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HOUSING COMPETITIONS – ELABORATING PROJECTS IN THEIR SPECIFIC PROCESS FRAMEWORK

ANTIGONI KATSAKOU

Abstract

In the middle of the 1990s, to answer pressing needs in the housing sector, a systematic search for new solutions, in terms of urban forms and housing typologies, was undertaken by State authorities, mostly in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where Zurich remains the predominant operational model. In general, promoting the quality of housing conditions has been established as one of the immediate priorities within larger schemes to reshape entire urban districts, densify and remodel entire neighbourhood identities. The competition system, already well known in Switzerland mostly through construction programs other than housing, has been reactivated to produce important numbers of quality collective housing units.

In this article, a series of housing competitions are analysed in relation to the modifications imposed on the awarded projects resulting from their process framework, either during the various rounds of the competition or from the competition to the execution plans. The role of the jury's comments and the authors' reactions, with respect to the proposed changes, are discussed; a constructive, consensual competition background is argued for, and the idea of a truly fertile dialogue among implicated actors constitutes this essay's central debate point.

Key words:

Competitions, Discursive procedures, Materialisation, Execution modifications, Innovation, Simplifications, Rationalisation of the plan

Introduction

Architectural competitions have often been commented on as participative processes, a concept that underlies the «collective» nature of the project authorship as described by some experts¹. A «special» kind of dialogue, mostly indirect – and consisting of visual elements, plans, diagrams and written texts – develops in their process framework²; a dialogue among a variety of actors – the competition’s organizers and/or the project investors, the participating architects, the jury, the specialized press and consequently the public – who all carry their assessment of the specific projects, and complete the cultural background, the social, political and financial circumstances, of its genesis. Other authors³ speak of the competition system as a kind of bridging device between theory and practice; a process that aims to reconcile the «ideal», expressed by the architects’ visions, and the «practica», represented by the market’s laws, to which any architectural realizations must yield.

In no other sector of the construction market is distance between the ideal and the practical as marked as in housing construction. This is due to the symbolic value of the unit for the individual; every person’s home is not only his material and psychological refuge from the outside world but also the incarnation of his personality and beliefs, and the mirror of his social status and cultural being. This question is even more pertinent in the collective housing domain, where frictions between the private and the public sphere are more acute than ever. In today’s new «intellectual» and «urbanised» societies, people may spend more hours living and working in their home, as social ideals focus on the individual and his comfort, defining and deifying success as differentiation from the crowd. Offering real alternatives to suburban «autonomy», as expressed in the ever-present dream of the detached single-family house, is as important as providing other population groups with their «urban» and «plugged» dream unit. It therefore becomes even more significant if the «ideal», in matters of contemporary housing units – apartments embodying new ways of living and allowing a certain flexibility of usage so that their inhabitants may identify themselves in the long run with their homes – reaches materialisation. To that aim, it is of interest to examine how new ideas turn into reality, in a context promoting research and quality construction, such as the one provided by architectural competitions for collective housing in Switzerland.

In the following, I will analyse a series of case studies resulting from housing competitions that have been recently organised in the German-speaking part of the country, and more specifically a series of awarded projects where a certain amount of modifications have been made to the original designs: either from the first competition round to the second or, from the competition project layout to those used for the execution. Five projects which have been awarded first prize in housing competitions in Zurich – the city with the most impressive results with regard to compe-

- 1 See Lipstadt Hélène, «Are Competitions Populist? A Bourdieusian Alternative Perspective» in Shamiyeh Michael (ed), *What People Want. Populism in Architecture and Design*, Birkhäuser, Basel, 2005, pp. 132-149
- 2 Tostrup Elisabeth, *Architecture and Rhetoric: text and design in architectural competitions, Oslo 1393-93*, Oslo School of Architecture, Oslo, 1996; also Strong Judith, *Winning by design. Architectural competitions*, Butterworth architecture, Oxford, 1996, p. 30: «The aim of the architectural competition system is not just to offer clients a wider choice or to distribute work more evenly throughout the profession (though it can do both things). It relates to the development of the art and science of architecture. The objective is to open up the commissioning process and introduce a whole interplay of different interests and in so doing encourage debate, discussion and exploration.» And she continues by quoting the RIAS catalogue of the exhibition *Winners and Losers*, 1991: «It is the peculiar, special and temporary relationships of the promoter, the architect, the jury and the public which constitute the essence of the architectural competition».
- 3 See Quincerot Richard, Nicolas Michel, *Concours d’architecture 1920-1940 : Une qualité en projet*, Comité de la recherche et du développement en architecture France and Centre de Recherche en Architecture et Architecturologie / Université de Genève, Paris, 1980, p. 12.

titions organized during the last fifteen years in Switzerland, concerning both the number of completed procedures and that of built projects – and two others resulting from housing competitions in the rest of the country’s German-speaking region, and distinguished for their highly innovative design approaches, will be examined. Although it is a question, within the limits of this essay, of a small number of case studies, these are quite representative of the general competition background: first of all, because they come precisely from the German-speaking district and secondly, because substantial changes can be identified in their respective competition project layouts.. Granted that the originally submitted drawings represent, for their authors, the ideal solution for the specific architectural problem described by the competition brief, what kind of transformations do the original layouts go through in the course of a two-round competition, or until they reach execution? Are the jury’s comments weighted towards the modification of the original proposals, and if so, in what way?

Swiss housing competitions: a few words on the system’s background

In the middle of the 1990s, to answer pressing needs in the housing sector, a systematic search for new solutions, in terms of urban forms and housing typologies, was undertaken, mostly in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where Zurich remains the predominant operational model. In general, promoting the quality of housing conditions offered to the population has been established as one of the immediate priorities, making it a part of larger schemes to reshape entire urban districts, and densify and remodel entire neighbourhood’s identities. The competition system, already well-known in Switzerland mostly for construction programs other than housing, has been reactivated, in a general atmosphere inviting tendering procedures in the whole of Europe; communal authorities started systematically offering leases on municipally owned land, often in disused urban or suburban areas, to not-for-profit housing investors, with the condition of organising architectural competitions in order to choose the most appropriate solution. Competitions were seen generally as a guarantee to quality of architecture. A significant number of competitions have therefore seen the light during the last fifteen years: *Amt für Hochbauten* (AHB), the municipal division for building construction and competition planning, has organized almost 70 competitions⁴ in the period 1997-2008, at least half of them dealing with housing using renovations, extensions, and completely new constructions of residential complexes. Efficient and client-oriented in its attitude, it operates equally as an independent planning office serving stakeholders external to the municipality and taking advantage of its acquired experience⁵. During the same period, AHB has managed more than 40 competitions for such investors, at least 30 of which were for cooperative societies and other non-profit associations. In the 2008 advertising leaflet «Der Architekturwettbewerb im Wohnungsbau. Das Amt

4 Stadt Zürich, Amt für Hochbauten, *Bauen für Zürich. Das Amt für Hochbauten 1997-2007*, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich, 2008.

