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The Remains and the Landscape: Strategies for Active Conservation of the Former Campo di Fossoli

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## CHAPTER NINE

### The Remains and the Landscape:

#### Strategies for Active Conservation of the Former Campo di Fossoli

Andrea Ugolini and Paolo Faccio

**[INSERT FIGURE 1: COLOR]**

#### Foreword

Research for this study began in the summer of 2011 and was carried out at Fossoli by the University of Bologna's Department of Architecture. This is one of the activities sponsored by the *Fondazione Fossoli*, which has managed the site since 2001. Since then, it has primarily focused its research on the various phases of camp occupation, sponsoring educational and scientific initiatives specifically aimed at schools and young people. What motivated the work were the needs and obligations of remembrance, intimately connected to the needs and obligations required for the (material and immaterial) protection and conservation of a twentieth-century memorial site. Although only just begun, the work made it possible to identify tools for managing the site's complexly characterized by ruins and vegetation, understood as significant images of memory. Moreover, although a general plan was lacking, by researching the camp it was possible to establish guideline criteria for specific operations, based on experience gained at Fossoli in recent years. They were intended to be 'guidelines for active conservation' rather than imposed arbitrary dispositions, and are recognised as valid 'best practices'.

The following notes give an account of what has been accomplished as compared to the rest of Europe, at least until the beginning of the second millennium,<sup>1</sup> with the ‘lesson of the extermination camps.’<sup>2</sup>

### **Sites of nazi and fascist violence in Europe: different preservation strategies**

As the Third Reich was approaching its demise, as early as 1944, many concentration camps were evacuated in an attempt to erase the traces of the Holocaust and the instruments that had made it possible. The strategies adopted to recall what had happened in these places often resembled one another, and almost always involved the construction of memorial monuments. They never involved the conservation of the material remains that had survived destruction by the Nazis. It is common knowledge that following the liberation of the camps, most of the surviving structures were demolished. In some cases, for public health reasons, in other cases, for the violent revulsion inspired by what had taken place there (as with the liberation troops at Ravensbrück in 1948),<sup>3</sup> or at the request of the local population. It was also occasionally done to recover materials for reconstruction (as with the *Konzentrationslager* Gusen I)<sup>4</sup> or to re-open factories, as was the case at Monowitz where the former IG Farben chemical industry plants were recovered (Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

**[INSERT FIGURE 2: BW]**

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<sup>1</sup>The foreword and paragraphs “Sites of Nazi and Fascist Violence in Europe: how they should be conserved”, “2011-2017: Strategies for active conservation of the former Campo di Fossoli” and “The Remains, the Landscape and the Memory” were written by Andrea Ugolini; the paragraph “Stability and Conservation to Protect Memory” by Paolo Faccio and the paragraph “The First Assessment” was written by the two authors.

The research, conducted over a period of six years, has been published several times at Italian and international conferences. The book published in 2017 by Andrea Ugolini and Francesco Delizia, *Strappati all’oblio, Strategie per la conservazione di un luogo di memoria del secondo Novecento: l’ex Campo di Fossoli* (Florence: Altralinea edizione, 2017), includes all the work completed to date, of which this essay is a partial summary.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Clara Ruggeri Tricoli, *Trauma. Memoriali e musei tra tragedia e controversia* (Santarcangelo di Romagna: Maggioli, 2009), 129-208.

<sup>3</sup> Ravensbrück, north of Sachsenhausen, was the largest camp for women only. It was liberated by the Russian army in April 1945.

<sup>4</sup> Gusen I, together with Gusen II and III, were among the most important sub-camps at Mauthausen. At Gusen I, the Soviet authorities allowed the population to use the buildings as quarry for construction materials.

<sup>5</sup> The Monowitz factory was also known as Auschwitz III and it was one of the sub-camps of the Polish concentration system. Elena Pirazzoli, ‘Dai Campi alle memorie’, in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all’oblio*, 40.



Immediately following the war, despite acknowledging the value of these sites for recalling the suffering of those interned there, total conservation of the remains was almost never adopted as a policy. This was even true of Auschwitz, which had been protected by the Polish government since 1946.<sup>6</sup> As Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan Van Pelt point out in their detailed study of the camp,<sup>7</sup> the various sites of the complex<sup>8</sup> were also subject to a ‘selection’, often dictated by political motives<sup>9</sup>, and transformed during the process to allow for the new museum. Some of the old Polish army barracks survived at the main camp, while at Birkenau, initially considered less important, many of the wooden sheds were demolished because they were in such a poor state of repair, although some were still used for German prisoners in those years.<sup>10</sup>

During the 1950s, many extermination camps were themselves transformed into memorials. Painstaking landscaping work was done in open areas, which often misrepresented the authenticity of the site in its significance as a tragic testimonial. At many sites – but, as we shall see, not all – a great deal was demolished, covered up by lawns or pebbles, and reduced to a completely aphasiac image. Monuments were built – occasionally recovering bricks and stones from the Nazi buildings (which James Young calls *bric à brac*),<sup>11</sup> - whose figurative language, reflecting times and places of origin, bore the heavy burden of remembrance.

Public opinion, at least during the years immediately following the end of the war, and contempt for what remained of Nazi constructions, were clearly reflected in Reinhold Lingner’s 1955 plan for

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<sup>6</sup> In 1947, the Polish parliament deliberated the creation of a memorial-museum that included the Auschwitz I and II areas, allocating the very substantial sum of forty million zloty for these sites. Witold Smrek, *Dziesięć lat prac konserwatorskich w Państwowym Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau*, in Krystyna Marszałek, ed., *Chronić dla przyszłości* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2003), 46.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Jan van Pelt and Deborah Dwork, *Auschwitz. 1270 to the present* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> The Polish complex comprised a *Konzentrationslager* (concentration camp), Auschwitz I; a *Vernichtungslager* (extermination camp), Auschwitz II-Birkenau; an *Arbeitslager* (work camp), Auschwitz III-Monowitz; and forty-five sub-camps.

<sup>9</sup> The main camp, Auschwitz I, attracted the attention of the Polish government because it was the main place where Polish intellectuals and Soviet prisoners of war were imprisoned and killed, making the site a symbol of the people’s resistance to Nazi oppression.

<sup>10</sup> In the ten years following 1947, the total number of buildings was reduced from 144 to fifty-three. See Smrek, *Dziesięć lat prac konserwatorskich w Państwowym Muzeum Auschwitz- Birkenau*, 46.

