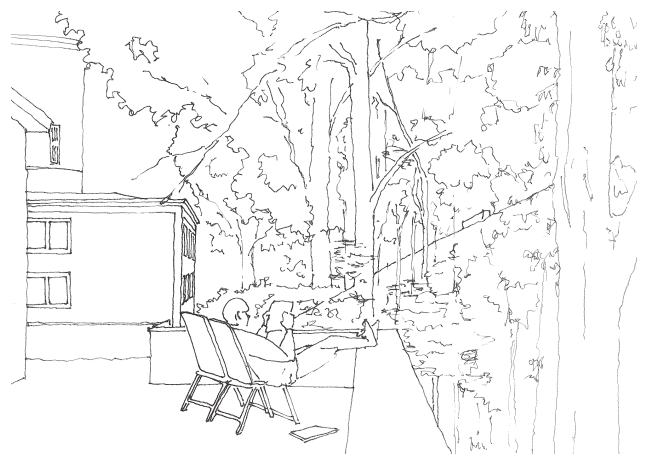


The Extension & Redevelopment of the Public Library Stockholm

Palace / Academic year 2023/24
MSc 3/4 Interiors Buildings Cities

Project Journal
Natalia Simonarson

Studio, Research & Building
Technology Mentors:
Daniel Rosbottom
Jurrien Zeinstra
Mark Pimlott
Matthijs Klooster
Sam de Vocht
Sereh Mendias
Susanne Pietsch



Fellow Students:

Andrea Beznitchi
Carlotta Luciano
Conor O'Kelly
Dominika Kubicka
Erini Sideri
Francesca Tritapepe
Qang Haoyu
James Flaus
Jan Yke van Bogert
Janis Kivlinieks
Joanna Pilecka
Jules van der Meijs
Julia Palega
Julia Vanderploeg
Kamil urban
Kelly Gumb
Liu Lenore
Chen Liuying
Marianna Lappa
Marijke De Groot
Mikolaj Waszkiewicz
Natalia Simonarson
Olga Strzalkowska
Pelle Kuipers
Pien Vanderlinde
Renzo Westerbeek
Ries Schouten
Simon Muntz
Snigdha Ray
Sora Kaito
Tijana Culum
Fang ZhengXin

Inviting the Public

Project Journal
Natalia Simonarson

Studio, Research & Building
Technology Mentors:
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Jurjen Zeinstra
Mark Pimlott
Matthijs Klooster
Sam de Vocht
Sereh Mendias
Susanne Pietsch

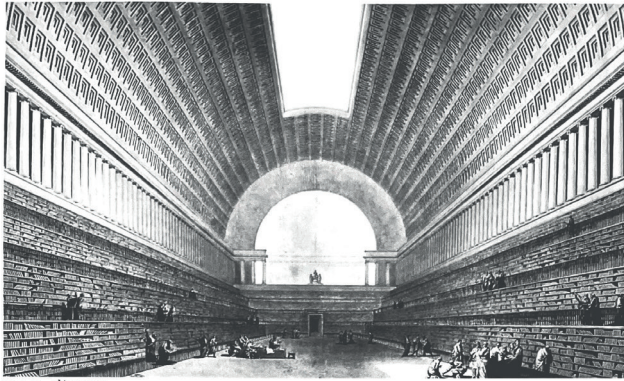
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Intro

Brief 00

Stockholm City Library

2023-24 MSc3 AR3A1100



Literal Libraries:
are an representation
the world - almost a
finite - you didn't know
logic

idea of a library (never built) as a political tool
like an agora - making people come together & talk

As an idea, the library's history is synonymous with the development of culture and society. Ancient libraries were centres of learning that sought to embody the sum of human knowledge, and to encompass and represent the known world, often through their own geometries. Privileged places for scholarly pursuit, they jealously guarded collections of books and manuscripts that were handmade, precious and often unique. The idea of the public library as a tool for broader social advancement arrived with the French Revolution at the end of the 17th Century, building upon the opportunities presented by the innovation of the printing press. The unrealised yet hugely influential designs of Etienne-Louis Boullée envisioned the vast, monumental interiors of a French National Library as the representative space for a new Republic, where the state would take responsibility for the collation and dissemination of all available knowledge to its emancipated citizens. This moment of political revolution prefaced an industrial one, during which the notion of the public library became a key component in the infrastructure of the emerging modern metropolis. Libraries changed that world, becoming spaces where scientific, cultural and political ideas were fermented and exchanged. As cradles of the emerging social democratic changes that swept through those industrialised societies during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, they transformed again into places of education and social betterment for the masses.

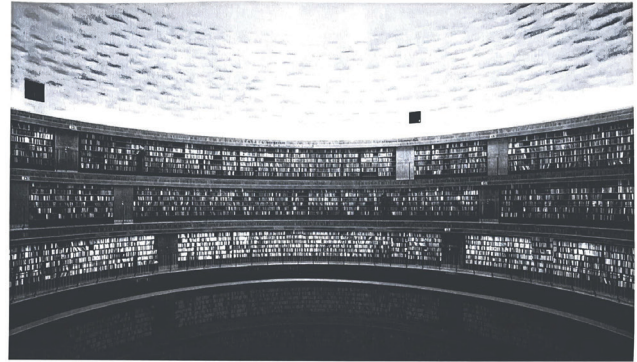
↳ a sitting library

Interiors Buildings Cities
connection between the demise of the catholic church & the rise of humanism?
(as a religion, a fantasy that humanity believes in)
↳ about the Kaiserthermen Old Rome.

Palace

Stockholm City Library

2023-24 MSc3 AR3A1100



Interior view of the Stockholm Library, Andreas Gursky, (1999).

In an echo of Boullée, the stripped, neo-classical geometries of Asplund's design presented the books on tiers of shelves ringing the monumental circular room within the drum at the centre of the plan, although the void above them, perhaps acknowledges that, unlike its forebears, the library's collection could only ever be considered a fragment of humanities knowledge. For the first time, its shelves were freely accessible to its users. This, alongside the remarkable offer of a dedicated children's library, were just two outcomes of a broader commitment to creating an educated populace, understood as a vital and fundamental component of the more enlightened social construct that emerged across Scandinavia during the Twentieth Century. ~~libraries have~~ social contract out the window

By the end of that Century, the public library as a type had found a new social and political purpose. Confronting neoliberalism's privatisation of public space, alongside questions of its own role, in the face of the increasing digitisation of information, public libraries transformed from places devoted to the lending of books and quiet study into open and largely expectation-free environments, embracing issues of equality and multiculturalism. In Sweden, this paralleled prevailing attitudes in society at the time. In 2008, Stockholm Library launched an architectural competition that sought to significantly extend it as part of an embrace of such an expanded role. However, the failure of that competition to elicit change was the beginning of a long and frustrating period of stasis. In 2015, the British architects, Caruso St John were commissioned

to undertake a more limited exercise of adjustment and expansion within existing spaces immediately adjoining the main building. This project was also halted, and this year, in 2023, a new call was launched to simply restore the building as it stands, recognising the deterioration that is one consequence of this extended period of uncertainty. Next year, the building plans to close its doors to facilitate this and is due to re-open twenty years after the launch of the original expansion project. The design needs to be future-oriented

This is our starting point as a studio. Following careful study of the existing building, undertaken as part of a process of design research that will also collectively examine the oeuvre of an architect, the society in which he built it and the history of the public library as a type, you will each develop a proposal for Stockholm Library. Your designs will explore how the remarkable legacy offered by its architecture and urban situation might be best developed in ways that can address contemporary society and future change: accommodating the possibilities and dilemmas inherent in the dissemination of knowledge within an increasingly digital environment, acknowledging the ongoing importance of the book; creating an open, welcoming and accessible environment for both learning and pleasure and, critically, doing this in a deeply sustainable way, that acknowledges the challenges we all face.

World? ↳ library as a place that gives certainty in an increasingly uncertain world of uncertainty
↳ reference to Home Deus
Palace

Interiors Buildings Cities

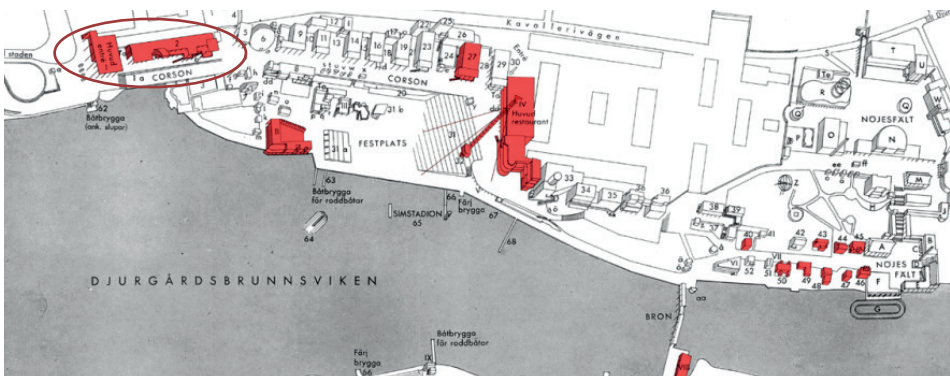
Learning from Asplund: Stockholm Exhibition 1930

James Flaus, Jan Yke van Bogert,
Carlotta Luciano, Natalia Simonarson



[1] Aerial render.

<https://theswedishrugblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/the-stockholm-exhibition-of-1930/>



[2] Area plan.

Seelow, A.M. (2016). Reconstructing the Stockholm Exhibition 1930. (1st edition). ARKITEKTUR FÖRLAG.

Context

In setting out his plans for The Stockholm Exhibition of 1930, Asplund came hot on the heels of the great modernists and their exhibitions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although he faced into an environment without the pomp and pageantry of his Central European counterparts. With Sweden left reeling by the great depression of 1929 and its declining export economy, there came a rapid dissolution of rural life, an associated crisis of urban housing, and equally, of ways of living. The Swede's struggle with modernity had been addressed by an earlier exhibition that had championed technology and change, but had not grasped its place in Scandinavian life. With the rising Social Democratic party's increase in public investment, and their championing of a leaner more functionalist ideology, Asplund arrived in 1930 with motivated public support and 10 years experience in refining the built elements of Swedish culture. In his role as curator and lead designer, Asplund is bringing neither a period of neo-classicism, nor of strict modernism. He is proposing a manifesto of acceptance. Taking in hand the new reality and evolving the elements he believes best serve his public. This is his attempt at a language squeezed in-between a prevailing national romanticism and a very international style.

In all of his attempts at this Asplund is looking for a purity of form. He understands that classical

architecture had given a rigour of elements to the canon, but proposed that the geometrical arrangement he had built a career on was made accessible by modern construction.

So there becomes a focus on not just the welcoming of this new aesthetic, but on its connection to a spirit of production and material newness that is distinctly modern. This is where the entrance pavilion and transport hall become so representative.

“Today's and tomorrow's willpower in our developing architecture“ - Asplund
in *Acceptera*, 1931

[3] Entrance pavilion day render.

<https://theswedishrugblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/the-stockholm-exhibition-of-1930/>

[4] Entrance pavilion night render.

<https://theswedishrugblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/the-stockholm-exhibition-of-1930/>



Figure 1

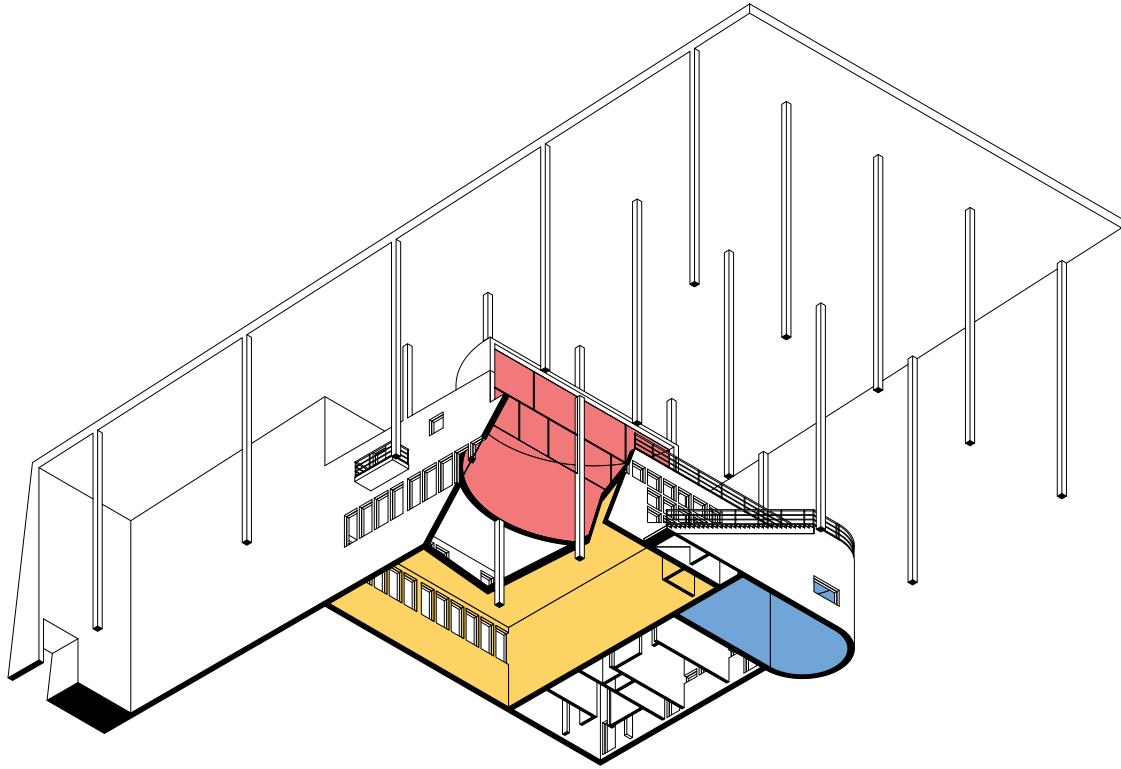


Figure 1

Entrance pavilion

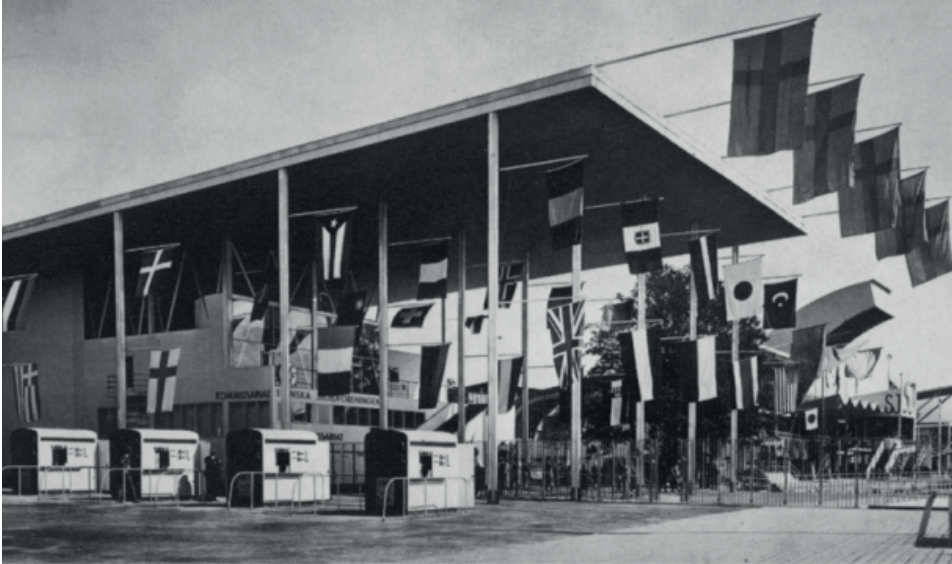
In the approach from the terminus of a newly built tram line Asplund parks a machine like facade. Drawing visitors through a forest of columns, past freely dimensioned windows, and under a massive ceiling. Facing the lake around which the exhibition is organised he draws his typical plan of stepping axes, and carves out a series of simple moves into a geometrically rigorous, but well executed entry sequence.

This entrance pavilion is resplendently wrapped in the flags of the world, and dramatically lit at night. In an exhibition of four million attendees, of which three million were Swedes, the drama of the elements which at the time would have been almost entirely new should not be understated. The tectonic arrangement of the buildings at the Stockholm Exhibition was employed as a means to illustrate modern potential. Many spaces, objects, and materials moved from foreign luxury to be part of the widely available lifestyle.



Worm's eye axonometry of the entrance pavilion
showing the different functions of rooms:

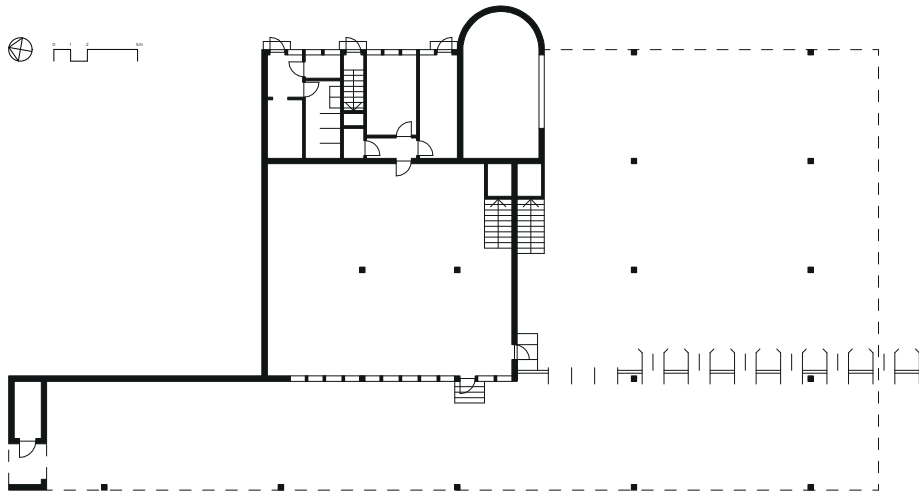
Yellow, offices and functional spaces
Blue, circulation with stairs to first level
Red, exhibition space



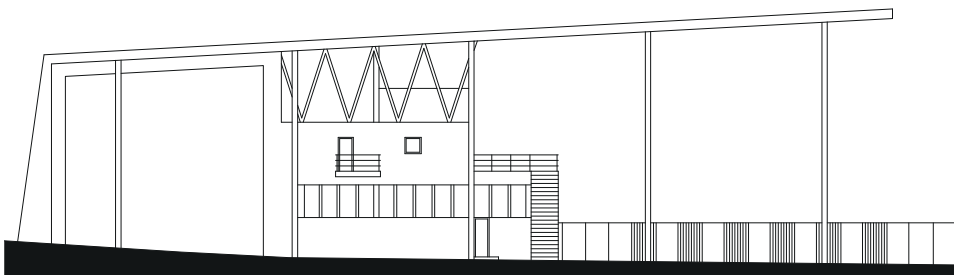
[5] Entrance archival photographs.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stockholmsutst%C3%A4llningen_1930_Huvudentr%C3%A9_och_kommisariat.jpg

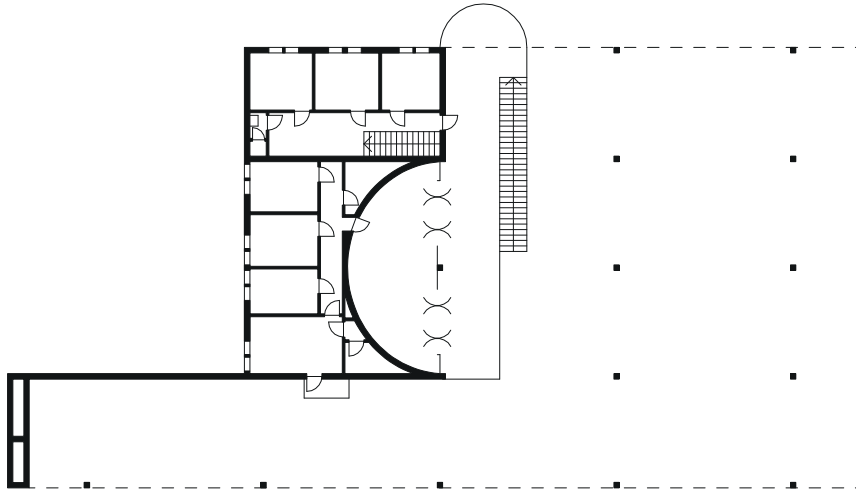




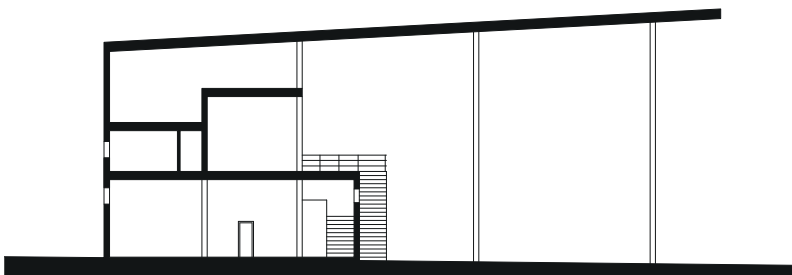
[6] Entrance pavilion floor plan.



[7] Entrance pavilion elevation.



[8] Entrance pavilion floor plan.



[9] Entrance pavilion cross section.



'Forms which do not threaten, but invite.'
- Asplund, 1930

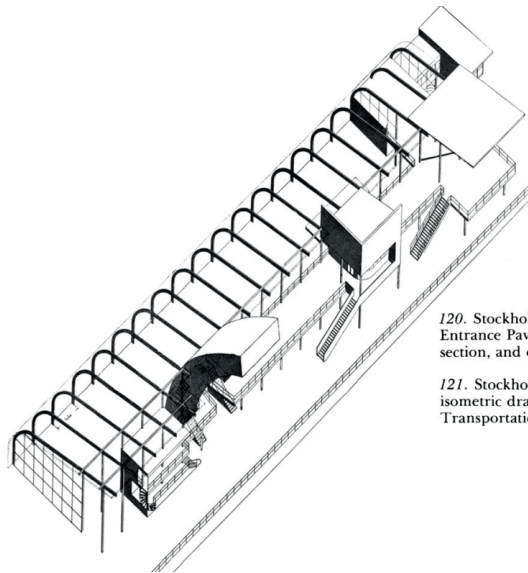


[10] Midsummer & traditional mast.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/theatre-survey/article/performing-midsommar-sweden-nationalism-folkloric-pageantry-and-the-political-power-of-symbolic-divergence/5B93A0D-90C05BA42E1AC9A7839B-FED87>

[11] Exhibition advertisement mast.

<https://theswedishrugblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/the-stockholm-exhibition-of-1930/>



120. Stockholm Exhibition, Entrance Pavilion, plans, section, and elevation.

121. Stockholm Exhibition, isometric drawing, Transportation Pavilion.

[12] Transport pavilion axonometry.



[13] Transport pavilion structure.

Transport Pavilion

This invitation to a new modern way of life was in a sense an act of acclimatising the public. Through the display of new building types alongside comparable and attractive objects an argument could be made that Asplund relaxed the tendency of modernism towards revolution, and instead adapted it into an enhanced expression of the Swedish culture.

In his transport pavilion, cars, trains, boats, and planes: all already accepted advances of modernism were displayed with a direct equivalence to the built fabric they occupied. Again within a very simple axial hall made possible by newfound steel spans Asplund exhibits an aeroplane under a roof that takes it figuratively under its wing. He shows boats under canopies tension hung from the material of their sails, and parks rows of cars within a factory like frame.



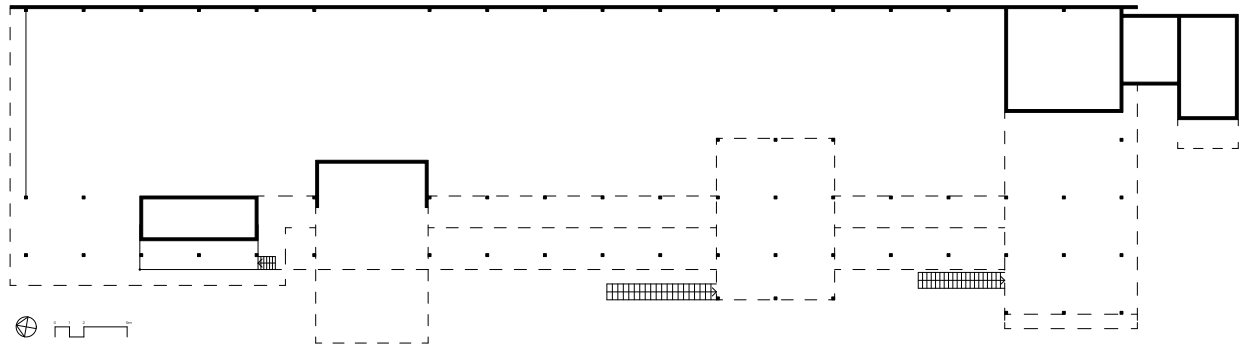
[14] Photograph colorised.

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2011/06/the-story-of-scandinavian-design-combining-function-and-aesthetics/>



[15] Colorised photograph.

Cronquist, Gustav. Ark-
Des. <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011014982113/stockholm-sutställningen-1930-paviljongen-for-samfardsel>.



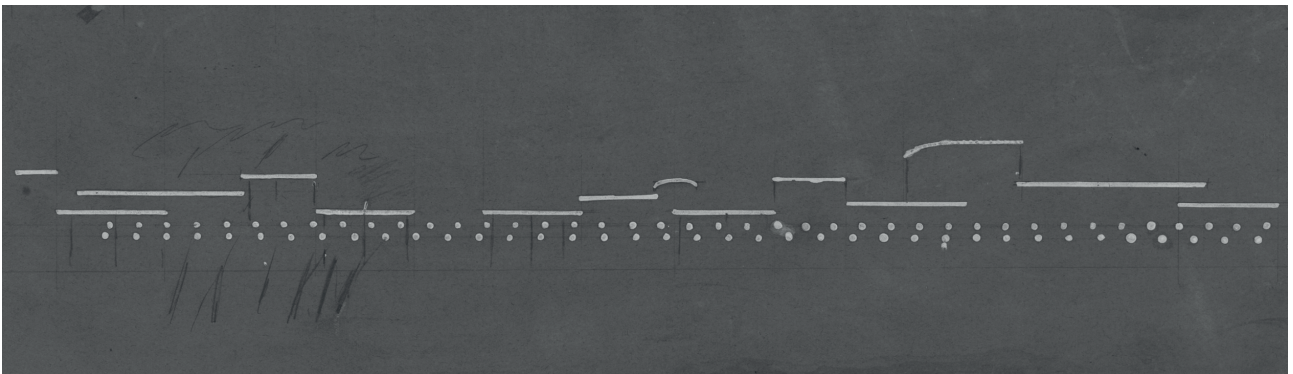
[16] Transport pavilion floor plan.

[17] Top: Asplund's light sketch.

Woollen, Malcolm. Erik Gunnar Asplund: Landscapes and Buildings. New York: Routledge, 2018.

[18] Bottom: archival photograph.

Woollen, Malcolm. Erik Gunnar Asplund: Landscapes and Buildings. New York: Routledge, 2018.



Conclusion

Asplund's offering and his invitation to a new way of life was in a sense an effort to acclimatise the public. Through the display of attractive and equivalent objects and building types an argument is made to relax the tendency of modernism towards revolution. He seeks not to reinvent, but to accept and adapt modern forms into a progression of his game of elements. The geometric rigour, the curated movement, and the taste for ornament are all still present, but have been brought into an enhanced and optimistic expression of Swedish culture.

[19] Landscape rendering.

<https://theswedishrugblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/the-stockholm-exhibition-of-1930/>

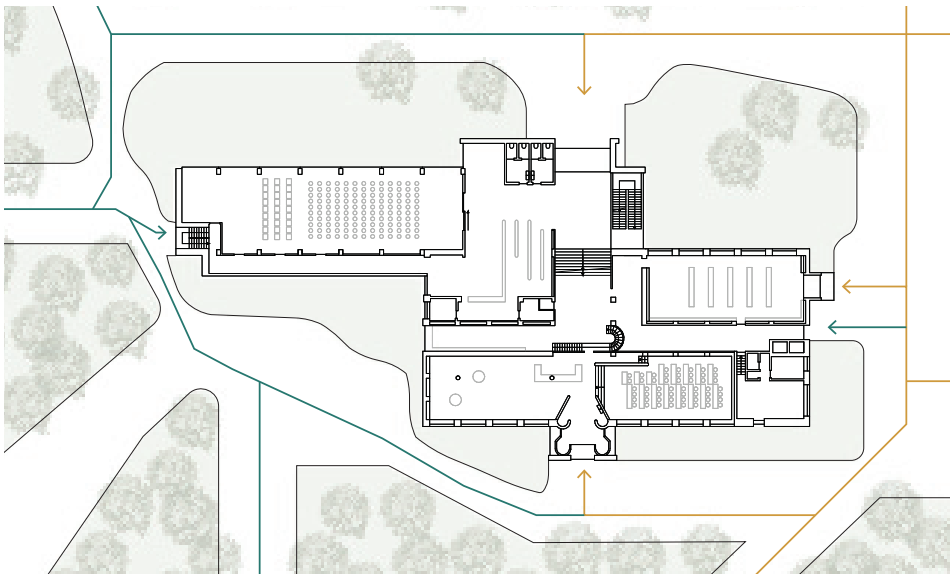


The Modern Public Library: Alvar Aalto's Viipuri Library 1935

James Flaus, Jan Yke van Bogert,
Carlotta Luciano, Natalia Simonarson



[20] Figure ground plan.



[21] Floor plan.



[22] Summer photograph.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>



[23] Winter photograph.

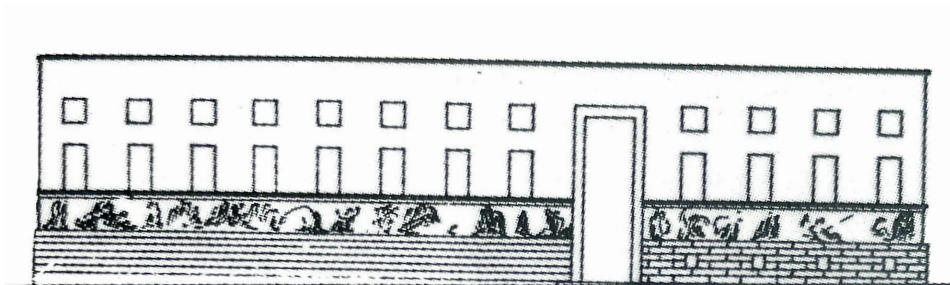
<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>

Context

The library as an institution has a rich history and significance in Finland that might be challenging for those in mainland Europe to fully grasp. The remote geography and oral nature of its language and traditions meant that not much of Finnish history had been written down. In fact, it wasn't until 1835 that the first book of oral histories was transcribed. At the time of the Viipuri Library's design, Finland's written history was only as old to Aalto as the project is to us today.

Viipuri in 1927 was Finland's second city, and held immense importance in its development as a nation state. Its library was one of the first modern buildings in the growth away from the Russian empire, and holds within it a deeply relevant nationalism. Both in its formal features and its intent.

Despite this energetic spirit of opportunity, Aalto's original design is notable for its prominent neoclassicism. Much like earlier Nordic works by Asplund it featured a decorated frieze wrapping a series of monumental civic volumes. This was of course not the eminent style in a young and relatively liberal Finnish government, and after two years the scheme was shelved in favour of a more modern and exciting interpretation.



[24] Initial classicist proposal.

Spens, M. (1994). Viipuri Library, Alvar Aalto. (1st edition). ACADEMY EDITIONS.



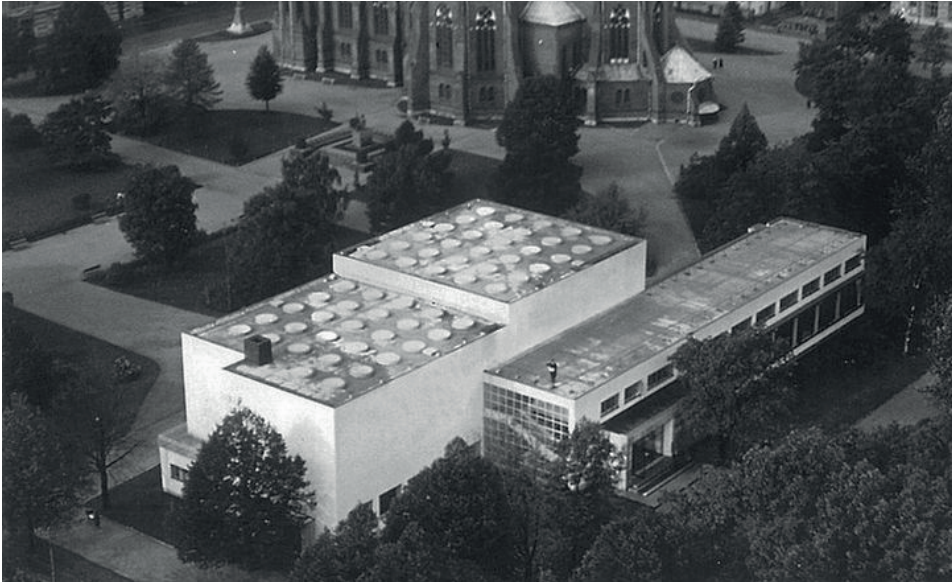
[26] Sketch of a library, reminiscent of a rock.

<https://www.archdaily.com/630420/ad-classics-viipuri-library-alvar-aalto>



[25] Elevation photograph.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>



[28] Photograph of library with now destroyed church in the back.

