

# Villa Seidler: Beyond the modern house

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# Abstract

This thesis offers an in-depth analysis of Villa Seidler in Olomouc, designed by the Czech engineer Jacques Groag. As one of his most iconic projects, Villa Seidler serves as a culmination of Groag's influences, artistic tendencies, and architectural evolution. Beginning with an exploration of Groag's early life and formative influences, the thesis situates Villa Seidler within the broader context of his architectural body of work. Through detailed descriptions of the villa, comparisons will be made with other significant works by Groag, including Villa Moller and Villa Otto Eisler, emphasizing recurring themes such as spatial organization, window design, and the integration of terraces. By comparing Groag's approach to that of his mentor, Adolf Loos, the thesis highlights Groag's unique contributions to modern architecture, demonstrating his sensitivity to human needs, his attention to nature and views, and his innovative adaptation of Loos' construction techniques. This study aims to underscore the distinctive qualities that made Groag a deeply respected figure by many of his contemporaries, and to advocate for greater recognition of Villa Seidler as a masterful and often overlooked achievement in 20th-century architecture.

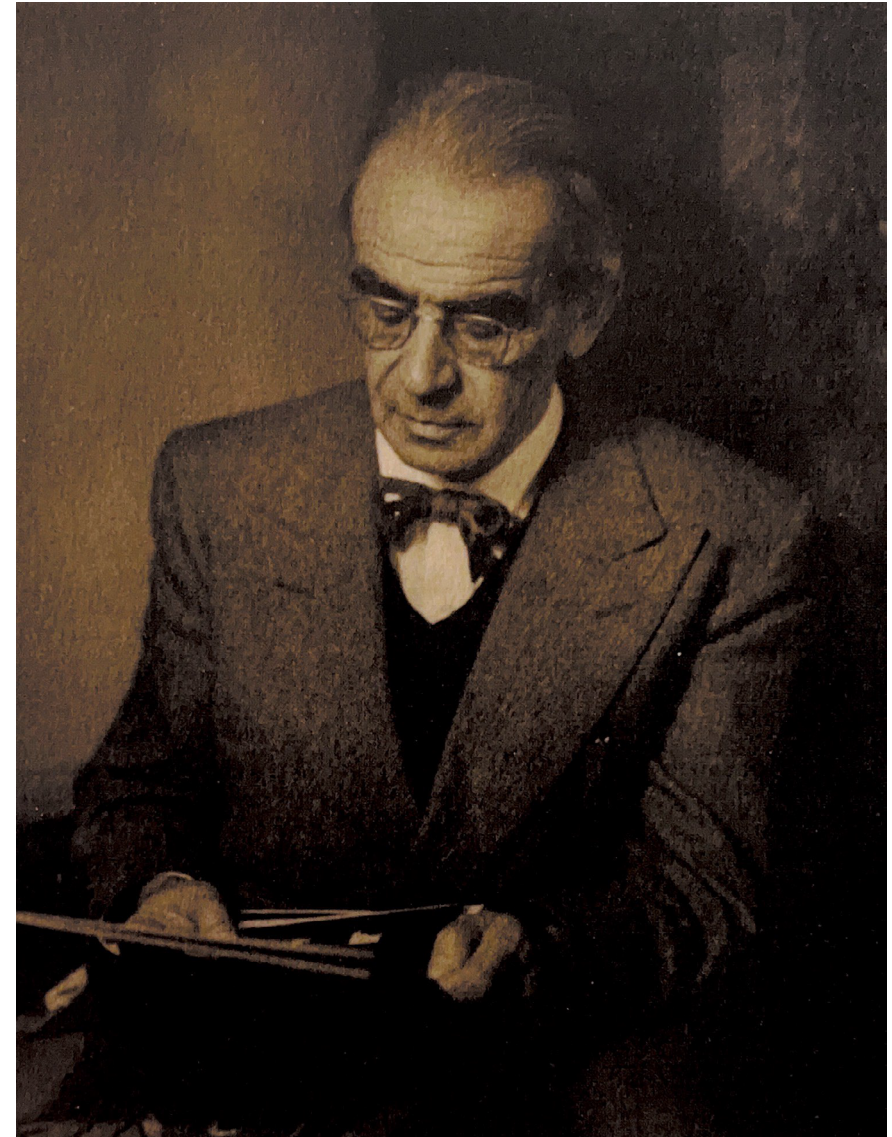
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Villa Seidler in Olomouc was designed in 1935 by Czech engineer Jacques Groag (1892, Olomouc – 1961, London). It was commissioned by Ing. Rudolf Seidler, a coal merchant, and his wife, a representative of the Austrian glass company Swarovski (Smutná, 2016). The Seidlers had a prior relationship with Groag: in the early 20s, they commissioned him to redesign of the interiors of their Vienna apartments, work that had evidently met their satisfaction. For their new home in Olomouc, they sought a modern villa that would reflect their status, granting Groag significant creative freedom. The villa was situated in a newly developed neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, surrounded by greenery. This was an element that deeply inspired Groag, becoming an integral part of his design. Villa Seidler is widely regarded as one of the highlights of Groag's career. It presents itself as a simple, massive volume, clearly influenced by his years working alongside Loos and his colleagues (Prokop, 2005). However, it also embodies the distinctive qualities that set Groag apart as an architect in his own right. The villa represents the culmination of his individual explorations, bringing together themes he had been refining for nearly a decade: his care for interior designs, his thoughtful spatial organization, his sensitivity to the human scale, and his deliberate framing of nature. It is a gesamtkunstwerk that fully represents Groag's multifaceted persona, and that contributed to Groag's recognition amongst his contemporaries as a talented and unique architect (Smutná, 2016).

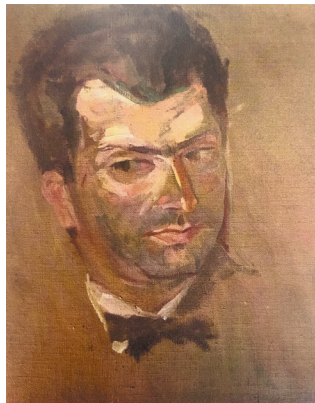
# Introduction

## Groag's early life and influences



5.1  
Jacques Groag, New York, circa 1955  
Photo by Trude Fleischmann  
Courtesy of Marc Aronson





**1.1**  
**Jacques Groag, Portrait of Heinrich Jalowetz, 1912**  
Oil on canvas, 9.25 x 12.25 inches  
Courtesy of Marc Aronson, published in *Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement*, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019



**1.2**  
**Adolf Loos with his Bauschule, 1920-21**  
Published in *Ruschcio/Schachel, Adolf Loos, Salzburg/Wien 1982*



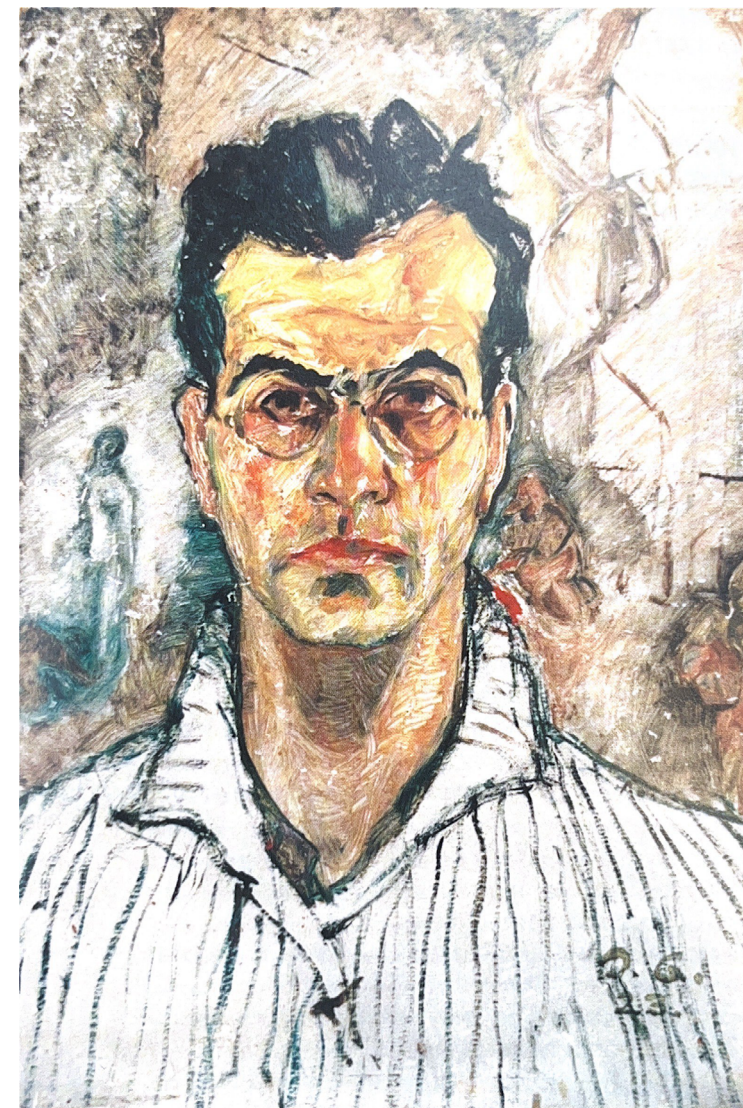
**1.3**  
**Jacques Groag, Self-portrait, 1913/16**  
Courtesy of Dr. Willi Groag/Eve Linden, published in *Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement*, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019

To better understand Villa Seidler and many of the design choices Groag made throughout his career, it is essential to first understand who he was – his acquaintances, his environment, and his troubled identity.

Jacques Groag is a relatively unknown architect compared to many of his contemporaries. Despite being an important figure in the Viennese and Czech architectural scene of the 1920s and 1930s, and later working in England during the 1940s and 1950s, the available knowledge about his life and work remains relatively limited. What is known about him is largely thanks to two figures: Czech architect Vladimír Šlapeta and art historian Ursula Prokop. Šlapeta is credited with “rediscovering” Groag and his colleague Paul Engelmann through his 1978 essay *Paul Engelmann und Jacques Groag, die Olmützer Schüler von Adolf Loos*. Prokop, on the other hand, dedicated herself to extensively documenting Groag’s work, culminating in her 2005 publication *Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, Architect and Designer: Two Hidden Figures of the Viennese Modern Movement*. Both sources relied heavily on interviews and indirect accounts, as very little was written about or by Groag during his lifetime. As a result, discrepancies exist between the two texts, and much remains unknown, especially regarding Groag’s early life and education (Zatloukal, 2019).

The Groag family was relatively wealthy and of Jewish origin, maintaining close ties with the Engelmann and Tugendhat families. Jacques met Paul Engelmann in middle school, and the two would later share most of their university years in Vienna during the 1910s (Prokop, 2005). Groag enjoyed philosophizing and embracing a bohemian lifestyle in Viennese cafés, surrounded by his close circle of intellectual friends. Thanks to this, he quickly became acquainted with many of the great minds that were populating the Austrian capital at the time: Karl Kraus, Josef Hoffmann, Otto Wagner, Jakob Wassermann, Sigmund Freud, and, of course, Adolf Loos (Šlapeta, 1999). Already at a young age, he appeared to be a multifaceted artist, displaying skills in designing, painting, and craftsmanship. Despite his strong artistic inclinations, his father compelled him to pursue a more technical education. With surprising dedication and seriousness, he thus attended the construction engineering major at the Technical University of Vienna, graduating in 1919 (Prokop, 2005). Despite the lack of sources, his close relationships with Engelmann and architect Felix Augenfeld, both students of the Bauschule founded by Loos in 1912, suggest that Groag might have also attended Loos’ lectures in parallel to his formal education (Zatloukal, 2019) (fig. 1.2). This would explain his later involvement in the construction of Villa Moller in Vienna and Haus Wittgenstein in Olomouc, as well as his deep understanding and application of Raumplan theories. Those were in fact developed by Engelmann and Loos in the years between 1912 and 1917, for the unbuilt design of Villa Konstanz in Olomouc.

