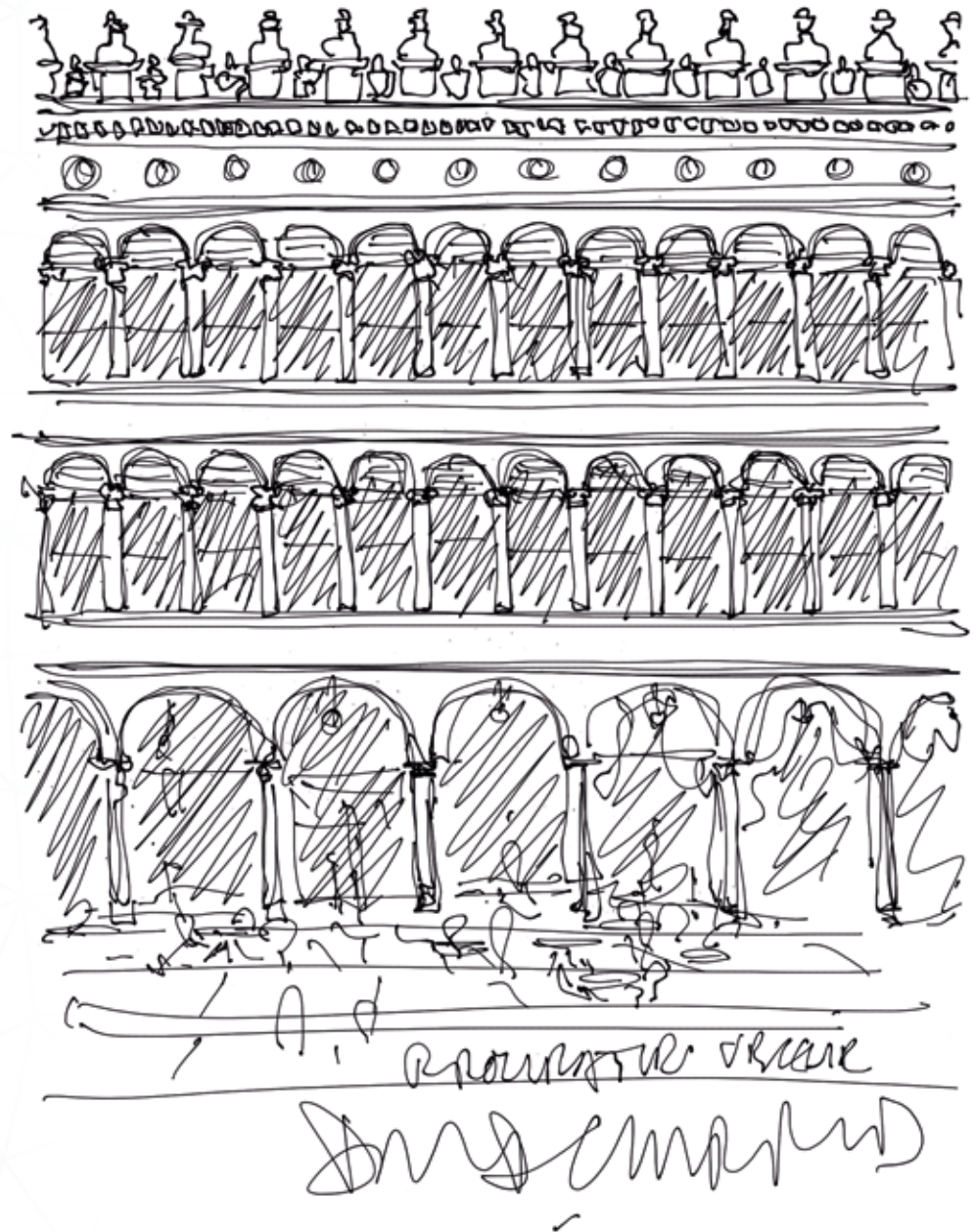



Generali and Venice

a new
vision
for the city



The
Human
Safety
Net





For almost two hundred years, our Company has had the good fortune of making a significant part of its journey in the heart of Venice, sharing key moments in history and the symbol of the lion of St Mark with this splendid city. Generali opened its first offices in 1832 in the Procuratie Vecchie a few months after the Company was founded in Trieste. For many years,

