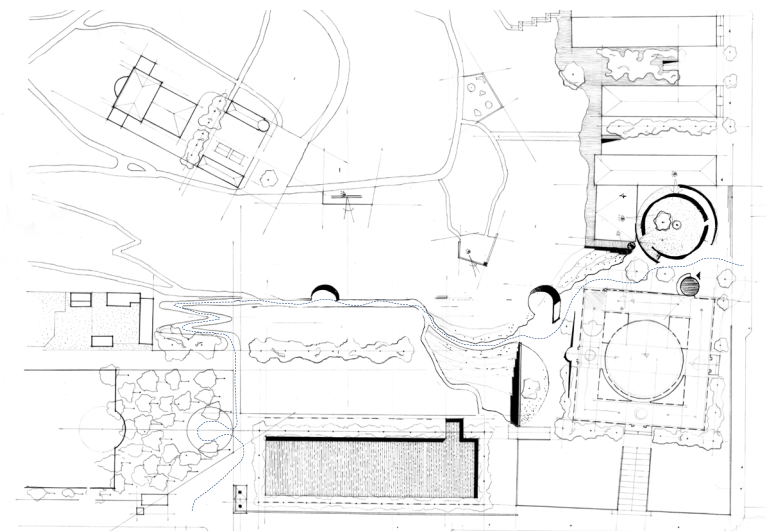


Reflection

Stockholm City Library by Erik Gunnar Asplund has been one of the public Library's most celebrated and influential manifestations for almost 100 years. The urge to transform this public institution is apparent through the unfruitful architectural competitions of the past decades, composing the studio topic. This graduation project attempts to reinvent the Stockholm City Library by treating this building as an integral part of the City, highlighting a connection that Asplund also intended to do with the landscape formations on the Observatory Hill. However, today, both the city and the role of the Library have significantly changed, and this project attempts to create spaces around and within the City and the Library that will trigger parallel reactions. The aim is to trigger an ongoing transformation process of the City and the Library, revealing that the City is part of the Library and reverse.



1:500 Site plan

The main focus of this graduation project is the connection between the Library and the city. From a distance, the Library resembles more of an introverted, protective, enclosed space where knowledge is housed, but in fact, the Stockholm City Library was designed to be part of the City. Today, it looks utterly detached from what is happening around it; everything is evolving at a different pace, including the renovation of the bazaar and the more minor interventions across the park. Also, adjustments are made to the interior of the building to keep it up to date but substantially diminish its architectural qualities.

People should re-engage with the Library as one of Asplund's oeuvres and as an institution that needs to establish a new political and social purpose. This project treats the Stockholm City Library as an institution that should not be restricted within a particular building; it should be open to its people and extend beyond its physical borders. This project connects the monumental building of Asplund with its surroundings and the people of Stockholm. To connect them, it was crucial from the beginning to dive into Asplund's approach while exploring the social and political purpose of the Library in the 21st century.