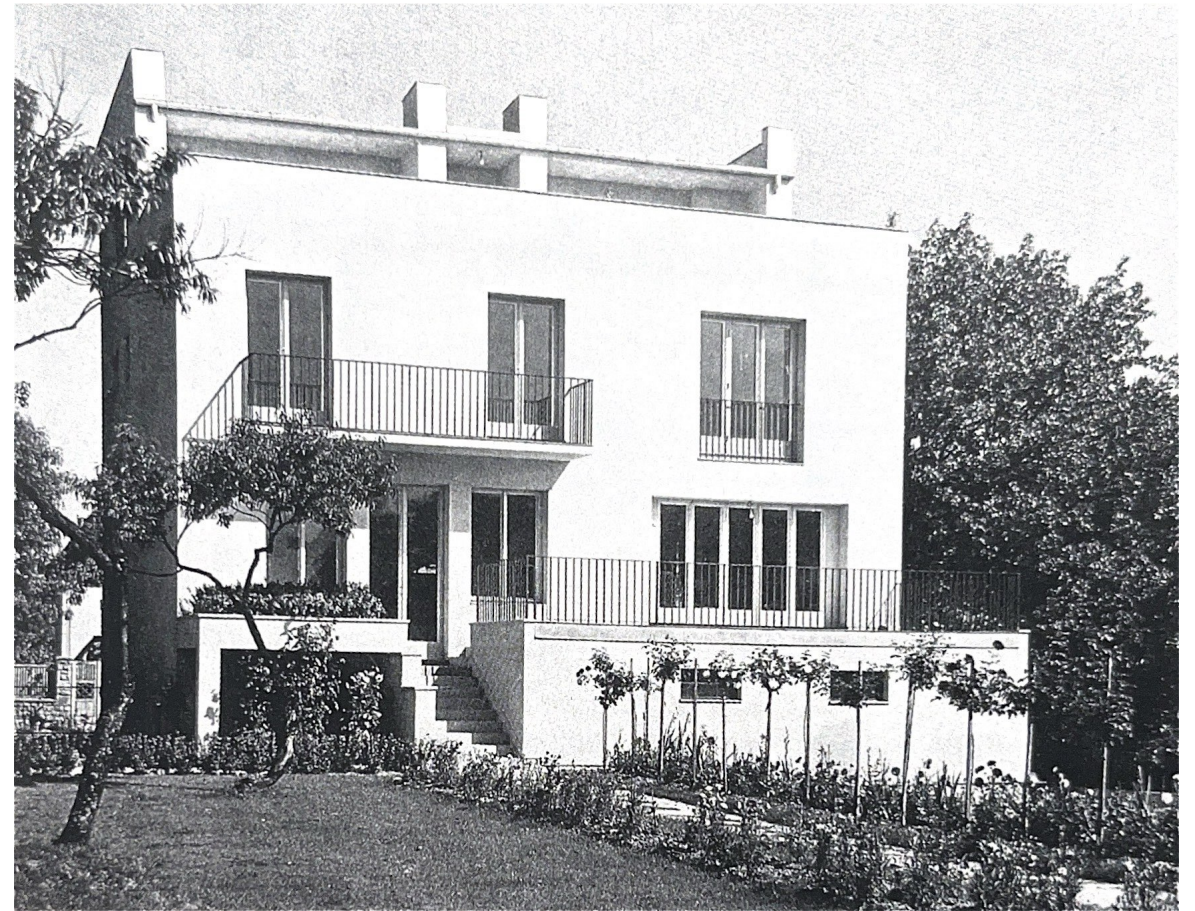
After graduating in 1919, Groag’s family was affected by the post-war economic crisis. This forced him to take on small interior design commissions arranged by his supportive brother. Meanwhile, he continued to lead a bohemian lifestyle, dedicating himself to painting, socializing, and engaging in philosophical discussions with his intellectual peers. It was not until 1926 that he finally established his own engineering studio, following an uninspiring collaboration with his former university colleague Fritz Keller (Smutná, 2016).



**1.4**  
**Jacques Groag, Self-portrait, 1923**  
Collection of Ursula Prokop  
Published in *Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement*, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019

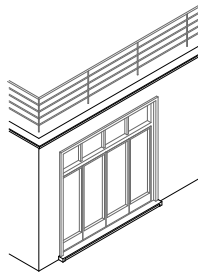


# Framing the views

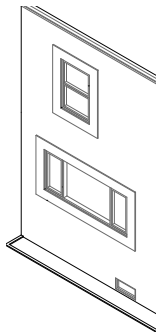


2.1  
**Adolf Loos, Villa Moller, Vienna, 1927**  
 Garden facade likely by J. Groag  
*Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc*





**2.2**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the French windows



**2.3**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the window relief on the southwest facade)



**2.4**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Picture showing the protruding window on the northeast facade

In 1928, Groag received his first commission as an engineering consultant for the construction of Villa Moller (Smutná, 2016). At the time, Loos was living in Paris and showed little interest in the project. However, despite the construction already being underway, the villa's design had not yet been finalized. This left Groag with the difficult task of making design decisions. While Loos had great trust in Groag, it remains unclear whether these were ever discussed between the two, or if Loos's unresponsiveness and procrastination forced the engineer to make choices on his own (Prokop, 2005). Villa Moller's rear façade stands in stark contrast to the rest of the building, with its enhanced verticality and openness opposing the more enclosed and austere front façade (fig. 2.1). The French windows, the tighter vertical rhythm, the strong visual connection to the garden, the staircase linking the garden's axis to the villa. Those are all features that do not belong to Loos' vocabulary, but that were rather belonging to Groag's newly developing taste and expressivity.

Seven years later, these same elements reappeared in the design for Villa Seidler (fig. 2.6). By that time, Groag had refined his ideas and theories, now applying them to a building entirely of his own creation. The composition for the southeast façade of the villa is freely arranged, with windows placed as to serve the interior functions (Prokop, 2005). Both the living and dining areas open directly onto the outdoors through French windows with tight vertical subdivisions, a feature reminiscent of Villa Moller (fig. 2.2). On the southwest façade, a horizontal window illuminates the library, being positioned high enough to partially conceal the exterior view. This placement was intentional, as the window would overlook the street rather than the garden. Moreover, this aligns with the function of the library, a space meant for reading and contemplation rather than external observation.

The upper floor houses the villa's private quarters, with the main bedrooms strategically positioned to enjoy the garden view. In contrast, secondary spaces such as the bathroom, cloakroom, and guest room are relegated to the northern side of the house, where smaller windows overlook neighboring plots (Prokop, 2005). On the northeast façade, a projecting window extends outward from the vertical plane (fig. 2.4). This feature belongs to the corridor connecting the master bedroom to the wardrobe, providing additional space in what would otherwise be a narrow passage. The protrusion also functions as a small greenhouse, creating a niche for potted plants.

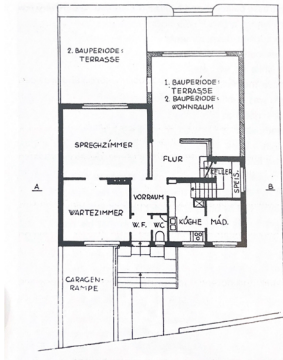
It is also noticeable how all windows are contoured by a subtle frame, a slight relief compared to the rest of the plain façade. On the southwest façade, the most visible from the street, this relief gets slightly wider, though not thicker (fig. 2.3). While there may not be a definitive explanation for this choice, it is interesting to note that such a gesture was uncommon in the works of Loos and Engelmann. This framing detail seems to underscore Groag's conscious approach to window placement, using them not merely as openings but as intentional design elements adapted to their specific functions.



**2.5**  
**Jacques Groag, Villa Seidler, Olomouc, 1935**  
Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc



**2.6**  
**Jacques Groag, Paula and Hans Briess Villa, Olomouc, 1933**  
Side facade displaying the protruding windows  
*Olomouc Museum of Art, Olomouc  
Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*



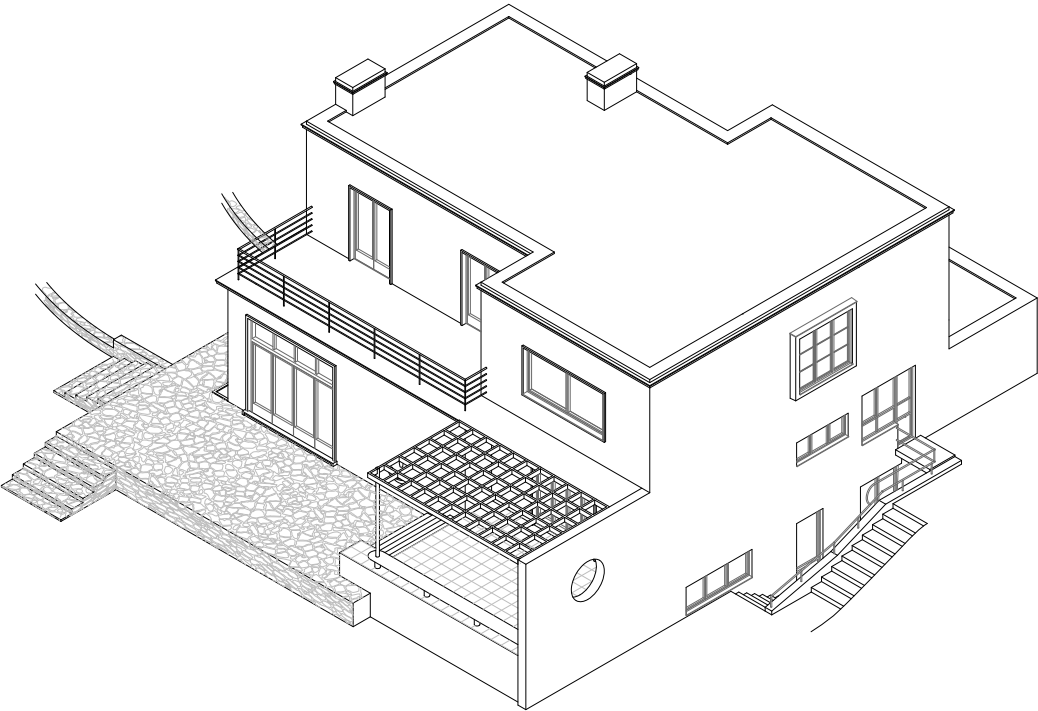
**2.7**  
**Jacques Groag, Stern Haus, Perchtoldsdorf, 1933**  
Floorplan showing the flexible interior  
*Published in Moderne Bauformen  
Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*



**2.8**  
**Jacques Groag, Stern Haus, Perchtoldsdorf (AU), 1933**  
*Published originally in Moderne Bauformen  
Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement*

Groag’s meticulous attention to views, window positioning, and spatial distribution of rooms in response to external factors is a recurring theme in other of his projects. In the 1933 Villa for Paula and Hans Briess in Olomouc, he designed a house comprising two stacked apartments (fig. 2.6). Due to the plot’s limited size and orientation, he positioned the living areas facing the street on the southern side, while the bedrooms were oriented towards the garden on the northern side. He thus gifted the free facade composition of the street side with much more generous windows compared to the garden side, allowing for more light to filter through. The most distinctive feature of this design can be found on the western side facade, and it consists of the inclusion of two oblique bow windows. Those serve as openings for the interior winter garden, connected to each of the living rooms of the two apartments. Furthermore, thanks to the slight tilt, they counteract the narrowness of the plot, allowing for more sunlight to enter into an otherwise rather unexposed room (Prokop, 2005).

