



STO

**TOWN GUIDE
HELSINKI**



Stone Town Guide Helsinki

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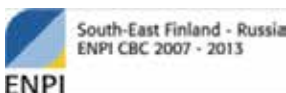
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STONE

TOWN GUIDE

HELSINKI





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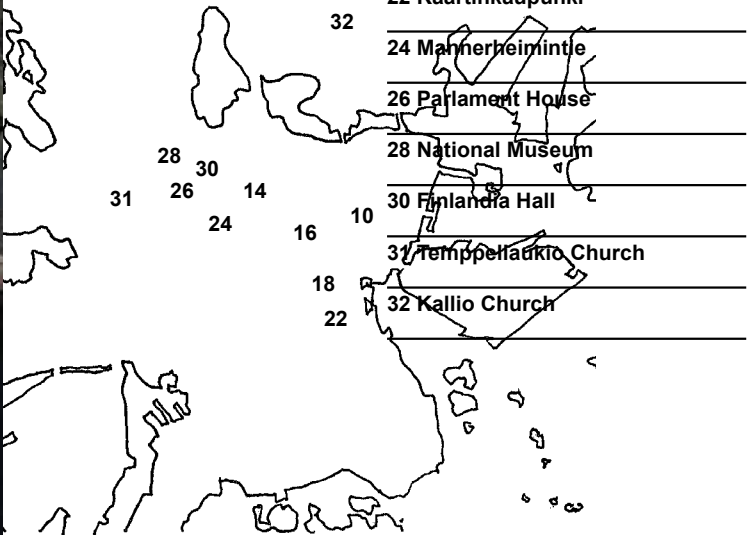
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The King of Sweden, Gustav Vasa, decided to found the city of Helsinki in 1550, intending it to be a competitor to Tallinn, a Hanseatic League member, over trade with Russia. The mouth of the Vantaanjoki River was selected as the location of the new town. However, the location of the town at the bottom of a shallow bay was not favourable. In the middle of the 17th century, a decision was made to move the town to Vironiemi, the current Kruunuhaka. Helsinki languished greatly even in the new location. In the middle of the 18th century, it was decided to found a fortress, Viapori, later known as Suomenlinna, on the islands in front of the city. Construction began in 1748. Building the fortress made the town more lively.

A turning point in the history of Helsinki occurred when Finland became a part of Russia as an autonomous grand duchy in 1809. In 1812, the Emperor of Russia ruled that Helsinki would be the capital of the grand duchy. At the same time, substantial construction began in the town, led by Johan Albrecht Ehrenström's town plan and Carl Ludvig Engel's building plans. It was at this time that Helsinki received a grid plan and the most notable public buildings in the town centre.





The cityscape has experienced many major changes since the end of the 19th century. First, wooden houses made way for highrises in the centre of the town and the town expanded. The city grew extensively in the 20th century and especially the commercial centre has seen significant changes. Layers of different eras and styles are evident in the city, and of course old buildings have been demolished and new ones have been built.

Highrises built at the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century typically have a massive full brick wall as the supporting structure. At that time, natural stone was often used in the foundation wall and the base. Depending on the architectural style, natural stone claddings treated in various ways were popular during different decades. At the change of the century, during the National Romantic era, granite was a very typical material in façade cladding. The use of natural stone cladding decreased by the middle of the century. Since then, natural stone façades have been made from thin stone plates that were either attached by plaster or hung by metal brackets.

We have selected some typical stone buildings from different periods. In Helsinki you can find more stone buildings. Several buildings have also natural stone bases or small amounts of natural stone in their façades but these have not been included in this review.



SENATE SQUARE





Senate Square is dominated by **Helsinki Cathedral**, designed by Carl Ludwig Engel. The construction of the church started in 1830 and it was consecrated in 1852. After Engel passed away, the exterior architecture experienced some major changes. According to E. B. Lohrmann's blueprints, side towers were added to the church, as well as pavilions on both sides of the staircase that descends to Senate Square.

Originally, there was a main guard building on the side of the Senate Square, which was replaced by monumental staircases. The church itself is rough-cast, and there is natural stone in the base, the plinth structure and the massive staircase structure.





