



Inclusivity on the basis of the character of buildings

an Elective Thesis from
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1. Introduction and question

“Inklusion meint das Recht jedes Menschen, in sozialen Bezügen leben zu können, also in allen Lebensbereichen dabei sein zu können. Es geht um das Dabeisein-Können beispielsweise in der Schule, auf dem Arbeitsmarkt, in Sport und Kultur, im politischen Leben. Nur wer in einem Lebensbereich dabei ist, kann dort seine Freiheit leben - sich bilden, arbeiten, kreativ sein, politisch mitentscheiden - und so seine Persönlichkeit entfalten.”¹

Beate Rudolf,
director of the German Institute for Human Rights

After the definition of Beate Rudolf is the understanding of the term inclusivity that everyone has the right to be present in all spheres of life. In order to implement these participation opportunities for all, to educate the population about their concerns and to create awareness of the problems, as well as to provide useful information, various interest groups have been formed in Switzerland that specifically represent individual groups of the population.² To that specialist units have formed, which specifically provide architects with information, rules and norms for their design.³ These include probably one of the most famous norm: the *SIA 500 Hindernisfreie Bauten*.⁴ In addition compile some books information's and design assistance on barrier-free build-

1 Benze, Andrea: *Zusammenhalt – Differenz. Bausteine für eine inklusive Stadt*, online: <https://www.inklusion-online.net/index.php/inklusion-online/article/view/542/394>, (09.07.2022).

2 Cf. *Über Insieme*, online: <https://insieme.ch/ueber-insieme/>, (11.07.2022) and *Unia Interessengruppen*, online: <https://www.unia.ch/de/ueber-uns/interessengruppen/>, (11.07.2022) and *Über Blindspot*, online: <https://blindspot.ch/ueber-uns/>, (11.07.2022).

3 Cf. *Publikationen*, online: <https://hindernisfreie-architektur.ch/publikationen/>, (10.07.2022)

4 Cf. *SIA Norm 500: Hindernisfreies Bauen*, Zürich: Schweizer Ingenieur- und Architektenverein (SIA), 2009.

ings.⁵ And on an administrative level is the aim to build more cheap housing projects, so that more people can find affordable housing that meets their needs.⁶

Furthermore regulate various laws the access to buildings and a non-discriminatory treatment. These include *Article 8* on equality in the *Swiss Federal Constitution*, as well as the *Disability Equality Act* and *Article 261* on discrimination and incitement to hatred in the *Swiss Criminal Code*.⁷ In order to meet the different requirements, different institutions such as museums, schools, municipalities are developing concepts to improve the inclusion and diversity.⁸

These various texts and concepts show that besides thoughts on representation, especially in relation to buildings, it is mainly accessibility that is addressed and not the design or expression of the buildings.

In contrast to that published in 2019 Charles L. Davis II the book *Building Character*, in which he looks in a chapter at the housing complex *Harlem River Houses* in New York, that was built specifically for black people. In the urban development, the use of the red bricks rather of financial reasons only than with a formal concept and in the sculptures, which are representing black people at work, Davis sees the racial ideologies of America and stereotyped picture of black people in America reproduced.⁹ Davis analysis indicates, that the character of the housing project, described by the red bricks and the

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- 5 Cf. Rau Ulrike ed. al. (Ed.): *Barrierefrei: Bauen für die Zukunft*, Berlin: Beuth Verlag, 2013 (3rd ed.) and Everding, Dagamer (Ed.): *Handbuch Barrierefreies Bauen : Leitfaden zur DIN 18040 Teil 1 bis 3*, Köln: Verlagsges. Rudolf Müller, 2015 (2nd ed.) and Herrgott, Barbara S., Meuser, Philipp (Ed.): *Barrierefreies Bauen und Wohnen*, Berlin: DOM publishers, 2013.
 - 6 Cf. Schipper, Sebastian ed. al. (Ed.): *Wohnraum für alle?! : Perspektiven auf Planung, Politik und Architektur*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2017.
 - 7 Cf. Art. 8 *Rechtsgleichheit*, Bundesverfassung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft vom 18. April 1999 (Stand am 13. Februar 2022), pp. 3 and *Bundesgesetz über die Beseitigung von Benachteiligungen von Menschen mit Behinderungen (Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz, BehiG)*, vom 13. Dezember 2002 (Stand am 1. Juli 2020) and Art. 261: Schweizerisches Strafgesetzbuch, vom 21. Dezember 1937 (Stand am 1. Juli 2020), p. 110.
 - 8 Cf. Strasser, Urs: *Eine Schule für alle: Integration und Inklusion auch in der Schweiz? Eine Standortbestimmung*, in: Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Heilpädagogik Edition 3, 2006, pp. 6 – 14 and Stegmüller, Céline: *Diversität und Inklusion in den Schweizerischen Museen*, online: <https://www.museums.ch/publikationen/revue/schweizer-museumszeitschrift-17/diversität-inklusion-schweizerischen-museen.html>, (11.07.2022) and *Integrationspolitische Ziele der Stadt Zürich 2019–2022*, Stadt Zürich, 2019, online: https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/dam/stzh/prd/Deutsch/Stadtentwicklung/Publikationen_und_Broschueren/Integrationsfoerderung/integrationspolitik_der_stadt_zuerich/IPZ_19-22_ENGL_long_DEF.pdf, (11.07.2022) and *Leitbild Integration Rapperswil-Jona*, online: https://www.rapperswil-jona.ch/_docn/3310991/113_Leitbild_Integration_Rapperswil-Jona.pdf, (11.07.2022) and *Diversity Strategie*, online: <https://ethz.ch/staffnet/de/anstellung-und-arbeit/arbeitsumfeld/diversity/strategie-und-zahlen/diversity-strategie.html>, (11.07.2022).
 - 9 Cf. Davis II, Charles L.: *Building Character, The racial Politics of Modern Architecture Style*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021, pp. 202 - 203.

sculptures, incorporated the exclusionary attitude of the White people in the United States towards Black people. Or in other words: the Harlem River Houses excluded the Black People from the United States society. This led to the question, so if a building can exclude by its character, how can a building include by its character? How are the terms inclusivity and character connected to each other? How can one define the term inclusivity in the context of the character of buildings?

So if to be true, constructing inclusively therefore would mean more than just enabling access to the building and the mobility within the building for all people. Rather it needs to be asked how the place or the expression of a building may be inviting for some people, but repulsive or even rejecting for others.

How inclusivity can be thought further on a bigger scale, on the level of urban development is for example discussed from the perspective of multiple disciplines in the book *Inklusionsmaschine Stadt: Inklusion im Städtebau, interdisziplinär diskutiert*.¹⁰ In the book *Inclusive Urbanization Rethinking Policy, Practice and Research in the Age of Climate Change* it is discussed how through greater participation of disadvantaged groups of people all people can be included and represented, especially also in the context of the climate crisis.¹¹ Further is in the book *Socially inclusive cities: emerging concepts and practice* explained how urban poverty and exclusion can be counteracted.¹² However, these also show that a focus on inclusivity in relation to the expression of buildings is so far absent.

The concept of a character is not entirely new, though, it has just not yet appeared in combination with inclusivity. Regine Hess analysed in her book *Emotionen am Werk* the texts of the 18th and 19th century from Gairmain Boffrand, Jacques-François Blondel, Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières and Étienne-Louis Boullée, which addressed the question regarding a good character, after their descriptions to character of buildings in relation to the emo-

10 Cf. Rummel Dorothee ed. al. (Eds.): *Inklusionsmaschine Stadt: Inklusion im Städtebau, interdisziplinär diskutiert*, Berlin: Jovis, 2020.

11 Cf. Shrestha, K. Krishna ed. Al. (Ed.): *Inclusive Urbanization Rethinking Policy, Practice and Research in the Age of Climate Change*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

12 Cf. Herrle, Peter ed. Al. (Eds.): *Socially inclusive cities : emerging concepts and practice*, Münster: LIT, 2015.

tionalism of its observer.¹³

This investigation she continued with works from Peter Zumthor, Daniel Libeskind and Lars Spuybroek. Furthermore, she pointed out how architecture became an architecture parlante and was no longer static, but made contact with viewers.¹⁴ This makes it possible to look at the buildings as acting objects as well and according their semiotic processes, which Umberto Eco described among others, to define their meanings.¹⁵

While these books analyse the buildings mainly from one perspective, architectural history, the buildings here are viewed from several perspectives: From the perspective of the architects who designed them, the residents and that of the architectural historian - my point of view. This approach allows one to go beyond the norms and to focus on the people (involved) for the analysis and evaluation. Using this method, the work asks about the perceptions and decision-making bases of the architects. In which social and political environment were the buildings built? What do the buildings speak of when read from different perspectives? To what do the buildings refer? How are the buildings characterised and how are they perceived? What has an inclusive effect?

The questions are addressed on the basis of three residential building projects in Zurich: The *Escherhäuser* built by Leonhard Zeugheer from 1836 until 1840, the settlement *Birkenhof* built by the architect Albert Froelich together with the office *Kündig & Oetiker* from 1925 until 1926 and the *Zollhaus* built by *Enzmann Fischer Architekten* from 2015 until 2021. The focus on Zurich in the selection of the objects to be studied allows the critical examination to be based on photos or plans of the buildings as well as on the explanations

13 Cf. Boffrand, G.: *Book of Architecture: Containing the General Principles of the Art and the Plans, Elevations and Sections of Some of the Edifices Built in France and in Foreign Countries* (C.V. Eck, & D. Britt, Eds.), London: Routledge, 2002, online: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315191850>, (19.07.2022) and Blondel, Jacques-François ed. al.: *Cours d'architecture, ou Traité de la décoration, distribution & construction des bâtiments*, Paris: 1771 – 1777, online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-366> (19.07.2022) and Le Camus de Mézières, Nicolas: *Le génie de l'architecture, ou L'analogie de cet art avec nos sensations / par M. Le Camus de Mézières,...*, Paris: 1780, online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k857133?rk=21459;2#>, (19.07.2022) and Boullée, Etienne Louis: *Architecture; essay on art*, trans. Sheila de Vallée, in *Boullée & Visionary Architecture*, ed. Helen Rosenau, London: Academy Editions & New York: Harmony Books, 1976, pp. 81-116.

14 Cf. Hess, Regine: *Emotionen am Werk, Peter Zumthor, Daniel Libeskind, Lars Spuybroek und die historische Architekturpsychologie*, Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 2013, p. 51.

15 Cf. Eco, Umberto: *Einführung in die Semiotik*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2002 (9th ed.), pp. 312 – 314.

in books and individual online resources, but also in particular on site visits. To this end, the individual subchapters first provide a general overview of the architecture of the buildings and their history of development, and then the questions are discussed on the basis of four selected elements: the façade, the entrance, the staircases and the windows. In the process, the elements are described starting from different sources and in parallel placed in different contexts, analysed and interpreted.

The research is thereby structured in three parts, representing different perspectives. The first chapter describes the building from the perspective of architectural historian and includes the perceptions of the architects. The second chapter focuses on perspectives of the residents and puts them next to my personal expressions of the buildings which I gathered during the site visits. The third chapter summarises the discoveries from the first and second chapter in one conclusion. Furthermore, the findings are contrasted with existing understandings of inclusivity and character, and their broader definitions emerging from the analysis are presented.

2. Historical analysis of three buildings in Zurich with regard to their inclusivity

2.1. The Escherhäuser

The Escherhäuser have been built in the years 1836 until 1840 and have been designed by the Swiss architect Leonhard Zeugheer, who lived from 1812 to 1866. They were built under the commission of Heinrich Escher-Zollikofer, the father of the famous Alfred Escher, who has been remembered for his achievements in the development of the train corporation (SBB) in Switzerland. The Escherhäuser entered history as the first apartment houses in Zurich, even though sources tell us that there have been similar buildings before these.¹⁶ After the razing of the city walls, Escher-Zollikofer bought the property between the theatre Pfauen and the Steinwiesplatz up to the Hottingerstrasse, which at the time still belonged to the suburban municipality Hottingen. He intended to build a large development for the whole area, a project which was rejected by the local council due to the unusually large scope of the project. Under these circumstances only the two buildings, the houses with apartments for the bourgeoisie in the front at Zeltweg and the houses behind for the servants at the Steinwiesstrasse, still existing today, have been realized.¹⁷ Between the rows of houses an open space was paid out, by which the residents could access the buildings and later was used, according to images, mostly to park cars (see figure no. 4). Already in the overall appearance one can see the different ideologies that must have led to the different expressions of the buildings. The front building for the bourgeoisie appears in a classicist style and the houses for the servants refer to

16 Cf. Kantonale Denkmalpflege Zürich: *Inventar der überkommunalen Schutzobjekte, Zürich, Zeltweg 007 – 0015. E-scherhäuser*, pp. 4 – 5 and *Steinwiesstrasse 3, 5, 7, Hintere Escherhäuser*, in: Stadt Zürich, Amt für Städtebau (Ed.): *Baukultur in Zürich - Schutzwürdige Bauten und gute Architektur der letzten Jahre*, p. 222.

17 Cf. *Steinwiesstrasse 3, 5, 7, Hintere Escherhäuser*, p. 222.



1 *The front Escherhäuser*

the Kosthäuser.¹⁸ That aspect is been further discussed in the chapter when addressing the four elements selected here to describe the inclusivity of this housing complex: the façade, the entrance, the staircases and the windows.

2.1.1. Façade

The façade to the south west of the row of houses at the Zeltweg has been designed in a classicist style. The façade is structured in a central avant-corps and two wings recalling similar Italian palazzi. While the wings are three stories high, on the central avant-corps a fourth level has been added. The ground floor forms a base level, which is divided by a string cornice from the first floor over the whole length of the building. Another string cornice splits the second level from the third level of the avant-corps. The whole housing row is composed of six buildings, which is shown with the avant-corps in the middle and the edge avant-corps on the Steinwiesstrasse and the rain gutters, that divide the wings.

¹⁸ Cf. Kantonale Denkmalpflege Zürich, p. 6 and Hass, Beat (ed. al.): *Zürcher Baumeisterhäuser: Zeugen einer wach-senden Stadt*, Zürich: Stadt Zürich Hochbaudepartement, Amt für Städtebau Baugeschichtliches Archiv, 2011, p. 19.

