

LIVING IN THE POST-PANDEMIC CITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a project, under construction in the municipality of Aversa, born from a scientific collaboration between the Department of Architecture (principal investigators: professors Lorenzo Capobianco and Fabrizia Ippolito), the municipality of Aversa and the Campana Agency for Building Residential (ACER, former autonomous Institute of Popular Homes), first place in the Competition of the Campania Region for the realization of Social Residential Building Programs_PIERS of 2020.

In a marginal city environment, in which all the characteristics and criticalities of the urban suburbs can be traced, this project, starts from the design of 85 dwellings distributed in 5 new buildings that "replace" the previous ones through a mechanism of progressive transfer of the inhabitants which makes it possible to build them on the same area as the buildings to be demolished, considerably extends its action by dealing with the improvement of environmental, physical and social conditions, for the neighbourhood and the community.

The purpose of this contribution is to demonstrate how it is possible, starting from public buildings, to experiment with innovative ways of living in the home and the city, imagining innovative activities and spaces for relationships. The quality of the architecture starts from the design of the urban space and its collective spaces, from the new uses and from the new forms of proximity that are imagined for the post-pandemic city.

The experimentation with new residential typologies (co-housing; turn-housing; co-living and housing-family/community) is accompanied by the provision of self-managed multifunctional condominium premises also to provide additional spaces that can be used for work and distance learning. Lastly, great attention is paid to the integrated design of the urban relationships and new proximity spaces that are substantiated in a new multilevel public agora and a small park with equipped greenery and areas for outdoor sports.

KEYWORDS: post-pandemic city; new forms of living; urban regeneration; social housing.

PREMISE

In the last two years, one of the first and most evident consequences of the world pandemic (Prime et al., 2020), which we are still experiencing, has been the disruption of our daily habits and, above all, of our way of experiencing social relations and using relationship spaces. The need for "distancing" and the consequent disproportionate increase in the time spent forcibly within the home, has also brought to the centre of attention a theme that has never been completely resolved by modern culture and has only apparently become secondary to the needs of the contemporary city: the need for collective houses and a profound revision of both the project tools and the experimentation linked to typological research (Capobianco, 2012).

In this context, at least as far as Italy is concerned, the progressive entrusting the transformation processes of cities to private initiatives and interests seems to be a road no longer uncritically viable with respect to the need to reaffirm the centrality of public intervention and scientific research: the

only actions and reflections that can still afford the luxury of being implemented outside the times and logic dictated by the market (Capobianco, 2019).

The privileged territory for these new experiments is that of the outskirts of the cities and the economic and social housing settlements which, even before the pandemic required urgent maintenance and redevelopment, today even more they are an opportunity to rethink visions of shared living (Hernández Falagan, 2021). If, on the one hand, standardization and studies on minimum space were the indispensable tools to give material body and concrete answers to the need for a "home for all" and the post-war reconstruction of cities, on the other, it is evident that the settlement models generated by them, which had already shown great limits in the ability to adapt to the natural evolution of the habits of life and use of space in contemporary society, highlight conditions of insufficiency and disparity amplified both by the forced retreat into homes (work and study flexibly) and from a different way of moving away from them (quality of public space and pertinent relationship).

INTRODUCTION

In the city of Aversa, an important urban centre of the Campania region of over 50,000 inhabitants and seat of the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design of the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", the adoption phase of the new Municipal Urban Plan coincided with a renewed debate on the theme of the strategies for the urban regeneration of the city, on the possible intervention programs for its more peripheral areas, and on the necessary interventions on the substantial stock of economic and popular housing which, precisely in the peripheral areas, finds its sphere of greatest diffusion. In this climate of confrontation between institutions (University, Municipality, Popular Housing Agency) a relationship of scientific collaboration was formalized (professors Lorenzo Capobianco and Fabrizia Ippolito responsible for the activities of the Department) aimed at "developing and promoting research on the rethinking of settlements of economic and popular housing in the city of Aversa, through a change in the quality of the houses and their more immediate context as a way to rethink the suburbs starting from a new production of collective space". Collaboration and research already started when, in the summer of 2020, the Campania Region announces a competition for the promotion of integrated social housing programs to which the Municipality of Aversa with Acer Campania submits a project for the replacement of a group of social housing in the northern outskirts of the city which will then be financed by the Region resulting in the first place.

