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Description of the preliminary layout
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The challenge of the Romanina project was that of designing a new piece of the city, a city centre, and of joining the flexibility of the planned functions and the relative spaces with the necessity of creating an intervention that would ensure, over the inevitably lengthy period of time required for its completion, the respect of the base structure and the quality and reciprocal compatibility of the works of architecture. The solution proposed by Manuel Salgado identifies the primary instrument for controlling the realisation of the project in the design of public space and the elements that define it. The plan is based on a grid with a strong central axis, interrupted by a transversal path defined by the presence of historical-archaeological elements. Within the regular grid of the chessboard, the densification of public functions and a system of public squares create a centre that functions as a magnet, attracting even the surrounding neighbourhoods. A large park is located along the northern, eastern and southern edges of the site, which also penetrates occasionally within the fabric, representing the completion of the system of public spaces.

In order to ensure the control of the quality of the public spaces, the project establishes a series of guidelines that regulate the characteristics of permeability and transparency of the ground floors and the upper edges of the buildings that define the edges of the main system of public spaces. Streets, public squares, small gardens, courtyards, galleries, commercial spaces, hotels and public buildings are used to create

a *continuum*, that also visual and rooted in the memory of Roman public spaces (of the premodern city): the 'corridor' road, the closed public square, the courtyards of the apartment buildings and the spaces of the civic buildings. A 'conventional' city in the words of Salgado himself: conventional because it is composed of streets, squares, blocks and voids all designed and accurately defined by solids, fabric and emerging elements. Within the regular grid of the chessboard, the occupation of the lots is relatively free, conditioned only by a few rules and self-regulated by the maximum allowable surface area for each lot in relationship to the type of function. The rigour of the structure in plan is balanced by the versatility and flexibility of the occupation of the blocks, allowing for a simultaneous presence of order and variety, multiplicity of spaces and recognisability of sites that is one of, but not the only characteristic of an urban centre. Equally important in 'making a centre' is the mix and diffusion of functions, continuous use throughout the day and night and the ability of the intervention to 'root itself' within its surroundings: to create relationships, to facilitate connections, to remove obstacles, to rationalise paths towards the portion of the city that is to act as the heart. The Romanina project has identified and reinforced these ties through a systematic study of the system of voids, of connections, of services, local mobility and the habits and expectations of the local population. The primary axis is virtually extended towards Tor Vergata and Ciampino, the subway and the high-speed traffic arteries are placed below grade, while on the surface there is a double system of tree-lined avenues for local traffic,

public transportation and pedestrian spaces, all connected to the system of the main public squares. The orthogonal roads connect the centrality to the surrounding neighbourhoods and to one another with a dense network. This latter offers a multiplicity of means of fruition and typologies of highly sustainable landscapes, active from a biological point of view, producing a variety of typologies of spaces. The continuous and organic pattern of the elements identified by the system of archaeological remains represents the natural extension of the park and an element that reinforces the ecological network, connections and local identity.

The quality of the project is also reinforced by the complete adoption of new techniques and technologies for energy production and reduced consumption. The conventional city mentioned by Salgado (we could say premodern) was built floor by floor, absorbing advances and setbacks, constructing itself through the consolidation of good and bad habits and through visionary and innovative projects, taking the time to metabolise errors and novelties; it was also built, notwithstanding everything and up to a certain point, through a shared sense of space. It is only the innate understatement that allows Salgado to describe the Romanina intervention as the design of a conventional city and not a conventional city built in an unconventional manner (and counter-current with respect to the dominant culture of architecture).