

Research Plan

Tijana Ćulum
Lenore Liu
Joanna Pilecka
Ries Schouten

Interiors Building Cities
Msc3 | 4 Palace

Villa Snellman

Erik Gunnar Asplund,
1917-1918,
Djursholm, Sweden

Group reflections
after *Asplund Oeuvre* presentations

Villa Snellman, designed for Bank Director Emil Snellman in 1917-1918, was one of Gunnar Asplund's early creations. It's located in Djursholm, a suburb of Stockholm, and while it exhibits typical elements of Swedish traditional architecture, it stands out in various ways.

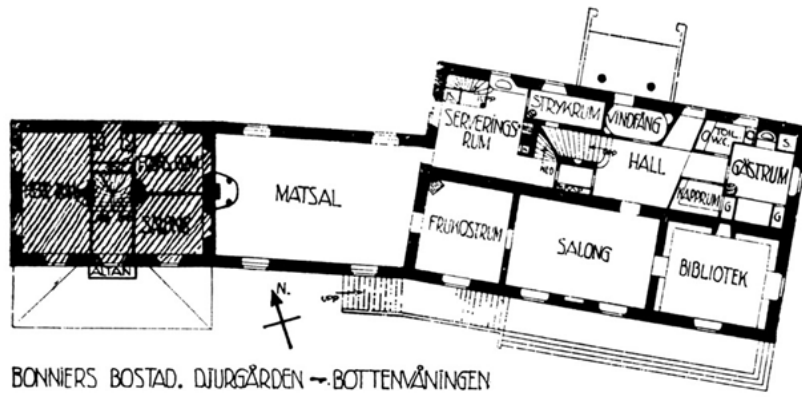
One of the remarkable features is how Asplund experimented with the arrangement of openings, windows, and ornamentation on the facade. Notably, he added a small, half-circle window in the facade, which cleverly refers to the living room inside. This room has a different speciality and materialisation than the other rooms. It has a round floor plan, a higher ceiling and uses wooden claddings for its surfaces. The round window highlights the different status of the room and makes the building readable from the outside. To avoid a monotonous facade, he intentionally placed the first-floor windows off-center from the taut second-floor windows. These playful facade compositions and the use of off-center windows is typical in Asplund's designs, and evident in his other buildings.

Villa Snellman maintains an overall formal and classical appearance but also shows some interesting elements that break with the traditional architecture in Sweden around that time. Traditional Swedish architecture typically favoured rich detailing and outstanding ornamentation, while the design of Villa Snellman embraces simplicity, geometric shapes, and has a focus on the practical use of space while departing from excessive ornamentation. Later work of Asplund elaborates even more on these aspects.

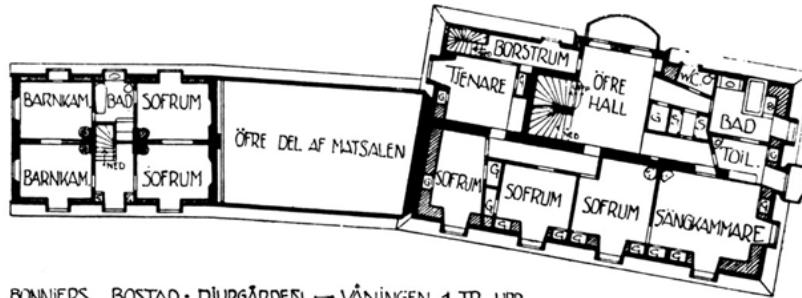
Asplund's attention to the sensory experience of spaces is evident in Villa Snellman. The use of skewed walls and carefully planned routes guides people through the building. These skewed walls not only create the illusion of perspective but also provide directions to various spaces. They lead to interesting areas like the round living room, the entrance hall, and the enfilade. Villa Snellman was designed to accommodate the Snellman family, visitors, and domestic workers. It features special routing and spaces designed to the needs of each user group. The building includes vertically look-through spaces, a separate staircase for domestic workers, a room dedicated to serving guests, and a big amount of storage space.

Last but not least, Asplund paid great attention to the relationship between humans and their surroundings in all his buildings. A visitor arriving at the site of Villa Snellman initially encounters the narrow side of the building with the face-like facade. As visitors walk further down a narrow pathway, they are welcomed by an inviting and intimate inner courtyard. The placement of the two building masses is at a smaller angle than usual, resulting in the creation of a partially enclosed courtyard. The circulation passages and functional rooms of the villa are oriented towards this inner courtyard. The design allowed the people inside the building to observe the activities taking place in the courtyard and notice incoming visitors. All the areas designated for leisure and relaxation were oriented towards the garden, providing a quiet, peaceful, and natural view. This arrangement emphasises the connection between the indoor spaces and the surrounding.

In conclusion, Villa Snellman shows aspects of traditional Swedish architecture but also showcases Asplund's experimentation with the use of ornamentation and the sensory experience of spaces. Its playful facade and innovative interior, along with its carefully planned layout, exemplify Asplund's commitment to both form and function.

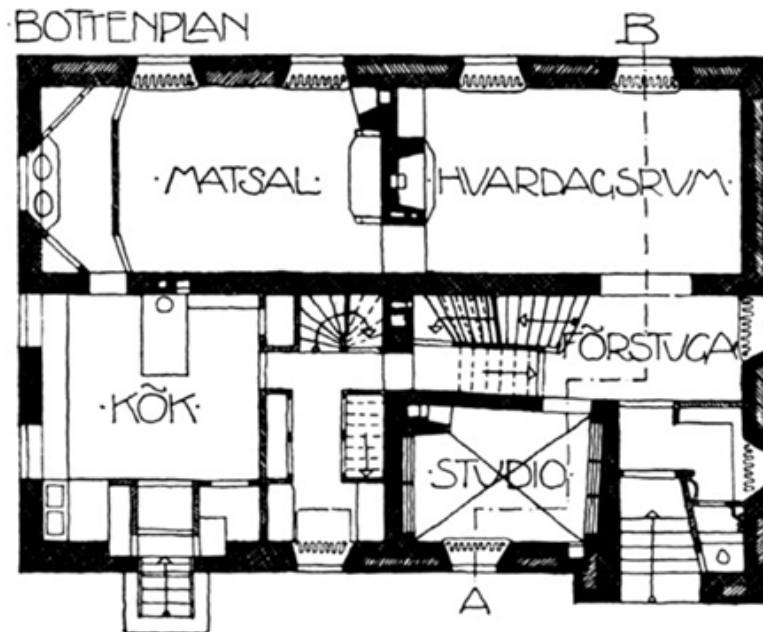


BONNIERS BOSTAD, DJURGÅRDEN → BOTTENVÅNINGEN

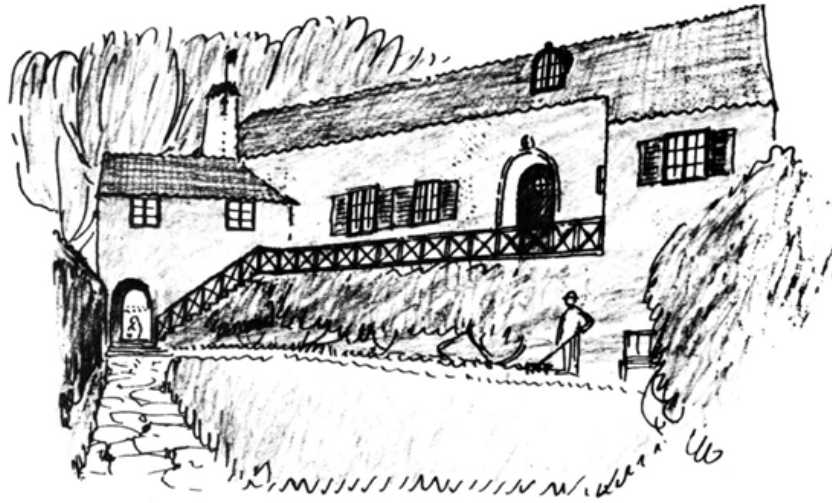


BONNIERS BOSTAD · DJURGÅRDEN → VÅNINGEN 1 TR. UPP

*Villa for K. O. Bonnier, Stockholm 1909-1910
plans by Ragnar Östberg, Asplund's professor, whose designs influenced Asplund's early career,
this plan reflects the trend of combining traditional Swedish cubic house design with English
informality and a flexible plan for modern living
source: Stuart Wrede, 'The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund', 1983*



*Villa Lagercrantz, Djurscholm 1910,
combines traditional exterior style with innovative interior design, showcasing a clear example of
the popular National Romantic style in Sweden during that time,
plan by Elis Benckert
source: Stuart Wrede, 'The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund', 1983*



