

CONTEXT AND TOPOGRAPHY

Uetliberg as a mountain itself, its presence at the delta of the Lake Zürich has ever since had great and very important impact on Zürich's city scape not only as an important symbol and a highest peak.

Therefore already from the ancient times the hill had served people settled in this area as an outlook and watch post to secure the whole area of the lake and the trade roads. From a Celtic Oppidum and even older settlements the hill had been developed into a fortified ensemble (castle) that eventually through the 18-19th century turned into a ruin left back as there was no more use for it.

Since that the romantic ideas and the begin of Alps tourism together with growing wealth and prosperity in the city of Zürich sparked the first interest in Uetliberg as a retreat as place for recreation and daily tourism from the growing city. For this purpose the whole rock was made a plateau even with ruins of the castle being removed to make place for the new recreational facilities of the 19th century, first restaurants and hotel as well as an outlook tower. So the hill was turned into an urban piazza attached to the city later on by a new railway.

The only nature presented was the marvelous panorama of the city, Lake Zürich and the Alps, leaving the actual "piazza", and its structures being only the background scene.

The concept of the new hotel tries to react on the present context of these facilities on the Uetliberg and its chaotic situation to revive and underline the most important natural aspects of its place, landscape and morphology, tries to make a minimal touch on the environment, but creating a landscape addition at the same time, to frame for the visitors the most important, what brings them up there, the view from the top of the mountain!

CONCEPTUAL IDEA AND LANDSCAPE

The concept of the Kongress-hotel derives from the idea complementing the landscape situation of the hill by creating with the volumetry a new man-made urban platform and at the same time trying to keep the footprint of the volume in the landscape minimal as possible. The idea is also to create a situation when the landscape on top of the hill itself with its panoramic view becomes the main attraction, not a volume built on it. The project tries to avoid building the hill higher, but on the contrary tries to re-naturalize it in a way not only on the plane but also in the landscape panoramas as seen from the city.

The building uses the level difference on the given plot between the top of Uetliberg towards which one of the main roads leads and the lower part of the mountain, the south slope under it by the continuation of another main road. By this the program is arranged as a stacking of the two main programs and volumes Hotel and Convention center on each other. Both volumes rising from the landscape in section, Hotel vertically, Convention horizontally, meeting in a "head" with outlook and public facilities (restaurant/bar/lounge) form an L-shape volume bridging the two levels allowing for both programs accurate plan formations (vertical Hotel, horizontal Convention). So it also has two entrances, one down the hill for the Hotel and one for Conventions from the hill top.

By this the footprint stays minimal and building with its program "flows" in the trees of the forest, allowing interaction between the inside and outside space, letting the nature in.

The project also enlarges the surface of the hilltop as a "second finger", as an artificial outlook "piazza" on contrary to the reforested existing part. It invites people to walk over it and enjoy the unblock view of the landscape in front. At the end there is the entrance to the public facilities (bar/restaurant).

PROGRAMM AND SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Programmatically the building functions as two entities, Convention center in the horizontal part of the bridge and Hotel in vertical tower configuration. The Hotel has in the lower part a small private lobby, fitness and wellness and service floors in the basement. This is followed by 10 floors of rooms/apartments in different layouts and sizes from 30 to 60 m², each with a terrace. Over the Hotel in the "head" there are three floors of lounge/restaurant-small apero space/tourist public bar with terrace. There are small seminar spaces 2x200m/2x100m² + services in the bridging part, and in the top two floors the big convention hall of 950m². The conventions have separate entrance from the hill top.

