

Giuseppe (Pino) Pizzigoni, 1901-1967 Bergamo

Local Heroes #7

Pino Pizzigoni, Bergamo

by:

Wim van den Bergh & Luciano Motta.
October 2011

Photos:

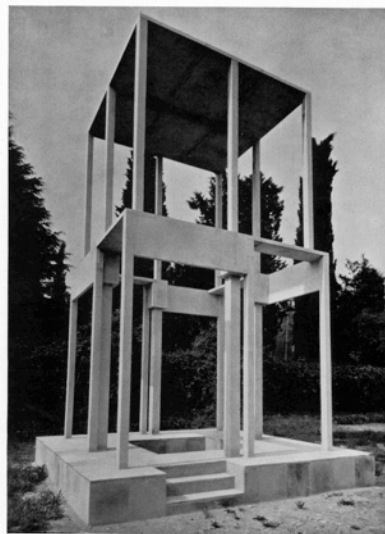
Wim van den Bergh, Luciano Motta,
Carolin Stapenhorst, Google Earth,
Bing maps, the Pizzigoni Archive in
the Public Library 'Angelo Mai' in
Bergamo and from the books:
"Pizzigoni, Invito allo spazio progetti
e architetture 1923-1967" and
"Architettura Funeraria Moderna".

My first encounter with Pino Pizzigoni's work was in 1980, while (still a student) I was researching the work of (another local hero) Frits Peutz in Heerlen. In going through Peutz's enormous library I came about an Italian publication on cemeteries called "Architettura Funeraria Moderna", by Roberto Aloï, first published by Hoepli in Milan, in 1941 and then reprinted twice while featuring more recent projects, first in 1948 and then again in 1953. In the 1953 version that Peutz possessed, two funerary chapels attracted my attention, the 'Cappella Bay' and the 'Cappella Ardiani', both by the same architect, Giuseppe Pizzigoni and both situated on the cemetery of Bergamo.

What actually interested me in those funerary chapels was their tectonic quality, in other words the rational relationship between form, proportion, material and construction. (One should keep in mind that it was the period in which the work of the Italian Rationalists was high on a student's agenda and especially its formal aspects captivated one's mind and attracted one's eye.) At first sight both chapels fitted into that genre of Italian Rationalist architecture and looked like interesting formal exercises, until one realized (after reading the captions) that they were made entirely out of only one material, namely granite and not, as one first expected, of reinforced concrete. Thus these were not just formal follies but real tectonic experiments in which the 'rational' limits of form, proportion, material and construction were literally tested to breaking point. And if I look back to my own design work from that period (like for instance the Mono-tube Chair of 1981) it were these truly tectonic experiments, in which form, proportion, material and construction became the expression of one fundamental 'rational' idea, that interested and intrigued me.

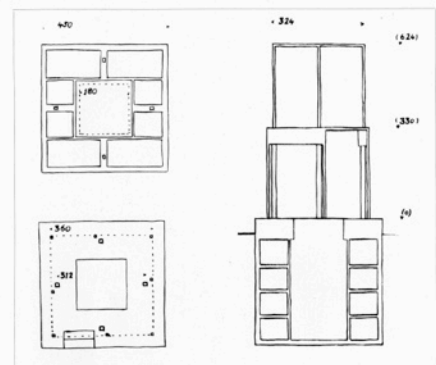


Cappella Bay in
"Architettura Funeraria Moderna".



MONUMENTO FUNERARIO BAY, CIMITERO DI BERGAMO
ARCHITETTO GIUSEPPE PIZZIGONI - BERGAMO

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MONUMENTO FUNERARIO BAY, CIMITERO DI BERGAMO
ARCHITETTO GIUSEPPE PIZZIGONI - BERGAMO

Sostanzialmente è un partito aperto che copre un foro a pavimento attraverso cui si accede ai colombari, disposti sottoterra. A chiusura del foro un cancello di rame. Il materiale, costoso per se stesso (granito), è usato come costruzione e non come decorazione: ogni pezzo lavora a portare e a resistere al vento, di conseguenza ogni sezione è calcolata allo sforzo cui deve resistere. I pilastri per arrivare alla quota del tetto, alto circa 7 metri sul piano di campagna, sono giuntati a metro di un manico pure di granito, che si vede in fotografia. Le sezioni dei pilastri, 12 x 12 centimetri, danno un aspetto di insolita leggerezza. La lastra di copertura, in 4 pezzi, ha lo spessore di 8 centimetri. Tutti i giunti sono fatti a incastro senza cemento. Il granito impiegato complessivamente non supera i 2 metri cubi.

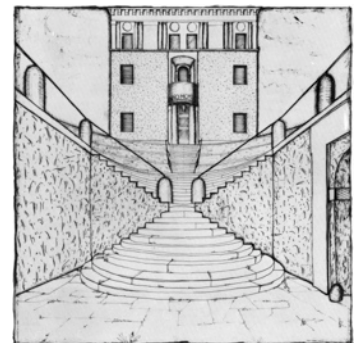
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Cappella Ardiani in "Architettura Funeraria Moderna".

Anyhow my initial search to find more about the work of this Giuseppe Pizzigoni in books, and via the Avery Index in periodicals, delivered very little. Except from those funerary chapels, one found the 'House for his father' in Bergamo (a Villa from 1925-27 in Novecento style) and an intriguing image (echoing the work of Adolf Loos) of the Villa Rinaldi-Ardiani in Selvino from 1932.



Perspective of the house for his father in Bergamo.

Then a few years later, in 1986, in the course of a publication on Frits Peutz for Casabella, I met two young Italian architects by the name of Mirko Zardini and Luca Ortelli, who worked as editors for Electa and as such were very well informed about the architects of the Rationalist period. So I asked them if they knew anything about an architect from that period by the name of Giuseppe Pizzigoni from Bergamo. Initially they told me they had never heard of him, but would do some inquiry for me. A few days later Mirco Zardini informed me that after a little search he found out that Electa had actually published a small book on Pizzigoni's work in 1982, entitled "Pizzigoni, Invito allo spazio progetti e architetture 1923-1967". After obtaining the book it became clear to me why Pizzigoni was so little known as a so called 'Rationalist' architect and had been neglected for a long time by the architectural historians. Not unlike the reception of Peutz's work in Dutch architectural history, also Pizzigoni's very diverse oeuvre didn't fit seamlessly into the usual frameworks constructed by historians to locate and value the historical importance of an architect and his oeuvre. Since these systems of 'boxes' are mainly based on stylistic novelty and then formal consistency over time. But that was not what the work of Pizzigoni was about; as a self-conscious architect of his time, his quest, and as such his historical contribution to architecture's body of knowledge, was to find a rational link between art and technique. So to find out how to establish a synergy between both the inherently formal and the fundamentally spatio-structural character of the new and so called 'modern' architecture of the post World War I period. And his way to do so was to constantly experiment with different forms, different proportions, different materials and different types of construction, no matter whether these were modern or traditional. So very much the same self-conscious and experimental attitude towards the development of architecture as his contemporary Peutz.

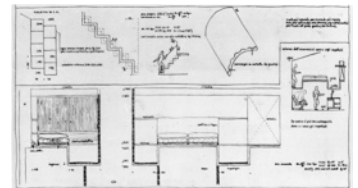
Villa Rinaldi-Ardiani in Selvino (demolished).



Some years later, while staying in the vicinity of Bergamo, I paid a short visit to its monumental cemetery to see those funerary chapels that had attracted my attention towards Pizzigoni's work and I searched for the 'Casa minima unifamiliare'. An intriguing little house I had discovered in the book, that Pizzigoni designed in the the same year he also designed the aforementioned chapels. Actually this strange looking little house was a marvelous piece of three-dimensional thinking in terms of space, functionality, size and I presume perspectival perception of its interior, which I wanted to experience in reality. However I couldn't find it. Its address in the book was indicated with Campo Brumana (an address that didn't exist anymore) and since it was a prototype I presumed it had been demolished. However this strange little marvel of a 'machine a habit ' kept recurring in my mind. So when, somewhere at the beginning of the new millennium, Gilbert Hansen asked me, if I would like "to contribute a drawing on the concept of detail in another architect's work", for an issue of the Danish Magazine *B* that he was planning, Pizzigoni's 'Casa minima unifamiliare' came to mind. Reconstructing it by means of a drawing (I thought) would probably help me to understand its three-dimensional secrets better. I had send Gilbert my drawing together with the book and then forgot about it, until a few years later I needed some images from the book for a lecture and could not find it in my library anymore. Contacting Gilbert to get it back also revealed that the issue on "Details/Detaljere" had not been forgotten, but had taken much more time then he had expected, but would come out just a week after our contact. (*B Arkitekturtidsskrift, #54* "Details/Detaljere", Kopenhagen 2005, p. 112-115)



Casa minima unifamiliare in Bergamo.

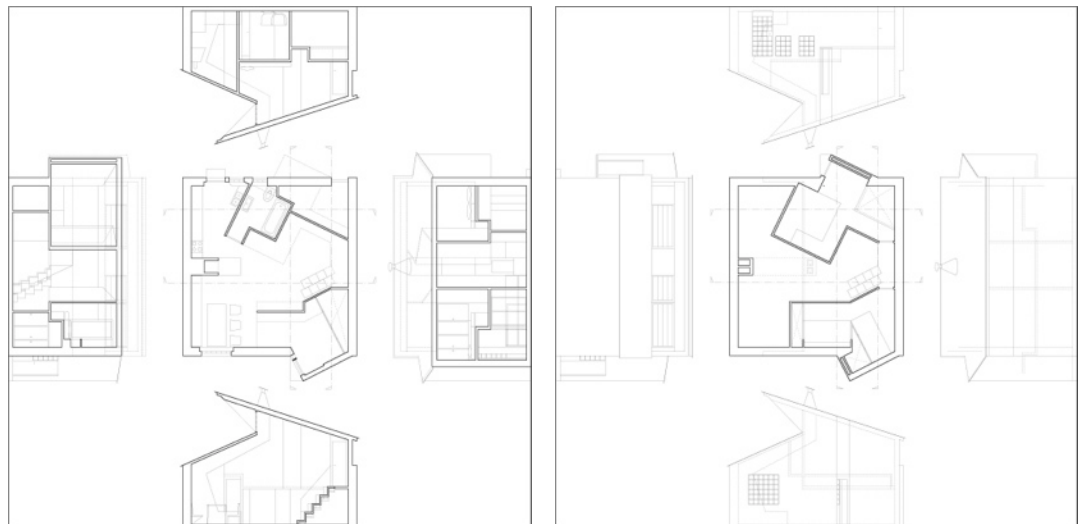


Detail drawing of Casa minima unifamiliare.

Well there are coincidences and coincidences. It must have been somewhere around 2005 that a young Italian architect, by the name of Luciano Motta, contacted me. His wife, also a young architect, had been a former student of mine at the RWTH Aachen University in and he, at that moment, was doing his PhD research at the Scuola di dottorato of the Universit  IUAV in Venice, and the subject of his doctoral thesis was "Il Progetto per il Raadhuis di Heerlen (Frits Peutz, 1936/1942)". Two years after a very interesting conversation with him on Peutz's project for the Town-hall of Heerlen, I received a complementary copy of his impressive doctoral thesis accompanied by a nice letter, which, according to the return address, had been send from Bergamo. So in the letter I send to him to compliment him with his work, I, mainly out of curiosity, asked him if he was familiar with the work of a rather unknown architect from his hometown, a guy by the name of Pino Pizzigoni who's projects had intrigued me. Well I guess you can imagine my surprise when he wrote me back that this Pino Pizzigoni was actually his grandfather whom he had never met, since 'nonno Pino' died before he had been born, but that his family was still living in Pizzigoni's first realized work, the 'House for his father'. He further told me that the 'Casa minima unifamiliare' was still in rather good condition.

So this issue of Local Heroes is based on the biography in the aforementioned book on Pino Pizzigoni, an up-to-date tour along most of his projects guided by his very well informed grandson Luciano Motta and an old fascination of mine.

Plans/Sections/Elevations of the 'Casa minima unifamiliare' as published in *B* #54.

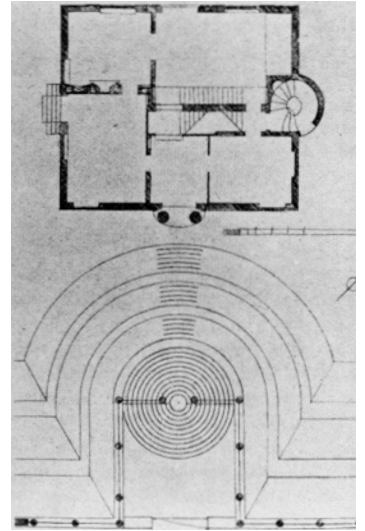


Life and Work 1901-1967



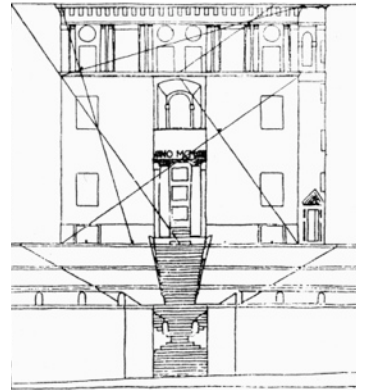
Portrait of the architect Pizzigoni by the painter Achille Funi, 1938.

Giuseppe (Pino) Pizzigoni (Bergamo 1901-1967) was the first-born child of avvocato Attilio Pizzigoni and Maria Patirani. His mother however died in childbirth when he was only 3 years old. Already early in his life Pino was passionate about painting and had found a teacher in the painter Giacomo Bosis (1863-1947), who (like for instance Carrà, Sant'Elia and Boccioni) had been a student of Cesare Tallone at the famous Accademia Carrara di Bergamo. After finishing the Liceo classico in 1918, the young Pizzigoni didn't however follow his early passion about painting by continuing his studies at the Accademia Carrara di Bergamo, or the equally famous Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera; no, he enrolled at the Politecnico di Milano to study architecture and become an architect. Here, between 1919 and 1924 he studied together with other students like Giuseppe Terragni, Luigi Figini, Gino Pollini, Piero Bottoni, Carlo Enrico Rava and Luciano Baldessari, their favorite teacher was the eclectic architect Gaetano Moretti.



1924 - 1930 Novecentismo

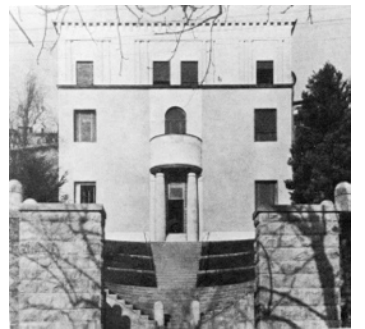
After his military service, Pizzigoni's first realized work of architecture became, in 1925-27, [1] the villa for his father at the viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 70, in Bergamo. An excellent example of so called 'Novecentismo' architecture, which as such was immediately published by Gio Ponti in the March 1928 issue of 'Domus', the new magazine that Ponti had founded the same year. Actually Ponti's newest vehicle to promote Italian neoclassical 'domestic' culture and as such lead the way between the "fake antique" and the "ugly modern".



1925/27 - 'House for his father', side facade.

'Novecentismo' (not to be mixed up with the Catalan 'Noucentisme') was the Italian name for a group of young artists and architects in and around Milan that responded to the European tendency of a 'call to order' after World War I. It initially grew out of a group of seven artists at the Galleria Pesaro in Milan in 1922 and was led by Margherita Sarfatti, a writer and art critic for Mussolini's newspaper, the 'Popolo d'Italia'. The group consisted of the painters Mario Sironi, Achille Funi, Anselmo Bucci, Leonardo Dudreville, Gian Emilio Malerba, Piero Marussig and Ubaldo Oppi. Parallel to the group of artists and with the same name and aim to link their new artistic developments to the great art of the past, a group of architects, inspired by Milanese Neo-classicism, tried to promote a renewed yet recognizably Italian architecture more linked with the aims of metaphysical painters such as Giorgio de Chirico or Carlo Carrà, then with those of the Futurists like Mario Chiattoni or Antonio Sant'Elia. The initial group of architects consisted of four, Giovanni Muzio, Gio Ponti, Mino Fiochi and Emilio Lancia, joined later by Pino Pizzigoni, Alpago Novello, Aldo Andreani, Giuseppe de Finetti, Gigiotto Zanini, Piero Portaluppi and others.

1925/27 - 'House for his father', front facade.



'Novecentismo' was an integral part of the period in which Italian Rationalism was slowly establishing itself, a period in which Italy's new order in the form of Mussolini's Fascism (which had come to power in 1922) was still in search of a formal language and a distinguishing style for its new buildings and monuments. As we could see everywhere in Europe also in Italy the roaring twenties were the years in which art and architecture had to redefine itself, in which they had to find a rational link between the traditional and the modern, between craft and industry, between art and technique and to establish a synergy between both the inherently formal and the fundamentally structural character of the new, the so called 'modern' art and architecture. In Pizzigoni's case we will see how an architect by training developed by means of his collaborations, to become both an artist and an engineer.





Giovanni Muzio, Mario Sironi and Pino Pizzigoni in the Italian Pavilion at the 1928 Pressa Exhibition, in Cologne.



Interior of the 'House for his father'.



In the period between 1925 and 1927, in which Pizzigoni was dealing with the 'House for his father', he also entered a competition for a bridge together with the engineer Gavazzi and he started his collaboration with Giovanni Muzio. In 1926 he participated with Muzio in a competition for the planning of Bergamo Bassa (banned by the Rotary Club) and they collaborated in the interior design of the Banca Bergamasca.