its business operations across Italy were conducted from this prestigious location overlooking St Mark's Square. The time has now come to revitalise our roots and overall presence in Venice. As insurers, our mission is to guarantee a better quality of life for people. Making urban spaces more liveable and accessible creates a sense of

well-being, and this is particularly important for the future of Venice, its residents and its visitors from all over the world. The restoration projects launched in St Mark's Square are intended to make Venice a more dynamic city that encourages one to think, to work and to enjoy culture, consequently unlocking the city's full potential.



Philippe Donnet
Group CEO
Assicurazioni Generali

St Mark's Square, the heart of Venice

*St Mark's will always be...
the most beautiful square
in the world!*

This enthusiastic comment appears in a document conserved in the Assicurazioni Generali Historical Archive, a letter written in 1932 when the company was deciding to purchase additional sections of the Procuratie Vecchie, despite the terrible economic crisis (the Great Depression that followed the Wall Street crash of 1929). Unquestionably, the writer's enthusiasm is fully justified: the square has been the heart of Venice's cultural, political

and economic life for more than a thousand years. Its story begins in the year 828, with the arrival of the remains of St Mark the evangelist from Egypt, where he had been martyred, and the construction of the first basilica, and continues with various additions over the centuries, which gave the square its present monumental appearance. The basilica we admire today is the result of an 11th-century reconstruction, while the great buildings creating the approach to the church were constructed at a later date.

Right: Aerial view of St Mark's Square; the Piazzetta with its two famous columns dedicated to St Mark and St Theodore leads into the square proper, enclosed between the basilica and the Procuratie.



A new life for old buildings and gardens

The Procuratie Vecchie, whose name comes from their use as a residence for the *procuratori de supra*, the officials responsible for the administration of the basilica, are one of the square's oldest buildings. Constructed in the 13th century and consisting of a continuous one-storey structure above a long ground-floor arcade, the Procuratie Vecchie underwent alterations during the 16th-century *renovatio urbis*, in which Sansovino played a decisive role. The 16th century also saw the start of construction work on the Procuratie Nuove, which, together with the later Napoleonic Wing, formed

the sides of the square. During the years of French rule, when plans were drawn up to turn the Procuratie Nuove into a royal palace, the decision was taken to create a garden extending the building towards the waterfront. After further changes to the layout of the area during the 19th century, in 1920 the Royal Gardens were opened in full to the public and their ownership passed to the City of Venice. In 1922 the Napoleonic Wing and part of the Procuratie Nuove became the site of the famous Correr Museum. Today, thanks to Generali, the historic and culturally important areas of the Procuratie Vecchie and the Royal Gardens will be restored to new life.



Generali: a new concept of community



The Human Safety Net is the new Group initiative for the community, to help the most vulnerable in our society. The initiative will pool Generali resources from all over the world to have a meaningful impact in three areas: supporting refugee business start-ups, creating equal-life opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and saving newborn babies from the debilitating and potentially fatal

consequences of perinatal asphyxia. With The Human Safety Net for refugee start-ups, Generali is taking a new approach to the European crisis: rather than respond to basic needs, the program enables refugees to create jobs for themselves.

The Human Safety Net for families unlocks the potential of disadvantaged parents to help them offer their children equal-life chances during their formative first six years. The

Human Safety Net for newborns promotes collaboration between the medical community and parents to improve prevention and treatment of perinatal asphyxia. Generali is engaging its entire organisation in the program, as well as inspiring its customers, like-minded individuals and NGOs to collaborate with The Human Safety Net. This chain of “people helping people” is at the heart of the initiative.



