

Lucio Valerio Barbera  
**Two Lessons from an Earthquake**  
**1 - Extreme City**  
**2 - Il Borgo**

---

Abstract

The city of Naples and a small village of the region, Castelnuovo di Conza, were both struck by the November 23rd, 1980, earthquake. Naples, given its social importance, and Castelnuovo with its location in the crater of the seism, became emblematic sites of the tragedy and the reconstruction. The author of the article participated in a position of responsibility in the planning of the reconstruction and requalification both of Naples and the town of Castelnuovo. In the following pages he attempts to draw some lessons from the complex planning experience.

Keywords

Architectural unity — Irpinia 1981 — Castelnuovo di Conza

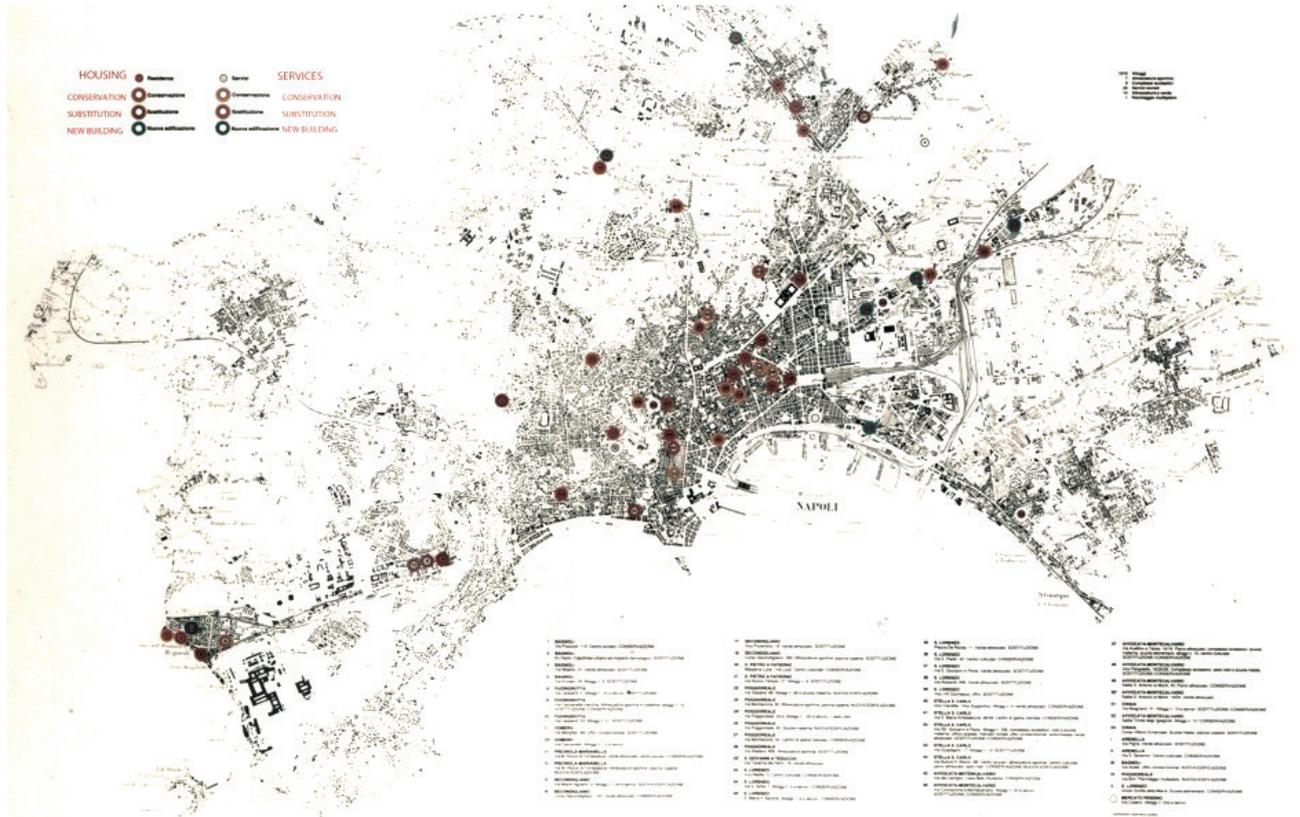
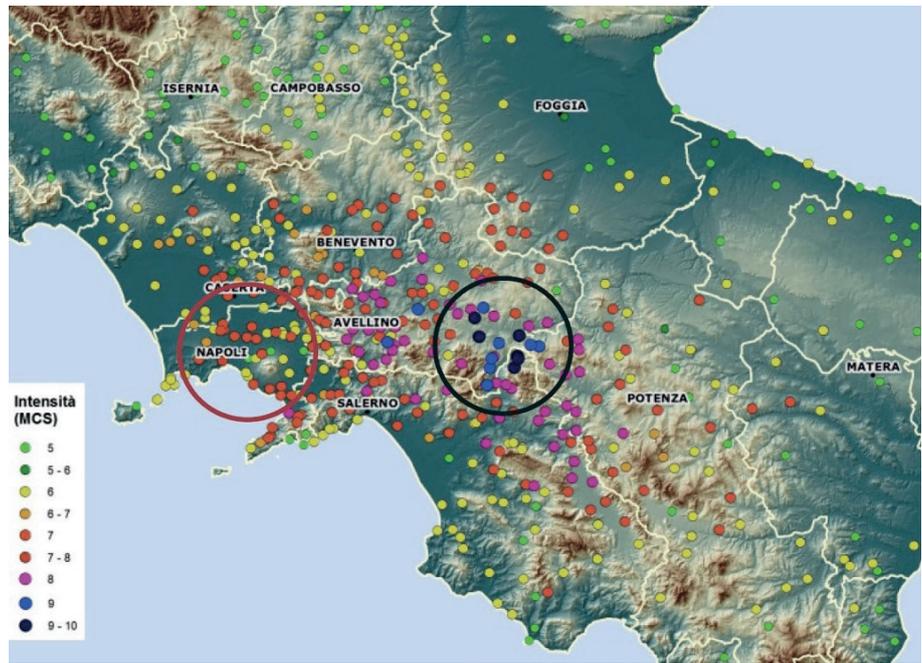
---

**Premise**

The following pages present some reconstruction interventions, coordinated or planned by me, regarding a metropolis, Naples, and a village in Campania, Castelnuovo di Conza, studied and carried out in the same span of years, between 1981 and 1991. This, my presentation, therefore, deals with reconstruction projects for *a city and a village*, according to an adage in vogue today not only among architects and urban planners but also among transport and infrastructure engineers and even – these days with a pandemic – among urban health experts, that is urban well-being. City and village, Naples and Castelnuovo di Conza were both affected by the November 23, 1980, earthquake, went down in the annals as the Irpinia earthquake. Naples, given its social dimension, and Castelnuovo for its position in the crater of the earthquake became emblematic sites of tragedy and reconstruction. Having had the good fortune to participate with roles of responsibility and, at the same time, in both the reconstructive and restorative projects for the city and the village, constituted a very precious experience for me, at times exhilarating, which rewarded and comforted the effort, difficulties, and disappointments, of which there was no shortage. I hope that the following pages will be of some use to a future reader.

