

# VALLE DI MUGGIO

Studio Sergison  
Diploma 2026

Valle di Muggio, Ticino



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Aerial view of Valle di Muggio  
from a model



## Introduction

In the spring semester 2026 we will turn our attention again to 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.

An extended period of time will be dedicated to an extensive survey to understand the physical conditions of each of the settlements. This work will be done individually and in pairs. It 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 second component of the work will involve developing a strategy plan for each of the seven settlements having carefully appraised their future needs. This should consider 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. This could be understood as an alternative regulatory urban plan.

Projects should emerge from readings of place and the needs that are seen to exist. A series of topics or themes are suggested as a way of structuring your work. You should consider the potential to re-use derelict buildings and, where necessary, the addition of new structures and building programmes.

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.

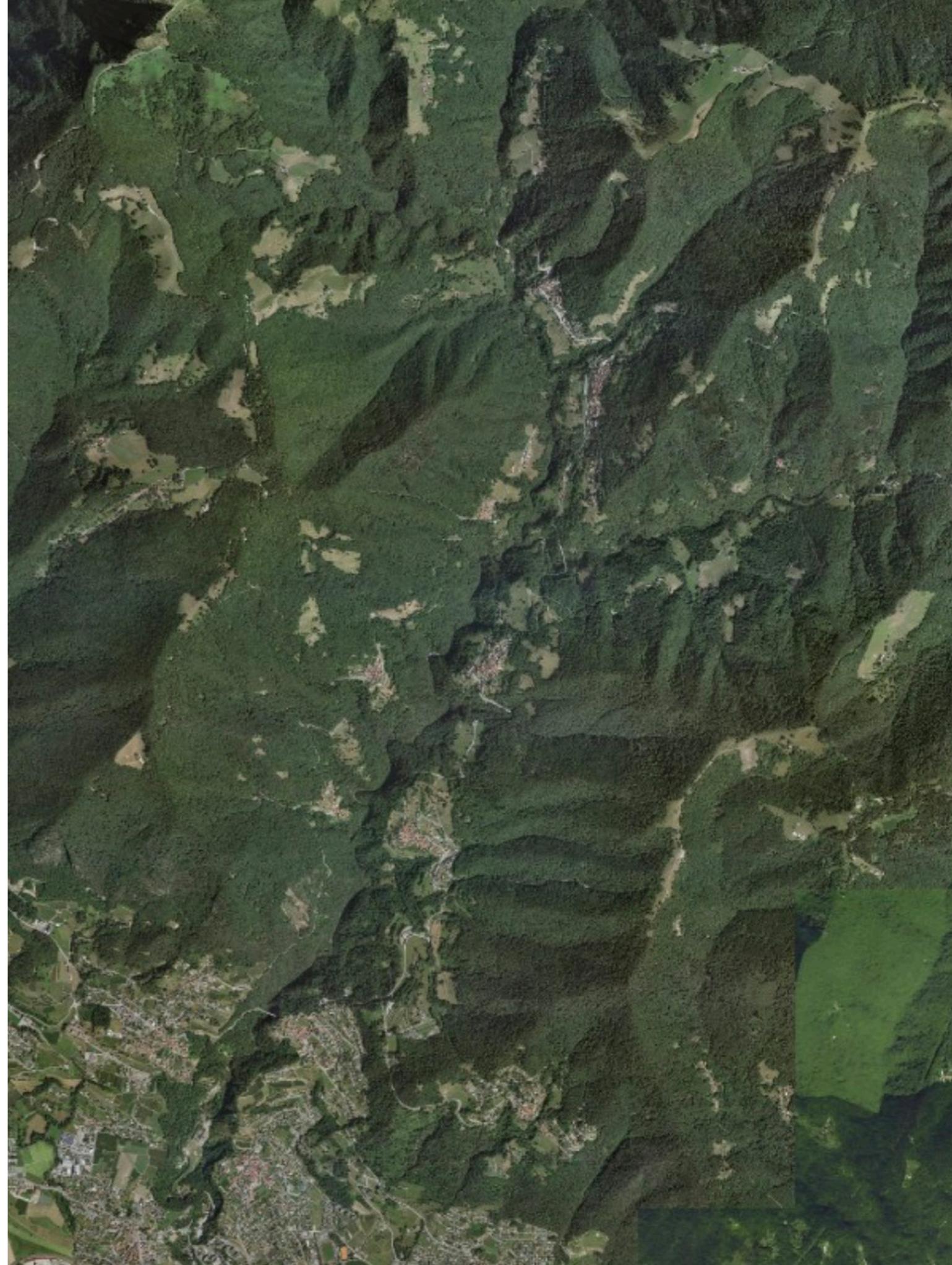
Historically, the harsh physical conditions and relative remoteness have meant that it has always been an economically deprived corner of the country. In the past subsistence farming was the norm, commonly supplemented by cross border smuggling. In recent years many of the terrace structures have fallen 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 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 artists engaged in creative forms of practice who enjoy the affordability of property and the beauty of the surroundings.

Aerial view of Valle di Muggio



In the past settlements have been built according to needs and through a process of addition and in relation to what existed before. Invariably this resulted in a compact form of urban ensemble where the need to ensure that the land surrounding a village would be productive and support a meagre form of subsistence. More recent houses have been built in the land that formerly supported agriculture where a level of autonomy could be established. This works against the older more compact form of settlement, that was inherently more collectivist. Many older houses have become abandoned and have fallen in to disrepair.

Even though more recently this tendency has been reversed the manner in which houses have been restored is often detrimental and poorly realised. There is a need to offer more robust guidance on how this task might be undertaken, especially on the outside of building where the act of restoration is most strongly felt.