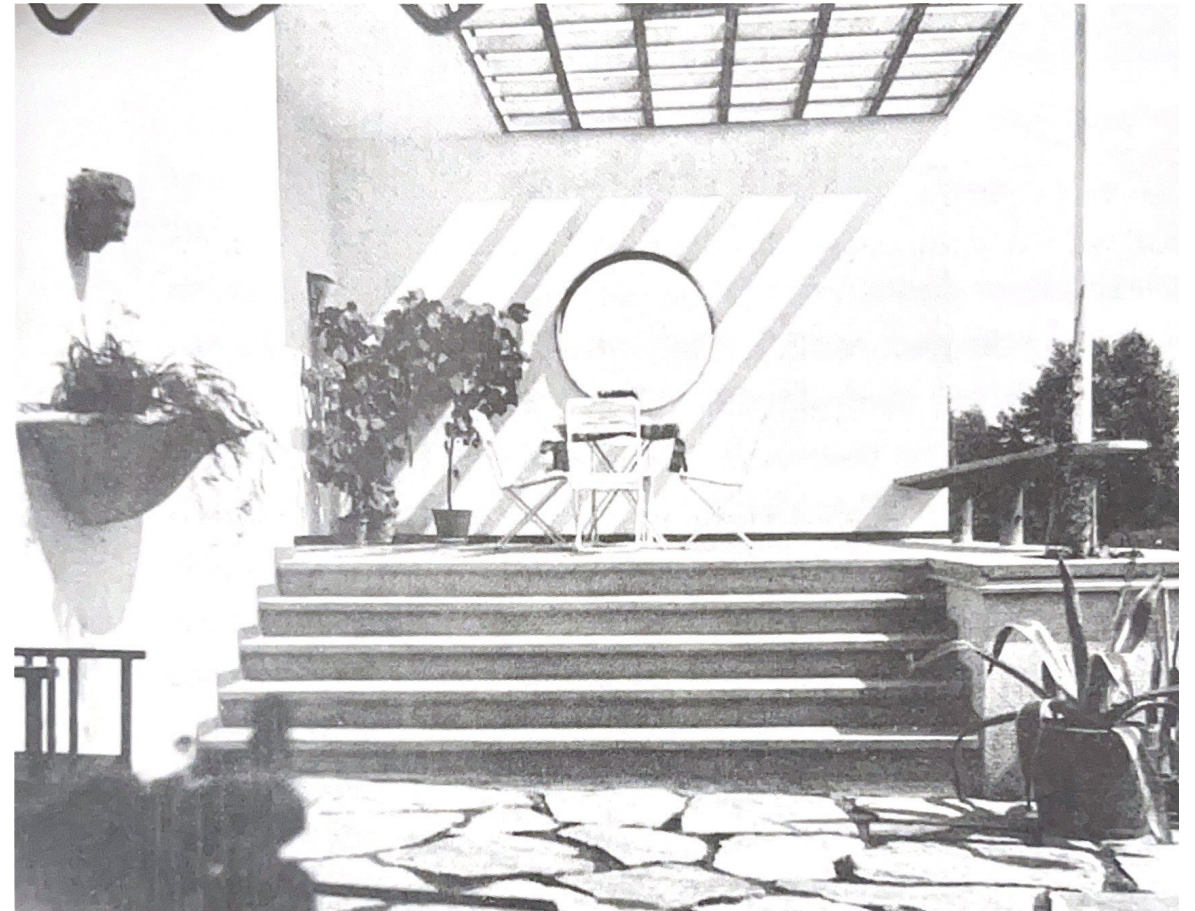
Another example of care towards facade composition can be seen in the 1933 house for Dr. Stern in Perchtoldsdorf, Austria (fig. 2.7). Here, Groag dipped even further in the modernist vocabulary, especially in that of Le Corbusier. This can be seen in the front facade with the use of the strip window, that gives light to the lady’s bedroom and to the hallway. However, he once again managed to make this design feature his own, by combining the horizontality of the window with an enunciated verticality of the frames – similar to what he did in Villa Moller, and what will soon do in Villa Seidler (Prokop, 2005). The circular window on the front façade is another recurring motif in Groag’s designs. For instance, a similar feature appears on the side façade of the Villa for Paula and Hans Briess, where it illuminates the upper apartment’s living room (fig. 2.6). There, the window is framed by a slightly darker-colored cornice, almost as to highlight its presence in the otherwise rather repetitive facade. A circular window is also found in the blind wall enclosing the veranda of Villa Seidler, and it appears in the original drawings for the garden façade of that house, although it was never realized. There is no clear explanation for the use of these circular windows, especially considering that neither Loos nor Le Corbusier were particularly fond of them. However, a circular window did appear on the street façade of Villa Beer, designed by Josef Frank in Vienna in the late 1920s; this might have served as an inspiration for the engineer. In any case, their inclusion can be understood as part of Groag’s search for a modern vocabulary, that would depart from that of his mentors and lead towards a more personal style.



**2.9**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric drawing displaying the northeast and southeast (garden) facades



## From the house to the landscape



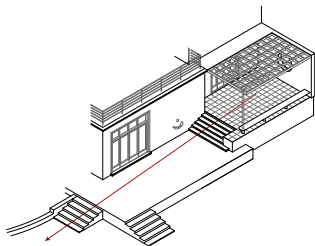
3.1  
**Jacques Groag, Villa Seidler, Olomouc, 1935**  
 Picture of the villa displaying the veranda  
 Published originally in *Innenndekoration*  
 Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag,  
*two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement*, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019



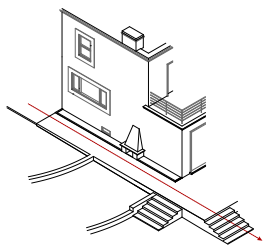
**3.2**  
**Jacques Groag, Villa Seidler, Olomouc, 1935**  
The only picture in which is possible to see the outside fireplace  
*Olomouc Museum of Art*



**3.3**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Picture showing the romanesque stoup



**3.4**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the connection between the veranda and the garden

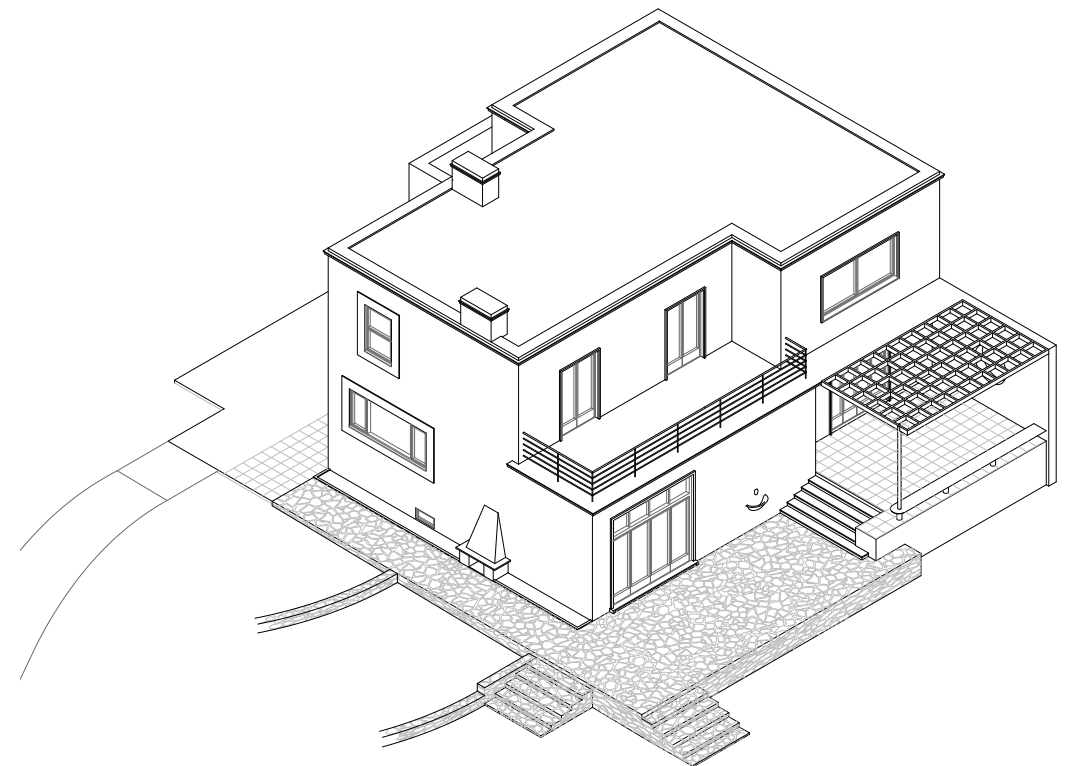


**3.5**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the connection from the entrance to the garden

In Villa Seidler, Groag interposed a terrace between the house and the garden (fig. 3.6). While a similar approach had already been implemented in Villa Moller, a much greater attention was now given to this element. The terrace extends along the southeast and northeast sides of the building and, following the natural slope of the garden, is arranged on two different levels: a lower one connected to the living room, and a higher one, linked to the dining room and accessible via five deep, low steps. The first section is paved with irregularly patterned natural stones, while the second is covered with ceramic tiles, similar to those used in the entrance area. A wooden pergola then covers this elevated area, creating a sort of veranda.

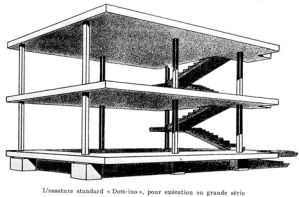
This is a feature Loos himself would have likely never introduced in his own designs. Although he incorporated terraces and niches in projects such as Villa Rufer and Villa Winteritz, these spaces were primarily intended as sources of light and ventilation for the interiors, rather than as places for observing and admiring the surrounding landscape (Worbs, 1983). Groag, on the other hand, celebrated these moments of connection between indoor and outdoor, deliberately framing and capturing the beauty of nature. This intent is evident in his decision to open a round window in the blind veranda wall, a porthole opening up the view of the surrounding woods (fig. 3.1). The concrete bench, integrated into the pergola's design by means of a steel column, becomes an invite to sit down and to admire from this vantage point the beautifully designed garden. This veranda, enclosed on the northeast side by the blind wall, on the northwest side by the house façade, and overhead by the pergola, thus functions as an extension of the dining room, an outdoor space where the family could dine and relax whenever the weather permitted.

Other small gestures around the terrace celebrate this attention that Groag had towards the outdoor space. A small concrete fountain, reminiscent of a Romanesque stoup, is placed on the southeast façade, and was probably used to water the plants around the terrace (fig. 3.3). An outdoor fireplace, placed on the southwest façade and mirroring the one inside the living room, allowed the family to gather outside even on colder days (fig. 3.2). This concept recalls Frank Lloyd Wright's idea of the hearth as the heart of the home, expanding the living space onto the terrace and reinforcing the connection between domestic life and nature. Finally, the terrace is connected to the garden by means of two flights of steps. One is positioned in correspondence of the north-south axis of the terrace, starting from the entrance and moving towards the garden along the southwest façade (fig. 3.5). The other is on the perpendicular axis, from the veranda going west, along the southeast façade (fig. 3.4). Whilst the first one had surely been planned by Groag from the beginning stages of the design, the origins of the second staircase is much more dubious. In fact, it is not present in any of the original permit drawings submitted to the Olomouc municipality. Furthermore, there is no evidence nowadays of a flight of steps located in that very position. It is only visible in one exterior picture of the house, probably dating back to the late 1930s – the same picture that testifies the existence of an existing outdoor fireplace (fig. 3.2). It can be thus imagined that, despite not being initially conceived on the drawing board, Groag decided to implement those five steps on site, probably to create an additional connection to the garden.



