

PERPETUATING STONE

sustainable tourism through rehabilitation



What is the ideal tourism?

« A gentle, slow, sustainable tourism that enhances our cultural heritage, the environment, families would rediscover nature and adventure. Not just an exploitation but a respectful exchange.»

-inhabitant from Verzasca valley

Verzasca valley, in Ticino, has been experiencing drastic depopulation for several years and counts today only 828 permanent inhabitants. In contrast, many tourists come to visit the valley for day trips or to rent houses. Tourists and locals co-exist in the valley but don't interact.

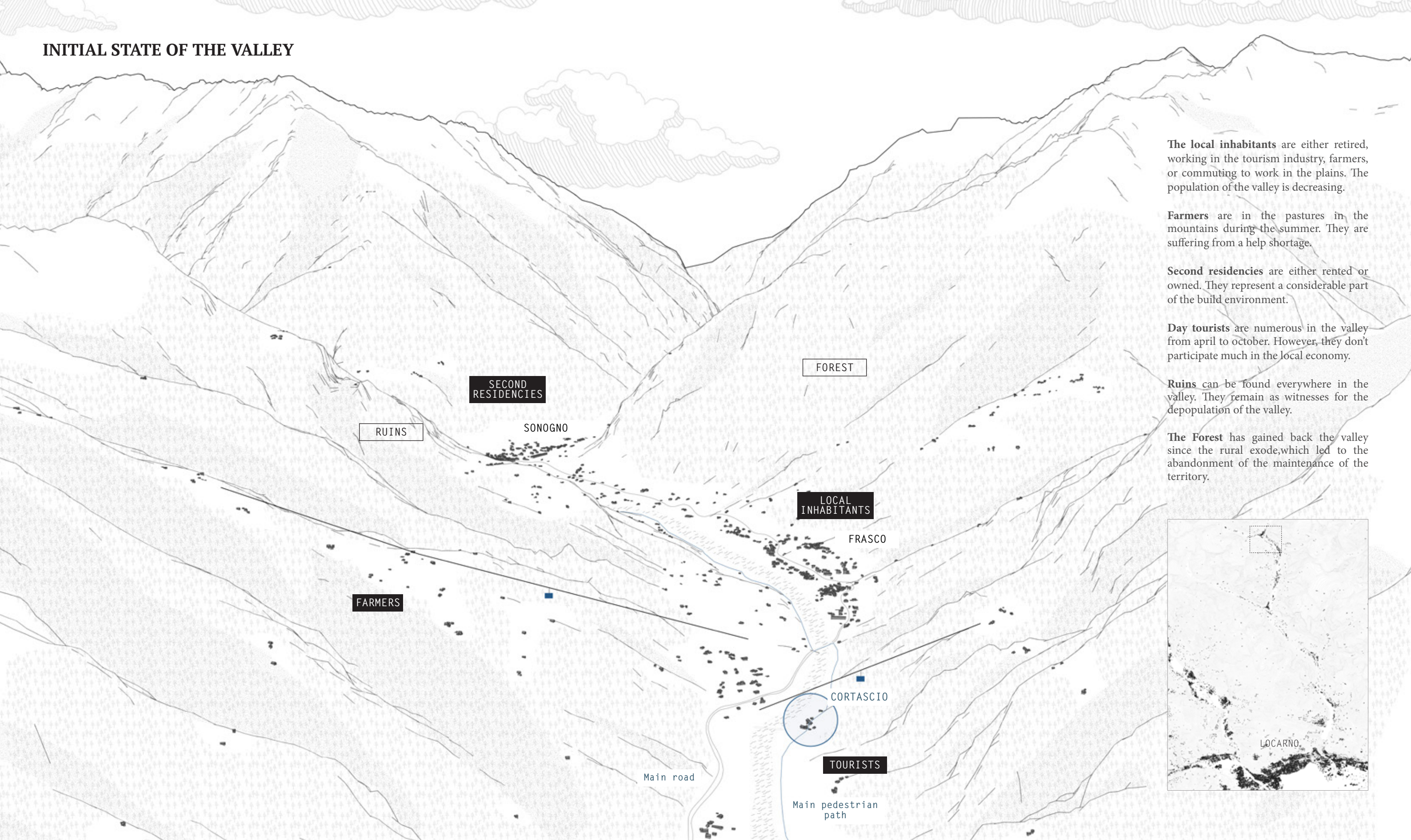
The project intends to orient tourism towards the local community and their territory to create an exchange that supports them while giving tourists a chance to become active visitors.

The implementation of this sustainable tourism starts with the renovation and extension of Cortascio, a small abandoned hamlet. At the end of its transformation, the village becomes a place to learn about the valley, participate in activities, and meet. The skills acquired by volunteers in Cortascio then spread to the valley.

The learning and exchange tourism starts during the construction.

Cortascio becomes the mediator between tourists and the local community through architecture and the maintenance of Verzasca's territory.

INITIAL STATE OF THE VALLEY



The local inhabitants are either retired, working in the tourism industry, farmers, or commuting to work in the plains. The population of the valley is decreasing.

Farmers are in the pastures in the mountains during the summer. They are suffering from a help shortage.

Second residencies are either rented or owned. They represent a considerable part of the build environment.

Day tourists are numerous in the valley from april to october. However, they don't participate much in the local economy.

Ruins can be found everywhere in the valley. They remain as witnesses for the depopulation of the valley.

The Forest has gained back the valley since the rural exode, which led to the abandonment of the maintenance of the territory.



PROJECT TIMELINE

1850s

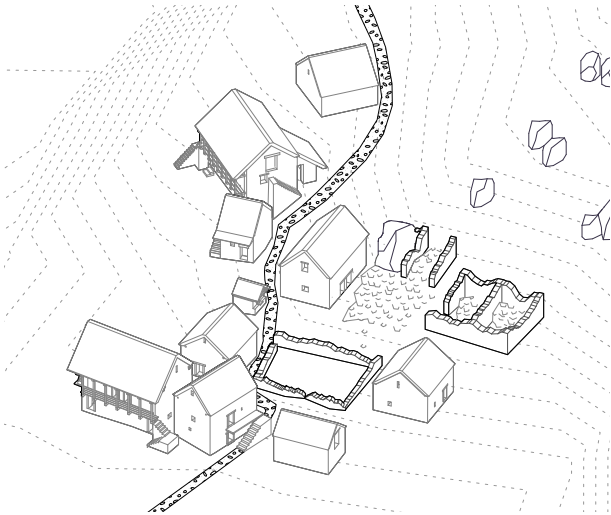
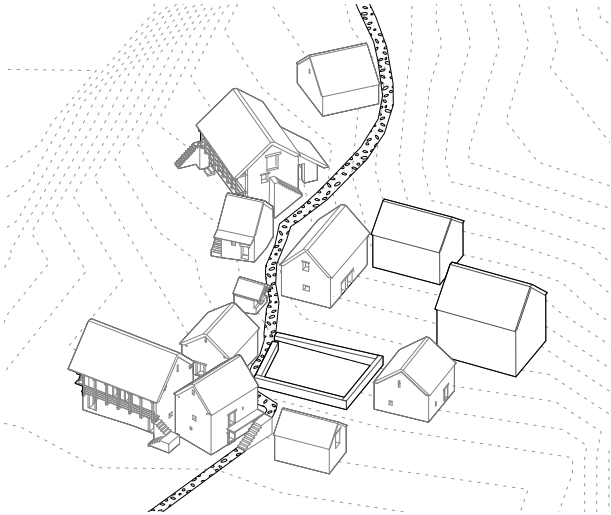
Cortascio was a hamlet with permanent inhabitants living from agriculture. Multiple families were co-habiting together.

15 august 1924

A landslide provoked the departure of the local community and destroyed two buildings.

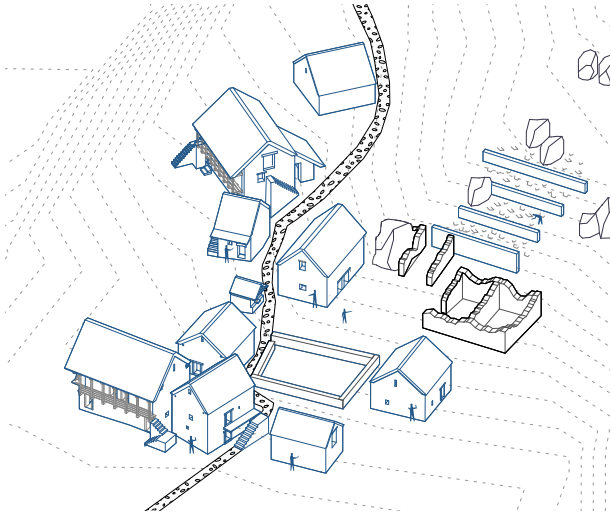
2021

Cortascio is now completely abandoned. The original pathway is used as the main pedestrian path for day-tourists.



