

ALVAR AALTO

Architect, designer and academician Alvar Aalto was born on 3.2.1898 in Kuortane in Southern Ostrobothnia. He is Finland's most notable and internationally renowned architect. The artistic style of Aalto's architecture developed from the clear functionalism of the first period towards more varied modernistic expression represented by the Aalto Centre.

During his exceptionally wide and varied career, Aalto designed glassware, individual houses and culture buildings as well as entire residential districts, industrial communities and city centres. In his architecture, Aalto wanted to preserve the connection between human and nature. Down to details, he designed all his buildings as comprehensive works of art.

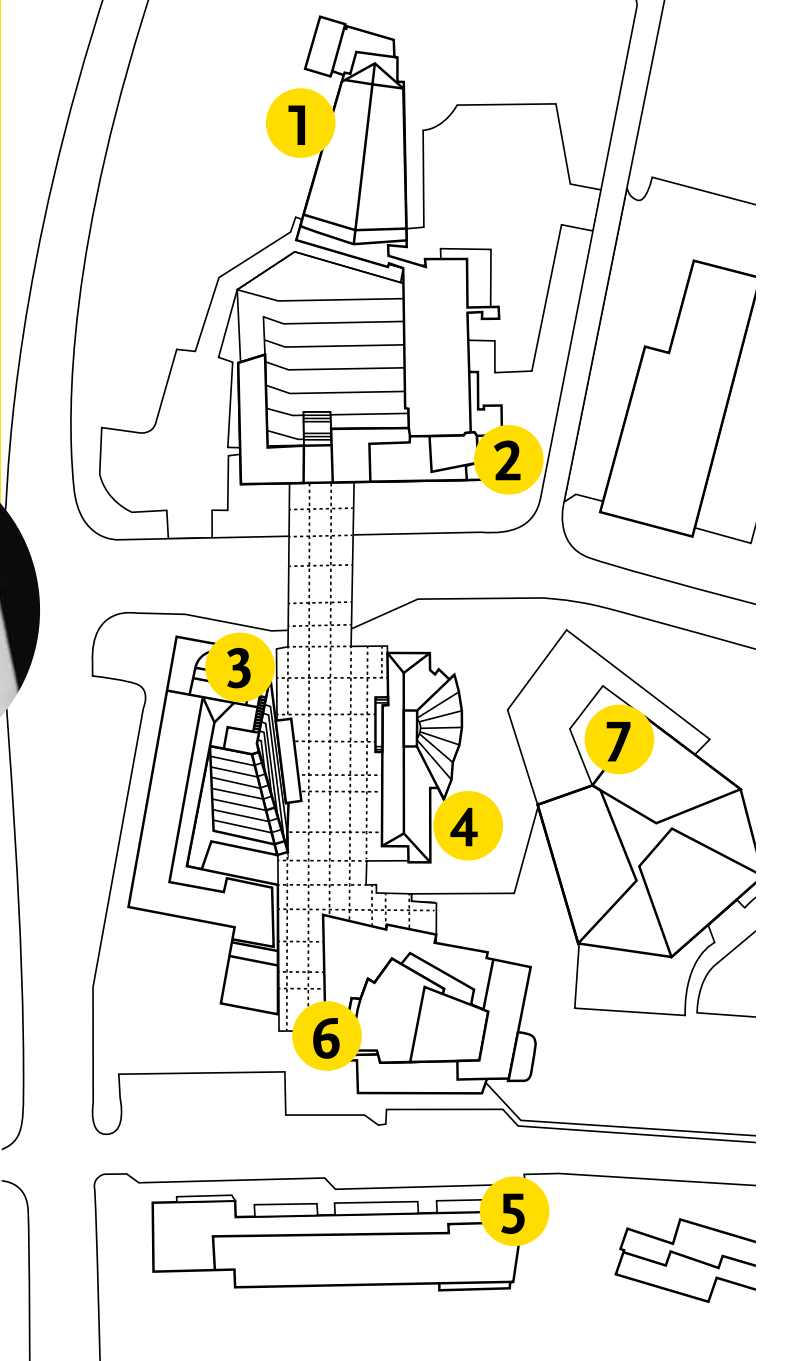


THE AALTO CENTRE

As an architectural whole, the Aalto Centre in Seinäjoki is unique in the world. Seinäjoki is also the location of the Defence Corps Building built in 1925, the only unaltered work from Aalto's youth.

