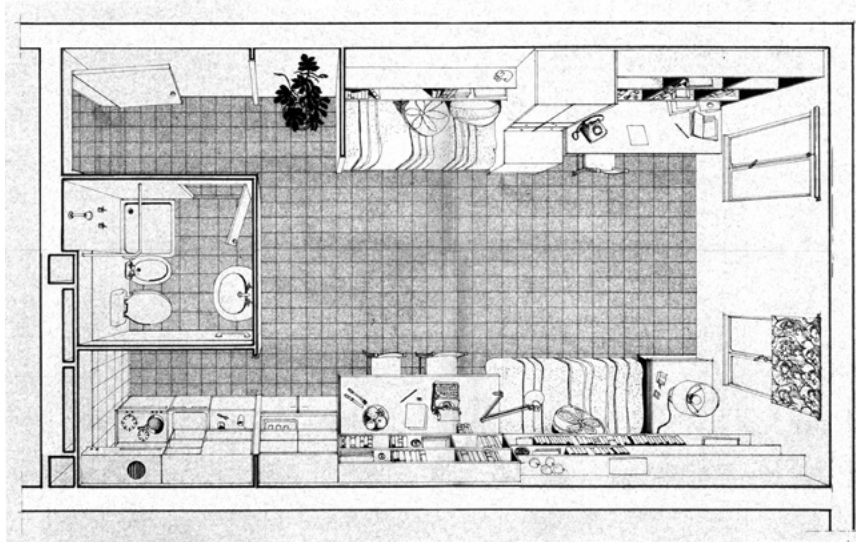


The City as a Reformist Project

Typological Research and the 1973 Plan for Bologna

Enrica Mannelli



Detail of the Restorative Project for the PEEP Comparto San Leonardo, July 1973 – First floor plan. Ufficio di Piano del Dipartimento Urbanistica, Casa e Ambiente del Comune di Bologna.

In 1960, when the Italian Communist Party (PCI) won the elections in the Bologna, the architect, planner, and militant Giuseppe Campos Venuti, was nominated chief of the city's department of urbanism. As a teenager, Campos Venuti participated in the Italian Resistance Movement; after the second world war he began studying Architecture in Rome, where he later taught and worked as an urban planner. Following graduation, Campos Venuti received a position with the Bolognese city council, which he held until 1966. As a leader, Campos Venuti put forward a radical and influential approach to urban planning whose primary goal was to counter land speculation. This approach was later known as, *Urbanistica Riformista* (reformist urban planning).⁰¹

Campos Venuti's method stemmed from an awareness that the industrial city was capitalised by powerful landowners who favoured the center as a strategic asset. The *Urbanistica Riformista* approach addressed the city in its entirety, a holistic attitude made clear by Pier Luigi Cervellati's 1973 plan for Bologna's historic center.⁰² Cervellati's plan used the

01 Giuseppe Campos Venuti (1926-2019) participated in the Italian Resistance Movement when he was 17, serving as a paratrooper with the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS). After the second world war he studied architecture in Rome where he would later teach and work as an urban planner. In 1960, he was nominated by the Italian Communist Party—whose Roman section he was in close contact with—chief of the department of urbanism of the council of Bologna. Later he taught urban studies in Milan (1968-2001). His book, *Amministrare l'urbanistica* (1967), describes his reformist approach. He always worked for the public sector, never setting up a private practice. He contributed to the Progetto 80, which can be read as the application of his theories on a national scale. Visiting professor at Berkeley in 1984, he consulted on many city plans among which were Madrid (1980) and also Rome (2006).

02 The Italian literature on the topic spans from books, articles and interviews to the architects leading the projects—among them were Giuseppe Campos Venuti, Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini and Carlo De Angelis. The main literary sources this essay refer to are: G. Campos Venuti, F. Oliva, eds., *Cinquant'anni di urbanistica in Italia, 1942-1992* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1993), 297–312; Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini e Carlo De Angelis, *La nuova cultura delle città* (Milan, Edizioni scientifiche e tecniche Mondadori, 1977); P.L. Cervellati, R. Scannavini *Bologna: metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973); Carlo De Angelis, "Forty years later. PEEP Plan for the historic city 1973. A marginal note, between method and practice," in *IN_BO ricerche e progetti per il territorio, la città e l'architettura*, n. 6 June 2013; Luisa Bravo, "Area conservation as socialist standard-bearer: a plan for the historical centre of Bologna in 1969," in *Docomomo* n.2 Dec. 2009; Filippo De Pieri and Paolo Scrivano, "Representing the 'Historical Centre' of Bologna: Preservation Policies and Reinvention of an Urban Identity," in *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, n. 1 (Fall 2004), 34-45.

concept of typology to initiate a methodological “revolution” in urban planning. Through typology, Cervellati and his collaborators linked policymaking and architecture together in one cohesive project for the city. The main goal of this systematic approach was to oppose the emphasis on Bologna’s historical center as a market asset.⁰³

This essay investigates the city as a reformist project by analysing Cervellati’s plan from 1973. As a case study, Cervellati’s plan can be read as a direct product of the Urbanistica Riformista approach to urbanism—the innovative strategy of the Bolognese administration led by the Italian Communist Party. Moreover, the plan’s tactics bear a striking resemblance to Aldo Rossi’s theories on typology put forward a few years prior. Despite being widely recognised for their focus on form, many of Rossi’s early studies, especially those published before the book, define typology as a political entity whose variations depend on society, time and culture.⁰⁴

The goal of Cervellati’s plan was to shape an old city for a new society. The project positioned the city center as an urban artifact. As an artefact the center’s form was to be preserved as a collective memory while its functions were adapted to the needs of its growing working class population, otherwise in danger of eviction. Cervellati’s typological approach represented both the analytical tool and the planning method required to improve the city while avoiding raising costs in the center.

The Bologna plan can be inscribed within a wider debate during the 1950s and 60s concerning historical city centers.⁰⁵ The main dilemma was how to address the expansion of cities caused by industrialisation. Specifically, what to do with historical centers whose morphology was not compatible with the twentieth century metropolis. Among the options put forward were: keeping centers as they were—as souvenirs of a past era, themselves museums turned tourist attractions; or transforming them to meet the needs of a modern capitalist society. A question that was even more relevant in the aftermath of World War 2 which forced the reconstruction of many Italian cities.

The Bologna plan proposed an alternative approach to the binary discourse around preservation vs. transformation. Instead, the plan for Bologna consisted of 1. refusing absolute preservation, 2. countering the economic valorisation of urban expansion and 3. a restoration of centers which maintained their economic affordability. In doing so, Cervellati’s proposal appropriated typology as a planning method, linking form, function and class composition.

03 It is important to underline that Pier Luigi Cervellati conceived the plan for Bologna’s historic center when Campos Venuti was no longer chief of the urban planning department. Cervellati (1936) is a Bolognese architect and urban planner who worked for the council of Bologna. He was chief of the public and private housing department (1970-1975) and later chief of the urban planning department. His interests have always focused on the renovation of historical centers through the implementation of low-income public housing. Among his works, and beyond what he did in Bologna, it is worth mentioning his contribution to the city plans of Palermo (1992) and Pistoia (2002).

04 The work of Aldo Rossi (1931-1997) is to be located at a precise moment in Italian history: the economic boom, therefore the acme of city expansions, when cities grew in an uncontrolled, rapid fashion. Aldo Rossi’s contributions find a very free form in his many essays written between 1956-1972 in different journals, and a compelling version in the renowned book, *L’architettura della città*, published in 1966. His studies aimed at deepening the knowledge of the relationship between society’s transformation processes and their settlements’ spatial and morphological configuration, focusing on the concepts of typology and morphology. Form is at the very core of Rossi’s investigation of the city: he defines urban morphology as the study of the form of the city. He uses the concept of typology—the study of types “tipi edilizi” —in order to analyze and classify the form of the city. For Rossi, ‘type,’ is the principle that can be found in the urban artifact whose classification depends on clear characteristics and aspects related to form and time. Building typologies are not technical entities that, once created automatically replicate and change on their own, rather, their variations depend on society, time and culture that influence their replication. These factors are political, societal, economic, and technical ... such as the division of land, the formation of urban plots, building regulations and daily needs: the sum of all of them corresponds to what Rossi defines as the culture of that time. The form of the city is deeply linked to all the above factors because it is precisely in the city that they have been produced: therefore, the relationship between building typologies and the form of the city is really tight and Rossi’s research focus is on their interdependence. Typology becomes, in this way, the analytical moment of architecture. See: ILSES, IV 4, Milano, 1964, in Rosaldo Bonicalzi ed. Aldo Rossi, *Scritti scelti sull’architettura e la città 1956-1972* (Milano: Clup, 1975).

