



The Hidden Geometry of Nature: Six Projects
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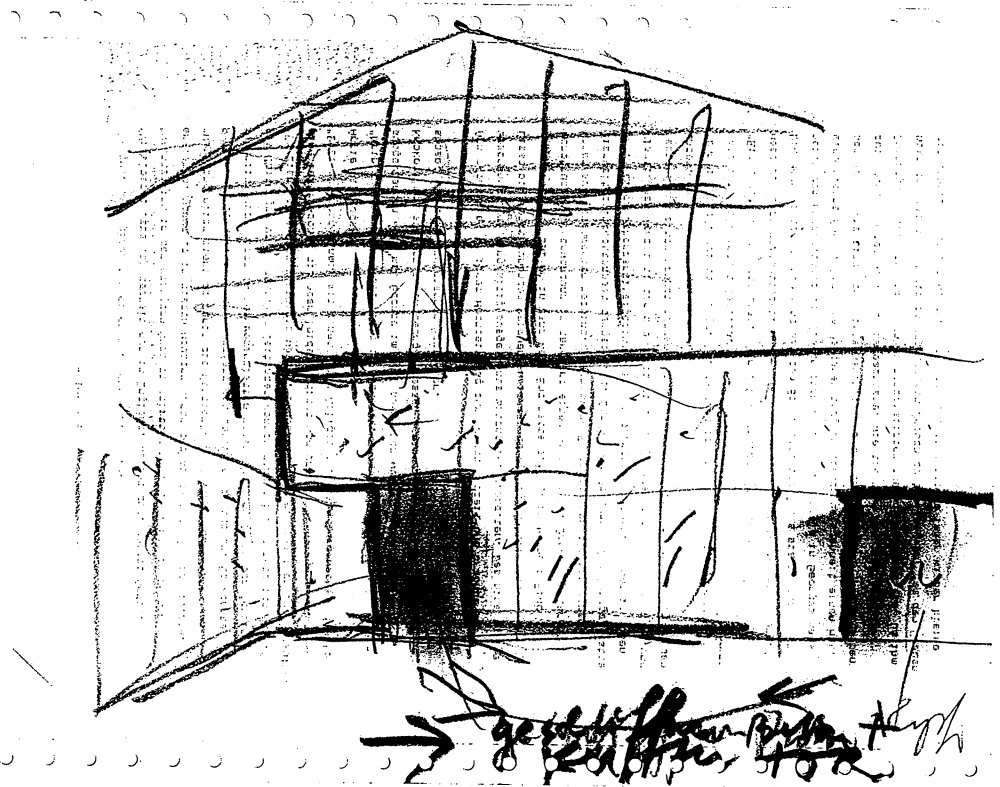
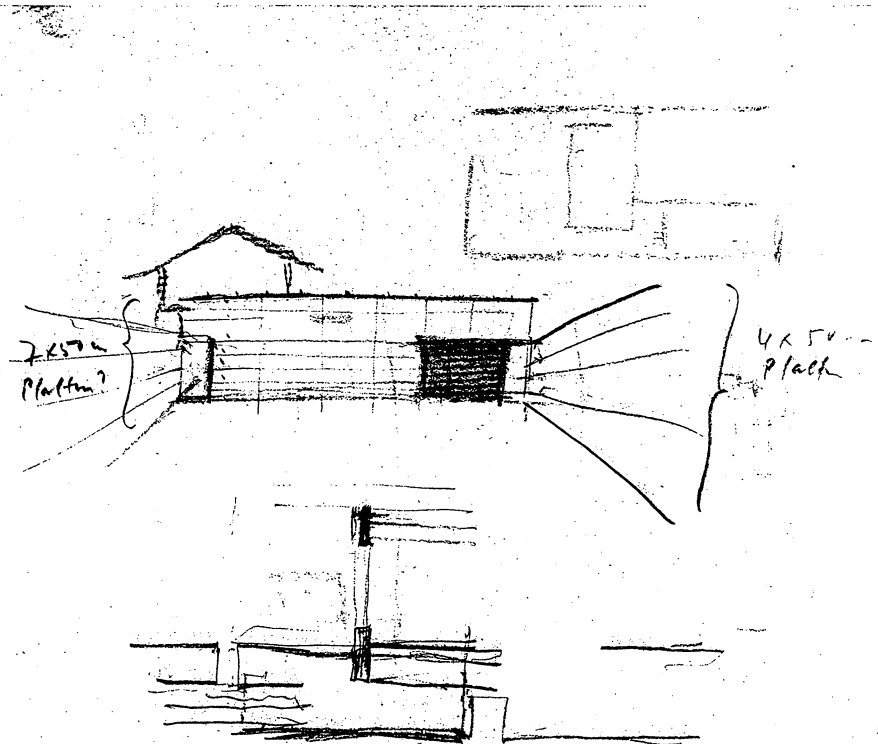
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Jacques Herzog
Pierre de Meuron
The Hidden Geometry
of Nature: Six Projects



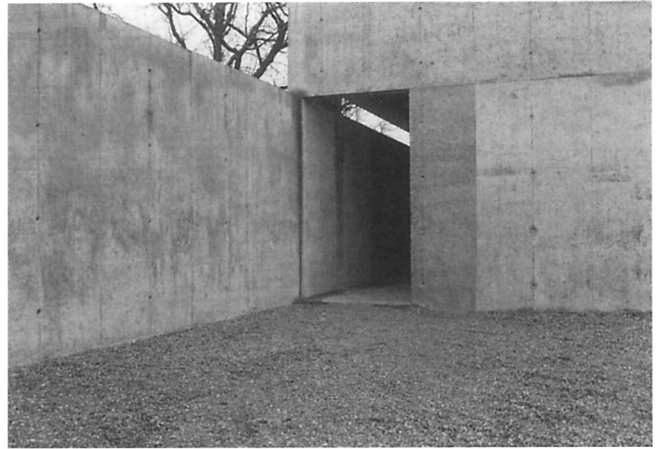
Frontispiece. Ricola Storage Building, view of rear elevation and quarry wall



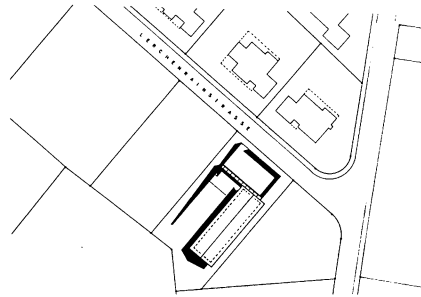
1. Sketches (charcoal and pencil, 29.6 × 21 cm.)

House for an Art Collector, Therwil,
Switzerland, 1985–86

The entry to the building is a containerlike courtyard with concrete walls, copper doors, and a gravel floor. The exhibition space for the art collection is contained in the concrete socle piece that opens toward the courtyard. The living space for the family is on the upper level, each room with its own door to the garden. The differing modes of construction and the appearance of concrete determine the architectural character of the building.



2. View of entry door from within courtyard



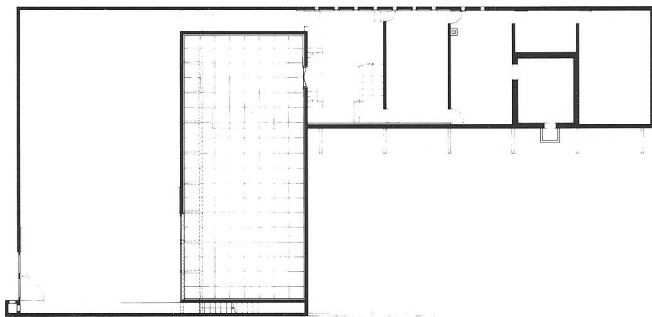
3. Site plan



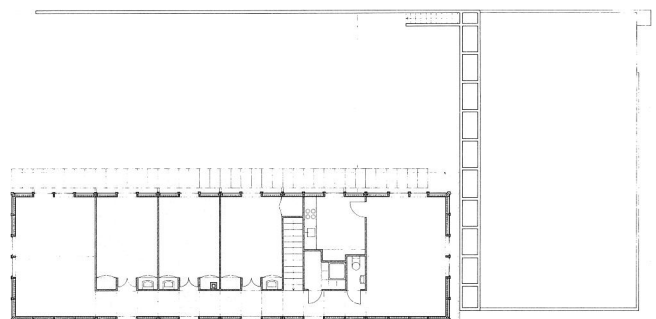
4. View at courtyard



5. View of exterior of courtyard



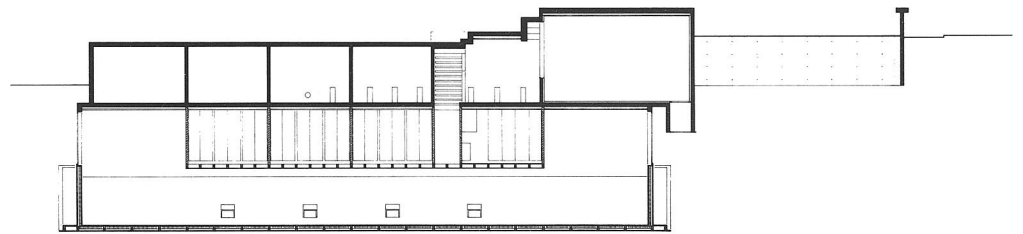
6. Plan of entry level, courtyard and exhibition space



