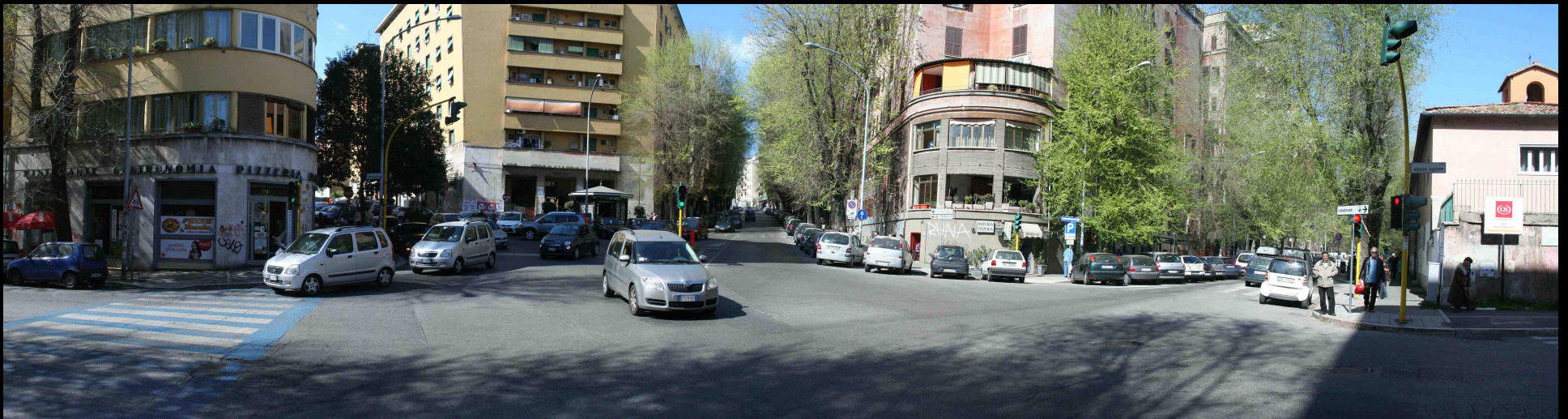


Via di Donna Olimpia



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Part I: Introduction and History

The neighborhood of Via di Donna Olimpia is situated within the southwest walls of Rome, in the Gianicolense district. Early development of the area occurred in several stages throughout the twentieth century, and thus the neighborhood exhibits a diverse range of architectural styles that vary from street to street. Changes in the regional economy have led to affordable housing shortages, a growing elderly population, and a distinctive difference between the Monteverde Nuovo and Monteverde Vecchio neighborhoods. This neighborhood analysis examines the various physical, historical, and economic factors that contributed to the complexity of the Donna Olimpia neighborhood, including land use, ownership patterns, and public spaces. We began with an evaluation of the existing conditions within the Via di Donna Olimpia neighborhood. This analysis was used to determine recommendations for the future sustainability of the area.

The Donna Olimpia neighborhood is distinctive for both its physical characteristics as well as its architectural quality. Surveying Via di Donna Olimpia and approximately two blocks extending out on either side, we noticed a striking pattern in terms of density, commercial distribution, and the quality of the built environment. The northeastern portion of Via Donna Olimpia, known as Monteverde Vecchio, is almost entirely composed of five to six story apartment building complexes that are gated and contain community patios within. Many of these apartments have balconies and parking areas. Within a few of these buildings are street-level commercial spaces; on Clivo Rutario, for example, there is a film studio, a community bar, a laundromat, and an upscale restaurant. Nevertheless, most buildings are residen-

tial. This residential district is composed of 4,363 housing units (as of 2001) for the 10,140 residents (as of 2001). The majority of the eight to nine story buildings in the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia are located on the Monteverde Nuovo side of the neighborhood. Most of these buildings are tightly packed and run along very narrow and often privately controlled street systems. Along with dense street parking here, the area is overwhelmingly cramped. The streets in Monteverde Nuovo are often bustling because most commercial activity is located here. Monteverde Vecchio, on the other hand, is typically quiet during work hours and most social activity involves the elderly and mothers or nannies with children. Towards the peak of Monteverde Nuovo, however, further east, the building density drops dramatically and the overall typology becomes very similar to that of Monteverde Vecchio.

The history of Donna Olimpia is one of development through remote displacement - it has changed primarily as a result of movements of people to Donna Olimpia from other places because of external factors. The neighborhood we chose as our area of focus and that we call the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia is part of a larger region known as the Gianicolo, a hill that extends south from Vatican City. Within Gioanicolo lies Monteverde - literally, "Green Mountain," named for the green tufa stone of the area.¹ Monteverde's hills are divided by its valleys - one such valley, now formed by Via di Donna Olimpia, divides Monteverde into a Vecchio ("Old") section to the east, and a Nuovo ("New") section to the west. Monteverde Vecchio was also known as Monteverde D'Oro - Mountain of Gold - because of the vineyards that existed there in the 19th century.² Before Via di Donna Olimpia was filled in the 1910s, it was a swampy ditch, and mossy

Neighborhood Context



Map 1: The Via Donna Olimpia Neighborhood's Location within Rome.

walls of the catacomb that existed here hundreds of years past are still visible next to Via di Donna Olimpia's church. The development here was initiated as part of post-World War I reconstruction, and inter-migratory Italians came here from all over Italy (especially from Abruzzo), but Monteverde Nuovo remained mostly excellent farmland (particularly for raising goats), and was thus nicknamed Monte di Splendore.³ Nevertheless, the more historical area of Monteverde Vecchio retained its eminence throughout the whole neighborhood's growth.

Fascism brought everlasting changes to Donna Olimpia. In 1932, the first of a series of three public housing apartment buildings was constructed by the Istituto Case Popolari (the Fascist public housing authority at the time). These buildings were considered colossal at the time, and were designed to “project a new ‘proletarian,’ working-class identity” and to “celebrate functionality, sheer mass, and the new lives of the ‘ordinary’ people on whose support Fascism depended.”⁴ They will be discussed at greater length further on in our building typology, but these social-housing buildings are the most important structures in Donna Olimpia's social identity. Every local we spoke with identifies them as the neighborhood's focal point, and they still retain their identity as “grattacieli,” or skyscrapers.⁵ Indeed, the three buildings were included in Rome's historic district classification in the latest 2008 zoning plan, providing them with protected status.⁶ They were populated by Romans who had lived in the Centro near the ancient forums but were displaced by Mussolini's excavation of that area and construction of the Via dei Fori Imperiali. Many of these new residents worked in the two factories located further south along Via di



The first Fascist Casa Popolare in Donna Olimpia, built by Mussolini.

Donna Olimpia or in the new hospitals the Fascists also constructed in the area.⁷ In this way, new housing for previously displaced residents was complemented by new employment opportunities. In addition, Via di Donna Olimpia's church was built in 1937, providing another important social service to the locals.

Similar circumstances led to another upswell in population and development in the Donna Olimpia neighborhood in the 1960s. Construction for the 1960 Olympic games in Rome again displaced people to Donna Olimpia, this time into the less developed area of Monteverde Nuovo. For the appearance of the city in the international eye, the former shantytown at the top of Monteverde Nuovo was transformed in 1957 into a market area that still exists today.⁸ The major local high school right off of Via di Donna Olimpia up Via Fonteiana was built in 1965, and the Villa Doria Pamphili was also opened in the 1960s.⁹

In the 1950s and 1960s, Donna Olimpia also acquired a more prominent modern legacy. The famous writer Pier Paolo Pasolini lived up Monteverde Vecchio's hill, but maintained a strong presence in Donna Olimpia, visiting it frequently and playing sports with locals. His classic *Ragazzi di Vita* (1956) takes place in Donna Olimpia and uses characters modeled after Pasolini's friends and acquaintances there.¹⁰ Donna Olimpia's association with Pasolini is trumpeted by a plaque proclaiming his presence in the main square, and his legacy here is a matter of pride for the older Donna Olimpia residents to this day.

Since the 1970s, development in Donna Olimpia has taken place on much smaller scales. Some small local shops have been replaced by larger stores, and buildings have been modernized and built up further out on both halves of Monteverde, but nothing on the scale of a large migration because of construction elsewhere has taken place. Since the 1950s, people would squat in houses as they were built in order to claim them, but regulation has prevented that practice in recent decades. The immigrants nowadays, rather than being from elsewhere in Italy, are international migrants. What's more, many locals now claim to feel like immigrants themselves given their background as non-Romans.¹¹ Although there does not appear to be much friction or animosity toward these new arrivals, there was a beating of an African immigrant in Piazza Donna Olimpia a few years ago that has been hushed up by the embarrassed population.¹² Today, Donna Olimpia remains what the locals call a "paese," or "country" unto itself. The area around the "grattacieli" is quite lively throughout the day, but social activity and community interaction levels vary elsewhere in the neighborhood. Though many of Monteverde Vecchio's residents com-

mute out of Donna Olimpia, the area is still home to a wide variety of commercial activity, including a creative segment of film studios, artists, and schools for the arts. While the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia has certainly retained many of its characteristics throughout its history, large-scale changes in past decades and more recent smaller-scale social and structural adjustments have significantly altered the urban landscape and social character of Donna Olimpia to this day.

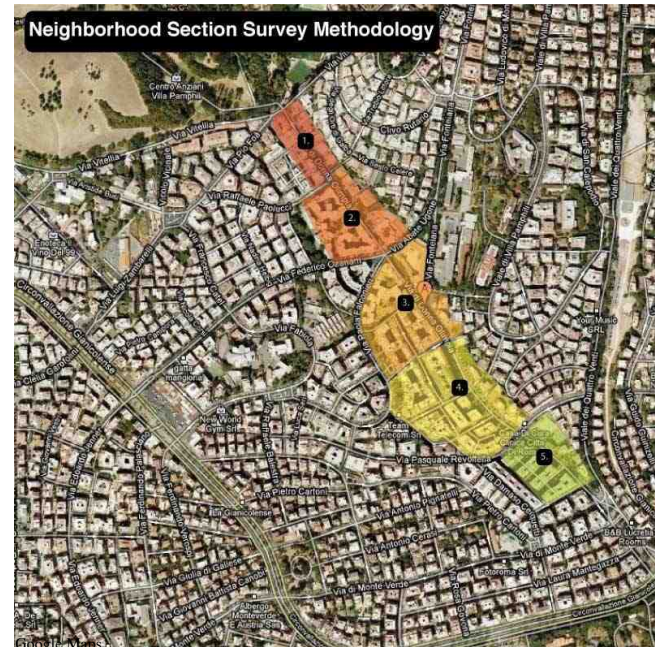
Part II: Methodology

Given the long north-south orientation of the Donna Olimpia neighborhood, the existing conditions were assessed by a visual survey (walking around the neighborhood) to document the various elements of the street and by an analysis of the neighborhood census. This process allowed us to develop a cohesive methodology for gathering data and observation. Through documenting building types, the street layout, and other notable street features, we created our own survey of the neighborhood that focused on the quality of the built environment, building typologies, and places of social contact within the neighborhood. We felt that these elements were important because we noticed drastic differences in the quality of the built environment and building typology in the two neighborhood districts of Monteverde Vecchio in the west and Monteverde Nuovo in the east. We also determined that where people socialize and how people socialize are important features to note given the lack of public spaces. By focusing on the main road and gathering detailed observations of the elements mentioned

above, we split Via Donna Olimpia into five sections (See Map 2). Each of us used our neighborhood survey to guide our observations within our given section. We then used our observations to identify the distribution of the building typologies and other street elements into map form. The first map we made was a “mental map” of the area that emphasizes the elements most visually and impressionistically important to us during our survey. This was inspired by the work of the urbanist Kevin Lynch. We also reconciled our observations and data with information from formal and informal interviews we conducted throughout the survey process.

