

# HELSINKI

## ARCHITECTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

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Helsinki is going through intense urban development with an estimated increase of population from the current 600,000 to 860,000 by 2050. New city districts are being developed on areas vacated from industry and harbours. Each era leaves its mark in the cityscape. Helsinki's urban history has its roots in the 18th century and during the 19th century the capital developed into the "white city of the north". The different urban ideologies of the 1900s created neighbourhoods with unique characters.

### NEW CITY DISTRICTS OF THE 2000s

**A** The construction of the **Arabianranta** housing and campus district, situated along a shallow bay behind the former Arabia porcelain factory, started in 2000. Today it houses 10,000 inhabitants, 6,000 workplaces and 13,000 students. The "Art and Design City" is known for its innovative and high quality residential architecture as well as public art. The "One per cent for art" principle, where public art is incorporated in the building projects and budgets from the start, has consistently been implemented in the public outdoor spaces as well as within the apartment blocks. The building and dwelling typology is heterogeneous consisting of high-rise blocks, urban villas, loft apartments, housing for senior citizens and flexible floor plans among others. The building volumes decrease towards the sea opening maximal views to the shoreline meadow park and the bay.

**B** When completed, the **West Harbour** area on old docklands and landfills will house 30,000 inhabitants and 20,000 workplaces. Construction in the largest part, Jätkäsaari, is halfway through and will be completed by 2025. A new passenger ferry terminal with several daily departures to Tallinn opened in March 2017. A wide park will meander through the whole maritime housing area. On the other side of the basin is Hernesaari, home to a significant shipyard and other related industry as well as an international cruise ship quay. While ship building is projected to continue in Hernesaari, the industry and depots are in the process of moving out to make room for the new city district to be started in 2020 and completed by 2030. The activation of urban culture in the area got a head-start when Löytö public sauna and restaurant opened in 2016 [92].

**C** The former cargo harbour in **Kalasadama** is being transformed into a new city district for 20,000 inhabitants and 8,000 workplaces by 2030. The first part of the housing area is completed, including experimental architectural and infrastructure solutions such as joint-venture apartment blocks, flexible floor plans, townhouse-type typology, car-free blocks and an underground pipe system for waste. A new pedestrian bridge connects Kalasadama to the recreational green areas of Mustikkamaa and the Helsinki Zoo island. Kalasadama Centre with a cluster of apartment towers – the tallest in Finland – and commercial spaces is under construction. The nearby Suvilahdi cultural centre, a former power plant, hosts major events and urban festivals such as Flow Festival in summertime, and the Teurastamo wholesale market zone north of the traffic artery has developed into an interesting venue for food and urban culture.

**D** A new district is under development to unite East and West Pasila, built in the 1970s–80s and separated by an extensive rail yard area. Pasila is the busiest railway station in Finland with a future estimate of nearly 200,000 daily passengers. Construction in **Central Pasila** has commenced in 2016 with the Tripla complex, a new urban centre adjacent to the railway station. When completed in 2022, in addition to large business premises the immense complex will include offices and residences. A bundle of 15 to over 40 storey office and apartment towers will rise south of Pasila bridge as a result to an architectural competition organised in 2017. A unique and versatile residential area with an inner city feel is planned in the northern parts. In 2040 the united Pasila district will be home to almost 20,000 and workplace to over 50,000 people.

### HELSINKI THROUGH THE DECADES

**18th** Before mid-18th century Helsinki was a small town with less than 2,000 inhabitants and consisted mainly of wooden houses. The oldest existing building in the inner city area is merchant Sederholm's house [i] from 1757. The house, standing in the corner of the Senate Square, was built of stone and thus survived the commonly occurring fires. During the second half of the century, the construction of **Suomenlinna** sea fortress, initiated by the Swedish crown in 1748 and, after Finland had fallen under Russian ruling in 1809, continued by the Russian Empire, brought life and wealth to the area. By the end of the century, 6,000 people lived on the island – more than in the town itself. Today the bastion fortress island is a UNESCO world heritage site visited by close to a million tourists every year.

