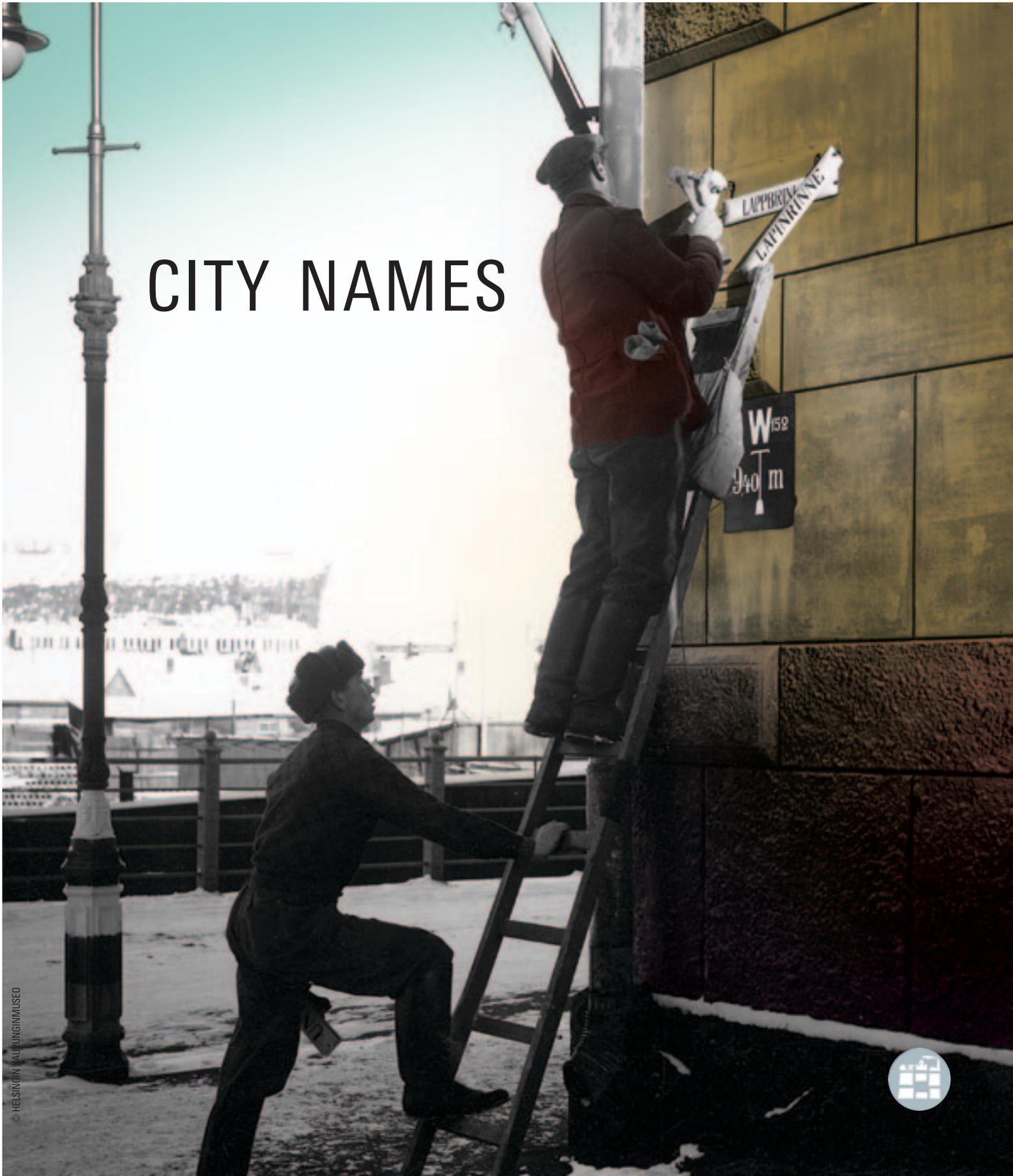




CITY NAMES





CITY NAMES

A nomenclature is a system of signs that guides, creates identity for a place, and enables us to perceive our environment and pinpoint locations. Names are needed to find places, in directional signs, emergency, maintenance and service traffic, public administration, the corporate world, map production and in all new planning. Without names it would be impossible to comprehend the overall urban entity.

Street and place names enliven our living surroundings and bring local history close to people. Although ideals and values change, street names remain free from the vicissitudes of time. Names draw our attention to history, science and art, reminding us of our society's spiritual and material development.

The nomenclature of Finland's capital city Helsinki also alludes to international and European cultural traditions.

Helsinki's name planning has long traditions

Street names first became ratified officially in 1820; at that time the street names were Swedish-language. In 1833 Russian-language signs written in the Cyrillic alphabet began to appear alongside the Swedish-language street signs.

