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The Gran Sasso imagined in archive documents, unrealized tourist and sports projects for the highest mountain of the Appennines

The State Archives of L'Aquila preserve within little-explored fonds projects, plans and programmes concerning mountain contexts of high naturalistic value, traces of which can be found in archive drawings, from which emerge the ambitions of a bygone, albeit close, time. Significant among many of these unrealised plans is the 1964 Gran Sasso d'Italia Tourist and Sports Enhancement Plan, a mountain that hosts the highest peak in the Apennines. As early as 1934, its tourist vocation was determined with the construction of the first cableway in central-southern Italy on its southern side, rising up the valley of L'Aquila and culminating in a hotel at 2130 metres above sea level. However, it was not until the 1960s that the site was the subject of extensive tourism planning based on a project by architect Luigi Orestano, which spread over the 26 km of carriageable road connecting the cable car stations, providing accommodations up to 10.000

people, numerous sports facilities and the construction of 35 ski lifts. Very few works were completed, some of which are now in a state of disrepair. The archive drawings reveal a territorial surreality that would have radically changed the way of living and inhabiting the territory. The wealth of content and graphic designs, identified and filed, has given rise to a database in which 'digital objects', endowed with attributes and geolocated, return a heritage that is often unrealised¹, but essential for understanding territorial developments and the social dynamics of places. Of this 'heritage', the present study focuses exclusively on unrealised works.

Keywords:
Gran Sasso d'Italia; Cultural Heritage; Architectural Project; Ski facilities; Mountain Heritage.

THE SITUATION SURROUNDING THE CREATION OF THE CAMPO IMPERATORE TOURIST SITE

The first tourist development of the Gran Sasso d'Italia area, in Abruzzo, was part of a wider promotional plan carried out under the aegis of the fascist regime and in particular of the *podestà* Adelchi Serena who, since 1926, had been working to create the 'Greater L'Aquila', an important city in the Abruzzi and national context. This included the incorporation into the municipality of L'Aquila of the neighbouring districts, including Camarda, which stretched over the slopes of the Gran Sasso. Among the issues of great public interest, Serena also tackled that of sport and tourism, thus the Gran Sasso Tourist Centre was founded in 1934, and at the same time the construction of the cableway from Fonte Cerreto to Campo Imperatore, and there, the Campo Imperatore Hotel were built.

The history of this tourist resort, born on the L'Aquila side of the highest mountain in the Apennines, a legacy of Count Aldo Bonacossa's first ski tour of the entire massif from 1923 onwards, was characterised by numerous unimplemented and unfinished plans, programmes and projects.

UNREALISED PROJECTS OF THE 1930S

The cableway project connecting Fonte Cerreto at about 1100 m.a.s.l. and Campo Imperatore at about 2100 m.a.s.l. initially consisted of two sections, of which only the first was realised in 1934. The second, was supposed to link Sella di Pratoriscio² to the saddle between Monte Aquila and Monte Portella at 2400 m.a.s.l., a point very close to the summit of Corno Grande, allowing the ascent in just a few hours. In order to magnify this work of the regime, the engineer Antonio Consiglio was commissioned to create a stone engraving of about 1.000 m² on the rocky shield near the summit of Monte Aquila, visible to those who would have faced the second cableway section. These two projects were not followed up, as well as other initiatives envisaged in the Gran Sasso Tourist Centre Master Plan, despite the fact that the mayor, the lawyer Giovanni Centi-Colella, who succeeded Serena, in 1935 commissioned the engineer Giuseppe Pini to carry out a study for the construction of a tunnel with a

two-by-two metre section, which could be used in all seasons between Campo Imperatore and Campo Pericoli, a nival basin at an altitude of 2300 metres. The CTGS Master Plan³ also included a tourist settlement at Fonte Cerreto (Fig. 1) and a ski jump at Campo Imperatore, designed by engineer Emilio Tomassi (Fig. 2).

THE RAISING OF GRAN SASSO D'ITALIA AS AN INTERNATIONAL DESTINATION IN THE 1960S: THE TOURISM AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN REMAINED UNREALISED

Background to the Valorisation Plan

The war interrupted the development of tourism at Campo Imperiale⁴, which had to wait until the 1960s to resume. In the wake of the conferences organised between 1952 and 1956 by the Institute of Mountain Architecture in Bardonecchia, the Apennines too returned to the idea of "Tourism as a factor for increasing the mountain economy", the title of the 1954 Provincial Mountain Convention. Tourism as a complement to the historical agro-sylvo-pastoral activities, therefore delegated to individual private initiative on a small scale and investment. The evident change between the 1950s and 1960s in the Central Apennines was that winter tourism was no longer considered as a complementary activity, but as the main economic activity. In 1961, engineers Federico Gorio and Marcello Vittorini drew up a project that anticipated what would later be included in the Gran Sasso Development Plan. This focused on the construction of a residential tourist centre at the base of the cableway, for 700 people, consisting of residential units of 120 m² (Fig. 3) plus a 200-bed hotel. A zoned chorography showed other areas for tourist settlements and ski facilities to connect the Monte Cristo area to Campo Imperatore. Of interest is the "organic rehabilitation and restoration with a unified design" of the village of Assergi, for the purpose of tourist redevelopment. The report noted that building a hotel in a pleasant location was no longer sufficient to transform it into a competitive tourist destination, as it had been in the 19th century. The ease of travel had given rise to "movement tourism", characterised by short stays, flanked by a persistent "residential tourism", with periodic returns and extended stays. The engineers observed that in order



