

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

"Gardens of knowledge", a project for the Porta Nuova area in Turin

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The object of the research and of the design proposal is the Porta Nuova zone in Turin, situated between C.so Vittorio Emanuele, Via Sacchi, C.so Sommeiller and Via Nizza, and currently occupied by train tracks and railway service equipment.

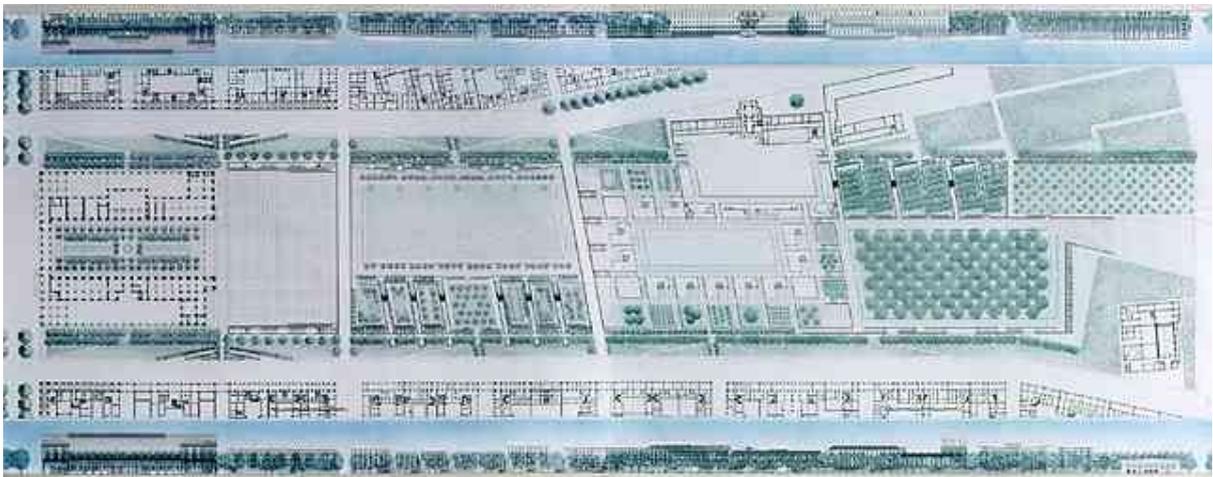
Turin's new General City Plan incorporates the transformation of the train track area, from Porta Nuova station to Lingotto, and attempts to re-qualify and give functionality to the zone. Furthermore, the plan includes the realisation of the North-South passing line in correspondence with the Zappata cross-roads, and a reduction of the main station's functions.

Our project is based on the supposition that the tracks can be buried or completely removed to restore an important strategic area to the city.

The re-qualification and re-utilisation of an 'urban empty space' in a central area of the city is a project that presents complex implications because it puts consolidated historical tissues in contact with new modern proposals.

As in the urban *embellissement* plans of the cities of the eighteenthundreds, green zones become the ideal instrument to give life to building-free spaces and to reconnect fragmented or missing tissue.

The design proposal becomes that of a big urban park able to communicate with the architecture that surrounds it and to re-create a relationship between the various elements.



Typological plant and prospects on via Sacchi and via Nizza

The study of projects realised over the last few years on similar areas to ours has carried us towards an idea of public green space that goes beyond the idea of a city garden as a place of refuge in nature. We tried to create a place for recreation, relaxation and culture in which the visitor could re-approach the natural environment and increase his knowledge.

The elimination of the railway park will allow the realisation of new roads and pedestrian crossings that will connect via Sacchi to via Nizza. Three streets will secure the continuity of the urban tissue roads. A separate system of pedestrian pathways longitudinally will cross the area.

