

THE URBAN PLAN CONTEXT FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE SITE OF S. CHIARA: PLANS, AGREEMENTS, ONGOING TRANSFORMATIONS

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Our story started ten years ago, in February 1996; by approving the document “*For Pisa. Directions on city planning*”, the Town Council was actually voting in favour of an extensive change of perspective over the whole city.

In fact, that agenda defined the soon-to-be structural specifications not only as a development plan, but rather as a "great renewal plan for the whole city".

This is only a brief summary of the plan endorsed by a Regional Law 5/95 for territorial managing; the works that followed included a control on land consumption, reduced to its minimum in the Structural Specifications according to which only 11 ha were destined to residential buildings.

The effort made in both the Structural Specification and Town-Planning Regulations as well as other subsequent territorial managing deeds addressed Pisa as a 21st-Century European city and the consideration of the following issues:

- *Even though cities often experience environmental issues, these drive economy, business, and investments. High quality standards in city environment reflect the agreed priority during Lisbon meeting, aimed at “making Europe more able to attract investments and work”.*
- *Once they are more attractive, cities will strengthen their growth and job potentialities; therefore, they are vital to the implementation of Lisbon agenda, and it is now a well-known fact that local authorities obtain best results when they implement an integral approach in environmental managing, through strategic, long-term plans.*
- *In order to have a reference set to guide and manage every-day choices, a clear view, a global strategy and an action plan are necessary in order to achieve scheduled goals and targets.*

The 1998 Structural Specification

According to the *Structural Specification* approved in 1998, the city and city area development were connected with future perspective given by its local social-economic situation and geographical location, in addition to knowledge potentials, professional skills and differential innovation rates: as a whole, these factors were deemed enough to trigger a growth and development in local economy, laying its foundations on basic requirements:

- the importance of local dimensions in the development;

- the unity of perspective on economic systems and relationship between different systems;
- the need to create the necessary prerequisites in order to fully exploit competitive advantage situations;
- the urgency to make uniform strategic decisions on programs and plans carried out by local authorities;
- territorial cooperation between the public and private sectors;
- creation of a "research & development" system able to work more and affect Pisa area more
- enhancement of Pisa as a learning city;
- renewal and diversification of tourism offer, toward traditional, cultural, and conference tourism;
- policies of cultural and natural landscape preservation and protection, for they are vital to the territory.

These choices place “*quality development*” as an inspiring element in city-planning policies, thus accepting the European challenge for the reorganisation of cities, a centre for different networks and a fundamental step in the recovery of a better global environmental sustainability, places able to create job opportunities and economy, as well as exploit new technologies which allow not to broaden their area.

A city limiting borders extensions in favour of a more compact, multipurpose plan, which also allows to squeeze movements: a city you can enjoy 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

“Cities are a social products. Their decay derive from social processes, and their rebirth can't be but the result of a collective commitment... everybody should give their contribution ... though ensuring individuality, citizen-friendly cities cannot combine with individualism: they require collaboration, respect for rules and laws, social commitment, participation into decision-making processes, the need to recognize individual problems; cities create opportunities to find common solutions, that is, together”

The 2001 Town-Planning Regulations

Therefore and consistently with Structural Specifications, the 2001 ***Town-Planning Regulations*** set a scenario focussing on strategic functional choices connected with consequent choices of physical and infrastructural characterisation:

- completion of a city organisation plan in Cisanello (the core of the “new city” planned by Piccinato in 1970), with the creation of a centre for integrated city services in a wide green belt and connected to the district with interventions aimed at enhancing pedestrian areas along with car accessibility;
- completion of a centre for public services in S. Cataldo area, with the relocation of public financial offices and other public institutions;
- final relocation of public health services (hospital) in Cisanello, which has now become a reality put into action by administrative decisions and concrete operational choices;

- stabilisation of University centres in the relevant centres;
- transfer of other service functions (not related to city-planning issues) to Ospedaletto, and new interpretation of the productive role played by this area;
- maintenance of a complex, functional role for the city Historical Centre;
- new attention for seacoast.

Variations to the 2005 Structural Specification

Finally, the recent *Variations to the Structural Specification* has the following strategic targets:

- the strengthening, enhancement and development of existing productive areas (Ospedaletto, Via delle Cascine) that are beyond municipal control, as well as limitations on infrastructural loads in other city areas;
- the determination of a system of integral projects favouring both the settlement of permanent residences, and the overriding need to recover degraded, abandoned areas, managing to limit the use of “territorial resources” and restrain recent criticalities connected with an increase in city and suburban mobility;
- the recovery of the specific local identity Pisa seacoast by creating opportunities that favour the construction of permanent residence, the increase in functional facilities, the creation of new functions and activities through the functional conversion and architectural renewal of spaces and existing building facilities of Calambrone.