5 Interview with Jeremy Hoskyn, Director of the Project Planification Department – Competitions Section of the city of Zurich, on 30 March 2009.

für Hochbauten als Partner 1998-2007» («The architectural competition in housing construction. The AHB as Partner 1998-2007»)⁶, concerning competition organization in the housing sector, the municipality of Zurich mentioned 30 competitions (corresponding to a total of 2'600 units) during the period 1998-2007⁷. «In Zurich, housing construction is in full blossom [...] The AHB is committed to imaginative architecture for a diverse public and encourages sustainable renovation concepts. [...] Housing construction is in Zurich, more than in any other Swiss city, a political affair.»⁸

The current regulation guaranteeing correct elaboration of the various competition procedures in Switzerland is mainly the 142 norm of the Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects (SIA)⁹, dating from 1998 and replacing the older 152 and 153 norms that concerned architectural and engineering competitions. The revision of the 152 and 153 norms has been necessary after the GATT agreement (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) by the WTO (World Trade Organization) of the 15th of April 1994 concerning public markets, and it followed the federal law of January 1996 that regulated tendering and commission of construction works (including architectural services) in Switzerland.¹⁰

The 142 principally specifies two types of competitions: the first one, under which ideas competitions and project competitions are classified, concerns only the elaboration of project studies, while the second refers both to the study and execution of a new project. A third competition type, the competition in several rounds, is mentioned: it is nothing more than the first two types when completed in more than one, progressive round. As a general rule, competitions respect the clause of their participants' anonymity, until the assessment is completed, except for one special case of tendering, the parallel study commissions¹¹, mentioned in the 1998 edition as part of the SIA 142 norm and in a later edition (2009) constituting the separate 143 norm (in 2011, another norm, the 144, concerning exclusively tendering on commissions, and destined to complete the 142 & 143, was put into effect). In a procedure of parallel study commissions, stakeholders assign the study of the project to several architectural bureaus at the same time, usually of a limited number; they are all equally rewarded for this work. A panel of experts is responsible for the final decision, after having normally discussed the projects directly with the participating teams. Apart from competition types, the SIA defines three different types of competition procedures: open to all professionals, selective ones, where a limited number of architects are normally allowed to participate on the basis of a portfolio evaluation, and invited procedures, where the organizer directly picks the architects he wishes to challenge.

Among different kinds of tendering, the model of project competitions in one or two rounds is revealed as predominant, along with procedures

6 Kurz Daniel, *Der Architekturwettbewerb im Wohnungsbau. Das Amt für Hochbauten als Partner 1998-2007*, Stadt Zürich, Amt für Hochbauten, Zurich, 2008.

7 Koch Michael, Kurz Daniel «Mehr als Wohnen: Auf der Suche dem neuen Zürich» in Durban Christoph et al., *Mehr als Wohnen. Gemeinnütziger Wohnungsbau in Zürich 1907-2007. Bauten und Siedlungen*, gta Verlag, Zurich, 2008, pp. 16-33.

8 «Hohe Ansprüche an Wohnarchitektur» in *Bauen für Zürich*, op. cit., p. 85: «In Zürich blüht der Wohnungsbau. [...] Das AHB engagiert sich für ideenreiche Architektur für ein vielfältiges Publikum und fördert nachhaltige Erneuerungskonzepte. [...] Der Wohnungsbau ist in Zürich, mehr als in jeder andern Schweizer Stadt, eine öffentliche Angelegenheit.»

9 SIA 142, *Règlement des concours d'architecture et d'ingénierie*, édition 1998.

10 See on this subject «Wettbewerb und Wettbewerbswesen» in *Themenheft* no. 15, Janvier 1998, Metron editions, Zurich 1998 and Ducret André et al., *Architecte en Suisse. Enquête sur une profession en chantier*, Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, Lausanne, 2003, pp. 18-25.

11 Author's translation for the French term «mandats d'étude parallèles», or «Studienauftrag» in German. It seems that the English equivalent term would be «restricted» or «invited» competitions, or even «commissioned competitions» (for this last term see the *Guidelines for Architectural Design Competitions* by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, October 2003, last viewed 27.01.2011, <<http://www.architecture.com.au/i-cms?page=13547>>). Another term would be «closed» competitions used by Cees De Jong and Erik Mattie (op. cit., vol. 1, p. 9) for describing distinctions between competition types during the nineteenth century: «In closed competitions, the organizing body invites a handful of celebrated architects, generally

of parallel study commissions (that become gradually more and more frequent), offering as an alternative to the indirect dialogue between architect and stakeholders, a more immediate contact (in the form of oral presentations in front of the jury, by the project authors). Concerning competitions conducted in more than one rounds, recommendations provided by the SIA specify that the jury remains the same until the final decision is reached and that it transforms the competition brief accordingly to knowledge acquired in previous rounds. This means that the jury is responsible for adapting the parameters of the architectural problem to new questions which potentially emerge from the first stage proposals; it may therefore further define points revealed as ambiguous in the original brief. In their turn, architects are expected to provide more detailed information as to the project's realisation, construction system, time and budget frame. If new demands are added to the program's requisites, architects are allowed to enlarge their team in order to deal more efficiently with the new guidelines, for example, in the case when additional expertise is recommended for the project's correct elaboration.

Second rounds can prove particularly useful for the evolution of an architectural proposal. They provide the authors with a chance of reviewing, first round choices, often made in a hurry in the first place. For the jury, second rounds are supposed to give an additional opportunity to evaluate viability among probable solutions, which have been developed in more detail. For the competition scholar, multiple-round competitions and completed projects, offer an occasion to study the project's «coming of age»; meaningful data concerning the interplay between assessing actors (the jury) and assessed ones (the authors and their proposals) may be discerned with regard to the kind of mutations architectural projects go through from their initial form to more elaborated, second round or execution plans, as well as with respect to the jury's role regarding such modifications.

Swiss housing competitions: on the system's efficiency

To return to the more specific framework of this essay and to the case studies being examined, it should be noted that these cases are part of a larger research project, that focuses on innovative parameters of the contemporary Swiss architectural production, resulting from housing competitions. Of a total of 106 competitions, organised roughly between 1995 and 2010, and listed in a primary census attempt at the end of this work¹², almost 50% have already produced concrete results, in the form of built projects; a relatively high ratio, especially if one considers that almost a third out of these 106 competitions are more recent than 2007, and therefore susceptible to execution in the near future. More than half of the built projects have seen the light through tendering procedures held in the canton of Zurich. Although I cannot claim thorough analysis of all built competition projects mentioned in this list, a primary overview of the majority revealed few significant changes between competition project layouts and executed projects; they were considered as significant modifications affecting the principal compositional

at a more than reasonable fee, who usually help to draw attention to the project and increase the chance that an architectural masterpiece will be erected.» Of course SIA's «mandats d'étude parallèles» are also held by invitation; we opted though for the term «parallel study commissions» because it seemed closer to the spirit of the Swiss regulation.

12 Katsakou Antigoni, *Recent Architectural Competitions of Collective Housing in Switzerland: Impact of this Framework on Architectural Conception and Innovation*, EPFL Thesis no. 5066, Lausanne, June 2011, p. 415.

logic of the original layout and/or, having an impact on an inherent design parameter that introduced some type of architectural innovation¹³.

The fact that a large majority of competition projects have been executed, and remained relatively faithful to the original design terms, is in itself an interesting point, considering the number of competitions that end up completely dropping the original building scheme, or the number of architectural works issued from competitions, of which the poor execution quality has been commented on in relation with the competitions system's deficiencies. Such success in the Swiss case could mean that normally no excessive questioning of competition results and no doubtful whining about the jury's decision takes place after the procedure's completion. It could point to the direction of a truly fruitful dialogue, taking place between the various stakeholders implicated in organisa-

13 For an understanding of the term innovation in architectural conception and the different types of architectural innovation, see Katsakou Antigoni, «Collective Housing Competitions in Switzerland. The parameter of innovation in architectural conception» in *Architectural Competitions, Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, vol. 21, n. 2/3, 2009, pp. 80-81.



