

## Caring for the Modern: knowledge, design and community in Matera's neighbourhoods

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### Abstract.

*The present essay proposes a theoretical–operative framework for caring for ordinary modern heritage. This is understood as a proximity-based heritage exposed to transformation and conflicts of use. Utilising Matera's contemporary residential districts as a case study, the text delves into the formulation of a neighbourhood-scale governance apparatus grounded in *schede norma*: instruments that translate social listening, morpho-spatial analysis and technological compatibility into quantifiable criteria and conditions for intervention. Care is defined as a measured, reversible and relational action, capable of avoiding both prescriptive rigidity and genericity. The paper under discussion highlights implications for public space and everyday management, as well as limits and prospects for updating and transferability.*

**Keywords:** Modern heritage; Urban regeneration; Community and proximity; Design and identity; Matera.

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### **Modern heritage as proximity-based heritage**

The architectural and urban heritage of the post-war period now constitutes a substantial share of the European and Italian built environment (Ghirardo, 2013), yet it continues to occupy an ambivalent position in public space (Migotto and Tattara, 2023) and within transformation policies. On the one hand, it is an "ordinary" and widespread legacy, often associated with material fragilities, social vulnerabilities and perceptual stigma; on the other, it preserves irreplaceable settlement and spatial values, tied to everyday life, neighbourhood infrastructures and the quality of collective space. In this context, the modern is first and foremost a proximity-based heritage<sup>1</sup> in use: its conservation cannot be reduced to formal protection alone (Harrison, 2013), nor can its regeneration be pursued through replacement processes that erase memory and practices. The fundamental issue pertains to the governance of transformation as a process, acknowledging that its values are ascertained through the relationship between inhabitants, spaces and services, and through the capacity to maintain continuity of use and recognisability. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to adopt a life-cycle perspective, in which targeted transformations and planned maintenance become operative conditions of inhabiting. The management of contemporary heritage therefore necessitates a governance apparatus (Paris and Bianchi, 2018) that can translate the values of usage and local demands into a set of rules and responsibilities for intervention. These rules must be measured, updatable and verifiable, with explicit priorities and sequences that can orient change over time. The objective is to circumvent two conflicting trends: conservative freezing and deregulation, which can lead to incoherent transformations.

The contribution was developed within the context of an applied research project, and it proposes a theoretical–operative framework that is based on three steps. Firstly, a morpho-technological reading of the spaces and devices that mediate everyday life. Secondly, the analysis of use transformations and spontaneous modifications as indicators of needs and criticalities. Thirdly, dialogue with public administration, managers and local stakeholders is to be initiated with a view to constructing criteria, decision thresholds and repertoires of incremental actions oriented to the quality of inhabiting. These are not abstract prescriptions, but a proximity infrastructure that renders transformations comparable and open to debate over time. The objective is not to provide a detailed account of an exceptional case, but rather to elucidate a series of transferable principles and their implications. The following questions must be addressed: firstly, how can the modern be recognised as a "near" and non-specialised heritage linked to everyday life? Secondly, how can a form of direction be established that makes social listening, spatial reading and feasibility compatible? And thirdly, how can instruments be built that orient transformations over time, reducing conflict, waste and the loss of urban quality? Matera offers a particularly significant terrain of experimentation because it concentrates, in a legible form, many of the contemporary contradictions of Italian modernity. The neighbourhoods that were developed during the period of renewal<sup>2</sup> and post-war

expansion constitute a recognisable built heritage (Bilò and Vadini, 2026), yet they are traversed by rapid dynamics of change, including spontaneous additions and alterations, shifts in use, fragmented ownership, pressure on collective spaces and services, demographic change and new imaginaries connected to the tourist city. In this scenario, the issue is not only what to conserve, but also "with which rules and within which timeframes" to accompany evolution, without dissipating original settlement values or generating new spatial inequalities. These fabrics function as a laboratory for constructing rules as a practice of care, that is to say, as a series of criteria and sequences of action that connect heritage, design, management and everyday life. It is within this incremental, measurable and shared direction that the modern can be assumed as proximity-based heritage, addressing—over time—an oriented, responsible and socially recognisable transformation.