1

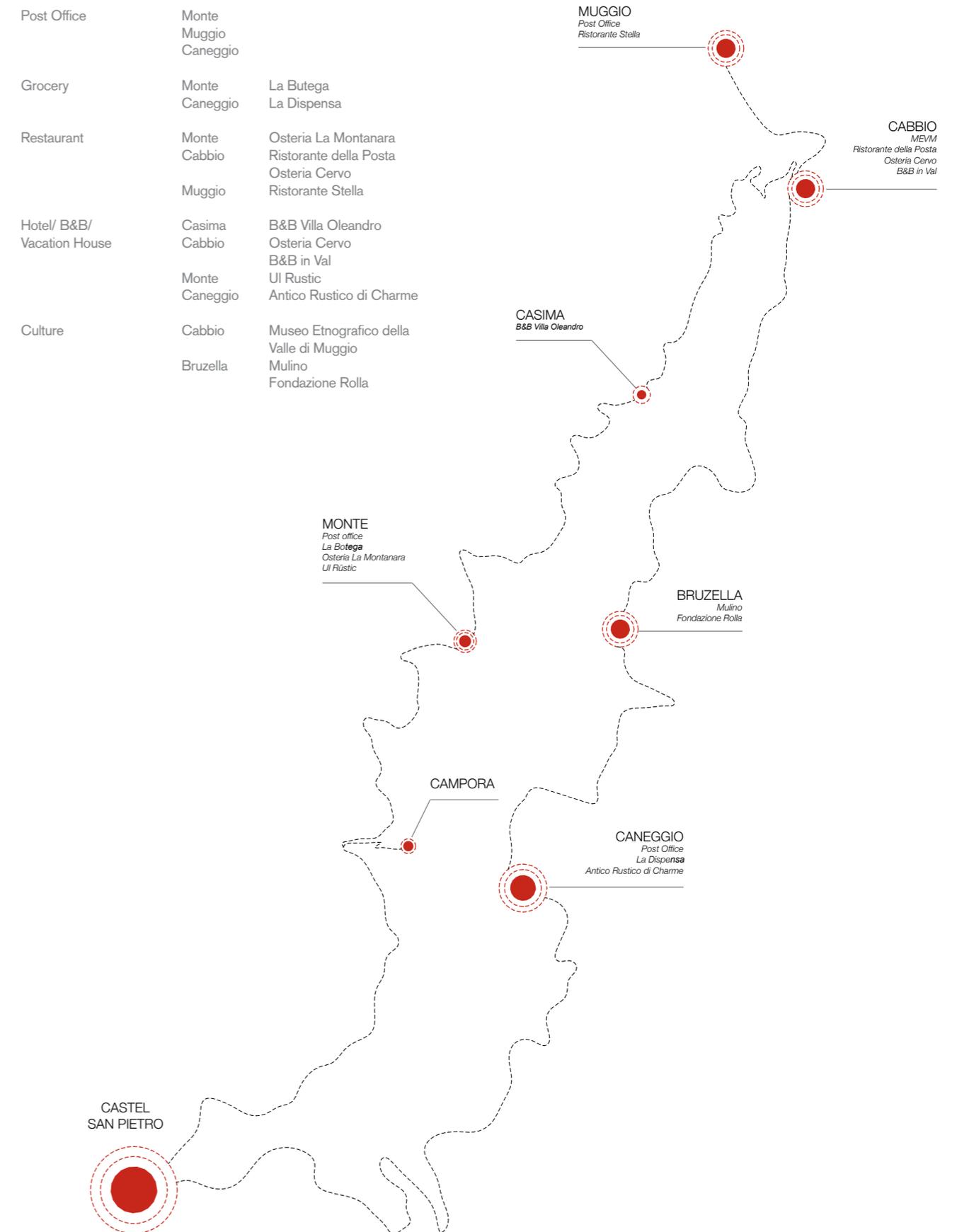
1 - 2  
House,  
Monte Castel San Pietro,  
Switzerland, 2010-2014  
Project by SBa Zurich  
Photographs by H el ene Binet



2

Public programme and public amenity

While housing and residential programmes form the largest use of land and buildings, there is a need to offer public facilities. Religious buildings, museums, and social, community uses, retail, leisure and recreational uses exist in a state interdependency. The support for the needs of different communities is limited by the size of the population and limited economic possibilities.



