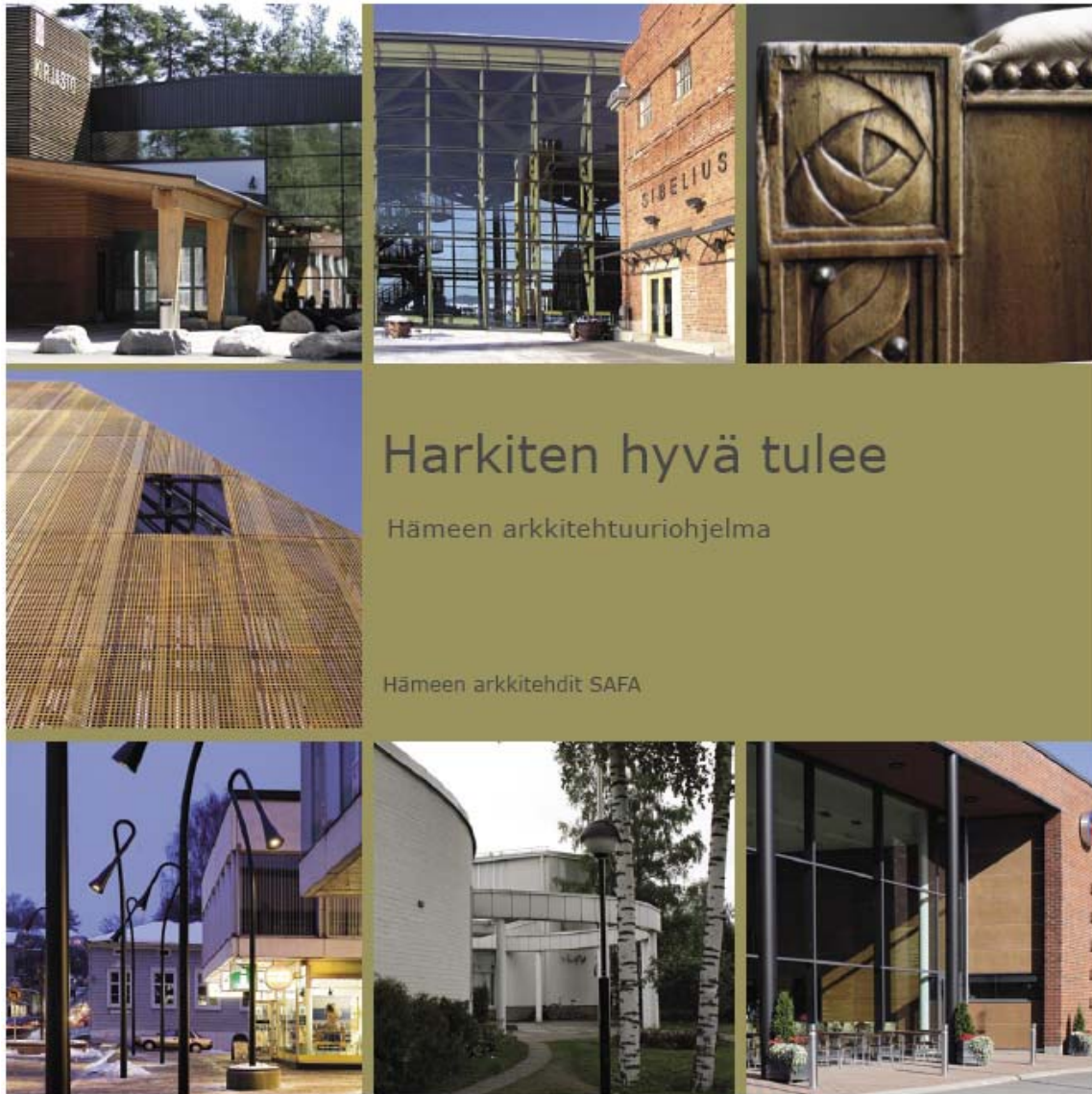


Careful consideration brings the best results

The Häme architecture programme



Harkiten hyvä tulee

Careful consideration brings the best results

The Häme architecture programme

The Finnish Association of Architects, Häme Chapter

Area covered by the Häme architecture programme

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Foreword

The Häme architecture programme

Harkiten hyvä tulee is the architectural policy programme for Kanta and Päijät-Häme. It assesses the present state of the built environment, sets targets for the future and proposes action for meeting those targets.

