





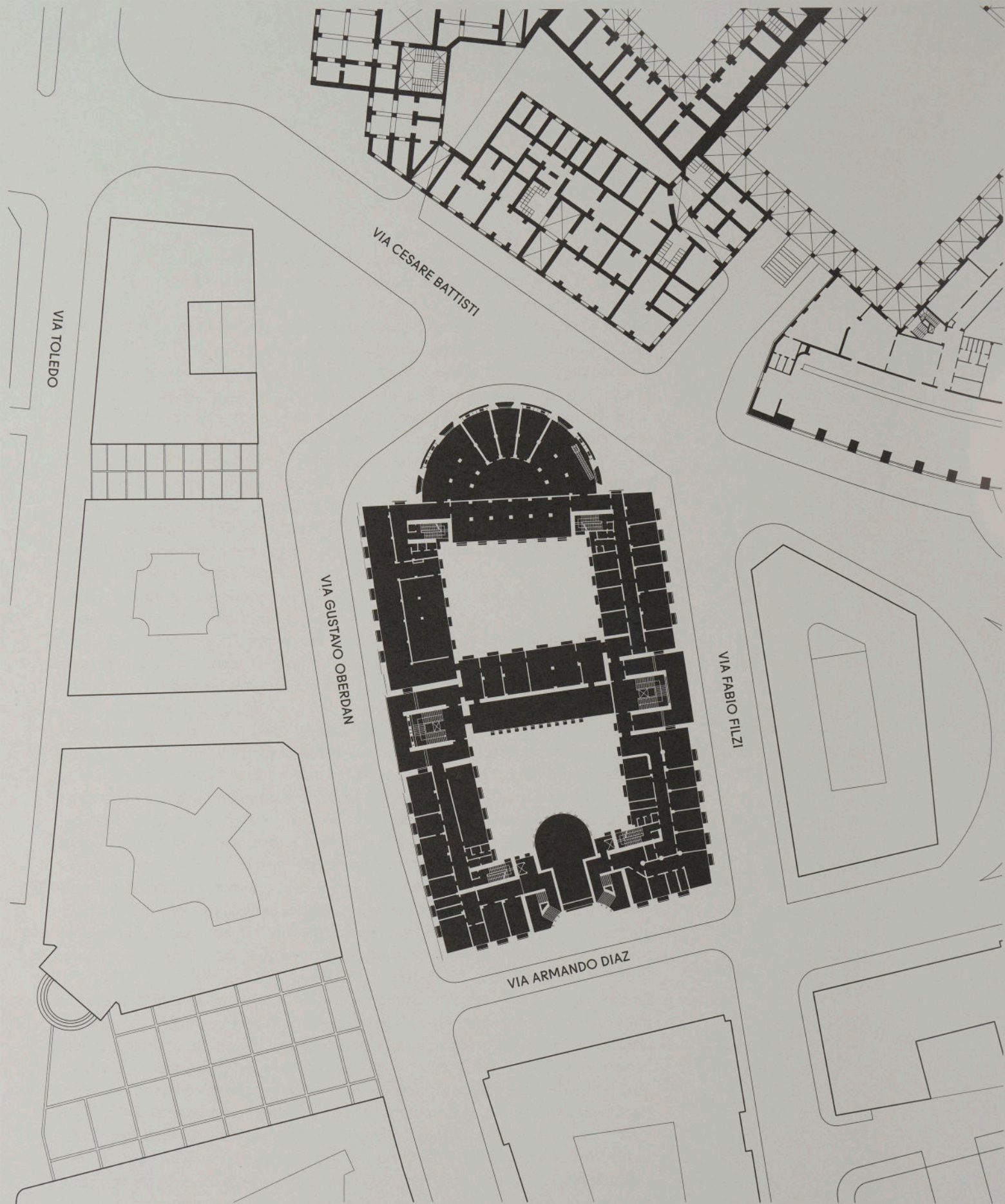
One of the most interesting buildings in the whole of the Rione Carità, Uffici Finanziari e Avvocatura di Stato Headquarters sits at the top end of Via Armando Diaz, the final tract of the axis between Piazza Bovio and Via Toledo, begun during the Neapolitan Risanamento and completed during the Fascist era. The back of the building actually faces onto what is now Via Cesare Battisti, looking obliquely towards Post Office Building on one side and towards Piazza Carità on the other. This means that the building has more of a “main” façade than any of the other projects and must be regarded as a finished volume rather than as a succession of surfaces.

