

From the gta Archives

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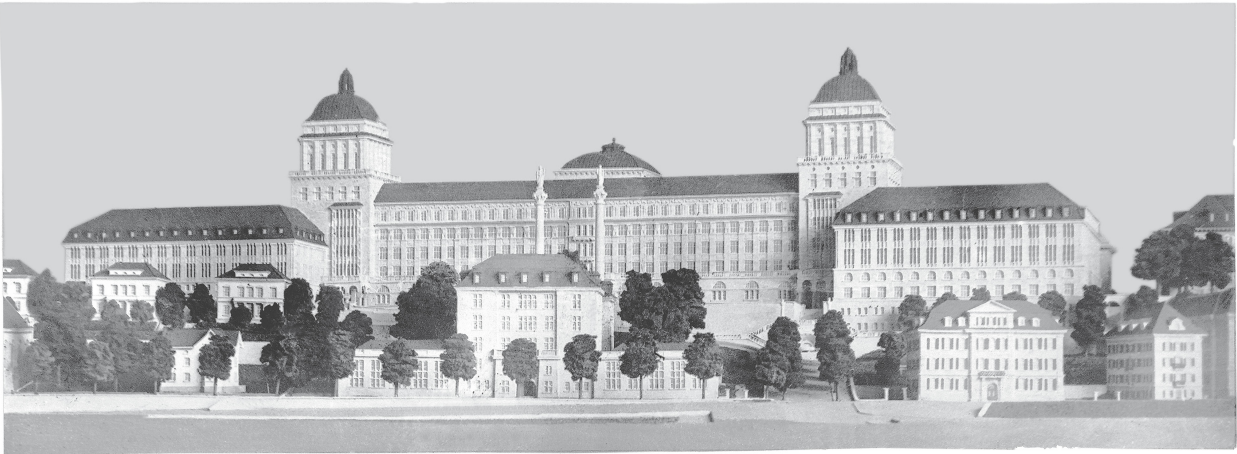
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From the gta Archives Selected by Daniel Weiss

