Field of Study: The Diffuse City

My presentation will focus on issues related to urban transformations in what is generally referred to as the “diffuse city”.

This is a subject that I have explored in a recent publication, and which is born of a desire to **reappropriate the practice of making architecture in the fields of teaching and research**; a practice that is all too often ignored in the name of often abstract theories that have little in common with real phenomena, with regards to which **we must now maintain a certain readiness and capacity for action.**

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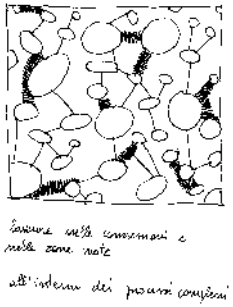
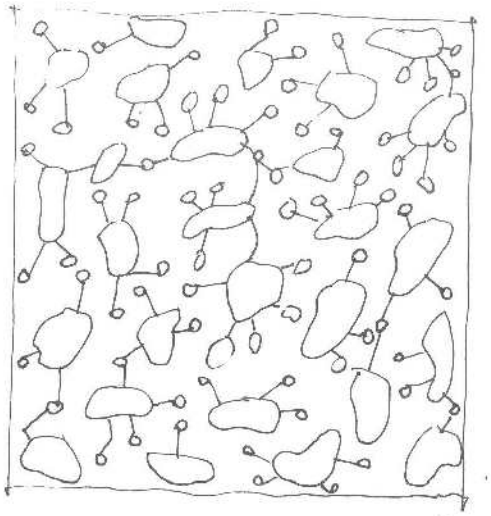
Where do we Find the Diffuse City?



The model of the diffuse city can be extended to different global contexts and regions, though with diverse connotations and forms of settlement.

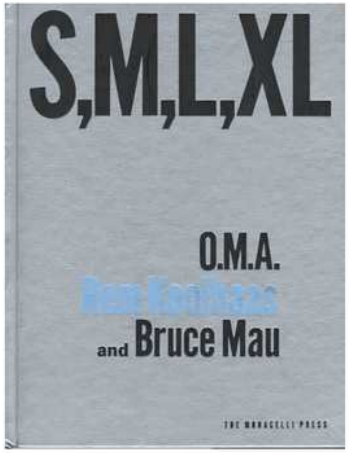
In Italy it corresponds with a form of urban development that equally affects large cities and small urban centres, often providing them with **areas for different uses (industry, commerce, residential), spread like leopards' spots throughout territories crisscrossed by mobility infrastructures.**

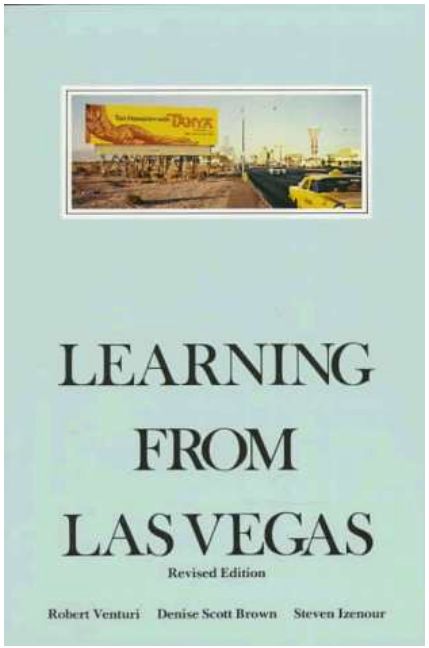
How do we Recognise the Diffuse City?



Its most common characteristics are:
- a lack of hierarchies;
- the absence of characterising landmarks;
- the presence of untended open spaces, or spaces with no specific use;
- the absence of any definition of public space as an element capable of creating relations and thus:
- the absence of neighbourly relationships

The Image of the Diffuse City

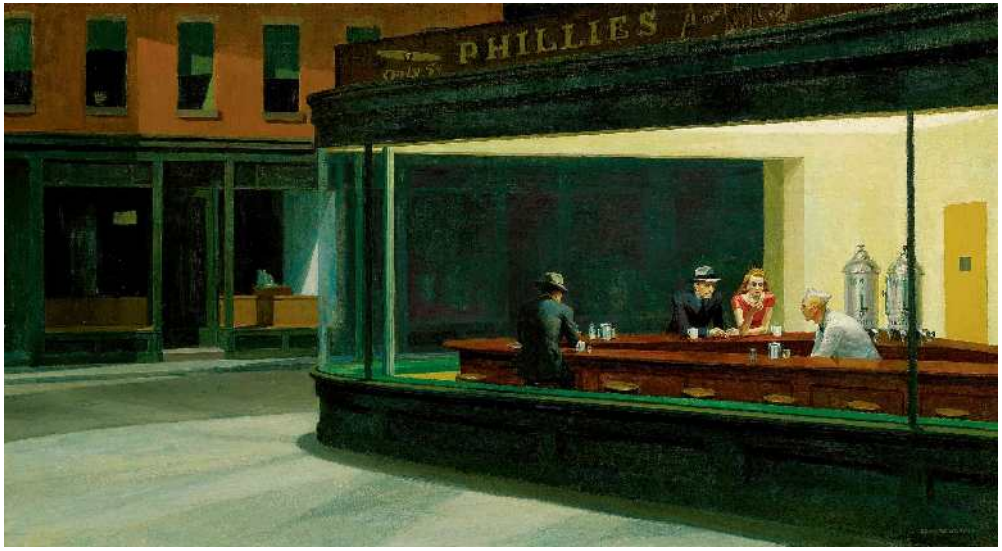




Very often, the image of the diffuse city has been presented in cinematographic or pictorial images that have anticipated the contemporary theories of such architects as Robert Venturi or Rem Koolhaas.

These latter visions, not without their intellectualisms were, however, the first to identify **the loss of a unitary conception of the city and assign value to the spontaneous nature of mechanisms of economic development.**

The City of the Everyday



The diffuse city is the city of the everyday. The home, the school, the supermarket … the functions of dwelling in a generic city in a generic suburb.

In general we avert **the lack of a strategy of transformation that begins with the dimension of the everyday.** The everyday appears to have been unleashed between the folds in regulations that are only apparently restrictive and, in reality, incapable of having a significant impact.

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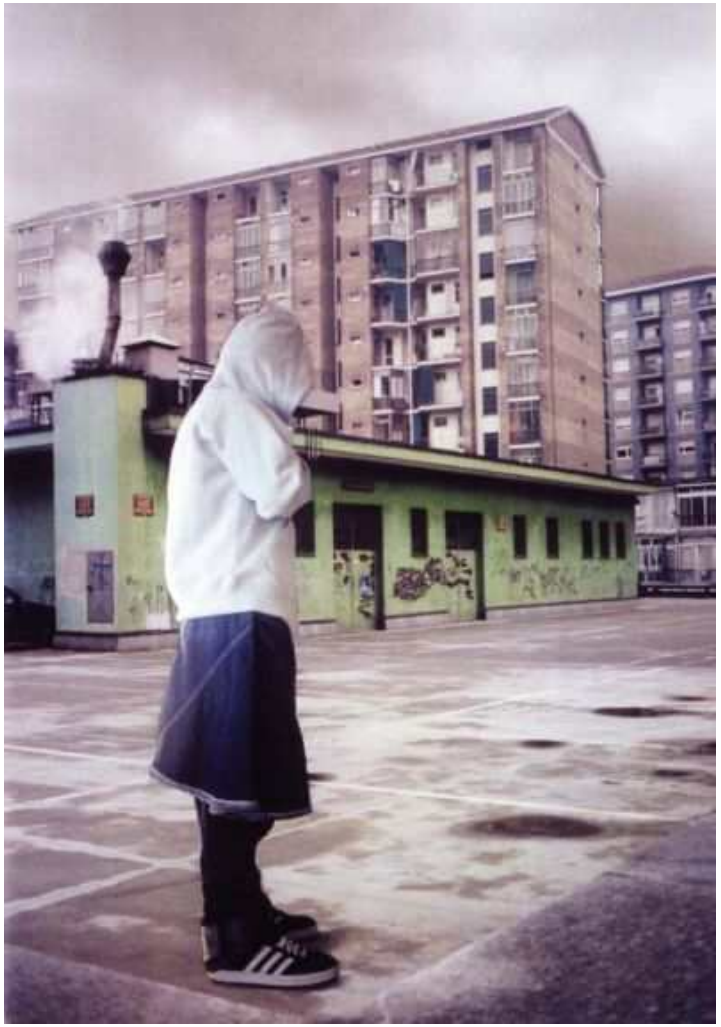
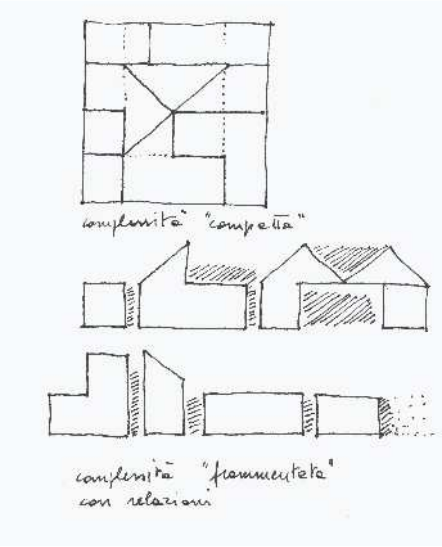
The Dimension of Time

Architectural culture is unable to renounce the idea of governing the complexity of processes of urban transformation at the large scale, even while being aware of the current impossibility of imposing decisions that guarantee stability over time.

