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Nursery School, Covolo di Pederobba, Treviso

C+S Associati

2005

This design, by Alessandra Segantini and Carlo Cappai, was developed from an obsessively nuanced study of children's perception as well as the topography of the local landscape. The school is thoughtfully integrated into the layout of the village of Covolo di Pederobba, and framed by the wider countryside of the Veneto. Set out beside the Piave River, between wheat fields and rows of vines, the tree-lined boundaries incorporate a homogeneous rural architecture characterised by a predominant use of stone.

The founding element of the building is the wall – a raw concrete enclosure whose exposed reflective aggregate catches the light and opens up to a south-facing patio overlooking the adjoining garden and fields. This choice maps the school as a territory constituted by buildings typically closed to the road, presenting walls without apertures as their public face. The architects also refer to the contrasting outlook from *barchesse* – the barns with porticoes typical of the region – as a precedent for opening up the school to the landscape.

The allocation of interior spaces takes into account social relationships rather than a strict separation of functions. Against the austerity of the external landscape these spaces oppose a complex set of perspective views and colours whose consistent tones and particular location configure a warm experience of schooling (epitomised by the red-walled and paved court). Windows at child's height, full-length sliding doors, apertures lined in timber to encourage occupation as seats, and continuous glazed openings offer a narrative of different conditions, intimate or open to the landscape, shaded or brightly lit.



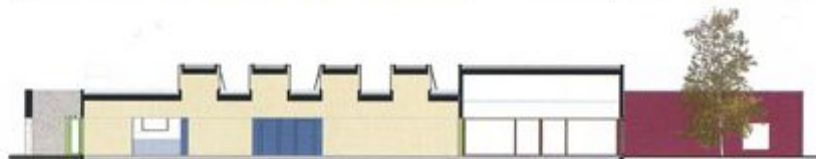
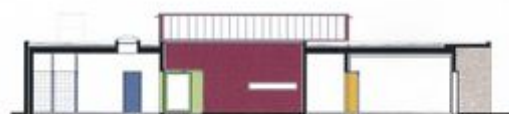
Teaching spaces line the openings formed by the two concrete enclosures, inset slightly and lined with gravel as thresholds to the adjoining landscape – communal spaces are identified with the rust-red roof profile above.



The main activity space frames a view of the village beyond, with the coloured sections of wall identifying different relationships within the school.



The rational simplicity of the main space contrasts with the offset distribution of mid-tone colours.



The straightforward clerestory-lit sectional organisation reveals the use of colour to delineate passages and thresholds.



The plan takes the form of a tripartite composition enclosed by a rough-cast external wall to the north, with teaching spaces located to the south; the main activity space occupies a bay between cross-walls, separating the school into two distinctive parts, one reflecting the other.

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