

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

The proposal for a wellness centre in Cocconato

di Maria Sole Ferrero

Tutor: Enrico Moncalvo

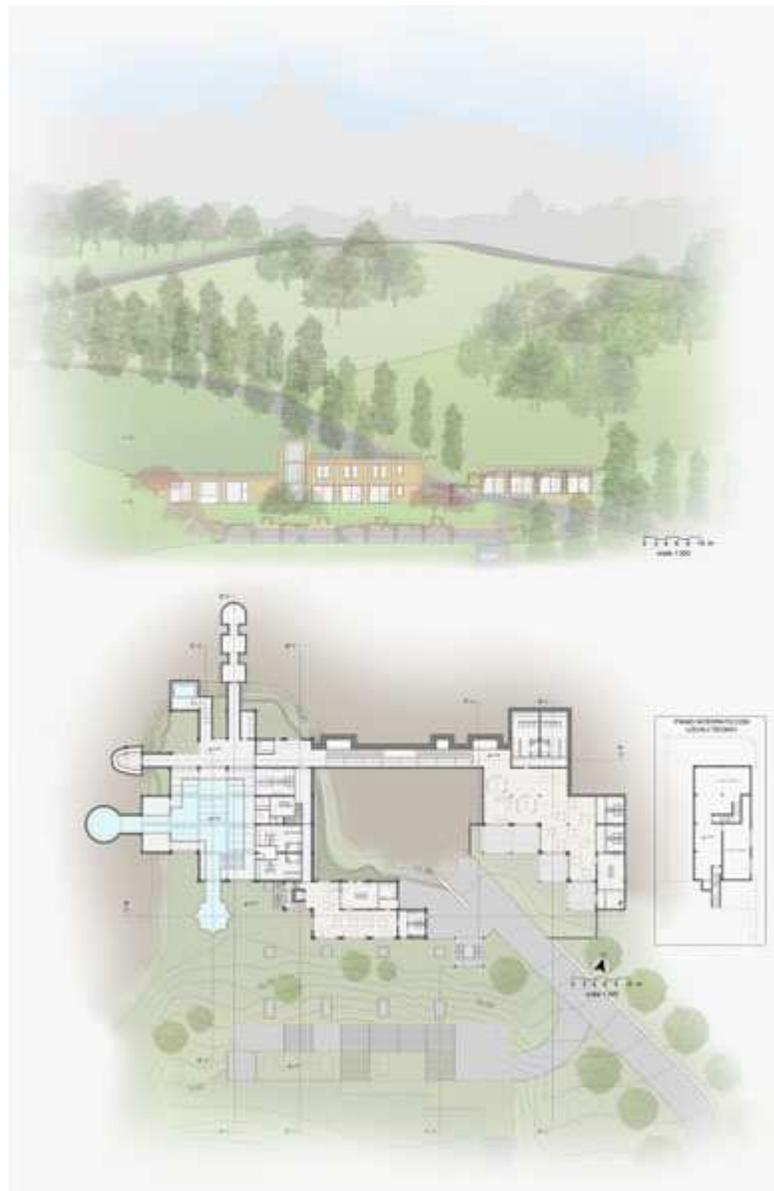
Co-tutor: Giuseppe Pistone

The proposal for a wellness centre in Cocconato, in the province of Asti, is tied to the belief that a need for such a facility exists in the local area. Initially it was necessary to analyse the thermal spas in Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta and search for the presence of curative spa water in the Monferrato area. Here, there are sources of sulfurised water, locally known as *pirente*, the best known being at Alfiano Natta, Brozolo, Castelnuovo Don Bosco and Murisengo. In Castelnuovo Don Bosco, the sulfur source was one of the main attractions to horsemen of Asti during the 18th and 19th centuries. The therapeutic virtues of these sources were discovered by some doctors in the area in the early 19th century and in 1823, thanks to the intervention by Count Filiberto Remigio Costa della Trinità, the availability of this water became public with the creation of a small building, subsequently rebuilt in 1982 by the architect, Giulio Balbo. The source is now unusable because the water has been found to be polluted. In the *pirenta* in Murisengo there is an interesting inscription by the Augustinian friar, Giovanni Agostino De Levis (1974 Torino) written to the Marquis Francesco Maria Scozia di Calliano. The monk suggested to the Marquis, a systematic use of this source in the territory, leading to a trend that was historically replicated elsewhere (Acqui, Valdieri, Vinadio). The curiosity in this inscription is the explanation of the term *pirenta*, which may result from pyrites, a mineral present in the soil in the Murisengo area; or from the greek πυρ, πυρος; but not in the sense of fire as an element of matter, rather, in the sense that matter contains fire, referring to the water source.



