ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMME OF THE CITY OF OULU
The unique nature of Oulu is based on its strengths: the northern location, being surrounded by nature, waterways, landscape, young demographics, a fair spirit of cooperation, and a high level of expertise.

Oulu values its urban culture, cultural environments and architecture.

This Architectural Programme showcases the goal of an attractive, diverse and high-quality Oulu shared by all of its residents. The programme also suggests measures to meet the goal.

Architecture in Oulu means a high-quality built environment, from urban planning to the finest details of individual buildings. Good architecture is beautiful, functional and durable. It is considerate planning, careful design, wonderful views, spaces that remain imprinted in our minds, and the unmistakable spirit of the city.

An architecturally high-quality built environment is also financially sound, when considering its entire life cycle.
THE FOCAL POINTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMME

A CITY OF LIGHT AND EVENTS

In winter, the darkness of the northern polar night, snow and ice will be used as strengths by taking advantage of lighting and by organising light-themed events.

WATERWAYS AND SHORES PUT TO GOOD USE

Oulu is located by the sea and is home to three rivers. The city's waterside location will be utilised.

A CITY OF WALKING AND CYCLING

It will be even easier to move around Oulu on foot or by bike.

MORE RESIDENTS IN THE CENTRES

High-quality infill development that pays heed to the local cultural environment increases the attractiveness of the centres.

THE CITY AS A DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

Various urban development projects boost innovation and enable a diverse range of business activity.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF COOPERATION

Open dialogue within the City of Oulu and between residents and interest groups yields great results.

HIGH QUALITY THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITIONS

More architectural and other design competitions will be organised and various forms of competition will be actively developed. At least one international design competition will be organised during the term of each city council.

ATTRACTIVENESS THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN AREAS

A great number of easily accessible green areas increase residents' well-being.

FROM GOALS TO IMPLEMENTATION WITH HIGH QUALITY

The bar must be set high when setting goals, and sufficient resources must be allocated for meeting them in order to further improve the level of basic development in Oulu.
What does it mean to be from Oulu?
The sea, cycling, a university city, the northern capital, an easy-going lifestyle, the dam, technology, outdoor activities, forests, rivers, rapids, local villages, geological uplift, islets and routes between them, the paper mill in the evening, the pulp mill, the smell, Plaanaaja ditch and the surrounding parks.
Is architecture in Oulu locally recognisable and original, and does it stand out from the mainstream? Do we appreciate architecture in Oulu? Are we able to exploit the strengths and attractions of the city: its waterways, green areas and the northern location? Do we want to build long-lasting, beautiful, aesthetically pleasing, accessible environments and buildings? Do we hear what our residents are saying and can we make our decision-makers and other local operators commit to our common goal? Are we willing to follow international developments and put the best ideas into use?

The answer to all these questions is: YES!

The objective of this Architectural Programme is to make Oulu an attractive northern city of architecture. The programme suggest measures for the planning and development of our built environment that will help us reach our goal. The measures apply to the built environment in its entirety, from plans to buildings and outdoor fixtures. They direct the activities of the City of Oulu itself but also outline what the city expects of its cooperation partners and interest groups.

The work to compile Architectural Programmes started after the national Finnish Architectural Programme was completed in 1998. The city council approved the first Architectural Programme of the City of Oulu in 2002. The follow-up report from 2006 stated that the measures proposed in the programme had mainly been implemented. It is now time to draft a new programme for Oulu. The programme will implement the city strategy and support the goals of the vision for the city centre.

The work to compile this Architectural Programme was launched in 2015. A number of specialists, residents and interest group representatives have participated in the work over the last two years. A warm thanks to everyone concerned – let’s make Oulu a northern city of architecture together!

Oulu, Finland 20 January 2016

Matti Matinheikki
Director, Urban and Environmental Services, City of Oulu
Courage to experiment, Arctic and attracting innovation!

A SLOGAN FROM THE WORKSHOP
4 DECEMBER 2015
Oulu is a beautiful city of northern light, where history and modern architecture exist in perfect harmony. A well-functioning urban structure is surrounded by buzzing villages and a vibrant countryside. The city centre, the various local centres and regions each have their own identity and their own strengths.

The lively city of Oulu stands out positively from its competitors. It attracts students, new residents, entrepreneurs, investors and tourists alike. The city is home to myriad attractive spaces for different gatherings and events: market places, pedestrian areas and parks. In addition, Oulu is renowned for its diverse business life and excellent services. The preconditions for the development of various industries are good. Positive job development boosts the well-being of the entire area and diversifies its urban structure.

The objective is that Oulu becomes an internationally interesting and attractive place in which to invest in the north. Oulu will also be developed as a city of tourism and good transport connections. It is located by the sea and is home to three rivers. Because of this, water is an integral element of the city and the landscape. Thanks to its opportune location, the Oulujoki delta is and has always played the key role in the development of the city. The marine identity of the city of Oulu originates from various factors: nature and its appreciation, and treasuring the cultural environment, historical events and merchant shipping.

