



**VELUX®**

**BEAUTY COMES FROM THE INSIDE**  
A Single-Family House near Vienna, Austria

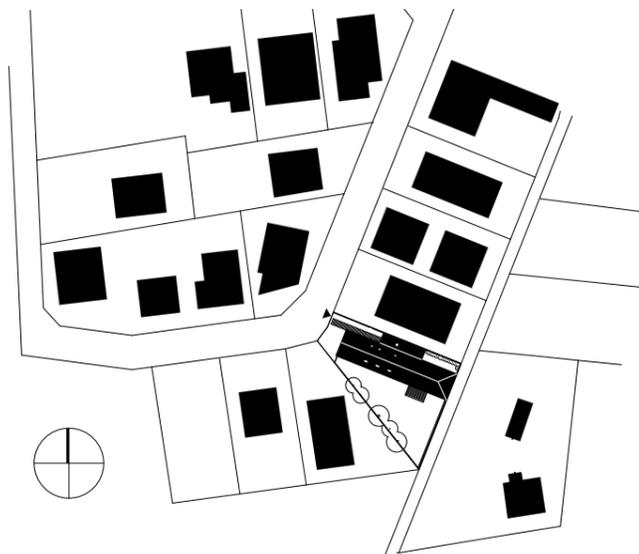


## A VILLAGE IS CHANGING

The house stands in a village eastwards of Vienna, close enough to be an attractive place for people wanting a house with a garden, yet preferring to stay in the vicinity of a big city. Like many beautiful historical villages, also this one has experienced an uncontrolled boom during the last years: nothing of the traditional, well-thought urban structure nor house shapes were kept.

A young family decided to come back to their roots, after years in spent in big cities and abroad, despite those rather uninviting surroundings, for the kid to grow up with their families. They bought a triangular plot between the construction site and rather unappealing villas, determined to build a house and call it their home – and found a planner, who fulfilled their wishes.

Andreas Etzelstorfer is a Viennese architect, founder and owner of a place called "Backraum", which means bakery: the name has more than one meaning to it. On the one hand, he works in a bakery he converted into an office; on the other hand, it indicated a place where ideas are created. His core team is small, but often he collaborates with different people on various projects in fields of architecture, interior design and even photography. Andreas Etzelstorfer's lively interest in the world around led him to research on traditional rural housing typology. The term "Hintaus" describes a road between the barns at the back of farms and the fields, parallel to the main street. It was the place where farm tools used to be deposited, and the kids were playing and animals running free. The barns had traditionally elongated forms, dictated by the wooden construction.



"It's a flat, windy place, with not much beauty in the surroundings of the house. It is very different from the picturesque landscapes we were lucky to build the majority of our projects – admits Andreas Etzelstorfer honestly – the thing we could hold on to during the design process was our great clients, and our love for wooden constructions."

Andreas Etzelstorfer, Backraum

The clients discovered what kind of houses their new neighbours were into only after having bought the land. A rectangular, elongated house stands on the northern edge of the plot, its form derived from traditional shapes of the barns. An unheated entry and technical room could be placed right on the site border. On the south, a wild, English garden is planned, but as the clients moved in just days before the lockdown, they settled for a temporary lawn – a make-shift playground for their little son. The building resembles an introvert person, standing in the edge, gaze turned inwards, oblivious to the boisterous villas in its direct surroundings.





