



# Regeneration of Hidden Historical Landscapes of Lecco City: A Didactical Experiment Through Urban Design Course

**Angela Colucci\***  
**Anna Kolmogorova\*\***  
**Benida Kraja\*\*\***  
**Maryam Ziyae\*\*\*\***

## Abstract

This manuscript provides results of an study through the role of Historical Urban Heritage for Urban Design studies collected through the presentation of the integrated learning path developed for *Urban Design* and *Urban Design Studio* courses of the school of Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering, Lecco Campus of Politecnico of Milan (master program in Building and Architectural Engineering - BAE and Architectural-Engineering- EDA).

The first part of the paper presents a general learning framework of the Urban Design course and the corresponding methodological process of developing the urban master plan of the studio modules. The second part presents the "LeccoLAB" didactical path developed in the Lecco Campus. This section focuses on a set of urban design issues of Lecco Historical Urban Heritage and present some selected design proposals and corresponding

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\*Politecnico di Milano, Adjunct Professor of Urban Design.

E-mail: [angela.colucci@polimi.it](mailto:angela.colucci@polimi.it)  
Orcid ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3830-7564>

\*\* Politecnico di Milano, Master Student in Building and Architectural Engineering,

E-mail: [kolmogorovaanna@gmail.com](mailto:kolmogorovaanna@gmail.com)  
Orcid ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5067-5688>

\*\*\* Politecnico di Milano, Master Student in Building and Architectural Engineering,

E-mail: [benidakraja@gmail.com](mailto:benidakraja@gmail.com)  
Orcid ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8486-5527>

\*\*\*\* Politecnico di Milano, PhD in Urban and Architectural Design,  
E-mail: [maryam.ziyae@polimi.it](mailto:maryam.ziyae@polimi.it)  
Orcid ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6748-181X>

results developed by students during the course for the Academic Year 2016/2017. Students' work teams (27) applied the concepts, methods and techniques which are presented during the course to the Lecco waterfront urban systems and developed a proposal of the urban master plan aiming to regenerate the urban complex systems advantaging from the principles of "*Nature Based Solutions*" and "*Urban Resilience*". Final section of the paper presents four selected master plan proposals developed by the students and implanted through four approaches to integrate the urban regeneration of the historical landscapes and values of Lecco city.

### **HERITAGE AND CULTURAL VALUES AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR URBAN REGENERATION PROCESSES**

Concept of Historic Urban Landscape [UNESCO, 2011] concerns identification, preservation and valorization of cultural heritage referred to urban area as a (historical) stratification of cultural and natural values (Bandarin at al. 2012; Bandarin at al. 2014). The Historic Urban Landscape solicits a more integrated policies and visions for urban design and urban regeneration strategies based on cultural heritage values. In these terms, the historic urban landscape approaches are coherent with the general renovation of cultural and heritage valorization issues as well as the European landscape convention (European landscape convention, 2000). The integration of historical urban heritage in urban policies requires an activation of synergies since the strategic vision identification from sectorial heritages conservation solution to an integrated management of living cities as cultural landscapes (including the integration among economic, social, environmental and cultural factors). In this terms the approach aims to reach the preservation and conservation goals of urban heritage through strategies oriented to achieve sustainable urban regenerations. Historic urban landscape approach identifies (in heritage and cultural values) a set of fundamental resources for regeneration and the conservation of heritages as key strategies for both (i) socio-economic development and (ii) strengthening of social and cultural identity (based on evocative role of historical heritage).

### **URBAN STRATEGIC DESIGN FOR HISTORICAL CENTERS RENOVATION**

Procedure of urban regeneration based on Historical Urban Heritage could be implied by integrated actions on both socio-economic and environmental spheres. Definition of the strategic vision is based on crosscutting approaches and on creativity capacities in finding resources in the characteristics of the local



context which are linked to the dynamics concerning scales in time-space dimensions and in solving critical phenomena and local urgencies.

The lack of attractiveness and vitality in small historical nucleus is often a result of the low quality of public spaces, inefficient use of the building stock (buildings and structures are left unused as a result of the outsourcing of other urban activities and functions) and a missing strategic vision for the urban public life (both in terms of public spaces and public urban functions).

In addition to the Historical Urban Heritage, some new themes are also emerging, such as environmental sustainability and the efficient use of natural resources; safety and adaptation to climate change; the renewal of relations with the local area and the rural and natural landscape; and the economic diversification that may find in the areas outside urban centers important resources for the development of territorial recognisability and new forms of rural life that can offer a range of integrated services for tourism and food distribution (Colucci, 2015). The core of strategic envisioning is the identification of potential areas for link-ups between these phenomena.

The criteria and principles which guide construction of the strategic vision including:

- Adoption of the new (or different) ways of looking to the Historical Urban Heritage issue, making it possible to find new interpretations and innovative solutions to local problems, new local alliances (a cooperative and comprehensive approach) and to think up “new landscapes” that enhance aspects of identity based on the Historical Heritage values and opportunities;
- flexibility and spatial modularity, both in interpreting phenomena and in constructing solutions where the strategic overviews need to not only grasp the opportunities offered by the dynamics and processes of the situation on a territory-wide scale, but also to have an effect on a micro-scale, enhancing local resources. In particular, historical values support the transition between “cultural identity” (based on historical culture) and “urban future scenarios”: the Urban Historical Heritage plays a crucial role in defining a continuity for the identity of communities;
- flexibility and modularity in the time-scale: the strategic vision in itself implies a long-term time-scale, but the solutions and implementation strategies need to allow for

- different scenarios and time-scales for the implementation phase, and to be relatively independent;
- the valorization of Historical Urban Heritage implies a integrated design able to assign a crucial and strategic role to the “public life” and “public realm” (the Historical Heritage values are strategic resources in the regeneration and re-signification on public spaces identity and recognition);
  - innovation in the processes that should be inclusive and should accompany the implementation and management phases of the solutions identified: stakeholders and local actors have to be engaged along the whole process of the design, implantation and management (the project is the process itself). Stakeholders should play an active role in the decision-making process in order to develop shared, feasible scenarios; at the same time, sharing solutions ensures an implicit (or even explicit) process of allocating responsibility to the different local parties, which guarantees greater feasibility of the implementation and management phase.