Fig. 1 - E. Tomassi, E. Lenti. Fonte Cerreto tourist settlement near the cableway departure point. 1935, ASAQ M 265

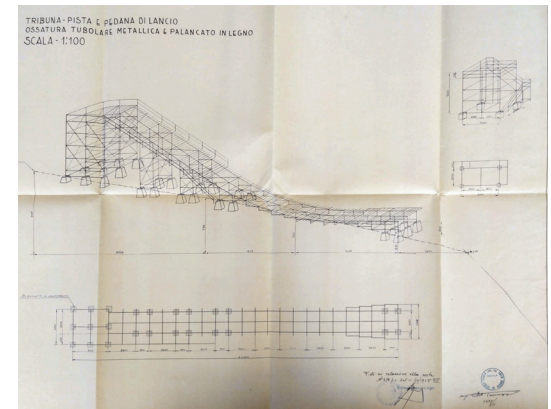


Fig. 2 - E. Tomassi. Ski Jump Project, Campo Imperatore. 1935, ASAQ M 372

to guarantee the continuity of the influx of tourists, the landscape and artistic qualities were needed, typical of the historic village, as well as sports facilities as new attractors. Thus, the urban regeneration of the village of Assergi was envisaged, as so was the redevelopment of the historic centre of L'Aquila. In agreement, the design of the Tourist Centre at the base of the cable car emulated the characteristics of the village, with low but fairly dense buildings and the vernacular features of the stone house. These features are not evident in the project plan, in which the 7 clusters and around 30 lots

do not make up a building continuum, typical of the compact medieval village. Nothing appears realised in these plans.

The Gran Sasso Tourism and Sports Enhancement Plan Projects and reports of the broader programme for the tourist and sports development of the Gran Sasso, signed by architect Luigi Orestano⁵ for the companies Montecristo S.p.A. and Campo Imperatore S.p.A. (represented by surveyor Vittorio Rimondi and based in Rome) and drafted on the basis of the previous Master Plan of the CTGS by Enrico Lenti and Emilio Tomassi, date back to 1964.

The plan was based on the sizing of possible users, also taking into account the construction of the Rome-Adriatic motorway that was being built, passing through L'Aquila with the Assergi gate right at the foot of the Gran Sasso d'Italia. A rough calculation estimated 40.000 skiers, so a capacity of at least 40.000 people/hour was aimed for, hence 30-35 mechanical lifts. From this, 8.000 car parking spaces were deducted⁶, to be organised on 340.000 m² of surface area. This is the

kind of invasive behaviour and urbanisation that is typical of suburban planning, where needs are estimated and activities placed on a blank sheet of paper. The planner did not seem to ponder the environmental, orographical conditions and the logistical and technical difficulties involved in realisation, and proceeded by settling the estimated maximum capacity and the resulting recreational and sports facilities. The building study continued by assuming that, of the 40.000 visitors, 10.000 would be interested in staying overnight, a number on which the accommodation buildings were sized. A forecast that did not take into account those who, coming from Rome, would be unlikely to stay overnight, given the distance of just over an hour from the snow fields. The plan included hotels, motels, hostels, camping sites, cottages, nursing homes, collective accommodation, restaurants, shops, bars, taverns, offices, banks, cinemas, churches and first aid stations: thus, constituting an evolution of the CTGS Master Plan of the late 1930s. The sports facilities would have included: 18-hole golf course, swimming pool, mountaineering school, tennis courts, ice rink, Olympic ski

jump, skating rink, outdoor and indoor athletics hall, bowling alley, go-kart track, volleyball court clay pigeon shooting range, space for international events and 35 skiing facilities of various types, ranging from the Campo Imperatore plain near the ruins of Sant'Egidio to the Campo Pericoli basin at the foot of the Corno Grande peak. The zoning indicated the main areas interested by accommodation and residential facilities, distributed along the connecting road between Fonte Cerreto and Campo Imperatore, in the following localities: Val Paganica, Colle Solaro, Bosco Aquilano, Fonte Sasso, Vado Foletto and Colle S. Pietro. For the implementation of the Redevelopment Plan, five phases were defined to be resolved in three three-year periods, according to the following timetable: in the first one, 40% of the infrastructures, 25% of the mechanical ski-lifts and 15% of the accommodation facilities were to be realised; in the second one, a further 40% of the first, 25% of the second and 25% of the third; to conclude the last one, the percentages of 20-50-60% were to be achieved, completing 100% of the planned works within ten years.

