History of Finnish Architecture

Essays

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# Table of Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOK REVIEW: WOOD, STONE AND STEEL CONTOURS OF FINNISH ARCHITECTURE, RIITTA NIKULA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUGENDSTIL AND NATIONAL ROMANTICISM</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROM KÄPYLÄ GARDEN TOWN TO THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE - QUESTIONS AND VARIATIONS OF THE 1920S</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAPIOLA GARDEN CITY - A 1950S MODEL SUBURB</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATURE IN AND OF REIMA PIETILÄ'S ARCHITECTURE</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURES</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCES</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following essays contain various topics of Finnish architecture in the 20th century. They all have one thing in common: they concentrate more on development and concept of architecture than on the built edifice itself. For me this part is the essential part to understand architecture. One should provide the knowledge for understanding and the viewer shall be able to interpret the buildings himself with this knowledge.

While going through the literature for the essays I also realized that urban planning and design, the overall appearance of townscapes is emphasized a lot. It seems that this has been an essential part of thinking in Finland very early. That is the main point and very fascinating for me, since my interest is more in urban planning and design than in building houses.
In 2005 the art historian Riitta Nikula published her first book trying to give “a general picture of building in Finland over the centuries”: WOOD, STONE AND STEEL Contours of Finnish Architecture. Nikula has been professor in art and architecture history at Helsinki University and wrote her PhD about the Töölö area in Helsinki. She is regarded to be a generalist historian of Finnish architecture and has published books on several Finnish architectural topics.

In her preface Nikula says she intends to readers who want to get an overview about the situation and the “crucial historical forces behind the building work” in Finland. Her aim is to make the reader understand the countries architectural appearance, inspire them traveling around in Finland and explore Finnish architecture themselves.

The structure of the book follows natural order of centuries, although sometimes it is hard to differ history in that sense: Beginning with a widespread overview of landscape and history, which offers a basic understanding of external drivers, live and building technologies until the Middle Ages, Nikula goes on in chapters of centuries from 16th to 20th century. This is still an understandable structure but titling and content of substructures becomes confusing in some different manners: The main interest is obviously in the 19th and 20th century, which can considered to be natural in reviewing Finnish architecture, but at least similar main focuses for all the centuries and going more into detail where necessary (19th and 20th century) would have been helpful. Especially because of obviously “extra-chapters” such as “[The Vaasa of Carl Axel Setterberg]” already the table of content becomes confusing and the reader is left alone with the same feeling while reading through the book.
He also misses Nikula’s conclusion about what is the essence of Finnish architecture in the end. In the last paragraph she tries to lead the reader’s thinking into future: Nowadays Finnish towns grow but industrial jobs are shifted to abroad, economy is still restructuring and agriculture a stable component of uncertainty. “All these will affect architecture in Finland in the decades to come.”

What makes it also hard to follow the steps of development is that building types, such as churches, are not treated continuously but within the order of centuries. One has to say that this comment questions the whole book structure, but since it is the decision between sorting things by time or by type, each variant has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Content wise the chosen topics seem to be very suitable to give an overview about Finnish architecture in general: Nikula emphasizes town and urban development as a big part of architectural and social development throughout the whole book. To me it seems that is the big difference to architectural understanding in other countries: A lot of architects, urban designers and just normal people in other countries do not consider urban and open space in the way as it is emphasized in “WOOD, STEEL AND STONE Contours of Finnish Architecture” already since the 16th century and in today’s Finnish society in general. This can considered being my personal essence of the book. In comparison to what I have learned about and seen in Central Europe’s architectural history, urban development seems to be more in the focus of decision-making in Finland.

The way Nikula explains facts to the reader and relates them inside the subchapters is very easy to understand, even for a reader who is not familiar with features of Finnish architecture. At the same time she uses some architectural terms the reader has to know, but since architecture is a big part of everyday life one can consider the reader to know most of them.

For each chapter Nikula gives a broad overview of what happened in social life and technical development, and what that means to building and architecture, before leading to the subchapters. Whereas these descriptions are very short and therefore easy to keep in mind while reading through the chapter, the reader feels bombed with facts of building years in the subchapters: on page 41 there are mentioned seven churches and eleven years related to them. The exact dates might be interesting to historians, but to inspire “usual” readers exploring architecture it would have been more interesting to relate and compare the buildings as steps of development in a meaningful manner. Sometimes the reader even wished to get less but more detailed examples, but since this book is made to give an overview it might be ok that way. The most important point about this is that text and figures would have been more obviously related to each

5 Nikula 2005: 204
6 Nikula 2005: 41
other. Since there are no figure numbers that could be mentioned in the text, it is hard to follow figures while reading. Nevertheless, the reader enjoys having pictures and since architecture is a lot about visual sense making and I as a foreigner am not very familiar to Finnish geography, would have wished to have more maps explaining where several places are. For the reader who wants to travel through Finland because he has read Nikula’s book, it would also be good to have two more things: First footnotes for further reading and secondly a table of places in the end of the book, where he could find the mentioned places sort by city or region.

In general it can be said that in her book “WOOD, STONE AND STEEL Contours of Finnish Architecture” Riitta Nikula achieves the goal to make readers interested in Finnish architectural development. I have myself taken a lot of notes about places I want to see and why. Although for planning a tour through Finland the reader needs further information, Nikula’s book is a good starting point to get to know one’s own interests. Since it is not the book’s aim to be a tour guide through Finland, it can be said that Nikula succeeded although there are weaknesses in relating text to pictures and places to each other, and ordering the content.
Jugendstil and National Romanticism

International and Finnish Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau is the art movement that took place all over Europe at the turn to the 20th century. However it was called Art Nouveau in France, Jugendstil in the German-speaking countries or Arts and Craft in Great Britain, they all had similar aims and similar ways of thinking. In the late 1890s the Pan Slavism-movement reached its peak. In reaction to that Finns started searching for their own roots and identity. The dream of independence was born at that time. Therefore the arts, literature and music as well as the visual arts and architecture started searching for new forms to express the national uniqueness in the late 1890s.

In architecture an astounding volume of building activity was to be seen between the late 1890s and the early 1910s: Dozens of churches, hundreds of schools and several cultural and administrative edifices were built. The communities in the countryside grew, but the most significant growth happened in the industrial centre of Finland, its capital Helsinki.

Technical innovation led to the need for new building types and the migration from the countryside caused an acute housing shortage. “Helsinki began to grow from a predominantly wooden town into a city of masonry dominated by multi-storey buildings.” Also the fact that Helsinki’s population doubled between 1890 and 1910 illustrates the rapid change, which was going on.

The vernacular building tradition and the Finnish nature served as inspirations for the particular Finnish Jugendstil. Through study trips and magazines artists and designers in Finland were closely following the international developments, from where the influences were adopted directly or through the other Nordic countries. It has been published that

7 Rauske 2008: 6
8 Rauske 2008: 6
9 Rauske 2008: 7
10 Rauske 2008: 8
11 Rauske 2008: 7
12 Rauske 2008: 8
many architects in Finland were interested in the Romanesque-influenced architecture of the American architect Henry Hobson Richardson, the comfortable housing architecture in England and the masonry castles in Scotland.\textsuperscript{13}

At the turn of the century the major part of building and development in Finland was built in the new Art Nouveau style. Especially here it was a very heterogenic style, which is nowadays known as Jugendstil as well as National Romanticism.\textsuperscript{14}

Typical features of the international Art Nouveau-movement were anti-classicism, free treatment of form, asymmetry and variation of form. The variation idea was caused by two different factors: the new kind of ornamentation, which led to the new Art Nouveau form language, and Camillo Sitte’s concepts of a painterly townscape, which became an ideal in the late 1890s.\textsuperscript{15} The Finnish Jugendstil- and National Romanticism-movement tried to merge these international influences with the need to develop a new original mode of expression.\textsuperscript{16} So Finnish Art Nouveau became known as modest and rugged, but still shows the rich imagination of the artists and designers. Especially in the style that is nowadays known as National Romanticism the so-called “requirement of truthfulness” became very obvious: In the architects opinion the interior had to be reflected in the exterior and authentic materials, like Finnish stone, were to be used.\textsuperscript{17}

Finland got its first international attention at the Paris World’s Fair in 1900. It was also the first time that Finland, which was at that time still a Grand Duchy of Russia, had an own pavilion (Figure 1). It was designed by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and is known as the example of the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Finland_pavillion.png}
\caption{Finland’s pavilion at the Paris World Fair in 1900}
\end{figure}

