

Public Realm in Rome

Fall Semester 2016/17

MSc3 Theory Seminars

Research submission:

Papal Arsenal, Rome; Reading the site as a human condition.

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Submission date: 13th January

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Introduction

This paper will attempt to discover a theoretical approach to the understanding, analysis, and eventual proposal for the site-specific task. The site is located in the metropolitan city of Rome, Italy. It is a former Papal Arsenal, long since abandoned, and named as an 'interstice' within the city. Within the premise of the assignment the proposal is concerned with the 'public institution' or 'public space'; therefore, the task at hand is to give a new lease of life to the site and return it to the context of the city.

To start this paper, it is important to understand the meaning of the city, especially as we shall be focussing on the public domain. Two aspects go hand in hand when imagining the city; firstly, the city is a 'jungle' of brick and mortar – this evokes the sense of the built environment; secondly – the city is a vast agglomeration of human activity – it's inhabitants create the city – literally and figuratively. There is a continual coexistence and collaboration between the built environment and its inhabitants, each side assisting in determining the trajectory of the others' development – they influence each other. Since the city is a product of human activity, it is clear, that we (with varying degrees of direct impact) influence our surroundings; however, it may not be immediately obvious the effect that the built environment has on human activity or on the human condition, or whether this effect would be improving, accommodating, or deteriorating. This paper shall initially investigate the extent to which the built environment can affect us, these findings shall be used to initiate a theoretical argument for the approach the builders of the city may follow in order to accommodate the dweller, finally it shall attempt to the apply the theory to the site-specific condition.

To begin a discourse on the effect the built environment within cities has on its inhabitants, it is imperative to provide a brief overview of the evolution of the city as a product of civilization. At this stage, we shall delineate three stages of city development: The Medieval City, The Renaissance City, and The Modern City.

- The Medieval City – cities were not planned, they developed where they were needed; they grew and refined organically over long periods. '...because this slow process permitted continual adjustment and adaptation of the physical environment to the city functions. The city was not a goal in itself, but a tool formed by use.'ⁱ the cities were based on the experience and needs of the inhabitants and built by the inhabitants.
- The Renaissance City. A drastic change in the city development occurred from the 1400s. The transition from what is called, 'the organic city' to 'the planned city'. The concern moved from the primary functions of the buildings and the areas between them (which accommodate human activity); 'the space', to the 'spatial effect' – a focus on the representation of power and the visual effect this had on cities. The street becomes a 'theatrical machine'ⁱⁱ.
- The Modern City. The second change took place in the early 20th century, it occurred as an antidote to the deteriorating physical environment and demographic growth explosion of western cities in the late 19th Centuryⁱⁱⁱ. A rational and scientific approach to city development was created, which was highly influenced by the ideologies of the Enlightenment (1800-1900s). The city no longer came to be through

natural/temporal accumulation, instead there was attention to aesthetics; with picturesque, geometric purification, ahistoricism and elimination of the disorder in the city^{iv}. This resulted in a fragmentation and 'the separation and exclusion of elements'; a 'separati[on] of architecture from the experience of life and the needs of society'^v although most of the utopian and post-war megalomaniacal proposals were not realised, their development and the ideologies behind them have drastically scarred and disfigured the cities, with this process continuing to the present day. Ready-made 'instant cities' are constantly developed.

'The social democratic utopia did indeed allow scope for consumer-orientated approach and increasingly diverse architectural forms, but urban design as a whole remains large-scale, mono-functional and inflexible. As a result of this, the role of the urban user was singularly limited to consumer of everyday products'^{vi}

From this we may infer that throughout the ages, from the medieval city to the present day, the preoccupation of semiotics and the expression of power through the built environment has reduced the role of the inhabitant from that of active user and a producer of the space to that of passive observer. The individual is stripped of their physical, emotional, sensual, and productive qualities in the discourse of architecture and has become instead viewed purely as an inanimate object that must be contained and controlled by its environment – the city. This results in potentially visually attractive (but empty), unpolluted spaces, but, perhaps only as it is used purely as a transitional space.

Jan Gehl observes that there are three types of activities: necessary, optional, and social.^{vii} The latter two are the concern of this paper, since those activities mostly depend on the physical quality of the external spaces.

Individuals are sensorial, experiential, and social beings who require external stimulus and contact with others, whether this be direct (meeting, playing) or indirect (hearing, seeing). It may be argued that the essential aspect of the city is those social acts which take place between or around the built environment, therefore the physical framework of the city can have a great influence on the accommodation of this act. It then becomes requisite that the city should provide for the possibilities of meeting, greeting, seeing and hearing. However, it does not mean that there is a direct interrelationship between the aesthetics (or 'beauty') of the built environment and the activity within and between it, rather the overall construction of the space which accommodates the activity might be perceived as the key aspect.