**19th** In 1812, Helsinki became the capital of Finland, an autonomous grand duchy under the ruling of Tsar Alexander I of Russia. The Tsar assigned the German architect Carl Ludwig Engel to design the capital's monumental centre, which was built around the **Senate Square** [3]. The Kruununka district, adjacent to the square, as well as the handsome apartment buildings along Pohjoisesplanadi street flanking the Esplanadi Park date from the end of the century.

**'00s** Art Nouveau or Jugend was the prevailing style in the turn-of-the-century architecture. Towards the end of the 19th century, the desire to define Finland's national identity grew stronger, which led to a Finnish interpretation of Art Nouveau called the National Romantic style. There are many prime examples of buildings of this style in Helsinki [8–13]. A well preserved and uniform Jugend style streetscape may be found in the district of **Katajanokka**, notably on Luotsinkatu street and its surroundings.

**'10s** The **Eira** hill with its villa-like apartment buildings and curving streets is a unique district in Helsinki. A town plan for the area by the sea, on the outskirts of the city was drafted in 1908 and the architecture is in late Jugend style. Nearby is the picturesque Jugend style street Huvilakatu, often referred to as the most beautiful streetscape of Helsinki.

- masterpieces before 2000s
  - residential buildings
  - assembly buildings
  - office buildings
  - commercial buildings
  - educational buildings
  - healthcare buildings
  - transport buildings
  - sauna & wellness buildings
  - wood architecture
  - related museums
- metro
  - tramway
  - ferry/waterbus
  - Baana bicycle route

FOR MORE FINNISH ARCHITECTURE EXPLORE THE ONLINE ARCHITECTURAL MAP GUIDE [NAVI.FINNISHARCHITECTURE.FI](http://NAVI.FINNISHARCHITECTURE.FI)

**‘20s** After Finland gained its independence in 1917 there was a need to brake away from the former ruler and turn towards the Nordic countries. In architecture this endeavour was manifested in Nordic Classicism, also referred to as Classicism of the 1920s. The objective was to create urban, uniform street views with all buildings falling in line with one another, hiding behind them big courtyards to be shared by the entire city block. A typical neighbourhood of this style is **Etu-Töölö**, e.g. Museokatu and Runeberginkatu streets.

**‘20s** Another notable but very different example of 1920s Classicism is **Puu-Käpylä** garden city in the north. The wooden two-storey houses on both sides of Pohjolankatu street were built to improve the living conditions of working class families. The timber structures of the houses each consisting of several dwellings were prefabricated in a sawmill founded on site. In the 1960s Puu-Käpylä was facing peril when a new town plan with concrete slab blocks was prepared. Preservation prevailed, however, and in the early 1970s the houses were renovated and modernised to include indoor washrooms.

**‘30s** A significant shift in the architectural climate occurred at the turn of decades when modernistic ideology replaced Classicism. The district of **Taka-Töölö** is an interesting manifestation of early Modernism, or Functionalism. The ideology called for open air and sunlight, but the Taka-Töölö town plan dated from 1906 and proposed closed blocks and deep building frames. In the 1930s, construction was booming and there was no time to review the town plan. This resulted in a type of Functionalism typical of Töölö with characteristic elements such as rectangular bay windows, around-the-corner windows and handsome staircases with a hint of Art Deco. Most of the large Taka-Töölö district was built during just one decade and therefore the cityscape is outstandingly homogenous.

**‘40s** Helsinki was preparing to host the Olympic Games in 1940 and much construction was going on. The **Olympic Village** in Käpylä, south of Puu-Käpylä garden city, was intended to lodge 3,200 foreign athletes and carers. 400 dwellings were built but due to the war the works were interrupted and the Helsinki games were postponed until 1952. After the war the Functionalist style buildings with modern floor plans, set in an open town plan in forested surroundings, were completed and taken into normal residential use. A new village for lodging the 1952 Olympic athletes was built south of Koskelantie street. The original Olympic Village remains well preserved.

**‘50s** After the war, there was a great need for reconstruction as well as relocating the hundreds of thousands of evacuees from Karelia. In the 1950s new residential areas were built on the outskirts of the city, such as Tapiola garden city in the west, Maunula in the north and Herttoniemi and Roihuvuori in the east. In **Munkkivuori**, northwest of the city centre, slab blocks and 10-storey towers are set in an open plan within a circular road following the contours of the forested terrain. The architecture is modernistic with a romantic touch. Characteristics typical of the period were innovative use of natural materials, closeness to nature and humane scale as well as modesty and functionality. Munkkivuori is home to Finland’s first and still functioning shopping centre dating from 1959.