AVERSA SMART LIVING

"Aversa smart living" (A.s.l., 2020) is the name of the project developed, following the scientific collaboration agreement with the Department of Architecture, by the Municipality of Aversa and the Campana Agency for Residential Construction (the architectural project was developed by professors Lorenzo Capobianco and Fabrizia Ippolito with the collaboration of architects Michele Dovere, Federica Iorio and Angela Palumbo) which intends to ensure the safety of buildings, a higher living standard and greater urban quality by focusing on the design of non-standard spaces, on the enhancement of environmental resources and the recognition of the multiple needs of users.

A project that represents both the start of a city regeneration program starting from the suburbs and of the suburbs starting from social living through the experimentation of innovative ways of living in the home and the city. The project involves the gradual demolition and replacement of degraded public houses (affected by serious structural diseases that make their recovery impossible), their implementation in number and types and the urban regeneration of the affected area with attention to the enhancement of greenery and creation of new collective spaces.

The demolition and replacement of two public housing buildings are planned at a short distance from the original nucleus. The size and number of the dwellings affected by this first triggering phase are

re-proposed (revisited in the spatial and technological aspects) in a new building for 20 dwellings to which is added the construction of another building for 15 experimental dwellings (intended for different types of users).

The project also provides for the redevelopment of the contiguous Piazza Papa Giovanni XIII were through the relocation of the court archive: a new flexible space is configured and available for different uses as well as the recovery and implementation of green areas through the creation of a small park and a playground for skateparks and parkours. In the subsequent phases, thanks again to the trigger mechanism, it will be possible to proceed with the construction of replacement buildings in the vacated areas, the clearing and subsequent demolition of the existing ones, up to the final configuration of the project masterplan where all the old buildings have been replaced and the square has been covered thus doubling the endowment of multipurpose public space available to the entire district (Figure 1).

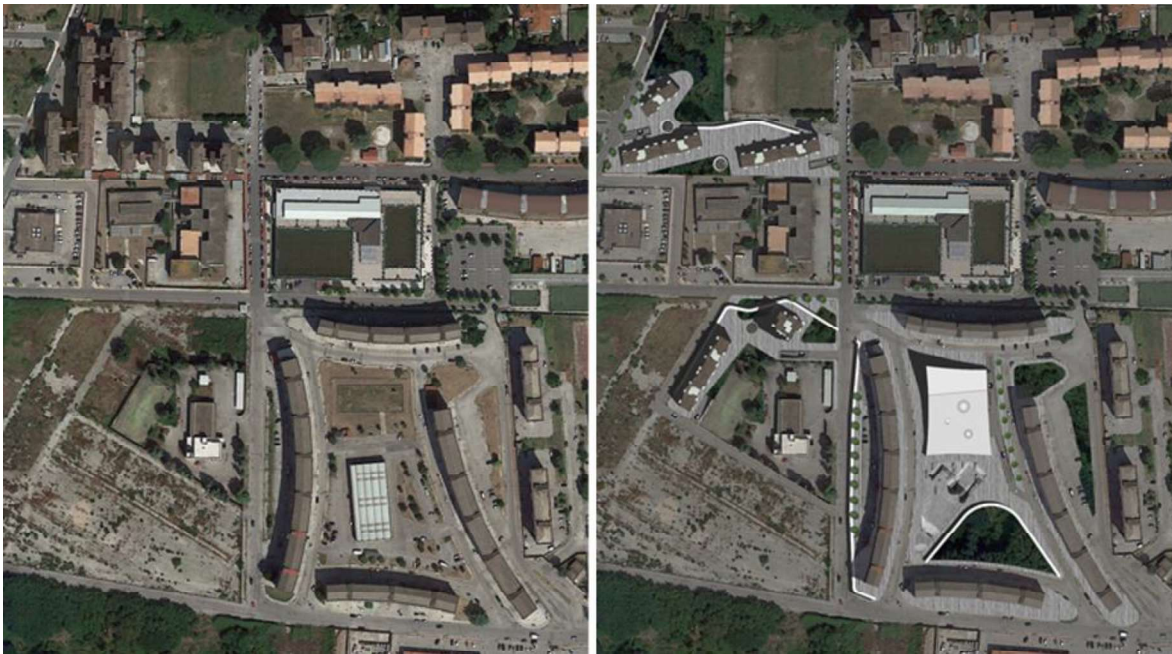


Figure 1: A.s.l.- The intervention area before and after.

