

THIS
TIME
TOMORROW

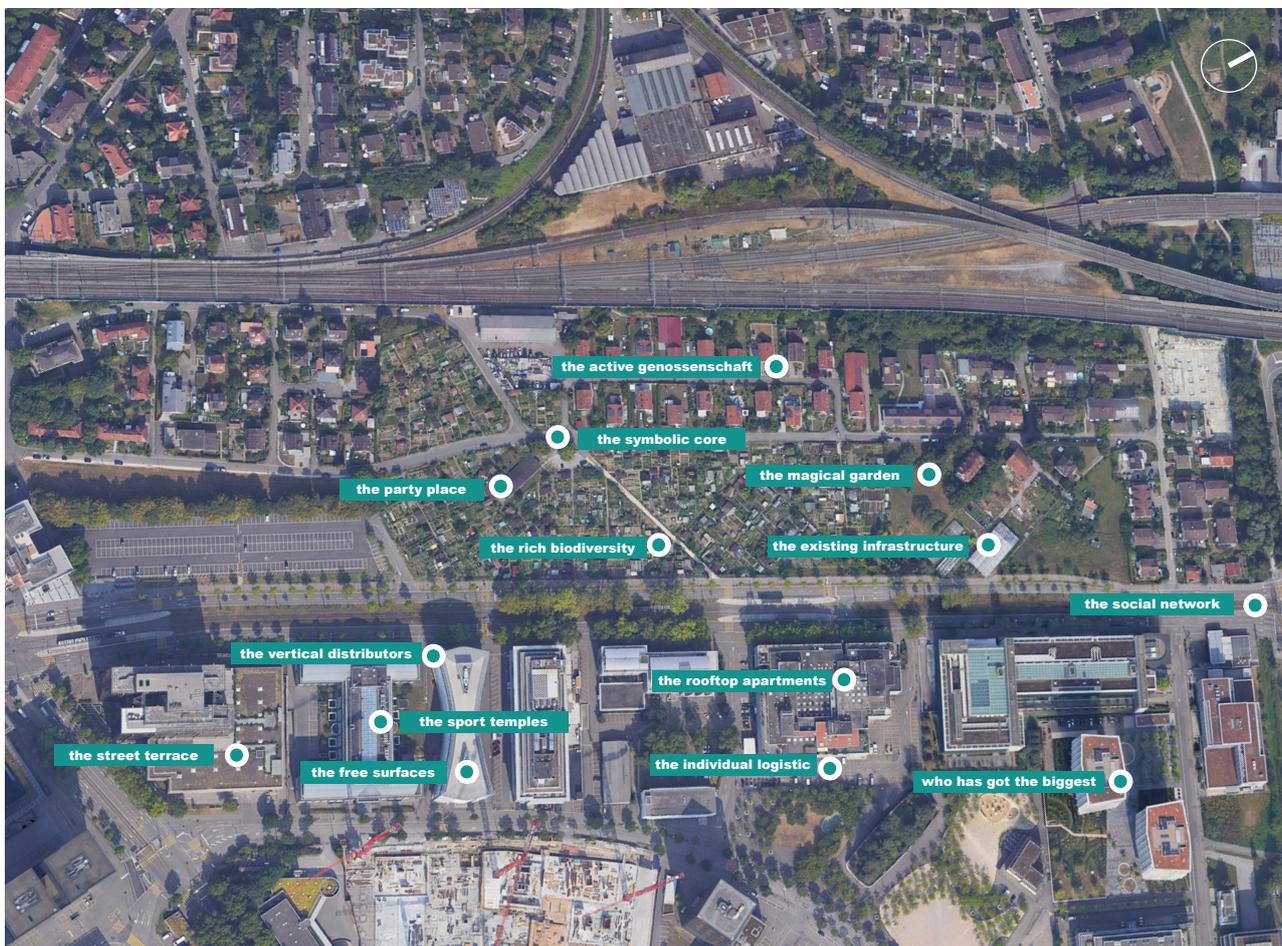
Catalogue of Potential

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In order to understand which phenomena characterize the perimeter, define this perimeter, map those phenomena and see the full potential of the site, a catalogue of potential is created. This catalogue is based on observations, interviews and research both on-site and online, through confrontations with local residents, as well as with employees and passers-by. Residents of the Grubenacker district were met first spontaneously and then in an organized meeting with the board of the Interessengemeinschaft Grubenacker and of the Wohngemeinschaft Grubenacker. In addition, an interview with Freek Persyn, professor for Architecture and Urban Transformation and

author with his office 51n4e of one of the Testplanungen for Thurgauerstrasse West, aimed to capture the site's potential from a different perspective and to understand through which strategies this potential could be exploited and/or improved. More generally, the catalogue aims to look for the site's hidden potential rather than for problems that should be solved.

The catalogue consists of 14 elements that are described through a text, a list of characteristics (such as ownerships, use, care,...) one or more pictures, a specific title and a bar that shows whether the potential is site specific or generic within the perimeter.



“Well, one provocation that you could make is, if all of this is empty, why don’t we turn this into housing first, before you start building the other one?”

- Freek Persyn, Architect and Professor for Architecture & Urban Transformation

The Free Surfaces

Ownership: mostly private
Care: different
Users: none
Use: none
Roof: yes
Access: through the building

The series of office buildings on the east side of Thurgauerstrasse has evident vacancy problems. The buildings from the 80s and 90s do not seem to be attractive for new offices anymore due not only to the working crisis itself but also to their outdated layout (of spaces and facilities). It is said that an average of 25-30% of the surfaces are now empty, and numbers are constantly growing. A paradigmatic change in the planning of the whole neighborhood/district could be the clue to a repopulation of the buildings, which might hide more qualities than at first sight.



