

## NODO

### Part I, San Dona di Piave as a case study in urban dichotomies

As a general introductory remark, we believe the urban strategies for developing cities are built around ideas which knit, using different civic functions, an urban fabric strongly pinned by three main poles: the civic pole, the religious pole & the commercial one. These poles have strong presences that generate metabolic-like relationships.

These blocks are built in time by factors such as the history of the city, its demographic chart, specific cultural aspects owed by the city itself, and so on. Some of the cities lost in time one of their poles or ended up minimising its value as a pin for the general urban fabric of the entire city. In most cases, we are talking about the commercial pole, as the religious one or the civic one cannot be easily “lost”.

This is mainly because both of them have a symbolic building (church or a local administration hall) which still holds the place, at least at the local civic level of perception, but most of the time, it also extends at the touristic level of perception. Even without any strategic interventions around the civic or the religious pole, people will still gather for activities or just as a generic meeting place. They are a well-in mind-printed spot for the people of that urban congregation. People will always meet “at the main church”, or “in front of the town hall” or at the “market”.

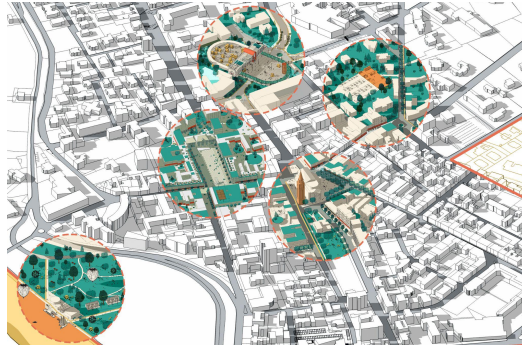
Therefore, the “lost” pole, in many cases, is the commercial milieu as a generator of social and economic interaction. Most of the cities pushed this commercial pole at one end of the urban boundary & started to call it ‘Mall’. The loss, in this case, was always regarding the social aspect of the commercial pole. Especially in Italy, urban places like San Dona are worldwide known for their public spaces, which enrich social life. The problem with over-concentrated commercial activities is that they can slowly erode the social fabric of the city by concentrating solely on financial gain that benefits the few, rather than the whole community. Localised economic prospects and an unsustainable relationship with the natural environment naturally tend to converge to a breaking point.

One can deduce from the requirement of the brief that the city is slowly touching that breaking point. The fact that we can state that we have reached the shelf-life of the current paradigm opens up new questions in terms of how to recuperate value from the existing ambiguity.



*Bringing together the 3 poles: civic, religious, commercial*

## Part II, Acupuncture



The whole strategic site interventions will focus on punctually uplifting the areas in need of transformation, from a functional, economic point of view, to fully integrating local flora and fauna within the urban space through context tailored proposals.

### *Commercial District:*

Key streets will be transformed into dynamic pedestrian routes, featuring green passageways, aiding overall well-being and the canopy will provide shelter and attract local biodiversity. Terraced seating and active frontage at street level will enable the economic sector to flourish. Interventions in the residential courtyards may include introducing neutral pavement, vegetation and urban furniture in key locations. We propose active frontage at street level for the use of residents and pedestrians and aim to enable pedestrian access from the main streets. We propose the planting of green roofs and brown wildflower roofs to allow for biodiversity. Restaurants and cafes could also be opened at the roof level and there is ample scope for sports amenities.

### *River Park:*

We propose to encourage tourism in the park with the construction of a dockland and an aquatic activity centre. There is also scope to include a restaurant and a small port as part of the docks to welcome visitors. Cycle routes, including parking racks, will connect the centre with the docks and will extend down the river, making for a picturesque cycle. Diverse outdoor sports amenities will be scattered around the park to encourage healthy lifestyles. The central area of the park shall remain open as a picnic zone but may also be used for various outdoor events.

