

Andrew Yau

Output 2:
Milazzo Harbour Project: Pier Regeneration Plan and Cable Car Scheme, 2010

Abstract

This urban regeneration project for the city of Milazzo, Sicily was initiated in 2010 by the Città di Milazzo under the European Union PIST-PISU (Piani integrati di sviluppo territoriale & Piani integrati di sviluppo urbano) programme. It entailed two related urban design proposals: one for a decommissioned military pier and one that connected the historical Castello di Milazzo and the city's western beaches. Both were vital to the future economy of the city. The primary research questions addressed by the project were: How can new urban connections and relationships be structured? How can the city's waterfront be revitalised? How can the economic life of the city be extended into the winter months? The project started with a five-day design workshop in Milazzo in February 2010, in which six postgraduate students from the University of Westminster participated. This concluded with a short presentation of sketch urban propositions. The London and Messina offices of Urban Future Organization, led by Andrew Yau, continued to develop the work with close dialogue with the city administration. The project was honoured with an Education Award from Quadrante di Architettura in Italy in September 2010.

Key Words

Urban regeneration, waterfront, connectivity, social and cultural integration

Context

Andrew Yau is a founder member of Urban Future Organization (UFO), a global architectural practice and design research collective with a common belief in bottom up organisational principles and collaborative effort. UFO's architecture is based on linked reciprocal relationships between a range of design variables such as context, form, organisation and structure. The common ethos between its members is to forge symbiotic relationships between people, nature and technology; this combines conceptual sophistication, social sensibility and technical innovation with practical inventiveness in creating conjectural, idea driven ecological architecture.

This project was initiated by the Cittá di Milazzo in 2010 under the auspices of the European Union PIST-PISU (Piani integrati di sviluppo territoriale & Piani integrati di sviluppo urbano)¹ programme. Milazzo was eligible as one of the municipalities in the Sicilian Region, with four of its areas under consideration: Paladiana, Pier Marullo, Borgo and Tono. Paladiana and Pier Marullo were an existing military pier and wave barrier at the periphery of an existing marina, while Borgo and Tono connect the historical Castello di Milazzo on top of a hill and the existing football field of Milazzo Football Club next to the city's western beaches. Both were vital to the sustainable economy of the city. Urban Future Organization was invited by the City of Milazzo to undertake an architectural and urban investigation into the future regeneration of these strategic areas. Andrew Yau was design director for the project. He continues to develop the work in close dialogue with the city administration.

General Description

Located on the northern coast of Messina facing the Aeolian Islands, Milazzo is one of the most beautiful historic cities in Sicily. The fortress, beaches and the summer nights have shaped the city's rich cultural life. The decommissioning of the military use of the extended wave barrier and the relocation of the port authority offered the city a rare opportunity to redevelop its waterfront and maximize its potential for urban regeneration, economic growth and enhanced urban facilities for inhabitants and visitors. At the same time, the relocation of the city's third division football team's home ground outside of the city provided an opportunity to modify the relationship between the castle and the beach.

The project was conceived as two independent but associated urban interventions promoting the economic development of the city with great emphasis on social and cultural integration. It considered the lifestyle and economy of local residents and evolved a form of social anticipation, with new public spaces for the community as well as new business opportunities and facilities for cultural events.

¹ Integrated Regional Development Plans and Integrated Urban Development Plans

Research Questions

The primary research questions addressed by the project were:

- 1) How can new urban connections and relationships be structured?
- 2) How can the city's waterfront be revitalised?
- 3) How can the economic life of the city be extended into the winter months?
- 4) How can students engage with real projects and what are the pedagogical values of doing so?

Aims and Objectives

- 1) To curate new urban connections and structure new urban relationships

This project was a unique opportunity to design and curate two independent but associated urban interventions to bring different parts of the city together and structure new urban connections and relationships. The consolidation and development of the decommissioned military pier was used as an opportunity to expand the city in front of the City Hall and connect it to the expansion and upgrade of the adjacent marina (fig.07). At the same time, a new cable car system on the western side of the city connected a beautiful pebble beach to the historical Castello di Milazzo on top of a hill, a little over 55m above sea level (fig.02, 12).

- 2) To revitalise the waterfront with an emphasis on social and cultural integration

The proposal for the Paladiana and Pier Marullo site reclaimed the decommissioned military pier for community and public leisure and enhanced local businesses with conference and exhibition facilities (fig.05).

