

**BASEL**

Studio Sergison  
Diploma 2024

Basel. City Between Research, Industry and Culture



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Aerial view of Basel



## Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to work in this important Swiss city. Basel has rich urban qualities and a strong cultural and industrial heritage due to its unique geographical setting, on the borders of France and Germany, on the banks of the river Rhine, a major artery for waterway traffic that runs through Western Europe, from the Alps to the North Sea.

We will be working on a site to the south of the main railway station in the Gundeldingen neighbourhood, adjacent to the central street that runs through it. We will explore several themes relating to the overall ambition of the Diploma. Priority will be given to housing and workplaces, and we will explore specific aspects of these, such as perimeter blocks, live/work spaces, ground floor uses, shared amenities, green spaces and existing structures. The Diploma brief produced by the Diploma Director offers extensive reference material in this respect.

## The site

The site we will be working on lies to the south of the main railway station in Gundeldingen, a neighbourhood that is well structured both physically and socially.

As in professional practice, we did not choose the site, but were allocated it. Architects rarely choose the place in which they work and are generally given a site and a programme and have to make sense of existing conditions and formulate an architectural proposal that responds to chance and circumstance. In keeping with this, students will be allocated, rather than invited to choose the sites they will work on. We will subdivide the area of study into a set of smaller sites that include various urban blocks, and students will identify projects within them, at first as an urban strategy for the whole area, and later as more detailed project proposals.

Priority will be given to housing and workplace uses, which are considered the most necessary programmes for the city of Basel.

Location plan of  
the area under investigation



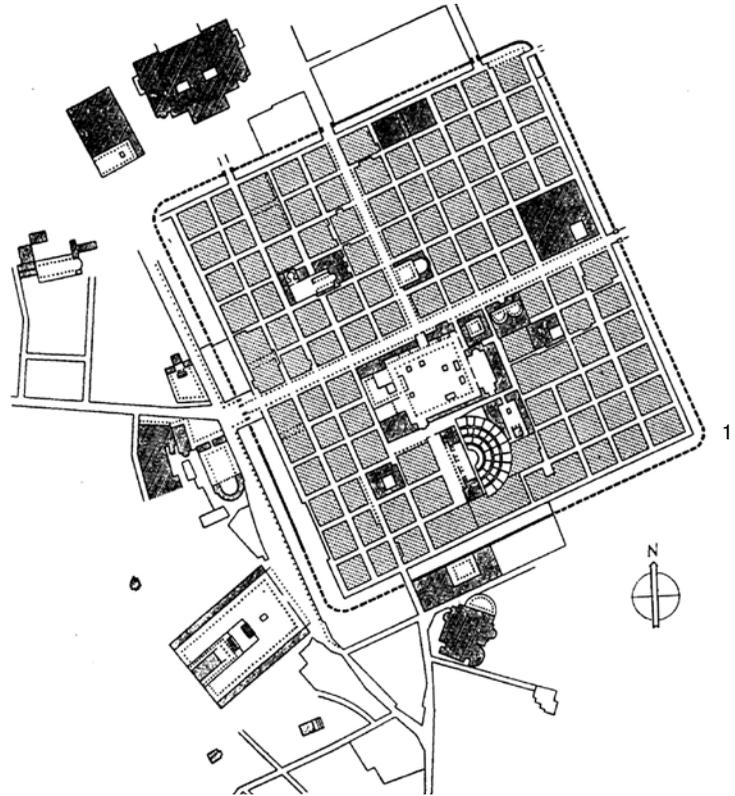






## The street

The area of the city of Basel we have been allocated is structured by a mostly orthogonal street grid, with Güterstrasse as the main axis. We will consider the street as an urban element that ensures movement, but also, more broadly, the public life of the city.



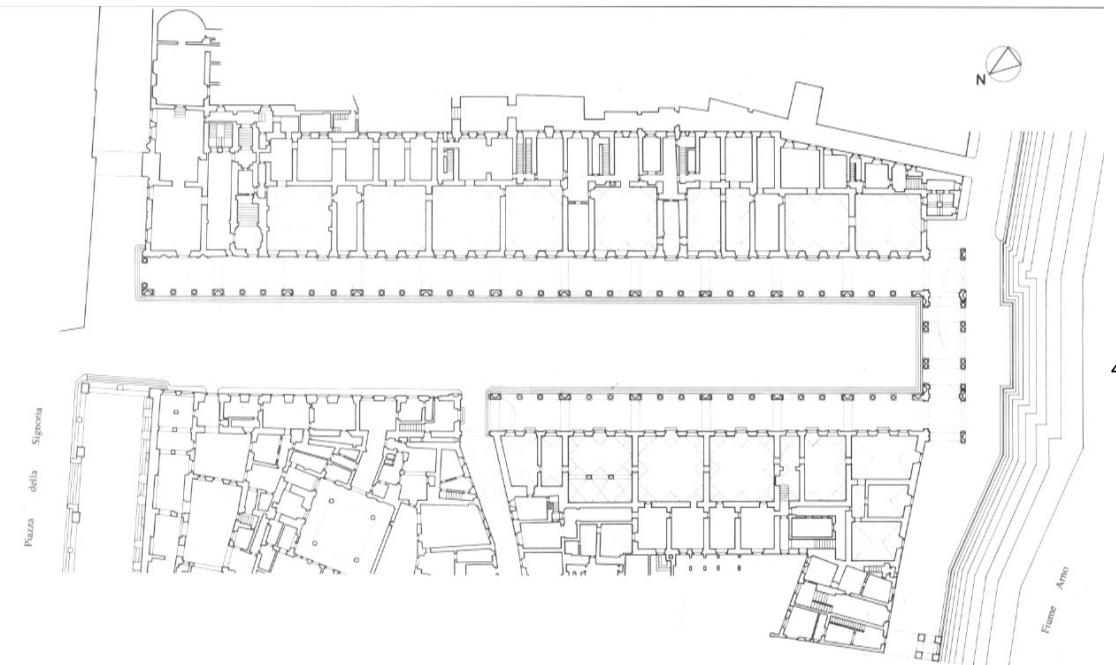
1  
Roman colonial gridiron town  
Timgad, Algeria  
during Roman Empire  
under Trajan, 100 AD

