traditional culmination of Italian academic study, the defense of the thesis, takes place.

Such a space shows how De Carlo's dialogue with historical forms often brings unexpected spectacle. But this confrontation is neither gratuitous nor jarring; rather, it is elegant and airy. The shapes of the library platforms are carefully designed so they don't quite touch the back wall, yet they extend into the space apparently randomly.



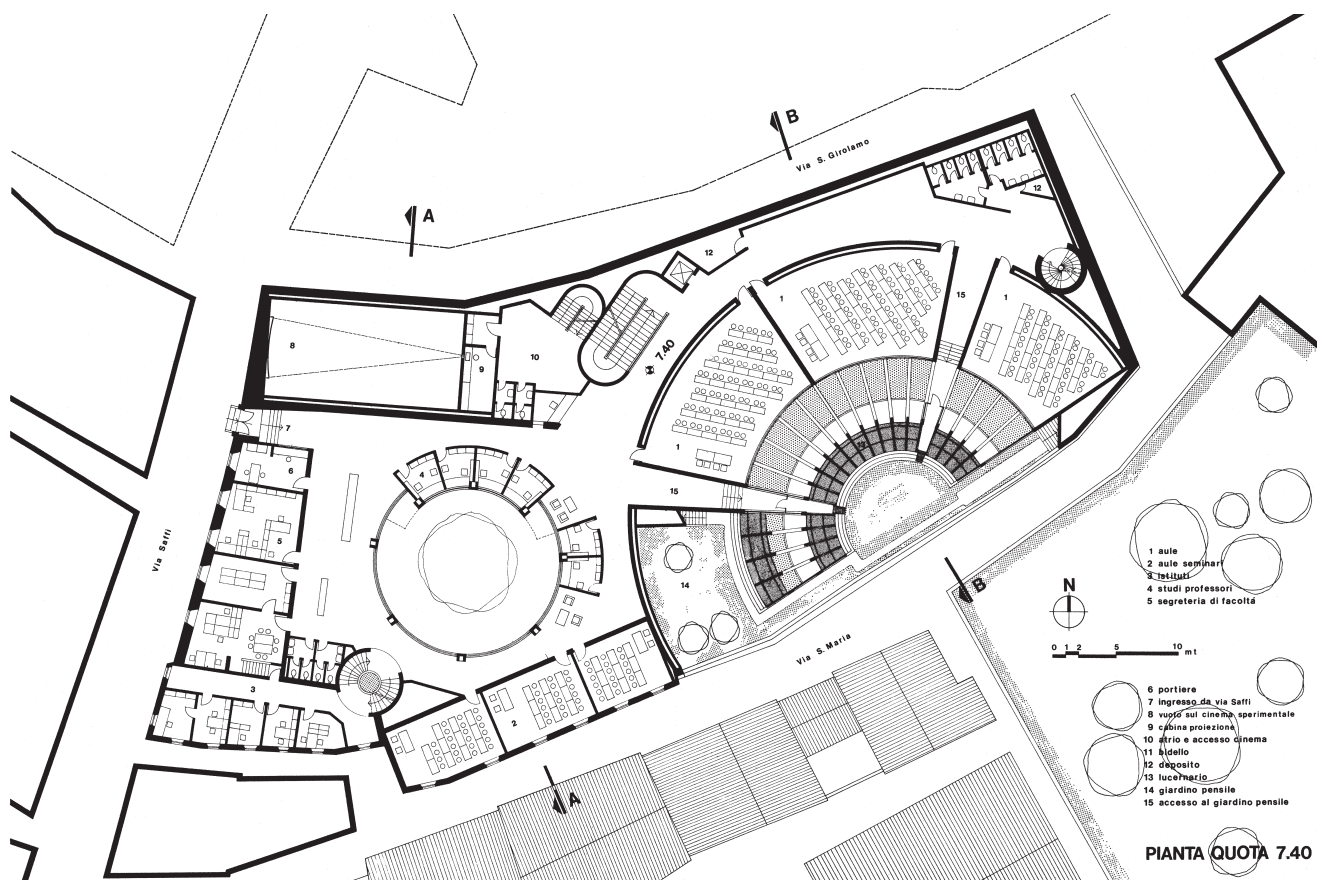
- 1 cinema sperimentale
- 2 sala lauree-biblioteca
- 3 studi professori
- 4 aule seminari
- 5 cortile
- 6 impianti tecnici