<https://www.archdaily.com/630420/ad-classics-viipuri-library-alvar-aalto>



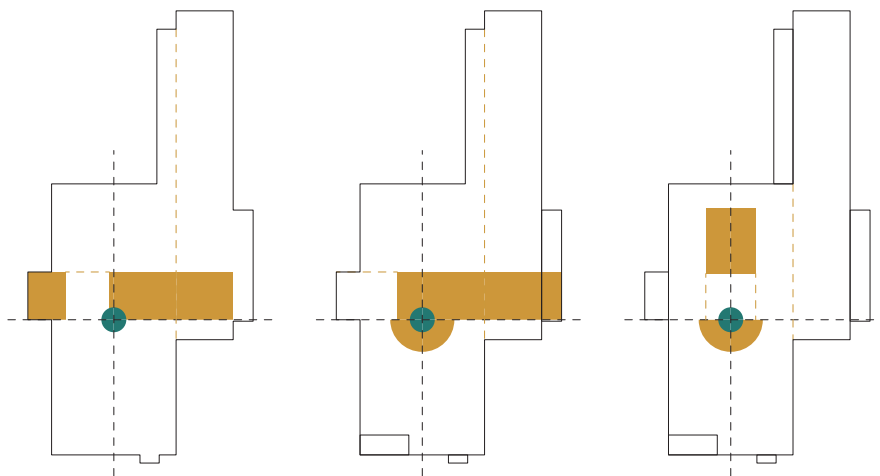
[27] Archival photograph.

<https://www.archdaily.com/630420/ad-classics-viipuri-library-alvar-aalto>

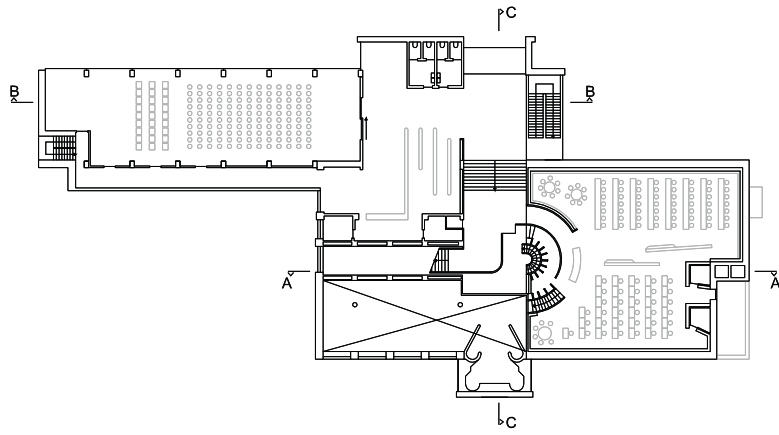
The Building

The result, built from 1931-35, is a series of white rendered volumes that stand proudly in Viipuri's central park. Each volume is well lit, enjoying generous steel spans that emphasise the library's relationship to national ideas of growth and prosperity. Despite the harsh Finnish winters, much of the building is widely glazed and visually connected to green space. A commitment to the provision of accessible public rooms becomes clear through a plan that offers multiple entrances, including a separated children's section, all carefully arranged around a central pinwheel.

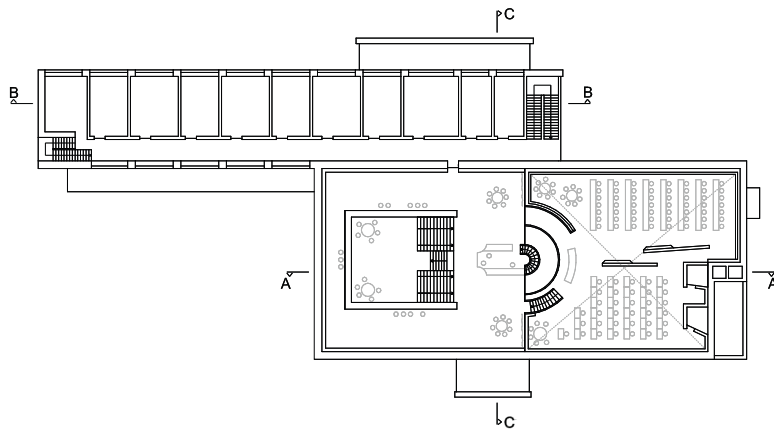
In section there is a real complexity involved in the way Aalto organises his toolkit of civic rooms. As each slides past the other there is a controlled sequence of shared view and connection through a domesticated environment. Inhabiting elements of Finnish culture on an intimate scale, despite its seemingly austere white exterior.



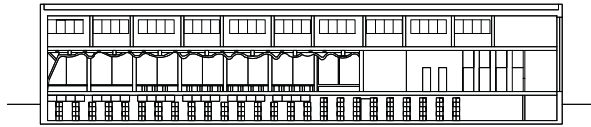
[29] Diagrams showing central entrance zones, twisting around the circular element into the main library room. Ground floor, first floor, second floor (left to right).



First Floor
1:200

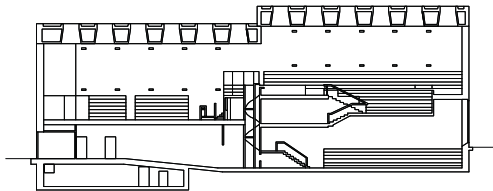


Second Floor
1:200



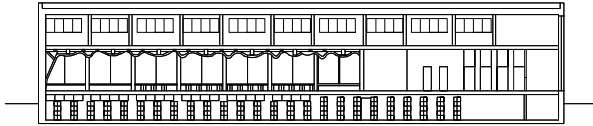
0 1 5 10

Section B-B
1:200



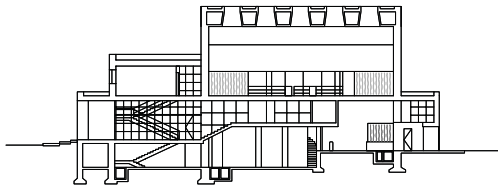
0 1 5 10

Section A-A
1:200



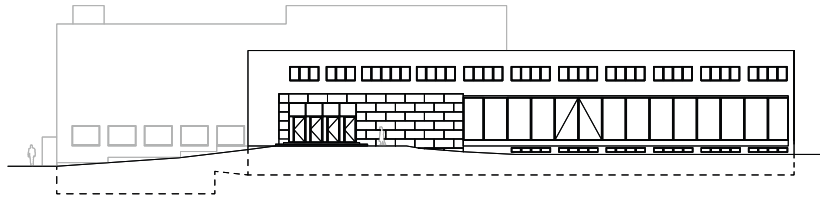
0 1 5 10

Section B-B
1:200



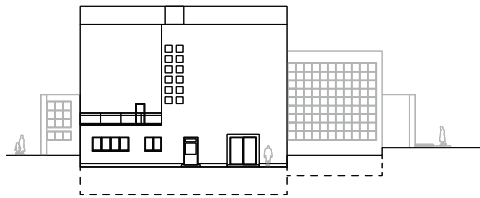
0 1 5 10

Section C-C
1:200



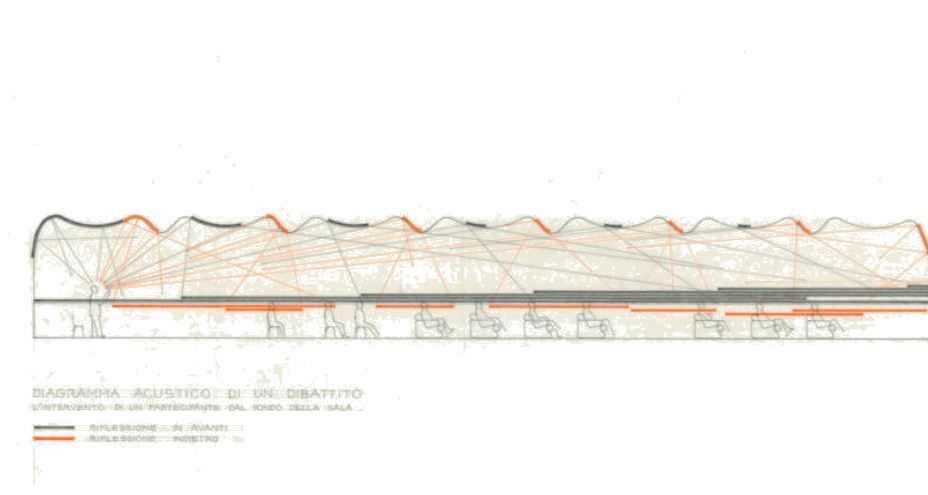
0 1 5 10

Elevation north
1:200
33



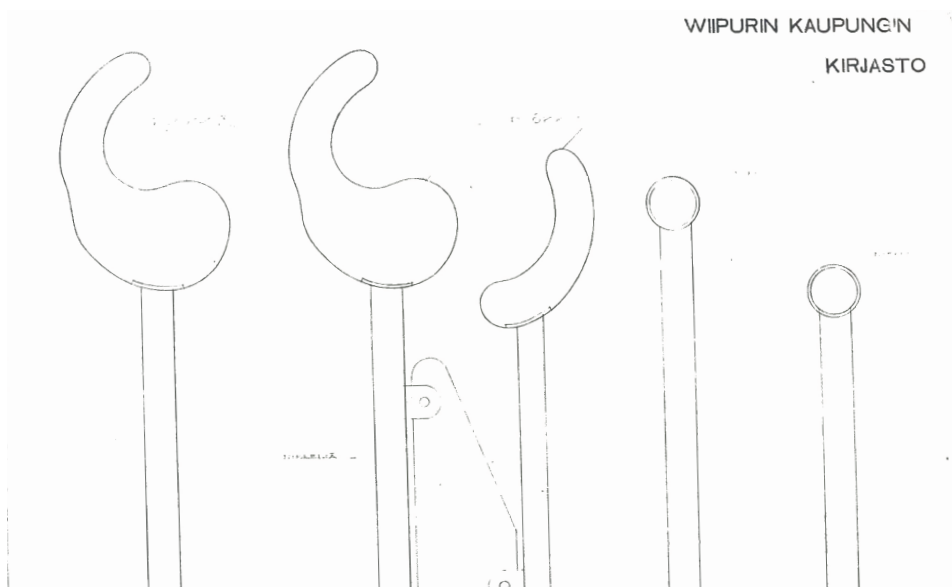
0 1 5 10

Elevation east
1:200



[31] Drawing for the acoustics of the auditorium.

<https://www.archdaily.com/630420/ad-classics-viipuri-library-alvar-aalto>



[30] Study of handrails.

Derived from a book.



[33] Photograph of the auditorium.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>



[32] Photograph of a handrail.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>



[35] Photograph of reading room.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>



[34] Photograph of reading room.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>

Conclusion

The Viipuri Library reflects a pivotal moment in Finnish history, where it played a vital role in the perception of a developing national culture. The scheme appears to understand its responsibility to portray and expand on Finnish culture, carefully crafting places to learn, speak, and develop in a quickly changing state. While taking a long stride in to the opportunities presented by modern construction, Aalto manages to keep both feet firmly in Finland.



[36] Viipuri Library at night.

<http://architecture-history.org/architects/architects/aalto/objects/1927%E2%80%931935,%20Viipuri%20LibraryMunicipal%20library,.html>

Individual Reflection

Natalia Simonarson

RESEARCH - INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

The comprehensive exploration of Gunnar Asplund's architectural oeuvre, encompassing iconic structures such as the Public Library Stockholm, the Stockholm Exhibition 1930, Villa Snellman, the Woodland Chapel and the Woodland Crematorium at the Woodland Cemetery, Lister Court House, and the Skandia Cinema, reveals a nuanced engagement with Swedish socio-economic and cultural dynamics, avant-garde modernism, functionalism, storytelling, symbolism, humor, sequencing, poché, and inspiration drawn from Italian classical architecture. Asplund's deliberate and thoughtful responses to the challenges and aspirations of his time underscore the multifaceted nature of his architectural legacy.

In parallel, the examination of architecturally significant libraries throughout history – ranging from the Beinecke Library in New Haven by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) to the Viipuri Library by Aalto – provides insights into the diverse philosophies shaping library design. The synthesis of modernist principles, unorthodox spatial configurations, classical aesthetics, adept manipulation of form and light, harmonious fusion of tradition and innovation, and a departure from conventional paradigms exemplifies the dynamic evolution of library architecture. The central observation derived from the examination of diverse libraries is how the architectures become vessels of their respective designer's distinctive architectural philosophies, ideologies, or fascinations. The libraries transcend their utilitarian roles and, eventually, contribute significantly to the annals of architectural history.

Reflecting on these studies, several overarching lessons emerge. Firstly, in contrast to the modernist architecture, the meticulous consi-

deration of all scales of a building—from the interior to the environment, the building is situated in—does not necessitate a designated purpose for each and every element but should, in my opinion, rather result in interpretative and ambiguous spaces, enabling them to withstand the vicissitudes of societal, stylistic, and environmental changes.

Furthermore, the concept of *poché* and thresholds emerges as a pivotal aspect in shaping spatial character, intricacy, and intimacy. Beyond the delineation of functional spaces, the deliberate incorporation of *poché* and thresholds can enhance the overall architectural experience, allowing for a rich interplay of rational and irrational space. The question arises, how intimate spaces can become and how little an architect needs to provide to have that quality while maintaining permeability to the public and how big these elements must be or can be.

Humor, subtly interwoven into architectural compositions, introduces an element of playfulness and ambiguity. As observed in many of Asplund's designs, where humor becomes an integral part of architectural language, it contributes to the vitality and versatility of built environments.

Sequencing, akin to musical composition, emerges as a powerful tool in architectural design. The juxtaposition of contrasting elements—be it in scale, function, or ambiance—creates a dynamic spatial experience. The careful orchestration of transitions from low to high, small to generous rooms fosters a narrative quality that heightens the overall architectural impact.

In essence, the comparative analysis of the investigated projects poses a question about the transformative potential of architecture in general and libraries in particular. It should extend beyond utilitarian functions to encapsulate philosophical underpinnings, ideological nuances, and a commitment to enduring architectural contributions. The synthesis of these learnings invites a re-evaluation of the relationship between form and function, inspiring me to embrace ambiguity, humor, and sequencing as integral elements in the creation of meaningful and resilient architectural expressions.

Stockholm City Library

Brief 01



Archival photograph of the exterior.

PREPARATION

Brief 1: Thinking and doing

This year, the Graduation Studio will undertake a design project for a public library in relation to the existing Stockholm City Library by Erik Gunnar Asplund. The opening weeks of the Graduation Studio engage in a collective period of design research as preparation for the main project, establishing the contexts in which it will develop through a process of thinking and doing across the Design Studio and Research Seminar. As students, themes, questions and your developing positions oscillate between these two spaces, each informing the other. These weeks are critical in establishing the terms through which we engage with one another and from which your individual projects will emerge. This is emphasised through collective teaching and group work. The conclusion will be a set of drawn and modelled outcomes. These are situated in a body of thinking and articulated through collective research documents and individual research plans that will, together, begin to establish the concerns and ambitions of your graduation project. Previous examples of each will be available for consultation and discussion. The weeks up to the P1 will be arranged as two periods in the Research Seminar and Design Studio. The first, Looking Carefully, will be followed by the second, First Thoughts.

LOOKING CAREFULLY: Weeks 1-4

Asplund

The first weeks of the Research Seminar will explore the world from which Stockholm City Library emerged by examining the work and thinking of its architect, Erik Gunnar Asplund. Working in groups of four, you will carefully study and describe eight buildings from different periods of his practice to begin to understand the ideas, methods and aesthetic, compositional and material concerns that characterised his developing architectural concerns. These will also provide the lens through which you will gain a collective understanding of the wider social, political, cultural, physical and architectural contexts in which Asplund worked. Considering the individual position that will begin to emerge from your early design work and study of the City Library itself, the questions raised through these studies will help inform your individual research plans.

- 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*

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

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Archival photograph of the Rotunda.

Each group will prepare a succinct presentation in which you will introduce the project. This will be accompanied by collating a complete set of drawings and a selection of images to describe its key characteristics. Alongside an investigation of the building itself, you will situate the project within wider architectural and societal developments in Sweden and Scandinavia, considering its relation to other projects from beyond Scandinavia and, perhaps, from different times. Finally, you will make a set of drawings in which you investigate the project with regard to the following themes:

Spatiality
Ornament
Composition (plan and/or elevations)
Landscape or urban setting

These are drawings you make yourself; they could be sketches or digital drawings. From them, you will produce one presentation drawing representing what you consider to be the essence of the project. Defining what kind of drawing would best describe your critique of the building is part of the exercise.

Scenes from a Public Library

In parallel, the first weeks of the Design Studio will focus on the Stockholm City Library itself.

Interiors
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Archival photograph of the stairs.

You will collectively draw the building and construct a three-dimensional digital model. Alongside this, working in the same groups of four at the Research Seminar, you will research, study and make models of key spatial moments in the library. These will relate to four key spatial themes:

The Rotunda
The poche which surrounds it, including the stairs
The children's library
The perimeter halls

Each of these will be represented by one or two models, which might encompass the following key spaces to be agreed upon:

The central rotunda reading room
The lobby and staircases
The erotica library
The Head librarian's office
The Children's entrance, reading room and storytelling room
The North and South Halls

The models will be made at a consistently large scale, to be agreed upon, and will depict the rooms as they were first designed and opened. They will include the furnishings and colour schemes of the original interiors as well representations of any decorative artworks. They will therefore record both the library as it was

Palace

conceived and, speculatively, how it might feel once restored. When you visit the library on the field trip you will carefully record adjustments and changes that have happened to the spaces you studied since. The models should be made to be displayed as physical artefacts as well as through photography. Alongside the models, you will present your studied rooms in plan and section through developed surface drawings. Both will be exhibited in the Department.

FIRST THOUGHTS: Weeks 5-9

The Modern Public Library

In the second period, the research seminars will look more broadly at the development and possibilities of the modern public library. Working again in groups you will investigate eight precedents in detail. Through research and careful recording, you will explore the thinking that informed the design of each of these libraries, considering their situation and how their architecture addresses its public and represents its function. This will be recorded through a series of black and white two-dimensional drawings, in plan and section, across a series of scales. From this, the studio will develop methods of explaining systems and relationships, creating a body of analytical material and diagrams for each building, which can subsequently be adapted, co-opted and applied to individual projects.

Salle de Lecture, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Henri Labrousse, 1875
Vilpuri Library, Alvar Aalto, 1935
National and University Library, Jozef Plecnik, 1943
Bernecke 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

A Room in a Library

Following on from your careful and detailed study of Asplund's library, and in parallel with your investigations into other public libraries, you will make your first design project. At the same scale as the models made of the Stockholm Library interiors, you will each individually make, in model form a proposal for a room in a library or, potentially, a significant fragment of it: What will happen in your room? Who will use it and what can they use it for? How will it engage their senses? What scale is it? How fixed or modelled is its form? Do you conceive it in relation to Asplund's room or contrast to it? Do you imagine it within an existing space or a new piece of architecture? The scale, purpose, character and furnishing of this room, or its potential relationship with a notional exterior, will allow you to begin to develop your attitude and position in relation to the larger design project to come.

Interiors
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While working on your designs, the Research seminar will give you a grounding in the project's historical, architectural, and theoretical context. The seminar will be focused on close reading and discussing projects and texts related to the assignment in small groups. Finally, a series of lectures will address parts of the wider context of the particular assignment. Through this combination of lectures and group research into Asplund's oeuvre and precedent studies of libraries, we ask you to formulate your position with regard to the design assignment and its various contexts.

Project Journal

The research seminar will introduce the Project Journal, a document made by each of you individually. The purpose of this is to record your process of researching, thinking, making, development and reflection throughout the graduation studio and, finally, to form a key body of evidence against which research and process can be marked at the end of the year, in the P5 examination. The Journal should be developed continuously, within a form and structure chosen individually. It should record and communicate the process of the project, including outcomes and reflections on tutorials and reviews, while offering a space for reflection and critique of the work being made and the issues that define it.

Research Plan

The Research Plan course (AR3A010) is integrated within the Research Seminar. However, the outcome differs from what is written in the Study Guide and Syllabus for this Department-wide course. Within the Interiors Buildings Cities Graduation Studio, the majority of the Research Plan is made collectively and consist of the edited outcomes of the investigations into Asplund's architecture and the precedent studies of libraries. Only a concise, individual reflective statement, which you will also present at the P1, is added to this collective work. This will be discussed in more detail with your tutors.

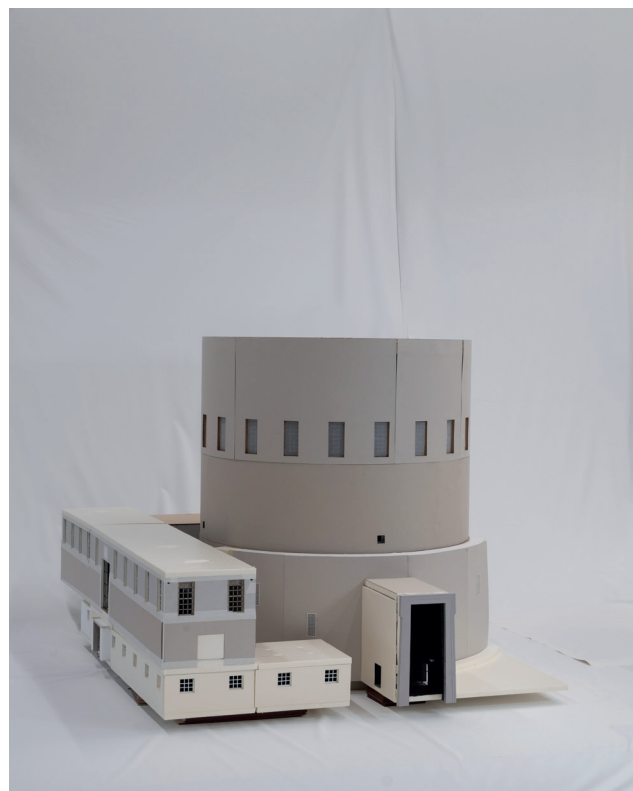


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The Asplund Library

Past, Present, 1:25 Restoration

Prior to an excursion to the site in Stockholm with all students and teachers partaking in the graduation studio, a model of the Asplund Library at a scale of 1:25 was collaboratively crafted by the studio. This involved thorough research, analysis, and modeling of significant spatial elements within the library. These efforts were concentrated on four main spatial moments: the rotunda, the surrounding areas including stairs and the entrance, the children's library, and the perimeter halls. It was the intention to reconstruct the library's original layout and appearance of the rooms. Details such as original furniture, color schemes, and decorative artworks provide a visual record of the library's original design and offer insights into its potential restored state. A book was created to navigate through these spaces, featuring photographs that vividly captured the library's ambiance, both current and archival, seamlessly integrating with images of the model. The culmination of this project was the exhibition held at the Faculty of Architecture in December 2023, where the model was displayed.





[37] Archival photograph of the interior of the main entrance.

Provided by the chair.

The entrance hall is a space intended to lead visitors through a series of experiences. Upon entering through a grand doorway adorned with ancient Greek engravings, a sleek glass front, complemented by sculpted door handles, invites visitors further into the building. This glass front floods the expansive entrance hall with natural light, creating a luminous atmosphere. The hall's surfaces, finished in semi-glossy black, amplify the influx of light as well as draw an extension to the exterior's horizon.



[38] Photograph of current state.



[39] Model photograph.



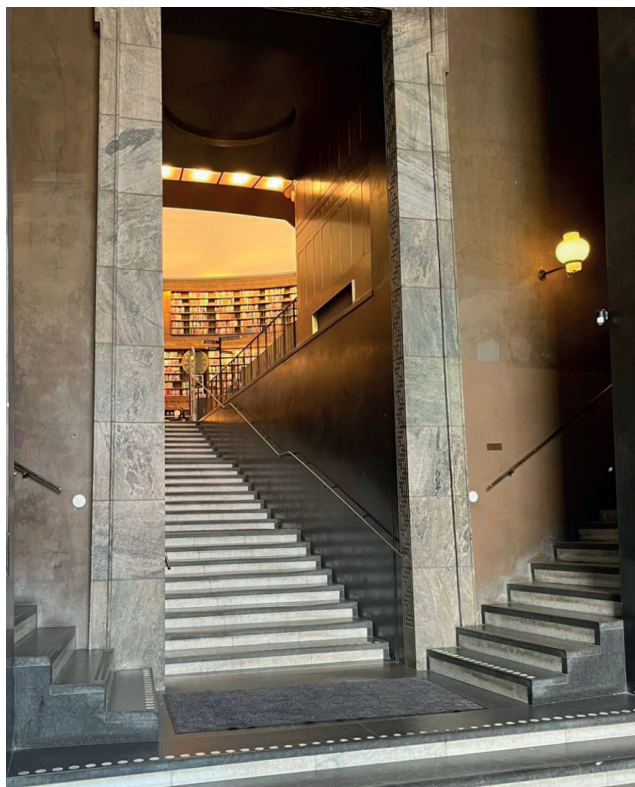
[40] Archival photograph of the interior of the main entrance.

Provided by the chair.

Asplund strategically incorporates reflective elements, particularly in the poché room, to alter the perception of space. Progressing beyond the towering entrance hall, a second doorway guides visitors into a smaller, more enclosed area, leading ultimately to the larger rotunda. This deliberate progression of varying heights captivates the visitor's attention, prompting them to look upward or downward and facilitating a transition into a serene space removed from the external world.



[41] Photograph of current state.

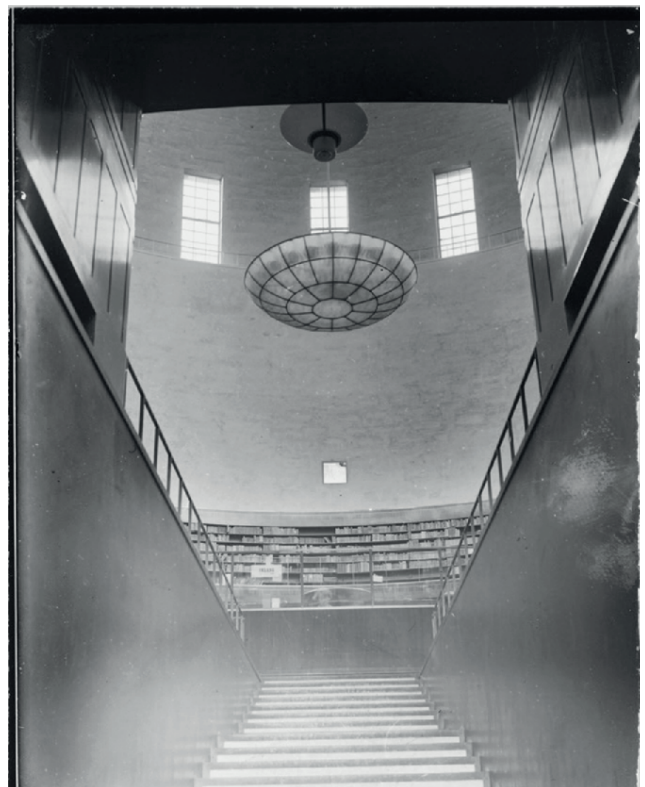


[42] Model photograph.



[43] Archival photograph, entering
the central rotunda.

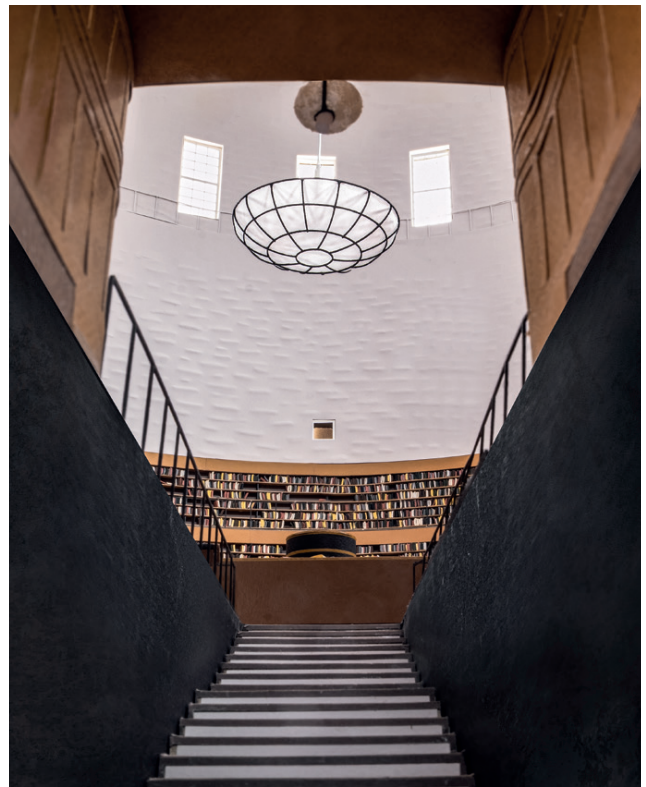
Provided by the chair.



[44] Photograph of current state.



[45] Model photograph.



[46] Archival photograph of the spiral stairs.

Provided by the chair.



[47] Photograph of current state.



[48] Model photograph.



First Thoughts

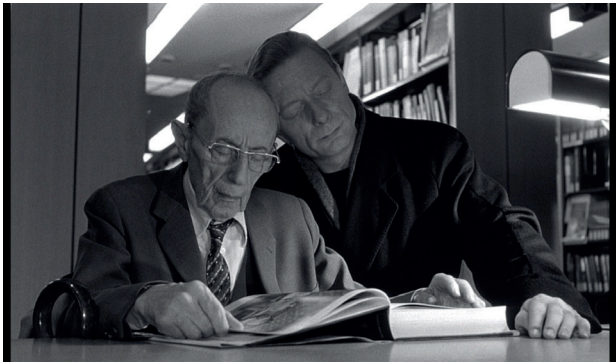
Brief 02

Stockholm City Library

2023-24 MSc3 AR3AI100
Brief 02



Der Himmel über Berlin, 1987, Werner Herzog, video still.



Der Himmel über Berlin, 1987, Werner Herzog, video still.

First Thoughts: Unpacking the Library

"I am unpacking my library. Yes, I am. The books are not yet on the shelves, not yet touched by the mild boredom of order. I cannot march up and down their ranks to pass them in review before a friendly audience. You need not fear any of that. Instead, I must ask you to join me in the disorder of crates that have been wrenched open, the air saturated with the dust of wood, the floor covered with torn paper, to join me among piles of volumes that are seeing daylight again after two years of darkness, so that you may be ready to share with me a bit of the mood. It is certainly not an elegiac mood but, rather, one of anticipation, which these books arouse..."

Walter Benjamin, Introduction to *Unpacking my Library*, in *Illuminations*, 1969

Through this brief, we will begin to unpack the library, not the library, as in Erik Gunnar Asplund's Stadsbibliotek in Stockholm, which we have just visited together, but the idea of a library, in its modern, public form. For almost two decades, the library has struggled with the idea of what a library needs to be, in order to serve the needs of a diverse contemporary society in an increasingly digital age (in Sweden). At the moment, like Benjamin's disarrayed books, your own thoughts might also be unfocused, muddled yet filling you with a sense of anticipation, or perhaps confusion.

The Modern Public Library

In the next four weeks you will start to define your first thoughts about the project, through two parallel pieces of work. In the research seminar you will be studying eight modern public libraries that are also considered significant in terms of their architecture. These encompass different contexts, both in place and time. You will not only consider what the motivations of those who made them might have been, but also investigate the ways in which these are expressed and elaborated upon in terms of their architecture and translated into spatial, organisational and functional strategies. The outcome of this part of the seminar will be a set of newly made architectural drawings, undertaken in the same way and at the same scale as drawings of Asplund's library, to allow them each to be compared with the other. Alongside these you will develop methods of making analytical diagrams which will again all for each precedent to be understood and compared in terms of its strategic order.

A Room for a Library.

In parallel, in the design studio, you will begin to think about how your attitudes to the question of the library can be expressed through design. Working in the abstract, we ask you to develop a room for a library. This room is not necessarily the library at this stage, nor is it necessarily in Stockholm. However, it should be understood as a real,

functional, tangible place, with architectural qualities, where people can do things. To consider what those qualities and uses might be, you will need to reflect upon your own developing attitude to what a public library is now, also drawing perhaps on your own experience as a user of libraries: What happens in your room? Is it for one, a few or many? What scale is it? Does one read there and, if so, how or what? Can one eat, talk, drink coffee? Is it ok to fall asleep? What are the qualities and atmosphere that it presents? What does it offer? How formal is it? How is it lit? Can one see outside, or be seen by passers by? Is anybody watching you? Does it matter who you are?

Asplund's reflections on such questions, more than 100 years ago, led to particular forms, spaces and relations: between people, between people and books, between books and the city. How might you respond in the present? It is an open question whether your proposal for a room, is a room in relation to Asplund's library. For some or perhaps all of you, it might be liberating not to be too concerned with this now.

However directly you choose to respond to, or counterpoint, Asplund's spaces, this initial project will be developed and presented in the form of a model, at 1:25. This will allow your thoughts to be comparable, not only with each other but also with the spaces in the Stockholm library that you have already focused so intently upon. It would be interesting to consider

whether or how, the strategies he employs might be reiterated in your own thinking. Your model should be presented as a physical artefact and through photography. It should be thought about in terms of inhabitation and furnishing and you should also consider about how it might perform technically, both structurally and environmentally, in terms of light and air. Accompanying the model should be a set of drawings, describing it in section, plan and reflected ceiling plan.

You should be able to discuss this initial design project in terms of both Asplund's work and wider thinking about the contemporary public library, encompassing the given precedents and your own thoughts and interests. These individual proposals will form the core of your P1 presentation alongside the collective work.

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My First Thoughts

First Thoughts

[49] The Bookworm (Man with Nose in Book).

Painting by Norman Rockwell (1926).



In the deliberate act of directing one's attention to a text, a conscious choice unfolds—a commitment to **immersion**. The words of the author, organized and contemplative become the reader's own thoughts and shush your unruly and often disjointed thoughts. This endeavor, reminiscent of a meditative state, heightens the reader's awareness of their surroundings, elevating them to the role of an observer in the theater of their own reading experience.

At home.

As you turn on a warm light, whether nestled in the corner of a couch beneath a cozy blanket or propped against a mound of pillows in the sanctum of one's bed, the reader engages with the comforts of home. The turning of pages becomes a waltz, guided by a heart attuned to the gentle serenade of solitude.

In the café.