2  
Uffizi Gallery  
Florence, Italy  
Giorgio Vasari, 1565

3  
Plan of the Uffizi Gallery  
Florence, Italy  
Giorgio Vasari, 1565



3



4



1



4



2



3

1  
Satellite view of the  
Baixa  
Lisbon, Portugal

2, 3  
Street views of the  
Baixa  
Lisbon, Portugal



5



6

4  
Satellite view  
Sestri Ponente  
Genoa, Italy

5  
Via Garibaldi, Genoa  
Alfred Noack, 1850

6  
Stada Nuova, Genoa  
Antonio Giolf, 1769

## The perimeter block

The perimeter block with an inner courtyard has been adopted as part of the urban morphology throughout Europe.

The area we will work in is an example of how the urban logic of this housing type developed historically and was adjusted and added to over time. Students will be encouraged to survey several perimeter blocks and investigate how these can be adjusted to increase density without compromising their inherent qualities.



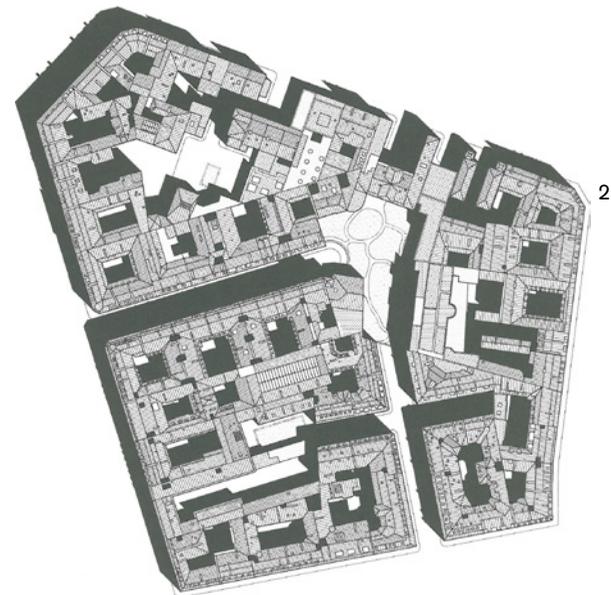
1  
Cité de Trévisse  
Paris, France

2  
Rue de Madrid  
Paris, France



1

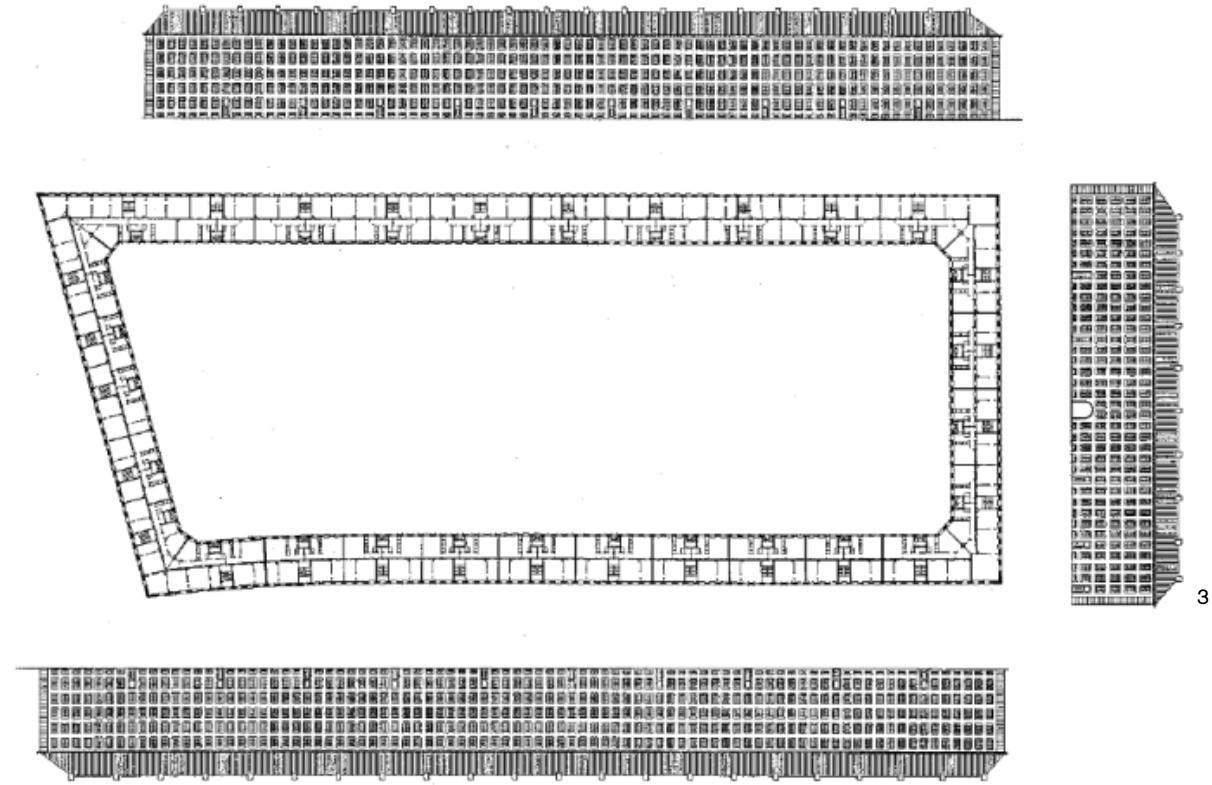
1  
Rue Simart and  
Rue Eugène Sue  
Paris, France



