Project

Housing Complex Zollikerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

The impressive existing trees on the site of the former villa - a copper beech, a redwood, and a pine tree - influenced the architecture of the replacement buildings in several ways. The trees had an impact on the position, shape, materials, and also the colors of the new structures, calling for a specific architectural reaction to the immediate surroundings.

The new built volume is much larger than the previous building and is divided into two units. An unusually narrow space establishes a visual connection between the shady garden beneath the trees on the street side and the private garden to the west. The narrow interspace is widened and opened up by reflections in the façades’ glazed surfaces, which visually “duplicate” the garden.

The fulfillment of various specifications regarding noise protection, the spacing required by the building code, and also the protection of the trees’ roots calls for footprints that are not rectangular. However, an orthogonal structure is inscribed within the irregular polygons.

In total, the complex houses eight owner-occupied apartments and one studio, which differ widely in size and character. This is expressed in the number of levels, the ceiling heights, and the respective outdoor spaces. For example, the penthouses have terraces while the apartments on the first and second floors have covered loggias. The three apartments on the ground floor are duplexes, two of which feature living rooms with high ceilings and direct access to a private garden.

Large slabs of in-situ concrete define the private outdoor spaces of the groundfloor apartments. Low yew hedges, interspersed with blooming plants, form loose green divisions between the various garden spaces. The hedges also constitute green boundaries toward the street. Ferns and low shrubs cover the “forest soil” underneath the trees.

The polygonal buildings are covered with dark brown enameled glass panels that reflect the garden space like a kaleidoscope and therefore enhance the presence of the small garden. The mirrored vegetation casts a lively ornamental pattern across the façades, paying homage to the exterior painted decoration on nearby Villa Patumbah.

G/G, December 2011
Credits

Project: Housing Complex Zollikerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

Spatial Programme: Two Houses with a total of 8 owner-occupied flats and 2 studios, shared underground parking with 14 parking spaces.

Competition: October 2005, 1st Prize


Client: Floor Owners' Association Zollikerstrasse, Zurich

Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich

Collaborators: Competition: Monica Knechtle
Planning/Construction: Markus Seiler (Team Manager from 2009), Barbara Schlauri (Team Manager until 2009), Damien Andenmatten (Project Manager), Ilka Tegeler, Monica Knechtle

Construction Management: Agora Baumanagement, Zurich

General Contractor: Gross Generalunternehmung AG, Brugg

Form of Contract: Design and Build (Totalunternehmung)

Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 2'896 m2

Landscape Architecture: Hager Partner AG, Zurich

Structural Engineer: Basler & Hofmann AG, Zurich

Electrical Engineer / Building Services Engineer: Ernst Basler + Partner AG, Zurich

Building Physics Engineer: IPA, Energieberatung und Bauphysik, Volketswil

Colour Consultation: Pierre André Ferrand, Geneva and La Chaux-de-Fonds

Photography: Thies Wachter, Zurich