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FROM VILLA TO BARRIO

Urban upgrade of an informal settlement in Buenos Aires

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to carry out an architectural experience and research of the informal settlement of the Villa in the autonomous city of Buenos Aires, characterized by the paradoxically coexistence of both richness and extreme poverty in the heart of the city. The theme of analysis concerns the particular urban and social situation of La Villa 31 y 31 bis and its possible future vision.

The interest stems from an exchange program in the Argentinian Capital, which made us aware of the political and social dimension of the Villa, full of contradictions and conflicts.

Thanks to the help of no profit associations and architects working there, there was the opportunity to personally interact with the inhabitants of the informal settlement, under-

standing the interrelationship, problems and needs in order to derive a framework to upgrade the Villa.

Therefore, the research moves from a deep social and urban analysis of the context to the design of three specific architectural focuses: the new housing prototype, the linear park under the Illia highway crossing the Villa and the Urban Market close to the Retiro Bus Terminal.

The results revealed that physical intervention is ineffective when it does not accompany social strategies. A combined approach to intervention, which involves characteristics of physical infrastructure provision, community action planning, and social transformation through a new urban plan, would have the best results if applied to Villa 31 y 31 bis.