

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture Construction City
Honors theses

Awaiting Verona: an alternative for the Magazzini Generali

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The paper presents a project for the requalification of the industrial heritage in the Magazzini Generali area in the city of Verona.

The topic was chosen after having followed an international architectural planning workshop which focused on the “Magazzini Generali Verona”, held in September 2011 and organised by the Ordine degli Architetti della Provincia di Verona. The workshop allowed participants to become acquainted with and examine in depth the extremely complex urban fabric of the city.

The paper was partly based on the thesis of arch. Maria Paola Repellino, who, after taking part in the workshop, developed a plan for a new urban layout and presented several future scenarios which could help solve Verona’s problems, one of which is its many derelict, former industrial areas.

After the relocation of the Agricultural-Industrial Zone (ZAI) during the Seventies, these vast areas in the southern part of Verona were abandoned. Among these the Magazzini Generali – built between 1927 and 1956 – are a potential resource for the city, a second opportunity to renew and upgrade the quality of its urban fabric.

The paper emphasizes the importance of restoring these areas to some form of use. Having built more than all the centuries that preceded it, the XX century has left us with an enormous amount of buildings to rethink; the sheer number and size of these constructions leaves little space to the option of demolishing and rebuilding from scratch. This explains why requalification seems to be the most reasonable path to pursue.

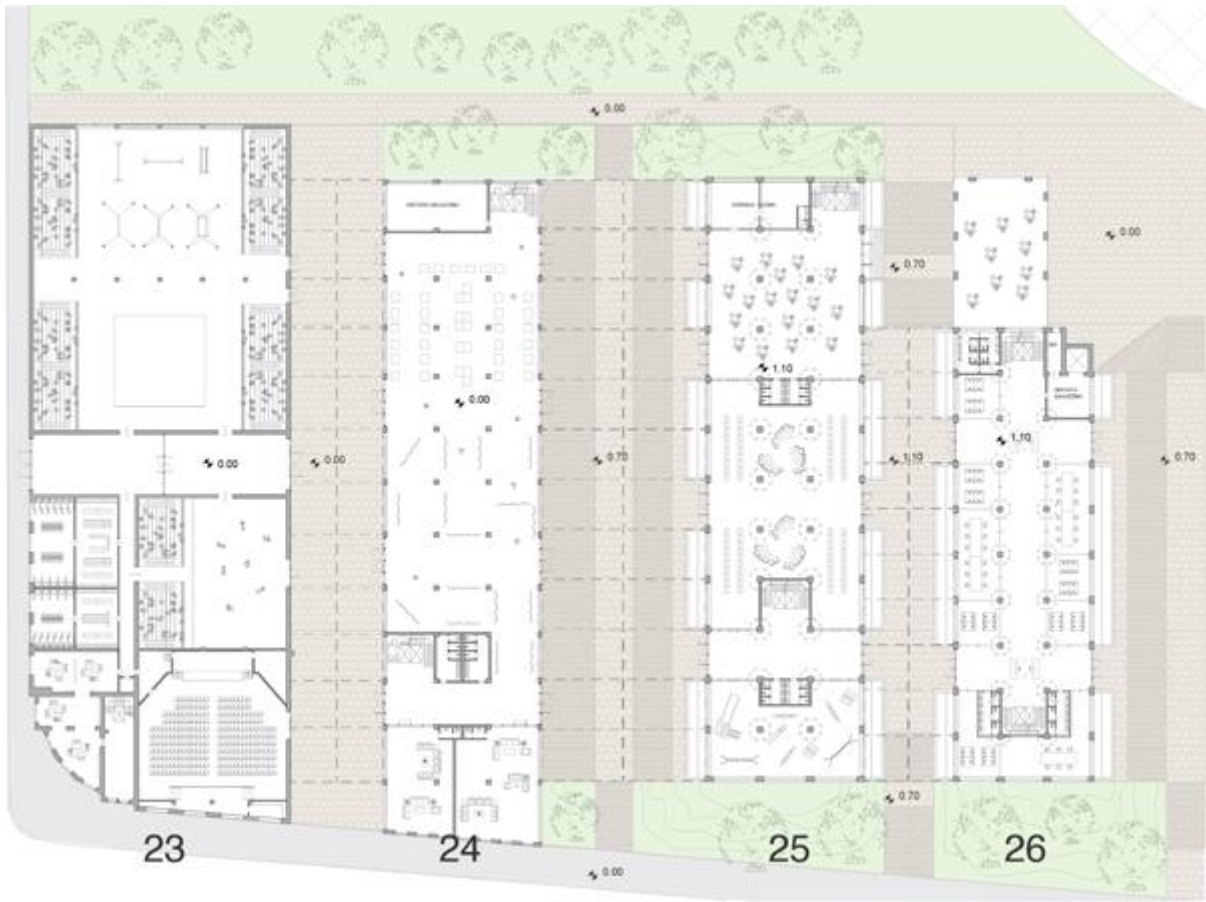
The thesis examines the different aspects involved in an industrial requalification project starting from an overall analysis of the urban setting, so as to promote an active urban fabric and ensure that the buildings be reintegrated into the daily life of the city. On the urban scale the project develops a hypothetical future expansion of the residential zone around and in the area of the Magazzini Generali bearing in mind the present prospects for the area and its neighbourhood. 1:2000 scale models were created so as to have a sufficiently broad view of the whole area and its directly connected surroundings. The final solution presents a series of buildings with a comb-like pattern creating a regular and closed front looking out on to the Viale del Lavoro, which should become the new urban boulevard of the Southern district of Verona. The buildings then gradually open up towards the Magazzini Generali area handing the stage over to the imposing, original industrial complex.



Scale model of the final urban layout proposal

Subsequently, at the the scale of the buildings, an alternative is suggested to the solution currently beeing considered by the municipality: a banking center. The alternative which has been offered, takes into account the importance of future users and of the city as the expression of social life which must contain multifunctional. public buildings, open to everyone. At present there are no such areas in the Southern district of Verona. The project aims to restore these spaces to the citizens by abolishing the “single-use” approach and by introducing a “mixed-use” centre, which can attract a great variety of users.

Such a centre will contain exhibition areas, shops, restaurant and cafeterias, workout gyms, theatres, dance centres, a coworking area, a library, a playroom, audiovisual spaces, etc.



Ground Floor plan of the project

Particular attention was paid to the spaces between the buildings, trying to maintain continuity between them and transforming them into public squares with glass roofs, areas that you can pass through or where you can stop for a while.



Buildings in their current state – Scale model of the project

In conclusion, the municipality's initiative of re-using the buildings is praiseworthy, but we must be careful not to fall back into the same situation we are trying to move away from, i.e. "monofunctional" or single-use zoning. Moreover, by introducing mixed uses the implied risk of the project is reallocated to a variety of players: if one player fails, his place will be taken by a new one. This mechanism cannot apply when only one actor is involved. In the long run, the mix of different uses provides a greater probability of success for the overall intervention project.

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