

News Release, January 29, 2016

Finnish Room Committee, University of Pittsburgh

Seija Cohen, Chairman

The Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh announces the completion of the design and plans for their classroom. Under the direction of architect Steve Altherr the University has finalized the plans, which reflect a "Smoke Farmhouse" main dwelling room and adjoining sauna. These elements represent well the agrarian culture of 18th century Finland.

Support of this project and especially having the room permanently in place will increase awareness of the Finnish contributions to America and enhance Finland's visibility in the national and international media. The hope is that immersion in an early Finnish learning environment communicates Finnish values, especially in education. The goal of our project is to create such a learning environment and to offer it to students and visitors. The Nationality Rooms are the 7th most popular tourist attraction in Pittsburgh.

We now have plans and computer simulations of how the room will appear. It will become the thirty-first Nationality Room in the Cathedral of Learning, an historic 42-story building on the University of Pittsburgh campus. The Nationality Rooms are active classrooms used by thousands of students and are viewed by tens of thousands of visitors every year. They are a major vehicle in promoting the understanding of cultural histories.

We need additional funds for the building process. The plan is to contact groups in Finland and America who would organize fundraising events to complete the Finnish Nationality Room as part of the Suomi 100 program. For that purpose, we need contacts and cooperation from all Finns in the United States and Finland. We also request the Finnish government's support.

Information about the Finnish Room on the web can be found directly, on the Finnish Committee site, www.pittsburghfinns.net, or through links on the Nationality Rooms site www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu--this site displays all 30 existing Nationality Rooms; the link to the Finnish Room is on the History page, accessible through the History tab, at the bottom right. Finnish Room Committee members can be contacted with email to seijac@aol.com and sallymort@verizon.net.

Support is urgently requested for the work to continue. Tax deductible donations are received by mail to the Finnish Room Committee, 1209 Cathedral of Learning, Pittsburgh, PA 15260; write your check to "Univ. of Pittsburgh," memo line "Finnish Room Committee," and give your name and address so we can send you a receipt. To give online, go to www.giveto.pitt.edu (PittGiving) click Ways to Give, then GIVE ONLINE. After filling in Donor Information, go to the bottom and click Gift Information and make sure to enter the amount of your donation to the right of the Finnish Room Committee label. Then click Add'l Information and fill it in, and then fill in Pay by Credit Card

On December 6th, Mr. Aaretti Siitonen, from the Embassy of Finland in Washington, visited the Nationality Rooms open house and many of the existing Nationality Rooms, focusing on the room reserved for Finland. Afterwards he met with the Nationality Rooms Programs Director E. Maxine Bruhns and staff. He will be our contact at the Washington Embassy and will offer recommendations.

The Finnish Committee is a member of the Nationality Council of the Nationality Rooms and

Intercultural Exchange Programs at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. The Nationality Council consists of over 30 affiliated room committees. The Finnish Committee represents a group from the greater Pittsburgh community interested in promoting and preserving Finnish culture, existing at the University of Pittsburgh since the 1960s. The Finnish Room Committee is dedicated to the Finnish Room building project.

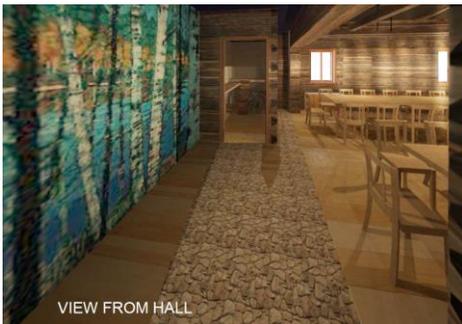
The process to add a Finnish Classroom to the existing Nationality Rooms began in 2003, when the University approved the proposal and reserved a classroom. The task remained to create a design of the Room and raise money for its construction. The goal was to create a classroom reflecting the Finnish culture in the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning.

Shortly after planning began for the Finnish Nationality Classroom project, Anna Maija Ylimaula, Professor of Architecture at the University of Oulu, became interested and arranged a design competition for architecture students in Finland which was completed in March 2006. The University of Pittsburgh stipulates that the design represent learning environments before 1787. Oulu University student Mika Gröndahl was awarded first place for his submission entitled Big Dipper. Mika Gröndahl's design was based on the traditional Finnish smoke house--a house with a smoke oven. At FinnFest USA 2013, Frank Eld, an American expert on Finnish log construction, became interested in the project and has worked to expand the design to showcase traditional Finnish log cabin construction, based on his research on Finnish-built log cabins in America and Finland and on pictures from buildings at Seurasaari Open-Air Museum in Helsinki. In addition to a farmhouse, a sauna is to be featured, along with traditional smoke ovens. Our architect, Stephen Altherr, combined these inspirations with contemporary requirements for classroom construction, and created computer simulations of the furnished room as well as the initial floorplan and ceiling plan.

