

# The Design and Development of Fences. Chronological Reconstruction from 1698 to 1998: The Fences of the *Real Passeggio* of Naples

Carla Mottola

Department of Architecture and Industrial Design “Luigi Vanvitelli”,  
Second University of Naples, Aversa (CE), Italy  
E-mail: [carlamottola91@gmail.com](mailto:carlamottola91@gmail.com)

**Abstract**—Along the line of beach, in the “*Veduta occidentale della strada di Chiaia*” of Francesco Cassiano de Silva, end seventeenth-century, are represented gushing fountains which interrupted the long row of trees that bordered the cobbled strip from the beach. This ink wash printer certainly represents the most important part of the manuscript of Francesco Cassiano de Silva in the field of this research, portraying in great detail, the Chiaia’s street, from the Torretta at the Prince of Satriano’s palace, near the current Vittoria square, it allows to put in this temporal circumstance the Veduta as the first moment of analysis to understand how it has developed the Chiaia’s transformation starting from a simple beach. In other words, this analysis studies what were the first elements to transform the Riviera di Chiaia, from an unaltered beach to in one of the major historical gardens of Naples. The research analyzes from the first singular and isolated elements, which delineated an initial boundary between the beach and the Riviera’s road to real fences that enclosed the public garden. The analysis goes up to examine the appearance achieved with the last intervention the architect Alessandro Mendini in 1998 led, over the entire area of the Villa Comunale, a regenerative plan including the substitution of the enclosure in addition to the invigoration of vegetation and cafes known as Chalet.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The road of the *Riviera di Chiaia* in Naples was paved in 1698 by the viceroy, Luis de la Cerda y Aragon, the duke of Medinaceli and the intervention was performed in order to facilitate the passage of the carriages. The work planned for Chiaia had to have “procession” character. To celebrate the initiative it was drawn up a view, entitled “*Napoli. All'eccellentissimo signor Duca Medinaceli, viceré e capitano generale in questo Regno*” by Francesco Cassiano de Silva, and from which it can analyze the “*Veduta occidentale della strada di Chiaia*”, dedicated precisely to the Viceroy, it then inserted into Antonio Domenico Parrino’s book, “*Guida dei Forestieri*”. The *Veduta*, having the point of view from the sea, allows the viewer to appreciate in detail the arrangement of the road and the curtain of palaces that lined the *Riviera di Chiaia*. The same action is also visible in the Petrini’s engraving in 1698. The “*Veduta della strada di Chiaia oggi*

*detta di Medinaceli*” depicts the Chiaia’s hamlet at the end of the seventeenth-century with the arrangement from the beach to a tree-lined promenade. In fact, the viceroy, duke of Medinaceli wanted for the *Riviera di Chiaia* the installation of a trees’ line and the arrangement of fountains.

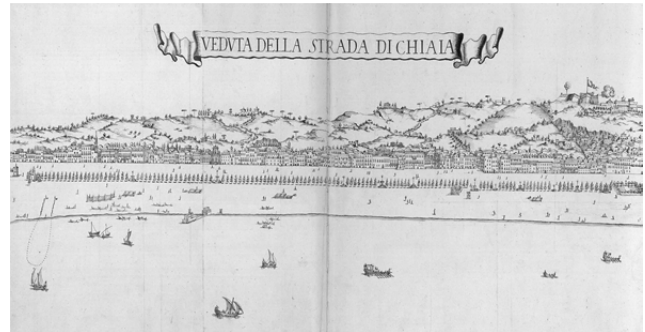


Fig. 1. F. Cassiano de Silva, Veduta occidentale della strada di Chiaia

## 2. THE REDESIGN OF THE FOUNTAINS: THE INTERVENTION WANTED TO MEDINACELI

Gaspar Butler, in his oil on canvas “*Napoli da ponente*” in 1730, portrays the *Riviera di Chiaia* to about thirty years by the intervention of the Viceroy, with the row of trees punctuated by fountains. This, it allows to say that in 1730 the *Riviera* was unchanged in its appearance. Butler painted, with the view from the hill of Posillipo, the situation of Chiaia’s beach as it appeared in the aftermath of the intervention of the duke of Medinaceli, with the alternation of trees and fountains.

