

Fiat Corporation Conference Center

The Amalfi Coastline, Italy

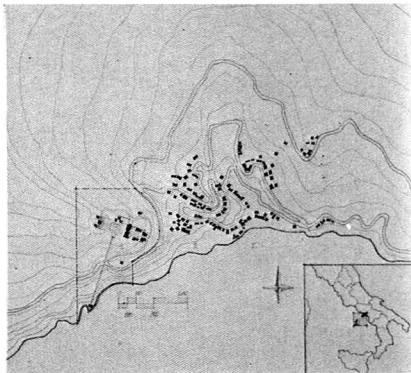
Annette R. Haflich

Critics: F. G. Ernst
Richard Pohlman
Richard Wagner

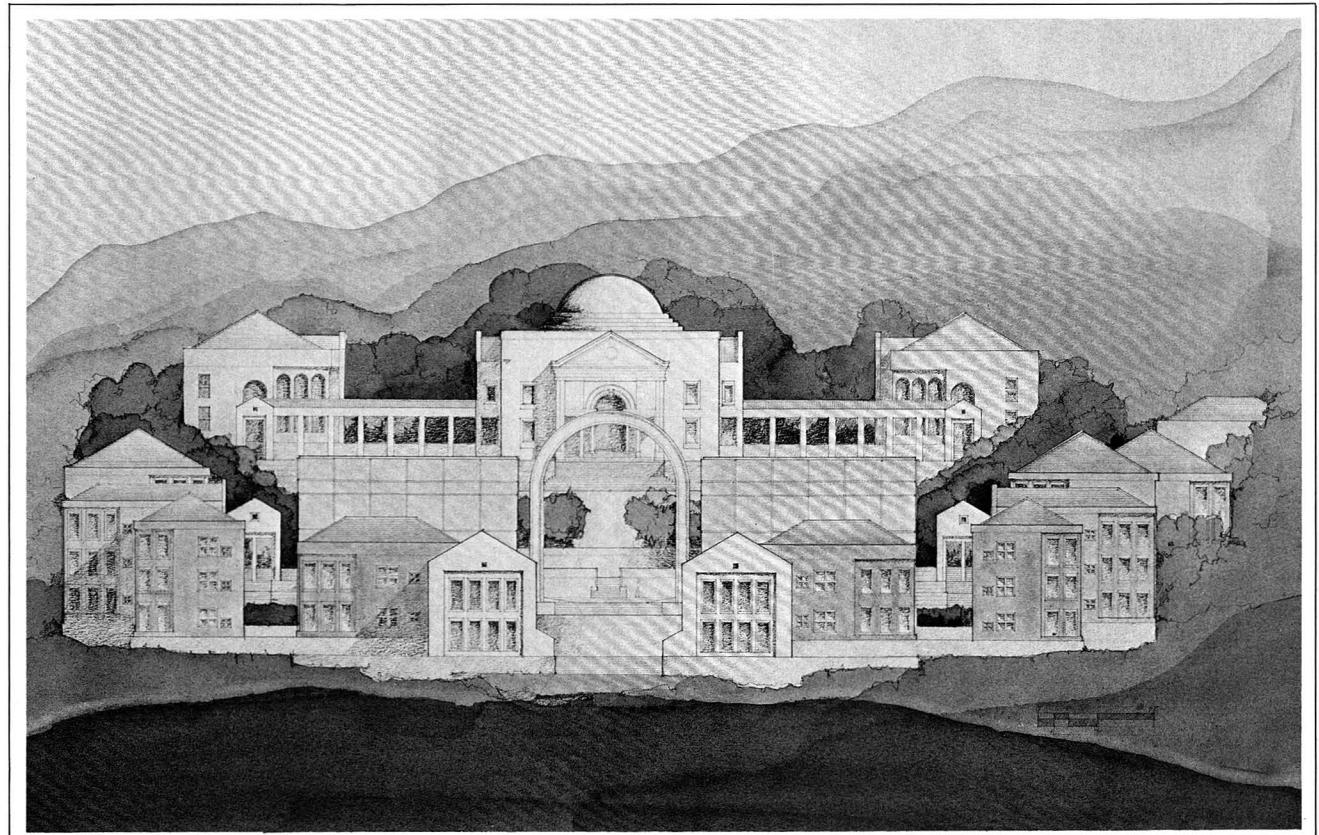
The Corniche road, which follows the rocky coast between Sorrento and Amalfi is the finest in Italy. Its innumerable bends, following the coastline, afford constantly changing views of enchanting landscape, wild fantastically shaped rocks, plunging vertically into an empty crystal-clear sea, deep gorges spanned by dizzy bridges, and saracen towers, once the haunts of pirates, perched on peaks or reefs.

