

Competition Areal Warmbächliweg, Bern (CH)

project **urban planning ideas competition for the new design of a former industrial site as a low energy living area** awarding authority **Fonds für Boden- und Wohnbaupolitik der Stadt Bern, Fachstelle Beschaffungswesen (CH)** team **WW+, Esch-sur-Alzette/Trier (LUX/GER), Metron Bern AG, Bern (CH), R+T Topp Huber-Erler Hagedorn, Darmstadt (GER)** rendering **Stube 13, Zurich (CH)** gfa **40.913 m²** total area **23.347 m²** competition phase **05/2012 - 09/2012** restricted competition **2nd round**

Task

The challenge of the task at hand consists in the integration of the architecture into the urban fabric. Various surrounding existing buildings engage in a dialogue with one another, revealing the tension between remaining loyal to an architectonic style and adapting the past to the requirements of the present. This central theme arises once again when it comes to the dialogue between the parties involved, i.e. between the planners and the inhabitants of a town. When planning this project, the context must be taken into account. And at the same time, it must add value and enhance the quality of life. Alongside other interdisciplinary considerations from the sociological and socio-demographic arenas, we integrate all these parameters into the urban planning and architectonic concept of the new construction of the Warmbächliweg precinct, known as the Areal Warmbächliweg.

Genius Loci – Living with vision

The Areal Warmbächliweg is located on what is from an urban planning point of view a striking site between the town's periphery and undifferentiated urban expansion structures and an extensive open space. Despite the strong topography of the site and its location between busy roads and the railway line, our design places an urban planning emphasis on the western town entrance. Within the Areal, identification and reference points as well as urban features from the neighbouring built-up structure are taken over in order to create references and to generate a harmonious integration in the urban space. An upgrade of the surrounding public space as well as a sustainable networking of the closer surroundings are positive effects of the connection to existing reference perimeters of the already present buildings. Through developing and reinforcing the greater connecting axis between town and nature, the abutment onto valuable green space is felt in every living aspect in the new residential precinct. The perceptibility of the habitat in the flow of nature is strengthened in particular through the opening up of the existing stream, which forms a central square, the 'Warmbächlihof', within the residential estate. Through the development of an own centre, the new town quarter emanates in all directions and with its openness enters into a dialogue with the urban space.



The urban planning concept foresees a linear building form, which follows the contour lines and places particular emphasis on a harmonious blending into the existing structure. In addition to the clearly set out street lines, due among others to the great difference in height between Güterstraße and Warmbächliweg, the bodies of the individual buildings align themselves with three topographical levels of the Areal and an attractive outdoor area featuring an exposed stream. The building towards Bahnstrasse, with its distinctive design, forms a clear, identity-establishing conclusion to the adjoining railway line, but opens up through its particular language and seamlessly connects to the linear building structures. In the overall structure, the buildings cave in under tension and break up into individual structures that run into one another, adapting their cubature to the surrounding formations. The resulting in-between spaces mark the entrances to the 'Warmbächlihof' and the loading zone. While the ground floor houses the entrance areas as well as public-use structures such as a convenience store, individual shops and workshops, the upper floors feature a wide range of living typologies, 90% of which are intended for lease and 10% for ownership. Within the urban space, these multi-storey buildings with their differing heights form a distinctive landmark that speaks a uniform language. A composition has been created that provides its users with a clear structure and orientation. At the same time, openness and transparency are created through the targeted use of material, light and openings.

Extract from jury report

The project sees the industrial precinct restored to its former topography. The terrain that drops to the southwest to reveal open spaces for sports facilities is interpreted as a privileged foreground to the adjacent neighbourhood. Crooked lines follow the restored contour lines. The structural bodies naturally step down to follow the slope of the terrain. In addition to the crooked angles, higher structures (high-rise buildings in places) also impart rhythm to the building landscape. These super elevations are offset in such a way that many dwellings from the second and third row are also able to profit from wide-ranging views and vistas. [...] The mobility management proposal, on the other hand, is elaborate and comparatively innovative. The buildings feature a simple structure. Entrance halls allow all residences to be accessed from the shared courtyard. The ground floors house the residential infrastructure, individual commercial areas and residential studios.[...]

