

Carbonia became a city thanks to the huge coal mine, the largest in Italy and one of the most important ones in Europe. It brought great progress to the area but had to be abandoned during the mining crisis, after which the city went into a steep decline. Nonetheless, this twentieth-century company town found the will to create a new future for itself by using its roots as a container for new and imaginative growth. The redevelopment project was able to involve the community, the urban heritage, the history of the work done there, the industrial archaeology of the entire coal basin, with its imposing visual and symbolic meaning, to highlight an internationally acclaimed modern landscape which received the Council of Europe Landscape Award 2010-2011 in recognition of its quality results.

The intent of this book is to offer a reflection on the cities of the twentieth century, starting with Carbonia and other remarkable redevelopment experiences in similar cases (Ivrea, Lyon, Crespi d'Adda and Schio), touching on such themes as conservation and the roles of institutions and the cultural policies in the recognition of modern heritages. Overturning the often negative opinions which prevail when it comes to the architecture and urban planning of the last century, it attempts to shift the focus from monuments, in the traditional sense, to vital urban and social fabric.

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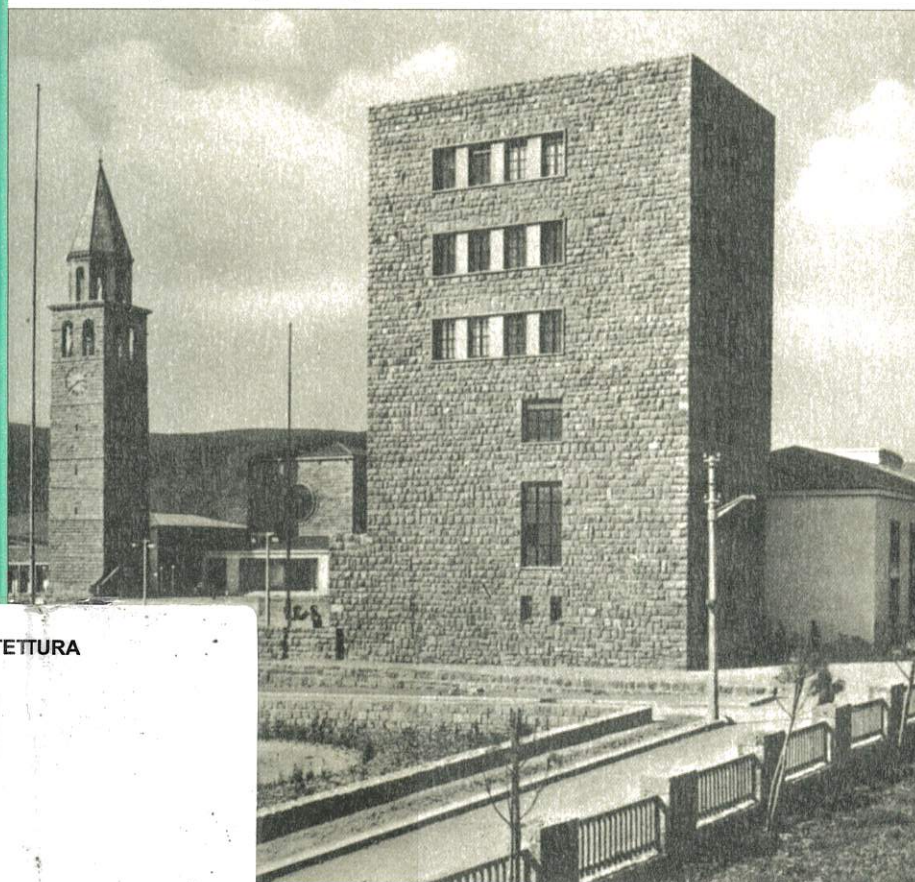
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POLITECNICO DI MILANO

Modern Urban Heritage

# Modern Urban Experiences and Reflections for the Twentieth-Century City

edited by Giorgio Peghin and Antonello Sanna



Umberto Allemandi & C.

