

Studio Sergison
Spring Semester 2021

Valle di Muggio

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Aerial view of Valle di Muggio



Introduction

In the spring semester 2021 we will turn our attention to 'Critical Regionalism', a term coined by Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzionis and later developed by Kenneth Frampton. The location we have chosen for our work is the Valle di Muggio, an area very close to our school. Projects will consider the future of seven settlements - Casima, Monte, Campora, Muggio, Cabbio, Bruzella and Caneggio - and the necessary urban, architectural and landscaping interventions necessary to ensure their qualities are not eroded by insensitive development.

In the first instance we invite you to explore and update our understanding of critical regionalism by presenting a relevant project by any architect built after 1985 (the date of publication of Frampton's 'Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity').

An extended period will then be dedicated to an extensive survey to understand the physical conditions of each of the settlements. This work will be done in groups and will require the drawing of existing buildings in plan, section and elevation at different scales, as well as photographic documentation. The survey should also investigate the social structures of each settlement and how the needs of each community are currently served.

The third component of the work will involve developing a strategy plan for each of the seven settlements having carefully appraised their future needs. This will be carried out by the same groups that worked on the survey, considering the interdependence of neighbouring villages. You should consider the potential re-use of derelict buildings, where necessary, through the addition of new structures and building programmes.

Most of your time will be devoted to the testing and refining of the ideas that will emerge from the strategy plan. This will be done individually while maintaining a dialogue with the wider group. The aim is to produce a detailed and thoroughly researched set of proposals designed to inform the future planning of the seven settlements at the end of the semester. These will be presented to the communities in a public exhibition.

Bruzella, Valle di Muggio

Lying on the border between Switzerland and Italy, the Valle di Muggio comprises seven settlements and a number of smaller hamlets in a setting of exceptional natural beauty. To the north, the valley lies at the foot of Monte Generoso, and it is bounded to the south by the hills above Lake Como, whose ridge marks the border between the two countries.

Historically, the harsh physical conditions and relative remoteness have meant that it has always been an economically deprived corner of the country. In the past subsistence farming was the norm, commonly supplemented by cross border smuggling. In recent years many of the terrace structures have fallen into disrepair. Today, agricultural production consists mainly of cheese, honey and flour (*polenta*) from the mill outside Bruzella.

A number of the villages on the foothills that surround the valley enjoy a pleasant climate in the summer months and a number of affluent families from Lombardy have built large summer houses in the area, particularly in Casima.

Currently the Valle di Muggio is stable in terms of population numbers. The recent changes in Swiss Federal law restrict second home ownership, which has had an impact on the real estate market and, more generally, on the local building industry. Communities tend to be formed by long-established Ticinese families and a significant number of Swiss Germans who have made their home in the area.

Each settlement has a church and cemetery, as well as public buildings such as community halls, museums, shops, cafés and restaurants. The educational needs of the children are met in Castel San Pietro and other larger nearby towns and, while many local residents are employed in the Mendrisiotto area or even further afield, there is a small community of artisans engaged in creative forms of practice who enjoy the affordability of property and the beauty of the surroundings.



