



Three apartment blocks create a collage of colour and texture around a green park.

Residential Apartment Blocks, Brescia, Italy

BLUE COLLAGE, VILLAGE GREEN





Vertical sections built up by the façade treatment, alternating Swisspearl panels, shingles, tiles and timber cladding, create a visual collage.



City Life, a housing scheme designed by the architects Studio 5+1AA is situated in a former industrial area to the southwest of Brescia, 80 kilometres east of Milan. Brescia is the centre of the third largest industrial area in Italy, producing mainly mechanical tools. Brescia is also historically significant for its role in the art of violin-making.

The residential scheme has three blocks, each four storeys high. Two are configured in an L-shape that opens at the corner junction, forming an entrance from the street and defining its central public park. The third block, somewhat smaller, faces the larger blocks from the far side of the park. The multi-storey blocks accommodate a variety of apartment sizes ranging from 62 m² to 170 m² (two-room to five-room apartments), thus catering for a variety of household sizes from singles to families with children. This demographic mix is healthy as it allows a natural assortment of inhabitants and an interesting range of people of all ages.

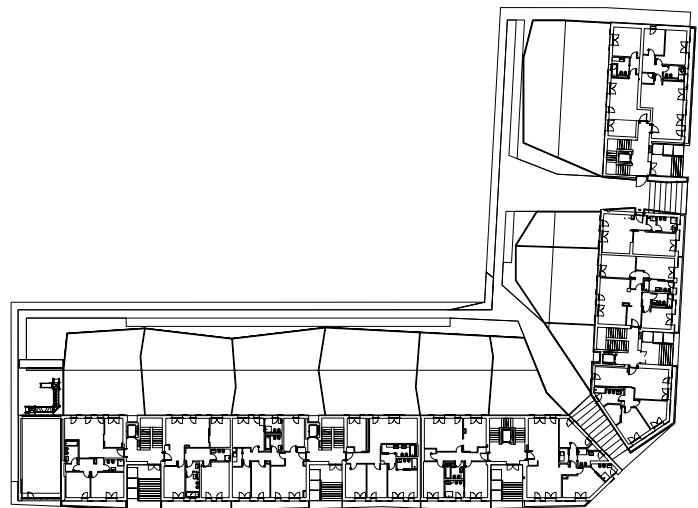
What strikes one immediately is the flamboyant treatment of the façades. By subdividing the four-storey blocks into distinct vertical sections, each with its own articulation, colour, texture and form, not only is a playful, light-hearted aesthetic crafted, but the scale



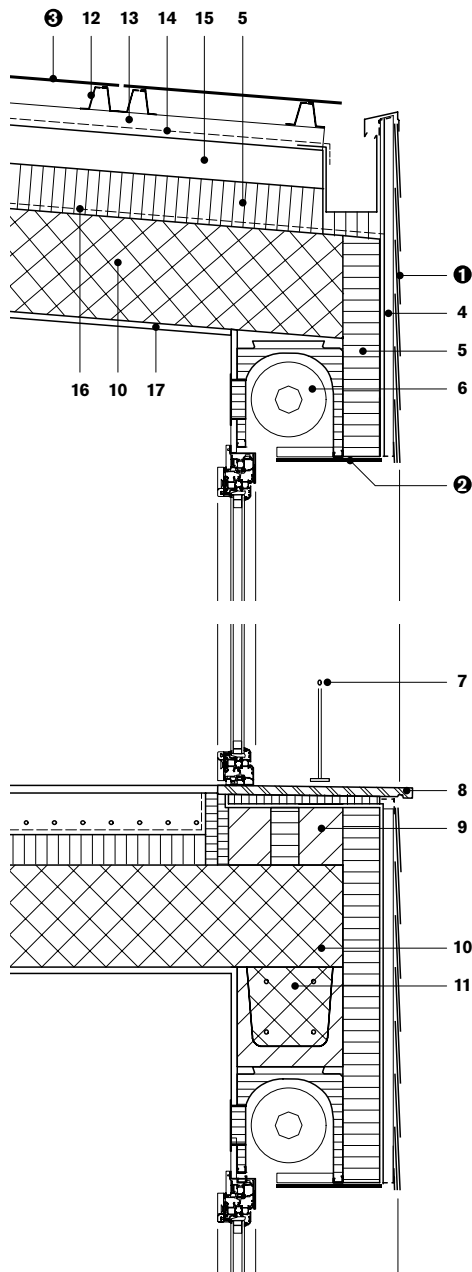
Two long blocks hinge open to create an entry into the park behind.



Ground floor 1:1000



Ground floor 1:1000



Vertical section 1:20

- 1 Swisspearl® cement composite panel 4 mm, double layer
- 2 Swisspearl® cement composite panel 8 mm
- 3 Swisspearl® cement composite panel 8 mm, R-finish (roofing)
- 4 ventilation cavity, vertical batten
- 5 thermal insulation
- 6 roller shutter
- 7 railing
- 8 marble threshold
- 9 aerated concrete
- 10 concrete
- 11 prefabricated beam
- 12 anodised aluminium supports
- 13 ventilation cavity, aluminium sub-framing
- 14 waterproofing
- 15 cement screed
- 16 vapour barrier
- 17 plaster

of the project is also dramatically reduced. A bold collage effect has been created by the patchwork use of different blue Swisspearl cement composite panels, shingled in places, or with fine vertical timber cladding and undulating shiny ceramic tiles. By varying the roof heights and alternating monopitch and flat roofs, the silhouette of the clipped-eave blocks forms a lively contour line against the sky. The forward and backward shifting of the façades also fragments the long panels, which would otherwise risk being monolithic.

The ensemble of apartments is somehow reminiscent of the pattern language of the coastal town of Liguria, where individual houses are nestled close together, their colourful façades forming colourful kaleidoscopes. The design and complex treatment of the elevations here give the residents a sense of individuality and identity and avoid the risk of anonymity. A strong graphic image is created on a sunny day by the backdrop of blue-sky blending with the two-tone blue façades and the emerald green park in the foreground.

Balconies are used as a strong design element; some extend as cantilevers, whilst others are enclosed in the envelope of the façade. The vertical façades are stepped forward and back to create a rich tapestry of positive and negative, light and shadow, which is further emphasised by the mix and match of colour and texture overlapping and interlinking. The balconies bring a layer of life and movement out of the façade and soften the interface between the building itself and the adjacent park. From their private balconies, the occupants can look down at their own private gardens and beyond to the public park.

Inhabitants of City Life have the positive benefits of having a community of people in close proximity, whilst also having direct access to a large open green space where their children can play and they can socialise. The architecture enhances the suburban surroundings and provides a high-quality living space.

Anna Roos

Location Via Eritrea, Brescia, Italy

Client Draco Spa, Brescia, Italy

Architects Studio 5+1AA, Milan, Italy

Building period 2011–2012

General contractor and façade construction Sandrini Costruzioni, Brescia, Italy

Façade material SWISSPEARL® CARAT, Azurite 7041, 7041R, SWISSPEARL® NOBILIS, N411

