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Ambitions and (in)successes of mass tourism on the Gran Sasso d'Italia. Plans and projects for Castel del Monte and Campotosto in the 1960s-70s

For centuries, high-altitude landscapes remained untouched by human activities. Between the 19th and 20th century, the construction possibilities offered by industrialisation and the economic prosperity in Europe after the second World War period, started a progressive modification of the Italian mountain skyline. The most significant interventions generally took place above 1,500 metres altitude over sea level, where snow persisted in the winter months. Alpine skiing, the magical discipline of 'gliding', was born and developed within this context, as the business of high-altitude mass tourism too.
Right from the beginning of the 20th century, in the Apennines, and on the Gran Sasso d'Italia in particular, the highest and most significant peaks became attractive hubs for the first ski facilities, which were created on both the L'Aquila and Teramo sides. Less successful were the initiatives for Castel del Monte and Campotosto, that definitively died out in the following decade. These areas, on the margins of the Gran Sasso region [Fig. 1], were undertaken in a delicate and complex context at the end of the 1960s. In those years, the mass tourism profit due to Alpine skiing began to decline, the interests of local communities clashed with entrepreneurial initiatives, and the process of formation of the National Park was in sight, ready to limit building investments on areas of environmental value.
This study analyses the planning instruments and building proposals for these two locations as evidence of the desire to import the mass tourism system of the Alpine area to the mountains of L'Aquila. It lies, ever since, on the limbo between remaining magnificently virgin and being terribly abandoned.

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ALPINE SKIING AND THE GRAN SASSO D'ITALIA AREA IN 20TH CENTURY

Alpine skiing as a modern discipline[1] arrived in Grindelwald, in the Bernese Oberland, thanks to Gerald Fox and his cousin Thomas, after a trip to Norway in 1891. A decade later, local production chains had already sprung up and skiing had spread widely in the subalpine and transalpine areas, from France to Slovenia, so much so that in 1924 the International Ski Federation (FIS) was founded and in 1936 it became an Olympic sport with participation in the Garmisch-Partenkirchen Winter Games.

The spread of Alpine skiing led to the birth of high-altitude mass tourism. Ski lifts attracted a large audience of winter tourists, putting aside the effort of the ascent in favour of the pleasure of the descent. Specifics transport and accommodation infrastructures were created for skiing, moving the construction boom from the city to the high altitudes. The presence of the ski-lifts gave added value to buildings, the demand of second homes for holidays was born, and mountain real estate grew in amount and value. Thanks to the possibility of skiing, the house in the mountains became a valid investment, so much so that production exceeded demand, occupying valleys and ridges.

The focus of this phenomenon in Europe was the Alpine area, although, looking at the Italian context, from the 1930s onwards the Apennine dorsal was also dotted with ski resorts, and even more so with ideas and programmes for numerous new realisations, which often never materialised.

Significant cases of unfinished planning are the areas of Castel del Monte and Campotosto, in the Gran Sasso d'Italia region, which were included in the Tourist development districts of the Province of L'Aquila with the law No. 717 of 26.06.1965. The two localities, with territories between 1,500 and 2,500 metres altitude over sea level, respectively on the south-east and north-west borders of what was to become the Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park in 1991, presented ideal conditions for the creation of ski areas.

The aim of this paper is to expose plans and projects that failed in these two regions and to analyse the main factors that led to collapse these economic mirages, which were planned between the 1960s and 1970s. The reasons around the failure of these plans and programmes cannot be traced back to a single scapegoat, but it is due to a complex framework of environmental issues, national infrastructure development, abandonment of inland areas, and climate and economic change.

In fact, since the 1980s, due to drier winters, lower economic availability and a new environmentalist consciousness[2], many winter tourism resorts have experienced a phase of decline and economic contraction, leading to reflections on the ethics, suitability to the territory and social convenience of ski resorts. The artificial snowmaking, required on most of them[3], has accentuated the reflections on these critical issues, with the concomitant increase in the cost of lift tickets, the withdrawal of water from the aquifers and the onerous infrastructure of the slopes. The smaller stations often did not have the strength to adapt to this change, and in the last forty years, there has been an exponential increase in cases of closure and subsequent abandonment of facilities, resorts and tourist complexes in general, which have almost never been dismantled and today weigh heavily on the Italian territory.

In the Gran Sasso area, of the 13 ski facilities that were activated between the 1930s and 1970s in Prato Selva, Montecristo, Prati di Tivo and Campo Imperatore, today (October 2023) only four are still in use in the latter two locations, and just one of the old ski lifts has been disposed of, while the others still stand as ruins on the territory.

This situation was affected by the construction of the highway to/from Rome by the S.A.R.A.[4], which in 1971 already reached Assergi from L'Aquila [Fig. 2] and in 1984 reached Teramo thanks to the opening of the Gran Sasso Tunnel motorway tunnel. This accentuated the centrality of the

Fig.1 - G.E.Fritzsche. Map of the Gran Sasso d'Italia. Highest point of the Gran Sasso in the middle. Campotosto with the peat plateau at the nord-west and Castel del Monte with the Fonte Vetica plateau at the south-east. No road across these territories at that time, just trails. 1887, CAISiDoc[5]

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tourist offer on the L'Aquila-Teramo axis, further marginalising the border territories of the current Park, including Castel del Monte and Campotosto.