AGREEMENTS AND AREA PLANNING

The city of Pisa and its historical centre in particular, have been and still are characterized by the presence of public and extra-city public offices. Until few decades ago, the small size of the city implied that the city town corresponded to the historical centre. This implied the concentration and development of different facilities in a small area. Banks, research bases, managing centres, handicraft and productive activities rose near historical buildings such as the hospital, university, business offices and military barracks.

The building boom of early 1960s involved suburban areas only with residential complexes; the decentralisation already included in the 1965 town planning scheme started to have effect during early 1980s, when the production area for handicraft activities and small industries was built along with the so-called Office District (*Centro Direzionale*), in the core of this new suburban area.

Relocation of activities and functions only involved productive activities and small or medium-sized GDOs, while public offices were involved minimally. In view of a spontaneous relocation (Local Health Unit and other public offices were relocated to the Office District), the Town Council decided to bring together big former town companies in Ospedaletto area during late 1990s.

The Italian National Research Council (CNR) has an outstanding number of facilities and research centres in Pisa; therefore, a huge relocation process was carried out and a new base was opened in S.Cataldo, thus vacating several private buildings in the city centre that have been destined to a residential use.

Over the last decades, the city-plan and structural condition of public bodies and institutions operating within the city centre has been a reason for debate through different governments, and particularly for the Town Council which is entitled to create rules and plan the territory.

Even though some past interventions were performed waivering city plan regulations and pursuant to art. 81 of PD no. 616/77, the awareness of the fact that operating within an integrated territory planning finally constitutes a benefit, lead to adopt agreed solutions.

This new awareness represents one of the most important results ever achieved by the Town Council, a strength to watch over in order to prevent institutional and economic technicalities to get the upper hand over a more extensive view of city quality.

This awareness also gave impetus to a series of agreements which changed the nature of this city, and indicate new development directions.

Public Financial Offices

This was the first agreement ever signed. It resulted in a main agreement on military barracks which will allow to relocate several public offices now placed in the historical centre to the state-owned area of S. Cataldo; in this way, several historic building were vacated and the presence of offices in the city centre was rationalised.

Roman Ships, Military Barracks and the town planning scheme for main Institutions

In 1998, there was an extraordinary archaeological finding in Pisa Ancient Harbour, when some Roman ships were found. Pisa excavation site developed and acquired an unprecedented scientific importance, since it provides important information on the knowledge of ancient sailing techniques, objects, subjects, routes and means of ancient trade, water system and seacoasts. Today, the site represents one of the most promising archaeological sites in the Mediterranean area.

The archaeological finding represented an extraordinary opportunity for Pisa to reorganise its city based on a transformation plan focussed on a Museum of Roman Ships. Such Museum should have characteristics reflecting this particular moment of Pisa city history, in which renewal and revitalisation policies are being undertaken on the city-planning level (relocation of military barracks and S. Chiara Hospital; pedestrian area from the Leaning Tower to the Railway Station; changes to the road system of the Arsenali area; a new access "door" to Pisa), on the economic and commercial level (promotion of hotel offers), on the tourist and cultural level (extension of tourism flows from the Leaning Tower to the rest of historical centre, longer stays in the city, revitalisation of other museums of Pisa, recovery of a Pisan identity).

In 2001 an ambitious plan was started: a real town planning scheme for main Institutions, establishing the creation of a Museum of Sailing to host Roman Ships, the unification of public financial offices, the recovery of areas and structures now occupied by some military barracks – and the consequent use of more adequate facilities for logistics, residences, and services. An important aspect of this plan was recently put into effect with the approval of an Implemental Plan on the area of S.Cataldo, where new headquarters for local Guardia di Finanza (an Italian police force directly under the authority of the Minister of Economy and Finance) will be built together with new DSU buildings and premises for other financial offices.

However, the core of this plan involves the creation of new military barracks in Ospedaletto, as well as the renewal of the three military buildings placed in the city centre that are no more suitable for their original functions.

The Feasibility Study resulting from the 2001 Agreement highlighted the fact that it would be very difficult to reach a financial balance in relationship with the needs of the Ministry of Defence. Unfortunately, this led to a stalemate and uncertainty which lasted for a long time. However, positive trends in real-estate market - also in the light of new expectations connected with a development of tourism within the city and also thanks to a patient process of political and administrative negotiations – made this point of balance more reachable and a direct confrontation with markets more sustainable; this will express a final judgement on the feasibility of the city transformations at issue.

