

**TOPIC**

Kuopio is designing new units for the urban fabric, which are called "Pearls". The Pearls are small neighbourhoods, or some kind of "urban villages", part of a large new project including 5000 housing units, called the District of Islands. The Pearls should consist of groups of blocks, forming courtyards, favouring development of societies and creating a community identity. The blocks should consist of different types of buildings and flats to promote diversity of the societies. The aim is to find new solutions offering the possibility for the new residents to combine urban life with the very existence of nature. The Pearls will function as elements of the Transit City, which should be taken into account in the design of each Pearl.

CONURBATION

The city of Kuopio has its location on narrow necks of land, surrounded by lakes. The relatively compact urban structure of the city is based on goal oriented land use planning, not excluding as well a determined land policy. Effective networks and a comprehensive network of green areas are important elements of the urban fabric. Effective street network, comprehensive network of bicycle routes and good level of bus transit is based on integrated land-use and transport planning. Kuopio is heading towards sustainability using a "Finger Model" of the urban structure. The "Finger Model" is a combination of the Inner City and the fingers, which consist of chains of neighbourhoods that spread outside the Inner City. It defines the parts of the city where citizens could, now and in the future, manage with only one car - or even without a car. One of the main objectives of the Finger Model is to maximize the modal share of walking, cycling and public transport.

SITE

The competition site forms an urban concentration, a pearl, along both sides of the Lehtoniementie road. The site is unbuilt and bordered by the lakeshore. According to the component master plan the site is bordered by the central park and other green areas. Behind the green strips there are other pearls of residential areas. The local centre of Lehtoniemi will be built about 500 meters southwest of the site, from where the majority of jobs and day care services will also be found.

PROGRAMME

The competition assignment is to design a "pearl" of urban fabric; the dense and effective inner structure of the pearl, and its connection to the surrounding nature. The area should become a compact, high quality urban living environment with good connections to services and the nature and with good access to busstops.

Statistics for competition area (a half of the pearl):

- upper area : 16000sqm, plot density 0,5 (from the site area), 100-120 flats, 180-210 inhabitants, 100-120 parking places
- lower area : 18000sqm, plot density 0,5 (from the site area), 120-140 flats, 200-230 inhabitants, 120-140 parking places
- shore area : about 7500sqm, plot density 0,2 (from the site area), 8-12 flats, 25-40 inhabitants, 20-25 parking places

Statistics for study area (the other half of the pearl):

- about 50000sqm, plot density 0,5 (from the site area), 310-330 flats, 560-580 inhabitants, 330-350 parking places
- remaining 12.3 ha will form the study area regarding the ideas connecting this pearl to the central park and to the other pearls, through a green strips of nature. Some of the buildings can have a parking space in the basement, but centralized and underground parking halls are unrealistic, because they are too expensive and don't match the requested quality for the area. How to organize the parking without ruining urban space and nature around ?

Population: 90.000

Study area: 21 ha

Project area: 4.1 ha



ISSUES

Functional / social

The pearl is constructed around the busstops at the center of the pearl. These stops function as a nodal point of the pearl. The other vital urban substance located in the center of the pearl are a kiosk or a small corner shop, and some public spaces for the neighbourhood of the pearl, plus maybe some spaces for the telework station, where you can meet other professionals, and societies and clubs could have their meetings. It is important to find a way to create urban life out from a relatively light substance.

Planning the metabolism of the pearl is an important part of the assignment. The competitors must propose how materials and people would flow through the pearl, and how this will affect the planned environment.

The pearl must be a built environment that supports communal urban functions and social contact.

How can private, municipal and voluntary (so-called third sector, social enterprises) modes of operation meet on a local level? Which new operational and economic functions can they produce? How to facilitate and support the everyday life of the elderly and families with children, dealing with new forms of co-operation and urban planning?

On the streets and squares of the pearl, informal conversations among different people will produce a creative atmosphere, from which the residents can get inspiration for their daily work. The pearl should be a strong setting for these informal meetings. The richness of choices available for getting around, the diversity of the built environment, and the subtle emphasis on the different characteristics of the local milieu, create an environment where individual creativity blooms and social interaction becomes natural.

Sensitive

Modern urban housing surrounded by nature. Your workplace could be a telework station at the centre of the pearl, providing services and social contacts. In winter you can ski to work across the lake to the technology park.

The population on the area is going to come from every walk of life: people who give value for the nature and the landscape, people who enjoy the "Urban village-like" lifestyle with outstanding connections to the city center, people who like to ski on the lake during wintertime or sail there at the summertime, people who like to use this unique opportunity for their own advantage in order to organise their life in a way they want to. Urban life with all modern amenities (IC-Technology) in the middle of wild nature.

How does the urban structure adapt itself to the surrounding nature remains one of the main questions to be answered in this assignment.

Sustainability

Sustainability is also about creating reasonable terms regarding the traffic in the area, and its connection to the city centre. Accessibility to new forms of services: online buying from home, and items delivered to a local service agent. Efficiency is only possible through combining things, not separating them. How can the identification and integration of light traffic networks, public transportation and private traffic services (taxis, car rentals, city car clubs) be used to reduce the number of privately owned cars? What is the potential offered by a residential area with low vehicle stock? What are the economic benefits brought to a community by everyday exercise?

Sustainability is to create such a communal structure that people can think of the whole area as their own territory.



EUROPAN 8



KUOPIO KEILARANTA, Suomi-Finland

