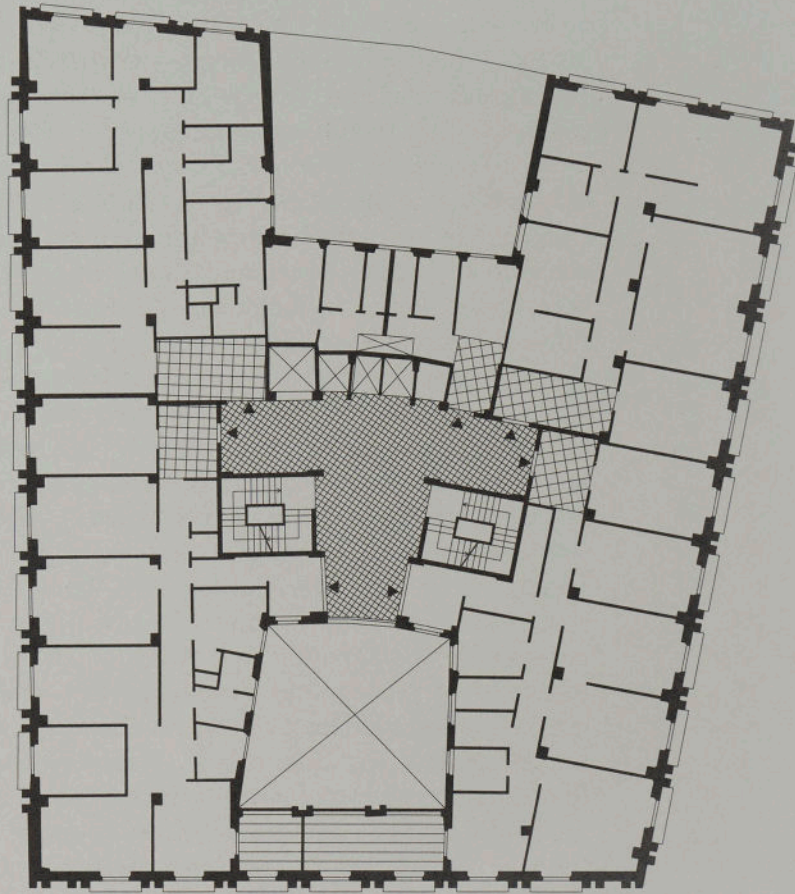


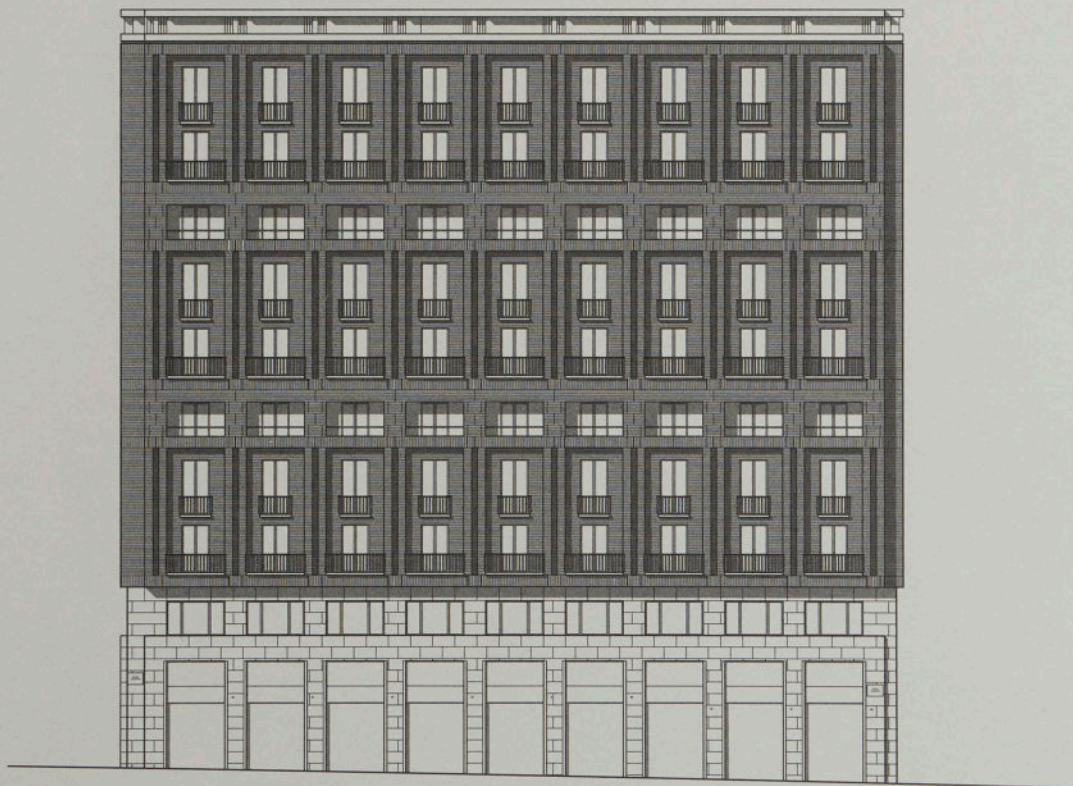


Situated on the corner of Piazza Municipio and Via Cristoforo Colombo, the building is located in a particularly significant spot, facing the Castel Nuovo on one side and the Maritime Station and its port facilities on the other, while the rear is adjacent to the Mercadante Theater. When construction began in 1950, to be completed three years later, the original designers Paolo Maffezzoli and Alba Luise refused to increase the volume of their building and were replaced by Marcello Canino, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and still a leading figure on the Neapolitan scene after the fall of the Fascist regime. Canino redesigned the building from scratch, with a closed and compact block on the first few floors, and a small off-center courtyard off the fourth floor, on the side of Via Colombo, with two short open wings on the opposite side, towards the Mercadante, making for an H-shaped plan. The central nucleus is formed by an atrium and the stairways, while the typical layout of the floors provides for four large, well-lit apartments.

The design of the elevations is extremely well thought through: above a travertine-clad base containing the ground floor, which is mostly occupied by shops and a raised floor, is the main façade, clad in clinker bricks and articulated with insets of two floors each, alternating with lower strips on a single level. This approach was somewhat similar to that in Canino's INA building in Piazza Carità of twenty years earlier. The intermediate strip between the double orders, which virtually acts as a string course, on the south-west side facing Piazza Municipio, contains covered terraces, while what is assumed to be the main elevation overlooking Via Colombo, aligned with Via Marina, contains simple windows. The latter side underscores its own role, even though it loses the compactness of the elevation facing onto the square and contrasts the horizontal lines of the insets with an emptying of the top five floors, making for a vertical division. The varying projection of the clinker decoration with respect to the pale base also makes for original corner solutions, depending on the tectonic value of the corner.

Praised by Emanuele Carreri, who described it as "the finest speculative building in the city," considering it a synthesis of Ludwig Hoffmann's monumental Classicism and Asplund's compositional lightness, the building is one of the most successful of Canino's later works.





East elevation
South elevation

0 5 10