Third Places and Transitory Uses: The Experimental Project "Hall - Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab" in the East of Naples

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Abstract. Buildings and unused spaces, grounds for experimentation for temporary uses, are known in France for years as "tiers lieux", or third places where hybrid programs and incremental processes are experimented with for the transformation of abandoned spaces. Italy, and particularly the city of Naples, has started to take an interest in the experimentation of temporary uses, approving with Municipal Council Resolution No. 30 of 2022 a "Draft Convention for the regulation of temporary uses for public spaces and publicly owned real estate." It is not coincidental that within the framework of the "CA23 Plural Territories Architecture Festival of 2023", the Living Lab "Inhabiting the City in Transition. Evolutionary projects for the reuse of urban buildings" was held in Naples. Evolving projects for the reuse of large abandoned urban containers, focused on the theme of temporary uses. The Living Lab provided the opportunity to test integrated design projects on some of the numerous abandoned buildings that dot the urban landscape of the city of Naples. Among the most interesting cases is the case study of a nineteenth-century building, the head of a now-disused productive urban block, which became the subject of study for the thesis "Hall-Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab, transitional agritecture for East Naples," following the Festival. The thesis project is based on an experimental methodology that integrates design, economic appraisal and evaluation tools and methods to advance a proposal for incremental and adaptive reuse that unveils the latent potential of the abandoned spaces of the urban block in question, returning meta-processes aimed at demonstrating the feasibility and potential (multivalued) activatable through the experimentation of temporary uses.

Keywords: Transition · Process · Third Places

1 Introduction

Borges, in substantiating his poetics aimed at removing reality from the ontological condition of certainty, instead emphasizes all the charm of the enigma that the "ephemeral" present, even if real, carries within itself. In fact, in "Storia dell'eternità" (1936), he writes: "Time is a problem for us, a disquieting and demanding problem, perhaps the most vital of metaphysics: eternity, a game or a laborious hope." [2].

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The tension between the transient and the eternal is certainly not foreign to the dimension of the project as an act of configuring a space in the present, which through the project is "projected" into the future. Designing implies transforming space, thinking about its configuration, habitability, use, character, etc., simultaneously delivering the project (more or less consciously) to the real conditions of the present time, but also to the unpredictability of the changes and metamorphoses of space over time to come.

This "short-circuit" between designed space and realized space occurs through the practices of use by the "bodies" that experience it, that inhabit it.

The continuity (the perpetuity, the eternity) of architecture does not exactly lie in the infinite possibility of renewal "in form" and "meaning" of space over time? It is not about giving up the perspective of a formal and defined configuration of space, but rather about thinking of the project within an articulated timeline.

Confronting the temporal dimension in design is a fundamental condition, especially in reference to the modification of existing built space, the numerous vacant, abandoned buildings that characterize contemporary urban landscapes, in a context of increasing economic and political fragility where it is increasingly difficult to activate, sustain over time, and manage processes of requalification and reuse of forgotten heritage.

The European panorama, particularly in reference to French experiments, provides some interesting examples of processes of reuse and urban regeneration of abandoned heritage, initiated through the activation of temporary and/or transient uses.

In Italy, a first legislative recognition regarding transient uses was introduced as an amendment to Article 23 quater of DPR 380/2001 and subsequently taken up by some regions, such as Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, and Campania, with Regional Law 13/2022 "Provisions on building simplification, urban regeneration, and the requalification of existing building heritage." Thes are some initial experiments in updating the procedural framework to allow for the temporary use of buildings, disused and/or underutilized areas, through different intended uses than those originally planned and regulated, to try to counteract processes of further obsolescence and activate unused public assets even for limited periods.

The city of Naples approved with Municipal Executive Resolution no. 30 of 2022 the "Draft Convention for the Regulation of Temporary Uses for Public Spaces and Publicly Owned Buildings", demonstrating sensitivity and interest in pursuing temporary reuse experiments. Within the framework of the cultural and scientific debate on these topics, the work developed in the Living Lab "Inhabiting the City in Transition. Evolutionary projects for the reuse of urban buildings" (edited by O. Fatigato and G. Freda) as part of the CA23 "Plural Territories" Architecture Festival in 2023, and subsequently the thesis proposed as a case study in this article, "Hall-Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab, agritecture in transition for East Naples", is inscribed.

The proposed thesis is based on an experimental methodology, where the interpretative, design, and narrative choices of the process integrate methodological approaches and operational tools of architectural and urban design with those of estimation and evaluation. The thesis develops a proposal for incremental and adaptive reuse over time that reveals, in multi-valued terms, the latent potential of the abandoned spaces of the urban block in question.

2 Theoretical Approach

2.1 Moving Spaces in "Infinite Places"

At the Venice Architecture Biennale 2018, the collective "Encore Heureux" coined the title "Lieux Infinis" for the exhibition they curated for the French Pavilion, presenting ten contemporary French projects that differ from each other in terms of function, typology of space, ownership, and funding for implementation. These projects are all aimed, according to the diversity of cases, at transforming existing abandoned buildings into "spatial" laboratories where different forms can be experimented with over time to come together, inhabit collective and inclusive spaces in the contemporary "moving" city; an important opportunity for reflection on the reuse of vacant, abandoned, and/or disused buildings, and the indispensable relationship between spatial and temporal dimensions in architectural design.

For the curators, these ten "collaborative, ecological, and supportive" places are representative of a possible different way of regenerating abandoned and disused spaces over time, and of experimenting with new "forms" to inhabit the contemporary city, through the initiation of processes that can be implemented over time.