SEZIONE AA



- 1 cluster delle grandi aule
- 2 aula sospesa
- 3 aula
- 4 soggiorno studenti e professori
- 5 lucernario
- 6 giardini pensili
- 7 cabine traduzione simultanea

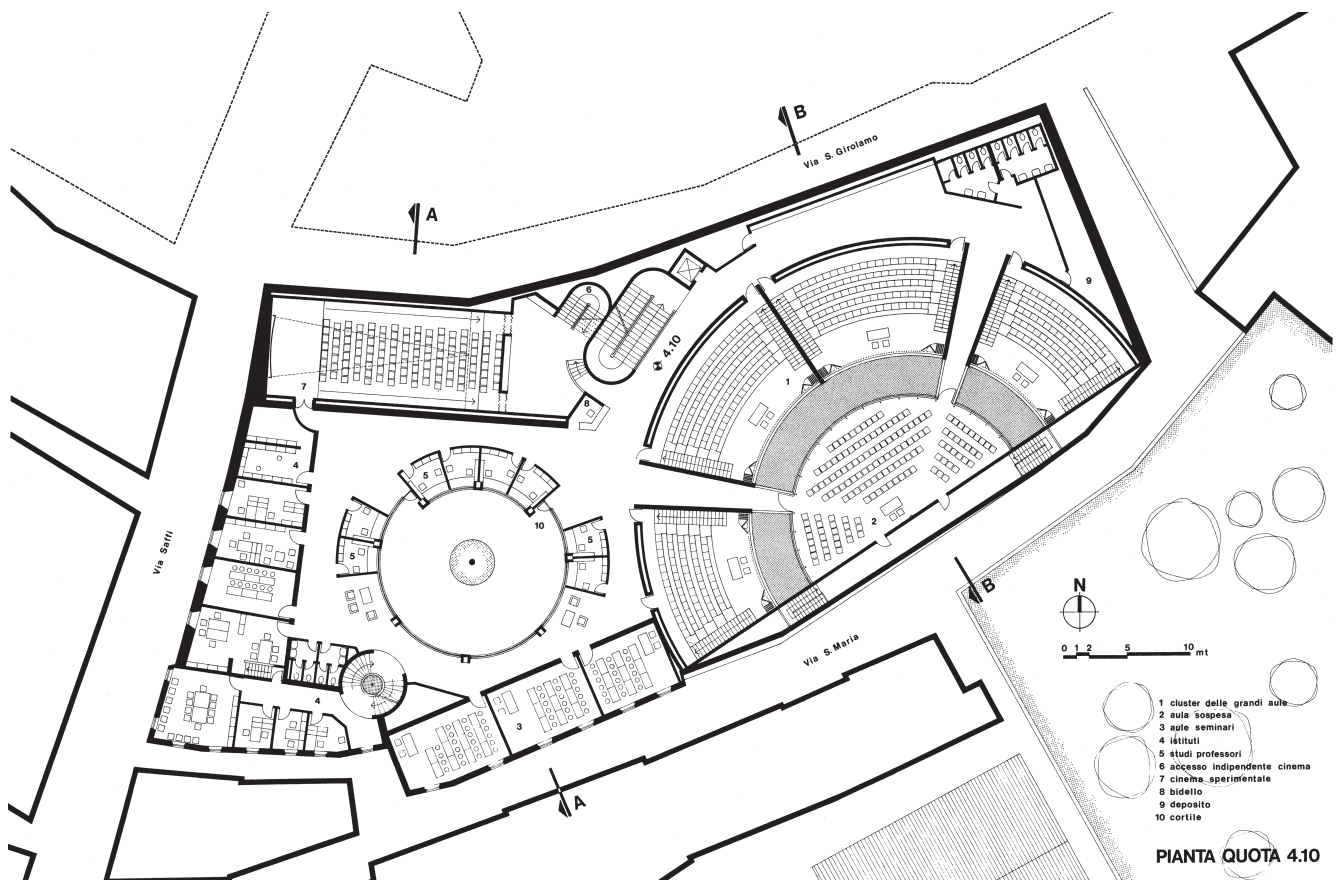
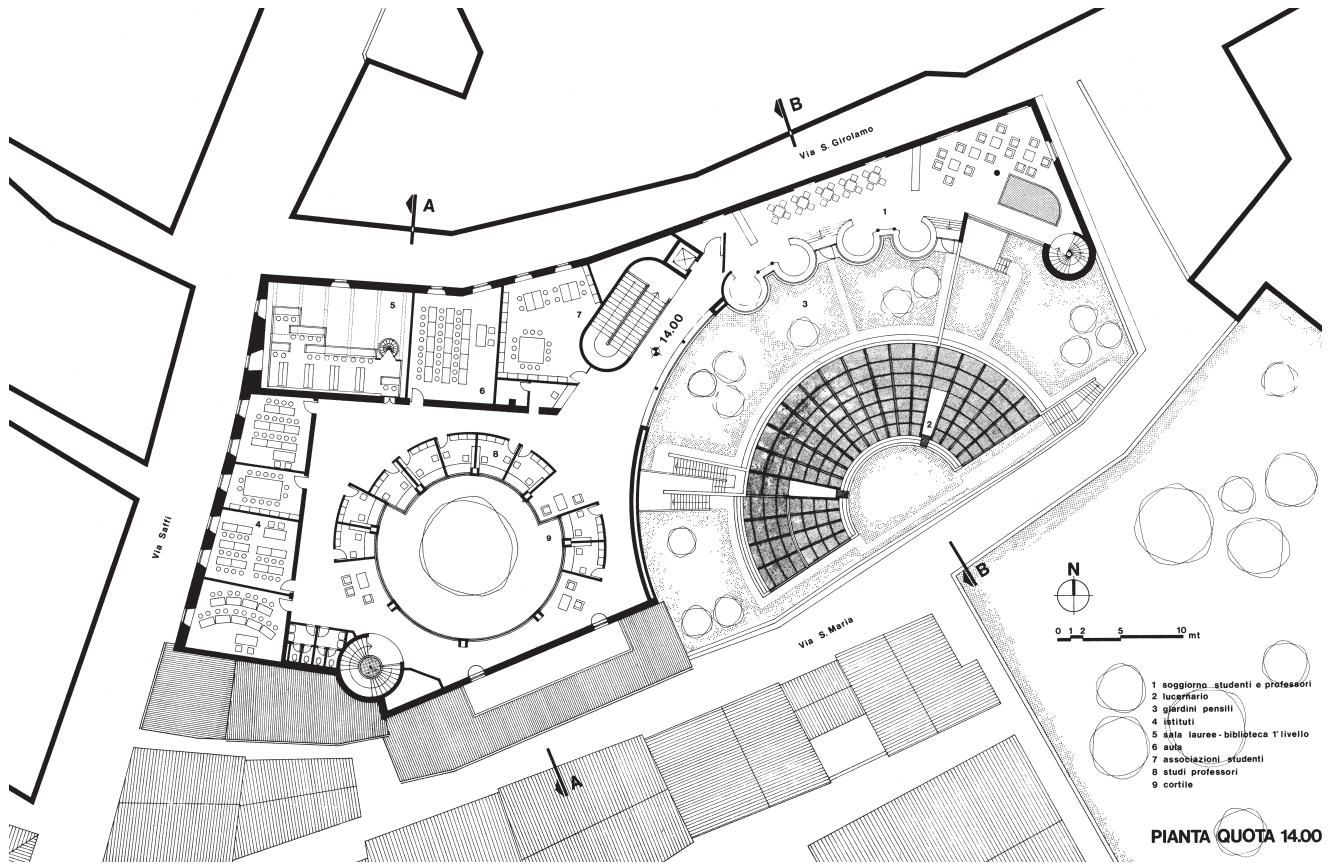
SEZIONE BB



- 1 aula
- 2 aule seminar
- 3 aula
- 4 studi professori
- 5 segreteria di facoltà

- 6 portiere
- 7 ingresso da via Saffi
- 8 vuoto sul cinema sperimentale
- 9 cabina proiezione
- 10 atrio e accesso cinema
- 11 ufficio
- 12 deposito
- 13 lucernario
- 14 giardino pensile
- 15 accesso al giardino pensile

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Such an insertion veils, but does not deny, the existing space.

