

SWISSPEARL

Kempeleen Kirkonkylätalo

Façade architecture adds interest
and variety to a large building





The Kirkonkylätalo town building was taken into use at the beginning of 2024 after being built as a growth and education centre for the municipality's children and youth. The different-coloured façade boards by Swisspearl from the company's Cover and Patina Original lines divide the large building into smaller sections visually, adding interest, variety and playfulness to the façade. Having a durable and maintenance-free façade was an important goal also to the client.

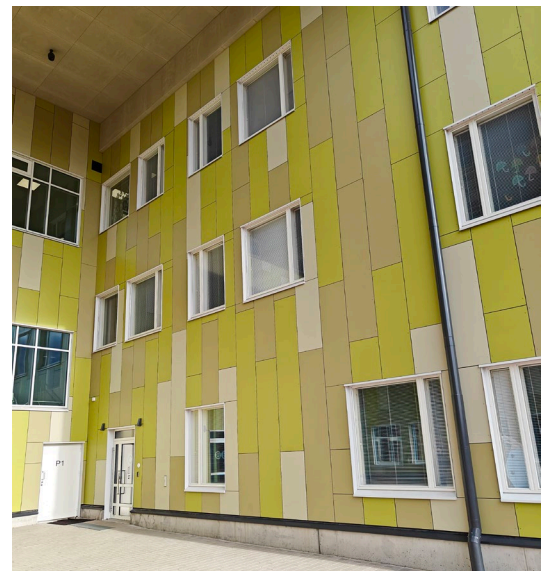
The Kempeleen Kirkonkylätalo building was the largest investment in the municipality's history, bringing together 220 daycare children and 960 school pupils from the town under one roof, along with the municipality's central kitchen, permanent and long-term archives and the youth centre of the region.

Kirkonkylätalo was built as a design-build project by Oulun Rakennusteho Oy, with Arkkitehtisuunnittelu Mikko Uotila Oy as the project's head designer.

"The special characteristic of this project was the location of the building in the old culture centre of Kempele; it stands next to a protected church from the late 17th century and is surrounded by open farmlands and low residential buildings. The building, with a gross floor area of 17,000 square metres, had to be adapted

Facts

Products:	Swisspearl Cover and Swisspearl Patina Original
Building:	Kempeleen Kirkonkylätalo
Address:	Koulutie 6, Kempele
Head designer:	Arkkitehtisuunnittelu Mikko Uotila Oy
Contractor:	Oulun Rakennusteho Oy
Completion year:	2024



to its surroundings and to the compact plot,” says architect **Mikko Uotila**.

The municipality of Kempele had made a project plan based on which the construction companies participating in the competition made their own drafts. Construction company Rakennusteho won the competition with its offer based on the plan by architect company Arkkitehtisuunnittelu Mikko Uotila.

“First, we worked on the plans with the construction company for three or four months, and then construction company calculated the price for their offer based on this plan. After our offer was chosen, we started planning the development stage together with the user and the client,” Mikko Uotila says.

The plot had an old school building from the 1980s, which either needed to be renovated or similar facilities built in a new construction.

“In the end, we decided that all facilities would be included in the new construction to ensure healthy

premises and no issues with renovations. We had to plan the new building in a way that allowed the old school building to be in use for the whole time so that temporary facilities were not needed during the construction. The fairly compact plot needed to support many functionalities, i.e. a large daycare centre, primary and secondary school facilities with their own yard areas and a large Finnish baseball field, so placing the building and the construction masses was very challenging,” says Mikko Uotila.

Façade boards add rhythm and character

According to Uotila, they wanted to visually divide the large building mass into smaller sections by e.g. combining different façade surfaces – a brick wall, and Cover and Patina Original façade boards in different colours from Swisspearl.

“The façade boards of Swisspearl had a great range of colour tones that suited the site and allowed us to create the visual variety and interest we wanted to the façades. We have chosen different shades of e.g. yellow and green to the yard façades of the different user groups,” says Mikko Uotila.

The three-storey building has an extensive space for machinery on top, and the building is quite high compared to its surroundings. Due to this, another goal of the façade design was to visually section the building also height-wise so that it would fit into its surroundings as well as possible. Different shades of yellow and green, fitting in well with the farmlands and the small forest surrounding the old church, have been used for the two bottom floors, and the dark grey colour of the top floors ties the upper part of the building together with the blue and grey hues of the sky, changing with the different times of the day and seasons of the year.

“Seen from further away, the dark grey façade board used in the third floor and the topmost machinery floor makes it seem as if these are part of the roof of





the building. The varying colours between the bottom and top floors divides the bulk of the building into two different sections height-wise, making the large building mass seem lighter,” Uotila says.