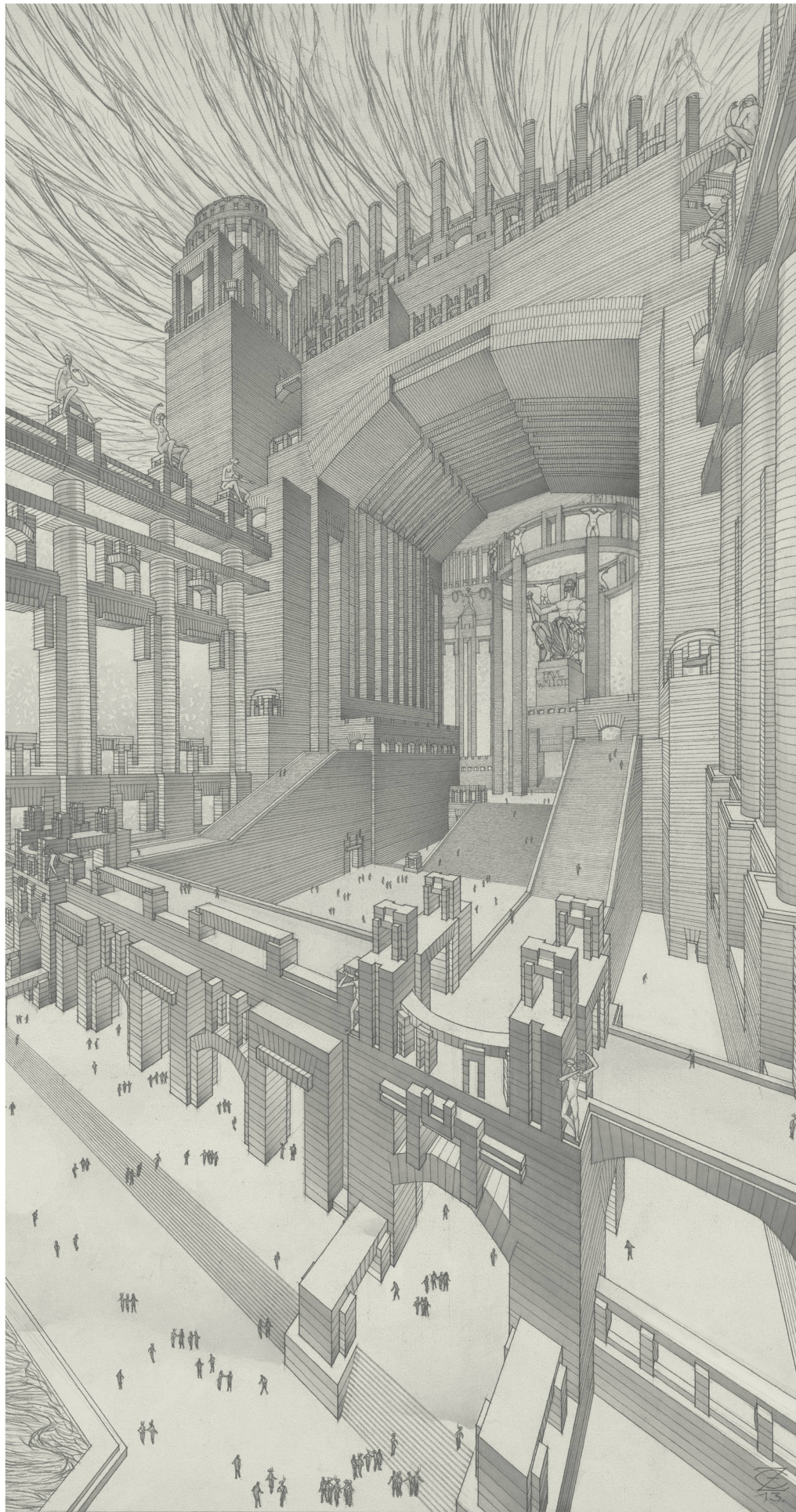
1 Karl Moser, Study for the extension of the University of Zurich; model photograph, 1917; Bequest of Karl Moser, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