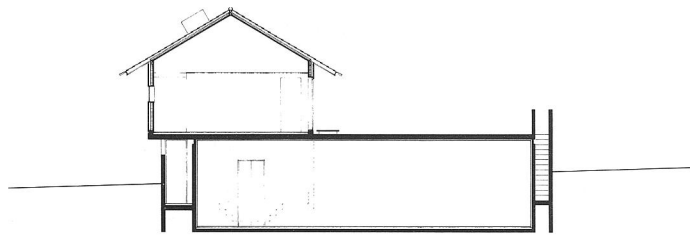
7. Plan of upper level, living space



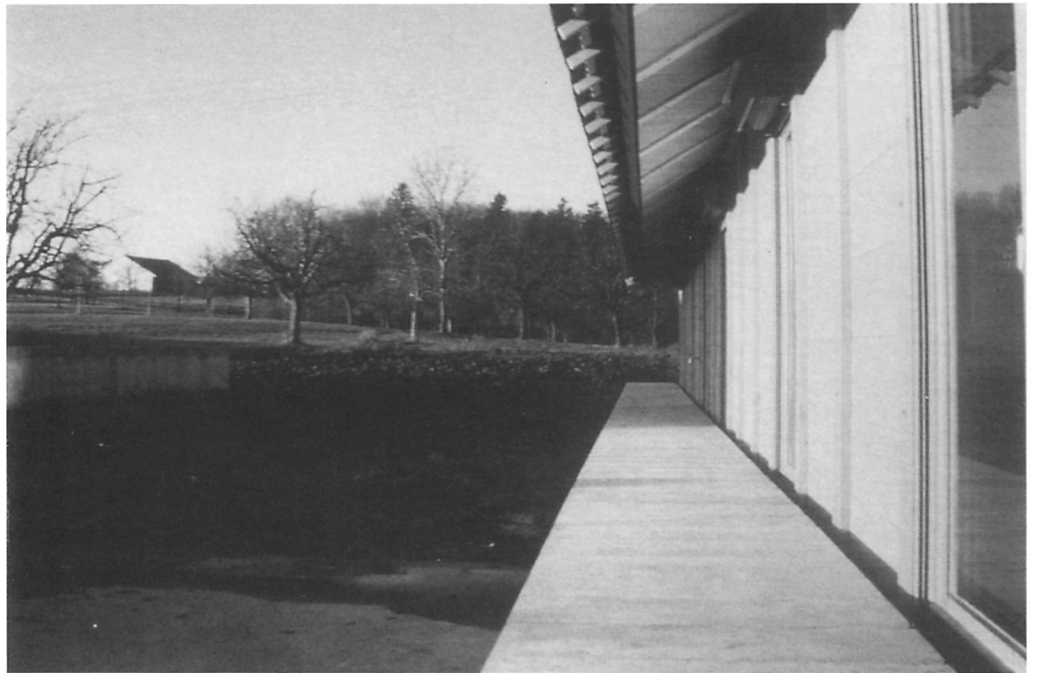
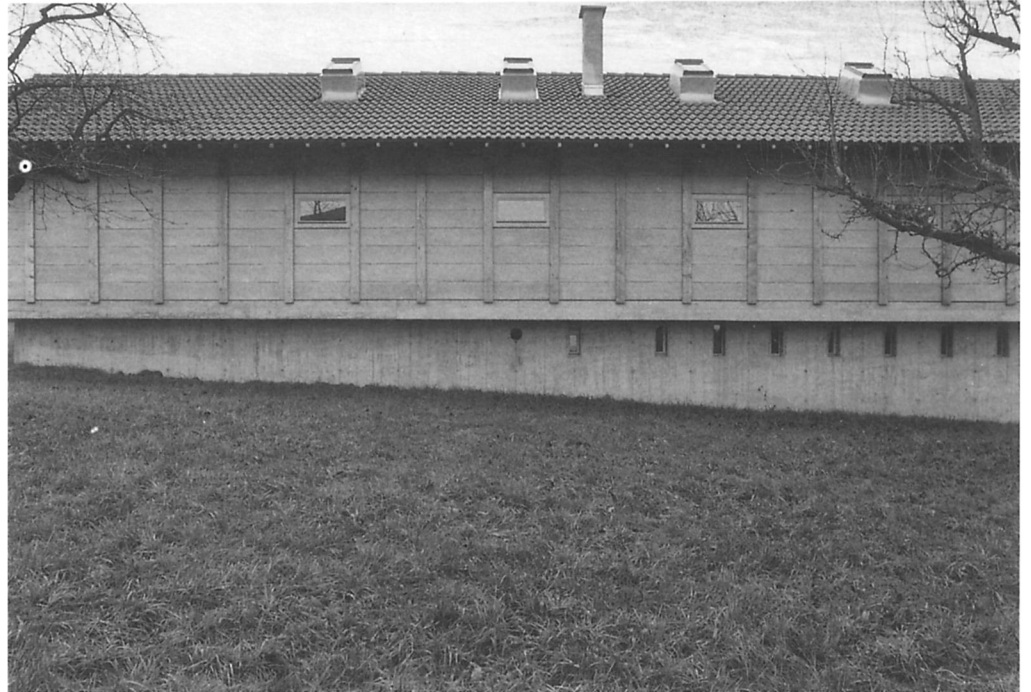
8, 9. Interior views



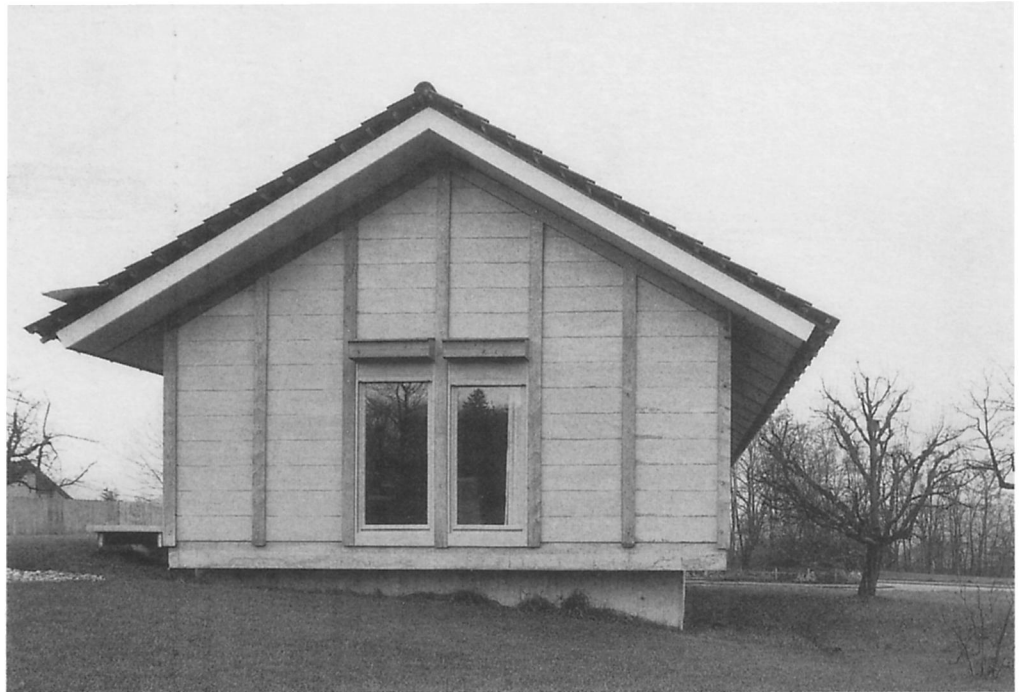
10. Transverse section showing relationship of exhibition space to living space above



