

Studio Sergison  
Accademia di architettura  
Universita' della Svizzera italiana

Autumn Semester 2018

Zurich Facades III

## Survey

*Survey (v and n) Look closely at or examine something. Examine and report on the condition of a building. An act of surveying a building. Origin: late Middle English from Anglo-Norman French: surveier.*  
From "The New Oxford English Dictionary"

Why do we survey things? Firstly because the information that reveals itself through closer examination instills a deeper understanding of the world as it exists. This is the basis of pedagogy. If you were studying architecture 150 years ago in the Beaux Arts tradition, you would learn by copying seminal classical details or whole buildings. This ensured you were well informed of the rules of the classical canon. Interpretation would come later.

It might seem conservative, even reactionary, to suggest this might be a profitable way of working in the early 21st century. In part, the answer is that it would be, and this is not because as a way of working, when we look and learn from looking at things and adjust them later as ideas making personal interpretations seems interesting, no the problem lies in the complexity of the situation you are looking at. When people like Servio, Palladio, Alberti and others undertook a process of recording and categorising the antiquities of Greece and Rome, it was with a purpose of organising a structure or developing a structure that would enable contemporary architects to find solutions from the past to the tasks they were facing: designing a palace for an Italian nobleman or a church for the Papacy. The books of classical orders that were produced in the XV and XVI centuries became a manual that enabled the architects of the Renaissance and Baroque period to operate. They knew 'the rules' and then set about interpreting or even breaking them. This could be understood as a form of discipline and a study of convention. Later (in very few cases) mastery would exist in the manner in which interpretation occurred.

When making a survey of a building that at first glance might appear unremarkable or ubiquitous, it should be understood that this building is not necessarily a work of great architecture, but it does nevertheless contain vital information that will reveal itself through careful study.

When our students were asked to look at the building we chose as the subject of their study, we asked them to remain critical and inquisitive in terms of what they could see and to ask the following questions:

what is the building made from?  
what form of construction has been employed?  
what is its urban strategy?  
how does it announce itself to the city and neighbourhood?  
how big are the windows?  
how are they detailed?  
where do they sit in the thickness of the wall?  
how are the window reveal, sill and lintel formed?  
what is the relationship of one window to another?  
where is the entrance door positioned?  
how have the building's materials weathered?  
how does the building reveal signs of change and modification?

These are a very few of the many questions we feel you should be asking yourselves when you look at the façade of a building and attempt to survey it.

To begin with we encourage students to look very carefully at the subject of study. When this has been done for some time, careful drawings made by hand were produced. These need to be well organised and the act of drawings undertaken in a systematic way. We remind students that it will be necessary to read them many days after they were produced and that it is good to make general or overall drawings of the object or subject of study as well as detailed ones. Encouragement is made to draw in a way that attempts to represent the real proportion of an element that is being studied. When dimensions are taken of an element with a tape measure, it is important to position these (the dimensions) carefully and coherently. We find it always necessary to ask when taking survey dimensions what scale will the drawing be and to not get lost in detail or unnecessary accuracy for example if you are producing a drawing at a scale of 1:100 you do not need to measure things to the nearest millimetre. To avoid making mistakes, critical dimensions should be measured twice and wherever possible it is helpful to take 'running' or accumulative dimensions so that if one increment is wrong it should not critically affect the overall situation.

Photographing the building occurred when the first two activities have been rigorously undertaken (looking and then drawing). Photographs become most useful when you return to the place where the process of accurately drawing begins. At the core of this activity is the need to look and try to understand how the building is organised.

Photography is seen as a companion to drawing. Encouragement was given to photograph the whole façade and that this can be achieved by taking many smaller images that can be later pasted or stitched together. When the production of photographs was undertaken in a careful way it should reveal vital information about the subject of study. It tells you how to draw a façade in a way that conveys its own sense of realness and inform the decisions that are later taken in terms of the strength of lineweight as a way of emphasising or reducing the significance of certain components. It also informs decisions about the size of the elements that are employed in buildings, windows, doors and other components, and tells you things about order and proportion and detailing and the weathering of materials.

Ultimately the act of survey, in our teaching studio, is seen as a piece of work that helps students to react to and against in their project work. We hope it might be seen as a helpful friend. In the same way that is necessary to ask the question in relation to the subject of a survey, it is also necessary to ask in our work as designers; 'what do I see when I look at something?'



