

Description and Prescription in the Historical Centre of Rimini (Italy)

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Abstract: A prescriptive act (such as a rule) cannot exist without a descriptive act (of restitution of form) that constitutes its founding relationship. Urban morphology, within a geographical and historical tradition, focuses on the rigorous and systematic description and explanation of the urban landscape (Oliveira, 2021), while urban codes are primarily in support of an urban vision (Dutton, 2000) from a prescriptive sphere-oriented perspective in the regulatory sphere. The relationship between description and prescription is the subject of a long debate in urban morphology. One of the central questions is how to derive prescriptions for regenerating the urban environment based on descriptions of the existing and its historical development. The debate today tends to focus on the need to make the descriptions provided by urban morphology more objective and scientific, with the expectation that an objective and scientific description should not, in principle, already be normative (Kropf, 2021). The city has long been the subject of studies involving different disciplines, and some works are based on the concept of the science of the city (Batty, 2013; Mehaffy, 2014). It is impossible to determine how cities will or should be built in the future, yet it is possible to outline the contours of urban rules and how their effects have influenced the city's shape. This research places current issues on urban coding in the context of studying the physical city (form) using the historic centre of Rimini (Italy) as a case study. The study offers an analysis of the evolution of the urban form of the historic centre of Rimini and its urban rules, reasoning on a broader discourse concerning the reform of urban codes. Through a morphological analysis based on traditional assumptions, this study uses design as a bridge between the study of urban form and the prefiguration of urban codes in the context of Italy's historical centres. The proposed result is a draft of urban rules that accommodate the flexibility of past and future urban transformations.

Keywords: Urban Form, Urban Codes, Urban Design, Historical Centre, Italy.

1. Rules and Physical Qualities

As argued by Ben-Joseph (2005), designers, planners and those who wish to work on the built environment cannot easily escape the obligation to create and maintain places where rules do not oust physical qualities. This thinking underlies the concept of quality of place and at the same time the flexible performance of urban rules in a formal action perspective. In this sense, codes could be used in a generative way, to specify generic urban elements and relationships, such as the type of building, the way buildings relate to the hierarchies of pathways, and so on, in order to create a number of variations around the formal theme. In a generative code, the codified elements and relationships are controlled,

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but the final overall form is derived from the identification of the emergent form. An *emergent form* or structure possesses constitutive characteristics or overall qualities that are not explicitly specified (nor necessarily provided for) in their mode of creation (e.g. rules of construction, aggregation, location, etc.) (Marshall, 2011). The concept of *emergent urban structure* refers to a configuration or pattern of settlement that develops spontaneously, without rigid planning or predefined design; it is composed on the basis of individual actions, user decisions and spontaneous adaptation processes and may appear to be orderly and well-organised, but is the result of stratification due to human actions and time. Historic centres fall into the category of emergent structures because they have developed over centuries: streets, buildings and public spaces have gradually configured themselves, responding to users' needs and social interactions. Studies on these concepts have been developed mainly by Christopher Alexander (1977; 2008) and Michael Mehaffy (2008; 2020) and declined into theories that build on these assumptions in the studies of Michael Batty (2005; 2018) on generative algorithms and the science of the city, and Bill Hillier (1996) on connection sets of spatial interactions. These approaches support the use of generative codes in place of master plans and can help consolidate a new way of doing cities (Plater-Zyberk, 2008). The theses of Alexander and the other academics, together with the theories on permanence and permutations developed in the Italian morphological sphere by Muratori (1959) and Caniggia (& Maffei, 1979), compose a framework in which urban form could be assumed as the main generator of codes and vice versa. In addition to the concept of *emergent structure*, from these methods it follows that the configuration of elements at one scale contributes to the design of integrated components at the next scale, creating an interlocking urban vision. For example, the combination of buildings and public spaces creates a certain type of street; or the combination of walls, doors and windows creates a façade. In fact, in traditional urban fabrics, based on the importance of the street as a route and matrix of settlements, there is an interconnected relationship between buildings, streets and public spaces (Marshall, 2011). In other words, elements tend to be composed of smaller sub-elements, which in turn contribute to larger elements or a larger whole (Alexander, 1977). The interaction between scales could help solve a problem highlighted by Christopher Alexander (1966) in his essay, *A City is Not a Tree*. This is a criticism of the overly simplistic hierarchical organisation of the urban environment, which does not allow for a rich complexity of overlapping elements, and of the apparent difficulty of urban planners in conceiving and achieving such complex overlapping arrangements on the ground (Alexander, 1966).

