



## EYSTURKOMMUNA TOWN HALL: INSPIRED BY NATURE

*Posted on March 21, 2019 by martabuges*



**Categories:** [Henning Larsen Architects](#), [Low Density](#), [Project](#), [Territory and mobility](#), [Urban Paradigms](#)

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Inspired by nature and local building traditions, the Town Hall in Eysturkommuna makes a subtle appearance at first glance. Nevertheless, the impact of the building is anything but minimal.



Bridges that not only serve to connect destinations but become places in their own right – places where people meet and settle – have their own important space in history. Florence, Prague and Venice all have inhabited bridges that define the cities. In the darkness of the Faroese winter, a truly special building not only bridges the river in the village of Norðragøta but unites two municipalities, which merge into one community in the municipality of Eystur.

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It almost takes an effort to make out the Town Hall. Not because the building is not spectacular, but because it understands and respects the distinctive Nordic nature that surrounds it. Discreetly cut into the lush landscape, seemingly floating between the river and the green grass blanket on the roof, the Town Hall creates the framework for the work of the City Council and the administrative staff. In the Faroe Islands, nature creates the framework for people's lives and professions, and nature is always physically just around the corner.

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## **Interpreting Traditions on the Road to Shaping the New**

The Town Hall in Eysturkommuna pays tribute to the Nordic landscapes and the traditional local grass-roofed houses but simultaneously defines a new path for contemporary Faroese architecture:

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"Many contemporary contributions to Faroese architecture directly copy elements from traditional buildings. I find it much more interesting to look into the underlying thoughts of traditional buildings," Ósbjörn Jacobsen, partner at Henning Larsen, says.

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A central theme in traditional Faroese architecture is the blurred line between nature and building, the fact that the spectator has difficulties distinguishing where the landscape ends and the building begins. The primary conceptual idea behind the design of the Town Hall is driven by the notion of this fleeting line between landscape and building – I believe that could be one way to approach modern Faroese architecture," Jacobsen adds.

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## **Celebrating Democracy**

From the Town Hall, one clearly senses this closeness to nature and the river, visible through a circular mirror-lined glass-covered opening in the floor. The town council convenes around the floor opening, at a circular table inspired by *kivas*, the ceremonial chambers used by Pueblo Native Americans. At this table, no one sits at the head; all meet on equal parliamentary terms. This is where the municipality's key decisions are made, and through the glass-covered floor one can even spot

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trout on their way upstream or out into the open sea.



The sound and light installation by the artist Jens Ladekarl Thomsen, inspired by sounds and structures in local society and nature, is built into the wooden cladding of the building. Passers-by experience the building "speaking" about its surroundings, thereby creating a new story of local nature and community.

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## **Staging Human Interaction**

The Town Hall in Eysturkommuna takes on the important task of establishing a space that will revive the local community. The terraces and roof are open to the public; people can come here to have picnics and swim in the river.

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Before the fishing industry made its entry with a large and important factory, the attractive local beach was the natural gathering point for special occasions: the bonfire on New Year's Eve was lit there; the flag day was celebrated there on April 25th; and locals used the beach for sporting events. The factory is now an important driver in the local economy, but Norðragøta also needs to reclaim spaces where people can gather.

