

**Politecnico di Milano**  
**School of Architecture and Society**

**Activating the ground floor:**  
**transformation scenarios for a residential area near Piazza Carbonari in Milan**

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## **abstract**

The project explores new design opportunities for the transformation of a residential housing area built in Milan between the 1950s and the 1970s for the rising middle class, near Piazza Carbonari. After the Second World War, Milan suffered the consequences of a massive migratory flux from other regions of Italy, due to the miraculous economic recovery that reshaped the entire Italian society. The built environment dramatically changed and an impressive growth in housing demand and production took place. Because of these social and economic transformations the suburbs of the major cities were simply divided and built in order to satisfy the new building demand. The condominium became the standard model that provided a sense of stability for every family unit. The lack of an efficient town planning regulation, the non-compliance of construction standards and the absence of rules regarding the construction and safeguard of the territory led to a wild urbanization. The spatial and social needs of the new emerging middle class were satisfied by the condominium typology. Despite the fact that these buildings have several problems concerning the difficulty of adapting themselves to the new spatial needs of the contemporary city, they are part of an important housing stock heritage. Condominiums possess potential opportunities in terms of “dense living”.

The project is aimed on exploring the opportunity of the transformation of the chosen area through the modifications proposed on the level of the city, the ground floor, based on the study and classification of the in-between buildings' spaces. Connected with the policy for the land ownership, the project is divided into a set of proposal scenarios. Moving from the private fragmented land ownership to the common and more public, and with the proposed transformations of the in-between spaces, these strategies explore a new reading of a landscape of condominium housing.