

## **How did the library project come into being?**

The initiative for the new Central Library building came originally from then Minister of Culture Claes Andersson in 1998. In 2007, the Mayor of Helsinki Jussi Pajunen launched a central library review process, led by the independent consultant Mikko Leisti. The final report of the review process, *Heart of the Metropolis – the Heart of Helsinki*, (Leisti and Marsio, 2008) laid a long-lasting foundation for goals and visions of the project.

In 2013, Culture Minister of that time Paavo Arhinmäki declared the Central Library would be a headline project of Finland's commemoration of a century of independence in 2017.

## **How was the construction project funded?**

On 28 January 2015, Helsinki City Council decided that the construction cost of Oodi would be met by the City of Helsinki. In addition the national government granted 30 million euros to the cost to make Oodi one of Finland's key centennial projects.

The total cost of construction is 98 million Euros.

## **How will the library sustain itself financially?**

Capital investment for Oodi Central Library came from the government of Finland (30%) and the City of Helsinki (70%). Oodi is a branch of the Helsinki City Library and after the opening it will be funded by the City of Helsinki, like all other Helsinki City libraries.

## **Why this site?**

Oodi occupies one of the last undeveloped sites in Central Helsinki. The site is particularly appropriate for a central library, surrounded as it is by the institutions that typify a modern liberal society – the National Parliament Building, the offices of the Helsingin Sanomat Newspaper, The Musiikkitalo Concert Hall and Kiasma Modern Art Museum.

## **Will Oodi become Helsinki's main library?**

No, it will not. Pasila Library will remain Helsinki's main library and the administrative centre for the city library, and it will continue to manage the city library's national development duties.

## **How does Oodi differ to other libraries in Finland? What's unique about the library?**

Oodi is an exciting opportunity to explore new ideas about what libraries might become. Oodi is unique in that practically all the space within the library is for public use: there are no administrative offices, collections handling or logistics centre, for example – these functions are handled elsewhere within the library system.

Oodi's focus on engagement with users makes it the perfect place to test new ideas and services as part of the constant evolution of library services. Oodi will be organized around the principle of constant user participation and interaction. Users are encouraged to create events within the space themselves and will have the support of librarians in setting up activities using the new facilities.

Oodi is also set apart by the way it embraces technology – placing new skills within the reach of everyone in society. The newest manufacturing technology, such as laser cutters and 3D printers will be free to use in the makerspace and an immersive 3D virtual reality zone, The Cube, will provide opportunities to explore new media experiences

## **Will Libraries close as a result of competition from Oodi?**

There are no plans to close libraries in response to the opening of Oodi.

Library 10, a library that inhabited a former post office building around 200 metres from the site of Oodi has moved its services to the new library building. This was a planned closure due to the geographical closeness of the two locations. Library 10 opened in 2005 and was an important testbed for many of the ideas that have gone into Oodi.

A part of the multilingual library at Pasila library will be transferred to Oodi. Pasila Library will remain Helsinki's main library and the administrative centre for the city library

## **Will Oodi have any links to specific schools or universities?**

Oodi doesn't have links to any specific links to schools or universities. However, it is part of the program to invite nursery school children and school children to enjoy literature and different kinds of digital and robotic workshops to the library. Oodi is also a platform for different kinds of events, which can be organised for example by different organisations (also universities) or citizens.

## **What are the environmental credentials of the building?**

The library building will be extremely energy efficient. Its energy consumption level is that of a nearly Zero Energy Building (nZEB). This is mostly due to the efficiency of the building services. The material efficiency of the building has benefited among other things from the use of wood in the exterior cladding.

The design of the building envelope is intrinsic to the passive energy approach adopted by the project team. Detailed analysis of the façade performance has informed the environmental solutions and has allowed the team to minimize the requirement for mechanical environmental control systems, which facilitates the highly flexible architectural solution. The glass facades allow for large amounts of functional daylight in the public areas, reducing the use of artificial light and enhancing the quality of the interior spaces as a multifunctional citizen's forum.

The carefully planned placement and optimization of building services has enabled the flexibility of the spatial arrangements. All public levels of the building are equipped with access floors to allow for changes in use during the estimated 150-year life span of the building.

## **How will technology and robotics be used to serve library users?**

Robotics and automation will take care of returned books at Oodi, giving librarians more time for face-to-face interactions with the public. Internal transportation within the library as well as part of the shelving work will be automated.

