

# THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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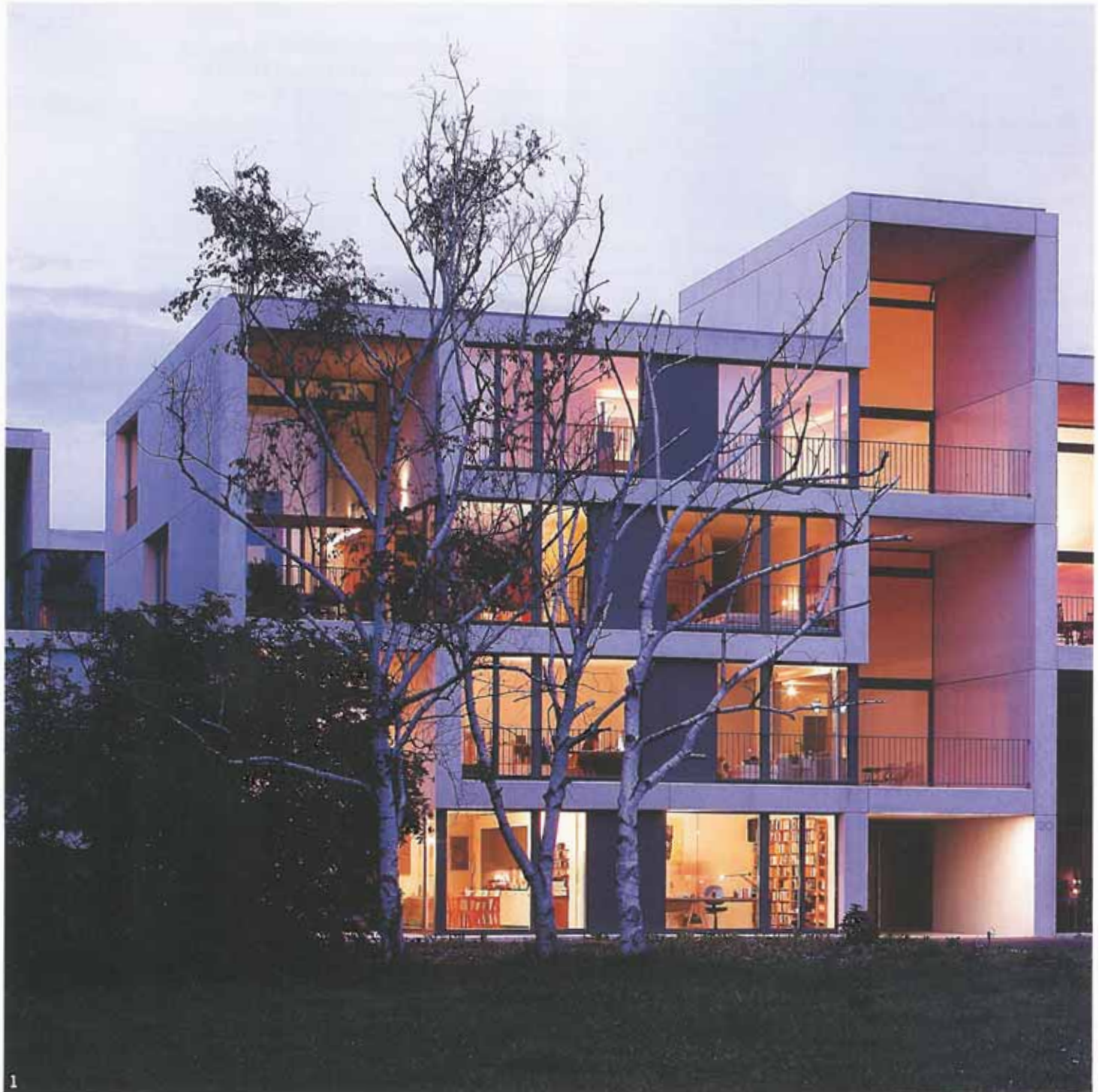
**Stuttgart station / The trouble with beauty**





ZAPCO  
PRACTICE PROFILE

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# ZAPCO PRACTICE PROFILE



ZAPCO LTD ©

## Philosophy

Zapco is a Swiss firm dedicated to developing a new type of urban living to help counter the increasingly built-up nature of the countryside. Zapco's urban living developments take the form of apartments that offer the advantages of a family home. Varying room heights make for spacious interiors and optimise natural lighting, while open floor plans and spacious yet private outdoor areas allow flexibility in use. The basic development types can be realised in different structural forms to accommodate a range of target groups and locations.

