

Zeitschrift: Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home : internationale Zeitschrift

Herausgeber: Bauen + Wohnen

Band: 20 (1966)

Heft: 6: Wohnbauten = Maisons d'habitation = Apartment houses

Rubrik: Summary

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Download PDF: 23.01.2026

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Summary

Hans Zaugg, Olten
Associate: Helmuth Puschmann

Single-family pationhouse of steel near Olten

(Pages 207-214)

Pre-conditions, program

The site for this house is a difficult one; it is a meadow filled with fruit trees and bounded on three sides, west, south and east, by lofty forest, and sloping towards the northwest. Down the slope there is also a view over the Jura.

A 600-meter-long forest path leads up to the house; it runs up to the site from the east and ends in a driveway giving access to the lower level of the house.

The house is designed for a family of five. The result is a program with large living-room, dining-room, kitchen, three children's rooms and a guest room, master bedroom, baths. On a garden level there are two maids' rooms, a laundry and ironing-room and a bar with seating area, the owner having a cellar of fine wines.

Analysis

The house is on two levels, a garden level and a living-bedroom level. The house is entered via the garden level, through a covered forecourt, situated beneath a part of the living-bedroom tract. Adjoining is a hall from which a single-flight stairway goes up to the living level.

One of the basic ideas underlying the conception of this house was to open up all the rooms towards the outside and to create an open-air space to constitute part of the house proper. There is a terrace court bounded by a wall, where the family spends a great deal of time in the summer. Moreover, there is a view out over the Jura forests, and there is maximum privacy.

The notion of the "four walls" that bound a room has been exploded; the house extends beyond what would be called its walls, to find its natural boundaries out in the environment. It may appear to be a paradox if such a boundary becomes a necessity for a "glass house". In this particular case, the boundary wall not only guarantees privacy, but sets up a purely optical limit. Especially after dark this becomes clear. When the outside tract is lighted up, the glass reassumes its transparency and the interior its specific relation to its surroundings.

The living room surrounds a small patio, on one side of which the stairs come up out of the garden level. In the north part of the patio, like a self-contained unit, the kitchen is situated. Farther north is the roomy dining room. This living-dining tract measures 20x19 meters. On the south side it is open towards east and west; towards the north it is surrounded on both sides by bedrooms. Towards the northeast there is the master bedroom with bath tract and study, towards the southwest the four children's and guest rooms with baths.

Above the whole complex there is a roof which is rectangular in plan, covering two seating areas on the south, on both sides of the living tract; the east one has an outdoor fireplace. Towards the southwest a large inside fireplace projects into the seating area.

Dimensioning

The plan consists of nine squares measuring 6.75x6.75 meters each. This yields a total of built-over area

of 20.25x20.25 meters, a basic unit of 1125 constituting the point of departure.

Construction

The house was erected as a steel skeleton structure. A cruciform support was employed as bearing element, because in this way the best connection between supports and girders, inside and out, could be achieved. Construction and spatial axes are not identical. In this way complicated unions between supports and wall parts can be avoided. Partitions and cupboards are pre-fab elements.

Finishing materials

For ceilings, walls and furniture oak was employed. In the bedrooms there are wall-to-wall carpets, while all other rooms have a dark terrazzo floor. All visible parts of the steel construction have dark paint.

Installations

The house is heated by means of hot air. In the lower level ceiling a distribution system of air ducts has been built in. The hot air is led in wall ducts to vents and can be regulated at will in each room. Part of the air, when stale, goes back through exhaust ducts running along the windows into the heating plant. A regulatable mixture of fresh air and a hygrostatically controlled humidification of the hot air make possible in winter a pleasant interior climate. Fears of overheating in summer have proved to be false.

Criticism

The combination of an open-minded owner and a progressive, uncompromising architect has led here to the creation of a very severe, clearly conceived structure, which is highly symmetrical in design. In this way it is given a certain imposing character further stressed by the ascetic materials, steel and glass. The architect notes how much technical cooperation with the owners contributed to progress on the house, and he also emphasizes the exemplary patience of the owners while awaiting official permission for going ahead with this unusual house.