Aldo Rossi in the book 'The Architecture of the city' attempts to redefine the relationship between object and subject. The Object being the city (and/or architecture), the Subject being the inhabitant. Aldo Rossi's notion is that if the collective memory of the society is the city itself, then it follows that the city is collective memory^{viii}. Consequently, we should attempt to reintegrate the subject and object into the discourse of architecture – an idea apparently in opposition to the approach of modernism, which implicitly rejected the subject. Therefore, if we agree with Aldo Rossi that the city is a mutual coexistence between the object and the subject, and that the subject is one of the primary components of the city metabolism; then it is important to notice that the human being is a sensorial, evolving being with innate unconscious yearning for participation (interaction, synergy) irrespective of if this is with animate or inanimate entities. Thus, cognition, perception and existentialism cannot be erased from the lexicon of architecture and instead can act as a driver for the 'other' approach to the development of the city – seeing the city at the eye level view. Which

may lead to the more accommodating environments for the human condition, 'that stimulate spontaneous interaction in daily comings and goings', promotes development of common values and stipulates the resilience and confidence in city user.^{ix} The following chapters of this paper will discuss the

phenomenological approach to architectural research and design – architecture/the city is read not through the morpho-typological perspective (the form), but rather through how they are perceived and experienced – the spaces in between.

Moving from semiotics to phenomenology

'Form matters, but more for what it can do than for what it looks like.'^x

As has already been discovered, the semiotic approach of the 20th century (and, to some extent, the present) has disregarded the subject as well as the pre-existing conditions, radically calmed meaning of representation and disregarded the instrumentality of architecture in everyday life. This results in problems in the cities at the local scale, the streets no longer form places where everyday life can take place. Or as Stan Allen states:

'... an architecture that works exclusively in the semiotic register and defines its role as a critique, commentary, or even 'interrogation'... has given up on the possibility of ever intervening in [the] reality'^{xi}.

Therefore, it is an opportunity to look at the human condition as a generator of a different approach to architecture, in this regard the description of the human condition by Michel Serres can be appropriate:

Human condition:

'Stations and paths together form a system. Points and lines, beings and relations. What is interesting might be the construction of the system, the number and disposition of stations and paths. Or it might be the flow of messages passing through the lines.... What passes might be a message but parasites (static) prevent it from being heard, and sometimes, from being sent.'^{xii}

From this metaphor, could be read that the human activity (condition) is an active organism in a constant state of metastasis – spontaneous, disorderly, coincidental... and the parasite – the urban environment – static, exclusive, orderly so that it prevents the successful integration of both the subject and object. This notion of the need for urban coherence to be replaced in order to more successfully accommodate has been voiced by numerous acclaimed critics, who refer to

architecture being Incomplete; Network like (Stan Allen), Equivocal (Robert Venturi), Spontaneous, Ambiguous (Hrshahn Urban design) and many others.

Thus, the architectural vocabulary can be changed:

From:	To:
Plastic	Infrastructural
Formal	Operational
Representational	Performative
Fragmented	Continual/Connected

The phenomenological approach to architecture have been already explored by a numerous practising architects and theorists such as August Choisy in his investigation on the acropolis in Athens as early as the nineteenth century. More recently, architects such as Gordon Cullen and Kevin Lynch with their seminal works 'Townscape' (1961) and 'Image of the City' (1960) respectively. In both writings, the city is analysed through the perspective of the subject walking through the city – the city at eye level. It is important to stress that, in his seminal work, Kevin Lynch emphasizes the importance of the observer – the subject – as a primary enabler of the process of the analysis of the city. The subject 'imagines' or creates a mental image of the city, therefore, it could be assumed that the object and the subject are engaging in a two-way process; where the object (with its presence) effects the sensorial and emotional receptors of the subject. Correspondingly, the subject endows the object with meaning, reimagining it according to their own needs, desires and preferences. However, according to Lynch the following general prerequisites are essential for the subject to place them self in the environment: identity, structure and meaning^{xiii}. The object should be distinguished (identity, meaning) from its surroundings, but at the same time recognised as an extension

(structure) of its surroundings in the eye of the subject. Even though, this interpretation can seem rather contradictory at the first glance, according to K. Lynch the city can become 'open-ended, adaptable to change, allowing the [subject] to continue to investigate and organize reality...'^{xiv} However, as investigated in the book 'The Image of the city' these aspects/prerequisites are most often lacking in today's cities, and the most predominant features being: 'confusion, flouting points, weak boundaries, isolation, breaks in the continuity, lack of character or differentiation.'^{xv}

K. Lynch developed an approach that divided the city into five mental representations or elements – paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks that are never read in isolation, but rather create a matrix through which the overall image of the city is developed.^{xvi} Each element possesses its own attributes that can impact the image constructed by the subject; whether this be; clear/readable and connecting or, confusing/isolated (isolating) and unidentifiable. Therefore, the city is a network, 'stations and lines for a system'.

