

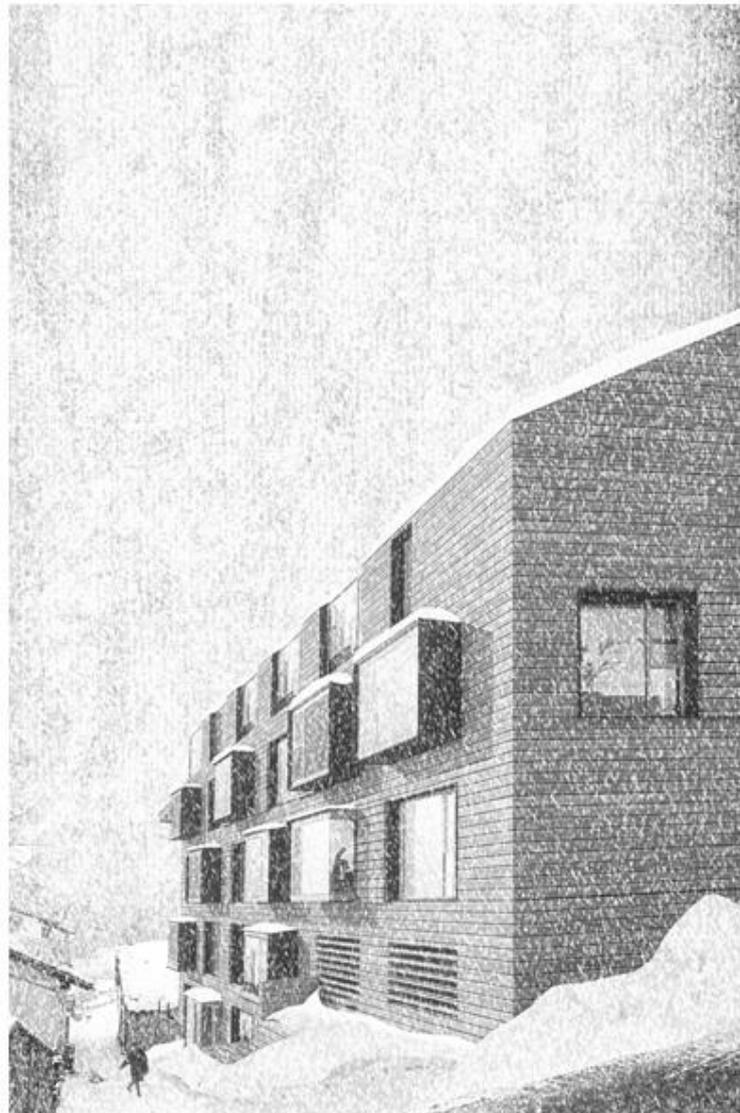
POLITECNICO DI TORINO
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture Construction City
Honors theses

REUSE OF ABANDONED CONTEMPORARY ALPINE ARCHITECTURE
An upgrading project for the “al Rascard” hotel in Chamois (Valtournenche)

