

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FORMER SALESIAN COMPLEX IN FAENZA

Before the Salesians

The area of the former Salesian Institute is located on the south-eastern edge of Faenza's historic town center, next to the town walls. It belongs to the part of the city which in Roman times was excluded from the city network and it is probable that the land at the time was situated in the Lamone river basin, which in this spot meanders towards the town center .

The area is an integral part of the town's history and as such over time has survived a series of stratifications, changes in ownership and use. An overview of transformations which took place over time is essential for a correct understanding of its current state.

It was only under the Manfredi lordship that the area became an integral part of the urban fabric, with the completion of the last town wall, so between the XIV and XVII centuries.

The plan of the former boarding school shows the strategic nature of its location: it is part of the historic nucleus and yet remains on the border between the old town and its

immediate periphery. It acts as a filter, an area characterized for the most part by a low construction density separating the dense historic center from the more sparsely built areas dating to the post-war period.

Therefore, one of the area's strengths lies in its accessibility, for both pedestrians from the historic town center and cars from the town's peripheral areas and beyond.

The complex consists of a series of buildings, which are heterogeneous in terms of structure, construction period, layout and large adjacent spaces. In terms of size and morphology the complex has the potential to be multifunctional.

The various buildings which existed prior to the construction of the former Salesian Institute are as follows:

a - Palazzo Naldi (with vegetable garden and gardener's house), belonging to the famous family of the Naldi Geremia Counts

b - Municipal slaughterhouse, a long, rectangular shed facing a service area

c - Two private slaughterhouses, a complex of structures which were demolished in 1890

d - The Lassi terraced house, known in more recent times as the nuns' house

e - Catholic orphanage; prior to the Salesians, abandoned orphans were cared for aged 7-14. In 1889 the former orphanage was sold to don Rinaldi and progressively demolished between 1890 and 1894 to make room for the construction of the new boarding school.

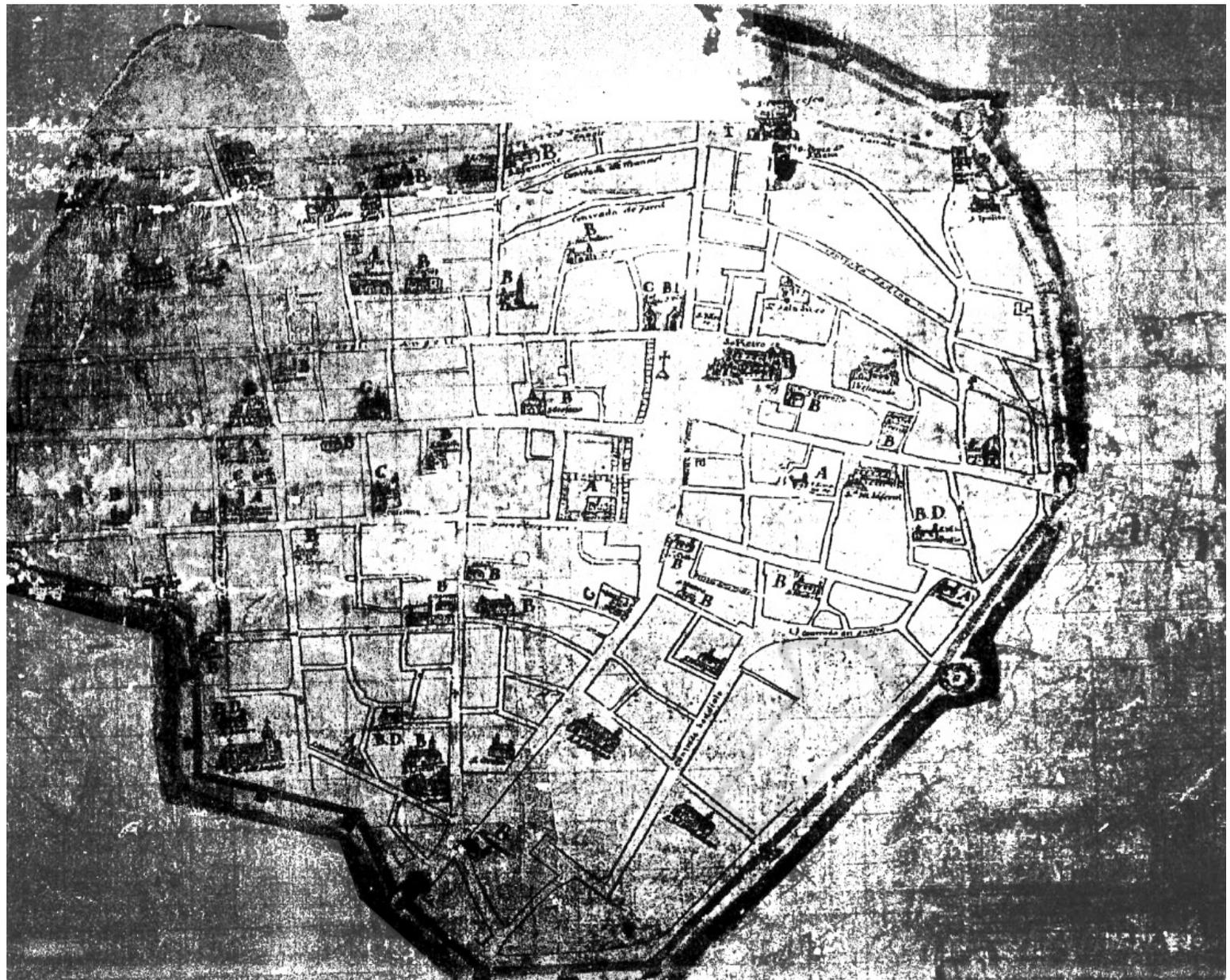
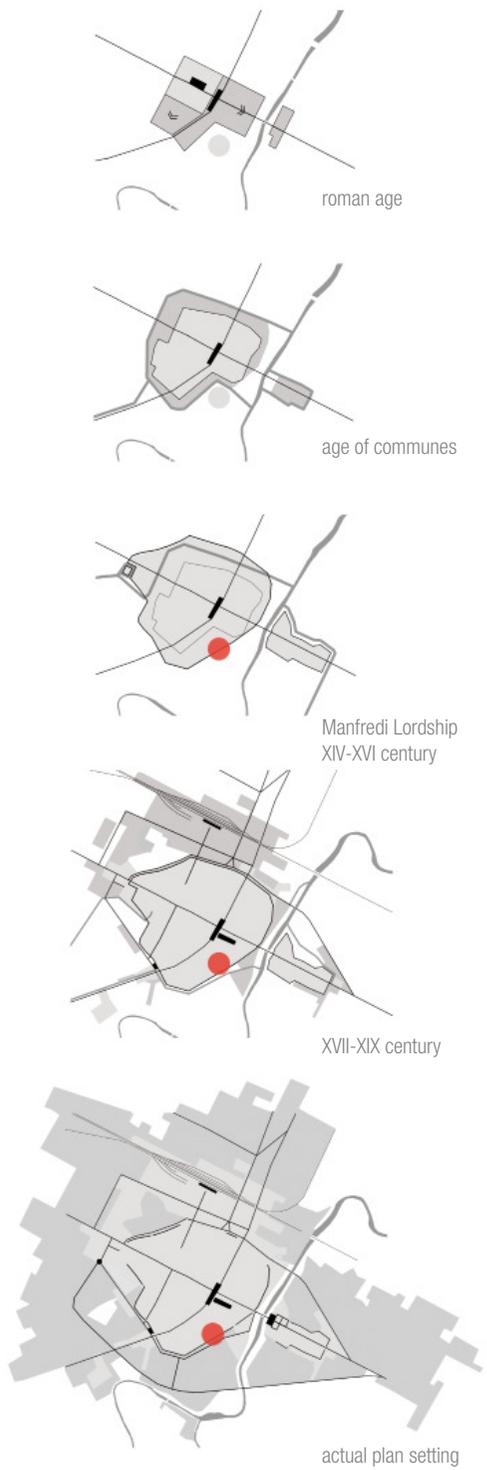
f - casa Maccolini, a small-sized terraced house typical of Faenza's town center, incorporated in the extension of the former Salesian Institute in 1888