Amidst the aromatic tapestry of a café, the reader becomes a participant in the bustling sonnet of life, orchestrating an unconventional yet vibrant reading experience. The modern café with caffeinated air and seating, ranging from cushioned lounge chairs to a wooden Thonet is known for having a laid-back, leisurely, friendly and comfortable atmosphere, making it a soothing place to read in. Yet, with sporadic noises - emerging through the grinding of the coffee beans or a child who, screaming with

joy, managed to escape the bonds of the mother - it also weaves in moments of tension, introducing a subtle discomfort within the overall tranquility. In this complex exchange, the reader not only absorbs the book's narrative but also learns through the recurrent interruptions, becoming an observer of the world around her just as much as within her book. The dynamic backdrop forges a curious alliance between the tangible surroundings and the world encapsulated within the book.

At the library.

Libraries embody the essence of serene temples dedicated to knowledge. The hushed ambiance, coupled with endless numbers of books, cultivates an atmosphere of deep focus and almost sacred reverence. The solemnity of the setting, marked by the intense concentration of fellow readers, imparts a ceremonial quality to the act of reading, making it the perfect place of focus. Seated with an upright posture at a table, each page is turned with a gentle touch in respect of the library's book, as not to damage it. The seeker of wisdom communes with the collective consciousness of written knowledge. The backdrop of shelves, filled with meticulously arranged volumes stand as witnesses to the collective wisdom of human thought, and the quietude becomes a canvas for introspection.

In nature.

Whether laying on a blanket amidst the wild gras-

ses or sitting on a bench next to a canal, the delicate manifestations of nature weave themselves intricately into the narrative of the written world.

Sunlight is filtered through the leafy canopy of a tree, casting intricate patterns of light and shade on the book's surface. This luminous interplay infuses the reading experience with a touch of enchantment, turning each page into a canvas painted with the subtle hues of the surrounding foliage. In the background, the stream's steady murmur functions as a white noise, an auditory backdrop that enhances the reader's focus—a melodic undercurrent guiding the journey through words. As she immerses herself in the harrowing twists of her book, a chill breeze emerges, tracing goosebumps upon her skin—a corporeal dance echoing the tale's unsettling narrative. Or - the warm caress of sunlight soothes her agitated inner world, a harmonious union of the fictional and the tangible. The nuanced flora and fauna become characters in this vibrant reading experience, fusing the worlds of literature and nature into a symbiosis of thought and sensation.

In public transport.

In the dynamic realm of public transport, the act of reading becomes an integral part of a narrative infused with motion. Sometimes she has to read standing, depending on the time of day, requiring a tactile dialogue with balance amidst the kinetic energy of travel. Muscles, tensed with the effort to maintain equilibrium while standing and rea-

ding, mirror the intricacies of navigating not just the book's pages but the dynamic space of the transport vessel—a vessel that transcends mere functionality to become a microcosm where the stories of diverse lives intersect briefly. Seated, she carves out a personal enclave amid the collective flux, a momentary sanctuary within the transit journey. Each page turned is a voyage, both literal and metaphorical, aligning with the rhythm of the moving vehicle, as she looks up every now and then to check on the station display. Stop after stop she lifts her gaze from the book, noticing a kaleidoscopic play of faces on the inside and a metamorphosis of the land- and cityscape on the outside. The evolving environments, glimpsed in fleeting moments, become mnemonic markers to memorizing the book's contents - a subtle application of the method of loci. Ironically, this method is also known as the memory journey or the memory palace.

In a bookstore.

The reading experience in a bookstore is exciting, adding to it the thrill of a shopping high. The smell of new books and the chance to discover something new make it an adventurous setting. You enter the bookstore and judge by the books on its shelves whether or not to engage with it. Akin to a curated library, the bookstore's selection on display becomes a manifestation of its identity, and, by extension, the people you meet inside. Contrary to a library, the hobbies of being passionate about reading books and merely owning your personally curated selection of books can coexist within the compounds of a bookstore. With minimal seating, the bookstore subtly communicates a message—a tacit invitation not to linger indefinitely within the confines of a single book but rather to wander, scout, and carefully choose a literary companion. As you skim the pages of a book, the act of reading in a bookstore comes with a reflection of what you want to discover and / or who you want to be, ensuring that every visit is not just a transaction but an unfolding chapter in the ongoing story of the reader's becoming.

FIRST STEPS.

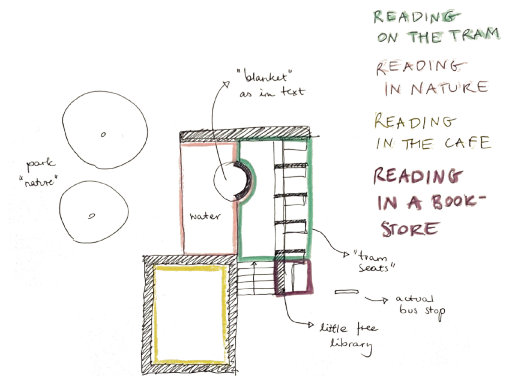
In the effort of designing a space to read in, I sought the optimal atmosphere for immersive reading. As a first step I explored how diverse surroundings shape our reading experiences, coming to the crossroad of two very different situations - the enchantment of nature and the rhythmic narrative within the tram's dynamic tapestry.

Drawing inspiration from the Stockholm Public Library's urban-nature interplay, my design merges city and nature at its threshold. Influenced by the recreation of tranquil nature and disruptive tram readings, I aim to create an outdoor architecture harmonizing tranquility and disruption.

Translating these thoughts into action, I worked out some first trials, culminating in some sketches and a 1:50 study model.

This sketch illustrates my idea of a diverse reading experiences, sliding along each other without over-toning one another - each distinct yet converging to create a design mediating various states.

[50] Study sketch and model.



The Library as a Mediator

First Thoughts

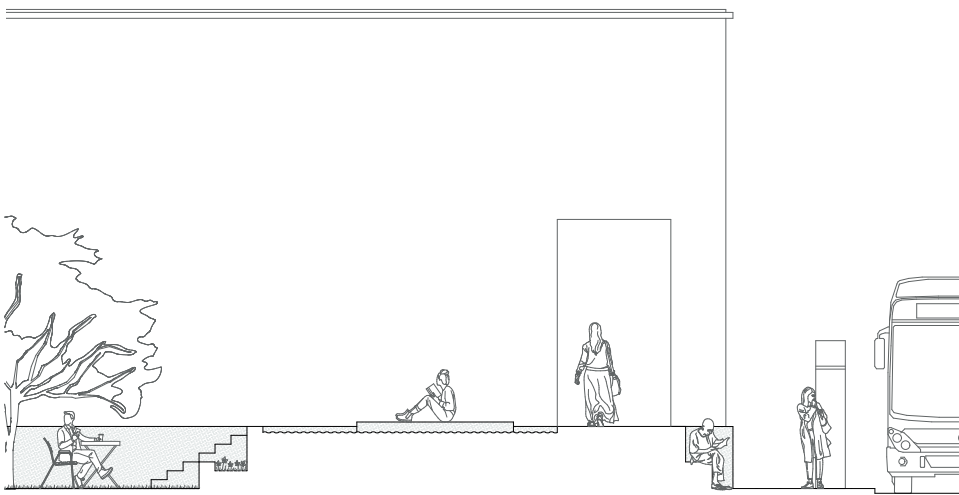
The design for a room for a library explores the idea of mediating two urban conditions that form the entrance to a public library – man-made nature in the form of a park and the built environment. This threshold as a subtly designed exterior space tries to invite everybody to use the space as a place to read, yes, but also to just sit, wait, meet, contemplate, and do everything that you can do in a room for a library. It does so by subverting the monumental plinth of a 19th century institutional building into something that actually (tries) to engage the public.



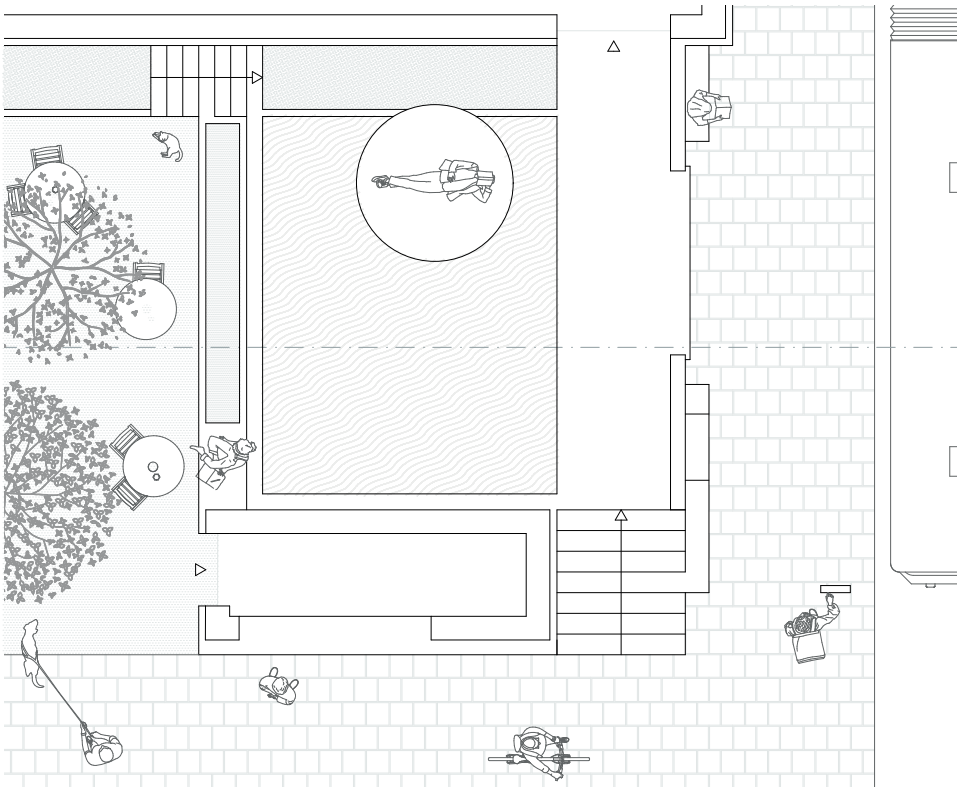
[51] Model photograph.







[52] Cross section.



[53] Floor plan.

Developing a Project

Brief 3

Stockholm City Library

2023-24 MSc3 AR3AI100
Brief 03



2010s Aerial View

Developing a Library

This brief introduces the project you will each focus on for the remainder of the academic year. It asks you to individually consider how you can develop and transform the Stockholm City Library, by Erik Gunnar Asplund, into a contemporary public library, serving the needs of a diverse, Twenty-First Century society, almost 100 years after its inauguration. As you already know, this question is a complex and disputed one: an elaboration of an ongoing critique that began almost as the building opened and has evolved significantly in the last 20 years. Already in 1931, while it was still new, the building was considered too small. It was extended by Asplund himself, in a manner which counterpointed the architectural concerns of both the original interior and exterior, reflecting his reinvention of himself as a modernist architect in the short, intervening period. Significant areas of the library have changed their function since then. Smaller physical adjustments undertaken by his son have densified the existing structure and changed how both the public and staff used it, while further adjustments in the 1970s sought to make it more accessible.

Competitions

In 2006, a major international competition was announced, with the intention of reinventing the library through a significant new addition which, alongside the existing building, would have delivered a net usable floor area of 24,000m². This project, which

attracted enormous interest from the architectural profession, was abandoned in 2009 due to public and political disquiet. In 2012, a brief focused on care for the existing building was produced, detailing its heritage concerns. This was followed in 2014 by another brief, which sought to both re-establish the questions of the failed 2006 contest, while critiquing some of its assumptions and, simultaneously, acknowledging the much-reduced circumstances in which the project would now take place. In seeking to deliver a version of the original aspiration within a total floor area of approximately 15,000m², which the combination of the existing library and bazaar offers, this brief asked a more open question than its predecessor. Instead of listing prescribed areas, as required in 2006, it challenged the architect to consider how they might make best use of the original building, in order to accommodate as much of those original intentions as possible, but in a more flexible manner, while also proposing that various elements could be reduced or removed. In doing so, it emphasised issues of diversity, questioned the necessity to accommodate large areas for new media, proposed a shift in the provision of study spaces to smaller group and individual work environments, and opened up the possibility for overlapping uses, in time as well as space.

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Caruso St John, the British practice that was awarded the project, reinforces this negotiative position in their response to the task: "In a completely new building it is possible to devise a functional programme that, in the abstract, prescribes sizes and adjacencies and to ask the design team to meet these requirements. In an existing building the development of the brief goes hand-in-hand with the spatial opportunities and connections that are possible. And in the case of a listed building this process is even more intimate, where the aspirations for improvement and change must be reconciled with the quality of the existing architecture."

In 2019, Caruso St John's project was halted. Now, close to 20 years after the original competition, it is your turn to devise an appropriate response to the Stockholm City Library and to consider how it might best serve the needs of today, and into the future.

Requirements

Working up to the P2 examination and following careful interrogation of both the 2006 and 2014 briefs, you will each develop an individual attitude to the library, which you will test through the development of both an architectural strategy and an accompanying programmatic brief. In communicating your intentions, you will need to engage not only your knowledge of this library but also the wider research you have been conducting as individuals and a group in relation to the public library as a type, in order to address the larger questions facing it. Amongst many, the following issues are of particular concern:

- **What are the responsibilities and expectations of a contemporary public library now?** How are these situated in relation to the particular concerns of Swedish society, within its capital city, and how might the redeveloped library acknowledge and engage the already established network and infrastructure of libraries in Stockholm?

- **Who is the library for?** How does it serve the needs and aspirations of a complex and highly diverse contemporary society, which includes a shifting demographic and many for whom Sweden has become their home, but is not their place of birth and for whom Swedish is not a native language?

- **What is an appropriate response to the existing building?** Should one create a more or less autonomous building, as the 2006 competition suggested, allowing the monumental status of Asplund's library to be reinforced; should one work within that monumental building, densifying and optimising it, as was suggested in 2014; or is there a possibility somewhere in between, where the existing library might be extended or added to in a more limited way?

Taking the intellectual premise of the 2014 brief as our collective starting point, you will each, individually, establish your response

to these questions and those that ensue from them. You will then go through a process of testing and critiquing the original terms and scale of the 2006 brief in order to consolidate your attitude and conclusions in response to your premise for what the resulting library might be. The outcome, as a functional brief, will depend on your concerns and how you conceive these being translated into built form and space.

We should also remember that the questions asked of the original brief by its successor in 2014, are now themselves a decade old. Since then the world has changed fundamentally in many ways: it has become far more cognisant of the planet-wide environmental crisis that we collectively face, and the need for both wider society, and for architects and architecture in particular, to respond to it proactively and effectively; mass migration, often as a direct result of environmental change, has become a major social and political question and a driver for change; we have been through a global pandemic, one of the effects of which has been to transform the way many people approach their working environment and their public lives; both the outcomes and aftermath of colonialism and the priorities that underpin traditional social hierarchies have been fundamentally called into question; there is an ever wider understanding that learning and education is a life-long activity; there is far more scepticism about the concerns of neoliberalism in response to these and other questions. How can your own reflections on the role of this library, in this city, and in relation to the contemporary culture it fosters, incorporate such questions?

Outcomes

By P2, you will be able to evidence and represent your concerns and conclusion through the following:

- **A statement of your attitude to the role of the library**, its situation in society and the city, the qualities and character of the existing monumental building and the ways in which you propose to transform it, in order to address the questions and issues you have raised.

- **An architectural proposition in relation to the existing library**, defining whether you intend to densify it, extend it, or see it as part of an ensemble, with a new building or buildings. This needs to be presented within either or both the site model (1:500), physical building model (1:100) or the digital model, each of which you are already preparing as a studio.

- **A series of clear diagrams**, expressed in plan, section and three dimensions, which describe how this proposition works, in response to the brief, the site and the existing building. Ideally the graphical language of these diagrams should correlate with those used in the analysis of existing library precedents to allow for comparison.

- **A consolidated room or area programme**, as a spreadsheet but also graphically represented and compared with the 2006 brief, translated through the aforementioned diagrams into the architectural proposal, in strategic terms.



Der Himmel über Berlin, 1987, Wim Wenders, video still.

Timetable

These abovementioned outcomes ideally are developed on parallel tracks as they inform one another. You will see on the Notion site that you have 8 weeks to prepare yourself for the P2 presentation. However, you will only be able to have feedback on the process during the coming 4 weeks, before the start of the end-of-year break (we do not teach on 20 December).

Annexes

2006 Competition Brief	(to study)
2012 Conservation Brief	(for reference)
2014 Revised Brief	(to study)

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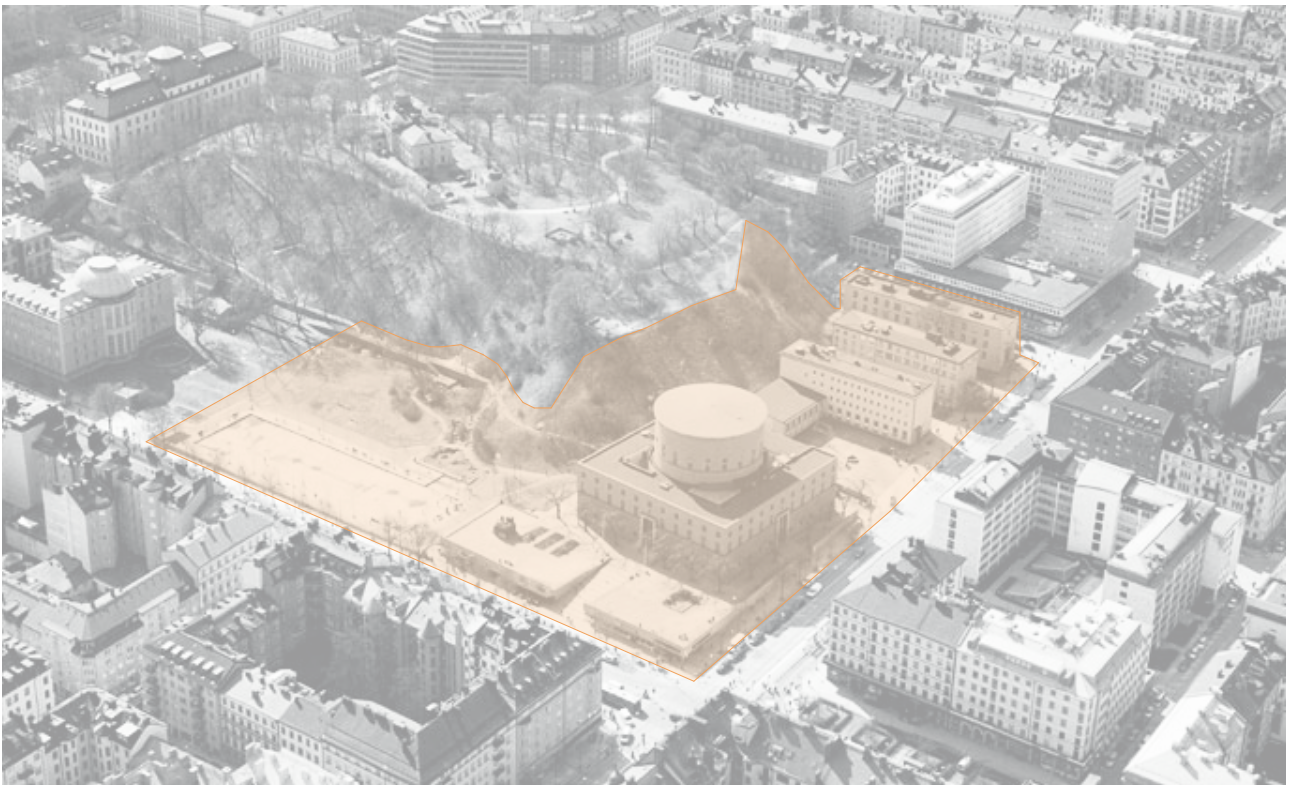
About the Site

Developing a Project

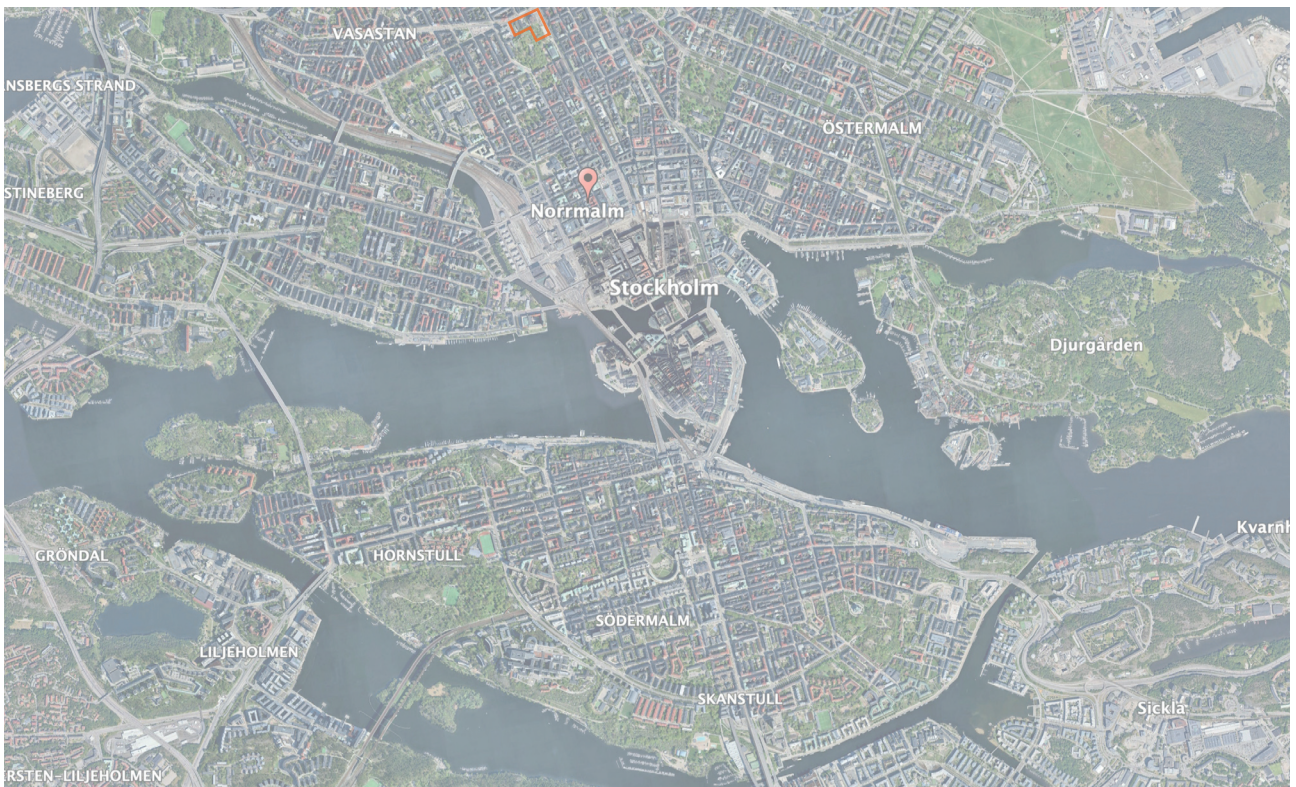
[54] Bird's eye view competition site.
Google Earth.



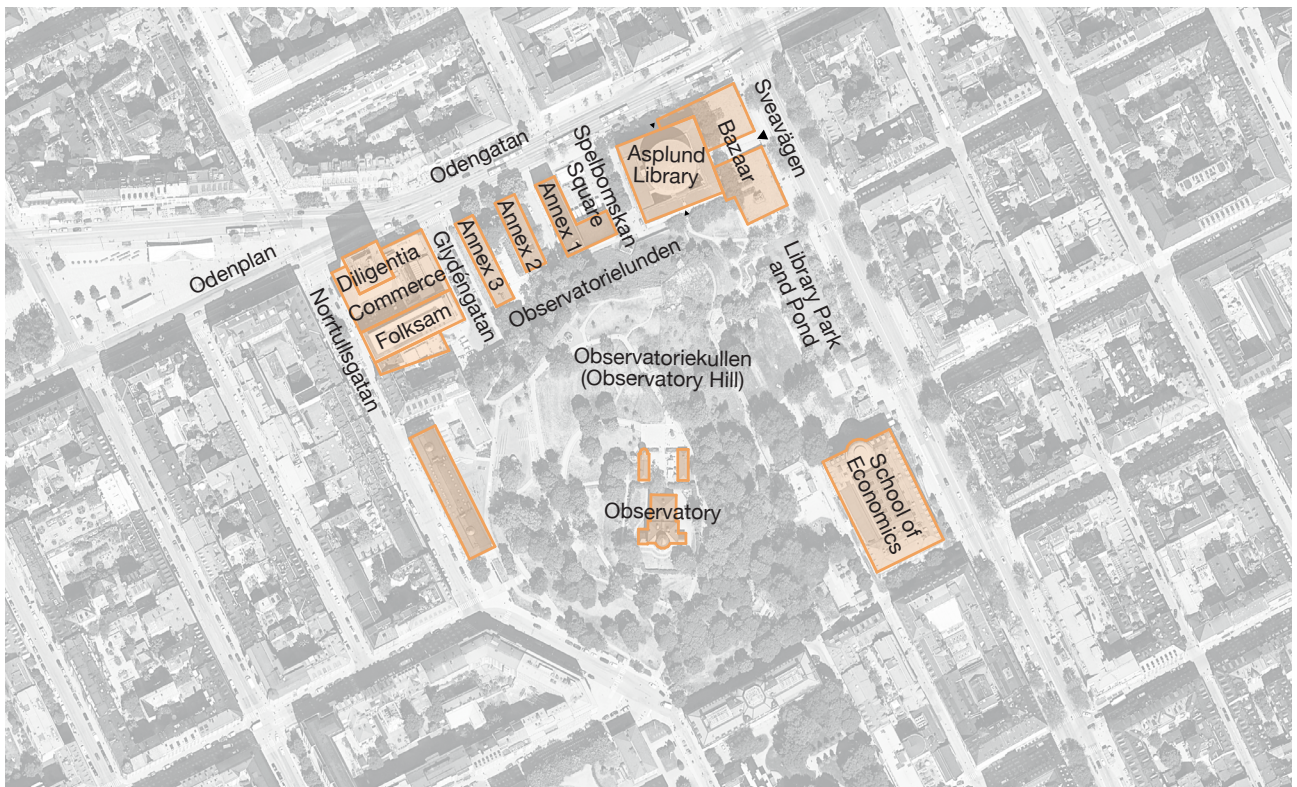
[55] Competition borders.



[56] Normalm in Stockholm.
Google Earth.



[57] Nomenclature for the site.



[58] The Public Library Stockholm.
Photograph by David Grandorge.



- | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 Asplund Library | 6 Stockholm School of Economics | 12 Observatorielunden Skola (1) | [59] The educational establishments around Observatory hill. |
| 2 Annex 1: International Library | 7 International School | 13 House of Innovation | |
| 3 Annex 2: Swedish Institute Children's Literature | 8 Photography School | | |
| 4 Annex 3: Observatorielunden Skola (2) | 9 High School | | |
| 5 Observatory | 10 Academic Department | | |
| | 11 Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry | | |



Borders

The designated site for the competition in 2006 and 2014 is situated in Norrmalm, a northern neighborhood of Stockholm. The competition revolves around the expansion of the Public Library Stockholm, comprising the iconic Asplund Library and its Annexes, also referred to as the Spelbomskan buildings. The Asplund Library is perched atop a plinth (which houses the Bazaar buildings), flanked by a classicist park to its south, bordered by Sveavägen and Odengatan to its east and north, adjacent to a market square on the west, nestled against Observatorielunden's incline to the south-west. It stands as the primary library, and a monument, being the „fourth most visited cultural institution in the city.”

The site constitutes two distinct sections. The initial section encompasses the Asplund Library, its Bazaars, and the accompanying park to the south. Pertinently, any proposed interventions in this area

must uphold a symbiotic relationship between the existing structures and the park. The guidelines emphasize, „the only measures that may be proposed for this part of the site are measures that maintain a relationship between the existing buildings and the park in this area.” Proposals concerning the enhancement of the external environment are acceptable, provided they align with these values.

Conversely, the second section incorporates Spelbomskan, the adjacent square, the airspace above Glydengatan (a component of the Folksam property), and the northern expanse of Observatorielunden. It is within this domain that participants are tasked with envisioning an extension, potentially linked to the Asplund main library. The directive specifies, „It is here that the extension with a possible connection with the Asplund main library shall be proposed.”



[60] Borders of the Site.

Stockholm. (2006). Photography: Lennart Johansson and Göran Sehlstedt [Photograph]. In The Stockholm City Library Competition Brief (p. 24). Retrieved from https://duch.mimuw.edu.pl/~sjack/space/asplund_brief.pdf.

History of the Asplund Library

In the late 19th century the northern precincts of Stockholm, encircling Observatorielunden began transforming into a nexus for academic and educational institutions. This evolution heralded the area's enduring reputation as a district of knowledge and education (Figure).

Among these academic establishments, the Asplund Library is both a beacon of innovation and a testament to the architectural legacy of Erik Gunnar Asplund, showcasing his transformation from classicism into modernism. Since its inauguration in 1928, the library has played a pivotal role in propelling Sweden to the forefront of libraries by the mid-20th century. The Asplund Library broke new ground by offering unrestricted access to its books and establishing Sweden's inaugural children's library.

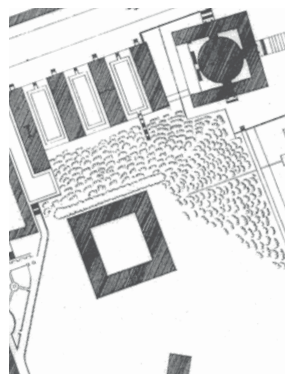
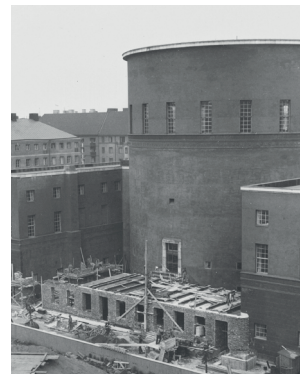
From its first drafts, the library grappled with spatial constraints and financial limitations. These challenges delayed and simplified the construction of its fourth wing (Figure), which faces the Annex buildings to the west. A probable consequence of these financial hurdles was the realization of only three out of four envisioned Annex buildings on the adjacent Spelbomskan property (Figure). The Public Library continues to struggle with meeting growing spatial demands and accommodating the dynamic needs of contemporary society, resulting in an extension competition in 2006 and 2014.

Top left: Asplund Library without west wing.

Top right: The west wing under construction.

Bottom left: Original sketch by Asplund, showing four Annexes and a new university building.

Bottom right: The completed Public Library.



Exterior Design

Erik Gunnar Asplund's architectural philosophy often blurred the distinctions between buildings, objects, and the surrounding landscape, imbuing his works with a holistic aesthetic. This approach is vividly exemplified in the Asplund Library, often celebrated as a „Gesamtkunstwerk“. However, it becomes clear throughout the research, that even Asplund's library is full of compromises. He envisioned an ambitious sculpture program to enhance the library's environs, aligning with his inclusion of notable artists like Ivar Johnson, Nils von Dardel, Alf Munthe, and Hilding Linnqvist in the library's interior design. Yet, financial constraints once again curtailed these plans, resulting in only three sculptures being realized: The Young and The Dancing Young in the southern park, and the Centaur atop Observatorielunden, overseeing the Annex buildings (Figure).

Observatorielunden itself is of significant historical and geographical importance, representing one of the few vantage points from which the original contours of the Stockholmsåsen (Stockholm Ridge) can be observed—a feature that has profoundly influenced the urban development of Stockholm. The hill's apex and its Sveavägen-facing slope retain the area's primal character and vegetation. However, the hill's northern facade underwent modifications for the construction of Sveavägen and subsequently for the library and its annexes, erasing some of its historical structures (Figure).



The Young



The Dancing Young



Kentaur, Ivar Johnson



Fruktstund 2018, Hans Isaksson



Observatorielunden's after excavation for Sveavägen (1902).



Observatorielunden after excavation for Sveavägen (1924).



Observatorielunden after excavation for Annex 3 (1930).

Spelbomskan Annexes

The initial two annex buildings, designed by Erik Lallerstedt with a nod to classicist plaster architecture—Annex 2, intended for the University's Social Science Department, and Annex 3, for the Biochemistry Department—envisioned the hill's northern slope adorned with terraces leading up to a university edifice at its crest (an idea which was never realized, see Figure). The completion of the final annex, Annex 1, designed by Paul Hedqvist in 1952 as the Humanities Library, marked the end of this architectural ensemble of three lamellas, leaving the Spelbomskans Square to the West Wing of the Asplund Library (Figure). A retaining wall segregates the Annexes from the steeply rising Observatorielunden, delineating the public space from the adjacent natural terrain, despite the hill's upper regions being noted for their remarkable but underutilized beauty due to its steep inclination and consequent accessibility issues.

Today, these structures continue to evolve: Annex 3 has been repurposed as the Observatorielunden Skola, Annex 2 hosts the Svenska Barnboksinstitutet—a research institute focusing on children's literature accessible only to registered scholars—and Annex 1 now accommodates the International Library. (see Figure)

[61] Asplund Library without west wing.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1928) The Asplund Library at its initiation [Photograph: graark_10070967]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 041. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070967.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070967.jpg.info)

[62] The west wing under construction.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1931) The Asplund Library's west wing under construction [Photograph: graark_10070935]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 009. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070935.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070935.jpg.info)

[63] Original sketch by Asplund, showing four Annexes and a new university building (1928).

Stockholm. (2006). Erik Gunnar Asplund [Hand sketch from 1928]. In The Stockholm City Library Competition Brief (p. 5). Retrieved from https://duch.mimuw.edu.pl/~sjack/space/asplund_brief.pdf.