**For
Refugee Start-Ups**



**For
Families**



**For
Newborns**

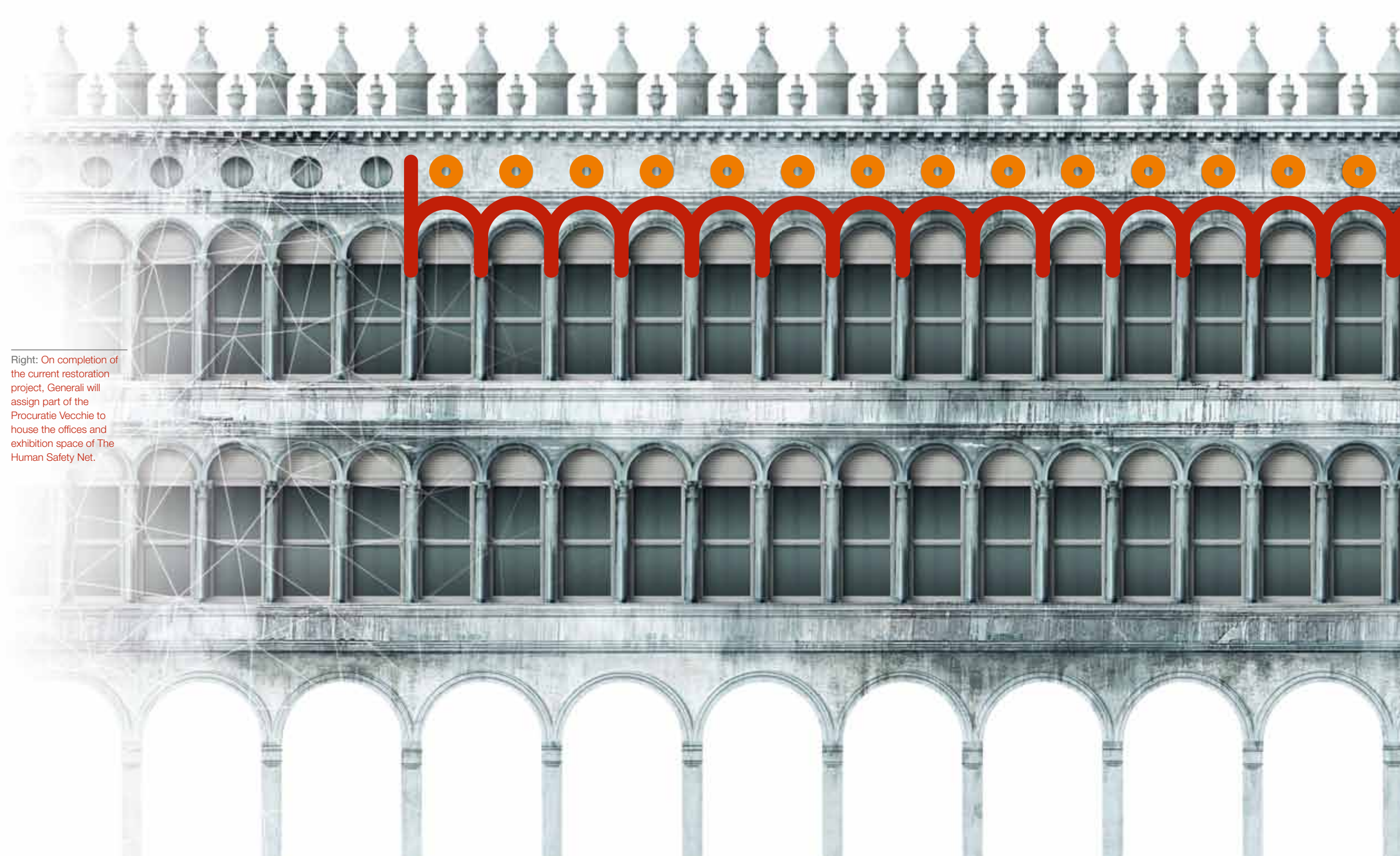
The Procuratie, the “home” of the THSN project