2 Hottingen,
Dufour Map
First Edition
1845 - 1865



3 Situation
Escherhäuser,
2022



Further the reduced plastered façade with a regular repetitive grid of windows with folding shutters dominates the character of the building, whereas of all parts the central risalit is the most decorated one. On top a console frieze completes the façade and on the first level lintels have been placed over the windows. Cornerstones are framing the passage and the edges of the ground floor of the central avant-corps, which span also the passage with a jack arch. The wings have a more reduced decoration with only a lintel on top of the middle windows of the base level. These windows are actually doors leading into the front garden via staircases. In addition two panels in the same row of two of these doors, one on each side of the central avant-corps, inform us that Richard Wagner (1849 -1857) and Johanna Spyri (1886 - 1901) lived in the house for a time.¹⁹

Three buildings form the rear housing block for the servants, each separated by a rain gutter. Every part has four rows of windows, where in the ground

¹⁹ Cf. Kantonale Denkmalpflege Zürich, p. 6.

floor one of the windows becomes a door, which gives by way of a staircase access to the respective house. While a regular, screened window structure and the flat plastered surface dominate the façade as well, the southwest façade is even more reduced than the façade of the front buildings. Only lintels over the entrances serve as decoration.²⁰ Overall, the facade refers to *Kosthäuser*, residential buildings, which were built next to industrial sites in rural areas by the owner of the factories, specifically to inhabit the workers. The description could be applied almost one-to-one to each of these buildings.²¹ For the design of the settlement, Zeugheer was probably inspired by his stays abroad in Neuchâtel (during his architectural studies), in Paris and Liverpool, as well as by the architecture for workers in the period of the industrialization in Switzerland.²² In Liverpool he worked for Thomas Rickman, who was famous for his history writing and his interest in the neo-Gothic style. Zeugheer's Gothic designs were not well received by Zurich society, whereupon he began to work in the classic style, which gained him many commissions, especially after the *Escherhäuser* for urban villas.²³ In the front housing row of the *Escherhäuser* one can already detect an interest in the typology of the villa, which became much more apparent in his later work. An interest in a certain representational form, a representation of a specific group of people, the upper class, the bourgeoisie.²⁴ Also, the *Escherhäuser* reflect the classical architectural language of row of houses that Zeugheer used for the cantonal hospital or the *Pfrundhaus*, which is also apparent in the design for the barracks in Zurich by Johann Jakob Müller in 1873 or in the views of the *Burghölzli Psychiatric Clinic* by Johann Casper Wolff in 1863.²⁵ Among all the building commissions, the one for the servants' houses seems to be rather exceptional for Zeugheer.²⁶ However, the design appears to indicate a possible comparable approach. In choosing the typology of the *Kosthäuser*, Zeugheer seems to have sought a style that corresponds to the purpose of the residential buildings. Therefore it is also connected to an in-

20 Cf. *Steinwiesstrasse 3, 5, 7, Hintere Escherhäuser*, p. 222.

21 Cf. Steinmann, Martin: *Die Kosthäuser*, in *archithese*, Nr. 5: Industrie und Landschaft, 1980, pp. 48 - 52.

22 Cf. Mathis, Hans Peter: *Leonhard Zeugheer*, in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS)*, online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/019958/2014-03-03/>, (03.09.2022).

23 Cf. Mathis, Hans Peter: *Villa: Wohnen auf dem Lande?*, in: *Journal of Swiss archeology and art history, La maison de campagne patricienne*, Nr. 50, 1993, pp. 67 - 68.

24 Cf. Mathis 1993, pp. 66 - 68 and *Kantonale Denkmalpflege Zürich*, p. 4.

25 Cf. Hauser, Andreas: *Kleine Zürcher Schriften zur Denkmalpflege*, vol. 4., Zürich: Baudirektion Kanton Zürich, 2001, pp. 65 - 65, 91 and 98 - 99.

26 Cf. Mathis 1993, pp. 67 - 68



4 The rear Escherhäuser and open space between the two house rows with cars, 1993

terest in a certain representational form, a representation of a specific group of people, the lower class, the proletariat, here the servants.

With this, one can see two different perceptions towards housing in one project in connection to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. On one hand the more noble classicist Italian palazzo and on the other hand the more simple labour apartment block.

Furthermore the front Escherhäuser can be linked to the Biedermeier style, to which the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie oriented itself when the houses were built.²⁷ The Biedermeier found an expression in art, the furnishing, music and way of living. Further it was mostly lived out in the private sphere and became mainly known for the arts and crafts in furniture making, where the living room or Salon became the place for representational purposes.²⁸ The lived simplicity experienced a reduction of ornamentation and an interior, that was both practical and comfortable. In the rejection of the opulence of the pre-

27 Cf. Aktionskomitee "Pro Pfauen": *Für die Erhaltung der Escher-Häuser*, in die Tat Zürich, Nr. 23, 28.01.1970 and Crottet, Regula; Grunder, Karl: *Escherhäuser (Ho/Zeltweg 7, 9, 11, 13, 15; Steinwiesstrasse 1)*, in: *Die "Ausgemeinden" der Stadt Zürich bis 1860*, Bern: GSK, 2012, p. 304.

28 Cf. Krüger, Renate: *Biedermeier: Eine Lebenshaltung zwischen 1815 und 1848*, Leipzig: Koenig & Amelang (VOB), 1979, pp. 33 - 34.

vious Empire Style of the Napoleon period and Baroque, both styles - the classicism and Biedermeier - came together and went along with the aimed standard of living.²⁹ Zeugheer found in that sense a design that suited the new formed bourgeoisie after the French revolution, and the People's Assembly on 22 November 1830 in Uster ("Ustertag"), where a bourgeois peasant movement of the underprivileged coun-tryside claimed for the Sovereignty of all citizens in Switzerland.³⁰

But build specifically for the bourgeoisie it was clearly not made for the workers, which came in high numbers to Zurich in these years and settled in the area of the Aussersihl.³¹ For them Zeugheer built the rear Escherhäuser, at which the construction of the houses and the poverty of the proletariat found their mutual reference points. Thus the even greater reduction of the ornamentation and the formal language of the rear houses created a tension between the different housing blocks. This created a hierarchical order between the row houses, which defined also the social status of the residents by the architecture.

2.1.2. Entrance

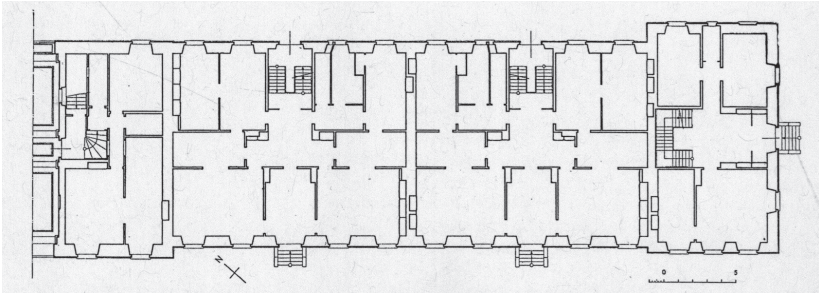
Each building of the Escherhäuser has a main entrance situated towards the space between the two house rows, except the avant-corps of the front building which is accessible by the passage, and has an entrance on each side of the passageway. The avant-corps on the right, seen from Zeltweg, has the entrance towards Steinwiesstrasse. In the ground floor of the bourgeoisie apartments there is an additional door, leading by a stair into the front garden. In the same way the doors of the houses for the servants can be reached by a stairway and every entrance is highlighted by a lintel.

The entrances of the more noble apartments in the classicist housing block are part of highly decorated walls, which are structured in four segments and in the middle a double door gives access to the apartments. The wall parts are framed by Doric columns, carrying an architrave over the whole length of the wall; in addition the segments hold coloured glass with beautiful orna-

29 Cf. Jenkins, Lawrence: *Biedermeier, Art and Culture in Central Europe 1815-1848*, Milan: Skira editore, 2001, p. 70.

30 Cf. Zürcher Baumeisterhäuser: *Zeugen einer wachsenden Stadt*, Zürich: Stadt Zürich Hochbaudepartement, Amt für Städtebau Baugeschichtliches Archiv, 2011, pp. 24 - 25.

31 Cf. Künzle, Daniel: *City, Millionenvorstadt und Arbeiterquartier: demographische und baulich-soziale Entwicklung in Zürich 1830-1914*, in: *Unsere Kunstdenkmäler: Mitteilungsblatt für die Mitglieder der Gesellschaft für Schweizer-ische Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 42, issue 2, 1991, pp. 164 - 170 and *Steinwiesstrasse 3, 5, 7, Hintere Escherhäuser*, p. 222.



5 *Groundfloor front Escherhäuser*



6 *Left: Entrance front Escherhäuser*

7 *Right: Entrance Rear Escherhäuser*

mentations. In contrast to some doors in the apartments there is no threshold separating the inside and the outside.

The entrances are so designed that one always has to rise slightly a bit to enter the house or the first apartment. With the accompanying elevation of the ground floor to a mezzanine, it separates the buildings from the street. It underlines the distinction between the public sphere, the street and place in

between the houses, and the private sphere of the houses and apartments, which is towards Zeltweg even more strengthened by the front garden, which creates a certain distance between the building and the street.

During the 19th century the bourgeoisie household became more and more reduced to the closest family members and one or two servants, which increasingly were separated from the family. They had to use their own entrances or had to sleep in small chambers, for example under the staircase or on a suspended ceiling in the kitchen.³² For this the entrance took on a great significance in the process of opening and closing.³³

But also the mezzanine level can be seen as a step in this process of opening and closing, the negotiation of the public and private spaces. In this context, participation in neighbourly processes about the maintenance of security through defence services or fire protection and the completion of everyday activities such as the use of public space or assistance at special events such as slaughter were relevant for the functioning of social life. The residents of the houses were part of a neighbourly fabric in which the membership of the social group, such as guild or parish, and the economic status determined how the relations were shaped, their rights, duties and obligations.³⁴ Thereby the different steps and elevations of the houses practically and visually enable the regulation of the interactions between the own household and the different members of the society. In that sense the stairs leading to the house entrances constitute spaces with a movement towards the neighbourhood, spaces reaching out for possible interactions, spaces between the private and public sphere.

Further, the separation of the settlement into a house row for the bourgeoisie and a housing row for their servants is accompanied by the development of creating more distance between the different kind of household members.

In contrast to the more restrained designed house entrances with only lintels highlighting them, are the actual representative entrances, the doors of the decorated walls to the individual apartments. In the same way, just as the

32 Cf. Kuhn Bärbel: *Mitwohnen im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, in: Eibach, Joachim (Ed.): *Das Haus in der Geschichte Europas*, Ein Handbuch, Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015, p. 382.

33 Cf. Schmidt-Voges, Inken: *Einführung: Interaktion und soziale Umwelt*, in: Eibach, Joachim (Ed.): *Das Haus in der Geschichte Europas*, Ein Handbuch, Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015, p. 411.

34 Cf. Schmidt-Voges, Inken: *Das Haus und seine Nachbarschaft: Integration und Konflikt*, in: Eibach, Joachim (Ed.): *Das Haus in der Geschichte Europas*, Ein Handbuch, Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015, pp. 421 - 423.

façade has a representational function towards the street, the city, the decorated wall has a representational function towards the inner street, the staircase, welcoming guests or neighbours. It emphasises that the transition into a private sphere, where we can identify a number of elements representing the identity of the household, was only performed when passing one of the entrance of the individual apartments. The spaces of the apartments were organised hierarchically, in such a way that the rooms were also part of this process of opening and closing, leading to the bedroom as the most private space. This means that every space had a different kind of representational function in connection to who was allowed access to the rooms. It also defined in which kind of relationship the people/visitors/inhabitants were standing.

With entering the private sphere the visitors got included into the private realm, and rewarded with trust and appreciation. Therefore, stepping over the threshold or passing through the door can be seen as a ritual, which seals the admission into the private environment of the flat owner. An unrequested passing over the threshold or opening of the door was an unforgivable transgression, although one knew or saw, that someone was in danger. In this way, the door protects the private sphere from uninvited guests through its physicality, but above all through its high symbolic and legal value. So one could say that, in this whole process of opening and closing, the door was not only highly loaded with symbolic value, but also legally.³⁵

In addition, if in the 19th century, when the Escherhäuser were built, a flat met the preferred requirements and people had an interest in moving into it, sources about how life was organised among the residents testify that the future residents had to fulfil some principles. These were defined by the homeowner in relation to the norms and ideas created by society. These principles followed the aim to have good neighbourly relationships and to avoid negative influences, which could damage the reputation of the house. This reputation was formed by all members of the house, which meant that every resident needed to be chosen carefully. Therefore a lot of articles in journals and newspapers wrote about how one could be protected from bad habits

35 Cf. Schmidt-Voges, Inken: *Einführung: Interaktion und soziale Umwelt*, 2015, p. 415 and Schmidt-Voges, Inken: *Das Haus und seine Nachbarschaft: Integration und Konflikt*, 2015, p. 429.

and form good neighbourhoods.³⁶ On behalf of the Escherhäuser to be a worker at the Swiss Train Corporation could have been of one of the criteria too, but the knowledge about Richard Wagner and Johanna Spyri living there as well, witness that it was at least not always the case.

2.1.3. Staircase

In every building of the Escherhäuser a simple staircase has been built, that serves one apartment per floor. Photographs (see figures 8 and 9) testify to the wooden steps with metallic stanchions and wooden handrails in the front houses. The stair railing forms long thin columns with a base and simplified Corinthian capitals. The landings are laid with herringbone parquet.

Of a particular design were the staircases in the rear Escherhäuser, which followed the layout of the Kosthäuser and were more or less part of the apartments, as they landed on the corridor, along which the rooms were laid out in a circular pattern. In general the residents could access the spaces via the corridor, but some were only accessible by another room.³⁷

An extension to the front Escher houses was built in 1887, designed by the architect Adolf Brunner-Staub. Besides a terrace on the roof, the extension accommodates a staircase that has a more decorated design compared to the reduced staircases of Zeugheer.³⁸ In terms of the materiality and ornamentation it takes a special position among the stairs. The floor is made in terrazzo and the wall is decorated in a classical style with antique ornamentation and an indicated ashlar masonry in the base. Two niches to the side are placed for possible statues and coloured windows provide a dimmed atmosphere. Stone steps and a with coving and cirrus decorated wrought iron railing and a wooden handrail build the stair.

In comparison to the staircase by Brunner-Staub the staircases from Zeugheer appear in a much less representational expression. While one can imagine in the extension that the owners of the flat would descend the stone staircase to greet their guests with a choreographed entrance, the functionality of overcoming the height outshines the other staircases. In an efficient way they connect the different apartments.