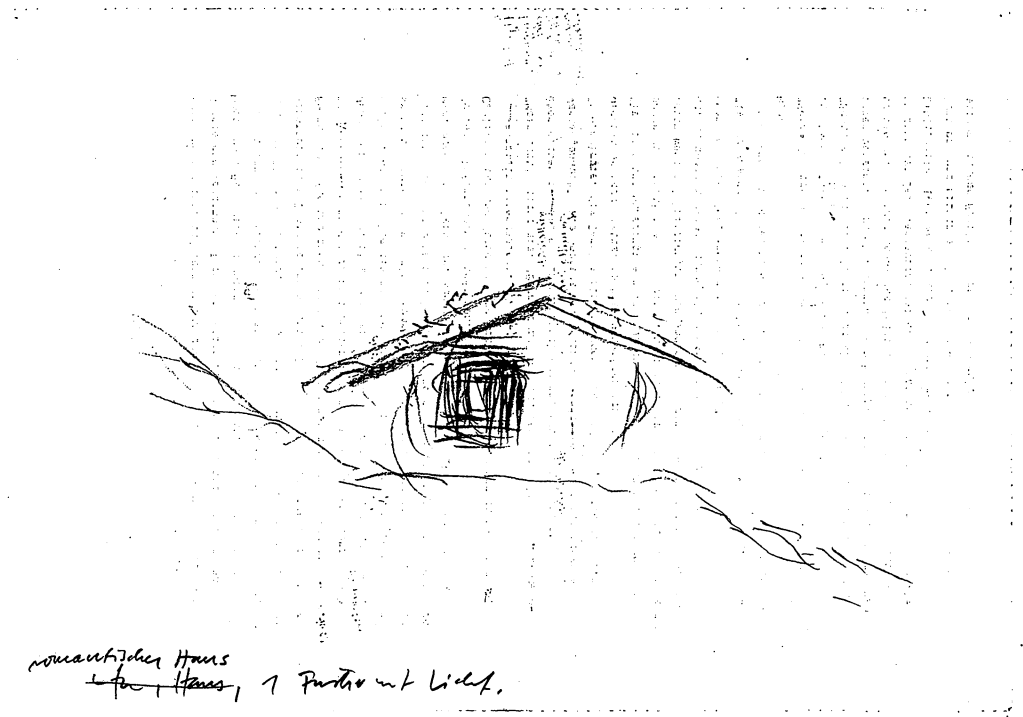
11. Longitudinal section



12, 13. Exterior views



14. View of east elevation



15. Sketch (charcoal and pencil, 29.6 × 21 cm.)

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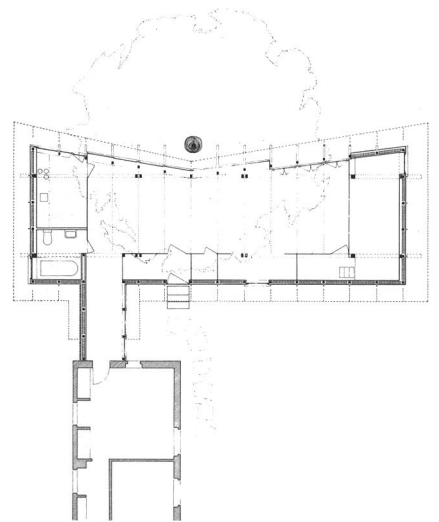
Photographs by Pierre de Meuron.

Drawings courtesy of the architects.

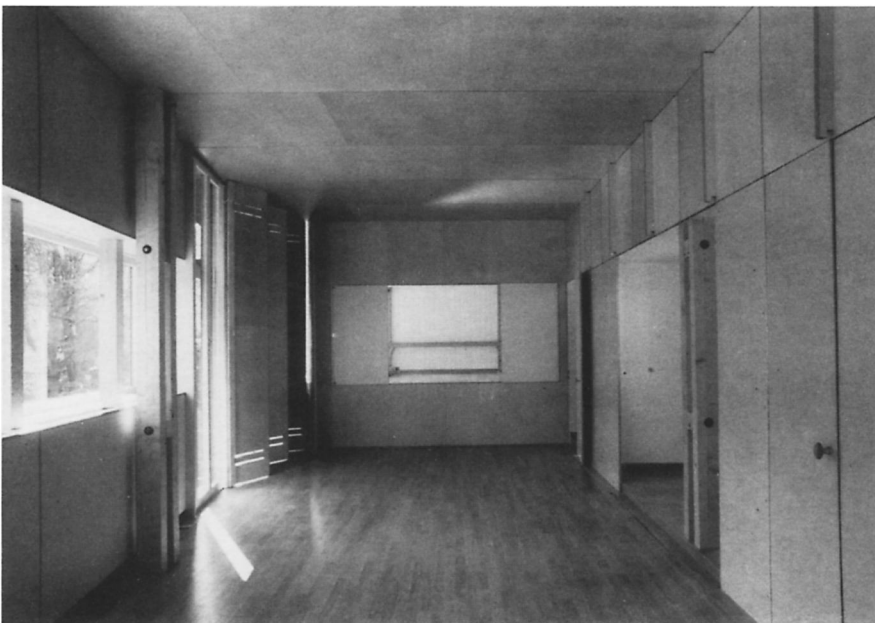
Sketches from a private collection, Switzerland.