<sup>11</sup> James E. Young, ‘Holocaust Museums in Germany, Poland, Israel and United States’, in Konrad Kwiet and Jürgen Matthäus, eds, *Contemporary Responses to the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 254.

the Bergen-Belsen camp, which was never executed.<sup>12</sup> It provided for the total demolition of all the pre-existing structures, symbols of horror and scandal, to be substituted by works of art<sup>13</sup> within an enclosure of walls and trees. This was the position taken in the 1957 project by Finnish architect, Oskar Hansen, for Auschwitz-Birkenau, drafted for the international Auschwitz competition.<sup>14</sup> The project proposed to destroy all surviving vertical elements, except the external fencing and ruins of the bombed-out crematoriums. It also planned to cover the entire area with black paving stones cut on the diagonal with respect to the original planimetric axes, thus going against the dispositions of the Polish government, which had banned any changes to the site as of 2 July 1947.

Those behind the proposals made in 1956, such as Ludwig Deiters (later director of the Institut für Denkmalpflege [Institute for the Preservation of Historic Monuments]), for the conservation of a few SS buildings, the crematoriums, and a few sheds in his project for the transformation of the Sachsenhausen camp, were considered revolutionaries.<sup>15</sup> The ‘clean camp’ policy, applied at Dachau in the early 1960s, first demolished all the pre-existing sheds and then the first post-war memorials. Later, though, when the camp was opened in 1965, a few wooden shacks were rebuilt for educational purposes, while others were outlined on the ground with pebbles and stones to restore a form to the site that was more similar to the original (Figures 3-4). **[INSERT FIGURES 4 AND: BW]** It was only natural that wooden artefacts, guard towers and sheds,<sup>16</sup> were among the first to disappear or be replaced with replicas for educational purposes at all sites because of their intrinsic fragility and temporary functionality (Figure 5). **[INSERT FIGURE 5: BW]**

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<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Lingner (1902-68), the landscape architect who was responsible for the *Landschaftsdiagnose* [land use survey] that provided for a general survey of all the naturalistic assets of the DDR.

<sup>13</sup> Ruggeri Tricoli, *Trauma. Memoriali e musei tra tragedia e controversia*, 42.

<sup>14</sup> The *Droga* (street) project, drafted by Oskar Hansen (group leader), Jerzy Jarnuskiewicz and Julian Palka, in Charlotte Benton, ed., *Figuration/Abstraction: Strategies for Public Sculpture in Europe, 1945-1968* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 268, 297, 301 and 308, was received very favourably by the jury but was contested by survivors and relatives of the camp victims (see page 151).

<sup>15</sup> Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representation of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 179.

<sup>16</sup> At many sites such as Mauthausen or Auschwitz, the most extensive alterations were done on the wooden structures, where they were not rebuilt from scratch, with numerous parts being replaced was the case with the eleven guard towers at Auschwitz-Birkenau; see Smrek, *Dziesięć lat prac konserwatorskich w Państwowym Muzeum Auschwitz- Birkenau*, 47.

The first conservation actions, dating from 1959-69, frequently aimed at rebuilding destroyed objects that took precedence owing to their strong emotional and iconic value: objects such as the crematoriums and their chimneys. The form of these objects had inspired more than one memorial, such as the Jewish memorial at Dachau designed by Z. Guttman, the English obelisk-chimney at Bergen Belsen or the Russian monument at Mauthausen.<sup>17</sup>

While *Crematorium I* and its chimney were rebuilt at Auschwitz I during the 1950s,<sup>18</sup> and at Birkenau, the final section of the railway where the deportee trains reached their final destination was retained (Figure 6). Strategies were employed to conserve the remains of the crematoriums destroyed by the Nazis when they fled: safety measures for Crematoriums II and III were taken in 1964, the project was prepared in 1967, and the works were completed in 1971. **[INSERT FIGURE 6: BW]**

The economic resources were therefore initially used to create monuments and memorial museums, the latter often housed in solid edifices built by the Nazis. The need for repurposing, albeit to create a memorial, on more than one occasion resulted in approaches and measures that were more akin to restructuring than restoration. Consequently, the traces and signs that would have continued to tell their story were lost.

At the end of the 1970s, the strategies for preserving the surviving structures were changed radically.<sup>19</sup> A number of interdisciplinary teams were created within the foundations or museums that managed the sites, often in direct contact with the Departments for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.<sup>20</sup> Their purpose was to preserve what remained of the movable goods, such as the objects

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<sup>17</sup> Ruggeri Tricoli, *Trauma. Memoriali e musei tra tragedia e controversia*, 137.

<sup>18</sup> Bohdan Rymaszewski, 'The limits of Intervention in Museum and Conservation Practice at the Auschwitz Memorial and Museum', in Marszałek, *Chronić dla przyszłości*, 30-1.

<sup>19</sup> In 1979, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. *Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)* whc.unesco.org. UNESCO URL accessed 15 June 2018.

<sup>20</sup> At Auschwitz, in the words of Jolanta Banaś-Maciaszczyk and Rafał Pióro, 'The majority of the staff are certified graduate historical conservators with specializations in the conservation of paper and leather, paintings, sculpture, and architecture. Other members of the team include construction engineers who are builders, electricians, control and automation engineers, and specialists in the field of sanitation. The Department also employs qualified bricklayers and masons, carpenters, cabinetmakers, and locksmiths engaged in both routine maintenance and preservation projects. Additional Department staff include chemists, microbiologists, an archaeologist, a historian, and a specialist responsible for the conservation of historic vegetation and the maintenance of green areas. Further additions to the team are made for

stored in archives or unearthed in excavation campaigns, and immovable assets such as buildings that had not yet been tampered with (Figure 7).<sup>21</sup> **[INSERT FIGURE 7: BW]**

In Fascist Italy and the territories under its jurisdiction, with the exception of the Risiera di San Sabba in Trieste, prison and transit camps<sup>22</sup> were established, but no extermination camps. Andrea Giuseppini and Roman Herzog recorded a total of approximately 900 that included concentration, forced labour, internment, forced residence and prison camps, camps for prisoners-of-war and provincial camps of the RSI; of the latter, almost all were forgotten after the war, having partially or completely disappeared, cancelling the traces of what the sites had been.