On the basis of these theories, the Rimini case study is developed, conducted with the aim of triggering urban regeneration mechanisms within the historic fabric, starting from its formal analysis and arriving at the definition of new guidelines. To achieve this objective, this article is divided into three fundamental parts. In the first section, 'Five forms (description)', the urban form of Rimini's historic centre is analysed, highlighting the main elements that structure the area. This part recognises urban structures enclosed in morphological clusters, i.e. parts of the urban fabric that present the same characteristics in terms of formal aggregation or building type. The second part recognises in each cluster the opportunity to hypothesise, on the basis of the formal analyses, a meta-design intervention, here called a device (from the definitions of 'dispositif' and 'device' by Foucault, Deleuze and Agamben). As a result of this process of analysis, in the third part, this contribution produces a synoptic matrix that proposes an a priori vision of the urban code, outlining a direction for the urban development of the historic centre (a portion of urban territory that in Italy tends to play a testimonial role, sometimes regardless of its real value).

2. Five Forms (description)

In order to accurately describe the consistency of the urban fabric of Rimini, it is essential to be equipped with the tools and techniques required to realise the complexity of the urban landscape. Recognising that the visible appearance of the urban environment is the outcome of processes that differ greatly in their logic and origins, and that these intersect and overwrite each other, leaving traces, albeit minimal, without a solution of continuity, defines the territory as a palimpsest that is gradually reshaped (Corboz, 1983). The sum of these processes represents an urban scenario in which transformations are difficult to reverse and whose sum constitutes the territorial fixed capital, which is the principle and the constraint for regeneration operations.

To set operational aims on consolidated urban fabrics, it is necessary to clearly define a certain number of elements that make up the urban structures of the historic centre. First of all, the presence of the structuring elements, i.e. the components of the urban environment that are almost unchanged and constitute the identity of the historic centre; these elements can be identified with the street pattern (as an overlay of Roman, mediaeval and later wall systems) and with the hydrography and natural elements (as in the case of Rimini, the Marecchia canal port). Secondly, there are settlement systems, i.e. urban agglomerations interdependent on structural elements, but also responding to internal rules (such as the old Roman *insulae*, now closed blocks; or open blocks, or linear or terraced agglomerations). Homogeneous morphologies are part of the settlement systems, defining a collage of areas characterised by certain densities, layout structures, and prevalence of building types. Homogeneous morphologies constitute certain taxonomies of urban forms, they are therefore groupings of aggregations of building and architectural typologies that present similar characters, inscribed within a morphological category such as closed blocks or urban fabric with typologies arranged in a line. The coexistence of such characters and the stratification of the processes of remodelling of urban materials constitute the hereditary and identity elements that the city shows today (Figure 1).

The description of the city's form structure is not a conclusion of the urban analysis, but an attribute that opens multiple design opportunities based on the understanding of the complexity of formal stratifications (Albrecht & Galli, 2021). Therefore, this kind of analysis allows to define a taxonomy of the built environment through the recognition of different forms of aggregation on the basis of typological units (Caniggia & Maffei, 2017). In the historic centre of Rimini, five homogeneous morphologies have been identified that contribute to defining its urban identity. These include a compact fabric characterised by blocks with stratifications, an urban fabric with special buildings, a fringe fabric with discontinuities of elevations, a fabric with buildings aligned along streets, and a fabric in which there are architectural units extraneous to the urban environment. These different morphologies contribute to creating a complex and varied picture of Rimini's historic centre (Figure 2). The different clusters were identified according to the types and aggregations defined by Caniggia and Maffei (2017) relative to basic buildings. The identified morphologies are:

- a. The compact urban fabric, composed mainly of closed blocks, owes its configuration to the Roman-style street system.
- b. Clusters with special buildings generate polarities due to their historical, architectural, political and religious significance.
- c. Margin fabrics are configured by their variation with respect to the topography or anthropic elements.
- d. The outlying villages, generated by the extension of the Roman road structure, present different forms and typologies compared to the central core.
- e. Historical fabric with extraneous typologies out of scale, that generate blind facades.

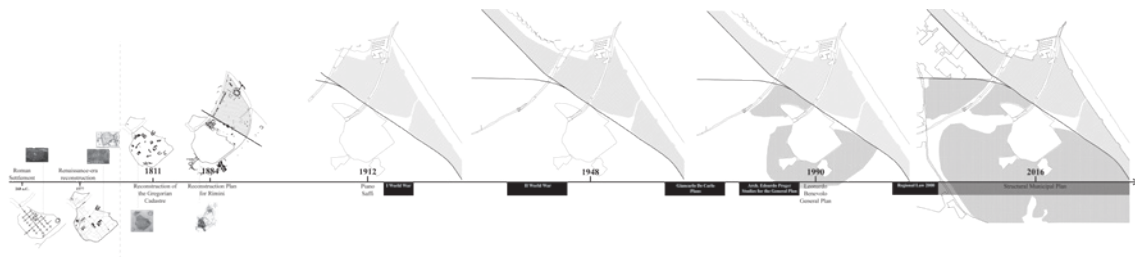


Figure 1. *Transitional morphology of Rimini's settlement (Source: author 2023).*



Figure 2. *Morphological clusters in the historical centre of Rimini (Source: author 2023).*

To understand these characteristics, each morphological cluster has been studied through the extraction of a tissue sample on which a morphological analysis and a meta-project (the *device*) has been conducted. Each *device* is useful not only to suggest prefigurations of the urban environment that conform to the identity of the places, but to generalise the reasoning from the sample to the remaining urban fabric with the same morphological characteristics.

The study of morphological clusters was conducted by analysing the formal transition of the sample urban fabrics, identifying repetitive characters and variations at each stage. The table (Figure 3) shows how the evolution over time brings out the typical characters of each sample and allows them to be compared. For example, it can be seen that in sample A, i.e. the one referring to the compact block fabric, it emerges that the curtain configuration of the blocks is sometimes betrayed by a porous character. In the second sample (B, fabric with the presence of special buildings) it emerges that the balance of the curtain is totally disregarded over time. In the sample of margin tissue (C), one notices the reconfiguration of the sample according to the margin communicating aspects of fragmentation and disintegration. Then, in sample D (fabric with buildings in line) the relationship between urbanisation and the street appears clear, and consequently the relationship between façades, building heights and building types. Finally, in sample E (urban fabric with extraneous buildings in relation to the surrounding buildings) the variations due to urbanisation phases are evident, but the discontinuities created by these typologies are not noticeable. In fact, one of the possible characteristics of extraneous buildings in relation to the surrounding fabric is that they conform to the aggregative principles of the fabric in which they are inserted (since they sometimes replace other units) but present architectural and typological characters that are clearly different from the surrounding fabric.