Although the fluency of this approach is clear and consistent, it could be questioned, whether it may feasibly be applied to the whole city to reach an achievable design outcome. Therefore, in order to apply this methodology, the paper will focus on the site-specific conditions, using what could be called an 'acupuncture' approach to city planning^{xvii}. This involves seeing the site as a city within the city, which has an identifiable character, but at the same time is connected to its wider surroundings.

Further analysis is bound specifically to the sensorial effect on the subject, however it does not mean that the form and the function is discarded, but rather 'is reconceptualised as conducive to certain outcomes, certain possibilities of activity and habitation.'^{xviii} Therefore, the further investigation of the site will incorporate already discussed approaches;

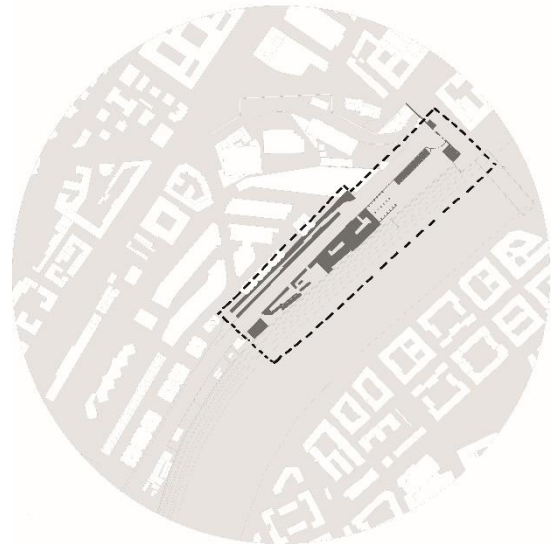
the city or a site as a network – an infrastructural, dynamic organism; the site as experienced by the subject, yet remaining aware that we are working within a historically stratified urban environment – as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Papal arsenal, Via Portuense, Trasevere, Rome

Rome is often described as the 'eternal' city or the 'biggest museum under the open sky', an urban organism par excellence, 'where each part is tied to another by a relationship of necessity' and all contribute to the same end^{xix}, which is a result of the organic and continuous metamorphosis of the urban fabric throughout the centuries. Therefore, Rome can be thought of as a 'persistent' urban environment. According to Aldo Rossi, the built environment may be divided into two types; 'the persistent' and 'the pathological'. Persistent space (architecture) is something that evolves with social and technological changes – continuing to function in the broader context of the city. Pathological is an artefact of the past that has become isolated, defunct, and problematic, since reciprocal action is suppressed.^{xx} Hence dilapidation, abandonment, brownfields, and neglect, and violence that occurs within cities. Therefore, the site of interest – the Papal Arsenal – could be included to the latter category, the pathological, since it is an artefact of the past which has become an isolated, forgotten element in Rome's urban scape.

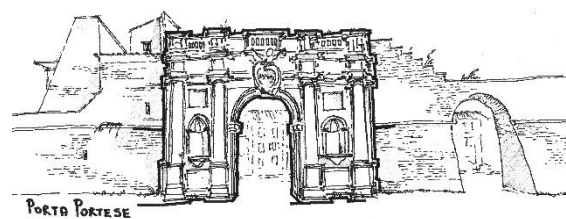
Prior to starting the analysis of the site, it is important to understand the site through its representational character, or what it represents as a physical form, as opposed to the phenomenological approach – its perceived character.

The area of Papal Arsenal presently comprises of 3 abandoned buildings and is of a small scale, insufficient for the analysis or further development of the proposal, therefore the description of the site will be considered that circumscribed in image 1.



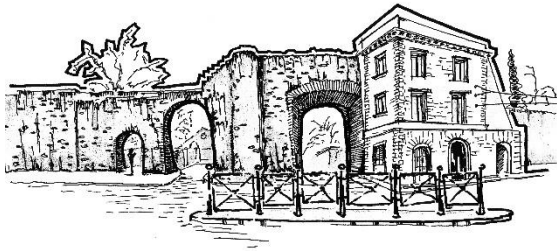
Img.1

The site lies on the west bank of the river Tiber, approximately 3.5km south from Vatican City. The site was historically situated outside the city walls, and was used mainly for agriculture, it was connected to the city by the gate which remains an identifiable feature of the area. Porta Portuense is a gateway erected in 1644 and located at the most northern point of the site, a part of the Janiculum wall system (Img.2&3). Additionally, it signifies the beginning of Via Portuense, a busy city road that runs parallel to the Tiber and borders the Papal arsenal).