The planning, technology and software required for the automation of book collection is being developed in Finland by Jyväskylä-based company Mikro-Väylä Oy.

A book's journey back to the shelves on the top floor starts at the automatic terminal in the lobby on the ground floor. All volumes within the collection have been equipped with radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, and the system reader interprets the data in it in just a moment and sends the book off on its journey on a conveyor to the basement.

In the basement, a machine named The Bookmatic Sorter drops the volume into a particular red basket depending on its classification, material type or any reservations placed on it. When the boxes and shelves become full in the basement, the machine automatically replaces them with empty ones.

Robot hands located at the end of the line will pick up some of the volumes, such as books wanted for an exhibit, and place them onto mobile shelves. Mobile robots will then deliver the shelves to the customer premises. These automated guided vehicles are able to operate independently inside the material lift and leave the shelves at the docks located in the customer premises. They are also able to take

shelves containing books to be sent elsewhere with them when they return to the basement.

In October 2017, experts from Mikro-Väylä Oy assembled the conveyor belt that delivers the returned items to the sorter. A children's book, Ikioma perheeni [My very own family], published by Pieni Karhu publishing house was the test book that travelled the conveyor belt.

### **What does Oodi mean and how was the name chosen?**

The word Oodi translates into English as "Ode", a poetic form marked by exaltation that praises an event or individual.

The name was chosen following a public competition in which members of the public were asked to suggest names. The final list of 1600 different names was considered by a jury made up of librarians, authors, a representative of the public consultation group, city and national policymakers and marketers, who made Oodi their selection.

Speaking on behalf of the Judges, Helsinki Deputy Mayor Ritva Viljanen, said:

"The name should support the symbolism of the Finland 100 centenary. It is also a merit to the name that the word is beautiful. Because it is a name of a library, it should be linked with literature and thereby with the library institution.

"We did not want to dedicate the library dealing with all of Finland, literature and culture to the memory of one person only, although good arguments were presented for library names dedicated to various authors. On these bases, we selected 'Oodi' as the name of the Central Library."

### **Can Members of the public organise an event at Oodi?**

Yes, they are encouraged to. The majority of the events held at Library 10, which was used as a testbed for many of the ideas that have gone into Oodi, were organised by library users. This policy has proven to work well and will be adopted at Oodi when it replaces Library 10 upon its opening.

### **Why did ALA Architects win the competition?**

ALA Architects design was chosen following a two-stage international competition which attracted 544 entries. All entries were anonymously submitted. In their final report on the shortlisted entries, the judges made the following comment on their selected winning design:

"The architecture of the proposal is of a very high quality, executed with relaxed broad strokes and memorable. The proposal provides excellent premises for the development of a completely new functional concept for the

library. The building has a unique appeal and the prerequisites to become the new symbolic building which Helsinki residents, library users, as well as the staff will readily adopt as their own.”

### **Which other architecture practices were shortlisted?**

Five other architecture practices were shortlisted:

Playa Architects (Helsinki, Finland), Verstas Architects (Helsinki, Finland), Huttunen-Lipasti-Pakkanen Architects (Helsinki, Finland), Henning Larsen Architects (Copenhagen), and a group of architects from Spain (no office name given).

### **How many visitors is Oodi expecting per day/year?**

Oodi is expected to handle 2.5 million visits a year.

### **What are the opening hours?**

Daily from 08:00 - 22:00 Mon-Fri

10:00 - 20:00 Sat-Sun

### **What were the main challenges and constraints of the project?**

The main constraints of the project included a challenging site with long and thin proportions, crossed by the planning corridor for a future tunnel; the location amongst a number of major civic institutions all with very different designs; the design brief for the library that included a multitude of functions and facilities within one building; and the timber façade that was used for the first time on a building of this scale.

### **Is the timber for the exterior cladding locally sourced?**

Oodi has been built using local materials and with local climate conditions in mind. The timber façade is clad with 33-millimeter-thick Finnish spruce planks that conform to the sweeping curve that extends the building outwards to create a canopy above the Kansalaistori square, blending the interior and exterior spaces and creating shelter for public events in front of the library.

### **How many items are borrowed from the library by Finns per year?**

In 2017 Finns borrowed 66,602,013 books. The total number of loans was 85 million, with the difference made up with other items including recorded music, games and films etc.

**How does total book borrowing break down per person?**

Based on the total population of Finland, this works out as 12.17 books per person. If you count other loans (music, games etc.) the number is 15.6.