

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan

Personal information	
Name	Renzo Westerbeek
Student number	4704568

Studio		
Name / Theme	Palace Interiors Buildings Cities	
Main mentor	Susanne Pietsch	Architecture
Second mentor	Elina Karanastasi	Architectural Engineering
Third mentor	Sereh Mandias	Architectural Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The complexity and public character of the design assignment and the studio's focus on socio-political and societal issues. Besides the above mentioned, the studio's methodology, developing a design from the experience of space from the user's perspective, integration and continuity between public interior, building and city.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Shaping Society: The Modern Stockholm City Library
Goal	
Location:	Stockholm, Sweden
The posed problem,	The current Stockholm Library by renowned Swedish architect Erik Gunnar Asplund, opened a century ago, needs to be intervened within to keep it relevance in todays modern society. In the 100 years of functioning as a public library, the role of a public library has changed in society. The Stockholm Library lacks the space and programme that other other modern libraries offer. This problem has already been posed in various architectural competitions written-out by the Stockholm Library and city.

<p>research questions and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the architectural value of the building designed by Asplund? • What is the role of the Stockholm City library in Swedish society, now and in the future? • How does the design proposal affect the existing urban landscape and the Asplund building? • What is the role of a Library in the 21st century and the future? • What programme and facilities is the current Library lacking? • How can the need for extra programme (briefs 2006 and 2014) be integrated architecturally in the plot?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>Following research on Stockholm, the modern library and the existing building, proposing an architectural design relevant to today's Swedish society. Taking into account building technology, sustainability and the desired architectural characteristics.</p>
<p>Process</p>	
<p>Method description</p>	

Asplund Research

The Research Seminar started with a collective research in small groups researching the oeuvre of Asplund and his design philosophy, methods and aesthetic, compositional and material concerns that characterised his architectural works. Besides this focus on architecture, research was executed on the social, politic, cultural and architectural context in which Asplund operated. We distilled our findings in both text, analytical sketches and drawings. As a product, we made a book with our collective research.

Scenes from a Public Library

Collectively we built a 1:25 model of the most important 7 rooms within the Stockholm Public Library. The goal of this model was to gain understanding of these important rooms as they were designed by Asplund in 1928. Building the model in a very detailed scale gave understanding in the use of spatiality, materiality, light, color, furniture and ornamentation, designed as a *gesamtkunstwerk* by Asplund.

Stockholm Excursion

On site investigation of the current state of the City Library. Besides the main protagonist of our design assignment, we also visited other important buildings by various Swedish architects: the Årsta church by Johan Celsing, the Woodland Cemetery and its chapels by Sigurd Lewerentz and Asplund, the former Social Insurance Bank by Lewerentz, Johannes Norlander's chair workshop and architecture studio and the Markuskyrkan by Lewerentz. We captured the findings in both photographs and the project journal in text.

A Room in a Library

Through the making of a 1:25 model of a room for a contextless library, we tried understanding which spatial qualities, materials, light and other architectural decisions build up a room for a library. The Room expressed the first findings on what a room for a library must be in today's society. Next to physically shaping a model, we made a set of drawings.

The Modern Public Library

As part of the Research Seminar, we collectively studied eight iconic modern public libraries. Main lenses we used were the spatial organisation, exterior and interior elevations and offered programme. We distilled our findings and text and drawings, combining the collective research in another book.

Developing a Library

Throughout the year, different methods will be used to research and test the desired architectural and societal qualities of the building. This will be done by model making (thinking through making) and creating drawings in both 2D and 3D. Research methods will be continuously used to further develop the design. Building Technology workshops will further help develop the technical aspects of the design, resulting in a sustainable building. Throughout the process, a project journal with images and writing keeps track of the development of the design and research.

