

The Common Heart(h) in Equipoise

Abstract

The article analyses the discourse of CIAM 8, which was held in 1951 at Hoddesdon and it dealt with the topic of the Heart of the city. This latter was conceived as a Constituent Element at the basement of the urban structure, dealing with right balance between the private and the public spheres.

The target of the article is to illuminate and compare these still overlooked multidisciplinary positions about the private hearth and public heart. It offers a better insight in the central role that these notions played in architectural culture within CIAM but also in the wider discussions on the contemporary built environment.

In particular the article analyses the case study of the Pioneer Health Centre, in Peckham (UK), a single mega-architectural building hosting a new community of 800-900 households with health problems. This sort of 20th Century Health Phalanstery was praised at CIAM 8 as a the common “Heart”, as a “place that serves as a bridge between private life and community life”, [...a] place where human contacts between man and man can again be built.¹

¹ Giedion 1951.

Keywords

CIAM, Heart of the City, Hearth, Private-Public, Equipoise