



RIVIERA DI CHIAIA





Amedeo d'Albora (1896–1980) and his brother Lorenzo (1897–1982), both engineers, worked predominantly in Naples and Campania. After taking his degree in Engineering, Amedeo d'Albora then took another in Architecture. Not just a professional engineer, he was also a sportsman, an athlete and director of the Fascist Federation's Sports Department. He was responsible for a project for a multi-purpose sports field in the late 1920s, followed by another for the Campo Sportivo del Littorio in 1928, and for realizing the XXVIII Ottobre Stadium, now the Arturo Collana Stadium, in the Vomero area of Naples in 1925, and the Vesuvius Stadium, subsequently known as the Partenopeo and later as the Giorgio Ascarelli Stadium, in 1930. His diverse skills also won him commissions in the field of urban planning and design, and after the war, during the crucial years of rebuilding and the speculation, in particular, he became head of the General Regulatory Plan Executive Committee; the plan was presented in 1958 and drawn up by a committee composed of more than a hundred experts, but never approved. Amedeo was elected and served as a Senator of the Italian Republic between 1958 and 1963, for the entire duration of Legislature III. His brother Lorenzo and son Domenico, an expert structural engineer, ran the family business during his time in office, in particular.

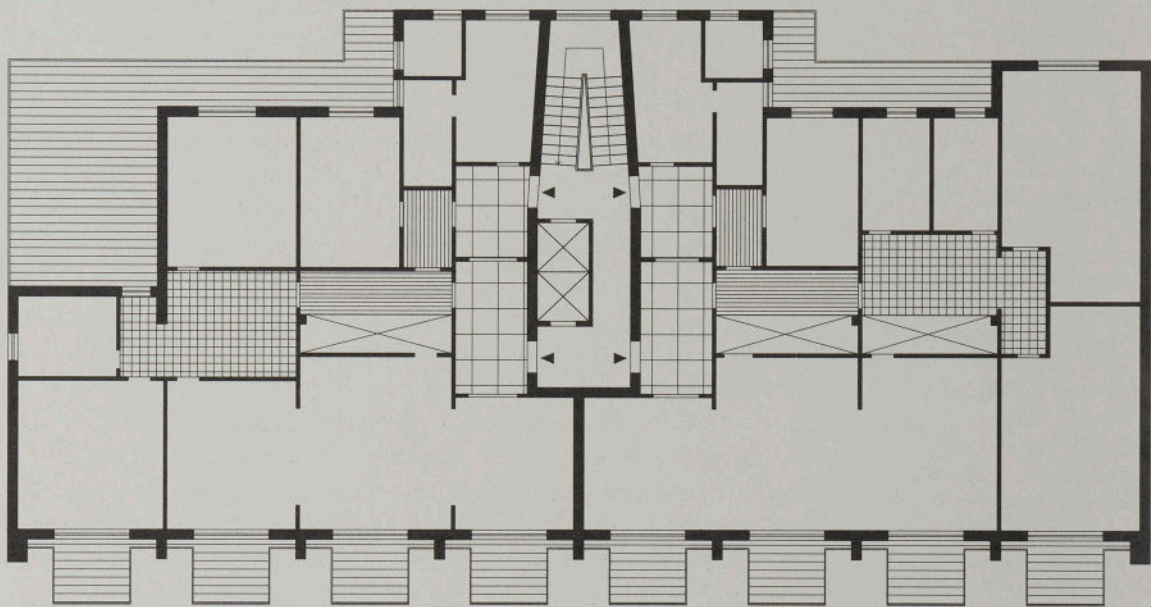
The work carried out by the company included several buildings for residential use, on Via Consalvo, in Fuorigrotta and on Via Tasso, on the Vomero hill, as well as higher-profile buildings such as the headquarters of the Lauro Fleet, designed by the architect Antonio Scivittaro to a structural plan by Domenico d'Albora, and a residential building at 206 Riviera di Chiaia. Aside from the well-known great personalities on the Neapolitan scene, d'Albora's work testifies to the existence – sometimes unrecognized in architectural historiography – of a correct and transparent professionalism, capable of defining the urban image much better than the great, celebrated masterpieces.

The building at 206 Riviera di Chiaia is situated in a particularly sought-after spot, on the road that runs along the Villa Comunale park, just a few dozen meters from Villa Pignatelli and its garden. At this point, the Riviera di Chiaia becomes wider because of the intersection with the axis of Via Carlo Poerio, creating a sort of open space. In reality the entire coastline of the Riviera, celebrated in views and paintings and marked with significant architectural events, has always been considered one of the most pleasant parts of the city, where diplomats, travelers and aristocratic families choose to live.

The current building stands on the site of a nineteenth-century building, Palazzo Maresca di Serracapriola, which was requisitioned by the Allies during the war, and damaged first by fire in 1944 and then in the bombings and subsequently pulled down. The new edifice was built by the engineers Amedeo and Lorenzo d'Albora, with the assistance of Domenico, Amedeo's son, an expert in structural engineering. The brothers acquired the entire property with a view to building several residential blocks, the most representational of which is the one overlooking the Riviera, while the others occupy the space behind it, once turned over to the garden. The entire complex was begun in 1954, while the building overlooking the Riviera, the last to be built, was begun in 1958 and completed in 1960.

Given that the ground is sandy and not the most stable, a base slab was put in, above which is a pillared structure, both in reinforced concrete. Obviously, the most delicate part of the project was the façade, which had to slot into the historic Riviera panorama. The solution of the strongly projecting balconies, all of equal size, that make up the design of the elevation, which is perhaps reminiscent of the Prellerhaus at the Bauhaus in Dessau, was arrived at in consultation with the Monument Care Superintendency, which was not unusual at that time. The quality of the materials was seen as important; thus the façade was clad in travertine marble, also used for the balcony floors. The design combines a regular geometry with a steady rhythm, especially when seen from the front, like the Villa Comunale; seen tangentially, however, it gives the impression of being a "three-dimensional" elevation, thanks to the vertical underscoring of the pillars and the projecting floor slabs of the balconies. Although the loss of the neoclassical building has to be mourned, the "sincere" Modernism of the new building should be acknowledged, a far cry from facile stereotypes and consolidated models.







South elevation

