

Zeitschrift: Schaffhauser Beiträge zur Geschichte
Herausgeber: Historischer Verein des Kantons Schaffhausen
Band: 86 (2012)
Heft: [2]: Schaffhausen seven walks through history : old town & Rhine falls

Artikel: Power and politics, oriels and façades
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-841558>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The walk starts at the *Fronwagplatz*, one of the city's two main squares. In the square, along with remains of the city fortifications (Walk 6), there are two tower houses dating back to the Middle Ages, which once belonged to noble families. The mediaeval construction can still be clearly seen in the "Turm am Ort" (14 *Fronwagplatz*) with its striking corner blocks. The tower is mentioned in 1299 as "turre domini in fine", the residence of a knightly family which died out in around 1400. The walls of the ground floor are 1.5 metres thick, and even on the third floor they still have a thickness of 1.2 metres. The other tower house is the Fronwag tower (4 *Fronwagplatz*). It too was mentioned in 1299, as "turre Sculteti". For a long time the tower was the residence of the noble family of von Randenburg, which provided several of the "schultheiss" (town heads) of Schaffhausen in the 14th century. They had received in fief from the abbot of the Allerheiligen monastery the right to oversee the compulsory weighing of goods. The purchase of the Fronwag tower by the city in 1436 was a sign of the growing power of the burghers in relation to the leading noble families. The tower was originally twice as high as it is today. On 1 June 1746 it was in such a state of dis-



repair that it collapsed and was rebuilt the following year. Beneath the gable is the astronomical clock built by Joachim Habrecht of

Schaffhausen in 1561, a masterpiece of 16th century clockmaking. In three con-

19



20

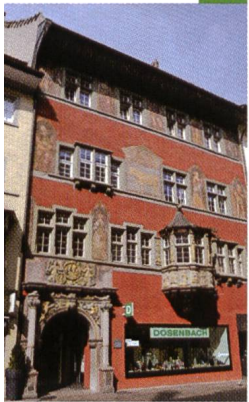


centric circles it shows the hours, the days of the week, the phase of the moon, the position of the sun in the zodiac, the seasons, equinoxes and eclipses.

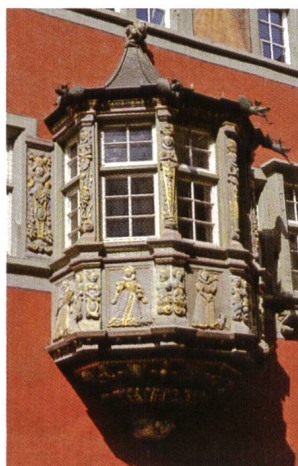
Fronwagplatz

The name should really be spelled Fronwaagplatz, since the scales, or "Waage", were set up on the ground floor of the Fronwag tower. The name comes from the word "fron", which refers to something belonging to an "overlord". So the "Fronwaage" were the scales belonging to people with influence in the city.

21



Our way now leads from the Fronwagplatz to one of the most magnificent oriels decorating the house named "Zum Goldenen Ochsen" (17 Vorstadt). The house was originally a tavern but was rebuilt in Renaissance style and converted into an imposing residence in 1608. The renovation of the façade in 2004 has returned the Renaissance portal and the oriel to its old splendour. The images in the spaces at the bottom of the oriel represent the five senses: sight (mirror), touch (glove and lizard), smell (flowers and dog), hearing (stringed instrument and deer) and taste (plate). At the top of the oriel sits a clergyman in 17th century dress with a splendid ruff.



He can be interpreted as a mocking allusion to the role of the clergy as a "morals police" at that time: the figure has excessively large ears, creating a powerful contrast with the two lovers depicted at the bottom end of the oriel. There is no coherent narrative in the paintings decorating the walls: they follow Renaissance fashion in depicting isolated scenes with antique motifs derived from the Trojan War and Babylonian history.

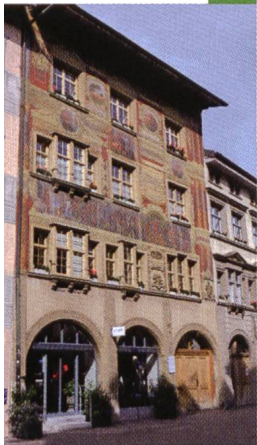
Oriel windows

Wealthy burghers expressed their pride and self-confidence, economic power and social status through their houses, and especially through the design of the façades. The oriels – bay windows projecting from the wall without reaching the ground – are one of the features of Schaffhausen:



they combine practicality, since they bring more light into otherwise dim living spaces, with status symbol, since they lend themselves to rich decoration and complex design. The city has about 170 oriels; the most recent was built at 57 Vordergasse in 1999.

