

Brisa 5

Brisa 5

by Park Associati

Client
Reale Immobili - Reale Group S.p.A.

Address
Via Brisa 5, Milan

Year
Project: 2016-2018
On Site: 2018-2020
Realization: 2020

Area
sqm 6.600

Professional Service
Concept
Architectural Project
Building Permits
Artistic Site Supervision

Contractors
Italiana Costruzioni, Rome
CTA - Costruttori Termotecnici Associati, Vignate (MI)
Milani Giovanni & C., Osnago (LC)

Civil Engineering, Specific Site Supervision
Sajni e Zambetti, Milan

M&E, Specific Site Supervision, LEED Certification
Tekser, Milan

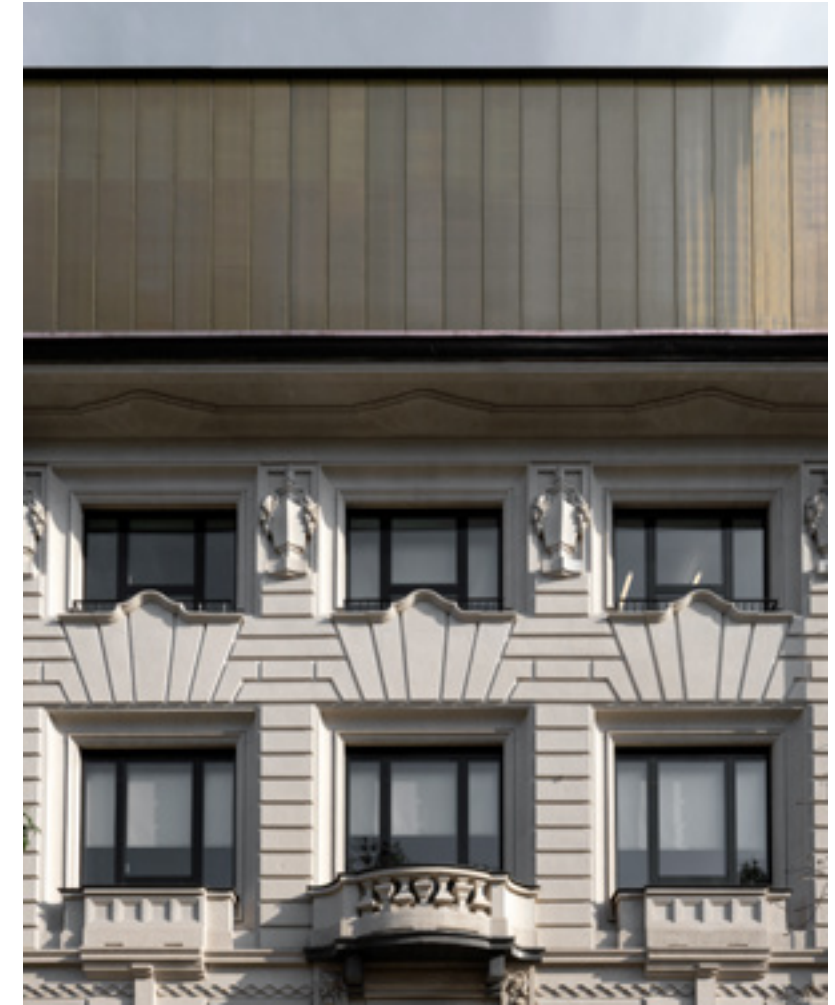
Fire Prevention Consultancy
Mistretta & Co., Milan

Health & Safety
Soluzioni, Milan

A strong suspended architectural gesture

A strong, 'suspended' feature that nonetheless maintains a close relationship with the building's base, therefore bringing together the stylistic unevenness of the two existing bodies, which are currently occupied by two different tenants.

Text: Mariva Vittoria Capitanucci



Milan is changing and transforming itself, and its buildings, including the historical ones and those designed by well-known architects, change with the course of time and adapt, maintaining their recognizability while updating their flows and functions.

