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Archives and Housing
Herzog & de Meuron
Expected completion 2015



'A massive base and a concrete grid together form an entity that resembles a table lamp'

Text Katharina Marchal

Looking south from Freilagerplatz in Basel's Dreispitz-Areal, you catch sight of a striking bipartite building. A tapering volume enveloped in a concrete grid rises from a massive base. Together they form an entity that resembles a table lamp. It's fairly obvious that apartments fill the lampshade, but what about the base? What's inside the building's 40-m-high bunker-like 'plinth'?

Herzog & de Meuron initiated and developed the Helsinki Dreispitz project, whose name refers to its location on Helsinki Strasse. The formidable base of the building holds a complete compilation of Herzog & de Meuron's archives, as well as a collection of art that the architects say, in describing the project, they 'acquired largely from artists with whom we have worked for many years'. An example is Swiss artist Rémy Zaugg (1943-2005), who greatly influenced their work and

who was part of their first collaborative project. Other artists whose work appears in their collection and in their projects are Rosemarie Trockel, Thomas Ruff, Michael Craig-Martin, Andreas Gursky and Ai Weiwei.

The project description continues: 'The archives – plans, documents, drawings, sketches, samples of building materials, models and model fragments in different sizes and materials – are currently stored in several different places.' By gathering everything together in one spot, the architects greatly facilitate its use, administration and evaluation, including appearances in publications and exhibitions. Then, too, Helsinki Dreispitz fulfils the latest requirements in terms of proper preservation and logistics. The architects are also thinking about opening the archives for research and study. Close to Helsinki Dreispitz is another large building by

Herzog & de Meuron that is used for storing archives: the Schaulager, commissioned by the Laurenz Foundation and open to researchers and students upon request, also contains an impressive collection of contemporary art.

Wholly in the spirit of a redevelopment scheme that is transforming the formerly industrial Dreispitz-Areal into a mixed-use urban district, the superstructure resting on Helsinki Dreispitz's enormous base consists of seven floors with a total of 41 rental apartments. The quality of furnishings and finishes inside these dwellings – floor areas vary from 62 to 194 m² and the number of rooms from 2.5 to 4.5 – is high, as are the rental rates. Oak window frames and slender roll-down shutters, also in wood, give these industrially designed new-build homes a domestic character. Fair-faced concrete ceilings and bare concrete floors

create the feel of a loft – and make a contrast to the standard Swiss rental apartment, which comes with wooden floors.

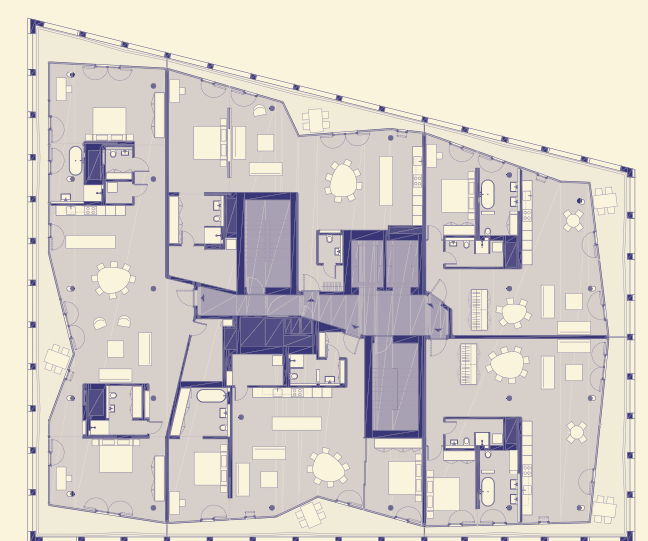
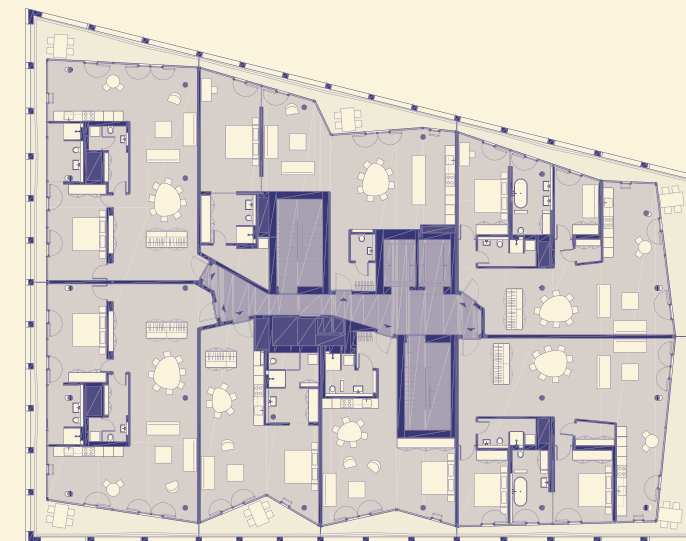
Upon completion, this will be the first genuine apartment building in the Dreispitz-Areal. Balconies provide breathtaking views in all directions, beyond the borders of both canton and country. The building forms a beacon for this rapidly changing part of town, which crosses borders of its own. Or, as we can read in Herzog & de Meuron's *The Complete Works, Volume 4*: 'Dreispitz is the first urban neighborhood in which a borderline between two cantons has become invisible; the borderline between Basel-Stadt and Basel-Land. A trifling achievement, one might argue, but in view of Switzerland's notoriously parochial mindset, its disappearance is a milestone in the country's history.' ←