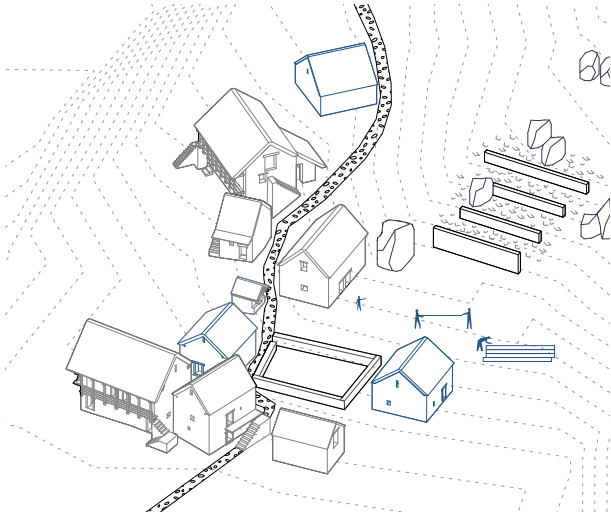
2022 - RENOVATING

The first step of the project consists of involving visitors with the renovation of the existing buildings and moving some stones to the upper part of the site.



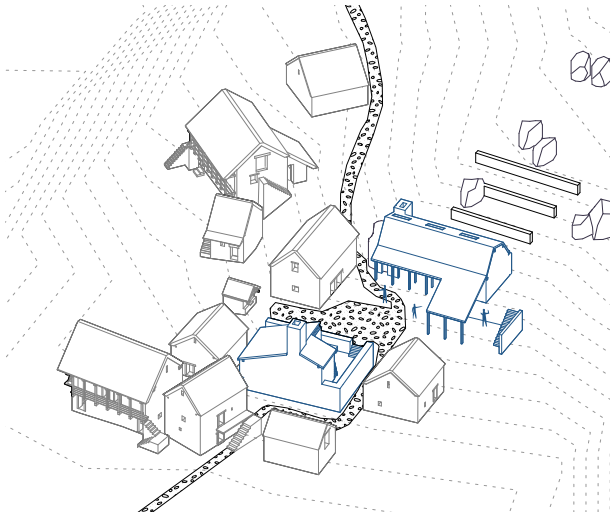
2023 - STORING

Three buildings serve as wood storage to dry it. The trees are cut in the valley, maintaining the territory.



2024 - ADDING

Visitors explore the dry stone construction technique with the addition of two new buildings.



THE NEW CORTASCIO:
In between locals and tourists

Cortascio becomes a place where tourism is oriented towards the local community and environment.

- A . Self-service shop

B . Accomodation

C . Shared bathroom

D . Communal oven

E . Workshop
- F . Accomodation

G . Cheese workshop

H . Animal shed

I . Wool workshop

J . Communal kitchen
- K . Reception/Library

L . Exhibition/Co-working

M . Communal garden



A . The day tourists stop to buy local goods supplied by the inhabitants of the valley.



G . Tourists learn cheese making. It gives the tourists the possibility to help the farmers of the valley, after completing this workshop.



I . The elders of the valley teach the tradition of wool knitting to visitors.



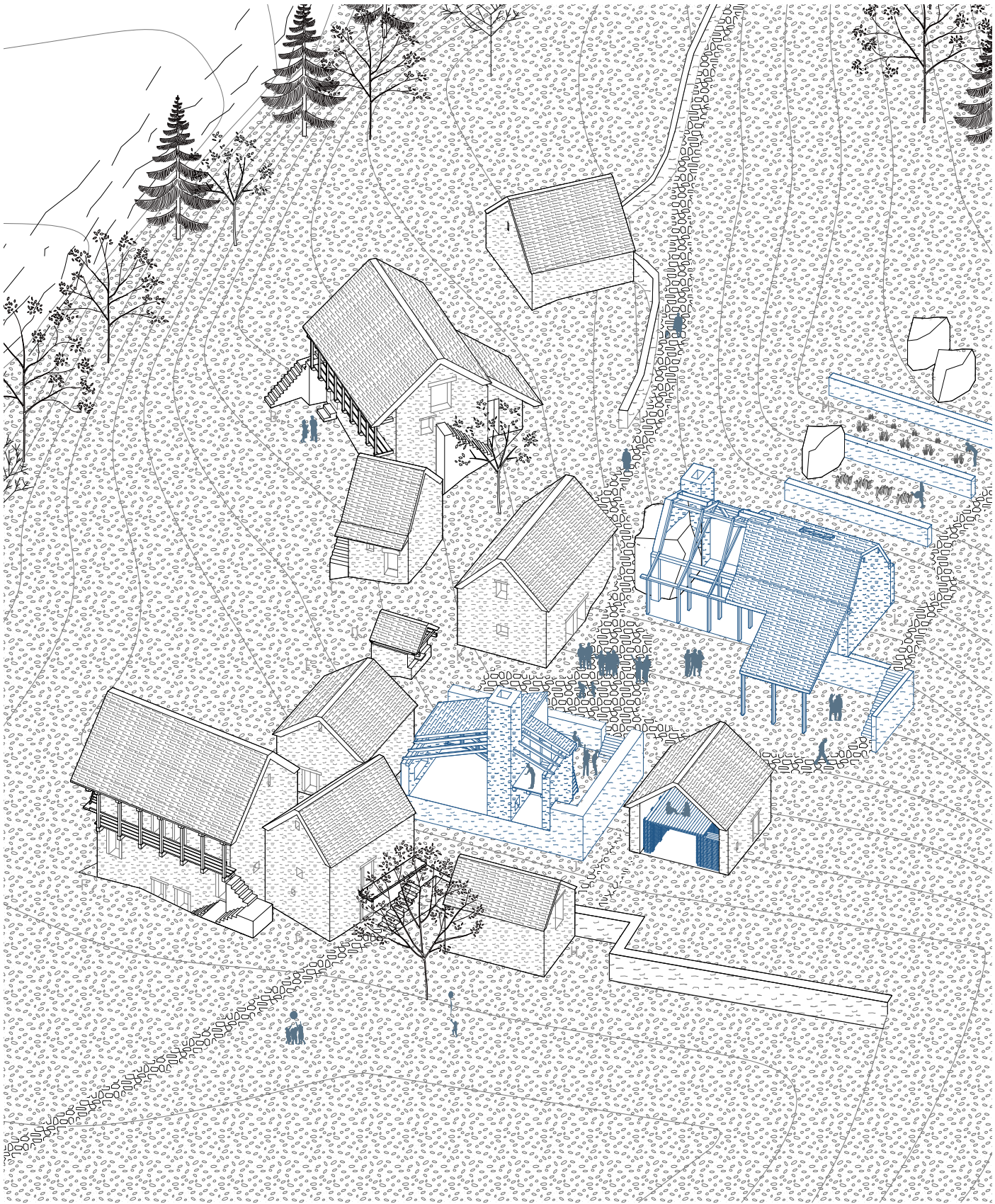
J . Once a year, the communal kitchen becomes the heart of the chestnut festival. People gather to put the chestnuts on a fire that will burn for three weeks.



K . The reception helps to operate Cortascio. It registers the member and coordinates the renovations and volunteer work in the valley.



