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Osservanza convent and Church of San Paolo in Monte: A Journey of Rediscovery – Exploring Reuse Strategies Through Comparative Analysis

CANDIDATE:

SOLEIMAN ARISH

SUPERVISOR:

LUIGI BARTOLOMEI

CO-SUPERVISOR:

ERNESTO ANTONINI

Abstract

This thesis delves into the revitalization potential of the Osservanza Convent and Church of San Paolo in Monte. Through a comparative analysis of successful convent reuse projects, the study identifies key strategies and adaptable functions. The analysis highlights the recurring trend of entrusting management to experienced organizations, often involving multiple entities for sustainable operations. Notably, the inclusion of residential units aligns with the convent's original purpose.

Furthermore, the chosen institutions in the examined projects demonstrate expertise aligning with the adopted functions, contributing significantly to their success. Selecting the right institution goes beyond mere management, offering a clearer vision for the future. As exemplified by Convento dell'Incontro, this strategic choice ensures new functionalities not only align with the building's potential but also preserve its historical essence.

Considering the Osservanza Convent's larger scale, the potential for a wider range of functions, including medical and educational uses, becomes evident. However, the future of the convent requires careful consideration of crucial factors, including the existing museum and library, and the convent's rich educational legacy. By thoughtfully addressing these factors, the future of the Osservanza Convent can be shaped to honor its past while serving contemporary needs and the community.

While this research does not propose a definitive solution, it lays the groundwork for informed decision-making. The comparative analysis provides a valuable springboard for further exploration, paving the way for the revitalization of the Osservanza Convent and Church of San Paolo in Monte.

Keywords:

Osservanza Convent, Church of San Paolo in Monte, Convent reuse, Comparative analysis, Management of reused convents, Future vision for reused convents, Preservation of historical essence, Franciscan values, Educational legacy, Revitalization

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Osservanza convent

Overview

From the south, the city of Bologna is surrounded by hills. These hills followed by Apennine Mountains eventually separate the capital of Emilia Romagna from the provinces of Tuscany.

The relationship between Bologna and its mountains has always been strong and still is. The presence of the religious buildings such as churches, chapels and sanctuaries in the territory and in mountain society is an undeniable historical factor and a current presence constitutive of the identity of the places, forming an integral part of the cultural dynamics of the resident populations and together with other religious elements, are the visible signs in the territory of a spiritual order present in the local populations since distant centuries and participating in the cultural formation of society and identity of the Bolognese mountains.¹ Today, there are at least 10 different religious buildings on the hills within a radius of 3 kilometers from Porta San Mamolo, which indicates the spiritual and ritual importance of the hills (Figure 03).

1- Manenti, Il territorio, 13-33

In some medieval paintings and drawings, looking towards the south and to some degrees looking towards the southwest from the twin towers of Bologna, out on the hills, there is a convent and a church standing on the highest visible point of the hill. A convent dedicated to Franciscan order (Figure 01).



Figure 01:an ancient depiction of Osservanza convent.)²

2- Image from the cover of the book: L'osservanza di Bologna convento e chiesa di San Paolo in Monte.

Ironically, for whatever reason it might be (religious, political etc), throughout history not all maps had the north on the top on the sheet³, likewise many maps of Bologna are looking towards the hills on the south where the Osservanza convent can be spotted (Figure 02).

Throughout this thesis, this orientation in which the south is on the top of the map will be used.

Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte Are located 1.5 kilometer walking distance from Porta San Mamolo and 2.4 kilometer from Piazza Maggiore. The same paths are accessible by bus and car. Through the official paths, Osservanza and Santuario Madonna di San Luca have 5.8 kilometer walking distance, However, observations and studies of aerial maps conducted for this thesis suggested that there might have been other paths which today are not available for public (located in the private properties) or they are too dangerous to cross (through the wild nature), for example a path might have connected the convent to the university in Viale del Risorgimento, which today clearly does not exist and needs passing through private properties, this path would have shortened the distance to San Luca as well (Figure 04).



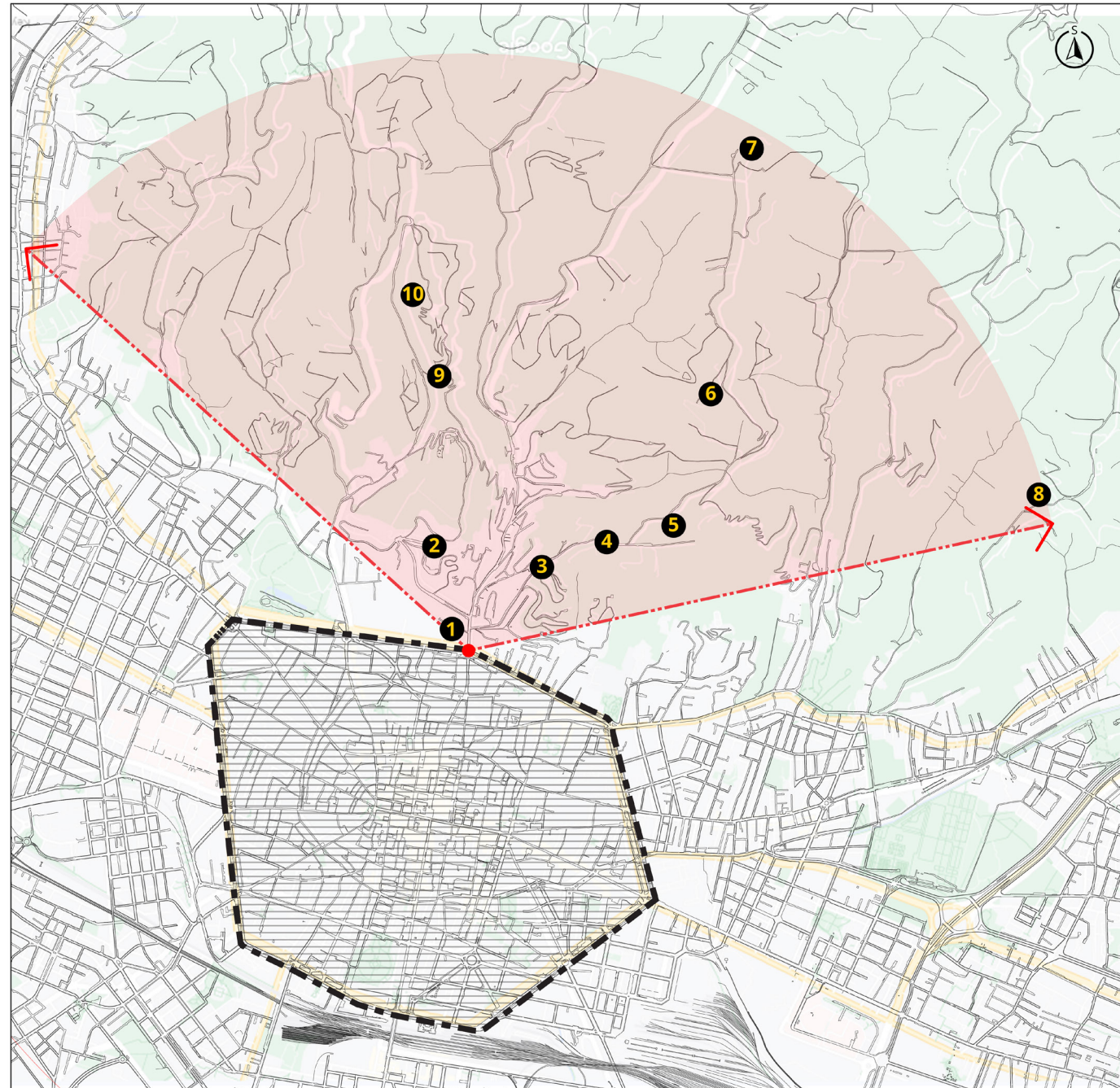
Figure 02: map of the city of Bologna by Gaet Ferrini.⁴

3- Dempsey, "map orientation."

4- From the British Library archive / ("Map of Bologna", n.d.)

Figure 03 - Historic religious buildings:

1. Chiesa della Santissima Annunziata a Porta Procula
2. Church of San Michele in Bosco
3. Santa Apollonia di Mezzaratta
4. Rotonda di Santa Maria del Monte
5. Chiesa e Convento dell'Osservanza
6. chiesa di San Vincenzo di Ronzano
7. Chiesa di San Michele Arcangelo di Gaibola
8. The Sanctuary of the Madonna of San Luca
9. Chiesina S. Vittore e Rudere
10. Church of San Vittore.



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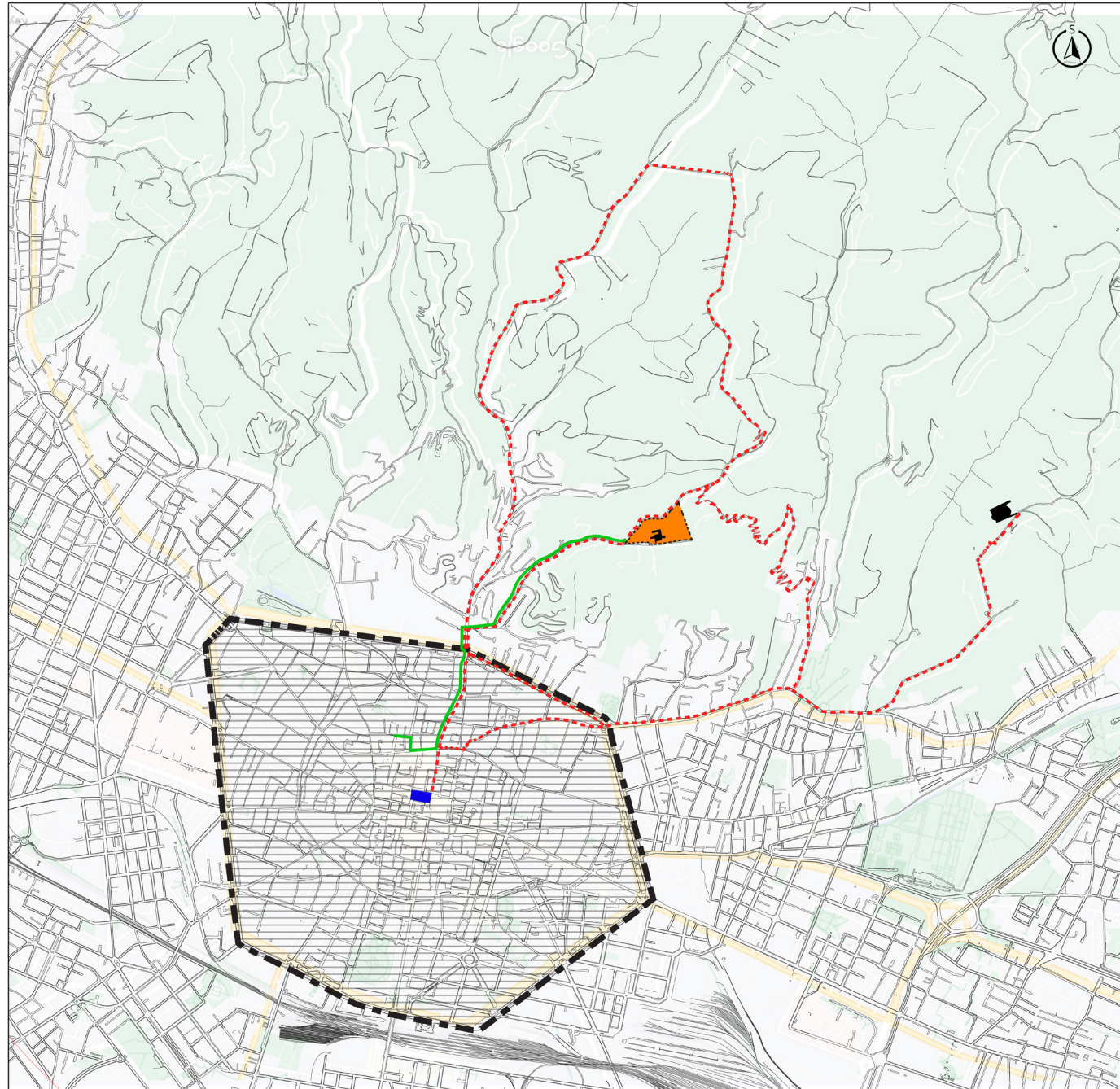


Figure 04 - infrastructure:

- ■ ■ ■ Bologna Historic center
- Bus number 52
- - - Car path
- Santuario Madonna di San Luca
- Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte
- Piazza Maggiore