A. Lynchian Analysis

The urbanist Kevin Lynch has found that people perceive their urban surroundings as distinct elements in a “mental map” of the city. Lynch identifies the elements of popular urban perception as: paths, the “channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves” such as streets; edges, the “linear elements not used or considered as paths by the observer” such as walls; districts, the “sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters ‘inside of,’ and which are recognizable as having some common identifying character” such as Monteverde Vecchio; nodes, the “strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling” such as piazzas; and landmarks, external physical reference points, such as Villa Dora Pamphili.¹³ Using Lynch’s methodology, we created a mental map to visualize our understanding of how we perceived the neighborhood along these dimensions (See Map 3). We gathered that the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia



Map 2: The five sections of Via Donna Olimpia for Site Survey.

presents a working example of the way a city’s socioeconomic, demographic, and physical attributes influence its appearance and define its urban form. Utilizing Lynch’s key elements of nodes, paths, landmarks, edges, and districts to construct an accompanying Lynch map, Donna Olimpia acquires a working level of navigability and legibility.

Our survey begins at the landmark of Piazzale Enrico Dunant, a square whose edges are defined by a split in the street Via Quirino Majorana, which intersects Circonvallazione Gianicolense. The western fork is Via di Donna Olimpia. This critical road serves as the major path of the neighborhood, connecting the two main districts that define the overall area—Monteverde Vecchio on the east hill and Monteverde Nuovo on the west.



Via degli Orti Galba in Monteverde Vecchio. This streetscape is an excellent example of Monteverde Vecchio's 5-6 story apartment buildings and narrow street.

Monteverde Vecchio's pathways consist of small and winding interconnected streets. Although sidewalks here are narrow, cars usually pass slowly enough and do not threaten pedestrians. Most of the structures in the area are low-rise gated apartments (or *villini*). Its residents, often seen socializing in local bars, are friendly and welcoming. Two women approached us and were eager to discuss our research (as seen by the circled stars on the map).

At the northern and western rims, parks indicate an edge to the neighborhood, as here is where residential development stops. Via Fontana is our opposing boundary because it is an unusually wide path that lacks any shared neighborhood character. It runs along a steeper slope

than most other paths in and around Donna Olimpia, and is dominated by a constant flow of vehicular traffic.

Monteverde Nuovo's pathways are generally not as well maintained as those of Monteverde Vecchio. Most connecting streets are too small to let large vehicles pass, let alone two-way traffic. Those streets that are not gated off are lined with garbage. Vecchio consists of numerous large apartment complexes, but the green and nonresidential spaces within each structure are also gated off, which produces an unwelcoming environment for outsiders. Nevertheless, there is one significant greenway west of Via di Donna Olimpia and denoted by a green shaded area on the Lynch map that is open to the street and lined with shops like insurance agencies, veterinary clinics, and hair salons. This open space's human activity was likely drawn there by this commercial capital. For this reason, the greenway strikes us as a significant node.

Eastward and at higher elevation a latter twentieth-century church was a defining element of the urban landscape. Although it is ugly and not frequented by many, its location – at the top of a hill, near a few municipal buildings and another small piazza – makes it a conspicuous landmark. Also, a useful node is the nearby open market. We define the edge of the neighborhood at the end of this market on Gianicolense because of the nature of this large, wide, difficult to cross, and imposing avenue, alien to Donna Olimpia.

We determined most other edges and borders based on significant changes in elevation (like the one south of Via Pasquale Revoltella)

that were accompanied by an easily perceptible shift in building type, or from sudden and severe walls built to separate expensive housing from the clamor of surrounding streets (like on Via Francesco Catel). As the “gatedness” of these areas precluded us from exploring them, we do not consider them part of the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia. We characterized a handful of other squares, such as Piazza Vincenzo Ceresi, to serve as nodes and landmarks on the outskirts, but our most important features are still set in the heart of the neighborhood – on Via di Donna Olimpia.

We specified additional landmarks by their familiarity and utility to us. They thus include a large bar across from the clinic at the southern end of Via di Donna Olimpia where we often convene to discuss our daily itinerary, or the well-known pizzeria and restaurant in Piazza di Donna Olimpia, the focal point of the road. Other landmarks were convenient meeting spots with amenable features, such as the church near the center of Via di Donna Olimpia, with street furniture that we could sit on in front. We defined other landmarks based on their “nodal” nature, or the amount of socializing and nearby human traffic. A major one is the clinic on the corner of Via di Donna Olimpia and Via Francesco Moidalchini, outside of which people constantly socialize during the day. Other small green spaces along the street were defined as landmarks based on the amount of communal contact within them. The area west of Via di Donna Olimpia, where street connectivity was weak and apartments were walled off from the street, did not exude this friendly atmosphere. Actually, many of its roads were better connected to Viale dei Quattro Venti, and we therefore did not include them in our survey. We nevertheless noted some municipal buildings



An example of the street furnishing outside of the Church located on Piazza Donna Olimpia

here that attracted a some notable communal activity. These included a juvenile test center, libraries, after-school centers and a police station. While we did not define these buildings as landmarks, we certainly recognize their importance in the development of the community and neighborhood of Donna Olimpia.

Whereas the unfamiliarity of a neighborhood can render it initially inscrutable, a Lynchian survey, analysis and cartographic representation clarifies the neighborhood’s structure and form and augments the neighborhood’s legibility. With Lynch as our guide, deconstructing and reproducing Donna Olimpia’s nodes, paths, landmarks, and districts has allowed us to better study and interpret the landscape and streetscape here and understand the elements that affect manifest social, economic, and physical issues on the ground.

B. Interviews

We interviewed a number of Donna Olimpia residents in order to attain personal, more informed perspectives on Donna Olimpia's history, character, strengths, and problems. Our subjects included prominent Donna Olimpiani like Silvio Parello, an artist with a studio on Via Federico Ozanam whose enthusiasm for Donna Olimpia has made him the de facto keeper of the neighborhood's history; and Roberto Baldetti, an economist, coordinator of the local Democratic Party office, public works manager of the sixteenth Municipio here, and a lifelong Donna Olimpia resident. Other interviewees were the custodian of Donna Olimpia's main church, two English teachers, immigrant flower vendors, and other residents we encountered on the street. Although our formal interviews proved to be quite fruitful, we



The Donna Olimpia team about to conduct an interview.

also found it helpful to ask just a handful of questions that were on our minds at the time to passersby.

C. Criticisms of Lynchian Analysis

While Lynch maps offer an ideal means for determining how residents envision their neighborhood, we found a few shortcomings with the exercise. Firstly, our sample size was too small to obtain significant variance in how inhabitants envision the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia; therefore, we cannot conclude that their perspectives are shared by the general community. Second, our handful of interviewees were mostly middle aged to elderly residents and all were generally uncomfortable with creating a spatial analysis of the neighborhood. Place imaging, eliciting an image, and analyzing the neighborhood visually seemed like a quite strange and unexpected request. In general, we found that most residents we spoke to simply did not envision their community spatially or diagrammatically in the method of Kevin Lynch. As we found, map drawing is a difficult and tedious task to ask of an average resident, especially with a time limit.

Additionally, we found that drawing was a foreign and uncomfortable activity to ask of interviewees. Many were not used to being interviewed by American students, let alone used to being asked to draw maps of how they envision their community. Thus, for many interviewees, the act of spatial analysis is rarely realized in this sense. Many Lynch maps from interviewees tend to focus on way-finding as opposed to quality of place, and highlight paths more commonly than any of Lynch's five other elements. Many interviewees were focused simply on indicating a general sense of direction and awareness of

place as opposed to identifying important aspects of the locale. Therefore, this exercise resulted in the urban environment being reduced to repeated and expected knowledge of its physical layout. The notion of identifying the neighborhood through paths, edges, and nodes limits interviewees' analysis of the environment to movement as opposed to other interfaces within the urban environment.

Part III: Visual Survey and Neighborhood Analysis

The central part of our report comprises a street survey and building typology of the Donna Olimpia neighborhood. The district's building typology is arranged by types that appear independently (but still according to social and developmental factors) in different locations throughout Donna Olimpia (See Map 4 and Map 5).

We present our ground-level observations of the streetscape, rather, in a geographical itinerary through the neighborhood and correlate perceptions with data we produce on Map 4 for integrated analysis. Comparing the presence of various buildings according to the different street conditions on which they appear clarifies correlative trends in development between building and terrain conditions. We harmonize our neighborhood research with empirical data to draw conclusions about the social, economic, developmental, and historical conditions of the Donna Olimpia neighborhood.