For many people, the environment of Häme is already good as it is. In the future, it may well stand out to advantage from the rest of Finland. Häme's trump cards may well be the humanity of the living environment, the *genius loci* of Häme and the quality of its building.

The Häme architecture programme provides a framework for local architectural policy. We hope that municipalities, enterprises and private individuals will take the targets set out in the programme into consideration in their own activities.

The ideas in the Häme architecture programme are intended to be borrowed, refined, applied and of course, constructed.

Architecture breeds well-being

In a congenial environment, people, society and the economy all do well. When a neighbourhood has a strong spirit of its own, people and enterprises see it as a part of themselves. A good built environment puts down roots.

In construction, good design is always worthwhile. It pays for itself many times over: in people's well-being, in the functionality of the environment, in the form of built wealth, goodwill and advertising.

Firmness, commodity and delight – the cornerstones of architecture laid down thousands of years ago, still apply. Although style and criticism may change, the principles of good building remain. The cornerstones of architecture still produce a sound built environment in twenty-first century Häme.

1. Genius loci in Häme

1.1 The Häme landscape

Beyond compare

The Häme landscape is quintessentially Finnish. The whole nation knows the Häme landscape from films, art and literature. It has a strong symbolic position in the Finnish psyche.

The Häme landscape is dominated by bodies of water, ridges and forests. Ancient villages and the long history of agriculture have left a strong cultural feeling on the landscape, which has been supplemented by new towns and built-up areas. Harsh and barren wilderness landscapes, huge expanses of lake water and forest highlands form a peaceful counterbalance to the man-made environment.

State highways and expanding towns

The regional structure of Häme is hinged around the provincial centres, Hämeenlinna and Lahti. The region is developing most strongly in two zones reaching from Helsinki, via Hämeenlinna to Tampere, and via Lahti to Heinola. Over the years, the largest communities have grown into towns or cities with strong characters of their own, surrounded by lively rural areas.

Häme has a long history as a nodal point for traffic. It is still possible to travel along ancient roadways and on one of the first railways in the country. Such routes are nowadays supplemented by motorways, new railway tracks and other rapid-transit links.

For many people, the location of Häme is excellent in terms of transport. The proximity of the biggest cities in Finland and the efficient transport network which permits international interchange make Häme an interesting and attractive part of the Helsinki metropolitan area.

Signs of change

The environment of Häme is in a continuous state of flux as the speed of construction is now greater than ever before. Because of its proximity to the Helsinki metropolitan area and to good transport connections, new areas are continually being taken into use for building.

Towns and built-up areas are expanding and dominated by single-family houses. In the hinterland between town and country, environments may come into being that lack the typical characteristics of both a good urban environment and a good rural environment.

New commercial building is located particularly near good transport links. Shop and office buildings are large and alter the roadside landscape. In addition to construction, the extraction of sand and gravel from the ground alters the landscape.

Construction of holiday homes continues to dominate new shoreline areas and other places in the bosom of nature. Summer cottages tend to be used all the year round to an ever greater extent. New holiday homes often correspond to single-family houses in terms of size and standard of equipment.

In the Häme of the future

- The beautiful and varied landscape will attract residents and businesses. Even in renewal it will retain the features characteristic of Häme and its position as a symbol of Finnishness.
- The social structure will be ecologically, economically and culturally sustainable and function as an integral part of the overall structure of southern Finland.
- Town centres and church villages will be preserved as viable centres that can be developed to supplement the village network.

What has to be done in Häme

- In construction, planning and other activities that have an impact on the environment, the characteristics of the landscape, its values and local features will have to be clarified in advance.
- Community structure will have to be preserved and remain functional by means of land-use planning. Cooperation between land-use planning and traffic planning will have to be increased.
- Municipalities will have to step up land-use and planning policy in their own areas and cooperate with others across municipal boundaries.
- The characteristic features of the Häme landscape will have to be studied and advice on care of the landscape will have to be increased. Cooperation with experts on the Häme landscape will need to be developed.
- The seasons and the impact of climate change will have to be taken into account in landscaping and environmental design.

///Figure//

In 25 years, 7.59 million square metres gross of residential buildings have been built in Kanta and Päijät-Häme. This equates to approximately 38,000 fairly large single-family houses. If each house were on a site of say 1,000 square metres, and the sites were laid end to end, they would stretch for 1,214 km, i.e. from one end of Finland to the other.