1. View of main room, looking toward marionette stage



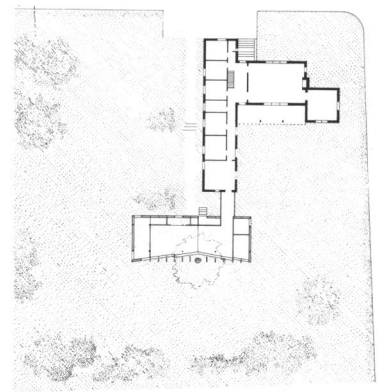
3. Plan



2. Interior view



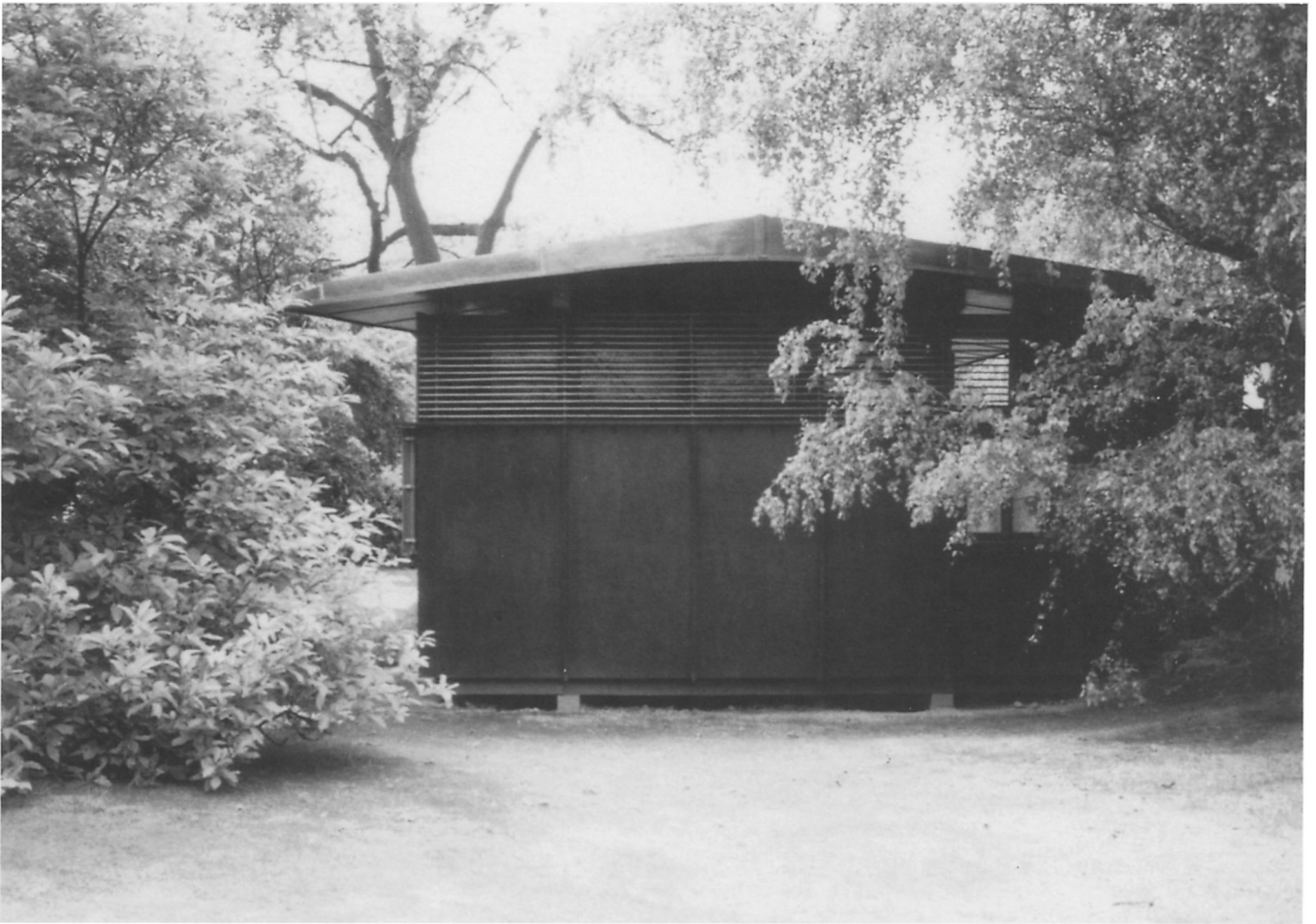
4. Exterior view



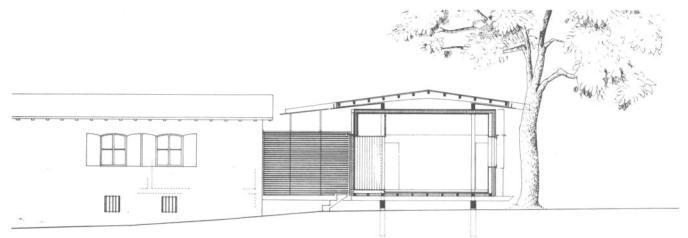
5. Site plan

Plywood House, Bottmingen, Switzerland,
1984–85

The Plywood House sits in the garden of an existing villa. The main room serves as a living room and as a small theater for marionette plays. The structure of the house and the treatment of the plywood skin of both the interior and the exterior are reminiscent of a piece of furniture or a musical instrument. The big Paulownia tree and the house form an inseparable architectural entity.



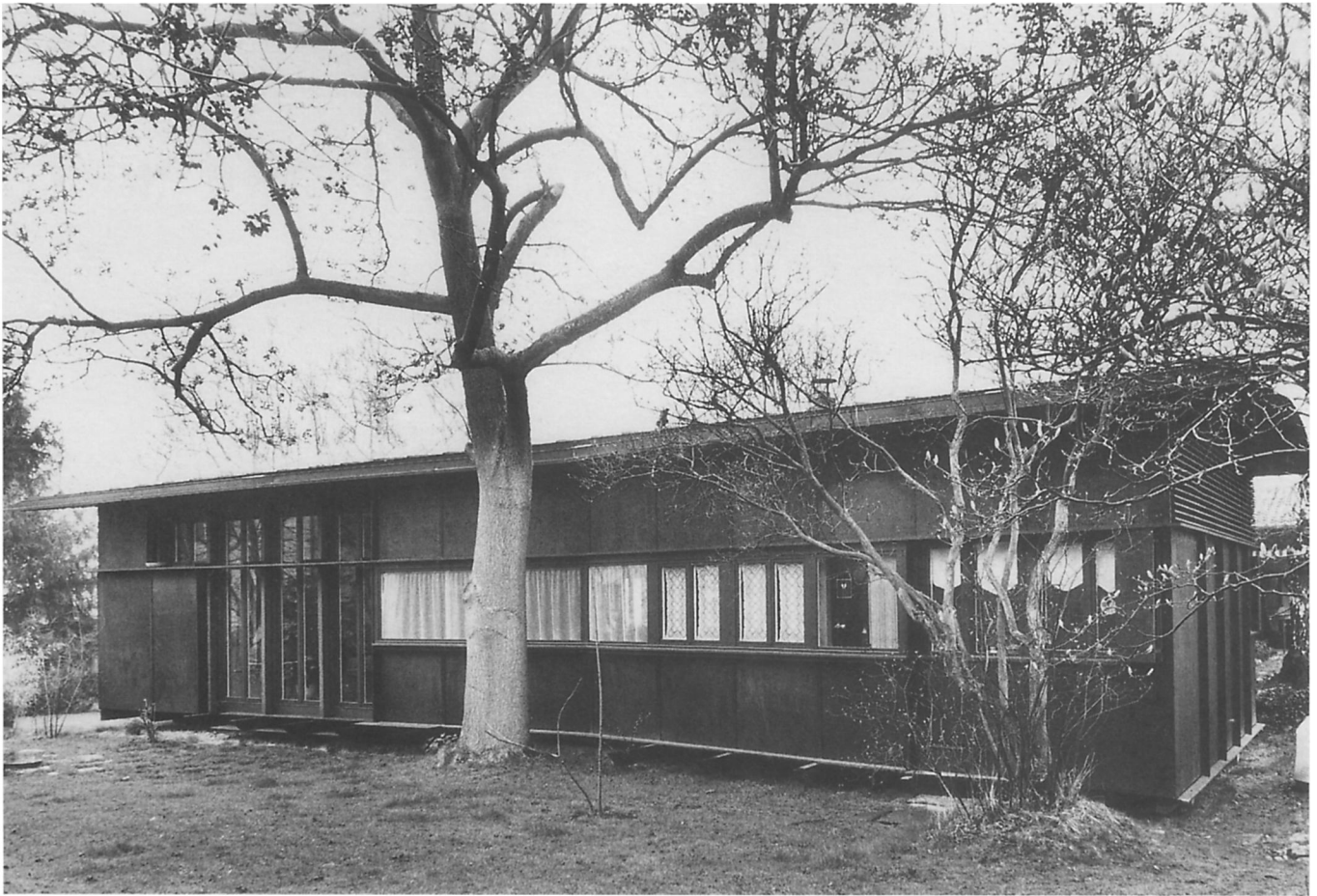
6. View of west elevation



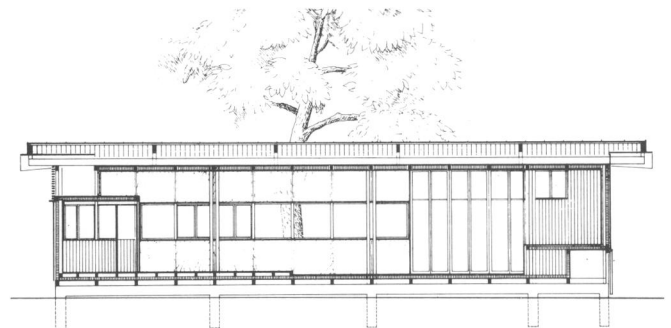
7. Section, looking toward existing villa

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With René Levy

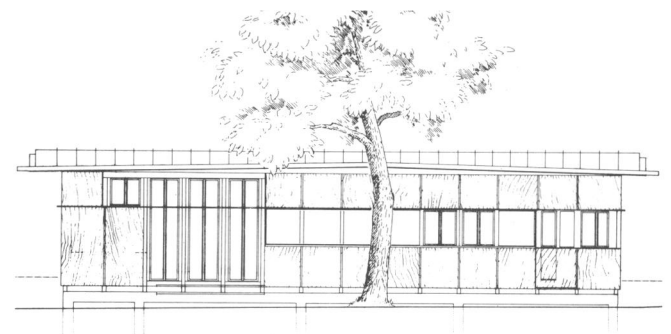
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Drawings courtesy of the architects.