**3.6**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric drawing displaying the southeast (garden) and southwest facades

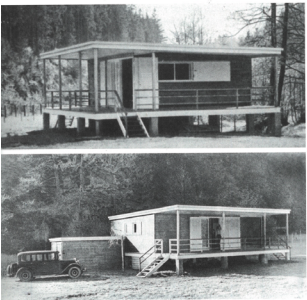




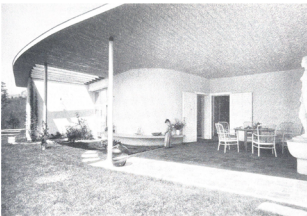
**3.7**  
**Le Corbusier, Maison Dom-ino, 19214**  
Image from Le Corbusier & Pierre Jeanneret, Oeuvre Complète Volume 1, 1910–1929, Les Editions d'Architecture Artemis, Zürich, 1964



**3.8**  
**Le Corbusier, Villa Le Lac, Corseaux, 1923**  
Axonometric diagram showing the connection from the entrance to the garden Association Villa "Le Lac" Le Corusier



**3.9**  
**Jacques Groag, weekend house for Ing. Walter Pollak, near Olomouc, 1931**  
Axonometric diagram showing the connection from the entrance to the garden Published in Bauformen, 1934 Olomouc Museum of Art Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019

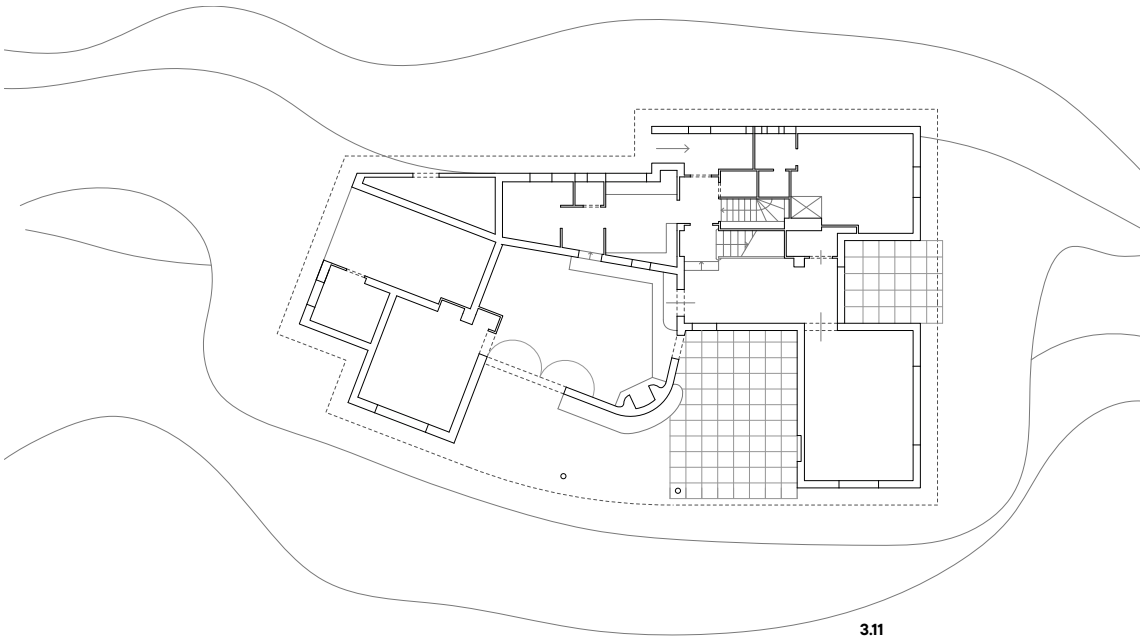


**3.10**  
**Jacques Groag, weekend house for Ing. Walter Pollak, near Olomouc, 1931**  
Axonometric diagram showing the connection from the entrance to the garden Published in Bauformen, 1934 Olomouc Museum of Art Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019

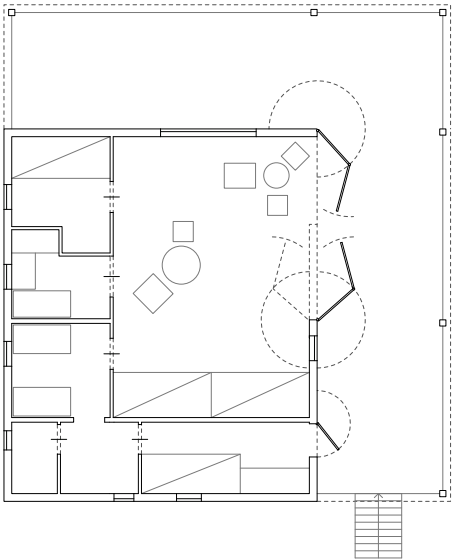
The thorough implementation of the terrace in the design of the house, as well as the idea of the terrace conceived as an extension of the interior, was a recurring theme in Groag's work. A notable example of this is the 1931 weekend house for Ing. Walter Pollak, an economically built bungalow in the Belkovic Valley, Czechia. This project stands out because it does not adhere to the formal language Groag inherited from Loos. Instead, it once again refers back to the modernist architecture of Le Corbusier, particularly in his emphasis on filigree construction. It is in fact clear his referencing especially to Maison Domino, with its ground floor elevated from the ground, the horizontal slabs, and the pilotis structure (Prokop, 2005) (fig. 3.7). Additionally, the use of inexpensive materials and care towards the terrace space suggests an inspiration drawn from Villa Le Lac on Lake Geneva (fig. 3.8). This inspiration might be also testified by the simple façade design, featuring a horizontal strip window on the main elevation, but also by the floor plan, articulated around a central multifunctional space. However, while in Le Corbusier the indoor and outdoor connection happens mainly through the longitudinal facade opening, in Groag's case the connection inside-outside happens via large glass doors that, when fully opened by swinging them into the room, made the terrace an extension of the living area. At the same time, their open position created a division of spaces on the inside, showcasing how Groag was already concerned with topics such as flexible spaces.

This theme of flexibility was also partially explored in the Gustav Stern House in Perchtoldsdorf, near Vienna, where he experimented with the concept of the "growing house." (fig. 2.7) Both the lady's bedroom on the upper floor and the greenhouse on the ground floor could be turned into enclosed living rooms by means of screens, and the children's bedroom into an additional balcony, depending on the occupants' needs (Prokop, 2005).

Groag's pursuit of an integrated relationship between architecture and landscape culminated in 1936 with the construction of Otto Eisler's house (fig. 3.10). This villa, a highlight of his career, departs from the cubic rigor of Loos's designs in favor of a more organic, biomorphic approach. Interestingly, the project was likely developed in parallel with Villa Seidler and Villa Dubsky – the latter of which adhered to a more traditional Czech aesthetic (Smutná, 2016). This variety in his work reflects Groag's chameleonic nature, balancing his bohemian, artistic inclinations with his role as a pragmatic engineer. It raises the question of whether his apparent reluctance to impose his own vision on the clients stemmed from a struggle with personal identity or, conversely, from a genuine enthusiasm for adapting to diverse influences. Perhaps he thrived under these conditions, preferring experimentation over adherence to a fixed stylistic approach. In Villa Otto Eisler, Groag once again conceived the terrace as an organic extension of the indoor living space. A far-projecting roof, supported by slim pilotis, creates a smooth transition between interior and exterior (fig. 3.11). To counterbalance the deep overhang and ensure natural light penetration, the living room window extends into the roof plane, allowing sunlight to filter through (Prokop, 2005). This delicate interplay of openness and shelter exemplifies Groag's evolving architectural sensibility, one that continuously sought to blur the boundaries between built space and nature.

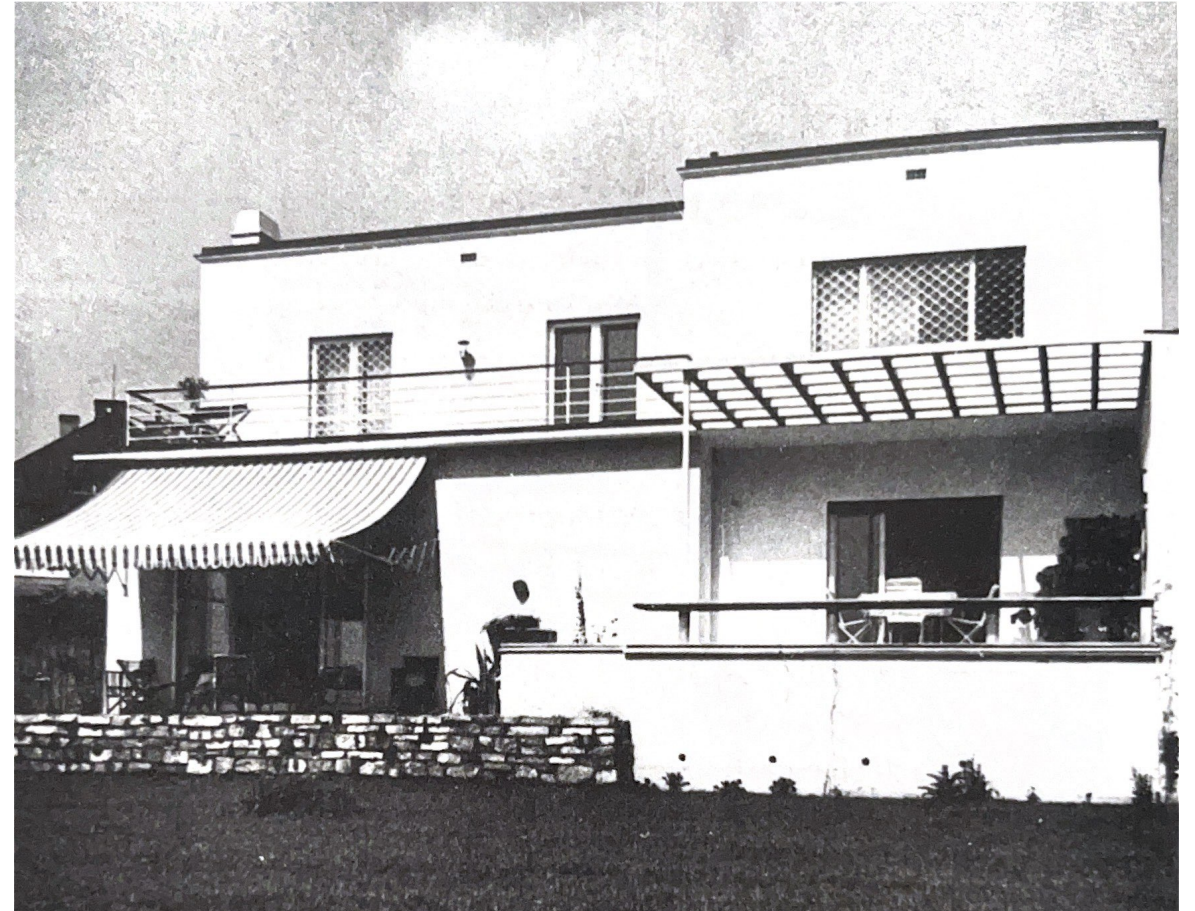


**3.11**  
**Jacques Groag, Eisler country house, Ostravice, 1936**  
Ground floorplan



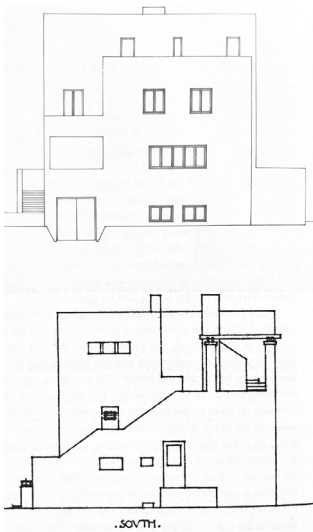
**3.12**  
**Jacques Groag, weekend house for Ing. Walter Pollak, near Olomouc, 1931**  
Ground floorplan

# The Raumplan



4.1  
**Jacques Groag, Villa Seidler, Olomouc, 1935**  
*Olomouc Museum of Art  
 Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag,  
 two hidden figures of the Viennese modern  
 movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*

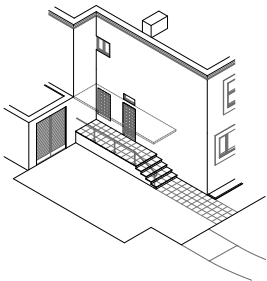




**4.2**  
**Above: J. Groag's initial drawing for Haus Groag with unrealised outer staircase, 1927**  
**Below: Adolf Loos, project drawing for villa Moissi, 1923**  
*Published in Bauformen, 1934*  
*Olomouc Museum of Art*  
*The Albertina Museum, Vienna*  
*Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*



