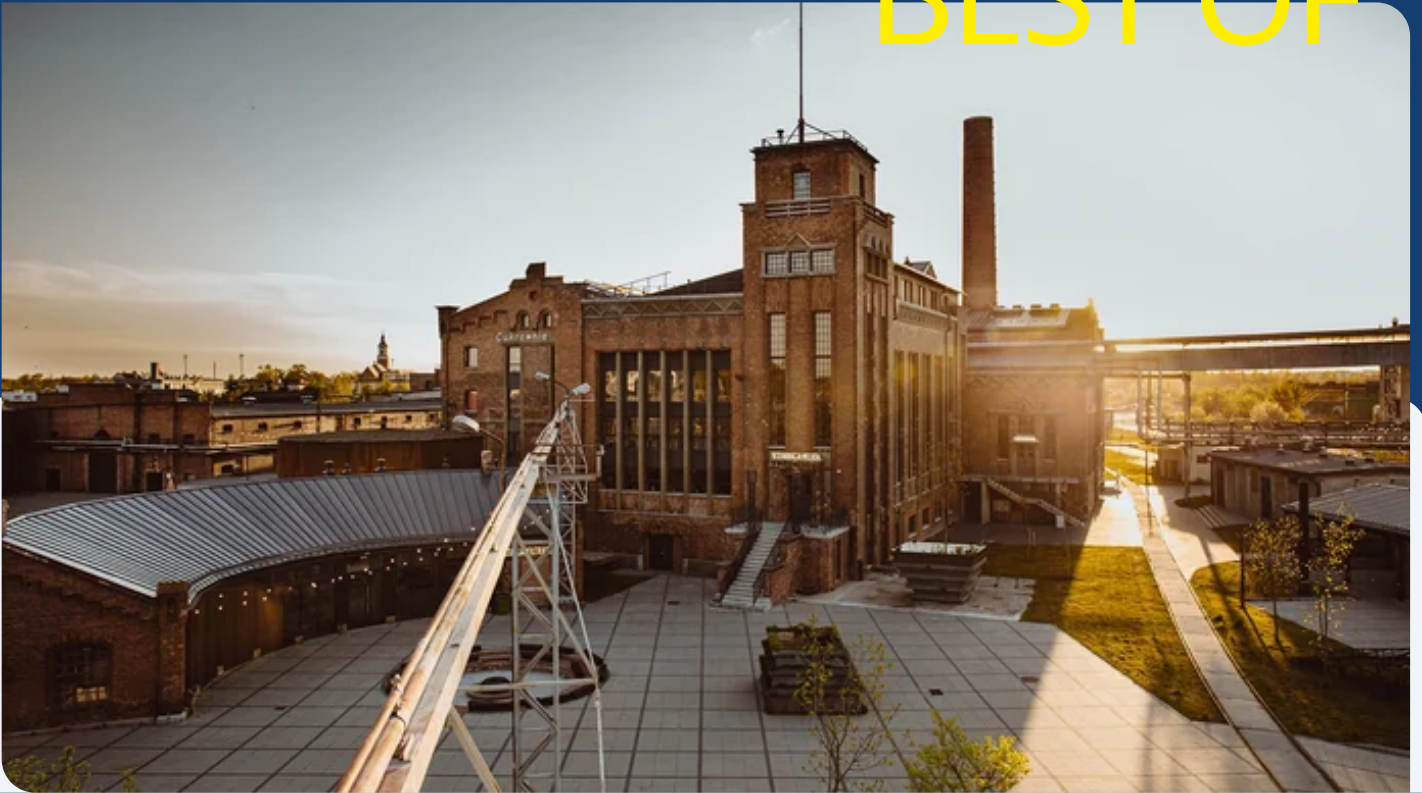


Top 5: Repurposed Factories

30.07.2026 / Österreich

BEST OF



Repurposing disused factories conserves resources and land. It also preserves cultural heritage. Architecturally, these high-ceilinged halls without partition walls often present a challenge. Our examples show how clever designs ensure the long-term future of these buildings – whether as a cultural centre, a hotel, a start-up hub, an office complex or the heart of an entirely new urban neighbourhood.

