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Mysteries and professions of the urban project in Italy

Carlo Gasparri

A good many years after other European countries, Italian town planning has come to appreciate well researched high quality innovation in urban transformation processes affecting space and architecture, accompanied by consultation instruments, facilitation of decision making, and interaction with local development policies. That is, in the past, phases of great urban projects supported by the State and local government were not able to take advantage of wider opportunities due to the crisis in public funding. Furthermore, the property market is no longer able to promote astonishing transformations which produced otherwise important although debatable results.

Nowadays the city and its problems are *de facto* hidden by the national government's agenda and political programs, which are not the exclusively property of the centre-right. The dispute is also widened by the objective impossibility of generously evaluating the results of work, and of measuring the effectiveness of different positions on the basis of tangible results. Few European countries such as Italy have experienced such a wide gap between town planning rhetoric and its ability to influence transformation processes. The 'urban project' is an illuminating example of this anomaly and of the difficulty in applying reason to developed programs and projects, and not only because of the weakness of institutional and governmental apparatus, or legislative delays and legal minefields, or the shortcomings of private promoters.

So it is better to start by

summarising what is not an 'urban project'.

First of all, it is not the great signature architectural project which nourishes international competition between cities as seems to have taken hold of both the media's imagination, and unfortunately, that of many thirsty and renowned griffe administrators who can put political action into effect. Neither does it coincide with the rich repertoire of vision found in some strategic or structural plans. It does not coincide with the concepts attempting to evaluate the essential proposals and interpretations contained in a strategy, and nor with the three dimensional proposals and interpretations in the new plans that Giancarlo De Carlo scornfully calls "little puppets".

Lastly, unlike some simplistically suggest, there is no correspondence in law to the 'complex programs' of many administrations who have put this type of instrument into operation. Above all, this can be seen when these are reduced to a banal residential-tertiary lotting or to modest building reform in a neighbourhood (refreshment of facades, a little more greenery, some sad and perishing 'urban furniture', as well endless streams of meeting after meeting). Urban projects encompass none of these activities, but:

- in common with these activities they share the choice of deciding to work on selective accounts or discrete parts of the city without pretending to treat them as a global whole, to propose physical, functional, and social transformations which cross over the boundaries of each project;
- to be credible and effective they need to interact explicitly with strategic visions of the global whole and the shared structural frameworks, recognised and accepted within a democratically formal planning and project development process, and

- not to appear like a rabbit out of a hat with the trappings of a genial author or agile promoter (or both of these): this requires a strong and explicit public will and decision making power;

- on the other hand, they must also be able to visually preconfigure the scenery of the modification by sagely distinguishing the resistive elements of the city and city landscape from the malleable ones, from the large scale to the details of its constituent elements, and to welcome the inevitable future and physiological planning of settlements throughout their shaping, management, and attuation;

- they are therefore conceived not so much as a suitable and convincing final design but as planning, negotiation, and decisional processes within a transparent framework of public regulation, able to intercept social and economic demands and integrate resources and subjects of varying natures, such as the internal components of the processes themselves, and not as incidental items occurring during the course of events;

- consequently, they are not merely attuative plans, but complex and transverse procedures which can be regulated using general town planning instruments capable of activating a planning process with certain rules, able to solicit the important strategic and structural choices, and at the same time, to activate a multiplicity of project details which are formalised and attuated in time, with *virtuoso* results on all scales of the planning and project development process;

- for all these reasons, they solicit wholesome interdisciplinary interaction between different expertise and subjects, which forms the basis of their effectiveness: therefore, as in the French experience, in

order to assemble project operations not only the project manager but also the contracting authority, and figures all but unknown in Italy, such as experts in communication, marketing, and management are required to assemble project operations.

Scale

The entire conceptual apparatus supporting our way of appreciating and thinking about the scale of transformation in the contemporary city crumbles away. This is not only because it is incapable of describing and understanding the very characteristics of the diffuse city, where some traditional hierarchical references are irremediably omitted, but because it is ineffective in evaluating the impulses solicited from the great engines driving the transformation, the infrastructure and environmental networks, the multiplicity of landscapes, scales and places which it solicits simultaneously. Therefore, what is required are visions of the contemporary city constructed to suit the relationship between the great regional, national or even transnational processes of transformation and the discrete dimensions of local demands.

Even when examining the individual fragment, what is necessary here is, firstly, an interscalar vision and ability to act on all scales, and secondly, fulfilment of the spatial and multifunctional potential of the new infrastructure and its nodes. In addition to these, the presence of a plurality of transversal spaces need to be contained within great ecological links, and fourthly, modifications induced by traditional and alternative energy condensers and dispensers which intercept and run through the inhabited fragments of the city prompting fertile

relationships, re-composition, and discontinuations. The development of this ability is not a problem of large-scale public operations or large self-referencing landmarks, but affects new places with a collective identity created by a renewed ability in the citizens to recognise urban forms. An identity which no longer lives alone but spills over into the reconstructed historical piazzas, enjoys better quality municipal public buildings, or improves the neighbourhood public garden, as required. Along with other places, these form part of a multiplicity of inhabitant's mental maps which remain unknown to us. We often delegate their construction to the commercial centres and other analogous demarcated spaces which, on the other hand, we should be able to intercept within pertinent and unpublished narratives running through the city. One of the more ruinous simplifications of the urban project has been the adoption of its own attention and action on an exclusive scale, that is to say, of many fragments that form the contemporary city. For example, often being blandly suited to demarcated public spaces in the neighbourhood or in the declining area. Ignoring or undervaluing the ability inherent in physical and social relationships between the fragments composing the archipelago-city, is to ignore or undervalue one of the most powerful levers activating urban redevelopment processes resulting from the aims of the great models and the large number of mediocre decisions. It is a mistake also certainly induced by the methods used to draw up the controlling legislative regulations of so-called 'complex programs'. In spite of their many merits, these have de facto contributed to

the closure of the projects within these demarcated spaces, impeding choice of operational boundaries, procedures, the required length of time, etc. They have not become either urban and landscaping projects, or solid and shared processes producing enduring collective values. Our cultural and disciplinary approach now resonates with these regulations. For example, the case of projects (urban?) for the public neighbourhood is symbolic. The cultural heritage left by Quaroni's legacy of "size conformity", and more generally of the 'neighbourhood' during the lengthy post-war period, has been greatly esteemed for avoiding or delaying the dismembering of the two terms (the city on one hand and the building on the other) which the Athens Charter produced. However, being progressively explained by a more ample repertory of connected views and instruments in the Italian tradition, this has certainly influenced the inability to reread the necessary interscalarity so that projects and programs in the peripheral suburbs have urban and strategic valency. It has helped impede the fulfilment of the potential of spaces and distances 'between things and people' in search of the transformational germs. This has also been targeted in the specific rethinking of networks as carriers of new physical values, symbolic and practical, crossing and overcoming the boundaries of the fragments in search of new unconventional geographical environments, as well as a new vocabulary and a new syntax. Furthermore, this also applies to significant structural relationships between the parts to which non banal local development politics can be attached. On the other hand, in a convergent objective

framework, from the social point of view the confirmation of the neighbourhood has also been an ideological choice. The expression of 'resistance' in the territory, rooting the social solidarity and cohesion, and the implacable enemy of identity, combat dispersion, impedes the outburst of new objectives and demands, of dynamics possible in the social geography born of obsolete explosion and confinement of separate demands within a territory. Not realising that, in these nomadic times, very little is enough to cause social change in a settlement's groups leads on to discussion of how the desired roots can be put down with the same ease with which the provisions in the plan have often been denied by the speed of unforeseen events. Being two sides of the same coin, both positions have proved to be negative and have brought about negligible and asphyxial results. Whereas in daring to take more adventurous directions, obstacles and resistance from diffident subjects have been met because they are not used to rationalising on different scales to those of appease-calm down in demarcated spaces.

Time

We also have problems shuffling our cards when faced with time as a variable. I speak of time as revealing a problem in our culture, of knowing how to build descriptions, instruments, and procedures suited to the complexity of questions posed by the contemporary city. On the other hand, is it not the case that time is one of the factors causing this problem because it has been one of the more problematic components in the process of constructing the contemporary city. For example, public suburbs have frequently been the

result of final projects impermeable to process modification, the expression of a project culture inclined to large-scale and complicated architectural machinery, and to large-scale self-referencing landmarks, as well as to refined morphological jointing lacking open space projects. And not only these but also to the production of spaces lacking historical context which grow old badly and without grace, becoming obsolete and are eventually intercepted by a nefarious order, such as that of being 'scrapped'. On the contrary, in declining areas time has suddenly stood still. Markets for their products have rapidly disappeared causing the devitalisation of these often monofunctional areas and transforming them into black holes inside the city, unable to stop unwanted and unexpected processes returning these areas to nature or partial reuse by unwelcome minorities. Faced with not only needing to reactivate the time machine in these places, but also introduce functional complexity, and solicit a multiplicity of objectives and force them to converge, our projects, starting with the urban, might lose their final value. They might be able to estimate the shared aims generated with the passage of time and through other not only human events (for example, I think of the very limited ability to fit in with the dynamics of natural components in our landscape). These events come to pass because they are collectively adopted by a multiplicity of actors, with all its consequences for the method of constructing, designing, communicating, and managing our projects, to provide and implement the many and successive decisions that, in addition to feasible operations, will make for collective ownership. In our plans and programs, there are two project

attitudes that, on the other hand, are very distant from this approach. First of all, once again the complete town planning 'grand project'. This time not only from a functional point of view, as in old-rationalist plans, but also a physical point of view with strong, synchronised architectural designs, by one single Author of course, to be adopted and attuated as they were designed. Another position, developing within the 'governmental' component of town planning, and often opposed to the preceding direction, ignoring or compromising the project's physical direction, which is often reduced to an exercise in dialogue merely composed of procedural regulations. As a result, visionary ability in projects as a communicative instrument is ignored, and space is reduced to a secondary component incapable of carrying out a purposeful role in the progressive post-ponement of decisions. Both have proved to be losers and the Milanese case is symbolic of this wide gap. On the one hand, the recent direction of several transformation programs has been constrained by the framework of the choice of plan, both strategic and structural. These programs pay attention to formal aspects only leading to the extreme paradox of a city as a collection of design objects, a luminous and prestigious shop window for the beautiful goods usually displayed in a 'drawing room'. On the other hand, those who have on occasions rejected the plan a priori as a healthy visioning activity and as project exploration of urban quality, with exclusive faith in safe procedural rules managed by a small office bound élite taking distant decisions in distant rooms. Thus this city of a presumptuous 'new

Renaissance' affirms an intensively exported view of the idea of urban project. That is, a view of it as an assembly of architectural projects or as a list of objectives and criteria contained within a strategic framework, sweeping away a wide slice of our project culture. In this sense they are very distant from the Bilbao-model whose cultural soup is composed of and invoked by the fertile interaction between the symbolic edifice of the Guggenheim, the Strategic Plan for the city, and the Ria urban redevelopment project. Very distant too from experiences such as those of Turin and Genoa who have identified a fundamental principle in their actions regarding the planning process and management of urban projects that also base their success on an architectural point of view.

Subjects

In the last twenty years the urban projects developed in Italy, or at least that which aspires to be one, have referred to three prevailing subject types:

- the large and small owners in declining areas who have promoted urban redevelopment programs and transformation work creating new centrality, as is provided for in the latest generation PRG (general town planning scheme);
- real estate groups who repropose and update the old expansion zone and its completion;
- the IACP (Autonomous institute for economic housing), promoters of 'urban recovery programs' and of 'neighbourhood contracts' in the Economic and Popular Building Plan historical PEEP (plans for economic and popular building), with a significant but marginal ability to bring the inhabitants into the decisional process. And yet the phase that we have been through in recent years has seen a very

different situation emerge. In areas of industrial decline and obsolescence, the large-scale redevelopments have been finished with reconversion being activated from the 1980s, but it is ever more difficult to find quality recorded. The liberalisation caused by the drastic simplification of the qualification procedure for interventions is associated with chronic decisional uncertainty in the Public Administration that prolongs the time required for attuation. This has seen the small and medium promoters fall back on direct intervention, widespread and interstitial building restructuring, and demolition with reconstruction. Of course, operations are less éclat and profitable but certainly more effective and swifter, but from a town planning point of view they bring all the easily imagined negative consequences of lack of control over the effects induced. This little investigated new situation takes a share of relevant subjects and resources away from the shared processes involved in transformation and all its stages through to construction i.e. quality components involving a shared interest suffer. The real estate groups have continued to hold on to shares in the 'residue' of Plans in the big cities, cheerfully resolving the theme of the project's urban profile by involving the architecture assigned. This almost always making the operation's functional content banal, re-launching middle-class residential areas with only a few non-residential crumbs which are almost never 'central' and almost never affecting the overall order of the urban attitude. Lastly, in fact the IACP and the redevelopment operations in the public city have been cancelled by attention from new programs of national investment, always oriented

towards achieving the 'president's great works' involving a shocking waste of public resources (this is eloquently demonstrated by the 'Ponte sullo Stretto' operation). This picture sees an almost exclusive role emerge for public and state-controlled subjects connected with the large-scale processes of developing infrastructure and extraordinary emerging operations, processes which, however, we have been historically accustomed to seeing play a central role (the soccer World Cup, the Expo, post-earthquake reconstruction, and the Olympics). It is a given that the drive behind latest generation urban projects, while they manage to be welcomed by the local authorities, are by now associated almost exclusively with these situations. They are seen in the controversial but often fertile planning processes involved in the new High Speed rail stations; the small and large competitions to redevelop the water front. With regard to major urban roads the new course taken by ANAS seems to demonstrate this, as do the opportunities offered by the Columbus celebrations in Genoa, by the Winter Olympics in Turin, and by the Vesuvius decompression program around Naples. For however much many signs indicate the almost exclusive emergence of these subjects in promoting the urban transformation operations, it may transform itself into a mass of sectorial operations which are closed in on themselves. While of course they pay attention to the architectural quality of the products, they are damaging if not devastating for the territory they invade. Starting with the infrastructure network, if the networks can and must represent an unmissable opportunity to transform the contemporary city and build new collective places, the

culture of town planning must accept the idea that even after any change in national policies they can be an extraordinary driving force organising the urban projects required. They can search for new terms for the 'principle of responsibility', which must animate project action in dialogue with the conglomeration of actors; to facilitate the local and district community re-appropriating and re-discovering their own identity, to re-vitalise them, to coax them now towards indefinable destinations once and for all. All of this aim is difficult to objectively put into practice, above all when the recent regulations introduced in the public works control regime simplifying and accelerating procedures tend to force the space into use as infrastructure, including symbolically. Obviously this means a change of fashion in that the huge public investments in the networks enter the political agenda and become programmed actions, as well as the administration of the local organisations being reorganised. This aim is not to produce a repertory of manufactured benefits from dubious functional utility, but to create new structural and qualified relation-ships in the contemporary city. A public policy for the new networks (infrastructure, but also for the environment and energy) able to leave the august confines of its imminent sectorial nature and to transform it into an opportunity to reconfigure the physical geography as well as the symbolic and social character of the city, and to solicit a wide ranging plurality of subjects around large and small urban projects, overcoming the wasteful and conservative logic of intervention in physical and social fragments practised up till now. After having 'defuturised' the future, the future needs to

be talked of in different terms. Because we need 'risky future openings, able to believe in the new and the possible, approached from the position already reached, using an audacious project able to call on the reserves of energy that manifest themselves in moments of danger'. In realising urban projects our discipline and our trade can draw great benefits and advantages from this approach.

The project production process in Europe

Ariella Masbouni

Will the urban project be European? In order to move from intention to realisation, will it mean a game between project and design, between urban and socio-economic strategies and operations? If things stand like this then public authorities must make great efforts lasting lengthy periods of time. The 'urban project' (the proposed vision of the territory's future) is realised by using a multiplicity of 'urban projects' to achieve it. This strategic vision, with its flexible spatial translation, tries to establish relationships between places, between people, and between functions. The struggle against sectorial town planning, restrictive disciplinary boundaries, and the juxtaposition of separate fields of interest, brings about contradictory interests. The urban project opposes laissez-faire but demands ambition and audacity because everyone and everything opposes change, for there exists fear of the future and transformation, meaning obstacles, strong forces, and financial problems have to be overcome. A demanding alchemy, seldom succeeding. As the following experiences teach us, the urban project has polysemy and suffers from differing political systems and methods of government. Moreover, only a few cities manage to be good examples: the city-Government.

City strategies

Bilbao: culture as a stimulus. The new town planning Mecca, illustrating the strength of an urban project founded on culture and architecture, possesses its own territorial strategic vision whose main objective is inventing a new model of development capable of

contending with economic and social crisis. The audacious gamble of the Guggenheim museum, designed by Frank O'Gehry, is only the visible upper third of the iceberg which is this urban project. It has been realised by grouping projects promoted by the public authority (Bilbao Ria 2000) and reinforcing them with suitable uses, methods, and collaborations that have risen to the challenge. *Genoa, encumbrances and events as stimuli.* As a confined site, Genoa demonstrates the benefits of an impossible situation and gambling on international exhibitions (Columbus celebrations in '92, the G8 summit in 2001, city of culture in 2004) to guarantee investment and exceptional publicity. Hindered by anarchic urban motorways, encumbered by a port and industries in crisis, but knowing how to create a magnificent waterfront by reconquering the Porto Antico, planned by Renzo Piano, who now hosts activities on an international scale. The dense fabric of the city has been regenerated thanks to reconfigured public spaces, revitalised historic, buildings, and the creation of quality museums. The entire urban fabric is affected by urban renewal. The historic city's modernity being achieved without refusing contemporary contributions is here demonstrated by the restructuring of the port's quays by using culture, the university, and commercial leisure activities exemplified by the Ponte Parodi, the public opera by Ben Van Berkel, and the French investor Altarea. *Emscher Park, ecology, memorial, and art as stimuli.* In the heart of the Ruhr, with mining discontinued and an iron and steel industry in crisis producing continuous job losses has meant that the urban project has had to re-evaluate the region's image and make it

attractive to high-tech industries. Its aims concentrated on benefiting from the ties between the territory's attractiveness in terms of landscape, ecology, culture, and art on the one hand, and on the other the development of new economic activities. The IBA international exhibition of architecture provided the opportunity to gather together a high level team who have managed to put suitable financing to good use in fulfilling relevant work of this type. The regeneration is based on durable development, abating soil and river pollution, renewing the vegetation cover, evaluating industrial archaeology for cultural and leisure activities, redesigning the landscape, strong action in contemporary art, and rediscovering geography and heritage. *Birmingham, partnership as a stimulus.* An old industrial city, marked by a hellish network of infrastructure creating a ring around its centre. It needs to rectify the urban reconstruction founded on the car, which uses an urban motorway system that converges on an internal ring road that then links up with a series of 'park and go' car parking lots on several levels. An ambitious urban planning project began in the 1980s with the aim of rectifying the ring and attempting to move away from an industrial economy in decline to a high level service economy. Business tourism, service industries, commerce, cultural and leisure facilities have been developed beyond the ring road but are connected to the centre by projects reconfiguring the barrier posed by this infrastructure. The canals have been improved by creating a promenade with leisure activities. A huge commercial centre completes the picture of renewal surrounding the ring road and the architecture found within it,

confirming Birmingham as a commercial centre. The dismantling of the ring road completes the urban reconquest, offering appropriate support to Birmingham's economic development as a business tourism destination.

Saint Nazaire, quality as a stimulus. Innovation is essential in the post-war reconstruction of this small city and its fragile economy, badly treated by history, with a submarine base separating it from the sea. The urban project came into being through artistic action based on the submarines (the work of Yann Kersalé) paving the way for the City Port project designed by Manuel de Solà Morales which has replanned the base's internal and external spaces. The need for quality is present throughout the city in the new centrality, the residential, the commercial, and the short-lived events. This is a project made by men centred on an exceptional Mayor, a remarkable and talented public planning office mobilised by Penot which has reconfigured public spaces, with de Solà Morales and the Secchi-Viganò team reorganizing the more unusual ingredients in order to take the city back to the sea. *The Plaine Saint-Denis, infrastructure as a stimulus.* The Hippodamos project (M. Corajoud, Y. Lion, P. Robert and P. Riboulet) launched the new dynamic of this city on the outskirts of Paris, becoming an attractive place thanks to the construction of the Grand Stade de France and the effects it has induced. The project affects the urban space of a 700 hectare area packed with declining industries. The main objective of this project has been to connect this territory with and to its internal and external horizons: the views towards Butte Montmartre, the canals, and the basilica. Reconquering the land by

using the cover of the motorway has been made possible by the involving the State, which represents the power required to make this whole urban renewal operation credible. Framework, structure, ability to give meaning, and strong reference points in the immense Paris Basin are the guiding principles behind this planning action. The project includes restructuring 'general warehouses' using private capital, the establishment of multimedia companies, as well as the numerous public and private projects.

