



## Urbanistica n. 130

May-August 2006

Distribution by [www.planum.net](http://www.planum.net)

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The plan is not enough

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## The history of a competition

Francesca Rossi

In July 2004, following the submission of the First Draft of the Feasibility Study, the Gruppo Scarpellini (the owner of the site), with the support of the City of Rome and InArch held an invited international competition for the preliminary design of the new centrality. The objective of the competition was the definition of a master plan: the formulation of an idea of the spatial and functional organisation of the new urban centre.

The choice of the invited designers, based on the principle of integrating the participation of Italian and international figures, included Carmen Andriani (Rome), Alessandro Anselmi (Rome), Bruno Fortier (Paris), Manuel Salgado (Lisbon), Francesco Venezia (Naples) and the offices MVRDV (Rotterdam), Avventura Urbana (Turin) and 5+1 (Genoa).

The competition officially began on December 11, 2004 with a group seminar and site visit. The competitors were then given two and a half months to prepare their submissions. The official competition documents, posted on the InArch site ([www.inarch.it](http://www.inarch.it)) and later on the official competition site ([www.farecentroaromanina.com](http://www.farecentroaromanina.com)), also included two 'restrictive' documents: the 'restrictions' drawing and the 'fixed sightlines' drawing. They were prepared by the competition organiser to 'suggest' the elements of historical-archaeological and environmental interest that were to be treated as qualifying and valorising resources within the project, as well as to focus attention on the overall image that the project would present from via Tuscolana and the A1 highway.

The submissions were to

include: four A0 format panels with the overall site plan, schemes and ideograms illustrating the functional distribution, programme, accessibility and connections with the context, the characterisation of public spaces and green spaces, perspectives and sections from fixed view points (indicated in the 'fixed sightlines' drawing) and an A3 format album with a descriptive report detailing the guiding criteria behind the design decisions and the urban organisation.

On February 24, 2005 the jury, composed of the lawyer Cesare Citro, the architects Maurizio Marcelloni, Manfredi Nicoletti, Bruno Gabrielli, Allan Jacobs, Ariella Masbounji and Daniele Modigliani, the engineer Paolo Colarossi and the architect Maurizio Morandi began the work of evaluating the projects submitted.

The evaluation criteria for the projects considered the overall image of the project, the quality of the organizational structure, the ability of the project to create meaningful connections with the context, the relationships of 'scale', relationships with the landscape and with the surrounding urban fabric, the feasibility of the project, the complexity of the design proposal and the clarity in describing complexity. The final criteria were based on the project's ability to respond to the 'need to create a new centrality', a request that was at the base of the competition brief.

At the end of two days work the jury selected three of the eight projects: Carmen Andriani, Avventura urbana and Manuel Salgado.

During the discussion regarding the selection of the winners, what clearly emerged was the complexity of the theme of the competition and the lack of reference points in dealing with such an ample

and complex programme in the heart of an unstructured periphery within the contemporary city.

The awareness of these difficulties and the will to support the challenge offered by the competition to the very end was rendered concrete during a second design phase that featured the participation of the three winners, and supported by the client as a form of private consultation. The second phase was also witness to the involvement of the client, designers, local administration, municipal government and neighbourhood associations in further defining the urban functions to be located in the area, in resolving existing issues of mobility and design and in-depth investigations of environmental and archaeological aspects, transforming them into elements of valorisation. During the five following months the three designers met individually with the neighbourhood associations in their municipal office, as well as with transportation experts, interacting with one another and with the client prior to the presentation, on July 25, of the development of the three proposals. The choice made by the client at this time, with the assistance of the jury, was to proceed with the project by Manuel Salgado.