To this day, visitors arriving at Zurich's main train station see a skyline crowned as much by Robert Curjel and Karl Moser's main building for the University of Zurich (completed in 1914) as by Gottfried Semper's main building for the Federal Polytechnic School (now ETH Zurich) of 1864. The arrangement of Curjel and Moser's university building into distinct volumes asymmetrically grouped around a central tower, and its careful integration into the terrain, lends it a certain lightness despite its size. During the First World War, Moser, alongside other previously progressive exponents of Jugendstil, increasingly turned to neo-classicism. In 1917 he proposed extending the main university building by mirroring it to create an enormous symmetrical complex.



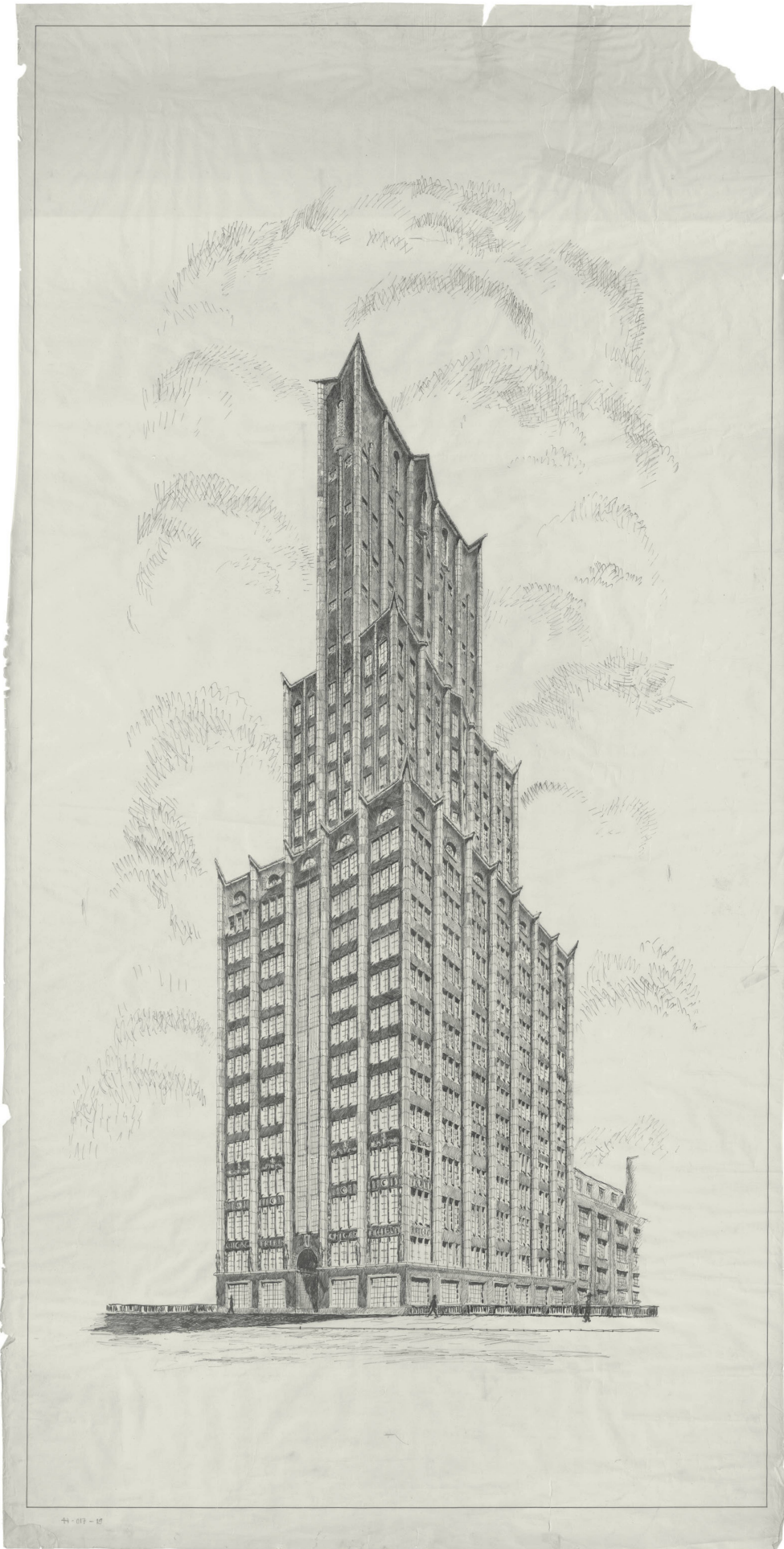
2 Carl Zehnder, *Hall with Memorial*; perspective drawing, 1913; Bequest of Carl Zehnder, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

Carl Zehnder studied architecture at the Bauschule des Eidgenössischen Polytechnikums in Zurich and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before moving to Berlin to work with Paul Wallot on the details of the Reichstag. After returning to Zurich, he directed the Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts) but retired to private life in 1902 – at the age of 43. From 1895 until the 1930s, he produced hundreds of large-format perspective drawings. The idealized architectures they depicted were initially clearly influenced by Piranesi and Italian stage design painting. Zehnder's later architectural visions increasingly fell under the spell of Wilhelmine monumental architecture, in particular Bruno Schmitz's *Völkerschlachtdenkmal*, and also began to display Art Deco influences. This drawing from 1913 shows a ceremonial square with monumental stairways leading up to a gigantic statue of Paul Wallot.