[64] The completed Public Library.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1956, August) Annex 3, 2 and 1 and the Asplund Library [Photograph by Jememan: graark_10070962]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 036. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info)

[65] The Young.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1938) The Young [Photograph by G. Löwendahl: graark_10070946]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 020. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070946.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070946.jpg.info)

[66] The Dancing Young.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1934) The Dancing Young [Photograph: graark_10070968]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 042. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070968.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070968.jpg.info)

[67] Kentaur, Ivar Johnson.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1989, August 16). Inaugural speech at the Centaur sculpture at Observatorielunden [Photograph: graark_10009914]. GRÅARK, Observatorielunden A, nya serien, sid. 059. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/10/10009914.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/10/10009914.jpg.info)

[68] Fruktstund 2018, Hans Isaksson

Google. (2021, April). Street view. [Screenshot]. Google Maps. https://www.google.com/maps/place/Fruktstund/@59.3432678,18.0527469,3a,75y,90t/data=!3m8!1e2!3m6!1sAF1QipOvpUxLk-23Nhv6JOlqLpwB2vnYYafig_-yPo-0Zs!2e10!3e12!6shttps:%2F%2Ffh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipOvpUxLk23Nhv6JOlqLpwB2vnYYafig_-yPo-0Zs%3Dw203-h270-k-no!72736836484m7!3m6!1s0x465f9d4bd7aa4fb7:0x70640daeb94dab5a!8m2!3d59.34314d18.0529063!10e5!16s%2Fg%2F11qs4mjk?entry=titu

[69] Observatorielunden after excavation for Sveavägen (1902).

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1902, May) Observatorielunden from Intersection Odengatan Sveavägen [Photograph by Atelié Larsson: graark_10062578]. GRÅARK, Observatorielunden A, sid. 031. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/53/10062578.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/53/10062578.jpg.info)

[70] Observatorielunden after excavation for Sveavägen (1924).

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1924) Observatorielunden from Odengatan [Photograph by John Wennermark: graark_10070929]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 003. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070929.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070929.jpg.info)

[71] Observatorielunden after excavation for Annex 3 (1930).

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. Observatorielunden around 1930 [Photograph by B. Norberg: graark_10070933]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 007. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070933.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070933.jpg.info)

[72] After completion of Annex 3.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. Annex 3 and the Asplund Library [Photograph by A. Malmström: graark_10070962]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 036. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info)



[73] After completion of Annex three and two.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1948) Annex 3 and 2 and the Asplund Library [Photograph by Petersens: graark_10070962]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 036. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info)



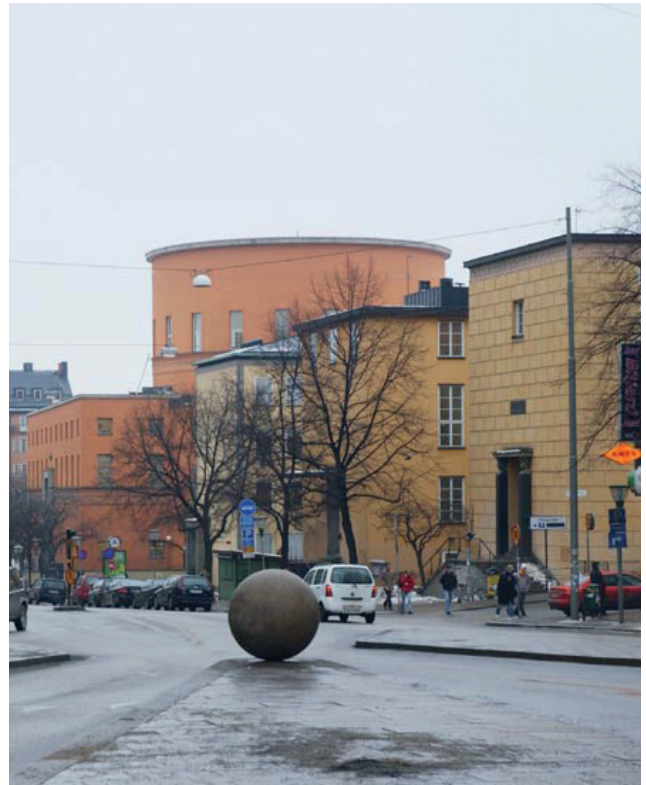
[74] After completion of the last Annex, Annex one.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1956, August) Annex 3, 2 and 1 and the Asplund Library [Photograph by Jerneman: graark_10070962]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 036. [https://digitalastads-museet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info](https://digitalastads-museet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070962.jpg.info)



[75] Annexes & Asplund Library ensemble today.

Stockholm. (2006). Photography: Lennart Johansson and Göran Sehlstedt [Photograph]. In The Stockholm City Library Competition Brief (p. 22). Retrieved from https://duch.mimuw.edu.pl/~sjack/space/asplund_brief.pdf.

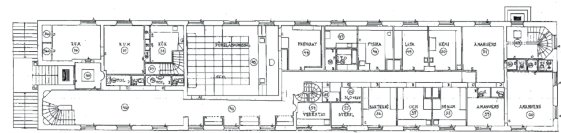
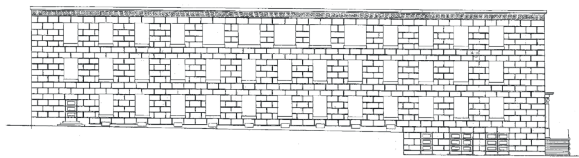
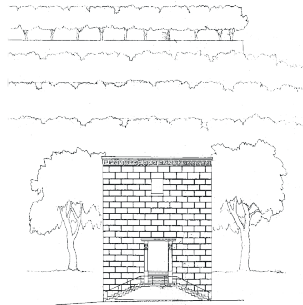


Spelbomskan Annexes

Developing a Project

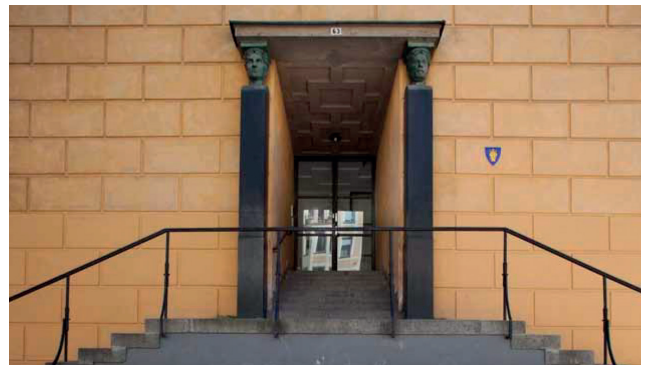
Annex 3

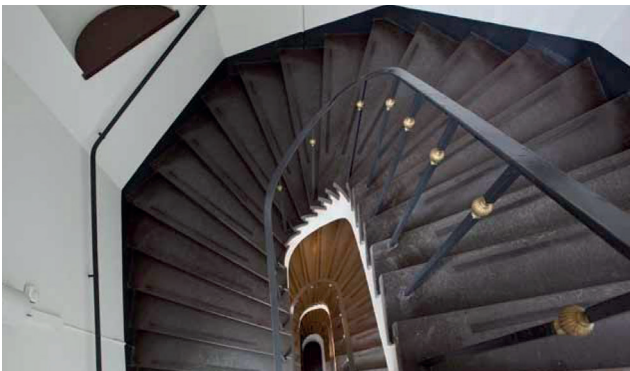
Completed in 1930



[76] Archival drawings and photographs of current state.

Lundberg, Lena, and Ingrid Johansson. Spelbomskan 13, 3, del av 16: Lamellbyggnaderna vid Stadsbiblioteket, Vasastaden, Stockholm: Kulturhistorisk karaktärisering. Stockholm: Stockholm stadsmuseum rapporterar, 2013.



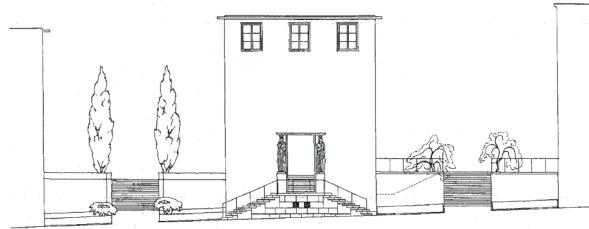


This study offers a comprehensive examination of the lamella buildings adjacent to the Stockholm City Library in Stockholm, incorporating information from the document „Spelbomskan 13, 3, del av 16. Lamellbyggnaderna vid stadsbiblioteket. Vasastaden, Stockholm. Kulturhistorisk karakterisering“ by Lena Lundberg (text) and Ingrid Johansson (photographs). The architectural landscape surrounding the Stockholm City Library in Stockholm, encompasses Annexes 3 (1930) and 2 (1932), both designed by Erik Lallerstedt, and Annex 1 (1952), designed by Paul Hedqvist. This study examines these structures' architectural evolution and societal impact, focusing on their intrinsic value within the urban fabric.

Annex 3, completed in 1930, is characterized by classical influences, featuring a facade with symmetrical rustication in plaster, ending upwards with a plastered meander border - both references to the Asplund Library. The central entrance, deeply recessed into the facade, is accentuated by a double free stair and two herms sculpted by Ivar Johnson. These herms pay homage to Justus von Liebig and Louis Pasteur, significant chemists whose work profoundly influenced biochemistry research, notably that of the house's later director and Nobel laureate von Euler-Chelpin. Johnson's craftsmanship, evident in the herms, parallels his work on the Asplund Library's interior reliefs, adding a cohesive narrative dimension to the entrance.

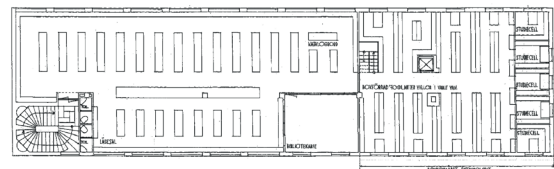
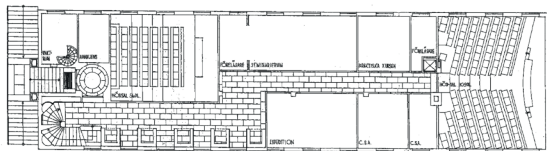
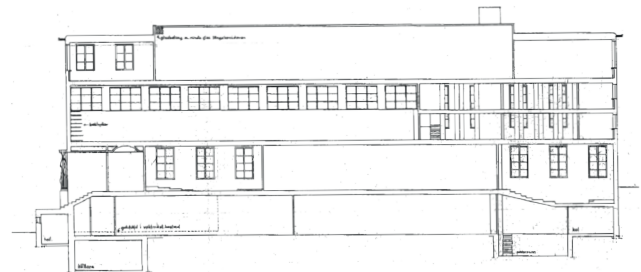
Annex 2

Completed in 1932



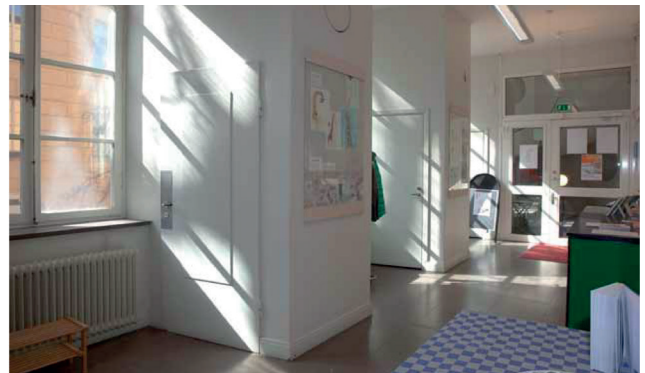
[77] Archival drawings and photographs of current state.

Lundberg, Lena, and Ingrid Johnsson. Spelbomskan 13, 3, del av 16: Lamellbyggnaderna vid Stadsbiblioteket, Vasastaden, Stockholm: Kulturhistorisk karakterisering. Stockholm: Stockholm stadsmuseum rapporter, 2013.



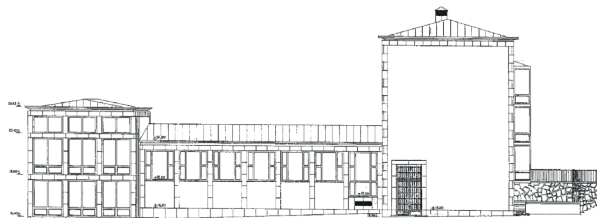


Adjacent to Annex 3, Annex 2 originally housed the Institute of Social Sciences. It was founded in 1921 and supported by a substantial research grant in 1925, the largest of its time in Europe, signifying its new headquarter's prominence. The simplicity of the layout facilitated multiple functions across the levels for interdisciplinary research, underscoring its pivotal role in advancing social sciences. The inclusion of carved stone reliefs, again by Ivar Johnson, further enriches the architectural narrative, adding layers of historical and artistic significance. Preservation efforts prioritize key architectural elements, including the exterior design such as the smoothly plastered facade and double stairs, the building's main entrance, original window arrangement, and main features of the original interior layout. Minor changes have been implemented over the years, with accessibility adaptations in 2003 and a complex process of foundation reinforcement due to tunnel railway extensions.



Annex 1

Completed in 1952



[78] Archival drawings and photographs of current state.

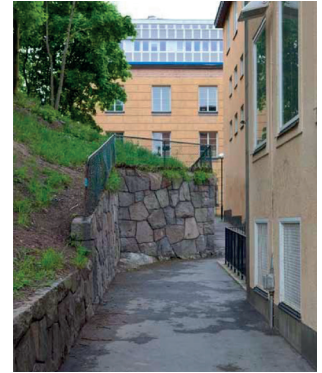
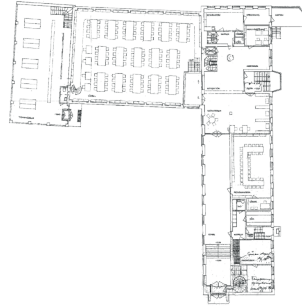
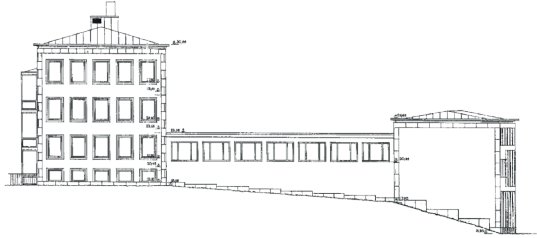
Lundberg, Lena, and Ingrid Johnson. *Spelbomskan 13, 3, del av 16: Lamellbyggnaderna vid Stadsbiblioteket, Vasastaden, Stockholm: Kulturhistorisk karakterisering*. Stockholm: Stockholm stadsmuseum rapporter, 2013.

Annex 1, matching the height of Annexes 2 and 3, uniquely accommodates an extra storey due to the slope of the ground and processing of the storey heights. Its facade boasts smooth rendering with elegant granite elements, including corner chains and window surrounds. The main entrance, facing Odengatan, is surprisingly not centrally decorated with a symmetrical double stair as its counterparts Annex 2 and 3. The entrance of Annex 1 is almost at ground level and positioned to the facade's east. The door is accentuated by a prominent granite frame, adding grandeur to the building's design.

Originally serving as a Humanities Library, Annex 1 included reading rooms, research areas, and a caretaker's residence on the ground floor, with book storage in the basement. Despite a significant renovation in 1995-1996, key architectural features such as most of its functions, the fac-

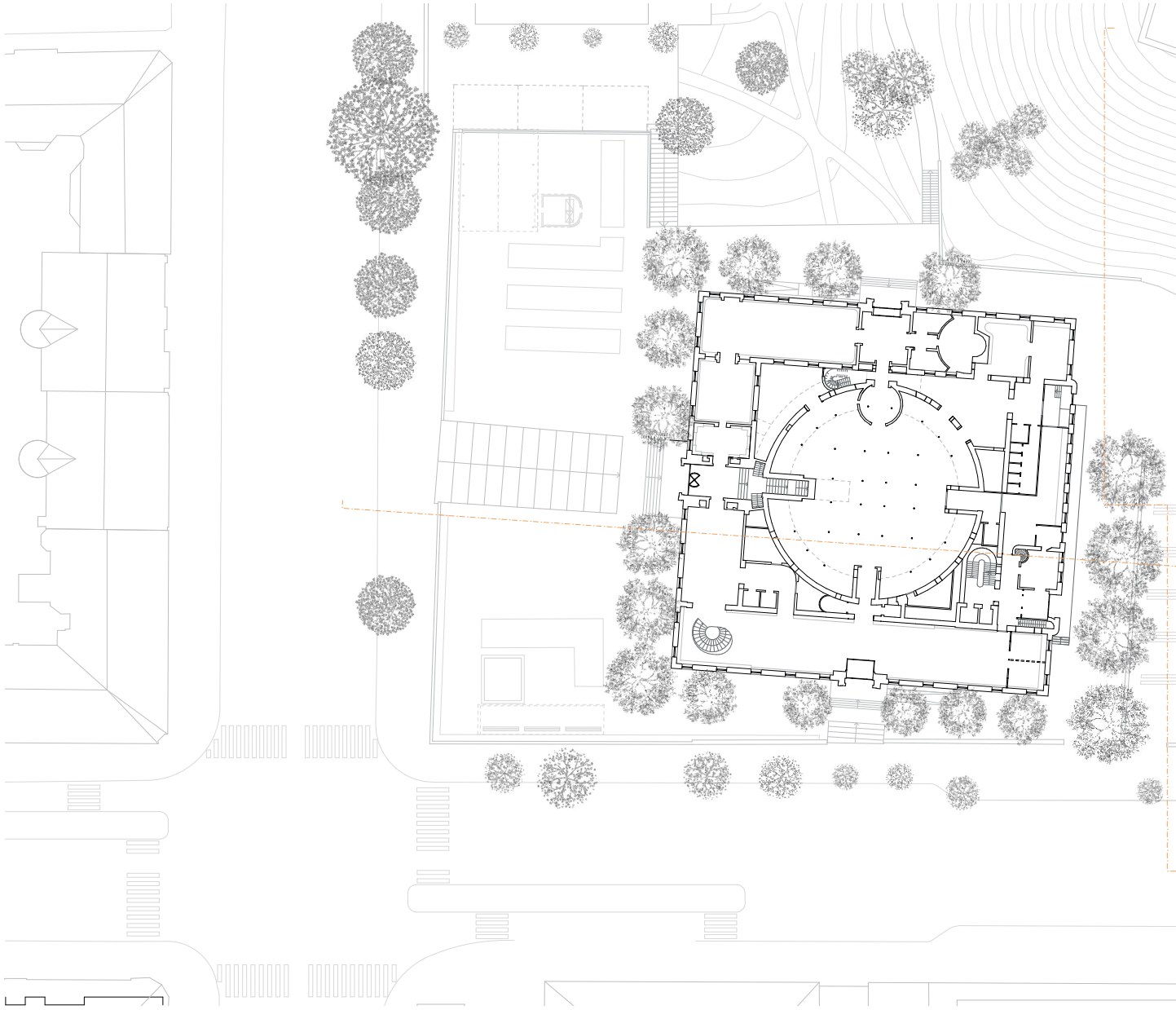
ade, expansive reading room, staircases, and original windows were preserved.

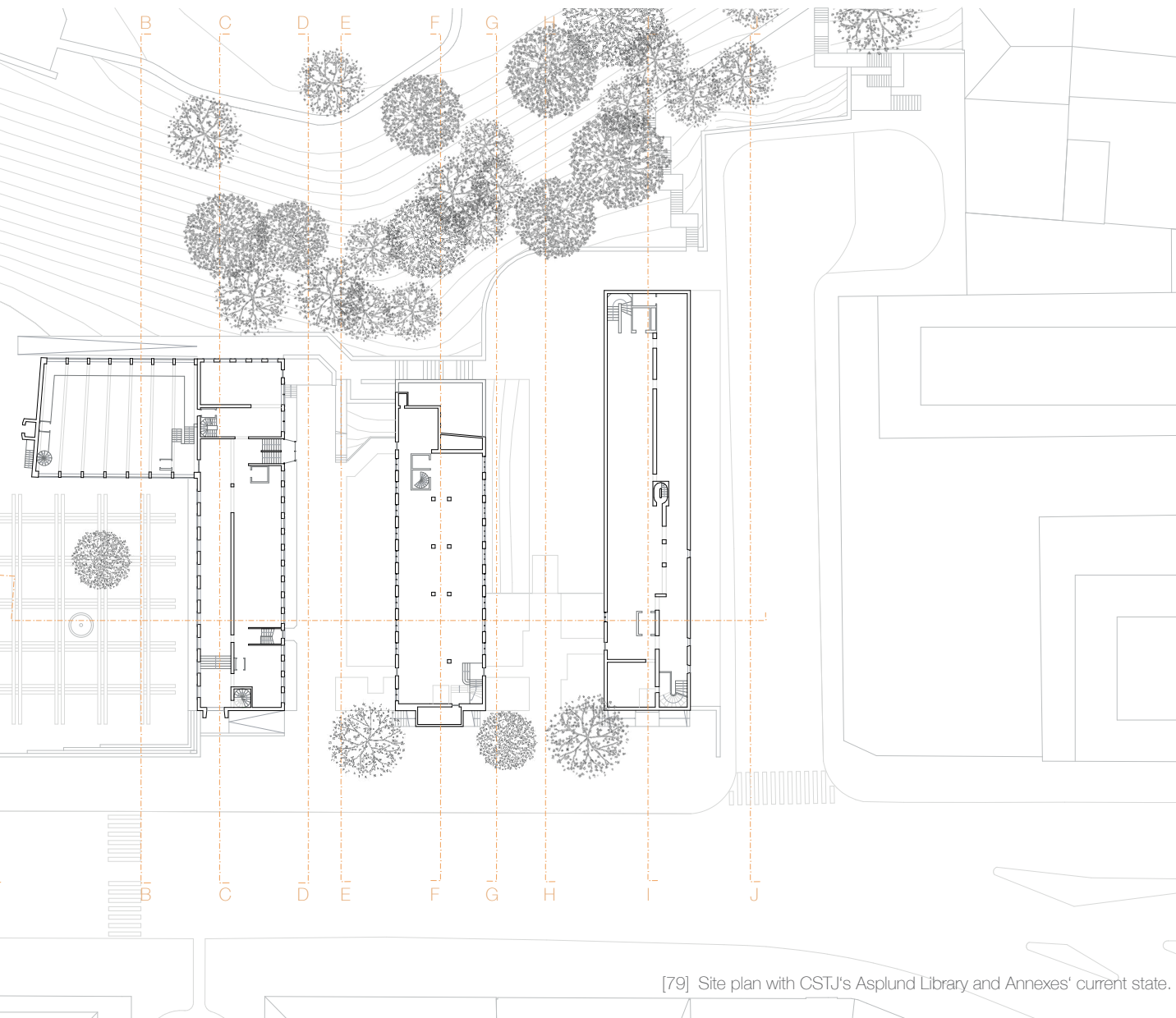
The cultural-historical classification by the Stockholm City Museum in blue underscores the significance of these buildings, denoting their importance from historical, environmental, and artistic perspectives. "Of particular interest is that they illustrate the evolution of architecture through its development under the influence of different stylistic ideals. The architecture is characterised by simple floor plans, an emphasis on entrances, halls and stairwells, the need for both large halls and smaller rooms around corridor systems, and abundant light." (p. 33) They serve as tangible embodiments of architectural evolution and academic progress, housing activities led by two Nobel laureates and contributing to research with international resonance.



Landscape

Developing a Project



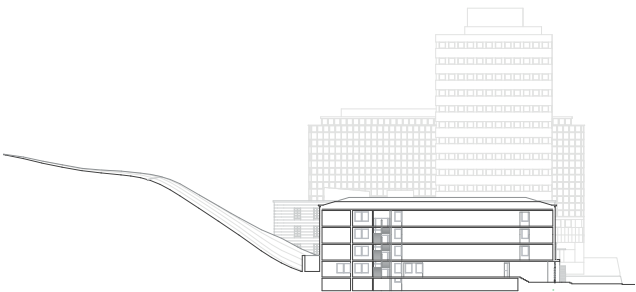


[79] Site plan with CSTJ's Asplund Library and Annexes' current state.

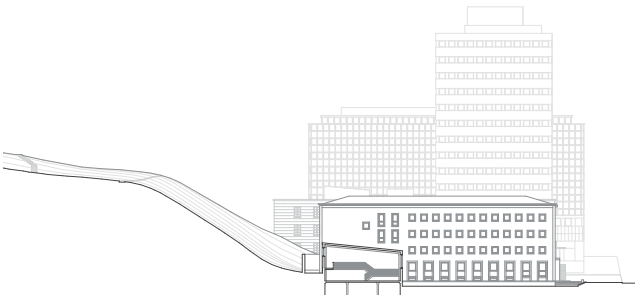
The Annexes & the Hill

Section Studies & Analysis

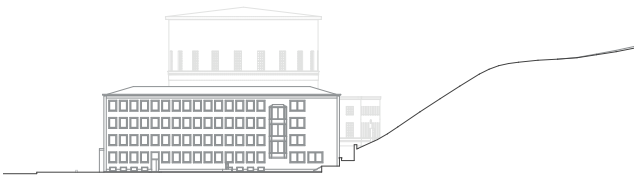
The Spelbomskan property is characterised by a topography marked by varying elevations in both its landscape terrain and building heights.



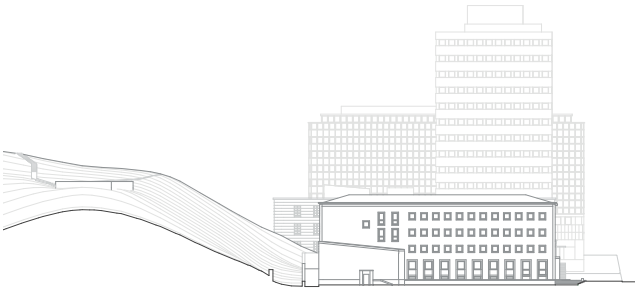
[80] Section C-C



[81] Section B-B



[83] Section D-D

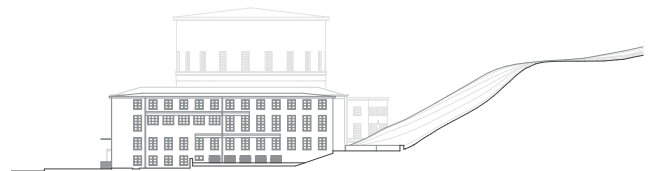


[82] Section A-A

Standing on the observation platform south of the annex buildings at an elevation of 34 meters, one is confronted with a street level, situated at 14.7 meters just 90 meters north. To the east, the imposing Asplund Library commands attention, while to the west, the highrises of Diligientia and Folksam soar above the four-story annex structures.

A complex but rather crude network of retaining walls, ramps, stairs, and platforms in the southern exterior of Spelbomskan tries to negotiate the clash of the steep hill onto the three annexes. While it is currently realized rather pragmatically, it holds potential of being transformed into an architecturally and socially meaningful threshold. This space could not only redefine access to the presently literally fenced-off hill but it could also serve as a harmonious transition between an untamed nature and the bustling city.

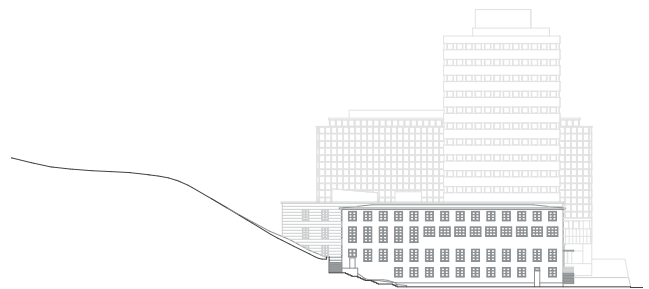
Simultaneously, the slope of the street from west to east leads to a distinct elevation for each annex. This results in each building having its floors positioned autonomously (e.g. the ground floor of Annex 3 aligns with the first floor of Annex 1). Consequently, a shift towards a connected typology could introduce circulation inefficiencies. Therefore, maintaining each redeveloped Annex building as its own entity programmatically is sensible. Shared functions can then be accommodated in extensions positioned between the Annexes, creating a campus-like organization.



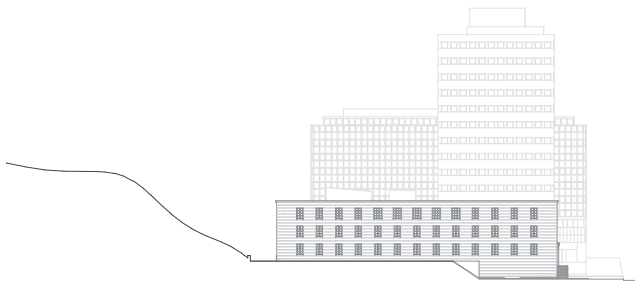
[84] Section G-G



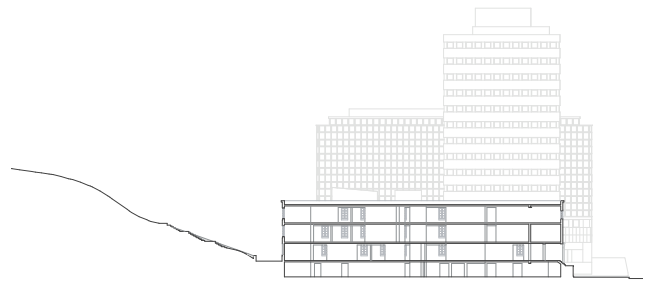
[85] Section F-F



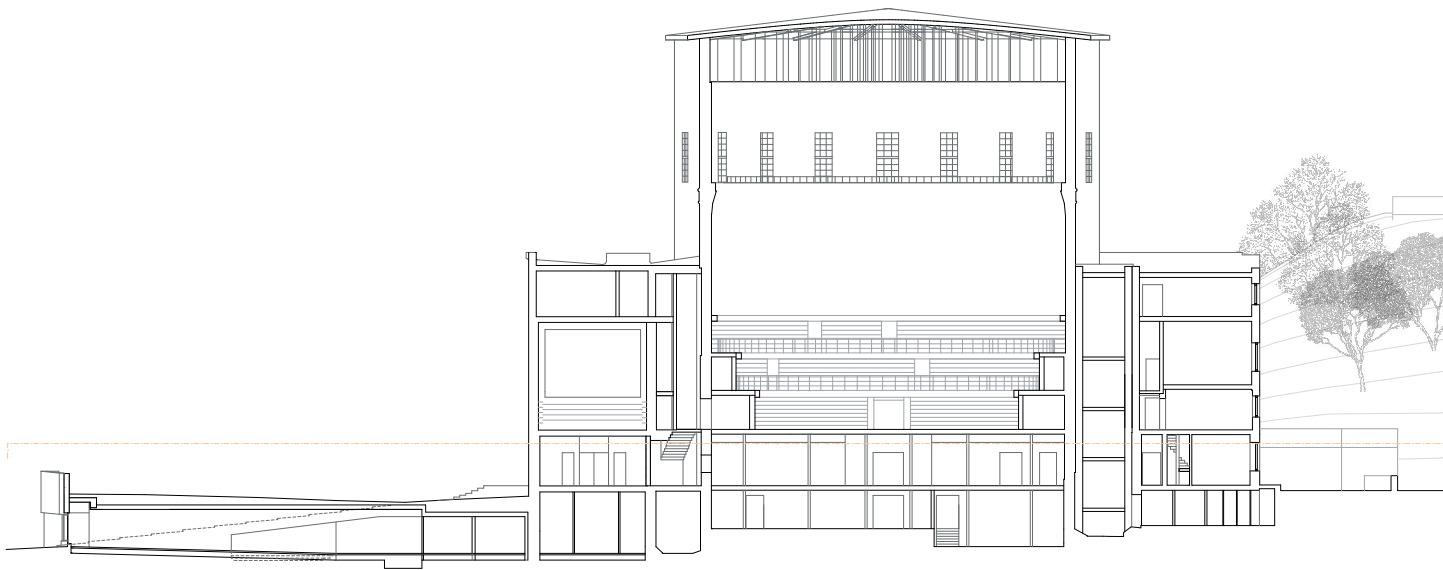
[86] Section E-E

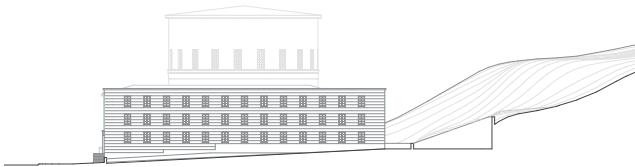


[87] Section H-H



[88] Section I-I





[89] Section J-J



[90] Cross section with CSTJ's Asplund Library and Annexes' current state.

Asplund and Landscape

Landscape-Architecture-Relation

[91] Left: Rendering of north end of 1930 Stockholm Exhibition

The Swedish Rug Blog. (2016, September 13). The Stockholm Exhibition of 1930. <https://theswedishrugblog.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/the-stockholm-exhibition-of-1930/>.

[92] Right: Sequences of Asplund's Woodland Chapel at Woodland Cemetery



Gunnar Asplund, a proponent of integrating architecture with nature, demonstrated this ethos in projects like the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and the Woodland Chapel in Stockholm's Woodland Cemetery.

The 1930 Stockholm Exhibition

The exhibition, which he co-directed together with Sigurd Lewerentz, showcased modern Swedish architecture with pavilions situated in the Djurgården Island's landscape. Asplund went so far as to take into consideration the period for the blossoming of planted flowers, to make sure that the landscape was colorful throughout the time of the exhibition. Open spaces and large windows were prioritized, emphasizing interaction with the environment. They, furthermore, made sure to let landscape, architecture and exhibited objects complementarily blend into one another. In Asplund's Transport Pavilion, for example, he exhibited a boat on an exterior gallery, with an over-arching canopy in the shape of a wave.



The Woodland Chapel

The Woodland Chapel, completed in 1920, is nestled among pine trees. The chapel incorporates natural materials like wood and stone in a building shape inspired by Swedish vernacularity, reflecting a deep connection to the surrounding woodland. Asplund believed architecture should respect and enhance its natural context, creating functional spaces that can also evoke a connection to nature.