## Proposal

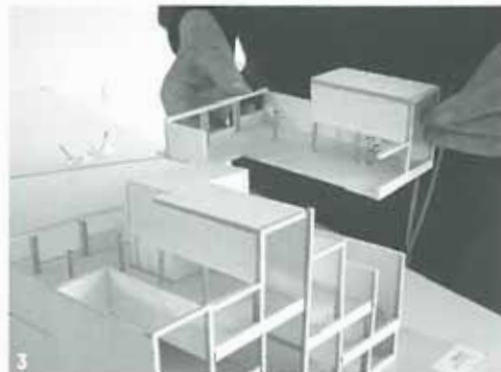
In developing a wide range of different projects, from courtyard developments, multi-storey buildings and high-rise developments to integrated clusters, Zapco acts as architects and planners. Landowners, investors and other developers benefit from the firm's wide-ranging expertise acquired from earlier development projects such as Pile Up and Stack Up.

Buildings employ a modular design in terms of structural and service engineering, together with a high degree of prefabrication, thus rationalising and streamlining costs. The use of intelligent heating and fresh air systems in combination with renewable types of energy means the strictest ecological requirements are met. With their ingenious use of space and high level of quality, Zapco's innovative designs retain their value, a fact confirmed by both the scale of demand and level of occupant satisfaction.

## History

Zapco was founded in the early 1970s as a subsidiary of Zwimpher Partner Architekten in Basel in order to realise tourism and urban development projects in Saudi Arabia and Ecuador. Zwimpher Partners were formed as a result of successful competition entries for the design of schools, colleges, churches and other major projects. The practice went on to found several housing construction cooperatives and undertake major projects in the role of developer.

Since 2004, Zapco has existed as a separate, independent company specialising in research, development and project realisation. Its focus is on urban planning within the context of current and future planning issues, such as the increasing encroachment of housing on the rural landscape due to a lack of attractive residential options in urban areas.







- 1 [previous page]\_ Pile Up am Rhein in Rheinfelden, Switzerland
- 2\_ Cartoon by Niculae Asciu in *The International Herald Tribune*, June 2002
- 3\_ The first Pile Up model, 2002
- 4\_ Pile Up Quellengarten, also in Rheinfelden
- 5\_ Pile Up am Neuhuserwald, in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland
- 6\_ Pile Up Baarerstrasse, in Zug, Switzerland

# ZAPCO PRACTICE PROFILE



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## Timeline

2002-present

Development of Pile Up type

2004 Reorganisation of Zapco Ltd development company

2006 Pile Up am Rhein, Rheinfelden, building of 24 residential and service units

2006-present

Development of Stack Up type

2007 Pile Up Baarerstrasse, Zug, building of 30 residential and service units

2009 Pile Up Quellengarten, Rheinfelden, building of 18 residential and service units

2010 Pile Up am Neuhuserwald, Neuhausen am Rheinfall, building of 16 residential and service units

2011 Stack Up Quellengarten, Rheinfelden, building of 42 residential and service units

## PILE UP

Pile Up is the first Zapco development type. It was launched in 2004 as a response to the increasing encroachment on greenfield sites by small-scale development structures. With Pile Up, Zapco offers urban apartments that have the advantages of a single-family home:

- Living and outdoor area with a room height of 5.6m
- Optimal incident natural lighting penetrates deep into the interior of the apartment
- Residential units of approx. 80m<sup>2</sup> to 300m<sup>2</sup> plus an external area of around 20m<sup>2</sup>

- open floor-plan structure allows long-term flexibility in use and individual finishing options - high quality office and studio uses can be accommodated
- Barrier-free living on one level
- Design can incorporate all forms of structural systems

## STACK UP

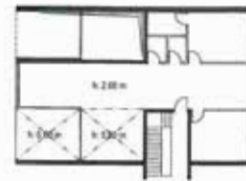
The desire for a flexible, open-plan layout and generous space standards also highlights the contrasting need for a personal, private domain coupled with intelligent storage space. Stack Up provides a centrally located multifunctional space which frees up floor space in living areas and can be used flexibly.