36 Cf. Schmidt-Voges, Inken: *Das Haus und seine Nachbarschaft: Integration und Konflikt*, 2015, pp. 425 - 427.

37 Cf. *Steinwiesstrasse 3, 5, 7, Hintere Escherhäuser*, p. 222.

38 Cf. *Kantonale Denkmalpflege Zürich*, p. 4.



8 Left: The staircase to one of the apartments of the front Escherhäuser, 1989

9 Right: Decorated Entrance to one of the apartments of the front Escherhäuser, 1989



10 Left: The Staircase in the extension with ashlar masonry in the base, 1989

11 Middle: Coving and cirrus decorated wrought iron railing with a wooden handrail of the staircase in the extension, 1989

12 Right: The two niches to the side from top of the Staircase in the extension, 1989

But not only the level of ornamentation is a criteria in the evaluation of the representational expression of the staircases, also the size and layout of the stair puts the stair by Brunner-Staub into another category. Whereby, more than representative staircases of public buildings of the modern era, it clearly has a certain representativeness and monumentality.³⁹ Zeugheer's stairs are with their already very modern and contemporary design much more neutral. They take not too much space, just enough to get from one level to another, what is further emphasised with the double flight structure. Wide enough for two people to pass each other, not more; it is clear that the stairs are meant

39 Cf. Middleton, Robin ed. Al.: *Architektur der Neuzeit*, Luzern, Verlag Kunstkreis, 1977.

to bring the people up and down, that is their functionality.

In combination with the highly decorated entrance wall, one can get the feeling as if the street was pulled further into the houses, which makes the staircases to become outside spaces inside.

The layout of the staircases in the rear Escherhäuser enabled a space with an efficient use of the room. As part of the circulation space not only to access the apartments, but also to move inside them, the public and private sphere overlaid in the area of the staircases, which resulted in completely different living conditions compared to the front Escherhäuser.

The different layouts implemented varied processes of opening and closing, various values of the respective spaces and due to that also different kind of interactions and living conditions with the neighbours. While the spaces of each neighbour in the front houses are clearly defined along the common staircases and the separations are highlighted by the entry wall, the realms of the residents of the back houses were more fluent and the role of each house member moved between a neighbour and a household and family member. The residents lived apart but also together, thereby the stairs had the potential to be meeting places for all units. With that the front door had in the servants house a much higher importance in distinguishing the inside and the outside, the private and the public.

Moreover, questions the staircase situation in the rear Escherhäuser the understanding of privacy as completely separate flats per household and how much personal space is needed to feel comfortable. Maybe this type of a staircase could be again a model for more spaceefficient housing with the aim to reduce the personal footprint. However, also the staircases in the rear Escherhäuser were adapted to contemporary living conditions during the renovation in 1992. Now all the rooms of the apartments can be entered without passing the staircase.⁴⁰

2.1.4. Windows

In the 1830s, the houses were built with double windows with further subdivisions and, the resources unfortunately do not provide a clear answer, but probably the possibility to have either attachment windows outside or shutters depending on the season or personal preferences (See also the analysis of the Birkenhof.). It is likely that during the renovation of the buildings from

⁴⁰ Cf. *Steinwiesstrasse 3, 5, 7, Hintere Escherhäuser*, p. 222.

1989-1995, when the windows were replaced, the attachment windows were also exchanged permanently by the dark green shutters, which are still existing today. Also, window sills give the possibility to put flowers in front of the windows.⁴¹ A metallic railing is protecting the inhabitants from falling down, those on the first floor of the front houses are decorated with a metallic ornamental field. And furthermore lintels have been added to the windows on the first floor of the middle risalit.

In addition there are inner windows in the elements of the apartments entrances and also in some room doors. Some of them, the one of the entrances and in the staircase of the extension, are made out of coloured glass and form ornamentations.

While inside the coloured windows are part of the ornamental grammar to decorate the building and design the representational walls, the windows in the outer facade have a significant role in forming the classicist character of the buildings. Their repetitive arrangement and the reduced decoration go together with the clear lines and sobriety of the classicism. The precisely placed antique motifs over the windows are very modest but enough to highlight certain moments of the buildings, to structure the façade and to set the proportions. At the rear houses the window structure goes together with the simplicity and unpretentiousness of the building.

Besides, since the technique of producing large windows without mullions was only developed in the 1920s, the division of the double windows testifies to the time when the Escherhäuser were built.⁴²

Finally, if the situation was like assumed, the attachment windows or shutters would have allowed the residents to react flexible to their needs and different climatic conditions. For example by regulating the light and fresh air situation. In addition a curtain could be mounted to have another layer to set the atmosphere climatically but also in a decorative sense. In addition, through these layers, the residents also had the opportunity to decide how much they wanted to expose themselves to the city and the street. Having this flexibility was an aspect to gain a certain comfort or not. Especially considering that the window was for centuries a place of personal interactions,

41 Cf. Kantonale Denkmalpflege Zürich, pp. 4 - 5.

42 Cf. *Historische Fenster*, in: Jahresberichte des Archäologischen Dienstes Graubünden und der Denkmalpflege Graubünden, 2008, pp. 124 - 126.



13 *Windows front Escherhäuser, 1978*



14 *Windows front Escherhäuser, inside, 1978*

love, conflicts, debates, rules and acts of breaking them. Women in particular were discussed, in terms of what they can do, should or should absolutely not do at the windows. This symbolic meaning of the window got lost towards the 20th century, thus the Escherhäuser were built in a time of change, not only in terms of the industrialization and new technologies, but also of the importance of the window.⁴³

43 Cf. Jütte, Daniel: *Das Fenster als Ort sozialer Interaktion: Zu einer Alltagsgeschichte des Hauses im vormodernen Europa*, in: Eibach, Joachim (Ed.): *Das Haus in der Geschichte Europas*, Ein Handbuch, Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015, pp. 467 - 483.

2.2. The Housing Complex Birkenhof

The settlement Birkenhof was built from 1925 until 1926 on behalf of the city of Zurich and designed by the architect Albert Froelich together with the office Kündig & Oetiker.⁴⁴ It was the period in Switzerland, when the housing shortage after the World War I was still going on. Reasons for this were low demand in the housing market, especially in the first two years of the war, a shortage of materials and a period of high inflation during which the cost of building and living rose dramatically, followed by a decline in construction activity.⁴⁵ When the Swiss national bank as a result implemented a deflation policy in the year 1920, prices fell, which, however, brought private construction activities to an even greater standstill. Nevertheless, Zurich's population grew in these years, and the circumstances of the housing shortage indicated the importance of cooperatives, especially for housing for less affluent families and families with many children. The increasingly left-wing government of the city of Zurich subsidised cooperative building projects to raise the necessary equity capital, which encouraged the foundations of cooperatives.⁴⁶ But not only that, the city of Zurich acted also alone as a building owner, within the framework of which the Birkenhof was built on properties owned by the city and an old cemetery. As it still does today, the settlement adjoined to the north-east the Guggachstrasse, to the south-east the Schaffhauserstrasse, to the south-west the settlement on the Zeppelinstrasse and to the north-west the site of the later built school, which was already considered in the design of the Birkenhof in order to result with it in a harmonious development.⁴⁷

Like a Palladian villa, the housing complex is formed by a four to five storey high central building, which deviates on one side from the street and two lower three storey high wings. Two additional four storey high buildings have been placed next to the central building towards the settlement on Zeppelinstrasse, to which towards the school a third additional building is attached.

44 Cf. *Der Birkenhof: kommunale Wohnungsbauten der Stadt Zürich: Architekten, Albert Froelich und Kündig & Oetiker*, in: *Das Werk: Architektur und Kunst*, Volume 16, Issue 5, 1929, pp. 129.

45 Cf. Erhard, G.: *Der schweizerische Wohnungsmarkt in zwei Weltkriegen*, in: *The Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics*, Nr. 3, London: Springer Open, 1942, pp. 263 - 266.

46 Cf. *Die Episode des systematischen Kleinwohnungsbaus*, in: *Das Werk: Architektur und Kunst*, Zürich: Verlag Gebr. Fritz AG, Nr. 5, 1929, pp. 140 - 145 and *Bisherige Bevölkerungsentwicklung*, online: <https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/prd/de/index/statistik/themen/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsentwicklung/bisherige-bevoelkerungsentwicklung.html>, (27.06.2022).

47 Cf. *Förderung des gemeinnützigen Wohnungsbaues in Zürich*, in: *Illustrierte Schweizer Handwerker-Zeitung*, Zürich, Nr. 8, 1925, pp. 9 - 8.



15 *The housing complex Birkenhof, 1928*

The gap between the two houses on Schaffhauserstrasse was closed with a wall that no longer exists today. In between the houses a green field is structured like a renaissance garden with a fountain with female figures and alleyways along the green field. The character of the housing project, moves between the notion of cooperative and social housing and a bourgeois villa. That will be further discussed in the chapter when addressing the elements of inclusivity: the façade, the entrance, the staircases and the windows.

2.2.1. Façade

My analysis focuses here on the façade of the central building along the Schaffhauserstrasse. Slightly built on a slope, the height of the building varies from four to five storeys and respectively in the number of windows per row. Towards the bottom, a plinth of varying height absorbs the height differences. In addition, the façade is dominated by the regular, repetitive window structure, with five window columns per section of the house, which are separated by rain gutters. In every middle row the entrances are located, highlighted by paintings above, that form a kind of frame around the windows. In itself every fresco is structured in the same way with a house phrase, figures and a band of ornamentation. In total one can observe five pieces according to

16 The Birkenhof between Milchbuck and Schaffhauserplatz, 1930



17 Situation Birkenhof, 2022



18 Villa Barchessa, Palladio



the number of house parts. Responsible for the frescos where several artists under the direction of Jakob Gubler, a fresco painter and mosaic artist from Zürich.⁴⁸ The rest of the façade is plastered and painted in a wine red colour. Further a string cornice divides the third from the fourth, respectively the

48 Cf. Killer, Peter: *Fresken vom Russ befreit: zur Restaurierung der Birkenhof - Fresken Jakob Gublers*, in: *Zürcher Chronik*, Band 8, 1975, pp. 164 - 165.

fourth from the fifth level and on top a simplified cornice finishes the façade.

The string cornice helps to structure the façade and to have a continuous finishing of the façade on the same height, while towards the ground the building adapts according to the situations by adding another floor, and different kind of windows. As an element of classicist and renaissance architecture, the string cornice links the building to these styles by giving a certain sophisticated look and expression of Italian palazzos and villas.

Highlighting the entrances and giving each house an individual expression, the frescos furthermore represent an unique type of decoration. Every fresco is as described structured in the same way, but different in the imagery and ornamentation. They show from left to right as followed: First, the phrase "Frau schau um." (Woman look around.), a smoking man sitting next to a woman with a flower on her knees and a dog lying between them. Around them some stars, and various red fields ornamentation forming the frame.

Secondly, the phrase "Ost und West, in Haus das Best." (East and west, in the house the best.) and a man and a woman working in a field with flowers. The frame is built with two coloured crosses, a geometrical blue pattern, blossoms and tendrils, and on top two pigeons, each holding a ribbon.

Thirdly, the phrase "Die Zeit teilt, heilt, und eilt." (Time divides, heals, and hurries.), three women, one with blindfolded eyes, playing a game before a bush with leaves and a bird flying in the background. A reddish pattern with blue and orange stars and blue wind mills form the frame, while two angels hold the window on top of the frescos.

Fourth, the phrase "Freude im Herzen, Sonnenschein im Haus." (Happiness in the heart, sunshine in the house.), a woman holding a child and some flowers with one arm, and a second older child supporting its head on the legs of the woman, and in the backdrop, golden - brownish stars float in mist or clouds. A blueish zigzag pattern with red and white flowers structure the frame. Finally, textile ribbons, two held by birds, complete the painting.

And as fifth, the phrase "Man muss D. Lb. Gott, helfen gutes Korn machen." (One must help the loving Lord, to make good grain.) and a man skating next to a barren tree with only a few leaves. Here the frame is repeated from the third fresco with the red pattern, the stars and the angels holding the window. In addition the window frames appear in red, brown and blue according to the colour palette of the frescos. Furthermore, frescos adorn in a similar way also other parts of the settlement, but on the smaller buildings, the two wings



19 *Façade Birkenhof along Schaffhauserstrasse*

of the housing complex, the frescos are reduced to the door frames, each structured by a painting and an abstract ornamentation.

In summary, the figures feature people enjoying their leisure time, several animals like horses, sheep, birds, butterflies and abstract industrial sites. Together they are representing a vision of a modern world, living side by side in contact with nature. Tradition and progress are coming together and are forming a unity. It reflects the time of change around the 19th century, the forming of a new way of life beginning with the industrialization. The building is put in the social-political context and is showing a standpoint to the world. So we could say that the Birkenhof incorporates the character of the modern world and uses the façade like a huge billboard presenting the notion of it.⁴⁹ Interestingly the narrative told by the frescos is different to other social housings like the façade of the Wohnkolonie at the Sihlfeldstrasse from Wilhelm Hartung. There women are shown doing the housework and looking after the garden. The men are working not at home, but in the forest or on the construction site. Some figures are enjoying a little leisure time. All together all are happy and satisfied, although they have to be content with simple things.

49 Cf. Killer 1975, pp. 164 - 165.



20 *One of the Frescos
on the Façade of the
Birkenhof*

The painting content of the frescos on Sihlfeldstrasse are much more focused towards a rural life with traditional virtues like love of the work, family spirit, piety and love for one's country. Further topics that were important to the cooperative are included: building houses, professions and a good work-life balance.

In both examples the frescos work as decorative elements with representative purposes and educational concerns, which should further be encouraged in uncertain times.⁵⁰ In this process, the residents are going into a relationship with the paintings. They can become a part of the identities of the residents and form a common element among them. In that sense the frescos are creating a visual representation of the people living in the housing estate.

On top of that especially the house phrases have an effect in different directions. First they are principles that speak to the residents on how they

50 Cf. Fülischer, Bernadette: *Die Sehnsucht nach einer besseren Welt in den Fassadenbildern von Wilhelm Hartung*, in: Truog, Barbara (ed. al.): *Seebahnstrasse, Zürich, Aussersihl, Zürich: Stadtzürcher Heimatschutz*, 2012, pp. 24 - 29.

should live, but secondly, written visually along the main street, they are also reaching out to the society and reminding them what the right way of life is. It raises also the question of the authorship of the phrases or who is speaking to whom? This seems to be an easy question, as it is known, that they were painted under authority of Jakob Gubler. But it is not only about who used the brushes, it is also about in what's name or out of which perspective they were painted. So the Frescos reflect the biased perceptions of Gubler and all the other painters, but are the architects speaking, the residents, the society, the politicians or the painters after all? And in what sense can the Frescos lose their connection to the author and become their own representatives, in a way the buildings become their own narrators?

In the context of Wilhelm Hartung one knows, that the frescos were intentionally painted for representational purposes, so the residents can find themselves in the paintings, which might go along with a certain kind of appreciation. But it also defined the residents' situation as normal - a simplicity worth living for and being happy about. That came close to a paternalism of the residents with a discriminative attitude.