In 1927 Pizzigoni (in collaboration with the architects Maiocchi and Montorfano) won first prize in a competition for a fountain on the piazza della Scala in Milan and he became third in the competition for the renovation of Bergamo's Città Alta.

Then again between 1927 and 1929 Pizzigoni and Muzio worked intensively together with the painter Mario Sironi on the 1928 'Padiglione della Stampa Italiana' for the International Press Exhibition, "Pressa" in Cologne (with the famous designs of El Lissitzky) and after that on the design of the exhibition in the Italian pavilion for the International exposition in Barcelona of 1929 (the one of Mies' Barcelona Pavilion).

Between 1929 and 1931 Pizzigoni joined studio with the engineer Michele Invernizzi, with whom he collaborated in several housing projects like the workers housing in the Quartiere della Clementina in Bergamo, the [2] Casa Beratto, in via Monte Ortigara, 5, and [3] Casa Traversi, in via Borgo Palazzo, 33. In the same period he won the competition for the church in Gorno and collaborated with the brothers Maiocchi in the competition for the cathedral of La Spezia.

In the mean time he also designed and realized prototypes of furniture for the IV Triennale di Monza, which was planned to take place in 1930. Here Pizzigoni also collaborated with the Novecento painter Achille Funi, in the design of the main hall or 'Salone della IV Triennale'. It was actually the crucial 'first' Triennale, still located in Monza, that would mark a shift from the more traditional and classical to the more modern and industrial, featuring the title 'Sintesi delle arti e funzionalità: Esposizione Triennale internazionale delle arti decorative ed industriali moderne'. Three years before, while still a Biennale, it had lacked the attachment 'ed industriali moderne' and was called III Biennale di Monza entitled "La semplificazione formale: Mostra internazionale arti decorative". Three years after it would move to Milan and be called the V Triennale di Milano and it would ad 'e dell'architettura moderna'. Its title "Stile - Civiltà: Esposizione triennale delle arti decorative e industriali moderne e dell'architettura moderna", revealed the fact that the gradual search for a formal language and distinguishing style expressing the new and modern Italy under Mussolini was starting to come to a conclusion.



Casa Traversi street front and back side.



1931 - 1937 Rationalismo



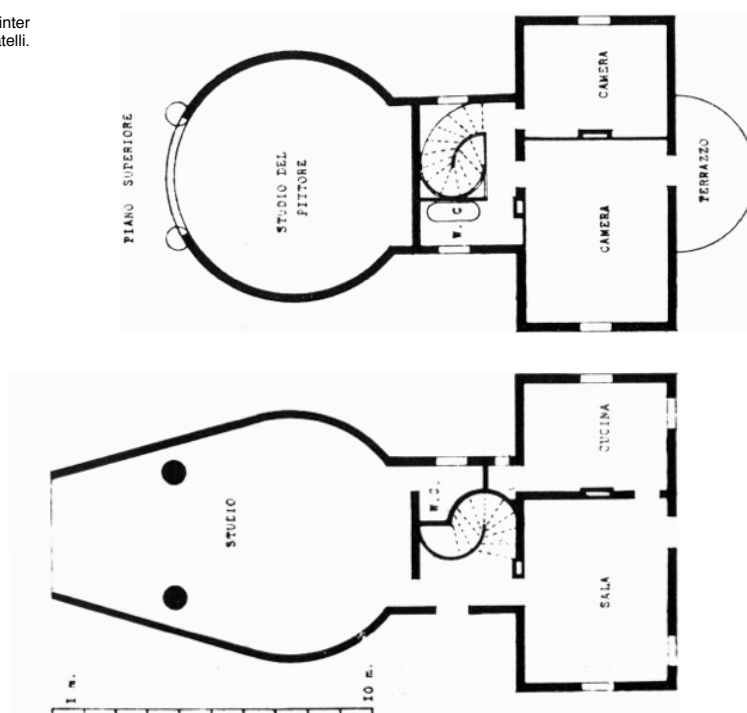
Villa-studio for the painter Romualdo Locatelli.

Pizzigoni's design for a [4] Villa annex Studio for the painter Romualdo Locatelli at the via Orsarola, 45, in Bergamo, marked a first change in his work. It was as if the themes of the last Biennale/Triennale in Monza, 'La semplificazione formale' and 'Sintesi delle arti e funzionalità', had influenced the architectural discourse. The studio-villa would be located in the rural countryside of Bergamo, more specifically on the Colle Bastia and would as such be visible from afar. Which rendered an old paradox visible, namely how to stand out without standing out, or to paraphrase Gio Ponti, how to thread the narrow path between 'fake traditional' and 'ugly modern'? Pizzigoni answered the question with the experienced eye of the painter. His constellation of pure geometric shapes blended in perfectly with both the landscape and the rural architecture, and he showed how those equally simple and functional tile covered roofs had been the classical basis for all traditional housing types.



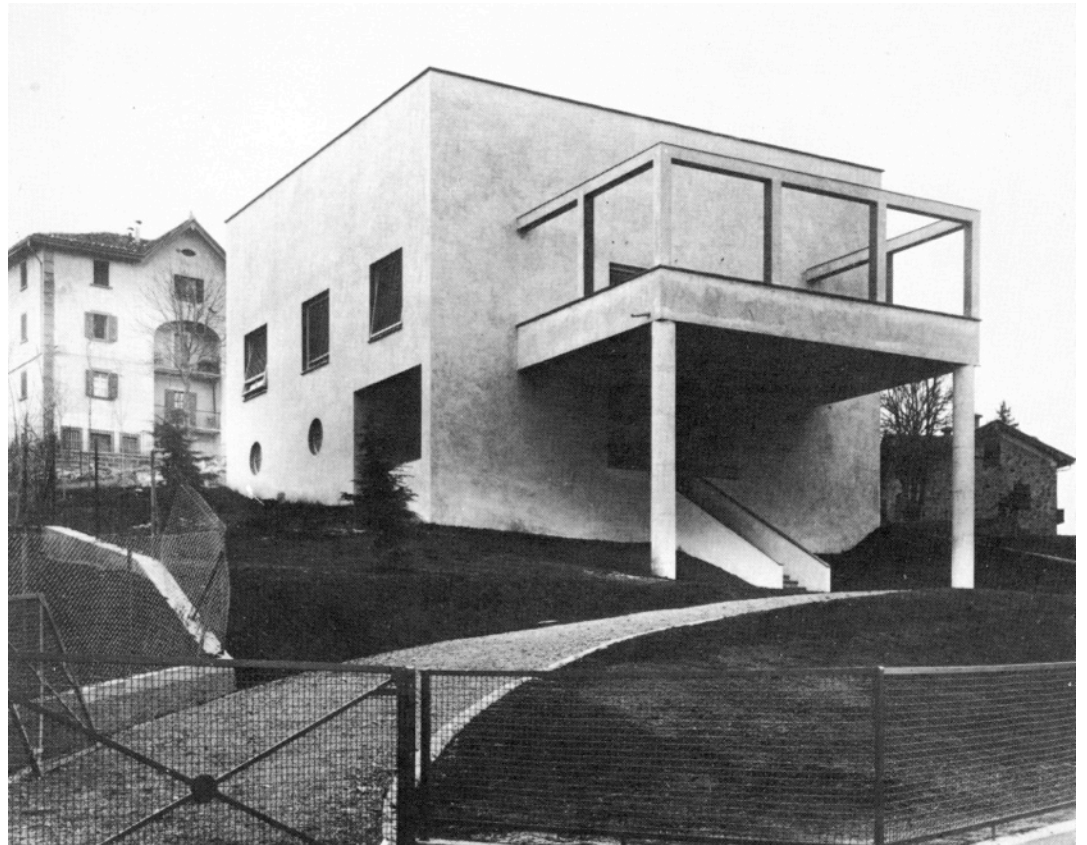
Villa-studio for the painter Romualdo Locatelli.

Plans of the Villa-studio for the painter Romualdo Locatelli.

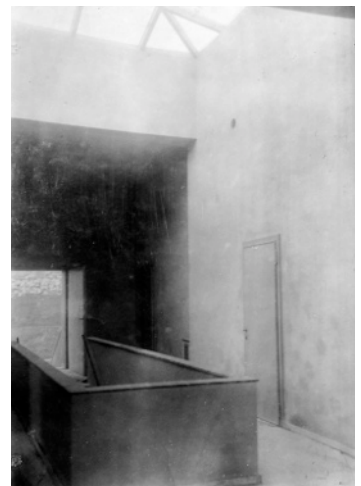
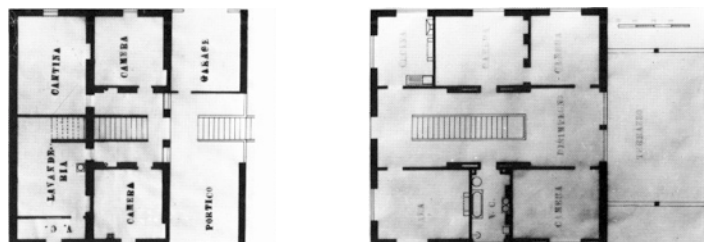
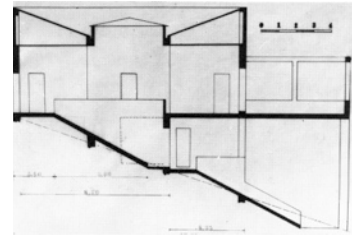




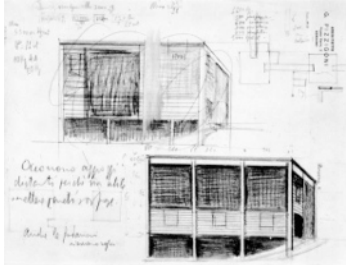
Villa Rinaldi-Ardiani in Selvino (demolished).



In 1932 Pizzigoni started teaching perspective at the famous Accademia Carrara di Bergamo and he published a first booklet on the subject that he would continue to explore and teach for almost 30 years, entitled 'Idee sulla prospettiva'. In the same year 1932 he also designed and build [X] the now demolished Villa Rinaldi-Ardiani, at the Corso Monte Rosa, 15, in Selvino (BG). Another example of a pure geometric shape based on the 9 square typology of a classical Veneto villa, but then transplanted onto a sloping site in Lombardy. Or a vertical atrium house, just imagine the entry sequence in which one would be walking up towards the light. Its a pity that this intriguing example of Pizzigoni's rationalism was demolished since next to its surprising spatial sequence, it also contained some valuable fresco's. Actually very early works of a in those years very close friend of Pizzigoni, the artist Giacomo Manzù, who had his studio in the garden of Pizzigoni's house. Giacomo Manzù (1908-1991), who would later gain world fame as a sculptor, was actually the 12th of the 14 children of a shoemaker from Bergamo. As a young boy he had to work as an apprentice to a woodcarver and later a plasterer, to help to maintain his family. At the same time he tried to follow some evening art classes at the scuola d'arte applicata Andrea Fantoni, in Bergamo, before to perform his military service in Verona, in 1928. Returning to Bergamo in 1930, after a short sojourn to Paris, Giovanni Muzio gave the young and mainly self-thought artist, his first official commission in 1931. He had to decorate the chapel of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, in Milan, with frescos.



In 1933 Pizzigoni won first price for the monument for the Fratelli Calvi, on the piazza Matteotti in Bergamo. In the same year he also assisted Muzio in the design of the Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan and collaborated with him in the embellishment of the famous exhibition that year. The renown 'V Esposizione triennale delle arti decorative e industriali moderne e dell'architettura moderna', actually the first Triennale which took place in Milan and featured the title 'Stile - Civiltà', a kind of credo for the things to come.



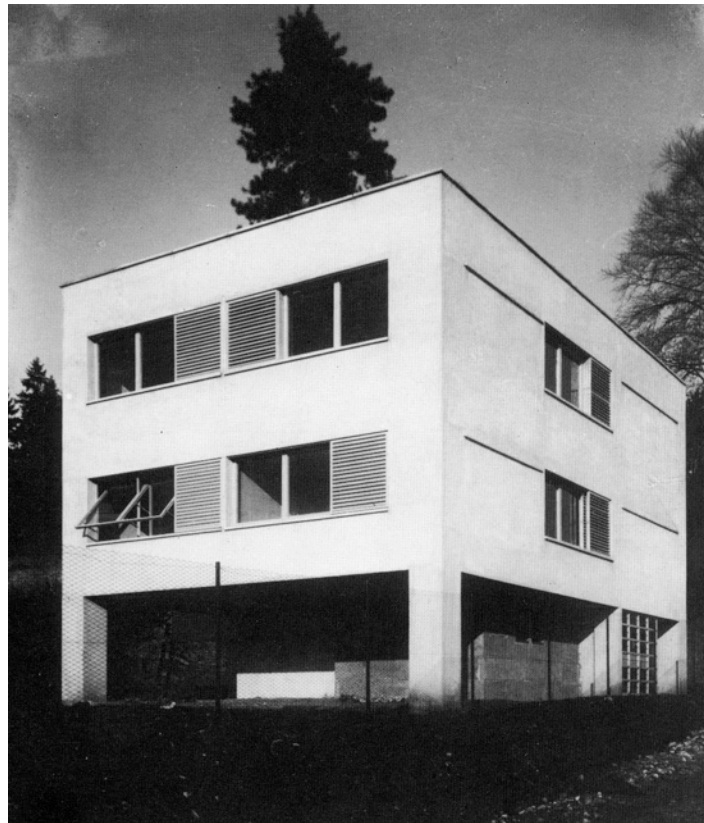
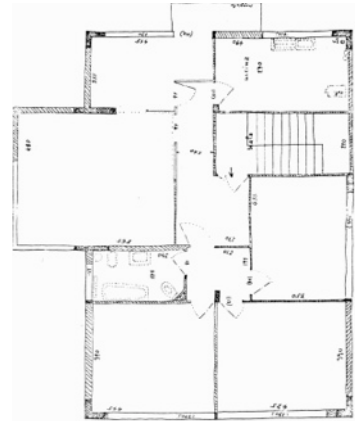
Casa per due appartamenti sketch.

The years between 1933 and 1937 were mainly the years of the large architectural competitions for the monumental buildings that had to celebrate the new and glorious Fascist State. Pizzigoni entered in several of them, in 1933 he worked for a few months in Rome together with the architect Steiner at the 'Concorso dell'Auditorium de Roma'. Then he entered the 'Concorso per il Stazione di Firenze', the 'Concorso per il Piano Regolatore di Brescia, together with Dodi and Aresi (the two architects who together with Invernizzi won first price in the Bergamo Bassa competition), the 'Concorso per il Palazzo del Littorio' in Rome, in collaboration with the engineer Giancarlo Eynard and the painter Achille Funi, the 'Concorso per il Palazzo degli Uffici Statali a Bergamo', again with the engineer Giancarlo Eynard and the 'Concorso per il Palazzo del Littorio di Legnano'. This also was the period in which Pizzigoni's tectonic experiments were mainly dealing with the formal and proportional aspects of the buildings structural frame in relation to its functionality, its construction and its materialization.

Between 1933 and 1935, next to working on these competitions and teaching at the Accademia Carrara di Bergamo, Pizzigoni also became the director of Bergamo's 'Scuola d'arte applicata Andrea Fantoni', for the period of a year. And he started writing articles, his 'Punti di vista artistici', appeared in La Voce di Bergamo (14-03-34) and in 1935 he wrote two pieces in the 'Cronache mensile di lettere, arti e costumi', on the subjects of windows and walls; 'Finestre', in the January issue #28 and 'Muri', in the March issue #30.

Around the same period he started working on a project for the subdivision of the Orti Brentani in Bergamo including the projection of several houses. Non of them got realized except from one, the so called [5] 'Casa Cubo', a house with two apartments, that he build for two of his cousins (the Riva's) at the via Monte Ortigara, 35. A simple cubic volume on four corner columns with the living room projecting out and overlooking the garden via a corner window.

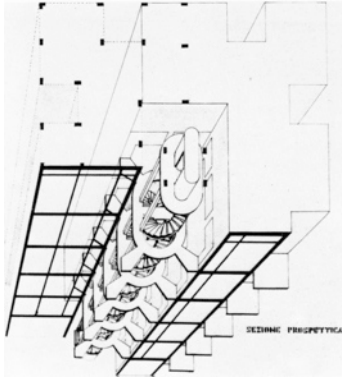
Casa per due appartamenti, first floor plan.



Casa per due appartamenti / Casa Cubo, in Bergamo.

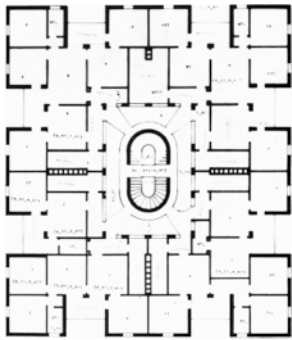


1938 - 1945 WWII



Pizzigoni had always refused to become a member of the fascist party (actually of any political party whatsoever) and gradually started to feel the consequences. In 1936 he already complained in a letter about the restrictive laws on the exercising of the profession for non-party members, which not only meant that he had difficulties getting commissions, but also that he was denied opportunities to participate in competitions and exhibitions. In 1938 he wrote a piece in 'L'Eco di Bergamo' (23-04) with the title 'Problemi d'arte: E il giudizio del popolo?'

