

ling a Runcorn, questa opportunità era stata avvertita, ma con l'intento più di convincere ad un determinato uso dello spazio, ed anzi a renderlo agibile spesso solo in quel modo, piuttosto che animare interventi e verificare i gradi di adattamento. L'operazione modelli al vero regge perché sembra far sentire realmente attori gli utenti, li responsabilizza.

Credo si stiano facendo passi in avanti sulla strada di un maggiore coinvolgimento effettivo dei fruitori, ma anche su quella che vede ampliarsi il numero degli amici dell'architettura.

Perché non traslare anche qui - sia pure nei termini idonei ad un diverso contesto socio-ambientale - questo tipo di esperienza, considerato che non mancano sedi idonee per ospitarlo?

THE WORKINGS OF THE IMAGINATION

One result of the Amsterdam housing policy is that the public has for some time past been deeply and permanently involved in the planning of dwellings.

In the one-time David Mayerplein Synagogue a full-size construction system of prototype dwellings has been set up, not as a possibility of occasional tests limited to certain "cases" but as a process extended to all low-cost public house building.

Having had direct knowledge of this, I described fairly minutely the method and the constructional details, which are moreover fairly simple, in the book published in connection with SAIE and devoted to building and land use policy in the Benelux countries. It is quickly described: a large quantity of plywood blocks, hollowed out and therefore light, prepared to the modular dimensions of 10 cm long by 20 cm high (with a possible reduction of 5 cm) can be put together to make suggested prototypes, but they can easily be dismantled and reassembled in order to modify them. A game without too many problems, since specially qualified assistants help to overcome the more difficult points, as may occur when in working on a duplex there arises the staircase connection.

What are the aims of this singular experiment and, more important still, what are the results?

It is necessary to point out that the full-scale typology is achieved on the basis of a design drawn up by carefully selected experts. This is accompanied by specially visualizing elements, even in the graphic part, it is fixed to the model and explained to the public in the course of appropriate meetings which are designed to bring out the correspondence with the model itself.

People are enabled to see their own living space before occupying it and *to test it*, above all to understand it, think about it, accustoming themselves to relate reality to the project. This comes about through the use of a fairly rough model, so that it shall not in any way appear too individualized; with or without furnishing, or with certain furnishing rather than other, space being therefore left for the workings of the imagination, indeed encouraging it and presenting the characteristics of an operation of space reading, of an essential space, not to be compared to the dolls house.

If something is not acceptable, changes are rapidly made, the proposers of these themselves being allowed to make them, though within the bounds of the approach phases agreed upon and of the objective

limitations, which corresponds to a method in which an exchange of ideas is obligatory. The resulting observations are then noted, care being taken to distinguish between those of a general nature and others that can be circumscribed among the individual possibilities of adaptation.

Even three-dimensional models, so necessary to the designer, offer to the future occupiers of the dwelling only a miniaturized image of the real thing, so that to apply a scaled down model of the one's own personality to it with reactions, emotions, and rejections is often quite a problem.

With full-scale models, however summary and adaptable they may be, the degree of approach to the real thing increases. The very method of the interview with the occupier, employed on so many occasions in investigations, acquires greater credibility because the attention of the person concerned, instead of being anchored to the living conditions to which he or she is accustomed and which certainly condition reflexes, is drawn to the new conditions that he or she perceives in full. At the same time, the criterion of the introductory exhibitions, adopted in various experiments in public involvement as occasions for the communication of information, is not excluded, but acquires quite a different efficacy if translated into models.

We can all think of the pre-arranged attempts of these more organic operations in the proposals put before the public during exhibitions or with the laying out dwelling types completely furnished as specimens. From the three-yearly Milan exhibition, to the Hansaviertel of Berlin, the houses at Stirling and at Runcorn, this necessity was felt, but with the aim rather of persuading people to make a determinate use of available space, and indeed often to render it feasible only in that way, rather than encourage cooperation from the potential occupier and ascertain the degrees of adaptation.

The operation employing full-scale models is effective because, it seems, it enables the potential occupiers to feel themselves real participants, it gives them a sense of responsibility. I think that great strides are being made along the road to a greater effective involvement of the future users of housing, but also along that which leads to a swelling of the numbers of friends of architecture.

Why not transfer here too - albeit in terms suitable to a different socio-environmental context - this type of experiment, in view of the fact that there is no lack of suitable halls in which to lay it out?