

Peter Kunz

Quart Publishers **Anthology 3**

Anthology 3 – Notat
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Traditional textbooks on architectural history are based on individual, prominent, geographically widely scattered buildings. But apart from these well-known objects, the fact that architecture and its history leave high-quality traces in many places, in cities as well as in regional centres and rural areas, gives them another valuable dimension. These innumerable witnesses present an eloquent picture of architectural history, absorbing and individualising it in many populated areas. It is to this heterogeneous field of contemporary architecture that we now turn our attention. Furthermore, we shall trace architects and their buildings located outside the more open centres. An even greater value is sometimes ascribed to these works because their architects have had to defy regulations and public opinion, and the often stubborn resistance from the local authorities. The already extensive work of the 40-year-old Winterthur architect Peter Kunz has been steadily growing in bulk for the past 16 years, and a remarkable group of works has evolved within it during recent years. Whereas the loft houses in Volketswil were developed primarily on the basis of their specific locations and topography, the following projects, while still responding to the existing territory, are really distinctive dwelling microcosms complete in themselves. They do not merely represent accommodation for single living and sleeping premises; they are made up of interwoven internal and external zones with openings that provide limited and selective transitions to the outside world.

Lucerne, August 2004

Roof Superstructure Lupsingen

The roof superstructure replaces the roof framework of a standard 1960s house. Its spatial structure is defined by a simple volumetric rule: a three-dimensional cross with arms stretching towards all four points of the compass. There are views in all directions. The sun, the weather and the green of the landscape define the seasons and the time of day. The protruding floor slabs allow conclusions to be drawn about the structure of this house-on-a-house. New load-bearing wooden slabs were laid on top of the existing ground floor ceiling. Four one meter wide wall angles of different lengths attach the roof surfaces in the four corners of the house, define interior rooms, and terminate the new vertical exterior wall elements of wood and glass. Because of budget-ary constraints the details were solved with elementary simplicity. The large-surface windows are permanently fixed to the structure; the ventilation shutters also serve as balcony doors.

Residential House Blonay

A slim building carcass has been inserted into a narrow plot of land. According to the client's wishes, the house was placed into the natural environment with minimum work on its surroundings.

The basement and a central flight of stairs give entry to an open-plan level. Suspended above the terrain, this level provides a living platform. The interior and exterior are linked by large glazing elements. They offer a view of Lake Geneva and the Valais Alps.

The attic story is a triangular body. The protruding girder structure also provides a walkable wall. The large window creates an enclosed oriel. The basement, main level and rear wall to the north are solid concrete elements on which the structure of wooden elements is mounted.

Loft House Basel

Colmarerstrasse is bordered by linear buildings and narrow block-edge developments. The heterogeneous streetscape is strikingly characterized by a wide variety of porches, bay windows and projections. In terms of proportion, the project maintains the characteristics of the building line, also projecting over the street, thus providing for better lighting in the narrow court area.

The Loft House is a residential project that combines the feeling of a loft redevelopment with the advantages of a new building: open, generously proportioned, freely dividable rooms; large-surface glazing, concrete core with stairs, goods elevator and sanitary units; built-in furnishings, untreated construction materials, seamless floor coverings, generous balcony areas.

Six similarly shaped concrete decks are suspended in the empty site, and protrude over the street. Their contours are followed by the green bands of glass. Floor-to-ceiling glazing with changing geometry from story to story lends an individual shape to each apartment.

The walled courtyard offers residents a protected, communal outdoor space. A 20 meter high birch tree, a fountain and a white gravel area create a restful atmosphere.

Retail Store Steinentorstrasse, Basel

An installation with its own three-dimensional geometry was inserted into a commercial building from the 1960s. The split level divides the space into two zones. The over four meters high lobby area is characterized by two oversized display cases with backlit portraits. Visitors are lead from there along a silver wall with a slight kink, up a flight of sublit glass stairs to the upper area. Inset glass show-cases protrude from the longitudinal wall, developing into a zigzag pattern after the kink. The atmosphere is heightened by a variety of transparent and reflective materials.

Residential House Büren I

In an area dominated by small-windowed single-family homes with simple gabled roofs, where families seek privacy within their own four walls, the client asked for a living platform where family life can take place while retaining a constant reference to the landscape.

An open concrete structure that is supported by concrete pillars at various angles is built upon a solid base. The glazing that runs behind the concrete pillars defines the living space on the platform.

The tent-like roof structure is a reference to the local building regulations that require a gabled roof. Stretched in an undulating pattern, the tarpaulin is anchored to the closed rear wall.

Residential House Büren II

The structure is situated on a sloping site with a good view, and it opens towards the valley. Dynamically it appears to mimic the landscape. It looks like a concrete sculpture hewn from a solid block with various openings offering selected vistas of the landscape.

Light impulses on the interior guide the occupants through the building, across the atrium-like forecourt and the lobby, and up into the generously proportioned

living space. As the central element with panoramic windows, this links the valley and garden landscape with the privacy of the interior. The rooms on the top floor provide a retreat for the occupants. The striking proportions of the rooms, underscored by the lighting, create a Mediterranean atmosphere.

Residential House Aesch

A glass cube with rounded corners is situated in the middle of a gravel-covered plot. Two central areas give structure to the ground plan, supporting the continual sequence of rooms with their shape. These room installations develop like a stripped tree trunk into the sleeping level, before dissolving into two atrium rooms. The sleeping level is surrounded by a steel casing with circular perforations. The surrounding plot of land is wooded with bamboo to lend intimate privacy to the building. The gradually rusting steel casing creates a red outline on the gravel-covered ground.

Since 1998, Daniel Buchner and Andreas Bründler have built four remarkable single-family houses, a loft house in Basel and a number of conversions and extensions. The two 37-year-old architects were awarded the Federal Art Prize in 2003.