

Studio Sergison
Spring Semester 2016

The *Palazzo* type



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Turin, aerial view

Introduction



This semester will form the second part of a year-long investigation of how type can generate an urban and architectural response. In the first instance we worked in the German capital, Berlin and considered block and courtyard types and how they can be employed as a means of repairing the existing urban fabric. This semester our attention will turn to the northern Italian city of Turin. We will work at a larger, more strategic scale and consider the *palazzo* type, the building solution that has been widely employed in the historic city centre of Turin. We will consider how this building type can be re-interpreted and contribute to meeting contemporary needs.

Our work will involve developing a strategy for a site to the north of the city formerly used for industry. The emphasis will be on normative programmes, predominantly housing.

As in the past, many experts on the issues that we will be exploring this semester will support the studio.

Turin, Lungo Dora Sienna

Together with Milan and Genoa, Turin forms a triangle that delimits the industrial heart of Italy. It is the home of FIAT and of many other significant Italian companies. In terms of production, it is second only to Milan and Rome. This economic base creates pressure for the city to house its growing and changing population needs.

The site chosen lies in the northern periphery of the city that was formerly associated with industry. It adjoins the *Regio Parco* neighbourhood, which has been recently developing as a home for the creative industries.

In many ways the centre of Turin represents an ideal urban structure. It is reasonably dense and compact, with buildings of a mostly homogenous height. The foundation of the city is of Roman origin and the grid is extremely present in its contemporary urban fabric, so that we experience the city very differently from Milan, Como or Naples, which share the same heritage. In many ways Turin reminds us of the egalitarian character of American cities even though the building language is so emphatically Italian.

Yet, the experience of walking through Turin is far from monotonous, as there are numerous exceptions to the grid structure. These take the form of open spaces, public buildings and institutions, secular and religious alike.

The figure ground of the city, the ordinary tissue, is formed of housing and places of employment. With few exceptions, they are arranged as blocks with inner courtyards. The dimensions of the block derive from the Roman urban structure of *decumanus* and *cardo*. What were in the past Roman courtyard houses have over time been rebuilt as *palazzo* apartment buildings, sometimes with porticos, always with residential uses on the upper floors, commercial uses on the ground floor, and an overall height of typically 6 storeys. As city blocks, they represent the image of a large house – a *palazzo* – with all of its historical associations to the heritage of the Renaissance.

The task for this semester will be to consider how this urban model can be applied or appropriated in contemporary terms. We will consider the manner in which versions of the *palazzo* type can be adapted to form a contemporary urbanism. In the first instance, the task will be to develop a strategy plan, or urban concept. Through the course of the semester this will be tested and refined at different scales.





1, 2, 3
Buildings, Turin

4
Piazza San Carlo, Turin



As other great European cities, Turin is the result of the stratification of cultures, people and civilisations. The oldest documents mention a small village at the foot of the Alps called *Taurasia*, a small settlement populated by the Taurine tribe, descendants of the union of the Gauls and Celtic-Ligures that was destroyed by Hannibal in 218 B.C.

It was a military citadel during Roman times and in 28 B.C., under Augustus, it was given the name *Augusta Taurinorum*. The colony was laid out in the grid pattern typical of the Roman city plan with the *decumanus* as its central axis and *cardi* at right angles to it. This system would characterise the city's zoning in centuries to come and is still visible in the urban fabric of the modern city, particularly in the area known as the *Quadrilatero Romano*.

In 1280 the House of Savoy conquered Turin. Under their reign, the city experienced one of the most important transformations of its history. In 1563, the Savoy transferred their capital from Chambéry to Turin and commissioned buildings by the finest architects of the times – Ascanio Vitozzi, Amedeo and Carlo di Castellamonte, Guarino Guarini, Filippo Juvarra – who transformed the city into one of the major capitals of the Baroque era. Turin acquired a style, charm and elegance all its own, which has been one of its distinctive features for centuries. The Turin of the House of Savoy was a religious as well as a lively cultural centre. The University, founded in 1404, attracted brilliant minds from all over Europe: Erasmus of Rotterdam, one of the great humanist scholars of Renaissance, graduated from its University. Turin was also loved by Montesquieu, and Charles de Brosses, a well known French politician and intellectual, believed it to be “the loveliest city in Italy and, as far as I’m concerned, in Europe”.