When this was not the case, as with San Sabba (the only Italian concentration camp) or Fossoli (perhaps the best-known of the police and transit camps), protection by the state was limited or lacking for a long time. The attitude of the designers and architects called to work on these sites was quite similar to that of their European colleagues toward other Nazi camps. During the 1966 competition for the Risiera di San Sabba- protected only the previous year by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage with a special conservation decree<sup>23</sup>- the designers selected for the final proposal, Costantino Dardi, Gianugo Polesello and Romano Boico, for the most part, removed and demolished the remains rather than adding to them or conserving them, despite the fact that a local Cultural Heritage officer served on the jury commission.<sup>24</sup> The area covered by the competition (therefore subject to protection) was radically reduced to the portion of the concentration camp where the crematorium was situated, as the winner of the competition, Romano Boico, pointed out himself (Figure 8).

**[INSERT FIGURE 8: BW]**

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specific new projects'. Jolanta Banaś-Maciaszczyk and Rafał Pióro, 'Preservation and Conservation at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial', in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all'oblio*, 59.

<sup>21</sup> See also the conservation guidelines for the buildings of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, 57-9.

<sup>22</sup> Reference is made to Croatia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Slovenia and Somalia.

<sup>23</sup> *Decreto di vincolo del complesso "Risiera di San Sabba" prov. di Trieste*, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione del 14.04.1965 [Decree of conservation of the "Risiera di San Sabba" complex in the province of Trieste, issued by the Ministry of Public Education, 14 April 1965]. *Museo Civico della Risiera di San Sabba*.

<sup>24</sup> Romano Boico never attempted to re-establish an image of what the camp had been. His intent was that the 'total and diffuse squalor [might] rise to become a symbol and a monument in itself'. See Andrea Ugolini, 'Strappati all'oblio', in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all'oblio*, 26.

The decree for the conservation of Fossoli arrived only in 2011,<sup>25</sup> even though, just a few months after the opening of the *Museo Monumento di Carpi* [Museum and Monument to Political and Racial Deportees in Carpi], the universal preference of those interested in the history of the local underground resistance movement (including some survivors) was to transform the entire area of the former concentration camp into a park. This idea was included in the competition notice of 1988, but did not influence operations, apart from the reconstruction of a shed in the Jewish sector a few years later. Again in this case, educational purposes were cited.<sup>26</sup> Browsing through the projects, it is again striking how little attention the landscaping designs gave to the concept of a memorial or evoking memories, or isolating a landscape-palimpsest. Instead, like many European projects designed immediately after the war, the sites are re-written to mitigate the horror and, consequently, the significance.

What seemed to prevail at these sites, at least until the 1980s,<sup>27</sup> were landscape designs and philological reconstructions for educational purposes. We see behaviour ‘that tends to favour the “immemorial” component with respect to the potential of an “archival memory” embedded in the material that composed the artefacts of the structure obtained’. It has been forgotten that, as David Weizmann wrote about Auschwitz in general, ‘avec Auschwitz la mémoire est devenu matière’ [with Auschwitz memory has become material]. It is a place where the true ‘monument to memory’ is not an object, a monument, a memorial, or a landscaping project designed after the war, but a Nazi artefact made of bricks, wood and tiles with a powerful iconic significance: what is known as the gate of death, the entrance to the Birkenau sub-camp (Figure 9). **[INSERT FIGURE 9: BW]**

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<sup>25</sup> The conservation decree for the largest concentration camp for Jews in the south of Italy and the first to be liberated, Ferramonti di Tarsia, was issued in 2009. The protective act was too late, considering that the area today is little more than farm land and the sheds are reduced to scanty remains.

<sup>26</sup> For the competition, see Giovanni Leoni, ed., *Trentacinque progetti per Fossoli* (Milan: Electa 1990); Giovanni Leoni, ‘Il Museo Monumento dei BBPR a Carpi’, in Marzia Luppi and Patrizia Tamassia, eds, *Il Museo Monumento al Deportato politico e razziale di Carpi e l'ex Campo di Fossoli* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2016), 29-52.

<sup>27</sup> Today, the approach of landscape design culture to these sites seems to have changed. See Tessa Matteini, ‘Per una conservazione attiva e inventiva dei luoghi della memoria. Strategie e strumenti del progetto paesaggistico’ in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all'oblio*, 63-71.

## **2011-2017: Strategies for active conservation of the former Campo di Fossoli**

If we accept the thesis that memory relies on the physical relics of time, then the traces and signs that are found on what remains of these sites, even if eroded by man and natural agents, will continue to reflect images and memories, and to a much greater extent than an educational reconstruction of what no longer exists.

We like to think that this may have been why, in 2011, the *Fondazione Fossoli* [former Fossoli Concentration Camp Foundation] decided to commission the Department of Architecture of the University of Bologna to conduct a study to establish strategies to ‘protect the physical integrity of what remains’, aimed at the ‘comprehension’ of the countless material and intangible ‘parallel stories’ that had taken place and left their mark on this site.

Where more than one hundred sheds once stood between the Campo Vecchio [old camp] (today, all traces have vanished) and the Campo Nuovo (new camp), only the ruins of twenty-seven buildings remain. They were of poor quality when they were built, and they are even more dilapidated today after decades of neglect, and the devastating earthquake of 2012, which irremediably altered their stability and appearance (Figures 10-11). **[INSERT FIGURES 10 AND 11: BW]**

During the course of its brief history, while only part of the original group of barracks was preserved, the site was adapted and repurposed on numerous occasions. Originally a prison camp (1942-3), it became a transit camp for Jews, political opponents headed for extermination and concentration camps under the RSI and the SS (1943-4), then for forced labourers for the Nazi war industry (1943-4). It then became a holding centre for stateless persons, concentration camp survivors and refugees of various origins (1945-7), then a reception centre for war orphans managed by the Nomadelfia community of Don Zeno Saltini (1947-52). Finally it became a stable settlement integrated into the life of the city of Carpi as the seat of Villaggio San Marco per profughi Giuliano-Dalmati [St Mark Village for refugees from the Julian March and Dalmatia regions] (1954-end of 1960s). After 1970, the camp was abandoned once and for all, but it was only in 1984 that the City

of Carpi managed to take possession of it, entrusting its management to the *Fondazione Fossoli* in 2001 (Figures 12-13-14). **[INSERT FIGURE 12-13-14: BW]**