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM

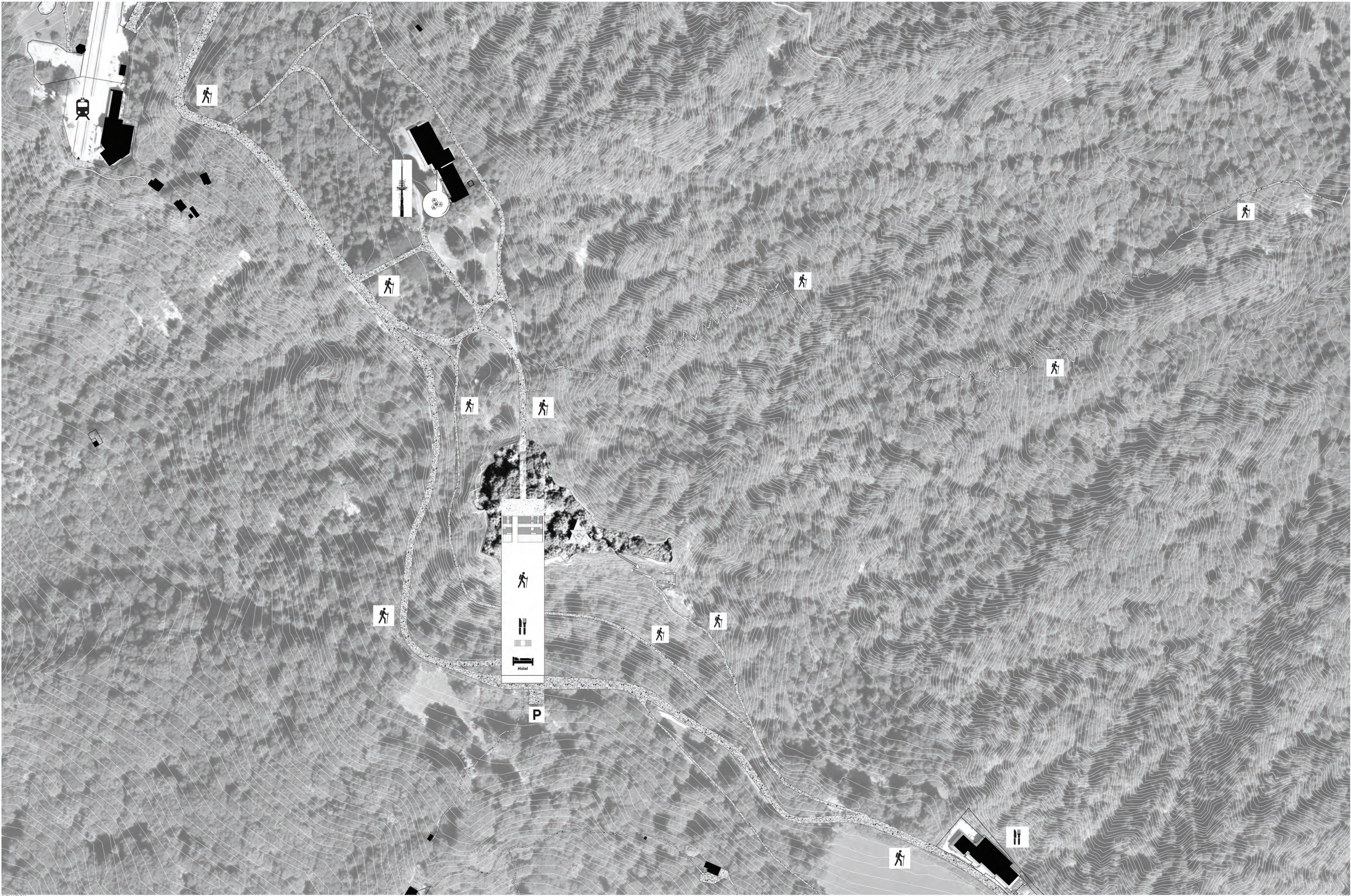
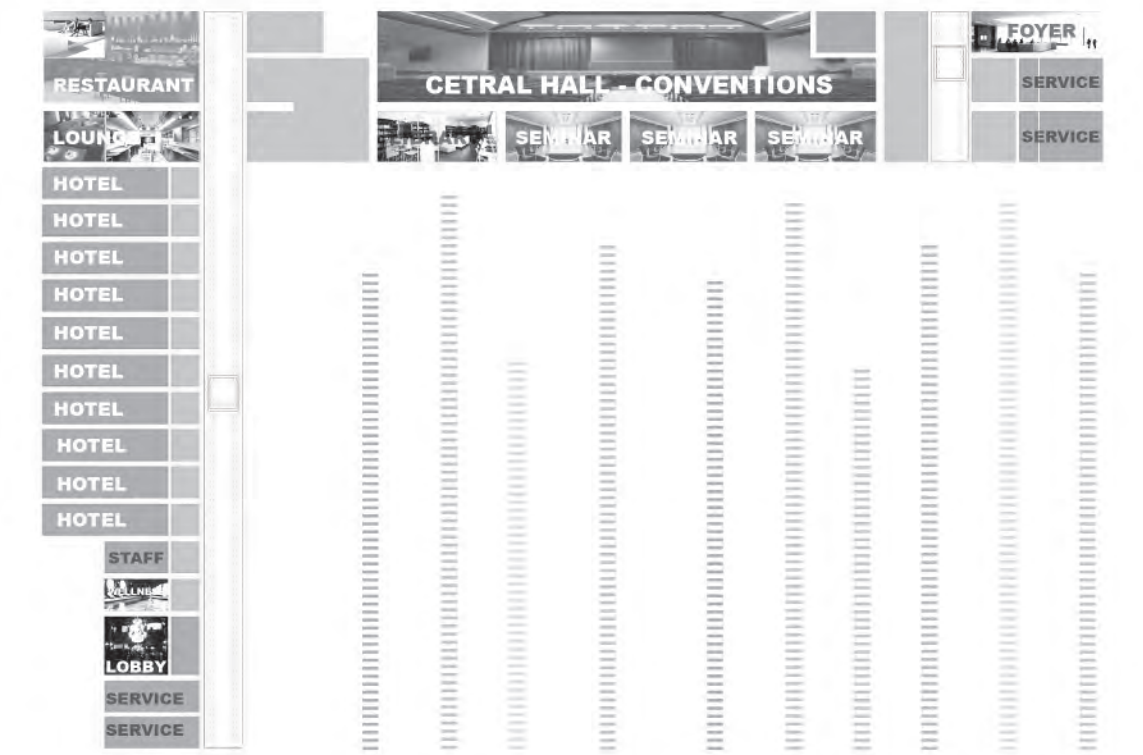