The concept of "pioneering places" in waiting or in becoming, is discussed – such as "le 104" in Paris, "Atelier 6B" in Saint Denis, "La Friche belle de Mai" in Marseille, "Lieu Unique" in Nantes, "La Ferme du Bonheur" in Nanterre, etc. – where the transformation of space is understood as inevitably connected to the transformation of the social bonds that inhabit it. Through the title of the French pavilion, "Lieux Infinis", "Encore Heureux" connects the notion of place and thus of space, with that of the infinite and thus of time, an "infinite time", which is recognized as a fundamental and indispensable paradigm for the conception of a "place". The notion of "infinite place" refers to the idea that if it is true that every spatial phenomenon occurs over time (Pierre Donnadieu and Elizabeth Mazas, 2002), space can only be continually changing (in motion) because it is the field in which relationships, events, uses, forms of connection, most of the time unpredictable, between the "bodies" that use and inhabit space are realized and manifested. The unexpected is therefore considered as an "opportunity" for the unexpected "manufacture" and experimentation of space in relation to time. The notion of "indeterminacy", which this approach to regeneration project implies, challenges design disciplines to prefigure adaptive systems, open to the unpredictable, to act therefore within a problematic oxymoron but capable of opening up numerous possibilities. The sought-after indeterminacy, not to be confused with vagueness or the ephemeral, characterizes interesting design operations coordinated by interdisciplinary collectives and/or cooperatives of designers, with the involvement of heterogeneous operators, in which new forms of governance and public-private alliance are experimented with, for the clear objective of overcoming the obsolescence of the new project through a new way of thinking about the transformation of the "old".

The experiments of the "infinite places" presented at the Biennale indicate alternative paths to rethink the processes of transformation of abandoned places, another way of thinking about the space of architecture and conceiving the project, but also of rethinking the role of the architect in this process.

2.2 Transitory Uses for Experimenting the "Possible Overlooked"

France is one of the most advanced countries in Europe regarding the experimentation of transient uses (*urbanisme transitoire*) as a phase of integration in many urban transformation and regeneration programs, thanks to the support of continuously updated national and local regulatory frameworks.

In France, since 2016, there have been a series of legislative updates to facilitate and allow, within predefined time frames, the initiation of temporary use projects in disused buildings, often starting with exemptions from existing urban planning and building regulations, due to the ability of such experimental projects to generate social, economic, and environmental value.

A precursor to this procedural innovation (and naturally, beforehand, cultural) is undoubtedly Patrick Bouchain, the creator of the "permis de faire" a principle that advocates for the "pleasure of doing" through collective experimentation of new uses in abandoned and/or underutilized buildings. Specifically, the "permis de faire" was introduced in the update of the State Law on the "Freedom of Creation for Architecture and Heritage" (2016). The law recognizes the creative and experimental aspect of architecture and in Article 88 legitimizes the "permis d'expérimenter", as the possibility of giving actors (residents, local authorities, third sector, entrepreneurs, etc.) the opportunity to explore what Bouchain calls the "possible overlooked".

Patrick Bouchain, awarded the *Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme* in 2019, has always directed his work towards the necessity of "faire autrement" (doing differently); he has been a pioneer of an architecture oriented towards reuse, "frugality", and the experimentation of collaborative practices. In 2006, with "Metavilla", Bouchain transformed the French Pavilion (of which he is the curator) into a space of informal living. In response to the theme of the Biennale – City, Architecture, and Society – "Metavilla" ("Mets ta vie là") is conceived as a place inhabited by the curators, intended to welcome the public and passersby. "Metavilla" aims to demonstrate that space is the field of human relations that unfold over time, and that from these relations, it changes, hybridizes, evolves.

Already in "Metavilla", the potential of the temporary space of the French Pavilion as a field of unexpected and unpredictable relations is affirmed: life in the pavilion is showcased as a true resource of inhabited space.

Starting from the pioneering work conducted by Patrick Bouchain, numerous interdisciplinary groups have emerged in the last fifteen years that have contributed to maturing the theme of "urbanisme transitoire" through numerous research and experiences. Just to name a few: Yes We Camp, Plateau Urbain, Encore Heureux, Communa, etc.. These groups have become new "real estate" actors capable of carrying out significant investments for the temporary use of public and private properties, requalifying disused spaces, and generating innovative economies [3].

Buildings and spaces in disuse, which serve as experimentation grounds for transient uses, are known in France as "tiers lieux", or "third places", where beyond living and working, hybrid programs and incremental processes are experimented with for space transformation and the possibility of shaping those "overlooked possibilities".

Indeterminacy becomes a significant aspect in these experiments, attentive to the changing nature of human interactions and the emerging needs over time. Spaces designed for transient uses are often conceived to have the ability to adapt to unforeseen

scenarios and the evolving needs of the community that inhabits them. This indeterminacy can be seen as an opportunity, rather than a limitation in defining space, because it opens up experimentation for creative and innovative solutions.

In summary, the project for transient uses of empty space requires a delicate balance between the precise definition of key elements and the ability to embrace indeterminacy as an integral part of the process. This goal calls for the creation of spaces capable of evolving along with the dynamic movements, allowing for active participation of users in the co-creation of the environments in which they live and move.

2.3 Transitory Space in Naples: Projects, Experimentations, Perspective

Reflections on the experimentation of temporary uses have also begun to interest Italian cities. Several administrations are carrying out significant work on experimenting with temporary (and/or transitory) uses as a strategic tool to reactivate disused buildings owned by the public. Legislative recognition of temporary uses was introduced as an amendment to Article 23 quater of DPR 380/2001 and subsequently adopted by various regions such as Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, and Campania itself, which approved Regional Law No. 13 of 2022, "Provisions on building simplification, urban regeneration, and the requalification of existing building heritage". In general, these are a series of regulatory and procedural frameworks that essentially legitimize the temporary reuse of buildings, disused or abandoned areas, even providing for possible derogations from the intended uses outlined in the reference regulatory framework.