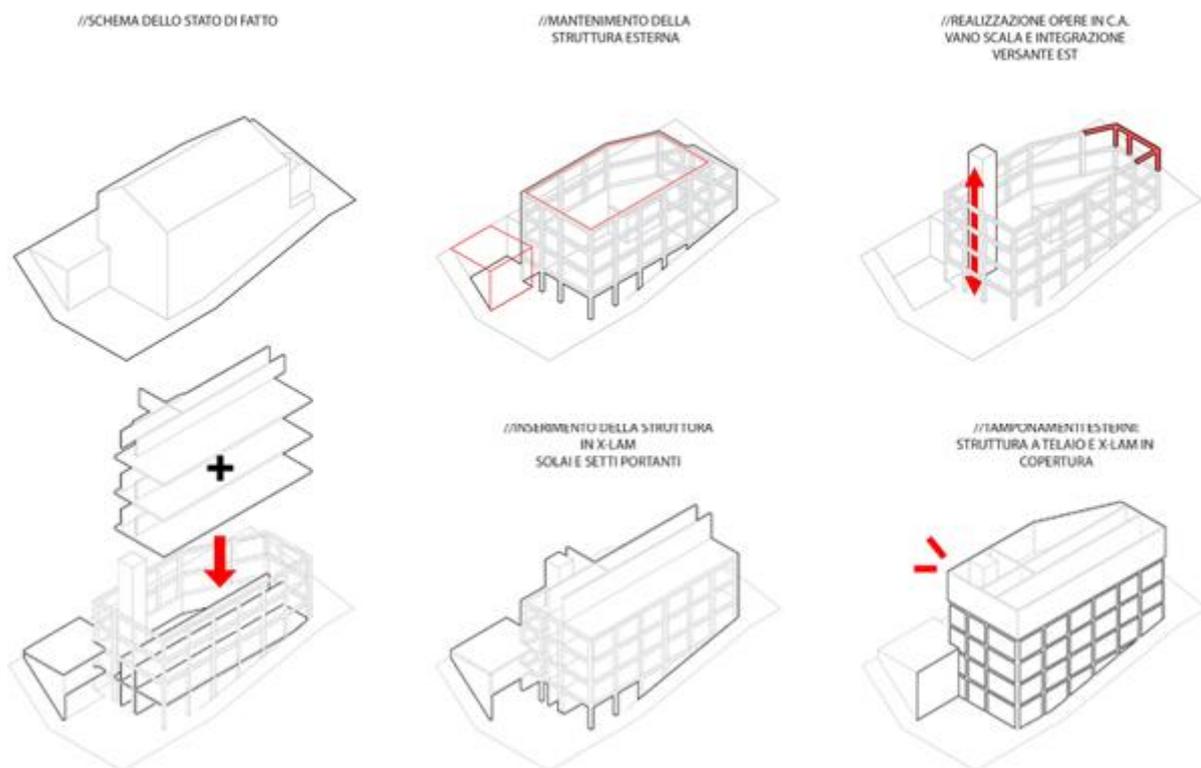
by Stefano Sogno Fortuna

Tutor: Massimo Crotti

Chamois, a mountain village in Valtournenche which is famous for its special, unique position, is linked to the valley floor by cable car. The village shows the traditional features of Aosta Valley settlements. The *rascard* (old wooden houses) intermingle with the newer buildings which, from the second half of the 20th century, radically changed the appearance and layout of the village. The greatest impact came from ski lift systems and hotels, and this project concerns one of the latter.

