

site visit

The studio began with a site visit in early September 2005, prior to the start of the school semester. The visit had two major goals: first, to gain a personal understanding of the Roncagette Park site, its larger context, and its major issues, and second, to begin to consider possible projects and policies for the area. Our days were full and very structured.

During the daytime we heard many presentations and visited parts of the site; in the evenings we met to discuss issues and organize information. It became clear that one purpose of our work was to illustrate the consequences of various strategic sets of assumptions, about which there was not yet a consensus.



meetings at zip



bicycling to and from parco roncagette



diagramming sessions



tour of sewage treatment plant



presentations by experts and officials
photos from padova site visit



tour of venice lagoon model



animated group discussions



dinner at la scacchiera

management teams

The class divided into four management teams, each taking a turn coordinating studio work for a period of three to four weeks.

The role of Management Team #1 was to organize the site visit and elements of site analysis, and to gain a common sense of "the problems" and "the opportunities" that needed to be incorporated into the studio's alternative proposals. Part of this organization took place during the visit to Padova; the rest occurred back in Cambridge. The two primary components of this phase of the studio were a list of project and policy ideas and a database for organizing and categorizing this information. In the brief week of our visit, we gained significant knowledge of the site and its complexities. As the week progressed, our purpose became more focused. Students were divided into geographical and topical subgroups to accomplish specific tasks of site inventory and assessment. Each evening, the team brainstormed potential design projects and policies for the site area. The pedagogical purpose of this exercise was to understand the site by proposing projects—whether derived from pre-existing plans, suggested by our hosts and speakers, or invented by studio members—and then examining their implications. Approximately 80 projects and policies were proposed during the site visit; they ranged from the small, such as installing a larger street sign indicating the entrance to Parco Roncagette, to the large, such as converting the entire park area into a sewage-treatment wetland system and habitat reserve. Back in Cambridge, additional proposals raised the total number of projects to 120. A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer program was then used to create a geo-referenced diagram for each of the original hand-drawn ideas.



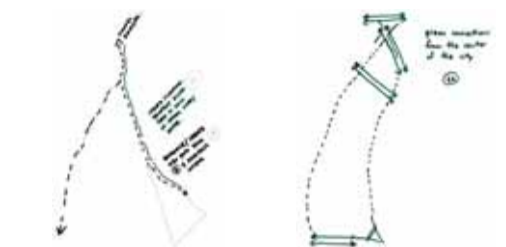
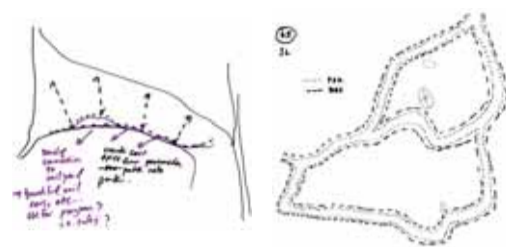
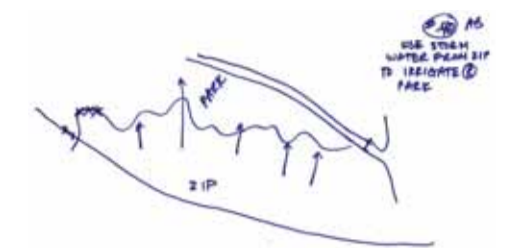
matrices created during diagramming exercises in padova