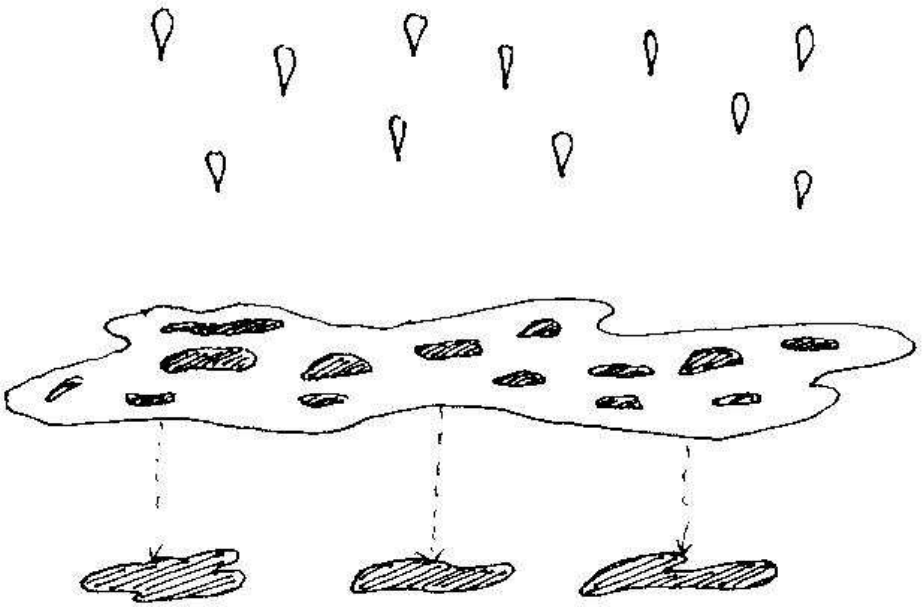
Working through Re-Stitching





Thus, if on the one hand the complexity of large projects more and more often generates paralysis, on the other **we lose sight of the meaning of a patient work of re-stitching,** that must be appropriated by architectural culture in order that we not lose control of urban space and refuse to surrender in the face of rising complexity.

"Selective Reduction"



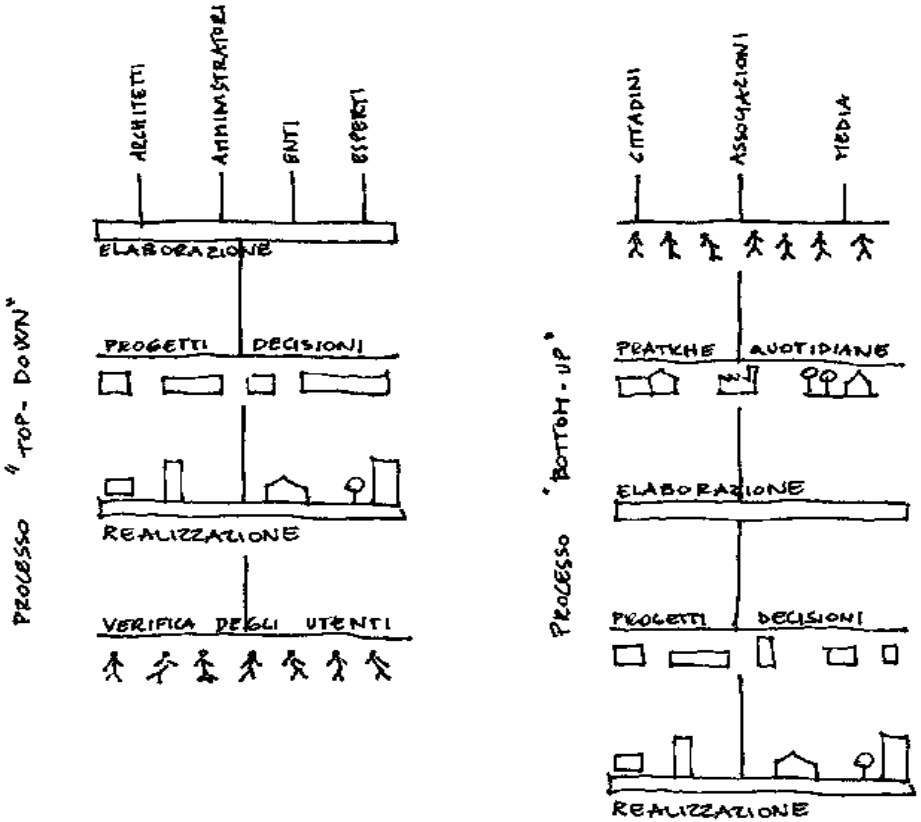
The complexity of urban phenomena can and must not hinder the possibility of improving urban space through specific and minute interventions, referred to the spaces of the everyday.

To achieve this we must implement a selective reduction that allows for the **identification of the most urgent issues to be confronted using the tools of architecture**.

Defining Everyday Urbanism

The concept of everyday urbanism refers to how everyday functions are presented to the inhabitants of a given city and emerges from the combination of multiple factors of a differing nature. The most relevant of these refer to the form of the city and, in particular, its density, the distribution of its functions, the quality of its technical networks (energy, water, transport, waste), the degree of connectivity that it offers its citizens (the capillarity and vastness of its channels of communication), its offering of services (nature, quantity and quality of accessible services at the urban and local scale) and, finally, even its traditions of building (prevalent building types, the construction systems and technical systems of buildings).
(Ezio Manzini, *Quotidiano sostenibile, scenari di vita urbana,* Milan 2003)

The Design of Programme and the Design of the Everyday



Beginning with this definition of the everyday and referred to the contemporary city, we can distinguish between **two types of design**:
one that we can call "the design of programme"
and one that we can call "the design of the everyday"

The Characteristics of the Design of Programme

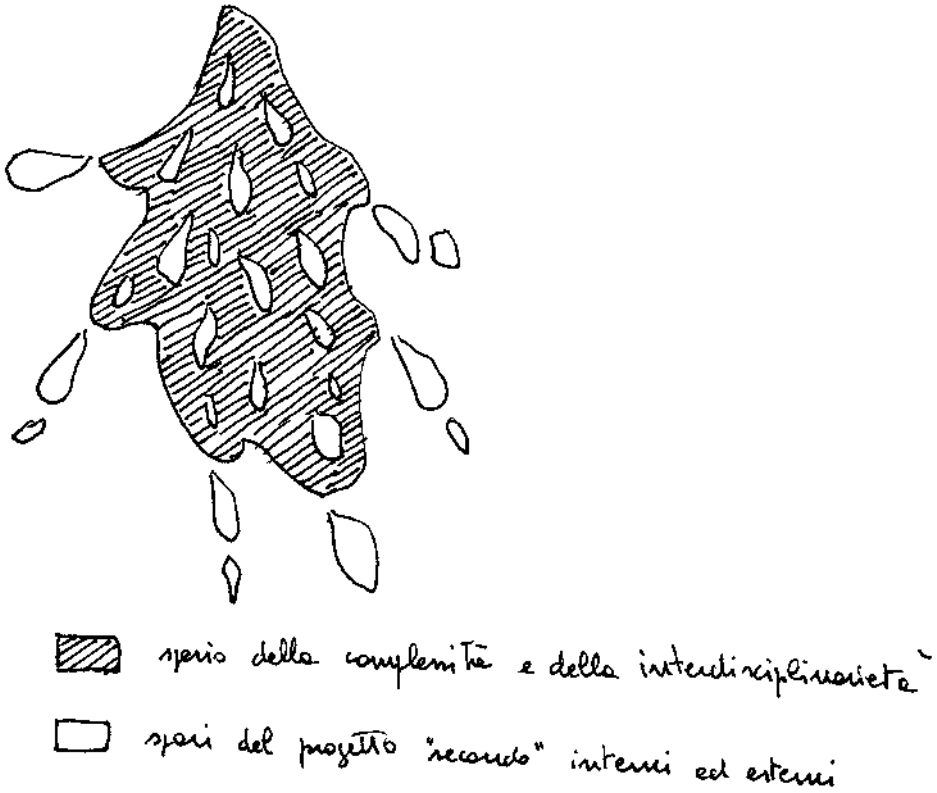
The first, the "design of programme", does not necessarily refer to existing regulations, but is itself a generator of regulations. It is not an urban planning project, but rather the organisation of a collection of necessities referred to different subjects who must dialogue with one another and identify points of convergence.

It is a project that requires lengthy periods of time.

The architect intervenes as a member of the group of designers involved for various reasons in the process, without assume the role of leader.

The economic aspect is preponderant with respect to all others.

The Design of the Everyday, or the Second Project



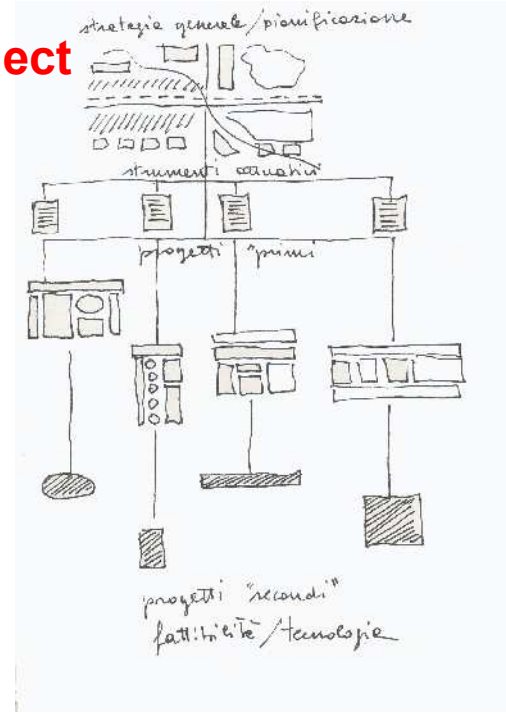
The "design of the everyday" makes direct reference to the **architect's responsibility to favour "exemplary" transformations**, within the fragmented fabric of the city.
In my book I have referred to this type of approach as the "second project", because I feel that today, in context analogous to those found in Italy, witness to the uncontrollable development of urban peripheries, it is more useful to operate through specific projects, derived from programmes or **situations already underway, but not yet complete**.

