

Signs of the times: Revitalisation & Monument Protection

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Some buildings tell stories from the past. That is why it is so important to preserve them for the future.

Historic buildings shape cityscapes and contribute to cultural identity. It is in the interest of architecture and society to preserve them and make them fit for the future through intelligent improvements. The general public benefits from this, as do many future generations. If everything is done right. But this requires a great deal of experience and expertise, especially when these structures are listed.

Treasures worth protecting

Revitalizing a building is a highly complex undertaking. Removing the old to create something new is a challenge in itself. But preserving the old, adapting it to modern requirements and allowing it to shine in new splendor is a feat. If a building is under a preservation order, you are even obliged to preserve its original state. After all, such buildings shape the image and identity of a city and its people. And that is why they should be preserved and

protected for as long as possible. In Austria, the Federal Monuments Office is responsible for this. It is guided by the Monument Protection Act, which also defines the obligations for preservation, notification and approval. In individual cases, exceptions can be made for revitalization – for example, if there are static concerns or problematic materials.

Creative expertise



(c) PORR AG / APA-Fotoservice / Heinz Stephan
Tesarek

When buildings are revitalized, it is a fairly complex undertaking. This is because rare building materials are often used to restore an old building to its original state. These include clay bricks, marble columns or historic door and window fittings. In order to cover the costs of such original building materials, there are federal and state subsidies for listed building projects. Another challenge in revitalization is to ensure comfort and contemporary standards without significantly altering the historical building fabric. Accessibility plays an important role here. A lift, a wheelchair-accessible entrance or barrier-free toilet facilities can sometimes be difficult to reconcile with the specifications. That's why a great deal of creativity is required in addition to precision and craftsmanship.

High-end hotel



(c) Stephan Huger Wiedner Hauptstraße 46 1040 Wien

A good example of a complex revitalization project: the Palais Hansen Kempinski on Vienna's Schottenring was built by Theophil Hansen in 1870 and is one of the largest private buildings in the Ringstrasse development. From 2010 to 2013, PORR transformed this listed magnificent building into a five-star hotel with its own wellness area. The undertaking was highly complex, with around 400 people working on different parts of the project simultaneously at peak times. The building was given a completely new reinforced concrete skeleton in many individual sections to strengthen the structure and extend its lifespan. The combination of areas under heritage protection and those where new structures were to be built made this project particularly challenging.

Chic palace



(c) Irene Schenda

Another example is Schloss Hof in Marchfeld in Lower Austria. The 17th-century baroque palace was once home to Prince Eugene of Savoy and Empress Maria Theresa, among others. PORR has carefully restored this cultural heritage site and reopened it to the public. The construction work lasted seven years, during which particularly strict requirements of the Federal Monuments Office had to be adhered to. At the same time, the area was to be enhanced with modern technology and a new palace café. Perhaps one of the most impressive parts of the project was the restoration of the 10,000 m² façade, which was painstakingly done by hand using lime putty.

Magnificent parliament

As part of a joint venture, PORR has also played a leading role in the renovation of the listed parliament building in Vienna. Join us as we travel back in time and take a look behind the construction fences.

More Info

[Here](#) you can discover how we at PORR are preserving the old and shaping the new.