Gerald Horn, Manhattan Beach, California

House with three-dimensional skeleton

(Pages 215-216)

Requirements:

Extremely flexible plan, cost of construction low.

Aside from the partitions forming the installations core and the kitchenette, there are no interior walls. Beside the asymmetrical core freely arranged cupboards subdivide the space, which is made up of a living tract, with dining nook, and a bedroom tract with quarters for parents and space for three children.

The elements constituting the ceiling structure, which are bolted onto the frame, can also be used for partitions. The house can be entirely pre-fabricated and assembled on the site. The roof structure is composed of three-dimensional beams which rest on four truss columns located in the centre of the building.

Marc Funk and H. U. Fuhrmann, Baden

House on a slope in Ennetbaden

(Pages 217-219)

Our readers are given an idea here of the entire range of contemporary building by being shown two examples of "brutalist" architecture which have their forerunners in Le Corbusier's last buildings and indications of which can be found even in his earliest projects. We should like in this way to show that we do not close our minds to the "other" trends outside the severe idiom of Mies van der Rohe. We should like to extend our range, because other types of architecture have now conquered such a vast amount of ground that a journal like ours can no longer overlook them. Let the dialogue commence. We adhere to our view of the severe orthodoxy line in this jubilee year, and we clearly realize that it has now arrived at a stage of maturity and has become so elaborated that one could often think that the saturation point has been reached.

Harry Seidler, Sydney

Duplex apartment house near Rushcutters Bay on the outskirts of Sydney

(Pages 231-235)

Site:

Steep north slope (exposed to sun in Australia) with open view over the bay.

Access half way up, park and tennis courts on the slope side, open-air swimming pool on bay side.

Program:

60 furnished studio-apartments (B) and 20 furnished 2-room apartments (A). Construction restricted to 8 stories.

Design:

The 2-room apartments are made up of a large north living room, a lower bath and a kitchen on the south beside a south bedroom, situated a high-floor higher. The access to the apartments is via a gallery with stairways. The bedrooms of the 2-room apartments are located between the south galleries.

The building is entered by way of two stairways placed at the ends, the open one serving as an emergency stairway.

The lift stops at every two floors; in the intermediate levels are the laundry rooms.

Materials:

Rough-coffered raw concrete. Elevations of smooth sandstone, cream-coloured. Window frames and doors of aluminium.

Interior appointments:

Furniture designed and selected by the architect. Venetian blinds, dark-blue, orange curtains (studios), red curtains for 2-room flat living rooms. Grey wallpaper. Bedding brown and black with brightly coloured cushions. All the woodwork of Coachwood. Ceilings painted white.

E. Hotta and Associates, Tokyo

"Villa Bianca" apartment house in Tokyo

(Pages 236-238)

Situated in Tokyo, near the sports arenas by Kenzo Tange, in a diplomatic quarter. Hotta has created a tenant-owned apartment block worth between DM 90,000 and 250,000.

Each of the 3- or 4-room apartments has a balcony with a small garden, which is intended to give an impression of private ownership.

The building with its balconies resembles a bee-hive, this effect being further stressed by the staggering of the floors, where solid cubes alternate with exterior loggias. The elevation is composed entirely of sliding doors which are glazed. The panel elements are thus supported by stringers which are thickened at the end and which prevent the panels from slipping.

The frequent earthquakes in Tokyo justify this static principle of construction. The reinforcement of the principal skeleton is constituted by two intersecting partitions to which are attached the vertical installations. The exterior supports are articulated. For reasons of acoustic insulation the windows are in three sections: on the outside, glazed sliding door with aluminium frame, then parapet with metal grille, then curtain-partitions and, finally, on the inside, traditional "Shoji" elements composed of wooden squares and dividers.

The living rooms connect directly with the kitchens, which are conceived as a unit separating the living tract into two areas.