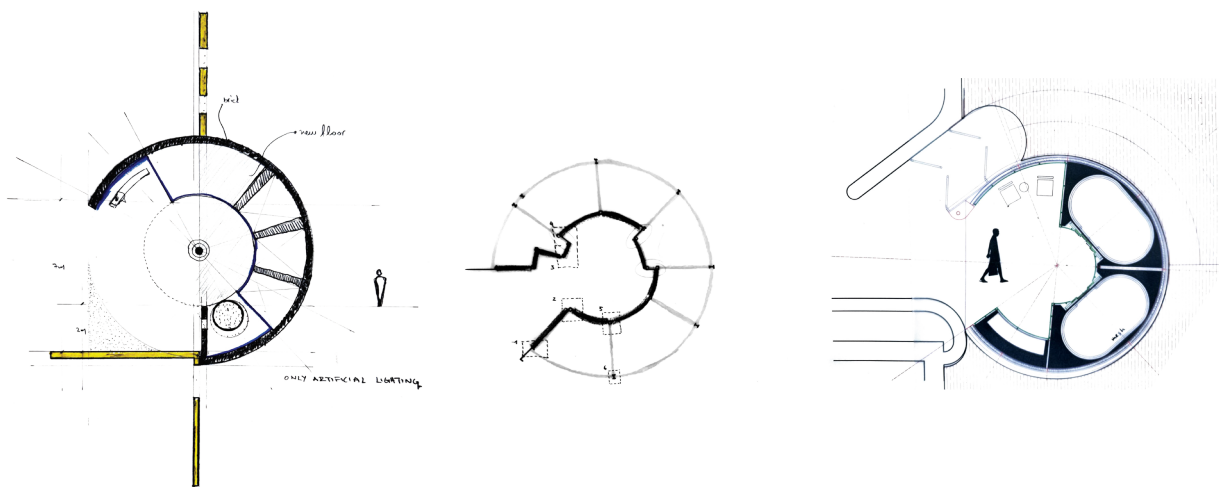
After setting the approach and forming the strategy for the extended area of the Library as a studio, we

zoomed into a crucial part of the design. The first step was to point out a part of the design showcasing the project's essence. For this project, it was a point, an actual circle, a cylinder, placed just next to the 1930s extension curve, continuing the outline of the building. There, the elevators removed from the courtyards were placed. The courtyards returned to the way Asplund designed them: empty rooms within the cylinder of the rotunda and orthogonal geometry of the surrounding halls.



Diagram of the addition

The addition made was meant to be the device through which all the ideas brought up during every tutorial throughout these months were tested. By carefully designing this space in detail, every idea was generated in the whole building, enriching the initial approach. Numerous attempts, with minor or significant differences, of this space show how such a small space can accumulate and define a broader approach compared to the rest of the building and the extended area. Starting from what it contains (air ducts and elevators in the beginning, elevators and book lift now) to the materiality (from wooden slat facade to rammed earth) and how it changes the way the building and the extended area of the Observatory Hill work. All these happened by using this space as a lens rather than trying to solve it independently.



Sketches of the addition (January, February, April)

Towards the end of the academic year and the completion of this graduation, the aim is to present this process directly and coherently. This project was formed after many back-and-forth, discussions, sketches, and models, forming many raw materials. Therefore, to reinterpret the personal archive, an appendix in the Project Book with every version of the addition -sketches, detailed models, and drawings- will be included. One by one, page after page, they will narrate a version of the story.

As far as the totality of the project is concerned, a series of photos will be produced to capture the atmosphere, as happened with the addition itself. The aim is to highlight that this graduation project is not only the addition; this space was the starting point on which the methodology was based, producing ideas generated in the rest of the building. The spaces that will be captured are the interior balcony to the reading room, the courtyards with the ducts, the exhibition space, and the room from where there is a window to the book-shorting machine. These pivotal moments were influenced by the addition's design, more or less. This series of photos will demonstrate how different these fragments are spread within the Library. They are different entities with unique features, but they all derive from the same process.

Undeniably, there are many ways to approach such a complex building. However, when choosing a reference point—like the one mentioned above—it is possible to go back and forth, compare every version quickly, and generate it into a broader context. Only by zooming in is it possible to understand that every small decision is a statement, a way of triggering the society and transforming its institutions. This way of thinking applies not only to Asplund's Library but also to the contemporary city and the pressing questions of the built environment.

Cities are already built with limited possibilities for significant interventions, so the challenge nowadays is to manage the built environment most sustainably while dealing with the ever-changing needs of society. Furthermore, society's attention has been significantly shifted towards public institutions and how they should be formed to include everyone. While libraries are trying to find their way of coexisting in an increasingly digital environment, the graduation project of Stockholm City Library brings together all these issues not only to transform this building but also to provide new insight into transforming a crucial public institution in a way to address contemporary society and future changes.