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 1903, 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)
4. MUNICIPAL LIBRARY (1964–1965)
5. GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING (1966–1968)

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 modernist expression represented by the Aalto Centre.

During his exceptionally wide and varied career, Aalto designed houses, individual houses and culture buildings as well as entire residential districts, educational institutions, 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.

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 foundations in the naves, the choir stalls and pews, the altar cloths, the stained glass in the chapel, and the fountains 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 city centre high bell tower of the church is Seinäjoki’s landmark.

3. City Hall

The black ceramic fan-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 1970s adapted for use in workspaces.

4. Library

Aalto made the drawings for the theatre in 1956, but the building was completed only in 1987 as part of Aalto’s supervision. The building’s facade is made of matt white ceramic tiles. The doors of the spacious foyer consists of Aalto’s design products. Aalto’s unique collection of six bent wooden reliefs is on display in the foyer.

5. Office Building

Book a trained guide to the Aalto Centre from South Ostrobothnia Tourist Service Ltd., tel. +358 6 420 9090 and +358 6 420 9091.

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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.

6. Theatre

Aalto Centre, Koulukatu 21
www.seinajoki.fi/aaltoinenglish

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www.seinajoki.fi
www.seinajoenseurakunta.fi
Alvar Aalto – Seinäjoki City Centre

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