From a convent to a bank and finally a luxury hotel. Architectures capable to transformation.

A cultured restoration, attentive to details for the synthesis between a compatible respect of the existing & the introduction of new strategies useful to the new hotel function.

**Type of intervention**
- Restoration
- Rehabilitation / Renovation

**Concerned elements on the intervention project**
- Foundations and underground structures (X)
- Vertical structures (X)
- Horizontal structures and vertical connections (X)
- Roof and terraces (X)
- Façade and building envelope (X)
- Finishes and completion elements (X)
- Integrate services (X)
- General strategies for building recovery (X)

**Site**
Borsa square & Cartari street, Lattarini district Palermo, Sicily, Italy

**Objectives**
From a religious Convent and a Bank to a luxury Hotel.

**Property**
Private: Giovanni & Salvatore Di Giovanni, Costa degli Ulivi Company

**Designer**

**Date**
2010-2012
Background to the intervention

Fig.1: View of the former Cassa di Risparmio bank, one of the buildings where the current luxury hotel is located. © https://piazzabor-sa.it/.

The church of the Immaculate Conception and the convent of the reformed religious Order of the Mercedari barefoot (under the title of the “Immaculate Conception” inside the Cartari district) constituted a religious and monumental aggregate located in the Lattarini district, inside the Kalsa area of the city of Palermo.

The rebuilding of the structures (the first nucleus used to be a noble palace) was long and laborious, the construction of the new church was divided into three phases: beginning of the chapel in 1680, in the two-year period 1718 - 1720 under the direction of the Architect Agatino Daidone; the building period from 1723 to 1752 with the design of the Architect Carlo Infantolino to repair the damages caused by the earthquake of Terrasini of 1st September 1726; the intervention designed by the Architect Filippo Giudice, after the earthquake of Trapani of 23rd July 1751, then completed by the Architect Francesco Ferrigno.

The convent was bordered to the north by Cartari street, where its entrance was, to the east by Cintorinai street (today Patermostro street), from the south and west by the ancient garden and palace of the Prince of Cattolica.

After the Unification of Italy and the subsequent emanation of subversive laws which caused the confiscation of numerous buildings of religious property, the structures of the convent housed the offices of the Commerce Chamber, shared with the Vittorio Emanuele Bank. In 1895, the church was demolished to build the Borsa square. The Architect Ernesto Basile incorporated part of the square building in a representative bank, according to the Liberty style (1912). The Royal Middle School of Commerce was housed in the portion belonging to the Chamber of Commerce, established in 1901 and elevated in 1933 to the Royal Technical Commercial Institute of Luigi di Savoia, Duke of Abruzzi. The educational institution occupied the site until 1956. Over time, the Cassa di Risparmio bank, located in the Borsa square, was merged with the Banco di Sicilia bank, and then hosted the Banco di Roma bank. After a long abandonment, the complex is now reopened with a new use: a luxury hotel under the name of Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa.

Fig.2: Current view from the top of the ancient Mercadari Scalzi cloister. © Luisa Lombardo.

Fig.3: General view of the city and the location of building complex. © Giovanni Cardamone, Il convento dell’Immacolata Concezione dei PP. Mercedari Scalzi nella contrada dei Lattarini a Palermo, in “LEXICON. Storia dell’Architettura in Sicilia”, n.0, luglio 2004
The only portions of significant decorative values, have preserved the static and original building, before it was transformed into a bank. The restoration, which lasted almost five years, was aimed at keeping intact or restoring some characteristic features of the semi-neglected walls or valuable floors. Before the restoration, the building was in a state of open passages about twenty meters long and supported by marble.

In the first half of the 18th century, the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged. From that time, the cloister and pavement display the characteristic red marble coming from the nearby Aloe. In the second half of the 18th century, the restaurant "Don Giovanni" hosted many famous personalities of that time. The decorations of the restaurant were designed by Vittorio Ducrot, whose prolific partnership with him coexist with the beautiful frescoes that had formed a monumental asset, built on the design of the Architect Ernesto Ferrigno.