—the Michelin Tourist
Guide to Italy

The beauty of the Amalfi coastline, and in particular the southern slope on the Tyrrhenian Sea located between the Italian hilltowns of Sorrento and Positano, establishes the setting for the Fiat Corporation Conference center. The center includes public display and lecture rooms, staff and executive offices, and employee and ex-



46 **Location map.**

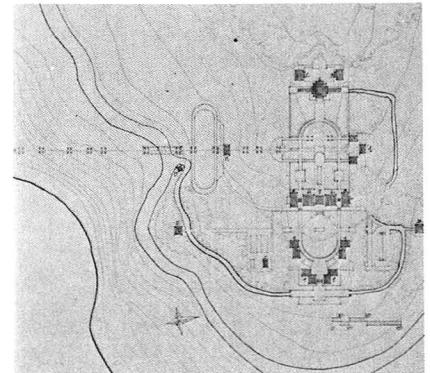


Executive office building perspective.

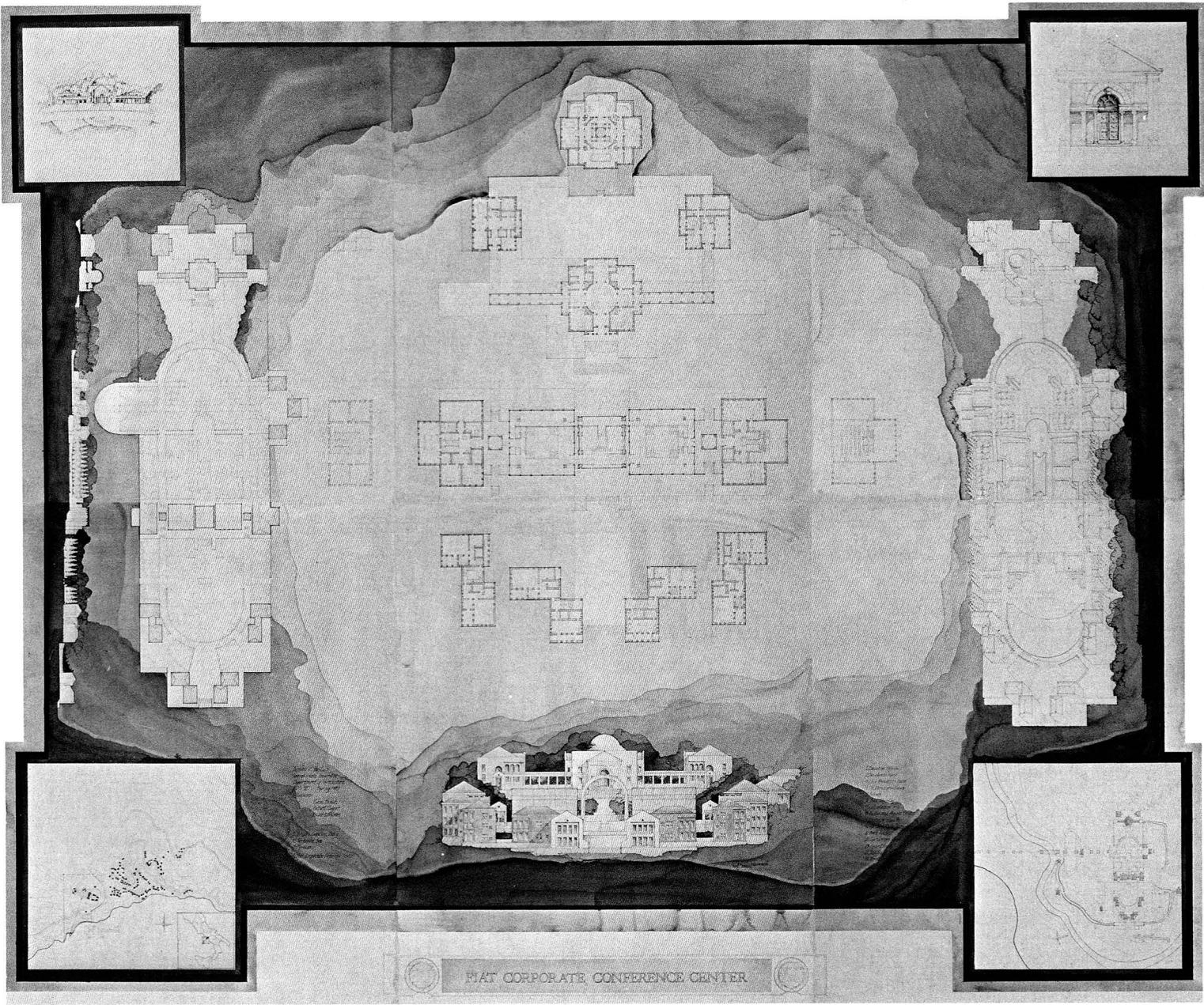
ecutive housing. A major consideration for the conference center was the representation of Fiat's image as a corporation to the public and to itself.