g - casa Orges (with garden and services), probably a small bourgeoisie residence. There was even a small garden behind this small residence. In 1798, the entire complex belonged to Giacomo Orges and included a small shop too; in 1866 the building was sold to his neighbour, Giuseppe Maccolini, and was demolished between 1889 and 1894 to allow the expansion of the Salesian Institute.

1875 - 1900

First Phase

Initially, as of 1881, the Salesians were located in the former Trinity monastery in Borgo Durbecco. In time, there was a sharp increase in the number of students and these premises were no longer sufficient. On the 31st October 1883 the former Naldi building was visited and deemed



One of the first maps of Faenza, 1540 conserved at Chapter House

suitable, giving rise to negotiations with Giovanni Poletti for its purchase. On the 23rd January 1884 an arbitration agreement was signed and on the 18th November 1884 the building was purchased for the sum of 45,000 Lire (of which 24,000 came from anonymous donors).

On the 23rd July 1885 works began for the construction of the new church which had been designed for free by the engineer Pietro Rossi; he also volunteered to lead construction works. It was constructed by the master mason Giovanni Canuti from Solarolo. The church was built in the extreme north of the former vegetable garden, as the neighbouring houses had not yet been acquired. Many annexes of the former Naldi building were also demolished to make room for the new church.

The institute's sharp growth required further expansion of its premises: negotiations got under way for the purchase of the first house in via Bondiolo on the side of the building, however the price was deemed excessive. Given that expansion from this side was no longer possible, a big dividing wall was erected in the summer between the institute and this house. The Maccolini spouses then offered their houses for 18,000 Lire and thanks to the generous donation of Benini, the book merchant, they were purchased in

1888. Works on the church resumed, comprising a sacristy and a theatre, above which there was a big dormitory with 50 beds.

Some changes were introduced to the church's design (lowering of the roof), and the engineers Gualandi and Liverani took over from Rossini; it was officially opened from the 11th-16th July 1889 and dedicated to Saint Mary Help of Christians (Santa Maria Ausiliatrice).