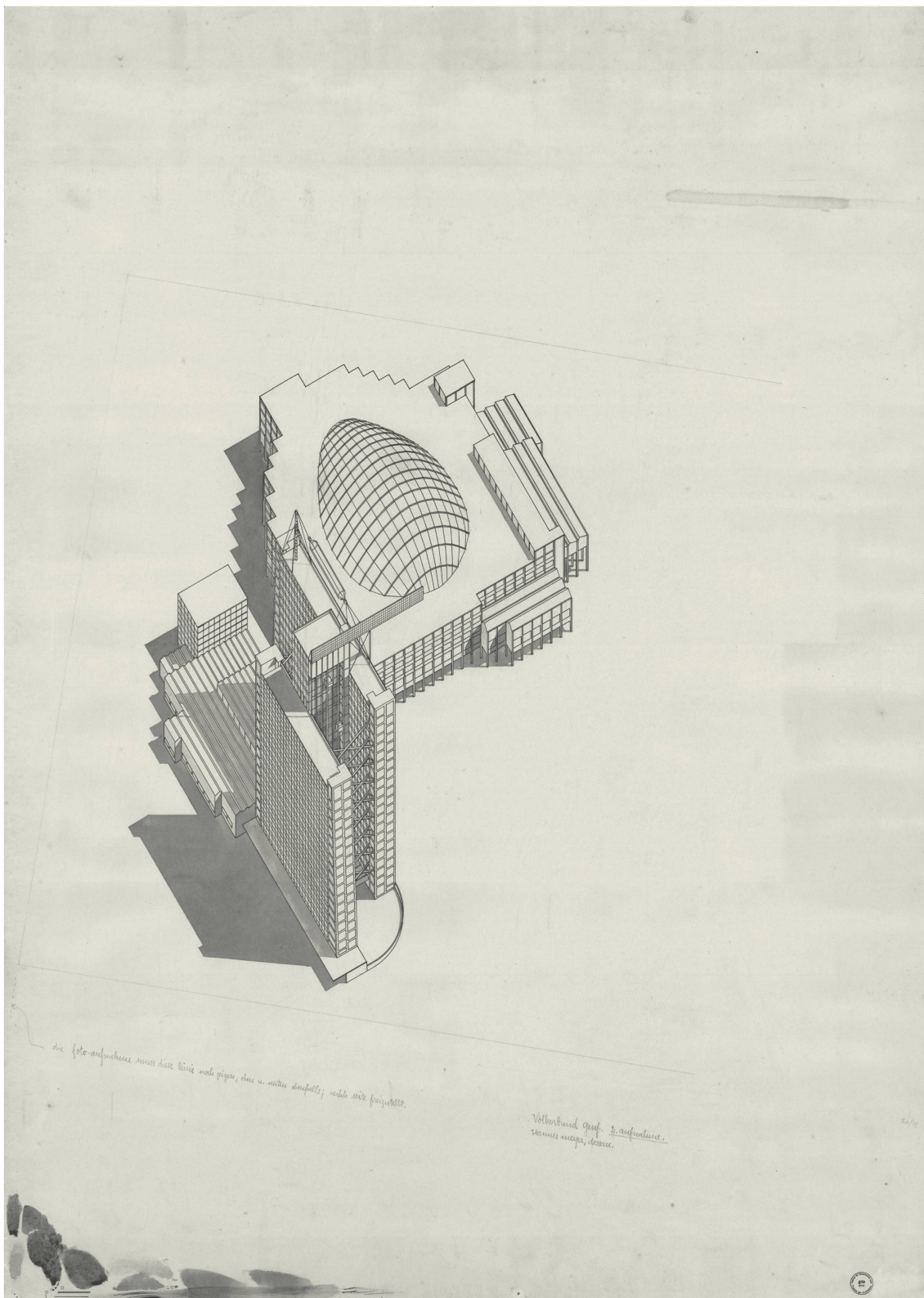
3 Steger & Egender, competition entry for the Chicago Tribune Tower; perspective drawing, 1922; Bequest of Karl Egender, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