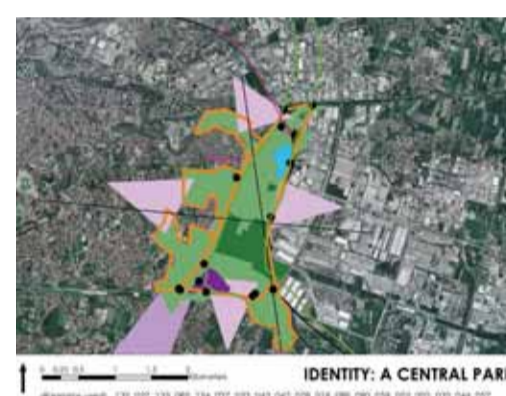
spreadsheet of 250 digitized diagrams



examples of diagrams, drawn on tracing paper over large aerial photo



examples of themed site plans created from gis diagrams



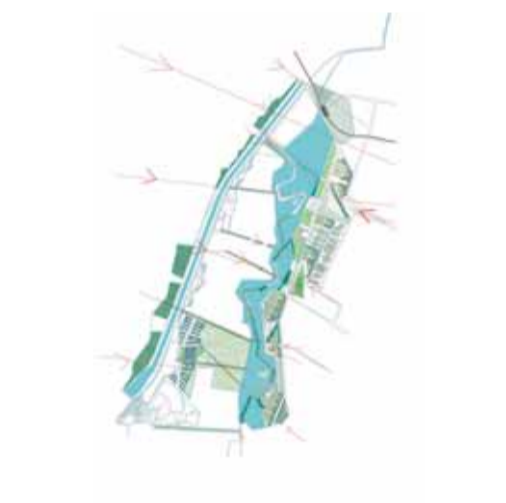
Management Team #2 coordinated a strategy to define alternative scenarios for the study area, which was defined as the core Roncagette Park site, and its context within the greater Padova region. Students considered the variety of issues that Padova and ZIP might encounter in shaping future physical, economical, environmental, and cultural development. This effort was informed by our site visit experience, conversations with official and academic authorities, and research on development trends in the municipalities of the region. Once these issues were outlined, each was developed into a themed site plan by the students, who selected and overlaid the 20 most appropriate GIS diagrams to represent each theme. A survey of the most frequently used diagrams from this exercise allowed the group to define the most essential decisions to be made regarding the future of the Park. Each student then created a new site plan illustrating the outcome of a particular combination of these decisions; while it became necessary to create additional diagrams at this stage, bringing the total to close to 250, no more than 20 diagrams were used for any given plan. The resulting 13 schemes were presented in early October. Common projects and policies that emerged as most critical to these alternatives were then researched in depth by students working as individuals and in teams. Projects were developed within a coordinated structure, enabling comparisons to be easily made among the designs. After a series of subsequent exercises intended to narrow the number of alternatives yet continue to illustrate the major decisions and assumptions, six scenarios were chosen for continued development. Groups of two and three students then developed more detailed designs for each of the six alternatives, considering both the core Roncagette Park site and the larger regional context. These six schemes, along with a compilation of relevant research and analysis performed by the students, were presented in late October to a delegation from ZIP, Padova, and nearby municipalities.



photos from october presentation to italian guests



delegates from padova and zip discussing proposed alternatives



examples of alternatives presented



The role of Management Team #3 was to lead the group in determining the number and nature of alternatives with which to move forward. Through insight gained from the October review of site plans and research, and much discussion and debate among members of the studio, it was decided to narrow the alternatives to three. Teams of four students worked to create comprehensive designs for each of the three scenarios presented in this exhibition. At the same time, individuals undertook additional analysis and development of the main projects required by the final three alternatives. By this point, each student had worked on at least two projects in depth: one that would significantly impact the Roncagette Park core and one with implications for the contextual region of our study. The three alternative scenarios, incorporating these more fully-developed projects, were reviewed in late November by faculty from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.



constants and variables among the final three alternatives



scenario a



scenario b



scenario c

Management Team #4 organized and guided the process of creating our final presentation. This responsibility involved formulating visual representation standards to gather the studio's work into a synthesized form, outlining and delegating the tasks (including drawing, layout, writing, editing, and graphic design) required to create both a visual and a verbal representation of the group's ideas, and determining the most compelling presentation structure for describing the three alternative scenarios as part of a coherent whole.

In more ways than one, this studio and exhibition is a collaborative effort at its core. Although each student focused on particular topics, the final result is one cohesive proposal. This is the product of extensive discussion, efficient management, and an exceptional level of cooperation among a diverse group of students.



photos of production process