Thinking of tomorrow's European city as the city-territory

As yet the urban project is not established in the rural suburban zone. Urbanisation extends without planning for a multiplicity of reasons: a certain degree of permissiveness in the construction process, the diffusion of specific 'urban products' (commercial centres, sale multiplexes, and introverted land allocation), lack of co-ordination between the producers of various networks, the individuality of social behaviour, the logic of funding and financing, the devaluation of the historic centre, and scant attention paid by the public authorities to the quality of these areas. Nonetheless, some of the experiences matured in the last decade provide several indicators for the urban transformation project. By being rooted in the geography and history of the site without being subjected to consolidated urban models, the projects have a liberal interpretation of the existing themes and work on articulating heterogeneous fabric, connecting the elements by using differing spatial, landscaping, geographic and artistic logic.

The lessons

The European cities

produced by European urban regeneration are often like supporting 'wall abutments', weighed down by terrible economic losses and social problems. Urban renewal is the lever for their economic and social regeneration. They confront the challenge of connecting the incoherence of society, space, the economy, and dare to risk making mistakes, accepting the world for what it is, including the market and new lifestyles, defending a European social model, without being nostalgic but by respecting identity and history. History cannot stop itself because it is still possible to create heritage. Moreover, it is a duty. The methods are similar. Construct a process squaring the circle between planning, project and action, then act by example to associate utopia and pragmatism, mobilise people capable of rising to the challenge, create ad hoc structures able to overcome the operational constraints of the administrative machine, governing the public-public partnership in order to attract the private partnership. Today, the city-territory needs to be considered, what efforts might be required to negate it because it exists and demands prefiguration and renewal. It is a huge building site composed of new demands expressed in these territories and consequently forms an immense challenge for town planners.

Strategic requirements of urban projects

Pier Carlo Palermo

In *Urbanistica* not many years ago Nuño Portas presented a wide ranging outline of international experience in which Italy was only referred to in passing. Compared to other contexts, Italy still lacked a clear cultural and administrative legitimacy for the principles and specific instruments used in 'area projects'. Notwithstanding the attempts at reform beginning in the early 1990s, in relation to the planning system, interpretations of 'operational town planning' were still sources of considerable uncertainty. Consequently, in Italy there are a multiplicity of initiatives, instruments, and sites of urban transformation that often make relevant changes to the territory's form and assets. After long phases of inertia, a reawakening of the desire and ability to act has become evident. But above all the legitimacy of these experiences seems to be more mature. The case of Milan illustrates this. Here the ability to evaluate the conspicuously available urban spaces using an innovative strategy of renewal and redesign of the metropolitan structure is missing, thanks to the distribution of rare functions in the peripheral suburban areas. That is, a public strategy able to orient market forces is lacking. For some years now a second generation of area projects has been emerging whose contents and purposes are more useful. But these actions cannot really be said to form part of a shared vision of the metropolis' future providing efficacy, direction, and coherence to the individual events. These limitations may be thought of as being the result of weakness on behalf of Milanese town planning,

which some disciplines have always contested vigorously. However, the problems are more general and depend on the very nature of the urban project itself, which in my opinion requires several disciplinary revisions.

I do not believe that indiscriminate adoption of the 'urban project' formula is suited to designing all the varied initiatives and instruments subtended on the new construction sites. An 'urban project' should meet several specific requirements. It should be a relevant transforming intervention with notable effects on the structure and the form of the built environment, requiring suitable actuation, construction, and management techniques and procedures and should be part of a strategic vision in a time scale that must not be the immediate. These requirements create problems and practices for which more traditional models cannot provide complete answers. In this sense, it seems that the urban project cannot be reduced to a project of urban architecture. The strategic dimensions are extremely relevant, the problems of 'assembling the project', the need to make progressive adaptations through time requires the ability to imagine the operation as a typical architectural planning problem. The project culture must not be formalistic, and even more so it must lack self-reference. Relationships with the context cannot be limited to the physical and formal dimensions. However, a more sophisticated project culture compared to the many current simplifications is not enough. The quality of urban projects depends on the demands and needs identified by a shared vision in a specific area. Above all, the quality of the urban project depends on the force and influence of the

'structural plans', which is a strategic operation. To make strategically important area projects feasible, it presupposes an understood agreed mature policy and secure conditions. If structural planning anticipates this complexity, it is more likely that urban projects will take place and be part of a coherent guiding vision contributing to quality transformations.

Out-of-date town planning answers

Paolo Ceccarelli

In recent years the 'town planning' debate has been ennobled by cultural arguments of various natures. Their origins lie in a historic phenomenon, which is habitual but not particularly interesting in current urban contexts: large-scale public and private interventions in real estate and infrastructure. In the larger part of cases promoted by public operators, the town plan is conceived so as to attract private investment, offering good speculative opportunities. All is centred on this aspect when private operators conceive the town plan. With few exceptions the operations generally involve recapitalisation of the existing city, reinforcing and redeveloping the consolidated urban fabric. Just where the majority of the population live and carry out a large part of their activities, none of the interventions help to organise 'the exploded city' in a different manner. The elements in the contemporary city's crisis are not the major or minor adjustments required from each of its components *per se*, but reside in the fact that these elements do not connect with each other to create an efficient functional system. For example, a great directional centre which is not particularly accessible because the road network is inadequate or a public transport system is lacking. Or else a large residential neighbourhood which is unattractive because it lacks a good comprehensive system of health, education, and social services. And not only this. Very often what makes the difference is not the existence of a service but its quality. Good access without causing excessive pollution, a well organised airport which does not suffer

from too many flight delays or too much lost luggage, good to excellent medical services, safety and security which... Today is a little naïve to say they are only resolved by improving the architectural quality of a particular area, or comes from old supporters of brick for brick which has been given a makeover (applying a neologism from politics in the USA: they have become neo-property developers because it sounds better than property speculators). A weakness in the Italian urban system is the lack of private investment, and more significantly, the lack of international investment. Many large-scale urban developments have been promoted and driven by public intervention. Private interventions have above all been made because they were already property owners in areas undergoing transformation, or more generally were already solidly rooted in these places, in contrast to what happens in other European countries and always deflated foreign capitals. The reasons for this predominance of the public, with the emphasis on local projects, and the lack of 'external' private investment, are firstly that there are extremely few guarantees regarding the certainty and time scale of the procedure. Secondly, that transparency concerning decisions is lacking; and thirdly, that infrastructure and services are inadequate, etc. The strong predominance of public intervention in projects that ought to be an integration of the private and public causes further problems. There is a risk that once activated, only those parts that are the direct responsibility of the public authority will be carried out after which paralysis occurs because these initial structural operations are not followed by wider private intervention. Another risk is a difference between the

quality of the public interventions, which are the fruit of good planning and project management culture, compared to the distinctly inferior quality of successive private interventions. No improvements are induced in this case: above all there is an explicit mirroring. In conclusion, the frequent short circuiting of urban projects and town planning in general, as well as of public and private interventions, are not caused by project technicalities or planning, or management, but by structural factors. Town plans are very limited and old fashioned replies to problems in the contemporary city.

**Meaning and methods
in the contemporary
urban project***Cesare Macchi Cassia*

The urban project is a tradition in Italian architecture. This tradition, whose architectural aim is the construction of the city, achieves the project's greatest objective: the ability of the citizens to recognise themselves anew in the urban form. All planning epochs relate contemporaneity to the existing form, re-symbolising it with new meaning. To what extent this is still valid in contemporary urban territories is a central question regarding the city's quality, the entire environment of our lives, or better the meaning we continue to give it. It is also a central question in the defence of planning as the classic vision of the city as a manufacture able to represent its constructors by using innovative forms and radical different uses. In any case, the basis of form is a planning will whose conscience is to be investigated rather than aprioristically excluded. The reply to this question is given meaning by project planning ability going beyond disciplinary themes: rethinking the contemporary city's construction from the architectural point of view in fact means getting closer to understanding it. This is an objective that other observers have aspired to well before architects and town planners. The latter view the urban landscape as consolidated suburbs in the city and not as a radically different city whose forms derive from a diffusion of the role of centrality that is no longer recognised as a specific space.

Rethinking the contemporary city's construction from the architectural point of view, that is, speaking of an

architectural landscape, means responsibility for the process of modifying the existing being shouldered by autonomous components. It means reflecting on the relationship between architectural autonomy and the reality of urban construction. The geographical dimension in urban landscapes intersects with the dimension of manufactured construction without graduations and hierarchies. Ground used to build architectural environments, which make up urban environments, needs to be organised: the responsibility for making a visible choice is assigned to these two environments, to create a skyline able to dialogue with both the historic and modern city. Configurations which differentiate themselves from the urban continuum, and so offer new meaning to the widespread construction, are indispensable, contained within projected residences built as minimally sized and repeating pieces but which are capable of re-appropriating a composite capacity which endows them with individuality. The instrument of these planning methods is form on a vast scale. The composite approach required for this instrument is characterised by thorough investigation of superimposed planned levels and the integrated interweaving of scale. It brings about the absence of hierarchies present in constructing the contemporary environment that specify the relationship between both means and moments, and between actors and decisions. More than ever in the past, the urban project must work as a revealer in this situation, able to draw more out of the processes acting in the situation. Understanding the reasons for contemporaneity in planning terms so as to contribute to the truth of its forms therefore means putting

forward proposals in a new cultural and interpretative dimension, and doing so well before the physical. The fundamental attitude of planning must be to allow the universe of forms composing the urban landscape to express their potential centrality, to collaborate in affirming a structure. This vision of the potential inherent in the new conceptual dimension of urban landscape, supported by methods which can be applied to contemporaneity in planning terms, provides an opportunity to see the urban project as the town planning project which the contemporary city so dramatically needs.

The hard work of constructing the urban project

Paolo Avarello

Notwithstanding today's consolidated European experience, and especially that of the French, in Italy the expression 'urban project' sounds ambiguous. Maybe the vague fascination this exercises over town planners and urban designers arises out of this ambiguity, the journey to define the term and place it somehow in the 'right' pigeonhole somewhere between plan and execution. Even if with some variation, the 'European' (French) meaning of 'urban project' identifies an ensemble of transformations which partially signify city as practised by many organisations, both public and private, but co-ordinated under the auspices of the local authority and/or dedicated structures under local authority control. In this state of affairs 'urban project' is not a 'project' at all, at least in the current meaning (that of architects, for example), or rather is defined entirely *ex ante*, being a tiring search for delicate equilibriums in progress. For example, between building sizes and environmental demands, between those already resident and future residents of affected neighbourhoods, between physical and immaterial operations. Generally speaking, between direct economic (private) interests and collective interests, which are not so easily measured in terms of money. However, secondly, the definition and realisation of 'urban projects' takes many years, and is not born of creative genius, but out of necessity, and must be coupled with a more general project in some way, one which moreover is long-

term, credible and trustworthy. So a plan specification should not be devoid of (or contain the least possible) final results and characteristics for the specific area affected, but above all should provide the elements necessary for the various proposals and alternatives to be evaluated in relation to the territory and also, but not only, in terms of the fall out of environmental problems. And naturally as far as possible a plan should guarantee the conditions for the realisation of such 'projects'. For example, intervening in the great urban mobility networks, providing the possible options, and relevant alternatives, in order to localise large urban structures (capable of characterising a part of the city), but also avoiding the creation of excessive competition between similar initiatives for intensive transformations in the candidate area.

To summarise, the 'urban project' is much more complex and difficult than is usually imagined (especially by architects, and sometimes by town planners), or as simple as 'redesign' of a part of the city ('ready' execution). Naturally town planning is also one of the professional activities required in executing an urban project since the project is implemented in agreement with the procedural character of this intervention typology. Within this the formation of the project must respond to the multiplicity of aims and objectives being pursued by different subjects by using contractual mechanisms to agree the plans and procedure.

Of course, compared to 'urban projects' in other European countries, the Italian experience presents some differences. These are not reducible to the scale of intervention (more limited), nor to the

excessive levelling of the size of the construction, nor the lower level of technical and managerial abilities, or to the support mechanisms of public financing. In contrast, the principal differences are unfortunately actually connected to the minimum of 'political' attention given to the organisation and functioning of the city, elsewhere considered vital organs of the society and economy, which in turn probably derive from the relevant financial commitments being viewed not as investments for economic and social development, fundamental elsewhere to overcoming the shock of de-industrialisation, but simply as public expenditure. Expenditure which while perhaps necessary, is certainly not exciting, additionally so because its effects are only measurable in the long-term: moreover, longer than one or two administrative mandates.

Many projects in Milan but only a few of them are urban

Federico Oliva

Milan today is living through the greatest process of transformation in its modern history thanks to the policy of deregulation applied by the current right of centre government. In some cases the projects now approved or underway have reached the standards of the world architecture star system and are many in number, so much so that they have brought the media to talk of a 'rebirth' of the city, or even of a New Milan. According to the *Comune* (local municipal government) there are nearly one hundred new projects, almost all approved under the town planning procedure of 2000, covering over eight million square metres of the city.

It all seems to be a success for the Milanese political administration. But beneath the data there are those who question the strategy, or rather the lack of strategy that follows the Milanese *laissez faire*, in addition to the 'exhibitionist and publicity seeking character' of its architecture. The reality is a city burdened with problems for three strictly connected reasons. Firstly, in substance the deregulation policy has provided every transformation opportunity possible, increasingly filling in all the old and new 'empty spaces', without correlating the new town planning functions with a suitable context of infrastructure or the preexisting phenomenon of congestion and its consequent environmental conditions. Secondly, from the development point of view, the lack of strategic town planning which selects and localises the functions developed, and the subordination of the regulations to the real estate market, has

produced almost identical results in every intervention, the same mix and recurring absence of excellence, exactly that which is most difficult to impose on this market and which is most necessary for the city's development. The third and most important reason is the substantial myopia of the Milanese town planning policies during the last thirty-five years. Milan is not only the city identifiable with the present Comune in which a little over 1.3 million people live, but is also a much larger metropolitan city extending continuously, without solution, for over 45,000 urbanised hectares and in which over 4 million live: an even more extensive polycentric regional city. Continuing to aim investment only at significant centres penalises the rest of the area, which is thus condemned to a peripheral role. The condition essential for such development to take place is therefore put through a comprehensive plan for the city and its metropolitan areas, being based on structural choices for mobility, the environment, and new settlements, which form the indispensable points of reference for true 'urban projects', guaranteeing it concrete sustainability and favouring the application of indispensable urban policies.

Urban project lacking city: notes from the case of Milan

Paolo Fareri

The recent transformation of Milan has been marked by an urban project which is not easy to evaluate. It is not only because the internal success of results produced by very recent operations is being analysed, but also above all because how they relate to the city.

Through recent decades in Milan what politically speaking has been called urban project is simply the setting of a style of government within urban transformations. Their main aspects are now described. Without any selfirony, the new settlement of Bicocca has seen the birth of the 'Bicocca Village'. One arrives in the neighbourhood of Arcimboldi as if using a 'teletransporter' from a 1970s science fiction tv series, as positioned in Piazza della Scala. In publicity Santa Giulia is depicted as an ideal city, but around it lie the permanent traffic jams of Ponte Lambro, Rogoredo, and the eastern ring road. The Garibaldi-Repubblica project is an attempt to construct a City for the city's fashion industry, as if in the city almost three hundred salons had not already concentrated together recently and quickly. In contrast, the great PRU (Urban redevelopment project) project has substituted several historical factories with districts whose identities' main element is marked by the logo of a supermarket chain. The city is developing through 'ready made' projects composed of a fake, false, or sham sense of city.

A project attitude is simultaneously derived from rigid delimitation of a territorial field and affirmation of strategic

needs. Once this has been achieved, project limits are re-read from the point of view of a political analyst. One limit is the territorial reference field. Analyses of the processes clearly show how consideration of relation-ships within the nearest or closest context is relevant to the building a consensus in or around the transformation project. In addition, not only efficiency but also effectiveness is strictly correlated with ability to consider different territorial fields simultaneously. It seems that what is required is a project form composed of needs seen from a plurality of perspectives, which should only be those of the very same actors involved. Therefore, the project is not so much the expert's domain but a process of social interaction, the domain of communal work between the planner and process experts. The second limitation is the persistence in planning of projects that tend to use rigid transformation hypotheses, which therefore preconfigure the final state. On the other hand, process analyses constructing project images can be used as an effective instrument not so much to mediate between interests but to construct new positions in order to trigger learning processes. Consequently, what seems to be required is a project form whose process is strategic, which knows how to put forward visions of the future while being open to change.

General town planning scheme, strategic plan, and urban project in Turin

Carlo Alberto Barbieri

The structure of Turin's economy, architecture, and construction industry is changing. After being an unchanging city-factory for an extremely long period of time, it is now trying to become a contemporary city full of innovative enterprise, technology, research, training, exchange and commerce services, and sport. And not only this, it wants to be qualified, with multiple jobs as well as a transcalar system of mobility and access: an organised city enjoying architecture and public art. This attempt is becoming increasingly conscious that the city is passing through a profound town planning transformation process equipped with suitable instruments so that interventions do develop. I refer to both the PRG (General town planning scheme) of Gregotti-Cagnardi in force since 1995, and the Strategic plan (approved and put into action between 1998 and 2000); the 2nd metropolitan and transregional Strategic plan in preparation will be both more explicit and further reaching. In terms of being planning instruments and processes, the Prg and the Strategic plan have developed positive interrelationships. The progressive profound change is materialising and accelerating as a result of the extraordinary opportunity presented by the 2006 Winter Olympics being held in the city. The Turin urban transformation project has above all been tested by the redevelopment of disused industrial areas since the end of the 1990s, and more recently in the transformation of several large public structures, which up to present in terms of urban 'metaproject' or

'metaplan'. This profile has also made it an interesting instrument of conscience, research, exploration, and involvement in the consensus in which the 'form' has often been the chosen language to communicate and understand it. As instruments, urban projects and complex programmes represent two innovations in the Italian experience, and do so in Turin: working for both projects and subjects, seeking to transform containers (objects in the physical city) and the contained (urban functions) within the existing city. However, if by the urban project one wishes to underline the content of form and architecture in and for the city, there is also the impression of an as yet insignificantly reduced deficit. This would be in the case of the initial very effective but episodic interventions (Lingotto, Venchi Unica, etc.), in which the architect has above all operated inside the property and given very little consideration to the urban context. This has affected the interventions to transform large tracts (for example the four environments of the 'Central spine' in the Prg), where property and construction interests have agitated for episodic operational projects, often changing or neglecting the Prg's planning-architectural aims. Lastly, this has affected international tenders, where the architect has often interpreted the area of the city affected as space for 'his own project' rather than as a structural and collective urban project within the context of a city.

French ideas for the Turin urban project

Patrizia Ingallina

The French notion of urban project is not of one exclusive discipline, but an all inclusive one of economics, sociology, law, urban geography, architecture, etc. It's like a kind of 'general culture', a shared vision of the city and the territory as an entity whose complexity has grown out of its moving instability, with flexible scenarios always 'representing' its future through participation and time. It is essential for all aspects to be preconfigurations so that a debate can be outlined linking the variations which arise so that they can on occasion act progressively through small changes, allowing margins for negotiation between actor/decision makers and financiers, the authorities involved, and 'informed' social subjects. Town planning is therefore a process involving a multiplicity of participants who intervene at different times, in different ways, and on different scales. This French notion of urban project is not improvised, but is the fruit of a culture possessing its own reference points, interpretations, and organisations.

Two of this culture's strong points have had a notable impact on town planning: the strength of an extremely centralised and well structured top down institutional organisational system which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each subject; and clear attribution of the project's public offices in the distinction between the responsibility of the *maîtrise d'ouvrage publique* and that of the *maîtrise d'oeuvre*.

Since it is more complex, the Italian situation seems difficult to understand in that

it does not fit systematic processes, but is entrusted to a step by step approach. In this context, the PRG of Gregotti and Cagnardi ('83-93) presents, in the guise of a strategic plan, the attempt to move from 'spoken' town planning to a vision of an urban project as 'the global and future prospective'. The project is structured around a forceful idea, the Central spine, a kind of urban *boulevard* obtained by planning and laying railway based transport coverage i.e. trains, trams, underground railways.

