# CHIASSO

Studio Sergison
Diploma 2020

Chiasso

Contents


5 Introduction
6 Theme: College for textile studies
8 Chiasso: the context
14 Building precedents
16 Textile machinery
20 Strategy plan
22 Survey
24 Atmosphere/Image
28 Building concept
30 Facade concept
32 Material for final review
34 Programme
36 Contacts


Aerial view of Chiasso



## Introduction

As in all other Diploma projects over the last 12 years, our work in Chiasso will be an urban undertaking. In this instance we will focus on the area that lies to the north of the main railway station. Students are asked to develop strategies for reinforcing the existing urban fabric. These studies will then form the context for the insertion of a new public and institutional building housing a new college for the study of activities related to the textile industry. The specific programme for the building is detailed in the following pages.

While in the past we have tended to explore normative programmes, in this instance the task is to explore a public and architecturally more expressive building. As in the past, the studio encourages a critical approach in a supportive atmosphere of shared endeavour and ambition.

Theme: College for textile studies

We have elected to work in the area that lies to the west of the historical city centre. As is the case with numerous cities in Italy and Ticino, the centro storico is complete, and while it remains important in terms of cultural associations, the task here is to repair rather than rebuild or densify.

We will be working in the area adjacent to the extensive public infrastructure zone visitors encounter entering Switzerland from Italy.

The cultural wealth of a city is partly linked to the quality and character of its shared spaces, how they are structured and the manner in which buildings contribute to their framing. Projects developed on this site must necessarily address this challenge.

In the first instance the task will be to make a careful survey of the existing situation and develop a strategy plan based on it. The scale and ambition of the wider urban plan must be argued on an individual basis, keeping in mind Roger Diener's statement that order can be brought to a situation with the building of a single house.

You will need to argue the case for the kind of urban adjustment and transformation your project advocates, as well as the image and representational character of your proposal. How should a contemporary building serving this programme on this site be arranged? What materials should be employed in its making? How will you address issues of sustainability? In what way do you envisage future transformation and change will occur?

The main task will be to develop in detail a single building proposal which fulfils a public use within your strategy plan. The project should function as a place of learning, and you should carefully consider the different forms this could take.



Plan of the area under investigation




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1
Via Enrico Dunant

2, 4
Chiesa parrocchiale San Vitale martire

3
Piazza Indipendenza

5
Portico, Piazza Indipendenza

6
Corso San Gottardo



1



2



3



4

1
Viale Romeo Manzoni, the northwestern limit of our intervention area

2, 4
View of the area of our study limited by the rail tracks towards South

3
Via Rampa, underpassage from the northen side of Chiasso towards the southern side

5
Via Giuseppe Motta, the eastern limit of our area

6
View of the Via ai Crotti, the southern limit of the city



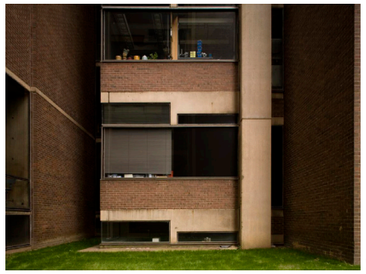
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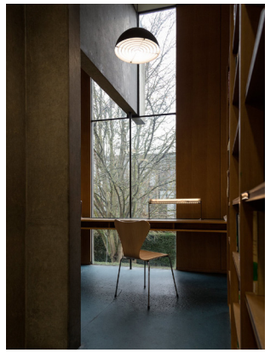


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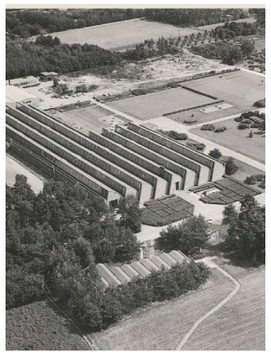



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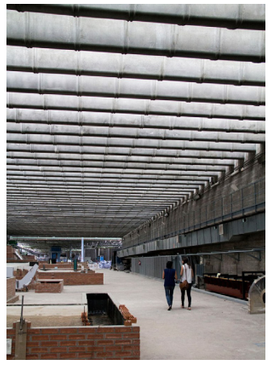

