

SAINT-ÉTIENNE

Studio Sergison
Diploma 2021

Saint-Étienne



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Aerial view of Saint-Étienne



Introduction

We think of the future needs of a city in terms of the demands population growth places on housing provision, educational, recreational and medical facilities, places of employment and the public realm. As urbanists and architects we also need to ask what role we should play when the reverse is the case: how should we respond to population decline? A declining population also equates to a reduction in tax revenue, which is exacerbated as the proportion of older residents increases. This is an increasingly common situation across Europe, and although circumstances vary greatly from city to city, this is an issue that requires architectural and urban solutions.

Saint Étienne is experiencing a decline in population, which has led to a decrease in property values, making it one of the cheapest cities in France to live. Improving the physical conditions of the city is at the core of the work we will undertake in the course of this Diploma. While the ambition to adopt an urban approach has underpinned all our Diploma over the years, in this instance we believe we need a strategy for opening up and reframing the city. Because there is no need to densify, the public realm can be improved by creating more open spaces and this will hopefully make the city more attractive to new residents in the future.

Saint Étienne was founded in the Middle Ages as a settlement close to Lyon, the third largest city and second largest urban area in France, on the road that connects Lyon and Toulouse. The city developed as a major coal mining centre and became later known for arms manufacturing and, more recently, for its thriving bicycle industry.

The population of Saint Étienne peaked at the end of the 1960s (220,000). Today it stands at around 170,000. The municipality is also at the heart of a vast urban area with more than 519,834 inhabitants in 2016 -the seventeenth largest in France by population, comprising 117 municipalities.

Cities are the result of myriad acts of building and rebuilding, but their image and identity is generally determined by large-scale interventions. In the case of Saint-Étienne, the introduction of a 6km-long boulevard running from north to south through the city is its most distinctive feature. While it clearly impacted the older mediaeval urban fabric, it also structured the expansion of the city that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

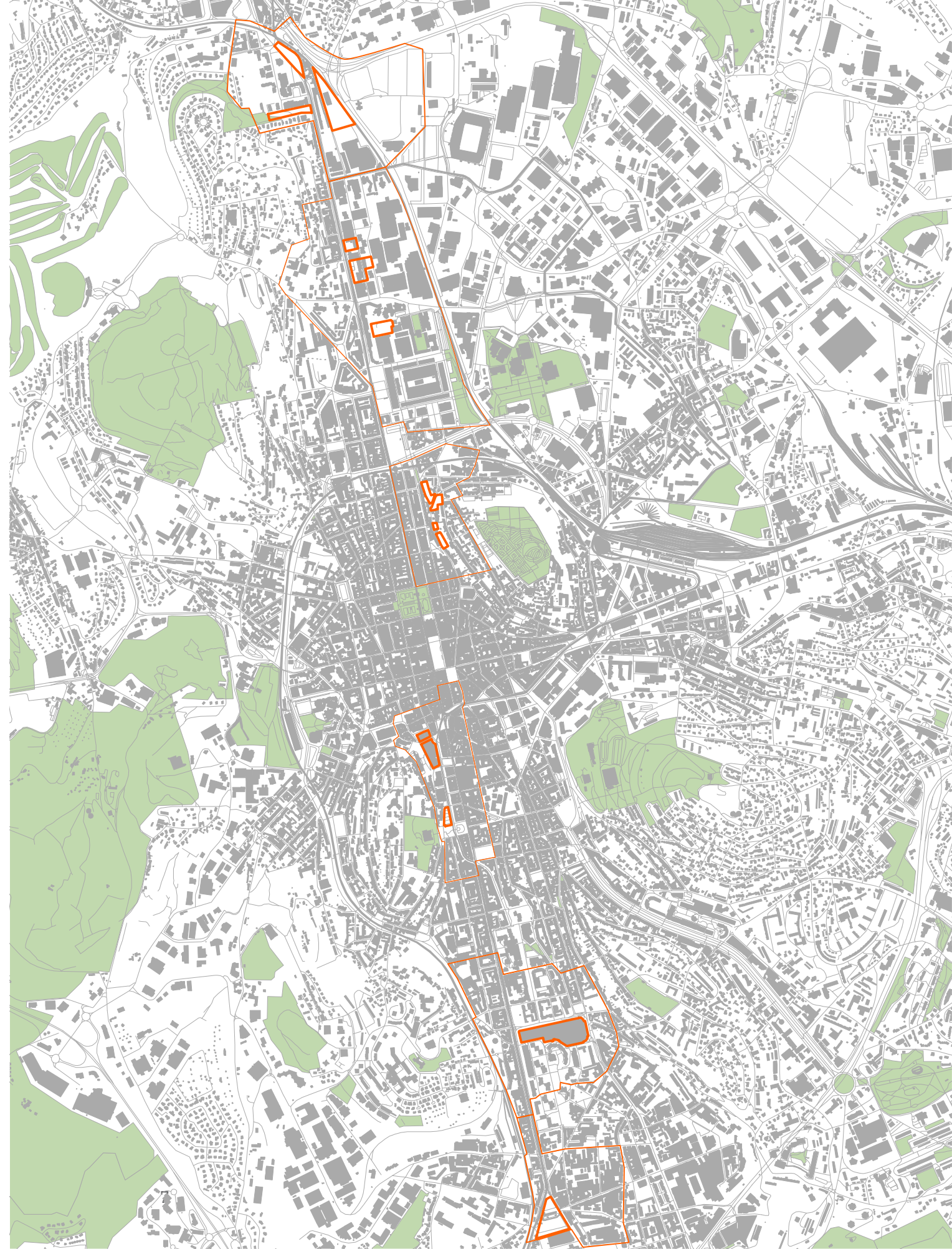
Theme: re-shaping and re-framing Saint-Étienne

While in previous Diploma semesters we have worked with a more clearly defined building programme, in this instance we will define the brief by analysing needs and site conditions, through test planning and by developing a strategy plan at the beginning of the semester.