Map of community amenities  
Valle di Muggio  
Spring Semester 2021

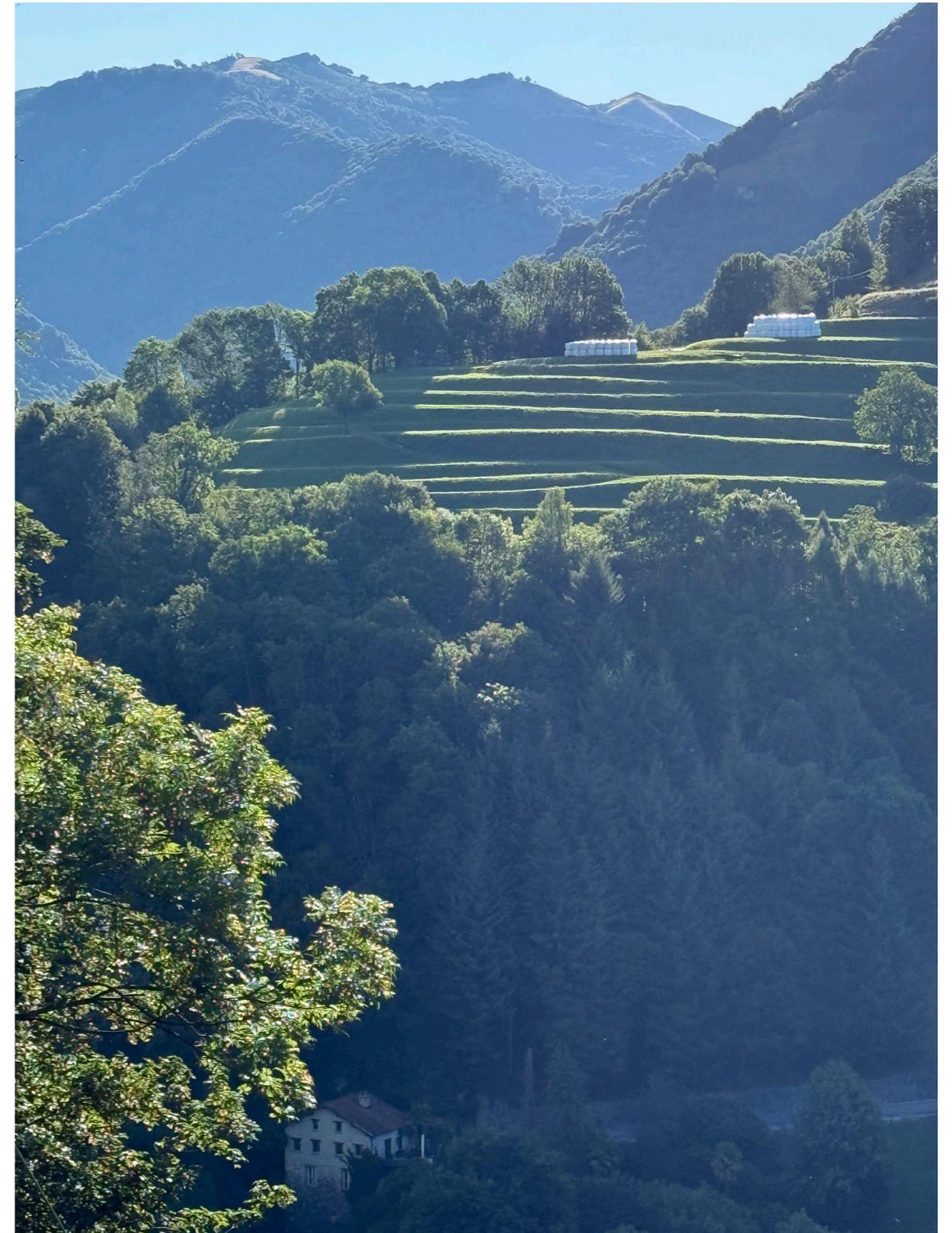
## Landscape

The natural landscape of the Valle di Muggio is exceptional. Laying below Monte Generoso to the north and the border with Italy to the south, the area is characterised by steep topography and extensive wooded hillsides. The Breggia river runs through the valley.

The abundance of trees ensures that the area has a favourable climate but the increase in temperature in the summer but this under stress.

In recent year extreme weather events have caused landslides and illustrate the somewhat fragile state of the landscape.

Valle di Muggio  
Photograph by Jonathan Sergison



## Movement

The south side of the valley has a better road connection and this explains why the villages on this side of the valley grew more than those to the north.

A public transport system exists to the north and south although the service is not that frequent.

Throughout the hillsides an extensive network of pathways and cycles routes exists and these are generally well maintained.

All of the villages have parking areas and while these can be seen negatively, they ensure that the population is able to move freely and gain access to places of employment outside of the valley.

The old path between Campora and Monte, Valle di Mugello  
Photograph by Jonathan Sergison