The ruins of the remaining sheds, however meagre, continue to tell the story of their construction to this day (Figure 15). **[INSERT FIGURE 15: BW]** These structures were intended as temporary quarters from the start, to replace the earlier tents, and were built by the *Cooperativa Muratori, Cementisti e Decoratori di Carpi* [cooperative of bricklayers, masons and decorators of Carpi]. They comprised thin, single-leaf walls of hollow brick and cement mortar, and no exterior plastering; packed earth or cement cast on packed earth floors; wooden doors and windows; lightweight roofing of wooden trusses and thin boards with simple terracotta tiles. When it was altered to accommodate the large *Nomadelfia* community, symbolic elements of the former concentration camp (enclosure walls, barbed-wire fencing and guard towers) were demolished. The interiors and openings of the sheds were re-adapted, and the buildings designated as habitations, work places and public spaces. Additional, more extensive changes were made by the refugees of the *Villaggio San Marco*, and the building complex was given additional functions. The camp was equipped with an efficient sewer system that is still visible. The sheds were divided up to create a greater number of smaller independent living units, which meant new partitions, sanitary services and heating systems. The wall footings were cut and insulated, doors and windows were altered, new interior hollow brick walls and dropped ceilings improved insulation and made the dwellings more comfortable (Figure 16). Flooring was redone in colourful granolithic paving, new plaster was applied over previous layers and then painted and decorated with stencils (Figure 17). **[INSERT FIGURES 16 AND 17: BW]**

Two research units with distinctly different and specific tasks were created to effectively interpret the complexity of the site, marked by neglect and the earthquake, as well as stratified ruins and dense spontaneous vegetation. One unit was dedicated to the camp's history and description of



the physical state of the remaining structures, the other focused on the evolution and analysis of the landscape and botanical components of the site.<sup>28</sup>

The first research unit began in 2013 by examining the copious material prepared and collated by the Foundation and City of Carpi. The documents still conserved in the archives of the Carpi cooperative that built the camp and the Nomadelfia community were also collected and examined. The first operations carried out at the camp involved cataloguing the twenty-seven surviving sheds, including descriptions of their typology, materials, construction techniques (foundations, vertical masonry, covering structure, etc.), and finishings (plaster, pavements, roofing, etc.). Attention was also paid to original purpose and later repurposing, paying special attention to the sequence of the transformations (Figure 18). **[INSERT FIGURE 18: BW]**

Excluding the shed rebuilt in 2004 as a model, the sheds of Campo Nuovo were divided into three major groups depending on their degree of conservation: Group I – sheds that conserved part of the vertical structure and limited portions of roof covering; Group II – sheds that conserved part of the vertical structure but without roof covering; Group III – sheds that conserved only portions of perimeter walls and central pillars. These were summarily analysed, their material alteration and decay were recorded, and after the earthquake, seismic damage and movement that was still occurring were measured.

At the same time, the second unit, responsible for the landscaping and botanical components of the site, began its study of the historical evolution of the vegetation in relation to the transformations of the camp, using the abundant photographic documentation from the archives. From an ‘empty’ space as a transit camp, in 1944-7 when it became a detention centre, the first vegetable garden furrows appeared. In the radical transformations for the Nomadelfia community and the Giuliano-Dalmati refugees, more space was made for vegetable gardens; tree alleys and brick-

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<sup>28</sup> The first unit, coordinated by Andrea Ugolini, restorer and scientific director of the entire project, included Chiara Mariotti and Alessia Zampini; the second included Licia Borghi and Manuela Senese, under the guidance of Tessa Matteini, a landscape architect.



walled flowerbeds were created near the dwellings; hedges were planted around yards and the original assembly area transformed into a garden (Figure 19). After the site was abandoned in the 1970s, the biological evolution of the botanical species planted by people played a part in reducing the buildings to ruins. **[INSERT FIGURE 19: BW]**

Between summer and autumn 2014, the on-site inspections to identify the variety of botanical species (arboreal, shrubs, climbing and herbaceous plants), were followed by a study of the existing dynamics and defining the index of hazard that the plant species represented for the constructions. The vegetation system at Fossoli is an important asset in terms of landscape, architecture and environment. The landscape system is unique, inasmuch as it is a result of the site's successive phases of utilization, but also for its organic diversity in relation to the homogeneous agricultural land that surrounds it.

While the studies of the sheds and landscape/botanical studies of the Campo Nuovo were being conducted, and one year after the 2012 earthquake, the regional MiBACT office of Emilia Romagna launched a project of safety measures for the sheds, selected in accordance with the Foundation, the city and the regional governments.<sup>29</sup> Three buildings representing, in synthesis, the typologies and levels of conservation, were selected and strategically situated in the the camp (Figure 20). Once the buildings had been stabilized, more accurate surveys and analyses were conducted to determine the geometry and material composition of each building. This made it possible to collect and compare more field data with the data taken from documentation in the archives. **[INSERT FIGURE 20: BW]**

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<sup>29</sup> The sheds selected were the no. 8 (guard house and later the school), the no. 14/5 (ward for Jewish prisoners and later dwelling) and the no. 4/1 (ward for political prisoners and later dwelling), where there was originally no intervention for lack of funds and the first two conserved ample portions of the roof covering that had been damaged by the earthquake. *Interventi urgenti di puntellatura, bonifica e manutenzione al Campo di Fossoli*, Carpi (Mo), prot. cap. 743PG/4 A.F. 2013. Project architect Marco Farneti, with Chiara Mariotti and Alessia Zampini. Subsequently, *Lavori di somma urgenza per la messa in sicurezza delle baracche n. 8 e n. 14/5 dell'ex-Campo di Fossoli – Località Fossoli, Comune di Carpi (MO)*, Tender issued by: *Direzione Regionale per i Beni Culturali e Paesaggistici dell'Emilia-Romagna*; head of the procedure and project supervisor, Arch. Francesco Delizia. Decree of the DG-OAGIBP dated 13 September 2013 for the amount of € 100,000.00, MiBACT funds.

Over that period, researchers were able to form a general idea of how to proceed with the work, but also of how to better understand the problems inherent to conserving and enhancing the cultural value of the site, directly related to removing debris and overgrown vegetation from the site to provide an image with a greater impact, and therefore greater evocative power. The operation actually stripped the environment of several components that were crucial to its current connotative power, with outcomes that were dangerously similar to the kind of ‘liberation’ (patinas, finishings, claddings, or extensions) that is so common in the history of restoration (Figure 21).<sup>30</sup> [INSERT

**FIGURE 21: BW]**

### **Safety and conservation measures to preserve memory**

The scope of guaranteeing the conservation of the sheds of the former concentration camp (including their material and non-material components) during the consolidation project was also considered in light of the safety measures required to maintain the remaining architectural elements, as well as the need to guarantee safety when the public used the places through obligatory paths and guided visits. While, on the one hand, there are numerous technologies and materials for stabilizing ‘self-standing’ damaged buildings in a seismic zone,<sup>31</sup> on the other there is less choice in the case of buildings reduced to ruins.

