



"Sugus" housing complex and the *Gleisfeld*. Zurich, 2020. Photo by Adrià Goula

# Building Communities

## Rehabilitation and Housing in Zurich

Building communities implies creating relationships that hold together people and things from different backgrounds and different times, a community between new and old neighbours, between new and old fragments of a built city in which, in the end, everyone, people and things, live in a new unity.

When we talk about building communities we are thinking about a new community built within the city that exists, inviting new neighbours to interact with those who already live there. We propose to work in urban contexts in transformation, observing and identifying the valuable social and physical qualities embedded in the area, and testing its capacity to be expanded and amplified as the basis to create a new urban chapter.

We understand urban rehabilitation as the balance between the recovery of a physical fabric and a social fabric:

both complement each other and work at the same time. To work with the social fabric of a neighbourhood is to observe and incorporate the memory of hundreds of civic, cultural or personal relationships that the neighbourhood had built over time, and still remain invisible but latent.

But not only people contain the memory of a neighbourhood; the buildings are also loaded with memories of the uses of the place: the built fabric is the reflection of a social behaviour. It speaks of a way of using the ground, the sky, of a way of inhabiting... To read the memory contained in buildings and in people is to think about a future that counts on that past.

After two semesters focussing our design studio on the city of Barcelona, we will now work on a very central area of Zurich: the neighbourhood of Neugasse and its relationship with the *Gleisfeld*.