A world heritage site of unrivalled art, beauty and history, Venice originated as a series of settlements of populations fleeing from the barbarian invasions, and these roots are also the source of a sense of welcome: a “crossroads of people and communities of every land, culture, language and religion, a destination and meeting place for populations from all the continents” were the words used by Pope Benedict XVI to describe the city during his pastoral visit in 2011. This is why Generali sees Venice, a universal symbol of imagination, ingenuity and open-mindedness, as the ideal site for

a wide-ranging project of interest to everyone. The Human Safety Net initiative will be located right in St Mark’s Square, specifically in the Procuratie Vecchie, which will be opened to the outside world as a place to examine major issues in contemporary society, in order to help the disadvantaged improve their own lives, those of their families and the communities in which they live. Before moving on to the future of the Procuratie, a future that begins with the recently launched redevelopment, let’s take a brief look back at the history of the Generali company in Venice.

Right: On completion of the current restoration project, Generali will assign part of the Procuratie Vecchie to house the offices and exhibition space of The Human Safety Net.





The choice of the lion

Left: The oldest Generali document with the lion symbol in the company's Historical Archive is a mandate from the main agency in Parma dated 1860.

The Venice Head Office for the Lombardy-Veneto Kingdom cannot be moved, and must stay in place for the entire duration of the contract, stipulate the articles of association of the Assicurazioni Generali Austro-Italiche company, which appointed entrepreneur Samuele Della Vida, a resident of Venice, to the post of general manager. So it was Della Vida who presented the application to establish the company's Venetian offices, approved by the authorities on 19 July 1832, and rented premises in the Procuratie Vecchie on 24 July. Since Trieste was part of the Austrian Empire, the first emblem associated with Generali was the double-headed Habsburg

eagle, a prerogative granted to many insurance companies. But in 1848, Europe was shaken by a wave of revolutionary uprisings, which in Italy took the form of a fervent patriotic movement: the Venetians revolted and proclaimed the Republic of San Marco, whose heroic resistance lasted for eighteen months. The senior managers of the Venice Head Office enthusiastically backed the rebels and their support triggered events of great importance in the company's history: the business name was shortened to Assicurazioni Generali, losing the controversial "Austro-Italiche" suffix, and the decision was taken to adopt the lion of St Mark as the symbol for operations in Italy.



1833



1868



1880



1910

Above: For many years, the winged lion chosen by the company as its symbol instead of the Habsburg eagle appeared in a variety of versions until a definitive image was established.

Generali and Venice together in art

In 1866, after the third Italian war of independence, Venice became part of the Kingdom of Italy. The following year the city gave a warm welcome to Giuseppe Garibaldi, who called for the liberation of Rome in a speech from the Procuratie Vecchie. Between the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, Generali launched a large-scale property investment program to build new offices in major cities in Italy and Europe, but in Venice – writes chairman Marco Besso in his autobiography – “we did nothing, because the Serenissima had already taken care of everything for us, by building the jewel that is the

Procuratie”: a jewel that, in that period, definitively became Generali’s “home”, as the company purchased most of the site and carried out an extensive restructuring between 1909 and 1914. Generali’s very close ties with the city are also reflected in the posters created for it between 1926 and 1938 by the great poster artist Marcello Dudovich: the magical atmosphere of Venice is the most frequent iconographic theme, evoked by the fluttering shawl of a female figure looking out over the lagoon, the statues of St Theodore and the winged lion in the Piazzetta, prayer in front of a shrine and other classic views of the city.



“The prodigious Marcello Dudovich, who is to the history of the Italian poster as Federico Fellini is to the history of cinema.”

