

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

Small Disused Areas in a Compact Urban Structure : possible policies for widespread reuse

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This thesis will examine the problem of the small or medium sized part of a city which, abandoned and degrading, are commonly found in a compact urban structure. Debate about disused areas, when considered, and are left subject to ordinary interventions.

Aims

I put forward a series of policies which could be applied to the treatment of these "gaps" in the city that, so often neglected in urban planning and development, fall prey to policies for reuse dictated entirely by market forces.

I ask myself if it wouldn't be possible to establish a set of widespread "minimal" action that could reduce aesthetic degradation, that would not take for granted a total and definitive transformation of the area and that, taking into consideration also that important of conserving the physical, social and cultural typology of the zone, would lead to provisional and flexible uses for the territory.

In these proposed policies of reutilization, the "players" could be public or private entities, from no-profit to business enterprises and group of citizen : the challenge will be to find a variety of methods of involving these players each time in a different way, according to the characteristics of the area.



Structure

The first chapter is dedicated to the definition of "Small disused areas in a compact urban structure" and to ways of approaching this subject matter. Starting with points about the preservation of the historical identity of an area and about the sensitisation and involvement of those who live in a certain urban situation. I go on to examine the following themes : "planning the wait", "conservation of space for the future", "flexibility" and "multi -use", themes which point towards low-cost policies of widespread reuse.



In the second chapter I have tried to pinpoint the different types of intervention :

- Intervention on the building façades to create an immediate aesthetic improvement
- Internal intervention on buildings, Intended to increase the availability of lightly renovated and versatile sites.
- Demolition and treatment of the surface area in cases where degradation is very advanced or when the only feasible option is to demolish and thus create a lower density of buildings in the area.

All the hypotheses of intervention are based on the same approach : low cost of realisation as a consequence of "minimal" interventions, the need for rapid completion and general diffusion of interventions within an urban area in order to create a web effect.



The *third and fourth chapters* are the product of a need to demonstrate ways of putting into practice the hypotheses put forward. To do this I chose a specific zone of Turin and, within this zone, several buildings which, thanks to their characteristic feature, can be used as case studies for my research.

I started by analysing the district in which the case studies are situated, gathering historical facts, information about the situation as regards buildings and, above all, the area's weak points (degradation and lack of public services) and strong points (proximity to the city centre and a series of important historical characteristics).

Following this I analysed the area surrounding each case study, putting forward proposals of possible interventions, drawing attention to the particular "players" that could usefully be involved and indicating plausible ways of funding the initiatives. This final part of the thesis is not designed to be a series of architectural design (which would require a different depth of study) but rather, a set of examples intended to highlight a variety of possible interventions.

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