Million square metres gross
Year

Other buildings
Office and commercial buildings
Industrial and storage buildings
Residential buildings
//Figure ends//

1.2 Space for living and space for being

The immediate surroundings are of great importance to people's experience of the world. A beautiful environment favourably affects people's well-being and increases the value of the buildings located in it. Congeniality of the immediate surroundings is greatly appreciated when choosing a place to live.

The settings of Häme tell us something about the life to be lived there: there are historic cultural settings, urban settings that are full of life, settings we pass by in a hurry, lively village settings and peaceful green areas. Every view helps us to form our own picture of Häme and its residents.

On the city streets

The overall appearance of the built environment affects the character of cities. The atmosphere is derived from the interplay between the buildings, the streets, the parks, the squares and the visible infrastructure. A successful urban fabric that suits the landscape is a sound basis for a congenial urban milieu and artistic urban details.

Squares, piazzas and streets are the residents' shared living rooms. Pedestrian precincts and other public outdoor spaces liven up the centres of cities and act as stages for all manner of events from going to the shops to street parties. They provide places to stop and look at the urban architecture, of which parks, too, form an important part in Häme.

On the rural village street

The church villages (not all villages in Finland have a church) are the historical centres in rural areas. The main streets and high streets are lined with municipal, parish, cooperative and association buildings and, of course, shops, all of different periods. Their architecture tells an interesting story, not only about the history of the neighbourhood, but about the present, too.

The lively villages are one of the great riches of the Häme countryside. Often hundreds of years old, these villages are situated along the edges of ancient traffic routes. Finnish traditional and vernacular building can be seen in the villages as a continuing part of them. Spread out in the Häme countryside, too, there are an unusually large number of manor-houses which, over the centuries, have been pioneers in styles of architecture and construction techniques.

The parts of the countryside that have not been built on are of major importance as a part of the Häme environment and its congeniality. Fields and forests are taken care of by a flourishing agricultural and forestry economy. National parks and leisure areas are important free-time oases that are supplemented by hiking routes and a network of smaller parks.

From one place to another

Häme's location, in the middle part of southern Finland, brings with it a good deal of through traffic. Transport routes and their surroundings are the most used and most seen parts of Häme and the views from transport routes give the traveller a first impression of Häme and an overall picture of it. The Lahti radio masts, the Castle of Hämeen linna and the Tähtisilta bridge at Heinola, all of which can be seen from the motorways, have become symbols of their respective cities.

Ease of mobility is important for people's well-being whether they travel by bus, car, train or bicycle, or walk. The streetscapes and approach roads to towns and cities, municipalities and industrial estates are the best advertisements for them and make the best visiting cards, while the main streets in towns and cities have the same kind of image value.

Signs of change

Many of the built-up areas in Häme are developing rapidly. Towns, cities and municipalities are acquiring their images by means of architecture and town planning. Symbols of viability include pedestrian precincts, cultural and commercial buildings, housing-fair areas and other distinctive residential areas. Architecture is not just a way of

building space, but is also a way of constructing the overall appearance of a town and making it attractive.

The appearance of town centres and roadsides is changing. Industrial and storage buildings are moving outside towns and cities, particularly along major transport routes, and new uses are being sought for the buildings left empty in town and city centres. Trade is moving more and more to major traffic intersections.

Private car traffic is increasing and this highlights the impact of traffic on the environment. More and more space is needed for traffic. The challenge is to develop a functional public transport system, but at the same time create an environment for cyclists and pedestrians that is unobstructed and human in scale.

The scale of building is changing. Spaces not only for trade, industry and agriculture, but also for living, are getting bigger and bigger. Traffic environments, too, are getting progressively larger. Large-scale environments need particularly skilful planning so that the human scale of the immediate surroundings is not lost.

In the Häme of the future

- New architecture will create new settings and enrich the old.
- The built environment will be congenial and human in scale in towns and villages.
- The built environment will be in balance with the areas that have not been built on to form a complete entity.
- The quality of the environment and the level of services will be in line with the wishes of the residents.
- Traffic environments will be functional and visually interesting.
- Public transport will work well, while walking and cycling will be genuine alternatives for everyday mobility.
- Construction of parks and green areas will be top class for Finland.

What has to be done in Häme

- The starting point for design or for changing milieus must be the characteristics of the environment. Special attention will need to be paid to townscape, history, human scale and greenery.
- Alternative, high-quality solutions will have to be found for milieu problems through architectural competitions.
- Traffic environments and traffic landscapes will have to be developed so as to boost the image of province and neighbourhood. Special attention will have to be paid to quality,

- safety and unobstructed access, and to public transport and pedestrian and cycle ways.
- Interaction between buildings and green areas will need to be increased.