2

2  
Rue de Clichy 41-53  
Paris, France

3, 4  
Hornbaekhus  
Copenhagen, Denmark



3



4



1  
Old Church Park  
(Vanha kirkkokuisto)  
Helsinki, Finland



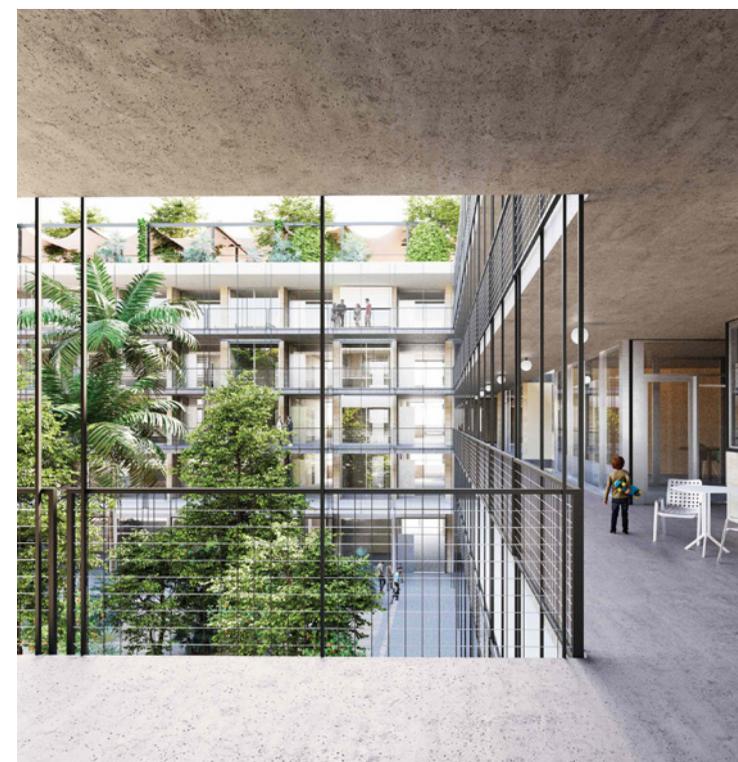
2



3



4

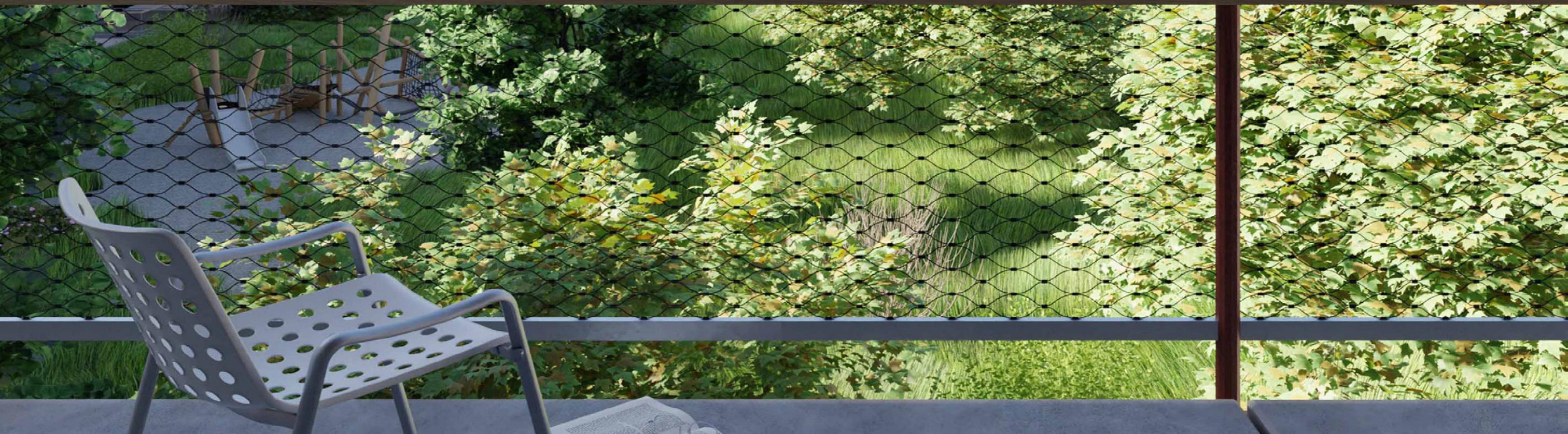


5

4  
Courtyard perspective  
Justin Rellstab

5  
Courtyard perspective  
Henri Baudet

overleaf :  
courtyard perspective  
Lucas Darbellay



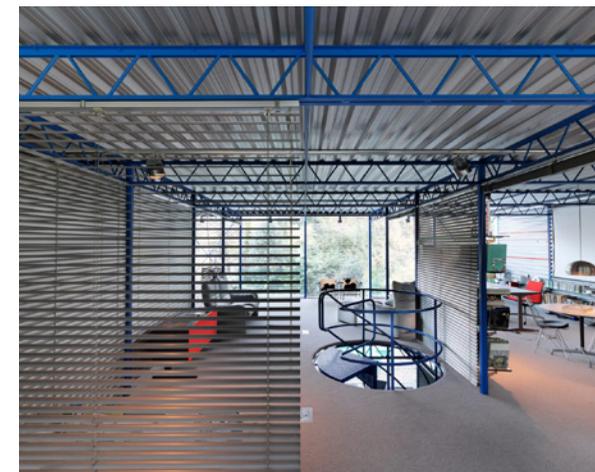
Basel is currently the second densest city in Switzerland after Geneva, and demographic trends indicate that further densification is required within the city's existing territorial limits to accommodate its growing population.

However, a balance needs to be found between providing more homes and increasing places where people can work proposals.

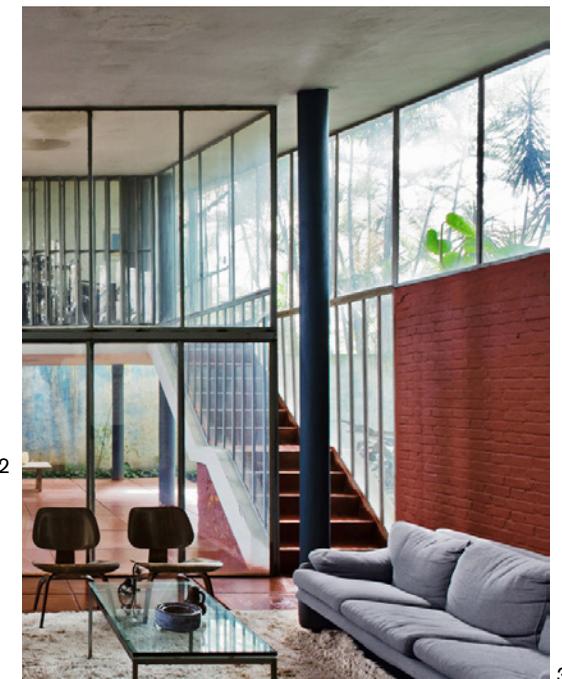
Projects should give equal consideration to residential and work uses.



1



2



3

1  
Student housing  
Zurich, Switzerland  
Atelier Scheidegger Keller

2  
Hopkins house  
London, UK  
Michael and Patty Hopkins

3  
Artigas residence  
São Paulo, Brazil  
Vilanova Artigas

## Ground floor uses

In terms of urban planning, the organisation of ground floor spaces is particularly challenging.

Ground floor spaces should be planned to ensure that they contribute both to the street and to the internal life of a perimeter block. Communal spaces, such as entrance lobbies, bicycle and pram storage, refuse collection and, more generally shared spaces should also be carefully considered.



1

1, 2  
Ground floor uses  
Güterstrasse  
Basel, Switzerland



2



1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
Ground floor uses  
Güterstrasse  
Basel, Switzerland

In addition to the communal spaces within a building — the common parts such as inner courtyards and roof spaces — project should consider shared spaces in the wider urban context: adjacent streets, the organisation of public transport and mobility in general, as well as the spaces in front of and between buildings.



