

PAST & PRESENT

VETENSKAPENS HUS

IVA • LKAB • LULEÅ TEKNISKA UNIVERSITET

A HOUSE OF SCIENCE



The background of the page is a dark blue gradient with several bright, glowing blue and white light trails that sweep across the frame from the bottom left towards the top right, creating a sense of motion and energy.

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past & present





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VETENSKAPENS HUS

53

LULEÅ



A GEM IN THE CITY CENTRE

A handshake in 2011 between IVA, LKAB and Luleå University of Technology marked the starting point for Vetenskapens hus.

When the property owner Diös presented the former Post Office as an option the deal was sealed. This was the building they had been looking for.

IVA was in the process of starting up a regional organisation in northern Sweden and looking for suitable premises, LKAB meanwhile needed to recruit young people for its high-technology business and Luleå University of Technology saw a golden opportunity to fulfil the dream of a centre for popular science in the city centre.

The official opening of Vetenskapens hus took place on January 31, 2014. The beautiful fifties building Posten 1 finally had a worthy successor.

The Post Office's transformation to Vetenskapens hus.

The opening of Vetenskapens hus in Luleå: January 31, 2014

The opening of the Post Office in Luleå: March 3, 1954





From left to right: Lars-Erik Aaro, Managing Director of LKAB; Johan Sterte, Vice-Chancellor at Luleå tekniska universitet and Björn O Nilsson, President of IVA, officially open Vetenskaps hus.

Karin Carlsson, former Director of Information at Luleå tekniska universitet talks about the history of the building.

The old Post Office is now a venue which accommodates up to 300 visitors (above).

THE NEW MEETING PLACE

Vetenskaps hus opened in January 2014 and the former Post Office in Luleå is once more bustling with people.

Vetenskaps hus is a new meeting place for all those interested in research, artistic endeavour and development.

Cultural history and advanced technology are conjoined in this building from the fifties. The Post Office in Luleå has become a venue for the public.



The horseshoe shaped floor serves as a reminder of the days when the Post Office was the hub of the city.





The massive screen can be used to communicate with the whole world (above).

The large hall has many uses: free wifi for online activity, seating areas for avid readers, lunch and evening lectures, banquets or breakfasts for businesses (left picture).

Jazz musicians from the the university performing at the opening ceremony (right picture).

A haven for adolescents: studying, working on projects and discussing (picture immediately to the left).



The Post Office undergoing restoration (above).