The overall redevelopment of the urban area, concentrated on roads and open spaces and aimed at increasing the quantity of greenery and spaces for collective use and at encouraging the pedestrianization and habitability of the neighbourhood on a human scale, is an integral part of this process (Capobianco, 2011).

The new buildings

The first two buildings to be built (phase 1) refer to two different building types.

The first, distributed in line according to an aggregation that includes two staircases, houses a total of 20 dwellings that exactly replicate the number and size of those existing in the buildings to be replaced (10 dwellings of 85 and 10 of 85 square meters). The second, on the other hand, with the same five residential levels envisaged, aggregates the apartments according to a tower type with three apartments per floor. On the one hand, the size of these new housing completes the variety of the offer and, on the other hand, lends itself to "experimental" uses also in reference to the social policies of the Municipality of Aversa (Figure 2). The ground floors of both buildings are mostly left free, except for some areas dedicated to collaborative housing services and local urban areas (Figure 3); an underground floor is provided for garages and cellars and, finally, the roofs are used by other collaborative housing services such as laundries and drying racks (Figure 4).



Figure 2: A.s.l.- One module of line building and tower building, typical floor plan.

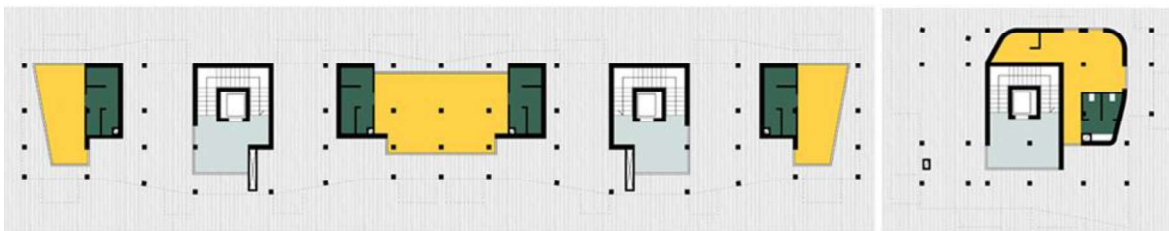


Figure 3: A.s.l.- The collaborative housing services and local urban areas on the ground floor.

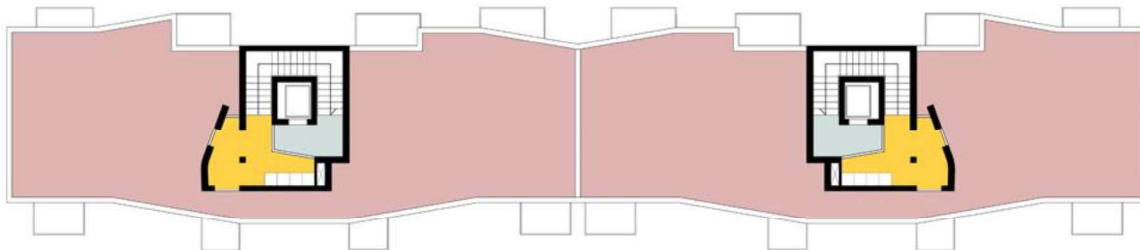


Figure 4: A.s.l.- The collaborative housing services at the roof plan of the line building.

For Piazza Papa Giovanni XXIII the project is embodied in the modelling of the open spaces (this type of space is given equal if not greater importance to the volumes to be built). The relocation of the Court archive is planned for the square, currently housed in an anonymous prefabricated structure that occupies the centre of the collective space. The freed areas will thus be arranged to accommodate a small park with equipped greenery and an area for outdoor sports. The project provides for a practicable coverage of the square, a suspended playground, which considerably expands the range of possible uses of the space below (events, markets, set-ups, restaurants, etc. etc.), expanding the availability of local and commercial urban services. Below the agora's walkable surface, a large surface is made available which, in addition to accommodating the transfer of the court archive necessary to free up the space of the square, still defines useful environments for various commercial services (Figures 5, 6).

