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Summary

Jürgen Joedicke

Building in Finland

(Pages 117–119)

Ever since Giedion made the observation, one day, that the leading architectures of the world are those of Finland and of Brazil, there have been in circulation a great many clichés describing modern Finnish architecture. The question remains as to what exactly are the special qualities of this architecture.

Anyone who travels through Finland with his eyes open will note from the outset an extraordinary multiplicity of architectural styles. This observation applies both to the works of different architects and to the separate projects of each architect.

The architects Paimio, Viipuri and Mairela-Saynatsalo follow in the line of Alvar Aalto. Beside him we have Blomstedt and Ruusuvaari, Siren, Lappo, Korhonen and Pietilä. Beside Pietilä mention can be made of Krakström, Palasmaa and Mikkola.

In attempts to describe the development of Finnish architecture during the Thirties, frequent mention has been made of the influence of the environment. To be sure, such an influence cannot be denied. Nevertheless, it is plain that in an age of constantly improving international communications and of highly developed technology, regional and geographical factors are no longer so dominant or determinative. Thus, we are no longer entitled to adduce the topography of Finland in our search for the roots of contemporary Finnish architecture. There is no doubt that the special features of the Finnish landscape influence the arts, but against this general background other different conceptions have made their appearance. The rugged lake-studded countryside of Finland is certainly not at the basis of a national architectural style. It is more correct to speak of modern architecture in Finland than of exclusively Finnish architecture.

Nevertheless, in one essential point Finnish architecture does differ from that of Western Europe. The question has to do with its position in society. In Finland the architect occupies a privileged social position. He enjoys the respect and the esteem of the population.

The great influence of Eliel Saarinen and the whole romantic national school is bound up with the architectural renewal in Finland and the social development that is taking place. Before the First World War, when Finland was still under Russian rule, buildings in the romantic national style already symbolized the independence and the sovereignty of the Finnish people.

The romantic national style in its best works attained a remarkable qualitative standard that is still apparent today owing to its fine handling of materials and originality in detailing. Contrary to the romantic nationalism that was based mainly on traditions native to Finland, the Early Modern Style ("Jugendstil"), which developed especially in the closing years of the last century, was very much under the influence of Western Europe, in particular that of Van de Velde, of the British Arts and Crafts movement and of the Viennese school.

In Finland, as in the other European countries, the years which preceded the First World War were characterized by a more conservative conception of architecture. The years which followed the war were marked by a recession. The architects of the Twenties went in for neo-classicism. The first creations of Aalto, for example, are marked by a tendency that is neo-classical and redolent of Italian architecture.

Elissa and Alvar Aalto, Helsinki

Students' Union Building at Uppsala

(Pages 120–121)

The site available for this building is located in a baroque garden which has always been a meeting-place for students. The architect's intent was precisely to preserve the traditional character of the place as well as he could. The structure, a widespan building elevated on pillars, constitutes the roof of a covered hall with easy and natural access to the garden.

On the first floor level, the foyer in the shape of a gallery is used for student events. As for the banquet room, its large stage divisible into three parts by means of movable partitions lends itself to many different functions.

Elissa and Alvar Aalto, Helsinki

City Centre with library, Rovaniemi

(Pages 122–123)

This municipal centre is situated on a restricted terrain close to a major traffic artery. It comprises the city hall, the theatre, a concert hall and a library. The large reading-room of the library, which with its various reading nooks constitutes one single tract, has sections for children, for young people and for adult readers.

Woldemar Baeckman, Helsinki

Sibelius Museum in Turku

(Pages 124–125)

The building program comprised the erection of a museum of musicology as well as a department for Sibeliana and a small chamber music concert room, along with premises for the institutes of music and art history of the high school of Turku, in particular an auditorium with seating capacity of 90. It will be feasible to expand the museum by removing the art history section into another building.

Aulis Blomstedt, Tapiola

Apartment houses at Tapiola

Period of construction: 1964–65

(Pages 126–127)

This complex of buildings comprises two residence blocks. The ground floor of the blocks accommodates three caretakers' flats, a students' centre and dining and storage facilities. Moreover, each block contains 18 flats with 3 rooms each, measuring 77.5 sq. meters, 3 3-room flats, measuring 69 sq. m. and 12 1-room flats, measuring 34 sq. m.

Arvi Itonen, Helsinki

Engineers: Pentti Kaista & Lars-Olav Sebbas

Standpipe at Järvenpää

(Pages 128–129)

This tower structure stands in an area of single-family houses. It serves 35,000 residents. The two tanks contain 1900 cu. meters of water. For financial reasons the exterior facing of the tanks is of wood and not concrete as originally provided for. Instead of the usual central construction, this standpipe is flanked by two supports, one of which accommodates the stairs. The architect's intention was to create a simple and practical structure which would harmonize with the surroundings.

Erik Krakström, Kirjo Mikkola, Juhani Palasmaa, Helsinki

High school at Botby, Helsinki

(Pages 130–131)

This school serves as the cultural centre of the Botby district of Helsinki. The

classrooms and the auditoriums have been separated in two buildings. The gymnasium can also be used for cultural events. It includes a spectators' gallery. This gallery can be combined with the foyer and the dining-room.

