

WEST MONTSERRAT TEXTILE AND DESIGN DISTRICT

*Communication non présentée
Paper not presented*

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“ The economic improvement, creativity and revitalization goals are integrated in the districts, where decision-making processes are based on relationships of mutual dependency among the actors, carried out through learning processes, which identify cultural policies typical of clusters with an only and unique participation” (Lazzaretti and Cinti, 2006).

This project proposes a comprehensive plan to promote the revitalization of the traditional textile area in the neighborhood of Montserrat and its immediate environment to create a specialized district and a new tourist circuit in the city of Buenos Aires, given its uniqueness, centrality, accessibility and because it is closer to the traditional tourist itineraries. It is also important to note that this proposal is part of the strategic guidelines of the Management Plan for the Revitalization of the Historic City of Buenos Aires, implemented by the General Office of the Historic City.

This area of Montserrat, located in the surroundings of the old city, is one of the most depressed areas of Buenos Aires. At the same time new business enterprises related to core applications wants to set there. If this happens, would change the characteristic profile of the area. It is very remarkable to know that this place has great potential as equity interesting scenario in which there are activities (some from their origins and other new and emerging) which is interesting to strengthen, develop and articulate on the premises: heritage - development - vitality - tourist attraction sustained.

In recent years all concerning to heritage has taken impulse and its recognition as an interesting added value to any business that is projected. And taking an account that the old buildings are singular and scarce, it is essential to strengthen its nature, promoting its potential as a totally unique resource available.

That is why is so important to make society recognize the high value and potential that these special urban areas have: To make consensus and support for their protection, enhancement and development. In this way it would be possible to reverse the deteriorating

situation of abandonment that some buildings present, and even stop real estate pressure that often threatens these heritage and areas that do not have special law to protect them. They can be irretrievably lost by the advance of indiscriminate urban renewal. The challenge is to understand that the renewal may be taking the heritage as an option to progress. It is necessary to implement multidisciplinary action aimed at the overall improvement of an area, through programs of public-private investment, promoting the association, using incentives and implementing training programs, support and monitoring to better use of available resources in achieving desired outcomes.

The vitality of every historic area depends on four items: heritage layer, residential activity, cultural activity and commercial activity and services. (From the book: «Desarrollo Económico y Gestión del Casco Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, el Eje Cívico y su Área de Influencia» - Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires City - Year 2003).

When in an urban area these activities are conected among each other, the levels of vitality get higher. The textile area of Montserrat has four components: heritage buildings, a high percentage of residence, an interesting traditional business profile in addition to other complementary new (leather goods and restaurants) and some emerging cultural activities, such as the Universidad del Cine or Annex of the Museum of Fine Arts and, since long time, the Argentina Association of Actors. Boost its revival seems right because, despite having the profile of mixture of activities, do not get to give a positive synergy among them. This makes the sector looks unattractive nowadays, because has not dynamism organized To reverse this situation, we propose a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to provide impetus and vitality to the area, boosting the mix of uses and activities, promotion of innovation and technology association to generate new economic and productive activities, as complement textiles ones, while encouraging the continuation and strengthening of residential use, the focus on care and value of heritage building and the

starting of a new tourist circuit.

The proposal is based on several complementary lines of action, focused on the revitalization of this area, noting that such changes are always very slow and long term. The lines of action are defined on five points: economic development - valuing assets - strengthening the residential use - tourism development - diffusion

Some of the actions foreseen are:

- joint program with the textile industry settled in the area, to sponsor young designers with the objective to impulse the design special collections using yarns of these companies, which are then exposed in the area to start an open air gallery of the new textile design. In parallel, training and support program for young entrepreneurs.
- Strengthen activities in the area, coordinating with the outlets local and dining available in the immediate environment to create a rich and diversified offer means a focus of interest for visitors.
- Encourage support program to make young designers to install their production workshops and also decide to live in the area.
- Strengthening Program of residence by special credits, subsidies and special exemptions for the enhancement of heritage buildings.
- Improvement Program environmental quality of public space in the sector.
- Outreach Program to promote the recognition and valuation of the heritage of West Montserrat, reinforcing the sense of belonging and identity, and to build consensus among the resident population for the project, for their support and active participation inclusion.