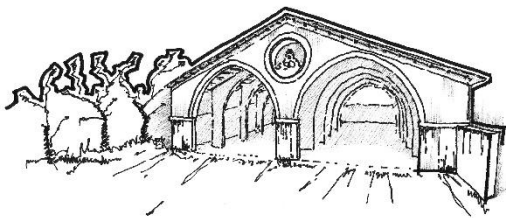
Img.2

the shipping trade on the Tiber was in steep decline.



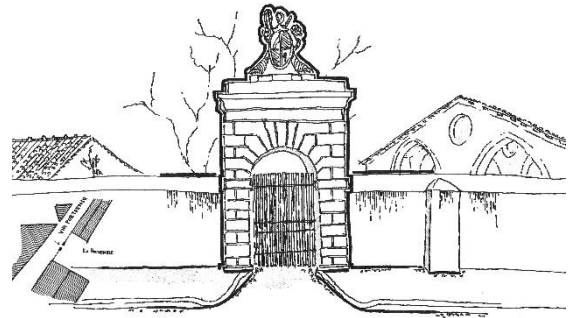
Img.3

On the east side of the Via Portuense is located the former Papal Arsenal, which was constructed in 1714 and was intended for the maintenance of the river boats and barges. Other constructions that potentially belonged to the original site are no longer present and their character not now known. The remaining building is a two-aisle construction with a double Gothic arch and gable roof, this design is highly atypical of Rome architecture (Img.4). Presently the edifice stands empty and inaccessible.

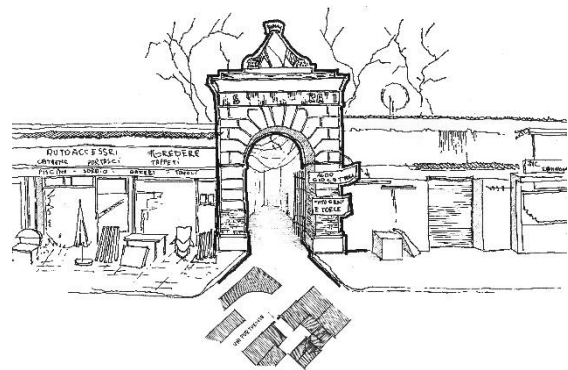


Img.4

The area assumed to be the grounds of the former arsenal is currently comprised of 2 further buildings of less significant character (the date of construction is not known) which could be assumed to have been erected at a later stage as they neither correspond in style nor in scale to the main edifice, additionally, a wall borders the site along the Via Portuense side. Along the perimeter of the wall may be found two former entrances (gateways) to the site (Img.5&6) which were constructed in 1853, during a reconstruction phase. The reason of reconstruction is not known; as by this time

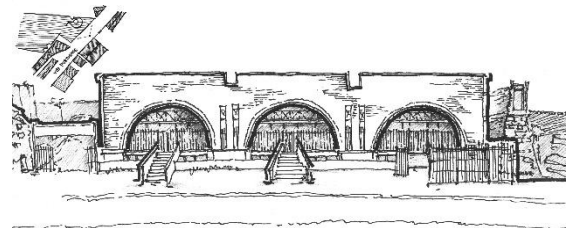


Img.5



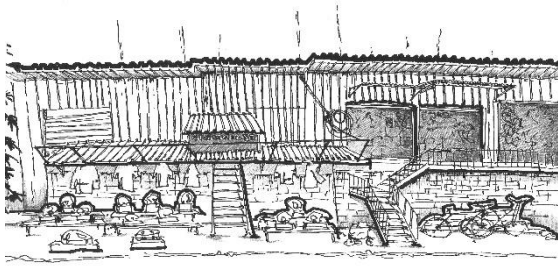
Img.6

Across the Via Portuense (facing the arsenal) is located a supermarket, of no significant architectural interest, dating from the late 20th Century. (Img.7)



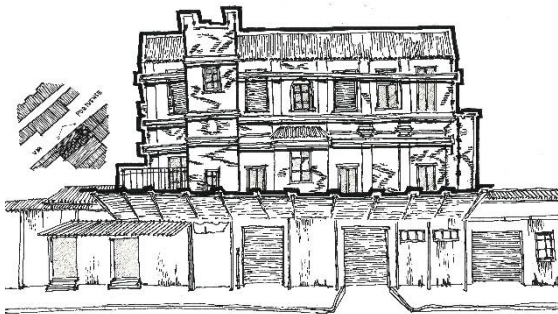
Img.7

From this point southwards on both sides of the Via Portuense, the site is occupied by self-constructed corrugated aluminium barracks (Img.8), which are appropriated as bike and bicycle shops or are otherwise derelict (img.9).