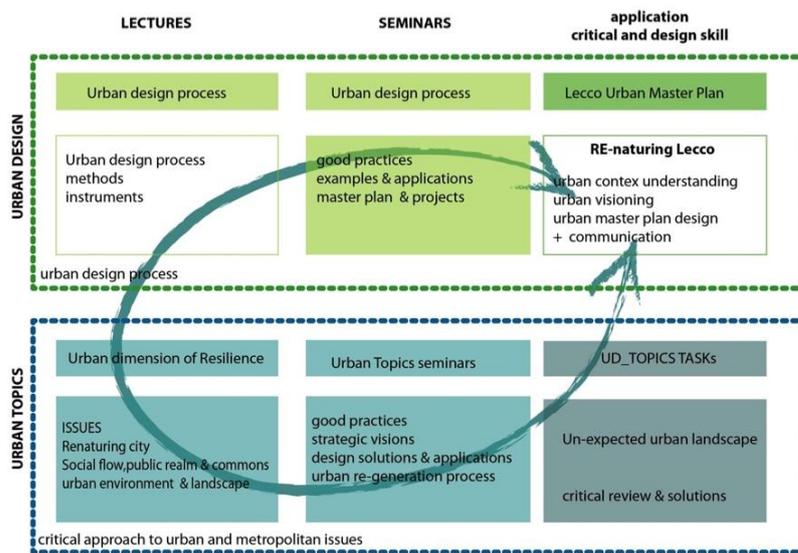
### **URBAN DESIGN LEARNING PROCESS**

Providing Urban Design learning process was developed over ten academic years of experiences and applied to the Urban Design Studio modules and Urban Design courses at Lecco Campus of Politecnico of Milan (Architecture Urban Planning Construction Engineering School). The whole integrated learning process was applied to (i) Urban Design (UD) and the related Studio (Building and Architectural Engineering –BAE master course) and (ii) the Urban Design Studio (UDS) modules (the Italian five-year degree course of Architectural Engineering -EDA).

The learning process is characterized by integrated activities towards the concrete application of design principles, methodologies and techniques to real-life case studies projects development (Fig.1). Aims of Urban Design (UD) and Urban Design Studio (UDS) are: improving urban design skills (both analytical, critical and creativity); become familiar with key issues of the urban complex systems; learn integrated approach to urban design including the whole transformation process and governance; acquire a critical approach to urban issues and develop original urban vision and strategic proposal of Urban Master Plan; develop communication skills.

The UD/UDS approach is based on the integration between:

- lectures on urban topics: the lectures will give main conceptual reframing and instruments to understand urban phenomena and develop critical skills supporting innovative and integrate solutions;
- lectures, seminars and applications on urban master plan design: the lectures will present the method and main theoretical references of phases of urban design process; the seminars will present the application and implementation of methods and good practices (projects, examples) (Urban Task Force, 1999);
- studio activities (Urban Master Plan): during the Studio sections, students develop an Urban Master Plan in the context of Lecco (integrated in the “LeccoLAB” didactical path).

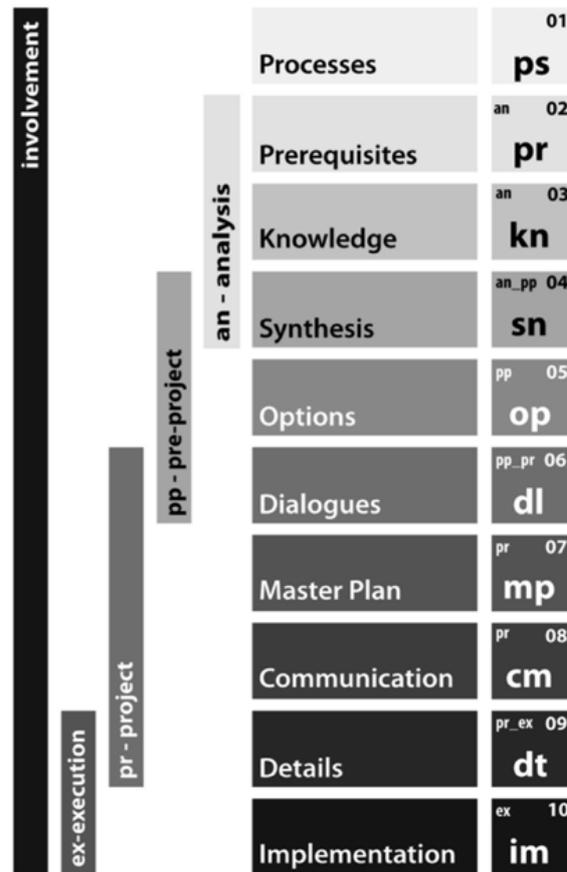


**Figure 1:** The learning process Flow (A.colucci)

The Urban Design course key issues for Academic Year 2016/17 were urban regeneration processes approached and based on principles of Urban Resilience, of Nature Based Solution and of Historical Urban Heritage. Key concepts that will be developed during all UD/UDS activities are: adaptive design (urban metabolism improvement, water management, productive landscape, climate change adaptation), integrated and creative solution for urban regeneration and visioning (“bio and social” diversity, social innovation, cultural and creative industries, facilities and etc.), public spaces and public life (commons, universal design, landscape and etc.) and cultural and urban heritage (e.g. cultural heritage valorization and conservation, urban cultural landscapes). Strategic urban visions have to be addressed towards urban resilience improvement integrating environmental, social, economical and governance spheres.

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS OF URBAN DESIGN STUDIO

The Urban Design Studio didactical path for the Master Plan development is based on the Ecological Urban Design process as laid out in the Palazzo and Steiner (2012) textbook (Palazzo and Steiner, 2011; Palazzo, 2008; 2011). The NOOS process – an acronym which stands for “Not Only One Solution” (fig.2) – is proposed as “method” that has to be adapted to the urban master plan development.