In summary, Asplund's architectural philosophy, seen in the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and the Woodland Chapel, revolves around integrating landscape into designs, fostering harmony, and enriching the human experience with nature.



Landscape Design at the Library

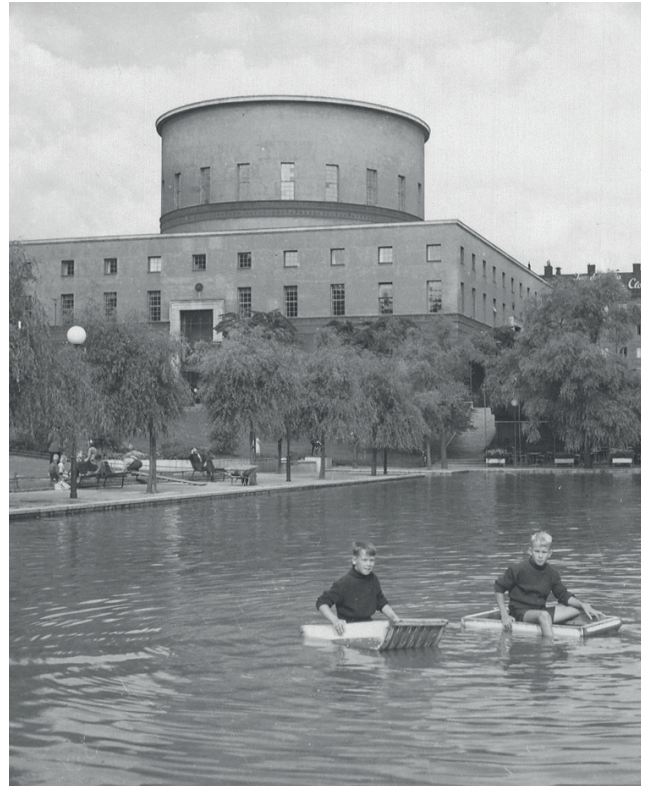
Landscape-Architecture-Relation

[93] Left: Ascending the hill in the Asplund Library park.

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. Asplund Library from the park's hillside [Photograph by V. Lundgren: graark_10070943]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 017. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070943.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070943.jpg.info)

[94] Right: Park with pond in front of the Asplund Library (1928).

Stadsmuseet i Stockholm. (1934) Asplund Library across the park's pond [Photograph by Sv. Dagbladet: graark_10070968]. GRÅARK, Kvarteret Spelbomskan, sid. 042. [https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-\(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm\)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070968.jpg.info](https://digitalastadsmuseet.stockholm.se/fotoweb/archives/5013-S%C3%A4rskilda-samlingar-(Gr%C3%A5ark-mm)/Gr%C3%A5ark/61/10070968.jpg.info)



When browsing through Asplund's stacks of sketches his approach to integrating the library into its surroundings becomes evident.

The library is situated in a verdant park, and its orientation maximizes the connection between the building volume and the landscape. Whereas the library itself is rotated at an angle that follows the Observatory hill, its plinth aligns with the axes of the intersecting roads of Odengatan and Sveavägen.

Approaching the park from the east via Sveavägen, visitors are welcomed into a classicist setting adorned with a central pond and graceful colonnades of Weeping Willows.

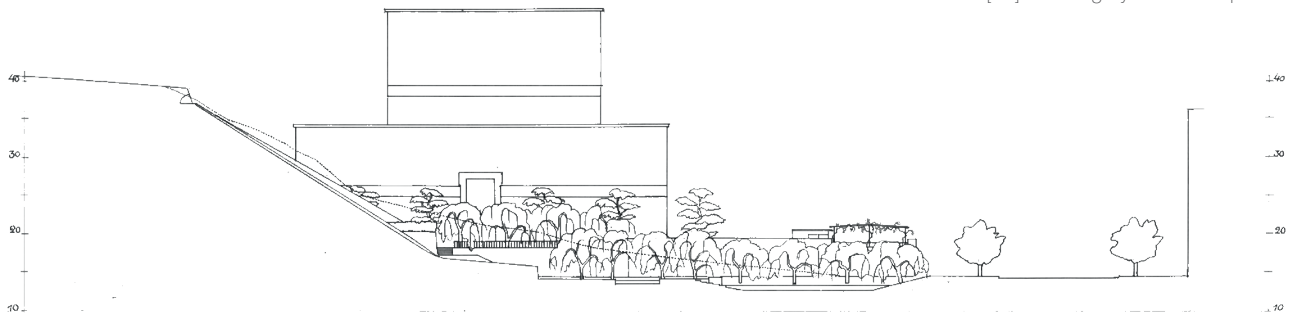
Gazing northward, the cylindrical core of the Asplund library subtly emerges through a veil of elm trees, imbuing the monument with a sense of modesty despite its elevated plinth.

Gastronomy seamlessly integrated into the plinth extends toward the pond, creating a transitional experience that blends urban and landscape elements.

Ascending further up into the hill to the west of the park, the landscape design evolves into more organic pathways accompanied by an array of plants in diverse shapes and sizes. As one ascends, the landscape takes on a wilder character, culminating in a breathtaking view looking down onto the Asplund Library against the backdrop of Normalm's skyline, framed by a lush canopy of trees.

This thoughtful integration extends beyond the exterior, as the considerations for the surrounding environment translate into interior experiences within the library. The design holds spatial moments of experiencing abyss and sky; juxtapositions of dark and bright spaces; sequences of narrow and grand spaces and much more.

[95] Drawing by Gunnar Asplund



Spaces of Disjunction

Spelbomskan and Observatorielunden

[96] Right: Behind Annex 1. View towards Folksam building.

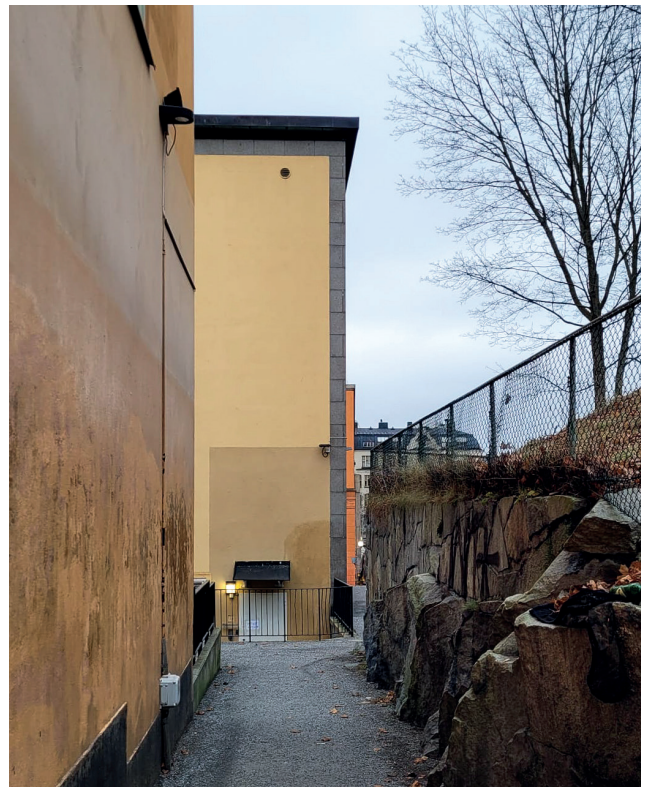
Photograph by Sandra Schillinger.



[97] Left: Behind Annex 1 & 2.

[98] Right: Behind Annex 2
towards Asplund library.

Photographs by Sandra Schillinger.





[99] Left: View from the northern
Observatorielunden.

[100] Right: From west towards
children's library entrance.

Photographs by David Grandorge.



Moments with Potential

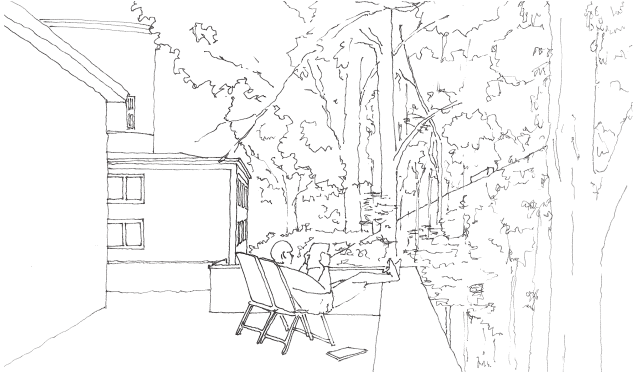
Spelbomskan and Observatorielunden

[101] Left: From Odengatan,
between Annex 2 & 3.

[102] Right: At the back of Annex
1 & 2.

Photographs by Sandra Schillinger.





[104] Left: Vision sketch.

[103] Behind Annex 3. View towards Asplund Library.

Photograph by Sandra Schillinger.



Competition Briefs 2006 & 2014 | Caruso St. John's Winning Proposal

Developing a Project

The subsequent examination endeavors to understand the requirements for the extension of the Asplund Library and how a contemporary version is envisioned, as outlined in the 2006 and 2014 competition briefs. Further, it aims to grasp the essence of Caruso St. John's winning design proposal by juxtaposing its accomplishments against the competitions' parameters. Additionally, an interview with the project architect, Nina Lundvall, offers valuable insights into the project's triumphs and obstacles encountered in its pursuit of realization. This investigation facilitates informed decision-making for the subsequent development of a design concept, considering the unique context, scope, functions, and programmatic requirements of the intervention.

Competition Briefs 2006 & 2014

Analysis

The Asplund competition of 2006 and the 2014 initiative for the extension of Stockholm City Library constitute two distinct yet complementary phases in documenting the library's state and requirements.

The former solicited proposals for expanding the Public Library's main usable area (MUA) from **14,000 to 24,000** square meters. This brief aimed to restore Gunnar Asplund's original 1928 library while accommodating contemporary needs in an extension, transforming the overall Public Library into a cultural hub and upholding the **Asplund Library's status as a „temple of books.“** The 2006 competition acknowledged the evolving role of libraries, transcending their traditional function as repositories of knowledge to become sources of inspiration. It highlighted the **integration of new technologies, flexible spaces, and public areas**, emphasizing the importance of the relationship between buildings and topography. Additionally, considerations were to be made towards **Odengatan** for facilitating **access to the northern parts of Observatorielunden** and accommodating increased foot traffic resulting from the City Express Railway.

The 2014 initiative complements the 2006 competition by shifting its focus towards **inclusivity,**

multilingualism, and user-friendliness, aligning with the diverse demographics of Stockholm. It aspired to transform the library into a dynamic center for learning, creativity, and community engagement, incorporating digital literacy. This involved the creation of **teaching and group rooms, varied reading and study areas, event spaces, debating areas, digital resources, multi-functional spaces, flexible workplaces, and shared functions.** Activities for **young adults** are proposed to be developed at a different location. However, given the imperative consideration of children within the proposal for the new library, the brief extensively delineates the requisite accommodation of various age groups, elaborately describing their distinct needs and schedules across different times of the day, week, and year. While acknowledging the **dual role of the Asplund Library as a monument and local library**, the 2014 initiative urged participants to address both aspects in the design. Furthermore, it introduced technical ambitions, including operational and **service enhancements, environmental sustainability, and efficient resource utilization.**

Both briefs underscore the historical and enduring significance of the library as a cultural and educational landmark. However, the 2006 competition is primarily concerned with physical expansion and integration, while the 2014 initiative emphasized the library's social role, adapting its services to the digital age and a multicultural society. Nevertheless, the briefs are complementary to each other.

Caruso St. John's Winning Proposal

Analysis



[105] Rendering of Winning proposal by Caruso St. John

<https://carusostjohn.com/projects/stockholm-city-library-se/>



[106] Right: Winning proposal rendering by Caruso St. John

Design Concept

The winning proposal by Caruso St. John [CSTJ] centered on extending the Bazaars on the east side, which serve as a plinth for Asplund's library. This involved reconstructing the Bazaars and excavating deeper to create a street-level floor connecting with the existing building. The envisioned single-story space would offer an expansive, horizontally oriented reading area with uninterrupted windows along the sidewalks, contrasting with Asplund's vertically enclosed rotunda. It would feature a new library entrance on street level, a central event space, and a park-facing café. A spiral

staircase and elevators would provide access to the Asplund building.

On the southern side, the children's library would expand into a new circular room beneath the rotunda, repurposing former plant room space. Additionally, the project encompassed interior renovations within the main building, including restoration work and the introduction of new furniture, lighting, and amenities.

The project as a collaborative effort with Stockholm-based Scheiwiller Svensson Arkitektkontor AB, is currently on hold.



[107] Winning proposal interior rendering by Caruso St. John



[108] Photograph of the current state by David Grandorge

Numbers

Caruso St. John's proposal increased the total main usable area (MUA) from 7,330 to 9,731 square meters, marking a 130 percent growth. The shift in the public-to-non-public ratio, now 1.5:1, was a key factor. Public space expanded significantly by 230 percent, reaching 5,712 square meters, with adult and children's libraries growing by 210 percent (4,645 square meters) and 350 percent (1,067 square meters), respectively. Notably, the children's library constituted almost 20 percent of the new space, introducing new categories. Conversely, non-public space reduced by almost

20 percent to 4,019 square meters, accompanied by a decline in workstations from 786 to 553, contrary to competition requirements.

While falling short of the competition's square meter targets, Caruso St. John's proposal achieved a significant expansion in reading room spaces, restoring the Asplund Library's monumental character and acknowledging its local library role by extending reading rooms to the Bazaar level. However, the question arises, why the Spelbomskan property has not been taken into consideration, to open up the current office levels in the Asplund library. This would restore it's full potential as the original

Row Labels	Sum of Existing Library	Sum of CSTJ proposal - Asplund Library
non-public	4818	4019
Administrative	1134	1034
Meeting places	202	221
WC, Changing rooms, On-site Service	146	260
Workplaces	786	553
Circulation	1203	989
Circulation	863	989
Entrances, Corridors, Staircases, etc.	340	0
Magazine	938	534
Magazine	938	534
Service	1052	786
Logistics, Goods reception	342	583
Storage, Workshops, Garbage, Cleaning	710	203
Technical rooms	491	676
Technical rooms	491	676
public	2512	5712
The Adult library	2205	4645
Group rooms, Assembly hall	0	399
Reading Rooms (including bookshelves)	1772	3609
Service, Info, WC, Circulation, Café	433	637
The Children's library	307	1067
Group rooms, Story-telling room, Labs, Workshops	0	143
Reading Rooms (including bookshelves)	271	691
Service, Info, Circulation	36	233
Grand Total	7330	9731

[109] Area schedule pivot table.

[110] Area schedule pie chart existing library.



Existing Library

■ public ■ non-public

[111] Area schedule pie chart
Caurso St. John proposal.

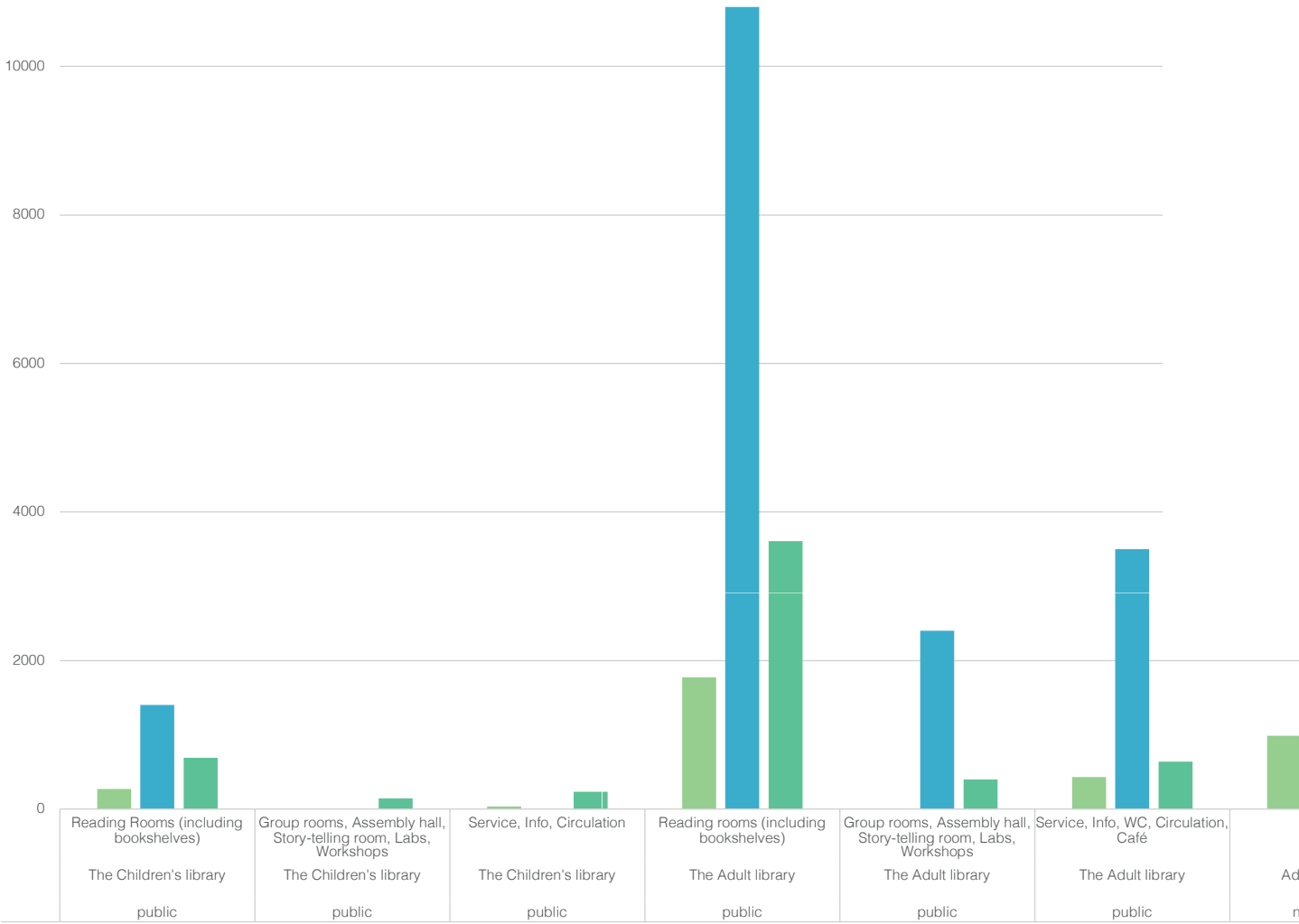


CSTJ proposal

■ public ■ non-public

[112] Area schedule bar chart.

- Existing
- Caruso St. John proposal
- 2006 competition program

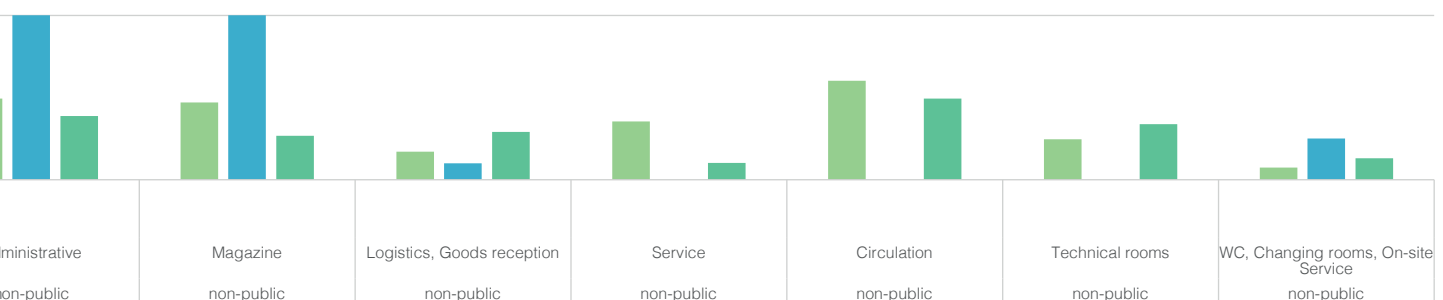


„temple of books“. It would further open up possibilities of accomodating media other than books to serve a more diverse public, transforming the library of the 19th century in a contemporary one.

Which ambitions of the competition does the CSTJ proposal achieve, and which does it not?

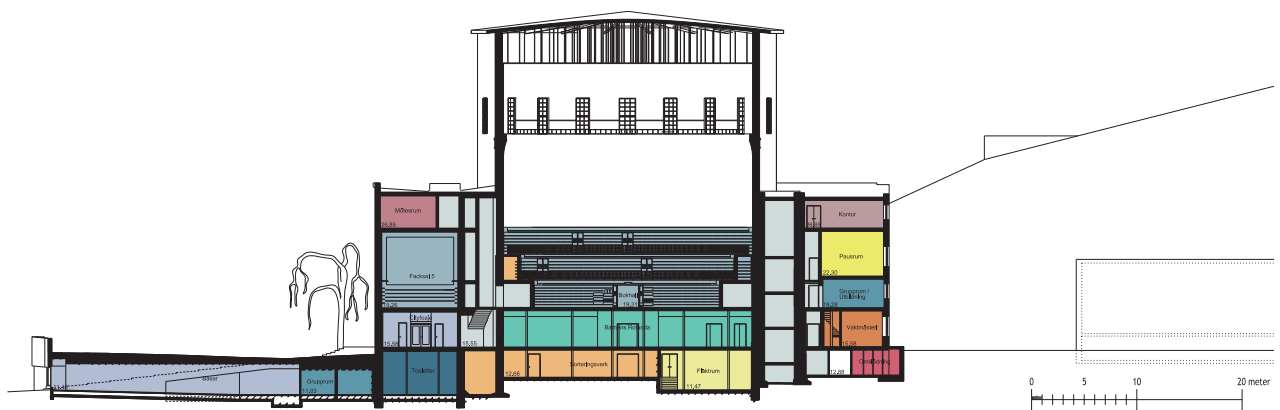
- + “Temple of books”, although compromised
- + Accessibility by connecting Bazaar level to Asplund Library
- + Dual role: Asplund Library as monument, Bazaar level as local library
- + Efficiency for logistics and space constraints

- Children across different ages
- Community engagement
- Varied reading and study areas / private nooks
- Flexibility
- Consideration of adjacent new Odenplan station
- Accessibility to northern Observatorielunden
- Sources of inspiration other than books
- Integration of digital media
- Square metres
- Annex buildings left out of consideration
- Open “round-the-clock, seven days a week”
- Production space + exhibition space



Interview with Nina Lundvall

Project Architect on the Design



[113] Section through Bazaar & Asplund Library.

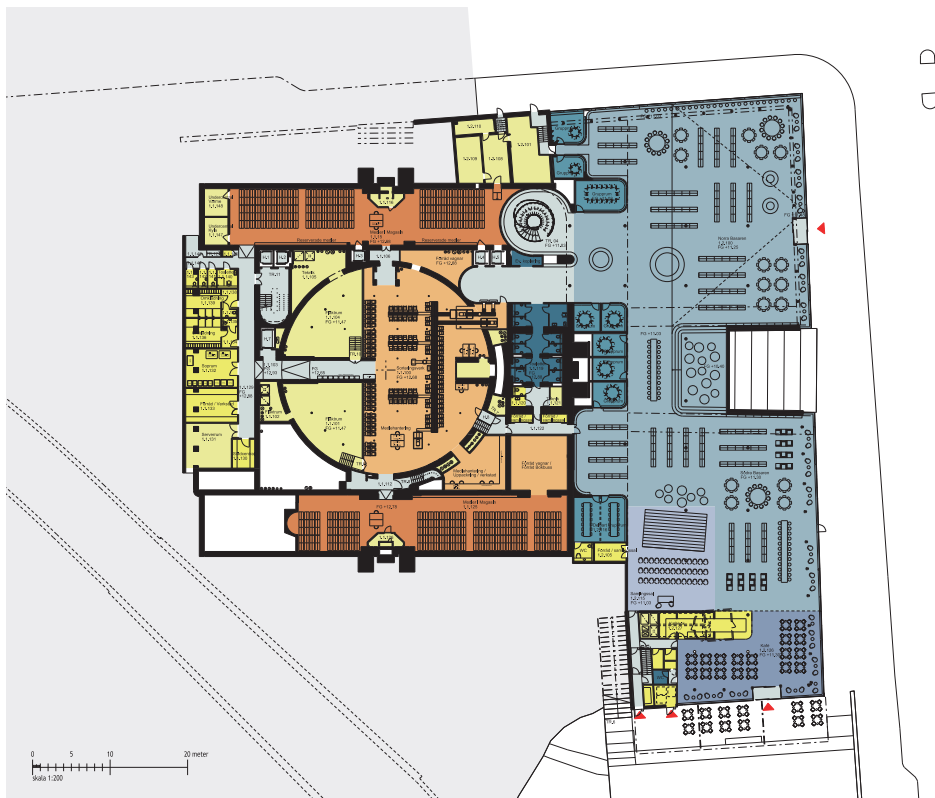
Caruso St John Architects LLP.
(2016). Section BB [Section drawing]. In Stockholm City Library Feasibility Study (26.09.2016).

In the interview with Nina Lundvall, several key aspects of the Asplund Library extension proposal were discussed, shedding light on the design considerations and decision-making processes involved.

When questioned about the focus on improving access to the northern areas of Observatorielunden, Nina confirmed that they had indeed explored different sites for interventions to better integ-

rate the library with its environment. However, as the competition progressed, the city mandated to work within the existing framework. Consequently, they directed their efforts towards enhancing the internal layout and functionality of the Asplund Library while maintaining a strong connection to its surroundings.

In discussing the exploration of potential uses for the Annexes, Nina clarified that while they initially



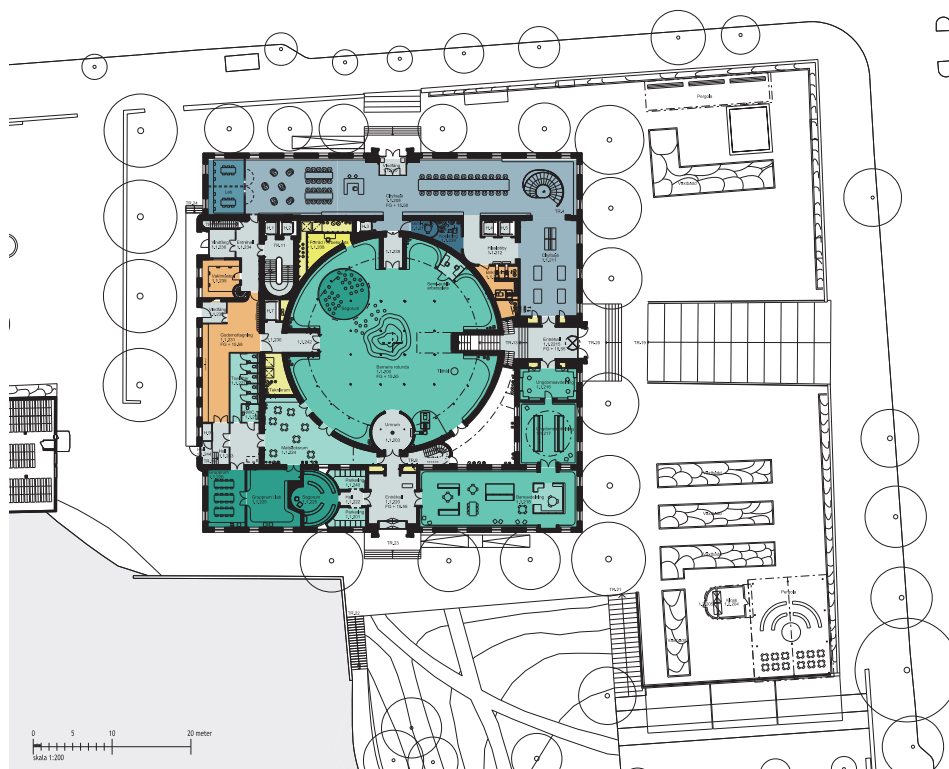
[114] Floor plan: Bazaar level.

Caruso St John Architects LLP. (2016). Plan 01 at 1:200 [Floor plan drawing]. In Stockholm City Library Feasibility Study (26.09.2016).

considered extending these buildings, this aspect was examined later in the design phase. The discussion emerged when contemplating alternatives in case expanding the Bazaars proved unfeasible, and when the client emphasized the need for additional square footage. During this deliberation, they determined that pursuing Annex extension would demand significant resources and deviate from their core objectives. Consequently, they opted to prioritize the unified development of the main

library space and its integration with the Bazaars rather than pursuing alterations to the Annex buildings.

Regarding the decision to reinforce the existing main entrance towards Sveavägen, Nina highlighted several factors that influenced this choice. While the idea of a new entrance to accommodate new streams from Odengatan and the new public transport station at Odenplan was considered,



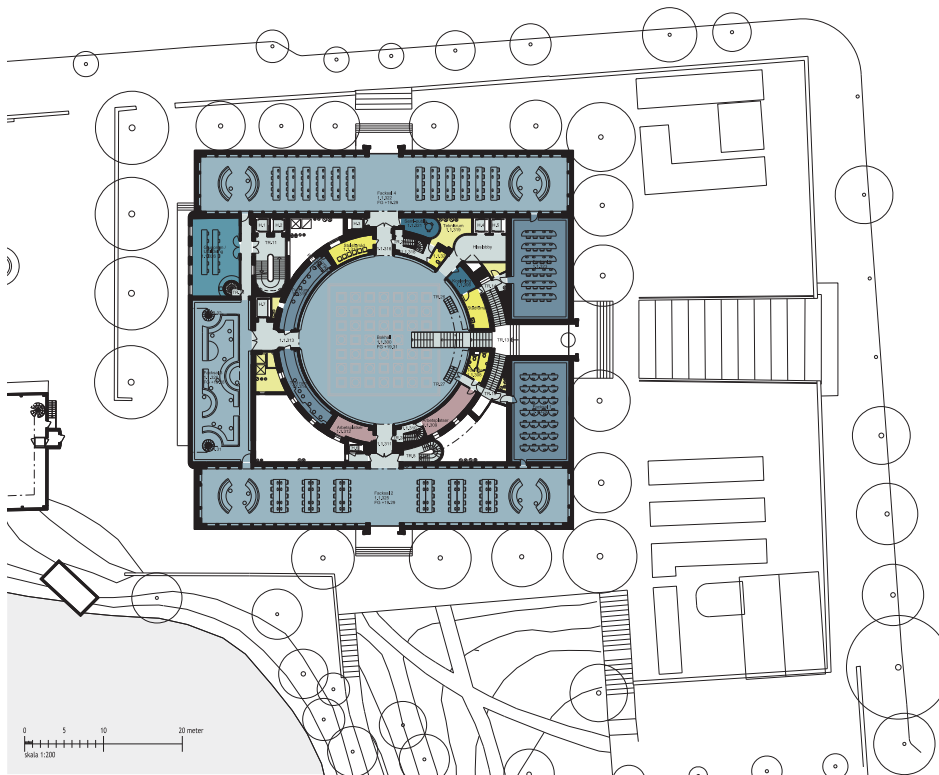
[115] Floor plan: Entrance level.

Caruso St John Architects LLP. (2016). Plan 02 at 1:200 [Floor plan drawing]. In Stockholm City Library Feasibility Study (26.09.2016).

they ultimately prioritized enhancing the functionality and accessibility of the existing entrance, essentially by making the Asplund Library's plinth a part of the public structure and, therefore, forming a new entrance on street level. This way, there should also be a seamless transition between old and new parts of the library.

In discussing the library's dual role as both a city-wide resource and a local hub, Nina explained

how their design aimed to accommodate a diverse range of visitors by providing a variety of spaces. These spaces included dedicated reading and study areas, interactive learning spaces, and communal gathering places. Offering a more relaxed atmosphere, the Bazaars could arguably primarily serve the neighborhood. In contrast, the restored ambiance of the Asplund Library, often regarded as a „temple of books,“ can accommodate visitors from far and wide. The City Foyer forms the



[116] Floorplan: Mainrotundalevel.

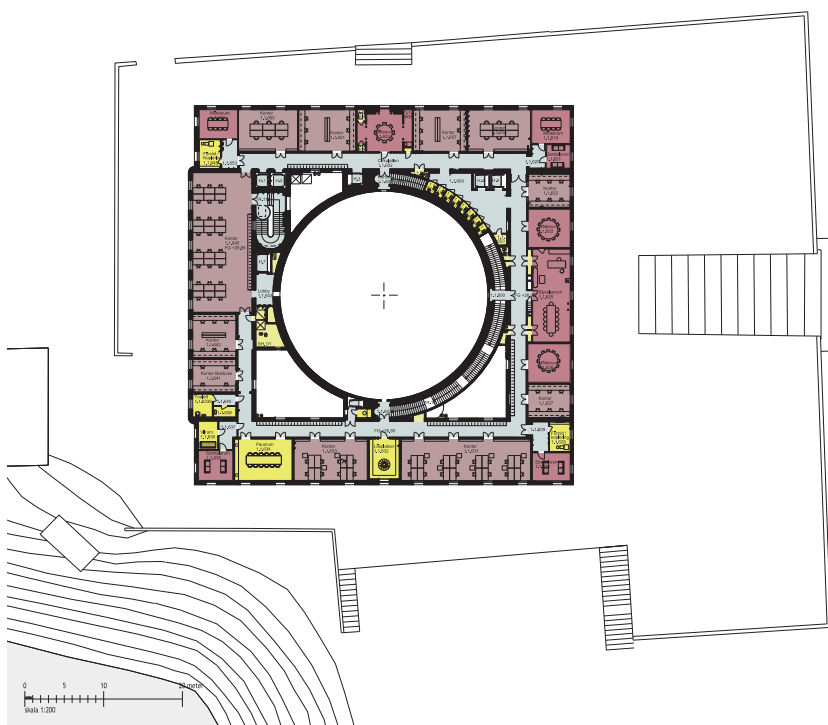
Caruso St John Architects LLP. (2016). Plan 03 at 1:200 [Floor plan drawing]. In Stockholm City Library Feasibility Study (26.09.2016).

access route between the expanded Bazaars and the Asplund Library and, further, mediates the two spaces.