The redevelopment by Park Associati of the Pietro Portaluppi architectural complex between Via Ansperto, Via Brisa, Via Vigna and Via Luini involves the two blocks of the building, which differ in terms of both height and style. While respecting the pre-existing structures and their distinct articulation, a third transparent contemporary element was inserted. The body added to the older, lower 1919 building is characterised by an opaque curtain wall that, while displaying an individualistic style that breaks off from the existing building, also forms an integral part of a new system of internal flows that aims at restoring the functionality of the whole complex. To achieve the effect of this elegant contemporary presence, a metal mesh was devised – brass-plated on the outside and painted black on the inside – and inserted between the two glass chambers to opacify the surface, thus building a bridge with its surroundings, as well as protecting the structure's interior from the sun's rays.

In 1936 Portaluppi himself was asked to design the extension of the building with two-, three- and five-floor solutions for a modernist style corner body onto Via Brisa, originally planned with a grey granite coating that was subsequently replaced by Ceppo gentile limestone. As stated by the designers, while fully respecting the pre-existing structure, 'the spacing of the openings along the façade was redesigned by inserting pillars in the glass parts as well as fretted profile sheets – the same used for the glass of the added floor – in the spaces between the openings.' The simplicity of the 1930s tower was thus maintained, while the cleaning of the Ceppo gentile limestone covering restored a grey colour of almost unexpected brilliance.

History of Milan within two streets



In the historical heart of the city bordered by the Museum of Archaeology that houses part of the Roman city walls, including the Ansperto tower and the church of San Maurizio al Monastero, Pietro Portaluppi designed and built the headquarters of the Linificio e Canapificio Nazionale. The area was thus enriched with two new architectural styles: the Art Decò of the Viennese Secession from the early 1900s for the oldest part of via Ansperto and, between via Brisa and via Vigna, the Rationalism of the 1930s.

'Among the roads whose names derive exclusively from vegetables are: *via Brisa* - possibly named after porcini mushrooms or the Latin for pomace (it actually intersects Via Vigna) or the fact that many citizens originally from *Brixia (Brescia)* lived there'.

Thus we read in the study of Milan's street names that collects all the names of the city's streets and squares. As for Via Ansperto, the name can be traced back to Archbishop Ansperto, who ruled the city in the years 868-881, at the time of the Carolingian empire.

These days, walking down a few hundred metres of Via Brisa from Corso Magenta means walking through a stretch of Milan's history. As soon as you start walking down the street, you will find on the left the remains of the imperial palace of Maximian, a Roman emperor who shared his title with Diocletian from 286 to 402 and who embellished the city with several monuments, including the Herculean baths and a large circus that extended all the way to via Torino, as well as starting the construction of a further set of city walls. At this time, Milan (Mediolanum) was the capital of the Western Roman Empire.

Further along Via Brisa, right opposite Via Ansperto and Portaluppi's architectural complex, there is a square with a vaguely metaphysical feel, which has now been completely redeveloped. The 'door' to this square is the medieval Gorani tower dating back to the 11th century, the only remaining evidence of the Gorani Palace that was destroyed by bombs during the Second World War. Also visible is a Baroque-style arch, possibly the entrance to the palace from the same Via Gorani at a time when the building had been extended and redesigned in the Baroque architectural style.

Pietro Portaluppi and Milan

Text: Mariva Vittoria Capitanucci



Villa Necchi Campiglio
1935

Pietro Portaluppi can be regarded as one of the greatest Italian designers between the 1920s and 1950s. While his design path crossed many trends, currents and movements, he remained a sophisticated free agent.

His Villa Necchi Campiglio, the first villa with swimming pool in the city, is the symbol of a modernity typical of the Thirties, as is the building in Via Morozzo della Rocca, which for a long time housed the premises of his practice. Between the end of the 1950s and the early 1960s, Portaluppi unexpectedly partnered with Ponti to design the headquarters of the Faculty of Architecture and the building for the Ras insurance group in Corso Italia, both in Milan.



