

## Press release 8.8.2016

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### Master builder of the city of Zurich

#### The 100th anniversary of the birth of Werner Stücheli

**The architect Werner Stücheli's nearly 70 buildings and initiatives, including Zurich's first high-rise building, the Schanzengraben promenade and a boat service on the river Limmat, have decisively influenced the way the city looks today. On 10 August 2016 he would have been 100 years old.**

'He was above all a true native of Zurich', wrote the ex-mayor of Zurich Sigmund Widmer in his 1983 obituary of the universally popular architect Werner Stücheli. The architect – who was born in 1916 in Zurich Wiedikon and remained a resident of his hometown throughout his life – had an impact like none other on the architectural development of Zurich from the 1950s onwards. In a creative period spanning nearly 40 years, Werner Stücheli managed to notch up almost 100 architectural and non-architectural projects, of which 67 were in Zurich and 9 were awarded the 'Distinction for Good Buildings in the City of Zurich'.

The initial spark for his career was his successful competition entry for the design of the veterinary faculty of Zurich University, which led to the establishment of his own architectural firm in 1946. The firm's very first project – the Köschenrüti housing estate (1947) – was awarded the 'Distinction for Good Buildings in the City of Zurich'. This was followed in rapid succession by increasingly prestigious commissions, including several high-rise buildings – such as the Zur Bastei office building by the Schanzengraben canal (1955), the city's first high-rise building; the Schmiede Wiedikon high-rise building (1958); and the Schanze office building (1962). Within just ten years, Werner Stücheli was employing a staff of around 40 and his firm had become one of the largest and most distinguished in Zurich. Stücheli was never interested in creating monuments, not with his high-rise buildings nor the large-scale projects that followed, such as the new Swiss Re building (1969, demolished in 2007) or Haus zur Enge (1978). He was more concerned with reconciling the wishes of the client with the demands of making a city worth living in – especially as seen from the perspective of the pedestrian. He saw architecture primarily as a service rather than a form of artistic expression: 'I hold the view – considered heretical in certain circles – that my client should live in his house later, not in mine'.

In addition to his activities as an architect, Werner Stücheli sat on numerous specialist committees, including the Zurich Construction Committee and the Zurich Open Space Committee, where he campaigned for a lakeside promenade that would extend until Wollishofen and a footpath along the Schanzengraben canal. As the chief architect at the Swiss Horticultural Exhibition G59, Stücheli encouraged the introduction of shuttle ferries to the exhibition site, which proved so popular that the city still runs a 'Lim-matschiff' ferry service.

Stücheli's buildings and initiatives continue to enjoy great popularity to this day, notably the aforementioned 'Limmatschiff' service, the Schanzengraben promenade and the Zur Bastei building, which has just been nominated as the city's most popular high-rise building. Although the majority of the works, particularly the high-rise buildings, required special planning permission and good negotiating skills, they stand today as though they had always been there. Stücheli is believed to have said once, 'Genius is being the

first person to think of something that is obvious'. That is something that he managed to accomplish repeatedly.

To the editors:

We would be delighted if you published something to mark the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Werner Stücheli's birth.

If you have any questions or require any visual material, please contact:

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#### Anniversary publication

On 3 November 2016, to mark the occasion of the firm's 70th anniversary, Stücheli Architekten will publish an architecture comic in the crime/detective genre that is set in buildings designed by the firm over the last 70 years.

Review copies may be ordered from:

Stücheli Architekten, Sonja Lüthi, Communication, [s.luethi@stuecheli.ch](mailto:s.luethi@stuecheli.ch), Tel. 044 465 86 40

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#### Kurzbiografie Werner Stücheli

1916	Born on 10 August in Zurich Wiedikon.
1936-41	Studied architecture at the ETH in Zurich under Otto Rudolf Salvisberg and William Dunkel. Worked later in William Dunkel's firm and was an assistant to Hans Hoffmann.
1946	Founded his own firm, which had a staff of around 40 within just ten years.
1963	Nominated for mayor of the city of Zurich, a position which Stücheli decided to decline.
1971	Founded the partnership 'Stücheli Huggenberger Stücheli' together with his long-standing colleagues Theo Huggenberger († 1989) and Ernst Stücheli.
1983	Died unexpectedly of heart failure. The funeral service, attended by around 2,000 mourners, was held in three churches in Zurich.

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#### Selected projects

Cantonal animal hospital and veterinary faculty (competition 1944/1966)  
Köschenrüti housing estate (1947)  
Zur Bastei office building (1955)  
Schmiede Wiedikon high-rise building (1958)  
Swiss Horticultural Exhibition G59 (1959)  
Tages-Anzeiger office building and printing works (1961)  
Franz AG office tower (1962)  
Schanze office building (1962)  
Schwandenholz Cemetery (1966)  
New Swiss Re building on Mythenquai (1969, demolished 2007)  
Bucheggplatz pedestrian footbridge (1972)  
Hoch-Ybrig Sports Centre (1972)  
Renovation of NZZ's printing works and editorial offices (1978)  
Haus zur Enge (1978)

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