05 Giuseppe Campos Venuti, “Centri storici e modelli territoriali,” *Studi Storici*, n. 2 (1967), 345-358; Antonio Cederna, “Bibliografia ragionata sul problema del risanamento dei centri storici in Italia,” Appendix to Comune di Bologna, Università di Firenze-Istituto di Urbanistica, Università di Firenze-Istituto di Storia dell’Architettura, *Relazione dell’indagine settoriale sul centro storico di Bologna*, fourth edition (21 May 1965).



1- Map of the historical center of Bologna, nineteenth century.
From Giovanni M. Accame, "L'architettura delle funzioni nella riappropriazione del territorio," in *Parametro* n. 29 (1974), 4.

BOLOGNA: URBAN HISTORY AND RADICAL POLICIES

Bologna, like many Italian cities, consists of a dense medieval center surrounded by a radial expansion of fragmented urban fabric. This scattered growth was further reinforced in 1906, when the medieval city walls were replaced by a modern boulevard ring. A 1940s map shows how a series of districts encircled Bologna's center: the industrial area in the north, two garden cities located at the bottom of the hills in the east and the west and finally the workers' neighbourhoods close to both the northern train station and running along the Via Emilia. A new city plan was drawn in 1955 to accommodate one million inhabitants. Within this post war scheme, the historical center was intended to undergo a drastic process of *sventramento*,⁰⁶ limiting preservation to a few monuments such as churches and palaces.

⁰⁶ The word literally translates to disembowelment. It refers to the massive urban planning demolitions and to the gutting of the historical core in order to make room for new programs. This practice affected many popular neighborhoods in European cities—such as London, Paris, Vienna—to make room for new infrastructure as well as to control the population after the turmoil of the nineteenth century. In Italy, it represents a typical praxis adopted during the Fascist regime.



Map of the expansion outside of Bologna's city walls in the 1940s.
From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini e Carlo De Angelis, *La nuova cultura delle città* (Milan, Edizioni scientifiche e tecniche Mondadori, 1977), 49.

However in 1960, due to a radical shift in Bologna's administration and municipal priorities, the plan was abandoned.⁰⁷ The new council organised the city into fifteen neighbourhoods. Each area of the city formed a borough council whose administrative scale fostered both participation and interaction among citizens and public institutions. Moreover, these neighbourhoods were equipped with an excellent network of social services including public kindergartens.⁰⁸ Such an urban organisation reflected the PCI's agenda to not only represent workers but also citizens. As a result, Bologna became one of the most progressive cities in Europe in terms of welfare. In order to implement these changes, the council⁰⁹ focused on two primary objectives: the redistribution of income in support of workers through the implementation of public services, housing and social investments; and the spread and accessibility of culture among the citizens through the activation of innovative projects.¹⁰

- 07 A short film made in 1975 described Bologna as, "a self-governed city that wants to produce culture. A city that wants to make pivotal social and political decisions, broadcasted through an autonomous, antagonist and not standardized approach. Bologna proposes an administration method, rather than a utopia." *Bologna*, directed by Carlo Di Carlo (1975), 45', available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tHZFiQR124_
- 08 The one for the kindergarten has been one of the most successful, pivotal battles pushed forward by the many working women living in Bologna: as the council officer Adraina Lodi points out in a clip, "the moment in which women started organizing strikes to claim for public kindergartens, is the evidence of the shift from the battle for salary and better contracts, to the ones that involved the city as a whole, reclaiming the condition of being citizens, not only workers." *La febbre del fare, Bologna 1945-1980*, directed by Michele Mellara, Cineteca del Comune di Bologna e Mammut Film (2010)—excerpt available at https://www.mammutfilm.it/it/?id=chi_siamo&member=michele_mellara&opera=La%20febbre%20del%20fare%20-%20Bologna%201945%E2%80%931980.
- 09 The group of young but highly committed leftist politicians that worked for the council under mayor Giuseppe Dozza (mayor 1945-1966) from 1959 was composed of Renato Zangheri as head of culture; Giuseppe Campos Venuti as head of urban planning; Umbro Lorenzini manager of the new financial politics; Giuseppe Beltrame as chief of health and social assistance innovations; Ettore Tarozzi as leader in the shifts of public education; Pietro Crocioni, who worked on the constitution of Bologna's neighborhoods in 1964 as a result of the devolution of council's administrative powers; and Armando Sarti, who worked together with Campos Venuti for the urban innovation of the city, a project that took its final shape in the 1970 Bologna city plan. Shortly afterwards this plan became the model of the new leftist town planning policy and the books, "Amministrare l'urbanistica," and, "La nuova cultura delle città," became popular manifestos of leftist urban policy. See Giuseppe Campos Venuti, *Amministrare l'urbanistica* (Einaudi, 1972) and the interview with Giuseppe Campos Venuti: "Quando il Comune di Bologna scelse l'urbanistica riformista" <http://www.comune.bologna.it/storiaamministrativa/video/clip/298652>.
- 10 In conjunction with urban reform, the council also focused on the dissemination of culture among citizens, an idea that arose in tandem with the project of the civic centers under Campos Venuti. Working under mayor Giuseppe Dozza from 1959, Renato Zangheri, nominated Head of Cultural Programs, was responsible for spearheading a plan designed to invest in citizens' accessibility to culture and art in the form of exhibitions and journals, two key aspects of city life able to emancipate the subject. The council grasped that a new civic way of thinking was forming which was completely different to the mass-worker consciousness that pervaded cities over the previous two decades. Indeed, being a city full of university students, Bologna during the 1970s was a landscape composed of socialized and educated subjects who were deeply rooted within the urban environment and who were expressing completely different needs than those of their parents.

INTRODUCING URBANISTICA RIFORMISTA

When Campos Venuti took office, he immediately criticised the 1955 plan for its overestimation of the city's demographics: a plan for 1,000,000 inhabitants was not needed for a city of only 840,000 people with no projected population growth. Furthermore, similar to many regulatory schemes produced in Italy at that time, the 1955 plan was the product of lobbying by real estate speculators seeking to manipulate the market. By reallocating previously un-zoned land on the outskirts of the city to buildable plots, the proposal disproportionately advantaged these investors. Campos Venuti understood that such a plan was bespoke to real estate speculation. The way the proposal was drafted provided a benefit solely to a few powerful landowners, creating an opportunity for them to buy the land cheaply and afterwards lobby the municipality to change the zoning permits, thus resulting in an overwhelming increase in the land's market value.¹¹

Campos Venuti's goal was thus to limit the consequences this process would have had on the working class and the whole productive sector—targeting the commodification of land as the enemy of a liveable city. In an attempt to reverse urban speculation, the council, led by Campos Venuti, drew a set of new urban policies. These policies followed a precise strategy pertaining to three key areas of the city of Bologna: the outskirts and their regional connections; the areas of recent expansion for industry and housing which were the first areas targeted by real estate speculation; and lastly the historical center, what Campos Venuti defined as the most important area, the core of the land value inflation process.

According to Campos Venuti, the outskirts of the city had to be planned in accordance with the entire region. The most important of these interventions focused on the decentralisation of service sectors. The result was the development of two new centralities outside the historical city: Center Gros, a commercial wholesale area, and the Fiera District.¹² Understanding that allocating new buildable areas in the city increased the land's value, Campos Venuti redesigned them to host both industrial and low-income housing complexes. Bologna's administration also applied the national law 167/1962, a law that allowed councils to buy privately owned land for public purposes at a low price.¹³ The administration therefore expropriated the majority of the buildable areas close to the city center. Considering housing as a public service, the council, in conjunction with various housing cooperatives,¹⁴ drafted a series of local plans known as, *Il Piano per l'Edilizia Economica e Popolare*, or PEEP.¹⁵ Peep was a urban planning tool specifically for building low-income neighbourhoods, each aiming to provide an outstanding 40 square meters of green space and services per person.¹⁶

11 Giuseppe Campos Venuti, interviewed by Paola Furlan. Bologna, 4 April 2007, available at: http://www.comune.bologna.it/storiaamministrativa/media/files/campos_intervista.pdf

12 The former, located in Funo in the province of Bologna, was an area dedicated to wholesale trade and gave rise to what today is the Interporto, one of the most important parts of the national logistic infrastructure network; the latter was part of a major project designed by Kenzo Tange.