CASTEL DEL MONTE AMONG SKI RESORTS, PLANNING AND THE ALLOTMENT OF THE VETICA

The municipality of Castel del Monte is located south-east of the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park and includes part of the Campo Imperatore plateau in its municipal perimeter. This area, commonly known as the 'Vetica', is at the base of Monte Camicia on one side and Monte Bolza on the other, the latter dominating above Castel del Monte itself. It is located at about 1,500 metres altitude over sea level, while the surrounding peaks reach up to 2,500 metres [Fig. 3]. Although Vetica area was the subject of the main ambitions of Castel del Monte's planning instruments, the area is located on the periphery of the mountain tourist flows of the Gran Sasso, 20 km from the arrival of the cable car built in 1934 to reach Campo Imperatore from Fonte Cerreto, and far from the motorway completed in 1970. Even the driveway connecting Assergi and the Campo Imperatore plateau, until the 1970s did not see a link road to the one going up from Castel del Monte to the same plateau, thus limiting the convergence of Roman tourist flows and leaving it isolated and lacking in services, despite its great naturalistic potential.
Some land reclamations in the 1950s, signed by engineer Orazio Giuliani and aimed at increasing pastures, the area's main source of livelihood, created the environmental and economic conditions for the birth of the first plans for entrepreneurial and tourism purposes, despite the poor connection infrastructures.

Spatial and urban planning of Castel del Monte
The Castel del Monte Construction and urban plan, drawn up by engineers Emilio Tomassi and Enrico Lenti in the 1960s, and in force since 1971, envisaged several expansion zones for tourism purposes, such as a hospitality area, a skiing area and one destined for new residential settlements. The hospitality zone was located in San Donato Vecchio, north-west of the village, with a capacity of 1,000 people and a minimum intervention area of 60000 square metres. The residential expansion areas would be implemented with parcels of at least 20,000 square metres, and a tourist centre for 3,000 inhabitants was planned in Valle Codorama, near Fonte Vetica, within what was at the time a nature reserve. It probably served the two ski resorts that were to be built near the gullies south of Monte Camicia and the northern slope of Monte Bolza. Contradictorily, the same plan indicated the Valle d'Angora, adjacent to the area of the planned tourist centre, as a reserve suitable for the repopulation of certain species that are extinct there.
The plan was denounced for being 'all about big speculation' and only available for to reach and powerful investors, due to the very high minimum intervention parameters, which were impossible to achieve for a Castellano[6] with limited economic resources. The article in the January-February 1976 issue of the local newspaper 'Problemi', almost five years after the Plan's approval, highlighted its nearly complete unimplementation.
Meanwhile the drafting of this Construction and urban plan, and in view to its future approval, initiatives more specifically aimed at the municipality's highlands came into being, with both construction and cementification of them. The main one was the proposal for an allotment, signed by surveyor Silvestro Sulli from Capitignano[7], previously agreed and approved by the L'Aquila council in 1967 and sent to the Superintendency on 10 July 1968 by the Castel del Monte municipality[8]. The Superintendent's Office never gave the clearence, probably because of a number of concomitant factors: the area was under protection by the law No 1497 of 29 June 1939 and the Superintendent's Office declared that the planned works were detrimental to the state of the site; in 1968 the new national planning law came into force, which changed the standards for zoning; the Gran Sasso district was in the process

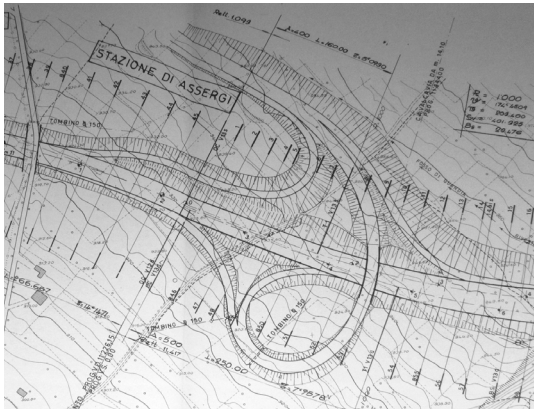

Fig.2-Above:S.A.R.A..ProjectofthehighwayL'Aquila-VillaVomano.Detail of the exit to Assergi, close to the Gran Sasso. 1971, ASAQ[9] BN[10] 116
Fig. 3 - Below: P. Corbellini. Gran Sasso d'Italia tourist map. 1929,CAISiDoc

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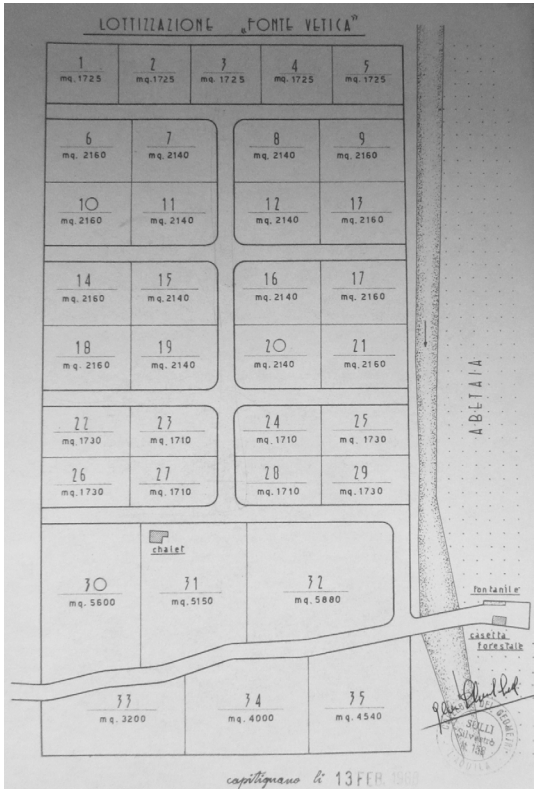
of being subjected to restrictions; some of the land was state forests property that could not be edificated. For these reasons, the architect superintendent Mario Moretti, clearly allowed the time pass[11], because every evidence led to the rejection of a poorly studied allotment, with no services and urbanisation works that were neither quantified nor localised, and which were to be carried out at the expense of the Cassa del Mezzogiorno. In practice, a mere parcelling out for building and speculative purposes of a portion of the mountain, including as many as 35 plots of significant size, from 1710 to 5600 square metres each. Confirming the perplexity of the Superintendency in accepting such a tourism initiative was the tormented matter of the road that was supposed to connect Castel Del Monte to the Campo Imperatore plateau, which was authorised by the prefect only after a reminder from the Castellani in 1970. The road, compared to the one that was actually built, which flanks the aqueduct route[12], was planned to follow a 'C' curve to reach Fonte Vetica.

