

# weberbrunner

Anthology 8 – Notat  
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Quart Publishers **Anthology 8**

Strange yet familiar, the powerful Hardauhalle pushes its way between the base constructions of the “Hard” high-rise buildings in Zurich and the idyllic allotment gardens in front of the extra-long row of residential buildings from the 1940s, whose colour is echoed by the hall. Seen from a closer perspective, the building volume extends upwards like a machine or an industrial building, and to me seems to represent a kind of inner parallel with the enthusiastic words of Le Corbusier in *Vers une architecture* on the theme of building volumes, which he illustrated with several images of grain silos in America and Canada: “...led by (...) the creative idea of an organism capable of living (...) that brings the human race in harmony with the world order.”

Drawing closer to the building, my gaze wanders across the broad, horizontal level of the urban space surrounding the building which – surprisingly – slopes down into the open interior network of corridors and routes that wonderfully reflects the town. The mighty hall, which looks like a coliseum or an over-proportioned heavy industrial building, is poised above the inner fabric of the town. It can be divided into three parts and each part can be reached via a series of routes, such as the circular spectators’ gallery approximately five metres above ground level, which has several, slightly concealed entrances. The town ends quasi in this large, concentric vessel, filled with faint daylight. The two young Zurich architects Boris Brunner and Roger Weber have participated in numerous competitions since 1999 however they have only realised a small number of their projects. The competition entries and projects for two single-family houses presented here reflect their search for spacious, spatially-oriented solutions, which are always created with a surprising, unconventional and unmistakable architectural instinct.

*Lucerne, November 2008*

## **Indoor Swimming Pool Tribschen, Lucerne**

Competition 2002, 1st prize

The new public baths are integrated into the series of striking buildings and facilities along the banks of the lake, some of which are public buildings. The new building is situated directly at the lakeside on the site of the former “Tribtschen Ried” and responds to the elements in the surrounding landscape and the different orientations. The view towards the north is characterised by the Wagnerhaus on the sunny south slope. A sandy beach, a lake and a mountainous panorama stretch out towards the south-east. To the south-west, directly in front of the indoor swimming pool and the terrace is the sunbathing area with a children’s play area. Due to the polygonal shape of the building, there is a clear view of the lake and along its banks. In order to reduce the floor area of the building to a minimum, the utilisations are stacked and interlinked. The structure of the building is shaped like a stepped spiral, so that on one hand the hall is divided into zones and on the other hand there is an uninhibited view of the countryside and the lake from each of the pools. The technical and infrastructural utilisations are located in the closed parts of the spiral and a wellness area with a patio is located in the roof structure.

## **Sports Hall Hardau, Zurich 2007**

The quarter Hardau on the western edge of Aussersihl is not one of the most privileged zones in the town of Zurich. Traffic noise is a burden on the quarter, open public spaces are rare, and there is little variety in the type of housing. In 1998, the city council of Zurich made the urban revitalisation of this quarter one of their legislative goals. In addition to the renovation of the residential buildings and the creation of public open spaces, the measures focused on the development of school and sports facilities, including the new sports hall Hardau.

The large sports hall with its rows of spectators is located above the ground floor. The building therefore requires as small a “footprint” as possible on an almost level site and with that achieves a noticeably public character. It opens up towards the surroundings with ceiling-high glazing and allows the adjacent open spaces to “flow through the building”. Wide cascading stairs lead from

the extroverted ground floor storey, which blends in with the environment, into the introverted sports hall. The spectator's gallery that runs around the entire circumference of the building gives the hall the appearance of a sports arena. The light, glowing outer shell cloaks the different facade constructions in a decorative, festive veil.

## **Win-a-house**

Study contract 2006

The marketing department of Credit Suisse initiated a study contract in order to obtain designs for a one-family house. The question posed was: "how can the one-family house respond to a change in utilisation demands twenty years from now?"

A typical one-family house perceives itself as a custom-made suit for the smallest social unit: a family consisting of a couple with children. This kind of housing is frequently limited to a short phase in someone's life. The changes in the relationships between the residents increasingly demand flexible forms of living, which are often not possible in a classical single-family house.

The design proposes dividing the single-family house into three autonomous zones. The single-family household is the smallest social unit. The basic infrastructure of each of the units consists of residential studios with a small bathroom and connection points for a kitchen and a bath. The unit includes a garden or a spacious terrace that can be used as a private outdoor space. An outside staircase extends the outer space down to the garden while at the same time the residential units can be accessed separately. An interior, neutral staircase in the form of a spiral staircase links the units to one another.

The conception of the autonomous units enables the inhabitants to live together in relationships of their choice. The residential units within a social unit can be allocated according to functions such as living/eating, sleeping, working and children. However, it is also possible for autonomous one-person households to utilize the units in such a way that they are loosely connected to one another. The basic triangular shape enables the residential building to be interwoven into the surroundings created especially for the building. Three groups of trees opposite the three facades define autonomous worlds and conceal the view of the neighbourhood.

## **Sports Centre Gotthard, Andermatt**

Competition 2003, 1st prize

A promotion company plans to construct a sports centre with an indoor-and outdoor swimming pool, using a very limited budget. The construction on the site of the former Bellevue hotel can only be realised and financed in stages. The existing trees and the former hotel park as well as the imposing mountain panorama are characteristic for the setting.

The design proposal developed in the light of these circumstances defines a programmatic approach with particular parameters rather than a house in the classical sense. Taking the cloakrooms as a starting point, modules that are thematically orientated towards the spatial programme have been aligned in such a way that they are interlinked with the park woods. In the sense of a “genetic code”, the qualities of the location will be incorporated into the individual modules. On the front facade, a large skylight allows for a clear view up to the mountains while the deep-set strip of windows on the long side focuses the view on the woody ground of the park woods. The interior space is characterised by the interplay of close up views and clear visibility into the distance.