The years around 1890 were the most prolific in terms of construction, with the almost integral demolition of the houses which had been acquired in 1888-89 and construction in their place of a much bigger and integral structure constructed quickly, section by section, as new areas became available.

In the wing confining with the nuns' house, two dormitories were made above the loggia at the end of which there were embossed iron and wood toilet cabinets. In the portion of the building facing the road, two rows of classrooms were located with a central corridor on the first floor and two large dormitories (also with a central corridor) on the second floor.

At the end of 1896 the old municipal slaughterhouse was also demolished and in its place a long, one-storey build-

ing was erected looking over via Mura Torelli, which housed the gym. The end of this building was two storey and neogothic in style, thus giving the building a castle-like look.

It would appear that works were completed finally in 1903; this was when the boarding school was opened for external students enrolled in public technical, middle and high schools. In 1905 the gymnastic society "FERT" was founded and soon began tallying sports victories in Italy and abroad.

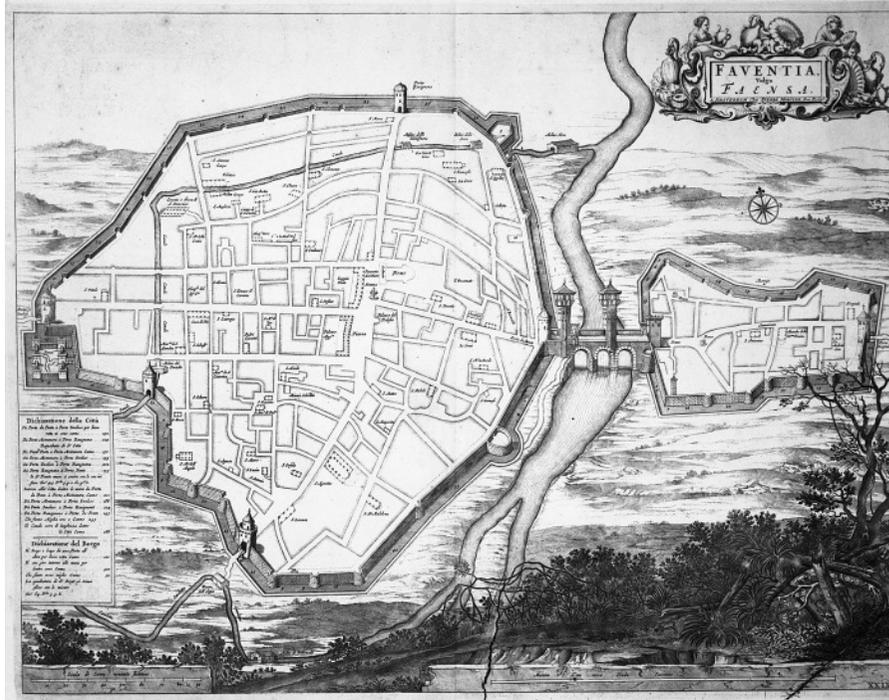
1900 - 1920

Second Phase

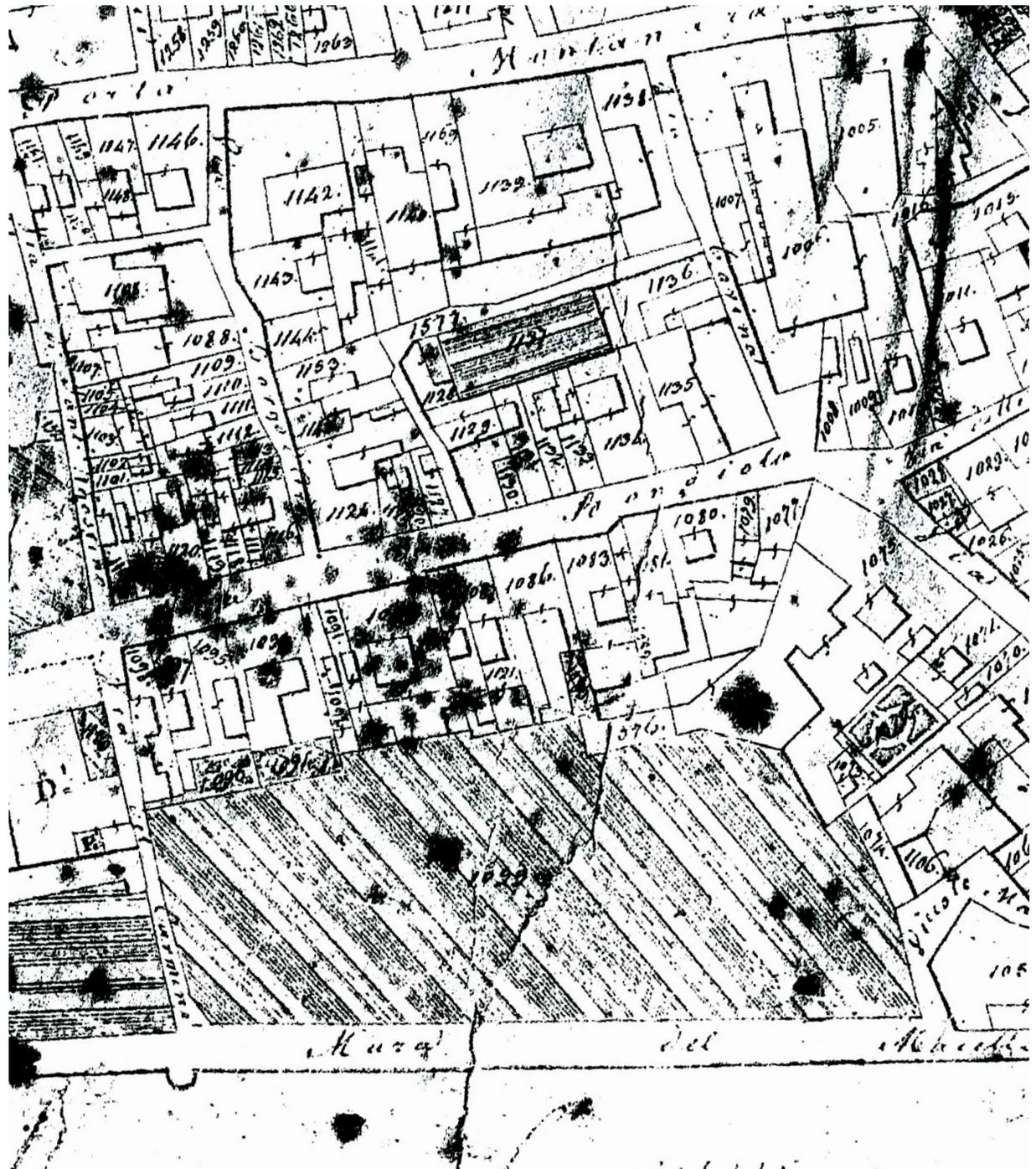
An examination of the cadastral maps of around 1900 and 1920 reveal the disappearance of the "Rector's house", which obstructed the courtyard, and the construction of a small bathroom building, with prestigious neoclassical facades and Latin epigraphs. Further expansion can also be noted on the church's southern side, including the current sacristy, and the completion of the series of buildings along via Mura Torelli. From 1917 to 1919 the Institute was requisitioned for military purposes.



about 1875_Before Salesians



Faenza old map, 1665, Photographic Archive



Cadastral map dated 1830, in *Faenza: the city and original architecture*, A.S. Ravenna, Catasti

1920 - 1955

Third Phase

In 1949, given the large amount of students, the Institute was able to build an extra floor above the gym along via Mura Torelli. A dormitory and other, smaller rooms were located on this new floor, accessible from a new staircase. A colonnade was also constructed next to the theatre, to connect the curved portico with the new floor. The ample open space was then divided into one very big, and two smaller, classrooms.

The last of the most important external works in the Salesian complex was the construction of the new Oratory, which had been long awaited in view of the lack of space. The project was approved by the municipal authorities on the 25th February 1954 and the oratory was rapidly erected and officially opened in 1955.