Fig. 4 - S. Sulli. Allotment plan of Fonte Vetica. Visible in parcel 11 the existing chalet and out of the plan the forestry building. 1968, ASAQ BN 131



During these procedures, the Territorial Landscape Plan was being drafted, with only the plan regulations being revised at first, and indicating Vetica as the centre of ski convergence.
Despite the remonstrances of the Superintendency, local authorities, such as the municipality, had endorsed the Allotment Plan, and a regulation was presented with it to determine the purchase prices of the lots, the participation in the urbanisation works, and the timeframe for realisation. A clause was also put in place to provide that lots would only be sold with the presentation of projects for the works to be carried out. Interest was high and as many as 11 private individuals, between 1966 and 1970, commissioned engineers to design chalets and high-altitude hotel solutions. Various types were proposed, such as seven private holiday residences, a hut and two hotels. In 11 of the total 35 plots, 1900 square metres of covered area was planned for approximately 300 occupants. Imagining this average to the entire allotment to be built, up to 1,000 new holidaymakers could be accommodated. A huge number, both in terms of preserving the environmental qualities of the place and in relation to the residents of Castel del Monte, approximately 1,180 at the time, just 445 at present. The realisation of such a plan would have generated a holiday resort larger than the existing community, following exactly the dynamics of mass tourism.
The allotment also presented other critical issues. The buildings rules had only five short technical provisions, which in the absence of another planning and building control instrument were not enough to protect the high quality landscape surroundings, during the construction phase. Moreover, no account was taken of the detrital moraine in the proximity, a sign of landslide accumulation and of the danger to avalanches, demonstrated by the snowslides that have historically descended several times from Mount Tremoggia and that would have swept over the entire allotment. However, this area was taken into consideration probably because of the presence of water and other constructions.

The projects of the Allotment Plan

The pre-existing buildings in the Fonte Vetica area were a prefabricated chalet, owned by Antonio De Carolis, which had a concession since 1964[13] and was included in parcel 31 of the allotment, and the forestry building with the fountain at the base of the fir forest [Fig. 4].

The private holiday residences

The projects, dated between 1966 and 1970, responded to a figurativeness of the 'verticality', while from a construction point of view was applied a mere transposition of techniques from the valley to the mountains, without reinterpreting the needs of a high-altitude climatic context. Indicative of that are the inter-floor heights often over 3 metres, unsuitable for cold climates, the travertine-covered plinths, a misprint of a rationalist dialectic, the application of unplastered brick walls, incongruous because it is frosty, and the aluminium windows frames that do not fit in with the rhetoric of the mountain hut.
The three identical projects drawn up by the construction expert Francesco Bracciolini for the owners Giuseppe Serena, Luciano Sarnari and Manfredo Rossi [Fig. 5], reinterpreted a stately mountain dwelling, gathered under irregular roof slopes, generating generous overhangs to protect entrances and balconies and sometimes hiding slightly recessed openings protected from the weather. The internal distributions, often naturally lit, lead on the raised floor to a large living area, distributed around the fireplace, with the

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kitchen and servants' quarters. The upper floors, one of which was attic, has numerous bedrooms with often integrated bathrooms. Defining the elevations are the acute angles of the roof slopes, the long protruding trapezoidal chimney pots, the wooden cladding on the exterior of sleeping floors, a glass-block pattern on the length of the staircase and a wide stone-clad basement that keeps the architecture elevated on all sides, protecting it during the months of continuous snowfall.

The surveyor Nino D'Angelo was commissioned for two other works. For Sergio Baroni, he designed a building that did not exceed 110 square metres in covered area, including the large outdoor terrace, but had a mixture of many elements [Fig. 6]. The columns of the portico with plastered or face brick sides, the stone plinth and the wooden roof beams. The interior rooms are kept to a minimum, but there is added a woodshed and garage to them.

For the Italian Alpine Club of Penne, D'Angelo designed a picturesque hut, with mixed elevations in wood, stone and plaster [Fig. 7]. However, he uses a sheet metal roof covering, a solution that is still suitable today in a mountain context. He inserts a sliding door between the two main rooms on the ground floor to improve the flexibility, and on the roof a deflection in the pitches accentuates their slope towards the ridge, so that the snow that settles at the top pushes on the lower one, favouring its fall from the roof. A large wood storage room in the basement serves to continuously feed the two fireplaces in the main rooms, whose heated flues crosses the walls of the upper dormitory.

In other aspects, the project is rudimentary and unresolved, perhaps due to the tight schedule. The mixed structure of masonry and reinforced concrete appears 'messy', the timber-clad plinth is in danger of rotting, and the attempt to mark out the levels with stringcourses is unsuccessful due to the mixture of materials on the façade. The white steamed beech wood slats, provided as an interior trim, make the rooms more cosy.