1.3 Buildings to meet needs

A building is an inseparable part of the environment. The setting defines the building's overall appearance just as much as its function does. In a harmonious building, the interior spaces and the details continue the visual appearance of landscape, setting and exterior architecture. In addition to *genius loci* (the spirit of the place), every building tells us something about the spirit of the age and about the culture that has created the building.

In buildings of bygone ages, the spirit of Häme is strongly present. They were built on their sites subject to the conditions set by the terrain and by their function; they were built with careful consideration, wisely and in accordance with local building traditions. The built cultural heritage that has created an identity for Häme includes the Castle of Hämeen linna, a substantial number of medieval stone churches, the administrative buildings in the cities, the manor-houses, farmhouses and crofters' cottages, and the old industrial buildings. Some of these old buildings are still in use as originally intended, but new uses have been found for some of the others.

Nowadays, influences on building are more national and international than local. Pre-fabricated components are being used more and more for building, but still the landscape and the setting form the starting point for the building designer. Although the high-quality building of today departs considerably from the traditions of Häme, there are nevertheless plenty of ingredients to reinforce identity and *genius loci*. A modern building will complement and enrich the environment by fitting in and standing out in the right proportion.

Architecture is a practical art that lives with people and with the times. From the point of view of the buildings themselves, it is best that they remain in use as much as possible as they get older. At their best, alterations and additions create beautiful layers for buildings that represent their own time.

Signs of change

Construction techniques change and grow more complex. More and more new materials come onto the market. Because of this, the technical and visual quality of buildings depends more and more on the professional skill of designer and builder.

Our building stock is ageing. For economic reasons, buildings have to be maintained systematically and on a regular basis with prevention in mind. The best of our modern architecture will one day become valuable antiques.

More and more attention will have to be paid to providing unobstructed access to buildings and the environment. In housing, the focus will be on people's need for more and more space, on quality issues and on the needs of the ageing population.

The building stock in rural areas is being renewed. New production equipment and ever-larger units are changing the built landscape in the countryside. Hay-barns and milk platforms are disappearing. Locating new buildings, production and storage units in the rural landscape calls for skilful planning.

In the Häme of the future

- There will be a demand for high-quality architecture that recognises local characteristics.
- New architecture will be in harmony with the old built environment.
- The technical, functional and visual quality of building will be good.
- Protection of buildings will call for the identification of buildings that are important in terms of cultural history or architecture. Residents will understand the importance of protecting buildings.

What has to be done in Häme

- Long-life and loose-fit will have to be taken into account when designing new buildings.
- Unobstructed access will have to be accepted as a key aim in building.
- Each municipality will have to develop a strategy for protecting buildings that will recognise the need for protection of both the old building stock and modern architecture.
- Old buildings will have to be converted to new uses that respect their history and their architectural value.

2. Building Häme

2.1 Beauty through planning

Controlled development of the built environment starts from planning. General plans, which include regional plans and municipal master plan, are used for planning the geographical locations of different activities and the way people move about between them. Detailed plans, which include town plans and local detailed plans, are used for planning the built environment and its external appearance.

From the point of view of people and the immediate built environment, some of the most important plans are the town plans drawn up by the municipalities. They are primarily instruments for shaping the townscape and protecting buildings as they are used to specify in detail the size, location and use of buildings, parks and streets. In approving the plans, municipal decision-makers act as generators for the development of townscape and creators of the framework for architecture.

In planning nowadays, the aim is for an active exchange of ideas between local residents, decision-makers and planners. This can be achieved best by using a language everyone understands and sufficiently illustrative images. The impact of building on the environment can easily be pictured using information technology.

The competition between municipalities for new enterprises has combined business policy with land-use planning more strongly than ever. In addition to this, the municipalities' genuinely competitive trump cards include the quality of their living environments and public outdoor spaces, plus the activeness of their communities. Congenial urban spaces attract not only residents and tourists, but also businesses. A well-planned environment can be seen as a success for the community that has built it.

In the Häme of the future

- Those who commission plans and those who draw them up will be skilled professionals.
- Regional plans, master plans and town plans will be mutually dependent and form a complete functional entity.
- The steering of municipal land-use policy, planning and building will be linked together.
- Planning will respect the *genius loci* of Häme.

