URBAN ARCHITECTURE

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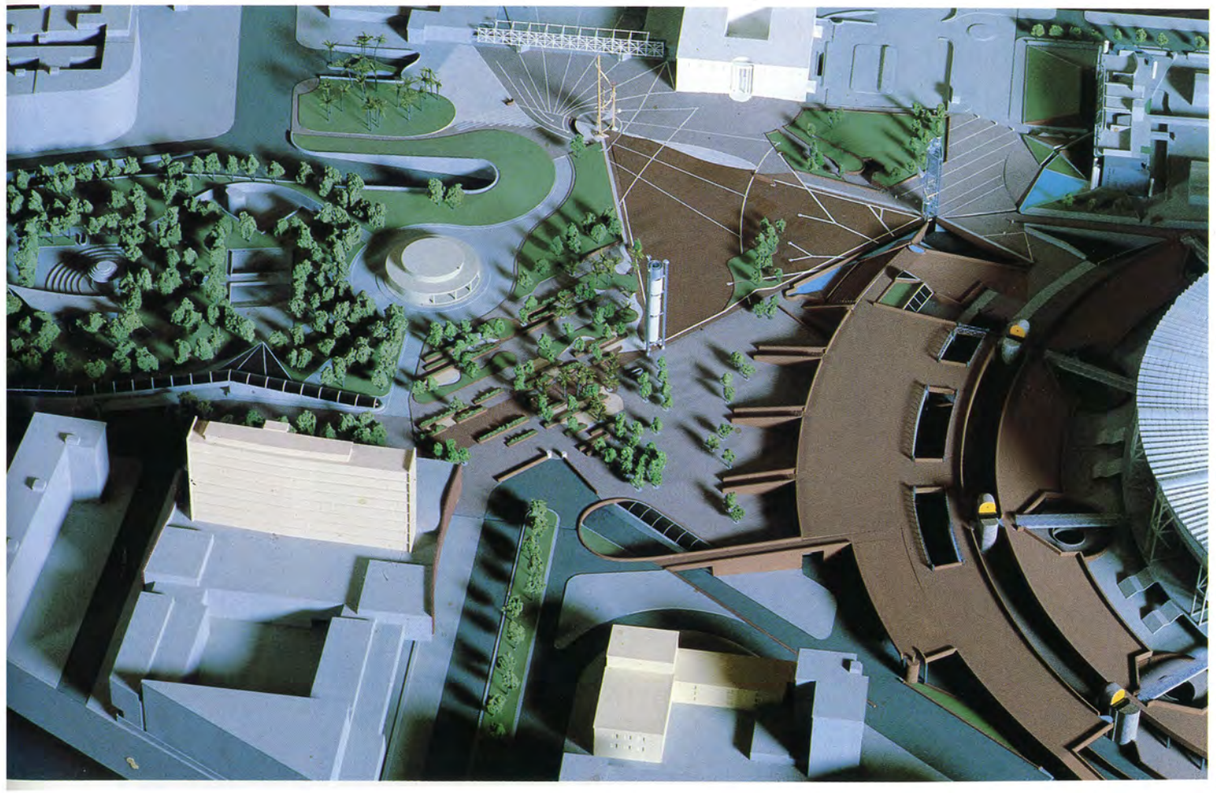
EDICIONES ATRIUM S.A.