Literature and general practical references

Literature

- Adams, N. (2015). *Gunnar Asplund's Gothenburg: The Transformation of Public Architecture in Interwar Europe*. Penn State Press.
- Asplund, E. G. (1943). *Gunnar Asplund, arkitekt, 1885-1940: Ritningar, skisser och fotografier*.
- Asplund, G., Åhrén, U., Gahn, W., Markelius, S., Sundahl, E., & Paulsson, G. (1931). *Acceptera! Bokförlagsaktiebolaget Tiden*, Stockholm. <https://www.kirkegaardsantikvariat.dk/product/acceptera-the-manifesto-of-swedish-functionalism-1931/>
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- Gardner, G. (2023). Various photographs. garethgardner.com. Kawashima, Y. (2005). E. G. Asplund, 1885 - 1940.
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- Rokem, J. and Vaughan, L. (2018) *Geographies of Ethnic Segregation: The Role of Mobility and Co-Presence in Shaping the 'Diverse' City*, *Urban Studies*
- Shannon Mattern, "Library as Infrastructure," *Places Journal*, June 2014. Accessed 14 Jan 2024. <https://doi.org/10.22269/140609>
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- St John Wilson, C. (2007). *Buildings and Projects*. London, UK: Black Dog Publishin Limited.
- Winter, E. *Perspective drawing of the entrance of the British Library*. RIBA Collections.
- Wrede, S. (1980). *Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund*. MIT Press.
- Thomson, M. (2019). *Syria's secret Library: Reading and Redemption in a Town Under Siege*. PublicAffairs.

Precedents

Stockholm Public Library. Erik Gunnar Asplund. (1924-1928).

French National Library. Étienne-Louis Boullée. (1785).

Het Predikheren, Mechelen, Belgium. Korteknie Stuhlmacher Architecten. (2011-2015)

LocHal, Tilburg. Civic Architects, Braaksma en Roosen. (2014-2018)

Collective research on the architecture of other buildings by E.G. Asplund:

- Villa Snellman, 1917–1918
- Woodland Chapel, 1918–1920
- Lister County Courthouse, 1917–1921
- Skandia Cinema, 1922–1923
- Stockholm Exhibition Main Entrance & Exhibition Hall for Transport, 1930
- Bredenberg Department Store, 1933–1935
- Göteborg Law Courts Annex 1934–1937
- Woodland Crematorium 1935–1940

Collective research on the following precedent projects:

- Salle de Lecture, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Henri Labrouste, 1875
- Viipuri Library, Alvar Aalto, 1935
- National and University Library, Joze Plecnik, 1943
- Beinecke Library New Haven, SOM, 1959
- Berlin Statsbibliothek, Hans Scharoun, 1967
- British Library, Colin St John Wilson, 1962–1997
- Exeter Library, Louis Kahn, 1972
- Seattle Public Library, OMA, 2004

Practical references

Lecture and visiting critic by Nina Lundvall, former architect of Colin St John Wilson, who worked on a competition on the Stockholm Public Library in 2014.

Lecture by Daniel Rosbottom featuring 5 of the Library designs created by his office DRDH.

Lecture by David Hanrath, former librarian and specialised Dutch library architect.

Lecture by Dirk Somers on the role of the Facade in architecture.

Debate by Amy Thomas on literature about the role of the Library in the 21st century.

Reflection

What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The chair of Interiors Buildings Cities' graduation studio concerns the Palace. The word Palace is used to describe representative public buildings that have shaped our cities and societies. The architecture of the Palace reflects this society and is complex in its speciality, infrastructure and organisation. It's a representative building for collective public life, where we meet and engage with each other.

The Library fits perfectly in this description, as a Palace for the People (Eric Klinenberg, 2018). This is where democracy, society, science and research is shaped. The Library houses the knowledge on which society is built, but also aims to shape this society by sharing of knowledge and opinions.

The Library functions as social infrastructure in the city and as a building has an important role in the life of the city. Especially a public library concerns all citizens in the city and is one of the public building types which should be used for people from all ages, backgrounds and cultures. Studying and developing the architecture for this typology is relevant to help understand complex building types in both architectural and societal context. The project also deals with positioning yourself as an architect in relationship to architectural works, in this case E.G. Asplund, carefully studying the existing building and intervening on it.

What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

The typology of the Library as a Palace for the People has been under big transformation, especially in the last decades during the introduction of digital information systems. This raises the question what the role is of a contemporary Library.

The project aims to research and develop the role of the future of the Library typology, rooting it inside Stockholm's society and city life. Research will be conducted on the Library typology and Asplund's architectural oeuvre. Working out the design and technology that will make the building work well in its context and making it relevant again for today and the future will be useful in understanding both exiting and new architecture.