

CORVIALE

Or more correctly Nuovo Corviale (called "il Serpentone" due to its length), is a residential complex in Rome located on the south-western outskirts of the capital (XI municipality).

Due to its large size (the main building is almost a kilometer long and due to the difficult living conditions of its inhabitants, it has become in the collective imagination the district-symbol of the degradation of the suburbs of the capital.

The complex, which accommodates about 4500 inhabitants, is essentially made up of three buildings: the main monumental "stick", a single body 986 meters long by nine floors (30 meters high); a second lower body, parallel to the first, of three or five floors; and a third body oriented at 45 ° with respect to the first two

The neighborhood is located near via Portuense, along via Ettore Ferrari, via Poggio Verde, via Marino Mazzacurati and via dei Sampieri. It is located in the Gianicolense suburb, about two kilometers from the Grande Raccordo Anulare.

It takes its name from the urban area in which it was built.

The project

Owned by the ATER of the Municipality of Rome (formerly IACP, Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari), the complex was designed starting in 1972 by a team of 23 architects coordinated by Mario Fiorentino and composed among others by established professionals such as Federico Gorio, Piero Maria Lugli, Giulio Sterbini and Michele Valori.

In the intentions of the designer, Corviale should have represented an alternative housing model, in clear departure from the urban development of Rome that began in the 1960s, which had led to the birth of entire neighborhoods completely devoid of services, called "dormitory neighborhoods". The innovative idea was to substantially change the conception of the suburbs as they had been designed until then, proposing a new model that integrated private spaces with collective activities, residences with services, rejecting the concept of a dormitory-district and favoring the richness and complexity of functions and typical relationships of the historic city.

Consisting of two slats of residences, the project had a total of 1200 apartments integrated with numerous collective spaces. The most revolutionary aspect consisted precisely in the idea of making the building completely autonomous, a complete fragment of the city able to offer its services to the entire community that would have inhabited and lived in it day after day. In fact, the project envisaged efficient services and large common spaces: four open-air theaters, district offices, the library, schools [from kindergarten to middle school], health services, market, a meeting room with five hundred seats and an entire floor (the fourth) exclusively dedicated to commercial and craft activities, all overlooking the green of the Agro Romano. «The new Corviale is a large residential unit, a single building complex that contains and expresses the complexity and richness of relationships typical of the city», the Florentine designer himself defined it.

According to the judgment of the architect Franco Purini, "Fiorentino had a conception of living as a heroic movement, he wanted his mammoth housing machine to be a kind of community that would be self-regulating by making collective interests prevail over individual ones; Fiorentino, however, came out of time, when the Post-modern was established in architecture at the end of the seventies, which, on the contrary, rather exalted the individual and his private needs ". For Purini, "Corviale is the most important work created in Rome in all the seventies and one of the most significant architectures of world production of those years".

The realization

The works, entrusted to a single construction company (Salice II), began in 1975 and progressed amidst difficulties and delays; they were suspended in 1982 due to the bankruptcy of the same company. The Florentine architect died in the same year of a heart attack, without having seen his project completed; the urban legend according to which he committed suicide for the remorse of having created a monster, is evidently false.

The first houses were delivered in October 1982 and the residential block was finished in 1984; but already a few months later the first illegal occupations by about seven hundred families took place, which continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s, despite the fact that the services provided to complement the houses had not yet been completed. In particular, the fourth floor of the central batten

it was illegally occupied and the premises, which should have been used as services, were used as homes, a situation that continues to this day.

Incorrect management conditions and functional problems have always been a constant in the history of the building: years of illegal occupation and total abandonment by the institutions have led in a few years the district to decay and dilapidation, so much so that since the 1980s Corviale has become the symbol of the degradation of the Roman suburbs.

Although slowly, the completion works have gone on over the years: the central part, or "service spine", which is located between the two slats, has been completed and houses some offices of the XI Town Hall, a center for mental illness of the ASL Roma D, the XV group of the traffic police, a cultural and artistic center "Il Mitreo" and, it contained, a farmer market. In addition, a group of artisans evicted from the shops in the historic center found their headquarters in the spaces of the central spine.

Inside the building there are the business incubator of the Municipality of Rome, an ASL clinic, an elderly center, a supermarket, various cooperatives and social and entrepreneurial activities.

After years of proposals, including the demolition suggested for example by Massimiliano Fuksas, Fabio Rampelli Teodoro Buontempo and others, and various redevelopment ideas, in 2008 the Ater and the Lazio Region presented a "rebirth plan" divided into two interventions: the first, called "Km Verde", designed by the architect Guendalina Salimei of the T-Studio, involves the complete renovation of the infamous fourth floor, with the demolition of what exists and the reconstruction of 103 new apartments instead of services planned by Fiorentino, works started in January 2019 and still in progress; the second is the winning project of the 2015 'Regenerare Corviale' international competition, an intervention by the design team coordinated by Laura Peretti architects. The project includes a new master plan for the public space of the entire sector, the construction of those services originally located on the fourth floor, the redesign and simplification of the entire vehicle and pedestrian circulation, as well as a new permeability between city and countryside. The entrances of the building are modified, passing from five to twenty-seven, the entire basement in the part of the ground connection, the area of the "fracture" which becomes a new square and the point of maximum connection between the different parts of the territory;

Features

«In this sense, however, the misunderstanding that the Corviale is something like a dwelling unit must be immediately avoided. Corviale stands exactly the opposite of the dwelling unit, which was conceived as a repetitive element, as an element that is studied in its complexity and functionality and can be repeated. The Corviale was born as a unicum for that site and for this city of Rome. Its morphology is due to the monumental architecture of Rome and the reference to Le Corbusier's projects for the Unitè d'habitation in Marseille and the Corbusierhaus in Berlin is wrong »

The complex is made up of three bodies: the main one, 986 meters long, 37 high, for 9 floors plus the underground parking floor and divided into five lots, with inside galleries, courtyards and common areas; the second, located on the west side and parallel to the first, also 986 meters long, 9 high, divided into five lots of 3 and 5 floors, connected to the first body by five bridges placed on the five access axes; the third, separate and located on the east side of the main one, is rotated 45 degrees with respect to it and is 253.4 meters long, with a variable height between 19 and 23 meters, for 3/5 floors.

Inside the courtyards there is, for the whole length, another row of houses ("low houses") of two or three floors that overlook the courtyards and the countryside behind. It is entirely made up of reinforced concrete partitions. It houses 1200 apartments of different sizes, plus an innumerable series of houses that arose illegally in the common areas and in what was to be a shopping arcade on the 4th floor.

In the initial project the building was divided into six lots: each one had to be equipped with a common room for common activities. In addition, there was a meeting room, an open amphitheater (built), schools, craft workshops and a fourth floor dedicated to commercial establishments.

Not far from the terminal of the third building, on the site where a green area once stood, the "Casetta Mattei" shopping center, already present in the original project, was completed in 2005.

Retraining

On 3 December 2015, the winning project of the international competition "Regenerare Corviale" coordinated by Laura Peretti architects was proclaimed