PICA CIAMARRA ASSOCIATI

NUOVA PIAZZA DI FUORIGROTTA

The architects' studio Pica Ciamarra Associati was founded in 1961 by **Massimo Pica Ciamarra** from Naples, who was later joined by **Luciana de Rosa** (in 1969), **Antimo Rocereto** (in 1975) and **Claudio de Martino** (in 1983). Pica Ciamarra was born in 1937, graduated in 1960 and lectures in "Architectural Projects" at the University of Naples. De Rosa (1940) graduated in 1963 and currently lectures in "Architectural Composition" at the same university. Rocereto (1942) was awarded his degree in 1971 and is involved in research work in the Department of Architectural Projects, and at the University of Naples. Finally, De Martino (1955) graduated three years before joining the studio. To a large extent the group has been influenced by the modern movement and the X Team and their idiom shows a marked leaning towards high tech innovations which has revealed itself in the majority of their architectural works and town planning projects. Their work has attracted the attention of major publishers (Pica Ciamarra Associati "Architettura per i Luoghi", Kappa, 1985; Pica Ciamarra Associati "Architettura e Progetti", De Luca/Mondadori, 1988) and has also been the subject of video documentaries ("Città futura –Alternative o compresenze?", 1989; "Piazza", 1990). In 1986 the Istituto Nazionale di Architettura promoted a book on examples of the studio's work in Rome, Paris, Dublin, Bruges, Brazil, and, in 1989, in Lanciano for the Tercas Prize. An exhibition is being prepared for the new Piazza di Fuorigrotta in Naples, including the critiques and interpretations of many well-known architects and international designers. They are steady contributors to top competitions in cities around the world: Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Melun Sènart, Samarkand, Latakia, Tokyo and in their own country (the restructuring of the Piazza Matteotti in Vicenza, the park in the old quarter of Reggio Emilia, the universities of Florence and Salerno, Rione Terra in Pozzuoli, the ICS in Cagliari, the IRFIS in Palermo and the Arma di Taggia coast). They have participated in high-profile projects such as the university precincts in Monte Sant Angelo, the Twin Towers at the entrance to the new administrative centre of the ENEL headquarters in Naples, the A. Dohrn Zoological Research Centre, and the universities of the Basilica and Molise. The most acclaimed constructions the studio has carried out are, in chronological order: extensions to the Angus plant in Casavatore (1962, IN/Arch Prize, 1969); the Arcavacata Multi-purpose Unit (1971, mention for the AIP Prize 1975); the Mesina Faculty of Pharmacy (the University of Mesina Gold Medal, 1972); the Casa all'Annuziata in Massalubrense (1977); urban remodelling in Piscinola Marianella (classed second in "Qualità dell'ambiente urbano" of the OIKOS Prize, 1983); the CNR Technological Centre in Naples (finalist in the International Award for Technology in Architecture, Sydney Quaternary 88, 1984); the Potenza unifiable classroom (University of the Basilica Medal, 1987); the Salerno University Library; the restoration of the Mascabruno Palace in Portici and the Teatro dei Quattro Cavalieri in Pavia; and finally the International Centre for Genetic Engineering Research, the new Piazza di Fuorigrotta (1990) and the restructuring of the Mergellina area (1991) in Naples.

Started: 1987.
Completed: 1990.
Location: Piazzale Tecchio, Naples, Italy.
Client/Promoter: Naples City Council, concession to ITALSTRADE/INFRASUD progetti, (IRI/IRITEKNA group).
Architects: Pica Ciamarra Associati (Massimo Pica Ciamarra, Luciana de Rosa, Antimo Rocereto and Claudio de Martino).
Associates: P. Gargiulo M. Russo, P. di Pasquale. F. Azzolio and R. Corato.
Project structure: Elio Giangreco, Alfredo and Giovanni Passaro.
Obelisk structures: Elio Giangreco, Federico Mazzolani and Giampiero Martuscelli.
General project technology installation, Aeolian machinery and special equipment: Vittorio Betta and Raffaele Vanoli.
Acoustics consultant: Carmine Janniello.
Sound consultant: Nicola Parente.
Special equipment consultant: Antonello Cutulo.
Meridian calculation: Unione Astrofili Napoletani and Edgardo Filippone.
Plans for the electromechanics of the Aeolian machinery: Mariano Migliaccio.
Plan for the rigid sail: Leonardo Lecce.
Security consultant: Bruno Macchiaroli.
Feasibility study: Marino de Luca and Giovanni Passaro.



The new Piazza di Fuorigrotta forms part of a vast programme for the urban restructuring of a major part of Naples, the intention of which is both to consolidate the spread of outlying areas throughout this century and give the city an aura of uniformity. Uncontrolled growth has caused the various access routes into the city to evolve in a disorganized, even chaotic fashion. In consequence the traditional atmosphere of Naples as a port and sea-side city has been in decline for some considerable time.

