



A walk through
with
Peter Haas

downtown Troisdorf

Troisdorf Central Station

We are on the Hans-Jaax-Platz between the train station and the bus station. Hans Jaax was mayor of Troisdorf for 18 years, from 1975 until 1993. This is an important location in Troisdorf, because the transformation of the city to the modern era was only possible because of the railway.

Overall, there were three railways in Troisdorf. The first one was the valley railway of the river Sieg in between Deutz and Hennef, constructed in 1859. The second was the railway on the right-hand side of the river Rhein from Cologne to Niederlahnstein, built in 1871. And the third and most significant one was a railway for freight trains only, from Mülheim an der Ruhr to Troisdorf, which was exactly 100 kilometers long. 100 kilometers was also the maximal distance a steam engine could perform before running out of water. This automatically made Troisdorf an important stop for the state railway, because in the meantime the railway had been nationalized.

Before, in 1859, they had forgotten to include Troisdorf to the railway system with a train station. The village was then very small and about 400 meters away from where the railway station stands nowadays. Thanks to Emil Langen, who had taken over the rolling mill in Friedrich-Wilhelms-Hütte in 1843, Troisdorf received a railway stop in 1862. 24 years later, Emil Müller, who had a factory for ammunition and explosives in Opladen, could be convinced to invest in Troisdorf. Wilhelm Engländer, legal adviser of the Oppenheim bank, helped to persuade him. Only one year later, in 1887, the production of explosives in Troisdorf began.

Directions:

From the Hans-Jaax-Platz walk on to the Kronprinzenstraße and follow it until you reach house no. 7.



Kronprinzenstraße

Still on the Hans-Jaax-Platz, we can take a look at the Kronprinzenstraße, the street of the crown prince, and easily see the positive influence of the railway station for the development of Troisdorf. First, we will take a look at the big house on the corner to our right. This is the hotel "Zum Kronprinz", built in 1900. So after the train station had been built, it still took a few decades until people started building houses. This was the first house next to the station.

The house no. 7 on the same street was built in 1913 by an architect from Troisdorf, Josef Probst, for doctor Trier, who was a contracted physician of the state railway. The symbol of the German state railway was placed above the entrance on the right-hand side. On the first floor, we can see the rod of Asclepius which identified the person living here as a doctor. In these times, Trier was one of the most popular inhabitants of Troisdorf, funding a lot of institutions and associations.

Walking on, we find more houses of the first two decades of the 20th century here. Several of them were built by engine drivers, two by directors of the Mannsteadt factories, that we will hear more about later on.

The constructions on the other side of the street began on the corner of the Poststraße and the Kronprinzenstraße with the post office, built in 1925.

The following houses were all built in more recent times, starting in the 1930s. We can tell that the original Troisdorf, in between the Hippolytus Church and the Ursulaplatz down to the Taubengasse, moved more and more to the northeast and closer to the railway station.

Directions:

Keep walking on the Kronprinzenstraße until you reach the Viktoriastraße. You will be able to see the church called Johanneskirche on the corner.



Johannes Church

Now we are standing in front of the Protestant church of Johannes to learn more about how the Protestants came to Troisdorf. In 1840, there were only three Protestant families in Troisdorf and Sieglar: The administrator of Burg Wissem, the manager of the Alaun lodge in Spich and the telegraphist of the telegraph in the forest.

Only 60 years later, in 1903, Troisdorf already had 3500 inhabitants and almost a third was of Protestant belief. What had happened?

With the growing industry, people from the Protestant parts of Germany came to Troisdorf and founded a community of considerable size in the mostly Catholic Rhineland. The community life began in 1860, when Emil Langen offered his own rooms to hold services and teach Protestant students. The result was an official Protestant school in Friedrich-Wilhelms-Hütte, but neither a room for prayers nor a church existed yet. For years, people met in the living room of the Schulte family, in the Kölner Straße 126, to pray. In 1896, the vicar Walter Neumann was ordained, but there was still no room to pray. The more important problem was the need for a school though, because the majority of the children that went to school in Friedrich-Wilhelms-Hütte came from Troisdorf. In 1900, a new school was built for them in the Viktoriastraße. Then finally, in 1903, the Protestant church was constructed, a new-Roman building designed by the architect Friedrich Adolf Cornehls from Elberfeld.

