

Planning and Management of Urban Renovation Projects. The Expo area and the pursuit of sustainability

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Urban renovation projects are gaining a new impulse in most of European cities. The embracing of a valorisation philosophy of the existing urban fabric and the new opportunities open in cities by the transfer and closing of major industrial areas, put in evidence the advantages to renovate and rehabilitate those areas, namely the cases where traditional industrial plants occupied waterfronts or areas that became potential centralities regarding the urban extensions of the late decades of the 20th century. The pursuit of a more sustainable urban development, and the need to articulate public perspectives with the attraction of private investments, were also major issues in acting in such areas. The possibility to develop new approaches to built neighbourhoods more balanced and sustainable became a challenge that many renovation projects aim to attend. The case of the 340 ha where the Portuguese government decides to implement the Universal Exhibition of 1998, is one of such an example. Adopting a new perspective to deal with such an event, the EXPO 98 in Lisbon is an interesting case study of planning and management an important renovation project, not only by its extension but also for the consideration, since the beginning, of what should be the area after the Exhibition. Major concerns with urban sustainability where present in all the planning, rehabilitation and construction phases, with interesting and pioneering results at the end of the process. In other hand, the articulation between public visions and objectives regarding the future of the new urban neighbourhood, the role of the private sector in the operation, and the institutional cooperation among different levels of government constitute interesting case studies of Public to Public and Public to Private partnerships. This paper presents and discusses the renovation project of the EXPO 98 area and subsequent urban neighbourhood, putting in evidence the main characteristics and innovations developed in the 14 years of this process. Particular attention is given to the sustainable planning aspects, the coherence between objectives and results obtained and to the institutional framework adopted.

Keywords: Expo 98; urban renovation; urban sustainability.