The Savoy reign was interrupted in 1798 when Napoleon’s troops occupied the city and forced Carlo Emanuele IV to abdicate and move to Sardinia. Piedmont was annexed to France and Turin saw the crumbling of its defence walls, which until then had been one of the distinctive traits of its urban structure.

Turin was occupied by Austria and Russia until the Congress of Vienna returned it to the Savoy in 1814. It was with the ascent to the throne of Vittorio Emanuele II, and the work of Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour and other protagonists of the *Risorgimento* (literally ‘the Resurgence’, referring to Italian unification), that the city became the protagonist of national history, leading the process that would result in the Unification of Italy. In 1861, Turin became the first capital of the newly established Kingdom of Italy and the first Parliament was installed at *Palazzo Carignano*. Its capital status lasted only until 1864, and the parliament had already moved to Florence by the time full-size chambers were completed.

Turin adapted quickly to its loss of political significance, and rapidly became a major industrial centre, part of the so-called “Industrial Triangle” with Milan and Genoa. In the aftermath of WWII, Turin was quickly rebuilt and large-scale industries such as FIAT and Lancia lured hundreds of thousands of impoverished southern Italians to Turin and housed them in vast company-built, company-owned suburbs. Fiat’s owners, the Agnelli family (who also own Turin’s local newspaper, a large chunk of the national daily *Corriere della Sera* and, last but not least, the Juventus football club), remain one of Italy’s most powerful members of the establishment.

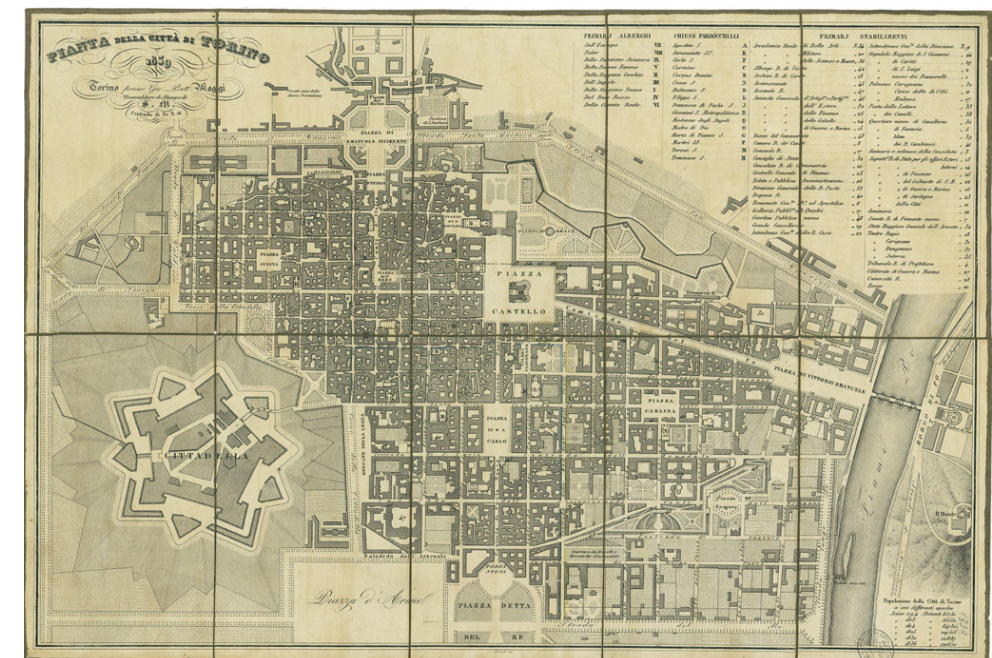
As well as an industrial powerhouse, Turin has always been home to a

