

English Supplement

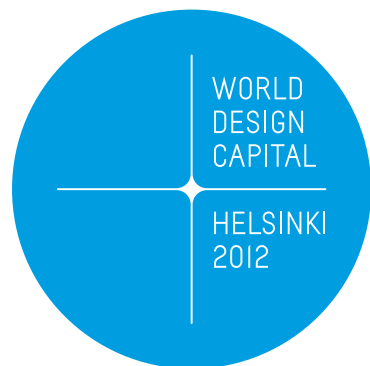
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Tuomas Rajajärvi:

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A city of good life

365 Wellbeing is one of the main development projects of Helsinki's year as World Design Capital in 2012.

The international body of students, researchers and professors at Aalto University reflect their living and working environment in Helsinki. ▶▶

The team with students Florina Trost (left), Deborah Betteto, Muhyeon Kim, Sanna Tuononen, Mike Walker, researchers Jari-Pekka Kola and Kirsikka Vaajakallio, Alastair Fuad-Luke professor, and students Kaushik Eshwar, Vesa Ylirisku, Sarang Ganoo and Tamara Amalia.



The team that participates in the Aalto University-led project *365 Wellbeing* admires the way the sea surrounds the city and its centre in particular. They mention the waterfront cafés, flea markets, greenness, and the slow sunsets that bathe the cityscape in magnificent colours.

The team is unanimous about their favourite place in Helsinki: the Seurasaari island and open-air museum. They sum up the pluses of Seurasaari: "The buildings give us a good idea of old Finnish building styles. The squirrels are cute. It's nice to lie on the rocks at the water's edge in summer, watch families on picnic and take a swim."

A design process for an even better life

365 Wellbeing is a spearhead development project of **World Design Capital Helsinki 2012**. The project consists of 12 student initiatives that look for new patient-centred health care

solutions for municipal wellbeing services. Some of the initiatives explore psychiatric care practices, electronic services and smoke-free public environments. The project also seeks new means to promote healthy lifestyles and healthful living environments.

"Responsible design – the environmental and social aspects

of design in particular – have gained renewed prominence," says Professor **Turkka Keinonen** of the Aalto University Department of Design, explaining the background of the project.

Summer in the Seurasaari island.





The city looks to the future at a

Helsinki redefines itself through city planning

By Johanna Lemola

Two hundred years in the making, the Finnish capital is faced with new realities and seeks new visions.

"We're in transition," says **Tuomas Rajajärvi**, Director of the Helsinki City Planning Department, reflecting on where Helsinki stands on its bicentennial as Finland's capital.

He singles out three major issues. Helsinki has reached a stage in its evolution where municipal boundaries in the Helsinki region are no longer tenable. ►►

Two visionaries meet: Eliel Saarinen drew a master plan for Greater Helsinki in 1918, his vision of a capital city symbolizing an independent nation's faith in the future. The home of the original plan is in Tuomas Rajajärvi's office.



Political changes and economic development have shifted realities in northeastern Europe, and Helsinki is in the process of redefining its place and identity in the European family of cities.

"I have learnt over my years steering Helsinki's City Planning that change happens only when the time is ripe. If it isn't ripe, forget it!" Rajajärvi says describing the nature of city planning. His long, three-decade-long tenure at the department has given him insight that works like sensors in the stream of time.

Rajajärvi offers the western extension of the Helsinki metro to Espoo as an example. Decades under discussion, the issue ripened to the point where the decision was made swiftly.

The time is now ripe for larger regional cooperation.

Rajajärvi explains, "For the past

two decades we have been implementing a grand development plan launched in 1990. This plan involved redevelopment of the inner city harbour areas, connections to Tallinn, and the art-and-science axis of Arabianranta and Viikki.

"That work is now finished, and it's time for a new round. This is general planning that answers a major challenge that Helsinki is facing: we can't manage by ourselves any longer in Helsinki, and we'll very soon reach our limits of growth.

"When we make large investments in the region, we should act like there were no municipal boundaries."

Rajajärvi continues to explain the bigger picture for Helsinki and the region.

"We used to have close contacts with Stockholm and

Copenhagen. Today we turn our eyes to St Petersburg, which is closer than Stockholm, and to Moscow, which is closer than Copenhagen. Tallinn is only 20 minutes away by helicopter."

"Ideally a city should tell a story," Rajajärvi says. "Our task here at City Planning is to dis-

Writing the Helsinki story.

