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Between Pompeii and the sea. The project of an Art District in ex Italtubi of Torre Annunziata.

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Abstract

The redevelopment project of the ex Italtubi of Torre Annunziata represents an important opportunity for the sustainable development, "green", "smart" of the territory of the Vesuvius area. The area, which covers a surface of over 20 hectares, is a strategic hub of particular geographical importance as set between the archaeological sites of Pompeii and the coastal system Torrese Stabiese, it acts as a "hinge" in an area heavily fragmented by the uncontrolled growth, unplanned, consisting of overlapping and not connected systems. The reorganization of the area is based on the creation of two distinct but highly complex systems interrelated: a large park of urban and territorial scale combined with the reconversion of industrial products, once used for steel production, in an Art District able to accommodate functions at the service not only of the project area, but of the entire territory. This dualism is aimed at strengthening the concept of "hinge"; it is in this design vision that the established system of the existing city, the sea and the archaeological site of Pompeii enter into relationship with each other, a close relationship, logical, historical, cultural. In this design, a central role is played by open spaces, by their quality, their scenic value, their "ecological" importance. The design choice is to mend, through the open spaces, the water and the green areas, the complex of historical and landscape environmental system of the Vesuvius area; a network of relationships to strengthen through the quality of these spaces to be entrusted with the ecological and environmental regeneration.

Keywords: Landscape design – Industrial heritage – Smart Planning – Reconversion – Art district

1. The recovery of brownfield sites: an urban regeneration opportunities.

The crisis of the industrial city and its transformative rules and logical settlement, has placed, on the table of local and national administrators, new questions and ideas on the fate of the abandoned areas inside the city.

The empty and enclosed urban spaces, designed without an apparent logic and connection with the surrounding landscape, continuously affect the urban morphology and memory.

The disposal of industrial areas is one of the issues that, due to the world economic crisis of recent years, has involved many cities especially in Europe and North - America. The link between cities and industry has always been very strong, impacting both positively and negatively on the urban development. If it is true that the city with the industrial development has profited from a substantial social and economic growth, it is also true that the industry has created real ruptures in the territory. This two-way relationship has greatly influenced the urban form, the design of the city and its spaces. There are cities born around large industrial complexes, Liverpool is a classic example, and conversely. In both cases there is no doubt that the industry's influence on urban development has been secondary.