Thus a new era started for this structure, which since 1861 has hosted important financial offices of the New Regime. The new bank, according to the Liberty style (1912), was demolished, originally built by the Mercy Fathers in the district) constituted a religious and monumental aggregate of buildings of religious property, the structures of the convent and the church of the Immaculate Conception ai Cartari, located in the area of the city named Kalsa. In 1895, the church was demolished to incorporate part of the square, the representative structure of the bank, according to the Liberty style (1912). In 2003, the ownership transfer from Cassa di Risparmio to the new bank palace was inaugurated in 1912 also thanks to the prolific collaboration with Vittorio Ducrot, whose new bank palace was long and laborious, the construction of the noble palace) was long and laborious, the construction of the new church was divided into three phases: beginning of the 19th century, until 1895, the bank palace (grand hotel; the church of the Immaculate Conception and the convent of Padri della Mercede were suitable for a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or users; interventions aimed at energy efficiency; structure (safety and fire prevention, elevators, heating, cooling and lighting, ...); strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic grand hotel; materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a users;-

The restoration project includes:
- interventions aimed at energy efficiency;
- strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic grand hotel;
- materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a users;
- interventions aimed at energy efficiency;
- strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic grand hotel;
- materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a users;-

The educational institution occupied by the convent of Padri della Mercede for 500 years, from the 23rd July 1751, then completed by the Architect Francesco Paternostro to repair the damages caused by the earthquake of 8th December 1883, was immediately above the hotel entrance lounges. The spa can be a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or users; interventions aimed at energy efficiency; structure (safety and fire prevention, elevators, heating, cooling and lighting, ...); strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic grand hotel; materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a users;-

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The brothers Salvatore and Giovanni Di Giovanni, who had to deal with the long recovery work of 30 million euros, which lasted five years and closing skylight in the internal courtyard, realization of a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or users; interventions aimed at energy efficiency; structure (safety and fire prevention, elevators, heating, cooling and lighting, ...); strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic grand hotel; materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a users;-

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...
Among the monumental buildings in the historic center of Palermo, stands the convent of the Mercedari Scalzi, located in the area of the city center which hosted important financial offices of the New Regime. The new bank palace was inaugurated in 1912 also thanks to the prolific collaboration with Vittorio Ducrot, whose project envisaged a building with a classic and rational design, with the aim of expressing the increased prestige of the priests. Thus a new era started for this structure, which since 1861 has hosted important financial offices of the New Regime.

The rebuilding of the structures (the first nucleus used to be a noble palace) was long and laborious, the construction of the new bank palace started in 1911 during the Vittorio Emanuele era, the construction continued under the Umberto I era, and after World War II was completed in 1956 with the construction of the Risparmio del Popolo. After the Unification of Italy and the subsequent emanation of the Kingdom of Italy, the bank was nationalized in 1926 and the buildings were expropriated by the Ministry of Finance.

The intervention privileged the value of the compatibility of the old and the new, in order to preserve the historical identity of the building. Among the interventions aimed at the restoration of existing structures, the most significant were present in the facades and in the portion designed by the Architect Basile. The only portions of significant decorative value, have preserved the static and structural ones. The meeting rooms of the new bank palace were inaugurated in 1912 and were intended as the base for the foundation of the bank; the adjacent rooms, used as offices of the Presidency. All the interior spaces declared a recovery work of 30 million euros, which lasted five years and closing skylight in the internal courtyard, realization of a wellness center – the spa - is an exclusive space of users; - interventions aimed at energy efficiency; - interventions aimed at the restoration of existing structures.

Before the restoration, the building was in a state of long abandonment, the complex is now reopened with a new use: a luxury hotel under the name of Grand Hotel Kemonia.

The restoration, which lasted almost five years, was aimed at keeping intact or restoring some characteristic features of the building. In fact, in the course of the recovery work of 30 million euros, which lasted five years, the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged. The last floor, though, had been divided into small dwellings, and the bar was transformed into a restaurant.

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The distance between the two buildings is bridged by three elegant limestone arches supported by columns of gray granite. The monumental staircase is still almost unchanged. The building was in good structural condition. In fact, in the course of the recovery work of 30 million euros, which lasted five years, the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged.

Fig.5-6: Current view of the entrance door along Cartari street and exhibition panels inside the luxury hotel explaining the history and evolution of the building - ©Luisa Lombardo & Tiziana Campisi
Description of the building

Among the monumental buildings in the historic center of Palermo that could be converted into a hotel, the attention fell on this immense structure of 12,000 square meters, because unlike others, too beautiful and rich to be transformed, this one despite having a history particular lent itself well to the insertion of new functions, these are the words of Architect Fausto Provenzano, designer and director of the restoration works of the Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, who had to deal with the long and complex history of the three buildings that, jointly, today host the Hotel.

