



Office building for Ericsson, Asker

A drive to go further: architectural diversity with JRA

Jostein Rønsen Architects AS describe themselves as generalists, keen to explore various kinds of projects without limiting design to set categories. Private constructions to public developments – this small-scale office knows how to turn great ideas into unique structures.

By Julie Lindén | Photos: Jostein Rønsen Architects

The office, centrally located in Oslo's Grubbegata, is made up of nine architects offering everything from customary architectural services to assistance within non-traditional fields. Though specialised in large-scale projects, the company strives to welcome assignments on several levels of complexity. "Our aim is to take on a miscellany of projects," says architect Jostein Rønsen, founder of the company. "We do a lot of different things, and we try to focus on the individuality and uniqueness of the projects rather than what category they belong to."

The varied portfolio of JRA was brought about and furthered by many unique,

prestigious and exciting projects. After its establishment in 1995, the office collaborated closely with Aviaplan AS during the building of Oslo Airport Gardermoen's traffic control tower. The project was prized for its outstanding concrete design, and JRA grew to offer services to locations around the country.

Ericsson AS headquarters – a mark of supreme quality

Much praise has been dealt out to JRA's 2001 completion of the Ericsson AS headquarters. Situated adjacent to a farm in Asker, west of Oslo, the office building was inspired by the openness of courtyards and conveys a seamless transition

from old to new. The office volumes are deconstructed into elements to suit the surrounding terrain, and are designed to let in the maximum amount of light and air. Rooftops have been given an open finish to embrace the distinctive feel of the JRA design.

"I wouldn't say we have any kind of special image or inspiration in mind when we start a project," says Rønsen, adding: "We solve every assignment for what it essentially is: a challenge for us to meet and acknowledge for its particular needs and prerequisites. The methodology differs greatly from project to project, and so floor plans and designs must follow naturally."

Rewarding competition

Architectural competitions make up a significant part of production, as roughly 90 to 95 per cent of the company's assignments have been initiated through such entries. Rønsen notes the importance of employing this work structure, as it gives a good return on invested time. "Both open and invited competitions are of interest to us, not simply because they provide us with appealing projects but also because they are a good way to keep in



Top: Vadsø elementary school, Vadsø.
Below: QB - office building for PEAB Real Estate Development, Tromsø. Photos: CADMAN.

Top: Twin schools Oppsal Vetland, Oslo
Below: University College of Dentistry, Tromsø

tune with the industry and the market. We're allowed to test our expertise on everything from complete solution proposals to the development of realistic quotes for each client," says Rønsen.

The results of the competitive spirit have, to say the very least, been abundant. The company won first place in a turnkey project competition in Norway earlier this year, designing a new 7,300-square-metre elementary school for Vadsø municipality. Over the past few years a number of corporate and industry buildings have also been commissioned, representing a trusting clientele at companies such as SKANSKA and PEAB.

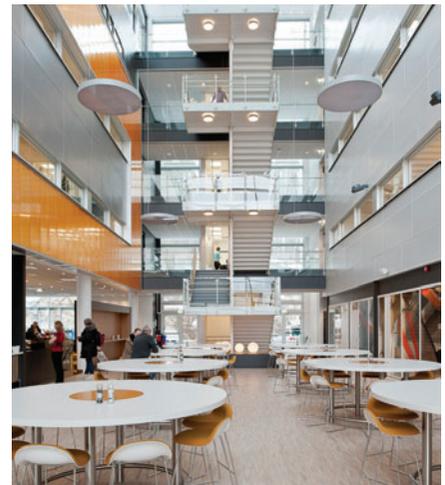
Entirety and drive – no matter the size

Rønsen stresses that the feeling of entirety is key to JRA, no matter the size of a project. Bringing together ideas of form, function and user experience, all employees motivate each other to reach the full potential of every task. Being a small-scale office providing a wide scope of services helps, Rønsen notes.

"We get to take on a lot of different projects and thereby work with methodologies

of various kinds. That allows you to keep learning and expanding on your current skillset, something that pays off in the end," says Rønsen. "Designing a care home is vastly different from designing a villa or an office building – they have completely different areas of use and demand, but because we have great and varied experience we are able to take these projects on with an open and driven mind."

JRA aims to grow further in the coming years, in order to take on even more projects on a long-term basis. The company has made it a goal to enter additional collaborations with other companies to expand on the current portfolio. "For a company of nine employees, we have completed a good number of large-scale projects – some as large as 30,000 square metres. Our hope is to continue to grow, while staying as involved in every phase of construction as we are at the moment. Ideas matter, as do details, expression and final delivery of a seamless experience. Every client deserves an architectural firm that stays connected all the way," says Rønsen.



Office building for Aibel, Asker. Top: Atrium of the office building for Aibel.

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