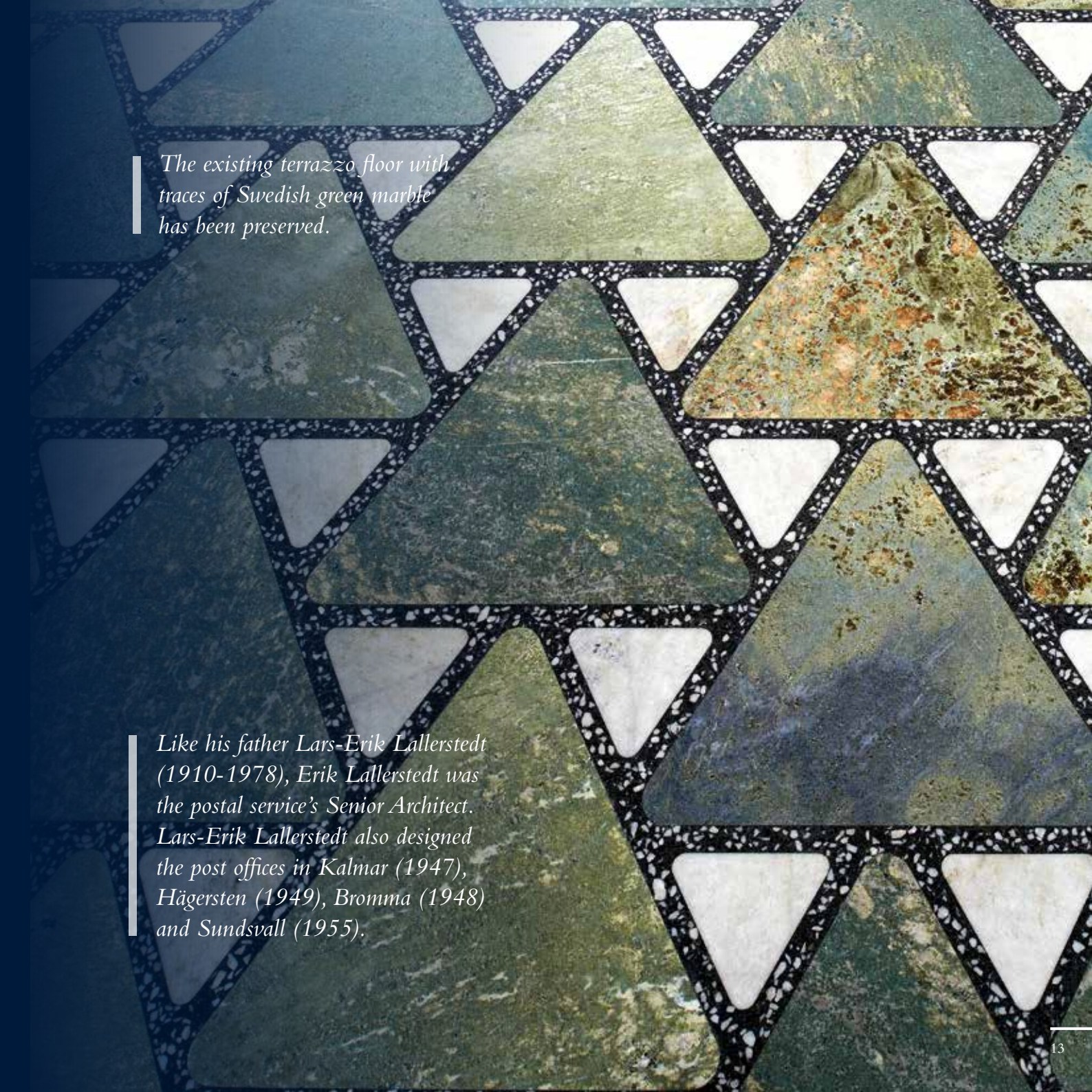
Attention to detail has been the focus of the architects work (above right).

A BUILDING WORTH PRESERVING

The Post Office in Luleå was completed in 1953. The building was designed by the Swedish Postal Service's Senior Architect Lars-Erik Lallerstedt (1910-1978), son of the architect Erik Lallerstedt and father of restaurateur Erik Lallerstedt.


The architect designed the building's exterior with great attention to detail. Line patterned plaster, trapezoid windows and asymmetrical corner sections. Buildings that were commissioned by the Swedish Postal Service during this period, were expected to remain in permanent ownership. Post offices were therefore built to a very high standard.

The arched ceiling was put on the Luleå Municipality conservation list on January 17, 2002. The stone floor in white, green and black, the balcony with its staircase, the line patterned plaster exterior and the trapezoid windows are also listed.



The existing terrazzo floor with traces of Swedish green marble has been preserved.

Like his father Lars-Erik Lallerstedt (1910-1978), Erik Lallerstedt was the postal service's Senior Architect. Lars-Erik Lallerstedt also designed the post offices in Kalmar (1947), Hägersten (1949), Bromma (1948) and Sundsvall (1955).



The building's heart and soul is preserved in the original trapezoid windows.



The goal was to preserve the heart and soul of the building. The interior of main hall was to be tampered with as little as possible.

Neither the existing terrazzo floor nor the staircase in the main hall, were to be altered and the line-patterned exterior and the trapezoid windows were left intact. The colour of the building was previously changed from grey to yellow, and after consideration it was decided that the yellow colour would remain.

The old clock in the main hall is still in place (right).

The balcony with its white, patterned staircase is protected in the municipality's plan (below).





Everything was designed to create a feeling of harmony. The hall would be both intimate and have plenty of space (top left).

