



Preliminary Design Document

International Ideas Competition "Piazza della Scala"

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INTRODUCTION

Piazza della Scala is one of the most central and representative places of the City of Milan, for many reasons. Its history starts with the Unification of Italy, and the *Piazza* projects an image of the city to the world with the emblematic buildings that surround it: the *Teatro alla Scala* Opera House; *Palazzo Marino*, the offices of the city government since 1861; the *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele*; the building of *Banca Commerciale Italiana* which is today Intesa Sanpaolo; the *Palazzo della Civica Ragioneria* of the City of Milan, which is almost a twin to the building of the *Banca Commerciale*. The *Piazza* has also assumed a new role as a reference point for the museum offerings of the city.

The *Piazza* has always been the focus of a Milanese cultural debate, the object of programs, plans and projects since the end of the 1700s, and is today the subject of a Competition of Ideas. The topic of allocating adequate civic space to enhance and appreciate the façade of the Eighteenth Century theatre was dealt with in fact many times over the course of the Nineteenth Century, along with designing the buildings along the *Piazza's* perimeter. Moreover, while it is the result of works that were performed in the years straddling the two centuries, the space of the *Piazza* found one of its main interpreters and protagonists in the architect Luca Beltrami (in addition to the architects Giuseppe Mengoni and Galeazzo Alessi).

The building of the covered Nineteenth Century Galleria that connects *Piazza della Scala* with *Piazza del Duomo* and the Cathedral guaranteed the fluid continuity of public and collective spaces, a fulcrum of civic, commercial and cultural activities that distinguishes this part of the historical fabric of the city center even today.

The most recent contribution to the redevelopment of *Piazza della Scala* was done at the beginning of the new millennium, on the occasion of the Giuseppe Verdi anniversary. The project of architect Paolo Portoghesi defined the current pavement and arrangement of the street furniture and flowerbeds around the monument to Leonardo da Vinci.

This work surely fostered the convivial and welcoming nature of the space, contributing objectively to the improvement of the urban scene of the *Piazza*, which had previously been paved with asphalt. But it did not resolve the urban planning relationship with the buildings along the *Piazza's* perimeter and the surrounding system of roads, piazzas and pedestrian spaces (some of which were modified only following the completion of Portoghesi's project). Nor did it address the bicycle/pedestrian paths, or even more generally parking for service vehicles, taxis and motorcycles.

In light of the sequence of events succinctly reported here, it appears obvious that the theme of the Competition is substantially an "urban" project, a city plan, more than a design for street furniture.

1 GOALS OF THE COMPETITION

In addition to its original civic functions, the *Piazza* today encompasses a new museum function: the latest example is the recent creation of the *Gallerie d'Italia* on the ground floor of the ex-*Banca Commerciale Italiana* building. Moreover, the *Piazza* has come to assume a role in cultural itineraries and museum exhibits that has brought about the need to further re-think in a general way its layout and its relationship to the central area. A project is needed in order to

enhance its Nineteenth Century historical nature and at the same time modify and improve its livability also through a design for new, easy traffic flow that can sustain it.

The goals of the International Ideas Competition that the City government, together with Intesa Sanpaolo, intends to pursue, therefore, are as follows:

