Project

Extension / Renovation of Historical Villa, Kastanienbaum, Switzerland

The existing, late Neoclassical villa was built in 1860 in the Italian country-house style as a summer residence within a large park overlooking Lake Lucerne. It is thought to be the work of Xaver Waller. In 1927, the villa's interior was extensively altered and an extension was built to house the kitchen.

For the villa’s current owner, a remodeling project was developed involving various degrees of intervention. The modifications ranged from cleaning, the removal of wallpaper, repairs and restorations, to a series of individual, explicitly dialectical interventions, and finally the replacement of the kitchen annex with a new building. However, the decision was made not to reconstruct the spatial and structural characteristics of the original building.

Proposed restoration involved repairing the sandstone window surrounds, sanding and oiling the parquet flooring, and transforming some single-glazed windows into double-glazed ones using the existing wooden frames and glass. Of special note is the small room in the tower. Stripped of wallpaper, the walls here exhibited such a remarkable patina, along with a number of pencil drawings made by previous workers, that it was decided not to renovate them.

Selective interventions included the construction of a brass fireplace in the large salon and the installation of a chrome steel kitchen unit in the center of the former small salon. The renovation of the bathrooms (the original positions of which were retained) likewise belongs in this category. They were furnished with new fittings, oak flooring, and walls of etched mirrors. In the large bathroom a freestanding bathtub was specially commissioned.

The most radical intervention was the demolition of the kitchen annex, which was in poor repair. Replacing it is a garage with adjacent workshop. The annex building, the roof of which serves as a terrace, is accessible from both the house and the garden. Trellises cover the walls of the single-story concrete structure and continue up above the roof, forming a pavilion over the terrace. In this way, the annex acquires dimensions and proportions in keeping with those of the villa. Architectural features typical of nineteenth-century villa gardens, such as gazebos and coach houses, are in a sense interwoven in this structure and physically connected with the house. The villa, annex, and grounds are also linked in terms of color: the green of the villa’s sandstone is echoed in the colored concrete, and the olive-green hues of the trellis match the greenery of the park.

G/G, December 2011
Credits

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Spatial Programme: Private residence; restoration of the existing villa with different levels of modification; salon with fireplace, office with furniture, bedrooms, renovation of kitchen and bathroom; Extension: garage with workshop/studio, the roof of which serves as a terrace.

Commission: 2002


Client: Private

Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich

Collaborator: Barbara Schlauri (Project Manager)

Construction Manager: Ruoss Witzig Architects, Zurich

Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 1070 m2

Structural Engineer: Dr. Lüchinger + Meyer Bauingenieure AG, Zurich

Electrical Engineer: Bühlmann Engineering AG, Lucerne

Building Services Engineer: 3-Plan Haustechnik AG, Winterthur

Photography: Lucas Peters, Zurich