Regarding the choice to restrict access to the stairs around the rotunda and upper floors, Nina elaborated that they did explore the option of opening them to the public. Employees suggested that offices could operate with flexible, unallocated desk arrangements. However, due to the overarching

spatial demands for office use, this possibility was limited. Consequently, maintaining the upper floors for office functionality was deemed necessary, despite acknowledging the opportunity missed in allowing public access to this architectural feature.

Finally, Nina addressed the project's current status, explaining that challenges arose from aligning the needs and visions of the library and city authorities, ultimately leading to the decision to put the



[117] Floor plan: Office level.

Caruso St John Architects LLP.
(2016). Plan 06 at 1:200 [Floor
plan drawing]. In Stockholm
City Library Feasibility Study
(26.09.2016).

project on hold.

In conclusion, Nina's insights provided an understanding of the complexities in balancing architectural visions, functional requirements, and heritage in such a significant project. Despite the challenges faced, the dedication to not only expand the Asplund Library but transform it into a contemporary public library within the constraints of being a listed monument remains commendable.

The Contemporary Library

Developing a Project

Deichman Bjørvika Oslo

Case Study

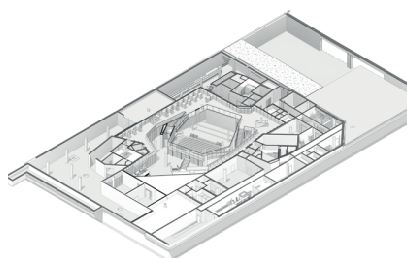
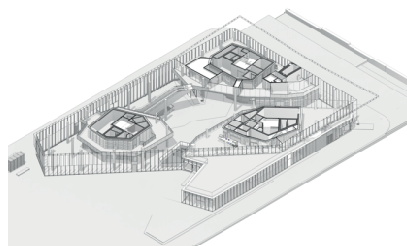
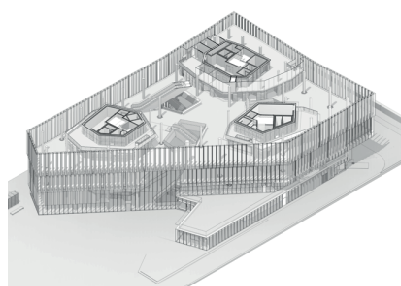
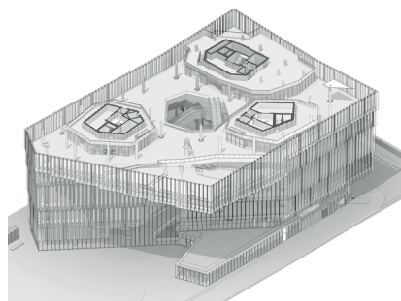
[118] Interior photograph.

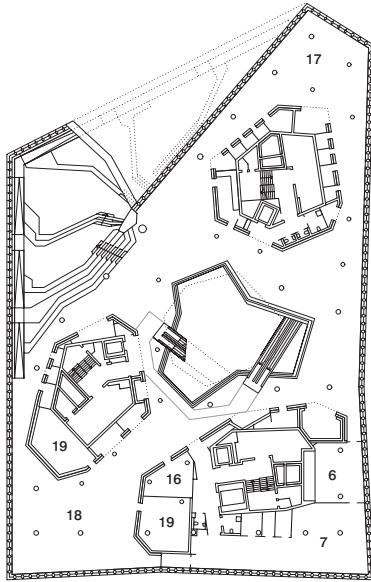
Schoof, J. (2021). Interior [Photograph]. Detail. Digital Processes, 11/2021, 41.



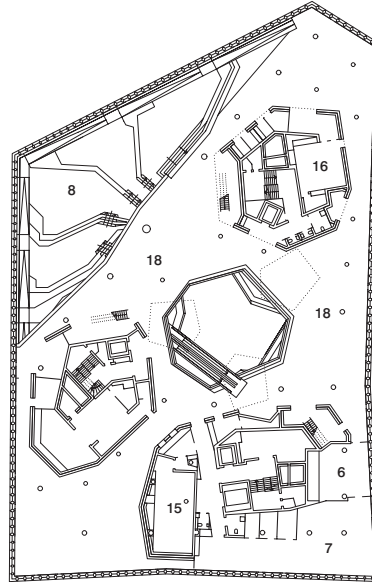
[119] Cut axonometry.

Schoof, J. (2021). Axonometry
[Illustration]. Detail. Digital Proces-
ses, 11/2021, 43.

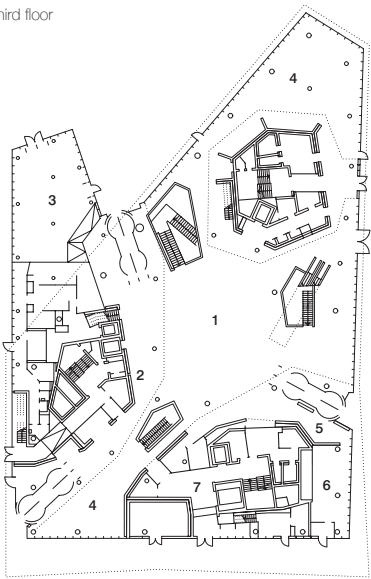




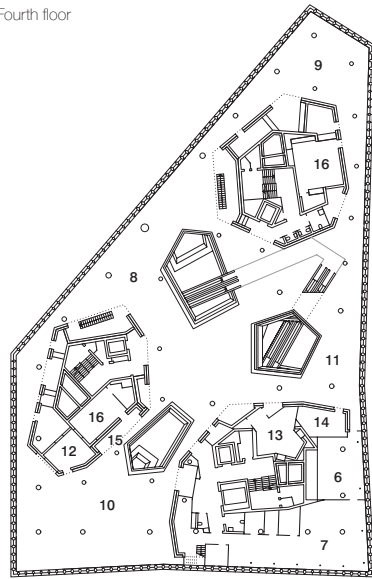
Third floor



Fourth floor



Ground floor



Second floor

[120] Floor plans.

Schoof, J. (2021). Floor plans
[Drawings]. Detail. Digital Proces-
ses, 11/2021, 41.

- 1 Entrance hall
- 2 Help desk / Information
- 3 Café / restaurant
- 4 Rentable area
- 5 Circulation desk
- 6 Book sorting equipment
- 7 Adiminstration
- 8 Lounge area
- 9 Maker space / workshop
- 10 Audio department
- 11 Video department
- 12 Studio
- 13 Play area
- 14 Screening room
- 15 Exhibition area
- 16 Meeting room
- 17 Art and architecture
- 18 Sciences
- 19 Language lab

The New Deichman Library in Oslo stands as a notable example of contemporary library architecture, demonstrating a **synthesis of functionality and aesthetic innovation**. The genesis of the architectural competition for the library can be traced against the backdrop of **Oslo's commitment to cultivating a dynamic cultural and intellectual milieu**. Recognizing the library's **role as a cultural cornerstone**, the international competition underscored the necessity for it to adapt to the evolving needs of the community.

Designed collaboratively by Lund Hagem and Atelier Oslo, the New Deichman Library is a key component of the cultural trio in Bjørvika, alongside the Opera House by Snøhetta and the Munch Museum by Estudio Herreros. Positioned as a **contemporary nexus for knowledge dissemination, cultural exchange, and community engagement**, its architectural evolution reflects a departure from conventional paradigms toward a responsive spatial framework aligned with modern dynamics.

The library spans five floors, each strategically designed to unfold **a cohesive spatial narrative**. Three entrances of equal importance guide visitors to the ground floor, where three diagonally intersecting voids create a visual and spatial connection between floors. Natural light permeates the triangular atrium spaces through large glazed skylights, establishing an **open and interconnected atmosphere**. The atrium serves as a focal point for vertical circulation, with escalators forming a grand

spiral that ascends through the voids.

The library's departments encircle the atrium spaces, resembling open reading landscapes where shelving and seating are thoughtfully integrated. Complementing this arrangement are three **polygon-shaped building cores, housing functions with varying degrees of openness**, such as elevators, emergency staircases, bathrooms, mechanical services, **seminar rooms, group workspaces, an audio and video studio**, and book sorting facilities. The deliberate **variation in ceiling heights** enhances the dynamic nature of the space, with the ground floor and the second and fourth floors featuring taller dimensions, including **integrated mezzanine levels**. In contrast, the first and third floors maintain a more modest height. The basement level accommodates a **screening room, an auditorium**, and a substantial **book collection**.

The New Deichman Library in Oslo stands as an insightful example of contemporary **library architecture, surpassing traditional roles**. This project reflects a nuanced understanding of a contemporary society's needs.

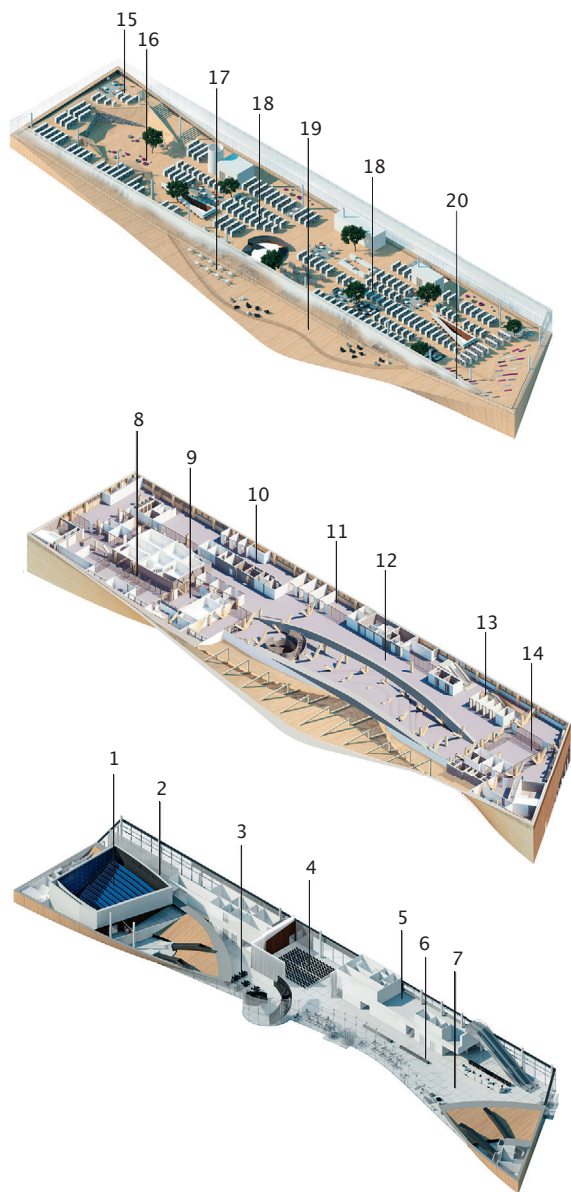
Central Library Oodi Helsinki

Case Study

[121] Interior photograph.

Hofmeister, S. (2021). Interior [Photograph]. Detail. Roof Structures, 1-2/2021, 19.

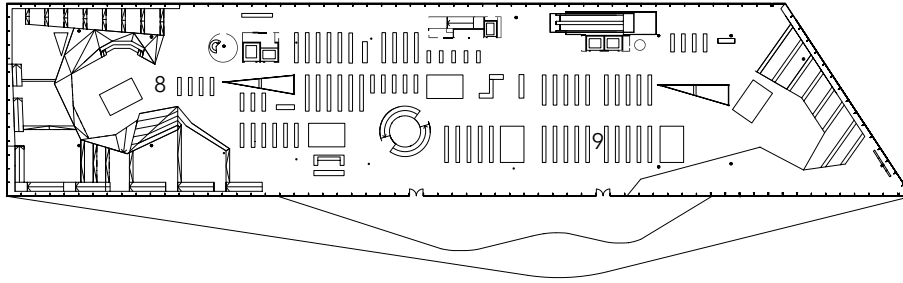




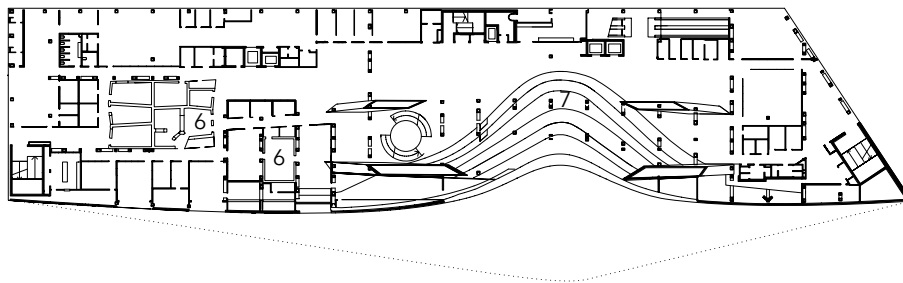
[122] Axonometric floor plans.

Hofmeister, S. (2021). Axonometric view [Illustration]. Detail. Roof Structures, 1-2/2021, 22.

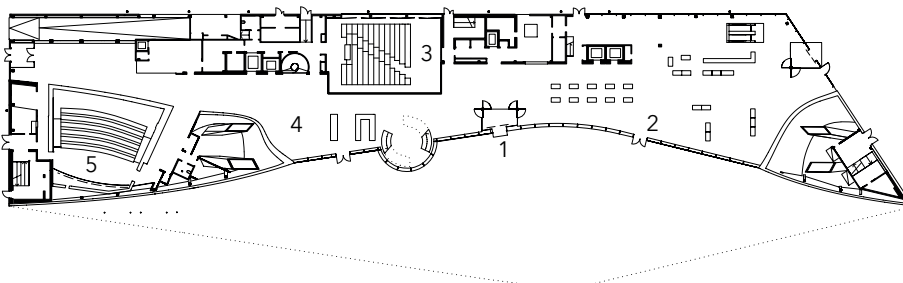
- 1 Cinema
- 2 Family library
- 3 Café, restaurant
- 4 Multipurpose hall
- 5 Gallery
- 6 Meeting zone
- 7 Pop-up exhibitions
- 8 Studios
- 9 Group working
- 10 Offices
- 11 Meeting area
- 12 Makerspace
- 13 Working area
- 14 Media lab
- 15 Kids collection
- 16 Kids area
- 17 Cafeteria
- 18 Media collections
- 19 Balcony
- 20 Book steps



Second floor



First floor



Ground floor

[123] Floor plans.

De Neumann, S. (2019). Floor plans [Drawings]. Detail. Structure, 2/2019, 22.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Foyer
- 3 Multipurpose hall
- 4 Restaurant
- 5 Cinema
- 6 Group rooms / studios
- 7 Stepped seating
- 8 Children / family zone
- 9 Reading room

The Central Library of Helsinki, Oodi, positioned at the heart of Helsinki, Finland, represents a paradigm of contemporary architectural innovation and cultural significance.

In 2017, an architectural design competition was initiated with the aim of redefining the urban library concept and **promoting civic engagement**. Architects worldwide were invited to participate, and the winning proposal emerged from ALA Architects, led by Samuli Woolston (SW), Juho Grönholm (JG), and Antti Nousjoki (AN).

Inaugurated on December 5, 2018, Oodi goes beyond the traditional library's role to house books, becoming a dynamic civic space that fosters **knowledge exchange, community engagement, and cultural exploration on approximately 10,000m²**. Its design seamlessly integrates functionality with a commitment to **democratic ideals of inclusivity**.

Oodi's significance extends to the design of an extension to the Public Library in Stockholm, offering a **contemporary interpretation that surpasses the 19th-century library**, evolving into a dynamic space with a multitude of public functions. The program's success among the Finnish population serve as a source of inspiration for the Stockholm project.

When queried about the design's rationale, Juho Grönholm of Ala Architects notes, „Traditional lib-

rary buildings are either containers for books or temples with columns and stairs. In our case, we already had a temple of power nearby – the parliament with its colonnade. So there was no need to manifest the status of the library in that form“ (Detail, p. 19).

Oodi's innovative approach involves a three-layer structure, strategically organizing diverse public functions (see Figure). The traditional library component, **featuring books and media**, constitutes the top floor, while the second layer accommodates enclosed **workshop and studio spaces, game rooms, and a public kitchen**. The ground floor is dedicated to open spaces conducive to **public interaction** (JG, Detail, p. 20).

Antti Nousjoki underscores Oodi's adaptation to the evolving nature of libraries, shifting from physical to **online media access**. This transition enables **flexible spaces**, carefully defined for varied activities. Samuli Woolston explains the **multi-functional approach**, aligning with distinct spatial configurations across the three floors, where the top floor encourages **learning and understanding**, the middle floor fosters **creativity and self-expression**, and the bottom floor is designed for **sharing and exchange**.

The Oodi Library stands as a forward-thinking model, combining innovative functions and spaces, encouraging public engagement and serving as an inspiration for the contemporary library.

The New City Library of Stockholm

Developing a Project

Program Concept

A Conclusion

Caruso St. John's architectural design effectively realized several objectives outlined in the competition brief, notably restoring the library's stature as a sanctuary for literature, expanding its reading space and improving accessibility by linking the Bazaar level with the Asplund Library. CSTJ's proposal successfully utilizes the Asplund Library's design language for new furniture, creating distinct characters that evoke a sense of continuity while embracing a new logic. Moreover, the ambiance of the original Asplund Library is beautifully restored, while modernizing its logistics and making the layouts clearer and more efficient. By extending the Bazaars into the Asplund Library, CSTJ transforms them from being a mere plinth into becoming additional, publicly accessible library space with a distinct character. Adding the new space City Foyer within the Asplund Library creates a mediating threshold to the Bazaars, which at the same time provides access to the two different parts of the new library.

However, due to several constraints, shortcomings emerged in certain areas, when compared to the competition briefs. In the proposal, the underground rotunda level, which formerly housed the sorting plant, was intelligently transformed into a children's rotunda, offering a flexible space within the broader children's library. While accommodating parents with toddlers, kindergarteners, and preteens, the proposal still seems to fail adequately catering to the needs of teenagers and adolescents, who occupy a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood and necessitate environments that balance elements of playfulness and maturity.

During the interview with Nina Lundvall it became clear that the decision to maintain the Asplund Library's upper floor as a non-public office area was necessary to accommodate the requested administrative space. However, the upper floor with its diverging ambience from the rest of the library would have potential to house the adolescent visitors.

Moreover, the proposal, prioritizing the library's traditional function as a repository of books and diverse reading experiences, overlooked the imperative of fostering community engagement through more sources of inspiration. Modernizing the library into a contemporary one requires spaces conducive to collective interaction and diverse forms of inspiration. Although the addition of assembly halls and group rooms was commendable, the absence of areas supporting varied creative endeavors, as advocated by Jan David Hanrath, is conspicuous. According to him, nowadays, a diverse set of architectural interventions such as workshops, exhibition spaces, and recording studios are indispensable in accommodating groups of individuals with diverse talents and promoting active participation.

While the incorporation of digital media was stipulated in the competition briefs, Caruso St. John's proposal, while enhancing the library's technological infrastructure and incorporating PC desks, failed to integrate digital storytelling spaces emblematic of

contemporary society's evolving cultural landscape. These could, for example, be screening and gaming rooms.

Furthermore, the decision to retain the existing main entrance instead of establishing a new one to cater to the streams from the new Odenplan public transport station hinders the library's integration with the adjacent Annexes, impeding the realization of a cohesive spatial configuration.

Notwithstanding these compromises, Caruso St. John's proposal significantly expanded reading spaces and adeptly integrated old and new architectural elements, offering viable solutions to many of the Asplund Library's contemporary challenges. Consequently, the thesis project posits itself as a complementary second-phase design to Caruso St. John's extension proposal, aiming to address residual deficiencies and further enhance the library's functionality in response to evolving societal needs.

Drawing inspiration from successful newly-built libraries such as the New Deichman Library and the Central Library Oodi, as well as insights gleaned from Jan David Hanrath's lecture on contemporary library design, this project proposes an extension to the Asplund Library, introducing new functions to transform it into a contemporary civic institution —a **Public Palace**. This intervention will occur at Observatorielunden, Spelbomskan 16, 13, and 3, with the Asplund Library and its Annex buildings forming a cohesive campus for the New City Library of Stockholm.

Program Proposal

A Conclusion

Existing	4500	
Annex 1	2500	
Annex 2	2000	
New Annex Complex	4580	
Main lobby and central public service spaces	1080	
- Lobby functions	160	draught lobby/ies pram/pushchair parking facility, approx. 40qm lockers (50-100pcs) space reservation for a cloakroom (approx. 550 persons)
- Public toilets	250	distributed throughout the building disabled WC (1 pcs per floor), babycare room 20qm
- Public services	100	reception and information point + control room, total 40qm client service point + separate work space, total 40qm client photocopying, print-out and scanning point, 20qm
- Meeting and lounge area	440	
- Stage	30	

- Reservable info spots 100

Events space 1220

- Screening rooms	290	incl. machine room, 40qm. Silent air-conditioning
- Multi-purpose hall	260	
- Furniture/stage prop storage	150	
- Foyer	175	shared by screening facilities & multi-purpose hall
- Back stage	40	storage, separate kitchenette, 2WCs, 2 showers
- Living lab	200	good AV + IT equipment
- Library exhibition space	120	
- Rentable exhibition space	180	
- Exhibition spaces	40	approx. 20+20qm

Learning and doing 1510

- Workrooms (for customers)	150	à 8-10qm, workpoints for 2 persons
- Private office (for customers)	400	work points, total approx. 350qm
		fixed client-service point à 30qm + laptop lending point
		photocopying, print-out and scanning point, 20qm
- Recording & video studio	100	AV equipment, computers
- TV and radio studio	60	TV studio lighting, sound-system
- Digital-physical workshop	200	
- Games room	200	

- Teaching & group rooms	400	10-14 pcs à 16-60qm larger spaces are combinable one 60qm project space, one communal kitchen
External service providers	450	
- Café	200	incl. kitchen 30qm staff social spaces, approx. 15qm
- Restaurant	150	incl. cloakroom (unsupervised) + WC, total approx. 15qm kitchen approx. 80qm catering manager workspace plus staff spaces approx 20qm
- Commercial premises	100	(eg. bookstore)
Staff facilities	430	
- Office facilities	300	staff personal storage approx. 35qm meeting rooms, 3 x 12-20qm + 1pc à 45qm 4 workrooms à approx. 10qm open workpoints for 15 persons + „team area“, in total 120qm quiet space, 2 x approx. 7qm
- Staff lounge	50	easily accessible to all staff
- Changing and washrooms	50	seperately for men and women, ratio approx. 1:1
- WCs	50	approx. 1 WC à 3qm / per floor

A Difficult Whole

Brief 4

Stockholm City Library

2023-24 MSc3 AR3AI100
Brief 04



Gothenburg Law Court Annex by E.G. Asplund.

A Difficult Whole

"An architecture...able to admit the paradox of the whole fragment: the building which is a whole at one level and a fragment of a greater whole at another level...It is the difficult unity through inclusion rather than the easy unity through exclusion."

– Robert Venturi, The Obligation Toward the Difficult Whole, in Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture

Confronted with the messy realities of the contemporary city, engaged in fragments of the past and addressing the uncertainties and challenges of the future, the thoughts of the American architect Robert Venturi on the possibilities of the *difficult whole*, written half a century ago, continue to have resonance. Beyond the, sometimes failing, formalities manifested in the work of Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown, it might represent the possibility of a negotiative architecture: one that looks outwards with a welcoming gesture, which enjoys what it finds; which searches for wholeness, rather than unity; which is open and political and has agency.

The Stockholm City Library might, on first glance, be considered a kind of unity – the circle in the square – but in reality it might be considered the embodiment of the difficult whole of which Venturi speaks, expressed in its geometrical offset to the city grid; through the frictions evident in its forth side; in the radically different architectural expression of its plinth; in the transformed whiteness of its interior; in the clutter of its voids. Stepping beyond it, the similarities and differences of the three lamellae, or the constructed picturesqueness of the surrounding landscape can all be understood as fragments, whose disjunctions and tensions

elaborate on this complex whole, as well as offering both qualities and challenges to the ways in which it is experienced. Your project will add yet another new fragment or fragments to the ensemble. Through this brief we would like you to begin to explore the creative tensions in the moments where things meet through volume, ground, façade, colour, material or composition for example. Many of you are struggling to escape the tyranny of the plan diagram.

This brief asks you to think at the scale of the fragment in a more traditional sense, elaborating in detail upon a moment where your project must negotiate its relationships with other things - whether existing buildings or landscape or both, while also exploring its own scale, proportion, structure, order and materialisation in more detail. The outcome will take the form of a physical model of a fragment of your building and the existing element or elements that it engages, made with an equivalent level of detail and care. The model might include spatial or structural components and more than one surface – for example roof and wall. The model may be made in any material or technique you wish but should be precise in its form and relationships. It should be supported by drawings of varying scales and projections which establish in the context of your wider project, through a description of the whole, while also exploring the constructional relationships you seek to resolve, through detailed elaboration of the external face in plan and section. The elaboration of the building section will be particularly important in developing the way in which the interiors of new and existing relate to one another. The moment you are looking at should be agreed upon by next week's tutorial with a sketch version of the model completed the week after. The final, photographed version, and its accompanying drawings, should form part of your P3 presentation.

Interiors
Buildings
Cities

Palace

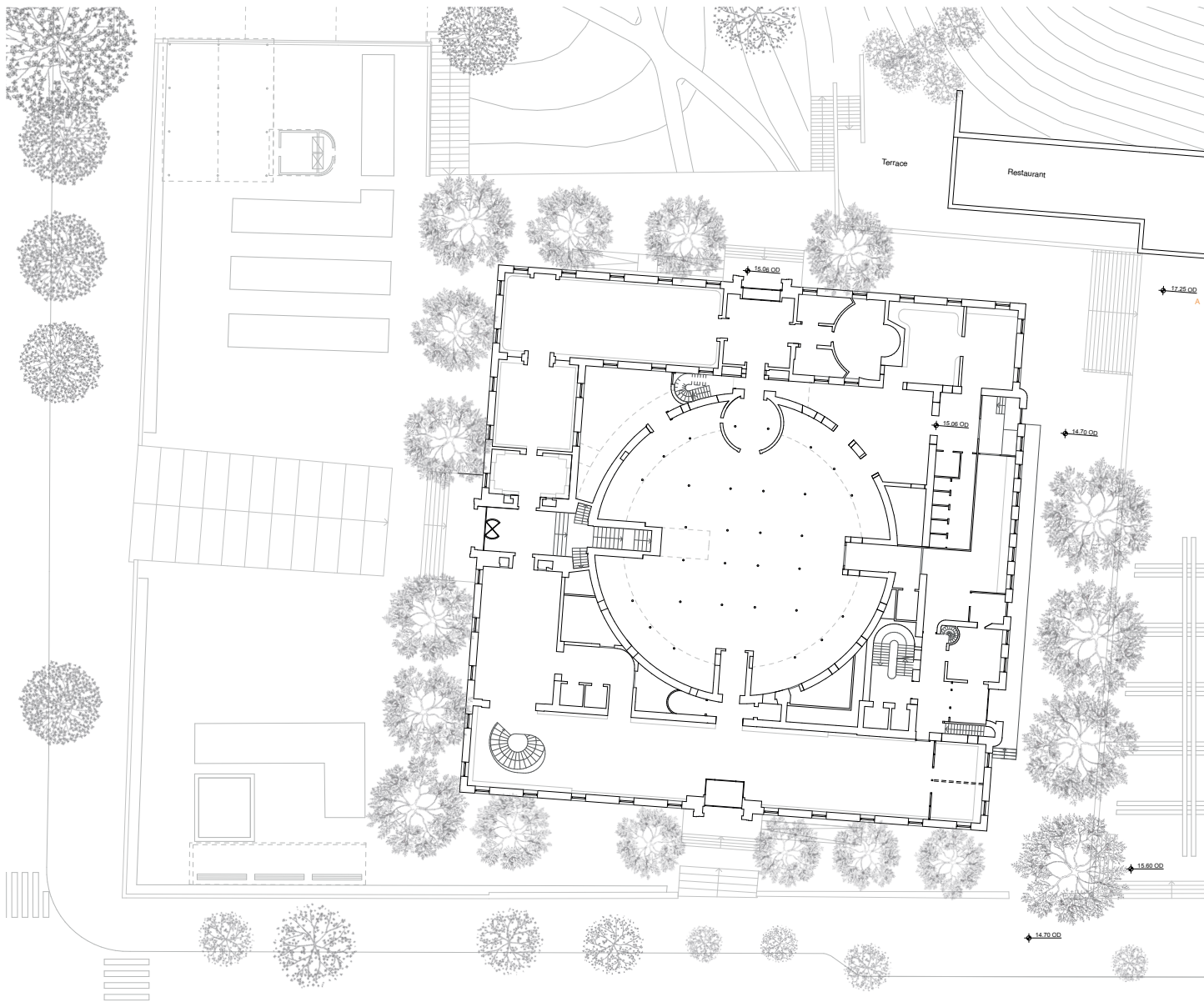
A First Design

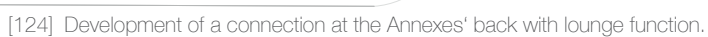
A Difficult Whole

Presently, the three Annex lamellas stand as independent structures against the backdrop of Observatory Hill. Originally envisioned as integral components of the „district of knowledge and education“ alongside the Asplund Library, they have since weathered with time and undergone significant transformations while the library has largely retained its original function and spatial configurations. Over time, the Annexes have experienced multiple changes in function, layout, and even structural integrity. Many past competition proposals have even suggested their complete demolition. However, a comprehensive analysis reveals that such proposals overlooked the social significance of the Annexes, a point reinforced by Kieran Long, former Director of the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design [ArkDes].

Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the Annexes have struggled to adapt efficiently to evolving accessibility requirements throughout their existence. In attempts to meet these demands, various interventions, such as outdoor ramps, stairs, and other modifications, have been implemented somewhat crudely over the years. Recognizing this gradual and arguably vernacular transformation, the proposed solution aims to address the Annexes' impairments while introducing new qualities.

This step is crucial for repurposing the Annexes into functional spaces suitable for the envisioned program, as detailed earlier in this work.