One of the principal entries to the city is the Piazzale Tecchio, a vast urban area situated on the western side of Naples and a product of the hey-day of industrial expansion in Italy during the course of this century. The planning for this area, as can be observed in the 1939 Master Plan, is based on two major city exits leading out towards the Campi Flegrei, the station for the extensive railway system from the Mergellina area. The Mostra d'Oltremare exhibition hall by Marcello Canino was constructed base during the thirties, placed awkwardly on a site where it obstructed the view from Augusto avenue, for this monumental building was not conceived as a suitable landmark in the back-drop to the entrance of the city.

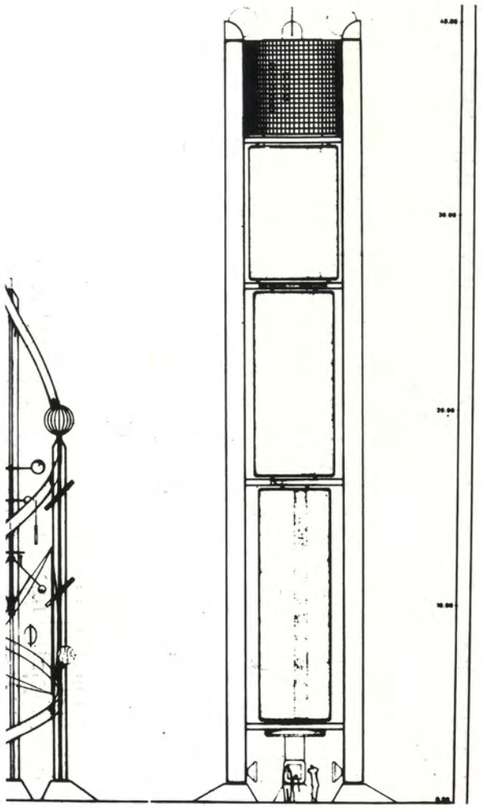
During the second half of the twentieth century the Fuorigrotta district has been a target for many and diverse incursions and the underexploitation of the sector constituted an ideal setting for development. It has therefore been the focus for some of the most significant architectural programmes seen in Naples in recent years, such as the previously mentioned Oltremare exhibition hall, the Faculty of Engineering designed by Luigi Cosenza, the Carlo Cocchia Stadium, the Cumana station by Frediano Frediani (with an interior designed by Nicola Pagliara), and the CNR Istituto Motori building, a high tech construction by Pica Ciamarra Associati which replaced the one by Camillo Guerra built during the thirties.

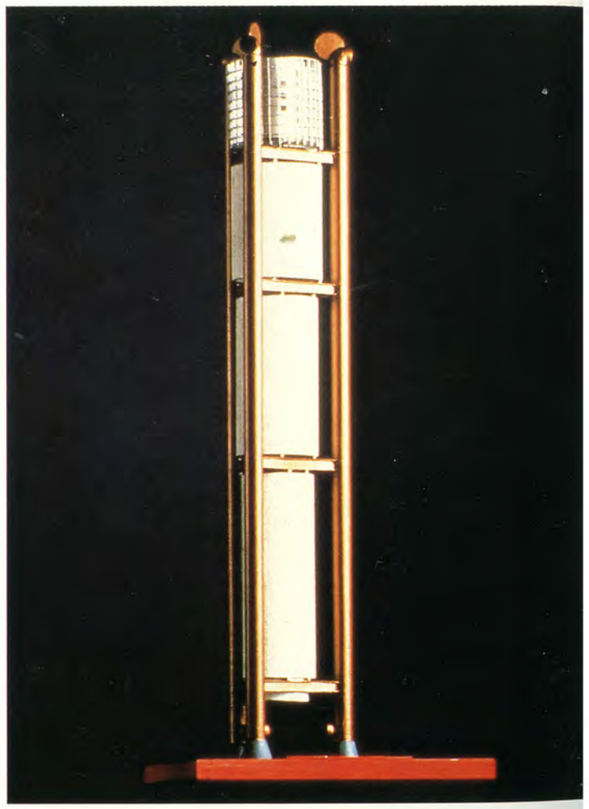
Nevertheless, all these single function buildings adopted a self-worshipping stance that in many ways prevented any interrelational dialogue striking up between them. The approach encouraged a piece-meal and contradictory urban design which, while the individual quality of the buildings could not be called into question, separated the Fuorigrotta area from the context of the city and emphasised its peripheral character. The majority of these constructions give onto the Piazzale Tecchio, and this has therefore become the central pivot of the intervention.