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15

1, 2
Richards Medical Research Labs, Philadelphia
Louis Kahn

3
St Catherine's college, Oxford
Arne Jacobsen

4
Dashanzi Art District, Beijing
x
5
De Ploeg weaving mill, Bergeijk
Gerrit Rietveld

6
Alfred Mame printing works, Tours
Jean Prouvé

7
University of São Paulo FAU-USP
João Vilanova Artigas

8
Smithdon High School, Hunstanton
Alison and Peter Smithson

9
Van Nelle Factory, Rotterdam
Leendert van der Vlugt

10
Gummibandweberei, Gossau
Heinz Hossdorf

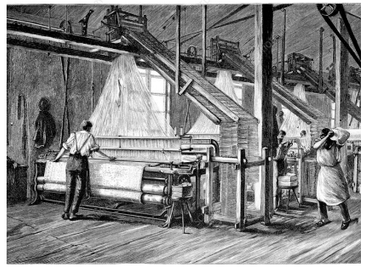
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Hydrographic Studies Center, Madrid
Miguel Fisac

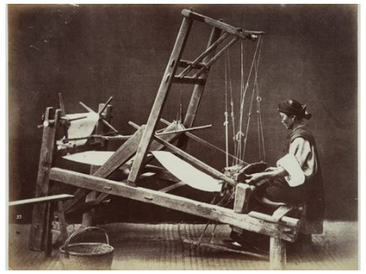
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Dean Clough Mills, Halifax

13
Magazzini Generali, Chiasso
Robert Maillart

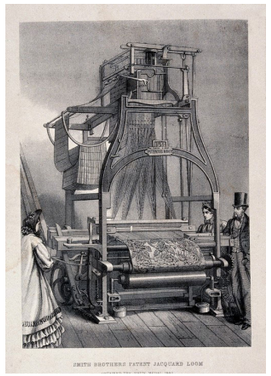
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Trade and Offices, Murcia
Enrique Nieto

15
Ford Assembly Plant, Richmond

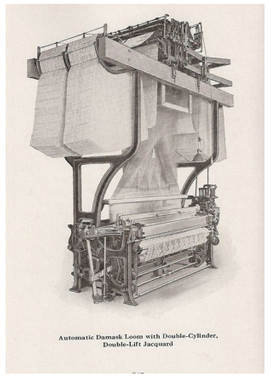

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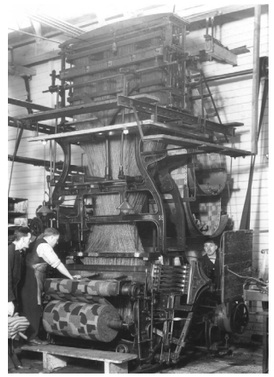

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1
Jacquard power looms,
Unknown Artist, c.1880

2
Woman weaving, 1863
photo: William Saunders

3
Carpet weaving, 1909
Postcard, Beauvais

4
Jacquard loom

5
Automatic damask loom

6
Dobcross Kidderminster Loom
early 1900s

7
A weaving shop, Gaza
early 1900s

8
Hand weaving silk, Japan
photo: T. Enami, c.1897

9
A draw loom recreated by a research team at the Korea National University of Cultural Heritage to weave gold thread into textiles

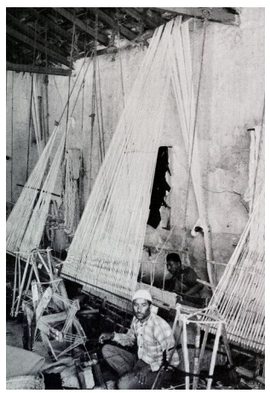
10
Textile Factory (Cotton Spinning)
André Kertész, 1940s

11
Queen Street Mill, Harle Syke,
Burnley, 1894

12
Royal College of Art,
Design Products Studio,
photo: Richard Haughton, 2018

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Polartec Factory, Lawrence
photo: Christopher Payne

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Cabot Hosiery Mills, Northfield
photo: Christopher Payne

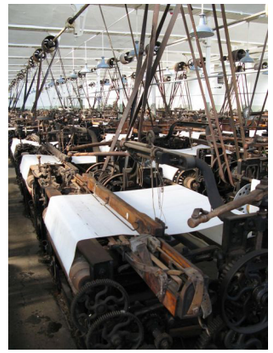

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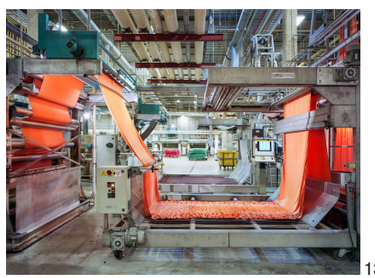