One of the first choices was to exclude volumetric additions or reconstruction of original the shape of buildings, to avoid a state that would be incompatible with the fleeting nature of memory, and would cancel out the drama of a past whose scars and transformations showed in all their power. The conservation of what has survived until today was achieved through the widespread use of ‘flanking’ with auxiliary structures, making the existing structure safe without removing its

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<sup>30</sup> Francesco Delizia, ‘Mettere in sicurezza: rilievi, analisi, primi interventi dopo il terremoto del 2012’, in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all’oblio*, 125-9.

<sup>31</sup> Regarding the status of an architectural construction, a ‘self-standing edifice’ is defined as a ruin while an incomplete architectural construction is a fragment. See also paragraph 3.1.2, Roberto Cecchi, *Interventi per la tutela e la fruizione del patrimonio archeologico. Roma archeologia, Primo rapporto giugno – agosto 2009*, (Milan: Electa, 2009), 48-56.

functionality. Therefore, ‘crutches’ of a sort were used: a hybrid structure that is not masked or hidden, but rather visible and separate from the remains, so that the existing structure is preserved without covering or erasing its traces. Some basic metal carpentry was chosen for this purpose, composed of standard frames assembled to support masonry wall segments that had become unstable due to ageing and the earthquake. The frames used are jointed to support gable peaks, to surround isolated pillars, and provide vertical stabilization using turn-buckles, and generate metal frames braced with tensioned cables. The materials in the collapsed sections have been replaced by other elements with the same structural function, located in the same position but de-materialized, in a synthesis that serves as the memory of a symbol that no longer exists. The metallic skeleton flanks, surrounds, grazes and connects, using one standard recurrent architectural language, but that is visible in the infinite combinations dictated by the condition of the ruins that make up the character and mood that the Fossoli camp has acquired over time (Figures 22-23). **[INSERT FIGURE 22 AND 23: BW]**

The substructures are strictly limited to the required completion and reintegration of ring beams. There was a single reconstruction operation to conserve a few rooms, intended to recall the spatial layout of the architecture. In these few rooms, where the covering was partially present, new or recovered elements were integrated, recreating, always in an unambiguous way, the structure that was no longer efficient. (Figure 24). **[INSERT FIGURE 24: BW]**

The signs of ageing appear as damage and transformations that affect the solidity and form of the architecture. Nature tends to take back the abandoned parts that are no longer visited, itself becoming a distinguishing feature. Dealing with what remained of the former concentration camp at Fossoli meant working at the limits of the material remains, where the precariousness of the structures was constantly undermined by deterioration, collapses, transformations and, in many cases, the residual outlines of sheds that no longer existed. The survival of these edifices, despite the project’s efforts and results, can only be guaranteed by ongoing scheduled conservation.

## Caring for the Remains, the Landscape and the Memory

The semantic richness of ruins and debris, the wealth of overgrown vegetation (grasses, shrubs and trees), and also the plantings that date to the phases that followed (Nomadelfia and Villaggio San Marco), have blended to create a multiform and continuous *unicum* that calls for strategies to ensure a controlled co-existence between the architectural vestiges and the surrounding vegetation. In fact, the ecological evolution that has taken place over these years has led to the definition of a new integrated landscape system, with a special figurative and memorial value, in addition to representing a valuable island of biodiversity in a mainly agricultural area (Figure 25). Analysing strategies for the active conservation of a memorial site has also meant that all the aspects with a historical, symbolic and memorial value need to be taken into consideration from a global and inclusive cultural point of view. (Figure 26).<sup>32</sup> **INSERT FIGURES 25 AND 26: BW**

Therefore, in addition to the guidelines adopted from the actions taken to consolidate the three pilot-sheds, we also attempted to draft a possible *Piano di Conservazione Programmata* [scheduled conservation plan] for the buildings and a *Manutenzione Programmata* [scheduled maintenance plan] for the botanical component. While the concept of permanence governs the conservation strategy for historic architecture, recognizing its unrepeatable and irreplaceable character, the dynamic and evolutionary botanical process called for an approach based on the concept of maintenance that takes into account seasonal rhythms and changes, thereby becoming points of orientation and management for inevitable and natural mutations (Figure 27). **INSERT FIGURE 27: BW**

Therefore, the plans were conceived as an ongoing process, carried out with scheduled inspections (quarterly, semi-annually and annually) that provide for the involvement of different representatives of different specializations, all of whom play important roles in achieving the programmed objectives. More specifically, the figures identified will be the scientific director, the

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<sup>32</sup> Andrea Ugolini and Tessa Matteini, 'Un unicum prezioso e inscindibile. Premessa metodologica', in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all'oblio*, 141-2.

operators assigned to the actions to protect the architectural component and the operators assigned the actions to protect the botanical and landscape component, all nominated jointly by the Foundation and the City.<sup>33</sup> Through the use of asset data files for each individual shed, an annotated table of critical and potential risks affecting the architectural structures, and an annotated table of interactions between botanical and architectural structures, constant monitoring of the camp's state of health as a whole will be assured. When necessary, warnings will be published in reports to signal the appearance of new or worsening risks that might compromise the survival of what remains (Figure 28).<sup>34</sup> In addition to specialized operators, there will be plans for collateral activities – parallel to the ordinary ones – such as workshops and on-the-job training stints for students in the faculties of architecture and engineering or vocational schools, and/or the organization of international workshops (Figure 29). **[INSERT FIGURE 28-29: BW]**

In this way, the “care” of the camp has been transformed into the care of its memory by setting up a type of educational activity that was already a fundamental priority for the Foundation. The care programme is in line with the principles of the *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* of 2005.<sup>35</sup> The knowledge and use of cultural heritage (not intended as the re-appropriation of an annuity but as ongoing reclamation) are among the recognized rights of man.<sup>36</sup>

## The first assessment

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<sup>33</sup> Operators will be classified as specialized or generic. The former, with past training, will be capable of analysing the edifice or botanical structure, while generic operators without past technical training will be employed in simple tasks such as, for example, cleaning the visitor paths. The figure of a voluntary operator merits further attention. With regard to safety in the work place, Legislative decree 81/2008 (Health and Safety in the Workplace Act) treats voluntary operators in the same way as sole traders. Consequently, such operators will be assigned to inspections that do not call for visiting the sheds, to operations that do not require pre-existing training other than normal domestic working capacities and basic care of the botanical component.