1  
Plan of Idaplatz  
Zurich, Switzerland

2, 3  
Views of Idaplatz  
Zurich, Switzerland

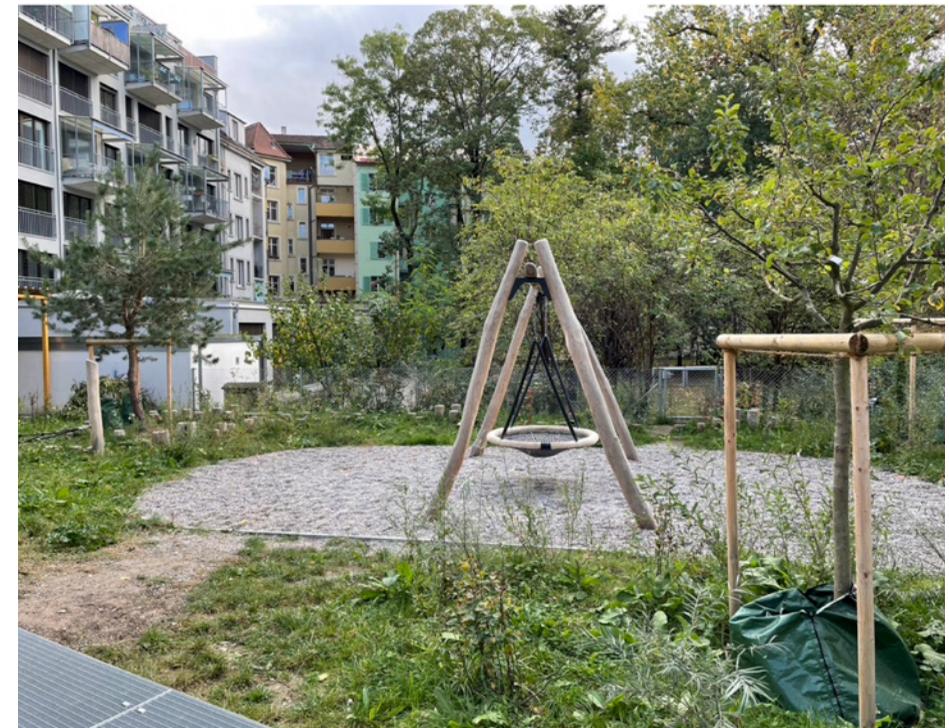


The city of Basel is committed to a process of greening the city as a strategy to combat global warming. However, this conflicts with the need to increase urban density. Projects should suggest realistic proposals to plant more trees and use permeable paving solutions to promote water drainage and minimise flood risk.



1

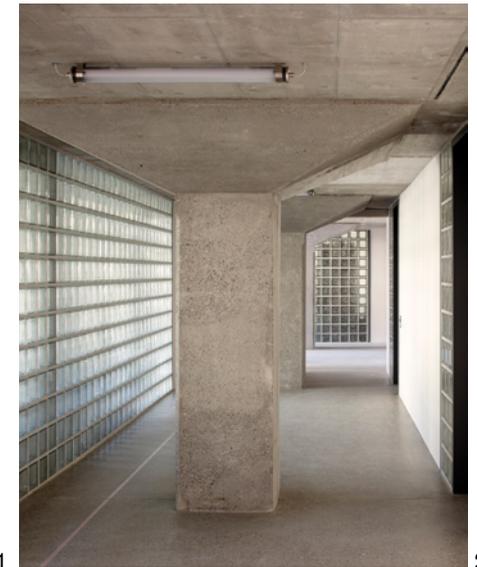
1, 2  
Green areas  
Güterstrasse  
Basel, Switzerland



2

It is commonly suggested that the work of architects today must always be about reuse. The neighbourhood you will be working in is an existing one, with both qualities and shortcomings. We invite you to consider which of the existing buildings can be reused, and to what extent.

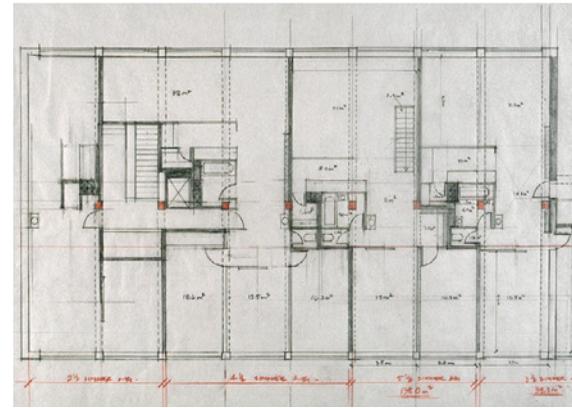
The need for densification cannot be addressed without change, but we need to consider that the embodied energy contained in existing buildings should be preserved. This requires a critical approach, and intelligent, well-reasoned arguments.



1, 2  
Conversion of a wine  
warehouse into a  
residential block  
Basel, Switzerland  
Esch Sintzel Architekten

3  
Conversion of a former warehouse  
into a school and kindergarten  
Basel, Switzerland  
Itten+Brechtbühl





1, 2, 3  
Live / work units in a  
former factory  
Zurich, Switzerland  
Meili Peter, 1997

4, 5  
Apartment building  
on a water reservoir space  
Zurich, Switzerland  
aggs architecture, 2011



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 city, focusing on the immediate neighbourhood your project is located in. This will ensure a clearer understanding of what you are engaging with and help design a building that is suited to its purpose.

