

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
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Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

Oropa Sport: reinstating project for the reconstruction of a territorial system

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The recognition of the site “Sacred Mounts of Piemonte and Lombardia” in the List of UNESCO world-heritage (Paris, July 3th, 2003 – “XXVII Session of the world-heritage Committee”) decrees their historical and artistic “universal extraordinary value”. That identifies Oropa in an important international object for the planning management of its properties.



Dépliant – territorial infrastructural system of Biellese

So it's the beginning for the requirement to carry into an effective project of preservation and transformation of the place in order that it can be recognized not only by a religious tourist but also by everyone loves to merge into the nature and discover the ancient culture of a tour across the territory.

Nowadays Oropa is:

- *spirituality*, the Sanctuary, a place of contemplation and prayer;
- *nature*, the spontaneous vegetation of Sacred Mount and the Botanical Garden;
- *sport*, a skiing resort at 1900 mt, where you can descent downhill by bike, fish on the lakeshore, climb, skate on ice and sky;
- *culture and tradition*, with its 15 Ecomuseums, where the recovery of the past becomes the reinstating of the courses, of the Alpine shelters and the old industrial buildings.

The reinstating project starts from two basic objects:

- 1) the reconstruction of a strong territorial system to make recognizable Oropa's amphitheatre like an only one value, joining its different properties;
- 2) the possibility to create an added value through the reinstatement of mountain places in evident degradation now and secondary compared to the Sanctuary.

Biellese history is fundamental to choose the right plan because, for example, it lies in the recovery of the old electric tramline Biella-Oropa (1911-1958). The proposal of the new tramway Biella-Oropa becomes functional to **reconstruct** the old line firstly and to reinstatement all those values and old buildings nearby (hydrotherapical and religious centres), to bait **new investment facts** and a kind of tourism not religious only. Moreover the **exclusiveness** of the tramline, that's not just a simple means of connection *there and back*, takes a **landscape value** (and touristic one) with its own importance.



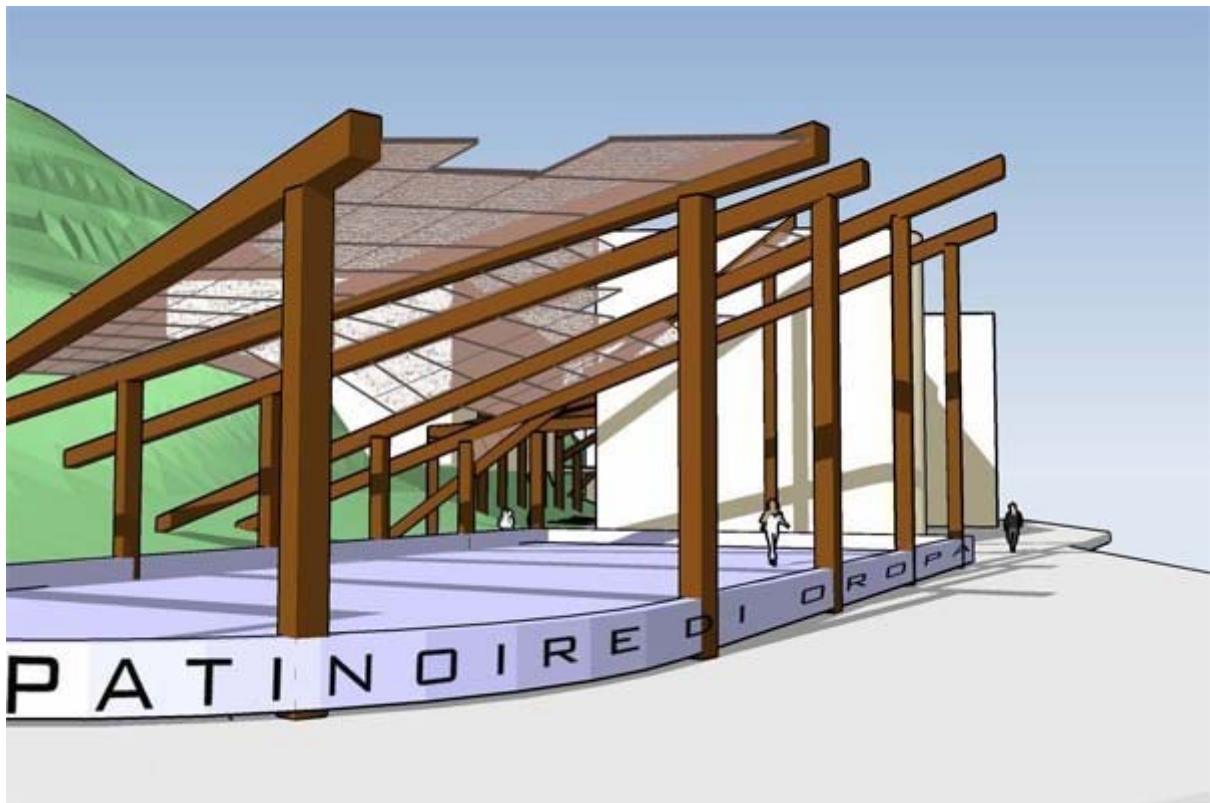
Oropa Sport - plan

The second step of the project insists on the area of *Oropa Sport*, a skiing resort born in 1926 with the opening of *Oropa's cableway*.

At the present this area is in a situation of strong degradation for the stop of the pre-existent activities or for the absence of those activities subordinated to the first of reception and welcome.

A first moment wants to give an identity to the place again starting from the **reinstating** of the pre-existent buildings, by the development of their own characters, by the landscape and the views they offer, like the interesting system of the terraces that, turned to the valley, establish a visual link with the Sanctuary.

The second moment works on the **image** of the place, on its perception of "fencing structure" (inherent in the existent hypogean system), through the insertion of a roofing that founds a dialectic-architectural relation with the landscape, emulating the jagged and fortuitous movement of the mountains; it becomes visiting ground, it opens itself to the valley or penetrates into the rugged stony faces of the mountain.



Oropa Sport – 3-D view of the roofing system and skating-ring

Summing up the recovery of Oropa Sport doesn't represent a formal exercise. The priority of the project is in its use, reflected on the choice of the materials, of the shapes and the connections among the buildings and the landscape. In this case other interesting elements becomes decisive: the "system" (and so the infrastructural connection to the other territorial resources), the memorials, the recognition of the territory like "Humanity's Patrimony".

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