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Guidelines and intervention's good practice for the historical small centers enhancement. A case study: the Monferrato Casalese

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The term smaller town centers encompasses widespread presence characterizing the national country: small towns with population of less than five thousand inhabitants, located generally in disadvantaged positions, away from the main economic attractors, characterized by a predominantly rural cultural past, they find the strength of identity in the quality of the landscape and in connection with the territory in which they are located. In the national rural system the cases in which the smaller towns are in trouble are numerous: some of the main factors hampering the development are the demographic crisis, an aging population, the lack of employment opportunities, difficulties in getting basic services.

Besides critical issues that hinder positive developments there are also a big potential represented by a historical, social, cultural, scenic heritage that, that if it was properly managed, would instead be the engine of change. For decades the new models related to the urban world and to the seriality are put a strain on this assets, with a construction indifferent to the specific context, with a low-density sprawl that is homogenizing the landscape perceptions that were once more specific and related to the context.

The objective of this paper is to define criteria and guidelines that can direct the actions and transformations in the historical minors centers, limiting the silent destruction of local resources (and therefore opportunities), which is generated by poor quality design practices and not very attentive to the consequences that generate both a limited and punctual sphere, both in the overall landscape system. The guidelines are not prescriptive claims, nor intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the many topics covered, but they want to highlight the various aspects that must be considered to return value to the sites, with attention to the context of the project but also to the necessity of current life.



Purposes and structure of the study

The case study is identified in the area of Monferrato Casalese, the territory is characterized by the presence of many small hill towns, which arose mainly from the XI and XIV centuries, currently in development's difficulties both for the not decisive role of agriculture and the industrial crisis that involved many companies that were established here during the '900. Both factors have resulted in a demographic crisis that has not prevented decades of design practices and settlement-free quality. The definition of guidelines, in the specific field of the historical centers in the hills municipalities of Monferrato Casalese, has been achieved by an empirical method of reading data collected on site, in particular with an urban scale of observation that allowed to highlight the characters most perceptible in the fruition of historical centers, but also the relationships between them and the outside. The interpretation of these data has revealed the critical aspects of small towns that, articulated in relation with five priorities and related issues for planning works, have defined the basis for the formulation of improvement actions and for the control of the urban landscape and the town centers, in order to contribute to the development of the area.

The identification of best practice, related to the issues identified in the guidelines, is intended to clarify materially the actions suggested, but also to stimulate the implementation of practices qualifying the project context.

obiettivo	temi	criticità	strategie	azioni	Best practice
OGGETTIVO	TEMA	CRITICITÀ	STRATEGIE	AZIONI	BEST PRACTICE
Salvaguardia e qualificazione dell'immagine consolidata	MARGINI	INDEFINIZIONE DEL MARGINE	DEFINIZIONE DEL RUOLO DEL MARGINE	- controllare lo sviluppo urbanistico ai bordi - riscuotere i margini stringenti - preservare la figurabilità	Facciata verde del Mondgo
	RELAZIONI CON I NUOVI INSERIMENTI	DISORDINE INSERITIVO	RICUCITURA DELL'INNEZZAMENTO E DEI SUOI MARGINI	- favorire il compatto edilizio degli spazi liberi tra l'edificato - definire ordine e continuità attraverso l'uso del verde - riqualificare le aree periferiche - riqualificare il contesto urbanizzato - evitare soluzioni a catalogo - limitare dispersione edilizia e consumo di suolo	Riduzione spazi residui a Torre di Mosto
	PORTI	MANCANZA DI PROGETTAZIONE DELLE VISTE D'INSEMIANZA	FRONTE PROGETTUALI CONTESTUALIZZATE	- evitare soluzioni a catalogo - definire disposizione edilizia e consumo di suolo	
	INDETERMINAZIONE DELLE PORTE URBANE	INDEFINIZIONE DELLE PORTE URBANE	PRESERVARE LE INQUADRATURE DEL CENTRO STORICO E DEL PROFILO CONSOLIDATO	- evitare l'impatto visivo di strutture nelle viste del centro - stabilire sistemi di traffico, salinaggio, identificazione sul piano orizzontale e verticale, impiegare alternative e stadi a bordo carreggiata, richiamare elementi di incoerenza con l'edificato	La Grana Isolatori a Toledo Progetto su spazio esterno a Guimarães Fronta urbana di Montemur-O-Vieho
	INTRUSIONE INCIDENTE DEGLI EDIFICI	APPROPRIATEZZA ED INTEGRAZIONE DEL NUOVO COSTRUITO	INSTRUMENTI ED AZIONI NON INVASIVI	- rapporto costruttivo/ritmo/performance/trasparenza - forma delle coperture - composizione facciata - integrazione ambientale di strutture tecnologiche - evitare inserimenti tecnologici su facciata principale, se non possibile limitare l'impatto	
	INTRUSIONE VISIVA DEI SISTEMI TECNOLOGICI	RECUPERO DEGLI EDIFICI DELLA TRADIZIONE LOCALE	SAVAGUARDIA E RECUPERARE LE OPERE MANDE	- rispetto struttura esistente, mantenere unità edilizia, razionalizzare forme e tipologie, rispettare il volume originario, scelta cromatica - intarsi, stratagemmi, ricuperare i manufatti - vegetazione	Recupero degli edifici disabitati a Spina Recupero Alinari's S. C.A. Girone Recupero casa di Grassi in Bissone Riqualificazione collina del Molinetto
PERDITA	ABBANDONO E GRADUALE PERDITA DEI TRACCIATI STORICI	SAVAGUARDIA E VALORIZZAZIONE DEI TRACCIATI STORICI	- riqualificazione e recupero, accessibilità, vegetazione - connessione con punti strategici, elementi di servizio all'utente		

Schematic summary of the guidelines' articulation relating to one of the five objectives identified

Finally, we verified the effectiveness of such guidelines in one of the historical centers of the study's area, Villadeati, in which the reading of the place, of the critical issues and the resources has led to the definition of some planning addresses increasing the assets' value.



Diagram of the guidelines' verification process in the little historic center of Villadeati, with an example of an address' plan card

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