EYEWITNESSES TO ARCHITECTURE  
SERIES DIRECTED BY CARLO OLMO AND EDOARDO PICCOLI

MODERN  
URBAN HERITAGE  
Experiences and Reflections  
for the Twentieth-Century City

edited by  
Giorgio Peghin and Antonello Sanna

texts by  
Emanuela Abis, Stefano Asili, Paola Atzeni,  
Maria Grazia Bellisario, Maria Paola Borgarino,  
Andrea Canziani, Alain Chenevez, Alessandra Fassio,  
Bruno Gabrielli, Paolo Galuzzi, Enrico Giacomelli,  
Franco Mancuso, Cristiana Marcosano Dell'Erba, Stefano Musso,  
Carlo Olmo, Giorgio Peghin, Antonello Sanna,  
Antonio Tramontin, Alessandra Vittorini, Rosalia Vittorini

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UMBERTO ALLEMANDI & C.

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The initiative which led to the publishing of this book came about thanks to the research conducted by the Department of Architecture of the University of Cagliari and to the close collaboration between the Department and the city of Carbonia, thanks to which Carbonia was awarded the Council of Europe Landscape Award 2010-2011.

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## Preface

This book contains a newly arranged selection of some of the principal contributions presented at a research conference entitled "Twentieth-Century Districts, Cities and Landscapes. Tools for the protection and upgrading of diffused assets". Organised in 2008 by the Cagliari Faculty of Architecture and by the Municipality of Carbonia, the aim of the event was to document practices and projects relating to the protection of 20th-century urban assets, highlighting their importance in the context of landscape protection issues.

Exactly two years on from the conference, its organisers and the "Carbonia project", which was the main driving force behind the event, received outstanding international recognition when the 2011 Council of Europe Landscape Award was won by the project. This award provides the clearest possible confirmation of the fact that "landscapes of modernity" and their upgrading are one of the issues currently central to the prospects for the sustainable development of our built environment. As its preamble states, the European Landscape Convention brings to the attention of communities and their institutions "landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes". "Twentieth-century landscapes" and the diffused urban heritage of the modern movement, which are dealt with in this book, are among the most representative assets of this contemporary approach to the issue of the quality of the built environment; the international scientific community's interest in the theories put forward and the experiences described thus seems to be consolidated.

The material is divided into four parts. The first section develops the theme of protection from an almost exclusively speculative point of view, putting forward decisive arguments to highlight the main problems that make intervening in mod-

ern urban heritage a complex matter: the meaning of memory and the creation of identity in the contemporary age; the relationship between historical authenticity and heritage; the extension of the concept of landscape to modern environments; and the role/value of heritage in socio-economic dynamics. The second section focuses on several particularly significant experiences that reveal the variety of planning choices and the various issues that emerge when confronted with manifestly dissimilar situations, albeit in a framework of almost identical objectives: Ivrea, Lyon, Crespi d'Adda and Schio. The third section is dedicated to the Carbonia case and to the grounds on which it was recognised to be an exemplary landscape project. Finally, the fourth section looks at the role played by the institutions and cultural policies in the process of granting full recognition to modern assets.

With varying emphasis the book underlines several issues as constants of the topic under discussion: the involvement of local communities, in other words the awareness that the full recognition of historical value is possible only through the integration of planning practice and politics of participation; the material value of the document, despite the rapid obsolescence of materials used in the modern movement, a fact that must not prevent its conservation and restoration; the acceptance of modification as a natural evolutionary process of the environment, which entails forming an opinion of the customs, usages and social practices of an intricate and complex inhabitation system as well as a dynamic vision of settlement processes.

Having included modern construction and settlement in the cultural formulation process of contemporary identities has, however, opened up new aspects for reflection, which to a great extent are still awaiting investigation. The book is thus

part of a very important debate on the cultural and social statute of "regenerating modern heritage". More than a hundred years ago Alois Riegl, father of the modern theory of building conservation, stated that "signs of the passing of time in things built recently do not produce a charming effect, but, on the contrary, are an irritant".<sup>1</sup> This book, by refuting such an opinion, attempts to define the state of the art as it relates to the new frontier constituted by the discipline of regeneration. It comments both on individual buildings and on urban fabrics, as well as dealing with civic and social systems, and thus investigates the ways in which the conservation/modification dialectic is applied to our "diffused" modern heritage.