Among the fountains, the largest dedicated to the poets Virgil and Tasso near the *Torretta*, is also visible in the view “*La Riviera di Chiaia dalla collina di Posillipo*” by Thomas Ruiz dating back to the first thirty years of the eighteenth-century. This view of the Chiaia’s beach, portrayed by the Posillipo’s hill near the monastery of St. Anthony and therefore from a

higher point of view, it can still see the remaining elements of the system wanted by the duke of Medinaceli.



**Fig. 2: A. Cardon, *Veduta di Chiaia dalla parte di ponente*, from the original painting of S. Ricciardelli, 1765**

This situation, which is confirmed by “*Veduta della Riviera di Chiaia*” by Ignazio Scopis in a press of 1764, inasmuch as the trees are not recognizable, that made up the row of the trees, but it is possible see just some fountains. The same period, the “*Veduta di Chiaia dalla parte di ponente*” by A. Cardon, taken from the original framework by S. Ricciardelli, that from the opposite point of view than the previous, it allows to see the status of the *Riviera di Chiaia* in 1765. In the same view, there are only three fountains of two types repeated with the ABA scheme until the *Casino degl’Invitti* while trees not any trace. With the analysis of this painting, it can equip a prospectus to visible fountains in the table of the duke of Noja, entitled “*Mappa della città di Napoli*”.

Giovanni Carafa, duke of Noja started, since 1750, the preliminary studies of the work of drafting. Although the *Mappa* is dated regularly with 1775, we should not be deceived because that year coincides only with the publication’s date.

The entire work, engraved in 35 sheets of paper, is based on extremely precise measurements and also include the Chiaia’s area. From the reading of the plant, it shows that, at the date of the surveys, presumably around 1750, it had to be very little left of the intervention made by the duke of Medinaceli inasmuch as it is not apparent the trees’ row planted in 1698 which it had to be deteriorated between 1730 and 1750, and the fountains that interspersed it a few are still present. Interweaving of the notions obtained from the view by A. Cardon, typological notions, and from the table of the duke of Noja, collocation notions, it can rebuild the alternation of the two types of fountains in the stretch from the current *Vittoria square* to the position of *Casino degl’Invitti*, which it then was demolished.

In the publication, “*Rilevare l’esistente per rappresentare il consistente e prefigurare il conseguente*”, Paolo Giordano, in 2015, defines the Chiaia’s beach, in the temporal circumstance, «no longer an extra moenia village in the

countryside but a fragment of garden city fell into a of rare beauty landscape». The direction, on which lay plants and fountains, was not built according to the backward abstract coastline on the mainland but in according with the line of building curtain of the *Riviera di Chiaia*. The direction, the arboreal and sculptural row is «capable of breaking and moving back, interrupting its continuity and linear arrangement», as written by Paolo Giordano, in some specific points of the walk, as it is, for example, in correspondence to the current San Pasquale’s widening.

### 3. THE REDESIGN OF THE FENCES: CARLO VANVITELLI’S PROJECT

In 1780, the first years of the reign of Ferdinando IV of Borbone, the tree-lined promenade endowed Naples of a particular type of architecture, intended to be the site of a walk worthy of respect from other scenic locations in major European cities. The front of the sun-kissed and lush vegetation surprised travelers. It’s of about a century earlier, in 1692, the description of Carlo Celano in his book “*Notitie del bello, dell’antico e del curioso della città di Napoli [...]*”, in which the author tells about Chiaia’s mediterranean beauty.