### **Object, mandate and device: from transformations to design criteria**

The work<sup>3</sup> takes as its object the definition of an operative framework for the transformations of some of Matera's modern neighbourhoods (Acito, 2017) – Spine Bianche, Serra Venerdi and Lanera (Fig. 1) – understood as ordinary heritage under conditions of vulnerability and transformative pressure. The focus is not on a single building, but rather on the set of relationships that constitute the neighbourhood unit. These relationships include settlement morphology, public and collective spaces, facilities, fronts and edges, as well as patterns of use and practices that sustain everyday life. The scale of reference under consideration is the intermediate one, situated between the level of the building and that of the city. At this scale, the cumulative effects of punctual interventions become more legible and, concomitantly, more difficult to govern. In this context, the aggregation of micro-actions (frequently deemed valid in relation to individual requirements) engenders, over the course of time, spatial, environmental and perceptual incoherences. It is at this threshold that the quality of life in the existing is assessed, not in exceptionality, but in the continuity of ordinary transformations.

The institutional framework, therefore, requires instruments that orient evolution over time with continuity and verifiability, thus overcoming both a purely constraint-based approach and reliance on episodic control practices (Lähdesmäki, 2016). The mandate is configured as the construction of design and decision criteria capable of making interventions comparable and reducing administrative arbitrariness.

The operative pathway has evolved through a collaborative endeavour between the DeAssociati practice and the CITERA–Sapienza University research laboratory, characterised by distinct yet integrated roles. DeAssociati contributes essential design and operational expertise in constructing applicable rules, thereby ensuring the translatability of principles into implementable indications, alignment with constraints and technical and administrative feasibility, and the robustness of the framework with respect to transformation procedures. CITERA–Sapienza provides support for the process through a theoretical and methodological approach oriented towards the "care" of the modern, understood as a critical reading of values and fragilities, and as the ability to convert spatial evidence and social demands into controllable criteria. The integration of these contributions establishes a declared chain between knowledge, design and implementation: from observed transformations to the definition of criteria, and onwards to their translation into verifiable instruments.

Matera's contemporary neighbourhoods are undergoing spontaneous and progressive transformations that, when considered collectively, result in substantial modifications to settlement structure, urban image and the quality of collective space (Fig. 2-3-4). The fragmentation of ownership and the heterogeneity of the relevant actors make the provision of unified direction difficult; socio-demographic changes further affect housing demand, household composition, use practices and expectations regarding services. The resultant effect is an increase in the pressure on available spaces and facilities. This is evidenced by the absorption of common areas as private extensions, inadequate infrastructures and services in meeting the increased demands, and conflicts between mobility, parking and pedestrian use. Symbolic tensions may also be observed, which may contribute to stigma or, conversely, selective valorisations. In the absence of a unifying framework, transformation occurs through the accumulation of exceptions, resulting in heterogeneous outcomes and a progressive loss of recognisability, accompanied by an increased likelihood of conflict and disputes (De Lucia, 2013). In this particular scenario, the *schede norma*<sup>4</sup> are produced. These instruments of guidance and regulation are designed for implementation at a neighbourhood scale. *Schede norma* are defined as synthetic units that associate specific domains or themes of transformation (public space, fronts, additions, recurring elements, facilities, etc.) with a set of criteria, indications and compatibility conditions for interventions. These *schede norma* are supported by graphic references and a logic of verifiability. The structure of these systems renders explicit priorities, decision thresholds and compatibility conditions, and they are designed to govern evolution. They render priorities and conditions legible, thereby reducing arbitrariness in decisions, orienting punctual interventions within an overall vision, and allowing updating over time on the basis of observed effects. In this sense, *schede norma* function as the core of a light yet structuring governance device: a proximity infrastructure connecting urban quality, use values and technical-administrative feasibility, while maintaining coherence between reading, criteria and operative choices.