**Fig. 1**

The two epicenters of the Irpinia earthquake: in the black circle the seismic epicenter, the municipalities of the Crater and its immediate surroundings. In the red circle the so-called social epicenter, constituted by the metropolitan city of Naples, shocks its building structures, but above all social ones.



**Fig. 2**

The projects included in the Urban Center Sector in the Naples Reconstruction and Redevelopment Plan. The Centro Urbano sector included the historic city - known as the ancient center - the peri-urban settlements and the first modern belt.

## 1 – Extreme City

### THE Reconstruction of the Urban Center of Naples

#### 1981 - 1991

In the early 80s, last century, following the 23 November 1980, earthquake which struck much of Campania and whose epicenter was Irpinia, I was called to assume responsibility as Coordinator of the architectural and urban planning of a complex program of building and functional reconstruction and requalification for the Urban Center of Naples, to be implemented through more than 50 projects of vastly different scale and complexity. The sites and constructions requiring intervention were chosen by the Government Commissariat for reconstruction, in the living body of the ancient center, and in the first modern urban expansion, the whole of which constitutes the central organism - the urban center, in fact - of the current Neapolitan metropolis. This city, due to its deep historical stratification of building structures, its complexity and widespread hardships with its social body, and the extremely high cultural level – coexisting with the present urban and human complexity – may be considered “Extreme city” within the framework of the great cities of the Western world and, in particular, of the European Mediterranean.

The program that I was entrusted with was part of a much larger redevelopment program for the entire city of Naples. In fact, the event had two epicenters: one seismic in the area of some towns in Irpinia (Fig. 1, black circle) with enormous destruction (almost three thousand deaths) and a social one in the Neapolitan area (Fig. 1, red circle) with had few victims compared to those of the epicenter (about sixty deaths in the collapse of a modern residential building), but many of its building and social structures were shaken and damaged. The complete program for the reconstruction in Naples contemplated the construction of twenty thousand dwellings, implemented by creating the so-called Plan of the Suburbs (Piano delle Perferie), consisting of twelve integrated plans of new construction and urban recovery. But the Suburban Plan, by its nature, did not answer to the demand for public interventions in the city center. For this reason, the special Comparto Centro Urbano (Urban Center Section) was created and entrusted to the Edina Consortium, of the EFIM group, who in turn asked me to assume responsibility as Coordinator of architectural and urban design. The more than fifty projects of the intervention program of the Urban Center Sector (Fig. 2), for which I accepted the project responsibility, included two functional classes - residences and urban services - and three types of building intervention: restoration, replacement, and new constructions. Combining the two functional classes and the three types of intervention, the projects were grouped into six categories. But each of them was unique in design both for its historical characteristics and the always very unique characteristics of the context. To tackle such a complex task credibly, I established an interdisciplinary working group that included historians of architecture and of the city, structural and service planners, urban planners, landscape architects, and architects, including Arnaldo Bruschi, Antonio Michetti, Gianfranco Caniggia, and included in the Technical Scientific Committee I wanted Vittoria Calzolari, Alberto Gatti, Salvatore Bisogni, Antonio Lavaggi among the planners. During the coordination and planning activities, I was assisted, of course, by the Edina technical office as well as by the then young architects, Corrado Giannini and Silvana Manco, from my professional team, ProgReS, in Rome. The Government Commissariat for Reconstruction in turn set up a group of technicians and con-

sultants under Vezio De Lucia's guidance with the task of ensuring compliance with the guidelines for reconstruction in a continuous dialogue and collaboration with the planners of the concessionary Consortia. We were lucky enough to be followed, on behalf of the Government Commissariat, by a then young architect of great value, Giancarlo Ferulano, who was not only decisive for respecting the objectives of the reconstruction, but also for verifying the orientation of each intervention according to the social and cultural objectives of the program.

Precisely because I do not hide the fact that it would have been methodologically interesting, in the forty years since that undertaking, to have reviewed it critically, *as I have not*, I take the opportunity given me by FAM – which I sincerely thank – to attempt to focus on at least one of the problems that immediately emerged in our work and which soon became dominant. It has to do with the question of the relationship between the expectations of the “social client”, that is, the future users – and the objectives and aspirations of the planners. Naples is a city with a strong identity character, in which one gets the impression that the social amalgam of the ancient city, living almost intact, alongside an established and thriving bourgeois society. But while this, despite inheriting from the aristocracy of Neapolitan culture, has naturally borrowed most of the “transnational” manners that characterize urban societies anywhere else on our planet, which keeps all its “pros” - creativity and urbanity - almost intact along with its well-known “cons”, which emerge with the characteristics of a resistant archaism, distorted by modernity. In this too schematic picture - I realize and apologize for - however, what surprises and fascinates above all a Roman like me, the son of immigrants - like most of my fellow citizens - here in Naples, is the natural and surprising relationship between bourgeois and commoners, a relationship in which each, maintaining his own social identity, knows how to understand and speak the language of the other naturally, as if it were one of the keys in which the living musical monument is composed and performed day by day and whose unity everyone knows that participate in equally. In this complexity, however, our planning aimed at operating in the most disadvantaged folds and areas of the city, aimed by statute precisely towards the oldest and most identifying “social client” among those living in the city. For our and our work's good fortune, our commitment in Naples lasted almost a decade. We were therefore offered the opportunity to experience the city and, above all, the sites of our interventions, directly and over a long period. We felt, therefore, that we understood something. Something important regarding the relationship between our “social client” and the architecture of one's living space. Feeling unable to express it with my own words, I entrust the definition of what I seemed to have understood, to the words - now ancient within the “modern” - of Walter Benjamin, taken from the first pages of his book about Naples, its society and its architecture:

«As porous as this stone is the architecture. [*He is referring here to the stone the system of caves and ancient quarries of Naples were dug*] Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its “thus and not otherwise”. This is how architecture, the most binding of all communal rhythm, come into being here: civilized, private, and ordered only in the great hotel and warehouse buildings on the quays; anarchical, embroiled, villagelike in the center,

into which large networks of streets were hacked only forty years ago. And only in these streets is the house, in the Nordic sense, the cell of the city's architecture. In contrast, within the tenement blocks, it seems held together at the corners, as if by iron clamps, by the murals of the Madonna».

