a housing proposal for maggia, switzerland

by
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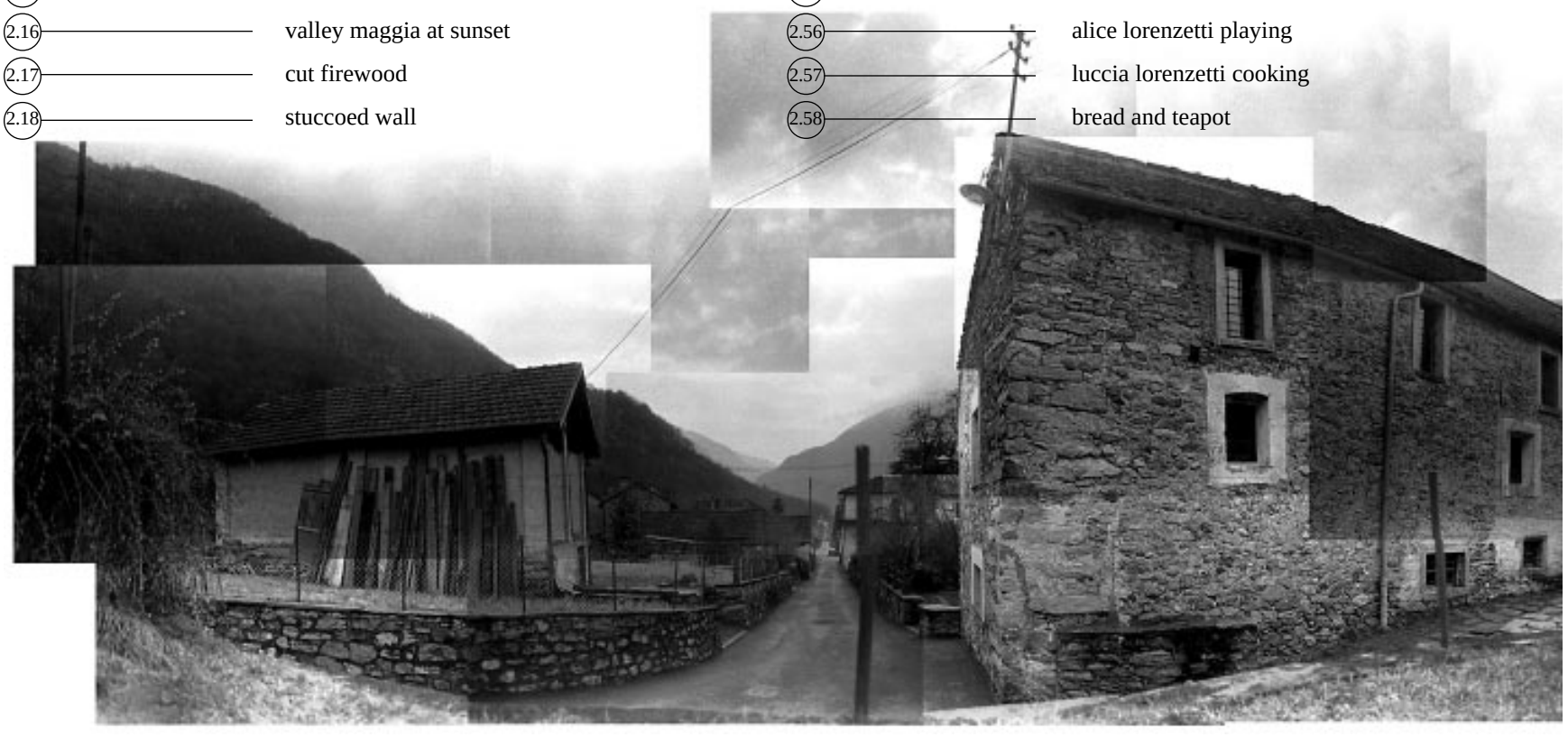
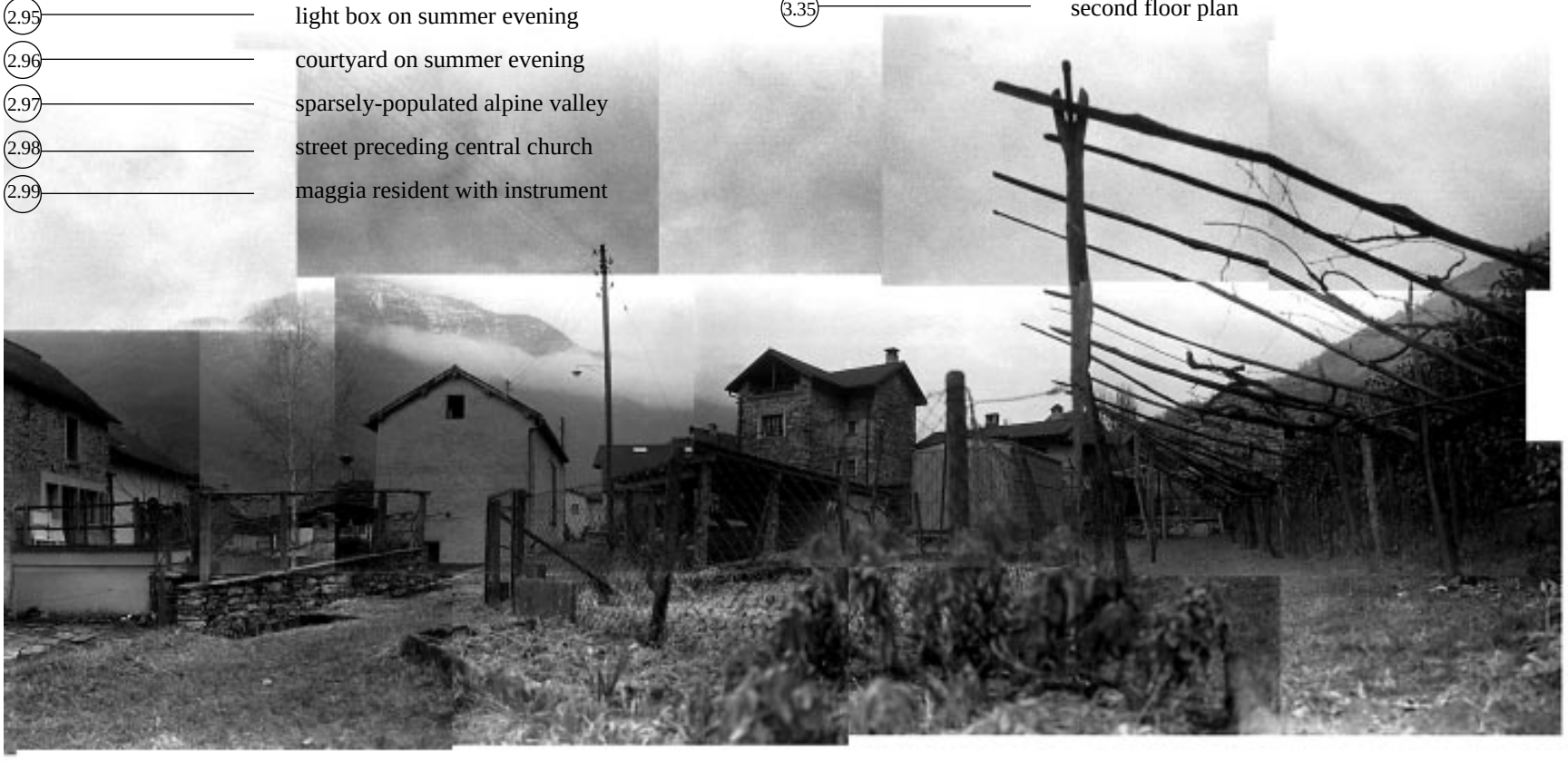
r e - d w e l l i n g

a housing proposal for maggia, switzerland

maggia resident 2.01

courtyard entrance in maggia 2.02





thesis statement 1.02

A creed serves as a set of rules and goals: it guides decision-making and defines focus. Each architect must develop a creed to inform design choices. This creed, while individual, has great public impact when realized in the form of a building and therefore should address issues important to society.

In *Learning from Las Vegas* Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour describe a creed based on specific aspects of their native American society. Their manifesto results from studying, evaluating, and regenerating aspects of the American suburban "strip." The group maintains that vernacular American architecture and the building patterns indigenous to America reflect the desires of their builders.

The vernacular hill towns of Ticino, Switzerland, reflect the historical aspirations and concerns of their Alpine communities. Venturi's thesis seems, however, to deny the contemporary relevance of life in such towns by defining a dichotomy where vernacular American architecture represents current ideals but megastructures like those of Ticino recall outdated concerns. Unified monumental structures such as the vernacular towns of Ticino typify Venturi's definition of megastructure. While such edifices may seem foreign and misunderstood in American context, they remain central to life in Italian Switzerland. Venturi's group calls American builders to create dynamic environments which live and grow with their inhabitants: this call is equally valid for maintaining contemporary life within medieval structures. The people of Ticino must deal with the conflicting notions of historic object and contemporary process, since both are daily aspects of dwelling in vernacular towns. The aim of the study presented in this book is to bridge the gap dividing monumental edifices and contemporary fragments by considering both historical and current issues in an attempt to enhance the ongoing life of one specific Ticinese village.

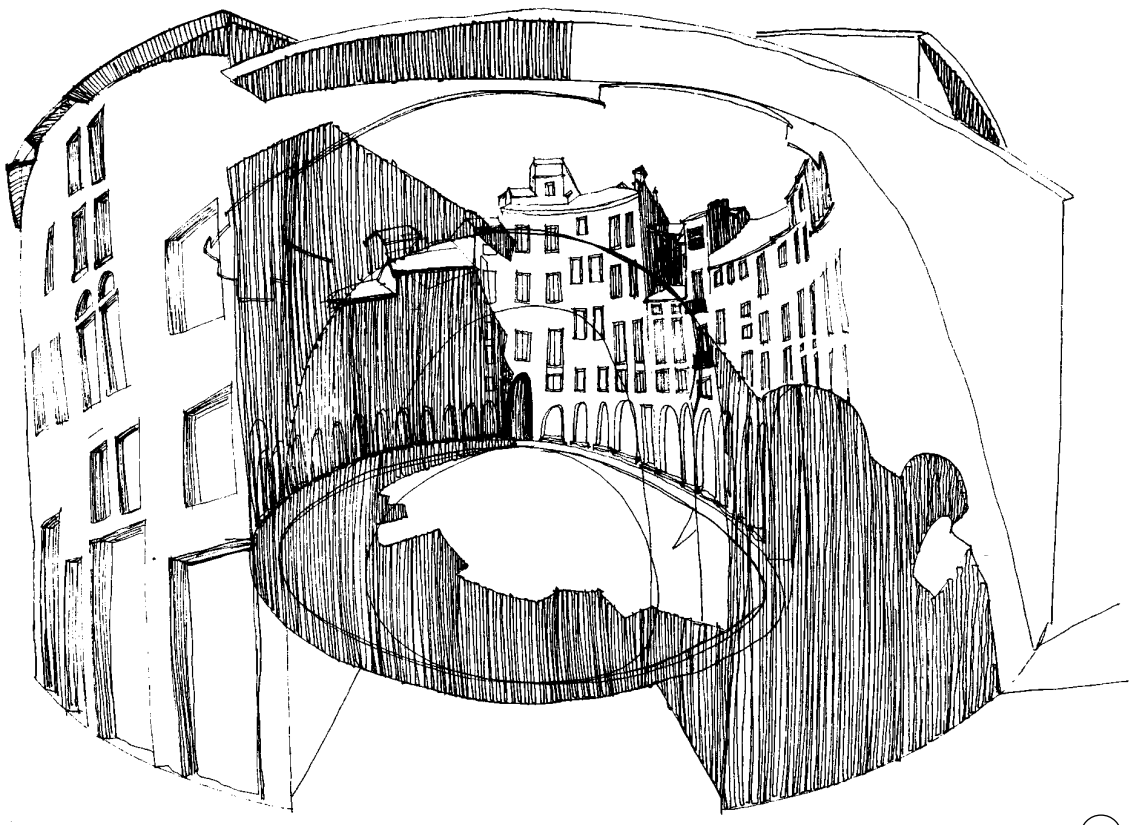
Table 2. Comparison of Urban Sprawl with Megastructure

Urban Sprawl	Megastructure
Ugly and ordinary	Heroic and original
Depends on explicit symbolism	Rejects explicit symbolism
Symbols in space	Forms in space
Image	Form
Mixed media	Pure architecture
Big signs designed by commercial artists	Little signs (and only if absolutely necessary) designed by "graphic artists"
Auto environment	Post- and pre-auto environment
Cars	Public transportation
Takes the parking lot seriously and pastiches the pedestrian	"Straight" architecture with serious but egocentric aims for the pedestrian; it irresponsibly ignores or tries to "piazzafy" the parking lot
Disneyland	Piazzas
Promoted by sales staff	Promoted by experts
Feasible and being built	Technologically feasible perhaps, but socially and economically unfeasible
Popular life-style	"Correct" life-style
Historical styles	Modern style
Uses typological models	Uses original creations
Process city	Instant city
Broadacre City	Ville Radieuse
Looks awful	Makes a nice model
Architects don't like	Architects like
20th-century communication technology	19th-century industrial vision
Social realism	Science fiction
Expedience	Technological indulgence
Expedient	Visionary
Ambiguous urban image	Traditional urban image
Vital mess	"Total Design" (and design review boards)
Building for markets	Building for Man
This year's problems	The old architectural revolution
Heterogeneous images	The image of the middle-class intelligentsia
The difficult image	The easy image
The difficult whole	The easy whole

venturi, scott brown, izenour 1.03

dress shop window - siena, italy 2.04

car dealer - staunton, virginia 2.05



oblong piazza of lucca, italy 3.01

creed for building in a monument 1.04

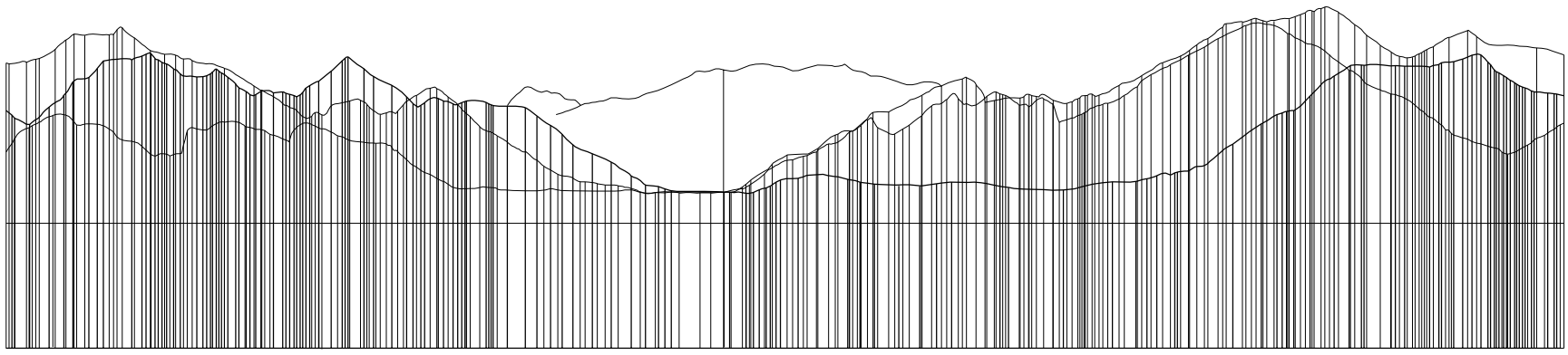
Aldo Rossi's architectural studies of town structures provide insight for interpreting the kinds of urban conditions found in villages of Northern Italy. The *ampitheatro* piazza in Lucca, Italy may be used to outline Rossi's position. The piazza represents an urban artifact as described in Rossi's book *The Architecture of the City*. The *ampitheatro* exists as part of an urban fabric: it is at once a collection of parts and a whole object which exists as a vital, contributing part of the network which constitutes the town. Both the object and the city grow and develop continuously: both also have unique history and form. By studying the existing concrete presence of this piazza, one may begin to understand the space as both urban artifact and contributor to the wholeness of the city. Developing a description of the piazza as an object allows one to understand and communicate the quality of the space in a way that explains more than a temporal, personal experience of the space. 3.01