The allotment also interested owners of the Adriatic coast, since a project dated 1966 for Frances-

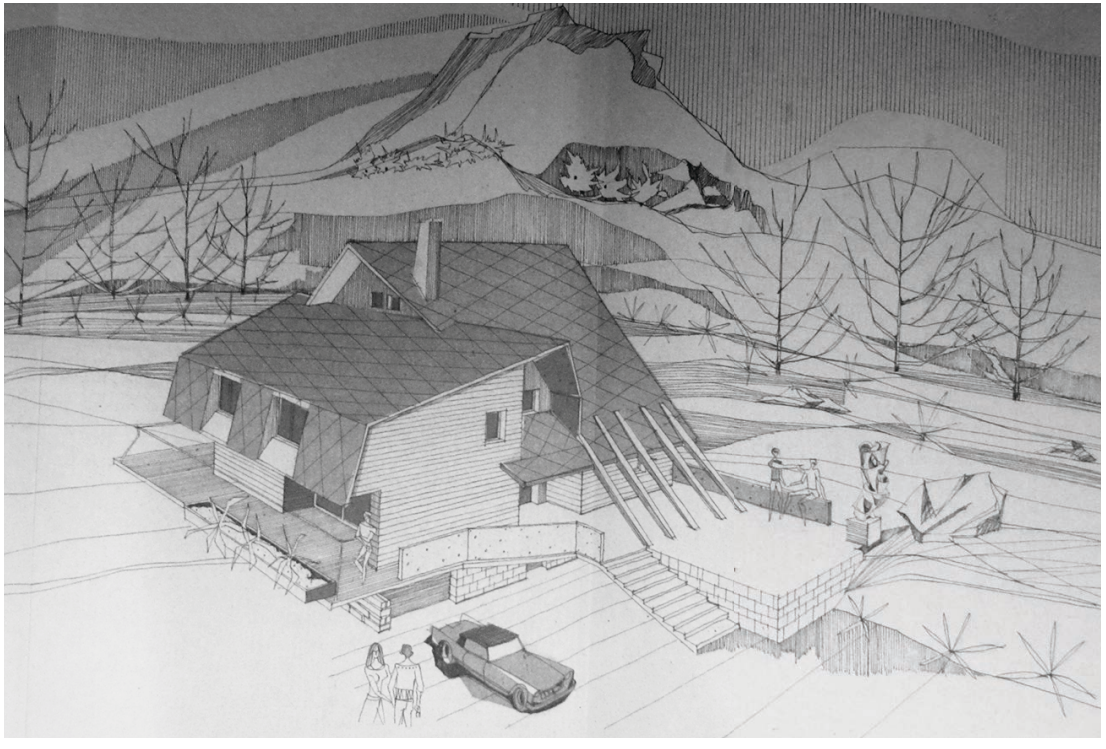
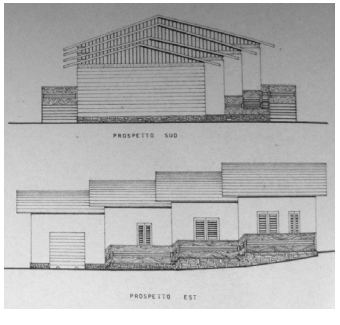


Fig. 5 - Above: F. Bracciolini. Perspective view of a identical chalet for G. Serena, L. Sarnari and M. Rossi. 1968, ASAQ BN 131
Fig. 6 - Below, left: N. D'Angelo. Perspective view of a chalet for S. Baroni. 1968, ASAQ BN 131
Fig. 7 - Below, centre: N. D'Angelo. Elevation of the mountain hut for the Alpine Club of Penne.1968, ASAQ BN 131
Fig. 8 - Below, right: V. Ciferni, E. Vinditti. Elevations of a terraced house for F. Ciferni. 1968, ASAQ BN 131



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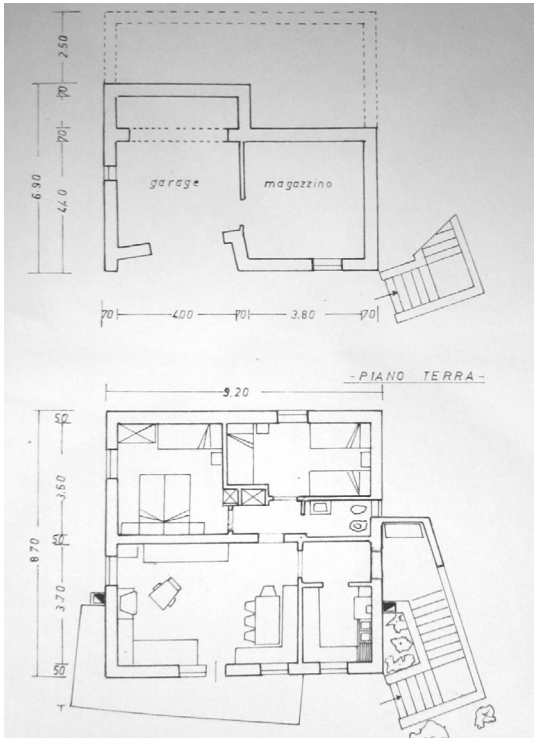

Fig. 9 - L. Renzetti. Plans of a small chalet for 6 people. 1968, ASAQ BN 131

Fig. 10 - V. Pezzopane. Perspective view of the hotel commissioned by E. Di Donato for the parcel 30 of the allotment of Fonte Vetica. 1969, ASAQ BN 131

co Ciferni was signed by surveyor Vittorio Ciferni from Silvi and engineer Eugenio Vinditti from Pescara. The solution, in matching the slope of the land, creates four levels connected by two risers each, which are reflected on the outside with a "stepped" plan and double-pitched roofs with the same height differences between them [Fig. 8].
More approximate were the plans for a two-level chalet presented by Graziella Papa, without the signature of a technician, and that of Livio Renzetti commissioned by Piero Renzetti on lot 15 [Fig. 9]. This presents a functional internal organisation that could accommodate 6 people in 80 square metres gross and an elaborate staircase that identifies the access. The low-slope roof and completely external flues demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the criticalities of cold climates. The elevations are completed with stone-clad false cantonments and the rest plastered.