Beginning with Needs

Philip Raham_"climate-related performance installation" that considers the relationships between indoor and outdoor and artificialand natural surroundings.

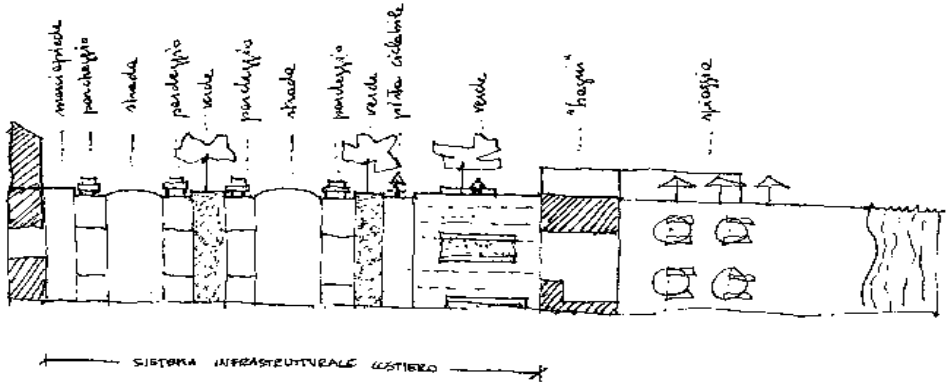
The second project (or second life of the project) is thus a method of intervening in the city that begins with **real needs that arise as a result of the incompleteness of programmes or projects**, and thus the result of the failure of these projects or programmes.

Opportunities for Identifying the Second Project



I would now like to present the thematic environments that define this particular dimension of design, which can be used as references in order to **understand lines of action or research along which to work**.

Objects or Systems of Objects

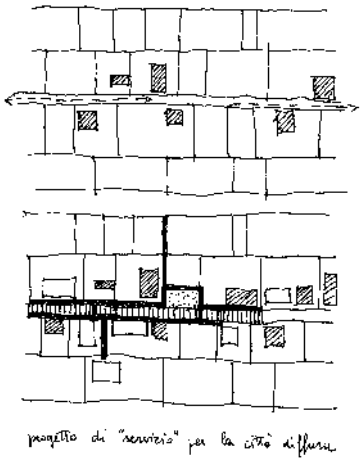


It may be limited to an object, or a system of objects. While it is rarely a large-scale project, it may be conceived of at the large scale, as **an experience that can be repeated, in whole or in part.**

Sustainable Technologies

We can thus begin with the premise that intervening in processes already underway now means employing sustainable technologies, focused on inverting a process implemented previously. **We take for granted that what has already been done is, in any case, unsustainable, if not actually dangerous, and the the methods of intervention must be self-sustainable.**

The Contemporary City



It is within the diffuse contemporary city (not only architecture) that man becomes aware of increased possibilities of intervention because it **is an open and available space that accepts new languages and promotes innovation.**

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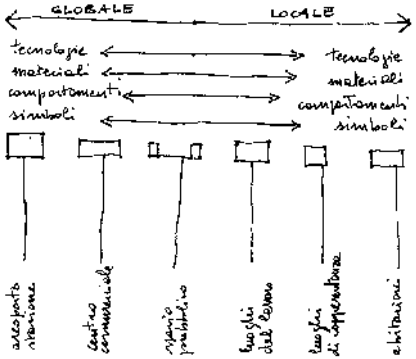
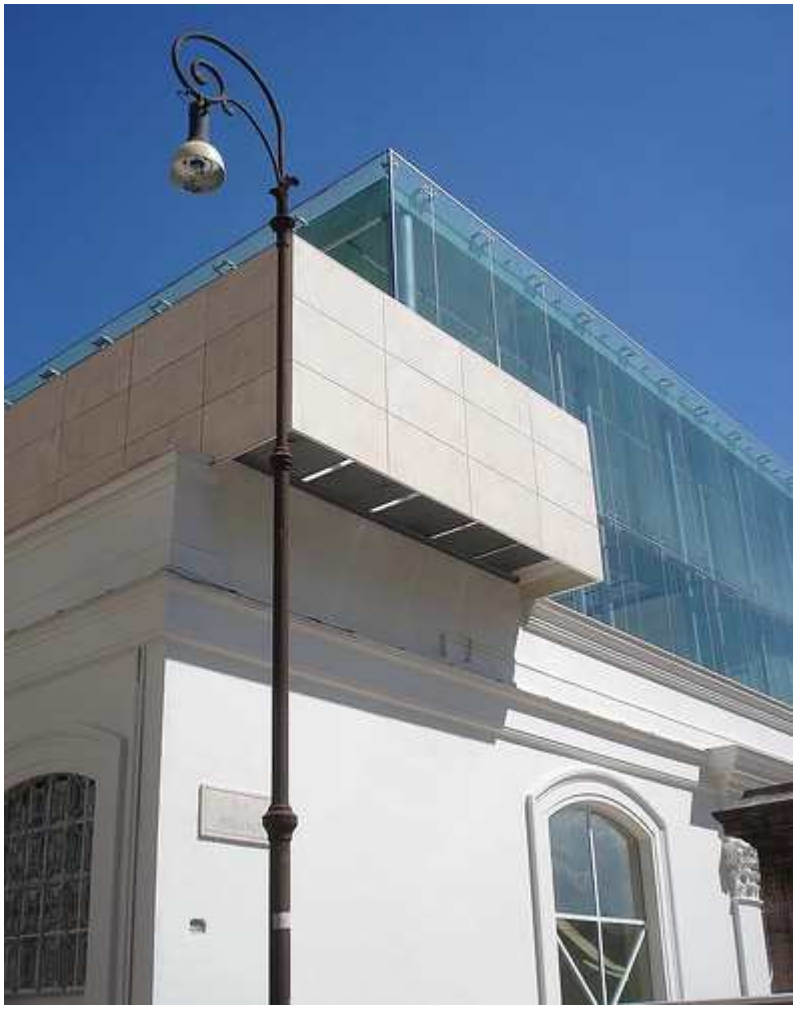
Local Dimensions, Global Needs

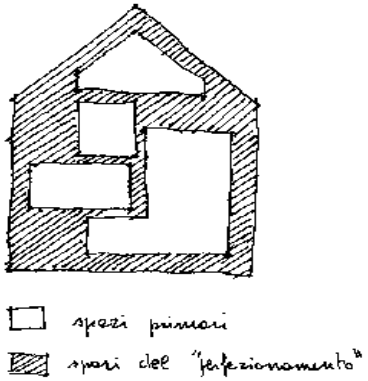


It is a local project that refers to global conditions (glocal).

The local condition is the driving force behind the development of the second project. However, it must not be confused with a condition of regression towards urban and social models that are no longer compatible with the reality of contemporary phenomena. Rather it is a method of facing up to globalization from a position of strength, rather than weakness.

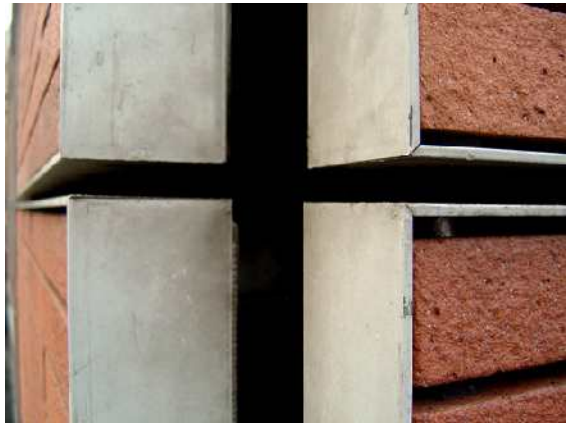
Technical Feasibility





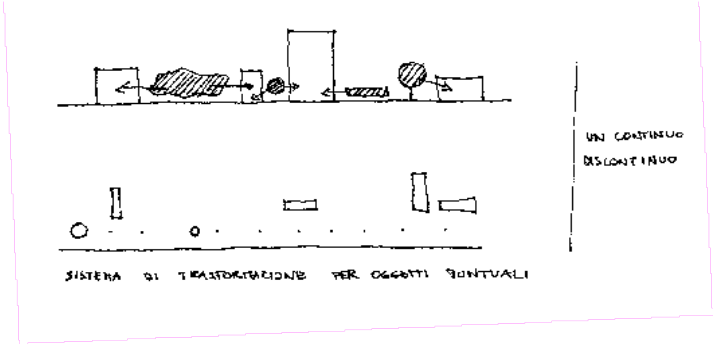
It is a project that translates the decisions made and elaborated in the form of technical feasibility. The second project is a project for construction. It may begin where a previous project has failed to find an equilibrium in form and content. **It may become part of a project that is already underway, offering contributions that ensure the achievement of more focused objectives**. While discrete, it is anything but weak. On the contrary, it strengthens the weaknesses of previous conditions.

Production and Material



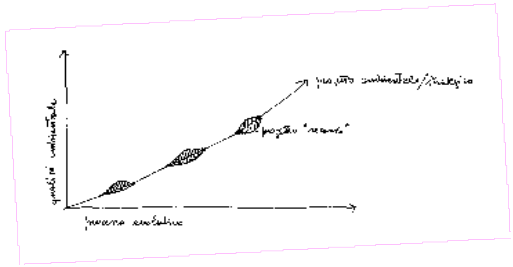
The second project recovers a tactile and perceptive dimension of making architecture and **tends to define a more intense tie with the production of elements destined to be used as architecture,** in order to obtain a better and renewed exchange between industry and the professionalism of the architect.