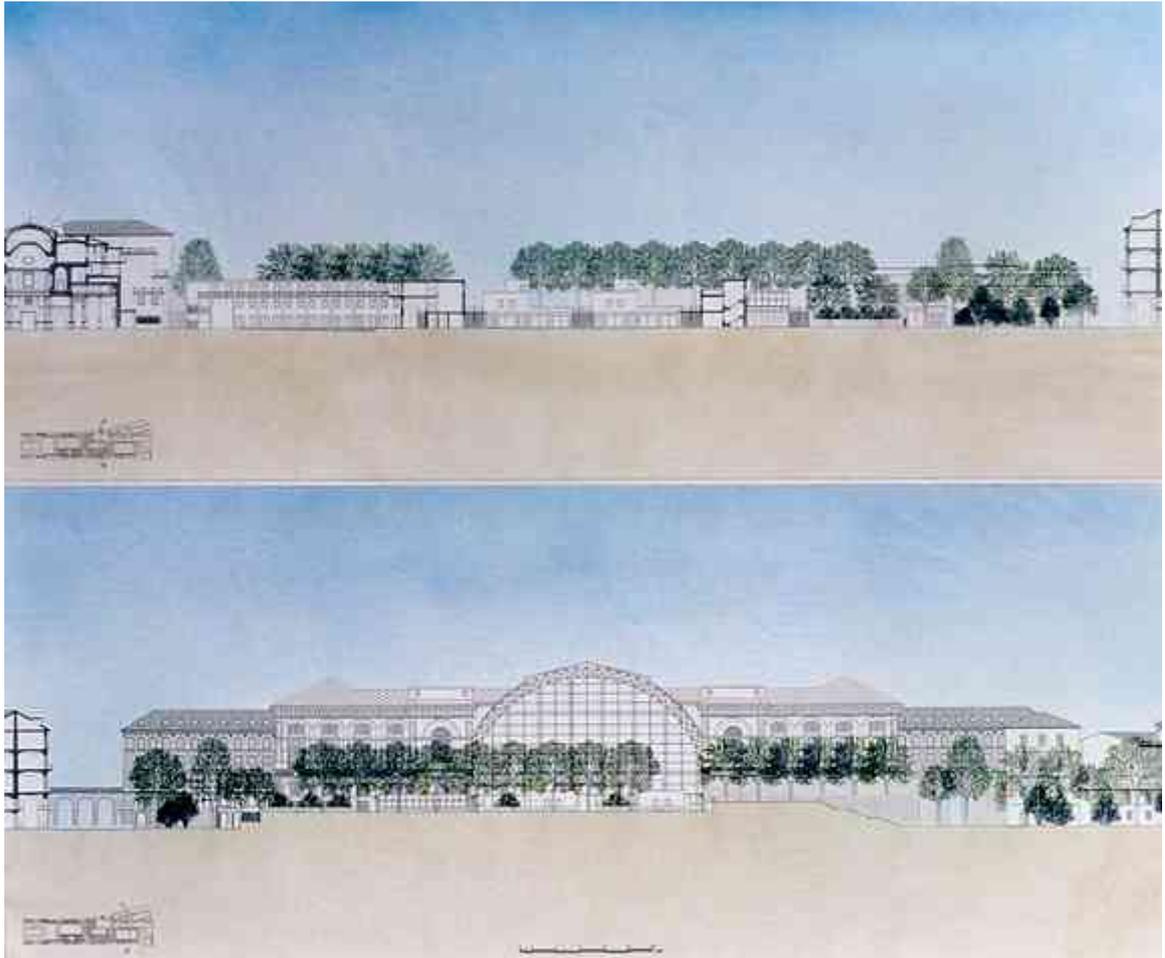
The level variation and warping of the routes define a sequence of independent public spaces, each one defined by a specific topic: the station square, the low garden, the S.Salvario small garden and the hanging garden.

Porta Nuova Station and the S.Salvario Convent will be re-developed on the inside of the park as important historical and territorial references.

The railway building will be restored using the original plans and will regain the role of new access door to the city and to the park, of *urban hall* and of important socialising place. In the big central gallery, protected by a glass vault, a garden re-creates the atmosphere of the *jardin d'hiver* of the eighteenthcenturies.

The old S.Salvario convent will become part of a new architectural complex, which by means of a re-elaboration of the religious block's architectural disposition, proposes a modern interpretation of the monument.

In the project hypothesis the new organism becomes a specialised cultural center for children. The convent's rooms will be used as offices and for the administrative activities. Three buildings situated along the old garden's perimeter will make room for the didactic museum's exhibition spaces, the documentation center and the specialised library. In the small laboratory-pavilions games and artistic-educative experiments will take place.



Cross sections of the cultural center and the hanging garden

When coming from via Roma, access to the park is allowed by means of the new paved square that slopes down to the level of the "low garden". The big central meadow, surrounded by step-seating, is thought to allow all of the activities that require large open spaces.