Developing such a description also poses risk of speculation. As Rossi explains, "...it is a general characteristic of urban artifacts that they return us to certain major themes: individuality, *locus*, design, memory. A particular type of knowledge is delineated along with each artifact, a knowledge that is more complete and different from that with which we are familiar." These themes remain elusive unless evaluated as concrete, measurable aspects of the complex object. Thus Rossi limits his descriptions to the form of the existing urban artifact, and the history which this artifact makes directly evident. The form itself — a concrete, measurable entity — quantifies the artifact's characteristics. That which is outside the form remains elusive speculation. 2.02 2.99

Rossi suggests that in order to avoid an empirical description of the artifact, one should begin by studying the object's manufacture. A description of its physical reality will help us understand the specific artifact, and its context, as a work of art. This is similar to describing the physical reality of a painting (composition, lighting, brush stroke, etc.) rather than evaluating the image's implied story or symbolism, the artist's relation to art history, or the emotion conveyed to the painting's viewer. While all these experiential aspects contribute to a reading of the place, a description of only the physical reality of the art object allows a more universal grasp of the work. The physical characteristics extend past individual interpretation by revealing what is available to all people who experience the space. Such a description begins to describe collective understanding and meaning of the place. This description will reveal a group of parts or elements which contribute to the overall effect of the work without attempting to describe the effect itself. 2.18 2.22 3.05 2.02

0.06

central chapel facade 2.06



sections of alps through project site 3.02

0.07

creed for building in a monument 1.05

Building a new element into the fabric of an old town such as Lucca or into a medieval Ticino village requires an understanding of the existing place and the forces which contributed to its making. The architect should question the physical characteristics of the built environment and also examine natural (geographic, climatic, topographic, etc.) and historical (social, cultural, traditional, etc.) factors which may have influenced previous building. Evaluating current and traditional context may aid the architect in determining forces to address in new construction.

The historical, natural, and built environment contributes to forming the spirit, or experience, of the place. By attempting to define and name the elements which have created this spirit, the architect may begin to develop a design uniquely specific to its locale which contributes to its built community. The introduction of each new architectural “member” promotes a continual process of redefining and rebuilding and allows the place to evolve through addressing both current and traditional concerns of its builders and inhabitants.

3.15 3.16 — 3.11 2.22 — 2.51 2.43 — 2.67 — 2.55 — 2.06 — 2.37 2.62

northern church, side view 2.07

northern church, axial view 2.08

pedestrain street along contour 2.09

0.08

project site toward street fork 2.10

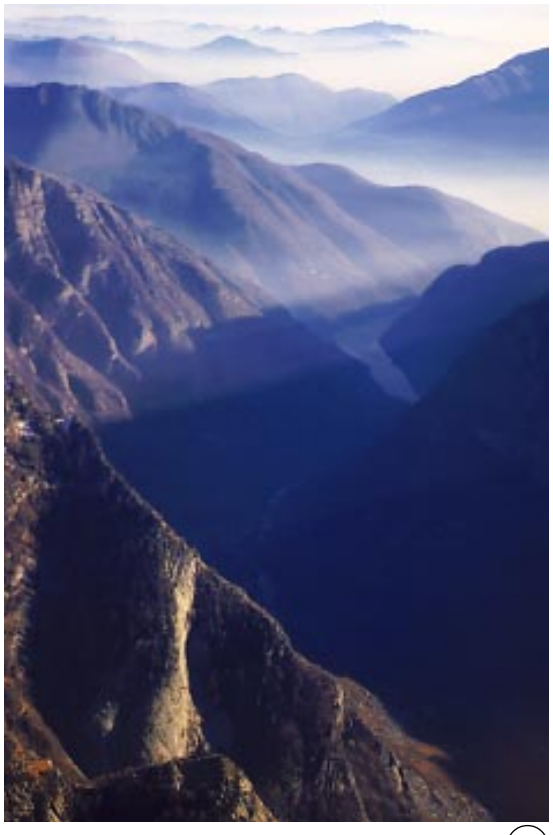
project site, houses to north 2.11

pedestrian paths through maggia 3.03

view from site toward waterfall 2.12

chestnut hull and leaf 2.13

fruit ripening 2.14



valley maggia at sunset 2.16

cut firewood 2.17

stuccoed wall 2.18

alpine village at sunset 2.20

spring snowfall 2.21

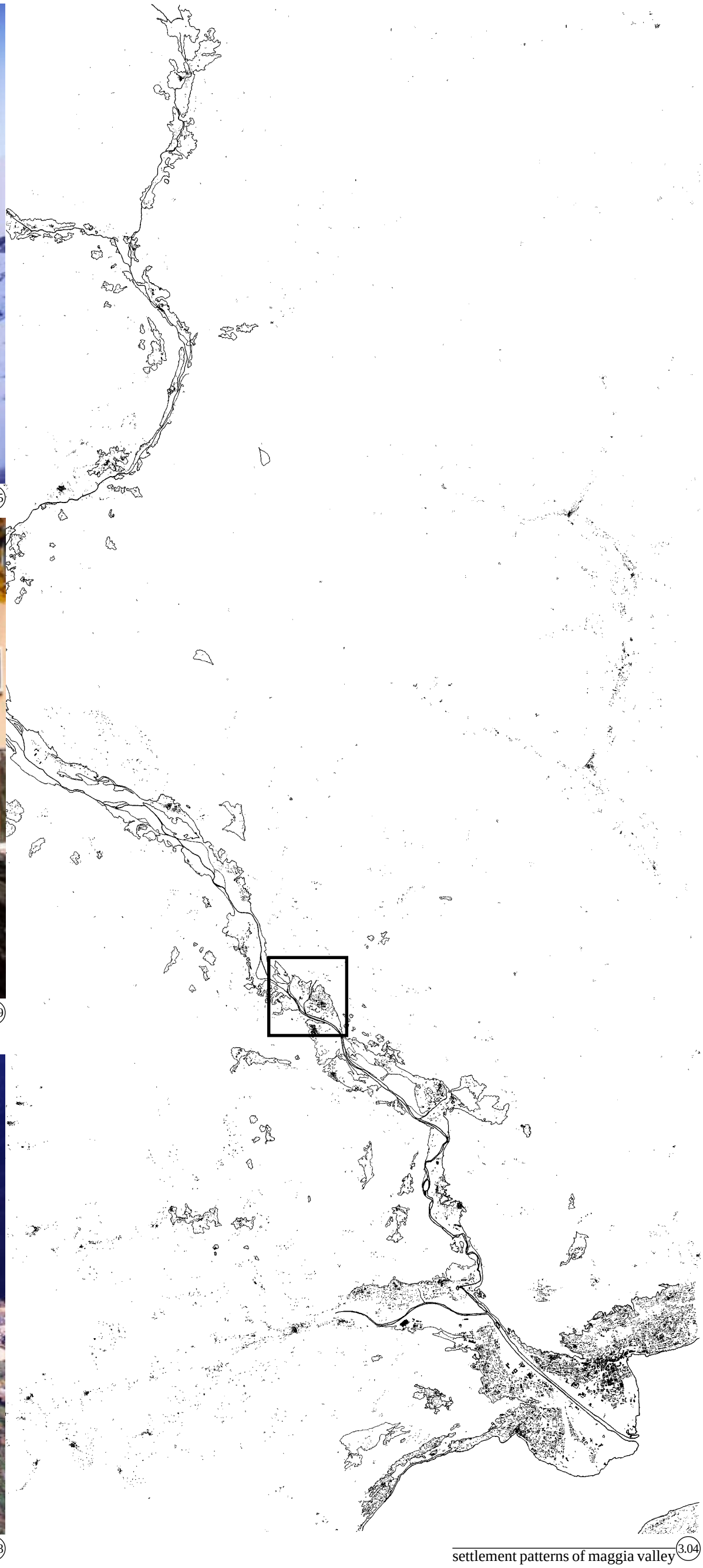
paving patterns 2.22

0.10

lake at hydroelectric facility, robeii 2.15

pedestrian street in central maggia 2.19

intragana - cento valley 2.23



settlement patterns of maggia valley 3.04

A gradual architectural evolution is evident in the Ticinese village of Maggia, and particularly in the village's stone-roofed churches. While two of Maggia's three churches exhibit Baroque ornamentation, all lack essential elements of Baroque architecture due to their traditional stone-on-stone construction. The dark, damp solidity typical of Maggia's stone-roofed spaces prohibits Baroque's light, festive atmosphere. The churches' ornamentation does, however, reflect an attempt to integrate traditional forms with contemporary concerns. A recent renovation of the village's central church reflects the general redefinition and rebuilding necessary to maintain a healthy, evolving community.

2.08 2.06 2.29

The rural vernacular dwellings typical of the area are known as *rustici* and consist of Alpine granite and gneiss stone blocks laid without mortar. Many dwellings include exterior stairs which often utilize steep slopes for both vertical transportation (one must walk outside and up a stair in the hillside to change floors) and insulation (since the house is submerged in the earth, the soil protects the house from the elements). Another typical feature is the stone-slab roof, supported by heavy timber purlins which are generally placed directly on the exterior load-bearing walls. The *rustici*'s thick stone walls carry tremendous roof weight and maintain consistent thickness of sixty to seventy centimeters from the ground up. The *rustici*'s lowest floors have extremely small openings and are seldom utilized for human dwelling. The size of wall openings often increases as a building rises, although the windows remain relatively small and admit almost no direct light. Large roof spans prove unusual and dangerous due to the tremendous weight of the stones, and as a result, interior spaces are small and dark.

2.44 2.48 2.27 3.32 2.47 3.04 3.05 2.26 2.31 2.35 2.52 2.19

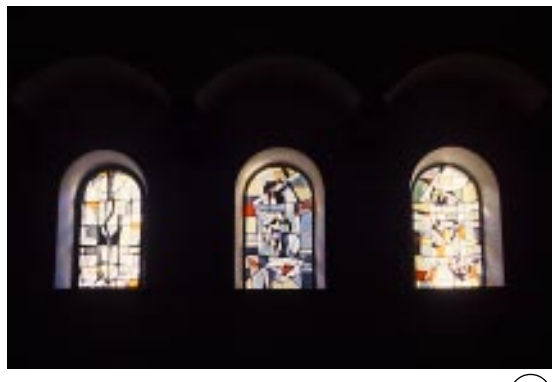
waterfall from bridge 2.24

space between houses 2.25

courtyard entry 2.26

exterior stair of dwelling 2.27

pedestrian street with raised yard 2.28



stained glass in central church 2.29

chimneys 2.30

street and buildings along contour 2.31

houses carved into mountain side 2.32

east view down central maggia street 2.33

courtyard and house entries 2.34

massive dwelling in hill side 2.35

2.31 2.32 3.09 2.53 3.13 3.19 3.14 3.16 2.28 2.26 3.09 2.19 3.32 2.34 2.50 2.51 2.86

Maggia's built topography reflects the valley's natural contours. For instance, a cluster of dwellings, carved into Maggia's north-east mountain side, follows the mountain's contour. These dwellings open down the slope, where small shared courtyards drain into a narrow pedestrian street. This street, and most linear elements of Maggia, radiates from a single geographic point: the village's waterfall. Many property lines, streets, walls, structures, and grapevine trellises in the village reflect a fanning pattern which radiates from this point.

Courtyards of Maggia are often series of small, winding spaces that are separated from the street by high stone walls with entry gates. Close proximity of masses results in these room-sized courtyards and corridor-sized streets where occasionally two dwellings share a single exterior stair. These courtyards serve as semi-public living and dining rooms during warm seasons. Families often delineate their outdoor eating areas by enclosing stone tables under grape trellises to create semi-private outdoor rooms within larger, shared courtyards.

aerial view of central maggia 2.36

reconstructed roof on *rustici* 2.37

mario botta house along maggia axis 2.38

maggia from southern church 2.39

Due to the history of building densely in Maggia, a majority of land suitable for living and farming has been retained for agriculture. Families traditionally lived centrally and farmed the village's perimeter. The outskirts of Maggia today, however, reveal a new trend in land use. While the old town center remains densely built, new construction reflects a suburban influence and lacks the traditional density. In Valley Maggia farmable land is extremely scarce and new construction patterns directly influence inhabitants as farmland rapidly disappears. Farmers who rent land for grazing animals and raising crops have increased difficulty finding enough available land, and as a result, the number of people producing food in the Valley Maggia decreases and food costs increase. 3.15 2.39 2.36 2.40

The suburban attitude displayed in new construction around Maggia is evident throughout Italy and Italian Switzerland, and has roots to the Renaissance. Increasing skepticism toward urban environments swelled at the end of the medieval period when cities often faced intense plague. With the Renaissance many people, notably the cultured and educated elite, fled the city for a kind of "suburbia," which they felt fostered contemplation and provided a healthier life style than the crowded cities. This trend fostered development of the villa: Palladio's country villas and the French Baroque Place of Versailles provide physical monuments exemplifying shifting construction patterns. During the same period, builders within the city began to address a similar desire for open, flowing spaces. Renaissance, Mannerist, and Baroque architects utilized perspective techniques (that had been recently created by painters) to create axial spaces within the city which fostered a sense of openness within otherwise crowded environments. 2.41

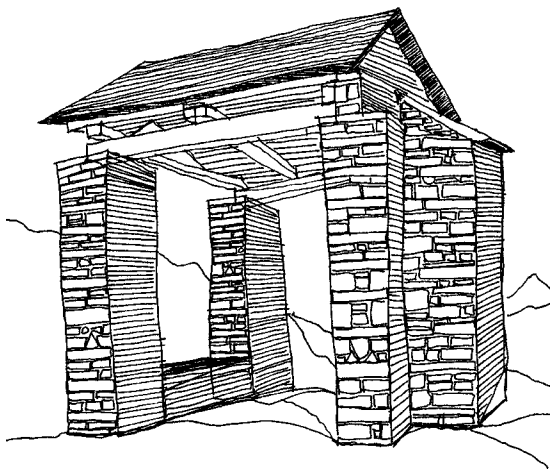
These new ideals in city design were popular in Italy (examples in Rome include the Baroque Spanish Steps and piazza of San Pietro) and filtered north, gradually affecting Ticino. In Alpine hill towns builders began to implement Renaissance axes. In Maggia, for instance, a monumental axis precedes the ornamented facade of each of the churches. Also in Maggia, a gradual reaction to the perceived overcrowding in the medieval core developed into a suburban isolationism, resulting in the sprawling outskirts seen in Maggia today. While the suburban shift were intended to improve the general living conditions, neither the recent urban sprawl nor the early medieval structures provide the highest possible quality of life for Maggia's residents. The old structures restrict light, air, and circulation through the village: the new structures distract from the whole by attempting to exist as isolated entities. 2.86 2.08 2.03 2.41 2.40

view over contemporary house 2.40

villa on edge of maggia's core 2.41

A man-made place, however, is something more than a space with varying degrees of openness. As a building it stands on the ground, and rises toward the sky. The character of the place is to a large extent determined by how this standing and rising is concretized. This also holds true for entire settlements, such as towns. When a town pleases us because of its distinct character, it is usually because a majority of its buildings are related to the earth and the sky in the same way....