1



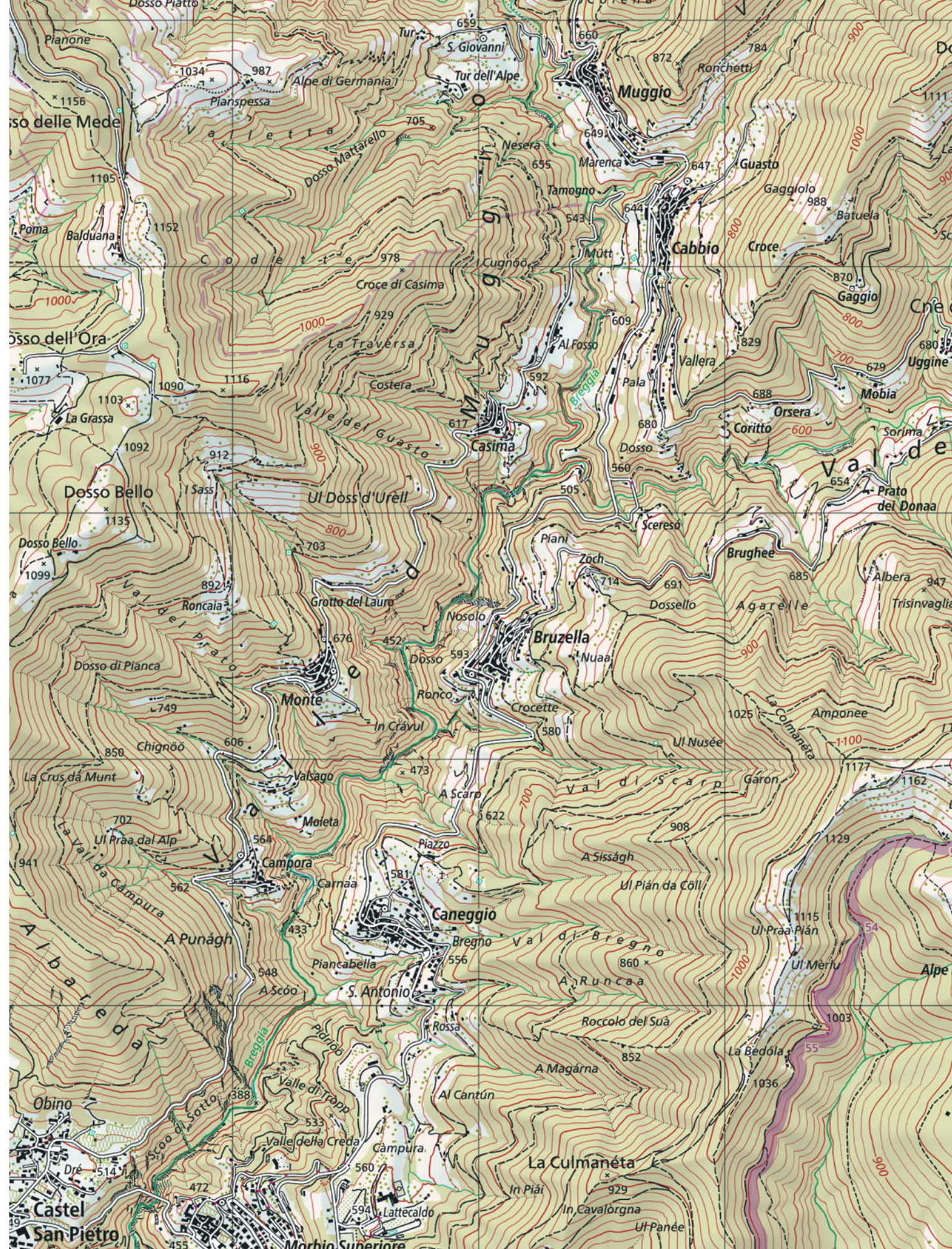
2

1
Caneggio, 1930 (coll. G. Haug)
2
Muggio, 1916 (coll. D. Marzoli)

Sites

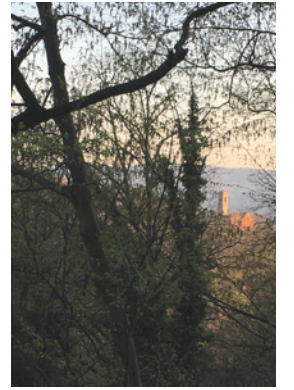
Project sites

- Caneggio
- Campora
- Bruzella
- Monte
- Casima
- Cabbio
- Muggio



Overleaf
1:5000 Site model.
Toni Mair. Museo Etnografico della
Valle di Muggio, Ticino.





