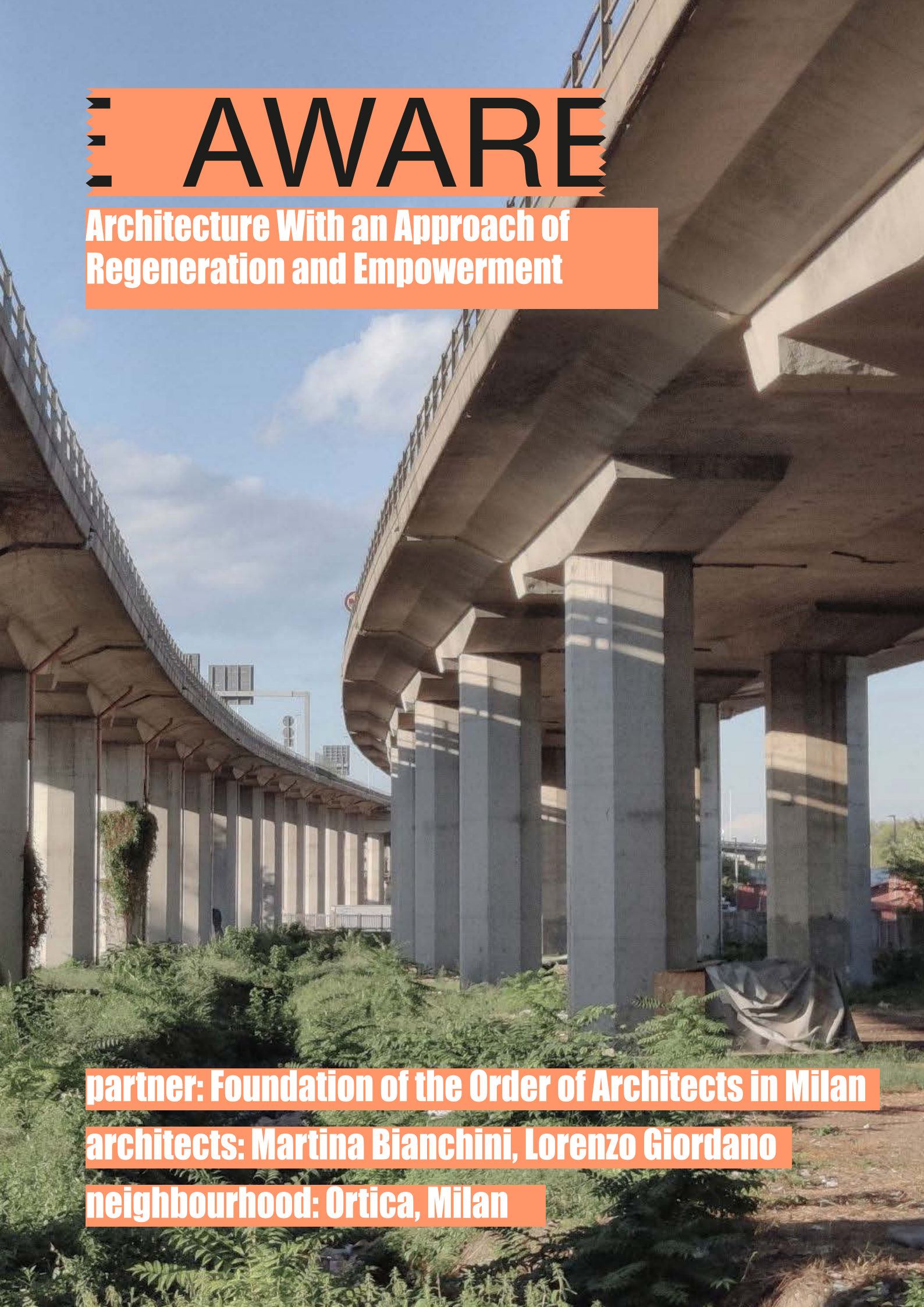




AWARE

**Architecture With an Approach of
Regeneration and Empowerment**

partner: Foundation of the Order of Architects in Milan

architects: Martina Bianchini, Lorenzo Giordano

neighbourhood: Ortica, Milan

Architecture With an Approach of Regeneration and Empowerment

Our relationship with the neighbourhood

The interest in Ortica originates from previous research conducted by the two architects through the RRR Atelier led by Professor Muck Petzet at the Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio. Through site visits, photographic documentation and exchanges with local associations, an initial understanding of the neighbourhood's spatial and social conditions was developed.

