SELFLOCKING BLOCK OUTDOOR PAVING

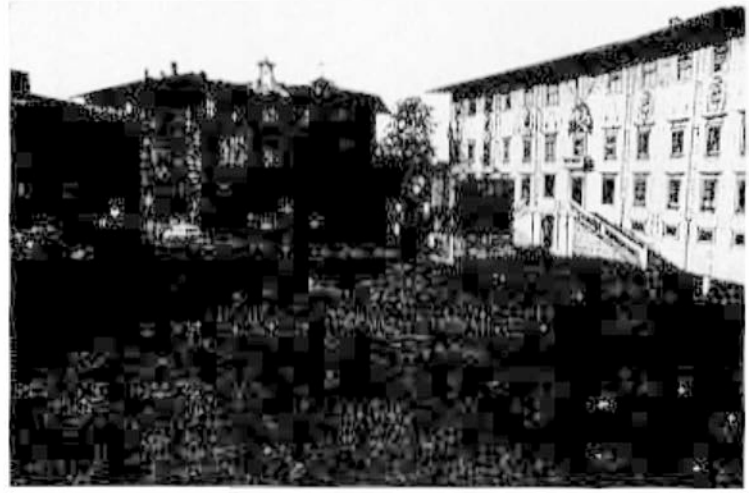
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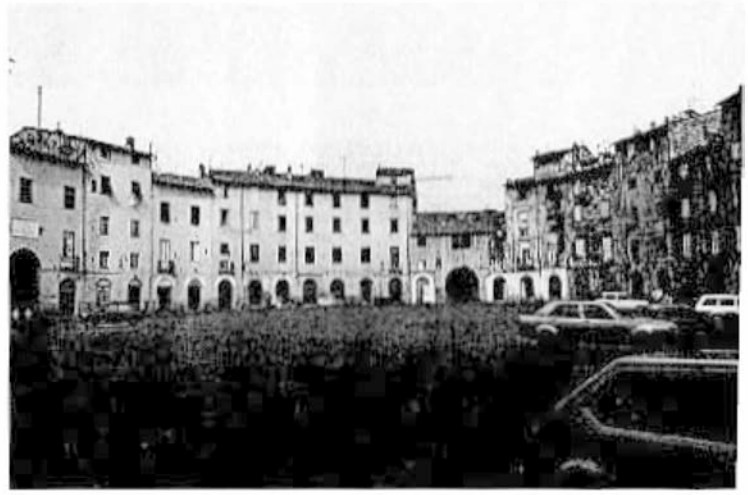
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1. In dealing with the problem of urban paving, with reference to central and suburban areas, it is important to research what characterized the city in the past and particularly to consider the teaching of historical medieval centres.
The city was rich in events and varied, so that it presented many elements that favoured the recognition of the several civic ambients, just the opposite of what happens today in the suburbs of our cities, anonymous areas that make any reliable reference impossible.
An urban area is serviceable when it has several branches which differ inside an only body, orderly traffic and parking places for means of transport, as well as foot-paths and other pedestrian zones, when the variety of buildings is characterized by the armony of the planimetry of the area itself and the bulks of the buildings and by the right choice of materials, when there is a proportinate relation between outdoor and sheltered areas.
One of the characteristics of poor suburban areas and of the deteriorated urban environment is asphalt, unfortunately employed even in the squares of historical centres.
Asphalt is employed in pedestrian zones too, making them cold and such as not to induce people to go and spend there, in the open air, their spare time.
An alternative to asphalt is paving urban squares and streets again, using drawings and colours, with differentiations which should not turn out as barriers for handicap bearers, that is, planning pedestrian zones, taking advantage of any idea, provided that it should help to bring back value to the urban areas needing an improvement of environment quality, resuming the traditions of the "Madonnari" (people painting their pictures on streets or squares. They use white and coloured chalks).