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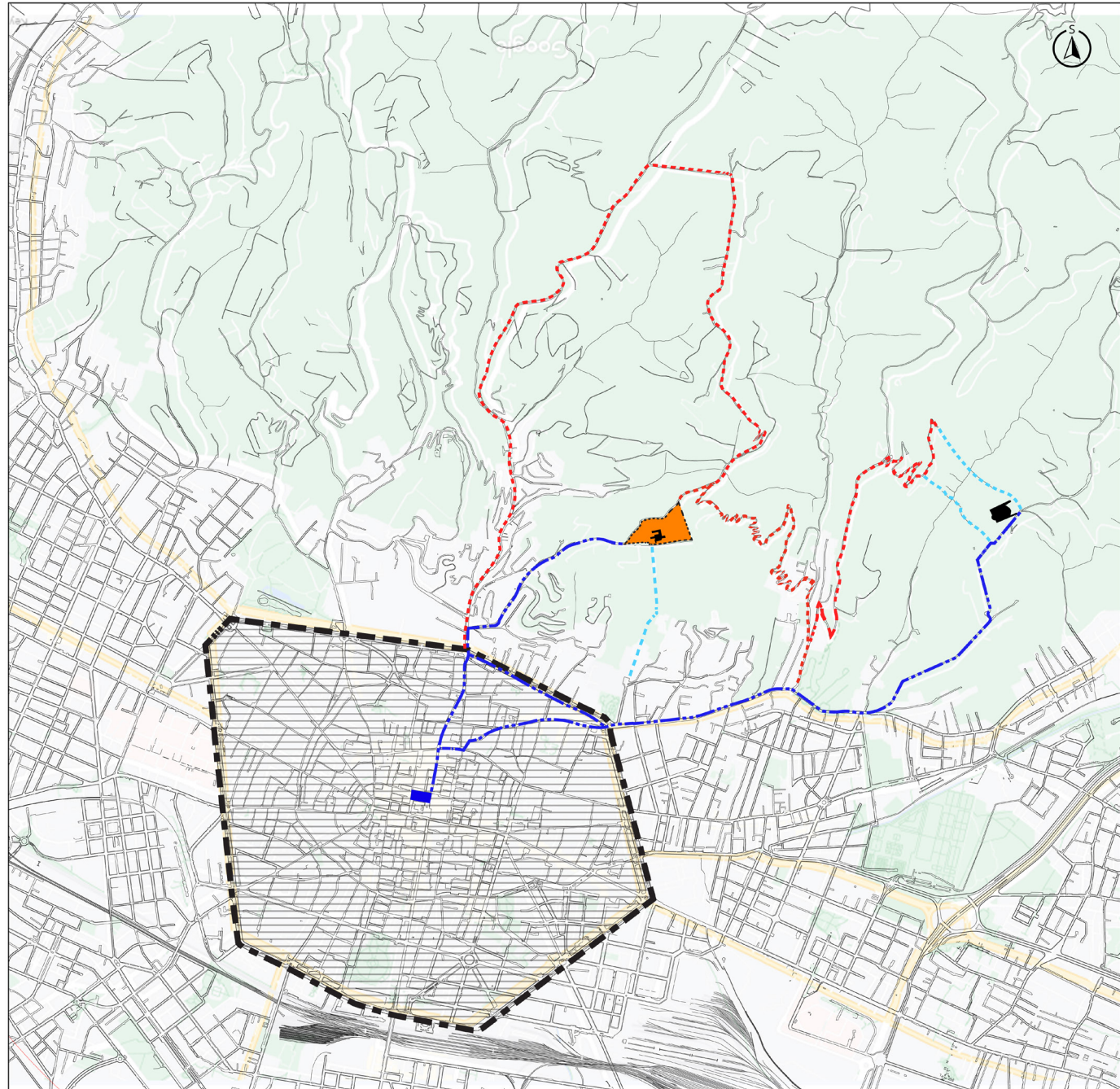


Figure 05 - Pedestrian paths:

- ■ ■ ■ Bologna Historic center
- ■ ■ ■ Official Pedestrian paths
- ■ ■ ■ Unofficial Pedestrian paths⁵
- ■ ■ ■ Non-existing paths⁶
- Osservanza convent and church of
- San Paolo in Monte
- Piazza Maggiore

5- Car paths used by pedestrians

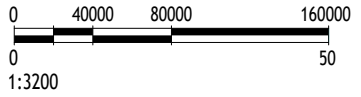
6-These paths are either in the wild or on private property.

1:24000



Figure 06 - Site plan

- ■ ■ ■ Premises of Osservanza convent
- Dense trees
- Agricultural area



History

Throughout history the convent and church of San Paole in Monte, went through many physical changes including expansion, partial diminishing, air strikes and earthquake. In its glory days it became the seat of the general chapter of Observance order and hosted many student and important religious figures, ultimately going back to original habits of solitude and hosting friars.

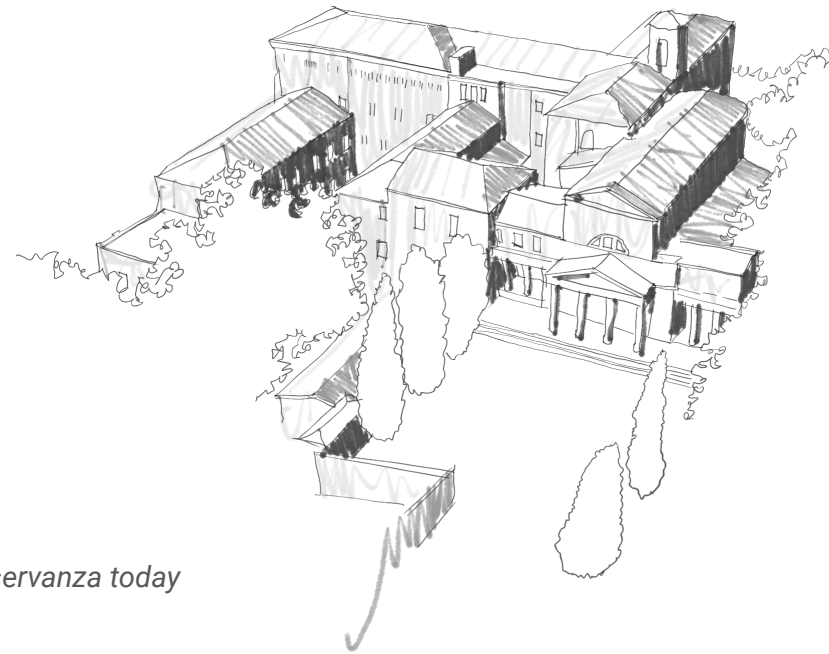
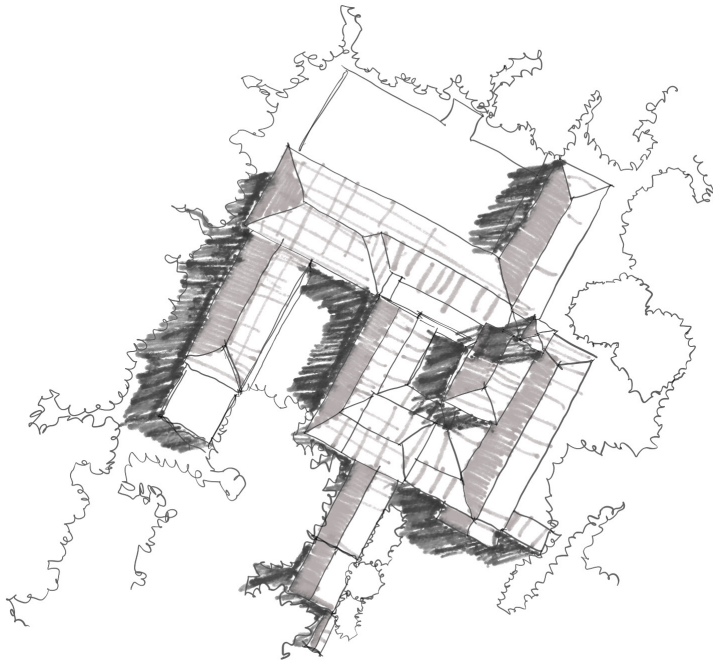


Figure 07: Osservanza today

Timeline

1211

The first presence of franciscan friars in Bologna goes back to the immediate after approval of Rule of Saint Francis⁷ by Pope Innocent III in 1210 where Bernard⁸ was sent to Bologna. His first appearance was not pleasant where his poor outfits were strange for people of Bologna. A lawyer⁹ named B. Nicolò¹⁰ took Bernard under his protection and gave him a piece of land in the area of Pugliole via del Porto street where he built a house and a church.^{11/12}

1224

Studies on franciscan ceramics estimated the presence of franciscan friars on Osservanza hills in the early 1300s. However considering the tradition of solitude, by the year 1224 Sant'antonio di Padoa¹³ who was teaching theology in Bologna had already retreated and was living in Osservanza hills where there was already an ancient chapel dedicated to saint Paul the hermit.¹⁴

7- regole di vita

8- Bernardo di Quintavalle (12th century – 1241)

9- dottore di legge

10- B. Nicolò da Bologna from the noble family of Pepoli.

11- Bernabei 1993, 4

12- Garani 1948, 1-4

13- Antonio di Padova 1195-1232

14- Paul of Thebes (227 – 341), commonly known as Paul the First Hermit or

In 1826 father P. Carlo di Bologna in a letter sent to the minister general of the Franciscan order P. Giovanni da Capestrano, claimed and traced back the presence of Franciscan friars in Osservanza hills to 1226.¹⁵

1403-1445

The Osservanza convent and the church of Saint Paolo in Monte dates back to 1403 when Pope Boniface IX on the bull¹⁶ on 23 March granted to the friar Giovanni da Stroncone two places one of which was on the hills outside of Porta San Mamolo. In the same year the jurist Antonio da Budrio donated money to the Order of Friars Minor to build the church, convent and bell tower, and in 9 December 1409 Pope Alexander V granted the full authority to start the construction process.¹⁷

The convent was completed in 1417 and enlarged again in 1446. The 15th century was great for both Osservanza convent and

Paul the Anchorite

15- Maioli and Giannaroli 1995, 68-73

16- Papal bull is a type of public decree, letter or charter issued by a pope of the Catholic church, named after seals used for authenticating documents and envelopes.

17- Maino and Gandolfi 2009, 23-30

the francescan order. The convent became famous for the presence of Saint Bernardino of Siena and all the Saints of the Osservanza reform. The convent quickly gained great importance so that in 1431 it hosted the first general chapter of the Observance order, presided by Saint Bernardino and in 1455 by S. Giovanni da Capestrano who was also appointed by Pope Eugene IV as preacher of the crusade against the Turks.

In this century important relations was established, thanks to the university, Osservanza convent became a cultural center, famous for the growing number of important religious people dedicated to study, such as the blessed Antonio Primadizzi, Marco Fantuzzi, Fathers Francesco Piazza, Alessandro Ariosto, relative of Ludovico Ariosto, Giovanni da Prato, etc.

1447-1510

In 1447 Pope Nicholas V granted to the friars and the guardians of the convent to have a place near the city without the bell and tower for taking care of sick friars. In this regard a place in the parish of San Mamolo near the walls of Bologna was given to the Vicar general Giacomo Primadizzi before SS. Annunziata was built.

To accommodate the convent's growing needs, another neighboring plot was acquired from the Abbey of San Procolo on December 8, 1450.

In 1475 Pope Sixtus IV allowed the friars of the Osservanza to buy the Armenian monastery of San Basilio just outside Porta

San Mamolo, at the foot of Osservanza hill, where a new convent and a church dedicated to SS. Annunziata which ultimately led to decline the importance and position of the convent of Osservanza of which the first signs were seen in 1491 when it became necessary to have documents preventing the sale of lands linked to the convent, which indicates the importance of the convent is beginning to wane.

In 1510 it was officially announced that two houses will have one guardian which had always been the case and SS. Annunziata was a dependency of Osservanza, however the need to officially write this makes it clear that there was a tendency to neglect Osservanza in favor of SS. Annunziata.

1511

From the second decade of the sixteenth century the period of great importance on Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte was coming to an end. On 16 May 1511 a separate guardian was announced for the SS. Annunziata. From this date the two convent although in close distance but formally distinct from each other. Thanks to the proximity with the university, SS. Annunziata will become the seat for general study of the order with the presence of forty friars. The Osservanza will return to its original function as a place of retreat and solitude giving refuge to dozens of friars.

1796

With the arrival of the Napoleon period in Bologna, on 18 June 1796, the Osservanza convent went under suppression like the other convents in the city. However unlike the other convents it had more and dramatic miss fortune to extent of ending his story, where as the church and the convent along the nearby Madonna del Monte were acquired by Antonio Aldini a deputy of Cisalpine Republic and a loyal to Napoleon, to demolish and use the materials to build what tody bears his name, Villa Aldini which was never finished and he never used the Villa. In 1824 the remains of the church and convent were purchased by Rosa Facci Bacellieri only to return it to the friars. In 1828 the donations made reconstruction of the church possible. The architect Vincenzo Vannini was trusted for the new project; he proceeded with the contemporary style of that time.¹⁸

In 1867 the convent was suppressed for a second time by the Italian state. In 1880 were finally able to come back but only to find out the water damaged the ceiling, in 1884 the ceiling was restored. In 1880 the convent became the seat of the Seraphic Collage for religious and missionary vocation, in the meantime the size of convent was expanded to accommodate the college students. During the period of war 1943-1945 following the bombing of Bologna in 25 July 1943 the convent was evacuated and on 1 December 1944 the convent was hit by aerial bombardment which led to the collapse of a wing of the convent which was never rebuilt. The convent remained closed until June

18- Biagi Maino and Gandolfi 2009, 37

1945.¹⁹

The return to normal life brought back the seraphic college and the convent went through a series of radical renovation works with new modern arrangement of the rooms.

The college became the seat of theological studies in 1978 but this experience also ended in 2006.

Since 1980s the convent went through series of restoration and intervention financed by the convent, the state, the Soprintendenze,²⁰ banking institutions, private individuals etc. as a result two museums were created: The chinese and non-european cultures and the Observance museum.

Since 1982 for twenty-six years Osservanza has hosted the Bolognese Harpsichord Association, annually hosts the May Cultural days, the September Days, the European Culture and Music Days.²¹

As of 2020, the leaders of the Franciscan Order have decided to transfer the remaining 5 friars without any explanation. Today, only the second and third floors are occupied by the Kinder Collage private school, and the rest is empty. The church is still unstable as a result of the 2012 earthquake.²²

19- Biagi Maino and Gandolfi 2009, 38

20- Related to the Ministry of Culture of Italy.

21-Biagi Maino and Gandolfi 2009, 39

22- Giordano, n.d.