Oulu is a city of the young and thus has great potential for reforming itself. Oulu boldly seizes new ideas and follows international development trends. It is also an attractive city of business and commerce.
**HOUSING FOR EVERYONE**

- Residential architecture and housing types will be developed and forms of housing diversified by taking all demographic groups into account in the entire Oulu area.

- Developers are committed to high-quality architecture in residential development by the awarding of building sites through quality competitions or by cooperating with architectural offices that are successful in competitions and renowned for their high-quality work, for example.

- Developers are encouraged to pursue functional, high-quality residential solutions.

- The community is taken as one of the starting points for residential development.

- Quality standards for gardens and yards are improved, and special attention is paid to the development of courtyards and green areas in centres.

**A LIVELY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**

- A diversified and lively city is created by encouraging the co-existence of residences and workplaces in the urban structure.

- Planning will be used to provide companies with opportunities to expand their business and react flexibly to new needs.

- The urban environment is utilised as a development platform for business activity.

- New cooperation partners will be actively sought to offer innovative services and residential areas that utilise latest digital technologies.

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*A greener, whiter, livelier and more attractive city of the north!*

A SLOGAN FROM THE WORKSHOP

4 DECEMBER 2015
BY THE WATER

• A report and action plan will be drafted to highlight the city's location by the sea and the better use of shore areas.

• Recreation opportunities by the riverside will be developed and the preconditions for service supply will be created.

• The use of shore areas will be improved by increasing their openness, accessibility and extending seaside routes, for example.

• The Oulujoki delta city park will be made a top project in green area development.

• The banks of Kaupunginoja stream will be made to stand out better by using illumination, for example.

EVENTS AND ART

• Oulu will be made a city of light with light architecture, light art and light-themed events.

• Arts, events and experiences will be incorporated into planning, development and maintenance programmes.

• Urban space will be developed: squares, parks, streets and public indoor spaces will be turned into all-year-round function facilities available for all residents.

• Art will be introduced in public indoor and outdoor spaces, and the model in which one per cent of building costs being earmarked for art will be continued.

• Small-scale events and the spontaneous use of public spaces will be supported by clear permission and street art policies, for example.

Urban culture is about people interacting with each other, expressing themselves and enjoying life.

The urban spaces in Oulu offer a wide range of opportunities for interaction and organising events.
OULU OF MANY FACES

Oulu will be developed as a city of networks. The close-knit urban structure is surrounded by a vast rural area dotted with villages. High-quality environments are different from one area to another. In villages and along riversides, new construction will be made to match the environment as well as cultural and traditional landscapes. The historical continuum of the 400-plus year old city of Oulu, the integrity of urban spaces and landscapes as well as landmarks to facilitate orientation are the most important features to cherish. Diversity will be seen as an asset.

Oulu city centre will be developed as an attractive and nationally important centre of services and urban culture that offers a wide range of activities and services. The local centres of Haukipudas, Kiiminki and Oulunsalo, as well as Ylikiiminki and Yli-Ii, will be developed as the hearts of their areas. The centres of residential areas and their services function as meeting places for their residents. A rich cultural environment and diversified architecture strengthen the local identity of each area. Infill development will be promoted in all centres.

Oulu is easy to reach by car, train, or plane. Traffic junctions are also centres of urban life. It is easy to move around by bike or on foot in the city. Oulu is a pioneer in promoting cycling. Frequent public transport serves everyone moving around in the Oulu area. The city offers good opportunities for physical exercise and the maintenance of the health and well-being of its residents.

The starting points for the planning of public areas, squares, streets and parks will be the atmosphere of the place in question, its urban and landscape structure, and ease of use. Landscape architecture will support and enhance the strengths of the environment. Road and street architecture, along with green areas, are important parts of the cityscape and landscape.
A CITY OF VARIOUS CENTRES

- A Vision for the City Centre 2040 will be drafted for the city centre of Oulu, along with development plans for all local centres in the Oulu area, former municipal centres and districts.

- Public spaces that highlight the local identity and are easily accessible, such as market places, parks or squares, will be developed or renovated in all centres.

- Infill development and development platforms will be developed, and block models and model areas will be designed.

- Oulu city centre will be developed and expanded as a high-quality urban environment in line with the measures listed in the Vision for the City Centre 2040.

- The planning of access routes and infill development will be commenced. The pilot project will be Kemintie.

RESPECTING THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

- The values of the cultural environment will be recognised by means of updated inventories and architectural history reports.

- The updated assessment of the cultural environment will form the foundation for design and decision-making.

- The values of cultural environments will be secured by prioritising them in planning, repairs, maintenance, and the responsible owning and selling of real estate property.