<sup>1</sup> A. Riegl, *Entwurf einer Gesetzlichen Organisation der Denkmalspflege in Österreich*, Vienna 1903, in S. Scarrocchia, *Alois Riegl: teoria e prassi della conservazione dei monumenti. Antologia di scritti, discorsi, rapporti 1898-1905*, CLUEB, Bologna 1995, p. 185.

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## The Protection and the Valorisation of the Modern City of Ivrea Starting from the *Urban Plan*

PAOLO GALUZZI

### IVREA / THE CITY-LABORATORY OF MODERNITY

For over a decade Ivrea has been an original laboratory of ideas, proposals and strategies that concern the valorisation of the modern Olivettian city, measuring itself against the profound social and economic changes that the Canavese territory experienced following the crisis of the factory.

A laboratory that lends itself as a testing bench of just how relevant the thinking of Adriano Olivetti is in current times, of the uniqueness of an unconventional philosophy of production and development that the engineer Adriano experimented with in that city.

From the end of the 1990s, in fact beginning with the production and financial crisis of the Olivetti company, the City of Ivrea, the Province of Turin and the Fondazione Adriano Olivetti (Adriano Olivetti Foundation) have supported numerous programmes and initiatives that place artefacts and places of modernity produced by industry in the centre of their activities, with the aim of valorising and pursuing the creation of awareness of the purpose of an operation of protection.

The activities carried out from 1997 to date have prepared and developed today's possibility of promoting the tangible and intangible legacy of that particular business season as a candidate for the UNESCO World Heritage List. Preparing this candidacy constitutes, today, one of the activities (perhaps the main one) in making the prospect of protecting the modern architecture of Ivrea even stronger.

In quantitative terms, the modern city of Ivrea covers an area of 56.4 hectares, representing approximately eight per cent of the entire urbanised territory. The production and multipurpose framework belonging to modernity represents almost

seventy per cent of the city's production and tertiary establishments; the ones used for housing host approximately twenty-five per cent of the residing population.

These few numbers help us measure a number of specificities of Olivetti's tangible legacy, which is not only made up of a few buildings that are unique for their architectonic value and symbolic for the modern history of the city, but also includes entire communities and frameworks, both urban and productive, around a widespread network of services, equipment and open spaces that continue to innervate the armour of the city and the territory. These are the very specificities that make Ivrea a unique case in the world, a modern city where it is possible to recognise and document an architectonic and urban experience that is both united and plural at the same time: many authors, much research, many instances and ideas live together and exchange ideas in a delimited urban setting that is dense with buildings of great cultural value.

A laboratory for planning, where architects, both young and not so young, that supported the modern Italian movement, or that particular line of critical Italian research, experimented with architectural languages, urban forms and strategies, building types and building systems, that today represent an anthology of modern architecture unique in Europe and the world: a collection of architecture, projects and reviewed plans that have been photographed in the most authoritative and prestigious international volumes on the history of architecture and urban planning. It is a heritage that must be put in the condition of being able to participate in the transformations that affect the life of the city; either through correct re-uses which especially concern buildings that were originally built for company activities and services, or through upgrading to current housing standards and the regulations in force, especially concerning buildings that were built under the residential building programmes.

#### THE MAAM AND CATALOGUING THE HERITAGE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

The creation of the Museo a cielo Aperto dell'Architettura Moderna (Open Air Museum of Modern Architecture) of Ivrea, inaugurated in 2001, led to the catalogisation of modern pieces of architecture: over 240 buildings that represent a unique case in the panorama of international modern architecture for its architectonic, morphologic and above all cultural features. Of these buildings, at least 40 are 'monuments' that take on a primary position in the history of modern architecture.

The catalogisation of the modern architecture in Ivrea was the main reference for the study on the features of the Olivetti buildings and neighbourhoods, and allowed the first directions and policies regarding intervention on this heritage to be identified, which were initially included in the Municipal Building Regulations.