Figure 08: Church of San Paolo in Monte in 1930²³

23- Candiani 2020, 6

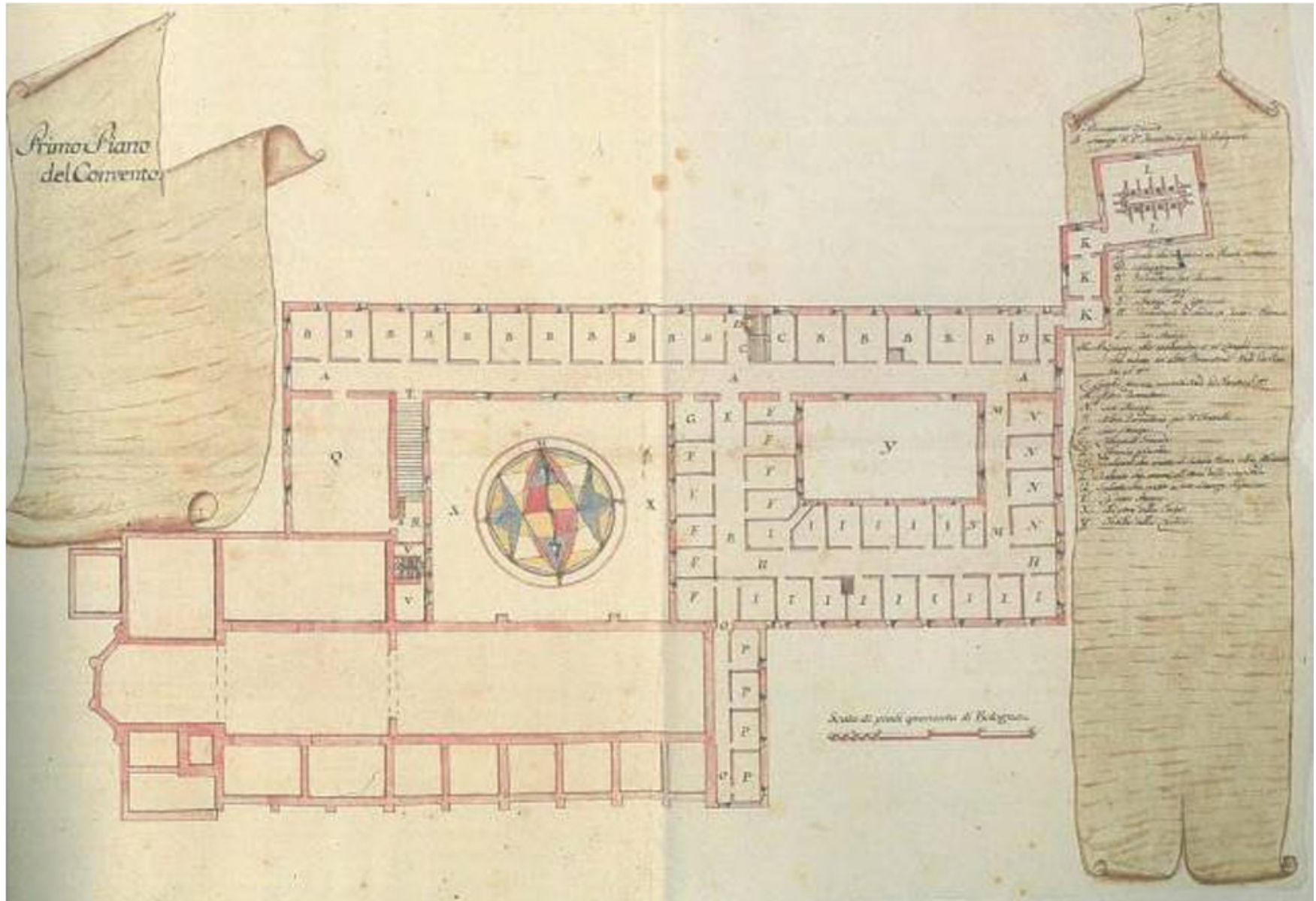


Figure 09: First floor of Convent of Osservanza in 1773²⁴

Fig. 8 - Pianta di tutta la Clausura del Convento (Archivio S. Paolo in Monte, Lib. VII, Vol. I, n. 7)

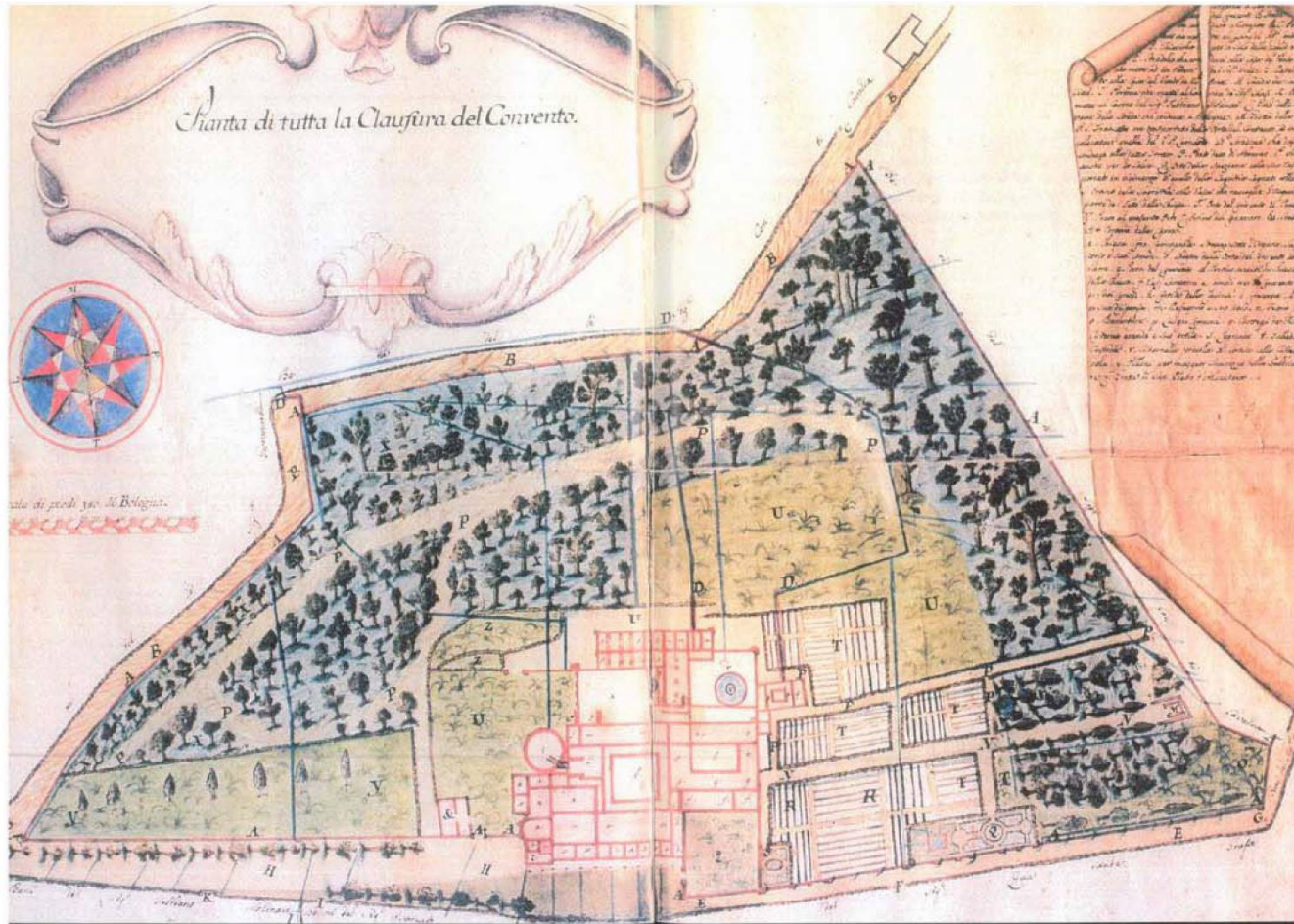


Figure 10: Site plan of Osservanza convent²⁵

Building analysis

Today, the ex-convent of Osservanza and the church of San Paolo in Monte are a total of 8240 square meters on 5 floors without some facilities within the premises of the convent. It consists of facilities for hosting and living of Friars, dining room, study rooms, library and museum. the second and the second floor are occupied by Kinder college school as tenant. In terms of major changes it can be studied with few steps of expansion before demolition in 1800s and strikes in wars and earthquake in 2012.

Scale

As stated by Thomas Coomans²⁷ and taking the size of the cloister as reference for defining the scale of convents, the smallest convents had at least a 20 meter long cloister. By this definition Osservanza convent is among the small convents with a 20 by 13 meter cloister. Arguably, by examining the historic floor plans (figure of historic floor plan) before the 18th century the cloister was 20 by 20 meters.

27- Coomans 2018, 106

Orientation of the church

Generally christian churches are built along east-west axis and in the early christian period the entrance of churches were on the east side of the church.²⁸ Since for a monastic life, the orientation of the church was an essential point. "The rising of the sun after the darkness of the night was a daily reminder to the monks and nuns of the resurrection of Christ"²⁹

As a result during the Carolingian period the direction of churches was turned, now the entrance would be oriented, facing east, however the axis stayed the same.³⁰

The case was the same for the Church of San Paolo in Monte. In the 18th century after the demolition and during the reconstruction, the church was reversed and now the entrance is facing the east (figure 14).

28- Coomans 2018, 28

29- Coomans 2018, 29

30- Coomans 2018, 28

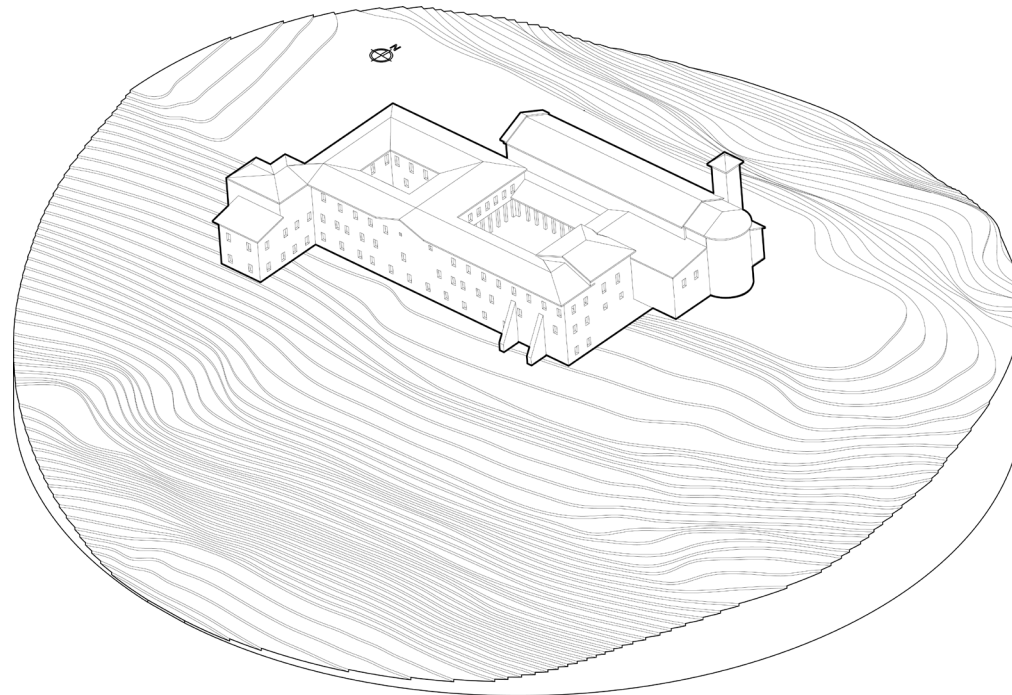


Figure 12: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte³¹ in 17th century.³²

31- the entrance is faced to west.

32- by this time the convent already went through enlargement compared to establishment time.

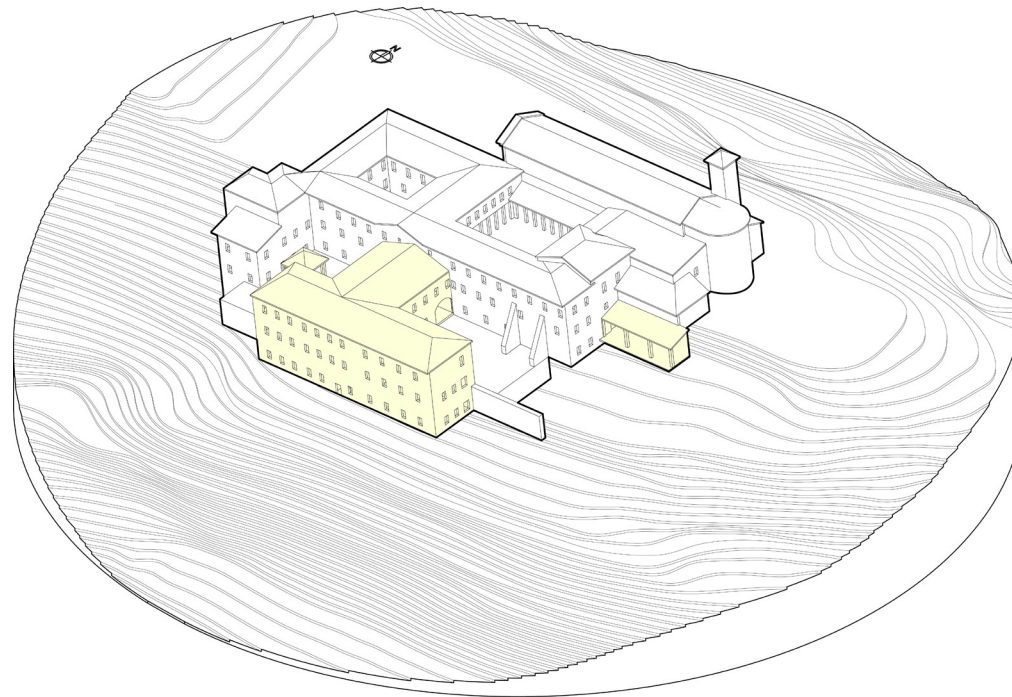



Figure 13: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte in 18th century.³³

 new constructions.

33- The added spaces are related to hosting students.