### **Participation as an infrastructure of knowledge: methods, tools, results**

In order to guarantee the operative effectiveness of the *schede norma*, it is not possible to exhaust the definition of criteria within a merely technical-formalist approach, nor can it be resolved through an uncritical sedimentation of heterogeneous demands. It is imperative to recognise the necessity of an intermediate phase, which is characterised by the establishment of a robust knowledge structure. This structure is designed to accurately discern needs and conflicts of use, subsequently converting them into prescriptive and verifiable parameters. In this scenario, participation is elevated to an essential cognitive infrastructure, tasked with feeding and qualifying the operative translation of the normative device (Amendola and Sivo, 1995).

The participatory initiative *La voce dei quartieri di Matera* was established to support the drafting of the *schede norma*, with the aim of initiating a dialogue between institutions, designers and neighbourhood communities which—according to Zevi—constituted the finest periphery among Italian cities. The formulation of strategies, methodologies and tools intended to guide the metamorphosis and management of these areas cannot do without the active involvement of the local population (De Carlo, 2013). In this perspective, the inclusion and participation programme curated by the Gianfranco Dioguardi Foundation—which, since the 1970s, has experimented

nationally with *Laboratori di Quartiere*—aspires to operate as a knowledge infrastructure supporting the city's future development (Dioguardi Group, 1995).

The project aims to facilitate the restoration of a central role for residents in defining future scenarios through proactive listening and an articulated programme of activities. The process is intended to identify needs, use values and sensitivities that can be translated into operative criteria capable of consciously directing the future of these historic neighbourhoods. In this regard, three totems were installed, designed to receive requests, proposals and desires expressed by citizens, remaining operational for a period exceeding one month. These "listening devices" serve a variety of functions, including displays for photographs and artistic illustrations, urban lanterns, amplifiers of sounds and messages, neighbourhood noticeboards, and collection points for "community mail". The photographic exhibition mounted on the panels brings into dialogue archival images of the settlements shortly after completion with contemporary photographs taken from the same viewpoints, enabling the reading—through visual comparison—of transformations over time (Piano et al., 1980). The installations (Fig. 5) were constructed using multidirectional scaffold tubes and finished with construction-site materials. They incorporate a large neighbourhood mailbox that enables residents to submit messages, letters and postcards. The installations also invite residents to express opinions about their living environment through a targeted survey. The questionnaire, available in both paper and online formats, has been designed as an active reception tool to gauge public perceptions of liveability, identity and the criticalities of the city's historic areas. Beyond the scope of gauging prevalent sentiment on matters such as safety and sociability, the survey encompasses technical inquiries designed to delineate the thermal and technological comfort of dwellings, along with the established practices concerning the utilisation of collective areas. Strategically positioned within the central districts of the three neighbourhoods, these urban entities become illuminated during evening hours, effectively serving as lanterns that illuminate public spaces. The primary objective of this initiative is to encourage residents to approach and engage with the surroundings, fostering a sense of curiosity and spontaneity through the presence of these sculptures. This approach aims to stimulate reflections among residents who may not be fully cognizant of the historical, architectural, and urban significance of these locations (Milella, 1985). During the presence of the structures, various activities were coordinated, also in synergy with third-sector bodies and local associations. These activities included direct interviews with citizens, collective meetings and workshops, exploratory walks and technical seminars (Fig. 6). On these occasions, 900 postcards displaying archival images of the three neighbourhoods were distributed in conjunction with the forms residents were invited to complete and post into the structures, alongside messages, letters, minutes of condominium assemblies, suggestions and observations (Fig. 7). The total number of submissions collected was approximately one hundred, which suggests that there was a considerable degree of interest among the social base. Concurrently, the digital completion of questionnaires resulted in a total exceeding fifty contributions. The utilisation of postal exchanges as a medium for communication fostered democratic and authentic participation, thereby transforming individual reflections into a collective patrimony. The initiative proved instrumental in collecting valuable data for the *schede norma*, while also catalysing social cohesion and identity. The transversal analysis of the collected material confirms the problematic condition of a part of the city that requires an adequate normative approach. Public space is characterised by a perpetual interplay of conflicting demands, including the tension between green spaces and parking, vitality

