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GROMA

Guidelines for the creation of Ivrea's future Cultural Pole

Executive summary

Groma study deals with the creation of a Cultural Pole in Ivrea devoted to the valorization of the city and local area (Canavese) patrimony and to the production of culture at all levels, to reshape Ivrea identity and turn it into a proactive laboratory of culture.

Groma investigated the characteristics, governance, cultural programs, activities and spaces a Cultural Pole comprising Ivrea main civic entities (museum, library and archive) should have, to organize a list of multidisciplinary guidelines to sustain the design and competition process of the new institution addressing the client's requests (Guelpa Foundation), and Ivrea inhabitants' needs.

Considering the architectural, urban and digital levels, the Agenda 2030 goals have been pursued for social and cultural innovation as requested by the client, to reflect on ecological footprints for museums and libraries and on the digital maturity of Ivrea cultural institutions.

For being a good practice in terms of social infrastructure speculation, rethinking processes and governance and transforming, adapting and reusing the patrimony, the project has been positively evaluated by the Oslo Architecture Triennale board that included it in the "Neighbourhood Index" realised for the "Mission Neighbourhood - (Re)forming Communities" Triennale 2022 (<https://neighbourhoodindex.org/>).

Key Words

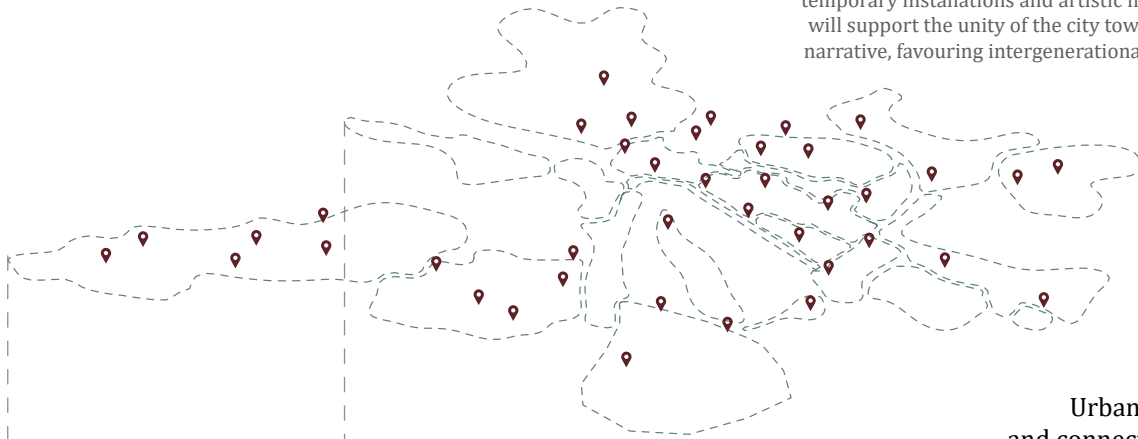
Culture-Led Regeneration, Community involvement, Cultural networks, Digital Humanities, MAB Model, UNESCO site



The imaginary of the future Ivrea is that of a city capable of renewing itself through the production of culture.

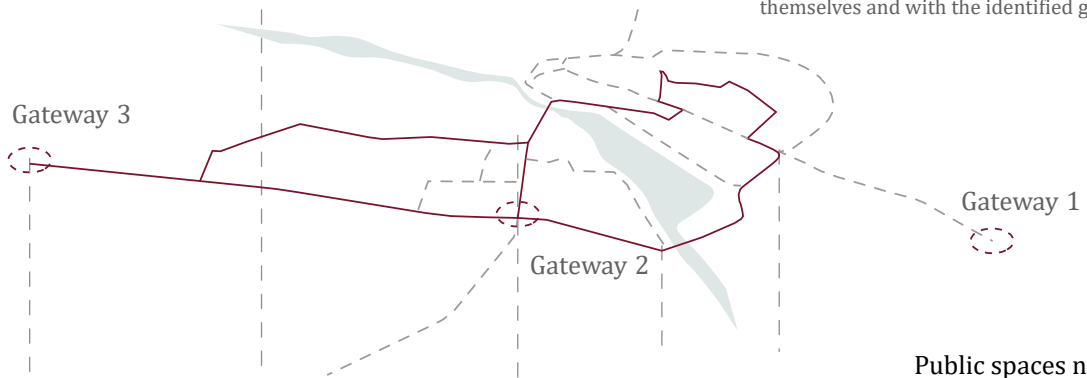
Installations and urban revitalizers

A system of public spaces working as scenarios for temporary installations and artistic interventions will support the unity of the city towards its new narrative, favouring intergenerational exchanges.



