



ENGLISH TEXTS

TITLE OF THE ISSUE

Urban Landscapes. Forms Plans Projects

DEBATE

Rewriting the City through Urban Architecture and Intermediate landscapes. An interview with Elio Piroddi

Claudia Mattogno

Q. Does the contemporary city exist or is it disappearing, drowned in a post-urban skyline?

A. Nothing gives us the right to speak about the end of the city, or rather the city-landscape, regarding a skyline I would call «hyper-urban». The spread is intermediate territory which, is how it is, or it becomes urbanized or disappears.

Q. Has the growth phase finished?

R. We are living in a thoughtful transition period that does not exclude the possibility of further «inlaid» growth. Then, stabilization will follow.

D. What are the urban-planning strategies?

A. Those represented by the examples you have chosen – reconnecting, planning and designing the «empty», reconverting. In short, designing the new «urban planet» landscape.

Q. In your last book, *Urbanistica (è) progetto di città (Urban-planning (is) city design)*, what do the brackets mean?

A. That it will be removed, because the final product of *planning* is not the Urban Project but the city of stone, what we see and live in. A good town plan must be based on the morphological tendency of the city able to manifest itself in urban architecture. Read *Urbanizzazione* by Levi.

Q. Why do you frequently refer to Mumford?

A. Because he had already understood everything decades before – from the «work of art» city to urban regionalism, and to the consequences of an economy based on money.

Q. What does the reference to the beautiful city mean?

A. To make a city beautiful is one of the intrinsic purposes of urban design, not to be confused with the «ugliness» of other artistic practices, as the feeling of beauty that a city transmits is the same as that of a natural landscape and an ugly city cannot be a work of art.

A Look at the Urban Planet

Martina Cardellini, Carlo Di Berardino

This article briefly presents some issues regarding contemporary urban phenomena. It is divided in two parts. The first part is about demographic and economic aspect of cities at global level. Today more than half of the world population is urban, the percentage of urban population is increasing and almost all the new urban dwellers will be in Asia and Africa. Afterwards some economic aspects of cities are examined from a global point of view. A large part of world GDP is produced in just six hundred cities. Current and projected trends of GDP of these cities show that the global economy's center is shifting to Asia at an unprecedented speed. Furthermore, cities are increasingly becoming nodes of a global network. In this network different levels are recognizable. The second part describes five cities, each of which can be considered paradigmatic of

different, specific urban dynamics. Nairobi, in its part including Kibera slum, can be considered a paradigm of informal development. Song Do, in South Korea, which is being built from scratch, is paradigmatic of «urban utopia». Copenhagen, thanks to its efforts aimed at improving sustainability can be considered a paradigm of high quality of urban life. Shenzhen, a megalopolis which was a village only 30 years ago is a paradigm of accelerated urban growth, while Detroit, once the flourishing Motorcity, nowadays is a paradigm of urban decline.

Contemporary Transformations of Global Cities. London and Shanghai, Two Urban Worlds

Antonio Cappuccitti

The urban transformations in two of the most important cities in the world, London and Shanghai, are showing the most extreme phenomena of contemporary urbanism, respectively, in the West and in the East.

London is one of the major financial centers of the West, and this causes a high level of demand for directional settlement, that shows strong fluctuations and changes over time, but that is expressed in an intense urban transformation, also (and particularly) within the consolidated urban fabrics. The public urban policies, at the same time, manifest themselves in different ways, the most important of which is particularly evident in the functional conversion of large brownfields and qualification of urban spaces and collective structures, as well as the construction of new settlements.

Shanghai is poised to become in the near future one of the first megacities of the world about population size and economic importance, with a spatial form typical of a city - region. High levels of economic growth lead to a demand for urban development that causes important phenomena of urban transformation, which regard, strongly and with different ways, the consolidated and historical urban fabric and the expansion in the territory. The public urban policies, in this context, provide an ambitious planning strategy aimed primarily at the development of an extensive and complex system of metropolitan polycentrism, hierarchically divided into several levels, which has already been implemented in the last ten years.

