

## Stadtarchiv Köln



"The most modern and largest municipal archive in Europe", Cologne proclaims, is now in their city. The future of the city archive had been uncertain for decades: first due to a lack of space, then came the collapse in 2009. The repository with its fragile treasures lay in ruins. No one expected this kind of new beginning. Through the office Waechter+Waechter Architekten, a new building was erected on a different site. With its opening, the rescued archives, the staff and the users are making a comeback - and a successful one at that. For the architects mastered the merging of two opposites. The transparency and openness of a civic archive is now in harmony with an indestructible security wing for the archives. Bronze and glass enclose the façade, of which there are actually two, because the building consists of an outer and an inner cuboid. The core houses the treasures, while the shell houses the offices, laboratories and workshops, the lecture hall and the foyer, whose interior glass façade provides a view of two atriums and the bronze body of the magazine. The staff offices and the lifts are covered with grey linoleum flooring, because Waechter+Waechter value the flooring as a sustainable and ecological product that meets high hygienic as well as aesthetic requirements and is hard-wearing at the same time. On the outside as well as on the inside, the beautifully ageing material of bronze is used again and again, as great importance is attached to the fact that the materials used haptically tie in with the task of preserving significant testimonies of time. Waechter+Waechter speak of their idea of connecting the areas through the repetition of the materials. This attention to detail is also reflected in the use of linoleum. The stair treads and the custom-made tables made of Douglas fir wood, the benches and the shelves have received an inlay of furniture linoleum "in a pastel moss green" (Bauwelt issue 20.21). Protected, the archival material is placed on gentle material for viewing, the colour tone has a soft effect, which gently dictates the handling of the treasures.

Location	Köln, Germany
Date of Completion	2021
Architect	Waechter + Waechter Architekten
Building Contractor	Gebäudewirtschaft der Stadt Köln
Photography	Brigida González, Stuttgart