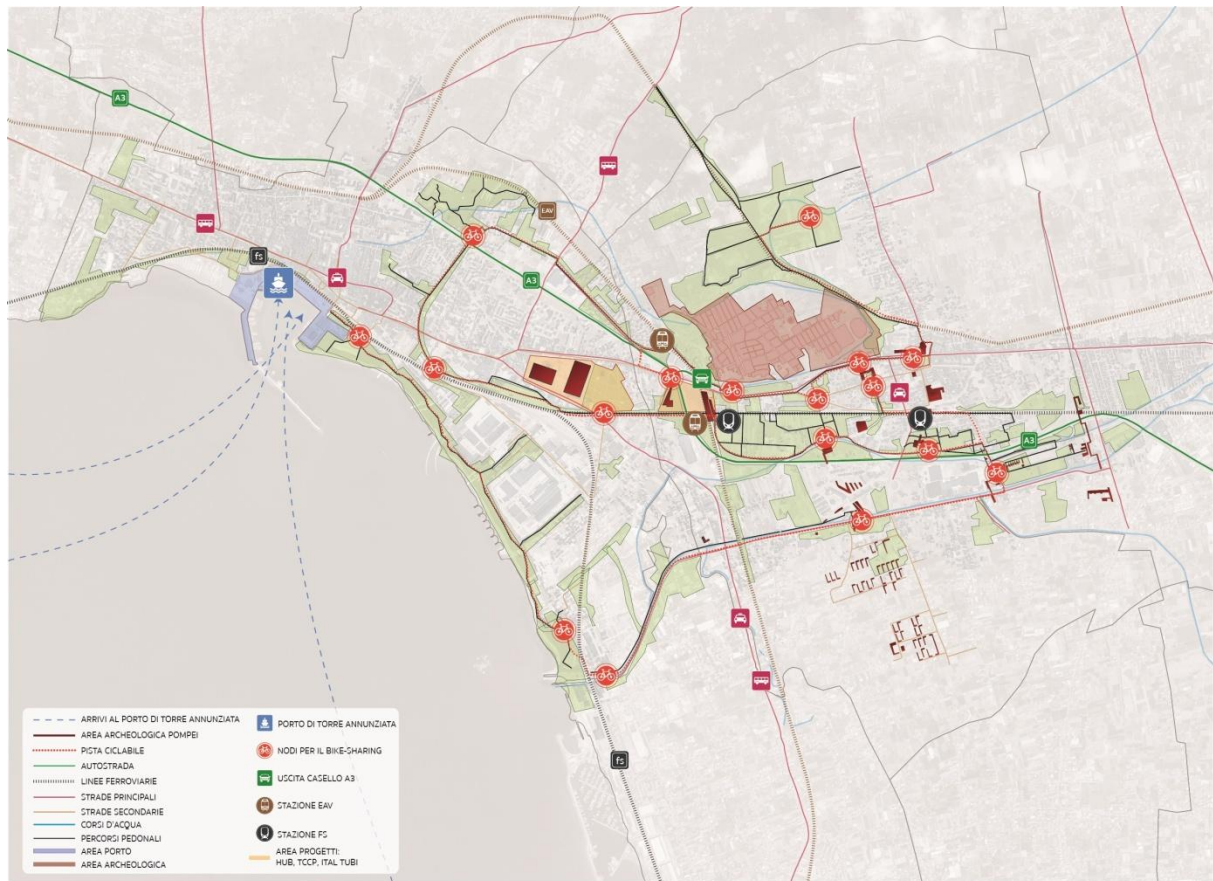


Fig. 1: Appreciating the context_mobility scheme.

"The amount of leftover and disused areas in European cities is so extended that it is unlikely that a new building program might be able to fill the current empty space. Few activities can stand comparison with the industries of the past in terms of direct and indirect consumption of soil"¹. With these few words Bernardo Secchi in " Rethinking an redesigning the urban landscape ," explains the effects of the industrial crisis, the impact on the city but at the same time, try to direct the eye of the reader the designer, to the possible choices and design solutions until now almost unknown and few studied.

The absence in the contemporary city of "urbanity"² mentioned by Françoise Choay in "post urban Horizon " is linked precisely to this fragmentation of urban spaces, their consequent loss of identity, their discontinuity in the urban fabric. A loss of values which involved especially the public spaces, their environmental quality and their functional qualities .

The crisis of the industrial city has left gaps in urban fabrics, abandoned disused, but also opened the eyes of the designers to new project ideas, new images, new glances to the landscape and the transformation of these places that become urban opportunities.

These drosscapes , empty spaces of different size and nature of the contemporary city, become the places of the urban project in which intertwine and merge the relationships between the various components of ecological, environmental, urban planning and infrastructure, and the materials that create the city ."The discrepancy (dross) is considered as a natural part of every city which develops dynamically. It is an indicator of the health of urban development"³.

The decline of industrial city has also coincided with the unregulated growth of cities, new suburbs, technological developments, new economies of scale. The industrial areas, gravitational centers for economic development of the territories have now lost their old centrality becoming generator of new insights on the development of cities, crucial points in urban transformations.

An example of urban renewal and regeneration of an ex industrial area is the project of the 798 in Beijing, earlier an industrial district and propagandist intervention of Maoist China. Today it represents one of the best design work on this issue. Transformed into a cultural district, the 798 with its huge spaces, that once welcomed one of the largest coal producing military industries in China, had become a large open-air museum with art galleries, exhibition spaces, bars, restaurants, schools and ateliers. The 798 has been transformed from a place of industrial production in a place of artistic

production and, despite its marginal position with respect to the historic center of Beijing, is now regarded as the new civic centrality.

The Ruhr, formerly an important region for mining and iron production in Germany, has been involved, since 1989, in a complex operation of renovation and functional conversion. The construction sheds, once workspaces and symbol of an historical - evolutionary process of human history, had now become vanishing cathedrals.

An important step, in this vast industrial restructuring program, deals with the ecological redevelopment, landscape and environment of the Emscher River. The area was previously occupied by Meiderich steelworks of Thyssen companies which occupied an area of about 230 hectares.