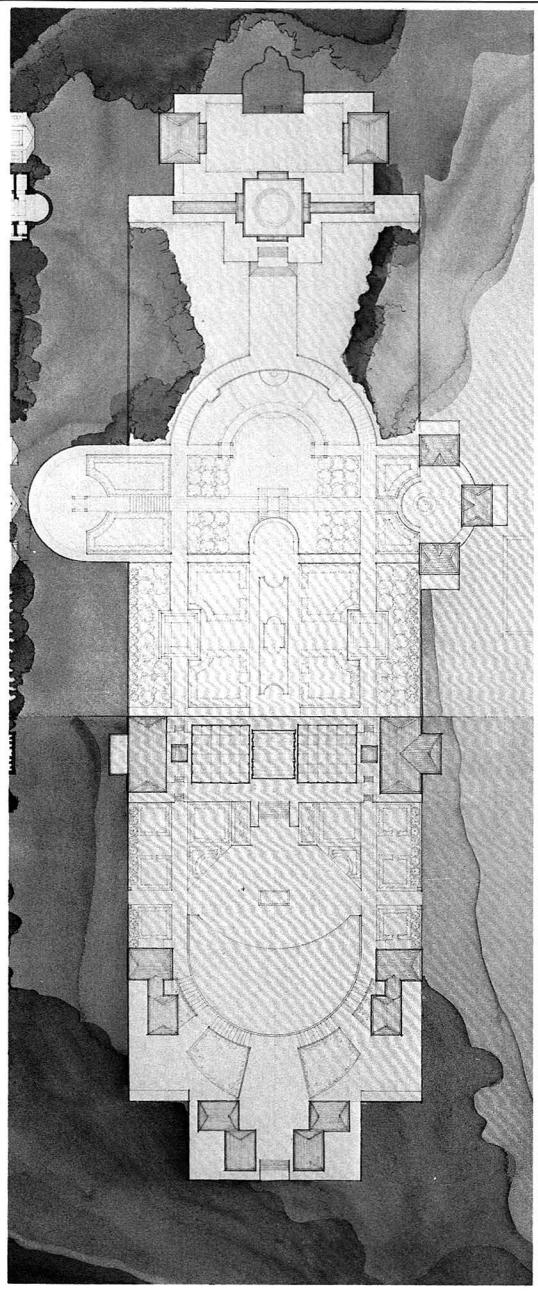
The order of the center is established by an axis running down the crest of a hill on the site connecting the sea with the mountains. The buildings in the complex are positioned hierarchically in relationship to the axis: the less important activities are at the bottom end (near the sea) and the more im-

portant ones—reflecting the corporate structure—are at the upper end (nearer to the mountains). The strong geometry of the site plan is an intentional contrast to the neighboring hilltowns and the natural setting. The hierarchical positioning of the buildings in the complex is reinforced by the material selection and degree of detail articulation; the less important are constructed of stucco or tufa, while the more important are made of marble.