Additionally, the Birkenhof bears witness to a similar time period as the "Rotes Wien" in the years 1919 until 1934, which followed in a time called "Rotes Zürich".⁵¹ In 1928 five candidates of the Social Democratic Party (SP) gained a seat in Zurich's city council, thus founding the "Rotes Zürich", which should persist until 1949. The programme to promote housing cooperatives, which had already been launched in 1924, could be continued during this peak period.⁵² Considering these political circumstances, it becomes clear, the red colour of the Birkenhof speaks undoubtedly of a certain political statement and a collective understanding, more than one can think of at first hand. Over the whole city of Zurich several residential houses were built, all of them coloured in a reddish tone, which belonged to cooperatives like the Allgemeine Baugenossenschaft Zürich (ABZ) or like it could be seen for housing blocks during the movement of the Red Vienna.⁵³ One of the architects, Heinrich Oetiker was part of the party Landesring der Unabhängigen (LdU)

51 Cf. Blau, Eve: *Rotes Wien, Architektur 1919 – 1934, Stadt – Raum – Politik*, Wien: Ambra I V, 2014, pp. 19 - 20.

52 Cf. Koller, Christian: *Sozialismus in einer Stadt?: Vor 75 Jahren entstand das rote Zürich*, in: *Rote Revue : Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur*, vol. 81, issue 2, 2003, pp. 40 -44.

53 Cf. Blau 2014, pp. 413 – 415 and 437 – 440 and Donati, Lorenza (Ed.): *Otto Streichers Spuren Lebenswerk eines Zürcher Architekten*, Zürich, NZZ Libro, 2017, pp. 17 - 64.

(National Ring of Independents), who was among the environment protection, and liberal ideas also engaged in social responsibility. For this organisation he was from 1942 until 1954 a member of the city council of Zurich and headed the building department.⁵⁴ This indicates that very most likely among the architects certain sympathies for the politics and ideas of "Rotes Zürich" existed.

With the red colour a kind of cooperative identity had been developed, which marked the settlement in the fabric of Zurich to be part of the social housing program. This could result in either a positive or a negative reaction.

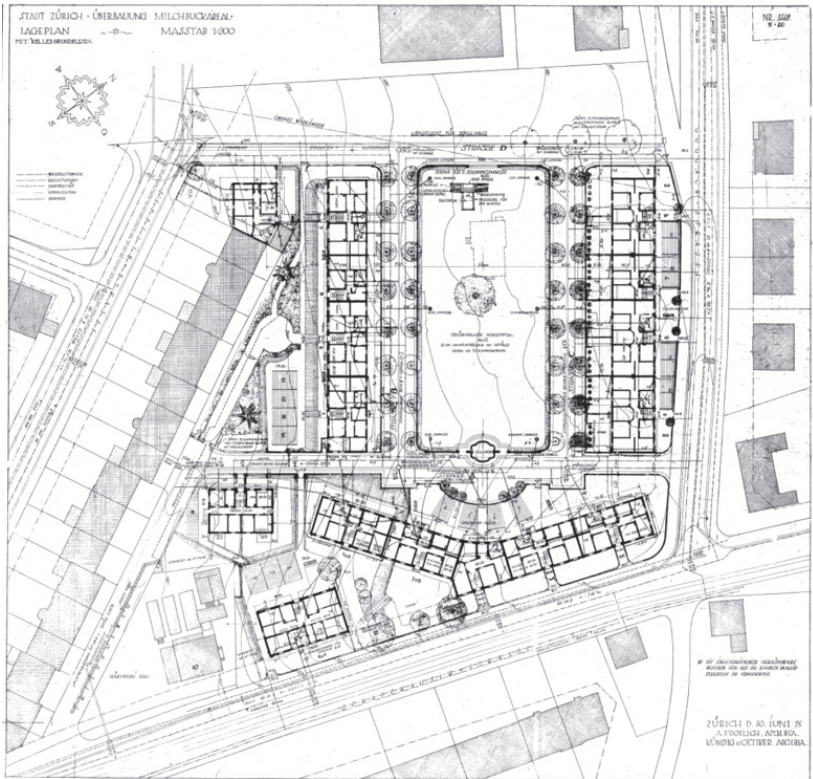
On one hand it was identity-forming and it emphasized that the residents belonged to a collective. This could strengthen the active cooperative life and encourage the inhabitants to participate and to design their way of living. The colour could have worked as a catalysator and enable to some extent rituals and behaviours, and it incorporated a spirit, that rooted in the perceptions of Social Democratic Parties, the cooperatives and socialist movements. On the other hand it contained the risk of a ghettomentalität, the creation of an island not only seen as models of future dwelling, but the home of others, workers, the lower class, who do not belong to a respective society, the peculiar or strange ones.⁵⁵ It made it easy to connect apartment houses with the people living in them, with all prejudices that came along with it.

2.2.2. Entrance

In the whole housing estate there are twenty entrances, one for each house and the row of houses along Zeppelinstrasse have each an additional entrance from the garden side, where some of them are reached by stairs. While the entrances of the central building are highlighted by the frescos above, are on the smaller buildings, the two wings and the three extra buildings of the housing complex, the paintings reduced to the door frames, each structured by an animal painting and / or abstract ornamentation (see figure no. 22). The wooden doors are rounded on top and screened windows give a glimpse to the inside and outside. Inside some apartments have a deeper transitional space from the staircases into the apartments, where the walls and ceilings

54 Cf. Meuwly, Olivier: *Landesring der Unabhängigen (LdU)*, in: Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS), version from 14.02.2022, translated from the french, online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/017394/2022-02-14/>, (19.05.2022) and Ki: *Ein Magistrat in wechselvollen Zeiten*, in: Zürcher Spiegel, Zürich, 12. August 1968, p. 5.

55 Cf. Blau 2014, p. 414.



21 Groundfloor Birkenhof, 1925

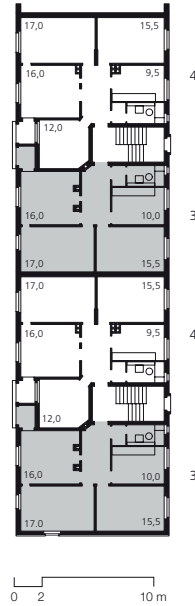
were painted with floral motifs as well (see figure no. 24).

Looking at the way of leading to the entrances, the residents of the house row on the left side can, due to the additional entrances, decide whether they prefer to walk through the garden or along the street, which gives them a slightly higher flexibility in the way they gain access to the houses. Yet, all the buildings have a mezzanine, which created for the lowest apartments some distance to the streets and pathways and can be reached via a staircase inside or outside the building. It emphasised the public and private sphere, that evolved during the 19th century.

Furthermore, especially through the stronger emergence of the distinction between the working and living spaces, the apartment became the place



22 Left: One of the entrances at the Birkenhof, 2022



23 Right: Apartments Guggachstrasse 3 – 5 floor

under a concept of privacy, which was organized by the wife.⁵⁶ Therefore the different doors constituted different steps in the process of transitioning from outside towards inside, whereby equipped with locks the access was controlled by the residents. Additional mounted spyholes let the inhabitants check who waited in front of the door and verify if the persons complied with the expectations, if someone was expected. That gave the residents another security layer and the possibility to open the door only when they accepted the situation. The opening and closing of the doors became a symbolic value as well, in which they expressed their trust in the visitors by opening the door. In connection with the threshold the transfer into the private world is also physically expressed by a movement in stepping over a barrier. Moreover, the thresholds function also as a protection against noise, draft, water and various vermins.⁵⁷ But all these elements to control the accessibility of the apartment influenced the apartments to become even more these private

⁵⁶ Cf. Nagy-Braun, Gisela ed. al.: *Wohnen*, in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS)*, Version of the 03.02.2015, onli-ne: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/016229/2015-02-03/>, (19.05.2022).

⁵⁷ Cf. Reichel, Alexander (Ed.): *Öffnen und Schliessen*, Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag AG, 2010, p. 122.

spaces which are sheltered from the outside world. As a result the individual units became more and more separated from each other, with less and less interactions, unless not enforced by the inhabitants.⁵⁸

Considering who could actually live there, the city realized, that the proposed rents were higher than in general for social housing, and therefore only affordable from the lower middle class onwards. As this group was also asking for new apartments, the situation was accepted. Reasons for the higher rents were found in the spacious rooms, the partly lower buildings, the situation with the greenfield in the middle, and the central location. So one could say, that a part of what describes the character of the Birkenhof resulted in the higher rents, which makes them two aspects that relate to one another.⁵⁹ Further, looking at the development of rent at the Birkenhof it is interesting to see, that they got cheaper over the years, if one relates them to the average value one has to pay in Zurich. While at the first letting the rents were higher than the average price, they are today below it. Owing to these low rents, the Birkenhof is together with the Bullingerhof, among others, extremely relevant for achieving and, moreover keeping a diversity of people in the city. The Birkenhof helps to reduce the risk, that the city will only be inhabitable for people with a certain status and wealth. In others words through the Birkenhof the city includes a greater variety of people not only locally in the settlement, but especially also into the life of Zurich.⁶⁰

2.2.3. Staircase

Every house has a double flight staircase, which serves one or two apartments and has a metal railing with a wooden hand rail. They are wide enough that two persons can walk side by side or two persons can pass each other. Apart from that the stairs are rather compact and space to store shoes or umbrellas is very limited.

58 Cf. Barbey, Gilles: *WohnHaft, Essay über die innere Geschichte der Massenwohnung*, Braunschweig: Friedr. Vieweg & Sohn Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1984, pp. 82 – 84 and 103 - 104.

59 Cf. *Förderung des gemeinnützigen Wohnungsbaues in Zürich 1925*, pp. 9 - 8.

60 Cf. *Förderung des gemeinnützigen Wohnungsbaues in Zürich 1925*, pp. 9 – 8 and Stadt Zürich: *Stadt vermietet sanierte Wohnungen in der Siedlung Birkenhof*, online: https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/fd/de/index/das_departement/medien/medienmitteilungen/2022/januar/220120a.html, (14.06.2022) and Stadt Zürich Statistik: *Nettomietpreise (in Franken), nach Stadtkreis, Wohnungsgrösse und Eigentumsgruppe, Median der Periode 2016–2020*, Zürich, 2022 and Brüscheiler: *Mietpreise in Zürich 1926*, online: https://statistik.stadt-zuerich.ch/modules/StatNat/1926/1926_ZSN_Mietpreise-in-Zuerich-1926.pdf, (04.07.2022).



24 Staircase Birkenhof,
1974

The stairs appear completely dedicated to their function of taking people up and down. No ornamentation, or special visual compelling elements form the stairs. Only the steps to reach the different height, a railing with a wooden rail to avoid accidents while going up or down and a double flight layout to not lose too much space for the apartments. A simple but solid construction with the aim to be comfortable to use.

Reasons for the rational and functional design can possibly be found in a text by Otto Streicher, who was the leading architect for various apartment houses of the cooperative *Allgemeine Baugenossenschaft Zürich (ABZ)*, the house architect so to speak, which he published in a publication by the cooperative: "Als Grundsätze gelten: Zweckmässige und einfache Grundrissbildung. Einfache und gut proportionierte Erscheinungsform der Baumassen. Einfache und solide Konstruktion. Jeder Luxus ist zu vermeiden, hingegen soll das Wohnen in den Genossenschaftshäusern angenehm und behaglich sein. {...} Die äussere Erscheinungsform ist auf das allereinfachste zurückzuführen. Dasselbe gilt von der Gestaltung der inneren Räume. Diese Forderungen werden nicht nur von der Ästhetik gestellt, sondern auch durch die Baupreise und dem Wunsche nach angenehmen Wohnen bedingt."⁶¹ The text quotes of the difficult times the architects had building their housing projects. Even

⁶¹ Streicher, Otto: *Bestrebungen hinsichtlich der Bautätigkeit*, in: *Unser Kampf gegen die Wohnungsnot*, Zürich, All-gemeine Baugenossenschaft Zürich, 1918, Faksimile – Reprint, pp. 16 – 18.

though the staircase was not designed by Streicher, it reveals a simplicity in its construction that may be linked to Streicher. Under similar economic, but also social and political circumstances, Froehlich and Kündig & Oetiker were confronted with the requirement to build beautiful flats of good quality for little money.

Also the simple at housing for workers was justified with the reputed servile, rough and uneducated character of the labourers and the inevitable risk of lootings. Furthermore the staircase was seen as a sign for the reputation of the houses, representing the living conditions and the behaviours of the residents. Thereby, the staircase has been developed into a tool to make the residents conform to the good manners of the society, as the residents in the staircase are exposed to mutual observations, what prevented conflicts as well.⁶²

2.2.4. Windows

At the time the Birkenhof was built, the façade was equipped with double windows with subdivisions, horizontally and vertically. Depending on the season, in the beginning there were either attachment windows or brown shutters mounted on the sides. So, the residents could keep the warmth in the rooms during winters by an additional layer of windows or create shadow during summers by the shutters. The single glazed windows have been replaced by double glazed windows and no subdivisions during the renovation in the years 1973 and 1974, as a result the shutters can be mounted all year round.⁶³ From 2021 until 2024 the Birkenhof will be restored again, bringing it back to its original state with windows with subdivisions.⁶⁴ The windows, which are framed by the frescos, have an individual quadratic layout with subdivisions vertically and horizontally, and on top of the composition crowns a special curved window.

The repetitive structure of windows dominates the character of the settlement, whereby they function as openings and create a space with interactions between inside and outside, but are also, as visual elements, part of the

⁶² Cf. Barbey 1984, pp 61 - 62.

⁶³ Cf. *100 Wohnungen einer städtischen Wohnkolonie*, in: Zeitschrift für Planen, Energie, Kommunalwesen und Umwelttechnik, Solothurn: Vogt-Schild AG, 1974, pp 16 - 17.

⁶⁴ Cf. Stadt Zürich: *Instandsetzung Wohnsiedlung Birkenhof und Kindergarten/Betreuung*, online: <https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/hbd/de/index/hochbau/bauten/bauten-geplant/wohnsiedlung-birkenhof.html>, (04.09.2022).