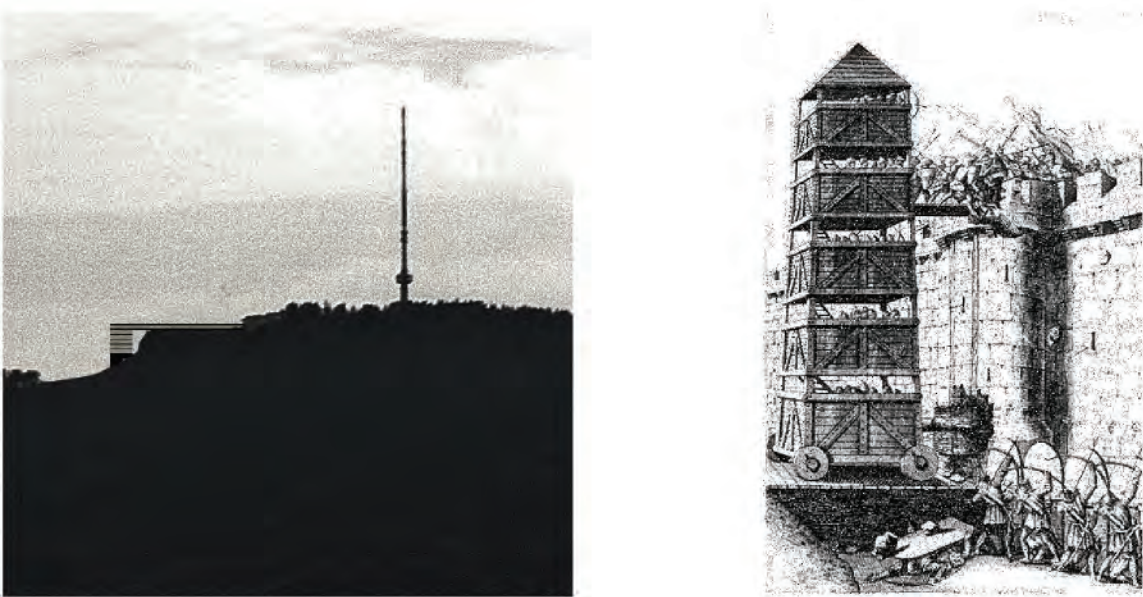
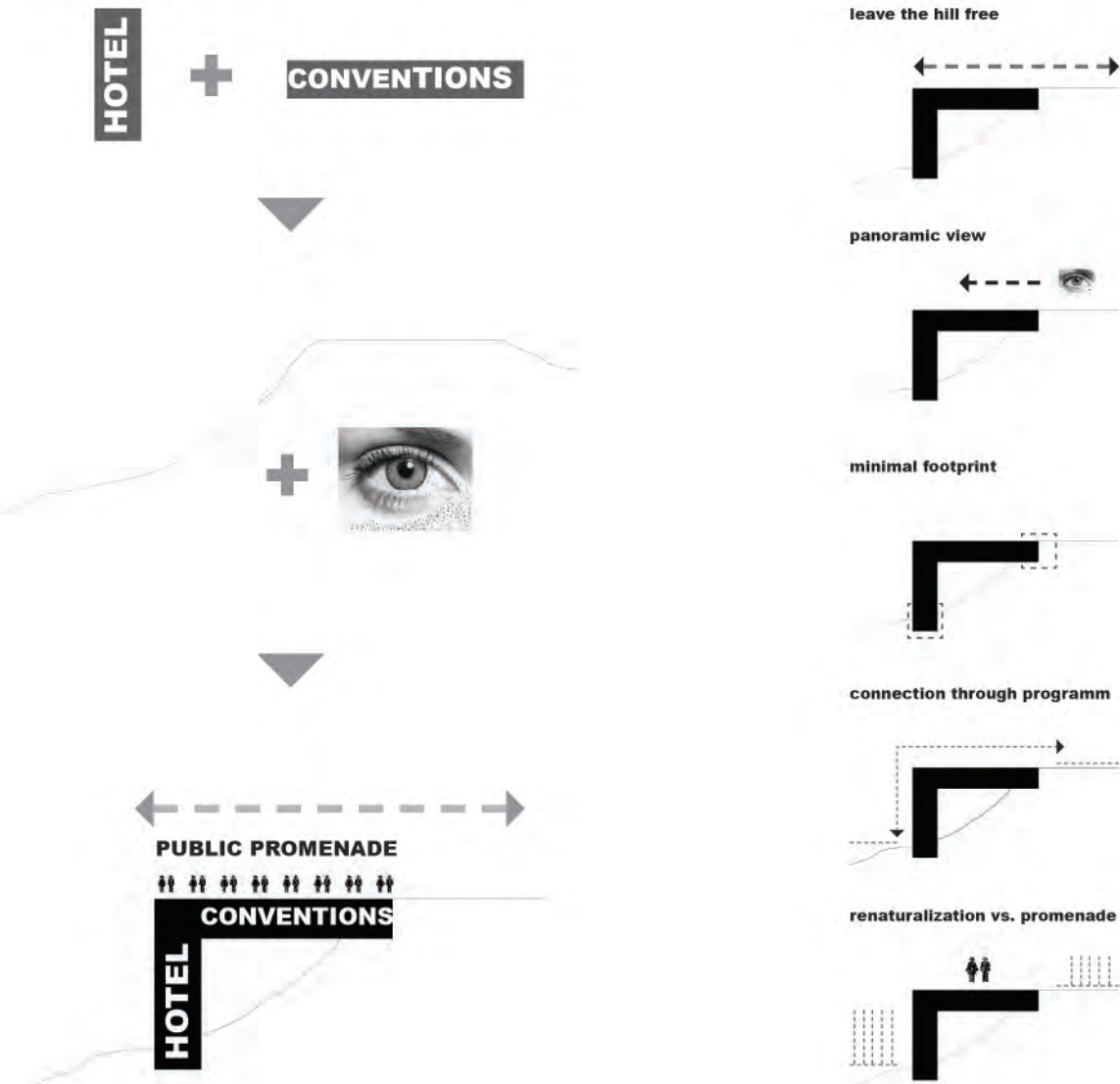
