Library concepts to competition winners

LIBER LAG 2014

Session 2

Helsinki Central Library Project
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Helsinki City Library

7.5.2014
Public libraries are important in Finland

• High appreciation to reading and knowlegde
• Public library movement in the 19th century was an important element in building the nation; another movement was for public schools
• High number of library users compared world wide
• The goal of public libraries is to serve citizenship; to promote reading & literature. Enlarged tasks like offering working space and organising a variety of events
Library Is the Most Popular Culture Service

- Helsinki University Library – The New Main Library Kaisa
  - visits 6500 a day
- Library 10
  - visits 2000 a day
- Turku City Library – The New Main Library
  - visits 5000 a day
- Apila–Library in Seinäjoki
  - visits 2000 a day
A brief glimpse into history of the project

Mikko Leisti: Central Library - The Heart of Metropolis, 2008
“In Finland public spaces aren’t designed for people. Usually they are empty squares and monuments. Public space should be for us all: street kitchens, sofas, creative nudges, peer learning and so worth. We need space and tools, that could be used for people’s own events, action and ideas.”

-Arto Sivonen, urban culture activist & marketing manager
The Heart of the Metropolis - Helsinki Central Library Open International Architectural Competition
1/2012 - 6/2013

Goals:
• Supports the library’s new functioning concepts
• A mark of excellence in the urban landscape and architecturally enduring
• Reinforces Helsinki’s positive cultural image
• City of innovation

The competition was a part of the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 programme
We received 544 entries for the open international architectural competition.
First price: 
“Käännös” by ALA Architects
Shared third prize 
“Kasi” by Verstas Architects 
“Liblab” by Playa Architects

Five honourable mentions were awarded
“The Central Library will be completed in 2017/2018 to celebrate the centennial of Finnish independence. The library is the Finnish Government's official centennial project”.

Minister of Culture and Sports
Paavo Arhinmäki, 14.6.2013
Töölöntila city block – a symbolically significant location right in the heart of Helsinki next to Parliament Building, Museum of Modern Art, Music Hall and Sanomatalo
The Best Bits from The Competition Programme

| Meeting- and lounge area 440 m² | Stage 30 m² | Pop-up-infos 100m² | Cinema 490m² | Multi-purpose hall 350m² | Lobby areas 150m² | Back Stage 40m² | Living lab 200m² | Exhibition spaces 300m² | Café 200m² | Restaurant 300m² | Interactive spaces 240m² | Living rooms 500m² | Children’s World 600m² | Personal Office-area 400m² | Studios 160m² | Makerspace 100m² | Listening, viewing, games room 230m² | Music, recording and videostudio 400m² | Service-points & collection area 1600 m² |
Why We Need the Library of The New Era

Open, non-commercial, public space - 2.5 million visits annually
Information and skills for a more functional society
Rich city experience created by the residents themselves
Why We Need the Library of The New Era

The book’s new life - a house of reading in Töölönlahti
Pioneer in intelligent everyday life
A library for all senses - a new programme every day
An extensive terraced area, called “citizens’ balcony”, is linked with the top floor. It adds, from many different viewpoints, a symbolic gesture to the form of the building and beckons the library users to take time to relax.
One of the strengths of the proposal is the rather different moods on the three floors of the building. Access from the ground-floor level to the upper floors creates a distinct, yet at the same time surprising, spatial sequence.
The first floor has a workshop-like character and offers an inspiring centre for diverse functions, which conveys ‘doing things’ and ‘activity’. The functions are present in an informal way and are both easily approachable and easy to use.
The top floor is beautiful, light-filled and pleasant. Exciting views open up from the spaces into the surrounding scenery. The free forms of the ceiling articulate the space pleasantly.
The library will be extremely eco-efficient, so called “zero energy building”. 
Facts and figures

A hub of knowledge, skills and stories

- 10 000 visitors a day, 2,5 million a year
- 10 000 m² of the library of the future
- Collection 200 000 items
- Long opening hours, even 24/7 - part of it
- Construction cost 96 million Euros. 16 Million is still missing
- Site location: near Töölö Bay, Helsinki
Customer path: school class
The capacity of revolving doors?
600 persons/h, 10 persons/min

Is this meant to be back door or front door? It’s quite modest

WC, baby carriage, safety?
Is the space enforceable?
## An imaginary Monday event calendar of the library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOS Children’s villages meeting</td>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>Tove Jansson-meeting room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detective stories workshop</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>lobby/oasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Horror Picture Show</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>cinema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture: Banksy’s art and vision</td>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>multipurpose hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish Business Culture</td>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>Feeling good –meeting room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate food-weeks</td>
<td>all day</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish language discussion club</td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>Multiculti-area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Parliament – series</td>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>free speech area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Photographers meeting</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts meets education</td>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>Flow-workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading together: Travel books</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Maria Jotuni –teamwork room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate club</td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>interaction space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The schedule

- The project plan is ready for the decision making 9/2014, legal 3/2015
- Construction begins 11/2016
- The opening ceremony 6.12.2018
Building the Central Library openly together
Building the Central Library openly together

Citizens’ ideas and wishes (almost 2300 by now)

• Space for relaxing, slow life
• Space for happenings, work shops, city culture, DIY
• Space for working
• Concepts for peer-to-peer learning and for sharing
• Place for families and dialogue between generations
• Open for all, a non-commercial meetingplace
Operations of the Central Library are already being created in pilots and projects with the help of local libraries and libraries also nationally.
Coffee and poetry. We wish to have a place where we could make poetry, read it, and drink coffee beside it.

- Mari & Mai
A room for meditation. A sound proof space with soothing colors.
- Maaria

A free place to work and meet people in relaxed atmosphere. Like a cosy living room but in the centre of the city.
- Stella
Hopefully an art workshop, where one can write and bind one's own book.

- axel

Beautiful and cosy, not cold and sterile. Offers books, music and movies. A quiet oasis where the rustle of history is present.

- Mimi
Cushioned reading room, where tea is served, and where there are soft and comfortable corners to read peacefully.

- kirjastokissa

- dixi
A place for informal exchange of knowledge with informal and released spaces to make it happen.

- Nathalie
The library is an *enricher* of ideas and thoughts, where by sharing knowledge, skills and stories, we *together* create a *new civic society*.

*Vision of the Helsinki City Library*