13 The law n. 167/62 was in line with the previous law n. 2359/65, and with art. 834 of the 1942 Italian Civil Law: the council, or the state in general, was entitled to expropriate any private land (or part of it) for public need at a price that was slightly higher than the former agricultural value and therefore significantly lower than the price the area would have otherwise had on the market as a buildable plot. These laws have been used widely throughout the entire country, mainly for the construction of roads.

14 The cooperatives (e.g., the Cooperative d'Abitazione e di Produzione e Lavoro) that managed the housing construction produced 16,000 apartments (at the beginning of the 1980s) in the neighborhoods of Beverara, Filanda, Corticella, Fossolo, Casteldebole, etc.

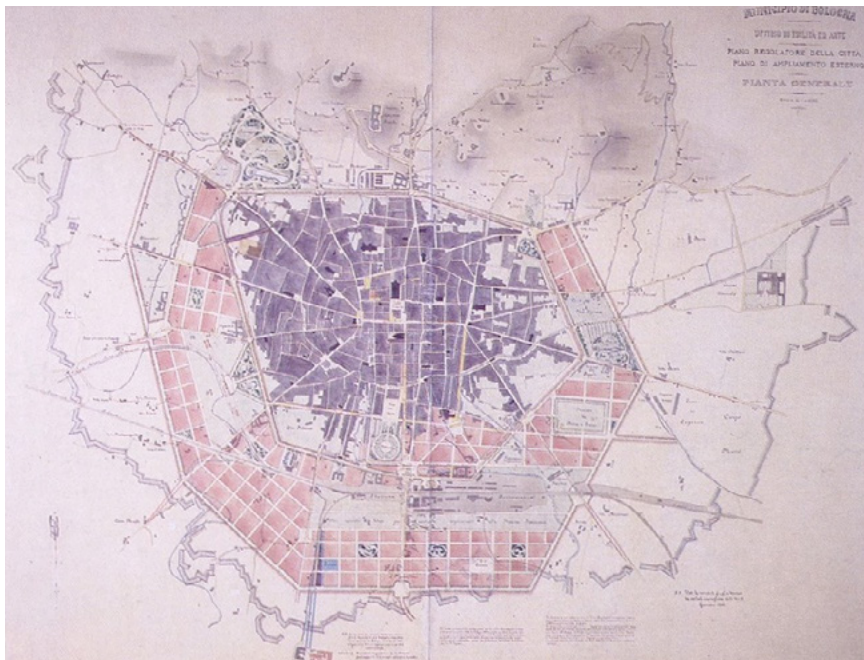
15 Piano per l'Edilizia Economica e Popolare.

16 This is a reasonably large amount of data that makes the Bologna case study unique compared to other contemporary housing complexes. Fossolo, a neighborhood planned in the mid-1960s, still represents one of the most successful examples of the council's policies and one of Bologna's greenest neighborhoods. During the 1960s and 70s, 15 percent (2,000 hectares) of the area within the municipal district were converted from agricultural land to development areas. Thanks to the council's new approach, the remaining 85 percent was acquired by the council via the twofold effect of the expropriation law: it both stopped real estate speculation and put the administration in a position to control future urban transformations. In this way, the council and other public institutions retained possession of the most central areas for public service use—e.g., parks and low-income housing—as opposed to solely those at the outskirts of the city as was the case in the majority of Italian cities. These areas, which were instead intended for offices and factories, reverted to private ownership at a non-speculative rate. In 1963, Bologna thus used the PEEP not only as a means of welfare provision but also as a driver of controlled urban development—with housing playing a pivotal role—thereby overturning speculative urban process and generating a compact city.

TOWARDS A LOW-INCOME HOUSING PLAN

The Bolognese policy was formalised in 1969 as the *Piano per l'edilizia economica e popolare* (Low-income housing plan PEEP/1973)—developed specifically for Bologna's historical center—by Pier Luigi Cervellati as part of the *Piano per il centro storico* (Plan for the Historical Center). The plan was based on research developed by Leonardo Benevolo¹⁸ in 1965 and was commissioned by the Bologna city council: the *Relazione dell'indagine settoriale sul centro storico di Bologna*.¹⁹

Benevolo's research focused on the preservation of the old city as a physical embodiment of previous values. His research, therefore, relates to what Rossi was also theorising at the time, reading the city as a physical urban artifact.²⁰ In both approaches the city was positioned as a giant urban artifact, autonomous from the rest of the city. Benevolo however, argued that the preservation of the city center, as an integral and finite urban artifact, was part of a broader strategy for investing in the city as a whole. Viewing the historical center as a distinct urban element, was based on what the report defined as the contrast between the so-called, *città storica*, and the *città moderna*—the latter being the developments that emerged with the industrial revolution. In the case of Bologna, the contrast between these two cities was represented clearly in the 1889 city plan. This plan shows the dense and organic fabric of the center coloured in grey, contrasting with the gridiron structure of the city's "future expansion," traced around the core in pink.²¹



1980 Bologna city plan (PRG 1980).

Piano regolatore della città e piano di ampliamento esterno: pianta generale: scale 1:8000
 archiviostorico.unibo.it

- 18 Leonardo Benevolo (1923-2017) was an Italian architect, urban planner and architectural historian. He taught Architectural History at the universities of Florence, Venice, Palermo and Rome until 1977. His most popular book, *Storia dell'architettura moderna* (published in Italian in 1960), has been widely translated.
- 19 The members of the research group led by Leonardo Benevolo were: Paolo Andina, Silvano Casini, Pier Luigi Cervellati, Pier Giorgio Felcaro, Vittorio Franchetti, Sandro Gandolfi, Eros Parmeggiani, and Paola Tamanti. Antonio Cederna acted as an external consultant. Comune di Bologna, Università di Firenze-Istituto di Urbanistica, Università di Firenze-Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura, *Relazione dell'indagine settoriale sul centro storico di Bologna*, fourth version (21 May 1965).
- 20 Aldo Rossi's focuses on the city, understanding it as a "comprehensive representation of the human condition," a "gigantic man-made object ... growing over time," as well as a collection of urban artifacts characterized by "their own history and their own form." Looking at certain urban artifacts, he observes, "the multiplicity of functions that a building can contain over time and how these functions are entirely independent of the form." Aldo Rossi, *The architecture of the city* (Boston: MIT Press, 1982), 34.
- 21 Università di Firenze-Istituto di Urbanistica and Università di Firenze-Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura, *Relazione dell'indagine settoriale sul centro storico di Bologna*, fourth version (21.6.1965), 27.

The report argues that most of the required programs of the modern city, especially tertiary activities especially suited to the city center, were incompatible with the dense medieval urban fabric and its intricate road network.²² Therefore, the report suggests that, wherever the insertion of new programs into the center destroyed the historical fabric, it was the planner's and the administrator's duty to imagine a metropolitan organisation that would allow their coexistence.

Opposing the *sventramento*,²³ the report proposed the notion of *risanamento conservativo*, conservative restoration. While the first can be understood as the superimposition of a new form on the ancient urban structure, the second acknowledges the heterogeneity of the new and old city, considering the historical center as one of the modern city's multiple *parts*. Whereas the *sventramento* modified form according to a specific function, the *risanamento conservativo* read the historical center as a valuable urban artifact worth preserving. Therefore, the center was needed to host new functions while maintaining its form, "rather than modifying the form according to function, we need to understand what function fits the existing form."²⁴

Benevolo's operative interpretation of the city²⁵ defined the historical center as a balanced system of different building categories which he classified according to their historical value and artistic character. This classification led to the following groups:

01. buildings that must be kept intact both internally and externally
02. buildings that must be kept intact only externally, especially relating to how they influenced their immediate context
03. buildings that do not need to be preserved

Additionally, the report identified a set of functions suitable for the form of each building type.²⁶



Paolo Monti, censimento fotografico, Bologna, 1969. BEIC archive.

22 Università di Firenze-Istituto di Urbanistica and Università di Firenze-Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura, *Relazione dell'indagine settoriale sul centro storico di Bologna*, fourth version (21.6.1965), 5-26 and Filippo De Pieri, Paolo Scrivano, "Representing the Historical Centre of Bologna: preservation policies and reinvention of urban identity," in *Urban History Review* Vol.33, n.1 (Fall 2004), 37-38.