“You should come on saturday, we’ll have a concert by the guitarist who lives here next door”

- Anne T., Member of the IG Grubenacker

The Magical Garden

Ownership: city

Care: leased to a private community member

Users: Grubenacker community/private neighbor

Use: leisure/agriculture

Roof: no

Access: Grubenackerstrasse

The Apfelbauwiese on the west side of the Thurgauerstrasse is an unofficial meeting spot for the community of Grubenacker. Every now and then, between spring and autumn, small informal gatherings take place underneath and within the apple trees. A neighbor, who rents the surface from the city of Zurich for 300 CHF per year, harvests the apples and mows the lawn. He then takes advantage of the Schrebergärtner association’s fruit press in order to produce his own apple juice - which he then shares with the community. Unofficial jam sessions and small concerts are organized by the community and are attended by residents of Seebach and Opfikon as well.



“For example, many single-family houses here are now inhabited by one or two people over 50 years of age. Some of these owners would be just as happy with a smaller, age-appropriate flat in the neighbourhood. This is where WBG Grubenacker sees a field of activity”

- Christian H, Präsident IG Grubenacker

The Active Genossenschaft

Ownership: private / cooperative
 Care: private / cooperative
 Users: private / cooperative
 Use: domestic, meeting
 Roof: yes and no
 Access: Grubenackerstrasse

Moved by the kommunalen Richtplan 2040 which foresees a Verdichtung über BZO2016, the land owners and residents of the Grubenacker neighborhood founded a Genossenschaft in November 2018. The aim of their cooperative is to participate actively in the development of Thurgauerstrasse West and to avoid land speculation on their plots. They also take care cooperatively of shared green spaces where gardening and small-animal farming takes place. Those surfaces (e.g. the magical garden) are also gathering places during summer weekends. For the cooperative, the relationships between members and other residents are as important as its aims, which include sustainability, resource consumption and quality of life.



