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ETH Zürich Dormitory proposes a student cultural hub for the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, Switzerland. The project, entitled Gesicht, German for face, presents its south façades as a distinctive sign at the entry to the ETH Hönggerberg campus. Three similar dormitory buildings rise out of a carved base to respect the parameters of the zoning while announcing to all who enter the campus the sustainability imperative of the university. On this south façade, a playful fenestration pattern is juxtaposed to a pattern of translucent photovoltaic cells laminated to glass to create a sign of sustainability while generating energy and acting as a sunscreen. In accordance with the masterplan, open grade level paths are cut through the single story podium connecting existing paths and points of interest and preserving all existing trees on the site. The entire site is green to the sky. Each building has an internal courtyard that terminates at a grade level garden. This semi-public green room is accessible to student housing residents but visible to all from the public paths. Each building has a green roof terrace offering a place for all building residents to congregate. An existing caretaker's house on the site becomes a super-scaled open-air playhouse for children at the kindergarten occupying part of the podium. Flexible function space and student and community amenities occupy the remainder of the podium. Student rooms are organized in groups of five in a pinwheel. For each group of five rooms, a living room, kitchen and sitting area along with two bathrooms complete the program. The five-room groups can be combined into groupings of ten, fifteen and twenty room units. Access to each group is through the courtyard which acts as a supply air ventilation shaft. The arrangement of common spaces deliberately encourages social engagement among residents. A plus-energy building is realized through the minimization of energy demands, highly efficient systems and by exceeding the balance of annual demand with on-site energy sources.