The tourist accomodations

Dimensionally more significant were the projects of the two hotels on lots 30 and 32, by the L'Aquila-based technical firm Organizzazione Tecnica Riunita. One was signed by surveyor Vincenzo Pezzopane, the other by engineer Vincenzo Roscetti, respectively for clients Euclide Di Donato and Franco Novarini [Fig. 10-11]. Similar in their representation techniques, they also share the same size and capacity, with a covered area of approximately 400 square metres, at least 72 beds for guests, and no more than 15 metres in height, the limit imposed by the allotment regulations. A planimetric analysis shows that one was projected towards a younger and more sporty clientele, having a waxing ski room, a clear reference to the ski district planned in the area, and a bowling alley for recreation; while the other was intended for a more mature guest, having a greater extension of living and resting areas. They are characterised by a volumetric articulation, with

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concave and convex elements, projecting or retracting, highlighting the loggias of the rooms, the stairwells, the openings and the entrances: a composition of volumes, proclaiming different functions, gathered under an articulated but continuous roof that covered the architecture by folding over the fronts until almost touching the ground. The ground connection, identified with a wide basement that regularised the orography of the terrain, is surmounted by the main floor with a public character, and then topped by the floor type repeated on 3 levels. The connection to the sky, before the roof, generally ends with a wooden-clad attic level, where the staff resides and the technical rooms are located.
The designs of the two hotels are intended for a luxury clientele, as denoted by the cars and characters represented in the perspectives and as is evident from the comfortable rooms and the daringness of the volumes that contrasted with the massive Monte Camicia in the background.

Planning outcomes
The submitted projects were not executed as the Superintendency suspended them, also on the basis that the Ministry of Public Work never approved them.
It was only within the settlement of Castel del Monte that the first hotel activities were built. In 1970, Mariano Aromatario's Hotel Miramonti, designed by engineer Emilio Tomassi, opened in Piazza XX Settembre [Fig. 12]. As the only hotel in Castel del Monte, it was often under investigation due to continuous and prolonged periods of closure due to the owner's choice, despite having been built with public funds.

CAMPOTOSTO, HOTEL MEGASTRUCTURE AND LATE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Located at the other end of the Gran Sasso to the north-west, Campotosto bears strong similarities to Castel del Monte in its unimplemented dynamics, even though no urban and/or territorial planning existed here when the first building interventions were implemented. The process thus appears reversed, the few realisations were carried out in abuse or in partial non-conformity as there was no plan and despite the fact that the protection regimes of law No. 1497 of 1939 were in force. A significant case in point is the Albergo St. Andrew, which, although approved by the municipality, obtained the authorisation of the Superintendence once it had been completed, or even the Albergo Valle, which seems to have never submitted the static test.
At the end of the 19th century, Campotosto appeared as a village at the base of the southern slope of the Monti della Laga, overlooking a large peat-bog plateau [Fig. 13], which made much of the area uncultivable and marshy. Grazing was the only source of sustenance until the beginning of the 20th century, when two processes began and radically changed the conditions for the tourist destination of the area: first, the extraction of peat for fuel and to reclaim the plateau, then, the construction of water retention structures that created an artificial basin for the production of hydroelectric energy[14]. The Campotosto zone became a healthy and pleasant mountain place both in winter and summer. However, the post

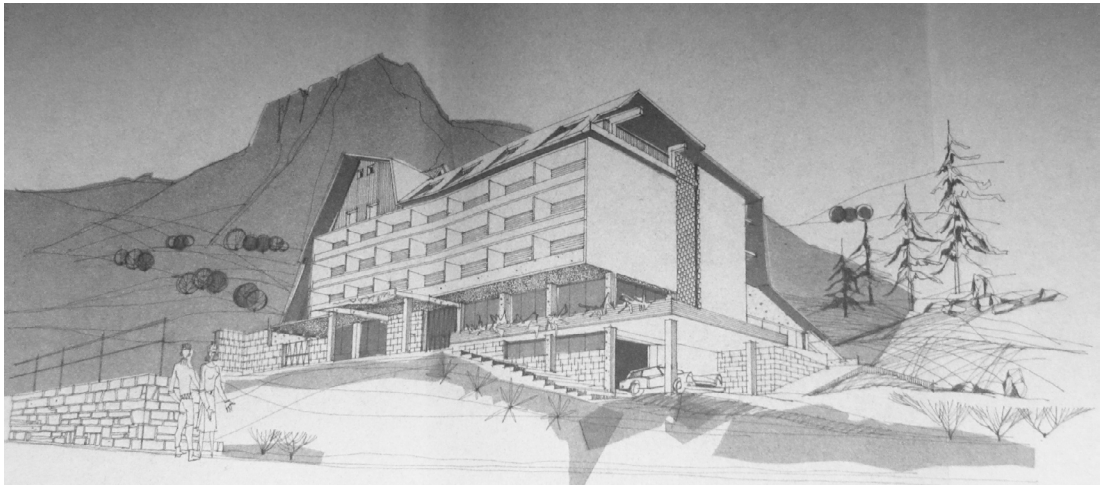
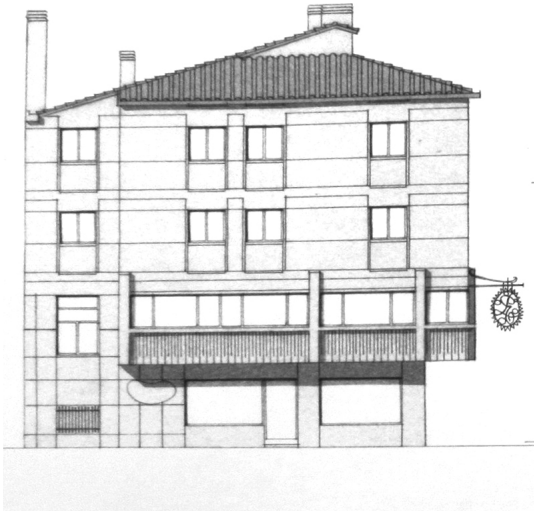


Fig. 11 - Above: V. Roscetti. Perspective view of the hotel commissioned by F. Novarini for the parcel 32 of the Fonte Vetica allotment. 1968, ASAQ BN 131
Fig. 12 - Below: E. Tomassi. Main elevation of the hotel built for M. Aromatario in the centre of Castel del Monte on XX September square. The only the only completed building of those shown above. 1970, ASAQ BN 131