A virtuous example is provided by the Emilia Romagna region, where the "Laboratiry Hub" has been activated - a space designed as a tool for discussion to reflect on the new conditions and demands of contemporary cities, with particular attention to temporary actions for the reuse of places and buildings, not only public ones, through activities that experiment with participatory methodologies to facilitate sharing processes and collective learning.

Even the city of Naples, by approving Municipal Council Resolution No. 30 of 2022, "Draft Convention for the Regulation of Temporary Uses for Public Spaces and Publicly Owned Buildings", aimed to promote processes for the temporary use of public assets. At present, this draft agreement still finds very limited concrete project implementations, also due to the difficulty of collaboration between different public offices, which a temporary reuse project requires.

Within the framework of the CA23 "Plural Territories" Architecture Festival, held in various locations in Campania and Paris in 2023, the theme of temporary uses was addressed through the work of one of the six Living Labs of the Festival. In particular, in Naples, in collaboration with the Department of Architecture of the University Federico II and the ENSA Paris Malaquais, the Living Lab "Inhabiting the City in Transition. Evolutionary projects for the reuse of urban buildings" [4] was organized, focusing on the theme of temporary uses, starting from the important regulatory steps taken by the Campania Region and the Municipality of Naples.

The living lab was conceived and structured as a collective laboratory that investigated the regeneration processes of some large disused containers in the city of Naples, starting from the activation of possible temporary uses. Together, participants discussed

the co-creation of innovative programs, new forms of hospitality to re-inhabit these spaces, proposing open and incremental strategies over time.

During the Living Lab, the specificities, the "stories", and the potentials of some abandoned buildings that populate the urban territory of Naples at different scales were explored.

Living Lab participants, along with community residents, architects, photographers, artists, students, and university professors, reflected on the value of these containers as "places of possible overlooked".

Integrated design projects were tested on some of the numerous abandoned buildings that punctuate the urban landscape of the city of Naples, resulting in meta-processes aimed at demonstrating the feasibility and potential activated through the experimentation of temporary uses.

The integrated methodological approach started from the development of an interactive and expandable map of the disused urban heritage, both public and private, in the area of East Naples [5].

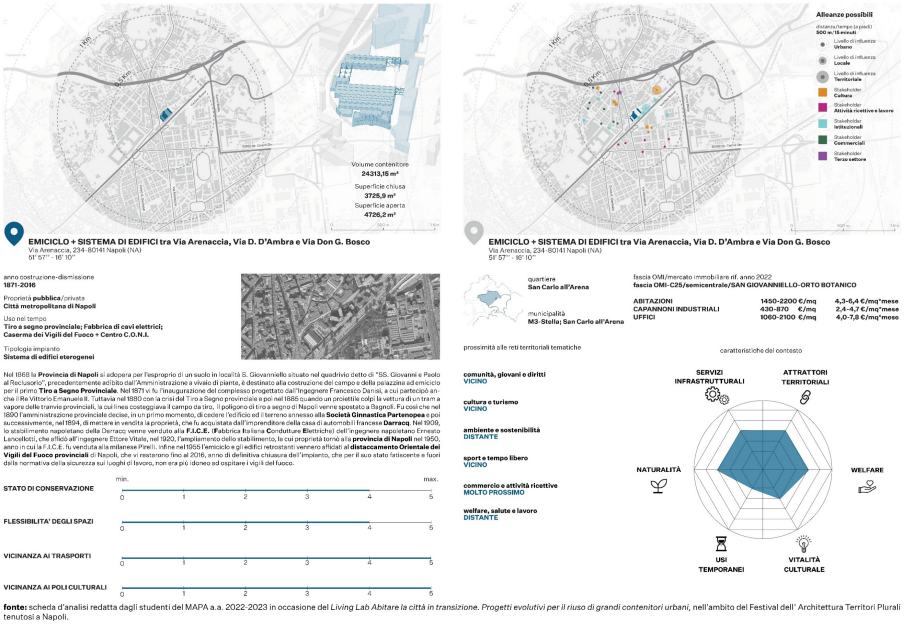
Through this mapping - not exhaustive, partial, and carried out in the short time available during the LL activities - about ninety buildings were identified, for each of which a multi-criteria interpretative card was subsequently developed (see Fig. 1).

The buildings were first divided into three groups according to the recorded square footage. We reasoned in terms of cubic meters rather than square meters to demonstrate the need to think in terms of "capacity of potential habitable space" (cubic meters) with reference to the empty buildings identified and mapped.

The cards were structured into two distinct parts, side A and side B. The front (side A) was conceived as a sort of identity card for the building, where historical, dimensional, and typological information about the building was provided alongside the identification of some useful indicators from the perspective of the temporary reuse of the analysed building, such as: state of conservation, flexibility of spaces, proximity to transportation, proximity to cultural hubs, accessibility. On the back (side B) of the card, the possible networks at different scales, in which to graft the building starting from its reuse, were indicated: stakeholders (cultural, institutional, third sector), hospitality activities, commercial activities, within a walking radius of about 15 min from the building.

The work related to some established indicators, including the level of influence of these stakeholders (urban, local, and territorial), led to the identification and graphical representation of the different degrees of proximity of the surveyed building in relation to the identified territorial and contextual thematic networks.