Corbellini-Wassermann House
1936

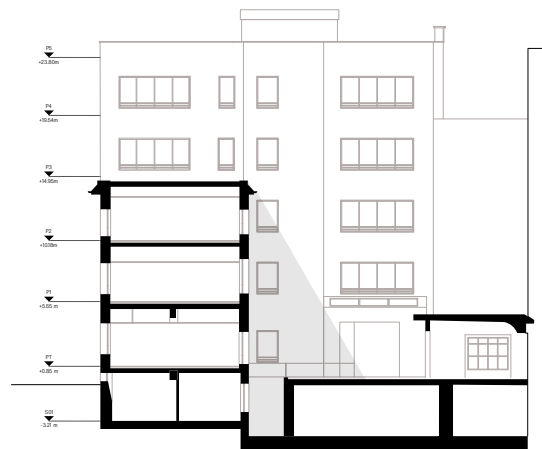
He started his career within the best Milanese middle class, in particular within the Lombard business world, starting from his family connection with Ettore Conti, president of Società Elettrica Italiana (Italian Electric Company) who, among other things, commissioned him with the restoration (and subsequently the expansion) of the family building, the well-known Casa degli Atellani, which had hosted Leonardo and his followers while they were painting the Last Supper in the nearby Santa Maria delle Grazie church.

Soon other important entrepreneurs of the time stepped forward, such as the Crespi family, the textile industrialists and founders of Corriere della Sera for whom the architect designed three buildings in the city, or the Hoepli publishers, who entrusted him with the city Planetarium in the Via Palestro Gardens.

He was further commissioned by major companies of the time, such as Filatura Cascami Seta with their secession-style headquarters in the early 1920s and, before that, the nearby tasteful Art Déco headquarters of Lanificio e Canapificio Nazionale in Via Brisa (1919), which he further extended some twenty years later, applying a simpler, more geometric style, typical of the Thirties.



Lower-ground transformations



Original building



Project

The practice's fully glazed entertainment spaces now overlook the large, lowered open space obtained by removing the courtyard's floor.

The key to an architectural redevelopment intervention is not always visible to an outsider. In the case of the restyling of the Portaluppi complex in Via Brisa, one of the two key elements of the intervention – the new body added to the top of one of the two buildings – is easily recognisable from the street.

The rearrangement of the internal courtyard, the real linchpin of the project's concept, is on the other hand the exclusive prerogative of the Allen & Overy international law firm that occupies the older building of the complex. Formerly used as warehouse and garage, the basement was in fact recovered within the existing courtyard. Completely covered with Ceppo limestone, the new lower-ground patio acquires predominantly mineral qualities thanks to the purity of the stone's vivid grey colour that punctuate the pattern of solids and voids.

Here the green is like a metaphor: the pomegranate tree placed in the area overlooking the internal rooms radiates all its auspicious symbolism of abundance and vitality. This was not an accidental choice, as the plant's fruits were in fact the inspiration for the motif of the friezes on the Portaluppi façade.

On the courtyard's ground floor, overlooking the patio, extra spaces were obtained from the area that used to house the garage, which have become the practice's cafeteria and the changing room area for the more sporty types who cycle to work or want to take a jog during the lunch break. The lower-ground courtyard thus becomes an unexpected place of relationship obtained from the building's structure and inspired by the new contemporary work patterns and times that envisage a continuous use of indoor and outdoor spaces as a way of marking the different moments of the working day.



A seamless solution of bright and modular spaces



Client
Allen & Overy

Year
Project: 2018
On Site: 2018-2019
Realization: 2019

Area
sqm 3.500

Professional Service
Concept
Interior Design
Artistic Site Supervision

The two blocks of the architectural complex of Via Brisa/Via Ansperto feature very different styles. The oldest one, designed by Pietro Portaluppi in 1919, is now occupied by the offices of the international law firm Allen & Overy, while the rationalist tower has become the Milanese headquarters of Buccellati, a historic Italian manufacturer of high-end jewellery.

