

Towards the end of 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the City of Helsinki together with the Foundation for the Design Museum and the Foundation for the Museum of Finnish Architecture set out to compile a report on the prerequisites and the necessary measures for the realisation of a world-class museum complex for architecture and design. The operations and development of the Design Museum and the Museum of Finnish Architecture have been the starting point for the planning of the new museum complex. The existing museums have substantial collections, but their operating conditions and their premises do not match the goal of providing ambitious exhibitions or public relations efforts or working towards the development of the industry. The museums are independent foundations and both have been specified as nation-wide specialised museums in their respective fields as defined by the museum act.

The proposed financial and administrative model

Based on discussions conducted as the report was compiled, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the City of Helsinki have sketched out a model for realising the museum complex according to which a new company would be in charge of running the museum and a new foundation would own the collections. The foundations behind the existing museums would join the foundation that is to be established. The foundation would govern the museum collections and also the foundation's capital, whose return would in part fund the operations of the museum. A company owned by the foundation would be responsible for the daily operations of the museum and for its supplementary activities, such as the letting of premises and events management. This model is largely similar to the administrative model of Amos Rex Art Museum.

The operational economy of the museum would be based on income generation and on state subsidies and allowances allocated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Additionally, the museum would receive earnings from capital return. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the City of Helsinki would be responsible for the capitalisation of the foundation together with possible private partners. According to estimates, the foundation needs a capital of 130–150 million euros.

The model would enable the museum to have a solid financial base and to operate independently. Financial predictability would create opportunities for more impressive international cooperation and long-term planning. Capital management necessitates the inclusion of asset management professionals in the museum foundation board as well as persons who are able to govern the

museum with the aim of maintaining financial independence while simultaneously safeguarding the high quality of the museum's operations.

Building the museum

The museum would be built as new construction in the South Harbour area as part of a comprehensive development of that area. A two-step concept and implementation competition would be organised for the construction area, which is later to be defined more precisely. The objective of the competition would be to find a partner that will be able to realise the project complex in the area while abiding by the highest possible standards.

The City would sell the plot to the winner of the competition, who would commit to constructing the museum building as part of the complex on the conditions that were laid out in the competition. As for the museum, a separate architectural competition would be organised.

The area could possibly also be the location for e.g. a hotel, office premises and public space, but not for housing.

The follow-up of the project

Provided that the government and the City commit to funding the project in line with the proposed model, the next stage would be to establish a project organisation for the museum that would be in charge of carrying out calculations on the financial and administrative model. It would also be responsible for further developing the concept and for external funding.

Given that the project will be advanced, the city will prepare the concept and implementation competition for the area and, jointly with the other partners, the provisions pertaining to the project. Architectural space programming would be done at the outset of the preparations of the architectural competition. The concept and implementation competition would be launched no earlier than the beginning of 2020.