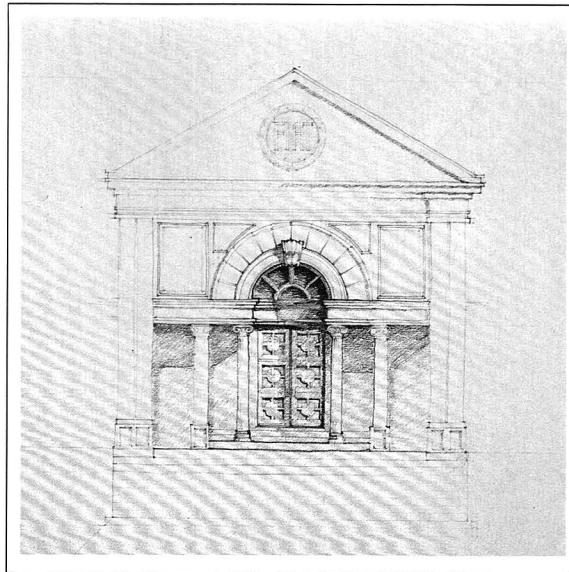


Site plan.

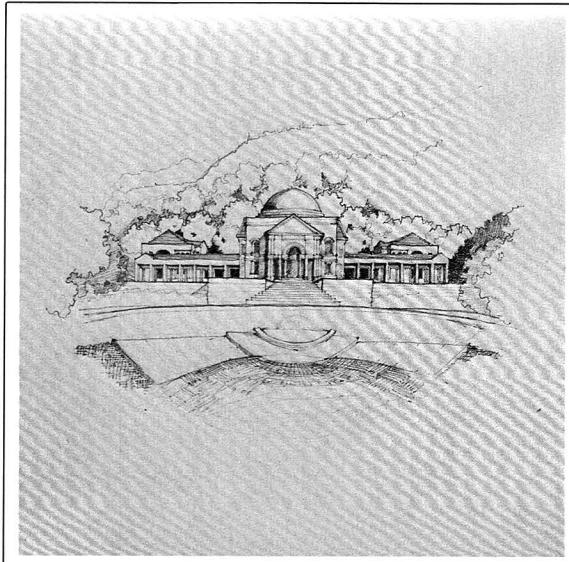




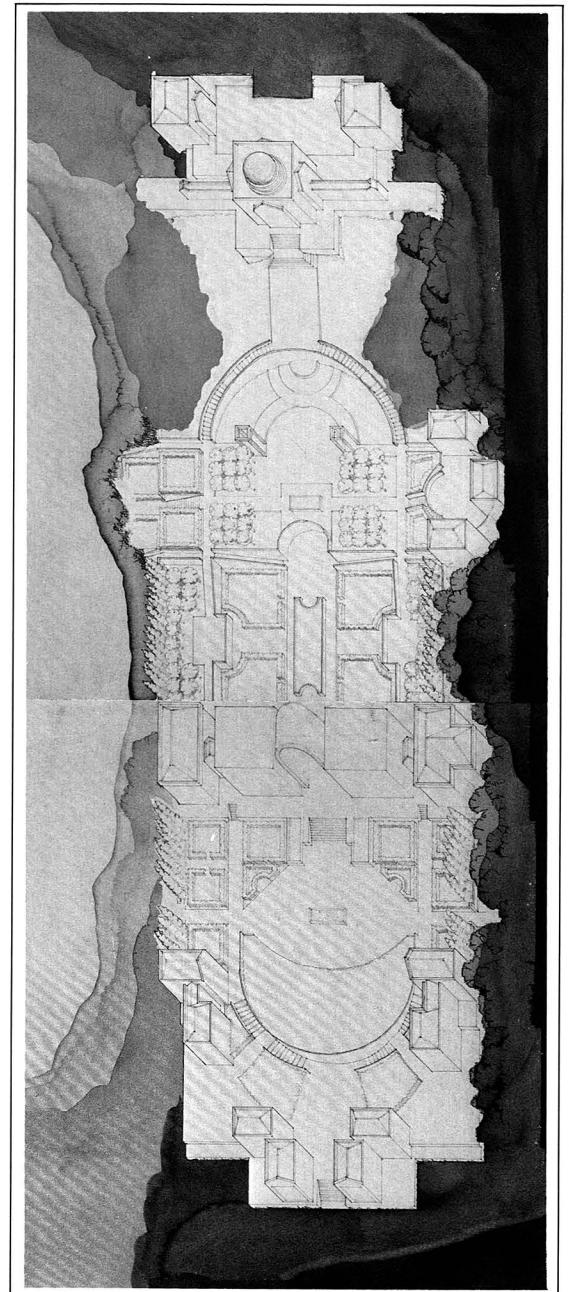
Plan.