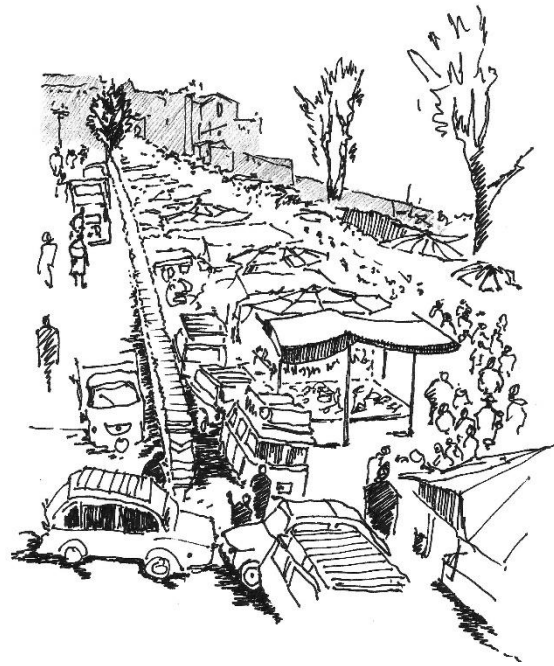
Img.8

All edifices lie on the level of the Via Portuense except for the existing raised wall on the west side of the road – on top of which the barracks are located, the plinth can be seen in image 8. This plinth is a trace of the former railway tracks of the old Trastevere junction, which has been out of service since 1910.



Img.9

Another feature of the area is less architectural and more of a temporal character, it does however, play a significant role in the image of the area; the weekly Porta Portese flea market that has been a feature of the area since 1945. The market occupies the length of the Via Portuense and carries on further outside the area of interest to Piazza Ippolito Nievo, which resides on the parallel Viale di Trastevere (Img.10&11).



Img.10



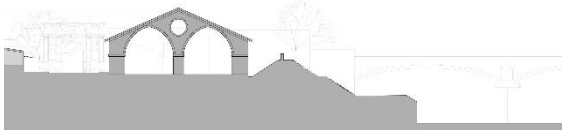
Img.11

The last feature of the site to be analysed – although perhaps not strictly part of the site is the Tiber river and its banks. It is necessary to mention since this will be later integrated within the analysis and proposal, and is also a strong topographical feature, dominating the site. Formerly the Tiber was of great importance to the city, it functioned as a main infrastructure, Img.12 shows a plate that features San Michele a Ripa (front), the Customs house (centre) and at the back can be seen the building of the former Arsenal. The Tiber also provided a source of the water. However since the current embankments were erected in 1876 in order to avoid the regular floods, the city (and the site) 'turned its back to the river'. Presently the river banks lie approximately 8 meters below the street level

and seem to be a blank spot within the city – used only by daily joggers and cyclists, especially as no facilities are provided for active appropriation of banks. It could be said to have become the greatest interstice in the city of Rome (Img.13).



Img.12



Img.13

From this overview of the site further characteristics can be observed:

- Dominant road crossing the site – Via Portuense.
- Scattering of historical buildings on the Northern part of the area – Papal arsenal, Porta Portese.
- Agglomeration of informal settlement with derelict buildings amongst them.
- Temporal, but dominant character of Porta Portese flea market.
- Embankments dominate and separate the river and the site.

By understanding the physical characteristics of the site, it is possible to move towards the analysis of the site through the phenomenological approach, that will be carried out in the second part of this chapter.

The city is an organism, continuously evolving through a process of adaption and exchange. Individual buildings and sites tightly interknit,

(contextually and functionally) with their surroundings and with their broader context – the city and beyond, affecting a constant symbiotic relationship^{xxi}. The site of the Papal Arsenal has become withdrawn from this system, and sits now as an isolated object with little intrinsic function or meaning to inhabitants or visitors. Therefore, the site fell into a crisis, becoming an interstice or what A. Rossi calls 'pathology' in the tightly interknit historic city.

This site has not been erased completely from the cultural map of Rome. Continued human activity such as the Porta Portese flea market and (to a lesser extent) the bike shop barracks bring a great flow of locals and tourists, however, due to the temporal nature of the flea market it has only a partial influence on the urban quality of the site. It would appear that the market operated as a trigger for the establishment of the more permanent bicycle shop barracks that currently dominate the site, but due to a marginalised function and the lack of real investment, the site became an island within its own established perimeter, without the opportunity or ability to grow.