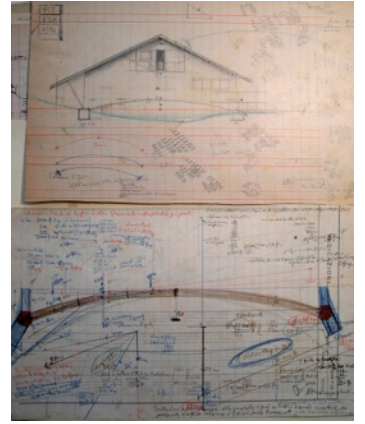
Between 1935 and 1937 he had made a design for an interesting vertical apartment building at the via Torquato Taramelli in Bergamo (not realized). And his only commission in 1938 was the design of a small mountain lodge for avvocato Alemanni, or better to say the construction of a little bridge over a small mountain stream with a lodge on top, in Roncobello (BG).



The years after he only made designs for interiors and furniture, since the situation in Italy was deteriorating fast for non party members. In 1939 Mussolini had also invaded Albania (he had already in 1935 invaded Ethiopia, via Italy's East African colonies, Eritrea and Somalia) and in 1939 Mussolini had signed a full defensive alliance with Nazi Germany, the so called Pact of Steel. He had however not yet declared war on Britain and France, this would happen in mid 1940. Then in September 1940 he would invade Egypt via Libya, Italy's colony in North Africa, and a few weeks later he would declare war on Greece. However from early on things didn't go as Mussolini had expected.

Project for an apartment building at the via Torquato Taramelli in Bergamo (not realized).

In 1942 Pizzigoni got married to Giuseppina Gallina and their first child Maria was born before he was drafted for military duty on the Aegian island of Kárpáthos in 1943. In the turbulent period of the so called 'Repubblica di Salò', between September 1943 and mid 1945 (in which Italy had already surrendered to the Allies, but was now, until its liberation, a puppet state virtually occupied by Nazi Germany) Pizzigoni started working on two new and interrelated tectonic experiments: one more spatial and dealing with form, proportion and function (i.e. experiments in minimal housing), the other more technical and dealing with structure, material and construction (i.e. experiments with granite, reciprocal frames, concrete shells, hypars etc.). Born from the necessity to start thinking about the problems the people will have to face after the war, the rapid reconstruction of the cities and the need for affordable housing, Pizzigoni started to use his enormous ability to really think three-dimensionally. It was probably his experience with all aspects of perspectival projection, imagination and representation that gave him this ability to imagine the traces of movements and forces in a space or a structure, in three- and even four-dimensions.

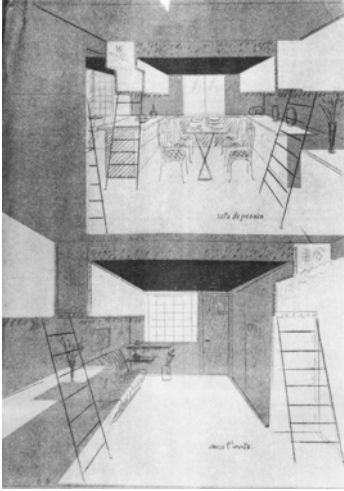


1938 - Bridge with a mountain lodge on top of it. Sketches and photographs preserved in the Pizzigoni archive at the Public Library of Bergamo. The wood cladding was extended further down in a later stage and at the moment also the span of the bridge is filled in to become a kind of basement space.

Garden furniture



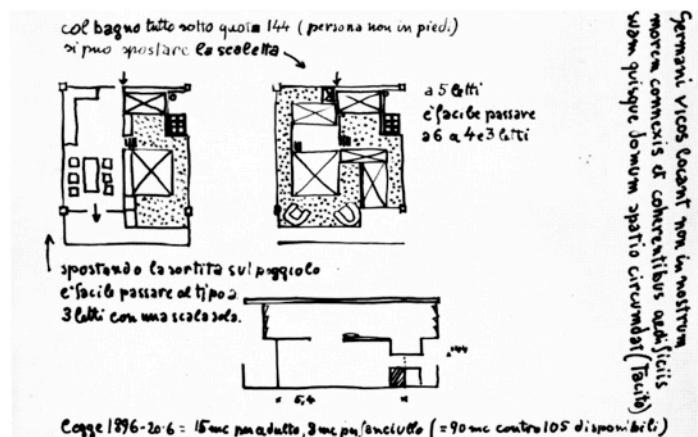
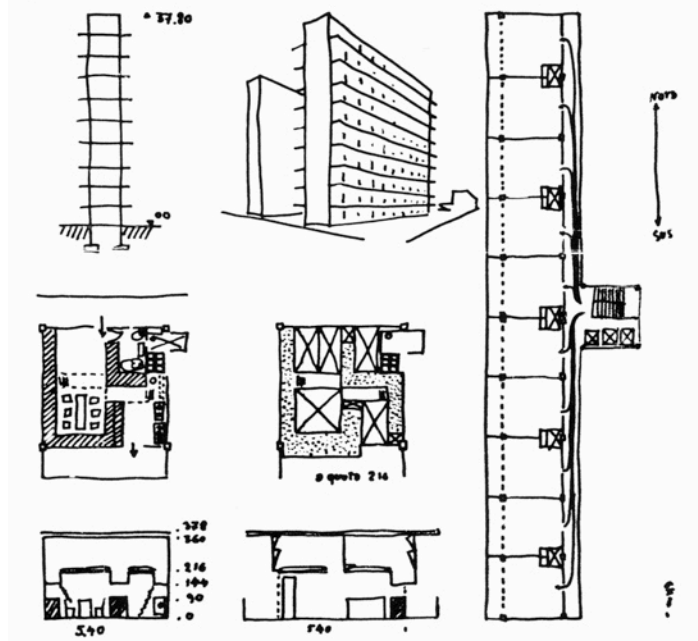
1945 - 1950 Economy of dwelling space



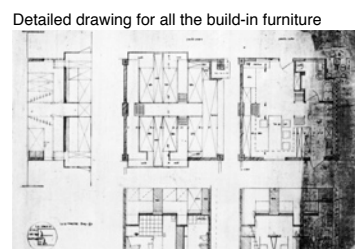
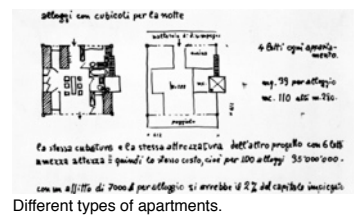
1945 - Interior perspectives of a project for 100 furnished apartments. The different sleeping alcoves are reached via small ladders.

Immediately after the liberation of Bergamo Pizzigoni took up an active roll again in shaping the city. He wrote a lot of articles for the 'Giornale del Popolo' that show is active involvement: 'Per una nuova edilizia cittadina' (22-06-45), 'Costruire nuove case' (08-12-45), 'Commento al regolamento edilizio del nostro comune' (21-01-46), 'Commento al P.R. del nostro comune' (26-01-46), 'La riforma edilizia' (15-02-46), 'Urbanistica cittadina' (21-02-46), 'Studi per la riforma edilizia' (24-02-46), 'Il P.R. e la Stazione ferroviaria' (15-03-46), 'La costruzione di un lotto di case popolari' (22-06-46). And to overcome the postwar building crisis with an actual building initiative, he presented several housing projects (a.o. to the Banca Mutua Popolare di Bergamo) that all deal with the economy of dwelling space in all its aspects, functionality, furniture, costs, material, construction etc.

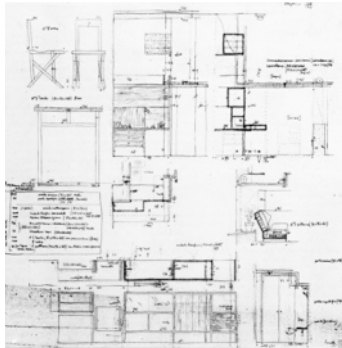
100 appartamenti ammobiliati: costo preventivo: 35.000.000.
 impalcati a mezza altezza - 10 piani - corpo semplice - distribuzione a ballatoio - telaio semplice portante in cemento armato - mc 17500 - economia sullo spazio - servizi modernissimi - area coperta 440 mq. in comune = 3 ascensori - portineria - telefoni - ristorante - asilo - lavanderia - stiviera - area a disposizione 5000 mq. - infermeria - garage - ogni appartamento = bagno - acqua calda - cucina elettrica - aspirapolvere - frigorifero - riscaldamento - tutti i mobili dimensionati sul posto - 6 letti a quota 2,16 (notto: bagno, ingresso, cucina, pranzo) - cammino di ronda a quota 1,44 (notto: armadi, apparecchi, mobili) - lavabi ribaltabili



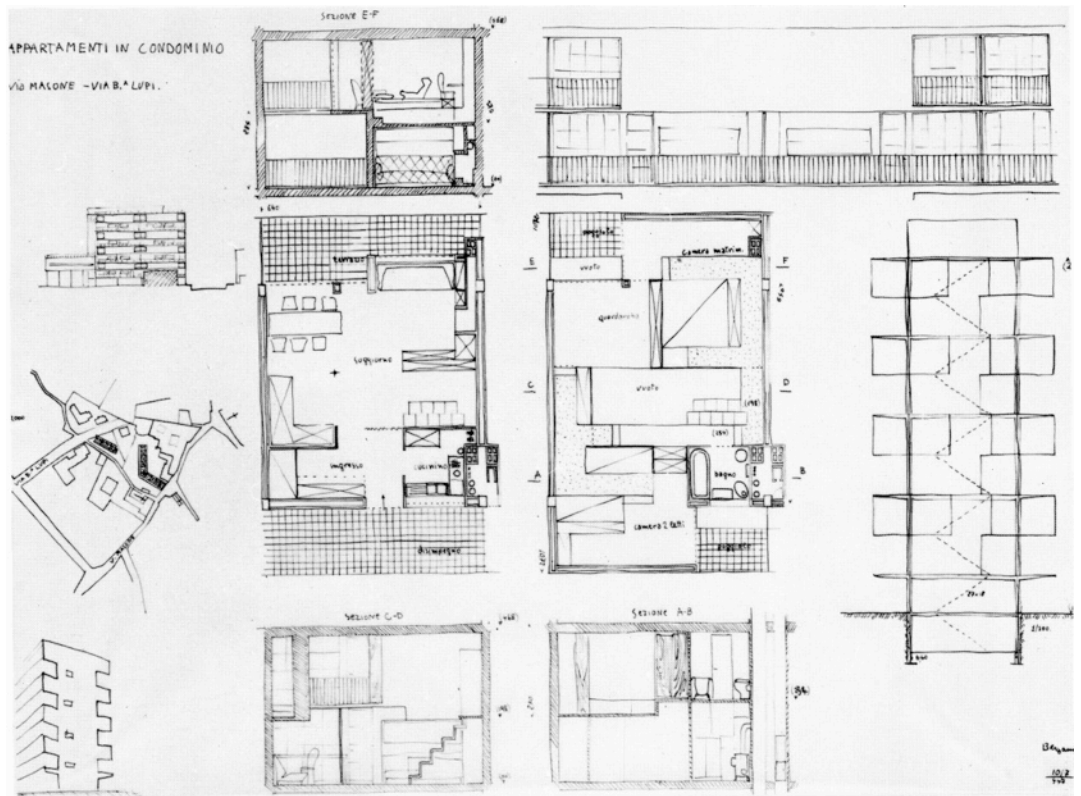
1945 - Project for 100 furnished apartments, each has two stories, but is only 3,60m in total height. This is achieved by modulating the height of the in-between ceiling/floor according to its function. Ceiling height for standing and walking areas is 2,16m for sitting/sleeping and furnished areas its only 1,44m.



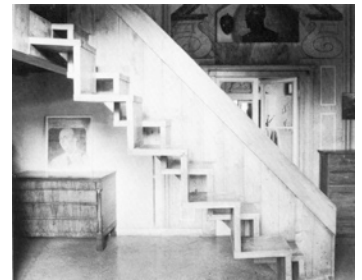
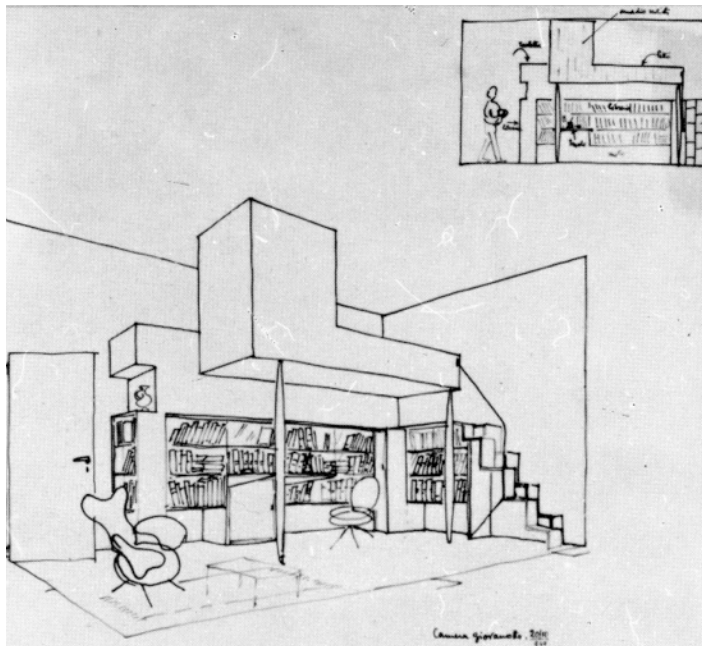
1947 - Project for a building with fully furnished apartments, on the site opposite the street of the 'Casa Cubo'. Same principal however now with more ceiling height and the ladders are replaced by only one staircase with alternating steps.



Detailed drawing for all the build-in furniture

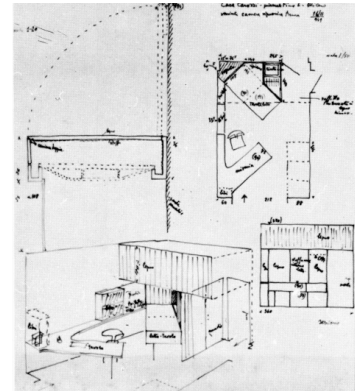


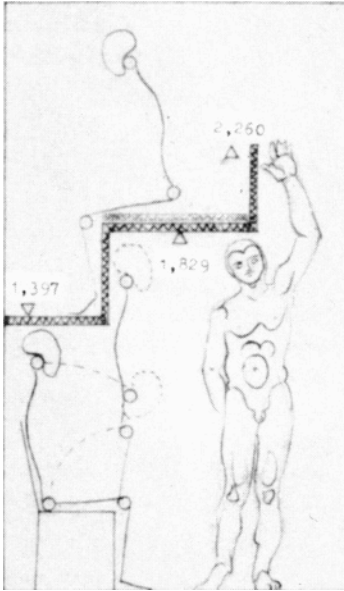
1949 - Furniture for Casa Carozzi.



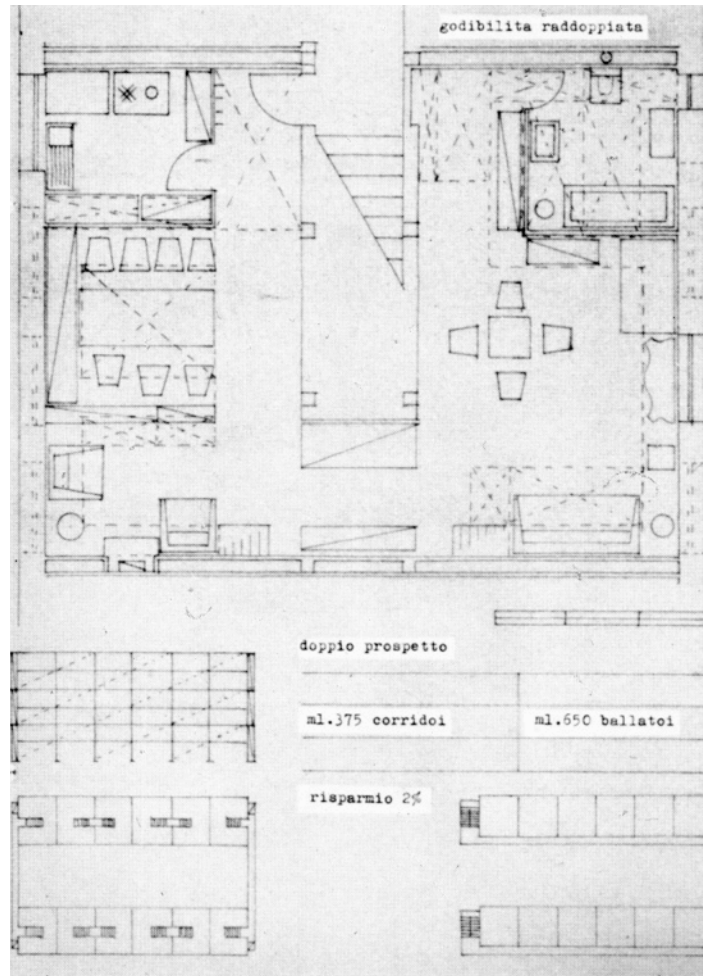
1947 - staircase with alternating steps that he build in his own house (the former 'House for his father') to reach a mezzanine he constructed in his studio.

1949 - Furniture for Casa Carozzi.

