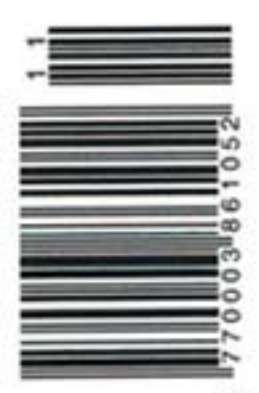


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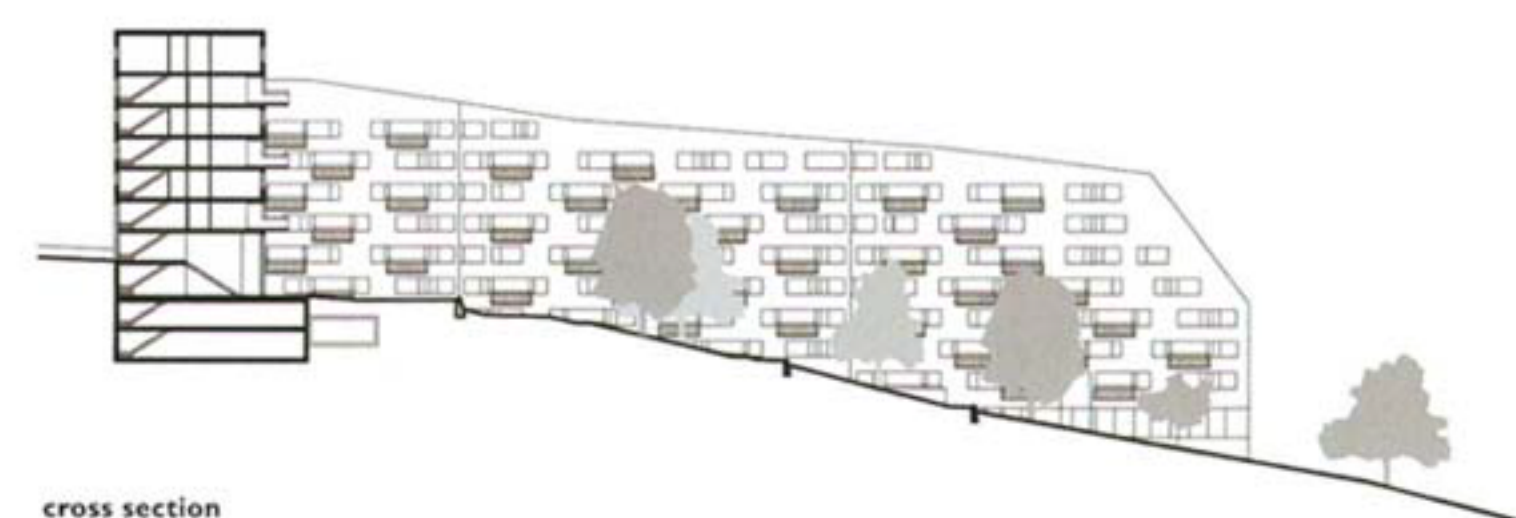


EMERGING ARCHITECTURE



SWISS ASSURANCE

This large-scale housing complex reinvigorates a dull building type.



88 | 12 cross section



location/site plan

The challenges of large-scale public housing still tend to confound most architects, so it was encouraging to see this assured example from young Swiss practice Pool Architekten. Compared with most of the projects shown here it represents a sizeable commission (for over 100 apartments), and demonstrates the skills of designing and building on a large scale. Jurors were impressed by the scheme's confident execution, if perhaps not so entranced by its quintessentially Swiss rigour.

Commissioned for a local housing cooperative, the development lies on the edge of Zurich, where the suburbs thin and give way to rolling countryside. The site slopes eastwards down from Leimbachstrasse to the river Sihl and forest beyond. To exploit light and views, the two blocks are placed along the west and north edges of the site defining a large communal garden. Clad in a reptilian skin of greenish grey slate and partly dug into the slope, the blocks have a topographic quality that abstracts the roll and heave of the surrounding hills. Each block consists of three sub-units which are kinked slightly in plan like a derailed train. Angular roof profiles also break up any potential monotony, as do the generous balconies set at regular intervals into slate-clad facades.

Deft internal planning juggles and organises a range of apartment types. Each sub-block contains three to four flats per



1 Generous balconies animate the stern slate-clad facades.
2 Edge of town context.

floor, arranged around a central communal stairwell. Apartments vary in size from one to four bedrooms, with living rooms strategically placed to take advantage of views. A quarter of the apartments are maisonettes, which interlink and overlap the standard flats, introducing an element of spatial diversity to what could, on paper, be quite a monotonous and repetitive building type. All flats have access to external space in the form of balconies (enclosed by elegantly detailed wire mesh balustrades) or roof terraces. As might be expected in this part of the world, the quality of construction and workmanship was painstaking, adding to the project's overall sense of dignity and decency. C. S.

Architects
Pool Architekten, Zurich
Project team
Raphael Frei, Mischa Spoerri, Ana Prikic, Markus Bachmann, Sybille Besson, Hannah Dean
Photographs
Arazebra, Andrea Helbling



interaction of different flat types



typical sub block plan (lower level scale approx 1:500)



typical sub block plan (upper level)

HONOURABLE MENTION
HOUSING, ZURICH,
SWITZERLAND
ARCHITECTS
POOL ARCHITECTEN