**Figure 2:** Not Only One Solution urban design process (adapted from Palazzo & Steiner, 2011)

The organization of lectures and seminars presenting concepts, techniques and good practices and application related to each step of NOOS process is coordinated with the studio activities of urban master plan development (Madanipour, 2006). During the UD Studio, students are asked to apply the concepts, methodologies and inputs derived by best practices and cases presented (including the Urban Design topics suggestions). The aim is to build a strong relationship and consistency, in term of didactical approach, between lectures (introducing the topics, problem, main disciplinary instruments and approaches), the seminars (presenting the application in case studies the instruments and concepts presented in the lectures) and the studio applying the concepts, instrument to the design process developed by students (Savage, 2005; Radović, 2004).



During 2016/17 Academic Year, lectures, seminars and the tasks were focused on the Historic Urban Heritage. In particular, in preparation of the UN-expected landscape task (exploration of urban landscape through un-conventional methods) lectures and seminars presented the general topic of Historical Urban Heritage and its role in urban regeneration design and the role of cultural heritage values in recognizing (and describing) urban landscapes.

### LeccoLAB AND THE URBAN MASTER PLAN

The LeccoLAB integrated learning process involves two Master Courses (EDA/BAE) offered in Lecco Campus of Politecnico of Milan. It was launched in the AY 2015/16 (Fig. 3). The didactical path involves several courses and different Academic Years developing urban visions and architectural, conservation and refurbishment projects for the city of Lecco.

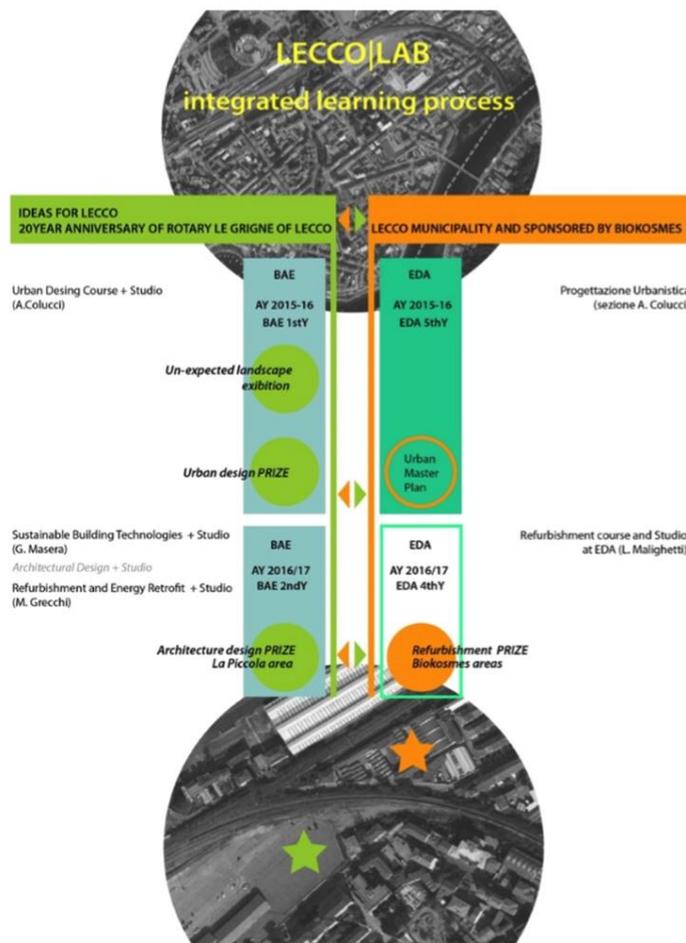


Figure 3: LeccoLAB 2015/16 | integrated learning process (A.Colucci)

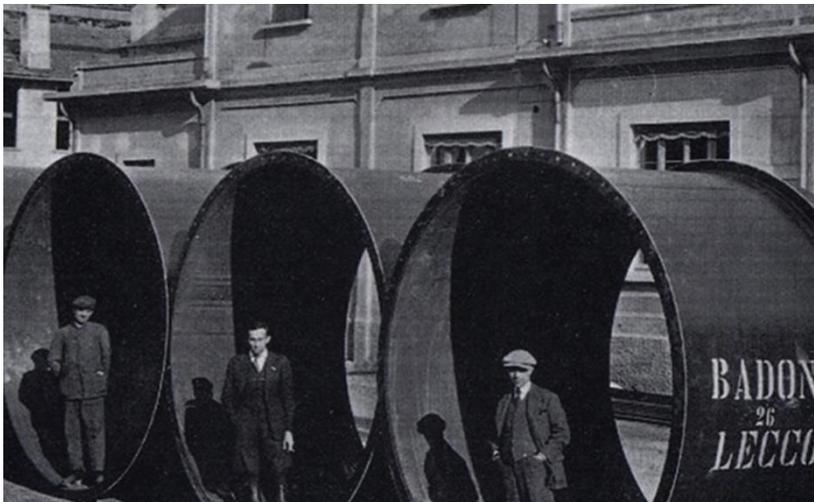
The focus of the didactical path launched in Academic Year 2015/16 was the regeneration of a central area of Lecco which is including the Campus of Politecnico, as well. To this end, Urban dimension (Re-naturing Lecco) involved to the Urban Design

course and related Studio of BAE and the Urban design Studio Module of EDA (A. Colucci module).

In 2016/17 AY the process involved to the Refurbishment course and Studio at EDA (by L. Malighetti) and Refurbishment and Energy Retrofit and Studio (by M. Grecchi), Sustainable Building Technologies and Studio (by G. Masera) and Architectural Design at BAE. Design focus of Refurbishment courses was the refurbishment of Biokosmes dismissed industrial area and design focus of Sustainable Building Technologies was the area of “La Piccola”. The LeccoLAB for Integrated Learning process was coordinated with Lecco municipality and sponsored by Rotary le Grigne of Lecco and Biokosmes Company (students’ works exhibitions and student prizes).

In 2016/17 AY a renovated didactical path was launched focusing on the Lecco water front regeneration and involving the Conservation course (by Prof. Elisabetta Rosina). All the knowledge surveys developed in the previous academic years was shared as common basis for the students of Urban Design Studio to develop new surveys in order to improve and complete the existing knowledge and framework. In particular, a focus on historical and cultural heritage was developed aiming to the recognition of hidden historical landscape and the cultural identity of Lecco city.