### *Piazza Antilla Rizzo:*

The parking area behind the main church will be relocated to derelict sites from across the commercial district. The space would then be free to become an urban garden; an oasis of greenery in the middle of the town, emphasising the city's *Axis Mundi*. The composition of the boulevards will undergo a transformation, allowing for two generous sidewalks, a two-way cycle lane, a filter strip planted with trees and, where possible, a one or two-way traffic area. Sculptural seating will be featured in key locations which could potentially become a very distinctive element of the town.

*Hybrid Parking:*

Because we propose to pedestrianise the centre, derelict sites adjacent to the central area will become new parking spots, allowing the commercial district to drastically reduce its on-street parking. Car parks will also be fused with amenity spaces for young people such as skate parks and playgrounds etc.

*The Community District:*

A mix of affordable residential and commercial housing will be provided within a single structure. The availability of retail space and active frontage will encourage economic activities to prosper. The existing area of the ground floor will be left as an external, covered space through which the natural footfall of the area can pass. An external community garden will be provided which will offer refuge from the noise of the city. The garden will feature urban furniture and, possibly, sports facilities such as tennis or badminton courts. On the upper floors, the availability of terraced gardens will help to nourish overall well-being amongst the community and would also encourage decorative gardening and urban farming.

### **Part III, The Knot as hybridisation**

Why not have, then, a public space with a strong significance for the city, which pulls together its living life, it pushes it to a fast-developing process?

**Mercato** : *British English: market / noun*

**A market is a place where goods are bought and sold, usually in the open air.**



People go to Italy just to wander around in the cities, hitting from one urban pole to the other one, just to get a bit of the Italian life -feeling and charm. This is the main reason why we think that San Dona has to regain a commercial pole in obvious and facile connection with the civic and the existing religious poles. We refer to a commercial pole in the classical Italian way from a general aspect point of view: meaning a full-time market with both indoor and outdoor spaces, large, flexible, walking-friendly urban “playground” for the social life of the city.

*NODO interventions:*

Our design narrative is directed towards a new type of space that will become a focal point of the city. The intervention as a whole will focus on bringing the community to a new level of holistic prosperity. From the local economy to the individual, well-being will be aided by natural interventions within the site such as the planting of trees and green roofs.

The pergola defines the mineral boundary of the public space. It both invites you into the market and encourages pedestrians to make a loop around the site under the hanging plants.

*The Existing Building:*

With minimum intervention upon the existing building, placing the main Mercato of the city in this place is the ideal move. The facade will be dressed in a metallic mesh encompassing a glazed first inner curtain wall. The mesh, made of special aluminium, is fully transparent from the inside but allows a beautiful play of shadow to be viewed from the outside.

*The Market:*

For the San Dona site, we propose to regain the commercial centre of the city by converting the site to a contemporary, multi-use, all-inclusive market. Flexible commercial 'boxes' will be provided by the square management and be available to rent for pop-up events or local businesses. These boxes offer complete modularity, meaning they can be rented as single or multiple units.

*The Flexible Square:*

We allowed the existing urban fabric to inform the design of our elegant, oval space. As buses will no longer use the space, we propose to curb traffic by lowering the number of lanes that dissect the area. The outdoor area is a flexible space that can host events all year round and the indoor space will become a permanent market. During events, the area can be fully closed to vehicles by mechanical bollards. The back of the building is an all-year-round outdoor market, which is populated with our dynamic 'boxes'.

*The Tower:*

Our space also includes a dramatic panoramic viewing tower, created in respect to the classical lines of Italian design. The observatory tower has a unique shape in its geometry with the aim of acknowledging the site's proximity to the religious centre. The shape creates a viewing area with a straight view toward the church tower.

## **Part IV, Closing Words**

We propose to execute our project in phases. We aim to create the minimum needed infrastructure in order to serve the new proposed function, the market, without disrupting the human traffic within the building and maintaining the dance school and offices. Additionally, the interior space will be reconfigured as a market, featuring retail spaces for rent.

Overall the area will become a beacon activity in the San Dona area and a catalyst for the local economy.