Despite such obvious care, material preciousness is not one of De Carlo's main interests. It is not that he doesn't enjoy detail; he loves virtuoso concrete detailing, with elements swinging through space and not quite touching each other. But the ingenuity is always spatial—to make places. And virtuosity in the Magistero is almost all in board-marked reinforced concrete: in the café with its curving outdoor seat, in the stairs and ramps, at structural edges such as the return corners in the cylindrical court, which are set off half a bay from the column rhythm so the glazing can play at wrapping around.

Of course, nothing of this internal form can be grasped from adjoining streets. The Magistero's southern wall, along Via S. Maria, is broken only by emergency exit doors, while its long northern wall along the Via S. Girolamo has only a few ambiguous slit windows (into storage spaces) and two street doors—one offering direct access to the basement cinema and another to the top-floor café and roof garden.

Most characteristically, like the exuberance of the Ducal Palace, the great conical rooflight can only be seen from outside the city.<sup>10</sup>

### Interior Form and Space

Clearly, it is ridiculous to try to understand this building in horizontal terms. Its drama derives from the way it opens downward toward its major spaces and out toward the countryside. Interestingly, first-time visitors rarely remember there is a roof garden on the same level as the main entrance.

One secret to the building is that although they appear as large, simple semicircles in plan, the spaces of the central hall offer an extremely complex three-dimensional section. Yet, four floors beneath the main rooflight this is all gathered together into a single great hall which can seat 1,500 people. To create this *aula magna* (best translated as “congress hall”), De Carlo had to dig deep—its floor is 16 m. below the preexisting garden.<sup>11</sup> But the resultant experience is remarkable, offering vertiginous Piranesian glimpses upward, as well as a wonderful sense of excitement when completely full.

To enrich its functioning, this great central space may be divided into separate lecture rooms with sliding partitions (the bottom hall divisible by two, the galleries above into four). And moving upward, there are more radiating lecture rooms, one suspended extraordinarily over the central lecture platform.

Because these upper spaces are all glazed, they offer unusual views and reflections: up from the bottom hall to

distant structure and glazing; across faceted curving reflections; from deep within one lecture gallery across the central space to another. At the top, the fan-shaped rooflight is cut through by access bridges, its outer segments either folding back down or lying flat, so that it rises a complete two stories only in the center.

De Carlo clearly delights in pushing the extremes of top and bottom, and his designs often weave multiple layers together. But with its seven levels, the Magistero is particularly complex. There is a fascinating personal origin to this obsession:

*I lived on the fifth floor of a big building. One day, I think I was just six years old, I was going up the stair, and on the last landing, suddenly, I met an animal. I thought it was a dog, but it had very long legs and the head of a cat. It could have been a lynx, a Siberian hare, or a very big felix serval (an African wild cat). Whichever—and I'm certain this actually happened, even though everyone always denied it—at one point, the animal in my path forced me to measure the surrounding space, to take in its dimensions, comprehend where I was, as I tried to find a way to escape.*

*That was the first time I felt conscious of the height and width of a place, of the horizontal and inclined planes, of going forward and backward, up and down. From then on the idea of stair was impressed in my mind, and it still fills my dreams and my thinking today. I am never so stimulated by flat places as by those on different levels.*

*With that experience, confronting that fast and cunning lynx, I learned to measure a space, to comprehend it and project my body into it in all directions. To measure out an architectural event means to take its dimensions back to those of the body, to understand the space with your mind and with your senses. Only by this measure can you appreciate dimensions and qualities. Through measuring space we grasp the totality through the detail, and the detail through the totality.*

### University and City

De Carlo's Magistero (and his other work for the University of Urbino<sup>12</sup>) might also not have been possible if not for the architect's strong personal relationship with Carlo Bo, rector of the university until his recent death (in his nineties). De Carlo first met Bo during the period between the fall of Mussolini and the allied liberation of Milan. At the time, a young De Carlo was an important figure in the resistance to German occupation. Bo, also an anti-fascist, was an important intellectual.