Since the first priest was wealthy, he built himself a private house in the Viktoriastraße at the end of the 19th century, also made of red bricks. This house is still magnificent today and stands out with its writings under the ridge:

“Fromm und Klug, Sonder Trug”. In 1903, the Johannes Church was finally inaugurated.

Directions:

Now take a left turn from the Kronprinzenstraße into the Viktoriastraße. Here you will pass the house of the priest. Behind the roundabout traffic, continue on to the Paul-Müller-Straße. Turn right into the Stationsweg. On the lefthand side, you will be able to see the town hall. Continue about 50 meters and you will reach our next stop on the lawn to the left of the town hall: the place of memory.



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Place of memory

For the lawn on the left side of the town hall, a large sculpture was made by Victor Bonato in 2002. It's a place to remember the fate of forced laborers, such as Tonino



Guerra and his "departure in Troisdorf". Tonino Guerra was born in 1920 and had distributed pamphlets against the German occupation in Italy. He came to Troisdorf as a forced laborer in 1944. Here, he began to write poems of consolation for his fellow sufferers. After the war, he started a career as a screenwriter and became very famous. Guerra wrote screenplays for 70 movies, among them "Amarcord" for which he won an Oscar. For Federico Fellini, he also wrote "Blow Up". The "Voyage to Cythera" was written for Theo Angelopoulos. For this screenplay, he won the Palm d'Or in Cannes in 1984.

In 1994 the city of Troisdorf invited Guerra and he suggested some ideas for poetic places and a suitable location for this monument. The relationship with Tonino Guerra was established by professor Roland Günter, the "father of the worker colonies" in "Ruhrgebiet". The city of Troisdorf had also asked his advice for the Mannstaedt colonies in the 1980ies. Roland Günter wrote the book "Tonino Guerra: Departure in Troisdorf". In 1992 for the days of culture in Troisdorf, it was published by the office of cultural activities of the city with the publishing company Klartext from Essen.

Directions:

Keep walking around the building until you have reached the main entrance of the town hall in the Kölner Straße.

Town hall

Now, the town hall is in front of us, located in the Kölner Straße 176. On the first of August in 1969, the new city of Troisdorf was declared through a municipal reform, as a union of the community of Sieglar, the small town of Troisdorf, Friedrich-Wilhelms-Hütte which had belonged to Menden before, and Altenrath which had been part of Lohmar.

The contract stated that a new building in Sieglar was going to be the new town hall. Soon, this proved to be too small though. Over the next years the city council worked in eight different buildings. It was an unbearable situation. So the city decided to buy this building in front of us in 1994 for 35 million German mark. It was previously owned by the pension fund of the Dynamit Nobel enterprise and had been the company's headquarter. The city council moved in just a year later, in 1995.

Surprisingly for many people from Troisdorf, this building stands on the former ground of Sieglar. It was designed using the principle of the short ways, composed of two trident star-shaped buildings. The administrator for its construction in 1978 was the Friedrich Flick industry administration. The main department for technology of Dynamit Nobel planned and realized it. The building where the company's headquarter had been before is just on the other side of the street. This had been the first high-rise building in the former district of Sieg and was built in 1956 by Paul Schaeffer-Heyrothsberge.

Directions:

Walk into the direction of the centre and cross Kölner Straße to the left. Then walk along the Ravensberger Weg, till you reach Carl-Diem-Straße on the left side. At Carl-Diem-Straße go to house number 17.



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Carl-Diem-Straße 17

The first houses in the Carl-Diem-Straße weren't built until 1949.

The house number 17 has a very special history. When a big exhibition called "Troisdorf in the mirror of time" opened in 1950, this house was raffled off. The batch cost only two German marks. The city council called this price way too high, but still continued with the raffle and published the winning number in August. Nobody responded. The news made the headlines in the national newspapers. Then an electrician from Stommeln responded. He had decided that he didn't want to live in Troisdorf, because his customers lived elsewhere. In the last minute, just before the council was about to draw a new number, he arrived. They asked him why he hadn't come before. He answered that he had just completely forgotten about it. But why had he even bought a raffle ticket to win a house if he lived so far away from Troisdorf in the first place? His answer was this: "It didn't make a difference if I buy a drink for a mark or if I buy a batch." Now he suddenly had become the proud owner of a single-family home. Jupp Mimzeck, a famous personality of Troisdorf, prince of the carnival and involved in various other activities such as St. Martin, heard about this and convinced the electrician to sell the house to him. He would never tell for how much, but it must have been really really cheap.



