

Scampia's Sails

Le Vele di Scampia

URBAN REVITALIZATION OF MASS HOUSING
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

TEAM CODE IT-NAP-588

LOCATION

Europe
Italy
City of Naples
District of Scampia

Scampia' sails: the sinking of an Utopia

Although Italy is considered between the richest countries in the world for its economical and political situation, it is still possible to find some very poor settlements comparable to the more known slums in the third world.

Naples, for instance counts more than one neighborhood lacking in Hygienic situation, mobility and every kind of services compared to the National Urban Standards.

Scampia, above all, is now become the symbol of Urban and Social decay, as well as the biggest drug dealing centre of the city, and a business centre of Camorra, a local criminal organization.

The district was born with the law n 167/ 1962 approved by the Public Works Ministry and

the design provided an ambitious plan for the development of the North-East part of the city.

The design, drawn by Franz Di Salvo, an important Neapolitan Architect, reflected completely the Utopian idea of the author.

With seven mega structures in the shape of towers and sails Di Salvo wanted to organize a popular

and social neighborhood rich of green spaces and services, an oasis in which follow the principles of the common experience of Owen, Fourier and Le Corbusier.

The Structures were designed with a module of 1,20 m, creating rooms of 3,60 x 7,20 and the dwellings were organized on three, four or five rooms, depending on the number of inhabitants.

Every building is oriented by the axis North-South in order to optimize Natural ventilation and day light control, and everyone is composed by two parallel blocks with in between a space of 10,20 m in which light hanging walkways lead the people to the own houses.

These walkways wanted to remind the idea of the typical Neapolitan alleyway, with all the colors and activities that happened there.

Unfortunately the project was not realized following the original design of the architect, on the contrary was almost upset.

The first reason to change the project was the earthquake of the November 1980.

After that, in fact, the need of dwelling in the city of Naples increases a lot; for that reason lot of houses were built inside the buildings, 23% more than the original project, instead services and common spaces.

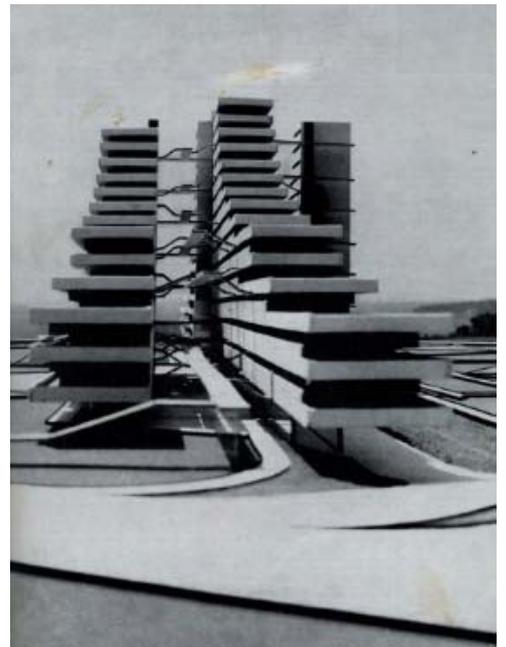
The second one can be assigned as a construction company's fault. In fact the structure was considerably modified in order to reduce the total cost of the work.

The building, as Di Salvo thought it, was considered too expensive by the company, and lot of changes were made.

First of all, the walkways, that were supposed to be light and not invasive, were built in concrete.

Then the space between the two structures was made of 7,2 m instead of 10,m.

In this way, the light cannot arrive in, and the result is a disturbing space that seems coming from a low quality sci-fi movie.



Differences between the original project, model above, and the existing building below.

Today the Di Salvo project, better known as the Sails, because of the shape, represents not only the failure of the Utopia, but mainly a political disorganization.

The Political responsibility, is in fact a crucial point for the disaster had been committed in Scampia.

Low income people were put all together in megastructures without any kind of services.

Because of the Earthquake, time was short, so lot of people moved there with the buildings not finished yet; Pipes are in very bad conditions and still now, in structures of 16 floors, there is no elevator.

As lot of inhabitants said, the presence of the State is given just by the Police, no activities, no services, no maintenance are made.

In many of these houses rains inside, so walls are full of mold because of humidity.