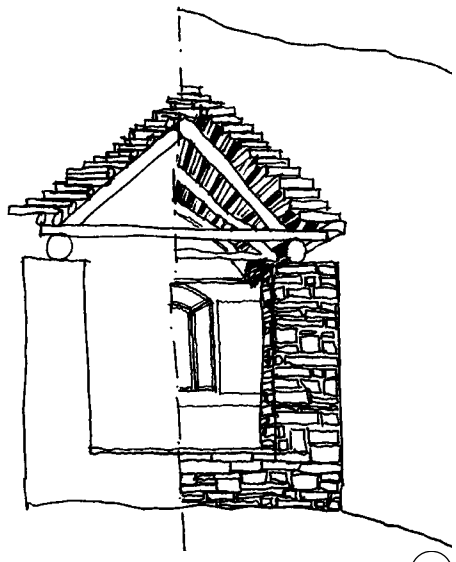
christian norberg-schultz 1.09



religious structure, side view 3.04

town plan 3.07

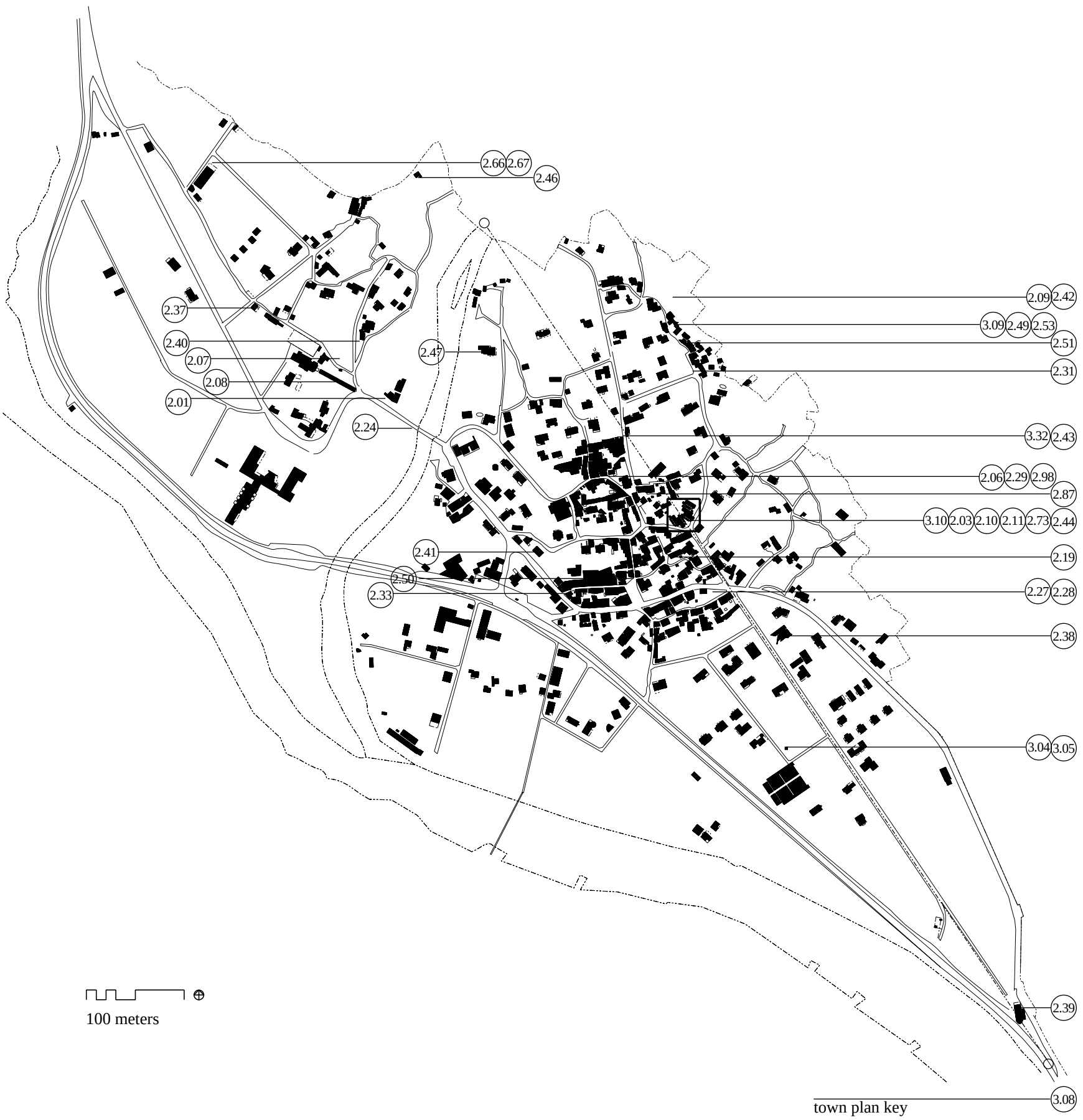
0.16



religious structure, front view 3.05

Through building man-made places are created which possess their individual genius loci. This genius is determined by what is visualized, complemented, symbolized or gathered. In vernacular architecture the man-made ought to correspond closely with that of the natural place, in urban architecture, it is more comprehensive. The genius loci of a town, thus, ought to comprise the spirit of the locality to get "roots", but it should also gather contents of general interest, contents which have their roots elsewhere, and which have been moved by means of symbolization. Some of these contents (meanings) are so general that they apply to all places.

christian norberg-schultz 1.09



massive vertical elements 2.42

street behind central church 2.43

wall with single opening, distant view 2.44

dwelling in vineyard 2.46

house built into hillside 2.47

wall opening, middle view 2.48

pergola bordering piazza 2.50

pergola along mountain side 2.51

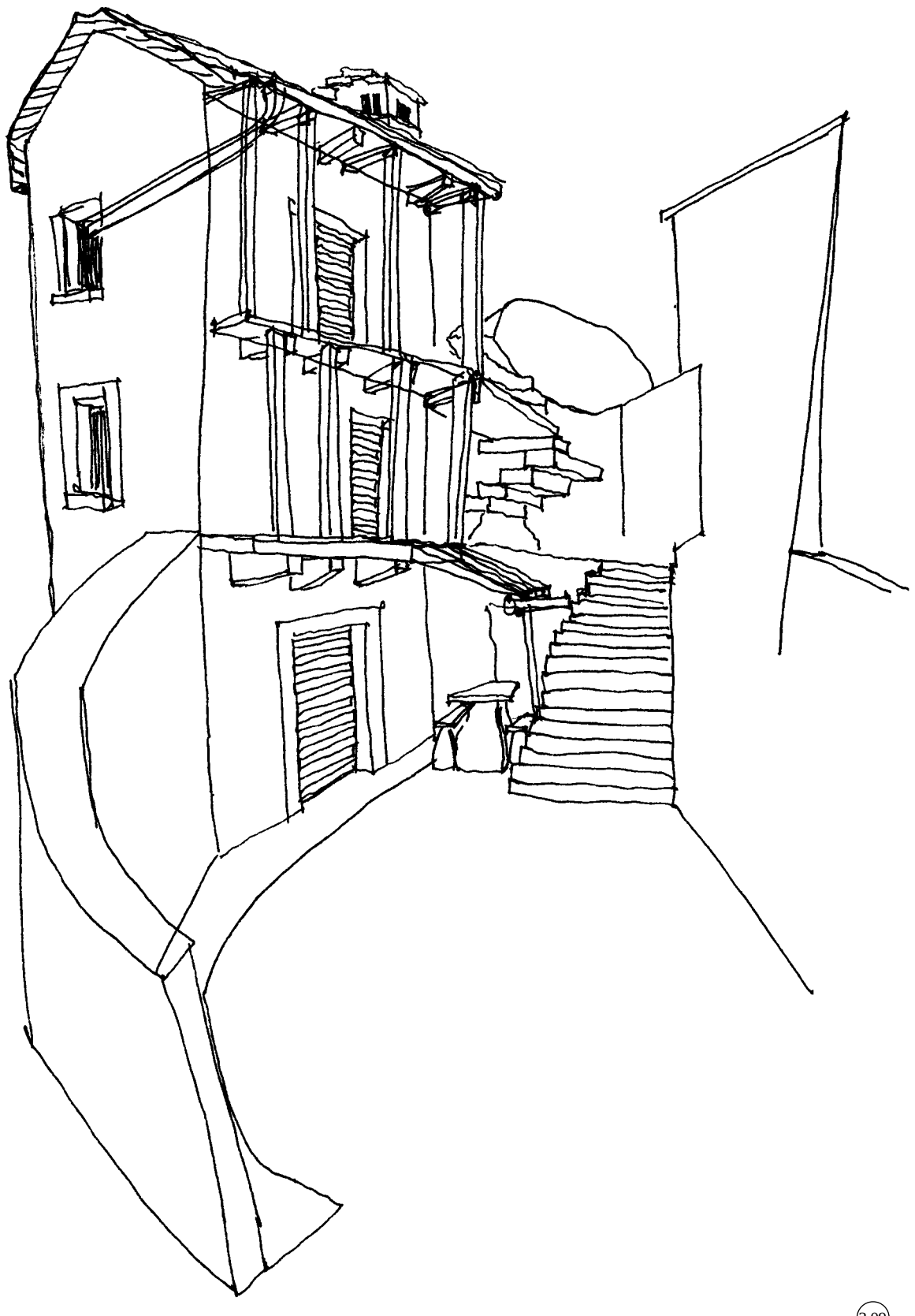
wall opening, close view 2.52

0.18

view across maggia to river 2.45

view over courtyard 2.49

view down into courtyard 2.53



courtyard from street entrance 3.09

snozzi pergola, brione 2.55

snozzi's monte carasso school 2.54

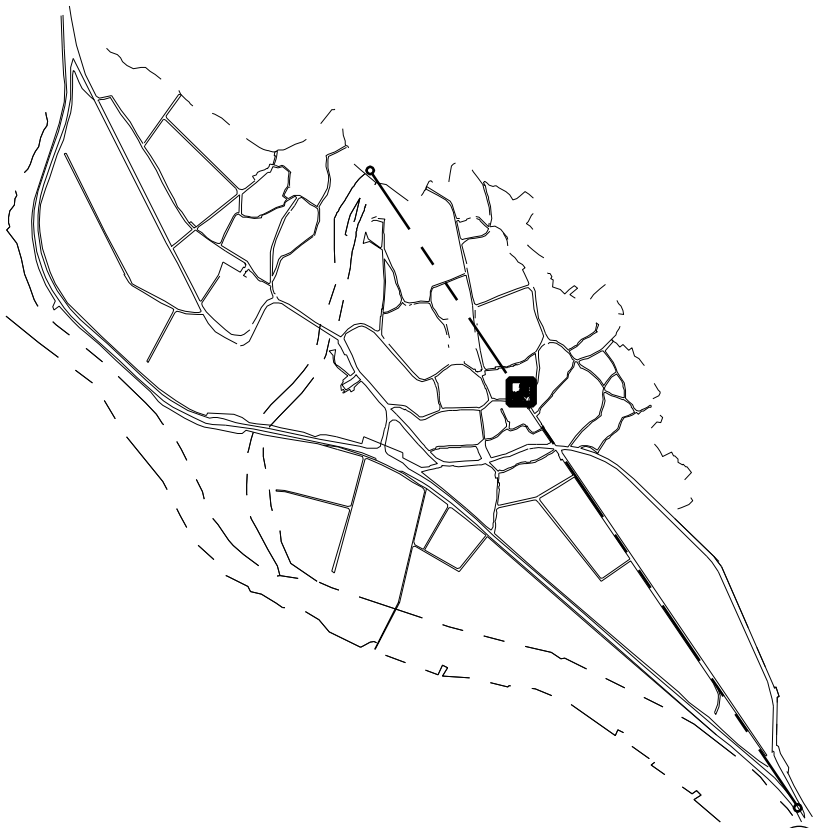
re-interpretations: monte carasso 1.10

2.54

Luigi Snozzi addresses a situation similar to that found in Maggia through his ongoing town plan for Monte Carasso, a “bedroom community” outside Bellinzona, in the central valley of Ticino. Snozzi’s designs for Monte Carasso, and his set of plans for future construction within the town, honor the town as both a historic edifice and a living, functioning community. Snozzi has analyzed the *genius loci* of Monte Carasso and defined rules for contemporary construction generated by the existing architectural network. His plan for town development allows a continual transformation of the place by addressing contemporary needs and concerns while simultaneously strengthening the collection of existing buildings within the town.

