

Reflections of Kleines Haus

In the middle of the village of Jonschwil in Altoggenburg, Switzerland, a typical old storage house was constructively secured. Three superimposed rooms with wet cells were installed one above the other, opening up a spiraling and vertically upward living space through all three floors.

On the square floor plan of 6 x 6 meters emerges now a "small house" with not quite 99 square meters of living space. The openings in the interior connect the rooms, large windows create connections to the nearby surroundings and perspectives emerge.

The spatial circumstances reminds of Japanese room constellations. The house has no corridors but consists of a sequence of rooms. They can be experienced in different sequences and as well by sitting on horizontal nets.

The materials are clearly reduced and natural. The contrasts and cracks of the materials meet each other without lamination. Often the materials are unconventionally used and the traces of work are part of the design.

The house has no cellar because of the groundwater and the technical equipment is tiny that it can be found in a closet in the washroom. Small also means a little volume to heat. A thick insulation of wood fibre and sheep's wool protects the house. The wood stove in the middle floor can get support by the floor heating that lies in the simple ground underlay.

The weather will reflect over the years on the wooden façade. The squared timbers from local larch and the simple wooden windows from pine will react differently depending the localisation on the facade and to the surrounding. The later emerging visible screw pattern counteracts the aging.

According to the preservation of the townscape image, the restrained building refers to the historical context and it shapes the place sustainably.

Reflections of Sustainability

The building materials are untreated, open screwed and mostly uncut. They are removable and reusable. The house can be seen as a store of building materials.

The kitchen also works according to this principle of reuse. A wooden frame in which the devices are placed and come from the component exchange trade. The idea of reuse also in detail.

The small footprint offers enough space for a family with two children. The vertical living space connects all rooms and living in the smallest space becomes an event that promotes connections. Retreats are always possible and therefore more conscious to experience.

The small footprint will also be followed by low construction costs. In addition, there is a low energy consumption, which entails small additional costs.

Reduction, renunciation and sufficiency are important representatives of sustainability for us - and as is well known, less is more.

The fact that the environment is small is more of a coincidence. In any case, it is easier to maintain and offers space for a vegetable garden that is available at the expense of the parking lot.