Building Typology

Neighborhood features are those critical characteristics to the neigh-

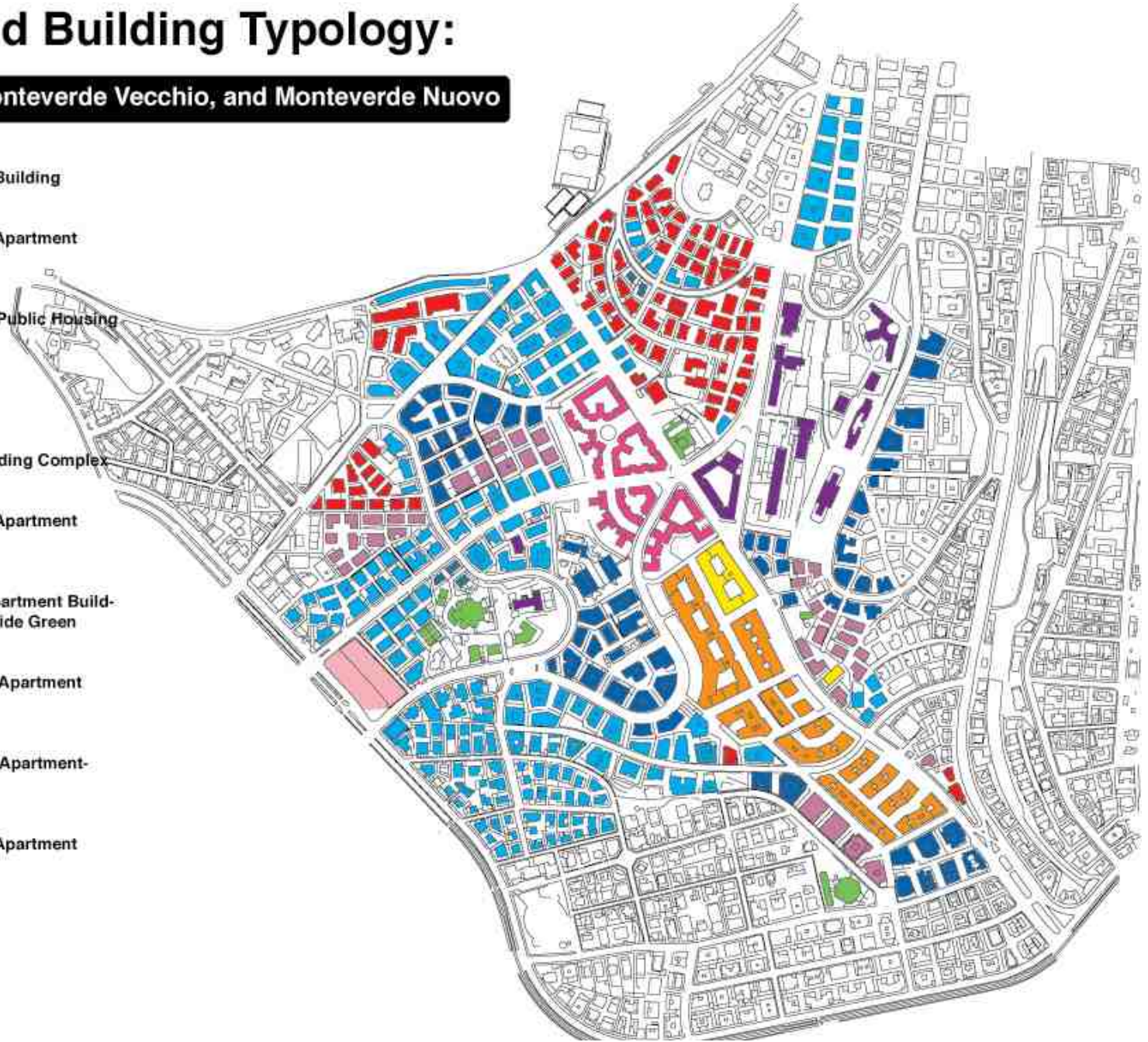


Type 1 5-6 Story Residential Apartment Buildings located in the northern part of Vida di Donna Olimpia

Land-Use and Building Typology:

Via Donna Olimpia, Monteverde Vecchio, and Monteverde Nuovo

- Type 1: 5-6 Story Apartment Building
- Type 2: 5-6 Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building
- Type 3: 1930s Fascist Model Public Housing and Mixed-Use
- Type 4: Church Complex
- Type 5: Municipal Public Building Complex
- Type 6: 6-7 Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building
- Type 7: 9 Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building Accompanied by Street-Side Green Spaces
- Type 7a: 9 Story Mixed-Used Apartment Building
- Type 8: 6-7 Story Residential Apartment-Building
- Type 9: 3-4 Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building
- Open Market



Map 4: Building Typology Survey for the Donna Olimpia Neighborhood.

borhood of Donna Olimpia. We defined nine distinct building types that compose the built environment. Most of these types exist in clusters, and while some are focused in one specific area of the neighborhood, other types have multi-focal, geographically disparate clusters. Characterizing the various building types that make up Donna Olimpia clarifies many social and developmental factors constantly at play within the neighborhood, including population group based on building type, use of space, economic development potential, service delivery, and community interaction.

a) *Type 1: 5-6-Story Residential Apartment Building*

Type 1 chiefly appears in Monteverde Vecchio, at the northern end of and eastward of Via di Donna Olimpia. This area is quite steep and its grade varies along many hills; whether the buildings here are 5 or 6 stories varies according to the corresponding height of the terrain and whether or not there is a rooftop apartment that often adjoins a rooftop garden and terrace. Type 1 also appears in certain areas in upper Monteverde Nuovo and occasionally elsewhere in lower Donna Olimpia. As mentioned by a lifelong resident of the area and son of the architect of some of these buildings, most of the buildings in this type that appear along Via di Donna Olimpia were built in joint groups of four or five in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁴

The exclusivity of these private residences with no commercial space on the street level is reinforced by the gates and walls that typically surround them and separate them from the street. Indeed, just by looking at our building typology map one can easily perceive the greater

distance between the buildings in red and the nearby street lines as compared to the rest of the area's buildings and abutting streets. These spaces usually serve to allow for walkways from gate to front door, with little alternative purpose.

Still, there are some residential green spaces and patios within the buildings' boundaries. Well-maintained, with neat paint and limited graffiti, these buildings have private balconies where residents maintain plants and hang laundry. Along Via di Donna Olimpia, where space is more public and less protected, parking for this building type takes place within the gates of the buildings. Further up in Monteverde Vecchio, where space is less public and utilized only by local residents, street-side parking dominates when not incorporated into the building as a garage.

Evidently, Building Type 1 is composed of private, exclusive residences for the wealthier segment of Donna Olimpia's population. The more expensive cars parked next to these buildings reflect this condition. When Building Type 1 is found in Monteverde Nuovo rather than Vecchio, it is even more gated than the Vecchio residences, emphasizing those buildings' exclusivity within a less homogeneously affluent area. What all the buildings in this type have in common, however, is their presence only on the fringes of the Donna Olimpia neighborhood. As Silvio Parrello detailed to us, the Vecchio area's longer period of habitation kept wealth concentrated there throughout the 20th century and allowed reconstruction in the 1950s and 1960s to assume the upscale quality it retains today for the neighborhood's wealthy members.¹⁵ Out of all of the tracts in the neighborhood, Vecchio con-

tains the highest number of families and students, as can be seen by the maps of our census data. One of the teachers in the local school we interviewed, Dawn, stated that these houses have been passed from generation to generation within the same family for decades.¹⁶ This circumstance highlights how money here (and elsewhere in Rome) is locked in place geographically.

b) *Type 2: 5-6-Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building*

Type 2 is also 5-6-story apartment buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike Type 1, however, Type 2 buildings contain commercial spaces on the street-level floor, and chiefly appear on the Monteverde Nuovo side of Donna Olimpia. The residences in these structures were once almost entirely public housing, but as Roberto Baldetti told us, the housing authority is attempting to privatize the apartment buildings by allowing current resident to buy the properties instead of renting them.¹⁷ The prevalence of this building type in Donna Olimpia, attested to by its dominance of our building typology map, highlights its importance in the neighborhood's overall character. Because of the commercial function of these buildings, they rarely have any sort of gate or fence. Without such strictures on social activity, the middle of these building complexes often comprise communal courtyard spaces where residents may socialize.

That these buildings contain some form of communal but private space keeps them somewhat exclusive in a more public setting. The condition of these buildings, however, is usually poor, with badly-maintained paint, trash littered on the ground, and a large amount of graffiti covering the walls. While balconies commonly exist in these



Green courtyards found in the Type 2 5-6 Story Mixed-Use Residential Apartment Buildings located mostly on the northern Monteverde Nuovo side of Donna Olimpia.



Type 3 Fascist-Era Mixed-Use Social Housing where the majority of social activity occurs throughout the day.

buildings, many buildings, especially those on the northern end of the neighborhood, do not have balconies and oftentimes appear devoid of any human presence.

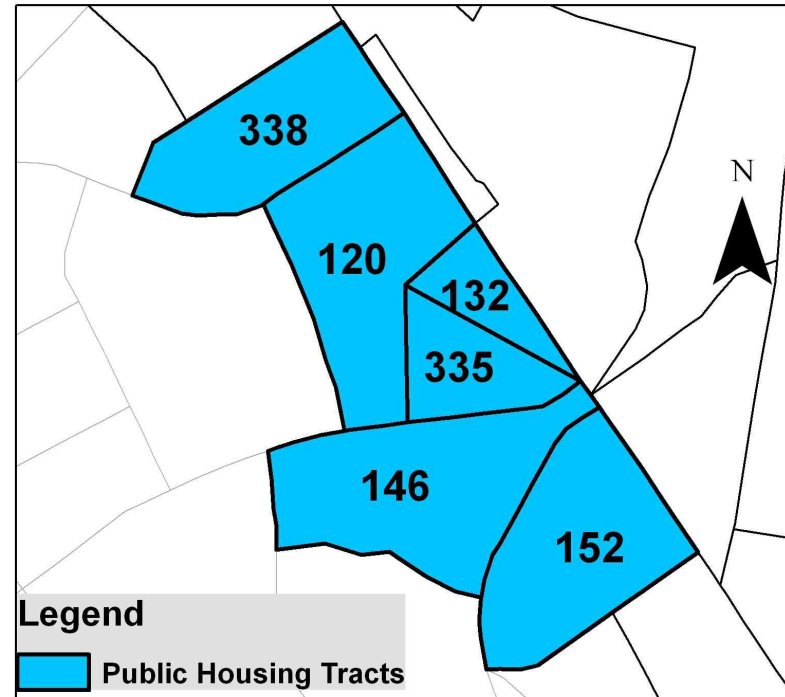
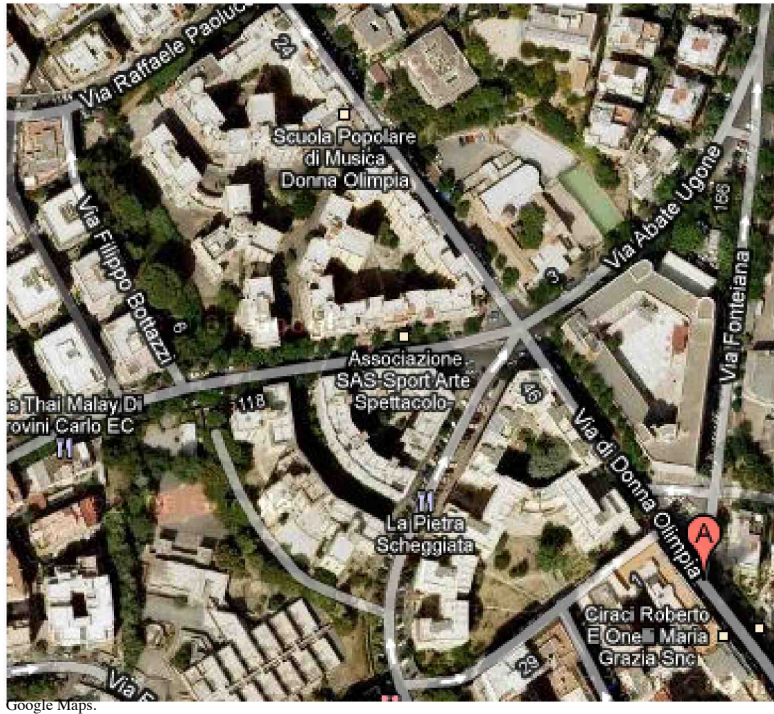
The commercial spaces inhabiting the ground level of Type 2 buildings are quite varied, ranging from restaurants to hairdressers to offices (See Table 1). The prevalence of certain types of commercial spaces – specialty food stores, hairdressers, motorino mechanic shops – that are very proximal to a large segment of the neighborhood’s living spaces indicates the needs and services that are most important to Donna Olimpia’s residents. These stores and shops are a major source of social activity for elderly residents throughout the day. They stand

outside storefronts chatting, stay inside talking to the proprietors, and greet friends as they pass by. In addition, many Type 2 buildings also contain parking garages within, emphasizing another important element of Donna Olimpia’s needs.

