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Basel University Library

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1962-1968. Architect: Otto H. Senn BSA/SIA, Basel

The new building of the Basel University library was undertaken in the shape of a renovation in two stages, on the site of the existing building and without any interruption of normal operations. The building site is located between two streets which intersect at an angle of 60 degrees; the third side is bounded by the botanical garden. The old building consisted of an entrance tract with a large reading-room at the street intersection and a tract containing stacks along one of the streets; there was planned an extension arranged in such a way that a second stack tract could be symmetrically aligned on the other street. However, when the time came for action on the extension in 1962, it was no longer possible to envisage a symmetrical construction, because of stylistic reasons and because the installations of the central tract no longer met the requirements of a modern library.

In a first renovation stage, on which WERK has already reported (11/1966), the new operations and administration building was erected, which for a time constituted the part that was symmetrically arranged in relation to the old stacks. Then the new reading-room with dome was sited in the courtyard formed by the two wings. Since the two wings stood at an angle of 60 degrees to each other, as dictated by the boundaries of the site, there resulted as the basic pattern of the new construction a partial realization on equilateral triangles developing into an arrangement of regular hexagons. Last of all, the entrance tract was done over, so that of the original old building only the book storage tract remains. The construction is articulated in accordance with the various operational functions, into the users' area, taking in the front building and the main level of the courtyard building, the book storage tract in the four basement levels of the courtyard building and the administration tract in the multi-storey wing of the first construction stage. The user of the library enters the building from the street intersection through the entrance lobby where the stairs are located. One flight higher we have the main floor with catalogue room, circulation desk, film reading-room and duplicating-room. Then the two-storey reading-room is reached, with the supervisor's desk and internal circulation, plus smaller reading-rooms for periodicals, manuscripts, studies for graduate students and professors, some of them accessible via a stairway leading into the basement.

The book storage facilities occupy the courtyard area in the core of the complex. Each of the four floors possesses a continuous glazed front permitting a free view on to the sloping garden. The library is equipped with pneumatic tube communications, and books are delivered to users by means of a conveyor belt. In this way each floor requires only one service employee.

Schaffhausen Cantonal Bank

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1967. Architects: Walter M. Förderer, Schaffhausen and Basel; Hans Zwimpfer, Basel

This building represents a contribution to the solution of the especially difficult problem of architecture in constricted old town centres. A large and rationally organized bank had to be integrated, on the proper scale, in the inner town of Schaffhausen, which has grown organically over the centuries. The built-up volume had to be subdivided into numerous small-scale units, and the construction material and the colour scheme were obliged to harmonize with the architectural idiom of the old town without creating an impression of historicism.

From the entrance on the so-called suburb side the customer passes into the two-storey main banking hall. On the ground-floor level, the tellers' windows, which are individually sited, and the consultation rooms separating them enclose the main hall. A lift takes the client wishing to have access to the vaults into the basement level; there is access also to the upper level, containing the managers' offices, the mortgage department, the credit department, etc. The accounting department and the correspondence are accommodated on the second upper level. The top floor, with sloping ceilings, houses a canteen, which can also be used as a lecture-room.

Commercial building in Bassersdorf

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Plan by Walter M. Förderer, Schaffhausen and Basel

The area involved was declared to form part of the core periphery within the scope of a town-planning scheme. Thereupon the owner together with the architect Walter M. Förderer put up a house with premises to let with shops on the ground floor. The question then arose as to what to do with the remainder of the site located on the other side of the street. The small community at the present does not suffer another building of this type, and the owner of the site, moreover, is not willing to finance another such building. For this reason the architect conceived a commercial building growing gradually to the dimensions of the permitted volume, thus slowly and gradually adapting itself to the mounting importance of the town. There is being erected for the time being only a

foundation structure, whose outside walls enclose a large building site. The commercial building in question is being erected on a provisional basis within this fenced off area. Between the building and the outside wall there are created open tracts which can be roofed over as required. The provisional character of the project is concealed from public view. At a later date the building can be fully expanded.

CIP, Centre interprofessionnel (Interprofessional Centre), Geneva

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1964-1966. Architects: Jean-Pierre Dom and François Maurice, FAS, Geneva

The nature of the building is determined by its situation between steeply descending streets. First of all, a foundation structure had to be set up on which the main building rests. In this way the entrance floor could be developed as an open area, with the office building above it resting on pillars.

On the basement level are parking facilities as well as an auditorium with a seating capacity of 300. The ground floor is a stone-paved plaza, part of it being a garden, containing the entrance lobbies and the access to the four lifts. The upper floors contain freely disposable office premises which are used by the different business associations.

Savings and Loan Bank of the City of Solothurn

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1966. Architectural Team: Wirz + Sperisen, Solothurn
Interior Decorateur: Fritz Maurer, Zurich

The new building of the Savings Bank of the City of Solothurn is located immediately to the west of the old town centre. Two houses were pulled down in the densely built up neighbourhood in order to make room for the five-and-a-half-storey bank. We have here a steel skeleton construction with visible supports and fire bulkheads of concrete. The steel construction of the faces was covered with rough-hewn Solothurn limestone slabs. On the ground floor is the main tellers' hall with its very carefully designed windows.

Swiss Credit Bank, Solothurn

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1966. Architect: H. Sperisen SIA, Solothurn

It became possible to pull together a site between two streets in the old town on different levels and containing seven old dwellings and various small yards. The new construction, again, comprises five different houses. The bank itself is accessible from both streets; the difference in level could be exploited in the development of the basements. On the ground floor are the tellers' windows, with the secretariat above, and on the second floor a conference room. Additional premises on the second floor and on the top floor are let and can be incorporated later within the bank. Construction was rendered very difficult by the archaeological finds on the site and by the necessity of protecting the walls of the Roman camp. On the other hand, old building elements were employed in the new structure.

Series and modulus in the recent work of Richard Paul Lohse

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by Eugen Gomringer

During the last few years there have been an ever growing number of exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad of the works of the Zurich painter Richard Paul Lohse (born 1902). There has become apparent the consistency underlying his work, which keeps within the deliberately restricted frame of reference of constructive art. This element of his idiom became apparent and was recognized very early, and it has been developed further since the Forties. Whereas formerly Lohse sought to create tectonic structures as each occasion arose, he now realizes the unlimited flexibility in work based on the series and modulus. The author analyzes six compositions by Lohse which demonstrate that the individual works vary greatly as appearances and so prove the manifold nature of his creative methods.

In the textile workshop of Bauhaus 1919-1931

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by Gunta Stadler-Stölzl

The weaver Gunta Stadler-Stölzl, born in Munich in 1897 and resident in Zurich since 1931, went to Weimar as early as the autumn of 1919, that is, at the very beginnings of Bauhaus, where she was at first an 'apprentice', then a 'journeyman' and from 1927 a 'Bauhaus master'. Her recollections are of particular interest, since they describe the first tentative developments in Weimar, the setting up of the textile workshop, in which the author was a prime mover, and finally, the migration to Dessau (April 1925). In the new workshop building in Dessau it became possible to experiment systematically with new materials and to investigate the functions of fabrics in order to arrive at strict norms. Previously only hand-crafted individual pieces had been fashioned; the new activities were owing to industrial orders.