Two students will work on the same site independently and are invited to collaborate as critical friends. We will suggest project sites, but it is important to use these as a guide and to expand or reduce the area of intervention as a result of more detailed study.

The current condition of Saint-Étienne today is also the result of the application of a linear urban planning model and we are interested in exploring how it can enable de-densification and urban regeneration. Our hope is that through a process of selective demolition, a new network of public spaces can be established, framed by existing buildings, old and new. This kind of strategy has a long tradition in urban renewal and offers a wealth of examples to draw upon.

Plan of the area under investigation



Saint-Étienne: the context



1



4



5



2



3

- 1 Rue de la République
- 2 Place du Peuple
- 3 Avenue de la Libération
- 4 Quartier Bergson
- 5 Escalier du Crêt de Roc
- 6 Rue de la République



6



2



3



4



1

- 1 Place Albert Thomas
- 2 Place du Peuple
- 3 Cours Jovin Bouchard
- 4 Perspective from Allée Chantegrillet
- 5 Perspective from place Louis Comte
- 6 Rue Michel Servet



5



6

Building precedents



1
Plaza Mayor
Madrid, Spain

2
Piazza San Carlo
Turin, Italy

3
The Circus
Bath, England

4
Facade of Boutique Santa Eulalia
Barcelona, Spain

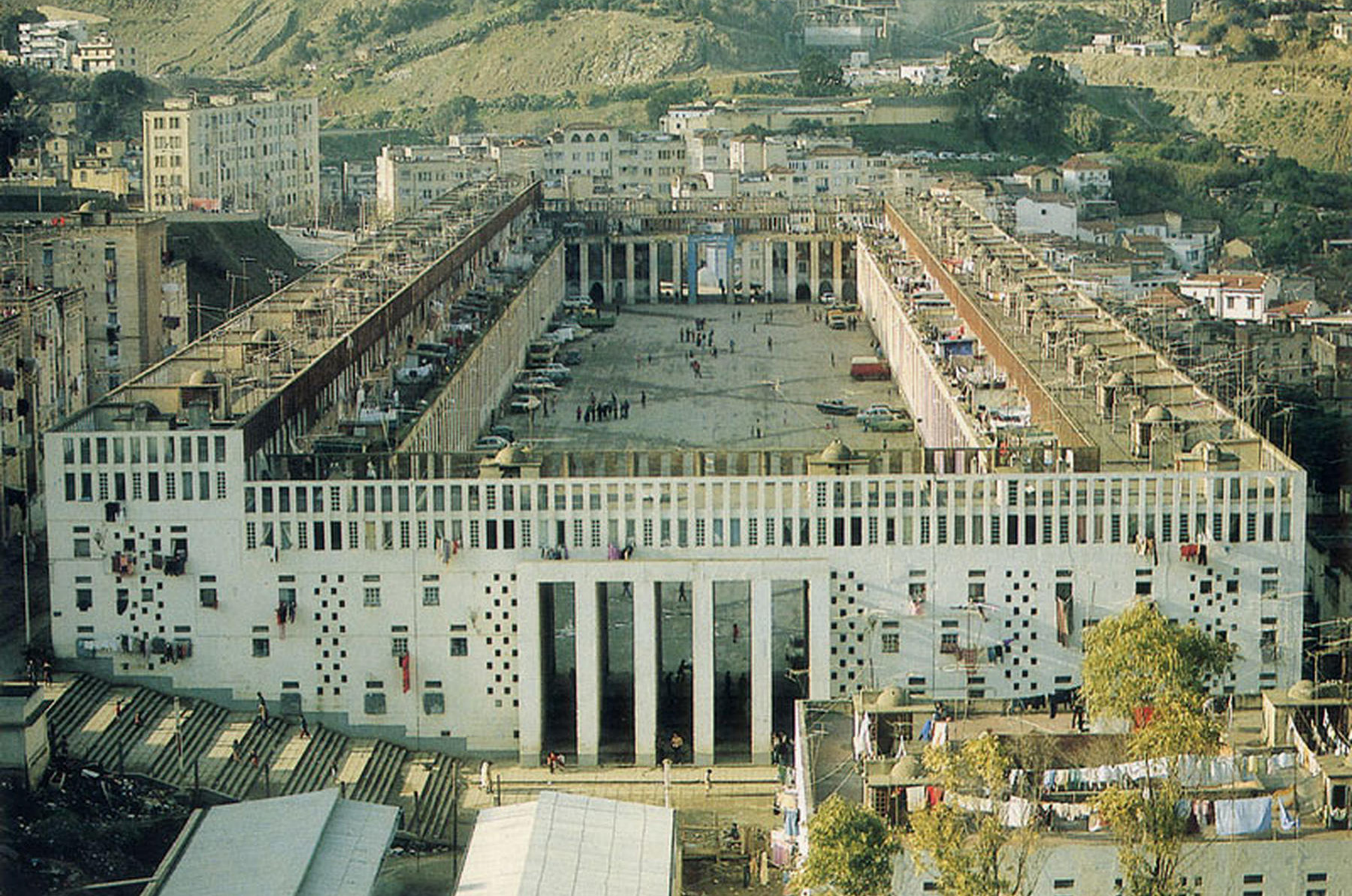
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Place des Vosges
Paris, France