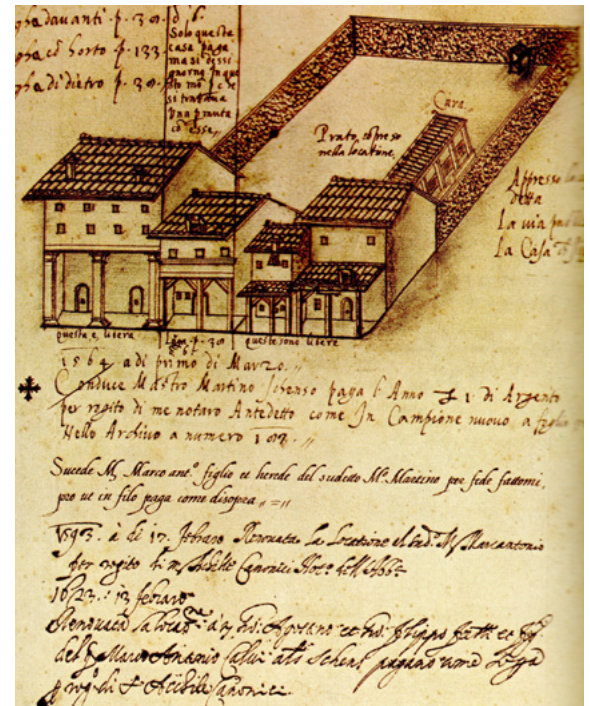
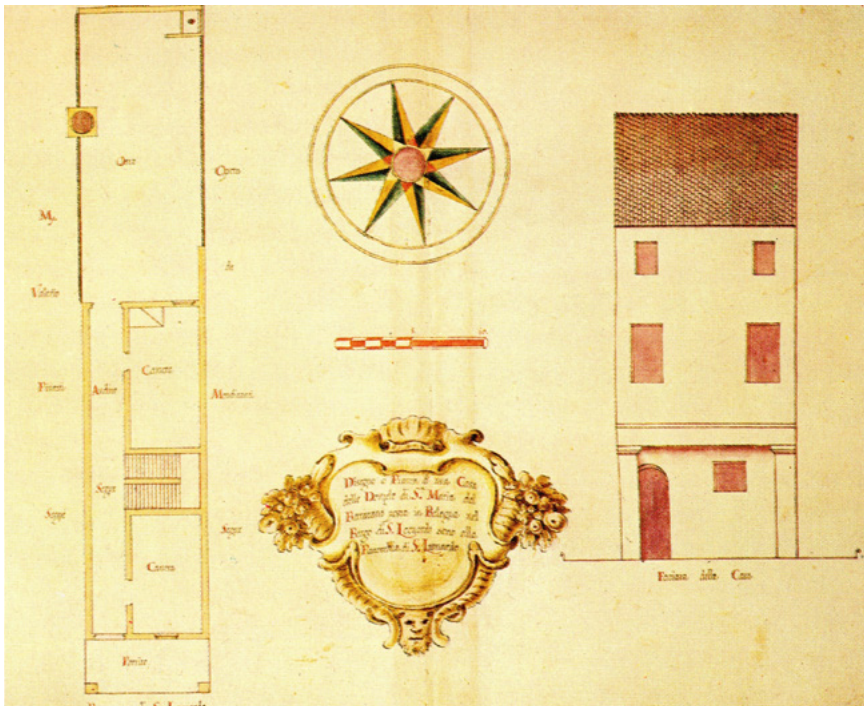
23 See note 7.

24 (Translation by the author) "... anziché modificare l'ambiente fisico rispetto alla funzione, occorre modificare la funzione per metterla d'accordo con alcuni aspetti vincolanti dell'ambiente fisico" in Comune di Bologna, Università di Firenze-Istituto di Urbanistica, Università di Firenze-Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura, *Relazione dell'indagine settoriale sul centro storico di Bologna*, fourth version (21.6.1965), 21.

25 "Proposta benevolo" in Italian.

26 P.L. Cervellati, R. Scannavini, *Bologna: metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 125.

The council, based on these notions, proceeded with two different means of collecting data. First, they looked for the appropriate medium to express the intertwined relationship between the historical center, its inhabitants and their lifestyles, habits and culture. As a result, the council commissioned photographer Paolo Monti to produce the *censimento fotografico*, a photographic survey consisting of over 8,000 black and white pictures. Taken from a pedestrian's point of view, these photographs provide a physical description of Bologna's center at the time.²⁷ The *censimento fotografico* is a detailed reportage—excluding cars and contemporary road signs—determining a collective perception of Bologna's urban landscape. Second, the council analysed the socio-economic data of the 1961 and 1971 censuses. Together, these censuses revealed that nearly 80 percent of the center's population were tenants, 30 percent of whom were retirees, and that the large majority of people working at the time were artisans or employees. Furthermore, the data highlight a decrease in the number of families living in the center, instead indicating an increase in the number of students and retirees. Combining these elements into an architectural strategy, Cervellati and the housing department built an extensive archive of Bologna's existing building types.



Left: Cadastral documentation of the historical center housing buildings.

From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini e Carlo De Angelis, *La nuova cultura delle città* (Milan, Edizioni scientifiche e tecniche Mondadori, 1977), 170.

Right: Sixteenth century cadastral documentation from the Abbazia di Santi Naborre e Felice archives.

From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini e Carlo De Angelis, *La nuova cultura delle città* (Milan, Edizioni scientifiche e tecniche Mondadori, 1977), 74.

27 In 1969 and 1970 the council commissioned a photographic survey to the photographer Paolo Monti. The 8000 b/w photographs and some hundred slides offer a physical description of streets, squares, buildings, courtyards, arcades and gardens as well as entryways, frescoes and architectural details, paving materials and urban furniture—always from a “human” point of view to underline the act of living in the city center. The collection of photos and slides is available at the Beic library in Milan <https://www.beic.it/>

The archival research demonstrated housing as the “analytical constant of the architecture of the city,”²⁸ or, that the house, as an element, defines the urban fabric. This notion is strengthened by the same representation of housing typologies throughout the centuries: historic architectural drawings always show the ground floor plan and sometimes even the first floor in a manner that depicts diverse housing functions in a conventional and descriptive way. These planimetric depictions of buildings were often joined by axonometric views detailing construction techniques and materials. This extensive collection of drawings suggested a typological approach as a recognition of “the perseverance of ways of living and behaving that take shape in similar and recurrent buildings” and was read as the study of how people have been living in the same houses over centuries.²⁹ This study suggested that those urban systems are driven by housing and are composed of gardens, arcades and streets. Consequently, the architects proposed a series of interventions whose goals were to adapt Bologna’s old buildings to the contemporary necessities of its working-class inhabitants.



Typological analysis of the historical center as built in 1833 and the subsequent alterations and transformations of the city’s types.

From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini e Carlo De Angelis,
La nuova cultura delle città (Milan, Edizioni scientifiche e tecniche Mondadori, 1977), 128-129.

The housing department³⁰ established four main building types composing the city prior to 1833, studying the formation and association of each category over time. These categories consisted of: A. “the big container” (mainly monasteries); B. “the courtyard building” (where the aristocracy and high bourgeois used to live); C. “the artisans’ house” (workers’ housing); and D., “the bourgeois house with a small courtyard” (medium to low bourgeois). Afterwards, the architects analysed what new functions each typology could potentially host.