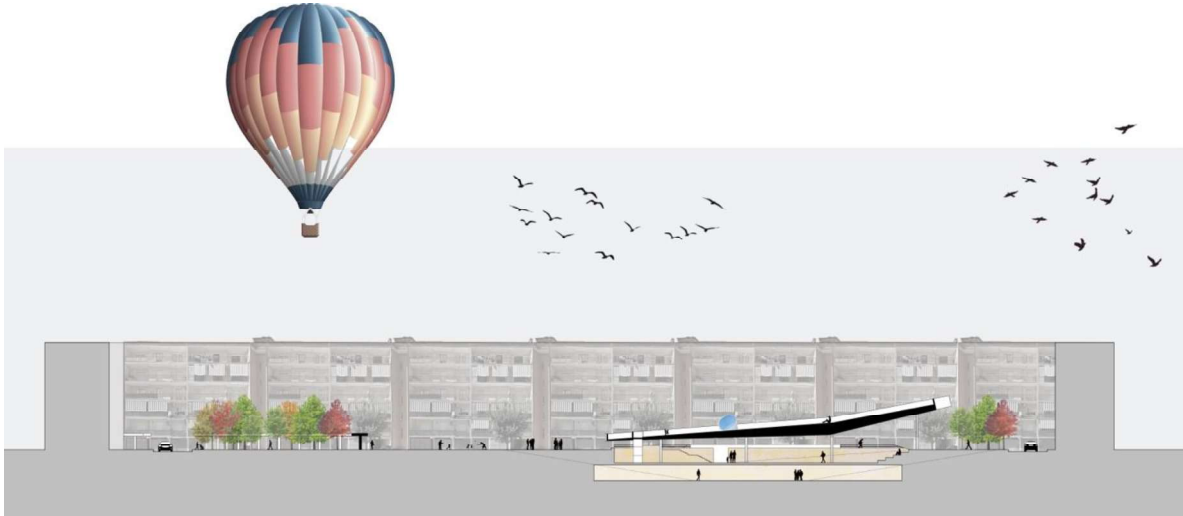


Figure 5: A.s.I.- Piazza Papa Giovanni XXIII, longitudinal section.

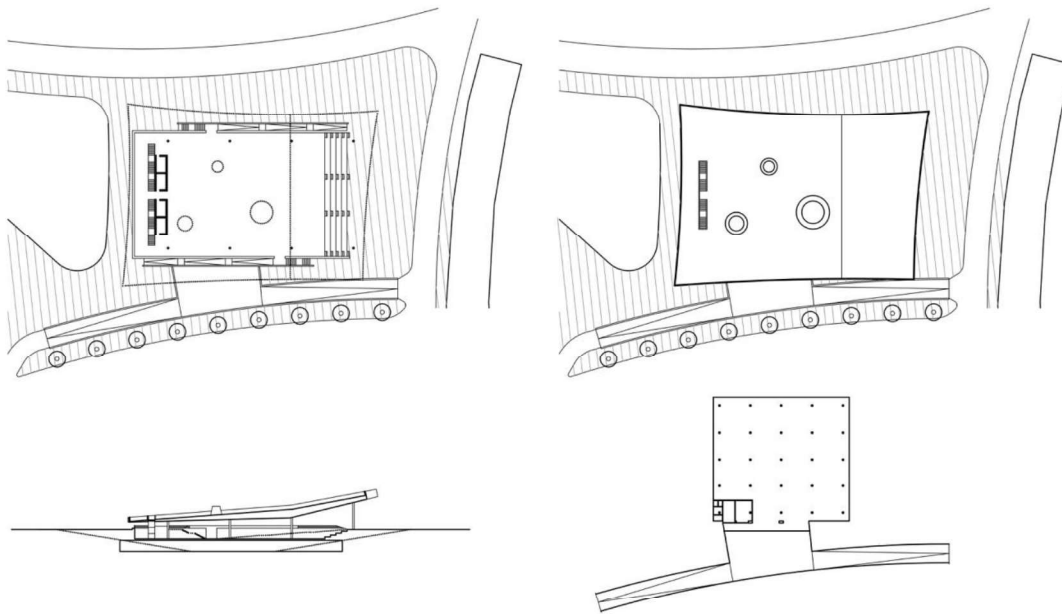


Figure 6: A.s.I.- The Agora, plans and section.