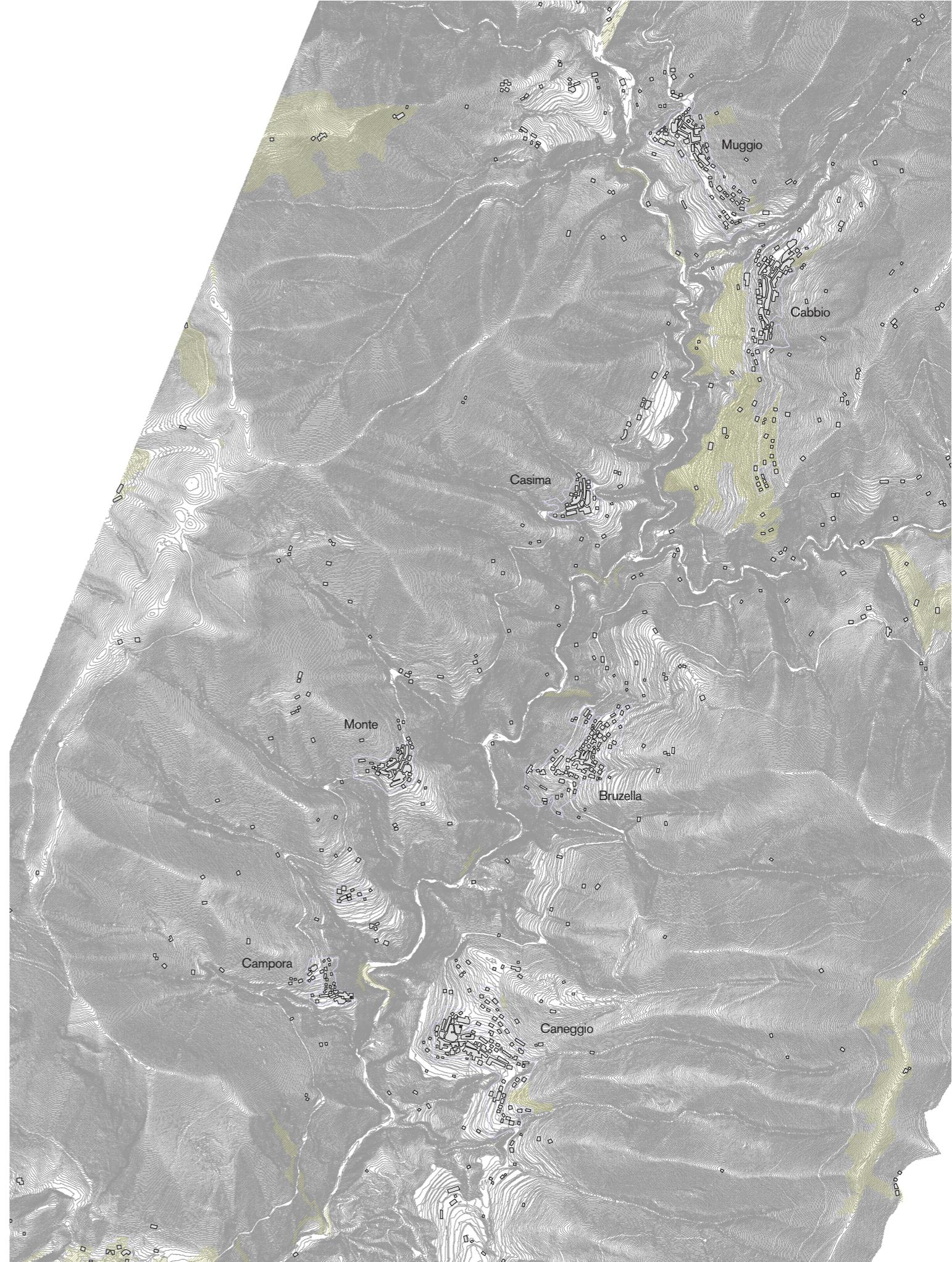




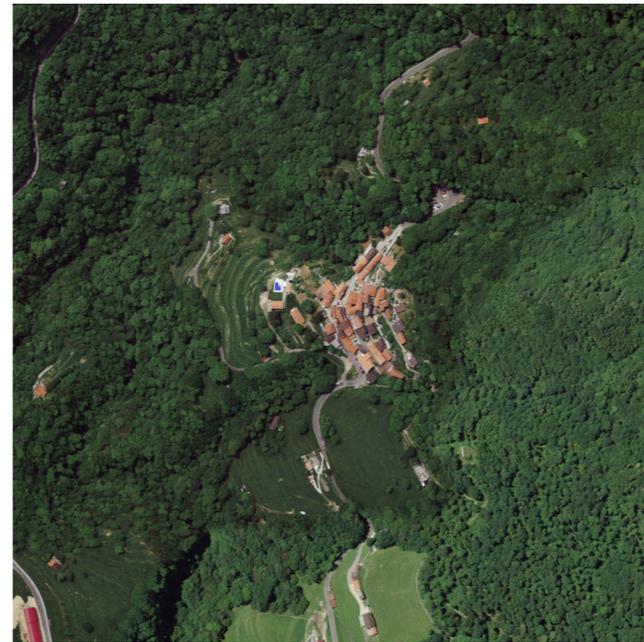
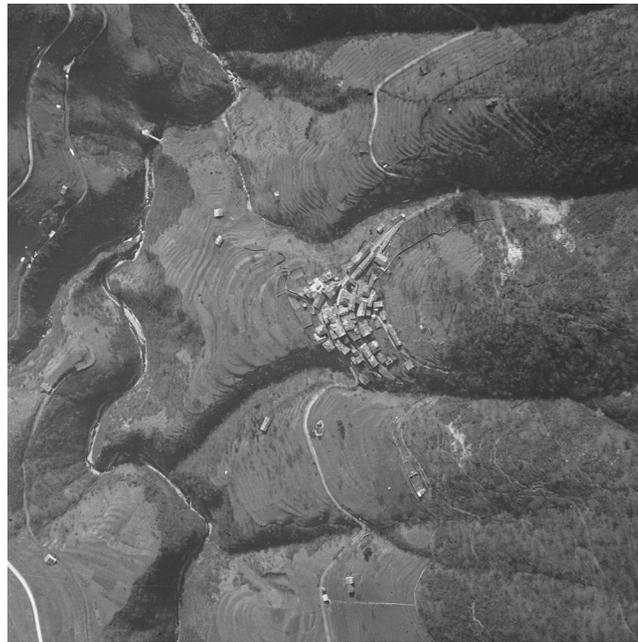
Sites

Project sites

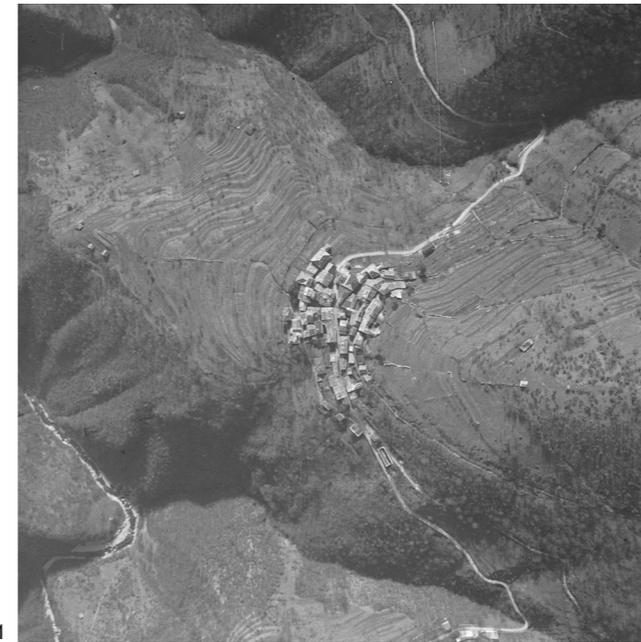
- Casima
- Monte
- Campora
- Muggio
- Cabbio
- Bruzella
- Caneggio