The provision of multifunctional spaces, a performance arena and a cluster of elevated shops, restaurants and entertainment venues aimed to activate the site as a local and tourist destination (fig.06). Below the elevated events cluster, a covered car park with a capacity for 450 cars reorganised the chaotic traffic and random parking arrangements along the marina. This pedestrianized the marina peripheries, transforming them into an urban park and green promenade for public enjoyment (fig.07). This offered a dramatically different urban reception to visitors, local or foreign, arriving by ferry, public transport or driving in a car, with immediate and long-term effects. The area benefited further from the relocation of the coastguard and fishing workshops from the refurbished historical heritage buildings along the quay (fig.05). New tennis courts for the relocated Milazzo Tennis Club as well as new outdoor performance spaces and new beach access adjacent to the Milazzo Sailing Club were provided. Music and other performances on the beach in the summer evenings are very popular in this part of Italy. The project became a social incubator for youth culture and community events (fig.08).

On the Borgo and Tono site, the main cable car operation was positioned at the existing football ground of Milazzo Football Club and the lower cable car station provided a combination of beach facilities (fig. 09). This played a major role as the organisational base for local and touristic events such as boat races, cycling tours and a half marathon. The upper station was designed as a small hop on-off structure with a magnificent panoramic view towards the castle and the sea (fig. 12). The project introduced a new open car park for better access and parking control for both the beach and the hilltop. This aimed to ease the traffic congestion in the city during summer months, one of the key issues limiting its economic growth.

3) To expand the economic life of the city into winter months

The intention to stimulate economic revenue beyond summer months was seen as vital to the future economic growth of the city. To this end, a core consideration of the project was the proposal of urban developments that engaged local residents, instead of concentrating only on marginalised and externalised urban attractors. This included the pedestrianisation of the marina and the new urban park, green promenade and tennis courts for the Milazzo Tennis Club. In addition, the provision of enhanced local businesses with conference and exhibition facilities extended usage into winter months.

4) To investigate the pedagogical value of engagement of students in a real project

After an initial site visit and meetings with local authorities (fig.02), Yau's initial proposal to the Mayor of the City of Milazzo was to undertake research and to explore design alternatives for the regeneration of the waterfront in a design workshop with the University of Westminster students in his Diploma Design Unit (fig. 01). The objective of the workshop was to generate energy and ideas and to explore a range of development opportunities for the future of the city. The one week workshop with the students, facilitated by Yau in collaboration with the town hall (fig.03a,b,c), developed a time based urban vision for the city as well as associative programmatic shifts for the two regeneration sites. Yau and his partners from the Urban Future Organisation then continued work for another four weeks and materialised the projective vision developed in the workshop in relation to more specific parameters, constraints and socio-economic factors, as sustainable urban proposals focusing on short and long benefits for the local communities. This was then presented to the city authorities and the public at a televised symposium In Milazzo (fig.04a,b), and later featured at the Shanghai Expo in 2010 (fig.13, 14, P01). The benefits for the students of engagement in this process was being exposed to the complexities of strategic urban thinking and of the conflicts of interests that arise between politics, economics and social opportunities in ways not possible in an academic setting. They also learned about the value of collaborative design thinking and of engagement with local authorities. They were encouraged to reflect on their experiences and experiments in Milazzo and implement what they had learned in the subsequent project

they undertook in Beijing. The parametric urban experiments they undertook there were informed by the real-time experience they had had in Milazzo. The project was honoured with an Education Award from Quadrante

di Architettura in Italy in September 2010, as exemplary for the productive interface it developed between the academy and City Hall.

Research Methods

After the initial invitation to Yau and the Urban Future Organisation to undertake a feasibility study and design exploration for the city of Milazzo (fig.02), the project was initiated with the week long strategic student workshop described above. This workshop investigated urban strategies that assumed a semi tabula rasa scenario as the basis for design proposals. (fig.03a,b,c). It was concluded with a short presentation of a series of sketch urban proposition and design opportunities. Yau and his partners from the Urban Future Organisation then continued work for another four weeks and materialised the projective

vision developed in the workshop in relation to more specific parameters, constraints and socio-economic factors, as sustainable urban proposals focusing on short and long benefits for the local communities. The project's central method was to re-evaluate and evolve traditional zoning strategies in order to curate the series of urban events proposed. The final feasibility scheme was presented to the Mayor, Maurizio Capone, the City Administration and the general public in an official press conference and project exhibition opening on 13 March 2010 (fig.04a,b).

Dissemination / Impact

The project was honoured with an Education Award from Quadrante di Architettura in Italy in September 2010. It was featured in the Italian Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo in 2010 (fig.13,fig.14).

Publications

UFO + Westminster University of London.
'Marina development and cable car Milazzo.'
In Italian High Design and High Technology,
Catalogo Della Mostra Oice

Padiglione WTCA - Expo Shanghai, pp. 36-39, 2010 (fig.P01).