The experience of the Living Lab concluded with an interesting collaborative workshop coordinated by Mathias Rouet, co-founder of the French cooperative *Plateau Urbain* and one of the leading experts in France on the topic of "urbanisme transitoire" (see Fig. 2). The workshop involved participants from the LL (students, doctoral candidates, professors, collectives, representatives from the Municipality of Naples, and curious citizens), who were divided into groups of promoters, operators, and users. Based on cross-evaluation criteria and a hypothetical budget for investment, they defined which of the mapped buildings was potentially most suitable for reactivation through temporary uses and integrated, incremental methods over time.



fonte: scheda d'analisi redatta dagli studenti del MAPA a.a. 2022-2023 in occasione del *Living Lab Abitare la città in transizione. Progetti evolutivi per il riuso di grandi contenitori urbani*, nell'ambito del Festival dell' Architettura Territori Plurali tenutosi a Napoli.

Fig. 1. Example of a multicriteria evaluation card

Among the buildings addressed in the workshop, was the nineteenth-century hemicycle of the former fire station, which, based on the reflections and outcomes of the workshop, was identified as an interesting case for further research.

Consequently, it became the subject of the experimental thesis work titled "Hall-Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab: Agritecture in Transition for East Naples" by Simona Capaldo (supervised by Orfina Fatigato and Maria Cerreta).



Fig. 2. Workshop with Mathias Rouet, co-founder of *Plateau Urbain.* During the Living Lab "Inhabiting the City in Transition", in CA23 Plural Territories Architecture Festival

3 Case Study and Methodology

3.1 The Integrated Project "Hall-Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab, Agritecture in Transition for EastNaples"

The thesis "HALL - Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab, agritecture in transition for East Naples" by Simona Capaldo develops a structured strategy in different temporal phases for the reuse of the building system, which, along with the hemicycle, an 19th-century building, constitutes the complex block between *via Arenaccia*, *via Domenico D'Ambra*, and *via Don Giovanni Bosco* in Naples.

The project aims to restore to the community a space with an agricultural vocation, where different, incremental uses related to food and based on the principles of the circular economy can be experimented with.

The thesis work is based on an experimental methodology, where interpretative and design choices integrate methodological approaches and operational tools of architectural and urban design with those of economic appraisal and evaluation.

The interpretative elaborations of context knowledge used by architectural and urban design (inter-scalar maps, collages, photographic collections, sections…) are always accompanied by diagrams and organizational charts for the detection of indicators, through quantitative and qualitative data supporting the identification of project objectives and allowing the structuring of a complex decision tree for design decisions.

The project elaborations are approached experimentally: a project "timeplan", replacing the traditional masterplan, constantly interacts with a schedule, developed based on the decision tree and financial analysis, which constantly evaluates the economic advantage of the investment; inhabited perspective sections and storyboards are the drawing and representation tools rethought and used to explicitly demonstrate results and outcomes that propose an incremental and adaptive reuse over time, thus revealing, in multivalued terms, the latent potential of the abandoned spaces of the urban block in question.

The work proposes a strategic schedule where the different temporal phases intertwine space transformations with the identification of promoters, operators, and users as co-activators of the process over time and through a non-linear economic model based on the principles of the circular economy.

An economic model of production and consumption that exploits innovative tools to promote material and immaterial development based on sharing, lending, reuse, repair, refurbishment, and recycling of existing materials and products as long as possible, where extending the product lifecycle not only contributes to minimizing waste but also enables value generation from what, in a traditional linear production process, is conceived as waste.

The experimentation developed through the "HALL" thesis raises some fundamental questions regarding the relationship between spatial and temporal dimensions for the regeneration of urban spaces from abandonment, identifying in transient uses an important tool for the transition project that, surpassing the aesthetics of the ephemeral and/or the provisional, is rather intended as a process that takes into account the evolutionary dimension of time and therefore space in relation to time, in which transient uses serve as a trigger for reuse projects.

In the experimentation work, it is interesting, as an outcome of the integrated methodology, the estimation of the "cost of vacancy" of the building as well as the comparison of the "project scenario" with a "trend scenario" of abandonment and a "restoration scenario" of the building's last active use; the comparison of the respective financial analyses of the three scenarios highlights the economic advantage of the "project scenario" and therefore demonstrates the necessity and urgency of intervening on such a disused building.

The thesis work is structured in three operational phases: immersion, strategy, and experimentation.

The immersion phase, as reading and inter-scalar interpretation of the reference context, is built through heterogeneous materials (collages, cartographies, archival documents, maps, diagrams of space-time evolution of the area).

The strategy phase is articulated, starting from the identification of project objectives and develops through the structuring of a schedule articulated in different phases and time intervals, in which the transformation of space is conceived in relation to time and the different actors (promoters, operators, and users) who, through partnerships of various natures (public-private, public-public, public-private-social), allow triggering the process through experimentation of transient uses: between a prefigured past and a future to be prefigured over time.

The experimentation phase, in which the project proposal is concretized, intended precisely as a proposal for an adaptive and evolutionary architectural and urban project, open to implementation over time and respectful of the "productive unpredictability" that animates contemporary society, in continuous evolution.