Fortified by a striking slogan, the Turin urban project has inspired a series of chain reactions and the PRGC has been a factor *déclanchant* further initiatives which have profited the city. The indisputable stimulus provided by the launch of the Strategic Plan in '98, for which the PRGC provided numerous ideas, was transformed into strategic directions by the document of 2000. Other projects have been triggered on this basis, with the additional support of complex and structural programs (Torino internazionale, ITP, etc.) created to demonstrate the credibility of the Turin project and for newcomers to judge, among which the 2006 Winter Olympics catches the eye. It is useless to worry about the inevitable difficulty associated with managing 'ordinary' and 'exceptional' (Olympic) projects side by side for they require different time scales and draw upon different resources, mostly mixed. There may also be decisional difficulties such as the choice between project priority, as well as choosing between short term and medium-long term projects. Beyond the inevitable operative problems introduced by this proliferation of projects, there arises the central role played by the PRGC, conceived as a

knowledgeable *mélange* of strategic elements. The privileged role given to the local scale rather than the intercommunal in Italy can be seen from this, in contrast to the French approach in which the 'strategic' has priority and requires a form of governance suited to negotiation and co-operation between neighbouring local municipal authorities.

Strong government for the Roman urban project

Maurizio Marcelloni

Although we may know exactly what an urban project is, if we no longer remember what it is when writing it into a regulation, or rather, if we do not manage to control it, the regulation will neither meet the needs of both the jurist-regulator and the administrator-controller, nor satisfy the flexibility required by the town planner-project manager. In reality this method confronts the attempt to undertake a complex of urban phenomena with, as far as can be seen, the culture of the urban government which has always refused to acquire this complex: both in terms of development and in terms of practical regulation. Confronted with this complexity, both the planner and the administrator must modify their own approach and must change the way they design the project. Firstly, the urban project poses a question of 'project/planning culture'. Almost always the will to define everything *a priori* derives from the evaluation's objectivity which the public administration must guarantee by eliminating all forms of discretion in the decision-maker. In fact, the traditional idea of defining a plan/project on the basis of given rules and parameters and presenting it for approval no longer holds good. The real problem posed by the urban project is that of the methods with which the various subjects participate and work together in its definition: in its content, time schedule, feasibility, and usefulness. The most fascinating challenge posed by the urban project lies specifically in its demand for integration: between planner and decision taker, between these and the local demand, between the definition of the

contents and the various disciplines involved, between marketing and project phrases, between definition of the management models and actuating development phases, between planning and management of time, between control instruments and guarantees of quality in the space produced, between control of the initial form and quality of successive projects. All this cannot be but the fruit of attentive negotiation between operators and administrators.

Rome's experience throughout these years confirms that there are certainly difficult problems associated with making progress along these lines. There are a great many urban projects activated and to be activated. The reality of this definition is composed of very different operations: from the urban project in the Ostiense-Marconi area involving the transformation of an entire area of the city through a multiplicity of precise and infrastructural interventions, to the urban transformation projects possessing a new centrality composed of complex large-scale interventions on 'empty' urban spaces of relevant sizes with the aim of constructing poles of attraction for substantially residential urban settings. The state of the art shows that a wide range of trends apply and there still seems to be a strong risk of remaining in an environment of purely real estate and property construction operations. The operators seem to wish to negotiate seriously, but only if pressed by a politically unified administration, conscious of its powers, of which it perhaps does not have many but which are certainly sufficient to obtain useful quality prioritised shared projects for the city.

Local government and experimentation in the urban project in Rome

Daniel Modigliani

In March 2003 the Municipality of Rome adopted the New Town Plan. Its adoption formalised an important result of experience in Rome matured through recent decades of town planning management in which the problem of finding new ways to maximise the private contribution to public works as well as works of public interest. The lack of public resources, impoverished but at the time growing, can only be solved by agreements between public and private at local government level. This practice requires public as much as private entrepreneurial abilities for long-term visionary projects using agreements made with the world of finance, but also great flexibility, and it is this which has been formalised in Rome both in the procedures of the integrated programs and in those of the urban project. This attempt is not only theory, but also based on solid long-term experimentation. It all began in the early 1990s, forced by the need to intervene in the abused suburbs with their lack of resources, and lack of the old town planning instruments. So with the encouragement of a small financial package provided by the Ministry of Public Works, the programs of urban renewal and regeneration were activated. Along with these the URBAN community programmes also began, and then the PRUSST and neighbourhood contracts were launched. Announcements were published in Rome to attract private enterprises to the proposed transformations, but always within strict public control. All this took place in difficult but fertile times in which the new Plan

was being planned. A completely new experience saw local government, entrepreneurs, local representatives, and representatives from central government working together, individually and in association. Work involving all of Rome's external suburbs and which became a type of long-term training course. It has produced a great many financial resources and produced many programs which have above all restored trust in the ability to plan and project manage in the city with effects which will endure for at least another ten years. The urban project's procedure, used every time an area in the city is transformed, is a product of this experience and has been regulated by being made a specific norm in the form of art. 16 in the NTA (Legal Technical Rules that regulate land use). The aim is to guarantee that intervention is not only sustainable, but also improves conditions in the context, that economic and technical feasibility are assured from the start, that the process is planned throughout its duration, and that from the start there is continuous and interactive consultation with the local community affected by the intervention.

Roads and practices: a research on Milan

Patrizia Gabellini,
Bertrando Bonfantini

Traffic jams, cars parked all over the place, pollution: these phenomena have been the focus of attention for a long time, in big towns and small centres alike. A growing concern over such issues and their dramatic effects on habitability are logically matched by a multiplication of proposals and experimentations, projects and policies. In Milan, during the two terms of office of the executive council headed by mayor Gabriele Albertini, the cognizant department worked unsparingly and produced a number of resolutions and actions designed to address the numerous demands associated with these problems. Emergency actions, similar to those implemented in other Italian cities (traffic bans and alternate licence plate transit) were flanked by short medium and long-term initiatives designed to *redistribute stopping and moving patterns over the existing road space* (parking permits along the roads for different user classes, limitations on vehicle traffic through the city centre, through the reorganisation of one-way roads by urban sectors, the creation of pedestrian islands and axes); *offer alternatives to change the habits and behaviours of motorists* (creating underground parking facilities for residents, construction of interchange parks at subway and bus stations, reserved lanes for public transport vehicles); *create a sturdy, integrated mobility network* (new roads, junctions and traffic circles, new tramway and subway lines). While the debate on the construction of new infrastructures, as envisaged in the 2001-2010 urban mobility plan,

remained confined to the *milieu* of administrators and experts, the other provisions set forth in the *General Urban Traffic Plan* and the *Urban Parking Plan*, as periodically updated and adapted, became a topic for general debate, which animated the exchange of opinions and brought out conflicts and contradictions. In fact, decisions entailing short implementation times and perceivable effects are part of the shared, daily experiences of the city and the territory. Starting from the consideration of the civil significance of traffic-related problems, the International Association of Lions Clubs deemed it important to look into this matter and entrusted a university department of architecture and planning with the task of conducting a research project focusing on the observation of such phenomena and the needs of city dwellers.

Experimental research

A number of well-known and well-tested approaches already exist to cope with the problems of city traffic and the quality of urban space.

The first approach, typical of infrastructure designers and transport engineers, puts the emphasis on sectorial aspects, of a functional and quantitative nature. Space and society, structures-people-relations are interpreted and expressed in terms of vehicle flows, linear development of infrastructures, network capacity and efficiency, parking areas ... Another approach, that has recently gained attention and popularity in Italy, is centred on road design and, in particular, on the re-shaping of road patterns. It relies primarily on use of techniques for the construction of 'models' that have proved highly successful in prior experiences and can be exported as viable solutions to different contexts.

Yet, in many quarters it is now believed that the time has come to *break the isolation of the problem and its solutions*, not only through the integration of instruments and decisions, but also by addressing the problems and devising solutions within the framework of a territorial strategy that will take into due account the different 'landscapes' involved. The need to come to grips with the complex nature of the theme is a stimulus to engage in research along new lines.

The research on Milan described in this article was conducted in this perspective, and, through an experimental, empirically oriented project, it covered a wide variety of situations and contexts to be able to evaluate possible interventions, focusing on practices and behaviours on the roads. The underlying assumption being that a careful and detailed observation of the phenomena associated with daily vehicle movements and, in particular, of the relations that are established between the subjects that populate the road space and the objects that connote such space, might lead to more appropriate considerations on the minute solutions adopted by city the administration, or might even provide cues enabling the experts to conceive better solutions. Working at the intersection between practices and spaces, in fact, we may realise that spaces of the same kind accommodate a multiplicity of coexisting elements: sometimes, this gives rise to conflictual, degenerative situations, where transgression and prevarication pre-dominate, conversely, at other times, this blend of heterogeneous factors is adaptive and even capable of improving on the existing conditions, and may help the experts to conceive more suitable solutions, or

even ones that do not fit into codified rules. This is the reason why it is felt that a promising approach to the problem in hand is to assume the *primacy of practices* without, however, under-estimating the importance of *structures*.

One operation plus two

A central aspect of the research was the intention to identify and describe different conditions of habitability of road space, to undertake the construction of a detailed map of situations in the city of Milan.

At the same time, two other operations were performed, with the aim of building up a telling background, i.e. a review of the municipal instruments governing mobility and parking modalities and a scrutiny of local news relating to a significant and 'hot' period, that is, the months from early 2000 to the summer of 2001, when two fundamental planning instruments were published: the Urban Mobility Plan and the General Urban Traffic Plan.

Instruments. The synopsis and comparison of sectorial plans made it possible to formulate some considerations on the specific aspects of each instrument and to assess the confluence of the different provisions into an overall framework. This originated a *deductive report* and an *additive approach*.

The *Urban Mobility Plan*, geared to the improvement of infrastructures, outlines the schedule of structural interventions and the correlated goals in terms of improved accessibility; the *General Urban Traffic Plan*, instead, defines the management framework and, above all, sets forth a functional classification of the network, paving the way for the minute treatment to which road spaces should be subjected for the sake of congruence with the

functions to be performed (smooth traffic flows, interdistrict, district and local links); accordingly, executive projects draw from a repertory of well tested and unified solutions (e.g. the abacus of materials for the design of environmental islands). In general, a viable goal that can be discerned seems to be that of discouraging in a progressive manner the use of private cars in favour of the public transportation system; this goal, however, has but a mild selective effect on the choices to be made and works, rather, in the sense of proposing a range of interventions in which 'as well as' is the keyword, i.e. the construction of new subway and tramway lines, *as well as* additional reserved lanes, car parks and interchange nodes on the city outskirts, biker lanes and environmental islands, *as well as* measures to achieve smoother traffic flows, new rules on wayside parking, construction of additional parking facilities in the inner city districts and residential areas. This seems to lead to the consolidation of sectorial plans based on a progressive accumulation of infrastructures, man-made structures and services geared to an indistinct improvement of accessibility, with some of the measures conflicting with some of the others (parking areas are attractors and setting up car parks close to the city centre will discourage the use of public transportation). Some of the arguments supporting this approach are controversial, i.e. the view that establishes a correlation *tout court* between a reduction in vehicle traffic and the expansion of the public transport system, or the notion that replacing private vehicle traffic with public transport vehicles is possible and legitimate only when the latter have

reached competitive levels of comfort and efficiency (as if such levels were a variable independent of vehicle traffic congestion). In the light of the theoretical uncertainty that persists in this field, the additive option, the multiplication of chances, might seem a reasonable choice. Yet, the ensuing hypertrophy of infrastructures and man-made structures (including generalised interventions for the reshaping of road layouts) can be seen as an unrealistic prospect, on account of the quantity of economic resources required, exceedingly long realisation times, incompatible with the needs to be met, and the inelastic limitedness of space available in a densely inhabited city such as Milan. Compared to the situation that has come about, it seems more advisable to consider two complementary lines of action. On the one hand, assuming a strategic vision that "demands 'more courage' on the part of the city administration", beyond the "petty handling of day-to-day affairs", beyond the "policies of compromise"; this would lead to adopting an approach where *instead* is the keyword, in lieu of *as well as*, i.e. a selective reduction of the measures in favour of accessibility, to be achieved by identifying a reasonable line of work, to be pursued through mutually congruent and synergetic actions, explicitly correlated with land use. On the other hand, a ductile design capacity, that is able to recognise the problems whose solution cannot be postponed and possible remedies, by investigating behaviours, their sense and legitimacy, overcoming the misconception of the right to free circulation, construed as a non-discriminating occupation of public road space, regardless of any consideration as to its effects and its costs to the community.

Local news. Precisely because it is part of the experience of anyone who lives in a city, the problem of traffic breeds different, and often conflicting, opinions, and occupies a central position in the public debate and agenda. For this reason, a study of the local news records (the newspapers, first of all, but also the web, as a venue where the different players voice their opinions, organise, mobilise and form coalitions) seemed useful to grasp the 'common' perception of a problem, the dominant factors in the way it is described and interpreted, a first step towards a reflection on the appropriateness of the solutions that are proposed, and those that might be proposed. Local news as an access to shared views, as records of the social practices that are the heart of this research, local news to become attuned with the 'temporal compression' and the 'over-abundance of events' that David Harvey and Marc Augé have brought to everybody's attention. Aspects characterising contemporary life that account for the constant presence on the daily newspapers of ideas and critical contributions by scholars and experts, sometimes organised as thematic inserts. Newspaper articles were collected and read to construct an annotated chronology and an initial reconstruction by themes, which revealed the emergence of two major concerns: atmospheric pollution and lack of space, space being devoured by moving and standing vehicles. The more superficial layer of local daily news depicts a city that deprives its inhabitants of two essential conditions: breathable air and a rich, plural, meaningful urban space. From a reading of mass news we get a markedly variegated image of urban

conditions in Milan over the last few years. As 'non academic', 'non scientific' sources, newspapers should perhaps be viewed as the best means to grasp the habitability crisis of Milan, where particularly evident is the jarring, almost schizophrenic contraposition between 'mega-projects' (e.g. the new fair grounds in Rho-Pero, the contest for the transformation of the city's oldest urban enclosure, the Santa Giulia district in Montecity, the 'new' Scala ...), which, in the national news, place Milan in the narrow circle of Europe's top-ranking cities, and the 'small' causes of distress, the minor episodes that continuously appear on the local news, evidencing the malaise, the exasperation of so many inhabitants of the metropolis. A paradox of Milan that was summarised by Alessandro Balducci in an editorial on the local pages of *Corriere della sera* of 7 January 2005: "On the wake of the success of the completion of a major project such as the restoration of La Scala, the debate was rekindled regarding the need to invest, with the same determination, in the recovery of a quality of life that, in Milan, appears badly compromised. The habitability of a city is the outcome of a number of factors, such as the quality of public space, the quality of the air we breathe, the efficiency of services, security, social cohesion, the vitality of some urban places, the ability to provide homes for the young, correcting the exceedingly selective dynamics of a real estate market that has lost all correlations to the utilisation value of housing facilities". The reference to habitability appears new if we consider the debate that has taken place over the last two decades, centred on competition-related issues. On the other hand, if we

look further back, we shall find that habitability is a 'classical' theme and, especially after the impact of the Modern Movement, has given rise to a host of techniques. The comeback of this theme is of interest if, in addition to grasping its integrated character, the discussion explores its technical implications with respect to the new life styles.

Going back to the original meaning of the term, working on habitability means working on the experiential dimension that unfold in the relationship between space and society, expanding the field of observation to the different places and modalities where this relationship materialises. In this sense, speaking of the *habitability of roads* is not something abstract or paradoxical, but rather it reflects a clear intention to view movement as a fundamental moment in life and to steer design and planning activities accordingly.

Practices, descriptions, images/actions

In as much as they are manifest actions, practices provide access to unvoiced demands, to the needs and the interests of a settled community. The observation of repeated behaviours helps to capture habits and patterns, the observation of behaviours shared by groups of individuals evidences common traits and differences, and, finally, the observation of rare, unique behaviours makes it possible to discern emerging trends.

Enjoyment, adaptation, distress are the perceptions that social practices will reveal, if they are examined keenly. For pressing and controversial issues, such as the problems associated with city traffic, the interpretation of signs, the collection of warnings add up to appropriate ways of listening, more interesting and more reliable than the

customary modalities. In this case, however, the responsibility of the observer is evident and the research itinerary is less certain.

In view of the chosen approach, the research could not aim for a predetermined conclusion, or one that could be generalised. Surely, it could not set for itself objectives for immediate implementation. On the other hand, it made it possible to explore a line of work and test its fertility, albeit with some syncopated passages.

In keeping with the underlying criteria, the *primacy of practices* without underestimating the importance of *structures*, it was decided to organise the experimental investigation into the "Observation of practices" and the "Descriptions and images/actions".

Observation of practices. A painstaking sequence of direct observations was translated into an organised collection of photographic documents, animations and charts; the process of observation was subdivided into four main logical stages, that were assigned names reflecting the progress of the theorisation and its thematic connotations: "Practices and figures of distress"; "Standardised techniques"; "Before and after standardised interventions"; "Before and after adaptive practices".

The aim of the first stage, *Practices and figures of distress*, was to try and delineate, with reference to different situations, the manifestation of conflicts between the people who use the roads and man-made structures, between different groups of inhabitants. Markedly transgressive practices are observed, deviating greatly from expected and regulated behaviours, that sometimes take the form of a veritable prevarication of

some user classes over others, or, sometimes, give rise to an informal use of road space in precarious conditions of equilibrium between the different users.

Standardised techniques: this aim of this stage was to determine the modalities by which the administration, with the allotted tools, provides solutions to known problems, by addressing them through standardised, repetitive solutions. In *Before and after standardised interventions*, the solutions put into effect are observed in relation to the taking root or rejection processes they have triggered, also as a means to determine their appropriateness and validity. The inhabitants react to the new spatial organisation by adapting, readapting spaces, or generating new, unexpected situations. But even in the absence of institutional interventions, road space undergoes processes of adaptation and transformation through 'do-it-yourself' solutions. In *before and after adaptive practice*, such spontaneous solutions are examined and some of them are recorded and validated by a technical treatment.

A sample of the photographic records of the behaviours of car and motorcycle drivers, bikers and pedestrians, as well as the latest transformations of space, followed by considerations on what goes on 'before and after' (including the reactions of road users to the corrective measures adopted and the reactions of the experts to their behaviours), is illustrated in the images proposed in these pages, that try to summarise icastically the correlations between practices and techniques, revealing striking and, sometimes, paradoxical situations.

Descriptions. In this portion of the research, *ten representative situations* of movement and stopping

patterns in the roads of Milan were identified empirically: 1. the distress caused by parked cars in the residential districts; 2. the criticality of cars stopping along the primary traffic arteries, which reduces the capacity of the roads and hampers the flow of vehicles; 3. parked vehicles invading the preferential lanes of public transportation; 4. the difficulties experienced by commercial vehicles in stop-and-go deliveries; 5. the plurality of uses of green patches along the roads, a space that is now deemed, and has become, residual, but is potentially significant; 6. the paradoxes characterising paid parking regulations; 7. the partial and fragmented set-up and the badly undermined, unsafe conditions of biking lanes; 8. the 'special' treatments and many needs of pedestrian areas; 9. the difficult coexistence of people walking and parked mopeds; 10. the competition between residents, commuters and city users for parking/standing spaces in the proximity of stations and urban attractors. The descriptive decalogue of the research summarises (and leaves programmatically open) the process of recognition of problematic behaviours; proposes an initial identification of critical situations that are recurrent in the city; makes an attempt to conceptualise social practices with reference to 'dedicated spaces' whose functionality is undermined (the residential zones and the main traffic arteries), 'weak spaces' whose conditions remain unstable and are exposed to the risk of turning into 'reserves' (ornamental green spaces, paid car parks, biking lanes), 'spaces fought for' where the concomitant presence of different groups of dwellers does not evolve into a regular coexistence (pedestrian zones,

sidewalks, car parks at the stations).

The habitability deficit finds expression in an 'exasperating' manner in the roads of residential areas, where heavy traffic and illegal parking practices clash with basic requirements that people perceive as prerogatives of these portions of the city, i.e., protection of people walking on foot, guaranteed and effortless parking, widespread use of bicycles, places where people can meet, hang around, rest and play ... The last step of the research therefore consisted of exemplifying, compared to the first situation described (*exasperated residents*), a ductile and contextual approach, also suitable for application to other situations, by imagining three different action profiles.