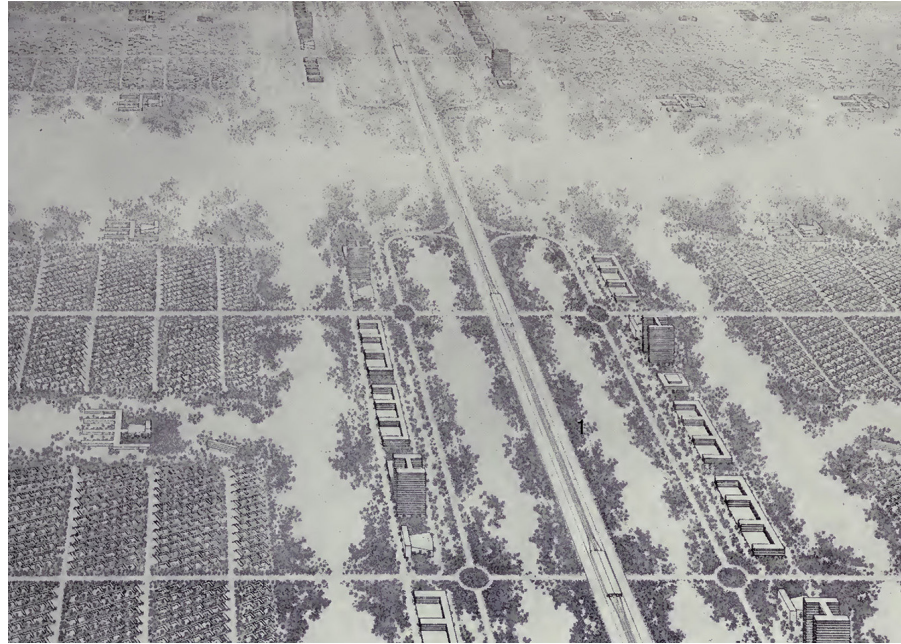
6
Place Vendôme
Paris, France

7
Hornbækhus,
Copenhagen, Denmark

8
Jardin des Tuileries
Paris, France

overleaf:
Climat de France
Algiers, Algeria





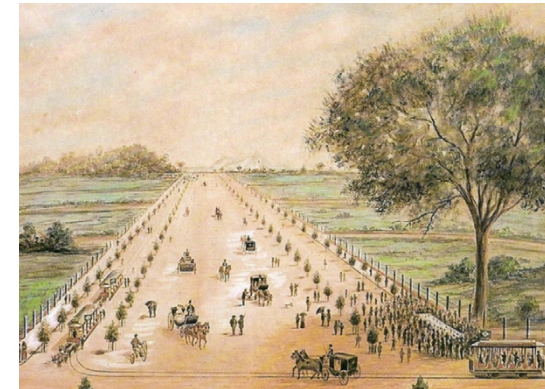
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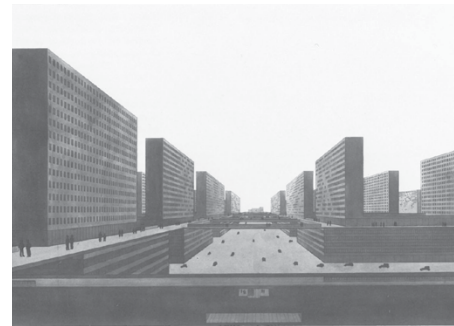
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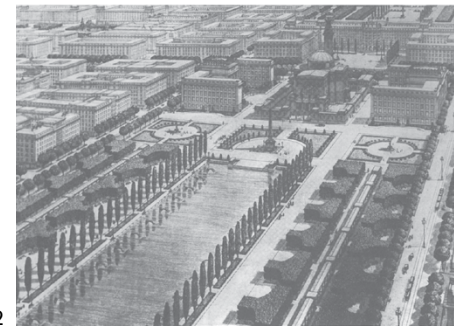
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7