The project provided for the construction of a two-storey brick building with a concrete and masonry flooring system which would contain games, meeting rooms and classrooms on the upper floor, plus an outdoor, roofed corridor looking over a regulation-sized football pitch which definitively replaced the vegetable garden. The building was designed by the engineer Lino Liverani and by the archi-

tects Pier Lodovico Massari and Arturo Locatelli. The birds-eye view here attached shows how the new oratory was the first of two allotments of works which were also supposed to include a new perpendicularly orientated theatre-cinema. The outdoor roofed corridor was supposed to be situated between these new bodies and reach the church, however it was never built. The football pitch and the volleyball court, on the other hand, were completed.

1955 - 2013

Final Phase and Current Situation

As of the 1960's, the progressive secularization of Italian society and the subsequent change in customs meant that young people were no longer interested in the Salesian lifestyle. In 1964, the old theatre was renovated and a cinema was also installed to attract more young people, while the anachronistic band as well as the amateur drama society had to be dissolved. The 1970's and 80's were characterized by sweeping internal renovations, modernization of bathroom areas and emergency maintenance works. In 1978 the Salesians obtained a construction permit from the municipal authorities for the opening of two pedestrian entries from via del Carmine and via Mura Torelli, along

the outer wall of the sports field, and for the expansion of the driveway on via Mura Torelli. In 1980 the lower middle school was closed but the Scientific high school remained open. However, on the 14th February 2000, the Milan Salesian Inspection Authority decided to definitively close the Faenza Salesian complex.

The news caused a big uproar in town, especially among the alumni and the people attending the oratory, however the petition forwarded by the committee which was set up failed to contrast this decision.

At the end of 2001, the municipal authorities reached an agreement with the Salesians for the use of the vast paved courtyard as a paying car park to alleviate the shortage of parking spaces in the historic town center, with a pedestrian exit on via S.G. Bosco through the atrium of the former palazzo Naldi. On the 19th November 2004, Bishop Stagni convened a press conference to announce the imminent sale of the complex of buildings to a specially founded company which was later called "Faventia Sales", comprising the Municipality of Faenza, Fondazione Banca del Monte e Cassa di Risparmio, Banca di Romagna and the diocese of Faenza-Modigliana.

