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## **Fyyri Library in Kirkkonummi wins 2021 Finlandia Prize for Architecture**

*The philosopher Esa Saarinen has chosen Kirkkonummi Main Library, designed by JKMM Architects, as the winner of this year's Finlandia Prize for Architecture. The new building envelopes the original library from 1982, designed by Ola Hansson. This year's prize is the eighth Finlandia Prize for Architecture presented by the Association of Finnish Architects (SAFA).*

### **New standard set in promised land of libraries**

Fyyri's architecture skilfully highlights the twin raison d'être of every library: books and reading. In his statement, Esa Saarinen praised the way Fyyri embodies the pillars on which the Finnish library institution rests: democracy, the cultural and intellectual dimension and an enduring faith in humanity.

"Libraries must be capable of moving with the times, and that is precisely what has happened in Kirkkonummi. Through our libraries we commit a collective act of service for the benefit of our community, we build our futures by offering everyone a space where they can think more, think different, think new, using fresh words and previously undiscovered nuances. All libraries emerge from the profoundly and enduringly relevant philosophical notion that is also the cornerstone on which our democracy, equality and belief in humanity all depend," Saarinen says.

"In current library parlance, Fyyri is a 'multifunctional space' but such managerese fails to do it justice. It's about setting the stage for new and unexpected encounters, and about the vitally important collective phenomenon that arises when people experience a sense of ownership and belonging over something that they share. Fyyri's greatness lies in its scale, its ability to breathe in tandem with the human organism in the dimension that we often describe as our soul," Saarinen adds.

### **Infrastructure for happiness**

Fyyri is the work of JKMM Architects, with Teemu Kurkela as the lead designer, Jukka Mäkinen as the project architect and Tiina Rytkönen as the interior architect.

JKMM has been involved in a number of new-generation library projects, including Turku Library, Seinäjoki Library, the Harald Herlin Learning Centre and, latterly, Kirkkonummi Library.

"We like to think of Finnish libraries as a sort of infrastructure of happiness. As an architect, it is a great privilege to be involved in these projects. The Finnish library institution is more than 100 years old, and it keeps going from strength to strength, re-inventing itself every ten years or so," lead designer Teemu Kurkela said.

Fyyri's main entrance is located in a spot where the historic King's Road, Finland's medieval highway, bends. According to architect Jukka Mäkinen, the historic location was a source of particular inspiration for the designers. "It has been a wonderful experience for us to be involved in creating a new centre for Kirkkonummi. The library has a unique role to play as a public building flanked by the city's market square and medieval church. If the church is the heart of the community here, then we like to think of the library as its imagination," Mäkinen said.

Alongside Fyyri, the nominees shortlisted for this year's Finlandia Prize for Architecture were Ylivieska Church and the City of Helsinki Urban Environment Division headquarters.

## Finlandia Prize for Architecture and members of the Pre-Selection Jury

The Finlandia Prize for Architecture is awarded for the design or renovation design of an outstanding new building or building complex that has been completed within the past three years. The prize may be awarded either to a Finnish or foreign architect, or to an architectural firm for a project designed for a location in Finland; or to a Finnish architect or architectural firm for a project designed for a location abroad.

The recipient of the Finlandia Prize for Architecture is chosen by a public figure who is a recognised expert in an area other than architecture. The winner is selected from a shortlist of projects chosen by the Pre-Selection Jury. The purpose of the prize is to promote the appreciation of high-quality architecture and to highlight the importance of architecture in generating cultural value and increasing well-being.

The 2021 pre-selection jury comprised Professor Saija Hollmén, Professor Tuomo Siitonen, Professor Panu Lehtovuori and architect Mona Schalin. The secretariat was provided by **Paula Huotelin**, Secretary General of the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA).

The Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA) is a non-profit professional organisation engaged in active efforts to promote architecture and high-quality living environments. Established in 1892, SAFA has approximately 3,100 members, all of whom are architects with a university degree. Additionally, SAFA has around 600 student members.

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