<sup>34</sup> Chiara Mariotti, Andrea Ugolini and Alessia Zampini, ‘Programma per la conservazione della componente architettonica’; Tessa Matteini and Manuela Senese, ‘Programma per la manutenzione della componente paesaggistica’; both in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all'oblio*, 163-75.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.coe.int/it/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/199>, accessed 25 February 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Massimo Recalcati, *Il complesso di Telemaco. Genitori e figli dopo il tramonto del padre* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2013), 121.

At the time this essay was drafted, the safety measures for the three pilot-sheds were practically completed, as were the preliminary inspections on a significant sample of the sheds.<sup>37</sup> This allowed for a series of ulterior thoughts regarding the actions, although some had already emerged during the research phase.

It is best to begin with the relationship between ruins, debris and vegetation – perhaps the most problematic of all. Statements and reflections about the possibility of conserving memory – an intangible asset – and the marks of time, represented by collapses and spontaneous (or invasive) vegetation in some cases, are a glaring example of the difficulty of reconciling theory and practice. The commonly shared theoretical considerations about the need to conserve the traces of time, which was our starting point, immediately revealed that in order to conserve, there was no way to avoid taking safety precautions, for the protection of workers, first and foremost. The safety measures, in this case required to move forward with the conservation work, proceeded in parallel with sudden and unexpected collapses after the first storms or after cutting and clearing out, as well as dangerous situations that were not foreseen during the planning phase. The volatile nature of the materials on the work site became clear, in many cases making goals that had emerged during the conception of the project – and were still shared – difficult or impossible to meet. The roots of trees and shrubs had grown into the buildings, raising floors, bringing down partition walls and deforming load-bearing walls. Additionally, the earthquake had made operational methods (as well as the fate of what remained of the camp) even more complex and precarious. We arrived at a choice that involved an almost obligatory acceptance of measures that unfortunately did modify the relationship between the architecture and nature, while conserving, however, the state of indifferent equilibrium<sup>38</sup> that somehow characterized the ruins. A few plants that did not compromise the stability of the buildings

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<sup>37</sup> A test had been carried out during summer 2017 to verify the effectiveness of the inspection data files collected for fifteen sheds. The activities conducted under the guidance of Andrea Ugolini, Paolo Faccio, Chiara Mariotti and Alessia Zampini were carried out by seven recent graduates with degrees in architecture (thus operators with specific training) after a brief introduction to use of the data files.

<sup>38</sup> A body is in a state of indifferent equilibrium when, shifted a short distance from its position of equilibrium, it remains stably in its position.

were preserved inside the sheds, but the accumulated earth and collapsed debris were removed to allow for consolidation work. It is true that the sheds, so stripped down to basics, today reveal all their fragility and poor construction, and are ‘monuments without *firmitas*’. But once the decision is made to protect buildings, the implications of each choice will always have to be reckoned with (Figures 30-31). **[INSERT FIGURES 30 AND 31: BW]** The need for safety during operations and in the utilization of the site can be achieved through consolidation and restoration methods that often involve adding material, but also by removing material in a sustainable way so, that the interventions are clearly distinguishable but not ostentatious.

Regarding the destiny of the debris that was necessarily removed, we wish to add that some of it was recovered for repairs, while some was set aside at the camp. The intention is to create a display that inspires remembrance and memory, while not artificially hindering the work of time, as has already been done at other memorial sites in Europe.<sup>39</sup>

The first experiment with inspections appears to confirm the implications of the research. However, it remains to be seen how regularly this activity will be carried out by the Foundation and the City of Carpi, and what type of support and approach in managing the camp and monitoring emergencies there will be, especially following further restoration and enhancement work. In this regard, a positive approach would be to establish a permanent conservation service for the camp that would handle monitoring and project management from the start,<sup>40</sup> as has been done at Auschwitz, although it must be acknowledged that Auschwitz’s monument and museum complex is managed by the national government.

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<sup>39</sup> See the project by Horst Hoheisel and Andreas Knitz for the old city centre of Weimar, winner of the art competition for the arrangement of the Gestapo area and barracks entitled *Crushed History-Zermahlene Geschichte*, where a part of the debris was stored for conservation in containers, while another part was heaped in the area once occupied by the buildings.

[http://www.knitz.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=143&lang=en](http://www.knitz.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=143&lang=en), accessed 25 February 2020.

<sup>40</sup> See Banaś-Maciaszczyk and Pióro, ‘Preservation and Conservation at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial’, in Ugolini and Delizia, *Strappati all’oblio*, 55-61.

The master plan for the entire area, which does not yet exist, deserves a final reflection, and as such the ‘guidelines for active conservation’ conclude this essay. First, it is to be hoped that the Campo Vecchio and the Campo Nuovo will finally be considered a single entity that is a part of a larger more complex system, as was already emphasized in the conservation decree of 2011 (but also in the competition notice of 1988). Despite the bareness of the Campo Vecchio today, similar to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, there is the need for a system that provides a better understanding of just how dramatic the numbers of deportees were in Italy.<sup>41</sup>

As for the landscaping project, we believe that the solutions used by landscape designers in the early *lager* memorials after the war should be set aside definitively. They were often so accurate that they misrepresented the authenticity of the environments. One thinks of Primo Levi’s words regarding Auschwitz, which he described as a ‘static, re-ordered and violated place’.<sup>42</sup> Along with an operational policy more attuned to the fragile balances of the camp, a good approach for a landscape project would be ‘an attitude of careful management and an immersive palpable experience’, designed to bridge ‘a certain gap between the design and execution, on-site, of the project’<sup>43</sup>. Processes and relationships should be made a priority, and always be interpreted on-site with a sensitivity to the value of the whole, whether it regards an architectural or botanical structure. In short, the design should be trans-disciplinary, respecting the skills of those managing it, demanding an effort in interpretation, methodology and management, focussing closely on the overall multi-form complexity of a place like the former Campo, to guarantee its preservation while maintaining a dynamic and sustainable balance between preservation and future.

**[INSERT FIGURE 32: BW]**

## Appendix

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<sup>41</sup> On this point, Andrea Ugolini and Paolo Faccio have presented a programme to the foundation for archaeological prospecting of the site to identify the sedimentary traces of sheds demolished after the war, which if found might contribute to the translation and communication of what no longer exists today.

<sup>42</sup> Primo Levi, ‘Appendice’ a *Se questo è un uomo*, in Levi, *Opere I*, Marco Belpoliti, ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), 184.

