

## SANTA CATERINA DI PITTINURI/S'ARCHITTU

### SITE

The villages of Santa Caterina di Pittinuri and S'Archittu are located in central-western Sardinia, and fall within the municipal territory of Cuglieri which, with its 120 km<sup>2</sup> is the largest in the province of Oristano. Santa Caterina di Pittinuri and S'Archittu together with Torre del Pozzo are the only consolidated historical settlements along the western coast of the Province of Oristano.

### BACKGROUND - SANTA CATERINA DI PITTINURI

The inhabited center, distant some 15 km from Cuglieri, developed in the post World War II period near the church of the same name, in the vicinity of the Spanish coastal tower. The first bungalows – basically holiday homes – were replaced in the 1960s by new buildings, but in the absence of any form of development plan or detailed zoning instrument. The present-day urban structure, divided into two parts by the Rio Santa Caterina, to the north comprises more recent buildings arranged in rows parallel to the main road axis - Corso Alagon - which crosses the whole hamlet, while to the south, the original nucleus developed towards the area near the church. The expansion of the past few years has enhanced the area's tourist potential and has led the local authorities to focus investment on hospitality structures, plus a service complex with plaza and amphitheatre. A short distance from the center is the archaeological area of Cornus. Geographical and landscape significance also stems from the presence in the area of a cluster of farmhouses built at the time of the rural land ownership reform, the ERSAT village, situated on the lava formation to the north of S. Caterina.

### The Church of Santa Caterina

This church, presumably dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, has a single nave with a double pitched roof in wood and curved roof tiles. Its gabled façade, is adorned by a single-span bell gable, a simple portal with carved frame, a small square window and a limestone cornice. The church was presumably built in Romanesque style, which was maintained by subsequent refurbishments.

### The Tower

The Spanish coastal tower (1578 – 1580) built on the limestone spur of S. Caterina at 28 m asl, looking out towards the towers of Capo Mannu, Scab'e Sai, Su Puttu and Capo Nieddu, has a circular ground plan and truncated-cone/cylindrical shape. It was built in calcareous sandstone with elements of volcanic lava stone. The watch room, with domed ceiling and raised entrance, has four embrasures tapering towards the exterior; it has a square rainwater cistern and a spiral staircase for access to the roof.

### The Beach of Santa Caterina

The beach lies within a bay and is fed by two streams, Rio Santa Caterina and Rio Salamedu. The latter, in its final portion flows through a covered channel in the vicinity of the inhabited area and in terms of hydro-geological hazard is classified as R4 (strong danger of flood and overflowing) (Source: P.A.I.). The beach is bordered by village buildings and other constructions, and is framed by two structures that have affected the

dynamics of its shoreline, which is locally variable. Instability is noticeable in sediment distribution along the shore (alternating deposits of pebbles and sand).

## BACKGROUND - S'ARCHITTU

In the 1970s, about 2 km distant from Santa Caterina, the tourist resort of S'Archittu developed close to the beach of the same name. The name 'Archittu' is a diminutive of 'arcu', a term which in the logudorese and campidanese varieties of the Sardinian language means 'arco' (*arch*). Indeed, on the shore at the northern end of the village stands a natural stone arch formed by sea erosion, declared a natural monument by Regional Law 31/89.

The urban fabric consists of blocks, more or less regularly set along the main road axis of the hamlet – Corso Amsicora – which, divides the village into two parts: one with buildings facing the beach and the second, of greater density, spreading towards the hinterland.

### The Beach of S'Archittu

A system of beaches consisting of sand and pebbles, bordered by carbonate cliffs, some deposited in the past by Rio Sa Canna and others formed in sheltered areas from erosion of the cliffs.

## CONTEXT

Cuglieri, situated at 500 m asl, dominates from its basalt plateau the western slope of the Montiferru, an ancient volcanic complex, sloping down towards the sea and the coast at times forming small bays or long stretches of sand, at others harsh and inaccessible. Throughout the territory, the relation between sea and mountain is very close: from the highest peaks – about 10 km from the coast – the sea is always visible, not surprisingly, when we consider that the geological events which defined the area's coastal morphology are strongly linked to those of the mountains. The complex coastal system of the bays of Santa Caterina di Pittinurri and s'Archittu is indeed marked by the irregular development of arches of rock, cliffs and rocky ridges sculpted from sandstone and calcarenites.

The zone offers a wide range of different landscapes due to the presence of many streams, beaches, natural harbors, woods and mountains. Regional Law 31/89 placed about 2/3 of the territory of Cuglieri within the perimeter of the the Sinis-Montiferru Regional Park, which has an overall area of 42,664 ha.

The main road link is State Road 292 which in crossing the whole territory, passes through two morphologically distinct areas: the first, which is flat, extends for 16 km, and is bordered to the west by the sea of Sardinia, to the north by the mouth of Rio Manno and to the south by that of Rio Pischinappiu; the second – hilly and mountainous – extends over the western slopes of the Montiferru as far as the municipalities of Seneghe, Santu Lussurgiu and Scano Montiferru.

This road links up with State Road 131 "Carlo Felice", leading to the main cities on the island.

## THEME

The villages of Santa Caterina di Pitinurri and S'Archittu, which developed along the coastal road 292, on two nearby bays, are marked by widespread urban and architectural problems due to unregulated development, starting from 1978, due to the absence of official zoning tools. Proposals should fall within a scheme for overall regeneration of the existing contexts which will need to take into account the architectural and construction characteristics of the various historic periods, and the relationship between the two villages and between the villages and their landscape context. Possible themes for consideration, besides general plans for street furniture, include the planning of widespread systems of public spaces and tourism services – to be seen as integrated structures giving unitary meaning to all the public areas (both existing and potential) including the urban voids present within the built area and those obtainable through the 'thinning out' of spontaneous constructions – including a new approach to accessibility, parking lots and areas reserved for pedestrian use. Other themes could address the upgrading of the shores and rocky beaches through the creation of services and equipment, also of a temporary nature, for beachgoers, thus improving enjoyment of the marine resources. Some points to focus on could be the former ESIT hotel, together with open spaces, including public and state property and unbuilt areas between the hotel and the church, as well as road 292 and its relationship with the settlements.

Proposals should refer to the goals, guidelines and criteria of the RLP. The present suggestions provided are in no way binding to competitors who are free to supplement and integrate them with other considerations deriving from the study of the village and its relations with the surrounding context.



