Project

Housing Development Brunnenhof, Zurich, Switzerland

The former, noise-exposed three-story apartment buildings owned by the Foundation for Large Families in Zurich have been replaced by two slightly angled, elongated volumes of different heights. The larger, six-story building follows Hofwiesenstrasse but is oriented toward the park, which it shields from the street and hence from traffic noise. The smaller, four- to five-story building on Brunnenhofstrasse is in a certain sense within the park, surrounded by green on both sides with its height corresponding to that of the neighboring buildings. Both buildings are conceived as ‘stacks’ of horizontal slabs which cantilever to varying degrees and form generous balconies on the park side.

For the noise-affected building on Hofwiesenstrasse, access to the apartments is via longitudinally arranged staircases and spacious entryways that adjoin the eat-in kitchens. All bedrooms face the quiet park side and are connected by a projecting balcony. The living rooms extend through the apartment, facing both east and west and giving onto the park-side balconies.

Within the smaller Brunnenhofstrasse building, the living rooms are positioned along the façade and look onto the park to the south and southeast via adjoining balcony areas. In the four-story north- and south-facing part of the building, the eat-in kitchens are connected to the living rooms on the south side, while in the angled part of the building the kitchens enjoy the evening sun.

A circuit-like layout grants all apartment types spaciousness, freedom of movement for both children and adults, and enhanced flexibility of use. The latter is further augmented in the ground floor apartments by means of extra rooms between them that can be used by either apartment. The entrance lobbies on the ground floor are connecting rooms that link to the park and provide space for strollers, scooters, and toys. The naturally lit laundry and drying rooms are located in the basement, adjacent to the stairs.

A kindergarten and nursery are housed at the end of both buildings where the pathway to the park is situated. A multi-purpose common room takes the most prominent position at the corner between street and pathway. A continuous hedge along the street creates a green zone that provides the necessary privacy for the slightly elevated ground floor apartments. The park-facing apartments are elevated by half a story to allow the inclusion of a garden and play area between the park and the building. The hedges that run alongside the building approaches establish the border between these zones and the park.

The façades are formed by the balconies and the concrete bands that wrap horizontally around the building. Between them, floor-to-ceiling windows alternate with colored glass panels, joining together with sliding glass shades to create an interplay of reflecting and matt, opaque and translucent or transparent surfaces. The color concept was developed together with the artist Adrian Schiess. Facing the street, the glazing is dark blue and violet, while toward the park the tonality flows over large areas from blue tones to orange to yellow. The impression of the fluid, changing play of colors is enhanced by the varying positions of the sliding elements – ultimately the residents modify and create new color compositions every day, even every hour.

G/G, December 2011
Credits

Project: Housing Development Brunnenhof, Zurich, Switzerland

Address: Hofwiesenstrasse 140, 146, 152, 158
Hofwiesenstrasse 6, 10, 14
8057 Zurich, Switzerland

Spatial Programme: Two building volumes bounding a park, with a total of 72
apartments, 6 extra rooms, common room, kindergarten, day-care, underground parking with 75 parking spaces.

Competition: Autumn 2003, 1st Prize


Client: Stiftung Wohnungen für kinderreiche Familien, Zurich

Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich

Collaborators: Markus Seiler (Project Manager), Lorenzo Igual,
Rolf-Werner Wirtz, Ulrike Horn

Construction Management/
Cost Planning: b+p baurealisation ag, Zurich

Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 18’437 m²

Landscape Architecture: Hager Landschaftsarchitektur AG, Zurich

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

Electrical Engineer: Elkom Partner AG, Chur

Building Services Engineer: 3-Plan Haustechnik AG, Winterthur

Building Physics Engineer: Lemon Consult GmbH, Zurich

Colours: Adrian Schiess, Mouans-Sartoux, France

Photography: Georg Aerni, Zurich
Hannes Henz, Zurich