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\bibitem{13} Rauske 2008: 6
\bibitem{14} Rauske 2008: 7
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\bibitem{17} Rauske 2008: 7
\end{thebibliography}
new style: Finnish Art Nouveau.\textsuperscript{18}
At the same time in Finland itself a change of planning culture took place: the organization of architectural competitions became a widespread practice through the demands of “Arkitektklubben”, which was founded in 1892. The practice of competitions ensured very early that young architects got the opportunity to gain professional success.\textsuperscript{19}
The plan for the most popular Art Nouveau-area in Helsinki, Katajanokka, was still drawn up by municipal officials, whereas the second example of Töölö-area is the first example of a Finnish town planning competition. It was proclaimed in 1899-1900. The work by Gustav Nyström and Lars Sonck was approved in 1903 and officially ratified in 1906.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Jugendstil in Katajanokka}
Municipal officials drew up the town plan for Katajanokka, which did not take the terrain into any consideration, in 1895. Already the first houses established in a few years reflected the new ideas of Finnish Art Nouveau. The housing façades are accentuated with bays and windows of varying size, blocks of natural stone anchor the buildings to the ground. Tiled roofs, turrets and gables add lively details. In Katajanokka one can feel as if being in a villa-area, but still the houses built blocks. Each house seems to “struggle” for attention and at the same time to fit into the whole: “The unique appearance of this section is due to its mixture of an old-fashioned town plan, a building ordinance permitting construction on a larger scale and a new style of architecture.”\textsuperscript{21}
The existence of two buildings, designed by the famous architect-trio Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen, on Katajanokka shall be pointed out: \textbf{Doctor’s House} was completed in 1901 at the edge of Kasarmitori square. It has a high-pitched tiled roof, a light-coloured façade, balconies

\begin{itemize}
\item[18] Rauske 2008: 7
\item[19] Rauske 2008: 8
\item[20] Rauske 2008: 17
\item[21] Rauske 2008: 13
\end{itemize}
and small-paned windows of different size. The architects presented it to the press as an example of a new design concept for homes. The aim was to create coziness in the interior but leave the exterior roughly simple. At the turn of the century this building pointed the way to more and more individualistic apartment design.  

The so-called Olofsborg apartment building, built between 1900 and 1902 for some wealthy developers, was a further development of these ideas (Figure 2). The façades are plastically even more impressive. It is often said, that the Olofsborg building introduced the features of villa architecture, which was regarded as an ideal, “into this area of straight streets.”

Lindqvist building, situated in Alexanderinkatu, designed by Selim A. Lindqvist was completed in 1900 (Figure 3). Lindqvist was very interested in new building techniques and therefore Lindqvist building became one of the first cast iron column and beam structures in Finland. Large windows and an adaptable interior characterize the ground level. These features ment the building to be a turning point in Finnish architecture. The edifice also has the modern facilities of a lift and own power plant. The vertical lines and other details in the exterior design reference to Central European Art Nouveau department stores and the Neo-Gothic style can be seen.

National Romanticism
It was already pointed out that Art Nouveau in Finland was a very special movement in the sense that a unique style was born out of it: National Romanticism. Due to the fact, that Finland was part of Russia at that time, but national ideas were born, architects searched for ways to express their national uniqueness. 

One of the most productive architects regarding this style was Lars Sonck.

22 Rauske 2008: 17
23 Rauske 2008: 17
24 Rauske 2008: 7
With his excellent feel for material he designed the most impressive examples using natural stone.\textsuperscript{25}

He planned the most important church design of the period, \textbf{Tampere Cathedral} (Figure 4 and 5). The competition took place in 1900 and the church was built between 1902 and 1907. The external appearance is marked by the asymmetrical disposition of volumes and the granite façades. The granite stones for the basis come from Ruovesi, a nearby village, whereas the façade stones are from the West-Finnish city of Uusikaupunki. The interior, designed by Hugo Simberf, is characterized by frescoes and leaded glass windows. Especially impressive is the rosette window above the altar, which was designed by Magnus Enckell. The motive is a thorn-winning cross, the symbolic crucifix of Tampere Cathedral. It has often been pointed out that Tampere Cathedral, which was designed as St. Johann’s Church, is something special in architectural history: “The church marked a decisive renewal of early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century sacral architecture.”\textsuperscript{26}

Another important church design by Lars Sonck is \textbf{Kallio Church} in the Kallio area of Helsinki (Figure 6). The church, built from 1908 to 1912, adopts the classical axial church layout. The façades are faced with granite in squared-rubble technique, which is typical for the National Romanticism. The massive tower on the hill location dominates its surroundings and works as a landmark visible from all over Helsinki.\textsuperscript{27}

Some other important buildings of the National Romanticism can only be mentioned shortly in this context: \textbf{Suomen Kansallisteatteri} was designed by Onni Törnqvist and built between 1898 and 1902 (Figure 7). It is a natural stone building employing Romanesque forms with American starting points of the National Ro-

\textsuperscript{25} Rauske 2008: 23
\textsuperscript{26} Rauske 2008: 23
\textsuperscript{27} Rauske 2008: 23
mantic style. Onni Törnqvist, who is later known as Onni Tarjanne, was one of the first popular female architects in Finland.

The competition for Suomen Kansallismuseo was won by Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen in 1902 (Figure 8). The aim was to combine “contemporary requirements of museums with forms and materials regarded as national in character.” The layout is based on the principle of agglomeration and employing masses of different type. The various departments are located in wings around two central courtyards. The connecting space between them is a large central hall under a cross vault. The frescos are painted by Akseli Gallen-Kallela. A high tower dominates the exterior. Natural stone is used in two different forms, as blocks and in various bonds.

Eliel Saarinen won the competition for Rautatieasema in 1904 with an entry resembling the design of a medieval church and of the recently completed National museum (Figure 9). At that time Saarinen’s competition success aroused heated reaction and Sigurd Frosterus and Gustaf Strengell published even a pamphlet criticizing the design. They called the design “rational, functionally defined architecture launched by Henry van de Velde.” In the following year the design was completely revised to become what we know as Rautatieasema today.

Another milestone in the history of Finnish architecture is the Pohjola Insurance Company building by Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen, built between 1899 and 1901. It can be called an “apotheosis of romantic architecture”. It is characterized by a soapstone façade and a bizarre decoration: The ornaments, which are inspired by the Finnish nature and the
world of Finland's national epic Kalevala, are concentrated around the doors and windows. Since even the name of the company derived from Kalevala the symbolism for their headquarters referring to the national epic seemed a natural choice. In the hall the modern cast-iron structure was given an archaic appearance. That already aroused opposition among contemporaries, but it fits very good in the time when cast-iron structures were not yet regarded as “good design” and therefore covered. The stairwell is regarded to be “one of most beautiful of its kind in Finnish Art Nouveau architecture”.

31 Rauske 2008: 7
From Käpylä Garden Town to the Parliament House - questions and variation of the 1920s

“The entire architectural profession in Finland embraced Classicism during the ‘20s. The high point came in 1927, after which the vanguard started turning to Functionalism. Many architects nevertheless remained Classicists long into the ‘30s. Classicism remodeled the everyday milieu through housing construction which reached an inter-war peak in the late ‘20s.”

Societal background/development
Finland gained independence in December 1917, so the after years of Russian oppression (Finland has been part of Russia for about 100 years) and the Civil War in 1918 it seemed natural for most of the young and mainly Swedish-speaking architects to turn towards Scandinavia.

“During the pre-war period, social and economic development in the Nordic countries were comparable to those in Northwest Europe general.” People believed in capitalism combined with increasing social tensions. Since the Scandinavian countries haven’t been in the centre of World War I, “the post-war years offered a fairly good prospects for democratic reforms in society.” Finland has had the opportunity for national liberations, but because of involving tensions and the socially agonizing Civil War this chance was not taken.

World War I also effected Finland in terms of house building: Individual house building was almost totally lacking during the war years, so state and municipal authorities took the initiative for new house building in the post-war years. But also the other extreme existed: “There was a nouveau riche clientele who was enabled by wartime economy and profiteering to aspire to a new standard in luxury housing in the villa areas and suburbs.”