The large scale includes the urban systems along the waterfront of Lecco from the Lecco historical center to the Pescarenico historical nucleus. For the development of concept and urban master plan, teams of students had the chance of selecting one (out of of three) proposed project-areas of: San Nicolò (in Lecco historical center), Viscontea Island (including a dismissed industrial area) and the Pescarenico historical center (see Fig. 4, Fig. 5).



**Figure 4:** View of different historical landscapes: Front; Historical center of Lecco; Next page up; the Viscontea area and next page down; Pescarenico (Urban Design Studio students documentation).

The urban design process focuses on the regeneration process of the urban systems along the waterfront of Lecco. Students defined strategic visions and design solutions for the future development of Lecco based on creative, cultural and touristic industries

through nature based solutions and resilience principles implementation. The LeccoLab 2016/17 involved also the Lombardy Region which was interested in application of regional polices on touristic sector (and guidelines for touristic facilities) and of regional polices on creative industries (Regional Laws: LR 26/2015 on creative and cultural industries; LR 27/2015 on touristic activities).

The general “instances” and topics for urban strategic vision and the urban master plan were the improvement of touristic system, research and innovation functions, integrated public services connected to the educational sector (a sector of excellence in Lecco). The topic of Historical Urban Heritage plays a central and crosscutting role in terms of design solutions for the conservation and valorization of existing heritage. The mentioned attitude could be discussed in terms of fundamental resources for the improvement of integrated touristic and economic issues and in public space design (public urban landscape based on cultural identity; Carmona et al., 2012).



**Figure 5:** Three areas of design studio regeneration: Historical Center Lecco; Viscontea area; Pescarenico (Authors elaboration)

For the Academic Year 2016/17 the urban design studio modules (BAE and EDA) involves almost 140 students organized in 27 teams as well as two professors and five teaching assistants



(Funda Atun, Anna Schellino, Livio Dell'Oro, Liliana Bonforte, Håkon Martin Rensaa, Maryam Ziyae) and four junior tutors (students from past academic years who are supporting new students: Benida Kraja, Anna Kolmogorova, Eleonora Ravagli, Stefani Kostova).

### **LECCOLAB: THE HISTORICAL HERITAGE AS “FILE ROUGE” OF STUDIO PROPOSALS**

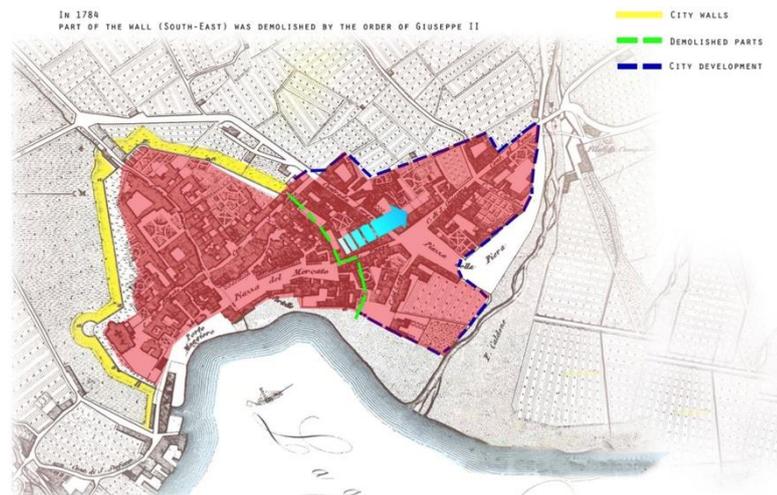
This section summarizes some selected aspects of the outcomes from LeccoLAB Urban design studio. In general, the proposals mainly emerge from Urban Design Studio and focus on the regeneration of Lecco urban systems along the waterfront. We present here results and proposals in which the valorization of historical heritage of the city plays a strategic role in urban envisioning and design solutions.

Along the Lecco waterfront (large scale), three “project-areas” identified and characterized by their unique identities, as follow:

- Lecco historical Center: as long as this area has been used the port of Lecco was the most important one on the Lake of Como. This area is very active and always used by the boats along the waterfront sides; its development influenced the layout of the city, especially the arrangement of the waterfront. The own identity of the city could be recognized by the characteristic values of this area, which was linked to the lake and river freights. The XX Settembre is an old historical and symbolic center of the city and had been called the Market place until 1895. The current appearance of the square is a work by Giuseppe Bovara who designed a new perspective view of the square, delimiting it with an arcade of granite doric columns.
- Viscontea island is placed close to the old bridge of the city. The island is believed to have been appeared in the XV century when the rubbles deriving from the bridge. It has been initially used as a small defensive fort. Nowadays, the island is a private property with a residence and gardens, partly open to the public visitors. The area close to the island has lots of unused industrial buildings.
- Pescarenico used to be a fishermen village located on the side of Adda river, near Lecco center. The village was composed by narrow streets around the Era central plaza. Colored boats were moored along the Adda river, creating a very suggestive atmosphere. From the industrial period, Lecco spread chaotically between the

waterfront and the railway and Pescarenico was incorporated in the industrial urban tissue. The village kept its historic core but industrial buildings have been built around it, without taking care of the historical heritage.

During the knowledge step of the urban design process, specific analyses were developed on the Lecco context aiming to integrate knowledge already developed during the past academic years. All the teams shared information and material (seminar and files) in order to set-up a synthesis of the knowledge which is the first real design step. To this end, each team highlights positive and negative phenomena characterizing under studying urban context (assign priorities and values to neutral information and surveys). Below we provide a summary of the most relevant phenomena to the historical heritage topics and some information and critical aspect of the urban context, to be useful for understanding the selected strategic visions presented by the student.



