

## SWITZERLAND KNIT, TRÈS CHIC

Residential block Widenbüel, Mönchaltorf

LOCATION: Lindhofstrasse 3–7, Sunneweg 5, Mönchaltorf CLIENT: GEWO Züri Ost, Uster

ARCHITECTS: Architektick Tina Arndt & Daniel Fleischmann, together with Scherrer Valentin, Zurich

BUILDING PERIOD: 2012–2014 FAÇADE AND ROOF CONSTRUCTION: Lerch AG, Winterthur

FAÇADE MATERIAL: Swisspearl® SMALL FORMAT, PLANEA Red P 315; NOBILIS Black N 012 and Grey N 212; Swisspearl® LARGO, CARAT Black Opal 7020 ROOF MATERIAL: Swisspearl® INTEGRAL PLAN, NATURA Vulcanit N 6510

**Aviation once opened up the roof for architecture as a fifth façade. Architektick and Scherrer Valentin Architects turn the tables: they transform each of the five façades of the five building volumes of the Widenbüel housing complex in Mönchaltorf into roofscapes. The cladding, composed of detailed, rhombus-shaped façade slates in gray, black, and red oscillates visually between screen matrix and handicraft texture.**

RAHEL HARTMANN SCHWEIZER In 2000, the German architectural office Hild and K stirred attention with a single-family home in Aggstall near Munich: They arranged the formwork of the solid structure, lined with solid brick, relief-like in a rhombus-shaped pattern. The structure makes the façade look like a knitted sweater. Hild and K are part of a generation of architects who take up the theme of clothing—virulent since Gottfried Semper's famous definition of the textile arts as the precursors of buildings made of stone—in numerous variations.

One variant can be seen in the housing complex in Mönchaltorf. The architects' desire to emphasize the geometry of the five building volumes—both façades and roofs—was pivotal in stirring interest in the textile aspects of a façade. The uniqueness of the five-cornered outline of the buildings can be seen in the situation plan. They seem to be individual chunks that were blasted off of a huge boulder. As the architects describe the design, “the buildings’ surfaces push away and their corners pull together.” The ground plans develop from inside to outside. Each is oriented around a central stairway, which first leads to entrances, wet rooms, and rédits; then corridor zones, and in the outermost layer, living and sleeping spaces as well as kitchen and balconies.

### “All over”

Rather than leaving the blasted monolithic blocks “raw,” the architects covered them in a fine-meshed knitted dress of diamond-shaped, gray, black, and red shingles of cement composite, which stretches seamlessly over all five façades. For the roofs, large-scale panels were used due to the lack

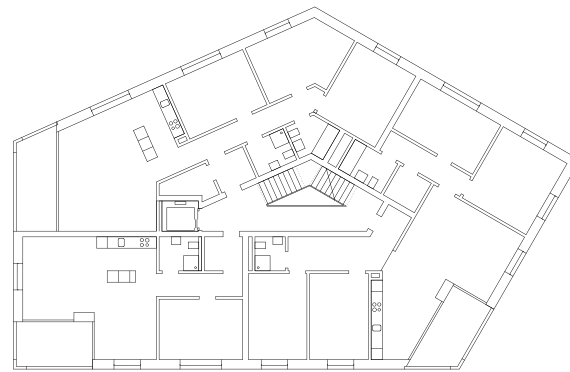
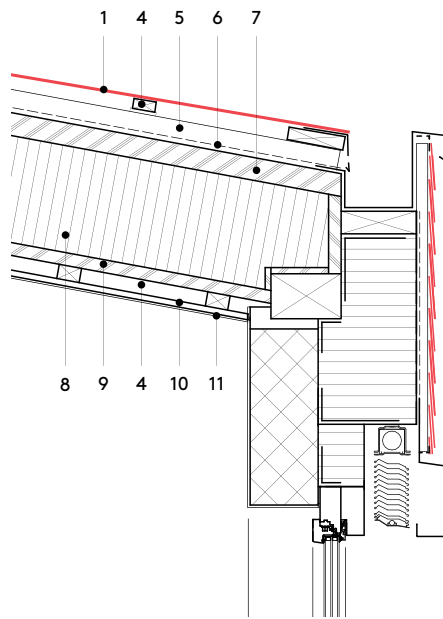
of a sufficient inclination for façade slates. The goal was to emphasize the strong geometry of the building volume. But the effect is subtly differentiated—depending on the angle and incidence of light. At times the comb strips meld to a practically uniform rust-brown tone, other times they generate a moirée effect, letting the eye glide erratically over the flickering grid of a surface that recalls a CRT display. The situation from up close is similar: with one of the two clashing façades always in the bright light and the other in the shadows, the corners appear sharply cut. When there is the same incidence of light on both surfaces, the corners dissolve—which most definitely fits with the “all over” idea. This is intensified even greater as the façade builder inserted the combs with such meticulous precision that the halved elements seem as though they had not been cut, but rather, folded. Moving closer to the façade, revealed is the knit pattern whose relief structure emerges especially through the play of light and shadow. The architects experimented intensively with the colors, and also considered a plethora of tones. “But that would have turned out too wild, which is why we kept the palette concentrated to red, black, and gray,” says Tina Arndt.