Government Palace, originally the Senate House, is located on the east side of the Senate Square, opposite the main building of the University of Helsinki. The first phase of the building, facing the Senate Square, was completed according to Carl Ludwig Engel's blueprints in 1822. The sections of the building on the other sides of the block were built partially at the end of the 1820s, partially in the 1850s and the last sections were built at the beginning of the 20th century. The façade is roughcast and the tall base layer is made from natural stone.

The main building of the University is located on the west side of Senate Square, opposite Government Palace. The building, designed by Carl Ludwig Engel, was completed in 1832. The main building of the University and Government Palace form a symmetrical pair. However, there are some differences in the details, for example in the colonnades. The façade is roughcast and the tall base layer is made from natural stone.

National Library of Finland, originally the library of the University of Helsinki, was built in 1836-1840, and the utilisation of the building started in 1845. The address of the building is **Unioninkatu 36** and it is located opposite the main entrance to Helsinki Cathedral. The façade is roughcast and the base is made from natural stone.



Located in the corner of Senate Square, **Nordea Bank's Finnish main office (Unioninkatu 32)**, originally the main office of the Union Bank of Finland, later Nordic Union Bank, was completed in 1936. The architect was Ole Gripenberg. The building differs greatly from the other milieu of Senate Square.



RAILWAY SQUARE

Ateneum was completed in 1887, at **Kaivokatu 2**. The building was designed by Carl Theodor Höijer. There is granite in the base of the building. This stone was also used in the decorations of the façade.

Finnish National Theatre is located on the north side of the **Railway Square**. The building was completed in 1902 and the architect is Onni Tarjanne. The architecture of the building represents the National Romantic style. The main façade is made from Uusikaupunki granite and Pielisjärvi steatite, while the roof is made from red bricks and copper. The building was expanded on the north side in the 1930s, and Pieni näyttämö (small stage) on the Kaisaniemi side was built in the 1950s. The designers were Kaija and Heikki Siren. The whole building was renovated during the first decade of the 21st century.

The **railway station**, designed by Eiel Saarinen, was completed in 1914. Granite was used on the façade. Unlike for example steatite, it is not possible to use granite to create rich details, which means decorations made from granite are always rougher.





ALEKSANTERINKATU



Designed by Lars Sonck, the **Helsinki Stock Exchange** building was completed in 1911, at **Fabianinkatu 14**. The stone cladding on the building's façade, with its many decorations typical of the era, is very beautiful.



Pohjola Insurance Company building (Aleksanterinkatu 44) represents the National Romantic style. The building was designed by Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen. Finnish granite and steatite were used on the building's façade. There are several different sculptural motifs on the façade, and the texture of the façade changes from roughness at the street level to a smoother surface toward the top.



ESPLANADI





Designed by Alvar Aalto, **the main office of Stora Enso**, originally the main office of Enso-Gutzeit, (**Kanavaranta 1**) was completed in 1962. Marble was used on the building's façade. While the building differs from the other constructions in Katajanokka, it joins the group of buildings on the Market Square, forming the end of Esplanadi.



The main office of UPM-Kymmene (Eteläesplanadi 2) was built in 1910-1912 as an office building for Insurance Company Suomi. The architect was Karl Lindahl.

The former building of the Mortgage Society of Finland, at Eteläesplanadi 16, was completed in 1908. The building was designed by Lars Sonck. The architecture of the building represents the transition from the liberal change-of-the-century style toward classical symmetry. The building was made taller in the 1950s and 1960s. The façade is made from polished light grey granite from Uusikaupunki.





The former **Wasa-Aktie-Banken's** building, at **Eteläesplanadi 12/ Kasarminkatu 27** (in the corner of Eteläesplanadi and Kasarminkatu), was designed by the office of architects Grahn, Hedman and Wasastjerna, and the building was completed in 1899. Architecturally, the building represents an interesting combination of several styles. There are influences of the Venetian medieval palace architecture as well as the Tudor Gothic style of England. Swedish red limestone was used on the façade.

