



## **OBSOLESCENCE and RENOVATION**

### **20th Century Housing in the New Millennium**

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#### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Ground floor. Transforming the city at zero level.

**2. Format:** Written paper

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**6. Abstract (300 words):**

Obsolete public housing is frequently the object of large renovation projects in diverse European cities, where neighborhood restructuring occasionally includes relevant demolitions. This is not the case in Milano, where demolition is still to be considered an exceptional event when confronting with public housing. Less traumatic strategies have to be considered.

However, public housing stock is in crisis, characterized by a mismatch between available spaces and the needs of inhabitants. One of the clearest examples of this discrepancy is the state of abandonment which is frequently found on the ground level of public housing estates, where spaces for "diverse uses" were once allocated. "Diverse uses" were meant to be commercial activities, workshop or local association centers. However, there is currently a total lack of demand and the empty spaces and the closed street windows confer a desperate tone which doesn't always correspond to the neighborhood's overall situation.

A closer look at a specific case study, Quartiere Chiesa Rossa in Milano<sup>1</sup> evidences the changed role which public housing estates are playing in the context of the metropolitan city. Once at the extreme periphery, they are now at the interface of the city's core and the metropolitan urbanized territory. A consequence of this new position is stress on public open space, where local streets and sidewalks are frequently forced to play the role of parking lots. Nonetheless, public open space also constitutes a possible entry point for a strategy of renewal of the neighborhood in its complexity. Moreover, renewal at ground level - buildings and sidewalks, streets and parking lots - can trigger a positive interrelation between the housing enclave and the city. Diverse scenarios are, thus, possible. This paper asks whether, in this context, small acupuncture strategies can suffice or will morphological redefinition of the whole neighborhood be needed to make these areas more compliant with the needs of a new population?

#### **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):**

**Nicolò Privileggio**, phd architect, teaches at the Politecnico di Milano where he coordinates the Town Planning and Design Workshop. He is editor of "La città come testo critico" (The City as critical text), Franco Angeli, Milano 2008 and co-author of "X Milano", Hoepli, Milano 2004. In 1994 he founded the office Privileggio-Secchi.

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1 The case study has been the object of an investigation conducted by the authors within the "Polisocial" frame of research/didactic activities. Polisocial is the social responsibility program of Politecnico di Milano.