The following aspects must be considered:

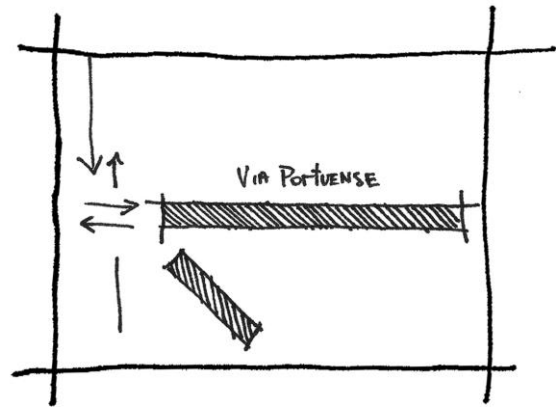
- the historic site – the Papal Arsenal- the boat and barge repair facility, the entrance gate to the city – Porta Portuense, (a customs house no longer exists, but was located just inside the city wall on the river bank (Img.12)).
- the present situation – Porta Portese flea market – weekly activity, the bike (repair) shop barracks – permanent, semi-legal commercial establishments.

Rome exists as an organic continual urban tissue par excellence, where the urban maze is intertwined and continuous. For example, the neighbouring area to the site Trastevere; an area considered one of the typical Roman neighbourhoods, and often referred as 'Roma

for Romans'. A 'Room like' urban tissue prevails, it is a vibrant, busy environment, clustered with numerous commercial spaces, galleries and eateries, (Img.14). By contrast, the Arsenal area exists at the opposite end of the activity spectrum. Dominant linear Via Portuense (Img.15) is 'bordered' by blank walls and boarded windows. This street exists solely infrastructurally, with continual traffic and a lack of suspense. The site is split into three distinct sections, with no mutual coexistence. The plinth of the buildings on the either side of the street become boundaries; R. Sennett and C. Alexander both (separately) describe the notion of the boundary as being the edge where things end, as opposed to the border – the edge where different groups meet.^{xxii}

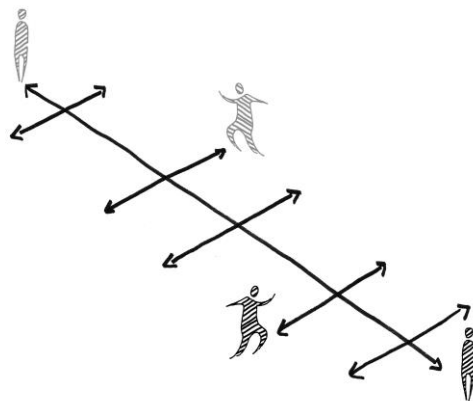


Img.14



Img.15

Each side of the road is densely built up, therefore offering no visual connection. The street is isolated, and to some extent 'tunnel like'. That this visual and physical isolation, with a sense of disconnection, is discomforting to the users has been greatly explored by C. Alexander in his book 'A pattern language'. Opening the street, allowing transparency, and exposing ordinary activities encourages appropriation, and allows 'the street [to] become not only a transitional space, but [also a] street where things happen and people meet.'^{xxiii} Therefore I propose to open the street in west and east at several intersections – towards the adjacent neighbourhoods and the Tiber river. (Img.16)



Img.16

The built environment which envelopes the Via Portuense lacks coherence, what G. Caniggia calls a 'discontinuity of products and

intention^{xxiv} or the crises of the built environment. In his text Caniggia refers to modern or contemporary city planning, which displays a 'blinker' approach to architecture, operating 'with complete individualism and is totally unaware of contributing through his own work to a picture of relations, which is an indispensable result of building in any era' which results in 'an indistinct heap of apparently different objects, a panorama of exasperating individuality that can only bring to mind a cemetery par excellence, consisting of scarcely interrelated monuments.'^{xxv} The site may not be exclusively the product of the modern era, however, the scattering of various edifices: the Arsenal, the barracks and the supermarket do acquire a similar character. G. Cagigga, J. Gehl and many other theorists, propagate the medieval city, 'the spontaneous building' with inheritance passed down and continuously evolving – typological continuity. There can be no argument, that the historic neighbourhoods which evolved gradually and over time (such as previously mentioned Trastevere) are the most satisfactory for residents and visitors; they maintain a special character and are easily readable from the subjects' perspective. However, it is of questionable value to attempt to maintain the continuity in the typology without being replicative and falsely mimicking the past. However, a complete disregard of the existing typologies of the surrounding city would, most likely, mean the site would remain isolated from its surroundings. Therefore, the proposition is to 'borrow' from existing typologies, patterns and habits and retranslate them to meet the present and future needs, whilst at the same time recognising the customs and way of life in Rome.

