

Design-build through re-use at “Casamatta”

At the place called “Mulini di Gurone” (“Mills of Gurone”) in Malnate (Varese), a group of volunteers of the Environmental Association “Legambiente” is rehabilitating a country building (“Casamatta”) in order to give it, in perspective, the capability to host people as a hostel - for short-period stays - and to host seminars and workshops about ecology and environmental sustainability. (It should be noted that the term “Casamatta” is a pun, because in Italian it means both “crazy house” and “pillbox”.) The hosting function would be favoured by the breath-taking beauty of the natural place (<https://casamattagurone.wordpress.com/>), and its amazing history.

In the past academic year, the design and construction activities have been developed in the framework of some master theses for rehabilitating parts of the building and its surroundings via recycling and re-use. The activities have been based on the design proposals by the authors of the thesis, followed by self-construction via a design-build workshop.

The group of friends belonging to the Association is now willing to host new works of rehabilitation and extension of parts of the building.

The theses should include the definition of design proposals for the rehabilitation of the building; and among each of those proposals, a part to be realized in self-construction by the students in the design-build seminar will be chosen. The condition for the buildability of the project is that it has been agreed with the friends of the Association (that is, they should approve the project in its general terms, very much as clients would do), and the project should be buildable without external aid and at no cost, just re-using, re-adapting and re-cycling existing building components and materials - as well as other components and materials.

The maximum number of theses is 4, for about 6 students.

The proponents of these theses are Proff. Gennaro Postiglione (who could be the supervisor of one thesis), Gian Luca Brunetti (who could be the supervisor of four theses – in the case in which they were developed by one person each) and Giovanni Di Luzio (who will be the co-supervisor of the theses).

The thesis works will make reference to a group of advisors who has also been active in the thesis workshop of the past academic year, composed by Profs Roberto Rizzi, Paola Salvoldi, Antonio Da Silva Ferreira De Carvalho, Stefania Sabatinelli, e Marta Averna), and will count on the support of Arch. Marco Zanini (ceo di Re-sign SB Srl), as an academic tutor, and Arch. Alberto Minazzi - both for the Association of Volunteers of “Casamatta”.

The candidates will be accepted after a discussion with the proponents concerning the objectives of the thesis.