## **Open air swimming pool Letzigraben, Zurich**

Renovation 2007

A visit to the Letzibad open-air swimming pool shortly after its opening in 1949 was in a number of respects very different to today. For example, on arrival all the visitors immediately changed in the two large changing rooms and handed their clothes to the personnel at the changing room reception, which ran the whole length of the building. Today things are completely different: most of the guests change as they wish either before they set off to the pool, or on the sunbathing lawn. Very few of them actually use the indoor changing rooms.

As a result, one of the central tasks of the restoration was to breathe new life into the changing room buildings, which had become superfluous. With the installation of the Max Frisch exhibition space and a kiosk, new and attractive utilisations could be accommodated in the former changing areas. The loss of the original utilisation as a result of the renovation was also something that had

great potential. With the conversion of the sports swimming pool into a leisure pool with a wave machine, the expectations today's visitors have of a leisure facility could on the one hand be fulfilled, while at the same time it was possible to preserve all of the other pools in their original condition. In this case, the preservation of historical buildings not only means the careful restoration of the existing structures but also the active search for utilisation concepts that are able to create an appropriate range of services throughout the entire facility – tailor-made to fulfil the needs of today's bathers.

## **Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences), Olten**

Competition 2006, 2nd prize

The perimeters of the competition site are located in a heterogeneous area between buildings of different sizes and utilisations. Small-scale structures border directly on the large volumes of the former industrial plants. The open space along the tracks gives the location a spaciousness that could be very attractive if it weren't for the bothersome noise of the trains.

The design proposal responds with a single building volume that fills the whole site. The open space that is lost as a result is compensated by a spacious roof garden. An open space with an uninhibited view of the station, the old town of Olten, and the mountain range further in the distance is created behind the building, protected from the noise of the railway. An "interlinear space" includes the roof garden and links the lively forecourts along the Riggerbachstrasse with the outside area of the University of Applied Sciences.

Two halls situated above one another form the primary structure of the building. The teaching and working rooms are aligned within the open floor plan like an interior design or furnishing concept, in a similar way to an office building. The individual rooms are divided up in a simple and flexible manner using glass dividing walls, sound absorbing curtains and cupboards.

The more specific rooms such as the cafeteria, auditoriums, lecture halls and gym are located in the attic storey. These utilisations are strongly linked to the public and can be utilised independently from the teaching rooms. The close links between the building and the outside space provides a further quality that differentiates it from the other spaces.

## **CU-West, Uetikon am See**

Ideas competition 2005, 2nd prize

With the conversion of the industrial area “CU West” located directly at Lake Zurich, a characteristic feature of the locality has been lost. As a result, the identity of Uetikon will also change considerably. With the creation of a public park, the design proposal sets a new, distinctive standard that will leave its mark on the future of this location. With this goal in mind, the spatial programme has been concentrated in one building and placed as a large-scale structure in the area on the edge of the lake.

The typology and structure of the building allow the apartments to profit greatly from the special qualities of the location – its direct vicinity to the lake and clear visibility into the open countryside. The concept for the provision of access to the apartments is based on the idea of a “rue interieure”. However, in contrast to the classical building model the corridors are aligned diagonally within the building. The access roads, divided at short intervals, are offset storey-by-storey and connected to one another along the facades by stairways. Two-storey rooms in the area of the “access joints” allow daylight to enter the corridors and provide an unrestricted view of the countryside.

The service areas and car parking zones are located in the base of the building and profit from direct access to the lake. In the open-plan basement storey, additional utilizations supplement the daily requirements of the recreation- and leisure-facilities of the park.

## **Residential building B., Weiningen 2008**

The replacement building is located in the agricultural zone at the foot of the Altberg in Limmattal valley. It is a residential building for which the design proposal has been developed from the specifications laid down by the building laws and a contemporary, open-plan utilisation of apartments. The building law specifies that a replacement building must correspond to the former building with regard to the shape, materials and windows. In this case, it should be a copy of a building structured in small units, which has grown over the years as result of coincidences and a series of pragmatic extensions.

Two “empty spaces” have been created, stacked within one another and limited by outer wall constructions that resemble stage scenery: a minimal house, in the form of a timber panel construction, whose mural-like appearance is contrasted by the slim structure. The high, open and light-flooded living room generates a feeling of liberation on entering the building.

## **Villa M, Herrliberg**

Study contract 2007

A free-standing, representative single-family house is usually called a villa. The term “villa” (Latin) stands for a distinguished house in the countryside, which always has a garden area. The house and garden enter into a dialogue with one another, forming a unit. In contrast to a luxurious townhouse or penthouse, a villa is distinguished by its relationship to the garden.

The project incorporates the classic themes of a villa and creates a series of different relationships between a house and garden. Differentiated relationships are created between the living rooms and the outside space.

A protective green area of blossoming shrubs and grasses frames the site, giving the house an island character. The ground floor rooms are oriented towards the spatial element of the green area. They provide the limited view with a foreground. In the upper storey the patio draws a section of the garden into the house. The rooms set around the patio open out onto the interior garden. Precisely positioned windows in the facade frame the view of the lake. Viewed from the upper storeys, the green area forms a romantic-organic scenario within the surroundings.

## **weberbrunner**

In 2002, the then 32 year-old Zurich architects Roger Weber and Boris Brunner surprisingly won the competition for the Hardau sports hall in Zurich, and another for a public indoor swimming pool in Lucerne. The overview of their work presents buildings, projects and competition entries.

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