**4.3**  
**Jacques Groag, Haus Groag, Olomouc, 1927**  
*Olomouc Museum of Art*  
*Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag, two hidden figures of the Viennese modern movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*



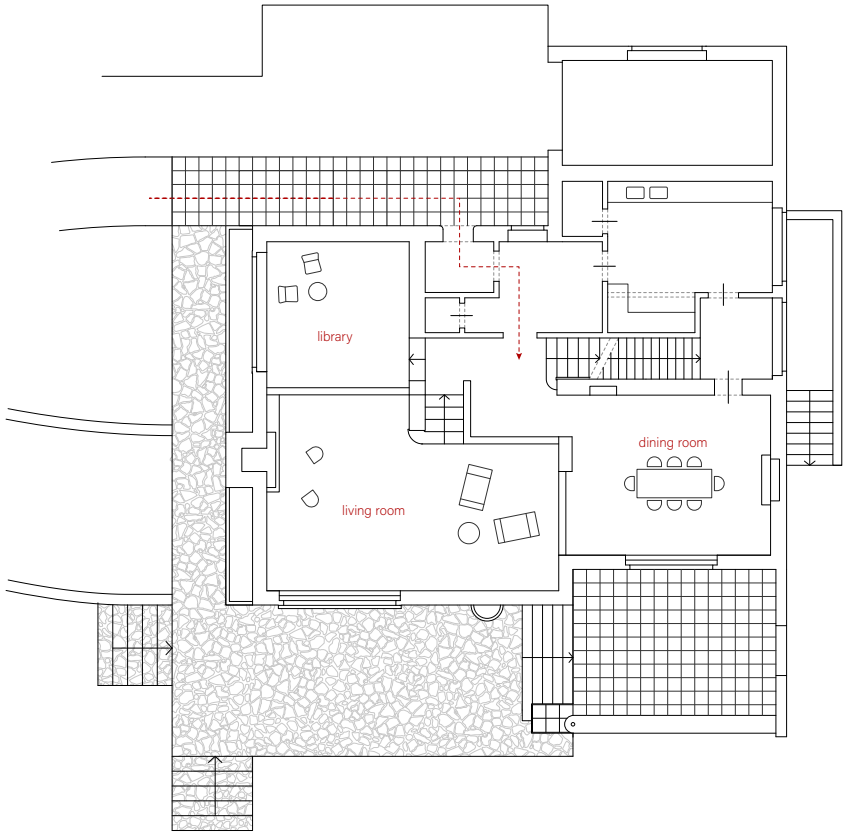
**4.4**  
**Villa Seidler**  
*Axonometric diagram showing the entrance steps and canopy*

It would be reductive to claim that this play of views only happens at the level of the building's membrane, through the façade openings. In fact, in Villa Seidler there is a complex system of interconnections happening within the house itself, with lines of sight extending from room to room, throughout the entirety of the ground floor. Villa Seidler is in fact one of the only – if not the only – examples in Groag's body of work where he successfully implemented Loos' Raumplan theories in a design of his own. As mentioned previously, Groag was probably attending the Bauschule when Loos and his dear friend and colleague Engelmann were discussing the floorplans of Villa Konstant. However, there is no concrete evidence of his active participation to these discussions. Furthermore, despite him having taken design decisions regarding Villa Moller, he most likely had no connection with its spatial interior composition. Villa Emo Groag, built in 1927 under the commission of Jacques' brother, would be the first architectural project of his own (fig. 4.3). Here, he displayed an impressive Raumplan with a series of interlocking levels revolving around a central staircase. Despite the house being at the time widely acclaimed and revolutionary for the Olomouc's architectural scene, it has to be said that its designed was vastly influenced by that of the unrealised Villa Moissi by Loos (Prokop, 2005) (fig. 4.2). Groag's contribution to the 1933 Werkbund Siedlung in Vienna also hints at Raumplan principles, although its impact was diminished by the limited size of the ground floor.

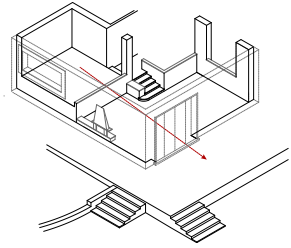
In Villa Seidler, Groag was finally able to fully demonstrate the lessons learned from working closely with Loos and Engelmann. Its spatial complexity is a perfect example of the Raumplan theories, as it displays an impressive play of views throughout the vast majority of its lived areas - the living room, the dining room and the library, but also the terrace, the garden and even the staircase. To better understand this spatial choreography, the house can be described from the point of view of a visitor discovering its interiors, from the entrance to the living areas, then up to the first floor.

The building is accessed from the street via a winding path leading to the concealed northwest façade, where the entrance is located (fig. 4.4) . The entrance itself is positioned five steps above street level and is sheltered by a small canopy. Upon entering the house, the visitor is greeted by a small entrance hall with a relatively low ceiling. A left turn then leads to a rather dusk hall, which provides access to the service areas - the kitchen and a toilet. Finally, a door opens into a second hall, revealing the bright main living area. This consists of three interconnected rooms located on three different levels, all visually linked.

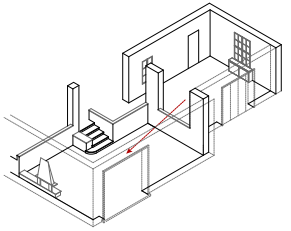
The library, located in the upper west corner of the floor plan, is reached by turning right from the hall and ascending two steps. It overlooks the living room to the south, separated by a low balustrade clad in wood. The living room itself is reached by descending five steps from the same hall, bringing the visitor back down to garden level. The dining room, located in the east corner, lies on the same level as the entrance and is accessible through a portal to the left, adjacent to the open staircase that leads upstairs. It also overlooks the living room via a wide internal opening, again separated by a wooden balustrade.



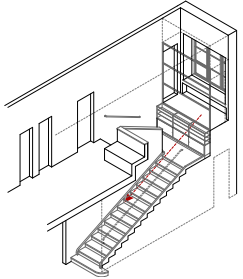
**3.6**  
**Villa Seidler**  
*Ground floorplan with routing*



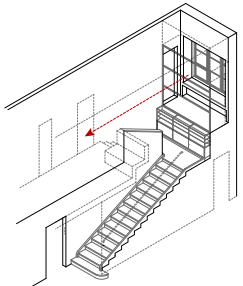
**4.6**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the entrance steps and canopy



**4.7**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection dining room - living room



**4.8**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection between the corridor and the staircase

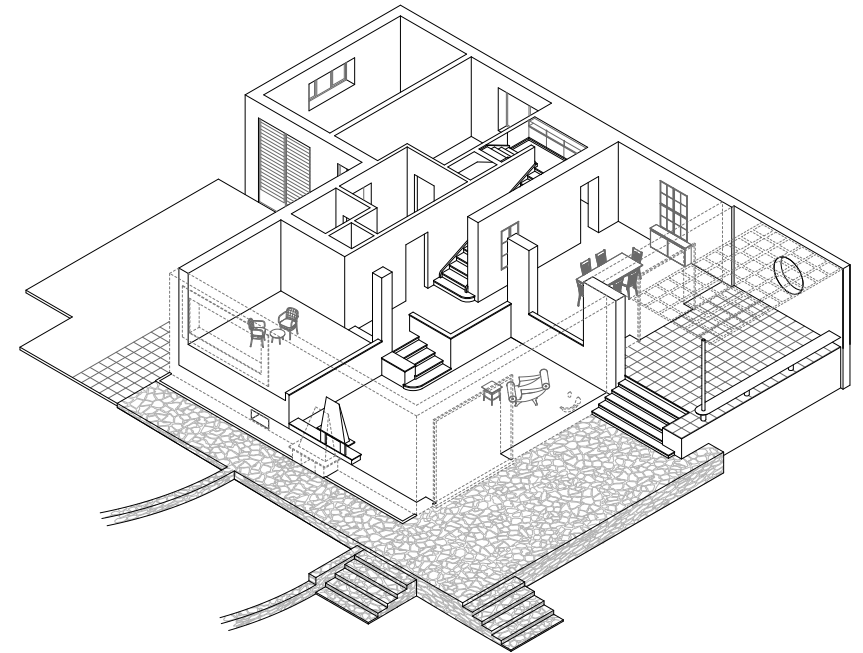


**4.9**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection between the corridor and the upper floor hall

The views into the living room from the library and dining room are distinctly different. From the dining room, the gaze is directed toward the fireplace located on the southwest wall, creating an intimate atmosphere enhanced by the soothing sight of the crackling fire (fig. 4.7). This feeling of comfort is further enriched by Groag's custom-designed wooden built-in furniture, much of which still survives in the house today. Conversely, the view from the library to the living room presents a completely different scene (fig. 4.6). It passes over the balustrade, beyond the fireplace, and through the French window that opens onto the garden. This view is far more serene, with nature providing a calming backdrop for reading or working.

The layout of these three rooms also reflects Groag's pragmatic sensitivity to the daily rhythms of domestic life. The dining room, located in the southeast, is bathed in sunlight during lunch, and the warmth of the fire enhances the evening ambiance. The living room, also south-facing, enjoys sunlight throughout much of the day. Meanwhile, the library's high window filters evening light, creating an ideal setting for reading. This is once again part of Groag's ambition of reflecting in the house's layout all the needs of a balanced and thorough human experience, so that to serve its guests rather than imposing on them.

Another, more subtle Raumplan moment occurs upstairs, in the corridor connecting the main bedroom to the cloakroom. This corridor overlooks on the staircase landing below, through a dividing glass pane that acts like a vitrine. From here, the sight runs down the stairs, reaching the main room on the ground floor (fig. 4.8). It was thus possible for the Seidlers to observe directly from upstairs who was entering the living room - whether it was a guest, a family member or a servant. Furthermore, they could also see through the glass into the first floor hall, which gives access to all bedrooms and bathrooms (fig. 4.9). From this vantage point, they could thus quickly communicate with anyone in the house.



**3.6**  
**Villa Seidler**  
Axonometric drawing displaying the ground floor plan, with an emphasis on the raumplan element



51  
Jacques Groag, London, no date  
Photo by Jacqueline Groag

## Groag's troubled legacy



Unfortunately, Villa Seidler is sharing a fate similar to that of its designer. It has been largely forgotten by many and, despite its monument status, it remains relatively unknown beyond the confines of Olomouc. Nevertheless, the building fully embodies what Groag stood for throughout his life. It is a testament to his ability to reconcile various styles and influences, from integrating landscapes into his designs to the spatial rigor of the Raumplan concept. The villa represents an attempt to step out from the shadow of Loos, his architectural and intellectual mentor, toward an architecture that is sensitive to both humanity and nature. However, it is important to note that Villa Seidler is not Groag's masterpiece. It would be incorrect to reduce Groag to just this one project. He was not only an architect but also a craftsman, painter, interior designer, and skilled engineer. While Villa Seidler encapsulates some of these aspects of his multifaceted career, it does not represent all of them. In this sense, the villa is a masterpiece in its own right, as much as Villa Otto Eisler and his weekend house for Walter Pollak are masterpieces.

Groag's capacity for reinvention continued after his emigration to London, where he fled Nazism in the late 1930s. There, he taught at the Central School of Art and occasionally returned to interior design, completing notable commissions such as the furnishing of a Colibri watch store (fig. 5.3). However, the limitations placed on him as an émigré, particularly in the possibilities of exerting his architectural faculties, led him into periods of deep depression. As he had done in the 1920s, Groag turned once more to painting, producing melancholic landscapes and dark self-portraits that reflected his troubled situation in the post-war London. He died suddenly in 1962 of a heart attack, largely unrecognized by the contemporary architectural scene.

