

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE SITE OF THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF S. CHIARA (AZIENDA OSPEADALIERA UNIVERSITARIA PISANA)

On March 31st 2005, the Town Council of Pisa, the Region Tuscany, the University Hospital, the University of Pisa and another ten bodies signed an agreement that marked a turning point for the town of Pisa: it laid down the timelines and the methods for the development of the new university hospital, located in the modern part of town, a veritable health-care city of the highest national and international relevance. The agreement meant making the best choice ever, which confirms the tradition of our town and which intends to equip Pisa and Tuscany with a new, larger service and training centre.

By making this choice, the hospital facilities and the university units that since 1257 have been hosted by the buildings of the Santa Chiara site, an area of over 10 hectares in the heart of downtown Pisa, just a few metres from that extraordinary World Heritage site that is Piazza dei Miracoli, with the Leaning Tower, the Cathedral and the Baptistery, will be relocated.

This will officially open the question of the urban renewal of the site of Santa Chiara. All this demands a reflection that in our opinion should take inspiration from a careful historical interpretation of the architectural facilities that compose it and from an analysis of the process of change that has resulted in the urban consolidation of this neighbourhood over the centuries.

Just because of the extraordinary importance of the neighbouring UNESCO site and the universal values it recalls and embodies, the Municipal Administration, in perfect agreement with the University of Pisa and the University Hospital, has decided to rely on an international design competition to select the best urban design.

This means to be an operation of a broad cultural scope, that will eventually produce a prestigious, feasible design that the Town Council will then be able to translate into an appropriate planning and regulatory system, aimed to give back to the site of Santa Chiara its local functions, fitting in with the town centre and the development of its living, tourist and cultural potentials.

The site bordering on the Cathedral Square can become the symbol of the town's new ability to stand up to the big challenges of the future, with a role and in a historical setting that have dramatically changed but with the will to preserve its natural bent as a town open to the world, a town of art and culture, of talent, of learning.

The Mayor

Paolo Fontanelli