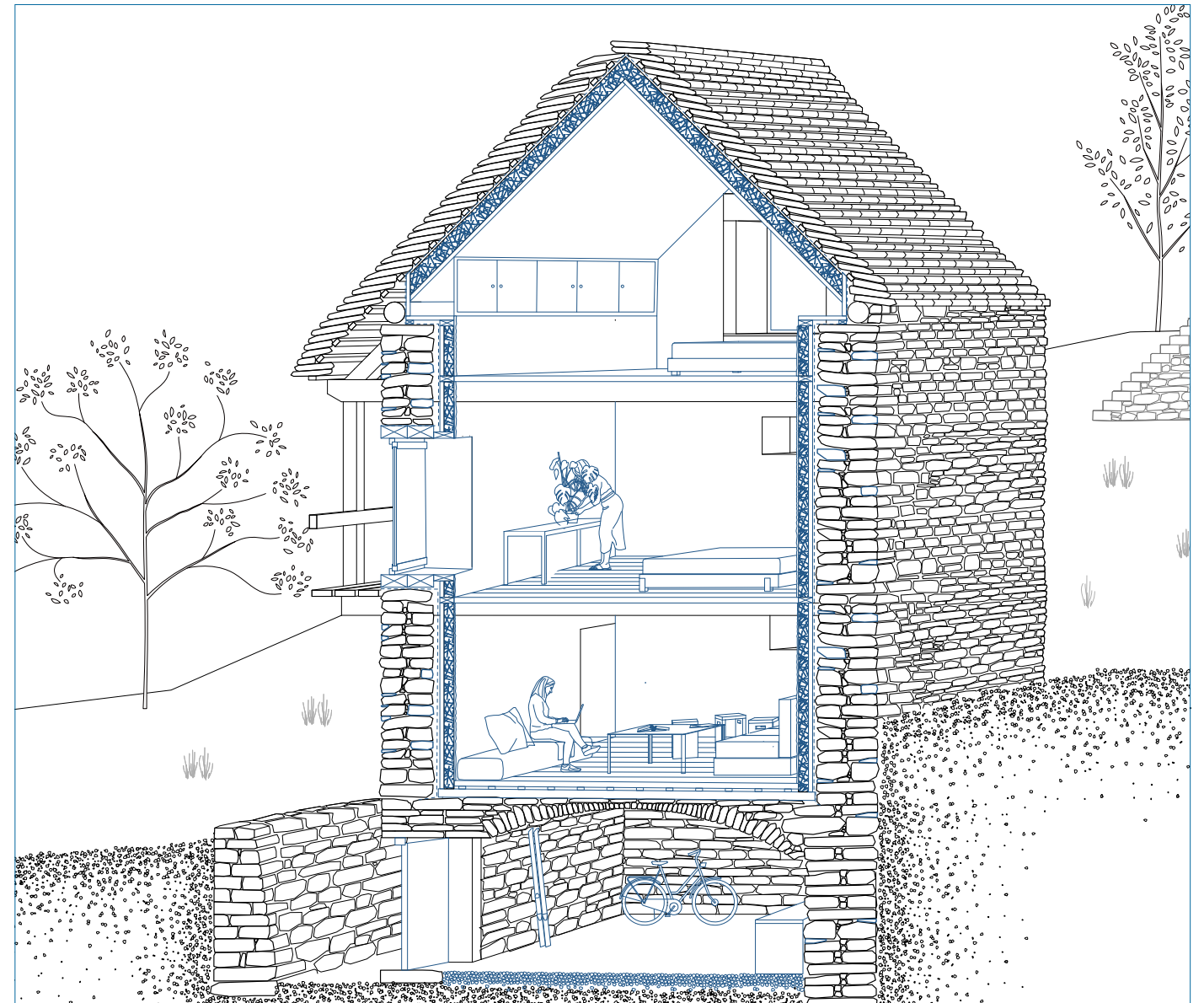
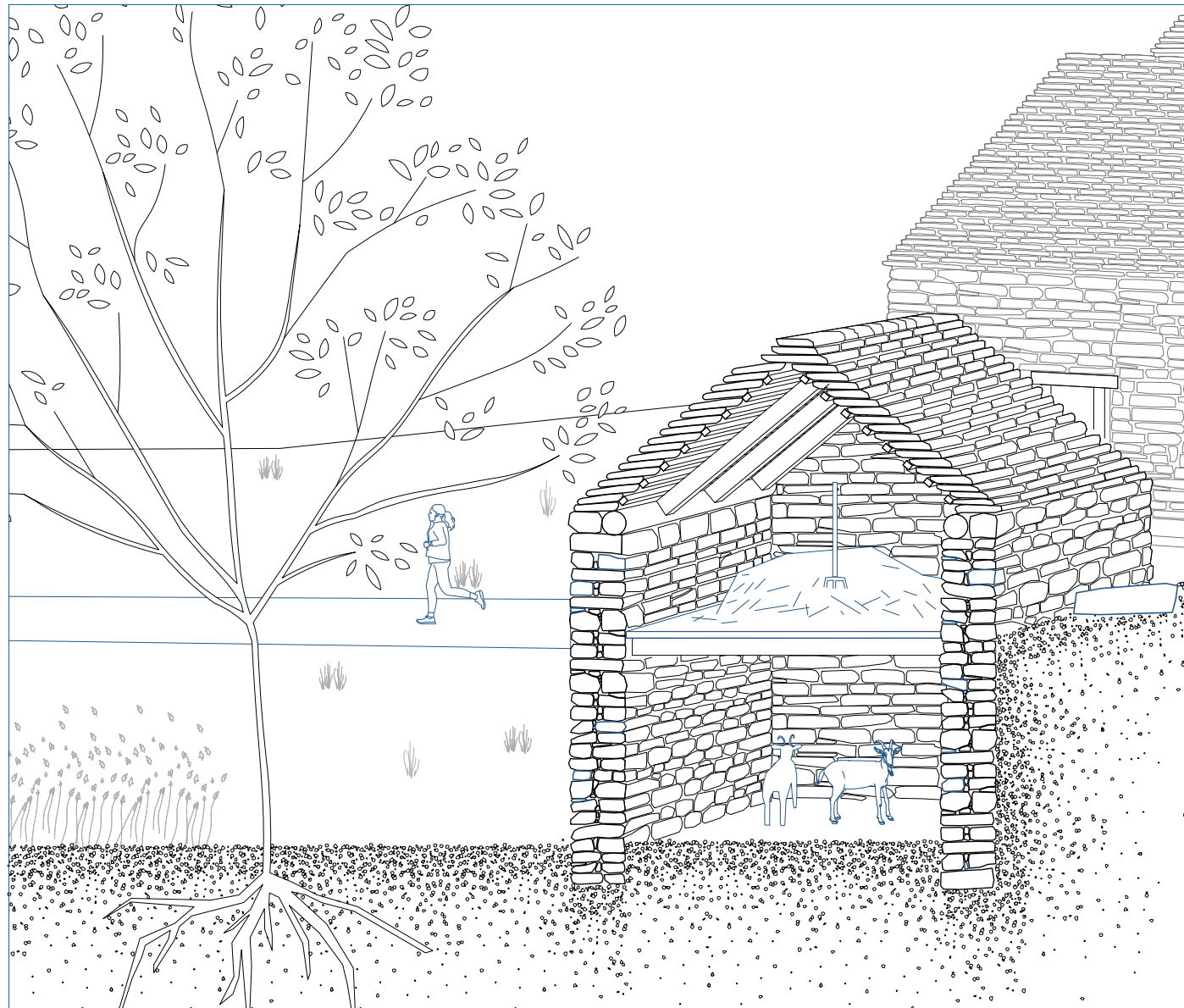
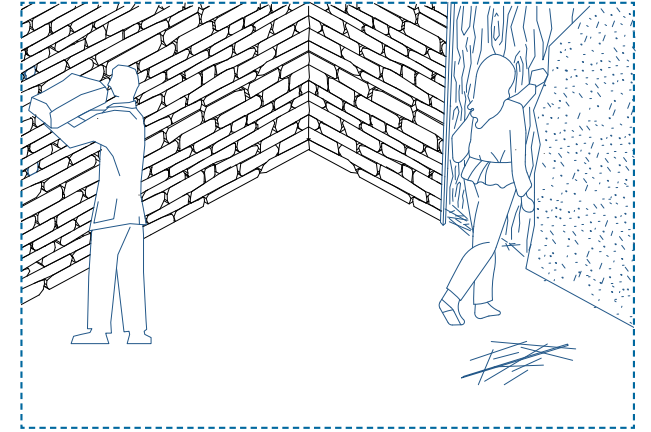
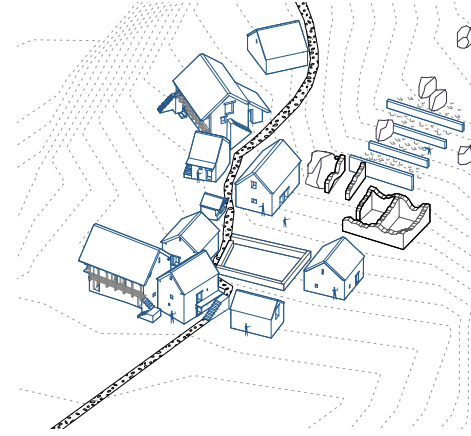
L . The exhibition displays the work of local artists during the tourist season and transforms into a co-working space during the winter.



PARTICIPATORY CONSTRUCTION:

1. RENOVATING

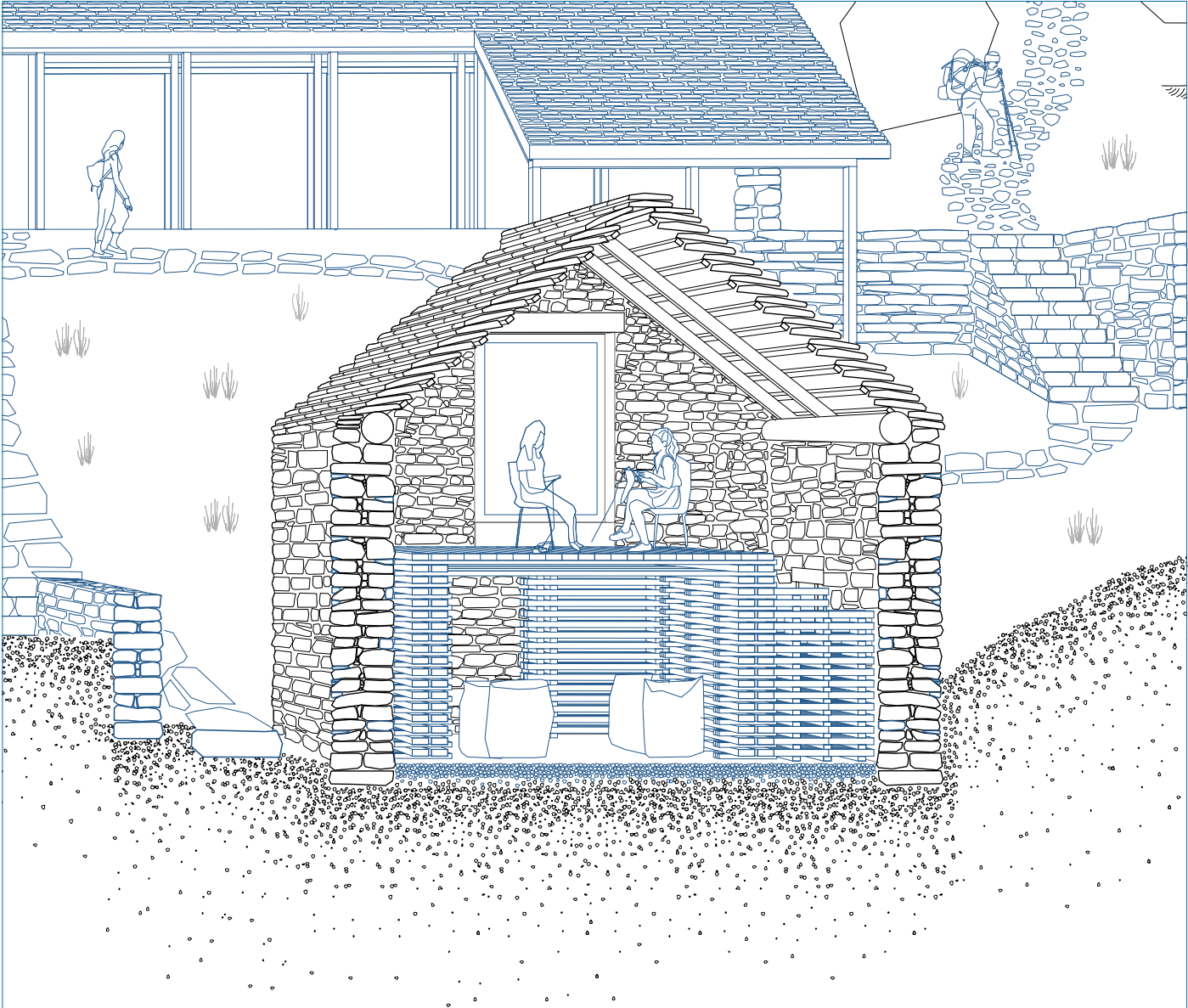
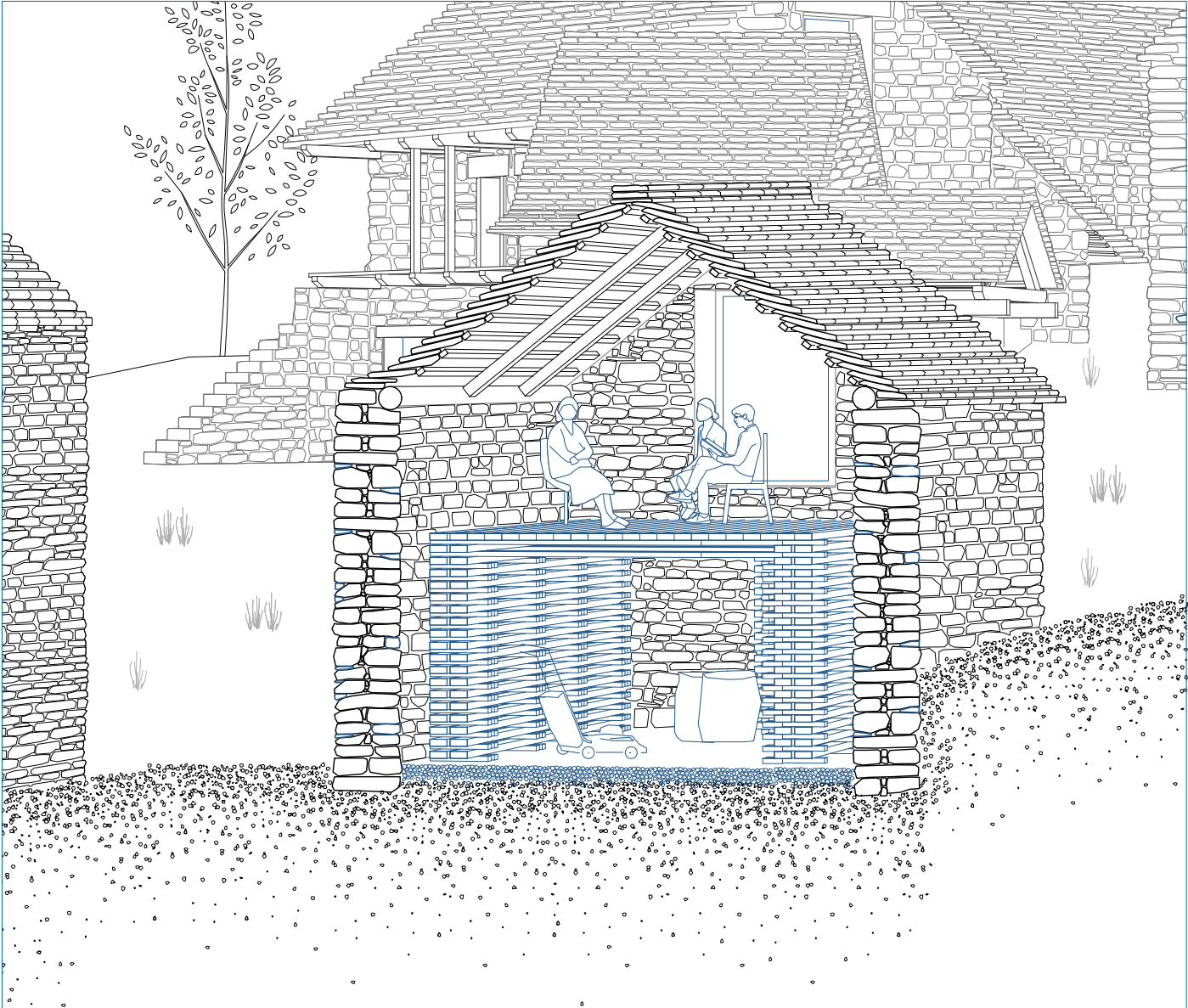
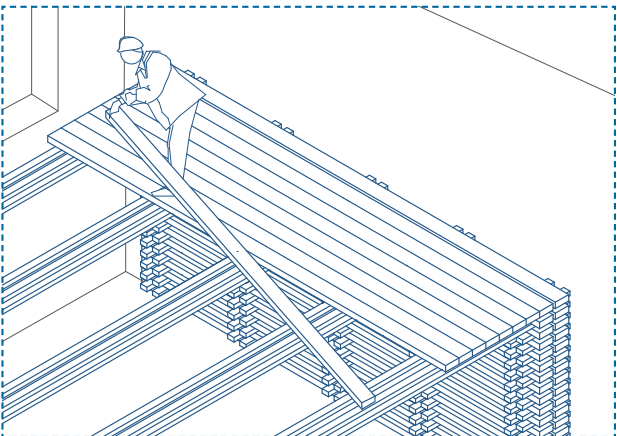
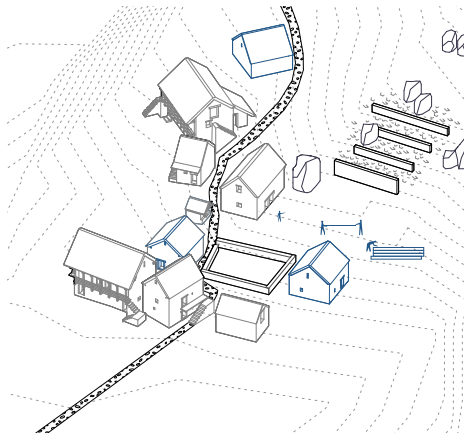
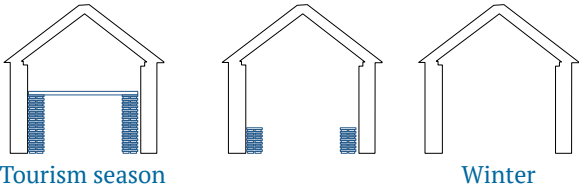
Volunteers, assisted by local craftsmen, renovate the existing buildings. It consists of clearing them from clutter, replacing missing stones from the facades, and insulating some of them.



PARTICIPATORY CONSTRUCTION:

2. STORING

Some non-insulated buildings are used for workshops during the summer. An interior stacking of wood offers a new space and serves as storage. During the winter, the wood is used for further construction in Cortascio, or sold.

