

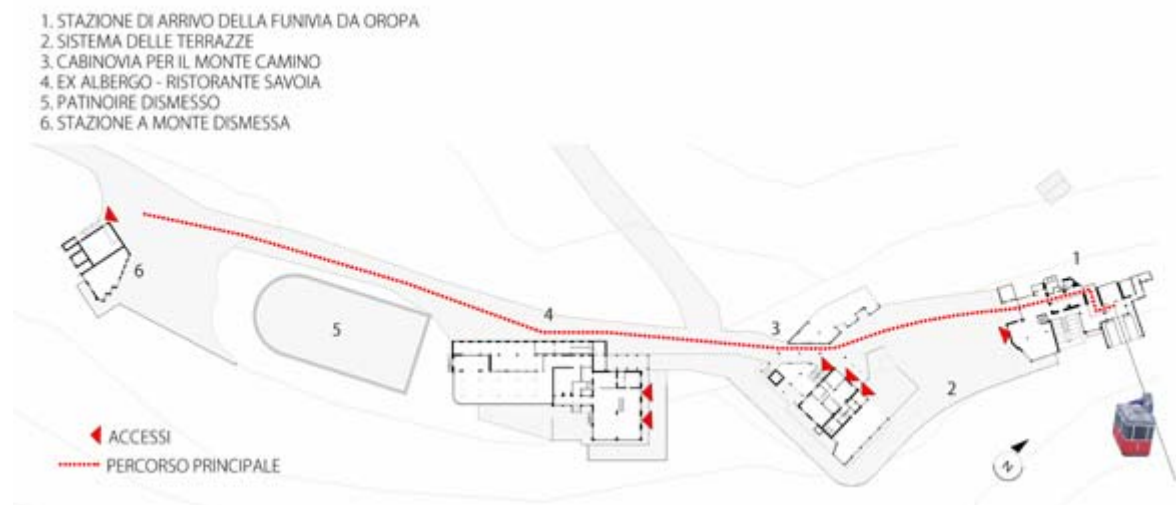
Oropa Sport, a walk between art and science

by Valentina Billone

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The object of this Master's Degree thesis is the refurbishing of Oropa Sport, a mountain district built in 1920 in the valley of Oropa (province of Biella) for the increased alpine tourism.

Oropa Sport is located in the Natural Reserve of Sacred Mount of Oropa (2005) very important for the presence of the Oropa Sanctuary and the Chapels of Sacred Mount. The district is accessible by cableway and is composed of six buildings: the cableway from Oropa, the Mount Camino's cableway, the observation platform, the old restaurant-hotel Savoia, the old ice rink and the abandoned cableway from Oropa. In the past, these buildings were part of a system, while now are individual units without any connection. The preservation status is precarious and the frame deterioration has caused the abandon of the observation platform, which allowed the scenic view.

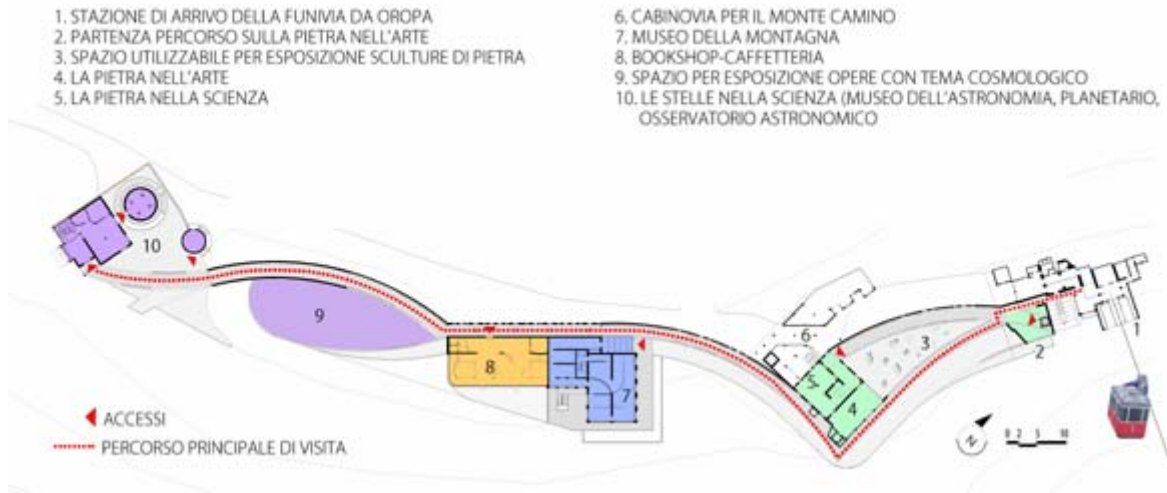


Oropa Sport: the present situation

The study is composed of different moments: data collection, inspections, analysis, meta project, choice of materials and shapes, ...