The big changes in the political system of the country led to new demands

32 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 85
33 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 81
34 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 17
35 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 21
of housing: War-favored industries needed new buildings; post-war years were a period of enormous bank-growth, which led to big investments in building; the economies crisis forced the government to build new warehouses and granaries and the surplus of resources among capitalists led to donations into cultural buildings. In addition to that development in towns, also the rural areas had a period of extensive building, since Finland arrived the peak of its agricultural development, which led to a demand for new homes for settlers and barns on large farms. But also new social environment, like schools, community halls and centres were needed. The new task was to develop a modern but still national architecture, using the best of the countries building traditions. However, it was already said that most of the young architects were Swedish-speaking and until 1870s Finnish architects were trained in Stockholm. So it seemed natural to them, to take influences from the other Nordic countries: The time around the First World War as a period of classical development in architecture of the Nordic countries, but it “was not isolated phenomenon, on the contrary, it was a digression which occurred generally at that time, and could be seen in many countries and in several arts.”

**Classicism**

Often “the years 1910 and 1930 have been set as the limits of the Classical period in architecture. These limits are, however, by no means clearly defined. The real breakthrough in Classicism was immediately before the First World War, and the climax was reached during the first half of the 20s. Already in 1925 the Esprit Nouveau was noticeable in the Nordic arena, and when the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition threw its doors open to the world of Functionalism, as far as the younger generation of architects was concerned the breaking up already took place a couple of years before. A fair number of architects were not, however, willing to embrace Functionalism, and the lingering reverberations of Classicism were still heard for a decade.”

In the book “Nordisk Klassicism – Nordic Classicism” Simo Paavilainen writes: It is often “said that Finland has no historical background of its own for the Classicism of the ’20s” But he argues that Finland has been part of Sweden for about 600 years and Sweden has ‘historical background of its own’ for Classicism. Apart from that Finland also has an own Empire Period: The first half of the 19th century, “with the German
architect Carl Ludvig Engel as its master and strongly influenced by the architecture of St. Petersburg.”

Furthermore it is by no means clearly defined which Classicism is meant, since there are two types of Classicism: The first one is based on the Classical Antiquity of Greece and Rome, which is used as a basis for design of building and principal for grouping facing materials, using Palladio and Letarowilly as models. The second one is a Classicism that is embodied in the basic shapes of the 1920s: “Design favoured complete geometrical shapes, axial symmetry, repeating elements of the same size, and proportions based on the golden section. This core is the foundation from which Modernism grew.”

Influences
At that time influences came from all over Europe to Finland, but especially from Italy, the other Nordic and the German-speaking countries. Study tours to Italy became more and more part of the new design and architecture education. The main interest of most architects in Italy was the “more ordinary, simple and abundantly varied architecture,” the so-called ‘architectura minore.’ It has also been obvious that the artists or architects, who had had the opportunity to see the classical cultural heritage, shared this experience with the fellow countrymen: “At the same time he [the artist or designer] felt a responsibility to the national and domestic cultural heritage” The big Italian influence is especially noticeable in the many church competitions taking place at that time: “Whereas other Nordic countries went back to their own rural church tradition, Finnish architects took their models from Italian towns. What they wanted was not nostalgic intimacy, but a Classicist cathedral – a high campanile next to the church.”

The interaction between the Nordic countries has also been very intensive during the 1920s. One reason for that are a lot of personal contacts between the architects, e.g. Alvar Aalto went over to Sweden to seek contact with the already famous Gunnar Asplund. But the biggest influences came from the Nordic masters Ragnar Östberg, Gunnar Asplund, Ivar Tengbom. Furthermore the ‘Nordic Building Day’ was introduced, which was a big recurrent conference including exhibitions. Another very obvious reason is that Finland has been neglected architecturally

44 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 79
45 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 7, 122
46 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 122
47 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 81
48 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 17
49 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 23
50 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 81
51 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 21
52 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 81
53 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 27
during Swedish rule, so the most representative examples of Finnish 18th
century architecture were in Sweden. In that sense it is naturally that stu-
dents of architecture took also study tours to Sweden and measurements
in Sweden became a part of the education of architects.\textsuperscript{54}
Another influence came to the Nordic countries from the German-speak-
ing culture. The Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne 1914 "bore
the impression of a classical language. It was a Modern Classicism."\textsuperscript{55}
These exhibition together with the Leipzig building exhibition 1913 "on
the eve of World War I, thus endorsed a development which had been
going on in Germany for a decade and which had already had a tangible
effect in the Nordic countries."\textsuperscript{56} According to Henrik O. Andersson, the
most influential architects from Germany are Henry van de Velde, Walter
Gropius, Bruno Taut, and Hermann Muthesius, so mostly artist working
at the Bauhaus during the 1920s.\textsuperscript{57}
Since it has already been mentioned, that the aim of the architects dur-
ing the 1920s was to develop a modern but still national architecture,
it is obvious that there must be a search for "the Finnishness" among
architects and designers. Source of inspiration were developments from
18th and 19th century: Engel's monumental buildings in Helsinki, the red
ochre farmhouses and industrial communities in Finnish rural areas as
well as the old modest urban tradition in Finland gained new attention."\textsuperscript{58}
As a contrast to the Art Nouveau reverence for the primeval forest, archi-
tects discovered the old Finnish agricultural landscape, which was closer
to the ideal Classical landscape as it had no trees. The pine of Art Nou-
veau was replaced by the fir-tree of Classicism."\textsuperscript{59}
Also the changes in education have already been mentioned: Since the
1870s Finland has had an own architects education, which reflected the
interest in national building cultures. In inventories and measured draw-
ings students provided knowledge about dimensions, proportions, de-
tails and the impact of materials used.\textsuperscript{60}

\textbf{General architecture development}

This new academic education provided students the technical skill to
form a correct column of any classical order: "But now they had attained
the freedom to create their own capital, and consequently the desire to
do so, and also the desire to develop its inherent qualities."\textsuperscript{61}
The ornamentation became lighter in the course of the 1920s. The final
stage of Classicism in Finland could be called a simplified variant of Cla-
sicism, the “eclectic use of ancient themes was very loose, even ironic.” According to Pallasmaa and Paaviainen the 1920s brought also back “a playfulness, a native candour as well as irony.”

During the 1920s Finland freed itself from the overall Swedish impact on Finnish architecture: The architects started to freely exploit the resource of experience that architectural traditions offered. They merged classical Italian architecture with national building tradition without “slavish regard for the correctness of art history”, to seek a modern or timeless synthesis.

It can already be seen, that different architects had different main interests: “Erik Bryggman studies houses built on slopes, Marti Välikangas combinations of building volumes, while Alvar Aalto dreamed of the atrium, the compluvium and the Neapolitan washing line, though he didn’t even get as far as Herculaneum during the 20s.” That shows that the 1920s haven’t been a unique period or a unique style of architecture, but there were a lot of common ideals mentioned above designers shared.

**Development of urban planning**

The first decade of independence was a time of rapid urban development. The ‘garden city’-ideas of Ebenezer Howard were strongly reflected in Finland. Town was now seen as a total work of art. New forms in design in the spirit of Classicism evolved.

Architect dreams of straight, majestic boulevards and streets lined with multi-storey buildings of even height and even talked about skyscrapers in Helsinki. These ideas reflected European and American precedents of metropolis concepts and clearly influenced Eliel Saarinen’s Mukkiniemi-Haaga plan. This “paragon of unified townscapes” was best realized in residential areas built during the 1920s: By combining the yards of all buildings of a block, new common areas and sheltered gardens were introduced. This model was adopted from Copenhagen and Gothenburg.

Helsinki’s town planning architects Bertel Jung and his successor Birger Brunila “implemented numerous smaller planning projects, modern solutions for traffic problems and residential areas.” “Cooperative and municipal housing construction became an important ingredient in city development, which among other things meant that building had to be undertaken on another scale and that overall planning was necessary.”

A new aim was introduced: From now on formal organization in towns was achieved on large and small scale. Variations between a homogenous

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62 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 122
63 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 7
64 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 28
65 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 81
66 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 27
67 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
68 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
69 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
70 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 27
whole and a tendency to add monumentality to common buildings can also be seen in Finnish town planning of the 1920s.  

Schools
In 1921 a new law on compulsory schooling was introduced, which led to large-scale building projects all over the country: An average of 150 new schools per year was built. Standard designs were developed for this building task, in order to ensure architectural quality. However, the greatest need for new schools was in rural areas, where the “Classical wooden buildings became elegant monuments to national education.” The finest schools were designed by Gunnar Taucher during the time when he has been Helsinki’s City architect: The primary school in Käpylä (1929), Väänilä’s Swedish-speaking elementary school (1932) and the Aleksis Kivi school (1934).