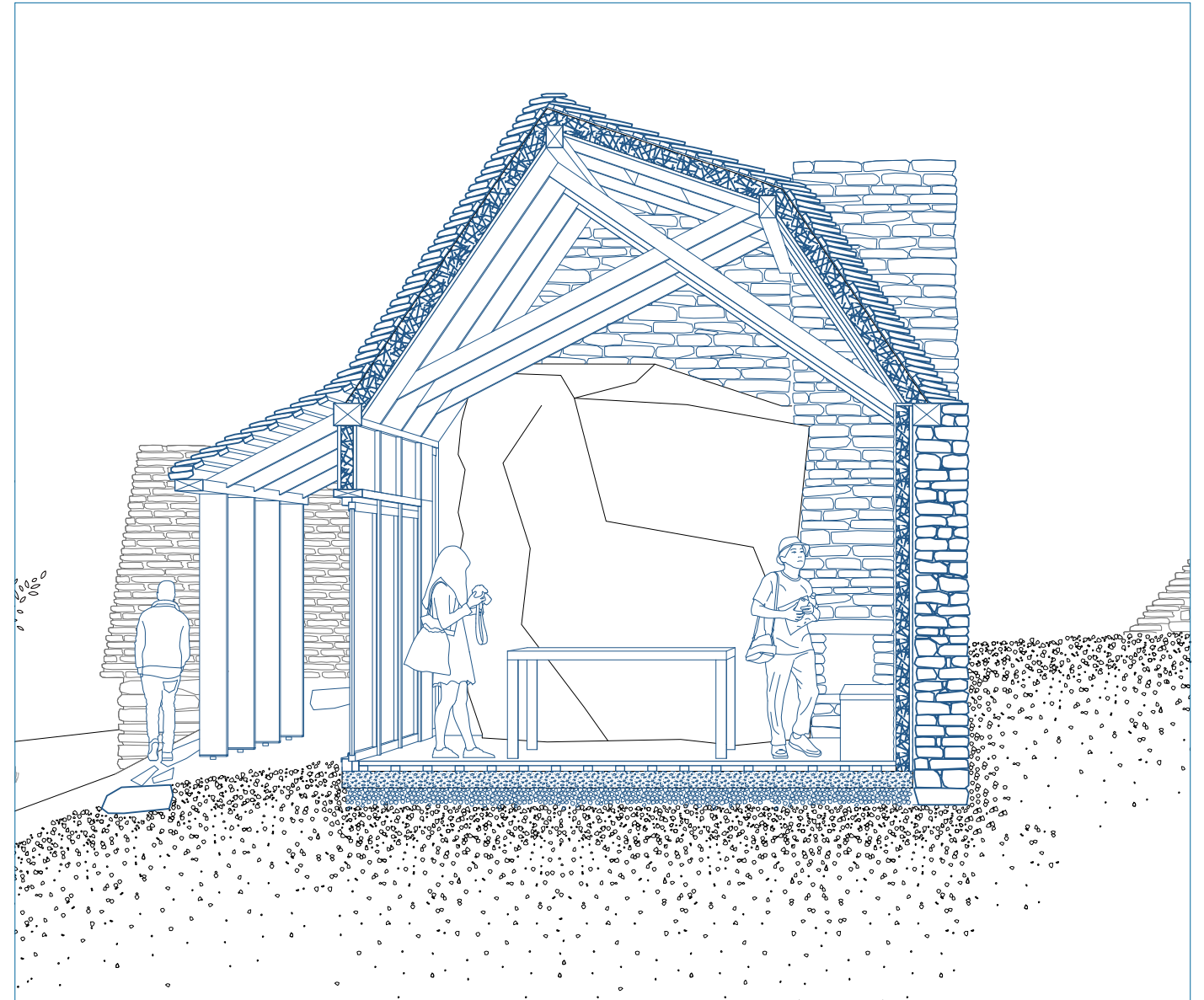
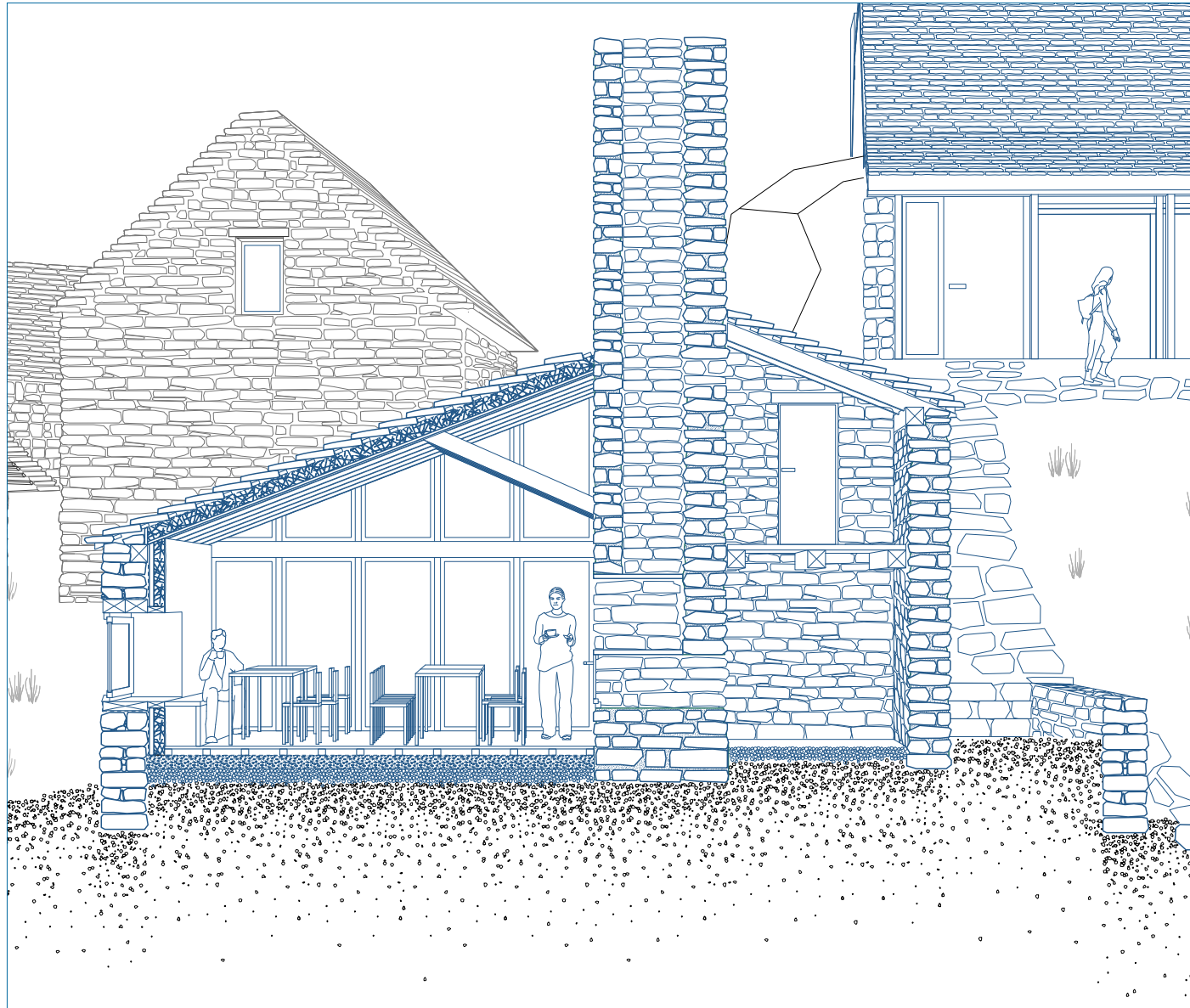
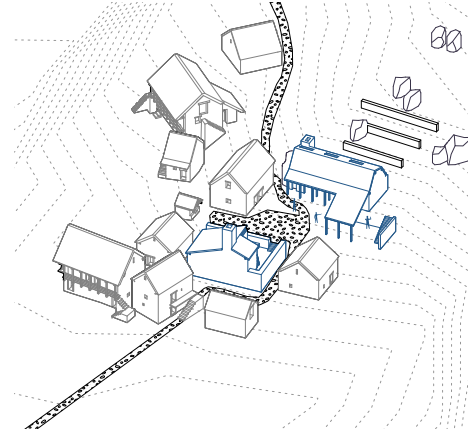




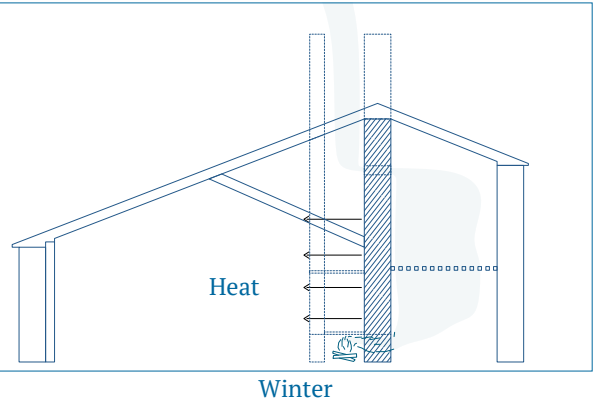
PARTICIPATORY CONSTRUCTION:

3. ADDING

Two new buildings are added to the village. They are taking advantage of the leveling done by the first inhabitants of Cortascio. The walls are in dry stones with a small part, near the chimneys, with lime mortar. The buildings are inspired by the vernacular architecture from the valley and demonstrate the possibility of using a traditional construction technic nowadays.



