RE:
DEPOT

DESIGN BRIEF

E1 | WS 2026/27

INTEGRATIVE/S DESIGN

EXTREMES

Dear Students,

*Welcome to **Re:Depot.***
In this studio we will work on one real site – the ÖBB-Postbus garage in Salzburg, and at the end of the semester, your work will be presented to ÖBB.

Starting with what already exists, we will retain the site's essential function while exploring how new spaces and programmes can be added.
In the face of environmental pressures, limited resources, growing cities and the housing crisis, we will ask: how can architecture do more with less? Rather than demolishing and building anew, we will explore strategies of reuse, adaptation and densification.

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Mónica Palfy Alonso-Alegre is an urban designer and computational specialist, working at the intersection of data-supported design, green infrastructure, and metropolitan systems.

On the following pages you will find the studio brief with the structure of the semester.

Good luck picking a studio, we look forward to working with you!
Monika & Mónica

ABOUT THE STUDIO

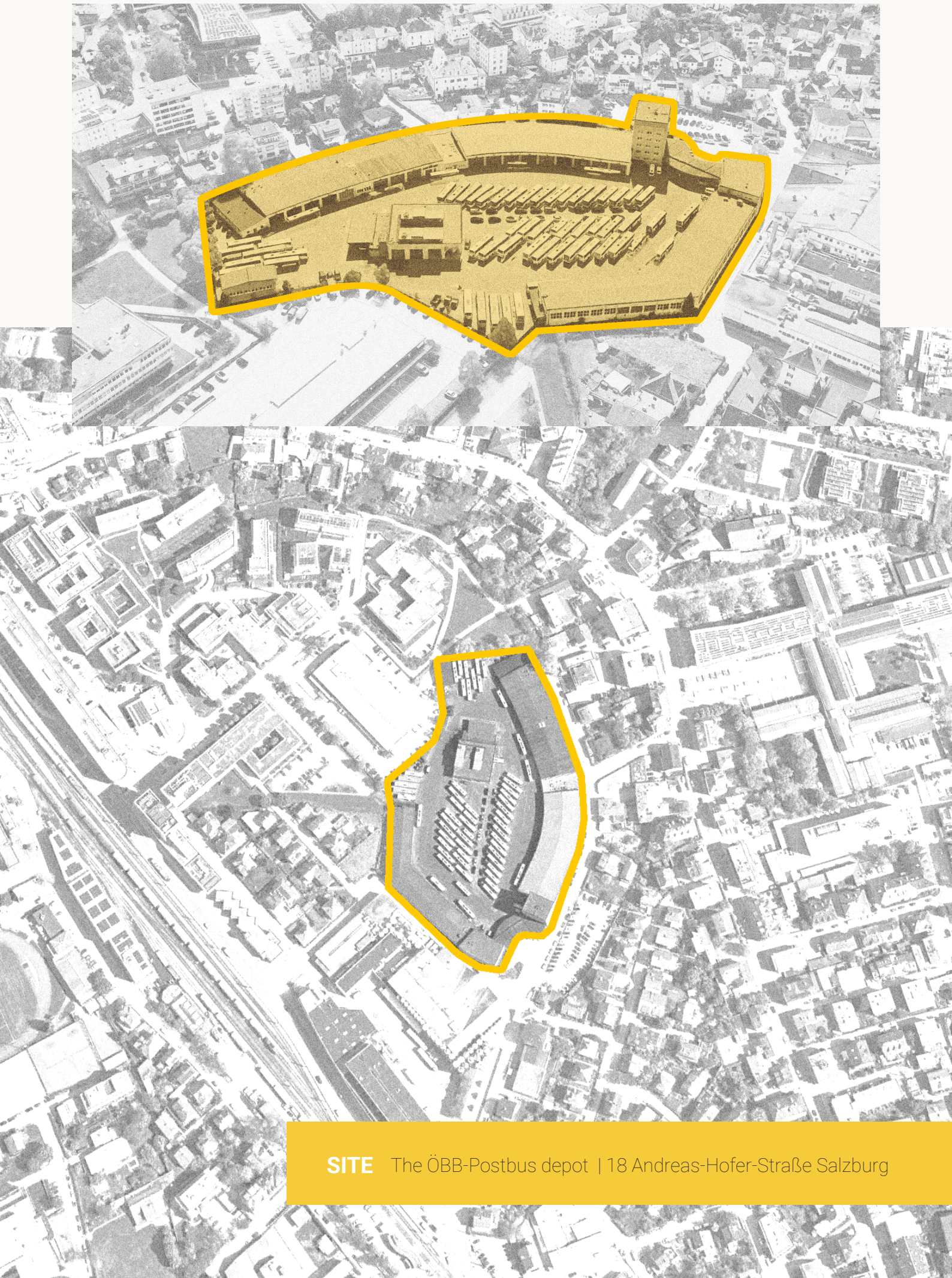
The ÖBB-Postbus depot in Salzburg is due to be renovated and forms the subject of an urban densification project. The essential functions of the bus depot are to be retained, while new programmes, such as housing, student accommodation, public uses, or other functions identified through your research, should be introduced as part of its transformation.