**‘60s** This was the period of comprehensive development and housing estates outside the urban structure. One of the best examples is Pihlajamäki in the north, which was the first industrially produced housing estate in Finland. In the inner city, there are only some fragments of 1960s’ cityscapes, notably in the district of **Lauttasaari**. The architecture is characterised by ribbon windows, large recessed balconies, functional and spacious floor plans and mixed use of brick and panels in the facades.

**‘70s** **Merihaka** in the vicinity of Hakaniemi Market Square is a pure example of the ideologies of the 1960s–70s when the infinite growth of motorisation was seen as a positive potential for the future. Prefabricated high-rise apartment blocks were constructed on a concrete deck thus separating cars and pedestrians on different levels and making the environment safe for children to play. Concrete is the overall dominant material. A similar style area with a two-level town plan solution from the same period may be found in East Pasila [D].

**‘80s** In the late 1970s an urban design competition was held for the tip of **Katajanokka** peninsula. After a long period of lamella type slab blocks or tower blocks in an open plan, the district has a more urban feel with closed blocks flanking the streets. Instead of prefabricated elements the town plan required masonry facades. Red brick is the dominant material in the streetscape of the maritime housing area, which is strongly marked by the colossal passenger ferries and cruisers along the southern shoreline and the ice-breaker base on the north side.

**‘80s** **Pikku-Huopalahti** on the north-western outskirts of the city is an excellent example of Northern Post-Modernism. The comprehensive housing district with meandering streets and buildings of different scales was conceived in the 1980s and implemented in the 1990s. The colourful architecture was a counter attack to the grey concrete boxes of the 1970s. The pyramid-like Terraced House [40] with 15 set back storeys rising above its surroundings is the dominant of the area.

**‘90s** The **Ruoholahti** district adjacent to the city centre was also conceived through a town planning competition and continues the closed block urban structure of the inner city. Office buildings face the heavy traffic on the north side giving shelter to the residential area on both sides of Ruoholahti Canal [37]. The office buildings are of high-tech architecture typical of the 1990s and the apartment blocks have an air of coolness and are marked by strong vertical and horizontal lines and glazed balconies.

## ARCHITECTURE AT MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

- a** **Museum of Finnish Architecture**, Kasarminkatu 24 [mfa.fi]
- b** **Design Museum**, Korkeavuorenkatu 23 [designmuseum.fi]
- c** **Ateneum Art Museum**, Kaivokatu 2 [ateneum.fi]
- d** **Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma** [41] [kiasma.fi]
- e** **Kunsthalle Helsinki**, Nervanderinkatu 3 [taidehalli.fi]
- f** **Helsinki Art Museum HAM**, Eteläinen rautatiekatu 8 [hamhelsinki.fi]
- g** **Amos Rex Art Museum** [100] [amosanderson.fi], opening in August 2018
- h** **National Museum of Finland** [12] [kansallismuseo.fi]
- i** **Helsinki City Museum**, Aleksanterinkatu 16 [helsinginkaupunginmuseo.fi]
- j** **Laituri**, Helsinki City Planning Department’s information and exhibition space, Narinkka 2 [laituri.hel.fi]
- k** **Jätkäsaari Info Centre**, Tyynenmerenkatu 1
- l** **Seurasaaari Open-Air Museum** [seurasaaari.fi]
- m** **Alvar Aalto Museum**: Aalto’s home [20] and studio [26] [alvaraalto.fi]

**1** **Presidential Palace**  
Mariankatu 2  
Pehr Granstedt 1820  
• renovations by Carl Ludwig Engel 1843; LPR Architects 2014

**2** **Naval Barracks**  
Laivastokatu 22  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1820



MIKA SUOMER / VISIT HELSINKI

**3** **Senate Square**:  
**a** Council of State Building  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1822  
**b** University of Helsinki Main Building  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1832  
• renovation by LPR Architects 2000  
**c** National Library of Finland  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1840  
• restoration by LPR Architects 2015  
**d** Helsinki Cathedral  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1852  
• restoration by Vilhelm Helander 1999

