



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

Honors thesis

COURSE OF
ARCHITECTURE FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN

Abstract

**Burgo 1905-2015:
History, architecture and the recovery of the factory in
Verzuolo**

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February 2016

This thesis bases on the questions that arose around the figure of Luigi Burgo, an important entrepreneur of a paper factory which impacted dramatically on the economic and productive reality of Cuneo and in particular of the small community of Verzuolo. The reasons why Luigi Burgo, electrical engineer graduated in London and owner of an electricity company, decided to invest in a sector that was unknown to him immediately caught my attention. Verzuolo is a small village in the province of Cuneo, which developed along the connection axis between Saluzzo and Cuneo.

Thanks to the high availability of water flowing from the Bedale del Corso, he developed during the 19th century a series of activities closely related to the use of hydraulic force, like two mills, three mills and a factory of scythes.

In 1897 the municipality of Verzuolo decided to replace kerosene public lighting with electricity: it was during this year that Luigi Burgo came into contact with the productive and industrial life of the country.

In the short time laps of twenty years Verzuolo underwent a radical transformation that made it become the leading Italian centre specialized in the paper production. The possibility of exploiting hydraulic power produced from the valleys and mountains around Verzuolo was the main opportunity which enabled Burgo to enhance investments in cutting edge technologies, ensuring success at an international level.

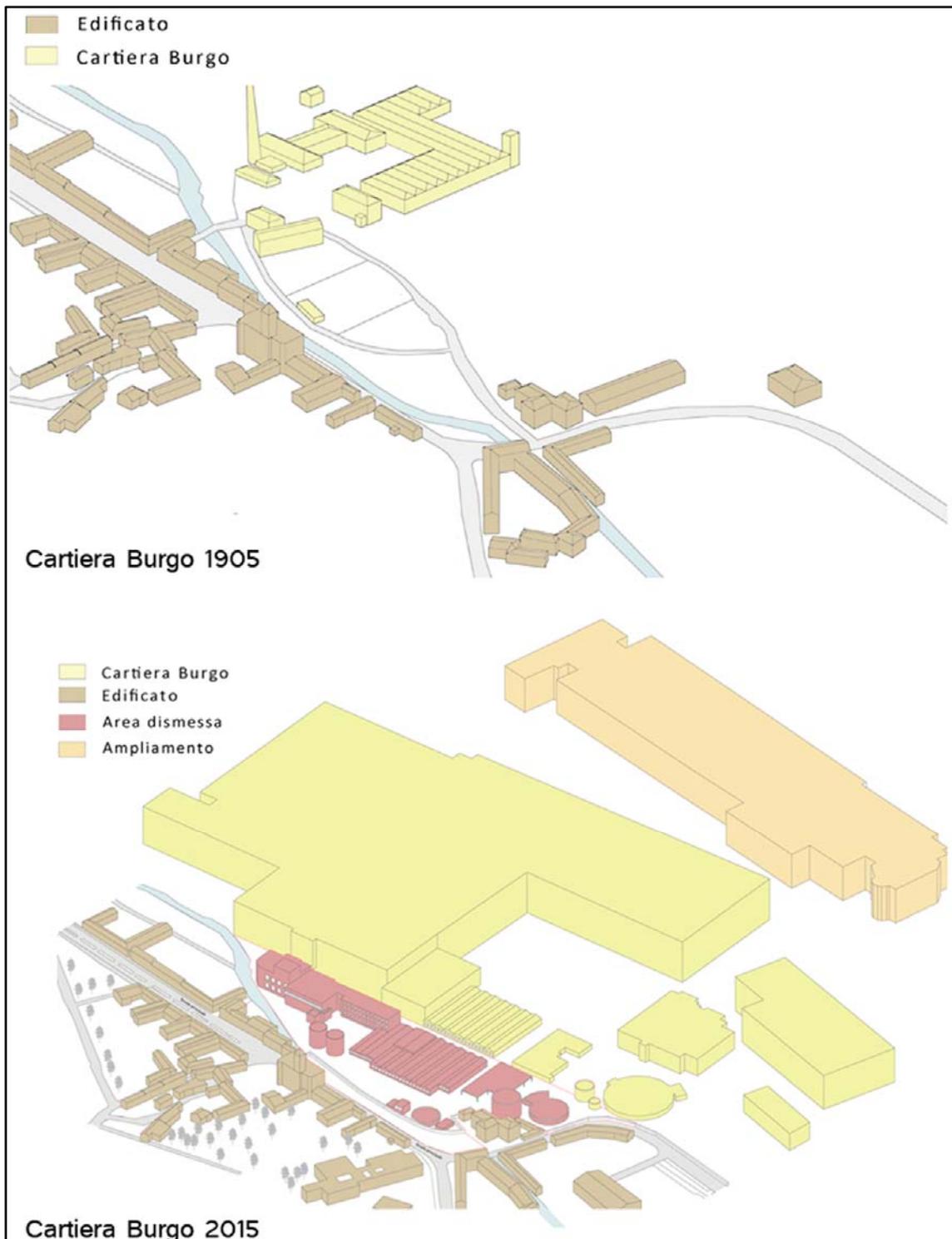
The product of his industry was especially appreciated by the fascism and its communication strategies: it saw in paper the essential component of its propaganda machine.

