

REVIEW OF MOST RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE "LABORATORIO TIPOLOGICO NAZIONALE"

The Laboratory's activities did not start immediately after its opening since the following year was mainly given over to the definition of criteria and procedures for the management of the Laboratory itself by OIKOS.

The Laboratory was officially opened by the Ministry of Public Work in October 1988

Actual research started in 1990 on the basis of a programme drawn up with the collaboration of the Public Housing Committee ("Comitato per l'Edilizia Residenziale").

The two-year programme is based on the following fundamental topics:

- **The study of regulatory aspects** pertaining to the establishment of National Building Regulations for Public Housing with particular reference to two categories of requisite defined by the PHC: **suitability for use** and **flexibility**.
- **The study of the functional characteristics of areas destined for special cases**, with particular reference to layout and functional value of living areas for special cases (aged, handicapped, children, etc.).
- **The study of specific planning problems** pertaining to the relationship between building technology and housing typology and between housing typology and the formal characteristics of architectonic space.
- **The study of problems regarding the relationship between building typology and urban morphology**, within the limits presented actually by the instruments of the Laboratory.

A fifth field of interest lies, so to speak, "within" the above four: **the control of the potential, characteristics, problems and operative limits presented by the Laboratory itself as a trial instrument.**

As regards **aims and fields** of application, priority was given to the following:

- the research and experimentation programmes sponsored by the PHC;
- the European programme;
- control of technical regulations introduced in the Law n. 13/1989 for elimination of architectural barriers in housing buildings.

Up to the present topics dealt with have been the first two above-mentioned fields of interest (i.e. Flexibility and Special Cases).

For the former, the object of study was one of the projects winner of the Italian Section of European Competition which concentrated to a great extent on flexibility both as regards the project and the use of spaces. The dwelling was simulated "bit by bit", starting from the basic nucleus which gradually multiplied, also changing with regard to final use, until one of the final layout proposed by the designers was reached.

Programming also went beyond the designers' original intentions. They did not plan for this potential for gradual growth and change, at least in consideration of the project in the form presented at the Competition.

In fact, this development illustrates an interesting feature of the Laboratory since it helps one to bring into focus aspects and possibility which could be overlooked on preliminary inspection. This is due to the process of analysis and recomposition which the use of the Laboratory implies.

Following the construction of the model, a meeting was held with the designers during which an analysis of the work carried out was effected and the studies carried out by the Laboratory were discussed.

Before leaving the subject of flexibility we should note that a trial programme has been set up with the Institute for Public Housing of Bologna with financial backing provided within the terms of the Law n. 94/1982.

The programme consists of a flexibility study relating to three specific work stages: designing, building and use. The use of full scale models at the second and third stages allows the future inhabitants to participate in the trial carried out at the Laboratory and/or on the building site itself.

The second field of interest, as specified, is that of special cases and, particularly, workshop trials of norms introduced by the Law n. 13/1989.

At the moment, this project is at the operative stage and will involve experimentations with elementary spaces and practical trials with the collaboration of technical staff from the local Health Authority USL 27 in Bologna (which runs a showroom of technical aids for the disabled) and AIAS (an association of families with disabled members). For elementary space trials, minimum standard areas will be simulated to see if these effectively respond to the needs determined by the various

forms of handicap.

The result of such trials can find expression in a number of basic design proposals which provide a guarantee that requisites are complied with. This is particularly important with regard to baths, toilets, and so on for which standards and compliance could determine the exclusion of many commonly adopted solutions.

Operative trials mainly concern the position and forms of all objects which are necessary for the satisfactory execution of a number of tasks in both collective and dwelling areas (door-handles, hand-rails, postboxes, fixtures, etc.). Apart from components specified by law, particular attention will be paid to kitchen furnishing which are sufficiently standardised both in terms of size and typology and which have a great influence on home routines.

Alessandra Carini, Roberto Farina, Franco Nuti