Surprise Copenhagen Between Visions and Achievements

Andrea Vidotto

Copenhagen is a city where in the area of town-planning and building it appears quite easy to verify the relation between visions and achievements, statements of principle and actual implementation, and programs and projects. In some areas of the city the changes are more evident. The city fabric has been enriched by quality services and infrastructures, by squares, open spaces and avenues that

have resulted in new solutions where public space is concerned. On Amager Island a new rapport with the sea has been created, with a Mediterranean feel to it. The enclave of Holmen and Christianshavn, for some centuries the Navy's arsenal, has been reopened to the public, being transformed into an area for cultural activities, housing and services. The Oerestad area, the most dynamic where the city's urban expansion is concerned, has developed along the elevated railway line, providing a spectacular view. In Oerestad "it is the intention to give full artistic freedom concerning architectural form" (from the 1994 call for projects) in line with an attempt to attract private capital within a framework of publically planned infrastructures. As well, across the straits in Malmö, the sustainable "City of Tomorrow" was built in 2001. The Danes and Swedes have become partners in aiming at innovation as a winning strategy. From among the redeveloped port areas, Sluseholmen is an admirable example based on the Dutch experiences with its blocks of low-rise buildings surrounded by canals.

Planning the Conversion. Urban Drafts in Amsterdam and Surroundings

Milena Farina

Since the nineties the Dutch territory is affected by important urban transformations, and Amsterdam in particular involving large brownfield sites as a result of the reorganization of port activities. These areas, in strategic locations for accessibility and proximity to the city center, are particularly interesting for national policies set out in the Seventies and Eighties on the urban revitalization and expansion inspired by the model of the compact city. To govern such complex processes of urban transformation the city of Amsterdam developed a planning system articulated in several phases, called «Plaberum» (which stands for *Plan-en besluitvormingsproces Ruimtelijke maatregelen*), established in 1980 and updated in 2003. During the planning experiences, involving several piers of the harbor and former industrial areas, the Plaberum system evolved adapting to the progressive strengthening of the role of private actors involved (developers, housing associations, current and future residents) who act more effectively in decision-making. An open process was set up that engages all parties, which relies on outside professionals to coordinate and mediate between different positions and provide an accomplished and appealing urban image. The role of private parties also has a decisive effect in the choice of urban models, which tend to respond to the strong demand for owned homes that emerges in the Nineties. The experiments range from models focusing on the individual dimension of houses with direct access from the street and the blocks, able to create a unique and more urban character; from models including the creation of a urban tissue and the combination of isolated buildings connected through the public space, researching a balance between uniformity and differentiation. This wealth of experience can now be evaluated in its results in terms of urban space.

The Vinex Dutch Housing Policy

Fabiola Fratini

With the objective to build one million houses in ten years,

from 1995 to 2005, the National Building Program or Vinex (1993) represented the premise of a radical change of the Netherlands landscape. At the same time the Vinex introduced some important innovations regarding sustainability; administrative decentralization; public financing reduction; opening to the private market. Considering these last topics, despite the tradition of public housing politics most of the new houses were to be constructed by the private sector.

The assessment of the outcomes of this extra-large program are suspended between an innovation effort, the aim to fulfill sustainable planning criteria and the results on the field. These are characterized by small cities most of the time within greenfield location, low densities and soil consuming. The opening to private developer influenced the quality of the urban products with a design concerned in the shape of private plots more than in the public realm. Nevertheless Vinex districts can have a better future. Densification, more activities and related public spaces can change the urban atmosphere of the new villages. A possibility within a positive future scenario.

The French Way to Planning. The Case of Lyon

Anna Laura Palazzo

In France, regional planning is closely linked to governance processes balancing cohesion and competition measures in the interplay between participation issues open to all citizens and negotiation arrangements with major stakeholders.

The *Communauté urbaine* of Lyon, recently established as a «Métropole», represents an ideal fieldwork to test such relevant topics.

Over the past three decades, the *Schéma directeur* and the subsequent lighter *Schéma de Cohérence territoriale* affecting 72 Municipalities have been set up in order to redirect the relationship between planning tools towards an overall idea of consistency, which allows some minor adjustments over time, such as a variable mix of uses in urban regeneration areas according to market demand.

Still, although the *Projet urbain de Gerland* carried out by the Grand Lyon within the broader perspective of such a *Projet de territoire* implies the idea of the city as a collective actor, the regeneration supply chain pays a peculiar attention to the control of urban form all along, notably within the *Zones à aménagement concerté*.

Cities Without Resources and Without Growth: «Reinventing» Development

Francesco Rubeo

The urban landscape and its morphological, architectural, and also management quality is a results of the capability of the local municipality to attract and generate resources.

The lack of these resources can be seen in all Italian, and southern European, cities, and in the absence of management, resulting in a widespread deterioration in the quality of public space. This is also the case involving suspended building site works and the absence of new, public and private projects.

