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Jury decision: Koelnmesse presents ideas for new corporate headquarters

**Final decision on new building expected to be made in 2025
Modern office location for 750 employees may be built near Deutz train station**

The design presented by the consortium consisting of HPP Architects and ASTOC Architects and Planners will form the basis for further planning of a potential new administrative building for Koelnmesse. "The design makes visible and tangible our vision of a future-oriented, flexible and sustainable company" explains Koelnmesse CEO, Gerald Böse, after several hours of jury deliberations. At the same time, Böse emphasises that the jury's decision should not be seen as a starting signal for construction: "Only after careful examination of the design plans and the detailed cost estimate will, we decide on a new administrative building or the continued leasing of office space." Within this context, the long-term economic consolidation of Koelnmesse has top priority. A decision is expected to be made in 2025.

Koelnmesse needs a sustainable future-proof office location and had already decided in 2019 to look into the possibility of constructing a new administration building. Due to the financial impact of COVID-19, an initial idea for a new construction on the site of the current Messehochhaus 2 was not further pursued. As part of a recent awarding process, general planners were invited to submit ideas for a possible new building on the site of Hall 3. In order to keep costs down, constructing a new building on the trade fair grounds is an obvious choice. The site of Hall 3 would also be ideal, as it is in need of major renovation and the events held there can be concentrated in the other halls.

To solve the planning task, Koelnmesse had decided to carry out an awarding procedure including research development. After an intensive preliminary examination of 30 applications, five firms were invited to develop solution proposals. The design presented by HPP and ASTOC ultimately convinced the thirteen jurors at their meeting on September 13, 2023: "With the new administration building, we would create an attractive and modern location that perfectly represents Koelnmesse to the world. At the same time, it would provide the optimal conditions for our performance, customer orientation and innovative strength," says company head, Böse, of the decision.

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Henriette Reker

Headquarters and place of

jurisdiction:

Cologne

District Court Cologne, HRB 952

The Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board, Mayor Henriette Reker said after the decision: "Even if this is not a decision for a new building, the invitation to the competition and the plans for possible new administrative headquarters reflect our confidence in the future of the trade fair business in Cologne. Koelnmesse has repeatedly proven itself to be a dependable builder that adheres to budgets and schedules in its construction and renovation projects."

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The goal: a climate-neutral building with DGNB Platinum certification

"The new office building would also bring us closer to our goal of sustainable use of resources and significantly reduced CO₂ emissions," says Horst Harbusch-Geier, Vice President Infrastructure, placing the possible new building within the context of Koelnmesse's sustainability strategy. Koelnmesse is planning a building with the goal of achieving DGNB Platinum certification. Sustainability measures include intensive greening, use of rainwater and photovoltaic systems, implementation of smart energy and sustainable building materials, and promotion of environmentally friendly transport options.

Jury statement on the winning design

"The design presented by the planning consortium consisting of HPP and Astoc was particularly convincing due to its placement within the surrounding cityscape and its architectural appearance as an additional entrance, which forms an outstanding presence in the urban space. The challenge of combining internal usage with trade fair operations was solved in an excellent manner," the unanimous jury decision stated. If implemented, the new administration building will provide key facilities such as the canteen and food court, meeting rooms and green areas for both Koelnmesse employees' own use and for trade fair events. Even at this early stage of planning, the design includes a "functioning logistics concept with perfect integration into the overall trade fair system," it continues. Regarding the interior, the jury emphasises: "The design includes exciting spatial arrangements with a central staircase that serves as a meeting point. The resulting spaces provide perfect settings for communication and exchange."

The potential new administration building at a glance

- Client: Koelnmesse GmbH
- Architects: A consortium consisting of HPP Architects and ASTOC Architects and Planners
- Gross floor area: Approx. 34,000 m²
- Location: Area of the current Hall 3
- Office space: 500 office workstations for around 750 employees
- Earliest possible start of construction: 04/2026

Images can be downloaded under this [link](#).

About Koelnmesse:

Koelnmesse employs around 1,000 people. The city-centre trade fair at the heart of Europe occupies the third largest trade fair grounds in Germany and, spanning almost 400,000 square metres of hall and outdoor space, it numbers among the top ten worldwide. Each year, Koelnmesse organises and manages around 80 trade fairs, guest events and corporate events in Cologne and in the most important markets around the world. Its portfolio attracts over 54,000 exhibiting companies from 122 countries and approximately three million visitors from more than 200 nations.

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