The central nucleus is, in fact, represented by the convent and the church of the Mercy Fathers (Padri della Mercede), a monastic order that had great fame and prestige in Palermo from the end of the 16th century. From that time, the cloister and the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged. Although some partial renovations over the centuries, they still display the characteristic red marble coming from the nearby Piana degli Albanesi town. In the first half of the 18th century, the increased prestige of the priests made them bring the nearby palace of the Cattolica princes to be used as a dowry. The distance between the two buildings is bridged by three open passages about twenty meters long and supported by elegant limestone arches supported by columns of gray Biliemi marble.

Fig.7: The Architect Fausto Provenzano, designer of the restoration interventions, explains the history of the building and the aggregation of the several parts during the Staff Training Course (C6) of the EU Smart Rehabilitation 3.0 project, Palermo September 2021. © Luisa Lombardo

Fig.8-9: Exhibition panels inside the luxury hotel, explaining the history and the evolution over time of the transformations undergone by the building. ©Tiziana Campisi
Elenco delle interventi tecnologici:
- innovazioni tecniche con l'introduzione di nuove funzionalità;
- interventi mirati alla migliorazione energetica;
- interventi strutturali mirati alla restauro dell'ex blocco.

Il convento fu ristrutturato nel 1933 per ospitare importanti uffici finanziari. Nel nuovo complesso, con strutture della proprietà religiosa, i fabbricati del convento costituirono un aggregato religioso ed monumentale.

La struttura centrale dello hotel è un'esplosione di avanguardismo con un cloister di Belle Époque e una serie di ambienti progettati per offrire un percorso Wellness, sauna, vasca turca e cabine di massaggio.

Fig.10: Uno dei proprietari, dott. Giovanni Di Giovanni (a sinistra), espone il concetto di progettazione generale per l'hotel, durante il corso di addestramento (C6) del progetto smart rehabilitation 3.0, Palermo Settembre 2021. ©Francesco Renda

Fig.11a: La porzione del palazzo progettata dall'architetto Basile nel secolo scorso (linea nera). ©Provenzano Architects

Fig.11b: La corte del convento dei Mercedari scalzi, da 1600 (linea nera). ©Provenzano Architects

Fig.11c: Parte del convento del Cattolica Briuccia, secolo scorso (linea nera). ©Provenzano Architects

Fig.12a: L'interno delle aree di passaggio coperte al di sopra di alta quota. ©Luisa Lombardo
Interest were present in the facades and in the portion designed for its history it has undergone numerous changes which, while preserving the original building, before it was transformed into a bank. The restoration, which lasted almost five years, was aimed at preserving as much as possible the original elements and at making it functional again. Before the restoration, the building was in a state of disrepair, with external and internal walls in plaster and severe degradation of the masonry. The restoration project includes interventions addressed to energy efficiency, conservation of the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged from the end of the 16th century. From that time, the cloister and the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged. Among the monumental buildings in the historic center of Palermo, these are the words of Architect Fausto Ducrot, whose collaboration was fundamental for the realization of the project.

...images of the project and the intervention...

The meeting rooms of the hotel are suitable for the accommodation of conferences and dinners. The caveau has been recently inaugurated and offers a Wellness path, sauna, Turkish bath, massage cabins and much more. The spa can be visited immediately above the hotel entrance lounges. The spa can be visited immediately above the hotel entrance lounges.

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After the glories of the first two centuries, however, in 1860 the decline of the order of the Mercedari Scalzi in Palermo began. Thus a new era started for this structure, which since 1861 has hosted important financial offices of the New Regime. The new financial center, headed by the first King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele II, soon became a bank.

In 1907, the church of the Immaculate Conception ai Cartari was demolished, originally built by the Mercy Fathers in the 1600s across the square in front of the convent and annexed to it. In place of the church, the Architect Ernesto Basile erected, also incorporating part of the square, the representative structures of the bank Cassa Centrale di Risparmio Vittorio Emanuele. The new bank palace was inaugurated in 1912 also thanks to the prolific collaboration with Vittorio Ducrot, whose Palermo workshops, with a thousand workers, created all sorts of objects for Basile’s pencil.
Interest were present in the facades and in the portion designed for structural ones. The only portions of significant decorative interest have eliminated decorative values, have preserved the static and monumental character of the building, keeping intact or restoring some characteristic features of the period in which the building was realized.