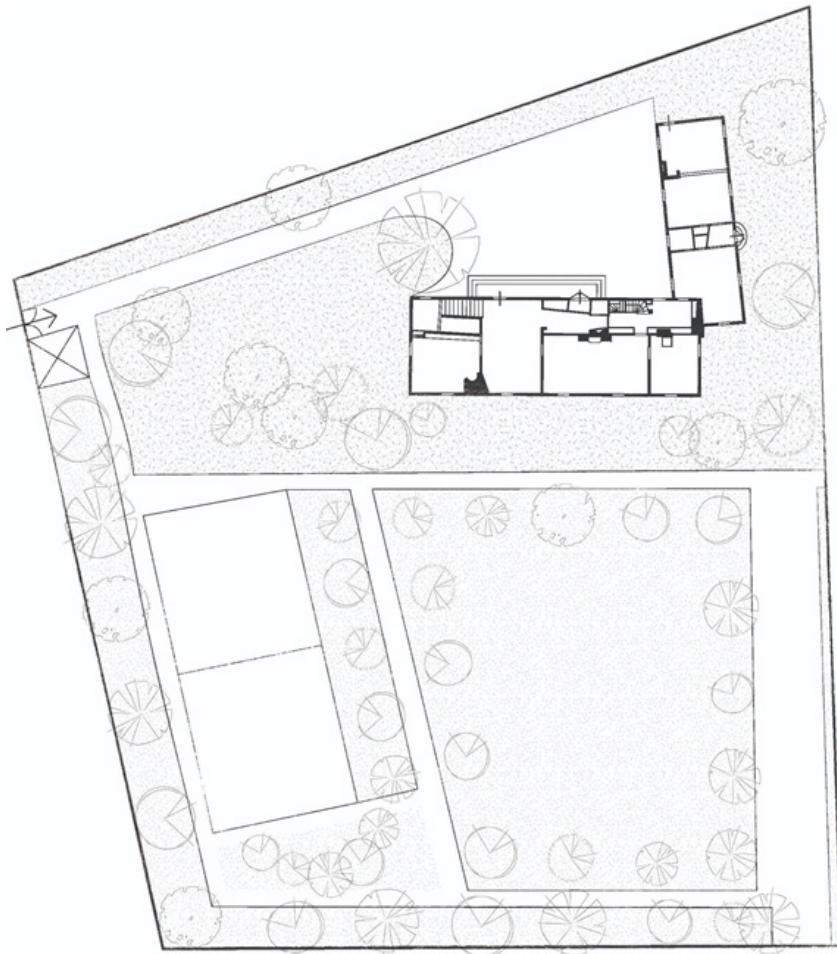
*Villa Rosenberg, Karlshamn 1912,
never built, took inspiration from English and Italian country houses,
shows stucco and a tile roof, anticipating the style of the 1917 Villa Snellman,
this project also introduced a recurring theme in Asplund's work—the enigmatic arrangement of
entries and passages, which became a common feature in his later designs,
source: Stuart Wrede, 'The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund', 1983*



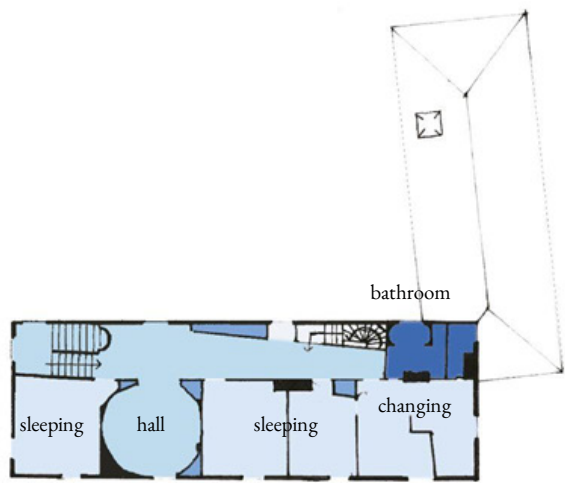
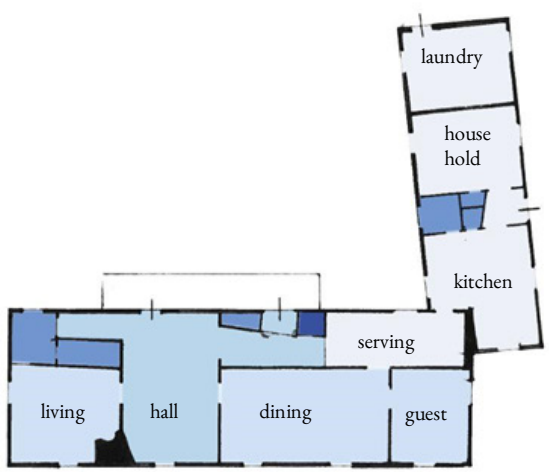
*Villa Snellman,
Djursholm, 1912,
perspective sketch by Gunnar Asplund,
source: <https://arkivkopia.se/sak/digmus-ark-ARKM.1990-04-39>*



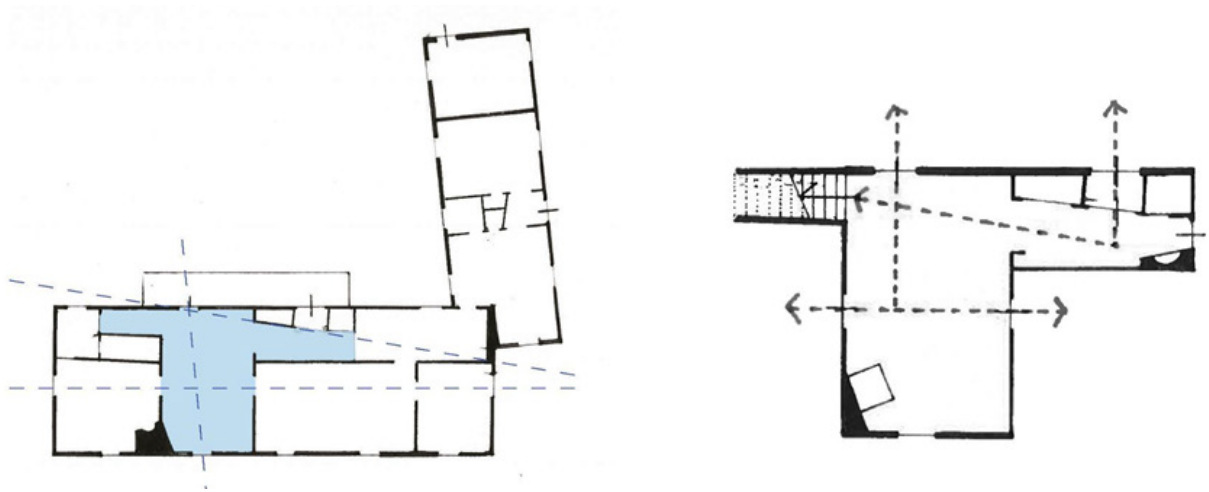
*Villa Snellman,
courtyard view,
photograph by Vincent Forsbeck*



Site plan



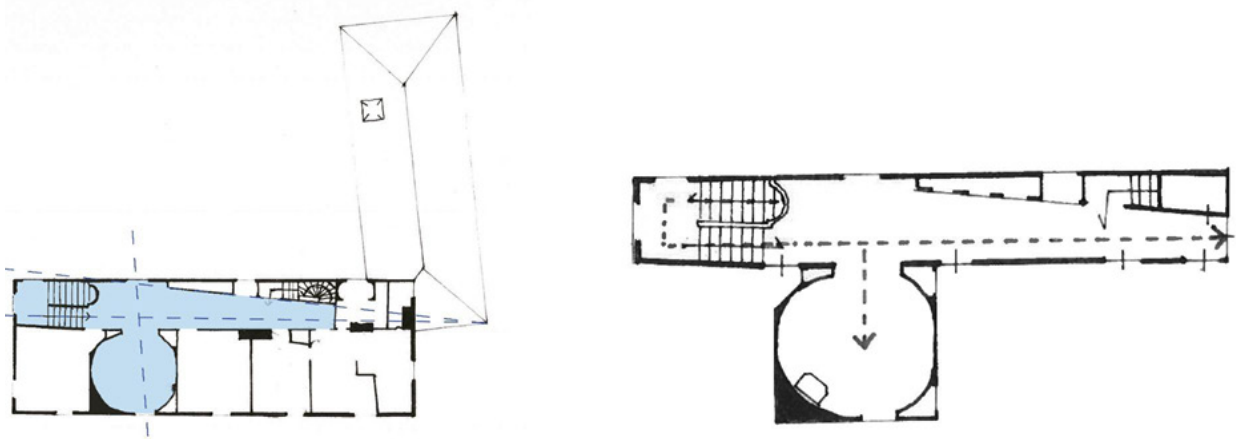
*Ground floor plan | First floor plan,
functions*



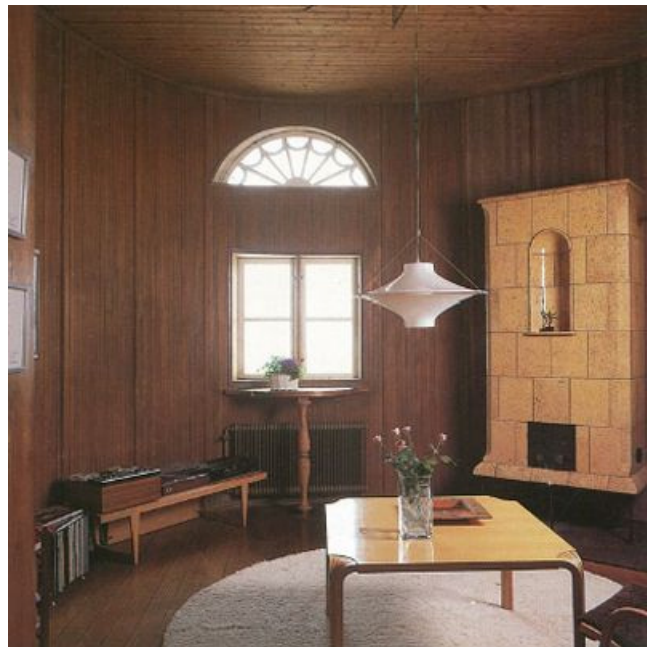
*Ground floor plan,
main building,
spatial organization of the entrance hall and the configuration of rooms along*



*Ground floor hall and corridor,
enfilade and summer terrace door,
photographs by Vincent Forsbeck*



*First floor plan,
main building,
spatial organization of the upper corridor and the relation to the round room*

