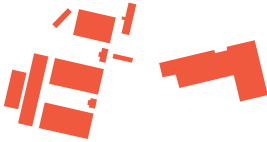


REINVENTING HERITAGE

A DESIGN COMPASS ON ADAPTIVE REUSE

	Le Rouge et Le Noir By Pierre-Alain Croset	6 — 11
	A Design Compass on adaptive reuse	12 — 17
	Milan as a living modern lab: in conversation with Margherita Guccione	18 — 27
	Dealing with the demolition drama: Barbara Rossi's lens on forgotten Shanghai	72 — 79
	Memory as a design studio: Koenraad Van Cleempoel on heritage and innovation	112 — 123
	Waste as a common ground: a dialogue with Formafantasma	168 — 177
	Renovating for a low-carbon future: Werner Sobek's practice on resource efficiency	206 — 217
	Regenerating cities: Jorge Pérez Jaramillo on urban transformation in Medellín	264 — 273
	Shifting perspectives: a roundtable on the future of adaptive reuse	300 — 307
	Glossary: the terminology of reuse	309

Le Rouge et Le Noir

Pierre-Alain Croset is an architect, critic and professor at the Politecnico in Milan. He has taught in Switzerland, the United States, Austria and China. He was Vittorio Gregotti's assistant editor of the international architecture magazine "Casabella" from 1982 to 1996, and the author of numerous writings on modern and contemporary architecture. He has edited monographs and curated exhibitions on the work of Cesare Cattaneo, Gino Valle, Luigi Snozzi, Álvaro Siza and Juan Navarro Baldeweg.

Numerous books and essays have been devoted to the topic of adaptive reuse and creative heritage in recent years, many of them produced by university research. This book, however, takes a different critical approach in that it was produced by an architectural firm, thereby affirming the urgent need to reuse and recycle. Elaborated on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Park's founding, the book goes beyond any celebratory intent to project itself into the future; indeed, it almost acquires the value of an architectural manifesto. Even though Park continues to design and realize new buildings, characterized by great compositional rigor and an accurate and refined technological development, this book makes evident their intention to privilege more and more interventions on the existing: a choice not imposed by market orientations, but proudly affirmed following deeply ethical and political motivations.

Park thus takes a decisive critical stance in the contemporary architectural debate, and does so by first turning the book into a forum for reflection, engaging in an open dialogue with many international authors from different disciplines, including art history, industrial design, photography, engineering, and urban planning. These dialogues accompany a critical reinterpretation of Park's fifteen most significant interventions, without, however, making them the direct object of discussion. This is a merit of the book as it confirms the attitude of understatement and elegant discretion that characterizes all of Park's work.

Apart from the project for the transformation of the former military arsenal in Pavia into the Lombardy Multifunctional Archive Center, which is currently undergoing executive development, all other projects are located in Milan and contribute to enhancing the Lombard capital as a true center of an authentically urban modernity. Park's interventions dialogue with significant buildings from different phases of Milan's modernization, and above all with some of the city's most important

masters, such as Piero Portaluppi (*Brisa 5*), Achille and Pierluigi Castiglioni (*Torre della Permanente*), Eugenio and Ermenegildo Soncini (*La Serenissima*), Melchiorre Bega (*Pirelli 35*), and Marco Zanuso (*Gioiaotto*); and with the Roman architects Marcello Piacentini (*Palazzo Missori*) and Luigi Moretti (*La Nave* in Corso Italia). These interventions always start with an accurate assessment of the cultural values of the original building (not always recognized as a listed building) and a construction analysis, before defining the precise intervention strategy. The *La Serenissima* building in Via Turati, the first to be completed in 2012, remains in my opinion exemplary of Park's refined design strategy. For some years now, I have mentioned it when foreign colleagues and friends ask me to recommend remarkable architecture realized in the last twenty years in Milan. Even if they only have half a day at their disposal, I advise them to visit Herzog & De Meuron's Feltrinelli and Grafton's Bocconi, but only after walking along Via Turati to discover *La Serenissima* next to Muzio's Ca' Brütta, and further on to Gio Ponti's Palazzo Montecatini, because in these few meters of Via Turati, they can witness the most authentically urban nature of Milanese modernism. Faced with the request to adapt *La Serenissima*, a 1950s office building, to the contemporary needs of the energy transition, Park did not limit itself to respecting the compositional quality of the original building, characterized by the binary rhythm of the steel structure, but considerably enriched the façade, introducing a skillful play of setbacks and slippages between opaque and glazed panels, transforming the static structural grid into a three-dimensional composition.