The first Finnish-language names were ratified in the 1906 Töölö town plan. Systematic nomenclature planning began in 1945 when the Real Estate Board, acting on the City Board's recommendation, established a committee to consider street naming questions. The annexation of suburban areas to Helsinki in 1946 created a great deal of work for the committee because the nomenclature of the newly incorporated areas had to be harmonised with the city centre's existing street names.

DIRIKA AND DUUNARI

In 2008, the Name Committee proposed that the blocks in the Söranäistenniemi district be dubbed according to the slang words for various trades. The names were derived from the history of the district and the trades practised in the area. The slang terms date back to different eras and were used by different social groups. The terms themselves were checked by Professor (emeritus) Heikki Paunonen. The Swedish expressions were checked by the Swedish Department of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.

Typical examples of the block names used in the area are Dirika–Dirikan ('director'), Duunari–Donarn ('worker'), Prikkari–Prickarn ('harbour clerk') and Stuuvari–Stuvarn ('stevedover'). The names submitted by the Name Committee were included in the proposed amendment to the town plan and subsequently adopted by the City Council without any changes.

KITAHANHI AND LÄKKIKALA

Beginning around the year 1350, it was decreed that cities in Sweden–Finland were to be divided into four parts. Subsequently this urban "quarter" was given the Latin-derived name kvarter ("kortteli"). From the mid-1600s in Stockholm, the kvarter naming however took on the official meaning as 'a property bordered by four or more streets'.

A new regulation was issued in Stockholm in 1810 stipulating that plots within each street-lined quarter were to be individually numbered. Additionally, the owners of corner buildings were to affix signs indicating the name of the quarter. In the Stockholm of those times, names were also given to blocks along with the numbers because they were easier to remember. The names drew on various subjects, for example trades, person's names, sea life and birds. In Stockholm's Old Town, the blocks' names are still well known.

In Helsinki the numbering and naming of sites bordering streets was legalised in 1820 in connection with fire regulations. At the same time the first street names were also ratified. Blocks in built-up urban areas were named after domestic and wild animals as well as certain flowers. In the so-called Uusimaa suburbs, the names of fish and birds were most commonly used. In 1836, when the names of blocks were harmonised in certain areas, flowers had to make way for mammals to ensure that entire blocks' nomenclature in existing city districts remained thematically consistent. Except for what is now Eira, the blocks in all of the city's southern districts were named in this fashion.

During the following decades blocks continued to be named according to the same themes, except in Katajanokka, where it was decided to name

blocks after different tree species. The naming of blocks never extended north of Töölö and Pitkäsilta bridge because this practice was discontinued since the 1890s. The use of previously given names was also relinquished without fanfare in the early 1910s. From that time Helsinki's blocks have been officially designated by number only.

The golden age of block nomenclature was therefore experienced in the mid-1800s, particularly during the century's last decades, when the blocks' names were often better known than street addresses. Officially, the blocks' names were in Swedish. A name directory of Finnish-language blocks was never officially published, but Finnish-language names were however used when it was necessary to mention the blocks in Finnish-language speeches or texts. For example the Giraffe was known in Finnish by the name Kamelipartti, Dromedary by the name Nopsakameeli, Gazelli by the name Lempikauris, Pelican by the name Kitahanhi and Cuttlefish by the name Lökkikala.

The concept of block naming has however enjoyed a resurgence in the 2000s when amusingly archaic-sounding names have inspired new kinds of marketing and the fostering of neighbour-hood identities. New block signs have now appeared alongside street signs in the city centre.

Source: Berndt Aminoff's and Leo A. Pesonen's article "Helsingin kadunnimistöön synty ja kehitys vuoteen 1946 mennessä" ("Creation and Development of Helsinki's Street Nomenclature until 1946") from the work Helsingin kadunnimet, ("Street Names of Helsinki"), City of Helsinki Publications 24, 2nd Revised Printing 1981.



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Name Committee celebrates its 50th anniversary

Since 1960 a Name Committee, whose members and their personal deputies are appointed by the Helsinki City Board for fixed-term periods, has continued the work of the Street Naming Committee. The Name Committee is a body of experts, many of whom have served for several years. Continuity is considered an advantage in this kind of long-term planning work. Represented in the committee's membership is expertise related to town planning and urban design, the history of Helsinki, the Finnish language, the Swedish language, name maintenance, name research, local knowledge as well as the specialised knowledge of city culture and urbanism. The Name Committee works closely with the Helsinki City Planning Department because names are always decided in connection with the town plan.

On average, the Name Committee convenes 10 times annually, preparing over a hundred of naming proposals each year. Most of the Name Committee's proposals are names for streets, plazas and town squares that are officially ratified in town plans. At the same time, the Committee monitors nomenclature developments in the neighbouring cities and issues proposals and opinions at the request of city authorities and agencies. Local residents may also take the initiative in naming matters.