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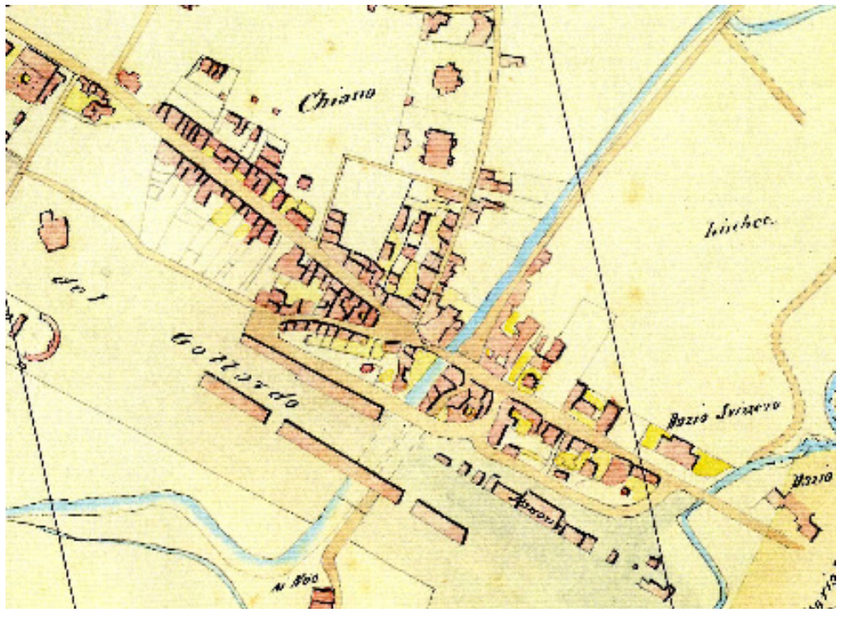
The first component of the work to be undertaken this semester requires you to develop a strategy plan. This can be understood as a typological and massing study. The principal tool to assist you in this exercise will be a 1:500 model. This will be made collectively and should encompass a wider area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

To begin we ask you to explore how the area of study can be adjusted and re-organised as an urban setting. You should explore a number of options and develop a clear argument in support of the solution you decide to propose. This exercise should be understood as an iterative process that will help you to 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.



Collective sketch
Studio Zumthor at Accademia di Architettura




Strategy plan,
Chiasso

In this studio we hold the position that invention is a necessary ambition in architecture, although it rarely emerges by spontaneous intuition. Generally, architects develop truly unique proposals only after many years of study and reflection, and it is questionable whether true originality can actually be achieved, given the wealth of precedents in the history of world architecture.

To help you understand the task that you will be attending to this semester we would like you to undertake a survey. This will be at the scale of the city, focusing on the immediate neighbourhood your project would be adjusting and adding to. This will ensure a clearer understanding of what it is you are being asked to work with, giving you a better chance of making a building that is suited to its purpose.

You should begin to consider where the building programme you have been assigned can be inserted into the urban fabric.

You could look at how the plan of a building is organised, or you could consider a study that looks at elevations rather than at building volumes. You should be able to describe it clearly and analytically, employing diagrams where necessary. Alternatively you might concentrate on understanding the quality and arrangement of a facade drawing upon a measured survey of an existing series of elevations.

This will require you to look carefully at buildings, making sketches and taking photographs as a way of recording their current condition.  We also ask you to make a precise photographic portrait that conveys the atmosphere of the building or buildings and the manner in which they are situated in the city. You could 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.





Martina Marchesi

Villa Bleuler, 1888
Alfred Friedrich Bluntschli

This 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 atmosphere and the presence of your building. One of the images should depict the exterior of the building and its relationship with the existing urban tissue and the site of the project within the city and its immediate context. The other image should represent the interior and its qualities as a partly public, partly private space.