This 'ambitious' plan for a mountaineering resort (Fig. 4,5) materialised only in the form of modest ski facilities built at Monte Cristo, flanked by the accommodation facilities of the Motel Valparaiso and the Lutetia Refuge, the latter of which was never completed (Fig. 6). The General Assembly of the Council of State, denied that the tourist-sports interest was a valid reason to de-demanise land in civic use, freezing certain procedures for the alienation of land affected by the Plan initiated by the L'Aquila municipality, under an agreement, for only 7 lire per m². The companies already had 1.750 hectares at their disposal when the almost 30-year agreement with the municipality was signed, but Italia Nostra⁷ protested strongly against the alienation of the public land, both because of the landscape quality that placed it on the level of a national asset on which the municipal authority alone could not decide, and because of the subsidised price. Even the user estimates and the sizing of the facilities were rather imprecise, warned against by environmentalists and disproportionate for the final use, and a definitive brake on the completion of the Plan⁸. However, it retained the multidisciplinary nature typical of early 20th century winter resorts, a quality that was lost in the second half

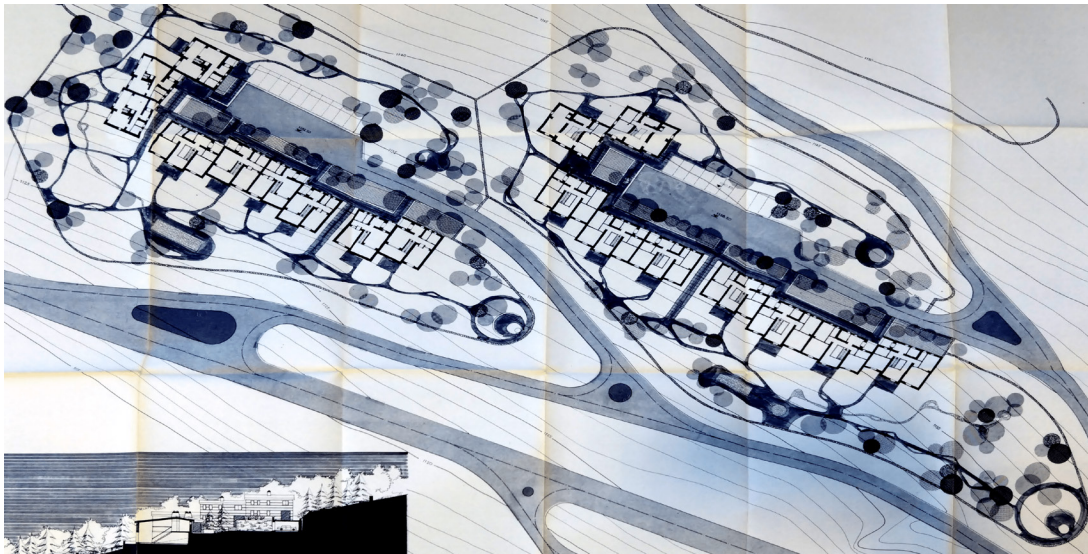


Fig. 3 - F. Gorio, M. Vittorini. Project for 2 of the 7 tourist residential cores at Fonte Cerreto. Plan and section. 1961, ASAQ BN 106

of the century in favour of the monoculture of alpine skiing, more akin to the mechanisms of mass tourism. Downhill skiing embraces the theme of fun for speed and relaxation and is implemented on ski fields to the north for optimum snow but with sunny areas in the valley to soften it after skiing: contrasts that make a skiing holiday attractive and rich in emotions.

The evolution of the road infrastructure to and through the Gran Sasso of L'Aquila

During the 1960s, the initiatives launched for the development of the Gran Sasso saw the completion of the road from Fonte Cerreto to Campo Imperatore, with the construction of the 4th and 5th sections as early as 1962. The completion of this infrastructure took several decades, delaying the arrival of cars at Campo Imperiale. Engineer Tomassi's project dates back to 1939, but only three sections were completed until the early 1960s, when the Fossa di Paganica saddle was reached and the 4th and 5th sections (Fig. 7) linked the locality of Sant'Egidio to Vado di Corno and then to Campo Imperatore (Fig. 8). This made it possible to arrive there, at least in the summer season, by car, changing the fruition of the place forever. The completion of the road was also accelerated in order to facilitate geological investigations in the Fontari and Vado di Corno areas, necessary for the Gran Sasso tunnel project. While of the five cantonment houses (Fig. 9) planned, only the first near Fonte Cerreto was realised. The last piece of this network was the Assergi section of the A24 motorway from Rome, inaugurated in 1971. This event, preceding by 13 years the inauguration of the tunnel that would connect Rome to the Adriatic and the Teramo side of the Gran Sasso, guaranteed a period of predilection for Campo Imperatore with respect to other tourist resorts.

