

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

Ecomuseum of Val Maira: Hypothesis of refunctioning of Combe hamlet and its mills

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The work develops itself within a wide work of territorial improvement, begun by the municipality of Celle Macra, as leader of “Alta Valle Maira Ecomuseum”, concentrating on Combe village, which is deserted hasn't got a good position. It is located in a very cold and shady zone set in a close gorge.



Combe hamlet, 1047 mt.

Primarily the idea of proposing again a micro economy based on the utilization of the territorial resources, with the resultant and ambitious project of populate the hamlet again.

Before to thinking of possible actions, it has been necessary to do an accurate metric and photographic survey of the entire hamlet, verifying how the assiduity of these inspections has been fundamental in the following phase of the project.

The first projectual occurrence line intends to create the conditions to actuate again small local economies, reviving the mills activity: for grinding grain and rye into flours, for working hemp (the milling pit are nowadays again seeable), and for cider production made from the apples present the valley.

In the same time, we sustain the conversion of some little mills for hydro-electric energy production, useful to the hamlet of Combe and for the other villages nearby. Three mills, which are located in the west of the hamlet, will maintain their productive function, which will be underlined with minimal ambiental collocation for improving the natural suggestive scenary that surrounds them. The mill set at the entrance of the hamlet will have an informing function and will work as a receptive area.



A foreshortened view of a Combe hamlet

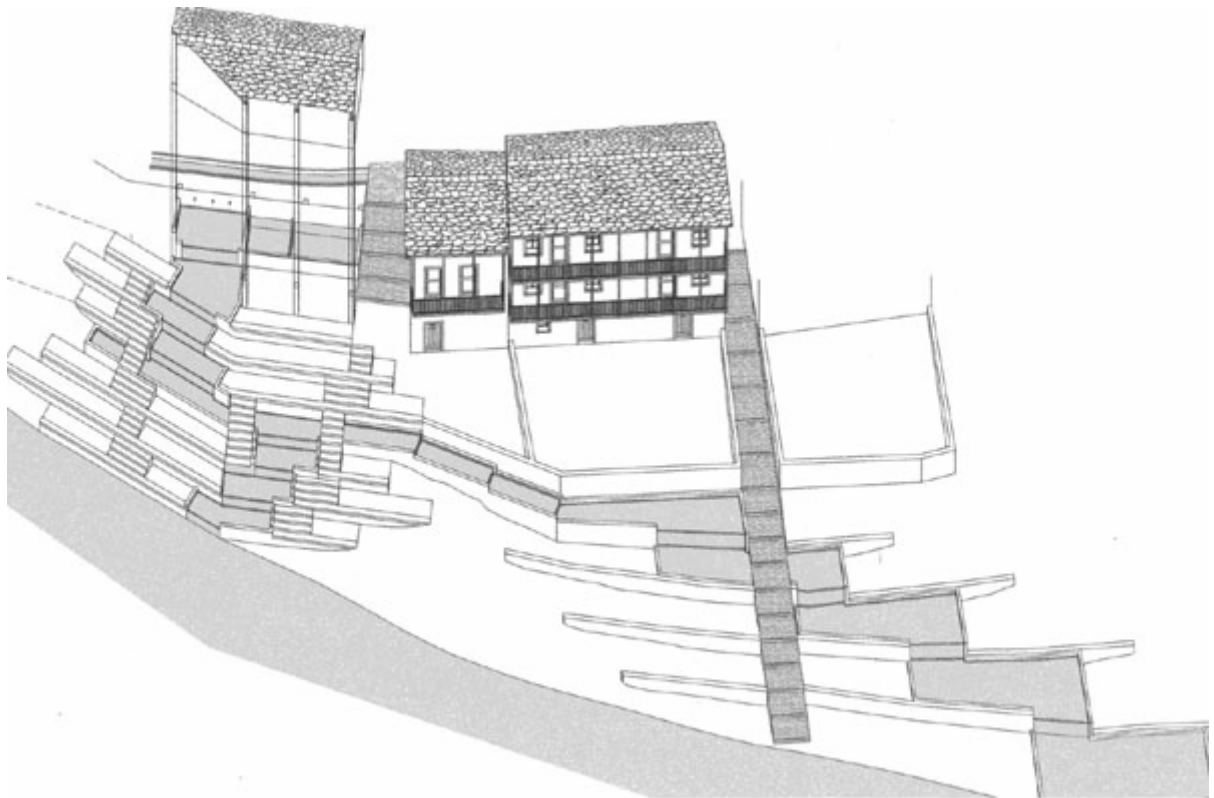
The occurrence concerns also the urban upgrading of the hamlet itself through a suitable paving to indicate the different ways; a car park useful both for future residents and for future visitors, the plan of a square, opposite the church, as meeting point among the pedestrian course, the carriage route and the canal course which links the mills.

Finally, it is necessary a philologic reclamation occurrence of the habitative units of the entire hamlet maintaining the traditional architectural characteristics.

But the topic which characterizes most the projectual occurrence is undoubtedly that of the water.

The continuous sound of Rio Intersile, together with the presence of some mills, have suggested the recovery of the canal ancient way, which linked in sequence the small mills, nowadays abandoned and partly removed.

This project wants to underline how Combe was in the past, and may still be, the “water hamlet” with a high working specialization.



Axonometric amphitheatre

That's why, water is a central element both in functional aspects (milling and hydroelectric energy production) and in entertainment aspects, we have created an amphitheatre new place for meetings and exchange nearby the ancient wash-house in correspondence to the river side composed by a series of baths and water games, provided of wooden seats and in stones terracing the same projectual approach type is also present in the car park where water, after running through the solid canal suspended with a series of waterfalls acts through a wooden vertical mechanic wheel a small bell which its tolling tells us of its continuous flowing.

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