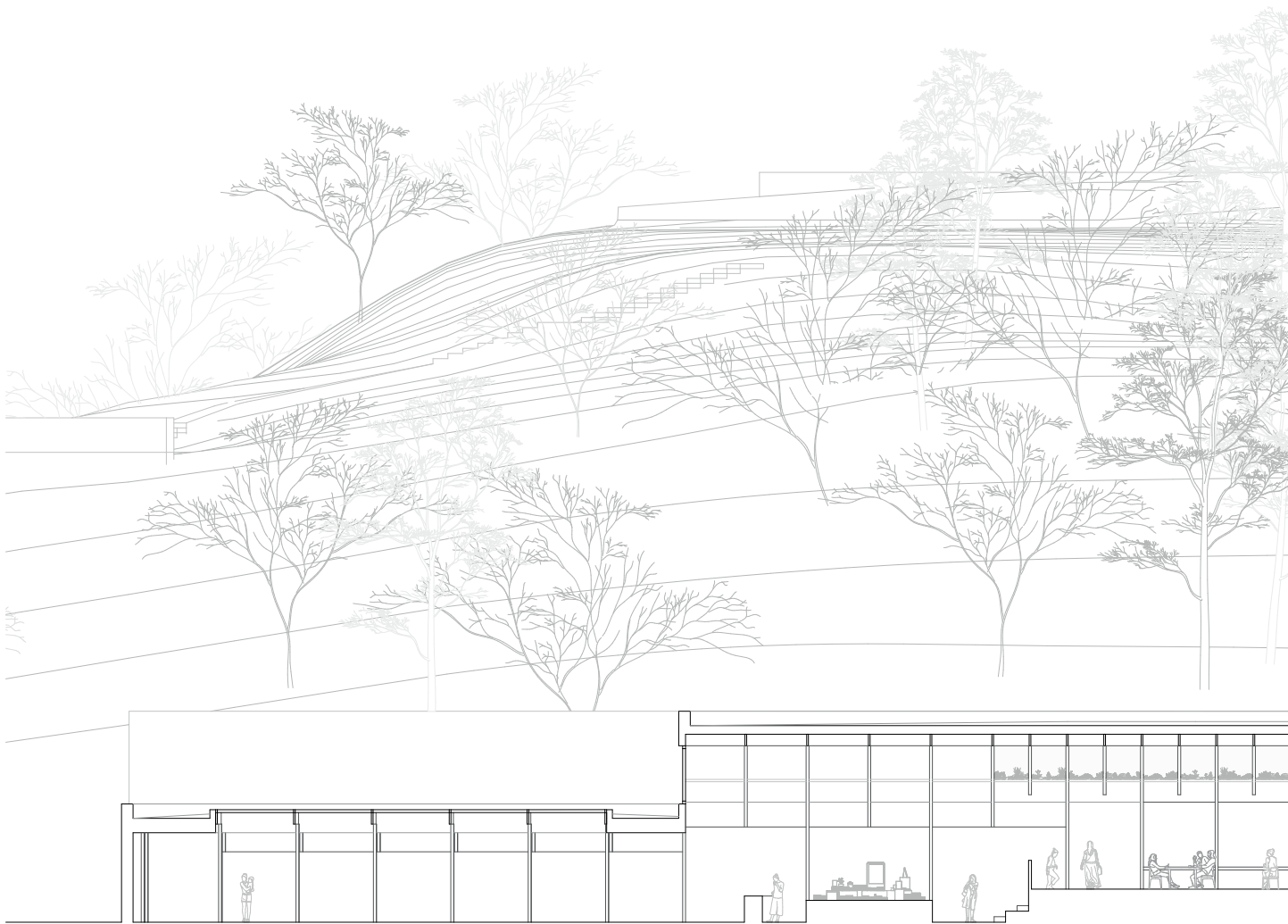


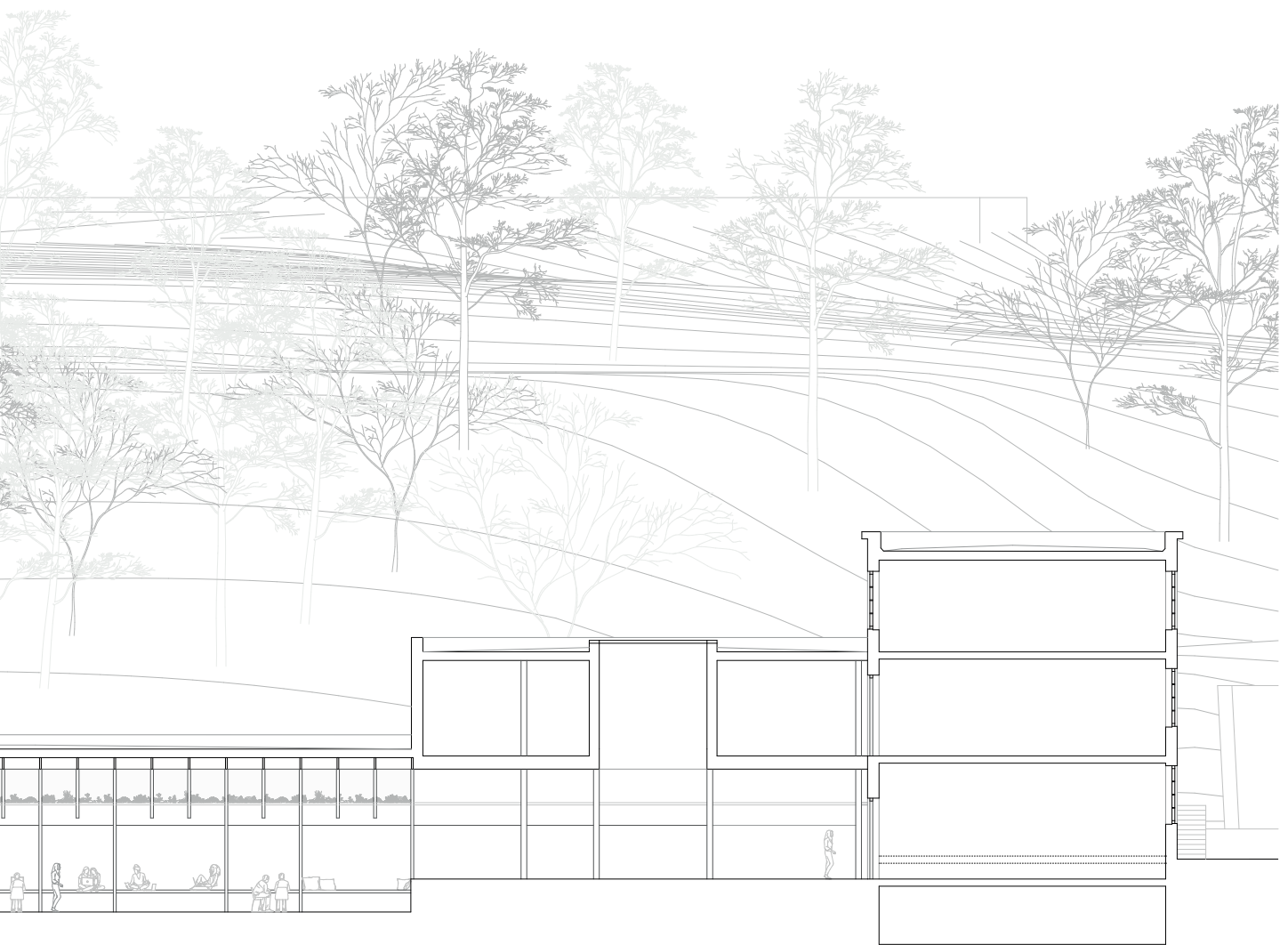


[125] Elevation drawing between Annex 1 & 2 and Annex 2 & 3 (left to right)

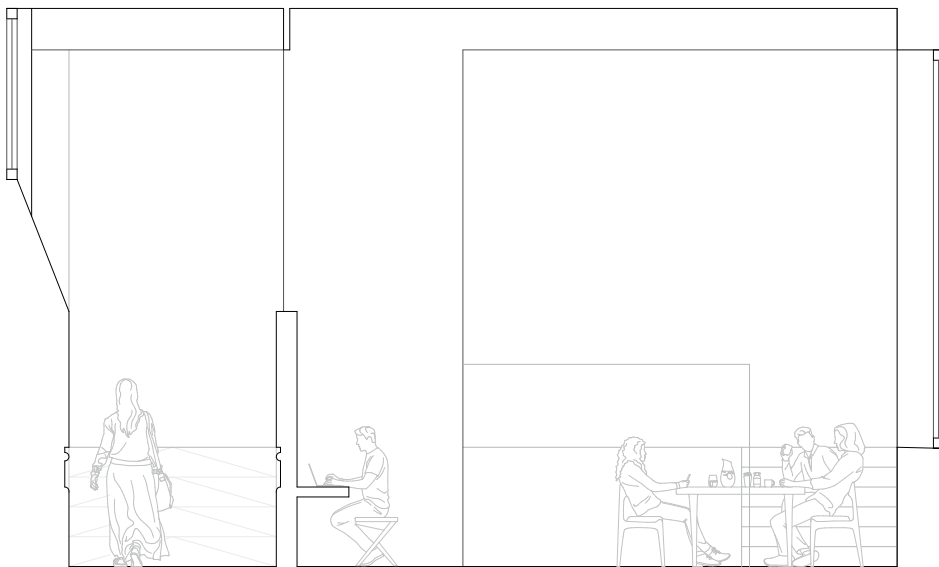


[126] Elevation drawing. POV: The entrance to the Asplund Children's Library.

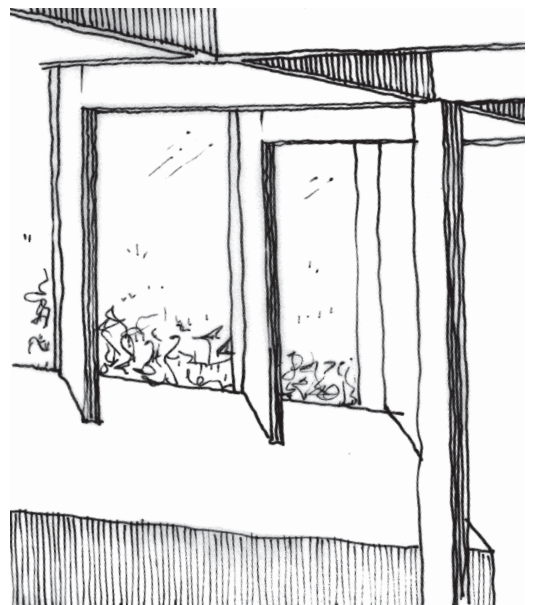




[127] Longitudinal section A-A.



[128] Cross section B-B (hill to the left).

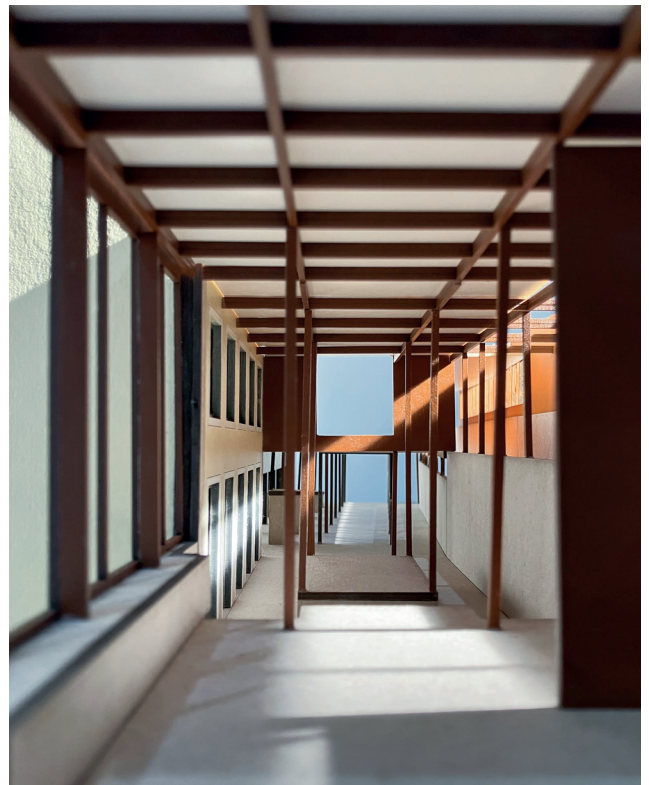


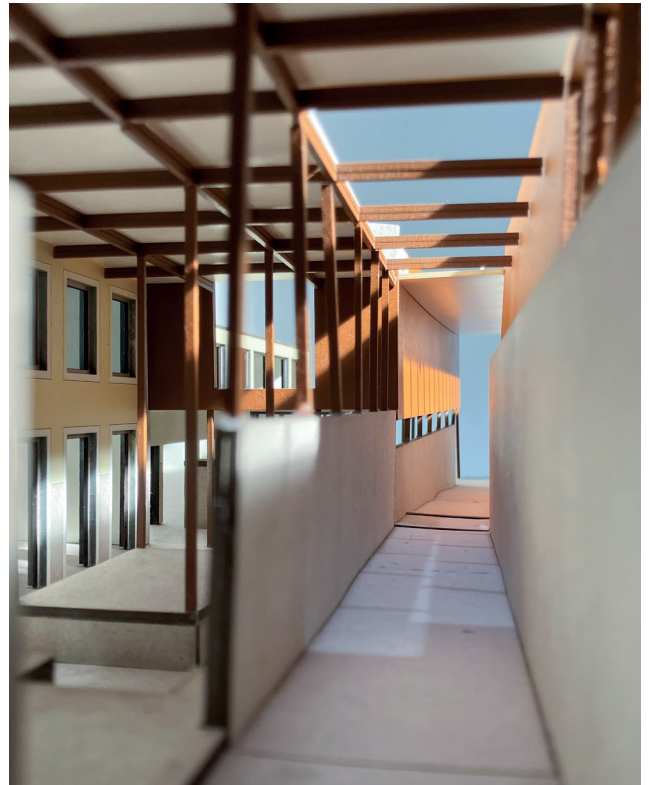
[129] First structural idea.

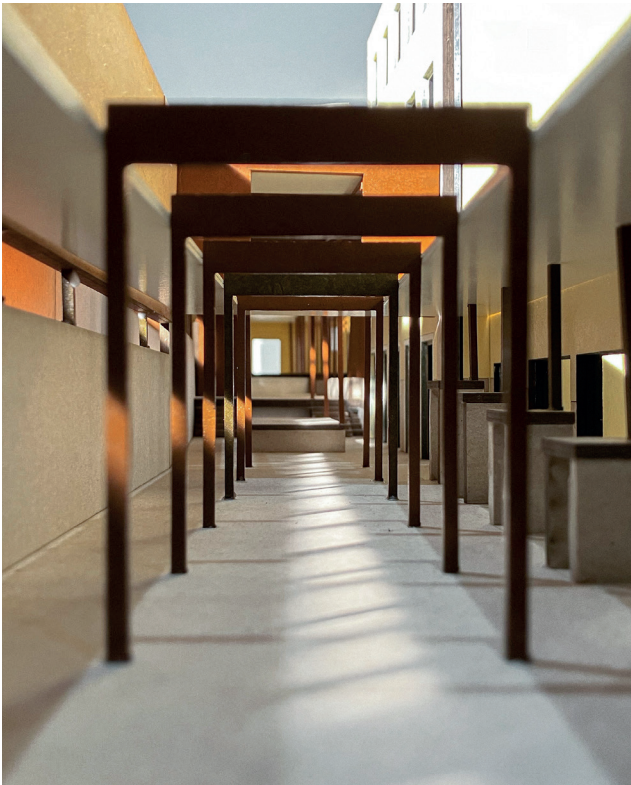


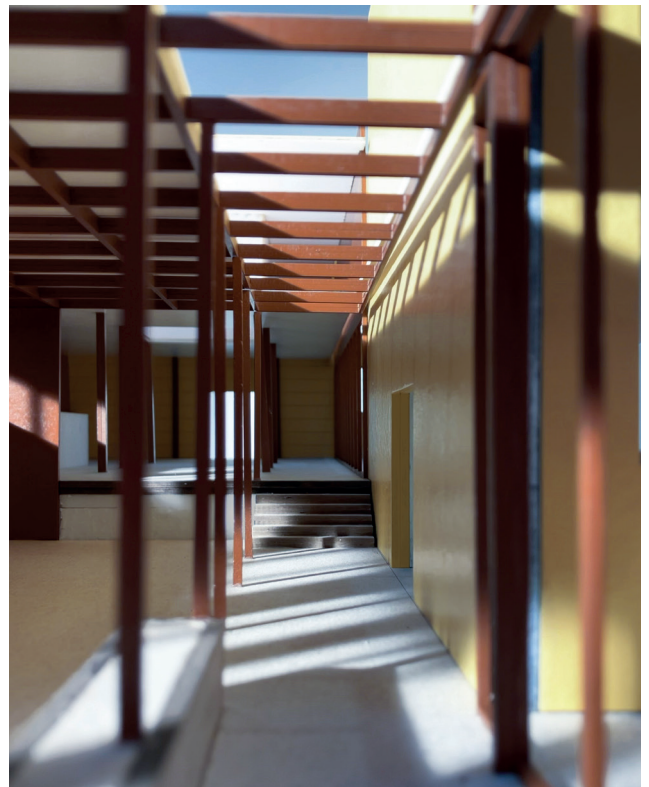
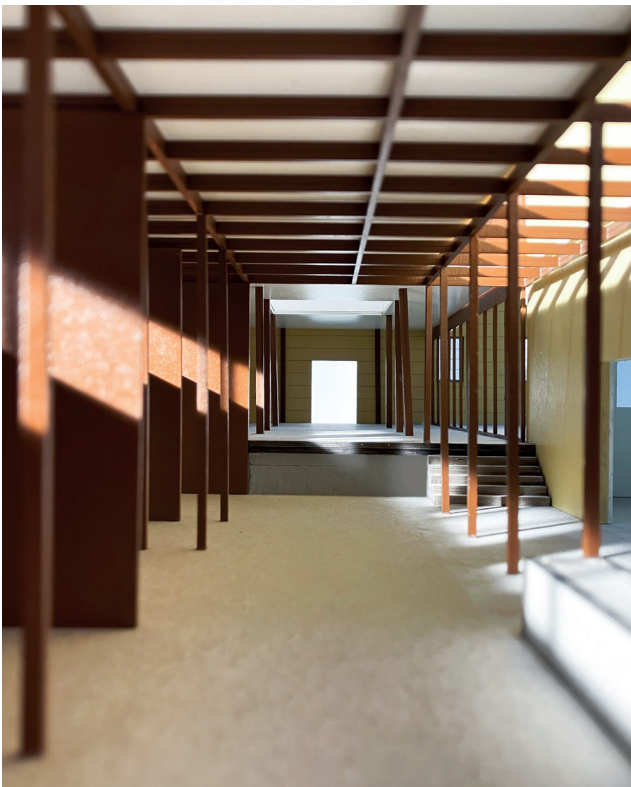
[130] Spatial study model 1:50.











This project, „Inviting the Public,“ explores the expansion and modernization of the Stockholm Public Library, focusing on integrating the historic Asplund Library and its Annex buildings into a cohesive, multifunctional campus. Situated in Norrmalm, Stockholm, the project aims to enhance the library's accessibility and public engagement, addressing previous unsuccessful competition attempts from 2006 and 2014.

The Asplund Library, an iconic monument and a beacon of educational innovation since 1928, faces the challenge of modernizing while preserving its architectural heritage. Caruso St. John's 2014 proposal, though intelligent, was halted due to conflicting interests, leading to this new design intervention. This project builds upon their proposal, aiming to transform the library into a Public Palace by incorporating contemporary functions inspired by successful examples like the New Deichman Library in Oslo.

The design intervention focuses on the Annex buildings, repurposing them to create additional public spaces and improving connectivity with the Asplund Library. This includes the integration of a lightweight timber structure, enhancing accessibility with new ramps and terraces, and optimizing the library's landscape to blend with the surrounding nature, embracing Asplund's principles of blending architecture with nature, as seen in his work for the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and the Woodland

Chapel.

The interior spaces of the extension are designed to be multifunctional, allowing for various uses such as reading, lounging, and community activities - a place to be, just like my P1 design. Architecturally, the idea is that the concrete retaining wall slopes towards the user of the building, allowing for a view into the hill. Each successive wall then gradually steps down in height, until the opposite facade fully opens up into the spaces between the Annexes. This attempt can be further developed and refined. A lightweight timber structure on top, sliding along the Annexes' back, gives the idea of a conservatory. The ceiling's grid of the cross-beam structure varies, loosening up towards each ends of the building. Integrated into the hill, with a dreamy incident of light, an ambient spatial character is created.

By preserving while introducing modern amenities, this project envisions a library that meets contemporary needs for community engagement, digital media, and creative activities, ensuring its role as a vital educational hub.

A further subject of study should be the surrounding landscape and the means in which it creates a connection between the new extension to the Annexes and the Asplund Library. The currently harsh edges should be softened, integrating green spaces and pathways that encourage interaction, variation and accessibility.

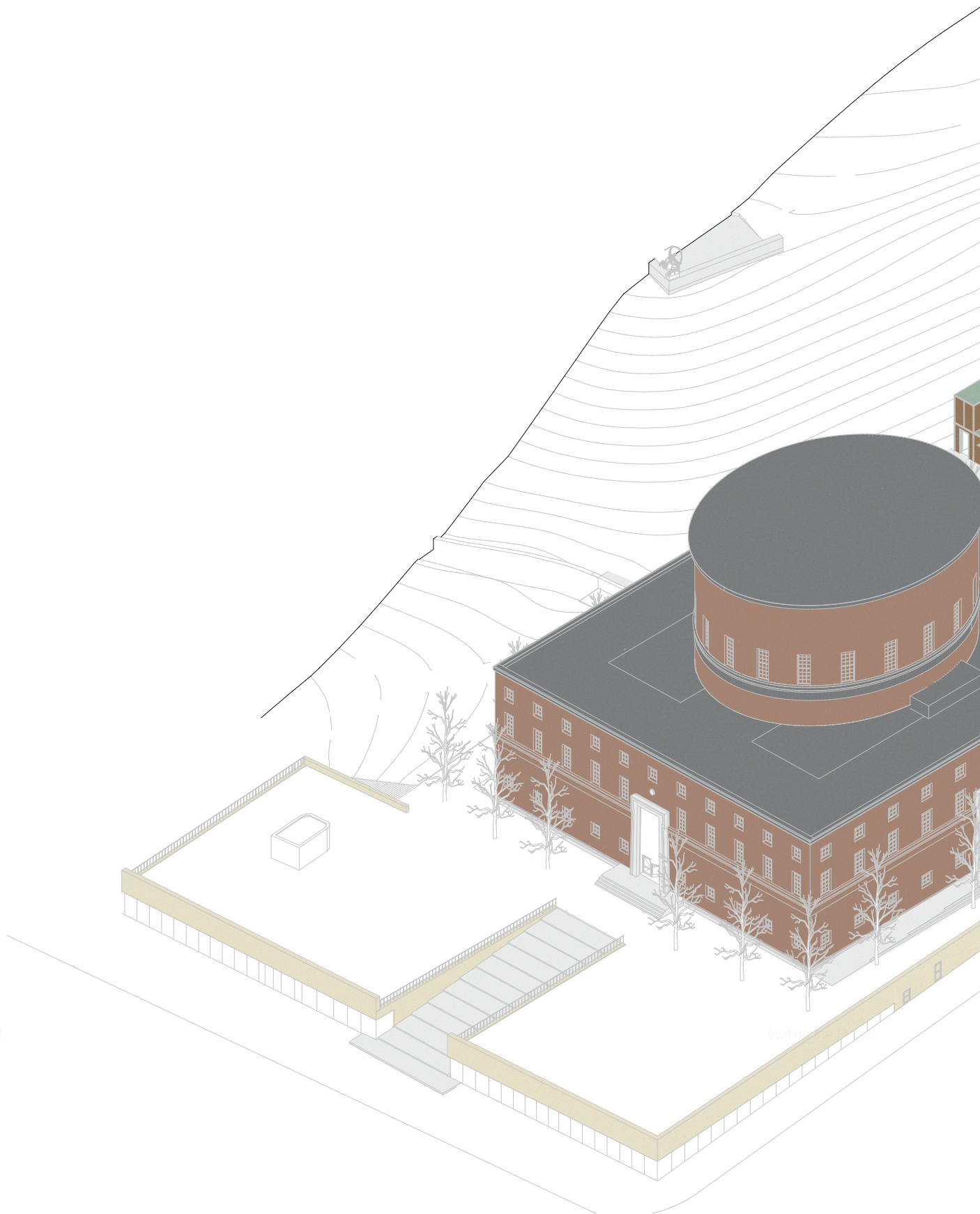
Inviting the Public

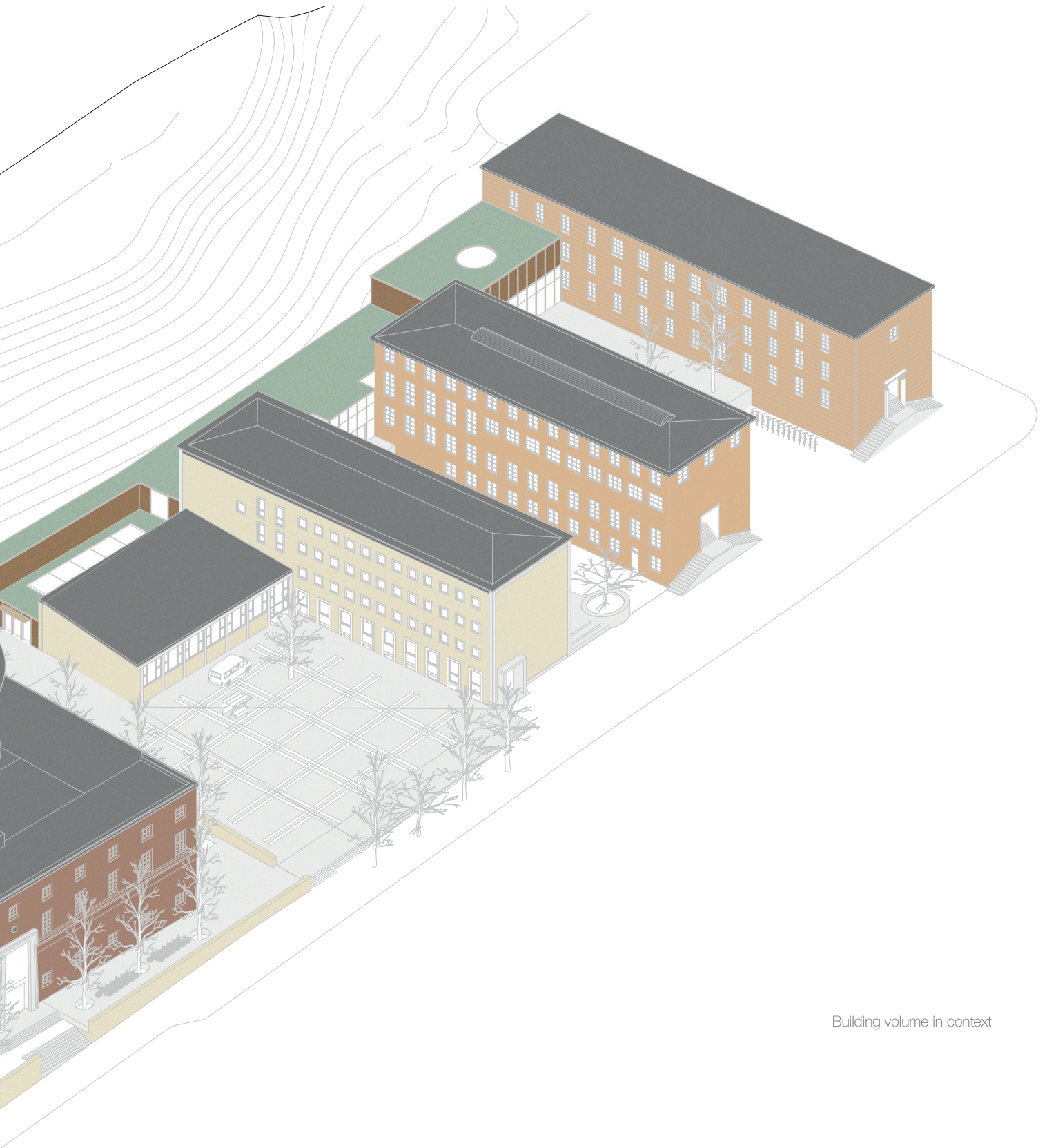
Design



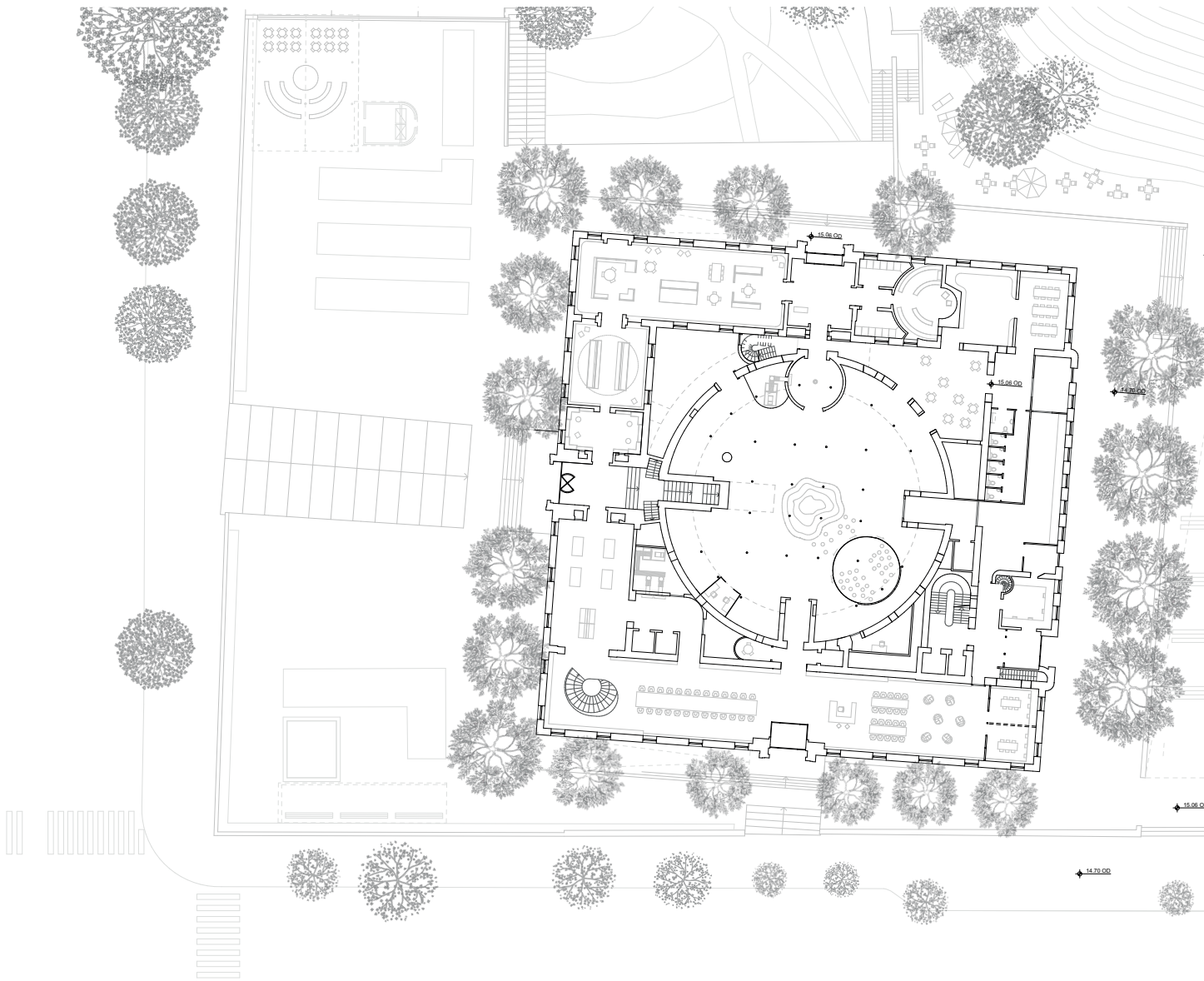
Figure ground plan

Bas relief model of the redesigned ground (1:100)





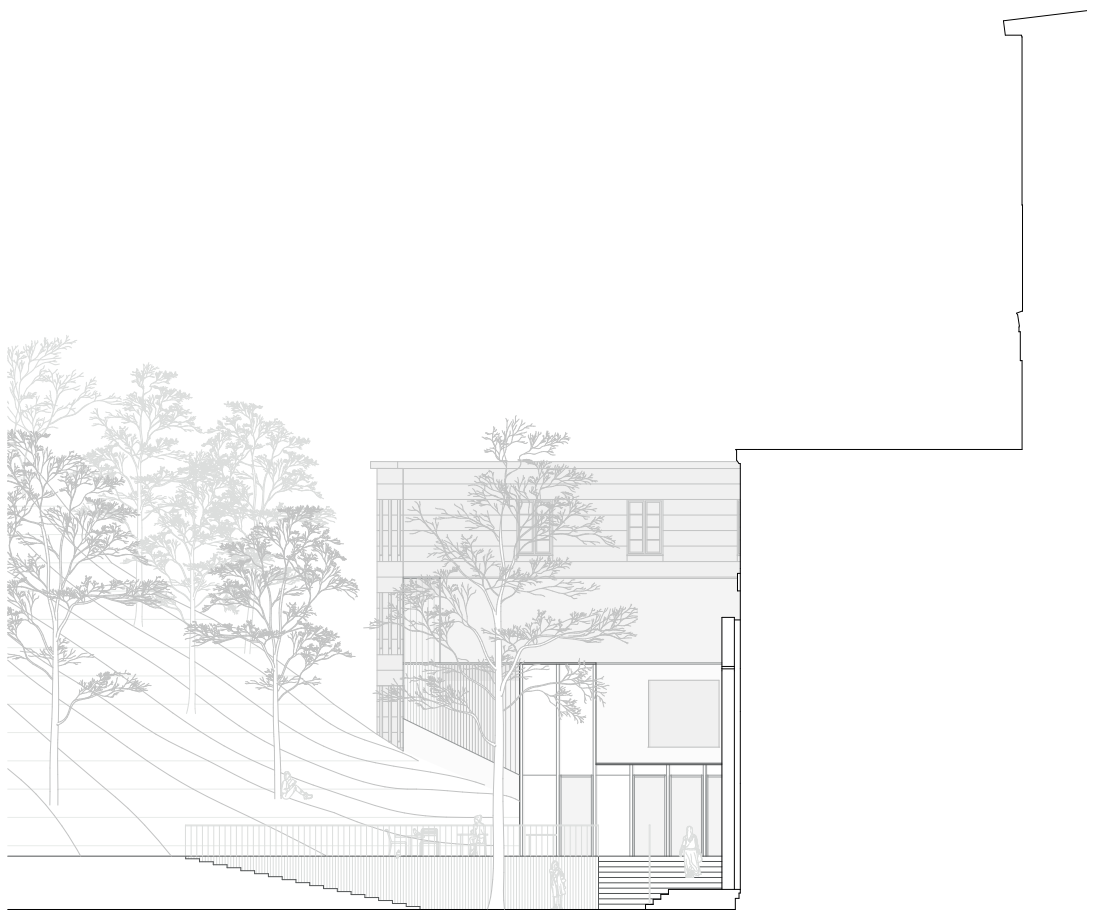
Building volume in context



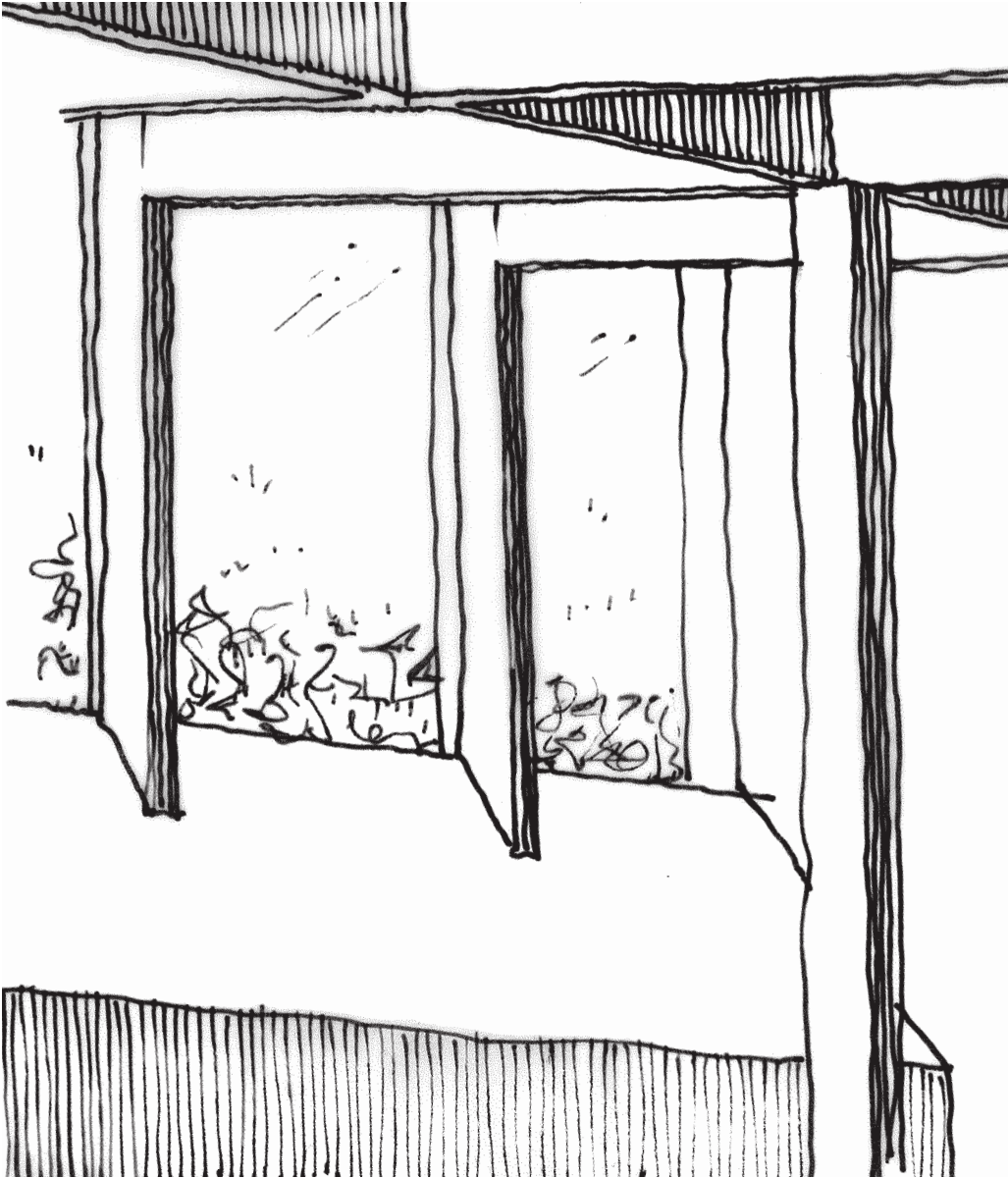




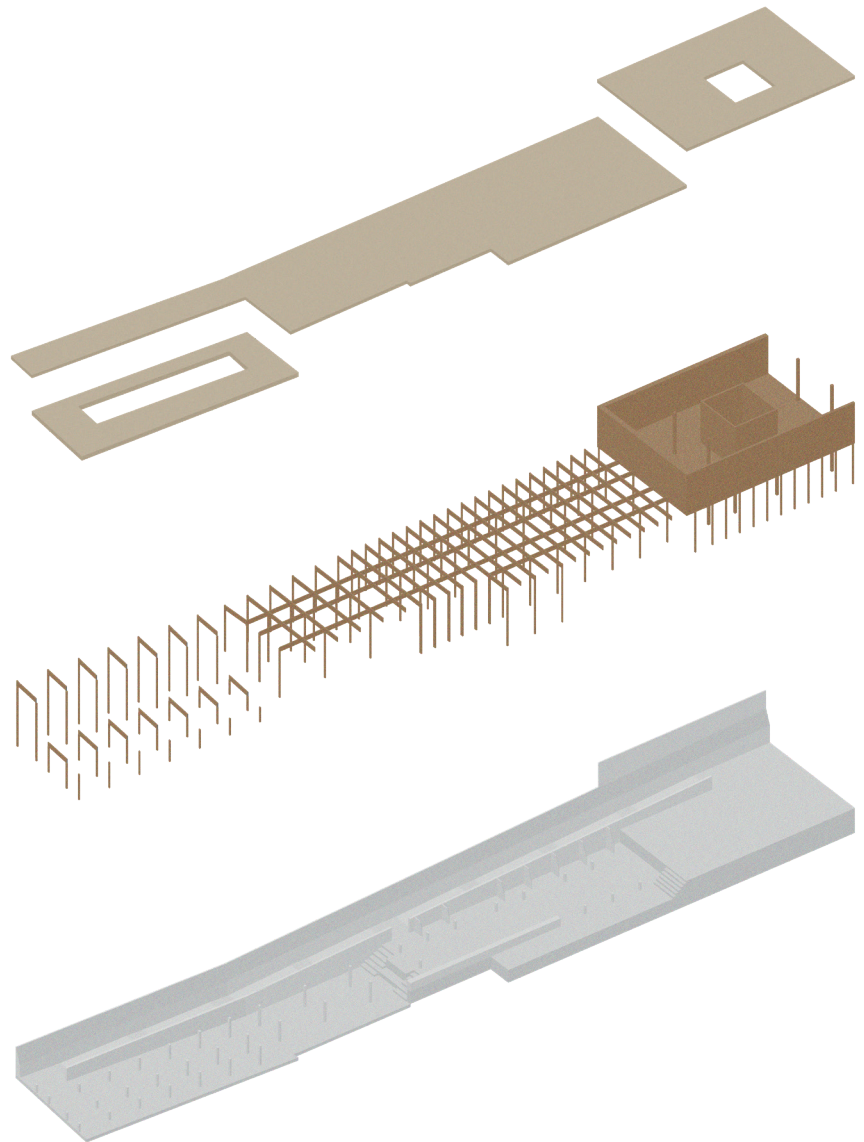
North elevation with entrance to the right (from Odengatan)