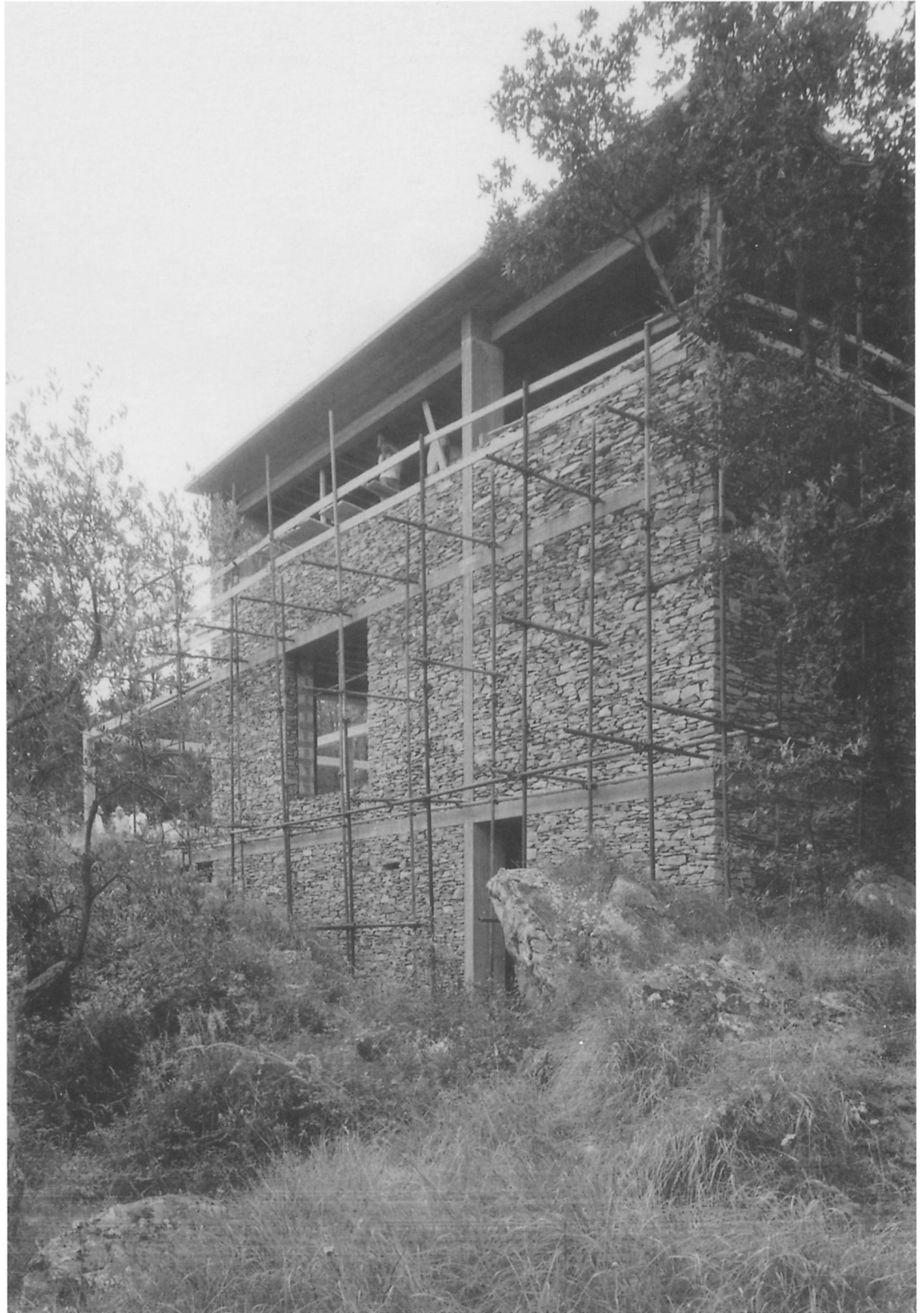
8. View of south elevation
with Paulownia tree



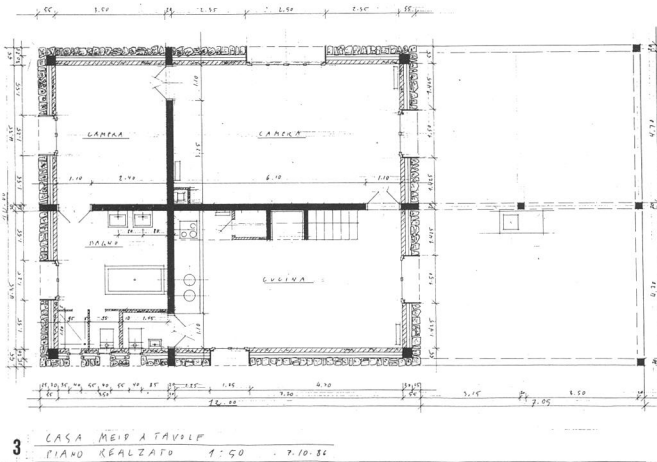
9. Longitudinal section



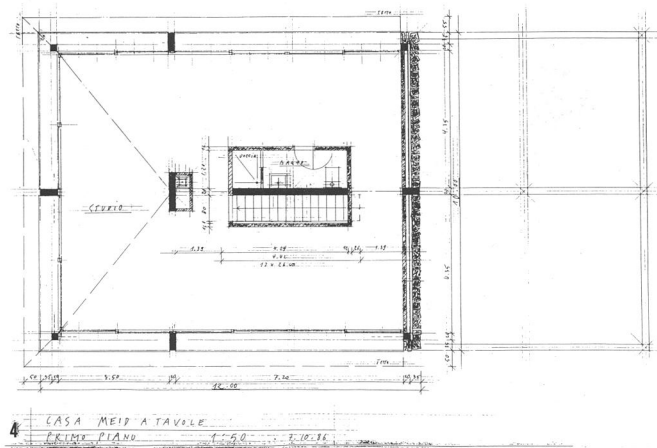
10. Elevation



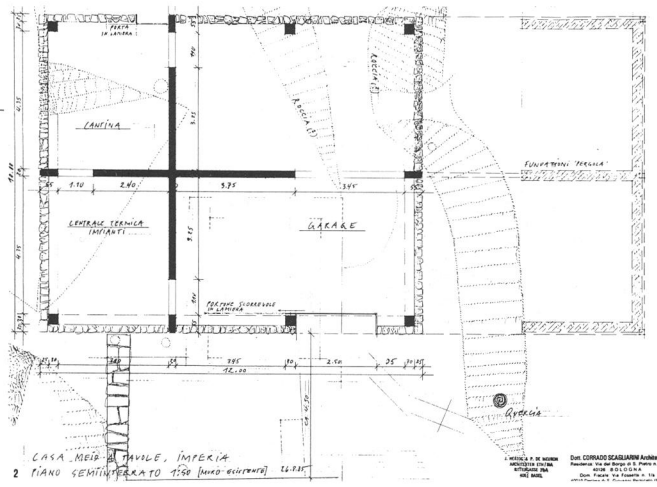
1. View of south elevation, under construction



