

# Minimum Documentation Fiche

composed by national working party of DOCOMOMO ITALIA

## 01. Picture of building



Depicted item: Tavolara Pavilion

source: postcard

date: 1960s

## 1. Identity of building

### 1.1 current name of building

Tavolara Pavilion / Padiglione Tavolara

### 1.2 variant or former name

CraftPavilion / Padiglione dell'Artigianato

### 1.3 number & name of street

Tavolara street / via Tavolara, giardini pubblici

### 1.4 town

Sassari

### 1.5 province/state

Sassari

### 1.6 zip code

07100

### 1.7 country

Italy

### **1.8 national grid reference**

40°43'24.1"N 8°33'34.7"E

### **1.9 classification/typology**

Pavilion

### **1.10 protection status & date**

Protected until 2011. The Pavilion lost the protection status because of the change of the section 10 of the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code, which modified the limit of age necessary for protection from 50 to 70 years.

## **2 History of building**

### **2.1 original brief/purpose**

The Pavilion was intended to be a place for temporary exhibitions, for cultural activities and for selling the artisans' creations.

### **2.2 dates: commission/completion**

1951 (commission), 1953-1957 (construction)

### **2.3 architectural and other designers**

The Pavilion was designed by Ubaldo Badas with Eugenio Tavolara (for the artistic works). However, none of them was a licensed architect or engineer so the projects were officially signed by G. Lorrai, engineer of the Enapi technical office.

### **2.4 others associated with building**

Ferrobeton construction company

### **2.5 significant alterations with dates**

The majority of alterations were made during the maintenance works and for the exhibitions setup. During the eighties, in particular, the building underwent significant modifications with a renovation that modified the interior and the terrace. This intervention aimed at adapting the Pavillion to a permanent use, providing the building with summer cooling and winter heating. However, the principles of natural air-ventilation that characterized the building, devised to reproduce the sensation of outdoor exhibitions, were not respected. In fact, in the exhibit hall and in the workshop area, they added a second glass wall that closed the air circulation. Moreover, the heavy air-conditioning system comprehended some tools and machinery that were installed in the roof, altering the shape.

In the central patio, all the floor-length windows and French doors were substituted, modifying the shape. Additionally, the ground floor gallery was subjected to the windows and doors substitution; in particular, the south-west front window wall was closed by the boiler room. In the terrace, the original stoneware floor with irregular tiles was covered with glazed ceramic tiles and it was built a new room, used as office. As well as the second glass wall addition and the windows substitution, the exhibit hall underwent other significant alterations, such as the closure of the recesses and the window in the back wall. In a 1970s intervention, it was added a third central staircase to connect the exhibit hall with the hall of honor.

Finally, with regard to the exterior refurbishment works, they interested the pool that was covered with glass tiles, while the shape had already been modified in a previous work. The entry ramp was preserved as far as the structure is concerned but, in the 1970s, they substituted the peculiar balustrade made of wooden listels and the "ondulux" covering, which together formed a sort of tunnel that protected the ramp. Furthermore, in the 1990s the area around the building was closed, for safety reasons, with heavy railings.

## **2.6 current use**

The Pavilion will be the Regional museum for handicraft and design dedicated to Eugenio Tavalara

## **2.7 current condition**

Currently, the Pavilion is in great condition thanks to a recent conservation work aimed at reestablishing the building values, with a view to the new life of the building as the Regional museum of handicraft and design. In 2011, the Sardinia Region entrusted the conservation project to Cenami-Simonetti-Ticca architecture firm, and the interior restoration was concluded in 2013. The intervention was preceded by an exhaustive study in order to elaborate a series of guidelines. This research, conducted by Rinaldo Capomolla, Stefano Gizzi, Tullia Iori, Sergio Poretti (supervisor) and Rosalia Vittorini, a team from the university of Tor Vergata (Rome), led to the publication of the book: "Il Padiglione dell'Artigianato a Sassari, architettura e conservazione" (The Arts and Crafts Pavilion in Sassari, architecture and conservation) edited by Gangemi in 2007.

## **3. Description**

### **3.1 general description**

The Pavilion is organized in two distinct volumes: the exhibit hall and the workshops area. The first one, conceived also for conferences, is designed following a trapezoidal shape and it is characterized by a series of shaped pillars covered with white marble. It is directly connected (through a few steps) with the hall of honor, which could become a stage for theatrical performances. The workshops area, dedicated to artisans' ateliers, is organized around the central patio, there are not rigid divisions but open spaces, plenty of light. The covering of the workshops area is a terrace that originally housed a café with the bar tables placed in the shade of a pergola. The two volumes are connected by a gallery, devised to be a public covered walk, which served also as gardens entry, enhancing the connection with the surroundings. One of the most interesting elements is the staircase that connects the workshop area with the hall of honor, conceived as a design object and entirely covered with mosaic ceramic elements. Another distinguishing feature of the building is the variety of materials, which are marble listels for the exhibit hall, both outside and inside; marble slabs for walls, columns and the flooring of the exhibit hall; wood, used for the false ceiling of the exhibit hall, for the handrail and for the entrance structure; ceramic for decorations; and finally iron.