Giampiero Mughini
journalist and author

Left: The winged lion standing proud atop one of the columns in the Piazzetta as seen by Marcello Dudovich (detail of a poster created in 1935 for Generali).

Right: The splendid poster from 1928 known to collectors as “La Veneziana” is one of Dudovich’s most famous works for the company.



Postcard images and distinguished guests



On these pages:
The AG initials on the
ground of St Mark's
Square immortalised in
an old postcard, Charlie
Chaplin as a guest of the
Procuratie on his arrival in
Venice for the 1972 Film
Festival and the building
decked out in party mode.



As mentioned earlier, Generali also purchased parts of the Procuratie in the 1930s and again in 1940, going on to make a series of improvements to the building, despite the difficulties of the war years. In 1956 Venice welcomed eight thousand Group employees who had travelled from thirty-one countries to celebrate the company's 125th anniversary: the event was a “spectacle of strength and harmony” wrote managing director Gino Baroncini in the *Bollettino*, the historic house organ (launched by the Venice Head Office in 1893), in an article illustrated with colour photos of the huge assembly in

Palazzo Ducale. Since then, many other images confirm that Venice has always been the home of Generali: the initials AG formed on the ground every day until 1974, by pigeons attracted by the food cunningly laid out by the company porters; the Fortuny wall hangings brought out to decorate the Procuratie on big occasions; distinguished guests such as Charlie Chaplin visiting the offices; the gondolas of the Generali Sailing Club providing a river escort for Chinese president Jiang Zemin or representing the company and Venice at major international events... and countless other moments featuring the logo and colours of the Generali Group.

Procuratie Vecchie, time for a revamp

The major restructuring of the Procuratie Vecchie that began in 1909, from a project by engineer Giulio Fano, created continuity between the various apartments, making the entire Generali property more rational, modern and functional. The building also underwent vital structural consolidation work, after the Technical and Artistic Commission set up in Venice as a result of the collapse of the belltower of the basilica (in 1902, an event followed by a “how and where it was” reconstruction completed in 1912) found that the Procuratie were in a state of static

degradation. The splendid rooms of the Procuratie Vecchie, with their sumptuous decorations and frescos, housed the Venice Head Office for much of the 20th century, until modern logistic requirements led to their transfer to Mogliano Veneto in 1989. The building in St Mark's Square therefore took on a new role: to represent Generali in Italy and the world, as a tangible and ideal link between the past and present of a Group whose history bridges three centuries. And now the time has come for a refurbishment, the first step towards a new future.

Right: *Render of a room on the first floor of the Procuratie Vecchie. The restoration design of the room is developed by Gretchen Alexander Harnischfeger Architect.*





Work in progress

The Procuratie Vecchie is an historic building protected by Legislative Decree no. 42, 22 January 2004 (Italy's cultural and landscape heritage act). The restructuring that commenced in March 2017 consists of a number of different operations. Once the work has been completed, a portion of the building will house the offices and exhibition space of The Human Safety Net. Specifically, the project envisages: the restoration of decorative devices; the renovation and static consolidation of the floor structures; the construction of tidal water containment tanks; renovation work to ensure the rooms in the building comply with current laws governing elimination of architectural barriers, fire prevention, workplaces and technological plant; the subdivision of the more than 10,000 sq.m, which today constitute a single cadastral subsection, into a number of independent areas and surfaces for specific purposes.



The Procuratie Vecchie in figures

12,800 sq.m

gross surface area
excluding proprietary stores.

152 m

façade extending
along St Mark's Square,
from the Clock Tower
to the Napoleonic Wing.

52 arches

forming the arcade,
above each of which are
two windows on the upper floors.