Landscape and settlements



Building forms, materials and details

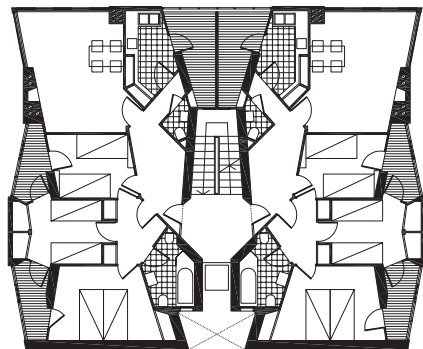
First exercise: precedent study

The fifth chapter of Kenneth Frampton's seminal book, 'Modern Architecture, a critical history' explores the theme of 'critical regionalism, a term first used by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in their essay about the work of the Greek architects Susana and Dimitris Antonakakis, 'The grid and pathway'.

Frampton describes this approach to architecture by referring to the work of many post-war architects, starting with a lengthy examination of Jorn Utzon's Bagsvaerd Church, near Copenhagen, 1976. He then turns to Spanish architects Coderch, Bofill and the Portuguese master, Alvaro Siza followed by Barragan, Williams, Gino Valle. This is followed by an extensive examination of the 'Ticino school', with particular emphasis on Mario Botta's house at Riva San Vitale (1972-73). He then refers to Tadao Ando and a number of Greek architects, including Pikionis, Konstantinides and Antonakakis. The chapter concludes with a seven-point summary of the conditions that can be seen to represent the common features of critical regionalism.

First published in 1985 this is a seminal text, although it has not defined a major current in architecture comparable to postmodernism or high-tech. Indeed, this is consistent with the nature of critical regionalism, which, as Frampton suggests, is not a stylistic position.

We invite you to choose a project completed in the last 35 years that conforms to Frampton's criteria and presents an analysis of it that includes drawings and photographs.



1

- 1
Floor plan
Casa de la Marina apartments, Barcelona
José Antonio Coderch
 - 2
Casa de la Marina apartments, Barcelona
José Antonio Coderch
 - 3
Interior
Casa de la Marina apartments, Barcelona
José Antonio Coderch
- Ovearleaf**
Aldo Rossi, ETH Zurich
Zurich ground floor plan 1974