The light can not enter well in the rooms facing to the internal courtyard.

Life conditions are pretty bad, so a political issue became an architectural problem.

Furthermore Naples is a territory in which Camorra operates.

This criminal organization was born in the XIX century and today represents the biggest one for amount of people, after the Sicilian Mafia.

Unlike the latter one, Camorra is not organized in one big group, but in families that share the all power.

So, when families do not find agreements in business, real wars break out, which involve also the local population not meddled in, creating an impressive number of deaths and injuries.

Camorra's businesses are various and cover many activities, from the construction sector to the garbage disposal, from sharking to drug dealing.

Legal and illegal activities mixed together with the only goal of richness and power, a net of sectors that need a lot of people. There are many risks as well as the possibility to earn money; one guy can earn 100-200 € just to alert the drug dealers if police is coming.

In the reality of low income people and with an extremely high unemployment level it seems normal that Camorra represents the richest sector of employment in the district.

The population is composed by an incredible amount of large families with just one working person, families with at least one family member deceased, in prison or drug addicted, young widows or old people alone struggling to make ends meet.

In addition an high level of abandon between primary and secondary school has been registered.

Instead of being fought, this situation is encouraged by the families that see in the children another possible source of income.

In this way is more and more difficult to create skilled workers and therefore find an adequate job.

Lot of people we spoke with, told us, would gladly do without working with this criminal organization, but right now it is impossible for them to find another occupation able to solve the monetary family problems.

	Naples (A)	Scampia (B)	B/A %	Grad.
popolazione attiva	419.576	18.206	4,3	12°
occupati	240.210	6.976	2,9	13°
disoccupati	41.681	2.401	5,8	8°
in cerca di prima occupazione	137.685	8.829	6,4	5°
tasso di attività	39,3	41,4		2°
youth employment rate	14,1	8,9		21°
tasso di attività M	55,4	58,9		1°
tasso di attività F	24,4	23,8		7°
unemployment rate	42,7	61,7		1°
youth unemployment rate	41,7	54,9		1°
male unemployment rate	39,9	57,0		1°
female unemployment rate	48,8	73,4		1°

Comparison between the labor market in Naples and Scampia.*

	Naples	Scampia	Grad.
<i>families</i>			
average number of components	3,4	4,5	1°
% of numerous families (5 or more comp.)	23,7	46,0	1°
% famiglie con un componente	4,8	4,8	21°
% famiglie con due o più nuclei	3,7	10,4	1°
% fam. con un nucleo e altre persone	11,1	14,8	2°
famiglie coabitanti per 1.000 abitanti	2,0	1,7	6°

Comparison between families of Naples and Scampia.*

	Scampia	Vele
% of population under 14 years old	21,6	31,7
old-age index	26,7	7,8
indice di dipendenza	37,6	51,8
numero medio di componenti	4,5	5,1
% di famiglie con un componente	4,8	2,8
% of families with 6 or more components	25,9	35,2
vani per abitazione	4,8	4,2
indice di affollamento	0,95	1,22
low instruction index	18,3	24,5
indice di istruzione alta**	0,9	2,5

Comparison between residents of Scampia and Vele.**

istat data source 2002

Scarce employment opportunities in the area and money needs to survive, push people to different branches of Camorra, creating an illegal business of killing and drug dealing. The results are destroyed families and a number of deaths, prisoners and toxic increasingly on the rise, resulting in a need for more and more money. A perfect scenario for local crime organization.

Besides, the urban conformation has made it easier.

The large avenues and the tall and particular structure of the "sails" with lot of viewpoint from everywhere and lot of escapes routes was considered perfect for the drug dealing.

Scampia's Sails became a real drug commercial centre, with lot of people coming from the all country for every kind of drugs and with really cheap prices.

Combined with the health service choice to put there an assistance centre for drug users that administered methadone to patients, this led to a really high concentration of drug addicted in the area.

All these situations have led to a strong sense of community.

Citizens have organized themselves in local associations and neighborhood assembly in order to promote a social and urban regeneration.

Some small activities and assistance are created to support those whom need more, as disable and old people.

The main goals of these associations are to clean the area from the drug and toxic and many of them want to demolish the Sails.