Käpylä
The aim in developing Käpylä was to built inexpensive wooden housing to serve the post-war housing shortage. Nowadays the wooden district of Käpylä, built between 1920 and 1925, along with the granite Parliament House is seen as principal monument of Finnish Classicism. The plan for the area was made by Helsinki’s city architect Birger Brunila and Ottolivari Meurman. Instead of trying to solve the housing problem Martti Välikangas, who was chosen as the architect in the age of 26 to design all 165 buildings of Käpylä, “designed a garden town full of surprises and ideas in the architecture and townscaping.” He “combined the best qualities of the period: an interest in the modest way of life, simple materials and Classical architecture.”

The development of Käpylä was initialized the local authority of Helsinki City and the whole process of designing and building up Käpylä was mostly supported by local authorities, who aimed at relieving the chronic shortage of housing. The ideals came clearly from the English ‘garden city’ ideology of Ebenezer Howard, but were combined with the Finnish tradition of building in wood. Basic inspiration comes clearly from Finnish farmhouses and red ochre industrial communities, but also the Italian influence is shown. Squares and yards of various shapes opened up the basic grid plan. There is even a social mix guaranteed by placing single-family houses and apartment buildings next to each other in the area. By designing very simple and structurally rational houses with fine and unusual proportions, Vä-

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71 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 27
72 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 122
73 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 124
74 Nikula 2005: 132
75 Nikula 2005: 132
76 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 83
77 Nikula 2005: 132
78 Nikula 2005: 132
likangas designed Käpylä not as a simple worker’s house district, but introduced a special touch in the whole area (Figure 10). The houses are ornamented with garlands and plinths of different shapes, temple gables and rotundas. Furthermore plank fences and arcades connect buildings (Figure 11).

During the 1920s Puu-Käpylä caused numerous of discussions: "everybody, the authorities and ‘the general public’ alike, concurred in thinking the buildings ugly’. The gently pitched roofs, plank fences and powerful earth colors were ‘too new to be accepted’.79 Even during the 1960s there were attempts to demolish wooden Käpylä to build up a denser city structure. Thanks to preservationists this attempt became not reality.80 Today the area is enormously popular and perceived quite differently from the 1920s: “With an apposite sense of proportion, refined ornamentation and powerful colours, Välikangas transformed these simple wooden houses into a uniquely charming milieu.”81

Figure 10: Street view in Käpylä

79 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 85
80 Nikula 2005: 132
81 Nikula 2005: 132
Vällilä
The town district of Vällilä, which is a bit closer to the city centre than Käpylä, was planned at the same time. It was also planned by the public planning authorities but in a completely different way: narrow buildings are arranged into the most consistently Classical suburb in Finland.\(^8\)

Here it was possible for the first time to lay out communal gardens: The first combined central yard for a square block of dwellings was designed by Armas Lindgren and Bertel Liljequist from 1917 to 1929.\(^8\)

Marrti Välilängas also designed some of the most beautiful buildings in Vällilä, those of Hauho and Sture housing companies, which had a moderate ornamentation setting off “the rhythmic nature of their architecture to perfection.”\(^8\)

Under the direction of City architect Gunnar Taucher, Mäkelankatu was transformed into a grand thoroughfare through Vällilä, which today clearly marks the line between older and newer parts of the city districts. The three city-owned blocks of rented apartments at Mäkelankatu 37-43 were completed in 1926.\(^8\)

**Eduskuntatalo**

“Built as a monument to Finnish independence and democracy, Parliament House is a complete work of art in which architecture, industrial design, workmanship and art form a harmonious whole.”\(^8\) The former quite does already point out the importance of the building: The Eduskuntatalo (Parliament Building) designed by J.S. Sirén is the most important public building following the independence. Three architectural competitions were held, numerous locations considered and construction problems overcome before ultimately building today’s Eduskuntatalo. Johan Sigrid Sirén’s competition entry 1924

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82 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
83 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
84 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
85 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 126
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Eduskuntatalo marks the climax of the Johan Sigfrid Sirén’s career and represents the ultimate ‘total work of art’ in Finnish Classicism.\(^8^7\) The architecture can be seen as a mixture of Danish, Swedish, Classical Roman and Egyptian style, but the material, a reddish Kalvola granite, is entirely Finnish.\(^8^8\)

The building itself is cubic granite edifice, giving a mighty and ponderous impression (Figure 12). The greatest change made after the competition entry is the façade: fourteen columns with Corinthian capitals, entirely made out of reddish Kalvola granite, line it.\(^8^9\)

The circular chamber in the core of the building dominates the layout. The other rooms are arranged in a hierarcilar circle around the chamber. The chamber itself was ment to be the heart of the nation: On the basic level are the seats for the people’s representatives. The speaker sat at the highest place, the government at an intermediate level. Public galleries are divided from the chamber by columns. The iconography of the cham

“...“The task of equipping it created a new profession in Finland – the interior architects.”\(^9^0\) The rich use of marble, stuccowork and hardwoods in the interiors point out the hierarchical order of the rooms.\(^9^2\)

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87 Nikula 2005: 122
89 Nikula 2005: 122
90 Nikula 2005: 122
92 Nikula 2005: 122
Töölö and Taidehalli

As a last example of variety of Finnish architecture during the 1920s, the following part will very shortly introduce another building type: South Töölö’s public art hall (Taidehalli) (Figure 13).

The final plan for South Töölö approved in 1917 in a form, by Helsinki’s City architect Jung. Most building took place in the late 1920s. In comparison to Vällilä in South Töölö it was not possible to combine the yards, although Jung tried hard. The architecture is marked by redbrick apartment buildings, which were administered by housing companies. The regular façades do not give any indication if a window is part of a single-room apartment or a luxury suite of five or six rooms.  

In the beginning Jarl Ekelund started to design Töölö’s new Taidehalli, but the principal architect was Hilding Ekelund. The outline of the art hall is based on the tension between symmetry and asymmetry, but overall it has a light and modest concept. Nevertheless the Art Hall gained a lot of public attention. The façades of the building were seen as a blot in the street and it was discussed, if artists or architects should be allowed to “disfigure the facades of the town’s public buildings” in that way.

Perception of Classicism

In summary it can be said, that Classicism in Finland during the 1920s has had different faces: the romantic, playful face of Puu Käpylä as well as the monumental face of Eduskuntatalo. It has also been shown that new ways of organizing towns and life have gained attention during the 1920s in Finland. Therefore the statement “pre-Modern Classicism of the North has been thought of as a mere interlude between two serious acts in architecture, Art Nouveau and Functionalism” has to be negotiated in my point of view. The Classicism of the 1920s in Finland do have
their historical foundations, their ideals and their principles expressed in architectural features as well as in discussions about townscape and city development. So I want to end this part with the following quotation, which in my opinion summarizes in a different but still convincing way the development of the 1920s:

“It [The Classicism] constituted a type of aesthetic democratization when homes of the ware-earners and the nouveau riche were dressed alike in classical, refined simplicity.”

97 Finlands arkitekturmuseum 1982: 23
Tapiola garden city - a 1950s model suburb

“Tapiola has become a collection of the leading achievements of four decades of Finnish town planning and architecture. It is also the country’s most significant housing area representing modern architecture under official protection measures.” Mariliina Perkko

The garden city of Tapiola is situated 8 km in west of Helsinki city centre. The main parts of Tapiola were completed in the 1950s and 1960s as a joint project of many architects and other professionals. The development of the garden city Tapiola, today part of the City of Espoo, can be divided into five main parts (see also Figure 14):

- Eastern part, started in 1953
- Western part, completed in the early 1960s
- Northern part, built mainly in the 1960s
- The centre, developed under varying principles since the 1950s
- The Southern area

Background: The 1940s in Finland

All over the world World War II dropped down housing production due to a lack of financing and shortages of materials. In Finland was the additional challenge that Karelian settlers from the areas ceded to Soviet Union, had to be resettled in Finland in post-war times and due to that fact the housing shortage was particularly hard. The task was to provide fast low-cost housing in large numbers. Already in 1942 the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA) established a ‘Reconstruction Bureau’ headed by Viljo Revell and divided into two main parts: the standardization unit and the planning service. In the early post-war years most of the new built buildings had already been designed and developed in the mid 1930s. The material shortage and the urgent need for housing forced architecture to adopt simple and unadorned means. Hilding Ekelund pointed out already in 1940: “We must avoid any unnecessary and costly luxury, and pay more attention to increased floor area and number
of rooms in apartments, instead of aiming at elegance and unnecessary ‘comforts’. This also applies to the exterior of buildings: we must ban empty ornament; simple, distinct facades are always the best settings for the apartments of clear-thinking, modern people. Decoration must be left to nature: freely growing trees, climbing plants, lawns, rocks and flowers are the most beautiful ornaments.”