**“The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its “thus and not otherwise”** In these two sentences which, interpreted by a committed intellectual of our times, may make one think of a Benjamin indulging in a conventional image of our extreme city, struck me as I read them: they confirmed what I had learned not only by observing the reality of sites where we had worked in Naples but experiencing the difficulties with our first projects. Those short sentences confirmed, after all, that the choices we made after the first moments of misdirected certainties were at least an attempt to come closer, even if only a little, to the reality of the expectations of our “social client” and, above all, to the vitality of their indispensable way of continuously remodeling the environment according to their own cultural identity.

In what follows, I have therefore chosen to present four projects which, among others, seem to me to better represent our attempts. The first concerns the Recovery Plan and the building reconstruction of a historic settlement now incorporated three centuries in the city of Naples. Here, the reconstruction of the degraded urban fabric through new residential buildings and some services open to the public was dealt with by confirming the “courtyard block” as a more faithful urban typology in the expectations of the “social client” and using an architectural language based on the mimesis of colors and movements urban construction of the nineteenth-century, the last, I believe, in Naples to have made the transition from the baroque city to the city of positivism and early modernity with ease. The second and third projects were part of a redevelopment activity “by points” of a neighborhood with a very strong popular and historical identity. The fourth project consisted of the architectural intervention – it would be better to say “tectonic” – which was built in the heart of another Recovery Plan of an ancient neighborhood. The brief description of the four projects, apart from any judgment of merit - which can be negative in many respects - can testify, I believe, quite clearly both to our attempt to interpret the needs of the “social clients” and to their ability to appropriate naturally, but inevitably, each project with a few identifying touches, thus incorporating it in the reality of life.

#### **The Recovery Plan of the SS. Giovanni and Paolo neighborhood.**

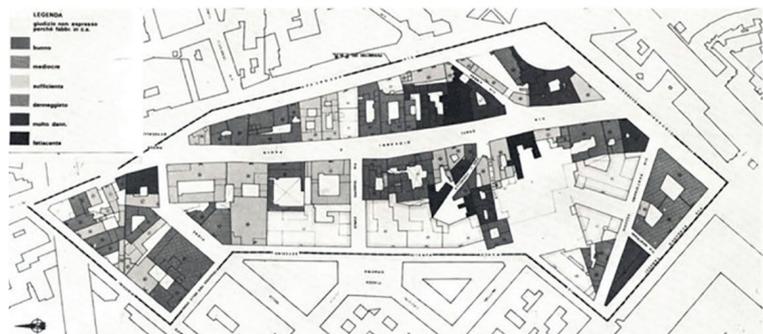
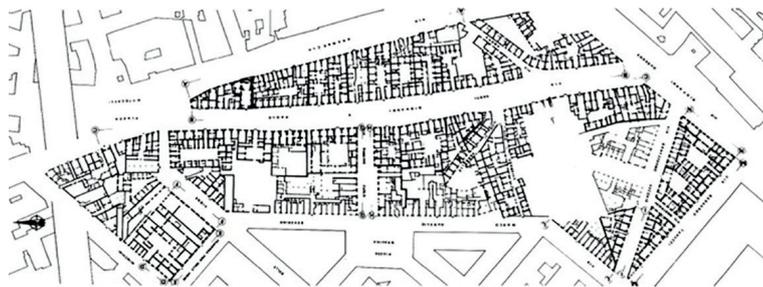
Some interventions were intended to rehabilitate the entire historic nuclei of urban districts of the central city. One of these nuclei, almost a neighborhood in itself, in the area of S. Carlo all’Arena, called “Saints John and Paul”. It is an ancient urban settlement located outside the walls of the ancient city, incorporated into the urban area at the beginning of the mid-eighteenth century when, nearby, by the will of King Charles of Bourbon, the architect Ferdinando Fuga built the gigantic structure of the Real Albergo dei Poveri [Royal Hospice of the Poor]. A part of the ancient settlement, already partly abandoned, had been demolished immediately after the earthquake. Large voids had opened up in the ancient fabric. Among the other historic buildings of the nucleus, very ancient and ruined types coexisted, with an open courtyard and low density, together with nineteenth-century buildings of more dense urban consistency. Very high and low-quality modern buildings

