Project

Detached House, Canton Grisons, Switzerland

The house is located on a steep slope below the village. A wide bridge leads to it from the street above, forming a level courtyard and a parking area.

The building form is defined by the mountain community’s strict building code, which stipulates the height and a pitched roof oriented toward the village church. The ridge of the roof runs parallel to the incline and the house is cantilevered toward the valley, seemingly suspended over the slope. With the façades and the roof uniformly clad in brownish-red copper shingles, the structure blends in with the timber buildings of the village. As a complete rain screen, the cladding allows for a reduced, contemporary formal vocabulary.

The topography is also reflected in the interior. Under the slanted roof, the living/dining room reaches a height of seven meters, and staggered mezzanine levels follow the sloping hillside. The central staircase links all four mezzanine levels with a single flight of stairs each. Wide floor-to-ceiling sliding doors allow generous connections between the spaces as well as closing them off at night.

The load-bearing structure consists of pre-fabricated timber elements filled with thermal insulation and protected from the weather by the rear-ventilated copper shingling. The inner surfaces of the timber panels are whitewashed. Pivot windows of uniform size appear to be scattered across the façade at random, but they actually reflect the spatial layout of the interior. The tall viewing window offers a spectacular vertical panorama down into the valley, across to the hills, and up the mountains on the other side.

The site remains nearly untouched by the house, with wild grasses now growing again all around, seamlessly joining the neighboring pastures. The only intervention is a level deck cut into the hillside to the west.

G/G, December 2011
Credits

Project: Detached House, Canton Grisons, Switzerland
Site/Address: Canton Grisons, Switzerland
Spatial Programme: Single Family Home
Commission: 2004
Client: Private
Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich
Collaborators: Christian Maggioni (Planning, Construction, Construction Manager)

Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 230 m²
Structural Engineer: Bruno Patt, Zurich
Electrical Engineer: Elkom Partner AG, Chur
Sanitary Engineer: Marco Felix, Chur
Heating Engineer: Remo Collenberg, Chur
Photography: Ralph Feiner, Malans