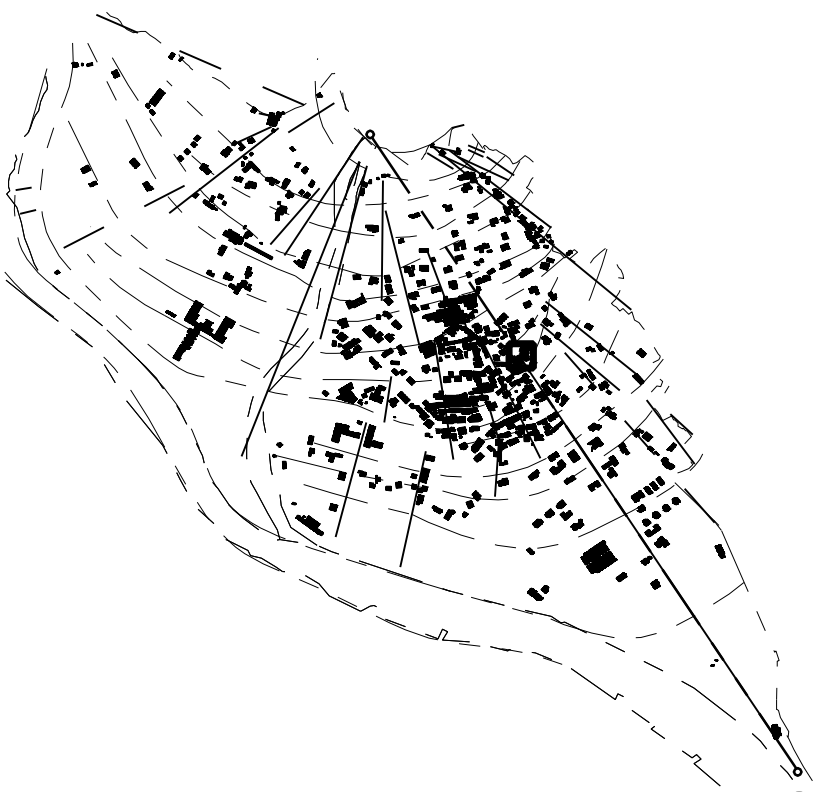
view west from project site 3.10

0.20

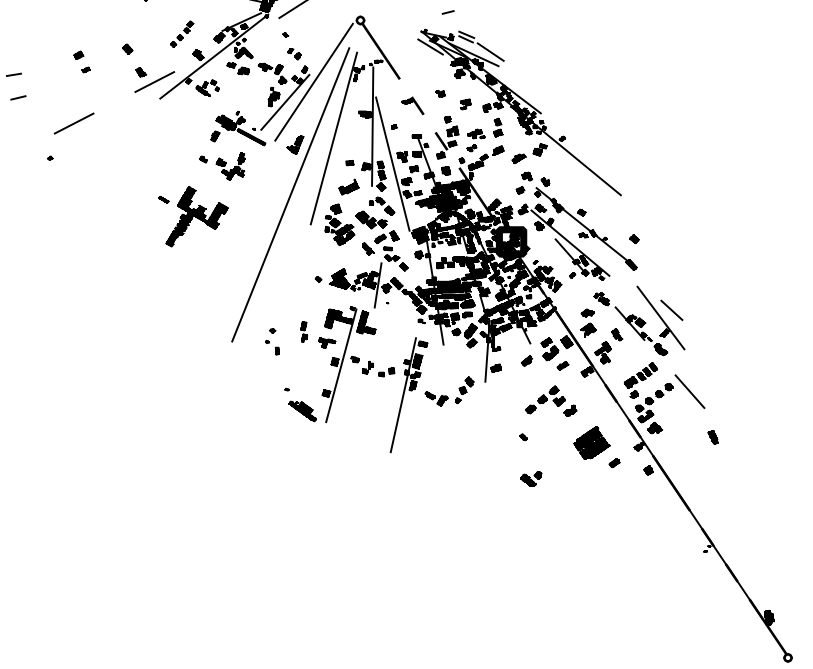


town streets 3.11

town walls 3.12



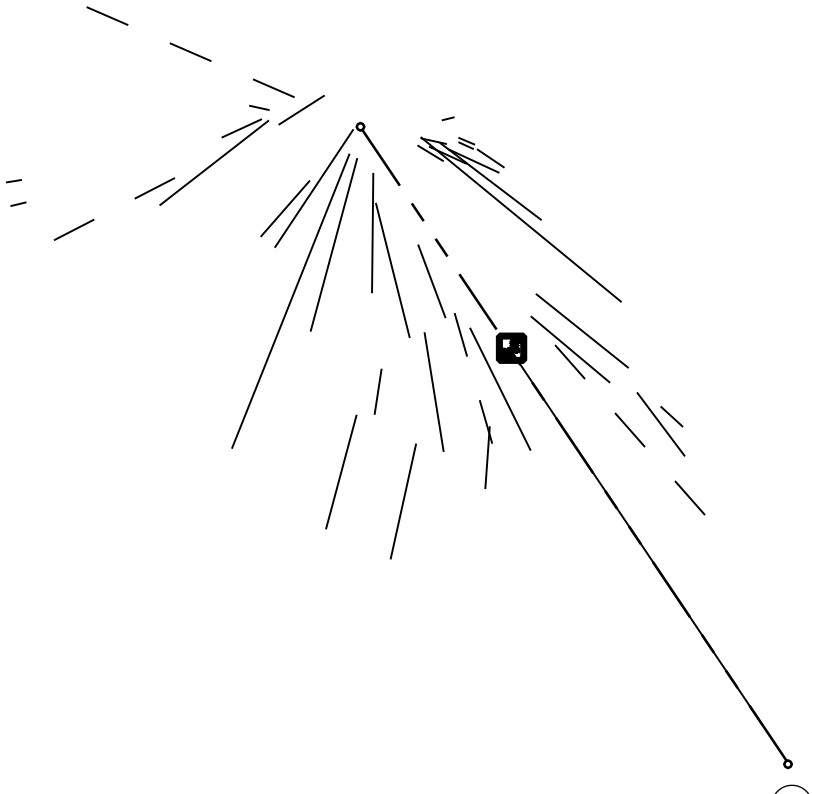
town building patterns 3.13



town axes 3.14

100 meters

town core 3.15



lines radiating from waterfall 3.16

alice lorenzetti playing 2.56

luccia lorenzetti cooking 2.57

frascesco and maurizio lorenzetti 2.61

nora lorenzetti practicing recorder 2.62

family study room 2.66

formal fireplace 2.67

bread and teapot 2.58

household decorations 2.59

clock and photographs 2.60

kitchen shelves 2.63

puppet and bookcase 2.64

household ornaments 2.65

colored pencils 2.68

metronome and piano music 2.69

home computer 2.70

summer sunset light in dwellings 2.71

summer sunset light in courtyard 2.72

collage of project site westward 2.73


0.24
2.87
3.26
2.11
3.17
3.28
2.03
3.10
2.10
2.74
2.19
2.27
2.28
2.30
3.17
area surrounding project site

proposed scheme 1.11

The housing scheme proposed in this book attempts to reconcile Maggia's vernacular aesthetic and traditional rationale with modern concerns. This dichotomy presents itself in the scheme as an opposition between dark and light, mass and weightlessness, telluric and tectonic, horizontal and vertical. The project addresses aspects of density, economy, and community inherent in Maggia's traditional architecture. It names four categories of vernacular space in Maggia — 1) cavernous interior rooms, 2) outdoor private dining areas, 3) semi-private courtyards, and 4) public plazas — and two categories of modern space — 1) flowing private interiors and 2) large interior public spaces. The language used to develop the design uses elements of both vernacular and modern spaces. The proposal's exterior design includes streets, stairs, courtyards, and plazas. The designed interiors incorporate extremely closed spaces, very open rooms, and many transitional spaces: these numerous forms of space accommodate the functions necessary for dwelling in Maggia. 2.29 2.51 3.09 3.18 3.34 3.35

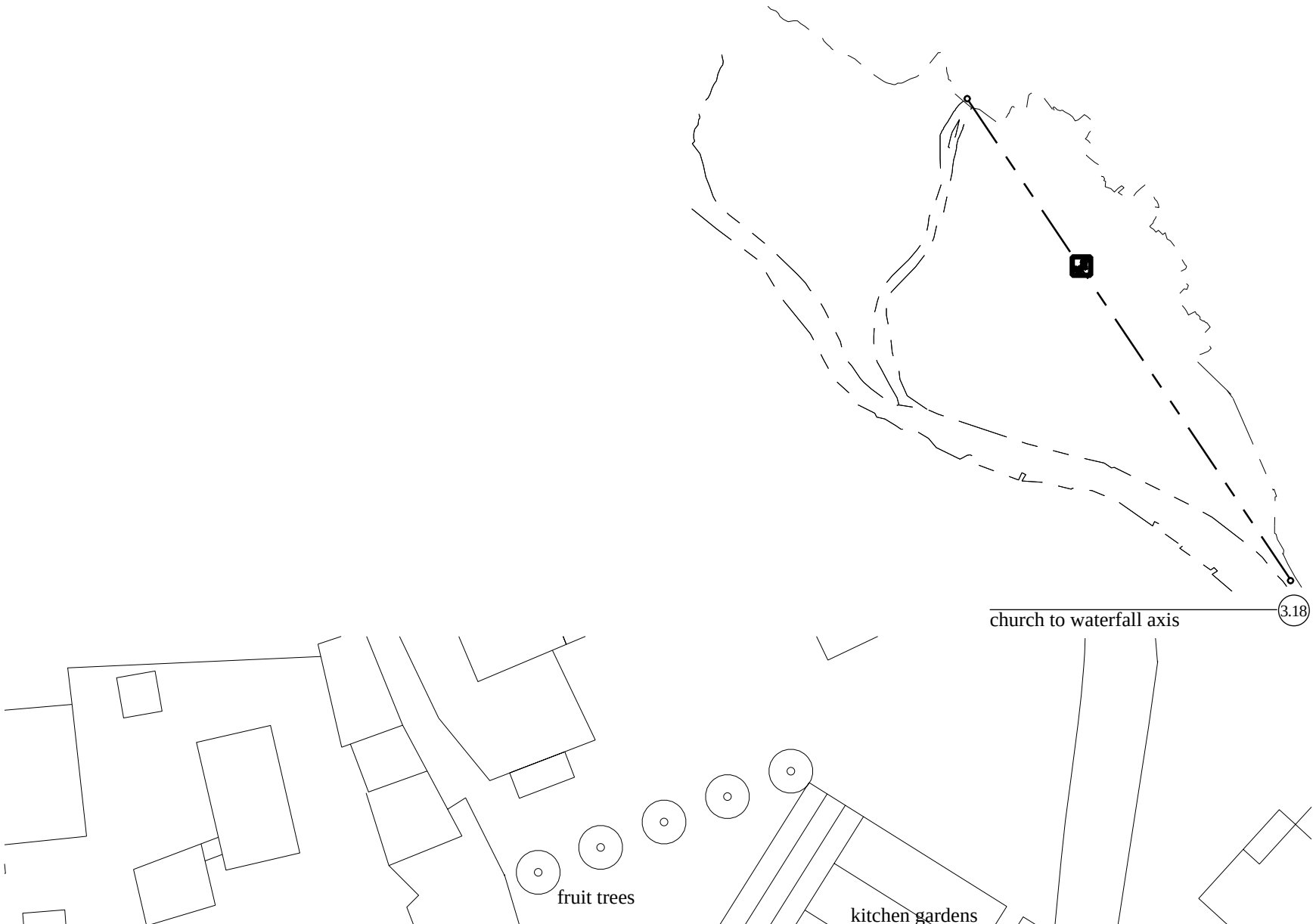
Maggia's vernacular Swiss-Italian structures are addressed as extensions of the earth. The scheme outlines a tectonic structure or "light box" placed upon each telluric "mass block." The light tectonic box, fabricated from pieces, provides opposition to the massive block, although it is constructed with forms and methods similar to traditional practice. The contemporary pitched roofs, for instance, are reinterpretations of traditional forms but are constructed of wood trusses covered by thin metal: the roof's ends are open to allow views of the sky from within the dwellings. While the form of the roof recalls traditional dwellings, the light-filled space under the roof is unlike that in old buildings. 2.71 2.92 2.79 3.06 2.94

The scheme is situated on the town's main axis: a street running straight from Maggia's geographic entrance north to the town in the direction of the village's waterfall. The scheme's site spans across this axis and directly adjoins the old village. With half of the project on either side, the axis continues through the project as a public exterior stair which funnels activity from the street into pedestrian areas. This axis helps shape the project: other influences on the scheme's physical orientation are the land's contour and the site's summer and winter solstices. The proposed buildings attempt to exist as part of the old village, while bridging the village to its larger context by providing a physical transition from old to new. 3.19 2.91 2.96 3.13 3.29 3.28 2.75

This modern scheme placed within Maggia's old town outlines an attempt to continue the village's life by providing places for individuals, families, groups of families, and the whole village community. The act acknowledges a process of evolution which integrates old and new to continually generate livable places. The project recognizes the village itself as the essential monument which guides and informs new design. 3.17