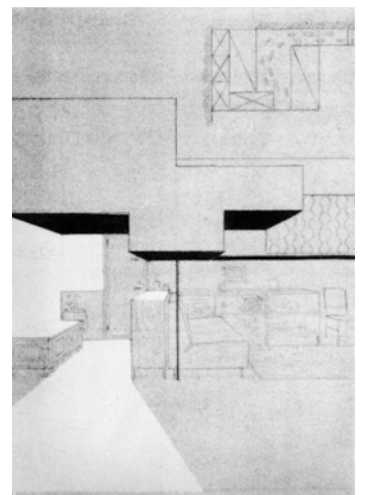
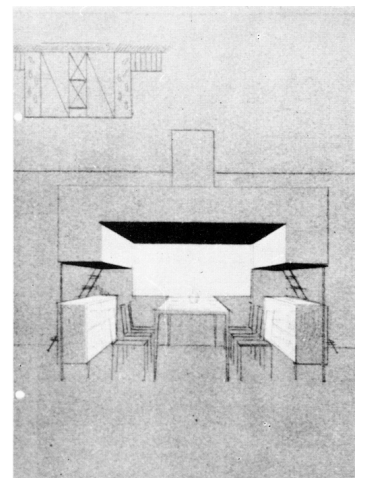
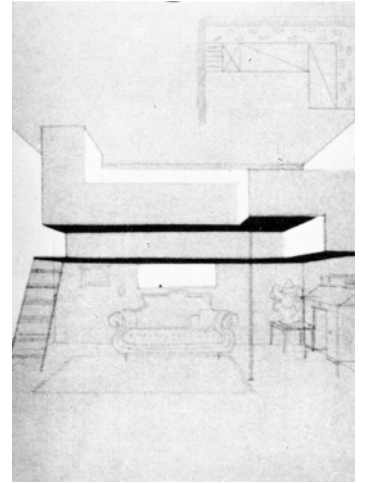




1948 - Ideas competition to solve the problems of the reconstruction, organized by the 'Società del Linoleum'. In this competition the game of modulating the different ceiling heights goes even one step further by means of the use of Le Corbusier's measurements from the Modulor (sitting, standing, walking).



1948 - Ideas competition to solve the problems of the reconstruction, organized by the 'Società del Linoleum'. Pizzigoni's proposal also shows how one could minimize even further. Not only he uses again ladders, but also he proposes to minimize the space to reach each apartment by means of staircases that run diagonally through the building, thus dividing the apartments, but giving them at the same time maximum privacy and an unobstructed view towards the outside. A bit like Le Corbusier's 'rue' in the Unité, but then diagonal.

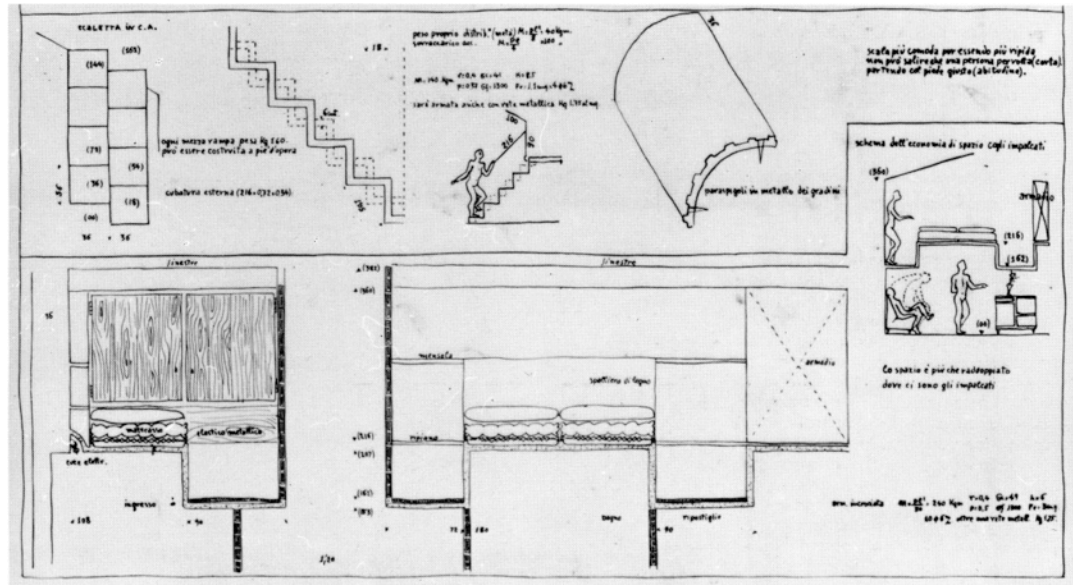


1948 - Ideas competition to solve the problems of the reconstruction, organized by the 'Società del Linoleum'. Perspectives.





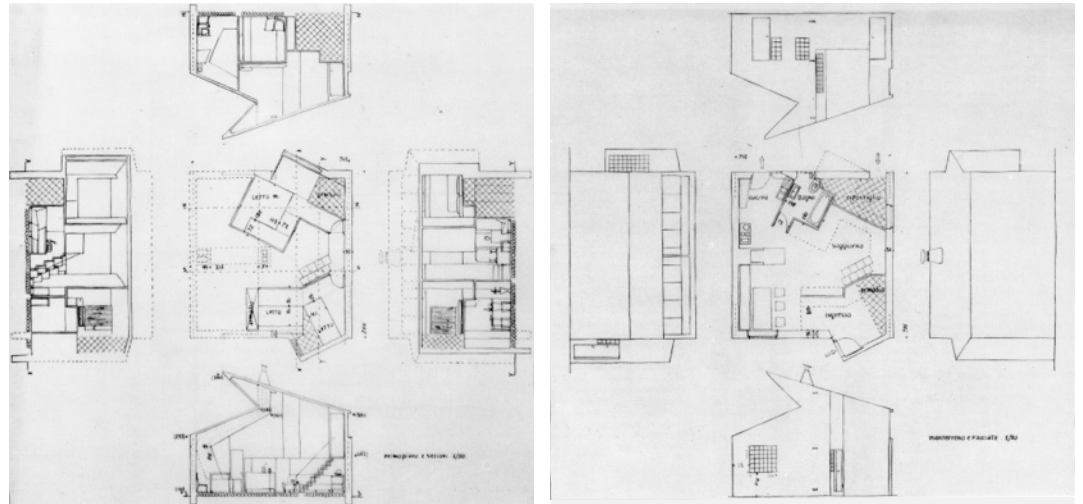
1946 - Casa minima unifamiliare, realization of the price winning design.

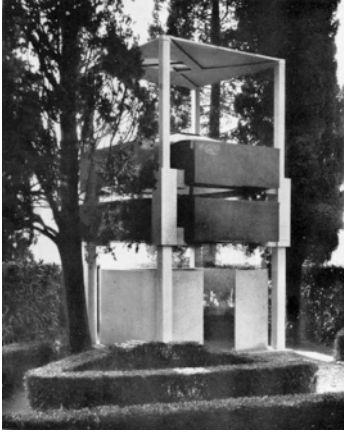


Details for the built-in furniture and the staircase with alternating steps

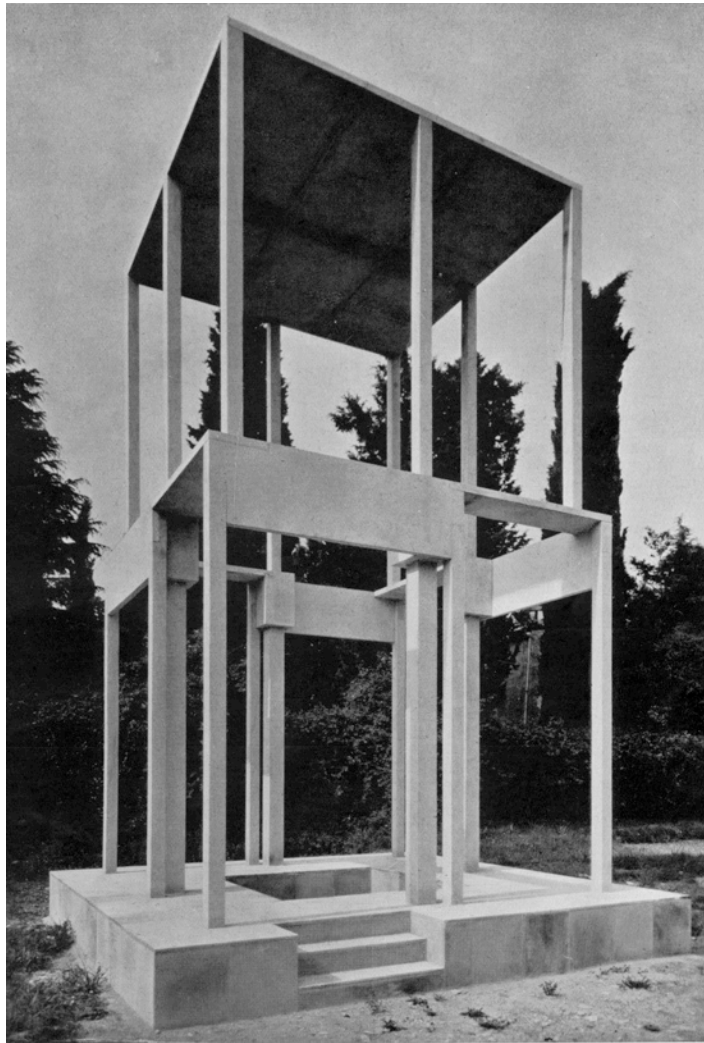
The only realized project dealing with Pizzigoni's ideas on the economy of dwelling space is the [6] Casa minima unifamiliare, the minimal one-family house of 1946, at the Piazzale Lodovico Goisis, 5. It was the realization of the price winning design of a competition for economical one-family workers housing, by the Collegio dei Costruttori Edili e Affini della Provincia di Bergamo. This house uses the measurements of the initial 1945 project (3,60m and 2,16m), but it goes a step further in also employing perspectival aspects in the perception of its interior space. The house is designed as a row-house with a small garden in the back. The large shed roof not only helps to heighten the perspectival perception of the space, it also provides fresh air and light even deep inside the house.

1946 - Casa minima unifamiliare, plans, sections, elevations.





1947 - Cappella Ardiani.



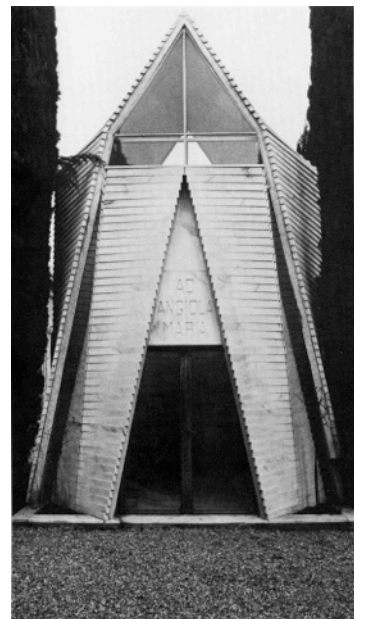
1947 - Cappella Bay.

1950 - Cappella Traversi.



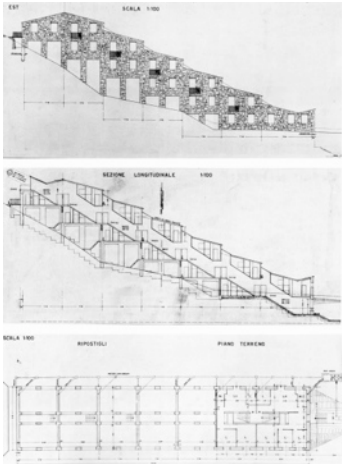
Next to his experiments with the economy of dwelling space he also started experimenting the structural use of granite, which he had patented. In 1944 he also writes a piece about 'L'uso strutturale del granito', for 'Stile' #12. The first build results are the aforementioned funerary chapels, the [7A] Cappella Bay and the [7B] Cappella Ardiani, both realized in 1946 on the cemetery of Bergamo. Here also other funerary chapels and tombs by Pizzigoni can be found like: the [7C] Cappella Traversi of 1950, the Tomba Maffioletti of 1951, the Cappella Billi of 1956 (demolished), the Tomba del pittore Angelo Crespi of 1957 and the Tomba Brandolisio.

1947 was again a year of many competitions, he for instance designed a church completely in granite for the 'Concorso per la chiesa del Quartiere sperimentale' at the VIII Triennale di Milano QT8 and he won several competitions like: the 'Concorso per la sistemazione del Piazzale della Stazione a Bergamo', in collaboration with Sandro Angelini, the 'Concorso per il primo settennio INA Casa' and in the 'Concorso per la sistemazione dell'area dell'ex-ospedale di Bergamo', he became ex-aequo second. In the years after he was intensely involved in the further development of Bergamo and its surroundings, he continued writing for the *Giornale del Popolo* and *L'Eco di*



1956 - Cappella Billi (demolished).



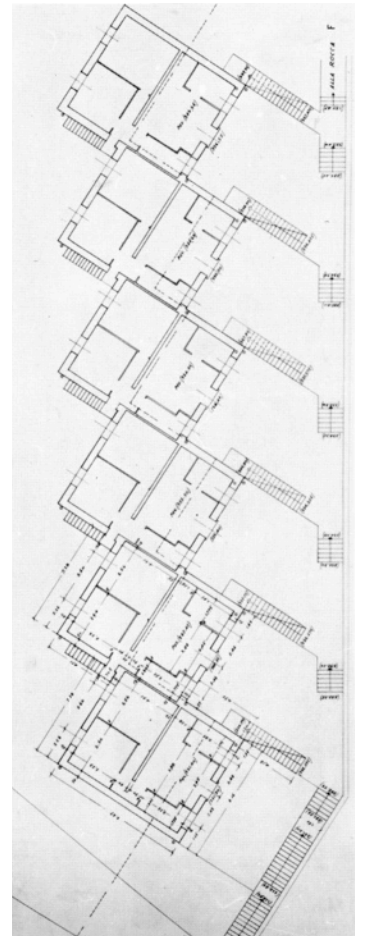


1949 - First design for the Case Fanfani, with a continuous staircase, with roof lights over the entries.

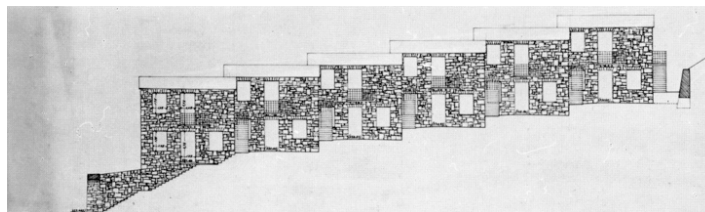


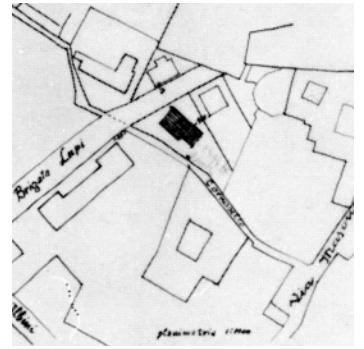
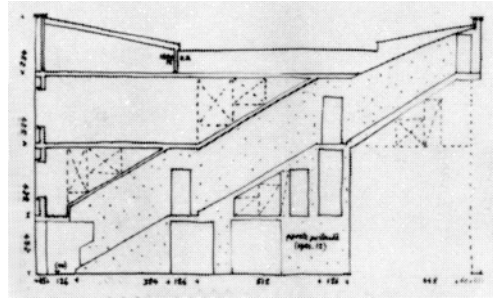
Bergamo, became a member of the direction of 'La rivista di Bergamo' and initiated international exhibitions. Further he also was the president of the organizational committee for the CIAM 7, the first postwar CIAM in 1949, in Bergamo.

In the period of 1949-1950 he realizes several projects: the [8] 'Case Fanfani, INA-Casa, at via della Fara, 5, in Bergamo, the [9] Teatro-oratorio Sala Eden, at via Bergamo, 9, in Stezzano (BG), the [10] Casa per appartamenti, at via Giuseppe Garibaldi, 16, in Bergamo and the (now demolished) Casa Azimonti Fortis at the via Monte Ortigara, in Bergamo.