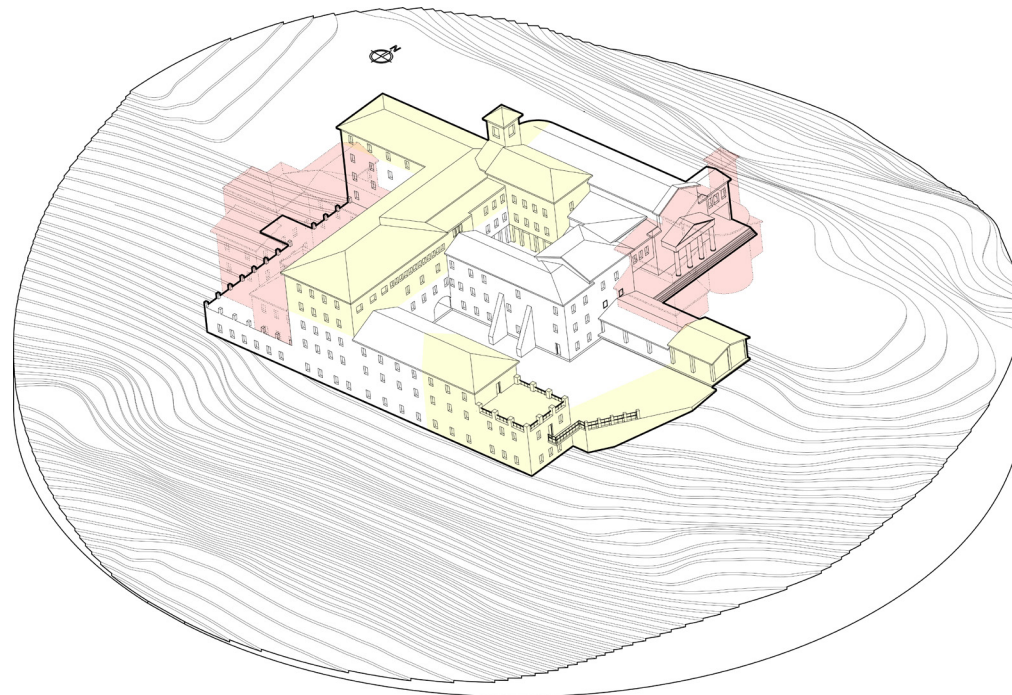




Figure 14: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte³⁴ in 19th century.³⁵

 new constructions.

 demolished.

34- in this period the entrance is faced to east.

35- during this period some parts of convent and church were already demolished to built Villa Aldini.

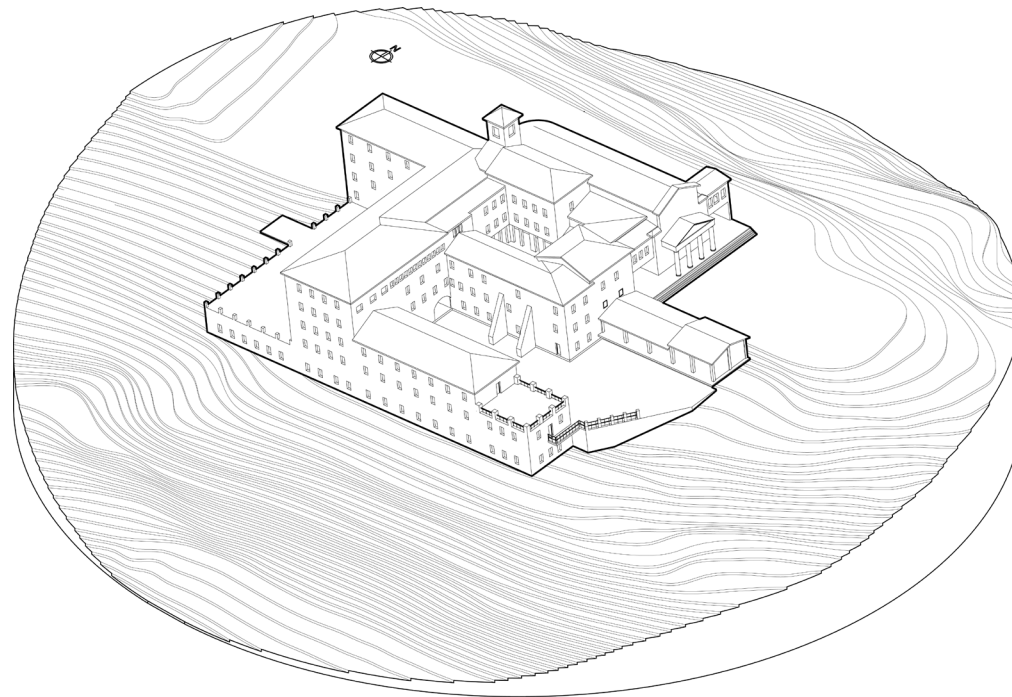


Figure 15: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte today.

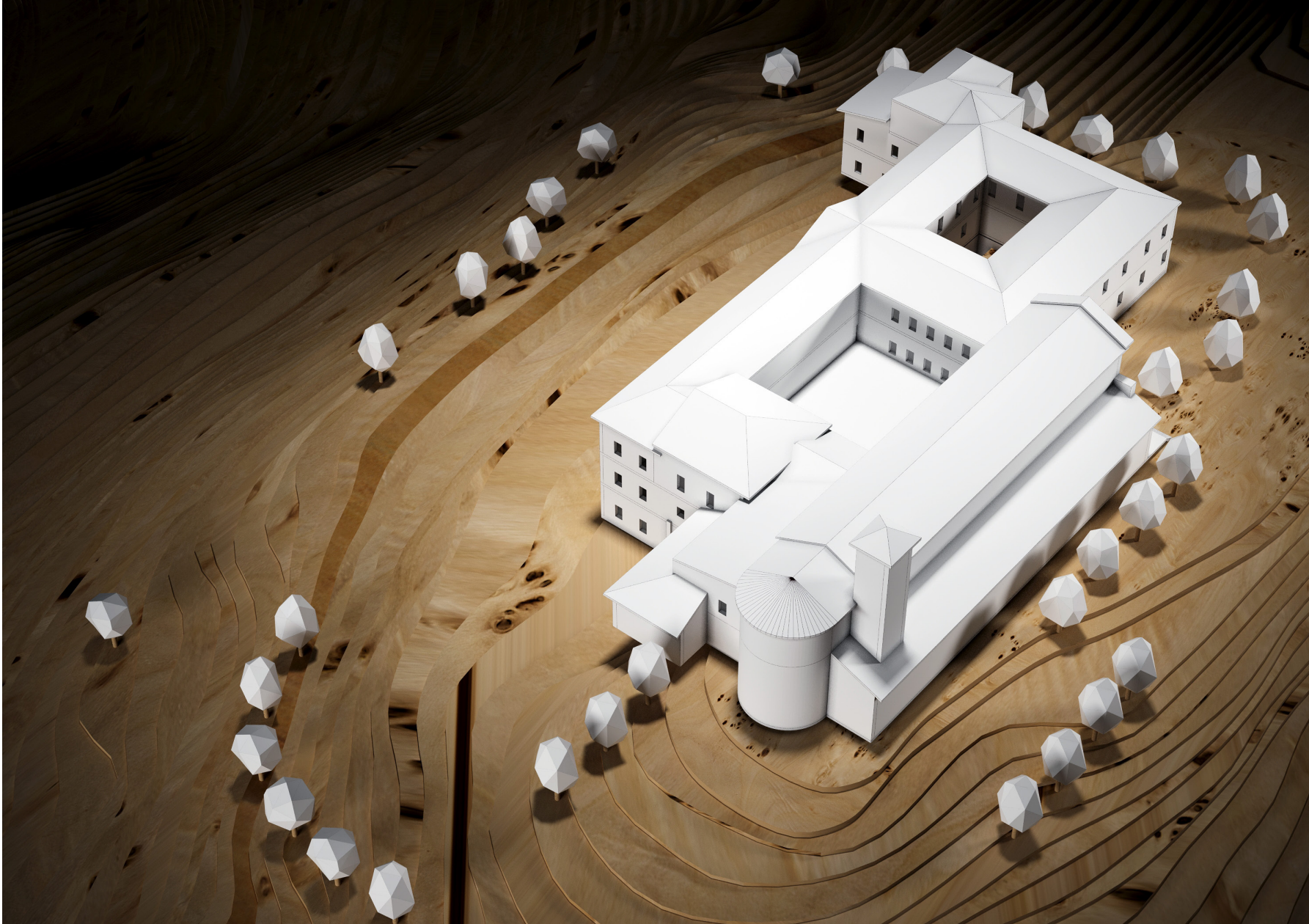


Figure 16: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte in 17th century.

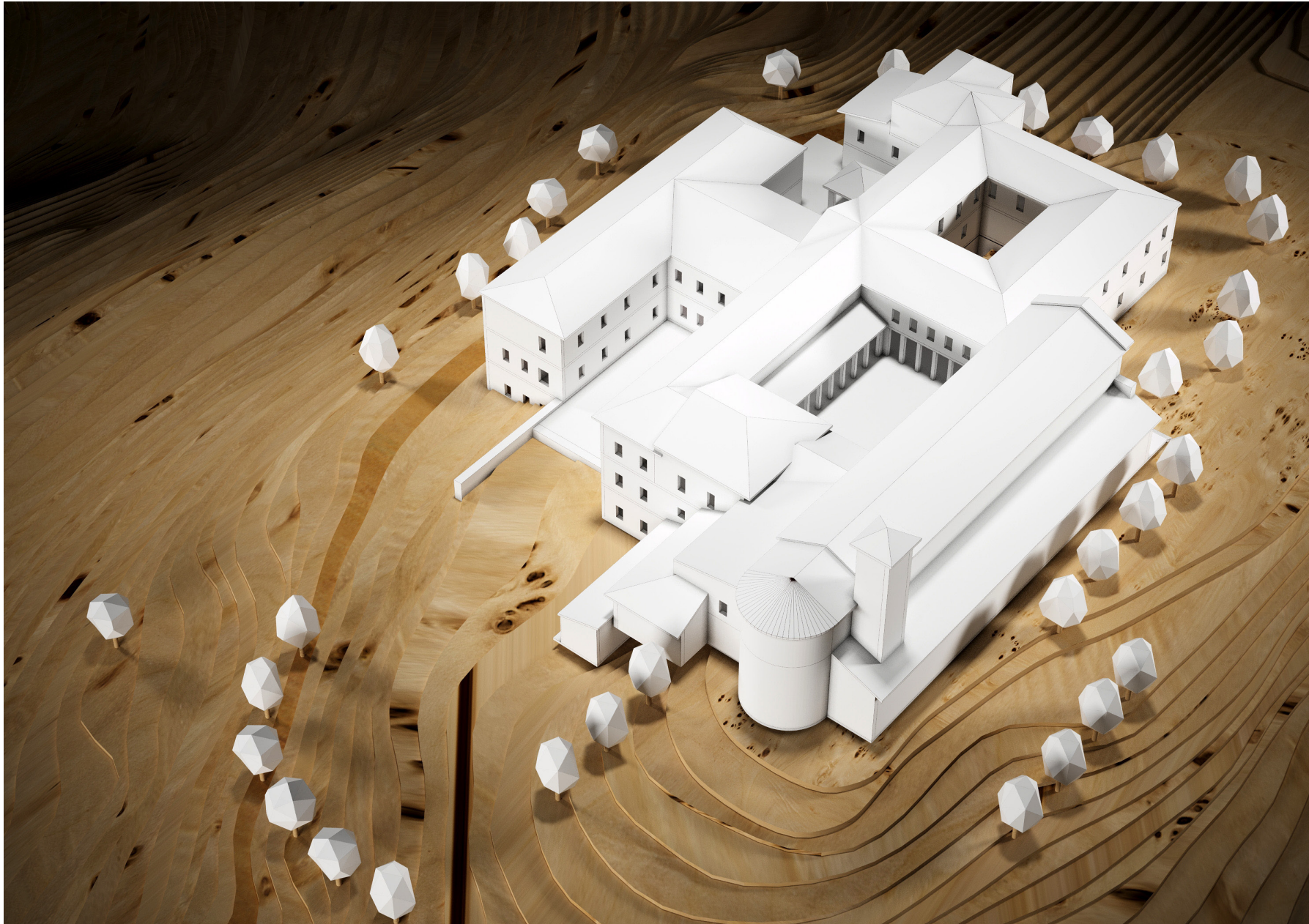


Figure 17: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte in 19th century