“They gave us a space underground, but it was right in front of a heating pipe - the beers and wines were fucked up. They moved us to the uppers floor and now we’re totally happy with it”

- Yannik A., Member of ASTAZ and tenant of a Zebra Box

The Logistics of the Former Headquarters

Ownership: public and private
Care: public and private
Users: mostly trucks and car owners
Use: parking, storage
Roof: yes
Access: mostly Leutschenbachstrasse

Every building (except for Angst + Pfister) stands on a deep foundation that hosts multiple underground parking lots. Airgate has four basement floors, Oerlikerhus, GVZ and Imperial have three. These parking lots do not serve only those who work in the buildings themselves: many parking spaces are rented, for example by the fitness studios in order to guarantee free parking for their members; further tenants are workers from other buildings (such as newer ones that have planned fewer parking spaces) or even residents of the neighboring residential towers. The exact number of non-rented parking spaces is unknown - but it is said to be very large. Access to the basement floors happens through ramps that are placed between the buildings. Most of them are accessible from Leutschenbachstrasse.



*“No housing cooperative will ever be interested
in a high-rise”*

- Christian H., Wohngenossenschaft Grubenacker

Who's Got the Biggest a Naming (and Height) Phenomena

Ownership: private
Care: -
Users: architects and clients
Use: power
Roof: -
Access: -

The building rush of postmodern office headquarters of the 80s and 90s is still visible not only in the architecture of the big lobbies and the polished stone facades, but also in the colonialist and global names with which the headquarters were baptized. This phenomenon could be compared with the more recent buildings, which not only share this passion for big names, but also show their importance with a new weapon: height. The display of power through the shapes and names of buildings is not over yet.





*“It’s up the street, right behind the
Kastanienbaum”*

- Anne T., Member of the IG Grubenacker

The Symbolic Core

Ownership: city

Care: Schrebergärten association

Users: Grubenacker community

Schrebergärten association

Use: -

Roof: partially

Access: Grubenackerstrasse

The Kastanienbaum at the crossing between Grubenackerstrasse, Steffenstrasse and Allmannstrasse is the symbolic center of the community. The Quartiertreff was mentioned several times during the interviews, and its location was always the same: by the Kastanienbaum. The interviewed residents refer to it as if it was a well-known friend who keeps an eye on what happens in the neighborhood. The tree itself is healthy and quite old and offers some shade on the small square, when the latter is not occupied by Schrebergärtner’s cars.



“So one way to read Thurgauerstrasse east would be to read the amount of vertical shafts that you have and maybe to activate them differently.”

- Freek Persyn, Architect and Professor for Architecture & Urban Transformation

The Vertical Distributors

Ownership: mostly private
Care: different
Users: employees
Use: circulation
Roof: usually yes
Access: through the building

The key pillars of the circulation in the existing buildings are the staircases and elevator cores. Every building has at least two. The classical spatial ritual of lobby-elevator-reception-corridor-office is present in every building. With small interventions, a different activation of those cores could pave the way for new layouts and series of spaces.



“I’m sorry, I’ll just take Maja to the toilet for a second”

- Jan & daughter, Schrebergärtner

The Party Place

Ownership: association

Care: leased to a private community member

Users: Grubenacker community

Use: meetings, storage

Roof: yes

Access: Grubenackerstrasse

Located between the Schrebergärten and Kastanienbaum Square, the Schützenhaus of Grubenacker is used by the Schrebergärtner as public toilet, storage room and meeting space. It was recently bought by the Grubenacker community, with the aim of creating a gathering place (the Quartiertreff). It can host events, presentations or discussions and can be rented by private individuals as well. Its position, further away from houses, also allows louder activities to take place. In addition to the meetings of the Grubenacker association, the Quartiertreff also hosts different official events such as the pizza plautsch, Halloween, part of the Kunst-dreieck-Festival, a flea market, barbecues and summer parties.



“Enjoyed a concert last night. Why wander into the city centre when the good stuff is just around the corner?”