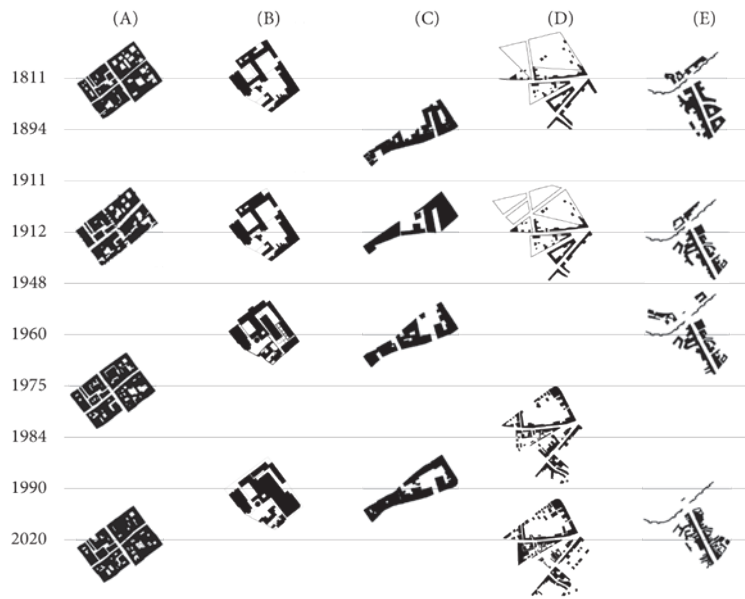


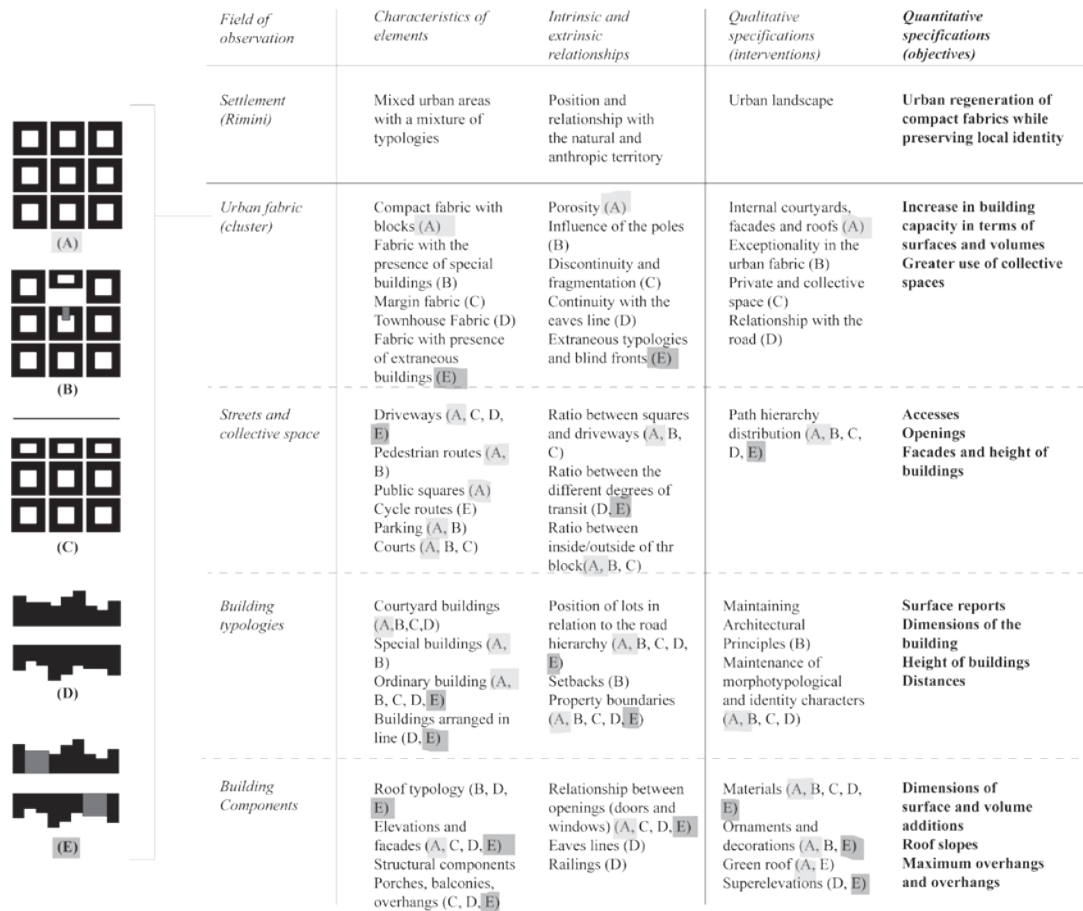
Figure 3. Formal urban transition of the study samples of the five morphological clusters in Rimini (Source: author 2023).