The need to restructure the area also became a pressing issue for it played a major role in the communications network of the western side of Naples. Plans drawn up by the Italian railway company envisaged replacing terminal with by-pass stations for the transit of express trains, and this would put the Campi Flegrei station on a different footing in terms of the urban network. In fact all public transport, surface and underground services, from the city would converge at this point and transform it into the western gateway into Naples. This combined with the centre on the other side, the new Centro Direzionale, would help to reduce the heavy traffic of private vehicles coming out of the city centre.

The fundamental objectives of the intervention study by Pica Ciamarra centred on changing the sense of the *Piazzale* as a mere transition point, into the more all-encompassing term of *Piazza* as a public gathering space where there is also a relationship between building scale or typology. The frontal view of Augusto avenue similarly had to be redefined to give a new visual perspective to the city exit. The idea was to construct a spacious and coherent city square that would be consolidated within the Naples city network, instead of an outlying zone that had up to then been fragmented both visually and conceptually.

The new structure would be a reference point for the district that had mainly concentrated on underground traffic (road and railway), but would now lay special emphasis on the wider



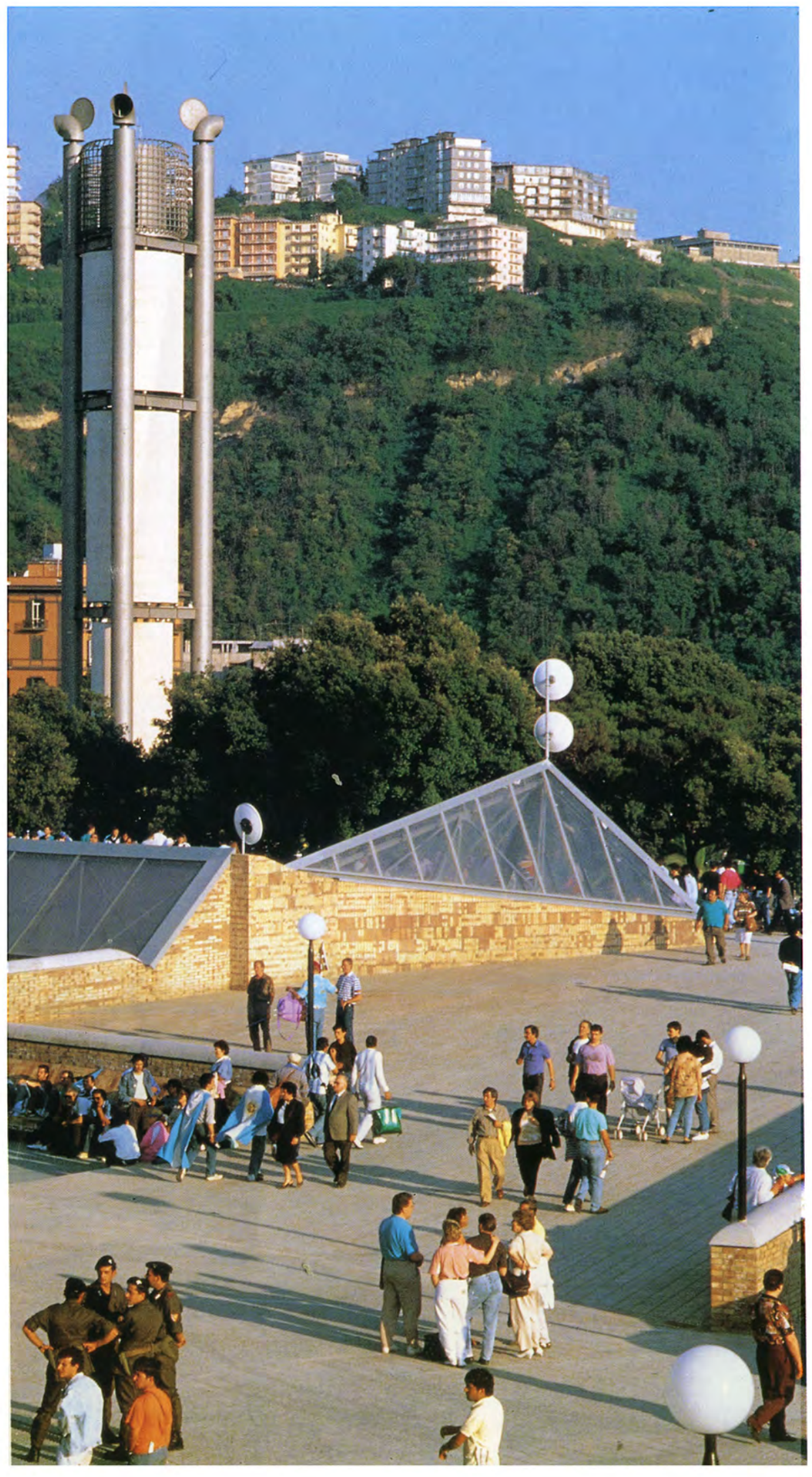


role played by pedestrian communications. Dotted here and there with trees, the open triangular space is paved in wood with a sign-posted tower rising up at each of the three vertices. The additional placing of an attractive pool not only contributes to its aesthetic appearance in subtle interplays of water, it also solves the functional problem of supply to underground installations.

