

1 Hardbrücke Station

Hardbrücke station is the most important entry point, and the most important public transport hub, of the Zurich West district. Connected at peak times by ten suburban train lines and four tracks, around 45 000 passengers board and disembark here per day. In the future, following further development of the district, that number is expected to double. This makes Hardbrücke one of the 15 busiest train stations in Switzerland.

2 Prime Tower

This 126-meter-high skyscraper is the symbol of the modern Zurich West. After its opening in 2011, it bore the title of Switzerland's tallest building for four years. Approximately 2 000 people work in office spaces throughout the 36 floors, and the bar and restaurant on the top floor offer the widest panorama over Zurich West.

3 Freitag-Tower and Frau Gerolds Garten

The Freitag-Tower is a structure composed of 17 repurposed shipping containers. At a height of 26 meters it doesn't quite measure up to the Prime Tower, but nevertheless attracts many daring people with its rooftop open-air viewing platform. Within the tower, in the Freitag shop, one will find the world's largest selection of «Individual Recycled Freewaybags» - unique, locally-made accessories from recycled vehicle components.

Right next door, Frau Gerolds Garten invites visitors to linger with a wide range of food, art, shopping and seasonal events. Former city plans to convert the area into a convention center were extinguished when one landowner refused to sell, but the future of the Gerold area still remains open. Will it soon have to comply with the active growth of Zurich West?

4 Josefweise

For this last open space in the industrial quarter, which remained undeveloped until 1916, garden inspector Friedrich Rothpletz presented the design of a park and green area. The opening was delayed, however, as the area was used for growing vegetables during the First World War. Potatoes were also grown here during World War II. Today, much like in the past, the meadow provides a space for the intermingling and coexistence of a variety of generations and nationalities.

5 WWII Bombing

On the evening of December 22, 1940, a British Wellington bomber attacked several targets in the city of Zurich, including the Wipkinger-Viadukt at Josefstrasse. The night after the 250kg explosive bomb detonated, tearing a large hole in the viaduct, a 500kg time bomb exploded, badly injuring five workers. As it turned out, this attack was actually a mistake. The plane belonged to a squadron consisting of 29 aircraft carriers, which were supposed to



Picture of the bombing on December 22, 1940. Source: Stadtarchiv Zürich.

bomb the Mannheim engine works in Germany to the north. Some aircrafts veered from the planned route due to poor weather conditions and dropped the bombs on what they assumed were alternative German targets, not realizing they were in Switzerland.

6 Administrative Units of the Industrial District

The Wipkinger-Viadukt subdivides the former industrial district, the current district 5, into the administrative units Gewerbeschule and Escher Wyss. The structure was the longest railway bridge in Switzerland for almost 50 years, and its influence on the neighboring areas, as depicted in this 1988 aerial photograph showing visible structural and architectural differences, is still visible today. Though the title of the longest railway bridge in the country resided elsewhere for a number of years, Zurich was once again in the lead with the completion of the Letzigrabenbrücke in 2015.



Aerial photo of the industrial quarter 1988. Source: ETH-Bibliothek Zürich.

7 Löwenbräu-Area

The Löwenbräu structure was built at the end of the 19th century, when the breweries «Felsenkeller» from Wald and «Feldbach» from Hombrechtikon merged. Beer was produced here on a grand scale for almost 90 years with an annual production peak of 15 million liters at the end of the 1960s. After its decommissioning, it was converted into a center for contemporary art, and the Löwenbräu-Area today is the location of not only apartments and offices, but also art galleries and a museum. The chimney, the malt and coal silos, and the brewery building are protected as historic monuments.



Löwenbräu-Area in 1931. Source: ETH-Bibliothek Zürich.

8 Swissmill Tower and Train Tracks

The Swissmill Tower has not only been the second tallest building in the city of Zurich at 118 meters since the completion of an addition in 2016, but it is also the tallest grain silo in the world. Since 1843, grain has been milled at this site and it is one of the last remaining industrial enterprises in the former industrial quarter. 220 000 tonnes of grain are processed here each year and more than 100 types of flour and semolina are produced. A freight train arrives three times a day on a track that is now reserved solely for this purpose and supplies the mill with up to 1 500 tonnes of grain per day. Because around 60 000 tonnes of grain are stored in this imposing structure, poles had to be driven down to a depth of 45 meters during construction.