Furthermore, starting from the open and relationship spaces that hold together the two buildings on Via Almirante (Figure 7) and which completely redesign the basin of Piazza Papa Giovanni XXIII, the project also imagines a new road section for a significant part of the neighbourhood: thanks to the connection between these areas and the neighbouring buildings to be replaced in the subsequent phases envisaged by the intervention, the space (currently small) available to pedestrians and cyclists is expanded and the presence of new plantings to building a "green backdrop" in the urban routes. A porticoed element, light and "transparent", will also serve as a supplementary lighting system for the paths and spaces of relations as well as providing shaded and protected areas for rest and relaxation (figure 8).

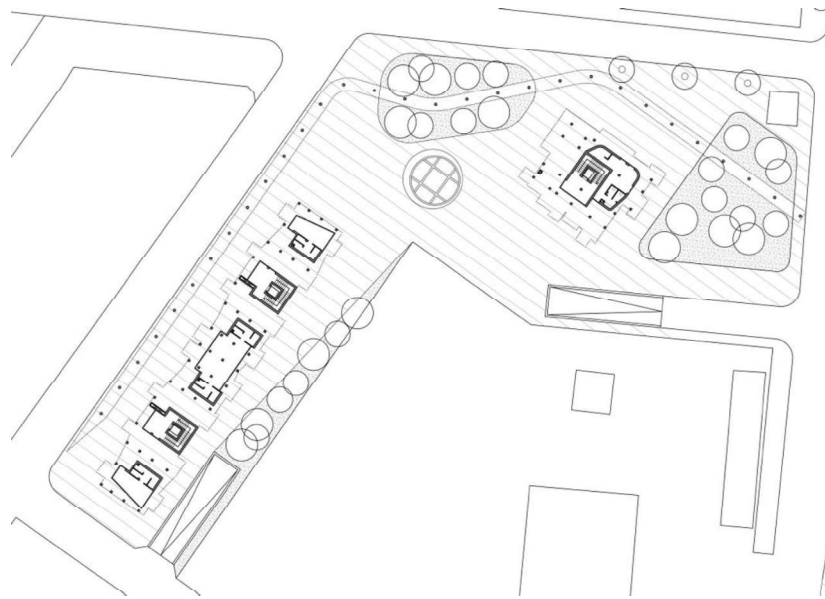


Figure 7: A.s.I.- The ground relationship space of the first two buildings to build in Via Almirante.



Figure 8: A.s.I.- The porch as an element of physical and perceptive connection of the intervention.

Forms of living

The criteria that inform the design of the two residential buildings, the line building and the tower building, respond to two substantially different needs. The 20 lodgings that make up the building in line reproduce the same dimensions of the respective lodgings they replace (85 and 95sqm) but offer, thanks to a system of sliding walls, a living space of considerable size that better adheres to and interprets the new needs of domestic spaces. The 15 newly built accommodations housed in the tower building, on the other hand, are more oriented towards experimenting with forms of contemporary living and supporting the innovative social assistance policies that the Municipality of Aversa intends to adopt (Figure 9).