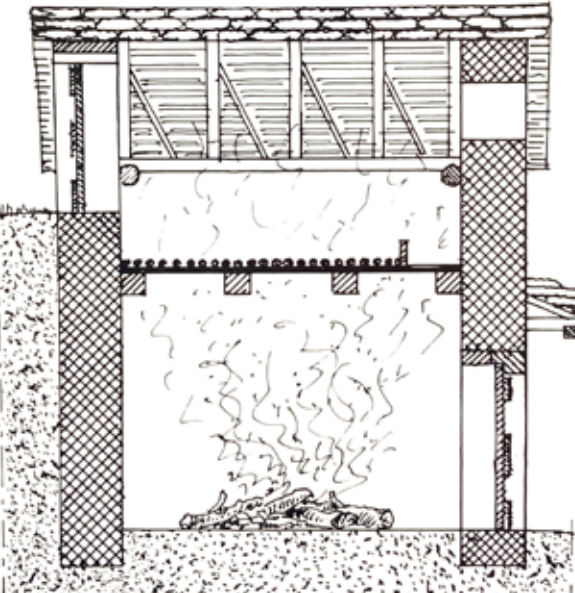
The communal kitchen



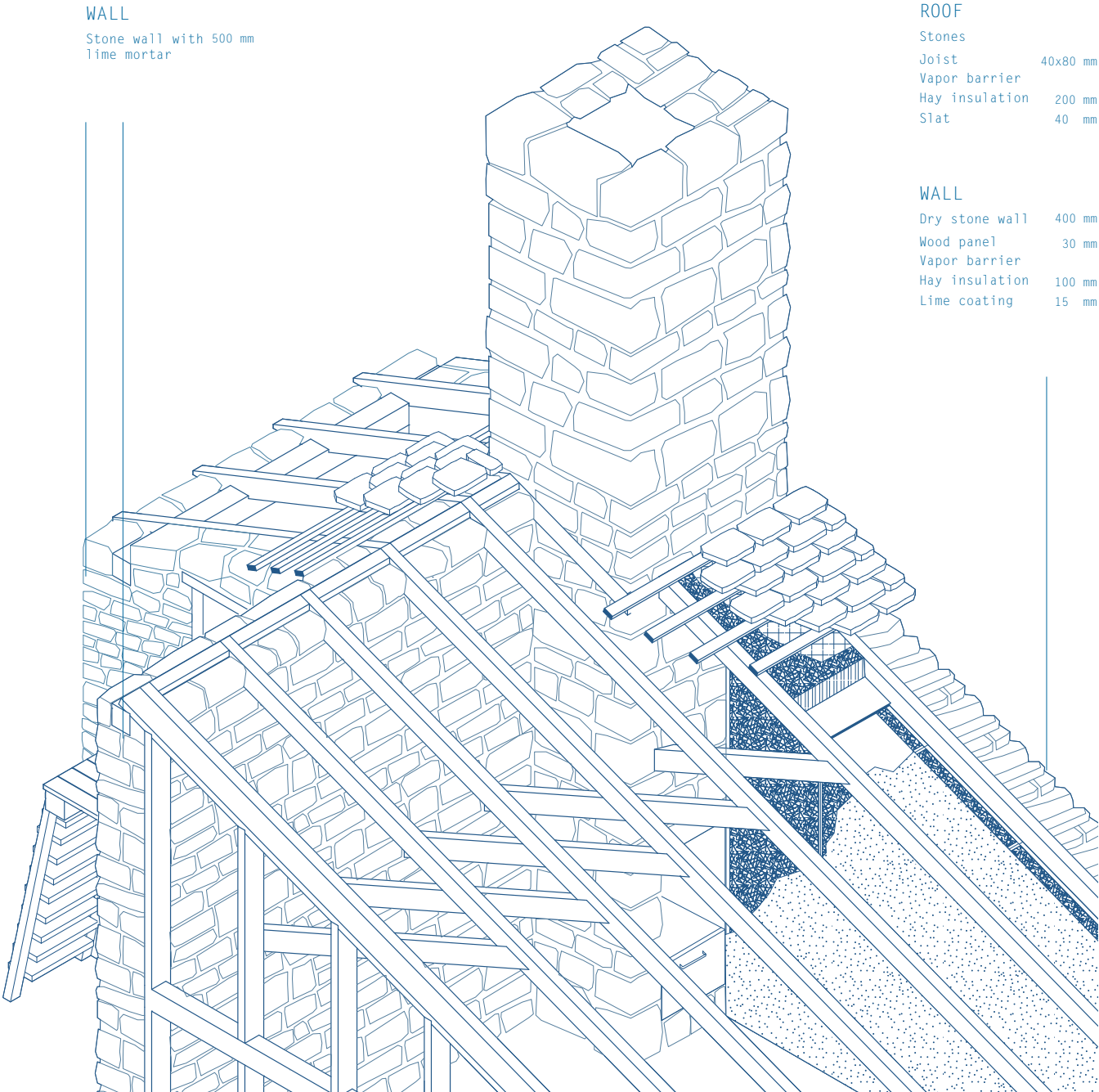
The communal kitchen becomes the heart of the village, a place for locals and visitors. It is used all year long. The building is designed as an homage to the traditional ‘Grà,’ a building used to dry chestnuts.

The chestnuts used to be the primary nutrition for the inhabitants of the valley during the cold winter. In mid-october, after collecting the nuts, they would meet around the *Grà*, to start a fire that was maintained for three weeks. It marked the end of the summer.

In this new building, the fire is used for cooking and, once a year, for chestnut drying. The building combines traditions with functionality by using the long path of the smoke to heat the party wall, which acts as a thermal mass.

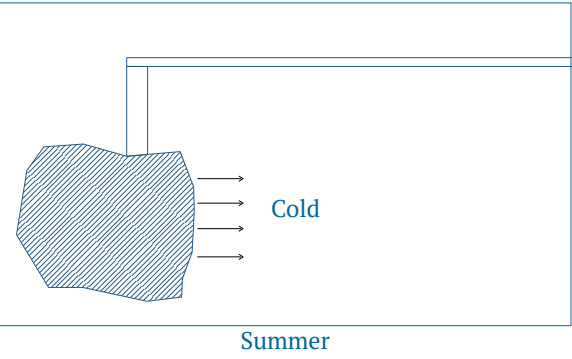


‘Grà’, traditional building for chestnuts drying, Valle Verzasca, Giovanni Bianconni, 1980



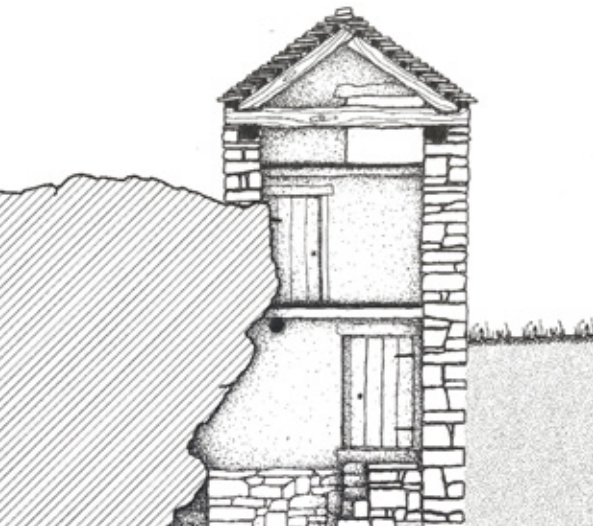


Exhibition/Co-working

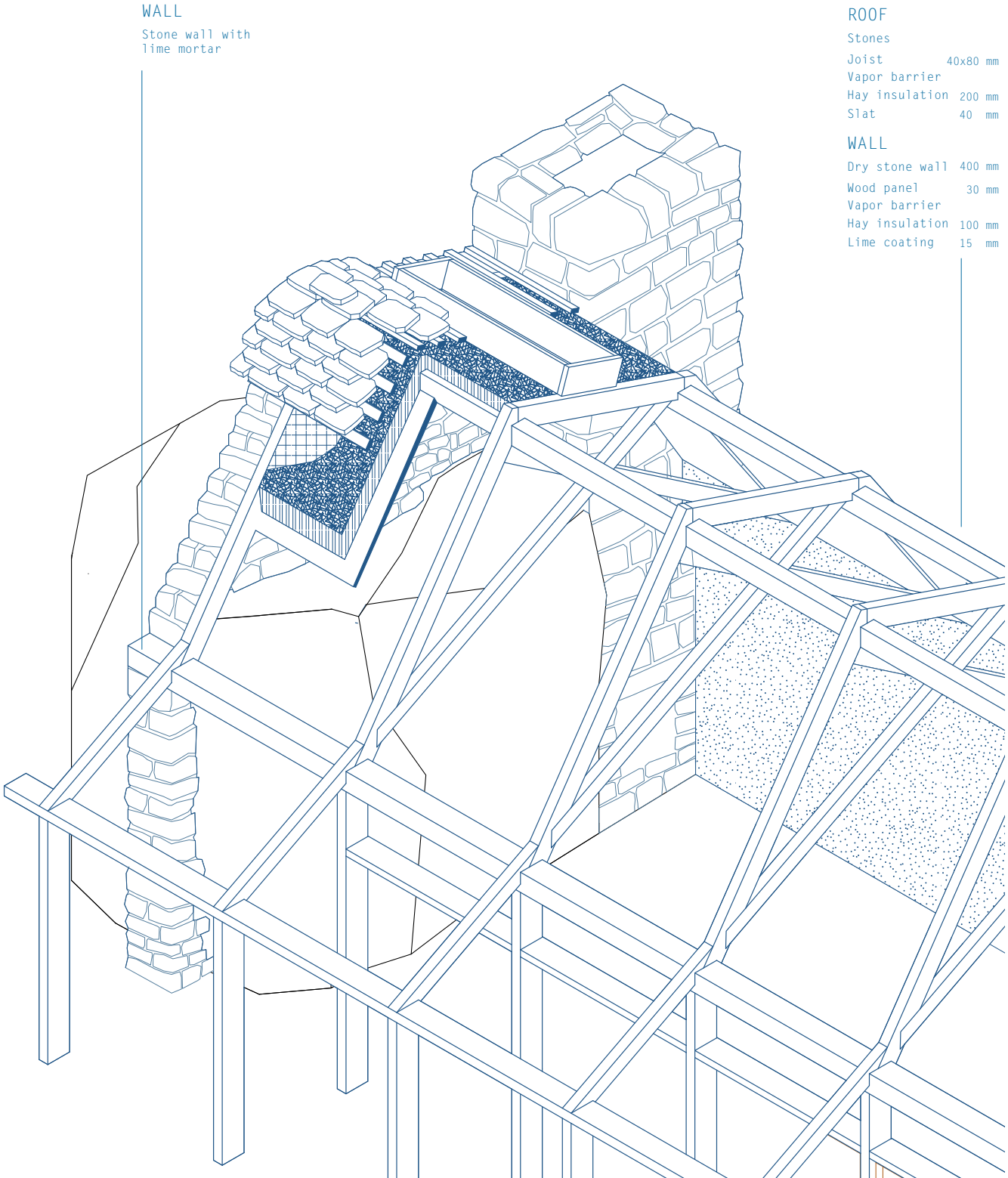


The second new building offers a generous multipurpose space. One of its walls wraps around the largest rock that fell from the mountain during the landslide in 1924. It uses the rock structurally and thermally, as it cools the space during the summer.