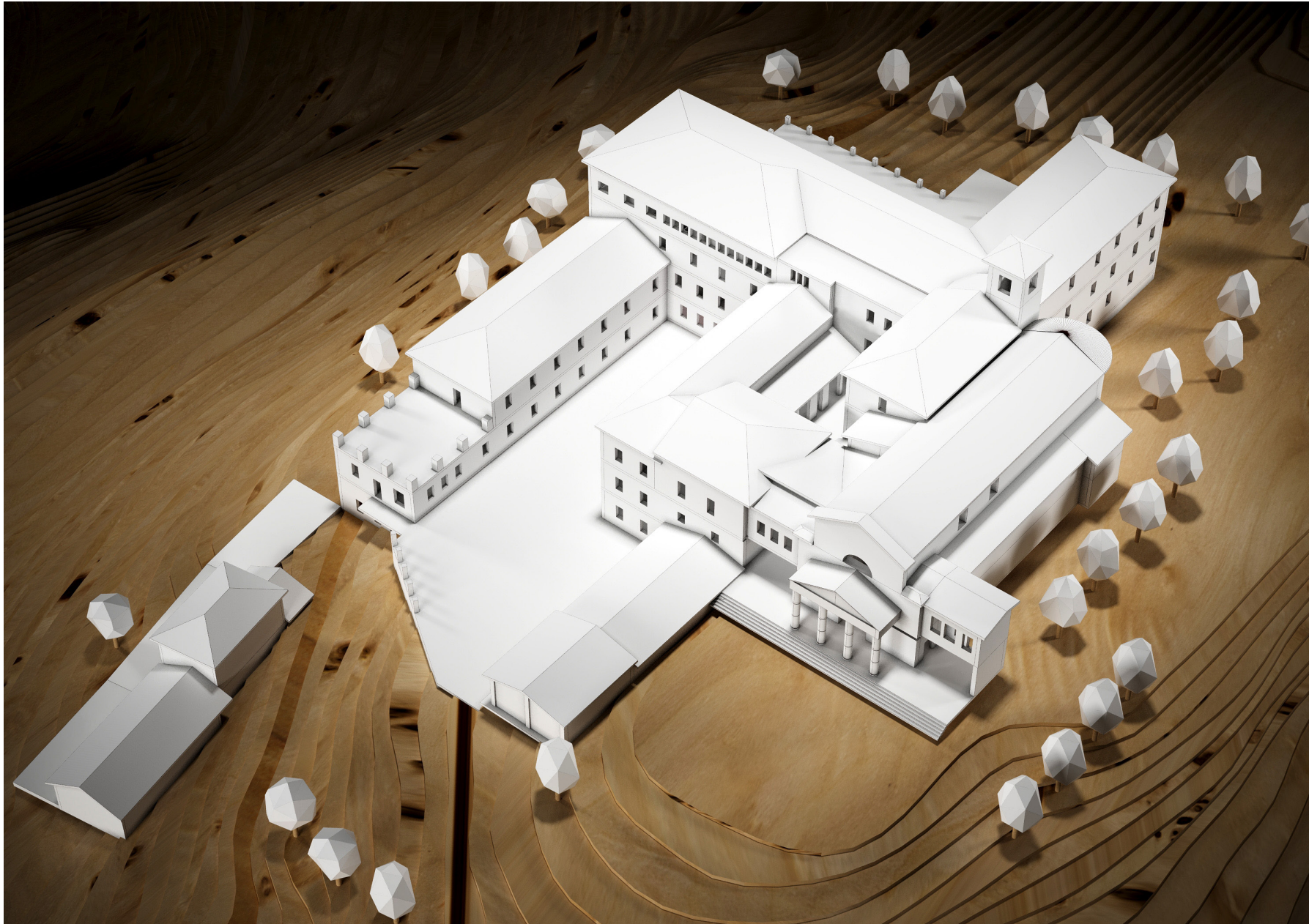


Figure 18: Osservanza convent and church of San Paolo in Monte today.

Figure 19: BASEMENT -3.50

Legend:³⁶

- 1. Recreation room
- 2. TV room
- 3. Tailoring and dressmaking
- 4. Stationery
- 5. Bookbinding
- 6. Carpentry

Total area: 1002.923 m²

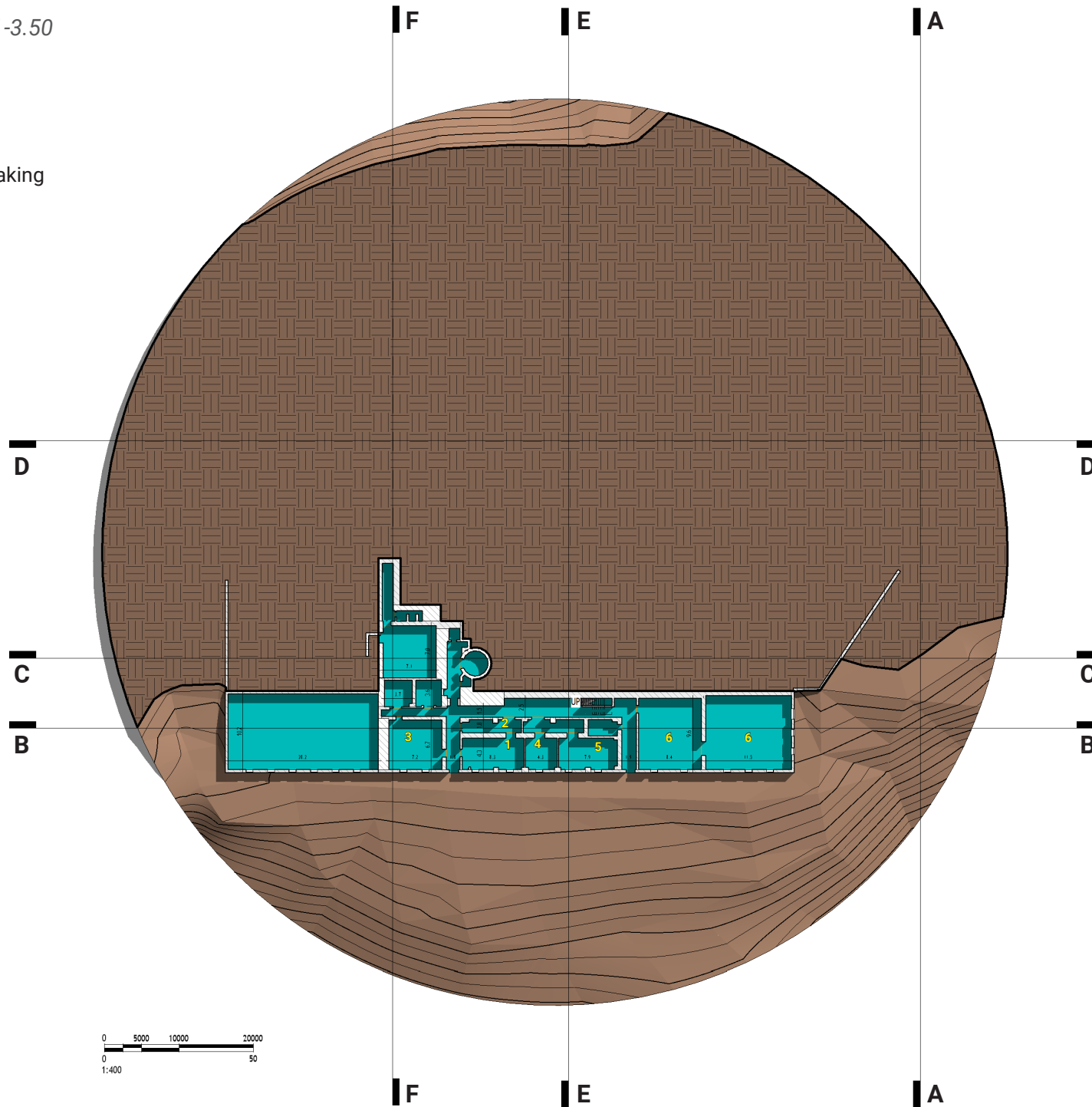
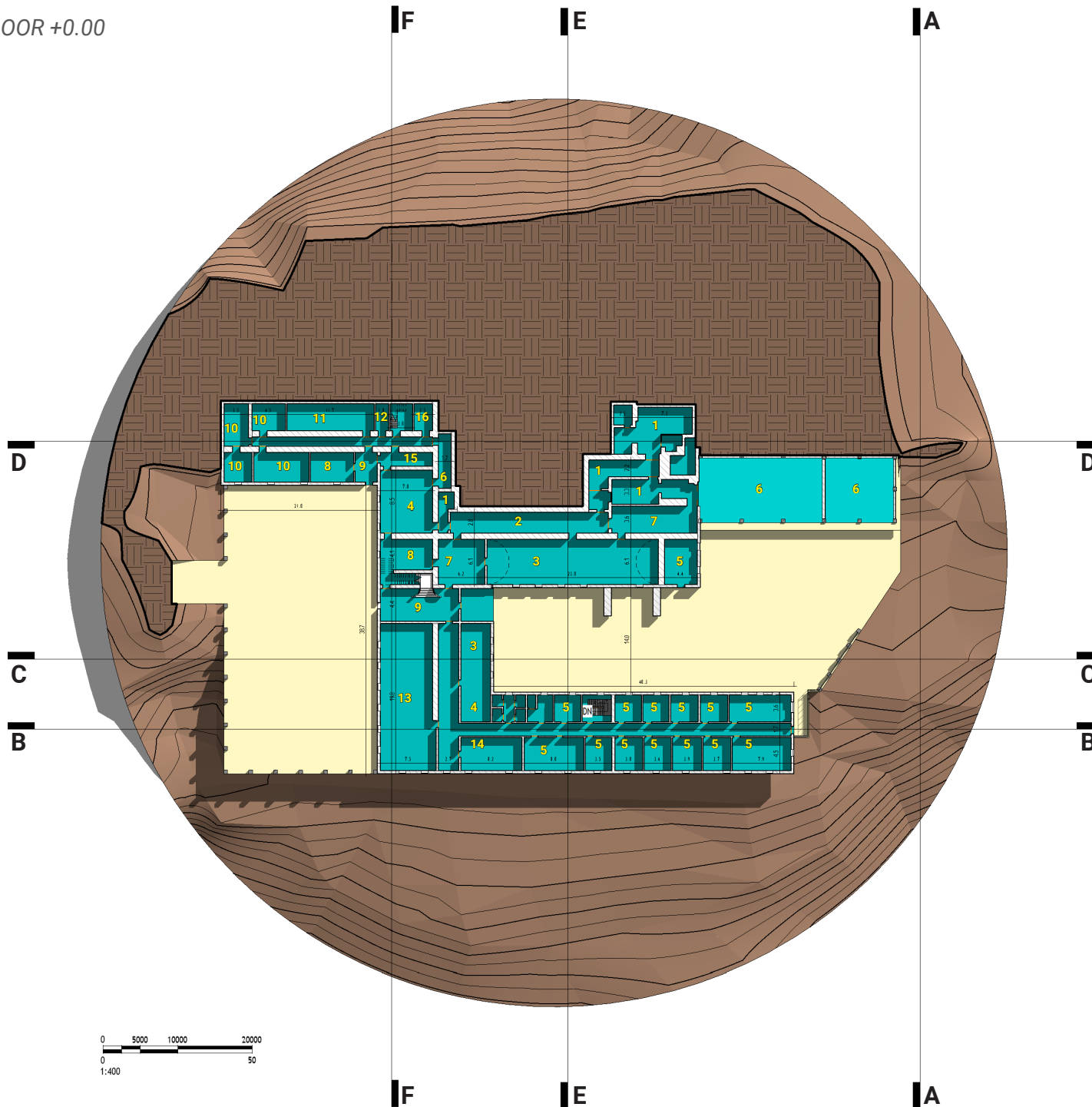


Figure 20: GROUND FLOOR +0.00

Legend:³⁷

- 1. Cellar
- 2. Corridor
- 3. Refectory
- 4. Kitchen
- 5. Room
- 6. Storage
- 7. Lobby
- 8. Small room
- 9. Entrance
- 10. Food storage
- 11. Warehouse
- 12. WC
- 13. Gym
- 14. Chapel
- 15. Cold storage room
- 16. Closet

Total area: 2144.115 m²



37- The legend is based on land and building registry plan date 20/11/1996 requested on 17/01/2020 from municipality of Bologna.

Figure 21: FIRST FLOOR +4.60

Legend:³⁸

- 1. Terrace
- 2. Room
- 3. Church
- 4. Cloister
- 5. Entrance
- 6. Sacristy
- 7. Bath
- 8. WC
- 9. Chapel
- 10. Bell tower