2



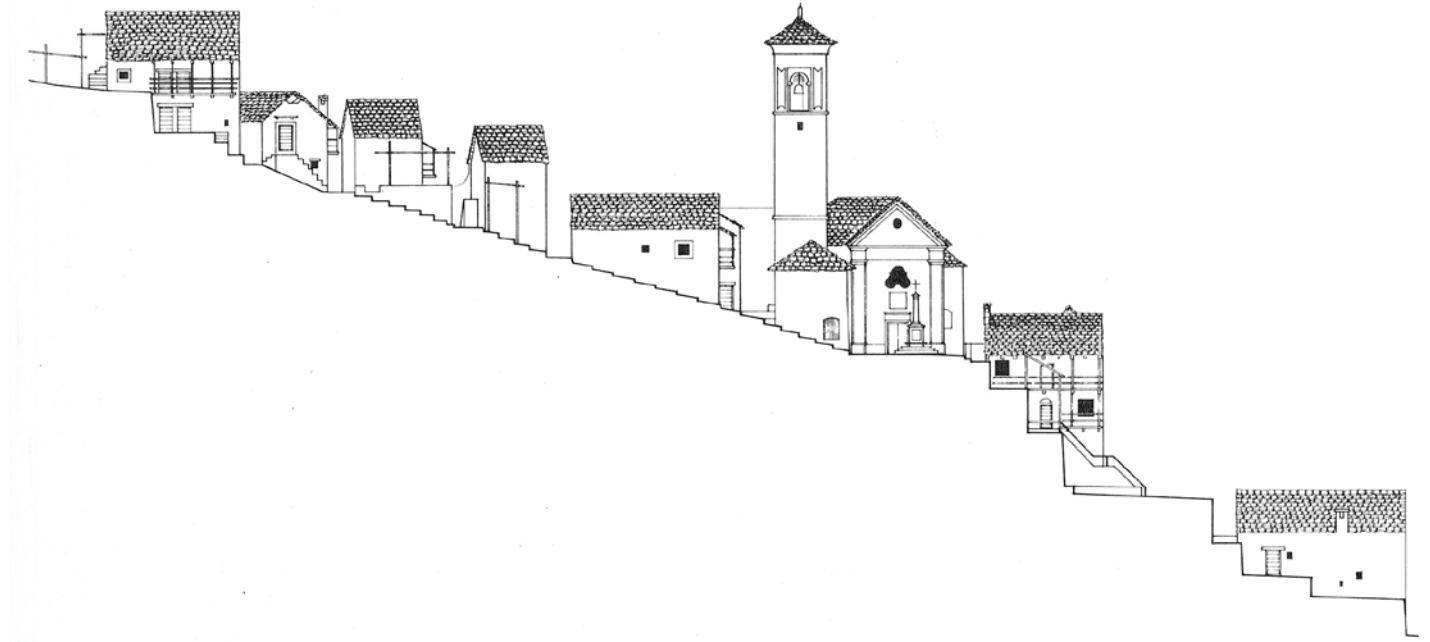
3



To help you understand better the task you are attending to this semester, we would like you to make a survey of one of the seven principal settlements in the Valle di Muggio. This group exercise should explore the structure of the settlement and represent the overall situation, as well as significant aspects in more detail. You should illustrate your report through drawings that are to scale in plan, section and elevation, photography and film.

You should consider the overall physical structure of the settlement and create a ground floor plan at 1:500. In addition, you should use diagrams to explain the way it is organised. It is important to consider the quality and organisation of public spaces and the thresholds between different uses.

This exercise requires you to look carefully at buildings and communicate your observations in a clear and understandable manner. This research should inform the projects you develop during the course of the semester.