3. From Form to Urban Design

As demonstrated for sample E, the analysis of morphological transition is not sufficient to intercept all the characteristics of historic urban fabrics. For this reason, each sample was studied according to a typological abacus, in order to better define the qualities present in the urban fabric at several scales. Therefore, in order to favour a global view of all clusters, a summary table of the analysis conducted was drawn up. The table (Figure 4) is divided into two main parts, the first three columns summarise the main characteristics and relationships of the forms analysed, while the last two columns show the areas in which to act and some strategies, in the form of objectives, to favour urban regeneration processes according to the data analysed. The table descends in scale from top to bottom, from settlement to urban fabrics (schematised graphically), from streets to buildings, to architectural components. For each scale, the characteristics of the elements and the relationships they form intrinsically and extrinsically are summarised. Qualitative specifications indicate the areas in which intervention is possible: from internal courtyards to individual roof elements. Finally, the quantitative specifications identify the objectives to be achieved in order to regenerate the consolidated urban fabric by preserving the identity of places and acting at different scales.

This operation favoured design experimentation on each sample of a *device*. For the compact urban fabric with blocks (A), experimentation focused on light and temporary interventions of urban acupuncture to preserve inherited identity. For sample B (urban fabric with special buildings), the approach involved morphological reshaping of the fabric through specific competitions and design based on the polarity of existing monuments. The marginal fabric (C) lends itself to the use of parasitic architecture and the utilization of residual spaces. The fabric with buildings in line (D) was tested with the device of dynamic growth, where a building can grow in height relative to its taller neighbour. Lastly, for the fabric that features extraneous buildings compared to its surroundings (E), mechanisms related to the use of air rights were experimented with. In order to show the reasoning conducted to set the design strategy, the work done on two urban fabric samples (A, E) is shown here.

- (A) In morphological terms, the theme of the block project emerges when global visions exist, not when individual interventions on the scale of the individual building are imagined. Nevertheless, the urban project can become unitary if each intervention (contiguous or not) is related to the others. An operational concept closely linked to the local character of project interventions is that of urban acupuncture. These are small injections that trigger mechanisms of well-being that



Field of observation	Characteristics of elements	Intrinsic and extrinsic relationships	Qualitative specifications (interventions)	Quantitative specifications (objectives)
<i>Settlement (Rimini)</i>	Mixed urban areas with a mixture of typologies	Position and relationship with the natural and anthropic territory	Urban landscape	Urban regeneration of compact fabrics while preserving local identity
<i>Urban fabric (cluster)</i>	Compact fabric with blocks (A) Fabric with the presence of special buildings (B) Margin fabric (C) Townhouse Fabric (D) Fabric with presence of extraneous buildings (E)	Porosity (A) Influence of the poles (B) Discontinuity and fragmentation (C) Continuity with the eaves line (D) Extraneous typologies and blind fronts (E)	Internal courtyards, facades and roofs (A) Exceptionality in the urban fabric (B) Private and collective space (C) Relationship with the road (D)	Increase in building capacity in terms of surfaces and volumes Greater use of collective spaces
<i>Streets and collective space</i>	Driveways (A, C, D, E) Pedestrian routes (A, B) Public squares (A) Cycle routes (E) Parking (A, B) Courts (A, B, C)	Ratio between squares and driveways (A, B, C) Ratio between the different degrees of transit (D, E) Ratio between inside/outside of the block (A, B, C)	Path hierarchy distribution (A, B, C, D, E)	Accesses Openings Facades and height of buildings
<i>Building typologies</i>	Courtyard buildings (A, B, C, D) Special buildings (A, B) Ordinary building (A, B, C, D, E) Buildings arranged in line (D, E)	Position of lots in relation to the road hierarchy (A, B, C, D, E) Setbacks (B) Property boundaries (A, B, C, D, E)	Maintaining Architectural Principles (B) Maintenance of morphotypological and identity characters (A, B, C, D)	Surface reports Dimensions of the building Height of buildings Distances
<i>Building Components</i>	Roof typology (B, D, E) Elevations and facades (A, C, D, E) Structural components Porches, balconies, overhangs (C, D, E)	Relationship between openings (doors and windows) (A, C, D, E) Eaves lines (D) Railings (D)	Materials (A, B, C, D, E) Ornaments and decorations (A, B, E) Green roof (A, E) Superelevations (D, E)	Dimensions of surface and volume additions Roof slopes Maximum overhangs and overhangs