The aim of the new proprietor is to requalify the former Sa-



1_ comparative plan 1875-1900



2_ site plan around 1900

1_ comparative plan 1875-1900

in orange colour demolitions, new constructions in red
 1885 the construction site for the new church begins
 1887 the first part of arches and loggia is completed
 1888 purchasing of Maccolini's House, the Catholic Orphanage and the slaughterhouses, the theatre is being built.
 1896 demolition of the old slaughterhouse, and construction of a stretch building where the gymnasium is stationed

2_ site plan around 1900

- a. rector's house
- b. church
- c. theatre
- d. gymnasium
- e. oven and storehouses
- f. tanks
- g. platform roof
- h. elevated walk/loggia
- i. toilets
- l. craftsman laboratories
- m. small garden
- n. garner's house
- o. vegetable garden
- p. ice chest



view from outside the ancient walls, Manfrediana Photographic Archive



the two courtyard, and the former rector's house in the center of the main square

lesian complex and dedicate it to training activities for the youth, in line with its original, historical vocation.

Current State

Problems and Resources

The number and the layout of the buildings in this complex have remained static since the 1960's. These buildings are heterogeneous in terms of structure, construction period and layout. The oldest buildings are located along via San Giovanni Bosco, towards the town center, whereas the area behind these buildings is less dense, with its three courtyards, the central one being the one currently used as a car park.

The town planning scheme allows an array of possibilities and scenarios for the area in question, especially in virtue of its strategic position in the town of Faenza.

Currently the former boarding school and the adjoining residential fabric can be considered an island surrounded by traffic fluxes: this is especially the case along the walls of via mura Diamante Torelli and via del Carmine, where cars parked along the road and the lack of safe pedestrian areas beckon a modification of the roads and passages surrounding the area.

Secondly, in addition to the isolated nature of the area, nestled among the walls and self-sufficient, the small number of active entrances has also further contributed to its isolation: today the area can only be accessed from via San Giovanni Bosco, (palazzo Naldi) and from a driveway on via Mura Torelli. A new series of entrances could be created, from already existing yet inactive ones, or new ones which could be opened in the Salesian walls by the local Heritage Department.

It is important to put an end to the use of the main courtyard solely as a car park, which currently precludes any relationship between facing areas, and to construct a system of attractive public urban spaces capable of creating a beneficial osmosis between the complex of the former Salesians and the town. The car park which serves the town center could potentially generate economic synergies with surrounding businesses, however it should be moved away from the main courtyard, giving way to a more pleasant vocation and for the creation of stimulating meeting areas. A further consideration regarding the main courtyard concerns size and perception: the outdoor space enclosed by the internal facades appears to be too big, undefined and devoid of some sort of separation capable of effecti-

vely delimiting it. The position of the building of the former oratory is considered unfavorable, as it fails to adequately circumscribe the square and the churchyard; it also represents a demarcation in relation to the football pitch.

Lastly, the interaction of the green area constituted by the football pitch with the surrounding residential fabric is somewhat inadequate: a solution is required for the difficult relationship with the rears of current houses facing it.

The area has many resources, not least its central location, part of the system of central squares in Faenza. Other strengths include the exceptional quality and quantity of green, which adds to the value of the existing complex. In particular, the large football pitch situated in the heart of the historic town center, directly accessible by pedestrians and 200m away from Piazza del Popolo, has enormous potential given its proximity to a saturated urban area.

The location's historical vocation is another factor which should be taken into consideration: it was created for the youth, their recreation and training and as such, in virtue of the layout of its buildings and of the outdoor areas, is particularly suited to a potentially new and stimulating social vocation which embraces the revival of the traditional Salesian spirit of youth interaction.



1_ comparative plan 1900-1920



2_ site plan around 1920

1_ comparative plan 1900-1920

in orange colour demolitions, new constructions in red
 1885 the construction site for the new church begins
 1887 the first part of arches and loggia is completed
 1888 purchasing of Maccolini's House, the Catholic Orphanage and the slaughterhouses, the theatre is being built.
 1896 demolition of the old slaughterhouse, and construction of a stretch building where the gymnasium is stationed

2_ site plan around 1900

- a. rector's house
- b. church
- c. theatre
- d. gymnasium
- e. oven and storehouses
- f. tanks
- g. platform roof
- h. sacresty
- i. curved enclosure



