

Aalto2

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The Best not to Demolish exhibition explores alternatives to building demolition

The Best not to Demolish exhibition arrived at Aalto2 Museum Centre, raising a timely question: is demolishing a building always the best solution?

In Finland, buildings are currently being demolished at nearly the same rate as during the peak demolition years of the 1960s and 1970s. During that period, a significant number of buildings were lost, including many Art Nouveau structures and entire wooden town districts. Today, increasingly younger buildings are under threat of demolition – particularly those built in the 1960s and 1970s.

“The current wave of building demolition in Finland has prompted actors in the field of architecture to mobilise, also in the form of a civic campaign. ‘Best not to Demolish’ seeks, on the one hand, to call attention to unnecessary demolition projects and, on the other, to highlight the usability of existing – often vacant – buildings,” says **Tommi Lindh**, architect and the managing director of the Alvar Aalto Foundation, who initiated the campaign.

Construction accounts for roughly one third of Finland’s climate emissions and up to 40 per cent of all waste. Every decision to demolish or renovate a building therefore has a direct environmental impact. When a building is demolished, an enormous amount of materials, energy and history is lost at the same time. The Best not to Demolish exhibition invites visitors to view the existing building stock from a new perspective. Instead of demolishing buildings or thoroughly modernising them, many could often be repaired, maintained and adapted for new uses.

Finland also has a large number of vacant buildings: former schools, offices, hospitals and industrial buildings. Urbanisation, municipal mergers and changes in industry have left many buildings without a purpose. The exhibition raises the question: could an empty building be the solution instead of constructing something new? The exhibition also examines the culture of renovation. In Finland, many renovations are carried out “just in case”, where usable structures or building components are replaced with new ones. However, worn does not necessarily mean damaged. The long lifespan of buildings is based on regular maintenance and carefully considered repairs.

Best not to Demolish is part of a nationwide campaign that aims to halt the current wave of demolition and encourage new uses for existing buildings. The exhibition invites visitors to reflect on what kind of built environment will be passed on to future generations and what we can do to preserve it.

The exhibition at Aalto2 Museum Centre brings the debate around demolition closer to everyday life and invites visitors to consider the values connected to the built environment – and what we lose when a building disappears forever.



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The exhibition and campaign are supported by a working group of architecture experts, including architects, researchers and specialists in building heritage.

Please note that the exhibition texts are currently available in Finnish only.

Best not to Demolish

18 March 2026 – 31 December 2027

The Aalto2 Museum Centre is a meeting place for architecture, design and cultural heritage in Jyväskylä, Finland.

[PRESS IMAGES](#)

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