This project asks how architecture can do more with what is already there. Rather than treating the existing depot as something to be replaced, it should be understood as a resource: a structure, a material stock, an active infrastructure and a starting point for new forms of urban life. What can be retained, reused, transformed, added to, removed, or given a new purpose?

Your proposal should be informed by an analysis of the wider Salzburg context. What is missing? What does the city need? Which new functions could meaningfully coexist with an active transport infrastructure? Students are free to define their own programme and to decide how new and existing functions are organised across the site.

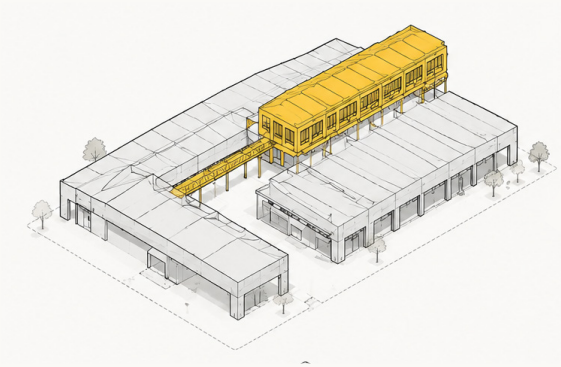
The results are to be presented to ÖBB.

(bus depot + ???)



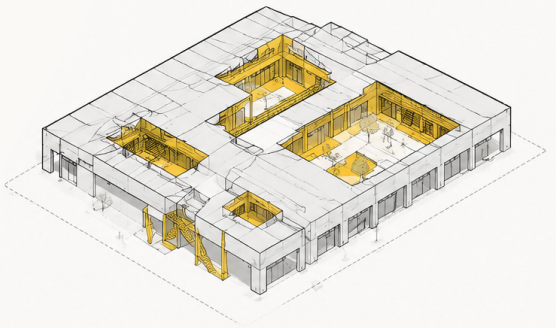
SITE The ÖBB-Postbus depot | 18 Andreas-Hofer-Straße Salzburg

Each project should be driven by one dominant architectural operation. Other operations may support the project, but one should remain the primary idea through which the transformation is developed.



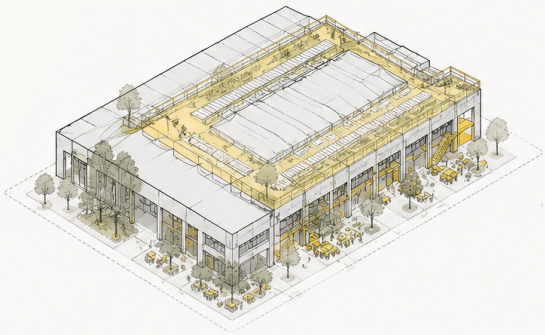
1 | ADD: Addition / Aggregation

Build onto, above, within or alongside what already exists. New spaces may occupy the roof, span across the depot, extend along its edges or make use of existing structures as their support. The challenge is to avoid simply placing an unrelated building on top of the garage. How can the new become possible because of the existing?



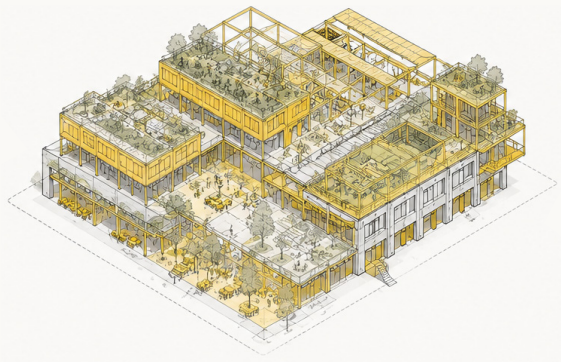
2 | CARVE: Subtraction / Excavation

Transform the complex through removal: cutting courtyards into deep plans, opening the roof, excavating below ground or creating new routes and connections through the existing structure. What happens to the material that is removed? Can it remain within the project as aggregate, fill, structure or another architectural element?