David Chipperfield

David Chipperfield (b. 1953) established David Chipperfield Architects in 1985, and currently works across offices in London, Berlin, Milan and Shanghai. In 2011, he received the RIBA Royal Gold Medal for Architecture, and in 2013, Japan's Praemium Imperiale, both given in recognition of a lifetime's work. In 2009, he was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and in 2010 he was knighted for services to architecture. In addition to studio work, David Chipperfield has lectured and taught at schools of architecture worldwide, including Yale University. In 2012, he curated the 13th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale under the theme 'Common Ground'.



Talent and creativity for a major project

Left: An interior and the central staircase at the Neues Museum in Berlin. The original staircase hall of the Neues Museum was destroyed by fire during the war, leaving behind an emotionally charged brickwork shell. The new concrete staircase repeats the original form but does not imitate, following the aim to recomplete the volume and its key components.

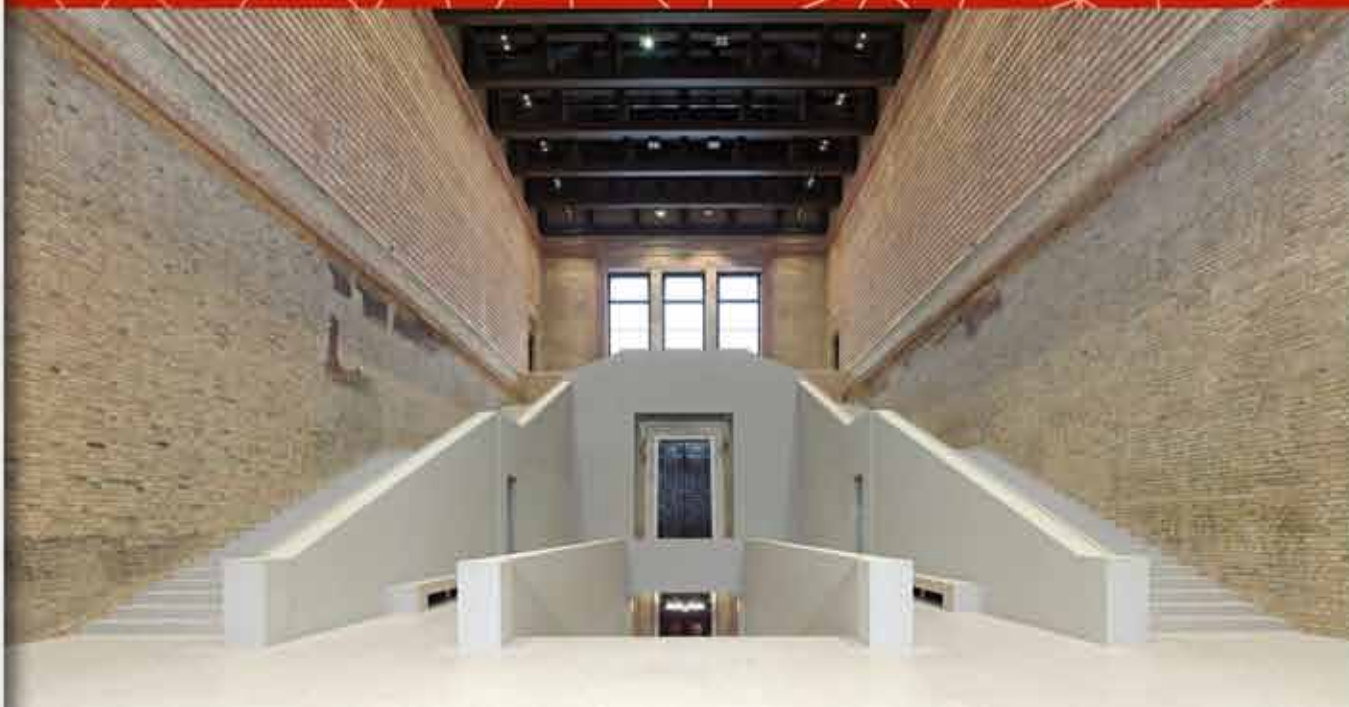
Top right: Model of the design for the Ravelins of Castello Sforzesco in Milan.

