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POLITECNICA BUILDING FOR HUMANS TRANSFORMS THE FORMER PIVA BRICKWORKS IN RICCIONE INTO THE NEW LOCAL HERITAGE MUSEUM

The restoration of industrial heritage becomes an opportunity for urban regeneration: the project creates a dialogue between historical memory and contemporary architecture, giving the city a new, open, and flexible cultural space.

Riccione, March 19, 2026 – In Riccione, the former Piva Brickworks, a historic industrial complex from the 1930s, is set to be reborn as **Local Heritage Museum** thanks to a project by **Politecnica Building for Humans**, one of Italy's leading firms in integrated architecture, engineering, and urban planning.

With the **completion of restoration work on the walls of the former foundry and the construction of the new museum architecture within it**, the historic industrial site is ready to take on a new role as **a cultural space**, pending the installation of museum displays that will define the exhibition layout, followed by the opening to the public scheduled for February 2027.

Politecnica's project, selected through a public tender issued by the Municipality of Riccione, restores to the community a **site symbolic of the city's industrial history, transforming it into a new urban infrastructure** where the **restoration of industrial archaeology** becomes an opportunity to generate cultural and social activities.

Within the furnace's perimeter, the project introduces a **new contemporary architecture** conceived as a light and transparent structure – a true "architecture of air" – that discreetly engages with the historic masonry, establishing a balance between old and new.

*"The challenge was to intervene in a place of great identity without overshadowing its history. That is why we chose to create a contemporary architecture that is light, transparent, and reversible, capable of engaging with the traces of the kiln without erasing them. The result is a space that preserves the site's industrial memory but projects it into a new public, cultural, and urban dimension***,"** explains **Architect Alessandro Uras, a partner at Politecnica**.

"We didn't want just a container for artifacts, but a living institution capable of telling our story through a dynamic and participatory cultural offering. The idea of a 'transparent' museum reflects our desire to make heritage a shared asset, accessible and in constant dialogue with the community. "With the restoration of this landmark, enriched by the stylized reinterpretation of the historic chimney, we are giving Riccione back an urban landmark that celebrates its roots while projecting them into a contemporary and international context," states **Sandra Villa**, Deputy Mayor and Councilor for Culture of the Municipality of Riccione.

Set within a broader system of public green spaces and bike and pedestrian paths and in direct connection with the adjacent school building, the museum also serves as a key element in the **urban regeneration** of this part of the city, strengthening the relationship with the surrounding landscape.

Politecnica oversaw the entire design process, from the restoration and safety reinforcement of the existing structures, through the architectural design, to the engineering of structures and systems, also taking on the role of construction manager. This approach leverages the firm's **established expertise in integrated design**, enabling a unified management of the project's various scales and disciplines.

THE REBIRTH OF THE FORMER PIVA BRICKWORKS

Built in **1908** by the Milanese entrepreneur Carlo Andrea Piva along the banks of the Rio Melo, the brickworks served for decades as one of the city's main economic drivers. The facility was equipped with a **Hoffmann kiln**, an innovative technology for the time that allowed for the continuous production of bricks and made the plant a cutting-edge production facility in the Riccione area.
In the years leading up to World War II, the brickworks reached very high production levels and continued its operations even during the war, remaining one of the most significant local businesses until production finally ceased in **the 1970s**.

In the restoration project, Politecnica chose to preserve and highlight this industrial heritage, emphasizing the **historic brickwork of the kiln**, the only surviving part of the old production complex.
The **perimeter walls were restored using an archaeological approach**: the historic surfaces were preserved without erasing the traces of time, such as holes, wooden inserts, and signs of craftsmanship, allowing the material stratifications of the walls to emerge. This design choice reinforces the dialogue with the new architecture inserted within, highlighting the contrast between the historic material and the contemporary intervention.
The enhancement of the historic walls is further emphasized by a **custom-designed lighting system integrated** into the supporting structures, which in the evening illuminates the building from the inside out, restoring the kiln's presence to the city as a recognizable landmark.