The project involved landscape architects, urban planners, architects, artists and historians united by one goal: create a new regional park that would combine the ecological and landscape value of this area with its industrial history. Pavilions like the fusion plant Meiderich have become exhibition rooms and art studios. The vast open areas have become a park of about 800 square kilometers covered by a dense network of pedestrian and cycle paths.

The project for the occupied area of the ex Italtubi is based on these examples, on these projectual design, on the scenarios aimed at the regeneration of the landscape and environment of these places, of these brownfields.



Fig. 2: Torre Annunziata, project area.



Fig. 3: Art District, masterplan.



Fig. 4: Torre Annunziata_ITALTUBI, current photos.

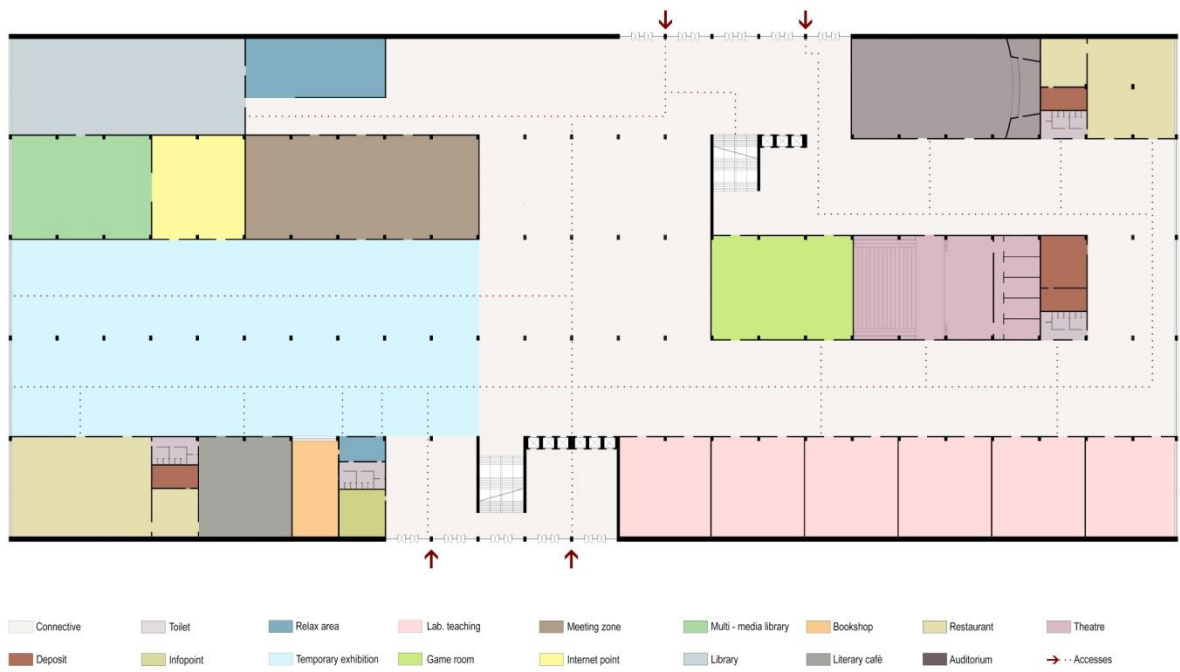


Fig. 5: Art District, ground floor.