**Housing Reform Competition and changes in law**

In 1952 Väesöötittö, the Finnish Population and Family Welfare Federation, declared a competition to develop new concepts in housing design and production, which aimed at new solutions for speedier and less costly construction. The competition consisted of four series: architectural and social policies, town planning, constructional and technical planning, and building parts, elements and details. One of the starting points for

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100 Espoo City Museum 1992: 8f.
the competition, taking place at a part of the Haaga suburb of Helsinki, was the concept of regional construction. Another main goal was to find low-cost technical solutions. They might even last for a shorter use-life of buildings, but since there was this urgent need for new housing this was not seen at a problem at that time.

The competition entries showed, that most of the architects proposed larger building units than before in order to meet the requirement of low-cost. The competition jury regarded high-rises and long, low strip-like buildings as a good opportunity, even though they saw the possible social and psychological disadvantages of large scale buildings projects. In evaluating the building types the jury kept to standard concepts: low apartment or row houses were regarded as suitable for families, singles and childless couples should live in highly centralized buildings. Even though the more advanced technical solutions were not used for many years to come the results of this competition were of importance for the development of Tapiola.

In 1953, when the work in Tapiola began, a new housing construction legislation was introduced in Finland: the maximum apartment size in multi story buildings was reduced to 87 m². A minimum size of apartments was completely deleted from the law. That led to a kind of renaissance of designing flats for the existence minimum, which was of course also criticized.

**THA PLANNING OF TAPIOLA**

When Heikki von Hertzen became the director of Väesöötiitto in 1943, he immediately started to strive for influence in the official family policies to help people establish homes and to raise families. After a study tour to South Sweden (Malmo’s “Friluftstad”) and the socially oriented housing schemes in Finland in 1945 von Hertzen published a book “Koti vaikko kasarni lasilemme” (Homes or Baracks For Our Children?) which had particular influence in the planning of the garden city of Tapiola: Von Hertzen, assisted by Otto-I. Meurman who had had crucial influence on von Hertzen’s concepts, compares the disadvantages of living in city blocks with the alternative of low-rise buildings in natural surroundings. “Von Hertzen’s solution for future urban construction was the principle of residential units designed and built in a single process.”

The ideal was to live in a detached house on ground level. The second-best alternatives were terraced and row houses. Apartment houses should not exceed four storeys.
Housing Foundation and first plan for Hagalund Area

Already in 1945 professor Otto-I. Meurman prepared a plan for the area of Hagalund. The plan was approved by the Uusimaa County authorities in February 1947 and later acquired by the Housing Foundation. It included housing for over 12,000 inhabitants, half in apartment and half in detached, row or terraced houses.\(^{108}\)

In summer 1951 Väesöötiitto purchased the lands of Hagalund. In the same year the Housing Foundation established. Only due to von Hertzen’s organizational skills Väesöötiitto acquired support among different sectors of society to begin the expensive project.\(^{109}\) At that time it was still expected that Hagalund would soon become part of the municipality of Helsinki city. This led to the situation that Helsinki City was represented in the Board of the Housing Foundation and it was agreed to adapt Helsinki standards to all technical solutions. The very early plans included also reservations for a rapid-transit tramline from Munkkiniemi in Helsinki to Hagalund.\(^{110}\)

In 1951 a committee, consisting of Meurman as a chairman and the three architects Yrjö Laine, Esko Suhonen and Ragnar Ypyä, was established to review and develop Meurman’s original plan.\(^{111}\) Due to technical and other reasons, they proposed that the planning should begin in the Eastern part of Tapiola. There were some other key features that were supposed by the committee: yards as desirable features adding comforts for the inhabitants, residential streets to limit traffic and existing roads, built in World War I for artillery transport, should be used as foundations of streets. The architects who are to be responsible for the respective parts of the area were required to participate in reviewing Meurman’s plan. The Housing Foundation should ensure the uniformity of various areas, but also avoid conformity by partly mixed use of different buildings and lot types.\(^{112}\)

At that status the Housing Foundation proposed a joint development scheme of Hagalund and Otaniemi area. This should permit construction in smaller areas within a larger entity. According to the proposal, this would permit a more profitable rationalization of construction work, industrial prefabrication of building parts, and the serial construction of buildings. These were to remain proposals.\(^{113}\)

Markus Tavio was commissioned to prepare a uniform utility-area plan for the first stage of building.

First building stage: The Eastern entity

In spring 1952 the architects Aarne Ervi, Viljo Revell, Aulis Blomstedt and Markus Tavio started working together with the building committee

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108 Espoo City Museum 1992: 22
109 Espoo City Museum 1992: 22
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111 Espoo City Museum 1992: 23
112 Espoo City Museum 1992: 24
113 Espoo City Museum 1992: 24
in dividing the area of the first stage into suitable parts and to prepare initial plans for approval.\textsuperscript{114} In May 1952 a discussion about housing policy issues and possible experiments in construction took place.\textsuperscript{115} Aarne Ervi forced the discussion about construction experiments and stressed “the number of rooms is less important than the number of beds. It is also possible to produce ready-made kitchen and bathroom units to be placed in the apartments.” Thus he introduced the idea of flexible design based on ready-made parts. The Housing Foundation rejected this idea, because they wanted to begin working in small scales. Planners had to confront with the realism of the 1950s.\textsuperscript{116} Also the construction engineer Viljo Suvanto stressed that it is impossible to adopt all advantages of rationalization and prefabrication in the first stage. He suggested to draw up two plans of action: One for the duration of one year and an ‘ideal plan’, that could be executed when sufficient funding had been arranged.\textsuperscript{117} Ervi, Revell, Ravio, Blomstedt and Meurman started preparing the draft plan for the residential area of Tapiola, focusing on the first stage of construction. “In connection with the long-term plan the experts pointed out that ‘all possible means of rationalization and construction in smaller areas’ where to be used. This programme would be drawn up ‘unhurriedly’ while the immediate plan was being put into practice.”\textsuperscript{118}

**Changes in Scale of Construction**

In June 1952 Viljo Revell presented a draft plan prepared by the four commissioned architects: Jorviksentie-Leppävaara road was to be the main route of access. The immediate surroundings of the main road were left unbuilt. Koivukumpu area was left unbuilt with five 4-storey buildings on the north and a group of single-storey row houses on the east. Three 8-storey high-rise buildings built the east slope of the hill to the south.

\textsuperscript{114} Espoo City Museum 1992: 24
\textsuperscript{115} Espoo City Museum 1992: 26
\textsuperscript{116} Espoo City Museum 1992: 26
\textsuperscript{117} Espoo City Museum 1992: 26f.
\textsuperscript{118} Espoo City Museum 1992: 27
Southwest of these the plan included groups of four 2-storey row houses with a commercial centre in the northeast.119 “The objective was to create a Le Corbusier-type townscape in a Finnish setting: most of the buildings were to remain below tree-level, being set off by high-rise towers clearly standing out in their surroundings.”

Following the presentation a lot of discussions took place. Meurman was not satisfied with the changes, von Hertzen pointed out that the large apartment buildings would have an undesirable sociologically effect.120 In the end some changes were made but the issue of single-family houses was left open. “This issue again revealed the generation gap among the architects and their way of thinking.”121 Additionally Revell proposed that the initial experimental area should be as large as possible and the commissioned architects stressed that prefabricated technology must be the basis of all planning and design.122 However, the plan for Eastern part of Hagalund was not yet ready: In July 1952 Meurman presented three alternatives for the plan of the first construction stage. Finally, Aulis Blomstedt suggested dividing the area of the first construction stage among the four architects. Each of them should design his own area under the direction and coordination of Meurman.123 So in November 1952 the plan of action was introduced. The final locations of streets and buildings were not yet laid down and every stakeholder had to review the plan ones more.124 In December 1952 also a group of home-economic experts reviewed the plan from their perspective. However, reviewing and checking the plans in several stages was especially characteristic of the early phase of the planning of Tapiola.125

In early 1953 Meurman was satisfied with the networks of roads and streets, the final sites of the buildings were already approved in December 1952 and the final version of the plan was prepared.126 Now discussions about the heating system were ready to take place. “Von Hertzen pointed out that if the heating system should prove to be unsuccessful, ‘the whole garden city concept would be criticized, even though it has nothing to do with such issues.’”127 District- and prefabricated element systems were studied in Sweden and von Hertzen found out that prefabrication was rarely used for apartment buildings all over the world at that time.128