Figure 1. Bünzli & Courvoisier – Hagenbuchrain competition, exterior perspective of the competition and photo of the built project (source: Bünzli & Courvoisier, photo: © Hannes Henz)

tion of competitions. It could also reflect well-structured competition briefs and the rich experience of the organisers, due to a long competition tradition in the country, or even to the financial ease of the specific housing market providing adequate resources for the accomplishment of the operation, and also perhaps a serious consideration of the financial factor, not only by the client but also by the organizer and the participants, since the very start of the study. Finally, a substantial change in the clients' attitudes, in regard to innovative architectural proposals, could also be implied, allowing for optimistic interpretations as to the relation of the architect's profession with the market.

On the one hand, the financial frame certainly constitutes a very important aspect from the beginning of every project, and of course, a rich experience in competition organizing can be claimed by the appropriate State services, at least in the case of Zurich. In the leaflet *Der Architekturwettbewerb im Wohnungsbau*, the importance of a correct cost control for the efficiency of a competition procedure is emphasized: *«In housing construction, desired rent prices are often predetermined. AHB provides competition participants with a «costs tool». With it, the architects may already in the phase of the competition, optimize their projects towards fixed cost objectives. Their statement is controlled by independent cost planners, thus a high level of compliance is reached.»*¹⁴ In the same publication, competitions are praised while debating the most frequently asked questions by the clients, regarding the issues that most preoccupy them, the system's time frame and the client's freedom of choice with respect to the awarded designs: *«Is the competition a waste of time?», «Is the building owner outvoted?», «Is the building owner buying a pig in a poke?* It is explained that a competition project, is a better thought-out project where there still exists room for improvement after announcing the winner. It is emphasized that competitions *«open doors with the approval authorities»*, since a generalised discussion among various actors already takes place in their framework, and since public reactions to the building scheme are mollified by a faith in the fact that all possible architectural alternatives have already been considered through the competition.

On the other hand, the variety of urban forms and housing typologies proposed in the built projects implies vigorous research in the domain of collective housing design, that could not justify unilateral interpretations of the system's functioning, such as a generalised consensus between clients and architects due to the latter's unconditional surrender to priorities imposed by the financial aspects of housing construction. It is the range of the applied architectural solutions as a whole that can safely guide us to understanding the competition system's operational way in Switzerland. Quincerot & Nicolas, in their important analysis of the competition system between the wars, in Switzerland and France, wonder: *«To what calculations they [the contestants] give themselves*

14 Kurz Daniel, *Der Architekturwettbewerb im Wohnungsbau*, op. cit., p. 1: *«Im Wohnungsbau ist die angestrebte Höhe der Miete oft vorgegeben. Das Amt für Hochbauten stellt den Wettbewerbsteilnehmenden ein «Kostentool» zur Verfügung. Die Architekten können damit schon in der Wettbewerbsphase ihr Projekt auf das definierte Kostenziel hin optimieren. Ihre Selbstdeklaration wird von unabhängigen Kostenplannern nachkalkuliert, wobei sich eine hohe Übereinstimmung ergibt.»*

in anticipation of the assessment, and to increase their chances of success? [...] Who, the technicians, the politicians, the architects, takes the decision?»¹⁵ On the basis of the analysed examples and the modifications applied to their initial competition project layouts, I will argue that instead of an authoritative prevalence of one of the implicated in the competition system actors (developer, jury, architects) over the others, a constructive dialogue is in fact in progress between them; a dialogue aiming at the elaboration and improvement of the winning projects through a real «consensual» spirit. Thus, I mean to suggest a real «bridging» between conception and practice in the Swiss housing market. This explanatory model also seems particularly intriguing with regard to the implied potential of the system of architectural competitions in general. The case studies presented in the rest of this essay were chosen on the following criteria: first of all, because, as already mentioned, significant alterations could be identified in their final versions (of the competition's second round or that of the materialised housing complex); secondly, because of their particular interest with respect either to the project's innovative design approach, or to the development of the competition procedure. In the first two case studies, for example, the Grünwald and Rautistrasse winning projects are distinguished by their unusual approach to the urban scale of the project and, in relation to the principal requirement of the competition programme, the densification of the respective districts. The third case study, the project awarded first prize in the Friedhofstrasse competition, was included in this essay because of the particularity of the operation: a different developer than the one who organised the competition in the first place executed the complex. The last four projects were mainly interesting for the research question examined here, because of their architectural quality that could be supposed to have been generated by the competition procedures, which made them possible.

Elaborating projects from first to second competition rounds

The Grünwald and the Rautistrasse projects, both originating from two-stage competition procedures organized in 2005, are two relatively large-scale interventions (80-100 apartments) planned in the municipality of Zurich. Their execution is being delayed by objections coming from the neighbours and from the City's Urban Department, due principally to the chosen urban forms¹⁶. The Grünwald competition, held in the Rütihof district of Höngg, was won by the architect Urs Primas with a large urban block, covering the entire perimeter of the available terrain. The main idea was to create an interior court of a semi-public character that could host all housing types – corresponding to three different non-profit investors – into a uniform ensemble, whilst at the same time transforming the neighbourhood's life by taking up the role of a central plaza. During the first stage, the jury found that the design of the exterior space, with a central green area, a peripheral path and private gardens for the

15 Quincerot & Nicolas, op. cit., p. 14: «*À quels calculs se livrent-ils [les concurrents] pour anticiper le jugement, et augmenter leurs chances de succès ? [...] Qui, des techniciens, des hommes politiques, des architectes, emporte la décision ?*»

16 Interview with Jeremy Hoskyn, op. cit.

ground floor apartments, was impoverishing the project's concept: «Inside the courtyard, a central park overlaps with a peripheral path and the gardens assigned individually to the apartments. The planned leisure uses for bikes and sleds on one hand, and the privatization in the ground floor on the other, certainly spoil, and not insignificantly, this composed, collective spatiality.»¹⁷

Moreover, the housing types around the interior patios in the south-eastern corner of the polygonal block have been criticised: «The patio houses at the south-eastern and western corner are again placed according to the requirements for noise emissions, but they are still unclear in their demanding spreading as to noise, views and aeration.»¹⁸ During the final competition phase, the project wins the jury's recommendation for execution, but this time private gardens and patio typology are left out of the final plans. Although one cannot be sure if the same modifications would have been made if the jury had not made these specific points, the final proposal seems indeed more coherent with the project's central idea, than the first stage site plan. Applied alterations serve as a reinforcement of the principal idea while the six alleys leading to the central plaza through the hexagon's angles are particularly emphasized, thanks also to some additional changes to the layout.

17 Walpen Lukas, Tschirren Ursula, Stoffner Doris, *Wohnüberbauung Grünwald. Zürich-Höngg. Studienauftrag im selektiven Verfahren. Bericht des Beurteilungsgremiums*, Hochbaudepartement der Stadt Zürich, Zürich, 2005, p. 58: «Im Hofinnern überlagern sich ein mittiger Park mit einem Rundweg und individuell den Wohnungen zugeordnete Gärten. Die vorgesehenen Freizeit nutzungen bis zum Biken und Schlitteln einerseits und die Privatisierung im Erdgeschoss andererseits strapazieren allerdings diese gefasste, kollektive Räumlichkeit nicht unerheblich.» (author's translation)

18 Ibidem: «Die Lichthofwohnungen an der Südost- und Westecke stellen sich nochmals den Anforderungen der Lärmimmission, sie sind aber in ihren anspruchsvollen Übergriffen bezüglich Lärm, Einsicht und Belüftung noch unklar.»