Directions:

Keep walking on the Carl-Diem-Straße until you reach „Am Prinzenwäldchen“. Turn right into the Friedensstraße after 50 meters and left into the Hospitalstraße after another 100 meters. Pass the hospital and the parking lot behind it. Then you will reach the next stop, the oldest part of the St. Josef hospital.

Hospital of St. Josef

The hospital of St. Josef is the oldest building in the Schlossstrasse. It was built in 1902. In the end of the 19th century, Troisdorf had grown to a town with 3000 inhabitants, but still without a health service. Pastor Clemens Meier from St. Hippolytus sent a letter to the poor Franciscans in Olpe to ask for nuns to help with the health care service. On June 14th 1899, hundreds of Troisdorfers were standing at the train station and welcomed the four nuns with excitement. They accompanied them to the house in which they were about to work in the Hofgartenstraße 1, which would later become the restaurant “Zum Treppchen”.

The four women worked as nurses, taught young women how to run their households and lead a kindergarten. After only a few weeks, their room proved to be too small and they moved into a house in the Frankfurter Straße 10. But even that larger room was again too small after a short while and they moved once more into the new building in the Schlossstraße in 1902, the oldest part of today's hospital. The foundation stone for the hospital we are seeing in front of us, was laid in 1975 and the house was ready to be used in 1979. Today, St. Josef hospital is still led by the Franciscans of Olpe, but now employs 5000 workers. It is still lead by an abbess.

Directions:

Follow the Schlossstraße to the left until you get to the Jahnplatz. From here, keep walking to „Am Prinzenwäldchen“ on your left and walk on until you can see the Parkstraße on the righthand side.



Little forest of the princes

We're standing on the corner of the little forest of the princes and Parkstraße. The house in the Parkstraße no.1 was built in 1919 by professor Heinrich Müller Erkelenz. He was a major architect of his time who also was responsible for the Hotel Excelsior Ernst in Cologne, several villas in the wealthy district of Cologne-Marienburg and last but not least, the famous hotel on the Petersberg near Bonn. This house in Troisdorf was built for Gustav Leysieffer, who was a chemist at the Rheinisch-Westfälische factory for explosives, which was later renamed into the Dynamit Nobel corporation.

Leysieffer was one of the most important colleagues of Paul Müller. In 1919, both of them faced an almost insurmountable problem. The First World War was over, the Treaty of Versailles had determined that Germany was not allowed to produce any more explosives, and from one day to another, the Rheinisch-Westfälische factory for explosives had to stop its production altogether. They had to change their products completely in order to continue their existence. Luckily, in 1905, they had already started to fabricate plastic. They extended their plastic plants which prospered rapidly, also because Leysieffer invented the base material „Trolit“. Several thousands of employees worked in the plastic production and finally Paul Müller initiated a merger with Dynamit Nobel. The new company opened its headquarters in Troisdorf in 1931. Paul Müller continued to lead the company.

On the opposite side of the street, we can see six houses that were apparently built in a different time, in the 1950ies to be exact. They cover the entire left side of the little forest of the princes.

The most important inhabitants of this row of houses used to live in no. 6: director general Biedenkopf, father of the late Prime Minister of Saxony, Kurt Biedenkopf and father of another son, who used to work in senior positions at Dynamit Nobel.

One can assume that the name „little forest of the princes“ played an important role in ensuring that these gentlemen chose this place to live. This was how it happened: After the Second World War, senior executives of Dynamit Nobel met with representatives of the city of Troisdorf on a regular basis. One day a city councilor asked, why none of them were living in Troisdorf, but in Bad Godesberg or in Cologne instead. The answer came promptly: “Because you can not offer us any properties.“ The city reacted quickly and offered them the parcels of land next to the little forest of the princes.