## WOODEN FUTURE

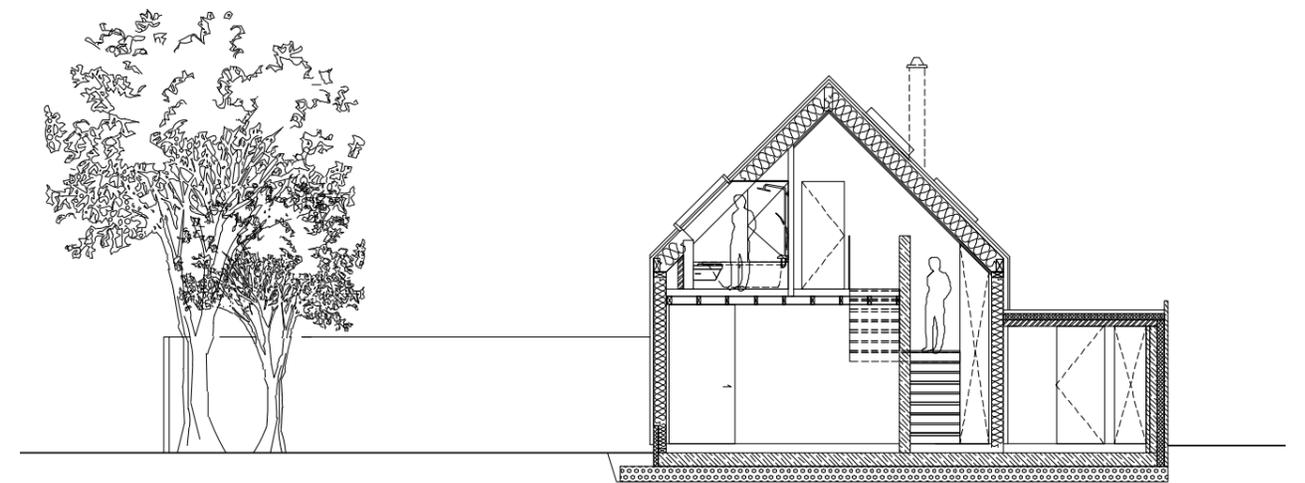
"As a nature-lover, I am very aware of ecological and sustainability issues, both of which I find crucial. I work with wooden constructions for several reasons, next to my liking for the material. Wood is more modern than a mixture of sand with water, cast on-site. They allow for a much more precise planning and pre-production, which shortens the construction time on-site, they also can be dismantled easily."

Andreas Etzelstorfer, Backraum

Backraum often works with Cross Laminated Timber plates. In this project the office went for a cheaper timber frame on the outer facades. Yet the optic remained the same: bare surfaces witness the passage of time and sun exposure. As the oil-treated outside shell will become greyish and darker – each façade differently – the inner walls will become golden. For about three years, the walls shall remain bare, which actually reflects clients' taste and reality of living with a rambunctious child.

A tight budget led to innovative, cost-saving solutions, like skipping door frames in favour of direct wall mounting. The hinges are screwed directly into CLT interior walls. Backraum implemented this detail as a standard solution in the next projects.

A traditional house in eastern Austria has a gable roof: Andreas Etzelstorfer follows this rule with joy.



Cross section of the house, with cold entrance area at the site wall on the right.