Today we have a draft of a Plan Agreement which states the final ratification of a preliminary design for new military barracks – carried out by the Corps of Engineers – inside the city-planning complex of Pisa Town Council, scheduling and tools of city renewal, the implementation of procedures of public evidence aimed at determining a private partnership for city renewal plans and the construction of new Defence buildings. This draft is serving as a base for a future final confrontation.

Cisanello Hospital – Santa Chiara Area

On January 26 2006, Pisa Town Council finally approved an Implementation Plan for a new university hospital in Cisanello. The relevant political debate and extent of public approval highlighted the importance of a long-awaited plan reflecting the strong planning and financial commitment undertaken by the Tuscan Regional Department of Health which made brave, unexpected decisions on the relocation of Pisa Medical School.

Along with the agreement on Military Barracks relocation, the agreement on a new hospital complex in Cisanello represents a turning point in city history.

The creation of a new hospital complex in Cisanello will mean a new, bigger top-class service centre in Tuscany and Pisa.

It can be said that this new hospital complex will lead to a radical reorganisation of the whole territory as well as our relationship with it: the extent of clearance works, new road connections and relevant consequences, the impact on local public transport, new relationships with the Province and Town Council of San Giuliano Terme, the relocation of public offices outside the historical centre, the new weight of a more modern city, a new balance between University and research activities, the diversification of student flows and DSU services.

The programmatic agreement of March 2005 not only deals with the relocation scheduling and procedures for S. Chiara area, but also envisages a series of complementary works that actually set a new relationship between the Municipalities of Pisa and San Giuliano in a critic area of Pisa territory in terms of mobility and water systems.

The recovery of Santa Chiara hospital area for more complex purposes constitutes a different issue, which we are not going to debate today.

Marina di Pisa Tourist Harbour

On February 15 2006, a Service Committee composed of the Region, Park, Dock Authority, Cultural Authorities, Province and Pisa Town Council approved a final design for an Implementation plan for the tourist harbour of Marina di Pisa.

It should be highlighted how the approved design is characterised by its consistency with currently applicable city-planning procedures. Such result was not a case, but the conclusion of a long, hard work which involved all local Authorities and Institutions to various extents in order to determine clear, common city-planning rules from 2000 to 2005.

A painstaking work made of agreements, negotiations and planning which mainly involved the Town Council and Park authority.

The long-lasting debate on the harbour, which was frequently disconnected from city-planning rules and concrete feasibility elements, has finally come to an end. The responsibility passed on to Pisa Town Council, which finally approved a Renewal Plan in December 2006. The Environmental Impact Assessment will have the final word on the matter.

Other Agreements

Though with a different extent in terms of quantities and quality at stake, several other agreements that are significant for the transformation they imply and the negotiation methods used were reached. These were the following:

- The agreement for a new Province base to be placed inside Cisanello central Park. The historical buildings currently being used will be vacated as stated in the Land Use specifications;
- The agreement with the Municipality of Cascina for the extension of the productive area adjacent to Ospedaletto: this will allow to save city territories and create synergies among the production areas of both towns; an Implementation plan was adopted by Cascina and Pisa over the last few months;
- The agreement aimed at creating a coastal logistics platform. This is a strategically important agreement for Regione Toscana, since it involves the harbour of Livorno, the Dock of Pisa (*Darsena Pisana*), Galilei Airport, the *Interporto*, the navigability of the Scolmatore river, the *Navicelli*, the railway hub. The high usability of this area opens new interesting perspectives in an innovative sector, also constituting a decisive factor in territory competitiveness; however, the agreement also includes the possibility to extend the Natural Park borders to Livorno inland area.
- The agreement with SAT, SALT, Anas, Military Airport, local authorities for the creation of a flyover on the Aurelia road, between the airport and Dock of Pisa (*Darsena Pisana*).

- The agreement with the national railway company for the creation of railway underpasses in Quarantola, Putignano and Oratoio. These works are currently at tender stage, and will greatly enhance liveableness in these city districts.
- Finally, the agreement for the re-opening of the Incile should be mentioned. This will significantly affect Pisan sailing systems, water tourism, the usability of the Natural Park and the renewal of Golena d'Arno area.