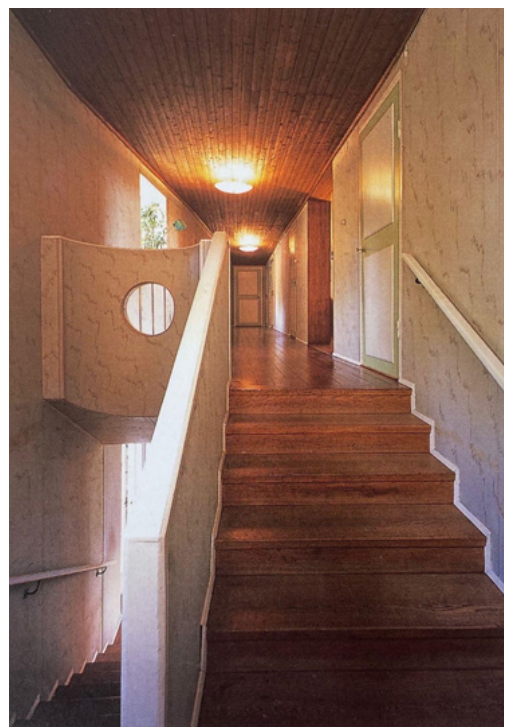
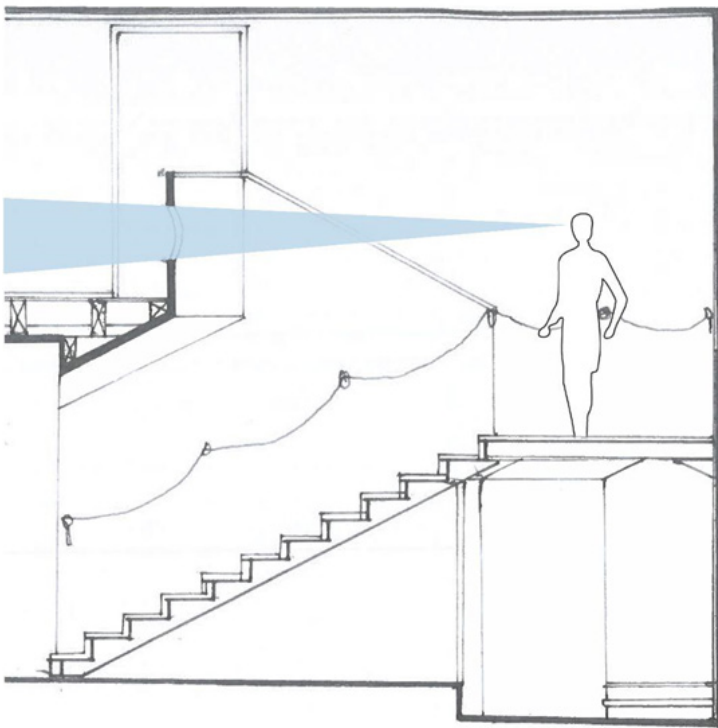


*First floor corridor and living room,
narrowing walls and circular room,*

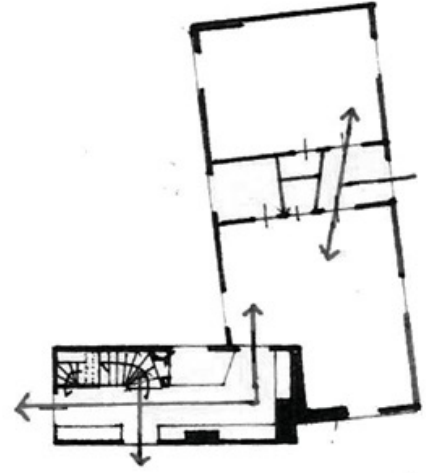
sources:

https://twitter.com/Javier_delMonte/status/1228800674978320384/photo/1

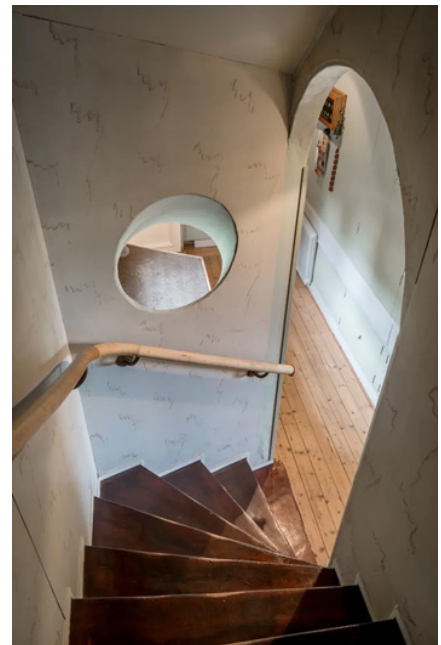
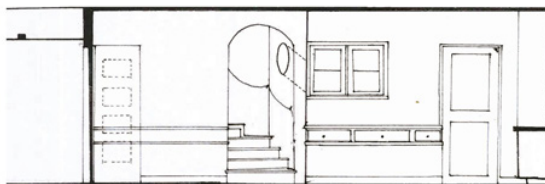
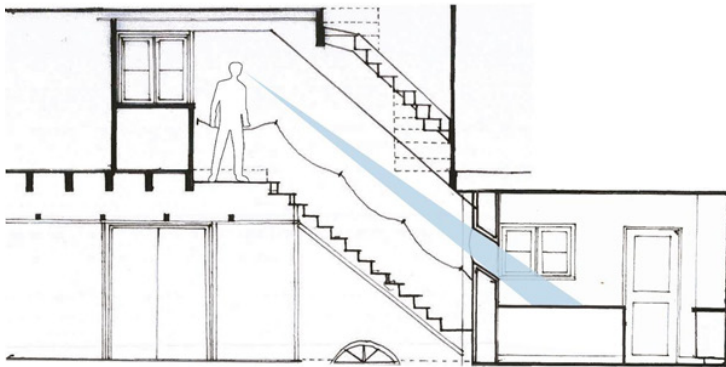
https://en.wikiarquitectura.com/villa_snellman_7-2/



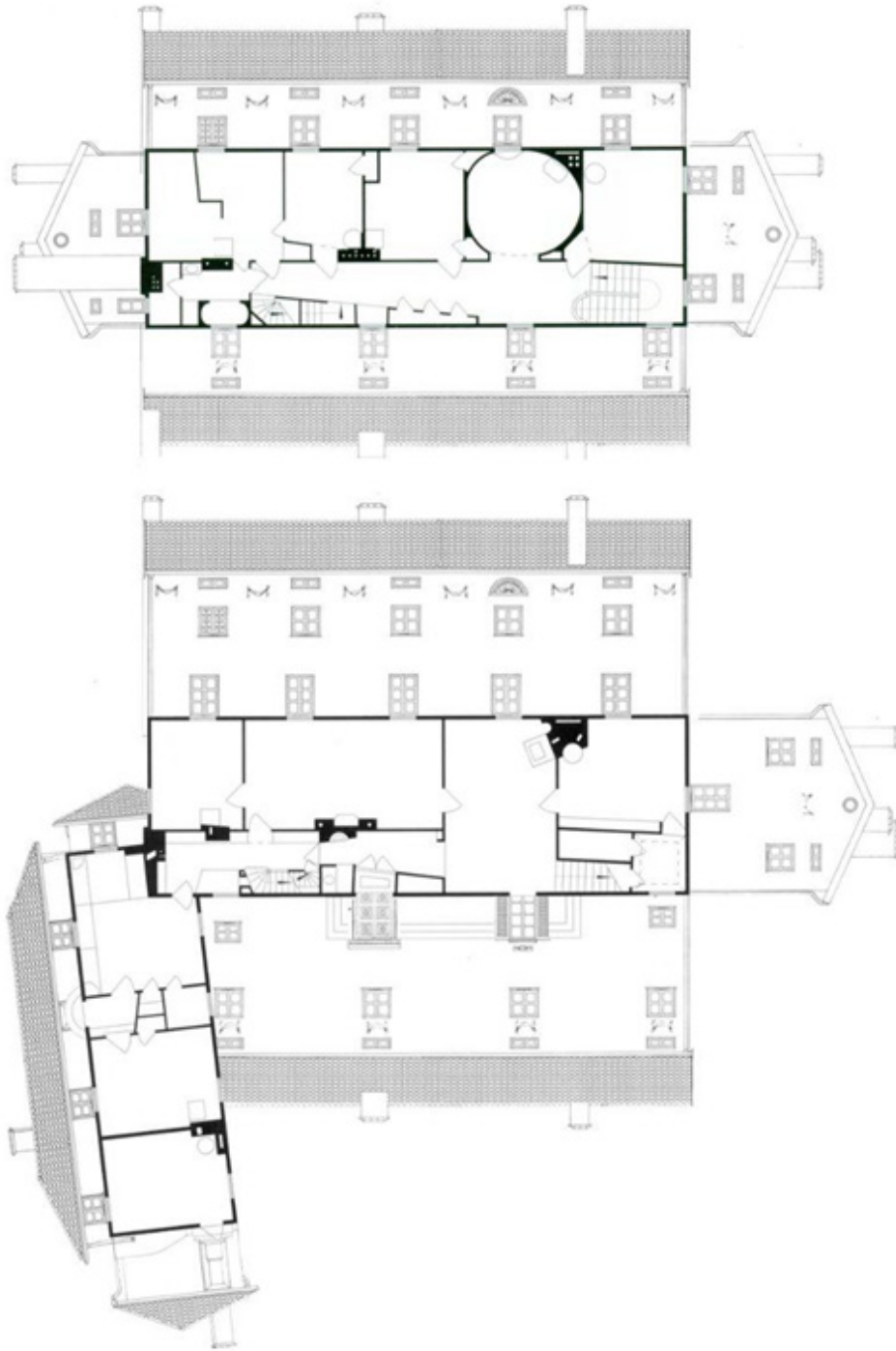
*Main staircase,
lookout point for the residents,
source: Gunnar Asplund Architect 1885-1940. Plans sketches and photographs, published by
Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, ed. G. Holmdahl, S. I. Lind, K. Odden, Stockholm 1950*