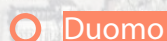
The atelier explored urban peripheries through the concept of minimum intervention, focusing on residual spaces generated by infrastructure. AWARE builds on this experience, expanding the geographical and methodological scope to investigate the wider network of spaces, communities and initiatives shaping the neighbourhood.

Why Ortica?

Ortica was chosen because of its particular condition within Milan. Despite being located in a territory strongly shaped by metropolitan-scale infrastructures, the neighbourhood still retains the scale and character of a small village, with a strong local identity.

The historic core is enclosed within a railway triangle that separates it from the surrounding urban fabric. While the railway acts as a barrier, this relative isolation seems to have contributed to preserving the neighbourhood's scale and some of its distinctive characteristics. Around the historic core, traces of the agricultural landscape along the Lambro coexist with former industrial areas, infrastructures and numerous residual spaces, further fragmented by the presence of the A51 Eastern Ring Road.

Ortica thus represents a condition that is increasingly common in contemporary cities: a neighbourhood with its own identity, absorbed into the dynamics of a larger metropolitan reality without necessarily benefiting from them to the same extent. The research starts from this tension to question how such territories can respond to large-scale transformations while valuing the resources and networks already present.



Duomo

Defining the study area

The study area is defined by the relationships between Ortica and its surrounding social, infrastructural and ecological systems, rather than by administrative boundaries alone. Lambro is included because of its historical identity and its close social and cultural relationship with Ortica, reflected in the activities and collaborations of local associations.

To the south, the study extends towards Cavriano, the Lambro River and Parco Forlanini, recognising their ecological value and the importance of their green and agricultural landscapes for Ortica. Particular attention is given to the potential connections between these areas and the green spaces along the A51 motorway.

The perimeter also allows for an investigation of the impact of the A51 and railway infrastructure, which strongly characterise the territory, shaping accessibility, mobility and the continuity of public and green spaces. This broader reading aims to identify opportunities to strengthen existing ecological and social connections while maintaining Ortica as the central focus of community engagement and future interventions.

.....M

.....Metro



Railway

4km from Duomo

LAMBRATE

A51

Ex Fabbrica Innocenti

Martinitt

Railway

ORTICA

Ex Richard Ginori

M

M

Ortica boundary

Parco Forlanini

Linate

M

Lambro

A51

M5

Ortica boundary

Industrial hub

Parco Forlanini

Lambro

Historical mapping

A “village” with a strong identity

Ortica is a neighborhood in Milan that feels like a small village due to its strong local identity and human-scale charm. Originally named after the historical farmland fed by the Lambro River, its center has preserved its distinct community character despite the surrounding city’s urban expansion

1800 – the agricultural dimension

Once a rural area of farmland, farmhouses (cascine), and irrigation systems fed by the Lambro River, Ortica now keeps its agricultural history alive through projects like CasciNet, which revitalizes Cascina Sant’Ambrogio through urban farming, culture, and sustainability initiatives

1900 – the construction of the railway

In the 20th century, the railway shaped Ortica in two key ways: it separated the neighborhood from Milan, creating distinct urban densities on either side, while its infrastructural triangle sheltered Ortica’s historic center from surrounding industrialization, preserving its small-scale character

1950 – industrial development

In the mid-20th century, Ortica became a major industrial hub home to factories like Innocenti, Lambretta, and Richard Ginori. Following their eventual closure, these abandoned industrial spaces are now being transformed through urban regeneration—such as the former Richard Ginori site becoming creative residential housing

1970 – the construction of the A51

The A51 eastern ring road further shaped Ortica, its elevated highway leaving behind a series of undefined, unplanned residual spaces beneath it that now function as a large urban junkspace

2000 to today

Since the 2000s, local associations have played an increasing role in preserving Ortica’s identity. Projects such as OrMe – Ortica Memoria have transformed the neighbourhood through murals that make its history and collective memory visible in public space



Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie



Martinitt Orphanage with its agricultural fields

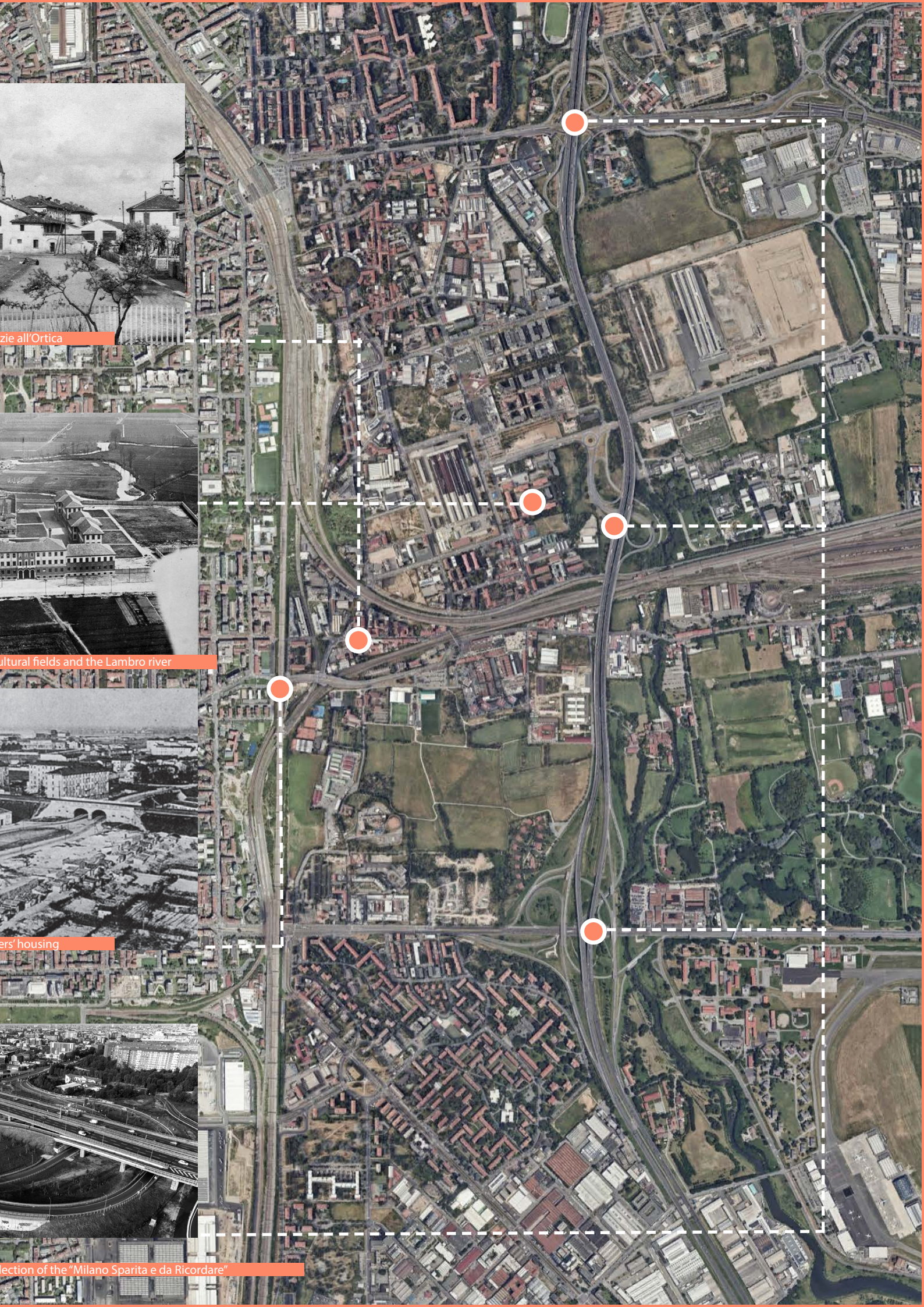


Buccari overpass and railway works

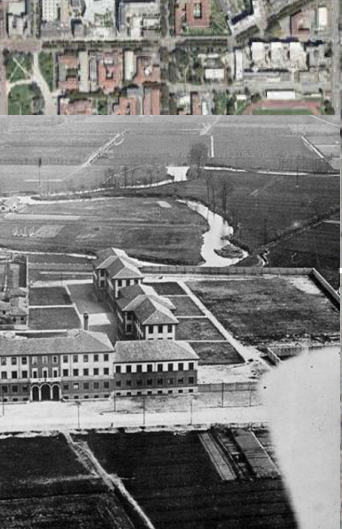


A51 Lambrate interchange

Image sourced from the digital collection



Torre all'Ortica



Torre all'Ortica



Torre all'Ortica



Torre all'Ortica

Methodologies

The research combines **qualitative and quantitative methods** to understand the spatial, social and cultural dynamics of Ortica–Lambrate, identify local priorities and explore opportunities for future collaboration, with methodological support from Itinerari Paralleli.