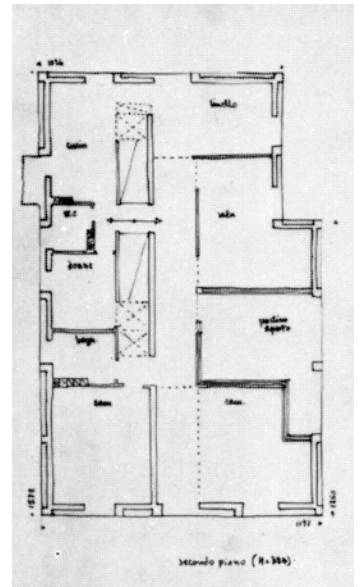
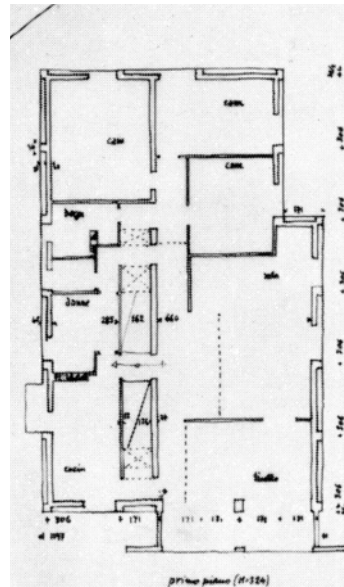
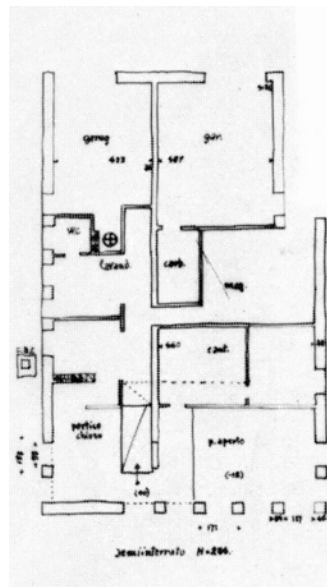
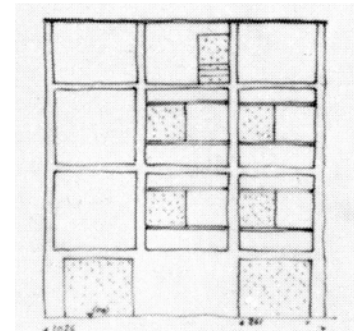
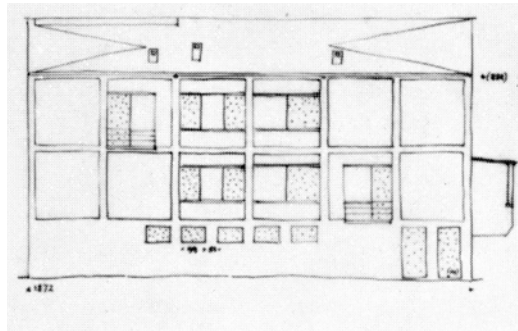
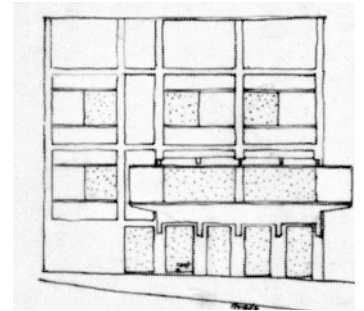
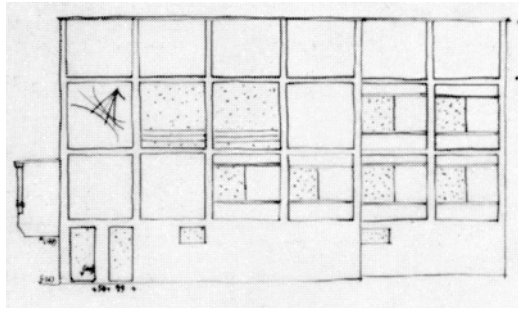


1950 - Build design for the Case Fanfani. 6 duplex houses.





1949 - Casa Azimonti-Fortis (demolished), this building containing 3 apartments was located on the site opposite the street of the 'Casa Cubo'.



1950 - 1967 Perspectival engineering



1951 - Visualization of the theorem on perspective by Pizzigoni.

Pizzigoni's intellectual fascination for the mysteries of perspectival projection was something that seems to be a constant during his active life. After his first publication on the subject, 'Idee sulla prospettiva', which he wrote at the beginning of his teachings at the 'Scuola di Pittura dell'Accademia Carrara' in 1932, he produced a second more extensive one in 1951, bearing the title 'Prospettiva illustrata per pittori, architetti, scenografi e cineasti' (Edizioni della Rotonda, Bergamo, 1951). Followed in 1954 by 'Dell'influenza della prospettiva nell'evoluzione delle arti plastiche', an article in the April issue of 'La rivista di Bergamo', the book 'La prospettiva', published in 1966, in Milan, and in 1968 'Causa dell'attuale crisi delle arti. La prospettiva e i problemi della visualità', in the April issue of 'La rivista di Bergamo'.

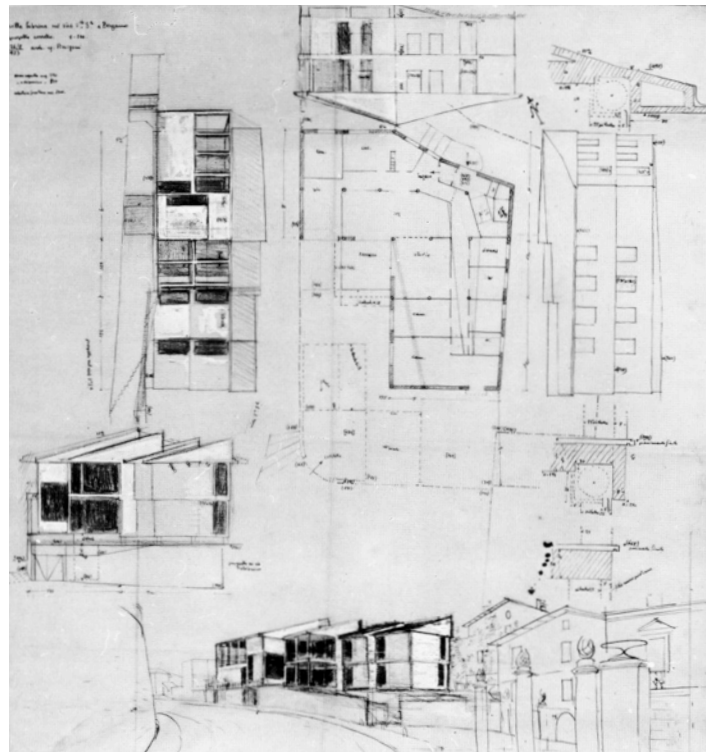
Between 1951 and 1954 he wins the first prize for the 'Piano Regolatore di Darfo', competes in the 'Concorso per la chiesa di Recoaro' and builds the (now demolished) 'Centro Parrocchiale' in the Celadina quarter of Bergamo.

Buildings still in existence that were realized between 1954 and 1959 are:

- [11] the Casa Bosis, at via Roma, 10, in Tavernola Bergamasca, a villa built against a steep slope overlooking the Lago d'Iseo
- [12] the Villa Lubrina, at viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 73, in Bergamo
- [13] the extension of the Teatro Donizetti, at the Piazza Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour, 14, in Bergamo
- [14] the Scuola elementare, at the via Pagliaro, 1, Rota d'Imagna (BG)
- [16] the Istituto Tecnico Industriale di Stato P. Paleocapa - ex-"Esperia", at via Mauro Gavazzeni, 29, in Bergamo
- and last but not least
- [17] Villa Colombo, at via Masone, 24, in Bergamo.

This last one is probably one of the best examples of how Pizzigoni's ideas on perspective also entered his architectural work.

1953/54 - Design for Casa Lubrina with shed roofs.



1953/54 - Casa Lubrina as built.





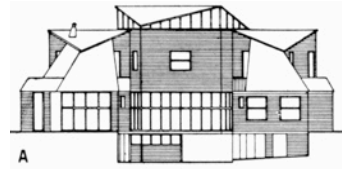
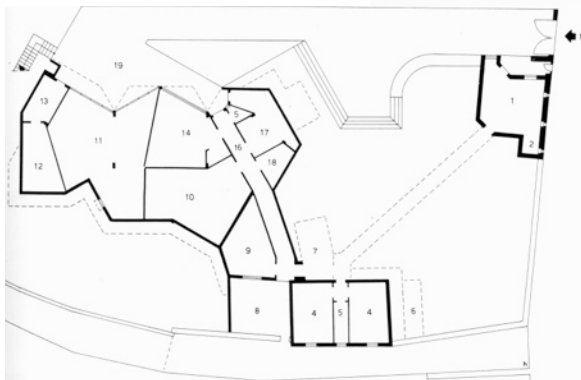
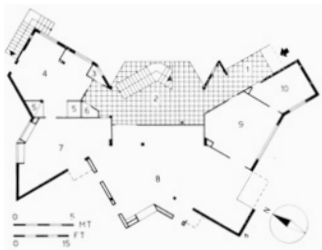
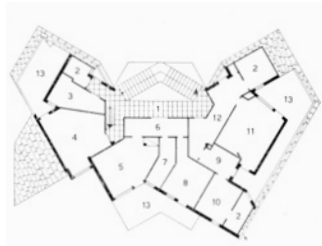
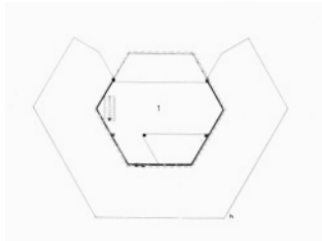
1957/59 - Casa Colombo, design for the decoration of the interior.



1957/59 - Casa Colombo, as build.



1957/59 - Casa Colombo, the (now demolished) fireplace.



1957/59 - Casa Colombo, the (now demolished) granite staircase.



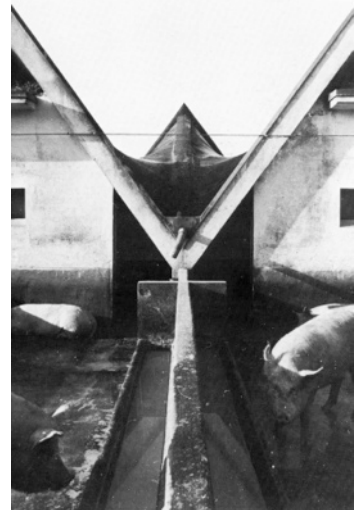


1956/60 - One of the experimental buildings.

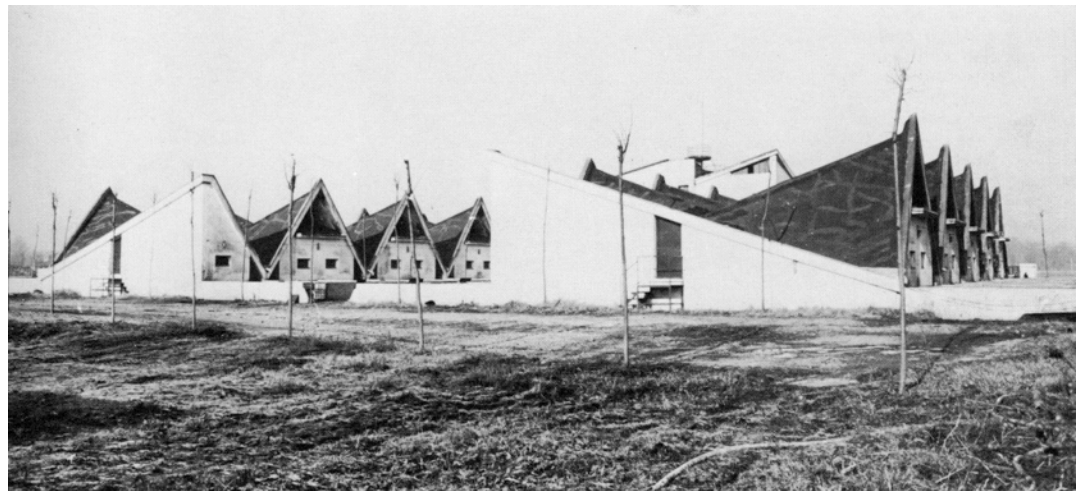


1957 - Industria Marmi Carlo Comana.

1960/64 - The 'porcilaie', pig sties, of the cheese factory at Torrepallavicina.

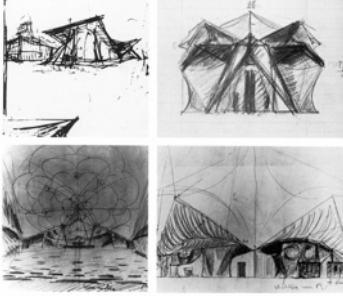


After experimenting with reciprocal frames in furniture around 1948, Pizzigoni got interested in the construction of concrete shells, hypars (partial hyperbolic paraboloids) around the mid fifties and he (being an autodidact in this field) build some [15] simple full-scale models on a site he owned in Zandobbio (BG) just to test them and see what you could do with them. He used the saddle-roofed structure as a stable for horses and the umbrella structure behind it for washing and grooming them. After that he started using this kind of constructions in several of his building projects, one of the first was for the [18] Industria Marmi Carlo Comana, at via Costanza Cerioli, 56, Seriate (BG), a simple industrial hall. He used it for school buildings, for instance the [19] Asili CEP, at the viale Caio Giulio Cesare, in the Moterosso quarter of Bergamo. But maybe the two most interesting examples are: the [20] Porcilaie, the big stables, at via Torre / Via Sante Giulie, in Torrepallavicina (BG) and last but not least the [21] Chiesa di Santa Maria Immacolata, at via Mattioli, 57, Longuelo (BG).

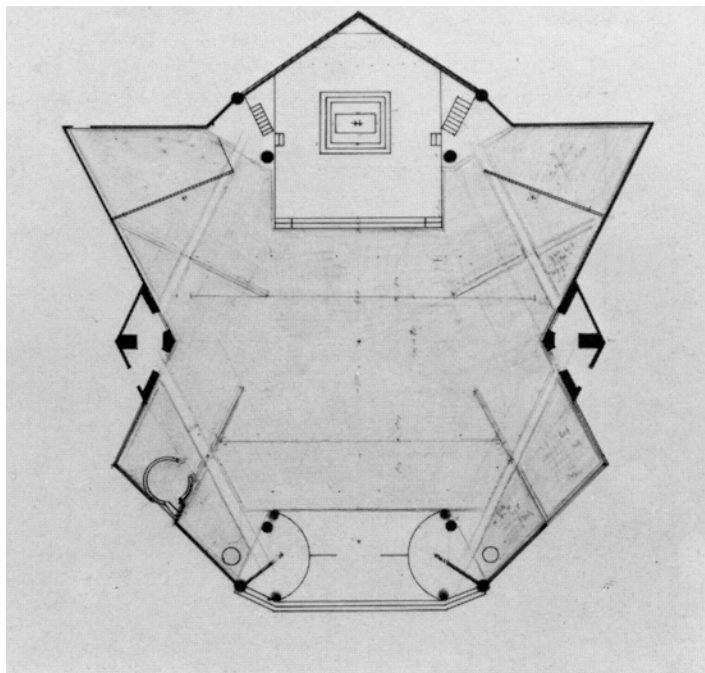
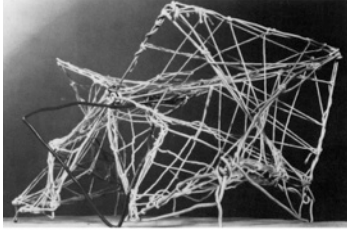


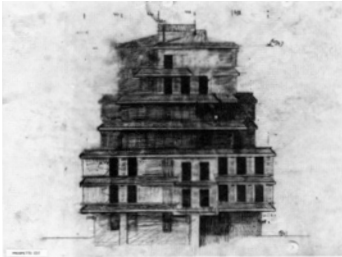
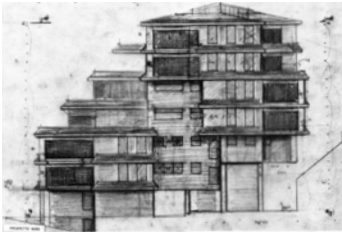
1959/65 - Asili CEP.



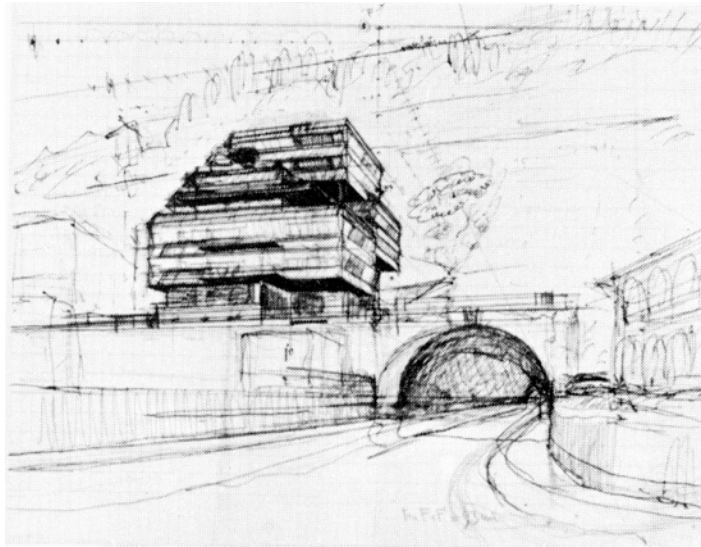


1960/63 - Chiesa di Maria Santissima Immacolata a Longuelo.





1960/64 - Condominio Conca d'Oro "Pagoda".



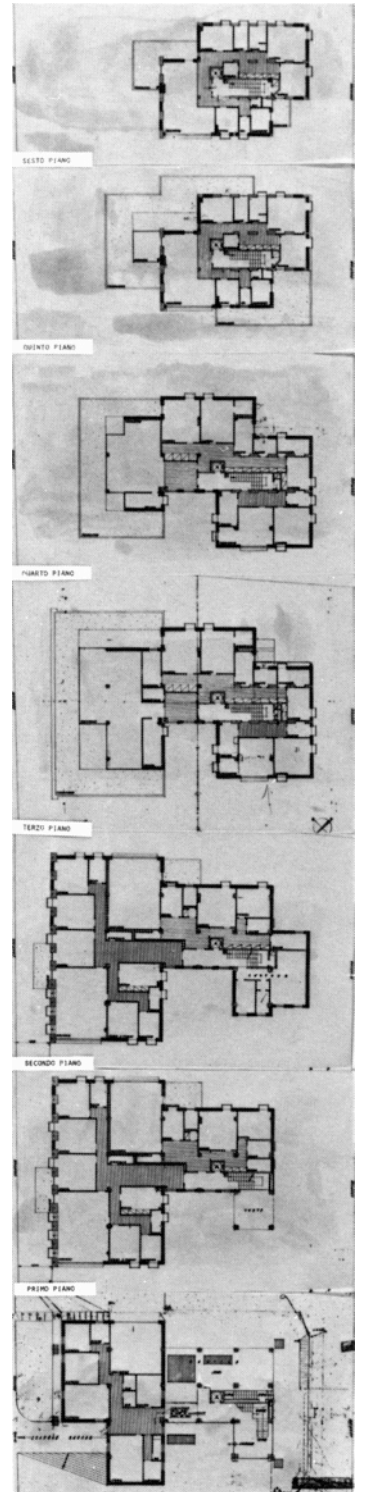
1960/64 - perspectival sketch showing the 'Pagoda' over the Conca d'Oro underpassage.

