

Decision on design competition for a residential and commercial development in Aarau

Zurich / Winterthur, 22 March 2022 – SWICA and Steiner AG held a design competition for the development of the "Küttigerstrasse" site, which is located centrally in Aarau, in the Scheibenschachen district to the north of the historic centre. The judging panel unanimously recommended adoption of the project design "Wohnen am Weinbergplatz" submitted by Atelier M Architekten.

The sustainable urban development of the "Küttigerstrasse" site, which comprises three plots with a total area of around 4,000 m², is a joint project of the healthcare organisation SWICA and property developer Steiner AG. The design competition was initiated and overseen by the two partners in consultation with the town of Aarau. The site is on the north side of the River Aare and within walking distance of Aarau's historic centre. In terms of its urban design objectives, the development project targets a northward expansion of the inner-city area and a further upgrade to the surrounding neighbourhood.

An ensemble of four buildings

The project design comprises four new buildings with around 70 attractive rental and owner-occupied apartments. It also includes a functional commercial development with local stores with good street-level visibility to improve the shopping amenities for the entire neighbourhood. The winning project carefully integrates the "Kreuz" building (Küttigerstrasse 16) in a manner that respects and preserves its historical value. As a significant focal point, the interplay of this historic building and the façade of the new complex gives the development a distinctive architectural feature and upgrades the entire area by the Weinbergkreisel roundabout by contrasting the placement of the new-build structures with the existing trees. The present filling station will be moved slightly to take account of road safety requirements and will be integrated sympathetically into the architectural idiom of the development. Special attention has been paid to a sustainable mobility concept. Despite the spatial constraints, the design allows for varied and good quality outdoor areas with a neighbourhood character.

The panel of judges unanimously recommended that more detailed work be undertaken on the proposal "Wohnen am Weinbergplatz" submitted by the Zurich-based architecture firm Atelier M Architekten.

Assessment of the project by the panel of judges:

The project proposal delivers good solutions to very many quality aspects of the assignment. The decision to combine just four buildings to create an urban development is effective. The proposal demonstrates a skilful approach to this high-density urban setting. The concept for the outdoor areas provides for three open areas or courtyards with different attributes.

The "Weinbergplatz", "Atelierhof" and "Gartenhof" areas divide the site into a logical sequence of outdoor areas with their own atmospheres and appeal for different uses. The purposeful arcade and tree-lined area on the street side facing the roundabout reinforces

its role as the gateway to the town. Setting the new buildings back from the Küttigerstrasse creates parking space for visitors' cars and bicycles as well as space for additional trees. On the Gysulastrasse side, the presence of the buildings is tempered by a row of trees. The robust urban development, careful balance of urban elegance and good marketability, proposed architectural principles, appealing plasticity of the structures, and coherent overall layout are convincing.

The following five planning offices were invited to take part in the competition (*in alphabetical order*):

- Atelier M Architekten GmbH, Zurich -- *winner* –
Landscape architect: atelier soto, Basel
- GLS Architekten AG, Aarau
Landscape architect: Chaves Biedermann GmbH, Frauenfeld
- Graf Biscioni Architekten AG, Winterthur
Landscape architect: SKK AG, Wettingen
- Luca Selva Architekten AG BSA, Basel
Landscape architect: Westpol GmbH, Basel
- SLIK Architekten GmbH, Zurich
Landscape architect: Andreas Geser, Zurich

An independent panel chaired by an external expert conducted a professional assessment of the proposals on the basis of the high quality specifications that had been defined. Alongside SWICA and Steiner AG, the panel comprised specialists with the expertise to assess the urban development aspects, architecture and landscape architecture, as well as representatives of the Aarau municipal building office.

Exhibition of the project proposals

The project proposals submitted by all planning offices involved will be on display to the public in the fire station at Erlinsbacherstrasse 21, 5000 Aarau between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m from Tuesday, 29 March to Thursday, 31 March 2022.

Planned procedure

Steiner AG plans to refine the recommended project proposal in collaboration with SWICA and submit a planning application in autumn 2022. The start of construction work is planned for early 2024 and the new apartments and commercial units should be available from the end of 2025.

Steiner AG

Steiner AG is a leading real estate service provider with a focus on project development and construction. Founded in 1915, it has its headquarters in Zurich and is represented by branches in Basel, Bern, Lucerne, Tolochenaz and Geneva. With a development portfolio worth more than CHF 6 billion, Steiner is one of Switzerland's largest real estate developers. Its portfolio comprises a wide range of residential, office, industrial and logistics projects plus proprietary product innovations such as the Werkarena, Manufakt and Steiner Student Hotel brands. In French-speaking Switzerland, Steiner Construction is

the market leader in real estate construction working on the total (design-and-build) and general contractor principle. Steiner AG contributes its 100-plus years of experience to the two recently established business areas: Steiner Financial Initiatives for new investment solutions, and Steiner Digital for digital collaboration platforms serving properties' entire life cycles.

SWICA

Healthcare organisation SWICA has approximately 1.5 million insured persons and around 27,000 corporate clients, making it one of Switzerland's leading health and accident insurers with a premium volume of CHF 5.0 billion. With a portfolio geared to corporate and private customers, it provides comprehensive cover for medical expenses and loss of earnings due to illness and accident. As a healthcare partner, SWICA combines a top-class range of offerings with above-average service quality. SWICA is headquartered in Winterthur and operates throughout Switzerland.

Information for the media

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