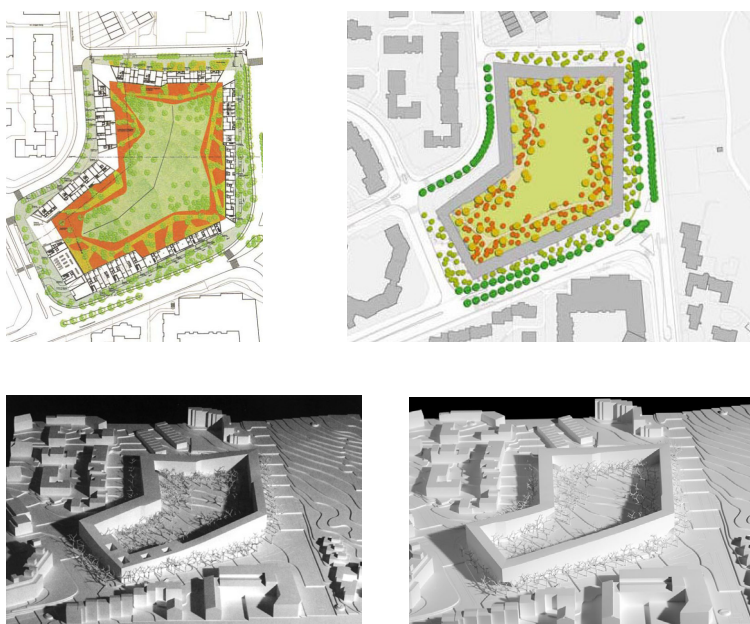


Figure 2. Urs Primas – Grünwald competition, site plan and model from the first and the second competition stage (source: Urs Primas)

On the other hand, in the Rautistrasse competition, the architects UN-DEND / SAND opted for seven relatively high urban blocks, to deal with the increased occupancy of the terrain demanded by the competition programme. They won first prize during the first competition round along with a recommendation to further develop their proposal in the second round, where the jury recommended the project for execution. On the whole, the jury spoke very enthusiastically of the architects' urban and typological choices: «*Although the apartments, always with a triple orientation, are classically arranged with corridors and halls, SUR [motto of the project] proposes an innovative spatial structure and thus gains spacious living room.*»¹⁹ A special mention was made to the loggias placed in the building's angle: «*The, loggia with the chamfered glass angle, placed on the corner, potentially to be used during the winter as glazed garden, endows every flat with a panoramic view. Thus, the spa-*

19 Müller Ursula, Stoffner Doris, *Wohnsiedlung Rautistrasse, Zürich-Altstetten. Projektwettbewerb im offenen Verfahren. Bericht des Preisgerichts, September 2005, Amt für Hochbauten, Stadt Zürich, Zurich, 2005, p. 44: »Obwohl die immer dreiseitig orientieren Wohnungen mit Korridoren oder Dielen klassisch einteilbar wären, schlägt SUR ein innovatives Raumgefüge vor und gewinnt damit großzügigen Wohnraum.«*



Figure 3. UN-DEND / SAND – Rautistrasse competition, site plan and perspective, unit's typology from the first and the second competition stage (source: UN-DEND architects, unit layouts re-designed by the author)

tial structure is once again linked up to the context and no flat resembles another, [...]»²⁰

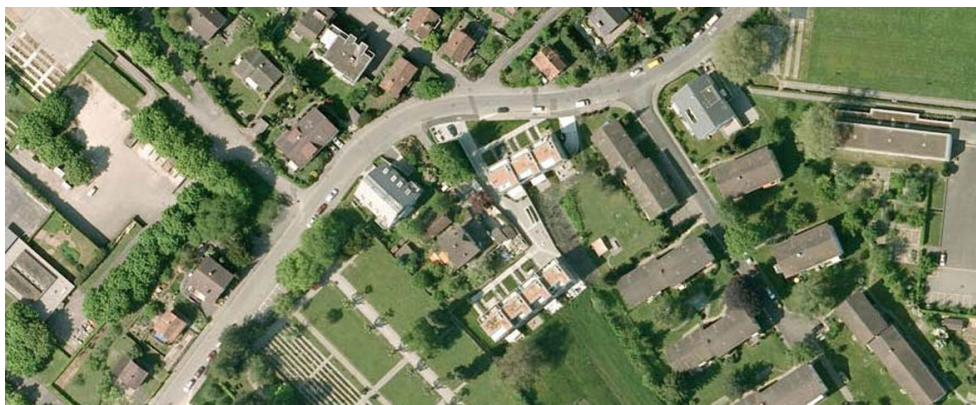
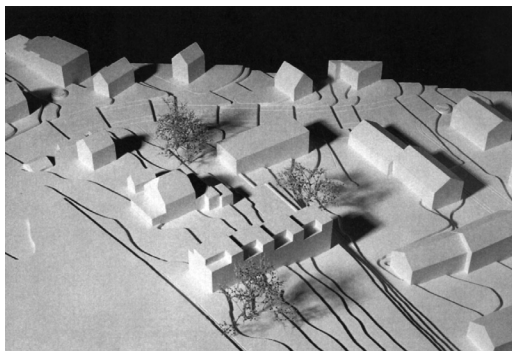
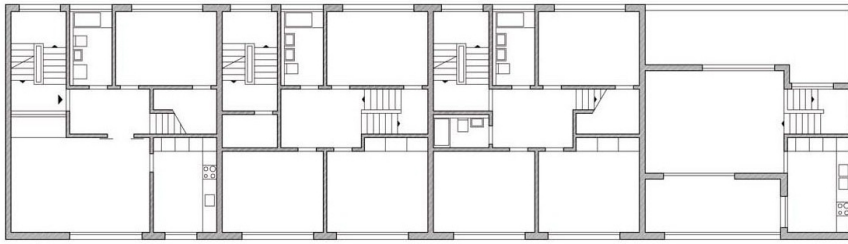
Despite positive remarks, authors radically changed the apartment's typology from first to second stage; instead of being diagonally articulated next to the block's central, vertical circulation core as in the first stage plans, the kitchen/dining corner and living room, are now merged into a uniform living sequence. The service core, incorporating a bathroom and a WC, moves to the centre of the plan, organizing, in an almost circular way, the apartment's distributive pattern, while the living space occupies the whole block's width in both of the building's extremities, and in the pair of units constituting the project's typical floor. Flexibility seems to be a principal concern for the architects and their second stage plan reflects this spatial quality a lot better. The jury comments on the changes, through the second stage assessment: *«The authors decide to change radically, in the continuation of the work, the apartment's typology. [...] The open living/cooking / dining zone is further developed. Through transversal and diagonal views, despite limited available surfaces in the collective housing, a generous spatial impression is created.»²¹*

In the Grünwald example, the jury's remarks seem to help strengthen the project's central idea, suggesting a more radical treatment. The discourse developed in the assessment seems to have played, in this instance, a determining role to the project's development. This could be an anticipated remark, since the commission was not yet decided in the first round, and the contestants continuing to the second round absolutely needed to secure the jury's good opinion. But it would risk being a rather forced remark, if all factors were not taken into consideration. Thus, it is important to point out that Primas' proposal, as the one featuring such a large urban form, may be the most daring of all participating projects, relating the idea of the district's central plaza to urban morphologies of the between the wars period. It is therefore architecturally desirable to promote its integrity, and the jury's remark may be understood in the spirit of liberating the architectural conception from certain requirements of the program; the contestant's compliance is justified. In the second case study, the architects seem willing to jeopardize the commission for the sake of the evolution of the project. There is no guarantee that the jury will remain favourable to an altered apartment typology, but the architects seem to trust the jury's judgement.

