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The tectonic of architectural solutions

AgwA architecture office : Addressing structure in architecture competitions

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The authors are partners of the Brussels's based architectural firm AgwA. AgwA is involved in a large amount of architecture competitions, mainly for public buildings addressing the community. These competition projects are developed in multidisciplinary teams.

In the work of AgwA, structure plays a central role in the architectural designs and their spatiality. The context of an architecture competition has important consequences on the way architects can approach the issue of structure.

A first striking example is the sharp timing of the competition. For architectural assignments (not bridges or roofs), the structural dimensions is often approached briefly, in the form of structural schemes and sketches. Calculations are often bypassed to concentrate on the principles.

Another example, from the designer's point of view, could be the intention to keep a certain flexibility towards the future, anticipating the evolution of the project in the process leading possibly to the building site.

On the one hand, we propose to analyze how the structural dimensions are addressed in this very preliminary phase, in order to unveil recurrent structural strategies in different competition projects.

On the other hand, we will explore the structural aspect of the Péronnes project in detail, through its successive phases (competition, sketch project, preliminary design, definitive project), in order to discover in which way the structural proposal was maintained, evolved and partially switched though time.