



TWISTING STAIRS

GRABER PULVER ARCHITECTS

APARTMENT BUILDING

OERLIKON / SWITZERLAND

**THE RONDO APARTMENT BUILDING,
DESIGNED BY GRABER PULVER ARCHITECTS,
IS AN EXERCISE IN GEOMETRIC MODELLING.**

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The cubistic atrium of Rondo, an apartment building designed by Swiss firm Graber Pulver Architects, evokes associations of Bauhaus structures and the abstract architecture of Suprematism. A straight-run staircase connects the ground and first floors, whereas a kind of meandering bridge path of steps lends access to the upper storeys. A tough nut to crack for the fire brigade, but all doubt was dispelled when the architects proved that occupants have a shorter distance to travel when exiting the building via the serpentine staircase than they would using a conventional double-run staircase.

An abundance of curves on the exterior adds another dimension to Rondo's character. The complex is located in Oerlikon, a quiet suburb of Zurich previously lacking luxurious apartment buildings of this kind. The pentagonal floor plan takes maximum advantage of the site; its main interior spaces are orientated towards the perimeter. To compensate for what the architects call a 'nonexistent attractive environment', they included a spacious, daylight-filled void that accommodates the stairs and the entrances to apartments. More than just a circulation area, this 'soft zone' is one of the few parts of the building that was not determined by standard building codes or by ideas generated by real-estate developers and owners. The soft look continues on the exterior, where a supple skin surrounds the structure's basic angular form, and undulating rows of balustrades in chromium-nickel steel line circumferential terraces. A textile-like curtain made from the same material finishes the façade, forming an anti-glare shield on the outside of the building.

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