In the years between the two world wars, the gratitude of the local community was also due to Burgo's commitment in the implementation of operations aimed at improving the philanthropic background (schools, libraries, heliotherapy colonies) whose proves are still present in the territory.

In 1935, the conditions dictated by the autocracy laws laid the foundations of the strong link between il Duce and the entrepreneur of Cuneo, which imposed the restriction of the production process within the Italian borders, without having connections with foreign countries, especially with the largest industries of the early 20th century.

These restrictions, coupled with future bombing and the war, will play a decisive role in reducing the turnover of the cartiera Burgo, which will suffer significantly until 1946. The studies on the business strategies of Burgo have revealed two parallel and at the same time opposite aspects in the relationships with the local community.

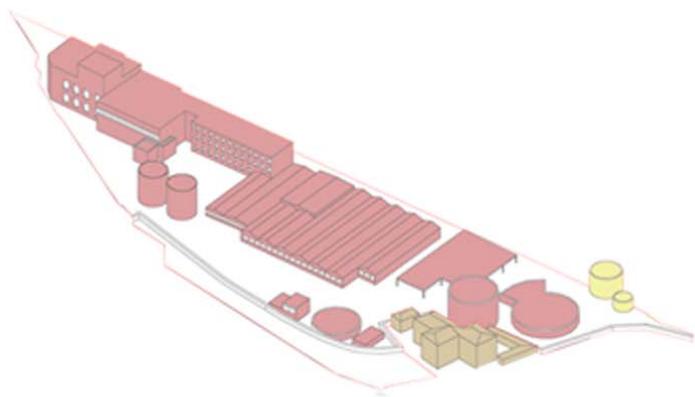
On the one hand Verzuolo had the chance to seize the opportunity offered by the presence of an industrial activity that, at a time of deep economic crisis, has been able to offer a stable job and a fixed wage for its inhabitants, on the other hand was the continuous erosion of the areas near the center of Verzuolo necessary to the expansion of the factory.



Even more recent stories do not seem to escape to some of these mechanisms. In the early years 2000 increased new demands for corporate expansion and enhancement. Due to the need of a decisive renewal in the production techniques, taken into account the reduction in the number of employees and the depletion of large portions of existing facilities, the new extension included also the occupation of a farmland area at the edge of Verzuolo.

This all resulted in the interest of the local administration who saw the disposal of part of the equipment of the factory, the opportunity to "recover" the spaces that had blocked the completion of the country and that they had forced him to direct its expansion on the opposite side. The forecasts cover full demolition of existing structures, the formation of a square, the construction of car parks, green areas and public services.