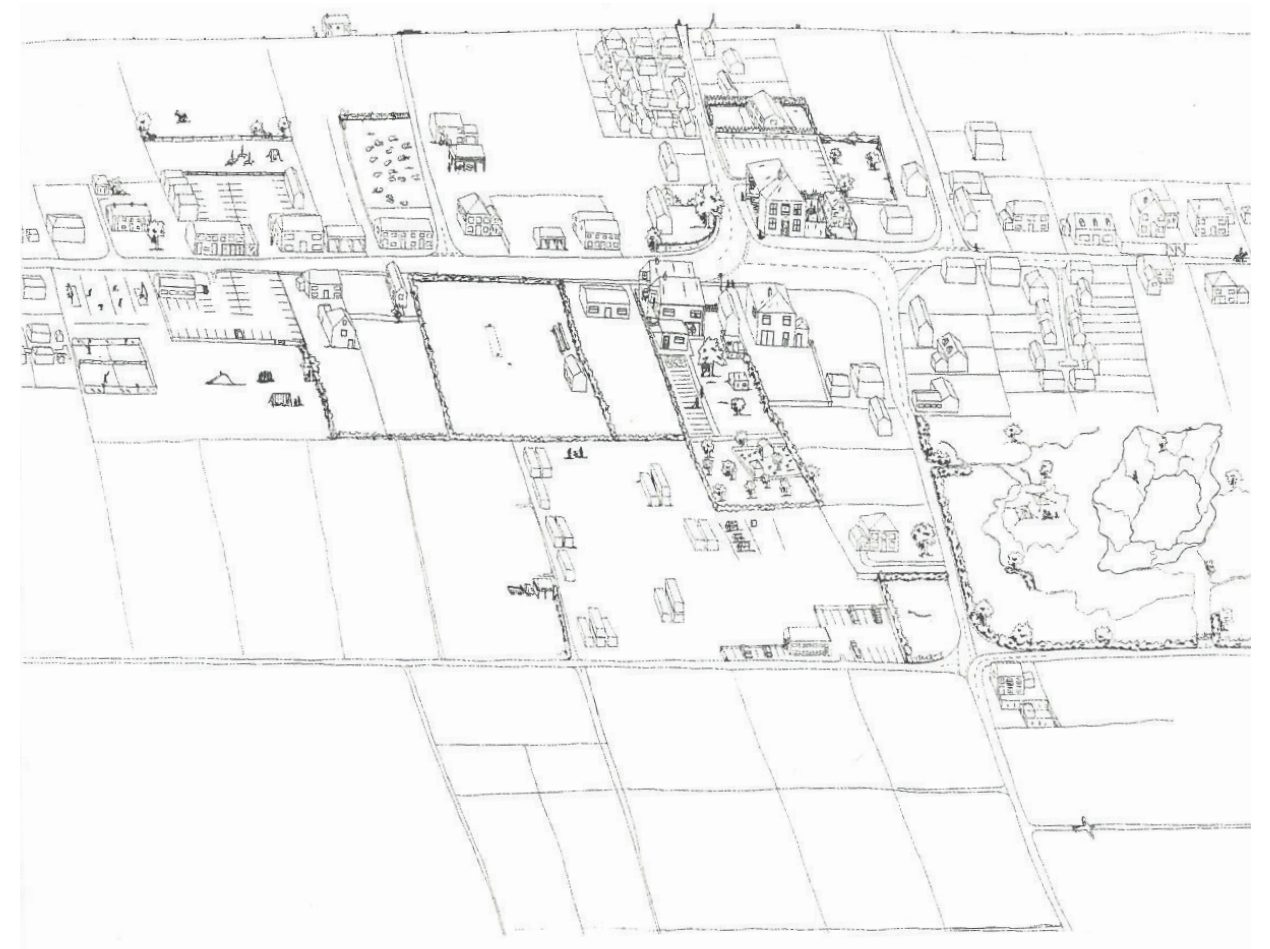


Survey by Max Bosshard, Eraldo Consolascio and Orlando Pampuri, 1974 (Aldo Rossi, Eraldo Consolascio, Max Bosshard, La costruzione del territorio nel Cantone Ticino, Lugano, Fondazione Ticino Nostro, 1979).

The third component of the work for this semester will be the development of a strategy plan. This is intended to develop an understanding of how future urban development can take place. It might require demolitions, the stabilising of existing structures and establishing precisely where it should be possible to build in the future. Particular attention should be given to the types of building programmes proposed, which should be necessary and appropriate.

A 1:500 model will allow the best understanding of the overall project but plans and diagrams will also need to be produced.