vibrant cultural scene. Luigi Einaudi taught here, Antonio Gramsci and Piero Gobetti studied here. In the 1930s, *Liceo Classico d’Azeglio* (a local secondary school) produced a generation of students that were destined to leave an indelible mark on Italian intellectual life: writers like Cesare Pavese and Primo Levi, musicologist Massimo Mila, philosopher Norberto Bobbio and Giulio Einaudi, founder of the publishing house of the same name, which would become a catalysts of Italian anti-fascist culture.

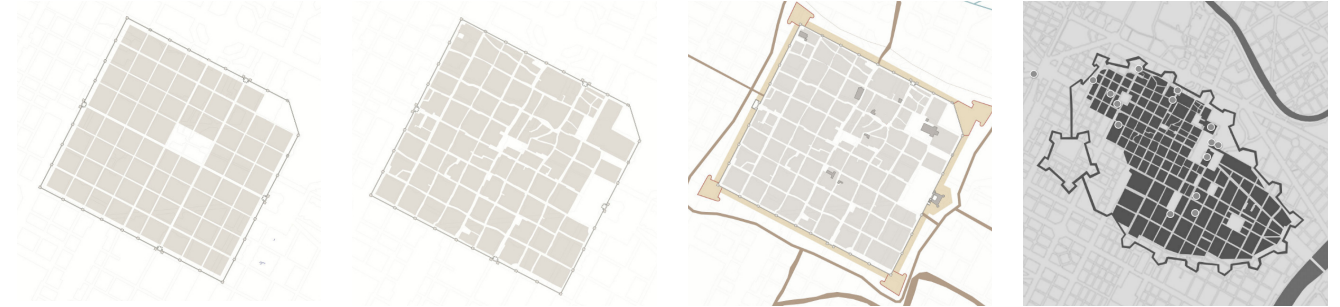
Italian cinema was born and developed here. In 1914 director Giovanni Pastrone filmed “Cabiria”, based on the novel by Gabriele D’Annunzio: the first full-length film to be distributed worldwide. Important film studios were founded in Turin: Ambrosio, Aquila, Itala Film and the Fert studios – now the location of the Virtual Reality & Multi Media Park – were among the most active and best equipped movie studios at the beginning of the 20thcentury. Radio and television history also started in Turin, where “Eiar”, the precursor of RAI (the national TV network), was based.

By 1960 the population has reached the 1 million mark. In the 1980s, the industrial crisis hit the city and its population began to decline. In 2005, the population was down to 908,000.

The highly successful 2006 Winter Olympics marked a turning point for the city, ushering in a building boom, including a brand-new underground system. Today Turin is no longer a staid industrial centre, but a vibrant, multicultural metropolis.



Turin, 1839



- 1
Street view, late 19th century
- 2
City plans 398-568, 773-1091, 1500, 1700
- 3
City plans 1911-1945, 1946-1980

With the opening of the new Fréjus tunnel in 1971, Turin became Italy's most important economic and industrial centre, part of the northern Italian "Industrial Triangle", together with Milan and Genoa.

Rapid mass industrialisation and the consequent population growth, led to a re-organisation of the city's territory. The 1907-1919 *Piano Regolatore* extended the city boundaries, creating new thoroughfares to link the new industrial areas. The use of concrete in the construction of industrial building became widespread: the FIAT Lingotto factory is one of the most significant examples of such buildings, a prototypical "factory" and an important symbol of the modern industrial city. Designed to house all phases of the car manufacturing process in line with the principles of Taylorist work organisation, the factory has a rooftop track for testing cars on site.