The staircase pattern has been blasted into the restaurant's mirrored walls (top right).

Choosing the right audio-visual equipment was a challenge. Flexible lighting was required: stage lighting, general lighting and spotlights. The result – a halo as circular as the floor. The fixtures were concealed inside the chandelier (right).


AN INTERIOR IMPROVEMENT

A majestic room which at the same time remains low-key and understated. The attention to detail in the staircase, the shape of the windows, the pillars in the corner and the arched ceiling provide the finishing touches which give the hall its unique character.

The architects took on the assignment to create a lecture theatre that would accommodate hundreds of spectators and a space accessible for visitors, with technology in the form of flexible lighting systems and PA systems.

Their ambition was to preserve the building's heart and soul. Using minimal surface structures, hand painted walls and carefully selected furniture, the new interior design was to harmonise with the original building.

The furniture was to be understated. Small and simple fittings to represent our own time rather than the fifties, but with the same respect for quality. The seats in the auditorium are stackable and easy to move. The materials of choice are leather, ash and marble.



The circular lighting system adds character to the main hall. It looks lightweight but actually weighs one and a half tonnes.

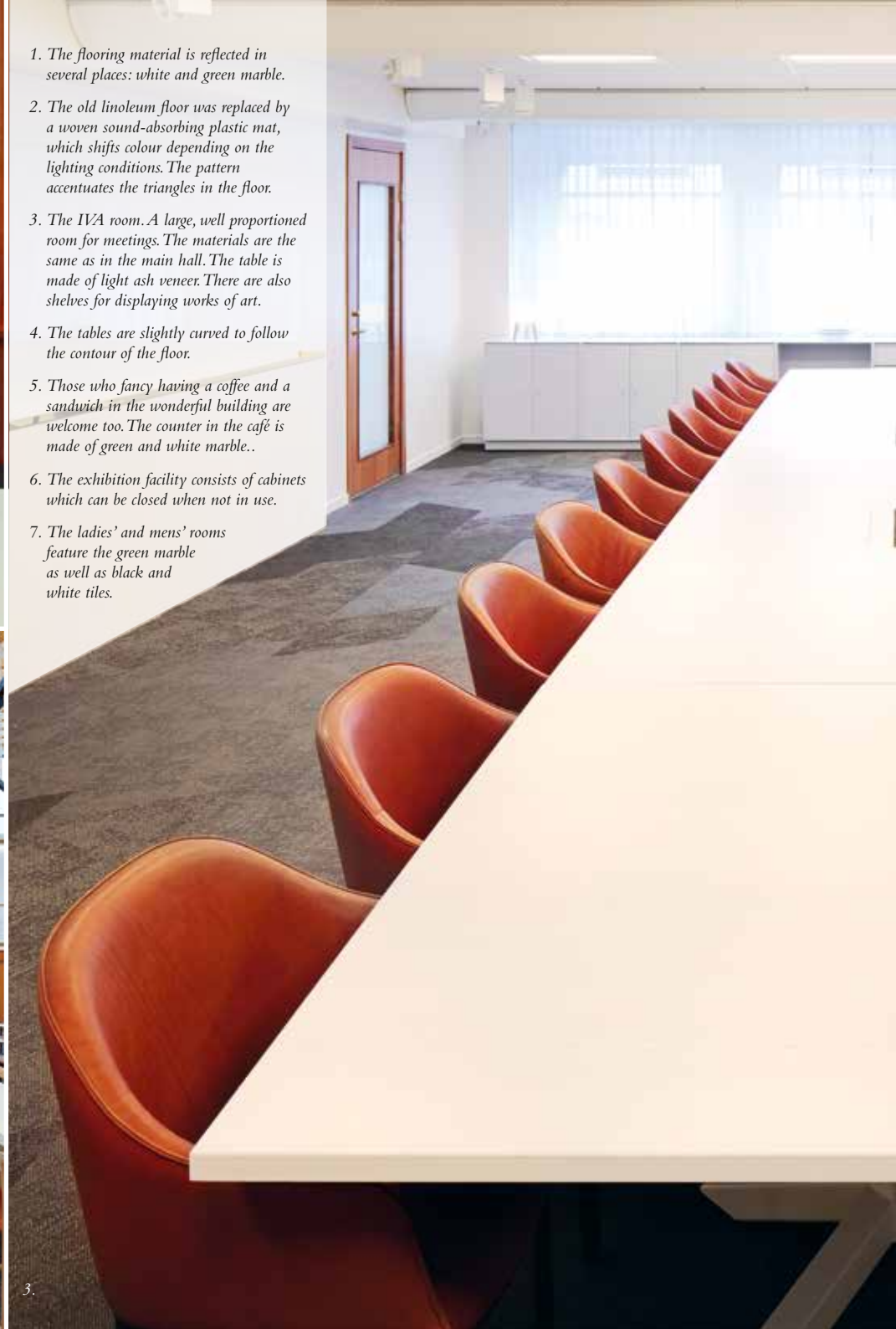


1.

1. The flooring material is reflected in several places: white and green marble.
2. The old linoleum floor was replaced by a woven sound-absorbing plastic mat, which shifts colour depending on the lighting conditions. The pattern accentuates the triangles in the floor.
3. The IVA room. A large, well proportioned room for meetings. The materials are the same as in the main hall. The table is made of light ash veneer. There are also shelves for displaying works of art.
4. The tables are slightly curved to follow the contour of the floor.
5. Those who fancy having a coffee and a sandwich in the wonderful building are welcome too. The counter in the café is made of green and white marble..
6. The exhibition facility consists of cabinets which can be closed when not in use.
7. The ladies' and mens' rooms feature the green marble as well as black and white tiles.