Images/actions. These are ideal-typical, programmatic profiles, designed to reveal the decisive correlation between the reorganisation of space and the objective pursued, in lieu of functional classification of roads, also in view of the fact that a single class will include different roads and, conversely, roads of the same type will fit different classes. Hence, the road space project must be interpreted in relation to the characteristics of the entire section, the specific surrounds (man-made structures and functions), the habits of the inhabitants, precisely those practices that were the focus of the research. Proposing three profiles for the same road, all of them compatible with its functional classification, is designed to evidence the margins for choice; one profile, in fact, does not rule out the others, and hybrid forms are possible. Above all, the action strategy recognised as suitable for coping with a given problematic situation in a specific context will not necessarily be the

appropriate answer for other city contexts in which the same situation is reposed. The simulation therefore suggests the need to evaluate recurrent issues against the venues in which they come up, to proceed with a flexible, contextualised scrutiny of possible project solutions, which can also capture, and take advantage of, locally identifiable adaptive practice.

A strategy for being effective

Bruno Gabrielli

The always weak credibility of urban planning has produced new instruments, or, perhaps, new names: diverse families of strategic and operative plans, of urban design imported from France and numerous other sources.

Beginning from 1998, the municipal administration of Genoa has given life to the 'City Plan': another name for identifying the same object, which is the plan, or its strategic/operative phase. As for myself, I think it is opportune to refer to this experience for its usefulness to the theory and practice of urban planning, having the benefit of being a privileged observer as the Assessor of Urban Planning for the Municipality.

In Italy and Europe there are various 'philosophies' of strategic plans. While in France and, in a different manner, in Spain, it is a matter of an urban design that comes to be realized, in Italy it is often a long term 'vision', placed in a context of complex strategies, interregional, in which the formation of operative instruments brings about results of unverified (and often un-verifiable) feasibility.

The 'City Plan' of Genoa is a rough but 'effective' instrument, certainly insufficiently sophisticated, that is traced back to hundreds of files of 'actions' almost all brought to completion. It seems evident to me that a Plan so configured is not an alternative to zoning regulations: it constitutes its strategic realization, and therefore the PRG represents the necessary 'frame' for the urban process of regulating land use.

The fact is that the 'City Plan' has not only 'urbanistic' contents, but is an integrated plan whose

operative actions are also social and economic. Below the 'actions' of physical, social and economic intervention, was an idea for the development of the city that called for the gathering of all of the inhabitants' forces, institutional and otherwise. One cannot forget that Genoa, being the seat of State-supported and heavy industries, is the one that perhaps has suffered the most among Italian cities from the post-industrial crisis. One fact is especially telling: in 1966 the Municipality had 847,000 inhabitants, and today there are about 630,000. This loss was barely compensated by a light growth of the metropolitan area. The industrial crisis was followed by the loss of important tertiary activities: Genoa lost headquarters for Eridania, Shell, the Società di Assicurazione, Italia di Navigazione, etc. This crisis has ended, but certainly left serious wounds. The 'City Plan' counted on an involvement that did not take place: the 'Development Committee' formed by the Mayor and of which the Region, Province, Chamber of Commerce, Labours and entrepreneurs associations, and the University were members, did not work.

I believe that one can claim, saving further verification, that the employment crisis, so severe in the 1970s and 1980s, is stopped today precisely as an effect of the administrative actions to relaunch the city, with the fundamental contribution of three great events: the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America with the Columbus Exposition in 1992, the G8 meeting in 2001, and Genoa's being the European Capital of Culture in 2004. While the first event has enriched the city with an area of the highest quality for leisure time (Renzo Piano's project), the second and the third have served to

bring about, at least in part, the 'City Plan'. It regards the activation of a program of large scale urban maintenance, on the one hand, and on the other the carrying out of a program of new interventions, centered above all on the museological reorganization of such sites as the Museum of the Sea and Navigation, the great axis of Via Garibaldi (with the amplification of Palazzo Rosso and Palazzo Bianco, with the annexation of the piano nobile of Palazzo Tursi), to the total remaking of the GAM (Gallery of Modern Art) in Nervi and the maritime museum in Pegli. This program of maintenance has involved above all the historic center with the remaking and pedestrianization of streets and piazzas, and with the 'painted facade' operation (described elsewhere in this publication). What one finds today is a city renewed, with a strong desire to reinforce the results, also through the opening of new, very creative shops and nightspots in the historic center.

If these are the facts visible to anyone's eyes, I believe it is of interest to know the 'inside' story as to how they came about. In the first place was the financing. It is necessary to say that the Municipality was very prudent to participate in all of the public (Urban 1 and Urban 2) and ministerial announcements (Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Public Works with PRU, PRUSST, Neighborhood Contracts, etc.), thus drawing a notable amount of financing, that was in addition to that allocated earlier by the government for G8 and then for 2004. Also the contributions of 'sponsors' were notable (in particular by the Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo and by the Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia, as well as private contributors).

In the second place there

was the organizational municipal 'machine': a nucleus of city officials that did all they could in an exemplary manner and were therefore of fundamental value for carrying out the work. In the third place the collaboration between the Region, the Province, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. produced together a great productive effort. It must be added that the contributions of the Superintendency, the Office of Public Works (especially during G8), and the various builders associations were fundamental to the outcomes. Also, the direction of the Prefect with regard to the work for G8 was essential in its turn. Finally, an awareness of the urban heritage was a significant factor in all of the projects carried out, so that it was possible to obtain quality results without committing too many errors during the realization of the work.

The City Plan has privileged the historic center, so much that an *Integrated Operative Plan* was drawn up and has been carried out in large part today. It reflects a conscious and broadly accepted choice that the city in its totality is not able to recover from the crisis that culminated in the 1980s, if a process of renewal is not begun within the historic center, considered simultaneously a serious handicap for the entire city due to its degradation, and a box of treasures enclosed within the heart of the city due its structure, history, and substance.

While in many other European cities the operations of improvement have taken into account interventions of urban restructuring, and therefore of demolition and reconstruction, in Genoa it is a matter of urban interventions of 'revealing' an inexhaustible cultural heritage. The strategy of

restoration has principally treated public space. The parceling of ownership has suggested the adoption of the Barcelona method, in which improvement of public space encourages private intervention on the buildings. This has included the paving and illumination of streets and the creation of an extensive pedestrian area, while there remains to be realized a pedestrian route that will go from the Lanterna to the Brignole train station (over 6 km). The public space work has addressed also the facades of the buildings, that while belonging to private persons, constitute the most important part of the public 'scene'. Funds of 35-45% were given to the private proprietors of the buildings, obtaining extraordinary results with the improvement of the frescoed facades. The theme of accessibility has represented the most consistent call for spending. The historic quarter is not passable by private means, even if their polluting presence is in most parts tolerated. The only accessibility possible is public and there is no doubt that the realization of the subway that is underway, and of which four stations are planned in the historic center, will give a big impetus to the historic quarter itself. The line will go to the Brignole train station, and then continue toward the east (S. Martino hospital) and toward Valbisagno (the stadium and Staglieno cemetery). The socio-economic interventions were constituted in the creation of an incubator of business, that has given generous incentives for the opening of new commercial and artisanal businesses. One of the most worrying aspects of the deterioration of the historic center is the presence of too many shuttered storefronts, especially in the traditionally commercial streets, and

therefore the numerous reopenings owing to the role of the incentives offered by this incubator has revealed its decisive role in the rebirth of the historic center. Finally, the verification that the mechanism on the whole has worked is given by the increase in property values that, as depressed as they were, have risen unexpectedly. If their rise was hoped for, the measure of the increase is certainly worrisome, given that the countermeasures of which the public administration can avail it-self are substantially weak and therefore insufficient, being scarce enough the resources of intervention in the field of economic and public housing. This last annotation serves to conclude that each time an urban project is designed and realized, it requires careful evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages, or, if one prefers, the benefits and the costs that are involved.

The governance of a city in action

Carola Gattorna

The new strategic plan of the city of Genoa, which was presented to its citizens at the end of a complex path in January 2002, represents an important part of the change in city government and in the management of the city's transformation process. Besides implementing the objectives set out in the current Municipal Urban Plan, which was approved in July 2000, the plan is an important tool to present the goals of the town council. Further it represents a sort of urban agenda where detailed initiatives can be laid down for the development of Genoa in the medium to long-term, and for the establishment of a shared vision among the different urban players. The innovative aspect of the governing and territorial transformation tools, which have been experimented with in Genoa as well as in many other post-industrial cities, does not lie so much in the simple identification of the issues of urban policy, as in the acknowledgement of the existence of a multiplicity of participants, belonging to or outside the community, whose relevance is essential to give rise to internal growth processes and to enhance local resources. The important aspect to the processes of localization and social economic development is not so much linked to the simple accumulation of a territory's knowhow and facilities, as to the ability to share the purposes and to redefine the value of resources. This is possible through processes which include learning from within and from outside the community, bringing to the fore conflict situations, negotiating interests and reorganizing the skills of the city's various players.

In this perspective, the City Plan, intended as food for thought for the whole community, selects a series of choices which are in line with objectives of territorial, social and environmental rebalancing. The aim is to specify aspects concerning implementation and actual feasibility which are consistent with the strategic lines that were defined for the development of the city within a given time frame, and which originate from the exchange of ideas with urban players with an economic and social background. The Municipal Urban Plan is a necessary presupposition, as with some important agreements reached with the Port Authority, with the approval of the Port Regulatory Plan (June 1999). However, there is the need for an instrument capable of organizing, defining and coherently guiding the planning, development and design, in an effort to bring about an economic recovery which is compatible with available resources and with the environment, in order to revive Genoa through the creation of a new idea of the city. The current European integration and the new active involvement of cities, which are undergoing processes of selective re-urbanization and economic regeneration, on the one hand, and are faced with a progressive widening of the social gap and fragmentation on the other, stimulate the City government to develop an urban plan capable of having long-lasting results. Such a plan should, first of all, create a system for decision-making, planning and management capable of mobilizing a comprehensive strategy that involves all of the city participants.

Structure of the strategic plan

In this scenario, the City Plan, drafted by the Genoa

municipal government for the years 2004-2010, is in effect also the final report of the achievements, the criteria and methods adopted by the public administration. It is made up of three books.

The first one is dedicated to the city budget of the town council, today at its second mandate, and gives an outline of the prospects for the city. It identifies the main topics concerning government action, and defines the priorities and the purpose of the selected policies. The second book contains the synoptic chart of the objectives and individual actions for the seven strategic lines: a city for everyone (education and solidarity); a city of qualities (urban development and territorial redress); a city for business and work (economy and employment); a superb city (communication and promotion of the city); port capital (Port and infrastructures); capital of culture (city of art in 2004); city management (organization and economic resources).

Each action is described in specific sheets highlighting the critical and relevant aspects of the initiatives and operational projects for each single action, outlining the players involved, the estimated (financial, human and instrumental) resources as well as the implementation times so as to evaluate the real feasibility of the proposals. Lastly, the third book contains images and statistical information which, without intending to be fully comprehensive, form a sort of visual 'historical memory' of a transformation process not yet concluded: Genoa 'before and after'.

An articulated and incremental process

The attention given to the creation of a shared image for the future and of a cohesive, feasible project is proven by the drafting

process of the City Plan.

This process is characterized by different stages in order to allow for moments of communication, proposal and working together: a laboratory, enriched by external input, which emphasizes the need to create a common vision involving a cross-section of town councilors.

The first stage was characterized by the organization of a series of workshops and conferences and of different public hearings on many specific topics (November '98-February '99). This process, called *Towards a Strategic Conference*, involved both individuals and social groups, with varied levels of organization, who were invited to put forward proposals and projects and to discuss the policy for the instruction of city government.

The second stage was characterized by the definition of the strategic guidelines and preparatory work for the Strategic Conference titled *Genoa: from the Mediterranean to Europe*, held in May 1999. This represented a focal point for the communication and structural arrangement of the City Plan and it involved all of the city players. Faced with rapid social and economic development in the city, the aim was to give rise to a common culture among the different actors (politicians, experts, active forces and citizens) in order to redesign an urban identity and to create a far-reaching partnership which could work together to identify the problems and to contribute to the political projects for the city.

In the same period, Genoa's chances as a prospective venue for the G8 summit and as European Capital of Culture for 2004 became stronger. This under-lined the possibility of experimenting with a different role for the city, that of new 'collective

player' for local development. In this dynamic framework, the remarkable events of the G8 and 2004 were another occasion to launch the image of the city and to gain access to special governmental funding. However, both were an occasion to pool common goals from the different bodies and private players involved in carrying out the necessary work to prepare the city for the great event. This consisted of major maintenance and restoration works, and not just urban refurbishment, which tangibly contributed to the concrete transformation process of the city, to its revival as a tourist destination and to the overall improvement of the quality of life of its citizens. In a new balance between strategic vision and individual actions, Genoa has been able to put into practice an effective public production, which has redesigned the relationship between public and private and developed an ability to integrate policies and resources as well as physical, social, economic and environmental projects.

Plan management and urban policies implementation

Between 2002 and 2004, the administration launched the "Program for a computerized management of the City Plan". Its purpose is to assess the consistency between policies and actions, activities and guidelines of the Management Working Plan and of the Triennial Program, to create a comprehensive archive of all on-going activities and to finalize the activities of the different administration services, according to integration and effectiveness guidelines. The work is still in progress and should contribute to develop an internal information network within the administration capable

of supporting new forms of governance together with a new tangible 'urban management' linked to the monitoring and assessment capability of the different policies involved. Each Office is called upon to test updating and monitoring of their own activity in relation to the objectives of the City Plan and to improve their interaction with other municipal services on the fundamental issues of city governance, from the point of view of 'internal governance' and of factual integration among sectors. Thus, this program, which is also called a "general management control panel", brings the focus of the experimentation of the city of Genoa back to the issue of Municipal Urban Plan implementation and to the need for innovation of the operational instruments. All this occurs against a background which is increasingly marked by a lack of public resources and by the changing role of a multiplicity of public and private participants, according to a governing style which differs from simple hierarchical control and from a kind of bureaucratic and administrative vision.

Genoa-Europe

Francesco Gastaldi

In the last fifteen years European cities have shown their desire to play an increasingly central role, higher competitiveness in innovative economic sectors, ability to attract new activities and external investments, and growth in tourism and culture. The economic readjustment process has been long and complex, and for many years some cities have been hindered by a climate of conservatism and confusion. The defense of the status quo instead of looking for new opportunities was blocking the restructuring of production and delocalization under way. Today cities show great vitality, ability to implement revival strategies and experiment with new urban transformation policies (correction of imbalances, restoring areas in decay, urban and environmental quality promotion, services and employment opportunities), and are still Western society's preferential place for growth. Such unexpected social and economic regeneration and the reversal of the trend of the '80s have proved the most dismal prophecies wrong which associated, also in the collective imagination, the urban environment with a negative place doomed to decline, where contemporary society's supposedly irremediable problems (pollution, traffic, lack of security, deviancy) were concentrated. After a difficult transition period, Genoa has concentrated its attention, projects and resources on recovering the waterfront and revitalizing the historic center as a way to promote the whole urban system. These two adjoined areas, which up to fifteen years ago were very degraded, showed the signs of the

entire city's crisis, unable to create development and partially unaware of its potential in culture, tourism and leisure activities. All of Europe has many instances of cities where the center marks, also in terms of symbols and image to the outside, the turning point of this new 'urban renaissance'. The center is preeminently the city's showroom, for residents and visitors to enjoy, where projects and actions aimed at such areas' promotion determine the reversal of negative trends and are the most effective answer to the crisis. Faced with preconfigured decentralization and haphazard localizations due to the development of information and telecommunications technologies and to forms of immaterial production and communication, cities have become again the center of the most important political, managerial, strategic and financial functions. In the case of Genoa it has been observed that urban policies have focused too much on central areas and too little on peripheral ones. Similar examples can be found in Europe. In many cities, indeed, the majority of available financial resources for recovery have been invested in central areas representing a show-case, a space of self-representation. Also private entrepreneurs have invested in such areas from which they expect monetary returns, a better image and prestige. In this context of increasingly stiffer competition among cities to attract new prestigious functions, enterprises and tourists, large part of the contest is based on innovative and attractive capacity of the city centers. Public policies, from urban planning to cultural policies, are increasingly concentrating their efforts on places considered strategic in terms of attributed visibility or

potential to become a center, and there is no lack of urban transformation projects aimed at creating new urban centers along with traditional ones. Genoa appears to be an interesting test case to understand the scenarios of transformation in the near future of cities, and the role of public policies and resources (at local, national, European Union levels) in reversing the downward trend resulting from the changing economy. This city has strongly focused on recovery, restoration and maintenance of the public space enhancing a valuable environmental, building, historical and artistic heritage. Also the new image derives from strongly rooted elements of local identity. In this renewal process, also involving culture, no new big works have been necessary. No hard demolition or reconstruction, no need to plan new city parts or new buildings, the relationship between public and private operators has been balanced, public actions have allowed new initiatives to be launched, triggering new processes, giving opportunities and appropriately stimulating local subjects to invest. The European situation is different: the tendency of 'physical' transformation prevails with housing activities playing a major role (Manchester, Nottingham in England; Amsterdam, Maastricht, Almere in Holland; or Vienna). At times infrastructures and interconnection hubs of different means of transportation are an occasion to reorganize whole city sections and to create new centers capable of changing balances and hierarchies (e.g. Lille); at other times, new 'technology citadels', or for consumption, leisure, sports, and even culture rise over shabby areas (Bilbao, Saint Nazaire). Common or

standardized features can at times be recognized in the new operations; at other times the actions taken by European cities in response to city crises are varied, showing their riches and traditions, the different countries' cultural, institutional, civic and social conditions, creatively producing diversity and distinguishing features. Partnerships between public and private actors also look varied. Their common feature is their progressive opening up to the 'market' (through grants, mixed agencies with a specific mission, project financing, etc.) and a substantial reduction of procedural and intervention times as to long-unresolved issues (urban empty spaces in decay, waterfront no longer functional to traffic, etc.). Another common feature seems to be the search for new urban and environmental quality (city parks, green areas, pedestrian areas, new forms of transport and urban mobility, reduction of pollutants), a higher tendency to experimentation and works' sustainability, also stimulated by the European Union guidelines and support affecting new approaches, institutional changes, and innovative practices (Leipzig, Seville, Stockholm, Malmö). The bottom-up approach aimed at the involvement of local participants to make actions effective and permanent has been developed in many projects for big public residential housing estates, where physical upgrading has gone hand in hand with accompanying actions of the social and economic fabrics (Dunkerque, Zurigo, Budapest, Tallinn).

The urban redevelopment of the Darsena area

Maurizio Cazzulo

In the last six years considerable public and private investment has been concentrated in the conversion of the port area that is focused around the area of the municipal dry dock, carrying on in this area the works begun in 1995 with the completion of the new School of Economics and Commerce. From the adoption of the 1998 urban redevelopment program that called for the re-habilitation of the Cembalo building, the realization of the public space of Calata Vignoso, the demolition of the Famagosta building, and the demolition and reconstruction of the Bacinetto building (future headquarters of the *Magazzini del Design*), a series of interventions was begun that lead to the realization of the Museum of the Sea in the Galata building, the rehabilitation of the Caffa, Metelino and Tabarca areas, as well as to a series of projects currently underway regarding Ponte Parodi, the new seat of the School of Engineering in the Hennebique building, and the new headquarters of the Nautical Institute.

The interventions

Cembalo. The Cembalo building, built as a warehouse for the old port, was enlarged over time in successive phases, but with the industrialization of port activities it fell into disuse. The recent transformation provided for its conversion into a residential building with various related functions. The principal north façade of the original building, facing the city, was saved, as well as part of the structure. On the south side the design proposed instead a light, continuous façade composed of sliding, light-filtering panels. The very placement of the building

with respect to the context presented two contrasting orientations: on the south side the view is addressed completely toward the port, the other side of the building addresses the city (1).