25 The Greenfield of the Birkenhof with children playing



26 Window inside Birkenhof, 1974

world of the paintings. Therefore they interrelate between a translucency, a visual connection from inside to outside and vice versa, and an opaqueness where they become structured planes as part of ornamental compositions. Moreover, the original windows with the subdivisions, which were mounted in the 1920s relate to traditional, historical perceptions and gave the apartment houses a domestic expression. The windows without subdivisions let the housing complex arrive in the modern times and allow the observation of the surroundings without having some lines in the visual field. So while the early windows, maybe also due to the price and production conditions, had more a view from former times, the new windows testified the use of new technologies to create enhanced living conditions with an increased comfort. Until the renovation in the 1970s the residents had, due to the single glazing, probably to deal increasingly with situations of noise and cold. Especially the Schaffhauserstrasse developed itself to a great frequented street, with the respective sound scenery. But also in terms of heating the single glazed windows were not efficient and it raises the question if it also led to heavy heating costs.⁶⁵

While staying in the rooms, different distances and plantings enable various protections from unwelcoming glances. Further the shutters and curtains ensure the possibility to create a different grade of transparency as desired by the residents. In contrast to the maybe not preferred views towards inside, the view towards outside, towards the garden could be a pleasant happening, not only beautiful but also useful. The green field offers a great place to give children leisure time, while always having an eye watching them. Thus the window is also a tool of control, of possible conflicts and playful interactions. Imagine children trying to hide from their parents, teenagers or young adults throwing a party, others laying in the sun or having a picnic. All events of pleasure or hate and rejection. One can clearly hear parents calling their children for dinner or adults or elderly people, demanding quiet at midnight so they can have a calm sleep. Besides passive watching for birds, the window could be also an active place of interactions and confrontations over the whole area.

⁶⁵ Cf. *100 Wohnungen einer städtischen Wohnkolonie 1974*, pp 16 - 17.

2.3. The Zollhaus

In 2021 after six years construction time the Zollhaus, the newest building of the Cooperative Kalkbreite along the train tracks at Lang- and Zollstrasse, has been completed. The project is an response to the highly controversial Europaallee built by the Swiss Train Cooperation (SBB) opposite of the Zollhaus on the other side of the train tracks. The SBB was held responsible for the gentrification and the increasing of the renting costs in Zürich-Aussersihl and moreover it was criticised, that they could profit in a great extend from the substantial increase in value of the property. In reaction to that the SBB launched an application procedure in the search for a cooperative to build costefficient and inclusive living spaces on the perimeter of today's Zollhaus.⁶⁶ The subsequent competition was won by *Enzmann Fischer Architekten* in Zurich, for which the cooperative organised a publicly advertised development committee, including representatives of the cooperative, to draw up the competition programme.

The building exists of an ongoing base level and three separate volumes on top. Over all parts there are different types of apartments from 1.5 rooms to 9,5 rooms and a size from 35m² to 275m², in total 50 residential units. They can host people living alone, families, flat-sharing communities and those who want be part of the living concept *Hallenwohnen*, where the residents can build, under some restrictions, their own spaces. In addition, in the base level up to the second level are several public uses located, like shops, restaurants and a bar, a theatre, a pension, a medical centre, a kindergarten, and rooms to rent. In comparison 60 percent of the spaces are used for the apartments and 40 percent for culture and commercial spaces. To encourage the interaction between the inhabitants, there are no balconies, but two roof gardens and a shared room with a kitchen. Moreover there are some spaces, which are supporting the interactions between the residents and the guests. To these belong the terraces next to the train tracks and the plaza in front of the building at the corner Langstrasse / Zollstrasse. In the building there are the atrium and the Rue Intérieurs, which connects all buildings and among others, public infrastructures, like the toilets, are located.⁶⁷ The character of

66 Cf. Kohlberger, Martin: *Konform oder radikal?*, in: Archithese: Swiss Performance 2021, Nr. 1, 2021, Zürich: Verein pro archithese, pp. 29 – 33.

67 Cf. Drey, Sabine: *Urbanes Wohnen in der Gemeinschaft*, in: Detail: Konzept Urbaner Wohnungsraumbau, Nr. 3, 2022, pp. 80 - 93.



27 *The Zollhaus*

the housing complex refers to industrial and office buildings with a notion of poorness. That is further discussed in the chapter along the façade, the access, the staircases and the windows.

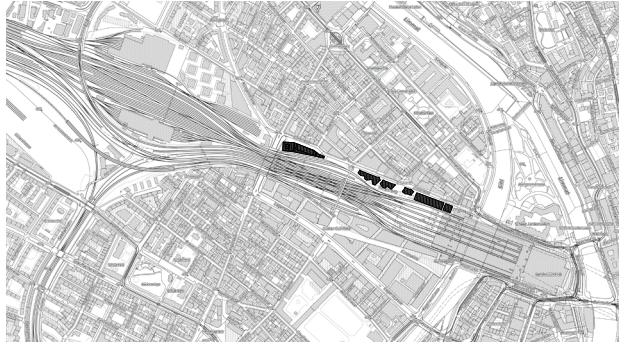
2.3.1. Façade

A thick concrete band over the whole length of the building divides the façade vertically into a base and an upper part, which is horizontally structured by the vertically window stripes varying with stripes of the corrugated fibre cement panels. On top an aluminium band completes the facade. The base is clad with aluminium panels as well, and structured by large shop windows. Some windows of the apartments of the middle building are formed as French windows, which the residents can open to step outside a little. The other windows have big flower boxes to put some green and other beautiful colours to the façade. Gray awnings give some plasticity to the façade and shade for the inhabitants.⁶⁸

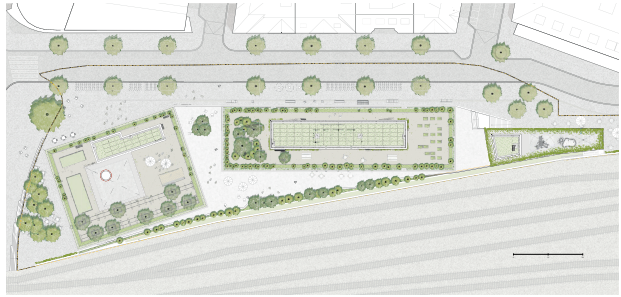
The analysis shows that the façade is structured in a classicist way: base, mid-

⁶⁸ Cf. Drey 2022, pp. 90 - 93.

28 The Location of the Zollhaus next to the traintracks, 2022



29 Situation Zollhaus, 2022



dle part, finish.⁶⁹ Thereby there is an offset and the base jumps towards the train tracks from the street level up to the first floor, respective on the same height where the trains are passing. With that the building addresses and takes elements of the houses in the area, which were built around 1900. Also the publicly built base with shops and restaurants can be linked to these houses.

But the Zollhaus not only copies the division of the façade in to the three parts, but also the concept of what they should speak of. The bases are clearly designed more openly, emphasising their publicness. This gives a reference to the programmatic distinction into the part for dwelling and all the culture, trade and health locations. But in contrast what the façade demonstrates, the public functions are placed up to the third floor, or even in the whole building, looking at the kindergarten (see figure no. 33). The placing of the various functions breaks the given structure indicated by the façade and behind the generic, repetitive façade, what is characteristic for the Zollhaus, every function has to be considered.

⁶⁹ Cf. Dolgner, Dieter: *Klassizismus*, Leipzig: E. A. Seemann Kunstverlagsgesellschaft, 1991, p. 16.

In addition, the construction of the windows allows to hang flags, banner, or posters to the façade, what makes it a huge billboard curated by the residents. It creates as a result a communication tool between the inhabitants, the city, the visitors and the passers. The rather naked façade is therefore permanently changing and decorated by residents, so that they have also an influence on what the buildings should communicate. The flower boxes can not only give some colour to the façade, but also break the neutrality and give some hints for the program behind.

Furthermore, the complexity of the façade lies in the ambiguity, which was intended by the architects. Over all, dominates the concept of an appropriate architecture, which should through an urban infrastructure with a raw and rough expression enable and facilitate appropriation processes. Thereby the idea arises among others in the understanding of the building as to be a part of the infrastructure of the train tracks and the underpass and less of the building along the railway lines. This resulted in the material concept, which defined the colour palette and vice versa. As a link connecting the infrastructural site with houses of the surroundings, the buildings receive the structure of the façade, the Standing balconies and the flower boxes, which are part of the quarter. Connecting these two worlds a diffuse architecture was created, where the different styles blur into each other and the building can be read in multiple ways.⁷⁰

Moreover, the façade of the Zollhaus can by its materiality be referred to typologies that can be found beyond the site of the settlement. The galvanised sheet steel panel and the corrugated fibre cement panels connect the Zollhaus especially to industrial or farm buildings. So it speaks about a place, where one does industrial or agricultural work, only that in the Zollhaus one finds boutiques, restaurants, public institutions. On the other hand, there is the phenomenon of transforming former industrial sites into cultural places with restaurants or theatres, or into places for start-ups and small workshops, which can also be observed in Zurich, as it can be seen in Zurich West or Binz.⁷¹ Looking at these sites, the Zollhaus can be described as a building,

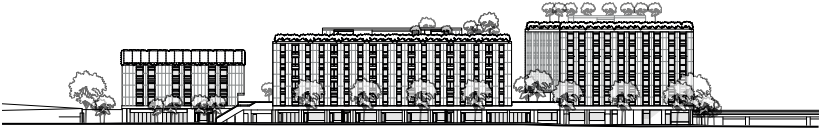
70 Cf. See Excerpt interview with Philipp Fischer, conducted on 28 June 2022, pp. 60ff. and Fischer, Philipp: *Zureich*, in: Diggelmann, Aline ed. Al: Zollhaus 2013 – 2021, Zürich: Genossenschaft Kalkbreite, 2022, pp. 30 – 31.

71 Cf. Volker, Mehnert: *Zürich wird hip: Schluss mit der Schweizerischen Lauschtigkeit*, in Frankfurter Allgemeine, online: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/reise/zuersch-wird-hip-schluss-mit-der-schweizerischen-lauschtigkeit-12530943.html>, (05.07.2022) and Jaudas, Urs: *Früher Lehm-, heute Goldgrube*, in Tages Anzeiger: online: <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/frueher-lehm-heute-goldgrube-881380639400>, (05.07.2022).



30 Left: The Zollhaus next to the traintracks

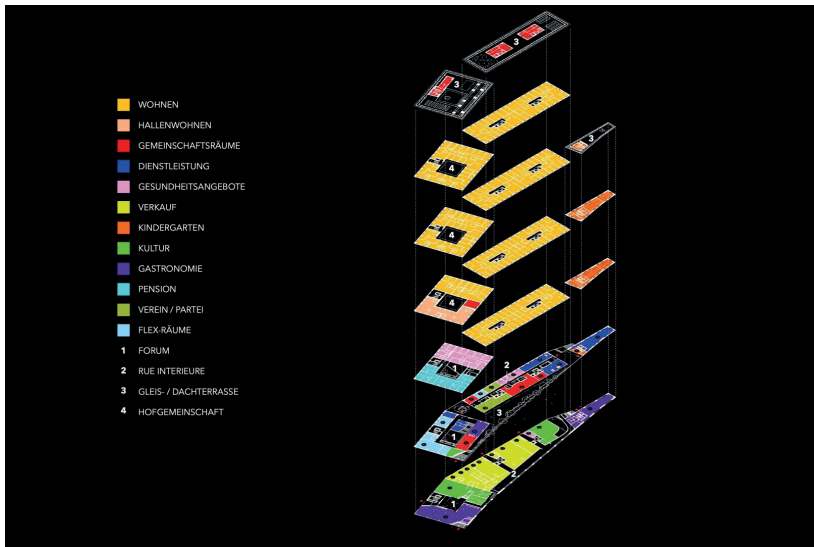
31 Right: Façade inner courtyard



32 Elevation Zollstrasse

where basically not the original industrial sites have been a reference, but the already transformed industrial sites. In that narrative the program and the expression would come perfectly together, by the attempt to intentionally create the character of these transformed industrial sites.

Looking further, it needs to be asked if the Zollhaus plays through its materiality with elements that are characteristic for architecture from the unprivileged or poor people who have to live close to or with subsistence level. The question is already more discussed in the realm of fashion. The phenomena are called *Poor core* or *homeless chic* and are characterised by clothes mimicking the clothes of people in need. Examples are *shoddy trousers* or sweaters or a shoe that is dirtied, scuffed and held together by a piece of tape. It is argued



33 Locations of the uses in the Zollhaus

by many that these brands romanticise poverty, what is seen as inappropriate towards people who are actually struggling with poverty. While the people who lack the economic freedom are stuck in a situation wherein they are both the models for and the unwilling participants of a new aesthetic, the people who can afford to dress or to live how they want are consciously emulating those who lack that freedom. What was once considered run-down is now celebrated and promoted for its special charm. Sarah Kendzior calls this phenomena *hipster economics*.⁷² In that sense that questions if the Zollhaus uses materials in an inappropriate way towards people, who cannot determine how they are living. Comparing the Zollhaus with favelas or slums, where people have to live close to or at subsistence level, one can recognize, that corrugated panels are a widely used building materials in these areas.⁷³ That it triggers something in the viewers shows the Instagram profile *Die neue*

72 Cf. Smilgius, Vivi: 'Poor core' is only an aesthetic for those who have the choice, in: The Berkeley Beacon, online: <https://berkeleybeacon.com/poor-core-is-only-an-aesthetic-for-those-who-have-the-choice/>, (05.07.2022) and McBride Isabelle: *the phenomenon of the "poor aesthetic"*, in: a magazine, online: <https://themag.com/6409/culture/the-phenomenon-of-the-poor-aesthetic/#>, (05.07.2022) and Iversen, Kristin: *The Aesthetics of Decay: The Dangers of Fetishizing Faux-Poverty While Hiding Real Poverty*, in: BrookIn, online: <https://www.bkmmag.com/2014/05/29/the-aesthetics-of-decay-the-dangers-of-fetishizing-faux-poverty-while-hiding-real-poverty/>, (05.07.2022).

73 Cf. Ashutosh Gokhale ed. al.: *A Tiny Whole World: Sustainable Design Lessons from the Architecture of Underprivileged Classes*, in Ellen, Nnamdi (Ed.): *Reading the Architecture of the Underprivileged Classes*, London: Routledge, 2016 (2nd ed.), p. 143.

Armutigkeit (The new poverty). The profile tries to grasp swiss architecture, which is exactly linking at the aesthetics of the architecture in the area of the unprivileged, but does it in a nice Swiss way. And one of their Instagram posts shows a part of the façade of the Zollhaus, which clearly brings up the question of the critical use of the material.