and tranquillity, and safety and comfort. Consequently, the *schede norma* should not be limited to static prescriptions, but should operate through conditions and thresholds of tolerance capable of regulating flexible uses of urban space. Concurrently, the demand for routine maintenance has emerged as a structural and prioritised request. This shift in focus entails a transition from a paradigm of the extraordinary event of renewal to a culture of continuous "care". It is evident that spatial quality is interconnected with architectural design, as well as with performance requirements and enduring management responsibilities. Consequently, the *schede norma* should integrate maintenance protocols capable of guaranteeing lasting decorum and responding to the sense of degradation perceived by residents. The concept of care is ultimately intertwined with micro-practices of use and the management of boundaries between public and private spheres. The incorporation of threshold elements and building fronts necessitates the establishment of criteria for ensuring compatibility of use and perceptual coherence. This is essential for the preservation of the quality of detail and the visual relationship between the dwelling and the street. Nonetheless, the integration of these outcomes into the standardised framework does entail methodological challenges. These challenges are linked to the limits of the non-statistical<sup>5</sup> representativeness of the sample and the risk of overly rigid or excessively generic normative translations. It is therefore essential to clarify that questionnaire outcomes do not constitute a direct prescriptive mandate, but rather a knowledge base for defining verifiable and updatable criteria. The objective is to translate the perceptions of local residents into performance requirements that allow the norm to evolve in accordance with the changing needs of the neighbourhood, while remaining open to ongoing monitoring and renegotiation.

### **Operative translation: from knowledge to criteria**

The contemporary care<sup>6</sup> for the modern built environment, within the context of ordinary neighbourhoods, must be distinguished from a nostalgic stance and from protection by subtraction. The operation is measured in nature, functioning through verifiable thresholds and priorities. It is reversible in essence, operating under the assumption of transformation as an ordinary condition and meticulously monitoring its outcomes without the formation of fixed forms and utilisation. The operation is relational in essence, acknowledging the construction of heritage value in the nexus between space, practices and imaginaries, and thus in the quality of interactions between inhabitants, services and public space (Sennett, 2018). In this perspective, the objective is not merely to "protect" an image, but rather to regulate the conditions of inhabitation over time. This involves establishing a set of criteria that guide decisions and facilitate the evaluation of intervention compatibility with proximity values, such as continuity of use, recognisability, accessibility, environmental quality, and social impact.

The transition from knowledge to schema is achieved through the integration of two complementary planes. On the one hand, the utilisation of listening and participatory materials serves to render visible the needs, conflicts and priorities of use, which are often concentrated on everyday micro-devices (thresholds, common areas, routes, spaces for rest and encounter) and on apparently "minor" aspects that are nonetheless decisive for perceived quality (maintenance, lighting, green-space management, decorum, safety of use). Conversely, analyses of the neighbourhood based on morpho-spatial and technological factors enable the identification of invariants, recurrences and vulnerabilities. These include the types of public space and their hierarchies (García-Germán, 2022),

