

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Zhengxin Fang
Student number	5812518

Studio		
Name / Theme	Interiors Buildings Cities / Palace	
Main mentor	Daniel Rosbottom	Architecture
Second mentor	Matthijs Klooster	Architectural Engineering
Third mentor	Jurjen Zeinstra	Architectural Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>This studio allows me to explore atmosphere and spatial experience concerning both detailed tectonics and the larger pictures of society and context. I have learned from previous academic and professional projects that spatial experience is human-centred but not limited to the human scale, and I seek to develop my response to the broader context while pursuing spatial quality.</p> <p>The studio also offers a sustainable approach by adapting existing buildings to the changing times. Here, I can explore the fundamental aspects of architecture, looking into how the buildings' meanings have evolved and re-interpreting them in contemporary settings.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Stockholm City Library
Goal	
Location:	Stockholm, Sweden

<p>The posed problem</p>	<p>Libraries were once seen as materialised representations of human knowledge and later became urban infrastructures fostering the exchange of ideas. Back then, "visiting the library" was a knowledge-acquisition ritual. Nowadays, however, public libraries have transformed from places devoted to "books and study" into open and largely expectation-free environments, embracing issues of equality and multiculturalism.</p> <p>The Stockholm Library, designed in 1928 by the renowned Swedish architect Gunnar Asplund, was pioneering at its time. Yet, it must adapt its role as a contemporary library, facing the ever-changing nature of society and culture. Since 2006, there have been iterations of architectural debates on this topic: significant expansion, limited adjustment and adaptation, simple restoration and preservation...but none of these proposals got realised.</p>
<p>research questions</p>	<p>What are the responsibilities and expectations of a contemporary public library now? Who is the library for? What is an appropriate response to the existing building?</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>As a graduation studio, we will each develop a proposal for Stockholm Library, exploring how this remarkable legacy can be transformed into a contemporary library in response to its current and future challenges.</p> <p>The previous competition in 2006 asked for a rapid expansion. The later brief in 2014, on the other hand, did not have prescribed areas but left it for the architect to decide how they might optimise the existing, to accommodate the original intentions, but in a more flexible manner, while also proposing that various elements could be reduced or removed. By testing and critiquing these briefs, we will develop our own attitude towards the Stockholm City Library, with the detailed programmes in respect to how we reconcile with the quality of the existing architecture.</p>

Process

Method description

The method concerns “thinking and doing” and “learning through making” while combining collective and individual research.

Collective research on the design of Gunnar Asplund – collectively study 8 precedents by the architect, producing analytical drawings on their context settings, composition, spatiality and ornaments, with a set of architectural drawings and selected images. This helps us to understand how the architect’s ideas, aesthetics, and material concerns have developed over time, and to get a collective understanding of the wider social, political, cultural, and architectural context in which Asplund worked.

Collective research on recreating scenes in the Stockholm City Library – through 1:25 physical models. This helps us to understand the building in detail – its architectural shell, composition, surface treatment and furniture – and compare these to the library’s current condition while visiting the building in person.

Collective research on modern public libraries – collectively study 8 modern library precedents, recording them through a series of monochrome 2D drawings, and producing analytical drawings concerning multiple aspects. This helps to explore the thinking that informed the design of each of these libraries, considering their situation and how their architecture addresses the public and represents its function.

Collectively document the Stockholm City Library – through a set of 2D drawings and digital models.

Individual research on a room in a library – represented through 2D plan and section drawings, 1:25 physical model and images. Working on abstract, this task expresses individual attitudes towards a modern library and challenges its transformation into spatial forms.

Individual research on contemporary libraries – analysing the composition and percentage areas of each function, in comparison to the current state of Stockholm Library and previous competition briefs, to understand how contemporary libraries function and how should the Stockholm Library adapt itself to this.

Individual design responses developed as a combination of 2D drawings, sketches, physical models at various scales, readings etc.

Literature and general practical references

- Cornell, Elias. "The Sky as Vault. Gunnar Asplund and the Articulation of Space." In *Asplund : a book*, 23-33. Corte Madera: Ginko Press, 1997.
- Eriksson, Eva. "Gunnar Asplund and his Works in the Context of Time and Place" Lecture at the 2nd International Symposium on the Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund, recorded at the Skandia Theatre, Sweden, Sep 1, 2023.
- Koch, Daniel. "Architecture as Material Discourse: On the spatial formulation of knowledge and ideals in four library extensions." *ITU A/Z* 12 No.3 (Nov 2015): 7-22.
- Lundvall, Nina. "On public building." Lecture at TU Delft, Netherland, Jan 12, 2024.
- Pimlott, Mark. "Learning from Asplund." Lecture at TU Delft, Netherland, Oct 3, 2023.
- Rosbottom, Daniel. "Five libraries." Lecture at TU Delft, Netherland, Nov 23, 2023.
- Schwartz, Martin. "Light from All Around. Gunnar Asplund's Stockholm Library." Conference paper from 6th Velux Daylight Symposium London, London, Sep 2015.
- Sternheim, Joyce, and Rob Bruijnzeels. *Imagination and participation, next steps in public library architecture*. Rotterdam: Nai010, 2021.
- Stewart, John. *Nordic classicism: Scandinavian architecture 1910-1930*, London: Bloomsbury, 2018.
- Wilson, Colin St John, "Gunnar Asplund and the dilemma of classicism." *AA files*, No.18 (1989): 88-96.
- Woollen, Malcolm. "Observatorielunden and stadsbiblioteket: intensifying the present." In *Erik Gunnar Asplund: landscapes and buildings*, 45-79. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.
- Wrede, Stuart. *The architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983.

Collective analysis of Asplund's precedents:

- 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 analysis of Modern Libraries:

- 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

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation topic, the studio topic, your master track, and your master programme?

The master programme in architecture constantly brings up the subject of "positioning": how do we position ourselves as designers? and how should architecture place itself in a broader environment? The graduation studio of Interiors Buildings Cities focuses on "Palace", referring to complex public interiors whose responsibilities in society are constantly re-interpreted over time. This project on the Stockholm City Library, in particular, urges us to reconsider the meaning of "libraries" as public spaces today – and in the future – and challenges us to adopt such transformation concerning Asplund's architectural legacy. This also raises the question of how we, as future architects, deal with the past, present, and future.

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

By working with an existing building on site, the design has the potential to be realised in real life. The previous competition's intricacy emerged not just from the architecture, but also from competing interests among the library institution, the municipality, and other political bodies. This research, therefore, seeks to form an opinion on how we treat heritage buildings. This is especially relevant for architects nowadays because we cannot simply build new without knowing what to do with the old. We should also be aware that the current architectural proposal is not the ultimate solution, and that the design should allow for future adaptations. Just as how a library holds books reflecting layers of human knowledge across time, its architecture bears traces of interpretation from different generations. I think that is the charm of this architectural intervention.