c) Type 3: Fascist-Era Mixed-Use Public Housing

Although Building Type 3 encompasses just three buildings, their importance and uniqueness warrant them a classification of their own. The first major residential buildings constructed in Donna Olimpia, these 1937 structures sustain their legacy as “skyscrapers” in the eyes of the locals, even though many other edifices in the area are just as tall. As Silvio told us, these nine-story buildings located off the north-

Census Data for Tracts Containing Public Housing



Census Tract	Total Population	% btw 0-24	% btw 25-54	% 55 & Older	% Retired	% Student	% Immigrant
338	339	22%	41%	36%	23%	11%	3%
120	686	21%	40%	38%	22%	5%	1%
132	140	14%	34%	51%	22%	1%	0%
335	368	23%	35%	40%	20%	4%	<1%
146	597	23%	38%	39%	25%	4%	<1%
152	467	27%	37%	35%	23%	5%	<1%

Projection: 1950 UTM Zone 33N
 Source: CornellInRome Lab: ISTAT 2005
 April 2010

Table 1: Census Data referring to the percentage of the Donna Olimpia Population living in the Case Popolari (Type 3 Buildings).

ern part of Via di Donna Olimpia house many elderly people who have strong ties to Donna Olimpia and its history and approximately five hundred families in public housing apartments administered by ATER. The architectural form of these buildings has a notable political legacy; from a bird's-eye-view, they form the letters D-U-X, latin for Mussolini's moniker Il Duce ("leader" or "duke"). Mussolini's attempt to imprint fascism here in this way has succeeded. The buildings (parts of which have been repainted) are imposing and somewhat constricting on the inside, and yet have ample communal space in the courtyards, with greenery, benches, and patios that are all commonly used (originally, bathrooms inside were also communal) . The intended monumentality of these structures perseveres as a factor in their role as Donna Olimpia's social epicenter. The strong social character of Building Type 3 is maintained in its permanence as public housing, and although its age is superficially apparent, these buildings are altogether well-maintained.

We confirmed through the census data that at least 20% of the Type 3 residents are retired, a statistic that was emphasized by Silvio Parrello (See Table 1).¹⁸ Many of these elderly residents typically spend time talking to one another during their hours spent leaning out of their windows or sitting and partaking in the daily passeggiata in the open green public spaces within these building complexes. On the ground floors within these buildings are a handful of commercial spaces, such as a household items store, a bar, a laundry facility, a cartoonist's shop and a podiatrist, as well as a political office building and a pool hall that serves as one of the only recreational spaces to be found on this level in Donna Olimpia. There is also a local music school and an art



An example of the many trees and seating areas found within the Case Popolari (Type 3).

school within these structures, which reinforce the social cohesion felt here. That all these public spaces within these buildings are sort of “tucked away” indicates that one would likely already have to know about them in order to visit – they do not benefit from passerby. As the oldest remaining buildings in Monteverde Nuovo, their public housing character endures through the many subsequent public housing buildings constructed in the Nuovo area. Nevertheless, this one building type provides an example of how varied social life can be across a small distance because of constructed factors. The “X” building has the most benches, fruit trees, open space, and people, and is the most socially active. The “D” building, however, contains apartments of varying quality and is thus less homogenous, and has gated-off and inaccessible housing and garden areas. Less socially active, its numerous green spaces are woefully underused, and the building’s underpass is replete with graffiti.

d) *Type 4: Church Complex*

There are three churches located within the Donna Olimpia neighborhood: the Church of the Holy Mother Mary of Providence, the Church of St Damasus, and the Church of Our Lady of La Salette. They were all constructed during different time periods and they each maintain a different level of social and communal activity serving the spiritual needs of the community. The two churches that contained the most activity were the Fascist structures located on Via Donna Olimpia and the convent located at the top of the Monteverde Nuovo hill. Like many others, churches built in the twentieth century are characterized as having radical innovations in style, building materials, and interior layout. These churches have uninterrupted planes, massive verticals,

columns without capitals, clean lines and angles that suggest a hierarchy of central authority, successfully communicating the austerity of the regime. While the Church of Our Lady of La Salette commands attention as it stands alone atop a raised artificial platform, the two-story yellow concrete building on the corner of Via Donna Olimpia and Via Abate Ugone is incorporated into the community. Although the Church of the Holy Mother Mary of Providence is also on a raised platform, the entrance faces the street and the spaces in front and its covered portico create inviting spaces for people to sit. Behind the church parking lot lies a small soccer field for children to use on Sundays. Situated next to an important intersection of Donna Olimpia, it is frequented by many of the residents and serves the community. Although churches are public spaces, the imposing architecture and closed gates of the facade suggest an unfriendly barrier between the people and the building’s function.

e) *Type 5: Public Municipal Complex*

Donna Olimpia is home to a number of public municipal complexes. These include the office of Rome’s sixteenth Municipio, a high school, a middle school, an elementary school with a police station now inhabiting part of the ground floor, a separate police station, a driving school, and a library. Their architectural styles and time periods vary greatly. The main elementary school located on Via di Donna Olimpia is a 1932 five-story building that used to be a public housing complex and now shares a ground floor with a local police station and a community center for the elderly. In interviews residents have pointed out how this combination of divergent services and clientele strengthens overall community bonds.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Dawn, the only real insight



An example of the 6-7 Story Mixed-Use Residential Building located in southern Donna Olimpia.

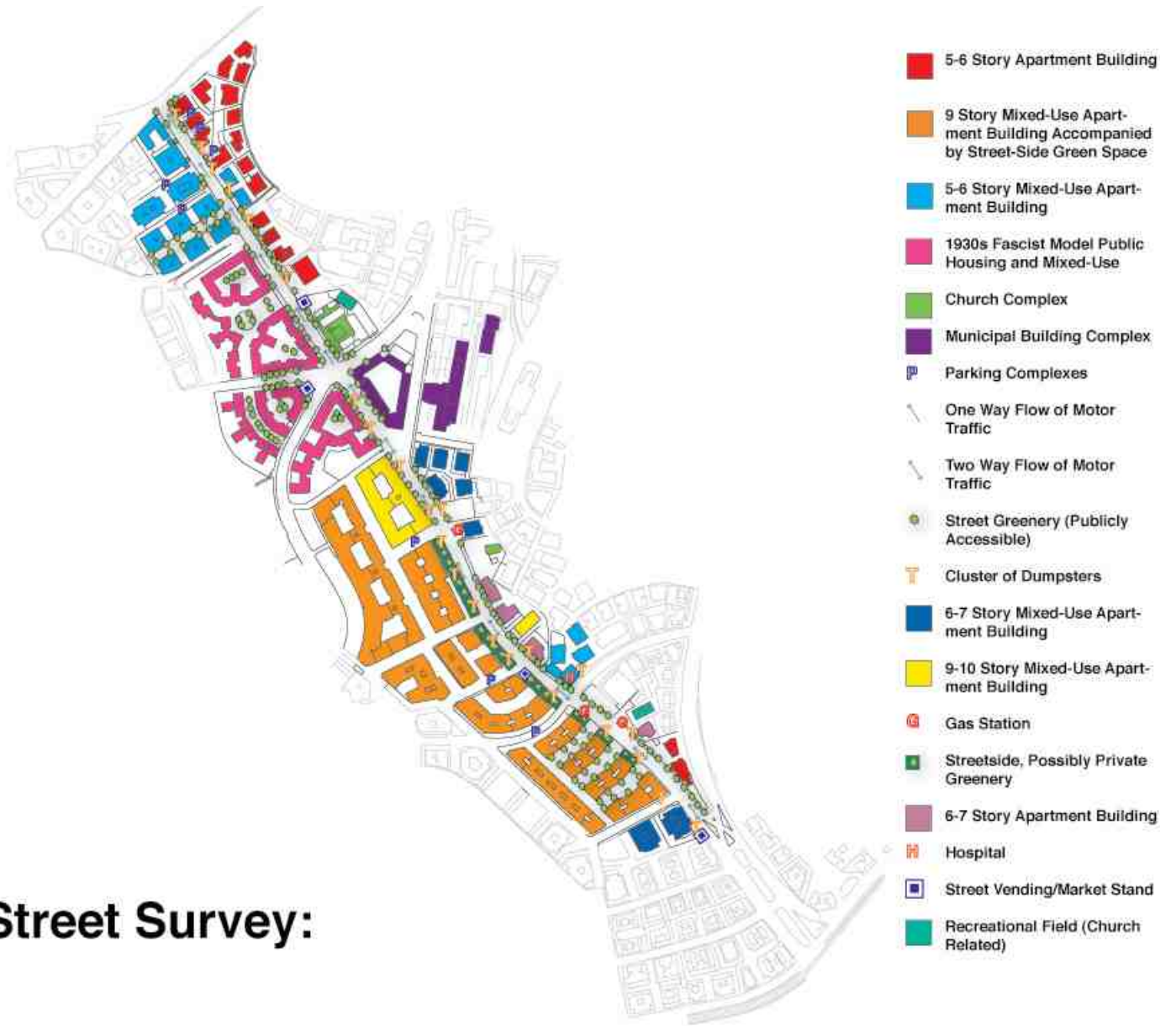
we had into the local schools, said that most of the academic services remain “insular,” having had little social influence on the surrounding neighborhood.²⁰

The facade of the elementary school is a bleak, straight gray with regular windows and accented by an Italian and EU flag, but upon further inspection one notes it is adorned with small, intricate decoration. The municipal office is located on an elevation and is blocked behind a wall and fence in Monteverde Nuovo near the church there. Even though this separation may distance the governing authority from the populace, people view this division as necessary to announce the prestige of the Municipio to the neighborhood. Still, Roberto Baldetti told us that one of Donna Olimpia’s strengths lies in the proximity of the

Municipio to the neighborhood in that it pays special attention to Donna Olimpia’s needs, and that locals here feel comfortable approaching the Municipio if they have problems.²¹ Other municipal buildings located on Viale di Villa Pamphili were at such a level of elevation in Monteverde Vecchio and so cordoned off behind high walls and gates that we felt their inaccessibility from Via di Donna Olimpia rendered them a fringe element of the neighborhood. None of our interviewees mentioned these buildings and their services, and social activity outside them (and from what we could tell, inside them as well) was scant. Nevertheless, their proximity and particular character makes them a notable part of our building typology.

f) *Type 6: 6-7 Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building*

The 6-7 story mixed-use apartment buildings are mostly located within the Monteverde Nuovo neighborhood. Most have balcony spaces where residents dry their laundry and maintain vegetation. These buildings have very few courtyards and residential gathering spaces, unlike the 5-6 mixed-use apartment buildings. Instead, they are often located in a small network of private streets. These streets are not maintained by the municipality, except for trash services; rather, the residents of the apartment complexes take care of them.²² There are also narrow private streets tucked between the buildings that are mostly clean and well-kept. These buildings may have terraces on the rooftops, and are often decorated with a brickwork finish that tells of the buildings’ higher quality. In addition, the secluded apartment building entrances usually lie up a small flight of stairs and behind a fence and gate (sometimes left ajar), and many Type 6 buildings share a paved ramp that leads from the street to rows of private parking



Neighborhood Street Survey:

Via Donna Olimpia (Main)

Map 5: Via di Donna Olimpia Building Typology and Street Survey Map.

garages. Similar to the Type 2 5-6-Story Mixed-Use Apartment Buildings, the street level commercial spaces offer varied services, usually upscale, to the residents such as veterinarian clinics, orthopedic clinics, hairdressers, and shops.

g) *Type 7: 9-Story Mixed Use Apartment Building With Abutting Green Space*

Concentrated in the southern end of Via di Donna Olimpia, Building Type 7 consists of large, nine-story, 1970's-era balconied apartment buildings with street-level commercial spaces and small greenways that run alongside and in between the buildings and are cognate with the small, rectangular, gated-off green areas on the sidewalk in front of these buildings. Unlike much of the rest of Monteverde Nuovo, these buildings house privately-owned apartments, and they are very well-maintained and have little graffiti on the walls. Typical commercial spaces here are bars, toy stores, banks, and grocery and specialty food stores, but the sheer number and diversity of shops makes commercial activity difficult to characterize.