Many buildings in dry stone in Ticino were constructed around or under rocks. It offered cooler space and reduced the amount of stonework. The roof of the building embraces the shape of the rock, and its three slopes allow zenithal openings.

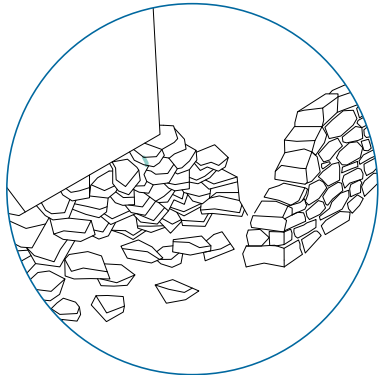


Cantina Binsacca, Moghehno,
Vivere tra le pietre, Museo di Valmaggia, 2004

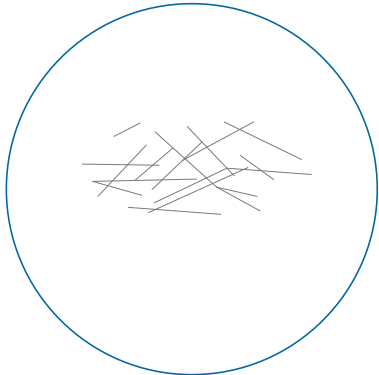




MATERIALS



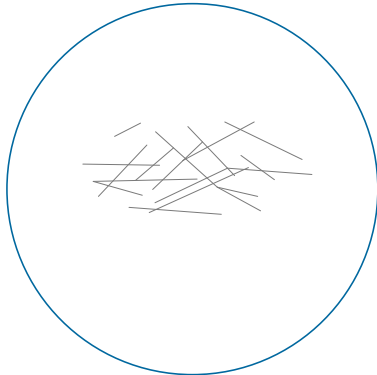
RUINS ON-SITE



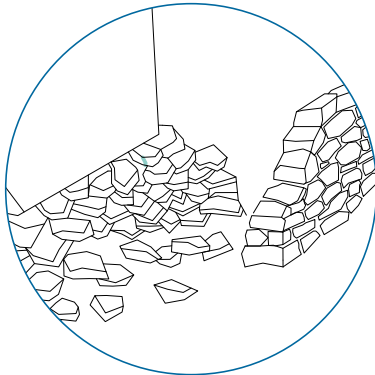
HAY ON-SITE



TREES FROM PASTURES

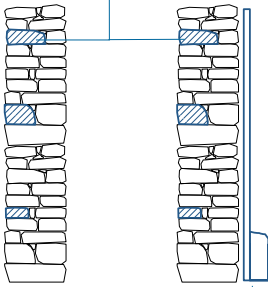


HAY ON-SITE

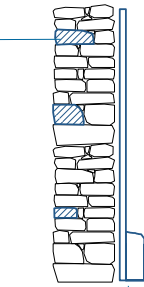


RUINS ON-SITE

RENOVATING



A. Only stones replacement

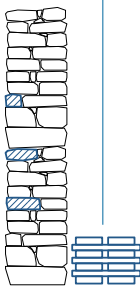


B. Stones replacement and insulation

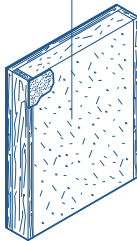


INSULATING PANEL

STORING

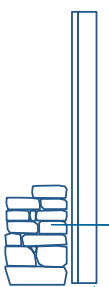


C. Stones replacement and interior wood stacking



INSULATING PANEL

ADDING



D. New dry stone wall and insulation panel



E. Stone wall with lime mortar



After the construction and renovation in Cortascio, the wood will still be stored to be sold