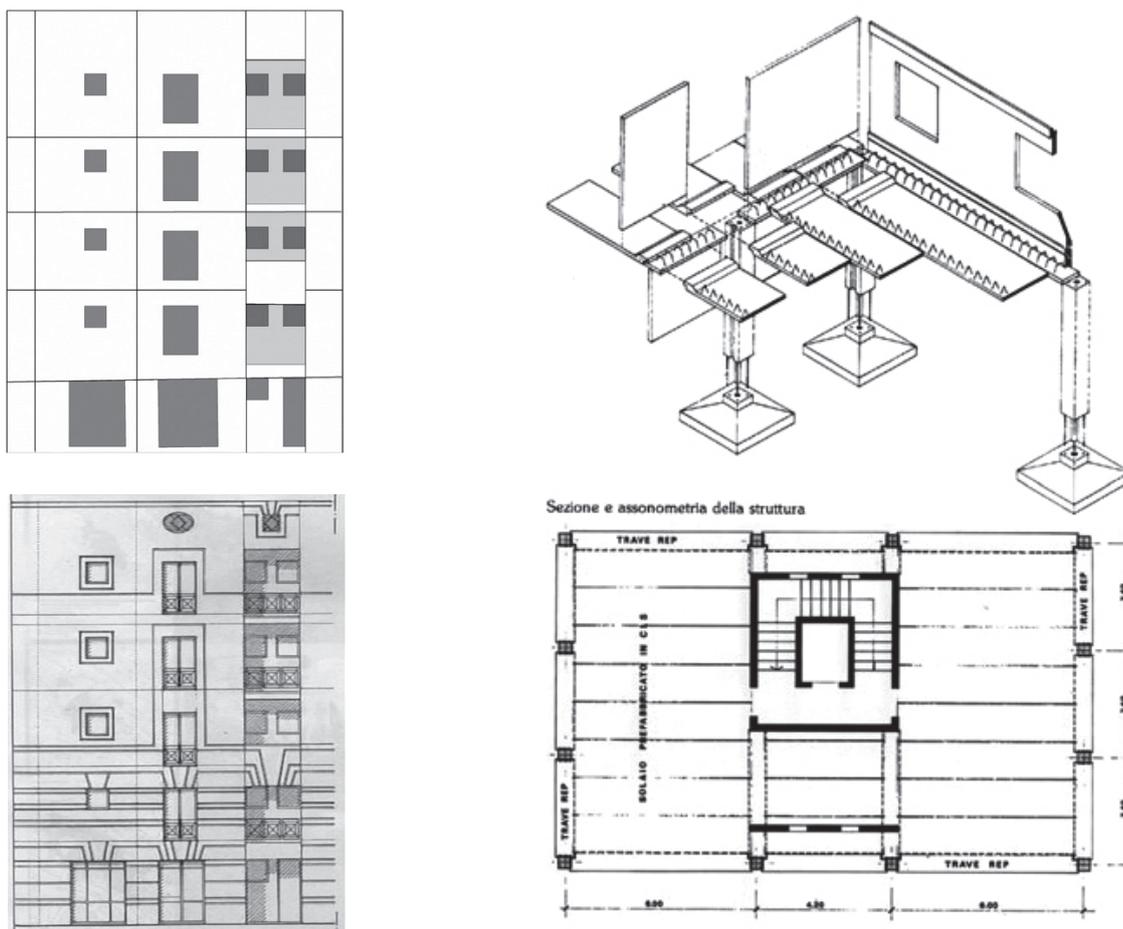
**Figs. 3 1-2-3-4-5**

SS. Giovanni e Paolo Recovery plan and main building interventions.

From above:

The fabric; The building stock;  
The main interventions; The main interventions carried out.



**Figs. 4 1-2-3**

Top left:

The window panels that make up the facades.

Lower left:

The same portion of the facade composed of window panels with a modeled surface.

To the right:

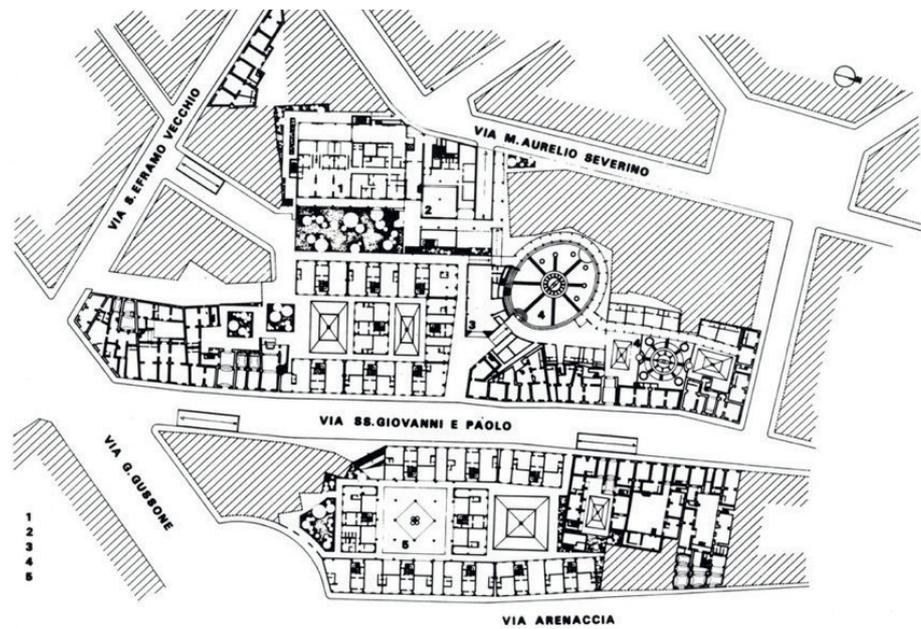
Axonometric diagram of the pre-fabrication system.

pressed around them. The main problem, in this case, was to reconstitute the environmental and functional unity of the neighborhood so that the population could naturally perceive and use the new buildings as being part of the local tradition, even though they were obviously built with industrialized and economic construction systems (Figs. 3-4-5).

The construction system chosen is in itself very close, perhaps closest, to the traditional ways of making the structural shell, in that it brings the window back to the concept of simply a hole, varying in size, opened in a wall characterized by a repeated series of rather small voids compared to the prevalence of the solid surface. However, the prefabricated applications of this conception, which generated a well-known system – the window panel – in general give rise to among the most alienating images in modern construction: uninterrupted sequences of square holes with no qualifying element, obsessive hive walls, impossible to integrate into any modern, traditional or historical urban landscape. But if one looks carefully, the most familiar and welcome image that greets us from the walls that line the streets of the center of any of our historic cities is nothing more than the result of a simple symbolic and constructive – therefore architectural – the articulation of a masonry wall in which perforations tendentially equal and relatively small neatly – that is, monotonously – open up. In this context, taking into account the objective of inserting the new buildings into the existing environment without tearing away, we followed that traditional and well-tried path, engraving the surface of the prefabricated panels to compose a hierarchy of clear and efficient architectural symbols on the facades because immediately comprehensible (Figs. 4).

**Fig. 5 1**

SS. Giovanni e Paolo ground floors; main services: kindergarten, post office, district offices, covered market, pedestrian square.

**Figs. 5 2-3-4**

Overall and detailed views of the insertion of new buildings in the urban environment 30 years after construction.





**Fig. 6**

Two interventions in the urban fabric of Secondigliano.

A - Residential complex for 200 apartments at the Quadrivio di Arzano.

B - Wellness center: swimming pool, gym, gardens and outdoor sports fields.

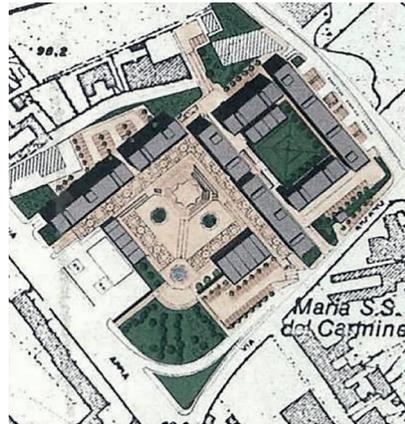
### **Two interventions in the urban fabric of Secondigliano**

The redevelopment program entrusted to the “Urban Center” section of which I was project manager, in addition to complex interventions coordinated by the urban planning instruments of the Recovery Plan – of which we have seen an example in the previous pages – included a multitude of specific interventions, mostly mono-functional – residences, specific services, green areas. They were conveniently inserted into some openings in the pre-existing fabric with the dual objective of responding to the urgent demand for social housing and giving the urban environment equipment servicing the population. In this framework, I believe it useful to present two specific interventions, of different dimensions and functions – a low-cost residential complex and a service center for sport and well-being – located not far from each other along the axis of Corso Secondigliano (Fig. 6). In their dimensional, functional, and architectural diversity as well as in their management specificity, however, the two interventions were conceived as parts of a unitary – albeit very partial – contribution to the rehabilitation of a critical area of the Neapolitan belt. Corso Secondigliano is the name given to the Appian Way as it crosses the ancient periurban settlement which constitutes a complex, sometimes difficult social reality.