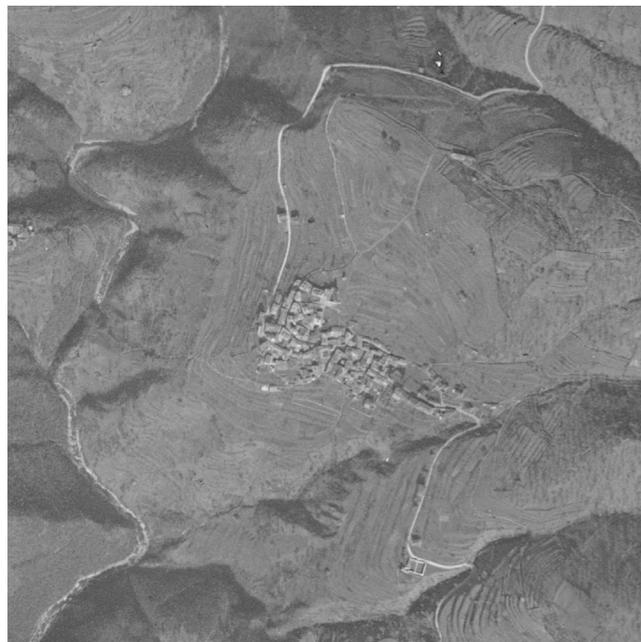
1.5000 Site plan  
Valle di Muggio, Ticino



1  
Casima, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive  
  
2  
Casima, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive



1  
Monte, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive  
  
2  
Monte, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive



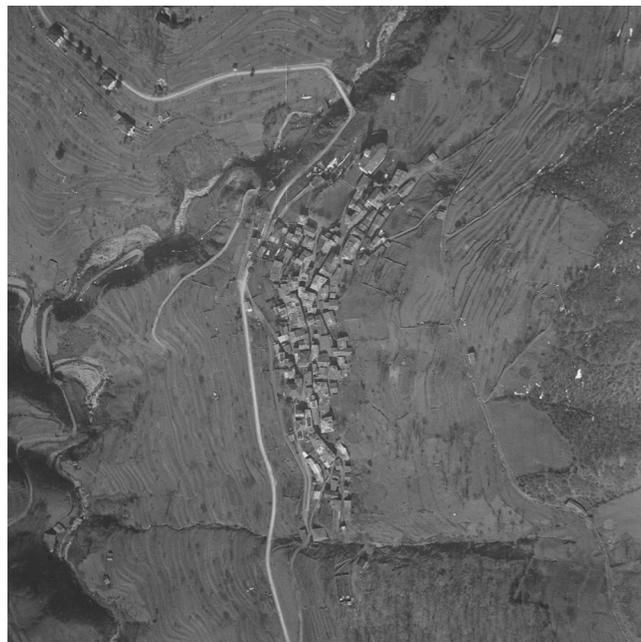
1  
Campora, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive

2  
Campora, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive



1  
Muggio, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive

2  
Muggio, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive

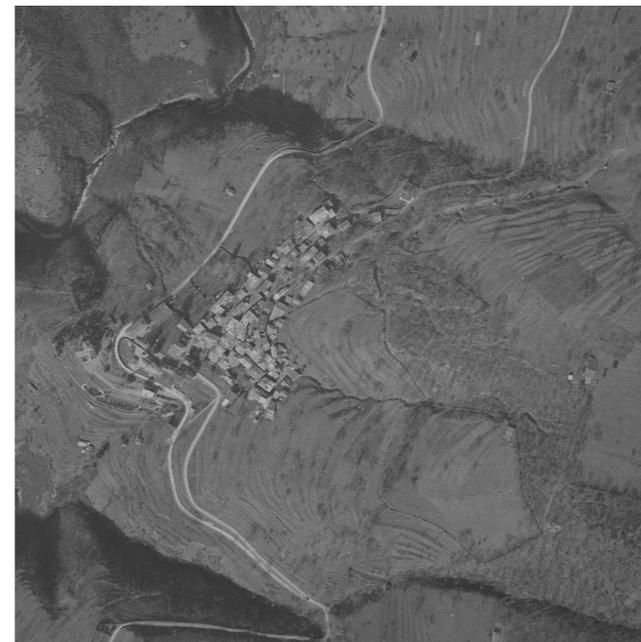


1



2

1  
Cabbio, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive  
2  
Cabbio, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive

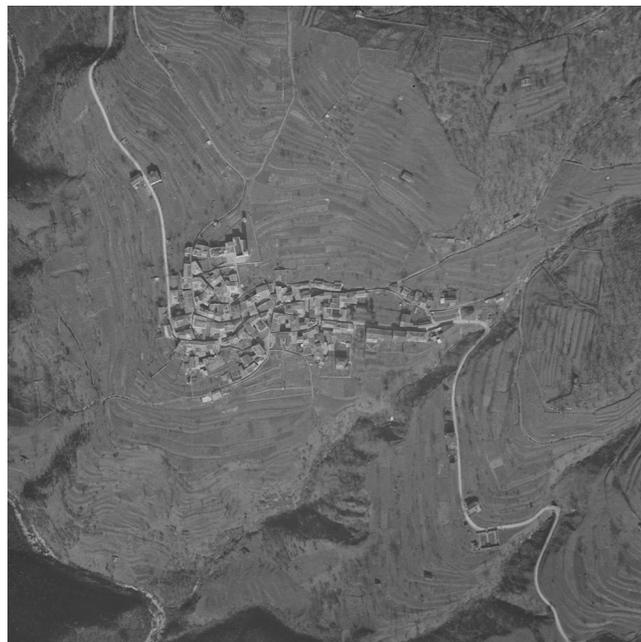


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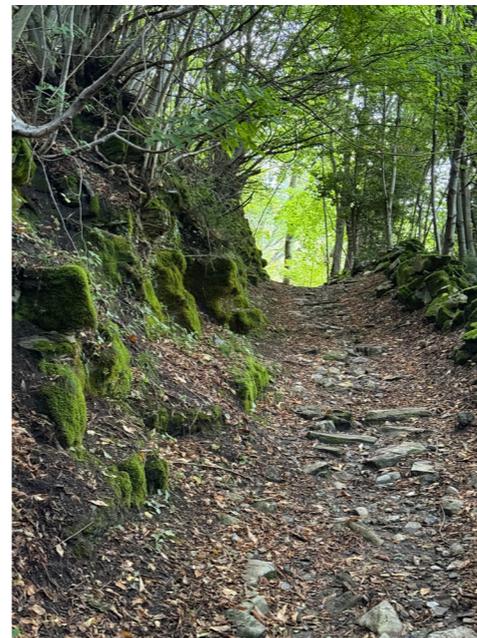
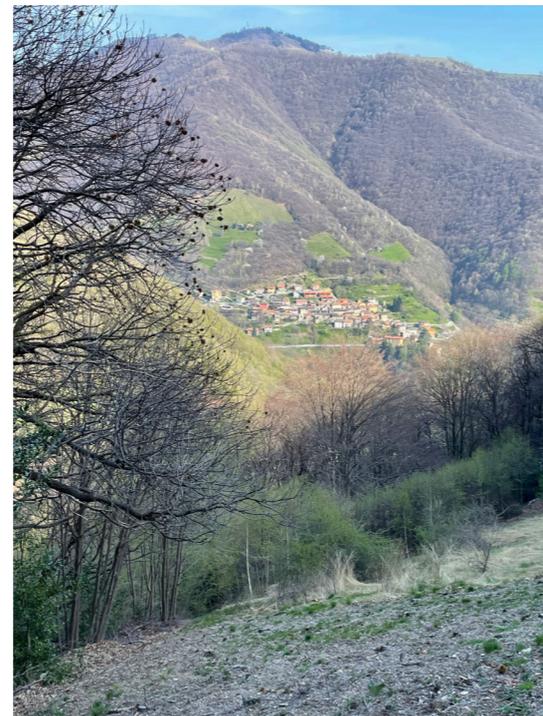
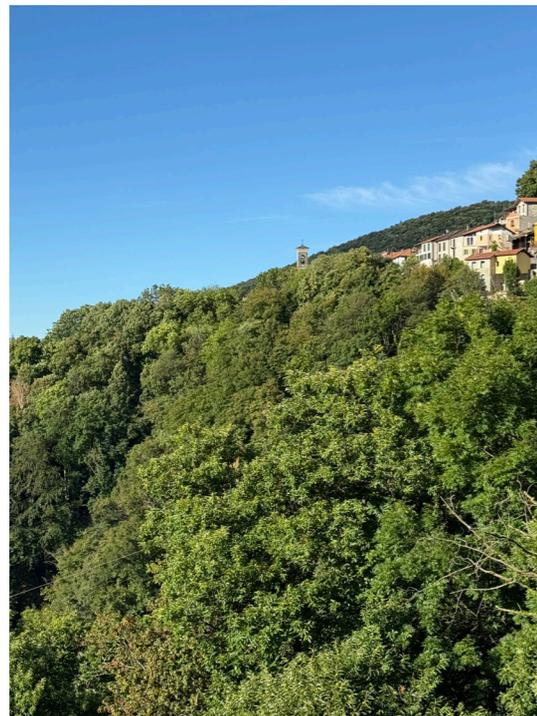
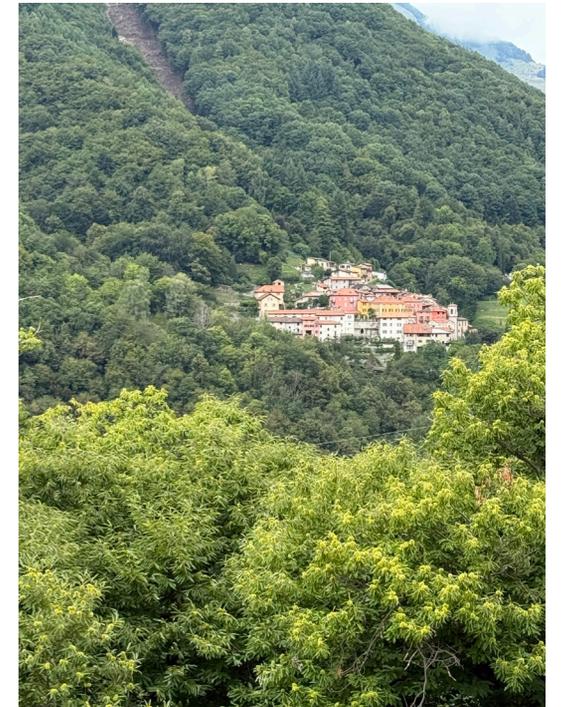
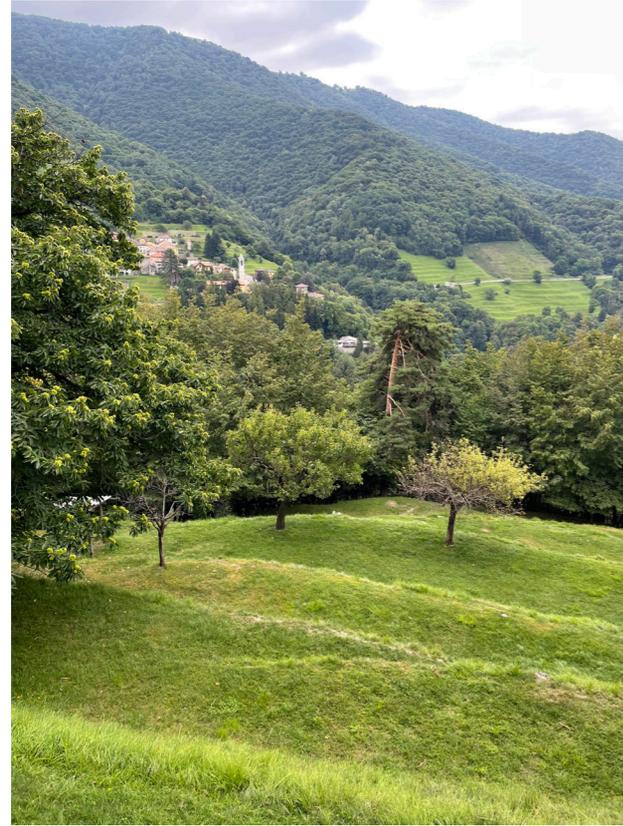
2

