

October 2023

MEDIA INFORMATION

Museum Prestegg, House of History and Culture in Altstätten (Canton of St. Gallen), Switzerland

City palace with a cultural mission

The ‘Prestegg’ has its roots in the 15th century. The baroque city palace in Altstätten, Switzerland, has undergone several renovations and conversions since then. Most recently, the listed building was extensively renovated and converted into a centre for history and culture. Special Janisol geometries were used to emphasise the renovation of the protected building with the aim of preserving the original substance of the building.

The ‘zur Prestegg’ manor was once the residence of the Rhine Valley reformer Vogler, then the stately house of the important textile merchant family Custer, and at one time even a brewery and restaurant. The south wing has been a protected monument since 1972 and houses one of the oldest museum collections in the region. The Museum Society was founded in 1895 and has run its small museum in the house ever since. In 2005 the concept of a ‘centre for history and culture’ was created. It will be set up and run by two of Altstätten’s culture institutions, the Museum Society and the Diogenes Theatre. The new centre is intended to be a supra-regional attraction that highlights Altstätten’s position as a cultural centre in the St. Gallen Rhine Valley.

Preservation and renovation

The basic idea behind the conversion project was to replace and extend only where necessary. From the outside, the building should be once again recognisable as a manor house. The majority of changes were to be confined to the interior. Schwabegger & Zoller Architects from Altstätten also accomplished the task of functionally combining the two existing wings of the building into a single unit. The construction of a new staircase with a lift allowed both wings to be adapted to the needs of the disabled. The museum’s exhibition rooms will be located in the south wing and the new auditorium in the north wing of the building. On the ground floor, on the side of the courtyard, there will be a common entrance area for visitors to the museum and the theatre. It will provide access to the ticket office and cloak-room, which will be used both for the theatre and the museum.

On both the east and west sides of the courtyard, the entrance area described above will be made accessible by large glass doors. The entrances to the two wings of the building are also separated by glass doors. Janisol HI was used for the exterior and Janisol 2 for the interior in order to design these arched doors in keeping with the surroundings. The slender steel profiles blend in optimally with the protected surroundings, both visually and in terms of compliance. They make it possible to realise special geometries. The four glass doors for the entrance area were manufactured by b&h Metallbau AG from Balgach as a double-leaf version,

each with a segmental arch glass skylight. Standard profiles from the Janisol system were used for the doors. The challenge was to create the segmental arches with different radii. Tailor-made templates had to be made for this purpose. Processing them was also a complex affair; they were rolled in three pieces ex-works and then had to be assembled by the metalworkers.

Janisol was particularly suitable here because it is a design-friendly, thermally insulated steel profile system that can be used to economically produce even one-offs or small quantities, such as arched windows, static reinforcements or aesthetic adaptations using commercially available steel profiles. The powder coating allows the colours to be elegantly matched to the design of the surroundings. At the same time, the highly insulating profiles meet the requirements of sustainable and environmentally friendly management of the site. In this way, the architectural quality of the house can be convincingly adapted to the demands of modern times.

PROJECT DETAILS

Building owner:

Museum Prestegg, Altstätten

Architecture:

Schwabegger & Zoller, Altstätten; Gantenbein & Partner, Balgach (construction management)

Metalwork:

b&h Metallbau AG, Balgach

Steel profiles used:

Janisol HI and Janisol 2 EI 30

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PICTURE OVERVIEW:

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