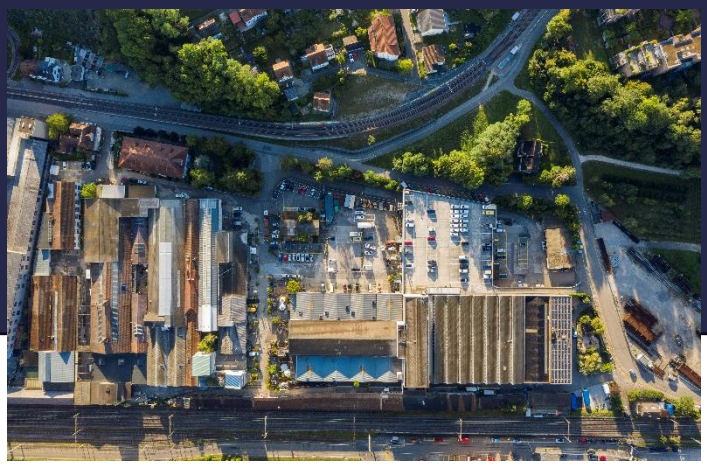
SFP
Swiss Finance & Property Group

WALZWERK

Student Design Competition

How could the Walzwerk of the future look like?



Design Pitch

The Swiss Finance and Property Group (SFP Group) invites students from the fields of architecture, spatial planning, and related disciplines to participate in an open competition for the Walzwerk site in Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland.
The competition hopes to answer the following question: How can a former industrial site be transformed into a vibrant, sustainable, and socially diverse urban district fit for the future? Participants are invited to develop visionary yet feasible proposals that reflect the identity of the Walzwerk site and its potential role within the urban context.

The Site: Walzwerk

50 589 m² Land area **>28 000 m² Rental space** **Commercial zone G3b**

The Walzwerk site, located between Münchenstein and Arlesheim in Basel-Landschaft, has evolved from an aluminium factory into a diverse destination for work, culture, and leisure. Founded in 1918 by Giorgio Giulini, it served as a centre of aluminium production for more than 80 years. Following its closure in 1999, the site, which covers more than 50 000 m², was revitalised by informal users until the Sefer Foundation acquired it in 2004. Together with Kantensprung Management AG, Sefer Foundation laid the foundation for a diverse tenant community. Since 2017, SF Urban Properties Ltd owns the site and pursues the goal of promoting mixed-use development. Today, following a further neighboring acquisition in Arlesheim, the site comprises 50 589 m² of land and approximately 28 000 m² of rental space. It is home to more than 90 tenants and attracts between 300 and 400 visitors every day. Business, education, and culture, together with gastronomy and leisure activities, make the site a vibrant meeting place within the region.

Competition Brief

The Walzwerk site offers a unique opportunity to explore issues of densification, mixed-use development, public space, built heritage, and ecological resilience. Participants are invited to work with the site's existing character rather than erase it, and to propose interventions that create lasting social, spatial, and economic value.

The aim of the competition is to develop a conceptual design for the transformation of the Walzwerk site into a future-oriented mixed-use urban district. Participants are expected to develop a spatial and programmatic concept that engages with the existing structures and meaningfully integrates new uses and architectural interventions. The competition seeks conceptually strong yet comprehensible proposals that establish a clear position toward the site and translate it into a convincing spatial vision. The designs should respect and further develop the character of the Walzwerk site rather than replace it.

Eligibility Criteria

The competition is open to students enrolled at a recognized university or university of applied sciences in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, or a related discipline.

