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# Ascoli Piceno Nuovissimo

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The development of cities often involves short and long-term interests. It is often the case that private initiative might overlook long-term concerns to address immediate short-term ones, such as feasibility and profitability of a project. This is normal and understandable, but the opportunity provided by “OPEN CITIES” International Conference merits a measure of deeper thinking. Here is an opportunity to address long-term issues of the survival and livability of the city, the preservation of the countryside, the improvement of the physical and spiritual quality of life of people, and, incidentally but not less importantly, the capacity to reclaim architecture and urban design as culturally relevant practices, as forms of art, to preserve them from what now appears as a certain bleak fate of becoming only frivolous branding and advertising tools of the short-sighted exploitation of the world.

Ascoli Piceno Nuovissimo proposes replacement of the existing periphery north of the Tronto River with a new form of experimental urban fabric. We envision a new XXI century quarter, Ascoli Nuovissimo, embodying the same civic vitality of the old city, but incorporating also provisions for comfortable and healthy contemporary lifestyles: car presence that does not interfere with pedestrians causing congestion and pollution, green urban space, shared public infrastructure such as sports facilities, schools, social clubs, bars, theaters, churches, etc. as well as housing that is connected both to the city and the landscape.

This new fabric is composed of 100 residential towers, each with a 9m x 14m footprint and height of 100 meters. To provide the gradual interior articulation compatible with the ambiguities and nuances of contemporary life, the apartments are organized in levels, articulated by large cylindrical columns, inhabitable structure providing protection against earthquakes and efficiently managing the flows of air, water, power and people up and down the building. Inside each typical 180m<sup>2</sup> three-bedroom apartment, living rooms and dining rooms are 4.8 meters tall, and all other spaces are 2.30 meters tall.

The 100 towers relate the new quarter to the skyline of old Ascoli with its approximately 50 towers, all that remain of 250 that existed in Renaissance times. Each tower is affixed to a low-rising “urban tail” building with parking underground, shops and shared facilities on ground floor, and offices and residences on two upper levels. The roof is occupied by sports facilities such as running tracks, swimming pools, fencing halls, tennis courts, etc. The tails wrap around themselves, creating the edge of parks and piazzas, the social heart of the new quarter. Although all built infrastructure is replaced by the 100 towers and their urban tails, the original layout of the streets is preserved, providing a continuity of past-present-and-future in the memories of people.

Built entirely of travertine panels and glass, the crystal-like towers reach up to the sky, inverted stalactites framing views of the

landscape and reconnecting the old city with the countryside. The project proposes the use of photovoltaic fret glass to produce enough solar-powered energy to feed all public facilities of Ascoli Nuovissimo.

