



TIRANA WORKSHOP II
bringing the city together
INTERVENTIONS IN
FORMER-STATE RESIDENTIAL COMPLEXES

WORKSHOP:

The former-state residential complexes represent an integral part of the city of Tirana, covering an extended area of the city's surface, and housing nearly 20% of the city's population. They are mainly located in and around the city centre, but are also found along all the major road axes. They were constructed by the state during the era of state socialism, in line with the principles of the modern movement and the post-war urban planning practices that applied to most of the Eastern and Western European cities. They constitute one of the main elements of Tirana's urban space; not only due to the population they house, but also due to the spatial qualities they offer.

In this controversial context, the former-state residential complexes of Tirana emerge as contested spaces of social interaction and spatial creativity. Their spatial and social integration into the city and their future role in the process of urban development of the Albanian capital are challenging issues of major significance. Similar issues arise nowadays in several European cities and have given way to a multiplicity of intervention approaches.

The Study Area is located in western Tirana and is surrounded by Lana River (south), the second ring road (east), an informal housing zone (north) and a former industrial zone of an evolving character (west). It is crossed by Kavaja Str., one of the main axes of the Albanian capital with commercial and mixed uses. This year's project seeks to investigate the future development of the former-state residential complexes of Tirana, by exploring a wide variety of possible interventions at the specific Study Area that intend to improve the living standards and the everyday life of the inhabitants, as well as to enhance community life.

In this context, the project will raise the following questions:

- How will the social and spatial characteristics as well as the identity of the Study Area evolve in the future considering the existing dynamics and proposed interventions?
- How can we reflect on the future character of the area in order to test planning models and promote new ideas about public space?
- How can participatory planning, institutional frameworks, public and private initiatives and elements of time inform the design process and the proposed interventions?
- Which solutions could respond to the existing and future problems of the former-state residential complexes and their residents' needs?
- How can interventions encourage various forms of collective/ community life and multiple ways of using space by different social groups?

Aiming to promote the upgrading of the urban environment and meet the challenges

of future development, the workshop will explore a multiplicity of interventions, ranging from mild patterns of neighbourhood regeneration and problem solving to the partial redevelopment of the entire area, addressing also the aspect of time in the design process. The variety of responses will contribute to an experimental educational process and to theoretical discussions among the participants during the workshop.

Throughout the workshop, tutors will discuss extensively the students' ideas, present relevant case studies and work closely with the groups in order to facilitate the formulation of analysis, proposals and presentations.

METHODOLOGY:

The project will follow three methodological stages:

VISIT -> ANALYSIS / Following the visit to the Study Area, groups are asked to organize their findings and ideas in two categories also keeping in mind the different social groups that live in the area:

- Features, assets and qualities that should be maintained or enhanced
- Problems and deficiencies that need to be faced

These findings may refer to the natural and built environment, or even to social networks and practices, habits, events and customs. Different documentation tools and techniques (sketches, video, photography, interviews, maps etc) can be used. Also information from personal experience, workshop lectures, Internet search, maps analysis etc can complement the study of the area. The groups will further assess their findings, stating their significance according to their set of criteria and will identify topics that interest them the most.

Groups are expected to organize their findings using various visual means such as maps, lists, diagrams etc.

ANALYSIS -> SCENARIOS / In this stage groups are expected to identify the present and future dynamics of the study area in order to formulate future scenarios. The scenarios should be based on the analysis conducted before and some form of future projections and the groups' own vision for the area. Among others, scenarios could explore issues of density, centrality, access, housing and social needs, connectivity and temporality. Participants are asked to focus on a specific topic / feature of their choice and to address a strategic framework, without developing a typical master plan for the area. In addition groups should develop consistent arguments and clear statements that will be used as guidelines for the following stage.

The scenarios should be presented with:

- A short text of max 500 words
- An abstract representation (diagram/sketch/collage)
- A time projection plan. Each plan could be developed along a time-axe and scale, for example short – medium – long-term development or even on seasonal or periodical ones, in the form of a calendar,
- A ppt/pdf presentation which will also include the results from the previous stage.

SCENARIOS->PROCESSES / Groups will focus on a specific topic of intervention. This topic's choice should be based on the assessment of the first stage and should be integral part of the scenario developed in the second stage. The specific topics, of the groups can develop within a wide range of intensities and outlooks that deal either with the whole area or with a part of it: from small-scale temporary constructions, to interventions on buildings (facades, terraces, stairs, extensions), open spaces (greenery, culture and sports); from supporting community life (social networks and structures) to accessibility issues (mobility, pedestrians, cars, parking) and rethinking of land uses; or even promoting the redevelopment of parts or the entire area, by defining new densities, building heights and spatial typologies.

The groups are expected to deliver time-informed proposals that emphasize not just their projections and interventions but mostly processes: for example stages of implementation, phases of development, seasonal variations, process of planning and design, actors involved, groups affected etc.

Groups should prepare a final ppt/pdf presentation which will also include finalized material from the previous stages.

The workshop "Bringing the city together. Interventions in former-state residential complexes of Tirana" is organized by a group of lecturers and PhD candidates of the School of Architectural Engineering of National Technical University of Athens and supported by U-Polis / International School of Architecture and Urban Development Policies University. It will take place in Tirana from 3rd to 9th October 2010 and will be hosted by U-Polis.