Originally, the way from the upper part of town to heathen of Troisdorf was called „cattle alley“, because it was where the cattle was led through to reach the heath for summer grazing. During the First World War, the church planted trees here and named it the little forest of the prince, in honor of Prince Adolf of Schaumburg-Lippe, the son in law of Emperor Wilhelm II., who had died during the war in 1916. The prince also had close relationships with the regiment of the Rhenish Hussars in Bonn, which had practiced regularly on the heathen of Troisdorf.

The name change must have seemed like a blessing in the 1950ies, because who knows if the senior executives of Dynamit Nobel would have been built their houses into a “cattle alley“ after all.



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Directions:

Keep walking uphill on the Parkstraße and on the way to the two of the three Mannstaedt villas, you will see the former entrance to the Mannstaedt park. After about 200 meters you will reach both of the villas, one on the right and one on the lefthand side.

Mannstaedt villas

Our way is leading us gently uphill into a left turn, then the street is bending softly to the right and we can see a quite unmotivated stone structure. When we look at it more closely, we can tell that it is the right door post of a larger gate. This was the entrance gate to the park of Louis Mannstaedt. It is indeed a huge park, that expands all the way up to the café in the forest named House Ravensberg.

Who was Louis Mannstaedt?

He was a factory owner, who had worked in Troisdorf before opening his own business and eventually became the owner of a large rolling mill in Cologne. It was a growing business and he would have liked to expand his mill, but the space of grounds around it was limited. In 1910, Mannstaedt remembered his former business partners in Troisdorf and learned that the Sieg-Rheinische ironworks company wasn't doing too well. It had suffered from the large flood in the previous year, another one had already hit the company in 1899. Business was bad and the water had damaged the factory so severely, that it could no longer be used for the production of iron. So Louis Mannstaedt took advantage of the opportunity to buy the Sieg-Rheinische ironworks company in 1911.

Then he started the most gigantic company project in the history of Troisdorf. He didn't only build a new rolling mill, but several housing estates for the workers, a settlement for his office workers, and new homes for himself and his two sons.

The housing estates for the workers and their superiors were called red and black colonies, named after the colour



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of their roof tiles, and another one was built in the Elisabethstraße in Oberlar.

Behind this door post in the Mannstaedt Park is where he constructed his own, most humble home and those for his sons. Today, Mannstaedt's own house can only be seen from the Altenrather Straße and doesn't look much like it did before. His sons chose the location up on the hill for their buildings. The architect Camillo Friedrich from Cologne was responsible for the largest villa of Carl Mannstaedt. His brother Ludwig's smaller house was built by Carl Doflein, who had previously constructed many Protestant churches.

So we can see, Louis Mannstaedt really built his own small world, something like a little state, which is unlike how companies normally do it nowadays, many of them are outsourcing as much as they possibly can.

For their employees, Mannstaedts also constructed shops and kindergartens. Louis himself founded the factory's own all male choir. He built a gym and a sports court. One of the premises was a bathhouse for the company employees. It was setting an example as a social institution and the role model for the housing estates for workers' in Margarethenhoehe in Essen and Hellerau in Dresden. Both of them were built after the ideas of Raymond Unwin and Ebenezer Howard from Great Britain and their garden city in Letchworth.

Their idea of homes for factory workers in a green environment had grown out of the unbearable misery in the first decades of the industrialization during the 19th century, when people had lived in slums. Unwin and Howard argued that a good health condition also worked towards more years in which the employees could work.

In 1913, the majority of the buildings was finished and the production in the Mannstaedt factories began. Only one year later, Louis Mannstaedt died at the age of 73.

Directions:

Walk back on the Parkstraße and turn right into „Am Seerosenteich“. At the end of the road on the righthand side you will walk into the forest park, the next stop.



The forest park

The Troisdorf architect Karl Heise had the ideas how to build this park in the forest in the 1930s.

Right in the beginning, there are a few aviaries, which are especially interesting for small children who might hear the cluck of a chicken or the crow of a cock for the first time in their life.

A little further on, we will see a pond. It was built in the 1920s, when Troisdorf was looking for a new place for a cemetery because the churchyard of St. Hippolytus was already full. It wasn't an easy search though because the community only had limited space. One of the possibilities could have been this forest park, but quicksand was found here and made it an impossible location for a cemetery.