Already in 1778, Ferdinando IV of Borbone instructed Carlo Vanvitelli for the realization of the *Real Passeggio*. Carlo Vanvitelli, appointed by the king, worked on the project to transform the tree-lined promenade of Chiaia in a public garden. The elaborate design by Carlo Vanvitelli is witnessed by a collection of drawings kept in the Archivio Storico Municipale of Naples. The reinterpretation of the sheets of paper allows a reconstruction of the ideas and documenting the likely design process, from the first elaborations to the final solution. The graphics kit consists of several boards, almost all undated, initialed directly from Carlo Vanvitelli and executed with great care and graphic skills with pencil, ink and watercolors. Their interest increases whereas, together with engravings and the nineteenth-century views, are the only full-graphic evidence of Vanvitelli’s walk no longer exists. At this point, it is interesting to understand how Carlo Vanvitelli intended to proceed for the project with the question of pre-existing, and if the same had to some influenced the design of the *Real Passeggio* if included, or if the architect intended precisely to consider the public beach clear by the pre-existing.

The curiosity comes mainly from to understand if Vanvitelli had a strong consciousness of preserving those fountains that now marked the landscape for a century. The design process, which Vanvitelli followed to achieve the ultimate idea of the *Passeggio*, moved itself in incremental steps towards ever smaller dimensions. Taking into account, the original idea of creating a “french” walk, with five avenues, fountains and parterres, the different design assumptions show the study of the tested and closing bodies of factory, the extension of the garden, the fences, the vegetation, berceaux, trillages, fountains and statues. On the table, called “*Piano del Lido di*

*Chiaia dalla Chiesa della Madonna della Vittoria fino a S. Leonardo con la delineazione del nuovo Giardino Pubbico*”, it can see a first villa hypothesis that stretches towards the sea demolishing the *Casino dell'Invitti* and existing fountains. This table is between the three investigated that which there is the most extensive design hypothesis in spatial terms, extended not only in length but also in width in fact the villa's design is protracted until the foreshore of the beach.

In fact on this table Vanvitelli declares, writing «da demolire», that is «to demolish», the area occupied by *Casino degl'Invitti*, want to delete the existing volume. The same thing occurs on the second hypothesis' table “*Piano del Lido di Chiaia dalla Chiesa della Madonna della Vittoria fino a S. Leonardo con la delineazione del nuovo Giardino Pubbico*” inasmuch as Vanvitelli reiterates want to demolish the *Casino degl'Invitti* and occupy that space for the public garden.

Up to this point Vanvitelli declares his own idea about the *Casino degl'Invitti* but the fountains that dotted the walk wanted by the duke of Medinaceli, there is no trace. It is likely that initially the architect wanted to occupy all the space of the beach to make the public garden and about the existing structures he declared, from what is written by him on the hypothesis tables, want to free up the beach from the existing volumes, certainly for the *Casino degl'Invitti* but this concept presumably is also extensible to the fountains for a smaller volume occupied by the same issue, in the sense that if for the *Casino degl'Invitti*, double level building, he meant to demolish it in favor of more space that could give way to the public garden.

The Chiaia's beach, before the intervention of Vanvitelli, was also dotted with washrooms that the population used for daily chores. It is likely that Vanvitelli wanted to adopt the same line of thought also for the fountains, because in the two tables analyzed so far the fountains aren't designed.

By the way some of those, traceable from the table of the duke of Medinaceli, would fall outside of the fence designed by Vanvitelli and the curtain of Chiaia, in the two hypotheses by Vanvitelli but nonetheless the same they aren't designed. Then when Vanvitelli draws closer hypothesis to that made, things change.

In the table, entitled “*Piano del Lido di Chiaia dalla Chiesa della Madonna della Vittoria fino a S. Leonardo con la delineazione del Nuovo Giardino Pubbico*”, the general structure of the *Real Passeggio* was downsized. The garden is an elongated rectangle and for Vanvitelli is easier to manage a more compact space than he would occupy with the two previous hypothesis.