What makes these structures unique are the green areas dotted with trees that run alongside the buildings perpendicular to the street, the handsomely decorated pavement in between these greenways, and the green spaces on the sidewalk in front of the buildings (See Map 5). Though all such spaces are quite well-maintained, they are devoid of benches, and, more significantly, people; as such, their purpose remains unclear, although the streetside spaces must have been designed with some specific intention, as indicated by the surrounding fences and gates that are sometimes locked. Although one Donna Olimpia

local said that only these buildings' residents were permitted use the green spaces,²³ it seems that this distinction made no practical difference, as no one at all utilizes them much. Still, they are pretty to behold and beautify the neighboring buildings and streetscape.

h) *Type 7a: 9-Story Mixed Use Apartment Building*

This building type is identical to Type 7 with the exception of its lack of adjoining green space. It houses a large resident parking complex in the interior courtyard of the building, demonstrating how the already congested parking in the surrounding area isn't enough for local needs. Private housing on a very busy street, this building was one of the few in the entire neighborhood to have a doorman. This particular building's commercial area typifies much of Donna Olimpia's upscale population segment. The toy store and the toy dispenser in front of the snack bar exemplify Donna Olimpia's abundant toy stores that cater to the neighborhood's children; the driving school and motorcycle shop mirror the high level of vehicle ownership and low parking availability; the pricey women's clothiers and handbag shop and upscale tabacchi reflect the wealthier residents of private apartment buildings; and the specialty food store and bakery is just one example of the many that inhabit Via Donna Olimpia, indicating locals' particular tastes and resources.

i) *Type 8: 6-7-Story Residential Apartment Buildings*

Scattered in clusters throughout Donna Olimpia, Type 8 buildings are chiefly 1970s-era 6- or 7-story residential buildings that are elevated and separated from the street by gates and walls up to fifteen feet high. Without commercial spaces on the ground to attract passerby or resi-

dential communal spaces within the complexes, these buildings see little social activity apart from what little interaction may occur along the balconies that are elemental to each apartment. Private parking for residents, located behind these buildings, is also gated off. Where this building type does not appear along Via di Donna Olimpia and buttressed by a large, imposing wall, it exists in residential blocks that are surrounded by other building types and never faces a street.

j) Type 9: 3-4-Story Mixed-Use Apartment Building

The smallest group in our typology, Type 9 encompasses just five buildings, three of which are located at the intersection of Via Fabiola and Via Ozanam in Monteverde Nuovo, and the others on Clivo Rutarario in Monteverde Vecchio. To our knowledge, each building consists of no more than four large apartments. Unsurprisingly, they are some of the best-maintained buildings in the entire neighborhood, and are located in two of the most attractive areas in Donna Olimpia.

k) Open Market

Sandwiched between the top of Via Federico Ozanam, Via Giuseppe Ghislieri, and Circonvallazione Gianicolense lies a thriving informal market of approximately 120 by 400 feet that sells food, flowers, clothing, household items, and other goods. This well-established mini-economy is mostly run by immigrants vendors who commute daily to this area. Although the market is located at Donna Olimpia's fringe, to many Donna Olimpia residents it is an essential component of their neighborhood, especially for the fresh food it provides. On the gateway to the busy artery of Circonvallazione Gianicolense, the market seems to attract people from Donna Olimpia rather than draw

outsiders into the neighborhood.

Street Survey

A street survey of the neighborhood of Donna Olimpia starts with Via di Donna Olimpia, the geographic, social, and commercial nerve center of the neighborhood. Via di Donna Olimpia is the "valley" of Monteverde, with Monteverde Vecchio and Monteverde Nuovo resting on hills that emanate up and away from Via di Donna Olimpia. Walking along this main avenue, one senses its importance relative to its surroundings if for no other reason that on either side one sees and feels the two rapidly inclining hills converge to the line of the street. We will begin on Via di Donna Olimpia at the northern end of the street, at its intersection with Via Vitellia and its abutment with the park of Villa Dora Pamphili, which also rests on a hill that towers above its surroundings and frames the edge of the neighborhood. Thus, these three bordering prominences create what feels like a natural fortification from the outside that monumentalizes the road while insulating Donna Olimpia socially and structurally. In reality, of course, Donna Olimpia is hardly immune from outer demographic, social, economic, and structural influences, but this notion of a strong community identity here was described and emphasized by many locals during our conversations. While not an element of the neighborhood proper that we surveyed, the park itself serves as an important focal point and recreational space for Donna Olimpia's residents. Its presence ornaments Donna Olimpia, and its popularity may explain the underutilization of many of Donna Olimpia's other green spaces within its buildings and on its streets.



Piazza di Donna Olimpia, which is formed by the three Case Popolare. People are often found socializing and traveling to and from the Case here.

Following an itinerary south down Via di Donna Olimpia, one finds walled and gated residences on the (more expensive) Monteverde Vecchio side (Building Type 1) that are commonly monitored by surveillance cameras, and similar buildings, but these with stores instead of barriers, on the Monteverde Nuovo side (See Map 5). Vecchio is also better served by trash receptacles than Nuovo, as certain sections here have four sets of two or three dumpsters set out in the street for five Vecchio buildings, and no easily accessible dumpsters for the denser Nuovo buildings. While in this case the Vecchio side did not have commercial spaces, in the neighborhood overall we did not find a correlation between dumpster placement and ground-level space use – whether commercial or residential. The condition of the sidewalk reflects the economic differences of the two sides of the street; while both sides are lined with shade-providing trees, Monteverde Vecchio's sidewalk is intact and clean, whereas Monteverde Nuovo's sidewalk

here is cracked and littered with trash and dog waste. Nevertheless, the bar and its outdoor seating area located on the Nuovo side attracts the main social activity in this area, which generally consists of a group of three or four older men talking amongst themselves and greeting acquaintances who pass by.

Further down Via di Donna Olimpia along the Type 3 D-U-X building complexes, one finds similar circumstances on the Nuovo side of the street (See Map 5). The constant social activity going on inside the complex on benches, in front of stores, and between windows, spills out onto the street where commercial services like a laundry facility, a butcher shop, a bar, and a small grocery enliven the block. An atmosphere of ease permeates this area, with some informally parked cars on the sidewalk, some overflowing garbage receptacles in the courtyards of these buildings but still a rather clean street, and significant

graffiti that nevertheless does not detract from the pleasant ambience by virtue of the vivifying social activity here. In spite of similar bustling social activity across the street that concentrates around a bar and a pizzeria, however, the gates of the adjacent Vecchio buildings creates a less welcoming atmosphere. Here, the lack of seating area, very high levels of graffiti, broken pavement, and scattered litter constitutes an unfriendly setting, and the parked cars and motorcycles on the narrower sidewalk made it feel claustrophobic. The unkept pavement here is an exception to Monteverde Vecchio.

This particular section also exemplifies a gender difference in social activity that we noticed throughout the neighborhood; on one particular morning, some older women ate at the pizzeria here but left soon after, whereas a group of older men socialized, smoked, and read the newspaper at the next-door bar for an indefinite time. This instance typifies how the social activity on the street in Donna Olimpia was more commonly formed by groups of older men than women.

The patterned sidewalk in front of the Via di Donna Olimpia church continues down the street in front of the main elementary school. There is no sidewalk parking for motorcycles here because of the metal bar and decorative benches and plant boxes that run along and are integrated into the well-maintained sidewalk. However, people rarely make use of this seating. The barred gates and heavily-graffitied walls of the school and police building create an inhospitable environment, but the pleasant old trees that drape into the street offset some of this sentiment. Much more social activity takes place across the street in front of the “D” building because of its commercial activity, wider



An example of a green alleyway that accompanies the 9-10 Mixed-Use Residential buildings located in south Donna Olimpia.

sidewalk that also hosts informal motorcycle parking, and outdoor tables and chairs in front of a bar. Old trees with nice grating line the well-paved sidewalk, and some attractive green terracing borders the restaurant at the corner. There is a welcoming wide staircase that leads up from the street into the housing complex. There is usually a lot of activity around this block's shops, but a boarded-up space that was formerly a bank mars this streetscape. Some notable community infrastructure also exists here: around the corner there is a donation bin for bags and shoes, and a receptacle for free newspapers sits on the corner.

Further down Via di Donna Olimpia, the level of pedestrian traffic increases. This is reflected in the presence of two beggars on this block – the only ones that stay in Donna Olimpia. A few (but rarely seen elsewhere) bicycles park along these Type 7 buildings, and there is an incline in the sidewalk pavement that goes down to the street with a handrail that was likely constructed for the convenience of the elderly. There is a full set of trash bins on the street for one building, and a mailbox inset into the apartment building's wall provides another service to the community here. Additionally, some storefronts are framed with identical potted trees. The social services, handsome appearance, and ritzier shops of this block of private apartment buildings indicates its more affluent status within the Monteverde Nuovo part of Donna Olimpia.

Not to be outdone, the area of Monteverde Vecchio across the street in front of Building Type 6 has a rather exclusive aura. The half of the sidewalk adjacent to the luxury shops that include a pet store, an

upscale gelateria, and a health food store that is very decorative and has an almost tile-like indoor appearance. Some barriers prevent cars from accessing the sidewalk and confine this block, and there are a number of square, brick elevated structures in the sidewalk where some greenery has been planted and that also functions as a seating space. Still, little social activity takes place here, and the bench-like elevated structures and chairs that the gelateria owner puts out generally experience little use, no matter the time of day.

Continuing down the street, one encounters a steep, fenced-off, overgrown vacant lot. On this side of the street at least, this is where Donna Olimpia's character starts to fade and construction begins. A gas station beneath a narrow 7-story building separates this vacant lot from a giant dirt ditch barricaded by an imposing cement wall. This major project is the site of a future parking facility, which highlights the needs of Donna Olimpia residents for still more parking. These voids in the landscape along with the gas station's extension into the sidewalk deter virtually any pedestrian activity here. While the sidewalk turns walkable further down the road, it is still a formidable presence, with huge brick walls separating the apartment buildings on top of the walls from the street, including one built from jagged stone to frustrate attempts at graffiti. These walls make commercial development impossible here. The only commercial presence here is a second flower shop that is strategically situated on Via di Donna Olimpia's corner with Via Francesco Maidalchini, on which is located a health clinic.

