



Paper for “Walking City” International Conference, June 2-3, 2005 - Porto, Portugal
www.arppa.org/cidadepedonal; www.arppa.org/walkingcity

Designing an urban street environment pro pedestrians: strategies and techniques

Lucia Martincigh

Department of Design and Study of Architecture, University of Roma Tre

Contact details:

Prof. Arch. Lucia Martincigh

DiPSA-Dipartimento di Progettazione e Studio dell'Architettura

Facoltà di Architettura - Università degli Studi Roma Tre

P.zza della Repubblica, 10 - 00185 Roma -Italy-

Tel. +39 06 57067924-25

Cell. +39 329 0572321

Fax. +39 06 57067740

martinci@uniroma3.it

Abstract

The urban texture took shape at human scale for its own nature, when the *forma urbis* was structured to host the activities of exchange and relations of inhabitants, who used mainly walking as transport mode for their displacements inside the city. Great part of everyday life was spent on the street to bear witness to the assumption: *via est vita*, and the streetscape reflected such role with its features, making people feel to be in their own realm. Before the motorized vehicles invaded the urban streets, encroaching on pedestrians' rights, there was no specific need of devising strategies and techniques for regaining such space and for designing an environment pro pedestrians.

Nowadays cities are characterized by a very high complexity, and therefore by a high level of mobility, carried out in many different ways.

Walking is the best transport mode for short distances inside cities. In planning then, priority must be given to pedestrians, by providing, organizing and designing the space in a way that is appropriate to perform such main activity and that offers, at the same time, the possibility of carrying out, in a free and casual way, also other related backing activities, that make walking more appealing.

The first step to face concerns the identification of actual hindrances and problems; the second relates to the way in which they can be removed or solved; the third regards to how the devised solutions can be implemented.

In all these steps, various methods and tools, that allow considering not only the experts' technical point of view but also the users' non professional one, are used. The comparison between experts and users makes indeed possible to confront and evaluate the consistency between convictions and reality as experienced, with the aim to put into evidence false problems or priorities.

This approach was used in some national and European researches, and in particular in the research PROMPT - New means to PROMote Pedestrian Traffic in cities, funded by the E.C. within the Fifth Framework (Key Action "The City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage), co-ordinated by Kari Rauhala (VTT - FI).

In this presentation, I will report some of the solutions devised in these researches, that are related to various steps of the design process: from the political and strategic choice, to the design idea and the measure implementation, and that suggest the priority order, the typology, the importance, the location and the ways of the possible actions. The devised solutions, apt to solve in a holistic way the detected lacks, offering the missing or inadequate performances: accessibility, safety, comfort and attractiveness, underline the multiplicity of actions that can be taken to achieve the scope, the complementarities and synergy among them, the need for a systematic approach. They are indeed interrelated among themselves and foreshadow different scenarios, adoptable depending on the detected problems, featuring technical and non-technical measures.

The presentation will linger more and deepen only some of the measures proposed in PROMPT Work Package 7 - Solutions, of which the author was leader: the increase of the space endowed to pedestrians, acting on various norms; the organization of a pedestrian network with, at least, the same dignity of the vehicular network; the architectural design of the space, that tries to satisfy people's expectations and at the same time to enhance the environment's propositions. In particular such design has to consider all the actors and to find solutions that communicate the right messages to all of them and make them at ease.

Biography

Prof. Architect - Department of Design and Study of Architecture-Faculty of Architecture-University Roma Tre.

Architect, associate Professor of Technology of Architecture

Lecturer at the Doctorate in Sustainable Urban Development and in various national and international Postgraduation Courses.

National Delegate in the EC COST Program: Action C6 "Town and infrastructure planning for safety and urban quality for pedestrians" and Action C11 "Greenstructures and Urban Planning".

Member of the C.13 National Technical Committee "Road Safety" of PIARC.

External expert for the evaluation of the E.C.research proposals.

Responsible of european and national researches on urban upgrading and pedestrian mobility, among which: PROMISING, PROMPT, SIZE, ASI. Co-ordinator in the elaboration of Pilot Projects for the implementation of sustainable mobility.

Scientific co-ordinator, lecturer or chairperson in national and international conferences and exhibitions.

Articles in specialised magazines, reports and/or books dealing with methodologies and tools for the sustainable development of urban outdoor spaces and pedestrian mobility; vulnerable users; technologies for urban rehabilitation and buildings conversion.