9 Escher-Wyss Square

Zurich West is a vital juncture for both the national rail network and the motorway network and is surrounded on all sides by important traffic hubs - a blessing and a curse at the same time. Escher-Wyss Square forms an intersection for trams, buses and private transport. Hardbrücke, built in the early 1970s as part of the West Tangent to bypass the city center, forms an important north-south link across the huge field of railroad tracks. Rosengartenstrasse at the northern end is considered one of the busiest roads in a residential area, with up to 75 000 vehicles passing per day. At the end of 2017, the extension of tram line 8 through Zurich West was opened. Further major projects are planned to cope with the increasing traffic.



Escher-Wyss Square around 1910. Source: Baugeschichtliches Archiv.

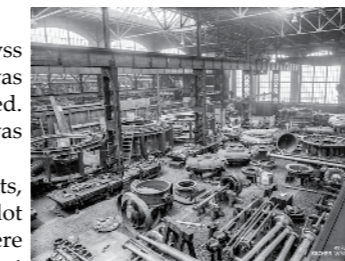
10 Tramdepot Hard

The Tramdepot Hard is one of five depot locations of the Verkehrsbetriebe Zurich. The trams are stored overnight, but are not maintained here. The eastern part of the building, built in 1911, has been under protection since 2006. By 2024, a development will give the area a completely new face. 220 non-profit apartments are planned, although the tram depot will continue to function as it does today.

11 Giessereihalle / Puls 5

For decades in the Giessereihalle of the Escher-Wyss machine manufactory, which was built in 1898, iron was welded by means of blast furnaces and further processed. After the production site had to close in 1975, the hall was used as a factory and storage facility.

Puls 5, opened in 2004, today houses shops, restaurants, offices and apartments. The foundry hall also offers a lot of promotion and event space. While the work done here in the past was sweltering and sweaty, sweat is shed most today in the building's fitness park.



Giessereihalle 1909. Source: Baugeschichtliches Archiv.

12 Technopark / Model of Zurich West

Since 1993, Technopark has been a center for science, technology and business. It has acted as the cornerstone of many innovative start-up companies, such as the world-famous Doodle service for creating appointment surveys.

On the ground floor, room WD0111, there is a model of Zurich West at a scale of 1:500 with interesting information about the history and future of the development area.

13 Gleisbogen

A region with intensive construction activity such as Zurich West requires forward-looking planning for sufficient recreation areas, either by building new squares and facilities or by connecting existing open spaces. In the «Gleisbogen» project, which was completed in 2013, a decommissioned industrial track serves pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The walkway over the Pfingstweidstrasse forms a link between the south and north side of the track curve.

14 Toni-Area

On 18 May 1924, the Swiss national football team played an international match in front of 20 000 spectators against Hungary, in the newly opened stadium Förlibuck on which the Toni-Area is today. In 1965, the stadium gave way to the construction of the Hardturm viaduct. The area sat unused for a period of time before the Toni dairy opened in 1977 - the then-largest milk processing plant in Europe - and was subsequently closed in the year 2000. Since a reconstruction, completed in 2014, the Toni-Area has been a university campus and offers a slightly different panorama over Zurich West from the rooftop terrace on the 8th floor.



Football stadium Förlibuck 1925. Source: ETH-Bibliothek Zürich.

15 Turbinenplatz

The Turbinenplatz was the centerpiece of the former Escher-Wyss area. Accordingly, the revaluation in 2003 was strongly influenced by the past of the former industrial quarter: Concrete, gravel and cast iron are among the materials that characterize the history of this site. The Turbinenplatz is the largest square in the city.

16 Fabrikschlot

With the construction boom in Zurich West, the industrial chimney, which is now a protected structure, was topped out by many surrounding buildings. But with a height of 46 meters and an unmistakable water reservoir with a capacity of 50 tons, this factory chimney could be seen from afar for a long time.