**4** **Old Church**  
Lönnrotinkatu 6  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1826

**5** **Helsinki City Hall**  
Pohjoisesplanadi 11–13  
Carl Ludwig Engel 1833  
• renovation by Aarno Ruusuvuori 1970

**6** **Uspenski Orthodox Cathedral**  
Pormestarinrinne 1  
Aleksei M. Gornostajev 1868

**7** **Market Hall**  
Market Square  
Gustaf Nyström 1889

**8** **St. John’s Church**  
Korkeavuorenkatu 12  
A. E. Molander 1893



MIINA JUTILA / ARCHIBDO

**9** **Pohjola Insurance Building**  
Aleksanterinkatu 44  
Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen 1901

**10** **Finnish National Theatre**  
Railway Square  
Onni Tarjanne 1902  
• extension by Kaija & Heikki Siren 1954

**11** **Eira Hospital**  
Laivurinkatu 29  
Lars Sonck 1905

**12** **National Museum of Finland**  
Mannerheimintie 34  
Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen 1910

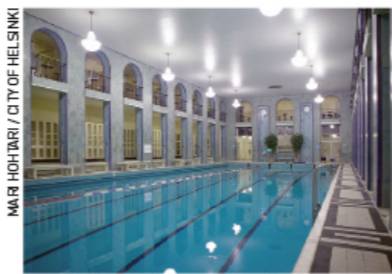
**13** **Kallio Church**  
Itäinen papinkatu 2  
Lars Sonck 1912



TUOMAS LUISHEIMO / VRT

**14** **Helsinki Railway Station**  
Eliel Saarinen 1914  
• platform roofing by Esa Piironen 2001

**15** **Stockmann Department Store**  
Aleksanterinkatu 52 B  
Sigurd Frosterus 1924–30  
• restoration by Gullichsen Kairamo Vormala Architects 1989; Laatio Architects 2010



MARIK HOHTARI / CITY OF HELSINKI

**16** **Yrjönkatu Swimming Hall**  
Yrjönkatu 21  
Vainö Vähäkallio 1929

**17** **Parliament House**  
Mannerheimintie 30  
J. S. Sirén 1931  
• renovation by Helin & Co Architects 2017



TUOMAS LUISHEIMO

**18** **Helsinki Olympic Stadium**  
Paavo Nurmen tie 1  
Yrjö Lindegren, Toivo Jäntti 1940, 1951  
• canopy by K2S Architects 2005

**19** **Mikael Agricola Church**  
Tehtaankatu 23  
Lars Sonck 1935

**20** **Villa Aalto**  
Riihtie 20  
Aino & Alvar Aalto 1936



ESKO JÄMSÄ / VISIT HELSINKI

**21** **Glass Palace**  
Mannerheimintie 22  
Niilo Kokko, Viljo Revell, Heimo Riihimäki 1936  
• conversion to Amos Rex Art Museum JKMM Architects 2018 [100]