2



3

1
Ludwig Hilberseimer
The city in the landscape

2
Ludwig Hilberseimer
High-rise city

3
Otto Wagner
Die Groszstadt

4
Hackescher Hof
Berlin, Germany

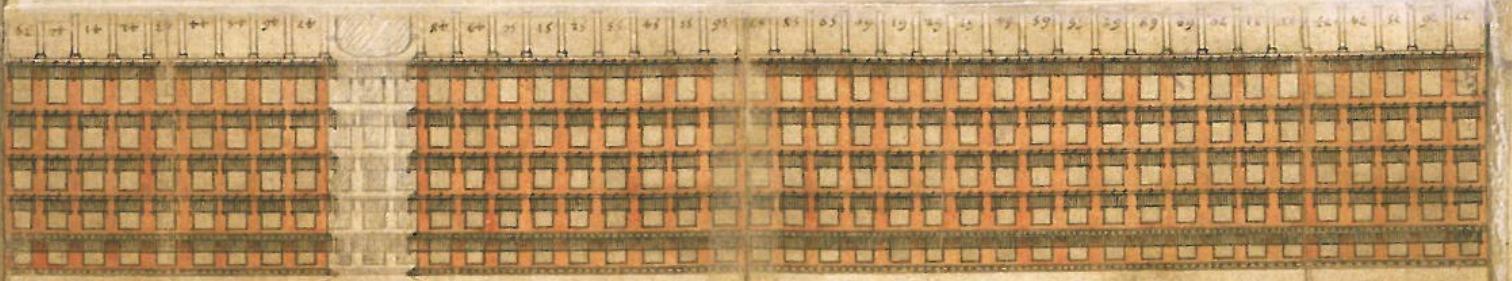
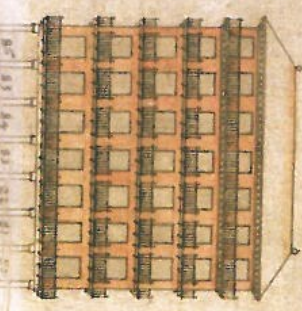