Vanvitelli move the project forward towards the sea, leaving free space to the south to go down overboard, and increasing to the north the distance between the curtains of the palaces of the *Riviera di Chiaia* with the villa's fence. Doing so on the latter table, Vanvitelli designs the existing fountains that fall in this space between the curtains of the palaces and the

garden's fence. In addition, on the same table it can understand how Vanvitelli has also rethought the choice to demolish the *Casino degl'Invitti* in fact he decides to integrate it to the garden by breaking the fence near the building volume.

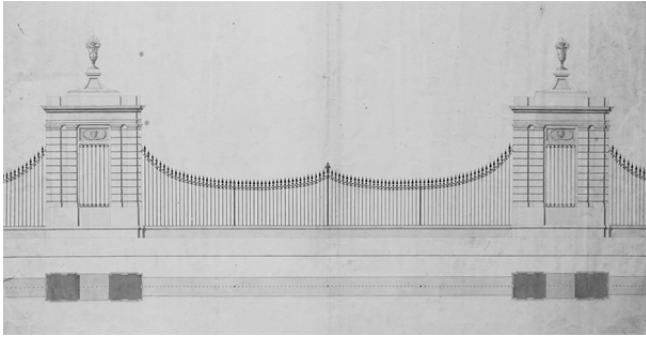
The tables show the evolution of the idea of the architect in relation to existing structures. Initially Vanvitelli says to want delete and not to consider them in their project idea, then reviewing the whole project, he will not only change the size of the garden but also re-evaluates the existing structures such as *Casino degl'Invitti* and fountains.

Surely the existing structures have not influenced the design idea of Vanvitelli, this thing confirmed by the first table analyzed that with hypothesis of the greater extension of the villa, inmuchas as the idea of the project didn't limit to what was already there, and when the architect resizes the project, the existing structures do not affect the idea because there are left where they lie, it is the only exception the *Casino degl'Invitti* that is built in the garden and in this case is the project that integrates the pre-existence.

It is to exclude any possibility of influence of fountains such as the cornerstones of the fence or maybe guideline for the project because if the project is a rectangle, the line on which lie the fountains in that time it is almost parallel to the line of curtains of Chiaia.

With the intervention of Vanvitelli, it limits the area of the villa because it is locked by fences. Those designed by Vanvitelli followed a representative hierarchy. In the table, entitled “*Prospetto e Piano dell'ingresso nel Giardino a Levante*” that analyzes the main entrance to the villa, there is a greater attention of the decorations and articulation of the gate with respect to the table “*Prospetto di una parte del Giardino verso la Strada a Settentrione*”, which it is the simplest articulation of the north fence. Nevertheless in the table entitled “*Prospetto e Piano dell'ingresso nel Giardino a Levante*”, the two Vanvitelli's casinos for the main access are welded both functionally both visually by a simple gate that with the elegance reveals the dynamic movement of the inner fountains, provided to the project intended as elements that dot the straight path.

In addition, Ornella Cirillo in his book “*Carlo Vanvitelli: architettura e città nella seconda metà del Settecento*”, on the fence she writes that «the rhythmic girder adopted in entry halls is simplified in the northern prospectus as a supporting element of the long wall with gates, but in actual implementation it had to even think of reducing it through the elimination of the niche with the statue, replaced by a small railing, preferable to an artifact of the poor quality, only capable of altering the good effect of the whole». The latter solution is available in the table preserved to Archivio Storico Municipale of Naples, Cart. I, Chiaia 9.



