ACTOR NETWORK ILANZ

HISTORY/CORE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

MEDIEVAL TOWN (1289)

Thanks to its geographical location, at the intersection of multiple valleys, the town was able to control the surrounding area. One of its most important income sources were taxes on goods passing through the valley. As a location of transit, naturally, a hospitality industry grew over time, accommodating traders and travellers from afar. Together with the cities of "Chur" and "Davos", Ilanz became a representative of the "Three Leagues", further expanding its regional influence that lasted until the 19th century. After that, the town was able to prove itself as an important market place for trading cattle.

2 SONTGA CLAU (1408)

The settlement area on the other side of the Rhein has always been connected to the core city with a bridge. It was an important and crucial instrument to control both sides in order to collect the taxes. The development of the area was mostly driven by the catholic congregation in the 19th and 20th century, as they implemented important buildings such as the forerunners of today's hospital, a school and the monastery that was built in 1975.

3 TRAIN STATION "RHB" (1903)

The opening of the train station at the beginning of the 20th century was seen as an important step towards a more modern time. Connecting Ilanz to Chur in the east and Disentis in the west, it was possible to reach a wider and also international market. Especially the timber and cattle industry could profit from the railway. Even to this day, thanks to the abundance of forest in the valley, timber is being exported internationally to Austria and Italy.

4 PERIPHERY (19TH CENTURY)

The periphery north of the town centre became habitable after a first correction of the Rhein in the 19th century. Here especially, a mix of hospitality, craft, business and service industry developed.

VISION FOR ILANZ

A TRAIN STATION "RHB"

As the centre of Surselva, whose agglomeration roughly counts 20'000 people, the train station is of undeniable importance. Around 1'500 people commute daily to Ilanz, of which around a third works in the public health sector. In the near future, a new station is to be built, containing mixed functions. The bus terminal connects Ilanz to the surrounding villages, numbering 12 bus lines in total. The town is used as starting point for hikes in summer, or as gateway to several skiing areas nearby.

B PEDESTRIAN AREA/MARKET

A large pedestrian area spanning between the medieval town and St. Clau connects the two sides of the city. Along this lane, many restaurants and smaller cafés are located, making it a beating and connective artery for the city. As one of the most important cultural goods, the weekly market is brought into the city, contributing to the lively experience along the axis. The market vendors come from all around the region, selling their locally grown products, or cheese from the summer pastures.

C TOWN PLAZA

The town plaza acts as the political representation of the 12 villages that banded together to form the new municipality of Ilanz/Glion. Located right at the entrance to the medieval town, and next to the central street leading into the peripheral commercial district, it resides at a prominent location frequently visited by inhabitants and tourists alike. Especially the fountain provides a refreshment for hikers, bikers and citizens.

D PERIPHERY

The periphery has grown into the commercial centre of Ilanz, hosting most of the restaurants, services such as bike mechanics, and smaller shops. It is the connector between the medieval town and the train station.

E PUNT MARCAU

The basic outlook of the project is to address the situation revolving around the existing "Rhine Bridge" on a smaller scale, while also addressing the rather problematic division of the two city halves on an urban scale.

Looking at the situation in Ilanz, one can identify the disconnection between the medieval town centre (1) and St. Clau (2). One factor is of natural reason, the Rhine flows through the city, and thus dividing it. Another factor is the existing "Rhine Bridge" which connects the two city halves on one hand, but also contributes to the disconnection on the other hand. The bridge acts as a chokepoint, since it is the only connection within the city's boundaries, which results in a rather confusing traffic situation around, where cars, pedestrians, trains and bikers get in the way of each other.

The project aims to resolve this situation, while also trying to strengthen the connection between the two city halves. Looking at it from an urban scale, the industrial area right next to the train station (3) has been named as a development area by the city. As the city still does not know how to develop it exactly, it could be seen as an opportunity to resolve the situation around the existing bridge. The newly developed area could be connected to the other side with an additional car bridge, and thus relieving the traffic flow in the city centre. This would result in a closed loop that runs through the city, similar to the one that already exists west of Ilanz. Additionally, the traffic through the city's centre could be reduced to a one way street, further reducing the number of cars in the city centre.

With this, a continuous pedestrian area that runs from the medieval town to the other side of the river can be created, improving the situation for tourists, pedestrians and bike users, expanding the usable public space.

The intervention aims to become part of this public space, while also making use of the wide surface of the already existing bridge. Standing in close connection to the biggest cultural good and public good of Ilanz, namely its market, the new building could become its host and bringing it back to the centre.

The building itself is partly inspired by the old wooden Rhine bridge that spanned over the river. Using traditional methods of construction such as mortises and scarphs, a simple structure of diagonals and suspension posts spans over the whole length of the bridge without touching it. The structure creates a large hall on ground level that can be used for the market, events or concerts, while the upper floor acts as a pedestrian bridge, but doubles as space from which these events can be viewed from. Unlike traditional wooden bridges, that are usually covered in order to protect the structure from rotting, and thus rather dark, the idea here is to create a light flooded market hall. The roof construction is partly inspired by wooden shingles, but here using "glass tiles" that let sunlight in.

The intervention is thus a more modern ode to the past bridge that once spanned the Rhine, making it a new, but at the same time also nostalgic symbol in the city centre.