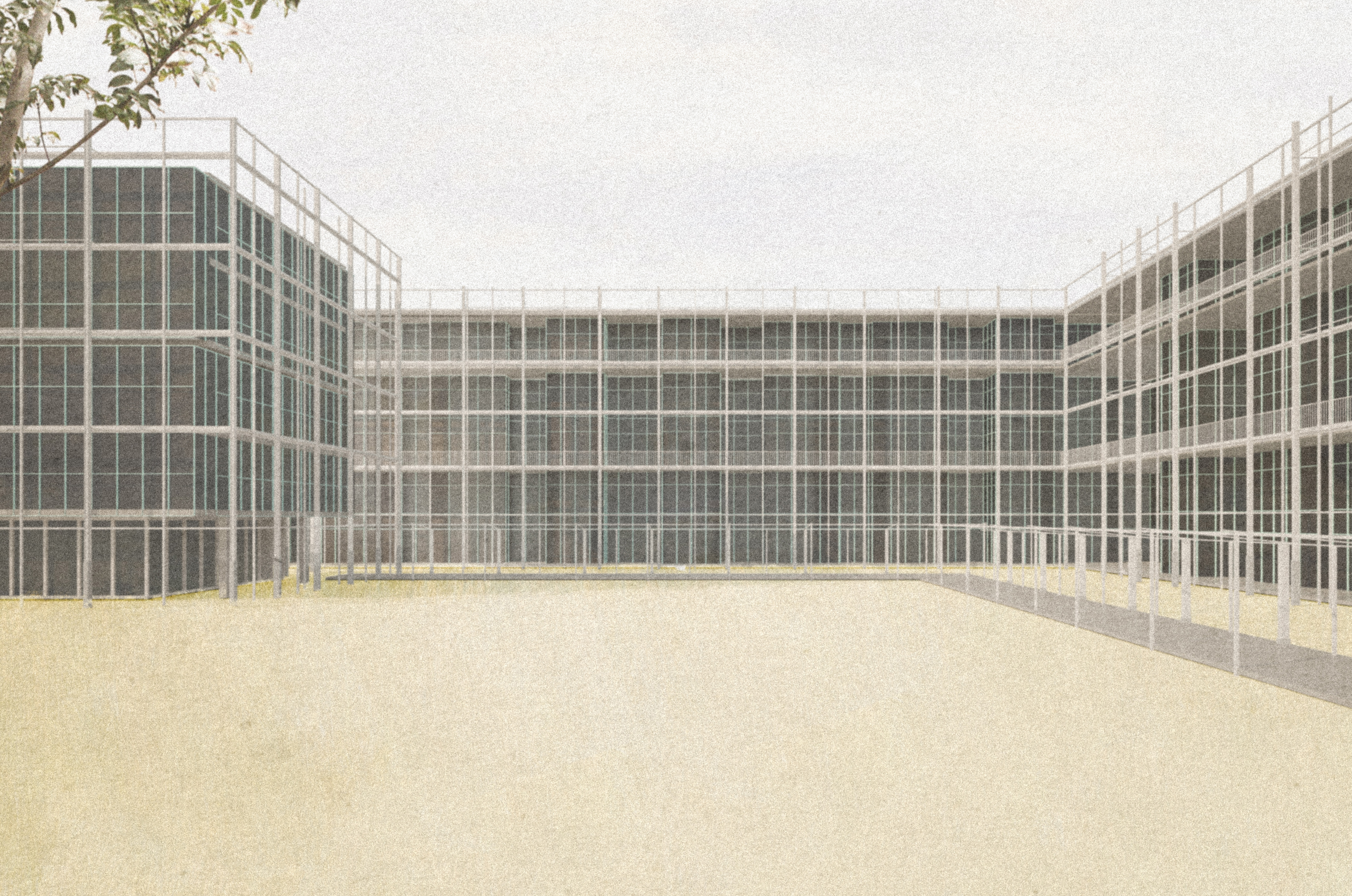
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Interior perspectives
Jack Dalla Santa