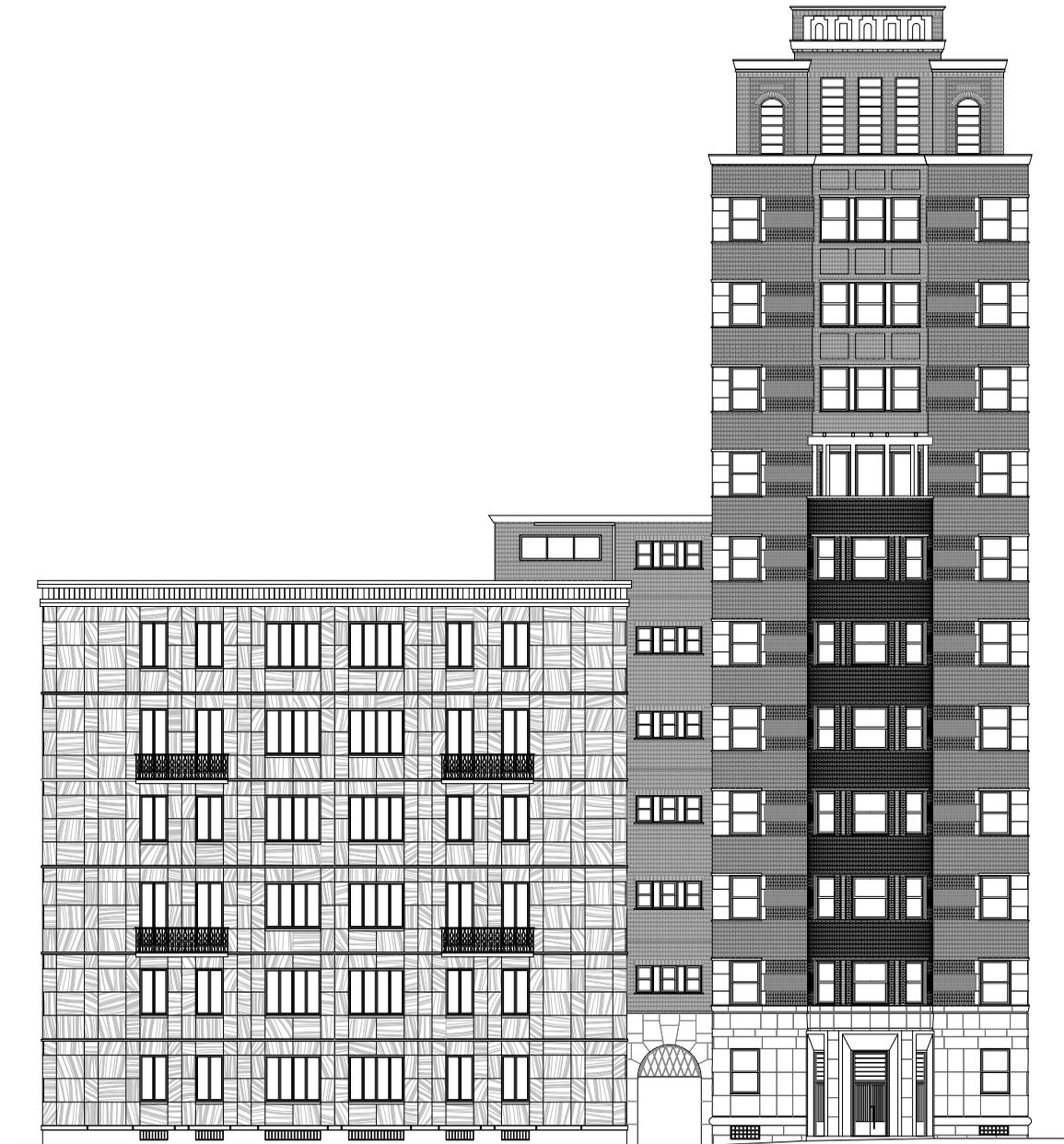
The programme we consider most appropriate for the sites chosen consists predominantly of live / work spaces, although other programmes could be considered, particularly where the project is required to negotiate its relationship to the public realm of the city.

You could consider the organisation of the plan of a building's volumes. You should be able to describe it clearly and analytically, through diagrams where necessary. Alternatively, you might concentrate on understanding the quality and arrangement of a facade drawing on a measured survey of a series of existing elevations. Basel offers many examples you can draw on, if you so choose.

Making a survey will require you to look carefully at buildings, sketch them and take photographs as a way of recording their existing condition.

We also ask you to make a precise photographic portrait that conveys the atmosphere of the building(s) and their location 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.



Rasini tower, Milan  
Gio Ponti, 1934

Bifu Wen

## Strategy plan

The first 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 will be made collectively and will encompass a wider area than the site 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 reuse.

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.

This 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. Our study trip should be used as an opportunity to understand the scale and existing urban structure of the city.