Fragmentariness



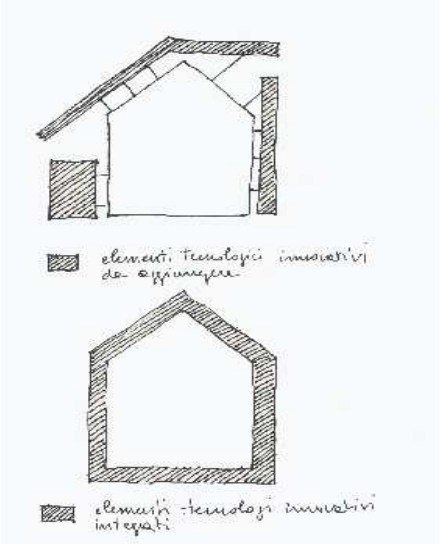
The second project intervenes in processes of re-stitching the urban fabric through fragmentary and **specific interventions whose modifications to the relationships between man and the city** are as real as they are consistent, using technological instruments (networks, transport, energy, illumination, etc.) that physically and virtually tie it to the local and global community and by employing elements of architecture that restore dignity, form and identity to everyday experiences.

Simplicity and Rapidity



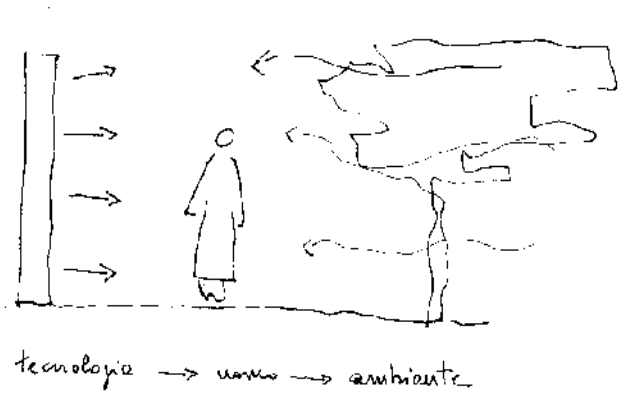
The reduction of complexity does not comport a reduction in the interpretative and selective capacities that belong to the sphere of the 'culture of design'.
The second project limits itself to **fixing a variability of data that are difficult to classify within a given period of time that is both brief and circumscribed** (the progressively more restricted time periods that we now require to implement choices that must have a rapid effect in the reality of the built environment).

Innovation



The second project intervenes in the internal structure of procedures of **implementing process of a given complexity, indicating innovative solutions**, though without entering into the merit of the choices that have generated it.

Technologies at the Service of Dwelling

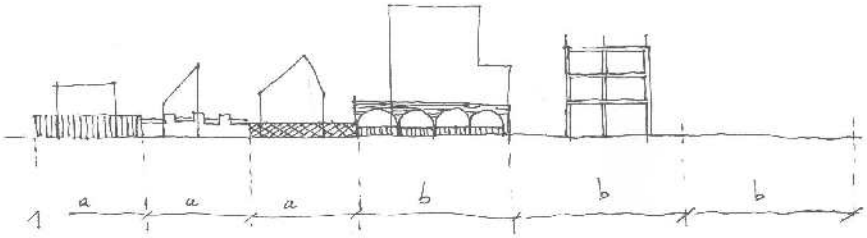


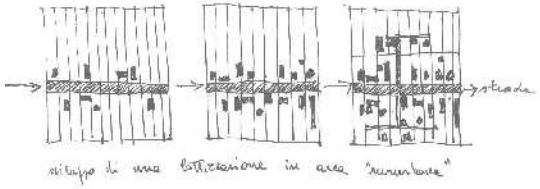
The second project is primarily a technological project. It seeks modifications capable of improving inhabitability in the quality of relationships between the elements of the spatial system and between the latter and man, and focuses on improving responses to the needs of contemporary dwelling.

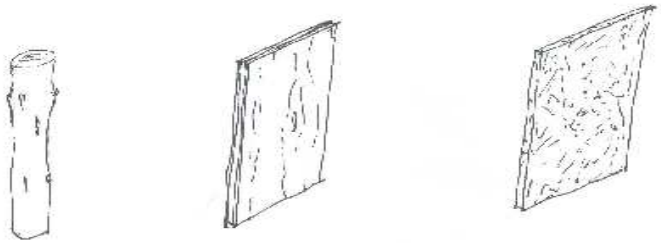
Microeconomics in Urban Microspaces

The second project exploits conditions that remain incomplete due to an absence of programme in order to **respond to new questions and reinforce local economies that are useful to the definition of new urban spaces.** We are not speaking of new expansions, but of interstitial and casual areas that are difficult to recognise as belonging to a system.

Disciplinary Competence

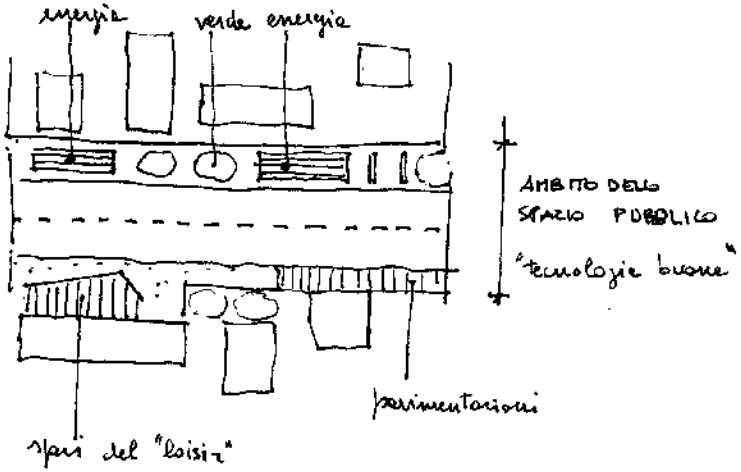






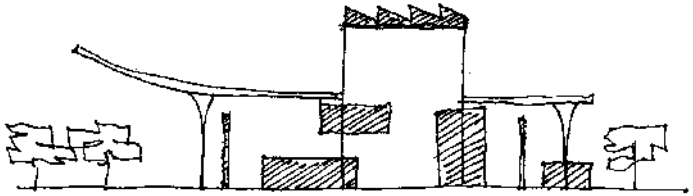
In the second project, the architect recovers disciplinary competence, prefiguring the qualitative technological systems that reinforce and render concrete the conception of architecture and space, independent of the dimension and scale of intervention. This is not a simple investigation of a generic idea, but rather the translation of a programme (even developed by different subjects) into a project in which the spatial system can make use of the most up to date instruments in order that each element of the system works towards the reinforcement of the initial proposal.

Public Space



Public space may represent that fragment of **space in which the architectural intervention can work towards ethical and demonstrative objectives**, utilising technologies regulated by motivations of shared well-being, far removed from the mechanisms of the market that condition choices in order to achieve other objectives.

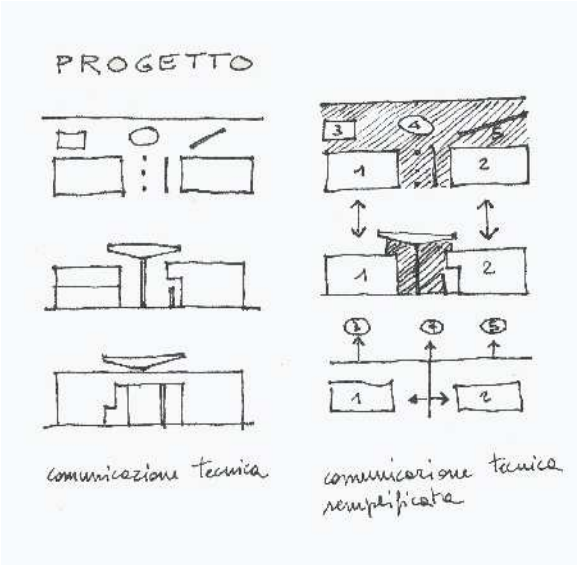
Space in Space



elementi di riqualificazione dentro i grandi contenitori urbani

The second project affects the organisation of space in large urban containers (shopping centres, rail stations, airports, etc.). It tends to identify a technological matrix through the composition of architectural parts that create the necessary conditions for **improving the quality of space and its inhabitation, in reference to the entire system**.

Flexibility and Reversibility



This practice implies criteria of flexibility and reversibility as technological parameters of quality. It prefigures spaces/services useful to the system and employs simple and **modular elements that can be easily extended, assembled and disassembled with an elevated level of autonomy** with respect to the macro-system that contains them.