In early 1953 the initial programme of the first stage was reduced in

119 Espoo City Museum 1992: 28
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125 Espoo City Museum 1992: 31
126 Espoo City Museum 1992: 32
127 Espoo City Museum 1992: 32
128 Espoo City Museum 1992: 32
scope in order to make it correspond to planned funding of 350 million marks from state housing authorities. Building lots were left relatively small, but large surrounding park areas compensated that.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 33} While the planning architects presented proposals concerning construction methods, the Housing Foundation pointed out that prefabrication will only be used were it reduces costs. The Housing Foundation also set the start date for the beginning of building work to June 1953. The planning of prefabricated construction would have required more time.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 34}

Aarne Ervi drafted a proposal of planning task for landscaping in Tapiola. In May 1953 the architect Niilo Orento was hired to take charge of landscaping and garden design of the first stage.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 34}

The foundation stone of the first-stage of eastern part of present-day Tapiola was laid on 5 September 1953.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 35}

**Changing the name: Hagalund becomes Tapiola**

A competition for a Finnish name of Hagalund was held in autumn 1953. The name “Tapiola” was chosen: Tapio refers to the mythic of the Finnish God of the Woods and ‘hopea’ means silver.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 35}

While the first construction stage was built, the second stage was already under planning. Meurman and Inkeri Siltavuori made extensive alterations to the plan in December 1953. Still the proposed tramline from Munkkinemi was included in all the plans.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 36} The rocky terrain placed high cost on municipal engineering. This made it necessary to place apartment buildings in new areas. The final plan included three buildings of 7-8-storeys. Probably due to the many changes from his original plan Meurman resigned from the Board of Governors of the Housing Foundation in spring 1954.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 36} The remainder of Meurman’s term was Martti Välikangas.

The changing of Tapiola from the original concept with detached houses into an area with apartment buildings and high-rises can partly been explained with new official regulations but also the role of younger architects, who approved of tall buildings. In that sense the generation gap between two generations of architects can be seen in the planning process of Tapiola.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 36}

In 1953 an ‘apartment construction committee’ was established to discuss details and issues of the construction plans.\footnote{Espoo City Museum 1992: 36}

First results on the economic aspects of building methods used in the first stage showed no real benefit of prefabrication. To keep the stage-
by-stage construction of Tapiola in the public eye Revell suggested introducing housing exhibitions. The first one was held in spring 1954. This instrument was used until the end of the construction of Tapiola and has been reviewed as proofed successful. In 1955 traffic and communication plans concerning Tapiola were studied. At the same time Aarne Ervi designed a general plan for main traffic requirements: a main Road should pass Tapiola in the east, instead of crossing through and around Otsolahti a ‘tourist road’ should be introduced. As a result “Tapiola remained almost completely without routes for local traffic.”

The Western Entity
The western part of Tapiola is clearly divided by a pedestrian way leading to a hill west of the commercial centre into two separated groups of housing units. The model of collaboration between many architects in the planning process was maintained from the first building stage, since it worked out fine. This building stage more closely reflects its period of economic restrictions than the previous one. It has been perceived that the first building stage varied between the extremes of extravagant and extremely small apartments, but the western residential park was seen as a suitable compromise between both. It “has non of the row houses that led to so much discussions and enthusiasm.” The apartments and housing units were completely on a single level and also the detached houses had no cellars. It has been shown in the previous stage that the objective of low-cost building can be best fulfilled with traditional building techniques. This does not mean that no further experiments took place in Tapiola.

138 Espoo City Museum 1992: 39
139 Espoo City Museum 1992: 39
140 Espoo City Museum 1992: 41
141 Espoo City Museum 1992: 40
142 Espoo City Museum 1992: 41
From now on the Housing Foundation stressed the importance of experiments even when their success is uncertain. In 1955 a lot was reserved for experimental building with glued brick elements. These elements caused some difficulties concerning durability because of new materials. Further experiments with brick elements took place at the Technical Research Centre. The Housing foundation also commissioned some studies regarding technical and economical aspects of the first building stage. The aim was to explore the differences in cost and profitability between prefabricated constructions and other methods. The studies showed that element construction was not yet economically viable, but it inspired to new collaborations in developing simpler concrete structures and lighter elements. Another study was to find out about the economic aspect of cellar-less detached houses and showed that it was not cheaper to built without cellars since the ground of the sites has been very difficult to deal with. Common to all these studies was their aim: to develop more and more economical building methods.

The Northern entity
The planning competition for the Northern part of Tapiola took place already in 1958. The specific objective for the competition entries by Pentti Ahola, Aarne Ervi and Olli Kivinen was to develop low buildings. Part of the area was reserved for sports, cycling and other residential activities. The first price was won by Pentti Ahola, “who pointed out that the most useful alternative was still the guiding principle of the planning of Tapiola, alternating low and high buildings, providing smaller houses with the same benefits of municipal engineering as the apartment buildings, and leading to interaction between different social groups.” Ahola mixed up small houses, 2- or 3-storey lamellar houses, point blocks and a few 7-storey high-rise buildings. The plan strongly stressed the contrast of built areas with the natural surroundings and also provided opportunities for experimental construction. The World War I artillery roads were used as part of the outdoor routes. The actual streets were laid in straight lines. The Northern area shows in that sense the different approaches on urban design between the two generations of architects in a new way: Whereas the Eastern and Western parts of Tapiola have a more “natural” layout, Northern Tapiola makes a clear cut using mathematical methods. Already Heikki von Hertzen pointed out: “The result was interesting insofar as younger architects had some time criticized the earlier plans as too ‘romantic’. We now decided to let unromantic men show what they could come up with. Diversity among areas is of course

143 Espoo City Museum 1992: 42
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146 Espoo City Museum 1992: 44
147 Espoo City Museum 1992: 44
an excellent thing.”  

The Centre of Tapiola
The competition for the Centre of Tapiola took place in 1953-1954. The purpose was to find an “architectural plan for an administrative, cultural and commercial centre and for the individual buildings and volumes that would take into account the requirements of the site and terrain.” For the commercial centre also the construction of shops in stages had to be taken into account. Winner of the competition was Aarne Ervi, who has been assisted by Olli Kuusi and Tapani Nironen. They titled their project “Don Herzenin kylä” (Don Hertzen’s Village). The buildings for administrative, cultural and business purposes are grouped around open spaces of different type. This was regarded as a main characteristic of a garden city. Kirmo Mikkola calls Ervi’s entry for the centre of Tapiola a “modern agora”: It follows Le Corbusier’s principles in his reconstruction plans for St. Die.

The idea of building commercial centres outside the city centres is a subject of general interest in Finland in the years following the competition. It was even assumed that the commercial centre in Tapiola would decrease the appeal of Helsinki Centre and draw shoppers from other Helsinki suburbs to Tapiola. To still this fears Ervi pointed out that the commercial premises in Tapiola would only be built according to the actual needs.

It lasted until the 1960s when the actual plans of Tapiola centre where ready, many of the buildings stayed at draft stage for many years. In the 1960s the municipal planning authorities of Espoo decided that Tapiola should become a leading regional centre in the city of Espoo. That’s why they commissioned Erkki Juutilainen, Kirmo Mikkola, Erkki Kairamo and Juhanni Pallasmaa to develop a plan for a regional centre of South-East-Espoo. This plan was published in 1967 and suggests housing lots next to the commercial centre. Since Tapiola was built according to garden city principles introducing a large-scale grid plan led to heated reactions. The architects explained their proposal as the following: “The starting point in terms of townscape is to preserve the architectural values of Tapiola by creating a centre where the new parts can be built in the forms of their own time so that the various periods can be seen in the overall structure.”

