Project

Detached House for a Doctor’s Family, Canton Zurich, Switzerland

The parcel is situated on the edge of the village's single-family house zone, tangent to orchards and in view of the nearby lake. Strict local building codes are intended to preserve the pastoral quality of the area around the lake.

The building is positioned near the northern boundary, which adjoins the agricultural area, and set parallel to the lake and to the land's slope. This siting insures that all rooms have either a lake view to the north or a maximum amount of sunlight. A garden, defined by a high espalier and a gardening shed, defines the green area to the south between the neighbouring houses.

The spatial structure within the house makes corridors unnecessary. On the ground floor, a dining room with a view towards the garden to the south is set in front of the kitchen and other rooms. This plan organisation is repeated on the upper floor: a foyer serves as the children's playroom.

Within the slope prescribed by the building code, the roof is folded across the entire volume in a wave-like motion. Beginning at the garage, it ascends sharply in the area of the staircase. Above the attic, it flattens out again and then, on the far side of the gable, extends in a continuous surface towards the northwest, where it forms an eave against the side most susceptible to heavy weather. All of the ancillary spaces are thus located directly beneath the slope of the roof.

The house is constructed in single-unit solid insulating masonry. The wooden windows are mounted on the inside, forming deep, wood-clad embrasures. Folding shutters in the open position fit into the embrasures. In the closed position, the window openings give the impression of being “barricaded” in a box-like way, so to speak. All woodwork, except for the sills, is painted red. The house's outermost protective layer is comprised of a mineral-based lime-cement stucco and untreated concrete tile, also made out of lime and cement. In the rain, the roof and façade turn dark gray and then dry out again like a watercolour painting.
Credits

Project: Detached House for a Doctor’s Family, Canton Zurich, Switzerland
Spatial Programme: Single-family house
Client: private
Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architekten, Zurich
Collaborators: Dieter Bachmann (Project and Site Manager), Michael Widrig, Roberto Azzola
Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 508 m²
Civil Engineer: Aerni + Aerni, Zurich
Photography: Christian Kerez, Zürich