

**Converging architecture. Thinking about planning through the analysis of a project referring to traditional architecture**

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The 20<sup>th</sup> century just ended up: it was the century which saw, at a world-wide level, the most intense and deep change in our cities and country-side ever happened in the history of architecture and city-planning.

A unique situations conjuncture produced these changes in such a breath-taking way that only later it was possible to realize the produced damages and start doubting about the planning principles and methods which had set in such an incontrovertible way.

Today planning is having problems; since the Seventies the architectural debate saw a sequence of many trends, from Post-modern to High-Tech, but did not manage to create a common thought to recover from this crisis.

Going over Brusasco's text – *Architettura Antimoderna*, Alinea, Firenze 1984 – where the author inquires about today planning role and guide-lines, I start from some proposed planning attitudes, which I personally share, to outlines an hypothetical "Converging Architecture".

"Converging" is an often recurring word in the above mentioned text; it supposes an architectural choice getting into – converging – a typological evolution process, according to the theory proposed by the school founded by *Saverio Muratori*; this choice promotes the congruent and step-by-step development of a collective heritage, rather than the declaration of many individual acts bound to increase the existing fragmentariness.

According to this outline, today planning should have, as main target, *urban quality*; planning should consider the project as strictly related with the *surrounding*, inserted again in the *evolutive process* of the traditional architectural heritage; besides, it makes sense to consider *typological research* as the proper instrument to realize this connection between context and history.

Looking at today architectural culture scenario, we realize how such a planning trend is already existing since some decades – let's think about the Neo-rationalist's principles, the Neo-urbanist's

theories ( Robert and Leon Krier together with Maurice Culot); this trend is becoming more and more substantial while the awareness about damages caused by opposite planning attitudes is increasing.

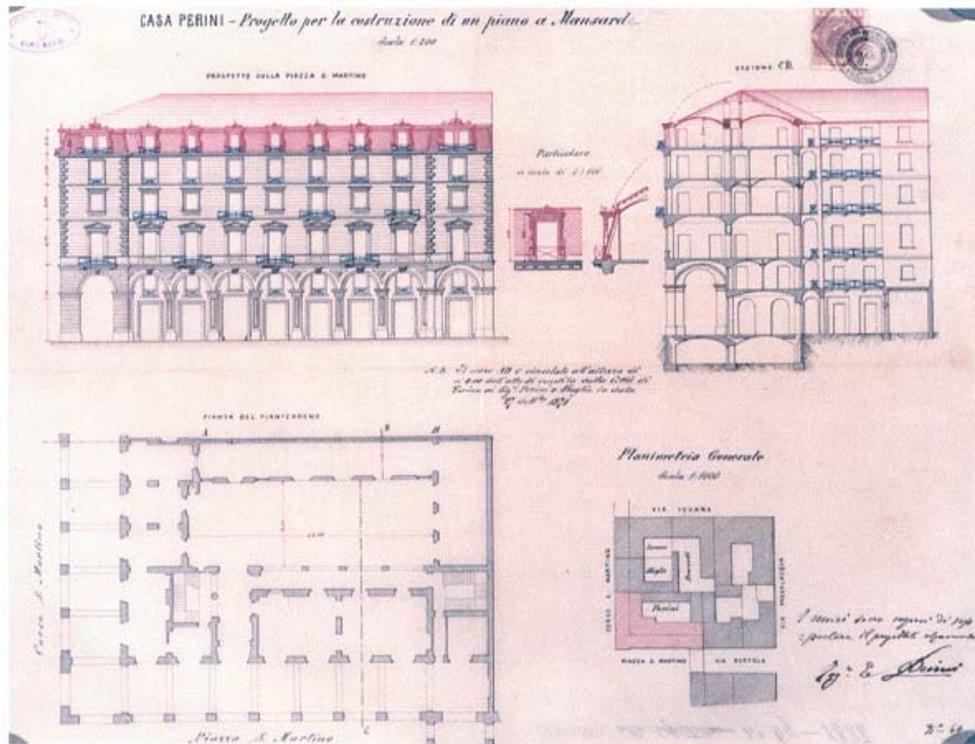
In particular, a movement called “Urban Reinassance” has strengthened since the beginning of the Nineties; this movement identifies an essential milestone in Leon Krier’s thought and work. The analysis of the *conceptual background* this movement is based on shows several affinities with the planning attitude here defined as “converging”, while it discloses a remarkable lack under the *instrumental point of view*.



1995-2002, Leon KRIER, G. TAGLIAVENTI,  
Città Nuova’s buildings in Alessandria

Through the analysis of what is meant to be the first project of “Urban Reinassance” in Italy – **Città Nuova** in Alessandria – planned by *Leon Krier*, I would like to show that referring to a traditional city’s generic model is not enough to create urban culture. In order to create an architecture related to tradition not just in a figurative way, we should look at the vision, if not at the method, of Muratori’s school; a vision considering *the relation* between the project and the urban organism, at every possible scale.

The project analysis is actually focused on *three related levels*: the urban texture, the building types and the architectural elements level.



Document from Turin Council Historical Archives : S.Fiorenzo block, building in XVIII Dicembre Square. (A 1887/69)

Besides, as in the *Città Nuova* case Leon Krier meant to go back to the traditional architecture of Piedmont, I referred to the urban system and to the architectural language of a *part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Turin* ( which I once analysed during an archives research) and to a *contemporary part of Alessandria's historical center*. From this analysis comes out the distance, at different levels, between *Città nuova* and the traditional Piedmontese examples: it is clear how the typological choices loose their incisiveness if they get far from a *strict regionalism* and how it becomes important to use an architectural language which is consistent with the local one, especially under the level of components point of view. The project turns out to be the sum of figurative suggestions generically deriving from the traditional architecture of different places and ages: its structural extraneity – therefore its “non converging” – compared to Krier’s models and above all to the surrounding texture points out the value of a *typological research* at different levels, such as it is described in a converging architecture outline.



1928, Historic photograph showing the centre of Alessandria.  
Corso Roma (from Frisina archives)

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