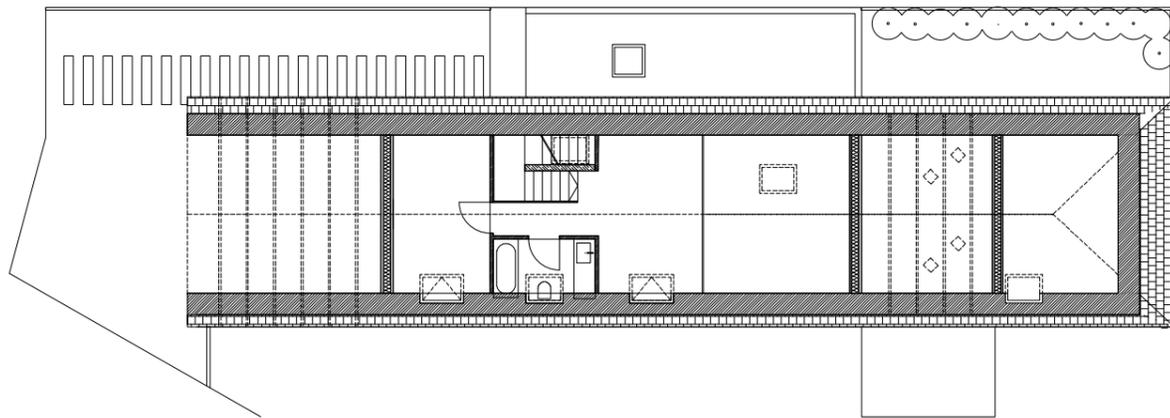
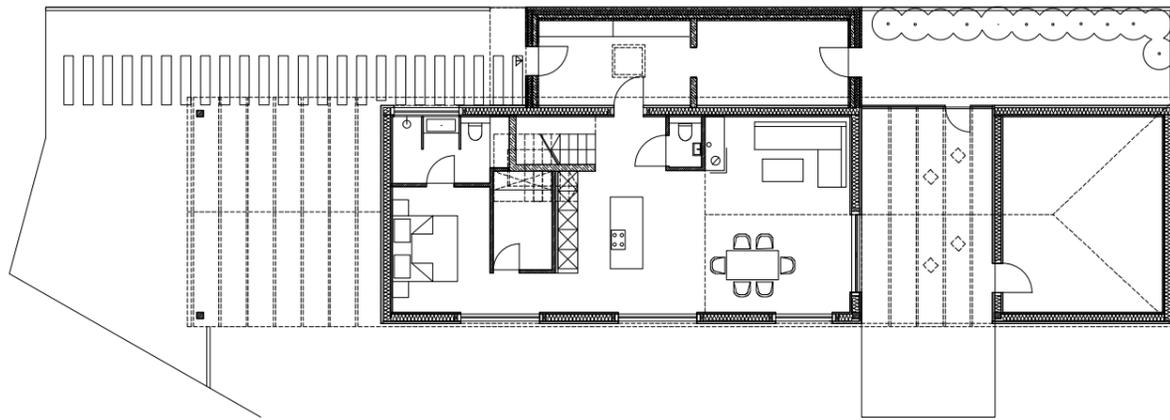


COMES FROM THE INSIDE

## POETRY AND TECHNOLOGY

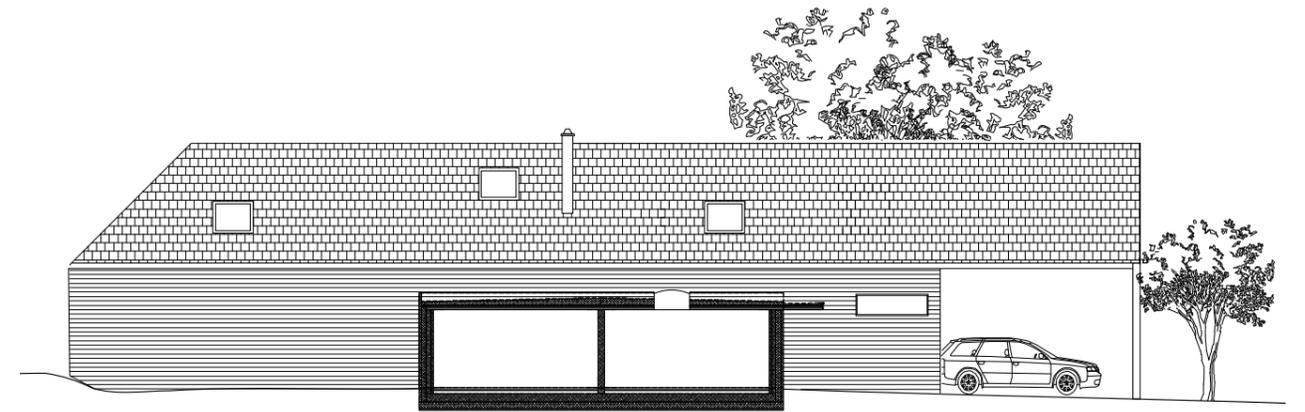
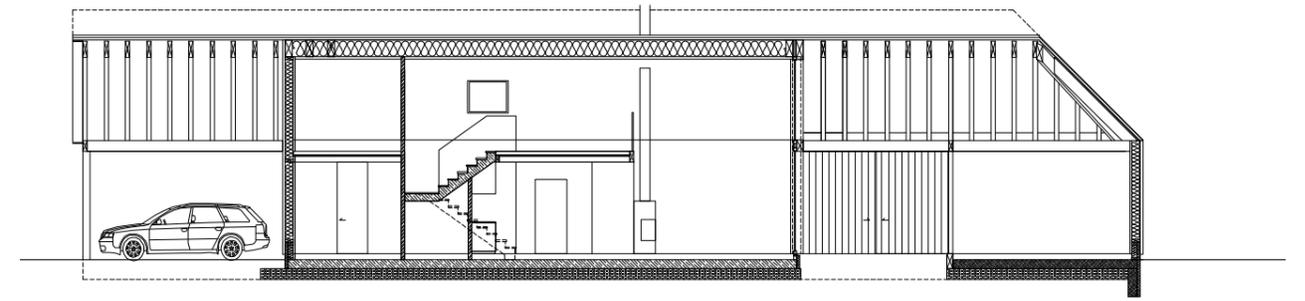
"We like to build gable roofs, as they match our context and form beautiful rooms below. They stand for retreat and cosiness. With roof windows, one gets three times as much light as from façade openings, as well as facilitates the ventilation."