INDIVIDUAL TOURISM INITIATIVES IN THE 1960S ON THE L'AQUILA SIDE OF THE GRAN SASSO

The enthusiasm of the 1960s led many private investors to put forward proposals for buildings, intended for tourism or personal use, often outside the plan forecasts. These initiatives were located along the entire route of the Monte Cristo tourist site up to Campo Imperatore, in other words from the Borgo di Assergi



Fig. 4 - Above: L. Orestano. Excerpt from the Gran Sasso Tourism and Sports Development Plan. Monte Cristo area: allotments, ski facilities, tourist buildings. 1964, ASAQ M 3168

Fig. 5 - Below, left: L. Orestano. Excerpt from the Gran Sasso Tourism and Sports Development Plan: Campo Imperatore, the highest part of the ski basin, with numerous sports facilities. 1964, ASAQ M 3168

Fig. 6 - Below, right: Tourist brochure of Campo Nevada at the Fossa di Paganica, part of Monte Cristo ski area. 1965, ASAQ AASTAQ



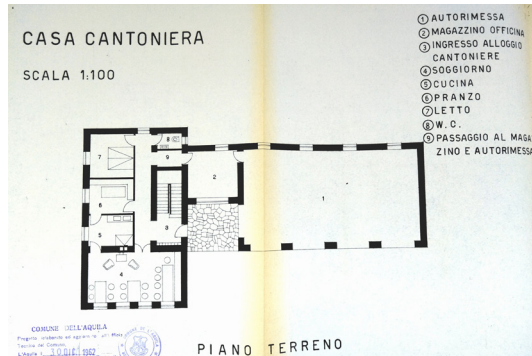
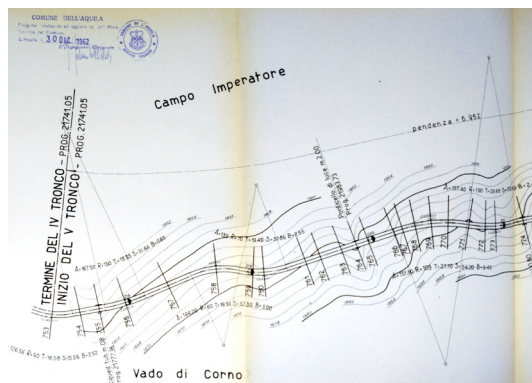


Fig. 7 - Above: E. Tomassi. Fifth and last section of the road to Campo Imperatore. 1962, ASAQ M 380

Fig. 8 - Middle: Campo Imperatore station in the late 1960s. ASAQ AASTAQ
Fig. 9 - Below: E. Tomassi. Typical cantonment house, to be built one per section. 1962, ASAQ M 380

to Fonte Cerreto and on to Monte Cristo and Campo Imperatore themselves. The following are the works planned but not realised, in the sequence in which they are located along the described route, the same path a tourist would take when arriving by car at the Gran Sasso.

Le Rosce holiday complex – 915 m.a.s.l.

Just outside the town of Assergi is the proposed hotel complex Le Rosce by Angelo Faccia designed by engineer Vincenzo Roscetti. Three bodies with 24 terraced tourist dwellings on two levels, staggered in plan, and a 120-beds hotel. The central body emerging up to the fifth level and containing the rooms, had two annexed branches extending up to the second floor and including all the public spaces and services of the structure. The 27.000 m3 planned in the complex resembled a conference centre, so much so that it was rejected by the superintendent architect Mario Moretti due to its excessive volume and height, alteration of the state of the site and architectural elements that did not correspond to traditional Abruzzo values.

Hotel in Sasso Pizzuto – 1060 m.a.s.l.

A few hundred metres from the cableway station, on the road to Fonte Cerreto, stood the hotel proposed by Amilcare Tiberti, designed by engineer Bruno Pelliccione in 1968, which was rejected by the Superintendence due to its excessive size⁹, its architecture poorly contextualised in the landscape, and the lack of a Construction Plan for the area. The report pointed out that the offer of beds and services at Fonte Cerreto was insufficient compared to the demand. With regard to the architectural language, an analysis of the elevations (Fig. 10) shows a giant order of extrados pillars covering the first two levels with what appears to be stone cladding. The rest of the body which rises three storeys from the basement, narrows sharply, leaving a wide terrace around the parallelepiped of the bedrooms that culminated under pitches with articulated slopes, supported by wooden struts in the major projections. The regular positioning of the windows gave monotonous fronts, with the envelope being partly plastered and partly wooden.

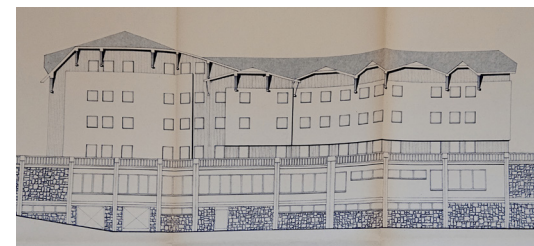


Fig. 10 - Above: B. Pelliccione. Main elevation of the hotel for A. Tiberti. 1968, ASAQ BN 129

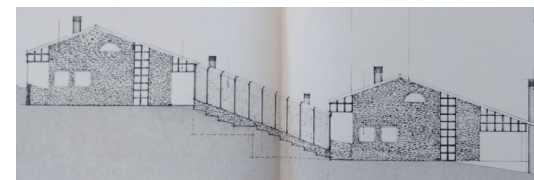


Fig. 11 - Middle: E. Marcantonio. Service facilities at the Fonte Cerreto campsite. During the Sixties, ASAQ AASTAQ

Camping in Fonte Cerreto – 1120 m.a.s.l.