3.2 Immersion: The Hemicycle Multidimensional Values

The project area, located in what was originally defined as the *"quadrivio dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo al Reclusorio"*, is situated at the point where *via Foria* concludes, intersecting *via Arenaccia.*

Italo Ferraro, in "Napoli, Atlante della città storica. San Carlo all'Arena e Sant'Antonio Abate" (2002), describes this part of the city as *"costituita da due parti assai differenti tra di loro, collinare quella di San Carlo all'Arena, da Capodimonte a Capodichino, del tutto pianeggiante quella del borgo Sant'Antonio Abate, da porta Capuana all'Arenaccia… E dunque è la storia, ovvero l'evoluzione e la formazione della struttura urbana, a legare queste due parti urbane a monte ed a valle di via Foria, unite da ruoli diversi in relazione allo scorrimento delle acque, e ciò fino ad un tempo non tanto lontano; questo comune legame con l'acqua è una delle caratteristiche generali di Napoli, e riguarda gli aspetti di una forma analoga in parti anche molto differenti tra di esse; a Napoli tutte le strade, spesso nate da antichi corsi d'acqua, portano al mare"* [6]. This area, therefore, conceived as a point of junction and connection between hill and sea, presents countless landscape and strategic positioning potentials (see Fig. 3).

In fact, in addition to *via Arenaccia*, the area borders *via Don Bosco*, originally called *via Nuova del Campo* and conceived to provide the city with a main entrance from the East, intersecting *via Foria* and thus the "Real Albergo dei Poveri". Within a few kilometres, moreover, the project area, already heavily underutilized, is dotted

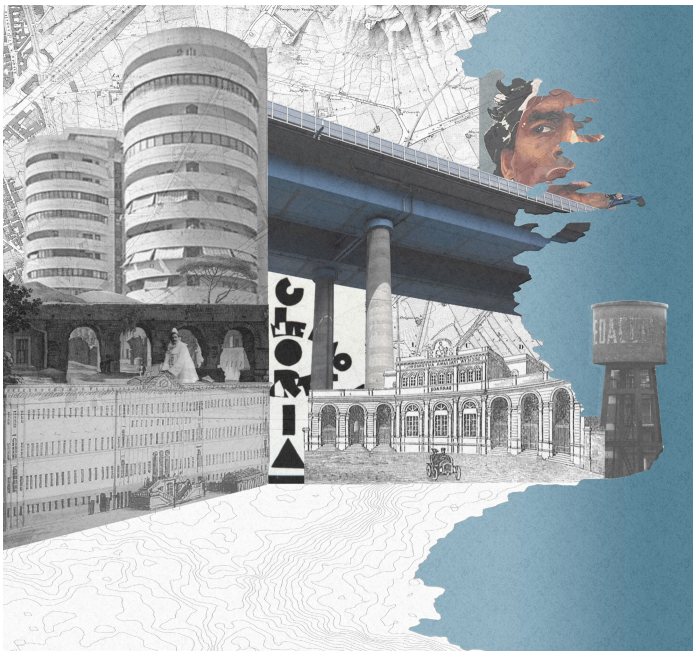


Fig. 3. Interpretative collage of the project: connection between hill and sea.

with a series of other architectures or infrastructures, heterogeneous among themselves, which for different reasons and stories, are unused or otherwise heavily degraded.

"(Re)discover the Hemicycle" means to highlight the complexity and contradiction that characterize this piece of the city, not only through the rewriting of a narrative of events that led to its abandonment but also through the understanding of how temporal evolution of this place has been accompanied by spatial transformation. Originally, the Province of Naples, owner of the area, worked on the construction of the Provincial Shooting Range (1868), which remained in use until 1890, when it was closed and later sold to a private individual in 1894. Following a series of changes in ownership, the area began to undergo transformation, and industrial hangars were built behind the nineteenth-century building, extending across the entire lot, as clearly visible in an aerial photograph from the IGM of 1949. A significant transformation occurred in 1955 when the block was repurchased by the Province of Naples. They demolished some hangars and entrusted the hemicycle and the existing hangars to the eastern detachment of the Provincial Fire Brigade of Naples. However, starting in 2016, the hemicycle and the complex of buildings behind it were closed due to their dilapidated state and non-compliance with workplace safety regulations. They remain awaiting a new narrative even today. From 2016 to the present day, what has been the loss in terms of material (economic) and immaterial (social and cultural) value for the Province of Naples, now Metropolitan City, in keeping this building closed? Is it possible to estimate the "cost of vacancy" to understand even just the economic impact that abandonment has caused?

The first methodological phase of the thesis concludes with an investigation into the management costs that the owning entity faces annually (see Fig. 4), arriving at a "cost of vacancy" of approximately 300,000 € over eight years.

This number represents an initial objective indication of the need to intervene on the property and demonstrates that reuse, if possible, contrary to abandonment, oblivion, and obsolescence, appears necessary, even obligatory, if one aspires to a more sustainable city model and a society more attentive to waste.

EDIFICIO	SPESA di GESTIONE	QUANTITÀ	COSTO di GESTIONE ANNUALE	n. anni dismissione	COSTO di GESTIONE TOTALE	TOTALE
	TARI	mq		(anno 2016-2024) **8 anni**	costo di gestione annuale*8	
Emiciclo	sì	926,7	11084,22	8	88673,76	
Ex cappella	sì	91,1	581,52	8	4652,16	
Hangar 1	sì	959,6	10.989,23	8	87913,84	
Hangar 2	sì	993,9	9208,68	8	73669,44	
Ex palestra	sì	616,3	4656,96	8	37255,68	
						292164,88 €

fonte: https://www.riscotel.it/calcolo/tari/napoli/

Fig. 4. Table of management costs for the abandoned building from 2016

3.3 Strategy: Transitory Uses and Evolutionary Design for "Hall" Activation

"(Re)discover the Hemicycle" first and foremost means restoring its visibility at an urban scale: this second phase of the research is based on the construction of an inter-scalar project strategy to reconnect the hemicycle block to the city through a system of soft mobility (cycling and pedestrian) as a natural connection of the area to the hilly part to the north and towards the sea to the south, building a network of connection between different buildings, abandoned and underutilized areas that punctuate the vast area of East Naples (among others: the "Albergo dei Poveri", the "Fabbrica Redaelli", the "Ospedale psichiatrico Leonardo Bianchi", the "Centro Direzionale"). To rethink the role of the block in its immediate context, four fundamental spatial themes are identified: the retaining wall of the block as a porous margin towards the "Arenaccia" neighborhood; the permeability of internal crossings within the block as a new crossing system; the sequence of squares as a multiplication of public space.

