

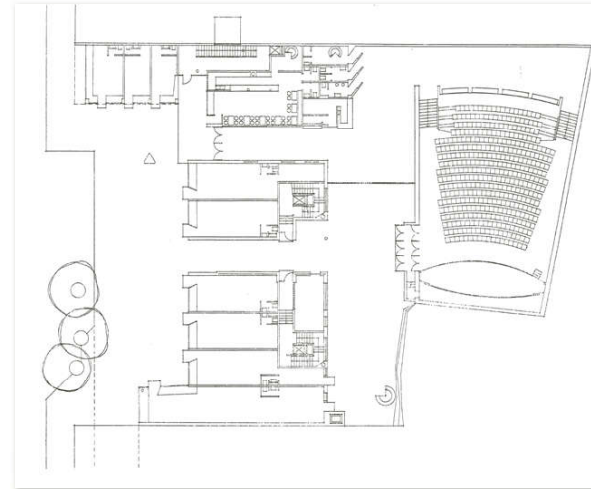
Pekka Pitkänen, Olli Kestilä
As Oy Humalistonkatu 7a
 Turku
 1955–1956



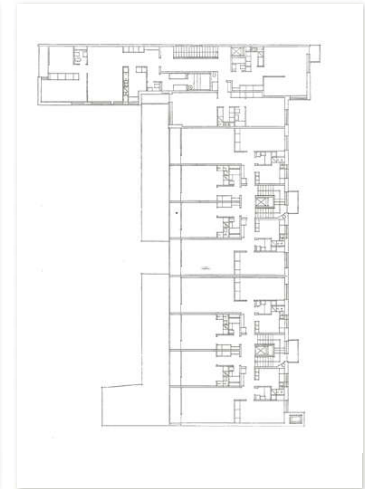
As Oy Humalistonkatu 7a, façade, Heikki Havas

This building comprises a block containing apartments and shops on Humalistonkatu and, behind it and partly embedded in rock, the Domino Cinema. There is a playground above the theatre. The entrance from the street leads into a spacious entrance hall with a kiosk. The hall is structured by wooden screens and angled entrances to toilets, and receives light from glass-tile windows. The 560-seat cinema auditorium widens in a fan shape towards the back; its inner walls are stepped. Presenting their project in *Arkkitehti*, Pitkänen and Kestilä protested against Turku's policy of widening the city's streets: 'Due to the demands of the city's planning authorities, on shopping streets in Turku all new buildings must be 3.75 metres from the old street line so as to allow taller buildings; in many places this has disfigured the cityscape with exposed firewalls.' They turned the requirement for a wider street to their own advantage by creating a plaza in front of their building. 'In our project,' they wrote, 'the main body of the building was as much as

15 metres from the street line and was joined by a narrow wing to the adjacent Southwest Finland Agricultural Cooperative building (Alvar Aalto, 1928). The shops were grouped around the small plaza, thus placing most of the apartments at some distance from the traffic on the street. The undersides of the balconies were originally painted in alternating bright colours – a key theme on the façade. They were subsequently painted dark grey. The building has a concrete frame; the walls between the apartments are load-bearing. Two of the staircases have floor plans with two two-room apartments sandwiching two studio apartments. The staircase overlooking the agricultural cooperative building has two two-room-and-kitchenette apartments and a three room apartment on each floor, with saunas in the extension by the staircase. This must be one of the first instances where saunas were built in ordinary apartments. Sigvard Eklund assisted in this project.



Floor plan of shop and cinema auditorium. *Arkkitehti* 5/1958



Floor plan of apartment block. *Arkkitehti* 5/1958



Domino Cinema. Heikki Havas

**Domus Aboensis, student-union dormitory
for Åbo Akademi**

Piispankatu 10, Turku
1964–1965

The student union at Åbo Akademi commissioned Urakoitsijat to build the Domus Aboensis dormitory on Piispankatu in 1964 to 1965. This project abandons the principles adopted for the redevelopment of Turku: here the building height is limited and the street has not been widened. The building limits the streetscape on Piispankatu, but the two four-storey volumes are, like the surrounding wooden buildings, staggered on the plot. Trees which have been retained from Carl Ludvig Engel’s city plan screen the buildings from the neighbouring high-rises.

The building originally had 36 one- and two-person rooms and 12 two-room apartments for married couples. The two-person rooms faced the yard and the one-person rooms and apartments faced the street. The apartments had balconies. All rooms had a private toilet and shower. On the yard side there was a communal kitchen with a large balcony on each floor. The ground floor had a café and club spaces. On the northeast side there is a corridor connecting the two blocks.

The façades were of prefabricated concrete slabs cast in steel mouldings, making this building an honest representative of its time. Originally, there were Fennica Ruska curtains by Kirsti Ilvessalo in four different shades to give the façades some colour.

The architect Ilpo Raunio and the architecture student Sakari Holma assisted in the design work. The building was converted to offices for Åbo Akademi and then back again to apartments. The façades were later covered in plasterwork replicating the original pattern.

Published in Arkkitehti 5/1967



Photo of the building in its current state, with changed façade material. Mikko Laaksonen



The staircase connecting the two blocks. Ola Laiho, MFA



A student room. Ola Laiho, MFA

06 The Chapel of the Holy Cross



Light effects behind the balcony of the large chapel. Mikko Laaksonen



The approach to the chapel. MFA

The concrete Chapel of the Holy Cross is one of the main works of béton brut architecture in the world. The refined concrete architecture marks the culmination of Pitkänen's work with concrete. Together with the nearby Chapel of the Resurrection (1938–1941) by Erik Bryggman and Turku's large city graveyard, it forms a unique landscape for mourning, comparable to Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz' Woodland Cemetery in Stockholm.

