



HELSINKI

news

4 / 2012



Ville Malja / Helsinki Design Week

World Design Capital Helsinki Looks to the Future

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2012

How can design be used to build a better city? This question has been Helsinki's focus throughout 2012. Helsinki has celebrated design as World Design Capital 2012 and used design to improve the lives of its citizens with over one thousand events and programmes.

"As World Design Capital, Helsinki has sought to build a more enjoyable and functional city," said Helsinki Mayor **Jussi Pajunen** speaking at a British Government sponsored Design Summit at 10 Downing Street on 26 October 2012. Helsinki's means to the goal have been citizen orientation and stronger communities. The summit addressed the possibilities offered by design-oriented approaches in the public sector.

The legacy of Helsinki's World Design Capital year is manifold.

Development projects organised by the city, universities and actors in the private sector use processes inherent in design to advance plans targeting a wide variety of areas, from early education to office routines to digital services for the elderly. The development projects aim to have lasting effects, extending the impact of the design year far beyond 2012. As an example, Mayor Pajunen mentioned the Future Desk, a service provided by the City of Helsinki that helps troubled young people to move on in their lives with jobs and placement in educational institutions.

The Co-Create with LEGO® event at Helsinki Cable Factory during Helsinki Design Week 2012. ARKKI, the Helsinki school of architecture for children and youth, organised workshops at the event.

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 has provided a novel window to original thinking involving design of services and processes, as well as to traditional product design and architecture.

Helsinki's design year coincides with the city's bicentennial as the capital of Finland. The city has celebrated the bicentennial with another year-long programme that urges Helsinki residents to take a look back, to understand how the city has come to where it stands today and how the city is building its future. Helsinki pays tribute to the bicentennial with a contribution to the future, again targeting the youth: the city administration has earmarked 10 million euro to fight social exclusion of young people.

World Design Capital is a biennial designation given to one city at a time by Icsid - International Council of Societies of Industrial Design. The project celebrates cities that have used design to improve social, cultural and economic life.



Photos Veikko Somerpuro / University of Helsinki

A reading corner at the Kaisa House library

University of Helsinki celebrates World Design Capital with novel learning environments

The Helsinki University Main Library re-opened in September 2012 in a new building in the Helsinki city centre, named Kaisa House after its home district of Kaisaniemi. The seven floors of Kaisa House form an oasis of learning and a public meeting place, equipped with the latest library technology.

Students and visitors are surrounded by design. The architecture by Anttinen-Oiva Architects is both classic and inspiring with large arches that define the building. The interior speaks of openness with an oval atrium that cuts through all floors and lets daylight stream in through a skylight. Likewise a large arching glass façade element illuminates the interior with ample daylight. Reading corners on each floor are furnished with chairs that represent high-end Finnish furniture design.

Service design is manifest in automated book check-in and check-out desks. The sorting of returned books is also automated. Kaisa House is open to the public and the library services are available to area residents.

Future Classroom

How can design advance learning? How can spatial solutions and the latest information technology be combined to create engaging learning environments? The University of Helsinki's Faculty of Behavioural Sciences seeks to answer these questions with a test site for pedagogical innovation. The faculty has turned an open plaza in the faculty building Minerva into a future classroom, named Engaging Learning Environments ELE.

Flexible configurations of shared physical space in ELE lead to shared information and increased knowledge. Applications of IT platforms allow for new ways to engage and to learn. Mobile applications allow for evaluation of results through real-time measurement of motivational states.

The Minerva faculty building is home to world-leading teacher training at the University Department of Teacher Education. Much owing to highly-educated teachers, Finnish 15-year-olds

have consistently achieved top scores in the OECD Programme of International Student Assessment. As a result, Finnish schools are hailed as the best in the world.

Research opened up to the public in an open space

What does design have to do with "carbon sinks and aerosol particles"? Or with "the urban landscape of languages" and "global justice and democracy"? The University of Helsinki blends design with top-tier academic research at the Think Corner.

The Think Corner opens the world of the academia to the public in a spacious, cozy street-level lounge at one of the busiest street corners in the city, inviting passers-by to walk in, to listen to talks by experts and to join the dialogue. The interior is designed to promote curiosity, learning and interaction. The programme is built around scientific themes that change every couple of weeks.

The Kaisa House library, ELE Future Classroom and Think Corner are all part of the programme of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012.



Students in the ELE Future Classroom

New guide to Helsinki architecture

Architectural Guide Helsinki is a new handbook that presents Helsinki architecture in an accessible way. The handbook gives readers an architectural tour of Helsinki with pictures and articles on more than 120 buildings and projects from the past 100 years, complete with maps and QR codes. The focus is on the main public and publicly accessible buildings.

According to the author, German architect **Ulf Meyer**, the handbook guides visitors to architectural masterpieces. Meyer comments, "Helsinki is a city of architecture but there was a need for a guidebook for visitors. The city has some of the finest neoclassical, Art Nouveau (Jugendstil) and modernist architecture in Europe. The city's contemporary architectural scene is just as rich, much of it beyond the façades in great interiors."