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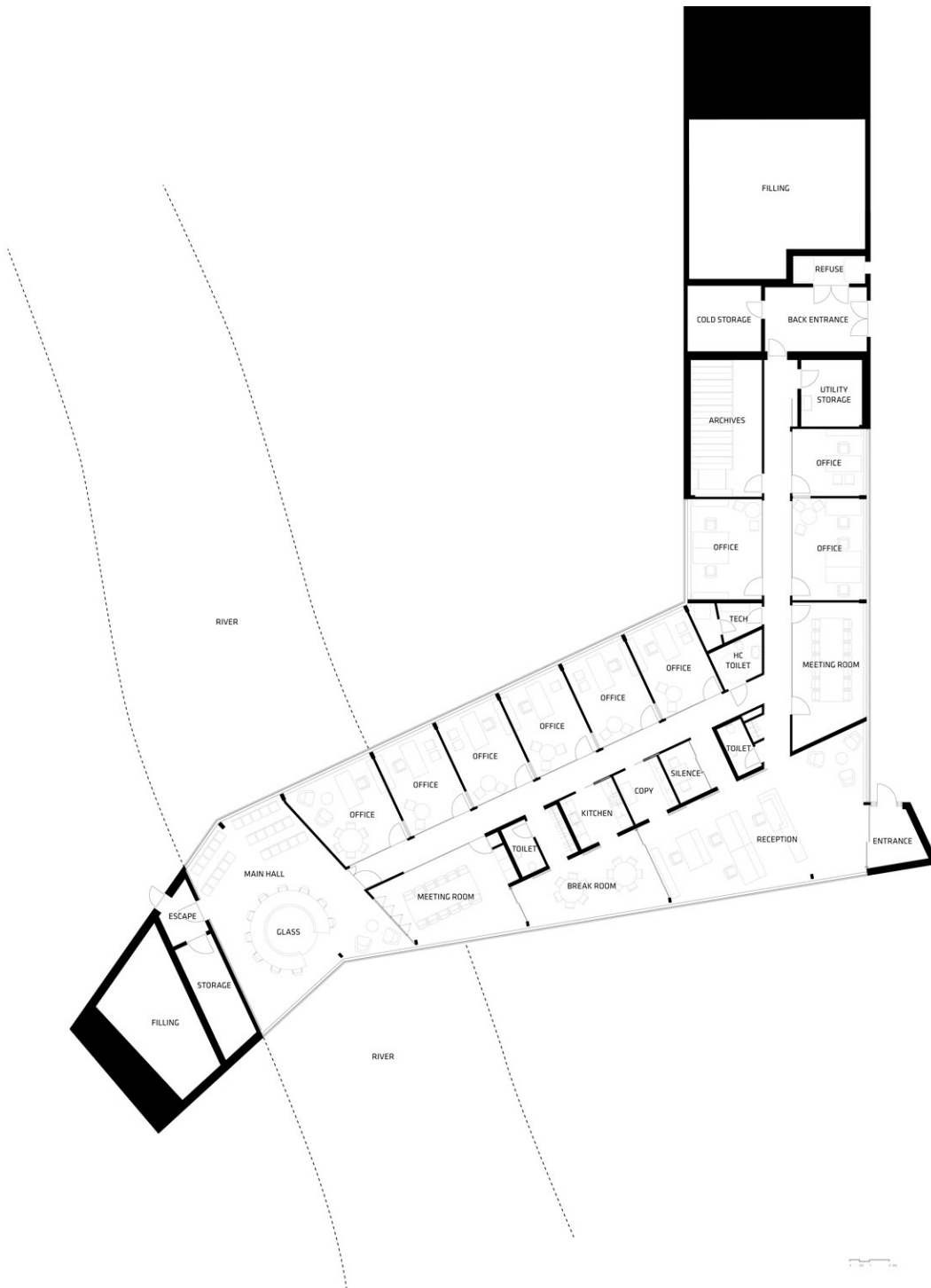
According to plan, the Town Hall in Eysturkommuna is the first building in a larger regeneration of the area. In the coming years, the local community will be revived with buildings and events that support public life.

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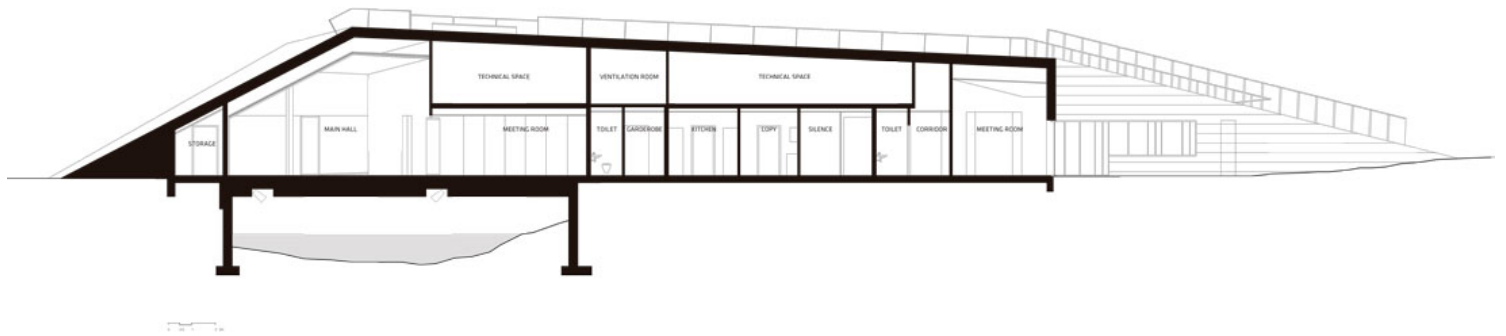
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