The problem of the qualification of suburban areas, is complex, it is also part of the study of the paving of zones, both public and private, used collectively. The research of the quality, -the conception has already been expressed, but it deserves to be examined more closely- presupposes for example, the planning of a correct alternation of traffic and parking areas, interfering as little as possible with the pedestrian zones.
As regards places for vehicles, in some suburban areas where spacious car parkings on rural ground are thought to be built, it is advisable to use drill concrete block pavement which allow the growing of a grassy surface.
As for pedestrian zones, the difference between the outdoor and the sheltered ones can be qualified by planning a selflocking block paving with drawings and colours in order to characterize the same according to the use they are planned for.
The plan quality to "planivolumetrica" scale, must be accompanied by the skill in choosing the materials. The latter can, in fact, contribute to characterize an urban environment positively, with creations and fancies which make it agreable.
Some solutions of outdoor paving built in concrete blocks reach an environmental whole between erections and ground. The material,with its natural characteristics weds also with the green, giving rise to a valid connection with nature.
The wisdom of man in operating on the territory in order to respect the several natural and environmental components get value, at present, in the definition of EEC, "valuation of environmental impact". It is a mark of the recovery of that sensitiveness which was frequently found in the past.
Typical examples of a clever choice of introducing buildings into environments

particularly qualified for their nature are the farmhouses and country houses of Tuscan countryside.
The farmhouse is a typical example in wich clayey material is found both for the building of the house and for the paving of the threshing-floor. Between outdoor and sheltered areas relations and fleeting blendings established, and still nowadays establish, favoured by the validity of a harmonius urban and building whole. The paving confers on the built parts that quality that the environment deserves and that nature would impose it should be always found.
Yet selflocking block outdoor paving, coloured and forming drawings, show the necessity to know how to choose forms and colours, besides being able to draw wide surfaces. The use of strong contrasts of colour, alternating with solutions with elements differently shaded in the same colour, requires an uncommon artistic ability.
With regard to colour in architecture it is fair to point out that an interesting debate showing a growing interest in the problems connected with the look of our cities and towns is taking shape in Italy after the pla of colour of Turin and Terracina -"cfr. Bollettino d' Arte del Ministero dei Beni Culturali ed mbientali suppl. 6/84 e 35 - 36/86" today there is a more careful analysis of those which were the traditional colours of the buildings and pigments qualifing urban environment are proposed again.
After the period of the exaltation of ruins, correct interventions for the recovery of the original colour of buildings and the choices for suitable outdoor paving are made.
Moreover the qualitative difference between an asphalted square and a paved one is appreciated by everybody: it is sufficient to think of "Piazza dei Cavalieri" in Pisa (foto 1), of "Piazza del Campo" in Siena and of "Piazza Anfiteatro" in Lucca (foto 2).





With the use of concrete blocks it is possible to draw and colour urban areas again, using the chromatic variety of elements in soft colours, for solutions harmonizing with pre-existent architecture.

2. Areas for car parkings in the suburb

Areas paved with drilled concrete blocks allowing the growing of grass or with solid concrete coloured blocks with trees planted at equal distance, constitute interesting solutions for suburban surfaces where the parking of many cars is exspected (foto 3).
In fact the surfaces made with them are efficacious also from the climatic point

of view in sunny summmer days, owing to the porosity of the material. The solution is positive also in order to avoid a large dampproof surface.



3. Town square to be drawn again, pavements and parkings for bicycles.
The different colours allow to locate the various intended uses and particularly to invite cyclists to let pedestrian-crossings clear, not causing blind people and handicap bearers to find themselves in critical situations.
More generically, a paving can serve as a guide to those who make use of it, as in the case of areas for exhibitions and shows.
- Open air surfaces for children's plays.
- Arcades, patios, flat, practicable roofs.
- Solariums and perimetrical surfaces of open air swimming-pool.
A paving with drawings is particularly advisable when the pavement must be anti-slip and beautiful even when it is wet.
One of the advantages of selflocking block paving is that it can be arranged after the ground settling.
4. Pathways in parks, in areas chosen for green and on sandy shores.
Block paving is suitable for these uses because blocks can easily be digged out, recovered and used again, besides looking natural.
For these same reasons it is suitable for public areas which must cover, with foreseeable alterations in the long run underground pipes for plants. In fact for selflocking block paving, it is not necessary a grouting foundation.
When it is used on sand and on settled ground it can be assured that this kind of outdoor paving, besides contributing to create better urban areas, avoids to have to waterproof large areas with continuous surfaces not connected with the culture of our cities.
5. Conclusions
The recovery of the environment quality runs also through this kind of choices which can turn avoided areas into pleasant spots for community life.