



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

Honors thesis

MASTER DEGREE IN SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

Abstract

NEW HIGH-ALTITUDE SCENARIES IN VALTELLINA

**A reconversion hypothesis of the Scerscen 3000 in
Valmalenco, as an innovative model of alpine tourism**

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The prefixed objective of this thesis is to show a hypothesis of regeneration of the Scerscen area. The Scerscen it's a mountain hut in Valmalenco, which belongs to a past that has faded, the one of summer skiing. The strong climate changes, have conditioned the fate of this reality at 3000 meters of altitude, compromising its future. The mankind, after the nature deprived what he had built in such a hard and tough ambient, abandoned his handiwork. The inactivity, the absence of maintenance and the rigid climate of the high altitude increased the state of degradation of the property.

The investigation of this work starts from the past, recreating a short history of the alpine huts and their development over the time. The story develops from the first explorers who built the first ancient repairs to the birth of Alpinism and tourism with the spread of the free time, to continue with all the changes of the alpine accommodation structure during the two world wars, until the present days, with the more and more performing shelters. The interest of the research focuses on the mountain reality of Valtellina, highlighting the abandoned huts, analyzing in particular the case of the ex-hotel mountain hut of Entova Scerscen and its minor structures located on the Sassa d'Entova area. The idea of the hut for the summer skiing on the glacier, was born in the 70s thanks to the ambitious projects done by Valmalenco's ski instructors along with the Alpine guides. Today, the massive construction, shows the hikers all of its desertion and degradation. It's inevitable to wonder if the area couldn't have had a better fate.

The study of this thesis aims to understand the potential of this abandoned area and to propose a concrete architectural project, considering its sustainability, feasibility and its future development opportunities. It was attempted to understand if a construction of such a big impact and history could be replaced in some way through energy redevelopment and above all, structural interventions. The project proposed, it's an architectural solution which responds to the contemporary aesthetic fees. A building completely made of woods with an outer metal coating, using prefabrication techniques to facilitate the construction site at high altitude.

There are also issues such as climate changes and their impact on the natural environment and human structures, which have been debated inside this thesis, besides the tourism and the changes that have taken place in the way of taking advantage of the mountain. The innovative aspect is a new vision of hospitality management in the Alps: the figure of the manager of the hut changes, in order to support the costumers demand. What follows it's an automated hut without manager.

It is important to highlight how much the word "equilibrium" is fundamental when we talk about working at high altitudes. Equilibrium is the base of everything. A strong equilibrium between human beings and nature allows the construction of buildings without defacing the landscape. As there are no rules to determine ideal solutions in every context, a careful and profound study has been carried out on the area where the artefact is concentrated. If we want the Alps to keep being inhabited, it would be worthwhile investing in technological innovation in the perspective of sustainability and preservation of traditions. The Scerscen building, as other structures in Valtellina, is the base from where restart to create new opportunities. The solution proposed in this study accepts what has been built in order to propose new sceneries to hand down to the future generation.



Fig_1: Postcards ex-refuge Entova Scerscen



Fig_2: New refuge without management

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