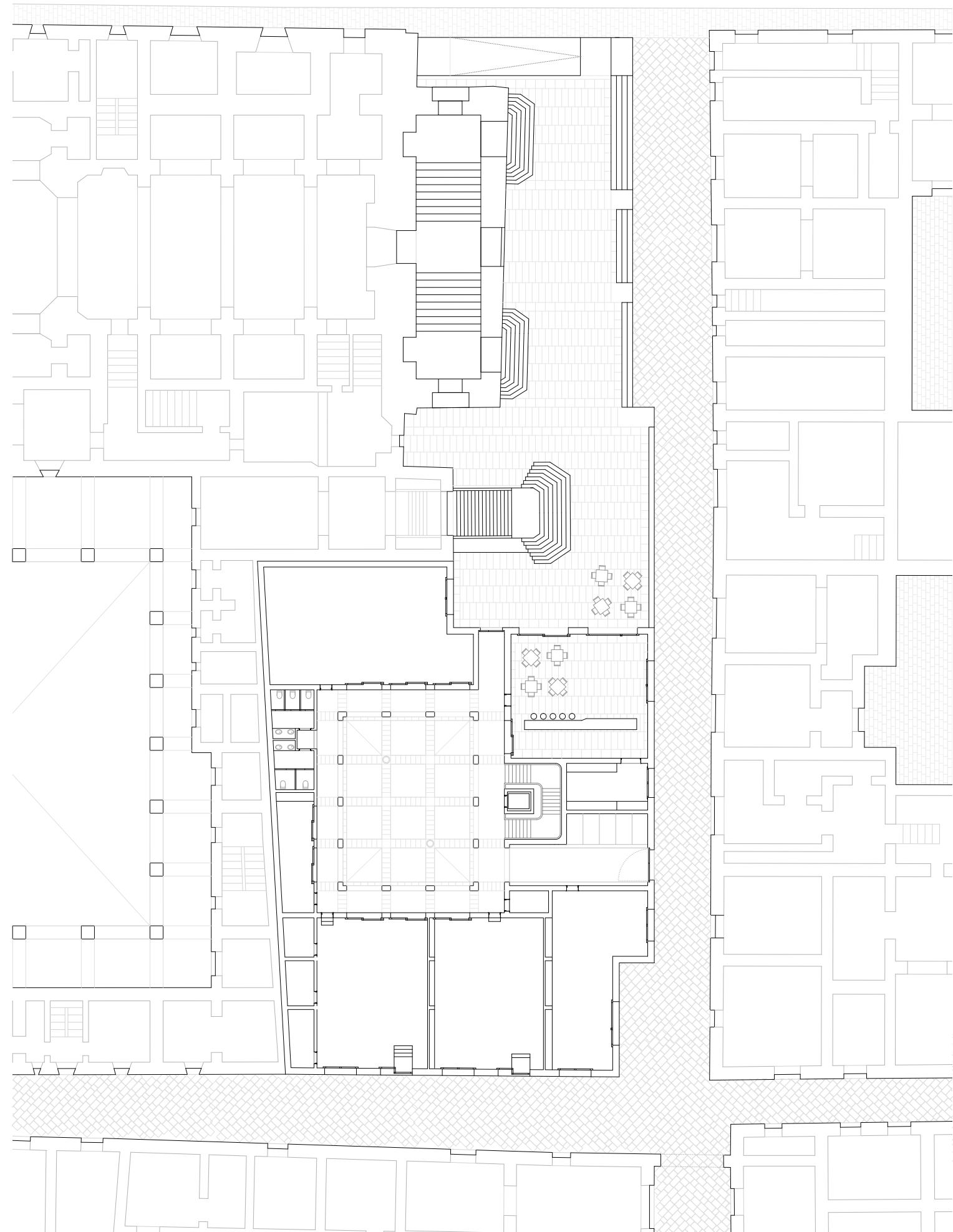
We ask you to explore a range of options for each settlement. These should be appraised carefully, and the work should develop in an iterative process which benefits from discussion, testing and critical appraisal.