herzogdemeuron.com

+5 to +7



+8 to +11



← Helsinki Dreispitz is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2015, but most of its rental apartments are already occupied. Wooden roll-down shutters provide privacy.

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Renovated Warehouse BIG Expected completion 2016



↑ BIG is adding three floors to the four-storey Transitlager Building.

Text Katharina Marchal

Right next to Helsinki Dreispitz by Herzog & de Meuron – the first apartment building in the Dreispitz-Areal – a second and even larger residential complex is currently under construction. Unlike the new-build tower designed by the architects from Basel, the one next door is a renovation project: the conversion of the Transitlager, a huge warehouse with a gross floor area of 22,000 m². Built in the 1960s as part of Basel's industrial zone, the Transitlager functioned as a warehouse for luxury automobiles, which arrived by truck and were transported in a freight lift to the upper storeys of the building. After Bjarke Ingels of Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) was asked to submit a proposal for the renovation and extension of the warehouse, he said: 'The first time I was in Dreispitz, looking at all the industrial buildings, I walked over rail tracks and passed lorries until, suddenly, I was standing in front of something that resembled a con-

crete ship.' He saw instantly that the building 'already had great power of expression' and that it didn't require major changes.

He found the brutalist character and form of the building so fascinating that he made these aspects the basis of his competition entry. From BIG's project proposal: 'The identity of the building is determined by its ship-like form. We wanted to preserve the enormous size and individuality of this industrial structure as much as possible. By re-programming and extending the former warehouse into a multi-functional series of floors for various uses, we propose a crossbreed of art, commerce, working and living. Two distinct buildings on top of each other form a mixed-use hybrid with activity and life 24 hours a day.' An extra volume added to the roof doubles the floor area of the original warehouse.

The extreme depth of the existing building demanded a unique

approach. To provide apartments in the three-floor extension resting on the original roof with optimal light, Ingels did the following: 'We divided the extra volume into five segments and rotated each segment towards the light. The result is five rooftop apartment buildings with universal orientation.' By rotating these volumes, he provided them with daylight coming from four sides rather than just two. And space created by the act of rotation can be used as roof gardens. 'We've allocated these outdoor spaces as private places that are accessible only to occupants of the building,' he says.

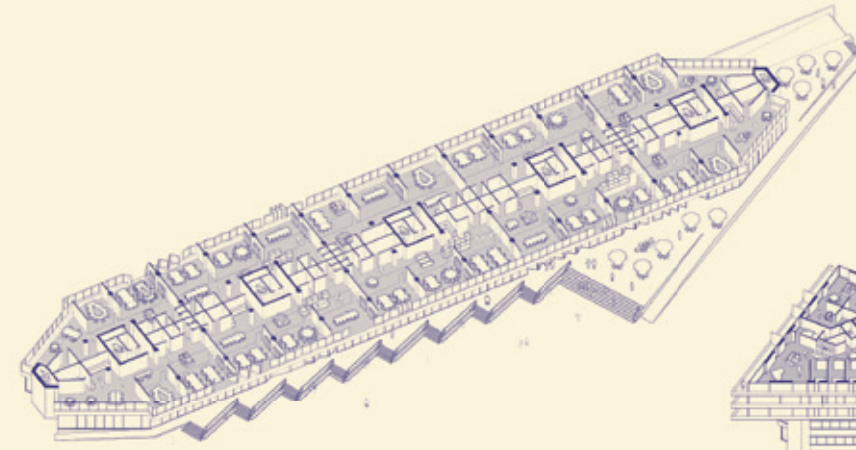
Both ends of the roof correspond to the tapering form of the building. One by-product is the unusual zigzag structure of the extension, which works well both architecturally and at the level of urban design. Certain floors in the original warehouse were partially removed to make way for maisonettes with studios at the heart of the build-

ing. Double-height voids capped by skylights provide interiors with extra daylight.

