

MEDIENMITTEILUNG**Feldmühle site: special development plan submitted to cantonal authorities**

Zurich, 17 December 2019 – In 2017, Steiner Investment Foundation purchased the disused Feldmühle site in Rorschach and appointed Steiner AG to develop a vibrant urban quarter with residential and commercial units. The planned use mix requires rezoning of the previously industrial site as a so-called "focal zone" for regeneration. To pave the way for the transformation and preparation of an architectural concept, a special development plan drawn up in collaboration with the town of Rorschach has been submitted to the cantonal authorities for preliminary review.

The 27,500 m² Feldmühle site is located on a major urban artery south of Rorschach town centre and directly adjoining Rorschach Stadt railway station. The station is currently undergoing improvements that will turn it into the main hub of the town centre area. This upgrade will at the same time enhance the urban prominence of the Feldmühle site. Having been closed-off for the last few years, it is set to be opened up and transformed into a vibrant urban district that enjoys all the synergies of a combined living and working location.

Creation of a focal zone

To establish the legal basis for flexible redevelopment of the Feldmühle site, the city of Rorschach is planning to reclassify the existing industrial estate as a so-called focal zone under the Canton of St. Gallen Planning and Building Act (PBG). Reserved for strategic development areas, such focal zones can, in principle, accommodate any facility type (residential, employment, retail, leisure, public) that is appropriate for local planning purposes.

A special development plan serves to concretise the predefined objectives and make them binding on the landowner. In this case, the special development plan is specifically based on the winning proposals put forward by Baumberger & Stegmeier in an architectural competition held as part of the urban planning procedure. This scheme was unanimously selected by the expert jury members, who included municipal representatives. The drawings needed for the special development plan have now been submitted to the cantonal authorities for preliminary review.

The special development plan has the following aims:

- rezoning of the Feldmühle site as residential and working location
- development of a new, vibrant urban quarter near Rorschach Stadt railway station
- definition of the watercourse corridor along a section of the Kleiner Feldmühlebach stream

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The special development plan ensures

- the amenity of the Feldmühle site in terms of architecture, urban design and open spaces
- access for motorised and non-motorised private transport
- implementation of schemes for an underpass at Rorschach Stadt station and town centre bypass
- appropriate treatment of heritage sites and buildings

Following the preliminary review by the cantonal authorities, the amended special development plan will be presented to interested Rorschach residents at a "Stadtapéro" (civic drinks reception) event scheduled for the summer of 2020, ahead of the consultation procedure. The plans will be publicly displayed after the Stadtapéro, probably in the second half of 2020. The preliminary cantonal review, public display of plans and several information events will allow as much feedback as possible to be gathered from the local population and the various interests to be balanced.

More homes and businesses at a top location

Striking features of the Baumberger & Stegmeier Architekten scheme include the distinctive character of the various buildings and the wide range of potential uses. A continuous green space links the buildings and courtyards. Individual historic structures that create a sense of place will be retained and integrated in the context of the new buildings such that the original character of the former industrial site remains perceptible. Owner-occupied and rental accommodation will each account for around 40% of the development. As around a fifth of the space is earmarked for commercial use, the site will offer a mixture of homes and workplaces. If all goes smoothly, the project will be completed by 2025. Ongoing documentation of the project is available at www.feldmühle.ch. Those interested can also register on this site for newsletter updates on the progress of the project.

Investors and project development

Steiner Investment Foundation (SIF), which was established in 2016, is an investment foundation governed by Swiss law. The purpose of the independent, self-managed foundation is to provide asset management of innovative and sustainable investment solutions exclusively for Swiss occupational pension schemes. Given its purpose, SIF is interested in long-term engagements.

Steiner AG, one of the leading project developers and general/total contractors (GC/TC) in Switzerland, offers comprehensive services in the fields of new construction, refurbishment and real estate development. The company, which was established in 1915, has constructed more than 1,500 residential projects, 540 commercial properties, 45 hotels and 200 infrastructure facilities such as universities, schools, hospitals, retirement homes and prisons. Steiner AG has its headquarters in Zurich and is represented by branches in Basel, Bern, Geneva, Tolochenaz and Lucerne.

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