Evidence

Images and Drawings

- Fig. 01 Letter of appointment from Mayor of Milazzo
- Fig. 02 Site visit with city officials prior to workshop
- Fig. 03a, 03b, 03c University of Westminster student workshop
- Fig 04a, 04b Milazzo Public Presentation invitation and programme
- Fig. 05 Programmatic Opportunities, Paladiana and Pier Marullo
- Fig. 06 Diagram of Activities, Night Club, Pier Marullo
- Fig. 07 Recommissioned Pier Marullo by day
- Fig. 08 Recommissioned Pier Marullo by night
- Fig. 09 Programmatic Opportunities, Borgo and Tono
- Fig. 10 Diagram of Activities, Street Performances, Tono
- Fig. 11 Rendering from base cablecar station, Tono
- Fig. 12 Rendering of Borgo and Tono cable car by night
- Fig. 13 Exhibit of project, Italian Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010
- Fig. 14 Exhibit of project, Italian Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010

Press

P.01 UFO + Westminster University of London. 'Marina development and cable car Milazzo.' In Italian High Design and High Technology, Catalogo Della Mostra Oice Padiglione WTCA - Expo Shanghai, pp. 36-39, 2010.



CITTA' di MILAZZO

Ufficio di Gabinetto del Sindaco

Prot. Gen. n. _____
Prot. Uff. 112

ll. 15/2/2010

Dear Mr. Andrew Yau

Thank you for attending the meeting with the Mayor, Head Engineer and Cultural Minister in the City Hall on 25th January 2010. It was a constructive and positive meeting. The City Hall of Milazzo is pleased to accept the research & workshop proposal from you regarding the mentioned feasibility studies and design explorations for the city by Urban Future Organization & University of Westminster.

Following our initial invitation regarding the intention of the City of Milazzo to investigate the Harbour area and our meeting with you and Arch. Claudio Lucchesi last week, the City Hall has identified two critical urban interests: The Marina Urban Regeneration and The Milazzo Football Ground Beach – Castle Cable Car Project. The City Hall seeks innovative studies and advanced understandings in architecture and urbanism in this rapid changing city structure of the area.

It is the intention of the City of Milazzo to explore the future vision and development opportunities through these regeneration studies with local and international professional organizations and academic institutes in the field of contemporary architecture and intelligent urbanism. The City Hall is planning to exhibit the works with a public presentation in early March 2010 follow with a publication of the two projects and other reference text and drawings.

The City Hall is writing to honour your presence on both professional and academic bases, and confirm the funding for your expenses and reimbursement as proposed.

Should you require any information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Staff from my office will discuss and organise further details with you.

Thank you very much for your contribution to the City of Milazzo. I am looking forward to the exciting projects and the future success of the workshop.

With warm regards,

Yours



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Fig. 01 Letter of appointment from Mayor of Milazzo



Fig. 02 Site visit with city officials prior to workshop



Fig. 03a, 03b, 03c University of Westminster student workshop



saluti: dott. LORENZO ITALIANO sindaco di Milazzo
moderatore: arch. VALENTINA PISCITELLI
relatore: prof. ANDREW YAU Westminster University of London
partecipano: on.dott. GIUSEPPE BUZZANCA sindaco di Messina
 prof. CESARE CASATI direttore di L'Arca rivista internazionale di Architettura
 prof. FRANCESCO DE SIMONE facoltà di Architettura di Palermo
 prof. MASSIMO LO CURZIO facoltà di Architettura di Reggio Calabria
 arch. NINO ROTELLA Soprintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Messina
 ing. FRANCESCO CLEMENTE dirigente VI dipartimento lavori pubblici
 arch. GAETANO MONTALTO presidente Ordine Architetti P.P.C. di Messina
 ing. SANTI TROVATO presidente Ordine Ingegneri di Messina
conclusioni: prof. LUIGI PRESTINENZA PUGLISI critico di Architettura