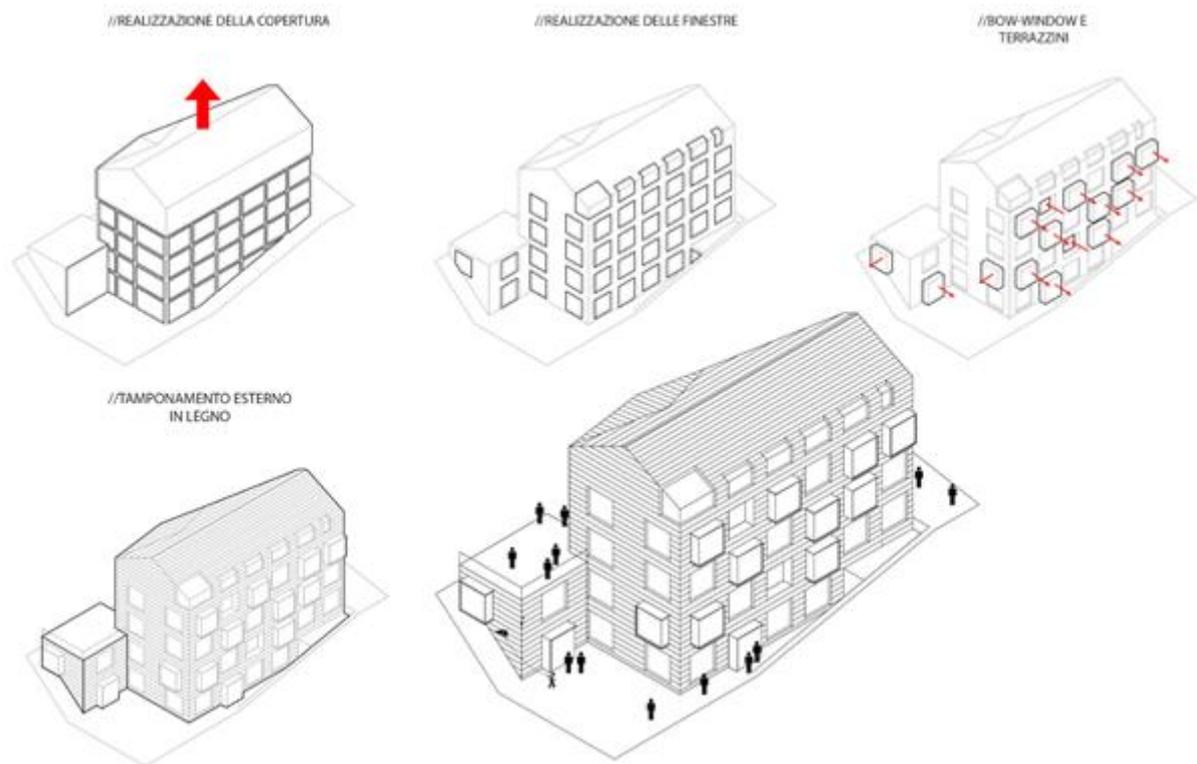


The “*al Rascard*” hotel was built in the 1960s and enjoyed great popularity until the 1970s, after which it was abandoned, falling into a state of total disrepair. Surrounded by high paling, at present the hotel is for sale and is completely inaccessible because of the danger posed by the poor condition of parts of the building. An abandoned building, one of the many in our mountain areas. Signs of a past that has clearly left its mark on the territory “*architecture and representation of the culture, politics and ambitions of a time and we must therefore understand this time*” (M.Cucinella). Buildings in a state of dereliction waiting for a future, to be reinterpreted and returned to the community. This is the challenge before us today, an architectural heritage no longer in use that lies deserted and in decay.



The “*al Rascard*” hotel is part of this patrimony, part of a group of buildings with a glorious past and in search of a future. The thesis focuses especially on this aspect, the reclamation and redevelopment of a modern building, the method used in the analysis and the prospects for a potential future (reuse). The key words become recover and return, aimed at a reclamation involving not only the hotel itself, but the whole community. They are opportunities to allow not just refurbishing of a single building but a driving force for the economic recovery of all the neighbourhood. Requalification of the landscape, the economy and the territory can be triggered by reclamation of derelict buildings. Reclamation from a modern viewpoint without historicistic and folkloric influences. This is the topic dealt with in this work, a journey in which design is the interpretation, which starts from statements on the present condition and on the background, and goes on to consider compositional and design aspects.

A journey that elaborates on a contemporary building (1963), reinterprets it and analyses it to project it in a modern form. The proposed project takes into account financial factors and the village's appeal as a tourist destination for which the hotel has great potential both as regards landscape requalification and functional redevelopment that could both favourably affect the whole Chamois community. These are the reasons that drove me to rethink the entire hotel complex, to exploit these unexpressed potentials. A journey in steps connected one to another, formed by suggestions and limitations, aimed at drawing up a practicable project. The Rascard is the child of an age, of the invention of mass tourism and, like many hotels of that period, it is in disuse and derelict. We have to rethink these buildings, question ourselves about them, about an architectural heritage that is here but is not used. Their redefinition is essential in requalifying the Alpine landscape ruined by the post-war shift towards consumerism.



Drawings 1 and 2 show the main steps of the reclamation, from the present condition to the completed project. Drawing 3 is a rendering showing the front view of the project.

For further information, e-mail:

Stefano Sogno Fortuna: stefanosognofortuna@gmail.com