collage toward project site from axis 2.74

0.26



3.18
church to waterfall axis

3.19
landscape plan and key

shadow of project at summer sunset 2.75

shadow of project at midyear sunset 2.76

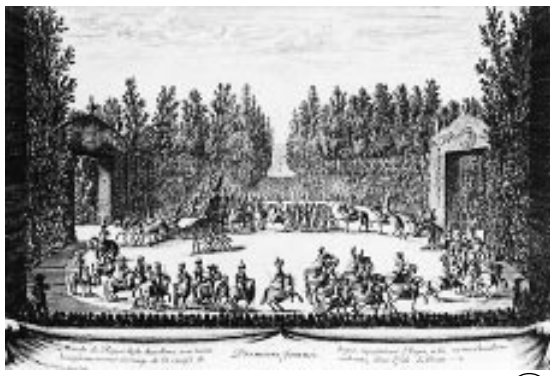
shadow of project at winter sunset 2.77

0.28

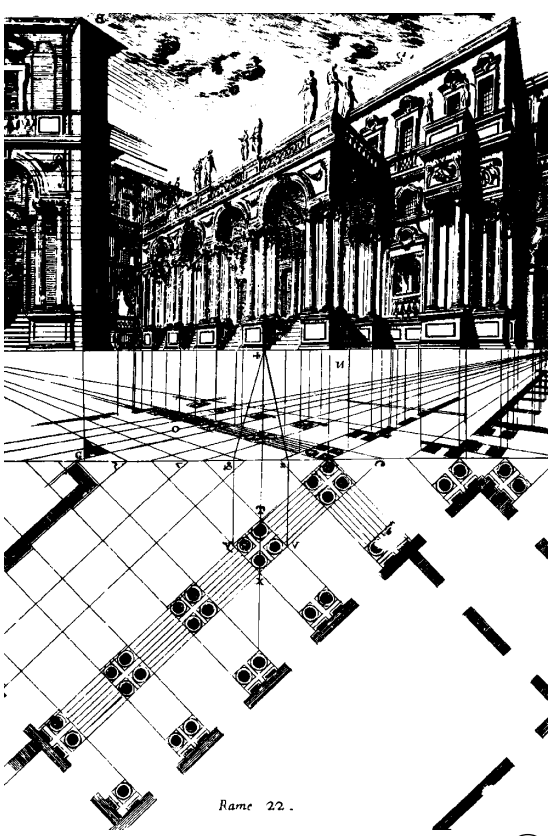
elizabethan theater 3.20

theatro olympico in vincenza, italy 2.78

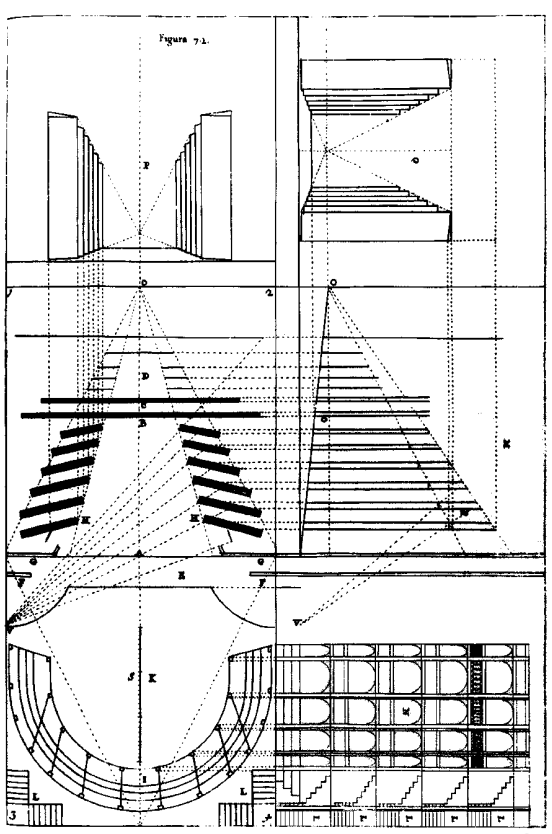
round theater 3.21



french garden theater 3.22



baroque stage set construction 3.23



baroque theater plan 3.24

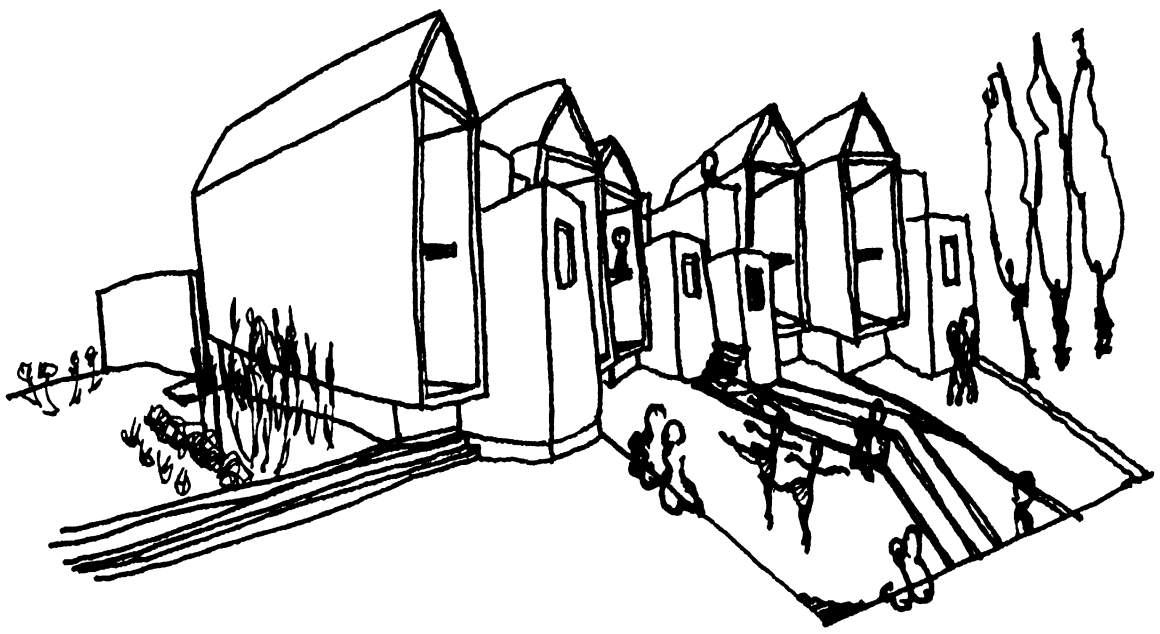
french garden theater 3.25

designed landscape 1.12

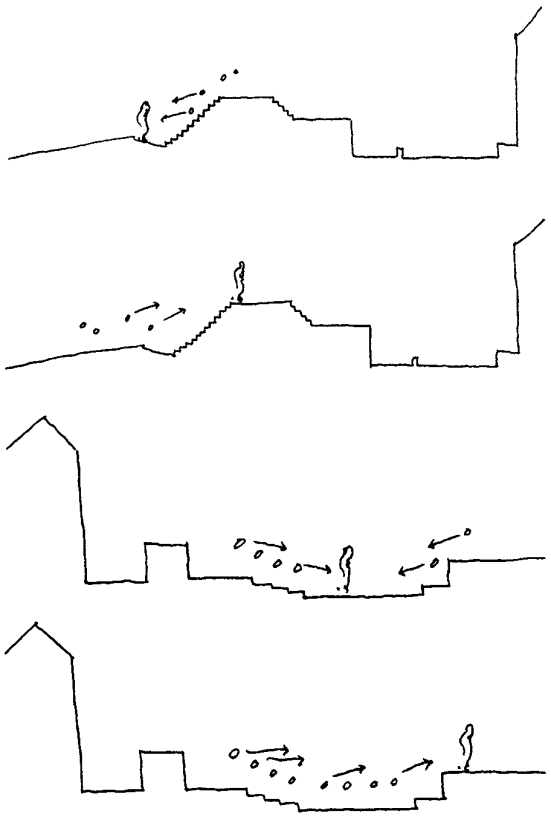
The town center may be read as a single medieval structure made of small stone elements and rooms. In the old town, protection from natural and human enemies proved essential and the resulting spaces between buildings were tiny and dark. The old village provides only one small piazza, which is now usually filled with automobiles, and no other clearly-defined places for large groups to meet outside. The village does include a few interior public gathering spaces, such as the town hall and its small adjoining school. While concern for protecting the community shaped the central town, issues of community are virtually ignored in Maggia's modern suburban dwellings which boast a trend toward isolationism and individual ownership. The outer village exists as a sprawl of individual elements with little or no relation to each other or to a whole. The proposed design attempts to mediate isolationist attitudes by offering gathering places to renew the sense of community, by promoting architectural and cultural continuity to strengthen ties to the town's rich history, and by providing a physical transition to bridge the widening gap between the village's internal and external societies. 3.15 2.19 3.14 3.26

Formally, the design provides a series of public streets and spaces intended to be used by the villagers for community functions. The landscape design includes an amphitheater which opens to the street, a pedestrian passage through the structure, and a theater-like stair with balconies which also serves as a pedestrian street. The theater-stair utilizes traditional baroque dimensions of axis and controlled perspective (including predetermined view points). Enclosed dining areas for individual families also incorporate controlled views. The amphitheater, on the other hand, provides a less deterministic public space with a variety of possible stage and audience areas, leaving the perspective and focal point up to the persons planning each specific event. 3.18 3.27 2.81 2.84 2.91 3.23 3.24 2.28 3.33 3.27

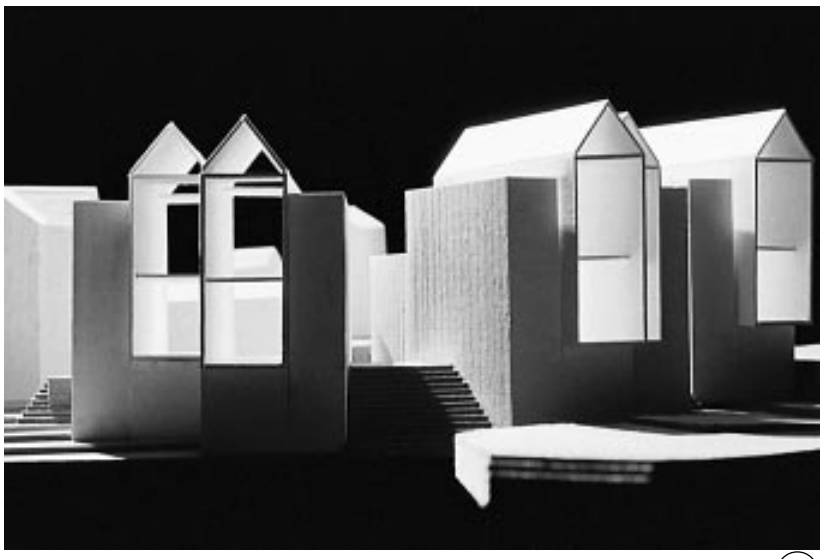
The proposed public spaces grow from a long tradition of garden theater design which matured during the baroque period. Baroque desires for overall design coordination, theatrical arts, continuous public gathering, and lavish garden design fostered the practice of outdoor theater. Both historic and contemporary theater design concerns are addressed in this proposal to create environments to accommodate a wide variety of public events. 3.25 3.22