L'ARCA

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER
un Progetto per Milazzo

Palazzo D'Amico sabato 13 marzo 2010 - ore 17:30



Fig 04a, 04b Milazzo Public Presentation invitation and programme

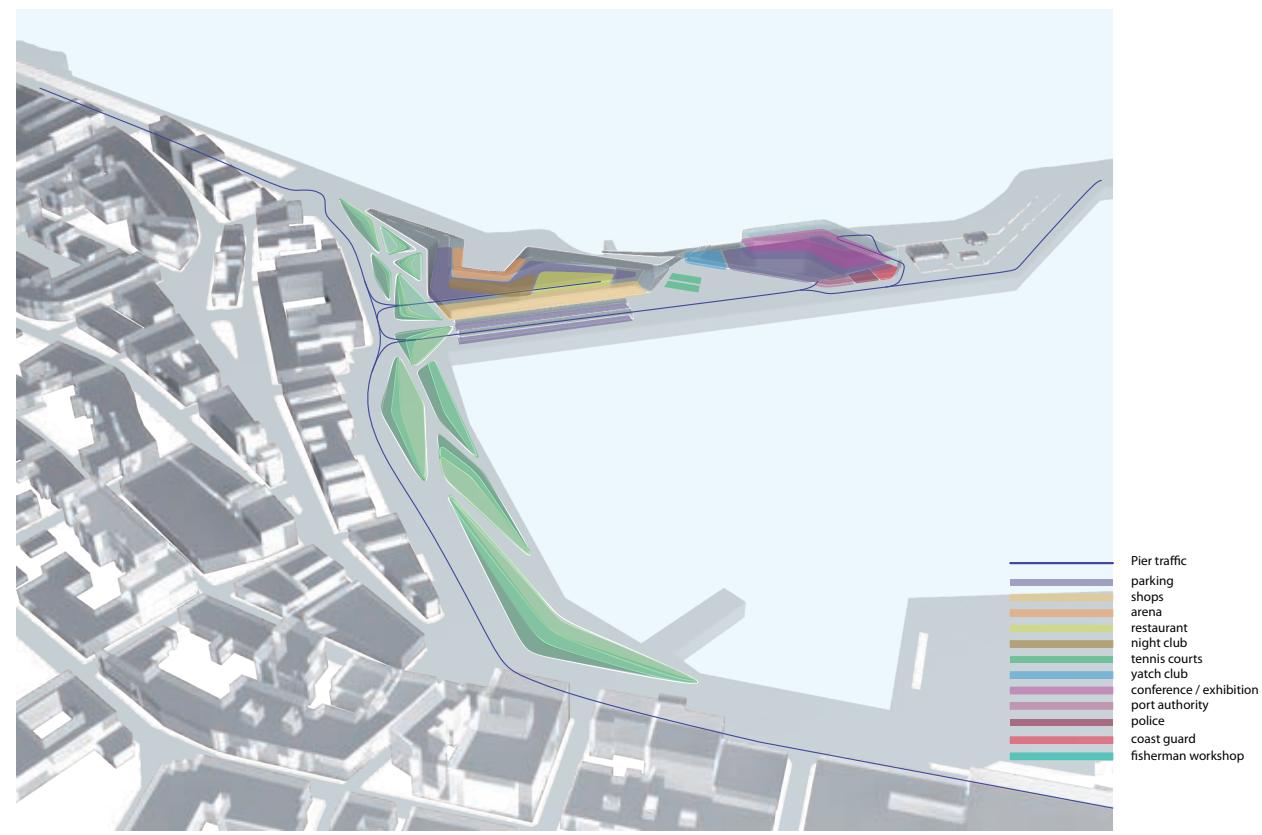


Fig. 05 Programmatic Opportunities, Paladiana and Pier Marullo

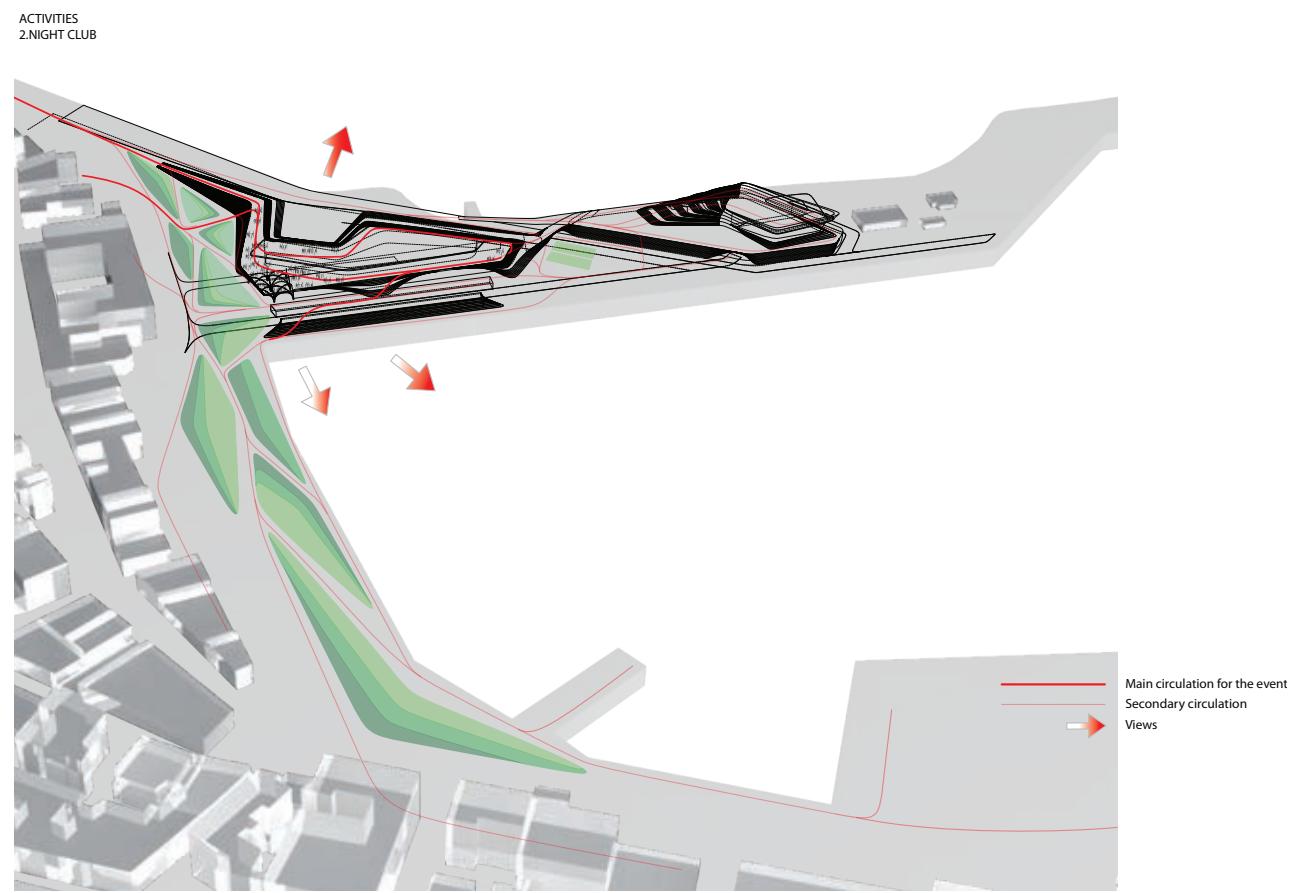


Fig. 06 Diagram of Activities, Night Club, Pier Marullo



Fig. 07 Recommissioned Pier Marullo by day

