

Embargoed until 25 May 2020 at 11:00 EET

Katajanokan Laituri - The submissions for the architectural competition

Beacon

Stora Enso moves to the dock in a beacon that shapes a new public place reconnecting Katajanokka to the South Harbour.

With many entrances and an open ground floor, the building activates the surrounding streets and newly accessible waterfront to create a public destination. The seafront is designed for social events while strengthening biodiversity, ecosystems services and stormwater resiliency.

A low scale towards the water respectfully blends in with the existing harbor, while the silhouette slightly curves to reveal a forest planted at the heart of the building, where Stora Enso's office and the new hotel come together.

The forest plays an active role in creating a healthy environment in the building and embodies "Silmu" and the strong connection between Nordic people and their forests.

Beacon is a showcase for carbon neutral timber construction with a robust grid offering flexibility of use and configuration over the building's lifespan.

With a biophilic approach, a series of green spaces with strong identities based on the history of the harbour, the nature of the archipelago and renewable materials integrate the building with the city of Helsinki.

Juuret

The name JUURET, meaning ROOTS in Finnish, suggests the concept of this building in many ways. The building inherits the history of Katajanokka, which is the meeting point of the redbrick harbor atmosphere and the white context continued from the city center.

The building blends into the city fabric by its simple and clean grid elevation on the quayside, and the arched façade on the street side. The building is entirely built with timber, which represents the core business and the roots of Stora Enso. The two building blocks are separated by a real Nordic forest. The space is equipped with an operable glass roof and glass shutters that allow the space to become an outdoor public space during mild seasons. After an unprecedented crisis, the world learned that buildings should be more opened, instead of enclosing people in a sealed box. The forest encourages this building to breathe and invites the users to extend their area of activities instead of staying confined in their offices.

Rantametsä

Rantametsä, a coastal forest, is a narrow strip of woods by the water. Such forests feature rich flora and fauna, forming an important part of the area's biodiversity.

In our proposal "Rantametsä", the building is an expression of the Finnish mental landscape, its forests and wood building tradition, even as it blends seamlessly into the historic, nationally valuable urban landscape. The building's appearance is dignified, in keeping with its milieu. At the same time, it contributes to Helsinki's vibrant urban culture on the prime seafront site.

The building consists of five volumes, staggered both vertically and horizontally. The design reflects both the clean neoclassical lines of the local architecture and the façade massing of the adjacent historic warehouses. A sense of the forest is created with the play of light and sea views through the wood façade louvres. Our design aims at high functional flexibility, adaptability and space efficiency. In line with the design brief, the offices can be converted into hotel rooms and vice versa with reasonable ease during the building's lifespan.

Spring

Strongly grounded in its site and surroundings, Spring looks towards the future and sets an example in carbon neutrality, sustainable growth and the possibilities of wood construction in a sensitive urban environment. Both urban and natural, it is strong but serene on the outside, while its interior and materiality evoke the dense but tranquil atmosphere of a Finnish forest. Its architecture embraces and elevates its surroundings, extending and reiterating the city's grid and silhouette in harmony with the old. Through a powerful, but open and inviting gesture and presence, it re-activates its surroundings and the city's waterfront.

Spring represents sustainable architecture in every meaning of the word: flexible structural solution capable of accommodating a range of different uses during the building's lifespan, adaptable spatial organisation and carbon neutrality combined with form and materiality that is true to its values – architecture with a true human approach. It showcases carbon neutral construction with innovative and creative use of standard Stora Enso massive wood products and intelligent technical systems. Its spatial solutions allow a diverse and flexible interaction between people and the different functions of the building.

Inventive and inspiring, Spring represents dynamic and modern, but timeless and firm architecture that fits and elevates its surroundings while following biophilic design principles. The building and its formal solutions create a clear identity that stems from its historic urban context as much as a Nordic forest and relationship to nature. Spring offers proud and urban presence with the warmth, smell and feeling of a Nordic forest after the rain.

Zander

The architecture of the proposal Zander is based on the dynamics between the three interlocking functions: the office, the hotel, and public spaces. Instead of dividing the functions into separate buildings or volumes, the proposal combines them into a new take on the urban perimeter block, the main ingredient of the beloved urban areas of Helsinki.