The project's objective, in relation to some of the "Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030" (in particular, No. 2 Zero Hunger; No. 3 Good Health and Well-being; No.11 Sustainable Cities and Communities; No. 12 Responsible Consumption and Production), aims to give back to the community an agricultural space where different, incremental uses related to food and based on the principles of the circular economy can be experimented with.

The project strategy addresses these themes and aims, as evoked by the title of the thesis itself "Hall-Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab, transitional architecture for East Naples", to experiment with innovative agricultural production systems that interact with the existing architecture.

The term "hall" etymologically defines a large entrance and meeting space in buildings and venues. Conceptually, this meaning is translated into the project's intention to return to the city a permeable space for socializing. Specifically, it refers to an agricultural space where different, incremental uses related to food and based on the principles

of the circular economy can be experimented with, including: local agricultural production, through the installation of urban gardens and experimental hydroponic cultivation systems (hangar 2); processing and selling of products in a hybrid and co-open market space (hangar 1); consumption and relaxation (hemicycle building); research, experimentation, and training in the food and culinary field (newly constructed "Core" building) (see Fig. 5).

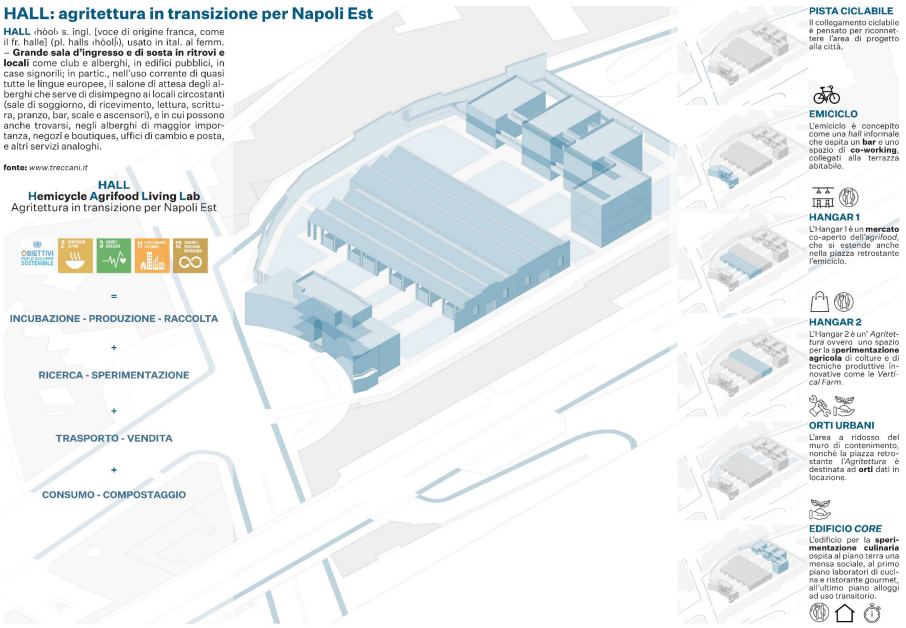


Fig. 5. Goals and Functional Program of the "HALL" project

The strategy emphasizes the innovative nature of the project conceived as an evolutionary process in its spatial and temporal dimensions, structured through a "project space-time line" that clearly associates space and time transformations, defining for each action what is intended to be achieved, who are the involved stakeholders in terms of promoters, operators, and users, and how these actions materialize in terms of "public-private-social partnerships", specifying the spaces involved where actions and intentions are spatialized through the project.

The project strategy is structured into three incremental temporal phases, each lasting 5 years:

The "seeding phase" involves, in parallel with the restoration of the hemicycle and the two hangars, the partial opening of the area through the conduct of temporary use activities (markets, urban gardens, concert space, etc.) in open spaces. These activities require quicker reactivation actions through a construction and management concession between the property owner, namely the Metropolitan City of Naples, and some third-sector entities specialized in organizing events for temporary uses.

This 5-year phase allows, through initial temporary occupation, not only to begin to give visibility to the area through programming based on functional mixity but also, in financial terms, to generate initial revenues that cover the expenses for interventions on existing buildings.

The "growth phase" (5–10 years) involves the simultaneous opening of existing buildings and the reconfiguration of the adjacent open spaces, along with the commencement of the construction of the "Core" building in the area previously occupied by temporary events. For the reactivation of the existing buildings, different models of agreements have been envisaged, ranging from" public-private" to "public-private-social" partnerships. For example, for Hangar 2, intended for the progressive experimentation of new agricultural techniques, a "Build Transfer and Operate" (BTO) partnership has been envisioned. In this partnership, the Metropolitan City of Naples finances the reconfiguration of interior spaces and the provision of facilities, while technicians from the "Real Orto Botanico" and third-sector entities collaborate to establish a network of producers/sellers/buyers (including associations such as "Semenza", "Coldiretti Campania", and the "Dedalus Cooperative"). During this second phase, significant revenues are generated, exceeding the construction and management costs of the completed works, resulting in initial profits.