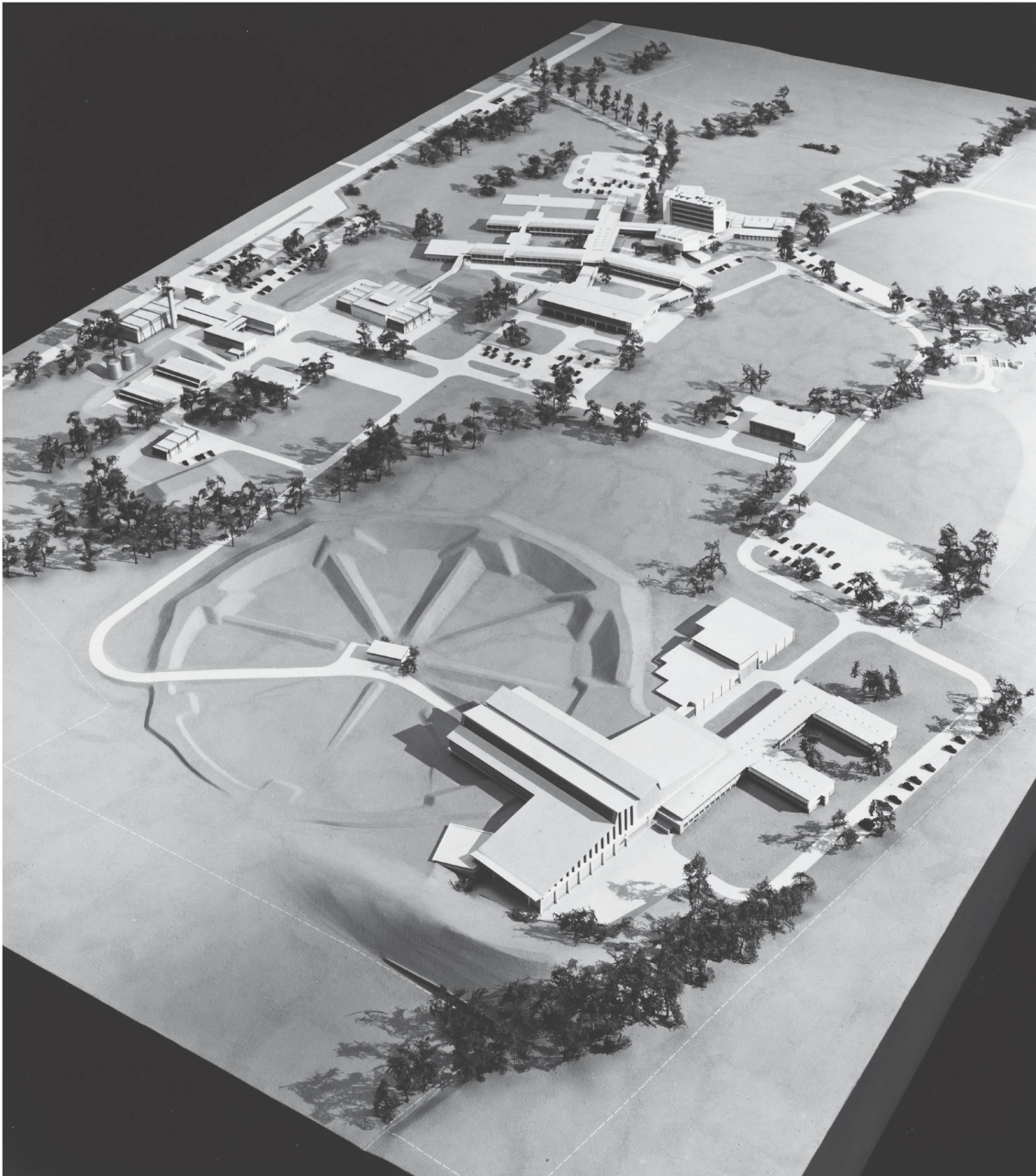
The international Chicago Tribune Tower competition in 1922 was doubtless one of the most ambitious open competitions of the twentieth century. Nothing less than "the most beautiful and eye-catching building in the world" was called for. Some 263 offices took part in the worldwide competition, including transatlantic contributions by Walter Gropius, Adolf Loos and Max Taut. Much less famous was the Zurich office of Steger & Egender. A decade before the first (rather modest) high-rises were built in Switzerland, the two young architects designed a delicate, vertically articulated ziggurat, its pointed edges reaching dramatically towards the sky. Their subsequently built projects, such as the Kunstgewerbeschule or the Hallenstadion in Zurich, were characterized by a far more sober formal language.



4 Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer, competition entry for the Palais des Nations Geneva; axonometry, 1927; Bequest of Hannes Meyer, gfa Archives, ETH Zurich.