The sidewalk across the street in front of the Building Type 7 buildings is wider than it is anywhere else in the area. It accommodates

dense commercial spaces including real estate agencies, tall trees, and enough roadside space for significant automobile and motorcycle parking space. Most exceptionally, a series of rectangular fenced-off green spaces of approximately twenty by thirty feet creates two separate pedestrian walkway spaces on the sidewalk. Coupled with the greenery of the trees, these spaces altogether enhance the appearance of the streetscape. While they are well-maintained and often include plants, they still remain generally out of use.

Our street survey ends at our neighborhood's terminus: Piazzale Enrico Dunant, where Via di Donna Olimpia enjoins Viale dei Quattro Venti to form a wide, automobile-heavy and pedestrian-unfriendly avenue. This junction is still an important focal point for the neighborhood, and its prominence is indicated by a "statue" street performer who must have chosen this spot for the number of passerby. There are a handful of vacant spaces alongside commercial spaces, and the upscale apartment buildings on the Vecchio side are very removed from the street by distance, fencing, and vegetation. What is noticeable about the Nuovo side is that in addition to the continuation of fenced-off rectangular green spaces set in the sidewalk, the apartment buildings are divided by sidewalk-alleys about forty feet wide that are set in decorative brick and are dotted with additional green spaces. These areas beautify and tranquilize the neighborhood, and create a private atmosphere in this public space. Looking back down Via di Donna Olimpia from here, one can see the neighborhood unfold in the form of trees, larger and denser buildings, and a constant presence of people. Although a street survey details the physical aspects of a streetscape, the social factors and results that influence and are influ-

Population Density in Donna Olimpia Neighborhood



Projection: 1950 UTM Zone 33N
Source: Cornell/Rome Lab: ISTAT
April 2010

Map 6: Population Density in the Donna Olimpia Neighborhood. Monteverde Nuovo is much denser overall than Monteverde Vecchio.

enced by the street's physicality are what uniquely help to characterize a neighborhood. Combining the physical Donna Olimpia with the social Donna Olimpia is what makes the area interesting.

Sample Streets and Opposing Area Comparison and Analysis

Many social, structural, and economic differences between Monteverde Vecchio and Monteverde Nuovo have already been mentioned. Here we provide street samples from the two neighborhoods within the Donna Olimpia neighborhood to better characterize these districts and their differences.

The streets of Via Sesto Celere and Clivo Rutario in Monteverde Vecchio well exemplify this side of Donna Olimpia. In the form of semi-circles cut into one of the hills of Monteverde, they are narrow, quiet, exclusive, and manicured, even though they are public streets. The building composition is almost entirely residential, being dominated by Type 1 5-6-story residential buildings with a handful of Type 2 and Type 9 mixed-use buildings providing minimal commercial services. It was evident upon walking through the neighborhood that it was significantly less dense than the other parts of Donna Olimpia, a suspicion we can confirm with census data (See Map 6). While all of these apartment buildings are pleasant to look at, their collective monotony is striking. As described above, there is typically a white fence or low wall in front of a small courtyard and walkway leading up to these buildings with polished facades, balconies, and large apartments, and parking behind a locked and sometimes automatic gate to the buildings' sides. There is also much parking, both for au-

tomobiles and motorcycles, on the street in front of the residences; the cars parked here are generally more expensive than ones found elsewhere in Donna Olimpia. Clearly, parking here is a very important issue, especially when a typical family owns three cars, as is often the case in this area.²⁴

Additionally, there are a disproportionate number of street lamps per block here than anywhere else in Donna Olimpia, indicating the better quality service these wealthier residents enjoy. (It is also possible that the lower density means that the street infrastructure undergoes less wear and tear, and is therefore in better condition.) Trees are situated behind private walls and fences along the sidewalk rather than being planted alongside the street, as low everyday traffic does not necessitate an additional buffer between the sidewalk and street.

Monteverde Nuovo, on the other hand, presents a very different picture. A principal street in Nuovo is Via Federioco Ozanam, which emanates from Piazza di Donna Olimpia and passes in between the "U" and the "X" buildings of Donna Olimpia's eminent public housing complex. Connecting Via di Donna Olimpia with the important street Circonvallazione Gianicolense on which the number 8 tram runs, Ozanam is a busy street lined with trees and moderately-sized mixed-use apartment buildings. Buses 44 and 19 run on Ozanam, and on one side there is yet another school that also serves as a community center for services like child care and concerts. Importantly, Donna Olimpia's open market is located at the top of this street, so residents must walk up it in order to buy cheap food, clothing, and other items. Ozanam hosts a wide variety of commercial shops, ranging from the



The open market located at the peak of Monteverde Nuovo, immediately off of Via Federico Ozanam.

usual pizzerias, dry-cleaners, and motorcycle shops to more particular spaces like Silvio's art studio (formerly a specialty egg pasta shop), a goth clothing store, and a well-known Thai food restaurant. Certainly, this section of Donna Olimpia embodies more diversity in economic activity and social presence than Donna Olimpia's Monteverde Vecchio.

Off of Via Federico Ozanam to the north lies a block of small, interconnected streets that is actually somewhat reminiscent of Monteverde Vecchio. They are high-quality, narrow, seldom-frequented streets with well-maintained apartment buildings, many of which are solely residential (Building Type 8). As a local resident we encountered told us, these streets are maintained by the residents rath-

er than the municipality, and as such often have private, decorative street lamps behind residential walls on private property rather than on the sidewalk. Here, however, commercial and residential street-level space is often replaced by ugly gates to private parking spaces within buildings, buildings are much closer to the sidewalk, and the walls of the apartment buildings are much higher relative to the street width than anywhere else in the neighborhood. Although it is pleasant here, there is usually hardly any social activity taking place along the streets, especially the smaller ones. Following these roads away from Via Ozanam, one encounters Via Pio Foà, a street notable for its patterned street-level facades, fancy apartment buildings that are still rather large and have commercial spaces on the ground floor, and Largo Guglielmo Bilancioni, the only public square and seating area in this entire section of Donna Olimpia. Even so, the benches in the square are almost never used at all throughout the day. Altogether, Monteverde Nuovo is evidently a much more diverse area than Monteverde Vecchio, structurally, socially, and economically speaking. While the two districts certainly shares some elements in some parts, the moneyed Monteverde Vecchio is more homogeneous than the mosaic of building types, streets, commercial spaces, public spaces, and social activity and people that defined Monteverde Nuovo.

Real Estate Property Analysis

During our first field observation in Donna Olimpia we immediately took note of two storefronts devoted to area real estate. The real estate offices served as an indicator of the economic viability of Donna Olimpia as a corridor located in a very healthy part of Rome. The storefronts prominently displayed several area properties for sale. A

sample of properties was taken. The property values generally ranged from 300,000 to 1,000,000. They were located solely in high and medium density complexes in Monteverde. The lowest price in our sample was 370,000 for a 2-bedroom second-story apartment located in one of the seven-story apartments at the southern end of Via di Donna Olimpia. Additionally, listings for the area included a retail location of 1450 square meters along Via di Donna Olimpia. This property included an attached warehouse, office, and loft. The asking price was just 170,000, a surprisingly low rate given its large size and prime location.

Part IV: Statistical Analysis

After our in-depth street survey and multiple interviews, we found it necessary to examine the demographics of Donna Olimpia, especially those having to do with age. We hoped that examining the 2001 census data from the Cornell server would confirm our biases and observations, but in many cases we were wrong. An examination of census data from the ISTAT (*Istituto nazionale di statistica*) for the Donna Olimpia neighborhood revealed several critical issues facing the neighborhood, especially in the “heart” of the neighborhood – the social housing.

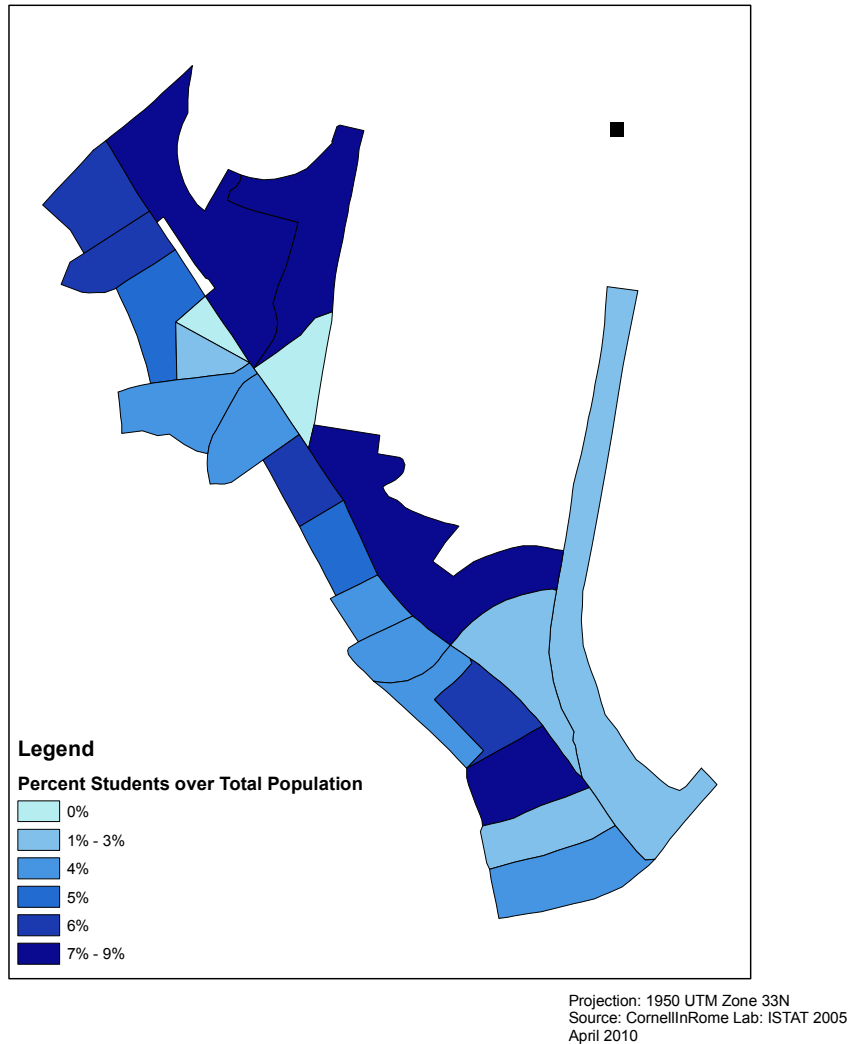
Our first data map (Map 6) simply shows population density in the various census tracts in the neighborhood. It is clear that those tracts on Monteverde Nuovo are much denser than those in Monteverde Vecchio, as we predicted when we conducted our street survey. The census tracts that are the densest contain the large 9-story apartment

complexes towards the southern end of the street. The data also made us question the accessibility of various parts of the neighborhood. We had trouble inspecting those regions located in the less dense census tracts, while we found the high-rise, mixed-use apartments towards the beginning of Donna Olimpia more open to the public.