Antikes  
& Art





1

1  
Alessio Pavani  
Wohnhäuser Asylstrasse 64-70  
1894-1895  
Louis Hauser-Binder



2



3

2  
 Francesco Colli  
 Wohnhaus Bergstrasse 135-139  
 1896-1897  
 Bützberger & Burkhard

3  
 Elena Bellocchio  
 Mühlebachstrasse 65, 1887  
 J. Friedrich Zuppiger-Spitzer



4

4  
 Marta Cassany  
 Plattenstrasse 32, 1874  
 Albert Rosenmund



5

5  
 Bernhard Geiger  
 Wohnhaus Streulistrasse 17, 1898  
 Richard Schuster



6

6  
Benedetta Basile  
Wohnhaus Carmenstrasse 47-51  
1905-1906  
August E. Veith, Heinrich H. Haller



7

7  
Martina Marchesi  
Villa Bleuler, 1885-1888  
Alfred F. Bluntschli



8

8  
Yiming Yang  
Plattenstrasse 68, 1875  
Heinrich Bosshart



9

9  
Mathias Balkenhol  
Hottingerstrasse 20  
ca. 1900  
architect unknown



10

10  
Stefano Onorato  
Plattenstrasse 34  
1878  
Johan Rudolf Roth



11

11  
Islay Cassels  
Wohnbauten Steinwiesstrasse  
2011-2015  
EMI Architekten



12

12  
Marta Kazimierczak  
Seestrasse 328, 1893-1894  
Adolph Aster



13



14

13  
 Maria Minic  
 Villa Tobler, 1853  
 Gustav Wegmann

14  
 Leon Dirksen  
 Gemeindestrasse 27, 1898  
 Georg Lasius



15

15  
 Arianna Frascoli  
 Steinwiesstrasse 80, 1863  
 Architect unknown



16

16  
 Valentin Goetze  
 Wohnhaus Aurorastrasse 50,  
 1913-1924  
 R. Bischoff, H. Weideli



17

17  
 Francesca Borea  
 Baschligplatz 1, ca. 1800  
 Architect unknown



18



19

18  
Alexandre Pleisch  
Villa Carmen, 1894  
Jacques Gasser-Knoch

19  
Benjamin Rea  
Villa Doldertal 7, 1915-1917  
R. Bischoff, H. Weideli



20



21



22

- 20  
Edoardo Scaravaggi  
Zeltweg 27  
1900  
architect unknown
- 21  
Giovanni Zeli  
Plattenstrasse 78, ca. 1850  
architect unknown
- 22  
Sandro Embacher  
Hotel Plattenhof, 2014 (renovation)  
Bächi Steiner Architekten



