

INNOVATION IN THE REGENERATION OF THE HISTORIC CENTERS IN SICILY: BARCELLONA POZZO DI GOTTO (ME)

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Abstract

The criteria for intervention on the existing building heritage in the historic centers cannot be pursued without taking into consideration the renovation of the whole relevant urban territory.

This does not imply an idea to postpone to future planning, rather to increase the topics in the Piano Regolatore Generale (P.R.G.), by bringing into the P.R.G the elements of the traditional detailed plans for the historic areas with a methodology simplification.

The detailed planning has been characterized in the years as “exemplary”, possibly due to the complexity of its project contents and rules and regulations, particularly in the historic areas. Indeed in Italy detailed plans for historic areas are quite rarely introduced and even more rarely implemented.

In recent years there has been more awareness of the problem and commitment to change through practical actions. The regional regulations dedicated to the regeneration of the historic centers are an example of this change, and aim at the renovation of the historic areas through a direct intervention (not subordinate to the detailed plan) included in the Piano Regolatore of the local administration.

The 2007 P.R.G of Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto in Sicily, is based on a residential capacity of 47,000 people for the next twenty years, with an increase of around 5,000 people. These are distributed over 300 hectares of urbanized area, out of which 86 hectares are represented by historic area, with a residential capacity of 11,600 people and a density of 135 pp/Ha. Recently the local administration has decided to adapt the P.R.G to the regulations for the regeneration of the historic center.

The urban set up of the historic area is characterized by the alignment of the buildings on the old central axis of entrance and exit of the city, incorporating some of the historic rural boroughs. The urban set up is organized as a chessboard, more or less regular, originally over more generating centres, that have today disappeared (the old Duomo and the Teatro, the first demolished in 1936 and the second one destroyed after a fire in 1972).

The building blocks include non allocated spaces and empty areas, as residue of the primitive building set up that was incorporated in the new urban network from the beginning of 1900s. The building units of the historic areas have been touched, particularly in the *facades*, with interventions that have altered their original image.

Nevertheless, the historic area preserves all its residential and commercial functions, even in the relationship with the new expansion areas and the productive areas.

The boundaries of the historic area have been defined by taking into consideration the urban history, the building heritage and its transformations, the functional aspects (accessibility, mobility, availability of services) so as to utilize again the historic building heritage itself.

The regeneration interventions have been classified in simplified categories, divided into **ordinary and extra-ordinary maintainance, regeneration and preservative restoration, renovation with the same building typology, demolition without reconstruction**. The individual categories are accompanied by other technical detailed regulations to be applied “house-by-house” in the entire historic area.