Nevertheless, the ditches that had been dug for the drainage created the small pond which then became the center of the forest park. Karl Heise came up with the questionable idea to create a large open space behind the pond to place a 30 meter column on it that he wanted to carry a huge swastika. Thankfully, the beginning of World War II prevented this project.



Directions:

After passing the pond, you will reach a small walkway into the forest behind the benches. Follow it for 300 meters and at the crossing, keep walking straight. Then you will reach the teaching apiary.

Teaching Apiary

On the right of the two main paths in the forest park, almost at the far end, in a very idyllic scenery on a hill, surrounded by trees and shrubs, the Beekeepers Association of Troisdorf has put up their teaching apiary. The association is almost 110 years old already and one of the oldest clubs in the city. Founding chairman was Kaplan Joeres. The teaching apiary however has not been built until the late 1970s. It is open for visitors from 10am until 1pm every first and third Sunday from May to September. Especially teachers with their students enjoy to pay the beekeepers a visit.

Directions:

Walk back to the crossing, turn left and walk on the small walkway until you reach the Altenrather Straße. On the opposite side of the street you will see House Ravensberg.



House Ravensberg

House Ravensberg is a restaurant and the last house on the Altenrather Straße on the way to the heath.

In 1928, the architect and inn-keeper Alois Remmel wanted more families to come to the well-known café in the forest House Ravensberg. His idea was to let the children play on a large playground, while their moms could enjoy a cup of coffee and their dads a beer.

After World War II, the British Royal Air Force seized the house until 1955. In the following years it grew into a popular location for dancing couples of all age groups. This ended when watching television in the evening became more and more common. Remmels descendants run the adjacent hotel in the forest today. House Ravensberg is now a Chinese restaurant.

Alois Remmel, who was also a member of the city council for many years, built the restaurant Sanderhof close to the Ursulaplatz after the Second World War. Interestingly, Sanderhof had already been the location of a restaurant early at the beginning of the 14th century.

Directions:

Walking out of the forest park, you can take a walkway on the left of House Ravensberg until you reach the Heerstraße. Turn right and continue on the walkway next to the street down to the valley. At the traffic light at the bottom of the walkway you will see the entrance to the forest cemetery.



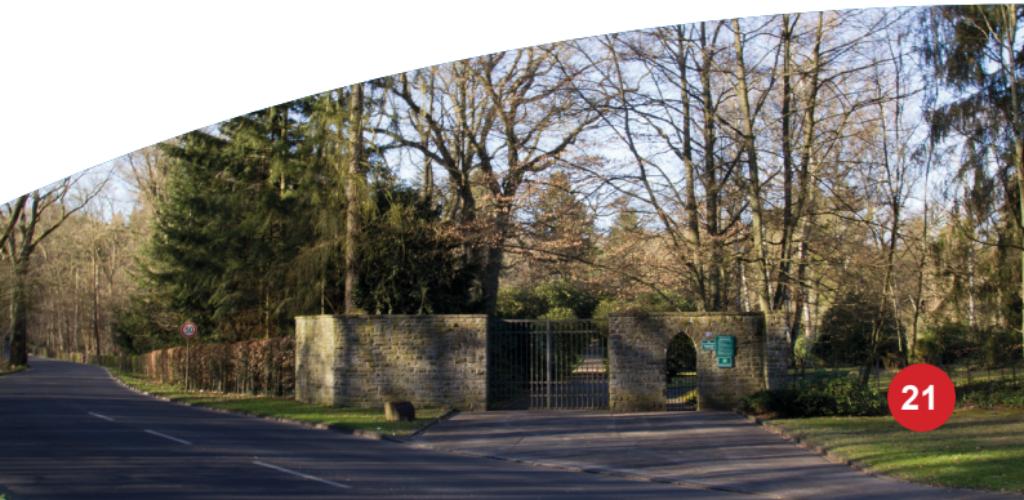
Forest Cemetery

Walking from the café in the forest, House Ravensberg, towards the forest cemetery, we reach the place that at least the older inhabitants of Troisdorf regard as the most beautiful place of the city. Nevertheless the forest cemetery caused problems for many years.

