

**GRADUATION PROJECT
RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

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As a preparation for designing for the Stockholm City Library, the research done over the last eight weeks has been of great importance. Through it, I have come to better understand the significance of libraries, their values, cultural and social significance, and their architecture.

They were spent in collaboration, and as a group we delved into Gunnar Asplund's design for the Stockholm City Library, other works in his oeuvre, and precedent studies of modern libraries. Combined, these assignments serve as a collective foundation on which to base our individual proposals.

The first weeks were spent in creating a physical scale model of the primary rooms within the Stockholm library as it was designed by Asplund. As well as studies into eight other works by Asplund, which were studied on the themes of spatiality, ornament, composition, and landscape or urban setting, as well as positioned within the wider architectural and societal developments in Sweden and Scandinavia at the time they were built. Through these exercises, I have come to better understand the way in which Asplund designed.

Asplund's works plays with the senses. He plays with light- and darkness, changes in perspective and scale, and materials and finishes. His work often features moments of transition. Alternating low, enclosed, dark spaces, and ones that are high, open, and light. Peculiar details are dotted throughout, and emphasize important moments in the building. They greatly influence the way one perceives and interacts with the building.

I find myself fascinated by these moments of apparent contrast within a design. As projects have progressively allowed me to explore designing through experience, rather than through technicalities, I have come to design with much greater curiosity and passion. In a proposal for a library, I feel it is exactly these nuances that will become an important aspect of the design.

Though lectures by Anders Bergstrop & Marcelo Rovira Torres, and Kieran Long, I gained a clearer comprehension of the history of the Stockholm library, and the previous competitions organised for its revitalisation. Although it is considered the central library building, its primary use differs from this designation. The building is mostly appreciated as an

architectural gem to tourists. Questions regarding the difference between a municipal and neighbourhood library must be asked in order to successfully design a future proposal.

As we delved deeper into the subject, analysing libraries constructed over the past two centuries, I acquired a deeper insight into library architecture during this period and how it reflects their intended functions. Many libraries from this era were designed as monumental structures, celebrated in a certain (simplistic) architectural grandeur.

The rapid onset of the digital age has triggered an ongoing discourse regarding the role of the library. Books are no longer the sole repositories of wisdom, and this shift has prompted architectural changes within library design. The traditional image of a library, once a vault for books guarded by a librarian's desk, has given way to open, versatile spaces. For example, the Seattle Public Library was designed to offer a multitude of dynamic social functions within a semi-flexible building. It provides a compelling example of how to draw groups of people to the library to attend a program or similar activities.

This continuing change in perspective raises vital questions. In an increasingly digital world, we must consider the evolving role of the library. What new contributions can libraries make to their communities beyond housing physical books? This shift underscores the need to explore and adapt to the changing needs of the modern library and its broader purpose in the digital age.

The library, as I see it, is not merely a sanctuary for knowledge. It serves as a rare communal space, and offers itself as the last truly public building; it offers a resistance to an increasingly commercial, neo-liberal society. It's more than just a repository for books; it's a community hub for learning, a place to gather, socialize, seek shelter, explore the city, and acquire knowledge in its various forms. They are essential public services to both community and society. Taking all of the above into account; what then might a future design for a library look like?