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Protection and Rehabilitation of the Historical World Heritage, Santiago *Spain*

Award Winning

New for 2002

- Categories:**
- Urban and Regional Planning:
 - conflict management and mediation
 - cultural heritage conservation
 - urban renewal
 - Architecture and Urban Design:
 - affordable/ecological design
 - historic preservation
 - landscape design
 - Land Use Management:
 - land-use planning
 - open space conservation
 - urban/suburban renewal

Level of Activity: City/Town

Ecosystem: River Basin

Summary

Since the early nineties Santiago de Compostela has been facing the challenge of the urban restoration and environmental regeneration of its historical World Heritage City. In addition to other national and international prizes, The European Commission and the European Council of Town Planners awarded the town planning initiative the 1997-98 European Town Planning Prize.

In the framework of a complex town planning policy, urban restoration pays special attention to two important problems in today's historical cities: the preservation of residential usage with the improvement of the population's housing conditions and the environmental regeneration of free spaces that have survived in a marginal state.

More than 650 projects, with public aid, have boosted a generalised rehabilitation process with demanding environmental and heritage criteria, resulting in more than 400 private projects. This is a stable trend that bodes well for the objective of comprehensive rehabilitation.

The policy of restoring free spaces (more than 18 ha of new parks) has consolidated two green corridors that include public riverbeds, woodland and vegetation, historical gardens and ethnographic elements.

All of this in a pilgrimage city, the destination of millions of travelers who, apart from enjoying its heritage, become immersed in a historical city with all its attributes, including the most fragile and valuable ones: the inhabitants that continue to use it in a natural way after 12 centuries of existence

and the natural setting in which it has arisen.

Narrative

SITUATION BEFORE THE INITIATIVE BEGAN

The historical city had maintained a notable level of vitality. However, symptoms of crisis were appearing: 16% of the houses were empty, rents were high, loss of inhabitants, destruction of building interiors, 40% of the houses required rehabilitation, aging population, congested traffic, free spaces with deteriorated uses, abandoned riverbeds, marginal and socially degraded spaces.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

- Conservation of constructed heritage and the environment.
- Preservation of housing and improvement of the residents' living conditions.
- Consolidation of urban activities and restoration of the historical city as a meeting place.
- Enrichment of compatible central functions and decentralisation of congested functions.

The Local Administration established the priorities in its General Municipal Organisation Plan. The priorities were developed in a Special Protection and Rehabilitation Plan. The same team of town planners initiated simultaneously (1988) the formulation of both Plans.

The Plans have gone through phases of public information, participation as well as cultural and social debate.

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

1. Residential usage of the historical city. Strategies: comprehensive rehabilitation programme (1,270 buildings, 2,400 houses), improvement of installations and green spaces.

2. The historical city: large-scale pedestrian infrastructure, a meeting place, links between different parts of the city. Strategies: Elimination of vehicular traffic with strict access regulation. Building new pedestrian routes. Compactness and continuity of urban growth.

3. Creation of green corridors in the historical city.
Strategies: Parks in the West linking the university campuses, in contact with rural landscape. Parks in the East linking traditional neighbourhoods near the Way of St. James. Reclaiming of riverbeds and tributaries.

MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

Most of the financing of the housing rehabilitation came from the residents and workers of the city.

World Heritage status means that restoration is a responsibility shared by state, regional and local administrations. The Special Municipal Plan proposed, in its draft, a stable system of cooperation among them.

This led to the creation of the City of Santiago Consortium, a cooperation entity in which the three administrations have participated since its creation in 1991. Presided by the Mayor, resources are contributed in a specific proportion in order to finance unanimously agreed projects.

This innovative experience enables to channel important public resources.

Boosted by a Royal Trust presided by His Majesty the King of Spain, the Consortium has financed, among others, initiatives such as: rehabilitation subsidies, rehabilitation office, land acquisition for

urban parks and, occasionally, their preparation.

Today, the rehabilitation projects are eligible for funds from the general housing policies, which has made the programme more sustainable.

The City Council, the administrator of the city, contributes technically and financially to the rehabilitation subsidies and is making a great effort to prepare and maintain the parks and spaces of environmental restoration.