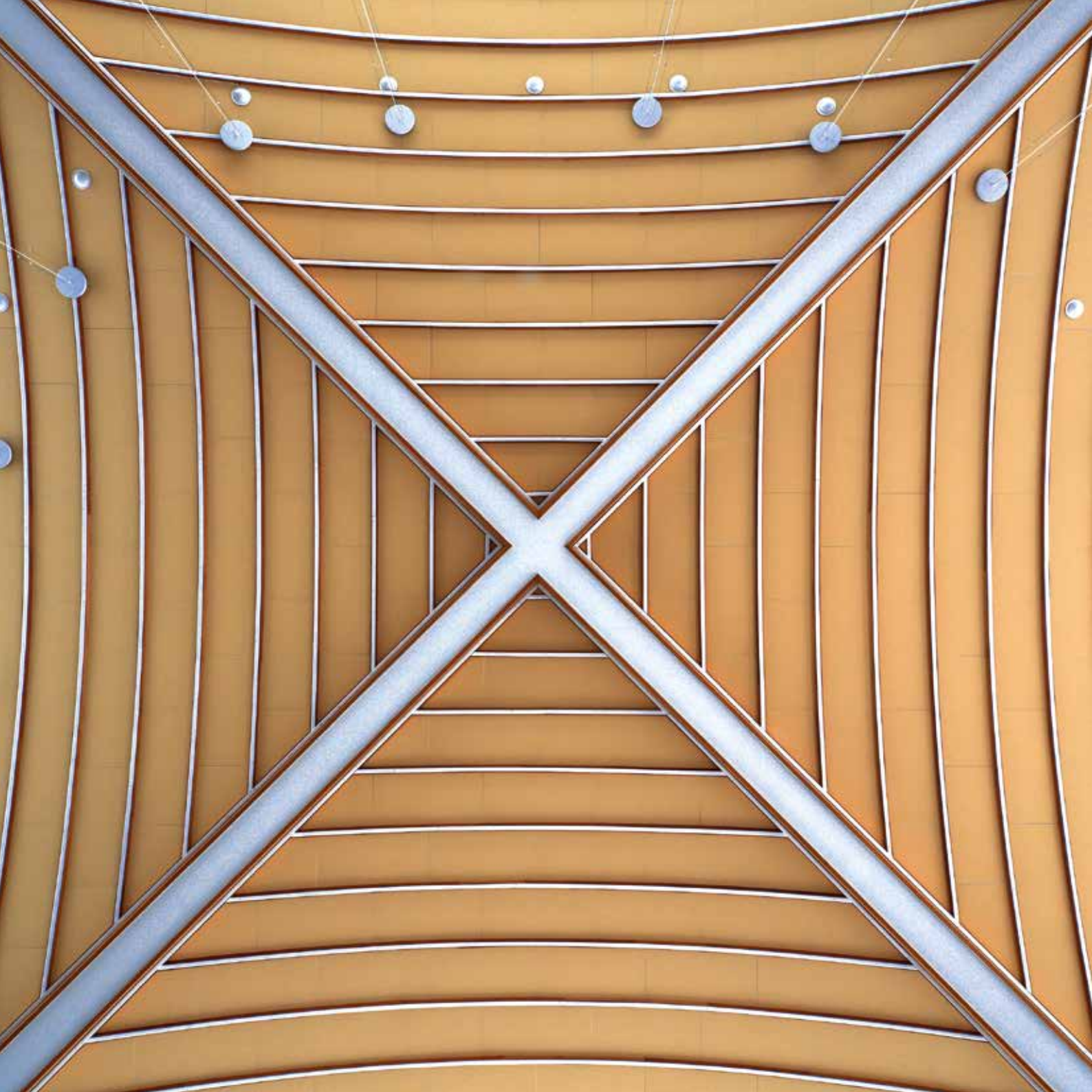


2.



3.





AN ARCHED CEILING

What do you make of such a special room with its nine metre high ceiling and a horseshoe shaped stone floor around which the post office cubicles used to be arranged? A building designed entirely to cater to the general public's postal needs?

A gym perhaps, or a market hall?

Several ideas and suggestions were considered but given the central location on Storgatan it seemed logical that this should be a venue for the general public. The premises would be open for people with a thirst for knowledge.

The objective was to create a venue for lectures and meetings, for philosophical discussions about love and truth.

The building would be bustling with people again.

But what about the owners and tenants of the post offices in other parts of the country? What happened to the other hundred buildings that the Swedish Postal Service owned and sold?

In Gothenburg, the Post Office that was built in the twenties was converted into a hotel. The 1950s building in Kalmar was first a Students' Union building then a market hall. In Borås the building housed several restaurants while Sundsvall's listed Post Office became an office landscape, to name just a few examples.

Everything was built to harmonise. The building was designed to be both intimate and at the same time have plenty of space for a large audience.





Simple black tables and chairs as well as leather, ash and marble fittings make the nine-metre room feel both low-key and grandiose at the same time.