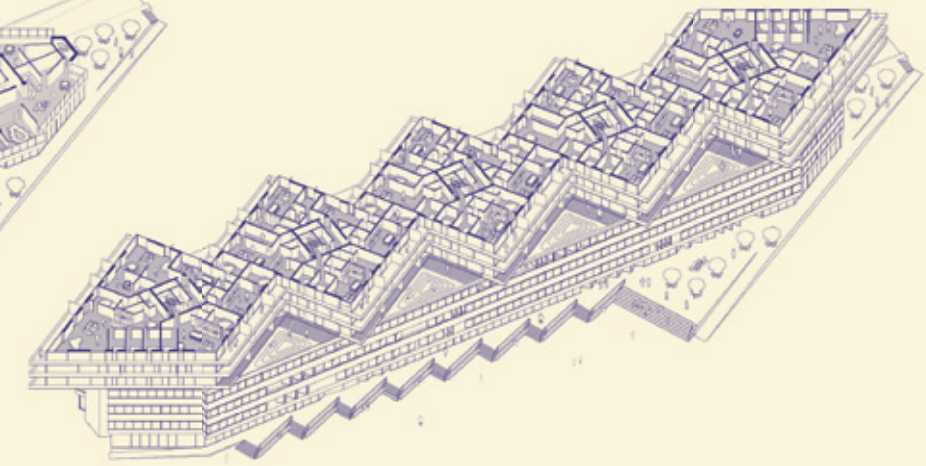
The architects were keen to preserve the character of the warehouse's traditionally finished concrete floors and ceilings – and to imbue the same quality into the new interiors. 'Everything new that we add to the building has to fit into the existing spaces like pieces of furniture,' says Ingels of a complex with more than 100 apartments, as well as floors with space for offices, studios and businesses. The second and third storeys of the existing building are reserved for alternative housing that includes studios. Open-plan office space will fill the first floor, and visitors entering at ground level will find commercial establishments, cafés and restaurants on the side facing Freilagerplatz. Construction began in October 2014 and is expected to be completed in the autumn of 2016.←

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Offices

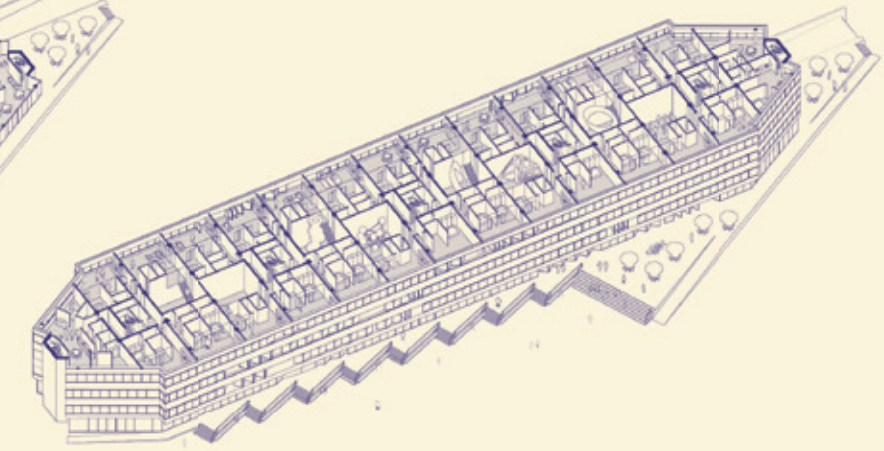
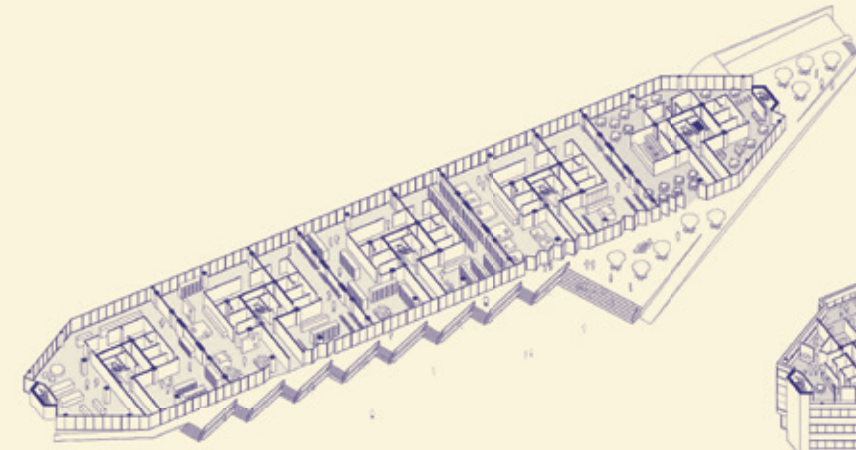


+4 to +6
Apartments



0
Commercial spaces |
cafés | restaurants

+3
Alternative housing



-1
Parking | storage

+2
Studios | apartments