Turin's industries played a fundamental role in the country's industrial development at the beginning of the 20th century and in the so-called "economic miracle" that followed World War II. The economic boom of the 1960s and the 100th anniversary of the country's union provided the rationale for Turin to host the 1961 Expo and for areas such as Nizza Millefonti to be developed. Pier Luigi Nervi was commissioned the *Palazzo del Lavoro* to host the event. Together with the *Palazzetto dello Sport* and the *Padiglione per il Salone dell'automobile* by Riccardo Morandi, they are great examples of Italy's long-standing engineering tradition.



1
FIAT Lingotto, G. Matté Trucco, 1917

2
Palazzo del Lavoro, Pier Luigi Nervi, 1960





ITALO
CASA del CUCCIOLO

DM-516XR

BAR

LIBRERIA
TRAPIANI

First exercise: Study of an apartment

We all have experience of what it means to live in an apartment. All of you probably started the day in an apartment, a horizontally arranged dwelling with a number of rooms serving different purposes – sleeping, cooking, and so on. We would like you to explore in greater depth what it means to live in an apartment and how the structure and atmosphere of a dwelling affect the way we inhabit a space or a collection of spaces.

We ask you to choose an apartment, preferably not your own, but one you can gain access to. Once you have selected it, you should study a space or a collection of rooms and find a good angle for photographing it, being careful with the light level and composition of the photograph. It is important that the photograph is taken for the purposes of this exercise rather than one taken at some point in the past.

You will then be asked to make a model of the room(s) at a scale of 1:10 based on a print of the photograph you took. The model should accurately recreate everything that can be seen in the print.

Having done this, you should photograph the model you have made. Care should be taken to recreate the lighting levels and atmosphere you observed in the room you selected, as illustrated in the photograph you took. You will then need to take a photograph of the model and print it at the same size as the original print.

An introductory talk will explain how to carry out this first assignment.



pages 18 and 19
Typical street, Turin

1
Apartment Photograph
Conrad Kersting

2
Photograph of final model
Conrad Kersting

We hold the position that invention is a necessary ambition in architecture, but it rarely emerges by spontaneous intuition. An architect can only hope to make a truly unique proposal after many years of study and reflection. Indeed, it is debatable whether true originality is achievable.

To help you understand the task you are attending to this semester, we would like you to undertake a survey of an existing urban block of your choice in Turin. You are free to select the block, but you should be able to argue what determined your choice. We believe that by doing this you develop a deeper understanding of the qualities of an existing building, a useful corrective to the belief that it is possible to invent spontaneously. The information recorded in your survey will be drawn upon and referred to throughout the semester and will potentially inform your work later.

You should consider the plan organisation of a block and will be expected to describe it clearly and analytically, employing diagrams where necessary. You should concentrate on understanding the quality and arrangement of a facade by drawing a measured survey of an existing series of elevations. This will require you to look very carefully at buildings, making sketches and taking photographs as a way of recording their condition. We also ask you to make a precise photographic portrait that conveys the atmosphere of the 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.

A lecture will be offered to introduce this exercise.



