

Architecture of the Restoration: the «Borgo Nuovo» of Carlo Felice (1821-1831)

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The dissertation is an historical and critical research upon «*Borgo Nuovo*»'s making and transformation in Turin, during the reign of Carlo Felice (1821-1831).

«*Borgo Nuovo*» is the long land strip bounded by Vittorio Emanuele II's avenue to the south, by Mazzini's street to the north, by Rattazzi's street to the west, and by Cairoli's avenue to the east. This area was the land concerned in 1822 by the town extension process.

This study wants to illustrate, through sources analysis, the reasons that made Municipal Administration of Turin choose exactly those lands for the extension of the town, their lotting as «villas with garden» for the well-off class and following resolutions that led to the effective evolution of this architectural scene.

Sources that have been analysed include, besides works already published upon this matter, evidences got from the *Archivio Storico* of Turin Municipality. Particularly, volumes by the *Ragioneria*, municipal office that attended, before being parcelled out in 1848, several authorities including also building sector control. Volumes by *Ordinati of Congregazione* and *Consiglio*, that were responsible of final approval of *Ragioneria*'s examined works. Volumes by *Consiglio degli Edili*, the body of control that allowed or refused private building projects. *Catasto Gatti*, and related offices of *Colonnari* and *Mutazioni*, charged to define the right place of architectural elements, the description of each cadastral lot, and transfers of property. *Tipi e disegni*, a fund that includes plans, maps and cards. *Progetti edilizi*, useful to reconstruct building interventions. Customers and planners were instead identified, as well as formers' jobs and professions and residence of they both, from registered guides.

During the research further information were found out –particularly by searches *Ragioneria*'s volumes which are full of evidences and unpublished information– upon the ancient land and the way it has been modified, primary urbanisation questions, water carriage canals equipment, communication lines building, but also information about the need to set up, within the new suburb that was going to be carried out, public spaces: a square, a church, a park.

Social scene was also studied to understand architectural carrying out by the searches of extension lots buyers and professional subjects they addressed for buildings construction.

Works of dismantling of ancient fortification made during French occupation justify choices of lotting out while they make the area easier to be carried out. The fact that a kind of extensive construction based upon villas with gardens has been chosen depends on the natural landscape: the proximity of the river, the hills, and Valentino's park.

Gaetano Lombardi (the architect of the Municipality) is charged with the lotting project: he parcels the area into seven exceptional extended blocks and splits each

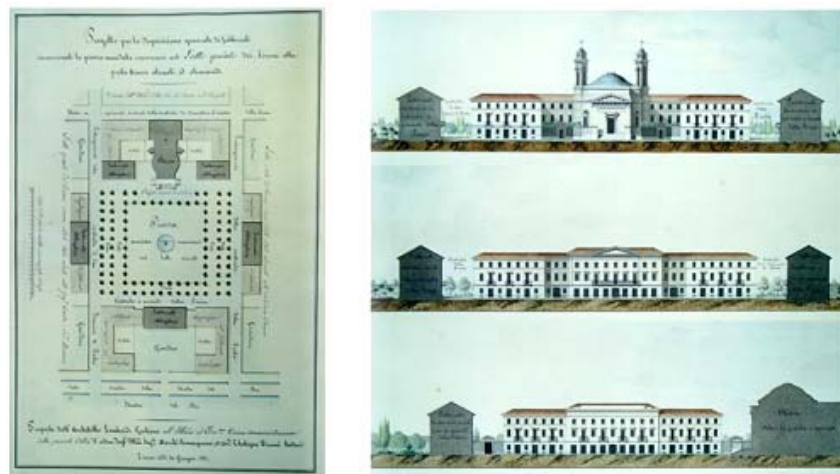
of them to obtain quite equal lots that take the longest distance except for the last one facing the river.



Picture 1 – Gaetano Lombardi, regular shape of lands lots (between Porta Nuova and the river Po), 1821.

Lots are sold by auction in 1822 but owners are imposed to level them by their own and the administration delays to supply water, so the auction has so little success that administration interrupts it and reconsider the problem looking for more tempting solutions. Results improve with a new auction at the end of 1824. At the end of 1825 all lots are sold to several professional men: doctors, lawyers, notaries, architects, functionaries and to the rich middle-class who just in that period becomes integral part of the municipal administration, filling posts until that moment meant for the aristocracy.

The municipality keeps for its own the fifth lot, bounded between present San Francesco da Paola's and Accademia Albertina's streets, to carry out a square and a church for residents of the future suburb. Gaetano Lombardi is charged with the project, but the square will not be carried out; the block occupied by the fifth lot is not sold until 1827, when Antonio Giolitti becomes the only owner.



Picture 2 – Gaetano Lombardi, square's plan and prospects in the fifth lot.
On the left: plan for the lay out of buildings surrounding the square, 1825.
On the right: top, church's main elevation to be raised on the north of the square, 1825; **middle,** northwards main elevation of buildings to be raised on the south of the square, 1825; **low,** eastwards and westwards main elevation of buildings surrounding the square, 1825.

The municipality fixes extension within these lots as villas with garden extensive suburban building. But even if terms of enclosed contract for lots sale fix certain limits to agree the all landscape, first carryings out do not conform themselves to fixed terms. Construction limits related to planimetries of each block are not respected and buildings rise anywhere within lots. Architectural typology comply only in part with terms: besides smart houses and villas facing King's boulevard, rows of courtyards and gardens, mixed use buildings are carried out, owner's villa plus house for rent with commercial use ground floor, income blocks of flats and in some case factories. From about 1829 lots are progressively parcelled out by further sales and lottings, and they lose definitively their typical use.

To carrying out plans of their houses buyers call rising architects of the time who studied at Ferdinando Bonsignore's School and his disciple Giuseppe Maria Talucchi. During first years Gaetano Lombardi, the most working architect in Turin at the beginning of Restoration, is charged with main tasks, and in the next years tasks are given to Giuseppe Frizzi, Giuseppe Roggeri, Gaetano Bertolotti, Felice Courtial, Giuseppe Signoris, Arnolfo Spagnolini, Andrea Cattaneo to mention only some of them, while in 1831 Giuseppe Leoni is the one who always appears.



Picture 3 – Gaetano Lombardi, plan for Giuseppe Consul's land building (first block's extension bounded between Vittorio Emanuele II's avenue, Rattazzi's, Mazzini's and Carlo Alberto's streets), 1822.

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