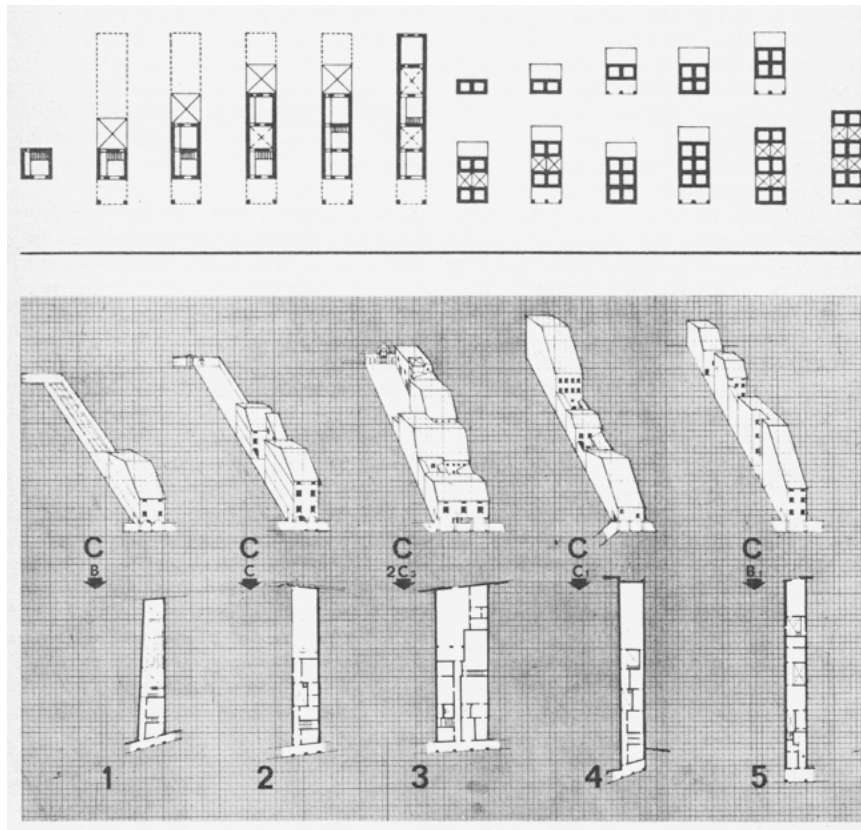
28 (Translated by the author) P. L. Cervellati, R. Scannavini, *Bologna: metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 156.

29 (Translated by the author) Cervellati et al., *La nuova cultura delle città*, 115.

30 As previously stated, the public and private housing department was led by Pier Luigi Cervellati (1970-1975) and among the architects working on this project were Carlo De angeli and Roberto Scannavini.

The slogan, “An Ancient City for a New Society,”³¹ defined the low-income housing plan’s approach. The conservative restoration of the historical center sought to counter gentrification, instead supporting the existing socio-cultural environment, avoiding the dispossession of employees, retirees, students and new couples. By providing evidence and alternatives for upgrading existing buildings to accommodate existing inhabitants, planners used the archive to defend the integrity of Bologna’s historical center from real estate speculation.

Rather than restoring specific buildings, the council proposed working on thirteen *comparti* (city parts) as the focus of their low-income housing plan.³² Each *comparto* was defined as a morphologically and functionally consistent sub-area composed of Category A and Category C housing both working together in a complementary way. Within the idea of the *comparti* lay a novel political project, proposing the importance of a minimal dwelling, and its requisite services, as a basic human need instead of its speculative financial value. Such an understanding further relates to Bologna’s specific historical context where the house was private while the street, the church, the market, the square and the council were the structural complementary services.

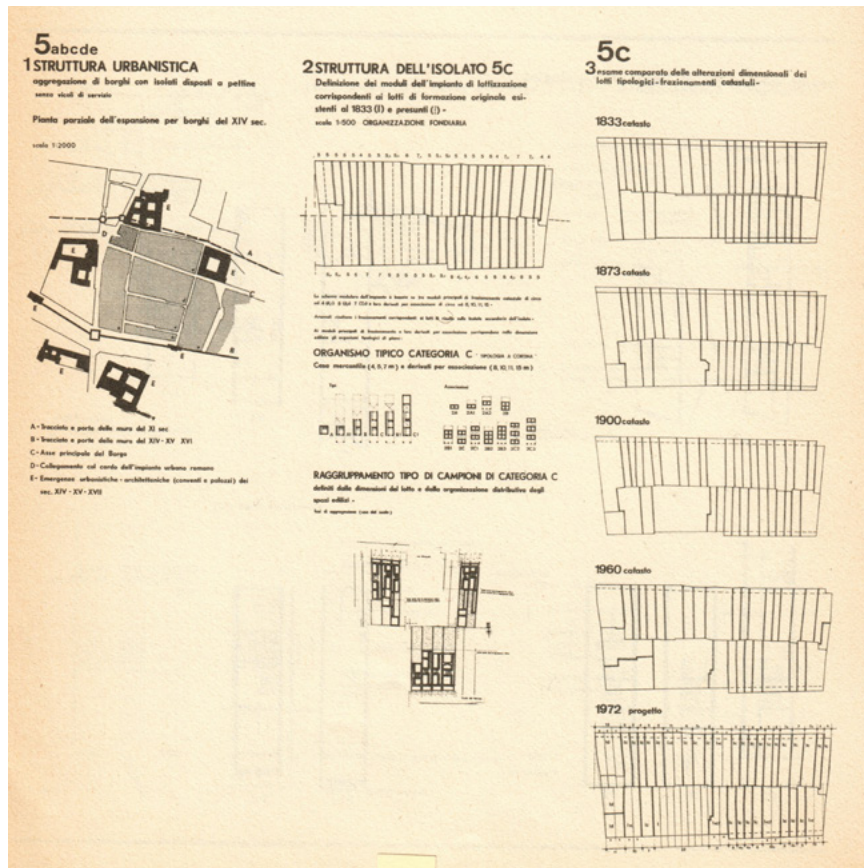


Type C, artisan houses: types and associations.

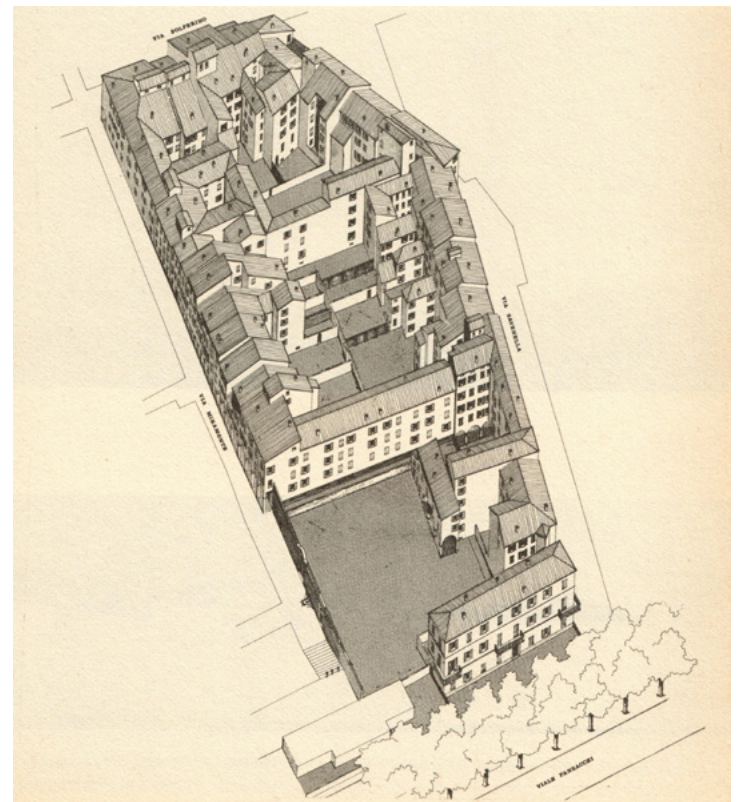
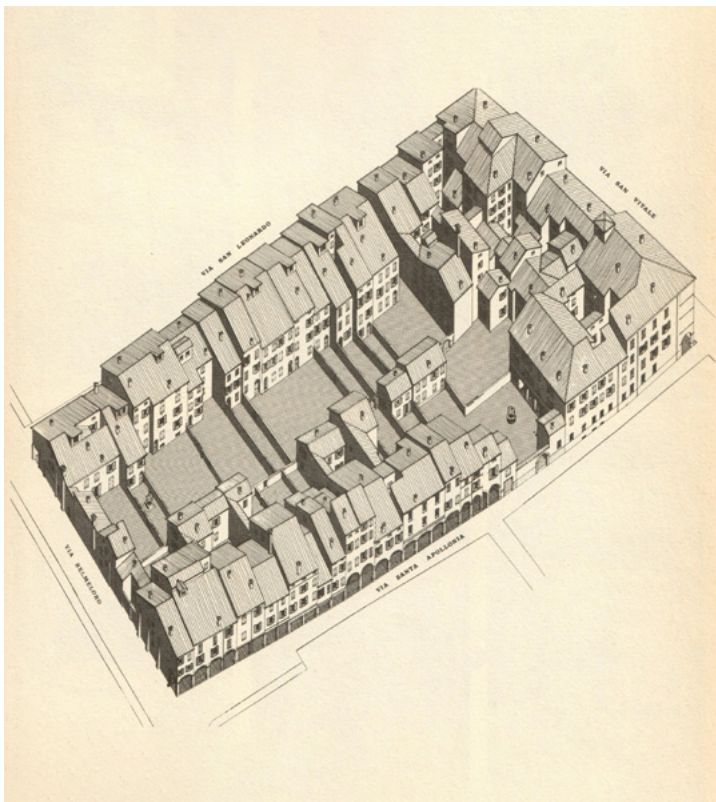
From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini, *Bologna: politica e metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 160.