2. Plan of main level



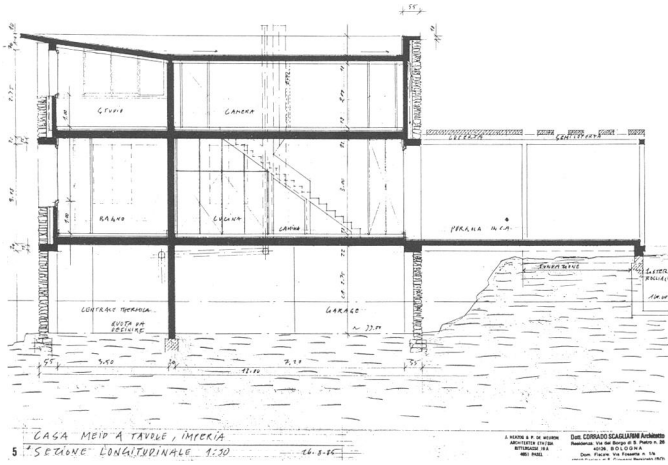
3. Plan of upper level



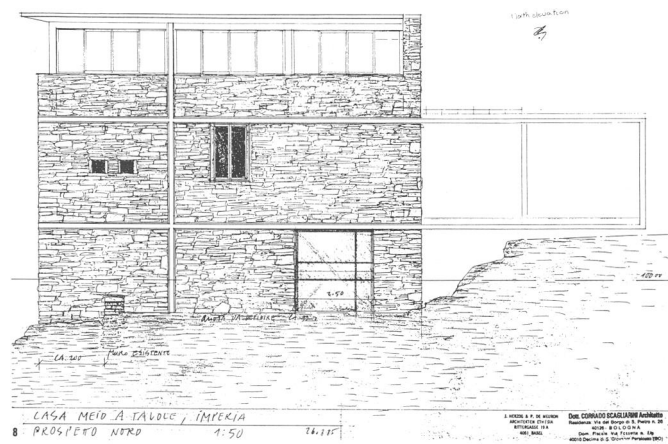
4. Plan of lower level

Stone House, Tavole, Liguria, Italy, 1982–89

The house overlooks a valley and has a view to the sea, ten kilometers away. It stands alone in a landscape of olive trees planted on terraces retained by crumbling stone walls. The cross form, expressed in plan, section, and elevation is reminiscent of traditional local buildings. This structure provides four equivalent rooms that are put together to make a whole. The concrete-frame structure is infilled with stone, used like color or pigment, a part of nature that fills the rational structure, analogous to the way the earth of the terraces fills the stone retaining walls. The stone is taken from a building that existed previously on the site. The concave roof form collects the small amount of rain that falls.



5. Longitudinal section



6. North elevation





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Drawings courtesy of the architects.

8. View of entry terrace at west elevation



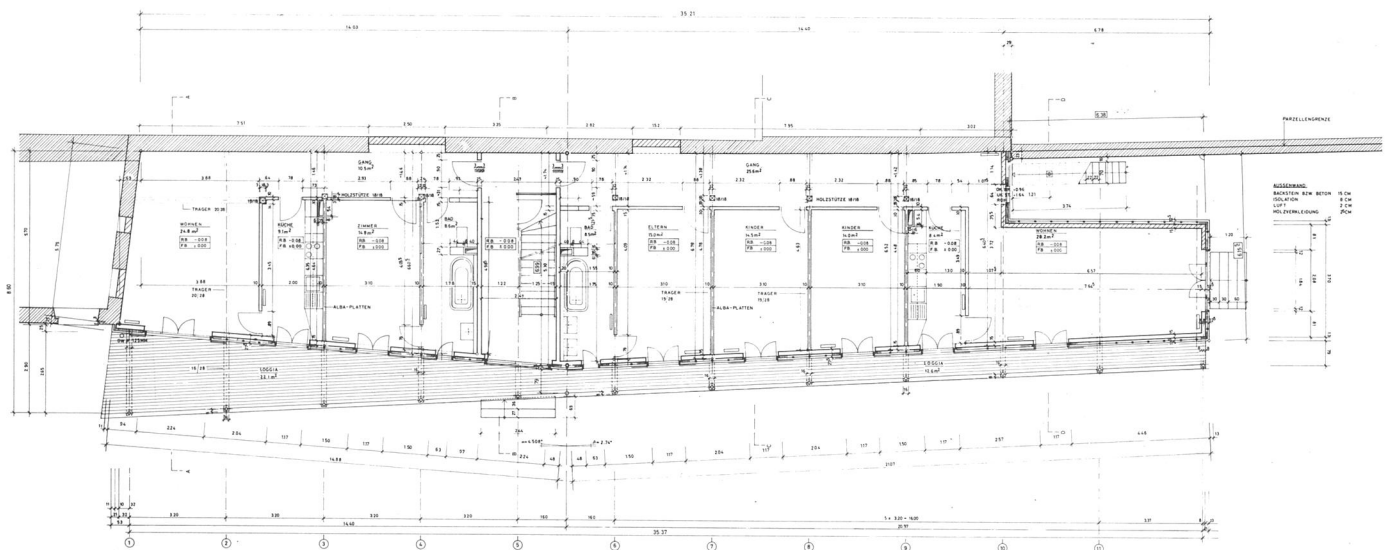
1. View at southwest corner showing roof terrace and door to yard



2. Exterior view



3. Site plan



4. Plan of ground level

House in a Backyard, Basel, Switzerland, 1984–88

The house, containing six apartments, is built in front of a historic, medieval property wall, ten meters high, in the backyard of an existing house. The building is understood as a "backyard" building, analogous to other local buildings of wood construction, such as stables and garden structures, that occupy this kind of site. The typology, or structure, of the building is determined by its relation to the wall. The wooden columns on the front, curved to give a sense of mass, are tied back to the wall by horizontal laminated wood beams, leaving the infill elements of the front elevation free and allowing space for a verandah. The columns and the infill elements are solid oak, reflecting an image of the building as a piece of furniture, a large cupboard, placed against the wall.

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de Meuron

With Mario Meier

Client: The City of Basel

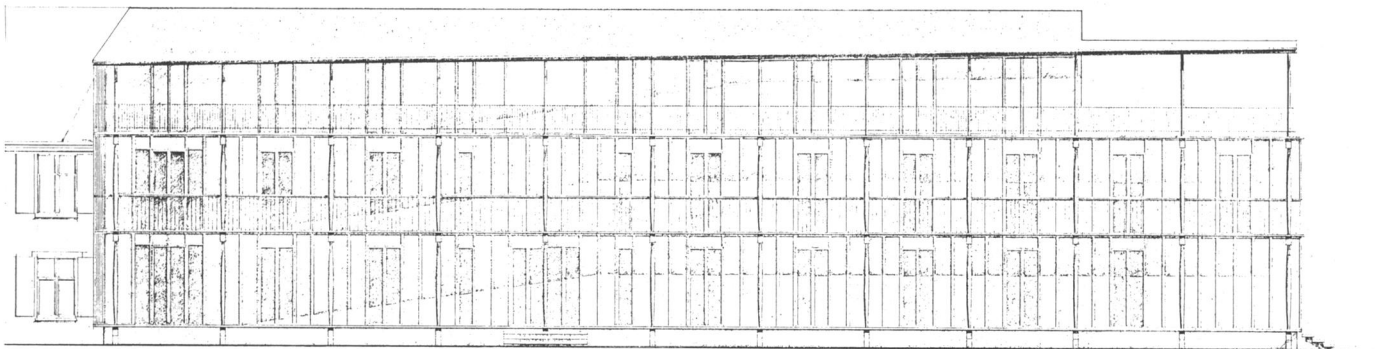
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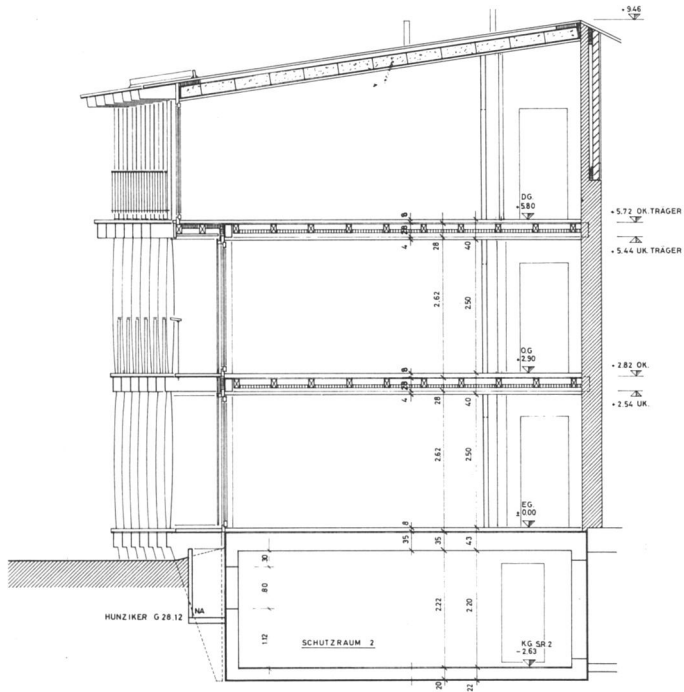
Drawings courtesy of the architects.