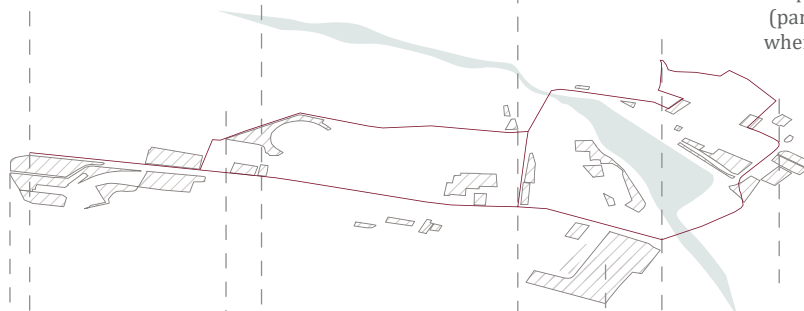
Urban gateways and connectivity axes

Composed of primary and secondary axes, the connectivity system is intended to connect the buildings and public spaces of the city between themselves and with the identified gateways.



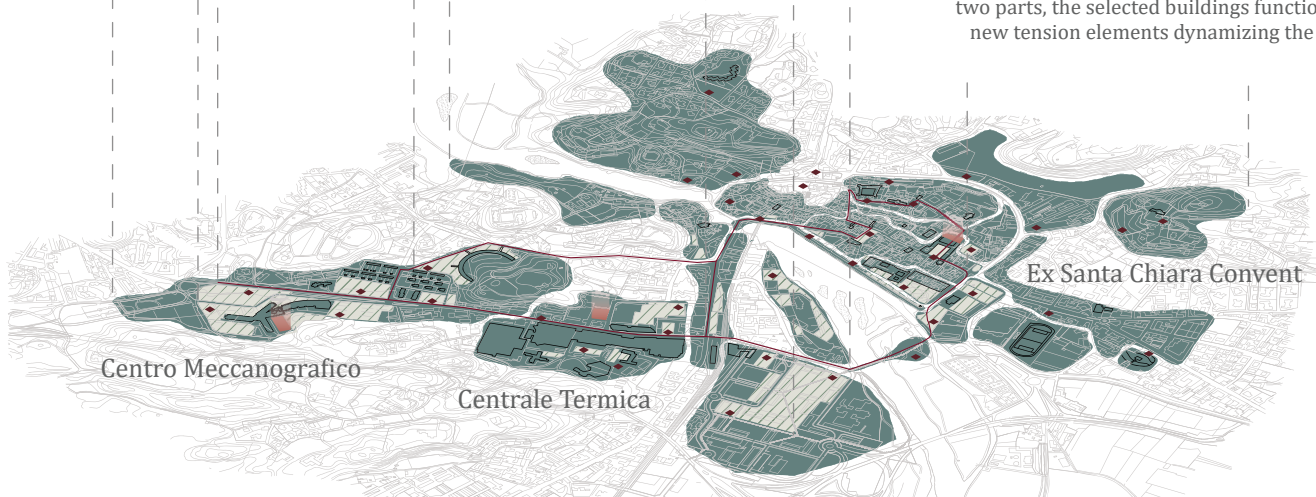
Public spaces network

The spatial and functional union of the public spaces intended as axes (roads) and areas (parks, squares), create a new city narrative where culture exit the buildings to become a vital part of Ivrea daily life.



Interconnected urban system

To overcome the narrative of a city divided in two parts, the selected buildings function as new tension elements dynamizing the city.



**Project description
written by the
Principal Academic
Tutor**

How can we rethink today the traditional museums, libraries and archive? Which part could they play in the regeneration of a place, in front of the so important and permeating role culture nowadays has in all the life sectors as Agenda 2030 shows? What are the elements involved? How can we imagine a process that could bring to the realization of such a complex duty?