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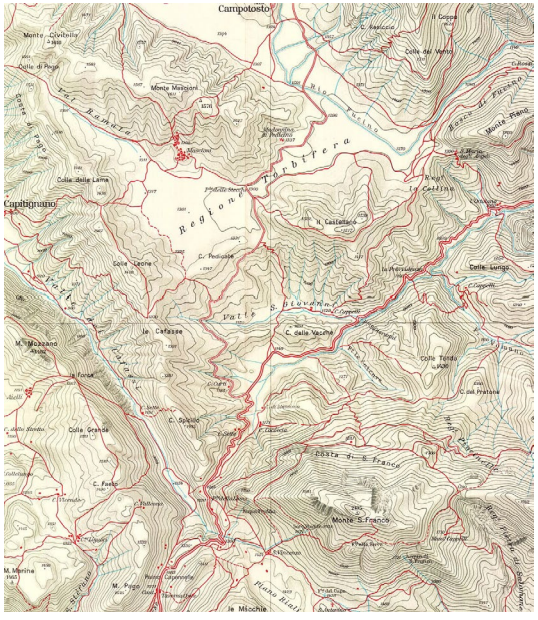


Fig. 13 - Above: P. Corbellini. Gran Sasso d'Italia tourist map. 1929, CAISiDoc
Fig. 14 - Below, left: Gran Lago Hotel, Poggio Cancelli. 1970, postcard
Fig. 15 - Below, centre: arch E. D'Andrea. Vertical section of the hotel commissioned by A. volpini. 1963, ASAQ BN 130
Fig. 16 - Below, right: arch E. D'Andrea. Perspective view of the hotel commissioned by A. volpini with a outdoor swimming pool. 1963, ASAQ BN 130

World War II period was characterised by an intense sequence of seismic events that occurred in the Gran Sasso area between 1950 and 1952, which compromised the rapid development of it.

Gran Lago Hotel

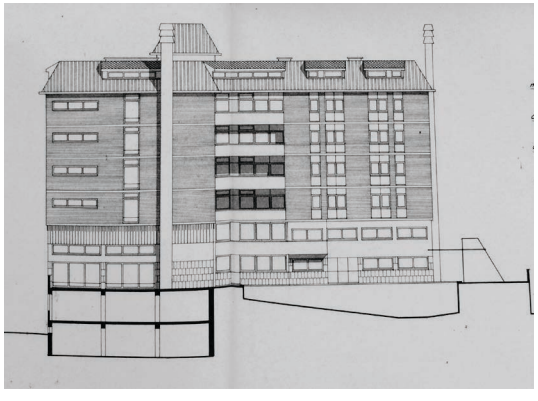
The first hotel in the area was the Gran Lago Hotel [Fig. 14], a four-storey building in Poggio Cancelli, a locality 6 km from Campotosto. It opened in 1953, making it the first registered hotel in the area. On 16 May 1955, an article in the Messaggero newspaper, about a school visiting the hydroelectric power stations and Lake Campotosto, mentioned it as a technically advanced structure equipped with every comfort of the time, so much so that it was included by the Compagnia Italiana del Turismo in its travel brochures to be proposed abroad.

Hotel by the lake

The first project close to Campotosto dates back to 1963 and consists of the Hotel by the lake [Fig. 15-16] commissioned by Andrea Volpini, a local entrepreneur, to architect Ernesto D'Andrea, which, despite receiving a positive opinion from the Superintendence, was not realised. An imponent and massive building, including a cinema and a theatre, with an apparently Bauhaus-style volume composition and the main bodies emphasised in the elevation. The outdoor swimming pool, planned on the side facing the lake, due to the altitude, would have been usable for a limited period of the year. In the design perspectives, a ski lift appears adjacent to the hotel, a theme that would be repeated by Volpini in other hotel initiatives in the area. In this case, in fact, unlike Castel del Monte, the ski resort was preceded, thanks to the new artificial lake, by the possibilities of water sports, fishing and hunting, as well as hiking. Only later, with the planning of the area, will be considered the inclusion of a large ski area.

Hotel St. Andrew

Volpini's only initiative that materialised was the St. Andrew's Hotel, designed in the 1960s by engineers Giuseppe Alegiani and Filippo Viola, and completed in 1970 in an area of approximately 7 hectares in La Pacina. The work consists of an enormous block of 17500 cubic metres, overlooking the lake with 7 levels in total, capable of accommodating 200 guests. A parallelepiped that on the standard floor servs, in a 'triple body', with 50 linear metres of corridor and a single barycentric staircase, 23 identical rooms per floor, each for two people and equipped with a private toilet. Completely isolated and intended for mass tourism from all over Europe, it was equipped not only with a restaurant and common areas, but also with a tavern-night, roof-top with billiards, a barber's, hairdresser's and infirmary, a bar with



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tobacconist's and gym, and boutiques for display and sale. Everything needed to spend short, medium or long periods in such a spacious 'holiday home'. The two main elevations looked like those of a huge barracks, with an unexpressive rigour and character [Fig. 17].

Vertical Hotel

Volpini's subsequent proposals were not so lucky. He wanted to annex a private ski lift to the hotel, which was rejected because it was located in a 'wooded area of considerable landscape and scenic interest' and would involve cutting down numerous trees, and moreover he wanted to build another structure, the Vertical Hotel. The latter occupies a 300 square meters area with a height of almost 40 metres. It has no communal spaces, considering that those of the nearby St. Andrew's, to which it was connected by a tunnel, would be used for it. With the exception of the recessed and porched ground floor, the upper 10 have almost identical floor plans, which varies in elevation as they rotate, and the building had a dormer termination that gave space to the engine room. Signed off in 1968 by the same engineers as St. Andrew's, it envisages 100 rooms accommodating up to 300 guests, due to the presumed tourist demand for the area. Despite having a building permit from the municipality of Campotosto, the project didn't obtain the clearance by the Superintendency, to which were sent various hypotheses of the image of the new hotel on the lake[Fig. 18]. It was rejected, adding to the landscape reasons also the absence of earthquake-proof requirements, despite the recent earthquakes in the mid-20th century.