The "harvest phase" entails the conclusion of this project experimentation, without excluding the possible future evolution of the process. Among the actions of this last five-year period, the most interesting is certainly the realization of the "Core" building, a hybrid structure that embodies the project's overall vision in terms of functional programming, the process of construction interventions, and collaboration among actors of different "public-private-social" nature. Indeed, the "public-private-social" partnership established for the construction of the building, through a "Build Own Operate Transfer" (BOOT) partnership, involves different promoters, operators, and users in the last two temporal phases of the process ("growth phase" and "harvest phase").

This second methodological and strategic phase involves a continuous comparison between proposed spatial reconfiguration designs and the economic sustainability of interventions, taking into account the principles of circular economy highlighted earlier. The design proposals are not seen as fixed answers but rather as incremental and experimental solutions open to possible evolving questions over time, reflecting the complexity and ontological uncertainty characterizing the contemporary city.

3.4 Experimentation: Three Scenarios Compared for the Urban Block of the Hemicycle

The design experiments involve the sequence of buildings that make up the block: the hemicycle, conceived as an informal and "porous hall", almost a threshold element between the block and the city; the "co-open" market composed of movable modules that can extend outside, configuring a constantly variable open space; the "agritecture", a term understood as the art, science, and activity of integrating agriculture into the built environment and in the case of the project, interpreted as a space for experimentation and research into new agricultural techniques capable of addressing environmental challenges and developing systems resilient to climate change; the "Core" building conceived based on various compositional experiments in the design phase and composed

of three buildings, interconnected by a system of walkways, allowing for the opening of a second access to the block at an elevated level and the possibility of dialogue between the block and the system of buildings behind it (see Fig. 6).

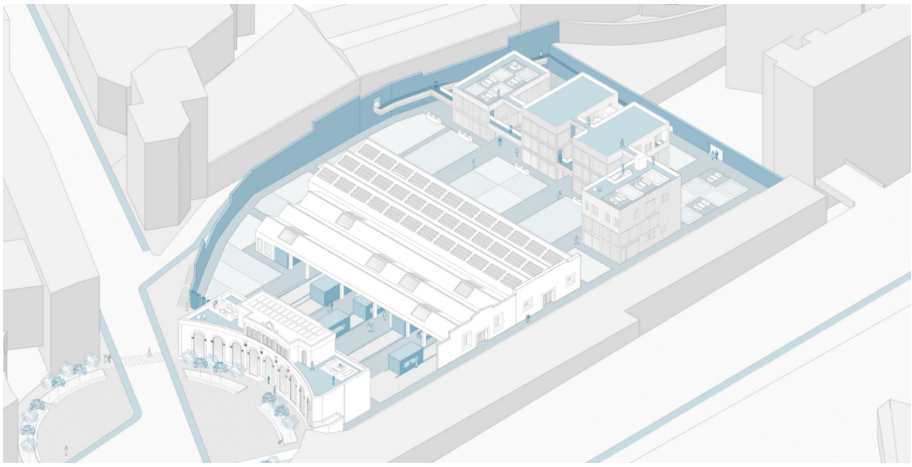


Fig. 6. "HALL - Hemicycle Agrifood Living Lab, agritecture in transition for East Naples"

These design experiments, conceived to conclude within a 20-year process, have been compared to two other possible project scenarios for the subject block, in order to evaluate the actual economic advantage of investing in a design approach that involves experimentation with different and incremental uses.

The methodological interest in comparing the project scenario to two other possible scenarios stems from the desire to address the following problematic question: Is it truly advantageous and therefore desirable to aspire to an innovative and incremental reuse project for this block?

To answer this question, two other possible project scenarios for this isolated complex were hypothesized: a "restoration scenario", in which the block's last function before abandonment in 2016, namely office use, is restored, and a "trend scenario", in which the condition of abandonment, oblivion, and degradation of the facility persists.

Once the three scenarios (project scenario, restoration scenario, and trend scenario) were identified, a financial analysis of revenues and costs was conducted for each of the three scenarios over a 20-year period: revenues were approximated by the revenues obtained from the lease of managed spaces, estimated through consultation of the rental value tables (€/sqm) of the "Osservatorio del Mercato Immobiliare" [7] for the area where the block is located (OMI C-23 range); costs were approximated by the construction and management costs of the works realized, estimated through the comparison of similar works consulted from the catalog of the "ACEN" (Associazione Costruttori Edili della Provincia di Napoli) of 2014 (see Fig. 7).

The financial analysis of the three scenarios allowed estimating the NPV (Net Present Value) and IRR (Internal Rate of Return): indeed, it is from the comparison of the IRR of the three scenarios that it is possible to answer the aforementioned question. From

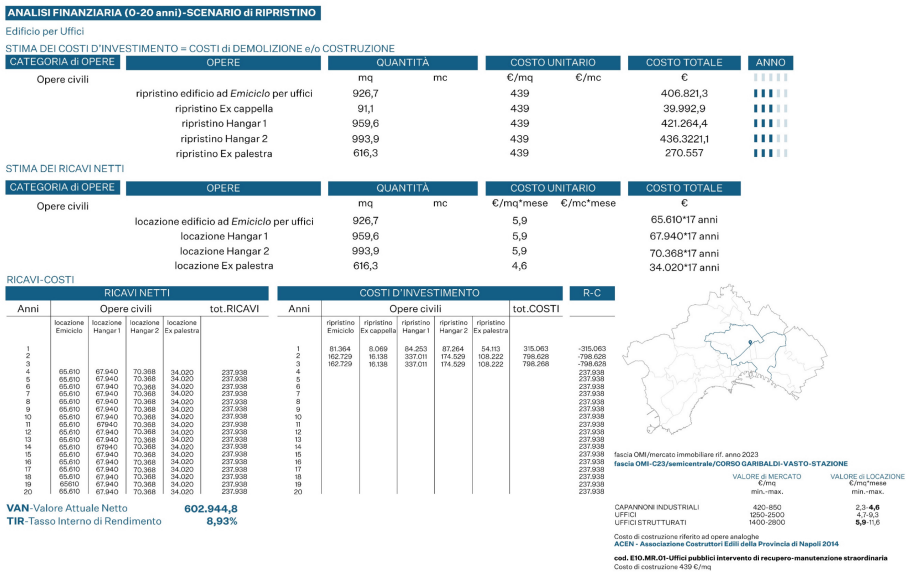


Fig. 7. Financial analysis table of the "Restoration Scenario" (Offices)