Fourth exercise: building concept

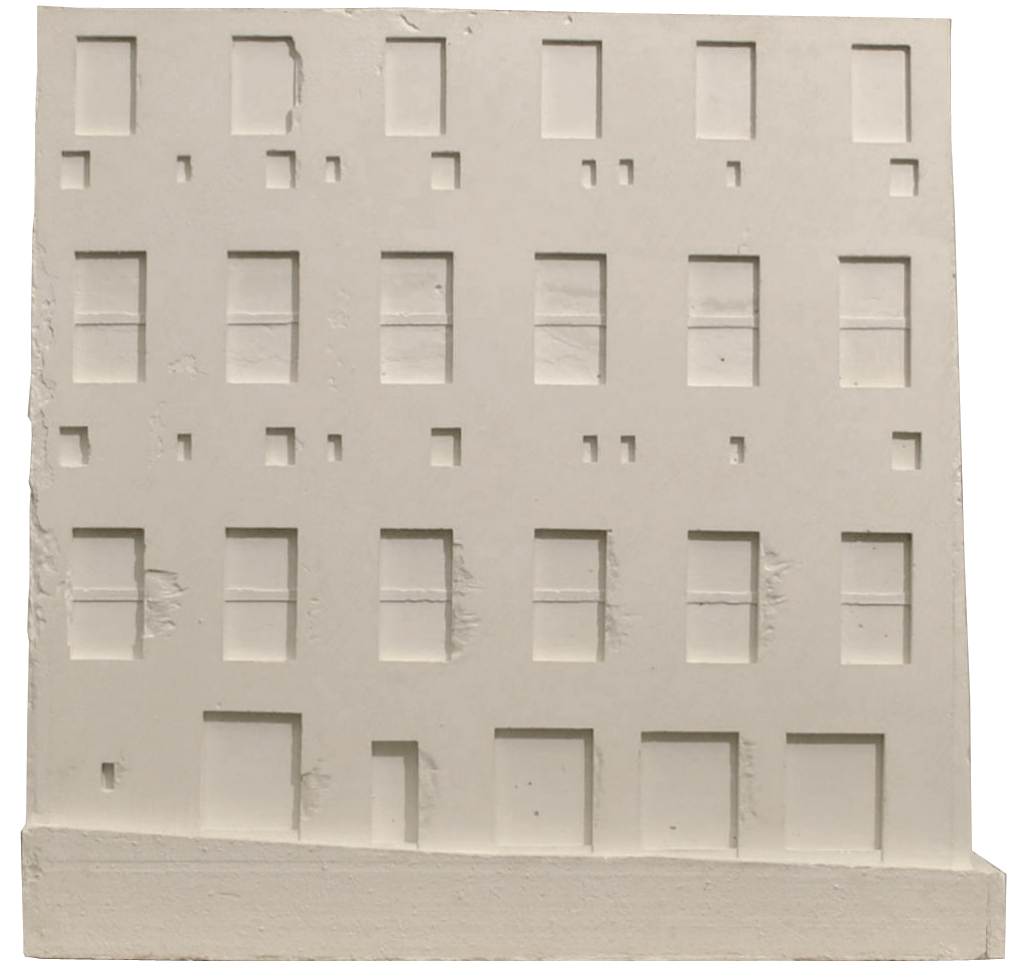
On the basis of the strategy plan, we would like to concentrate on one or a number of buildings in close proximity. This might involve the re-use of existing structures, but should also include new buildings. This work should be undertaken individually, in dialogue with the group that you developed the strategy plan with.

This is partly a typological exercise and in presenting your ideas you should give priority to studies that explore the organisation of plans and facades, as well as models to test the three-dimensional aspects of your work. When considering residential projects, you should consider the organisation of a home, how it may be inhabited and how flexible it might be. The principal scale that should be employed at this stage is 1:100.



Ground floor plan
Dionisio Mora

We would now invite you to explain the image of a building and the extent to which it draws upon the characteristics of existing buildings, and in what way it is contemporary - in other words, how it relates to the principles of critical regionalism. You should use model studies, references and draw several variants before selecting the strongest option.



Facade model
Matthew Bailey and Matthew Howell

Overleaf
Interior
Julien Orozco and Arnaud Beetschen



As a convincing set of ideas for building projects emerge, you will need to produce a set of drawings at a suitable scale, in plan, section and elevation. You should also produce a landscape which explains the relation between your work and the wider setting. Hard and soft landscaping elements should be drawn precisely.

It is important that the strategy plan produced earlier in the semester is updated taking into account the evolution of a more detailed understanding.

The main piece of work will be the creation of a series of images of the location with and without your project, as a way of illustrating the qualities and the positive impact of the intervention on the wider surroundings.

Finally, you will need to produce a pdf or powerpoint presentation to describe your project. This is an important tool in illustrating your project at the final review and tracing its evolution through the various stages of development.