5. Fabrika Georgia

In Tbilissi, a former Soviet clothing factory has been transformed into a multifaceted cultural centre featuring cafés, restaurants, studios for artists, co-working spaces, event venues and a hostel. Surrounded by three buildings, the large inner courtyard offers plenty of space for events, shops and open-air dining areas. The focus of the building's regeneration was on preserving the existing structure, whilst the new, creative use is expressed through contemporary elements. The result is a symbiosis of old and new. Exposed walls, floors, existing paintwork and decorations were retained wherever possible. The architects at *MUA* completed the transformation of the vacant halls, covering a floor area of 7,600 m², in 2017. Since then, the former *Nino* sewing factory has become a popular hub for art and creativity. Today, the site is known nationally and internationally as *Fabrika*.

4. Ckrownia Żnin Poland

The *Ckrownia Żnin* in Poland produced beet sugar from 1894 to 2004. Instead of demolishing it as planned following its closure, the factory was extensively refurbished and adapted for a completely new use. The complex comprises a total of 27 buildings. All of them have been preserved – including the smallest details such as screws and scraps of sheet metal. The main building now houses a 4-star hotel with a restaurant. The site also features a 3-star hotel with a water park, spa, club and a brewery, a conference hall with capacity for 800 people and a

cinema, another restaurant, a marina on the lake and a rehabilitation centre. During the regeneration of the 23,000 m² of total usable floor space, the architectural firm *BULAK PROJEKT*, together with its partners, placed great emphasis on preserving the industrial character and has provided a best-practice example of the sensitive regeneration of historic buildings. Even old machinery and vehicles have remained on site and have been integrated into the landscape design.

3. Tabakfabrik Linz Austria

The *Tabakfabrik Linz* was designed by the architects Peter Behrens and Alexander Popp and opened in 1935. It was one of the first steel-frame buildings in Austria. Its architecture is regarded as a prime example of *New Objectivity*. The buildings housing the high-bay warehouse and the sales area were not completed until the 1980s by the architects *Suter + Suter*. In 2009, the City of Linz took over the site, including the listed building, following its decommissioning. Revitalisation began in 2013, starting with Building 2 – now known as *Haus DAMES* – using the so-called 'box-in-box' concept, which enabled the historic shell to be preserved. This was followed by the refurbishment and regeneration of

further buildings and the site in several construction phases. The *Tabakfabrik Linz* has now become a modern start-up hub with an innovation workshop and event venues. The Linz Brewery is even bringing production back into the historic halls. The *Tabakfabrik Linz* is regarded as a pioneer in the sustainable conversion and preservation of historic factory halls, demonstrating that heritage protection is no obstacle when it comes to smart, modern use of space. Almost twenty years after the project began, the high visitor numbers and the vibrant local scene show that the concept is a success

2. Fábrica de Gas Spain

In Madrid, *Foster + Partners* have transformed an old gasworks into a trendy workplace. The former factory building, which was built in 1904, now houses more than 10,000 m² of office space. To ensure a high quality of environment and optimal use of space, a free-standing lightweight structure made of locally sourced timber was installed within the 90-metre-long and 30-metre-wide hall. This allowed the brick outer shell, with its historic windows, to be preserved. Inside, three

storeys have been created, providing around 800 flexible workspaces. The surrounding factory site has been revitalised into a public park, whilst solar panels on the roof of the former factory supply the building with renewable electricity. Overall, the conversion of the old gasworks is a fine example of the best possible conservation of resources when creating new usable space in a central location.

1. Papieri Cham Switzerland

The redevelopment of the paper factory in Cham, Switzerland, has become a comprehensive neighbourhood development project. For more than 300 years, the paper factory was a defining feature of the townscape. Demolition was therefore out of the question when *Cham Paper Group Holding AG* decided in 2016 to cease production at the 12-hectare site. *Boltshauser Architekten* and *Albi Nussbaumer Architekten* subsequently drew up a development plan for the site: an 'urban, vibrant' neighbourhood for 2,000 residents and around 1,000 workers. The refurbishment and conversion of paper machine halls 1–4 into residential and commercial spaces was completed in 2023. Today, the complex houses not only retail, commercial and service spaces on the ground floors, but also studios and 52 owner-occupied flats. During the refurbishment, the interiors of the halls were stripped back to their load-bearing structure, whilst the existing façades – characterised by a striking reinforced concrete skeleton and infill walls of cement blocks – were partially retained. The architects deliberately chose not to artificially reconstruct missing windows or sections not worth preserving, but instead supplemented them with modern elements. *PORR SUISSE* carried out the project as the total contractor and officially completed it in June 2023.