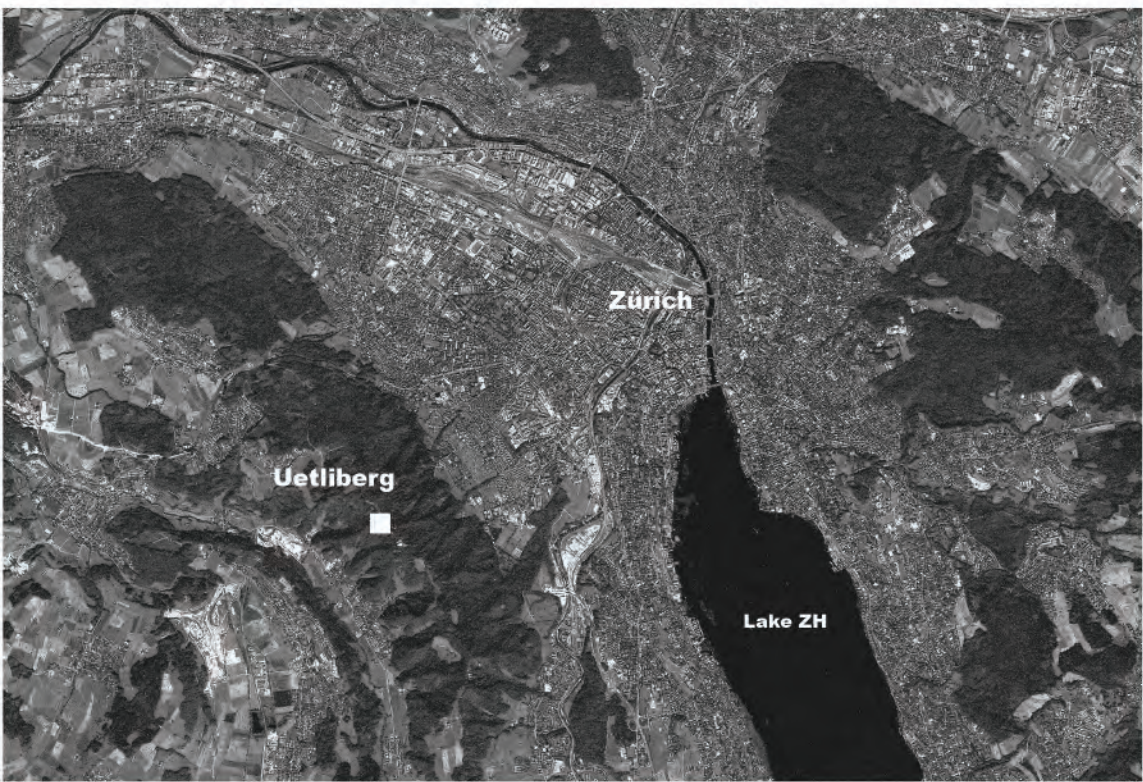
The structure of the building follows its concept of a 3-dimensional connection, a programmatic bridge that connects two points, in this case two landscape levels and inside its spatial and volumetric sequence.