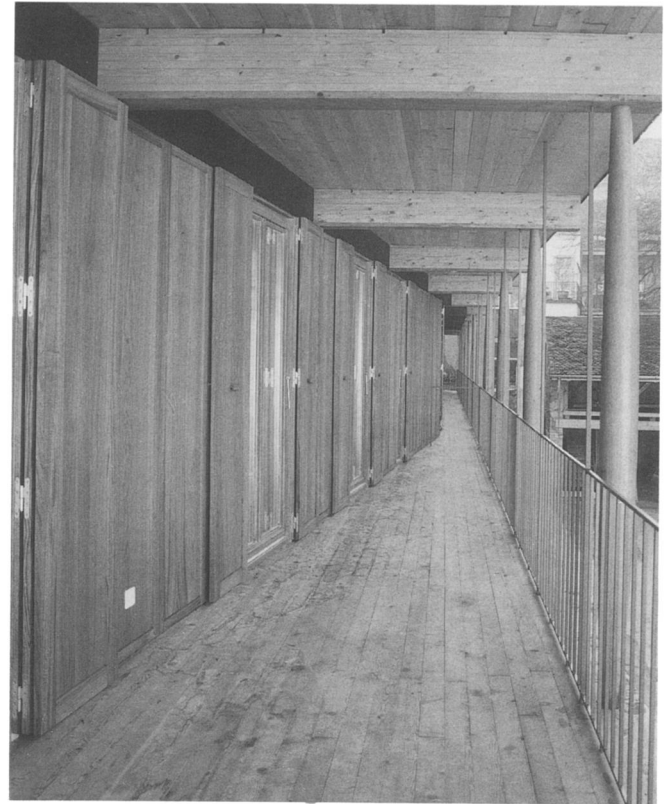
5. Exterior view



6. West elevation



7. Transverse section



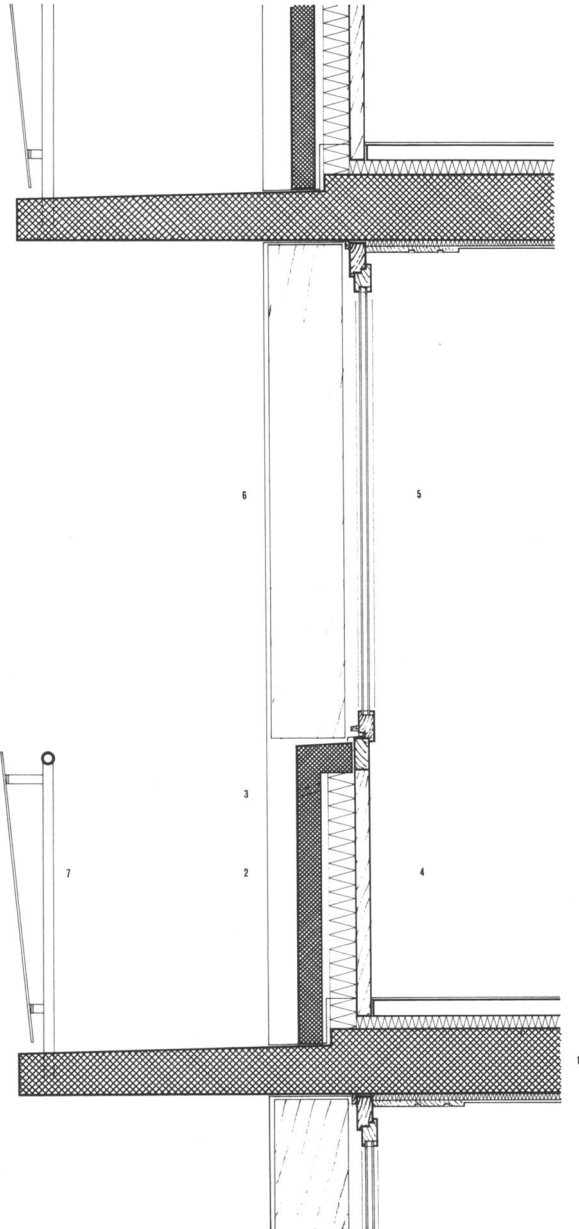
8. View of balcony



9. View of west elevation



1. View of courtyard



2. Detail section

1. Poured-in-place concrete slab, supporting prefabricated façade elements
2. Prefabricated, colored concrete elements (black on street façade, green on courtyard façade)
3. Airspace
- 4, 5. Prefabricated, painted wall panel with window (grey on street façade, white on courtyard façade)
6. Shutters of plywood faced with dark brown synthetic resin
7. Painted iron and zinc balustrade with aluminum handrail

Schwiter Building, Housing and Offices, Basel, Switzerland, 1985–88

A double curve defines the exterior of the building, the inner curve reflecting the line of the street, the pure geometric outer curve relating to the building's radial organization around the courtyard that serves as an entry court. The linear loggia to the side of the court contains an outdoor space for each apartment, encouraging a social movement and interaction across and around the court and the birch tree in the center.