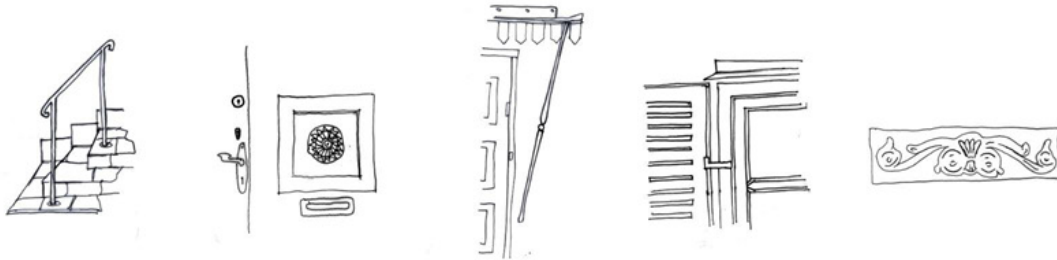
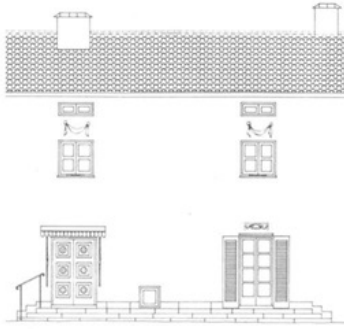
*First floor plan,
annex,
spatial organization and movement of the domestic workers' rooms*



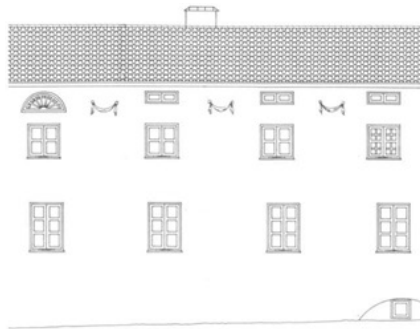
*Additional staircase,
lookout point for the domestic workers,
photograph by Vincent Forsbeck*



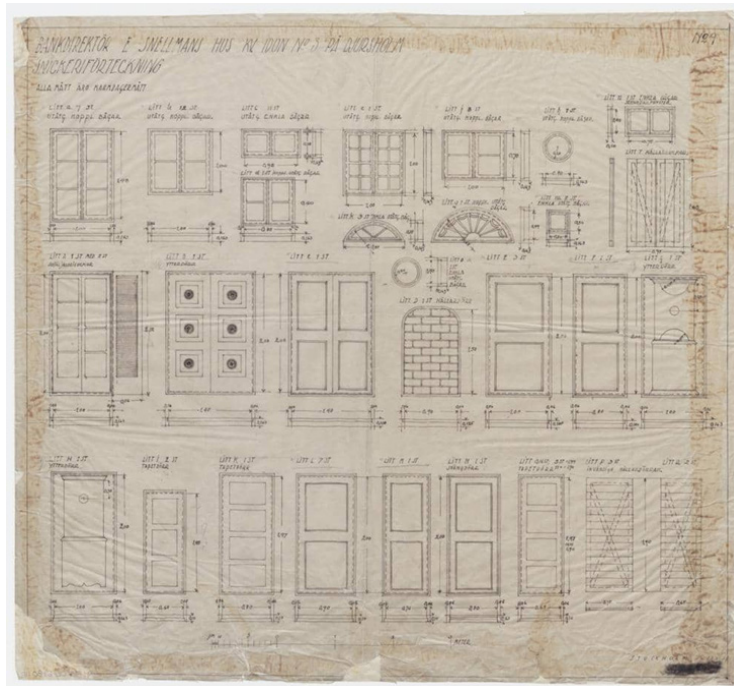
*Interior-exterior connections and organization,
folding out the facades and comparing with floor plans,*



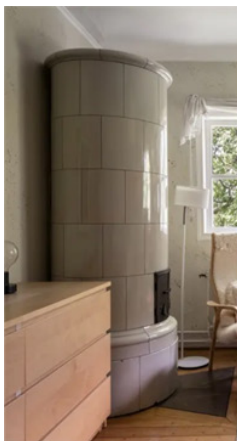
*Courtyard facade,
the ornaments create a vertical - formal facade here,
they highlight the entrance and different door*



*Garden facade,
the facade appears horizontal and less formal,
the half circle window refers to the organic-shaped circular room on the first floor
exterior photographs source: <https://parallel-archive.org/Villa-Snellman>*



*Carpentry drawing,
Djursholm, 1912,
source: <https://arkivkopla.se/sak/digmus-ark-ARKM.1988-02-6999>*



*Tiled stoves,
all designed by Gunnar Asplund,
photographs by Vincent Forsbeck*



Final drawing analysis

The drawing reveals that a complex and unpredictable interior is concealed within the simple rectangular volume. The entire residence forms a harmonious composition of unexpected events and elements. Therefore, the exterior shell of the building is shown in simple lines, whereas the interior space and windows are shown with textures and dimensions. This reveals the complex and playful spatial experiences that one can have within this building.

Phillips Exeter Academy Library

Louis Kahn,
1966-1971
Exeter, New Hampshire

Group reflections
after *Modern Libraries* presentations

Phillips Exeter Library is located in Exeter, New Hampshire, USA. In the 1960s, when the old library building exceeded its capacity, architect Louis Khan was assigned the task to design a new contemporary building for Exeter campus. As the requirements stated - the building had to fit in the masonry aesthetic of the campus from the outside and provide an ideal interior for studying. Main goal was to house not only books but people who will use them.

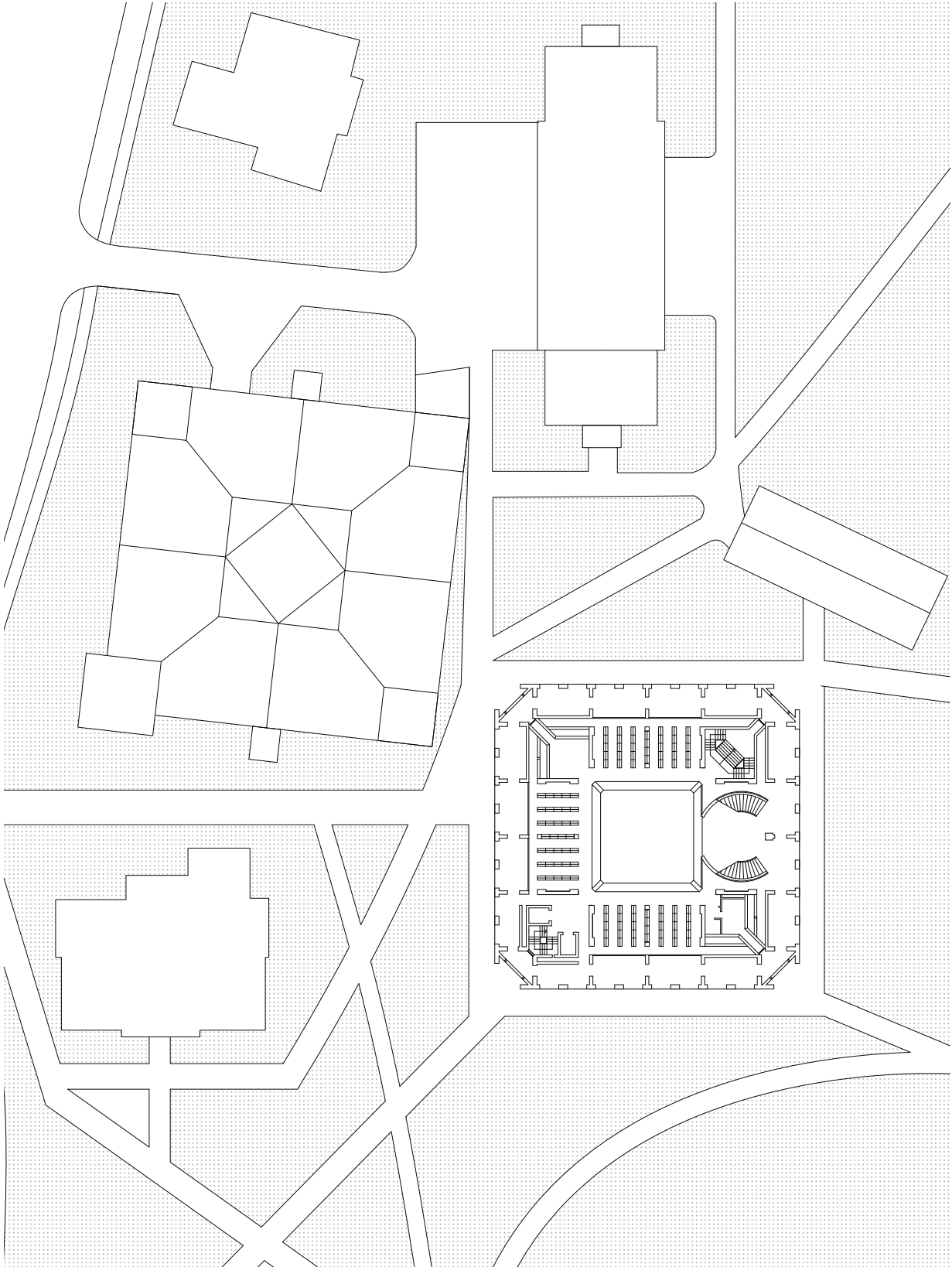
The building presents at first sight itself as a monolithic mysterious square. Symmetry from all four facades hides the entrance. Journey to the inside starts from the arcade going all around the plan on the ground floor. From this rather dark place one would walk through the entrance door to the light marble staircase that leads to the first floor entrance hall where the space opens and lightens up. Once in the atrium building presents all it has to offer. Similar journey of walking from dark to light space that opens up is present in the Stockholm City Library.