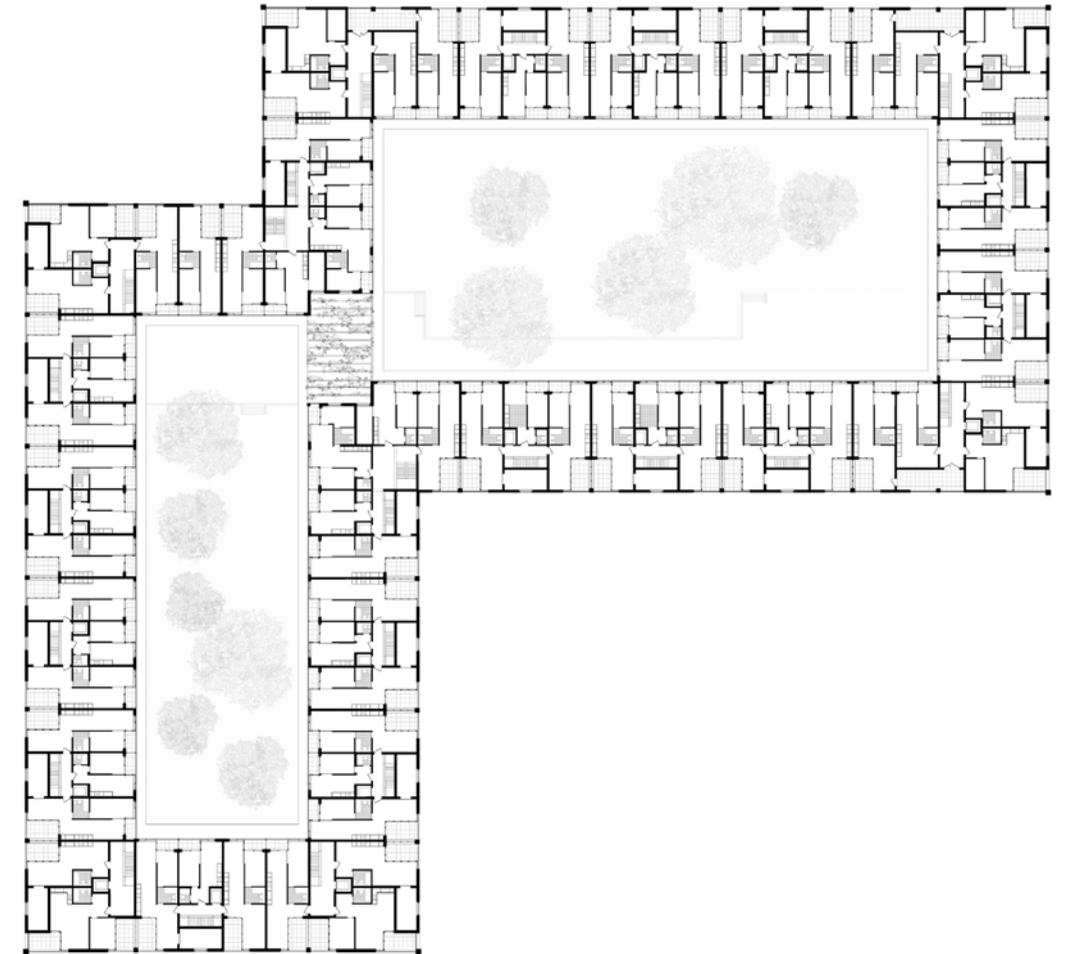


Collegium  
Arévalo, Spain  
Tatiana Bilbao

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. It is also important that you measure the density of your proposal.



Apartment building plan  
Manon Arduino

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.



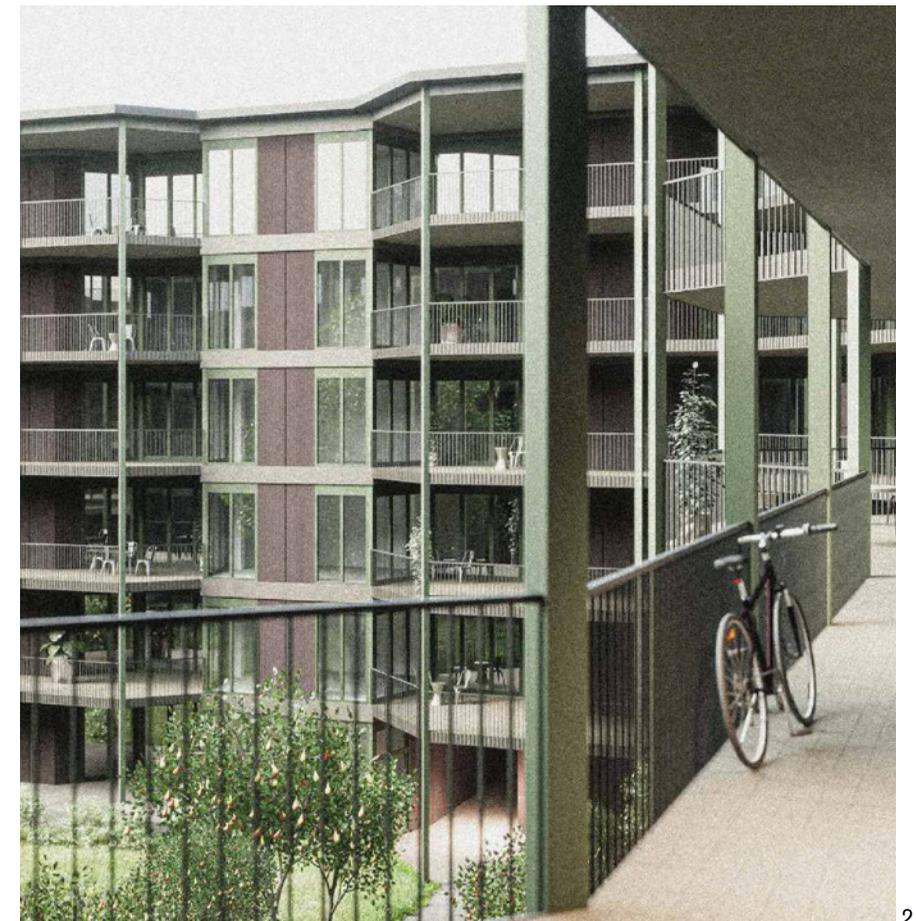
Elevation  
Francesco Caminati

The next exercise 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 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.



