

Rivista "IBC" XIII, 2005, 3

Dossier: Destinazione Cina - Proposte italiane per la riqualificazione urbana
territorio e beni architettonici-ambientali, dossier /

"Asia Urbs Chn05-08": Rome calls on Beijing (abstract)

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The "Chn5-08 - Urban Sustainable Development Model for Beijing" project falls within the framework of the "Asia Urbs" programme promoted by the European Commission, and is supported by the Municipality of Rome that operates through "Risorse RPR", a company specializing in the field. Partnerships were set up with the Municipalities of Paris and Beijing, each with the collaboration of local universities, in particular of the Department of Architecture and Engineering of "La Sapienza" University in Rome, Science Po in Paris and the Institute of Sociology of the School of Architecture of Tsinghua University in Beijing.

The project (www.asiaurbschn5-08.org/) has already gone through the analysis, setting of guidelines and identification of alternative scenarios. Currently, talks with prospective stakeholders (both social and economic) have been started. Following to this, the final model shall be designed. The chosen area, that covers little more than 6 hectares, is situated north-west of the Forbidden City, in a corner of the "Shichahai" district. It owes its name to the main street crossing it, "Baimixiejie", meaning "The diagonal road of white rice".

The buildings erected before 1949 (when the new People's Republic of China was founded) account for 28,7% the Baimixiejie area. They still show the typical traits of traditional Chinese architecture, such as grey brick-walls, curved roofs, wooden frameworks, windows and decorations: a living memory of the traditional Beijing's *siheyuan* (literally, "a courtyard with buildings along its four sides"). Such buildings make up for the backbone of this urban context and convey the peculiarities of a fabric consisting of low houses with huge trees in the inner courtyards. For the remaining part, the houses were built by splitting up the traditional courtyards. These were either built by the national Government to provide basic housing for the workers, or illegally erected by the inhabitants to meet the primary needs of everyday living. Green spaces - particularly the most imposing trees, often more than a hundred years old, which have grown among the houses, in the courtyards, and are a fundamental trait of the local architecture - have an extraordinary importance in the character of the *hutong*-type fabric.

A detailed sociological analysis went hand in hand with the study of architecture and town planning, revealing some more or less evident inconveniences. The project's guidelines aim both at safeguarding the architectural/urban/environmental peculiarities and at meeting the population's needs as far as possible, starting from the improvement of some basic elements, such as building from scratch or rationalizing infrastructural networks, strengthening some buildings, redeveloping environments and open spaces and increasing the minimum per capita surface, currently an estimated ten square metres.

Once completed, the final feasibility study will be disseminated by the three partners to the project during a meeting on re-qualification, to be held in Beijing in December 2005.

Alberto Sansi - Pechino, 2004: foto aerea di parte del centro storico, con la localizzazione dell'intervento "Asia Urbs Chn5-08"

[cina60.jpg](#)

Alberto Sansi - Pechino, 2004: all'interno dell'area, con l'ausilio di carte storiche, sono riconoscibili sia impianti tradizionali complessi e significativi, sia brani di tessuto tradizionale da valorizzare e conservare

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Alberto Sansi - Pechino, 2004: l'edificio a due piani che chiude l'asse occidentale del complesso di Zhang Zhi Dong, oggi

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Alberto Sansi - Pechino, 2004: vista sugli edifici che hanno progressivamente occupato corti e giardini

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Alberto Sansi - Pechino, 2004: "onde" di tetti all'ombra degli alberi. Gli alberi partecipano alla costruzione del paesaggio urbano e anche il loro rapporto con l'edificato è un carattere storico da preservare

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Alberto Sansi - Pechino, 2004: particolari di tradizione emergono tra superfetazioni e fili volanti e strutturano un tessuto urbano dalle qualità spaziali irripetibili

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