Interviews

Direct conversations with local stakeholders to understand their activities, objectives, needs and future ambitions, while identifying potential synergies.



Exploratory Walks

Collective walks organised with the Fondazione dell'Ordine degli Architetti di Milano, the HomeSapiens group (<https://homesapiens.tech>) and OrMe – Ortica Memoria, allowing us to explore the neighbourhood through different perspectives and local knowledge.



Online Research

Investigation of local organisations, ongoing initiatives, historical resources and existing territorial projects.



Data Analysis

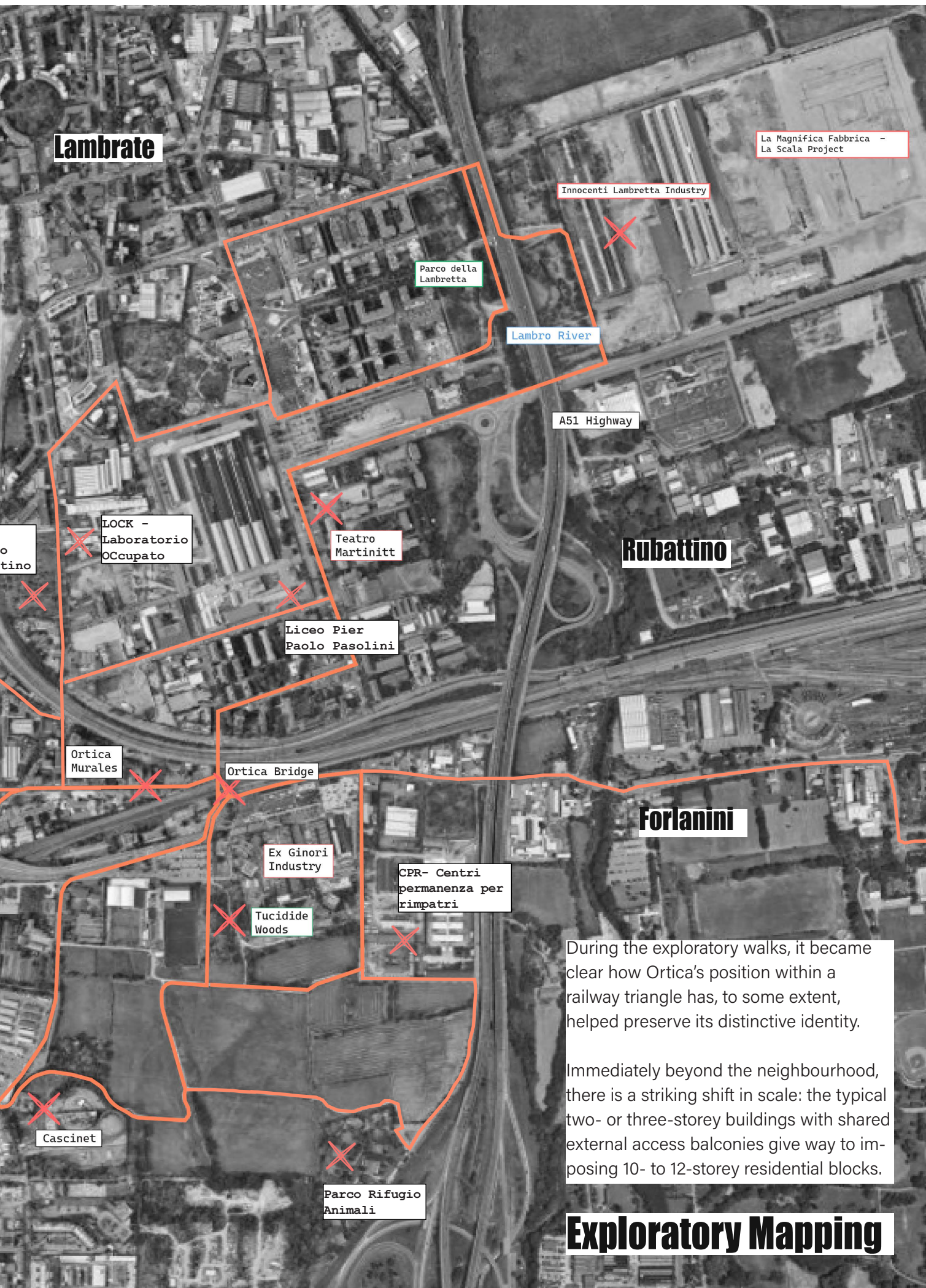
Analysis of Milan's Nuclei di Identità Locale (NIL) and Piano di Governo del Territorio (PGT) documentation to understand demographic trends, urban development and territorial priorities.