The functions are arranged around a covered courtyard, a true public addition to the city. Surrounding this courtyard, the office and hotel functions and the social spaces define a city block, which is aligned along the sidewalks and follows the main urban grid without exceptions. The block has four over-ground floors to achieve enough floor height for future flexibility. The headquarters part defines an interesting façade towards the Market Square, and the hotel has a smaller scale, sculptural façade towards the sea. The extensive use of timber and renewable materials and low energy usage make the project responsible and sustainable.

uusi aalto – the new wave

The potential and responsibility of being the first seed to be planted in what is to be the forest of the new urban development of Katajanokka has inspired us in so many ways. We were challenged

with a brief that was much bigger than the building itself. It was to be a piece of architecture and landscape that weaved together the layers of history in Katajanokka with the vision of a new and invigorating development of the quay. It is a design that must keep its integrity both in status quo, facing an operational harbor, but at the same time strives to be flexible to accommodate for a possible future where the area has been fully pedestrianized.

One of the first things we noticed visiting the historic site of Katajanokka was its attention to the corners. The Jugendstil/Art Nouveau architecture that was built here in the 20th century left no corner untouched. By activating the diagonals, the streets become equally important and the corners address the city in a much more dynamic way. Further, instead of getting a façade that follows the street like a funnel – you can use the diagonals to create pockets with which the city and the building are allowed to breathe. Using this strategy, we were able to take a step back from the old customs house as a respectful nod to the past as well as solve the challenge of having two programs on the attractive southwest façade. By activating the diagonals, the new headquarters and the hotel both hold their own identity addressing the city and the evening sun, but at the same time look as one coherent piece of architecture.

The directional approach created indentations on each façade, which had several positive effects. It maximized the lengths of the facades to accommodate for the program given, but more importantly it created pocket parks different in design and attitude on all sides of the building. The structure looks as if it is standing as an oasis in the harbor of Katajanokka, bringing the forest and the Island vegetation into the city center of Helsinki. Pine and birch trees bring the building down to a human scale and create soft shadows for the urban spaces. A combination of typical Finnish undergrowth forest vegetation covers the spaces that are not intended for walking, while a sloping sun-facing lawn provides informal seating by the sea. The lush and varied vegetation changes the perception of the site and sets a new standard for future pedestrianized harbor development.

The form alludes to several waves reacting to its immediate urban context. While the south façade has a higher frequency to maximize façade area and give passive protection against the sun, the north façade is a bigger and more open wave with fewer surface ripples. The north facing lamella accommodates the entrance lobby and most of the office spaces. Big open windows face the city and Katajanokka historic center. The north face needs less cooling and sun protection measures. It has a beautiful visual connection with the old customs house and the entrance lobby on the northwest corner is optimal from an infrastructural and marketing point of view.

The south facing lamella accommodates the hotel. It has most of its façade towards the south and southwest with incredible views for the guests. The façade is less permeable to accommodate for practical yet stunning hotel rooms with floor to ceiling windowpanes. This façade is optimized to be less dependent on sun shading measures. We first considered passive environmental strategies and always consider what spaces are being used, how and when. The restaurant and café on the ground floor lift up towards the southwest for those incredible long summer evenings and meet the new harbor development with a friendly face.

The movement of the form lifts each corner in a very social way and allows the interior spaces to visually connect. While the restaurant and lobby welcome you, the opposite corners on one side create a unique spa with uninterrupted sea views and on the other facilitate the parking entrance and delivery services.

All the way on the top, 21 meters above sea level, you have a grand roof terrace, cascading down to the roof bar it connects to via an outside elevator to the 4th floor. The rooftop has 360 degrees panoramic views of the inner harbor and sits recessed covered in foreshore meadow planting brought from the Islands right outside the city center. The 1500m² solar power facility is not only attractive-looking, it also produces 1.4 million kwh per year. The central core of the roof has the intake and the output of air for the ventilation.

The building meanders through the new forested park of Katajanokka, the vertical nature of the wooden façade mimics tree trunks with flickering lights between them from the reflected sunlight. What better place to turn for inspiration than nature and what better phenomenon to investigate than the wave? Sound is waves, sight is waves, the forest is waves – and the waves created by the new headquarters of Stora Enso not only activate the city in a whole new way; the wave facilitates views, reacts to the sun, protects from the wind and the sound of an active city harbor.