Museo del Mare (Museum of the Sea and Navigation). Since 2004 The Galata building, formerly the naval dockyard and port warehouse, was the seat of the new Museum of the Sea and Navigation. The designer, Vázquez Consuegra, took the occasion to legitimize the role of contemporary architecture in a complex historic fabric not yet redeveloped. The lack of a consolidated image of the building, object of successive transformations over time, and the radical change of use brought the designer to introduce a totally new image. A 'gap' was created between new and old by separating the new structure from the preexisting, purified of the interventions of the early 1900s. A continuous façade of steel and glass gives a glimpse of the historic building within, attributing to it the same status as an object in a museum. This skin that does not adhere perfectly to the body permits the insertion of a full-height atrium fitted to the new function: a 'jump in scale' necessary to define a space, still 'public' but 'external', that contrasts with the more domestic scale of the internal rooms. The logic of the scale changes demarks the internal space. The design called for the demolition, carried out in part, of a structural bay necessary for the placement of a galley complete with masts and the realization of a full-height space, containing stairs and ramps, that rises above the original level of the roof, culminating in a *belvedere* above the city, through which light may fall onto the preexisting stone stairs. Such solutions, beyond suggestively

articulating the path within the museum, ensure that the new structure establishes a clear relationship at the scale of the city. The building, positioned along the pedestrian course that runs along the Expo area to the intersection with the axis that unites the areas of the Darsena with the Ponte Parodi project, represents one of the most important links in joining the historic city and the port area. Purpose of project and site: realization of the Museum of the Sea and Navigation in the Galata building in the Darsena (2).

Caffa, Metelino, Tabarca. The original 1800s complex was composed of two equal buildings, Caffa and Metelino, connected on the longer side by a glazed gallery. In the 1930s an additional story was added that doubled the height to the line of the eaves. The project called for the conservation of the original part and the complete reconstruction of the added story. The north face, housing a display space in the Metelino area for contemporary art, plays on a suspended portico that makes a continuous path between the stairs to the west (also with security functions) and the external stair that continues to the covered area where sculpture is displayed in the open air. If the *sopraelevata* were to be demolished, the sequence of facades would assume a prominent urban role as a counterpoint to the seaward face of the historic center. The project of restructuring the Tabarca area, currently underway, completes the discourse of the redevelopment of all of these areas that confirms their comprehensive nature as an urban monolith (3).

Ponte Parodi. The winning design of the international competition, developed by Un Studio, substitutes a 'piazza on the Mediterranean' for the grain silos, a gigantic 'out-of-

scale' structure demolished in 2001. In opposition to the emerging building a paradoxical fragment of an artificial hill in contact with the sea is introduced that establishes a rapport in a scale more regional than urban. There are approximately 83,000 sm of usable space distributed mainly on five levels, with a roof that offers 19,000 sm of urban park. In spite of the potential of the location in the center of the port area, the situation necessitates an 'attractor' of complementary functions, distributed through-out the day and for different categories of users. It is a place that is simultaneously 'destination' and 'docking' for other directions, in order to attract persons and give them reasons to stay. According to the programmatic process of cause and effect the designers attribute to the new piazza the ability to create a connective network among the attractions already in place, passing from a state of 'imbalance' and 'separation' between port and city to attaining a system in equilibrium (4).

Hennebique. The intervention for the conservation of the building designed utilizing the Hennebique system is still in the study phase. The design addresses one of the oldest buildings in reinforced concrete in Europe (1901), whose volumetric mass faces onto the sea with a continuous main façade, to be retained, of almost 500 meters. Its redevelopment will permit the urban connection between the Maritime Station of the Ponte dei Mille and the new Ponte Parodi project (5).

Notes

1. Cembalo. Purpose of project and site: rehabilitation of the Cembalo building, A. Dinegro quay, Genoa dry dock (project carried out in

accordance with the Genoa municipal Darsena Pru). Intended use: residential, commercial space, day-care and nursery school, and parking. Parties involved: Cembalo Cooperative (organizer and client); G. Terragna (building permits); studio Patrocchi (project execution); M. Malaspina (direction of works); E.D. Mona (Pru coordination); Liguria Construction Spa, Milan (construction firm). Schedule: work begins June 2000, work completed December 2004. Cost: 10 million euros.

2. Museum of the Sea. Intended use: spaces for temporary and permanent shows, with related services; approximately 12,000 sm covered area. Parties involved: Porto Antico di Genova Spa-Municipality of Genoa (client); Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra (designer); Vecchia Darsena, Galata Scarl (construction firm). Schedule: announcement of competition October 1999, work begun April 2002, work completed July 2004. Cost: approx. 18 million euros for construction, approx. 3 million euros for interiors and fittings; European Community financing through Urban 2, Compagnia di S. Paolo Foundation, Porto Antico Spa-Comune di Genova.

3. Caffa, Metelino, Tabarca. Purpose of project and site: rehabilitation of the Caffa, Metelino and Tabarca areas, reconstruction of exteriors. Intended use: commercial, offices, gallery of contemporary art, House of Music. Parties involved: Porto Antico, Vecchia Darsena Srl (organizer and client); E.D. Bona (comprehensive final design and execution of north facade), Studio Patrocchi (final building design, external building design with M. Malaspina); Vecchia Darsena Srl-Quartieri Darsena Scarl (construction firm). Schedule: work begins January 2003, work completed December 2004

for Caffa and Metelino, June 2006 for Tabarca. Cost: 16 million euros.

4. Ponte Parodi: Purpose of project and site: realization of a cultural and entertainment attraction; Ponte Parodi, old port of Genoa. Intended use: uncovered public spaces, covered recreational and commercial spaces; sport and cultural center, auditorium, cruise terminal, parking. Parties involved: municipality of Genoa-Porto Antico di Genova Spa (client); Un Van Berkel and Bos Studio (designers); Ati Ponte Parodi (organizers). Schedule: competition announced 2000, judging 2001, work begins 2006, work completed 2009. Estimated cost: 150 million euros.

5. Hennebique. Purpose of project and site: conversion of Hennebique silos, Santa Limbania quay. Intended use: new seat of the School of Engineering; teaching spaces and complementary functions. Parties involved: University of Genoa (client); City Engineering, Genoa (design); Stefano Boeri Studio, Milano (architectural design); Ati (Unieco, Carena, Cei, Serteco) (organizer).

A season between new architecture and recovery

Simona Gabrielli

It is quite revealing that 2004, the year of Genoa as the European Capital of Culture, closed with the exhibit/show *Arti e architettura 1900-2000* conceived by Germano Celant. Parallel to the main body of the exhibition held in the Palazzo Ducale, a series of installations by different artists and architects were set up spreading through the city center to create a map, a path through the dense fabric of the old town made up of a sequence of thirteen stops. Apart from the criteria of choice for the individual objects and their placement in relation to the different types of space, it is interesting to note how they have straightaway become goals, opportunities to discover the buildings and the open spaces within an itinerary which starts from and leads back to the waterfront, from Caricamento to the front of Palazzo Reale towards the old docks area, the Darsena, past the overpass. The rationale behind it is the super-imposition on the context of a further level of reading of the urban space, of a fabric woven into a path which systematizes a constellation of pre-existing objects by introducing a new reacting element. The installations become a useful means to lead the visitor to the discovery of values already present in this city, so rich in hidden places. However, a reverse view is also possible. The renewal process of the urban underlying structure has been able to create an arrangement plan which can accommodate the insertion of any element, as it is the structure itself which is strong enough to support the whole. This means that it is not the individual objects that guide the visitor to the discovery of places,

rather it is the revived urban fabric that has the power to arrange the single pieces according to a system. This is the deep sense of the urban regeneration process which has been building up in Genoa and has been phased by big events from the '90s until today. The city has been able to build within itself a system where what is 'empty' can revive what is 'full' and therefore bring new life to it. The places affected by urban regeneration are in fact the old port area and the old town: two vital entities that are different in terms of their establishment, use and purpose, which, however, are physically adjacent and complementary from time immemorial. The conception of the new waterfront, created for the Columbus celebrations, follows the existing port structure through a cross-reference of unique elements, jetties, wharves, warehouses, loading areas. It is a system of juxtaposed, independent and sequential single elements which originated in response to a logic of use, as did the quays on which they rise. The area was designed by Piano for the Expo '92, together with the cotton warehouses (Magazzini del Cotone) and later the Aquarium, and it constitutes the first part of a system which today reaches the Maritime Station, through the old marina (Marina Porto Antico) and the historical docks quarters (Darsena) with the Museum of the Sea by Vázquez Consuegra. A constellation of new or restored buildings of different architectural quality, whose strength lies in the complementary arrangement of discrete elements which are able to establish a dialectical relationship and, at the same time, to be absorbed by the existing fabric. This is an interpretation of an architectural and urban renewal, which is very far from a new self-referential

iconic monumentalism linked to the culture of the image as an end to itself. However, this topic will be the focus, in a not too distant future, of the challenge represented by the carrying out of the Un Studio's project for Ponte Parodi.

If, on the one hand, the waterfront's features can be described through concepts which can be reduced to rarefaction, exactness and distance, on the other hand, in complete antithesis to this, the old town looking over it, is characterized by density, compactness, contact. It is a unique, layered, adjacent fabric where the physical form of architectural features finds its direct correspondence in a complex social and functional superimposition which has always represented the treasure and peculiarity of this urban reality.

Also in the old fabric, the restoration of what is 'empty' allows what is already there to be brought again to the surface, enabling it to react and reverberate with all of its parts. The restored old painted facades find a natural scenario to turn to and the buildings open up their main doors which hide vaulted grand staircases and gardens, unexpected treasures and disguised marvels.

Heterogeneous spaces, different however close, such as the port and the old town are, in this way, both interwoven following a pattern which is superimposed on the already existing one, where the open space acts as binder and reactant onto which the built-up space is grafted. After all Genoa is made of a complex matter, composed of parts which are strictly linked and that can hardly be separated by the urban form. This is the result of the same settling logic observed by the old palaces of the historical center, as well as by the

series of restoration works on the waterfront.

It can be stated that the regeneration process occurred in Genoa has become an expression of a concept of architectural quality, as a result of a search for continuity of the urban identity, which goes through a spirit of transformation inherent in its own genetic code, where the context prevails over the conception of its single parts.

And it is exactly for the same reasons that it can be stated that the new contemporary architectural season has found in this city a continuity also with its own specific interpretation of the tradition of the modern. The 1900s, as everyone knows, offered a comprehensive picture of eminent personalities, from the local figures such as Mario Labò, Luigi Carlo Daneri, Robaldo Morozzo della Rocca and Marcello Piacentini in the '30s, to Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella and Ludovico Quaroni after the second world war; then Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Angelo Mangiarotti, Aldo Rossi, S.O.M., Giancarlo De Carlo, Renzo Piano, Gino Valle, and finally in the last decade the contributions for the port design by Manuel de Solà Morales and Rem Koolhaas. The new century has seen the opening of the Museum of the Sea by Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra and will be marked by the realisation of Ben van Berckel-Un Studio's project for Ponte Parodi, which are both the result of international competitions. The city of Genoa grew beyond its walls following subsequent additions of homogeneous parts until the first half of the 1900s. This growth followed the plans of the central areas after an unprecedented increase in building activities, completely ignoring the urban morphology typical of the two decades between the '60s and '70s. Since the

'80s Genoa has started again to work on its own body inserting and adding layers to its pre-existing fabric. The reading of a line of continuity through time is necessarily linked to the interpretation of a concept of identity which is the result of an ongoing evolutionary process. It is a process that, despite going through the renewal of its forms of expression, can still always be recognized as derivation from some fundamental urban features such as artificiality, secrecy, stratification, steepness, scale jumps...

Among some meaningful examples are: the work of Daneri, a very capable interpreter of the Ligurian peculiarities through rationalistic needs; the work of Albini who, besides museum projects resulted from the co-operation with Caterina Marcenaro, is the author of the new City Council's office building annexed to Palazzo Tursi: this is an interesting interpretation of the issue concerning the difference in levels, to which the Genoa built-up space has been necessarily reduced; the matitone by Skidmore Owings Merrill, an office tower rising in the urban skyline which, with its out-of-scale design, seems to reabsorb the emptiness left by the excavation of the hill of S. Benigno. Lastly, there is the Museum of the Sea and Navigation by Vázquez Consuegra, where a sober glass skin conceals the bowels of the old building. This is how architecture in Genoa has been able to become an expression of a wise transformation process, by pursuing the new and deepening its roots in the past.

The rehabilitation of the historic center

Giorgio Gatti,
Anna Maria Nicoletti

"In the last fifteen years no other city has changed as much as Genoa" (*Panorama*, 2004). "How has a port city in crisis, that only ten years ago had record unemployment in the center-north and had lost almost a third of its inhabitants, become a model of urban livability and of innovative projects?" (*L'Espresso*, 2003). Evidently, and not only among those attached to labor and the specialized press, an opinion is spreading that the transformation underway in the city, in particular in its historic center, constitutes almost a methodological reference, a sort of model of good practice in the field of urban redevelopment both in its procedures as well in its results.

As in all processes of transformation, the exceptionally rapid change, in particular for a 'traditional' city like Genoa, arose out of the undeniable necessity to overcome the deep economic and social problems that had characterized the beginning of the 1980s. Even the historic center, extraordinary for its potential as well as its considerably problematic nature, had suffered severely the most critical aspects during this time: decline of building and maintenance, lack of a sense of belonging by the inhabitants to their neighborhood, social alienation, the crisis of the commercial network, the low quality of life. These phenomena were so extensive and deep-rooted that they made the modest attempts at public and private investment almost irrelevant.

For a long time the historic center was characterized by a substantial immobility, a phenomenon that if on the one hand had provoked its

slow decline, and in some cases a true and proper deterioration, on the other had nevertheless protected its comprehensive integrity. In fact, one of the most meaningful elements of the Genoese historic center is the permanence of the mediaeval settlement, both for its multi-functionality and vitality that characterize the main areas, as well as its integration with the contemporary city. The advantages of living in the historic center are noteworthy, as it has a diversified commercial network, is rich with artistic and historic heritage, centrally located with respect to urban activities, services and systems of transport, and characterized by a closer sense of socialization. To that is added in the Genoese case the exceptional potential of its facing the sea. Yet the rehabilitation of the Genoa historic center presents aspects of particular criticalness that make a different approach necessary with respect to those of other Italian and European cities.

The strategy of redevelopment

These considerations emphasize how the programmatic approach of the civic administration to the redevelopment of the historic center had to be flexible and diversified: from the large redevelopment operations at an urban scale (such as the annexation of the historic port to the city and the installation of large and qualified public services) to the attention to the widespread recovery of the single building and single dwelling unit by means of private involvement. The strategy of comprehensive redevelopment is clearly articulated in the city's new urban plan that identifies as strategic objectives the reinforcing of the importance of the historic quarter, the realization of an adequate system of accessibility, the installation of services, and

the support of widespread recovery. The first urbanistic objective is integration, that is, the true and proper physical and functional connection between the historic center and the old port. Begun with the integration of the Expo areas into the city, this program has progressively expanded until it includes all of the areas between the old wharf and the maritime station. It is certainly the most significant innovation of recent years, for the breadth of the endeavor and the diversification of the instruments by which it was brought about.

In this sense the historic center has expanded, assuming an entirely new dimension in both quantitative as well as qualitative terms, with the exceptional opportunity of its facing directly on the sea, a completely new experience for the inhabitants of the historic center. With respect to the physical and environmental degradation, which includes the structural factors such as the elevated index of the density of the building fabric and overcrowding, the high number of empty lodgings, the old age and precarious condition of the buildings, the municipal administration has the aim of improving livability through carrying out a major program of investment in the redevelopment of public spaces, in order to raise the quality of life of the neighborhoods and to encourage investment in housing rehabilitation, especially on the part of private citizens.

These initiatives have clearly improved the quality of life of the neighborhoods and maintained their vitality unaltered. Even the contradictions testify that here there is life, there are people that live and work, stores, services, activities, and naturally, sometimes, trouble and tensions. All of this represents, together with the quality of its historic and

architectural features, of its un-disputed and unexpected monumental and artistic treasures, of the partial glimpses and views of its landscape, one of the most valuable possessions of the city.

One of the actions that has been most effective in slowing the degradation of the neighborhood is the investment in maintaining infrastructure and primary services, modernizing and the rationalizing of services (sewers and other uses), repairing the street paving (often recovering the preexisting stone material), improving public illumination (the new lighting gives a higher sense of security), and cleaning the streets. This reorganization has fostered trust in proprietors who, with some initial diffidence, have increasingly invested in the recuperation and maintenance of their own properties, obtaining public contributions put at their disposition within the scope of specific integrated redevelopment programs. Projects and programs were also begun at a larger scale, also involving private parties for large investments in urban rehabilitation operations as well as for their management (the completion and management of all of the public areas of the Expo, the realization of the touristic port with touristic accommodations in the area of Morosini, the re/development of the municipal dry dock, the next transformation of Ponte Parodi). In this case the cleverness of the administration was that of having initiated numerous integrated programs of a public-private nature and of having foreseen in these new forms of cooperation the more appropriate mechanisms for obtaining the consensus of the 'primary players' and more effectively making the rehabilitation of critical areas such as in the historic center.

The routes of color

Edda Ricagno

Old Genoa is a city of palaces: a density of tall buildings, contiguous, separated by narrow alleys. The fabric is of medieval origin and so has remained until the present day, while the buildings are the product of a continuous stratification taking place through centuries of rich urban history. Beyond the generating historic events, from the physical point of view one may read in the urban design two distinct and linked plans: the area enclosed by the walls of the 9th century, corresponding to an archaic structure, and another that may be defined as 'organic', born from the routes leading to the port from the first wall, enclosed within the 13th century wall. Within this context, the chain of frescoed buildings lies in the trading areas and in those where power entrenched itself, foremost those of civil power. The first frescoed facades are found in the oldest areas of urbanization, immediately beneath the Castello along the lines that lead to the first urban nucleus, always in relation with a curia or a 'hotel', in this case that of the Embriaci and Sauli families, and to a market, while those of the first half of the 1500s are located instead in the vicinity of the docks. The fact that the commercial locations and the seats of power remain in the same positions over a long period ensures that renovation also follows closely the same space. Therefore we are able to read the 'routes of color' in the manner of a 'temporal mosaic', where the persistence of the oldest painted interventions are incorporated with those of change and renewal. The most interesting case of the persistence of a family in a single place is that of the

Imperiale family that, after an initial operation of demolition and construction during the Renaissance, take on the adaptation and decoration of the houses of the adjacent families. The transformations that occurred over the course of the century culminate in the cutting of the present day via Scurreria, a route once again frescoed, that runs from the piazza of the cathedral of S. Lorenzo and terminates precisely on axis with the entrance of the palazzo.

The greatest splendor is reached however between the middle of the 1500s and the middle of the 1600s: the so-called 'Genoese century' that saw the rise of splendid new buildings of the Genoese noble families active in trade with Spain and the rest of Europe.

This great fervor of initiatives enriched the city with new facades and masterful entrance halls, and gave impetus to the work of the fresco artists who were very active in this period. There are facades that bear painted architecture or figures, floral decorations, scenes often intended to illustrate the magnificence of the family by works of Genoese painters that from the beginning of the 1500s onward had glorified the city. It is a virtually unknown heritage almost completely buried in time from deterioration and lack of care.

This is the age of via Garibaldi, the Strada Nuova, when a group of noble families came together to build, on the edge of medieval center at the foot of the hill of Castelletto. The major part of the palaces, with exteriors ornamented in stone, are frescoed only internally. As for those completed later in the style of the 1700s, they are certainly not lacking in color, as in Palazzo Rosso. The only example entirely frescoed is that of the palazzo of Angelo Giovanni

Spinola, showing a perfect equilibrium among painted architectural and decorative elements. But the most extraordinary building and in a certain sense most 'colored' is certainly the palazzo Lomellino-Podestà, by G.B. Castello. Beyond any illusory pictorial form, the ornamental solution is a unique example of free decoration with a clear mannerist stamp, realized in stucco on a intense, uniform azure field.

With regard to the renovating of the 'Ripa Maris', not a street but a city face lapped by the sea until the 19th century construction of the 'Strada Carrettiera', only one facade frescoed with decorative elements emerges, that of the palazzo Cibo, frescoed like the two adjacent buildings on the internal street, the via del Campo, while the rest of the building is treated in a continuous manner and colored in a different tonal scale.

During recent years the City administration has promoted the restoration of approximately a hundred of these facades, to the point that the historic center has totally changed its image. Suddenly there was this 'unveiling' of one of its most important 'secrets', revealing a richness and variety that the scholars themselves had not imagined. Needless to say, this activity has encouraged other studies and further research.

The Region of Liguria is supported in this promotional endeavor by the city administration for some streets, such as via S. Lorenzo and via del Campo, with mechanisms of assistance to private citizens, as well as from the Superintendent for Architectural Heritage. Therefore today a series of routes are offered in the historic center by which to enjoy this rediscovery.