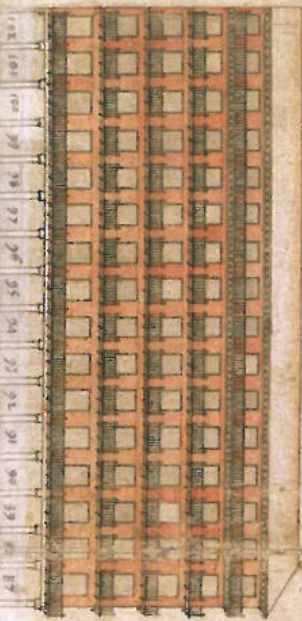
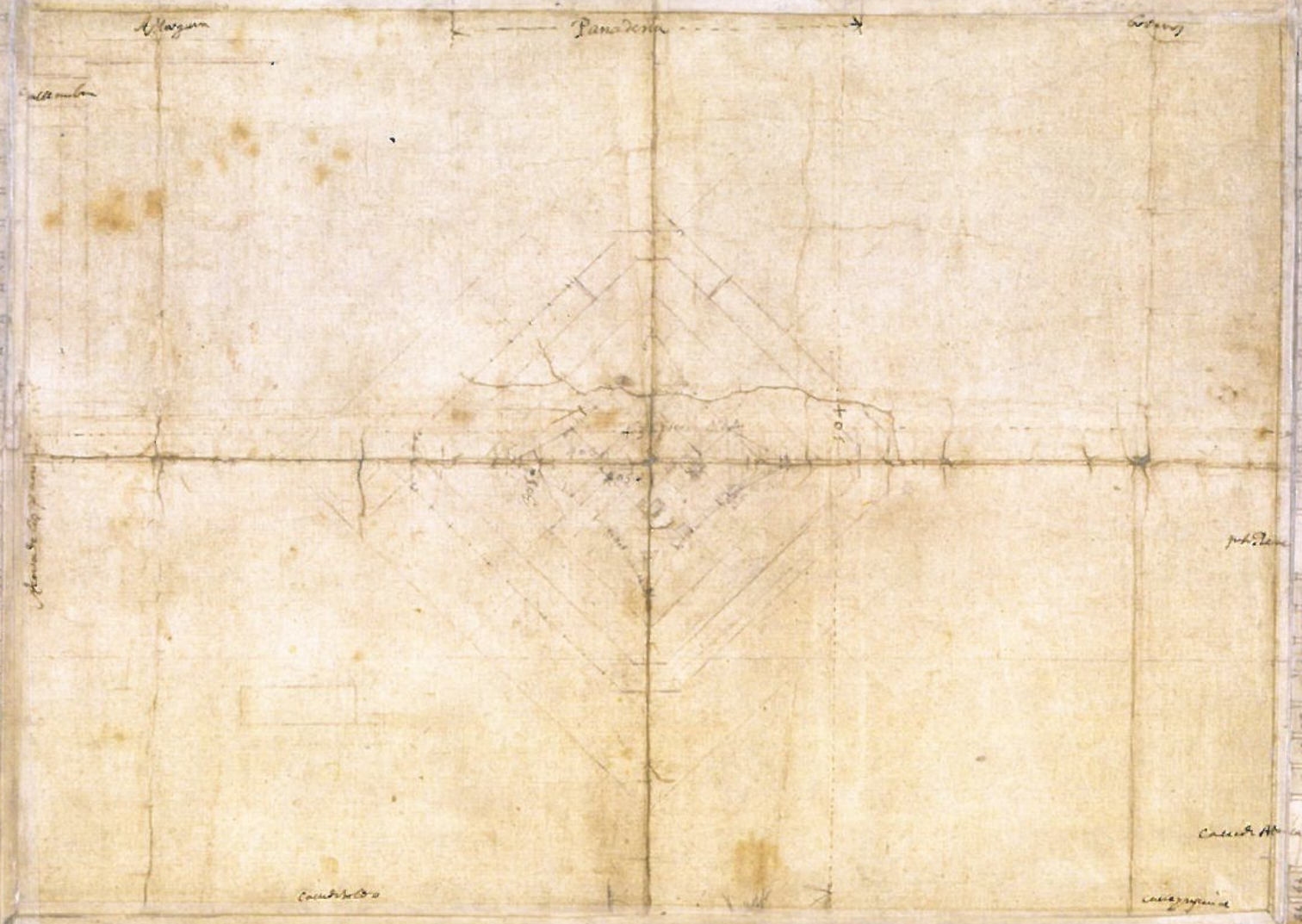
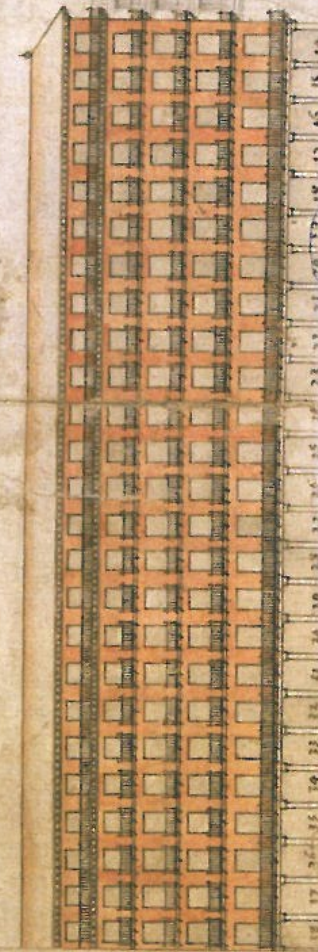
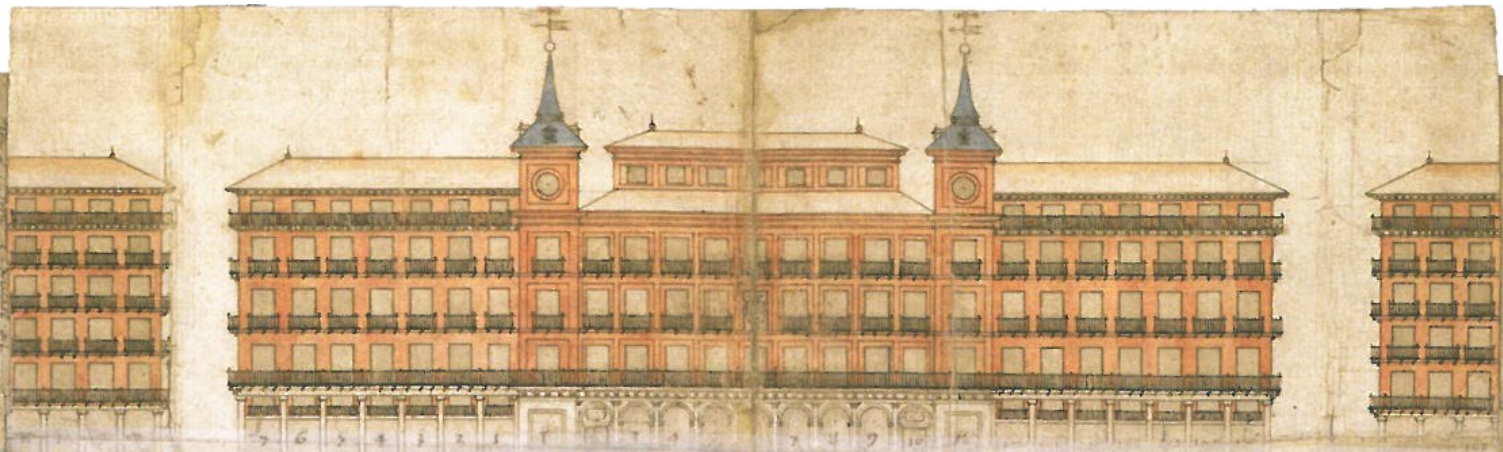
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Arturo Soria y Mata
Ciudad Lineal

