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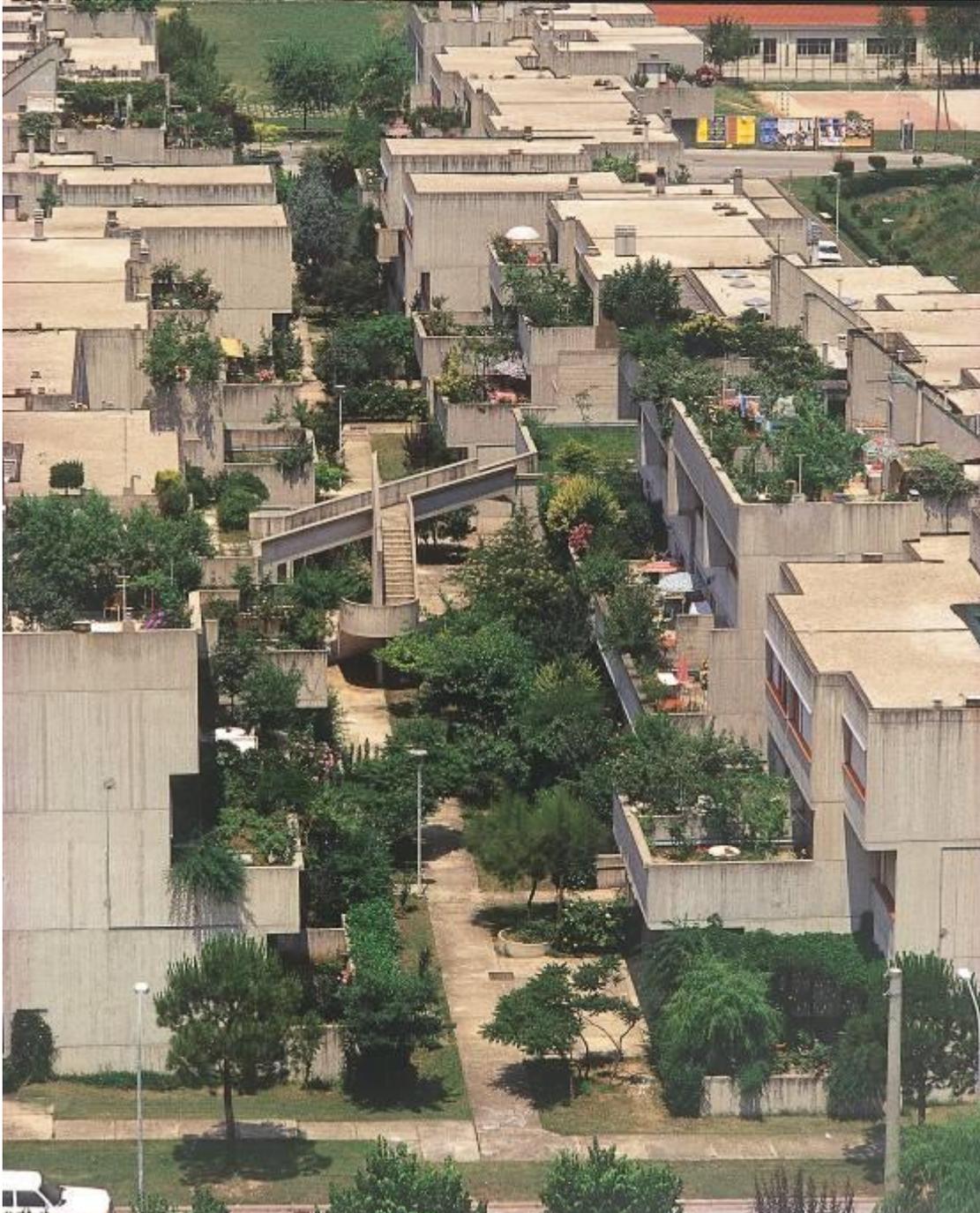
Minimum Documentation Fiche 2003

International working party for
documentation and conservation

of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

composed by national/regional working party of:
Docomomo Italia

0.1 Picture of building/site



depicted item: General view of the neighbourhood
source: Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso
date: 1982

1.

Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden

1.1 current name of building	Matteotti Neighbourhood
1.2 variant or former name	Villaggio Matteotti
1.3 number & name of street	Via Irma Bandiera 16
1.4 Town	Terni
1.5 Province/state	Terni/Umbria
1.6 zip code	05100
1.7 Country	Italy
1.8 national grid reference	latitude 42.547351, longitude 12.659187
1.9 classification/typology	RES (Residential)
1.10 protection status & date	

2

History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose	Housing for workers of the <i>Società Terni Acciaierie</i>
2.2 dates: commission/completion	1969-1975
2.3 Architectural and other designers	Giancarlo De Carlo; <i>Collaborators</i> : Fausto Colombo, Valeria Fossati Bellani <i>Structural Engineer</i> : Vittorio Korach
2.4 others associated with building	<i>Sociologist</i> : Domenico De Masi <i>Curator of the Exhibition of International Projects</i> : Cesare De Seta
2.5 significant alterations with dates	
2.6 current use	Housing and services
2.7 current condition	quite good condition, thanks to the maintenance of the common parts made by inhabitants

3

Description

3.1 *General description*

Terni's Villaggio Matteotti is a social housing estate commissioned in the early 1970s by the Società Terni for workers in its steel mills and funded by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) administered by GESCAL.

Designed by the architect Giancarlo De Carlo, it is one of the first examples of participative planning in Italy: the program is the results of the active participation of local residents during the various phases of planning and design.

De Carlo identified and proposed a general grid that included a series of overlapping and excavated plates hosting the residential units and a hierarchical system of paths and services closely linked to the residences.

Together with his collaborators, architects and sociologist Domenico De Masi, met with local residents to gain a sense of their effective needs and direct interests. The outcome of these interviews, meetings and exhibitions of projects was a project that offered future homeowners a rich catalogue of possible solutions (45 alternative typologies).

3.2 *Construction*

The new village, designed with a total of 840 units on 20 hectares, was interrupted after the completion of the first phase of only 250 apartments. The built area consists of four large serial

buildings, separated by circulation spaces and surrounded by landscaped areas and gardens, and a fifth building, four storeys in height and diversely organised. The apartments are situated in a vast and articulated system of linear residential blocks with integrated services (kindergarten, meeting spaces, library, cinema-theatre, walk-in clinic, sports facilities and commercial spaces). Circulation spaces and connections between private spaces and public services are clearly separated: vehicular roads are reduced to a minimum and pedestrian traffic occurs partially above grade. Each apartment has its own covered garage and two bathrooms, as well as a large terrace or roof-garden or vegetable garden, as per the requests received during the preparatory meetings with future residents.

3.3 *Context*

The initial project for the new Villaggio Matteotti included the progressive substitution of existing housing in the workers' village with a series of bar buildings, without making significant modifications to the road network and rendering connections with the city centre more fluid. More important than relations with its immediate surroundings, the village was to have established connections with the city of Terni, based on the desire to integrate the old semi-rural village with urban life by redefining road connections and increasing density to provide the neighbourhood with a more urban character. The fact that the entire project was never completed and that the first phase involved only the southernmost portion (the project was begun in the area with the most dilapidated original buildings, constructed immediately after the War) isolated the project from the rest of the city. The new Villaggio Matteotti was thus forced to confront a context that had not been contemplated during its original design: the village it was to have substituted.

Today the Villaggio Matteotti remains formally alienated from its surroundings: it stands out in the neighbouring area for its typology of construction and density of inhabitation. The fact that the road network and neighbourhood facilities were never completed – entrusted with the role of integrating the project within the city – has rendered the Villaggio Matteotti to a certain degree self-referential.

4

Evaluation

4.1 *Technical*

The modernity of the new Villaggio Matteotti with respect to the old village is manifest also in the selection of materials and building techniques. The use of exposed reinforced concrete for the load bearing piers and walls (including the raised walkways, stairwells, balustrades and ramps) and the wood frame strip windows evidently link its design to the language of the Modern Movement.

The considerable added value of the project can be found in the attention to the design of public spaces: common areas are organised by a structural hierarchy of semi-private, semi-public and public spaces. Each stairwell serves six units, two per floor, and constitutes a point of connection between pedestrian paths at grade and those raised above it: large stair landings on the lower floors and tall, offset stair ramps in reinforced concrete ensure that natural light reaches the lower levels. The landings are designed to allow for spaces of pause without interrupting passage. The neighbourhood's residents use these spaces as an extension of the domestic environment, demonstrating a strong sense of proprietorship of the spaces immediately outside their front doors: they are "furnished" with benches and seating and embellished by vases and flower boxes, creating ideal spaces for sitting outside, chatting with neighbours and hanging out the washing.