Portico detail.



Executive offices.



Axonometric.

The complex is first viewed from the employee apartments, which are simple stucco buildings. They are placed on the sides of the axis to signify the entry, and are stepped back to create a false perspective framing the rest of the complex. The second group of buildings combine staff offices and public rooms. The offices and lecture rooms are contained in the outer buildings, which are made of tufa, the

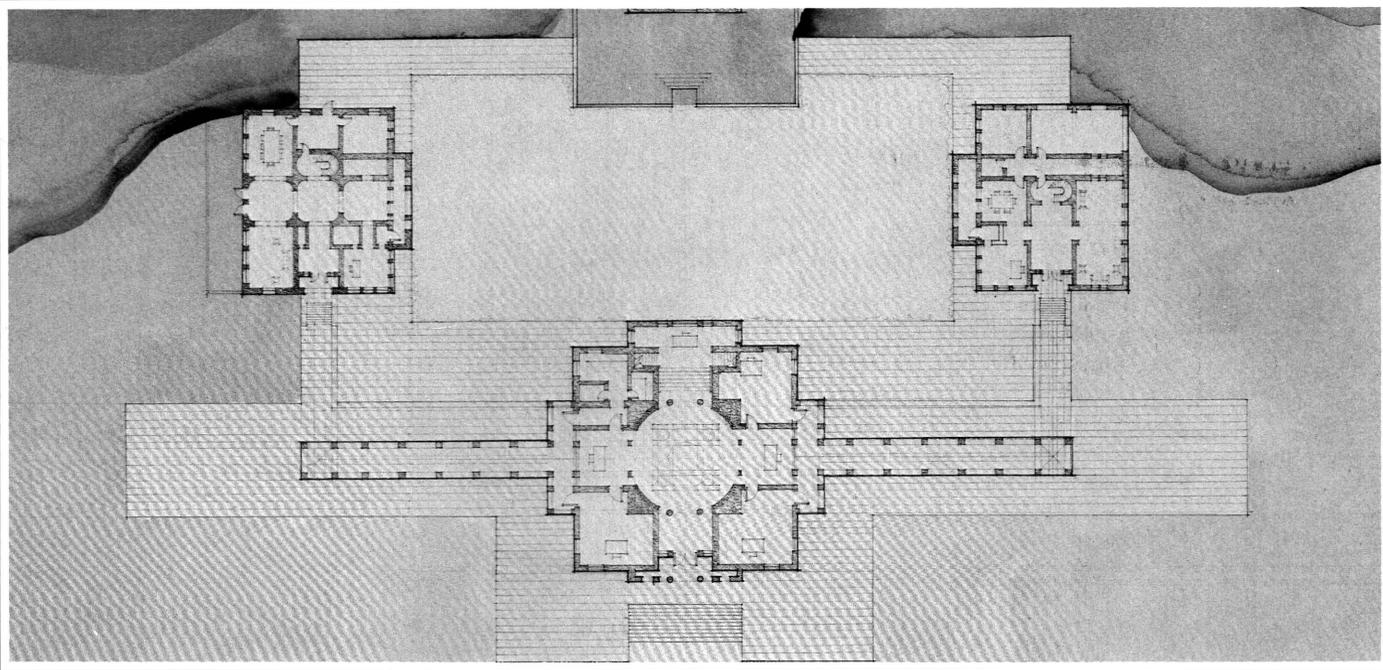
native volcanic stone, and the public spaces are used for the display of automobiles. Between the buildings a concrete arch, which spans the axis, frames a view of the dome of the executive office building ahead.