Total area: 2470.15 m²

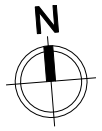
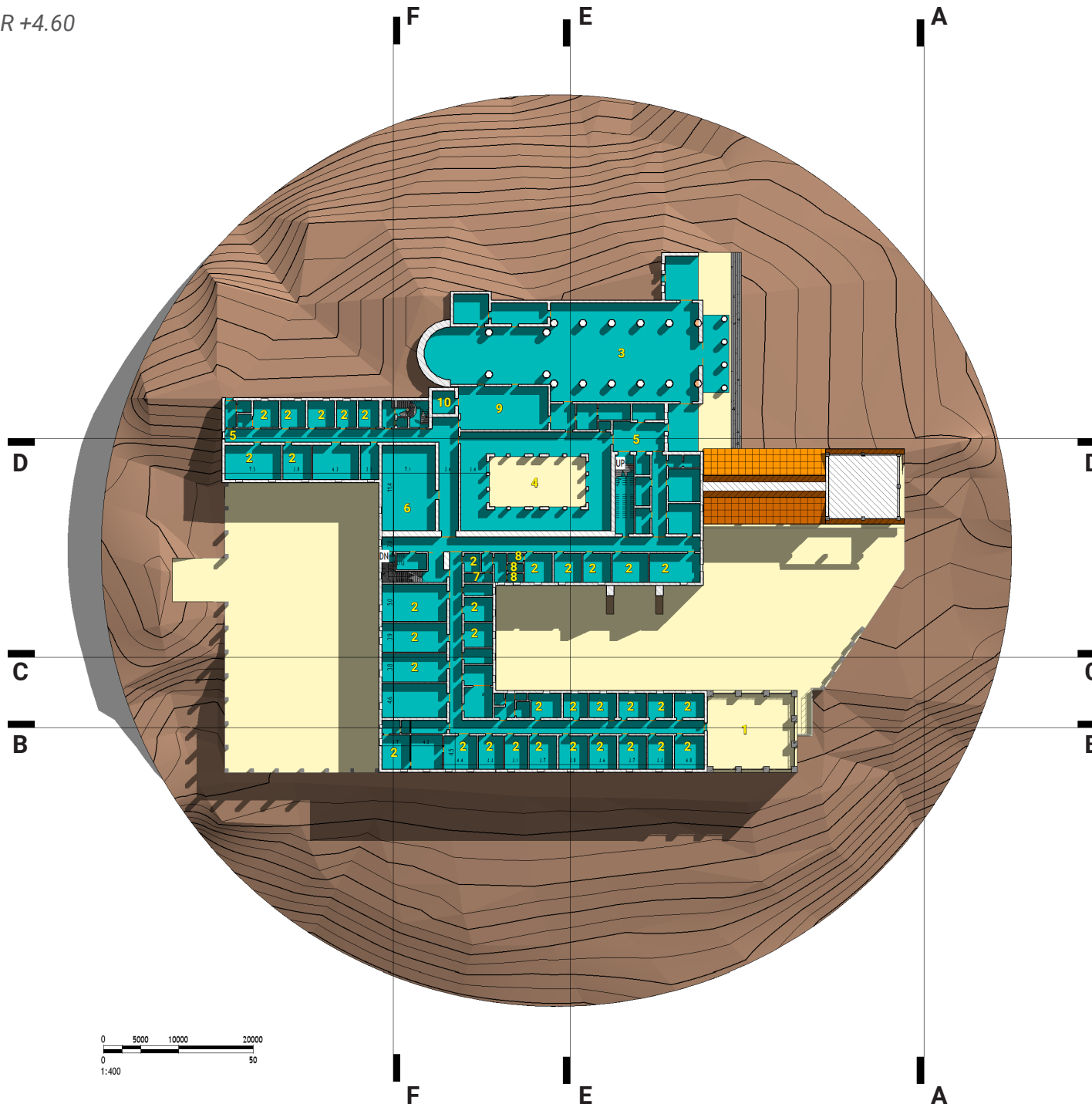
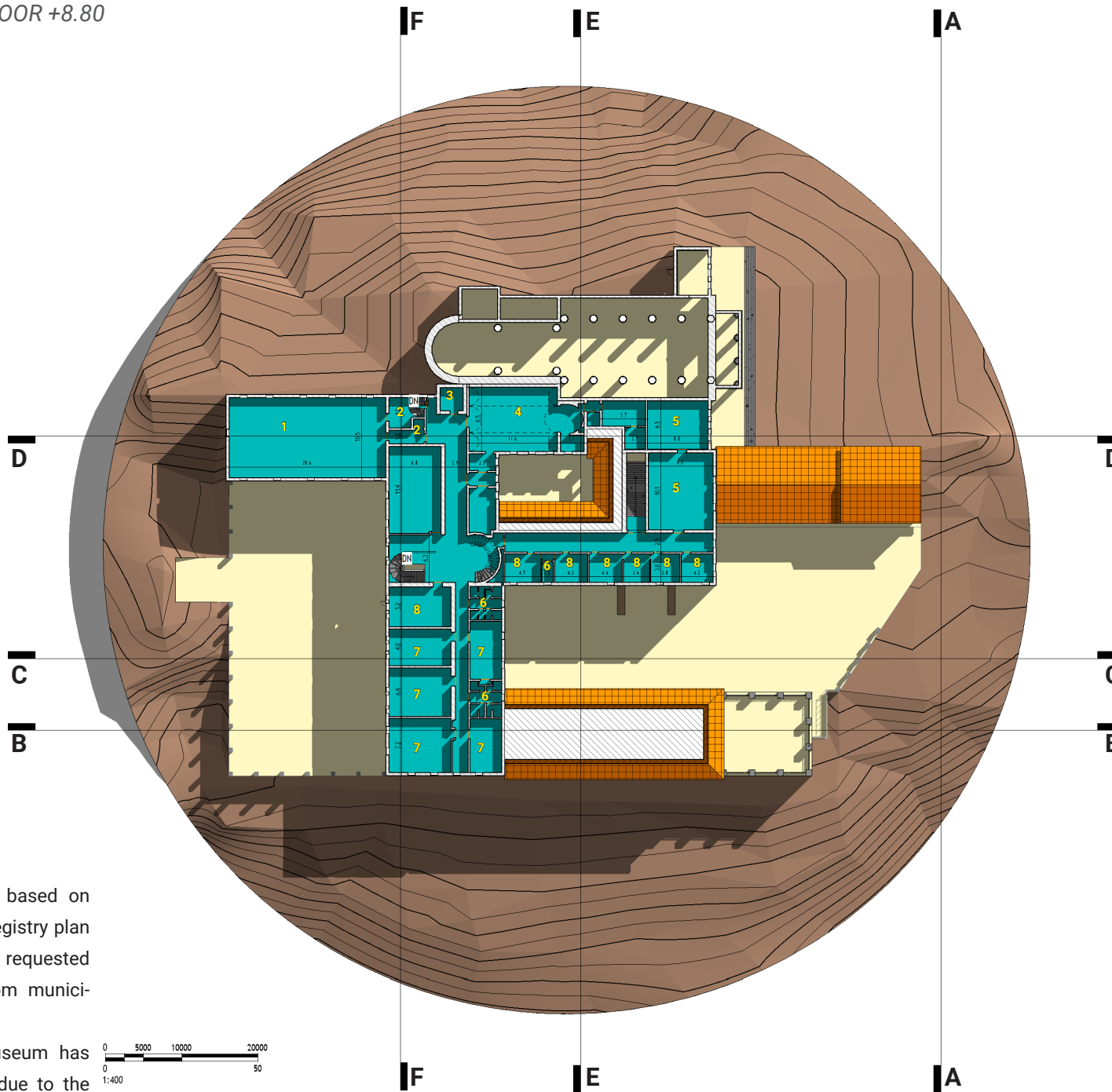


Figure 22: SECOND FLOOR +8.80

Legend:³⁹

- 1. Museum
- 2. Lobby
- 3. Bell tower
- 4. chapelle⁴⁰
- 5. Library
- 6. WC
- 7. Classroom
- 8. Room

Total area: 1509.37 m²



39- The legend is based on land and building registry plan date 20/11/1996 requested on 17/01/2020 from municipality of Bologna.

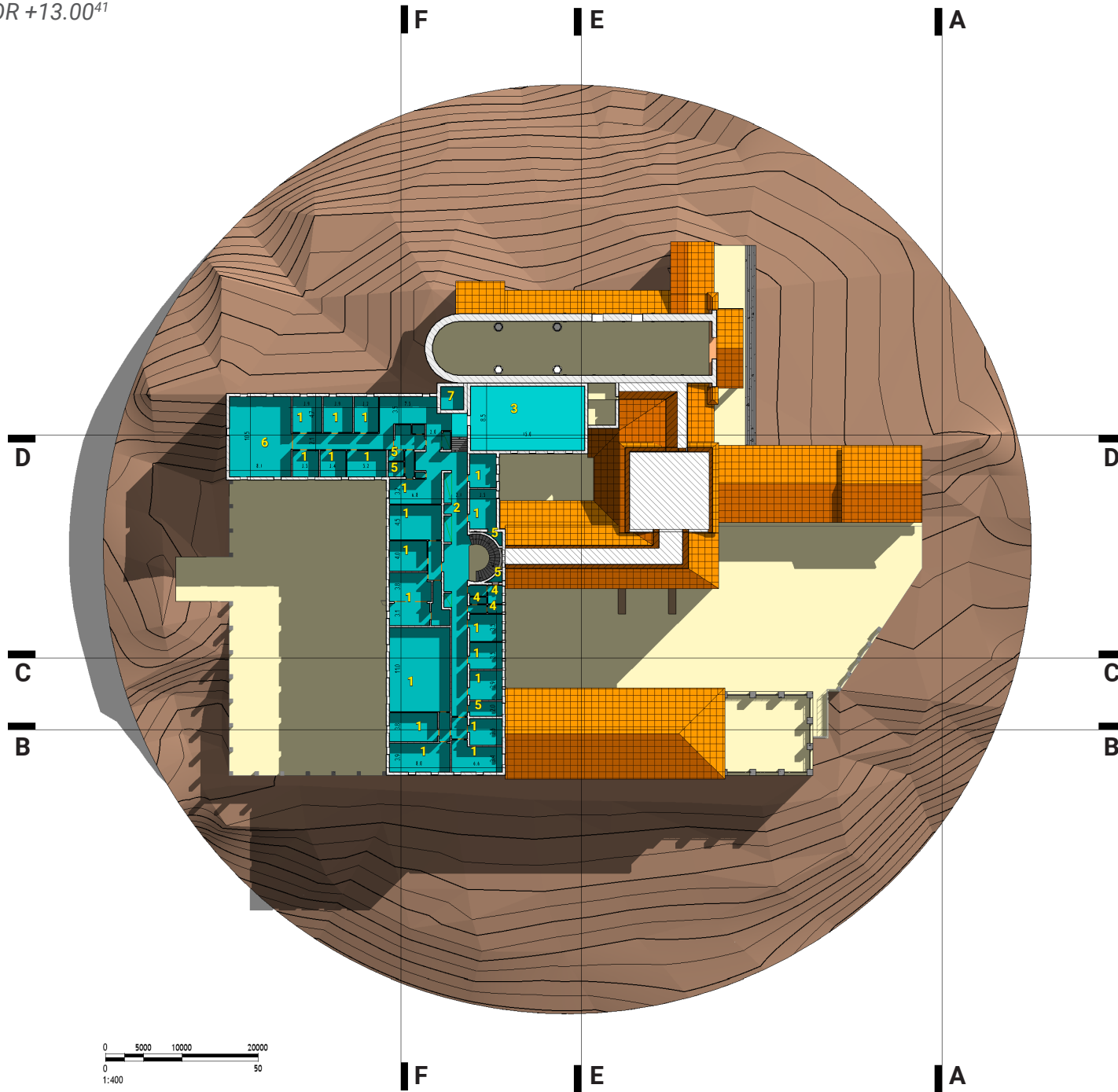
40- Today, the museum has been moved here due to the damage caused by the earthquake in its previous location.

Figure 23: THIRD FLOOR +13.00⁴¹

Legend:⁴²

- 1. Office
- 2. Corridor
- 3. Meeting room
- 4. WC
- 5. Closet
- 6. Hall
- 7. Bell tower

Total area: 1105.86 m²



41- This floor is occupied by kindercollage.

42- The legend is based on land and building registry plan date 20/11/1996 requested on 17/01/2020 from municipality of Bologna.