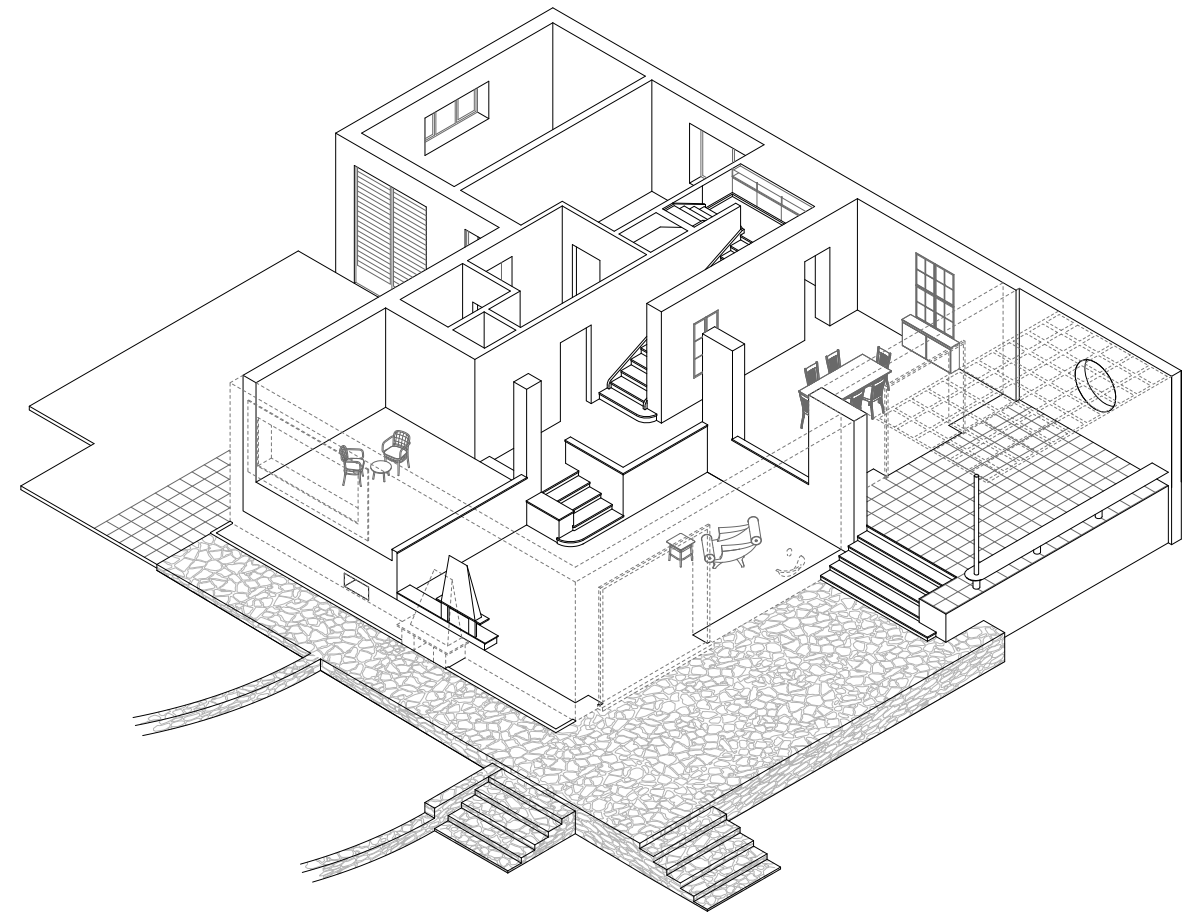
Despite the many challenges he faced throughout his life, Groag remained deeply respected by those who knew him personally. His legacy, once nearly forgotten, has gradually resurfaced thanks to the dedicated efforts of Šlapeta, Plaisier, and Prokop. Through their work, Groag's architectural contributions are being reappraised and celebrated. It is thus hopeful that buildings like Villa Seidler will continue to carry his memory forward, serving not only as historical documents but also as living testimonies to an architect who consistently placed the human experience at the very centre of his work.



**5.2**  
**Jacques Groag, staff lounge for a company,**  
**possibly London, circa 1955**  
*Published originally in Design and Decoration*  
*Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag,*  
*two hidden figures of the Viennese modern*  
*movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*

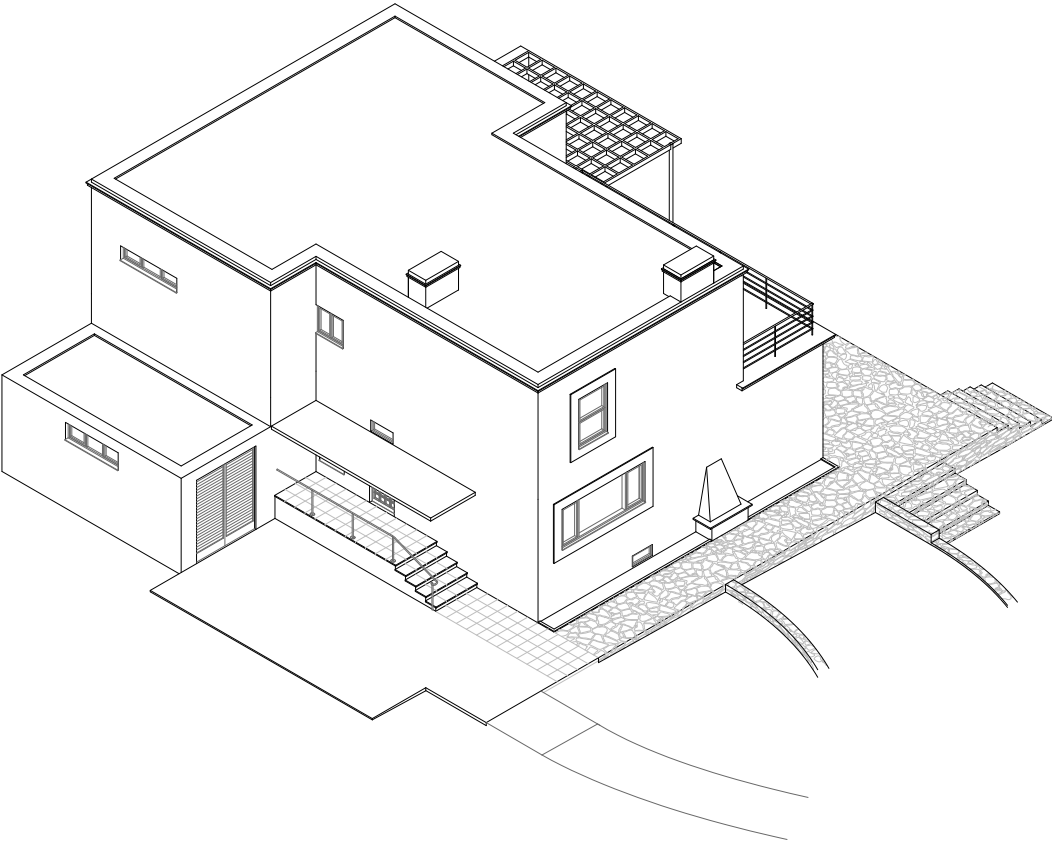


**5.3**  
**Jacques Groag, Colibri watch store,**  
**possibly London, circa 1955**  
*Olomouc Museum of Art*  
*Published in Jacques and Jacqueline Groag,*  
*two hidden figures of the Viennese modern*  
*movement, U. Prokop, DoppelHouse press, 2019*



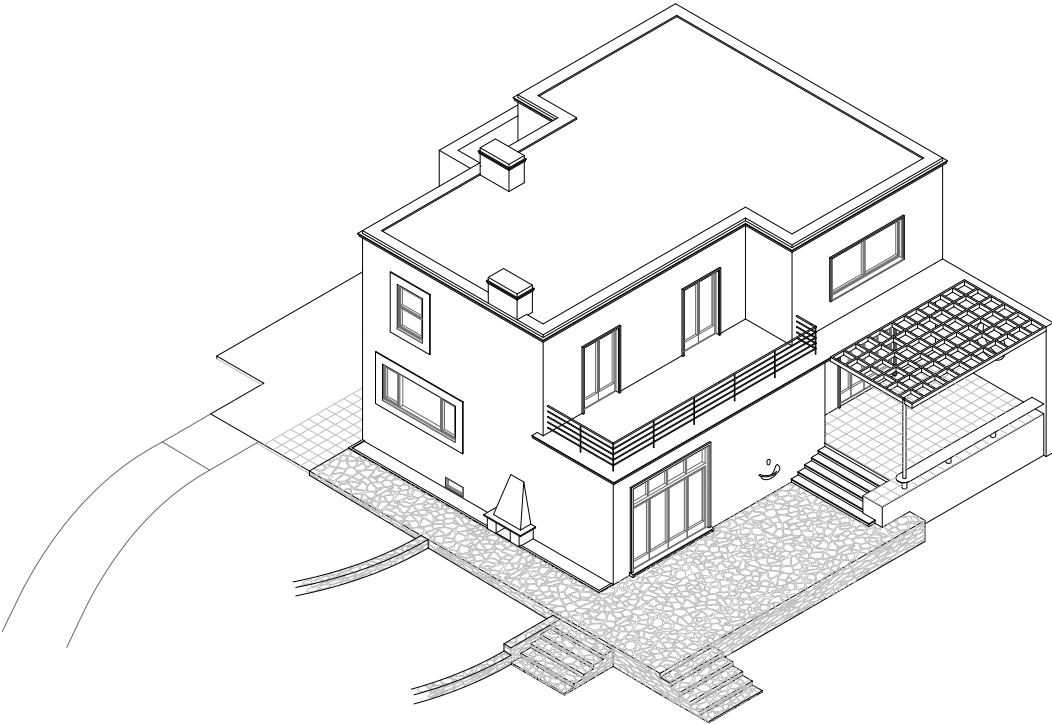
Southwest axonometric of ground floorplan