The L'Aquila Provincial Tourist Agency proposed the creation of a campsite (Fig. 11) at Fonte Cerreto, which had already been contemplated in Gorio and Vittorini's Tourist Centre. The project signed by engineer Enrico Marcantonio was only partially realised. It covered an area of about 60.000 m2 and included various communal and sports facilities, which do not exist in the only campsite currently existing.

Single family tourist residences – 1120-1200 m.a.s.l.

Today, in the area of Fonte Cerreto, there are several small chalets and private residences, some of which were never built, such as: the single-family villa designed by engineer Paolo Cimino in 1969 for Almerindo D'Amato, a modest two-storey structure with a covered area of 140 m2; the three-storey villa with a floor area of 12 by 16 m near Fonte Pedagna for Mirella Cardarelli (Fig. 12,14), designed by engineer Bruno Pelliccione in 1967, with a large projecting terrace on the valley front, whose boldness seems to have been inspired by F. L. Wright's Kaufmann House; the picturesque little villa near the access to Valle Fredda for Carlo Ferrante

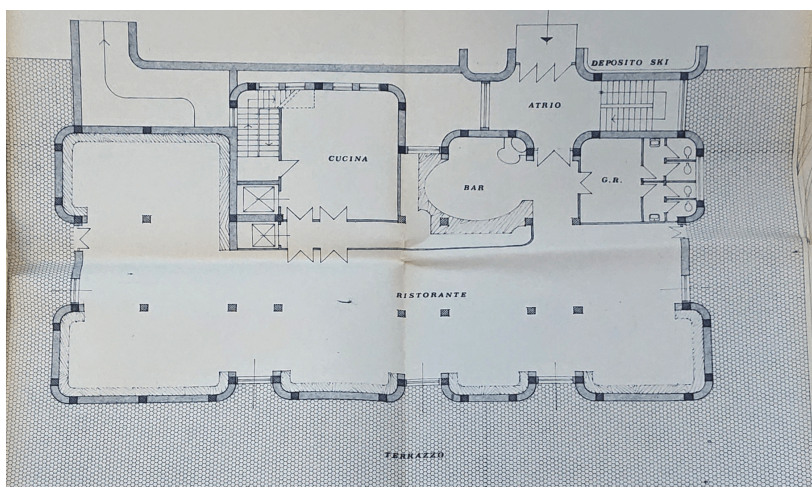
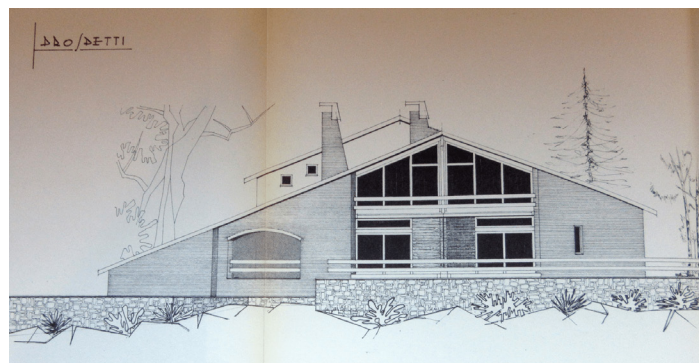
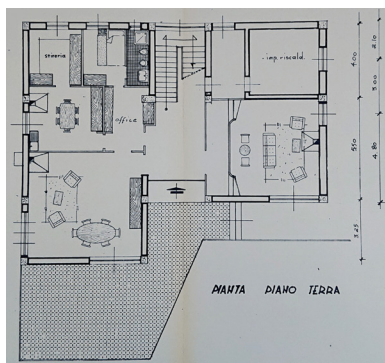


Fig. 12 – Above, left: B. Pelliccione. Perspective of the house for M. Caldarelli. 1967, ASAQ BN 97a

Fig. 13 – Above, right: G. Maurizio. View of the chalet for C. Ferrante in Valle Fredda. 1970, ASAQ BN 97a

Fig. 14 – Middle, left: B. Pelliccione. Ground plan, house of M. Caldarelli. 1967, ASAQ BN 97a

Fig. 15 – Middle, right: P. Cimino. Main elevation of the house for L. Feneziani in Fonte Cerreto. 1969, ASAQ BN 121

Fig. 16 – Left: A. Angelini. Floor plan of the restaurant-bar at the forecourt of Montecristo. 1971, ASAQ BN 97a

(Fig. 13), designed by engineer Giuseppe Maurizio in 1970, with a rectangular floor plan, a compact volume with two roof pitches and wooden decorations on the loggias, windows and eaves, which gave a vernacular character to the dwelling; the Feneziani house, built in the form of a variant, while the first project by engineer Paolo Cimino had a multifaceted plan, with triangular shapes at the corners, accommodating ancillary spaces such as staircases and loggias, resolving the outcome in a slightly Venturi-inspired elevation (Fig. 15).