This crisis in resource availability hits both the public and private sectors. However, the great capital cities have begun once again to move towards large investments and choose

assets with guaranteed returns.

The rest, the suburbs, the «social» facilities, have remained on hold. But it is actually from the crisis that new opportunities can be generated, creating and training new entrepreneurs able to manage the urban transformation based on more sustainable approaches.

We must begin again from the Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), creating a new equilibrium and greater transparency. An analysis of the relevant tools, drawn up by Italy, France and England, highlight an important need to move towards innovation allowing for development, but less «aggressive» and more compatible and sustainable compared to the past. Thus, the crisis can become a factor for development, creating added resources for the building of the public city.

Urban Sprawl: Interpretations and Processes of Redevelopment

Maurizio Morandi

The essay examines a kind of urban landscape recently named with many denominations: urban sprawl, continuous city, endless city, metropolitan city, city outside the city. This urban landscape is part of the more general phenomenon of contemporary urbanization in the European territory. It is a settlement that despite the absence of many morphological and qualitative aspects of the city, is characterized by behaviors that belong to the urban culture. It is marked out by uncontrolled and self-produced interventions, by the absence of recognizable hierarchies and by the non-compliance between typology and architectural image.

The paper assumes that a morphological redevelopment of these settlements can be carried out starting from some of their characteristics, that can be summarized as follows:

- *a vision of the territory as a continuous space;*
- *the need for complex centralities;*
- *the qualitative upgrading of fluxes and infrastructures;*
- *the keeping of gaps and empty spaces, allowing the spontaneous uses of the common areas and the agricultural functions;*
- *the introduction of types and configurations characterized by a spatial and temporal mix of uses and functions;*
- *the introduction of design methodologies that may include the transformability of the interventions.*

The essay concludes by proposing some considerations about the lack of morphological quality in the urban sprawl and it identifies some reference aesthetic parameters to find a new quality.

R-Urban Landscapes Scenarios

Paolo Colarossi

This paper explains some considerations about those landscapes that can be named «intermediate landscapes». Furthermore, this paper explains the principles and guidelines that can change these kind of landscapes in other, named «r-urban landscapes». A «intermediate landscape» is an area of non-city and non- countryside. A r-urban landscape is the evolution of the intermediate landscape toward an integrated landscape. In the latter, into

perception of inhabitants, the countryside assumes a functional, social and aesthetic quality and the built environment is provided with the adequate facilities and equipment for a good living.

Into Lazio region, three types of landscapes of the non-city can be identified: widespread settlements, small groups of settlements, urban edge. In the same context five types of non-rural landscapes can be identified: populated countryside, peri-urban countryside, intra-urban countryside, peri-urban populated countryside, intra-urban populated countryside.

Four types of actions are suggested to turn the intermediate landscapes into r-urban landscapes: small villages, r-urban small squares, new walls between town and countryside, green cores. Each of these actions is based on the principle of endowment of facilities, services and public spaces, or for public consumption. These actions are able to ensure, to the areas of non-city and non- countryside, the necessary qualities for a good living: hospitality, sociability, urbanity and beauty. Finally, this paper outlines some guidelines about the methods and tools to realize these actions (scenarios and detailed urban plans; mode to acquire areas by Municipalities).

How Does Regional and Urban Planning Work in Europe

Antonio Cappuccitti, Elio Piroddi

The scenario of regional and urban planning in Europe shows very different ways of dealing with the many problems specific to the regions and towns of our present era, beginning from the national laws and the practices in planning adopted by the public authorities at different levels.

The research and practices in planning, in this area, exhibit very different and complex histories and experiences, which can be divided into some basic types of «similar» families, and which scientific research has highlighted and compared at different times.

Therefore, taking a look at the research in this broad area, can highlight a wide and interesting range of operative models and tools, underlying urban culture and the various legislative and administrative frameworks. However, it can, overall, provide signs concerning a series of important questions which are a feature of contemporary planning experience, and which are currently summarized into recurring *key words*: efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, fairness and management.

From this viewpoint, some specific issues are especially important: the forms and roles of *general urban-planning*, *strategic planning*, *local planning* and *public-private partnerships*. Concerning these issues, this contribution presents a brief overview of some of the important national approaches in planning, recalling the underlying features, particularities and main operative tools.

On the basis of this analysis, some reflections regarding the research's main points and directions are consequently presented, and where it is also possible to identify references for the specific and particular national experience in planning in Italy.