After the war, Bo became rector of the free university of Urbino.<sup>13</sup> Although a Renaissance foundation, by the 1930s it had few resources, less than 140 students, and just one large building. Yet soon after his arrival in 1948, Bo set



about its renewal. Among other things, he sought to radically overhaul teaching practices. But he also believed that every change in pedagogy should involve a transformation of physical space. And a decade later, with his university renovation going badly, Bo approached De Carlo to take over.

It is the special nature of their friendship De Carlo remembers best. According to De Carlo, Bo was a man of few words. “We had short meetings—not short in time but short in words. We’d sit together, and every ten minutes we’d have a sentence. Communication. We are very close friends. Intense communication, but short in words.”

It is not entirely flippantly that Bo is today spoken of as the last Duke of Urbino. And De Carlo’s friendship with him put the architect in a position of power perhaps paradoxical for one of known libertarian views. “Bo was a man of the eighteenth century—a *grand seigneur* of the Enlightenment,” muses De Carlo. “How much did a man of the Enlightenment really want a democratic organization? Not very much, I believe.”

Typical of the university’s planning processes was the way the program of the Magistero was developed. “Il Magistero” literally means “Teacher Training School,” but in Urbino the school encompasses a much wider range of studies and is often translated “Faculty of Arts.” The university’s aim was to concentrate these activities, which were then housed at various sites around town, into a single building. But the programming of this new structure involved only Bo, De Carlo, and a small group of professors. The requirements included the expected professors’ rooms, library, seminar rooms, and smaller lecture halls. But other program elements indicated how far Bo entrusted the larger vision of the building to De Carlo. And, in particular, De Carlo insisted on permeability between the university and the town.

Still today, having spent much energy on university planning schemes from Dublin to Pavia, Siena to Catania, De Carlo is opposed to the idea of a campus. For De Carlo, a university should be both an urban microcosm and part of a larger city.<sup>14</sup>

*The university must be an active, open part of society, of the town, towards which it has both rights and duties. Usually it takes its rights, but it is less concerned with its duties. Just as the university is using the city and its territory, in the same way the university should reciprocate, and be usable by the city and its territory. There are, obviously, parts which should be closed and private (though these are far fewer than might be imagined), but all the rest can be more public.*

Ironically, the Magistero’s small, almost invisible entrance offers no promise of such permeability. But De Carlo’s argument is not about this kind of overt legibility.

*In a university really worthy of the name, every citizen should be free to enter and listen to a lecture. You could say, “well, what stops anyone from attending a lecture now?” I believe the answer is the architecture itself. Thresholds, for instance, are the expression of authority and institutionalization. And the most important barriers are those thresholds which you cannot touch.*

*The issue of easing access should be much more important than simply concern for disabled entrances. In a way, we are all disabled when we cannot use a particular space. Thresholds built up in words are more powerful than physical thresholds.*

It is not the visual form of the Magistero’s discreet entrance which promises welcome, but the knowledge of shared space beyond, as in a church. Thus, while you must enter as an individual, not in a crowd, there is a certain recognition that a public, “urban” realm lies within.

Typical of these views was De Carlo’s suggestion that the bottom floor of the building be used for an experimental cinema.

*You know . . . within the Magistero faculty there is a Film Institute which had a wonderful film library. So I said “shouldn’t this be shared with the town?” In Urbino the movie theaters are terrible! If we had this film theater, the experience of showing their films publicly might lead to organizing other things with the citizens, perhaps even making movies. . .*

There was also the vast *aula magna*. Such extreme focus on the lecture, the *ex cathedra* pronouncement, might seem to embody a very old-fashioned view of education. But, according to De Carlo,

*. . .the aula magna had wider powerful purposes. First, it would celebrate the unique freedom of this university and assert the role of the small university. Second, it would also celebrate the bond between the town and the university. Its specification was agreed between university and civic authority with the aim that it would be used for all town celebrations.*

On such occasions the *aula magna* is at its best. Filled with people and buzzing with conversation, it is then that it most confidently fulfills its role as palace within this city of a building.