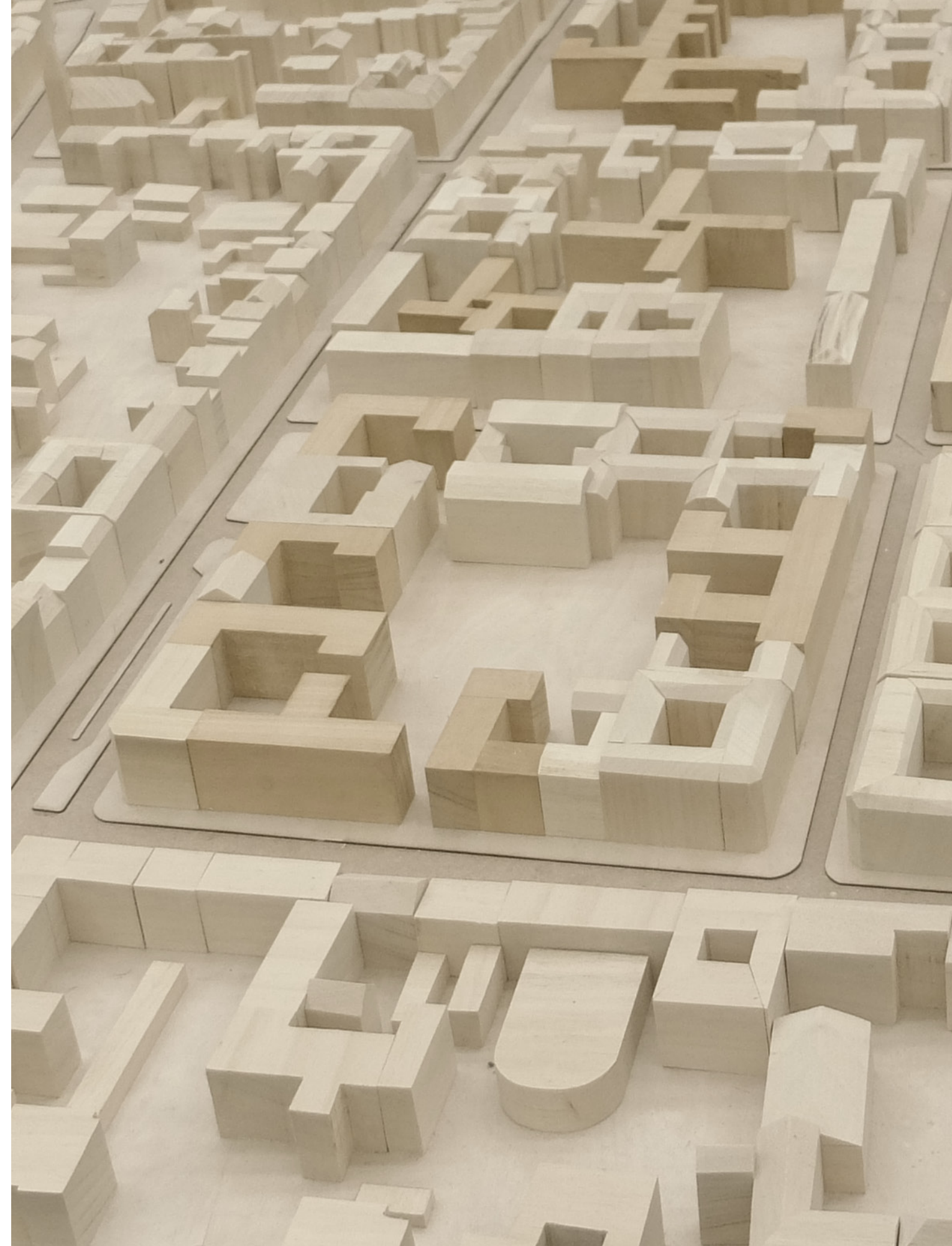
Third exercise: Strategy plan

The third component of the work to be undertaken this semester requires you to develop a strategy plan. This can be understood as a typological and massing study. The principal tool to assist you in this exercise will be a 1:500 model. This should encompass a wider area of the neighbourhood in which your site is located. The base model will be made collectively by all members of the studio.

We ask you to begin by exploring a number of solutions that would allow the site you are studying to be developed to a reasonably high density through the introduction of building blocks. The scale of these blocks and the distance between them should be carefully considered. Each option you propose should be recorded photographically and then critically appraised and tested to determine the density that it yields. This should be developed further and refined or discarded as appropriate.

This work should be understood as an iterative process and one that will begin to develop the idea for the project you will be working on throughout the semester. You should use the study trip to Turin as an opportunity to begin to understand the scale and urban structure of the city.

A lecture will be offered to introduce this exercise.



Fourth exercise: Atmosphere and image

The next piece of work you will undertake requires you to produce two images. The graphic technique is not prescribed, although you should be able to explain why you feel that the technique you have chosen is appropriate.