GREAT ONGOING TRANSFORMATIONS

The work carried out by the Administration Council from 1998 to the present aimed at defining, planning, starting up, and creating - besides other significant transformations - city-planning operations on decade-long issues, which started with the hard, vexed approval of Dodi – Piccinato plan. These may be summarised as follows:

- The recovery of the “**historical centre**” aimed at relocating some public offices into a different city area. The purpose was relieving pressure on “city users”, rationalising the presence of university students, improving tourist reception – also distributing it in other areas of the city –, offering new housing complexes reflecting those recovery plans that were envisaged in the Town Plan regulations, also regardless of plans related to military barracks and Santa Chiara hospital; among other plans, one should not forget to mention the renewal plan in former Gentili area of S. Antonio and ongoing works at former GEA area;
- **Outside** the historical centre, ongoing transformations implemented pursuant to the town-planning tool were intended to harmonise temporary solutions with a mild use of city land, and ensuring wide public areas and squares for each district. New functions were conceived and built that contribute to transform the single-functionality of several city areas, with new hotels, student houses and other services; among the most significant developments, one should not forget the renewal of one major disused industrial area, former Lavaggi of Putignano;
- The relationship with the **Natural Park** proved to be a crucial one. Far from the burlesque image of development sought by certain politic environments, the Park authority has been a fundamental, co-planning partner in quality development. The biggest renewal and requalification plans develop around the Park boundaries: the harbour, Cosmopolitan, Calambrone camps, the renewal of bathing establishments, the racetrack, the Sterpaia plan, the renewal of the Arno holm, the agreement on the seacoast platform, new tourist and food offers. The contribution of Park authorities, and particularly of Pisa Town Council, were vital in order to leave Park borders unchanged along with its privileges;
- In what deals with public housing, the 1995 **PEEP** was completed and the new 2003 PEEP was started (see Barbaricina and S. Piero a Grado) along with Integral Intervention Plans involving city renewal for residential, administrative, and craftsmanship purposes at West Saint Gobain area, as well as the renewal of Calambrone areas outside the Park;

- Thanks to the creation of a new hospital hub, the designing of a new Province base, and the creation of a central place composed of squares, green areas and a new library – the result of an international architecture competition – as well as the ongoing construction of hotel facilities, the future construction of new houses and services, a “**new Pisanova**” is rising: not just a residential suburbs burdened with GDOs; rather a complex, multi-purpose and multi-functional area where new local and provincial facilities become engines for new city relations;
- The expression “**Grande Ospedaletto**” (Great Ospedaletto) means to indicate a concept of third millennium productive area, a base for innovation and high productions needing renewal interventions and a new supply of services and systems (starting from sport facilities). Interesting results were achieved on the level of quantity and quality of interventions, so much that it has turned into a place for contemporary architecture experimentation (new millennium Tower and Square);
- The completion of city-plan schedules for the renewal of **Canale dei Navicelli** (Navicelli Channel) marked a turning point. Today, the Canale dei Navicelli has been acquiring a great strength in the frame of infrastructure supply for Area Vasta; and also is a place of public and private investments addressed at renewing yards and developing sea economy, which is very important for regional strategic plans. There exist a vital connection with traditional manufacturing (wood industry) as well as with the development of new economy;
- A “**city upon seacoasts**”: this was an attempt for all the above-mentioned town planning tools, regardless of useless debates such as “yes to the harbour/ no to the harbour”. On the contrary, the idea that a housing offer might have been developed in order to “entrust territorial control” to the resident, retailers, and those who might find a job in that area 24 hours a day, each day of the year. The contribution by private entities was crucial, particularly with the creation of a consortium of Calambrone operators which constitutes one of the latest demonstrations of this;
- A **new accessibility** will be ensured thanks to the construction of huge facilities close to the railway hub as well as a new track to Lucca, which will also allow to use existing lines for suburban purposes. To such pursuit and also in the light of the increasing importance acquired by Pisan airport and, finally, for the potential role of Pisa as an important "entrance" with a combination of railway / bus station – airport, - and the Darsena Pisana – the common designing procedure adopted is currently being followed through among different characters, in order to ensure a great flexibility and the possibility to allow city users to travel by train or public transport;
- The extraordinary growth of **G. Galilei International Airport** deserves particular attention; a real propulsive factor for the city economy, the airport makes Pisa the hub of a network made of a wide international network. Pisa becomes a veritable entrance door for Tuscany, enhancing its potentialities as a European city at many levels beyond tourism and culture: training, research, and support.

The extent of this transformation which involved several functional and structural aspects of the city, involves the coordination of planning and performance activities by the different territorial entities so that they harmonise in a “global view”.

This is a main task for city government on the short term; integration of policies and decisions should be used as government method.

The Mayor's proposal to develop a **Strategic Plan** should also be interpreted in this sense.

The works carried out on the new university hospital complex over the last two years as well as on the renewal of S. Chiara area by a significant number of Entities and Institutions represents a concrete example of what it is considered as a “global view” and “integration of policies and decisions”.

While the reorganisation of public offices in the city centres at various levels represents a unique example in the history Italian city planning, at least in what deals with the extent of transformation compared to the city size, the renewal of Santa Chiara area will in turn be a momentous turning point in the history of Pisa, as well as a world innovation for the physical location of planned interventions.