The reconquest of the waterfront

Emanuela Brignone Cattaneo*

Strategic restoration has been undertaken for a new area of museums in the Eastern part of Genoa linking four cultural 'containers' in the Parks of Nervi: Villa Grimaldi (with the Frugone collection, opened in 1993), the Luxoro Museum (to be restored), the Wolfsonian Museum (opening in 2005) and the Gallery of Modern Art (GAM) opened in November 2004. The combination between art and nature is evident here in all its facets. To enhance the fundamental bond between 'nature-territory' and construction, an historical country residence has been preserved, typical of the great Genoese families' *modus vivendi*, dating back to 1590 with connected chapel, greenhouses and stables. From the outside the painted walls, their architecture and sculptures stand out over the 19th century parks' green background. The whole complex will soon be restored including the spectacular sea promenade and the historical swimming sites.

The GAM was designed to be respectful of the configuration of the surroundings, limited by the mountains and the sea, without any additions. Essential but practically invisible actions, albeit somewhat forced, were taken, so as to allow a 17th century building to meet the current conservation and exhibition needs while respecting the spirit of a past era, thanks to advanced technology. To meet these conditions interventions of various degrees were necessary. Capillary dampness was eliminated in the base of the structural and external walls with a dielectric barrier based on a compensatory

procedure of induction charge.

The lack of a wall cavity led to the creation of a new ventilation space and of complex plant networks dug deep in the ground and fed by two external stations below grade.

Responding to today's needs for housing works of art, in each room a 'pulsating body' was introduced with specialized mechanical systems to create a microclimate. This required the making of a 'second skin' inside the rooms, and eliminates the problem of vibration for large paintings. Counter-walls were anchored to the 17th century walls through a series of spindles mounted on tapered roller bearings, product of the Goppion museum laboratory's state-of-the-art technology and re-search. Such space metamorphosis has allowed for flexibility, thus making the container change with time both in terms of scientific arrangement of the works exhibited (some rooms can easily become temporary), and in terms of a lighting system providing the museum with spotlights in addition to the current low-consumption indirect light. Direct upward light artificially recreates the natural conditions of a diffused light sky, thus lending the museum and the paintings a particular brightness without flattening the works' texture.

The link between art and nature is highlighted by the tinted windows filtering the sunlight. Surrounding nature appears to be framed thus creating *tableaux vivants*. The sense of lightness of the interiors is accompanied by the series of colors which, through the museum itinerary, are transformed, inspired by the colors inside the residence or by the restored facades, enhancing them as in an abstract painting.

The scientific arrangement has in turn focused on landscape-related topics. In

a city such as Genoa where green areas surrounded by buildings are so scarce, and instead the sea in which the city is reflected is so vast, the unique value of 'sea/green areas/art and culture', thanks to the GAM's revival, becomes the first hint of the ideal city's fragmented and imaginary recovery.

* Restoration, recovery and conservation project, and museum display of the GAM by an interim group of professionals: Luigi Amann, Emanuela Brignone Cattaneo, Chantal Cattaneo, Enrico Pinna (group leader), Gian Luca Papini, Italo Rota.
Villa Serra: 8,400 cbm;
Implementation cost euro 5,487,880;
Grants: Ministry of Architectural Heritage, Municipality of Genoa (BOC), CARIGE Bank, Mitchel Wolfson foundation.

The process of transformation of European city

Federica Alcozer

During the year 2004 many people who had previously visited Genoa but that had not returned for years, rediscovered it and commented: "It has the sense of being a European city, like Barcelona, Munich, Milan, or London". This is not the comment of a specialist, but rather the expression of a nonnative observer's feeling of being 'in a European city'. But what exactly does this mean? A visitor's feelings are difficult to break down by a rigorous method into distinct parts, but allude to a series of visible aspects that have brought about a transformation that brings together peoples of different nationalities and communicates a cultural liveliness, that treats history and contemporaneity, that transmits care for the proper urban forms and qualities of spaces. But when did this process begin? Which are the determining moments and subjects for such an urban regeneration? What are the elements of continuity and specificity of a process such as this? Three phases can be identified, three periods which intersect in which the transformative events of the waterfront are directly and indirectly integrated with those of all the historic center, in which the functional choices have contributed only partially to the success of the interventions, while fundamentally it was the centrality of the public space; three successive phases in which the logic of urban rehabilitation is steadfastly the basic design choice, even in the completely new interventions, for redefining Genoese image and identity. This begins around the middle of the 1980s when a

series of diverse circumstances brought about ideas that had very different roots. One is the Christopher Columbus Celebration of 1992: the choice of transforming to 'urban uses' an area until then used only by the Port Authority. This decision was made in 1985 by the Triport Commission, in which the Region, Municipality, and the autonomous port Consortium signed a protocol of intention of transforming the area of the historic port of Genoa into an area for the city and together drafted a plan for the re-use of a large part of the waterfront, defining a rough outline of the functions by which to locate the spheres of intervention. This became the first fundamental step for the transformation of the Genoese waterfront, still today in evolution. But another fundamental fact in this initial phase, even if not as visible from outside the city, was the moving of the School of Architecture into the historic quarter in 1990 to complete the cultural complex of Sant'Agostino (museum, theater, auditorium, school). The force and determination in bringing about such a choice, even if with many disputes, was repaid by the effects induced by that intervention in every context, from the point of view of interventions of renewal that with time are multiplied, as well as for the economic and social regeneration that have responded to the new demands created by the young university students. It was not the only intervention of this period, but it was the first able to demonstrate in the short term the potential of transformations of the historic fabric. In the following years appeared a 'more successful' intervention in the Porto Antico itself. One may recall in fact the years immediately after 1992,

when the functional uncertainty of most of the buildings rehabilitated specifically for the Columbus Exposition in 1992 placed in doubt the outcome of the intervention, leaving many of the volumes empty. It was precisely in this predicament that the intervention demonstrated its strong points: the tourism activated by the Aquarium (1,300,000 visitors annually), and the offer of an ample public space in direct contact with the sea, unique for the historic center. These two interrelated aspects attract a multiethnic and multicultural population. From that moment the definition of the functional choices in the area of the historic port (Cineplex, City of Children, Congress Center, commercial spaces, pool) consolidate the prevalent use of the area for free time. In the local context, it is an equipped urban park for the historic quarter, in the urban context, a center and place of services, and in a territorial context, a touristic destination. In the following years the administration directed the attention to the big problems of Genoa: traffic, relying upon a plan by Bernard Winkler; it was adopted in 1995, and in 1997 a revision was begun. This plan is proposed to reduce the vehicular traffic by removing pure transit from the center by placing it on the periphery; it calls as well for the optimization of the public transport system by distributing it throughout the city. The instruments for realizing such objects predominantly concern the reorganization of the flows, reducing as much as possible the structural interventions on the road network. The biggest merit of this plan is promoting the environmental re-habilitation of the occupied center and in particular of the historic center by reducing the vehicular load and creating

new pedestrian areas. The first phase of the intervention called for the improvement of piazza De Ferrari, via XX Settembre, the vehicular/pedestrian reorganization of piazza Caricamento and access to the historic port. The second phase called for the reorganization of piazza Verde for public transport, and the reorganization of the rotaries for multiple directions for both piazza Corvetto and piazza dell'Annunziata with via delle Fontane. These choices are at the base of two of the more meaningful interventions in the change of Genoa's spaces: making via San Lorenzo pedestrian and the system of via Garibaldi-via Cairoli-via Balbi. Even though it is a sectoral plan, this surely has established the bases for the improvement of large areas of the historic center and created the conditions of urban design so as to take best advantage of the special financing for two big events: G8 in 2001 and being the 'European Capital of Culture' in 2004. In particular, a large operation of 'urban maintenance' with interventions on palazzos, piazzas, and public spaces began with the financing activated by the *Special Law for the G8 summit meeting* (n. 149/2000). In the same period the waterfront improvement proceeded toward the west with work on the Darsena with the Calata Vignoso promenade. To this is added still other interventions for improving the public space of the Expo, with a large quantity of geometric planting of palms and the construction of the *Bolla* by Renzo Piano, a glass sphere for ferns, butterflies, birds and tropical plants. Next, the interventions of recent years have followed the logic of regeneration of the historic quarter and of the waterfront taking advantage of the occasions offered: Urban 2 (called for

in the 2000-2006 planning period by the European Union) and 2004 (combining national and community financing with that of local entities and private citizens). With Urban 2 the Municipality proposes projects of a 'physical' and 'infrastructural' nature together with actions aimed at economic and social regeneration, in particular through the development of the cultural and touristic potential and the livability of the historic center.

While Genoa was the 2004 Cultural Capital of Europe, the following were called for: still further interventions of urban maintenance and improvement, of public spaces, of the facades of historic palaces, bringing to light parts of the built heritage invisible until recently, through attention to details, new paving, and the artistic lighting of streets and palaces. With Genova 2004, another part of the waterfront was completed in the Darsena area, with the rehabilitation of the Galata area for the Museum of the Sea and Navigation and the Caffa and Metellino areas to build the Center of Contemporary Art and the House of Music. Looking to the future, the Porto Antico will be further transformed through the Ponte Parodi project, to be completed by 2010 to the design of competition winner Ben Van Berkel. A large piazza on the water is called for with recreational, sport, touristic, and commercial functions. Passing through the central areas from one place to another, considering them in diverse periods, is assisted in the variations of functions and of uses, of forms of social aggregation on the part of a multitude of peoples. The areas and open spaces designed in the last fifteen years with at times different logics come together without solutions of continuity to propose a new image of contemporary Genoa and still tenaciously witness of its own historic

identity. Perhaps this renders the sensation of its being a European city.

Strategies for the development of the port

Nicoletta Artuso

The development strategy for the Port of Genoa is contained in the Port Plan developed by the Port Authority at the end of the '90s, also with the contribution of the University and other external advisors, and approved in December 2001. If the methodological approach of the current Prp was determined to encompass the modern evolution of the Port of Genoa characterized by expansion phases, implemented or only envisaged, and modification phases, based on the optimization of existing local resources, it is ascribable to this latter modality of action. While the former have resulted in big works such as the port of Sampierdarena at the start of this century, the construction of the airport and of the iron and steel industrial area in the '60s, as well as the latest expansion of the Voltri Port, the latter have consisted in the rationalization and adjustment of the port structure to the current needs, focusing particularly on its local context. To give some examples, in line with the Prp expansion project for Sampierdarena, the existing parallel piers, no longer functional to the modern handling of containerized goods, have been modified, and water areas have been filled in, so as to optimize the lack of local resources; the reduction of most polluting forms of traffic, such as hydrocarbons; or the attempt to make the ship repair industry compatible with the surrounding urban fabric. Even the most substantial and perhaps most challenging expansion westward of the Voltri port basin has been part of a

project aimed at safeguarding the delicate balance between the necessary port development and the surrounding natural and urban environment. The intent and responsibility of such interpretation and the resulting development strategy may support a new phase of 'big works' which, contrary to the past, is today necessarily faced with the issue of sustainability that, for port cities, is firstly the result of a culture of respect for the different stakeholders.

Growth prospects

Although the Port Plan forecasts look moderate compared to the logics of expansion of the past, they have been carefully weighed to meet expectations based on economic analyses. Considering that already today the system of goods forwarding and reception prevents smooth port operations, the development of traffic and facilities needs to go hand in hand with the strengthening of infrastructures out-side the port. This has meant acting differently, from the planning of specific hubs, and the joint study of solutions for the city with other relevant Administrations, to the presentation of principles and options for the general mobility system of the Northwest. Currently there is an upward trend in traffic essentially in line with the economic analyses carried out at the time of the Prp drafting. Forecasts up to 2016 highlight for the port of Genoa a volume of handled goods between 4 and 5.5 million TEUs yearly. Meeting the needs of growth in traffic depends on factors such as the development of high terminal service efficiency standards, as well as the implementation of infrastructural and logistics projects. As to the extension of operational spaces, the Prp

mainly foresees projects for the Sampierdarena and Voltri port basins. If such projects were realized, the port production capacity would be saturated between 2009 and 2013. If this was not the case, in light of the recent debate about projects feasibility (particularly the expansion westward of the Voltri port), the same capacity would be saturated between 2007 and 2010. Against this background the issue of development strategies for the port and the city at large becomes a priority.

The debate about new proposals

In this context the proposal by Renzo Piano, upon request by the Region of Liguria, and publicly presented to the administrators and the city on 25 May 2004, suggests an evolutionary scenario which is an important reflection tool on the development not just of the port of Genoa but of the city as a whole, and beyond the regional perspective. It is a cultural contribution, as Piano himself defines it, to the self-reflection of the city, introducing fundamental topics such as the relationship between urban and port spaces, eco-sustainable development, the infrastructural connections system, and port expansion. The strategic relevance of this authoritative contribution has been appropriately recognized by all local administrators, resulting in the creation of the Waterfront and Territory Agency, whose functions should be the preparation, supervision and monitoring of the joint general plan feasibility, while respecting each participant's authority (Municipality, Province, Region, RPBW and Port Authority). The city debate emerged from this wide 'vision' has increasingly intensified involving proposals by

different institutional and non-institutional subjects. Some new elements have come into play in the meantime, such as the 'emergencies' connected to the realization of two new large infrastructural projects (the 'gronda' motorway ring road and the *Terzo Valico*, i.e. the third pass). These would generate a large amount of fill material which could be used within the port and for future expansions. Once again the answer to the lack of space, particularly for production activities, may be found in reclaiming land from the sea which has produced over time a new kind of territory, totally man-made, and 'suspended' between land and sea. Nearly all of the hypotheses advanced, despite different layouts and foreseen functions, fall under the category of 'big works' and see the appropriate location for the new port spaces and other activities beyond the existing outer breakwaters. Delocalizing more critical activities judged incompatible with the urban fabric seems to prevail over the idea of interpenetration. The transition from simple coexistence to real integration between port and city in terms of spaces, economy and employment is not a simple matter, and has to do with the city culture. The debate is more heated than ever and tackles fundamental issues regarding the government of the territory. An action strategy is needed that, going beyond the logic of removal and through the promotion of integration of production and urban realities, strives for sustainable development in support of the overall city growth.

The regeneration 'beyond the center': the complex programs

Franca Balletti

Launched in the '90s, the city's regeneration process has led to the establishment of a new development pattern through which Genoa has secured a 'multidimensional' image, where it is no longer associated with purely industrial and port-related functions, but plays an important touristic and cultural role and attracts high-skill production operations. The local administration has been able to seize the opportunities offered by the so-called 'major events' and to obtain EU and government funding, especially in connection with the so-called 'complex programs'. The city's new strategic layout revolves around two main themes: the recovery and reuse of the old harbor, for touristic, recreational and cultural purposes; the gradual expansion of the process to substantial parts of the historic city; and the redesigning of public areas in the city center; and the recycling of disused industrial areas, a process which started in the '80s under the EU Resider Program, with the reclamation of the former Italsider site (Campi, in Val Polcevera) for small-scale manufacturing and commercial operations. Although the media have often focused on the city center, the vast conversions carried out (or currently under way) in areas outside the center, using the new plan-project-management integration tools, are equally important (San Biagio, Fiumara).

The beginning of the experimentation process
Genoa's experience can be broken down into stages, each with its own features, goals and tools. Together,

such phases outline a substantial evolution from the initial occasional location choices and project compartmentalization, still entailing large use of conventional process planning and management procedures, to a more 'mature' stage, involving the latest complex tools, namely, the PRUSST (Programs for Urban Regeneration and Territory Sustainable Development) and the *Contratti di Quartiere* (Neighborhood Contracts), which focus on the sharing of choices, the combining of material and immaterial actions and the prior appraising of project feasibility.

The first stage began with the San Biagio integrated program, involving the reclamation of one of the largest areas formerly devoted to oil processing. Designed for the creation of a mix of residential, commercial, hospitality and service functions, the initiative partly relied on funding made available under Law 203/91 for the construction of police dwellings. If compared with complex programs, this was still an isolated episode. However, it provided an opportunity to test out a government-controlled reclamation operation featuring complex characteristics in terms of costs and high-income functions, the latter being indispensable in order to ensure profitability for a project promoted by a private body (Coop7).

The consolidation and implementation of different tools and procedures

The second stage, which included the PRUs (Urban Recovery Programs, Ministerial Decree 1/12/94), the PRIUs (Urban Regeneration Programs, Ministerial Decree 21/12/94) and the first-generation Neighborhood Contracts (Ministerial Decree 22/10/97), led to: the

recovery and infrastructuring of public housing areas (PRUs for Voltri, Pegli, Begato, San Eusebio); the re-cycling of derelict production facilities (PRIUs for the Fiumara's Ansaldo site, the ice factory in Piazza Sopranis, the cotton mill in Cornigliano and the tannery in via del Mirto-Marassi); the restoration of old city areas (Neighborhood Contract for Porta Soprana-Carmine-via Giustiniani); the completion of the old harbor conversion, begun with the Columbus celebrations, with the redevelopment of the old docks.

These projects have reflected the local government's increasing ability to attract financing, the expanding focus from mere landscape recovery to social and economic promotion, the gradual inclusion of the initiatives in urban policies, as well as a growing interconnection with conventional planning tools, especially following the revision of the city's general plan in 1997.

It can be safely said that the Genoese complex programs were not introduced as 'subversive tools', as some sort of leverage means for opportunistic variations to the plan, but as projects in line with the plan's overall philosophy. Although many of the past initiatives were sponsored by private bodies, a public tender selection system and official commitment deriving from undersigning memoranda of understanding and framework agreements have made it possible to opt for projects in the interest of the city, as well as to define performance rules.

Towards integration into an overall city design

The approval of the PRUSST marked the expansion of the involved territory to almost the entire city, as well as the introduction of a set of measures devised to create infrastructures, sustainable

development opportunities and integrated activities, to enable the assessment of their consistency, mutual compatibility, practical and financial feasibility, and to provide an opportunity to test the relationship between public and private interests.

Although the objective framework was designed to include a very large territory, the allocation of the funds confirmed an inclination to privilege the waterfront and adjacent areas, with the exception of the infrastructure network and fruit and vegetable market of Bolzaneto in Val Polcevera. While leading the complex transformation of strategic public areas to completion, the comeback of several initiatives to the same locations has left the needs of the suburbs unanswered, which have not as yet been paid back for the environmental expropriation they underwent as a consequence of the industrial role they assumed since the 1800s.

The latest Neighborhood Contracts redistribute funds in a more balanced manner between the old Ghetto and two public housing areas: one in Voltri in the west-end and one in Molassana, in Val Bisagno. Nevertheless, adequate quality standards across the entire urban territory will only be achieved if urban policies begin to focus on the creation of a 'city of cities', designed to enhance the local identities deriving from Genoa's old multi-center layout, as outlined in the city's 2000 strategic plan. At a time of serious financial crisis for municipal councils, complex programs may indeed represent, like the European projects (Resider, Urban I and II) did before, the key to meet the expectations of suburban communities, as opposed to the strategic areas in the city.

Towards new strategies for a city in transformation

Roberto Bobbio

Genoa is probably the Italian city that has changed the most in recent decades. The first phase of change was in the 1960s due to the loss of its role as a great industrial center and the progressive paralysis of the port. The second phase was marked by the reaction to the crisis, which began to produce unequivocal results by the middle of the 1990s with the resumption of maritime trade, the redevelopment of the city center, and the reuse of the large abandoned industrial areas. The effects of this double change involved both the image and structure of the city. The articles collected in this section of *Urbanistica* illustrate relevant aspects of the second phase of change and position them within a strategic program. After long analysis of the causes and effects of the crisis, the city sought to encourage new development initiatives. Genoa presents itself thus in the image of a 'mutant city', that cyclically redefines its own role and economy; an image emerging from the study of long term processes treated both in a local (Giacchero 1980) and global perspective (Braudel 1982). A third phase of transformation is beginning that has as its point of departure the renewal of the port and city, but in which a new 'spontaneous' process comes into play, often of exogenous origin. Maintaining the enterprise of change will require reinforcing the outcomes achieved, but also by devising new comprehensive strategies that are able to incorporate actions already in part set in motion, but still requiring a commitment of creativity and coordination. I will try to briefly describe a

few themes of change that seem to me essential for the future of the city.