Stack Up's appeal can be summarised as follows:

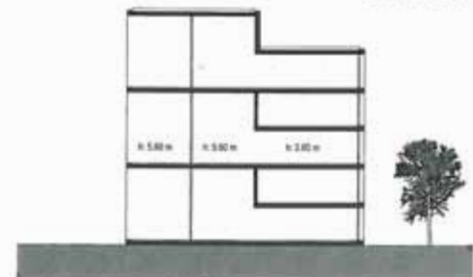
- Different room heights in areas with different uses, for example: main living area with a room height of 3.05m; double-height external space with a room height of 5.6m; multifunctional space with a room height of 2.05m
- Optimal incident natural lighting that penetrates deep into the interior of the apartment
- Residential units of approx. 80m<sup>2</sup> to 300m<sup>2</sup>, plus an external area of around 16m<sup>2</sup>
- Long-term flexibility in use and individual finishing options - high-quality office and studio uses can be accommodated
- Barrier-free living on one level (with some restrictions concerning multifunctional space)
- A design that can incorporate all forms of structural systems

PILE UP® 1:600

typical floor plan



cross section

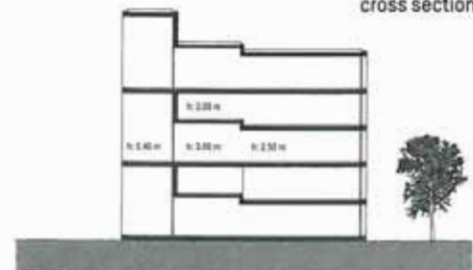


STACK UP® 1:600

typical floor plan



cross section





7\_8\_Pile Up  
living area  
9\_Stack Up  
living area  
10\_Stack Up  
multifunctional  
space





# ZAPCO PRACTICE PROFILE



Differentiated room heights are characteristic of both Pile Up and Stack Up. These are clearly reflected in the forms of their facades.

## Architecture

With their contrasting and alternating of high, normal and low room heights, Pile Up and Stack Up create a unique facade structure that is articulated in a new, architecturally distinctive form. This has clearly been recognised within the architecture scene, and has been implemented in projects from Zurich to Hamburg and New York.

Retail, commercial and office uses can be layered on top of one another in large clusters. In this way, a living architectural form is created in which content and design complement one another.

## Versatility

The finishing of the 100 Pile Up units constructed to date and the 40 Stack Up units currently under construction illustrate the wide range of possibilities offered by the open building structure. These include the individual positioning and design of the kitchens and sanitary facilities, the omission of partition walls with the aim of creating large single room units, and the selection and positioning of fitted furniture, floor coverings and wall finishes to permit residential, service or studio use. Stack Up's multi-functional space can be used as storage, archive space or home gym. It can also accommodate a sun bed, sauna or many other options.

Pile Up and Stack Up fulfil the much cited demand for sustainability in terms of adaptable spatial and service engineering requirements.

Individual finishing is subject to certain rules. Service shafts are fixed, and the installation of suspended ceilings in the tall room typical of Pile Up is not permitted. This is primarily for spatial and architectural reasons, but also because it would interfere with the increased level of acoustic insulation. In the case of rented properties, finishes are largely fixed, with two to three options offered for the arrangement of the floor plan.

The outdoor space can be converted into a conservatory through the addition of simple openable glazing. This is primarily recommended in urban locations subject to increased noise levels on the lower floors of the building. Alternating open and glazed outdoor areas further enriches the tectonic qualities of the building.





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- 11\_ Stack Up  
variation, garden  
apartment
- 12\_ Stack Up study,  
for a development  
in Esslingen,  
Switzerland
- 13\_ Stack Up  
living area,  
view from terrace
- 14\_ Pile Up/Stack Up  
study, for a scheme  
in Vienna, Austria

Photo 1, 4-8  
Johannes Marburg, CH - Geneva

Photo 3, 14  
Zapco Ltd, CH - Basel

Visualisation 9-13  
Odra Sikula, CZE - Ostrava - Přivoz



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