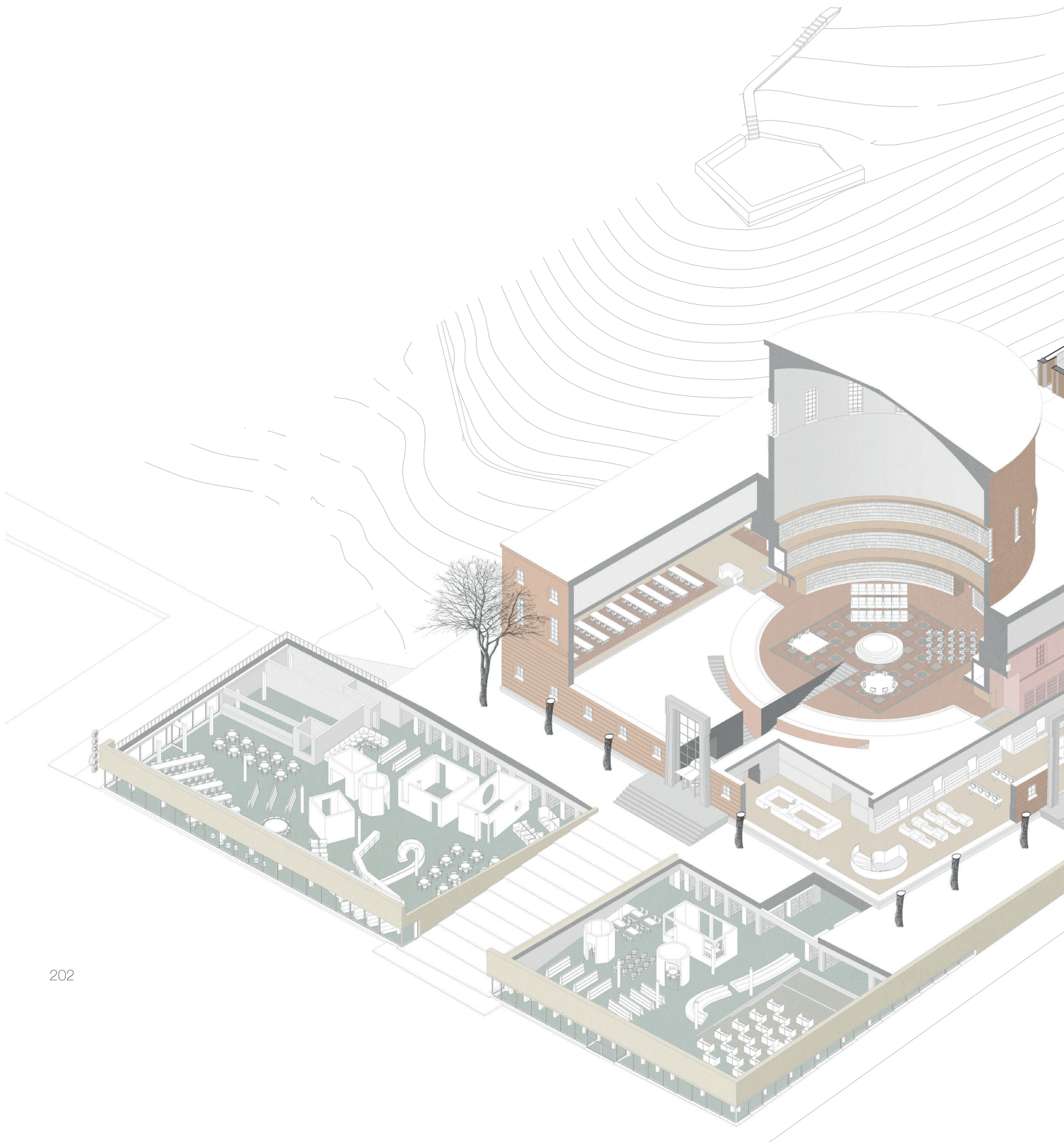
East entrance elevation (from Asplund Children's Library)

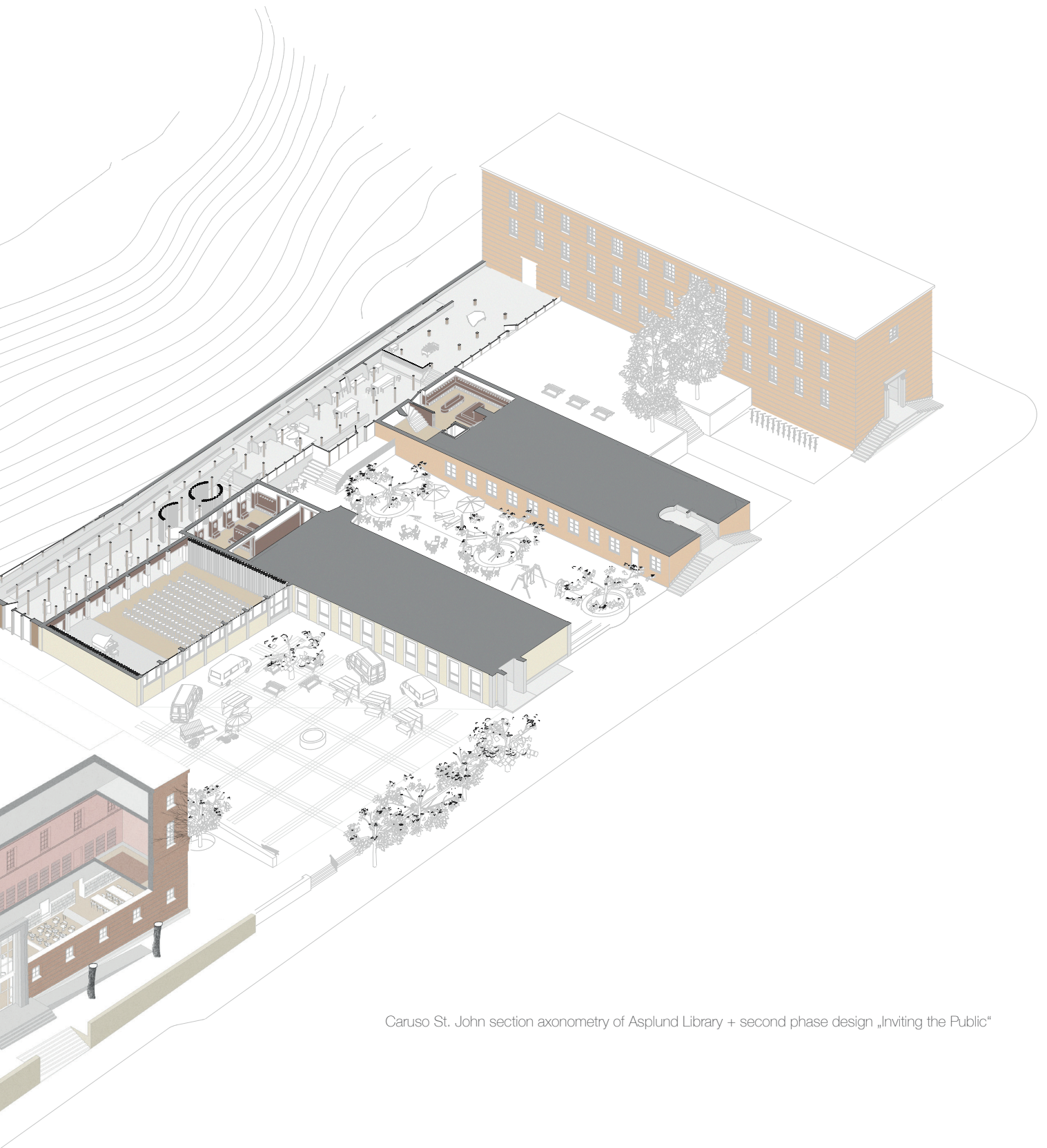


First structure sketch



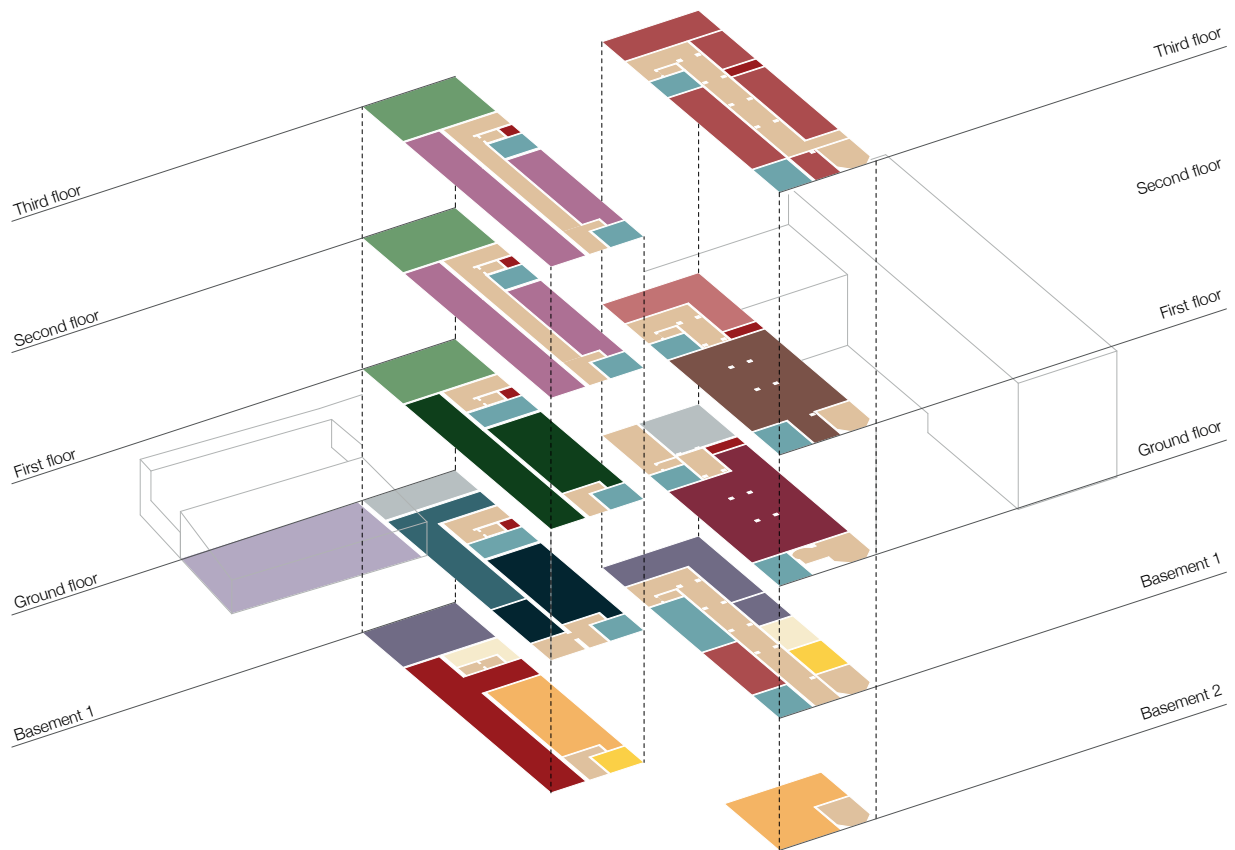
Structure explosion diagram





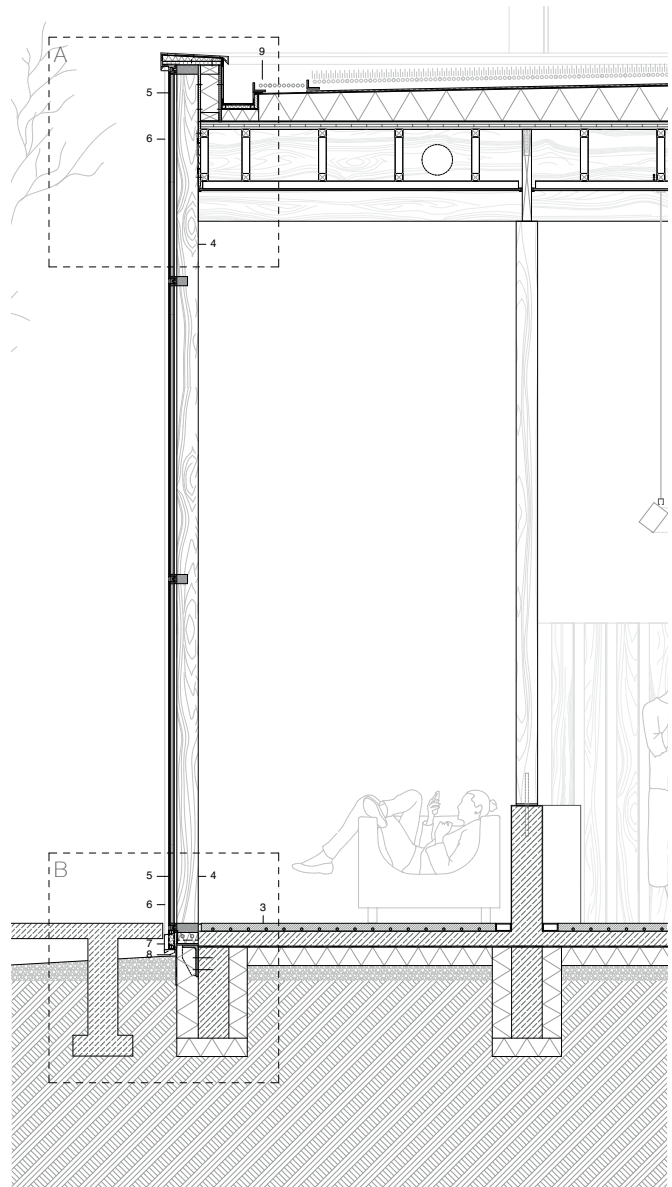
Caruso St. John section axonometry of Asplund Library + second phase design „Inviting the Public“

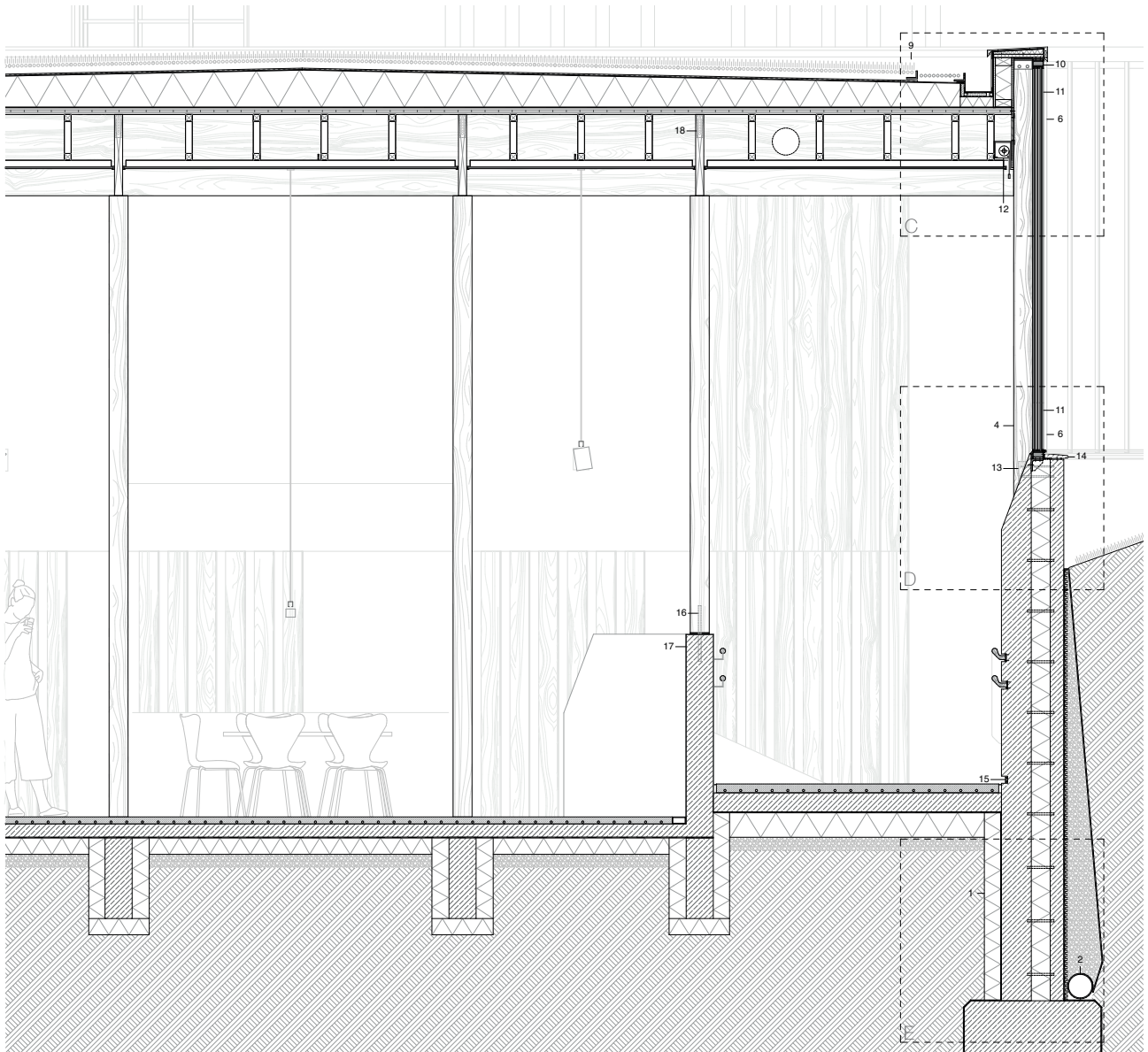
	m ²
Wardrobe	112
Circulation	700
Multi-purpose hall	290
Library Exhibition	115
Restaurant	145
Customer workspace	285
Physical & digital workshop	238
Living lab	220
Auditorium	225
Teaching & group rooms	400
Debating room	85
WC, washrooms	325
Staff rooms (offices, lounge)	280
Storage & stage prop	195
Security office & storage	40
First aid & health room	45
Utility room + maintenance (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, water heaters, ...)	210
Servers, network & IT storage	215
	4125



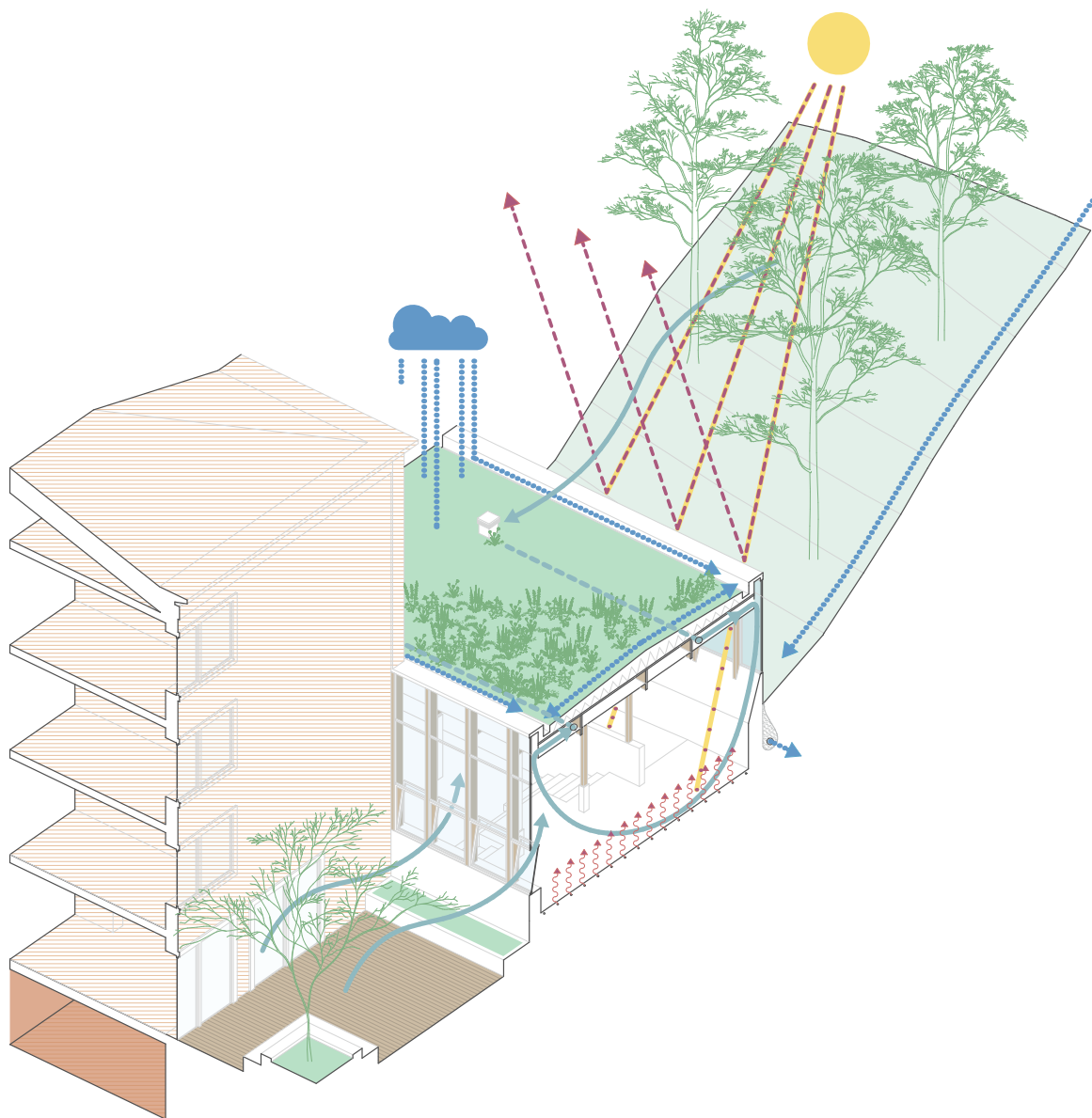
Program diagram Annex 1 & Annex 2

- 1 Retaining wall:
Fleece.
Gravel fill.
Dimpled plastic sheet drainage layer.
Bituminous sealant finish.
100mm Reinforced concrete sandwich element +
150mm XPS thermal insulation + 220mm
reinforced concrete.
- 2 Perforated drainage pipe.
- 3 Floor:
20mm Concrete water-jet treated with an epoxy
resin coating.
50mm Screed with underfloor heating.
100mm Reinforced concrete slab on strip footings.
8mm Bituminous sheeting vapour barrier.
120mm Thermal insulation.
100mm Compacted gravel.
- 4 140 x 100mm Ash column, fire retardant treated.
- 5 Mullion-transom structure.
Double glazing: 12mm laminated safety glass +
6mm argon-filled cavity + 8mm toughened glass
with low-E coating.
- 6 Softwood mullion profiles.
- 7 Bend sheet metal.
- 8 Water drainage via mullion gasket below.
- 9 Roof:
80mm Extensive planting.
10mm Filter fleece.
1mm PVC sealant layer.
Min. 180mm PIR thermal insulation on a 2% slope.
8mm Bituminous sheeting vapour barrier.
50mm CLT.
600mm x 60mm Ash beam, fire retardant treated,
cross-beam construction.
50/50mm Battens, 400mm suspended ceiling
framework.
- 10 Frameless window, steel profile, gold anodised.
- 11 Triple glazing: 6 + 6mm laminated safety glass with
solar control coating + 14mm argon-filled cavity +
6mm float glass + 14mm argon-filled cavity + 6mm
float glass with low-E coating.
- 12 Fabric blind.
- 13 Column anchor.
- 14 5° Sloped window sill, concrete prefab.
- 15 LED indirect lighting aluminium track.
- 16 Column base.
- 17 Skim coat.
- 18 Invisible steel
connector for main
and secondary
beams.





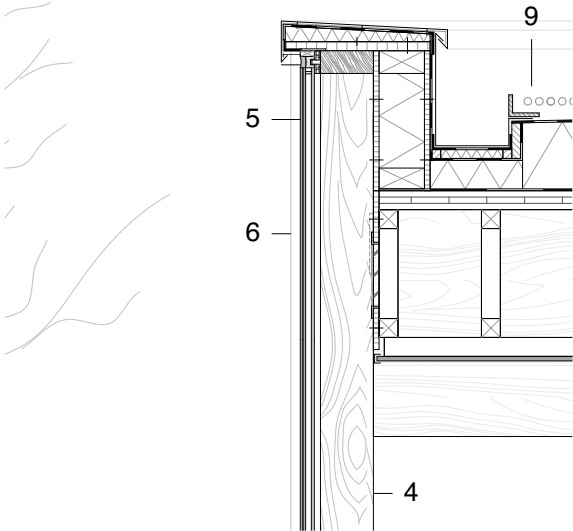
Construction cross-section A-A (detailed 1:20)



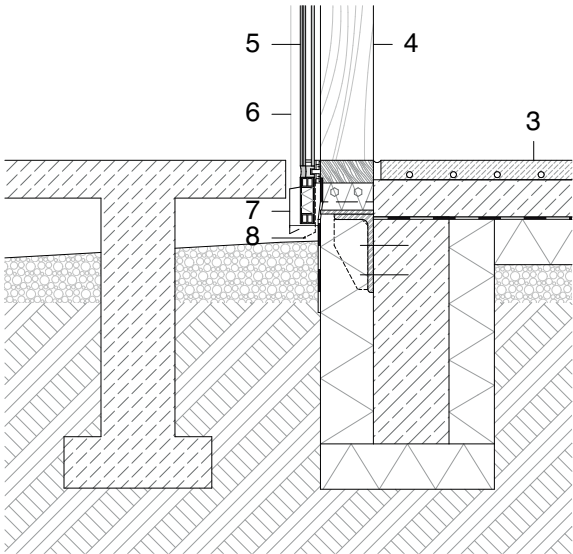
Climate diagram



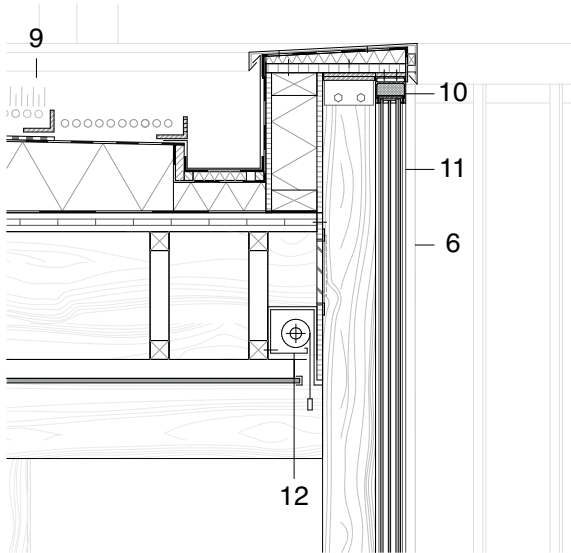
South elevation (detailed 1:20)



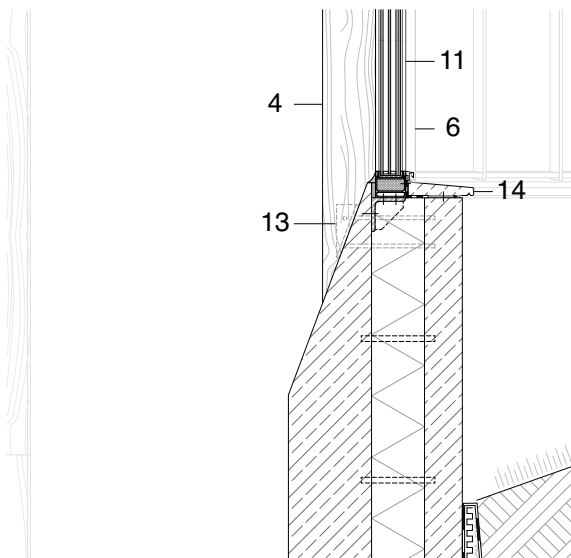
Detail A (detailed 1:5)



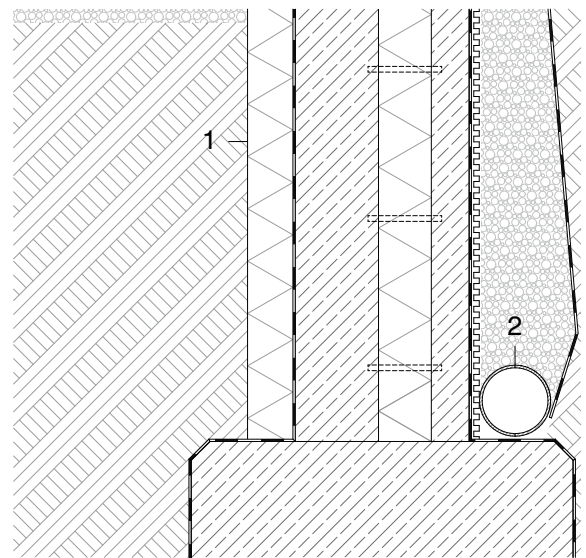
Detail B (detailed 1:5)



Detail C (detailed 1:5)



Detail D (detailed 1:5)



Detail E (detailed 1:5)

A walk through the building













































Natalia Simonarson 5864534

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Department of Architecture

Julianalaan 134

2628 BL Delft

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and Building Sciences**

Architecture Track

Academic year 2023/2024

AR3AI100

Interiors Buildings Cities

Graduation Project - Palace

Daniel Rosbottom

Jurjen Zeinstra

Mark Pimlott

Matthijs Klooster

Sam De Vocht

Sereh Mandias

Susanne Pietsch

Supervisors