The principal side of the triangle starts at the diagonal line which cuts across the conference hall of the CNR building and culminates in the Faculty of Engineering, while the other two converge at the entrance to the Oltremare exhibition hall. The arrangement of three obelisks make the new space more readily understood and identifiable. The new square thus demonstrates both its relationship with the traditional Italian *piazza* and skill in combining referents from the past with more recent innovatory technology.

The three towers have been conceived as urban landmarks and contribute to a reassessment of the esplanade, imposing on the scene much the same as the "fiesta machines" in Naples old town centre. These vertical structures therefore fulfil a two-fold function: a fundamentally pragmatic function as part of the city landscape, and as lyrical symbols transforming the square into a place for contemplation and relaxation following true local tradition.

The first tower, the Time and Liquids Tower, is constructed entirely of larch



ture "olfactory labyrinth" is shortly to be installed.

The channels interweave along the great meridian line which starts at the Time and Liquids Tower. Both are bordered in grey or white stone separating the blocks of wooden paving made of railway sleepers. Stone circles are set into the ground making an astrological clock-face to indicate the time. There is a slightly sloping raised square at the rear of the stepped terraces sheltering the car-park and the underground lines. This provides access to the Carlo Cocchia Stadium through a portico which links up with the entire area to the south in order to level out the land.

The attention paid to the underground sectors has highlighted the evocative interplay of physical and optical comstone, it is shaped like an enormous telescope through which the sea or the old town centre can be seen in the far distance. A set of television cameras explore the walls in the interior, where sculptures and bas-reliefs of Naples historical past will eventually be on show.

Finally, the Information Tower has been designed as the supporting base for the city telecommunications tower. It consists of a parabolic aerial and a large screen connected by means of optical fibre cables to the neighbouring radio broadcasting station and with the other monitors in the square. The base is made up of rotary sign-posts and a digital information board.