To understand why, we have to go far back in time until 1900. Troisdorf had then only been an independent municipality for half a year and had grown into a small town with more than 3000 inhabitants. The cemetery around the Hippolytus Church was running out of space.

Only ten years later, in 1910, the population of Troisdorf had doubled and for 6000 people, a new graveyard needed to be planned. The search for the best location was incredibly difficult because Troisdorf was small and had little free space to offer.

A place next to the heath was considered, where the sport and tennis courts are located today, another one was found where the forest park is now and the third possibility taken into account was in between the Hermitage and the telegraph. However, none of them could be realized as the new location for the cemetery and so the city bought a district on the Sonnenberg, which was part of the military training area in 1926. A competition was organized and a landscape architect from Duesseldorf won the first prize. Another architect from Aachen, Heukemes, who designed the forest cemetery there, was asked to revise his draft again. So finally, on January 1, 1928, after eighteen years, which had been interrupted by the First World War, the first dead person was buried here.



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Directions:

On the other side of the street, after walking through the entrance of the forest cemetery, you will see a walkway parallel to „Am Hirschpark“. Continue on the walkway and you will have four opportunities to turn right. At the fourth turn you will reach the Park of the Senses (Taststelen) behind a hedge.

Park of the Senses

The creative workshop of Troisdorf is an important part of the museum Burg Wissem. Everyone can create visual art here. The field of sensual experience surrounding Burg Wissem was initiated by the creative workshop. It was built by the city in 2002 and is a great activity for families with children.

Directions:

Walk over the wooden bridge and you will see Burg Wissem. The next stops are in the courtyard of the castle.



Burg Wissem and the tourism information

If we look around the courtyard of the Burg Wissem, we see buildings from four different decades.

The oldest building is the one made of quarry stone. It was built in 1550. The baroque entrance gate, which is preserved only in part, originated in 1741 as we can see it being written down above the archway. It was renewed at the same time as the museum not many years ago. Baron Franz von Cortenbach was the builder of the gate.

The castle Burg Wissem itself is from 1845. Twelve years before, in 1833, the family of Loe had bought the entire property. Clemens von Loe was the first lord of the castle Wissem who was named „Loe“. He had been born at Schloss Wissen in Weeze on the Lower Rhine, the ancestral home of the extended family of Loe.

Since 1939, the city is the owner of this property. The Picture Book Museum opened in 1982 inside Burg Wissem and exhibits original illustrations that have later been used in children's books. A foundation started the museum when a former factory owner from Troisdorf named Wilhelm Alsleben, gave his entire property of illustrations to the city, but only under the condition that they would be displayed.

The fourth, most modern building, has been built over another. After the Second World War, Burg Wissem had become the town hall of Troisdorf, because the previous one in the Poststraße, not far from the train station, had been destroyed. But in the course of the 1950s, it proved to be too small to fit the whole administration. So an extension was built in 1960, which is still here today.



This entire property demonstrates Troisdorf's industrial history and portrays its urban development. In addition, people can also get married here and do like this beautiful setting for their special day. In the newly built house of the Burg Wissem you can not only find the Museum of Urban Development and Industry and the gateway to the Wahner Heide, but also the tourist information of Troisdorf, that offers all the important information for those visiting the city for the first time.



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, „Hans in Luck“

Right next to the Burg Wissem, you can see a group of figures from the famous fairy tale „Hans in Luck“. Troisdorf artist Michael Sönksen created them in collaboration with the apprentice workshop of Dynamit Nobel out of steel plates. „Hans in Luck“ is here, because it was the favorite fairy tale of Wilhelm von Alsleben, who was responsible for founding the museum. Since the end of World War II, von Alsleben had collected many picture book illustrations and originals that he wanted everybody to see. So he decided to give the pictures to the city, asking those responsible to build a museum for them and put them on display. This is why the Picture Book Museum was opened in 1982 and also, just a few years later, this group of figures from „Hans in Luck“ came here.



Directions:

Leave the castle through the entrance gate and walk on the Burgallee towards the city center. At the end of the Burgallee turn left into the Römerstraße. After about 300 meters you will reach the Römerplatz and the entrance to the pedestrian zone. One of two entrance gates can be seen at its beginning.