**A. The residential complex** situated in the so-called **Quadrivio di Arzano** - about 200 residences - has become famous due to a recent television series, mentioned in books and films that investigate the social complexity of that territory. The intervention was never really finished, because the residences, even before completion, were occupied by a lower-class population who settled them without respecting the rules for allocation. However, it has since been populated and basically fulfills its functions. The complex is organized around a main courtyard in the form of a square opening onto the Quadrivio di Arzano. The construction system is the same as in the previous example, but finished with lighter less contrasting colors: (Figs. 7).

**Figs. 7 1-2-3-4**

From above:  
General planimetry; Aerial photo;  
Project perspective: the main  
court; Side view of the complex.



**B. The Sport and Wellness Service Center**, overlooking **Corso Secondigliano**, includes a training pool, a gym, a martial arts gym, sports fields, and green areas. Using a common Anglo-Saxon term, this is a typical infill project that literally crosses the body of the urban fabric using a small sequence of free spaces, confined between the buildings. Composed of building structures and small equipped public areas, it connects the main road – Corso Secondigliano – to the interior of the district, without interruption ... The complex seems to work well and to have been very well received by the local population who turned it into a meeting and recreational center for individual and collective physical education (Figs. 8).

**Figs. 8 1-2-3-4**

From above:

Aerial photo of the Center; The Center in the building fabric; The front on Corso Secondigliano; Interior of the gym.



### Recovery Plan of Via Avellino in Tarsia and Parco dei Ventaglieri

Another Recovery Plan of a complex area of Naples' historic center concerned the ridge along which Via Avellino a Tarsia runs and its adjacencies up to the Ventaglieri area (Figs. 9). A fundamental element of the Recovery Plan was the reclamation and reuse of a large area between the bastions of the Tarsia ridge and Vico Lepri ai Ventaglieri, also affected by a vast system of quarries. In this area after the earthquake, it had been necessary to demolish a degraded and shapeless fabric of buildings already largely abandoned. In the void thus created, we realized an important urban park which includes a compulsory school, public gardens on different levels, and a system of lifts and stairs that connect the two parts of the area, the lower one, around Vico Lepri ai Ventaglieri, and the upper one, around Via Avellino in Tarsia (Figs. 10-11). The **Parco dei Ventaglieri**, as the completed project is now called, seems to have had considerable social success: spontaneous and public collective functions take place in its spaces, with active participation by the population (Figs. 12).

#### Figs. 9 1-2-3

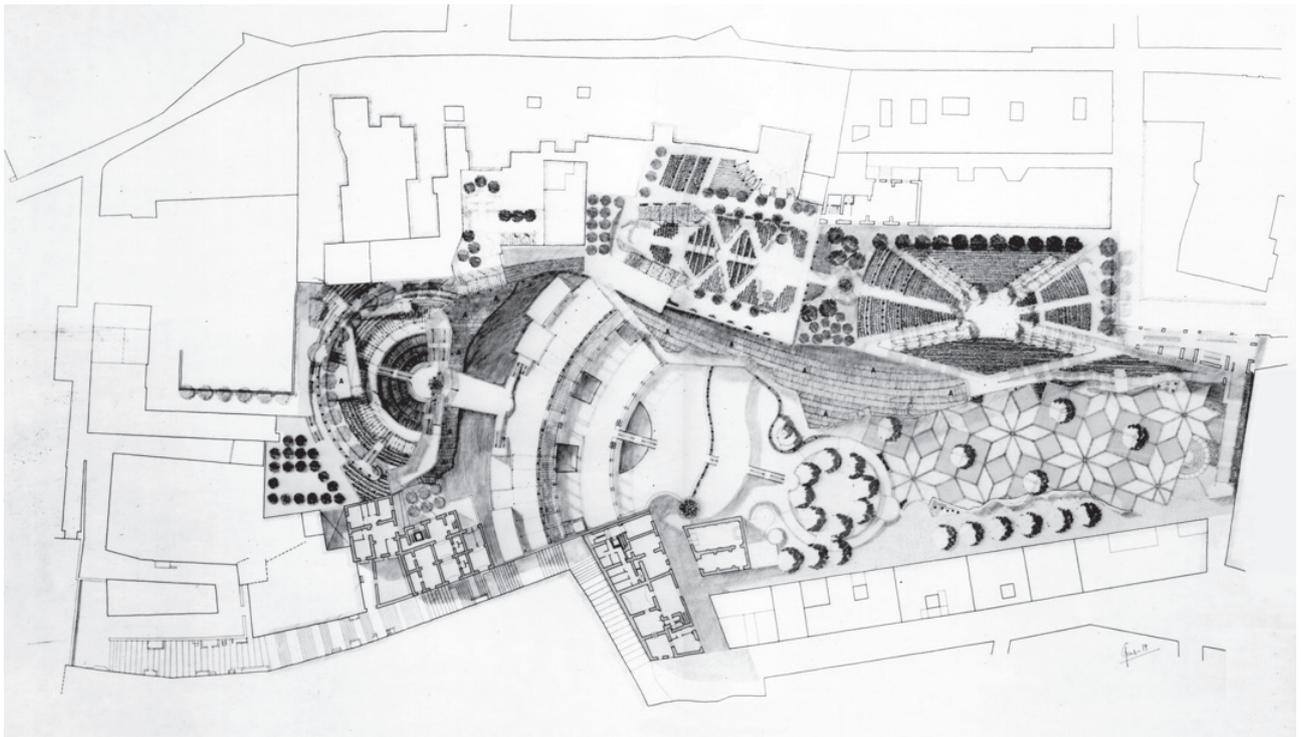
From above:

In red the perimeter of the historic center of Naples (Ancient Center and the Baroque extensions). In yellow the area of the Recovery Plan of Via Avellino in Tarsia; The system of ancient quarries; A table of the Recovery Plan: (title of ownership of the buildings).