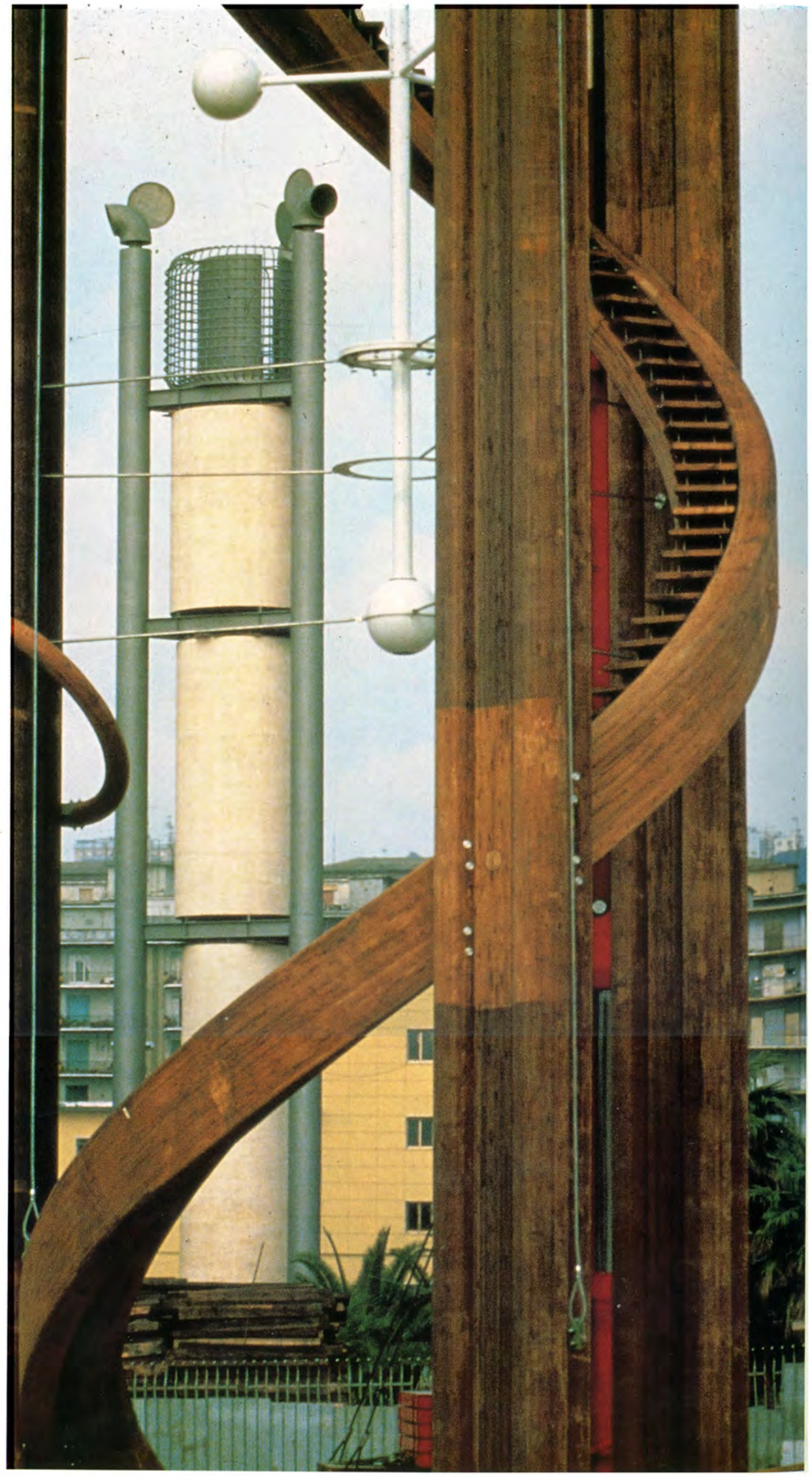
The triangular precinct is flanked by a stepped bank for sitting and enjoying the sun and provides additional seating during events held here. There is a large fountain at one end of the Piazza (a water storage tank for supplying fire-fighting equipment), connecting up with small channels crossing the paving through which the water flows. The reaction of photo-voltaic cells, extremely sensitive to atmospheric variations, cause the flow to change direction according to weather conditions and subtly change the image of the setting. The fountain extends on one side towards the surface of water supplying equipment at the CNR Istituto Motori, and on the other towards the Cosenza Faculty of Engineering where the fu-

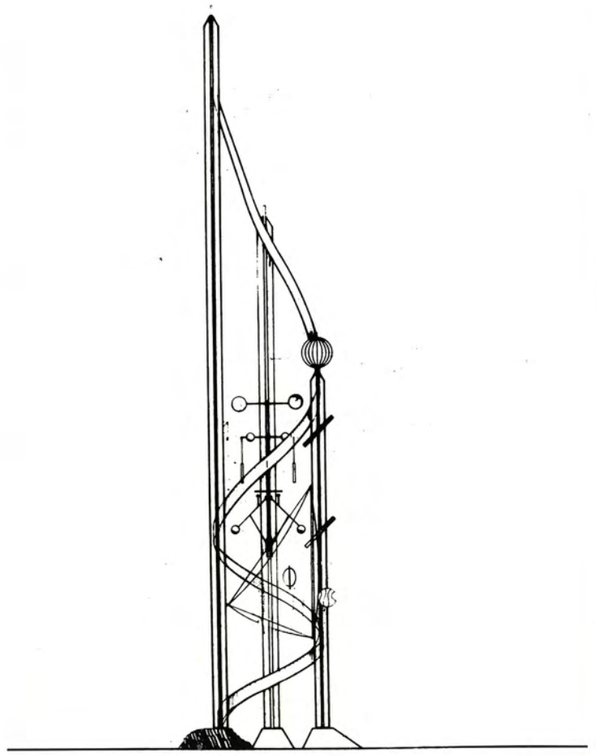
wood, with lamina pilasters and micro-laminate for the helix. Its design follows a meridian line drawn on the paving of the Piazza and the spiral component, the curves of which change shape, reminds one of the DNA structure. From a functional point of view the obelisk houses Aeolian sound machinery and a rigid sail that symbolises the use of wind in ancient times. This acts as a protective screen against the laser beams projected by one of the other towers. The tower has sign-posts at the base and a small platform from which to observe the polar star through a viewing-hole at the top.