A BUILDING OF ITS TIME

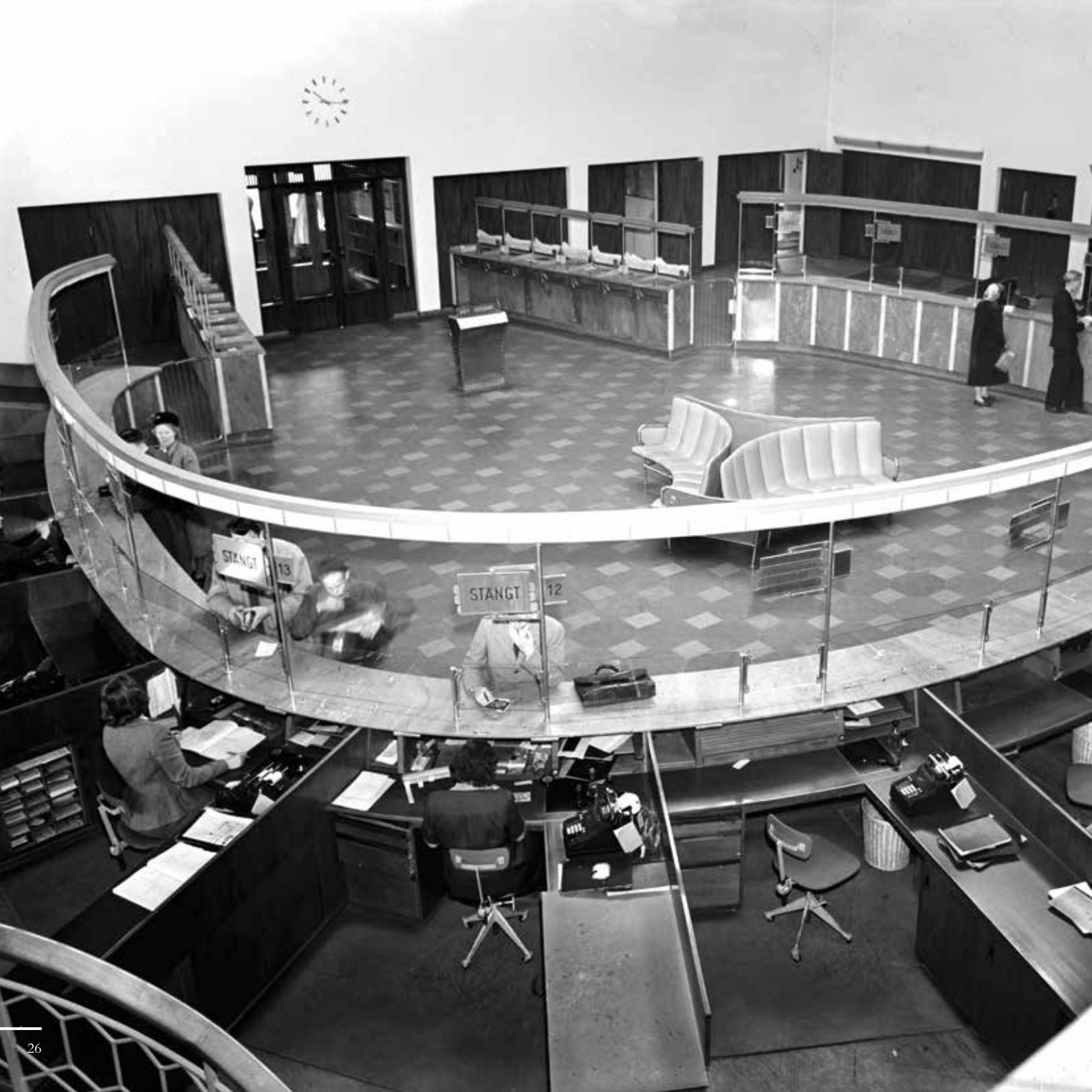
This was the face of monumentality in the 1950s. A building representative of the community. This was an organisation that seemed destined to expand.

The Post Office was used by the public for child benefit claims, pension collection, money transfers and sending letters and packages.



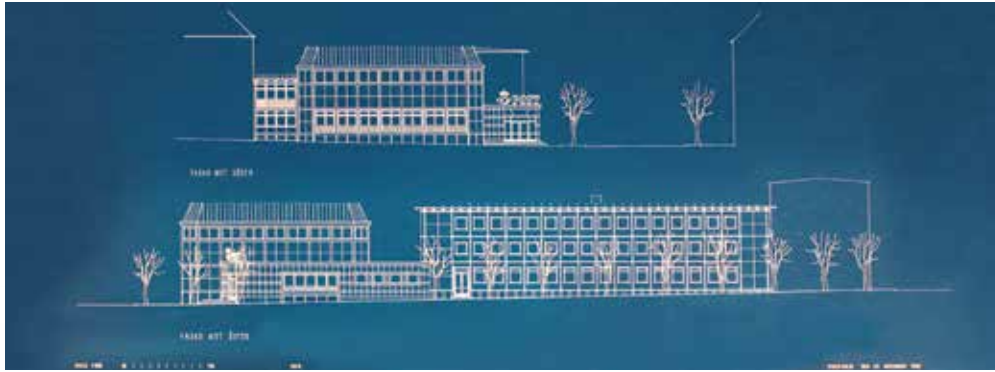


*“One of Sweden’s most beautiful post offices,”
said the Director General Erik H. Swartling
at the opening ceremony.*



STANGT 12

STANGT 13



The first sketch of the austere design for the post office was abandoned in favour of the building sketch with softer lines (above).