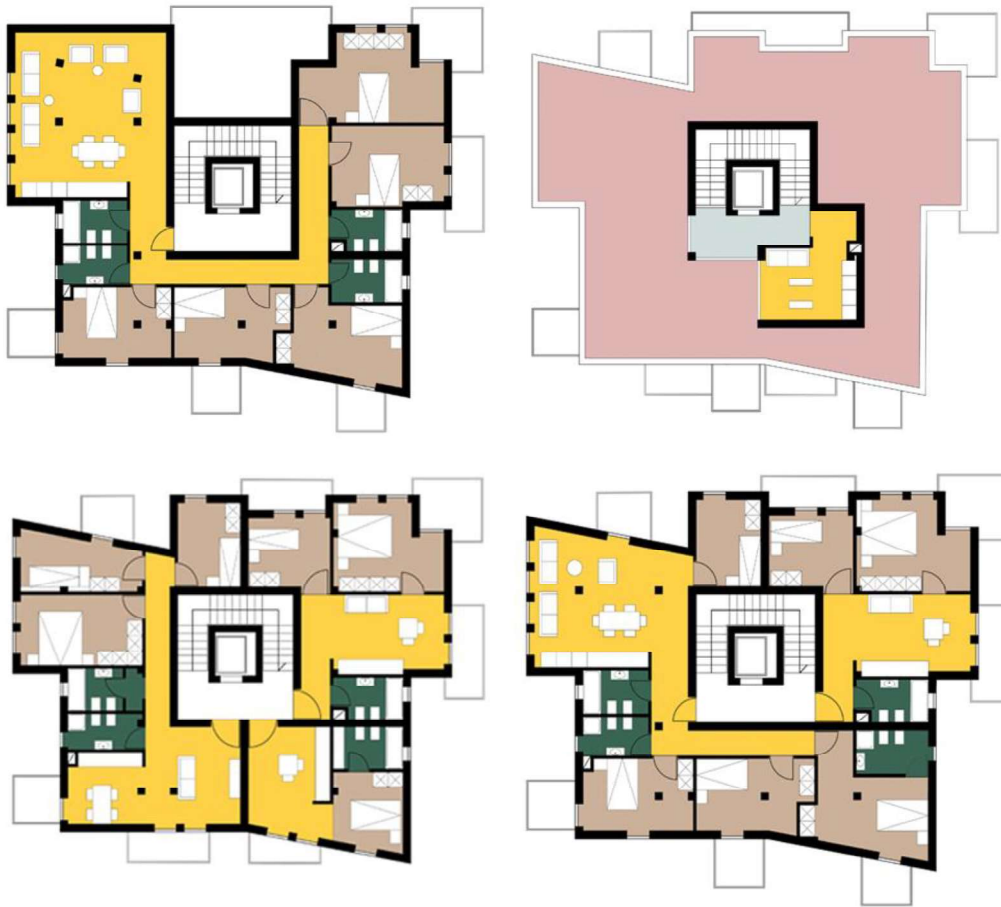


Figure 9: A.s.l.- Possible housing configuration in the tower building.

With the same overall surface, it is possible to compose different configurations of the standard floor: a first, "base", has three accommodations (28, 50 and 75sqm) suitable for responding to the residential demand of young workers and the elderly but also to respond to the request for turn-housing housing with short-term lease agreements. A second possible configuration includes two apartments per floor: a 50sqm unit, the same as that present in the first standard floor configuration, and a second, 105sqm, designed for co-housing. Finally, in the third configuration, the need for collective housing for students and family homes is entrusted to a single accommodation of 150 square meters.

CONCLUSION

Not only the house is involved in the proposed living experience, but the whole piece of reality in which it is immersed. A reality that necessarily translates into social and cultural spaces of aggregation. In this direction, the service system was considered an essential part of the residences. A system that, in addition to responding to a need, offers the community places to meet and socialize to develop its sense of identity and belonging. The space between the buildings thus becomes a space of relationship and social exchange also thanks to the design of the ground floors: as free as possible to encourage the spread of a feeling of belonging, perceptive and functional, towards the open external spaces that run through and across the grounds. of buildings. Here, both for the line and the tower, we find a double typology of environments all equipped with toilets and accessory

spaces: the collaborative living services (also repeated on the roofs of the two buildings in the form of condominium laundries), and the local urban ones. Specifically, the functions provided for collaborative housing services, closed and controllable spaces but as generic as possible, are those of hobbies and living rooms but also of spaces appropriately wired to allow temporary, work or distance learning experiences, when the conditions they request. The local urban services, on the other hand, are substantiated by the presence of two multifunctional environments, also equipped with services and deposits, whose use will no longer be exclusive to the inhabitants of the two buildings but open to the use of the neighbourhood and the city and managed by cooperative associations and local businesses.

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