Photographic Research

Visual documentation of the built environment, infrastructure, public spaces and everyday activities to identify spatial conditions, barriers and opportunities.





Lambrate

La Magnifica Fabbrica -
La Scala Project

Innocenti Lambretta Industry

Parco della
Lambretta

Lambro River

A51 Highway

Rubattino

LOCK -
Laboratorio
OCcupato

Teatro
Martinitt

Liceo Pier
Paolo Pasolini

Ortica
Murales

Ortica Bridge

Ex Ginori
Industry

CPR- Centri
permanenza per
rimpatri

Tucidide
Woods

Cascinet

Parco Rifugio
Animali

Forlanini

During the exploratory walks, it became clear how Ortica's position within a railway triangle has, to some extent, helped preserve its distinctive identity.

Immediately beyond the neighbourhood, there is a striking shift in scale: the typical two- or three-storey buildings with shared external access balconies give way to imposing 10- to 12-storey residential blocks.

Exploratory Mapping

Photographic Mapping



"Magnifica Fabbrica" project



Rubattino, under A51



Via Cavriana, Ortica



CasciNet, view of the gasom-



gnifica Fabbrica' project



Ex "Fabbrica Innocenti"



Ortica



Via Ortica



Fields overlooking the Towers



The Towers Complex, via

Stakeholder mapping

1

Vivi Lambrate

Location: Decentralised network, Lambrate

Identity: Self-organized network

Goal: ViviLambrate aims to revitalize the neighborhood by regenerating its spaces and uniting the community through citizen participation and social networking.

2

Teatro Martinitt

Location: Permanent headquarters, Rubattino

Identity: Self-organized network Artistic director: Stefano Marafante

Goal: The goal of La Bilancia is to promote and revitalize contemporary theatrical comedy by supporting emerging young playwrights and new stage writing, both through its own production work and by running showcase theaters in Rome (Teatro de' Servi) and Milan (Teatro Martinitt)

3

Ortica Cooperativa

Location: Permanent headquarters, Il circolino, Ortica

Identity: Social Promotion Association (APS)

Goal: OrMe – Ortica Memoria aims to preserve and promote Ortica's historical and cultural identity through public art, collective memory and community participation.

4

CasciNet

Location: Permanent headquarters, Ortica

Identity: Non-Governmental Organisation

Goal: Regenerating the historic cascina and its agricultural landscape as an open community space.

5

Associazione Grande Parco Forlanini

Location: Registered headquarters, Forlanini

Identity: Social Promotion Association (APS)

Goal: Grande Parco Forlanini promotes the protection and regeneration of eastern Milan's green and agricultural landscapes, aiming to establish a continuous metropolitan park connecting the city centre, Parco Forlanini, the Lambro River and Idroscalo through ecological corridors, pedestrian and cycling routes, and community participation.

6

La Balera dell' Ortica

Location: Permanent venue, Ortica

Identity: Family-run restaurant, dance hall and cultural venue

Goal: La Balera dell'Ortica aims to preserve the neighbourhood's social and cultural traditions by combining traditional dining, live music, dancing and community events.

7

Municipio 3

Location: Institutional headquarters

Identity: Local Government / Municipal Administration (covering Porta Venezia, Città Studi, Lambrate, Ortica, Rubattino, and Feltre)

Goal: Managing, delivering, and promoting local neighborhood services for Municipality 3, including public green spaces, local urban planning and public space maintenance, cultural and youth initiatives, social and personal services, neighborhood commerce, and civic participation.



The stakeholder mapping adopts a broad understanding of who participates in and shapes the neighbourhood. It includes formal and informal organisations, ranging from established associations and cultural organisations to less formal local networks and initiatives; institutional stakeholders, such as Municipio 3; and educational and civic stakeholders, including schools, residents and visitors to Ortica and Lambrate.

The mapping also extends beyond human actors to recognise non-human stakeholders as part of the neighbourhood ecosystem. The vegetation and animal species inhabiting Parco Forlanini, together with the Lambro River and its ecological system, are considered active components of the territory whose presence and needs should inform future transformations. This broader approach allows the project to understand the neighbourhood not only through organisations and institutions, but as a network of social, cultural and ecological relationships.