the financial analysis, it emerges that the "project scenario" has an IRR of 28.00%, the "restoration scenario" has an IRR of 8.93%, and finally, the "trend scenario" has an IRR of 0%, as the financial analysis shows zero revenues and only a progressive amount of vacant management costs.

So, let's revisit the question: is it really advantageous and therefore desirable to aspire to an innovative reuse project for this area? The comparison of the three scenarios tells us that the answer is definitely affirmative and declares the evidence and urgency of intervening on the property.

To further emphasize this point, another question was addressed: in the case of continued disuse, what is the "economic value of abandonment"?

To answer this, a formula derived from financial mathematics was referenced, where the annual loss in the building's value (Va) is given by the difference between the market value of the project (Vm,prog.) minus the market value of the building in its current state (Vm,today), divided by time (t), the period of abandonment:

$$Va = (Vm, prog. - Vm, today)/t$$

The estimation of the real estate market value, respectively (Vm,prog.) and (Vm,today), was defined by consulting the market value table (€/sqm) of the "Osservatorio del Mercato Immobiliare" for the area where the building is located (OMI C-23 range), referring to the year 2023, which allows us to answer the aforementioned question. Indeed, in the case of continued disuse, the economic value of abandonment is equal to 3.15% of the market value of the project.

The work of experimental design has therefore been substantiated by the estimation of the "vacancy cost" of the building, which was developed in the initial "immersion

phase" and subsequently compared with the financial analysis of the three possible scenarios described above in this final "experimentation phase". The result of this methodological process has highlighted the economic advantage resulting from investing in the experimental, innovative, and incremental reuse of the building. It has also supported the hypothesis regarding the necessity and urgency of intervening on this disused building through an approach that integrates design and economic appraisal and evaluation tools and methods, capable of promoting and enhancing the project's potential.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Transient Uses for Projecting into the "Future Anterior"

The thesis work presented allows for the verification, on one hand, of the proposed theoretical approach regarding the necessary interrelation between space and time to intervene in the processes of reusing abandoned and underutilized heritage, and, on the other hand, to test the integrated methodological approach (between design and economic appraisal and evaluation) proposed.

Referring to the theoretical and scientific debate regarding the theme of reuse and experimentation of transient uses for projects in transitioning cities, it is important to underline how the thesis work, starting from this project approach, aims to focus attention on three main issues:

- A "reuse" project can effectively function in the long term if thought differently, i.e., based on the evolutionary dimension of time and therefore space in relation to time, where transient uses serve as triggers, between a before and an after, of such transformation processes.
- A "transitional" project rejects the aesthetics of the ephemeral or the provisional; it is a project designed to endure over time with the awareness that it does not design on a blank slate or towards a defined future to be prescribed but rather, as Gabriele Pasqui (2019) states: "designing means imagining a future anterior, actions projected into the future but with the awareness that they can occur before others. In this perspective, the project is seen as experimentation because it deals with the world in a context of radical ontological uncertainty" [8].
- A "minor" project, as Camillo Boano (2020) writes, "opens a fracture in the major project where major and minor are not different languages but different uses of the same language" [9]. It recognizes a new figure of the architect, represented not by a single designer but by a collective of interdisciplinary designers, involving heterogeneous and ever-changing operators, implementing new forms of governance and public-private partnerships, aspiring to overcome the obsolescence of the project of the new, so that architecture returns to being a political act aimed at the common good, where aesthetic beauty finds its reason and foundation in ethical beauty.

Referring to the methodological-operational aspect, it is the presented design experience that stands as a demonstration of the necessary integration between design and economic appraisal and evaluation tools and methods. This methodology allowed for the formulation of a proposal for incremental and adaptive reuse over time, capable of integrating multidisciplinary and inter-scale aspects, revealing the latent potential of the

abandoned spaces in the urban block in question, and returning meta-processes aimed at demonstrating the feasibility and the potential (multivalued) activatable through the experimentation of transient uses.

The illustrated design experience highlights and demonstrates the economic advantage of investing in an experimental, innovative, and incremental reuse project over time, and the value and material impact that this project can potentially generate. At the same time, the limitation of this design experimentation is that it is confined, precisely, to a purely methodological-operational dimension, not concretized.

The impossibility to activate the process on the examined artifact does not allow to demonstrate and evaluate the social, cultural (including economic) impacts of the project. Furthermore, in relation to the value of "indeterminacy" as stated in Sect. 1 of this contribution, which is a determining factor in the success of experiments with transient uses of French "tiers lieux", the failure to concretely activate the process does not allow to record "unexpected' effects resulting from the "voluntary" indeterminacy of the process itself. The "possible overlooked", as mentioned by Bouchain, also lies in the unpredictable interaction between bodies inhabiting the space, which can lead to revealing other unexpected material and immaterial potential.

Only the concrete "short circuit" between designed space and realized space can determine the reasons (the necessity) for the real evolution of the process and the additional values it can generate.

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