

Reclaiming Heritage: Post-Catastrophe Reconstruction

RECLAIMING HERITAGE aims at exploring the potentials of using reclaimed building materials for a sensitive post-disaster reconstruction that includes cultural values and the retention of heritage by means of direct user involvement in the technical decisions and in the project management. The project proposes a model of housing reconstruction based on the re-use of existing foundations and construction debris, to make partially destroyed houses inhabitable for users. Reclamation, the process of carefully dismantling architectural materials or components and reconfiguring or reusing them in new or existing construction, is one way of preserving the physical artifact for future generations, and preserves the history and building practices that are associated with those objects. The use of reclaimed materials and associated techniques is technically feasible, yet it presents issues of acceptability when strongly bound values such as community or family histories are not associated to their use.



RECLAIMING HERITAGE is a collaborative initiative intended to promote post-catastrophe reconstruction while retaining local heritage and cultural values. Facing destruction and the need to rebuild, the question arises: how to recover the assets damaged or lost in the buildings and houses that have collapsed and the cultural heritage embodied in the built stock and the traditional construction techniques? It is then necessary to develop ad-hoc tools that allow the inclusion of architectural heritage criteria in post-catastrophe

conservation, restoration and / or reconstruction. **RECLAIMING HERITAGE** is a 'design-build' initiative for exploring the potentials of using reclaimed building materials for a sensitive post-disaster reconstruction that includes cultural values and resources efficiently, by means of direct experience. The main problem addressed is the relevance and possibilities for the use of reclamation materials in current contexts, underlining the economy of resources, the architectural value and the sociocultural relevance of using these materials, as opposed to reconstruction based on new materials.

The initiative was first triggered by the Earthquake in southern Chile in 2010 and a first prototype was built during 2011, in Chanco, Chile. This subsequently led to the case of Haiti by the design project "Reclaiming Heritage: Bicentenaire, Port-au-Prince", which won the Housing Category in the Haiti Ideas Challenge Competition and was built during 2014, in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. A third project is already underway for the case of l'Aquila, Italy, where a collaborative research initiative is underway.

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