- enhance the *Piazza* through its architectural identification and its even more active participation in the life of the city, in order to make it a primary place with a declared symbolic value;
- identify the *Piazza* through its historical memory and its currently valid and present nature as a Nineteenth Century piazza, to present it better for its overall, comprehensive character through a formal and sensible homogeneousness, that at the same time harmonizes the solution of restrictions related to its technical and functional aspects and the fact that it belongs to the Cultural Patrimony. To do this, the project for the design of the *Piazza* should also try to include *Largo Ghiringhelli* and the space that it defines toward *Via Filodrammatici* and *Piazza Paolo Ferrari* alongside the Theatre (which is still a space that has not been resolved from an urban planning point of view), in addition to the urban space represented by the segment of *Via Case Rotte* and *Largo Mattioli* that lead to *Piazza Meda*;
- reinforce the relationships between the *Piazza* and the buildings that define it, to express in the best way possible the potential that the *Piazza* has as a natural extension of its civic, institutional, museum exhibit and cultural dimensions. Specifically, the *Piazza* hosts the activities of each of its buildings: *Teatro alla Scala* Opera House, the *Gallerie d'Italia*, the temporary exhibits that are periodically held in *Palazzo Marino*, a possible future re-thinking of even only the partial use of the ground floor of the building *Palazzo della Civica Ragioneria*. It almost constitutes a natural foyer for a multiplicity of institutions and organizations that are all very important but very different among themselves, with a common connotation which is that their use has the goal of spreading culture. Absurdly enough, the relationships of the *Piazza* precisely with *Teatro alla Scala* and the *Gallerie d'Italia* are currently penalized;
- bolster the relationships of the *Piazza* with the surrounding urban areas, by putting forth design suggestions that are able to make this place more lively and attractive, reinforcing proximity with the system of pedestrian spaces in the central zone, and proposing ideas for traffic solutions and alternative slow (or easy) mobility that allow for arriving at a unified and recognizable design of the *Piazza* itself and at the same time increase its environmental quality, livability and pedestrian safety in crosswalks;
- characterize the *Piazza* as a fundamental junction of the museum circuit that enhances and links numerous public and private institutions and extends from *Piazza Duomo* and the area around *Piazzetta Reale*, and links *Palazzo Reale* and the recently created Museum of the Twentieth Century (following a design competition), up to *Brera* and the Brera Art Museum and *Palazzo Citterio*, branching out along *Via Manzoni* where the Poldi Pezzoli Museum is found, and involving some of the adjacent piazzas and streets such as *Piazza San Fedele*, *Piazza Belgioioso* (where the Alessandro Manzoni house is located, soon to be the subject of a conservative restoration project), *Piazza Paolo Ferrari* and the nearby *Piazza Meda*, separated from *Piazza della Scala* by the spatial system of *Largo Mattioli*, rich in prestigious architectural heritage, but also in this case, almost a place that is a mediocre result of the

urban environment (the current extension of the museum network is delineated in the diagram attached to the Competition Notice).

2 URBAN OVERVIEW

2.1 DESCRIPTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE AREA OF THE PIAZZA

Piazza della Scala is a cultural and tourist attraction, both by virtue of the fact that the buildings surrounding it are of great importance, and because it is a “civic piazza”, a meeting place with many open air cultural manifestations, located in the historical center of Milan.

It is rectangular in shape and measures about 75x82 meters (including the curbs to the streets) and is dominated at its "center" by the monument to Leonardo da Vinci, a Nineteenth Century sculpture by Pietro Magni in Carrara marble with a pedestal in granite.

Facing onto the space of the *Piazza* are some of the most interesting buildings of Milanese architecture from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.

- The building that occupies the northwest side of the *Piazza*, home to the *Teatro alla Scala* Opera House of Milan, was built by the architect Giuseppe Piermarini in 1778. For over two hundred years, it has hosted artists of international fame and still commissions operas that are present in all the best programs of opera houses around the world. It was originally flanked by the *Ricordi Casino*, which is today the seat of the *Teatro alla Scala* Museum. The Theatre was the subject of a restructuring project from 2002 to 2004, commissioned by the City of Milan. The architectural work was done by Mario Botta and may be divided into various themes: that of the volume of the tower used for storing scenery, that of the service areas built above the roof area on *Via Filodrammatici*, and the conservative restoration project of the Theatre. The conservation work involved the unit of the Piermarini room and the Nineteenth Century building volume of the ex-*Ricordi Casino*. The volume of the tower for storing scenery was the most important work done; the increase in elevation was the answer to the new technical needs and thus the height of the roof was raised to 38.70 meters with respect to the height of the ground floor. In the area above the Nineteenth Century roofing on *Via Filodrammatici*, a new volume was raised with an elliptical shape where spaces that are at the service of the Theatre may now be found. It is this "new" volume, added above the roof, that is placed to the side of the volume of the scene with its own autonomous image.

- *Palazzo Marino*, a Sixteenth Century noble palace designed by the architect Galeazzo Alessi, occupies the opposite side of the *Piazza*. It has been the Town Hall and seat of local government since 1861 and today appears in the form of the restoration performed by the architect Luca Beltrami in 1892, where the design of the new façade facing onto the *Piazza* was taken care of, taking the cue from the original, principal façade that faced onto *Piazza San Fedele*. The building occasionally hosts cultural and artistic events that have become more continuous for the number of events and better attended by the public over the last few years.