**22** **Sokos Department Store**  
Mannerheimintie 9  
Erkki Huttunen 1939–52

**23** **Serpentine House**  
Mäkelänkatu 86  
Yrjö Lindegren 1951

**24** **Hotel Palace**  
Eteläranta 10  
Viljo Revell, Keijo Petäjä 1952

**25** **Keskuskatu 1 & 3**:  
• Iron House  
Alvar Aalto 1954  
• Academic Book Store  
Alvar and Elissa Aalto 1969

**26** **Studio Aalto**  
Tiilimäki 20  
Alvar Aalto 1955

**27** **Social Insurance Institution**  
Nordenskiöldinkatu 12  
Alvar Aalto 1956

**28** **University of Helsinki, Porthania**  
Yliopistonkatu 3  
Aarne Ervi 1957  
• restoration by NRT Architects 2006



JUSSI TAINEN / NRT

**29** **House of Culture**  
Sturenkatu 4  
Alvar Aalto 1958  
• restoration by NRT Architects 2013

**30** **Lauttasaari Church**  
Mylykallionrinne 1  
Marja & Keijo Petäjä 1958

**31** **Stora Enso Head Office**  
Kanavaranta 1  
Alvar Aalto 1962

**32** **Merimiehenkatu Housing**  
Merimiehenkatu 32  
Aarno Ruusuvuori 1962

**33** **Helsinki City Theatre**  
Eläntarhantie 5  
Timo Penttilä 1967  
• renovation by LPR Architects 2017



PAUL WILLIAMS / VISIT HELSINKI

**34** **Tempeliaukio Church**  
Lutherinkatu 3  
Timo & Tuomo Suomalainen 1969

**35** **Finlandia Hall**  
Mannerheimintie 13 E  
Alvar & Elissa Aalto 1971, 1975

**36** **Vallila Library and Daycare Centre**  
Päijätentie 3–5  
Juha Leiviskä 1991

**37** **Ruoholahti Canal and outdoor spaces**  
Juhani Pallasmaa 1991

**38** **Finnish National Opera**  
Helsinginkatu 58  
Hyvämäki-Karhunen-Parkkinen Architects 1993

**39** **Mäntyniemi, the Official Residence of the President of Finland**  
Mäntyniementie 4  
Raili & Reima Pietilä 1993

**40** **Pikku-Huopalahti Terraced House**  
Punamäenpolku 1  
Reijo Jallinoja 1994



KAISA LUUKKAINEN / VISIT HELSINKI

**41** **Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art**  
Mannerheiminaukio 2  
Steven Holl 1998

**42** **Sanoma Headquarters**  
Töölönlahdenkatu 2  
SARC Architects 1999

**43** **University of Helsinki, Physicum**  
Väino Auerin katu 11  
Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects 2001

**44** **Helsinki City College of Technology, AV Media**  
Muottilijankatu 3  
Ark-house Architects 2001

**45** **Käpykallio Housing**  
Mäkelänkatu 97  
Tuomo Siitonen Architects 2002



JUSSI TAINEN / AVANTO

**46** **Kuula, Helsinki Zoo Observation Tower**  
Mestikkamäänpolku 12  
Ville Hara / Aalto Arts Wood Program 2002

**47** **Media Centre Lume**  
Hämeentie 135  
Heikkinen-Komonen Architects 2002

**48** **Little Parliament**  
• extension of the Parliament House  
Arkadiankatu 3  
Helin & Co Architects 2004

**49** **Kamppi Shopping Centre and Public Transport Terminal**  
Urho Kekkosen katu 1  
Juhani Pallasmaa Architects, Helin & Co Architects, Marja-Riitta Norri Architects, ARX Architects; Davidsson Tarkela Architects (terminal) 2005

**50** **Keva Pension Fund Office Building**  
Unioninkatu 39  
Käpy & Simo Paavilainen Architects 2005

**51** **University of Helsinki, Minerva**  
Siltavuorenpenger 20 R  
A6 Architects 2005

**52** **Arabianvillat Housing**  
Gunnel Nymanin piha 2  
Ark-house Architects 2005

**53** **Svingi & Stanssi Housing**  
Kanavakatu 7  
NRT Architects 2006

**54** **HTC High Tech Centre**  
Tammasaarenkatu 1–7  
Kai Wartiainen / Pöyry Architects 2007

**55** **Sandels Cultural Centre**  
Sandelsinkatu 3  
Juha Leiviskä 2007



JUSSI TAINEN / NRT

**56** **Pasilan Konepaja Housing**  
Aleksis Kiven katu 27–33  
NRT Architects 2007–2015

**57** **HOAS Kumpula Student Housing**  
Intiankatu 20  
Brunow & Maunula Architects 2007

**58** **Eiranranta Housing**  
Helin & Co Architects 2008

**59** **Varma Office Building**  
Salmisaarenranta 11  
Tuomo Siitonen Architects 2009

**60** **Töölö Stage & Oscar Housing**  
Rautatiekatu 1  
Tuomo Siitonen Architects 2009

**61** **Finnish National Board of Education**  
transformation  
Hakaniemenranta 6  
SARC Architects 2009

**62** **Seurasaaari Open-Air Museum**  
Conservation Centre  
Seurasaaarentie  
Häkli Architects 2009

**63** **Violanpuisto Townhouses**  
• owner-occupied development  
Saarenkatu 15  
Marcus Ahlman, Viivi Snellman 2009

**64** **Helsinki Court of Appeal**  
transformation  
Porkkalankatu 13  
Tuomo Siitonen Architects 2010  
• original building by Vainö Vähäkallio 1940