The MAAM represented the first indispensable step towards beginning a process of spreading knowledge of and sharing the Olivetti legacy and continued to constitute the main tool in creating collective awareness in support of protecting the uniqueness of this heritage. The Olivettian area that the museum passes through is indeed perceived as a legacy shared by the population of Ivrea and at the same time it offers an accessible cultural itinerary and guide for an audience of visitors. In preparation for the Olivetti centennial, the current arrangement of the museum is in the process of being reconsidered, with the aim of re-launching its institutional profile to promote the support and concentration of the cultural actions linked to the valorisation of the legacy, and, in particular to developing the role that it could have in terms of the UNESCO candidacy.

#### THE NEW MUNICIPAL URBAN PLAN

Definitively adopted in 2004 and approved in 2006, the *Municipal Urban Plan* of Ivrea (PRG 2004) was drawn up by

Giuseppe Campos Venuti, Carlo Alberto Barbieri and Federico Oliva by placing the protection of the modern Olivetti city in a strategic framework for the entire city and for the entire territory. The basis of the *Plan* is the choice to pursue the strategy for urban redevelopment (three-quarters of the new forecasts of the *Plan* concern existing urban fabrics, or areas that are already affected by the old urban regulations) and to interpret the urban relationship with environmental and social-cultural values in the most advanced way.

The Campos, Barbieri, Oliva *Plan* recognises Ivrea as a city that is no longer linked to a hegemonic company, but as a production centre inserted in an extensively polycentric structure, as the reference point for the Canavese region, with the potential to interact with Turin, the region and the country. The strategic choice for urban development becomes meaningful in its new approach towards historical values, regulated for the first time in Ivrea according to a preventive and systematic historical analysis and a legislation that is based on the updated use of building and urban types. In particular, the PRG 2004 guides the valorisation of the historical cultural heritage and architecture and urban planning of the Modern movement using a new tutelage of the historical fabrics and an innovative approach to conserving and developing the Olivetti neighbourhoods. This approach, which began to make some headway in Italy at the beginning of the 1990s, implies overcoming the space-time limits of the previously employed model for historical protection, without failing to observe the fundamental principles of the *Convention* and *Charter* of Gubbio of 1960.

Accordingly, the protection planning not only applies to the historical centre, this is to say, the fabrics built prior to the industrial revolution, but the entire historical city affected by the plans of expansion of the eighteen and nineteen hundreds, and especially the modern ones.

## PROTECTING THE 'NEAR PAST': THE MODERN HISTORICAL CITY

The dilation of the urban policy of protection to cover the historical city determines the search for a management model that is indeed more complex than the one used for the historical centre alone, derived from the Bologna model.

Direct methods of intervention, initially generated by the typological analysis of the building units, in the PRG 2004, are deduced through the interpretation of the typologies of urban fabrics, determining various levels and types of protection, ranging from Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque fabrics, to Neo-Classical fabrics, up to the modern ones.

For the modern fabrics and buildings, the urban regulation identifies building and urban interventions that provide a guided transformation in the general perspective of protection and valorisation of physical and morphological features of the Olivettian urban plan.

This regulation combines a process of vital re-use and upgrading of the heritage, with the protection of the main constitutive and compositive elements of modern architecture. The regulation for building protection and fabrics of the historical Olivettian city is built on the awareness of the extreme fragility of modern buildings, even when it applies to the more restrictive categories of intervention, such as restoration and the more representative residential areas (often composed of repeated typical building), and explores the more acceptable forms of 'philological recovery', both under the profile of architectonic integrity, as well as under the profile of economic and social sustainability.

It is thus defined as a 'fabric regulation' for completed modern urban episodes or for those of increased unitary urban density (such as, for example, Via Jervis, Via Pinchia, Via della Liberazione, Via Papa Giovanni XXIII, Crist Hill) and 'specific building regulations' for the more significant individual episodes and the minor and widespread Olivetti buildings.