Architectural illustrations of the building were made from behind the fields as far as a few kilometres away during the planning stage. The view clearly showed the lighter lower part of the building, with what appeared to be a dark roof over it.

Horizontally, the building is given visual rhythm by the different specific colours chosen for the different user groups of the building – the primary and secondary school and the daycare centre – and their varying tones. These façade boards in different colours create the characteristic looks for each of the functional sections, making navigating the building easier.

“Using façade boards also allows for highlighting the vertical or horizontal lines of the building or its height or width through different board alignments, for example. In this site, the boards were sawn at the mill to 60-centimetre-wide strips for vertical installation. Together with the vertical windows, they became stripes that highlighted the building’s verticality,” says Uotila.

Fibre cement is nearly maintenance-free

Mikko Uotila thinks that one of the advantages of a façade made with boards is that they make it possible to alter the impression of the buildings’ window size when combined with the right kinds of boards.

“As the floor heights have grown due to the increasing amount of building services and as large window

surfaces are often avoided in the name of energy efficiency, the windows of buildings can easily seem a little small. The visual impression of window size can be increased by e.g. installing plate mirrors of suitable colours below or above the windows, adding the desired rhythm and character to the façade.”

According to Uotila, life cycle thinking is now strongly present in almost all projects. The advantages of fibre cement boards are their durability against mechanic wear and the weather and their low maintenance needs.

“A board façade is maintenance-free compared to a wood surface, for example. It does not have to be painted every five years. One of the client’s key objectives was a durable, maintenance-free building with a façade that does not need constant repairs or maintenance. This sustainability and life cycle perspective was one of the reasons for why this board façade was chosen for Kempeleen Kirkonkylätalo,” says Mikko Uotila.

He thinks that one of the advantages of fibre cement boards is that they allow creating a clear, simple and smooth surface where the colours and board sizes and alignments can be varied, thus creating the desired appearance for the building and its different sections.

“Metal panels, for example, can easily become a little uneven and dented. These imperfections are visible in the façade, breaking the smooth, cohesive appearance.”

Safety of moisture management highlighted

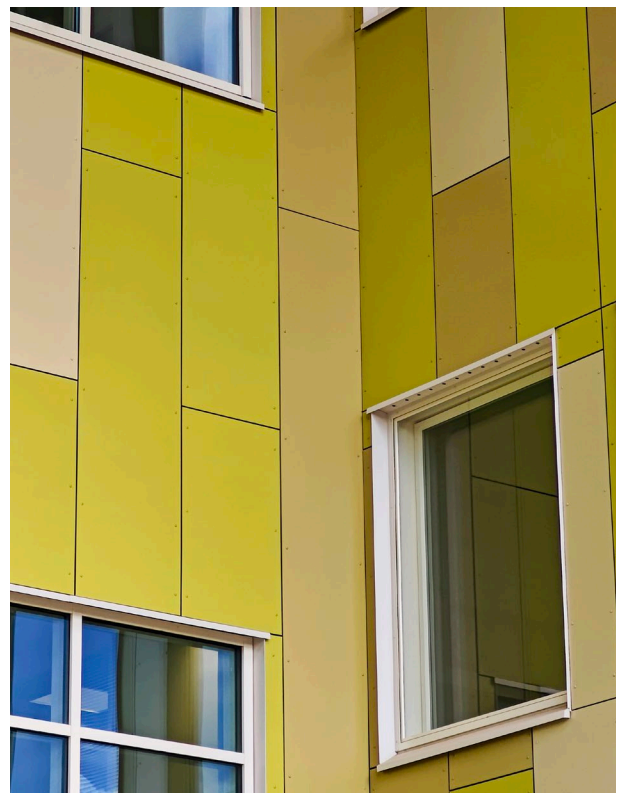
If necessary, the façade board can also be easily replaced, e.g. in case of vandalism.

As buildings nowadays have thick insulation and as climate change is increasing the weather and moisture stress of façades, the clients often highlight

the importance of the façade’s ventilation and moisture management technology. Façade materials that tolerate moisture well, as well as the functionality and safety of the entire façade’s moisture management technology, are especially important in school and daycare buildings where moisture and indoor air issues have led to high repair costs and health problems in several cities and towns.

“It is easy to arrange a decent ventilation gap behind the façade boards. In this site, the board claddings were installed on the wooden elements on top of the rainscreen on the construction site, and the façade’s bricklaying was started right on top of the base, leaving a generous ventilation gap for the whole façade,” says Mikko Uotila.

“The municipality of Kempele has been satisfied with the new Kirkonkylätalo. The building offers the local children and youth the facilities the decision-makers were hoping for.”





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