

Buildings and Regenerative Thinking: a Forward Perspective for Sustainability

Emilia CONTE

DICATECh, Politecnico di Bari, Bari, Italy

E-mail emilia.conte@poliba.it

Abstract

In this paper, the author reflects on the contribution of sustainable buildings to the built environment and people in it.

The first section introduces the emergence of sustainable buildings in the general scenario of sustainability, highlighting that greening buildings has been the main operative way to practice sustainability in the built environment.

From such way of operating, the design activity has become a key to improve quality of buildings in terms of environmental friendliness and human well-being. However, in the second section the paper emphasises that the greening process of buildings has not changed conventional practices of building design, failing to improve the person-environment relationship and give adequate answers to sustainability demands beyond the short-term.

Regenerative thinking is then suggested in order to overcome these limitations. Drawing on scientific literature on the subject, the third section describes rationales of regenerative thinking as well as its essential characteristic of working in a continuous engagement of natural and human systems for sustainable development of the built environment in a long-term perspective.

Conclusions highlight that a new generation of sustainable buildings based on regenerative thinking would be able to nourish complex interactions in the built environment for a mutual beneficial development of all components in it and the progress of society.

Keywords: Sustainable Buildings; Built Environment; Regenerative Thinking; Natural/Human Systems.