

Facilities for new services at Finlandia Hall to be built during renovation

Plans are in place for an audio-visual exhibition, design store, and a drink bar on the roof

The renovation project of Finlandia Hall will begin in 2021 according to the preliminary schedule. The project means not only restoration of existing premises but also construction of a framework for new services. Plans for the renewed Finlandia Hall include, for instance, an audio-visual exhibition and a design store. The kitchen will be modernized so the restaurant can be of service during large events and conferences in the future. Restaurant operations will be developed so that people from far away arrive at Finlandia Hall for dinner. A drink bar on the rooftop terrace is planned as a main attraction. For the area around Töölönlahti Bay, there are plans for glamping-type activity that connects Finlandia Hall more closely to the surrounding park area.

Finlandia Hall is the largest and best-known event and conference centre in Finland. The building's turnover has doubled in six years, and Finlandia Hall Ltd's operation is profitable.

– Finlandia Hall is very important for Helsinki both as an architectural landmark and as a living conference centre, which enables the arrangement of diverse events in the capital city of Finland. This is why special care must be taken of the building. Every year Finlandia Hall welcomes more than 200,000 visitors. According to one study, they spend almost €50 million per year on various experiences, shopping and services in Helsinki, says Anni Sinnemäki, the Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment.

– The renewed Finlandia Hall is part of the larger Töölönlahti Bay area that is becoming a shared living room for all Helsinki residents more strongly than before. The new Helsinki Central Library Oodi, the Helsinki Music Centre, Kansalaistori Square, Kiasma and Finlandia Hall will together constitute a lively and diverse cultural hub in the centre of the city, Sinnemäki continues.

Finlandia Hall will remain open during the renovation

To ensure that the premises service increased event production in the future, Finlandia Hall will undergo a renovation project that begins in 2021 and lasts for a couple of years. The schedule will be clarified as the project progresses. The renovation will proceed in stages, and Finlandia Hall remains open throughout the project.

– Finlandia Hall was completed in 1971, so the building management systems require an upgrade. Facilities will be altered and the service range expanded during the extensive renovation. Finlandia Hall's strategic intent is to serve as a low-threshold venue that offers new services to Helsinki residents and tourists alike. The reforms are aimed at achieving this goal, says Johanna Tolonen, the CEO of Finlandia Hall.

Aalto's production in a nutshell

A new service planned for Finlandia Hall is an exhibition whose audio-visual implementation would utilize technology as well as virtual and augmented reality. Changing thematic exhibitions are supplemented by a permanent section that focuses on Alvar Aalto, the history of Finlandia Hall, and an alternative reality that brings to life Aalto's plan for the city centre of Helsinki that was never realized. The Alvar Aalto Foundation is involved in the design of the contents.

– Finlandia Hall is a natural place for displaying Aalto's extensive production and history. It is an iconic building where architecture and the surroundings constitute a coherent whole that supports the contents of the exhibitions. The exhibition planned for a central location in Helsinki reaches both Finnish and foreign members of the public interested in architecture and design, but also daytime tourists visiting the capital city.

The location in a lively event centre incorporate the exhibition as part of living cultural heritage, states Tommi Lindh, the Managing Director of the Alvar Aalto Foundation and Museum.

The national Alvar Aalto Museum is located in Jyväskylä. Museum sites open for the public in Helsinki include Alvar Aalto's home and the studio in Munkkiniemi that served as his architectural office.

A design store focused on Finnish design products is being planned adjacent to the exhibition in Finlandia Hall. Premises for the new services will come from underutilized facilities that have previously served as locker rooms, for example.

Glamping in the park and drinks on the rooftop terrace
Finlandia Hall's unique location on Töölönlahti Bay enables an expansion of activities outside of the building, on the shoreline and in the park.

– In summer the surroundings are ideal for arranging active park picnics. Finlandia Hall can expand its operations outdoors and provide an elegant setting for glamour-type picnics. We can provide oases, gazebos, games, food and drinks or tents for rent, for instance, Johanna Tolonen envisions.

Restaurant operation that extends to the park lowers the threshold of arriving for meals at the restaurants of Finlandia Hall. During the renovation, the kitchen will be modernized and made more distinct, so the working conditions of kitchen staff fulfil future requirements. The renewed restaurant concept will be situated in the place of the current Café Veranda, from where the restaurant world seamlessly continues to the park.

– The rooftop of Finlandia Hall offers an exceptionally gorgeous view of Töölönlahti Bay. The roof will be opened for use by consumers so they can hold weddings or dinner parties, for example. The planned attraction for the rooftop terrace is a drink bar that attracts both tourists and city residents. We will also see if we can open a pop-up sauna on the rooftop or street-level terrace, Tolonen says, shining a light on potential plans.

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