
The enhancement of Cuneo's piazza Virginio for the new civic museum

by Barbara Giordana

Tutor: Lorenzo Mamino

Some years ago the town council of Cuneo decided to gather the various cultural services in the old city centre and set up a cultural centre named "Cittadella della Cultura". The various cultural activities should have been placed in some unused public buildings which, for this reason, had to be restored and re-activated.

In recent years a lot of work has been done to develop many of these projects; however, a careful analysis of the actual state has highlighted the necessity of strengthening one of the most significant services: the Civic Museum, located in the complex of San Francesco next to Piazza Virginio. For this reason, the suggested project foresees the enhancement of the whole area and the introduction of some further functions to support the museum activity such as a Picture-Gallery and an Urban Centre, using the old market structure of the square.

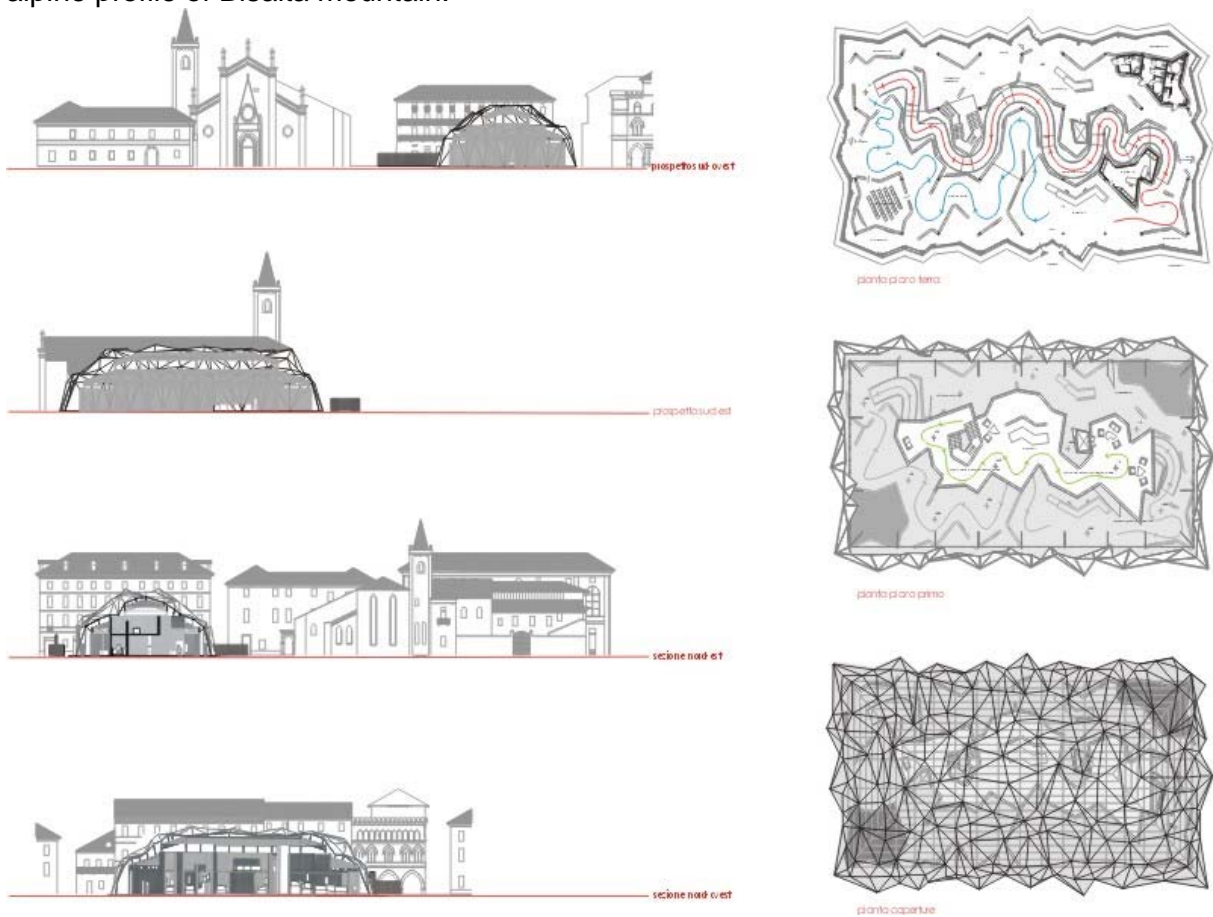


Area framing and axonometric explosion

The project has decided to accept the challenge of coping with the existent structure. This structure is considerably characterized in terms of typology and space, and looks apparently loath to any change in use destination. But such a structure, for its dimensions and position, is the missing link of the “New Cultural Centre”. Then, considering the possibility of the buildings to contain activities different from those they were designed for, and their flexibility to changes and to new social needs, this project can also offer the opportunity to experiment with innovative solutions given by the latest technological developments.

