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The preliminary studies

Carmela Mariano

Designing a centrality means confronting with the 'complexity' of the urban context. In the case of the Romanina we are dealing with a periphery where it is necessary to breathe life into an organic and rationalised pattern of sites and identify a framework that is legible and recognisable in its overall structure. The attention to context, the guarantee of participation and the objective of the effectiveness of the intervention are the terms that the construction of an urban project for a centrality must confront. Beginning from this premise, the preparation of the project was dealt with by providing a series of preliminary studies of the environmental sustainability, the historical values of the site and archaeological investigations, mobility, local requirements and participation-based processes, the functions to be included and the costs, scheduling and management of the project. The preliminary analyses included the environmental sustainability of the intervention, verified through the procedure of environmental impact analysis and the effects resulting from the implementation of the project, based on the methodology of strategic environmental evaluation, the preliminary environmental analysis of the components of the landscape and the natural elements found on the site. The preliminary archaeological investigations required an indepth campaign of testing aimed at ascertaining the presence of any elements that would restrict the urban transformation. The integration of the project with its context is also guaranteed by the

verification of the compatibility between the requirements for the settlement of the centrality with the proposed system of mobility. The study of the current conditions of mobility in this urban area is aimed at reducing the deficit of infrastructure in order to arrive at a proposal for the organisation of mobility that is capable of guaranteeing an improvement in the entire urban sector and responding to the requests of the new master plan, which subjects the approval of the centralities to the presence of rail-based connections. The attraction of the centrality and the objective of functional *mixité* is guaranteed by the maximum integration of residential and nonresidential functions and a focus on the design of a connective form of public space. The hypothesis of locating nonresidential functions, composed of public and private office space, private activities related to a film and communication centre, to research, to the social economy, hotel structure and activities for free time and recreation required the definition of a series of preliminary agreements for the location of the important attractors, such as Gèode, the Ministry of the environment, the Museum of science. In the case of the Romanina, the local community and its citizens are seen as active subjects and their participation is a central element in the legitimization of the design decisions and the contributions made to the construction of the scenarios that orient choices. Within these scenarios we find the startup of a process of participation, in collaboration with the local communities, between the Municipal government, the X Municipality and the Department of architecture

and urban planning for engineering at the La Sapienza University. The construction of a network of neighbourhood workshops and the organisation of a central committee has led to a series of meetings to verify and discuss the process of defining the urban project and the critical evaluation of the design solutions proposed for the centrality. An urban intervention of the scale of that for the Romanina cannot be concluded within a prescribed and brief period of time because it must consider a range of variables which do not allow us to determine the final structure of the interventions beforehand. The project for the Romanina calls for the construction of a model that guarantees the flexibility of the realisation of the various parts as part of a framework of an urban design that is controlled by regulations and strategic guidelines. In this sense the legal and financial study of scheduling, costs and the implementation of the centrality required the creation of a consortium that is responsible for the project. It was constituted as a public limited company that acts as the sole interlocutor with the municipal government, working on the development and the management of the urban project and, above all, the maintenance and the management of the areas and services. In this sense the innovation of the model for the construction of the urban project of the new Romanina centrality aims at a level of quality that is the result of a lengthy process, where methodologies and procedures are dealt with from the very beginning, where the relationships between the project and its context are clear, as are the interactions between institutional subjects and local representatives. For

this reason the search for suitable design solutions must pursue and achieve a capacity to transform design ideas into interventions that contribute to improving the quality of life in the city.