Stakeholder mapping

Each stakeholder identified through the mapping process was assessed through a combination of desk research, archival research, interviews, calls and on-site exploration.

The assessment focused on their objectives, activities, priorities and relationship with the neighbourhood, while identifying potential connections, shared interests and opportunities for future collaboration.

➤ Orme, Ortica Memoria



Location: Permanent headquarters, Ortica (MI)

Birth: 2015

Identity: APS Social Enterprise

President: Serafino Sorace

Vice President: Elena Cerasetti

Goal: Ortica Memoria is a social promotion association that preserves the historical memory and urban renewal of the historic Ortica neighborhood in Milan

What we discovered?

Ortica faces increasing pressure from commercial and residential developments in neighbouring Lambrate, while local services, such as pharmacies and post offices, have declined rather than expanded.

According to Milan's Nuclei di Identità Locale (NIL) documentation, the area has a significant elderly population, as also highlighted in our interviews with OrMe and other stakeholders. Mobility is another major concern, with heavy through-traffic during peak hours disrupting the everyday life of this otherwise quiet, village-like neighbourhood.

Activities

Public Art & Historical Memory: Milan's working-class history and participatory **murals** designing

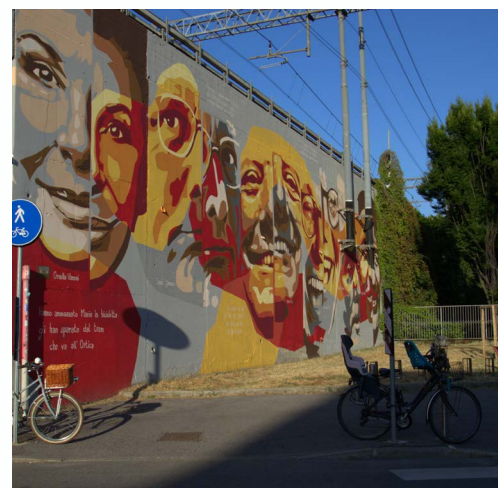
Guided Walks & Cultural Tours

Educational Activities & School Workshops

Cultural Events: **Orticainfesta**, festival of three days of exhibitions, discussions, workshops, performances and neighbourhood activities.



Murales in Ortica



Murales in Ortica

➤ Vivi Lambrate

Location: Decentralised network, Lambrate (MI)

Founded: October 2014

Identity: Network of local associations and citizens / Community Association

Goal: ViviLambrate is a network of local associations and community groups working together to strengthen Lambrate's social and cultural identity through shared initiatives, neighbourhood events and civic participation.

What we discovered?

Our interview with a ViviLambrate member highlighted a growing mismatch between urban development and local infrastructure. Traffic congestion at key access points, increasing residential density and large-scale commercial developments are not matched by adequate mobility improvements or local services.

Public spaces also fail to support community life: Piazza dei Vigili del Fuoco functions mainly as access to commercial facilities rather than a social gathering place. Lambrate lacks a "Casa di Quartiere" for informal meetings, events and community activities, while ViviLambrate itself has no dedicated venue.

Activities

Neighborhood events bringing together local organisations, residents and visitors like "Il sabato di Lambrate"

Community Engagement as the Digital Safari Lambrate (May 2026), a neighbourhood treasure hunt involving local shops and associations.

Historical Memory & Guided Walks

Neighbourhood walks exploring Lambrate's industrial heritage, local history and urban transformations.



"Il sabato di Lambrate", Weekend Celebrations



**COSTRUIAMO LA PACE
E LA NONVIOLENZA**

settimana della nonviolenza 2026



Program to raise awareness

Stakeholder mapping

➤ Associazione Grande Parco Forlanini

Location: Permanent headquarters, Argonne (MI)

Birth: 2014 (active since 2012)

Identity: APS (Associazione di Promozione Sociale)

Goal: A social promotion association that campaigns for and helps build the “Grande Parco Forlanini,” a connected metropolitan park in eastern Milan linking the city centre to the Idroscalo through farmland, the Lambro valley and existing green areas.



What we discovered?