Bensow business house has a façade made from thin steatite plates. The building was completed in 1940 and its address is **Eteläesplanadi 22**. The architect is Uno Ullberg.



ESPLANADI





KAARTINKAUPUNKI

Supreme Administrative Court's building (Fabianinkatu 15), originally Helsingfors Sparbanken's main office, was also used for a long period of time as the premises of the Finnish Broadcasting Company. The building was designed by Waldemar Aspelin. Ruskeala marble was used on the façade.

Designed by Karl Hård af Segerstad, **Nylands Nation** was completed in 1901. The student association building is located in the north-west corner of Kasarmintori, at **Kasarminkatu 40**. The building's steatite façade with its ample decorations typical to the era represents the National Romantic style.





KAARTINKAUPUNKI

Designed by Lars Sonck, **Helsinki Telephone Association's building** (**Korkeavuorenkatu 35**) was completed in 1905. The façade material of this castle-like building in the National Romantic style is granite.





MANNERHEIMINTIE 7





There is a castle-like business building in the corner of Mannerheimintie and Kaivokatu (**Mannerheimintie 7/Kaivokatu 12**), which was completed in 1913 and designed by Armas Lindgren. The façade material is granite.





PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Parliament House dominates the street view of Mannerheimintie (at **Mannerheimintie 30**) in the south side of Töölö Bay. The building was completed in 1931 and it represents the Neo-classical Monumentalism of the 1920s. The most powerful element of the façade is the tall colonnade. Kalvola granite was used on the building's façade. Behind the main building that was completed in 1978, there is an additional building, which was designed by LPR Architects, with brown rapakivi granite on the façade.

The Finnish Parliament Annex is located in the triangle-shaped block between Mannerheimintie, Rautatiekatu and Arkadiankatu. This additional building for the Finnish Parliament was completed in 2004. The building was designed by Pekka Helin. Kalvola granite, partially used in the façade, connects this building to the old Parliament House on the other side of the street.







NATIONAL MUSEUM

The National Museum of Finland was completed in 1910, and it was designed by architects Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen. The building is the most famous representative of the National Romantic era. The exterior architecture reflects various themes of medieval churches and castles. The façade is a rich display of various natural stones.







FINLANDIA HALL

Designed by Alvar Aalto, **Finlandia Hall** dominates the landscape of Töölö Bay. The first phase of the project, the concert hall, was built in 1967-1971, and the congress wing was finalised in 1975. The façades are paved with Carrara marble and partially with black granite.

Tempeliaukio Church was the subject of a third architectural contest in 1961, which was won by architects Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen. The winning proposal preserves the rock of the square as close to its original condition as possible by embedding the church inside the rock and placing the other parish premises on the edges of the mound. The public opinion rejected the plan but it was implemented nevertheless. Taivallahti Church was consecrated in September 1969. In 1971, the name of the church was officially changed to Tempeliaukio Church.

The interior design by the architect brothers repeats the various shades of granite: red, blueish and grey, and the metal components are patinated copper. The church became popular especially among foreign tourists and it is currently the most important architectural destination in Helsinki.



TEMPELLIAUKIO CHURCH





Kallio Church was built when a decision was made to divide the Parish of Helsinki into six parishes in 1907, giving the 30,000 inhabitants on the north side of Pitkänsilta a new church. The church was designed by architect Lars Sonck and it was consecrated in 1912.

KALLIO CHURCH



The grey granite church ends the straight axis formed by Unioninkatu and Siltasaarenkatu. The shape of Kallio church is rectangular and it is joined by two lower-rise side annexes. The pillars holding up the galleries divide the centre of the church into three naves. The high church tower has been placed to emphasise the chancel that has a semi-circle extension with pilasters and a semi-dome. Sonck was inspired by the proportions of the temples of Solomon and Jerusalem. The grey stone church was built in the purest Art Nouveau style, both on the inside and the outside. The massive façade is decorated by several beautiful details made from stone. There are 1,100 seats in the church. The church's façade was last renovated in the beginning of the 21st century, when for example 15,000 façade stones were reattached and rejoined.



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