F. Ottone, L. Pignatti

Project of requalification of Piazza San Cosimato in Rome

Piazza S. Cosimato - The old piazza

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Il progetto secondo: riqualificazione urbana e dimensione quotidiana del progetto

Piazza S. Cosimato - The old piazza – Urban blight

F. Ottone, L. Pignatti

Project of requalification of Piazza San Cosimato in Rome

Piazza S. Cosimato - The new piazza

F. Ottone, L. Pignatti

Project of requalification of Piazza San Cosimato in Rome

Piazza S. Cosimato - The new market

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Il progetto secondo: riqualificazione urbana e dimensione quotidiana del progetto

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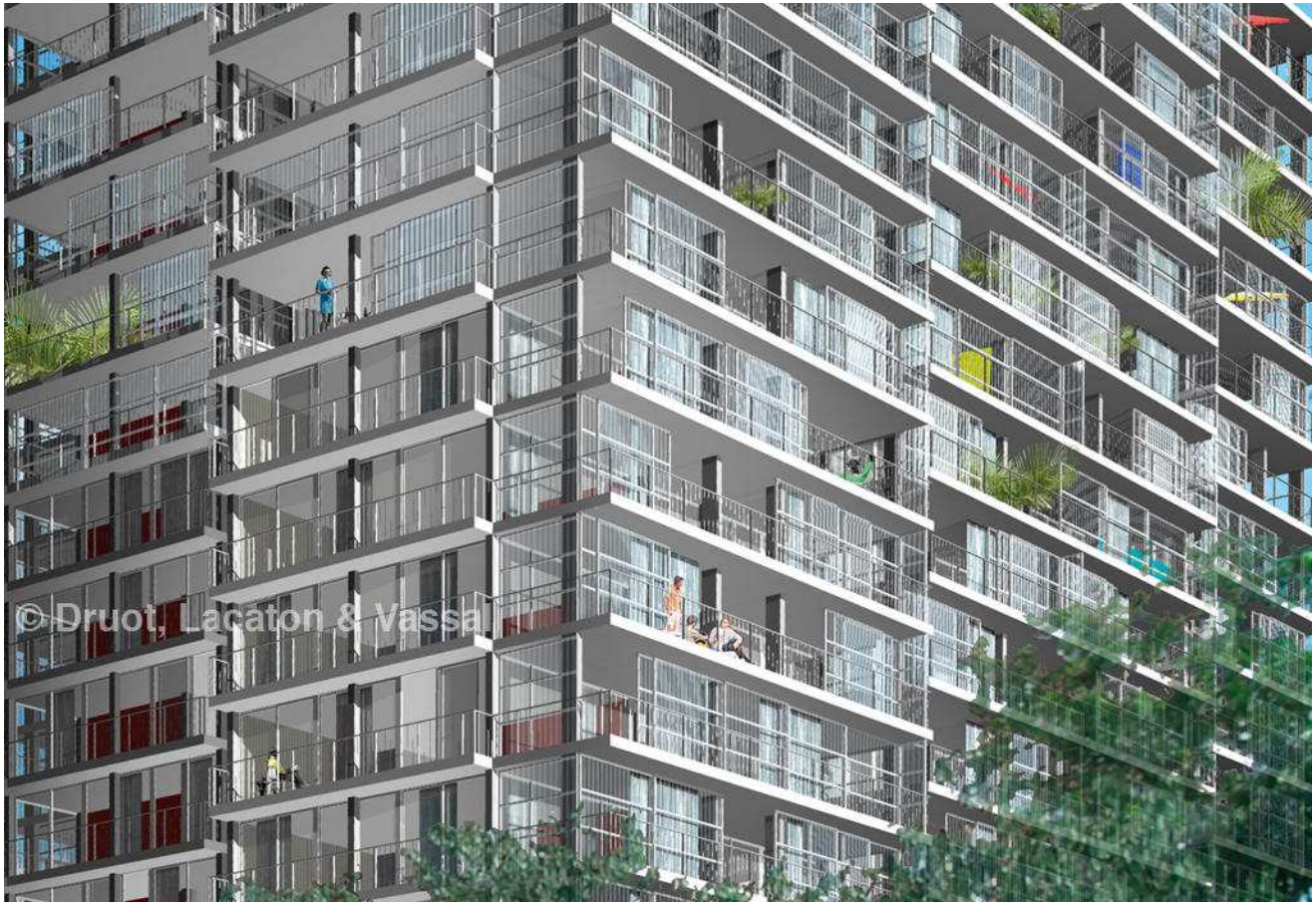
Piazza S. Cosimato - The new piazza

Transformation of Housing Block - Paris 17°, Tour Bois le Prêtre - Druot, Lacaton & Vassal

Transformation of Housing Block - Paris 17°, Tour Bois le Prêtre - Druot, Lacaton & Vassal

"New floors, built as a self-supporting structure, are added on the periphery of the existing building at every floor, to extend the living rooms, create closeable terrasses and balconies. The existing facades with small windows will be removed and replaced by large transparent openings, so that the inhabitants will profit of the exceptionnal view on Paris all around."



Transformation of Housing Block - Paris 17°, Tour Bois le Prêtre - Druot, Lacaton & Vassal

The old windows

Transformation of Housing Block - Paris 17°, Tour Bois le Prêtre - Druot, Lacaton & Vassal

"The volume will be releases of all useless rooms and installations to become a free and transparent space from the entrance to a new garden created on the back of the building. Rooms for collective activities will be established on the sides of the hall. Two lifts will be built to improve the access to the apartments.
The structure will be designed with prefabricated elements so that the inhabitants can stay in the apartments during the construction works."

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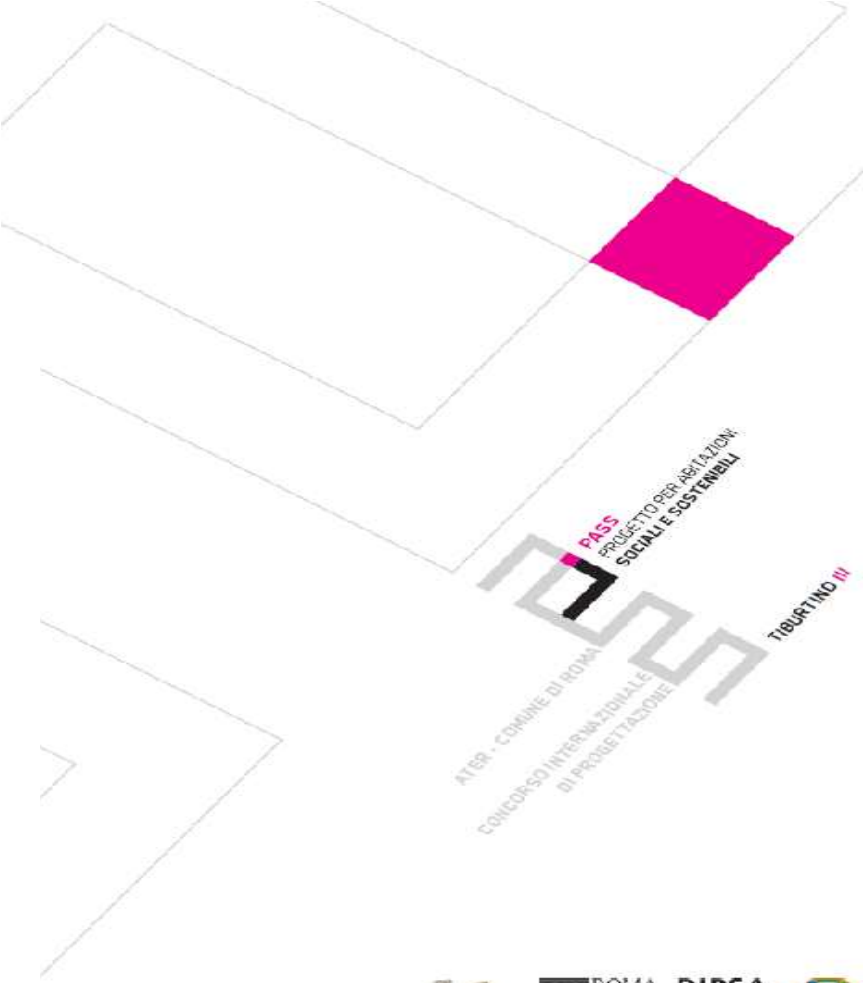
A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

New methods of requalification of social housing

Il presente concorso internazionale di progettazione **"PASS – Progetto per abitazioni sociali e sostenibili"** ha per oggetto la riqualificazione di parte del complesso E.R.P. (Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica) sito nel Piano di Zona n.15 bis - Tiburtino III, cioè i lotti compresi tra via Grotta di Gregna e via Mozart, attraverso

- l'inserimento di **120 nuovi alloggi** circa di edilizia popolare
- la dotazione di **nuovi servizi** di quartiere
- la **riqualificazione degli spazi pubblici**
- **interventi integrati per il miglioramento del comportamento energetico** degli edifici esistenti (costituiti da circa 450 alloggi) al fine di
  - migliorare la qualità dell'abitare
  - migliorarne le prestazioni energetiche
  - innovare i sistemi impiantistici al fine di una gestione sostenibile.



