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In the latter years, various research projects were undertaken in collaboration with the Municipality of Ferrara (in the North-East of Italy), at the same time when new town planning instruments were defined in the regional law. Within these research projects, the research group had to identify methodologies/solutions aimed to identifying the interventions, having regard for the specific architecture and material characteristics of the urban structure. The need for extending research up to the understanding of the town development process is the result of these first important experiences, whose practical results are contained in the instruments under approval.

Up to now, the research has focused on the collection and the analysis of the historic and archival documentation, the identification of features, recurrent aspects, peculiarities, issues related to the basic building heritage, and the proposal of practical guidelines for some classes of functional elements and types of materials. Today, the main focus, shared by the University and the Administration, is linked to the refinement of typological evaluation method.

The urban and architecture evolutionary trends record major economic, social and political modifications, from a small military castle to a flourishing commercial river port, from the lavish Este's capital city to a peripheral Church State town, and to a contemporary site of industrial and tertiary activity. The research aims to present generalized conceptual models and operating techniques to be used in the interpretation and management of other historic centres.