1



2

1  
Interior  
Manon Arduino

2  
Courtyard perspective  
Carmen Höhener

overleaf:  
Courtyard perspective  
Grace Boga



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.

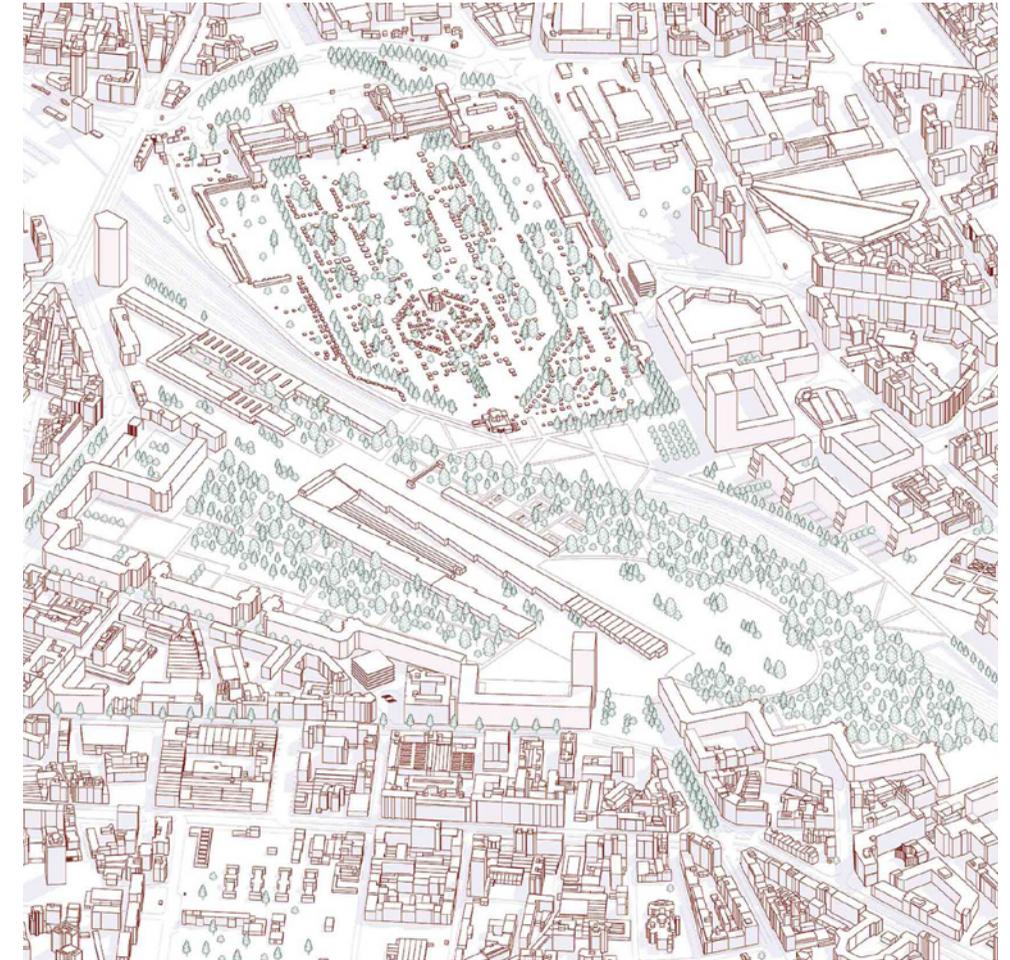
Repetition and variation in apartment plans should also be explored, together with other programmes that might be introduced, especially at ground floor level.

A landscape plan should be produced at a scale of 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.



Axonometric projection  
Justin Rellstab

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
09 January	Studio meeting Site allocation	with Taro Sakurai (TS), Liviu VasIU (LV)	
16 February	Tutorials	Urban studies	1:500 model studies 1:500 plans
23 February	Tutorials	Urban studies	1:500 model studies 1:500 plans
1 March	Tutorials	Review of urban studies	1:500 model studies 1:500 plans
8 March	Tutorials	Review of urban studies	1:500 model studies and plans Perspectives
15 March	Tutorials	Review of urban studies	1:500 / 1:200 site model 1:500 plans and sections Interior/exterior perspectives
22 March	Tutorials	Preview of all work	1:500 / 1:200 site model 1:500 plans and sections Interior/exterior perspectives
29 March	Tutorials	Preview of all work	1:200 plans Study models
5 April	Easter holidays		
12 April	Intermediate reviews	Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics Review of strategy plan	A separate note to be issued
19 April	Tutorials	Review of intermediate critic revisions	1:200 plans Study models
26 April	Review	Plan studies Elevation studies	1:200 plans Study models

Date	Event	Details	Assignments
3 May	Tutorials	Plan studies Elevation studies	plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
10 May	Review	Review elevations	plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
17 May	Tutorials	Elevations	plans, sections and elevations Study models, perspectives
24 May	Review	Review of projects	Start final models
31 May	Tutorials	Discussion of final model	Project revisions
7 June	Final reviews	Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics	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

## Contacts

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