These images should represent the atmosphere and the presence of the building you propose. One of the images should represent the exterior of one or more buildings and their relationship to its immediate context, the general urban tissue. The other image should represent the interior of an apartment in a block and its qualities as a semi-public, semi-private space.

A lecture will be offered to introduce this exercise.



2

Fifth exercise: Building concept

The results of these previous studies should now be re-appraised and drawn upon for the next phase of this semester's work. We now ask you to develop a more precise concept for a block, possibly with courtyard(s), focusing on the relationship it might have to other blocks and to the wider context. The principal tool we ask you to employ is a 1:100 study or sketch model which should include an appropriate amount of detail and context. This is really the beginning of the key piece of work this semester. We are interested in the qualities contained in the buildings you design and the way they are expressed through the organisation of their facades.

The emphasis of your work should be on critically appraising and further refining earlier studies. While a model will be the main product of your work, we expect that you develop your project through study plans, elevations, sections and sketches. It is also important that the density of the project is measured.

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

1
Building exterior
Silvia Rossetini and Alessandro Sebastiani

2
Interior model
Emine Halefoglu and Cyril Kamber

3
Situation plan
Balz Blumer and Laetizia Lietha



Sixth exercise: Facade concept

At this stage in 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 building facades within the framework of the strategy plan you have developed.

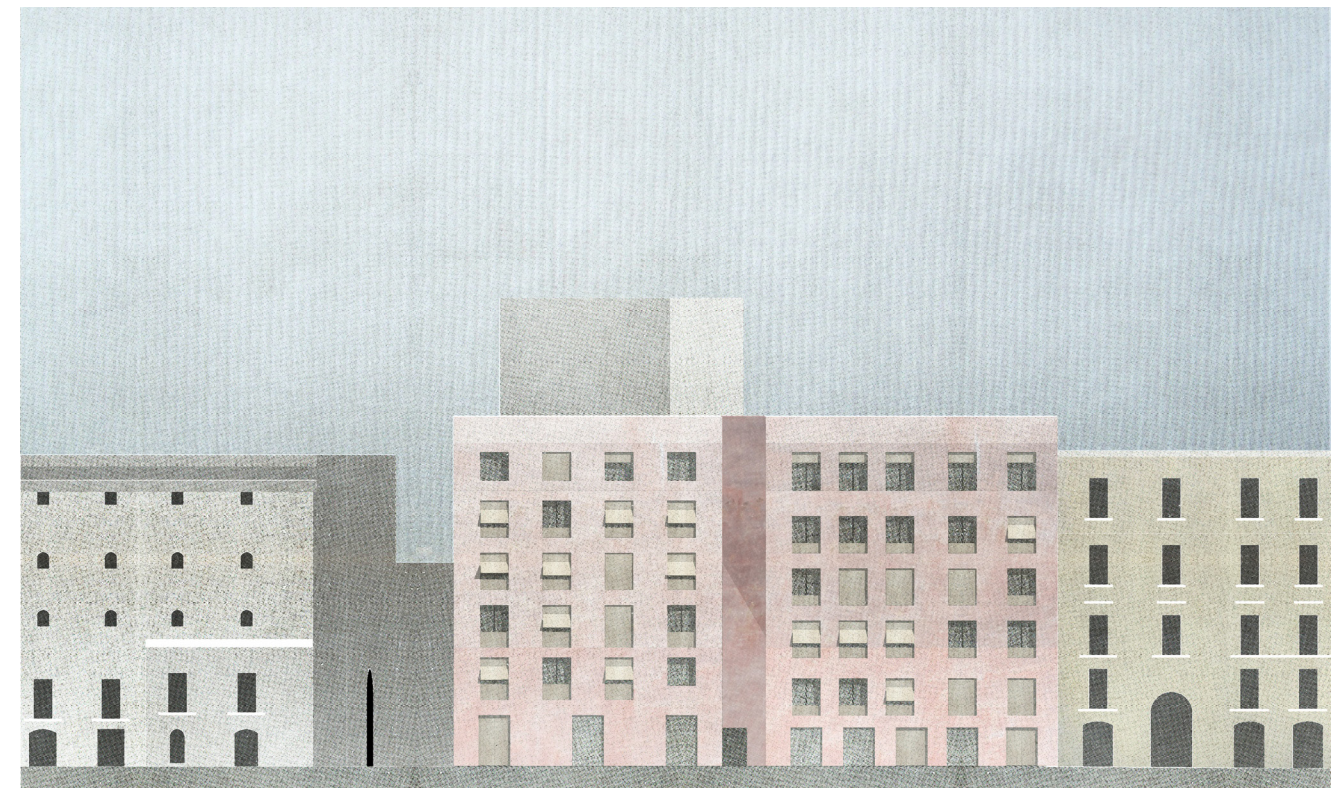
The facades of your buildings should be drawn at 1:100 as an unwrapped elevation and translated into three-dimensional models. You need not necessarily draw all the facades of every building or block, but should present enough to convey the ideas you are exploring.