Directly opposite, on the other side of Via Turati, it is now possible to contemplate the recently completed extension of the *Torre della Permanente*, highlighting another way to create a singular quality of dialogue between the existing and the new. While the tower, completed in 1953, had previously appeared strangely unfinished, susceptible to a possible later elevation due to the

absence of a crowning element, Park's addition of two more floors decisively improves the tower's proportions, completing it with an intervention that is both respectful and innovative. The design continues the use of brick and glass but introduces refined variations in the assemblage of materials: on the side façades, alternating setback of the rows of bricks creates a texture that reinforces the image of heaviness of the wall; on the façade facing the street, the double-height windows evoke a giant order that contrasts with the repetition on the lower floors of bands of bricks and full-height windows. In the perception from afar, the creative detachment from the pre-existing building is emphasized in the refined corner solution: whereas in the Castiglioni brothers' tower the volume appeared as a continuous mass, in Park's addition the inward chamfering of the brick corner allows the glazed wall to expand over the entire width of the building, lending it a sense of detachment and further accentuating the crowning character of lightness and apparent dematerialization.

Faced with these exemplary interventions by Park, the observer becomes aware of their exceptional ability to adapt and renovate some of the best postwar buildings, so deeply embedded in the urban fabric as to appear as "timeless," conceived by cultured architects who shared an interpretation of modernity as a continuity of, not a break with, history. It is nevertheless interesting to observe how Park achieves equally convincing results in the interventions on apparently less significant buildings, not only including the two historicist buildings in Piazza Cordusio (*Terrazza Biandrà* and *Palazzo Sorgente*), which as listed buildings limited the field of experimentation to interventions on the roof and internal courtyards, but also, and above all, in the work on more "anonymous" buildings from the 1980s in the Bicocca district (the respective headquarters of *Engie* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*) and on industrial buildings (*Luxottica Digital Factory*, *Consorzio Agrario*, and *Valtorta 52*) in areas of twentieth-century expansion.

In these projects Park brings into play all the expertise gained from many years of research and experimentation on innovative façades, particularly in the field of office architecture, in order to combine technological and aesthetic qualities to profoundly renew the building's external image.

In its double dimension of a forum for reflection and a critical review of fifteen exemplary projects, Park's book also takes on a pedagogical value in using the tool of drawing to highlight with two colors the dialectical tension that characterizes every intervention on the existing: the drawings—of plans, sections, and elevations—are in black for the preserved parts and red for the new parts. The most important drawing is an exploded axonometry, not by chance the representation tool normally used to highlight the ways in which the different building components are assembled. This axonometry allows one to immediately understand the degree of intensity and nature of the transformation operation. Observing all fifteen axonometries in succession, one discovers Park's great predilection for interventions to transform roofs from technical spaces to inhabited spaces, often with an additional new volume; or conversely for excavation or emptying operations to allow the building to be crossed and courtyards transformed into gardens. The axonometries also reveal the nature of the intervention on the façades, represented in black with red inserts when it is a simple replacement of windows, or in red in the case of new façades as an additional layer applied to the outside of the pre-existing structure. Red and black represent the new and the existing as two ontologically separate entities that must dialogue intelligently. The intelligence of this dialogue is perhaps best manifested in the detail sections, because it is in the care and precision of these construction details where the secret lies as to how Park achieves a solution that is not only “correct” in terms of construction technology, but also “beautiful” in making the dialogue between existing and new meaningful and interesting.

In conclusion, Park's book can be understood as a manifesto, not only in inviting architects to steer their design research increasingly in the direction of adaptive reuse of the existing, but also in reminding them that ethical choices are not enough to produce good architecture if they are not accompanied by coherent linguistic choices. As Konraad Van Cleempoel writes in this book (p. 119), in the context of interventions in buildings interpreted as palimpsests “*architecture becomes an art of editing, not of erasing.*”