- Mario F., Resident in Oerlikon

The Social Network

Ownership: mostly private / cooperative
 Care: different
 Users: public
 Use: leisure, culture events
 Roof: -
 Access: -

IG Grubenacker belongs to a wider network that involves big fellow popular spaces like Wunderkammer, as well as small realities such as Longtang and Nordphon, all self-initiated organization and places of gathering for the residents of Opfikon, Glattpark, Leutschenbach and Grubenacker. The network organizes events, as well as all kinds of community-helping activities, volunteering, new playgrounds, bike rental and so on. Once a year, an art festival takes place in the different spaces of the communities.

- 1 – Apfelbaumwiese im Grubenacker
Grubenackerstrasse 80, 8052 Zürich
bernhardparz.com
 - 2 – Geigenbau Werkstatt Julia van der Waerden
Genossenschaftsstrasse 13, 8050 Zürich
vanderwaerden.ch
 - 3 – Longtang
Hagenholzstrasse 106 (Pavillon), 8050 Zürich
www.longtang.ch
 - 4 – Nordphon
Treffpunkt am Hunzikerplatz
Genossenschaftsstrasse 13, 8050 Zürich
facebook.com/nordphon/
 - 5 – Open Studio Glattpark
Atelier Marcus Maeder
Wright-Strasse 74d, 8251 Glattpark
www.domizil.ch/osg.html
 - 6 – Quartiertreff Schützenhaus
Grubenackerstrasse 42, 8052 Zürich
facebook.com/grubenacker
 - 7 – Schallbeton
Dialogweg 6, Treppenhaus, 8050 Zürich
facebook.com/Schallbeton
 - 8 – Studio Pianoforte Zürich
Grubenackerstrasse 51, 8052 Zürich
bernhardparz.com
 - 9 – Wunderkammer Glattpark
Containeranlage neben Tramhaltestelle «Glattpark», 8152 Glattpark
wunderkammer-glattpark.ch
facebook.com/wunderkammerglattpark
- Infos auf zürinord.org

MIGROS kulturprozent
 Stadt Zürich Sozialdepartement
 HELF.CH

das kunst dreieck festival

kultur in und um leutschenbach
 10.–20. sept. 2020



The Rooftop Apartments

Ownership: cooperative
Care: private
Users: private
Use: domestic
Roof: yes
Access: Thurgauerstrasse

At the outer edge of the Oerlikerhus there are 4 spacious roof flats, which are accessible via an inner corridor. Their address is determined by the staircase - every apartment is accessible from different sides of the building. The apartments have private terraces and give their back to the public courtyard-like terrace of the building.