20 Ibidem: *«Die übereck angeordnete Loggia mit der abgeschrägten Glasecke, im Winter als Glasgarten benutzbar, gibt jeder Wohnung einen Panoramablick. So vernetzt sich das Raumgefüge immer wieder neu mit dem Kontext und keine Wohnung gleicht der anderen, [...]»*

21 Ibid., p. 30: *«Die Verfassenden entschließen sich in der Überarbeitung, die Typologie der Wohnungen radikal zu ändern. [...] Weiterentwickelt wird der offene Wohn-, Koch- und Essbereich. Durch Durch- und Diagonalblicke entsteht trotz im gemeinnützigen Wohnungsbau begrenzt zur Verfügung stehender Flächen ein sehr großzügiger Raumeindruck.»*

Modifications in the execution of projects



In the built projects examined in the rest of this essay, certain alterations seem indeed to have been indicated by the jury's assessment, such as in the following example. The Friedhofstrasse competition, for a small housing complex in the Altstetten district of Zurich, is one of the few, in the municipality's 1998-2008 series of tendering procedures, not considered entirely successful. Organized by AHB in 2000, for a piece of municipal land that was to be leased initially to the St. Jakob Construction Cooperative, as part of the program «10'000 apartments in 10 years» (promoting cooperative construction), the competition led to construction only in 2006, this time with a different developer (Swissbuilding Concept AG). This was a relatively «early» procedure, in the examined time lapse, where the majority (70%) of the demanded units (a total of fourteen) were quite large, corresponding to 4.5-room flats. It was held by invitation to six architectural bureaus and won by the architect Zita

Figure 4. Zita Cotti – Friedhofstrasse competition, typical floor plans (re-designed by the author), model of the competition and aerial view of the built project (source: Gerber et al., *Wohnüberbauung Friedhofstrasse, Zürich-Altstetten, Zürich, 2000*; <<http://maps.google.ch/>>)

Cotti, who proposed two different building types for the front and the rear part of the plot, aiming to answer in accordance with the respective urban contexts.

The architect placed a three-storey apartment house, comprising six units, near the main street along the northern side of the terrain, while four row houses, each containing two superposed duplexes, were arranged in proximity of the natural landscape extending towards the back side of the plot, and were well adapted to the terrain's slight slope from southwest to northeast. We read in the report of the jury: «*The shorter slab, located on Friedhofstrasse, does not reach, from the point of view of fitting to the topography, the precision of building B* [the one comprising duplex apartments].»²² And further on: «*Indeed, the quality of House A does not quite match that of House B.*»²³ The row houses in fact seemed to have been studied better than the apartments of the front building that did not introduce any exceptional typological features. Depending on the level, each duplex was endowed with an outdoor sitting space: either a private garden in the ground floor or a terrace in the attic. The number of units demanded originally in the competition program was respected in the built complex, but all apartments were executed as duplexes, with the original front building being replaced by a second linear construction (three row houses), similar to the rear one.

Another procedure, organized in the same year with the Friedhofstrasse housing competition, concerned the construction of 25 apartments in the Affoltern region, and was won by the architect Ueli Zbinden. The construction of the Schürliweg housing estate was completed in 2009. The proposed layout was of a highly innovative character²⁴, featuring an elongated kitchen counter in a radical central position along the interior courtyard. In this case, the modifications in the execution were considerable. The building's figure was changed in its southern extremity, imitating the form of the northern edge (as presented in the competition plan) and thus revealing in the façades on both sides, the existence of the interior courtyards in the middle. This choice altered the concept of the building's integration in the neighbourhood, as presented in the competition. Given that the surrounding tissue of the existing, linear constructions changed direction from the northern to the southern part of the complex, the difference in Schürliweg's form in respect to these opposite sides, seemed to confirm its introverted character: it closed up on an open urban space and opened up on an already existing barrier. According to a different line of thinking, this arrangement better expressed the repetitive conceptual logic of the project, making it appear as a fragment of a compact construction with the potential of extending, in theory, indefinitely further.

Another significant mutation was the change of position between night and day zones in the layout, evidently with reference to the jury's com-

22 Gerber Robert, Stoffner Doris, Wohnüberbauung Friedhofstrasse, Zürich-Altstetten. Projektwettbewerb auf Einladung. Bericht des Preigerichtes, Hochbaudepartement der Stadt Zürich, Amt für Hochbauten, Zurich, 2000, p. 34: «Die kürzere Zeile, an der Friedhofstrasse gelegen, erreicht bezüglich Einfügen in die Topografie nicht die Präzision des Gebäudes B.»

23 Ibidem, p. 35: «Allerdings entspricht die Qualität des Hauses A nicht ganz derjenigen des Hauses B.»

24 For an explanation of the plan's radically innovative character see also Bassand Nicolas, *Densité et logement collectif: innovations architecturales et urbaines dans la Suisse contemporaine*, doctoral thesis no. 4276 (2009), EPFL, Lausanne, 2009, p. 146: «*It should be considered, in this regard, that the space in question [that corresponds to a kitchen counter 12m long comprising the entrance wardrobe] is not a «retro-innovation» but a radical innovation, because real antecedents of this elongated kitchen are not known in the field of collective housing, a fact that increases of course, the notion of an inherent risk in this type of innovation.*» («*Il faut à ce propos considérer que l'espace en question n'est pas une rétro-innovation mais une innovation radicale, car on ne connaît pas de véritables antécédents à cette cuisine de forme allongée dans le logement collectif, ce qui augmente bien entendu la notion de risque inhérente à ce type d'innovation.*»). The same author notes a bit further: «*It seems that the plans executed to this moment have attenuated this innovative character.*» («*Il semble que les plans réalisés à l'heure de la rédaction ont atténué ce caractère innovant.*»)

ment: «Although generously dimensioned, the potential of the interior patios has not been exhausted, neither as regards a possible arrangement as a green space, nor in the relation between interior and exterior space. Thus, the orientation of the living room's balcony towards the southeast, instead of towards the direction of the evening sun, is incomprehensible.»²⁵ Still, maybe the most important alteration of the competition project's layout was the new arrangement of the kitchen space. Regarding this part of the plan, the jury noted: «[...] Otherwise the rooms are spacious, with the exception of the kitchen that, as working space and circulation zone, is designed as too narrow.»²⁶



25 Hauser Michael, Stauffner Doris, *Wohnüberbauung Schürliweg, Zürich-Affoltern. Projektwettbewerb auf Einladung. Bericht des Preisgerichtes*, Hochbaudepartement der Stadt Zürich, Amt für Hochbauten, Zurich, 2000, p. 26: «Obwohl grosszügig dimensioniert, wird das Potential des innen liegenden Patios weder in Bezug auf eine mögliche Grünraumgestaltung noch im Verhältnis zwischen Innen- und Aussenraum ausgeschöpft. So bleibt die Orientierung des Wohnzimmerbalkons nach Südosten statt in Richtung Abendsonne unverständlich.»

26 Ibidem: «[...] Ansonsten sind die Räume großzügig ausgelegt, mit Ausnahme der Küche, die als Arbeitsplatz und Durchgangsbereich zu eng geplant ist.»