22



Further along the *Vorstadt* we come to the house called "Zum Grossen Käfig" (43 *Vorstadt*), one of the most important bourgeois houses in the city, with its façade painted in 1675 by an unknown artist. The paintings we can see today are 19th century copies. The subjects are all connected with the name of the house, "Käfig", meaning "cage". This is particularly obvious in the scene depicted above the windows of the first floor, which shows Mongols parading the sultan whom they have captured and put in a cage. This image was a way of reflecting the cosmopolitanism of the owner of the house while at the same time presenting a touch of oriental exoticism.

23



The way now leads back from the *Vorstadt* to the *Webergasse* to the first guild house of the Zunft zun Webern (Weavers' Guild) (27 *Webergasse*). The very name of the *Webergasse* indicates the trade that was practised here. The building was first mentioned in 1387 as the weavers' drinking parlour. It was sold to private individuals in 1777, since the guild was building itself a new house in a better location (see below).

Guild houses

Guild houses fulfilled a number of functions: they were gathering places for the guild or corporation in question. They always included a drinking parlour, where members and guests could meet. This was where disputes were settled and po-

litics discussed. The guild hall was a special room used only on ceremonial occasions, such as the annual assembly, which was originally called in German "Aufgebot", or "summons". Today it is called either "Bot" or "Bott". But the houses of the guilds and corporations also reflected the status and pretensions of their owners, which is why it was important to build as imposing a guild house as possible in the best possible location. The Schaffhausen guilds and corporations still exist, but none of them own any of these guild houses any more. When the guilds and corporations lost their political and economic power in the 19th century, all the guild houses were sold to private individuals in order to secure the assets from which members' pensions are paid.

From the *Webergasse* our path leads down the *Rosengässchen* to the *Platz* and then along the *Krummgasse* to the *Stadthaus*, now the seat of the city executive. The house is actually called "Freudenquelle" (Source of Joy) and was built in 1729 as a large private house, partly on the site of the nave of the Barfüsser monastery which was dissolved during the Reformation (Walk 1). The position of the old nave is indicated in the paving in front of the *Stadthaus*. When the constitution of 1831 made the city of Schaffhausen into an autonomous commune, separate from the rest of the canton, the newly created city administration needed imposing premises, which explains why the city bought this building in 1838. It is one of the most impressive town houses in

24



Schaffhausen. The city council chamber is on the second floor; this is where the city executive (government) holds its meetings beneath a late baroque stucco ceiling with paintings illustrating Labor (work) and Honor (honour). (The building is not open for visits.)

25



Continuing down the *Stadthausgasse*, we reach the Fronwagplatz with the Butchers' Guild house (*7 Fronwagplatz*). The guild bought the house in 1517 and had it rebuilt in 1655/56. The guild house is an imposing building with a balustrade. Inside, one of the rooms of the old guild house is still preserved on the first floor of the premises now used as a shop.

26



Next to the Fronwag tower is the house of the Gesellschaft zun Herren (Corporation of Lords, or Gentlemen) (*3 Fronwagplatz*). The nobles already had a drinking parlour on this spot back in the 14th century. Badly damaged by the collapse of the Fronwag tower immediately next door, the house was rebuilt in late baroque style in 1747/48. The portal is particularly impressive; in the cartouche above the entrance you can see the coat of arms of the gentlemen's corporation: two crossed jousting lances, a reference to tournaments, in which only the nobility were allowed to take part. To the left of the cartouche is Pallas Athene and to the right Mars.

Our way leads from the Fronwagplatz to the *Oberstadt* and the guild house of the *Zunft zum Rüden* (Dog Guild) (20 *Oberstadt*). This is the only guild in Schaffhausen which does not take its name from the main trade exercised by its members, but from the name of its guild house, which also gave the guild its coat of arms: it was the guild of shopkeepers and local traders. In 1423 the guild bought the house known as "Zum schwarzen Rüden" (The Black Dog), and after buying the next-door building in order to obtain more space, had it rebuilt from 1779 to 1783 as a palatial late baroque house. The entire edifice was extensively restored between 1994 and 1996, in a manner as close as possible to the original, and has recovered its former glory. Since 2002 it has been a hotel. Inside, the furnishings of the guild house survive largely intact. The staircase is particularly magnificent. On the first floor is the guild hall, unique of its kind, the expression in exuberant stucco work of the guild's self-image that has more in common with the pretensions of an absolutist monarch than with republican restraint. The entrance with the portico and balustrade were not rebuilt until the renovations of 1996. The guild hall can be hired for special events.

