

LA “CITTÀ SOCIALE” E L’AREA DELL’EX LANIFICIO MARZOTTO DI MANERBIO: UN PATRIMONIO ARCHITETTONICO E URBANO A RISCHIO DI DISSIPAZIONE

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Abstract

In the 1930s and 1940s, wool entrepreneur Gaetano Marzotto Jr., in conjunction with a process of reorganization of his plants, started an important construction project in Manerbio, extending his model of ‘social city’ in this settlement. This modern project redesigned the town’s urban and social structure, involving the old town centre and the entire municipal area in a new type of development. Adjacent to the factory is the ‘welfare district’ that still retains much of the rationalizing and modern charm imprinted on the buildings by their creators. The former industrial plant and the adjacent ‘social city’ occupy an enormous area, integrated with the old town, on the north-west side of the city, and now risk being lost: for both there are no protection rules. The profile of twentieth-century Manerbio, characterized by its industrial transformation, has been substantially neglected and underestimated. Its historical, cultural and landscape value was not even considered. Although the buildings retain their architectural and urban features, they have already undergone heavy transformations and many of them (mainly in the production area) are in a state of complete abandonment. The area occupied by the former wool industry is largely influenced by the interests of private owners and of complex safeguard and reuse. On the other hand, the surrounding area constituted by the ‘social city’ could be largely improved by the public administration with protecting measures.

This multidisciplinary essay will analyze the case of Manerbio by offering a reflection on the most appropriate strategies for necessary improvements, beginning with raising awareness of the inseparable relationship between the existing urban fabric and the twentieth-century transformations. We are convinced that this would allow a more effective analysis of its potential and critical issues, to reach the identification of a more appropriate project of reuse, management and enhancement.

Keywords: *Manerbio, Marzotto, Company Town, Industrial Archaeology, Industrial Heritage, 20th Century Architectural Heritage, Urban Planning, Reuse, Conservation*