Curated by Park Associati, the interior design for the Allen & Overy section envisaged recovering the spaces that were already used as offices to transform them into environments strongly characterised by modularity and transparency.

By redistributing the volumes of the existing complex, the building in Via Ansperto was given an added body, for a total of three floors, beside the ground floor and the lower-ground areas. All these spaces are flooded with light, and the seamless solution adopted for the offices, which are completely glazed and soundproofed and look onto the two sides of the corridor that runs along the entire length of the floor, is hardly perceived.



The interventions adopted for the interiors were similarly strong yet respectful of a programme aimed at enhancing the pre-existing environments, which were refurbished and, where possible, left intact according to the original project.



Thanks to the lighting project specifically created by Park Associati and developed in collaboration with In-visible Lab and 3F Filippi, the flowing, functional spaces enjoy maximum brightness even with artificial light. The 3F HD lighting system stems from a desire to bring up to date the lighting of the offices using a linear, minimal contemporary system that ideally combines energy saving with visual comfort.

Brightness and comfort are also the key words for the law firm's library located in the section overlooking the lower-ground courtyard, an environment that is both spacious and intimate. The full-height shelves that cover the walls provide plenty of room for books and manuals. Aligned along the centre, tables alternate with sofas. Perfectly suited to its function and conducive to concentration, this room features light walnut shelves, dark table surfaces and grey sofas that combine to create a comfortable environment that almost feels like home.



Interview with Anna di Giovanni, Head of Operation at Allen&Overy



Q: What was the decisive aspect that led you to choose the building in Via Brisa 5 for the Milan office of Allen & Overy?

A: The choice of our new headquarters was dictated by several factors that are very important for us: technological evolution, sustainability and corporate responsibility, attention to people and, consequently, the need for work spaces that promote innovation, well-being, inclusion, and the most effective collaboration between our people. Following a selection process driven by these criteria, our choice steered towards the building in Via Ansperto 5, as we were convinced that this was the ideal place to implement the project we had in mind, focusing on the main themes of modernity, efficiency, reduced environmental impact and attention to quality in the work environment.

Q: Creating a lower-ground space is a functional solution that results in a greater and original use of the underground parts of the building. How did collaborators and customers welcome the new space?

A: Being able to welcome our customers to contemporary and innovative spaces improves relationships in terms of experience, interaction and comparison. Using this part of the building to greet our customers is an unusual choice that is close to one of our practice's distinguishing features, that is thinking outside the box to find innovative solutions that bring added value to our customers.

Q: What is it like to work in a place that is at once open to the outside and private, characterised by an office design that is both intimate and innovative?

A: Changing location has had a significant impact on the working life of our employees, certainly for the better. Our previous headquarters were undoubtedly prestigious but the work environments were significantly more traditional and definitely less functional. Thanks to the use of glass as the distinctive element of the interiors, the resulting work environment is bright and its transparency encourages collaboration and team work among the various departments.

Q: Increasingly, workspaces are viewed in connection with a possible flexible use of both internal and external spaces. The fluid, modular design of your office spaces points in this direction. Do you think this formula is well suited to a business such as yours?

A: Changing location was a long-term investment that allowed us, among other things, to further expand the available spaces, thus enabling us to carry on developing the Italian practice. And in a long-term perspective, we needed to absorb the changes taking place in the professional service sector and meet future challenges with an approach to work that is increasingly integrated with technology. Rethinking the working environment was crucial to further stimulate inter-departmental synergies and professionals skills, combining flexibility and encouraging sharing.



