

# IL MARE NON BASTA PIU. LA TUTELA DEGLI STABILIMENTI BALNEARI: INDAGINI E CASO STUDIO

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## Sea is not enough. Bathing architecture preservation: In-depth analysis and case study

From the beginning of the eighteenth century, *Viareggio's* coastal scene concentrates with bathing structures meant to introduce the city to the most coveted Italian and European touristic activities of that period. The definition moment of *Viareggio* as a real seaside resort matches with the construction of *Passeggiata promenade* along the seashore. Following the example of French *promenades*, it appears as the backbone of a system that blends therapy and recreation through a heterogeneous mixité of structures; an urban principle able to reflect the multitude of recollections from distant places that melt into a single architectural scenery. Raffaello Brizzi, together with other professionals, handles the 1932 construction of the coast segment between square *Principe Amedeo* and *Fossa dell'Abate* in *Viareggio*, according to the rationalist language that managed to embody the *loisir* sphere. To conclude this intense programmatic course, a new bathing resort rises, as a result of engineer *Aldo Castefranco's* project. Named *Select* at the opening ceremony, in 1938, but soon replaced by the more imposing name of *Principe di Piemonte*, it appears as the incarnation of modern life precepts. A multifunctional complex able to offer a complete tourist experience through 150 changing rooms, a pool, dancing halls, restaurants, cafés and bars, a big round terrace on the beach and a cinema. Therefore, it represents an *unicum* inside the rhythmic enfilade of pavilions along the seafront and the last important constructive moment of the promenade. The current study intends to propose a restoration hypothesis in order to preserve such structure, being one of the most significant constructions of the *Passeggiata*. To do so, an in-depth study is developed according to various subject matters, starting with a deepen historical research and continuing with geometrical and dimensional data analysis and material sampling that compose building's surface, to better define their conservation state. Even though the structure underwent some morphological and functional alterations – it was in fact an important congress center in Versilia – it preserves today its main features but loses its historical role of focal point of the northern area of *Viareggio*. Therefore, it is necessary, in this context, to predict future scenarios that would shed light on the building and its potential in the area's urban regeneration. This case study could represent an opportunity to reflect on the seaside bathing structures preservation as heritage elements inside strong urban transformations.

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