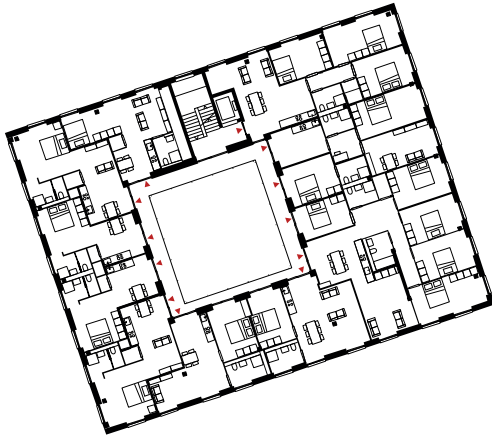
Furthermore the Zollhaus creates its very own context by putting the name Zollhaus on top of the building towards the train tracks. Zollhaus gets a brand that stands for certain values, depending on the perspective, positive or negative ones. The building is not just any building, it is the Zollhaus. It can be recognised above it in the urban space and can get famous through the name, whilst at the same time loved from someone, and hated by others. There is the potential of a polarization, that one talks about it. Thereby the building becomes special and therewith the residents as well. They are not just any residents, who are the residents of the Zollhaus, what can hover like a stigma over them. As always in a positive or a negative way, whether the residents can be admired or discriminated.⁷⁴ Further, the posters that can hang at the windows, influence the realm in which they get put in. This gives to a certain amount the authorship, about the content what the Zollhaus should promote, to the residents. In any case, the numbers of articles written about the Zollhaus show, that one will not forget it so quickly.

2.3.2. Entrance

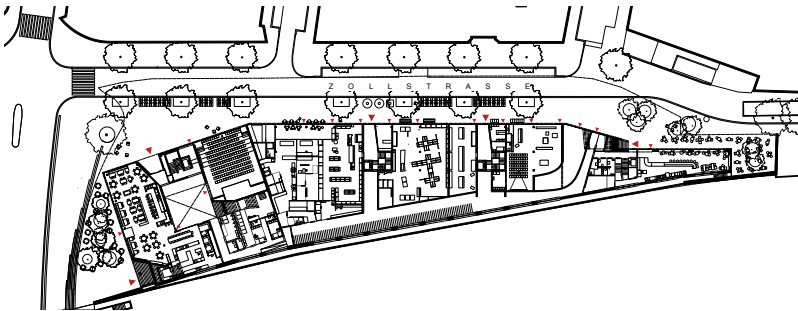
Every group of apartments have their own entrance at the Zollstrasse, where the residents can reach the staircases and elevators. The culture institutions and shops have their entries at Zollstrasse. Other public facilities can be reached over the platform on the first level or also by the access to the apartments. Furthermore folding doors open to the restaurant and bars towards the terrace and street.

The aluminium doors on the ground fit with their materiality into the cladding of the façade. In contrast the apartment doors are made out of greyish-greenish coloured wood. The entrances to the staircases of the middle building are identified by metallic shed roofs. At the front building the façade steps back and creates an overlaid entrance zone. To the side of the doors to the

74 Cf. Laube, Agnès ed. Al.: *Archigrafie, Schrift am Bau*, Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH, 2016, p. 31.



34 Fourth floor apartments



35 Ground Floor

apartments in the atrium a window the height of a room makes it possible to look into and out of the apartments, whilst the others have a fanlight towards the corridor.⁷⁵

Foremost the entrances with no thresholds fulfil the requirements for buildings for disabled people, so that the building is accessible for a greater group

⁷⁵ Cf. Drey 2022, pp. 90- 93 and Enzmann Fischer Partner AG: *Wohn- und Gewerbehaus Zollhaus*, online: <https://www.baudokumentation.ch/projekt/wohn-und-gewerbehaus-zollhaus/876898>, (20.07.2022).

of people.⁷⁶

On this basis different kinds of access are designated according to their publicness. As the most public functions the shops and restaurants can be accessed in the most easy way directly by the street. The folding doors open up the building and connect it to the street and the train tracks. Huge spaces of interactions can be created, where the borders between the inner and outer space are fluid and allow for a quick consummation. The single door entrances to the boutiques, the public facilities and the apartments appear more private. Thereby the entrances to the staircase of the middle building block need metallic shed roofs to signalize the doors. There is no development of the building that marks and creates the entrance zones organically by itself. So the entrances to the apartments build exceptions in the system, whereas the metallic shed roofs and also the retreating façade forms a break in the system.

The overlaid entrance to the inner atrium leads the visitors somewhat lightly into the building. While big enough to form the main entrance to the centre of the settlement, it also takes a back seat and doesn't want to attract too much attention. In this context the atrium seems due to not reaching the outer façade, to be a hidden secret. The visitors have to cross two layers of doors until entering the over-height space. While it might be invisible from outside, it might therefore be a much bigger surprise. Moreover, according to the architects, the entrance was designed precisely to prevent the party people from entering the building.⁷⁷

The public facilities like the medical centre or kindergarten, which have their entrance from the first floor onwards, constitute according to their position and location of the doors, of more private situations than the functions on the ground floor. These are followed by the doors to the individual apartments, which have the most restricted accessibility. The Zollhaus is especially a public building and also thought of in this hybrid way. Depending on the position (visitor or resident) of the person using the spaces the building opens it up less or more. The clear organisation of the building defines through its structure how public the spaces are and leads thereby the users through the building. The clear separations in the Zollhaus bring the people together where it

76 Cf. (For example) *Publikationen*, online: <https://hindernisfreie-architektur.ch/publikationen/>, (21.06.2022).

77 See Excerpt interview with Philipp Fischer, conducted on 28 June 2022, pp. 60ff.

is preferred and also protect the private sphere of the individuals living there. But with so many entrances and different ways to access the spaces, it could be a bit confusing for some to know how to reach them. On the other hand, it also makes one feel like exploring the complex to find new beautiful places. And, the residents have the freedom to decide how much interactions they want, whether they want to go in and out unobserved or whether they want to interact with other people, for example by crossing shared spaces like the bar to have a look at what the others happen to be doing at the moment.⁷⁸

In addition the entrances to the individual apartments build over the windows a special sense of community. Especially the windows towards the atrium let the residents see how others live. The door builds as usual a border, divides the inner private space from the common outer space, but in contrast the window forms a connection, gives glimpses to what's happening inside or outside. It makes clear that the residents are not living alone, they are part of a bigger community. By putting up a curtain the residents can create more privacy if preferred. Moreover, it functions also as an element of safety and control - there are no surprises about who is before the door. Thus the atrium creates in particular a special form of a joint living, as everything is directed to each other, producing common experiences on several levels almost naturally. With the fanlights the glimpses are at the other apartments much smaller, more a play of light and shadows. As a result the amount of privacy is much higher and closer to regular apartment buildings, leading to two different kind of shared living on the basis of their access concepts.

While to be part of the Zollhaus as a visitor is very easy-going, to become a resident is much more difficult. First of all one needs to be part of the cooperative. To apply for a membership can be done just over their website, but until one is accepted as a member it takes some time. First there is 1000 Swiss francs to pay as a participation certificate and 200 Swiss francs entrance fee. After that the cooperative board discusses the application, and with their authentication one is finally included. But that is only the main principle to even get the chance to receive an apartment. Afterwards, if there is not a new housing opening, one has to wait, and that up to several years. Has one then the possibility to have an apartment, one has to pay as a resident in addition

78 See Excerpt interview with Philipp Fischer, conducted on 28 June 2022, pp. 60ff.

to the participation certificate the sum of a half or full rent from a year, which one gets back if one moves out.⁷⁹ The process shows if one plans to get a resident, one has to commit oneself to the cooperative and one needs not only to have patience, but also to have the financial possibilities to carry out the act.

Here a big contradiction of the Zollhaus can be seen. On one side the number of public functions, which have the potential to attract a lot of different people. And on the other side the residential, which is very much limited to a relatively small number of people.

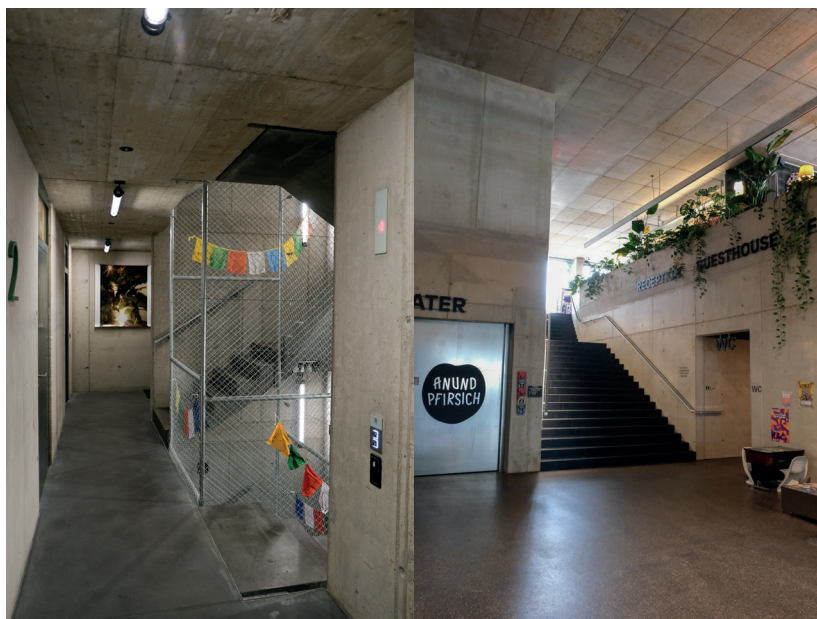
2.3.3. Staircase

According to the entrances every house has its staircase and elevator, which makes four in total, plus the bigger public staircase in the atrium, which connects the first and second floor with the base. Depending on the situation, the stairs run straight, with either two or three flights. The steps are made out of exposed concrete but with a lower quality and as railings metallic frames function with wire-mesh fences as fillings.⁸⁰

Comparing the staircases it shows that they form a contrast in their appearances, but not in their materiality. On one side the stair in the atrium, which expresses in size and form a publicness, and on the other side the stairs to the apartments, which appear purely functional. In terms of the material all the staircases have a quite similar expression. The stair in the atrium has a slightly more designed appearance, but still, all have a highly notion of industrial sites, due to the metallic railing and the rough concrete. Through this roughness, the staircases do not feel very comfortable and it seems there is nothing that makes one like to stay there. Considering that the building was designed to create interactions and build a sense of community, the contrast with the overall concept couldn't be bigger, as the staircases do not speak of any of these values. The cheapness and poorness of the staircases stand in contrast to the carefully developed layout of the apartments and common spaces. Probably the reason for the design is to be found in the discussion

79 Cf. *Mitglied werden*, online: <https://www.kalkbreite.net/ueber-uns/mitglied-werden/>, (15.06.2022) and Drey, Sabine: *Urbanes Wohnen in der Gemeinschaft*, in: *Detail: Konzept Urbaner Wohnungsraumbau*, Nr. 3, 2022, p. 88.

80 Cf. Enzmann Fischer Partner AG: *Wohn- und Gewerbehaus Zollhaus*, online: <https://www.baudokumentation.ch/projekt/wohn-und-gewerbehaus-zollhaus/876898>, (20.07.2022).



36 Left: Staircase middle building

37 Right: Staircase Atrium

where money can be saved and where one can create something with more value. But it goes along with the intended concept of the urban infrastructure and the connections to the railway.⁸¹

Also the additional elevators make the building accessible for people with various forms of physicality. Always on the side of the stairs, they form together individual access cores, via them the apartments can be accessed efficiently without the need to take extra ways over ramps. Therefore one can imagine where the architects and the cooperative set their focus points and what they valued more in their perceptions.

Then there's the staircase in the atrium, which expresses the public realm and has the potential to be a gathering place that allows interactions with residents from several households and guests. The staircase leading from the ground floor to the second floor starts out quite wide and becomes narrower as it proceeds, representing the transition from the public to the private sphere. Exactly their wideness and openness make the stair more spatial and therefore more attractive to stay and gather there. Maybe not for long, but to

⁸¹ Cf. Kohlberger 2021, p. 31.



38 Left: French Window

39 Right: Window with flower boxes

have a short talk, a chat about the latest news or to exchange some information. The size makes it possible to have more things happening side by side. For example walking up and down and some people sitting and talking with a drink in their hand. Further it can be used for different activities after each other. So it can change from a simple stair to walk up and down, to a sitting place for spontaneous gatherings or a grandstand to follow a presentation or performance. In the atrium the stair has the potential to be combined with activities happening in the space and vice versa.

2.3.4. Windows

Several types of windows shape the appearance of the façade and allow different interactions between the inside and the outside, which is sometimes also the inside. Large shop windows let the viewer wander over the newest products in the stores. The apartments have in general a room high window with a subdivision on the height of the balustrade and on top a big window to open. Some of the apartment windows are built as French windows with the possibility to open two room high wings and to step out a little. The metallic railings prevent the residents from falling down while enjoying the fresh air.

In addition, the windows at Hallenwohnen and the apartments and rooms on the first floors, on the second and third floor of the head building and in the smaller building with the kindergarten, due to the higher ceiling, have another subdivision, so one can read especially the position of Hallenwohnen in the settlement on the three segments of the windows, where the middle part can be opened. Also, in the multifunctional space that rises above the atrium, internal windows whose wings can be swung upwards allow a view of the happenings below. Finally, not exactly windows, but inner glass brick walls let one sense what is going on behind.⁸²

In contrast to spaces in the bases with the possibility to open the space completely, is the movement towards the city in the apartments, due to no balconies, more restricted. The residents can open the windows and look outside, but they not become really part of the surrounding. The French windows allow to step outside a little and therefore break somewhat the façade, like the fourth wall in the theatre, and enable interactions between the residents and the spectators. It gives the inhabitants the possibility to expose themselves, maybe in a little speech or a concert, towards the outer world. In that sense one can also look at the posters hanging at the railings – a communication with the environment.

Awnings further allow the residents to control how much they want be exposed. The construction enables one to shut the windows completely, or mount it, so it forms little shed roofs to spend some shadow, while it can also wait just rolled up until the perfect time comes to use it.

In addition the windows are part of the vegetation of the residential housing as well. Fixed flower boxes are mounted, which can be planted with all kinds of plants by the residents. From there, the plants can take over the façade. Together with the patina that emerges on the corrugated fibre cement panels, the plants will change the appearance of the façade over time from a rather greyish to a more greenish appearance.

82 Cf. Drey 2022, pp. 90- 93 and Enzmann Fischer Partner AG: *Wohn- und Gewerbehaus Zollhaus*, online: <https://www.baudokumentation.ch/projekt/wohn-und-gewerbehaus-zollhaus/876898>, (20.07.2022).

3. The User of three buildings in Zurich: The Visits of the buildings and interviews

In this chapter I am going on a journey following the residential housing projects in a chronological order, starting at the Escherhäuser, then up the hill to the Siedlung Birkenhof and finally back down to the Zollhaus. The chapter deals with my personal expressions of the three projects during the visits and puts them next to other perspectives from the residents, which I gathered in interviews. In the confrontations my point of view has been questioned, which lead to new recognitions.