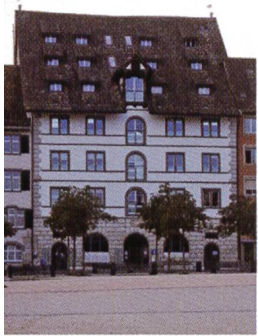
The guild house of the vineyard workers (2 *Rebleutgang*) seems to have been rather more modest. We reach the house via the Neustadt and the Rebleutgang which turns off it. The *Zunft zun Rebleuten* bought the house in 1448. It was hit by bombs on 1 April 1944, and was subsequently totally demolished and a modern



building put up on the site. The word "rebleute" refers to the workers in the numerous vineyards in and around the city of Schaffhausen. The "rebleute" were employed by others, rather than themselves being owners of large vineyards. But this guild goes to demonstrate the exceptional importance of winegrowing.

From the *Rebleutgang* our path leads to the *Herrenacker*, the second large square in the old centre of Schaffhausen, which was inaugurated in 2007 after being redesigned and planted with trees. One of Schaffhausen's city granaries occupies a prominent place on the right of the square (*15 Herrenacker*); it was built in 1678/79 on the site of the former workhouse. This is one of the biggest public buildings in the city, and was used as a merchants' hall as well as for storing grain. It has a strictly symmetrical Renaissance-style façade whose lower part consists of rough-hewn blocks, and it dominates the northern half of the square. For a long time it was used simply as a warehouse, but in 2003 it was completely renovated. Since then the upper storeys have housed offices, including the cantonal economic promotion bureau, while the local tourism organisation "Schaffhauserland Tourismus" and the organisation of Schaffhausen wine producers, "Blauburgunderland" (Blauburgunder is another name for Pinot noir grape), have their offices on the ground floor. Originally there was a bell foundry at this spot: its remains can be seen through a window in the floor.

29



Tip
Schaffhausen
Wine

You can get a good overview of the wide range of Schaffhausen wines here.

The city's administrative quarter starts at the eastern end of the Herrenacker with the house "Zur Münz", the court house and the cantonal archive.

The house known as "Zur Münz" (Mint), located at *11 Beckenstube*, consists of two buildings, and was originally the place where the master of the city's mint lived and worked. As an imperial free city – i.e. with no intermediate authority between it and the emperor – Schaffhausen minted its own coinage in the name of the mayor and the city council. The house was largely destroyed by bombs on 1 April 1944. It was rebuilt in 1946/47 with its exterior faithfully reproduced, but the interior completely new. The building is now used by the cantonal administration.



In 1522 the city of Schaffhausen constructed a court house opposite it, which was also used as the town clerk's office. In the 19th century it housed the city government before the government could move to its current building in 1914 (see below). The building was subsequently completely renovated, and since then has again been used as a courthouse, although it is now the seat of the cantonal court, the second highest court in canton Schaffhausen.



The cantonal archive (*4 Rathausbogen*) adjoins the court house. The first vault for the treasury and storing documents was built here in 1610, and an archive room, now the reading room, was built above it in 1669. In 1936 the building was raised

by one storey. The archive room of 1669 has a baroque stucco ceiling and a door with elaborate coloured ironwork.



Right next to it is the Rathaus, the city hall, where now the parliaments of both the canton and the city hold their meetings (*10 Rathausbogen*).

The city government

From 1411 to 1798 the city of Schaffhausen was ruled by ten guilds and two corporations. The guilds brought together the various crafts and regulated the way they were practised. The corporation of merchants had as its members those burghers of Schaffhausen who were in-

involved in foreign trade, and the members of the corporation of gentlemen came from the noble families. The introduction of the guild constitution in 1411, which gave all guilds and corporations equal participation in the government of the city, laid the constitutional foundation for the next few centuries, when the guilds were the governing power in Schaffhausen.

This is the third city hall. It was proposed in 1382 that a new city hall should be built in a prominent location. The first thing to be built, in 1393/95, was a merchants' hall. This function has left its traces in the design of the ground floor, which can be accessed from an arcade in the *Vordergasse*. Between 1408 and 1413 the building was expanded to become the city hall and the construction of the western part (the Rathausbogen with the treasury in which the state treasure was kept) was undertaken at the same time. The finalisation of the building probably had to do with the introduction of the guild constitution of 1411. From that time, the Small Council was made up of 24 members, namely the masters of each of Schaffhausen's 12 guilds and corporations and the first deputy masters. The Great Council had 84 members: the 24 members of the Small Council and five members from each of the governing bodies of the 12 guilds and corporations. A political career in Schaffhausen's council was thus directly connected to membership of the governing body of a guild. Two thirds of the upper floor is taken up by the imposing council hall, with a Renaissance ceil-



ing dating from 1586. The other third of the area is occupied by the council meeting room, which is entered through a magnificent Renaissance portal built in 1624/25.