Valle Hotel

At the same time as Volpini's entrepreneurial activity, Luciano Deli built the Valle Hotel in Campotosto in 1969. It was designed by architect Arturo Di Francesco and surveyor Silvestro Sulli [Fig. 19]. A small building, capable of integrating into the lake landscape. It consists of four levels, only two of which are visible from street level, while the others are located lower, at lake level. Intended

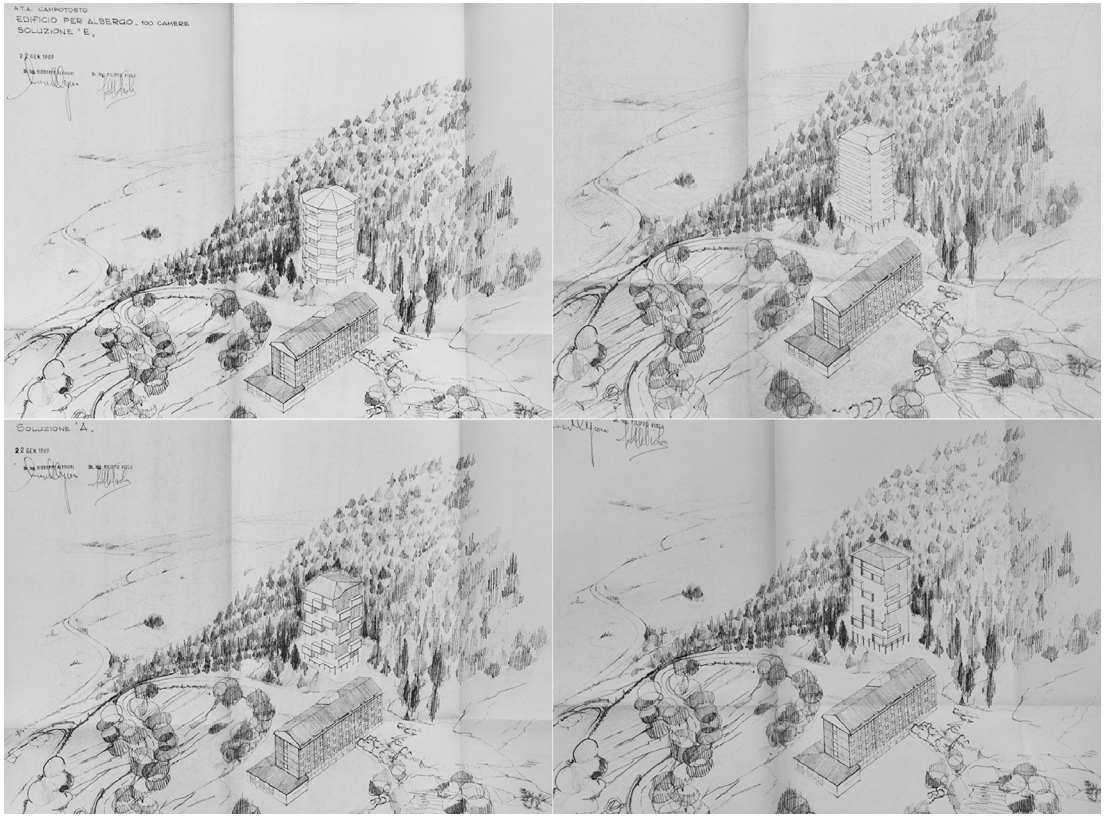

Fig. 17 - On the right: G. Alegiani, F. Viola. Elevation of the Hotel St. Andrew. 1970, ASAQ BN 130

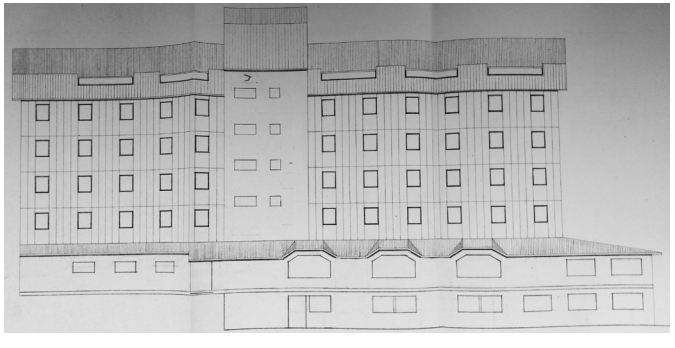

Fig. 18 - Above: G. Alegiani, F. Viola. Several options for the Vertical Hotel, commissioned by A. Volpini, but never allowed by the Superintendency. In the aerial views is also visible the already built Hotel St. Andrew, reall close in order to use common spaces together with the new hotel. 1969, ASAQ BN 130

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for 18 guests, including the manager's residence and a bar-restaurant, the hotel is characterised by a suspended access walkway and balconies jutting out over the lake. In the plan, the theme of the central fireplace as a focal point for the living area recurs. On the façade, the change of external materials coincides with a different internal use, and the false columns on the façade are vaguely reminiscent of the majestic stone pillars of Franco Albini's hotel-refuge Pirovano in Cervinia.

Spatial and urban planning of Campotosto

As already mentioned, these interventions were carried out in the absence of a planning instrument, which arrived in 1975 with the adoption of the Urban and Construction Plan drawn up by Polimorph Studio [Fig. 20]. The same date has the zoning chorography included in the Fabrication Programme, which testified to the desire for a tourist development of the area, aimed to mass and intensive tourism. It represents a number of tourist settlements on the shores of the lake, partly related to water sports and partly to ski resorts. The latter were to be built to the north of Campotosto, on the slopes of Monte di Mezzo, where six ski-lifts were planned, of a no better explained type, some of them also of considerable size, one of which reaching 2 km in length and 2,000 m altitude over sea level at the apex. Part of the ski basin stretched towards Colle di Valle Bove, adjacent to which, in the area between Monte Cardito and Monte Cocullo, a tourist allotment would be built at over 1,500 metres above sea level. More modest was the settlement of water sports facilities that were to be distributed in 4 locations on the banks of the lake. While the further 4 areas destined for private allotments were quite extensive, exceeding the total land occupation of the existing centres of Campotosto, Mascioni and Poggio Cancelli.