Figure 24: ROOF

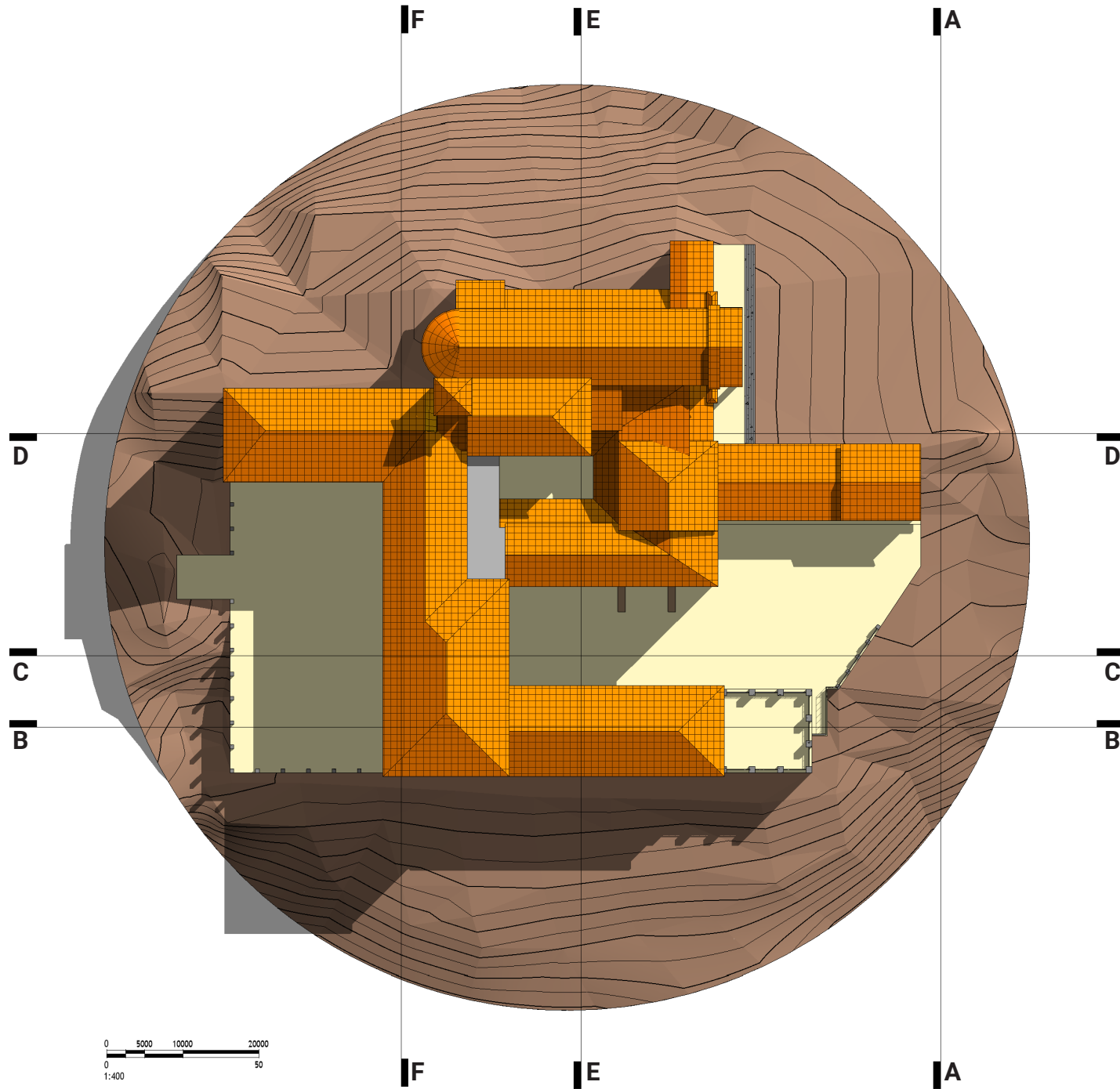


Figure 25: A-A SECTION

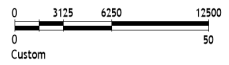
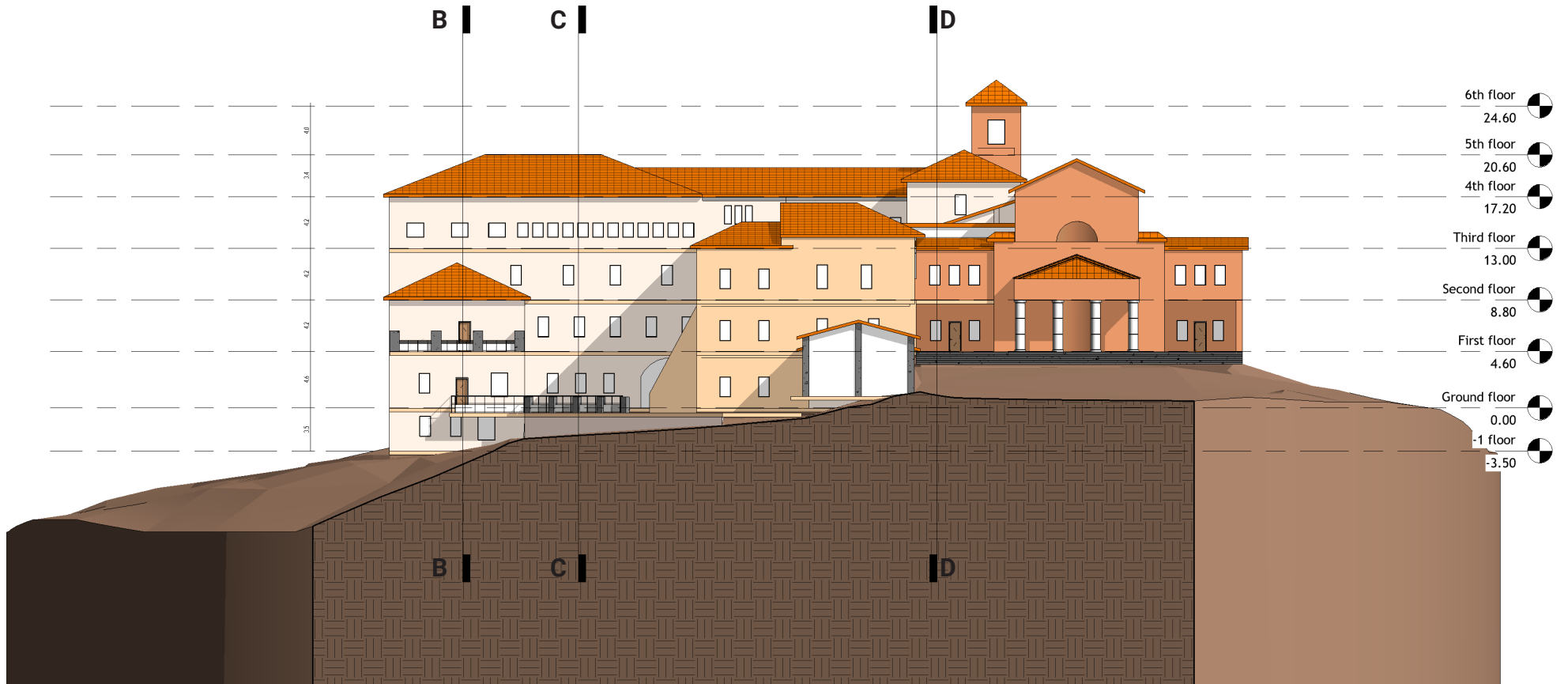


Figure 26: B-B SECTION

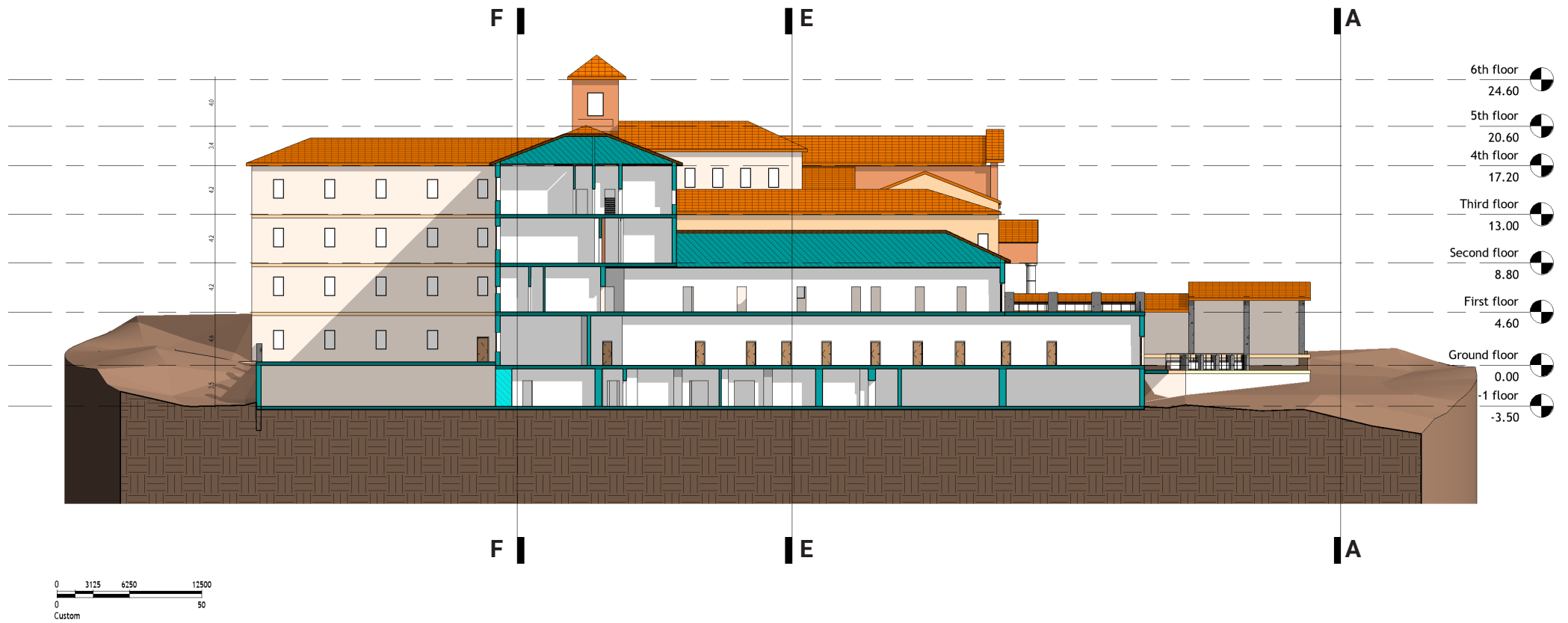


Figure 28: C-C SECTION

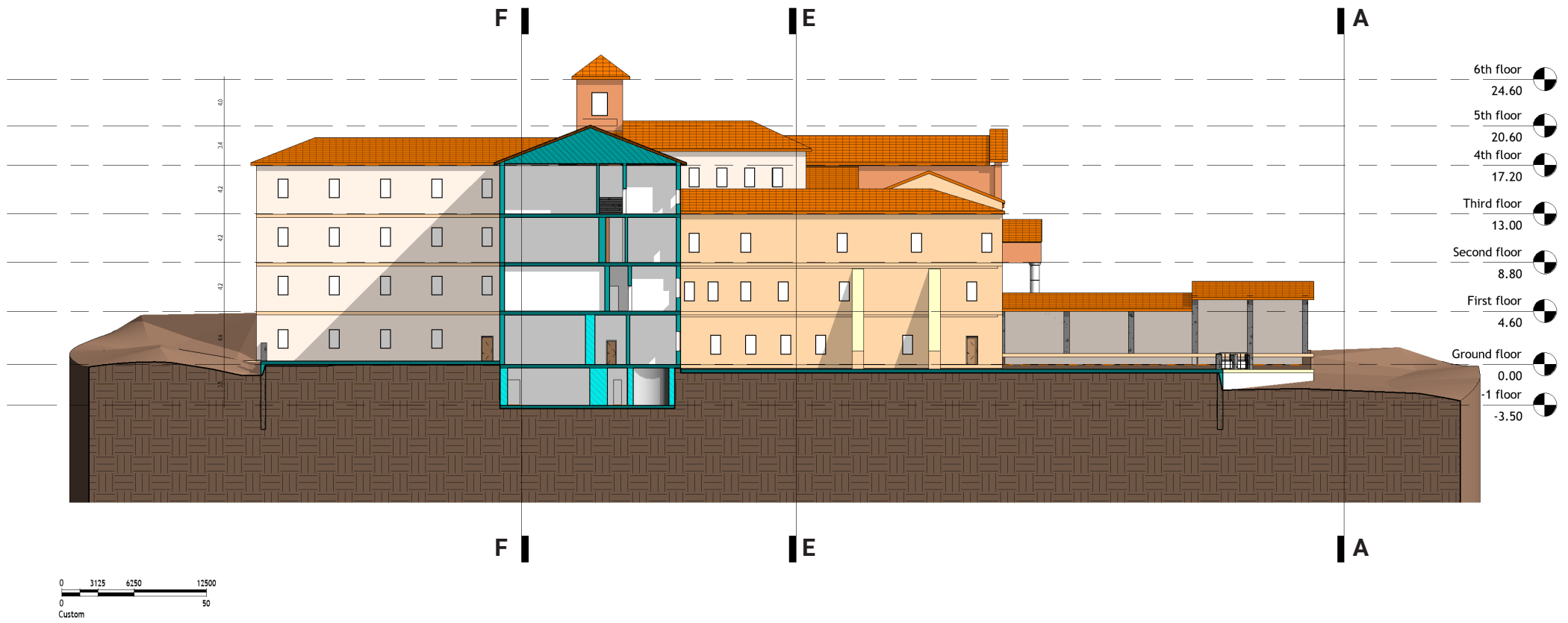


Figure 29: D-D SECTION

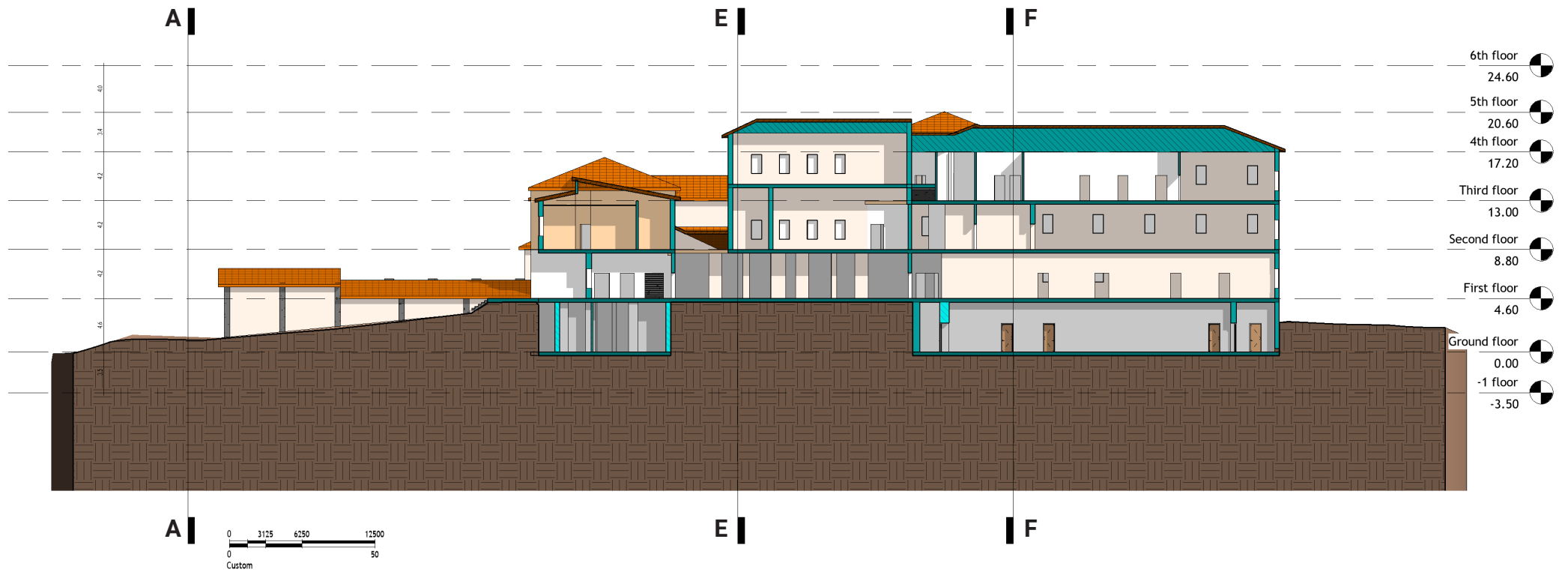
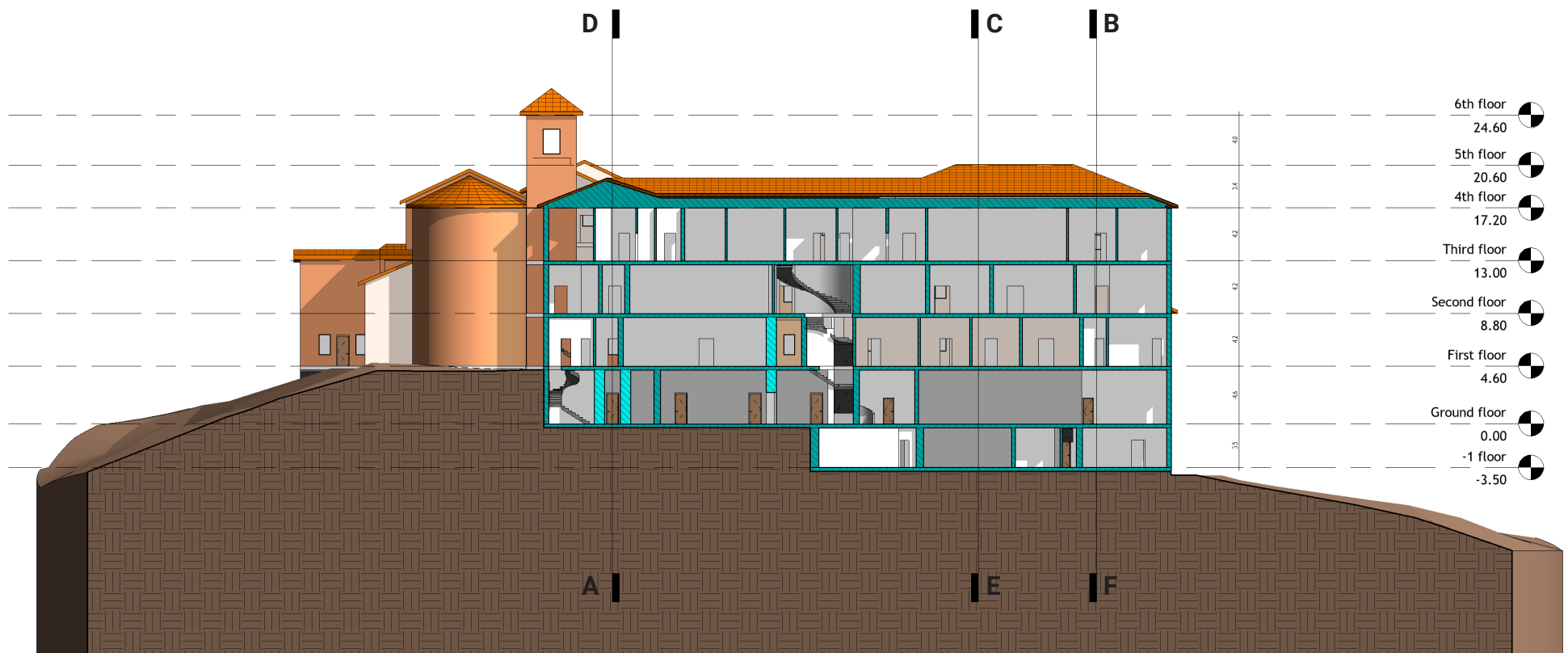


