

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?'





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
Bernhard Geiger
Wohnhaus Streulistrasse 17, 1898
Richard Schuster



5



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
Wohnhaud 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

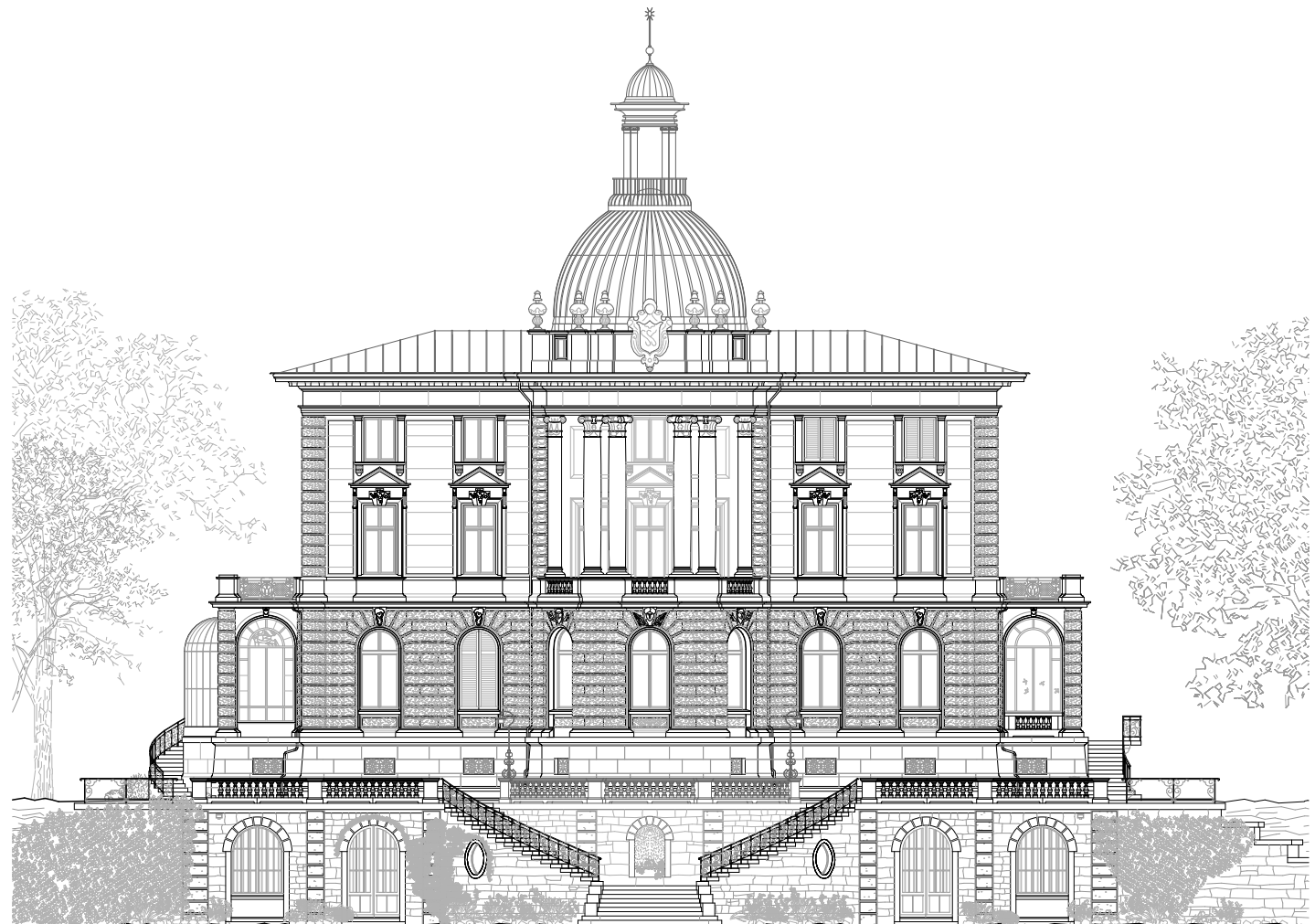


24



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



Valentin Goetze
p24



Francesca Borea p25



Nika Titova p30



Ayse Canci p31



Alexandre Pleisch p26



Benjamin Rea p27



Giovanni Zeli p28



Edoardo Scaravaggi p28



Sandro Embacher p29



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

Credits

Concept: Jonathan Sergison
Editing: Marina Aldrovandi
Graphic concept: Cartlidge
Levene
Graphic design: Jeanne Wellinger

Studio Sergison
Accademia di architettura
Università della Svizzera italiana,
Mendrisio

All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be
reproduced in any form without
permission in writing from the
author.

Copyright © 2019 Studio Studio