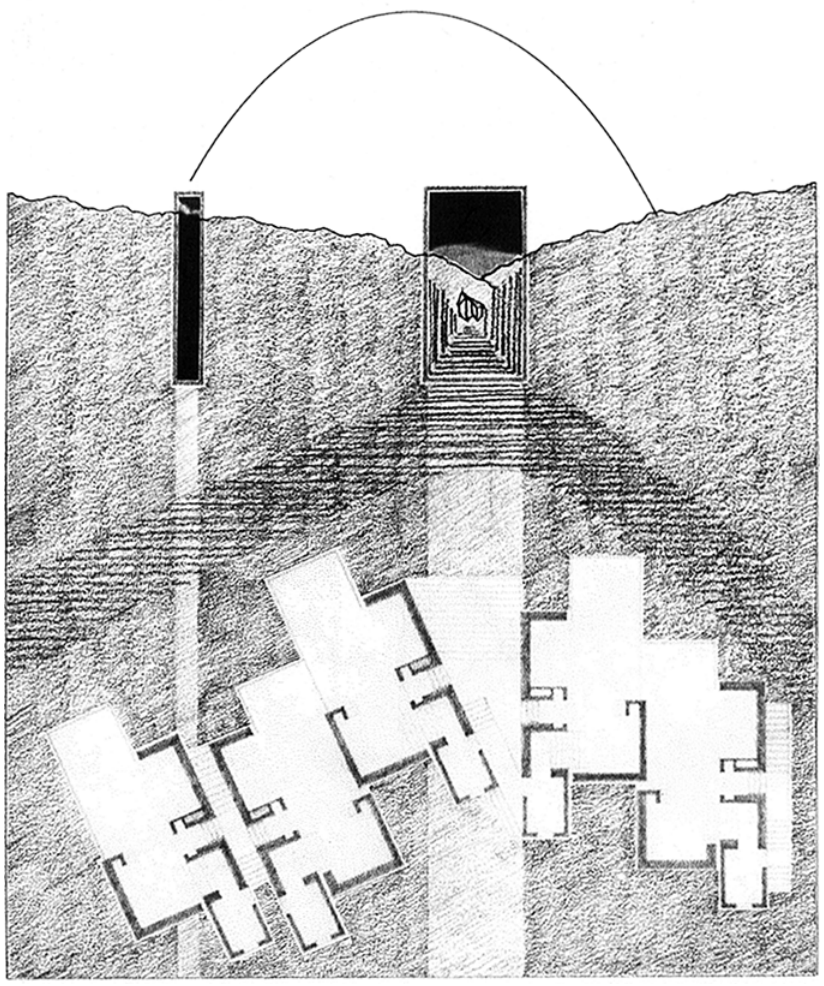
amphitheater scene 3.26



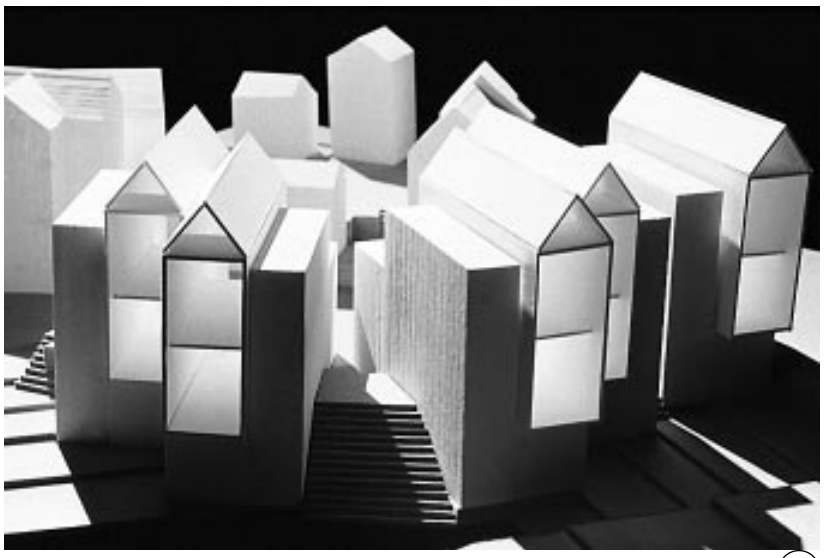
landscape sections 3.27



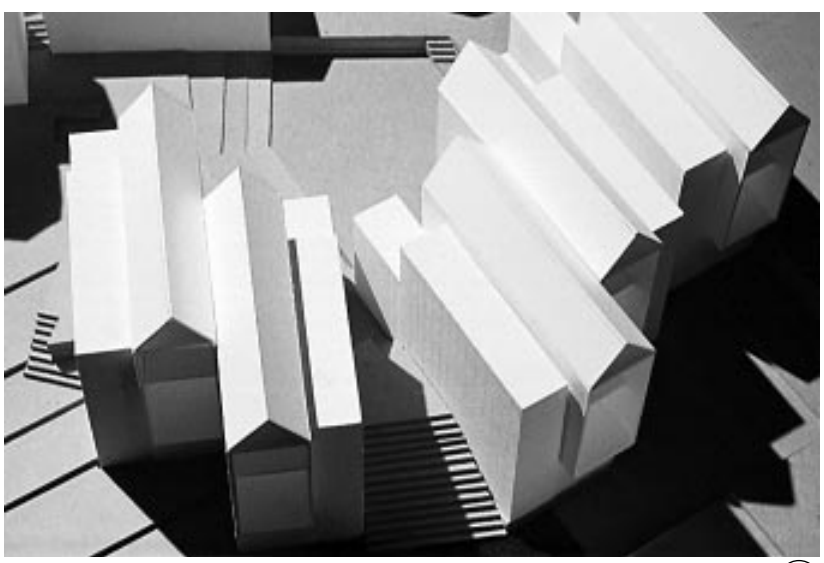
2.79 pedestrian approach from axis



3.28 diagram of sunset from project site



2.80 theater-stair from axis



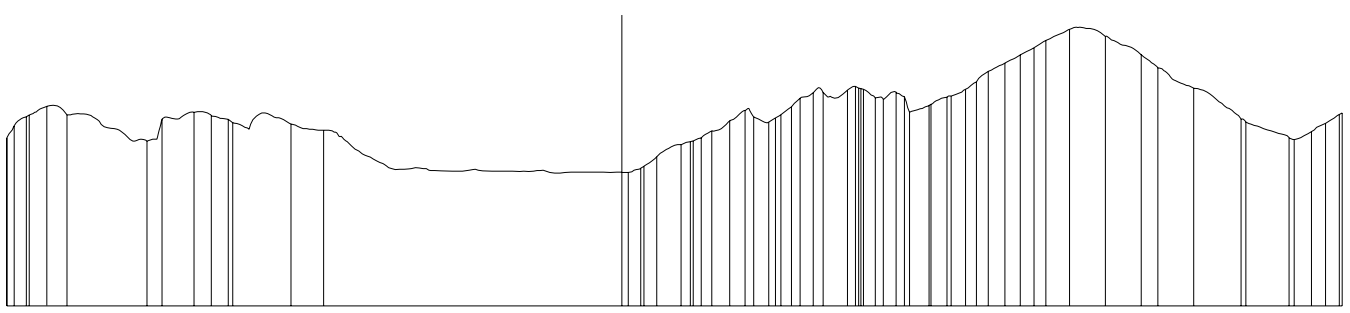
2.81 view into amphitheater from axis

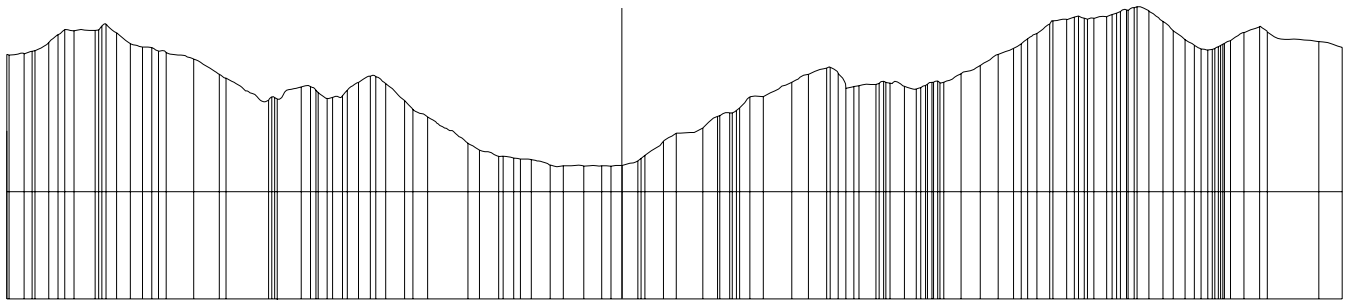
2.82 sunset projected on mountain to south

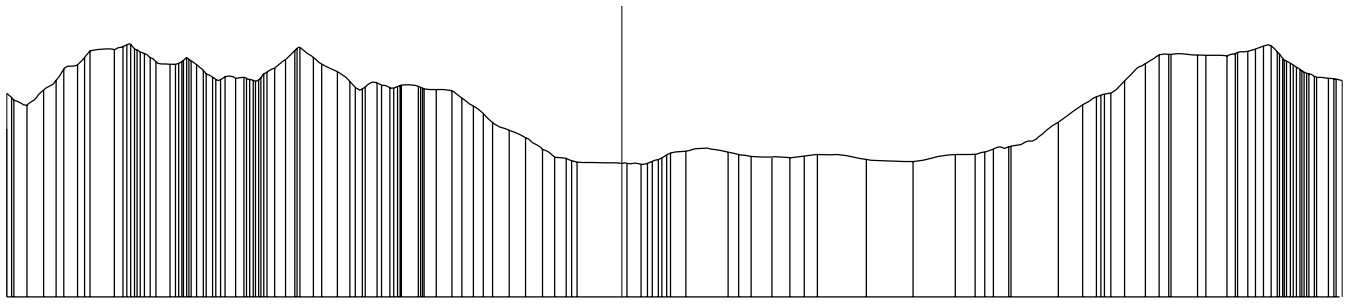
baroque theater 1.13

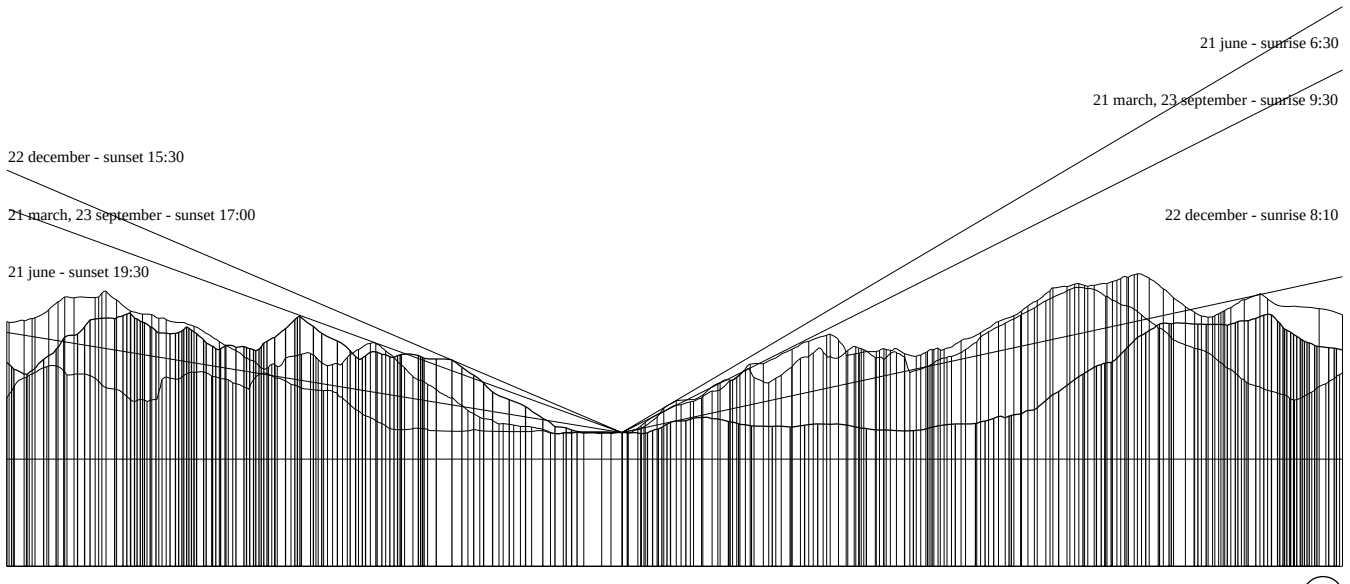
During the Baroque period architects increasingly utilized perspective as a major design tool. Initial development of perspective began during the Renaissance, and required that the artist (then generally a painter) select a single dominant point of view. The idea of a single vantage point determined by a single artist fit well with Baroque's authoritative and deterministic position. Use of perspective in architecture came into full force during this period. Baroque rules of perspective had lasting impact on theater design. 3.23 2.78 3.24

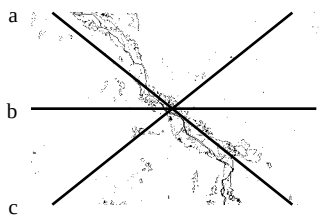
The main stair displays Baroque influence by utilizing axis, controlled point-of-view and perspective, and theatrical and social emphasis. The designed steps lay on the town's main axis and create a space for viewing both natural phenomena and social events. The steps provide a place to sit to watch the setting sun.: while the Alps around Maggia block direct rays of the setting sun (they shadow the village from low-angled light), the sunset is indirectly visible from the steps. As the sun's last rays strike the mountain side to the south, the mountain glows like a projection screen while Maggia itself lays in darkness. In this way the design helps materialize light, one of the major issues of Baroque planning. The axial street also provides a backdrop for social events, funneling the view down the dwelling-lined street to the distant church which is seen in perspective. 3.31 2.82 3.28











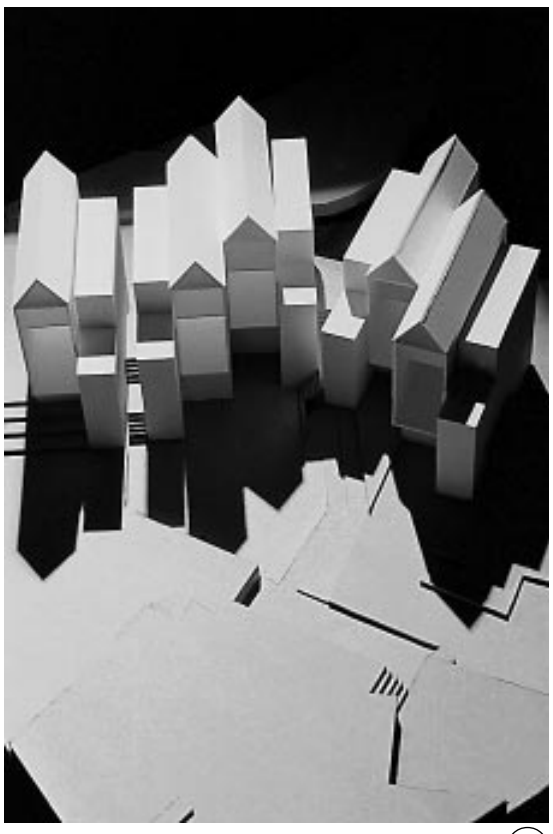
separated alp sections through site 3.29

Concerns in theater design have shifted since the Baroque era. In contemporary theater design, a deterministic vanishing point is no longer essential. The contemporary "theater in the round" emphasizes democratic concerns by allowing the audience to gather around the stage as a community. Concepts of human interaction within the theater have changed, and the performers' and audience members' active participation with each other and with the space itself has increased importance.

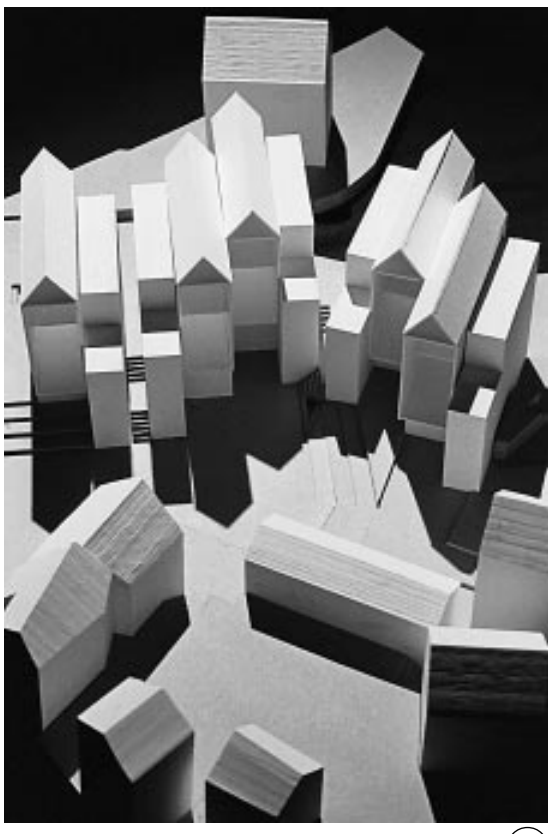
The proposed amphitheater, nestled between old and new houses, provides an environment which can be continually changed and reinterpreted. While the design suggests some arrangements (one with the raised area beside the kitchen gardens serving as a stage and a second with a central lowered stage surrounded by the audience), numerous configurations are possible. The houses' roof gardens provide balconies for viewing activity in the amphitheater courtyard below, and (from the middle two units) into the theater-like stair. One may also view activity in the amphitheater from inside each dwelling, or through the window of each outdoor dining area.

The amphitheater creates a flexible set of spaces which encourage community use and interaction and promotes formal, informal, and impromptu activities. The landscape's numerous level changes and the varying spatial conditions created around the housing structures also provide rich play places for children in an enclosed space protected from the street. The families' kitchen gardens are consolidated to the east side of the units, leaving a majority of the land open for social events.

Orientation of the sun plays a crucial role in the landscape design. During warm months the amphitheater receives sunlight throughout the day. The outdoor eating spaces, open to the sky, also receive sunlight during warm months but are shaded by enclosing walls. The dining enclosures windows (in three of the units) align precisely with the sun's setting rays on the longest day of the year, admitting light directly onto the family dining tables. Conversely, on the year's shortest day, the sun rises on the design's south side, with rays piercing into the complex's narrow pedestrian street.