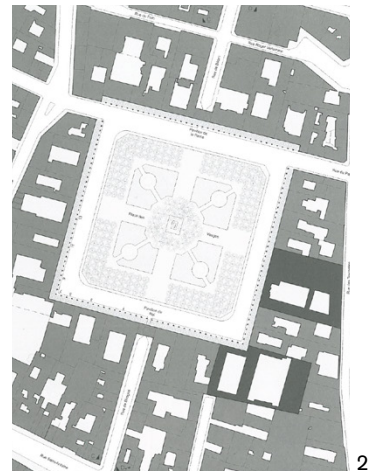
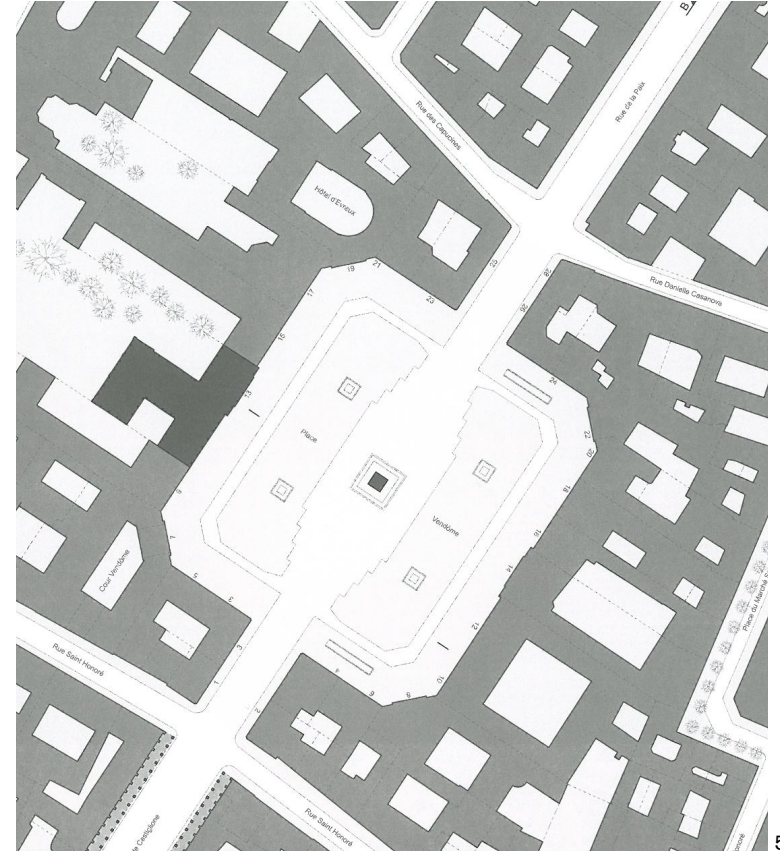
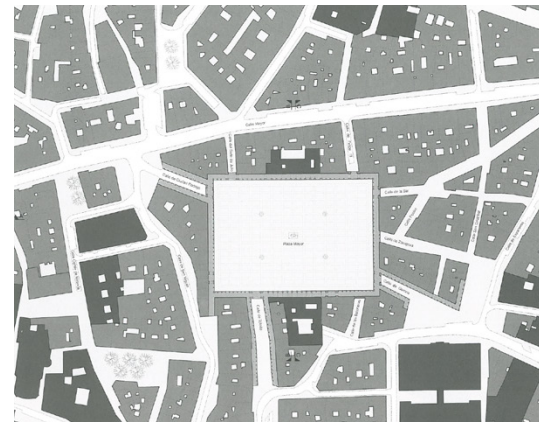
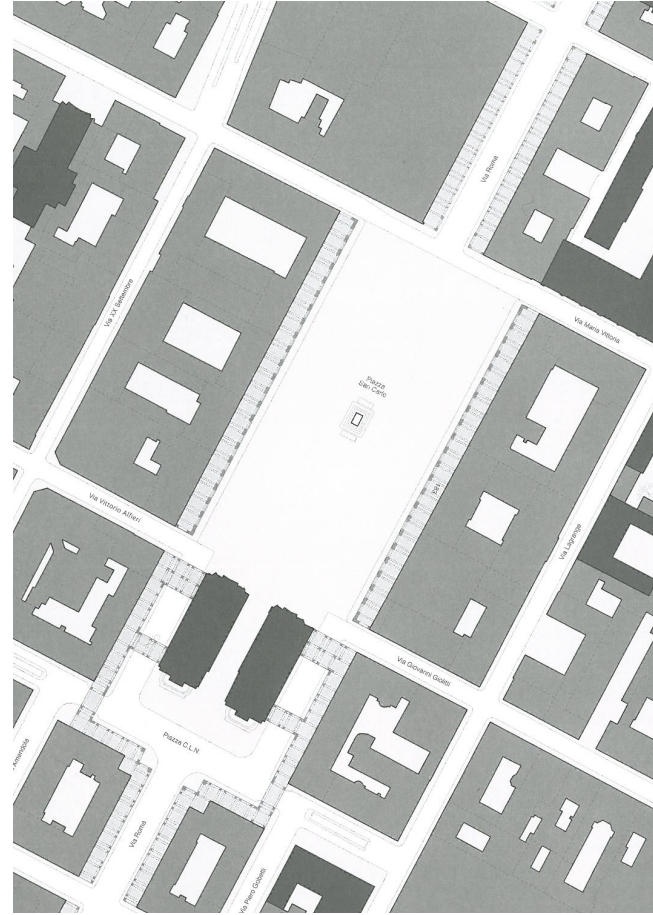
6
Jules Victor André Martin
Avenida Paulista
São Paulo, Brazil