Structure of the library can be described as a 'room within a room'. Outer ring is a masonry structure and facilitates reading desks. Adjacent to that are concrete slab floors, supported by beams, columns and vertical service shafts. This zone bears the load of bookshelves located on all floors. It can be said that the architect used a single material to facilitate single activity (reading/ book storage). This way he also celebrates the honesty of the materials displaying their true nature and capabilities. Finally, there is concrete structure surrounding the atrium in the middle. This perforated concrete is only an illusion of a structure, as it does not bear any loads. On top of the atrium there is a gigantic concrete cross. Completely out of proportion for the load bearing function it has, it rather aims to reflect the light from the windows at the top. With play of light the architect created a hierarchy of spaces, where the most important reading area is emphasised by daylight access.

The importance of light can also be seen in the journey from the entrance to the reading desk. One would go from the atrium through the bookshelves, where they would be then guided by the light to find a place for

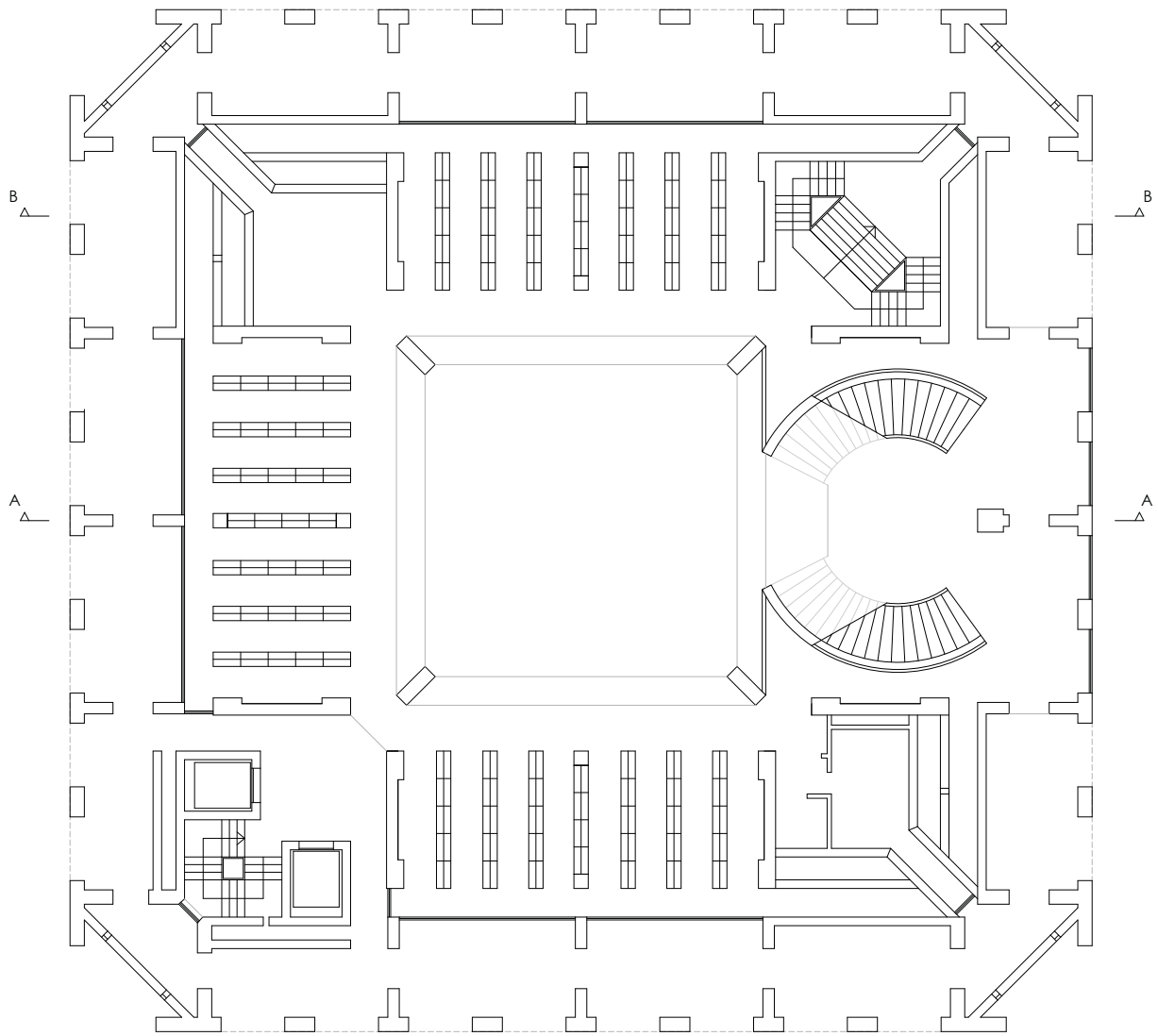
reading along the façade. Bespoke furniture allows for private individual reading space with direct access to daylight. This way the architect fulfilled one of the initial requirements of creating ideal spaces for studying.

To conclude, both the simplicity of the plans and the monumentality imposed by the atrium structure with material use form a unique experience, but also confuses the building scale from certain viewpoints. The focus underlines the journey and experience of a reader. Light plays an important role in guiding the visitor and organising the spaces. Finally, the architect also managed to celebrate materials with simple yet imposing structures.



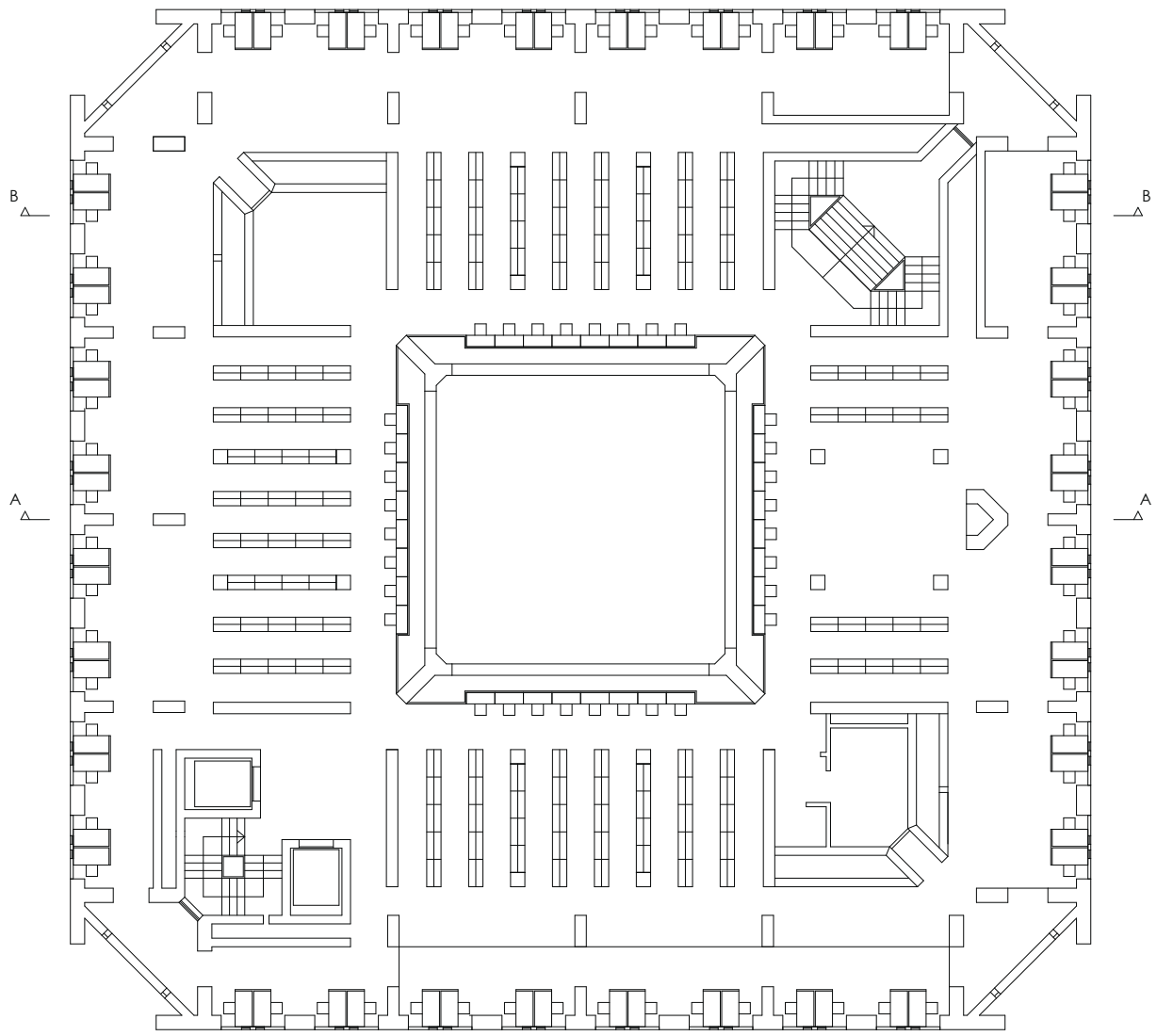
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Site plan with ground floor context

