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Green Urban Areas: From the "Garden Cities" to the "Eco-strucures"

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Abstract—*Green urban areas have always been an important ecological and environmental element in Mediterranean cities. The perception of this urban element developed overtime, assuming different social meaning: in the 18th century green urban areas represented an important collective space for new emergent classes; during the 19th century a new concept of "garden city" was developed; in the 20th century Camillo Sitte stated that green areas was not only an embellishment for city but also an essential element for social and urban health.*
Nowadays the use of green elements in architecture is of utmost importance, given the high density of urban areas.
In the proposed paper, the evolution of green urban areas concept is presented based on historical analysis of architectural transformations. The role of green urban areas is analysed considering its importance both for human life and for urban development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green urban areas have always been an important ecological and environmental element; The perception of this urban element developed overtime, assuming different social meaning: in the 18th century green urban areas represented an important collective space for new emergent classes; during the 19th century a new concept of "garden city" was developed, was conceived by Ebenezer Howard, who stands out as one of the strongest ideological theories of the city and one of the first modern urban scientific theories under the vision of "green" and built in the 20th century Camillo Sitte stated that green areas was not only an embellishment for city but also an essential element for social and urban health. It is switching from an idea of nature, of passage and green with aesthetic and decorative value to a value of use.

Making prevail the concept of utility is made the transition from the park generated for the bourgeoisie to that aimed at the health needs of man.

The architects were the first to guess that with the integration of natural elements it was possible to implement corrections to the structures themselves.

Nowadays the use of green elements in architecture is of utmost importance, given the high density of urban areas.

The buildings provide space to increase the share of green by enhancing the physical scenario representing the continuity between past, present and future.

There were many productions in which the first floor was absorbed by the presence of vegetation, just think of the Quai Branly museum which houses a striking wall-garden and is submerged and almost suspended in a seemingly wild green space, made only artificial from the glass barrier, designed in Paris by Jean Nouvel in collaboration with the French botanist Patrick Blanc, at the CaixaForum in Madrid of Herzog and De Meuron that once housed the power plant of Mediodía, and presents two characteristics that make it unmistakable: the garden vertical and the apparent state of "levitation" or even the Vertical Forest, a work created by Stefano Boeri in Milan which not only performs an embellishment function, but, intensely intervenes in the development of a natural balance, consisting of two towers of 110 and 76 meters, will house 900 trees, up to nine meters high, as well as numerous shrubs and floral plants.

More and more architectural projects try to bring the green to the center of our cities and the "green" component in architecture allows to exploit both the vertical and horizontal surfaces of buildings, thus nullifying the border between nature and building fabric for the city that derives from it.

Figure 1: Parigi, boulevard, after Houssmann's work.

Designing and thinking Green in the city becomes a way to reformulate the landscape from static and artificial to dynamic and changeable. In this way architecture regains the starring role, where collaboration with nature contributes to the creation of spaces that can improve the quality of life of man.

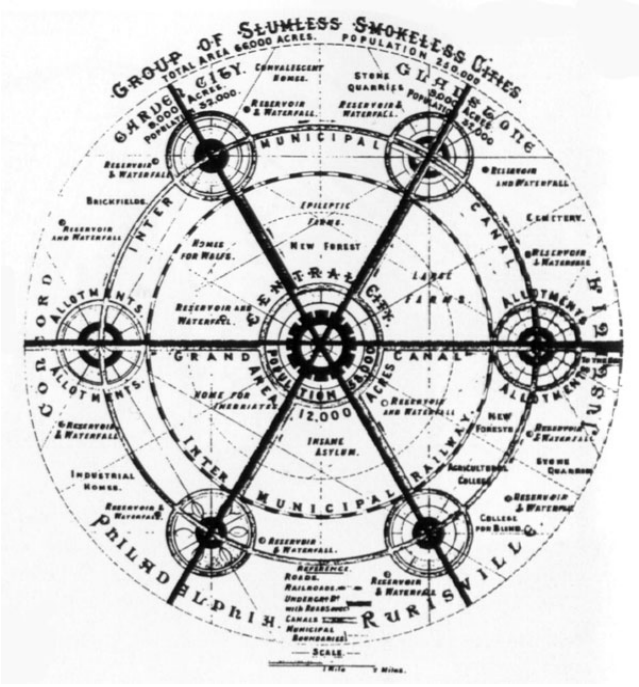

Figure 2: Ebenezer Howard, “*The Garden City*”.

Figure 3: Musée du Quai Branly, Jean Nouvel, Paris 2006. Detail of the vertical wall.

Figure 4: Caixa Forum, Herzog and De Meuron, Madrid 2008. Detail of the plant wall.

Figure 5: Bosco Verticale, Stefano Boeri & partners 2014. Detail of the facade.

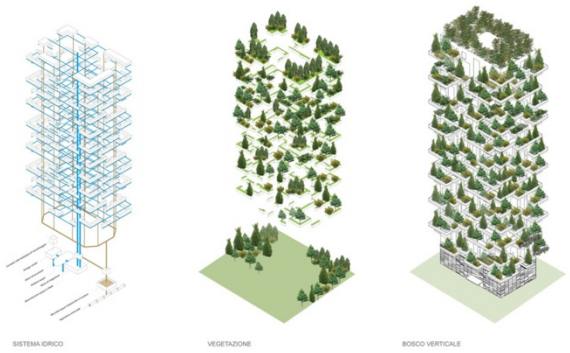

Figure 5. Bosco Verticale, Stefano Boeri & partners 2014. Detail of the construction system.

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