The Megastructures are seen by a large amount of the population as the main problem of the area, and removing them, they believe Scampia would become a really better place.

Between 1997 and 2003 three of the seven Megastructures were demolished by the Government and now the debate is to continue with this policy or change strategy.

The actual Mayor Luigi De Magistris wants to demolished all of them and close a sad chapter of the Neapolitan History.

This point of view is shared with the inhabitants of the Sails that affirm to hate to them, that is extremely uncomfortable to live there and that crime and drug dealing exist in the area because of the structures.

Superintendent of the architectural and landscape heritage, Stefano Gizzi as well as lot of architects and intellectuals think that Scampia's Vele, like for instance Unitè d'abitation in Marseille and Corviale in Rome, even though ruinous experience, represent a particular period in Architecture besides a philosophical idea common in the 1960- 1970 period.

Scampia' sails: the re-landing to reality

Our proposal

Actually we consider really important the inhabitants point of view, and we agree that right now the Sails do not symbolize at all the best live conditions, but we also consider really interesting the original design of the architect and its social utopia.

Furthermore It is true that the Vele can be consider a sort of monument of the 1960-70 architecture and for this reason should be preserved but It is completely inhuman to force some people to live in a place that can not afford basic live condition just because is a monument of a failure!

However we are convicted that the architectural problem in this area is just a little part of the total discontent, and in an another context a similar structure can be even consider nice and usefull; see the example in Baie des Anges, France.

Everyone can concord that only demolishing the Sails, it is impossible to solve the problems of drug dealing and organized crime, in fact probably it would just move in another place.

We believe it would be necessary to give to the population an effective alternative in order to remove workforce from the Camorra and devote it into legal and positive activities that can ensure an income able to support the families.

For this reason we propose a social, economical as well as architectural and urban solution

It is clear that these architectural and social ideas considerably depend on policy: the political commitment should be much stronger compared to what was done with the previous Di Salvo's project.

In the past experience a speculative and inadequate policy, adding to a total lack of maintenance of the structures, have resulted in what today is one of the most serious situations on a national scale.

The idea is to preserve the existing structures giving them a completely new life.

The model we want to propose is a mix between the eco-district and the vertical and urban farm.

What we want to do, is to create through agriculture a new micro and why not macro economy able to re-qualify again the Vele and the all neighborhood.

The Eco-housing model is becoming extremely common in the World, especially in the north of Europe, with the proud examples of Freiburg, Hannover and Linz.

At the same time, the idea of vertical and urban farm is growing a lot.

The km 0 products combined with the possibility to grown the own product in the own garden is a policy that is spreading quickly among Italian population.

The experiences of Ken Yeang in Malaysia and Singapore, Mithun in Seattle, USA and Knafo Klimor Architects in Wuhan, Cina teach us that vertical farm are now possible and not a dream anymore.

The design we propose is probably closer to the idea of urban farm than the vertical farm, for cost, possibility and realization.

About the buildings, first of all, the shocking walkways in the central hole will be removed in order to permit the sun light to come inside.

Light and the more transparent is possible, situated every four houses will be the new vertical connection.

The services planned by Di Salvo will be placed in the ground common floor with adding places for social participation and training centers to able local people to work inside the structure, activities for children and spaces for giving help to drug addicted people.

The number of dwelling will be reduced, but the amount of people will be the same.

This can be possible re using the several abandoned compartments that right now count an incredible number.

Facades and the walls will be renovates in order to remove molds and humidity.

Furthermore the Sails structures result perfect for passive system integration.

Because of the shape can be extremely easy to collect rainy water and re use it for irrigation.

The orientation is well done for ventilation and every house counts on a double front.

Can be also possible the integration of solar panels along the huge south side.

The large number of terraces and the dimensions pretty big can permit the creation of green roofs possibly used for the agriculture scope.

The presence of a local market and a subway line connecting to the centre can guarantee to this economy to grow and develop.

People can find a real job and with time specialize the own sector of production.

In this way, we are not saying we will remove Camorra and drug dealing but we will give to the people a good choice!

With a clever administration and a wise government Scampia could even become an example of renovation and change, and maybe we will see the Vele sailing again.



Above the actual situation of the "Sails",
Below. A render view of the design proposal.

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