Themes of transformation

The redevelopment of the center. The strategy that made a mainstay of the quality of the urban environment in the central areas and of the valorization of the historic center has achieved notable results in terms of improving the urban image, increasing tourism, and strengthening the sense of belonging on the part of the inhabitants (Alcozer in this issue). This success is the result of a series of initiatives that, connected with the organization of major events (Alcozer, Gattorna in this issue; Bisio, Bobbio 2004), have drawn together the efforts which have their origins in the 1980s but with variable success (for want of a strategic vision or the lack of the capacity to put it into effect). The unknowns regarding the future developments regards first of all the possibility of realizing new works without special state financing (or the possibility of new acquisitions); but also the peril of success, beginning with the abnormal growth of property values that threatens to drive the inhabitants with modest economic means, the commerce of the neighborhood, and the remaining artisanal activities towards the degraded areas of the city. *The residence and services.* The directed and 'virtuous' processes of transformations of the 1990s have concerned the central areas, in keeping with the specific strategy of relaunching the city. The priorities of this strategy are well understandable but (Gattorna, Gastaldi), as in any city poorly developed after World War II, in Genoa the problem remains of bettering the poor conditions of the residential periphery. Some neighborhoods are involved

with rather marginal interventions (Balletti, Soppa); the only large work is perhaps the green spaces and sports facilities facing the water realized between the built-up area of Prà and the great dock of the port of Voltri in response to the decades-long battle by the inhabitants. The improvement has just begun of some of the public building complexes that present the most acute problems of discomfort and security, and the initiatives are not yet realized for diminishing the degradation and augmenting the environmental quality of the neighborhoods of private building (the first project remains unrealized that sought to resolve the conflict between residences and the road conditions of the motorway). The theme of the periphery is connected to that of services: the urban plan contains the elements for dealing with the improvement of the systems that have been in large part or totally inadequate until now, such as those for hospitals or schools, but for now the possibility of activating restructuring operations appears remote. *Port and infrastructure.* Renzo Piano has laid out a scheme for the ample reconfiguration of the port and the infrastructural system that includes the transformation of large areas at the periphery of the city. It is a fascinating design that integrates new ideas with revised proposals for enlarging the port which have been discussed for some time, but that have not demonstrated their feasibility and utility. The start of a new phase of growth of the port (Artuso) seems to have gathered broad support, but input from qualified experts has raised doubts as to the possibility of procuring the enormous financing necessary, and concerns that such ambitious

programs detract from more urgent improvements. However if one considers the connection between the building up of land area by infilling along the sea edge and the realization of infrastructure, Piano's idea acquires another value (Artuso). For more than forty years Genoa has aimed at the opening of a third rail pass toward the north (essential for connecting with the high-capacity Torino-Trieste line) and by more than twenty years at expanding the motorway and shifting it to a higher elevation: essential works to avoid the asphyxiation of the port and city. It was calculated that whoever digs the tunnel would recover their investment by dumping the fill in the sea to create an artificial island, which is being discussed (January 2005) as the site for the petroleum terminal that today represents a risk factor due to its nearness to residential areas. Piano's scheme (which resolves differently the problem of the petroleum port) is therefore useful for determining the conditions in which to carry forward a more limited and concrete design. However what is not being considered is the impact on the city and environment of a work so invasive and, more generally, the meager debate on the choices that affect the whole city: representation by the diverse agencies in the 'technical' committees is not sufficient to legitimize decisions of such importance. *The urban polarity.* The reorganization of trade, setting out late with respect to the other metropolitan areas for lack of space, has taken on the conversion of the abandoned industrial areas in the internal valleys and in the Ponente (Balletti in this issue). The new order of trade means not only greater difficulties for the old distribution network (stores

in both the center and in the neighborhoods are disappearing) but in connection with the realizations in the center for free time, puts in crisis the multipolar structure that has constituted a positive characteristic of the fragmented Genoese urban area and that has until now avoided the ghettoization of the periphery. The interventions executed to strengthen some peripheral commercial systems that are still able to develop competitiveness have obtained some results; yet the process of weakening and slipping of the peripheral polarity continues and should be confronted with decisiveness, even considering other aspects.

A critical point: the role of private stakeholders

All of the major operations, from those already taken to a good level of completion, such as the redevelopment of the center, to those only begun or discussed, are promoted and guided by the public administration: the City administration is by far the principal player, but also the Province and the Region, thanks to electoral reform and by self-government, have been involved with notable initiatives. It seems instead that it is the private sector that is not interested (or able) in promoting regional development. After the failures of the great property operations of the 1970s (the office districts of via Madre di Dio, Corte Lambruschini, San Benigno resulted in bankruptcies and were completed thanks to the interventions of the banks and the buying in by public agencies), the private entrepreneurs began to address themselves to building rehabilitation; but the operations were taken in tow by the public operations. Recently, some businesses in the building sector made themselves promoters of some

interesting initiatives, taking risks in the design phase but always with the idea of obtaining public financing in the executive phase. The panorama of industrial activities is discouraging. For years a productive restart was hoped for that would be led by the high technology sector, as is present in the Genoese Ponente (the western portion), but the growth programs of Marconi Italiana (to which the city administration responded readily by accelerating the process of approval of projects and even ceding an academic building to the company) failed due to the crisis of the multinational group of which the company is a part. All attention is now on the project for a citadel of technology on the hill of the Erzelli (Miracoli in this issue), a step ahead (but for now only virtually) with respect to the vague discourse that has gone on for years.

Paradoxically, the much opposed program for the restarting of the iron and steel works (ex Italsider) of Cornigliano seems at the current time the only initiative capable of preserving a significant number of industrial work places.

The results reached by the public administrations risk being ineffective in the fostering new development processes if they are not be joined by a more substantial private response.

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A strategy for territorial transformations balance

*Giuseppe Campos Venuti**

Fifty years ago, urban planning was considered very important by politics, culture and media. Today, it has not been included in the list of European Union competences. It doesn't mean that it is less important than it was, and that urban and territorial transformations aren't important factors for European countries. Fifty years ago urban rebuilding, houses, factories, public facilities building were already a topic problem for European countries. It was not the same for Third World countries: their biggest problem was the end of Colonialism and how to find a way out of underdevelopment. And even today, cities like Bologna or Barcelona haven't always the same urban indicators than Shanghai or Mexico City. For this reason, I'll speak about Europe not for Eurocentric attitude, but because this is the context I know more.

Fifty years ago Italy and Spain focussed on urban transformation less successfully than other North European countries. Spain and Italy decided to solve housing emergency choosing quantity, and not quality, allowing a big growth of urban interests. Italy made worse, rebuilding the most part of the fabrics demolished during the war and concentrating them in the northern part of the country, leaving to South the only possibility of emigration, towards the richer North or elsewhere abroad. And even when national policies decided to invest in industrial development in the South, only isolated fabrics were built, and soon condemned to fail. Italian and also Spanish cities lived the contradiction

of a life together with an old capitalism based on urban interests and a more dynamic one, able to create, in Italy and after in Spain, a real economic boom. This contradiction caused territorial lack of balance bigger than in the rest of Europe.

Firts attempts of territorial balance

Italian lack of balance was determined also by old laws and urban plans, able to foster urban interests: the process of reform tried to fight against these laws and plans, but unsuccessfully. But what the process of reform proposed, nationally refused, was considered very carefully by some Italian left wing local administrations: Bologna above all.

During the '60s and the '70s the administration of Bologna bought almost the 85% of available rural lands, to be directly urbanized. As a result, popular neighborhoods were built in the city center, and private houses and offices districts were built outside, saving the historic city center and the chain of hills, saved from urban development. A new road network helped this process of decentralisation, even if the city didn't take enough initiative to build a strong network of railroads, a big mistake above all for the future development. In the same period, a strategy of balance was used to plan all the region around Bologna, deciding to stop the natural growth along the historic route of Via Emilia and fostering perpendicular development lines, crossing Padana plain and connecting directly the foot of Appennini.

After the first big oil crisis after 1973, European cities began to face more complex problems, like mobility and environment, and just connecting these two aspects European cities launched new attempts of territorial balances. German

metropolitan regions have been supported by the development of regional railroads networks; Dutch and French urban regions have been developed by large investments of regional railroads and giving a new role to environmental resources.

From urban to territorial transformations

During the '80s and the '90s big industrial and territorial transformations occurred in Europe. Fabrics and industrial building were decentralised outside the cities, supported in Europe by a new development of railroads, while in Italy industrial decentralisation was not helped by any transportation policy and produced new territorial problems.

In Italy and in Spain, where economic and territorial lacks of balances are deeper than in other countries, urban transformations are considered and discussed without considering a territorial perspective. This is the reason of the strange diatribe between plan and project and between urban planning and architecture. I always refused to fall into this trap. The reason is that I always refused bureaucratic and dogmatic plans and laws, and I always favoured flexible, pragmatic planning decisions, with a clear regulation. In my opinion, "total deregulation is the same and the contrary of total, dogmatic and strong regulation". In my opinion, plan and project are not one against the other, but they must be integrated, and urban transformations must be integrated within territorial transformations.

In this perspective, the topic of derelict and abandoned industrial areas is only one of the problem of urban transformation: it is an occasion that must be used according to the territorial general vision, and it cannot be left to casual or unregulated decisions. In

Italy, the effects of industrial, and consequently residential sprawl are worse than in the rest of the continent: it is stronger in Italy the power of urban interests and the lack of a contemporary law to rule cities and territories; public works get at their disposal only one third of the money other European countries public works can get; it is still live the Italian 'genetic anomaly' of cities without railroads; and there is still a weak environment culture.

Territorial balance strategy

I'm not familiar with questions on long term alternatives: I'm used to analyze yesterday and today problems to find good solutions for tomorrow, for Italy and Europe, whose experiences can be reflected on Italy.

I believe that in Italy and in Europe the future of the cities must be helped by integration, decentralisation and polycentrism, and not left to unrulled competition, concentration and congested cities. Many of the reforms suggested by European Union, refused by national politics, have been approved regionally in Emilia Romagna, giving me the possibility to work to a new model of plan, after fifty years of political fight.

The reform is about a masterplan, called in Italy 'structure plan', with a strong program but without prescriptions, as required by the 1942 National Law. The 'operative plan' puts into practice its provisions, for five years, the same five years of the length of a local administration; it is prescriptive and supported by real financial investments included into the local budget and private investments, selected among the available and able to put into practice the ideas included into the structure plan, using frequently urban projects. The process is flexible, but it respects public rules; it

gives real possibility to realize public ideas with private transfer of rights after private development; it assures equity of transfer of rights from private to public sector and it fosters constantly urban quality. The model is simple, new, ethic and democratic. But it is not enough to regulate urban transformations: territorial transformations must be considered as well. The new plan for Rome is a typical example of this frequent underestimation of territorial strategies. All the urban strategies are well known: the strong investments on railroads, the new idea on the city center, considered as a city itself, the new compensative mechanism to put into practice the provisions, that caused a big debate and some stops to the plan process. But the territorial strategy is not so well known. Rome is a metropolitan municipality. It has a territorial extension larger than the Province of Milan or Naples, made by a collection of big neighborhoods without a center. For this reason, the new plan programmed 'new centralities', to create a new heart to these neighborhoods, supported by a strong development of railroads. This territorial balance strategy is quite similar to the strategy chosen twenty years ago by Madrid, whose politic of public facilities balance in the southern sector of the city was so ordinary to be misunderstood.

Future and territorial balance

At a smaller scale and in a different context than the Roman one, I worked once again to a territorial balance strategy for the city of Bologna.

The city changed its strategies in the last years, forgetting what it did in the old process of territorial balance. The city decentralised in the last

years all the industrial activities, giving the way to office development and high costs houses to the city center. Young people, immigrants, poorer people left the city. Transportation policies have been car oriented, without strong regulations.

But in the same time, smaller cities within the same Province grew creating a strong integration between houses, jobs, public facilities and environmental quality.

Today, 14 municipalities in the Bolognese Province, with a population of 120,000 inhabitants consider themselves as 'Cities-Neighborhoods' of the bigger provincial city, asking to Provincial administration to create a strong debate with the major city of Bologna. The proposed strategy is a decentralisation for office locations, using the already working regional railroad network. This strategy gives the possibility to the major city, Bologna, to invest in urban design to create new quality for the city, as Barcelona did and as it is possible to read in Jordi Boria's book on public space.

In my future, I see a strong commitment in modernizing urban transformations tools and in integrating plan and project, as Catalonia did. In my future, I see a strong commitment in fostering metropolitan balance, helping the transition from monocentric cities to polycentric cities, asking to European Union an involvement in economic, social and territorial balance, towards a 'European policy of integration and territorial balance'. Perhaps, this is a too ambitious proposal: but I'm not asking it for the rest of the century, it is enough for the next future; and quoting Gramsci, this is the "willingness optimism".

* This contribution is a synthesis of the opening speech of the World City Forum held in Barcelona in September 2004.

Authenticity, simulation and entitlement

Peter Bosselmann*

A city derives authenticity from many sources, but at its most fundamental level the authenticity of a city is related to the shape of the land upon which the city is built. Each city has an authentic location defined by rivers, shorelines, plains, hills or mountains, and the form of the city should serve to reinforce it. This notion of place within the ecology of a region warrants reflection, because it holds many answers to a better understanding of sustainability.

Acknowledgement of the qualities of authentic form also emphasizes a city's unique attributes in an era when global economic forces are encouraging sameness.

Though the forces underlying a city's qualities of authenticity may be immutable, every city is subject to constant, if gradual, change. Often this means that its sense of authenticity can only endure if it is monitored. Normally, in democratic societies this process is the purview of elected representatives who, through methods of entitlement, assign allowable building heights, forms and densities to various properties.

Generally, these decisions are based on standards for the design of new buildings and open spaces that are arrived at through open, public processes. Simulation studies have long offered tools to facilitate this work. Indeed, without simulation, even a politically involved citizenry could not understand the effects of cumulative change, driven as they often are by speculative forces. However, the use of such simulation studies is only as valuable as is the commitment of those who produce and evaluate them to protecting accepted

public standards. Without such commitment, the sense of a city's authenticity may be compromised, no matter how technologically sophisticated simulation methods become.

Like other cities, for many years San Francisco has monitored these processes of change using simulations to inform urban design decision-making. In San Francisco, decisions regarding building height have been the subject of particular controversy. It is in this regard that two recent building proposals have tested the nature of the relationship between simulation and public-policy formation. The story of these proposals underlines how important it is for simulation experts to remain neutral with regard to position and affiliation.

City form and topography

The shape of land and water are remarkable in San Francisco. When describing their city, residents often refer to their location of residence in topographic terms. They refer to hills and valleys, heights and hollows. The sense of dwelling and moving through a complex topography further heightens the experience of the city. Many locations have regional views, and from a number of places a person can look out over the rolling topography and comprehend all three geographic boundaries of the city's 49 square miles of surface area: the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay, and the San Bruno Mountains.

Such an experience is possible because the city's buildings appear like a carpet uniformly stretched across its hills and valleys. Historically, this condition did not result from building regulations; there were few of these in the late nineteenth century when much of the city was rapidly built with riches from the Gold Rush. Rather,

structural limitations imposed by wood-frame construction were largely behind a uniformity of building heights. When it did become economically advantageous to build highrise structures, the city adopted rules preventing such building along the waterfront and on the down slope of hills. These limits were imposed in the early 1970s in response to great pressures for highrise office buildings in the financial district and for residential towers in the affluent neighborhoods. For thirty years these height limits stayed in place with few changes.

Understandably, there have been many challenges to these height limitations. Over the years the San Francisco Planning Commission has heard frequent arguments in favor of lifting allowable heights in certain locations. However, neighborhood opposition has generally always backed existing rules. A certain truth has seemed to be embodied in the height limits, which the people of San Francisco have understood and shared. There were also sufficient parcels of land in the city where highrise structures were encouraged. In particular, highrise buildings were allowed in a well-defined area of the financial district, and by arranging height limits here like natural contours, a 'constructed hill' emerged to complement the city's natural topography. This design principle embodied certain flexibility because as long as building heights stepped down gradually toward surrounding neighborhoods, the image of a 'constructed hill' would remain intact. This happened especially in the early 1980s when the downtown highrise area was permitted to 'swell' to the east and south. The method of setting height limits would have lost none of its validity if it had

been allowed to continue on the course first set in the 1970s (1). However, San Francisco's building rules need periodic monitoring, interpretation and alteration by the professional staff of the city planning commission. And to assist them in making such decisions, they have relied on simulation studies.

Starting in the 1970s such studies were made in the Environmental Simulation Laboratory, located at the University of California, Berkeley. A large wooden model of San Francisco was kept underneath a large crane here for movie-making purposes.

Periodically, the computer-guided cameras would drive down streets in the model to simulate changes to allowable building heights. In the late 1980s the staff at Berkeley gradually augmented the modeling technique and then replaced it by constructing a digital model that used computer simulations based on geographic information science and digital representations of actual and proposed buildings in the vicinity of downtown (2). This new technology has opened the field of simulation to other sources than the Berkeley laboratory. In fact, it has become quite simple for digital-imaging contractors to furnish developers and their architects with their own feasibility studies and make high-tech design presentations. A small industry of lawyers, architects, and technical support staff has grown up in San Francisco around this activity. Their prime occupation was and is to help developers increase building entitlements (the rights to develop certain parcels to prescribed densities and heights). Equipped with their own digital models developers now routinely try to persuade decision-makers to increase entitlements. Not that developers would

openly lie; they simply distort the truth by presenting information selectively, showing the proposed building from only the best perspective, or leaving out important aspects of its context. Such privately produced models also never show the effects of cumulative change if neighboring properties receive similar increases in entitlement. By contrast, the staff at the Berkeley SimLab includes all factors that can be shown and that are representative of the existing and proposed conditions. They have also provided openness to accuracy tests in their assumptions and methods. Indeed, anyone doubting the accuracy of a particular simulation has access to its underlying data files. As a public institution, information produced at the University is in the public domain, and will be disclosed upon request.

Interestingly enough, proponents of developments have rarely challenged the accuracy and representative nature of the laboratory's simulation work. Instead, developers have attempted to influence the building entitlement process by preventing the laboratory from getting involved in the first place. These efforts have sometimes made use of backdoor political channels. For example, contracts for simulation work between the city and the university have been quietly canceled by the mayor's office without informing the planning staff that commissioned them. The reader should not assume that any undue level of conspiracy has operated in these matters. Viewed from a financial standpoint, everybody is simply operating in a most predictable manner, using whatever political influence may be at his or her disposal. The stakes are high, and if increased entitlements are granted, the potential financial gain

for property owners may be substantial.

Highrise living downtown

Downtown building values in San Francisco remained depressed for a decade and a half following the collapse of the highrise building market there in the mid-1980s. Existing highrises had high vacancy rates, and there was little demand for additional high-quality office space. Whatever demand for new office space existed in the Bay Area was accommodated in suburban office parks. But by the late 1990s demand began to grow for highrise residential towers in an area south of the financial district near the Transbay Terminal, a commuter bus depot primarily serving office workers from across the bay.

Initially, this demand for highrise residential towers was triggered when the State of California resolved to modernize the bus depot with an ambitious design that included a new terminus for future high-speed train service linking San Francisco to Sacramento and Los Angeles. The State also owned ten acres of land adjacent to the terminal on parcels that had previously been occupied by the Embarcadero Freeway. These parcels had been vacant for almost ten years since the structure had been demolished after it was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. In a nutshell, the State proposed building high-rise structures on the vacant land from the freeway as a way to help offset the costs of the new terminal. One important side effect of the state plans was that nearby property owners began to hire developers to perform feasibility studies for highrise structures on their own parcels. Collectively, these owners, through their architects, also pressured the city to lift building height limits in the

area to a uniform 400 feet. In keeping with the idea of a downtown 'constructed hill', these limits had formerly varied from an allowable 80 feet in most places, to 140 feet elsewhere, to 240 feet on top of the adjacent Rincon Hill. Responding to this pressure, in January 1999 the mayor's office, without much consultation with the planning staff, sent a message to the owners that a 400-foot height was under consideration for all properties in the area. This message clearly broke with thirty years of public policy in San Francisco, which had been to set allowable building heights with respect to the 'authentic' topography of the city.

Whoever advised the mayor to allow highrise residential towers near downtown in all likelihood used sound logic. However, the arguments in favour of highrise towers were selective chosen. The larger argument went something like this.

Downtown San Francisco will eventually become a neighborhood. In addition to the 300,000 commuters employed there, more people will soon want to live downtown. Granted, they will live on land originally intended for commercial development, but as demand for housing has outpaced demand for offices, housing is now the highest and best use of this land. The location is in some ways ideal. Residents can live near their work; or if they do not work downtown, they can walk to a range of transit providers that will take them to employment centers anywhere in the Bay Area.