People don't resist change, they resist being changed. - James C. Scott^{xxvi}

In planning the site, it is important to remember the notion of the city being an organism – a coherent relationship with the surroundings prevents the perception that the

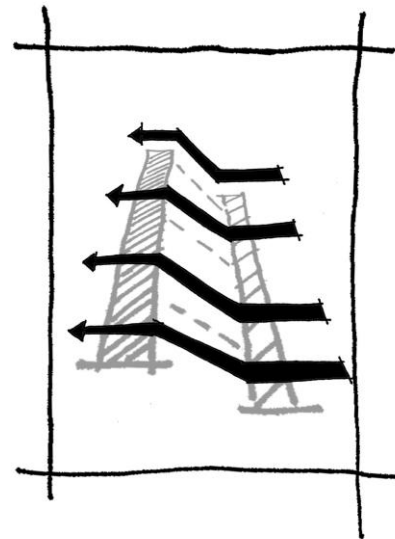
site exists as an isolated and unrelated fragment. Correspondingly, the reverse view may be taken – seeing the building (the site) operating as a city within a city – with paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks, which integrates urban life within it and blurs the boundaries between built matter and infrastructure. A building that instead of restricting movement, instigates it, and intertwines with its surrounding areas can become a catalyst of activity in the area. Likewise bringing back generous public space into the context of the city, where at present there is only neglected and partially abandoned space. Taking the site as a city within a city means any intervention must carry a unified identity which incorporates the following:

- The existing historic site of the arsenal, adapting it to new functions; this way giving it back to the city, and allowing the historic layer to be a propelling actor for the identity of the site.
- Public promenade
- Connections between the site and the Tiber
- Small pockets of outdoor activity

The site has always been an area of coming and going, producing, repairing, consuming and distributing. Therefore, as a theoretical exercise the programmatic proposal is to develop an establishment of production and consumption – a productive market, as a natural continuation of the already pre-existing condition of the site. The proposal forms a new vibrant public space, and seeks to provide an alternative to the commercialised city centre. In this way, the rest of the site, including the abandoned monuments may be incorporated into the program and become a pivotal component of the new development strategy.^{xxvii} Thus, the 'pathology' of the existing site will be subverted to 'persistence'- no longer an isolated relic of the past, but rather a functional destination in the broader

context of the city and a part of its connective tissue.

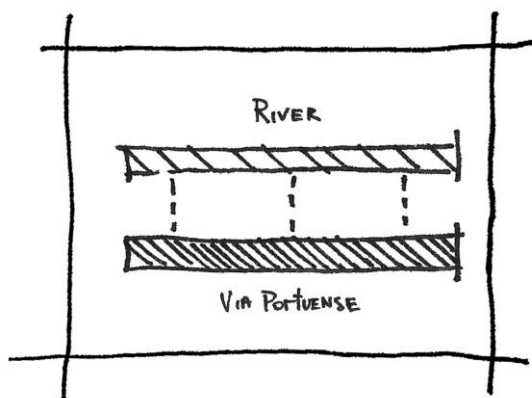
The site is not only split into segments by the busy Via Portuense and the juxtaposition of unrelated objects (the built matter), but it is also vertically and horizontally disengaged from the river Tiber (Img.17&18), which is situated parallel to the Via Portuense on the east side of the site. Due to the river embankments, the river is lost from the image of the viewer when stood at the site level. Correspondingly, when stood at the river bank it is impossible to place yourself in the context of the site. Additionally, when stood on the opposite bank of the river at street level, the site is virtually invisible, due to the proliferation of plant growth (Img.19) – the site is erased from the image of the city. Therefore, as we are dealing with a proposal for a public building the building should be identifiable and visible – a landmark. A connection must be created not only between the site and surrounding area, but also to the river level (physically) and to the opposite bank (visually). In so doing, a part of the riverbank can be claimed back and become an integral part of the city.



