

Monday, 25. October - Friday, 29. October 2021

Living in Zurich

Single-family houses and their environment

The single-family, free-standing house seems to be the most consistent type in the history of housing in Zurich and its environment. Farms, mills, villas, family homes, ateliers and holiday houses are testimony of its reoccurrence.

While in medieval Zurich a strong link existed between landscape, house and work (e.g. farms, mills, wineries), with the final demolition of the city wall in 1833 and the subsequent industrialization and expansion of the city, these structures begin to change. People started working in factories and moved into nearby tenements, while industrialists and merchants, working in the city, built their summer residences along the lake shore.

Even though the family grew smaller with the development of the bourgeois family model, the idea of a detached house with a garden remained, finding expression throughout the twentieth century both in the affordable workers' housing and in the villa of the factory owner, as well as in the writings and buildings of modern and post-modern architects.

This seminar week will consist of daily walks where we will follow the single-family house and their environment throughout history, examining the relationship between the house and the topography, between dwelling and working, the connection of the single unit to the urban infrastructure, the social distribution throughout the city, etc. Each house will be studied in detail through historical and on-site investigations.

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