A NEW ARCHITECTURE BETWEEN MEMORY AND CONTEMPORANEITY

Within the historic walls, **Politecnica has designed a new contemporary architecture conceived as a large transparent display case**. The volume fits lightly within the furnace's enclosure, establishing a continuous relationship between interior and exterior and making the contemporary intervention clearly distinguishable from the original structure.

The project spans two levels, covering a total area of approximately **1,500 m²**, within a broader intervention area of about **2,500 m²** that includes the outdoor spaces and connections to the surrounding public green spaces.

Between the new structure and the perimeter walls, a **perimeter walkway** has been introduced—a buffer zone that allows visitors to observe the historic facades up close and expands the possibilities for movement and interaction between the museum and the urban space.

A symbolic element of the project is the **reinterpretation of the chimney of the former brick kiln**, which had collapsed over time. Through a stylized steel structure that reproduces the original location, height, and proportions identified through historical research, a defining symbol of the city's industrial history is restored to the urban landscape. A dedicated lighting design further highlights its presence at night, transforming it into a new **urban landmark**.

AN OPEN, FLEXIBLE MUSEUM CONNECTED TO THE CITY

Politecnica has designed the museum as a flexible cultural space open to the city.
The ground floor will house the **double-height entrance hall**, the reception area, the café, the bookshop, classrooms for educational workshops, glass-enclosed museum storage areas, and a large conference hall. The upper floor, on the other hand, will host the main exhibition spaces, designed as **open, flexible, and reconfigurable** environments.

Vertical circulation is provided by a **main staircase with a light, almost suspended character**, detached from the floor and walls to accentuate its sense of lightness. Backlit and situated within the large hall, the

staircase becomes a central architectural element of the project, contributing to the visual continuity between the museum's two levels.

The entire building has been designed to house not only the museum exhibition but also educational activities, cultural events, and public initiatives, with spaces capable of functioning independently of the museum.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS: ENGINEERING INNOVATION IN THE SERVICE OF HERITAGE

The restoration of the facades of the former brickworks required **a complex structural intervention to reinforce the perimeter walls,** which were uncovered at the start of the project and therefore at risk of collapse.
Politecnica designed a **structural steel exoskeleton** capable of stabilizing the perimeter walls and integrating with the factory's original openings, avoiding invasive interventions on the historic structure and preserving its architectural integrity.

The new architecture is structurally constructed of **steel**, with floors and a roof made of XLAM laminated wood, a solution that ensures high structural performance and meets the environmental criteria set forth in the project. The **large glazed surfaces** promote natural lighting and reinforce the concept, developed by Politecnica, of an **open museum that is permeable to its surroundings**. Materials and finishes, such as concrete and steel, deliberately retain a **material and industrial character**, in continuity with the site's industrial heritage.
The new building was constructed using **dry-construction systems** based on the principle of reversibility, which is fundamental in projects involving listed buildings.

With this project, Politecnica once again brings its multidisciplinary expertise to bear to enhance the historical heritage and transform it into new spaces serving the public.

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POLITECNICA BUILDING FOR HUMANS

Politecnica Building for Humans is an integrated design firm that manages complexity through method, strategic vision, and a multidisciplinary approach capable of bringing together diverse expertise to generate lasting value for regions and communities.
Founded in 1972, it is now one of Italy's leading integrated design firms in architecture, engineering, and urban planning. As an independent firm, it is led by 45 partner engineers and architects and, over the years, has developed public and private sector projects in over 60 countries worldwide, with annual revenue exceeding 30 million euros (2024 estimate).
With four offices in Italy—Modena, Milan, Florence, and Rome—and an international presence in 10 countries across 3 continents, Politecnica operates in numerous design sectors, including healthcare, manufacturing, corporate facilities, infrastructure and mobility, restoration and industrial archaeology, urban regeneration, hospitality, culture, and energy.
With over 350 professionals—including designers, planners, engineers, consultants, and specialized technicians—Politecnica integrates diverse expertise, ranging from mechanical and electrical systems to urban planning, and from structural to architectural design, enabling the firm to manage all phases of the design process.
Politecnica develops its projects in accordance with leading international sustainability standards—LEED®, Envision™, BREEAM®, WELL®—by integrating ESG criteria and the advanced use of BIM methodology. The company also aligns its activities with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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