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# Living as Students: Bologna 2000

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Renovated  
sugar factory  
in Cukrarna,  
Slovenia

## LIVING AS STUDENTS: BOLOGNA 2000

In November 2000, the City of Bologna, Italy, welcomed a conference entitled "Living as Students". The conference was co-organised by the City of Bologna, the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of the University of Bologna and the Emilia-Romagna Region, with the participation of PEB. The event was part of the European Capital of Culture project which examined the major role Bologna has played and continues to play as a university city. It also looked at the role of cities that host major universities, in and outside of Europe, as centres for the development and dissemination of culture and advanced professional training.

The theme of the conference, student housing, is complex in that it addresses the use of temporary accommodation that is often used for relatively long periods of time. Student housing differs both from the permanent residences of a city's long-term inhabitants and from visitors' temporary accommodation. Students are in a unique and intermediary position, participating in university life while also contributing to the identity of the city. The organisers of the conference spoke of student housing in the context of "the relationship between a more permanent, tightly-knit and deep-rooted society, and one which is changing, open and oriented toward knowledge and innovations."

Students were compared with other types of clients such as business people who are transferred or are on long missions and tourists; student housing shares common points with guest-houses, hotels, etc.

Urban costs affect students' behaviour, forcing students to optimise spending. The relationships between accommodation and transportation (e.g. travelling to and from the city, or transportation within the city) both public and private, need to be studied. The organisers presented student behaviour and resources (personal or parental) from a sociological perspective.

### Student housing competition

In parallel with the conference, an international competition on student housing was organised by the Department of Architecture and Territorial Planning of the University of Bologna, in which 30 European universities participated. Two first prizes were awarded: one to a project called

University Block Houses in Brescia, Italy, and the other to a project for the City of Cukrarna, Slovenia.

The first concerns the rehabilitation of an unoccupied, urban space in the centre of Brescia. The jury considered it to be a particularly relevant approach to the revitalisation of European historical city centres. The project combines a strong respect for the original site with the use of modern construction technologies to meet the multifunctional use of the building. The result is a balance of built volumes that respect the surroundings and features of the original site. A repetitive scheme of units is used boldly without producing a monotonous construction. The project successfully converts an interstitial urban space into a beautiful and original place to live.

The second project is the renovation of a sugar factory in the urban area of Cukrarna, Slovenia. Originally an industrial area, it is now equipped with integrated services for community life. The renovation of a huge, abandoned industrial site reveals an unusual approach which the jury wished to distinguish. With a big stone wall and windows at regular intervals, the building preserves the memory of the industrial past. The inside is an empty, open space, designed to accommodate diverse uses associated with university life. The contrasting architectural style is particularly suggestive: between past and future, immobility of the stone wall and intrinsic mobility of the distribution of space inside the building. It is far from a traditional design and shows a strong integration of functions through the adaptability of space.



University Block Houses in Brescia, Italy

