HELL. A. _ Homeless' residence
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"HELL. A." is a friendly way that Los Angeles people use to call the social reality of the town where they live. This is because Los Angeles is commonly called L.A. where "L" is pronounced exactly in the same way as "hell" . This happens for multiple reasons and because of the many social problems which exists in megalopolis and in particular areas that can be really defined a sort of (or a true) hell.
This unlucky area is in the centre of Los Angeles Downtown, a place where homeless concentrate, and it's called Skid Row.
This has been an interesting start to describe and create a purpose to solve the big and unknown situation of homeless people, whose number per night is over 88.000 units, including women, men, children from all social classes.
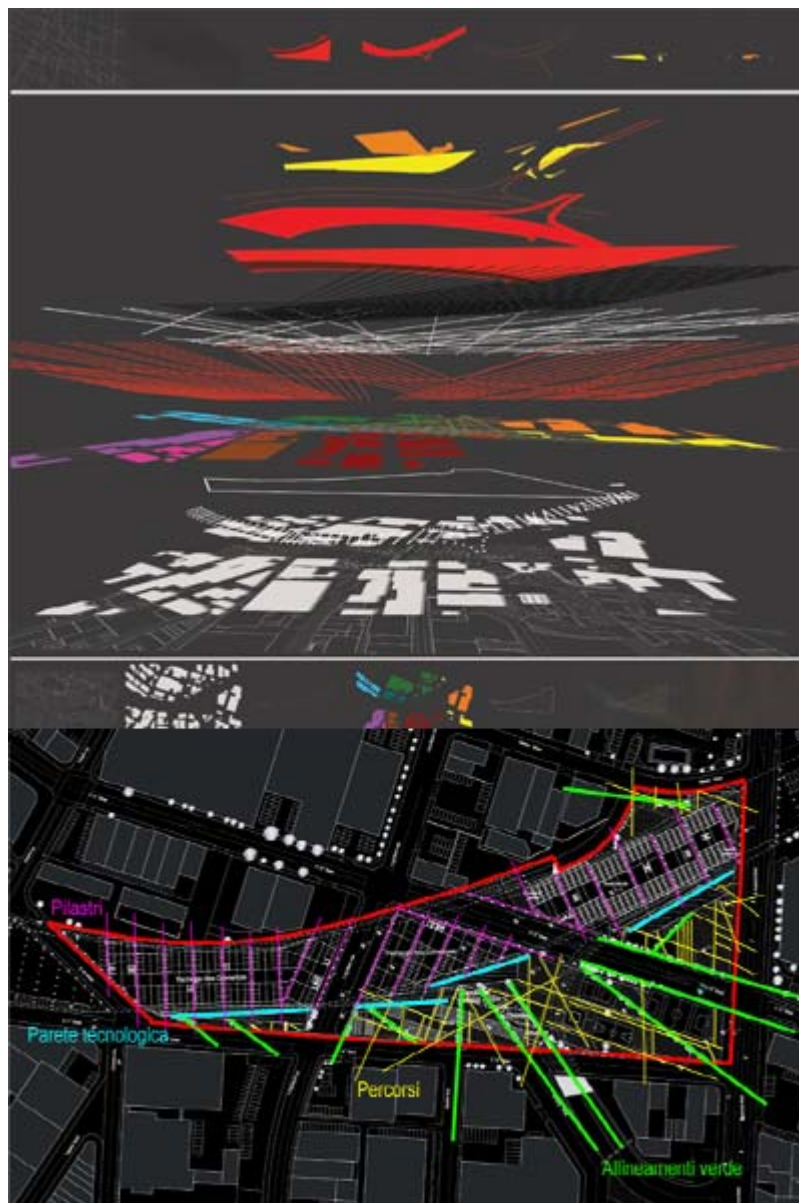The will to use architecture as a service for the respect of everybody's fundamental social rights such as having a house, difficult purpose in a nation dominated by individualism, made the opportunity to propose a homeless residence and commercial area, a place where people can live and work. This is decided in order to obtain a good social reintegration, the opposite of what we could have obtained with an easy welfare activity, like most of existing homeless house experiences demonstrate.
Since homeless have a lot of different experiences and knowledge, the kind of work proposed concerns a lot of fields, manual, creative, managerial. The architectural typology which is the best for this purpose is the "shopping centre", seen as polyvalent centre which should give the opportunity of doing different kinds of job but, in the same time, approaching sustainable trade, getting closer the reality of the weakest, homeless in this case (ex Whole Food Market, ecc.).