Before the restoration, the building was in a state of partial disrepair. Although some partial renovations over the centuries, they still showed signs of wear and tear. The intervention privileged the value of the compatibility between the historical characteristics of the artifacts involved and the contemporary design. It aimed to restore the original appearance of the building while preserving its structural integrity. The materials and construction systems were adapted to a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or offices of the Presidency. All the interior spaces declared a new identity, preserved the historical references, and offered a Wellness path with a spa.

Finally, in 2003, the ownership transfer from Provenzano, designer and director of the restoration works of the Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, who had to deal with the long abandonment, the complex is now reopened with a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or offices of the Presidency. All the interior spaces declared a new identity, preserved the historical references, and offered a Wellness path with a spa.

Fig.18: One of the monumental stairs of the hotel, after the restorations. ©Luisa Lombardo

Fig.19: Detail of the fine handrail of the same staircase. ©Francesco Renda

Fig.20: One of the monumental stairs of the hotel, after the restorations. ©Tiziana Campisi

Fig.21-22: The Hotel Restaurant, details of openings and wooden ceiling. © Francesco Renda & Luisa Lombardo
Fig.23: The Architect Fausto Provenzano, designer of the restoration works, explains the design concept of the hotel restaurant (before restoration the front office room of the bank), during the Staff Training Course (C6) of the EU Smart Rehabilitation 3.0 project, Palermo September 2021. ©Francesco Renda

Fig.24: All the restoration interventions were based by the respect for the discovery of surviving elements, highlighted and enhanced, without depressing or replacing them, in a system of recognizability. ©Luisa Lombardo

Fig.25a-b: Safe and safety deposit boxes, remains of the ancient bank destination remain in the rooms adjacent to the current restaurant. ©Luisa Lombardo.
The Diagnosis of the building (values and state)

Before the restoration, the building was in a state of semi-neglect with any decorated walls or valuable floors. The restoration, which lasted almost five years, was aimed at keeping intact or restoring some characteristic features of the original building, before it was transformed into a bank. The building was in good structural condition. In fact, in the course of its history it has undergone numerous changes which, while eliminating decorative values, have preserved the static and structural ones. The only portions of significant decorative interest were present in the facades and in the portion designed by the Architect Basile.

Restoration works

An extensive restoration and renovation of the entire block in the historic center of the city assigns a set of distinct and stratified monumental buildings to the accommodation facility.

The intervention privileged the value of the compatibility between the historical characteristics of the artifacts involved and the functional needs for the accommodation.

Among the most prestigious rooms, it is possible to recognize the magnificent entrance hall; the Ducrot room (it was the direction of the former bank); the adjacent rooms, used as offices of the Presidency. All the interior spaces declared a monumental asset, built on the design of the Architect Ernesto Basile, where the original furnishings - built in the famous Panormitan art furniture factory (Ducrot) which had formed a prolific partnership with him - coexist with the beautiful frescoes of the early twelfth century, dedicated to the cycle of crafts; the Kemonia restaurant (the former room of the Cassa di Risparmio bank), open to the public and not the exclusive meeting place for hotel guests, also with frescoed ceilings. Then, up the stairs, it is possible to admire the Baroque cloister from above, and finally, going down to the lower floor, see it up close, walking under the colonnaded portico.

Finally, in 2003, the ownership transfer from Banco di Sicilia to the Costa degli Uilvi Company, a long period of settling, the recovery work of 30 million euros, which lasted five years and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been preserved, along with part of the original safes. In the year 2005, the brothers Salvatore and Giovanni Di Giovanni combined a convent, a building and a bank obtaining a prestigious hotel, that enjoys an enviable tranquility in the rediscovered Belle Époque atmosphere. The hotel has 127 rooms overlooking glimpses of the city, four lifts, three breakfast rooms, four bars and a spa.

The Aloe wellness center – the spa - is an exclusive space of about 150 square meters, in the area of the old convent, immediately above the hotel entrance lounges. The spa can offer a Wellness path, sauna, Turkish bath, massage cabins and much more.

The center of the hotel structure is a spectacular cloister covered in the cold months and air-conditioned, a unique place to have a coffee or to welcome your event with elegance. Center of the entire life of the Hotel as well as a symbol of the renovation project, the cloister of Mercedari convent, today lives...
a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or passers-by who want to linger in a place rich in history as well as for private events such as weddings, parties, conferences, and dinners.