None of the planned operations materialised, except for the construction, in 1976, of a few terraced houses proposed by Bartolomeo Quintiliani in the area to be parcelled out in Colle Rudo, and, in the following decades, the arrangement of roads connecting the villages.

The same year, Italo C. Angle, head of the study office of the Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Heritage, signed a proposal for the creation of the Monti Sibillini and Monti della Laga National Park with a development of about 50,000 ha, probably also on the basis of the constraints requested by The World Wildlife Fund in Rome as early as 1974. Although this motion would only come to fruition with the creation of the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park in 1991, including these areas, it manifested, several years in advance, the desire to curb building speculation in areas of high environmental value.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF SKI RESORTS AND EXTREME INLAND AREAS

The debate on inland areas is still alive today and poised between considering them a resource for the territory or a problem to be managed. From the birth of the mountain communities in the 1970s to the recent (2014) National Strategy for Inland Areas (SNAI), plans and programmes have been adopted to save and safeguard these territories socially and economically. As in the cases of Castel del Monte and Campotosto, these places live in a state comparable to abandonment for most of the year and then have to respond to a very high summer tourist influx. To make up for the peak attendance, temporary strategies are implemented with the 'importation' of a non-permanent workforce, which leaves a social void during the rest of the year. Campotosto and Castel del Monte each have about 400 inhabitants, with a housing stock capable of accommodating up to 10 times that number. Would winter and ski tourism have provided growth opportunities for the area? Perhaps it would have guaranteed profitability in the months between

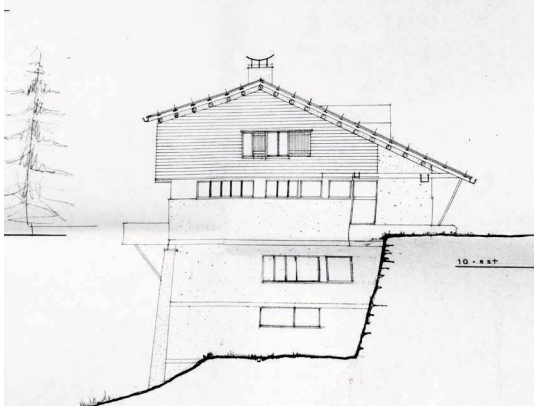

Fig. 19 - On the right, above: A. Di Francesco, S. Sulli. Elevation of the Valle Hotel built for Luciano Deli. 1969, ASAQ BN 130
Fig. 20 - On the right, below: Polimorph Studio. Urban and Construction Plan for the area of Campotosto. 1975, ASAQ BN 72

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Christmas and Easter and a consequent stay of its inhabitants, but the few realisations mentioned, in particular the 'St. Andrew' hotel, which some years after its opening was already in disuse, testify to the failure of mass tourism in these areas of the Apennines. Similar considerations are valid for the ski resorts of Prato Selva and Monte Cristo, which have been closed for decades and have yet to be 'recovered'. What has been lacking and is still lacking is a long-term vision that considers their economic and environmental sustainability. The Gran Sasso area has suffered from the poor infrastructures system and the failure on creating a single ski area that would network the various resorts. At the same time, the lack of abusive development, without adequate planning, has preserved a large part of its territory, which has, therefore, the possibility of aiming at a widespread and equitable tourist network, as already indicated in law no. 991 of 27.07.1952 and highlighted in the Provincial Mountain Convention of 1954, entitled 'Tourism as a factor for increasing the mountain economy'. Considerations, these, that remained unexpressed for a long time, interpreting tourism as a production industry for decades, against an idea of ethical and ecological tourism, which today can instead be realised thanks to the potential of technology.

NOTE

[1] Intended with fixed heels, as opposed to the older telemark which was with a detachable heel.

[2] The Club of Rome in 1972 published 'The Limits to Growth', the first report on the limits to development, highlighting the impossibility of indeterminate growth with respect to environmental resilience.

[3] 72% of total ski facilities. (Dematteis, Nardelli, 2022)

[4] Società Autostrade Romane e Abruzzesi p.a., engineer Mario Bruni managing director.

[5] CAISiDoc is the online documentary system of the Italian Alpine Club.

[6] Inhabitant of Castel del Monte.

[7] Capitignano is close to Campotosto, the other focus of this paper, but almost 100 km from Fonte Vetica. The surveyor Silvestro Sulli was probably born there in 1924. He is also a signatory of the Albergo Valle project in Campotosto, which is discussed below

[8] The first draft was dated 15 May 1966 and the municipality of Castel del Monte approved it on 12 December 1966.

[9] ASAQ stands fos Archivio di Stato dell'Aquila.

[10] BN stands for Bellezze Naturali, a fund form the ASAQ where are collected the projects.

[11] The Superintendency notes on the files 'to be sent out (interlocutorily) until 1 September 1968'.

[12] The existing way was made as an exception because of the tourists who, unable to use the existing bad road, passed over the meadows. A ballasted construction was prescribed, without excavations or elevations. The road connecting to Pescara also had a different route to the present one.

[13] Enlarged with an outdoor veranda and renovated to a design by Vincenzo Pezzopane in 1973.

[14] For more details see Paolucci, M., Ciranna, S. (2023). The other side of Gran Sasso: Campotosto area in the 20th century. In proceedings of IMG23 (pp. 302-309). Alghero: Publica.

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