

The living pier

A housing project for Jyvaskyla City, Finland. (European 6)



Client: Municipality of Jvaskyla, European 6, 2002.
Project: 2003/4 in collaboration with Michiel Spaan (M3H architects)
Budget: unknown
Status: competition

The city of Jyvaskyla situated on the edge of lake Jyvaskyla, is a fast developing city. The task was to develop a housing project of 600 houses at a designated location roughly 4 km from the city itself, on the western perimeter of the lake.

Jyvaskyla lake park

The analysis showed that recreational circulation around the lake was disconnected, and that the housing districts very often had no physical or visual relationship with the lake. Most suburban settlements in Jyvaskyla are ground dwelling houses, enclosed by large areas of forest. As a reaction to this conventional housing pattern it was decided to optimise the lake and its green edges by using it as a central public space, 'Jyvaskyla Lake Park'. Development could take place around the lake based on the specific qualities of the surrounding areas. These areas were characterised as 'city', 'boulevard', and 'forest and nature' which in turn were punctuated by three activity points of organised interaction with the lake; 'harbour' (existing), 'beach' (new) and 'pier' (new) to stimulate interaction and activity in the lake. New pedestrian bridges and walkways connected disjointed routes around the park to form a continuous recreational network.

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The Living Pier forms the point of organised interaction with the lake in the 'forest and nature' zone. It was decided to use a concentrated form of housing, to create as much space as possible for nature in the surroundings. The housing was given a strong linear structure to optimise the views of the lake, while still maintaining a low horizon, punctuated by two higher points (the lofts). The linear motif was literally extended into the lake to form a boardwalk and jetty to create a 'living pier'. Due to the height differences in the landscape the space under the deck was adapted to accommodate a range of recreational functions including a boat house, a restaurant, a tourist information point, and parking for two leisure craft.