- Local history and stories will be utilised as a basis for local identity. They will also be used as starting points for design, in learning materials and tourist information materials.

- Awareness of our cultural environment will be enhanced by placing cultural environments as stages for events and tourist attractions, by means of cultural environment walks, seminars and publications.

Cycling city of the north!

A SLOGAN FROM THE WORKSHOP
4 DECEMBER 2015
GETTING AROUND WITH EASE

- A well-functioning transport system will be created, and various forms of transport will be taken into account during planning. Pedestrian and cycling routes will be further developed.

- Oulu’s image as a cycling city will be enhanced by means of high-quality cycling routes and bicycle parking solutions, clear signage and cycle paths.

- A better service level in public transport will be promoted by means of infill development. Smoother public transport systems will be enabled, such as a city tram or driverless buses.

- More pedestrian space will be added to streets. The aesthetic and technical quality of street space will be improved.

- Parking norms for cars will be developed, particularly by means of infill development. Car-free areas will be piloted in the city centre.

GREEN POWER

- The integrity and continuity of the network of green areas will be secured throughout the entire city.

- Urban nature, its diversity and its benefits to residents will be taken into account in design planning.

- Parks located in areas for infill development will be developed more clearly from the perspectives of recreation and activities.

- Green areas in urban environments and on streets will be cherished, and valuable plants and biodiversity will be taken into consideration.

- The natural treatment of rainwater will be integrated as a part of urban planning. Rainwater will be utilised in particular in green areas and green arrangements on the streets.
A child-friendly, youthful, interactive and attractive city!

A SLOGAN FROM THE WORKSHOP 4 DECEMBER 2015
OU LU FOR EVERYONE

Oulu will be developed on the basis of the needs and wishes of its residents. It is a pioneer in the development of interactive planning. Oulu, a city for its residents, entrepreneurs, designers, builders and decision-makers, will be designed and developed together through the exchange of information, learning and setting goals together.

Oulu particularly emphasises the engagement of children and young people. The City of Oulu participates in UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities programme, and is therefore committed to long-term development for the benefit of children. Oulu has also declared itself the cultural capital of children, and offers high-quality cultural events for children every week.

Cooperation between various parties is smooth in planning and building processes. Quality is defined by means of mutual agreement, not by stringent regulations. Every party is responsible for quality. The planning of the urban environment is transparent. Easily accessible information of planning and building processes, from master planning to building work, will be generated to support successful dialogue. People are encouraged to participate in many ways by using modern tools and methods, for example. Cooperation between parties ensures that goals will be achieved, from planning to completion.

Architecture is actively used as a tool for urban development. It is used for highlighting the strengths of various areas, developing a local identity, strengthening fading areas, enhancing a safe and healthy environment, and increasing the well-being of residents. Planning and construction are used to prevent the segregation of various districts and to promote social equality. People living in Oulu will be encouraged to arrange activities on their own initiative as communities, so that they feel at home in their environments.

Architecture is for everyone. Oulu has long and renowned tradition of teaching architecture, from the days of Otto Ilivari Meurman to Reima Pietilä and the world we live in today. The very best talent graduate from the Oulu School of Architecture which can be seen in the unique, vibrant architecture throughout the city. Oulu is a hub of architects’ offices in the north.
TOGETHER FOR GOOD RESULTS

- Participation will be made an even more important part of planning and the design of streets, parks, public outdoor spaces and buildings.

- A participation plan will be made of the most important projects.

- Quality objectives will be made to cover all the processes of development, planning and construction projects, from the building stage to use and maintenance.

- Active cooperation with educational institutes will be enhanced by taking advantage of final projects and thesis works and competitions in the city's design and research projects, for example.

- The preconditions and scope of both private and public sector projects will be defined between the various units of the City of Oulu at an early stage.

NEW WAYS TO INTERACT

- Methods for participation and interaction will be developed to be timely and inspiring, such as by utilising games and social media.

- Digital technology will be exploited in developing map systems available for residents.

- Content supporting architectural education and the ability to understand our environment will be promoted, such as local educational material and architecture-themed games.

- Architecture will be made an important part of the communication procedure of the City of Oulu: material will be offered to media and new channels, and visibility will be actively sought. For example, architecture will be made a part of the programme selection of the Oulun Päivät theme weeks.

- New events related to the built environment and architecture will be developed in conjunction with the annual urban design seminar.

Architecture is a part of everyone’s daily life.

A COMMENT, ARCHITECTURE STUDENT, WORKSHOP 4 MAY 2016
YOUR ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

• Education open to all decision-makers and residents will be organised in the fields of architecture, community planning, cultural environments and construction.

• A new architectural guide to Oulu will be drafted.

• High-quality architecture in Oulu and the built environment will be made more prominent by means of themed walks, for example.

• International examples and good international practices can be studied on architecture excursions by the building supervision authorities.