modes of occupation and additions, serial elements and constructive details, plant-system compatibility and performance limits. Operative translation is defined as the process of converging these knowledge bases into a set of criteria that is neither the simple registration of preferences nor an abstract code, but rather an orienting grid capable of guiding design and administrative decisions (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel, 2019). Firstly, the efficacy of an intervention in preserving or enhancing continuity of use and everyday liveability is assessed, with a focus on avoiding the introduction of unmanaged conflicts (accessibility, comfort, safety of use, usability of common spaces). The concept of continuity does not imply immobility; rather, it signifies that the emergence of novel requirements and adjustments should not impede collective efficacy or the equilibrium between private and shared domains. Concurrently, the concepts of recognisability and image coherence are posited as integral components of the quality of inhabiting. In this theoretical framework, the legibility of the urban layout and fronts is treated as both a value component and a factor of perceived "care". The criterion does not aim at homogenisation, but at avoiding arbitrary discontinuities and incoherent accumulation (materials, colours, windows, closures, screens) that erode overall quality and engender stigma or conflict among residents. In this context, the "rule" does not delineate a particular style, but rather, it establishes a verifiable principle of coherence. The objective is not to impose limitations on transformation, but rather to ensure its comprehensibility and the capacity for negotiation. Consequently, a secondary set of criteria pertains to open space as the fundamental infrastructure of proximity. Routes, squares, green areas, thresholds and residual spaces must be regarded as a system. The criterion provides a framework for decision-making concerning the selection of equipment, maintenance protocols, and compatible applications, while considering the trade-offs that emerge (e.g., green/parking; vitality/tranquillity; safety/comfort) and translating these trade-offs into conditions and thresholds, rather than establishing absolute prohibitions. Concurrently, each addition or modification is evaluated in terms of technological compatibility and reversibility, ensuring compatibility with existing construction and building-services systems and circumventing the use of invasive, hard-to-maintain solutions. Reversibility<sup>7</sup> is defined as the capacity for removal without causing damage, as well as the traceability and durability of solutions. It is imperative that details and junctions are designed to minimise the risks of decay, thermal bridges, infiltration, and performance discontinuities. This approach ensures that individual adaptations do not lead to collective vulnerabilities. Two further criteria must be met for the device to be governable in practice. Ordinary maintenance<sup>8</sup> should not be regarded as a postscript, but as an integral part of the project (Losasso, 2022). The standardised maintenance schedule may include minimum requirements and clearly defined responsibilities, such as those related to green space maintenance, lighting, cleaning, furnishings, and micro-equipment. This is because perceived quality and liveability are more influenced by continuity of care than by episodic interventions. Finally, the rule is assessed in terms of equity, considering how it affects the distribution of benefits and burdens among residents. It should prevent transformation from favouring a few through private appropriations of common space or solutions that increase conflicts. The transparency of the process is of paramount importance, as it serves to reduce the discretion available to the negotiators and, concomitantly, serves to enhance the legitimacy of the process. The bridge towards the rule-form consists in transforming each criterion into a set of operative conditions (admissibility, compatibility, minimum performances, indications on materials and solutions, priorities and phases), organised by recurring domains. These domains are as follows: public space and green areas; fronts and

thresholds; additions and closures; systems and performances; management and maintenance. In this manner, the standard is able to circumvent two conflicting risks. On the one hand, prescriptive rigidity can impede transformation, leading to exceptions and disputes. On the other hand, genericity can lack direction, resulting in incoherent interventions. The rule does not replace design; rather, it enables and renders it accountable, thereby making evaluation criteria explicit and offering a framework within which transformations can evolve with continuity, recognisability and proximity-based quality.