## THE CHARTER FOR QUALITY

The PRG 2004 made an adaptation to the catalogisation of 2001 by introducing a number of suitable integrations and modifications that allowed a specific programmatic document of the *Plan* to be drawn up: the *Charter for Quality*.

This document, over time, has taken on the nature of an actual manifesto for the protection of the territory of Ivrea, where, for the first time, focus, value and protection are placed on the modern Olivettian city on par with the historical one. It was not about recognising the latent structure of a particular industrial landscape, but aimed instead to bring out the deep and distinct trace of the modern city, within the sedimentation of the transformations of the contemporary city of Ivrea, and which was recognised in the *Plan* using the paradox 'Modern Historical City' (associated with the Ancient Historical City).

In the urban context of Ivrea, this 'near past' takes on a meaning that is comparable with, if not greater than, that of the 'remote past' which is stratified inside the walls, which are no longer standing, of the ancient city.

The *Charter* states three types of qualities with reference to the sense and meaning that they take on in the history of the city and community of Ivrea: 'Particular aspects of context', in other words morphogenetic and structural features of the urban structure; 'Particular architectonic aspects', morphological, compositive, and use-related types of the single fabrics and buildings; 'Particular environmental and landscape-related aspects', of the open spaces, the uniqueness of environments and landscapes that frame, distinguish and qualify the settlement structures.

The *Charter for Quality* identifies and therefore articulates the quantitatively relevant elements of the territory, city, and settlement structure of Ivrea. The aim is to make the salient and distinguishing features of the urban and landscape identity of Ivrea emerge concretely, as the physical and cultural landmarks of the redevelopment project for the contemporary city.

The mapping of the *Charter for Quality* does not end however at the single valuable artefacts, but involves significant contexts, urban environments, fabrics and landscapes, that create a lasting link between the shape and qualities of the settlement and the territory.

This takes on particular relevance in Ivrea precisely because of its modern architecture: buildings that are solidly rooted in the environmental and landscape-related context of the Canavese region, cornerstones of a specific modern concept of open space, which is permeable and linked to the landscape, and appreciable in many Olivetti buildings.

The *Charter for Quality* is conceived, lastly, as a document under continual construction: a dynamic, and even more a cumulative, element of the implementation process of the *Urban Plan*. The programmatic and management aspect of the table resides here, in the conviction that further integrations and indications for interventions are launched in the implementation and management phase.

#### THE PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACES

The *Charter for Quality* places a valuable architectural legacy in relation with its urban and territorial landscape: the Amphitheater Morenico, the river, the hill system; but also the potential quality of the spaces that one passes through while visiting the Museum, walking through the modern architecture of Via Jervis and Canton Vesco.

A space that among other things confers meaning to the buildings; that together with them constitutes the most physically fragile part of the modern legacy and together with the less evident part of the lesson of Ivrea, which is hinged on the modern concept of urban space, on the features of Ivrea's 'urban landscape'.

Thus, next to the *Plan* regarding buildings, the PRG 2004 tackles the theme of open space, a fundamental acquisition to substantiate the protection of all of the modern architecture of Ivrea, more or less 'monumental', including those numerous,

minor buildings in the neighbourhoods of Via Jervis, Canton Vesco, Bellavista, or Crist, to name just a few.

It is a framework that contains the same aspects of protection and valorisation as the buildings, constituting material worthy of protection in itself. Among the numerous, most significant examples, we can mention the Grande Bosco (the great forest) that surrounds the Olivetti Executive Buildings, designed by Pietro Porcinai, recently affected by the new road works for the motorway toll station, built by the Province of Turin in an area that lies between the municipalities of Ivrea and Banchette. These works risked irreversibly deleting an arrangement of the landscape that gains its strength and value from the very 'normality' of its design solution. This operation called into question not so much the intangibility of that brilliant solution (which, among other things, is inappropriately described as intangible given the inherently dynamic nature of a garden or a park), as the danger of losing the value by trivialising a noteworthy place through an unconscientious alteration produced by an infrastructure project of pure road engineering.

Within an updated protection policy, on the other hand, even the open spaces, just like the exclusive buildings, can count as part of the positive welfare of a virtuous view of territorial development.