Groma translated those questions in a real context thanks to the solicitations of Fondazione Guelpa, problem owner of the project, which allowed to ground the project in Ivrea, a small Piedmont town in the Canavese area, not far from Turin and Milan.

The cultural resources the Canavese and the city have -Ivrea, especially, with a long history, starting from a roman colony to a laboratory of culture in the industrial city of XX century, today UNESCO site- are considered by the community as a possible engine of the transformation of the city and a central element in its future vision, yet, up to now, they do not unitarily emerge.

A cultural and design dimension, even symbolic, strong enough to leave behind the nostalgia for the glorious industrial past of Olivetti, is currently missing. Looking at culture as a laboratory of production and leverage for social processes and cultural welfare of the community is, therefore, the horizon in which Groma acts, to rethink the urban dimension, individuate spaces and new models and forms of cultural fruition.

Aim of the project is the individuation of a more precise definition of contents and spaces for a new cultural subject- the Pole- able to elaborate a new cultural program involving the Garda Civic Museum, the Nigra Civic Library and the Historical sector of the Archive of the City of Ivrea.

Groma set the guidelines which individuate the founding elements of the future pole and its realization. The analysis carried out, the methodological choices, the solutions envisioned, allowed to treat a multidisciplinary and multiscale project whose proposals are today the Fondazione Guelpa's work agenda. This philanthropic institution, in fact, to enhance at best the Ivrea cultural patrimony, is organizing together with Groma the next steps of the project, involving Ivrea community.

**Team description by
skill**

Groma multidisciplinary team covered with its members' competences all the main topics of the study, allowing their deeply investigation and the envisioning of possible solutions in each field.

The project goes from an international scope to a local scale considering the Ivrea community involvement and crossing three main layers: building architecture, public spaces and digital components, with their relative functional and management characteristics to be explored. The mix of disciplines treated in the engineering, architecture and design courses of study allowed each of the members to opt for specific themes he was comfortable with, to implement his knowledge in the fields with proper benchmarking and desk research and to work out original outputs.

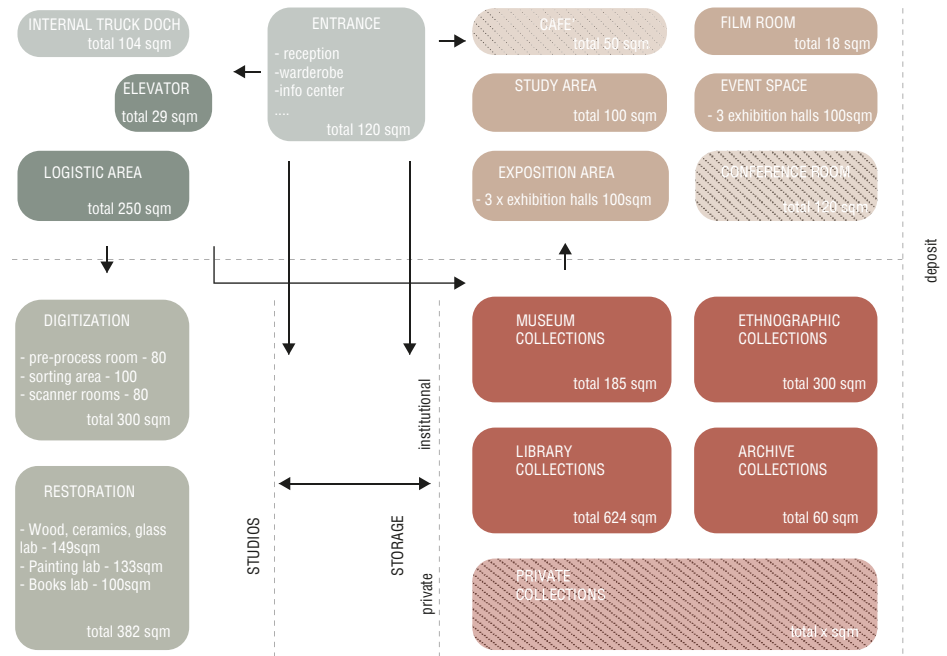
Architectural students contributed, according to their backgrounds, to the definition of the urban strategies and functional programs for the Cultural Pole building proposals: through a morphological reading of the city it has been possible to figure out which buildings better fit the spaces requirements and how to let culture exit the constructions to become an active part of Ivrea everyday life.