### **Rule, feasibility, design responsibility**

In the context of contemporary neighbourhoods, the "rule" cannot be conceptualised as a conservative constraint that fixes forms and uses, nor as a generic framework that merely accommodates the accumulation of specific transformations. The rule functions as a regulatory mechanism that governs the transformation process by establishing compatibility conditions, clarifying thresholds and priorities, and fostering a shared language between the administration, designers and residents. In this perspective, the value of the *scheda norma* lies in its capacity to function as an interface between principles and implementation. It is clear enough to orient repeatable decisions, and flexible enough to absorb variability of use and differences of context. It is evident that three recurring domains necessitate this particular direction. The primary concern pertains to the design of facades and thresholds, incorporating elements such as closures, screens, light additions, and devices for climatic and visual control. The impetus for these transformations is frequently rooted in the pursuit of comfort and the appropriation of micro-spaces. The cumulative effect of these transformations is twofold, affecting both the collective image and the permeability of the environment, as well as the relationship between the public and private spheres. In this instance, the rule should not impose a particular style, but rather define verifiable conditions of coherence and compatibility. It should distinguish what is negotiable from what irreversibly alters the legibility of the layout. A secondary domain pertains to the incorporation of new elements and alterations in utilisation. These encompass minor expansions, functional transitions, the integration of building services, and modifications that interact with construction systems and their functionality. The objective is not to prevent adaptation, but rather to mitigate the collateral effects that engender collective vulnerabilities (accelerated decay, performance discontinuities, maintenance problems). In this domain, the *scheda norma* has the capacity to function through thresholds and minimum requirements, thereby signifying the necessity for supplementary inspections. A third domain pertains to public space and appurtenances, encompassing green areas, routes, squares, residual spaces, and interstices. In this context, the resolution of recurring conflicts of use (e.g. green/parking, quiet/vitality, safety/comfort) cannot be achieved through abstract prohibitions; rather, the rule should facilitate negotiation by specifying compatible uses, levels of equipment, responsibilities for management and maintenance, and priority criteria that render public choice legible. It is important to note that two risks are invariably associated with the process of translation into norm: over-prescription and banalisation/standardisation. The aforementioned issues can be mitigated by working through conditions and thresholds, building repertoires of compatible solutions (rather than single "models"), and maintaining a traceable link between evidence (use and form) and normative decisions. In this framework, coordination with university research is of practical value in strengthening the knowledge base and rendering the rule discussable and updatable over time.

### **Implications and transferability: what remains after the project**

The experience that has been developed in the modern neighbourhoods of Matera reframes the concept of "proximity-based heritage" as an operative question. That is to say, it raises the issue of how the value of ordinary built fabric can be maintained over time in the context of inevitable transformations. The remaining elements do not align with a formal outcome, but rather function as an orienting device, thereby enabling the governance, discussion and updating of transformation. The initial implication pertains to governance. In the context of contemporary heritage, transformation is typically characterised by micro-interventions and accumulation. In the absence of a reference framework, outcomes frequently exhibit heterogeneity and arbitrariness, as evidenced by exceptions, derogations and disputes. Should the *schede norma* be founded upon explicit and verifiable criteria, they have the capacity to provide a shared grammar. In this manner, they serve to clarify priorities and compatibility conditions, thereby reducing discretion and enabling neighbourhood-scale direction without replacement of design.

Secondly, the implications for public space and its utilisation are noteworthy. In contemporary neighbourhoods, the concept of proximity quality – encompassing accessibility, comfort, recognisability and opportunities for encounter – is predominantly manifested in open spaces and their boundaries. It is within these domains that conflicts and processes of appropriation reach their zenith. In this context, care should not be regarded as a mere decorative addition; rather, it should be considered a strategy that holds together design and management. It is evident that maintenance requirements, rules of use, equipment and operative priorities directly affect perceived quality and the social holding of spaces.

A third implication pertains to replicable instruments. The integration of listening, morpho-technological reading and translation into criteria delineates a transferable method that extends beyond the confines of Matera (Block and Ruggiero, 2023). This method is not a rigid model, but rather a reproducible and adaptable sequence of steps that can be applied to other contexts involving ordinary modern heritage. The concept of replicability does not depend on the process of replication; rather, it depends on the transparency of the process. The transferability of the process is dependent on the manner in which rules are constructed and checked. The rule thus also functions as a knowledge device that makes evaluation criteria explicit.

However, it should be noted that there are still limits and uncertainties in this field. Firstly, the knowledge base derived from participatory processes does not coincide with full statistical representativeness. Moreover, some tensions between demands are structural and not univocally resolvable. Secondly, the process of translation into *schede norma* gives rise to a pivotal question concerning implementation: the efficacy of the device is contingent upon its ability to function within prescribed procedures, the availability of resources, and routine management. The transformation of modern neighbourhoods is influenced by external factors (markets, flows, policies, incentives) that may accelerate or distort outcomes, thus necessitating forms of adaptation. The prospects therefore concern three directions: replicability, updating and the maintenance of rules. The process of updating entails the conceptualisation of the scheme normal as evolutionary instruments (Harrison et al., 2020), capable of incorporating feedback and revising thresholds and priorities on the basis of observed effects. The maintenance of rules necessitates the acknowledgement that care is not a one-time action; it demands explicit responsibilities, administrative continuity, and a management

culture that transforms proximity heritage into a tangible benefit, rather than merely an articulated one.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this contribution, the term 'proximity-based heritage' is employed to denote a set of use values and recognisability that are produced through everyday life (spaces, services, practices). The safeguarding of this heritage depends on continuity of liveability rather than on monumental exceptionality.