Year 2017 marks the centennial of Finland's independence which will be celebrated all year by Finns, both in and out of Finland. "Let's get together to celebrate together" is the theme for these celebrations. The Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh is also eager to get together for this celebration.

Pictures of present plans:

Views of classroom:



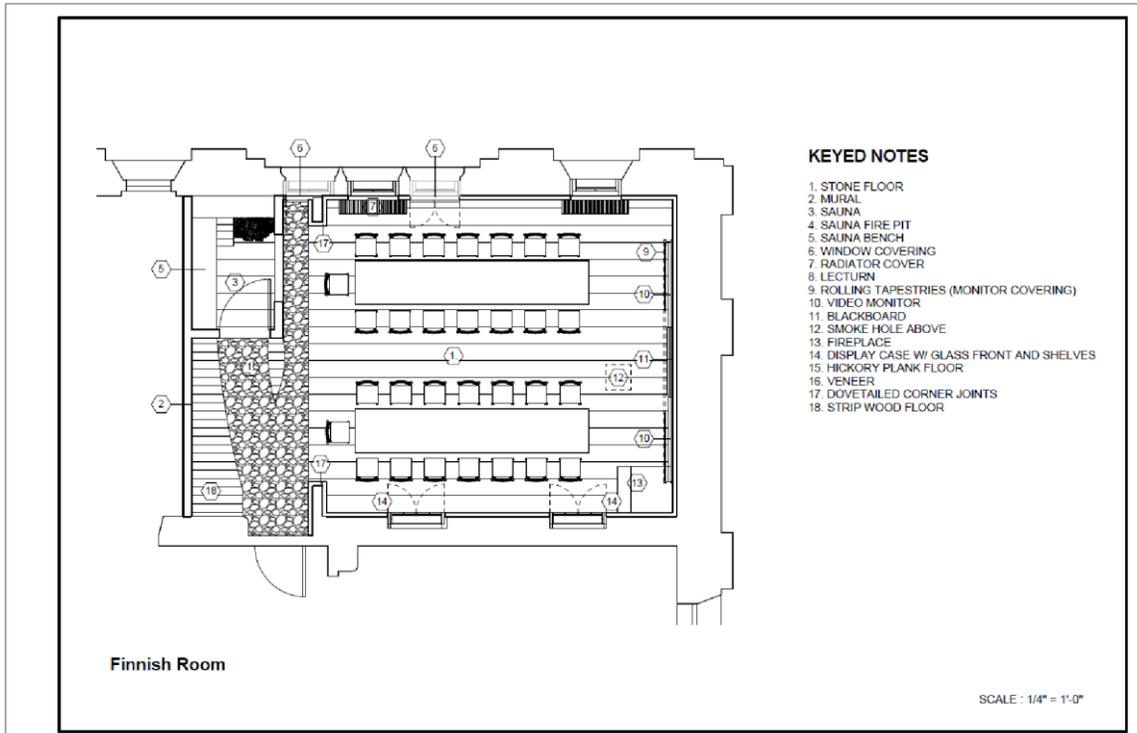
View Fromt Hall

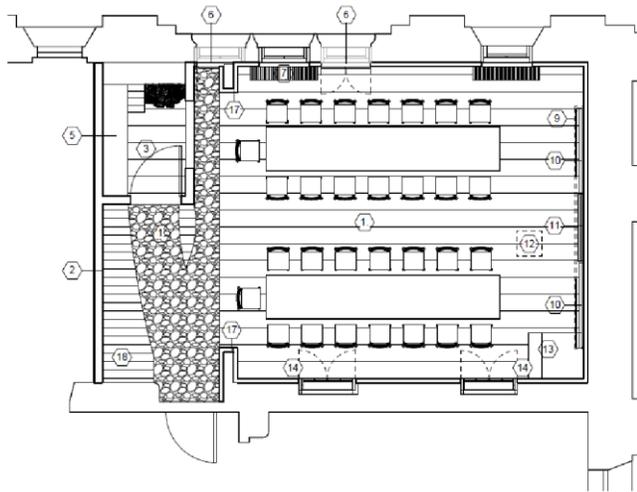


View Towards Front



Plans for the floor and ceiling:





Finnish Room

KEYED NOTES

1. STONE FLOOR
2. MURAL
3. SAUNA
4. SAUNA FIRE PIT
5. SAUNA BENCH
6. WINDOW COVERING
7. RADIATOR COVER
8. LECTURN
9. ROLLING TAPESTRIES (MONITOR COVERING)
10. VIDEO MONITOR
11. BLACKBOARD
12. SMOKE HOLE ABOVE
13. FIREPLACE
14. DISPLAY CASE W/ GLASS FRONT AND SHELVES
15. HICKORY PLANK FLOOR
16. VENEER
17. DOVETAILED CORNER JOINTS
18. STRIP WOOD FLOOR

SCALE : 1/4" = 1'-0"