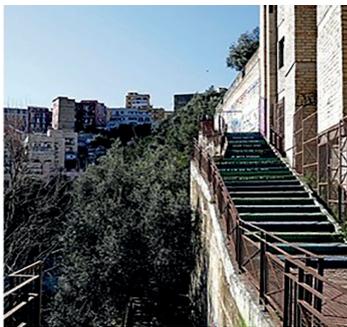
**Figs. 10 1-2**

The state of the intervention area before the implementation of the Recovery Plan and the Ventaglieri Park project.

**Figs. 10 3-4**

General plan of the Ventaglieri Park project; General view of the completed project of the Ventaglieri Park. Note: the volumes and terraced terraces of the school complex; the gardens at various altitudes; the system of stairs and ramps that connect the different levels.





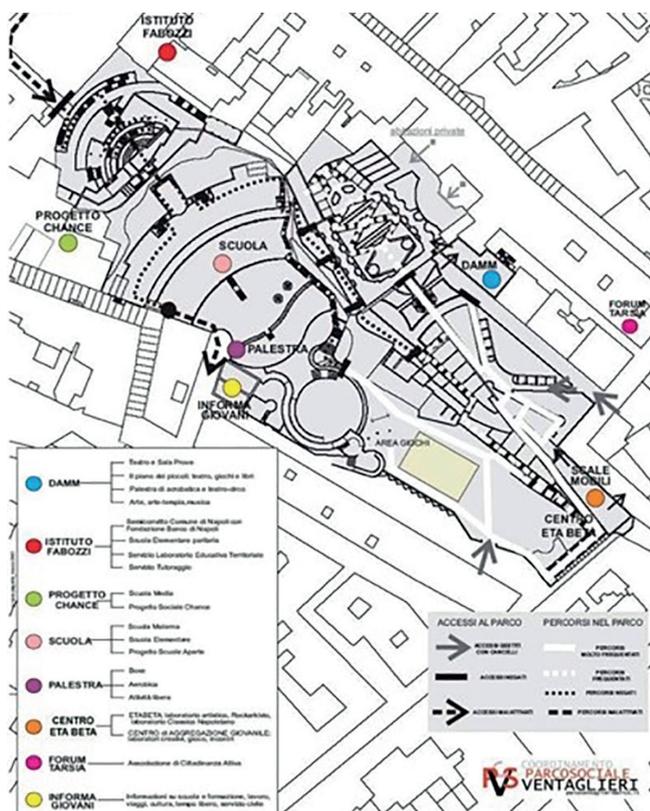
**Figs. 11 1-2-3-4-5**

Left from top:  
Some views along the paths between the different “horti” of the Park.

Right from above:  
Views of the Ventaglieri Park in the urban fabric.

The Park project was conceived to promote integration between school functions and public spaces. Part of the school’s terraced roofs is also for public use, while the school itself can access some of the Park’s spaces. The gardens are connected by a system of paths that introduces, alongside the *horti conclusi* [enclosed gardens] and the rest areas, an invitation also to explore or to experience the sites privately or subjectively. The park is at the service of a vast urban and social environment; but a particularly positive effect was that of having indirectly given new quality to the daily life of those who live in the buildings of the immediate surroundings, today overlooking a public space which, more than thirty years after its construction, seems to be run with sufficient care and used with rare interest.

Ludovico Quaroni, under whom I was trained, taught us that the projects carried out are like children who become adults: we must not hope that they will remain as we have designed them, unchanged. On the contrary, we must wish them to attract interests unlike from ours and to know how, if loved, to adapt to those needs they will be called upon to fulfill. So, it truly doesn’t sadden me that a five-a-side football field covered part of the beautiful floor with large stars I had carefully designed in the lower square; instead, I am pleased that that space has found a function – unforeseen by me – which has increased its attractiveness. And it matters even more that the range of spaces of which this “demanding” Park is composed has stimulated the foundation of a “participatory” institution, the Ventaglieri Social Park, of which I include the link of the site, which talks about this project with more truth than I can express: <http://www.parcosocialeventaglieri.it/pagine/parco.htm>



**Figs. 12 1-2-3**

From above:

The functions currently active in - and around - the Ventaglieri Park; Cultural and recreational entertainment in the Ventaglieri Park.

## 2 - The Borgo

### The Reconstruction program of the Municipality of Castelnuovo di Conza 1981 - 1991

In those same years in which I was engaged in the redevelopment of the Urban Center of Naples, I was called, with my Roman team of architects, to look into the reconstruction of the Municipality of Castelnuovo di Conza, the closest to the epicenter of the Irpinia earthquake in the veritable seismic **Crater** (Fig. 13). The institutional framework of the project was far different from the one in which I worked in Naples: this time the leader of the planning task was an important engineering company, Technital of Verona - that collaborated with the technicians of the Civil Protection and the Government Commissariat for Reconstruction especially on the purely safety and seismic aspects. My workgroup, which also had the aspects of a planning company - ProgReS (acronym for Progetti, Research, and Studies) - had acted for years as a constant reference for the lead company in architectural and urban planning in Italy and abroad. As mentioned above, in ProgReS I shared my responsibilities in planning with the then young Corrado Giannini and Silvana Manco. In the case of Castelnuovo di Conza it was Corrado Giannini who followed the work with increasing autonomy from setting it up to planning and its realization. Corrado Giannini and I had known each other for decades. I had met him in the early sixties of the last century, when he, together with Francesco Cellini, Maurizio Cagnoni, and Domenico Cecchini was among the best students of the last years of the faculty of architecture of La Sapienza in Rome, where I was already carrying out my early role as professor. During the years of the reconstruction of Castelnuovo di Conza, he was assisted with great intelligence by Mario Andreanò, who directed the studio founded specifically by Technital in Battipaglia; for some preliminary ideas, we called Francesco Cellini to collaborate with us, as we had often done in previous years in other projects. The Municipality of Castelnuovo di Conza, although part of the province of Salerno, lies on a ridge of the north-western offshoots of the Lucanian Apennines, at 650 meters in the upper valley of the Sele river. Its main town – the “paese” – had suffered devastating destruction on the evening of November 23, 1980, when the earthquake struck violently. The oldest part of the town was completely destroyed (Fig. 15) and the number of deaths – 85 out of about a thousand inhabitants – was not worse only because the quake occurred at 7:30 pm on Sunday. People were still in the square before dinner; the town lived as a cohesive community, the streets were spaces of collective life. The highest, oldest, and steepest part of the village was razed to the ground. The square located at the central point of the ridge remained mutilated. All the buildings to the west were swept away by the earthquake, those to the east, though standing, were severely damaged (Figs. 16). Even if time had already made the tower, evident in the ancient prints and the civic coat of arms, disappear (Fig. 14), until the evening of the earthquake everyone was all gathered around the highest and oldest summit of the ridge, where the remaining walls of the castle and the small patronal church emerge (Figs. 17). The form of the town and the social identity still corresponded: but that evening the identifying aspect of the town dissolved. The geological examination that preceded the planning we abandoned the idea of reconstructing the part of the ancient settlement razed to the ground by the earthquake: in that site, the subsoil was composed of a bank of large fragmented intrusive rocks, which would enter into devastating resonance with a seismic wave, as had