According to initial estimates, a total of 10,000 people could be accommodated on the state-owned properties, and an equal number on adjacent privately owned properties and on the slopes of nearby Rincon Hill. Many of the new units would have great appeal because they would have

views of downtown and the Bay Bridge. But even units facing the south and the east would have sweeping regional views over the city and toward the Berkeley and Oakland hills. The mayor's advisors also cited the precedent of another West Coast city, Vancouver, where a graceful highrise community had emerged over the last thirty years on former industrial areas. It could happen in San Francisco too.

Responding to obvious political counter-arguments, the mayor would have asked about affordability. Naturally, the tower units would be expensive, the equivalent of a traditional single-family house in a decent San Francisco neighborhood, or more, depending on the views. But, advisors would have assured the mayor, for every tower unit there would have to be a unit in the podium portion of the project. Those would be more difficult to sell or lease, and could easily be set aside as subsidized units.

Density

Overall, the density of typical San Francisco neighborhoods is relatively high compared to those in other cities in the Bay Area. There are on average about 35 units per acre in a typical San Francisco neighborhood. However, the densities envisioned for the twenty-acre area around the reconfigured Transbay Terminal and on the nearby slopes of Rincon Hill was much higher.

In fact, it was expected to exceed 400 units per acre, and this computation did not include surface areas occupied by city streets. There was clearly no local precedent for how to design livable communities at such densities. Throughout all San Francisco the highest existing density on an equivalent ten-acre site was in an area reconstructed following the urban renewal

era of the 1960s, and even here residential densities had only reached 150 units per acre. To come to grips with this reality, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency hired a consultant team to study the feasibility of accommodating 6,000 units on the ten acres of state-owned property near the terminal. Meanwhile, after some study, the architects and planners hired by developers began to offer proposals for this area to the mayor. Their initial plans and accompanying simulations showed how it was true that for every tower unit there would be a unit in the podium of their buildings. The reason is that a tower can only occupy a small portion of a site. Depending on the size of a property, there might be room for two towers; but the rest of the site would need to be covered by a structure that, for reasons having to do with codes and planning laws, could only rise to eight stories. According to the developers and their architects, apartment units in this podium would necessarily have windows facing only one direction. Such an orientation to natural light and ventilation could either be to the street or to an internal courtyard, but never from two sides except at building corners. There would be no choice for the lowest units but to have them wrap around an internal multistory parking garage. Meanwhile, the towers would need to have footprints of close to 100 by 100 feet and reach all the way to the 400-foot limit. Each floor would accommodate eight units. And to optimize views, they said, towers would need to be placed in a checkerboard fashion, facing each other on the diagonal, separated by a 65-foot gap. Before the Redevelopment Agency's own consultant team completed its study of the

development potential of the downtown state-owned lands, private developers had already made two proposals to the city based on the above design parameters. These received preliminary approval from the mayor's office. Then, with some delay and reluctance, this decision was confirmed after hearings in front of the appointed city planning commission and elected city council in early 2004.

An alternative view

The consultant team hired by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency responded to their assignment from a different standpoint than the architects hired by the private developers. Among other things, they wanted to demonstrate that not only would the tower units be of high quality, but so would the units in the podium portions of the structures. Furthermore, since a substantial population of the new neighborhood would be expected to use the sidewalks in the area to walk to work or other destinations, it was imperative that the pedestrian experience be as pleasant as possible. Their plan formulated a list of four design goals. These were based both on design explorations and simulation studies.

Towers had to have sufficient separation. Unlike office towers that frequently sit right next to each other, residential towers of 40 floors should at least be 150 feet apart. The consultants determined that such a distance was needed to protect privacy and views and provide sufficient light to lower-floor apartments and nearby streets. The wider separation would also prevent an accumulation of towers from seeming opaque. Thus, a person driving or walking alongside the amply separated towers would still be able to catch glimpses of the nearby

skyline, natural topography, and occasional sky. In this regard, the placement of towers in a checkerboard pattern also had to be avoided; such a pattern would allow a small number of towers to merge together into a solid wall.

Lower units had to be of high quality. Development of the state-owned lands near downtown offered the unique opportunity for an innercity neighborhood that might indeed provide a true choice to living in suburban locations. For this reason, all units, including those in the lower portions of the structures, should receive light from two sides whenever possible. As a measurable standard, the consultant team proposed that all apartments should be guaranteed direct sunlight for some hours every day, even in winter. Also, every apartment resident should be able to step outside onto a private space, however small, and be able to look up to the sky. Only under such conditions could the housing offer a true alternative to a freestanding home within commuting distance of the city. Streets had to be designed in an attractive manner. To ensure the quality of the pedestrian experience in the new neighborhood, the consultant team proposed that one public right-of-way, Folsom Street, should be widened to 95 feet. Such a width would allow double rows of trees to be planted and a separate vehicle lane to be constructed to give access to adjacent properties. They further proposed that all sidewalks in the area had to be designed with an active frontage. In this regard, they calculated that even at the proposed high densities, not all frontages could support retail stores. Many frontages would thus have housing units at ground level, and these units should be given direct entrances off the side-walk. To maintain the

privacy, these would need to entered from exterior staircases ('stoops') leading to private or semiprivate landings raised at least four feet above the sidewalk. Such a design would also allow residents of the lowest units to enter their townhouse units directly, without using the same communal lobby for the tower units above. Finally, the consultants also proposed that car entrances to underground garages should be restricted to one per block.

The new neighborhood would need one or two high-quality public squares. Such public gathering spaces should be located at street level, not on the roof of an underground garage. This would allow large trees to grow there, ones that would not be dwarfed by the scale of the surrounding buildings. The consultant team recommended that when they reached maturity, these trees should be as tall as the podium portions of the residential buildings. Furthermore, the parks in which these trees would be located should receive sunlight from 11 AM to 2 PM for six months of the year on their entire surface area.

Testing value through simulations

These four goals were conceived by the consultant team as an expression of values reflecting the existing urban design culture of San Francisco. It was recognized that they might be different in other cities. For example, the tower separation rules advocated by the consultant would be considered generous compared to the standards used in Asian cities. Once agreed upon, however, the standards would set an appropriate baseline for the design of individual structures. The relative performance of these structures could then be measured through simulations. The accompanying images

illustrate how this evaluation might make fair use of simulation studies. In this case the evaluation is based on the experience of entering San Francisco by driving across the Bay Bridge. This entry to the city must surely rank among the most memorable urban experiences in America. Among other things, the animated sequence shows why an appropriate separation of residential towers south of downtown is so important. This type of simulation can only be done in motion. It shows that without adequate separation, new residential towers in the area will create a sense of opaqueness. The hills and ridges that form key components of the city's natural topography would be obscured; so would the nearby skyline existing office buildings. By contrast, the damaging effect of the developers' proposed checkerboard spacing is evident from views in the Yerba Buena Island sequence. This spacing causes all four towers to appear to merge into a single large volume. This same view also explains the merits of the city's 'hill policy'. As mentioned at the beginning, allowable building heights in San Francisco have traditionally concentrated highrise development to create the sense of a 'constructed hill'. The same notion can be tested in the view sequence from the Hall of Justice. If, indeed, the height shown here were approved, significant pressure would be exerted on the properties in front of the viewer. Instead of marking the end of the hill with a very high structure, the heights would have to come down gradually to make the transition to the allowable height in this neighborhood. Finally, sunlight simulations can be used to measure the performance of the new square in the Transbay

development in relation to the standards proposed. Among other things they indicate where towers may be placed to avoid shading this new park. The consultant performed additional simulations of this type to evaluate access to direct sunlight for near-street-level apartments and for apartments facing onto internal building courtyards.

The public trust

There is an underlying belief among those who do this type of simulation work that the public should be given an opportunity to understand the implications of decision-making. It is not an outlandish belief. Public assets are at stake. Topography and sunlight are assets protected by the city charter. A well-designed public space is an asset; so are views, and so is good urban ecology and the sense of authenticity of landform and shorelines. In this regard, simulators make an important contribution to the political discourse in cities. But with the advent of sophisticated, accessible technologies, the opportunity grows for misuse of the public trust in simulation work. Therefore it is important that those who do the work adopt a neutral stance toward those who assign it. Realistically, this means the work is best done at facilities affiliated with a university. Among other things, the staff here may be somewhat removed from the pressures of political influence, and insulated by the circumstances of their employment from the temptation to tailor their findings to the needs of high-paying clients. More difficult to advocate is the timing of such work. Simulations need to be done early in any design-review process, prior to the granting of entitlements for particular properties. If done early, an urban design sense can be introduced into otherwise abstract

decision-making. Decision-makers can also more fully articulate values that later detailed design should respect. Large projects of the nature discussed here go through the hands of many designers and the final outcome will look differently from what is shown here, but decisions in the early phase of such projects are crucial for the design of the city as a whole.

* The visual simulations were produced by Cheryl Parker (Urban Explorer), John Bela, Blaine Merker, Maria Vasileva and the author.

Notes

1. The projects mentioned here were developed by Tishman Speyer.
2. The author was a member of the consultant team that was directed by John Kriken and Ellen Lou, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, San Francisco.

Barcelona progress: a successful experiment in communicating town planning

Josep A. Acebillo

Nowadays our many cities are suffering the effects of de-industrialisation. Since the eighteenth century the socio-economic engine of urban development has been the industrial revolution and when manufacturing activity changes location or declines a structural change is imposed on urban systems. Being based on the requirements of industrialisation, the built urban fabric and infrastructure do not adapt spontaneously to the needs of the new economy, causing the city to slide into crisis and making urban transformation an absolute necessity. Preconceived solutions cannot be applied to transformations of such intensity. A new metropolitan culture needs to be developed, capable of sustaining our present socio-economic evolution in territorial terms. In order to describe this process the term 'remapping' denotes a concept which is not a mere revision of the city map but which must reflect a profound programmed morphological transformation: from economy to architecture. After industrial growth usefully guided by expansion plans a new phase of re-conversion and re-use is coming, which can only be approached through projects.

Urban projects for the transformations

On the one hand, at the time of writing the city project of Barcelona is based on targeted neighbourhood redevelopment operations in which over 25 years' worth of accumulated experience is being applied, and on the

other hand, a new town planning strategy involving reorganisation. These are large-scale transformations capable of creating the spatial scenario guaranteeing the city's future competitiveness, or in other words, its economic prosperity and social vibrancy. The idea of exhibiting this project, which envelops the whole city, was the starting point for the *Barcelona in progress* exhibition presented at Forum 2004, and which has continued permanently as a place communicating the project. Initially the particularly technical nature of planning materials presented some difficulty and so the need to bring it closer and make it comprehensible to the wider public arose. Making a three dimensional relief model was a demanding work, involving simplifying plans, using rendering and videos in order to illustrate more than 100 projects along a section of about 100 metre. But finally the exhibition of all the town planning project types, reawakened collective interest, and brought a great many people into the Forum building. The visitors, whether citizens of Barcelona or foreigners, attempt to read the plans as one tries to arrange a group portrait so that the last detail provides them with an idea of how their daily environment will change.

Redrawing the city

In 1980 the quality of public space constituted the basic reference point in the urban-planning efforts of Barcelona. Right from the early developments of gardens, squares and streets, that reference-point has been constantly present for almost 25 years and has marked the city out from others in the world. In this way, the city has come to be recognised as an authentic laboratory for urban design. This way of doing things

remains constant in the new transformation strategies for the city but going beyond the domestic and insular scale of the early years. As such, the new parks of the Seafronts, Ciutadella, Diagonal, the Forum 2004, the heights of Montjuic and the restructuring of the Tres Turons and Collserola park currently comprise a strategic green space structure which will improve the quality of public space in Barcelona considerably. This quality is also evident in the new transformation currently underway, which are concentrated at the two extremes of the city; to be exact, in the areas surrounding the two rivers. Let us bear in mind that the Barcelona seafront, from the river Llobregat to the river Besòs, stretches some 14 km and is divided in two parts of almost equal dimensions, although used for different purposes, by the new estuary of the port. In this way the southwest littoral, between port Vell and the Llobregat, will be the location for large-scale industry (*zona franca*), the large-scale areas dedicated to logistic activities (ZAL, Mercabarna) and the large-scale transport infrastructures of people and goods (industrial Port and Airport) to the current two runways and one terminal building of the airport a third runway and additional terminal building will be added. This extension, together with the high-speed-train link, will provide the airport with the sufficient characteristics and critical mass to become an intercontinental hub with substantially extended connections with the rest of the world. Its links with the metro and commuter rail network will also allow the airport to act as a dynamo and resource centre of the economic and metropolitan space. New urban projects are marked out for the inland area corresponding to this part of the southwest littoral,

encompassing the new setting of Gran Via-Plaça Cerda-Passeig de la Zona Franca-Amadeu Torner. Developments such as the extension of the Montjuic 2 trade, fairs site, the Ciutat Judicial (the new complex of law courts), Plaça Europa and the transformation of the Can Batllò site, will transform this area into a new residential centre and centre of economic activity within the territories on the Barcelona-L'Hospitalet boundary. During the second half of the 20th century, Barcelona has grown basically westwards whereas the eastern areas of Barcelona were forgotten about and became increasingly obsolete. Now, Barcelona has turned its development eastwards, with a clear commitment to rebalancing the city established on the basis of the transformation and recycling of old industrial area, thus completing the process of recovery for civic use of the 7 kilometres of littoral stretching between the new port estuary and the River Besòs. This transformation eastwards of Barcelona, in the districts of Sant Martí and Sant Andreu is supported by three key elements: Gloriès, Sagrera and the Forum 2004. Together they define a triangle which must become the metropolitan reference of the new economy. Between Plaça de les Glòries and the setting of the Forum 2004, a new Diagonal avenue traverses the old fields of Poblenou neighbourhood, which until 150 years ago were crop fields and which in the middle of the 19th century were turned into industrial areas with the appearance of large industrial buildings and chimneys. Now, those industrial constructions are being turned into buildings geared to housing the activities of the new economy, thus producing

urban images which make up the new socio-economic landscape. This new technological district of Barcelona 22@ will encompass more than 3 million sqm dedicated to economic activity and a significant amount of new housing.

Plaça de las Glories in its new setting, must guarantee continuity between the 22@ district and the Eixample and Ciutat Vella. Defined by a set of spaces encompassing leisure and culture, administrative and economic activity, along with road and transport infrastructures, it will generate a huge park of 16 hectares.

Another large lineal park, covering double the area of Ciutadella Park, constructed over the railway, is the central urban element of the new Sagrera. In this setting 8,000 dwellings, offices and facilities will be built as well as the new station. With four subterranean floors, it will become a metropolitan reference point, configuring itself as a great centre of mobility and activity. Its intermodal character will facilitate the linkage of regional, commuter and high-speed-train services, two metro lines (L4 and L9), a bus station and the corresponding parking space.

In the 2,5 km of coastline down to the River Besòs, the most important urban project of the city has been developed constituting the culmination of the transformation of the seafront, the first stage of which was Vila Olímpica. This Forum area, which because it had been so forgotten about and housed so many infrastructures was considered the junk room of the city, has been transformed and brought into line with the central city without abandoning the maintaining there of infrastructures of great strategic scope. This complex of infrastructures already

includes a new water treatment of large quantities of waste with less incineration. A new system of electricity production, of greater output and less pollution, along with the burying underground of all the electricity lines stretching along the course of the river to the Nus de la Trinitat. The centralized heat and cold production, the pneumatic recovery of waste and the complex of photovoltaic panels are further components of this restructuring of infrastructures, which is inseparable from and forms part of the same transformation strategy which finds its civic complement in the creation of new public spaces.

The Diagonal avenue finally finds its way to the sea by means of a large square which doubles up as the roof of the water treatment plant and which serves as an area of distribution facilitating access to a new seafront in a setting of beaches, parks and singular public spaces.

This city-building effort, as well as public space, needed to be rounded off by the putting in place of activities complementary to the housing present in the area. This is the motive behind the construction of the International Convention Centre of Barcelona, which together with the Forum, is the economic motor behind the establishments of new public and private enterprises throughout the area.

The urban reforms, aware of their surroundings, establish a relationship between the new public space of the seafront and the residential areas of the Mina. The new university campus (between the Ronda ring road and Carrer de Taulat), together with the new residential complex, comprise a sequence of spaces which, shaped by the new Rambla de la Mina, will contribute to the regeneration of this

neighbourhood.

All this effort to rebalance the city eastwards, including the regeneration of the course of the River Besos, takes in several municipalities and has been conceived from a perspective of essential continuity in the design and management of the services and infrastructures of the urban spread, along with the coordination of the urban planning and infrastructure policies of the municipalities which are encompassed by it. This perspective is clearly conscious of the role which the Barcelona's metropolitan area (Region 1) has to play in the new territorial organisation of Catalonia.

In Catalonia, the status of Barcelona as capital cannot be allowed to result in a blind concentration of installations and facilities. Barcelona must be the first political and urban reference to place its spaces, installations, facilities and the city as a whole at the service of each and every Catalan. It must also be a first-class reference on the world stage.

The great relief model

of Barcelona river to river

In this attempt to explain the metropolitan transformation of Barcelona which forms the central focus of the exhibition, it is vital to overcome a limitation: represent and communicate the territorial impact of the projects under construction in a comprehensible form. A dozen years ago an agency for town planning development and infrastructure was created in Barcelona in order to develop the post-Olympic city's main transformation projects. Not by chance was the agency called Barcelona Regional, which produced an initial document with the purpose of defining this new scale of territorial intervention. Generally known as the *Barcelona Riu a Riu Plan* (Barcelona River

to River Plan), it can be defined as a much wider territorial vision than that embraced by the city's strict administrative limits.

The first step in defining the minimum territorial scope, with the purpose of both explaining and validating the projects being managed, was precisely this initial Plan.

The *Barcelona in Progress* exhibition is a qualitative jump in the same direction transforming this obviously two-dimensional plan into a large relief model of the city, that is, into a suggestive three-dimensional object. This change, apparently of little importance, opens a whole range of opportunities as yet largely unexplored, resulting in it becoming a powerful investigative and urban planning instrument. Relief models are such familiar tools in the fields of architecture and town planning that they have become indispensable to the long-term verification of the planning process involved. Transferring this experience to the wider public helps the citizen to participate in the process of validating the planned transformation.

Here what is relevant is not the detail of each project but rather the opportunity to understand the size and localisation of the interventions on a comprehensible scale, starting from a notable reference point of observation and moreover being able to relate the transformation expected to the rest of the consolidated city.

Furthermore, the value of the relief model lies in its own physicality and size, although this is not perceived at first glance in its actual 200 m2 length. Observing it is no ordinary experience engendering a feeling of indifference: the model is a strong magnet and attracts lingering looks from visitors. In fact, one might think that making a relief model of this type

might even possess something of the archaic and have been superseded given the general use of alternative models such as virtual reality. This is already so much the norm that when the virtual becomes real we are not able to recognise how innovative it is. On the other hand, the idea of making a large three-dimensional model stems from a very simple fact: the perception of the physical model is a direct action lacking both filters and artificial symbolism. Being positioned right in the middle of the Forum building's three corners, the relief model offers at least three different points from which it can be observed, both in regard to its height and its arrangement. So the city can be viewed as if one were approaching it from the sea, a view which is rarely seen and only from a plane landing at the Prat airport or from a cruise liner mooring in the port. A step away is a bird's eye view towards the sea from Collserola that is so much more realistic than the view from Tibidabo or the telecommunications tower. Viewing the relief model provides an immediate understanding of the city's structure. The original city's compactness and the preeminence of sections of the city wall, the Cartesian irregularity of the Ensanche which encloses the historical city centre and unravels into the much more dispersed and disordered fabric of the rest of the city. So the dense and compact city is perceived at a distance from the amalgamated anonymous urban landscape and serves both as a reference point in reality and as a scale model of reality. A more complex second reading of the relief model is stimulated by coloured lights being projected onto the relief model to highlight the planning strategies, specifically lighting

operational axes, nodes, areas, and networks, and simultaneously accompanied by a video which presents real and virtual images of the transformation project. Consequently, the relief model contains the intentions of the original plan and has very dynamical and pedagogic effects which turn its perception into the exhibition's masterly lesson. A brief and schematic course running from the past to the present and on into the future moving through urban time and containing all of Barcelona's forthcoming projects.