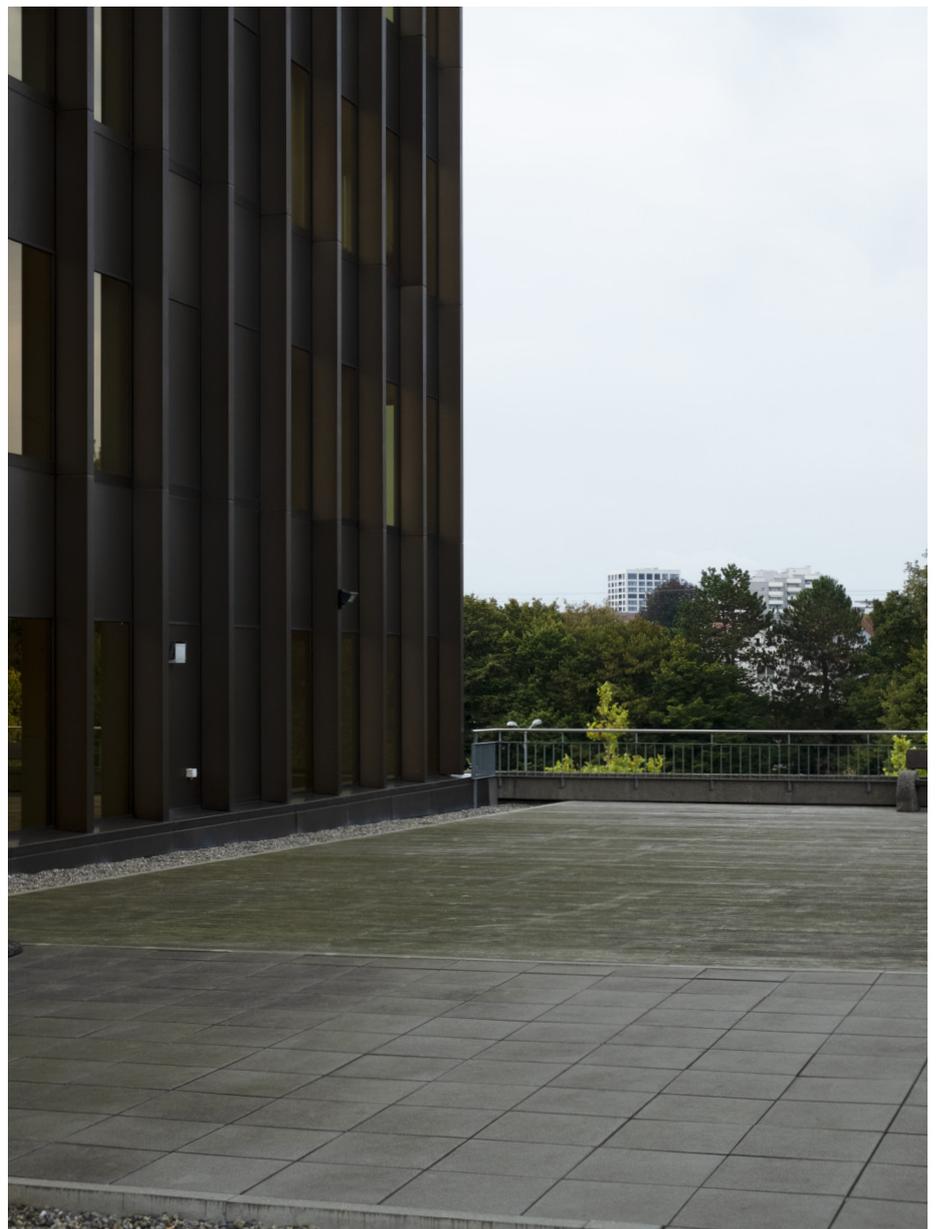
“Which terrace?”

- Marco W., Fitness Center Manager

The Street Terrace

Ownership: city of Zurich
Care: external gardeners / Hausmeister
Users: office employees
Use: leisure - work break
Roof: no
Access: through Airgate building

The public terrace above the two-story base of the Airgate building offers an amazing view over Thurgauerstrasse. This is where office employees can enjoy a Manhattan-like experience of smoking a cigarette between the high-rise buildings developed by the crème de la crème of Züricher real estate. It is, however, an insider’s tip: the manager of the fitness studio underneath was not even aware of its existence. An employee says that he comes down to the terrace five or six times a day from his office – usually alone, sometimes with other employees – and enjoys the calm. The street noise is much softer than down on the sidewalk.





“Anyway, if you start thinking from what is common, you also produce a certain freedom in the other things. So for example you design this [...], and the rest around is quite a bricolage. But bricolage is also, to certain extent, life.”

- Freek Persyn, Architect and Professor for Architecture & Urban Transformation

The Existing Infrastructure

Ownership: city of Zurich
Care: none / residents
Users: residents / animals
Use: gardening, farming
Roof: yes
Access: Grubenackerstrasse

In the northern part of the Zurich plot on the Thurgauerstrasse West there are the remains of a former infrastructure that was linked to gardening, agriculture and horticulture. The most evident example is the double greenhouse that is also visible from the main street. These infrastructures border the Schrebergärten and community spaces of the Grubenacker neighborhood. The surrounding infrastructures are the heritage of a gardening company and a former farm. The neighbors appropriated some of these spaces for gardening and small-animal farming. Fresh eggs are laid by the hens that live in this spaces.