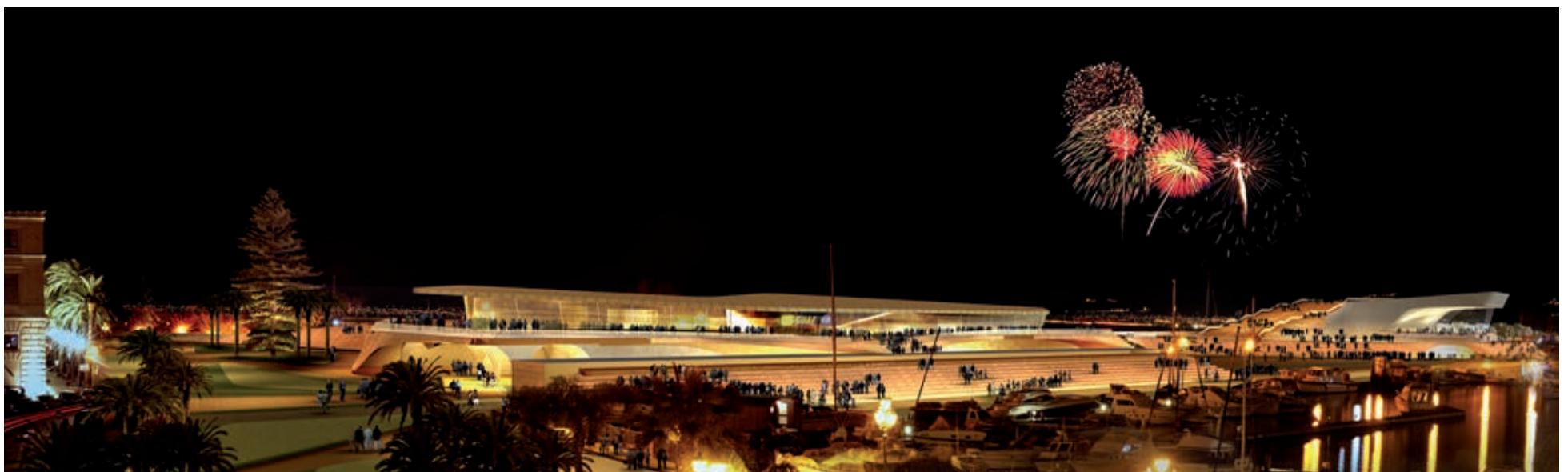


Fig. 08 Recommissioned Pier Marullo by night

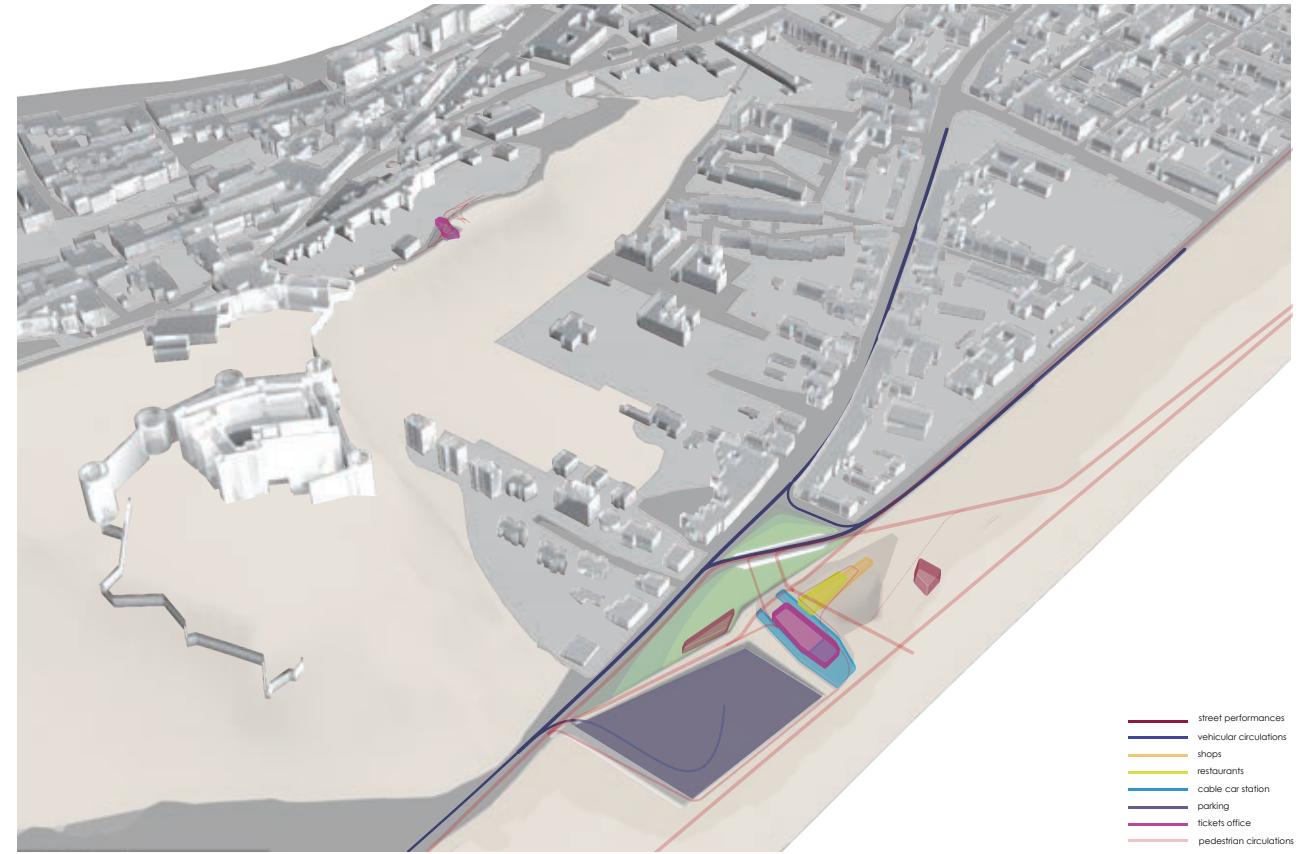


Fig. 09 Programmatic Opportunities, Borgo and Tono

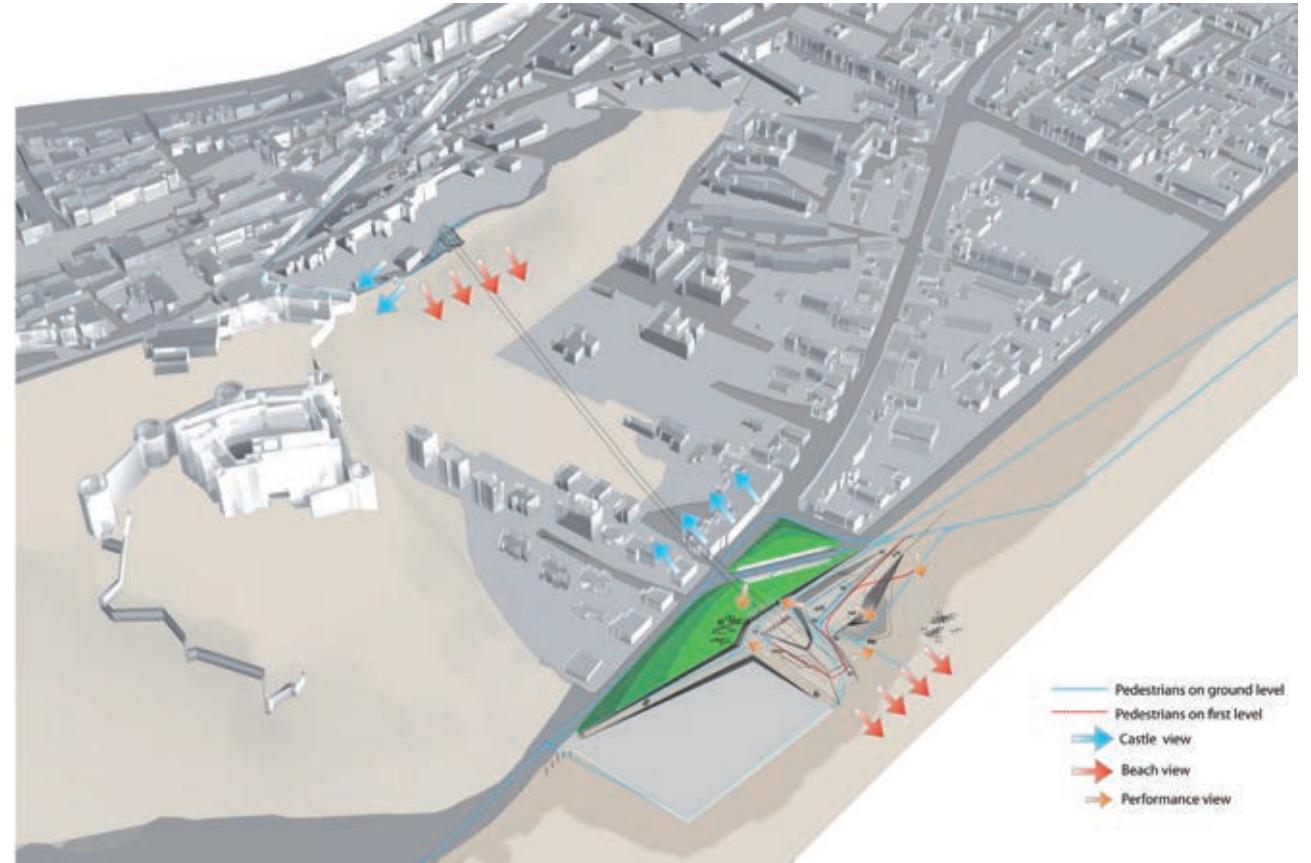