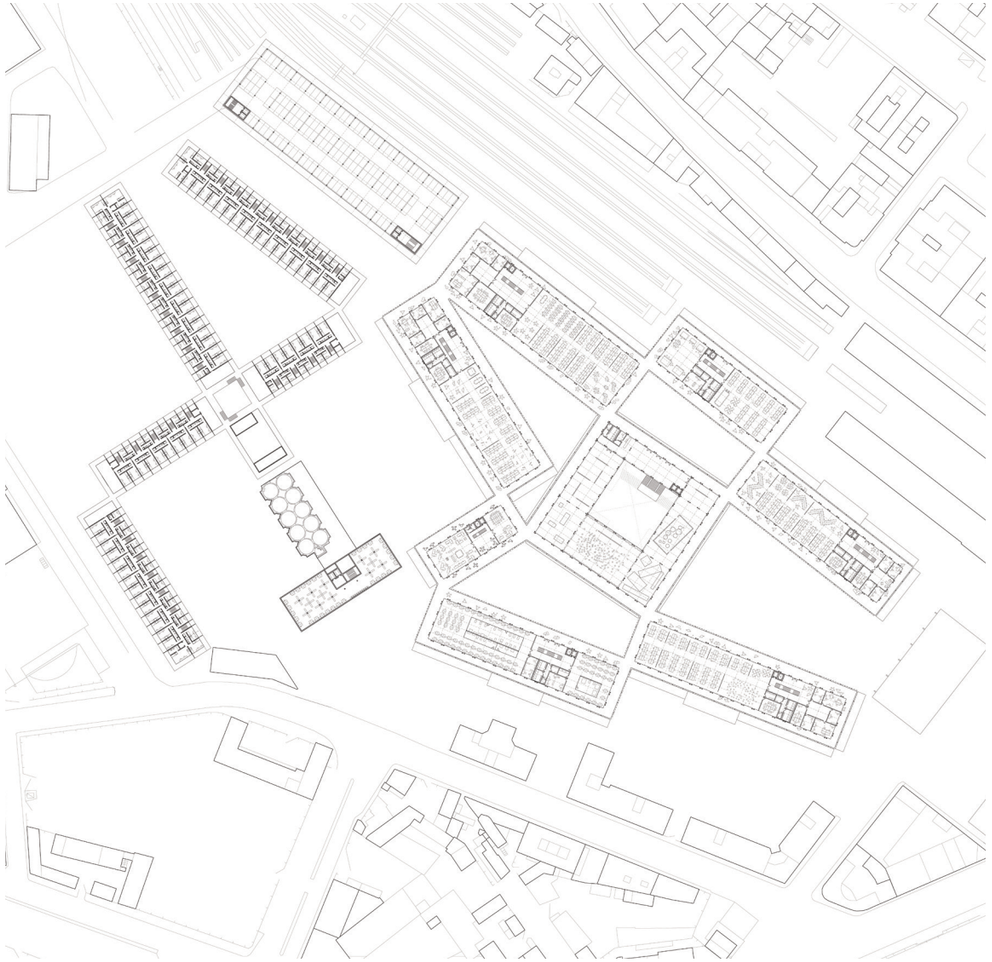
overleaf
Exterior perspective
Hanna Bergh



The result of the 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 and their relationships 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 context. This is really the beginning of the key piece of work you will be producing this semester. We are interested in the qualities of the buildings you design and the way 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 principal piece of work you produce, we expect your project to be developed with study plans, elevations, sections and sketches. At this stage in the semester your work will be subject to an intermediate review.



Campus building plan
James Irving

# Facade concept

At this stage of 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 you have developed.

The facades of your buildings should be drawn at 1:100 as unwrapped elevations 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? 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? These are only a few of the questions you should be asking yourself about the facade of your building.



Elevation
Hai Jie Tan

With the emergence of a convincing set of ideas for your buildings you will need to produce a careful set of drawings of some of the facades you have developed. Additionally a number of sections should be produced, all at scale 1:100:

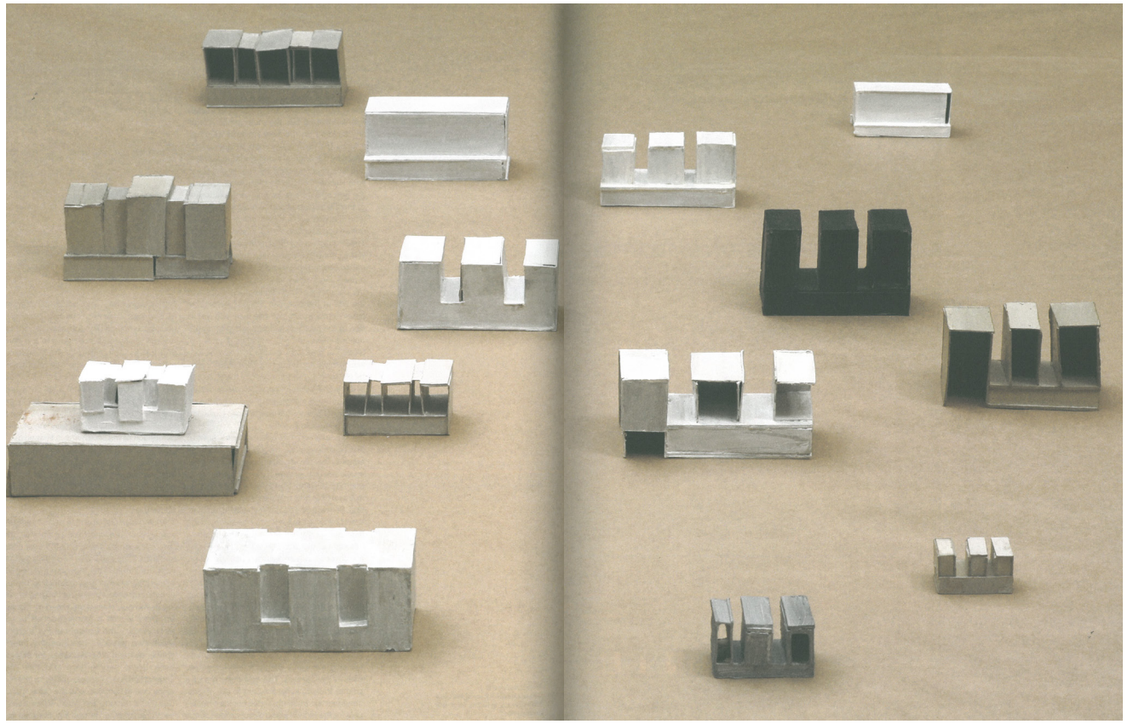
You should also give due consideration to the plans for the project. These should be developed at 1:200, 1:100 and at a larger scale where appropriate.

A landscape plan should be produced at a scale of 1:200 indicating an approach to the landscape surfaces, hard and soft elements and a general concept for the public realm.

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

A further two 'atmospheric' perspectives should be produced 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 and should explain the development of your work and the strategy you propose.



Visitor centre, Novartis campus,
Basel, Studio Märkli, 2003-2006

| Date | Event | Details | Assignments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 February | Studio trip | Taro Sakurai (TS),<br>(MS) Studio trip to Chiasso | |
| 21 February | First meeting | Presentation 1:500 model<br>Precedent study | 1:500 site model<br>Precedent study |
| 28 February | Review | Review of first urban studies | 1:500 model studies<br>Sketches |
| 6 March | Tutorials | Urban studies | 1:500 model studies<br>1:500 plans |
| 13 March | Review | Review of urban studies | 1:500 model studies<br>1:500 plans |
| 20 March | Tutorials | Perspectives | 1:500 model studies and plans<br>Perspectives |
| 27 March | Review | | 1:500 site model<br>1:200 plans<br>Study models<br>Interior/exterior perspectives<br>Pdf presentation |
| 3 April | Review | Preview of all work | |
| 9 April | Intermediate reviews | Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics | 1:500 site model<br>1:200 plans<br>Study models<br>Interior/exterior perspectives<br>Pdf presentation |
| 11-19 April | Easter holidays | | |
| 24 April | Review | Plan studies<br>Elevation studies | 1:100 plans<br>Study models |



| Date | Event | Details | Assignments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 May | International Workers' Day | | |
| 8 May | Review | Review elevations | 1:100 plans<br>Study models |
| 15 May | Tutorials | Elevations | 1:100 plans<br>Study models |
| 22 May | Review | Review of projects | Start final models |
| 39 May | Tutorials | Discussion of final model | Project revisions |
| 5 June | Review | Review final model and pdf presentation | Final model<br>Pdf presentation |
| 11 June | Final reviews | Project reviews with Diploma commission and guest critics | 1:500 site model<br>Final model (scale to be agreed)<br>1:100 ground floor plan<br>1:100 typical plan<br>1:100 elevations and sections<br>Interior/exterior perspectives<br>Pdf presentation |

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