# Appendices



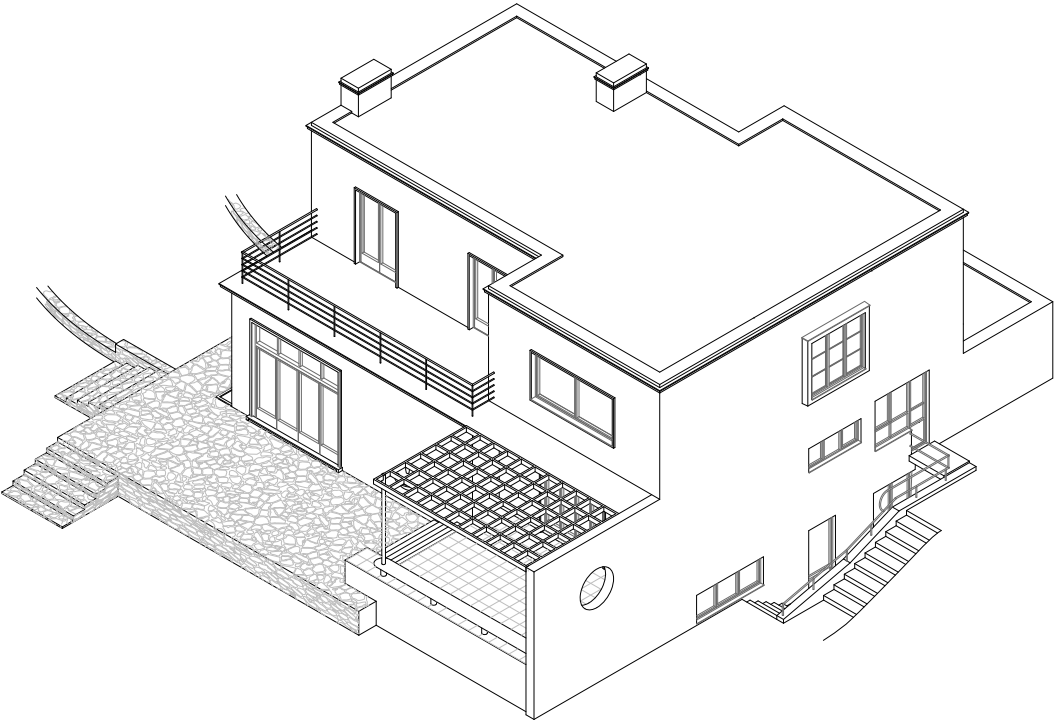
Northwest axonometric

Luca Cecca



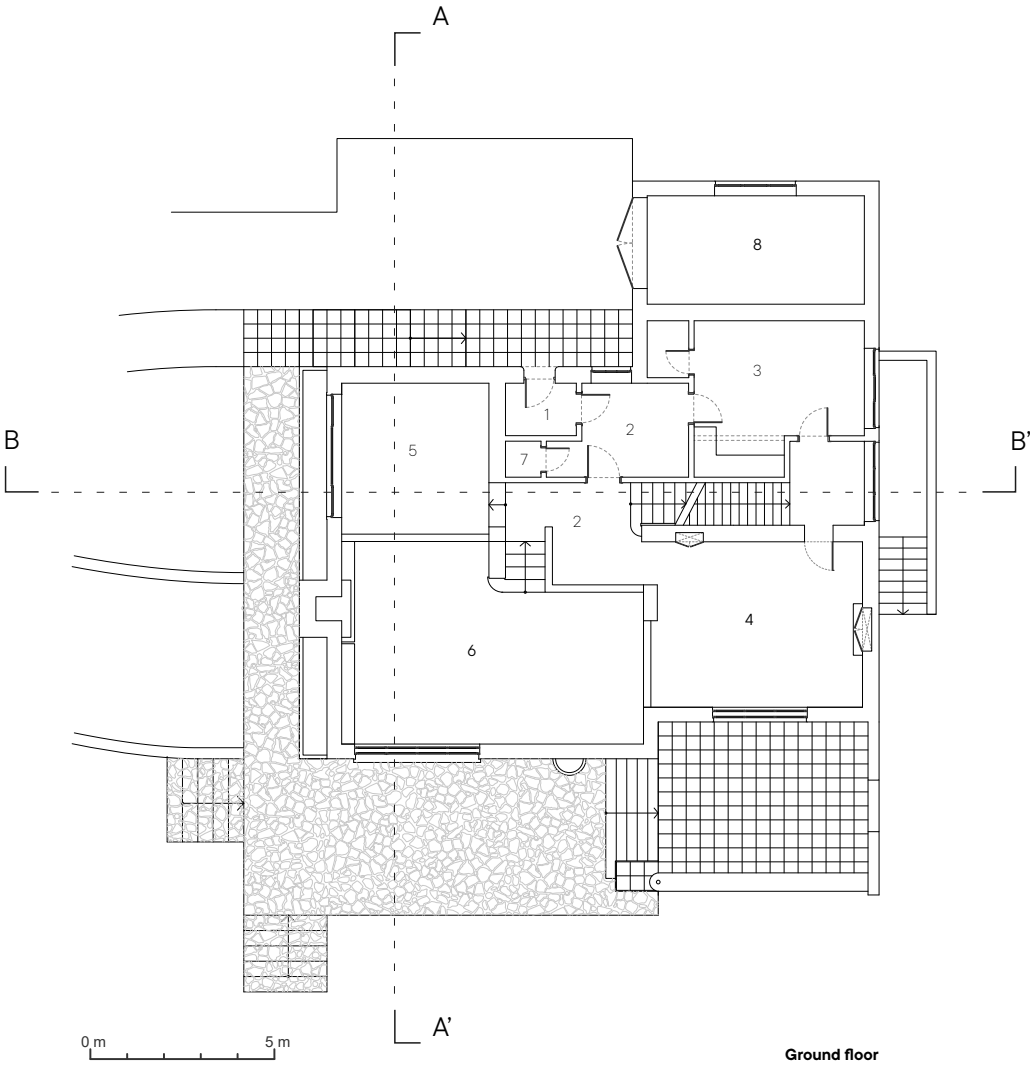
Southwest axonometric

Villa Seidler



Southeast axonometric

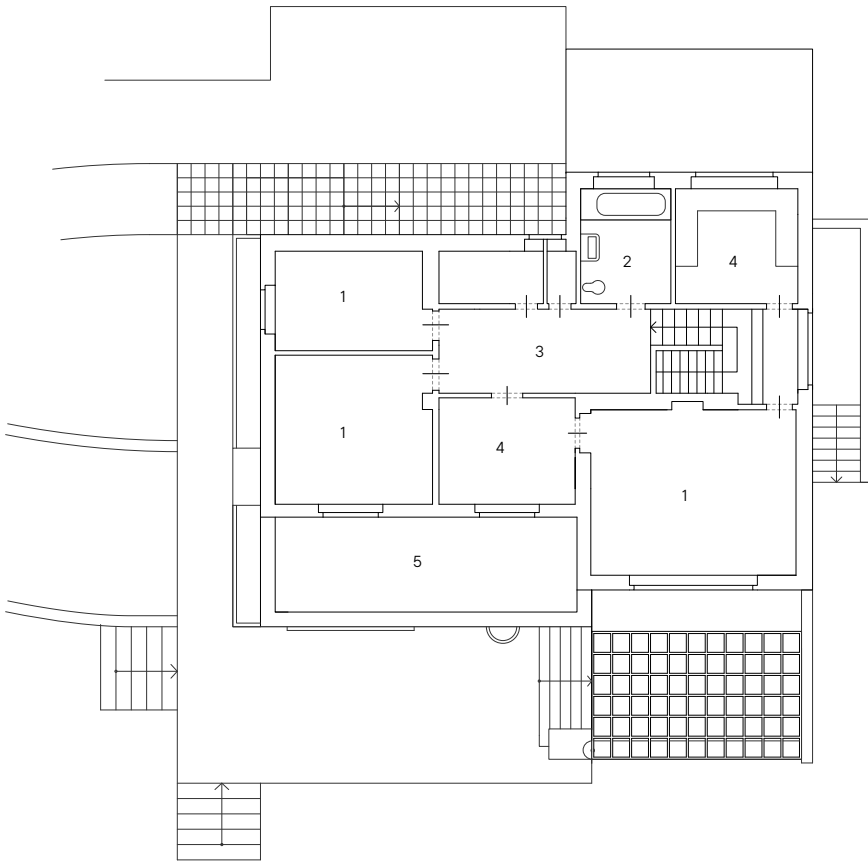
Luca Cecca



Ground floor

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Hall
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Dining room
- 5 Library
- 6 Living room
- 7 Toilet
- 8 Garage

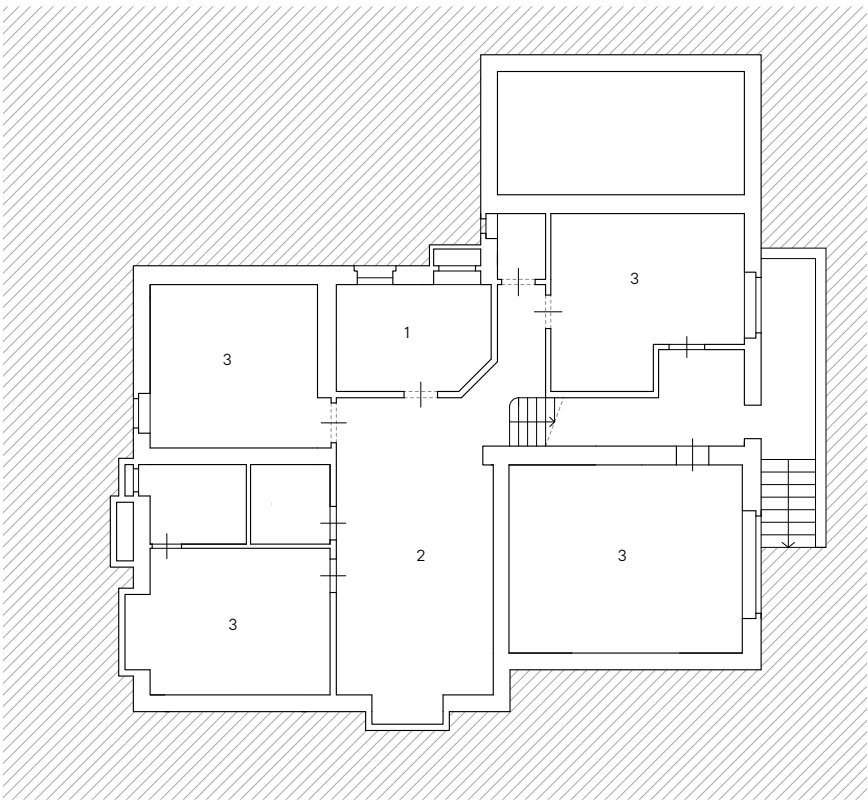
Villa Seidler



First floor



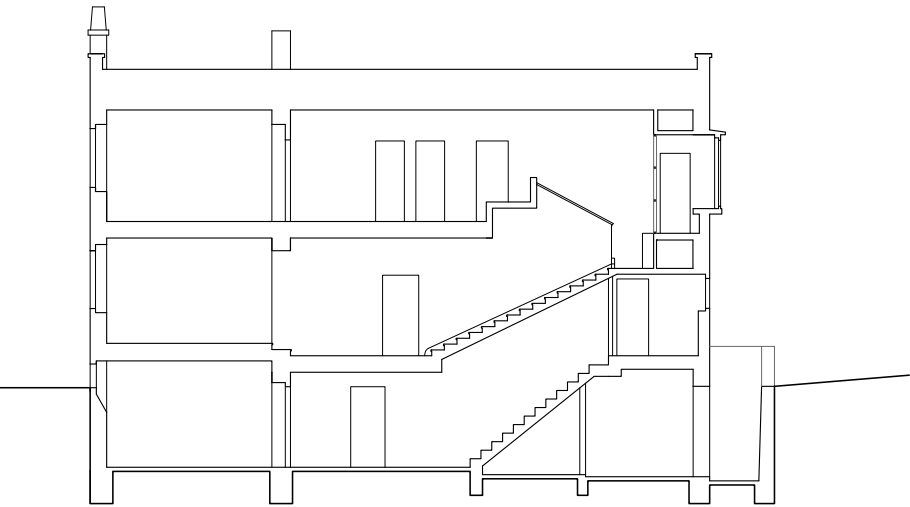
- 1 Bedroom
- 2 Bathroom
- 3 Hall
- 4 Cloackroom
- 5 Balcony



Basement floor

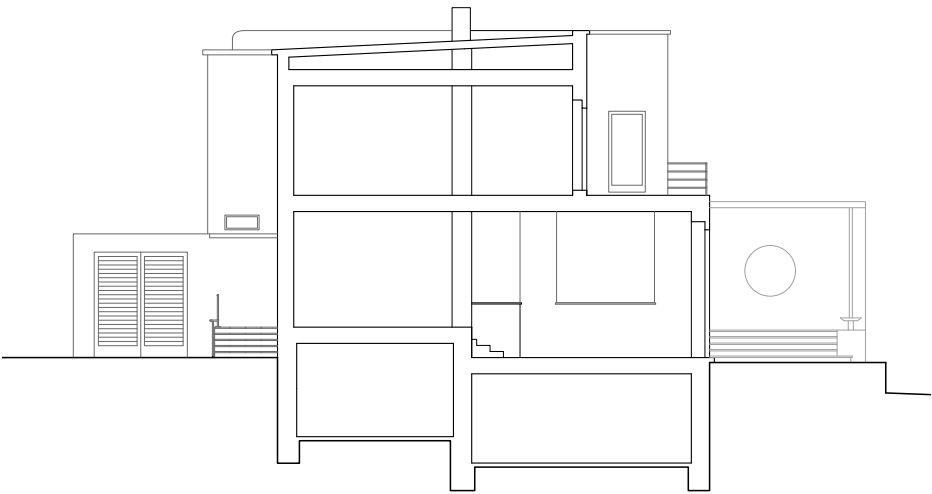
- 1 Washroom
- 2 Dry cellar
- 3 Cellar
- 4 Storage





