“There is a famous story about the Casa Malaparte in Capri: Malaparte recounts how Erwin Rommel visited the house in 1942 before the battle of El Alamein; he asked the writer if he had bought his house ready-made or designed it himself. Pointing toward the sea, Malparte replied that the house had been there but he had designed the landscape. Any work of architecture, before it is an object, is a transformation of the landscape.” Marida Talamona, Casa Malparte (Stan Allen: From the Biological to the Geological)

1. In a place of the distributed field-like organizations of landscape urbanism, landform building trusts in the compact power of specific building proposals to absorb and transform the new potentials of landscape. Landform building reworks the opposition between object buildings and landscape fields to create productive transformations of field-like effects at the scale of buildings.

2. Landform building is less interested in the imitation of natural form and more interested in new programmatic possibilities that are opened up by the creation of artificial terrains. Landform building favors program, process, and affect over formal similarity.
3. Going beyond the single surface topologies of the 1990’s, landform buildings work with complex formations that accept both the horizontal and the vertical – extended, interwoven surfaces that offer new potentials for networked interconnectivity as well as the iconic power of the architectural object. **We need to remember that the marking out of territory and the separation of a protected interior space from nature are founding acts of architecture:** If architects are expert at anything, they are experts at limits and boundaries.

4. The contemporary city is a complex field that changes and evolves in advance of the discipline. Landscape and ecology, understood as dynamic, adaptive systems, offer productive models to understand the complexity of the city today. But the city is also a man-made artifact. **Rather than loose organic metaphors, a new synthesis of architecture and landscape is needed to confront these new constraints and potentials in emerging urban sites.**

5. At a time when questions of environment and sustainability dominate public discussion of the field, landform building can suggest a productive new approach to sustainability and enhanced environmental performance in which architectural form – rather than technological fixes – can play an active role.
6. There is a clear parallel between architectures current fascination with ambient effects and the experience of landscape. **Landform building works with an expanded notion of the interior.** The vast scale of these megaform proposals brings landscape effects inside and blurs the boundary between interior and exterior. In this context, landscape is no longer viewed as pure exteriority – as the nature or wilderness out there – but is understood as an immersive environment similar in experience to the contemporary city.

7. Landform building takes full advantage of the opportunities afforded by emerging fabrication, building, and envelope technologies to construct new, man-made environments. Although drawing on a diverse range of expertise, landform building is conceived as a technical problem within architecture.

Landform building learns form the recent experiments of landscape urbanism and landscape ecology at the same time as it recuperates the specificity of architectural expertise in an expanded field. In this sense, these working concepts could be traced back to Aldo Rossi’s idea of the architecture of the city, elaborated now nearly fifty years ago. “By architecture of the city” Rossi wrote, “we mean two different things: first, the city seen as a gigantic, man-made object, a work of engineering and architecture that is large and complex and growing over time; second, certain more limited but still crucial aspects of the city, namely urban artifacts, which like the city itself are characterized by their own history and thus by their own form.”
Rossi’s insistence that the history of urban artifacts is intimately linked with their form serves as an important reminder of the continuing agency of design in the public realm. **Rossi understood urban form as a geological matter: hard and persistent, yet capable of accommodating change over time.** The architecture of the city evolves not by rapid changes or fluid transformations but rather incrementally, as a result of the collective intelligence of the discipline embedded in its formal structure. The city, like a vital ecological system, encompasses both the unyielding mineral strata and the dynamic, fluid interactions of life itself. Landform building does not so much propose a radical departure as a new lens through which to view architecture’s role in the shifting ecology of the contemporary city. It affirms the efficacy of architecture as a discipline at the same time as it asks new questions of architectural expertise.