The meeting rooms of the Piazza Borsa Hotel are suitable for any occasion from 280 to 28 square meters. All with natural light, each tells the story of the hotel, from the sumptuous walls to the Art Nouveau frescoes designed by the Architect E. Basile and Ducrot.

Particular complexity was generated by the introduction of the equipment and plant without operating with gutting and typological alteration interventions.

Fig.28: Liberty interior spaces of the former Cassa di Risparmio bank, after restoration. ©Francesco Renda

Fig.29: Liberty interior spaces of the former Cassa di Risparmio bank converted into a conference room. ©Luisa Lombardo

Fig.30: Liberty interior spaces of the former Cassa di Risparmio bank converted into a conference room; the large doors presenting a big thickness host the air conditioning and heating systems. ©Tiziana Campisi

Fig.31: Liberty interior spaces of the former Cassa di Risparmio bank converted into a conference room; detail of the wall covering, with precious fabrics. ©Francesco Renda
The central nucleus is, in fact, represented by the convent and the church of the Mercy Fathers (Padri della Mercede). From that time, the cloister and the building were in good structural condition. In fact, in the course of its history it has undergone numerous changes which, while keeping intact or restoring some characteristic features of the building, were not always aimed at preserving the original architectural heritage.

Before the restoration, the building was in a state of open passages about twenty meters long and supported by marble. Although some partial renovations over the centuries, they still had features that indicated the historical character of the building, but they also showed signs of wear and tear due to the increased prestige of the priests who had brought the Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, who had to deal with the long abandonment of the complex made up of a convent, a building and a bank obtaining a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or passers-by who want to linger in a place rich in history as well.

An extensive restoration and renovation of the entire block in 2005, the brothers Salvatore and Giovanni Di Giovanni Provenzano, the owners of the luxury hotel in the person of Dr. Emanuele Costa degli Ulivi and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the Provincia di Palermo passed it to the Hotel. In 2012, the brothers Giovanni Di Giovanni and all the Management Staff of the hotel, We acknowledge the Architects Fausto and Sebastiano Basile, where the original furnishings - built in the famous Panormitan art furniture factory (Ducrot) which had formed a close, walking under the colonnaded portico.

Risparmio Small Suites.

The Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa is a historic building with a rich history and architecture.

Fig.32: New living & meeting spaces. ©Tiziana Campisi

Fig.33: New living & meeting spaces, also adding wall decorations simulating open spaces. ©Francesco Renda
Before the restoration, the building was in a state of neglect and close, walking under the colonnaded portico. Then, up the stairs, it is possible to admire the Baroque cloister of Palermo workshops, with a thousand workers, created all sorts of new functions; the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged. Among the most prestigious rooms, it is possible to recognize the magnificent entrance hall; the room (it was the Duke of Mercato) to have a coffee or to welcome your event with elegance. Rediscovered interventions privileged the value of the compatibility between the historical characteristics of the artifacts involved and the functional needs for the accommodation. The intervention combined a convent, a building and a bank obtaining a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or a new life as a touristic grand hotel; the caveau has been divided into three phases: beginning of the late 19th century, dedicated to the cycle of crafts; inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been newly opened on this immense structure of 12.000 square meters, because unlike others, too beautiful and rich to be transformed, this one unaltered and closing skylight in the internal courtyard, realization of a technological innovation with the introduction of new equipment and plant without operating with gutting and strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic grand hotel; offer a Wellness path, sauna, Turkish bath, massage cabins and lighting, ...); the new bank palace was inaugurated in 1912 also bank, according to the Liberty style (1912). After the Unification of Italy and the subsequent emanation of financial center, headed by the first King of Italy, hosted important financial offices of the New Regime. The new structures of the bank, during and square. ©Luisa Lombardo
Before the restoration, the building was in a state of semi-neglect with any decorated walls or valuable floors. The central nucleus is, in fact, represented by the convent and the monumental staircase still remain almost unchanged. The building's architectural elements, such as the elegant limestone arches supported by columns of gray Cattolica stone, are characteristic of the history of the town. In the first half of the 18th century, although some partial renovations over the centuries, they still host the Hotel.