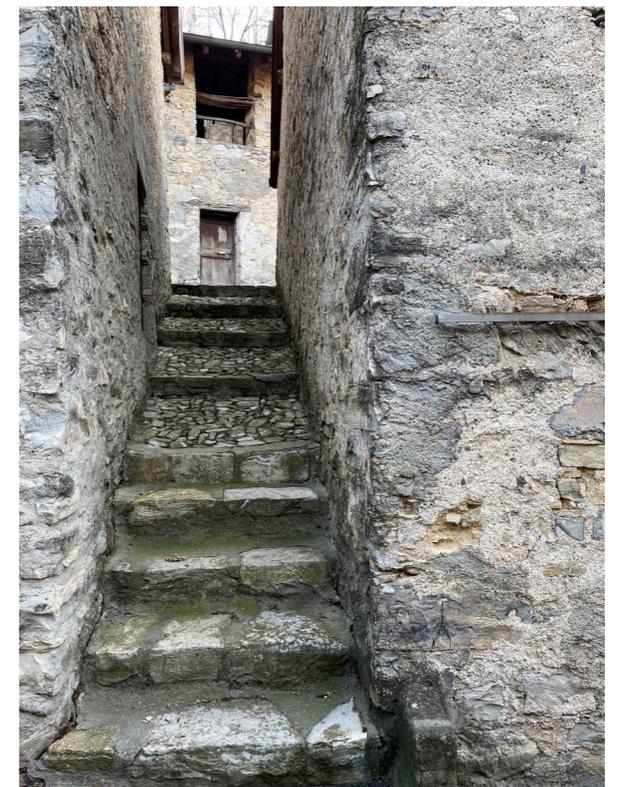
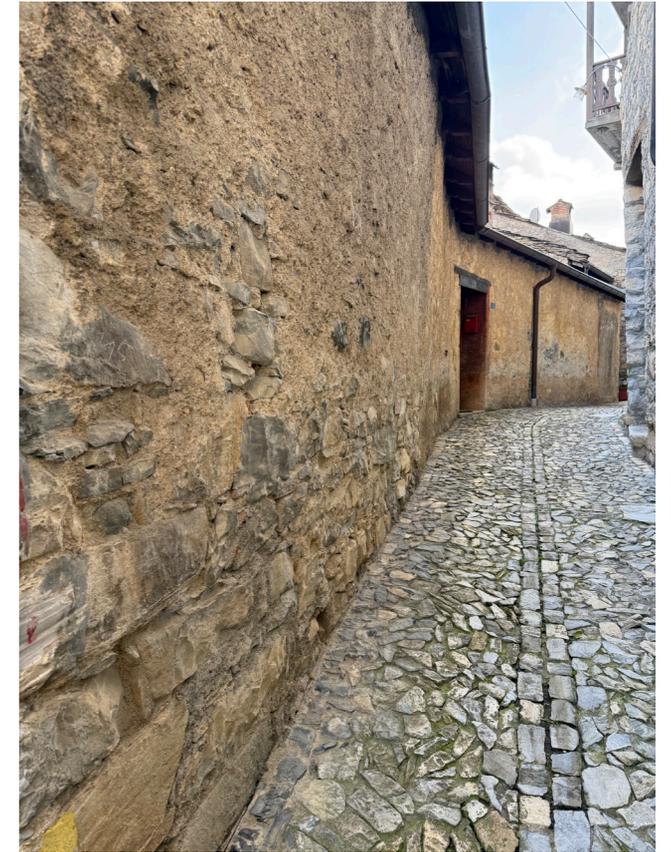
1  
Bruzella, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive  
2  
Bruzella, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive



1  
Caneggio, 1933  
from the swisstopo archive

2  
Caneggio, 2015  
from the swisstopo archive





To help you understand better the task you are attending to this semester, we would like you to make a survey of one the seven principal settlements in the Valle di Muggio. This 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 work through drawings that are to scale in plan, section and elevation. Photography and film can support this task. 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.

