## *Кинигјартик* Mens Sana in Corpore Sano

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"When designing a school, one should always be thinking of a city and drawing parallels with urban situations. [...] Although a building can never be a city nor anything between the two, it can still become city-like and thus become a better house. [...] Indeed, the school community probably acts more like an urban community than that of most other buildings; as a social unit with a certain connectedness or feeling of belonging together, comparable perhaps with a neighborhood. At school, the emphasis is on social space, an open and clearly organized system where all the attributes of learning and thinking are readily accessible."

> Herman Hertzberger; "The School Building as a Micro-City" in Space and Learning, Lessons in Architecture 3, 2008, pp.127-128





North Elevation 1:500

The old European factories as photographed by Bernd and Hilla Becher bear witness of the power and presence of those anonymous buildings like characters layed out on the territory. Despite their direct and consistent construction, there is an undeniable variety in those landscapes. In Zürich West, one can also easily find the traces of the neighborhood's industrial past, simply by looking at the name of the streets (Fabrikstrasse, Gasometerstrasse, Motorenstrasse...). Located at the intersection of Viadukt Letten and Viadukt Wipkingen, this "brownfield" site already evokes by its vast spread between infrastructures and its grain silo, the (fictitious) presence of an old factory. Industrial buildings have as well the quality to accommodate a great diversity of uses in a congested manner so as to foster the synergies in the production process. As described by H. Hertzberger in The School Building as a Micro-City, the experience of learning is not that far from that of a production chain where all tools are readily accessible and activities benefit from one another. A school for adults could be like a KulturFabrik with its production being knowledge and abilities. It is not about making a hierarchy in the different programmes or an address towards the site but to promote a condition of provisional spaces that work all together.

Like in a factory, it is the consistency and the repetition of the structure that brings all of the functions under one roof. Starting with the existing silo, its cellular rythm and form deploys across the site through a first gesture: the negative shape is actually an efficient retaining wall for the Viadukt hill and serves as light shafts on the one hand, and on the other, the grid of the cells applies to the whole field. The resulting ground floor consists of continuous and yet differentiated space where all the public activities have their territory and interact through their adjacencies. The presence of the structure above gives a civic sense to this large concourse as well as indicates the presence of the various and more specific uses above. In addition to the filigree steel structure and the concrete retaining walls, there is a number of formal elements (helicoidal stairs, folding doors, wood panels, large glazing and so on.) that radiates through the whole building in order to bind everything together into a single image.

Factories and Industrial Buildings around Zürich West



Ground Floor Plan 1:200





Unrolled Section 1:150





Based on the 7.24x4.36m grid of the silo, the new structure imprints differents heights and rhythmes on the plan. Depending on the span and the height, the steel box section varies between 10x10cm and 30x30cm. A modular truss system can be repeated at various scale to generate different roof shapes: a shed, a peached roof or a inverted peached roof. The construction is welded and braced through the lining and the precast concrete slabs. Moreover, as the structure is continuous on the whole site, it works together as one.

The shape of the silo is extended across the site as a concrete retaining wall against the bigger hill. Its form is actually efficient to counteract the forces of the terrain and it anchors the structure on both side. Those alcoves are used as light shafts for the ground floor but also accommodate different uses such as stands for the sports hall or a chimney in the workshop.







Unrolled Section 1:150

![](_page_2_Picture_4.jpeg)

## The Circulation

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Starting with the silo, the evident way up would be helicoidal stairs. This typology is repeated throughout the building as light slatted steel structures. Besides helping stabilizing the structures, the cores are meeting points in the project as they are generous and shared by different programmes. For example, as you come in from Limmatstrasse in the silo, you take the stairs up to the school, the pool or the library.

![](_page_2_Picture_7.jpeg)

![](_page_2_Picture_8.jpeg)

As the structure is quite open and the programme has a provisional dimension, the enclosure reflects this idea of the non permanent and the possibility to accommodate things differently in time. The space can be divided in three different ways: the most provisional one is the furniture that can be like archipel in the continuous concourse of the ground floor, then comes the large curtains that encloses for example the sports hall so that it can be used for other purpose when a game does not take place and finally the least provisional is the three-ply wood panels that also braces the structure and can be painted and repainted in time as wished. In any case, the structure is always present and give a specific character to each space.

![](_page_2_Picture_10.jpeg)

![](_page_2_Picture_11.jpeg)

The facade is conceived as a continuous and delicate membrane of glass and Eternit hanging from the structure inside. The entrance door consists of part of the facade folding like a curtain. It also recalls the industrial gate that one can see on the facade of industrial buildings.

![](_page_3_Picture_0.jpeg)

From Hönggerberg to Platzspitz, one can always recognize the dense skyline created by the surrounding buildings: the 118 meters tall new concrete Silo, the Löwenbrau Black and Red and the existing grain silo. Like a Morandi still life painting, the Becher photographs often represent a close set of buildings cutting out in the plain grey sky. In elevation, the school expresses this multiplicity through different heights and crownings whilst making a single representational image by the use of color and continuous cladding.

The scale of the opening is that of the city and its image. The skin as a seamless and delicate membrane of tainted Eternit and Okalux capillary diffuse glazing is like a line drawing with thin joints that imprint the different rhythms of the structure inside. Depending on the daylight, the difference between plain and glazed surface is almost imperceptible like in a Becher photograph. The image from a distance is almost purely volumetric and the depth is emphasized by using different hues of the same color.

Inside, the provisional character of industrial buildings is maintained by letting the structure apparent and cladding only in the lower parts with large three-ply wood panels that help with the bracing of the structure and can be painted and repainted as wished. Moreover, high curtains and furniture are also used to enclose space and divide vast rooms according to need.

South Elevation 1:250

![](_page_3_Picture_6.jpeg)

![](_page_3_Figure_7.jpeg)

![](_page_3_Figure_8.jpeg)

![](_page_3_Figure_9.jpeg)

Façade Section 1:25