After all, research, study and project creativity represent the challenge we accept for the future of our urban landscapes.

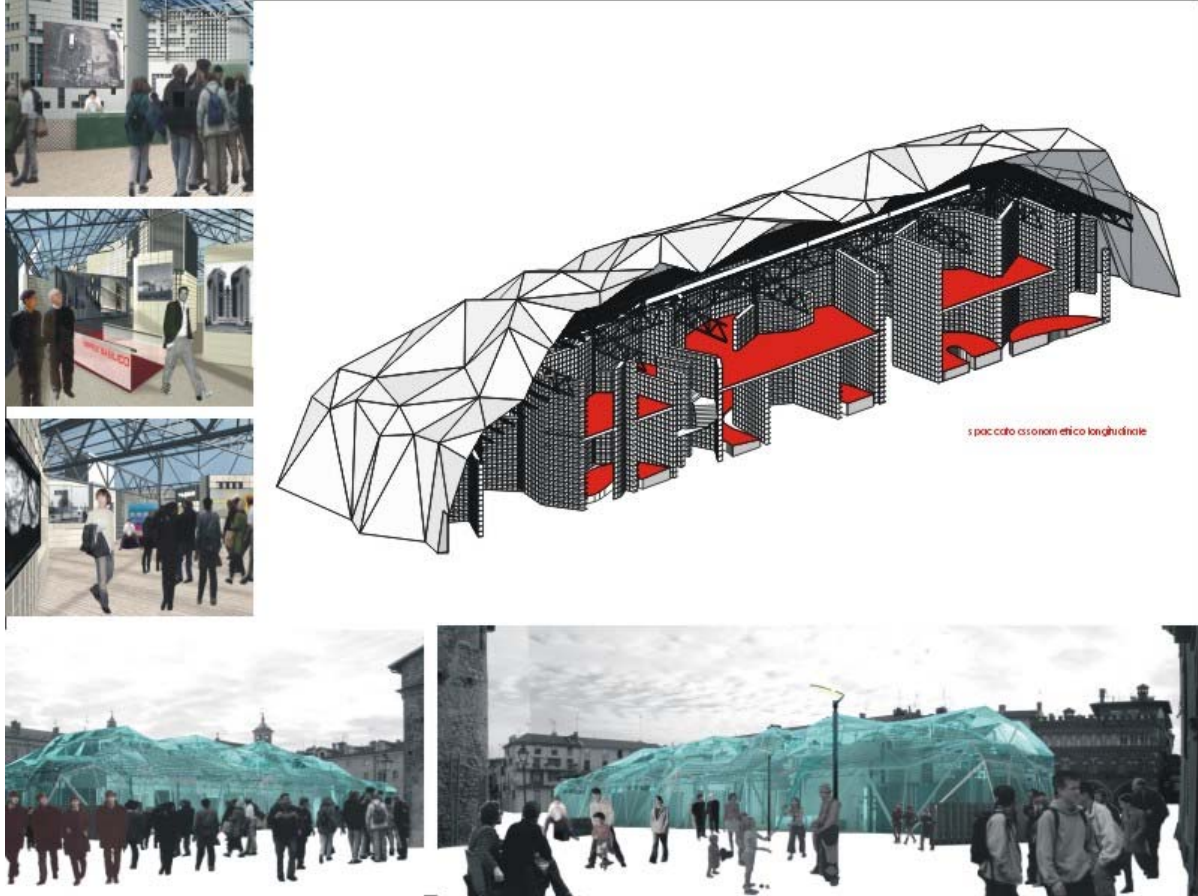
Lightness, transparency and permeability are the features of this project which restores the old structure, stripping it of every present surface and covering it with an impressive “diamond gown”, consisting of a complex steel and glass structure framed on the existent grid in a disjointed way, as if the parts were animated, and vaguely reminding us of the alpine profile of Bisalta mountain.



Plans, prospects and sections

The use of glass is decisive for the success of this project: its lightness dissolves the weight of this huge shapeless mass and its transparency produces an effect of “open” architecture which makes inside and outside coexistent, so that the inner space becomes part of the outside environment, holding the sky, the surrounding houses and light. From the outside, the interior shows its various functions and departments; but these are hidden to absent-minded strollers, by vertical structures which delimitate and subdivide the spaces, clearly distinguishing the path of the Picture-Gallery from the Urban Centre.

While strolling around the place of the project, walking along the streets or standing at the corners, we are more and more convinced that through the organization of this area and the introduction of new functions, this square could become again one of the most important pivots of the town's activities, gaining its central role, inexorably and slowly lost in the past.



Vertical section axonometric drawing and rendering

For further information:

Barbara Giordana, e-mail: barbara.giordana@tiscali.it