31 (Translated by the author) P. L. Cervellati, “Una città antica per una nuova società,” in *Bologna centro storico*, catalogue of the exhibition “Bologna-centro storico,” Bologna, Palazzo d’Accursio, 1970 (Bologna: Alfa, 1970).

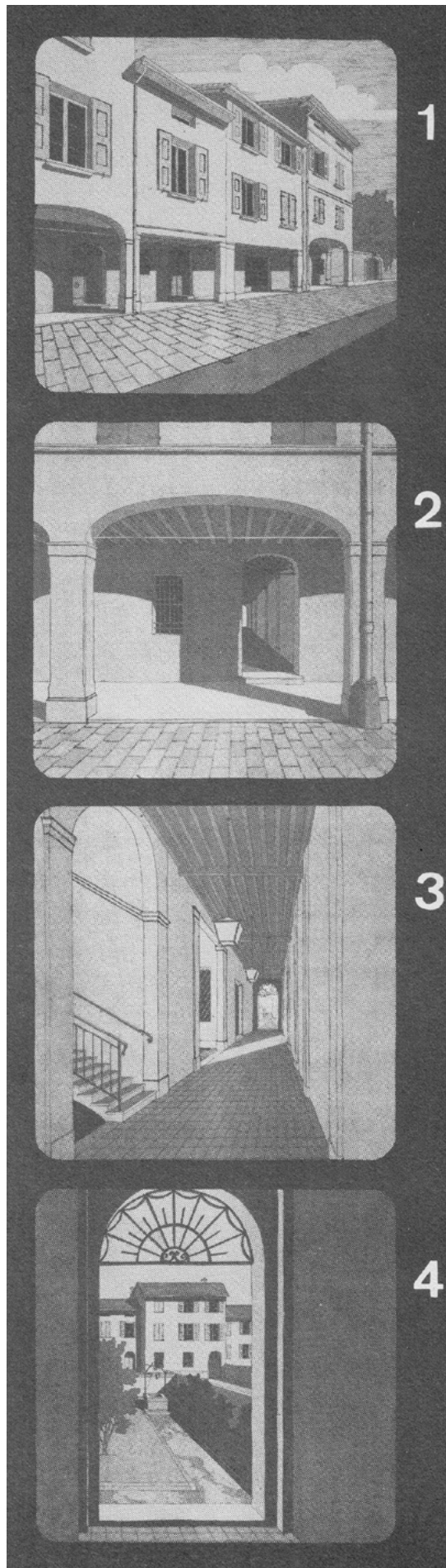
32 The urban planning department subsequently succeeded in applying the PEEP to five of the thirteen *comparti* initially nominated.



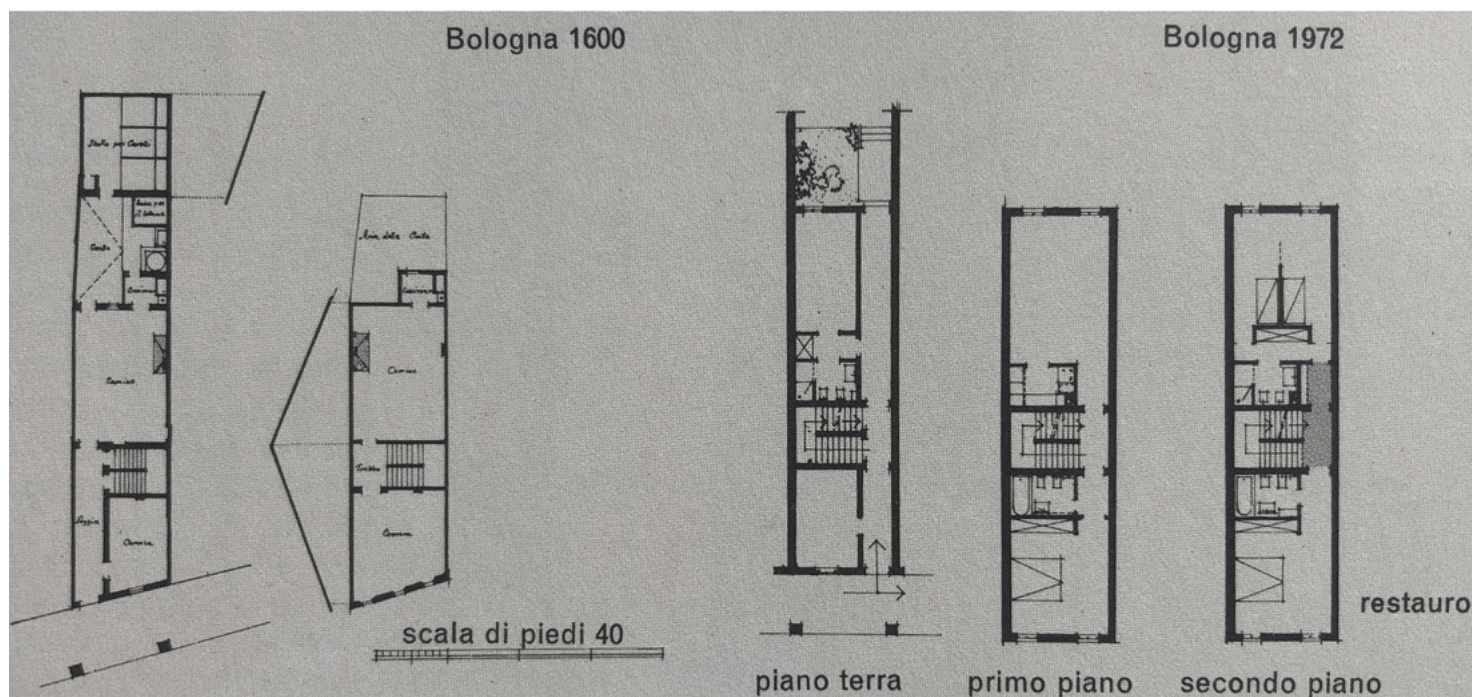
Urban and blocks' structure : from the formation of the borghi to the formation of the city center.
 From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini Bologna: politica e metodologia del restauro nei centri storici (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 172.



Left: Type C artisan houses. The urban block of Via San Leonardo – Via San Vitale.
 From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini, Bologna: politica e metodologia del restauro nei centri storici (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 195.
 Right: Type C artisan houses. The urban block of Via Miramonte – Via Soferino.
 From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini, Bologna: politica e metodologia del restauro nei centri storici (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 185.



Type C artisan houses. The urban system: from the street to the arcade, to the inner garden.
 From Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini, Bologna: politica e metodologia del restauro nei centri storici (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 198.



Restorative conservation of the type C artisan houses.

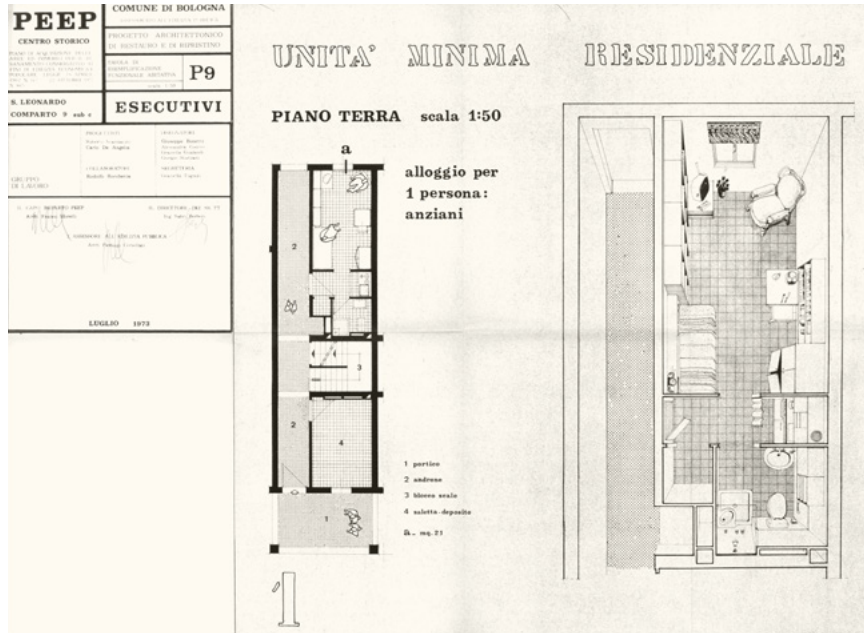
Pier Luigi Cervellati, Roberto Scannavini e Carlo De Angelis, *La nuova cultura delle città* (Milan, Edizioni scientifiche e tecniche Mondadori, 1977), 156.

