

Shaping the historic centres of today between architectural heritage and sustainable development planning

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Contemporary planning in historic and consolidated parts of towns cannot avoid take into account the current concerning about the so defined sustainable development. But this is not exempt of contradictions: intervention on heritage sites is obliged by lots of strict rules about their possible evolution and any (physical) change is submitted to architectural conservation approach. Moreover, heritage and sustainable development often obey to different political logics and are under the competence of different ministries. Also due to the possibility of better energy efficiency in buildings, operational sustainable development planning often points out on brand new constructions. Nevertheless we're not giving up our existing parts of the town, especially the historic consolidated ones considered as patrimony. From a sustainable point of view they are: 1. already there (cheaper to conserve them than to destroy and build newly); 2. often not so bad in terms of energetic behavior (having been built when the only available buildings materials were locals and when it was not possible to systematically count on mechanic heating and conditioning); 3. their social and functional composition is much more complex and complete than the one of recently built peripheral quarters, which allow to think urban sustainable planning also in terms of social and economic aspects and not only on environmental ones. So, how to solve the apparent contradiction? Analyzed study cases show that the chosen way to compose between the two tendencies (heritage conservation and sustainable planning) pass thorough the planning of the only spaces left somehow "free" of conservation plans constraining rules: public spaces. Contemporary sustainable planning in historic centers acts on public spaces at the street level interpenetrating the heritage conservation plans more devoted to the physical architectural aspects, introducing some redesigns of forms and uses almost only of this specific material support made by the spaces "in between".

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