In this studio we hold the position that invention is a necessary ambition in architecture, but it rarely emerges by spontaneous intuition. In general, architects only develop truly unique proposals after many years of study and reflection. It is questionable if true originality can in fact be achieved, in view of the wealth of examples the history of world architecture offers. To help you understand the task that you will be attending to this semester we would like you to undertake a survey at the scale of the village. This will ensure a clearer understanding of what you are engaging with and help design a building that is suited to its purpose.

You will work on your own or in pairs to investigate key themes, including history, the relationship between bound and unbound surfaces, the public realm and its spaces, housing as a typology, embodied energy, public-use buildings, and the wider urban territory.

These surveys will serve as a critical foundation for your work throughout the semester, shaping your understanding of the site and informing the role your project may ultimately play within the city.



Survey of  
Piazzetta, Campora  
Beatrice Zago, Francesco Tudino  
Spring Semester 2021



Survey of  
Ground floor spaces, Muggio  
Giada Walzer, Estelle Gagliardi  
Elsa Labouré, Alex Farina  
Spring Semester 2021

The second 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 plans at a appropriate scales.

This should encompass a wider area of the village in which your work is situated. We ask you to begin by exploring a range of solutions that would allow the site you are studying to be developed to a reasonably high density with a suitable urban morphology, while giving priority to re-use.

Each study or option you propose should be recorded photographically and then critically appraised to test the density it yields. This, in turn, should be further developed, refined or discarded as appropriate, and should be understood as an iterative process that will help you develop the idea for the project you will be working on throughout the semester.

We would encourage you to take advantage of the closeness of the site to our school and revisit the place you are working in to check the proposals in relation to the existing place.



Strategy plan for Bruzella  
Giulia Mauri, Pietro Falchi  
Martina Bertani, Sophie Agne  
Spring Semester 2021

The results of previous studies should now 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 in relation to the wider context. The principal tool we ask you to use is a 1:200 study or sketch model, which should include an appropriate portion of the urban context.

This is really the start of the piece of work you will be producing this semester. We are interested in the qualities of the buildings you design and how 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 key element, we expect you to develop study plans, elevations, sections, and sketches of your project. At this stage of the semester you should already have a rudimentary understanding of your project in plan and section, and we now ask you to develop and test your ideas for building's facades within the framework of the strategy you have developed. The facades of your building(s) should be drawn as unwrapped elevations at scale 1:100 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 intend to approach the arrangement of window openings? How does the building meet the ground, and how is the top of the building resolved? These are some of the many questions you should be asking yourself about the facade of your building.



Diploma 2025  
In Between the Existing  
A spatial and social connection  
Jens Ugelstad

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

The facades of your building(s) should be drawn as unwrapped elevations at scale 1:100 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 intend to approach the arrangement of window openings? How does the building meet the ground, and how is the top of the building resolved? These are some of the many questions you should be asking yourself about the facade of your building.



Spring Semester 2021  
Giusy La Licata

## Images

The next exercise requires you to produce at least 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 presence and atmosphere of your building. One of the images should depict the exterior and its relationship with the existing urban fabric, and the site of the project within the city and its immediate context. The second image should represent the interior and its qualities as a partly public, partly private space.

Spring Semester 2021  
Daniele Boschesi



## Final review

As a convincing set of ideas for your building(s) emerge you will need to produce a set of drawings of some of the facades and sections of the building, all at scale 1:100. You should also develop plans for the project at 1:200, 1:100, and at a larger scale where appropriate.

A landscape plan should be produced at a scale of 1:500 or 1:200 indicating an approach to landscaping and to the public realm in general.

The main piece of work to be completed is a final model at a suitably ambitious scale. You should choose the material for this model carefully – it should feel special.

You will also be expected to submit two 'atmospheric' perspectives of the final version of your 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, to explain the development of your work and the strategy you propose.



Final reviews  
Spring Semester 2025  
Studio Sergison

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
06 February	Diploma briefing in Monte Site visit in Valle di Muggio	Diploma introduction with Jonathan Sergison (JS)	Survey
12 February	Diploma seminar in Bellinzona	Castel Grande, sala Arsenale	
13 February	Independent work	Survey	Survey drawings
20 February	Review	Review of survey	1:200 model studies 1:500 plans Survey drawings
26 February	Exhibition visit in Zurich	Vernissage of the exhibition 'A Plan for Zurich' at 18.00	
27 February	Tutorials	Review of urban studies	1:200 site model 1:200 plans and sections
06 March	Tutorials	Review of urban studies	1:200 site model 1:200 plans and sections
13 March	Tutorials	Plan studies Elevation studies	1:200 site model 1:200 plans and sections Interior/exterior perspectives
20 March	Tutorials	Preview of all work	1:200 site model 1:200 plans and sections Interior/exterior perspectives
27 March	Intermediate reviews	Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics Review of strategy plan	A separate note to be issued
03 April	Tutorials	Revisions to project	1:200 plans Study models
10 April	Easter holidays		

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
17 April	Tutorials	Plan studies Elevation studies	Plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
24 April	Review	Review plans	Plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
01 May	Tutorials	Plan studies Elevation studies	Plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
08 May	Tutorials	Review elevations	Plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
15 May	Tutorials	Plan studies Elevation studies Images	Plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
22 May	Review	Review of projects	Start final models
29 May	Tutorials	Discussion of final model	Project revisions
05 June	Final Reviews	Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics	1:1000 / 1:500 / 1:200 site models Final models (scale to be agreed) 1:100 / 1:200 ground floor plan 1:100 / 1:200 typical plan 1:100 / 1:200 elevations and sections Interior/exterior perspectives Digital presentation

Drawing list and production is offered as a suggestion rather than a mandatory requirement. Individual students should always consider the drawings necessary to explain their project.

## Contacts

### Professor

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