



Visionary office concept in Hof:

Leuwico transforms old factory building into a modern office environment

Coburg/Hof. LEUWICO, an office furniture manufacturer based in Wiesenfeld near Coburg, Germany, implemented a one-of-a-kind project in the Franconian town Hof last summer: It joined forces with fickenscher architektur+ to implement a visionary office concept on an area of 1,564 square metres in a century-old textile factory. The building belongs to the international manufacturer Tenowo GmbH, a subsidiary of HoftexGroup AG headquartered in Hof. "The concept is based on the sustainable approach of building upcycling to create a modern and pleasant working environment for all employees," explains Uwe Fickenscher, an architect based in Hof.

The goal of the project was to bring all departments of the company together in an office environment that offers the best possible working conditions for development, sales and management today and in future. "Already in the 1990s, the red brick building - once a weaving mill - was remodelled to serve as an administrative building. However, the interior design and room structures were no longer fit for a modern working environment," says Fickenscher. Therefore, the team completely renovated the second floor, while keeping the original structure for authenticity, and created an open space office for about 50 employees. "We've planned the layout in such way that the office can grow along with the number of employees. The design revolves around the ideas of innovative room structures, which allow for transparency and flexibility," the architect explains.

By mixing open and closed social and work areas and furnishing them with upmarket office furniture and height-adjustable desks, the design promotes and improves communication among the employees. "The combination of high-end furniture lines and individual custom designs also plays an important role. Airy shelf systems that can be accessed from both sides

double as unobstructive but effective room dividers," describes Mattias Rothe, CEO at LEUWICO GmbH.

Ergonomic office chairs and desks with manual height adjustment now offer both, employees as well as visitors, perfect working conditions and true variability so they can work effectively. According to Rothe, "the conscious use of sit-stand work stations is trend-setting and ensures more freedom of movement than traditional work spaces, reducing the risk of back problems and the consequential sick leaves." With the H2 quick desk adjustment mechanism, employees can change from a sitting to a standing position in only one smooth move that takes less than a second. This gives them maximum flexibility to work in different positions. Many differently designed social areas are spread across the entire floor. Here, employees can meet for casual conversation, team meetings or to exchange information. "The design is defined by a high degree of transparency but at the same time allows individual employees enough privacy to work in peace, which is not necessarily a given in such open space offices," reflects the CEO of LEUWICO.

Sustainability and design as the central themes

Already the first designs for the remodelling project were based on the principle that everything that can be kept should not be dismantled by hand or disposed of or redesigned, which would have been a large and unnecessary expense. The architects and interior designers strived to keep the original structure of the building as best as possible when deciding where to place the new offices, conference, exhibition and training areas. Supporting structures were left fully intact and integrated into the new design. "For the floors, we used 100% recycled fibres to meet the high demands on sustainability and design. The transitions between the different areas are smooth and the dividers are well integrated into the general flow of the design," says Uwe Fickenscher, illustrating the concept of the project. The distinctive grey-green gradient guides the eye through the office and the deep-pile structure of the carpet improves the acoustics in an aesthetically pleasing way - as do the sound-absorbing surfaces made out of sheep wool. The wooden components of the floor are made of locally available wood arranged in a stylish brick pattern. The heat-treated larch with the traditional air-drying oiled surface is extremely resistant to wear and tear, making it perfect for social and kitchen areas as well as the training facilities, common rooms for trainees and library. "Following the line of sustainability, ecological straw particle boards were used for the room dividers and shelves, rounding off the design with a stylish look," continues Fickenscher and concludes: "The flexible layout of the office space has a hollow floor, lightweight divider walls, glass walls and

does not have a suspended ceiling, making it easy to change and adapt it to the developments of the next 20 to 30 years without having to change basic structure and technical installations."

Project data:

Project:

Hoftex Group AG – Tenowo GmbH in Hof
Renovation of the office space on the 2nd floor
with a terrace area for employees and new external staircase

Address:

Fabrikzeile 21
95028 Hof, Germany

Building owner:

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