

Glásir Tórshavn College - Faroe Islands, Denmark

By Nicholas Navarro

Completed in 2018, Glásir is a multipurpose educational building for the many disciplines taught at Tórshavn College. Located just up the hill from the capital of the Faroe islands, this 5 story building incorporates components of the Faroe Islands Gymnasium, the technical college, and the business college totalling 206,667 sq ft and over 17,50 staff and students. The building's form follows its function and it gracefully links these different studies while maintaining their distinction enough to recognize the separate portions of the structure assigned to each. The design is meant to encourage innovation and interaction as it wraps its different levels around a central courtyard and common area(1).

The main entrance is accessible via a bridge from the hillside and provides a direct path to the central atrium. While there are three separate schools in the singular building, each one reserves its autonomy and functions independently from the others. The glass panels of the atrium interior are tinted per the school on that floor to subtly indicate that same separation they wish to maintain, made even clearer by the notion that each respective level has its own unique floor plan to properly facilitate its directive.

These same floors radiate outward from the main atrium and cantilever 30 meters out over the hillside. Most of the walls on the exterior are glass curtain walls and beautifully present not only the town and countryside, but the other limbs of the building itself. The harsh climate of the Faroe Islands make it difficult to appreciate the beauty of the islands for long periods but the transparent skylights over the central atrium provide adequate shelter while providing large amounts of natural light and apparent space while also providing some natural heat. Not only does this increase appreciation for the natural landscape as well as the historical town of Tórshavn, it also improves the productivity and mood of the building's students and staff(2).

Due to the location's remoteness and harsh weather, the construction of the building had to be performed in tandem with the changing conditions. This was especially true of the cantilevered upper floors supported by diagonal saw tooth bracing that provides the structure, as well as being a significant feature of the Glásir's intended façade. Following along with the exposure to natural light and views, the interior makes extensive use of stone, cast concrete, and wood to mimic a sort of natural landscape that plays smoothly with the rounded atrium. The exterior makes more use of glass and aluminium to properly showcase its structural elements.

Like most, if not all BIG projects, Glásir has an intent to blend with the environment and be highly sustainable with its energy usage. Similarly to the 8 House in Copenhagen, the roof of the building is designed to involve the growth of natural vegetation which serves two purposes. The first is that it meshes the building with the hillside. The second is that it provides a natural heat sink for the roof of the building which can, in turn, be used to assist with the conditioning and insulation of the interior(3).

Sources:

- (1) [Glasir Tórshavn College / BIG | ArchDaily](#)
- (2) [Glasir - Tórshavn College – ARQA](#)
- (3) [Glasir Tórshavn College - Glasir - SCUP](#)