Great Gate

This is a very important historical site in Troisdorf, because the center of the village and the school were here. Today, it is the location of the forum that was built in the late 1960s as a department store by Hertie. The original buildings on the opposite side at, Kölner Straße no. 1, no longer exist. Since the 18th century, this was the place where the house of the Muelhens family used to stand. Wilhelm Muelhens was born there in 1762, who would some thirty years later establish the company 4711 Eau de Cologne in Cologne. Wilhelm had eleven brothers and sisters, and many of them became wealthy like him. Three brothers were bankers in Cologne, Koblenz and Frankfurt.

The large gate that you can see here today was built as an extension of the pedestrian precinct. Since the late 1970s, Troisdorf had wanted a pedestrian zone. But the problem was the national highway B8, that had been an ancient trade route a long time ago and ran right through the city. So the Theodor-Heuss-Ring was built as a bypass which passed the train station and didn't reach the old road until north of the city center. This left enough room for a new pedestrian area.

The construction started in 1979, at the lower part of the Hippolytusstraße. Then, the Tchorz brothers from Cologne won an architectural competition and they invented and built the pedestrian zone as it exists today. Originally, for the two entrances to the pedestrian zone the brothers had planned Mero constructions, which were metal tubes joined together in various ways and which were very popular back then. Nowadays, Mero constructions can still be found in the Cologne city center for example. The city of Troisdorf



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didn't like the idea of these constructions because they could be seen in many other buildings at this time, like the community center and the comprehensive school.

So an art competition was held. The artists, Joachim Bandau, from Aachen, and Victor Bonato from Niederkassel, won it. They had the idea to work with steel and glass, the materials Troisdorf is known for. To be exact, it is not glass that the city is known for, but rather a plastic safety layer for glass, which protects people in car accidents from being hit by bits of broken glass.

Bandau and Bonato created the semicircle we are facing now, and a quarter arc for the upper part of the Kölner Straße. They positioned them with their open sides facing the city centre. The idea was to open up the city for visitors, unlike the potential closure at any time the medieval gates used to stand for. All of the national newspapers wrote about those new types of gates in 1982 and praised the artist's courage to build these pieces of art.

Directions:

Walk into the pedestrian zone until you will reach the fountain on the Kölner Platz after about 200 meters.

Fountain with balls

Until the 1970s there was a garage for repairing cars and a gas station here at the Kölner Platz, where the pedestrian zone is now. So in 1987, artist Victor Bonato, who was also involved in designing the two entrance gates for the city, was asked to build a child friendly artwork here. Bonato made it clear that he wanted children to play here at the fountain.

Directions:

Behind the fountain, take a left and leave the pedestrian zone on the Klevstraße. Take the second street on the right and follow the Kirchstraße until house no. 39.



Kirchstraße 39

A bronze plate on the house in Kirchstraße no. 39 tells us that Wilhelm Hamacher used to live here.

He was born in 1886 and received his PhD in 1911 at the University of Bonn in the field of philosophy, in the department of history. Hamacher became a teacher and at the end of the war the managing director of Rhenish center. In this position he was also a member of the Reichsrat in Berlin from 1926 to 1933. Then, in 1933, he came back to teach again. Immediately after the war, he refounded the party „Zentrum im Rheinland“ and was its first chairman. For a few weeks he even held the position of education minister of the newly founded North Rhine-Westphalia. Hamacher led a heated argument with the first Chancellor of Germany, Konrad Adenauer, because Adenauer was determined to found a new party to unite all Christians. At this time, however, the Zentrum was traditionally a Catholic party. Wilhelm Hamacher was so closely associated with his Catholic belief that he could not imagine it to be separated from the Catholic party. They led a mainly written argument, the letters are today displayed in the archives of NRW in Düsseldorf.

Hamacher became the headmaster of the high school in Siegburg and in 1949 a member of the first Federal Parliament and Mayor of Troisdorf. One of his goals as a mayor was to turn Troisdorf into a city. Unfortunately, Wilhelm Hamacher didn't live long enough to see his goal achieved. He died in 1951, and Troisdorf wasn't established as a city until March of 1952.

Directions:

Follow the Kirchstraße until it ends and turn right into the Hippolytusstraße. On the lefthand side, you will see St. Hippolytus Church.