<sup>43</sup>



Here, the authors wish to include the following document from the end of the book *Strappati all'Oblio. Strategie per la conservazione di un luogo di memoria del secondo Novecento*, because it summarizes the research group's intentions and, at the same time, provides operational guidelines for carrying out the conservation work at the memorial complex.

#### Guidelines for the Active Preservation of the Former Camp at Fossoli

1. The main aim of improvement work is to protect the physical integrity of the camp and its particular landscape features.
2. The extreme fragility of the whole requires the implementation of a continuous process of inspection and monitoring of the architectural components and plants found there, aimed at identifying improvement priorities.
3. Generally speaking, improvements carried out on the ruins of huts will involve conservative restoration work, based on an approach where the minimum amount of historical material is removed, ensuring the compatibility of protective treatments and limiting and preventing the causes of deterioration and damage to the structural strength of buildings, whilst keeping in mind that the camp is a living organism and, as such, subject to ageing.
4. Whilst the aims of safety co-exist with those of conservation, each improvement carried out on the buildings will aim to reduce the overall vulnerability of the structure and restore its purpose as a place welcoming visitors and as a site of memory.
5. Given the nature of existing elements and their material and structural fragility, limits on access will need to be put in place, and entry will only be allowed to huts that have been made safe.
6. Should measures for improving earthquake resistance be required in order to guarantee minimum levels of safety and access, the approach for making technical additions will be that of installing structural systems alongside the individual element concerned, calibrated to meet its actual needs.

7. Should there not be a general plan coordinating improvement work as part of controlled scenarios, only the minimum improvements needed to guarantee the preservation of the complex and its safe use will be allowed. The filling of gaps and holes needed to ensure that aim will prioritise the reuse of material salvaged on site and, in any case, the compatibility of new materials will need to be guaranteed.
8. The assessment of proposed improvements will need to particularly take into account the protection of the delicate balance between the landscape features and architectural features, as part of that overall, combined value that currently constitutes the site's main, and most fragile, peculiarity.
9. The vegetation at the Fossoli camp has recognised ecological importance in terms of biodiversity and the persistence of local species, which determines what choices for improvement can be made, in that it is a historicised landscape, but also because it contains important traces that pertain to the history of the site.
10. When establishing conservation and maintenance protocols, it will always be necessary to consider the context, 'passing through' the various different scales and comparing them to the surrounding landscape and natural landmarks, such as the nearby Oasi della Francese, an essential database for the study and understanding of the ecological mechanisms underway throughout the area.
11. A periodical survey of the plant species found on the site – trees, hedges and grasses – and an understanding of the mechanisms of development that affect each single species and their associations will be essential in order to prevent further deterioration and foster the harmonious and risk-free co-existence of architectural and landscape components.

(Andrea Ugolini, Francesco Delizia, Tessa Matteini and Paolo Faccio)

## Captions

Figure 1. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, a shack. Photo S. Angel, 2009.

Figure 2. The Buna Werke of IG Farben factory in Monowitz concentration camp, 1941.

Figure 3. Dachau, Appelplatz after 'clean camp' operation.

Figure 4. Dachau, the rebuilt shacks. The interior.

Figure 5. Auschwitz I, rebuilt wooden guardhouse.

Figure 6. Auschwitz II-Birkenau, the railway with a conserved wagon.

Figure 7. Auschwitz II-Birkenau, securing of a shack by the Permanent conservation service of the museum.

Figure 8. The Risiera di San Sabba.

Figure 9. Auschwitz II-Birkenau, The *Gate of Death*, entrance of Birkenau sub camp.

Figure 10. Fossoli camp after the devastating earthquake of 2012. Photo April 2013.

Figure 11. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo after the earthquake of 2012.

Figure 12. Fossoli, Campo Vecchio, the shacks of prisoners of war camp.

Figure 13. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Don Zeno and his children.

Figure 14. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Nursery school children at Villaggio San Marco, 1951-70.

Figure 15. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, the kitchen of a shack.

Figure 16. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Nomadelfia, the construction of new internal hollow brick walls.

Figure 17. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Villaggio San Marco, Stencil wall decorations of shacks.

Figure 18. Ex Campo di Fossoli, survey and analysis of a shack.

Figure 19. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, transformation of empty spaces in common areas.

Figure 20. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, securing of shack 8 after the earthquake of 2012.

Figure 21. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, the shack 8 after cleaning out debris.

Figure 22. Project working drawings. All details are realized using a standard, recurrent language

of metal carpentry.

Figure 23. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, shack 14.5, the metal carpentry.

Figure 24. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, new wooden trusses.

Figure 25. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Analysis of the landscaping system.

Figure 26. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, The new spontaneous landscape.

Figure 27. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, sketches made during the scheduled maintenance.

Figure 28. Report to signal the appearance of new risks (shack 4.1).

Figure 29. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, voluntary workers during the scheduled maintenance.

Figure 30. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, shack 4.1. Inscriptions by deportees.

Figure 31. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Debris after the activities.

Figure 32. Fossoli, Campo Nuovo, Aerial view. The camp and school visits at the camp, 2013.





*Fig. 1*





Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-2007-0058 Foto: o. Ang. | 1941/1944 ca.

