

1. NATURE/CULTURE AND TOWN/COUNTRYSIDE

CONCEPTIONS OF URBAN GREENING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

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Abstract

Urban Greening, (UG) through nature-based systems (NbS) in sensitive historic environments should be considered as 'a network of multi-functional green spaces which can deliver environmental benefits and improve health and well-being for community. The promotion of greening actions can work as a key bridging concept between cultural heritage and nature. They have been also used extensively to address issues of urban risks such as flooding, climate change, biodiversity loss. One of the key benefits of an UG approach is the ability to be adaptive to the spatial design of a site. This flexibility and adaptability of urban greening is crucial to shape historic environments and landscapes in a more responsive way. In this reflective and adaptive way UG can be best linked to urban design. Further, it is essential in integrating urban and ecological design into planning policy. For a more sustainable, accessible, liveable places, greening can provide opportunities to meet these needs.

For sure sensitive sites require specific contextualisation to ensure preservation protection of Urban Heritage that can be a critical aspect of this perspective. Urban greening can provide an added value to the urban design process as can help to maximise aesthetic, functionality, quality of a space.

But, at what point does the UG have a positive influence on the historic environment? How can UG be used to move beyond simple tree planting? These questions are now being taken seriously by local authorities and in terms of local policies and strategies.

To bridge this ongoing gap, the University of Florence has developed innovative teaching programmes that provide opportunities for students to integrate UG thinking within urban design practice in historic city centres. At the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and specifically within the Master Courses of Technique of Urbanism and Urban Design is providing not only the conceptual basis but also to embrace the principles of urban planning and design to manage the well-defined by UNESCO Heritage Urban Landscapes (HULs).

Key words: urban greening, sensitive historic environment, urban design, Heritage Urban Landscape

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