Our project area is in one of the many derelict spaces which are not used anymore in the metropolis, the ground under a freeway bridge. This choice offers numerous and interesting architectonical and urban planning ideas, but , in the same time, presents big problems of difficult solution. We are in a metropolis which exploded in only a century, without an urban plan, so projects like this one could be used to join different parts of town.
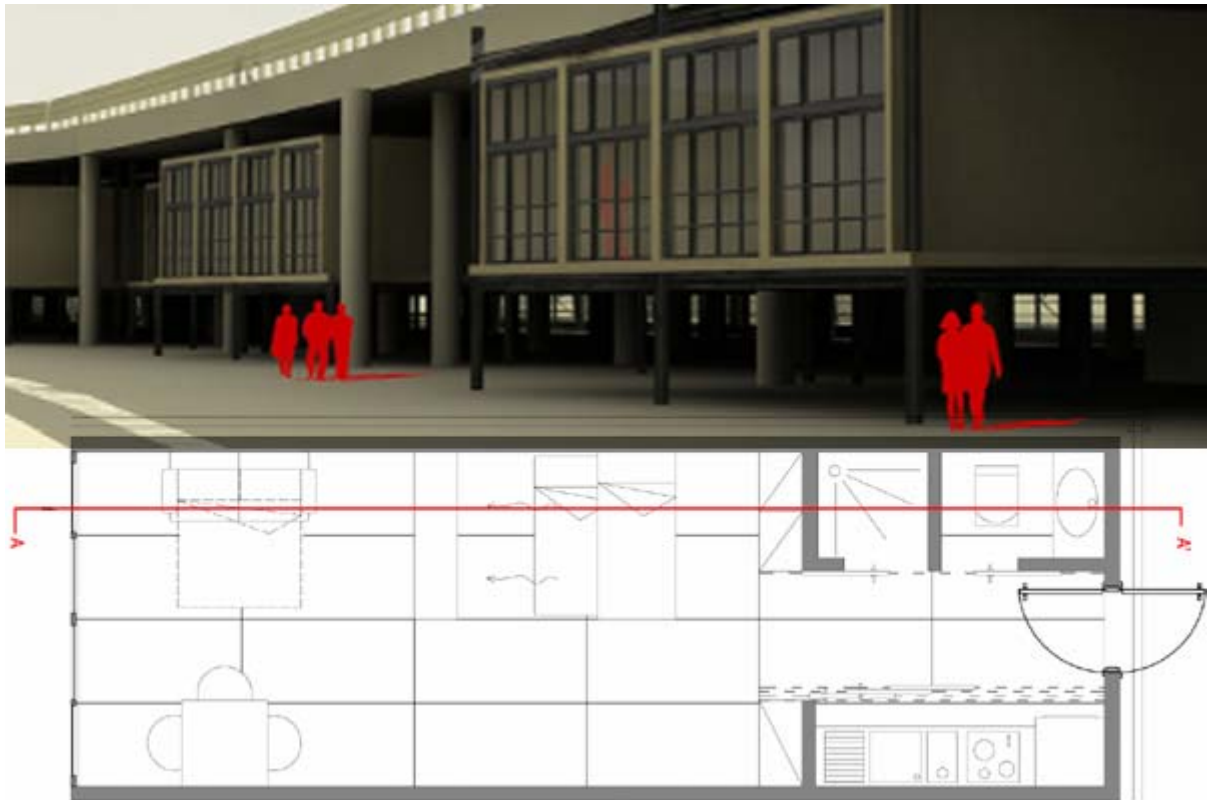
The choice of this area results lucky from the economical point of view, because of the price of the terrain, and from the social one, because it is not far from the centre of Los Angeles Downtown, it can be reached on foot, and it is close to market areas, avoiding to form a ghetto.

Urban planning start studying the built context and environmental component, to define spaces for each activity (Fig. 1). The functions planned in project, besides residential and commercial, are sportive, since sport is the main reason why people join together, and relax, consisting of green areas, routes, lanes, paths, shadow areas, realised using Californian trees, and finally water surfaces used to recovery rain water and waste water (fitodepurazione).

Concept and study of the lines coming from context and planning information of the function inserted in the project

Architectonical drawing reaches technical details that mind on sustainable technology. This is the reason why the project, which consists of commercial and residential areas, creates modular units made in prefabricated (OSB a material coming from waste wood) panels and metal structures. (Fig. 2).
South face has a double skin made with photovoltaic panel and waste glass, and its function is to filter the wind and to absorb the noise (Fig.3).

Example of the commercial cell made of four basic habitat units, and plan of the single habitat unit

General view of the plan, double skin detail and waste water tank

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