The Aalto Centre consists of six buildings and the Civic Square completed in 1988.

- 1. CROSS OF THE PLAINS CHURCH (1957–1960)
- 2. PARISH CENTRE (1965–1966)
- 3. CITY HALL (1961–1962)
- 4. MUNICIPAL LIBRARY (1964–1965)
- 5. GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING (1966–1968)
- 6. CITY THEATRE (1986–1987)
- and 7. APILA LIBRARY (2012) JKMM architects



1. Cross of the Plains Church

In 1951, Aalto participated in an architectural competition, arranged in Seinäjoki with the view of finding a designer for the church of the small but developing market town. The competition board found the Cross of the Plains by far the best design.

The ceiling of the cathedral church becomes lower and narrower towards the choir, and the floor slopes to the altar. The light fittings, the chandeliers in the nave, the silver chalice, paten and pyx, the altar cloths, the stained glass in the chapel, and the fountain by the bell tower are designed by Aalto.



2. Parish Centre

The yard between the Parish Centre and the church was designed by Aalto with outdoor events in view. The acoustic sheeting of the parish meeting hall is made of red beech, the benches of red-hearted pine. The same kinds of wood were also used in the interior decoration of the Cross of the Plains Church. The 65 meter high bell tower of the church is Seinäjoki's landmark. A lift takes visitors to the tower.



5. Office Building

Aalto completed and finished the new administrative centre with a three-storey white-plastered office building. Aalto's idea was to design an ending point for the axis starting from the church and running through the civic square, "a peaceful background building", as Aalto put it. The architecturally most significant space in the building is the courtroom, now used as a meeting room. The office building has previously housed, e.g., a tax office and a police department.



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Vaasa 1 h
Tampere 1 h
Helsinki 3 h
Jyväskylä 3 h
Oulu 3 h

SEINÄJOKI



The Aalto Centre
Koulukatu 21
60100 Seinäjoki

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visit.alvaraalto.fi
#aaltospinori
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Sources:
www.seinajoki.fi
www.seinajoenseurakunta.fi
Alvar Aalto -museo: Alvar Aalto -
Seinäjoen kaupunkikeskus



3. City Hall

The dark blue ceramic bar-shaped bricks of the City Hall's facade glimmer in different lights. "The facade must be of the Seinäjoki City Hall, not of anything else", Aalto reasoned the choice of the material. In the City Council's debating chamber, which due to its height resembles a tower, the seats of the council members are placed radially. The same composition is also reflected in the facade. The City Hall's west wing, which was originally intended for residential use, was in the 1970–80's altered for use as workspaces.



4. Library

The fan shape of the library's circulation department is the most distinctive visual feature of the building. The light reflecting in the circulation department through a grid falls beautifully on the ceiling, the walls and the stacks. The Aalto library has been restored to its original appearance and was opened for the public in May 2015. The new and the old library, which are neighbours, were connected with each other by means of an underground basement storey. The Aalto library also contains the biggest collection of Aalto's glass pieces in the world.



4



6. Theatre

Aalto made the drawings for the theatre in 1968, but the building was completed only in 1987 under Elissa Aalto's supervision. The building's facade is made of matt white ceramic bars. The decor of the spacious foyer consists of Artek's design products. Aalto's unique collection of six bent wood reliefs is on display in the foyer. The drop-curtain of the Alvar-stage, called Daidalos, was designed by the artist Juhana Blomstedt.



6

7. Apila library

The main library Apila is located next to the cultural and administrative centre designed by Alvar Aalto. The head designer of the library, opened in 2012, is Asmo Jaaksi. From above, the shape of the building resembles a clover and it has won several nominations and awards in architecture competitions. The facade of the Apila is covered with copper and the library has become the city's collective living room and a meeting place.



7



The Aalto Centre
and Apila-library
Seinäjoki
Finland