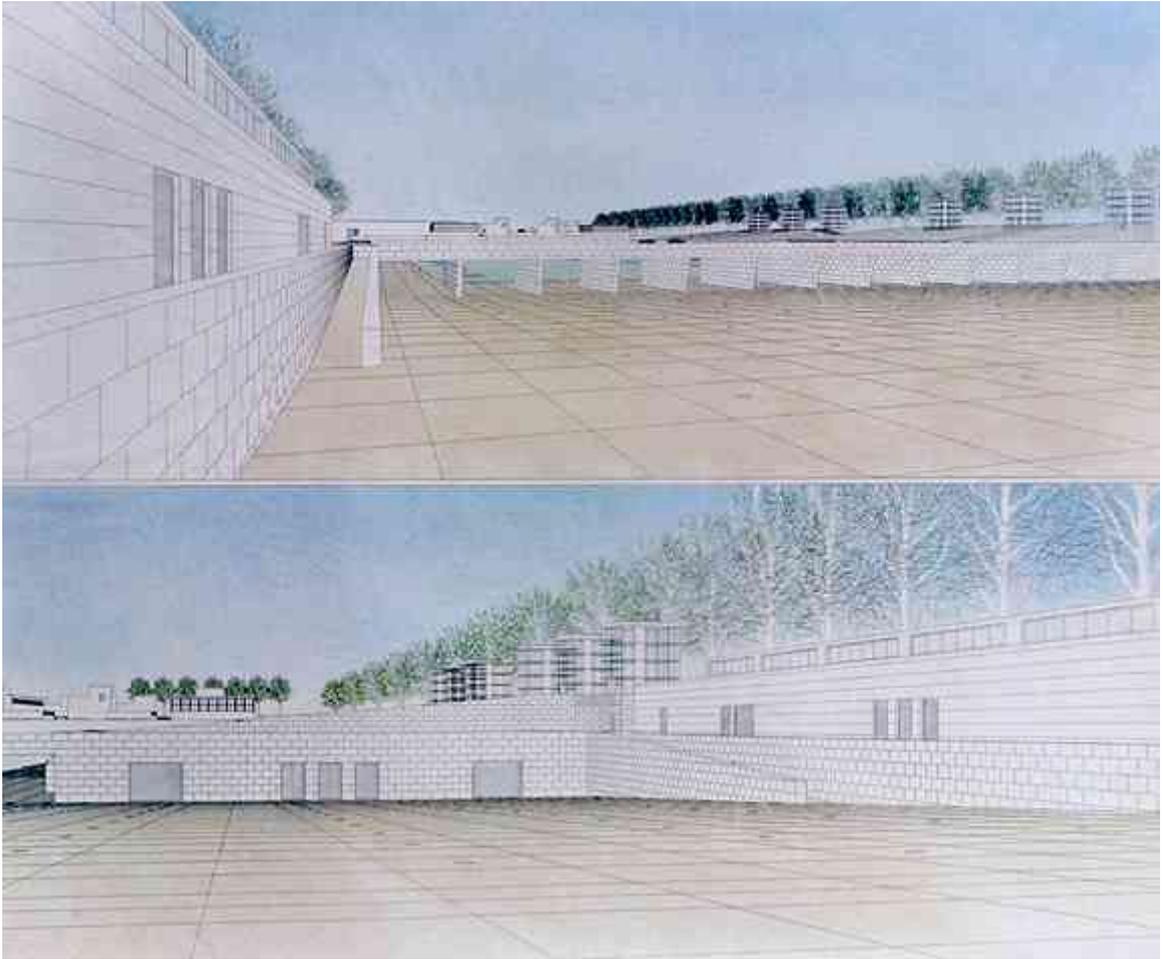
The parterre's simplicity is opposed to the articulated sequence of the thematic gardens. Each garden is to be considered as an autonomous landscape unit, a reserved and protected "green room".

The arcade courtyard of the cultural center, where all of the routes meet and then depart, becomes a mediation element between the various gardens. Around it, a sequence of small green spaces revisits the themes of the cloistered garden: the aromatic herb garden, the orchard, the medicinal herb garden.

The big hanging garden is the area's real limit and it works as a viewpoint for the freely and naturally designed park which extends to Lingotto.

The building density, greatly reduced by our proposal, guarantees a stronger tie between the buildings and the park. Green spaces and buildings are composed to

form an independent architectural world, in the form of a small city, in which the constructed element's static order is balanced by the natural element's dynamism.



Perspective views of the entrance square to the urban park

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