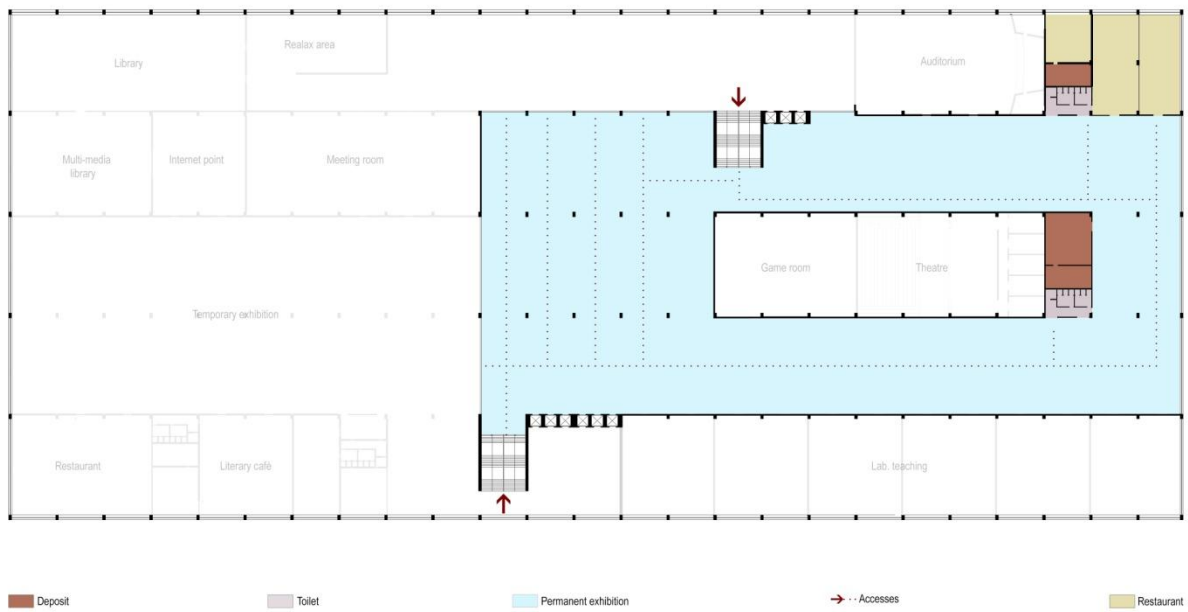


Fig. 6: Art District, first floor.

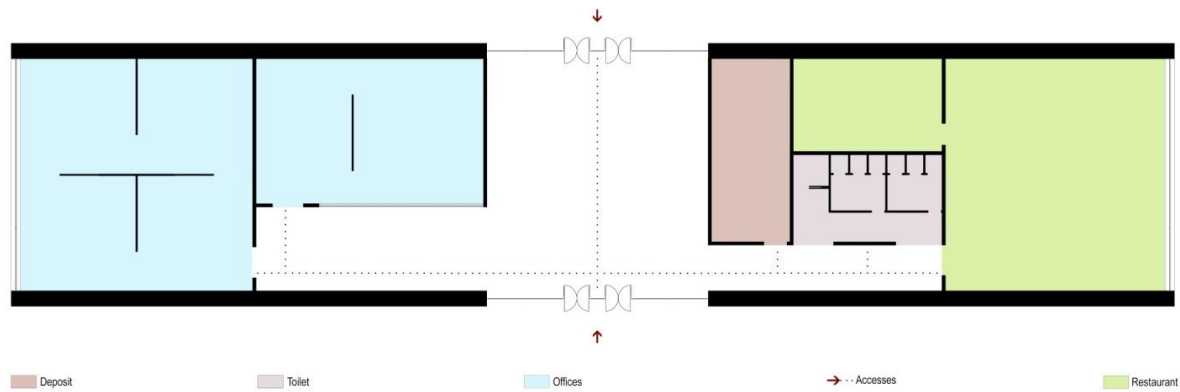


Fig. 7: Art District, administrative offices.

2. History and rationality as elements for the project design of ex Italtubi.

Disused for the past twenty-five years and reclaimed by asbestos in the 2000, the area of the ex Italtubi of Torre Annunziata is one of the most important and interesting urban renewal opportunities concerning brownfields in the national scene. The area, which covers approximately 19 hectares, is inserted in a region among the most beautiful of our country both for its environmental and landscape value that for the the historical and cultural one. It is set among the slopes of Vesuvius and the Torrese - Stabia coastline, which is separated at present by the dense bundle of tracks of the national rail line.

The intrinsic value of this urban "empty" "full" of history and opportunities becomes a place of reflection on design, the meeting between the written history and a future to be written. A place full of charm, set within an urban fabric with great features. A "non - urban area " to be exploited, to be "recycled", to be returned to the landscape, to the city and to the citizens. A public space "new", central, able to outline the dynamics of development of the city, the quality of life of citizens, and the environmental quality.

It is at these places and spaces that urban design gazes must turn to redesign and design.