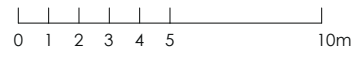
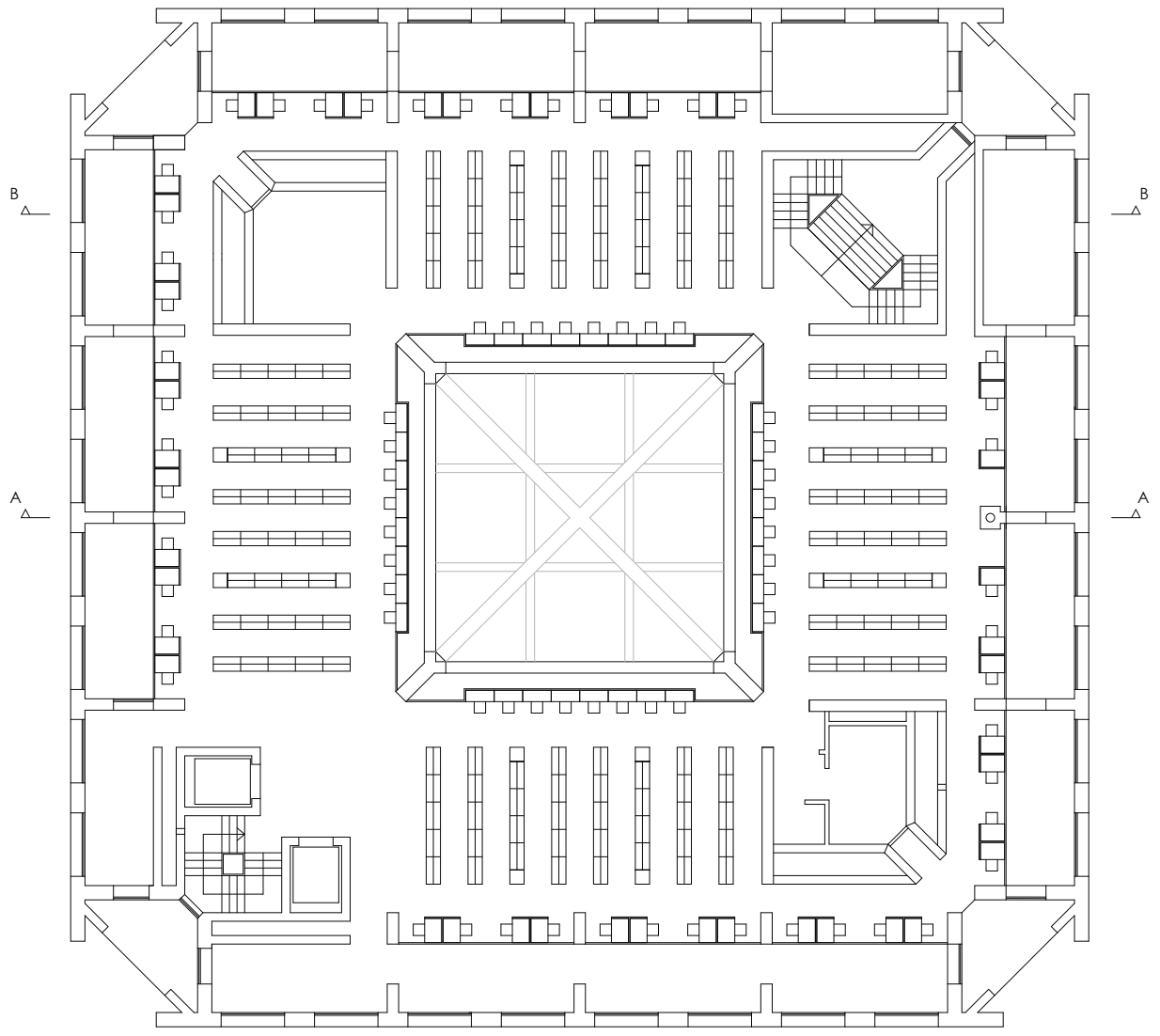


0 1 2 3 4 5 10m

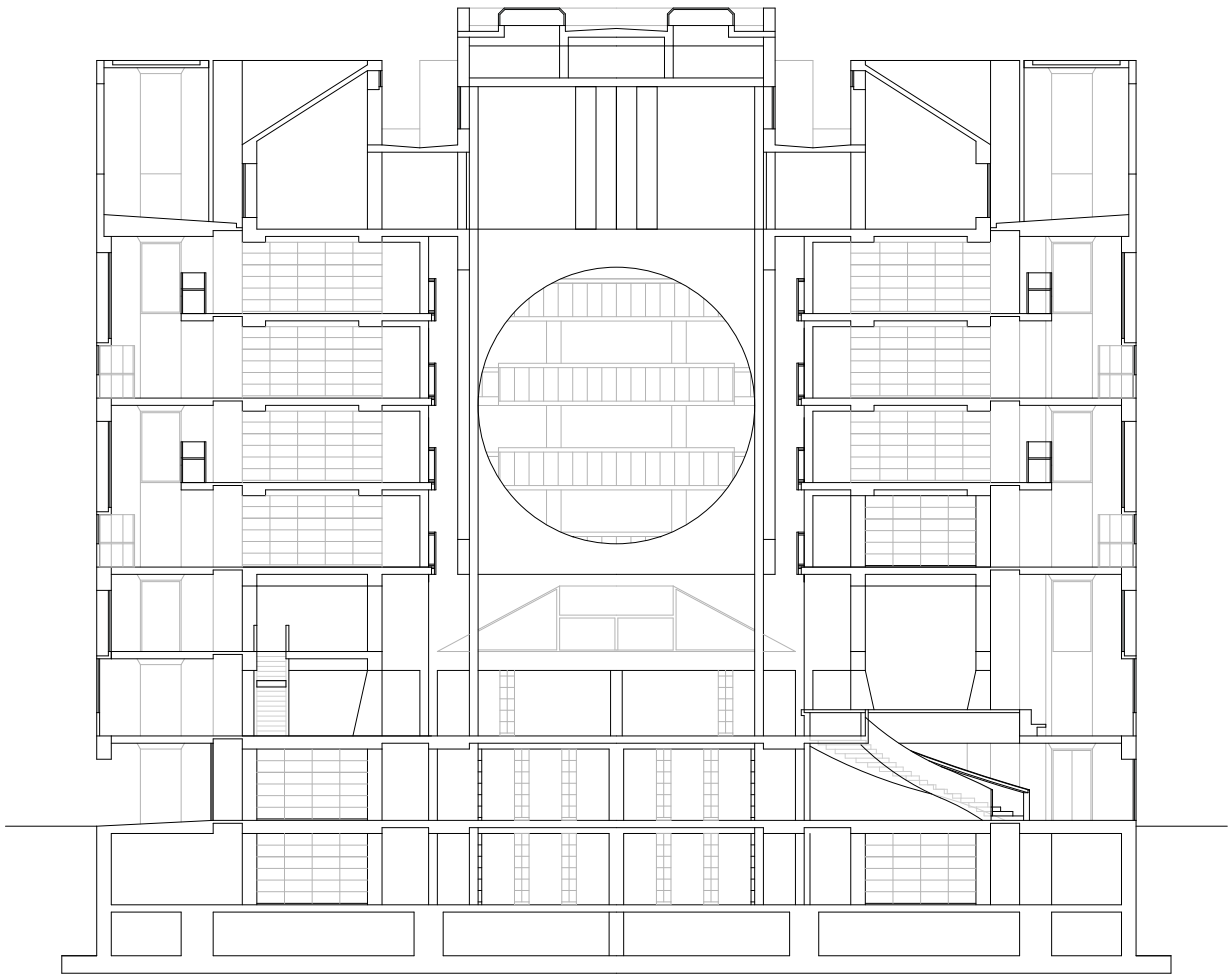
Ground floor plan



1st floor plan
3 rings are becoming visible - the atrium, the bookshelves and the reading spaces