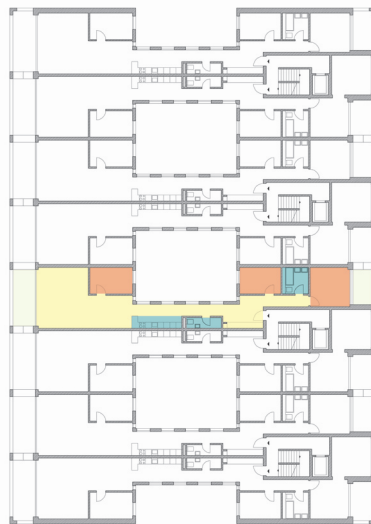
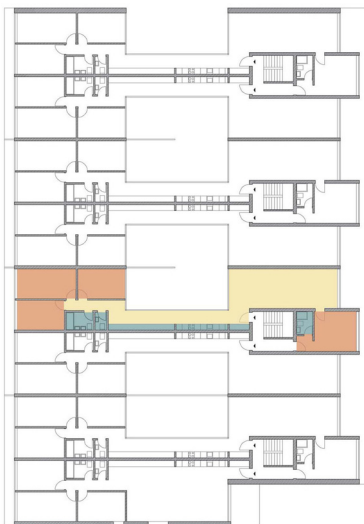


Figure 5: Ueli Zbinden – Schürliweg competition, competition's site plan, typical floor plan of the competition and of the built project (floor plans re-designed by the author) (source: Hauser et al., *Wohnüberbauung Schürliweg, Zürich-Affoltern*, Zurich, 2000)

In the executed plan, the kitchen/wardrobe sequence, originally a 2m wide and 14m long strip, comprising the counter, cupboards and a circulation space linking front and rear part of the flat, was broken up by a WC in the middle that takes up half of the available width, and separates the entrance from the living space to the west. The kitchen counter was cut back. In this case, it was precisely the most innovative device of the plan that got altered in the execution, although not completely abolished. This modification could testify to the investor's reluctance to go all the way with the implicated risk of the operation, and perhaps also to a disagreement, in the first place, among jury members.

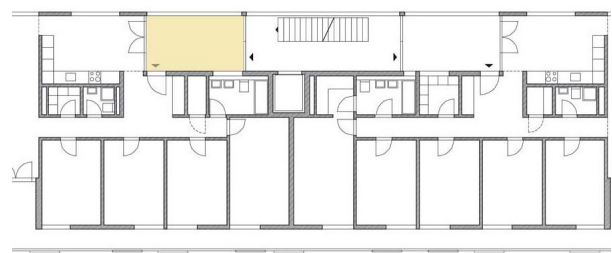
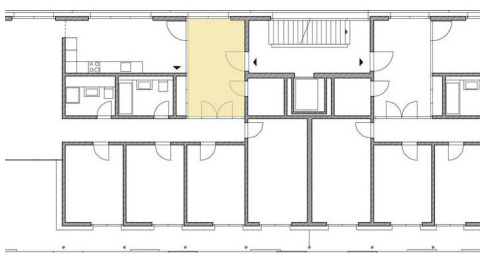


Figure 6. Gigon & Guyer – Brunnenhof competition, site plan and exterior view of the built project, typical floor plan from the competition and the execution
(source: Gigon & Guyer, floor plans re-designed by the author; Kurz Daniel, *Wohnsiedlung Brunnenhof: Zürich-Unterstrass: Ersatzneu*, Dezember 2007, Zurich, 2008)

A similar case, where the principal innovation device of the plan has been modified in the execution, is the example of the competition for the Brunnenhof housing estate (Zurich, 2003). Architects Gigon & Guyer, who won first prize, had designed a complex composed of two linear constructions: two medium-width «slabs» that followed the plot's perimeter in a subtle way. The main problem of this piece of land that extended around an existing park was the noise coming from the adjacent Hofwiesen Street, an urban artery linking the busy Buchegg plaza with northern neighbourhoods of Zurich. The completely diversified ambiance of Brunnenhof Street – the one to the north, of a calmer character more suitable to the residential area – added a grade of difficulty to the architectural problem. The solution proposed by the architects, comprising two different apartment types, each corresponding to the particularities of respective side. Towards Hofwiesenstrasse, a filter zone was made up of the northern part of the living room of this *appartement traversant* (meaning a living room with double-sided view), the *Wohnküche* (large enough to include a dining table for the family), and a kind of loggia forming an additional transition space between the communal staircase and its landing, and the sphere of the private unit. That way all rooms belonging to the apartment's night zone were successfully integrated into the eastern and quieter part of the slab. Towards the calmer Brunnenhofstrasse, the authors changed the placement of the kitchen, and arranged more private rooms on both sides of the building.

In the executed plan, the loggia of the Hofwiesenstrasse flat type was merged with the space of the apartment's main entrance. Arranged this time transversally in the plan, it preserves its autonomous character; separated by light, transparent partitions from the kitchen and the corridor that crosses the night zone. According to their report, the jury of the competition seemed to appreciate the loggia device, without taking notice of a slight confusion created by the alternative itineraries that were proposed in relation to the entrance zone: «*In the Hofwiesenstrasse apartment type, it is arranged for all sleeping rooms and the living room to face the park, and this, combined with an attractive entrance sequence, with open loggia and sufficiently large living kitchen, on the evening side.*»²⁷ Thus, the modification would probably have been suggested by the developer during the project's execution phase. It should nevertheless be pointed out that, although more «conventiona» – in the end resembling a relatively common antechamber rather than a transition space with an «ambiguous» quality of a semi-collective touch – the apartment's entrance space now seems functional in a clearer way.

In the last two case studies, simplification of the original competition project layout also seems to be the key issue. In the Chriesimatt (Baar, 2003) and the Volta Mitte (Basel, 2005) competitions, the already built winning projects both proposed certain types of architectural innovations; on their completion, their authors talked of typological simplifications

27 «Wohnsiedlung Brunnenhof, Zürich» in *hochparterre.wettbewerbe* n. 2, 2004, p. 23: «Beim Typus der Wohnungen an der Hofwiesenstrasse gelingt es, alle Schlafräume und das Wohnzimmer auf den Park zu orientieren und dies zudem mit einer sehr attraktiven Eingangssequenz mit offener Loggia und genügend großer Wohnküche auf der Abendseite zu kombinieren.» (translation by AK)

in the final layouts, directly associated to budget and cost reductions, but still in accordance with the general conceptual logic of the projects and their main characteristics²⁸. Such alterations may be understood, in relation to the quality of the built result, as a maturing of the project's main idea, a kind of purification treatment that sooner or later has to occur in its life, and may even present positive effects as to the original concept, stripping it from secondary devices and reinforcing its principal assets.

For the Chriesimatt project, satisfaction seems to be the general feeling among architects and land owners. The Schmid family, architect Marco Graber explains, was one with concrete views concerning their desired buildings. Without completely putting aside the economic aspect, they were interested primarily in the architectural approach of the built complex and the living quality this approach offered to the future users (units destined to rental tenures). The clients themselves speak, after the completion of the western slab, of a certain «compromising» on their part, with respect to the financial profit of the operation, and for the benefit of the built result and of «good» architecture: *«Astonishingly this special building is only little more expensive than a conventional one. [...] Moderate rents are possible, because we count the land value not only in investment terms, and because we aim at a moderate profit. [...] Whether «good» architecture would pay off, was in question. The success proved us right. [...] The tenants are very happy with these special apartments - so are we. That is why we will change nothing, for the second phase, on the concept and execution.»*²⁹

28 Interview with Marco Graber, from Graber & Pulver Architekten, in the firm's Zurich office, 9 April 2010; discussion with Emanuel Christ, from Christ & Gantenbein Architekten, on the occasion of the project's official presentation to the press, Basel, 20 March 2010.