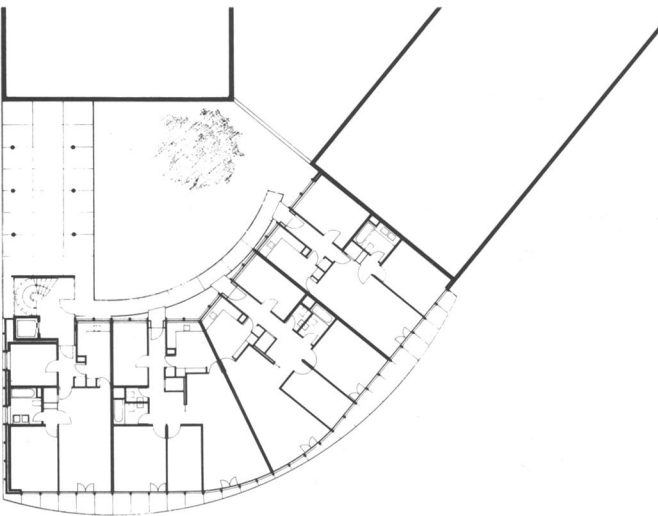
3. Site plan



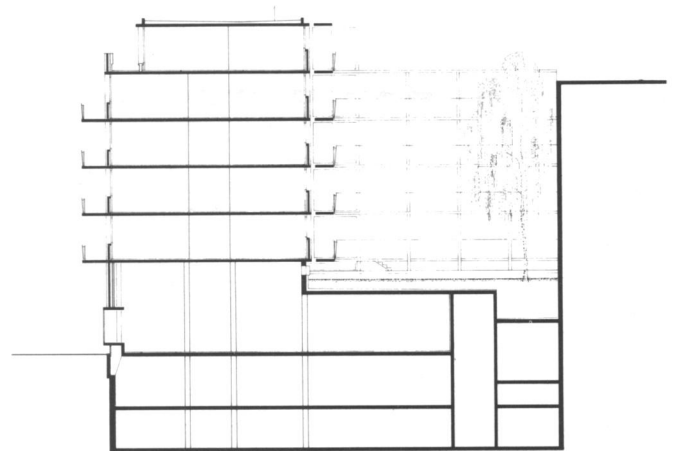
4. Views of courtyard



5. View from street



6. Plan of typical level



7. Transverse section

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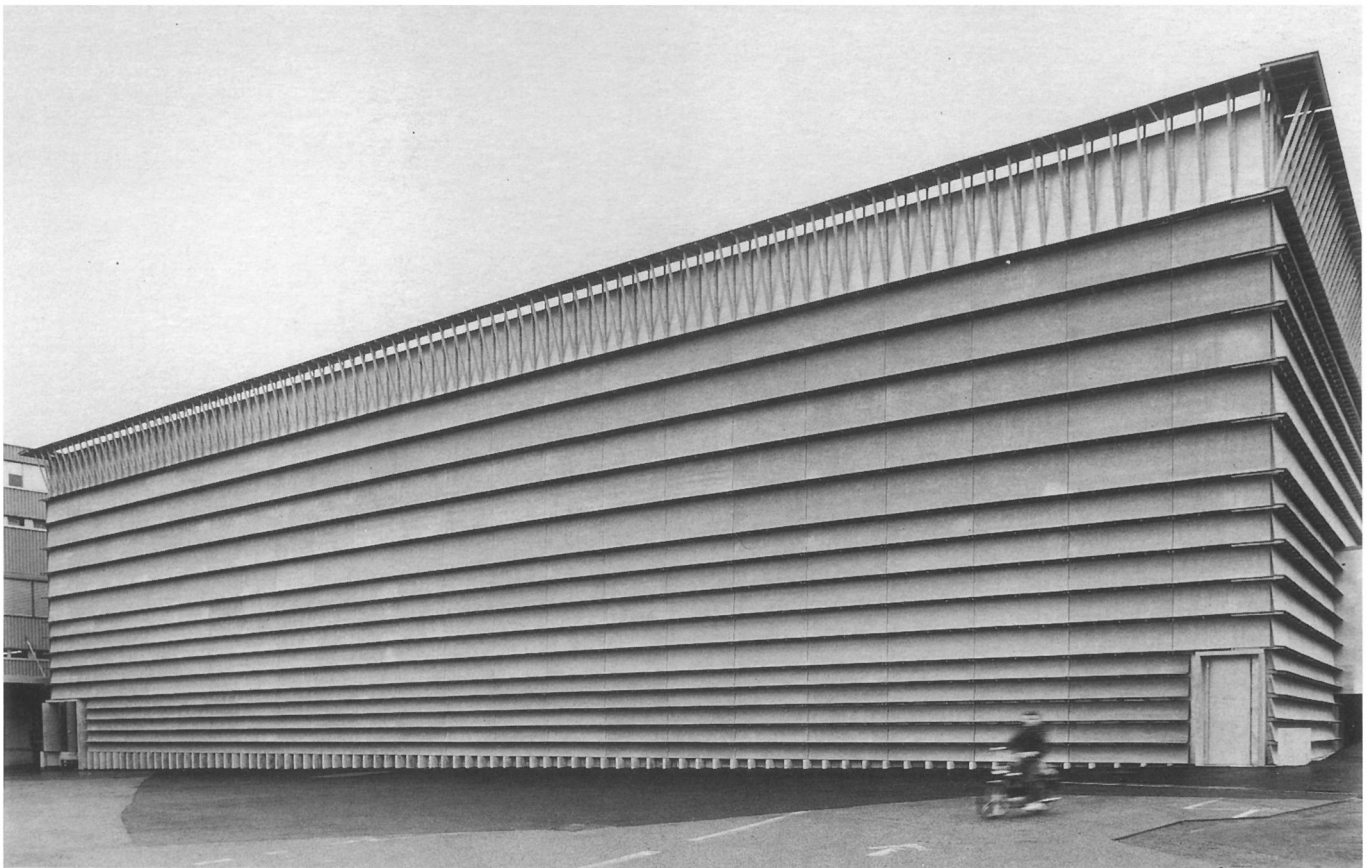
Drawings courtesy of the architects.



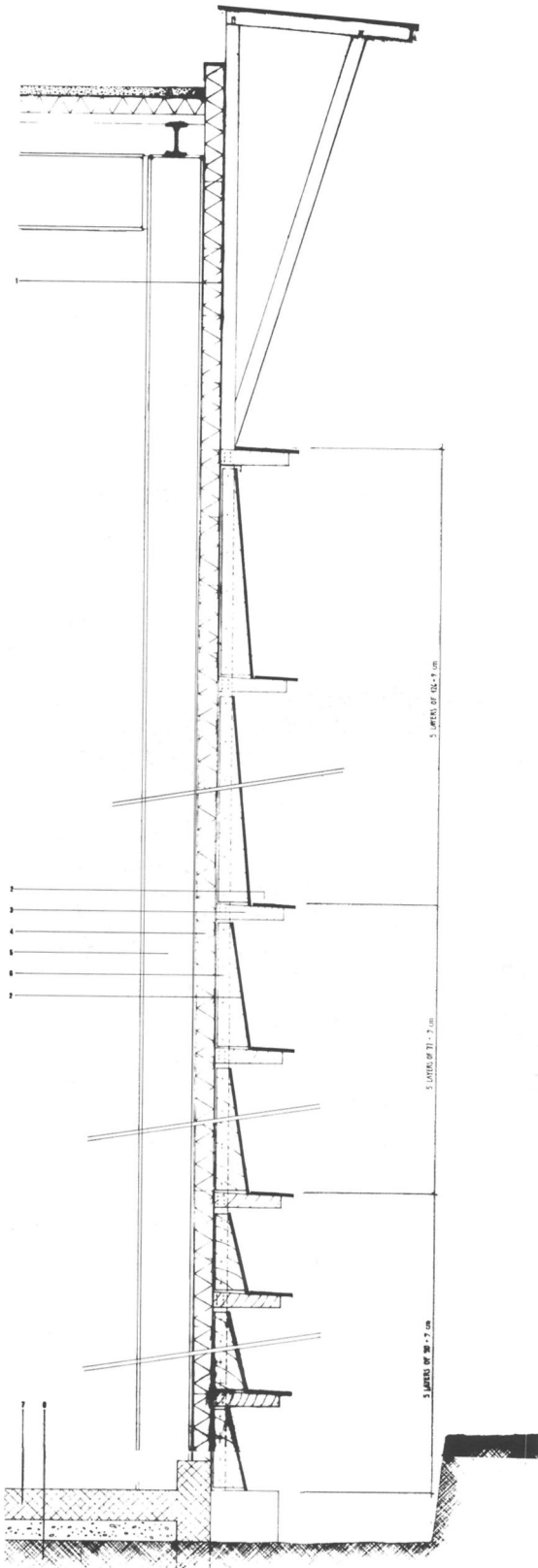
1. View of corner

Ricola Storage Building, Laufen, Switzerland,
1986–87

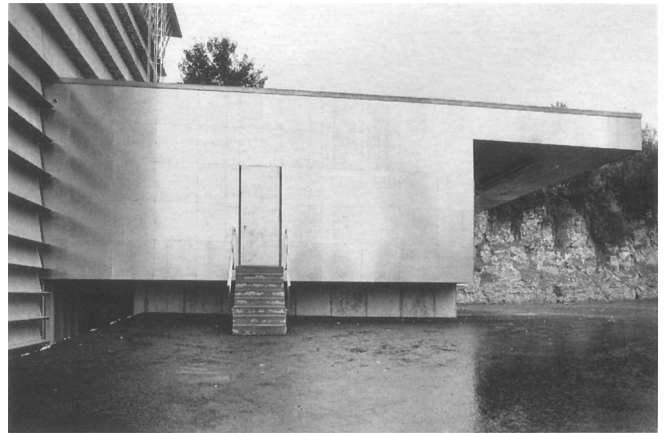
The site for the storage building is in a former limestone quarry. The inside layer of the wall is steel construction. The exterior is constructed of vertical and horizontal members (wooden beams, composite wood-cement boards, and sheet metal) arranged as if these elements were themselves being stored in a giant pile.



2. View of front elevation



1. Sheet-metal skin visible at upper part of elevation
2. Composite wood and cement boards
3. Wood console
4. Insulation panel
5. Steel construction
6. Wood beam
7. Concrete slab
8. Rocky ground of former quarry



4. View of loading dock

3. Wall section showing structural and cladding systems

Figure Credits

Photographs by Margherita
Krischanitz, Vienna.

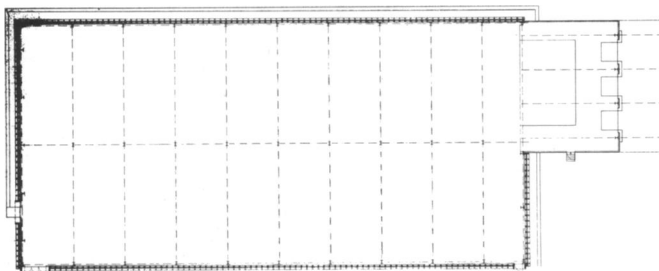
Drawings courtesy of the architects.

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de Meuron



5. View of corner showing cladding system



6. Plan

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron
are architects in Basel, Switzerland.