

NEWSWISSARCHITECTURE

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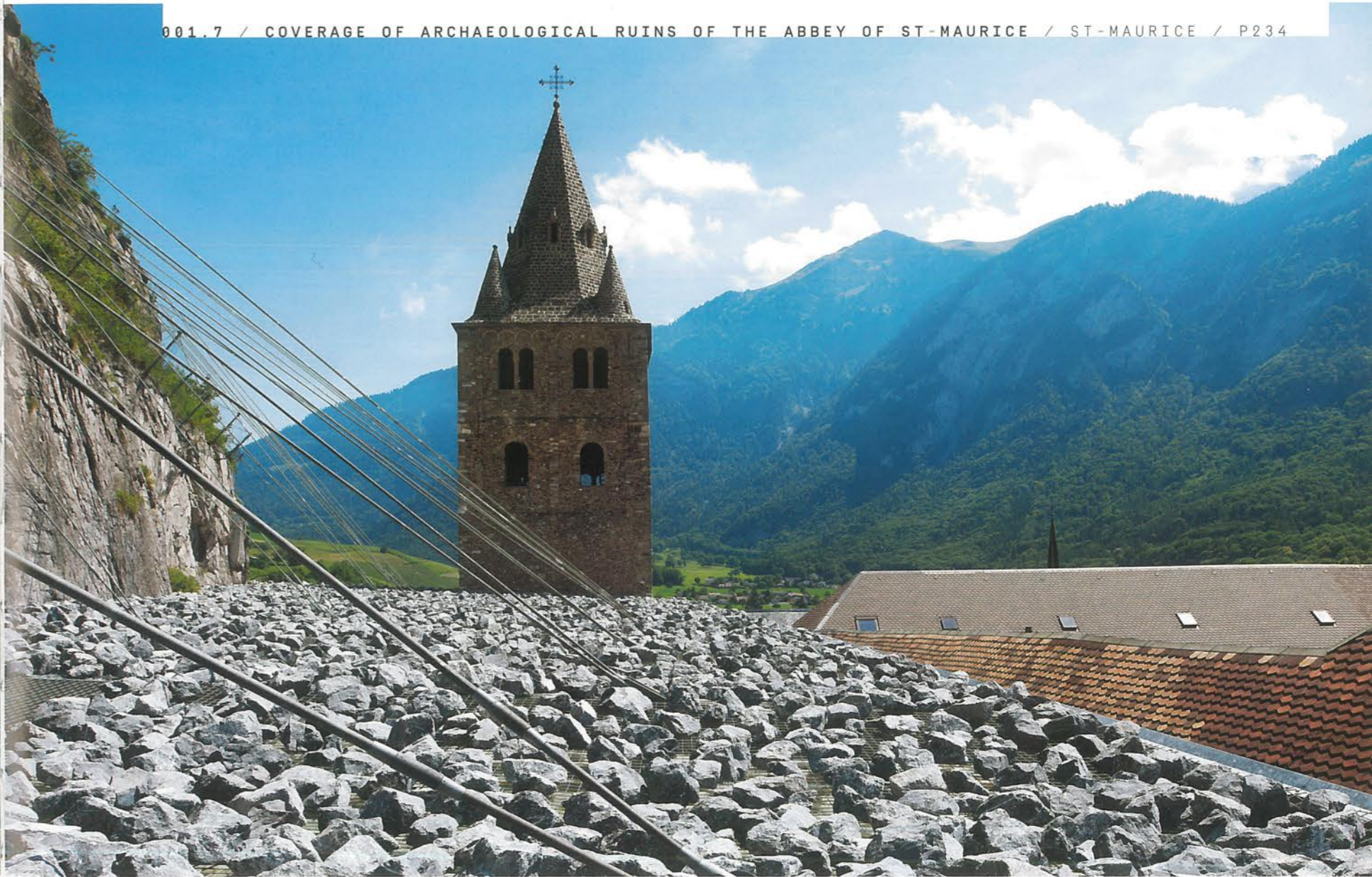
Thames & Hudson

Local identity takes its character especially from rural architecture. Because of the economy of construction means, the use of local materials and the considerations of local specificities, the old know-how is now part of a sustainable perspective. Local identity and sustainable architecture are reconciled through vernacular architecture.

Savioz Fabrizzi



ABOVE A new awning protects the ancient Roman and early Christian archaeological ruins of St-Maurice Abbey from further dangerous rock falls. OPPOSITE The steel structure is suspended from the cliff face and touches neither ground nor church. It is stabilized using 170 tonnes of stone - the very material that has posed such a danger to the site.



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COVERAGE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RUINS
OF THE ABBEY OF ST-MAURICE

St-Maurice
pp. 038-039

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CLIENT

Abbey of St-Maurice

COMPETITION

2004

CONSTRUCTION DATES

2010

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Recent archaeological excavations carried out in the grounds of the ancient Abbey of St-Maurice uncovered vestiges of Roman and early Christian building works. Those earlier constructions were built right next to the cliff face for protective and defensive reasons. Over the course of time, however, such a choice of site has proved disadvantageous, as numerous rock falls damaged the building over the centuries. In the seventeenth century a new abbey was finally built some distance away from the cliff.

The archaeological site is now protected by a new awning that spans across the void and is weighted with 170 tonnes of rock. This ballast prevents further landslips while vividly evoking the danger that constantly threatens the location.

The steel awning is suspended from the cliff but does not make contact with either the ground or the church roof, whose profile it replicates. The resulting platform looks astonishingly light and its Plexiglass cover filters sunlight to create diffuse lighting below.

The rocks on the covering serve to balance the structure and reduce the impact of further falls. As an important component of the overall design, rocks - the very material that previously posed such a formidable danger - now help to protect the Abbey's archaeological site.

01 Cross-section 02 Northeast elevation 03 Site plan