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A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

The existing buildings

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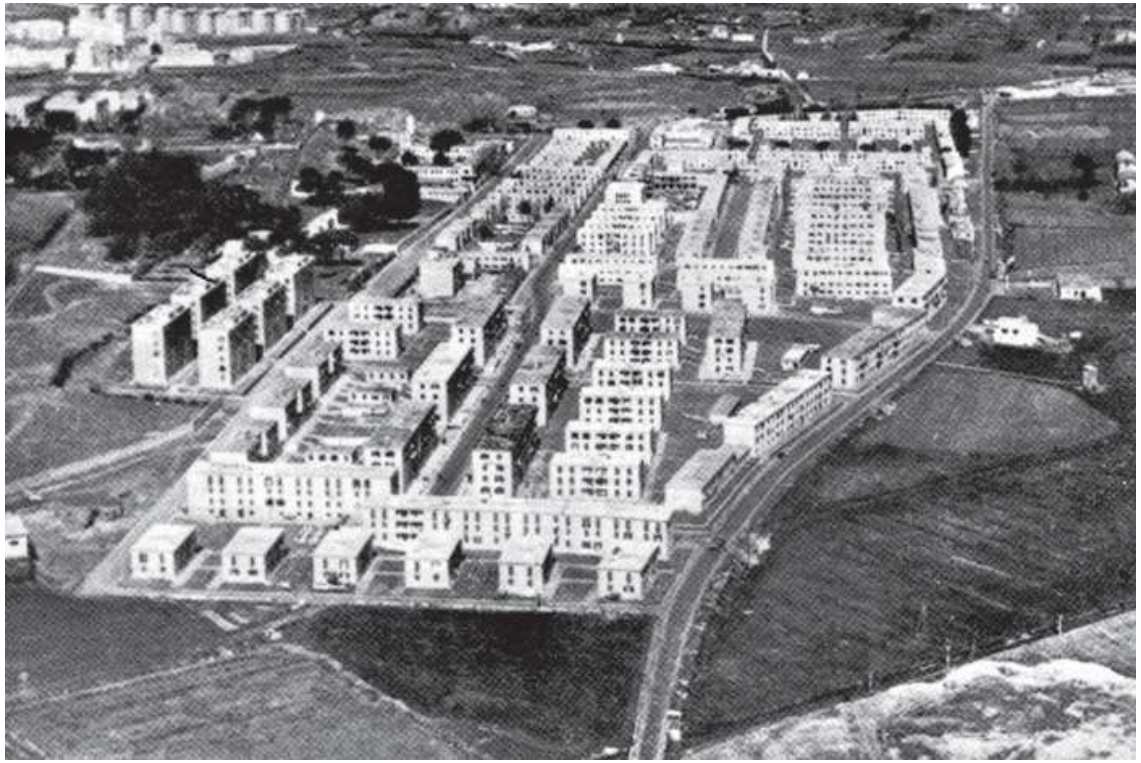
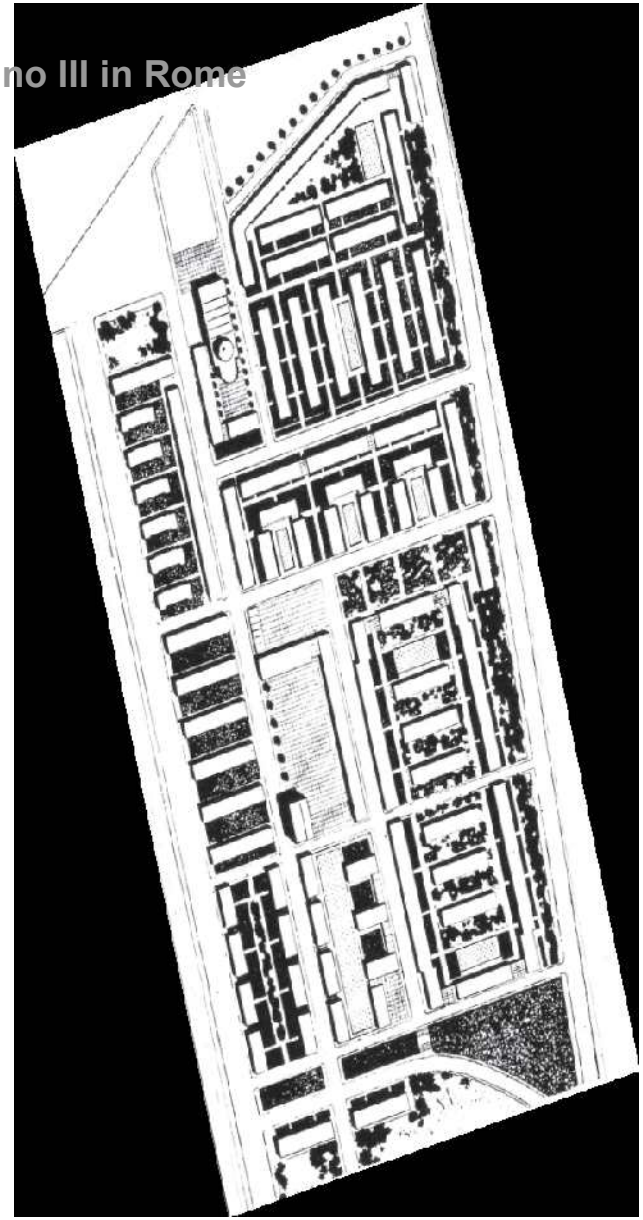
A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

The old project





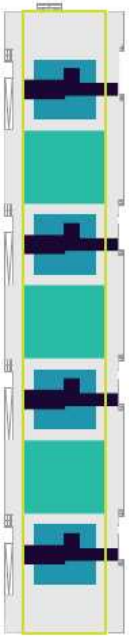
A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

Prescriptions of the competions

IL PIANO PORTICATO

DG3 ■ I piani terreni porticati caratterizzano l'architettura costruita a Roma e in tutta
DG4 ■ Italia con il primo *Piano di Edilizia Economica e Popolare* - PEEP (tra il 1967 e il 1985).
Questi spazi porticati, sebbene declinati in modi differenti e con caratteri di specificità, in origine individuano spazi di uso comune al coperto: proteggono normalmente gli accessi alle scale e agli ascensori, ospitano cantinole, depositi, locali tecnici, talvolta anche posti auto per i residenti.
Nel tempo la qualità materiale e le condizioni d'uso di questi spazi li hanno trasformati in luoghi spesso negletti e residuali, evitati dagli abitanti perché percepiti come pericolosi.

DG2 ■ A Tiburtino III il piano porticato è contrassegnato dall'alternanza di vuoti, cantine, blocchi scala, vani accessori comuni e passaggi, in una composizione molto rigida; a questo si aggiunge che tutta la piastra del piano terra è a una quota più alta della quota stradale e che la *continuità con il paesaggio* che è il riferimento basilare nell'utilizzo del piano porticato in epoca moderna, viene meno.



ESEMPIO DI UN PIANO PORTICATO TIPO (EDIFICI IN LINEA)

- basamento
- superficie coperta
- collegamenti verticali e locali tecnici
- spazi accessori comuni
- cantine

A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

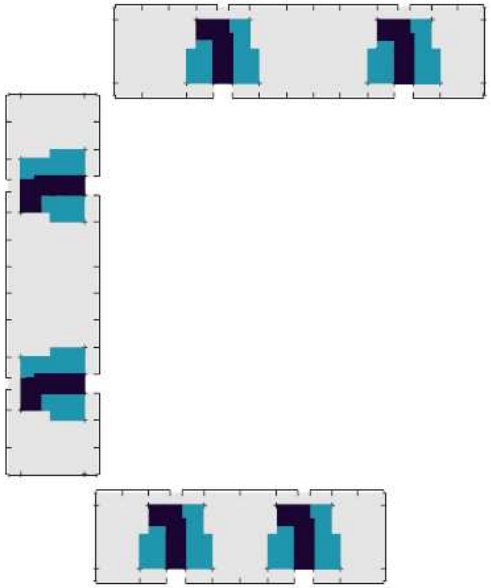
Prescriptions of the competions

LE COPERTURE

DG3 ■ Le coperture degli edifici di Tiburtino III sono piane, con la presenza di ambienti
DG4 ■ per ogni corpo scala, destinati a lavatoi, stenditoi e locali tecnici, alcuni coperti altri scoperti ma definiti spazialmente da muri perimetrali. Questi vani sono spesso inutilizzati dagli abitanti, anche perché accessibili esclusivamente dalle scale, e non serviti dall'ascensore di cui emerge il volume tecnico per l'extra-corsa. Il torrino del corpo scala arretrato rispetto al corpo di fabbrica e la soluzione di dettaglio del parapetto che assume il ruolo di cornicione, rendono indefinito il piano di copertura rispetto all'intero edificio, e denotano un *attacco al cielo* non perfettamente risolto.

DG2 ■ Lo spazio di copertura si presta ad ospitare nuove funzioni residenziali. In via sperimentale per il 2011 è già prevista la realizzazione di 4 alloggi da 38 mq finanziati sulla base di un precedente progetto redatto dall'ATER, distribuiti per ogni corpo scala dell'edificio 12A.

In copertura il concorso richiede di destinare ad alloggi e/o funzioni a servizio della residenza.



ESEMPIO DI UN PIANO COPERTURA

solaio
spazi accessori comuni
collegamenti verticali e locali tecnici

A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

Prescriptions of the competions

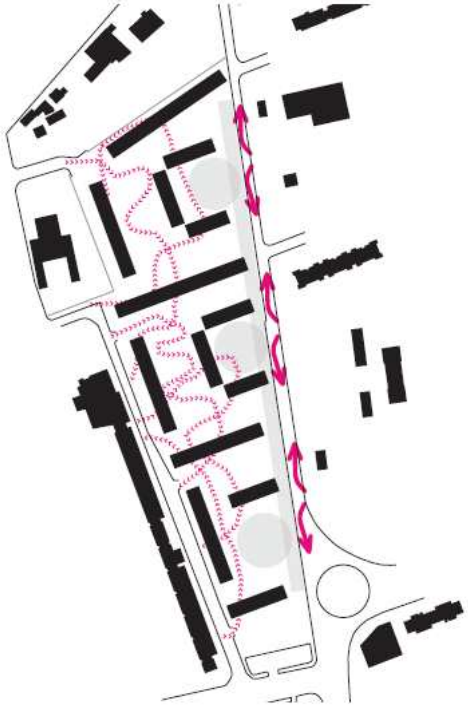
LO SPAZIO APERTO

DG3 ■ Lo spazio pubblico del Tiburtino III è il risultato di un progetto studiato minuziosamente: marciapiedi, aiuole, minigiardini, rampe carrabili di accesso ai garage, rampe pedonali, scale, muretti in calcestruzzo e cordoli, si ripetono in tutta l'area e per ogni edificio costituendo un insieme troppo denso di elementi costruiti che complicano l'accessibilità, la permeabilità visiva e il controllo spaziale tra il livello della strada e quello degli spazi porticati basamentali. In generale lo spazio aperto non ha confini e delimitazioni: non ci sono cancelli, recinzioni o barriere. Dalla zona prettamente pubblica agli spazi semiprivati o verdi, si accede liberamente, salvo gli *ostacoli* derivanti dal disegno architettonico dei salti di quota e della viabilità.