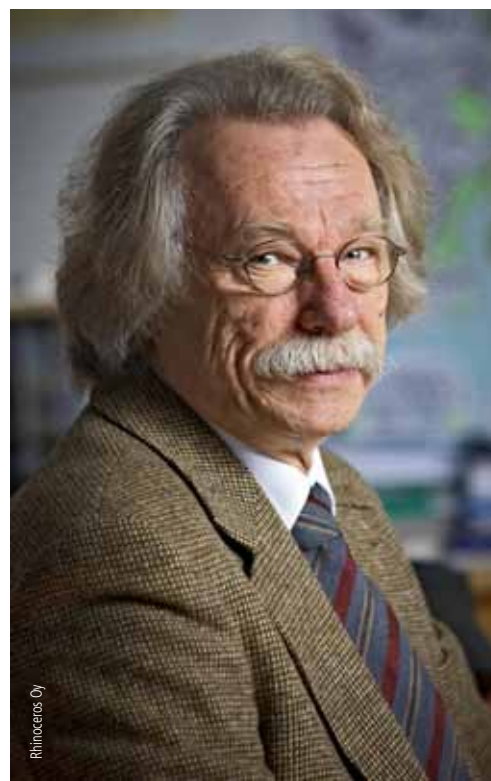
cover the unique Helsinki story."

He describes how Helsinki seeks to define its place in Europe: "We can't compete with bulk, like places such as

Manhattan can do. Our story must stem from being an attractive, pleasant city marked by closeness to nature and human scale. For example, Helsinki's Central Park extends to downtown, and ships sail to the centre.

"In Helsinki, different areas of the city should form a harmonious series like chapters of a story. Each area should have a soul, which determines the area's character."

Rajajärvi mentions Viikki as an example, planned on environmental values and as the home of a biosciences campus. "The values and role of Viikki penetrate the entire area and create new growth."



Rhinecras Oy





Helsinki's vast asset in defining its place is the emphasis and exceptional resources in city planning, including the **City Planning Department's** staff of about 280 and a unit specializing in the study of weak signals in society.

"A city is a place where many functions come together, and together they form a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts," Rajajärvi defines cities.

The future belongs to cities.

The values that convene in Helsinki include public transportation, especially on rail, efficient energy solutions, and ecological development which gathers rather than separates functions and builds them on existing structures.

"These have been Helsinki's values for as long as I remember, and they make Helsinki a true city," Rajajärvi emphasizes.

True cities are where progress happens, and they are the engines of growth in nations and regions, both economically and culturally.

"The future belongs to cities," Rajajärvi asserts.

Plans for the Kalasatama area.



Sweeping changes over 200 years

By Johanna Lemola

Helsinki's history as capital is part of the Finnish national psyche. Historian Martti Helminen looks back at what happened 200 years ago, what it meant, and where Helsinki stands today.

What did the status as the capital of Finland mean for Helsinki? How did it transform Helsinki and all of Finland?

These are questions that Helsinki historian **Martti Helminen** seeks to answer, not just for people in Helsinki but for all Finns.

"Helsinki is the capital of all Finns," he says, "and everybody in Finland should feel ownership in Helsinki because Helsinki's history is Finland's history and reflects the spirit of the nation." ➤➤





Finland was annexed from Sweden to the Russian Empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy in 1809. "Emperor **Alexander I** of Russia wanted to stabilize Finland with the autonomy," Helminen explains, referring to the hundreds of years of tumult between Sweden and Russia on Finnish soil.

Autonomy meant that Finland would for the first time in history have its own administration and a capital. "Finland's status in the Swedish Empire was only as 'eastern parts'," Helminen

points out, "and Turku, or Åbo, was never a capital during the Swedish rule, only Finland's largest city."

Alexander I named Helsinki the capital of Finland in 1812. Turku had served as the Finnish capital in the interim period 1809–1812. Alexander I and his follower **Nicholas I** were very keen to develop Helsinki.

Soon after Helsinki changed its status to capital, a vast design

and construction process got underway to rebuild the town, practically from an empty table.

Helsinki would be turned into a capital that would stand as a metaphor of new power.

A Finn educated in town planning named **Johan Albrecht Ehrenström**

was appointed to head the process. He envisioned a city with straight, wide streets placed on a geometric grid. Today, Helsinki

Russia gave Finland a capital.

stands out against its European peers, many of which grew from trading places with a medieval-style plan characterized by narrow and winding alleys.

The Ehrenström plan wiped out what little existed in Helsinki, a town of 4,000 residents and mostly wooden houses, retaining only some ten stone houses of local merchants.

German architect **Carl Ludvig Engel** was assigned to the architectural design of the main buildings in 1816. He stayed on the task to his death in 1840, despite many occasions when he considered leaving.

"What architect gets to design a whole city?" Engel would deliberate on his reasons to stay. ►►

South Harbour has functioned since the end of the 17th century as a port and quay area neighbouring the city center.