Serving as secretary to the Name Committee is the Name Administrator who prepares issues and presents them to the Committee for review. The position of the Name Administrator was established at the Helsinki City Planning Department in 2003.

Main principles when giving names

When assigning names the city is treated as a unified entity. The intent is that the given names should be rooted solidly in local history or be based on other environmental attributes. When many names are needed, so-called group names – an area's nomenclature created around a certain theme – can be used.

The name should be workable in the Finnish and Swedish languages and may appear in the city only once. Efforts are made to avoid similar-sounding names. Here the nomenclature of surrounding municipalities is also taken into account.

A street, square, park or other location can be named after a person or to commemorate their memory provided that the person and his or her accomplishments are generally considered as being worthy of remembrance. The person should be significantly and positively associated with the place being named or represent its historical stratification. Individuals should have been born, lived most of their lives, or carried out a major portion of their life's work in Helsinki. It can also be a question of a Finn whose life's work was of national or international significance. Places cannot be named after living persons; a person's name may be considered for use in town planning only after 5 years have elapsed from the date of his or her death. Streets, squares, parks or other locations cannot be named after a functioning business, company or publicly administered community. A company or community name can be considered for use in town planning if the company or community has operated under the same name for several generations and has strong local significance.



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KUNINKAANTAMMI

The Kuninkaantammi residential and job area is being planned at the northern part of Kaarela's Hakuninmaa area. The name Kuninkaantammi (Kungseken) was given in January 2004 based on the Name Committee's proposal. The housing blocks, the main road, as well as the parks have been given their names from the same historical account, according to which Gustavus III, the King of Sweden-Finland, ordered the planting of an oak tree along the highway while he was visiting Finland. The majestic royal oak, now a protected landmark, is still standing.

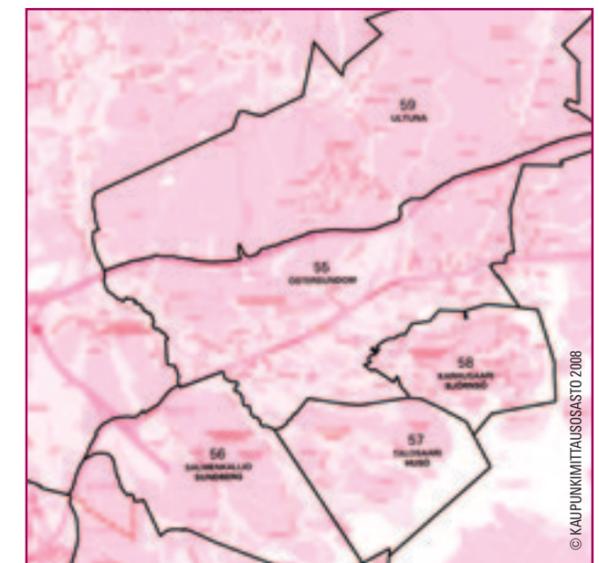
Names currently in use are not changed without particularly compelling reasons.

The guiding principle has been that a name is found for a place, not that a place is found for a name. Names are created to meet the needs of the city's current and future residents.

How nomenclature is decided in Helsinki

The names of streets, plazas and town squares belong to town planning nomenclature that is decided in connection with town plans or town plan amendments.

- The town planner requests a naming proposal for the blocks to be named from the Name Administrator.
- The Name Administrator prepares the matter for processing by the Name Committee, assembling information about the area's history, existing nomenclature, the contemporary naming environment and planning in progress.
- The Name Committee drafts a proposal for the new names. The town planner usually approves the proposals without modifications.
- The town plan and its nomenclature are displayed publicly for possible public debate.
- The town plan is first submitted to the Helsinki City Planning Board followed by the Helsinki City Board. The final decision on the adoption of the plan and plan amendments are made by the Helsinki City Council except for minor amendments that are approved by the Helsinki City Board.
- The names will not end up in street signs and official maps until the town plan has become effective.



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FIVE NEW DISTRICTS

Geographically, Helsinki is divided into 59 districts. This is the official division on which town planning and the property system are based. Many of the district names are derived from the traditional village names such as Oulunkylä-Äggelby, Malmi-Malm, Herttoniemi-Hertonäs and Mellunkylä-Mellungsby. The latest additions to city districts are Vuosaari-Nordsjö annexed to Helsinki in 1966 and Östersundom, Salmenkallio-Sundberg, Talosaari-Husö, Karhusaari-Björnsö and Ultuna amalgamated in 2009. The names of the new districts were proposed to the City Board in October in 2008 and were adopted at the beginning of the following year.