Among the types mapped by Cervellati's team were the "houses for artisans," which formed elongated rectangular blocks whose voids dominated the built environment.³³ The façade of this type gave form to one of Bologna's most distinct architectural features, the arcades. Bologna's arcades flank the city's streets, making them architecturally continuous. Additionally, the rectangular blocks contained hidden gardens, which acted like squares. The gardens, accessible from the main roads via entryways and courtyards, suggested a peculiar relationship between public and private spaces. Starting from a study of all of the type's transformations over time, the plan adapted the original form of the "houses for artisans" to meet contemporary needs. As a result the design proposed a new internal configuration for both the ground and upper floors, splitting the singular houses into a series of apartments and spaces across each level.³⁴ The ground floor was intended to host activities open to the public in the front and private services (i.e. laundry) in the back, while the upper floors were divided into apartments on each level: 35-45 square meter apartments for students and elderly people; 60-90 square meter apartments for young couples; and/or a duplex of 120-180 square meters for larger families. Following their objective to convert housing from an economically productive good into a public service, the council attempted to revert the former rental contract into a new undivided ownership regime.³⁵

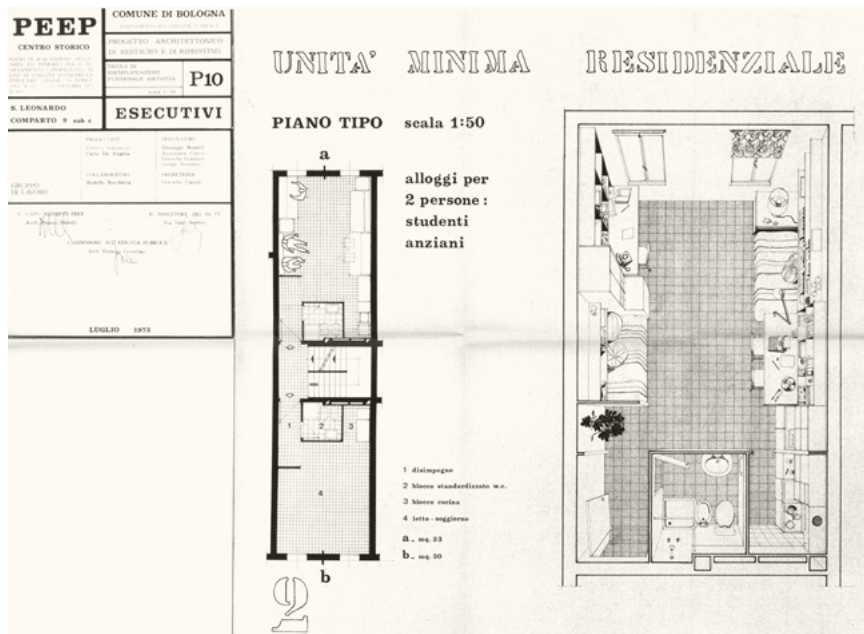
33 This form is given by the fact that they have been built during the medieval time period as the output of the fragmentation of agricultural expansion.

34 The project's very first step was to build temporary accommodations for the inhabitants of the units being restored. The reconstruction of the housing buildings of the demolished sub-comparto C of the comparto San Leonardo acted as a model for the restoration of the many other existing building belonging to the Category C.

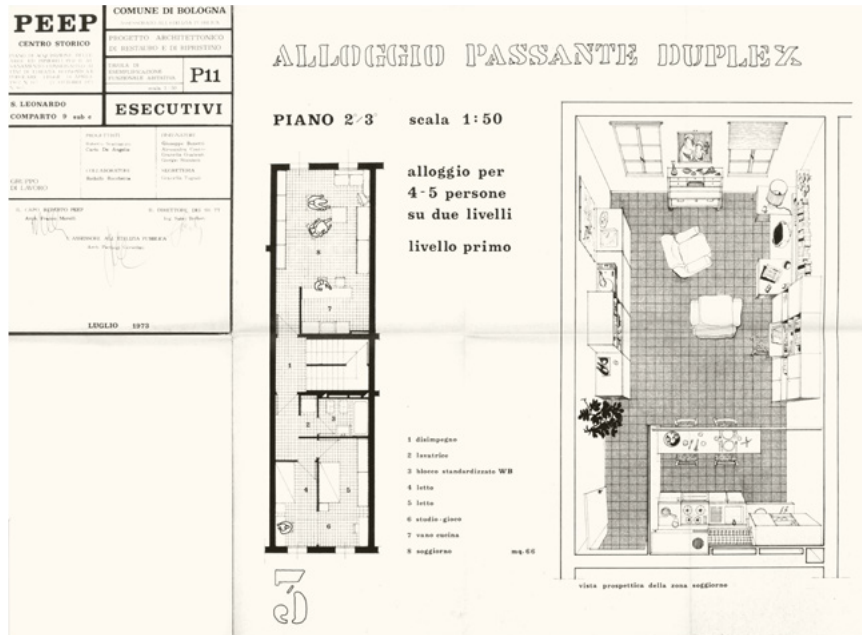
35 Carlo De Angelis, "Forty years later. PEEP Plan for the historic city 1973. A marginal note, between method and practice," in *IN_BO ricerche e progetti per il territorio, la città e l'architettura*, n. 6 June 2013, 38.