David Chipperfield Architects – engaged by Generali for the renovation of the Procuratie Vecchie – has a diverse international body of work including cultural, residential, commercial, leisure and civic projects as well as masterplanning exercises. Offices in London, Berlin, Milan and Shanghai, contribute to a wide range of projects and typologies.

Over the last 30 years, the practice has developed particular expertise in combining the delicate handling of historic fabric with contemporary architecture, as demonstrated by the rebuilding of Berlin's Neues Museum and

the planned additions to the historic military complex of Castello Sforzesco in Milan. A collaborative and participatory approach to sensitive contexts has also led to invitations to work on architectural and masterplanning projects on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Berlin, Venice, Segovia, Sudan, and Pisa, as well as in landmark districts in cities including London, Berlin, Shanghai, and New York.

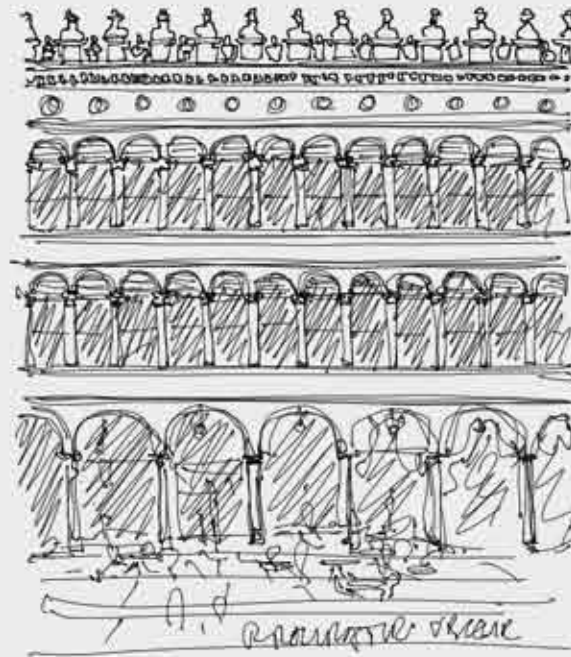
Through this experience, the practice's work has become unified and characterised by meticulous attention to the concept and details of every project, and a relentless focus on refining the design ideas to arrive at a solution that is architecturally, socially, and intellectually coherent.



Architecture reflecting social values

The Piazza San Marco is one of the most iconic public squares in the world, and a gathering point for all cultures. The architectural rigour and authority of its buildings, including the Procuratie Vecchie, have for centuries given form to the civic state, creating a sense of order and stability for its citizens, and the face of Venice to the world.

Behind this linear, formal facade lie the organic street patterns of an agile city that for centuries has had to endlessly adapt challenging conditions both natural



and man-made. In its intensity, Venice provides an extreme, yet reassuring image. Nowhere else is the dialogue between architecture and nature, between the individual contribution of singular buildings and the overall idea of the city so eloquent.

Venice is a reminder of how a city's architecture and life can create a drama in which everyone can participate as engaged, opinionated and excited audience. We come here not just to see great sights, but to see what man's imagination is capable of building.

And yet, like other historic cities, it faces the considerable challenges both of conservation and of rejuvenation to avoid falling into parody.

However, embracing the spirit of accessibility promoted by the Human Safety Net program, the general initiative by Generali for the area provides an opportunity to enlarge the concept of Piazza San Marco and revitalise a central section of the city's fabric, the core of which is the opening up of the Procuratie Vecchie to the public for the first time in its history.

Not only will this initiative encourage a more vital and real urban environment in terms of opening up public routes and destinations through architectural interventions and improving the Giardini, but it will also create spaces for an engaged public program, and establish a base from which a range of social outreach projects can be developed.