The pedestrian shed theory has been applied to public spaces to create a system of active stages for an inclusive cultural fruition, and design tests checked the suitability of selected buildings to host innovative functional programs for museum, library and archive of the city.

The cinema and media engineering student deepened the digitization and digital humanities topics, to quantify the space needed for the operation and envision a strategy to allow Ivrea Cultural Pole to overcome the local borders and become part of an international network of cultural sources.

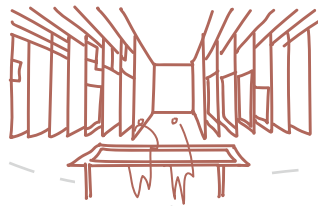
The integrated product designer contributed to the workgroup by studying the most proper communication strategy to involve the population in the project, translated in managing the social media pages (Ivrea Step by Step, on Facebook and Instagram), in realizing the questionnaire submitted to citizens and in producing the materials for the sponsorship of the Jane's Walks the group led to test the

readiness of Ivrea citizenship in welcoming the new Cultural Pole. Even if the division in four macro levels helped in better structuring the internal group organisation, all the contributions converged into a compact final proposal, with strong interplays and connections among the different areas. The individual skills of the team members have changed and the methodologies hybridized. Furthermore, the complexity of the project required the group to be continuously active in the analysis of the context and players involved, through interviews carried out by all the group members and on site visits to Ivrea and inspiring realities.



The proposed functional program for the open deposit finds out to perfectly fit the Centrale Termica and Centro Meccanografico buildings, due to their strategic position inside the UNESCO site, the easy accessibility from Ivrea and its surroundings and suitability of construction systems.

**Toward a new museography:
DEPOSITS & DIGITAL TOOLS**



Ottinetti square complex (above) and ex Olivetti's Centrale Termica (left), Ivrea



In the layout used for the posts on social media pages, images of some key aspects of the project are proposed: collections, public spaces and reuse of the built patrimony.

Exploring the opportunities

The culturally and historically overloaded Ivrea context allows to infer weaknesses and threats to be transformed into opportunities the project could manage. The presence of Olivetti Typewriter corporation in the last century still affects the citizenship and Ivrea settlement: two independent enclaves are configured, physically highlighted by the Dora river cut of the city in half, and intangibly related to the historic centre heritage and to the industrial patrimony.

The cultural identity of the city, fragmented after the closure of Olivetti which provided an unitarian narration to Ivrea as an industrial city, offers the opportunity to cope with the continuous decline of the city, looking always more to its aged population and lacking to involve the young generations.

The current cultural offer, indeed, follows the trend of tastes of the older users, a situation that cannot but lead to an inesorable shutdown of the lights of Ivrea glorious past, in need to be inverted. Providing a new narration to the city as a fresh and innovative cultural producer constitutes a challenge and opportunity the project faces.

The possibility envisioned by the current lack of collaboration between the cultural entities of the city, furthermore, can sum itself to the needs of civic museum, civic library and archive of the city to free their overcrowded storages and increase their attractiveness.

Opening their locations in the historic centre to the community, with dynamic places for social gathering, intergenerational exchanges and cultural production, will improve the sense of belonging of the community to its cultural institutions and favour the flourishing of collaborations between museum, archive and library as well as with the community and local cultural and social associations.

The UNESCO site "Industrial City of XX Century" could play a significant role in establishing a robust, symbolic contact with the historic centre and enhancing the Olivettian heritage, worth reconsidering for its value and suitability of use for the cultural activities.

Generating a solution

The guidelines to be furnished to the client and to be possibly extended to any other place in the world that struggles due to the lack of identity, the past influence and the shortage of opportunities for community involvement, concern five topics: Innovative Functions, Building Architecture, Public Spaces, Digital Component and Innovative Processes in Knowledge Exchange, considered as vital elements for the success of the Cultural Pole project.

Envisioned as two centered, comprising a cultural centre an open deposit, the Pole requires the development of a territorial strategy for the reactivation of the connections between the buildings to reshape Ivrea identity as a Cultural city, and the opening to a wider territory thanks to the possibilities offered by digital tools (TMO organization).

The population will participate to the creation of the cultural programs for the pole and to its final project definition by means of a more transparent and measurable competition process, to let the pole be grounded in the community and cope with the Ivrea endemic internal resistance to change.

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