The League of Nations, founded directly after the First World War, began looking for an adequate architectural form for its new headquarters in Geneva in 1927. The international competition led to a major dispute in which Le Corbusier, who had won one of the prizes and energetically lobbied for control of the project, was one of the main protagonists. While Le Corbusier's design self-consciously referred to palace building typologies, Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer presented a functionalist machine. Their design, whose essence is expressed in this axonometric projection, was awarded third prize but became one of the icons of the avant-garde and played a role in Walter Gropius' inviting Meyer to the Bauhaus later that year.



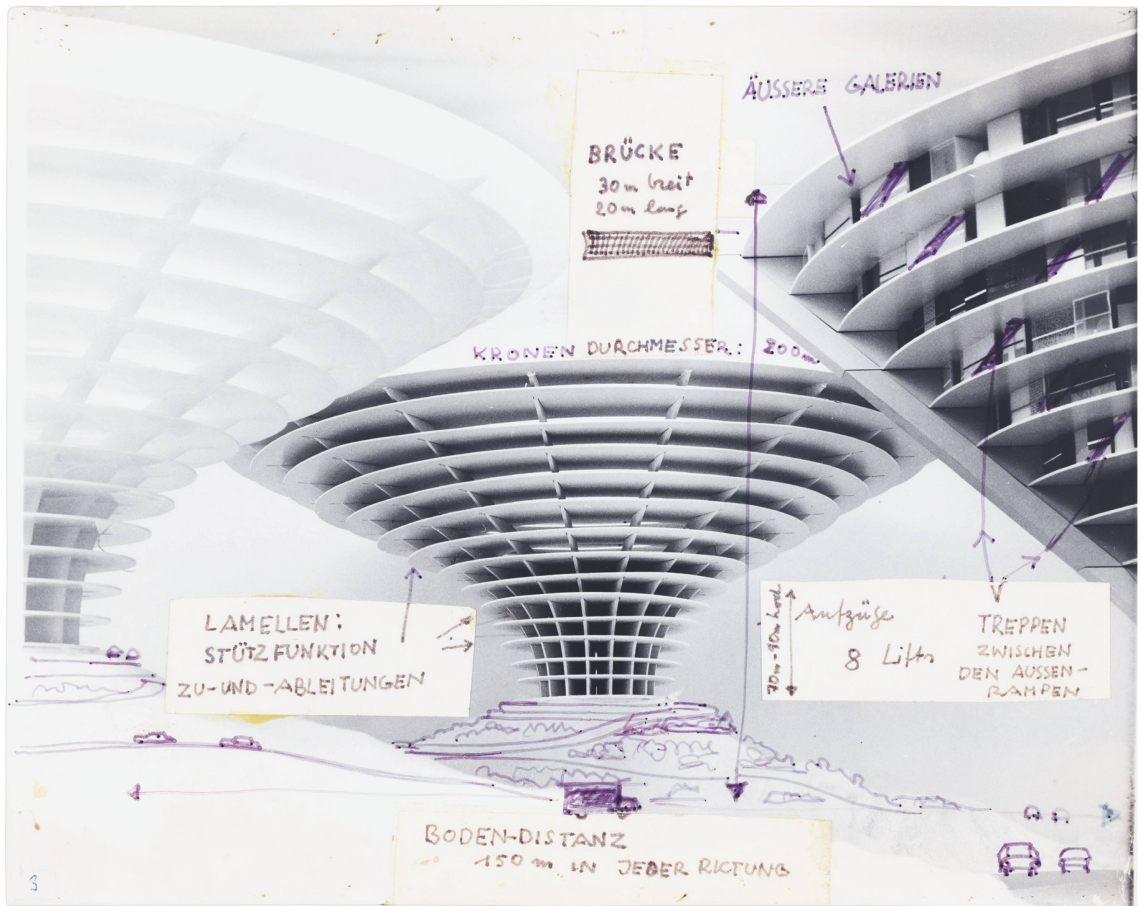


5 Rudolf Steiger and Peter Steiger, Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire CERN Genève, model photograph, around 1953; Bequest of Haefeli Moser Steiger, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

From above, the core apparatus of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) is only visible as a ring-shaped earthen rampart some 200 meters across, like the ruin of an ancient fortification. The rest of the particle accelerator, built from 1953 to 1958, is subterranean. Swiss civil engineering has a long and proud tradition of inverted monuments. Across the country, countless infrastructure projects, railroad and road tunnels, water galleries and underground deliveries, military caverns and civil defense installations conceal their dimensions underground.