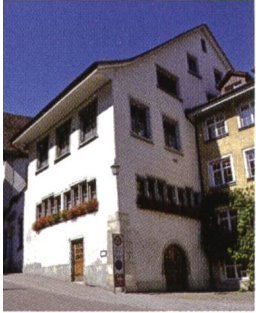
Its walls are decorated with murals of the same period with aphorisms about the conduct of authorities and their subordinates. Panes of glass in the window feature the coats of arms of the members of the Swiss Confederation – that's to say, the other cantons. It has been a tradition since the late Middle Ages to exchange panes bearing coats of arms. The neo-Renaissance ceiling dates from 1883. This room has been the council meeting room since 1412: today, it is the cantonal council and the city's Great Council – in other words, the parliaments of the canton and the city respectively – which meet here, as do the courts. This means that the chamber holds the regional record for the

length of time it has been used for decision-making within the context of the rule of law and democracy. On the north side the Schaffhausen ram, put there in 1409, juts out of the façade over the Vordergasse. The ram there today is a copy. The original is in the Museum zu Allerheiligen (Walk 1). Since 1831 the Rathaus has belonged to the canton of Schaffhausen. It underwent complete renovation in 2010/11 when it was equipped with the latest technology. As a rule it is open in the daytime and can be visited.

Now we go back to the *Herrenacker* and leave it via the *Beckenstube*. That is where the cantonal government building is located (*7 Beckenstube*), somewhat set back from the street. It was built in 1617 as the arsenal in pure Renaissance style with corner blocks and a stepped gable with volutes. On the second storey is a prominent ram, the animal depicted on Schaffhausen's coat of arms. The city-state of Schaffhausen had its own military body, which is why an arsenal to store weapons of all kinds and ammunition was essential. The building, the property of the canton, was used temporarily as a barracks the second half of the 19th century, before being converted into the seat of the cantonal government in 1912/14. The government's meeting room is on the second floor. This is where the cantonal government has held its weekly sessions since 1914. The building is not open to visitors.



34



Opposite the government building is the guild house of the *Zunft zun Becken*, the Bakers' Guild (*Beckenstube 8*), which can be accessed through a small but charming front garden. The guild bought the house in 1412 and rebuilt it in 1561. It was altered again in 1751/53 and decorated with rococo stuccoes, only a few traces of which are left. One point of interest is the bell hanging under a small projecting roof high up on the wall to the right of the entrance. It dates from 1752 and was used to summon a servant to open the door. Today the former guild house is also used as a court house.

35



Our path now goes down the *Münstergasse* to the *Vordergasse*. At the corner of the *Münstergasse* and *Vordergasse* is the house "Zum Ritter" (65 *Vordergasse*). The name – meaning "knight" – is documented as long ago as the early 14th century. A new building was erected on the same site in 1492, and this was extended in 1566 and raised by two storeys. The property has belonged to the city of Schaffhausen since 1941. In addition to its size, the house „Zum Ritter“ is particularly noteworthy for its painted façade. It is the best example of frescoes in the city of Schaffhausen. It was painted between 1568 and 1570 by the Schaffhausen artist Tobias Stimmer. However, the original frescoes are no longer there. What still survives of them is on display in the Museum zu Allerheiligen (see Walk 1). Today's frescoes are based on the originals and were painted in 1938/39. The way the whole sequence of images is composed reflects the ideas of the Re-

naissance and humanism. The paintings draw on ancient mythology and knightly virtues to reflect the name of the house, although the focus is on an appeal to civic-mindedness and self-sacrifice. In other words, the idea underlying the images is an appeal to the town's burghers to preserve republican virtues.

In the middle at the top is the old Roman hero Marcus Curtius on his horse just as he is about to sacrifice himself for his fatherland, the Roman republic. In the right-hand corner of the gable is a depiction of the painter, Tobias Stimmer himself, while on the left is the owner of the house who commissioned the work, Hans von Waldkirch. The second storey features scenes from Greek mythology: on the left is cunning Odysseus withstanding the wiles of the enchantress Circe; on the right, Daphne is being changed into a bay tree, which is supposed to illustrate a clever way to escape from danger. In the row immediately below this, a knightly hero is returning home, accompanied by horsemen and men on foot (right), to be welcomed with a fanfare by council members and townspeople (left). Gloria and Immortale – fame and immortality – represented by the two female figures between the windows of the first floor, beckon as rewards for chivalrous behaviour, while the symbol of Virtus, or virtue, is accompanied by the state in the shape of a king and by the church in the shape of a woman wearing a mitre.