After witnessing little to no student activity on the streets of Donna Olimpia, we decided to research the student population in the neighborhood. This is especially important given the two large public schools in the area. Dawn, one of the English teachers we interviewed, said that not many students actually live within the neighborhood, and significantly fewer live within the public housing complex at the heart of the community (Map 7).²⁵

We were surprised to find that the greatest student population is in Monteverde Vecchio, given our initial impression that this area was only populated by older couples who have lived there for decades. Furthermore, the census tracts at the southern end of the street contain a very small number of students, which suggests an older population. Although we cannot make assumptions about age based solely on the number of students, it was interesting to note that those census tracts that contain social housing vary greatly in their student population. There are 1,932 students in all of Donna Olimpia, making up a sizable 21% of the total population. Compare this to Rome’s student percentage of 7.1%. Because we were unable to get the definition of a “student” according to the census bureau, we were unsure what the term meant demographically. For example, although we saw many American and other foreign students in Donna Olimpia, since foreign

Percent of Student Population Residing in Donna Olimpia Neighborhood



Map 7: The percent of student population per census tract in Donna Olimpia.

students do not fill out census forms, they were not included in the census data. The GIS data is further confusing because it does not include the ages of the students. Therefore, it is possible that many of those included in the census are actually older than we would assume and do not attend the public schools in Donna Olimpia itself.

After examining the neighborhood as a whole, we decided to focus on age within the tracts that contain public housing. The census data chart focusing on the public housing tracts covers the six tracts in which social housing is present in Donna Olimpia and provides more specific percentages regarding the population (See Table 2). The population of these six tracts is approximately a quarter of the total population of the neighborhood.

Our data showed that children aged 9 and younger constitute the smallest percentage of Donna Olimpia's social housing population, followed closely by children between the ages of 10 and 19. In four of the six social housing tracts, the greatest proportion of the population is between the ages of 60 and 69, although in some cases this measure is similar to the percentage of middle-aged people. We also noted a relatively high percentage of people between the ages of 30 and 39 here. The significant presence of both middle-aged and elderly populations and our experiences in interviewing elderly people living in social housing reveals the large presence of aging families in these tracts. Many of Donna Olimpia's social housing apartments are still inhabited by their original occupants and their families.

The presence of retired residents is quite clear in the social housing

Census Tract	Total Population	% btw 0-9	% btw 10-19	% btw 20-29	% btw 30-39	% btw 40-49	% btw 50-59	% btw 60-69	% 70<	% Student	% Immigrant
338	339	7%	9%	15%	16%	9%	16%	17%	10%	11%	3%
120	686	5%	9%	15%	11%	14%	11%	20%	13%	5%	1%
132	140	4%	5%	13%	11%	9%	19%	24%	14%	1%	0%
335	368	7%	8%	15%	14%	8%	19%	19%	9%	4%	<1%
146	597	6%	9%	15%	13%	12%	16%	18%	11%	4%	<1%
152	467	9%	10%	13%	14%	11%	15%	12%	14%	5%	<1%

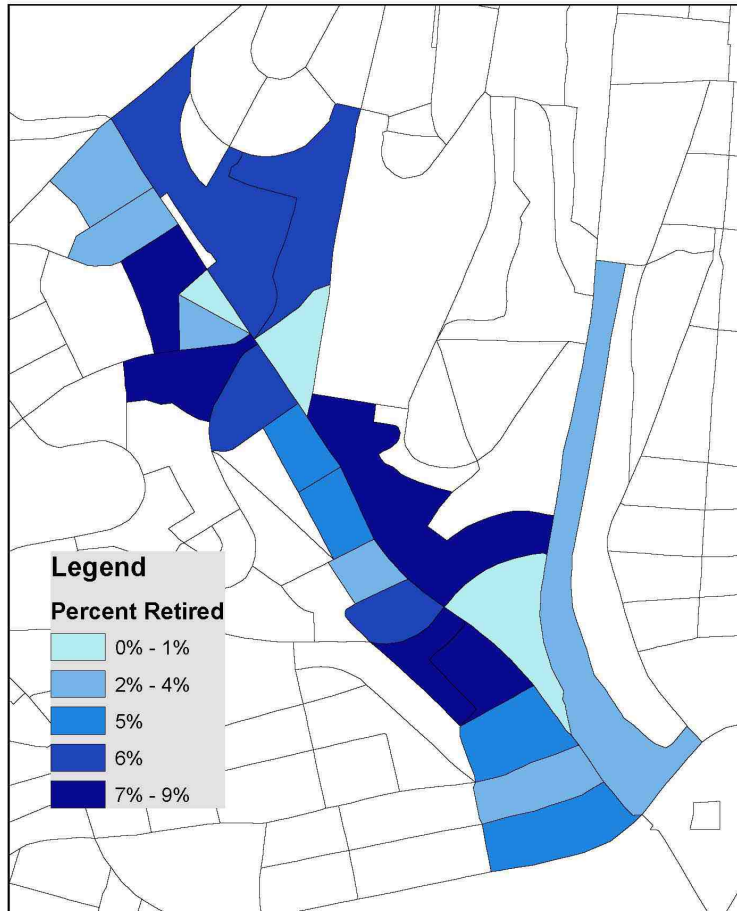
Table 2: The percentage breakdown of the Case Popolare population in Donna Olimpia.

complexes, as these residents tend to occupy the public spaces here and frequent many of the shops during the day (See Map 8 and Table 1, page 15). In our observations, the retired residents were the most prominent and frequently noticed group, whether it was morning, afternoon, or evening. According to the per cent retired map (See Map 8), the highest concentrations of retired individuals are found in two of the census tracts containing social housing as well as in tracts in the central portion of the Via di Donna Olympia. The highest concentrations of retired individuals live in tracts immediately bordering Donna Olimpia. Perhaps this is explained by the convenience of commercial services and a senior center attached to the elementary school of Via di Donna Olimpia.

Another significant number from the data is the percentage of immigrants. On average, immigrants represent less than 1% of the total population. We corroborated this datum by looking at a large sample of mailboxes in the social housing complexes; we never found even one non-Italian name. This reveals that social housing here has failed to integrate immigrants. While many of the residents are Italian internal migrants who came from farming communities or migrants who were displaced from other locations of Rome, external immigrants are not a common feature of Donna Olimpia social housing.

We explore settlement patterns of immigrants in our next map (See Map 9 and Tables 3, 4). The chart featuring the per cent total, as well as the countries of origin in the areas most heavily populated by immigrants, reveals relatively low numbers of immigrants in the area and that these populations tend to cluster. During our initial observations we noticed a minimal impact of immigration in the area (See Map 9). Overall European immigrants are the largest group, followed by Americans, Asians, and Africans. The largest number of immigrants is found in the northernmost track abutting Villa Pamphili, which was surprising given our belief that these houses were mostly occupied by Italians. Here there is an evenly large number of Asian and European immigrants, followed by Africans. The data indicate that the number of African immigrants in the area represent 20% of the immigrant population. While we noticed African immigrant street vendors on a daily basis, we assumed that these vendors traveled to Donna Olimpia from other areas. They were the clearest immigrant presence in the area. In addition, we met a number of American immigrants during our observations, and learned from interviews that Monterverde is home to a large number of American immigrants and residents. In general, the Americans were quite satisfied with their experience in the area, but were unaware of any other additional or substantial

Percent of Overall Population That is Retired by Census Tract

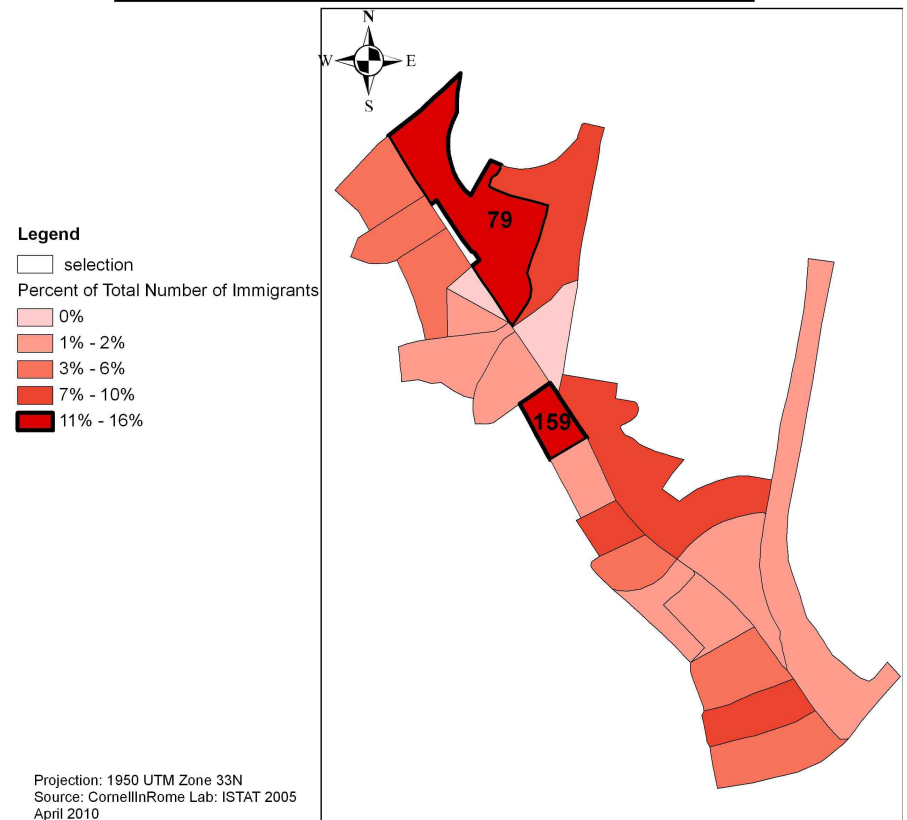


Projection: 1950 UTM Zone 33N
Source: CornellInRome Lab: ISTAT 2005
April 2010

Map 8: The percent of overall population that is retired by census tract in Donna Olimpia.

Percent of Total Immigrants by Tract and Countries of Origin In Donna Olimpia

Country of Origin	Number of Immigrants
Europe	94
Africa	46
America	52
Asia	47
Oceania	1
Sum of Immigrants/Total Population	240/10,140 (~%2.4)



Projection: 1950 UTM Zone 33N
Source: CornellInRome Lab: ISTAT 2005
April 2010

Map 9: The percent of total immigrants per census tract in Donna Olimpia.

Within TRACT 159	
Continent of Origin:	
Europe	6
Africa	14
America	7
Asia	2
Oceania	0
Total	29

Table 3: Number of immigrants within Census Tract 159.

immigrant presence. Americans tend to be scattered throughout the neighborhood in various locales, with the least clustering of any other immigrant group.