Photos:
Stefano Anzini
Nicola Colella
Andrea Martiradonna

Texts:
Luciana Rappo
Giacomo Geroldi

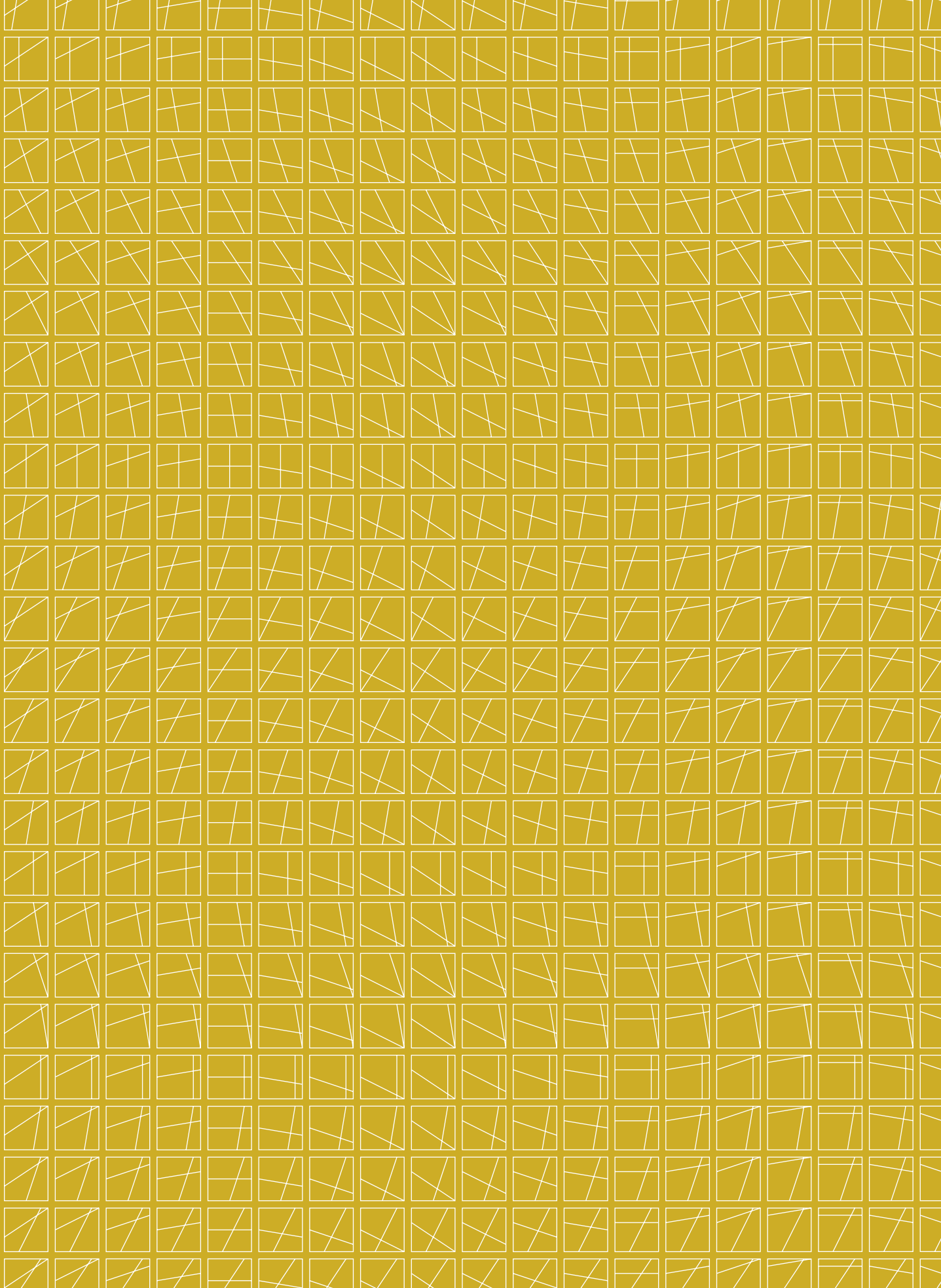
Graphic design:
Marinella Ferrari

© 2021, Park Associati
This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved.

Park Associati
Via Garofalo 31
20133, Milan

info@parkassociati.com
www.parkassociati.com

Printed on 100% recycled paper
Printed in Italy





PARK ASSOCIATI