

Turin: Town planning in the modern period. Demolition and renovation works of farmhouse buildings

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Even today a careful analysis of the area of the municipality of Turin reveals traces of a solid rural structure which took on its definitive shape during the last few decades of the 18th century.

Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, an evident impact took place between town and country, which constitutes the basis for the considerations made in this study.

The changes occurring within the town boundaries, which were inferred from the study of relief maps and of plans relating to historically significant areas, showed the presence of farmhouses within the municipal area and changes to their number over time. However, the present work does not merely aim to establish a census of the rural structures already existing, but to propose a study of the reciprocal influences between town and country in the light of the town plans which determined them. It will thus be possible to demonstrate whether and in which cases rural buildings may have played a morphogenetic role.

It was noted that neither the planners' decisions, which have directed and consolidated urban development over the past two hundred years, nor the actual implementation following the subsequent planning decisions, took into account rural buildings present within the town boundaries.

In this regard, the Town Planning Scheme of 1908, the first that defined the overall expansion of the town, acquires particular importance: the whole area within the town boundaries appears destined for development, whilst agricultural use of the peripheral areas seems destined to disappear.

It is interesting to note how the mapping out of roads makes no allowance for the presence of the farmhouses, which as a result become mere obstacles to be removed.

The only proof of their existence is to be found from the names which have remained in use in local place-names within the town (Abbadia di Stura, Bellacomba, Bramafame, Brusà, Drosso, Fossata, ...).

Moving forward in time, during the period 1930-1955 there was a tendency to dismantle this architectural heritage of country buildings throughout those areas of the municipality considered suitable for development, with some of the more extreme episodes taking place in the south and west of the town.

In particular, in the 1930s they started an overall systematic demolition of such architecture and stopped constructing new rural buildings.

Turin did not escape the bombing raids of the Second World War; an analytical survey of the damages suffered by individual buildings between 1940 and 1945 reveals a significant number of farmhouses damaged.

83° CORPO VIGILI DEL FUOCO "TORINO"
 12 INCURSIONE AEREA 4° SET.
 5° SETTORE RELAZIONE N. 48/55/4

NATURA DEL SINISTRO: Lucerna di cucina

1. Giorno, data e ora della chiamata: *Evrosati 20/11*
 2. Mezzo con cui è stata fatta la richiesta: *Tel. dal circolo Rionale Forcu del Nungio*
 3. Richiedente (generalità): *Fig. Quaglio C. orbassano No2*
 4. Località del sinistro: *casina sul tetto strada del Portone*
 5. Proprietario (generalità): *Fig. Quaglio Giuseppe fu Francesco*
 6. Cliente - Inquilino - Affittuario, ecc. (generalità): *11*

7. Ammontare dei danni (accertati o presunti):

	Assicurati	Non assicurati	Totale
Agli immobili L.	5000		
A oggetti e cose	3000		
Vari			
Totale L.	8000		8000

8. Veloci Interventi

Personale del Corpo Intervento:
*A. P. 1 (collega) A. H. L. Paraggio - M. V. Ballero - M. Pinelli - Zarda -
 M. P. 23 Montagnani - Battani - Verrino - Porcino - Lamin -
 A. T. 14/R Vecchioni - amb. Prinetto, amb. Croatto*

9. Mezzi Interventi

Mezzi Interventi	Ore di Partenza dalla Caserma	Ore di Arrivo sul posto	Ore di Partenza dal posto	Ore di arrivo in Caserma	Cilindrata percorsi	Ore di Prestazione	Cilindrata consumata	
							Valore	Applicazione
A. P. 1 (collega)	0.40	0.55	1.25	1.40	22	5	1.80	
M. P. 23	5.37	6.2	11.25	11.40	24	5	1.10	
A. T. 14/R	5.17	6.2	6.5	6.30	24	11	5	

Fig.1: Farmhouse fire caused by an enemy bombing raid, taken from the records of the Turin Fire Brigade's wartime operations

The remains of this rural heritage were restored and are still used to house various social services (la Marchesa, la Tesoriera, il Borello, la Fossata, Villa Amoretti, il Giajone). In 1975 the Town Council began buying these buildings as part of its policy of preserving and renovating existing buildings, in order to meet the need to house services for its residents. Special agreements were drawn up with the Polytechnic of Turin to study their conversion to functional use. As confirmation of an increased awareness to the problem, over the same period the Preliminary Study for the Variation to the General Town Planning Scheme included - amongst the various categories of cultural and environmental properties - "lowland-plain farmhouses (and

the physical remains of farmhouses) together with the relative agricultural outbuildings".



Fig.2 The Cascina Giajone farm renovated during the 1970s

After their renovation works during the 1970s and 1980s – which were carried out in the wake of a new feeling of awareness towards those already existing – the issue concerning these farmhouses was put aside.

All this is easily verified by analysing the objectives of the new General Town Planning Scheme which has taken a different direction with respect to the preliminary study drawn up during the 1980s.

In conclusion, it can be stated that, since the second half of the 1970s, the number of rural constructions within the town boundaries has not changed significantly. Unfortunately, however, what has been left untouched by man has not been spared by nature.



Fig.3 The Cascina Grangia farm in its present state of decay

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