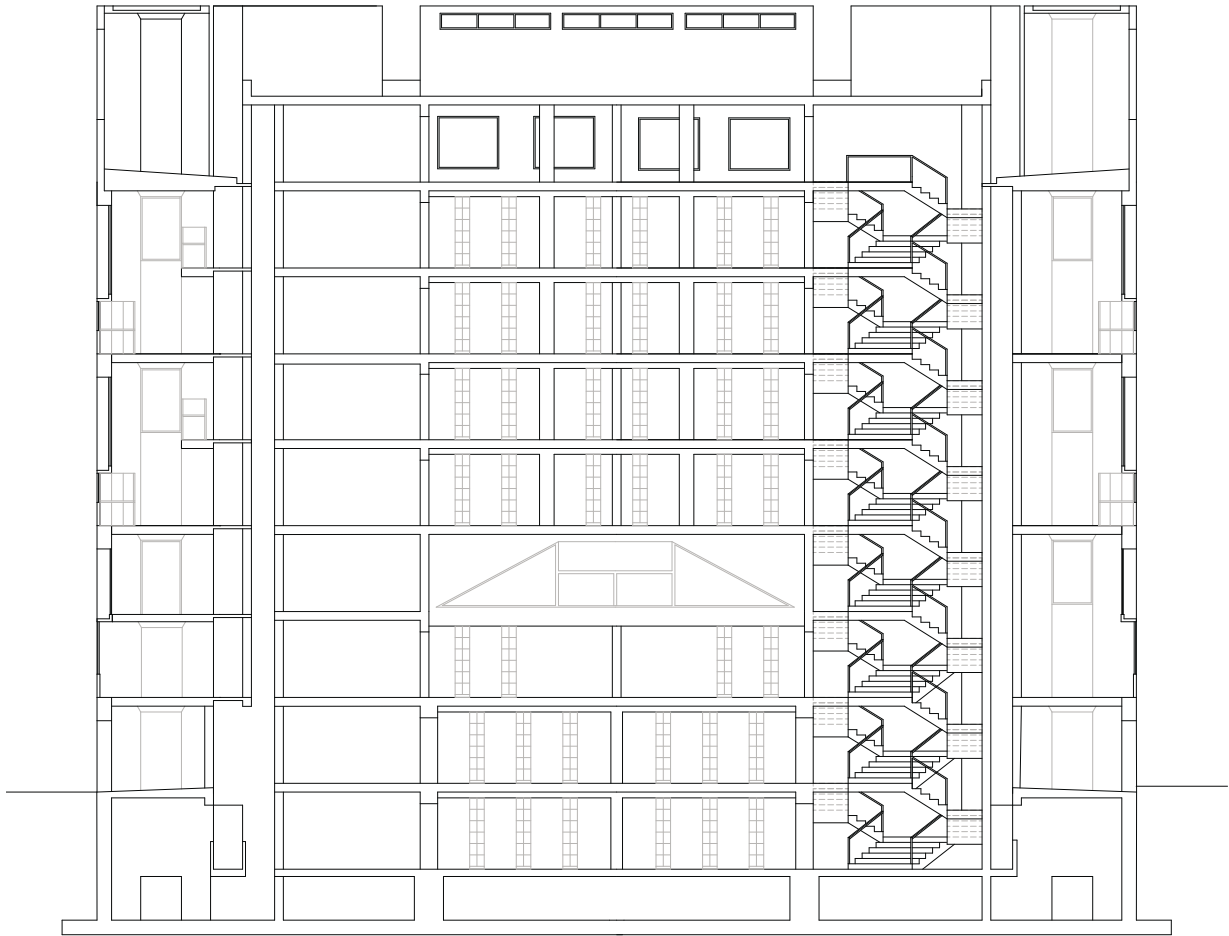


*2nd floor plan,
extra reading spaces on mezzanines over the first floor level*



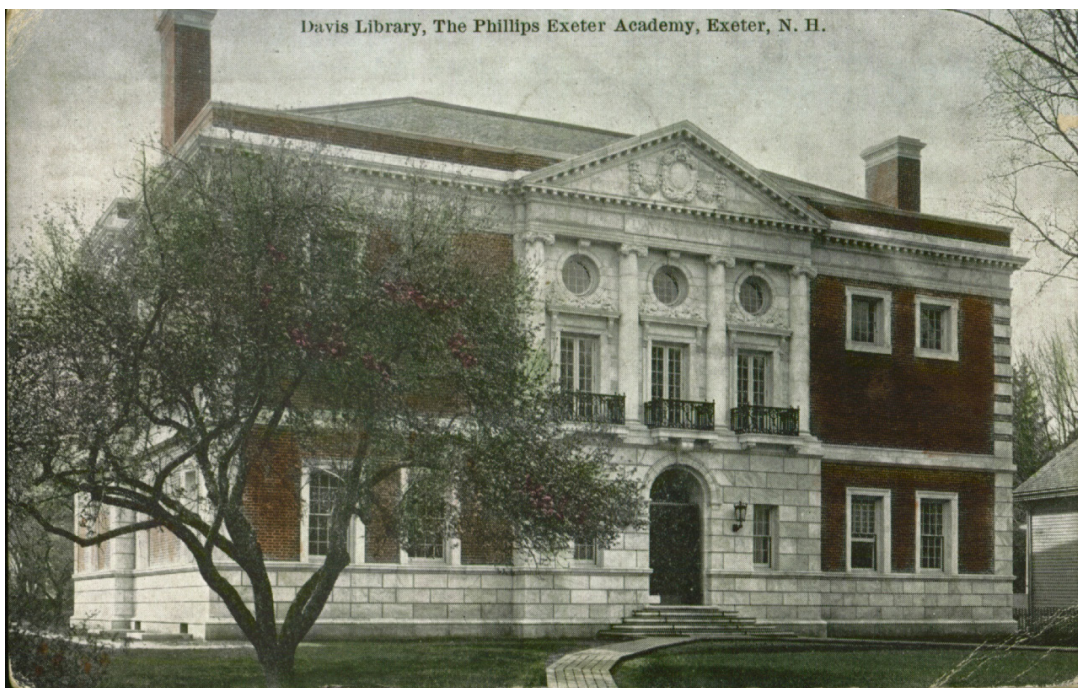
0 1 2 3 4 5 10m

A-A section



0 1 2 3 4 5 10m

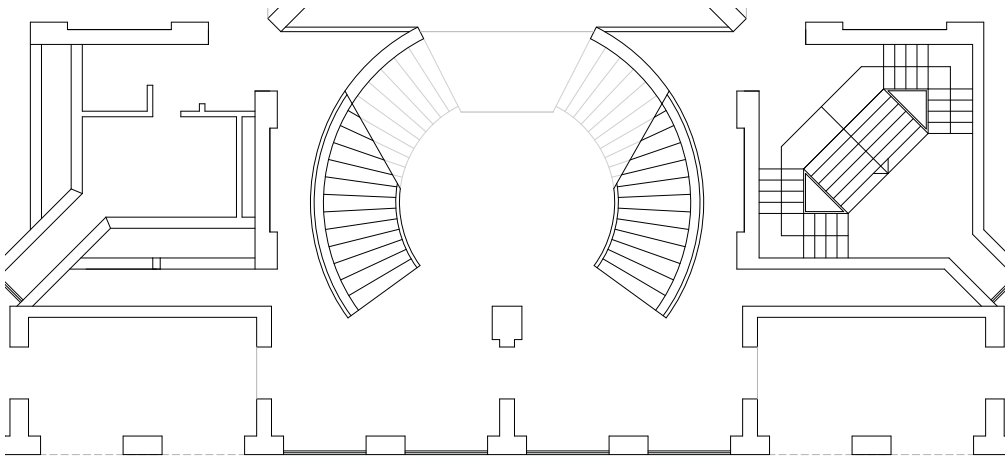
B-B section



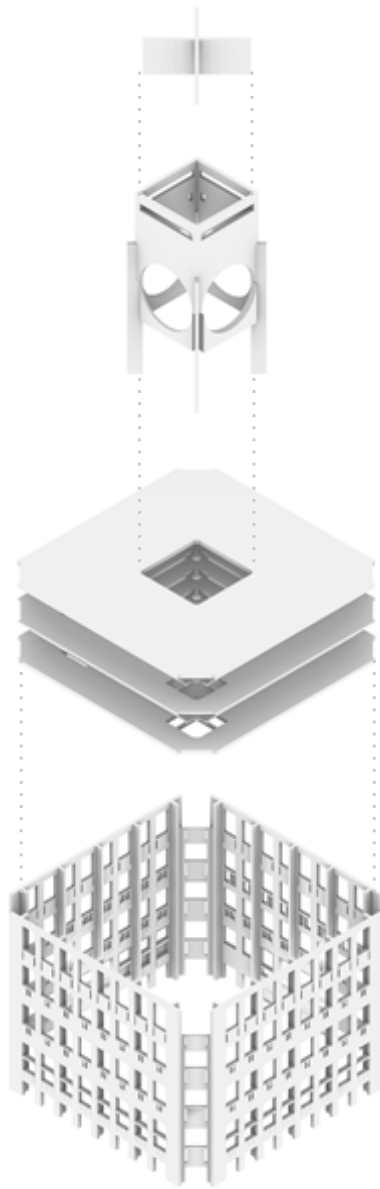
*Hand-colored photographic postcard of Davis Library,
the Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N.H,
one of seventeen postcards sent to Clara Louise Guild from friends*



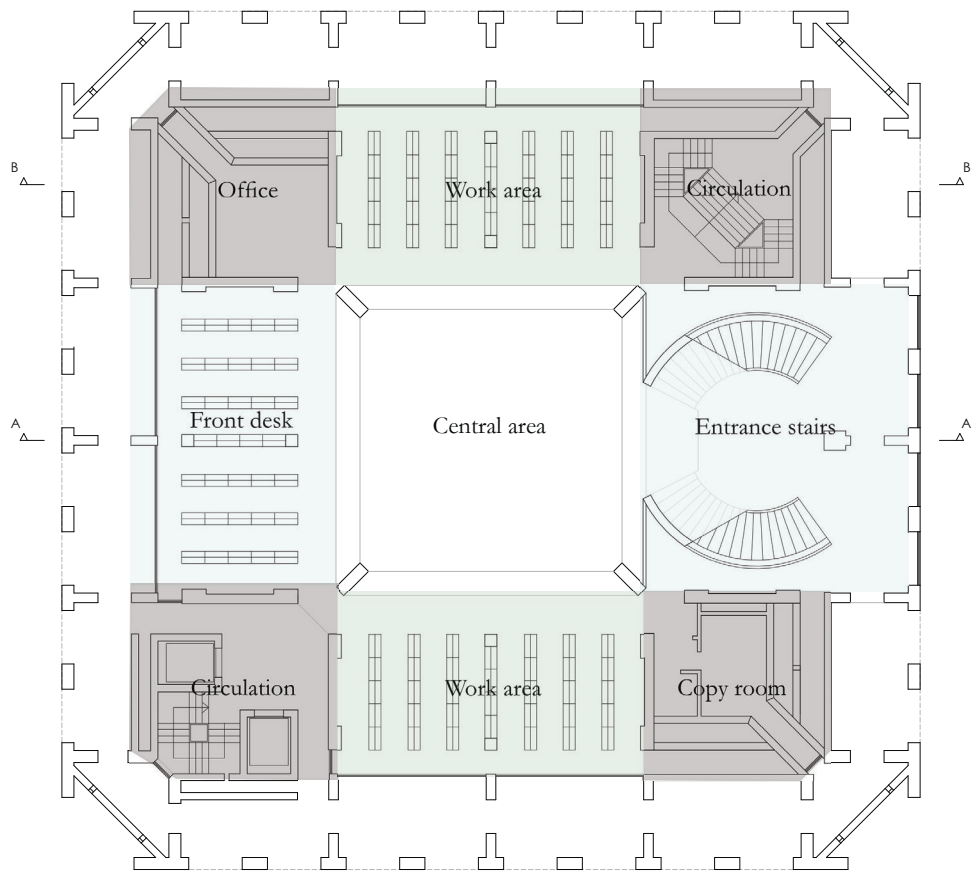
*Corner view of the building
photograph by Gunnar Klack*