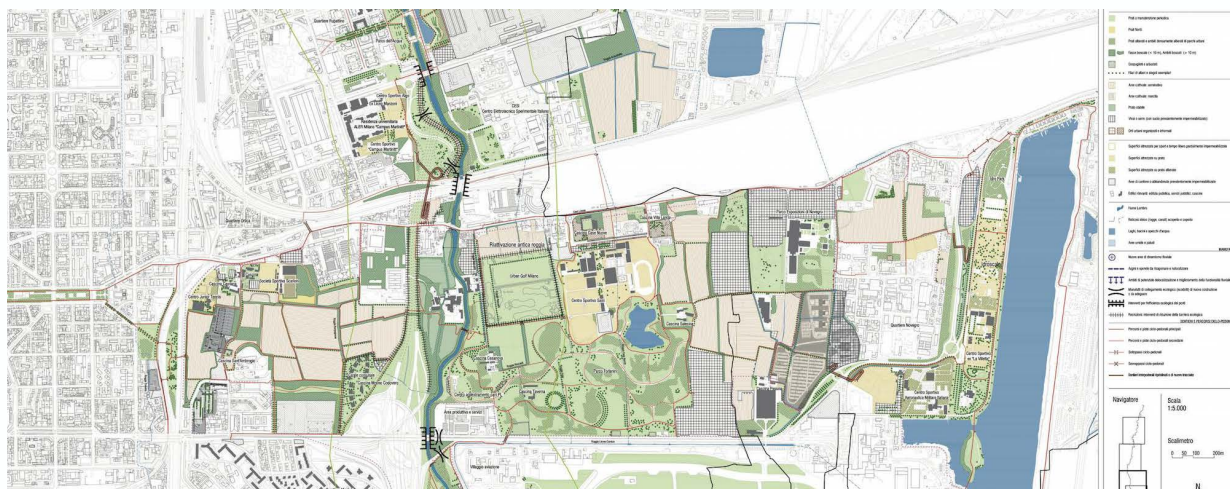
The association advocates for a continuous green corridor connecting Milan's city centre to Parco Forlanini and the Idroscalo, prioritising cycle lanes, soft mobility and reforestation, with plans to reconnect the park with the Lambro river valley. Some fields around CasciNet and the Bosco di Tucidide are already open to the neighbourhood as informal spaces to walk and gather. However, the lack of shade, seating and drinking water makes them neither accessible nor safe in summer, particularly for elderly residents. Testimonies have also revealed that people hosted in the non-detention section of the CPR, on the park's northern edge, stroll through the fields with nowhere to rest.

Activities

Ecological Advocacy & Urban Planning

Guided Walks & Bike Rides: “Così vicino, così lontano” (2023), a neighbourhood walk from Viale Argonne and an evening bike ride through the park, plus the “Staffetta lungo il Lambro” relay along the river (2019).

Academic Collaborations & Student Workshops: Over ten years of partnership with Politecnico di Milano's CALL lab, including the “Brick by brick” project (2019), where international students designed the park area between Viale Argonne and the Idroscalo, and urban design seminars led by Gianni Dapri (2023).



Grande Parco Forlanini Project and Ecological Connectivity along the Lambro

Teatro Martinitt

Location: Permanent headquarters, Rubattino (MI)

Founded: 1932, reopened to the public in 2010

Identity: Theatre and cinema, privately managed by La Bilancia Produzioni

Goal: Teatro Martinitt is a neighbourhood theatre and cinema that grew out of the historic Martinitt orphanage. It champions contemporary Italian comedy and new talent, and now runs a growing programme for families and children.

What we discovered?

Teatro Martinitt, in the Rubattino area, has expanded its already full programme to include Sunday activities for families and children, responding to the growing number of young families settling in the neighbourhood. In contrast, the students living next to the theatre show little interest in its programme and rarely take part in its activities. Open every day, the theatre also functions as a presidio comunale, a stable civic reference point for the area. As also highlighted in our interview with Vivi Lambrate, the neighbourhood lacks a casa di quartiere, and Teatro Martinitt partly fills this gap by offering residents a shared space to meet and take part in local life.

Activities

Theatre & Italian Comedy: A full season of plays focused on contemporary Italian comedy.

Stand-up & Comic Shows: Regular comedy nights and improvisation formats such as Comedyficio (November 2025), where comedians test new material and the audience decides the outcome of the games.

Cinema: A cinema hall added in 2015, screening films throughout the season at affordable prices, with discounts for university students and staff.



The outdoor space dedicated to events



"Teatro Burro e Marmellata"

Architecture With an Approach
of Regeneration and Empowerment

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