Osmo Lappo, Helsinki

The recreation centre of the garrison of Kajaani

Period of construction: 1962–68

(Pages 132–133)

The complex housing this centre is situated in the midst of the new garrison facilities intended for 2500 soldiers. The construction program comprises a soldiers' canteen, an athletics centre with swimming-pool and a sauna as well as cultural facilities. The architect's aim was a "rough" effect, achieved in particular with the aid of untreated surfaces, without paint, this contributing the proper barracks atmosphere.

Bengt Lundsten, Helsinki

Kortepohjy residential area at Jyväskylä

(Pages 134–135)

This zone is located two kilometers from the centre of the town on a wooded slope near a lake. Leisure facilities are thus available in the neighbourhood. From the construction point of view, the area contains 48 serial houses and 2 service buildings, or 260 residence units with size varying between 85 and 120 sq. meters. The aim was to create low-rental flats with costs kept below those of large apartment blocks. The materials employed are Siporex elements and timber elements. Aside from a number of variants owing to location, all the houses have the same price.

Timo Penttilä, Helsinki

Municipal Theatre of Helsinki

(Pages 136–137)

The size of the available site allows the location of the most important utility annexes on the same level as the two stages of the public theatre. The architect has made a special effort to preserve the park-like character of this site. The two stages differ mainly as follows: the foyer and the cloakrooms of the large stage are on the south side. They face the sea. On the other hand, the public facilities attached to the small stage are more intimate in character. The point of departure for the planning of the large stage (auditorium with seating capacity of 920) is based on the traditional scheme of "auditorium-stage" with a movable door and a fireproof drop-curtain. The small stage is capable of many different applications. This theatre is equipped with the most modern technical installations.

Reima Pietilä, Helsinki

Dipoli students' centre

(Pages 138–139)

This students' centre is situated among other buildings serving a cultural purpose near the Institute of Technology of Helsinki. The restaurant and its annexes occupy much of the space of the building. 2500 students can be served here within two hours. The different spatial groupings constituting the restaurant and the large banquet hall can be combined to serve as one single auditorium for conventions, lectures, dinners, etc. The banquet room with its annexes measures 900 sq. meters, the students' restaurant 1600 sq. meters, the public restaurant 400 sq. m., the theatre (seating capacity 280) 400 sq. m., the conference rooms and clubrooms 1400 sq. m. and the technical installations 3700 sq. m.

The building is faced on the outside with copper sheeting; on the inside the untreated concrete is left visible.

Reima Pietilä, Helsinki

The Kalevala Church in Tampere

Year of construction: 1966

(Pages 140–141)

The indirect lateral light throws into relief the curved vertical partition elements. These elements and the direction from which the light comes illuminate the interior of the church in a regular uniform fashion. The concrete partition elements are faced on the inside with acoustic panels. Moreover, acoustic elements are suspended between the parallel roof girders.

Pekka Pitkänen, Turku

The Holy Cross Chapel in Turku

(Pages 142–143)

The cemetery of Turku having been enlarged, its chapel proved to be too small. The new building program comprised the erection of three chapels, with seating capacities of 160, 50 and 12, respectively. This program, moreover, envisaged the construction of a mortuary hall, a sacristy, a crematorium and utility annexes. The architect decided on simple geometrical shapes, and he has employed very few materials, in order to create an atmosphere of quiet meditation. These materials are: prefabricated concrete panels, bronze and dark oak.

Aarno Ruusuvaari, Helsinki

Marisauna

(Pages 144–145)

The construction program comprises a hot room, a toilet and a veranda. It is easy to transform the outside zone into an inside one thanks to canvas partitions furnished with hooks and eyes. Regarded as a whole, the building is made up of three roof elements, three floor elements, five partition elements and two glass elements. The architect's assignment was to devise a direct communication between the sauna and the water outside. From each sauna unit there is direct access to the water and the outdoors. The light shade of the timber facing, the shining water and the surrounding landscape create an atmosphere of repose and an effect of cleanness and serenity.

Kaija and Heikki Siren, Helsinki

KOP bank and commercial building, Helsinki

(Pages 146–147)

The building is located on a busy square in the commercial district of Helsinki. It is one element in a chain of public buildings which in the near future will be erected in the park in the centre of the city. The structure is round. In this project pedestrian and vehicular traffic are kept separate. The ground floor is furnished with three large openings used by pedestrians for access to the bank in the centre of the complex. The entire ground floor accommodates shops and passageways. The construction has a span of 23 meters. The width of the building itself is 17.2 meters, while the diameter of the whole structure is 76 meters.

The floors have the following functions: the basement houses the parking facilities, the floor above shops and store-rooms, the ground floor and the first floor shops; from the 2nd to 7th floor there are offices, and on the 8th floor we have employees' flats. Total volume: 120,000 cu. meters. Materials: concrete and copper.