

Cultural Centre Ascona, Switzerland

Date: 2006
Client: Council of Ascona
Budget: £25m
Area: 9,000 sqm

01 The Centre against the backdrop of the mountains

02 Top Left: The Site, Top Right: The Centre from the approach into Ascona, Bottom Left: Foyer, Bottom Right: The front facade

03 Top: The temporary exhibition hall, Bottom: The concert hall,

Caruso St John won an international competition to design the cultural centre in Ascona, a resort town in the Italian part of Switzerland, with a famous lake edge promenade on Lake Maggiore. The new building provides a 1200 seat concert hall as a permanent venue for the town's annual music festival and as a conference venue, as well as a gallery for the collections of the town's existing art museum.

The design proposed a building of unusual simplicity, working like a palazzo on three big floors. Reception facilities are on the ground floor,

the museum on the first floor and the concert hall on the top floor, with its foyers around the external perimeter of the hall. The hall volume allows the centre to have an outward aspect over the town and to be seen from the surrounding district and lake edge. The centre appears to crown the city like the baroque churches and medieval castles that punctuate towns in the Ticino region. The building is cast in white concrete with marble aggregate exposed by a fine vertical tooling of the surface. From a distance the Centre will radiate a brilliant white, at closer range sparkling in the clear alpine light.