Lo stemma di Castelnuovo di Conza oggi

**Figg. 13 1-2**

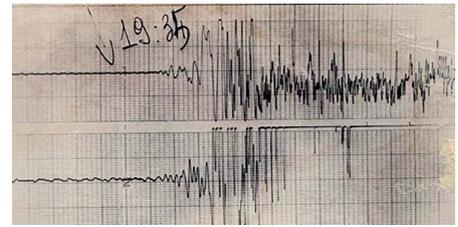
A print, 17th century: the village gathered around the castle and the church; Coat of arms of Castelnuovo di Conza.

happened. The project plan took the form of a very detailed General Town Plan, which we can consider composed of two parts: what remained of the Historic Center was the subject of a meticulous study as in a real Recovery Plan. The studio established, building by building, the technical and architectural characteristics of the reconstruction and the anti-seismic, functional, and aesthetic building restoration. And also defined in detail the characteristics of the recovery of the public spaces, alleys, streets, and squares of the ancient center. For the new buildings, necessary to replace those destroyed by the earthquake, the Plan was truly a Detailed Planivolumetric Plan; besides choosing the areas of intervention, it planned in detail the network of public spaces and established the typological, volumetric, and architectural characteristics of the buildings of the new expansion. Among the newly designed buildings, the new parish church stands out, located in the main hub of the new expansion, where most of the population now resides. In the Master Plan, we included a small residential settlement that had already been built. It was built on the initiative of Indro Montanelli and was quickly put into operation, immediately after the earthquake, a prefabricated system in reinforced concrete. But the current settlement of Castelnuovo di Conza also includes another neighborhood in its own right, not included in the Master Plan because it consists of the temporary prefabricated wooden houses, which should have been dismantled and removed after the reconstruction. In fact, once assigned, those houses were never returned and became part of the patrimony in use by almost every family of Castelnuovo. They had been made by a famous South Tyrolean company. Solid and well built, with a not unpleasant aspect – even if out of place in the Lucan Apennines – they further expand the surface occupied by the modern settlement, in any case much further than that of the ancient town if only for reasons of adaptation to the modern “urban standards” (Fig.18).

The Regulatory Plan envisaged transforming the area where the town had suffered total destruction into a “Park of Remembrance”. The simple weave of the ancient “vichi” [lanes] would have constituted the design of the paths in the green. The park has not yet been built, but the ridge begins to take on the naturalistic aspect of a densely wooded area and it seems that the idea of eventually creating a real urban park has not been abandoned. What remains of the historic center now contains only a few sites and buildings belonging to tradition; they do seem capable of at least partially reacquiring, but with great dignity, the identity function they had in the past (Figs. 18). But in the meantime, the country has shifted its center of gravity towards the areas of an easier settlement, towards the north. Today the new part of Castelnuovo is four times larger and more densely populated than what remains of the old center. And this, I believe, has given satisfaction, but also disorientation to a community already severely affected by the earthquake. Certainly the seismic event, in a small town – such as Castelnuovo di Conza – has marked the inhabitants deeply: in personal affections, in goods, and especially in their collective identity. In such conditions, that is, when the “home” of a community historically rooted and integrated within its natural environment is damaged or destroyed, the loss of the forms of the location is accompanied by a risk of weakening of community relations. It would be up to those who plan the reconstruction to imagine the form of the new settlement as that of a new “home” of the established community, a “home” ready to support or even stimulate the rebirth of the “recita a soggetto” [Tr. note: a form of improvised acting] which collective life always is. A performance that cannot exist if there is

**Figs. 14 1-2**

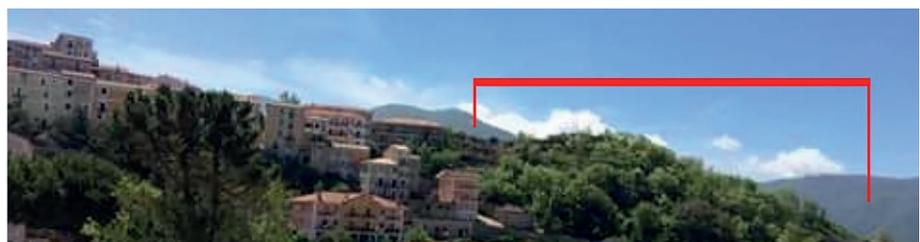
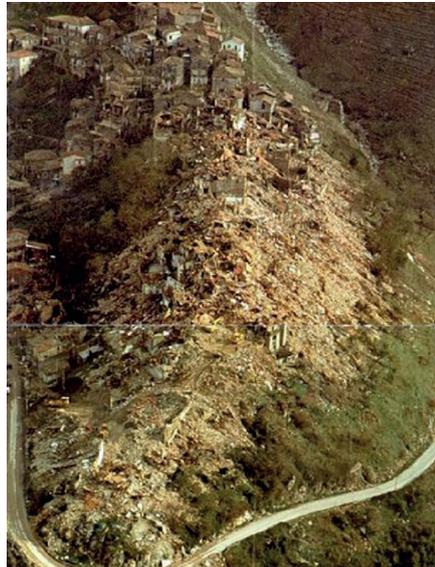
The seismic crater; On 23 October 1980, 7:35 pm, the seismogram leaves the track.

**Figs. 15 1-2-3-4-5**

From above:

Photo after the earthquake. The oldest part of the town was razed to the ground; The profile of the country from the south in a photo before the earthquake; The current profile of the country from the South; The profile of the country from the north in a photo before the earthquake; The current profile of the country from the North.

