Rural settlement in Haimhausen

The increasing financialization of land and property and the current dominance of economics and the market upon architectural production brings with it an emphasis on growth, large scale production, demolition and consumption. We know that this is an unsustainable position as it relies on the exploitation of finite natural resources and ignores the well-being of fragile ecosystems and ethical values in favour of profit and the economics of numbers. A counter position is to promote an economy that respects ecological limits, seeks circularity and the potential for synergies between processes, recognises craft and meaningful work over profit and material consumption.

There is growing evidence of a reduced reliance on large urban centres for living and working, particularly during and following the Covid pandemic, with the capacity of technology in facilitating remote working patterns. This can have a positive effect on smaller towns and villages or even more isolated rural communities. The rural settlement is a new territory for architectural thinking, where the pre-conceived motivation towards extreme density is not appropriate and the expectation to plug into existing infrastructure with easy access to materials, commerce and leisure facilities is not a certainty. Instead, these locations require an adjusted way of thinking. Often marked by new or ancient manmade thresholds, and traces of historical agricultural and industrial production these ‘green’ areas are filtered through a romantic gaze. However, ‘living in the countryside’ provides fertile ground for exploring new and contemporary ideas of dwelling, community-making, comfort, where the ground and the land itself is a key protagonist and influence on how and where we build.

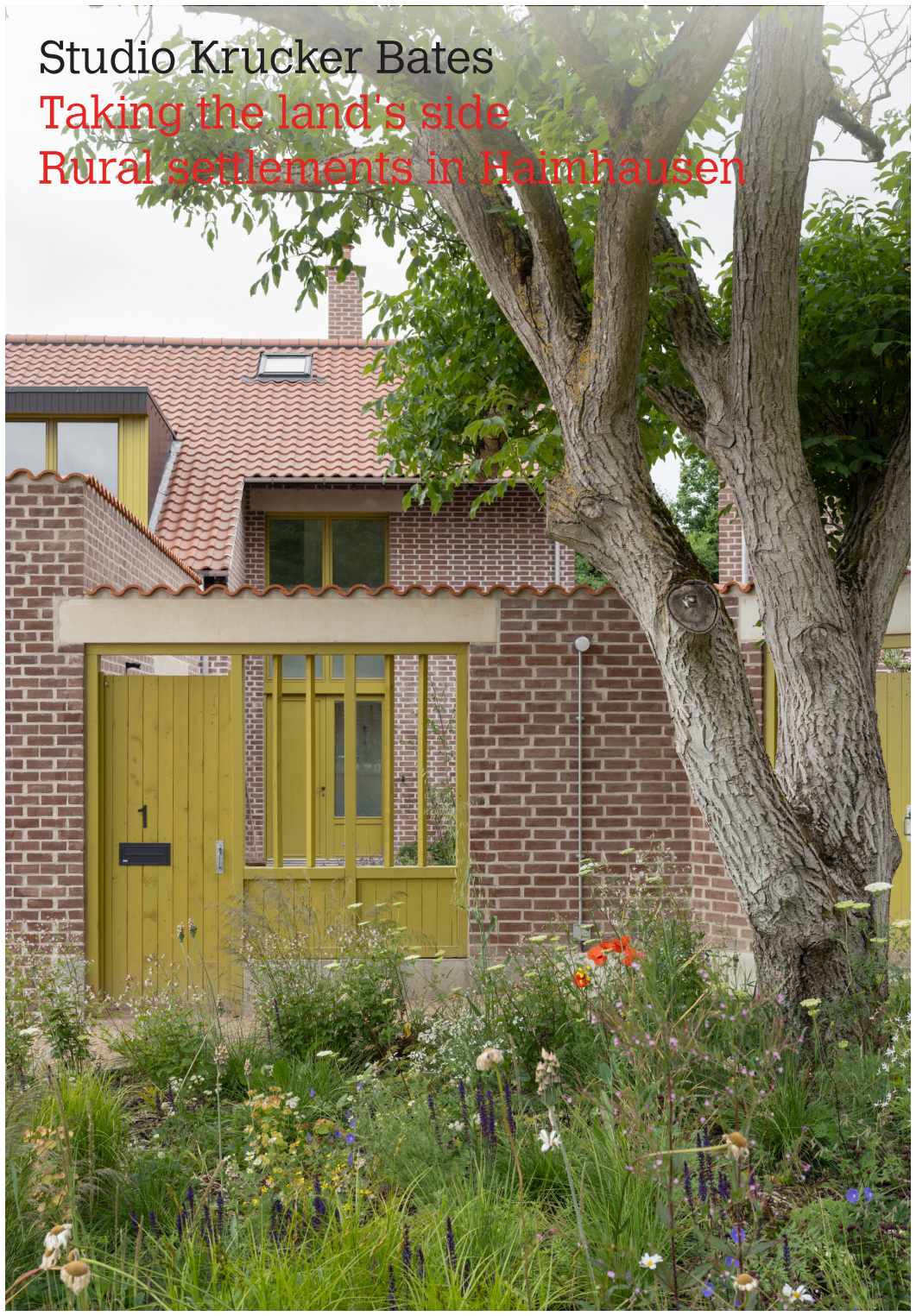
Within these peripheral areas we can see a dichotomy of building cultures. On the one hand there remains evidence of a Vernacular architecture, a slow architecture, evolving gradually, lessons absorbed from predecessors, shaped by necessity, frugality and deep local knowledge. Materials were sourced locally, building depth dictated by available timber lengths and pitch forms influenced by specific climatic conditions. On the other hand, one encounters the blankets of the ubiquitous housing estates with winding tarmac access roads, exposed front gardens and evenly spaced detached houses built to pattern-book designs with construction costs driven to the lowest possible value. Today, global sourcing has made an overwhelming range of materials and techniques available, and architects have come to accept this as a given. But in this new Anthropocene reality, architects, builders, and clients now face dilemmas not only of taste and function, but of morality, sustainability, and cultural meaning. How do we build meaningfully in a world where the concept of place is increasingly diluted? How can we pursue sustainable, economical architecture? The answer is surely not to strive for novelty, but instead to feel the ground and listen to place, history and the slow intelligence of craft.