Next to exploring the space and experimenting around with the structures that produced such extravagant spaces as those in the church of Longuelo, Pizzigoni was also very interested in aspects of equilibrium in both the construction and the composition of a building. Gravity for Pizzigoni (so it seems) was not a force one should fight against, but a force one could use. Already in the extension of the Teatro Donizetti he had used hanging granite pilasters not just to take gravitational weight away from the existing side walls of the theatre, but also to use them as compositional elements echoing the neoclassical facades of the old building. Other examples of his play with the idea of balancing are:

- [22] Residential building Conca d'Oro, better known as 'la Pagoda', at the viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 44, in Bergamo
- [23] The Municipio di Zandobbio, at the intersection of via Rivi/via Monte Grappa in Zandobbio (BG), here its more a balancing act between symmetry and a-symmetry
- [24] Casa Gilberti, at via Roma in Pontenossa (BG)
- and last but not least [25] Casa Claudio Nani, at Parre (BG).

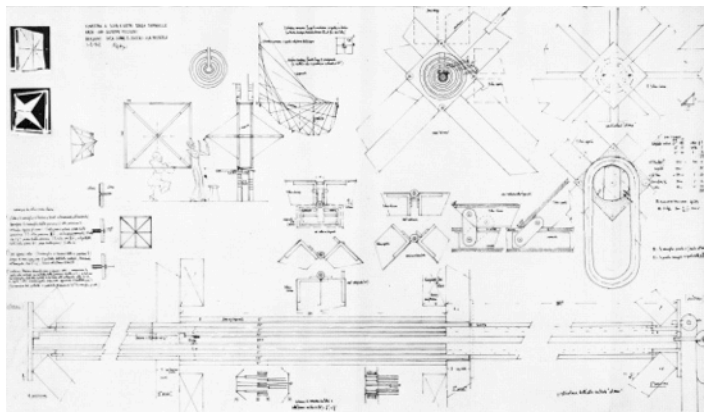
In the last years of his relatively short life he also started inventing new types of shades for windows, one that works like a scissor and another that works like an umbrella. He works on several competitions, the 'Concorso per L'Istituto Magistrale di Bergamo', the 'Concorso per la chiesa del Cimitero di Bergamo', a competition he won ex-aequo, but which did not get build, and the 'Concorso per l'Istituto sordomuti a Bergamo', another first prize. His last listed project is for a prefabricated house in steel.

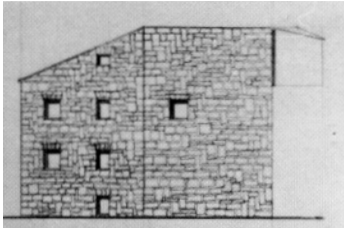
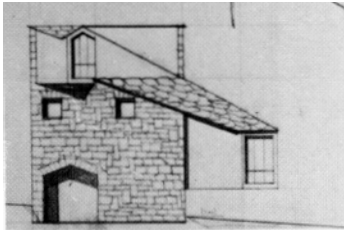
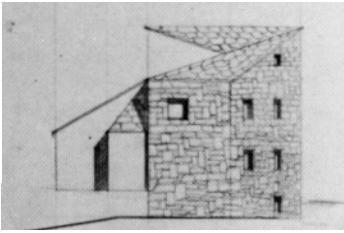
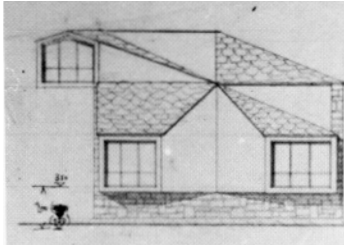
Pino Pizzigoni died on March 29, 1967, in his studio at the age of 65 years.



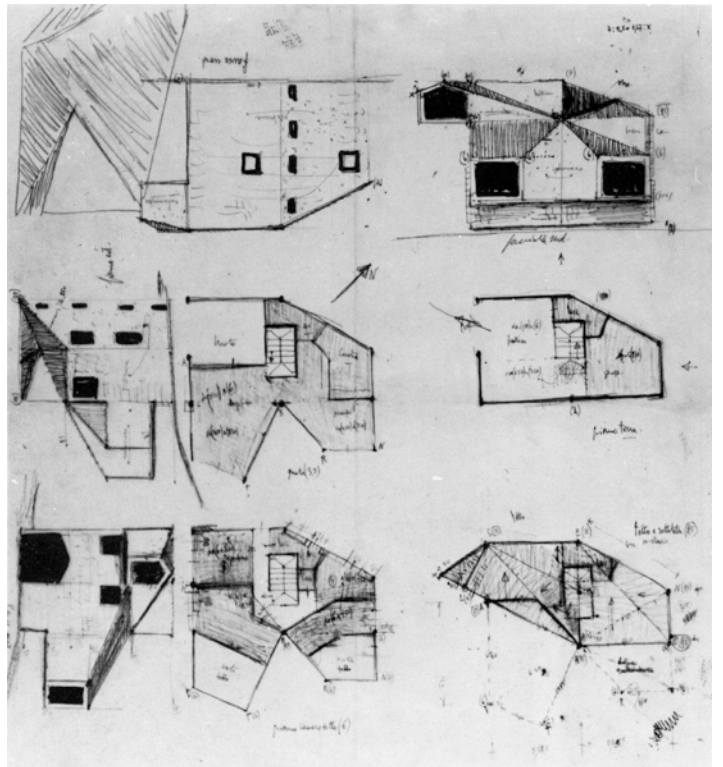
1960/64 - Condominio Conca d'Oro "Pagoda".

1966 - 'Finestra a ombrello' for the villa Zucchi in Bergamo.





1964 - The house built for the artist Claudio Nani, is situated on a sloping site with a fantastic prospect. Its a house that, by means of its oversized bay windows, plays with its perspectival view on and in the landscape surrounding it.



Giuseppe (Pino) Pizzigoni, 1901-1967

Bergamo

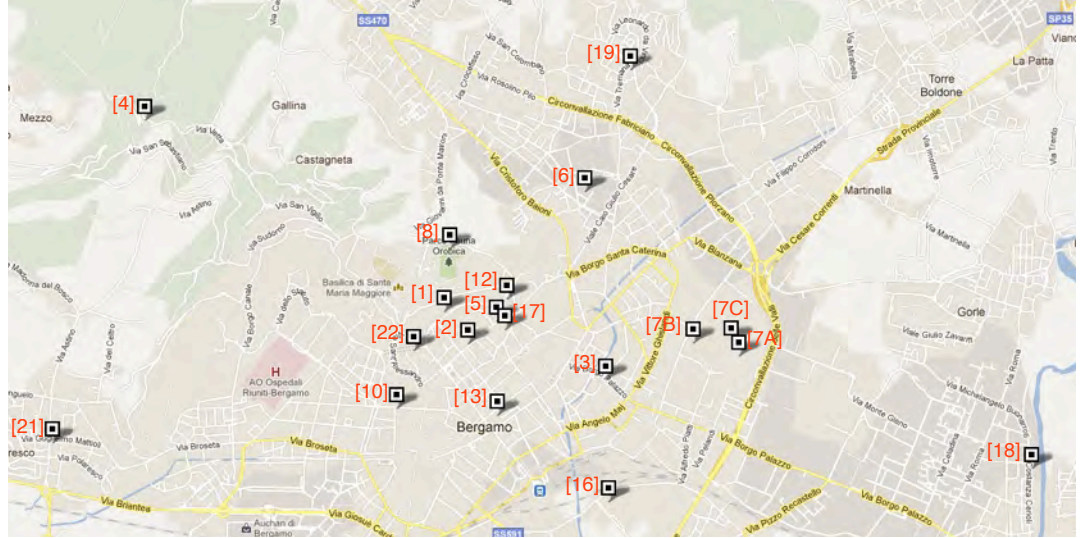
Local Heroes #7

Pino Pizzigoni, Bergamo

by:

Wim van den Bergh & Luciano Motta.

October 2011



[1] 1925/27 Villa for his father
Viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 70, Bergamo.

[2] 1929/31 Casa Beratto
Via Monte Ortigara, 5, Bergamo.

[3] 1929/30 Casa Traversi
Via Borgo Palazzo, 33, Bergamo.

[4] 1931 Villa-studio for painter Romualdo Locatelli
Corso Monte Orsola, 45, Bergamo.

[X] 1932 Site of the demolished Villa Rinaldi-Ardiani
Corso Monte Rosa, 15, Selvino (BG)

[5] 1935/37 Casa Cubo
Via Monte Ortigara, 35, Bergamo.

[6] 1946 Casa minima unifamiliare
Piazzale Lodovico Goisis, 5, Bergamo.

[7A] 1947 Cappella Bay
Cimitero Monumentale, Bergamo.

[7B] 1947 Cappella Ardiani
Cimitero Monumentale, Bergamo.

[7C] 1950 Cappella Traversi
Cimitero Monumentale, Bergamo.

[8] 1949 Case Fanfani, INA-Casa
Via della Fara, 5, Bergamo.

[9] 1949 Teatro-oratorio, Sala Eden
Via Bergamo, 9, Bergamo.

[10] 1950 Casa da appartamenti
Via Giuseppe Garibaldi, 16, Bergamo.

[11] 1954 Casa Bosis
Via Roma, 10, Tavernola Bergamasca (BG).

[12] 1954/55 Villa Lubrina
Viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 73, Bergamo.

[13] 1959/64 Extension of the Teatro Donizzetti

Piazza Cavour, 14, Bergamo.

[14] 1956/60 Scuola elementare
Via Pagliaro, 1, Rota Imagna (BG).

[15] 1956/60 Experimental concrete constructions
Località Gabbione, Zandobio/Gorlago (BG).

[16] 1956/66 Istituto Tecnico Industriale di Stato
Via Mauro Gavazzoni, 29, Bergamo.

[17] 1957/59 Casa Colombo
Via Masone, 24, Bergamo.

[18] 1957 Industria Marmi Carlo Comana
Via Costanza Cerioli, 56, Seriate (BG).

[19] 1959/65 Asili CEP Monterosso
Via Caio Giulio Cesare, Bergamo.

[20] 1960/64 Porcilaie
Via Torre/Via Sante Giulie, Torrepallavicina (BG).

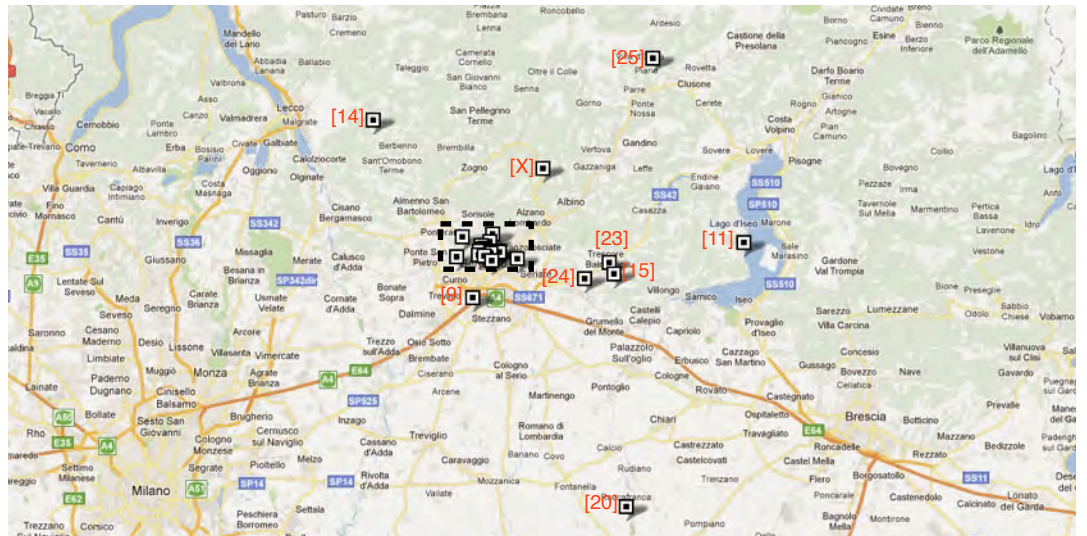
[21] 1960/63 Chiesa di Santa Maria Immacolata, Longuelo
Via Mattioli, 57, Bergamo.

[22] 1960/64 Apartment building "Pagoda", Conca d'Oro,
Viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 44, Bergamo.

[23] 1962/65 Municipio di Zandobbio
Via Rivi/Via Monte Grappa, Zandobbio (BG).

[24] 1964 Casa Gilberti
Via Roma, Pontenossa (BG).

[25] 1964 Casa Claudio Nani
Sant'Alberto-Grumella, Parre (BG).





1925/27

[1] Villa for his father

Viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 70, Bergamo.

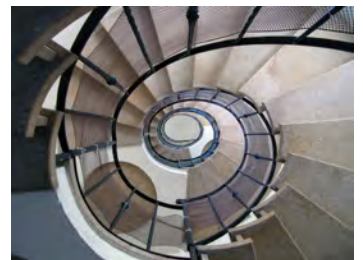
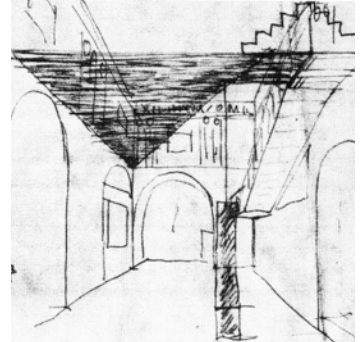
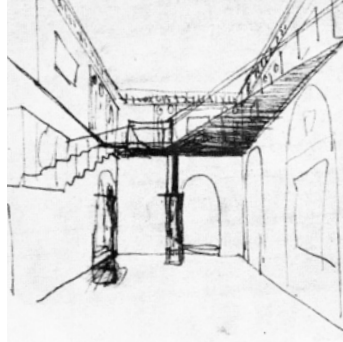
This is the best preserved of all of Pizzigoni's buildings. And as such the villa still emanates that specific surreal atmosphere of the 'pittura metafisica'. From the outside one first climbs a convex staircase that in its center turns to become a theatre like concave staircase and then leads further up straight to the entrance portal. From here a subtle play of symmetry and a-symmetry, positive and negative leads the way to an enclosed white staircase that at its first landing turns dark when it enters the space of the main 'sala' of the house and then leads towards the more private quarters on the first floor.

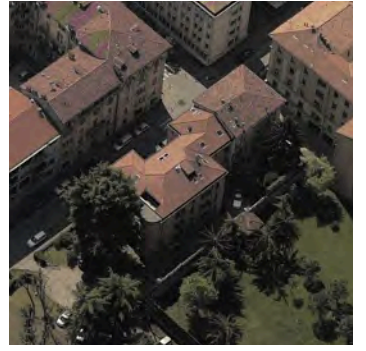
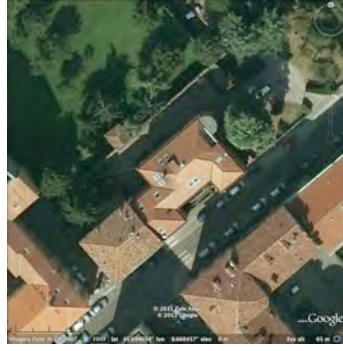
By means of the spiral (service-) staircase at the side, the top story can be used as a separate apartment.

At the moment Pino Pizzigoni's daughter Antonia and her family are living in the house.



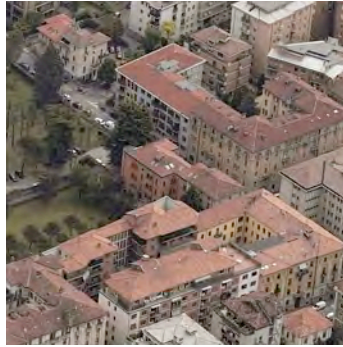
The sketches show that Pizzigoni only later introduced a kind of triangular mezzanine in the main 'sala', to be supported by a column composed of a statue by Giacomo Manzù and a wooden base.





1929/31
[2] Casa Beratto
Via Monte Ortigara, 5, Bergamo.

In collaboration with the engineer Michele Invernizzi.
The interior is completely modified.



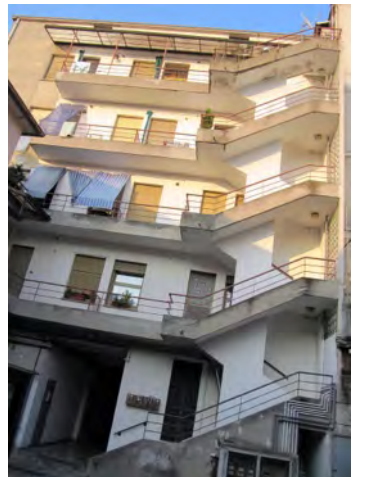
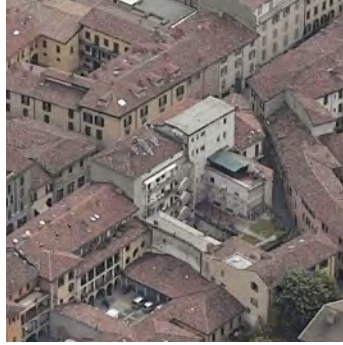


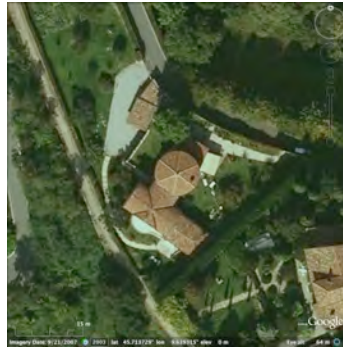
1929/30

[3] Casa Traversi

Via Borgo Palazzo, 33, Bergamo.