The project is intended to ensure that the area, closed in itself, can become a place "open to the city" able to offer citizens new services, more public spaces, commercial areas, for restaurants and green areas accessible at all. The project aims planning to "break" the industrial precinct in its architecture and in the image and make sure that this area will become an integral part of the city, territory and landscape .

The pavilions are immense and cover an area of about 5 ha, 25% of the entire batch. Tall structures, silhouetted against the sky in remembrance of the past. A city within a city. A space that for too many years has remained closed and abandoned. The ability to transform and regenerate is part of the logic of urban development based on principles dictated by ecological dynamics which in these places can be enhanced. The first step is to change the urban planning point of view, look for new cultural approaches that are able to give new life to matter. The urban planning of areas such as the ex Italtubi need to focus on a wider range of variables, developed in order to create a dynamic approach to the planning that is in continuous evolution.

The idea of converting this former industrial area into a "new 798", an Art District able to enhance the places in harmony with the surrounding landscape and the industrial architecture, comes from the awareness that this new role will be a driving force for development for the entire torrese and stabiese area, an excellence, a historical cultural unicum.

The area is characterized by the presence of two main artifacts that, for their architectural and functional characteristics, represent factors of permanence of greater impact on design choices. These two elements have always been the fulcrum of the entire production chain of Italtubi and for this reason the masterplan project starts with the careful observation of these already existing structures, including the recording officers of the production areas, with the specific aim of enhancing their peculiarities and safeguarding the main distinguishing features. The reading of the historic trim has unequivocally suggested the overall urban development of the entire area with the layout of the new design features in a clean design, rational and "clean" The aim is to organize within the old container a distribution system and a simple exhibition, linear and rational, able to optimize the use of all the available spaces and to give back a strong and, at the same time, "attractive" imagine to the building and new features, so as to turn it into one of the privileged places of culture.

The architectural structure represented by the two main existing elements is renewed thanks to an intervention which, keep on respecting the environment and the spacious interiors, is characterized by an identity different from that of existing buildings becoming part of the conversion trend of the

archeological industrial spaces into places dedicated to culture and art in its various forms and expressions.

The standards design tend to a maximum retention and preservation of existing structures to enhance its historic character and authenticity of the preserved parts also alternating with technologically advanced materials and placing new historical artifact in close and reciprocal relationship enhancement.

The morphological axis defined by the pre-existing artifact is the most important generative sign in which outline the various spaces and functions. The project is focused on delivering a perspective art gallery which together with spaces dedicated to educational workshops, temporary art installations, wide-ranging cultural events, artistic and technological installations in public spaces dedicated to catering, to trade, to congress activities, multiple use of halls, social events and all the complementary services

The floor plan that flows out has allowed the construction, between the two main architectural and historic, of a large public square on which will overlook the restaurant and business trade. A "green" square able to recall at the same time the historical memories of these spaces.

The project plans, for the south area of the lot, the realization of a large urban park of about 8 ha, a green and wooded collective space that is set to become the connecting place between the city and the Art District. Although the area destined to the urban park and the architectural elements retain some independence among themselves, at the same time even if "working" independently they keep being firmly connected in a physical bond through the pathways and functions that characterize them.

In this project proposal, the public space re - assumes importance in the dynamics of development of the city, in the quality of life. It is in public spaces, in the architecture to "zero volume", that the city is redesigned and designed. It is in these spaces that the urban ecosystem regains its shape, is enriched with biodiversity, social life, a new "urbanity" capable of overcoming social inequalities, access to functions and services for all. The urban green takes on a new value, the ecological one, in addition to purely aesthetic and recreational functions to serve the people. An eco-dimensional process in urban planning leads to bind territories and their inhabitants in a vision in the longer -term urban development, to adopt new models of economic and social development are able to renew our ways of consuming , producing, working and living.



Fig. 8: Art District, night rendering North- East view.



Fig. 9: Art District, rendering North- West view.



Fig. 10: Art District, temporary exhibitions.



Fig. 11: Art District, teaching laboratory.

Notes

¹ Rethinking an redesigning the urban landscape, Bernardo Secchi in Places Journal - Volume 19 "The future metropolitan landscape", Issue 1, 2007.

² L'orizzonte posturbano, Françoise Choay, Officina Edizioni, 1992.

³ Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America, Alan Berger, Princeton Architectural, 2007.

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