Requirements:

- Active enrolment until at least December 2026 (Bachelor's/Master's level flexible)
- Individual submissions or team submissions of up to four members
- Interdisciplinary teams (from related disciplines) are welcome

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following five criteria:

Urban Continuity & Landscape 20%	Explore how the Walzwerk site can establish new connections with its surroundings in Münchenstein and Arlesheim: linking existing neighbourhoods, green corridors, and public infrastructure.
Economic Viability & Feasibility 20%	Demonstrate that the proposal is based on a coherent development logic and economic feasibility. The proposed interventions should be realistically justified in terms of scale, density, and mix of uses. Area calculations, access and circulation strategies, and phasing should illustrate the architectural and financial viability of the project without limiting its visionary ambition.
Social Diversity & Inclusion 20%	Promote a diverse, accessible, and socially mixed neighbourhood that actively includes the existing tenant community. To achieve this, the housing typologies, public spaces, community infrastructure, and programme of uses must support and reflect this ambition.
Identity & Narrative 20%	Acknowledge and celebrate the site's industrial heritage. The proposals should develop a clear spatial and conceptual narrative, giving the Walzwerk a re-imagined and meaningful identity.
Ecology & Sustainability 20%	Apply circular economy and ecological principles. Energy, materials, water, biodiversity, and climate resilience should be embedded in the design.

Jury

The jury consists of four experts. Internal jury members include Bruno Kunz (CEO of Swiss Finance & Property Funds Ltd and SF Urban Properties Ltd) and Carolin Schmüser (Member of the Board of Directors of SF Urban Properties Ltd). The remaining jury members will be announced at a later date.

Awards

The best submissions will be invited to present their projects to the jury in person. Following the presentations, the three best projects will receive awards. The prizes are as follows:

1. Prize CHF 5 000	Cash prize and public exhibition
2. Prize CHF 2 500	Cash prize and public exhibition
3. Prize CHF1 000	Cash prize and public exhibition

Schedule

June 2026	**Competition Launch**	Competition launch and opening of registration. Site documentation available online. Supervising university contact person registered.
6 August 2026	**Q&A-Session (online)**	Online event. Questions may be submitted in advance via the platform.
22 September 2026	**Optional Site Tour & Q&A**	Guided tour of the Walzwerk site followed by a question-and-answer session.
30 October 2026 (23:59)	**Submission Deadline**	Submission of documents by email. No submissions will be accepted after the deadline.
11 November 2026	**Pitch Competition & Celebration**	The best submissions present their projects to the jury. The award ceremony will also take place during this event.

Submission Requirements and Format

One Vertical DIN A0 PDF (PDF, max. 20 MB)

The board must contain all relevant graphical and written content, including:

- Planned total GFA (Gross Floor Area) in m² (target floor area ratio: 1.5–2.5)
- Overview of proposed uses (housing, commercial, cultural, open space, etc.)
- Intervention strategy, specifying whether the proposal involves new construction, renovation/adaptive reuse, a combination of both, an interior design concept, landscape design, etc.
- Material strategy: conceptual indication of materials and construction principles
- Contextual integration: relationship to the urban surroundings and approach to existing structures
- Concept diagrams, site plans, floor plans, sections, elevations, perspectives, and/or visualisations

One A4 Summary Sheet (PDF, editable template provided)

The summary sheet must be completed using the provided template and include:
Team composition (name, university, and programme of study for all members)
Overview of the concept
Explanation of how the proposal addresses the evaluation criteria (maximum 150 words per criteria)
All documents must be submitted digitally to hochschulwettbewerb@sfp.ch.
Physical submissions will not be considered.

Contact and Further Information

- Website: www.walzwerk.ch
- E-Mail: hochschulwettbewerb@sfp.ch
- Registration via the website; submission via email

Complete site documentation, plans, and contextual maps will be made available automatically to registered participants.

Disclaimer

Participants retain full intellectual property rights to their submitted work. By submitting, participants grant the SFP Group a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the submitted materials for exhibition, publication, and communication purposes related to the competition and for non-commercial purposes.

The data and information provided as part of this student competition may be used solely for the completion of the competition task. They are confidential and may neither be published nor shared with third parties. Violations may result in legal and, where applicable, criminal consequences. All data must be completely deleted no later than 31 December 2026.

The SFP Group will not construct or implement any submitted proposal without entering into a separate agreement with the respective team.

Prize money will be paid after the closing event. Winners will sign an agreement with the SFP Group regarding the documentation and communication of the project.