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CAPANNONE 18  
EX OFFICINE REGGIANE  
**A HISTORIC SETTING**  
FOR INNOVATION

Reggio Emilia, Italy

ANDREA OLIVA ARCHITETTO



The Ex Officine Reggiane, situated in the old industrial heart of Reggio Emilia, lies just on the other side of the tracks, but not far from the historic center. The site has been a central part of local history, with railway manufacturing companies setting up factories here in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with many later turning to producing war materials until the end of the Second World War. The site ceased to be used for manufacturing in the 1980s and now the zone is the focus of a public-private regeneration project that is turning this space into a hub for science, technology and humanism - key skills for companies and research institutes.

Andrea Oliva's design for Capannone 18 sought to combine revamping the original structure while keeping its memory, avoiding the complete reconstruction of the facility in favor of maintaining elements of the dilapidated structure that can almost "tell" the tale of this plant. It is an intriguing project in which Dott. Gallina supplied the polycarbonate cladding.

The main industrial building is rather like a basilica structure at 174 m long and 40 m wide, with three "aisles" of differing heights and a succession of 28 steel portals. Externally, bricks are used as infills and also support the metal roof truss.

After the asbestos had been removed and the structure made safe, the building was given a new lease on life as a "mini city", with pathways, rest areas, internal and external views and shafts of natural light from

above. The new structures are literally located in the old, with a series of volumes that, for the most part, houses laboratories and offices. The grid-like structure is also a symbolic representation of relations and links, a network of connections. These volumes are overlapping, forming walkways, bridges and terraces in a unified space that rejects any attempt to impose monotony or the mundane. For example, the use of both polycarbonate and composite wood for the cladding of these new structures forges a dialogue of colors, textures and light.

In general, the ground-floor blocks are clad with wood, while the upper levels have polycarbonate modular panels, leading to the lower story being a darker hue, and the upper sections are marked by the translucent, ethereal appearance of white polycarbonate.

The arcoPlus® VT Façade modular system has 2 cm thick and 60 cm wide panels that are custom extruded. Externally, these panels have a crystal finish with UV protection; internally, they are opal white, concealing the underlying structure.

The use of a double layer ensures the translucent façades achieve good levels of thermal insulation, while the opaque walls and false ceilings are only single layer.

The Capannone 18 design was presented to the future users, allowing them to immediately plan the interiors and even start moving in while the building site was still active.

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