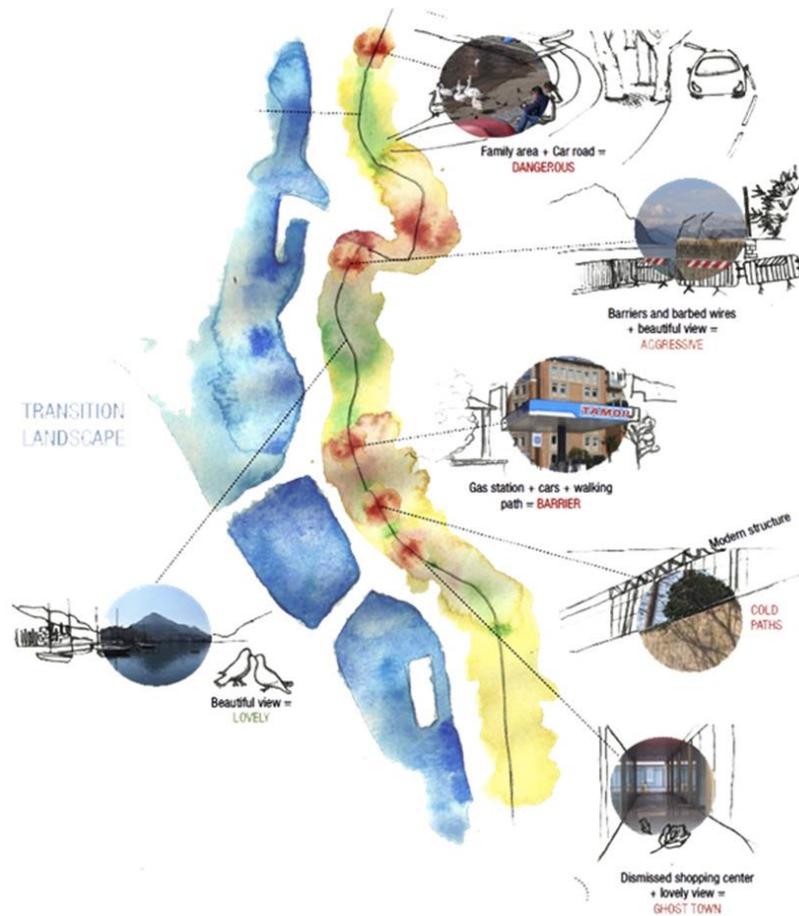
**Figure 6:** Old Map of Lecco showing the historical city expansion (Urban Design Studio students documentation, 2017)

**Development of the city:** Lecco is a mid-sized city located in northern Italy surrounded by the mountains and enclosed a lake. This geomorphology has determined an uneven urban expansion through the history. Most of districts and zones are shaped from such phenomenon, hence they are sometimes very well related together, and sometimes they are just disrupted (Fig.6).

From the historical point of view, the name “Lecco” appeared in a document dated back to 845 representing the plain between the Alps and the Adda river. The city started to gain its importance during the Bronze Age, but it reached a peak during the Middle Ages. During the XII century, walls and towers had been built near the expanding port to protect and defend it, but in 1296 Matteo I Visconti totally destroyed them. A few years later, Lecco was rebuilt by Azzone Visconti because he understood the importance

of Lecco from the military and commercial points of view. In 1784, the Austrian emperor, Giuseppe II, visited Lecco and ordered the demolition of the walls and the fortifications. In this way, Lecco spread and turned into a city. Since second half of the XIX century, development and growth of Lecco has been always linked to the industry: the railway and the train station built, new factories for steel and iron processing were set up, new streets and bridges were constructed. When the crisis of the metallurgic industry began, all factories closed except the one of Arlenico. For several years Lecco was remaining in an intermediate phase between the demolition of those buildings and the idea of a new urban plan. Then, the image of Lecco quickly changed from the “city of iron”: it started to provide a basis of commercial activities, but this aspect has never been satisfying by the city.

The evolution of the waterfront (Fig.7, Fig.8) is directly linked to the development of the city. A substantial aspect that has always characterized the city is the commercial and handcrafted traditions, developed since the Middle Ages. This tradition is linked both to the iron factories and the open-space markets, an element that has been affected by the development of the port.

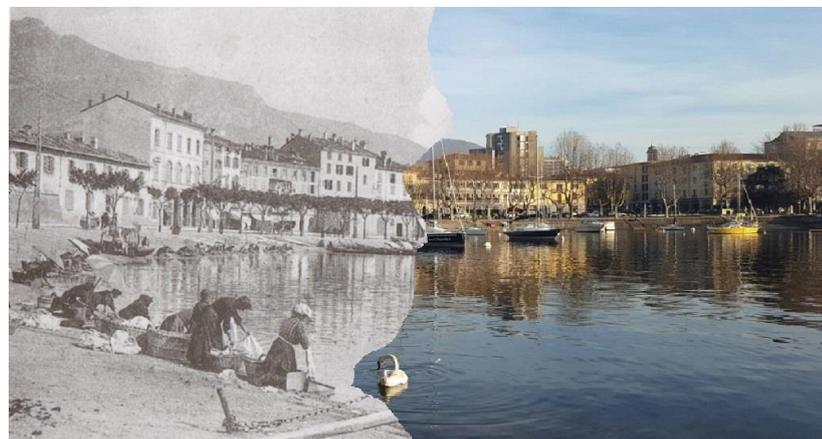


**Figure 7:** Sketch of the waterfront of Lecco (Urban Design Studio students documentation)

Today, the waterfront does not longer have a commercial function and is used as a leisure and touristic area. Along the waterfront some historical and cultural buildings are located that are valuable for tourism, the lakeside has been partly turned into a pedestrian path. However, the city does not take the advantages of such potentialities, adequately.

**Urban industrial heritage:** Apart from historical buildings, there exist a number of industrial buildings In Lecco that are now left unused or abandoned but have sufficient potential to be transformed as vital public spaces.

**Interaction between lakeshore, city center and community:** From the lakeshore, there are some mobility connections - most of them pedestrian kind - that provide very important designing opportunities; instead, visual connection is not well developed or in some points of the city is lacking. In the lakeshore, instead, we can find even some voids as public spaces that are left unused by the local community due to their odd position. They can be good starting points to develop a lakeshore system. In the area after Ponte Kennedy, it is possible to develop private boat transport instead of a public one. In Lecco, a public boat transport network is already present but it is mostly dedicated to the touristic services: few lines connect the Lecco's side of the lake to Bellagio or the Como's side.