Figure 4. *Qualities and Quantities summarised after the analysis of the sample in Rimini (Source: author 2023).*

affect the entire city organism. The ‘injections’ are interventions at various scales that socially, economically and urban revitalise the portions of the city concerned. Using such a strategy of intervention in an historic centre, such as Rimini’s, and in conditions of compact, isolated fabrics, means considering acting on the residual spaces of fabrics with a strong identity. In prescriptive terms, admitting small interventions (even temporary) within courtyards, or on solar slabs, or even admitting the redevelopment of fronts on the edges of urban blocks, could improve the perception of space in the historic centre. In this sense, the urban acupuncture project/device contributes to creating a direct communication with the rest of the city and will naturally integrate if one has the tools to include it. The possible trigger for such a transformation may come from the drafting of a typological abacus of possible interventions, i.e. the type of structures and the extent of intervention affecting the consolidated tissues (Figure 4).

- (E) Air rights also refer to the right of ownership that surrounding buildings have over the airspace above their properties. There are a number of ways in which these rights can be transferred, such as: the addition of a new completion volume above the roof; the use of air and ground rights; the use of air rights of the street belonging to the public sphere; the transfer of GFA (Gross Floor Area) to other buildings; the partial transfer of GFA; and the transfer of GFA from the ground floor. The design exploration of buildings outside the surrounding urban fabric, which have blind façades, has led to a number of possible configurations, based on the case histories present mainly in the study sample. This resulted in two types of devices relating to the expansion of private spaces and two concerning the addition of volume for the creation of collective spaces. In the first case, volume addition refers to the inclusion of a private space between existing buildings with the total or partial transfer of air rights. This allows the creation of new interior spaces, e.g. to extend a residence, create a workspace, an accessory space or an outdoor space. As with private spaces, the addition of volumes or surfaces for the creation of collective spaces includes the total

or partial use of the space between two buildings. In this case, however, the intervention involves several parties who collaborate so that the increase in space is available to the community as a meeting place, common area or space accessible to citizenship (Figure 4).

4. A Matrix that Generates a Code (prescription)

What emerges from the synthesis of the analysis of Rimini's urban fabrics is that every consideration regarding urban regeneration comes from a morphological perspective. Therefore, the analysis of fabrics, their aggregations, and typological cells forms the basis of any prescriptive or codifying reasoning. The *devices*, on the other hand, represent a test suggesting design actions to achieve regeneration objectives. These considerations lay the foundation for the construction of a synoptic matrix that serves as a preparatory consideration for writing a code, starting from the relationship between formal analysis and operational devices. The following table (Figure 5) represents the five morphological clusters, the morphological requirements of intervention zones (IF), the possible actions on urban fabrics deduced from device simulations (ALLOWED), the entities responsible for regeneration actions (PROMOTERS), the benefits for the involved entities (ADVANTAGES), and finally, the measures and quantities of operations allowed in each cluster (LIMITS/QUANTITIES). Although the table shows the work carried out on each sample, two examples are given here in full (A, E).