Kalmar: The floor design in the Post Office in Kalmar (designed by Lars-Erik Lallerstedt) gave the architect an idea that he would later revisit. The horseshoe shape prevented queues from intersecting. This theme reappeared in the Luleå Post Office a few years later (left).

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Lars-Erik Lallerstedt presented the first sketch in 1949. Like many architects, Lars-Erik Lallerstedt was inspired by the early functionalist movement of the 1930s. As the sketch shows, The Post Office in Luleå was initially designed with straight walls and ceiling and window strips typical of the time.

Inspiration from the 1930s functionalism can also be found in some of the other buildings that Lars-Erik Lallerstedt designed, e.g. the Post Office in Kalmar, which opened in 1947. At the opening ceremony, the Minister for Transport and Communication said that Kalmar's new post office was "the most beautiful in Sweden".

But he had not yet seen the one in Luleå.

The Post Office in Hågersten from 1949 is another example of the austere design of buildings during a time when function came first (immediately to the left).





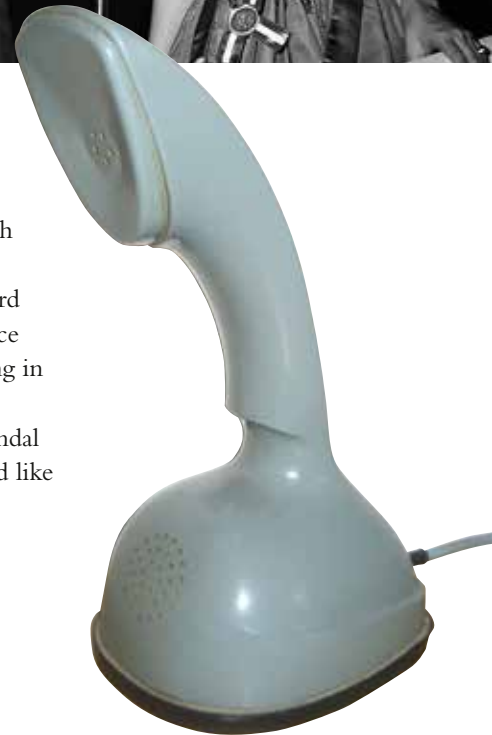
The Blackeberg underground station from 1952 exemplifies contemporary architecture. The building was designed by Peter Celsing, who later became a renowned architect. (upper left)


SWEDEN IN THE FIFTIES

When Post Office was built in Luleå, it was a time of industrial growth and boom in public construction.

The PV 444 model became symbolic of the dreams of a high standard of living. The Cobra one-piece phone from LM Ericson found its place in Swedish homes and Sophia Loren visited the student union building in Stockholm in 1955 in conjunction with the Italian film festival.

It was the year before Cabinet Minister Ulla Lindström caused a scandal when she did not curtsy to the Queen of England and instead bowed like her male colleagues.



A rear view of a dark-colored Volvo PV 444 car. The car features a prominent chrome bumper, a license plate reading "DJE 016", and a "Volvo" badge on the rear panel. The car is parked on an asphalt surface, and a chain-link fence is visible in the background.

*This was the post-war period. In the 1950s
the Swedish industry was booming and the Volvo
PV 444 found its way into the hearts of the people.*

*Badhuset was completed in 1957
and considered to be Europe's finest.*



MEANWHILE IN LULEÅ

In the fifties, the city of Luleå grew at an explosive rate and Norrbottens Järnverk (a Steel Producer) expanded as never before.