**Figure 8:** Old vs New Lecco Lake Side: Historical values and Environmental values (Urban Design Studio students documentation)

**Ecosystem and biodiversity:** The lake during the years has created its own ecosystem, which is directly connected to the historical heritage of the city. Now, public green area is condensed just at the ends of the lakeshore (Santo Stefano and Bione). In those areas, we can find a good biodiversity of the greens that must be maintained.



#### FOUR SELECTED STUDENTSAL PROPOSALS:

The criteria of selecting four student's projects are based on the consideration of the role of urban historical landscape in urban strategic vision of the developed Master Plan proposals. The selected Master Plans consider the issue of "Historical Urban Heritage" as the core inspiration (within different approaches) for their urban strategic vision. The four selected proposals took into consideration of the historical values of Lecco in their approaches of interpreting and adopting urban design projects, they also rely on some different approaches of integrating Urban Heritage issue for their solutions.

#### Hey! There is history. Sense of Memory

The first project was developed by Fabio Angeloni, Claudio Avila, Riccardo Meroni and Andrea Sala and shows how interventions can delicately change the perspective of the old parts of the city.



**Figure 9:** Hey! There is history. Sense of Memory. Masterplan (students elaboration)



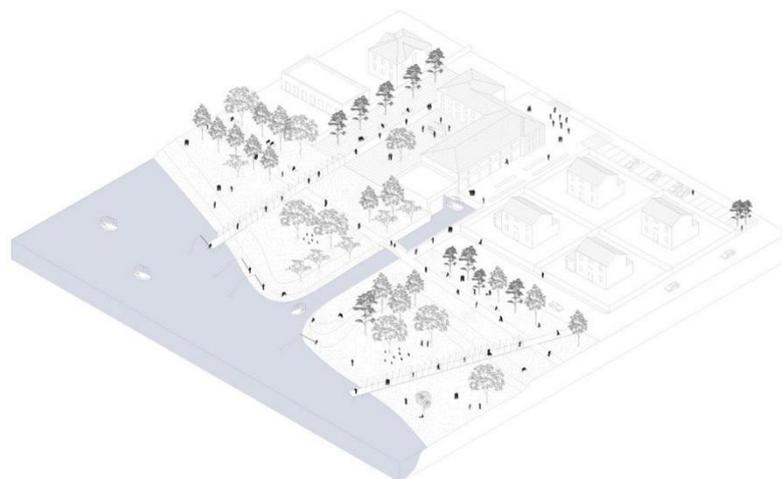
**Figure 10:** Hey! There is history. Sense of Memory. Render of “Piazza Germinata” revitalisation proposal (students elaboration)

The proposed itinerary reinterprets the connection of Pescarenico with water. It is not only an exercise of historical memory, but also a common reflection of how, now days, a city can interpret itself and its own spaces. From there we provide a vision that valorizes the attractiveness of the heritage (see Fig. 11). Particularly, analysis show that valorization of tourism is connected with “Manzonian Iteneraries”, handcraft and fisherman tradition and will bring new touristic accommodations and services (Fig. 9, 10, 11 and 12).

**Figure 11:** Section of the Chocolate Fabric



**Figure 12:** 3d View of the boat tradition area





The lake as a characteristic element of the city, regains its own natural spaces, in practical forms and suggestive. On one hand, in some parts of the city center the lake takes the color of water through one passage, and on the other hand, there is another point where the lake enters the city.

From the historical analysis, it is noticed that water, in the past, has been crossing the frontier of Via Guado, from which it takes the name. Thanks to these interventions, it's possible to read the waterfront as a key point to connect present to the past.

In the first place there are identified some areas of interventions, like the reuse of the Chocolate Factory, now dismissed, into a diverse fabricate building with functions interacting with another one. The landmark of the building is kept as a historical footprint of the area. Here we can find functions as the chocolate market, the exhibition space "The Fabric of Culture Alesandro Manzoni", a studental residence and at the end a workshop space "The Fabric of Ideas".

In order to have an impact on tourism near the lake, this project proposes the structure of a diffuse hotel, which will be spread around all the old part of Pescarenico. Also, a health organization is proposed in a coordination center near the parking area (outside the historical center). Pedestrian paths are recovered around the whole area in order to valorize the history, tradition and connections with the other parts of the city.

The path that connects The Church of Pescaranico with river Adda, is colored with blue and one can find traces of fragments from historical photos and illustrations of old Pescarenico available in the book "Promessi Sposi". The handcraft tradition "Laghee" and of the lake boats "Lucie", typical of the branch of Lecco Lake, is brought to life again. The building is connected to the water with a channel, from where the boats will enter.

### **Along the thread of the tale**

The second project focuses on the narrative features of different images that the city has been obtained through the time, and show how the city can adopt and develop into a sustainable future (the proposal was developed by Colombi Giacomo, Dall'anese Gabriele, My Phung Le Diem, Manikyam Sai Mahendra Subba Raju, Raynal Thomas, Vanhille Melvin, Luo Zidan). To drive the process of design, this group of students settled three main goals:

- Thinking of the connection notion, the waterfront is an element that not only links the city with the lake, but also connects people to the city. So, the waterfront can be used

at its potential, also to solve the problems of physical and social discontinuity in some critical points.

- To strengthen this function, the green system needs to be improved, unifying all the related areas with a structured plan, and adding green places inside the city to create more recreation and relaxing areas: valorize the environment to create a more suggestive green city.
- The combination of these elements has a great potential to make a general image for the city which finally leads to shape the symbolic characteristic values. This element has an important role in the project, because in Lecco, each part of the city has a proper history, a proper tale to tell and this needs a narrator.

The conclusion of this proposal is the vision of the project, which looks like the index of a book. A book that as the “Promessi Sposi” does speak about Lecco and the fragmented history of its parts and create the identity of the city structured in the centuries.

The waterfront acts as the thread, the “fil rouge”, of the story of Lecco towards different areas where design of new patterns is focused. These different areas could play as parts of the different chapters of Lecco regarding its functions (Fig. 13).