6 Walter Jonas, Intrapolis; montage with model photographs of three Intrahouse units, around 1964; Bequest of Walter Jonas, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

In 1961 the Swiss artist Walter Jonas first published his concept of Intrapolis, the city of the future. The city was to be made up of mushroom-shaped megastructures called "Intrahouses" with diameters of around 200 meters. Each was intended to accommodate 2,000 residents. Service, shopping, and entertainment facilities were located in their shafts, while in the funnel above, public facilities and terraced apartments opened up to air, light, and sun. Jonas, who together with Michel Ragon and Yona Friedman founded the Groupe international de l'architecture prospective (GIAP) in 1965, tried with great persistence to realize his vision. He presented this vision in professional journals and at exhibitions, founded working groups, and looked for potential investors. He sought to build a prototype for the 1964 national exhibition in Lausanne. His final attempt, a contract with a building consortium for the construction of several modules in the ill-fated new city of Wulfen in Germany, ended in an obscure legal dispute in the early 1970s.



OBJEKT: HKW ,Wallisellen

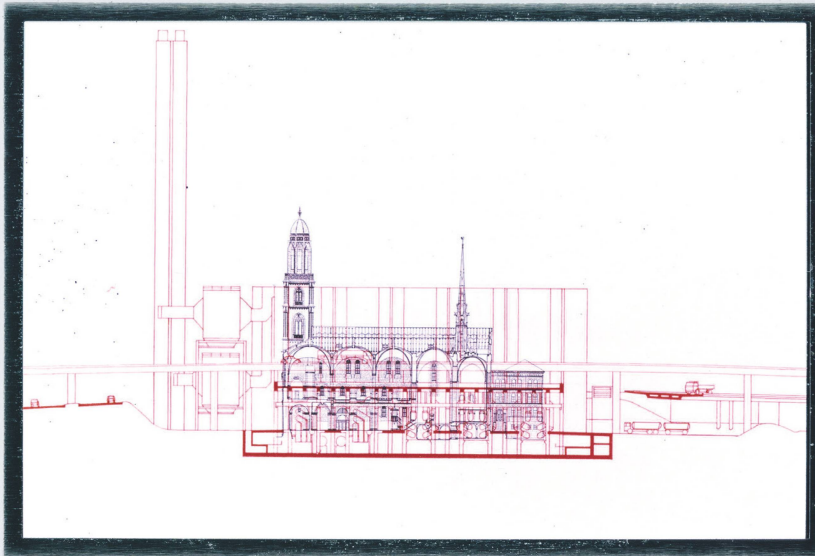
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JOB #408