7
The Circus
Bath, England

overleaf:
Juan Gómez de Mora
Plaza del Arrabal

Handwritten notes in the top left corner, including a signature and some illegible text.





1
Via Giuseppe Garibaldi
Genoa, Italy

2
Place des Vosges
Paris, France

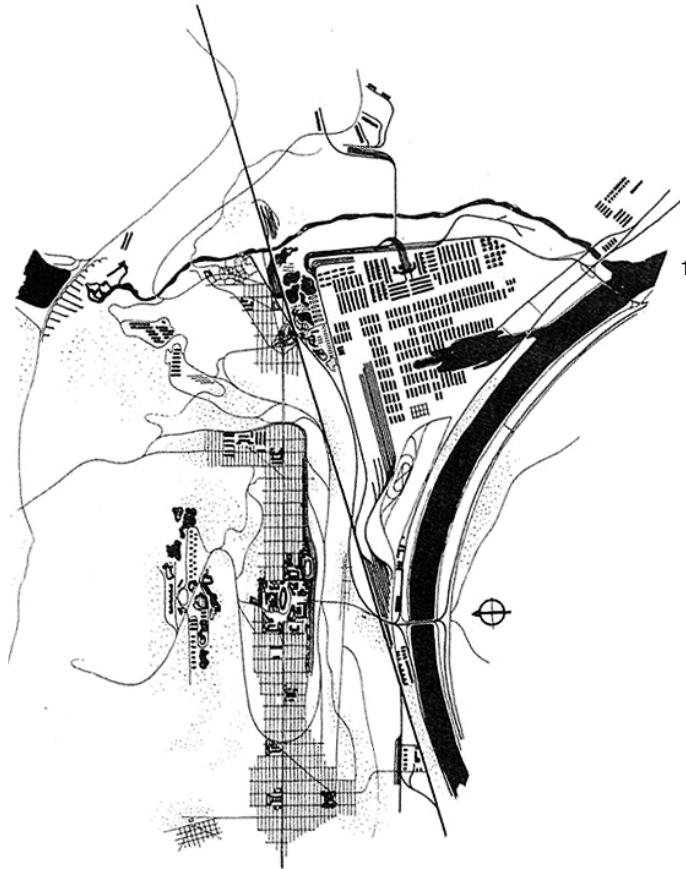
3
Piazza San Carlo
Turin, Italy

4
Plaza Mayor
Madrid, Spain

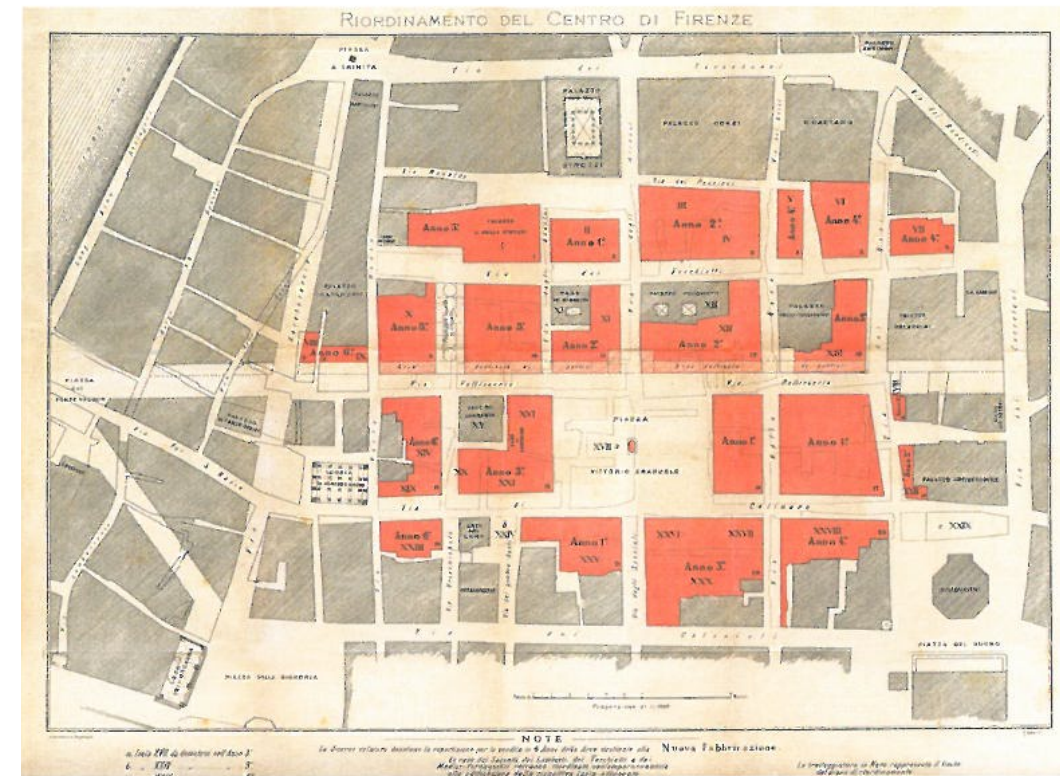
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Place Vendôme
Paris, France

The first component of the work to be undertaken this semester requires you to develop a strategy plan. This will involve a typological and massing study based on a 1:500 model that should encompass a wider area than the site in which your work is situated.

We ask you to begin by exploring numerous solutions that would allow the site or sites you are studying to be developed. Each of the studies or options proposed should be recorded in photographs and its qualities should be critically appraised in order to further develop, refine or discard it. This work should be understood as an iterative process that will begin to develop the idea for the project you will be working on throughout the semester.



1
Tony Garnier
Une Cité Industrielle, 1917



2
Riordinamento del centro di Firenze
1889

In this studio we hold the position that invention is a necessary ambition in architecture, but it rarely emerges by spontaneous intuition. Generally, architects develop truly unique proposals only after many years of study and reflection, and it is questionable whether true originality can actually be achieved, given the wealth of precedents in the history of world architecture.

To help you understand the task that you will be attending to this semester we would like you to undertake a survey. This will be at the scale of the city, focusing on the immediate neighbourhood your project would be adjusting and adding to. This will ensure a clearer understanding of what it is you are being asked to work with, giving you a better chance of making a building that is suited to its purpose.

You should begin to consider where the building programme you have been assigned can be introduced into the urban fabric.

You could look at how the plan of a building is organised, or you could consider a study that looks at elevations rather than at building volumes. You should be able to describe it clearly and analytically, employing diagrams where necessary. Alternatively you might concentrate on understanding the quality and arrangement of a facade drawing upon a measured survey of an existing series of elevations.

This will require you to look carefully at buildings, making sketches and taking photographs as a way of recording their current condition. We also ask you to make a precise photographic portrait that conveys the atmosphere of the building or buildings and the manner in which they are situated in the city. You might also make a photographic portrait of an internal space and record the relationship of the building's interior with the city outside.

You are free to choose the subject of your own survey, but do consider carefully the role it may play in assisting you later.



Martin Glen

Shilporte 3, Zurich
Otto Streicher, 1929

The next piece of work you will need to undertake requires you to produce two images. No specific graphic technique is prescribed, although you should be able to explain why you consider the technique you choose appropriate.

These images should represent the atmosphere and the presence of your building. One of the images should depict the exterior of the building and its relationship with the existing urban tissue and the site of the project within the city and its immediate context. The other image should represent the interior and its qualities as a partly public, partly private space.



1



2

1
Interior perspective
Jie Zhang

2
Exterior perspective
Jie Zhang

overleaf:
Exterior perspective
Taro Sakurai



The results of these previous studies should be reappraised and drawn upon to produce the next instalment of this semester's work. We would now like you to develop a more precise concept for a building or buildings and their relationships to the wider context. The principal tool we ask you to employ is a 1:100 study or sketch model, which should include the relevant surrounding area. This will form the basis of the key piece of work you will be producing this semester. We are interested in the qualities of the buildings you design and the way they are expressed through the organisation of the facades.

Your work should concentrate on the critical appraisal and further refinement of your earlier studies. While a model will be the principal piece of work, we expect your project to be developed with study plans, elevations, sections and sketches. It is also important that you measure the density of your proposal.

At this stage in the semester your work will be subject to an intermediate review.