This exercise should be undertaken with a clear concept of the image of your building in mind. What materials is the building made from? What is your approach to 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.

A seminar will be given to assist you in understanding this exercise.

1
Elevation
Eike Harant

2
Facade drawing
Eike Harant



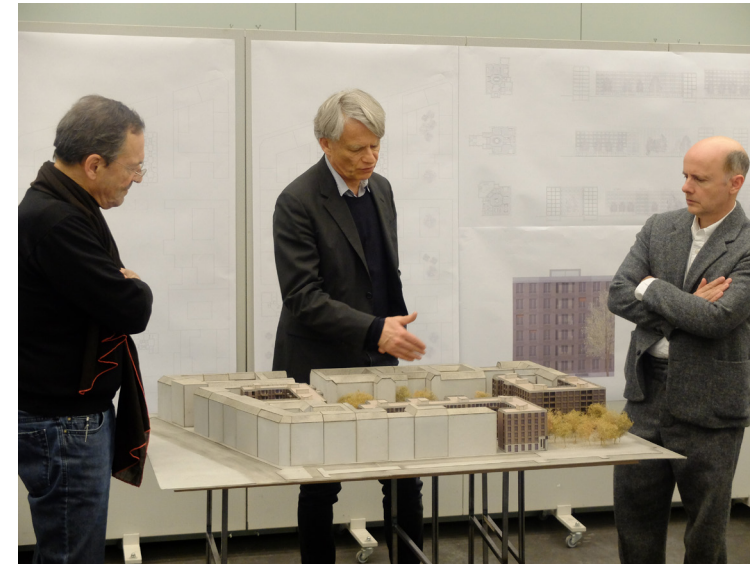
As a convincing set of ideas for your buildings emerges, you will need to produce a careful set of drawings describing some of the facades you have developed. You will also be expected to produce a number of sections at a scale of 1:100.

This semester, less emphasis has been placed on the study of plans, which should be drawn at a scale of 1:200 and should provide a rough indication of how vertical circulation is organised, where entrances are placed and of the distribution of apartments (although these need not be exhaustively studied in plan). Consideration should be given to repetition and variation of apartments and other programmes that might be introduced, especially on the ground floor.

A landscape plan should be produced at a scale of 1:200, which explains the idea for the landscaped surfaces and your approach to hard and soft elements and to the public realm in general.

The main product should be the remaking of a final version of two 'atmospheric' perspectives. These could derive from model photographs edited in Photoshop.

Finally you should prepare a pdf or Powerpoint presentation of your project. This is an important tool for presenting your project at the final review by explaining its evolution and the strategy you have developed.