29 Marti Rahel, «Von Z bis Z» in *hochparterre* n. 9, 2009, p. 31: *«Erstaunlicherweise ist dieser spezielle Bau nur wenig teurer als einer konventioneller. [...] Die moderater Mieten sind möglich, weil wir den Wert des Grundstücks nicht voll in die Investition einrechneten und weil wir eine moderate Rendite anstreben. [...] Ob sich die «gute» Architektur aber auszahlen würde, war offen. Der Erfolg gab uns dann recht. [...] Die Mieter haben große Freude an den besonderen Wohnungen – so wie wir. Für die zweite Etappe werden wir darum nichts am Konzept und an der Ausführung ändern.»*



The competition project's layout mainly expressed the architects' will for creating an individualized variety in matters of apartment typology. This main concept seems to have been respected in the execution. Among the ninety-nine apartments already built, forty-one different plans were introduced. With the proposed apartment types now generally fixed, it can be confirmed that certain flat types, as presented in the competition, are missing from the built project. Smaller apartments also had to be added, while morphological features which were «difficult» with regard to the execution – the slabs' converging outline and the slight level differences «distinguishing» zones in the uniform central spaces of the flats – were eliminated. Nevertheless, the main idea of a double-sided view living room sequence was maintained and enriched, perhaps because of the elimination of the single apartment type in the competition project's layout, that did not correspond to this clear organizational logic; namely, some 4.5-room flats in the top floor, with «Sonderzimmern»/interior patios bringing light into the kitchen and the middle space of the unit. Elongated kitchens originally placed in the centre of the apartments were normally replaced by a standard type of «living» kitchen, situated

Figure 7. Graber Pulver – Chriesimatt competition, site plan from the competition and the execution (source: Graber & Pulver; *hochparterre* n. 9, 2009)

at one of the extreme points of the interior circulation path: this was also an idea existing in the competition project layouts, but which seemed less important at that moment.

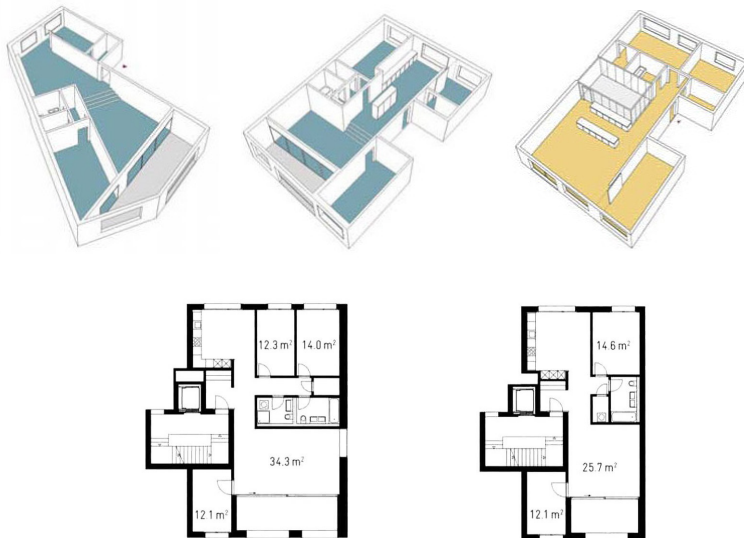


Figure 8. Graber Pulver – Chriesimatt competition, competition typology and execution layouts of apartments (source: Graber & Pulver; *hochparterre* n. 9, 2009)

Another modification of the competition plans was that the execution of the polygonal block, completing the composition to the north, next to the plot's main access, was cancelled, as commercial uses planned in its ground floor were no longer considered necessary. Thus, the western slab comprises, in the execution plans, five different fragments, and the architects adapted the site plan and apartment types in such a way that the two «freer» fragments to the north would be better integrated to their context: house access for these two fragments is located on their eastern side, while for the rest of the complex, where emphasis is given to the central open space, building entrances are located to «external» sides. In addition,, loggias were eventually proposed on both sides of the buildings also to accentuate «changes of direction» that characterize the overall adopted form. Finally some private gardens, originally attached to the side of the western slab facing neighbouring buildings, were integrated in the general layout of this middle green space, probably with reference to a remark from the jury: *«It is clear that a good balance between public and private green space arrangements, as well as a careful development of the elongated park as a green centre, is crucial for the project's quality. Thus, for the double aspect of the park to be able to function, through the hedges of the private gardens, as an independent green space, the left slab should be moved more to the west.»*³⁰

The general impression formed by the viewer, from the direct juxtaposition of competition and execution plans, is that of a well thought-out project where no detail was left to chance. The architects seem satisfied

30 Marti Rahel, op. cit., 2004, p. 14: *«Es wird deutlich, dass die ausgewogene Balance zwischen öffentlicher und privater Grünraumzuordnung, sowie die sorgfältige Ausbildung des länglichen Parks als das grüne Zentrum ausschlaggebend für die Qualität des Projekts sind. Damit der Parkbeidseitig durch die Hecken der Privatgärten zu einem eigenständigen Grünraum geformt werden kann, müsste die linke Zeile noch mehr nach Westen gerückt werden.»*

with the change concerning the polygonal block and the prolongation of the western part of the complex, as this seems to improve the way the building is perceived from the main street to the north. The addition of loggias to both building sides reinforced the original «loggias in-the-angle» design pattern proposed in the competition, and seems to have established an additional link between the different fragments of the linear construction. The colour concept of the original project, based on the contrast between the exterior skin of the building, painted in a uniform neutral tone, and the vivid colours employed for the interior spaces of the loggias, aiming to strengthen the individualised treatment of the units, was also respected in the built project, although the tone of the exterior walls has, in fact, changed. In general, alterations seem mostly to be the outcome of a well-studied design, rather than that of restrictions and negatively perceived simplifications that were imposed by the client.

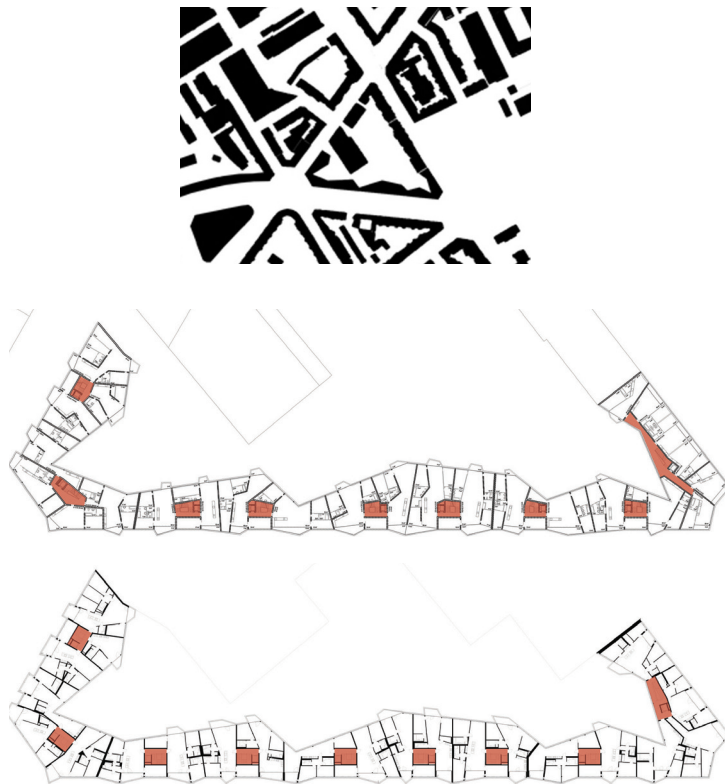


Figure 9. Christ & Gantenbein – Volta Mitte competition, site plan, typical floor plan of the competition and of the built project (highlighted by the author) (source: Christ & Gantenbein; Laedrach et al., *Neubauung VoltaMitte*, Basel, 2005)

Another project resulting from a competition was completed in 2010. The Volta Mitte complex was designed by architects Christ & Gantenbein, with the support of Marazzi General Enterprise, during a joint architect/investor competition organized by the municipality of Basel in 2005. The project was distinguished by its unique concept of an undulating outline, creating better conditions for orientation for the units and allowing significantly varied views to the exterior. Construction has lasted slightly more than a year and a half, and the result seems to be leading to the same conclusions as with the Chriesimatt estate.