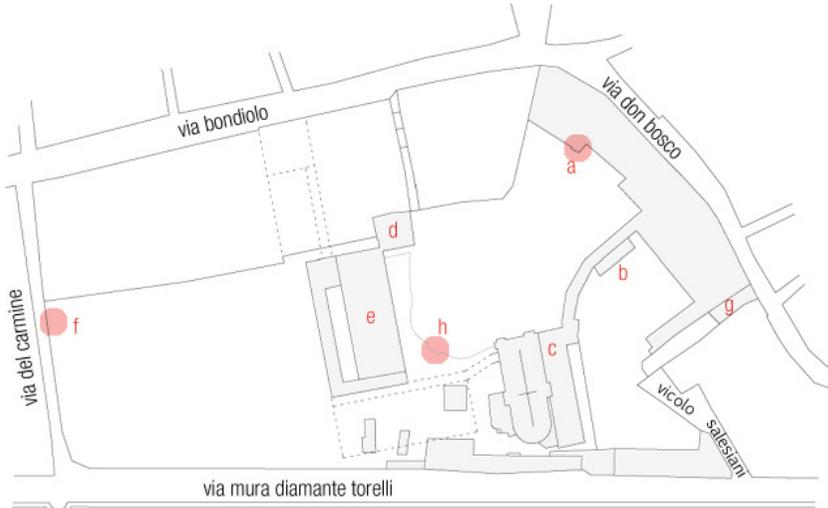
the main courtyard, in a shoot of 1930, without the previous rector's house



the small bathroom building features a style that is typical of early XX centuries functional buildings



1_ comparative plan 1920-1955



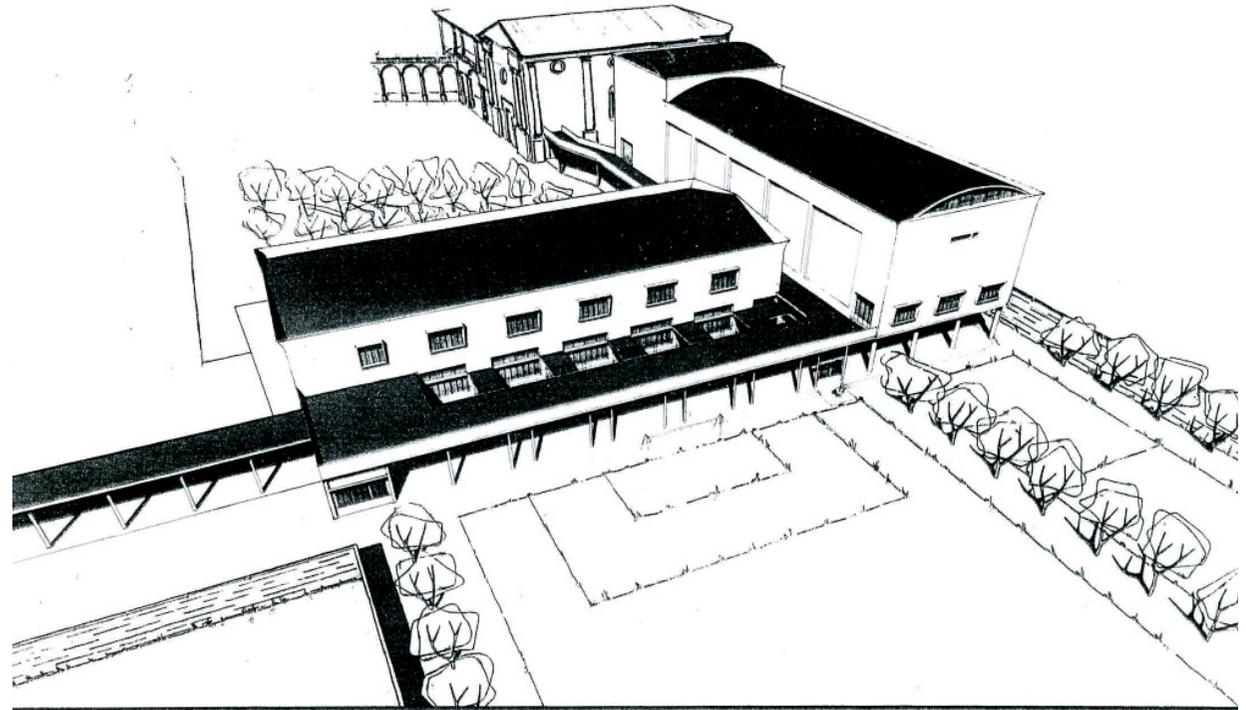
2_ current layout, 2013

1_ comparative plan 1920-1955

in orange colour demolitions, new constructions in red
 The last of the most important external works in the Salesian complex was the construction of the new Oratory.
 The project was approved by the municipal authorities on the 25th February 1954 and the oratory was rapidly opened in 1955.

2_ current layout

- a. rector's house_demolished
- b. toilets
- c. theatre
- d. green hose-storage
- e. new oratory building
- f. inactive access
- g. nuns' house
- h. curved enclosure