The domed executive office building is the only building positioned on the axis and acts as its terminus. This is not only the highest point on the site,

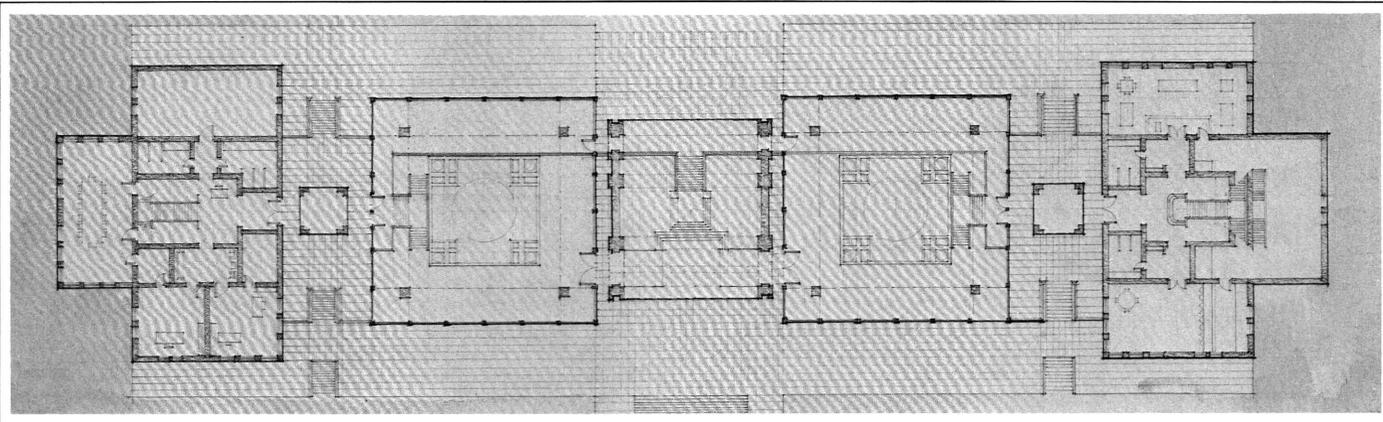
but is also the location of the president's office. The building is constructed of white travertine, with intricate detail carved into the stone of the portico. The selection of material, the level of detail, and the centrality of the dome reinforce the president's position as the patriarch of Fiat.

The houses located behind the office building are for the president and

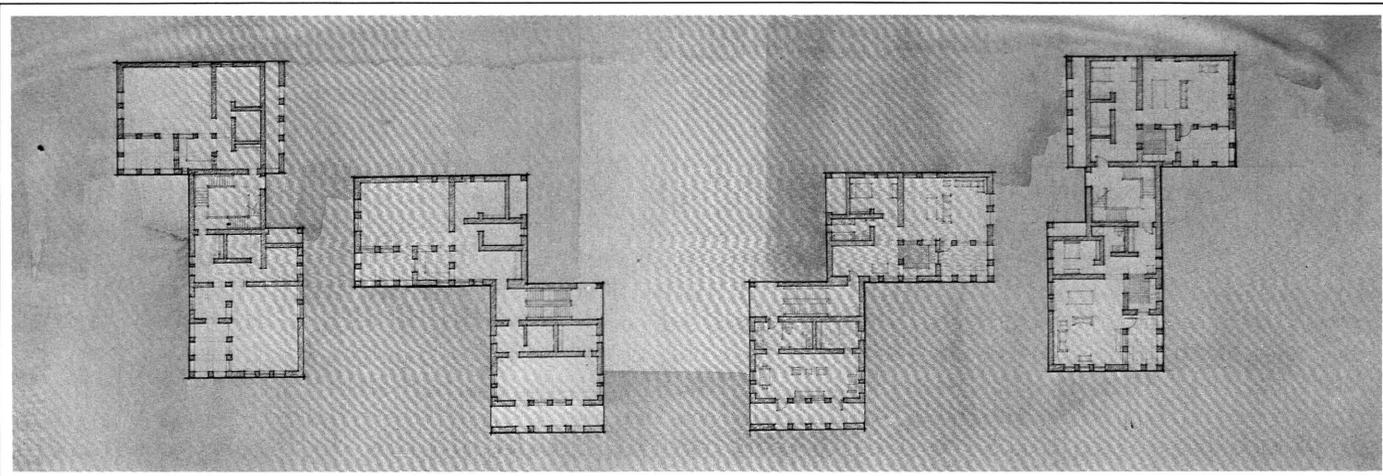
vice-president. They are built of white marble and face away from the axis. The courtyard formed by the houses and offices contains a pool which reflects the strict geometry of Fiat's structure on three sides. The fourth side takes the form of the natural hillside, representing the end of the complex and the beginning of nature, a contrasting backdrop for Fiat.



Executive offices and presidents' houses.



Office complex.



Employee apartments.