Autumn semester reviews, 2020

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
25-26 February	Studio briefing	Jonathan Sergison (JS) presents studio programme. Lecture by JS 'Reflections on Critical Regionalism'	Precedent study
4-5 March	Trip to Valle di Muggio	Trip to allocated project sites Review of precedent study Lecture by JS 'How to make a survey'	Survey photographs and drawings Review of precedent study
11-12 March	Tutorials	Review of survey work Lecture by Irina Davidovici 'Critical Regionalism in relation to Ticino'	Survey photographs and drawings
18-19 March	Review	Review of survey work Lecture by Ted'A Arquitectes	Survey photographs and drawings
25-26 March	Tutorials	Review of initial ideas for strategy plan Lecture by Cristina Roiz (CR) 'Between Modernism and Tradition. J.A.Coderch'	1.500 models Initial ideas for the strategy plan Plans and diagrams
1-2 April	Review	Review on strategy plan Lecture by Mirella Mascolo (MM) 'Twenty floor plans'	1:200 drawings, plans, sections and elevations
8-9 April	Easter break		
15-16 April	Intermediate review	Project reviews with guest critics	Pdf presentation Ideas for a strategy plan 1:200 plans sections , elevations Perspectives 1:500 models
22-23 April	Tutorials	Review of plans, sections and elevations Lecture by JS: 'Representing atmosphere' and 'Twenty Facades'	1:200 plans, sections, elevations 1:200 models
29-30 April	Tutorials	Review of plans, sections and elevations	1:100 plans, sections, elevations 1:100 models

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
6-7 May	Review	Review of facade detail	1:100 / 1:50 facades
13-14 May	Tutorials	Review of facade detail	1:100 / 1:50 facades
20-21 May	Tutorials	Review of final drawings	Prepare presentation
27-28 May	Tutorials	Review of final drawings	Draft pdf presentation 1:200 situation plan (roof plan) 1:100 plans, sections and facades Interior and exterior perspectives 1:50 detailed section
3-4 June	Final review	Invited critics	Pdf presentation 1:500 model 1:200 situation plan (roof plan) 1:50 model 1:100 plans, sections and facades Interior and exterior perspectives 1:50 detailed section

Aldo Rossi
L'architettura della città
 Padova: Marsilio, 1966

Martin Steinmann
Forme forte. Schriften / Écrits 1972-2002
 Birkhäuser, 2003

Joseph Rykwert
The seduction of place: the city in the twenty-first century
 Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004

Alexander Tzonis and Liliane Lefaivre
'The grid and the pathway. An introduction to the work of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis' in *Architecture in Greece*
 Athens, 1981

Kenneth Frampton
'Critical regionalism. Modern architecture and cultural identity'
 in *Modern architecture: a critical history*
 London: Thames & Hudson (1980) 2007

Jonathan Sergison and Stephen Bates
Papers 3
 London, 2016

Paolo e Silvia Crivelli, eds.
Valle di Muggio allo specchio.
 Lugano: Fondazione Ticino Nostro 2018

Aldo Rossi, Eraldo Consolascio, Max Broschard
La costruzione del territorio. Uno studio sul Canton Ticino
 Lugano: Fondazione Ticino Nostro, 1979

Giovanni Luisoni
Quattro passi in valle. La Valle di Muggio raccontata
 Lugano: Salvioni, 2003

Patrick Gmür Architekten
Wo ist Zuhause, Mama?
 Zurich: Niggli Verlag, 2009

Sebastiano Brandolini, ed.
The inhabited pathway. The built work of Alberto Ponis in Sardinia
 Zurich: Park Books, 2019

Peter Disch, ed.
Luigi Snozzi. L'opera completa / The complete works (3 volumes)
 Lugano: ADV 203-2005

Peter Disch, ed.
Luigi Snozzi. Costruzioni e progetti / Buildings and projects 1958-1993
 Lugano: ADV, 1994

Kenneth Frampton
Álvaro Siza. Tutte le opere
 Milan: Electa, 2006

John Pardey
Two houses on Majorca. Jorn Utzøn Logbook, vol. III
 Hellerup: Bløndal, 2004

Ted'A Arquitectes 2010 2018
 El Croquis 196 [II], October 2018

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