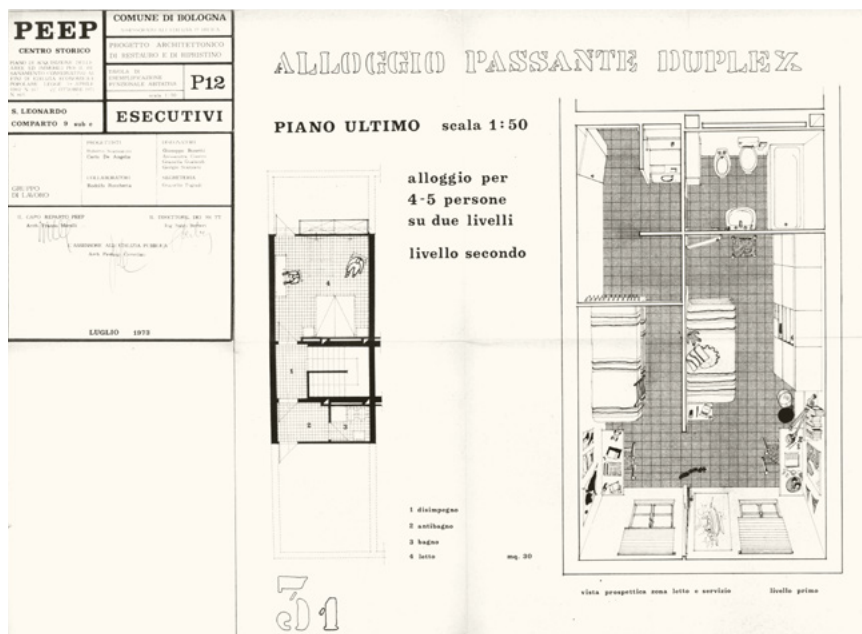
Ground floor plan



First floor plan



Second floor plan



Third floor plan



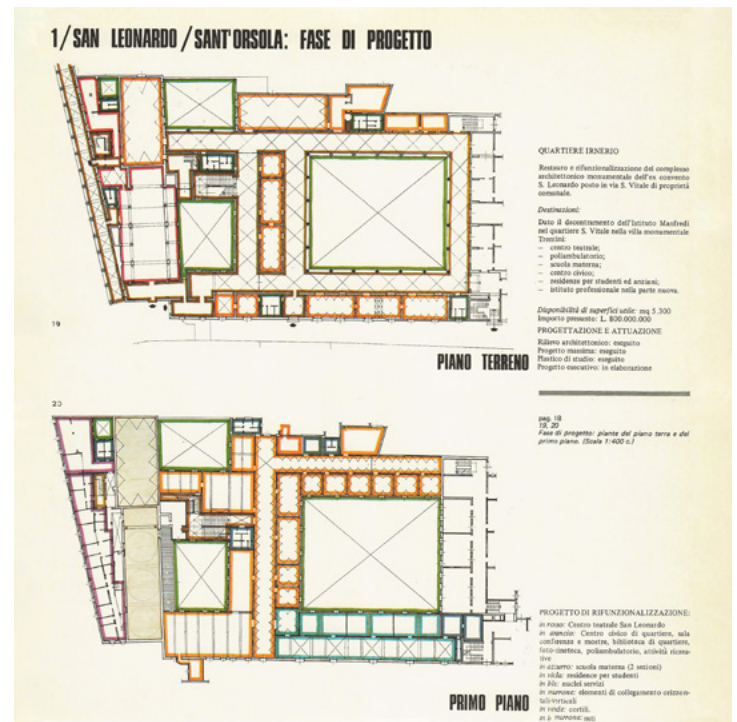
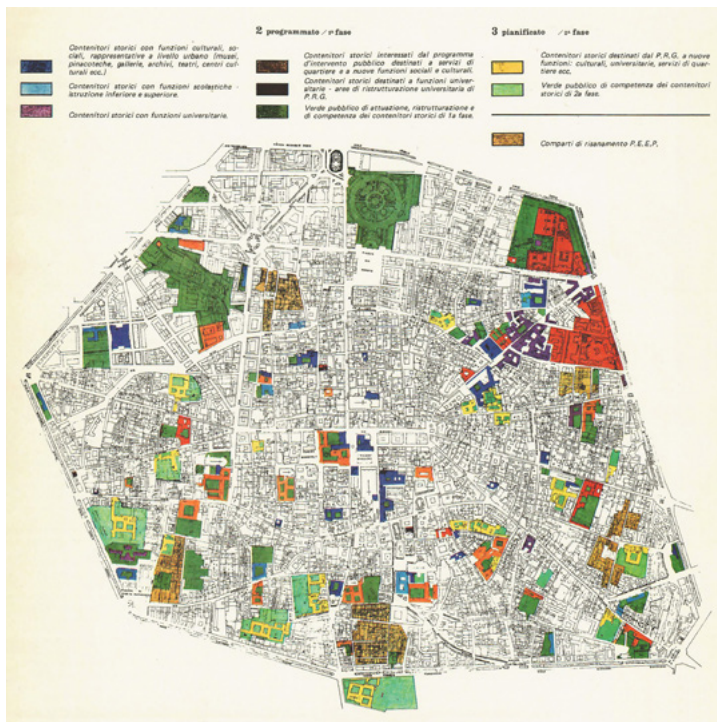
The interiors of one of the restored and refurbished apartments published in Casa Vogue.
From Giuliana Corsini, “Un esempio pilota di restauro e di arredo,” in Casa Vogue, Condé Nast n. 65/66 January/February (1977).

The dwelling units provided only the minimum amount of private space. In exchange, they were counterbalanced by a greater number of shared spaces and social services, such as meeting and community rooms, playgrounds, green areas as well as social and civic centers, enabling citizens to participate in the political life of the city. These services were to be scattered throughout the historical center, hosted by the ‘big containers,’ the abandoned monasteries and palaces classified in Category A. The generous number of shared facilities detailed in the plan suggested a way of living that encompassed not only the house, but the city at large. Consequently, the design completely discarded the house-factory dichotomy which otherwise defined the Fordist approach.

To cite an example, the San Leonardo/Sant’Orsola complex began as a thirteenth-century church before becoming the monastery of the Ursuline nuns. Despite expanding during the eighteenth century through the acquisition of many *orti* (vegetable gardens), by the mid-twentieth century, the complex was converted into a school and hospital, shrinking into a rectangular form as a result. The proposed renovations of Cervellati’s plan consisted of converting the main church into a theatre and the small interior church, together with the dining room and courtyard, into a gym—a facility linked to the existing school but open to all. The proposed complex would also house the neighbourhood civic center (with rooms dedicated to meetings, free time, health care, exhibitions, a library etc.) and student accommodations. These interventions would not, however, alter the building’s urban structure. The buildings were protected due to their visible and longstanding relationships with the block and surrounding urban fabric represented by the arcades—a recurring element in each of the complexes. These civic centers gave rise to a network of diverse spaces which could facilitate political engagement, meetings and cultural events. They were, in other words, rooms for free time not spent at work. The aim of this approach was to provide spaces that were properly designed for social interaction, expressing the importance of a collective consciousness. As the architects stressed in their book, *Bologna: metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna: restoration methodology in

the historical city centers), everything was planned from the perspective of the dwellers' self-management. Self-management was seen as the only way to truly share choices and activities.³⁶

The architects decided to use different representational media in order to explain and share the aims and objectives of the projects with the citizens. For the big containers of Category A, they made scale models of the buildings, while for the housing, they used the same style of drawing found in the archive: but instead of an axonometric view of the house as an isolated building, they used top-view perspectives of each unit's interior. This graphical choice underlines the main characteristic of the space as being inhabited. Each apartment type was represented not just in terms of its 'architecture' but also in a high level of detail, giving a snapshot of the daily life happening within. The 'perspectival plans' show different furniture in each apartment, tables are covered with pens, books or food, pillows have different textiles and curtains show a variety of patterns—in a clear attempt to oppose standardisation. This approach is particularly important as a demonstration of the project's ethnographic accuracy, which focuses on the dweller as a subject to be supported, rather than exploited.



Left: Map of “big containers” and public green areas, public services and university restoration and rearrangement. From Giovanni M. Accame, “L’architettura delle funzioni nella riappropriazione del territorio,” in *Parametro* n. 29 (1974): 4.
 Right: Conservative restoration of the San Leonardo - Sant’Orsola complex. New asset and new functions hosted in the former monastery. From Giovanni M. Accame, “L’architettura delle funzioni nella riappropriazione del territorio,” in *Parametro* n. 29 (1974): 4.

36 P.L. Cervellati, R. Scannavini, *Bologna: metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1973), 161.

PRESERVATION AS THE RE-APPROPRIATION OF THE CITY

Urbanistica Riformista was a project of both preservation as well as a civic re-appropriation of the city:³⁷ it represented a revolution within the field of urban planning. This happened by understanding the historical center of Bologna as a unique urban artifact, highlighting, in Rossi's words, "the multiplicity of functions that a building can contain over time and how these functions are entirely independent of the form."³⁸ In terms of planning, such an understanding meant operating within a unitary system, balancing the preservation of form while adapting functions to the needs of a contemporary society and the socio-economic composition of a given area.

The typological approach understands typology as, "the perseverance of ways of living and behaving that take shape in similar and recurrent buildings." Typology in this case allowed the architects to work on an existing form, establishing continuity between the former and the contemporary ways of inhabitation. Adapting the different typologies to current needs without disrupting their urban relationships, represented a step forward in a series of modifications that occurred over time—a history the architects were deeply aware of. Within the method of *Urbanistica Riformista*, the typological approach proposed a way to link collective needs and the economy to architecture and urbanism—two practices that tend to be used for the exploitation, rather than support, of the working class.³⁹ Typology here is understood as a political tool that expresses a possible link between form, function and social class.

This praxis, the process of active preservation, understood as the rehabilitation of the building structure and the functional renovation of its spaces without disrupting the urban systems to which they belong, was part of a wider political project and represented an act, through which, architecture was used as a powerful tool for the working class's re-appropriation of the city against its otherwise capitalist valorisation.

37 Giovanni M. Accame, "L'architettura delle funzioni nella riappropriazione del territorio," in *Parametro* n. 29/1974, 4-8.

38 Aldo Rossi, *The architecture of the city* (Boston: MIT Press, 1982), 34.

39 Giovanni M. Accame, "L'architettura delle funzioni nella riappropriazione del territorio," in *Parametro* n. 29, 1974, 4-8.

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