Restaurant-bar at the forecourt of Monte Cristo – 1470 m.a.s.l.

In 1971, the architect Augusto Angelini designed a restaurant-bar for the CTGS on the esplanade of the Monte Cristo ski resort, along the road leading up to Campo Imperatore. It overlooked the basin of L'Aquila and the southern slopes of the entire Gran Sasso, in a more panoramic position than the existing refuge. The structure had semicircular recesses near the walkways and overlooks (Fig. 16), unusual for a mountain building, perhaps designed to reduce the effect of the wind on the structure. A low and wide building, 46 by 26 m, with a technical-architectural character typical of the time, with exposed reinforced concrete infills cast in situ with polyester in interposed panels.

Enlargement of the Campo Imperator Hotel – 2130 m.a.s.l.

The hotel at Campo Imperatore, at the end of the driveway, was also the subject of expansion and renovation wishes during these years. The first plan by engineer Vincenzo Bonadè Bottino¹⁰ (Fig. 17), already modified during construction, led to the creation of the east wing, about 12 metres longer than the west, which extruded from the main semi-cylindrical volume. The 1965 renovation project by engineer Paolo Averardi, approved in 1968 (Fig. 18), restored the central axis of symmetry of the building body by extending the west wing by the same length and, at the same time, completely changed the interior layout and modernised the mechanical systems. A modest increase in volume led from 67 rooms to 90, now with private bathrooms, and from 99 beds to 150. The transformation was followed by the reorganisation of the common areas, which were increased from 1.830 m² to 2.880 m², necessary

to ensure a pleasant stay of customers in bad weather. Finally, the snack room for day visitors was enlarged to 154 seats, so that up to 462 people could have lunch in three shifts.

THE 1990S, FROM THE ABANDONMENT OF THE MONTE CRISTO FACILITIES TO NEW PROJECTS

The Special Territorial Project of the Scindarella-Monte Cristo Area of Particular Complexity

The desire for a tourist enhancement of the Gran Sasso area through an increase in ski facilities was latent for a long time, so much so that in the same years in which the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park was being established¹¹, the Abruzzo Region entrusted architect Gianlorenzo Conti and engineer Dino Pignatelli with the drafting of the Special Territorial Project¹² of the Scindarella – Monte Cristo Area of Particular Complexity of the Gran Sasso massif. In the 1995 Scindarella - Monte Cristo PST (Fig. 19), on the basis of data from the INFN¹³ and the Centro Turistico Aquilano, and consistent with current landscape and town planning legislation and the expected users, a new basin called Fosse di Paganica was planned, connecting the Campo Imperatore and Monte Cristo stations. The abandoned facilities of Campo Nevada¹⁴ were recovered, from which branched two chairlifts to Monte Cristo and a gondola to Monte Scindarella. The latter, the centre-piece of the future ski area, thanks to two additional ski lifts on its northern slope, was connected with new chair lifts to the facilities of the Campo Imperatore Basin. The Monte Cristo Basin was implemented with two chairlifts inserted between the existing ski lifts. This increased the hourly capacity of users from 5.000 in two basins to 14.700 in three. Eleven new mechanical lifts would relaunch the winter resort of Campo Imperatore and Monte Cristo, generating new access to the snow fields from the forecourt of Monte Cristo and the Fossa di Paganica. The area of cableway's arriving station at Campo Imperatore would only be modernised.

The Scindarella - Monte Cristo PST was not implemented and the Monte Cristo facilities, due to their low altitude and mainly southern exposure, were closed in 2001. Also suffering was the Campo Imperatore ski resort, often adversely affected by bad weather and strong winds, which, with alternative access and ski

fields further down, could have been better exploited. The flaw in the plan was to perpetuate the now widespread monoculture of downhill skiing, without diversifying the offer, a feature that today, seeing a revival of multidisciplinary interest in the mountains, is fundamental to the survival of the resorts.

In 2024, the same project-plan has been proposed again to enhance the Gran Sasso for tourism.