What has to be done in Häme

- Planning will have to be used as a tool in the architectural design of townscape, urban spaces and a beautiful built environment.
- Municipalities will have to update their plans on a regular basis and the impacts of planning will need to be assessed in an appropriate manner.
- Adequate personnel and financial resources will have to be applied to community planning.
- The relationship between regional planning and municipal planning will need to be developed and cooperation over land use at the regional level will have to be stepped up.
- The mutual interdependence of master plans and town plans will need to be developed within the municipalities.
- Architectural expertise will have to be available to all municipalities.
- The status of 'area architects' as experts on municipal land use will need to be improved.
- Municipal and regional decision-makers will have to be trained to understand the legend used on plans and in planning.

2.2 Putting ideas into action

From need to commission

A construction project can be initiated by a private individual, a company or a public organisation. Whoever starts the project is in an important position insofar as he outlines targets for the quality of the building and for the way it fits in with the environment. The most important decisions are made early on in the launch phase and decisions made later in the project are the result of decisions made earlier. Since a completed building is going to have an impact on the lives of those who use it for decades, perhaps even centuries, it is important to communicate the far-reaching nature of the very first decisions.

Organisations constructing major projects have to decide who to commission to design the building. It is reasonable to expect architects and technical designers to have experience of similar projects. If the job is a particularly challenging one, a design competition is a useful way of finding alternative design approaches.

From design to building

The architect aims for an aesthetic, functional and efficient building that fits in well with the environment. He tries to realise the client's wishes as fully as possible. This is most successful when client and

architect both speak the same language and there is effective dialogue between them. Drawings and computers help to illustrate the architect's ideas to the client.

The principal designer is responsible for the construction project as a whole. He takes care of the aesthetics and functionality of the building and ensures that the technical systems are compatible. In practice, the principal designer is usually the architect. The principal designer has to be involved with the project right from the start so that he can influence the design at the appropriate moment.

When a building needs repair

The proportion of renovation work to all building work is growing. For renovation work to be ecologically and financially viable it has to involve a preventative aspect. Continual and correct maintenance of buildings is an economic, ecological and cultural act.

For the environment of Häme to retain its own distinctive character, there has to be sufficient knowledge about renovating existing buildings and an adequate supply of professionally skilled labour available to do it. Repair and renovation work calls for special expertise and experience from the designer. It is important that competent craftsmen are available to carry out the work. A high level of skilled craftsmanship opens up all kinds of possibilities in new building, too.

In the Häme of the future

- Architectural design and building will be high quality.
- Renovation work will be carried out by experts and involve a preventative aspect.
- Local housing construction will be the best in Finland.
- Clients will be aware of their responsibility for the success of construction projects.
- The principles of sustainable development will be of key importance in decision-making associated with building.
- The Land Use and Building Act will be interpreted the same way in all municipalities and building control procedures will proceed smoothly.
- The construction sector will be attractive and have a sound image.

What has to be done in Häme

- We have to build beautiful, long-lasting architecture.
- The public administration will have to set an example in construction projects.
- Selection of designers and awarding contracts through competitive tender action will have to be based principally on quality.
- Enterprises in Häme will have to take an active part in competitive tendering.
- The position of the principal designer as leader of the design team will have to become established.
- Construction companies will need to develop their services to respond to the needs of the client.
- Construction industry product development projects will have to rely on the architectural expertise of Häme.
- The renovation sector will need to be expanded.

The history of environmental design in Häme

The right-hand page shows an environmental rose to illustrate how a successful building or a successful environment is an achievement by a large group from many different fields and with many different values. Structural design and building services design are carried out at the same time as architectural design. All those taking part, from the client and the designers, right through to the builders, have an impact on the success of the final result.

///Figure//

// Technical quality / Visual quality / Ecological quality / Social quality / Economic quality /

Phase 1: Each sub-sector of construction is brought in as part of the environment //

// Technical quality / Visual quality / Ecological quality / Social quality / Economic quality /

Better environment

Phase 2: Each sub-sector is taken into account in the design work to a greater or lesser extent //

// Functional environment /

Phase 3: Too much emphasis on any one of the sub-sectors produces a poor result //

// Technical quality / Visual quality / Ecological quality / Social quality / Economic quality /

Functional environment

Phase 4: The importance of different sub-sectors has been understood. For most people, the result is a sustainable environment //

3. Learning for all ages

3.1 Architecture from the cradle

Architecture is part of everyone's life. It is present in our everyday environment and affects our daily life in many ways. Not everybody has anything to do with architecture in a professional sense, but everybody makes decisions at some time in their lives that have a bearing directly or indirectly on architecture.

