

Gerling-Quartier Cologne

Location
Cologne

Built
2025 GFA: 32.000 m²



Sustainable Urban Quarter GERLING QUARTIER in Cologne: Renovation and extension under heritage protection

A modern and sustainable mixed-use urban quarter is being developed on the former Gerling site in the heart of Cologne. The project is the third-largest neighborhood development project in Germany.

The Gerling Quarter in Cologne is one of the largest heritage-protected ensembles in Germany, built in the early 1960s based on the plans of architects F.H. Sobotka and G. Müller, with the involvement of Arno Breker. The ensemble includes the so-called Horseshoe Building at Hildeboldplatz, the adjacent Century Hall, and the building at Spiesergasse / corner of Im Klapperhof. As part of the reurbanization of the former Gerling Quarter, the area has been modernized while preserving its valuable historical fabric, with new buildings harmoniously integrated. Special emphasis was placed on resource-efficient architecture, sustainability, and ecological responsibility, with the aim of realizing the vision of a future-proof urban district. Originally designed as a representative

office building with a spacious entrance hall, the Horseshoe Building was extended by two stories, and by three stories in the central section, by ingenhoven associates. The facades of the penthouse floors step back from the original façade. The building continues to function as office space: flexible and communicative office usage (co-working, lounges, etc.) is provided in the foyer and adjacent ground-floor areas. On the upper floors, large, open, and flexible office spaces offer high spatial quality, natural lighting, and energy efficiency. Small-scale retail spaces on the ground floor help to connect the building with the surrounding public space, ensuring the quarter remains vibrant and future-oriented. As part of the renovation, the Century Hall is being repurposed for new uses, including retail and office spaces. The horizontal division of these units and the access to the upper and lower floors is achieved via a new barrier-free core. Structural changes have been carefully coordinated with the geometry of the interior space, wall surfaces, and ceiling segmentation to preserve the historic substance while ensuring modern user orientation. The four-story building at Spiesergasse, previously a concrete skeleton in a raw state, has been extended with a new building that merges with the existing structure, creating a unified volume. Here, too, two additional penthouse floors have been added. New entrances have been incorporated into the facades of all buildings in the ensemble, either facing Im Klapperhof or Spiesergasse, to better integrate the buildings with the surrounding street space. To achieve this, the ground-floor parapets have been removed and floor-to-ceiling glazing has been added to the facade fields. The redesign and greening of the outdoor space in front of the Century Hall also supports the building's reorientation towards Im Klapperhof Street. In order to allow for this spacious area, the new access building for the underground parking garage is positioned in the western part of the forecourt. The landscape design also takes into account sustainable materials, water retention, and biodiversity. The original natural stone façade on three sides of the Horseshoe Building and the Century Hall has been preserved and ecologically restored. On the north façade of the Horseshoe Building, a reconstruction of the historic façade structure with vertical natural stone pilasters has been implemented, as well as on the building at Spiesergasse (where the original façade no longer exists), ensuring the monument's historic significance remains clearly legible. These interventions were made with careful consideration of both heritage preservation and sustainability aspects. The window openings on the ground floor have been glazed from floor to ceiling, and new

windows and operable sashes have been installed on the upper floors. The façade construction of the new penthouse floors follows the vertical articulation of the existing building through foldings in the floor plan (glass and ventilation elements). Fixed glazing alternates with opaque facade elements, which, through opening flaps, provide natural ventilation for the office spaces. This supports healthy air quality and reduces the energy consumption of the buildings. The roof areas of the buildings are accessible and landscaped. The plantings have been chosen to ensure that the roof edges and crenellated parapets of the original building are not altered. The green roofs of the penthouse floors have also been integrated into the overall concept of roof greening. These green roofs contribute to CO₂ sequestration while simultaneously improving the quality of life for the building's occupants. Through the careful integration of old and new elements, the sustainability concept, and energy optimization, the Gerling Quarter serves as a model for the transformation of historic urban areas into future-proof, climate-friendly, and livable urban spaces.

Awards, Nominations

Team