David Chipperfield



Left: The range of programmatic requirements and functions for the Human Safety Net activities, office spaces, and public access called for an approach that would improve the building's adaptability to evolving horizontal and vertical configurations. Addressing this need to increase the flexibility and resilience, the project proposes inserting two new building cores. This will improve the accessibility and encourage a vertical public route up to the third and fourth floors – the home of the Human Safety Net. The two new staircases integrate gently with the existing historic fabric. The distinctive spatial qualities and materiality are inspired by the renowned staircases of the building's original architect Jacopo Sansovino, generating a sense of architectural scenography that has become representative of the city.

Right: Previously unused spaces on the third floor will be opened up to create an area for exhibiting, meeting, working and discussing ideas. A hub where the Human Safety Net initiative can foster connections. The project seeks to preserve the existing architectural, material and spatial qualities as much as possible. The traditional sixteenth-century exposed wooden beams and terrazzo flooring will be reinstated, and the brick walls repaired and lightly whitewashed allowing the original fabric to be read underneath. Into these walls, a series of arches are opened, linking together a row of spaces to form a single environment without losing a sense of the original sequence of rooms.

“By addressing practical accessibility issues, there is an opportunity to make a profound contribution to the wider aims of the initiative.”

David Chipperfield
architect





Royal Gardens: a hidden treasure

The redevelopment of the historic site of the Royal Gardens, which will be connected once again with St Mark's Square via the drawbridge, will revise nineteenth-century principles and urban and architectural issues to re-establish the area's old ties with the city and the square. The partnership between Generali and the Venice Gardens Foundation will restore an important part of the history of St Mark's Square, which had been badly neglected in recent years to the point where the original design of the Royal Gardens – both layouts and planting – had become almost indecipherable.

Once the restoration has been completed – explains Adele Re Rebaudengo, president of the Venice Gardens Foundation – “visitors will be able to wander through the Royal Gardens in the shade of the long wisteria pergola or the dense foliage of the evergreens, along a timeless path leading from the drawbridge to the Correr Museum and creating a new dialogue with St Mark's Square. The gardens will be a meeting place where nature and artistic inspiration will combine to take care of every facet of their life.”

Left: The Royal Gardens in Venice, situated between St Mark's Square and the waterfront, are undergoing an extensive restoration supervised by the Venice Gardens Foundation. Generali is partnering the foundation on the operation for the redevelopment and enhancement of the gardens.



On these pages:
The botanical restoration of the gardens has been assigned to garden architect Paolo Pejrone, a student of Russel Page and Roberto Burle-Marx. The architectural restoration and the restoration of the orangery, based on the drawings by Carlo Aymonino and Gabriella Barbini, have been assigned to architect Alberto Torsello.

The drawbridge had been in a state of serious neglect and degradation for many years, but thanks to the restoration will be returned to its original function as the link between St Mark's Square and the gardens, through to the Correr Museum.

Anna Regge's watercolours offer a foretaste of the appearance of the area on completion of the restoration.



“It will be a triumph of greenery and leafy fronds, a play of transparencies and shadows. The Gardens will be a luxuriant abundance at any time of the year.”

Paolo Pejrone
landscape architect





Looking ahead

The restoration of the Procuratie Vecchie is the first step of Generali's new vision for the city of Venice.

The Human Safety Net will create a vibrant hub in the heart of Venice, advancing ideas that transform the lives of families and communities around the world. The centre will serve as an open door to the world, inviting people to seek inspiration, exchange ideas, and take collective action.

The Procuratie Vecchie will become a meeting point for social ventures and business initiatives, revitalising St Mark's Square with new energy and purpose.

The Human Safety Net will host exhibitions and performances, to serve as an inspiration for Venetians and visitors to commit to its mission.

We want to help turn Venice and the area surrounding St Mark's Square into a place where people seek new stimuli, share ideas and work together, unlocking the city's full potential.

This commitment to social and cultural causes lies at the heart of Generali's vision: to position Venice as an innovative hub where many players can take a key role in solving global challenges.

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Environmental certifications





The
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