### **3.2 construction**

The structure consists of reinforced concrete frame and masonry infill walls.

### **3.3 context**

The Pavilion is located in Sassari, within the Public Gardens. The position favored a connection with the surrounding vegetation, and the architect improved this link using open spaces, projecting roofs and pergolas as well as a pool. Unfortunately, the railings added in the 1990s strongly limited this connection, but the ongoing exterior renovation will try to adopt a better solution, even if the spaces need to be separated for safety reasons.

## **4. Evaluation**

### **4.1 technical**

With respect to the technical features, it is interesting to highlight the structural system of the exhibit hall, which has a sine wave shape. In order to obtain this complicated figure, the reinforced concrete frame is bent following the moment diagram. This aspect compares Badas' project to the Italian experimentations during those years around static research. Such a complex structure was clearly devised to be in sight, but for unknown reasons Badas decided to cover it with wood listels. The pillars too, pronged or V-shaped, prove the affinity with the tendency of the Italian "structural realism".

Another interesting technical aspect is the way the issues of air-conditioning are solved without

technological systems, but naturally. Sun and wind are controlled through the building orientation, the use of colors and reducing the solar radiation with brise-soleil, arbors and projections. Furthermore, the majority of the windows are permeable, having between the sheets or in the contact with the window frame, thin splits that allow the hot air to be replaced by fresh air. In addition, the glass wall of the exhibit hall is designed to favor natural ventilation, being composed by a series of sheets, obliquely arranged as a shutter. This peculiar arrangement allows the air flow (cooled by the pool water below) to pass through the permeable windows, producing a natural air-conditioning.

#### **4.2 social**

The Pavilion was commissioned by the Sardinia Region with the specific purpose of increasing the value of Sardinian artistic handicraft. The aim was to re-launch the sector, which, together with tourism, could be a growth booster.

#### **4.3 cultural&aesthetic**

The Pavilion reflects perfectly the handicraft revaluation aim, becoming itself a "handicraft piece", because of the quality of decorations and details. The link between architecture and art was a discussion topic during those years, when it was not rare for buildings to be adorned by famous artists' creations. However, in this case, there is more than a simple decoration; in fact, it is the Pavilion itself to be conceived as a "piece of design". The architect transferred there all his knowledge and experience in the handicraft field and involved in the project many artists such as Eugenio Tavolara, Gavino Tilocca, Emilia Palomba and Giuseppe Silecchia. Every decoration is perfectly integrated in the building and treated as a constructive element, at the same time constructive elements, such as the walls covered with green-colored ceramic listels, become decorations.

#### **4.4 historical**

The building reflects many aspects of the postwar architectural tendencies, such as the Italian "structural realism", the relationship between art and architecture, the interest toward the principles of a Mediterranean architecture, inspired by vernacular tradition. However, all these elements are originally interpreted and the Pavilion is the result of Badas' personal experience in the field of artistic handicraft.

#### **4.5 general assessment**

The Pavilion represents one of the most important examples of Modern Architecture in Sardinia. The architect successfully combined the flexible typology with interesting structural solutions, integrating decorations and structure in a close connection. Moreover, modern materials and traditional ones coexist together creating a perfectly balanced ensemble.

### **5. Documentation**

#### **5.1 principal references**

A Sassari. Domus. 1958;(349):43–6.

A Sassari, mostra dell'artigianato sardo. Domus. 1957;(328):37–44

ALTEA G., MAGNANI M. Eugenio Tavolara. Nuoro: Ilisso; 1994. ISBN 8885098266

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GIZZI S, PORETTI S. Il Padiglione dell'Artigianato a Sassari Architettura e conservazione. Roma: Gangemi; 2007. ISBN 9788849213560

GIZZI S. Studi ed indagini propedeutici al restauro di due complessi architettonici degli anni 'Cinquanta nella Sardegna settentrionale. In Biscontin G, Driussi G. Architettura e materiali del Novecento; Università degli Studi di Padova, 2004;

MASALA F. Architettura dall'unità d'Italia alla fine del '900. Nuoro : Ilisso; 2001. ISBN 9788887825350

PISANU M, SANJUST P. The challenging issues of restoring a Modern building while respecting the projects principles of sustainability: the case study of the Tavolara Pavilion. Heritage 2014 proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Heritage and Sustainable Development. Barcelos: Green Lines Institute for Sustainable Development; 2014; ISBN 9789899801370

SANJUST P. Ubaldo Badas architetture 1930-1940. Cagliari: Università degli studi di Cagliari, Dipartimento di Architettura; Cuec; 2003.

## **5.2 visual material attached**

- 01. Pavilion, exterior (1960s, old postcard)
- 02. The patio and the workshops area (old picture, Giuseppe Silecchia private archive)
- 03. The staircase ( Altea, Magnani, 1994)
- 04. The exhibit hall, under construction (1954, Ferrobeton – Franzil archive)
- 05. The exhibit hall, after the recent restoration works (2013, M.Pisanu)

## **5.3 rapporteur/date**

Maddalena Pisanu 2015

## **6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R**

name of examining ISC member: date of examination:

approval:

working party/ref. n°: NAI ref. n°:

comments:

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