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PUBLIC BUILDINGS

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the building. The church wing is distinguished by its steep roof and decorations inspired by Finnish medieval greystone churches. At its southwest corner is a round fortress tower, which originally housed the museum's weapons collections. On the corner next to the main entrance is a Renaissance-inspired loggia. The courtyard parks around the museum are framed by walls.

The most prominent façades in the cityscape are clad in grey granite. The variously sized rectangular blocks are laid as squared rubble. Variations in the cladding are introduced by using both coarsely hewn and smooth blocks. The stone cladding continues around the entire ground floor and into the wall bordering the plot. Arched windows and doors accentuate the building's main floors.

Soapstone decorations featuring plant and animal motifs are found in sculpturally decorated parts of the façade, especially around the main entrance, but also in the portal of the castle courtyard and the outer corners of the building. The decorations were created by Hans Uthuslien and P. Fredheim from Norway.⁹

The natural stone façade is complemented by red-brick masonry at the top of the tower and in the gable composition on the church wing, the latter referencing the typical gables of medieval stone churches in Finland. The most visible planes of the steep roofs are slate imported from Wales. Triangular dormer windows provide light to the attic floor.

The stairs leading up the main entrance are guarded by a bear sculpted from granite by Emil Wikström. The museum is entered through the main entrance at the foot of the tower. The monumental doors are clad in copper and feature reliefs designed by artist Eric O. W. Ehrström.

After a vestibule and hallway with a low casseted ceiling, the visitor steps into the museum's high central hall which is dominated by magnificent granite columns with finely hewn surfaces.

The columns support a vaulted ceiling with frescoes painted by artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela in 1928. The images are new versions of the Kalevala-themed frescoes he had made for the Finnish pavilion at the Paris 1900 Exposition. The hall with its limestone floor is lit from above by a glass-roofed dome in the centre of the vaults. The walls are plastered – the granite cladding originally planned for them was never implemented.¹⁰

The central hall combines features of several interiors described in the controversial pamphlet *Vårt museum*:

I first entered a low hall with sturdy columns and mighty vaults [...] The walls are built of granite blocks of indeterminate shape, the pillars are huge monoliths of the same material, partly with a number of artless carvings.¹¹

A wide staircase leads to the upper floors, where three stained-glass windows titled *Archaeologia*, *Historia* and *Ethnographia* point to the three original departments of the museum. The stained-glass works by artist Eric O. W. Ehrström were installed on the windows in 1925.

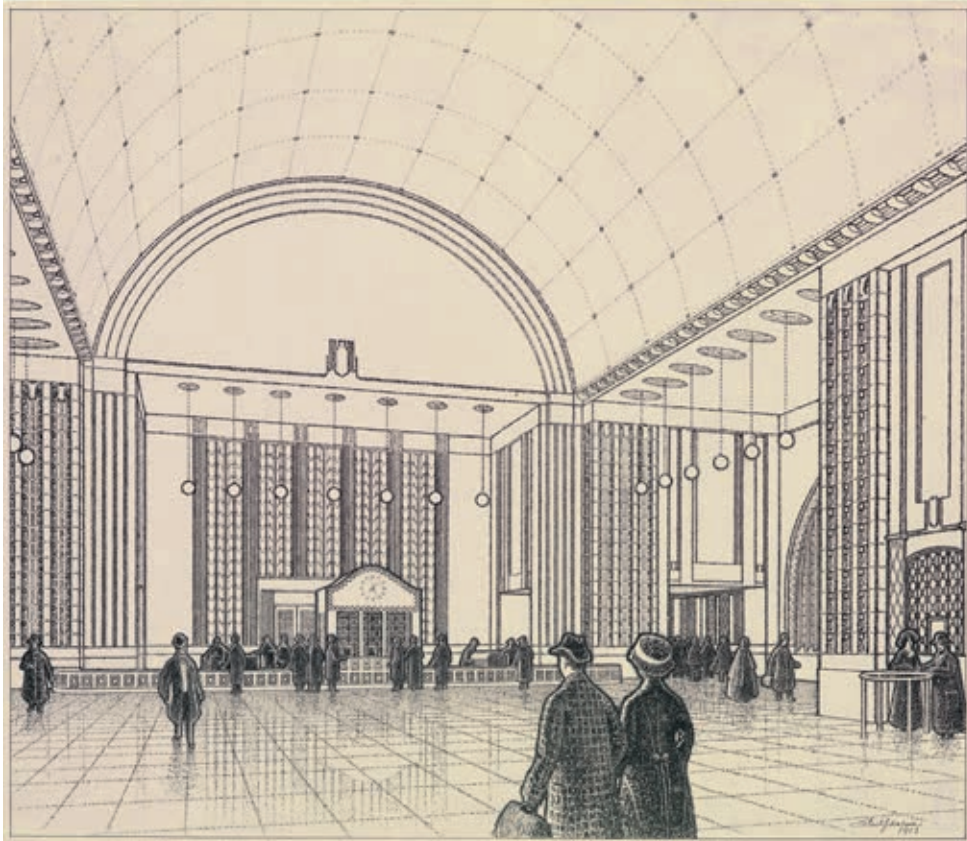
Initially, the museum served as a kind of multifunctional facility, accommodating exhibitions, storage and management of collections, and the antiquities administration of the country. The building represents a meeting point between national and international architectural trends from the late 19th and early 20th century. It exemplifies the prevalent idea of museum architecture of its day, with the different sections of the building reflecting the nature of the collections housed within and also echoing the different stages of Finnish architectural history. Although the ways the building is used, the contents of exhibitions and other arrangements have evolved, the features of the building's key spaces have been preserved through renovations carried out over the decades. The 2020s include an extension of the building in the enclosed park and the roofing over of a courtyard.

OVERLEAF
Aerial view, National Museum on the left, Finlandia Hall on the right.

OPPOSITE
The main entrance is guarded by a bear sculpted by Emil Wikström.







OPPOSITE
Central hall. The chandeliers, installed in the 1950s, were designed by Paavo Tynell.

TOP
Restaurant in second-class waiting room, Eero Järnefelt's painting on the wall. Photo early 1930s.

BOTTOM
Central hall, perspective drawing, 1913.







TOP
Interior view towards
the chapel and organ
loft.

BOTTOM
One pew relocated to
the vestibule.

OPPOSITE
Chancel of the chapel.