- The end portal of *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II*, built between 1865 and 1878 by Giuseppe Mengoni, is found on the southeast side of the four-sided construction. The *Galleria*, with its decorative statues by the Milanese sculptor Pietro Magni, is currently undergoing restoration.

- The building of the *Palazzo della Civica Ragioneria Comunale*, built between 1918 and 1927 on a design by the architect Luca Beltrami.

- The building of the *ex-Banca Commerciale Italiana*, now property of the bank Intesa Sanpaolo, was built starting in 1906 by the architect Luca Beltrami. Since November 2012 the ground floor has hosted the “*Gallerie d’Italia*”, a space for permanent and temporary art exhibits from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The space is remarkable (about 8000 square meters) with direct access onto the *Piazza* itself. In addition to the ground floor of *Palazzo Beltrami*, the *Gallerie d’Italia* occupies the ground floors of *Palazzo Brentani - Greppi*, *Palazzo Antona - Traversi* and *Palazzo Anguissola*, which are linked to it.

2.2 HISTORY AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE AREA OF THE PIAZZA

Analyzing the historical maps of the City of Milan, it is possible to see the development of this urban area starting in the second half of the 1500s, when the perspective views of the city show a compact medieval shape without any monuments emerging, found in proximity to the *cardo maximus* of the Roman city layout.

In 1553, the building of *Palazzo Marino* was begun, which may be recognized as inside the compact medieval urban fabric in Richini’s map of 1603, with its two rectangular courtyards, together with the Fourteenth Century church of *Santa Maria della Scala*, which was then demolished in the 1700s to make way for the building of the Theatre.

The transformation of the ancient city fabric follows the program of Neo-classical renovation works of some portions of central Milan that were concentrated around some noteworthy public buildings starting at the end of the Eighteenth Century, in the Hapsburg period. In this phase, which was decisive for the beginning of a gradual transformation of the space into a “*Piazza*”, comes the construction of the Ducal Theatre, then called “*alla Scala*”, on a design by Piermarini. It emerges for the first time in a 1786 map by Giulio Cesare Bianchi with the overlooking widening of the area.

In the Napoleonic period that follows, a prospect of urban planning was inaugurated that was of an Enlightenment slant with a rational matrix. In this sense, the theme of the “public piazza” became central for the entire Nineteenth Century: no more shapeless clearings or widenings in front of important architecture; instead, there are places that have been thought out and completely designed from a formal point of view, in order to become qualified civic spaces.

In landscape paintings of the mid-Nineteenth Century, the disparity of the scale between the new building of the Neo-classical Theatre and the curtain of houses that surrounded it became evident. In 1830, the porticoed wings were created that were placed against the entrance portico, and shortly thereafter, the Ricordi establishment to the left side of the Theatre’s façade.

Between 1855 and 1858, the program of progressive demolition of the curtain of buildings facing toward the Theatre began; the Sixteenth Century *Palazzo Marino* still faces the theatre.

The theme of a great civic space in front of the Theatre was dealt with several times over the course of the Nineteenth Century, often in parallel to the development of the design of another important public space in the city, that of *Piazza Duomo*.

The physical link between these two central places found its solution in the end through the creation of a covered gallery designed by the architect Giuseppe Mengoni in 1865.

Only in 1872 is the sculpture dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci placed at the center of the *Piazza*, created by tearing up the center and putting it in the place of the circular green flowerbed already present there in 1859. This placement along the perspective line of the Gallery was a representative choice of a new, strong Milanese bourgeois class that recognized in Leonardo the symbol and figure of maximum expression of a unified, global cultural vision. Starting in 1872, moreover, the presence of ornamental trees around the monument is documented.

The definitive transformation of the *Piazza* thus bears the predominant signature of Luca Beltrami who, in addition to completing the façade of *Palazzo Marino* facing toward *Piazza della Scala*, designed the building of *Banca Commerciale Italiana* in the late-Sixteenth Century style and with a sobriety of an ordinary urban palace. Moreover, in the end he also designed the building for the central offices of the same *Banca Commerciale Italiana* in continuity with Mengoni's entrance portal to the Gallery; this palace will subsequently be bought by the City of Milan and become the headquarters of the city's accounting department (*Ragioneria Comunale*).

Beltrami also took care of the decorative arts and conceived of the whole project for the design of the furnishings and decorations of the *Piazza* around the monument, designing the flowerbed, the little fountain and the candelabra-shaped light posts. It is to him that is owed the definition of one of the most representative spaces of Milanese bourgeois culture.