First of all, despite the jury's doubts on the strongly diversified unit types and the public's receptiveness in this regard (all, originally planned, ninety-six flats were different from one another), the built project still presents distinct flat types in its totality. Secondly, the «rationalisation» of the layout, suggested by the jury³¹, seems to have been realized in the design of a more «orthogonal», standard staircase used for the entire typical floor plan, except for the part corresponding to the eastern aisle. Thus the six staircases of the southern aisle are aligned with the building's façades, and the only difference between them concerns the lift's positioning to the east or west side of the stairs. In the typical competition floor plan, the convergent lines of the northern parts of the staircases seemed to provoke a relative congestion of small spaces, that were not always convincing as regards their usage value. Besides, a large number of 2.5-room flats, often unilaterally oriented (mostly in the eastern aisle), seemed imposed by the staircases' form. In the typical floor plan, the number of flats is slightly smaller (22 instead of 25), but in the end the total number of housing units is not considerably reduced (92 instead of 96).

31 See Laedrach Ueli, Waltert Thomas, *Neubauung VoltaMitte, Projekt- und Investorenwettbewerb, Bericht des Preisgerichtes*, ProVolta, Basel, 2005, p. 16: «The partly experimental character of the houses should be disciplined; the implicated risk can be decreased by a measured «preservation» of the concept [...]».

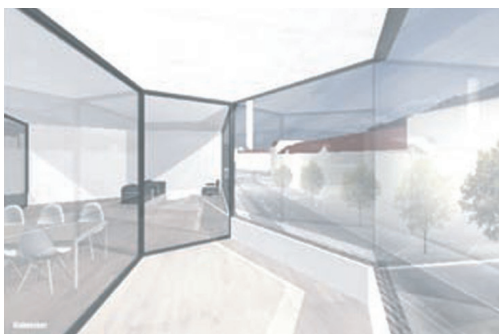


Figure 10. Christ & Gantenbein – Volta Mitte competition, perspective images from the competition and photos of the built project (source: Christ & Gantenbein; Laedrach et al., *Neubauung VoltaMitte*, Basel, 2005)

The rationalisation of the plan equally concerned the building's contour, which becomes in a sense calmer, with fewer changes in the oblique directions that seemed often quite random in the competition project layout. This is true especially with respect to the southern street side of the building, where the positions of the balconies seemed also somewhat fortuitous. The result is a «purified» design, where disagreeable situations for adjacent units – such as shared balconies – are avoided. In any case, the balconies' size appears also to be adapted, in the built project, to a fixed minimum necessary for comfortable use. One last issue though, concerning the building's exterior aspect, seemed thornier for the architects: they confirmed changing the red brick originally envisaged for the façades, to a cheaper and darker grey, but were less satisfied with this particular arrangement. Still, for the outsider the alteration does not necessarily seem negative in relation to the competition project, the brick colour being in reality more coherent with a neighbouring construction. In the end, differences between competition and execution layouts appear, on the whole, to be the result of carefully studied adjustments of an evolving proposal, rather than modifications imposed by serious compromise on the financial level.

Summing up

The limited number of examined case studies here, as well as the fact that a competition procedure (and even more a construction operation), depends on a long list of interacting factors, cannot justify very generalised conclusions for the housing competitions system in the Swiss construction market. However, given the representative but also the relatively diversified character of the procedures I have dealt with, significant points offering an idea of the broader framework of housing competitions, may be gathered by crosschecking the analysed examples.

First of all, regarding the modifications applied from first to second competition rounds or from competition to execution, in most cases these remained relatively moderate, and in five instances, with the exception of the Schürliweg and Chriesimatt estates, resulted in a clear improvement of the proposed design. The Schürliweg project is excluded because, although the rearrangement of the rooms in the plan may be considered a positive change, the design of the kitchen and the main circulation axis of the apartment may be seriously questioned in their final version. The Chriesimatt project is also considered an exception because the modifications cannot, in my opinion, be classified as genuinely positive or negative in relation to the original proposal, but merely as necessary. The Chriesimatt and the Rautistrasse projects present the most important changes, the former with respect to both the urban form and the apartment typology, while the latter mainly with regard to the proposed flat type. In this last case study, the architects' decision to radically alter the layout was particularly daring.

RECAPITULATING							
Name of competition	Type of competition	Year	Year of execution	Type of innovation	Type of modification	Jury suggestion	Preservation of innovative character
Grünwald (Zurich-Höngg)	Parallel study commissions Pre-selection	2005		Urban	Programmatic simplification, Rationalisation of the design	Yes	Reinforced
Rautstrasse (Zurich-Altstetten)	Projects competition Open	2005			Elaboration of the proposed typology	No	
Friedhofstrasse (Zurich-Altstetten)	Projects competition By invitation	2000	2006-07		Programmatic + formal simplification	Yes	
Schürlweg (Zurich-Affoltern)	Projects competition By invitation	2000	2009	Functional	Formal + typological simplification	Partly	Attenuated
Brunnenhof (Zurich-Unterstrass)	Projects competition Pre-selection	2003	2004-07	Functional	Rationalisation of the proposed typology	No	Attenuated
Chriesimatt (Zug - Baar)	Parallel study commissions By invitation	2003	2009	Programmatic	Formal + typological simplification	No	Preserved
Volta Mitte (Basel City - St. Johann)	Projects and Investments competition	2005	2010	Formal	Rationalisation of the design, programmatic simplification	Yes	Preserved

Another important point is that most of these projects have introduced innovative design approaches that were either preserved or even reinforced, in their final versions: for the Grünwald, its urban concept of a continuous large courtyard; for Chriesimatt, its typological variety and interaction with the context; for VoltaMitte, its sophisticated urban proposal and typological richness. In the Schürlweg project, the innovative parameter of the typical apartment was seriously attenuated, while in the case of Brunnenhof the loggia device in the entrance becomes less prominent, though it works in a better way with respect to the overall layout of the flat.

Concerning the role of the jury, in half of the case studies, suggestions of the jury would seem to have been connected to the proposed changes; it would be interesting to know for the Brunnenhof case, where no more data were available, if the change in the entrance loggia was imposed during the execution process by the client. The developer is sure to have played a significant role in some of the modifications in the execution of the Chriesimatt and VoltaMitte projects, as explained by the architects. In general, we would say that all case studies point to a live competitions' system, promoting research and concrete results. Interaction between various actors is verified, as the variety of proposed forms and housing types is confirmed in its framework by a plurality of architectural voices. What seems prevalent is the quality of the architectural result; the jury's suggestions are taken into consideration even after the completion of their last "official" task. Thus, the dialogue generated by the competition indeed seems to extend into the execution process. Judging from the outcome, investors seem to opt for architectural quality and in a relative way respect the proposals' design approaches, as principal conceptual

Figure 11. Chart resuming the modifications of the analysed projects and data from the respective competition procedures

lines generally survive the execution phase, even if the intensiveness of a certain characteristic is sometimes attenuated. However, a built competition project may be judged with regard to its consistent evolution on the whole, and valued for its innovative approach, but remains, above all, an accomplished architectural work that has to be evaluated for its adequacy in relation to its users. It is sometimes possible that a certain architectural device seems particularly stimulating, in the competition phase, for the originality of the introduced idea. But as the professionals themselves very well know, the solution may prove deprived of meaning, or even impossible to build, when specific technical requirements, treated in later stages of a project's study, must be taken into consideration.

Acknowledgements

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