

The Earth Lands Program: a Strategy for Local Earthen Architecture Restoration and Territorial Sustainable Development as Well



Arch. Gaia Bollini, arch. Isidoro Parodi
39 Via Ca' Baroncello, Cassola 36022 (VI), Italy
11 Via Gramsci, Novi Ligure 15067 (AL), Italy
Novi Ligure Department of Territorial Management
and Urban Planning
arch.gb@tele2.it

ABSTRACT

Novi Ligure is a small Italian town in South Piedmont Region (Alessandria province). This area, which includes about 30 other towns in the Novi surroundings, is characterized by an important rammed earth and adobe architectural heritage, that marks out both Novi urban (and historical) centre (palaces, churches, public buildings etc. not only in Novi) and the rural landscape. Most of these earthen architectures are still inhabited and they can be hardly recognised, as the rammed earth walls are often covered with typical coloured plasters; whereas others stand in the Novi Ligure plan in a state of desertion and decay. This particular heritage represents the land memory, history and meaning; for this reason Novi public authority decided to preserve and revalue it (as pretext to plan a more complex territorial sustainable development).

In order to start with a complete re-evaluation and promotion plan of its earthen heritage, Novi Ligure has recently submitted a local *Ecomuseum* (called *Earth Lands-Terre diTerra*) design to the Regional Administration. The main interest will be focused on promoting and setting up permanent actions of preservation, restoration and re-evaluation of the local and traditional earthen heritage, in order to place it in an economic system, strictly correlated to right territorial exploitation policies. Collocating the local earthen architecture patrimony in this specific territorial design aims three strategies: giving earth its building material dignity back, emphasizing its natural and sustainable features as well; replacing a territorial lack of touristic receptivity, that is neither much specialized nor innovative at the moment; finally, defining thematic (and closely) integrated routes (country/city foot and cycle paths, greenways etc.) connected to cultural, historical, social and economical etc. environment of the territory. Everything should be inserted in a more general attitude towards the biocompatible ("green"), sustainable architecture, where earth as building material, tested by centuries of use and revised according to a modern approach can be reasonably considered as an effective answer to the actual environment problems to which the contemporary world of building and architecture has to respond. All these actions will contribute to sustain the local rural architecture outline and the use of both rural and fluvial spaces of the area as well.

KEY WORDS :

earth architecture, sustainable and territorial planning, *ecomuseum*