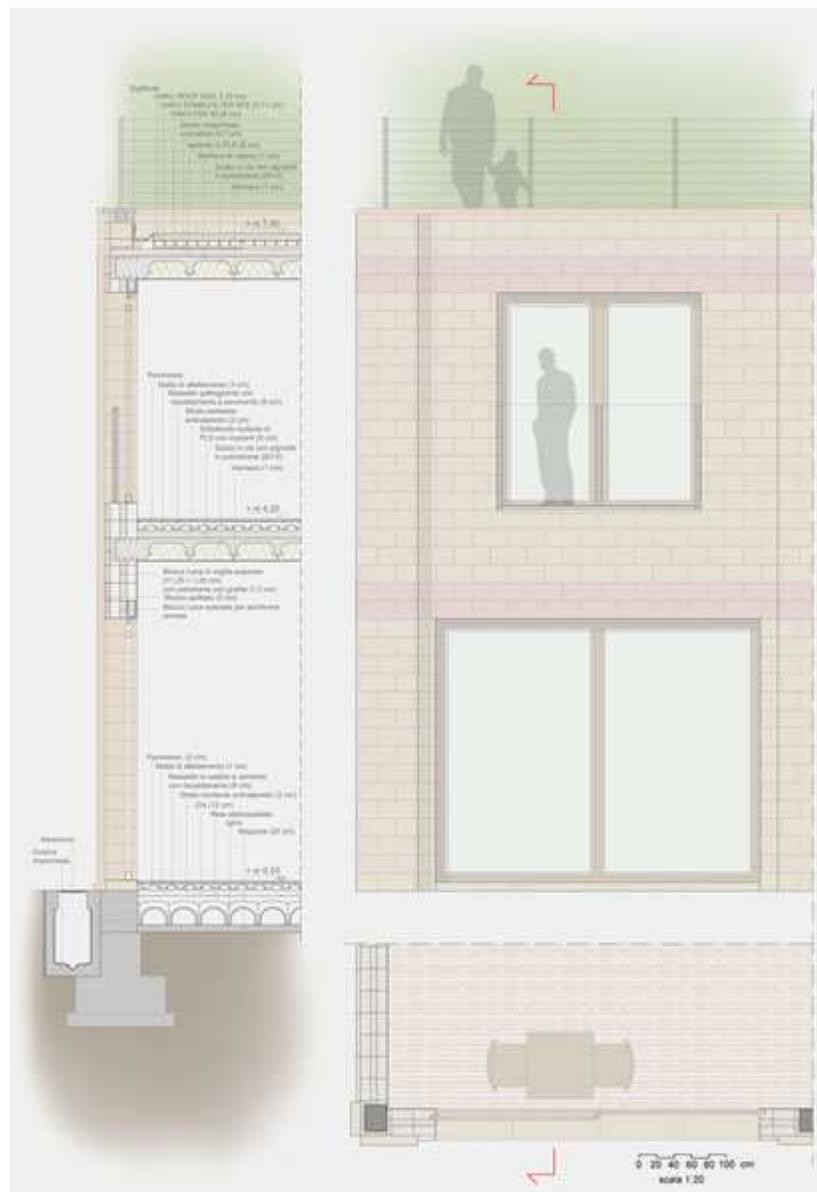
Photoinsertion

Looking up at Cocconato from the valley, one notices its jagged and very compact skyline, the prevailing colours are red bricks and tiles, and here and there the yellow tuff stone. Famous local quarries for this stone are located in Cella Monte, as well as Ozzano Rosignano Ottiglio, Moletto and Vignale. In recent years the area has seen a wide spread of building restoration and renovation of local housing that reveals the use of tuff stone bricks. The main difference between the use of these materials in the Casale area of Monferrato and in Asti is that in the former, it was used in alternate brick courses and the latter, the entire walls consist mainly of tuff, and bricks are used for lintels, pillars and for any detailing. The initial thought was to use the materials for projects following local tradition, but then it seemed more appropriate to choose them as simple coating blocks divided in shades of yellow and red, both for the colour and for its roughness, recalling it as a traditional material, needing only minor maintenance.



Map and brochure

The proposed structure is composed of a golf club and wellbeing centre connected by an underground passage, naturally lit through the use of vertical "tunnels". The centre will comprise an indoor swimming pool that extends outside with a nymph water feature, a turkish bath and sauna, all completely underground; a bath of cooled water, changing rooms for customers, employees and the local technicians. Particular attention is paid to the roof covering. The choice is in the "rationalist" spirit that characterises the project using a lowered beam ceiling. The light comes through south facing glazed walling, but also from above, by means of a number of curved light "sheds" facing the north so as to provide illumination without disturbance. The centre is equipped with a two-storey car park, integrated within the landscape through a series of pergolas with climbing plants and a garden on that part of the roof extending above ground.



Construction detail

For further information, e-mail:
Maria Sole Ferrero: mariasoleferrero@tiscali.it