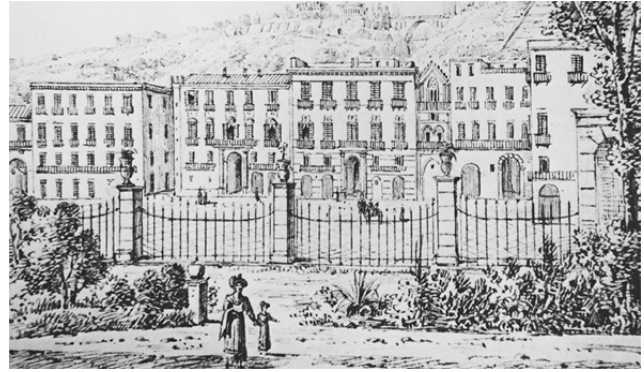
**Fig. 3: Photo, Carlo Vanvitelli's table, a hypothesis of fence.**  
Archivio Storico Municipale of Naples (Cart. I, Chiaia 9)

#### 4. INSTALLATION OF THE FENCE: DOMENICO POTENZA

On 11 July 1781, the annual fair, which was held regularly since 1738 between the Palazzo's square and Castello's square, it was held exceptionally for the first and last time on the *Vittoria square* to celebrate the inauguration of the *Villa Reale* in Naples. For this occasion, moreover, the architect Carlo Vanvitelli arranged a "car for the party" in the face of «Padri Teatini's new houses», never realized project. For the construction of the *Villa Reale*, despite the amount allocated on 8 June 1778, the money proved insufficient to complete the work for the date's inauguration. In fact, in 1782, the manufacturers of Caserta finished mounting the travertine fountains and only after it was provided to the installation of the fence by the blacksmith Domenico Potenza that finally it allowed the planting of 22 parterre. Finally, only in 1785 they mounted the lamps for lighting.

#### 5. THE REDESIGN OF THE POST-VANVITELLIAN FENCES

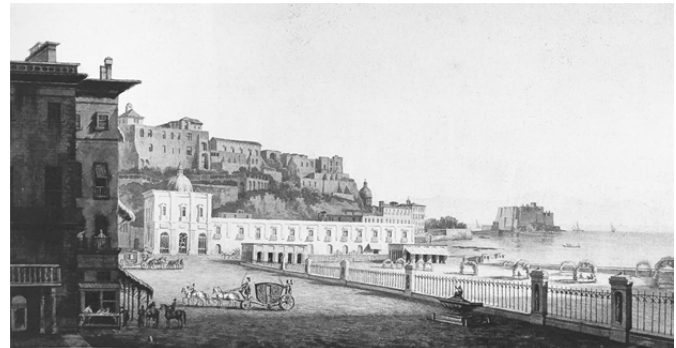
Among the first iconographic documents that tell the completion of the work of Vanvitelli, is a watercolor by John Warwick Smith, made during the neapolitan stay done in the early eighties of the eighteenth-century, in which the *Villa Reale* looks like says Ornella Cirillo «wall through the lattice in iron, interspersed with simple pillars in masonry with smooth bosses and central niches, and along the inner walk there were a few shrubs on curved supports».



**Fig. 4: A. Senape, ink printer**

The other analyzed iconographies have unearthed different types of fences that have over the years surrounded the villa.

The types of fences analyzed from the iconographies and are generally composed of pillars, foundations and gates. The gates are sometimes thicker and sometimes thinner and with horizontal elements sometimes arched and other straights. The decorative element, consisting of vases that surmount the pillars, is not always present in all types but only in those represented in the ink printer by A. Senape and in the watercolor by C. Carelli.



**Fig. 5: J. Warwick Smith, watercolor**

#### 6. ALESSANDRO MENDINI'S FENCE

Totally different and not respectful «identification of the local characters» as Paolo Giordano says, the fence designed by Alessandro Mendini in 1998 consists of slender golden lampposts and railing with three architectural fragments made from synthetic materials. The *Villa Comunale* of Naples, today, looks like a complex structure composed of architectural volumes as temples and pavilions and timely objects like statues and fountains, all surrounded by vegetation. The complexity of this place comes from the fact that the elements that compose it, belong to diverse times in history and in their entirety at the same time represent the complexity of a place that speaks of different ages.