Andreas Etzelstorfer, Backraum



Floorplans, ground floor and attic.  
The entrance to the site is from the west; along a covered parking space a path leads to the entrance of the house. As a non-insulated addition it could have been built at the edge of the site. Behind the open living area is the master bedroom with en-suite bathroom. An open space on the east side of the attic is usually filled with toys.  
One of the most special features of the house, a covered veranda with a barn-like atmosphere divides the the heated part of the house from an additional room on the east.





Longitudal sections through the house.  
 A clear order of the spaces in the house: parking lot, bedrooms, kitchen with an open space above are stacked next to the double-height living area and veranda. The second section shows the entrance area, lightened through a VELUX flat roof window and the heating room.  
 Except for the roof windows and one bathroom window this facade is entirely closed.

An optimally lit room is not only one fulfilling the norms; there is hardly any beauty without some poetry. The clients' idea of living in a barn resonated with Andreas Etzelstorfer's childhood memories. He recalls jumping onto a pile of fragrant hay, sun rays visible in the dusty air. In old barns and attics sometimes single ceramic roof tiles were replaced with glass ones, resulting in an everchanging pattern of sunny dots in the interior. He wished to bring in this magic into the project.

As the roof above the covered veranda is not insulated, enabling visible roof construction, this was the spot to mix the Eternit-tiles with acryl glass pieces of the same size. Shining lozenges wander through the walls: their position marks the position of the sun, indicating the time of the day and the season, connecting inside and outside subtly and powerfully.

Andreas Etzelstorfer believes that a little bit of technology makes our lives better: the house is equipped with automatic ventilation systems, allowing for maintaining an optimal climate in the interior.

"All this comfort was achieved just with two little engines" – he claims enthusiastically – "and protects lazy people from living in an unhealthy environment." As an office collaborating closely with VELUX for a long time, Backraum knows how to incorporate the company's know-how into their buildings.



"After having built so many houses with roof windows, I have some experience and idea of how the end result will be. With Daylight Visualizer and the expertise of our VELUX expert, I have full certainty that space will be optimally lit."

Andreas Etzelstorfer, Backraum



## PROJECT DATA

Project: Single-family house  
Location: Vienna metropolitan region, Austria  
Architect: Andreas Etzelstorfer, Backraum Architektur, Vienna  
Year: 2019 – 2020  
Area: 130 m<sup>2</sup>  
Photos: Romana Fürnkranz

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