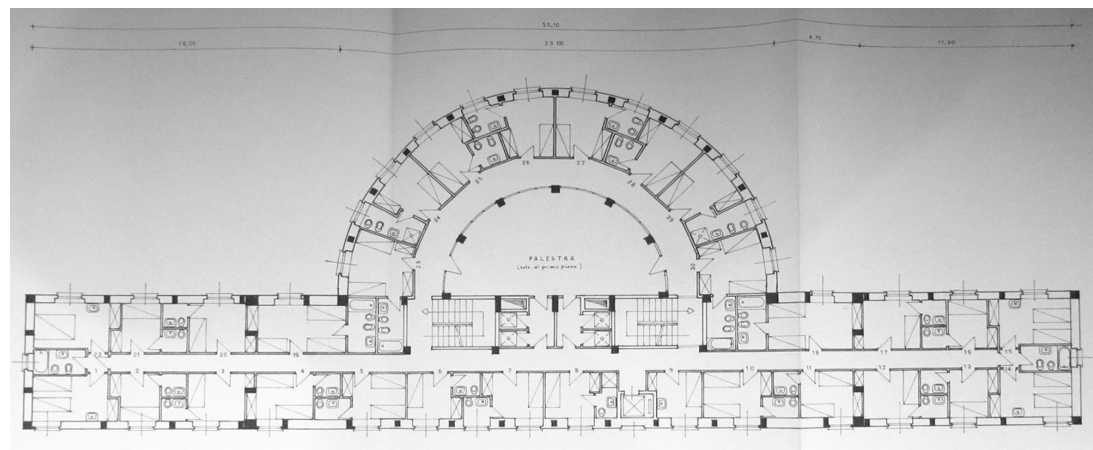
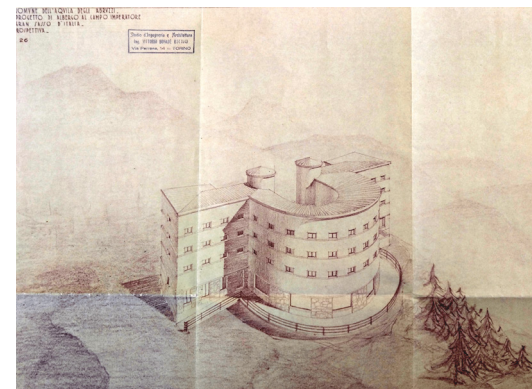
CONCLUSIONS

The founding character of the Campo Imperatore station, designed to bring man closer to the highest peak of the Apennines, affected subsequent tourist settlement strategies, given the ruggedness of the site, not ideal for the establishment of a holiday resort. As early as the 1930s, the scheme of a cableway serving a high-altitude hotel, with no ski slopes on the cableway track, but on the opposite side, proved to be inefficient, as it required additional mechanical ascents, resulting in an intrinsic economic unsustainability: many lifts for few snow fields, therefore high costs for few people. This was the scheme of the third typology

among those identified by Jean Pierre Sabatou in his essay *Urbanisme en montagne*, similar to the Cortina model, with a cable car and from there further mechanical ski lifts¹⁵. The peculiar climatic conditions of a station located on a saddle instead of at the bottom of a valley, as suggested in the essay, as well as the long castling route of more than 3 km to reach snowfields developed over a height difference of only 200 m, and finally the possibility of accommodating only a few 200 guests, were factors that determined Campo Imperatore's economic unsustainability for winter tourism. Despite the obvious environmental qualities and the

Fig. 17 – Right: V. Bonadè Bottino. Project perspective of the Campo Imperatore Hotel. 1930s, ASAQ M 358

Fig. 18 – Below: P. Averardi. Plan of the Campo Imperatore Hotel extension. 1965, ASAQ BN 121



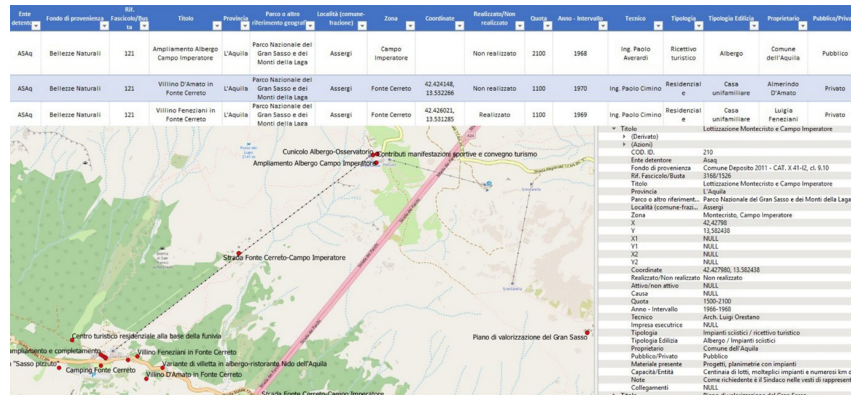


Fig. 19 – Above: G. Conti, D. Pignatelli. The new ski facilities of the Scindarella - Monte Cristo PST. 1995, ASAg, AASTAQ
Fig. 20 - Left: M. Paolucci. Tabular inventory .csv transferred to a GIS platform ready for networking. 2024

charm of the location, which still leads many users to prefer it to other sites, the station has renewed the cableway system just twice in 90 years¹⁶, increasing the capacity from 65 persons/hour to 760 persons/hour, and replaced the ski lifts with chair lifts.

Furthermore, the Campo Imperatore site had no precedent as a tourist resort, not even at the valley station at Fonte Cerreto. The first winter resorts were often established where there was already a summertime attendance, for holiday as well as thermal and therapeutic purposes, or where there was an infrastructure of mountain passes. Areas that over time were equipped with hotels, taverns, hospices, sanatoriums. Campo Imperatore was born exclusively as a winter resort and only in contemporary times is it experiencing the process of conversion to summer tourism. The colonisation of the Gran Sasso in the 20th century hardly retraces the routes and passes historically frequented, the current roads intersect the tracks of transhumant herds and flocks several times, without overlaying them. Two phenomena, tourism and sheep-farming, which in this area continue to run side by side, rarely crossing each other, sometimes brushing against one another, but occupying different spaces and using different routes, ensuring that the mountain, outside the tourist flows concentrated in a few poles, retains an ancient attraction, little affected by the developments of the last century.