Gli edifici sono spesso circondati da porzioni di aree verdi, a loro volta delimitate dalla viabilità carrabile e dalle aree di sosta (in molti casi selvaggia) e parcheggio. Tra via Mozart a via Grotte di Gregna, non c'è collegamento diretto, né pedonale né carrabile. Da un punto di vista della rete viaria, le strade sono ad esclusivo servizio degli edifici e dei residenti; gli spazi verdi posti ad est, continui lungo via Grotte di Gregna sono di impedimento ad una percorrenza trasversale.

Il concorso richiede nuovo disegno dello spazio pubblico, nel rispetto delle alberature esistenti.

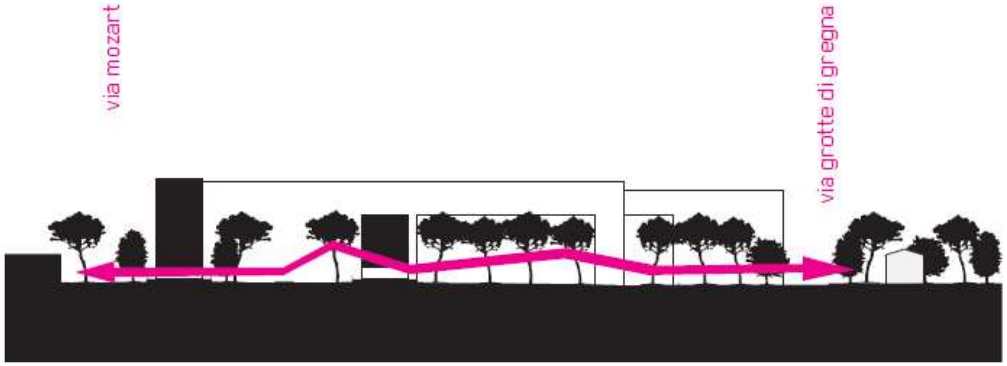
LE CONNESSIONI



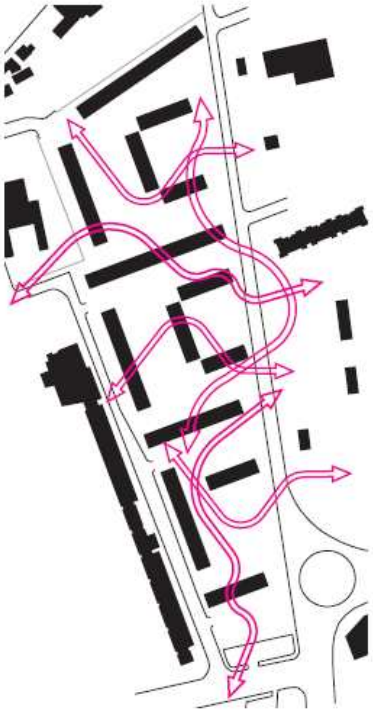
A recent competition of requalification of neighborhood of Tiburtino III in Rome

Prescriptions of the competions

Ampia libertà è data alle scelte progettuali al fine di giungere ad una nuova definizione dell'identità degli spazi urbani, riconfigurando la quota "zero". Uniche invarianti di progetto sono la posizione delle alberature e le rampe di accesso ai livelli interrati dei garage, per cui è comunque ammissibile una parziale tombatura, garantendo comunque le altezze utili. Per quanto riguarda
DG2 ■ la viabilità carrabile interna all'area è possibile rimodularne sezione e tracciato, fermo restando l'accessibilità carrabile ad ogni edificio.
DG1 ■ Nella riqualificazione di questo ambito saranno apprezzate quelle proposte che sapranno mettere a sistema lo spazio aperto del quartiere con la città, in particolar con le altre aree pubbliche e pedonali attraverso la definizione una rete di percorsi ciclopedonali anche con la riserva naturale del parco dell'Aniene.