Eleven architects took part in the competition, which was announced in 1933 and won by Marcello Canino, with second place assigned to Ferdinando Chiaromonte, who subsequently worked with Canino on the construction of the edifice, which took place between 1935 and 1937. Of all the competition projects, Canino’s was the only one to redefine the street frontage at the rear of the building, between Piazza Carità and the Post Office Building, which he did by means of a convex volume. The full semi-cylindrical shape on the rear façade seems to correspond to the exedra “hollowed out” of the main elevation, which defines the monumentality of the entrance portal. The structure is of reinforced concrete, while the various designated spaces for the offices are distributed around two internal courtyards. As Sergio Stenti notes, here, as in other buildings by Canino in the Rione Carità, the design of the plan points to extremely exacting functional and distributive research, and shows a number of different hypotheses for the external shape of the building, with elevations differentiated according to the spaces onto which they face.

The cladding is worthy of note, with a travertine base and masonry facing that draws on German examples: Peter Behrens and Paul Bonatz in particular. Moreover, the travertine base on the rear elevation covers the cylindrical volume to a greater height, serving to accentuate the “urban” dimension of that façade. The side elevations retain their own gravitas, and are not simply products of the overall design, featuring a wide, central portal with an abstract and “enigmatic” geometrical travertine motif. Also worthy of note are the interior elevations and a number of features such as the stairs, not least the helical staircases in the second courtyard.

According to Guido Canella, Canino’s “critical classicism” reached its maturity in the early 1930s, especially with the large exedra on the elevation of Uffici Finanziari e Avvocatura di Stato Headquarters and the portal on Palazzo della Provincia. Nonetheless, it remains that the latter is less of a success, particularly in the rigidity of the overall volume, which is subordinate to the adjacent Post Office Building – so dominant as to make the monumentality of Palazzo della Provincia seem out of place. In the Uffici Finanziari e Avvocatura di Stato Headquarters, Canino has managed to transpose his own inclination towards the forms of the past, not least Baroque expressions, into an imposing building, yet one that retains its own dynamism and expressive autonomy.

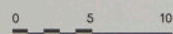






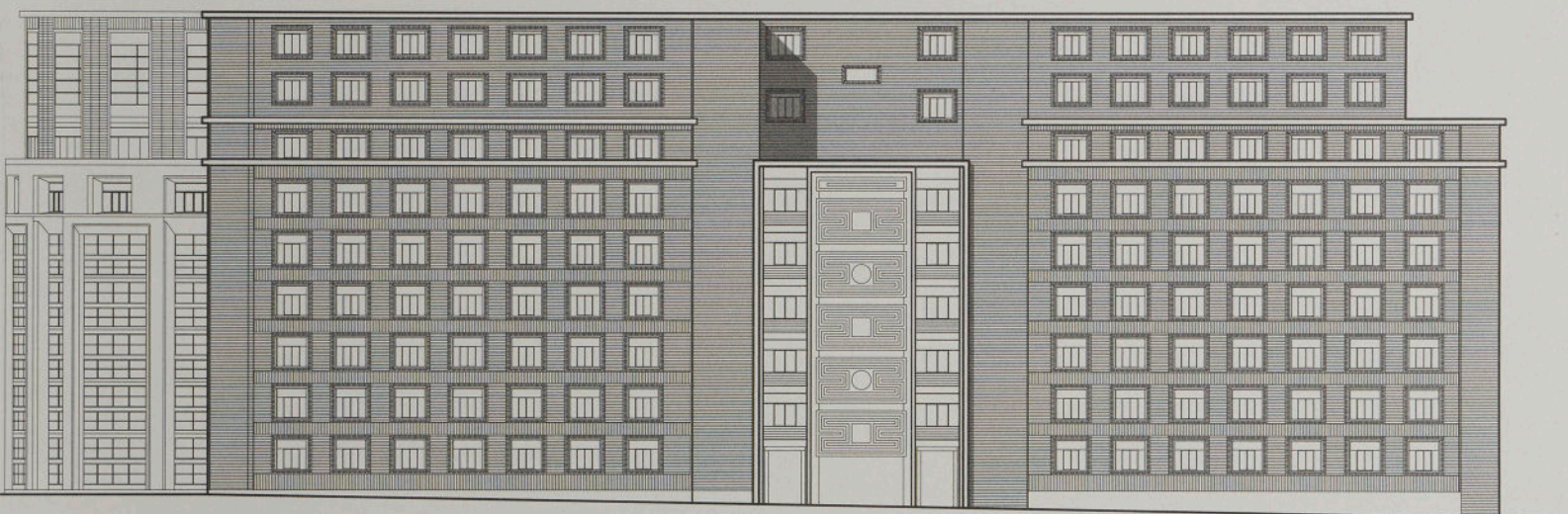


South elevation









West elevation