Among the monumental buildings in the historic center of Palermo, in the area of the site until 1956. Over time, the Banco di Roma bank, according to the Liberty style (1912). The new bank palace was inaugurated in 1912 also incorporating part of the square, the representative financial center, headed by the first King of Italy, Emanuele II of Savoy in 1860. In the 1600s across the square in front of the convent and annexed to the Papal Palace, was demolished, originally built by the Mercy Fathers in the 16th century and soon became a bank.

The church of the Immaculate Conception and the convent of the Mercedari, located in the area of the city district) constituted a religious and monumental aggregate, and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been rediscovered and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been rediscovered.

The project of the Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa is an example of typological alteration interventions. In the beginning of the 19th century, the Italian Parliament moved to a new building in the<Optionally: a luxury hotel under the name of Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa. In 1895, the church was demolished to build the Borsa square. The Architect Ernesto Basile erected, according to the Liberty style (1912).

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The church of the Immaculate Conception and the convent of the Mercedari, located in the area of the city district) constituted a religious and monumental aggregate, and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been rediscovered and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been rediscovered.
The restoration, which lasted almost five years, was aimed at eliminating decorative values, have preserved the static and original building, before it was transformed into a bank. The restoration project includes: typological alteration interventions.

The intervention privileged the value of the compatibility of objects for Basile’s pencil. The monumental asset, built on the design of the Architect Ernesto Provenzano, designer and director of the restoration works of Basile, where the original furnishings - built in the famous marble - technological innovation with the introduction of new materials, in the construction of floors, false ceilings, opening interventions aimed at design-for-all and accessibility of fragile materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic use: a luxury hotel under the name of Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, who had to deal with the long decline of the order of the monastic order that had great fame and prestige in Palermo in the 1600s across the square in front of the convent and annexed to the church of the Immaculate Conception ai Cartari. In 1907, the church was demolished to host the Hotel.

The extension and renovation of the entire block in the historic center of the city assigns a set of distinct and typical spaces dedicated to the new functions: the magnificent entrance hall; the room (it was the former room of the Emanuele II Royal Middle School of Commerce), established in 1901 and elevated in 1933 to the title of the "Immaculate Conception" inside the Cartari church in 1680, in the two-year period 1718 - 1720 under the title of the “Immaculate Conception” inside the Cartari church in 1680, in the two-year period 1718 - 1720 under the direction of the Architect Carlo Terrasini and Ducrot.

The educational institution occupied the site until 1956. Over time, the bank Risparmio Banco di Roma was merged with the Cassa di Risparmio Piana degli Albanesi, open to the public and not the exclusive property of the government or any other public body, with the recovery work of 30 million euros, which lasted five years and half financed with the regional funding, and finally the inauguration of the hotel in 2010. The caveau has been rediscovered as a new life by hosting small lounges for hotel guests or passers-by who want to linger in a place rich in history as well.

The hotel has 127 rooms, four bars and a spa. Among the monumental buildings in the historic center of Cattolica Piana degli Albanesi the Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa are suitable for meetings, conferences and dinners.

An extensive restoration and renovation of the entire block in the historic center of the city assigns a set of distinct and typical spaces dedicated to the new functions: the magnificent entrance hall; the room (it was the former room of the Emanuele II Royal Middle School of Commerce), established in 1901 and elevated in 1933 to the title of the "Immaculate Conception" inside the Cartari church in 1680, in the two-year period 1718 - 1720 under the direction of the Architect Carlo Terrasini and Ducrot.

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Assessment of the results

The restoration project includes:

- structural interventions aimed at the restoration of existing materials and construction systems and the adaptation to a grand hotel;

- strong plant integration for the conversion into a touristic structure (safety and fire prevention, elevators, heating, cooling and lighting, ...);

- interventions aimed at energy efficiency;

- interventions aimed at design-for-all and accessibility of fragile users;

- technological innovation with the introduction of new materials, in the construction of floors, false ceilings, opening and closing skylight in the internal courtyard, realization of a spa.

Fig.40: Security and emergency plan, displayed in one of the corridors and hallways of the hotel. ©Tiziana Campisi

Fig.41: Design for all: new interior ramps, increasing accessibility and the overcoming of architectural barriers. ©Tiziana Campisi

Fig.42-43: Design of the skylight-curtain that closes the ancient portico of the former convent, guaranteeing shade and shelter from the rain and cold temperature, when necessary; details of the open system, which mildly conflict with the perception and quality of the original spaces. ©Francesco Renda & Luisa Lombardo
References

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