Figure 30: F-F SECTION



Case studies

Convent of Cappuccini

The Convent of Cappuccini (figure 26) dedicated to the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin located in the area of San Marco in the city of Pisa. The ownership of the convent is with the administrative division within the Capuchin Franciscan Order of the Tuscany region. Today the convent is located in the vicinity of the central station of Pisa, once a suburban area. Founded in the 13th century by Cistercian monks, it later transitioned to Benedictine ownership before facing destruction during the Pisan-Florentine wars. Rising from the ashes, it was granted to the Capuchin Friars Minor in the 16th century. However, its ownership continued to shift, becoming public property under Napoleonic laws and later the Italian State. During this period, it served as a military barracks experiencing both peaceful and disruptive occupations. Despite a devastating bombing in World War II, the Capuchins repurchased and rebuilt the convent, showcasing resilience and devotion. Today, it reflects both its storied past and present purpose as a theological seminary.⁴³

43- Giani and Giofrè 2018, 257

Although it lacks artistic relevance and has been completely rebuilt in recent times, the property is protected by the MIBACT⁴⁴ because it has been recognized as having testimonial and identity value. With the decline in the number of friars, negotiations for the convent's future began in 2013, leading to its entrustment to external parties. After three years, in 2016, a lease agreement was established with a Temporary Business Association (ATI) formed by three cooperatives affiliated with the Diocese of Pisa and guaranteed by the local Italian Christian Workers' Associations (ACLI). This means the friars currently only retain control of the church and a small adjacent room for Sunday mass, while the rest of the convent is managed by the ATI. Looking ahead, plans are underway to convert the lease into a sale of the surface rights, effectively transferring ownership of the convent space.⁴⁵

44- Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism

45- Giani and Giofrè 2018, 257

Today the main functions carried out in the convent are:

- Student residence, managed by Aforisma.⁴⁶
- Center for Health and Social Development, managed by Il Simbolo.⁴⁷
- A family home for minors, managed by Il Simbolo.⁴⁸
- Headquarter of Aforisma⁴⁹ training agency and employment center.⁵⁰
- Conference room and restaurant, managed by Axis.⁵¹

46- "Studentato Cappuccini Hall, Pensionato Universitario Pisa", n.d.

47- "Ex Convento Cappuccini: sarà ambulatorio omeopatico e dispensario farmaci", n.d.

48- "San Giusto che rinasce: l'ex convento dei Cappuccini si apre alla città" 2015

49- Aforisma s.c.r.l. is a non-profit training agency and employment center in Tuscany, Italy, offering professional courses, job placement, and career guidance.

50- "Chi siamo - Agenzia formativa e per il Lavoro Aforisma", n.d.

51- "San Giusto che rinasce: l'ex convento dei Cappuccini si apre alla città" 2015



Figure 31: The Convent of Cappuccini.⁵²

52- "Studentato Cappuccini Hall, Pensionato Universitario Pisa", n.d.

Convento dell'Incontro

The Convento dell'Incontro is a Franciscan monastery situated at the top of the highest hill southwest of Florence, in the town of Bagno a Ripoli. Its rich history dates back to ancient times when it housed a Lombard watchtower. Later, in the eighth century, it transformed into a hermitage dedicated initially to San Macario Abate and subsequently to Santa Maria dell'Incontro. In 1716, the site was generously donated to a Friar Minor, San Leonardo da Porto Maurizio. With the support of benefactors, he undertook the restoration of the church and the construction of cells for the friars. St. Leonard envisioned this place as a haven for prayer and retreat, where the friars of Florence could prepare themselves spiritually for preaching and popular missions. During World War II, the church suffered severe damage due to bombing, and the convent also bore the brunt of destruction. However, both the church and the convent were painstakingly rebuilt in 1948 and now fall under the protective umbrella of MIBACT. In 1999, due to a decrease in the number of friars, the owners engaged in discussions with the non-profit association

Obiettivo Francesco. This association, supported by Franciscan tertiaries, took over the convent to uphold Franciscan values of missionary spirit and hospitality. Just over a year later, on October 4, 2000, they formalized the arrangement through a free loan contract. The remaining friars departed when the association assumed control.⁵³

Today the convent with management of Obiettivo Francesco is capable of offering services such as:⁵⁴

- Accommodate up to 200 people in various layouts. such as: theater layout, classroom, round table.
- Outdoor tennis field.
- Indoor football pitch.
- Large garden.

53- Giani and Giofrè 2018, 259

54- "Obiettivo Francesco", n.d.



*Figure 32: Convento dell'Incontro.*⁵⁵

55- "Convento DELL'INCONTRO a Bagno a Ripoli (Firenze)", n.d.

Convent of Cerro Maggiore

The Convent dedicated to the Capuchin friars, situated in the town of Cerro Maggiore near Milan. Founded in the sixteenth century, it was established at the request of local lords and with the approval of St. Charles Borromeo. The primary purpose of this convent was to provide accommodation for Capuchin friars who were traveling to and from Milan. Initially constructed adjacent to a small church, the convent underwent several transformations over the years. Around 1750, both the church and the convent were demolished due to the substandard quality of materials and construction techniques. However, they were subsequently rebuilt. During the Napoleonic era, in 1812, the convent was repurposed as a residential building. In 1897, it reverted to the ownership of the friars and became a place for their formation. In 1960, the convent faced yet another demolition, only to be reconstructed according to a design by Father Angel Maria Nulli, assuming its present form. The building spans an area of 1,200 square meters and is not subject to any constraints for the protection of cultural heritage. However, in July 2014, the Franciscan community vacated the premises due to a reorganization of the Province, which necessitated the closure of certain districts owing to the limited number of friars.

Various proposals for reuse were considered, including those from associations close to the friars, a community of disabled people, and Franciscan tertiaries. Ultimately, the owners decided to loan the convent for free to the association Mondo di Comunità e Famiglia ACF. In September 2014, one family moved into the convent to serve as guardians while awaiting project approval and agreements with the Municipality. In 2015, planning for space reuse began. The Municipality initially intended to change the use from “religious equipment” to “single dwellings,” which posed financial challenges for the families involved. Negotiations with the Municipality highlighted the social value of the project. The intended use was modified to “social: areas and equipment at the service of residential settlements.” This change avoided expected burdens and unblocked the stalled situation. In December 2016, renovation plans were approved.⁵⁶

56- Giani 2021, 114

The construction included:

- Five apartments
- Two two-room apartments
- Five rooms for temporary accommodation
- A common kitchen and dining room
- A meeting room.

The ground floor features a kitchen and living area with direct garden access, while the first floor houses the sleeping area. Existing vertical connections were confirmed, and new staircases were added. The construction work cost approximately 300,000 euros, supported by family savings.⁵⁷



*Figure 33: Church of the Capuchin Friars.*⁵⁸

57- Giani 2021, 114

58- "Chiesa dei Frati Cappuccini Chiesa / Chiostro / Convento / Parrocchiale", n.d.

Comparative Analysis

This analysis compares three successful convent reuse projects (Convent of Cappuccini, Convento dell'Incontro, Convent of Cerro Maggiore) to the Osservanza Convent to inform its potential revitalization strategy.

Key Considerations:

- **Transition Time:** All three examples had a transition period of 1-2 years between closure and new use. Osservanza Convent has been vacant since 2020, offering ample time for planning and securing partnerships.
- **Multi-Functionality:** Each project adopted a multi-use approach, potentially suitable for the larger Osservanza Convent.
- **Church Use:** All three projects maintained the church's original function. While the Osservanza Convent's church requires maintenance, its future use should be considered alongside the overall plan.
- **Management:** Two projects utilized multiple institutions, potentially offering broader expertise for Osservanza Convent's larger scale. However, Convento dell'Incontro's success with a single institution demonstrates effective single-entity management is also possible.
- **Existing Function:** Osservanza Convent currently houses a private school. Integration or adaptation of this function should be explored alongside new functionalities.

Expertise of Managing Institutions:

A significant factor in the success of these projects was the expertise of the chosen institutions. In each case, the institutions:

- Possessed established knowledge and resources within their respective fields.
- Were able to implement the new functions swiftly upon taking over the convents.

For example:

- **Convent of Cerro Maggiore:** The chosen institution already had a pool of eligible candidates for social housing, who could also contribute financially to the building's maintenance.
- **Convent of Cappuccini:** The managing institution had experience in implementing student housing and job placement centers, while partnering with separate entities for medical services.

Considerations for Osservanza Convent:

- Given its larger size, Osservanza Convent could accommodate a wider range of functions compared to the smaller examples. Exploring medical or educational uses, as seen in some successful projects, could be particularly attractive.
- The existing private school presents an opportunity for continuity. Integrating this function or similar educational uses into the new plan could be beneficial.
- Selecting the management structure (single vs. multiple institutions) should depend on the chosen functionalities and the expertise required for successful implementation. The expertise of the chosen institution(s) will be crucial for swift and efficient implementation of the new functionalities.
- The future use of the church should be carefully considered alongside the overall revitalization plan.

Table 1: Comparison of case studies

Feature	Convent of Cappuccini	Convento dell'Incontro	Convent of Cerro Maggiore	Osservanza Convent
Transition Time	2 years	1 year	2 years	Discontinued since 2020
New Function	Multi-use (residential, healthcare, conference hall)	Multi-use (conference hall, sports, classrooms)	Multi-use (social housing)	To be defined
Church Use	Maintained original use	Maintained original use	Maintained original use	Currently not functioning (maintenance)
Management	Multiple Institutions	Single Institution	Single Institution	To be determined
Total Area	2500-3000 sqm	2500-3000 sqm	1200 sqm	8240 sqm
Existing Function	N/A	N/A	N/A	Private school (rental)

Conclusion

This thesis embarked on a journey of rediscovery, exploring the potential for the reuse of the Osservanza Convent and Church of San Paolo in Monte. Through a comparative analysis of similar convent reuse projects, valuable insights were gleaned into successful approaches and adaptable functions.

The analysis revealed a recurring trend (Table 1): the entrustment of management to existing organizations or institutions, often involving multiple entities to ensure sustainable operations. Notably, the inclusion of residential units in most cases resonated with the convent's original purpose as a friary.

Interestingly, the chosen institutions managing the reused convents all possess a notable level of expertise and extensive experience in their respective fields. This expertise aligns with the specific functions adopted for each convent's revitalization. For instance, institutions managing residential units likely possess established knowledge in property management and resident care, while those overseeing educational or medical uses boast experience in their respective domains. This alignment between the institutions' expertise and the adopted functions contributes significantly to the success of these reuse projects.

Selecting the right institution to manage a reused convent goes

beyond simply finding a competent manager. It grants a clearer vision for the future. This strategic choice, as exemplified by Convento dell'Incontro, ensures the new functionalities not only align with the building's potential but also preserve its historical essence. In the case of Convento dell'Incontro, the chosen institution demonstrably upholds the Franciscan values of missionary spirit and hospitality. This guarantees that the convent's revitalization honors its legacy while serving a contemporary purpose. By strategically selecting an institution that aligns with the convent's historical values, we can ensure the future of the space reflects both its past and its potential.

Considering the Osservanza Convent's larger scale compared to the examined case studies, the potential for incorporating a wider range of functions becomes evident. Medical and educational uses, observed in some successful projects, hold promise for adaptation within the convent's spaces.

The future of the Osservanza Convent hinges on the careful consideration of several crucial factors. The existing museum and library within the convent's walls present unique opportunities that any proposed reuse plan must address. Defining a fitting future purpose for these spaces is paramount, ensuring their continued cultural and educational significance. Furthermore, the rich educational legacy of the Osservanza Convent cannot be overlooked. Integrating elements that honor and cultivate this legacy within the new functionalities should be a central consideration. By thoughtfully addressing these crucial factors, the future of the Osservanza Convent can be shaped to not only adapt to contemporary needs but also preserve its historical and edu-

cational value.

While this research refrained from proposing a definitive solution, it has laid the groundwork for informed decision-making. The comparative analysis serves as a springboard for further exploration, paving the way for a future where the Osservanza Convent and Church of San Paolo in Monte can be revitalized and serve the community anew.

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