Fig. 10 Diagram of Activities, Street Performances, Tono



Fig. 11 Rendering from base cablecar station, Tono



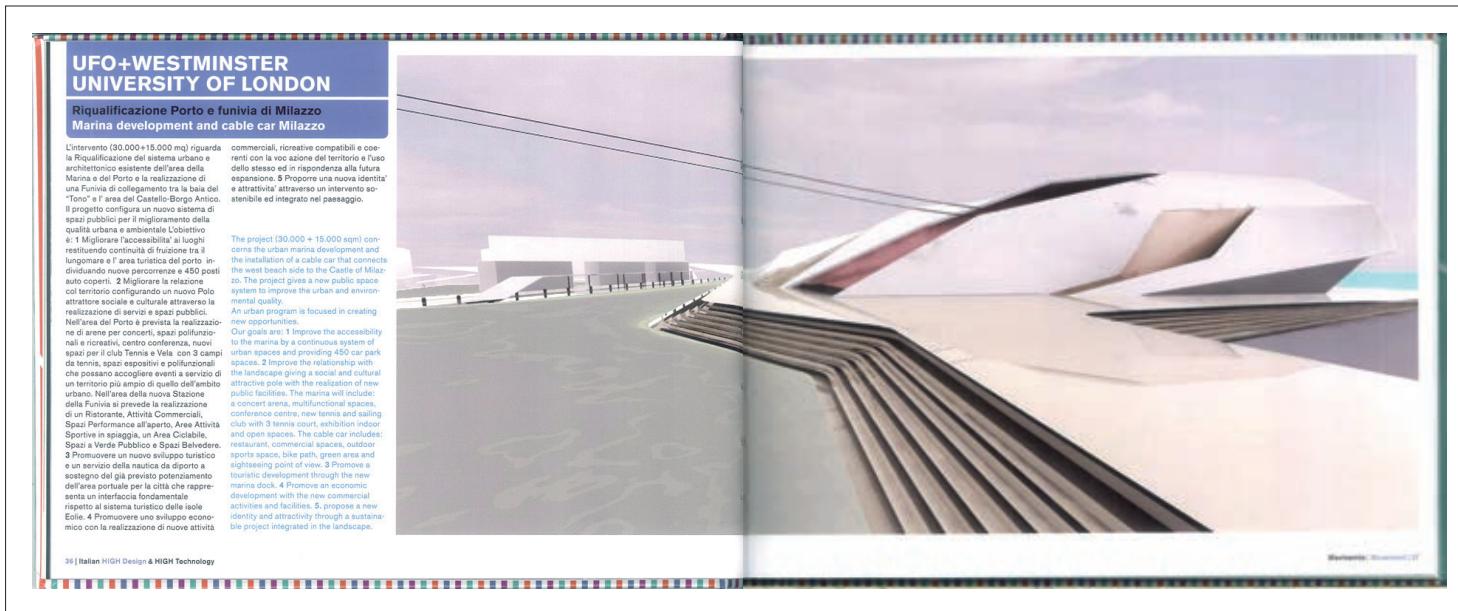
Fig. 12 Rendering of Borgo and Tono cable car by night