### Finally

An integral feature of the city, the Magistero today changes with the seasons. Each autumn the trees in the hidden garden, which offer solar shielding through summer, turn from bright green to burning ochre. And as the low winter sun shines through their bare branches, the space inside is altered completely. Likewise, the roof garden walls, soft with Virginia creeper during the summer, change to blood red in fall. During winter the vines are revealed as naked scratchings on sharply-cut board-marked concrete. Twenty-five years old now, the

two trees in the central court have been cut back by half. And yet they climb up again.

In its design, De Carlo struggled to take account of many factors: historical traces on the ground the building was to occupy; its relation to the larger fabric of the city; and his vision for a new relationship between university and town.

Yet for the architecture of the Magistero to become embodied and accepted, he also argued it needed to become embedded and layered with new stories. It had to allude to and reverberate with these—even those of the young students, who may come to Urbino only temporarily and from quite different cultures. Indeed, when the building was dedicated in 1976 De Carlo gave a lecture in which he encouraged the university and the town together to make it their own.

In the years since, Urbino's response to the Magistero, and its now-thriving university, have been conditioned by an explosion in student numbers. Social pressures and rising prices have pushed some residents out of the historic center, while allowing others to prosper from student rents.<sup>15</sup>

It is a fragile equilibrium, yet the townsfolk clearly support the university and are proud of its buildings. De Carlo is only slightly exaggerating when he suggests, "Urbino is one of the few cities in Italy where contemporary buildings are considered as part of the citizen's heritage. They recommend visitors to the Palazzo Ducale and the Magistero, drawing no distinction between new and old." It is certainly one of the few places where postcard stalls display the new among the old, Magistero next to Raffaello.

Of course, the dialogue between the building and its users has not gone entirely as planned. In particular, its ideal of town-gown cooperation never truly materialized. For example, I have never found the door leading directly to the Magistero's underground cinema unlocked. The same is true for the street door leading directly to its top-floor café. In fact, this café was never installed. Instead, this space is normally packed with students poring over books. Desperately short of places to study, they say they can always go elsewhere for a coffee.

Of the unfulfilled promises of another of his Urbino buildings De Carlo said recently: "there are places which are not discovered yet. But they will be. An architect must do what he believes is right, not just because it will be made real immediately. But you suffer. You ask why they are

**Opposite:** The bold, hollowed-out forms give the interior spaces of the Magistero an urban quality. View on the 14.00 level: cylindrical courtyard to the right, keyhole windows to left. Photo by Giorgio Casali.

not using it? Is it because they are lazy, or do not have enough imagination?"

Nevertheless, the promise of the architecture remains embedded in the structure of its spaces. "People will always use it as they want," he says. "But the space suggests how to use it. Creating this space, this potential, is the essential of architecture."

The Magistero was never meant to "reconstruct" a defined past. Instead, it refers to the city's many transformations: from the fifteenth century, when Renaissance geometries were overlaid on the medieval town; to the twentieth, when Catholic churches were replaced by more contemporary centers of urban culture. The same might be said of its future.

In this regard, De Carlo says, "It is impossible to imagine that an architectural or urban configuration might have just one codified message to which everybody has to refer. We live in a society of conflict and not of spontaneous consensus. And therefore what represents these realities has, of necessity, to be polyhedral, many sided, manifold."<sup>16</sup>

In the same editorial with which I began, De Carlo writes:

*If the purpose of restoration is to preserve an identity and make it significant for all—for the permanent inhabitants as well as the occasional ones—then we need to lever the valued events of the past out of the system of meanings they had originally, and insert them into new systems of meanings that correspond to their present contexts: to destructure and then restructure them, reinserting them with an active role in the circuit of contemporary activity.*

In a world of instantaneous messages and sound bites, this notion of an extended conversation with the past must seem stubbornly old-fashioned. Yet, paradoxically, it acts to open a real awareness today. This is what the Magistero has achieved.

#### Acknowledgement

Much information and all uncredited quotations from Giancarlo De Carlo come from long conversations he had in 1999 and 2000: with me (in English, taped but unpublished); and with Franco Buncuga, published in Italian as *Architettura e Libertà, Conversazione con Giancarlo De Carlo* (Milan: Elèuthera, 2000); French translation to appear in 2003; English translation by John McKean still has no publisher).