**65** **Student Healthcare Centre**  
extension  
Töölönkatu 37  
Sanaksenaho Architects 2010

**66** **Meilahti Hospital Entrance Lobby**  
Haartmaninkatu 4  
Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects 2010

**67** **Café Mattolaituri**  
Ehrenströmintie 3  
Helin & Co Architects 2011

**68** **Helsinki Music Centre**  
Mannerheimintie 13a  
LPR Architects 2011

**69** **Exhibition Centre extension**  
Messuaukio 1  
Davidsson Tarkela Architects 2011

**70** **Victoria, Diana & Titania Housing**  
Sörnäistenkatu 2  
B&M Architects 2011

**71** **Flooranaukio Housing**  
Brysselinkatu 6 & Lontoonkatu 5  
Heikkinen-Komonen Architects 2011

**72** **Tila Loft Housing**  
Poslininkatu 3  
Talli Architects 2011

**73** **Kellokas Semi-detached Houses**  
• owner-occupied development  
Hämeentie 170  
Karin Krokfors Architects 2011

**74** **Three Infill Apartments**  
Huvilakuja 14  
Roomy 2012



MARGO HUTTUNEN / K2S

**75** **Kamppi Chapel**  
Simonkatu 7  
K2S Architects 2012



TUOMAS LUISHEIMO / ADA

**76** **Kaisa, Helsinki University Main Library**  
Kaisaniemenkatu 5  
Antinen Oiva Architects 2012

**77** **Hotel Paasitorni**  
Paasivuorenkatu 5  
K2S Architects 2012

**78** **Kaanaankatu Housing**  
Kaanaankatu 9  
Huttunen-Lipasti-Pakkanen Architects 2012



MIKA HUISMAN / K2S

**79** **Arctia Shipping Headquarters**  
• floating office building  
Laivastokatu 9  
K2S Architects 2013

**80** **Helsingin Studio Housing**  
Arielinkatu 10  
Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects 2013

**81** **Kotisaarenkatu Housing**  
Kotisaarenkatu 7  
Playa Architects 2014

**82** **Kulttuurisauna Public Sauna**  
Hakaniemenranta 17  
Tuomas Toivonen, Nene Tsuboi 2013



ANTTI LUUTONEN / NRT

**83** **Merenkulkijanranta Housing**  
Purjeentekijänkatu 13  
NRT Architects 2014

**84** **Malta Housing**  
• owner-occupied development  
Välimerenkatu 13  
Ark-house Architects 2014

**85** **Café Birgitta**  
Hernesaaarenranta 2  
Talli Architects 2014

**86** **Saukonpaasi Housing**  
Länsisatamankatu 23  
Huttunen-Lipasti-Pakkanen Architects 2014

**87** **EY Office and Residential Building**  
Alvar Aallon katu 5  
Verstas Architects 2014

**88** **Kippariintalo Housing**  
Arcturuksenkatu 6  
Juha Leiviskä 2015

**89** **OP Financial Group Headquarters**  
Teollisuuskatu 1  
JKMM Architects 2015

**90** **Meripaviljonki Floating Restaurant**  
Säästöpankinranta 3  
Simo Freese 2015

**91** **Toukoranta Housing**  
Lontoonkatu 10 / Berliininkatu 9  
JKMM Architects 2015



KUVIO.COM / AVANTO

**92** **Löyly Public Sauna and Restaurant**  
Hernesaaarenranta 4  
Avanto Architects 2016

**93** **Kalasatama School and Daycare Centre, stage 1**  
Polariksenkatu 1  
JKMM Architects 2016

**94** **Allas Sea Pool**  
Katajanokkalaitur 2  
Huttunen-Lipasti-Pakkanen Arch. 2017

**95** **West Terminal 2**  
Länsisatama  
PES Architects 2017

**96** **Jallukka**  
• block of flats for musicians  
Malagankatu 3  
Talli Architecture & Design 2017

**97** **Lonna Public Sauna**  
Lonna Island  
OPEAA Office for Peripheral Architecture 2017



MIKA HUISMAN / JKMM

**98** **University of Helsinki, Think Corner**  
Yliopistonkatu 4  
JKMM Architects 2017

**99** **The Greenest Block of Flats</**