*Fig. 2*



*Fig. 3*



Fig. 4





Fig. 5





Fig. 6



Fig. 7





Fig. 8



Fig. 9





Fig. 10





*Fig. 11*



*Fig. 12*





Fig. 13



*Fig. 14*



*Fig. 15*



*Fig. 16*





Fig. 17

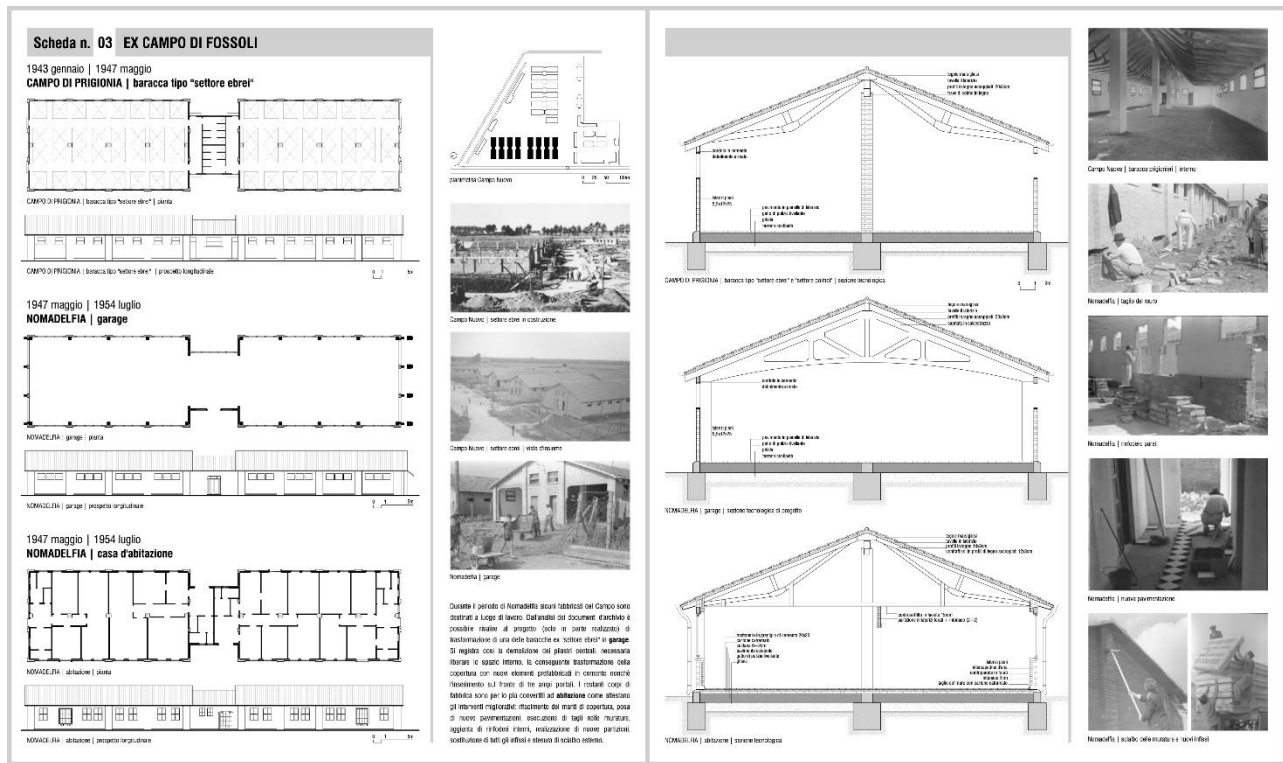


Fig. 18





Fig. 19



*Fig. 20*





*Fig. 21*





*Fig. 23*



*Fig. 24*





Fig. 25





*Fig. 26*



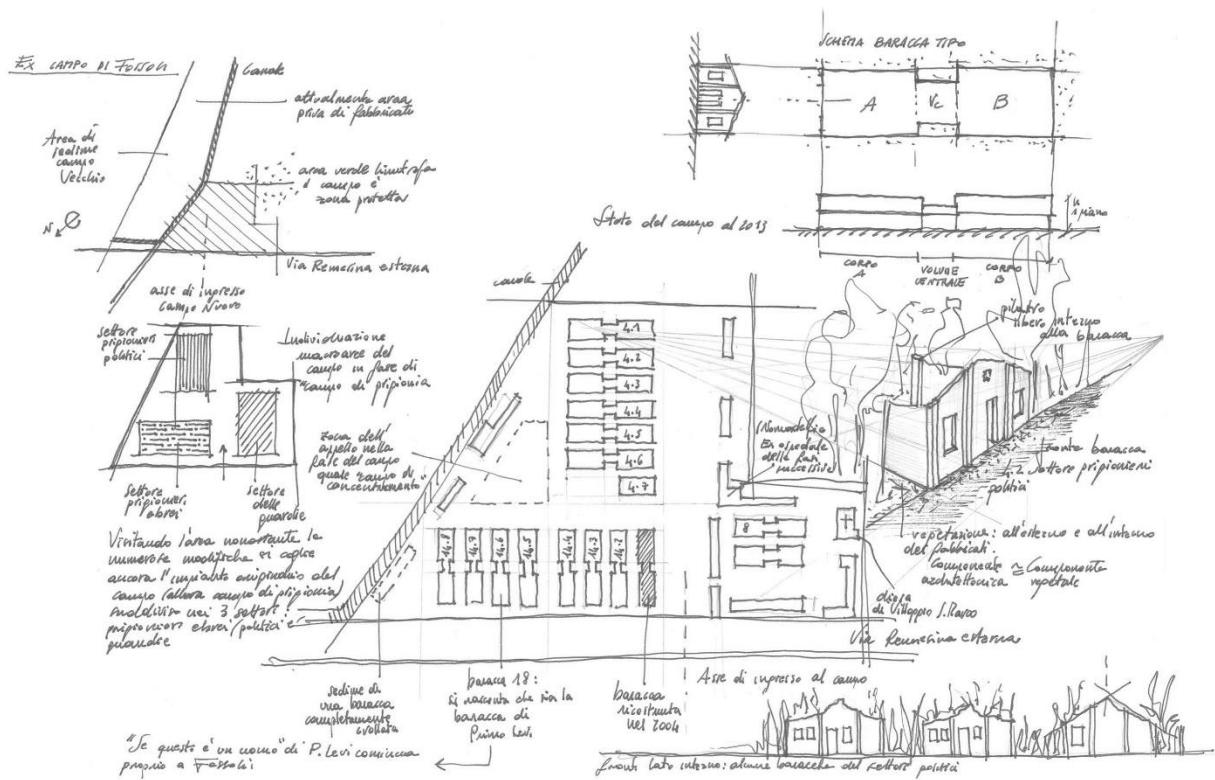


Fig. 27

## BARACCA 4.1

report

### MR | MURATURE

#### ANOMALIE RISCONTRATE

##### MR<sub>1</sub> | ribaltamento fuori dal piano

Azioni preventive	Intervento suggerito
Puntellamento e messa in sicurezza dell'elemento in casi di manifesta instabilità	Su progetto: consolidamento
Tempi di monitoraggio	Soggetto competente
Annuale e/o in occasione di eventi straordinari	Tecnico specializzato

#### Fotografie



MR<sub>1</sub>



MR<sub>2</sub>



MR<sub>3</sub>



MR<sub>4</sub>



MR<sub>5</sub>



MR<sub>6</sub>



MR<sub>7</sub>

#### Confronto con ispezione precedente:

Fenomeni invariati	---
Fenomeni peggiorati	---
Fenomeni nuovi	---



*Fig. 29*



Fig. 30





*Fig. 31*





*Fig. 32*