



POLITECNICO
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Honors thesis

COURSE OF ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION CITY

Abstract

**Villages in Search of an Author.
Italian Ghost Towns Reactivation: Strategies and
Design.**

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by

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The title of the work refers to an Italian reality, those of abandoned villages which represent a heritage considered to be "minor", not far from the Italian artistic, cultural and architectural heritage, valued and celebrated all over the world for its beauty.

The thesis is focused on a part of an unknown Italy, which now runs the risk of disappear, and is accomplished through a project and a possible strategy to bring these places to life, starting with the idea that they represent a cultural heritage and strong identity, and possibly may be an economic resource to be valued. The discussion is divided mainly into two parts, in the first is studied and analyzed the phenomenon with particular attention to the Italian cases and with the intent to collect and unify the fragmented sources on the topic; in the second part it assumes a reactivation intervention applied to a case study.

The study of the phenomenon is spread through a metaphorical journey that runs through the entire Italian territory, which suggests that all around the *Belpaese* there are at least 175 totally abandoned villages. The phenomenon has a huge scope and does not spare any Italian region, even the islands. In addition to the mapping of villages was carried out a study on the origins of the villages, almost all of medieval fortified and located in inaccessible areas for defensive reasons. From a typological and morphological analysis are reported the most recurrent developments, so as to create a classification for best develop intervention strategies.

The decline of the villages takes place mainly for economic reasons, linked to the economic boom of the 50s, and environmental factors, such as the occurrence of natural disasters such as landslides or earthquakes, or causes related to unfavorable position or social reasons.

The research also aims to understand the role of architecture in the abandonment phenomenon. Architects, from World War II onwards, have gone along with the trend to depopulation of rural areas through the creation of new urban suburbs, with the explicit intention of recreating an organization that was referring to rural morphologies. Only in 1995 Giancarlo De Carlo create a proposal for Colletta di Castelbianco, a village on the Ligurian slopes. The project, visionary for the time, was aimed at the reactivation of the village through the clabing of internet. The result was the telematic village, the flagship of the reactivation of the Italian villages. Although in Italy there are some recovery examples of villages, the decommissioned and abandoned heritage in danger of extinction is far higher than that reactivated, and there is no central device (state or government) that it can neither quantify the abandonment nor give directives for recovery.

In the second part of the thesis is proposed an intervention strategy concerning the Val Borbera, a territory belonging to the Piedmont Apennines, with the specific intent to create a methodological system applicable to similar cases study. The valley is marked by the passage of the River Borbera and the occasional rural architectural heritage is surrounded by an impressive natural landscape that preserves the ancient pre-Celtic and pre-Roman substrate.

The project proposal focuses on four villages of the high Val Borbera area, which represent different types of abandonment: Carrega Ligure is a village partially abandoned, Connio represents the type of the abandoned village with foundation of new center and finally the ghost towns Ferrazza and Reneuzzi. The project provides the recovery of existing buildings in compliance with local building traditions and the characteristic materials of the area; every new construction project was thought to be recognizable and

reversible. The functions provided for the reactivation include new accommodation facilities such as the spread hotel and productive activities that promote repopulation of the villages also with the participation of new ethnic groups. The economic strategy assumed, develops through buying and selling goods and services, and making skilful use of the funds generated by the formation of associations of citizens and European and regional tenders.

The ultimate aim of the research is not just about the study of the phenomenon, but also understanding the reactivation mechanisms and how these can spread to bring to life a national reality and community which is likely to be forgotten.

ghost town



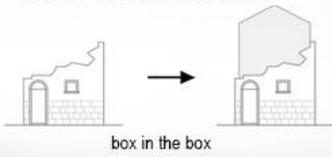
partially abandoned village



ghost town with foundation of new center



ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGY



PUBLIC FURNITURES



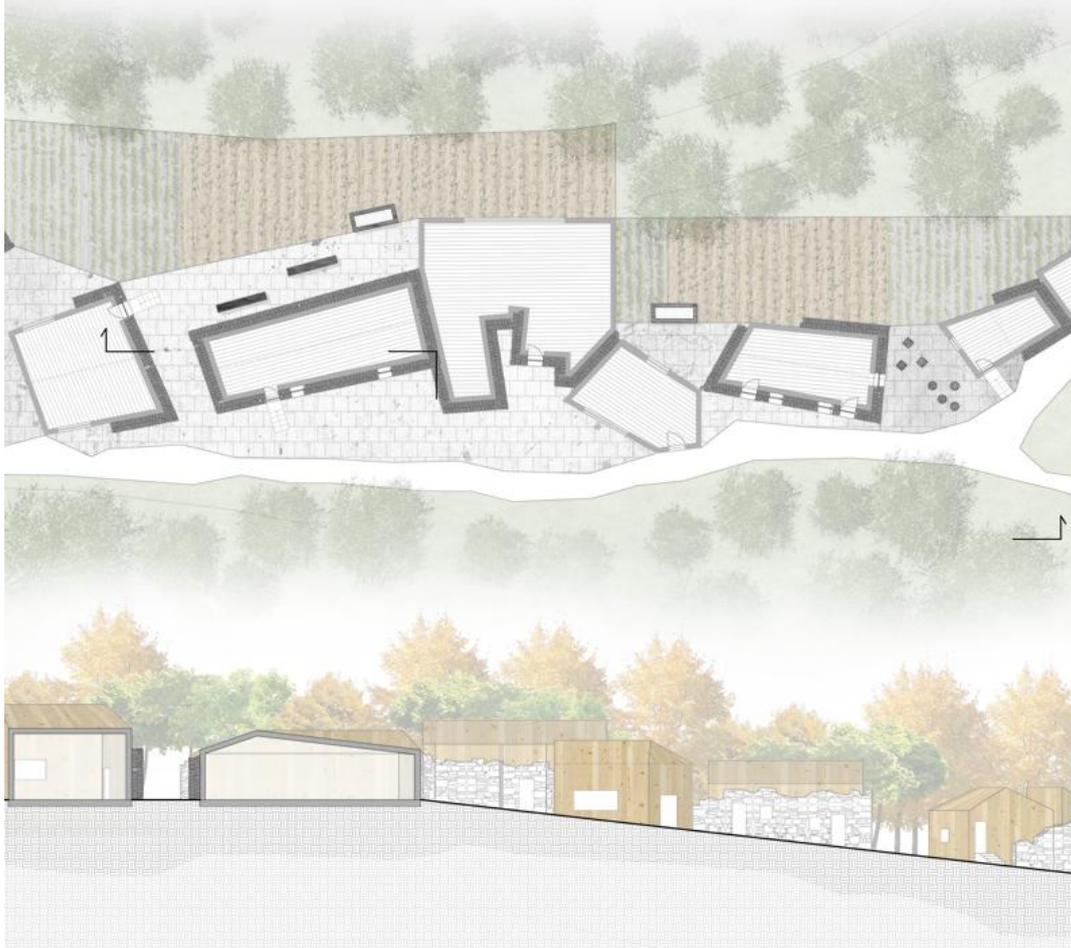
benches



fountain



street lamp



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