At a first stage the centre should be extended to south by building 3- or 4-storey commercial edifices. Also a number of housing units in the actual centre were suggested. The proposed glass-roofed public areas where

148 Espoo City Museum 1992: 44
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150 Espoo City Museum 1992: 46
151 Espoo City Museum 1992: 50
152 Espoo City Museum 1992: 50
153 Espoo City Museum 1992: 53
later developed into the main north-south pedestrian road.\textsuperscript{154} Only in autumn 1970 Penttilä presented a draft model for the volume of building in the centre and later a separate committee for developing the centre of Tapiola started working.\textsuperscript{155} Penttilä’s draft plan was completed in 1972 and officially approved in 1974. A supervisory body established in 1975 to coordinate the planning and building in Tapiola centre. In the early stages Reima Pietilä and Heikki Siren worked here as invited experts. The body discussed the plans in great detail and aimed to accommodate the new architecture for the centre into the whole garden city of Tapiola. Reima Pietilä pointed out that the new centre “was to be suited to the spirit of Tapiola” and not to become a city of the future.\textsuperscript{156} Due to conflicting views of many involved experts the planning of Tapiola centre was a long process. It was the aim of all stakeholders to include large business buildings and tall apartment buildings into the new compact whole of Tapiola and “as a result, not much was to remain of Timo Penttilä’s admirable plan.”\textsuperscript{157}

What makes the planning of the garden city of Tapiola so interesting is that the process itself seems well documented. Although lots of great ideas were left to be proposals or dreams of architects, planners or other stakeholders, Tapiola has become a unique character as a Finnish adaptation of Ebenezer Howard’s garden city-concept. Reading for this essay made me think about planning processes in a new and more complex way. Although in my opinion Tapiola is a great place to live, and nowadays popularity among people shows the same, the project is still unfinished. Tapiola is a developing project that is still built by all the stakeholders. What I feel very special about the process of planning Tapiola is that it really had to deal with a lot of pressures from outside (just to mention the economical aspect and the pressure of the housing shortage in the 1950s). In a great and special way it can be seen that lots of stakeholders are on the one hand hard to satisfy (long discussions happened in Tapiola especially during the first stage of construction), but on the other hand this example shows that many stakeholders of different background, experiences and ideas, can work together, even for a very long time, to lead to the best possible result. For me that is the essence of what one can learn about planning processes in architecture, urban planning or even any design process in general.

\textsuperscript{154}\textsuperscript{155}\textsuperscript{156}\textsuperscript{157} Espoo City Museum 1992: 53
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\textsuperscript{157} Espoo City Museum 1992: 55
“I think in my native language Finnish. I talk whilst I draw – the rhythm and intonation of Finnish govern the movements of my pencil. Do I draw in Finnish? My language rhythm influences my drawing shapes, phrases my lines, outlines my surfaces. The local cases and regionalistic vocabulary of the Finnish language are the elements of my genuine way to express topological architecture and space.”

Reima Pietilä

Reima Pietilä is after Alvar Aalto and Eliel Saarinen one of the central figures in Finnish architecture and its profession. In many judgments his unique approach to design and architecture is emphasized. Markku Komonen says, “Language images and image language are bound together when Pietilä sketches the first ideas of a particular design.” Komonen points also out that Pietilä deals with the important questions of design “as much through theory and practice as he does through word and image.”

To understand his architecture and get a wider view on it, the following part concentrates on Reima Pietilä’s approach on design and architecture, how he himself has described it in 1985, whereas the second part of this essay describes some of his most important projects.

Creativity

In Pietilä’s opinion creativity has been one of the most used cultural terms nowadays, so that it has become an empty phrase. These artists or designers are considered to find the ‘universal truth’. “He is an artist-prince of the late Renaissance and Baroque eras.”
avoids to use the word ‘create’, in his opinion architects do not ‘create’, they ‘sketch’, ‘design’ or simply ‘draw a line’.\textsuperscript{162}

**Design process**
Furthermore Pietilä points out that visuality, functionality and communicativeness are main qualities of design. During the design process they are combined into the same entity. He emphasizes that this three characteristics “cannot be isolated or added together with simple arithmetics.”\textsuperscript{163}

**What is genius loci?**
Another concept strongly related to all of his works is the idea of ‘genius loci’. Pietilä points out that he sees ‘genius loci’ in "a geographical place, which in relation to its surroundings has its own particular individual atmosphere, which differs sufficiently from the surrounding landscape."\textsuperscript{164}

**About form and structure in design**
Many architects see structure as an ordering factor in their profession. Pietilä disagrees in this point completely. For him “neither form, nor space, nor structure can be the starting point” if a designer aims at a culturally oriented holistic design.\textsuperscript{165}

**His approach on architecture**

**What is architecture?**
Pietilä calls architecture a special type of spatial art, producing a volumetric mega sculpture, which is experienced by moving around within it.\textsuperscript{166} For him creating architecture is a multi-media process, consisting of verbal, visual and spatial parts: verbal programming, visual sketching, spatialization with the help of a scale model. Furthermore it involves materialization by building. All these parts are needed to explain architectural forms, pictures as well as words. None of them alone “is enough to make architecture as a phenomenon sufficiently comprehensible.”\textsuperscript{167}

**His opinions about architecture as a language**
“It [Architecture] begins to speak in the language of a synthesis of contextual meanings. But before built architecture can speak for itself, one must speak and communicate on its behalf by using a meta-language of design.”\textsuperscript{168}

“An architect who elaborates on the quality and particularly the artistic nature of his architecture soon becomes abstruse, becoming entangled
in words. His difficulty being that many important ideas are visual already when they are born, and have developed into specific form through drawing, in other words by non-verbal means. The speaker is compelled to interpret the architectural object-idea indirectly with words. That is no small problem!”\textsuperscript{169}

Wittgenstein argues, that "What can be said, can be said precisely; about that which we cannot say, we are silent." Pietilä points out that this is an ideal for many architects, but he totally disagrees. He thinks, that not every step of a design process can immediately be described by words.\textsuperscript{170} But still he says, “it has to be possible to talk about an idea even before it has assumed a distinct form.”\textsuperscript{171}

“I imagine that the verbal and the non-verbal are at the polarities of the message-communicative form axis. My interest centres around the middle part of this axis. There I imagine to find my ideas and sketches; the outlined language of form.”\textsuperscript{172}

\textbf{Nature and architecture}

“Nature-architecture is a concept of multiple ideas still unknown in our language. I myself use it now for the first time to signify the way in which nature and architecture interact as elements of genius loci. The peaceful and even mutually beneficial coexistence of nature and architecture is a state of existence, is genius loci approach.”\textsuperscript{173}

“When nature ‘continues in architecture’ it means that natural forms, or more correctly; their morphology, the metamorphoses caused by natural forces, etc. are incorporated into our architectural idiom, parallel to Euclidean form language, or even as a replacement for it.”\textsuperscript{174}

\textbf{Who influenced Pietilä?}

Natural influences Pietilä received from the “pioneers of modernism”: Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Aulis Blomstedt. Alvar Aalto’s competition design for Säynätsalo Municipal Centre and his Ota- niemi University Campus project made the idea of the regionalist functionalism clear to Pietilä. Frank Lloyd Wright’s autobiography opened his eyes for architectural philosophy and had the most formative influence, but Aulis Blomstedt inspired to develop an architectural philosophy of his own. Frank Lloyd Wright was also important in that sense that his “Usonian Anti-city” and the conception of a peaceful synergy of human culture and nature, motivated Pietilä to develop own city ideas.\textsuperscript{175}
Suvikumpu
Suvikumpu is one of the residential neighborhoods south and west of Tapiola Centre in Espoo. The competition took place in 1962 and was won by Reima Pietilä with an entry emphasizing the relationship between architecture, town plan and the surrounding forest (Figure 17). Today’s complex is the result of two concentrated building periods between 1962 to 1969 and 1979 to 1983. But although building in Suvikumpu took place for about 20 years, the original site and building strategies were constantly followed. Naturally building techniques developed during the time and the latest techniques were used in building the single sections.

The background was laid when building the series of fortified positions for World War II on the small, rocky hill in the wooded landscape of today’s Suvikumpu. Pietilä suggested a group of L-shaped buildings. A first group was thought to frame the hill along the north side and a second group extending perpendicular to the hill in the south. A third group of communal spaces was to mark the intersection of the first two groups on the west. The architectural magazine ‘Arkkitehti’ described the plan in 1970: “Landscape architecture and town plan: the main theme is the form of the central hill, which is repeated in the vertical and horizontal masses of the buildings.”

Pietilä himself describes that the rectangular block rise higher in the higher parts and lower in the lower parts. They repeat and are what he calls “isomorphs of the terrain”.

The original design for Suvikumpu included housing for about 500 people, but apartments for only about 300 were actually built in the first phase of construction, between 1964 and 1969. The second phase between 1981 and 1982 included 32 new residences. A small shopping centre, a flower shop and several other apartments were built during the last

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176 Suomen rakennustaitteiden museo: 52
177 Suomen rakennustaitteiden museo: 16
phase in 1983.