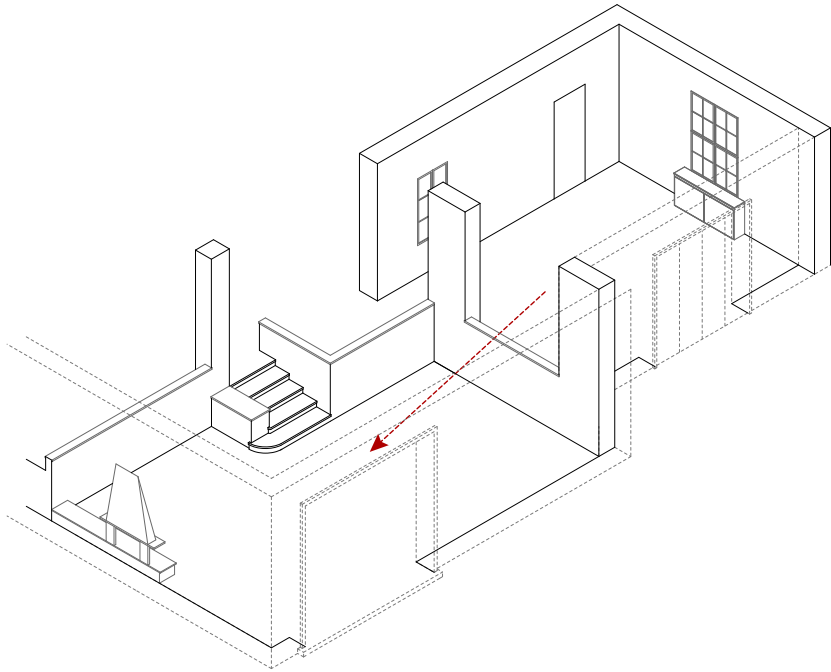
Section AA'

Luca Cecca

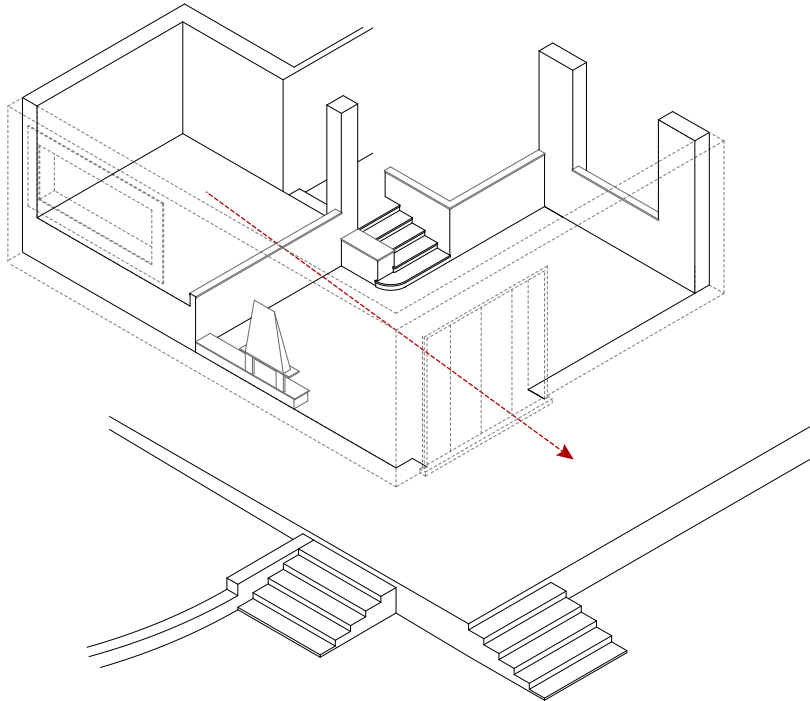


Section BB'

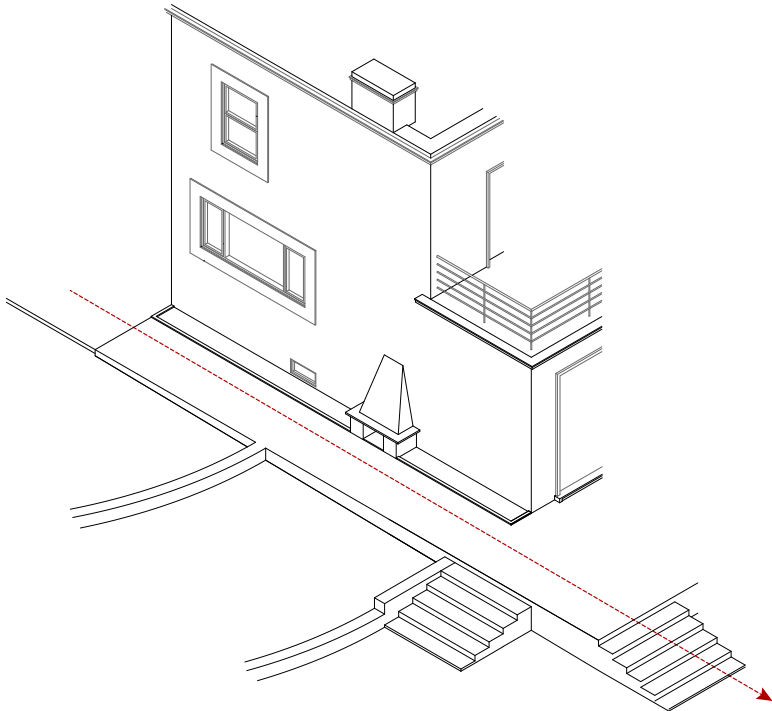
Villa Seidler



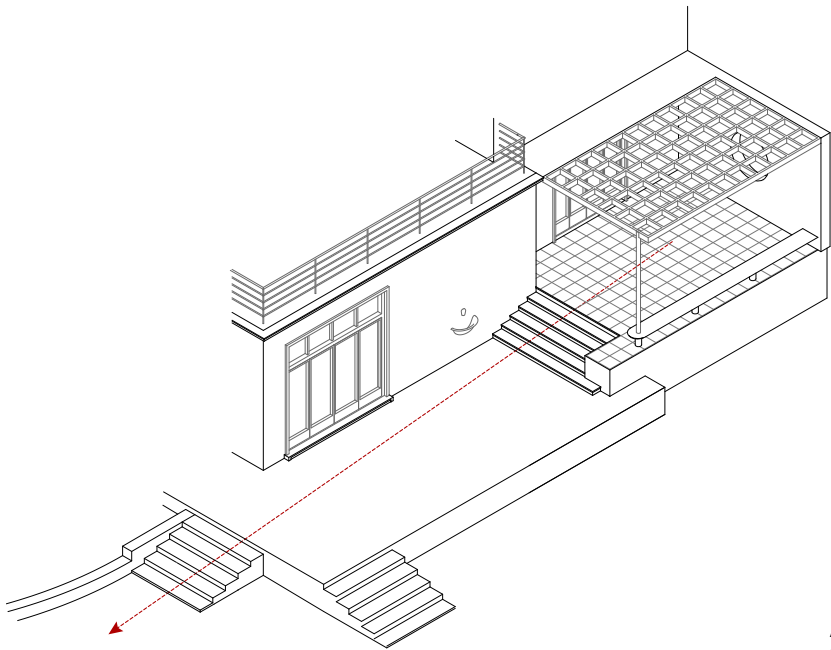
Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection dining room - living room



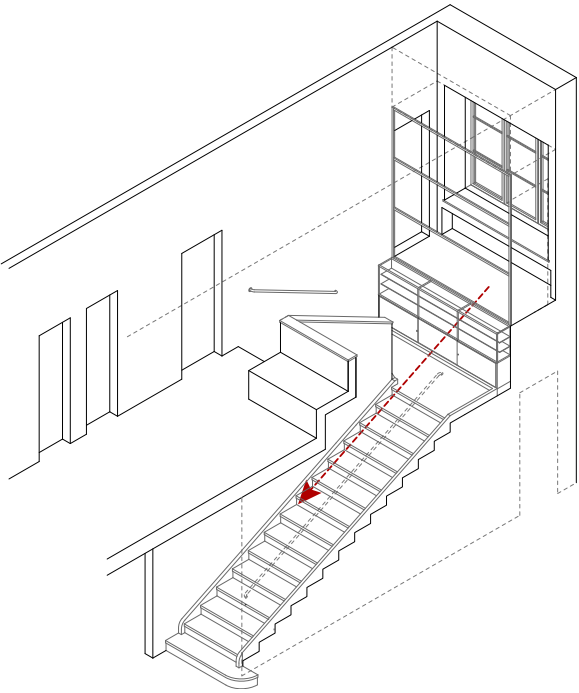
Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection library - living room



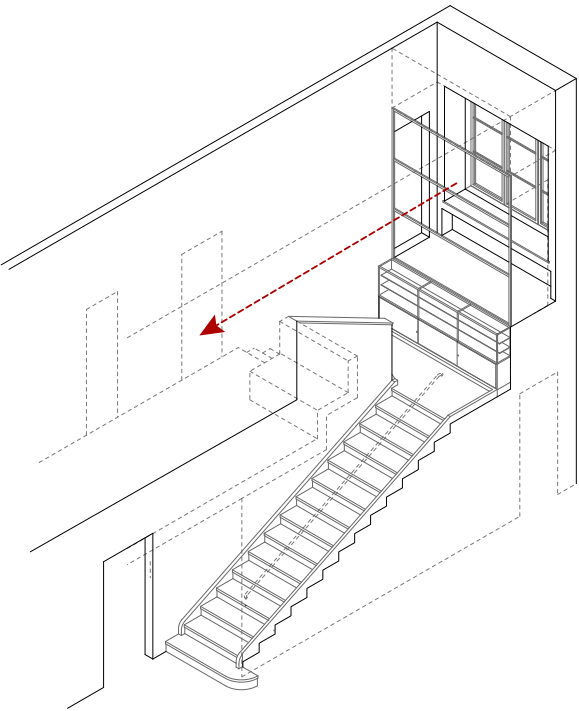
Axonometric diagram showing the connection from the entrance to the garden



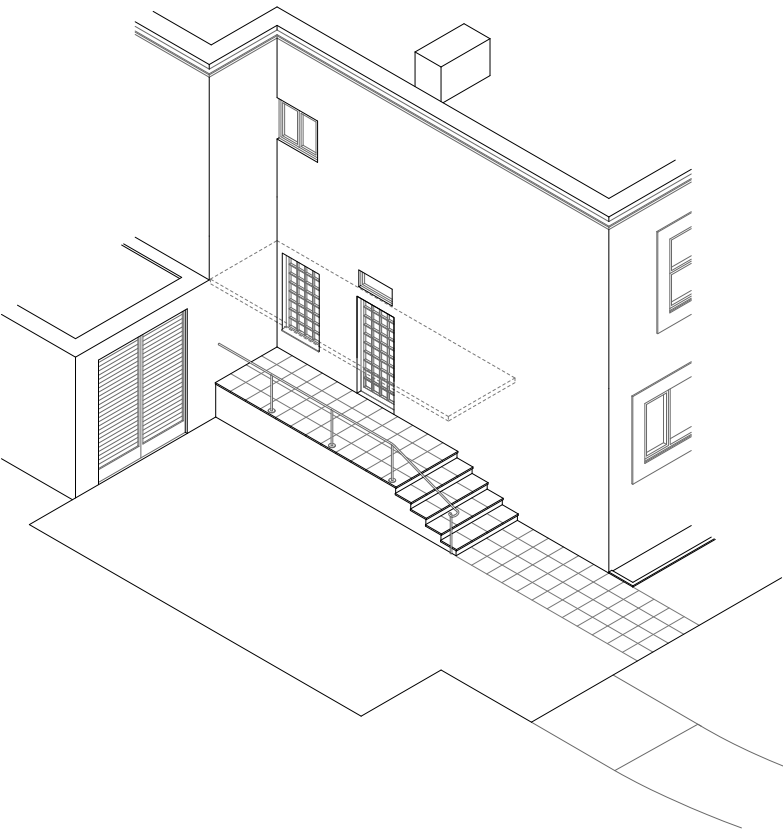
Axonometric diagram showing the connection from the veranda to the garden



Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection corridor - living areas



Axonometric diagram showing the visual connection corridor - upper floor hall



Axonometric diagram showing the entrance

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