The sporadic subsequent interventions involved only aspects of street furniture, regulation of the traffic and paving of the *Piazza*. The last chronologically is the one done by Paolo Portoghesi to whom the current layout of the urban scene is owed.

For more information regarding the history of *Piazza della Scala* and the projects regarding the palaces that border the *Piazza*, see the essay by the architect Giuliana Massari, which contains significant photographic documentation, attached with the materials of the Competition Notice.

2.3 CURRENT MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The scope of the Ideas Competition concerns a particularly important junction of traffic flow that is both private and public, especially as regards the layout of the central area of the city. This area constitutes the last segment that crosses through the historical nucleus of the city. The *Piazza* in fact has only a partially pedestrian characteristic in that two sides are involved in major roads where there is significant traffic flow, precisely because these two arteries play an important role in the system of traffic in the central area of the city.

The two sides involved in the roads are those in front of the Theatre, as a continuation of *Via Manzoni*, and the one facing the *Gallerie d'Italia*, a natural extension of *Via Case Rotte*. The two streets are wide in both lanes, as they are two-way streets, in particular, on the stretch of *Via Manzoni* which is open to all kinds of traffic, there is also the tramway line n. 1 which has a stop nearby the Theatre.

The widening of the *Piazza* to the left of the façade of *Teatro alla Scala*, which is called *Largo Ghiringhelli*, is up until today used improperly and spontaneously as a stopping spot for motorcycles. In *Via Case Rotte* on the side of the *Gallerie d'Italia* there is a taxi stand where taxis park, while on the opposite side (alongside *Palazzo Marino*), there is a parking lot for motorcycles and a station for city bikes (*BikeMi, Palazzo Marino - 100*). The unauthorized stopping place for motorcycles is particularly critical in *Largo Ghiringhelli* in that it constitutes an element of decay and inconvenience for the crosswalks and pedestrian traffic flow near the Theatre.

The presence of vehicle traffic impacts severely the quality of the *Piazza* and the cultural and civic activities that make it lively and popular. Such a condition may be fixed only by reducing the conflict of pedestrians and flow of vehicle traffic, by improving the quality of the crosswalks that are in place today.

The City of Milan has planned for the creation of a first intervention for redevelopment of some of the pedestrian crosswalks, which is described and illustrated in the graphs and materials attached to the Competition Notice. The crosswalks are to be redeveloped through work on the materials of the pavements at the intersection between *Via Manzoni* and *Via Verdi* and *Via Manzoni* with *Via S. Margherita*. The crosswalk at *Verdi/Manzoni* is integrated on the one hand with the project by creating a bike path on *Via Verdi*, and on the other by confirming the pedestrian crosswalk on the south side that links the present sidewalk on the side of *Teatro alla Scala* directly to the pedestrian *Piazza*. The *Piazza* moreover represents an important pedestrian junction in the system of piazzas and public spaces of the central area of the city (*Piazza Duomo*, the *Galleria*, *Piazza S. Fedele*, *Piazza Meda*, etc.), connections that should be enhanced in the final arrangement in function of the pedestrian flow and safety for the roads.

3 DESIGN INDICATIONS

3.1 GENERAL INDICATIONS

A total rethinking of *Piazza della Scala* could achieve the goal of a fuller involvement, or more generally, an ‘inclusion’ of the *Gallerie d’Italia* and the very theatre itself, *Teatro alla Scala*, in the public space.

As regards the flow of traffic, what is hoped for is a distribution and organization of the routes for the vehicles in transit, in order to develop efficient and sustainable public and private transportation, reduce traffic and recoup livability and a better use of the urban space and of the architectural, cultural and social value of the Historical Center of the city. In the guidelines to the proposal for the new PUMS (City Plan for Sustainable Mobility), it is expressed that an area such as *Piazza della Scala* has characteristics such as to be identified as a “privileged pedestrian area” where a private means of transportation is not necessary excluded but subject to conditions (such as: pedestrian areas, ZTL: Zone for Limited Traffic - Zone with speed limits, road work according to a hierarchy appropriate for making an environmentally sound area, etc.). The degree of these conditions will thus be an important element on which to focus when delineating the layout of the *Piazza* and its surrounding areas.