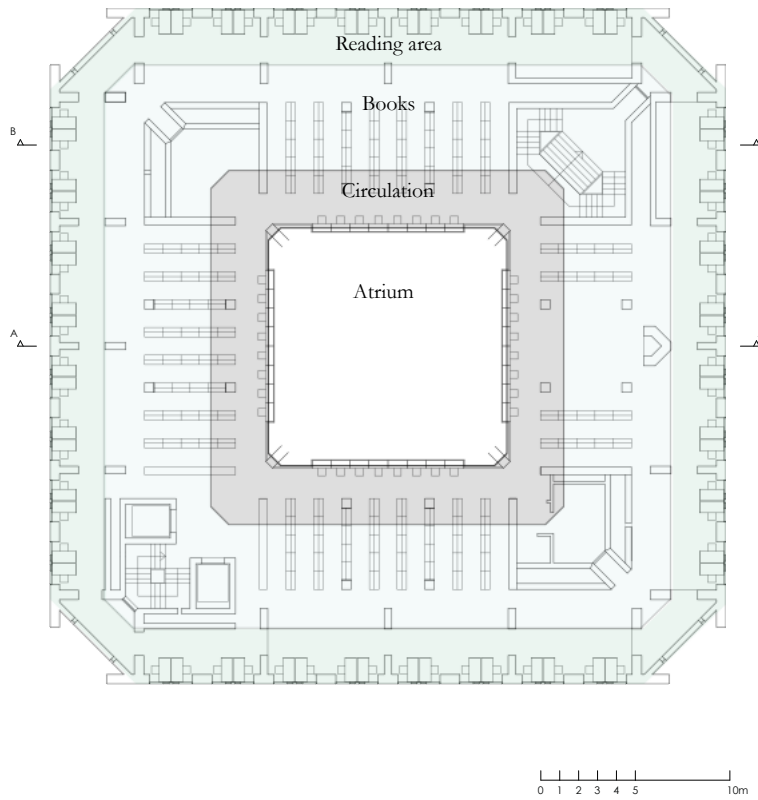
*Ground floor - exterior context,
the only entrance is hidden in a glass box that occupies a small part of the ground floor arcade,
source: <http://dmabr.com/2010/12/biaa85-final-paper-exeter-library/>*



*The structure consists of separate elements with their own materiality,
the exterior facade is a brick wall whereas the internal structures are concrete*

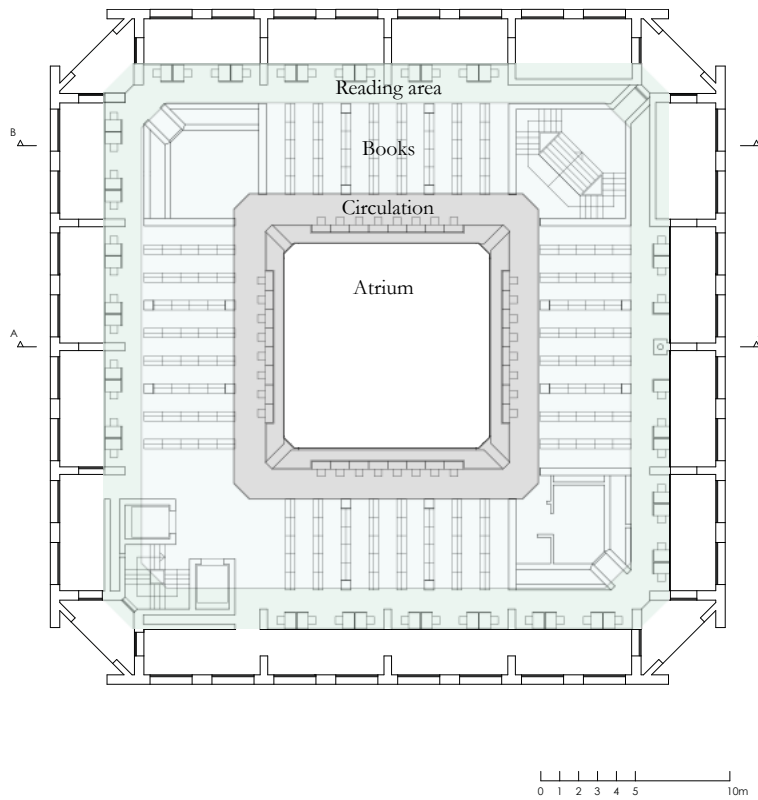


*Ground floor functions,
after entering the building, circular stairs lead to the first floor - making the ground floor feel
almost like a basement*



1st floor functions

3 rings are becoming visible - the reading area, the bookselves and the circulation

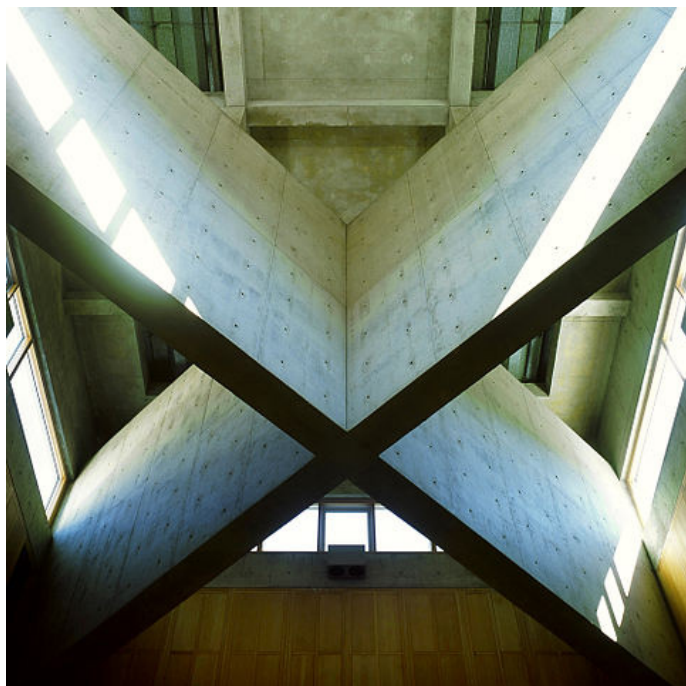


2nd floor functions

extra reading spaces on mezzanines over the first floor level



*Concrete and marble stairs creating a connection
from the ground floor entrance into the atrium,
photographs by Ivan Baan and Xavier de Jauréguiberry*



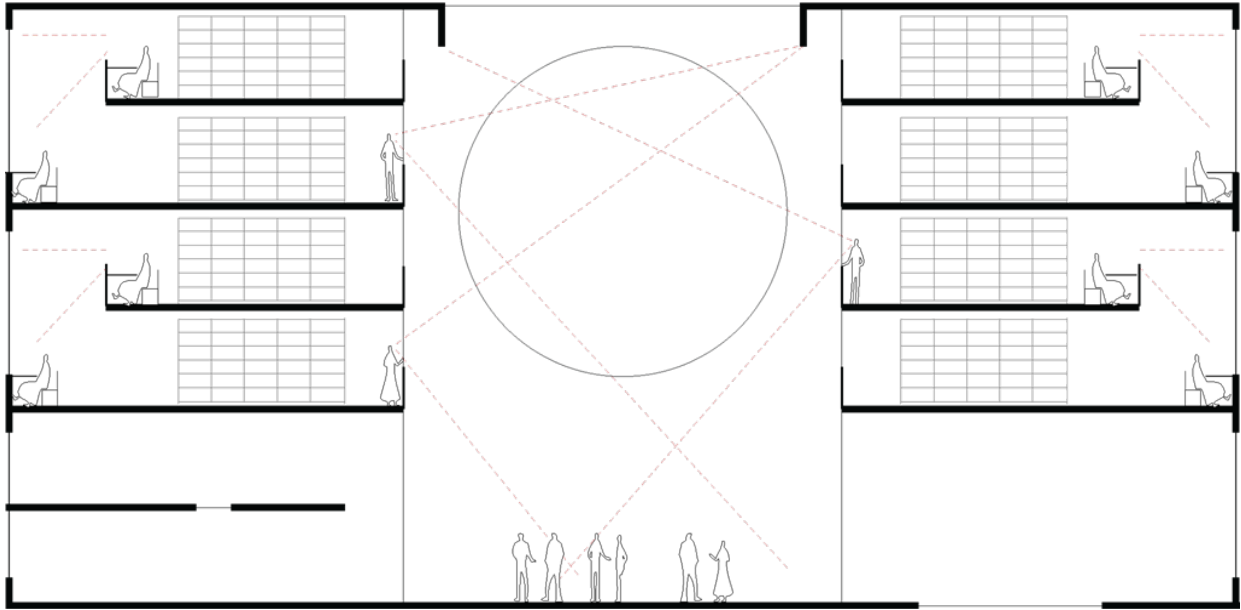
*Monumental concrete cross, bearing no load
as a light-transmitting element,
photographs by Naquib Hossain and Darren Bradley*



*The atrium, the bookshelves with circulation and the reading spaces,
zones with different experience, atmosphere and materials,
photographs by Carol M Highsmith, Peter Keyes, Ed Brodzinski*



*Service zones - shafts with staircases, elevators and toilets,
each on every corner of the bookshelves' ring
photographs by Xavier de Jauréguiberry*



Visual connections between different spaces



*Reading spaces on the facade's outline,
bespoke wooden furniture,
photograph by Xavier de Jauréguiberry*



*Interior-exterior connection,
photograph by Hans Nijs*



*Exterior details,
bricks from a brickyard that once supplied harvard campus,
the imperfections create unique shadows,
source: <http://dmabr.com/2010/12/biaa85-final-pa>*