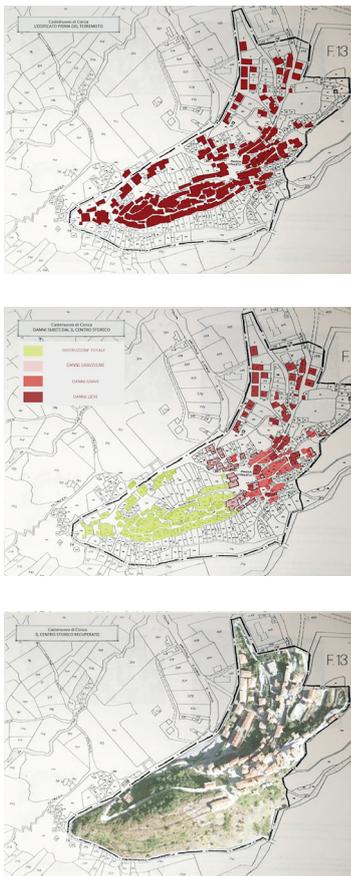
N.B. In figures 15.4 and 15.5 the horizontal brackets in red correspond to the same portion of the ridge where the oldest part of the town stood.



no “participation” and which, therefore, cannot be such if the project has not prepared places, spaces, situations that can lend themselves - according to the needs and inspiration of the living generation – as possible scenes of that play. However, in general, the use of the above mentioned modern building and urban planning “standards” directs the overall design of settlement expansions towards the creation of models that are certainly not comparable with those of historic Italian settlements, villages, or cities.

**But it’s not enough.**

In this context, therefore, the maintenance and care of what remains of the original historical settlement in the new communal organism are fundamental not only for the preservation of an unrepeatable historical asset, a testimony to the culture from which we come but above all to give new generations the most suitable scene for the expression of the most intense and memory-rich



**Figs. 16 1-2-3**

From above:

The “country” before the earthquake; Damage suffered by the earthquake; The current state of the “Historic Center” after the reconstruction.

moments of their collective life. But more than that; in our time, as we apply ourselves to restoring a “home” to communities touched by tragic events or neglect, we know that those same communities have been in crisis for some while. A perhaps slow crisis, but inevitable; it is the crisis in which the myriad of ancient minor settlements on Italian territory, the “villages”, which, if not caught up with, devoured, and digested by the suburbs of the metropolis, are slowly abandoned by the new generations. Castelnuovo di Conza which had about a thousand inhabitants on the evening of the earthquake, today has just over five hundred. The substantial improvement of housing conditions, the renewal of the entire building stock, the redevelopment of public spaces was not enough to curb the phenomenon I call “urban anemia”: it first accelerated, and then, perhaps, it has slowed down. But it has not reversed. The town, although modernly renovated, loses about one hundred inhabitants every five years. For this reason also, the municipal administration and the mayors who have followed one another, often passionate lovers of the history of the “village” and its territory, are working to restore to the surviving places of the old historic center that soul they seem to have lost, despite their redevelopment; the soul that is, I say, the ability to attract and, at the same time, represent the community. We must hope that it is not too late while the process of “urban anemia” continues. In fact, it is not enough to rebuild, requalify, and restore. Something more decisive is needed. There is a need to deeply innovate the territorial settlement network of which our villages are part, which, in our case, for example, is made up of cities – Salerno, Potenza, Naples – of the densely inhabited countryside – between Castellamare, Pompei, Sarno, Nocera Inferiore – and of the many villages and mountain villages similar to Castelnuovo. The aim must be to make each still functioning center or agglomeration a node – or a link - of a fast digital network and, above all, a public transport network suitable for the great present metamorphosis. On the one hand, therefore, it is a question of reacquiring, with a bit of humility, the old idea that Giancarlo De Carlo tried to implement very early in Colletta di Castelbianco – a splendid village clinging to the Ligurian Alps – on the other, without trepidation, it is necessary to re-explore the ideas of alternative public transport systems that even have distant, nineteenth century, historical roots. But closer to us, who does not remember the passion of the Sixties for a category of mechanized transport that would have made it possible to travel long routes and difficult gradients in a straight line, with faster systems, lighter than all those we have been to used to in a sluggish industrial development? It is certainly not up to me, architect, to explore the renewed category of “hectometric transport” (what an abstruse name) – cable cars, funiculars, vertical and inclined elevators, people movers. But it is certainly up to me to point out the integration of our work with that of IT engineers as essential, of course, but above all of the designers of infrastructure and transport systems, the most advanced. So why not look around the world with eyes capable of finding innovation where it really emerges? why not understand how much “disseminable” innovation already exists in the experiments of some collective transport systems that until now have seemed to us only “niche” demonstrations, such as the cableways systems of Singapore and of a growing number of major and minor Chinese and South American cities and transport on public helicopters-buses? How else can we continue to believe that rebuilding, redeveloping, restoring with our care, that of us architects, is enough to render our villages, the urbanized countryside, but also our historic cities, the privileged places of a way of life suitable for our times? And above all adequate to the needs of future generations?

**Figs. 17 1-2-3**

Castelnuovo Conza today; The arrival in the country from the North; in the background, on the right, the wooded hill where the oldest part of the center stood. The country has “changed direction”. From a typical ridge settlement it is now a town resting on slow parallel steps. What remains of the ancient center acts as a unifying backdrop for the new alignments. But the new town doesn't stop there. See figure 17.3.



- Perimetro dell'area del Vecchio Centro Storico.
- Perimetro dell'area di espansione secondo il PRG.
- Perimetro dell'area di espansione detta Villaggio Montanelli.
- Perimetro dell'area del villaggio provvisorio/permanente in legno.



**Figs. 18 1-2-3-4**

From above:

The remaining part of the ancient town, now the Historic Center; A typical staircase of the historic center; A vico; The square, called Lu Chianedh, restored after the earthquake, comes back to life in religious recurrences.



## References

- AA.VV. (1985) - *Quaderni della Edina. La ricostruzione a Napoli*. Edizioni Edina.
- BENJAMIN W. e LACIS A. (2020 [1924]) - *Napoli Porosa*. Editore Libreria Dante & Descartes.

Lucio Valerio Barbera, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Sapienza University of Rome, Chair-holder of the UNESCO Chair in "Sustainable Urban Quality and Urban Culture, notably in Africa" (2013). Director of the academic journal "L'architettura delle città – The journal of the Scientific Society Ludovico Quaroni" (2013). Dean of the Faculty of Architecture "Ludovico Quaroni", Sapienza University of Rome (2003-2009). Coordinator of the Doctorate program in Architectural design and Theory (1993-2007). Co-founder with Clementina Panella of the Master "Architecture for Archaeology-Archaeology for Architecture" and Director (2007 to 2009); Deputy Mayor of Rome for Cultural Politics and Historic Center (1992-1993). He practiced as architect, planner and landscape designer internationally since Sixties. He recently published the book *La città radicale di Ludovico Quaroni*, Gangemi 2019.