This was when it all happened. After the Post Office was completed, a bridge was built in 1954 over the Luleå River which made it possible to expand the district of Bergnäset. This was followed by Ralph Erskine's shopping centre, unveiled in 1955. It was the world's first indoor shopping centre and was a welcome place for students to warm themselves on the way home from school in freezing temperatures. This was followed by Badhuset (swimming baths), which was completed in 1957. The building was Europe's most extravagant swimming baths, according to local media – according to some perhaps even a bit too extravagant. Badhuset was designed by the three architects Jan Ericson, Torgny Gynnerstedt and Bengt Ågren.

The City Hall was known as the “Marble Palace” and considered to be built art. The City Hall was designed by Bo Cederlöf and opened in 1958.

Putte Wickman, a famous clarinetist performed in the bright garden at the shopping centre.

The shopping centre in Luleå, the world's first indoor shopping centre. People came here to listen to jazz or keep warm in the winter..



The City Hall in Luleå, also known as the “Marble Palace”, opened in 1958.





The bridge between Luleå and Bergnäset was completed in 1954 and allowed Luleå to expand beyond the city centre.

INTERIOR ARCHITECTS

Wingårdh Arkitektkontor AB

- Gert Wingårdh: Responsible Architect
- Helena Toresson: Senior Lead Architect
- David Regestam: Project Architect

CONSTRUCTION ARCHITECTS

MAF Arkitektkontor AB

- Senior Architect: Mats Öhman

PROJECT MANAGERS

- Rikard Hedlund, Project Manager
Luleå University of Technology
- Anders Burman, Assistant Project
Manager a and d arkitektkontor ab

PA SYSTEM

Anders Nordin, Luleå University
of Technology

PROPERTY OWNER: Diös Fastigheter AB

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY: NCC

PHOTOGRAPHERS

- Åke E:son Lindman 1, 3 (middle), 4 (left), 7,
9, 12 (right), 13-15, 16 (right), 17-20, 22, 23
(bottom), 35
- Fredric Alm 8, 10, 11 (upper), 21
- Karl-William Sandström 3 (right), 5, 11
(bottom), 16 (left), 23 (upper)
- Rune Espling 3 (left), 24, 25, 30-33 Post
Office in Luleå, Shopping Centre,
The Bergnäs Bridge, Badhuset and City Hall.
Property of Luleå Municipality archive
- Lars-Erik Lallerstedt 27, skiss
- Ateljé Wahlberg 27, Post Office in
Hägersten
- Sune Sundahl/Ateljé Sundahl, 26 Post

Office in Kalmar. From the collection of
Architecture and Design Centre Stockholm

- Jan Allan 28, Sophia Loren at the Student
Union in Stockholm
- Mostphoto 29, picture of Volvo PV
- Ulf Sörenson 28, Blackeberg Underground
Station
- Jenny Strand 4 (right)
- Anders Burman 12 (left)

ARCHITECTS OF BUILDINGS FROM THE FIFTIES:

- Bo Cederlöf, Luleå City Hall
- Peter Celsing, Blackeberg Underground
Station
- Jan Ericson, Torgny Gynnerstedt,
Bengt Ågren Badhuset Luleå
- Ralph Erskine, Shopping Centre Luleå
- Lars-Erik Lallerstedt, Post offices in Luleå,
Hägersten och Kalmar. Drawing from 1949,
property of the Postal Museum.

SOURCES:

- Luleå Municipality archives ■ Norrbotten
County Council archives and library ■ Postal
Museum Stockholm ■ Architecture and
Design Centre Stockholm ■ Emilie Karlsmo,
senior lecturer in Art History at Uppsala Uni-
versity ■ Hans Hellström: Postens Byggnader
genom tiderna ■ Norrbotten Museum ■ Lina
Karlsson: Dokumentation av modern arkitek-
tur i Norrbotten ■ Johan Mårtelius, professor
at KTH Stockholm.

PARTIES IN THE HOUSE OF SCIENCE:

- IVA Nord ■ LKAB
- Luleå University of Technology

The former Postal Service administrative building's exterior also has a rhombus pattern.



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