• Good practices in Oulu will be developed to shed light on high-quality architecture. For example, the Arkkitehtuuria Oulussa (Architecture in Oulu) series of books will be continued to be published. An annual award for excellent architecture will be established.

The City of Oulu directs the quality of our built environment through various working groups, including the cityscape working group, the building protection working group and the visual arts working group.

The role of these groups must be strengthened and their visibility as a part of the organisation of the City of Oulu must be increased. The Urban Committee and the Building Supervision Committee are the elected administrative bodies that make most decisions related to the built environment. In addition to official meetings, various training events, seminars and excursions are important events for common learning.
OUlu, The High-Quality City

The best available expertise in Oulu is utilised in the design of the built environment. The design work will be based on a thorough knowledge of the built cultural environment, local nature conditions, and the values of the natural environment. Urban spaces and buildings are designed and built to be of high architectural quality, functional, durable, accessible and safe. They must be easily accessible, attractive and healthy.

Cost and environmental impacts for the entire lifespan will be taken into account in design and construction. High-quality environments are durable, easy to maintain, repairable and flexible. Good design and construction work will see a return on its investment – and bring added value. Oulu will build a valuable cultural environment for the future.

Buildings will be made durable, modifiable, easy to use and with low energy consumption. The environment in Oulu as well as its buildings are suitable for all users. High-quality basic and advanced education in the construction sector will guarantee the professional skills of those working in the field.

The City of Oulu encourages high-quality building by means of quality control on behalf of the building supervision services, among others, and it sets an example when developing public buildings. The City of Oulu values design and carries out tendering procedures with a focus on quality.
TOOLS FOR GOOD DESIGN

• Sufficient resources are allocated for planning and the entire lifespan will be considered when designing the built environment.

• Design competitions will be organised for important public buildings, residential and infill development, among other things, in order to unearth fresh ideas and alternative solutions.

• Competition procedures will be developed in cooperation with those working in the field.

• Instructions will be given to recognise the importance of quality objectives during the building permit process. Functional and durable solutions are expected of designers, architects and builders.

• The professional skills of personnel of the City of Oulu, for example in procurements, will be developed by means of varying tasks and participation in training events, seminars and excursions.

SOLUTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

• The quality of public construction will be improved by implementing the energy efficiency and environmental goals set for new and infill development in the six largest Finnish cities, the Terve talo (healthy house) criteria, and the Kuivaketju10 (dry chain) operating model.

• The contents of quality control in building supervision will be developed in order to meet technical and architectural quality goals by means of instruction cards, start-up meetings and training events, among other things.

• Public buildings will be built in compliance with new service concepts.

• Sufficient resources and time will be allocated for building work.
TOP SHAPE – ALWAYS

- Buildings and environments in Oulu will be taken care of in such a way that they will maintain their value and characteristics.

- The maintenance and repair of buildings in Oulu is systematic and based on sufficient surveys and research.

- A commitment is made to develop the practices of infill construction and to continue the development of building supervision, with the allocation of sufficient resources.

- An allowance is earmarked every year for the basic renovation of public sites that have high cultural and historical value.

- A quality manual is produced for the public areas, streets, parks and squares in Oulu. The quality manual will define quality goals for the use of materials, fixtures and vegetation in various parts of the city in order to strengthen their local identities.

- The attractiveness of the city, bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and the quality of the environment will be improved through regular and sufficiently funded maintenance of public areas.

The northern city of Oulu is a vibrant city of five seasons. Oulu is an expert in good winter city design and winter maintenance work.

A SLOGAN FROM THE WORKSHOP
4 DECEMBER 2015
The compilation of this Architectural Programme started in February 2015. The programme has been prepared in extensive dialogue with residents and various interest groups. A total of over 400 responses were received to the internet-based questionnaire on the image of Oulu which was open to all residents in Oulu in spring 2015. A total of eight meetings with residents and interest groups were held. Workshops were organised for decision-makers in June 2015 and February 2016. Two workshops were organised for the experts of the City of Oulu. The project was presented in urban planning and design seminars in 2015 and 2016. A workshop and innovation competition was organised among the students of the Oulu School of Architecture in spring 2016. A steering group and a working group were created with expert officials from the City of Oulu.

Extensive cooperation and commitment to the measured proposed are needed in order to meet the goals of the Architectural Programme. The Urban and Environmental Services Department is responsible for the follow-up of the implementation of the measures. A follow-up report will be created during each term of office of the City Council.

Oulu City Board 20 February 2017
Oulu City Council 3 April 2017
ARCHITECTURE IS A PART OF EVERYONE’S DAILY LIFE.

VISION: OULU IS THE NORTHERN CITY OF ARCHITECTURE!

This Architectural Programme showcases the goal of an attractive, diverse and high-quality Oulu shared by its residents. The programme also suggests measures to meet this goal.