23

23  
Nika Titova  
Plattenstrasse 70, 1869  
Gottlieb Baumann-Hotz

24  
Ayse Canci  
Wohnhaus Freiestrasse 27-29  
1890-1892  
Albert Meyerhofen

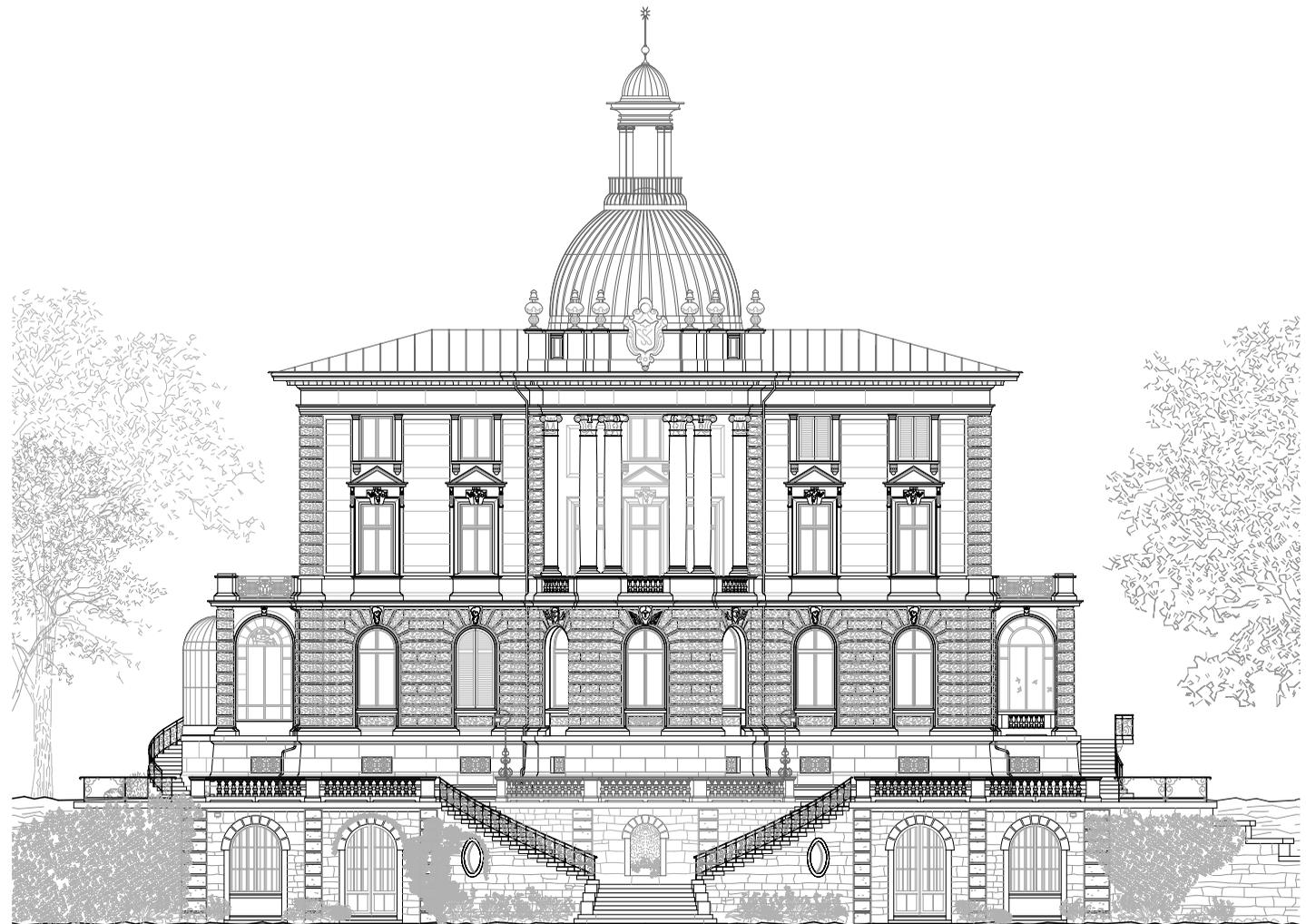


24



25

25  
 Ignasi Sanchez  
 Familienhaus Eidmattstrasse 49, 1896  
 J. Bryner, A. Oswald-Giesker



26

26  
 Alessandro Roda Balzarini  
 Villa Höhenbühl, 1885-1887  
 Alfred F. Bluntschli



Alessio Pavani p8



Francesco Colli p10



Elena Bellocchio p11



Yiming Yang p17



Mathias Balkenhol p18



Marta Cassany p12



Bernhard Geiger p13



Stefano Onorato p19



Islay Cassels p20



Benedetta Basile p14



Martina Marchesi p16



Marta Kazimierczak p21



Maria Minic p22



Leon Dirksen p23



Arianna Frascoli p24



Edoardo Scaravaggi p28



Sandro Embacher p29



Valentin Goetze p24



Francesca Borea p25



Nika Titova p30



Ayse Canci p31



Alexandre Pleisch p26



Benjamin Rea p27



Giovanni Zeli p28



Ignasi p32



Alessandro Roda Balzarini p32

# Aknowledgements

## Students

Mathias Balkenhol  
Benedetta Basile  
Elena Bellocchio  
Francesca Borea  
Ayse Canci  
Marta Cassany  
Islay Cassels  
Francesco Colli  
Leon Dirksen  
Sandro Embacher  
Arianna Frascoli  
Bernhard Geiger  
Valentin Goetze  
Marta Kazimierczak  
Martina Marchesi  
Maria Minic  
Stefano Onorato  
Alessio Pavani  
Alexandre Pleisch  
Alessandro Roda  
Benjamin Rea  
Ignasi Sanchez  
Edoardo Scaravaggi  
Nika Titova  
Yiming Yang  
Giovanni Zeli

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