4.2 *Social*

The Villaggio Matteotti is an example of the “tentative architecture” theorized by De Carlo, and intended as the progressive approach to a definitive architectural solution through the alternation of moments of pedagogy, listening (meetings with users) and architectural response to specific requests. De Carlo’s method for Terni, in collaboration with the sociologist De Masi, sought a balanced and scientifically supported position between the two extremes of architects who impose their designs on the one hand, and the self-determination of users on the other. Using the general grid proposed by De Carlo, the variation of typologies and the frequency of the individual units were established by the user. The interpretation of the built environment by workers’ families is not evidenced in linguistic elements, tied to the architect’s expressive language, but in the motivations behind the formal articulation of the organisation of space. The three-dimensional grid defined by De Carlo served as a reference, an open system within which to insert the inhabitants’ requests (garden terraces, the independence of the units, the variety of internal layouts), whose old habits were modified through this process. This occurred without constricting the architect’s creative abilities that, on the other hand, were in reality reinforced.

4.3 Cultural & Aesthetic

The architecture of the Villaggio Matteotti represents a continuation of De Carlo’s way of intending modern architecture not as a style but as a way of reasoning, of designing and solving problems. Particular characteristics of the Villaggio Matteotti contain the fundamental elements of a vision of dwelling clearly derived from the contents of the architectural discussion and critique of the Modern Movement, conducted by De Carlo together with Team X: the attention to the site, the re-evaluation of the individual in society and the search for intermediate levels of belonging between the public and the private, the integration between the dwelling unit, facilities and services to be opposed to the tendency to the functional impoverishment of buildings and the notion of the city as a collection of complex fabrics in which public paths and collective facilities serve as connections and hinges and exalt the values of spatial and functional integration.

Manfredo Tafuri listed the Villaggio Matteotti among the four examples of residential projects of international interest produced by Italian architecture during the 1970s.

4.4 Historical

The Matteotti residential complex is situated in the immediate periphery of Terni, on the same site occupied by the “Italo Balbo” village, built for the city’s steel workers between 1934 and 1938 according to the canons of the Fascist regime: a collection of unhealthy and monotonous homes still inspired by rural characteristics and devoid of any facilities or services. The old village, later renamed the Villaggio Matteotti, had fallen into serious conditions of decay when, in the wake of the many and continuous denunciations by its own inhabitants and as part of a more general process of regeneration, the Società Terni decided to proceed with its reconstruction. In 1969 the company invited the architect Giancarlo De Carlo, recognised for his approach to the profession, to analyse the possibilities related to the rehabilitation of the neighbourhood. However, De Carlo imposed the respect of particular aspects and procedures. In particular, he called for the activation of a real process of participative design involving the area’s future residents. The challenge, despite difficulties and mistrust, was accepted and the design team initiated a series of encounters with local residents. Meetings were attended by all potential inhabitants (approx. 1,800) because at the outset the assignees of the new homes had yet to be decided. The first meetings clearly demonstrated that the architectural culture of the interviewees was conditioned by traditional constructions in Terni, and thus it was considered opportune to propose a series of projects realised in other parts of the world based on diverse lifestyles, in order to stimulate their imaginations. Cesare De Seta was responsible for the organisation of an exhibition of “modern” residential neighbourhoods in Great Britain, Switzerland and the United States. A lively debate concluded with the establishment of the

architectural criteria and fundamental requisites. Five blocks composed of different dwelling units on different levels. The selection of the definitive list of assignees was followed by the definition of a second classification of needs that led to the definition of three variations for each nucleus, for a total of 45 different unit layouts.

4.5 *General assessment*

Referring to the principal requisites that De Carlo intended to respect in the design of the village, it is possible to identify the reasons behind the quality of life and the strong sense of belonging that exist in the area today: a considerable increase in density and thus the number of units, in order to create an urban settlement; reduced building height because at more than three storeys there is a loss in any opportunity for inhabitants to appropriate public space; the separation of pedestrian and vehicular paths in order that the neighbourhood could be crossed entirely on foot easily and at no risk to pedestrians; an elevated offering of collective services; the incorporation of services into the residential fabric; the elevated standards of public and private landscaping, accompanied by an intense co penetration of landscaping into built space.