PROCESS

Santiago de Compostela stands out from other historical cities of similar significance because it is at the same time a residential urban area.

There were evident symptoms of residential, demographic, functional and material crisis in the eighties as well as the pressure from traffic and the marginal nature of outlying free spaces. The rehabilitation initiatives were mainly aimed at stabilising the resident population, fulfilling their aspirations for improved housing. Small-scale rehabilitation and procedures of public administration based on the proximity of users formed the basis of a widespread strategy that was based on the private sector, which activates the public promotion mechanisms.

The reintroduction of traditional materials and the introduction of compatible technologies had to deal with deep-rooted habits and strong real-estate interests. This required intensive educational work, assistance in projects and construction work, cost control and the training of businesses, workers and professionals in order to share the practice of small-scale and reversible rehabilitation.

The Rehabilitation Programme has the objective of rehabilitating 2,400 houses over a 12 year-period. Around 650 projects (80% occupied) were carried out between 1995 and 2001, with an average investment of 20,000 Euros per house, an average subsidy of 35% and free professional assistance and advice. These public programmes have already stimulated more than 400 private projects. If this rate is maintained, comprehensive rehabilitation will be attained in the planned period.

Despite the shortage of land (180 ha, the historical quarter), 23 ha is zoned as new public parks of which more than 80% has been executed, acquired or is being executed. The 18 ha is consolidated in the historical city and its surroundings as a meeting place par excellence.

The population now identifies the protection of cultural heritage more and more with the restoration of the natural environment.

The land was acquired with public resources or donated by individuals, in fulfillment of their urban obligations.

The City Council had to deal with the opposition of shop owners as pedestrian traffic increased. The process was accompanied by the construction of car parks nearby and an initiative to improve the facades of 1,000 buildings. The measure, now irreversible, has consolidated the historical centre as a privileged place for spending time and enjoying human relations.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

Although this is a long-term project, which is still underway, it is worth evaluating the results of this initial phase, which involved great institutional, financial and administrative efforts:

- We are approaching 50% of the comprehensive rehabilitation objective with 60% of the remaining time period.
- Housing improvement is affordable for the residents (20,000 Euros per project). Abandonment has

been stopped by means of an economic and efficient alternative that respects heritage.

- We have reversed the trend of systematic destruction of the wooden interiors of historical architecture.
- We have revived and introduced technologies and trades in order to use and reuse materials with a low-energy cost.
- A field of specialisation and employment has arisen for small businesses, professionals and technicians.
- More than 80% of the green corridors have been acquired. More than 15 ha of parks have been created or are in the process of being established. Socially and physically degraded spaces have been reintegrated into the city without losing their social and environmental component.
- The historical city has been reunited with its natural surroundings.
- Restored to pedestrian use, the historical centre fully reflects its meeting-place and architectural quality.
- A stable inter-administrative cooperation entity has been institutionalised, based on consensus, producing synergies resulting from coordination.
- The environmental quality and quality of life have improved substantially, with a meticulous urban transformation.
- Compostela has turned its urban restoration project into an international platform based on the value of cultural heritage and the environment at the service of citizens and social cohesion.

SUSTAINABILITY

Financial:

The housing rehabilitation costs are affordable for the users. The sobriety of the projects, the reuse and repairing of elements have made them eligible for public-sector subsidies.

The public-sector subsidies are accompanied by an investment on the part of the users and are administered according to the criterion of stimulating such investment.

The restoration of public spaces requires important resources for their acquirement and execution. However, a significant part (7 ha) was donated free by the beneficiaries of urban developments. The investment for preparing such spaces is centred on regenerating the woodland and a layer of vegetation adapted to the climate.

Social:

Rehabilitation has stopped the loss of residents and maintained the social diversity.

The localisation of large urban parks and prestigious installations has integrated the surrounding segregated spaces.

Cultural:

The preservation of the historical city's cultural value, applied rigorously in the case of constructed heritage, has also taken into account its social content, as a living expression of coexistence in a city of multiple functions, of inhabitants from different classes, of different cultural expressions.