WORKSHOP

24 April 2021

Reconstruction of a dry stone wall in
Cortascio with local craftsmen



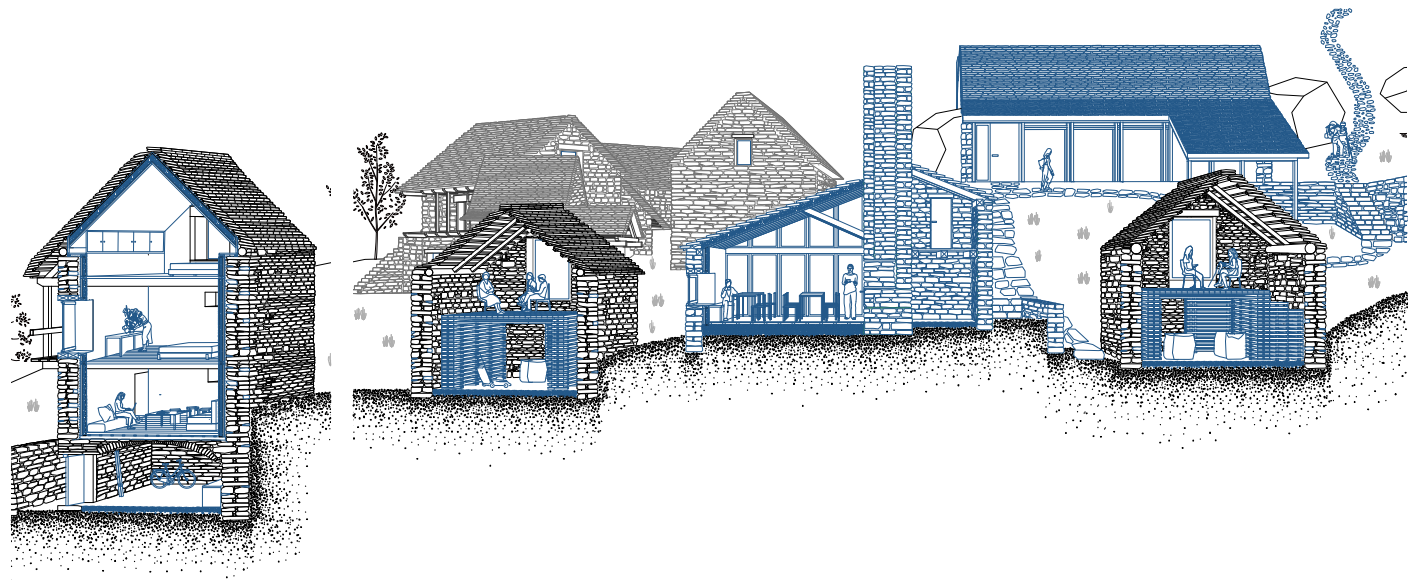
10:00



12:00

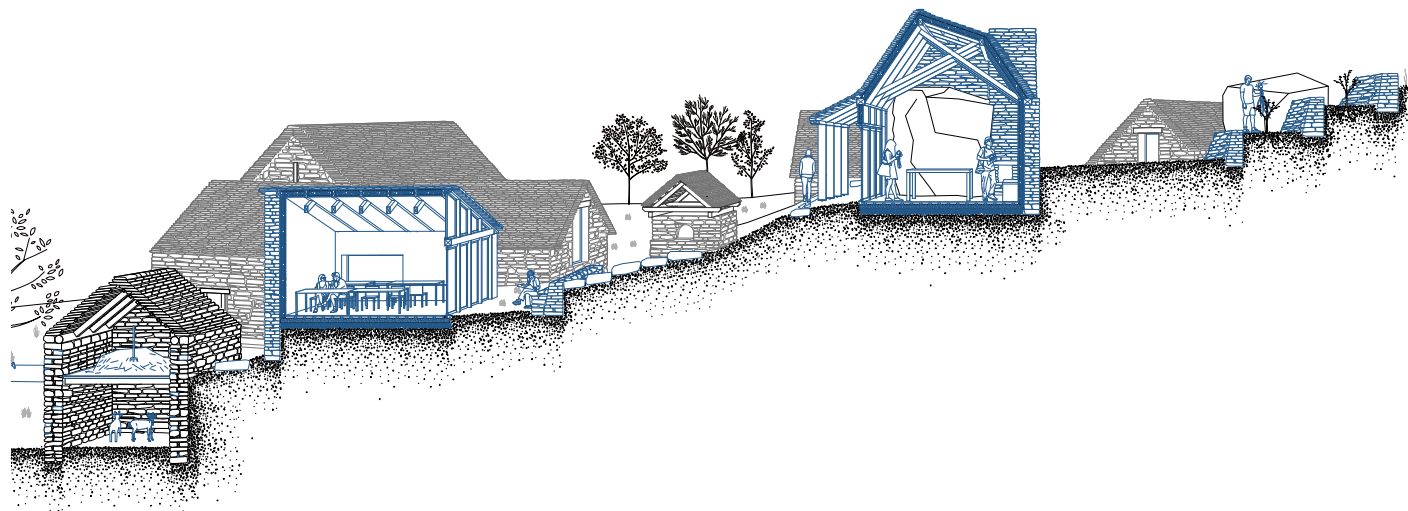


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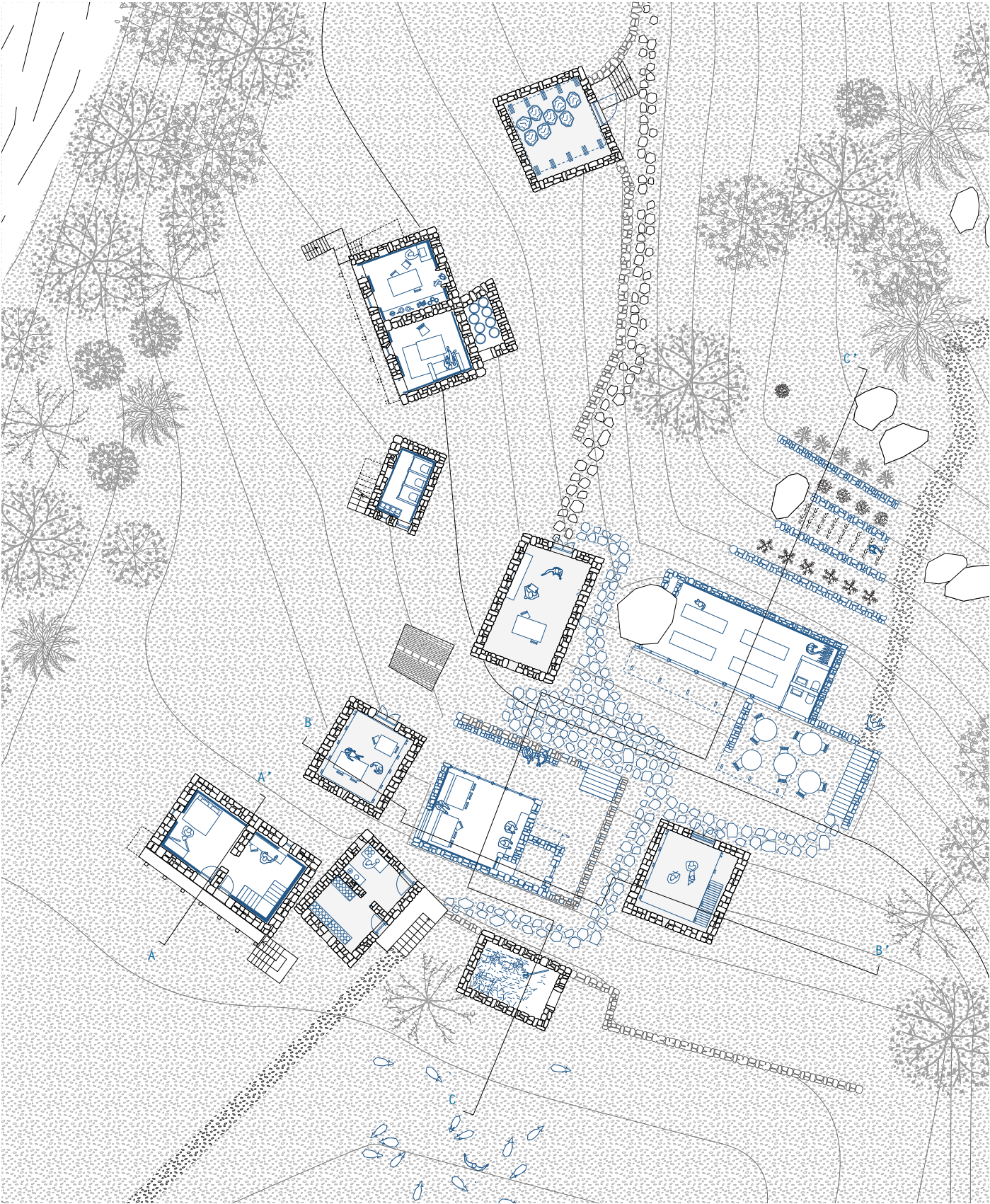


SECTION A-A'

SECTION B-B'



SECTION C-C'



Only during
tourism season

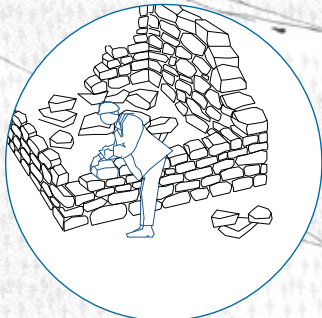
DIFFUSION OF SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM IN THE VALLEY



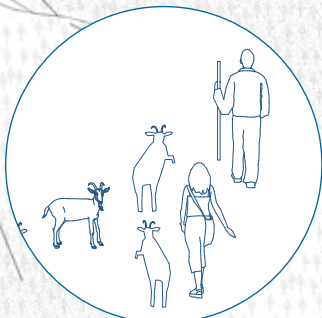
1. Trees are cut in the mountain, maintaining the territory



2. New self service shop are implemented along the pedestrian path



3. The many ruins of the valley can be renovated



4. Some visitors can come to help the farmers

The **local inhabitants** can go to Cortascio to teach tourists local traditions, sell goods, use the co-working space during the winter, or exhibit artwork.

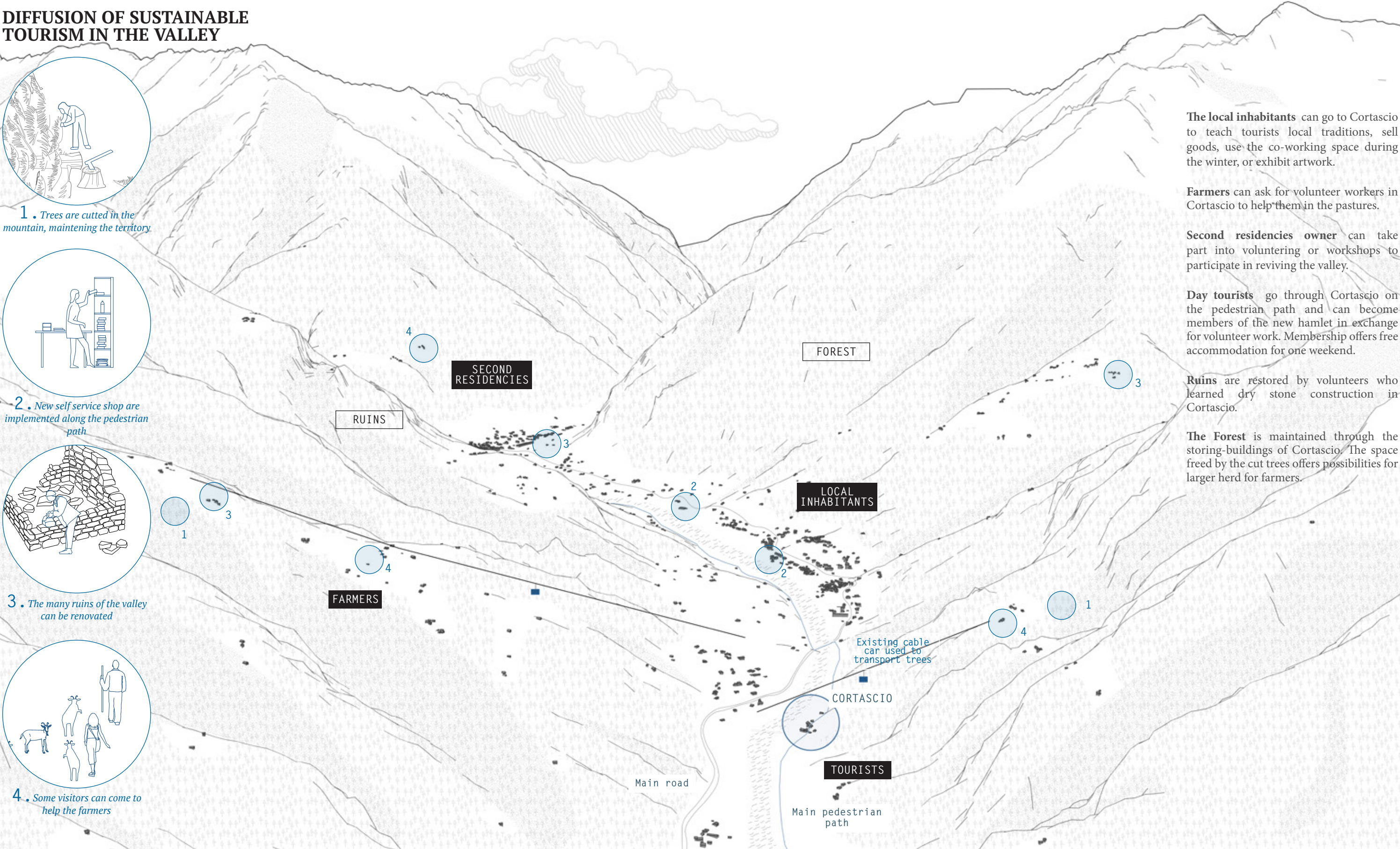
Farmers can ask for volunteer workers in Cortascio to help them in the pastures.

Second residencies owner can take part into volunteering or workshops to participate in reviving the valley.

Day tourists go through Cortascio on the pedestrian path and can become members of the new hamlet in exchange for volunteer work. Membership offers free accommodation for one weekend.

Ruins are restored by volunteers who learned dry stone construction in Cortascio.

The **Forest** is maintained through the storing-buildings of Cortascio. The space freed by the cut trees offers possibilities for larger herd for farmers.





WORKSHOP VIDEO