MÄSSSTAB VERGLEICH

JAHR: 1977

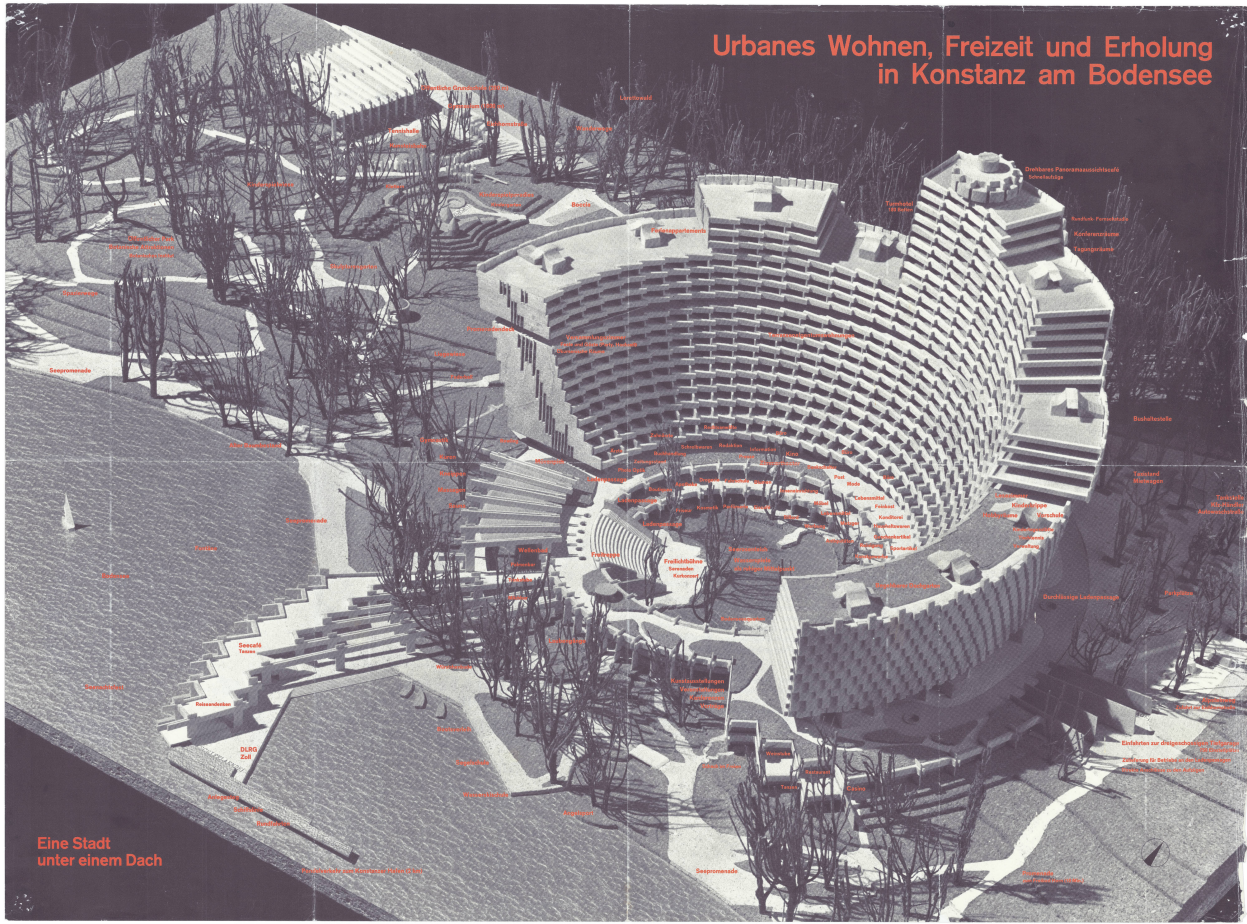
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7 Pierre Zoelly, Thermal Power Station Aubrugg in comparison with the Grossmünster Zurich; slide 1977; Bequest of Pierre Zoelly, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

As a landmark visible from afar, the Aubrugg power plant, built by Pierre Zoelly from 1975 to 1978, dominates the fragmented sprawl to the north of Zurich. The folded, windowless flanks lend the huge concrete sculpture a striking dynamism, like a ship parting the freeway junction that surrounds it. For the easy comparison of size, Zoelly superimposed his technological monument onto slides of various historical sacred buildings, including the largest church in Zurich, the Romanesque cathedral known as the Grossmünster.



In 1970 André M. Studer was commissioned by an investor to plan a neighborhood for 2,000 residents on the outskirts of Konstanz, complete with shopping center, restaurants, and hotel. In order to preserve the parkland on the shore of Lake Constance as much as possible, Studer concentrated the entire neighborhood in a crater-like mega-structure that opened up to the lake and the Alpine panorama. The fragmentary appearance of the large form is reminiscent of representations of the Tower of Babel. The project, repeatedly delayed by financial difficulties, ultimately failed due to a shift in social attitudes. Increasing concern with questions of environmental and landscape protection led to a building law in 1971 that limited the height of new structures on the shore of Lake Constance to a maximum of six stories.