Helsinki's evolution over the past 200 years has gone through major milestones. Helminen serves as the main consultant on those milestones for Helsinki's bicentennial programme in 2012. The programme culminates in an exhibition titled *Head and Heart*, on view at Helsinki City Hall's Virka Gallery from early April to mid-June 2012.

Helminen picks out one of the key themes of the exhibition to point out a powerful factor in Helsinki's evolution – demographics.

"One of the huge milestones in Helsinki took place around 1900, when the Finnish speakers exceeded 50 percent of the city's population. Equally momentous to the city was when residents speaking some other languages than Finnish or Swedish exceeded the number of the Swedish speakers."

Today the Swedish speakers represent six percent of the Helsinki population, while the share of foreign-born people stands at almost eleven percent and is growing.

Helminen describes the role of foreign-born people in Helsinki in the past. "The first musicians of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra came from Germany. Household names in Helsinki including Stockmann and Sinebrychoff remind us how Helsinki has been built by foreigners; now these names are synonymous to the iconic department store and a famous beer brand."

The future Helsinki is inevitably an increasingly multicultural city, and some of the future milestones in Helsinki will most definitely be marked by foreign-born residents – as milestones have been marked by them over the past 200 years from Engel onwards.

Job and passion combined

Martti Helminen is a lucky man. "I get to do for living what I do for a hobby," he admits. For the past 32 years, he has been a historian, now under the title Special Researcher, at the Helsinki City Archives, which is the chief agency to document Helsinki's history.

Helminen has not abandoned his passion for Helsinki in his physical surroundings either: he has lived all his life in the Töölö district of Helsinki, studied in Helsinki, and even served his armed duty in Helsinki.

Nevertheless, foreign travel has allowed Helminen to view his home city from different perspectives to understand Helsinki's character and spirit. This includes about 20 visits to St Petersburg. He quotes Finnish poet and writer **Zacharias Topelius** (1818–1898), "Helsinki is like St Petersburg's little cousin." Another perspective is provided by Berlin, Helminen's favourite destination owing to his interest in the German language and culture.

Helminen defends Helsinki's character and spirit. His daytime duties continue after working hours on a voluntary basis as Chairman of Helsinki-Seura, a Helsinki society founded in 1934 to advocate Helsinki's cultural and historical values, especially as they are reflected in the cityscape.



Rhinceros Oy



Milestones of the Finnish capital

8 April 1812 Emperor Alexander I makes Helsinki the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

1812 Johan Albrecht Ehrenström is appointed to head the reconstruction of Helsinki, and Carl Ludvig Engel of Berlin is made the chief architect.

1819 The Senate of Finland and all central government agencies are relocated to Helsinki.

1828 The Royal Academy (today University of Helsinki) is relocated from Turku to Helsinki.

1855 The major sea fortress dating back to the 18th century, Viapori, is bombarded by the English and French navies during the Crimean War.

1863 The first regular parliamentary sessions of the Finnish Grand Duchy

1906 Parliamentary reforms are implemented, introducing equal and universal suffrage and a unicameral parliament.

6 December 1917 The Senate of the Grand Duchy of Finland declares Finland an independent nation.

1919 Finland becomes a constitutional republic.

1931 Parliament House is inaugurated.

1939 The Winter War begins; Helsinki suffers from air raids by the Soviet air force.

1941–1944 The Continuation War; Helsinki suffers from heavy air raids in April 1944. When Finland loses Karelia to the Soviet Union, all 400,000 Karelians flee and Helsinki receives 30,000 evacuees from Viipuri.

1944–1947 The Allied Control Commission oversees compliance with the Moscow Armistice.

1952 Summer Olympics

1975 Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

1995 Finland joins the EU.

1999 Finland joins the eurozone.

2000 Helsinki turns 450 as a European Capital of Culture.

2012 World Design Capital Helsinki 2012

8 April 2012 Helsinki celebrates the bicentennial as capital.



Helsinki City Media Bank

1812
Helsinki
200 vuotta
pääkaupunkina

Helsingfors
200 år som
huvudstad

Helsinki

200
Helsinki
200 years as
capital

2012

By Johanna Lemola

Every Helsinki resident should become aware next year that they live in the Finnish capital and what that means.

Hilkka Hytönen has just secured a national Finnish folk music festival to be a part of the year-long programme next year in Helsinki celebrating the city's bicentennial as the capital of Finland. In her role as the producer of the Helsinki 200 programme at the City of Helsinki Event Office, she receives contributions to the programme from many sources, sometimes unexpectedly.

"The programme will open up the theme 'Helsinki as capital' explaining what the status as capital has meant for Helsinki," she says. "The programme content will highlight events and developments in Helsinki that have taken place because Helsinki is the nation's capital."