In this project Pitkänen, together with his assistants Ola Laiho and Ilpo Raunio, amalgamated a wide range of influences taken from the international sources visited on their ambitious foreign study trips, as described in this book's biography chapter. The chapel is surrounded by the landscaping of the cemetery extension, which was also designed by Pitkänen. The contemporaneous competition proposal for Vaasa Burial Chapel is also included in the present chapter.

13 Harjavalta Church



Façade, view from the approach path. Mikko Laaksanen

Harjavalta Church

Kirkkokuja 2, Harjavalta

1981–1984

Harjavalta Church stands in the graveyard next to the Kokemäki river. Pitkänen won the commission to design this church in an invited competition with his proposal 'Kala' ('Fish'). The church plan creates a variable space for services. The main hall seats 350 persons; the balcony has a further 90 seats. The chapel, which can be joined to the main hall, seats 70; the choir, 30; and a separate space for children, 10. This makes a total of 550.

A central starting point for the design was the use of an old 17th-century pulpit from an earlier wooden church. Another important historical item is a 15th-century crucifix, placed in front of the altar window. The altar wall stands at a 45-degree angle to the church's main axis. The façade and the internal walls are of dark-brown brick, which makes a fitting background for the old pulpit. The bricks are laid with very wide seams of a coarse mortar which has been partly washed out. The roofs of both the main hall and the chapel are lined with wood panels to improve the building's acoustics. The floors are of Gotland limestone polished to a semi-gloss finish. The altar is a monolithic structure of the same stone. The church is also used for burials; there is a mortuary in the northwestern corner. A wide glass door leads out into the graveyard to the west of the altar.

The auxiliary spaces and the entrance hall are situated around an atrium. Many details are in natural wood. The finishes are clearly less polished than in Pitkänen's other works, probably in allusion to late churches by Sigurd Lewerentz.

The church's exterior is sculptural. There is a belfry on the roof. A fire staircase for the balcony forms a small tower in the north part of the building.

Published in *Arkkitehti* 4/1985

Turku Courthouse

Sairashuoneenkatu 2–4, Turku

1985–1997

Turku Courthouse consists of four buildings: the neo-Renaissance cork factory designed by Arthur Kajanus in 1891 for Wicander & Larsson; an office wing behind the façade of the former storage wing; a white office block on the slope of Kakola Hill; and a block housing courtrooms and the main entrance hall on Sairashuoneenkatu. The different blocks are grouped around the cork factory's yard and a light atrium in the centre of the new buildings. The factory yard is bounded on the other side of Sairashuoneenkatu by the wooden house of the director of the cork factory, designed by Adrian Thomander in 1899.

The cork factory had settled unevenly, tilting towards the street. It was not straightened, however, during the conversion. Of the storage wing only the yard wall could be preserved; this has angled windows, in contrast with the new interiors. The restoration of the cork factory was carried out in 1991 to 1994.

The courtroom wing is a monumental form covered in grey granite. Its acute corner and circular public staircase protrude towards the factory yard and Linnankatu like a fort bastion. The height of the courtroom block was defined by the police station opposite; at the end facing the river, the building's height is the same as that of the cork factory. The office wing is visible above the courtroom block and the ways through to the Aura river. The façades of the office block looking towards Kakola Hill and the light court are very simple, while the roof landscape and the end façade overlooking the river are more detailed. The best river views have been reserved for the library and the staff cafeteria. The exterior architecture of the courtroom wing is diverse; the windows of the atrium and courtrooms exhibit a playful variety of forms.

From the entrance hall with the information desk people entering the building are directed right to the courtrooms and left to the offices. The entrance level provides access to the partly three-storey atrium of the criminal courtrooms, above which, on the third storey, is the hall for the courtrooms for civil cases,

which are illuminated from above. The painted surfaces of the walls substitute for artwork. 'The state art commission granted no funds for purchasing art,' commented Pitkänen, 'so painted colour divisions on some of the walls had to suffice.'

The courtrooms have large windows facing Sairashuoneenkatu and the Aura river, admitting city life into the courts. Exterior views were made possible by the creative approach taken to the courthouse's internal circulation: the judges use stairs to move between the courtrooms, which are linked to the offices by the balcony between the entrance halls. The courtrooms were designed for the reformed court process, whereby witnesses sit between the two parties and the prosecutor sits with the plaintiff. The tables were designed specially for this building; the seats are standard furniture by Yrjö Kukkapuro.

The textiles for the courtrooms were designed by Pitkänen's daughter Leena Wiikari, based on cotton fabrics bought at an Artek clearance sale. The textiles were sewn at Mynämäki College of Applied Arts as student work. 'In long sittings,' wrote Pitkänen, 'they serve as resting places for the eyes. They mean you don't have to stare at your disgusting opponent all the time.' The courtrooms provide a spatial frame for a successful trial. The space created by the architects' intuition soothes aggression and anxiety. Textiles and city views have entered the courtrooms so that participants don't need to bore themselves watching the opposite party.

Toni Rantanen was project architect for this project.

Over the more than 20 years in which the building has been in intensive use, there have been a number of mostly practical changes. Due to security concerns, the cafeteria has been moved from the entrance hall to the cork factory. What used to be the staff sauna is now used for additional ventilation machinery. The accessibility of the courtrooms has been improved. All these changes were designed by the office of Matti Takala and integrated in the original architecture.

Published in *Arkitehti* 6/98



Exterior view, Jussi Tiainen



Perspective view, Pekka Pitkänen