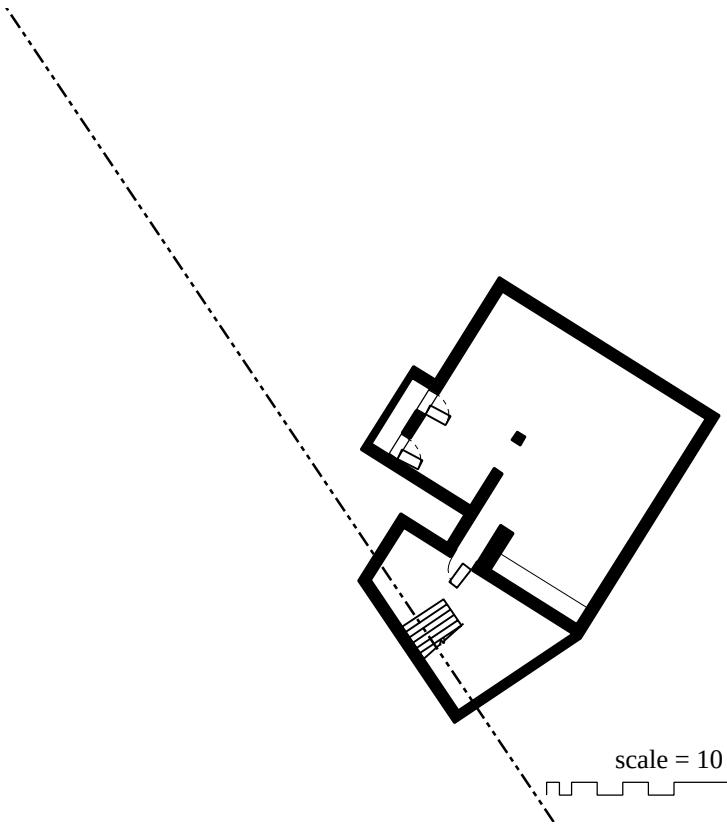


winter sunrise down stair-street 2.83



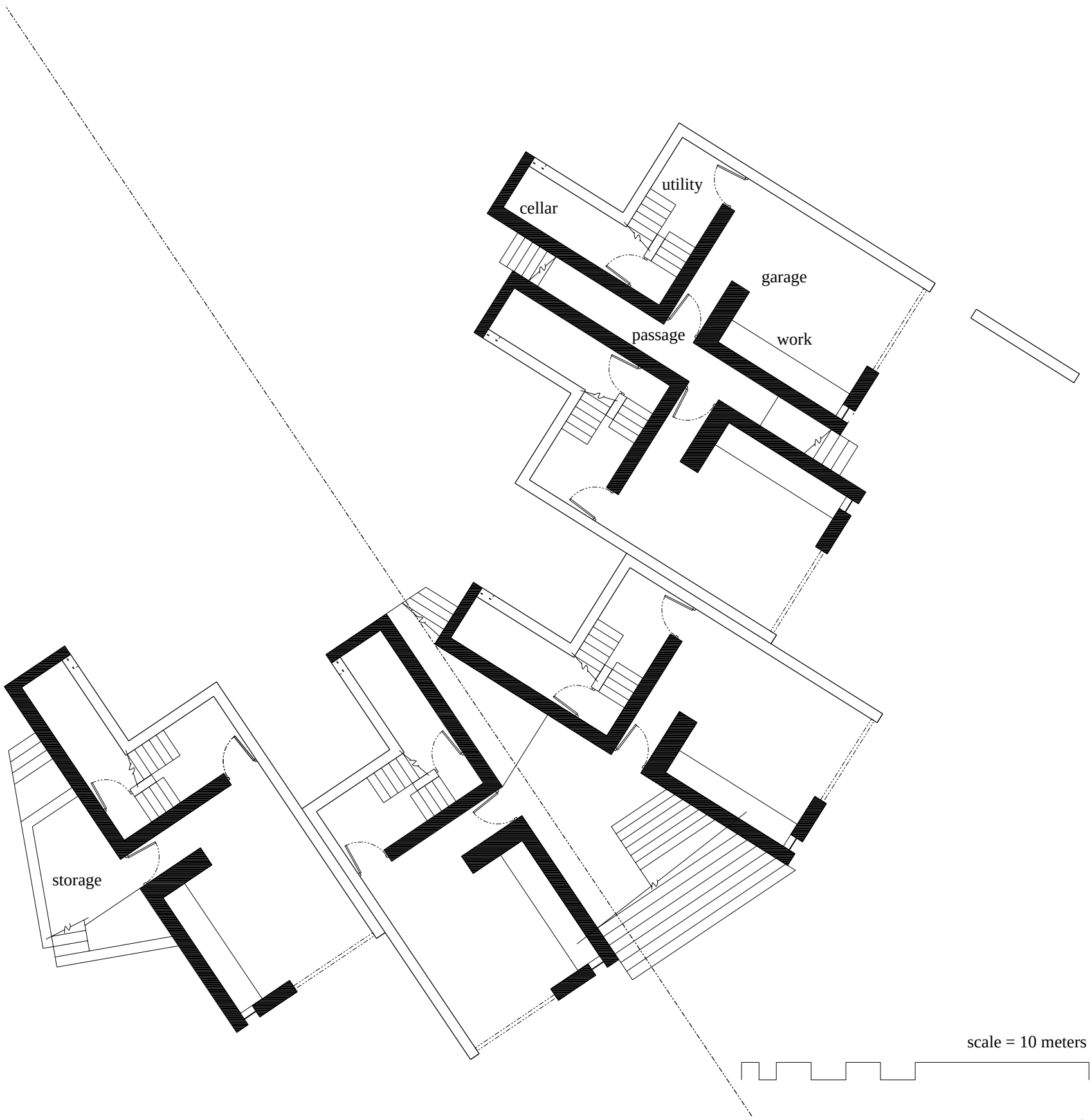
amphitheater enclosure from north 2.84

amphitheater enclosure from south 2.85



scale = 10 meters

bomb shelter plan 3.30



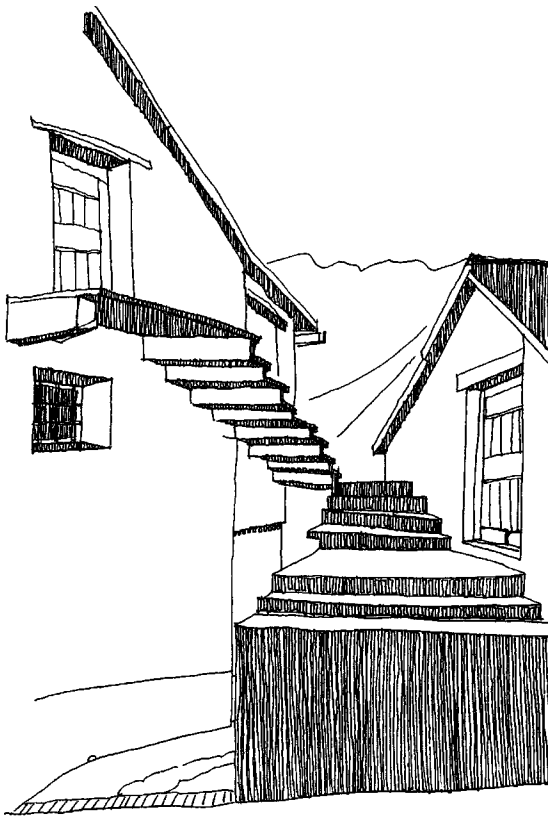
scale = 10 meters

ground floor plan 3.31

Ledges, courtyards, freestanding towers, and magnificent outdoor stairs have become prohibitive luxuries for us.
[due to contemporary materialism] not so much because of a lack of money as because of a lack of genuine, vital, fundamental approach.
More than that the grand stairway has become an interior feature in this age of interior living.

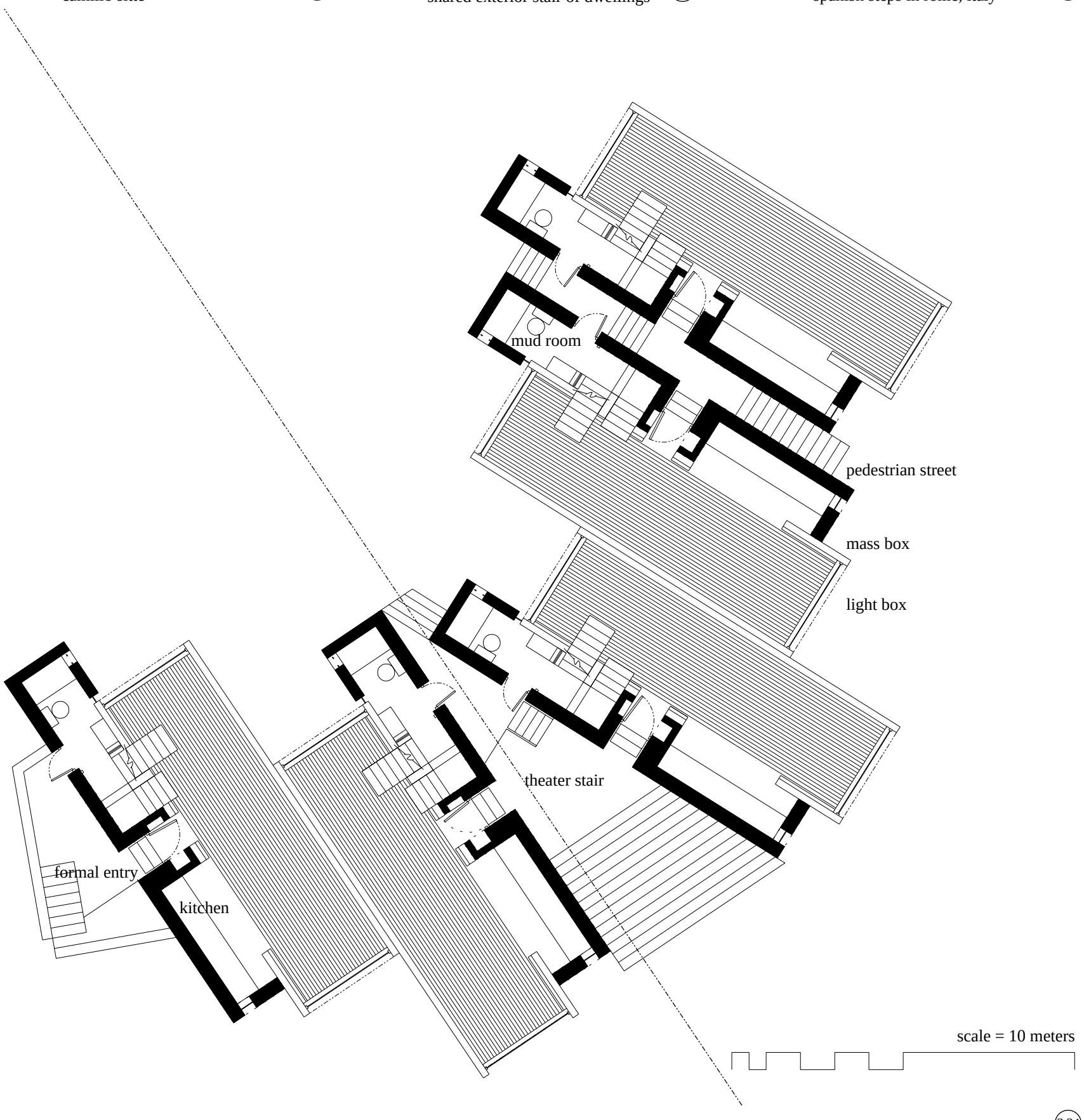
[These] charming effects must be forsworn in an age that no longer builds little by little as circumstances at the site suggest, but instead carries on its construction according to calculations made at the drawing board.