Meyer has taught architecture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has authored and edited several architectural publications. *Architectural Guide Helsinki* is published by DOM Publishers in English and German.



DOM Publishers

Design to improve day-to-day lives

What section of our lives has the biggest impact on our overall wellbeing? World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 asked this question at the early stages of the design year. The answer was, *work*. The outcome was *Redesigning 925*, a project focusing on day-to-day office routines. A year's work has produced a study on how to revolutionize the way we work with design-based solutions.

Aalto University (which includes Finland's main design school) puts service design to work in *365 Wellbeing*, a series of World Design Capital Helsinki projects to build better welfare services, healthier environments and means to persuade citizens to adopt healthier lifestyles. One *365 Wellbeing* project is *Smoke Free Environments* aimed at curbing smoking in public areas, carried out with the social services sector of the Helsinki metropolitan area.

Helsinki's Social Services Department embraces the World Design Capital year with a number of projects. For example, *My e-Design* develops ways to make digital services available for more citizens as more and more services go online. *Functional Homes* helps elderly people to cope in their own homes when their physical and mental capabilities weaken.

Children educated in design



Patrik Lindström

Designer's Treasure Chest in use at the Muru day care centre in Helsinki. (From left) Eeli, Joonas, Teo, Onerva, Sanni, Severi, Isra and Samiira envision the fox's journey to the city with pre-school teacher Kaija Haapalinna-Lintinen.

World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 educates the future generation of Finnish designers and consumers of design with Designer's Treasure Chest.

Designer's Treasure Chest is a package for pre-schools, containing materials and a teacher's guide for six design workshops. The workshops inspire children to examine their environment through the lens of design. The exercises focus on the meaning of design, built as a hide-and-seek game – "Where is design?", "Let's find design!". The theme of the workshops is a shoe, a familiar object to all children. The shoe theme is approached through a story, in which a fox follows the children from the forest to the city and needs new shoes.

Altogether 750 Designer's Treasure Chests have been delivered to Helsinki region pre-school groups at kindergartens, and over 11,000 pre-schoolers have taken the course. The project is coordinated by the City of Vantaa.

Observatory opens to the public

An old, venerable building in Helsinki is a new venue for learning: Helsinki Observatory, completed in 1834, has been refurbished as a visitor centre with exhibits that educate especially children and young people in astronomy and the space. Until 2009 the building was used by the University of Helsinki as classrooms for future astronomers.

Helsinki Observatory was designed by **Carl Ludvig Engel**, the main architect of Helsinki during the early years of the capital. From his appointment to the task in 1816 to his death in 1840, Engel designed nearly 30 public buildings in Helsinki, giving shape and character to the new capital.

The re-opening of the Observatory is part of the programme of Helsinki 200, the year-long celebration of Helsinki's bicentennial as capital.



A.E. Rosenbröjter / Helsinki City Museum

Helsinki Observatory in 1893

Helsinki's 2013 budget puts an emphasis on responsible caring



Helsinki Mayor Jussi Pajunen presenting the 2013 budget proposal

"Helsinki seeks to increase expenditure moderately and to curb further growth of debt," stated Helsinki Mayor **Jussi Pajunen** when presenting the city's 2013 budget in October 2012. The budget secures health and social services and allows the city to invest in the development of new districts and public transportation.

"The Finnish welfare society is in transition," Mayor Pajunen said, "and municipalities will carry an increasingly heavy burden of Finnish wellbeing." Nonetheless, Helsinki will not raise the municipal tax rate in 2013.

The city budget for 2013 is about 4.5 billion euro (the population is about 600,000). Unemployment is expected to rise from the 8.9

percent recorded in July 2012. The city will focus on young people and immigrants in efforts to create new jobs, with 2 million euro appropriated for immigrants.

Helsinki expects tax income to grow by 2.2 percent in 2013. Taxes constitute 68 percent of the total budget. Close to half of the budget is allocated to public health and social services. About 14 percent is allocated to education, 8 percent to day care and other pre-school services, and 22 percent to public works, city planning and real estate services. Investments will amount to 696 million euro in 2013, which shows 4.5 percent growth over 2012. Investments are expected to grow further over the next two years.

The budget was prepared under the shadow of the European economic crisis and an uncertain outlook for the future. Numerous recent corporate layoffs may weaken the city's tax revenue over the next few years.

Helsinki has a new city council

Local elections were held nationwide in Finland on 28 October 2012 to elect new municipal councils for the next four-year term 2013-2016. Councils are the highest decision-making bodies of Finnish municipalities.

The Helsinki City Council comprises 85 councillors elected as representatives of political parties. The Helsinki City Council usually meets twice every month. In 2012, the Council met 21 times.

Political party representation in the new Helsinki City Council:

National Coalition Party (centre-right)	23
Green League	19
Social Democratic Party	15
Left Alliance	9
True Finns	8
Swedish People's Party	5
Centre Party	3
Christian Democrats	2
Communist Party	1
Total	85

43 men, 42 women



Helsinki invests in the future by developing new districts. The plan for Central Pasila includes many high-rise buildings.

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Helsinki News is an international bulletin published by the City of Helsinki Communications Office four times a year.

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