

**Unique economic, geographical, and social context**

Zürich is the largest city in Switzerland and the capital of the canton of Zürich. It is located in north-central Switzerland at the northwestern tip of Lake Zürich. The coldest month is January when the temperature ranges are between -10°C and -5°C and the warmest month in Zurich is July when the temperature ranges are between 15°C and 28°C.

The municipality has approximately 390,000 inhabitants, although the Zurich metropolitan area has around 1.83 million. The rising city holds a 38% of immigrant population and just a 2.9% of unemployment rate. Both Zürich Airport and railway station are the largest and busiest in the country and the upcoming area is becoming the economic and social motor.

In the past ten years new parts of the city have risen into the spotlight. Notably, the area known as Zürich West in district 5 which was one of the most productive areas of the city back in the 20th century, has recently made a turn.

While a certain amount of factories closed down and moved to the country side, the city of Zürich invested into reconvertng the postindustrial district into a new popular neighborhood. Some of the old buildings were demolished and left room for new projects (like the *Prime Tower* and its campus), other were refurbished instead (*Toni areal* and *Maag areal*).



The picture above (1898) shows how the city council regulated already from the early years of the industrial revolution every piece of ground around the upcoming infrastructures; such as the train tracks leading to Hauptbanhof (central station) and the Viadukt, which offered the train connection with other cities of Switzerland.

The development of the area made another infrastructure a very important piece of the area. The high road of Hardbrücke establishes an avenue that contains in a determined width a dense traffic of public buses and cars on top of it and below it gains a free/ pedestrian boulevard for bikes and public trams. The entrance of the Hardbrücke train station is located in a lower level and the infrastructure acts as a transport interchanger between the three levels.

**Recovery of Kreis fünf.**  
**"Züri West, home for the brave"**

Back in the 90's the city had an specified area were consumption and drug dealing wasn't regulated. It was popularly called "Das drogenszene", as the scene for drugs.



The law was regulated in the 1994 and everything regarding drugs was prohibited. By then, all the drug scene was cleaned up and the river edge was restored. A big public investment was made in order to purge all the area and several services spots were placed all among the "Letten".

**Repopulating.**  
**Letten / Viadukt / Prime / Maag / Toni Schiffbau / Hardbrücke**

After the river transformation a small masterplan for a linear park was aproved.

The intention was to connect the main park near Hauptbanhof with another park already inside kreis 5, Josefweiese; and all along the river edge.

The connection was mainly done by rehabilitating the lower lever of the Viadukt, which wasn't currently being used as train path.

While the lower level was reconverted into a pedestrian elevated oatwalk and the upper one was still part of the main trains route, the encounter between both created a residual space between infrastructures that was perfectly reconverted into a food market: the only one covered in Zürich. The new market started to provide

the rising neighborhood new services as the new little shops located under the arches of the Viadukt now do. Other refurbishments were carried out around Kreis



5. While the *Toni areal* consisted on reusing an abandoned milk factory and reconvertng it into new housing, supermarket and cinema, the *Maag areal* also changed its function, it has become a popular exhibition facility. Every year the Design and Architektur fair occur inside that old/fashioned factory.

Another example to be considered is the old factory of boats *Schiffbau* which now offers a space for modern acts and independent cinema in addition to the very unique space of the factory bar/restaurant.

The investment for the recovery of the river edge wasn't the only one made in order to execute a full new project.

The recent finished building *Prime Tower*, located just a few meters away from the parcel in Geroldstrasse represents an icon for the district.

Even though its purpose was just for offices, the Tower also contains a bar on the roof top absolutely public, which allows every pedestrian to have a full elevated view of the entire city. This Tower and the renovation of the train station Hardbrücke have become a landmark of the area.

**Synergistic new program**



**ZW Musikhochschule.**

Instead of demolishing the entire Geroldstrasse parcel as the city council is studying to do, the proposal acts just in a 1/3 of it instead.

The idea of allocating in the neighborhood the new university for music studies not only uses the existing infrastructures of the place (train station, exhibition locals, bars) but also provides new services to the area, which are currently non-existent.

The strategic section of the building works in a way that the more public, the lower it is the program. While in the ground floor the library and bar are located, the theory and rehearsal rooms are situated on top of it. Besides the synergistic function of the School and the aim that the new cluster will retrieve the rest of the abandoned buildings, the position of the volume is strategic in terms of location. It is where the old town (pressed by the Viadukt) and the growing post-industrial Kreis meet. The "meeting" of both natures will be resolved by the occurrence of a new urban park. The park would consist on the implantation of a regulated patchwork which would let the nature appear spontaneously but in a certain order.

The open areas around the university could at the same time be used for private and non-relate to the school acts. And as the building will complete the empty circumstance, the preexistences would also complete and take part of the new life created on the inside.

**The street meets the space and the space uses the street.**

**The use of a corridor.**

Today, a corridor typically acts as a link between spaces, corridors now appear in almost every dwelling. However, looking further back to ancient times, the corridor was by far the largest room in a residence, as its purpose was not only to provide access but also a space for public life.

In the Music school, several corridors are placed atop each other and are connected by independent stairs. The superimposed corridors create breakaway areas on multiple levels. But what will happen in these super-scaled spaces? The answer is: *whatever does not happen in the main rooms*. The system lets the street to penetrate inside the building as the first layer of corridor, and with the openness, the corridors encourage interaction.



Several wells out into the corridors, providing daylight and views between the levels.

Besides both concert chamber and black box, "the pearls" of the school, the corridors are by far the largest spaces in the building.

As in the sculpture above (*lo profundo es el aire, Chillida*), the setup of the corridors provide the "voids" that make the space to be intense. Without these voids, the entire building loses its meaning, and the appearance of circulation remains just as the meaningless passage from one point to another. There would be no place for interaction, meeting or public indoor activities.

The central space is a fixed element around which maximum flexibility is achieved. In addition to the corridor walls, only the horizontal slabs (mainly the ones of the pearls) and the facades are structurally active. They support the whole building.



**The only and completed Skyline**

The position of the school enables the completion of the Skyline that appears at the place. Such is that an odd situation because the location of numerous train tracks next to each other. The unique longitudinal view in the dense city gets completed by the appearance of the new object, that adopts and translates the common shed roofs on the industrial remainings.