L'area Burgo dismessa



Area di completamento del paese



L'amministrazione comunale concede la possibilità di un futuro ampliamento della Burgo



Riqualficazione dell'area

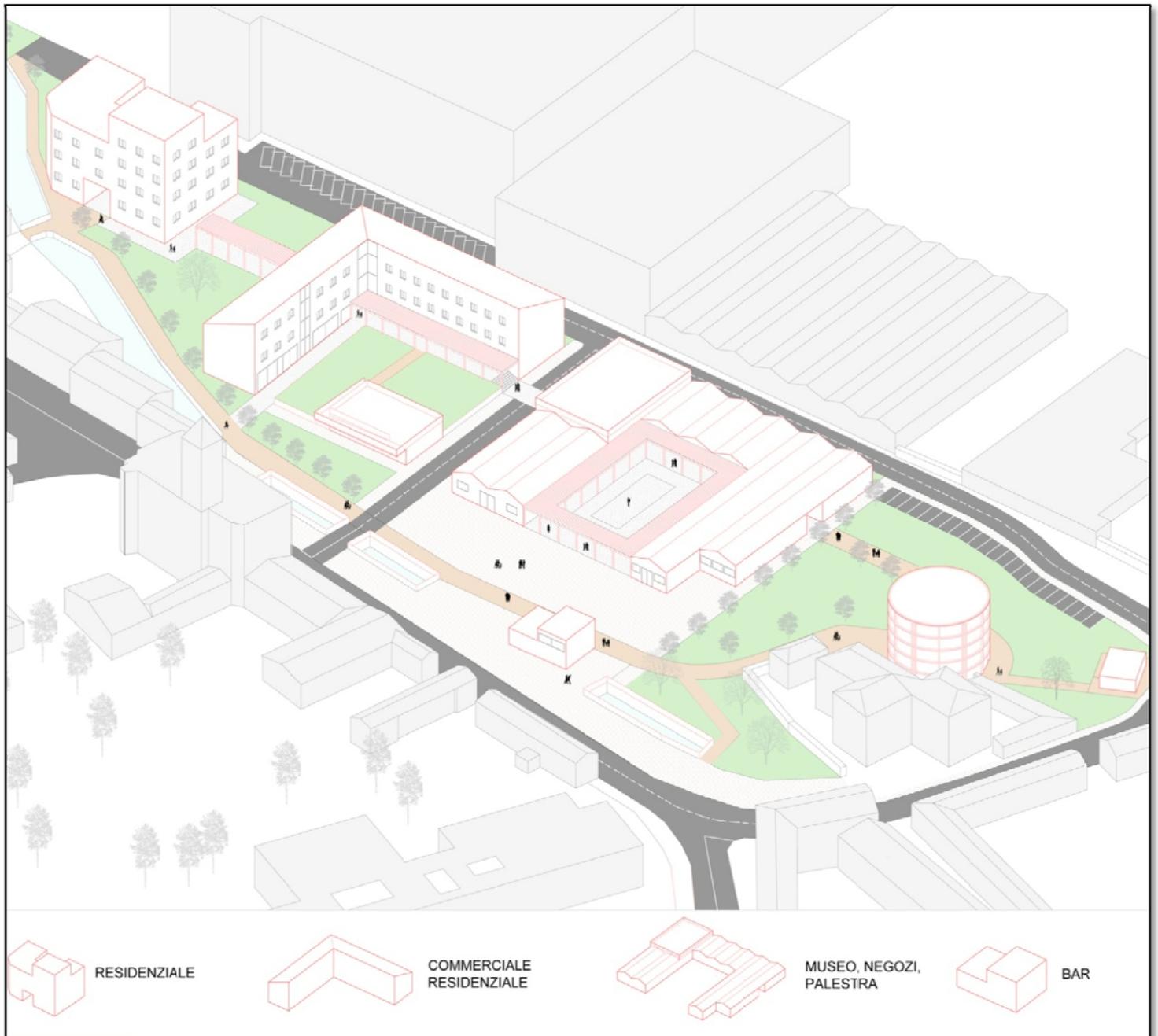
Periodo di costruzione:
1948

Ex funzione:
macchina continua 6

Stato attuale:
magazzino



Main objective of the thesis is to outline a framework for more complex design choices, which would found themselves upon the different "stories" that made up the Verzuolo village, but still would be open to solutions aimed at improving the dialogue between the spaces of the industrial production (factories) and those of collective life, to trigger different forms of living capable of designing new strategies in the relations between present and past.



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