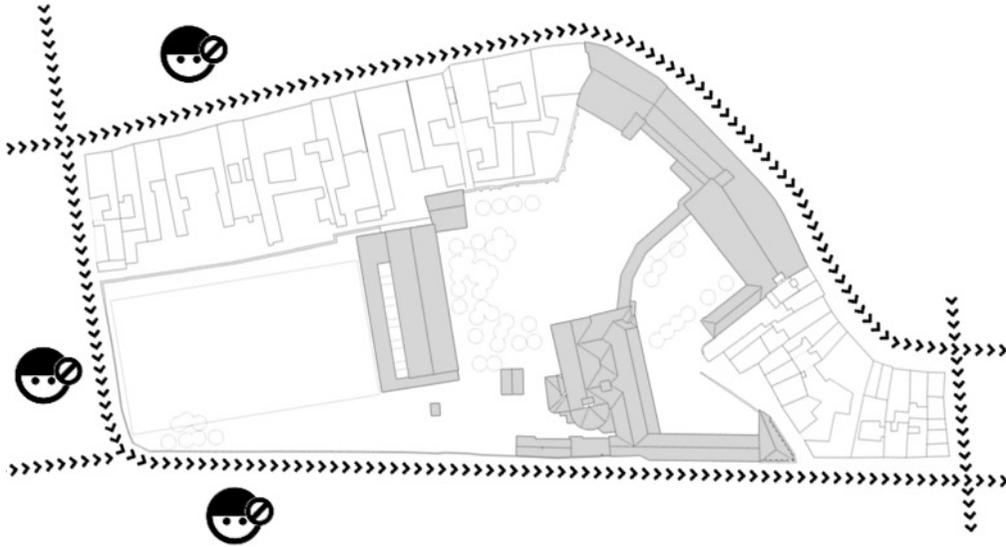
• PROGETTO • DI • COSTRUZIONE • DEL • NUOVO • ORATORIO • E • TEATRO • /ALE/IANO •
 MASSARI & LOCATELLI ARCHITETTI
 ROMANO TORO ARCHITETTO
 GIULIO LOCATELLI

the new oratory, according with massari and Locatelli's project



the loggia of the new oratory building

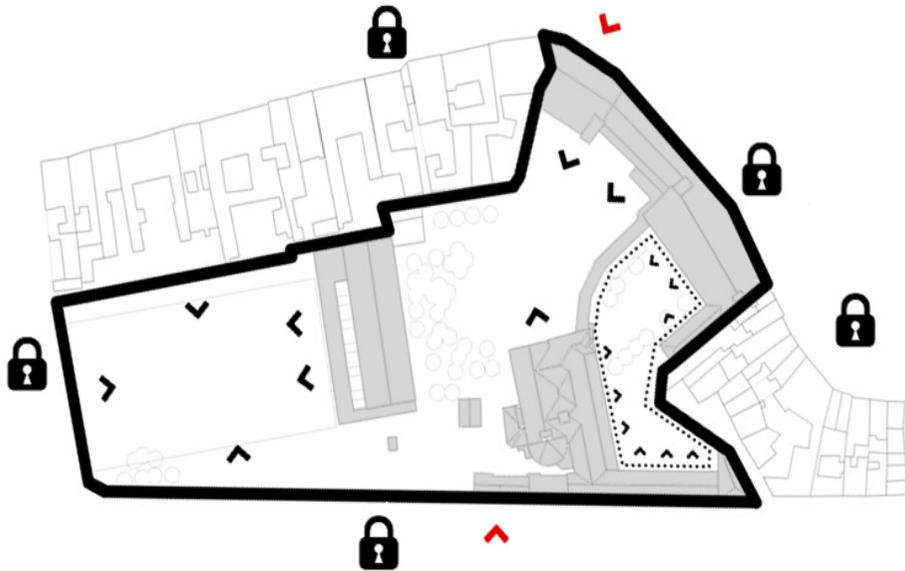
WEAKNESSES AND THREATS



the area appears as an isle surrounded by car fluxes, there are not safe spaces for pedestrians



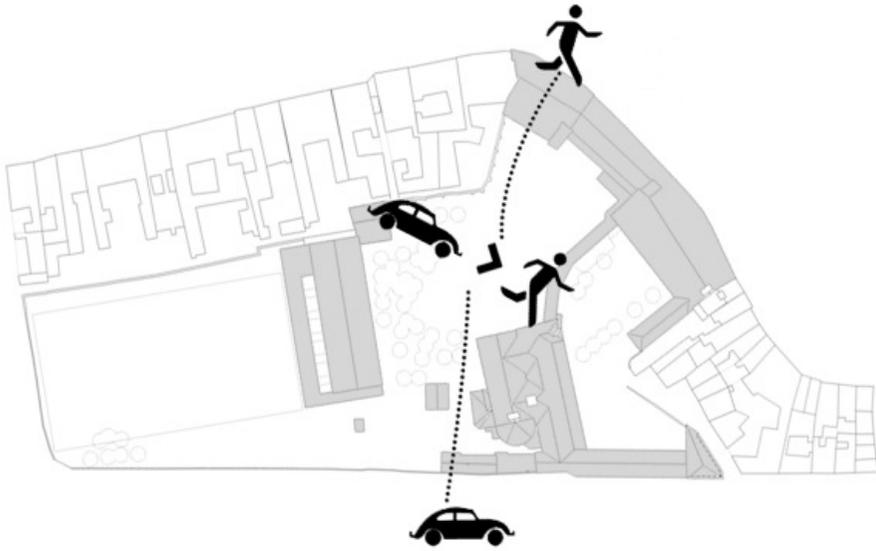
vehicles parked along the two sides of Mura Diamante Torelli street