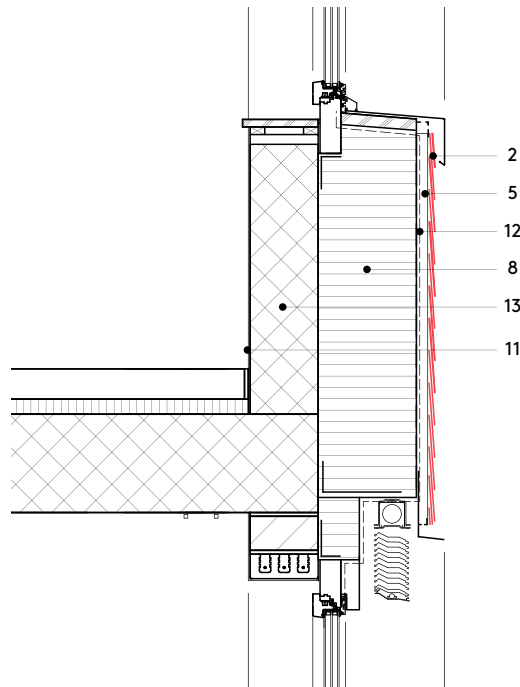






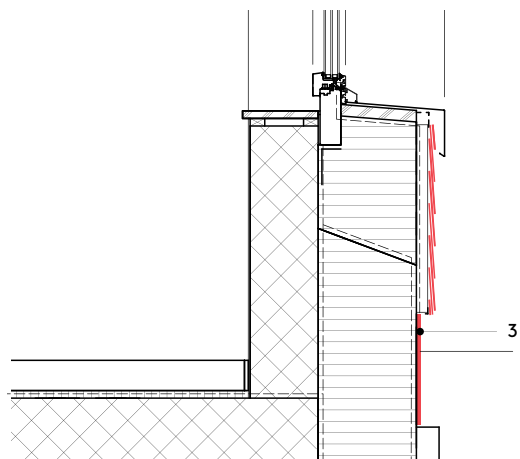


Typical floor plan 1:400



“The arrangement of the buildings is chosen in such a way that the corners occupied by the living spaces grant the apartments different orientations and views.”

Tina Arndt, Architektick



Vertical section 1:20

- 1 Swisspearl® INTEGRAL PLAN panel 8 mm, R-coating (roofing)
- 2 Swisspearl® SMALL FORMAT panel 4 mm, double layer
- 3 Swisspearl® LARGO panel 8 mm
- 4 timber batten
- 5 ventilation cavity, timber batten
- 6 membrane
- 7 soft fiber board
- 8 thermal insulation
- 9 timber board, stiffened
- 10 gypsum plaster board
- 11 plaster
- 12 moisture barrier
- 13 concrete



The buildings A and D have two colors, red and black; on building B, rows of red and gray alternate; and the central building C displays the entire palette of red, black, and gray.