camillo sitte 1.15



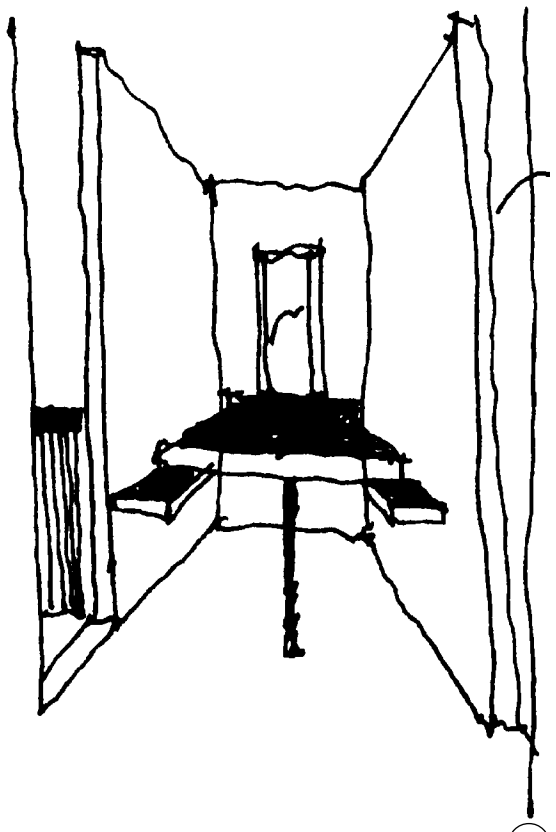
shared exterior stair of dwellings 3.32

spanish steps in rome, italy 2.86

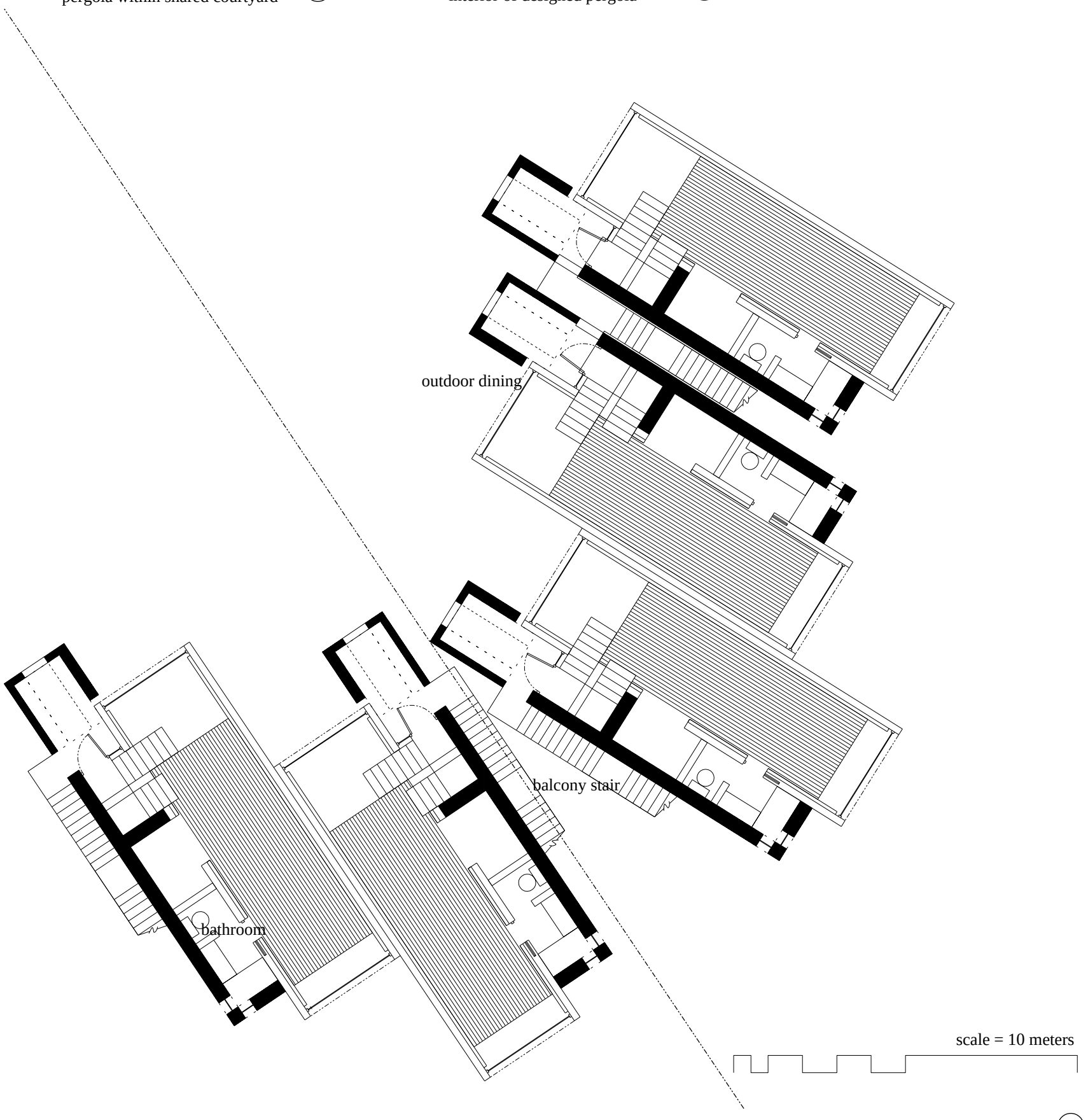


first floor plan 3.34

pergola within shared courtyard 2.87

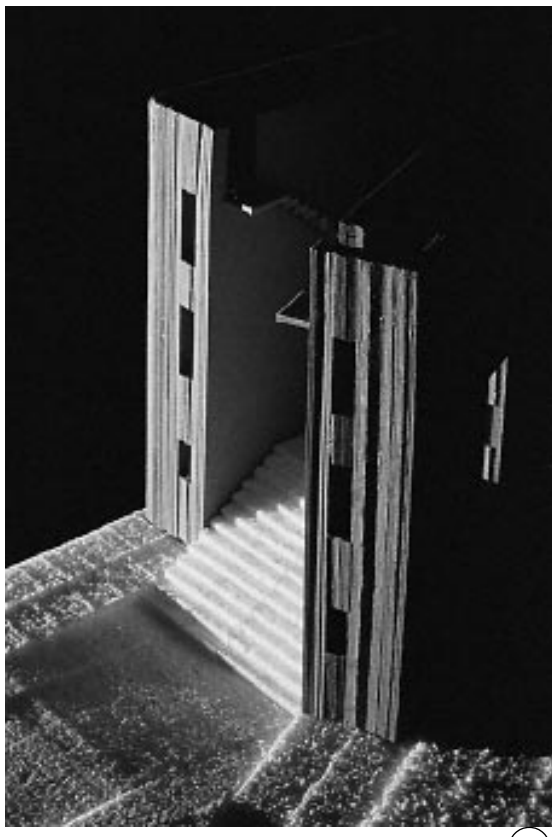


interior of designed pergola 3.33

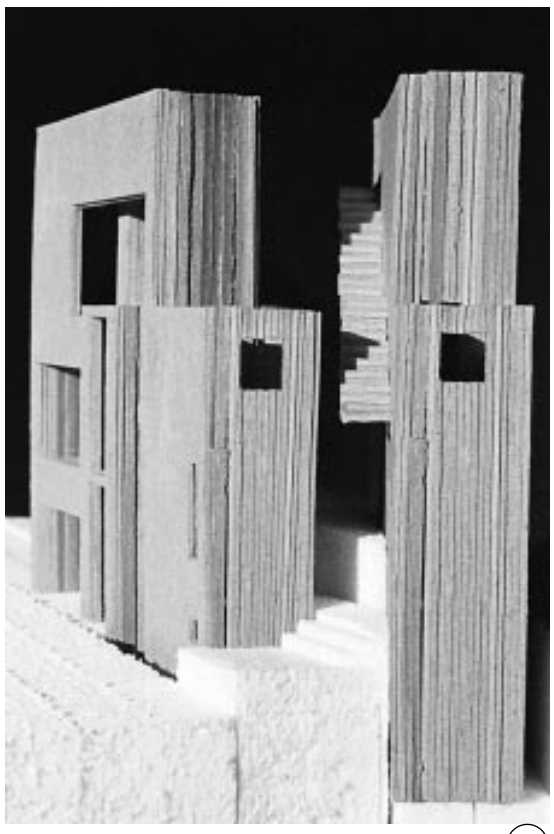


second floor plan 3.35

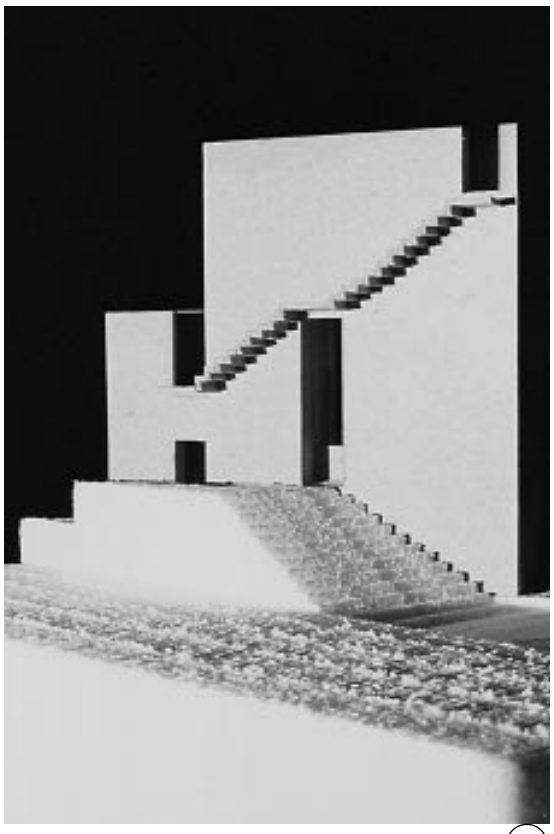
0.36



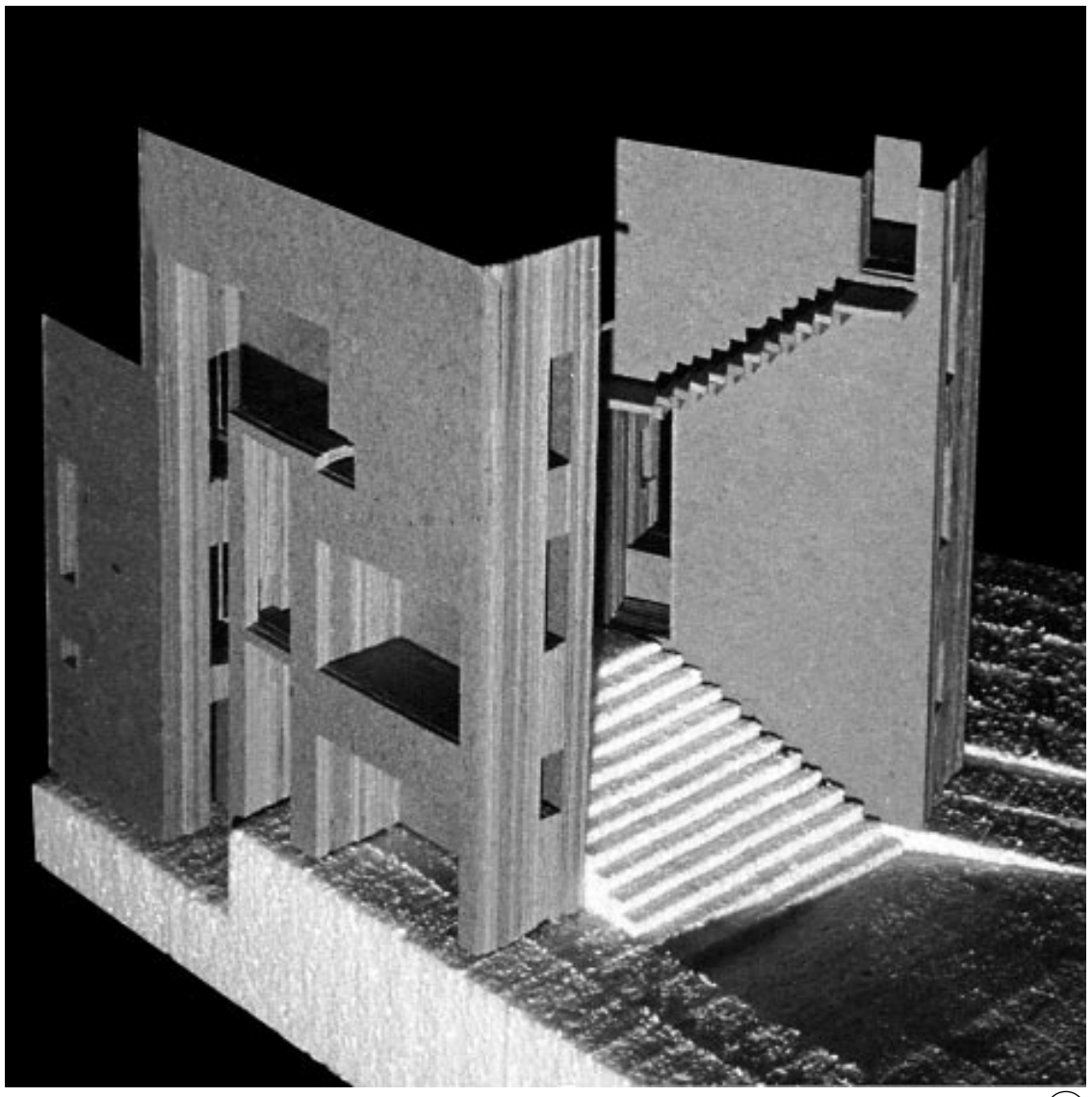
level change along axis at site 2.88



balcony stair and pergola window 2.89

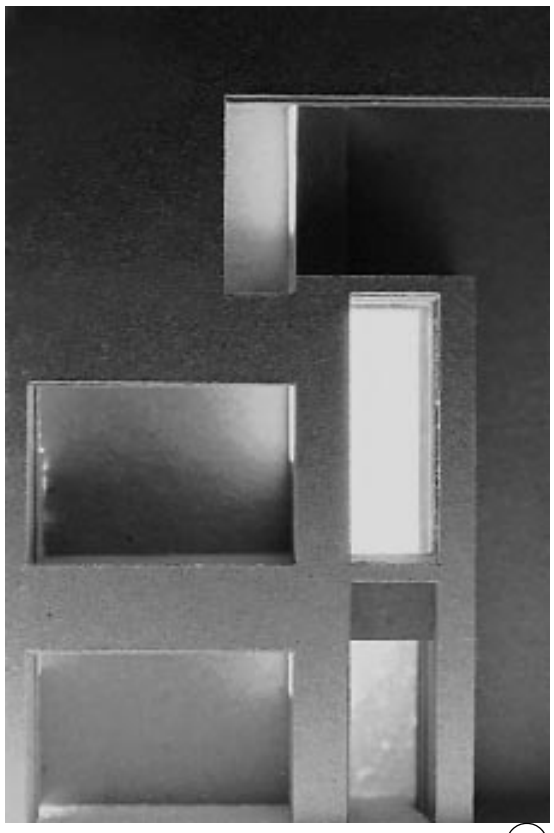


balcony stair and house entrance 2.90



mass on interior side of dwelling 2.93

public street and theater space 2.91



interior lighting conditions of mass 2.92

2.93 2.95 2.94 2.92 3.34 3.31 3.34 3.34 2.94

The interior of each proposed dwelling includes a range of spaces reminiscent of both old and new construction. Each concrete masonry mass supports a light-filled wooden box above ground level. Glass facades on either end of the wood box allow spacious, flowing interior spaces, once possible only on the exterior of buildings. The open-ended roof protects the wooden box and frames the sky, making it visible from within each house. Both ends of the second floor overlook living areas below and provide two-story vertical spaces within the house.

Echoing traditional construction, the massive core provides service functions for living: cooking, washing, food storage, and vertical transportation. These tight spaces are illuminated sparsely by "half light," the filtered light which Luis Barragan described as "the sort of light that imposes a sense of tranquillity." Louis Kahn echoed Barragan's notion of serenity, explaining that "even a space intended to be dark should have just enough light from some mysterious source to tell us how dark it really is." Barragan's claim that "it has been a mistake to abandon the shelter of walls for the inclemency of large areas of glass" suggests the same kind of conflict between old and new construction that is evident in Maggia today.

To enter the house's main living space, one travels up an exterior stair and crosses the dwelling's threshold, a slot punctured through the mass. Just inside the door of the entry, openings carved into the mass provide places to store shoes and jackets. Moving around the house, one constantly crosses from closed to open space. One may also enter the house through the garage at ground level, or through the mud room from the amphitheater / garden. Entering the dwelling always involves a transition through the tight mass into the open living space.

Traditional houses provided tight service spaces, but little else. The kind of served spaces Louis Khan describes were available only outside the medieval houses. Contrasting the old, the proposed dwellings provide distinct "served" areas within the wooden boxes. The light boxes remain relatively free of equipment needed for living and provide the kind of intimate open spaces once found only within the family pergola. Objects within the wooden boxes are intended to be moveable as to adjust to the changing needs of the inhabitants. Fixed objects within the massive cores, such as mailboxes, stairs, and light fixtures, are fabricated from punched aluminum sheet and are attached to the masonry. Thus the cores provide a permanent telluric sense of space while the wooden boxes, composed of smaller pieces, seem more temporal and changeable.

light box with ceiling openings 2.94

light box on summer evening 2.95

courtyard on summer evening 2.96

designed landscape

A walk through Maggia reveals a sharp line dividing the town's architecture. The old houses maintain aesthetic, structural, material, and conceptual continuity, but provide poor living conditions and little spatial diversity. The new houses seem to reject the mentality which built the old: they exist as individual elements, isolated, with little emphasis toward addressing the community or maintaining historical continuity. The proposal attempts to bridge the old and the new by providing a physical transition, a built translation, between the two.

The proposed houses would tighten Maggia's urban fabric by helping connect the old and new into a single entity and by providing community spaces to unite the community. The designed structures would provide essential elements necessary for healthy living within a small, densely-populated space. The design would incorporate current technology and materials with historic concerns of community, resourcefulness and form.

An intervention such as the one outlined here is necessary to alleviate the stark contrast between Maggia's core and periphery. New construction techniques common in Maggia's contemporary houses afford healthier facilities for living: the town's medieval core must also continually be rebuilt and raised to the living standards possible today. Without intervention the old town will fade and become a relic — an unusable symbol of the past. This proposal calls for revitalizing the town center by contributing new elements which raise the quality of living standards within Maggia for all of the village's inhabitants. By incorporating the ideals of community and economy of the old town, and the variety of interior spaces and the hygienic advances utilized in the new buildings, the proposed design contributes to the ongoing lives of individuals, families, and the community.

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sparsely-populated alpine valley

street preceding central church

maggia resident with instrument

Education

Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Master of Architecture, December 1996
Virginia Masonry Society Competition, Second Place, April 1996
Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Bachelor of Architecture *Magna Cum Laude*, May 1993
Outstanding Student Award, April 1993

Experience

Lecturer (Foundation Studies Program)
VPI College of Architecture and Urban Studies, 1993-1994

Graphic Design, Exhibition and Symposium Coordinating
VPI College of Architecture and Urban Studies, 1995-1996

Program Support Technician (Developing Internet Web Sites)
VPI College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 1996

Graduate Assistant (Architectural History and Hospital Research)
VPI College of Architecture and Urban Studies, 1996

Assistant Director
Camp Holiday Trails for Children with Special Health Needs, 1995

International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) to Switzerland, 1994

Computer and Graphic Consultant, 1990-1994

Architecture Office Assistant
Mills, Oliver and Webb: Architects, Engineers and Planners 1989-1990

Newspaper Reporter and Photographer
News Messenger, 1986-1988

Skills

Architectural Drawing and Model Building

Exhibition and Event Coordination, Public Speaking

Machine Shop	Metal and Wood, Airplane Building

Research

Computer:	
Architectural Drawing and Modeling	(MicroStation 5, Rendering)
Graphics Tools	(PhotoShop 3.0, PageMaker 5.0)
Web Tools	(HTML Scripting, BBEdit)
Word Tools	(MicroSoft Word 6.0, Excel)
Presentation Tools	(Director)
Photography:	
Black and White Processing	
Model Photography	
16-mm Film and Video	Photography, Animation and Editing

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