For more than 115 years, the headquarters of Zurich Insurance Group Ltd (Zurich) has stood at Zurich’s Mythenquai. It comprises several buildings dating from various periods, and is currently undergoing a significant renovation. Under the plans drawn up by Vienna-based architect Adolf Krischanitz, all listed buildings in this ‘Quai Zurich’ project will be preserved, and the site enhanced with new construction. As a result, the buildings will be better connected to each other and shortcomings in the current site layout will be resolved. At the same time, the number of on-site workplaces will increase significantly. Approximately 1,300 people will work at the new headquarters by 2020. The site will create more than workspaces, however; a ground-floor auditorium and café, together with inner courtyards – all accessible to the public – will grace the neighbourhood with new meeting places.

Existing structures are being refitted, and new ones built, to the latest energy efficiency standards. Quai Zurich aims to earn several sustainable development labels: MINERGIE ECO for renovations, MINERGIE-P-ECO for new buildings, and LEED Platinum and 2000-Watt Site certification for the project as a whole. The headquarter will also meet sustainability targets once the site becomes operational, pumping lake water for heating and cooling, using substantially less energy than at present, and drawing on 100% renewable energy for power.

Quai Zurich is car-free above ground, has direct links to the public transport system and is easily reached on foot or by bicycle. It offers covered bicycle parking and charging stations for electric vehicles. Zurich Insurance also has an incentive package to promote use of public transport and non-motorized traffic by its employees.

"Quai Zurich" represents a commitment to tradition and to the Zurich location. Sustainability is more than just a slogan for us. If we are to fulfill our duty as an insurance firm to the society and the economy as a whole, we ourselves have to act sustainably - and that holds true for our office buildings, as they represent one of our most significant areas of potential environmental impact.

The lake and its shoreline are of tremendous importance to Zurich; their fame stretches far beyond the city’s limits. Zurich Insurance Group Ltd was one of the first firms to build its headquarters, more than 115 years ago, on what was then the newly constructed Mythenquai. The site is home to workplaces, recreation areas, shops and various types of housing. Zurich, the “city of short-distance trips”, thus corresponds to our demand for a sustainable corporate location - incidentally, also one of the criteria of the 2000-Watt Society approved by the voters of the City of Zurich in 2008.
Status of the project

- Zurich Insurance Group Ltd launched an international architecture competition in 2011.
- The competition was won in 2012 by Vienna-based architect Adolf Krischanitz and his «ZUMY» project.
- The land-use plan was unanimously approved by the City Council in 2015, and the construction permit was issued in May 2016.
- In April 2017, ground will be broken for development of the Zurich Corporate Center.
- The goal is for Quai Zurich to become operational in 2020.

Highlights

- This will be the first complex of buildings used predominantly as business premises to receive 2000-Watt Site certification.
- The buildings are heated and cooled with lake water.
- The aim is to obtain the LEED Platinum New Construction & Major Renovation label for the existing buildings. In addition, new buildings will be constructed to the Minergie-P-Eco standard, and conversions to the Minergie-Eco standard.
- The site is car-free above ground. Public ground-floor areas and courtyards enhance neighbourhood life.
- Listed buildings will be preserved and new constructions added for optimal and sustainable operations.

Certificates for ‘2,000-Watt Sites’ are awarded to housing developments that use resources sustainably in the construction, operation and renovation of their buildings, and in the traffic they generate.

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) and the ‘Energiesstadt’ association award this certificate in two stages, the first being for ‘Sites under development’. The next stage is reached when construction has progressed to the point that at least half of the total living space is in use. The development is then considered a ‘Site in operation’ and can apply for a new ‘2,000-Watt Site’ certificate. Actual operating values are then measured to determine whether the Site fulfils the necessary criteria for certification.

This certification was developed as part of the SwissEnergy program, with which the SFOE promotes national energy policy implementation, specifically in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Through a sub-program called SwissEnergy for municipalities, the SFOE systematically supports projects on a communal level.