- (A) *Compact Fabric arranged in blocks*: If there are conditions of compact building fabric with closed blocks and stratifications, it is allowed to rethink urban space to make the fabric more porous through temporary interventions in the void system (courtyards and inner facades), interventions on roofs and terraces. These interventions aim to promote porosity of the blocks and urban acupuncture interventions to improve spatial quality. The promoters of these operations are the property owners, with specific agreements with the municipality for the use of courtyards and terraces. If there are environmental improvement projects that benefit the community (not only residents of the intervention unit), the municipality could grant incentives on environmental taxes, in addition to allowing increased surface area. The measures and limits of these interventions fall within private land occupancy under private concession and the increase in surface area according to building typology.
- (E) *Extraneous Typologies to the Surrounding Urban Fabric*: If there are compact urban fabrics that feature extraneous typologies (out of scale and with blind facades), it is allowed to increase volume by adding volumes and surfaces through air rights transfers. The increase in surface area and volume is permitted through agreements between adjacent plot owners. Once agreements are reached, it is allowed to fully or partially occupy the footprint of the lower plot with structures that catalyse good urban quality. Allowed operations include: adding the maximum volume between buildings (private spaces), adding a percentage of the maximum volume (private spaces), adding volume to connect two buildings (collective spaces), and adding the maximum volume for multiple buildings (collective spaces).

This reading mode, applied to all five generalised sample areas according to their morphological-typological fabric, defines a series of relationships between spaces, entities, and possible guidelines for the development of Rimini's historic centre. The flexibility of interventions is guaranteed by allowing a certain number of variations within these fixed systems. The use of typological-morphological analysis allows for the deduction of parts, components, and their arrangement, thus establishing which variations and modifications are possible in a fixed system such as Rimini's historic centre.








URBAN FABRIC (cluster)	IF (morphological characters)	IS ALLOWED (operations permitted)	PROMOTERS	ADVANTAGES	DEVICE	LIMITS QUANTITIES
	There are conditions of compact building fabric with closed blocks and stratifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rethinking the urban space to make the fabric more porous through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> temporary interventions on the system of voids (courtyards and courtyards); interventions on the internal facades; interventions on roofs and flat roofs. 	Private owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remediation Incentives on environmental taxes Increase of surfaces 	Urban Acupuncture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupation of private land by the public on private concession Surface increase in accordance with the building typology.
	Types of special polar characteristics with respect to the surrounding urban fabric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remodel the urban fabric while maintaining the layout of the special building; Recognize the morphogenetic archetypes of the tissues affected by polarity; Parametrically modulate the interventions between the identified morphogenetic archetypes. 	Public administration	Increase in surfaces and volumes as a percentage of the urban fabric under analysis.	Morphological replasement of tissues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupation of private land by the public on private concession Surface increase in accordance with the building typology.
	Margin tissue conditions are present with proximity to topographical and/or anthropic borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recover cubage through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the increase in surfaces and volumes served by walkways or paths; the temporary occupation of private open spaces (courts and courtyards if any) by the public administration to create public spaces or gardens. 	Private owners Investors Public administration	Increase of surfaces and volumes	Parasite architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupation of private land by the public under concession The overhangs must respect a maximum overhang comparable to the addition of balconies on the street facade The "parasitic architectures" must occupy no more than 20% of the facade on which they are built.
	There are compact urban fabrics with typologies arranged in line (row houses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the building capacity of surfaces and volumes by addition while preserving the characteristics of the original typology The elevation of buildings is enabled through a dynamic index which is governed by the height of the tallest adjacent building 	Private owners Investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For urban quality, the preservation of local identity For investors, increase in area/volume 	Dynamic growth 	Height raising with dynamic index: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> $h = h_{near} + 1$ traditional standard maximum height 5 floors Adding volume to the facade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum projection: 1 m Coverage of the existing facade: max 20%. No addition of ground floor towards the public road. Roof: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation gauge (partial or total) Residential destination Addition of dormer window Partial removal max 20%
	There are compact urban fabrics that have extraneous typologies (out of scale and that have blind facades)	Increase the cubic capacity by adding volumes and surfaces through the transfer of air rights.	Private owners Investors	Increase of surfaces and volumes	Air Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupy all or part of the outline of the lowest lot with structures that are catalysts of good urban qualities. adding maximum volume between buildings (private spaces); added as a percentage of the maximum volume (private spaces); addition of volume to connect two buildings (collective spaces); addition of the maximum volume for more than one building (collective spaces).