The technical and visual skills required in architecture can be taught and studied. It is an independent and practical art form supported by other forms of art. General education in architecture is well-suited to pre-school and comprehensive school, art school and adult education. Exhibitions and open seminars support learning. The media has an important role in making architecture familiar to all.

When information about architecture is available, it increases interest in architecture. Everyone has their own personal idea about the kind of environment that is congenial and beautiful. Teaching about architecture helps to form and develop these ideas about beauty and the civic skills to go with them. It broadens the picture of architecture and enables one to evaluate the environment.

The basic requirement for developing a shared environment is the understanding and support of every resident. A person who has the basics of architecture at his command is in a position to demand architectural quality in the environment. Basic skills also give everyone a shared terminology and a common language they can use to take part in public and private debate about architecture more easily. The artistic and cultural life of an area becomes stronger and more varied when architecture becomes an inseparable part of it.

In the Häme of the future

- Every citizen will be skilled in the basics of architecture and building so that they are equipped to demand a high-quality environment.
- Information about the architecture of one's own home district and one's own neighbourhood will be readily available.
- Elected officials in positions of trust will be aware of the social importance of architecture.
- Architecture and building will be regularly covered by the media in a critical manner.
- Good architecture will be a highly valued tourist environment.

What has to be done in Häme

- Children will have to be introduced to architecture and building in nurseries and schools, and students at art schools, adult education centres and other colleges of free education will need to be taught about them, too.
- People will have to be introduced to the history of architecture in their own neighbourhoods by, for example, publishing teaching packages about the architecture of Häme for different target groups, plus maps and guides for architectural sight-seeing tours.
- Architects will have to take part in art education.
- Exhibitions, city walks, theme days and other events associated with architecture will have to be organised.

3.2 Only the best is good enough

Quality building requires thorough professional expertise. It is needed by the entire sector from the design stage to the construction stage. In Häme, there is a long and solid building tradition. New buildings, too, will last for generations to come.

As well as designers, the people that produce architecture and the built environment include the clients (or building owners) and the builders. The client decides on the purpose, location, construction method and size of a construction project, and selects the designers and the builders. Through project planning and contract placement, the client is of key importance to the quality and appearance of the built environment.

The action of civil servants and decision-makers occupying positions of trust has a significant impact on the development of the built environment in their municipality. Decisions are made by local

politicians and, by virtue of their profession, by building inspectors, for example.

Training in the construction sector is provided in Häme by polytechnics, vocational training colleges and professional skills centres. University education in the construction sector is provided not far away in Helsinki and Tampere.

Qualified professionals in the construction sector need training, too. The construction sector changes rapidly in terms of technology and regulations, so that those working in the sector need continuous learning. Such training is the responsibility both of the individual and the working community. The construction sector maintains various registers of qualified professionals who exercise their profession on a continuous basis and take part in continuing supplementary training.

In the future, there may well be a scarcity of professionals in the construction sector, as many of them will soon be retiring. The situation will become critical if the construction industry boom continues. The construction sector in Häme must remain attractive and its image must remain strong.

In the Häme of the future

- Studying for the construction sector will be popular and people will enjoy working in it.
- Building design and environmental design, construction and construction management will be in good, qualified hands.
- Skills centres specialising in residential building and renovation will distribute information about it to those who need it.
- Training for the construction sector will be carried on continuously.
- Research and development work in the construction sector will be performed actively.

What has to be done in Häme

- Designers will have to be trained for renovation and extension design work and for other artistic and scientific needs.
- Decision-makers and elected officials in positions of trust working in municipal planning and building control will have to be trained to understand architecture.
- Towns, cities and municipalities, and organisations and enterprises will have to offer thesis subjects and practical training positions to students in the construction sector.
- Teaching in the construction sector will need to be developed to respond to the changing needs of working life in cooperation with municipalities and enterprises.

- Joint supplementary training events will have to be developed for the construction sector on a local basis to provide training in project planning and other areas.
- Training in the construction sector will always need to include some architectural training.
- In design firms there will need to be an emphasis on quality competence and IT expertise.

Harkiten hyvä tulee

Careful consideration brings the best results

The Häme architecture programme has been drawn up by the Häme Chapter of the Finnish Association of Architects, the local SAFA organisation in Kanta- and Päijät-Häme. The content of the programme has been worked on since 2003 using a wide range of methods. At various stages of the process, cooperation partners of the SAFA Häme Chapter have also been involved and we wish to thank them for their constructive suggestions and fresh ideas.

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