Bicentennial programme to embrace all of Helsinki



Rhinoceer Oy



The programme will comprise dozens of items, both large and small, informative and artistic, ranging from a downtown parade to exhibitions in suburban public libraries.

"Everybody in Helsinki should run into the theme in some connection during 2012."

After Helsinki became capital in 1812, buildings for state institutions were first erected in the city. There was a boost to the cultural life, and cultural buildings followed.

The capital status would mean migration to Helsinki. The city ►►

1812
Helsinki
200 vuotta
pääkaupunkina
Helsingfors
200 år som
huvudstad
Helsinki
200
2012
Helsinki
200 years as
capital



grew rapidly, also with some negative side effects such as pollution and social problems.

The consequences of becoming capital were numerous. Even the flora changed with new species brought to Helsinki through the rail connection to Russia.

Hytönen looks at all these issues, and many more, pondering how to reflect them in the bicentennial year. She urges players both inside and outside the City administration to make contributions. Helsinki 200 will be a joint effort by a large number of players to make the jubilee.

Double celebrations

Helsinki will celebrate its bicentennial as the World Design Capital 2012. As a result, the

Helsinki 200 programme will coincide with the World Design Capital Helsinki programme. The latter explores dimensions of design through a vast design-related programme.

The two programmes complement each other. "Wherever possible, we'll share programme items, so they'll serve a double function," Hytönen explains.

Some of the shared items revolve around Unioninkatu, a street that forms a major axis through the city centre and connects many of the main Helsinki institutions and scenes of history. "The mystical blue laser" will be a laser beam shot through Unioninkatu from late October onwards underscoring the significance of the street. The blue laser will be complemented by the Unioninkatu Axis exhibition at the Laituri gallery.

The Helsinki 200 programme and other information are available at www.helsinki200.fi.

*A view along the street
Unioninkatu.*

Engel in Helsinki: Lessons from the heart



C.L. Engel (1778–1840). Oil painting by J.E. Lindh from around 1830. Helsinki City Museum.

Architect C.L. Engel's life is documented in a new exhibition.

"I must stay in this country of bears for a while before I can consider moving to a better climate," **Carl Ludvig Engel** wrote from Helsinki to an old friend in Berlin in 1816. ►►



The central square of Helsinki before the city became the capital with the tiny wooden church of Ulrika Eleonora.



The 37-year-old architect from Berlin had just started his new assignment on the reconstruction committee of Helsinki, the newly designated capital of the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland. He had no idea that he would never return to his beloved home city.

Engel was chosen by Emperor **Alexander I** of Russia to design the main blocks of the new capital, the Lutheran cathedral, university buildings and the main administrative buildings around Senate Square.

Before Helsinki Engel had worked in St Petersburg and Tallinn. In comparison, life in Helsinki was stifling at first. But when at the end of his career Engel looked at the Empire-style Helsinki that he had created, he stated in his last letters, "No man can be more satisfied with his fate than I."

A window to Engel's personal life

The first exhibition to celebrate Helsinki's bicentennial as capital,

"Home in Helsinki – Heart in Berlin", opens a new perspective to Engel.

The exhibition introduces this great man with materials that include architectural and town plan drawings supplemented by the architect's witty comments. The gem of the exhibition is a reconstruction of Engel's home as it stood in a large wooden house at Bulevardi 20.

The exhibition also presents the Engel home's once admired large garden, the master's beloved plot where he cultivated roses and other decorative plants imported from abroad.

The curating team includes historians, landscape architecture researchers, museum experts and Helsinki antique shop keepers.

■ Home in Helsinki – Heart in Berlin
Cultural Centre G18, Yrjönkatu 18
12–29 January 2012
www.engel.fi



1812
Helsinki
200 vuotta
2012

English Supplement

*The Senate square today
with Engel's Cathedral.*

Lights over the sea

An international invitational competition will be organized aiming at selecting the general lighting plan for the new residential district Kruunuvuorenranta.

In the future, Kruunuvuorenranta will be both a cosy residential area and an attractive recreational area for all Helsinki inhabitants. The construction will begin in 2012.

The area has six kilometres of shoreline. In addition to gorgeous views over the sea, the district offers cultural history in the form of estate parks and true natural wilderness.

The intention is to make Kruunuvuorenranta a district with a coherent lighting design that is both nationally and internationally unique.

The competition is part of the World Design Capital 2012 Helsinki -programme.

ksv.hel.fi/en/kruunuvuorenranta/lights



Helsinki City Planning Department

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Info Bank is an online service aimed at immigrants, offering information on Finnish society and life in Finland in 15 languages. The website also contains local information on Helsinki.

www.infopankki.fi