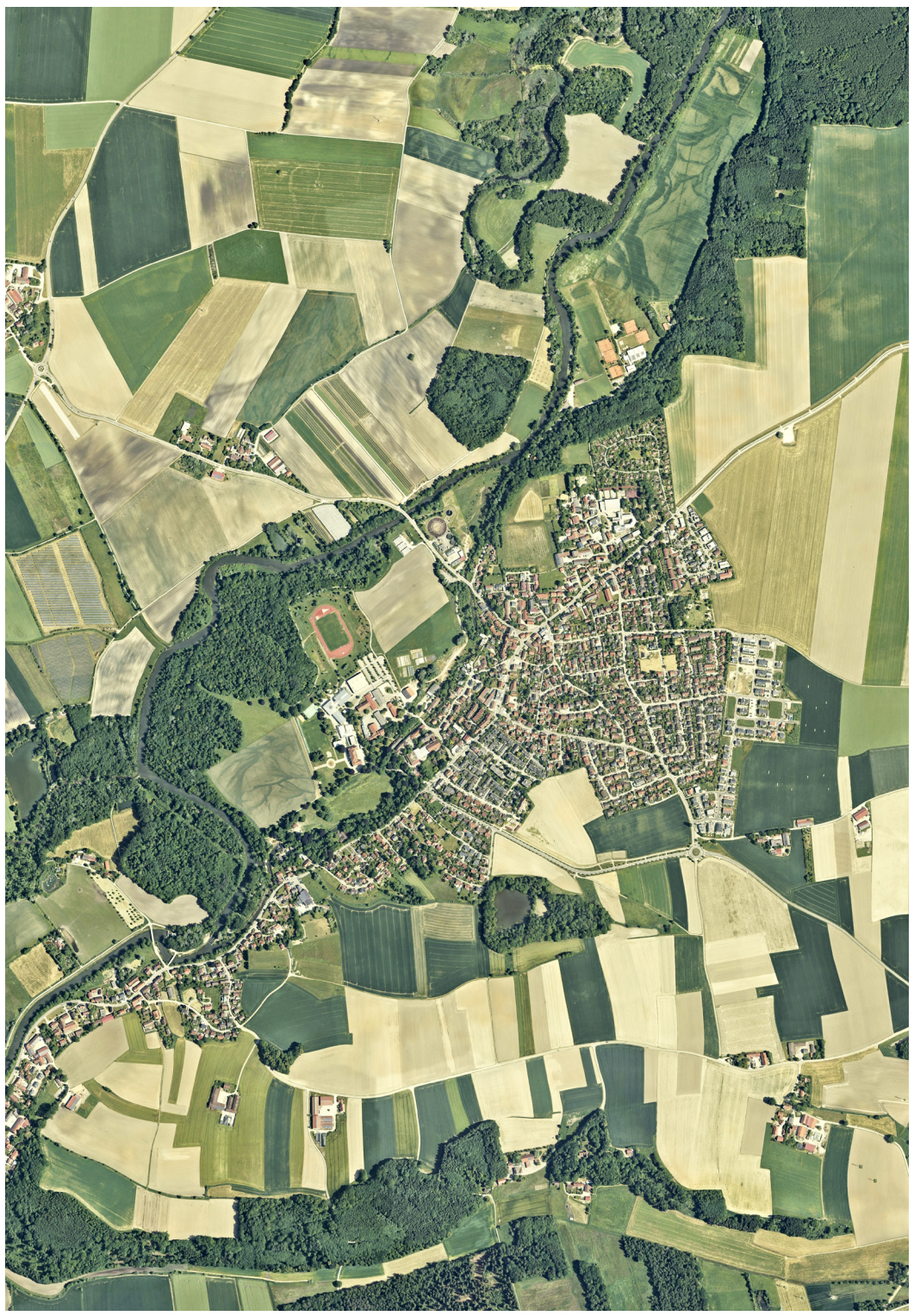
This semester we are going to design a *rural settlement* of buildings to make a community within landscape. We will address ideas of settlement, territorial density, community, appreciating that ‘small is beautiful’. We will be conscious of the borrowed ground in which we build upon, considering a greater equilibrium between building and land, the garden, and the threshold between. We will focus upon the plan and have courage to re-define patterns of use and challenge old hierarchies so that our work is more relevant to today’s domestic needs for work and leisure. We will consider how we make our buildings, new buildings that are layered, easy to construct and resilient for future unknown uses.