Figure 5. Synoptic Matrix (Source: author 2023).

5. Towards Formal Urban Codes

The selection of the analysis samples was conducted starting from the urban forms of Rimini which, due to their intrinsic strength, possess the potential to remain active with new dynamics. *A posteriori* from the analysis conducted, at least two orders of observation can be emphasised: the first linked to the morphological analysis, the second to the *devices*. Firstly, the study on Rimini highlighted that the entire historic centre is composed of compact fabric and that most of this is aggregated in closed blocks. This does not mean that the historic centre can be considered indiscriminately, but that there are a series of spatial organisations and morpho-typological sub-categories that can be distinguished. That is to say that each cluster analysed is a specific declination of the compact fabric and that at least three out of five samples (A, B, C) are particular block aggregations that, however, present identity characteristics that go beyond the mere 'block' classification. This denotes that when analysing the urban fabric there are general classifications (compact urban fabric) and evidence at the local level (deformations or replacements) that can contribute at different scales to define the relationships between urban organisms. In the second instance, the classification into clusters implemented for urban fabrics has allowed the conception of *devices* that are more or less incisive with respect to urban design. In fact, it is possible to catalogue devices according to the degree of urban transformation they could generate. This distinction is not accidental, but comes from the recognition of the identity of the places. Where the *cardus* and *decumanus* meet is the most fertile place in which to graft buildings of power and representation, so the fabric that develops in the centre of the historic core presents well-rooted morpho-typological characters and recognisable architectural principles. This approach indicates the presence of two regeneration times: a slower and more concentrated one within the historic core and a faster and more incisive one in the outer boroughs.

The approach developed in this research has a high potential for generalisation to other contexts. Since the proposed matrix summarises the morphological transition, formal abacus, dimensional criteria and suggested transformation *devices*, closely based on and related to the morphological analysis of the study sample, it is possible to reformulate these paradigms for other historic centres. The main advantage of this process is that all the recommendations are site-specific and thus able to foster and promote local identity. More generally, the approach presented is suitable for any established urban fabric, as the main requirement is to have a pre-existing built environment with a recognisable image to inform the form-based transitional analysis abacus. In this sense, the approach presented so far can guide not only the transformations of the most representative and symbolic part of the city, such as the historic core, but also the regeneration of more ordinary or peripheral areas, recognising their different urban role. For these reasons, the future prospects of this study are to develop interdisciplinary research linking urban design with public law and parametric design (Oxman, 2017). The field of public law can help develop specific regulatory tools, supporting urban codes that deal with dynamic and non-absolute criteria based on morphological typologies, while the parametric design approach would offer effective digital tools to visualise and simulate the multiple morphological outcomes of dynamic regulation of urban growth. Another possible integration is the use of spatial analysis and tools such as Space Syntax (Hillier, 1996). This tool addresses a number of issues relevant to the formation of land-use strategy and location considerations: promotion of economic growth, revitalisation of core areas, increasing social sustainability and improving cycling and pedestrian access. The tool offers an evidence-based approach to decision-making (Brown & Corry, 2011), informing the accessibility and walkability of an urban area and helping to test strategic interventions and project proposals.

Although urban codes are not only concerned with physical form, but also regulate land use and other planning issues, they can help create variety associated with both aesthetic ideals and the mediation between individual and collective interests. Codes are not necessarily con-

servators of the established order, but can help offer alternatives to conventional visions, from the combination of planners and other figures who may work to draft them. In conclusion, the generative vision of the urban environment offers a proactive influence on urban form.

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