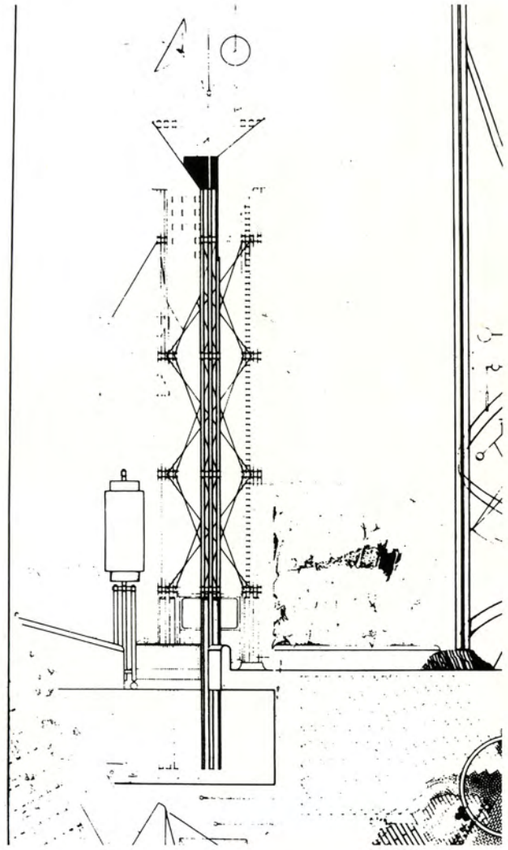
The laser projector is installed in the Memory Tower. Constructed of steel and munication between the upper and lower levels. A spectacular system of circular ramps and ventilation grills allows the light to filter through to even the levels deepest underground, giving interesting views through to the exterior. Horizontal moving walkways are planned to link the area between the car-park and railway station, which will extend this interplay of relationships by the use of subtle transparent covers.

The underground areas have been constructed using vertical structures inserted into circular metal casings. The horizontal structures are made of prefabricated and compressed reinforced cement. The finishing materials are simple, apart from those mentioned above: painted brick and grey stone for the walls, to mark continuity with the old Istituto Motori factory. Colour schemes tend to become less intense the further towards the light of upper levels one gets and thus serve for orientation within the building.

Outside in the square, construction materials are deliberately richer and more complex, natural elements from the environment have also been used and solutions employed that pertain to the city of the past. Stone, wood, brick, lawns, water and trees join to create an atmosphere that appeals to all the senses, and allows one to conjure faint mem-







ories of the past together with the emotions, spaces and objects of the present. The entire effect is one of familiarity and immediacy, based on what the architects have termed "the experience of the immaterial" accentuating the artistic and cultural activity of the Piazza, made possible by the presence of the technological installations inside the towers.

It should finally be mentioned that the project forms part of a process of transformation which takes in the entire western side of Naples. One of the major characteristics is to make definite landmarks to act as reference points within an integrated urban environment. There is a plan to site, next to the naturally immaterial Fuorigrotta sector, a *Piazza d'acqua* opening through to the coast in the Cavalleggeri Aosta district and coming out into a canal-port something along the lines of Lamont Young planning. Another square in the port area of Bagnoli will stretch towards the sea to form the culmination of the Campi Flegrei railway lines in the south. The Pica Ciamarra Associati intervention is living evidence that the attempts to restore to Naples some of its original ambience are not simply wishful thinking.

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