<sup>2</sup> In this study, the focus is on the neighbourhoods of Spine Bianche, Serra Venerdì and Lanera. These neighbourhoods were developed from a competition that was launched in 1954 by the Ministry of Public Works. This competition was part of a larger project to renew the Sassi districts, which was first established under Law 619/1952. In accordance with the prevailing municipal plan, these fabrics are recognised as constituting the "Historic City" (comprising both ancient and modern components) and are incorporated within Zone A; see Art. As outlined in the 32nd Technical Implementation Rule of the Urban Planning Regulation of the Municipality of Matera (City Council Resolution No. 19, 11/03/2021).

<sup>3</sup> The present essay pertains to an applied research initiative that was commissioned by the Municipality of Matera. This initiative was initiated following a public call for the drafting of *schede norma*, with the objective being the socio-economic regeneration of the neighbourhoods Spine Bianche, Lanera and Serra Venerdì, whilst also ensuring the safeguarding of their historical and testimonial values. The activity was carried out jointly by CITERA (Sapienza University of Rome) and DeAssociati, within a multidisciplinary team.

<sup>4</sup> In normative–operative terms, *scheda norma* is defined as a technical–regulatory document that refers to specific areas or themes. It is used to define compatibility conditions, requirements and verification criteria, with the aim of guiding and rendering transformations controllable.

<sup>5</sup> Participatory outcomes are regarded as qualitative evidence that lends support to the formulation of criteria (rather than being considered a statistical sample). The efficacy of these outcomes stems from their ability to illuminate conflicts of use, priorities, and perceptions. However, their limitations pertain to self-selection and representativeness.

<sup>6</sup> In the text, the term "care" is employed in an operative sense (thresholds, priorities, checks), as opposed to a moral category. It is a praxis of design and management that addresses the effects on liveability, public space, maintenance and technological compatibility.

<sup>7</sup> The concept of reversibility is understood in two distinct ways. Firstly, it refers to the possibility of removal without causing damage. Secondly, it refers to the traceability and maintainability of solutions. The issue of reversibility relates to a stratified conception of the building and to the capacity to learn over time through controlled transformations.

<sup>8</sup> As posited in the preceding paragraph, the centrality of ordinary maintenance and management as components of urban quality implies that the project should include requirements and responsibilities for continuous care, not only works.