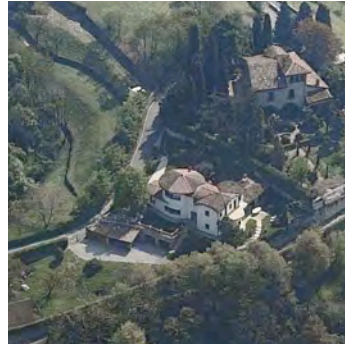
In collaboration with the engineer Michele Invernizzi. Interesting for its two faces, the very carefully proportioned 'Novecento' front facade and the more rationalistic back, with its concrete staircase and galleries to reach the two apartments on each floor.





1931
[4] Villa-studio for painter Romualdo Locatelli
Corso Monte Orsarola, 45, Bergamo.

The house is completely remodeled. The former double height studio with its large window is now divided by a new floor into two stories, the large window has been closed off and new windows have been added all over the house. The house is also extended with extra buildings and the roofs are now projecting further outward than in the initial design. The S shaped staircase is still present but extended to reach the new floor dividing the former studio.



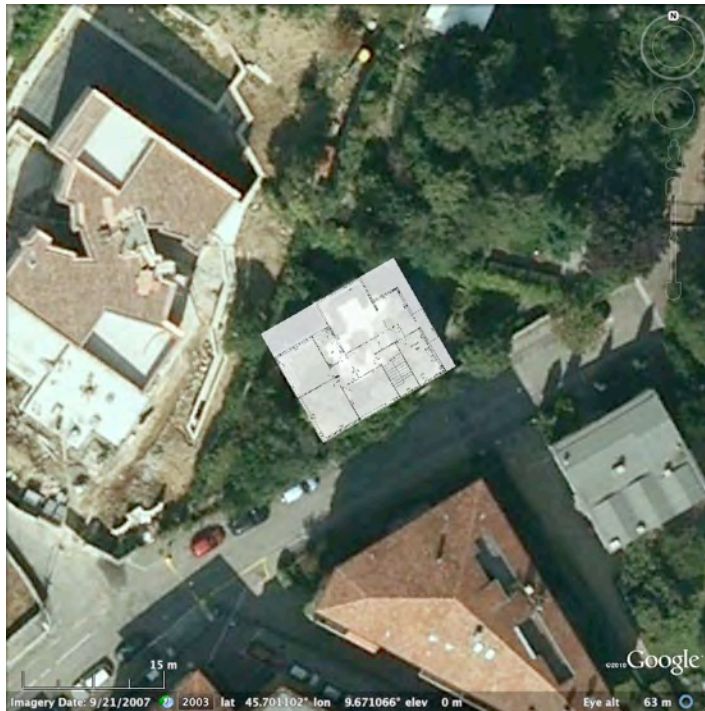
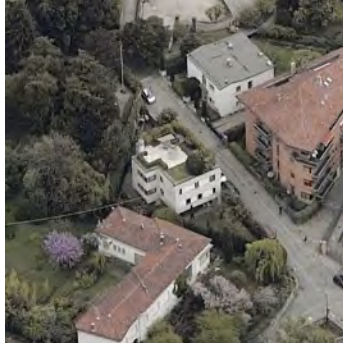


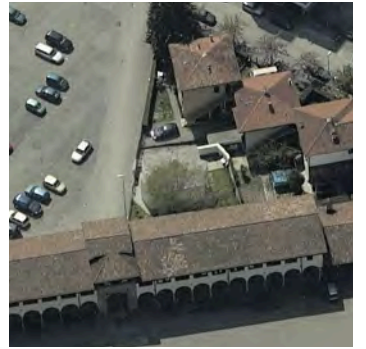
1935/37

[5] Casa Cubo

Via Monte Ortigara, 35, Bergamo.

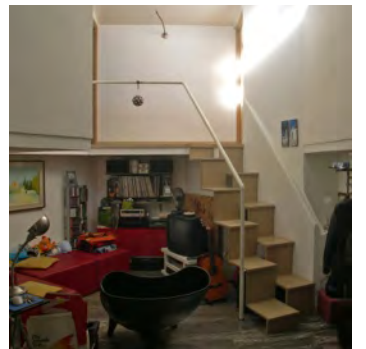
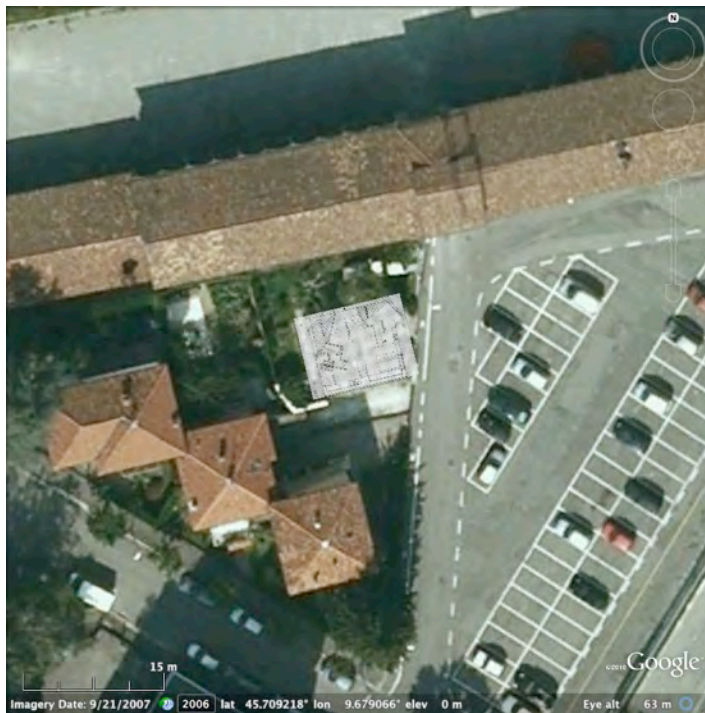
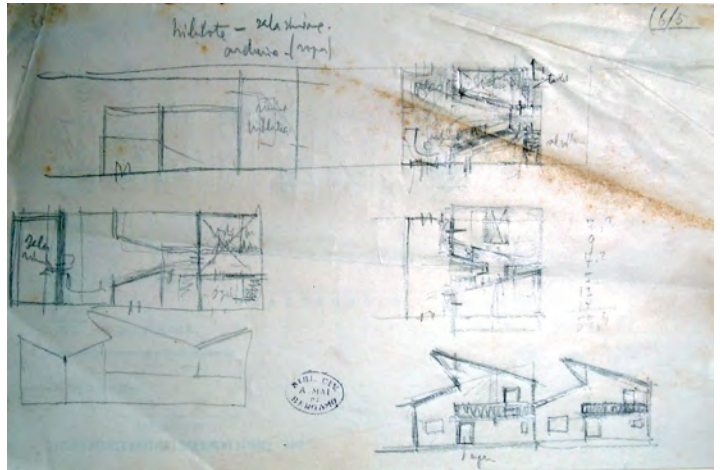
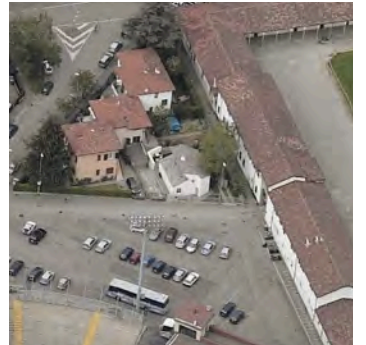
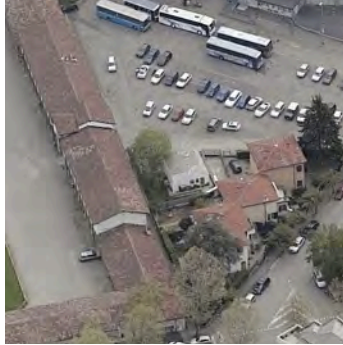
Initially designed as a building with two apartments it is turned in to a single-family house by Pino Pizzigoni's son Attilio, who lives in it. He insulated it from the outside and added a roof terrace on the top.

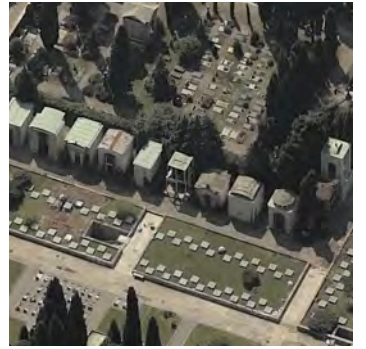




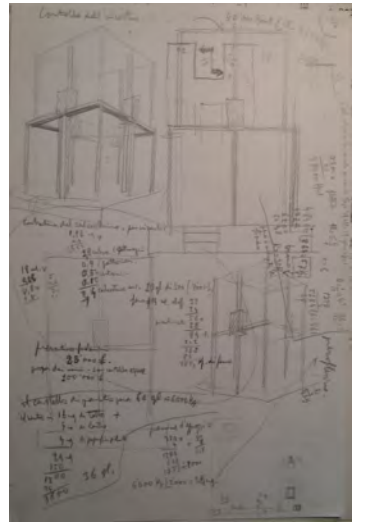
1946
[6] Casa minima unifamiliare
 Piazzale Lodovico Goisis, 5, Bergamo.

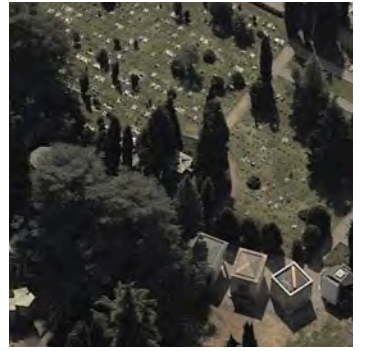
Also this house has been renovated by Pino's son Attilio, who is also an architect. Its a bit over done in terms of the marble floor and the not so subtly detailed woodwork, but it still remains its intrinsic spatial character.





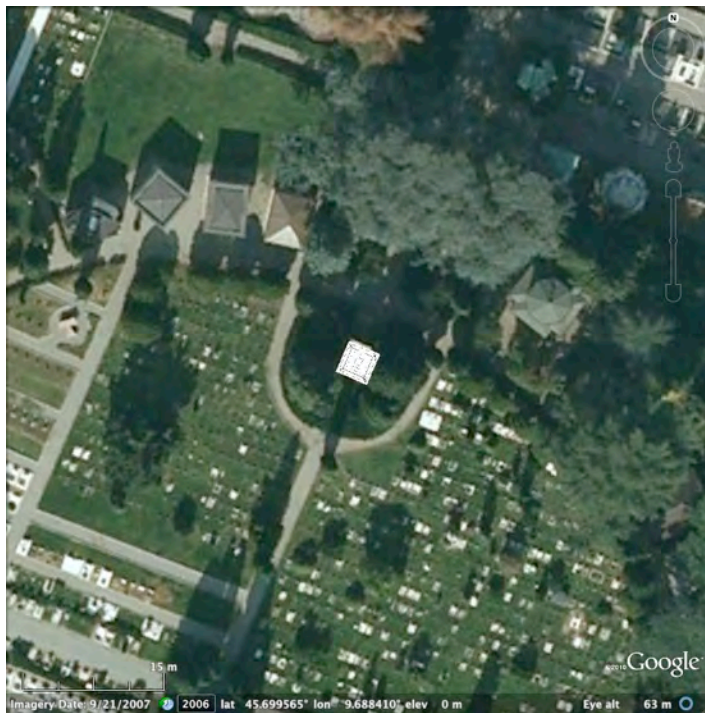
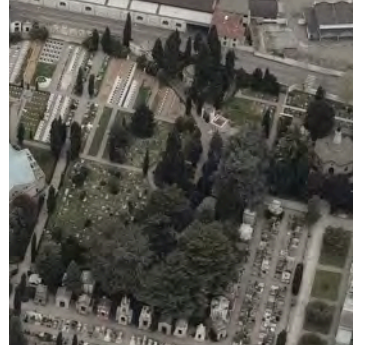
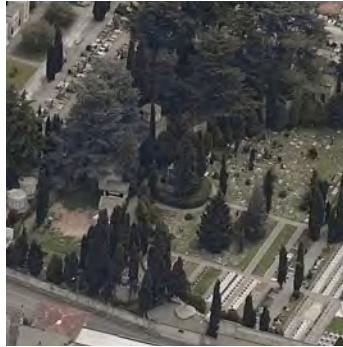
1947
[7A] Cappella Bay
Cimitero Monumentale, Bergamo.
Still in very good condition.





1947
[7B] Cappella Ardiani
Cimitero Monumentale, Bergamo.

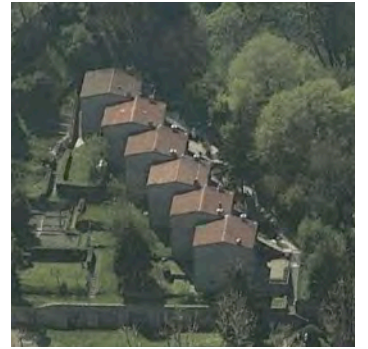
Still in good condition, although the lower part is now glassed.





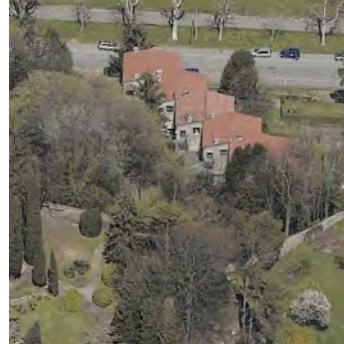
1950
[7C] Cappella Traversi
 Cimitero Monumentale, Bergamo.
 Still in very good condition

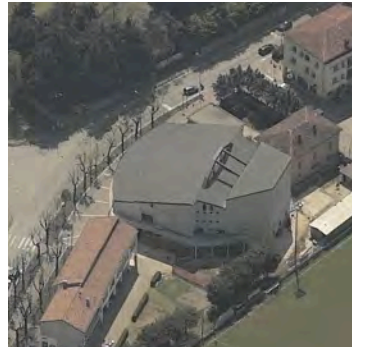




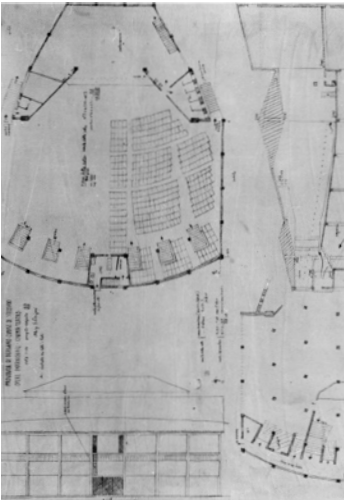
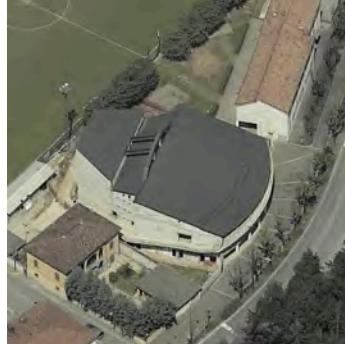
1949
[8] Case Fanfani, INA-Casa
 Via della Fara, 5, Bergamo.

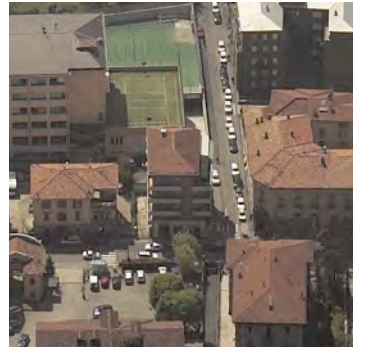
Still in good condition, although a new parking garage that is under construction next to it, might later on destroy its imbedding in a beautiful green environment.