The location of our work will be the village and surroundings of Haimhausen northeast of Munich. Our work will be informed by our visiting lecturer Judith Lösing of East Architecture Landscape, the first invited guest of a new residency at the Chair going forward. We will make a fieldtrip to England to see exemplary historic and contemporary houses and gardens, settlements and landscapes and there will be a dedicated in-house lecture series by invited speakers exploring ideas of landscape, archaeology, building and thinking.

Stephen Bates, September 2025

Studio Krucker Bates
Taking the land’s side
Rural settlements in Haimhausen





Calendar

Week 1
13th/14th October 2025

Introduction to the Semester by Studio Krucker Bates, Monday 3.00pm (Room 2380)
Introduction to exercises one and two, Tuesday 2:00pm (Room 2380)

Week 2
20th/21th October

Lecture by Markus Stolz, Monday 11:30am
Assistant tutorials (exercises one and two)
Introduction to exercise three

Week 3
27th - 29th October

Excursion to England

Week 4
3rd/4th November

Lecture by Michele Marini, Monday 11:30am
Assistant tutorials (exercises one, two and three

Week 5
10th/11th November

Lecture by Stephen Bates, Monday 11.30am
Pin up 1 with SB (exercises one, two and three)
Introduction to exercise four

Week 6
17th/18th November

Lecture by Adam Gielniak, Monday 11.30am
Assistant tutorials (exercises four)
In-House Lecture, Tuesday 02.00pm - 04.00pm

Week 7
24th/25th November

Lecture by Judith Lösing, Monday 11.30am
Pin up 2 with SB and JL (exercises four)
Introduction to exercises five

Week 8
1st/ 2nd December

Lecture by Katharina Püschel, Monday 11.30am
Assistant tutorials (exercises five)
In-House Lecture, Tuesday 02.00pm - 04.00pm

Week 9
08th/09th December

Lecture by Stephen Bates, Monday 11.30am
Online Pin up 3 with SB and JL (exercises five)
Introduction to exercise six

Week 10
15th/16th December

Assistant tutorials

Week 14
12th/13th January

Lecture by Stephen Bates , Monday 11.30am
Pin up 4 with SB (all exercises)

Week 15
19th/20th January

Lecture by Serafina Eipert, Monday 11.30am
Assistant tutorials (all exercises)
In-House Lecture, Tuesday 02.00pm - 04.00pm

Week 16
26/27th January

Assistant tutorials (all exercises)

Week 17
2 nd/3rd February

Final review with Stephen Bates, Judith Lösing and guest critic

Production list

Exercise one: Place
In this first exercise we ask you to make a visual analysis of a specific aspect of the site locations. The studio will work as a single collective to collect information about the place, analysing its qualities, past and present, identifying its physical, social and cultural characteristics. Site visits will be organised to undertake this task, and each design group will be allocated a theme in which to assess in relation to each of the sites. The recording of your findings and the presentation of this information will be important. A combination of drawing types will be used including figure ground drawings, isometric projections, site sections and diagrams which will be compiled in a carefully designed graphical document. The work will then be made available to each group for their design project
An introduction to this exercise will be given in the first week of the semester.