*1 DISTRICT = 1 DESIGN = 1 MATERIAL = 1 COLOR = 1 MAIN FUNCTION*



**Figure 13:** the four Districts along the Lecco waterfront showing and valorizing the different historical landscapes. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Districts (students elaboration)

1<sup>ST</sup> District: Lecco's Environment. The main function is to emphasize the cultural link of Lecco towards the nature, because what predominates all along the Lungolago, is the metal element



mixed with the stone from the mountain. The main functions would be described as:

- The Amphitheatre: to gather people on great stairs made of mountain rock to assist public speeches or cultural events, and also to develop a panorama on the lake that links people to the natural environment of the waterfront (water element and mountains).
- The Eco- Pedalos: to create a flux between different districts on the water, by thinking of a self-sustainable system (water element and mountains).
- The Green-Walls: to reduce the noise from the roads bred by cars towards the pedestrian path along the waterfront, but by building the walls-made of plants to absorb sounds and smell waves – non continuous so that it does not disrupt the view from the internal part towards the lake.
- Prevention area: to sensitize people.
- The material that is dedicated to this one is the mountain stone and its specific color grey.

2<sup>nd</sup> District: Historical Heritage –Lecco’s Beginnings. The main function is to emphasize the cultural and commercial aspect of Lecco towards the history from which it takes its spirit.

The main functions are suggested to dedicating to:

- The Info-Points: many Info-Points according to the principle of “le Parcours de la Chouette” are set up in the part of the waterfront because of its abundance regarding the historical part (fortifications, exchange places, etc.)
- The refurbishment of the visibility of the Visconti Tower

The material dedicated to this one is the wood (according to the idea of the former fortifications) and its specific color is light wood brown.

3<sup>rd</sup> District: Industrial Heritage. The main function is to emphasize the innovation potentiality of the area according to its industrial past. functions which are useful for citizens and the city.

The main functions for this area are suggested as below:

- Exhibitions
- Places for associations
- Open space fitness exercises
- Open air places for working activities

In these places people can spend time, create and develop their activities which lead to improve the quality of the city. The most important part is the reuse of the old industrial buildings, which

recall the industrial past of Lecco, called “The city of iron”. The material that is dedicated to this district is steel and its specific color of rust brown

4<sup>th</sup> District: Fishermen District. The main function is to emphasize the sharing purpose of the area according to its historical past: the fishermen village, in which people lived in a quite closed community and where commercial activities were important.

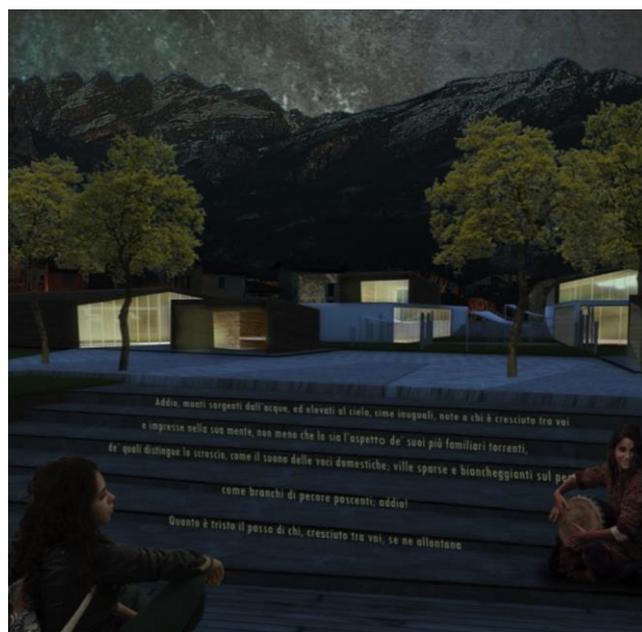
The main functions could be described as:

- Spot based on art, sharing and multi-functionality, opened to everybody
- Diffused hostel that use the abandoned buildings like rooms-to-rent.
- The Eco-Pedalos: to create a flux between different districts on the water, by thinking of a self-sustainable system (cycling movement producing electricity) and which enables visitors to discover this place that is less easily accessible than the others.

The material that is dedicated to this one is the net-fish (according to the former tools that the fishermen were using) and its specific color is light wood blue.

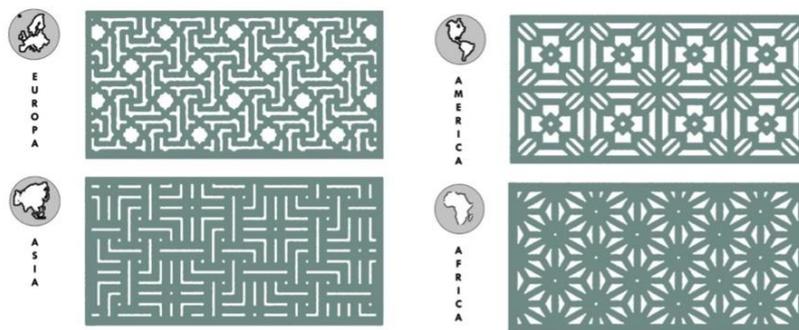
### LecCommunities

The project is very important for the use of historical pattern and cultural landscape/ memorial identity that characterizes the design solutions (Fig. 14, 15 and 16). LecCommunities proposal was developed by Caldarelli Alice, Corti Eleonora, Eskandar Kiroles, Marchi Rachele and Paracchini Lisa.



**Figure 14:** LecCommunities: image of the Viscontea Island (students elaboration)

*Patterns and Text.* “The language was created by people in order to understand each other, not for misunderstandings between us.” Starting from this phrase from Alessandro Manzoni, students choose to use text and patterns throughout the paths of the project in order to increase the quality of connectivity. The first ones represent a more traditional tool of aggregation between community, and at the same time, they give possibility to generate words and dialogue between people. Translating in different languages the typical phrases of the Manzonian literature, it would be easier for tourists to understand Lecco’s culture.



**Figure 15:** LecComunities: patterns from the continents (students elaboration)

The texture, on the other hand, represents gathering of more original and modern elements. These elements allow us to develop a dialogue not only between people together, but also between people and landscape. They are designed during the paths and inside the observation areas in the project, like a filter between the visitor and the fluvial landscape.