To realise the gap between planned and actually realised tourist facilities, it should be noted that there are, mostly concentrated in the Fonte Cerreto area, only three hotels, a few restaurants and a dozen private cottages. These are accompanied, higher up, by the Montecristo Refuge, the Campo Imperatore Hostel and Hotel, and the Fontari Refuge. Added to these are a cable car and two active chairlifts, with four abandoned lifts at Monte Cristo and a couple of hotel structures that have never been activated. These activities operate on a seasonal basis, all in the summer period, a portion in the winter, others have been abandoned for decades. Numerically, in terms of accommodation capacity and the number of ski facilities built, they amount to not even one-thirtieth of the total plans that have remained unrealised.

In order to understand the complexity of such a territorial structure, which now preserves only a few traces of the site's tourist anthropisation prospects, it was

essential to generate an information system capable of including projects, information, geolocations, personalities, performers, etc. The projects and plans analysed come mainly from the State Archives of L'Aquila, from partially unexplored funds such as the Natural Beauties Fund of the Abruzzo Region, which conserves the Landscape Authorisations issued by the local Superintendency, concerning most of the architectural heritage in these territories, as they have been considered, since 1939¹⁷, of high environmental value. The detailed inventory of each project, using significant attributes necessary to filter the entire content and guide the search, included geolocation on standard OSM base maps in the WGS84 reference system, using QGIS 3.16.16-Hannover software (Fig. 20), to enable territorial interpretation and diachronic analysis of the effects that mass tourism had in the 20th century on the Abruzzo landscape. In 2024, a test was carried out to put the research online using the queryable Omeka platform, while within the Department of Civil, Construction, Architecture and Environmental Engineering, Department of Excellence MUR 2023-2027 of the University of L'Aquila, a Documentation Centre is being set up, including an open source digital archiving system. This virtual space, accessible and implementable by the scientific community and beyond, will house this documentation and act as a tool for analysing the multifactorial reasons behind the crisis affecting ski resorts and, more generally, mountain resorts. Campo Imperatore, the highest winter resort in the Appennines, is not immune from problems related to climate change, and requires in-depth contextual, territorial, social, historical and situational analyses to assess conversion factors and livelihood possibilities.

NOTE

[1] The database resulting from the research includes design material of built and unbuilt architecture in a mountainous context. The contribution analyses those not realised in the Gran Sasso d'Italia area.

[2] Toponym for the area currently and commonly called Campo Imperatore.

[3] Later, CTGS. The Master Plan was entrusted in 1935 to the engineers Enrico Lenti and Emilio Tomassi.

[4] As footnote 2

[5] Luigi Orestano, architect, urban planner and sculptor, was a member of the National Institute of Urban Planning and a former planner of tourist centres on the Amalfi, Cilento and Sorrento coasts.

[6] The calculation is unclear, as 3 persons per car are estimated for the 8.000 parking spaces, thus 24.000 users in total. The remaining 16.000, compared to the 40.000 expected skiers, are perhaps imagined to arrive on site by public transport as they are not included in the expected car count.

[7] Italia Nostra ONLUS is an association for the protection of cultural, artistic and natural heritage, founded in 1955.

[8] The Convention of 27 August 1964 had other delicate points. First, the use of funds from the Cassa del Mezzogiorno by the L'Aquila municipality, which would have required so much in this operation that it would have deprived neighbouring territories and thus probably created enemies to the operation. In addition, the management companies undertook for

a number of years to pay percentages of the profitability of the ski facilities to the municipality, which on its part was alienating territories that were civic uses in the public interest, a sort of economic operation to reclaim common law assets.

[9] A 110-bed building on five levels, with the first two configured with a floor space of almost 60x20 m.

[10] Designer of the Sestriere ski centre, in which the well-known cylindrical tower-hotels he designed appear, with clear affinities also to the hotel project for Campo Imperatore.

[11] Framework Law on Protected Areas No. 394 of 1991. The park was not definitively established until 1995, but the first proposal dates back to 1980 in the form of a Gran Sasso Natural Park Project with the patronage of the Abruzzo Region. In 1981, the Italian Government had indicated the Gran Sasso as an asset of universal and exceptional value to UNESCO, to include it in the world list of cultural and natural heritage. The process culminated in the National Park in 1991.

[12] Later, PST.

[13] Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (National Institute of Nuclear Physics), founded in 1951, has one of its laboratory sites in the Gran Sasso, near the motorway tunnel.

[14] The aforementioned Motel Valparaiso and Refugio Lutetia.

[15] In the same essay, the first typology is assimilated to resorts such as Davos, where from a cable car one descends several long

runs into the valley and a bus brings all skiers back to the base of the cable car. The second typology is instead the Sestriere model, with several lifts serving parallel slopes converging on the main station.

[16] In 1964 they renovated the existing plant and in 1989 they built a new one.

[17] Law No. 1497 of 1939 for the protection of scenic beauty.

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