Img.18

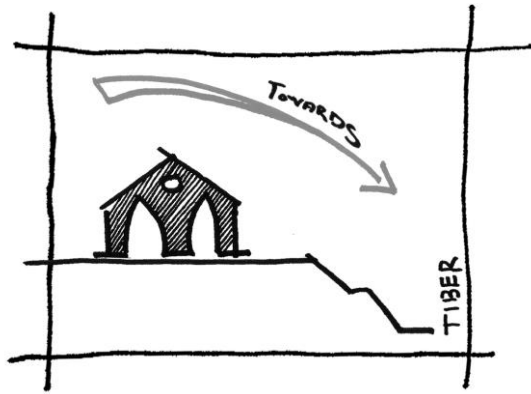


Img.19



Img.17

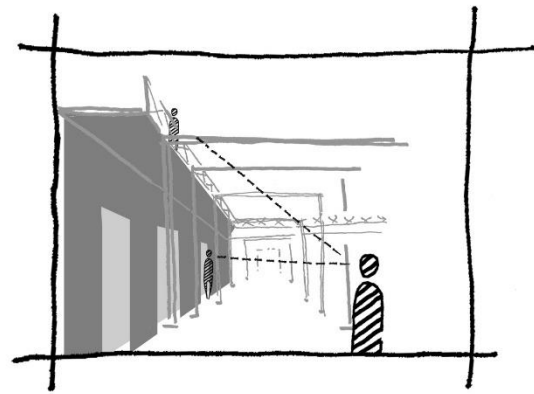
One clear benefit taken from reconnecting the site with the Tiber is utilising the existing topography and reintroducing nature to the city. Thus, the edifice may cascade towards the riverbank and intertwine with its surroundings, whilst becoming a space for public activities (Img.20). Further, incorporating the pre-existing tissue of the site with the perpendicular pathways (to Via Portuense) creates a micro city that visually and physically connects the street level, riverbank, and the opposite side of the river.



Img.20

As discussed, the Via Portuense is a busy traffic route, therefore the intention is to maintain it whilst integrating both sides of the site. Currently, the buildings border the street on both sides, with no strong connection between the territories – a sharp edge between buildings and street; therefore, the introduction of an arcade which would run along the street and be integral part of the site/architecture would act as a device of synthesis for the site. As espoused by C. Alexander, an arcade creates an ambiguity between the street and the edifice, the path becomes a place in itself, with characteristics of partly being inside and outside, likewise becoming an extension of the building (Img.21).

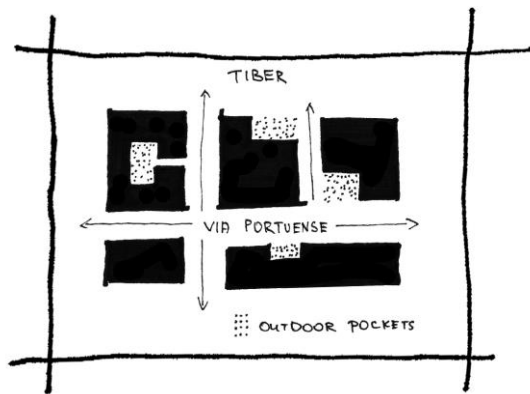
'If the major paths through and beside the buildings are genuinely public, covered by an extension of the building, a low arcade, with openings into the building – many doors and windows and half-open walls – then people are drawn into the building; the action is on display, they feel tangentially a part of it. Perhaps they will watch, step inside, and ask a question.'^{xxviii}



Img.21

With these interventions, Via Portuense may become not only part of the city infrastructure, but also an oasis – a promenade, which will incorporate the traffic, the pedestrians, the weekly Porta Portese market and instigate spontaneous unexpected/unplanned activities on the site. The architecture acts an infrastructure, a built form 'that operates urbanistically, giving the effect of moving through the city, introducing temporal and programmatic complexity to the experience of^{xxix} the building.

As previously discussed, the area is without outdoor recreational spaces – the site is split between built matter and the street; public activity unrolls in outdoor spaces – J. Gehl declares that the life between the buildings is more important in creating vibrant and active cityscapes than the built form. In this regard, it is key to incorporate small and medium scale outdoor activity pockets into the proposal. The previously discussed 'room like' environment of the Trestavere neighbourhood gives a key inspiration for the development of this program. The connections between the street and the Tiber may become small public squares, sometimes facing Via Portuense or the river for public activities or perhaps become courtyards within the built form for semi-public activities (Img.22).



Img.22

The street and the building can become extensions of each other; the built form and the space are in constant dynamic symbiosis. One of the protagonists of this understanding is S. Allen who works in the field of the phenomenological approach to architecture, in which interest lies on the effect and the performance of built environments. In his book 'Points+Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City' he reiterates the importance of understanding architecture not only or primarily as a form, but rather for what it can do, and the forms that it creates in between – the spaces. He sees architecture as an infrastructure, a built form 'that operates urbanistically, opposing the modernism approach to urbanism of fixed monumental figures – discipline and order.

The main features of this approach to architecture and urbanism are: visual continuity, identity and flexibility, a complex mix program that become public condensers, blurring the boundaries between public and private, architecturally specific yet programmatically independent, open to unexpected activities, and most of all giving public spaces back to the city. This way the urbanity subverts from fragmentation, to fragments that constitute the whole – the city.

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Img.1-9. Author;
Img.11. View of Porto di Ripa Grande, Engraving by Giovanni Battista Piranesi; Source: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porto_di_Ripa_Grande_e_arsenale_pontificio#/media/File:Piranesi-16054.jpg; Accessed: 11 December 2016;
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