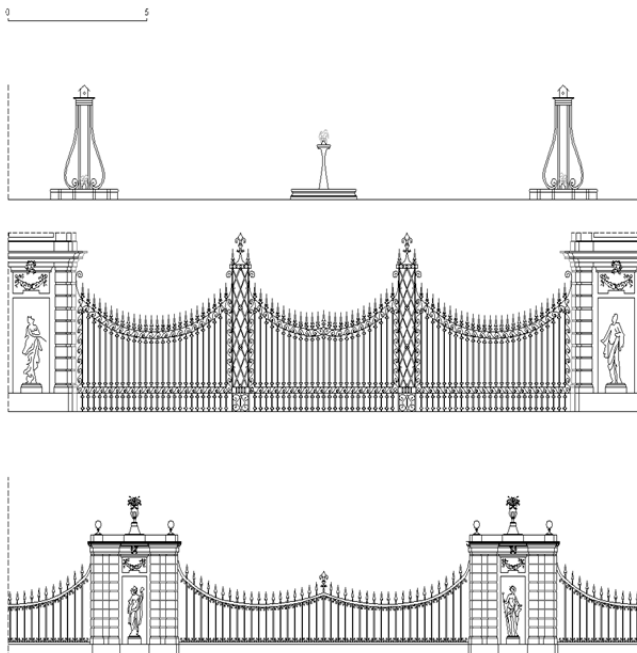


**Fig. 6: Photo, Alessandro Mendini's fence**

Where the complexity is the ruler, «the oldest layers should engage in dialogue with those modern and contemporary layers» as written by Paolo Giordano, in his book *Il disegno dell'architettura funebre* in 2006, but that does not always happen, in fact continuing Paolo Giordano adds «dialogue that most of the time is silenced by realizations that don't put in relation but in contrast to the place of belonging».

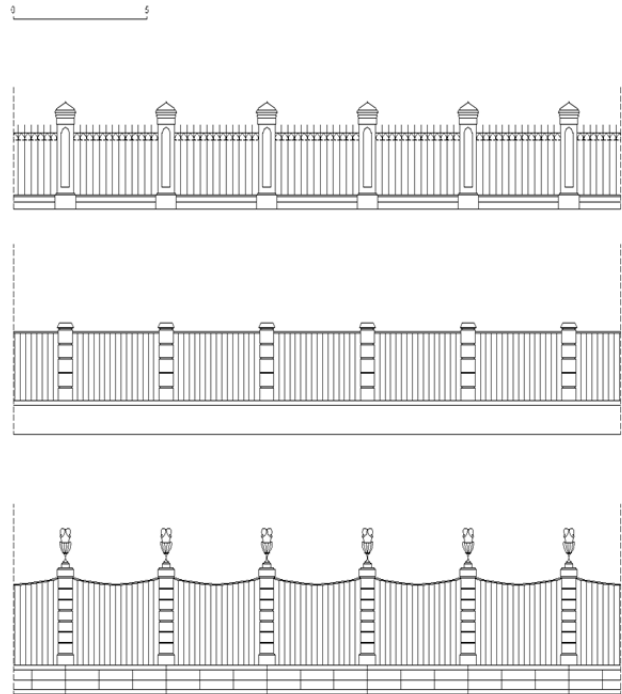
## 7. CONCLUSION

The research conducted and based on the redesign methodology permits to bring to light typological type of the element analyzed, the fence, that the only visual observation would not let it to see.



**Fig. 7. Synthetic table of the fences\_ part I**

The visual observation, the view, is certainly the first analysis tool that man uses, almost involuntarily, to evaluate and examine but it is the redesign that lets him get in close relationship and understanding with the element or architecture in general analyzed.



**Fig. 8: Synthetic table of the fences\_ part II**

The redesign is of fundamental importance for studies, as this just described, because it reconstructs the historical phases of both an integer part of the territory and of an architectural element.

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