3 | CONVERT: Transformation / Reprogramming

Transform what already exists by giving it a new purpose. Rather than replacing the depot, work with its existing spaces, structures and materials, adapting their properties to accommodate new functions. The operation can draw on ideas of upcycling and urban mining: existing resources become the raw material for new uses, structures or components. What can the depot become without losing the value embedded in what is already there?



4 | BLEND: Hybridisation / Integration

Bring different elements together to create a new hybrid condition. Existing and new architecture, materials, construction techniques, infrastructures or programmes can be deliberately combined, allowing their differences to remain visible while creating new relationships between them. What emerges when distinct systems coexist, overlap or interact?

STUDIO STRUCTURE

PHASE 1 (2 weeks; individually): Site analysis

We start on site. You will visit the depot, survey it, photograph it, sketch it, and measure what you can. Then you will step back and read Salzburg: what the city has, what it lacks, who lives near this site, and what a new piece of the city here could reasonably be for (demographics, housing, transport, green space, gaps and needs).
The output of the phase is a proposed programme and a concept: what should happen here, for whom, and why, argued from evidence you gathered yourself.

Deliverables:

• A short video, 2–3 minutes, with site documentation, analysis and proposed programme and concept
• The shared 1:500 site model, built together.

Phase 2 (3-4 weeks; individually or in groups of 2-3): Site plan / Masterplan

In this phase, you will form teams and begin to translate the programme and concepts developed in Phase 1 into a spatial strategy for the entire site. Your initial proposal is not fixed: as you test it against the realities of the site, the existing depot, and your chosen architectural strategy, both the programme and concept can (and probably will) evolve.
At the start of this phase, each team will select its dominant operation – ADD, CARVE, CONVERT, or BLEND – and use it as the primary lens through which to develop the project. You will declare your position on the existing fabric: what stays, what is altered, what is removed, and where removed material goes. Where do the buses go? Where does the new mass go? Where is the ground, where is the public, where are the entrances, and where does the city come in? This is a strategy at the scale of the block. It must work as a strategy before it works as a building.

Deliverables:

• Poster presentation with Siteplan / Masterplan, concept diagrams, proposed programme, sections, operational diagrams, and moodboards.
• Physical, massing model 1:500 placed within a collective site model

Phase 3 (9-10 weeks; individually or in groups): Design development

In this phase, we move towards the architectural scale through the detailed design of a selected fragment of your masterplan. You will take your fragment down through the scales until it becomes an actual piece of architecture: rooms with dimensions, a structure that stands up, a façade made of something, and spaces designed for specific people and activities.
The fragment should remain connected to the logic of the wider masterplan, which can continue to evolve and be adjusted as the project develops. The focus, however, will shift towards architectural resolution, materiality, structure, space, and detail.

Deliverables:

- Final poster and presentation
- Project booklet with the whole project development, process and final drawings.
- Physical models 1:500 and 1:200/1:100, designed as a removable insert into the collective base.

METHODS

The studio moves from the scale of the city to architectural detail: analysing the context and site, developing a programme, concept and masterplan, and finally resolving a detailed architectural fragment.

Throughout the semester, emphasis will be placed on developing and communicating a clear design idea across scales through drawings, diagrams, models, visualisations, video and presentations. We will also explore different methods of representing and communicating architectural projects, including video, diagrams, posters, architectural drawings, physical models, visualisations and booklets.

All students work on the same site and contribute to a shared physical site model. In Phase 2, proposals are tested together within the model; in Phase 3, each detailed fragment becomes a removable insert within the same base.

PREPARATION

We will all be going to Salzburg for a **site visit on Thursday 1st October**. Details will follow by email.

For our first meeting in class, on 7th October, bring three things:

1 | Moodboard

A moodboard; one printed A2. Images of what you find compelling: buildings, but also textures, machines, films, landscapes, objects, light, people. It does not have to be architecture. Include at least three examples of intervention in an existing buildingL densification, addition, conversion, repurposing.

2 | Reference project

One precedent, redrawn by hand (A3). Choose one building that adds to or transforms something existing. Redraw one of its drawings (a plan or, better, a section) by hand, on paper, with a scale bar. Do not trace mindlessly; redrawing is how you find out what a project actually does. Add three lines of text: what was there before, what was added, and what it now allows.

3 | Question

One question. Write down, on one line, a question you want this semester to answer.

SUGGESTED LITERATURE

- A Pattern Language, Christopher Alexander
- How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built, Stewart Brand
- Freedom of Use, Anne Lacaton & Jean-Philippe Vassal
- On Altering Architecture, Fred Scott
- UnDoing Buildings: Adaptive Reuse and Cultural Memory, Sally Stone
- Deconstruction and Reuse, Rotor
- The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment, Reyner Banham