36



A few steps further down is the guild house of the Zunft zun Schmieden (smiths' Guild) (61 *Vordergasse*). The predecessor of the current guild house already stood here in the early 15th century. The house was enlarged in 1471, rebuilt in 1590, and altered in 1653. The most striking feature of the guild house of the Zunft zun Schmieden is the imposing corner oriel, built in 1653, which stretches from the first to the third floor. The magnificently designed entrance portal, with the guild arms at its centre, a crowned snake surrounded by a pair of tongs and a hammer, is especially worthy of note.

37



Opposite is the house belonging to the corporation of merchants (58 *Vordergasse*). The corporation's original house stood in the same place. In 1780 the corporation decided to rebuild it completely. There has been a printer's shop in the building since 1910, which is today the editorial office of the "Schaffhauser Nachrichten" newspaper. The house of the corporation of merchants was built more or less in competition with the house of the dog guild (see above), but is in early classical style. The façade is clearly divided into different sections. In 2000/2001 the almost forgotten banqueting hall on the upper floor, which until then had been used by the newspaper, was reconstructed and underwent exemplary restoration. Only since this restoration has the quality of the original furnishings with the rococo stucco ceiling and the classical design of the walls become clear. This banqueting hall can be seen as the last high point of guild rule, before it disappeared

just a few years later, in 1798. The hall is not open to visitors, but it can be hired for special events.



Our route now continues on along the *Vordergasse* to the guild house of the *Zunft zun Schneidern* (tailors' Guild) (*7 Schneidergang*), whose main façade faces onto the *Vordergasse*. This was originally Schaffhausen's second city hall and court house, used until the council moved into the new city hall in 1412 (see above). In 1414 the *Zunft zun Schneidern* bought the former city hall and used it as their guild house. The house still shows strong Gothic features, for example on the façade and in the old drinking parlour on the first floor. This is a room with fully preserved wood panelling and a timbered barrel vault. The room was restored in 1983/84. Today it is part of a private flat.



Just a few houses further on is the second house belonging to the Weavers' Guild (*41 Vordergasse*). The guild bought the

39



property in 1775 and immediately had a new guild house built. It thus managed to move from the Webergasse (see above), which was no longer felt to be good enough, to one of the best locations in town. In the cartouche over the entrance portal is the guild coat of arms with the guild motto: "Societatem concordia nuptam nil turbet" – "Nothing can disrupt a community linked by harmony". The interior of the guild house has been completely rebuilt.

40



If we turn round, we will see the house that dominates the space between the *Vordergasse* and *Brunnengasse*, right behind the "Tellenbrunnen" (Walk 7). This is the guild house of the Zunft zun Schuhmachern (cobblers' Guild) (18 *Vordergasse*), first mentioned at this site in 1438. It was rebuilt in 1763. The interior has been completely altered. "Granate", the name of the house on the façade, means "pomegranate", a symbol of life and fertility, but also of power – it is associated with the imperial orb.

Our walk continues along the *Vordergasse* via the *Bachstrasse* to the *Gerberplatz* with the guild house of the Zunft zun Gerbern (tanners' Guild) (8 *Bachstrasse*). Alterations were made in 1599 and again between 1708 and 1710. The big guild house with its late baroque façade dominates the Gerberplatz. But the real substance of the house is to be seen in the interior, which was completely altered in 1734. On the first floor is the guild hall, with its magnificent stuccoed ceiling, taking up the entire width of the house.

Even more splendid is the decoration of the banquet hall on the second floor. The room was expensively panelled. By a stroke of luck, in 1930 the city of Schaffhausen was able to buy back the panelling that had gone to the Arts and Crafts Museum in Karlsruhe, and it has been reconstructed in the Museum zu Allerheiligen, which is where it can be seen today (Walk 1). It is evidence of the high quality of craftsmanship in the city of Schaffhausen in the 18th century. The rooms on the first and second floors are not open to the public, but are today part of a restaurant.



At the far end of the Unterstadt (Lower town) by the "Güterhof" (Walk 5) is the guild house of the *Zunft zun Fischern* (fishermen's Guild), which was completely rebuilt in 1810/11. The former guild house has been used as a restaurant since 1957,

and since 1995 it has housed one of the best restaurants in Switzerland, as part of an exclusive hotel.



The silverware of the Schaffhausen guilds (Museum zu Allerheiligen)