Environmental:

These projects were marked by environmental sustainability. It is worth highlighting the consistency applied in the introduction of a small-scale rehabilitation method that: has the objective of functionally restoring all possible structures, has reintroduced construction techniques capable of prolonging the

buildings' life, has revived the use of wood in construction, has restored historical buildings. Compostela has preserved free and natural spaces in contact with the dense city, the last, rich contact of proximity with the rural surroundings from which it arose, an example of city integration into its territory.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Social diversity has a cohesion value and an opportunity in historical cities with housing rehabilitation policies based on project economy and technologies.
- Improvement in living conditions is increased by means of qualified technical intervention in the smallest projects.
- Knowledge of traditional techniques and materials, compatible technological innovation and qualified conservation and repair practices enable the duplication of restoration initiatives.
- The success of the restoration depends on the active participation and direct financial involvement of the population. Sometimes technical assistance and advice is more appreciated than economic aid.
- The material, social and environmental crisis of historical cities requires cooperative coordination among administrations. The Local Administration is responsible for the planning, strategies and direct management of the initiatives.
- Restoring nature in the city, also in the historical city, is a legitimate aspiration with an immediate effect on the quality of life. Reclaiming deteriorated free spaces in outlying areas can promote urban integration and social cohesion.
- Interventions in historical buildings, designed to last, make up a rich educational and experimental field regarding themes of sustainability, the quality of life and development models for mankind's habitat.

Compostela's experience has been nourished by the long European experience and intense Spanish experience of the eighties. The fact that it is a late-starting project has enabled a synthesis between the disciplinary use of town planning, a very precise administrative and programming dimension, the handling of different scales, comprehension of the institutional variable and understanding of the indispensable involvement of the population directly linked to a certain expectation of improvement in its living conditions.

TRANSFERABILITY

The urban restoration of the historical city of Santiago de Compostela has attained important national and international recognition with the awarding of the 1998 European Town Planning Prize, by the European Commission and the European Council of Town Planners, to the Special Protection and Rehabilitation Plan.

The city is present in numerous forums, conveying its experience to other cities.

Different European cities have shown interest in the specific experiences presented herein, in addition to the other actions completing the urban project of the historical city's urban restoration. The city is currently participating as a partner in a European project included in the Finestra (Recite II) programme regarding the exchange of public-private collaboration experiences with the Corsican city of Bastia, the Italian cities of Lecce and Perugia and the Italian region of Umbria.

Compostela's experience has been conveyed by means of the Assembly of World Heritage Cities to different cities around the world, participating in international cooperation relations with several Latin American cities.

Three successive series of rehabilitation training courses for architects and technical architects have been held biannually.

The small size of the city (120,000 inhabitants), the comprehensive nature of the projects, their direct relationship with the citizens' most specific problems and the direct involvement of the Local Administration with limited technical and financial resources, make this experience especially conveyable: a locally based project that, identifying the opportunities of its resources (cultural and environmental), managed to catch the authorities' attention. It thereby became a project of state interest that has served to internationally promote the city, its cultural heritage and the region of Galicia, without losing sight of the underlying social and environmental objectives required by its urban reality.

Key Dates

1994 Initial approval of the Special Plan of Historical City Protection and Rehabilitation. Definition of the planning framework

1994 Rehabilitation Bridge Plan. Bonaval Park. Promotion of housing rehabilitation. First environmental restoration project in the East.

1997 Final approval of the Special Plan of Historical City Protection and Rehabilitation. Consolidation of local planning for restoration.

1999 Special Planning of the Sarela River. Galeras Park. Beginning of the restoration of the West environmental corridor.

2000 Preparation of Belvis and Simeon Parks. Central actions in the West and East corridor

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Type of Partner Support: Financial Support

Financial Profile

Year	Total Budget (euros)	Santiago City Council (%)	City of Santiago Consortium (%)	M. of Public Works- IGVS (%)	Residents and users of the historical city (%)
1997	9,144,400	7.5	63.5	-	29.0
1998	7,284,270	10.0	44.5	-	45.5
1999	3,768,350	44.5	23.0	-	32.5
2000	1,376,320	43.0	36.5	7.5	13.0
2001	5,529,310	18.0	60.0	10.5	11.5

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