17 Schiffbau

In this factory built in 1891, Escher, Wyss & Cie. manufactured steam boilers, water wheels, locomotives and ships. A total of around 600 ships were built here and exported all over the world. The two paddle steamers «Stadt Zürich» (1909) and «Stadt Rapperswil» (1914) still operate on Lake Zurich today as floating industrial monuments. The now-protected building was renamed «Schiffbau» in 2000 following four years of renovations. Since then, the Zurich theater has operated three stages as production and performance venues.



Schiffbau with the chimney 1934. Source: Baugeschichtliches Archiv.

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Zurich On Foot

Available Walks

- 1 The Inner City E
- 2 Wollishofen
- 3 Along the River Sihl E
- 4 Wiedikon
- 5 Aussersihl und Hard
- 6 Limmat and Zurich West
- 7 University District E
- 8 Witikon
- 9 Seefeld
- 10 Altstetten
- 11 Wipkingen
- 12 Höngg
- 13 Affoltern
- 14 Oerlikon
- 15 Schwamendingen
- 16 Seebach
- 17 Unterstrass
- 20 2000 Watt Society
- 21 All about football
- 22 With children E
- 23 All around water E
- 24 Discovering Uetliberg's yew trees
- Zurich West E



audio play available

unobstructed path

English version available

Aerial photo 2015

A Walk Through Zurich West

Zurich West is a development area of the city of Zurich characterized by momentous change. Its history ranges from industrialization to commercialization, and includes an old brewery, a football stadium that became a dairy production facility that became a university campus, and an accidental World War II bombing.

Until the 19th century, today's district 5 was an almost uninhabited part of the community Aussersihl, characterized by agriculture and small village living. As a result of the industrialization and incorporation into the city of Zurich, the industrial quarter grew rapidly at the end of the 19th century. Machines, turbines, engines and even ships were produced here over a period of about 90 years before a major shift in the industrial sector in the 1980s led to the loss of many factories. New utilization concepts had to be developed for the former production and storage facilities. As of today, the former industrial wasteland finally has turned into a trendy district and made Zurich West rich in visible contrasts between relics of the past and modernity of the present. The change is still ongoing as you will discover during this 90-minute walk which will enlighten both long-time residents and first-time visitors alike.

Length of the walk
approx. 5 km

Duration of the walk
approx. 1h 30min

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Prime Tower Media & Support



«Zurich on foot» is a series by the city of Zurich comprised of over 20 walking routes designed to convey interesting facts about varying points of interest throughout the city. This special route was a project by specialized Master's students in Geographic Information Science at the University of Zurich, as part of the Project Planning, Execution, and Management year-long course in cooperation with the Civil Engineering Department of the City of Zurich. Follow the QR code for more routes of «Zurich on foot».

- 1 Hardbrücke Station**
The gateway to Zurich West
- 2 Prime Tower**
The symbol of modern Zurich West
- 3 Freitag-Tower and Frau Gerolds Garten**
A spot for hippies and hipsters
- 4 Josefwiase**
Where urban gardening was already practiced during the war
- 5 WWII Bombing**
A tragic mistake by the British Royal Air Force
- 6 Administrative Units of the Industrial District**
How a railway bridge shaped city development
- 7 Löwenbräu-Area**
The successful conversion of an industrial area into a residential, working and cultural center
- 8 Swissmill Tower and Train Tracks**
The highest grain silo in the world in the middle of the largest Swiss city
- 9 Escher-Wyss Square**
The machine factory is history, the name remains
- 10 Tramdepot Hard**
Where trams spend their after-work hours
- 11 Giessereihalle / Puls 5**
Modern building complex with a historical core
- 12 Technopark / Model of Zurich West** (closed on Sundays)
Zurich West from the bird's eye view
- 13 Gleisbogen**
A pedestrianized relic from the industrial district
- 14 Toni-Area**
From a football stadium to a milk processing plant to a university campus in 90 years
- 15 Turbinenplatz**
A tribute to the history of an industrial district
- 16 Fabrikschlot**
The Prime Tower of the past
- 17 Schiffbau**
When a landlocked country delivered ships all over the world