LO SPAZIO FRA LE CASE

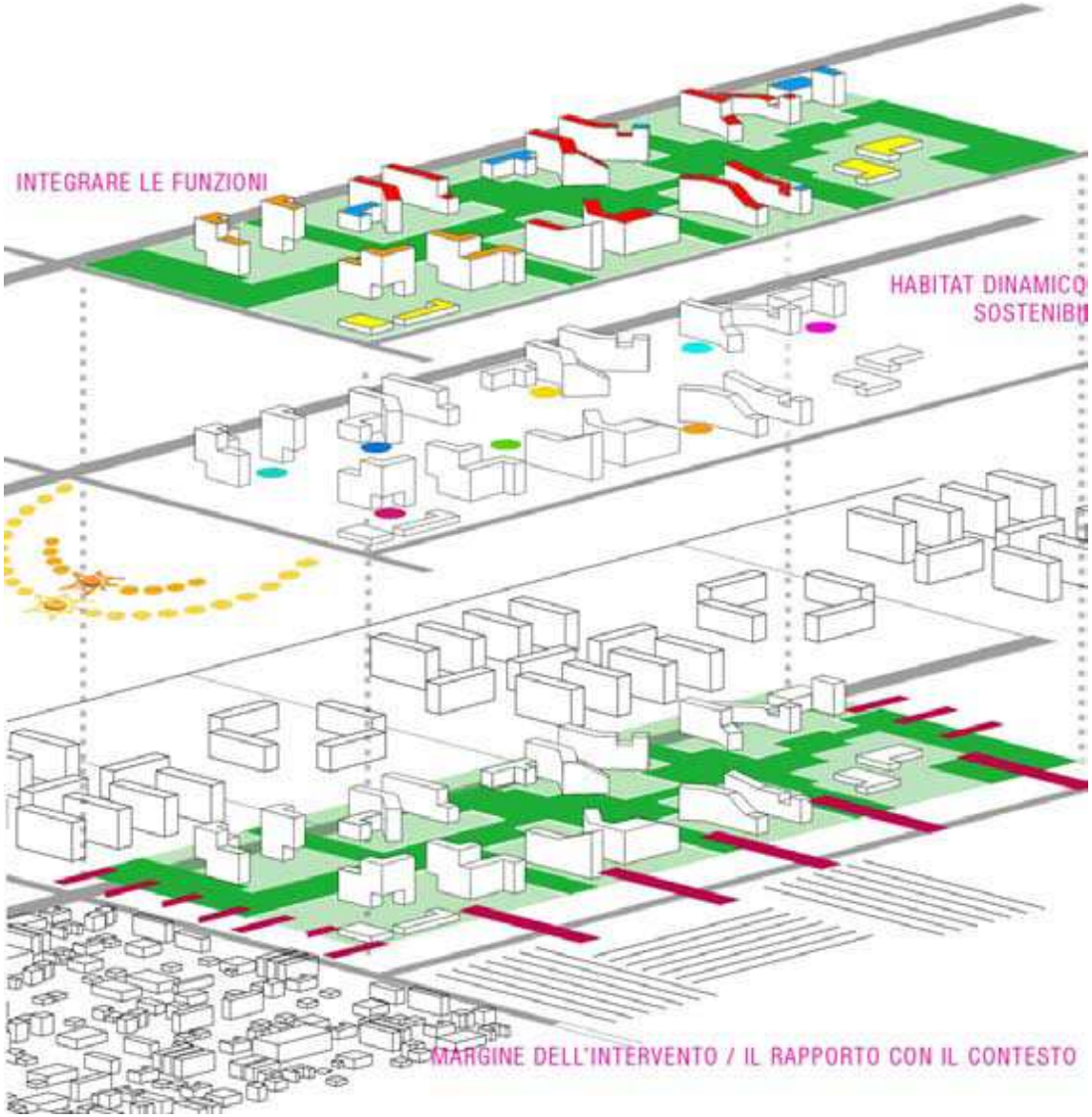


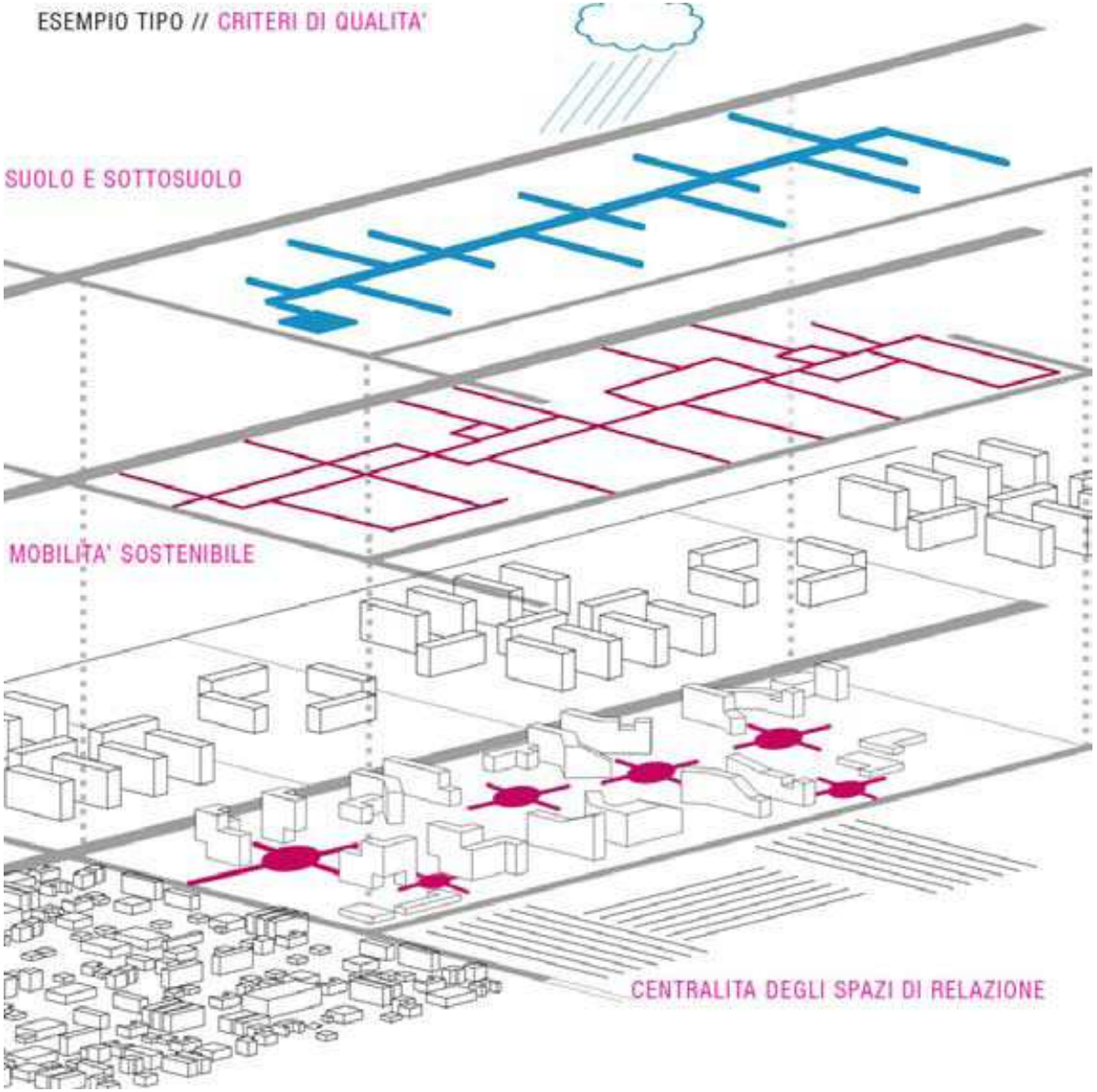
federica ottone

Linee guida per l'applicazione del Piano casa

Regione Lazio

Gruppo di lavoro Commissione Urbanistica Confedilizia // coordinamento // Arch. Marco Pietrolucci
team // Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza" Dipartimento ITACA, Studio Associato ABDR, Studio Associato Ottone & Pignatti, Studio N.10 s.r.l., c.a.c.p. Studio Studio 1ax architetti associati, Pietrolucci Studio Associato ENEA




ESEMPIO TIPO // CRITERI DI QUALITA'
SUOLO E SOTTOSUOLO
MOBILITA' SOSTENIBILE
CENTRALITA DEGLI SPAZI DI RELAZIONE

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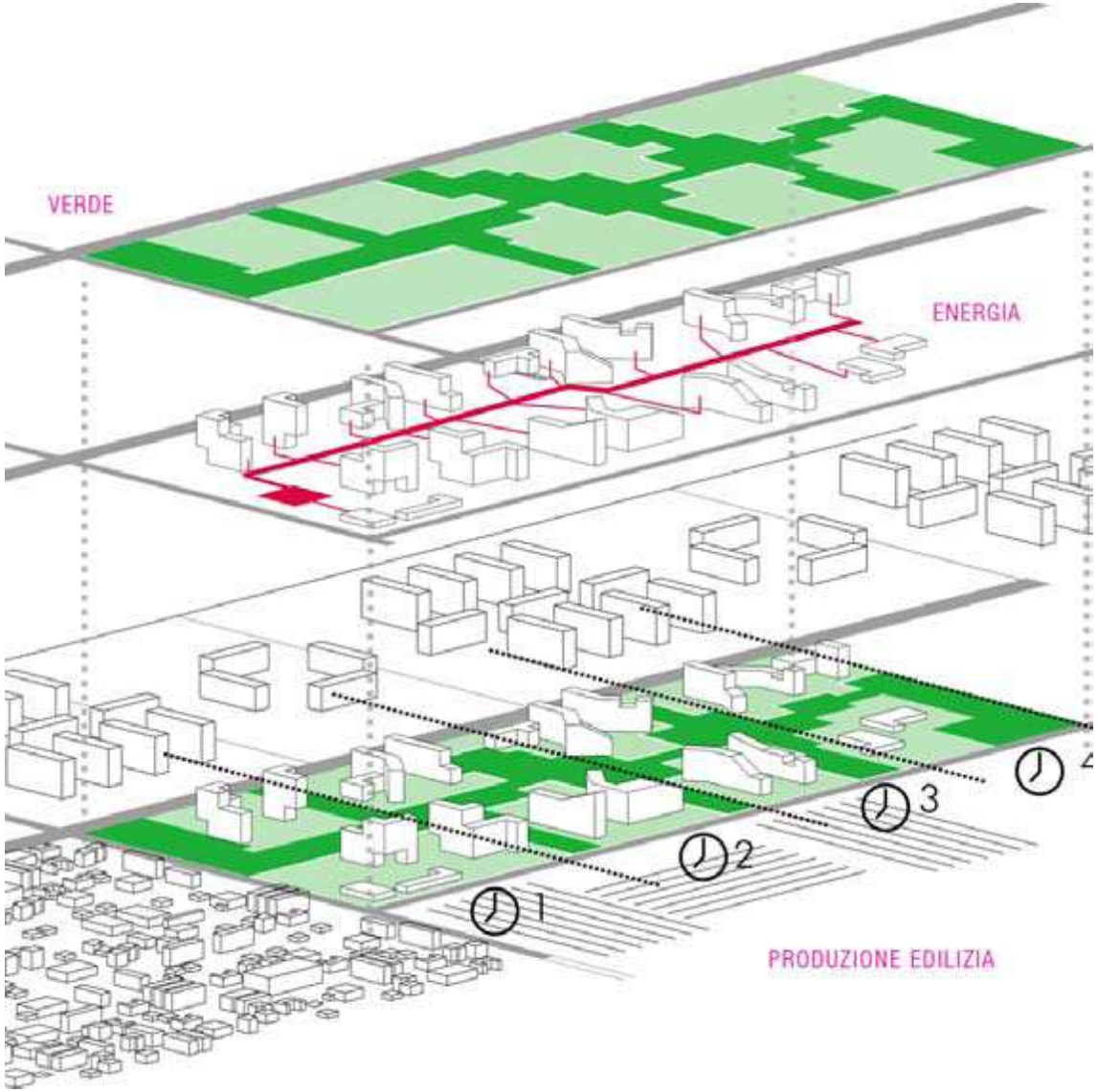
Il progetto secondo: riqualificazione urbana e dimensione quotidiana del progetto



A recent process of substitution of social housing in Rome – Via Giustiniano Imperatore

ABDR Architects - Rome

FORUM ITALIANO PER LA SICUREZZA URBANA
SICUREZZA URBANA IN EUROPA

CALDERARA DI RENO
25 giugno 2010

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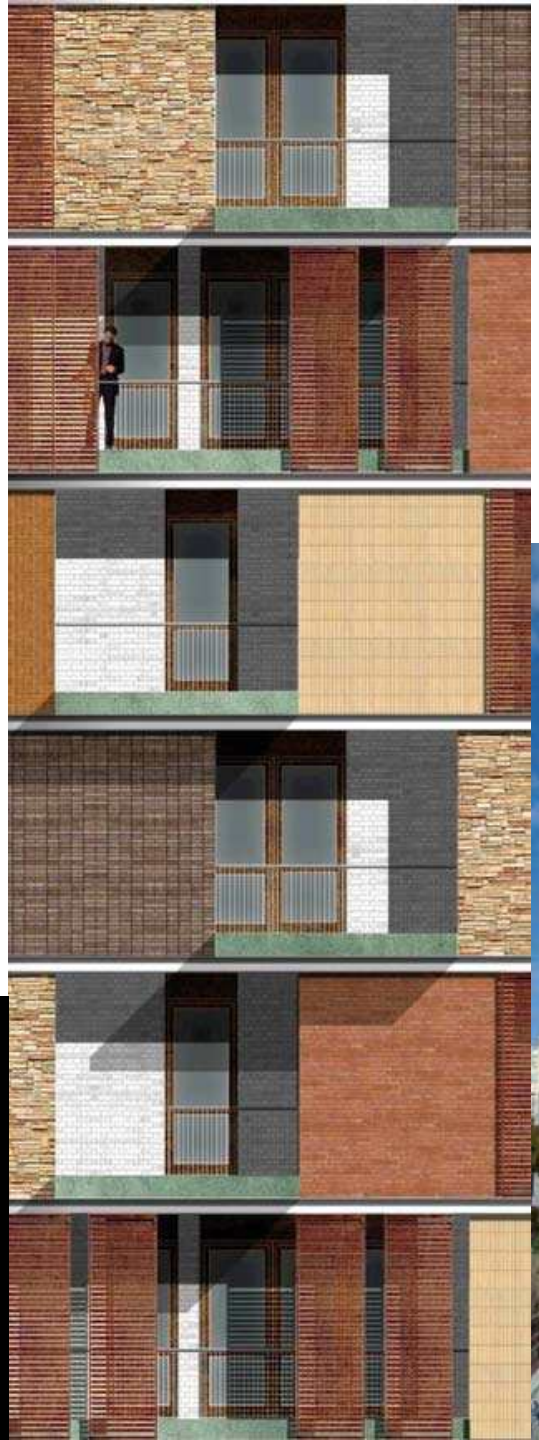
Il progetto secondo: riqualificazione urbana e dimensione quotidiana del progetto