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Pressures of Social and Programmatic Needs on Architecture and Urban Form: Towards a Renewed Approach to Sustainability in the Post-Crisis Era

The paper investigates the “pressures specific to the twentieth century that combination of program imposes on architecture and urban form” (Holl, 2011).

Financial crisis (2007-2008) and its consequences – not just in terms of urban development – have still not been absorbed/metabolized from urban settlements, also because of still un-solved causes that generated the problem (in terms of economic tools, financial rules, real estate procedures, etc) (Rossi, G. 2011).

Large post-industrial sites’ reuse, under used districts for offices and services, housing districts and urban peripheries represent the result of last decades’ globalization processes, real estate and finance driven processes, property speculation, etc

The complexity of contemporary society implies the creation of new categories of spaces in which design processes are reversed: social forms and communities’ needs provide reason and meaning to architectural transformations.

Participation procedures, contractual communities, re-appropriation processes are some of the tools that through different disciplines could have strong impact on architectural figures and forms.

Design tools and procedure are also rapidly changing: on the contrary of what traditional design processes prescribe, the managing of project scales is changed: the approach "from large to small scale" could be substituted by iterative processes, and urban links or connections derive both from territorial approach and interior spaces’ definition. Urban analysis and design tools should be updated: sections and three of four dimensional design take precedent over plan layouts.

Process reveals itself as more important than mere shapes, and architecture show again its being a science in strong relationship with society.