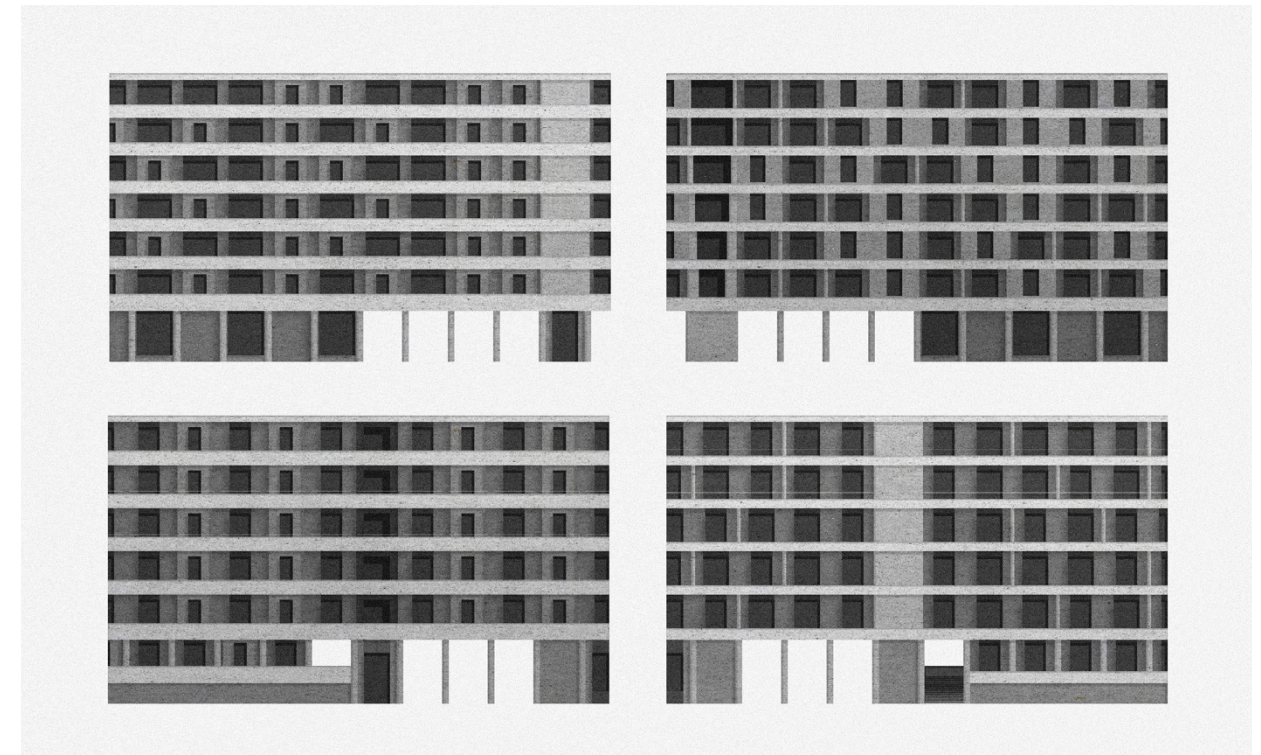


Campus building plan
James Irving

At this stage of the semester you should already have developed a rudimentary understanding of your project in plan and section, and we now ask you to develop and test your ideas for the facades within the framework of the strategy you have developed.

The facades of your buildings should be drawn at 1:100 (as unwrapped elevations) and translated into three-dimensional models.

This piece of work should be undertaken with a clear concept of the image of your buildings in mind. What materials is the building made from? How do you approach the arrangement of window openings? How does the building meet the ground, and how is the top of the building resolved? There are numerous additional questions you should be asking yourself about the facade of your building.



Elevations
Dominic Murray-Vaughan

With the emergence of a convincing set of ideas for your buildings you will need to produce a careful set of drawings of some of the facades you have developed. In addition to these, you will need to produce a number of sections at scale of 1:100.

You should also give due consideration to the plans for the project. These should be developed at 1:200, 1:100 and at a larger scale where appropriate. You should consider repetition and variation in apartment plans and what other programmes might be introduced, especially on the ground floor.

A landscape plan should be produced at a scale of 1:200 to indicate an approach to the landscape surfaces, hard and soft elements, and public realm in general.

The main piece of work should be the remaking of images that represent the project.

Finally, you should produce a pdf or Powerpoint presentation describing your project. This should be understood as an important tool for presenting your project at the final review and should document the development of your work and explain the strategy you propose.



Date	Event	Details	Assignments
29 January	Collective meeting Site allocation	Taro Sakurai (TS), Liviu Vasiu (LV)	
19 February	Studio introduction	Presentation 1:1000 model Precedent study	1:1000 site model Precedent study
26 February	Tutorials		1:1000 model studies 1:500 plans
5 March	Tutorials	Urban studies	1:1000 model studies 1:500 plans
12 March	Review	Review of urban studies	1:1000 model studies 1:500 plans
19 March	Tutorials	Perspectives	1:500 model studies and plans Perspectives
26 March	Review	Preview of all work	1:1000 site model 1:200 plans Study models Interior/exterior perspectives Pdf presentation
2 April	Review	Plan studies Elevation studies	1:100 plans Study models
9 April	Easter holidays		
16 April	Intermediate reviews	Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics	1:1000 site model 1:200 plans Study models Interior/exterior perspectives Pdf presentation
23 April	Review	Plan studies Elevation studies	1:100 plans Study models
30 April	Review	Plan studies Elevation studies	1:100 plans Study models

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
7 May	Tutorials	Plan studies Elevation studies	1:100 plans Study models
14 May	Review	Review elevations	1:100 plans Study models
21 May	Tutorials	Elevations	1:100 plans Study models
28 May	Review	Review of projects	Start final models
4 June	Tutorials	Discussion of final model	Project revisions
11 June	Final reviews	Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics	1:1000 site model Final model (scale to be agreed) 1:100 ground floor plan 1:100 typical plan 1:100 elevations and sections Interior/exterior perspectives Pdf presentation

Contacts

Professor

Jonathan Sergison
jonathan.sergison@usi.ch

Assistants

Taro Sakurai
taro.sakurai@usi.ch

Liviu Vasiu
liviu.vasiu@usi.ch

Studio

2nd floor
Palazzo Canavée

Office

Depandance
Office D1.03 (Level 1)
Largo Bernasconi 2
CH 6850 Mendrisio