*Pavimentation.* The floor which designs the whole cultural path of LecCommunities, is a gathering of geometrical patterns that repeat themselves in a rhythmic way. The chosen tiles represent the four continents which most of the foreigners from Lecco come from: Europe, Asia, America and Africa. The decision to realize this idea came from a general objective that intends to bring together the union of the communities which live in the city.

The most visible pattern on the floor is that of the “Lecco path”. This one was designed after a detailed analysis of the typical flooring of Lecco and Pescarenico, including also the historical buildings, the fresques and the decorations or the architectonic elements of the buildings. The references that gave life to the Lecco’s patterns, offer a simple and geometric design. These are the typical flooring of Pescarenico, the Mantovana of Viscontea Island and the decorations of some villas of the area.

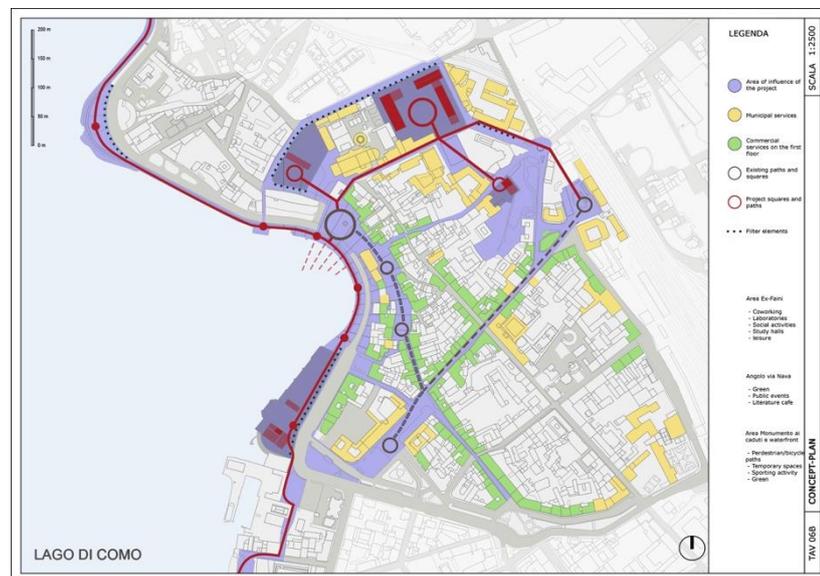
**Figure 16:** LecCommunities: patterns from the facades (students elaboration)



### LecConnection

The project focuses on the valorization of the hidden historical heritage, through emphasizing touristic paths and traditions. LecConnection represents exactly the vision of this group (composed by Bestetti Francesco, Brambilla Roberto, Fassi Andrea, Maino Marco and Mattiolo Giorgio Marco), or better said the valorization of the historical center of Lecco, through a path sewing all the most important elements already present in the area. The connection becomes more real through a texture on the floor in order to distinguish: a thread that weaves an inconspicuous texture canvas. Unused Industrial buildings are presented in the area and it is from the ones that the revitalization of historical importance starts (Fig. 17).

**Figure 17:** LecConnection Concept Map (students elaboration)



Interventions are made in different scales, from the reuse of the ex-industrial area to the punctual elements through where the sewing of the urban pattern is made. The tendency of the city to welcome slow mobility, created the idea of connecting the train station through a path full of opportunities. In order to achieve this a bicycle path is proposed to connect all the internal parts of the old city center. At the same time, it is proposed to extend the



limit of the controlled traffic, which is already present in the center.

In the area of the old walls, the projects includes a thematic path that accompanies the visitors in the learning process of the history of Lecco. Importance of this area is from presence of the library, which makes it more interesting from the cultural-social point of view.

For the ex-industrial area it is proposed to revitalize the green areas and design spaces for start up and research companies. What the project wants to achieve is the reference of an innovative city in the fields of boating and building materials, where the city can become a point of international reference.

The two main historical squares are proposed to have a light intervention, which includes unifying the pavements and managing the parking problem, in order to leave more space for the bicycle paths and different seasonal activities in the piazzas.

## CONCLUSIONS

Common issues and complex challenges characterize the historical center and historical heritage of small town similar to Lecco: industrialization and urbanization process since last century often produced a fragmentation (and some time a physical substitution) of medieval and historical heritage. The students' proposals are demonstrating as the valorization of hidden historical landscape, in different scales of interventions, is fundamental resources in changing the image of the city and in defining renovated new cultural identity.

The paper underline how the integrated learning process presented can support the development of investigation and diagnostic framework able to develop complex proposal for urban regeneration during the urban design studio modules.

A suit of selected four proposals presented to highlight how strategic is the integration of Historical Urban Heritage in the regeneration and urban envisioning process. The historical and cultural heritage are fundamental values supporting long terms visions for the renovation of the Lecco city which are central resources for new urban function and economic innovation.

Based on the Urban Design Studio general didactical path and on the four Urban Master Plan, proposals developed by students, present emerge of the historical urban heritage and can play different roles in urban regeneration strategic visioning: the role of "memories" (as "romantic" approach) on which new strategies

for urban renovation can be based; the role of narrative identities in building a new structure of urban landscapes (giving different identities of urban landscapes and, at the same time, the recognizability); the role of social and cultural identity supporting vision based on social innovation, creative industries (the role of historical and cultural heritage is a fundamental resource in the process of urban social inclusion of different cultures); the role of “connection” supporting urban vision linking the cultural and traditional heritage and innovations and creative scenarios.

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## Resume

Angela COLUCCI Planner, consultant and independent researcher (M.Arch., Ph.D.) she is adjunct professor of Politecnico of Milan since 2006 (courses of Urban Design, Urban design Studio and Urban Planning). She published several books and papers on



*environmental and landscape planning/design, urban and territorial resilience, governance, co-design learning and educational approaches to urban transformation process.*

*Anna KOLMOGOROVA is student of Master in Building and Architectural Engineering, (Politecnico di Milano).*

*Benida KRAJA is student of Master in Building and Architectural Engineering, (Politecnico di Milano).*

*Maryam ZIYAAE is an architect, she holds a PhD in Urban and Architectural Design (Politecnico of Milano) and she was senior tutor of the Urban Design Course.*