What is striking when arriving at the Escherhäuser is the great amount of traffic passing by on Zeltweg. It was difficult to take a photo without having a car on it. It didn't feel very loud, but there was definitely a certain basic motor noise. With a man in his 80s, who collected his mail from the letterbox, I could have a short talk. When the conversation turned to the heritage conservation, he addressed an ongoing discussion. Apparently the windows are not so tight anymore and as a result the heating goes out of the windows and the wind blows sometime through them. It is planned to replace the windows, but the responsible persons are still in talks with the preservation authority. Until then it is likely that not only the wind but also the noise is going through the windows, leading to rather uncomfortable living conditions. One of the famous residents, Richard Wagner, lived from 1849 until 1857 in three different Apartments of the Escherhäuser. He as well was plagued by a noise, that at the time emanated from a sheet metal smith in the neighbourhood. Luckily the Wiesendocks offered that Wagners could live in the House next to their villa, which they happily accepted.⁸³ It seems the Escherhäuser can be surrounded by loud noise from time to time, what can be disturbing for some residents, so it even leads them to move out. A different opinion has

83 Cf. Hangartner, Bernhard (Ed.): *Durch Richard Wagners Zürich – Ein Stadtrundgang*, Frankfurt am Main: Stroem-berg Verlag, 2012, pp. 31 – 33 and 39 - 41.

a couple living in the front Escherhäuser. They perceive the Escherhäuser to be a quiet place. Especially towards the place in between the house, where they also have their bedroom. Moreover one can hear the birds chirping. To the same conclusion comes a woman living in the rear Escherhäuser. Apart from the footsteps of the residents of the apartment above, which she hears owing to the wooden ceiling, she can barely hear the neighbours. She has not the feeling living with all residents together and can listen to music without having to use headphones.

The Escherhäuser, asked after their character, are seen as a massive building, which stands stable on the ground. This is leading to a living that is strongly directed towards inside with a great amount of intimacy. It can go so far, that it is described as claustrophobic, as there is also no balcony (except from the middle upper apartment), where one could step outside to break out from the apartment.

Further the front houses are seen as old buildings, but connected to a certain noblesse, being part of the houses of upper middle class Zurich, which one can find in the area. So, they are recorded as buildings from the 19th century. With all the trees, bushes and flowers the front garden forms, especially in the beginning of summer, when I was there, a nice imagery and makes the façade clearly to a representational figure. However, the question arises as to how the rear Escher houses fit into the context of the representative houses in the surrounding area. Even though built in the same time as the front Escherhäuser, the rear Escherhäuser are seen as outsiders, which not belong to the quarter. They are mainly understood as extra buildings, which were built to serve the front Escherhäuser due to the housing of the servants. There one can still feel the hierarchical order between the two house rows

Concerning the staircase in the rear Escherhäuser the houses are further described as dangerous buildings. Due to their steepness there is the risk of falling down. Moreover by use of the stairs and the lack of elevators all the houses are seen as not to be suitable for disabled people. Especially with the elderly the stairs can become a bit strenuous and require a certain physicality, which excludes certain people from the outset, and what can become an issue if the personal conditions change. Therefore the man in his 80s and his wife are considering to move to another place.

Until then the elderly couple belongs to the stable residents, which is said to be characteristic for the Escherhäuser. In particular the central location is liked by many. Especially also for the elderly couple, as they gave up driving cars

due ecological reasons 40 years ago. In addition the positive atmosphere among the residents, where no problems occur is a reason for the long stay in the Escherhäuser. That compensates also for the lack of balconies. And finally the rent, which apparently didn't change all the many years of tenancy. Furthermore, since the completion of the Escherhäuser, various groups of people lived in them. At first the Escherhäuser kept attractive to the higher society for their purposes, living or working. Heinrich Escher-Zollikofer had built the houses for the planners of the Swiss Train Corporation. So engineers and other executives from different cantons or foreign countries got a place to stay there. Therefore the Escherhäuser were according to one of the interviews one of the first residential tenements, which accommodated foreign people in Switzerland. Later Richard Wagner and Johanna Spyri lived in the house and today the Portuguese consulate, medical practices and law firms are to be found there. In particular the Portuguese consulate brings the people to the place. Every few minutes some are arriving and disappear in the house of the Portuguese institute. In the rear Escherhäuser mostly young working couples or singles are living, but no families. For them, the apartments are too small. Also Richard Wagner lived in an apartment in the rear Escherhäuser when he came to Zurich in the first year from 1849 until 1850 for a few months. The apartment was small, but thanks to friends in Zurich, Wagner, who was destitute due to his flight from Germany, was able to furnish it quite comfortably. So the Escherhäuser provided in almost 200 years for different people in various life circumstances a home.

The journey moved on to the Birkenhof, a little further up the hill towards Oerlikon, close to Milchbuck. Already from a distance one recognises the reddish housing complex with the fresco paintings. Not only is the Birkenhof through the painting and the reddish colour easily recognisable in the street, but several people I have spoken to can remember them about it. So the façade design contributes to the identity of the building. The several decorations were also an argument for Romero Schäfle Architekten, who are responsible for the renovation from 2021 until 2024, to apply for the project. They like, that the building also sets a high standard and one can feel the passion of Albert Froelich and Kündig & Oetiker, which they are striving to maintain. It shows that the quality of handwork from the beginning is crucial for how durable a building is, in terms of its stability and providing good living spaces for different people over a long time, where the socio-political contexts

change as well. Especially in this regard are the windows from the mid 1970s replaced again. Where I see with the windows without subdivisions an arriving in the modern times, the architects see the loss of the original character of the building. Moreover, the construction quality was not as good as with the original wooden windows, which led to the fact that wooden windows with subdivisions now adorn the houses again. According to a woman who has lived in Birkenhof for 25 years, the residents are also happy about the new windows, as they hope that they will absorb the noise of the trams and the traffic on Schaffhauserstrasse.

In general the apartments are characterised as old, but designed and constructed in a good way. It was assumed that the buildings were so massive that they would withstand an earthquake. Whereby the buildings must be very stable and therefore durable.

Furthermore, not only the building seems to stable, but also the residents, living in the Birkenhof for several decades. Due to this continuity the residents know each other very well, what keeps them to stay there. Especially as a lot of the residents have an international history from Italy, France or Turkey. Moving again to another place would make them to newcomers for another time. Also they do not want to put the effort again to familiarise themselves with a new neighbourhood. Here they have a functional network where they can help each other out. For example to buy groceries for elderly people or share their cars. In addition they have similar histories, similar problems and they speak several languages, so they can understand each other not only linguistically but also in terms of their living conditions. In an environment of like-minded people, they feel they are in good hands. In addition they know and appreciate the surrounding, where a lot is going on and they know where to buy their food, etc..

However to live in Switzerland is for some of the residents quite expensive. Besides the rent comes an expensive health insurance on top of that. Especially since the rent increased after the renovation makes living in Switzerland a challenge, questioning whether one can make ends meet. Therefore some of the residents had to move to another place. Others had to move because of new regulations saying that only one household can live in one apartment with at least as many people as the number of rooms in the apartment minus one.

Further, all the time I have been there I felt very attracted by the peaceful atmosphere around the settlement, if one doesn't get disturbed by the fre-

quent traffic on Schaffhauserstrasse. But if one leaves the street or enters the courtyard with the greenfield the chirping of birds fills the air, and from time to time an airplane crosses the sky above. Photographs witness that the greenfield was a beloved place for the children as well. The woman, who moved in with her sons, agreed, especially as she also could let them walk around, and go to school next to the settlement by themselves. And indeed when I sat down on a bench along the greenfield and watched the life going on in the settlement, a few students in groups exited the school through the Birkenhof. But apart from that there was not much happening. It seemed the residents were hiding in their apartments or out at work. Most of the activities were in the ongoing renovation work of the apartment buildings. When I also can imagine that during free time more is going on, it confirms again and again, that the Birkenhof is a very peaceful place to live.

In the end the journey went back down the hill to Langstrasse and to the in 2021 finished Zollhaus. The settlement is definitely located at the most lively area of all housing complexes. Through Langstrasse not only buses and cars are passing by frequently, but also people on bikes or walking. In addition the trains passing by create a loud and distressing background noise. As a result, although all the windows can be opened, they are kept in general closed as one woman told me, who lives in one of the Hallenwohnungen. Otherwise it is impossible to have conversations. Therefore the inner courtyard offers a good solution, which is liked by many. Not only, does the courtyard present an outer space, which is as far as possible shielded from the loud noise, but also a place to meet the other residents and have various happenings. One of the residents told me, that he prefers the courtyards with the access via arcades opposite to the classic accesses via corridors. Because, he claims he already knows three quarters of all the residents around the courtyard almost organically, just by the openness and visual connections this one big shared space creates. And a visit at the opening festival of the Zollhaus proved, that the courtyard is not huge, but big enough and suitable for various gatherings of people, to have parties, exhibitions, etc.. Especially also the children liked to run around and sell self-made colourful cocktails to the visitors. This testifies, that the Zollhaus is also a good place for children, where they feel comfortable as well. Two mothers, which are living in the Zollhaus have a different perspective. For them the architects could have done more. There are not so many places to play and the balustrade on the terraces are too low,

which makes the places not safe enough to be with children. Thus, in particular if one lives in the building part without the courtyard, the directly usable outdoor space is drastically reduced.

When residents are asked about their understanding of inclusivity in the Zollhaus, they express the openness to the outside and inside and the diversity in the housing estate, which is reflected in several aspects. On one hand this is seen in the range of shops, restaurant, cafés and institutions. This opens the building towards the outside and brings different groups of people to the Zollhaus. Evidently popular are the ice cream and coffee place. But also the restaurants seem to attract a lot of people. A mother likes for example, that she can bring the children to bed, and then can have a drink with friends or neighbours in the bar downstairs. Another of the interviewed persons highlighted the Regenbogenhaus, a meeting place, event location and contact point for questions on lesbian, gay, bi, trans and other queer topics (LG-BTQ).⁸⁴ They do a lot of events, where a highly diverse audience is attends and brings a lively atmosphere. Philip Fischer, one of the architects of the Zollhaus, further emphasised that the Flex rooms, meeting spaces, which can be rented from everyone, are well used. Even Google holds meetings there, whereby the world of the cooperatives and the low-paid workers are coming together with the finance and technological sector. On the other hand the inclusivity is seen in the range of people, that are living in the building, among them young families, elderly people, disabled persons and refugees. Moreover in the range of apartments, for families, but also shared living concepts and especially the Hallenwohnen, different lifestyles can be lived and explored. Furthermore the openness is seen in the structure of the building, for example the open accessible staircases, which allows different people to interact easily.

However, additional impressions from residents show on the other side another image. Most of all, the concept to mirror the social character of the quarter with occupancies in the Zollhaus didn't succeeded.⁸⁵ The Langstrasse is an area with a lot of international bars and kitchens and has a long history

84 Cf. *Statuten Verein Regenbogenhaus Zürich*, online: https://www.dasregenbogenhaus.ch/_files/ugd/695567_2bcbc880670f48f3b664461f6aeda2a0.pdf, (01.07.2022).

85 Cf. Vögeli, Dorothee: *Leben auf engem Raum und ohne Auto – weshalb trotzdem so viele das Wohnexperiment im Zürcher Zollhaus wagen wollen*, in NZZ, online: <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/zollhaus-zuerich-genossenschaft-kalkbreite-erprobt-alters-wg-ld.1569987?reduced=tr ue>, (01.07.2022).

as a red-light milieu, with which Zurich tourism also advertises the quarter.⁸⁶ According to answers are the people, who frequent these places not found in the Zollhaus. There is no international restaurant or shop, like an Indian restaurant or Chinese supermarket as well. The lack of these might result in the fact that the respective people are not visiting the Zollhaus. Furthermore the residents are clearly more wealthy than the regular persons around Langstrasse and belong to the ecological-alternative milieu, therefore the Zollhaus is also taking part in the gentrification of the area.⁸⁷

Three apartments provide specifically a place for refugees to live, what at first sounds like a good thing. But according to one man who is in contact with the refugees, it seems that in practice life in the cooperative is not so easy for them. Its difficult for them to understand how the concept of the cooperative works, including the organisation, the different committees, and also the language differences form a great barrier. If one then witnesses how other residents talk about a strange smell in the staircase that they associate with certain people, the example shows the challenges that can arise when living together with people from different milieus or cultures.

Further, there are already critical voices towards the openness of the building: Meanwhile young people have realized, that one can make nice parties on the roof terraces on top of the buildings, what causes some resentments from time to time.

Finally, asking after the character of the Zollhaus, the materiality and the expression is a point of discussion. From all interview partners the settlement was described as rough and not of the best quality. Continuing from that the opinions go in two directions. On the one side one resident finds the roughness as charming and helpful to appropriate the spaces, because as colour or scratches on the wall don't destroy the architecture. On the other side an opinion is, the aim to have a friendly and inviting architecture was not achieved. The building is depressing and ugly. Another one went even further and added that the building has the appearance of prison-like architecture. Specifically, for example, in the materialisation of the staircases with the wire mesh fences and the courtyard, which looks more like a hole in the building.

86 Cf. *Langstrasse*, online: <https://www.zuerich.com/de/besuchen/sehenswuerdigkeiten/langstrasse>, (01.07.2022).

87 Cf. Kohlberger 2021, p. 33 and Feller, Alessandro: *Wer von der Gentrifizierung profitiert – und wer verliert*, online: <https://pwiweb.uzh.ch/wordpress/blog/2017/12/16/wer-von-der-gentrifizierung-profitiertverliert/>, (01.07.2022).

In a summary it can be stated that the concept of the Zollhaus is appreciated from the most residents, and it was also a reason why they moved into the settlement. They appreciate, that they can fulfil themselves and live according to their preferred life models. In contrast to this is a disapproval to the appearance of the architecture. While it allows the rooms to be easily appropriated, it doesn't really satisfy many people.

4. Conclusion

In the two chapters before I wrote about the historical background of the three chosen housing projects in Zurich: the Escherhäuser, the Birkenhof and the Zollhaus. The research revealed what the intention was to build them and in what political and social environment they have been created. With a focus on the four chosen elements - the façade, the entrance, the staircases and windows - I analysed in what way the character of buildings and specifically the character of the four elements are important if we discuss inclusivity in the field of architecture. The interviews brought in other perspectives and confronted my research before. Here in the conclusion I bring the different perspectives together and show what could be revealed by looking at these different perspectives.

