



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

Tesi meritoria

CORSO DI LAUREA MAGISTRALE IN ARCHITETTURA
PER IL RESTAURO E VALORIZZAZIONE DEL
PATRIMONIO

Abstract

**Smallpox Hospital.
Architecture and Ruin in New York:
Analysis and Projects**

Relator

Paolo Mellano

Correlator

Francesco Novelli

External correlator

Stephen Martin

Candidates

Giulia Balocco

Stefano Iurlaro

Matteo Lauri

Federica Ravizza

21 december 2017

The thesis focus is on the case study of the American Smallpox Hospital, specialized on the treatment of smallpox, built in 1856 by James Renwick Jr. on the site of Roosevelt Island, located between Manhattan and Queens. Presently the building is in state of ruin and abandon and is inaccessible.



Steve Amiaga, City landmark: Louis Kahn's Four Freedoms Park, [2012], www.standard.co.uk (cons. 26.11.2017)

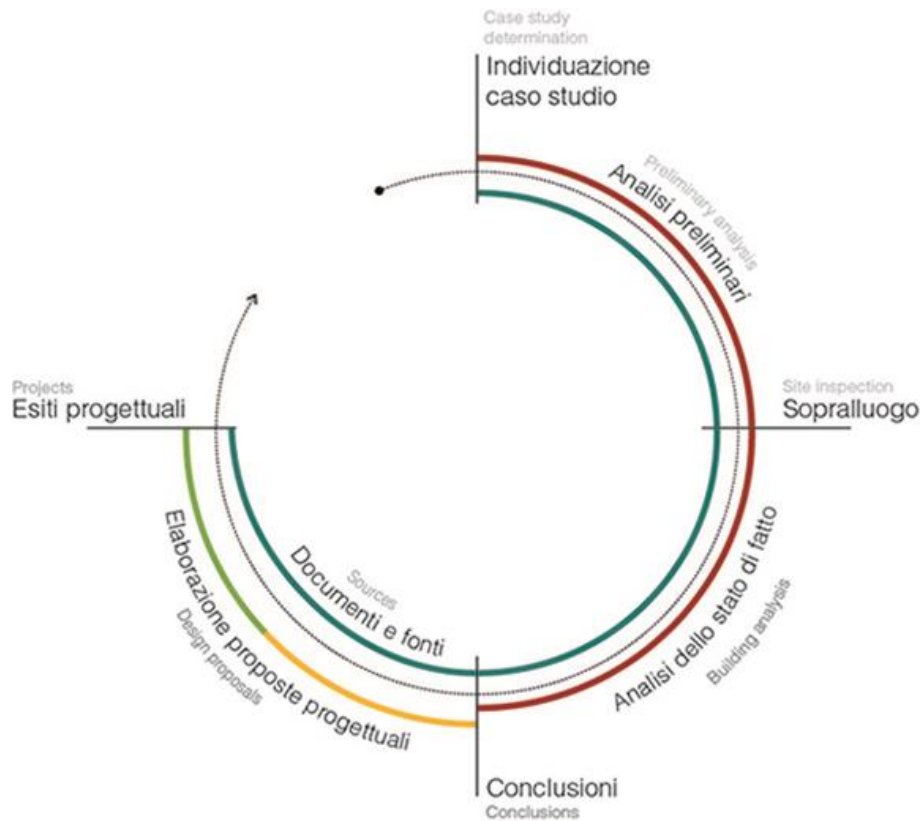
The theme of the thesis was chosen following a year where we have confronted the rapport between architecture and archaeology. In September 2016 we participated at the Accademia Adrianea's competition, the *Piranesi Prix de Rome*, that enabled us to attend from March 2017 the touring Master in *Museography, Architecture and Archaeology, design projects and innovative management of Archaeological Areas*, all while we were continuing our regular university course studies.

Among the case studies proposed by the Master there appeared that of the Smallpox Hospital.

It is in fact a unique example for the state of New York and for Roosevelt Island; for the population of the island it represents their identity and their history and it's for this reason that it has been recognized by the main American preserving agencies as a landmark. The strong sense that Smallpox Hospital has acquired has made it so that numerous agencies are pondering about its future, on how to preserve it to be able to render it to the island's community.

The surrounding area is undergoing enormous changes; in 2011 and 2012 Southpoint Park, the F.D.R. Four Freedoms Park and Memorial were created, and in September 2017 the Cornell Tech Campus opened its doors to numerous students and researchers.

Illustrated here is the schematic diagram of the research progress that we face in the thesis.



A colour has been associated to each phase of the research that identifies each of the four sections, respectively: Preliminary Analysis, Project 1, Project 2, document collection.

It is opportune to clarify the steps taken and of what parts it is composed.

Preliminary Analysis: the first phase of the research was fundamental in order to better understand the architectural consistency. **Site inspection:** done in July 2017, was fundamental to get knowledge of the state of preservation and to meet people who are involved with the ruin's preservation. Below are listed a few of the responsables whom we had the pleasure to meet and discuss with: **Stephen Martin**, external correlator, *Former director of design and planning at Four Freedoms Park Conservancy and architect*, he is in charge for adopting safety measures on the structure and is following studies for further restoration interventions; **Belmont Freeman**, *Architect, Adjunct Associate Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University*, and **Jorge Otero Pailos**, *Director and Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University*, who in 2013 proposed the Smallpox Hospital as a case study to a design course at Columbia University; **Alex Herrera**, *Director of Technical Services at New York Landmarks Conservancy*, who showed us the U.S. building conservation system, highlighting the differences between the Italian and American systems; **Mary Miltimore**, *Senior Community Planner and Designer at Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.*, who is at present carrying out various analysis, involving the inhabitants of the island; **Judith Berdy**, *President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, and a resident on Roosevelt Island*, administrator of the historical archives of Roosevelt Island, Mrs. Berdy supplied us with the historical material about the Smallpox Hospital.

Building analysis: following an on site analysis it was possible to elaborate a state of preservation study of the artifact.

Elaboration of design proposals: this phase is located among a complex debate upon the building. Two projects have been brought forth by us. We came to this conclusion because during the on site inspection we had two different schools of thought and ideas, not only with

respect to the object analysis, but also with respect to the context in which Smallpox Hospital is located.



Daniele Fazzari Architecture Photography, Smallpox Hospital, 30.08.2017

Per ulteriori informazioni contattare:

Giulia Balocco, giulialbalocco.gb@gmail.com; Matteo Lauri, matteolauri@hotmail.it;

Stefano Iurlaro, stefano.iurlaro@live.it; Federica Ravizza, federica.ravizza93@gmail.com