

Press release 30 November 2018

Oodi, the library of a new era, will open to the public on the eve of the Independence Day

Helsinki Central Library Oodi will open its doors to the public on 5 December at 8am, a day before Finland's 101st birthday. Designed by ALA Architects, this library of a new era is an ode to Finnish culture, equality and freedom of expression. Oodi offers everyone an open, public urban space at Kansalaistori Square, right opposite Parliament House.

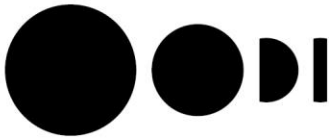
Central Library Oodi is an active and functional meeting point with 2.5 million expected annual visitors. Oodi offers its visitors a place for learning something new and developing personal skills by offering information, facilities and the most recent technology for anyone to use.

"Oodi symbolises the core values of our society, such as education, culture, equality and openness. The promotion of these values is especially vital in these times marked by uncertainty. Oodi stands firmly in the defence line of our democracy," says Mayor of Helsinki **Jan Vapaavuori**.

"The story of the public library is the story of communal Finland. Now, the era of Oodi is about to begin. Library as a gift to the independence of Finland symbolises the Finnish civilisation ideal and reflects our unique relationship with the library institution," says Minister for European Affairs, Culture and Sport **Sampo Terho**.

Libraries and democracy go strongly hand in hand. In accordance with the 2017 Public Libraries Act, Oodi promotes life-long learning, active citizenship, democracy and freedom of speech. The significance of democracy is also highlighted by the location of Oodi opposite Parliament House.

"Oodi is situated in the heart of Helsinki surrounded by the institutions of a modern, liberal democracy: Parliament, free press, art and museums," says Deputy Mayor **Nasima Razmyar**. "I hope that Oodi will bring people and institutions together and generate a new kind of interaction and understanding."



The ideology behind public libraries has it that the library is a cultural centre that, in addition to literature and reliable information, also offers diverse and innovative services. This also holds true for Oodi, which is a house of literature and of diverse urban experiences. Apart from the traditional library services, Oodi also features a café, restaurant, cinema, art, studio facilities and an urban workshop, for example.

Oodi will be a new part of the Helsinki City Library network of 37 libraries ensuring an easy access to libraries in Helsinki. Oodi is a library of a new era and a pioneer in library services, leading the way in the library world. For instance, Oodi makes use of the most recent robot technology that leaves the library professionals with more time to serve customers. Services will be continuously developed together with customers and partners.

“The building will get completed, but the library itself will never be ready. Oodi and its services will continue to change and develop,” says Director of Oodi **Anna-Maria Soininvaara**.

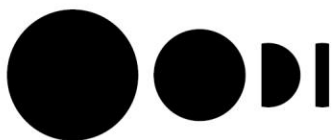
Oodi’s facilities are still undergoing some finishing touches, so some of the facilities will open for public use within the coming months. The second floor will be closed to the public from 7 to 27 December, and Kino Regina commences its operation in January 2019.

Three floors, three atmospheres

Central Library Oodi serves visitors from the early hours till late in the evening seven days a week. Oodi comprises almost exclusively facilities open to public. Its architectural concept is based on a notion of dividing library functions to three different types of floors, each with their dedicated atmospheres.

The first floor is a fast paced transformable space. It holds a spacious lobby for organising various events, the library’s information desk, book returns as well as a café. The cinema and the multi-purpose hall located on this floor can be flexibly used for either extending the lobby or organising separate events.

Oodi is a place for learning and doing things. On the second floor, city residents can get creative in the top-class workshop and studio facilities. At the Urban Workshop on the second floor, you can create new things and personalise old



ones. A broad range of tools is available for anyone to use, ranging from 3D printer to overlocker, from laser cutter to label printer. The second floor also hosts the state-of-the-art studios for playing music, recording, filming and editing. There are also rooms dedicated for studying and working.