Exercise two: Ground
This exercise requires the making of a drawing and a model of your given site. As two groups will be working on each site one group will be responsible for making the drawing, the other the model.
The drawing is an isometric projection, a method for visually representing three-dimensional objects in two dimensions as a technical but also artistic drawing. You will use 70 and 30 degree angles to ensure the surface and object appear equally foreshortened unless an alternative approach is agreed with the teaching assistants for the specific requirements of the case study. The drawing is an exercise to show the ground profile, the landscaping and building objects on your site and it may require the edge of the drawing to show in section. The final presented scale of the drawing will be large (A1 or A0) so that it 'holds' the wall and reveals much detail.
The model is a topographic model at a scale of 1:200. It will be made from Styrofoam modelling foam using a Hot Wire Foam Cutter and sandpaper. The base of each model must be a minimum of 50mm thick. The final model will be painted an off-white/grey NCS S 1002-G50Y. Soft landscaping (trees, shrubs etc) will be represented by off white sea foam high quality natural plant material (provided by the Chair). The extent of each model will be discussed and agreed with the assistants before the final models are made.
The experimentation of this drawing (oblique) and modelling (foam) technique will be useful as you will be required to make the same models to show your own project later in the semester.
An introduction to this exercise will be given in the first week of the semester.

Exercise three: Settlement/landscape
This exercise requires you to study how you are going to add to your given site. Analysis will lead to layered diagrams that investigate the various infrastructures bearing upon the site and those that you choose to develop, re-interpret or impose to provide an underlying organisational structure to your project. Working in your group you will use a site model as a tool to help develop a concept for your project. While priority will be given to an extensive exploration of different massing options, you will be expected to produce drawings in the form of sketches and schematic plans and site sections and elevations. Once the direction of your design strategy is clear you will use the techniques learnt through this Exercise to present the completed scheme at a scale of 1:200 together with fine quality figure ground drawings. An introduction to this exercise will be given in the second week of the semester.

Exercise four: Plan/use
At this stage in the development of your project we ask you to consider the patterns of use and subsequent plan organisation of your project. Sketch plan studies will be made to consider the shape of rooms, their relationship to each other, the position of doors and openings. You will already be thinking of the construction aspects such as the thickness of walls, the potential they hold to establish powerful spatial thresholds. Your work may include study models at a scale of 1:50 (produced in white foam board) but this is not mandatory. What is important is that you can demonstrate a free investigation of the internal spatial organisation of your project, the interconnection of different rooms and spaces, the promise of use for work, rest, storage and leisure. This is an exercise in which we wish you to defy convention and the customary arrangement of domestic space in favour of something more original and more relevant to contemporary life.
An introduction to this exercise will be given in the fith week of the semester.

Exercise five: Making/form
With the knowledge you now have, you will investigate the design of the facades of your project in greater detail. Following these studies, you will then construct a grey card model of the buildings at 1:200 and make one constructional section perspective to reveal the build-ups and spatial relationships.
An introduction to this exercise will be given in the seventh week of the semester.

Exercise six: Inside/outside
This exercise is intended to allow you to present some of the special situations that you have developed in your design: 'small moments' which reveal the special qualities of your project. We ask you to make at least two images, either as digital renders or photographs of scenographic models. One view should reveal the quality of the plan you have made – the spatial relationship between spaces. The other should show the threshold between the inside and outside of buildings in this rural situation – very different from the urban condition for example! Images should be made from eye level, and all vertical lines should be precisely vertical – wide angles or distorted views are not acceptable! A high standard of composition and technique is expected, and the images should convey the atmosphere and character of your project.
An introduction to this exercise will be given in the ninth week of the semester.

Final Review
The final review in early February will consider all the work produced during the semester. In addition, you are asked to prepare the oblique drawing and topographic model of your project (based on Exercise two). You are alsorequired to present a 1:1000 site plan and site sections at 1:500 or 1:200.