The logic of the structure is a light-weight bridge-like steel construction, basically an L-shape truss-system in three floors relying on two massive supports in terrain, the only points the volume of the building actually touches the landscape, where also the access points are. These L-shape trusses are the main structural elements, additionally supported by one core of the high-rise hotel section. The spatial sequence and organization of the horizontal "Kongress" bridge sets also the logic of a sequence of transversal Vierendeel-Trusses holding the span between the main L-shape ones as a support for the main two-storey convention space above them. The Vierendeel-Trusses allow free spatial layout in-between them and flexibility of openings of the smaller lecture rooms. The roof of the main hall in two top floors is supported by a smaller truss-system from which also the passarella-connection between the foyer and convention-bar is hanging. The height of these trusses in the hall also serves for technical equipment under the roof.

MATERIALITY, FACADE AND EXPRESSION

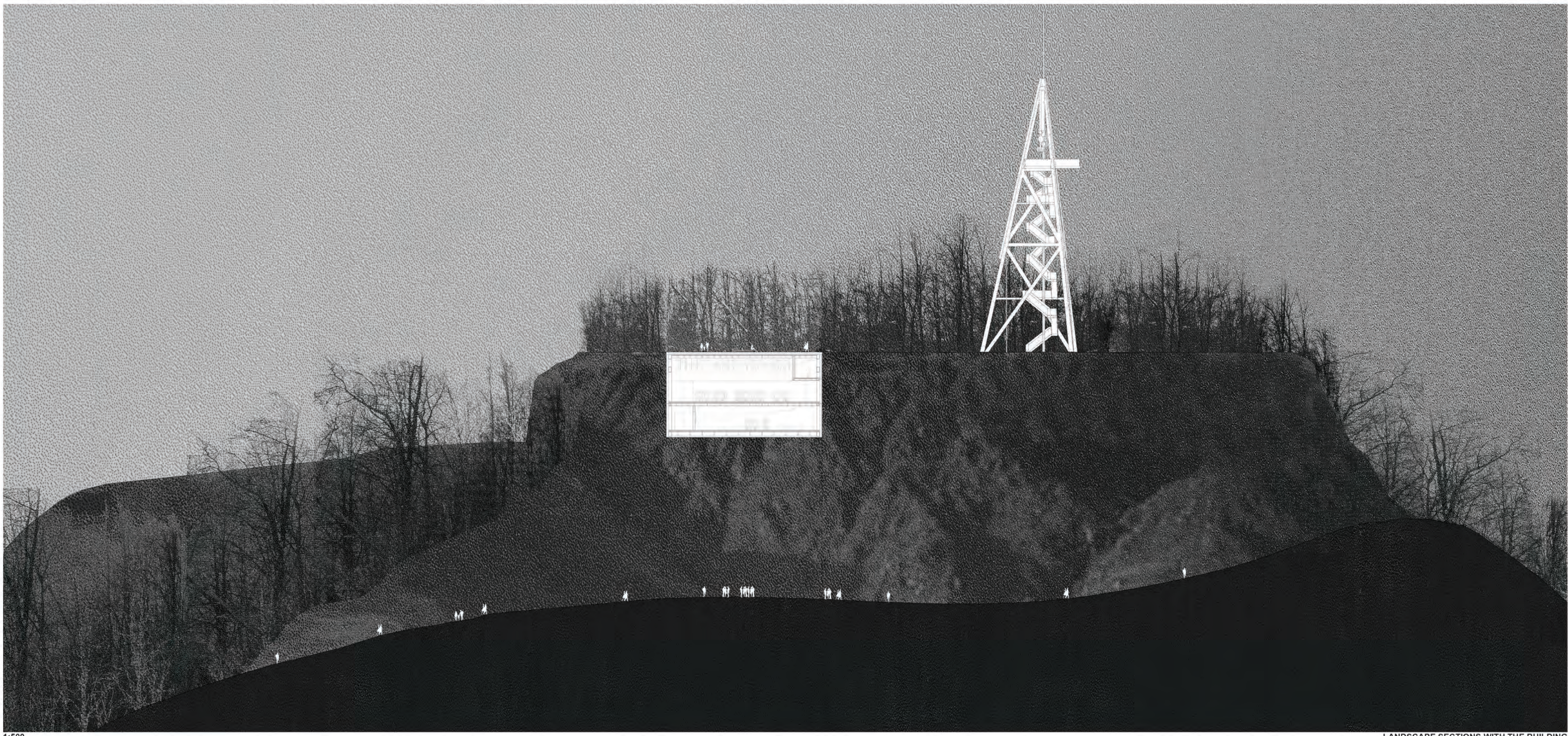
The materiality of not only the facade follows the main idea of openness and exposure of the inside spaces to the nature and natural condition of floating inside the forest and feeling of almost touching the trees around. This reflected also in the structure by maximal openness of the steel truss-system underlines the glass envelope of the facade, creating the closest possible contact and spatial flow between inside and outside. At the same time it reflects the nature and landscape around like a sort of camouflage-skin that wants to fit in and stands out at the same time. The inner organization is reflected in the facade by a pattern of clear and opaque surfaces and changing vertical divisions of the glass. This creates a play of different appearances and situations of the volume combined with the present natural element almost an endless number of expressions with minimal amount of material. The character of the building changes not only from day to night but also throughout the year with the nature around it like a mirror of a time loop.

Begeleitlich Landschaftsarchitektur - Professor Christoph Grotl / Begeleitlich Architektur und Kunst - Professor Karin Sander



SITUATION north-south oriented

1:1000



1:500

LANDSCAPE SECTIONS WITH THE BUILDING



1:500