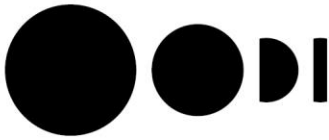
Book Heaven on the third floor of Oodi fuses the traditional library mood and modern library services. The third floor invites you to read, learn and relax. There are 100,000 items available to borrow, a café and nine living trees. The children's section offers the opportunity to get carried away by stories and imagination. The Citizens' Balcony facing Parliament House is a great place to admire the Töölönlahti Park and city centre in the summertime.

Oodi is also a house of partnership. The Kino Regina cinema of the National Audiovisual Institute, Playground Loru, Helsinki-Info, Brygga participatory facility of the Urban Environment Division and EU@Oodi offering EU information all serve customers under one roof. The café and restaurant services available on the first and third floor are provided by Fazer. Operations are planned in close cooperation with the Töölönlahti area neighbours, i.e. the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Musiikkitalo – the Helsinki Music Centre and the Sanomatalo building.

At Oodi, you can participate in diverse events and workshops, attend lectures and get inspired by media art. Yle Kulttuuri launches Oodi's programme with the première of two author documentaries directly after the grand opening on 7 December and Kohtaamisia-klubi of Musiikkitalo – the Helsinki Music Centre, will visit Oodi on 8 December. The spring season will feature visiting authors and the Harry Potter Book Night. Oodi will also become one of the key event locations of the DocPoint festival.

Oodi – created together

Oodi has been funded by the City of Helsinki and the State. The State's share of the funding is €30 million, with the total cost at €98 million. Oodi has been a project for the 100th anniversary of Finnish independence. Therefore, it can be seen as a gift from the State and City of Helsinki to Finns and 100-year-old Finland.



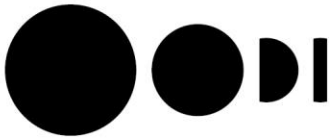
ALA Architects is responsible for Oodi's architectural planning, and YIT is the building contractor. The open international architectural competition published in January 2012 received 544 entries from all over the world. Six entries were selected for the second round of the competition in November 2012, and ALA Architects was declared the winner with their entry *Käännös* in June 2013.

"The design we created for the competition answered the city residents' dreams with the help of architecture that everybody wanted to build. The draft started to transform irresistibly into an amazing and very sensible building, and none of its exceptional features were questioned because they form an entity greater than the components. As we see it, the completed building is in line with the competition entry and the original idea very well and we cannot wait to see how city residents will embrace the building," say partners of ALA Architects **Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki** and **Samuli Woolston**.

YIT started the construction of Central Library Oodi in September 2015. The building features several original and unique solutions that require special expertise from the building contractor, such as the two steel arches that support the building.

"There have been no compromises in Oodi, we have strived to follow the architectural plans to a T," says Head Supervisor of Oodi **Tero Seppänen** at YIT. "Nobody builds such buildings alone; the key to the success of the project and solving various challenges has been in the close cooperation of all parties. It has been a dream to run a site with some of the best people in this industry. With great joy, we hand over the result of our contribution for use by city residents for future decades."

Oodi has been designed by listening to and engaging its users so that it would match city residents' hopes and needs in the best possible manner. In 2012, hundreds of library dreams of residents were collected, and with the help of participatory budgeting city residents were able to allocate funds to the development projects of the Central Library. Over the years, various customer panels and development communities have shared their input as users in Oodi's design process. Future users have had their say, for example, in the choice of Oodi's seats and the collection of magazines and journals. The name of the library, too, was selected through an open name competition. Oodi is truly a house of all city residents.



Oodi will open its doors to the public for the first time on the eve of the Independence Day on 5 December at 8am. The opening festivities will continue on Independence Day on 6 December, with the programme focusing especially on families with children.

The grand opening programme is available at <https://www.oodihelsinki.fi/en/grand-opening/>

Oodi's grand opening can be viewed by means of live broadcasting at www.helsinkikanava.fi on 5 December.

Oodi's grand opening on social media: #oodi #oodihelsinki #onneaoodi

Press kit and photos: www.oodihelsinki.fi/en/for-media/

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