

The Langhammer und Söhne wallpaper factory was constructed in 1883 and the plant under the management of director Emil Zilling was the second-largest wallpaper factory in Germany. After the Second World War, wallpaper was produced here once more: the factory belonged to the collective organisation VEB Verpackungsmittelkombinat Leipzig until 1990, after which place mats were produced here by Leipziger Tapeten GmbH for Lufthansa until August 2006. Following the company's insolvency, the old Wilhelminian-style factory at the heart of western Leipzig with its eight factory halls and office buildings was sold by the trust agency and the new owners immediately began the development of the first gallery and studio rooms, as well as the old factory canteen. The Tapetenwerk [wallpaper factory] was "opened" with the "Tapetenwerkfest 1.0" event in April 2007.

The primary conceptual idea from the outset was to develop the historic factory complex from the Wilhelminian era in stages, in order to establish economical yet professional rooms for "creative" individuals and organisations, and thereby also a central communication hotspot for projects and ideas. At the same time it was intended that the charm of the original industrial architecture be retained and the Tapetenwerk remain intact as a "production site": for artists, designers and architects, for creative handicrafts such as the Longboard Workshop, or for new work concepts such as the Co-working Space. During the step-by-step renovation, the appearance of the old factory - in particular externally and in the stairwells and corridors - is being retained. Features are being emphasized with colours, scripts and old wallpaper samples - an economical and deliberately reserved solution. The work rooms themselves are undergoing modern refurbishment, although industrial history is being retained wherever possible here too; from the ribbed radiators to the concrete floor.

"Low-threshold restoration": However, the particular challenge that the project posed for the private owners - and also an aspect that appealed greatly to them - was the "personal union" of architect, developer and creative management. The Tapetenwerk is not an "investment property" in the generally accepted sense: the greatest profit is instead immaterial in nature, although it is highly valued in particular by creative entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the low-threshold restoration of the historic industrial architecture requires highly creative handling of the existing buildings, also on the part of the technical planners, surveyors and official bodies. In collaboration with the individual authorities it requires time, calmness and patience. It is here that the professional experience of the two owners (both architects with many years of construction practice), as well as the "Tapetenwerk" label and the civic commitment to creative projects and networks in Leipzig and Saxony are fundamentally beneficial.

At least twice a year the entire Tapetenwerk opens its doors to small and large art festivals with exhibitions and open studios. The space where web designers, architects and photographers usually work then hosts a public and independent presentation of new pieces from art, design and architecture. All year round, exhibitions and workshops are held in Hall C01, which encompasses 320 m² and is operated as an economical presentation and communication space for young creative individuals and art projects. DAS TAPETENWERK TEILT, a charitable art auction on the Friday after Saint Martin's Day, is the last major event of the year. On this occasion, Tapetenwerk occupants and their guests share space, art and art proceeds to the benefit of a non-profit association and project in western Leipzig.

Management of the temporary art rooms, in particular Hall C01, was entirely new territory for the owners. However, the possibility of opening the rooms of the old factory up for exhibitions, workshops and lectures - regularly and independently of cultural subsidies - is important to them, as is gathering creative individuals within the Tapetenwerk who share this notion.

In 2012, the Tapetenwerk was included in the Good-Practice database of the network series "wieweiterarbeiten – Arbeitsorte der Zukunft" [workplaces of the future] of the federal foundation for building culture.