The first group of three buildings forms a stepping L-shape on the north-west corner of the site. On the first sight the complex seem to be continuous row, but it consists of three different buildings, which step from 9 floors height in the east to 3 floors at the south end. The plan for this section is at the same time “repetitive and modular” and “individualized and chaotic”.

These first buildings were built in situ-concrete with other exterior surfaces of wood and plaster. The concrete is painted in green to form a link with nature, earth and forest. Even more important was it for Pietilä that “it contains three different shades of green to correspond with the birch, the spruce and the pine.” The reason for that design choice can be clearly related to the concept of the Suvikumpu: The border between nature and building should be eliminated as much as possible; “The colours and light of the surrounding forest landscape continue in to the architecture. Suvikumpu is ‘naturalistic architecture’. It stimulates nature.” The concrete shuttering of horizontal boards of various width and height, used at balconies and other parts of the buildings, results in a rhythmical, freely, irregular, one could even say ’naturalized’ surface. Completely in contrast to that are the rectangular surfaces from ordinary white plaster (Figure 18). They open up a Finnish variation from the early 1920s atmosphere. In addition to that the surface areas at the façades are freely broken up at eaves level to ensure the maximum unity of building and surrounding forest.

The second group of two connected stepping buildings was built in 1981-1982. This group extends south past the western flank of the rock. These two- to four-storey buildings were completely made of pre-cast concrete panels. The same patterns of horizontal siding was used but made as pre-cast concrete. This, the absence of plaster walls and more extensive use of siding led to another surface quality of the later buildings. The final stage of Suvikumpu complex was the construction of a small shopping centre. Unlike the competition entry, where the common spaces were integrated into the whole layout, this last building was built separate and already on the plan it is felt as a disconnected element.

It is often said, that the design of Suvikumpu stands out as quintessential in Pietilä’s work. It demonstrates his ideas about modernism and the influence of a natural landscape on building form and quality, which have already been mentioned above. Furthermore “the modernist imagery of

178   Http2
179   Suomen rakennustaitteen museo: 11
180   Suomen rakennustaitteen museo: 12
181   Suomen rakennustaitteen museo: 11
182   Suomen rakennustaitteen museo: 52
white stucco, pre-cast concrete panels, De Stijl scholarship and references to Nordic vernacular traditions are equally obvious.” The general disposition in the forest refers to rural farm buildings, which are normally located to retain a close relationship with natural landscape.

The described repetitive element, which could be described as the combination of a modular building concept, and the reference to Nordic landscape, the free formed elements, is the crucial point in all of Pietilä’s works. He himself describes it as the following: “Sunken deep in winter snow, the elevations in white interplay with the snow on the trees and on the ground. These white surfaces do not belong to any formal architectural entity of the building but are options for a self composition along with the environment.”

Dipoli
Similar themes as in Suvikumpu can be seen in the design of Dipoli, the Students’ Centre in Espoo, which took place already from 1961 to 1966. The title for the competition entry made in 1961 was: The caveman’s Wedding March.

Although the Dipoli building cannot be spotted as a whole from any perspective and on the first sight it seems like a haphazard agglomerate, it doesn’t represent the anarchy of destruction, as the artificial disorder of post-modernism does. The intention in Dipoli was to create a “fragment of the nature-complex of this site.” The aesthetics aims at the nature’s own way of making architecture, but Pietilä has pointed out several times that that does not mean Dipoli is an unintentional creation. In this work Pietilä tried to experience the accepted rules of composition.
Externally Dipoli does not have any explicit demarcation, neither on its base nor on the top. It sinks into the terrain. The shape of the copper roof imitates rock and the additional copper lanterns make one remember of boulders brought glacial ice. This copper eaves representing cliffs is what Pietilä ment with his idea of ‘genius loci’. The archetypal dwelling is certain to that geographical place, this site in Otaniemi. At ground level the stone mass disappears amongst the thicket and even the concrete plinth is covered with angular boulders left over from the site excavations. It seemed that Pietilä put special attention into the windows in this project: There are over 300 different forms and sets of windows. These vertical frames of the windows stand like trees in nature. The visual impression of a forest is extended through the windows into the interior. Also materials and textures seemed to be ordered in a natural and even topological way.

This is how Pietilä imagines buildings to be: using materials and surface structures that are clearly related to nature and the geographical site of the building produces a ‘replica of nature’. He points out that nature in Otaniemi acts as a landscape space between the buildings, siting and materials, but slowly the ‘genius loci’ of the landscape is replaced by that of architecture, e.g. because the ecological balance has been upset in the 1970s. Pietilä adds to his description of ‘genius loci’ the idea that it is “a synthesis of building, landscaping and original nature.”

The architecture of Dipoli has been criticized a lot and is probably still not completely understood until today. In my opinion the concept of the building has to be known when judging the building, because it is very essential to understand every single design decision made by Pietilä for Dipoli. Pietilä himself admited a lot of the problems that are still perceived today as main aspects of this particular design concept, but also state an overall view on what Pietilä regrets to be good architecture: “At the same time as being like a materialized sketch, it is a sketch of architecture.”

“Dipoli might be a torso. It is unsettled architecture.”

“Dipoli is contrary to preconceived good taste; styleless (in as much as style is the consistency of convention).”

Metso

An other well-known project by Reima Pietilä is the building of Tampere’s Central Public Library, called Metso, which was completed in 1985. This project shows essentially another spirit of relationship of architecture and nature.

The sketching for the competition started on a holiday trip in Ireland
under the influence of the rock landscape. Pietilä described that the crystallization of the floor plan began back home, but still it seems that the fact that starting the project abroad widened his mind to the Finnish nature of the project: the image of the building as a whole began to resemble a capercaillie, Finnish ‘metso’, which is the typical Finnish totem-bird.

In the Metso-project the image of the capercaillie as an earthbound creature is felt as an inbuilt theme. The other relation to nature is kind of more hidden and only understood when knowing about Pietilä’s view on architecture, he says: “The kind of being, in which this bird creature is clearly visible connects the library with air and space.”

Again, in Metso-project to understand the whole architectural experience one gets as visiting the building, can only be understood when knowing Pietilä’s background and approach on architecture, art, design and nature.

To conclude this essay, I want again to let Pietilä speak himself. But beforehand I would like to point out what are in my opinion the key features of Reima Pietilä’s approach on architecture:
His designs do realize that a unique architecture for every place, as intended by functionalism and international style, does not exist, but architecture needs to be aware of its surroundings. Therefore for Pietilä the Finnish forest and the setting of farmhouses seem to be the key inspiration of his architecture. He tries to involve nature into architecture and at the same time realizes that architecture set into nature influences nature in a very unique way in every site. That can be seen in the Dipoli-project.

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195 Suomen rakennustaitteen museo: 18
196 Suomen rakennustaitteen museo: 19
197 Suomen rakennustaitteese: 19
as well as in the design for Suvikumpu. The statement I want to end with shows that Reima Pietilä is aware of the fact that Dipoli and Suvikumpu, two projects in Espoo designed in two years following each other, are the projects showing his ideas about architecture and nature in a very impressive manner:

“The correct way to put your question would then be: how does architecture function as an element of genius loci and as a part of the natural environment? And the answer is short: as in Dipoli and Suvikumpu. This is of course my individual nature-philosophical answer, a precedent naturally."
Figures

Figure 1: Finland's pavilion at the Paris World Fair in 1900
Connah, Roger: Finland - modern architectures in history.
London 2005. p. 21

Figure 2: Olofsborg apartment building
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 3: Floor plan of Lindqvist building
Connah, Roger: Finland - modern architectures in history.
London 2005. p. 42

Figure 4: Tampere Cathedral
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 5: Detail of entrance at Tampere Cathedral
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 6: Kallio church designed by Lars Sonck
Connah, Roger: Finland - modern architectures in history.
London 2005. p. 32

Figure 7: Suomen Kansallisteatteri
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 8: Suomen Kansallismuseo
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 9: Helsingin Rautatieasema
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 10: Street view in Käpylä
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 11: House entrances in Käpylä
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 12: Eduskuntatalo
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 13: Taidehalli on a picture from the 1930s
http://www.taidehalli.fi/english/info/architecture/ 2010-12-03

Figure 14: Plan of housing development in Tapiola
http://www.espoonkaupunginmuseo.fi/tapiola50/main_
Figure 15: Housing in Tapiola
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 16: Housing in Tapiola
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 17: Housing in Suvikumpu
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 18: Detail of first building period in Suvikumpu
Susanne Miessner 2010

Figure 19: Metso from a bird’s perspective
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