The small number of active entrances to the area contribute to its isolation



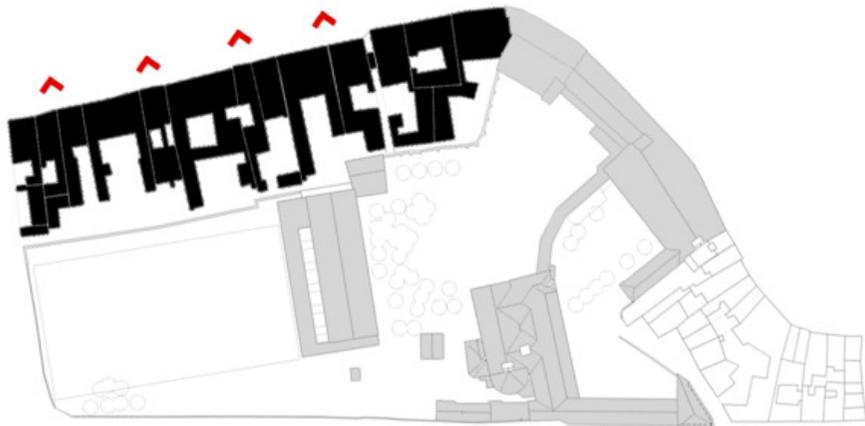
there are some present yet inactive entrances on the Salesian perimeter walls



the use of the main curtyard as a parking has a nehive impact on the surrounding buildings and outside spaces



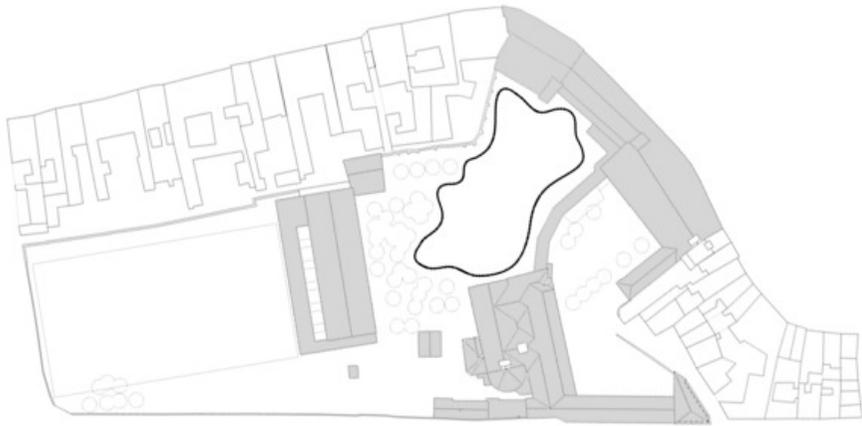
solely used as a parking lot, the squares loses the possibility of being an attractive public space



inadeguate relationship between the inner grassy area and the neighbouring residences facing with their rear sides



incomplete and unsolved elevation due to the current residential buildings which abut on the fotball pitch



the outdoor space appears undefined, it devoids of something capable of effectively delimiting it



the former oratory building does not adequately circumscribe the square and the churchyard



the outdoor space enclosed by the internal facades appears to be too big, undefined



the main squared viewed from the roof

STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES



the central location of the area is one of its greater resources



external connectin with the city centr: via San Giovanni Bosco e Via Zuffe



Large availability of space: the complex is about 16000 sq meters in plan



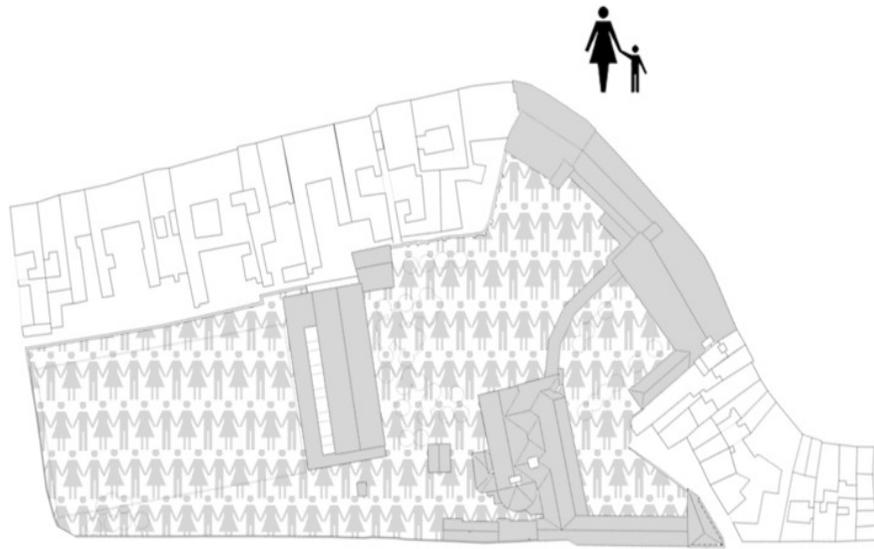
the complex is huge in terms of size: 16000 sq meters in plan, including open areas and innrer space like Palazzo Naldi (above)



the area's strengths include the exceptional quality and quantity of vegetation



vehicles parked along the two sides of Mura Diamante Torelli street



The small number of active entrances to the area contribute to its isolation



there are some present yet inactive entrances on the Salesian perimeter walls