

# **URBAN COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURES: THE RE-USE OF THE BLOCK 47 INSIDE THE HISTORICAL CENTRE**

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The primary aim of the intervention is to demonstrate how actions of restoration/ recovery of the physical elements of the city tissue - buildings, common spaces, social areas - can contribute to elevate its quality and use in security conditions. A factor of development of the city quality/security is moreover the use of innovative technologies of information and communication.

This relation is introduced by the company Laboratorio di Quartiere, founded in 1986 and operating in the field of building (in particular of the restructure and the requalification), of building and system maintenance and in the field of real estate complexes management (the so-called "facility management").

The entrepreneurial philosophy is that of conjugating building with technology, with the applied survey and with the technical services; the company is present in Bari, its legal office, in Rome and in Milan.

## **An example of intervention on the city context**

The restoration intervention described as follows has been realised on a building of state property given in use to the Polytechnic of Bari, thanks to an intervention promoted by the Ministry of Works (fig 1). The building is localized in the historical center, near Corridoni school.

The structure is originally medieval, with Romanesque parts and more recent parts (the so-called "twentieth-century" side), therefore with all the building features in stone, lamellar wood floors, pavings in stone of Trani. It is not a large building, approximately 2800 meters cubic (fig 4).

## Hi-tech in the Historical Center of Bari

More than the building aspect (of the "container"), it is important to speak about content and instruments included inside.

From an infrastructural point of view, the building is equipped with local network (LAN) with optical fibre dorsals (technology for speed over 100 megabit per second) and switch devices for the configuration of virtual LAN.

As "facilities", the building has got a conference room with simultaneous translation (fig 2), where didactics can be carried out, audiovisuals can be produced (because there is a direction equipped with all the devices: video recorders in multiformat and everything else, mixer video, etc.), video-conferences can be realised in contemporary connection with other eight users.

Another "facility" is the media library for multi-medial data banks consultation, with the station of scansion for the acquiring of paper material and relative processing and mastering in cd-

rom (fig 3): sixteen user workstations, served by a filing system on CD-ROM with capacity of approximately 100 GigaByte (144 cd-rom of contemporary stocking capacity).

### **Technology supporting quality/city security**

What can it be learned from this intervention? First of all that in the building the communication infrastructures can anytime link, or better connect, the historical centre of Bari to other remote communities, and this is an element of security yet broadly speaking, in a view of security seen as "not being alone".

Moreover, technology can support recovery and re-use processes of physical places that increase the city quality, according to the process for which physical quality contributes to the concept of city quality, city quality helps re-appropriation, re-appropriation is in biunivocal correspondence with security.

Therefore, continuing in a reasoning of scenery, making an appraisal of requirements not satisfied in modern cities, desire is born to have modern places to meet: Internet point, a centre of information, a multimedial library, cultural stimulations, in order to contrast lack of job and lack of protection.

Again in terms of opportunities offered by technological development, we find the wide band, e.g. the optical fibre as a channel allowing much more information to travel; mobile Internet, e.g. the possibility to approach wireless the great amount of information present in Internet, the convergence between computer science and telecommunication, and the availability of services, on-line information updated in real time.

### **A proposal for the city quality development**

If we put together on one side the requirements (necessity to have places to meet, lack of cultural stimulations, lack of job, lack of protection, etc.), on the other side the opportunities offered from the technological development, then we can agree that those which are the punctual events of renewal and of maintenance, even if promoted by the administrations (and therefore in Bari an example can be Urban project), or interventions of requalification or of renewal promoted by private citizens/companies through the project financing or, in any case, maecenatisms of every kind, they suffer the risk to remain isolated events, not helped by a multiplication factor if they are not integrated by the creation and opportune distribution on the territory of a something that, in an intentionally generic way, can be indicated as "places-event", with just the function of multiplication, of catalyst. Such places-event constitute "articulations of relations at high intensity of communication", thus places where once again the information is multifarious, various and it circulates fast; in a more picturesque way they can be defined as "dispenser of opportunities", thus as accelerators of the process of re-appropriation of the city.

Therefore in a city environment where single, punctual, public and private participations are multiplied, a scenery proposal is that of "objects" catalysing information and then helping dissemination of the concepts of physical quality, city quality, re-appropriation and security.

In order to better characterise this vision, a possible definition is that of a physical place where people feel secure and, above all, they are attracted by some cultural stimulations, as

well as working ones, because we also speak about opportunities, public and private services, made possible also thanks to the innovative technologies support.

In order to be complete we have then to mention other services that can be localized: the bar, the garrison of the Police Forces, the Internet point, the *booking* of cultural and musical events, the information on mobility, the home attendance services, thus an offer that can in a way tempt people to reach these physical places, and, therefore, to take again possession also of what is all around.

### **An entrepreneurial contribution for the improvement of city quality**

Going back to what an enterprise like Laboratorio di Quartiere can do, or like other enterprises that want to operate in this field, it can be cited an initiative that it is starting in these days and will last until December 2001, so an entrepreneurial contribution for the improvement of city quality.

In the context of a research agreement between ENEA and the Polytechnic of Bari, as introduced before, a project for the creation of a multimedial informative system inside the building of the historical Centre is going to be activated; more precisely, the aim of this project is the creation of a whole of occasions of "territorial relations", which allow to put together inside this informative system, acquaintances and methodologies in order to support the communes of Puglia, technicians, enterprises and of course also citizens, according to the "laboratory of quarter"'s own philosophy, in choosing the methodologies, in the initiative of restoration, re-use and maintenance and also regarding education and creation of enterprises. Therefore it is not only about developing an informative system, but also to put together a series of methodologies of territorial relations.

The philosophy of action that guides the initiative is, in synthesis, that of using a technical infrastructure provided with a media library, conference room and video-conferences, in order to promote the physical quality of city environment. On this promotion we propose to found development, security and city quality process in a wide sense. Therefore, just for a chance, the building of the Historical Centre, from "object" of restoration care which was until little time ago, becomes the "place of the project" for the surrounding territory care.



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4