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## Images

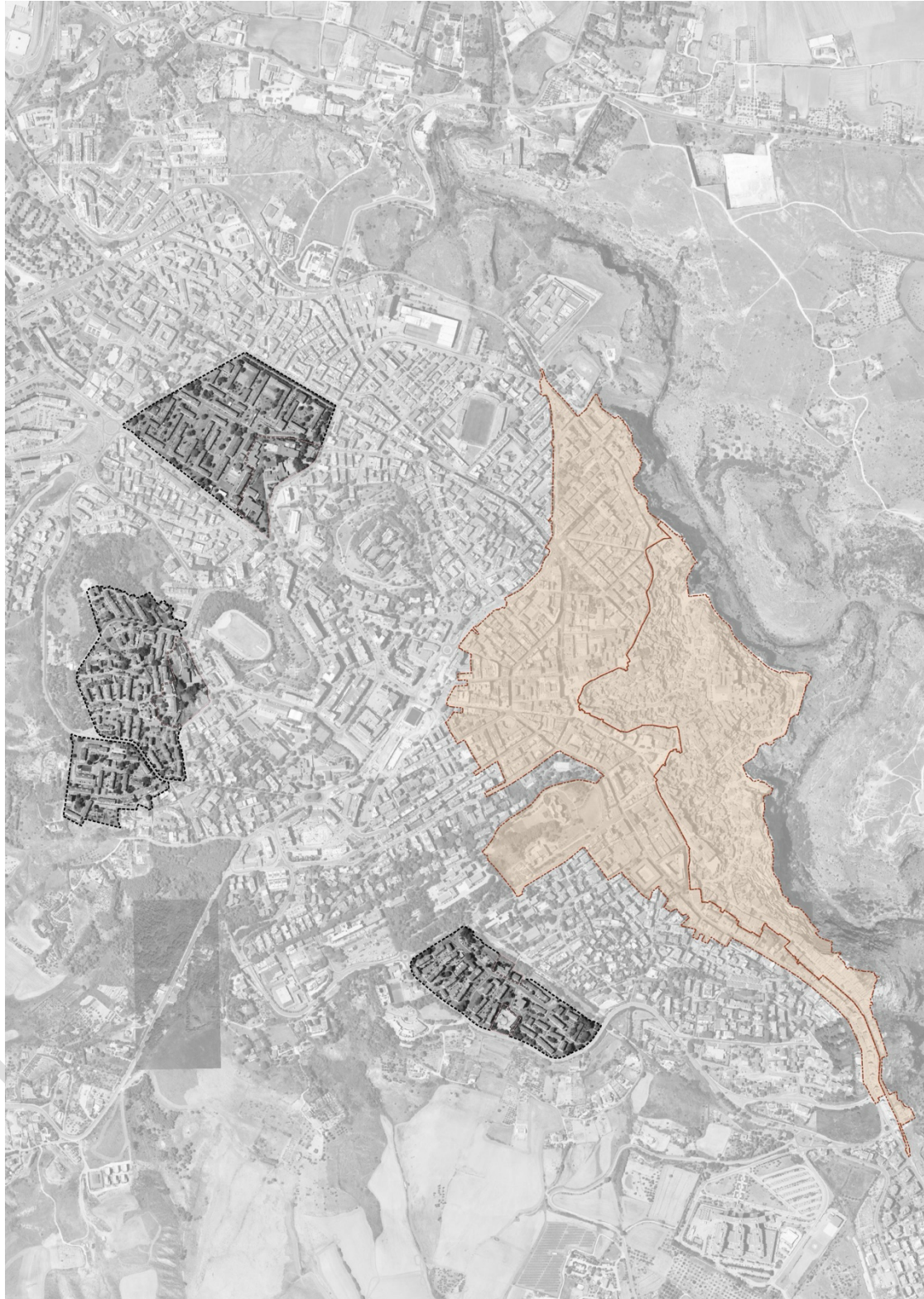


Fig. 01 – Matera. Overview and boundaries of the Spine Bianche, Lanera and Serra Venerdi districts within the municipal urban context. Map elaborated by DeAssociati Studio.



Fig. 02 – Spine Bianche: then-and-now photographic comparison. Historic photograph from Casabella, no. 231, September 1959; contemporary photograph by Carlo Vannini.



Fig. 03 – Serra Venerdi: then-and-now photographic comparison. Historic photograph from the private archive of Luisa Anversa Ferretti; contemporary photograph by Carlo Vannini.



Fig. 04 – Lanera: then-and-now photographic comparison. Historic photograph from the Mario Coppa Archive; contemporary photograph by Carlo Vannini.



Fig. 05 – Listening device installed in the Spine Bianche district. In the background, the Casa di Matera by G. De Carlo. Photograph by AVIE Studio.



Fig. 06 – Listening device installed in the Lanera district during the “La voce dei quartieri di Matera” initiative, with residents engaging in the neighbourhood public space. Photograph by Carlo Vannini.



Fig. 07 – Neighbourhood “mail box” integrated into the listening device. On the left, a then-and-now photographic comparison of a corner in the Spine Bianche district. Photograph by AVIE Studio.

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