

PRESS RELEASE

Newly qualified architects win restricted design competition for new school of architecture in Aarhus

The newly established practice Vargo Nielsen Palle, led by three recently qualified architects, has won the restricted design competition NEW AARCH ahead of established and internationally recognised practices. This was the result of close interdisciplinary cooperation with ADEPT, Rolvung & Brøndsted Arkitekter, Tri-Consult and Steensen Varming.

Today, a unanimous jury announced the winner of the restricted design competition NEW AARCH. The newly established practice Vargo Nielsen Palle, led by three recently qualified architects, has won the restricted design competition NEW AARCH ahead of established and internationally recognised practices. This was announced today at an event at Aarhus School of Architecture in which participated, among others, the Danish Minister for Transport, Building, and Housing Ole Birk Olesen and Mayor of Aarhus Municipality Jakob Bundsgaard.

"It is a powerful project that interweaves with its surroundings, Ådalen, the city and the surrounding neighbours in the area. The new school of architecture will be a cultural hub that encourages interaction and dialogue. An open, pragmatic, flexible structure that allows for continuous change and adaptation to changing needs, and which focuses on the future life and activities inside the building. It will be a factory for architectural experimentation that will set the stage for cooperation with the city, the profession and our neighbours - just as we wanted", said the happy rector of Aarhus School of Architecture, Torben Nielsen, who is looking forward to leaving the out-dated premises in the old merchant's house at Nørreport - premises which have been the 'temporary' home of Aarhus School of Architecture for more than 50 years.

A unanimous jury

The Jury could have chosen up to three projects for further processing in a negotiation process, before making the final decision. However, a unanimous jury found Vargo Nielsen Palle's project so compelling that they chose to invite only this team to the negotiations. The project was drawn up in cooperation with ADEPT, Rolvung & Brøndsted Arkitekter, Tri-Consult and Steensen Varming. In terms of scale, the winning project relates well to Carl Blochs Gade and plans the many uses as a 'city within the city', where visual contact between the school's diversified users encourages cooperation and mutual inspiration. The building structure is stepped down in height towards a central urban space that opens up the school towards the city and the neighbouring institutions.

A two-stage competition allowed young talents to participate

A total of six companies participated in the restricted design competition. Three teams had been pre-qualified based on their experience, while another three were selected through an open design competition, in which 230 participants from around

the world submitted proposals for a new school. The two-stage competition was precisely intended to give young, untested talents an opportunity to contribute.

"Today the majority of design competitions are exclusively based on prequalification, which means that only established companies that have participated in numerous building projects qualify. The competition form that was chosen for this project challenged this, and the result shows that it was entirely successful", said Norwegian Architect Reiulf Ramstad, who together with Architect Jens Thomas Arnfred, acted as design professional in both the open design competition and the restricted design competition.

Concept and idea reduced to the bare essentials

Signe Primdal, vice president in The Danish Building & Property Agency and chairman of The Jury, is also satisfied with the competition process:

"The framework and economy of the new school of architecture are modest, which has forced the school and us to think hard and give priority to the right aspects from the very start. The initial open design competition enabled us to draw up a competition brief that has helped us find a robust winning project – a project in which the concept and the idea have been reduced to the bare essentials. We have been fortunate enough to find a winning team which has very skilfully - but also in a subdued and humble way - read, understood and solved the task. Architecture, functionality, and economy have been interconnected criteria during the assessment, and we are pleased to have a winning team which has understood the spirit of the budget without allowing inventiveness to suffer in consequence. This has convinced us that they are fully capable of handling the task and realising the project."

The Danish Building & Property Agency expects to enter into a contract with the consulting team behind the project immediately after the winning project has been announced. Subsequently, the project will be processed and detailed further through dialogues with the students and staff of the school before the project is expected to be offered as a design- and-build contract in the autumn. The winning consulting team will, together with the chosen design-and-build contractor, be responsible for the detailed design and for bringing the project home. The new school of architecture is expected to be ready for inauguration in 2020. It will cover approx. 13,000 m² and have a total budget of DKK 261 million.

FACTS ABOUT THE RESTRICTED DESIGN COMPETITION

The following teams competed:

- Vargo Nielsen Palle and ADEPT (Denmark) in cooperation with Rolvung & Brøndsted Arkitekter, Tri-consult and Steensen Varming.
- ALL (Atelier Lorentzen Langkilde, Denmark) in cooperation with Buro Happold.
- BIG (Denmark) in cooperation with Transform, Rambøll, SLA and Tom Nielsen.
- EGA (Erik Giudice Architecture, Sweden/France) in cooperation with Niras and Kragh & Berglund.
- Lacaton & Vassal and BESSARDS' Studio (France) in cooperation with Kristine Jensens Tegnastue, Jørgen Nielsen, Strunge Jensen and Sergio Fox Awe.

- SANAA (Japan) in collaboration with B+G Ingenieure, Sasaki & Partners and Transplan (pre-qualified, but chose not to submit a project without further explanation)

Vargo Nielsen Palle is: Brian Vargo, Jonas Snedevind Nielsen and Mathias Palle, who, after having won the open design competition in the spring of 2016, set up their own practice, which is currently located at the premises of ADEPT in Copenhagen.

The Danish Building & Property Agency is the client and developer. Aarhus School of Architecture is the tenant and end user of the planned building project.

Realdania has contributed DKK 3.3 million to the open design competition and the restricted design competition.

The members of The Jury: Chairman of The Jury and Vice President of The Danish Building & Property Agency Signe Primdal Lyndrup; Head of Office at The Danish Building & Property Agency Martin Lose; Chairman of the Board of Aarhus School of Architecture Ingelise Bogason; Rector of Aarhus School of Architecture Torben Nielsen; Project Director at Realdania Lars Autrup; and acting as design professionals, Architects Jens Thomas Arnfred and Reilulf Ramstad (Norway) and Engineer Frank Jensen.

The advisers to The Jury included the following representatives of Aarhus Municipality: Director of Technical and Environmental Services Erik Jespersen and City Architect Stephen Willacy.

You can find more information, including The Jury Report at:
<http://www.bygst.dk/projekter/arkitektskolen-aarhus/>

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Photos and illustrations

Photos and illustrations are freely available with **accreditation to Vargo Nielsen Palle and ADEPT.**

Photos and illustrations in large format can be downloaded by this link:

https://filkassen.statens-it.dk/u/yeR-c2dkfkb5H5x/Illustrationer_akkreditering%20Vargo%20Nielsen%20Palle%20og%20ADEPT.zip?l