IN-DIESEM-HAUSE
WOHNTE-BIS-ZU-SEINEM-TODE
DR. WILHELM HAMACHER
1883 - 1951

REICHSRAT IN DER WEIMARER REPUBLIK
(BIS 1933) MITGLIED DES ERSTEN DEUTSCHEN
BUNDESTAGES - ERSTER KULTUSMINISTER
DES LANDES NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN

ALS BÜRGERMEISTER VON TROISDORF HAT ER
SICH BESONDERE VERDIENSTE UM DIE STADT-
WERDUNG SEINER HEIMATGEMEINDE ERWORBEN

St. Hippolytus Church

We are now in the Hippolytusstraße in front of the Catholic Church of St. Hippolytus. The patronage of St. Hippolytus indicates that the church is very old and its first construction took place in the Middle Ages. However, this is not the case. This church was in fact not built until 1966. The tower of the original church is just underneath the one we can see here.

The predecessor of this church was built in the sixties of the 19th century and the one before that originated in the seventies of the 18th century. More information on elder churches that were here before could not be found.

Because the archdiocese already had plenty of churches in the 1960ies, it would not subsidize any new buildings, but pay for renewals only. So the Catholics of Troisdorf decided how to achieve their goal of a larger church that could fit at least five hundred believers: They demolished the church, leaving out only the tower and the central part of the choir and then built a larger building around them.

It will most likely remain a secret why back in the days, this church was built on the western end of the village, when all the churches were standing in the middle of the village. The center of the village back then was right at the other end of the Kirchstraße in the direction of the Ursulaplatz, around the area where the Hofgartenstraße takes a turn from the Kirchstraße. It was the highest point of the village, and we may suppose that the very first church in Troisdorf was built perhaps 900 years ago. Maybe even earlier, because Troisdorf is first mentioned in 1064 as „Truhtesdorp“, when the abbey on the Michaelsberg was founded.

Directions:

If you keep walking on the Hippolytusstraße, you will enter the pedestrian zone again and then the Fischerplatz, our next stop.



Fischerplatz

We are standing on the Fischerplatz. A stone of Giovanni Vetere was placed here during the first meeting of sculptors from Troisdorf. Also, the now legendary big man is here, who at the time we prepared this walk, was covered in plastic to be protected from construction work.

In 1987, three galleries in Troisdorf were selling fine art: The galleries of Inge Donath, of Siggi Theisen and of Brigitte and Giovanni Vetere. In cooperation with the city, these galleries featured a display of art works from various artists throughout the city, which could be seen in almost the entire pedestrian zone. One of these pieces of art is the big man.

To some, he looks terrible, pathetic to others and some simply find him to be a terrific art work, so from the day he was first shown, he caused lively debates and arguments. Giovanni Vetere asked the city to buy the figure that caused so much attention and Troisdorf would have liked to do so, but it was too expensive. The gallerist set an example and donated 5.000 marks. Hans-Henning Seemann from Stuttgart, who had created the figure, wanted 60.000 marks for it though. So while the people kept arguing whether the big man was worth all the many, the city started all kinds of fundraising activities. City manager Heinz Bernward Gerhardus, the head of the Culture and Education Office Georg Kern, Ulrich Grossmann and members of the Cultural Committee participated in raising the money and managed to collect 55.000 marks in the end and Seeman agreed to sell the big man to them.

When he was first displayed in the exhibition, the big man was placed in the water of the fountain. But Seeman didn't like him there. The artist preferred to see him standing

among the people passing by. He argued that the figure represented a simple man, whom he created in the early seventies after a then 35-year-old worker from the VW plants in Wolfsburg.

Directions:

Stay on the Fischerplatz. At the end of it you will see the fountain Valder.



Fountain of Valder

A fountain can be seen behind the big man that consists of two round plates forming a semicircle, which is interrupted in the middle. It was created when the city asked all citizens to participate in an art competition to design this fountain. Wilhelm Valder from Troisdorf won this contest. He had already received the Max Ernst art scholarship from the city of Brühl.

Originally, Valder had planned a design with round plates made out of mirrors instead of stones. But those responsible for the fountain decided that stones would be a more suitable material for such a public piece of art.



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NOTES



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