1-3
Final reviews
Autumn semester 2015

| Date | Event | Details | Assignments |
|------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| 25 February | Studio introduction | | |
| 26 February | Studio briefing | Spring semester studio presentation by Jonathan Sergison (JS). Lecture "Turin, a brief history" by Lea Prati (LP) Lecture "Facade survey" Philipp Knorr (PK) Lecture "Room survey" (LP) | Photographs of apartment Preparation for 1:500 model |
| 3-4 March | Trip to Turin | Trip to allocated project sites Survey studies Detailed programme to be issued | Survey photographs and drawings |
| 10-11 March | Review | Review of photographs, survey drawings and apartment photograph Lecture "Strategy plan" (JS) | Apartment and model photograph |
| 17-18 March | Tutorial | Review of initial ideas for building Lecture "The Palazzo type" (JS) | 1:500 site model Initial ideas for building |
| 24-25 March | Review | Review of strategy plan Lecture on perspectives (PK) | 1:500 site model Initial ideas for building |
| 31 March-1 April | Easter holidays | | |
| 7-8 April | Review | Atmosphere image | Interior and exterior perspective |
| 14-15 April | Tutorial | Building concept review of model, plans, sections and elevations | 1:200 model studies, plans, sections and elevations |
| 21-22 April | Intermediate review | Project reviews with guest critics | Ideas for a strategy plan 1:200 model 1:200 plans sections, elevations Perspectives 1:500 models |
| 28-29 April | Tutorial | Plans, sections, elevations | 1:200 plans, sections, elevations 1:200 models |
| 5-6 May | Review | Review of plans, sections elevations and perspectives | 1:100 plans, sections, elevations 1:100 models |

| Date | Event | Details | Assignments |
|------------|--------------|---|--|
| 12-13 May | Review | Review of facades | 1:100 / 1:50 facades 1:100 plans, sections, elevations |
| 19- 20 May | Review | Review of plans, sections elevations | 1:100 / 1:50 facades 1:100 plans, sections, elevations Interior and exterior perspectives |
| 26-27 May | Tutorial | Plans, sections, elevations Submission | Submission of of final plans 1:200 ground floor plan 1:100 plans, sections, elevations |
| 2 June | Final review | | Pdf presentation 1:500 model 1:200 model 1:200 ground floor plan 1:100 plans, sections and facades Interior and exterior perspectives |

Reading list

Guida all'architettura moderna di Torino
A. Magnaghi M. Monge, L. Re, Torino 1995

Italomodern 1, Architektur in Oberitalien 1946-1976
Martin und Werner Feiersinger, Wien 2012

Italomodern 2, Architektur in Oberitalien 1946-1976
Martin und Werner Feiersinger, Zürich 2015

Der Mythos der Wahrheit. Städtebau im Italien der Nachkriegszeit
In: ders. (Hg.), Die Architektur, die Tradition und der Ort. Regionalismen in der europäischen Stadt
Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, München 2000

Torino, le città nella storia d'Italia
Vera Comoli Mandracci, Torino 2010

L'architettura del moderno a Torino
Bruna Biamino, Torino 1993

Torino 1920-1936. Società e cultura tra sviluppo industriale e capitalismo
Edizioni Progetto, Torino 1976

The works of Pier Luigi Nervi
Ernesto N. Rogers, Teufen 1957

L'architettura barocca in Piemonte
Guiseppe Luigi Marini, Torino 1963

Werk, Bauen + Wohnen
Turin, nr. 11, Zurich, November 1980

References

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

Das Haus und die Stadt / The House and the City
Diener & Diener, Städtebauliche Arbeiten/Urban Studies
Roger Diener, Martin Steinmann, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1995

Dichte / Density
Archithese, Niggli Verlag, Zürich, 2011

The Seduction of Place: the City in the Twenty-first Century
Joseph Rykwert, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, New York, 2000

Die Stadt im 20. Jahrhundert. Visionen, Entwürfe, Gebautes
Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Wagenbach Verlag, Berlin, 2010

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