To begin, the analysis showed that a concept of inclusivity can be found in any kind of things, the materiality, style, ornamentation or elements relating to something or someone. It is about how the elements can be used, what functions the spaces have, how they can be adapted and appropriated, how flexible they can be used and especially who can do it, for whom the spaces are. Inclusivity also asks for the norm, the ordinary and what is the exception and questions their characteristics. Thereby also just among the architectural elements a play of inclusivity and exclusivity can be determined. Thus, in the context of the character of buildings, inclusivity can in first hand also be discussed without relating to social circumstances, simply by precisely describing the construction and design of the buildings.

In relation to the four selected elements it could be recognized that the design of them are relevant for the building of inclusive architecture. The first reason is that the analysis showed that the elements are places of interactions. So either they are places where people actually meet and are becoming part of a community, as it is in case of the staircase or by talking through windows. What means further that elements are also places of communications, either by meeting the persons directly or by the design of the elements, whereby depending on the codes they incorporate and are understood certain narratives are transported. Or they are elements of negotiations where it is

decided whether one is included or not. And this directly in an active way by deciding about to open a door (or not) or in a passive way by the design of the entrance that implies a certain openness (or not) or a staircase that can form a barrier.

What the elements are communicating and as what they are perceived puts them in certain architectural, but also social and political contexts. As an architect to be conscious about that is important, as via the design values and perceptions are transported, which can concern spaces but also people. As a result, depending on what is transported, the design can represent and include a group of people and reject others.

Secondly, it became clear that the residents, which should be included by the design need to feel comfortable. This can touch the aspect of noise. If the residents can hear other people or sounds from outside or also the other way around if sounds that are produced by the residents themselves can be heard by the neighbours. Further it can be about to be seen or not to be seen. If the residents have the possibility to protect them from the sun or they can regulate the ventilation. Or it can also bring up the question of the materiality and its composition. All together the aim of an inclusive architecture is to ask questions after the experience the residents have and what they feel when they are in the spaces and if their needs are fulfilled.

They descriptions of the spaces are formulating the character of the spaces and of the building out of their point of view. Here the different perspectives are challenging each other as not every perspective necessarily imagines the same character for a certain kind of architecture. So having the aim to construct inclusively, the architects need to find out what character the building need to have to include the respective groups of people. To handle this precisely and expediently, and not arbitrarily, the architects and designers need to have knowledge about the ideas of the future residents and about the effects the designs could have. If one imagines all the knowledge one has a personal archive, then that would mean that, the architects need to question the personal archives and (if needed) at best expand them.

In this regard the analysis showed that an interdisciplinary and multi-perspective approach can help to understand the different effects of the designs and enables to expand the personal archives. A broader and more in-depth image can be created. So while one can get in this way a good understanding of the buildings in the relation to the social and political context, can the gathering of the perceptions of the residents be more challenging. Interviews

allow to understand how residents evaluate contemporary buildings and how historical buildings comply with the needs of the people living today. Gathering historical perspectives of residents is more difficult. For the analysis of the Escherhäuser I had the fortunate coincidence that Richard Wagner lived in the houses and also wrote in letters about his stay, which were documented in some texts. What means that if available, text, letters, etc. of former residents can provide one with their perspective. If there are not existing maybe texts about other similar buildings during the same time can help to get a notion about the designs of the kind of building one is researching. In my case, a text by Otto Streicher helped me to more closely understand the perspective of the Birkenhof's architects of. But one need to be carefully with formulating conclusion. Then even so one might come closer to the truth, it can only be approximations and only evaluations under certain circumstances and/or assumptions can be made.

Furthermore can be concluded that the different living conditions and standards, social and political circumstances and values over the time led to different criterias which made the inhabitants to be part of something / to be included. In relation to this, researchers need to be careful about evaluating the grade of inclusiveness in historic situations and need to be conscious about their own perceptions, which eventually can lead to a biased conclusion.

And this leads to the recognition that it cannot be argued that there is only one inclusive status to be achieved, but that there are different forms of inclusivity. What also means that inclusiveness can only be achieved for the chosen reference points. This leads to the conclusion that the better and more specific the character of the building is for the chosen reference points, the less inclusive is the character in relation to other reference points. This shows that architecture is on the move. It moves between inclusion and exclusion, between to be part of and to be an exception. The character of a building includes and excludes at the same time.

Moreover, from an architectural perspective, the revelations challenge Beate Rudolf's definition of inclusivity from which I started my research. Then her definition argues that Inclusivity is a human right, which can be applied on all the people. In contrary showed the analysis, as described before, that the inclusive space for all the people cannot be constructed. Here one needs also to consider two fundamentally different processes in creating an inclusiveness. In Rudolf's definition inclusivity is created by the possibility to be active

in all the areas of life. In architecture the design or the character of buildings can be inclusive (or not) no matter whether the persons are active or not. This means for example that people can take part in the political life, even so they don't feel to be included by the architecture. Also people might have the human right for housing, but not necessarily the right for inclusivity, even so I think the aim to bring the two types of inclusiveness together is worth to have. So that people can also be present in all areas of life in spaces that are inclusive for them, what can add to their comfort. As a result the urban fabric contains a diverse number of spaces with different kinds of inclusivities. Or one might could be so radical to say that there are only exclusive spaces for certain groups of people.

When looking at all the aspects, which the analysis could show then this asks for a change in what the project participants want to invest their time and money, including which spaces need to be designed more carefully and which elements are more important. Especially the staircases have the potential to be much more a common space and a space of inclusivity then today. Finally, the analysis showed also where the limits of the architecture is to create inclusivity. Even so the spaces are perfect they are aspects that go beyond architecture which enable that the people can be part of and feel included. To this belongs the possibility to realise oneself, which is characterised by the fact that one can live according to one's preferred life model. Further, a stable neighbourhood which creates a familiar surrounding, to which one can fall back on in the best case, among other things, if there are no problems among the neighbours, when one needs something. In addition, an administration that is willing to create housing spaces for a diverse population and make the application process low-threshold, open for a wide range of people. And last but not least, the flats have to be affordable.

By set now this framework I would like to draw four conclusions I could define by bringing the historical analysis and the interviews together, which concern in specific the design of residential buildings and the character of these buildings.

First, if one wants to bring the people together and create a certain community feeling in the housing complex, then the access via a courtyard with pergolas is more ideal compared to a typical staircase with a corridor. The fact that the different housing units are directed towards one another means that the different households are more noticeable, which increases the feeling of

a shared life. In addition, contacts can be made more quickly with almost no effort, so that one can get to know large parts of the residents in a relatively short time.

Secondly, the windows are on several levels important to create an inclusive effect. On one hand they are part of the façade and therefore also structuring and building up the style of the façade. With that they are also part of the communication of the façade with the surrounding. On the other hand they are important for the interactions between inside and outside and enable several visual connections. And in addition they allow, depending on the design (with shutters, curtains, railing, etc.), to react as a resident to different situations, climatic conditions, feelings of retreat and being on display, etc.. With that the residents have the possibilities to adapt the spaces to their needs to feel comfortable.

Thirdly, can individual elements form a catalyst to create a inclusivity or a feeling of belonging and evoke a certain life and practices. This can either be a colour if a certain meaning can be attributed to it. Or especially if it is written on the building a name for the residential housing can allow to establish a connection with the place where one lives or interacts with as a visitor. In other cases, a special history of the housing estate may contribute to identification with the place of residence. According to the level of awareness of the history, information boards can help to relate the residents more strongly to the history.

And fourth, contributes to the comfort as an inclusive effect a well-executed work, where a feeling occurs that the construction is on one side stable, thereby it can for example also last an earthquake. And on the other side the feeling occurs the design is well thought out, whereby the designer understands the needs and the spaces are functional for the users. Also if the design is work-out in several details and maybe some special designs are added, the building can be perceived as valuable, which can lead to the aim of maintaining the quality.

Outlook

During the analysis, I got the notion that many concepts to create inclusivity, work mainly with stereotypical imagery and therefore fall apart quite quickly. Continuing my research in the realm of inclusivity concerning the character of buildings, I would like to research if by designing noise intentionally, inclusive buildings could be constructed, which are less stereotypical and therefore

inclusive for more people and more durable. The notion of noise is introduced by Kisho Kurokawa and describes heterogeneities and dissonances in cultures.⁸⁸ The research would ask what intentional noise is in architectural form, how it could be created and if it would have the preferred effect to include more people.

88 Cf. Kurokawa, Kisho: *Intercultural Architecture, the philosophy of Symbiosis*, London: Academy Editions, 1991, pp. 32 - 35.

5. Appendix: Excerpt interview with Philipp Fischer, Member of the Executive Board of Enzmann Fischer Architekten

[...]

It became clear to us relatively quickly that we wanted to build a raw stage, an architectural raw stage. That has a lot to do with the urban interior in which we built here, in which the formulation was relatively raw, with this concrete architecture. Which is perhaps also the child before this whole immense sustainability debate that has been going on for the last 4 - 5 years. But we have examined the timber construction, that can be said for sure, and we have actually come to the conclusion that with the static questions that we have in this building, that is, with this complexity of 3 residential storeys, which are simply small in structure and oversized halls, up to the question of costs, these are relatively many parameters that have influenced this, we have come to the conviction that this is the right decision to build the blank, which also perhaps has something to do with this rough subway architecture,

Asphalt from the city and so on, and out of that came the idea that the green would increase the intensity of the appropriation and that the green would influence the whole thing over the years and allow the architecture to increase and be influenced, if we want to put it that way, and the basic idea was actually that the more radically we think about it, the better the type of appropriation and the more it comes together with the concept, perhaps also with the idea of the railway architecture.

[...]

So of course we looked at the various things from the seventies in Berlin, communal living or illegal forms of housing, and we actually came to the conclusion that we can't build that as architects, that's not the idea. Especially now with the Hallenwohnen which you saw at the weekend. There's actually a conscious decision to build this

large, rough hall that's as flexible as possible, that is, the basic idea. And then it's simply taken into application. From these somewhat experimental, I would say somewhat illegal, forms of housing into a legal form. But we didn't want to design the floor plan and the rooms, as we like to do as architects, of course, but to consciously take a step back and say that we are actually building a kind of almost neutral theatre stage, which they (the residents) can then occupy and realise. Our achievement is actually that we have sought a structure for the whole thing that simply creates networks in which this idea of communal living also comes to fruition.

[...]

A lot of cooperative housing buildings have decided to build with Eternit. So we were actually looking for an architectural expression that fits in with cooperative housing. There are wood-metal windows from Zug in Central Switzerland. The wood builder is also from the region, and he did the entire façade. These are considerations that we have made.

[...]

The character is rough and coarse in structure and it takes time to judge, like a large outdoor space

where trees are planted, which is also very bare at the beginning and the trees are small and it has not yet been appropriated and so on. And that's actually the idea, that over the years, what happens there, you now see the greening themes made by the residents themselves. Then the whole political appropriation. Greenery will become more and more important for our cities and for such superstructures, and the contribution here is of course enormous, if you just look at how this track terrace looks now after only two years of intensive greening. So in 3, 1, 4, 5, 6 years you will have to cut it out and the greenery will actually take over the whole thing.

We always had the picture of the Halen housing estate by Atelier 5 in mind. Of the relatively large structure that will later be taken over by the residents and above all by the greenery. And that takes time. So that's something that can perhaps only be assessed conclusively in 5 years' time, how it will all come together. So the things that are happening (points to a wooden structure built by the residents themselves), we knew that this would happen, these mobile children's playgrounds that the residents are now making themselves.

It has gone so far that they are now starting to make a pergola back there themselves. So this kind of stuff will happen more and more, I'm convinced of that. And that is actually the basic idea. You can see that the courtyard was very beautiful, very naked of course at the beginning, and now with the greenery, with the various themes of appropriation by the residents, it will end up being quite a lively story.

[...]

Colour concept equals material concept or vice versa material concept is precisely the colour concept. Very few specific colours have been used. In the utility rooms, all the furnishings and everything we did ourselves, the furnishings in the kindergarten, there is an intensive green concept in the lined rooms, the same in the guest-houses, so in the guest-house up-stairs. The rest, everywhere where it is again the infrastructure, an urban questioning, a bicycle garage, interior, middle house, the whole urban interior is as an urban rough materialisation, where also again this idea is to allow the appropriation. We have the feeling if we would have gone now still much with colour purely or would have made intensity, either that would have bitten itself total-

ly, that is simply what we have not wanted. But actually, that this appropriation takes on a more individual dynamic.

[...]

On the ground floor, where we made the large folding windows, which work extremely well, especially in the transitional phase of spring, summer and winter, so that you actually have quite a high level of generosity from the outer urban space into the semi-public spaces. Where you don't actually have an arcade threshold space. That's something we've thought about before. The way Esch. Sintzel did it. We came to the realisation that this doesn't have much to do with Zurich, nor with the neighbourhood. Rather, we were looking for this directness. Direct public space from the pavement, really without thresholds, with the largest possible folding windows into the interior. And these are really extremely popular, we notice, they work great, so people really do open up, again and again, and so these lower ground floor spaces come together extremely well. Of course, it also promotes sales, it really is a busy place and people tend to go in quickly, much more than if you open a door or just a small door, but they

also go out again quickly. So that's what we were actually looking for. We wanted to offer something that would enable contact to be established more quickly at the neighbourhood level and at the level of the residents. You don't have to, you can avoid each other, but you have the possibility. And then a very crucial question arose: how big do we make the entrance at the bottom into the urban interior and then we actually came to the realisation that we can't open up enough here at the top (Gleisterasse), the lower space is actually almost something.

So it has a clear address, it has a square, it has a decently wide front, but you almost enter the space with a dramaturgy through a closed space and we did that very consciously because we also found that we don't know how the state will develop in the long term, so 30 years ago it was unthinkable - junkie scene - to build such a space with such an open public spine where you almost have to position Securitas at the end to see who goes in and out. So we also said, let's try it now, let's make a relatively fine, relatively narrow threshold, because once the space is discovered by the city dwellers, the neighbourhood, then you know I want to go there. That was a consideration. And if

possible, do something up there to revive it. And the threshold spaces are the large sliding windows, where you can also say that you can open a large sliding window in the community room, so that the space flows in and out again.

[...].

You can actually see how efficient the staircase is. That means that when I want to meet colleagues, which is perhaps a bit of urban thinking again, I walk across the Josefwiese because I know they are usually there. If I think of the extended living room here, when I come home in the evening, then I go in via the urban interior and I still want to somehow have a beer today with X Ypsilon or, and if I don't feel like it, then I take the short-cut and take the stairs in here and can almost sneak off a bit or, and can say, I want to move around like in the urban space, I now deliberately take this street so that I don't see him or her again.

[...]

The interview was conducted on the 28th of June 2022.

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