Fig. 13 Exhibit of project, Italian Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010



Fig. 14 Exhibit of project, Italian Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010



P.01. UFO + Westminster University of London. 'Marina development and cable car Milazzo.' In Italian High Design and High Technology, Catalogo Della Mostra Oice

UFO+WESTMINSTER UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Riqualificazione Porto e funivia di Milazzo Marina development and cable car Milazzo

L'intervento (30.000+15.000 mq) riguarda la Riqualificazione del sistema urbano e architettonico esistente dell'area della Marina e del Porto e la realizzazione di una Funivia di collegamento tra la baia del "Tono" e l' area del Castello-Borgo Antico. Il progetto configura un nuovo sistema di spazi pubblici per il miglioramento della qualità urbana e ambientale L'obiettivo è: 1 Migliorare l'accessibilità ai luoghi restituendo continuità di fruizione tra il lungomare e l' area turistica del porto individuando nuove percorrenze e 450 posti auto coperti. 2 Migliorare la relazione col territorio configurando un nuovo Polo attrattore sociale e culturale attraverso la realizzazione di servizi e spazi pubblici. Nell'area del Porto è prevista la realizzazione di arene per concerti, spazi polifunzionali e ricreativi, centro conferenza, nuovi spazi per il club Tennis e Vela con 3 campi da tennis, spazi espositivi e polifunzionali che possano accogliere eventi a servizio di un territorio più ampio di quello dell'ambito urbano. Nell'area della nuova Stazione della Funivia si prevede la realizzazione di un Ristorante, Attività Commerciali, Spazi Performance all'aperto, Aree Attività Sportive in spiaggia, un Area Ciclabile, Spazi a Verde Pubblico e Spazi Belvedere. 3 Promuovere un nuovo sviluppo turistico e un servizio della nautica da diporto a sostegno del già previsto potenziamento dell'area portuale per la città che rappresenta un interfaccia fondamentale rispetto al sistema turistico delle isole Eolie. 4 Promuovere uno sviluppo economico con la realizzazione di nuove attività

commerciali, ricreative compatibili e coerenti con la vocazione del territorio e l'uso dello stesso ed in rispondenza alla futura espansione. 5 Proporre una nuova identità e attrattività attraverso un intervento sostenibile ed integrato nel paesaggio.

The project (30.000 + 15.000 sqm) concerns the urban marina development and the installation of a cable car that connects the west beach side to the Castle of Milazzo. The project gives a new public space system to improve the urban and environmental quality. An urban program is focused in creating new opportunities. Our goals are: 1 Improve the accessibility to the marina by a continuous system of urban spaces and providing 450 car park spaces. 2 Improve the relationship with the landscape giving a social and cultural attractive pole with the realization of new public facilities. The marina will include: a concert arena, multifunctional spaces, conference centre, new tennis and sailing club with 3 tennis court, exhibition indoor and open spaces. The cable car includes: restaurant, commercial spaces, outdoor sports space, bike path, green area and sightseeing point of view. 3 Promote a touristic development through the new marina dock. 4 Promote an economic development with the new commercial activities and facilities. 5. propose a new identity and attractivity through a sustainable project integrated in the landscape.