#### Notes

1. In the 1950s De Carlo was invited to join the Italian CIAM group. At the time, CIAM (Congress International d'Architecture Moderne) had become becoming arthritic—increasingly identified with the International Style, as codified by Siegfried Giedion. De Carlo (who had already published praise for William Morris, Frank Lloyd Wright, and rural peasant architecture) was scathing of those CIAM disciples who felt, for example, that Le Corbusier's recent church at Ronchamp had betrayed them. According to De Carlo, it was the pomposity of Giedion and his





cronies that led to the birth of the oppositional Team X, so called as its young members were asked to prepare the tenth CIAM congress. They included Jacob Bakema, Ralph Erskine, and Shad Woods; but at Team X's intellectual heart were Peter and Alison Smithson, Aldo van Eyck, and De Carlo. Though they were tough with each other, they offered among the first and strongest criticisms of Modernist assumptions. To them, the takeover of the machine and planning for *esistenza-minimum* implied not just a negation of the user, but the loss of place, local character, and history. The last words in the documentation of the final CIAM meeting were Bakema's: "The aim will be to develop architecture and town-planning towards a language which can communicate about human behaviour." This has remained one of De Carlo's core principles ever since.

2. Giancarlo De Carlo, "Editorial," *Spazio e Società* 92, (2001), p. 4.

3. Giancarlo De Carlo, in Denys Lasdun, ed., *Architecture in an Age of Scepticism* (London: Heinemann, 1984), p. 54.

4. See "The New Faculty of Economics, Urbino," *Domus* 826 (2000).

5. Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano* (Venice, original 1528), Book I, Ch. II.

6. The ramp provides a clear echo of Urbino's other famous social hinge, Francesco di Giorgio's *rampa* at the foot of the Ducal Palace. This older spiral within a bastion links the upper and lower portions of the city; it was designed to allow the Duke to ride directly from outside the city walls up to his palace. Later, it was filled with rubble and capped with a theater. It was revitalized as part of De Carlo's restoration. See John McKean, "Unearthing the Future: De Carlo in Urbino," *Building Design* 24 (February 24, 1984), pp. 22-44.

7. De Carlo, interviewed in Benedict Zucchi, *Giancarlo De Carlo* (London: Butterworth, 1992), p. 167.

8. Giancarlo De Carlo, *Urbino: The History of a City and Plans for its Redevelopment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 104.

9. Indeed, the cylinder around which the professors' rooms cluster may consciously echo in negative the central cylindrical building in the famous painting of the

"Ideal City" no longer attributed to Piero, which hangs in Urbino's Ducal Palace. 10. The same is true of the Magistero's keyhole windows, which appear on the tapestry of the city like shadows of the Ducal *torricini*.

11. Both his other university faculties nearby also burrow down and protrude with skylights; at the Business School he even managed to lift precious Roman remains a few meters to make room for its sunken *aula*.

12. The university has restored many extremely valuable buildings in the historic center, saving them from abandonment and destruction. But there have been only three complex restructurings, all by De Carlo: the Law Faculty (completed in 1973), the Magistero (1976), and the Business School (opened in 2000-1). De Carlo's buildings outside the town include the residential Collegi dei Cappuccini on a nearby hilltop.

13. The only "free" university in Italy, Urbino neither belongs to the state, nor to a private foundation. It is set up by its own statutes (one of which had confirmed Bo as "rector for life"). Although it works within state educational rules and is supported by state funds, it retains a unique freedom in the use of its funding, setting its own priorities and avoiding interminable bureaucratic delays.

14. Throughout his career De Carlo has taught architecture. For many years he held a chair in Venice, then one in Genova. For twenty years he has also run his own International Laboratory for Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD). But he has always remained keen to distance himself from the educational establishment. "I never liked the academic community," he says. "It is lazy, conservative, authoritarian, and with a Mafioso tendency." De Carlo is particularly disillusioned by the general retreat from radical intentions that dominated Italy's campuses after 1968. Today, he says, with staff increasingly self-important, "university buildings are mostly filled by rooms for tutors who are there for a few days every other week, leaving overcrowded lecture rooms, where students squeeze in, unable to watch and listen."

15. Student numbers jumped from 500 to 10,000 in the 1970s. The enrollment is now 20,000. A total of 15,000 are housed in the area, 7,500 of them in the old town.

16. De Carlo, quoted in *Domus* 826 (2000).