5

Documentation

5.1 *principal references*

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- DE CARLO, Giancarlo, *Die Matteotti-Siedlung in Terni*, *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, Team X, n.11, 1978

5.2 *visual material attached*

- Fig. 1 General view of the neighbourhood (Projects Archive of Luav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1982)
- Figs. 2, 3, 4 Meetings with future residents (Projects Archive of Luav University in Venice, photo by Mimmo Jodice, 1970)
- Fig. 5 Demountable model of one typology, scale 1:50 (Projects Archive of Luav University in Venice)

- Fig. 6 Exhibition panel presented at the end of the participative process (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 7 Model of the entire project. The white parts to the right indicate the built portion (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 8 A pedestrian street immediately after its completion (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Gabriele Basilico, 1976)
- Fig. 9 The nursery school, accessible without interferences with vehicular routes (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1982)
- Fig. 10 Passage between the first and second level (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice)
- Fig. 11 The terraces (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1982)
- Fig. 12 One of the diagonal connections linking the entire neighbourhood (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1982)
- Fig. 13 One of the raised pedestrian connections (Projects Archive of Iuav University in Venice, photo by Antonio Garbasso, 1982)

5.3 *rapporteur/date*

Laura Felci/June 2015



figs. 2, 3, 4 Meetings with future residents



fig. 5 Demountable model of one typology, scale 1:50

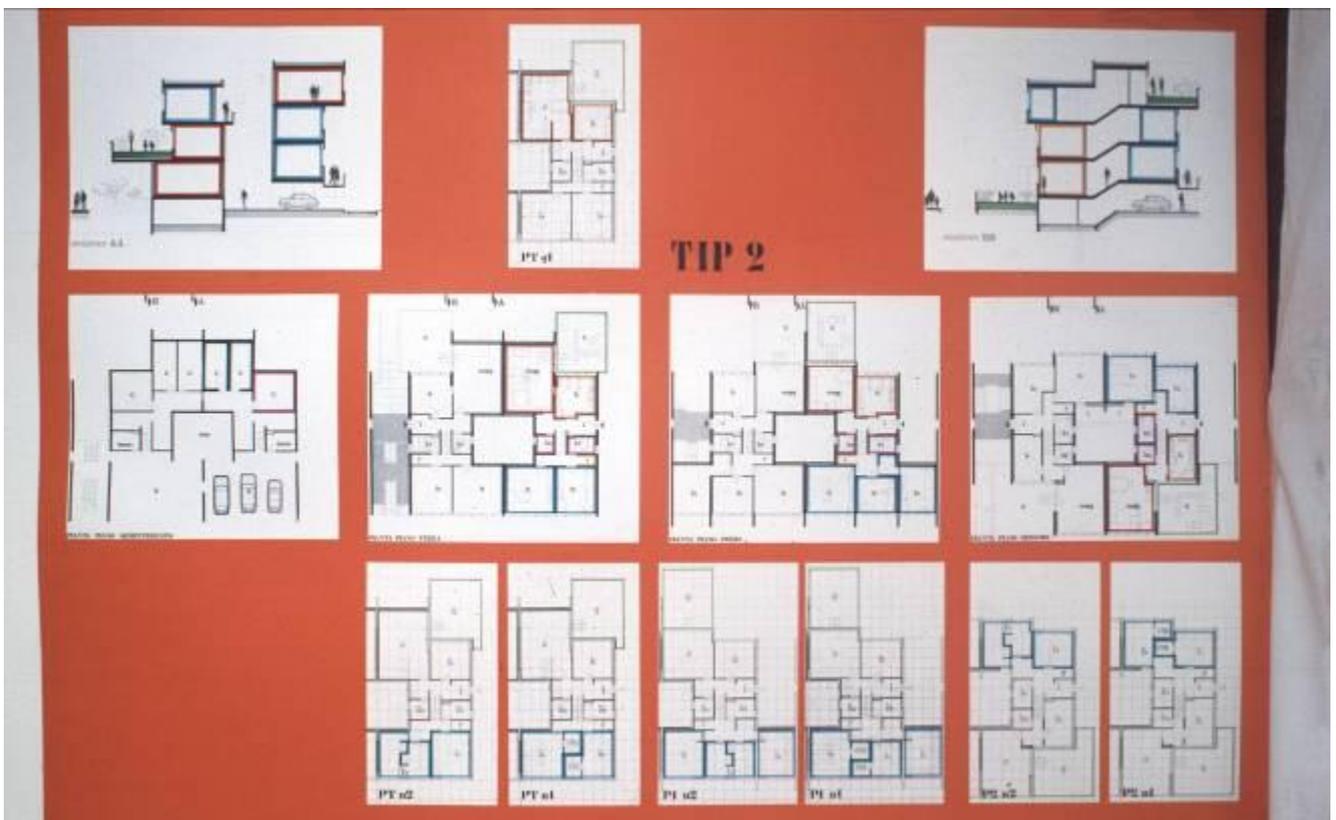


fig 6 Exhibition panel presented at the end of the participative process

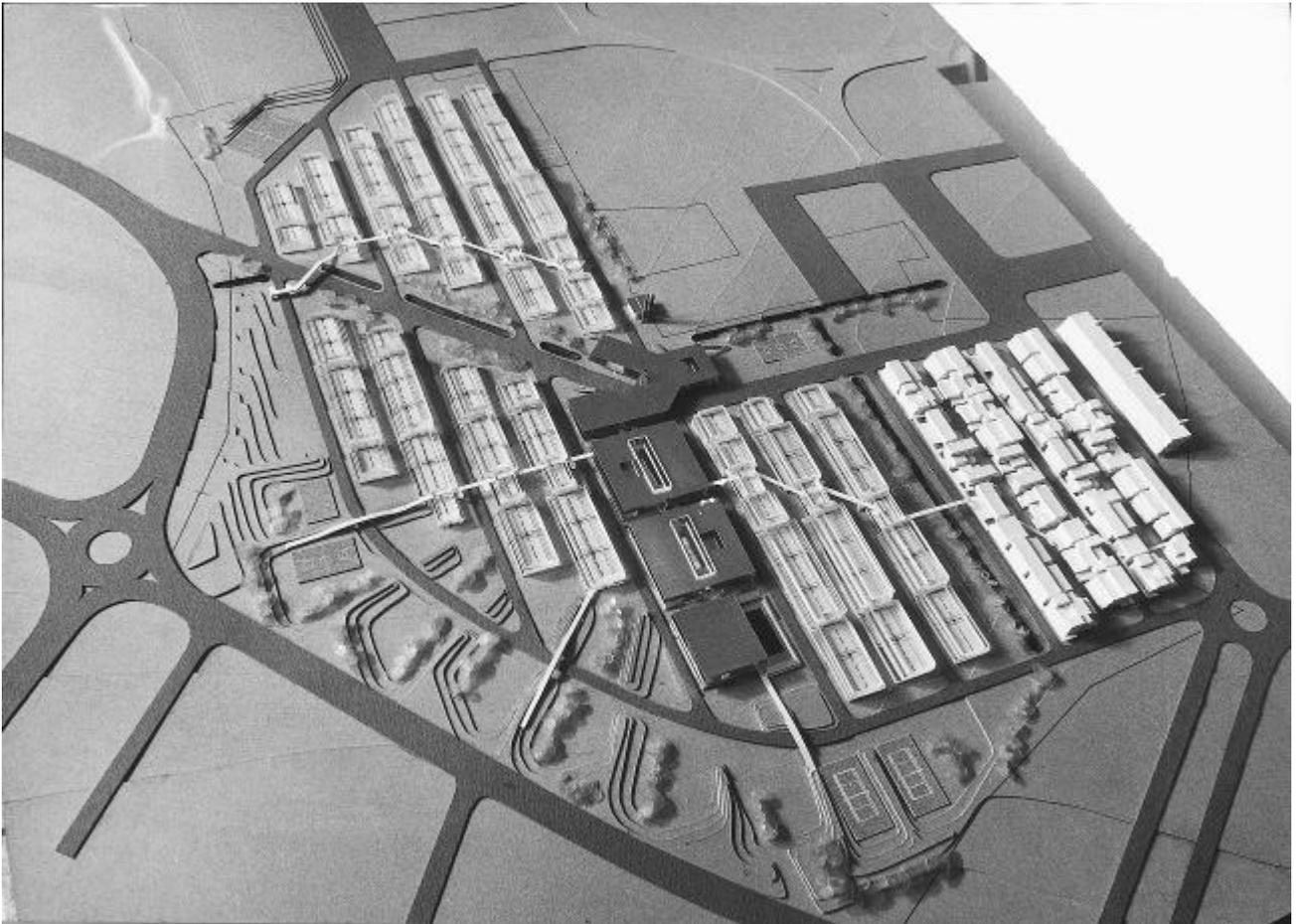


fig. 7 Model of the entire project. The white parts to the right indicate the built portion



fig. 8 A pedestrian street immediately after its completion



fig. 9 The nursery school, accessible without interferences with vehicular routes



fig. 10 Passage between the first and second level



fig. 11 The terraces



fig. 12 One of the diagonal connections linking the entire neighbourhood

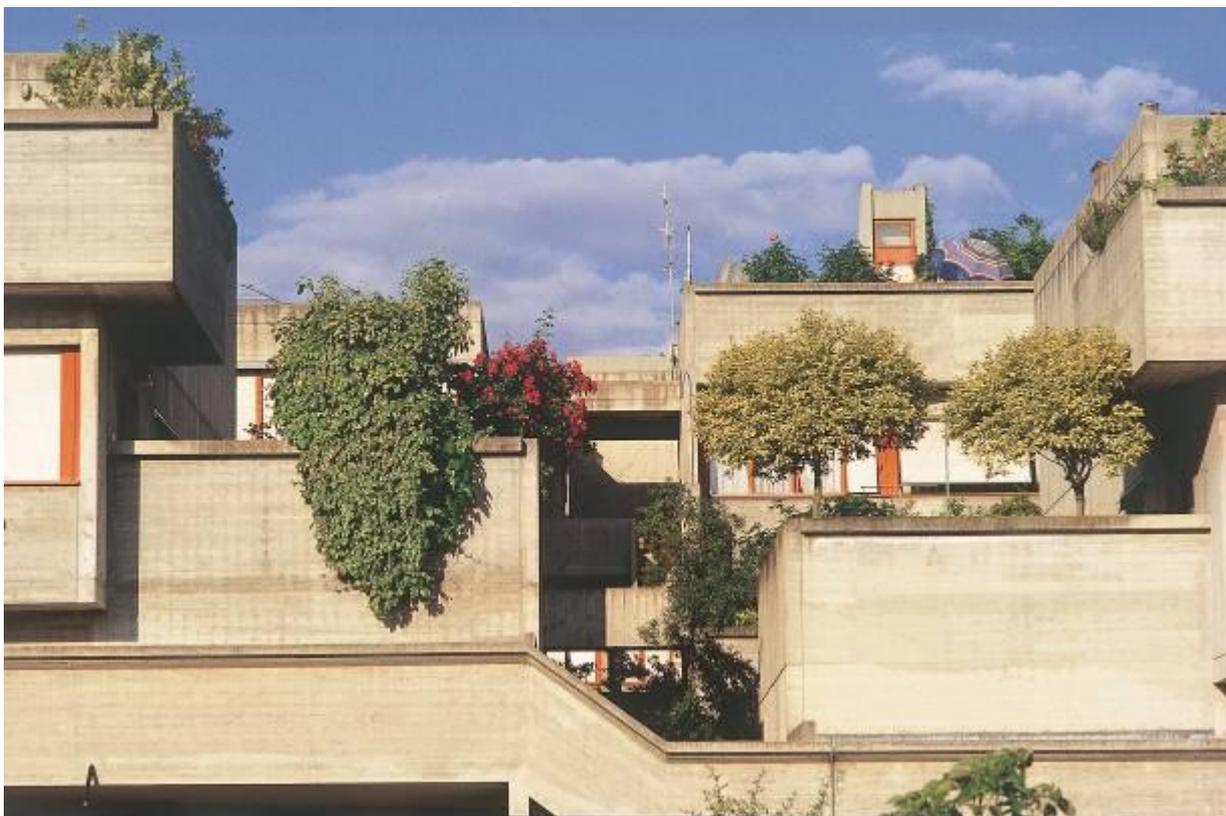


fig 13 One of the raised pedestrian connections