

Housing (Associations) of quality: projects and works. Glasgow, a case study

by Ombretta Ròmice

Tutor :Giovanni Salvestrini

CoTutor: Mr Rob Joiner, F.R.S.A.

This thesis was generated by my interest in lectures given by Rob Joiner as part of Prof. Giovanni Salvestrini's course in Architectural Planning in the 1991-'92 Academic Year .

Those lectures, whose title was "**Programmes and plans for a new way of living**", were meant to present the **Scottish experience in community architecture**, and described projects and works by Reidvale Housing Association in Glasgow of which Rob Joiner was the Director.

The lectures suggested that the story was one of great success; my interest was generated by a desire to discover whether it was really an unquestionable planning method, suitable and useful in different contexts; what changes it required of traditional design methods; what real advantages it could offer to the communities involved; what kind of technical problems it generated.

My Thesis, which is dedicated to the analysis of this experience, is articulated in the following way:

Chap. 1 is dedicated to the concept of "**quality of living**", as a fundamental principle for any housing design; to this is associated that of "**affordable housing**", as a necessary solution to allow anyone to have a house to live in. The third idea, "**community architecture**", is presented as a possible solution to reconcile the first two, even though there is no immediate apparent connection. (**Chap. 2**).

This first introductory section is followed by a study of what has been happening in Glasgow over the last 20 years through the work of **Housing Associations** (voluntary non profit associations which repair, build and manage houses, primarily for rent); especially where they are trying to use new design techniques in the search for high quality as the main tool of their work.

The study of those Associations induced me to analyse firstly the **historical-social-cultural factors which generated their birth** (**Chap. 3.1**) and secondly their **early work** (**Chap. 3.2**).

Chap. 3.3 is dedicated to the description of the **method of work used by them**, from an organizative, economical and bureaucratic point of view.

Some **opinions about their work** is given by people involved in housing, such as members of the Local Authority and Scottish Homes, whom I interviewed during my stay in Glasgow (**Chap.3.4**).



The "speculative tenement" was traditionally used by the low income classes since the XIX Sec; it has been the main reason for the birth of the Housing Associations which wanted to restore them *with and for* the local communities who lived into them.

There follows a section dedicated to **3 case-studies (Chap. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)**; these are 2 Housing Associations and a Cooperative, whose work I studied for 4 months. For each of them are described their activities, their projects and their characteristics.



Molendinar Park Housing Association is committed to variety, quality and sustainability in its developments. At Bellgrove Street the Association has worked

with the architects to create a building of significant architectural merit"; Rob Joiner, Director.

At the end of each case study I summarise **interviews** which I conducted with the architects, the Committee members and the urban planners involved in their work. I have given great importance to this form of analysis as it has worked for me as a sort of catalyst, able to generate questions and curiosity on each aspect connected to the Housing Associations.

Each of these generated further areas of reflection which led me to build up a complete picture based on the roles and opinions of the various people involved in the work of the Housing Associations:

- **the residents** of the area in which the Housing Associations works;
- **the staff** employed;
- **the architects** working for them;
- **the Committee.**

Chapters 5 and 6 are dedicated to an analysis of the **difficulties** which Housing Associations have to face in their everyday life, **and** of the **perspectives** they have for the future.

Chap. 7 is about the **application of the "participatory design process"**, from the beginning, which I had the chance to experience working with Molendinar park Housing Association.

It is concerned with the proposal to adopt new housing solutions (shared houses with common facilities) which could work with Housing Associations, which over the last few years have become more and more interested in the problems of young people; I adopted these solutions into my project, which could become a feasibility study for the future work of Molendinar Park H.A. in Gallowgate, a very interesting area close to the city centre.



In my project I planned over 120 flats for young people and homeless; it is located in the area of Glasgow Cross, Gallowgate Road and Bell Street.

This picture has been realized with 3Dstudio.

Moreover I presented some **possible evolutionary developments of the "partecipatory design process"**, both in Glasgow and in Rome: these intend to involve multi-media techniques to facilitate cooperation between local communities and the professionals in urban regeneration projects.

For further information, Ombretta Romice, e-mails:
romice@to2000.it,
mbretta.r.romice@strath.ac.uk