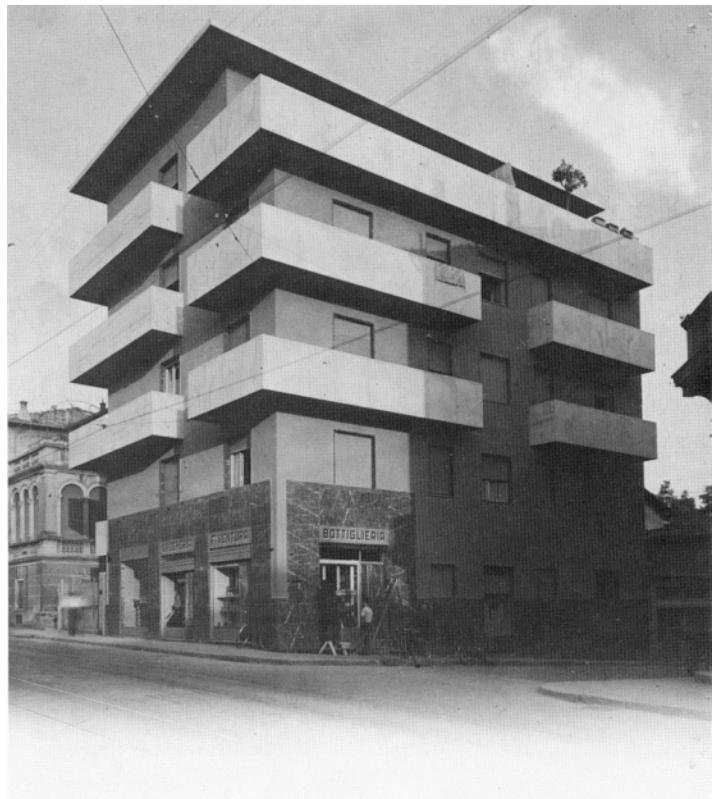
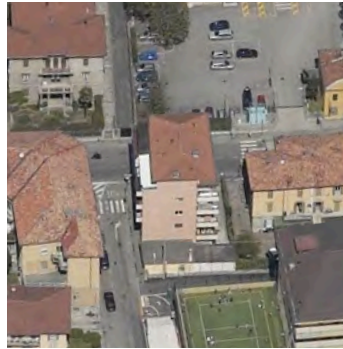
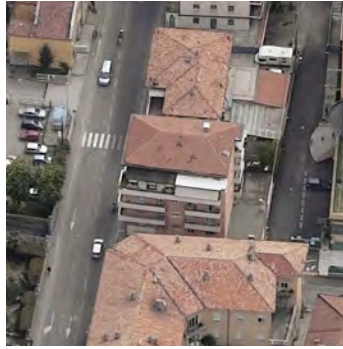


1949
[9] Teatro-oratorio, Sala Eden
Via Bergamo, 9, Bergamo.





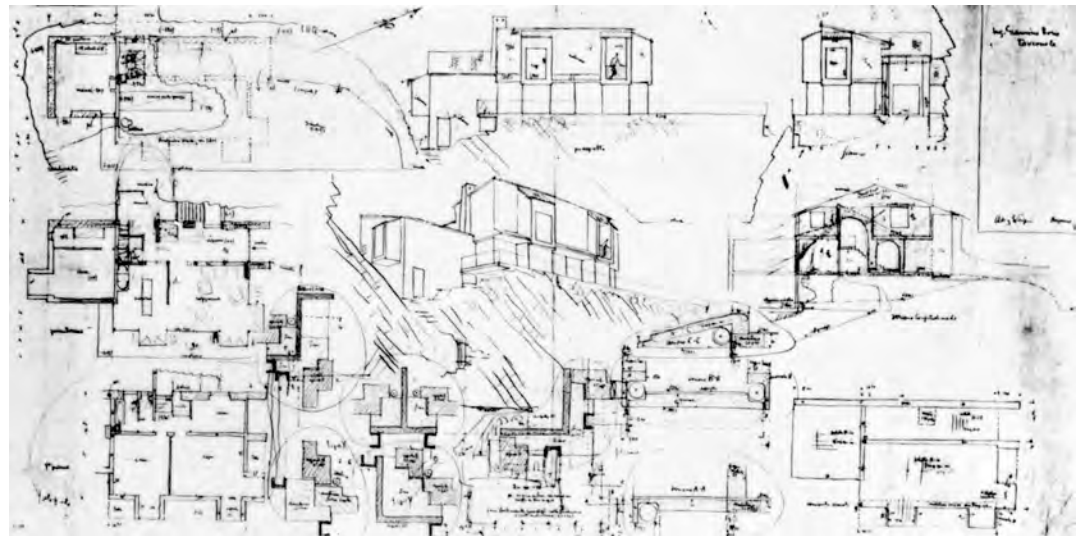
1950
[10] Casa da appartamenti
Via Giuseppe Garibaldi, 16, Bergamo.

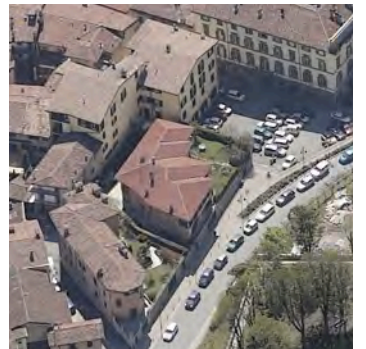




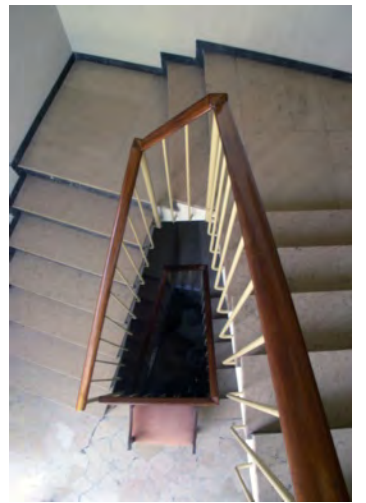
1954
[11] Casa Bosis
Via Roma, 10, Tavernola Bergamasca (BG).

Although some changes have been made to the original house, it's still worthwhile to enjoy the spectacular views from the different bay windows and to study the subtle compositional play that Pizzigoni played between the rock and the house.





1954/55
[12] Villa Lubrina
Viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 73, Bergamo.





1959/64
[13] Extension of the Teatro Donizzetti

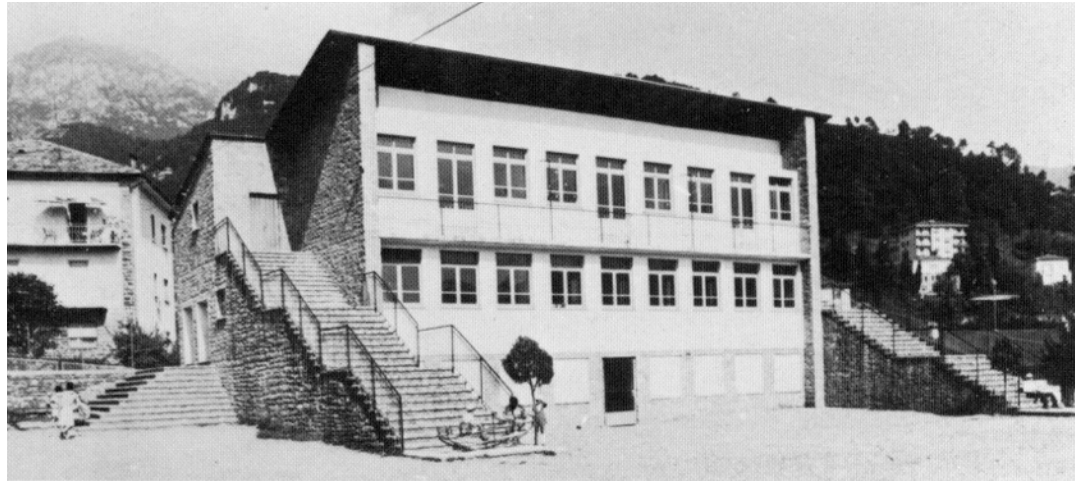
Piazza Cavour, 14, Bergamo.

The hanging pilasters are taken off and new extensions have been added.





1956/60
[14] Scuola elementare
Via Pagliaro, 1, Rota Imagna (BG).

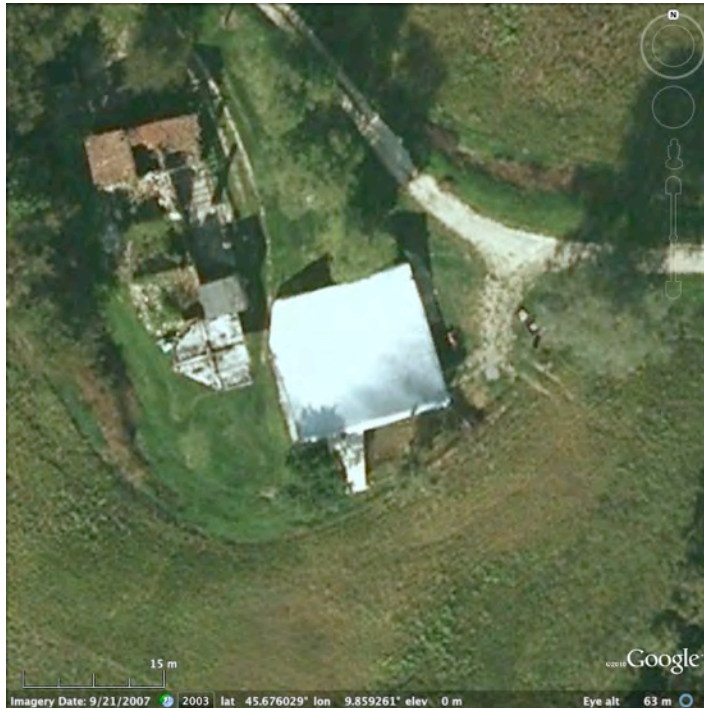




1956/60
[15] Experimental concrete constructions

Località Gabbione, Zandobio/Gorlago (BG).

The umbrella structure has partly collapsed, but the other structure (although modified) is still in use.



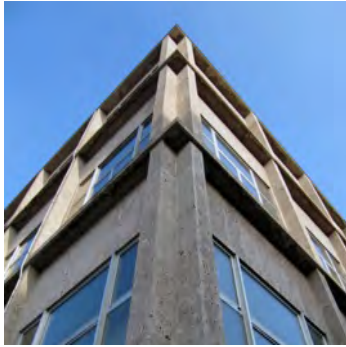
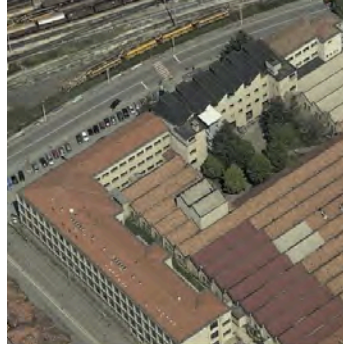


1956/66

[16] Istituto Tecnico Industriale di Stato

Via Mauro Gavazzeni, 29, Bergamo.

The whole is built in different fazes, one was the adding of an 'Aula Magna', a large hall on top of the building with one of Pizzigoni's experimental roofs. Its still there, but it is divided up in small rooms. The rational facade itself is a beautiful example of proportioning in stone, notice how the front of the pilasters slightly tilts backwards (except from the top floor, where also the part above the window is lower) to make the horizontal lines of the facade run





1957/59
[17] Casa Colombo
Via Masone, 24, Bergamo.

Sadly enough the whole interior of the house has been changed (the fire place and the stair are gone). The house now contains five apartments connected by a spiral staircase with a glass elevator in its centre. From the outside it gives the impression to be a relatively small and modest house, but that is due to the over-scaling of all the window openings (if one looks at the two garage doors down below one can see that they are in size like the windows above and a bit further back).



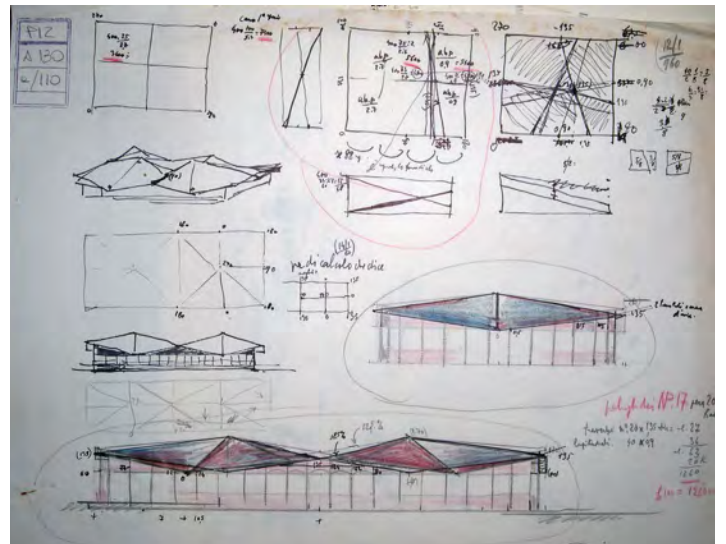


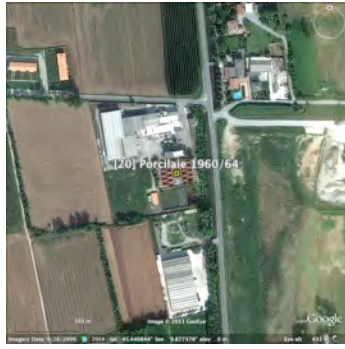
1957
[18] Industria Marmi Carlo Comana
Via Costanza Cerioli, 56, Seriate (BG).





1959/65
[19] Asili CEP Monterosso
Via Caio Giulio Cesare, Bergamo.





1960/64

[20] Porcilaie

Via Torre/Via Sante Giulie, Torrepallavicina (BG).

Although the cheese making plant is still in use, but the pig stys are not. The 'waist product' in former times leftover after the production of cheese is no longer fed to pigs, its economically more profitable to now use it for something else.





1960/63
[21] Chiesa di Santa Maria Immacolata, Longuelo
Via Mattioli, 57, Bergamo.

For an extensive study of this church see:
http://riunet.upv.es/bitstream/handle/10251/7159/PAP_DEREGIBUS_1599.pdf?sequence=1

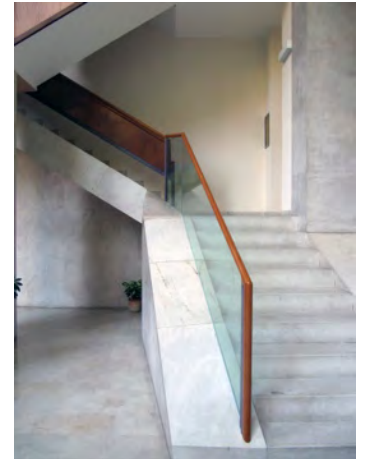
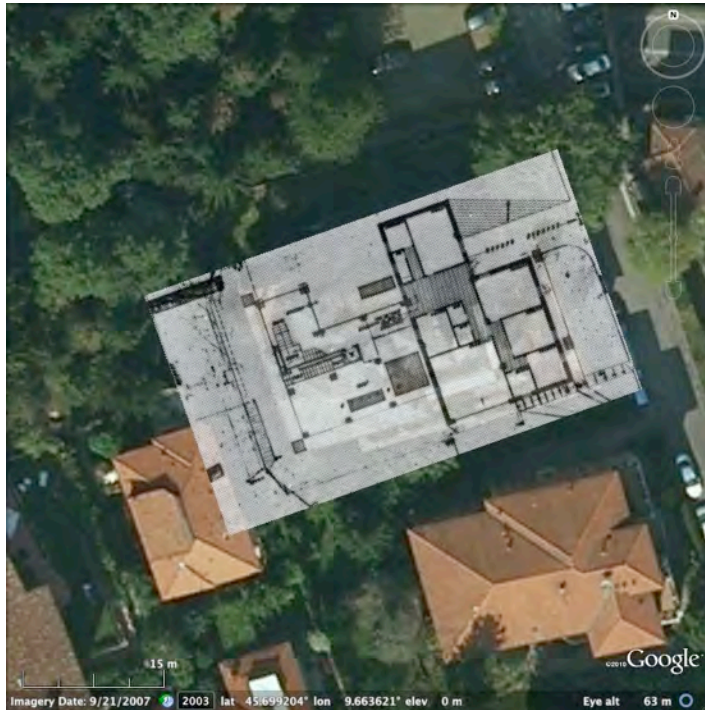
http://vbn.aau.dk/files/49621090/The_church_of_Longuelo_by_Pino_Pizzigoni.pdf

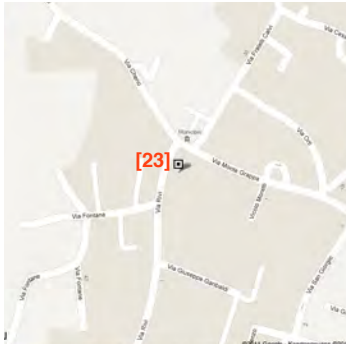




1960/64
[22] Apartment building "Pagoda",
Conca d'Oro,
Viale Vittorio Emanuele II, 44, Bergamo.

See also:
<http://www.vimeo.com/tag:pizzigoni>





1962/65

[23] Municipio di Zandobbio

Via Rivi/Via Monte Grappa, Zandobbio (BG).

At present it is difficult to see the subtle play of symmetry and a-symmetry that was so characteristic for this building's entry sequence. A staircase on one of the a-symmetrical sides would lead a visitor from the lower street level straight to the entrance on the ground level. Or a kind of gallery would lead the visitor around the (symmetrical) front to the other a-symmetrical side where an outside stair would go up to the first floor entrance. The movement would then spiral back and out on to the balcony of the symmetrical frontside facing a little square. A new entrance made under this balcony now destroys that experience and makes the whole relatively one dimensional.

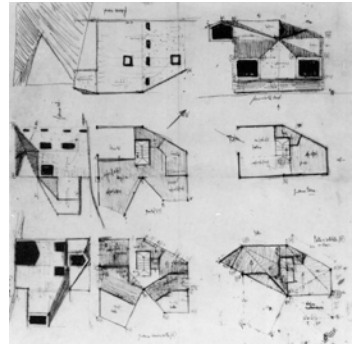




1964
[24] Casa Gilberti
 Via Roma, Pontenossa (BG).

This raised atrium house for a medical doctor has lost a lot of its initial balancing quality, since the ground floor level has been filled up and is now turned into a pizzeria. The house was actually split in two parts balancing on their triangular 'pilots' and held together by the beams in the roof.





1964
[25] Casa Claudio Nani
Sant'Alberto-Grumella, Parre (BG).

This house for the artist Claudio Nani is still in a good state.

