

KORPILAHDEN PURO

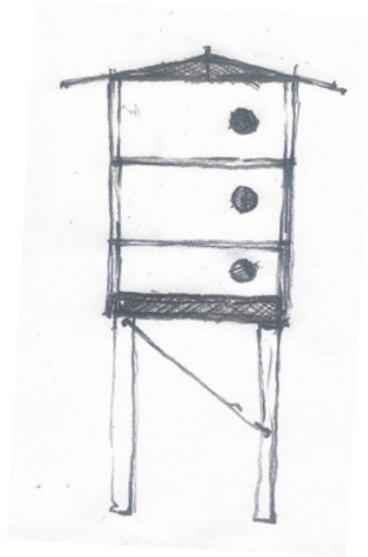
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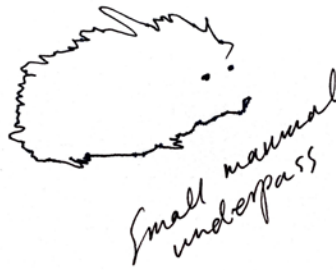
Urban identity begins with recognition

In 1942, a proposal was introduced to build a road across the competition plot: a route extending from the exurbia of single-family houses, through farmed fields and past estates with their lush gardens, toward the port. Our proposal reinterprets this unrealized gesture. The road becomes a pedestrian pathway, a landscape of water and vegetation, and a structuring element that binds the neighborhood into a more coherent whole.

The buried stormwater sewer is brought to the surface and is turned into an experience: a meandering pedestrian and cycling path that follows the course of the water, accompanied by small interventions, wooden decks, gardens, and a summer kitchen, that invite pause, gathering and interaction. These spatial gestures root the proposal in the area's horticultural heritage: not through nostalgia, but through a contemporary lens. Wild herbs, community gardens, and shared green spaces foster ecological awareness and social connection. Public space becomes culinary, seasonal, and communal, extending the spirit of the garden into a shared living environment.



The competition site is divided into three distinct zones. In the eastern section, excess soil from excavation of the ponds is repurposed to create a hilly meadow featuring communal gardens, public tables, and bee hotels, serving as a functional stormwater infiltration basins. The central zone is transformed into a garden-like park with inviting green spaces and retention pools; together with tall vegetation, these water features help mitigate the area's heat load. The western zone reflects the site's industrial heritage, with sunken courtyards functioning as detention pools as well as green spaces. Selected industrial buildings are preserved and repurposed as offices and commercial venues, forming a vibrant new market square that anchors community life.



The new infill housing responds to both the demands of density and the qualities of the existing context. Building typologies sit between the scale of detached houses and larger apartment blocks, moderate in height and with only a few homes per floor. This “middle scale” housing preserves the domestic character of Vähäheikkilä while introducing more spatially and ecologically efficient forms of living that preserve privacy, offer access to green space, and reduce land consumption. Shared courtyards, flexible units, and large balconies uphold the values of the garden city while pointing toward a more resilient urban fabric.

Through scale and community, the proposal reinforces the very qualities that give Vähäheikkilä its character. At its core, this proposal is an act of reconnection. By completing a forgotten street as a living landscape, the design offers Vähäheikkilä not a new identity, but a stronger one, amplifying what was always there: water, gardens, modest homes, and the quiet richness of shared space.