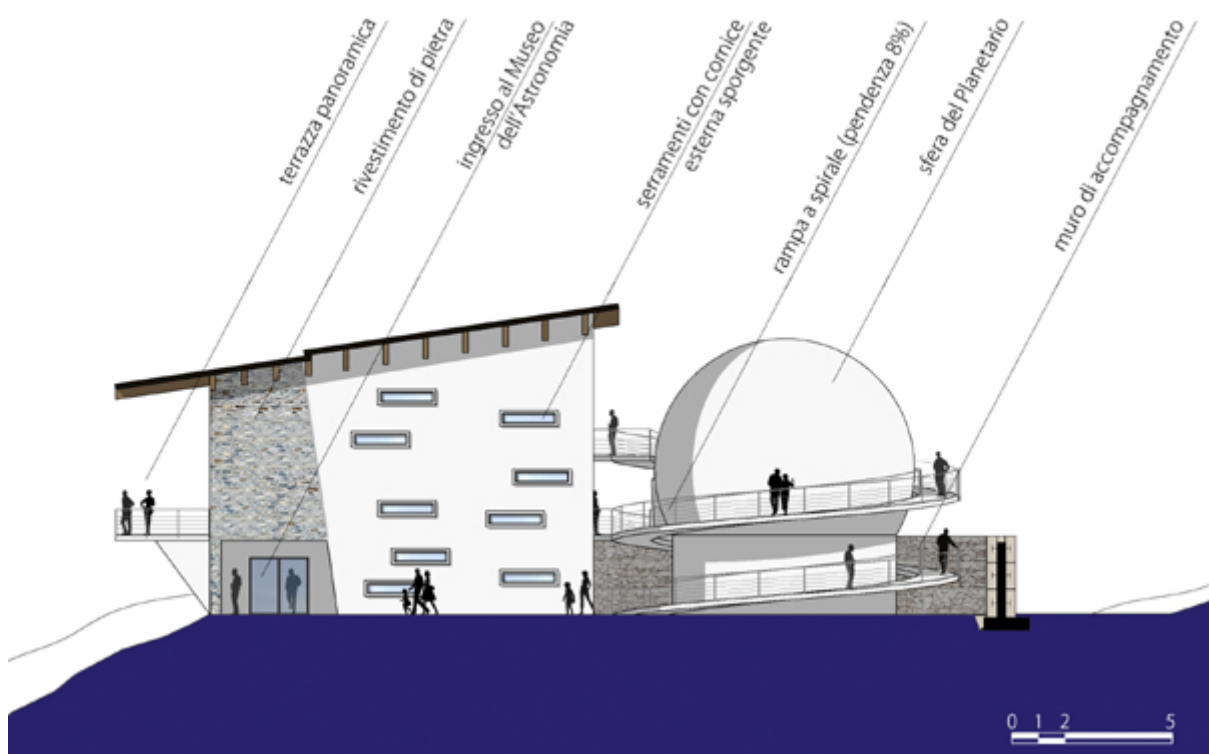
Firstly the main objective has been to recreate a *leitmotiv*, a connection between buildings, both material and conceptual. This purpose is made explicit through the elaboration of an ideal trip that leads visitors from earth (theme of STONE) to STARS. Between these two themes, there is the imagine of MOUNTAIN, ideal meeting-point between earth and sky. These three themes are analyzed with double point of view: scientific and artistic.

This choice has caused the creation of three separated walks (artistic, scientific and artistic/scientific), which generate three different kind of users.



Oropa Sport: project

The themes of stone and mountain are located in pre-existing areas, while theme of stars is placed in three new buildings: a Museum of Astronomy, a Planetary and an Astronomical Observatory.



Theme of STARS: Museum of Astronomy and Planetary

The master-plan is completed by the creation of one bookshop-coffee house, which receives all visitors and collects books and catalogues of different themes.

In the first place the project tries to preserve the identity of Oropa Sport, which is a multifunctional place: first of all a place of Oropa Sanctuary, which is very important destination for a spiritual or cultural exploration; is a place of skiing; is a place of geology with the *mucronite*, a special stone found on Mount Mucrone in 1970; is a place of pause and relax, opposite of city life; is a place of memory, where history come back to life through black and white photographs and postcards.

In the second place the project tries to create a new reality, links with territory and with the pre-existing museums and cultural structures: the Museum of Biellese' s Territory (Biella), the Foundation "Vittorio Sella" (Biella) and the Arts Centre Palazzo Boglietti (Biella).

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