Our interviews revealed that native Italian residents tend to have a positive and generally welcoming attitude toward immigrants. This may be in part due to the lack of an overwhelming number of immigrants here and to residents' assumed higher economic status of immigrants in the area. Despite these comments, an interview with one resident detailed a recent brutal attack against an African immigrant, and rising hostility between the local municipalities and immigrants. Dawn described how the immigrant was handing out leaflets in the center of Piazza Donna Olimpia when a few young Italians began throwing bottles at him. This escalated to a full-on beating that was especially shocking because of the local police station across the street that refused to stop the attack because it "wasn't part of their jurisdiction." Dawn also pointed out that a number of local school officials

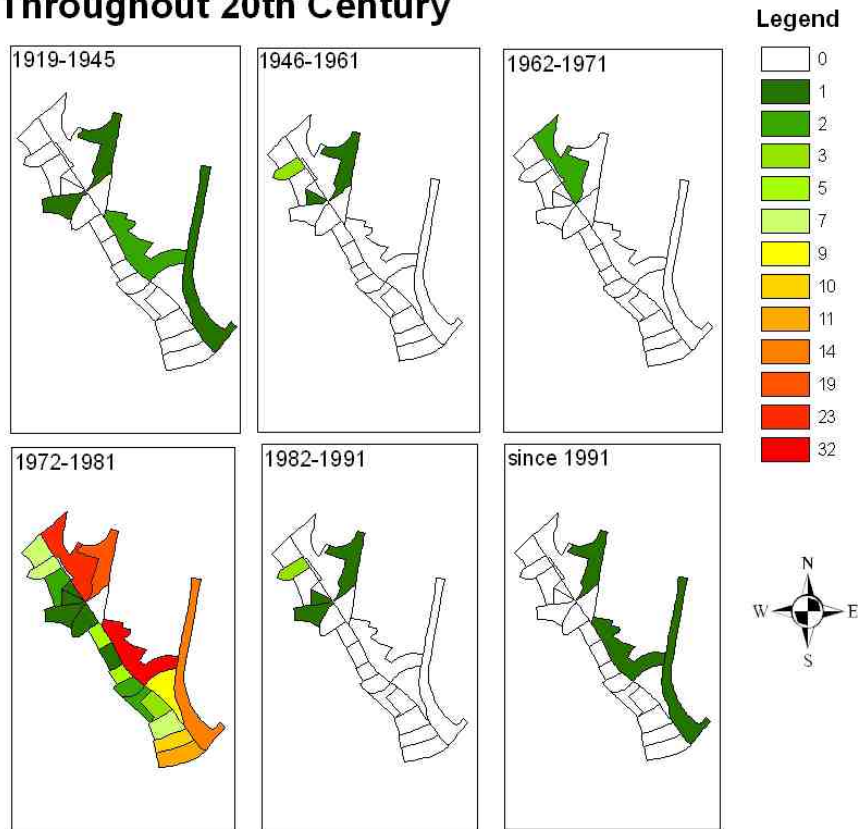
Within TRACT 79	
Continent of Origin	
Europe	11
Africa	9
America	7
Asia	11
Oceania	1
Total	39

Table 4: Number of immigrants within Census Tract 79.

have begun viewing immigrants as a problem within schools given the students' supposed difficulties in assimilating and their parents' inability to speak Italian.²⁶

The next GIS map indicates building construction in Donna Olimpia during the twentieth century (See Map 10). This map illustrates the early construction of social housing and shows that since the period of 1919-1945, the majority of housing construction in Donna Olimpia took place between 1972 and 1981. During this period, the largest number of units was constructed in Monteverde Vecchio on the eastern side of Via di Donna Olimpia, and on the extreme southwest end of Donna Olimpia in Monteverde Nuovo. In more recent decades, new development has been centered in Monteverde Vecchio. According to our interviews, many of the developments constructed between 1960 and 1980 were done in a haphazard and unplanned manner, particularly in Monteverde Nuovo.²⁷ This has resulted in a number of dense complexes with narrow, private, limited access roads as well as

Building Construction in Donna Olimpia Throughout 20th Century



Map 10: The building construction over time in Donna Olimpia.

some internal green space. The haphazard and dense placement of development here in Nuovo puts a strain on service delivery to the area and severely limits the ability for the development of collective green space and parks. Many private streets we surveyed were undergoing construction work in order to improve upon services such as water and roads.

Criticism of GIS Data

One critical flaw in all of our GIS Data is that the ISTAT (*Istituto nazionale di statistica*) census data is from 2001. Therefore, the data does not reflect the current dynamics of the neighborhood, including the aging and retired population, immigrant flows, population density, property ownership, and family composition. We could only make basic assumptions on what we observed and heard in our interviews. Additionally, we have limited data on rates of turnover and tenure of ownership prior to and since 2001. Without this information, we are unable to draw many conclusions on rates of change within the neighborhood and cannot track general trends and dynamics in the aforementioned issue areas. Additionally, ISTAT data relies on recording methods that are unable to track certain social groups, patterns of immigration and homelessness. Nevertheless, we have complemented the data with the information we gathered from our interviews and observations for a comprehensive picture.

Part V: Conclusion and Questions for Future Research

The preceding study has compiled and evaluated Rome's Donna Olimpia neighborhood along historical, typological, ownership, demographic, spatial, land use, commercial, governmental, service, and social dimensions. We have integrated our impressions and in-depth street surveying with resident interviews and census statistics to achieve a holistic understanding of Donna Olimpia's components, characteristics and underlying issues. These interviews provided background and specialized information about Donna Olimpia that we would not have been able to gather otherwise. Occasionally, the data provided by the ISTAT census surprised us because of its seeming contradiction with what we perceived on the ground, and we were forced to reevaluate our initial observations and determine whether we were mistaken or the data was flawed. For example, we initially assumed that many privately-owned apartment buildings were public housing. Although Donna Olimpia may have a very strong community identity, it still cannot prevent problematic issues from arising in the neighborhood. As discussed above, issues of parking, green space and other public space, immigration, and development all contain particular circumstances and consequences for Donna Olimpia's future. But we feel that the most pressing issue for the people of Donna Olimpia is the future role of the neighborhood's social housing.

Undoubtedly, the social housing in Donna Olimpia centers the population physically and ideologically. Its importance to the neighborhood's landscape and to its residents is immediately apparent after just one visit and a few conversations with locals. The D-U-X social hous-



One of the Case Popolare Complexes on Piazza di Donna Olimpia.

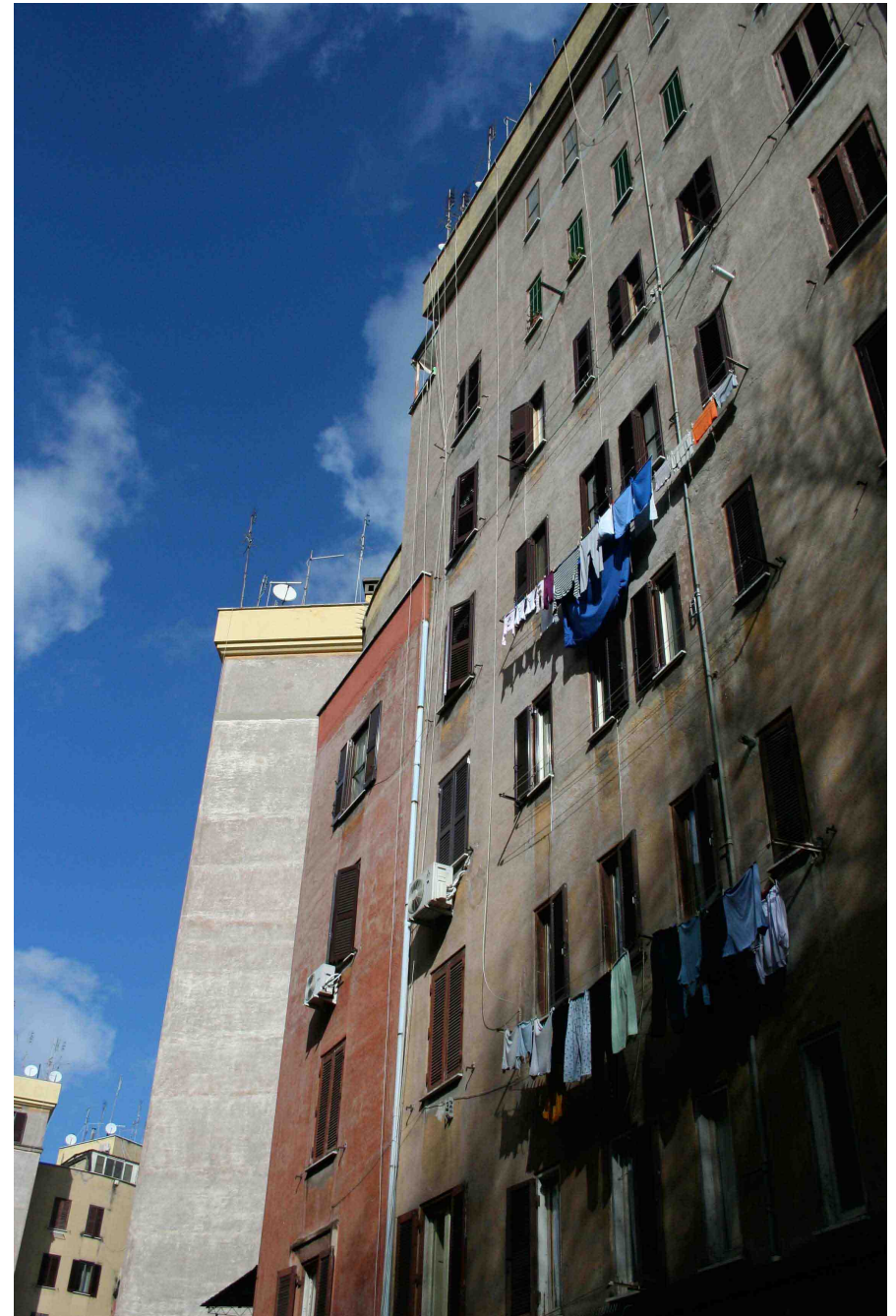
ing “skyscrapers” that engendered Donna Olimpia's working-class, sociable identity eighty years ago continue to house some members of the same families that originally populated it. These buildings have recently been incorporated into Rome's official historic district. While they have undergone some structural and cosmetic changes since their inception, these cultural landmarks have not yet faced a problem as serious as the privatization that now threatens it.

Rome's public housing authority, ATER, is now offering the apartments in these buildings to their current residents for purchase. If residents are unable to afford the approximately 35,000 per sixty square meter price tag for a typical apartment,²⁸ they may continue leasing their homes and will not be forced to move. Indeed,

to many residents of the D-U-X buildings, there is little incentive to sell. Many residents we interviewed pay only 100 or 200 a month in rent and also have renovations and repairs paid for. The familial structure ingrained into the social housing also deters privatization, as people simply pass their property down to their children. One resident we spoke with, Paolo, inherited his apartment from his parents, and because he is childless, plans on giving it to his nephews.²⁹

Nevertheless, our interviewees have told us that some privatization of these apartments has already taken place, and residents anticipate its acceleration. This is problematic on a number of levels. Privatization threatens the famous community spirit in this area; one need look no further than Monteverde Vecchio to perceive the manifest social differences there in terms of cohesion and identity. The higher real estate prices associated with privatization that we have already noted in real estate agencies in Donna Olimpia also pose problems. Many people we talked to spoke of the unaffordability of these newly private residences. Donna Olimpia is thus at risk of becoming an island of the elderly and of immobility. One of our interviewees, however, expressed optimism that privatization may add some dynamism to Donna Olimpia through population turnover. The uncertainty around this critical issue for Donna Olimpia's people, spirit, development, and legacy is cause for further investigation. A comprehensive understanding of the entire Donna Olimpia neighborhood has provided us with the background to examine privatization of social housing's past causes, current bearing, and future consequences in Donna Olimpia. The social housing in Donna Olimpia has undeniably been a momentous determinant of the neighborhood's essence throughout its history,

and will continue to play the leading role here in the future.



The looming facade of Donna Olimpia's "gratacieli."

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