This assumes even more importance with the creation of the bike path that will involve *Via Verdi*, related to the project of the *Duomo - Porta Nuova* bike route. The design proposal will be able to set itself up as a “continuation of the process of urban renewal” and an enhancement for tourism as well as for the civic, cultural and commercial role of the Historical Center of Milan, which has already been identified as a goal of the City government.

The renewal has the goal of reinforcing the identity of “*Piazza*” as a civic space and at the same time a center of attraction for events linked to *Piazza della Scala*’s mission (forever linked to the buildings and functions imagined for those places). The objective is to present and enhance the space for relationships, appreciating the places according to the dynamics of contemporary life, while reinforcing and respecting at the same time the signs of its historical identity, in the

knowledge that the natural vocation of the place is above all for “cultural appreciation” and “civic institution.”

It is thus of fundamental importance that a solution be found that is able to interpret the dichotomy of this *Piazza* as a place in which to stay, to meet, to remain, but at the same time, a place to be crossed, a place of transit.

Great attention must be paid to the accessibility of the *Piazza* with the goal of proceeding with planned works for making it more useable to the public.

It should be noted that the area of the Competition falls under “Area C,” a ZTL - Zone of Limited Traffic area - that regards the entire area of the Historical Center of Milan, which is enclosed by the ring road of the *Bastioni*. Access to the area is controlled by 43 video cameras that are active on business days from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and private and commercial vehicles are subject to obtain and activate an entrance ticket in order to have access.

3.2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS, DESIGN ORIENTATION

The projects shall pay particular attention to the identity of the place with respect to regulations related to public spaces, such as passing the architectural barriers and safety.

It should be underscored, moreover, that there are numerous restrictions principally relevant to the historical and artistic value of monumental buildings already under restrictions in accordance with the law D. Lgs. 42/2004 - “*Code for Cultural Heritage and Landscape, in accordance with Article 10 of Law n. 137 of July 6, 2004,*” for which the documentation is furnished. In addition to the restrictions “by decree” it should be made clear that the place is to be considered part of the “cultural heritage” in accordance with Article 10 of the Code: “*To be considered part of the cultural heritage are those things that are real estate or assets belonging to the State, to the regions, to territorial public agencies, as well as to every other agency or public institution, and to private citizens or legal subjects which are non-profit, that have artistic, historical, archeological or ethno-anthropological interest*”. The Code makes reference to restrictions that are not declared but that exist for the presence of the conditions: 1) that they are places or real estate of important historical/artistic interest; 2) that they are public property; 3) that they are at least 50 years old.

The proposal should be accompanied by a study of the typologies of pavements to be used and/or maintained with respect for materials used in the Milanese tradition. Also, the illumination of the *Piazza* could have an important role as regards the various typologies of use of illumination.

The solution for or arrangement of the pavement and the buildings should be aimed at privileging the use of the types of materials and creation of an environment in the Milanese tradition, in keeping with the history of the *Piazza*, taking into account what existed there historically with special attention to the buildings designed by Beltrami.

The eventual definitive project shall be subject to the rules and indications formulated by the Superintendence for Architectural and Landscape Heritage for the Region of Lombardy. Where the design proposals of the participants foresee proposals for excavations or digging up the grounds of the *Piazza*, the project shall be evaluated also by the Superintendence for Archeological Heritage for the Region of Lombardy, which is competent on that matter.

Attention must be paid to the presence of restrictions on the subsoil related to the presence of technological constructions. To this end, exhaustive documentation is furnished about the subservices present in the area.

Work must be undertaken to support and foster privileged pedestrian access, pursuing factors of balance between accessibility, improvement of traffic flow and safety in the central area as a function of improving the quality of the urban space and environmental quality.

Should the proposal regard the theme of mobility, it should be accompanied by transportation estimates related to the sustainability of the choices proposed.

Should the proposal regard a modification of the tramway line (tracks or stops) it should be noted that in addition, the possible subsequent project must be approved by the competent Authorities and agencies in accordance with DPR 753/80; even if the modifications are only to the road axes where the tramway passes, they must take into account the UNIFER regulations on the subject of safety in railway transportation.

3.3 FINANCIAL LIMITS FOR PROPOSALS

It is estimated that the reference costs for the projects that shall be proposed by the Competition entrants is estimated at €2.000.000,00 (two million euros and 00 cents) VAT tax included for the surface work to be done, systems, illumination, city furniture and technical buildings.