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City cohousing: a model for a sustainable city

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The main topic of my graduation thesis has been planning, a small scale housing unit where the relationship between private space, shared space and public space is pivotal, as well as that between citizens whatever their sex age or social classes. I chose to design a cohousing - an inclusive housing model- in which each inhabitant is able to take possession of spaces he has a right to. It allows a total fruition of indoor spaces, shared spaces and outdoor spaces.



The main aim of cohousing is not only a general improvement of the social living condition of their cohousers, but cohousing may ends up by improving the living condition of a hole urban area.

Cohousing is a housing model in which a good synthesis of the privacy one can have in a private apartment and the benefits one can obtain sharing spaces, services and resources. Can be reached both social and economic benefits.

Planning, conceiving a sustainable form is now possible.

In order to carry out my project, I had some informal interviews with people who deal with cohousing and social housing and they suggested me some interesting points for the project. The first one is the need of flexible spaces, that can be modified according to specific requirements and that can host different types of family; the second concerned the unbalanced relationship between citizen and local government, and the last is the fund raising matter, which is deeply connected to spending power and property market.

The site of the project is in an area of Turin called "The Stangone", on the border to San Salvario¹. It is a very heterogeneous block system, that groups together different building types ("corti concatenate"², L houses, etc.).

On PRG³, the area is an "AT", *Area to be transformed in historical centres*; in its sheet n. 28, some restrictions are given: numbers of floors, width of building, materials, etc. The peculiarity of the site where my project was based gave me the opportunity to move on some strong points: visual continuity with the Park of Valentino, angular size, accesses and entrances; different heights in the surrounding buildings.

The design choices made were:

- green facade (the garden develops vertically)
- opposition between inside (private life) and outside (public life) facade
- covering (half terrace and half roof)
- different types of apartments/flats
- sharing out spaces (terrace, kitchen garden, green garden)

¹ See AAVV, *26 itinerari di architettura a Torino*, SIAT, Torino 2003

² Like the site of my project.

³ An official document supplying the lines for building policies

Car sharing a fundamental feature in cohousing, was also a milestone in my project. The cohousing was also planned to take account disabled people's needs. I devoted a great part of planning to common areas, I thought of spaces for everybody, children or old people, and I deeply studied the choice of kitchen garden (the organization and the choice of vegetables and spices suitable in a city). The terrace is a big open space without barriers, in which there's an area for relaxing and another one for playing.



The main technological aspects was the Green façade and thermal insulation wall cladding system. I contacted some companies that build green wall and I studied the Patrick Blanc's system; I also chose the green essences that were more suitable for the site conditions. Prof. De Paoli - my assistant supervisor- and me designed a cladding wall system right to support the vegetal wall.



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