NARINKKA

Narinkka–Narinken is a square located between the Kamppi shopping centre and the old bus station. Proposed as an official name in 2003, it was adopted the following year. Narinkka, an area of sales stands operated by Russian and Jewish merchants at the upper end of Simonkatu, was used for this purpose from 1876 up to 1929. The name is derived from the Russian expression 'na rinke' meaning 'in the marketplace'. Helsinki's first Narinkka in the 18th century was located on the isthmus linking Katajanokka to the city, from where the sales stands were moved in the 1840s near the current site of the Bank of Finland. Narinkka remained in this location until the move to Simonkatu in 1876. Narinkka is currently one of the most popular rendezvous spots as well as being a venue for a wide range of events in Helsinki.



Aurora Karamzin (1808–1902)

WOMEN IN THE NOMENCLATURE

The number of items in the nomenclature named after men exceeds the proportion of women many times over. However, during the past few years, a number of influential women and women who have earned credit in various fields of activity have been identified for use as names for new locations. When name proposals are prepared, efforts are made to find individuals with some sort of link to the place being named. The number of places named after women will increase - albeit fairly slowly - because the majority of new names will be selected based on themes other than personal names in order to maintain the diversity of the nomenclature.

- Maria Hammerénin mäki–Maria Hammaréns backe (hill) – proposal by the Name Committee in 2003, name established in 2005: after Maria Johansson (nee Hammarén, 1867–1960) born in the crofter's house located in what is now Roihuvuori. Maria Hammarén (Johansson) and her children engaged in farming and operated a market garden in the area.
- Toini Muonan katu–Toini Muonas gata – proposal by the Name Committee in 1995, name established in 1998: after Toini Muona (1904–1987), a ceramist and glass artist related to the Arabia Artists group name selected for the area.
- Zaidankatu–Zaidagatan – proposal by the Name Committee in 2007, name established in 2008: after Professor Zaida Eriksson-Lihr (1895–1974), the founder of the Skin and Allergy Hospital in Meilahti.

PAPUKAIJA ZAGULAN POLKU

In 2002, the Nomenclature Committee proposed Papukaija Zagulan polku (Papegojan Zagulas stig) as the name for a path in Tapaninvainio's new Kapteenskanmäki residential area. The name was established in 2006. This would appear to be the only path in Finland named for a parrot. Zagula, who could whistle, sing, swear and order the estate's dog around, was the long-lived pet parrot of the widow (kapteenska) Manjeffa Multanovskaja. According to tradition, Zagula was buried in the manor gardens in a silver box; another source states that the casket was wood and equipped with a glass cover. Manjeffa Multanovskaja was a Russian-born Countess and the last owner of the Tapaninkylä Estate who lived her final years there before her death in 1950. In her memory the area is called by the name Kapteenskanmäki (Kaptenskans backe).



Name Committee's 2009–2010 composition

Chairperson

Annukka Lindroos, Deputy Director, Architect
- Personal deputy, Suvi Tyynilä, Architect

Deputy Chairperson

Mauri Laine, M. Soc. Sc.
- Personal Deputy, Rikhard Manninen, M. Soc. Sc.

Other members

Riitta Pakarinen, M.A.
Pirjo Mikkonen, M.A.
Kristian Slotte, M.A.
Mauno Harmo, M. Soc. Sc.
Miska Rantanen, M. Soc. Sc.
Mikko-Olavi Seppälä, Ph.D.
Veera Luoma-aho, M. Soc. Sc.

Personal deputies

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Heikki Hurttu, Ph.D.
Mikael Reuter, Ph.D.
Anton Eskola, M.A.
Jussi Pullinen, M. Soc. Sc.
Pia Österman, M.A.
Minna Joenniemi

Secretary

Johanna Lehtonen, Name Administrator, M.A.

Helsingin kadunnimet ("Street Names of Helsinki") book series

Helsingin kadunnimet ("Street Names of Helsinki") book series
A series of three books dealing with Helsinki's street names has been published.

Helsingin kadunnimet appeared in 1970 in Finnish-language and Swedish-language printings. The book clarifies the history of the nomenclature of Helsinki's streets as well as the street naming committee and the Name Committee's work. The book contains about 3,800 street names supplemented with background information.

Helsingin kadunnimet 2 – Helsingfors gatunamn 2 was published as a bilingual printing in 1979. The book lists about 1,400 new names with background information.

Helsingin kadunnimet 3 – Helsingfors gatunamn 3 contains the background information for approximately 1,300 new names given between the years 1979–1995.

The book series is sold at the City of Helsinki Urban Facts' library at Siltasaarencatu 18–20 A, tel. (09) 310 36377, tietokeskus.kirjasto@hel.fi. The third book is sold at the Helsinki City Planning Department at Kansakoulukatu 3, tel. (09) 310 37387, ksv.kaa-vaesittely@hel.fi.

The book series can also be found in most of Helsinki's public libraries, www.helmet.fi.

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