Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

Personal information	
Name	**Ries Schouten**
Student number	--------

Studio	
Name / Theme	MSc3|4 Palace / Interiors Buildings Cities	
Main mentor	Sam de Vocht	Architecture
Second mentor	Elina Karanastasi	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I chose the Graduation Studio of Interiors Buildings Cities primarily because it emphasizes attention to detail and a hands-on approach. I believe that model-making is a highly effective tool in the design process, involving a continuous cycle of creating, evaluating, and adapting. Additionally, working with models forces you to take a close look at the details of an architectural composition. Since I haven't engaged in much model-making in my academic studies yet, joining this studio will be an opportunity to improve my skills and gain valuable design knowledge.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Developing Stockholm City Library : A monastery of knowledge

Goal	
Location:	Stockholm
The posed problem,	An addition and/or adaptation of the Stockholm City Library

research questions and design assignments in which these result.

The analysis of the libraries, together with the P1 Design project 'a room for a library', has led to initial thoughts about the idea of a library, in its modern and public form. It has raised questions such as: Who uses the libraries? Why do they utilize them? What types of spaces do they require? How does a modern library relate to its traditional form? What should be the balance between public and private spaces in a library? What is the role and significance of books in a modern library?

In my view, these questions relate strongly with architecture of spaces. As Asplund delves into how sensory experiences and routing impact the utilization, hierarchy, and perception of spaces. I argue that the public libraries should enhance the connection with the outside world, while also embracing the private sphere to evoke a sense of home and belonging for individuals. How this

could result in a physical design will be addressed further in this graduation project, answering the main question:

How can de Stockholm city library, by Erik Gunnar Asplund, be developed and transformed into a contemporary, public library, serving the needs of a diverse, twenty-first century society?

The main question will be addressed by answering the following sub-questions:

- *Who is the library for?*

For a lot of people, it is to find something they are deprived of. This might be a quiet space for concentration, free internet, access to digital devices, or it could be a place for discussions, social contact, and access to non-digital materials (books). For example, the students who can't find a quiet non-distracted study place. The lonely elderly who are searching for social interaction. Or the low-income families who don't have the space and/or the facilities to read and study in a comfortable room. For the graduation project, I'm going to focus on this last group. For them, **the library is a place of refuge** from their often stressful lives. The public library can be a 'home' for those who are deprived of essential spaces and facilities due to their financial and social status. Especially for children reading is an essential part of their educational development. Good language and reading skills will help one move up the social ladder.

- *What are the responsibilities and expectations of a contemporary public library nowadays?*

The idea of a library, in its modern and public form, is explored for this research question. To explore this question I looked at other libraries, such as the Phillips Exeter library, Rotterdam Central Library, the LocHall in Tilburg and public library the Predik-herenklooster in Mechelen.

The Stockholm City Library isolates itself from the city with its high windows and internally focused design. In contrast, the Exeter Library by Louis Kahn strives to connect interior spaces with the campus's life outside. Additionally, the hierarchy between books and people varies in each library. Louis Kahn once noted that the Exeter Library houses the readers who use the books, not just the books themselves. Exeter Library emphasizes the reader's journey and experience, using light to guide visitors, organize spaces, and create comfortable reading areas. Seattle Public Library by OMA and the LocHall bathes in light for an open, public character. Stockholm City Library and Salle de Lecture Bibliothèque Nationale de France have high windows to enhance the formal setting and emphasize the books' significance. When surrounded by a wall of books in these libraries, they underscore the library's role as a knowledge institution. But, time has changed and so has the role of the library.

The original design of the Stockholm city library by Gunnar Asplund focuses on the **collecting and storing of Knowledge**. The knowledge, in the form of books, is displayed by walls of books in the reading halls and the Rotunda. The bookshelves in the Rotunda were only accessible to the librarian. Later on, an additional staircase was added, to make the books accessible for every visitor of the library. The library was not only a place where knowledge was collected and stored, but became a place of **sharing knowledge**. People could take books themselves and use the knowledge in their own practice. In my opinion, the adaptation of the Stockholm City library should focus on elaborating even more on the aspect of sharing knowledge. Spaces for discussion, lecturing, and informal reading places should be added to the library and enhance the sharing of knowledge between people.

Moreover, the modern public library should be a place where knowledge is not only theoretical but becomes practical too. Libraries are evolving from spaces primarily centered on knowledge consumption to becoming spaces for **knowledge creation**. It can be a place of using and making knowledge. The so-called makerspaces can house initiatives from the (local) society. The incorporating of makerspaces in public libraries, facilitates the creation and transformation of cultural values. But can the current Stockholm City library house all of these functions? Or should there be an addition? And How will this addition relate to the existing monumental building?

- What is an appropriate response to the existing building?

Following careful interrogation of both the 2006 and 2014 briefs, I developed an individual attitude toward the library, which I will test through the development of both an architectural strategy and an accompanying programmatic brief. In communicating my intentions, I engage not only my knowledge of this library but also the wider research I have been conducting as individuals and a group in relation to the public library as a type, to address the larger questions facing it. 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 optimizing 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?

My approach to the library is a careful investigation of what is already there, what works already, and what should be adapted. The current building has a high historic value and has a very static appearance. To house the functions discussed in the previous question, such as the maker spaces, I think an addition to the library is needed. This addition allows a more free and flexible design for the modern library. However, it should also respect the current buildings, such as the annex buildings and the bazaar, and their historic and architectural value. My addition makes a connection between the institution of knowledge (current Asplund building) and the sharing and creation of knowledge (new building). The addition should enhance the connection with the outside world, while also embracing the private sphere to evoke a sense of home and belonging for individuals.

Process

Method description

I'll be looking into these research questions by creating designs, analyzing projects that serve as references, and reading relevant literature. I'll be switching back and forth between these methods and documenting the whole process in my project journal. This way, I can share my progress and thoughts with my tutors and also reflect on my own decision-making process.

Literature and general practical references

The literature on the work of Gunnar Asplund and the Stockholm City Library:

Asplund, Erik Gunnar, 1885-1940 & Svenska arkitekters riksforbund. (1950). Gunnar Asplund, architect, 1885-1940 : plans, sketches and photos / published by Svenska Arkitektera

Rikaforbund ; ed. by Gustav Holmdahl, Sven Ivar Lind, Kjell Odeen ; with an essay by Hakon Ahlberg. Stockholm : Ad Tidskriften Byggmastaren

Wrede, Stuart, The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund, 1983.

The literature on other public libraries:

Corinne Bélier, Barry Bergdoll, Marc Le Coeur and Martin Bressani. Henri Labrouste: Structure Brought to Light. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012)

Emden, Cemal. The Essential Louis Kahn. Munich: Prestel Publishing, 2021.

Michael Kubo and Ramon Prat (Eds), *Seattle Public Library, OMA/LMN* (Barcelona: Actar, 2005), 15.

Spiro Kostof. A History of Architecture. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Other literature:

Aureli, P. Vittorio, & Tattara, M. (2017). Dogma: The room of one's own. Milano: Black square.

Cali, F., & Hervé, L. (1957). Architecture of truth: the cistercian abbey of le thoronnet in provence. Thames and Hudson.

Grassi, G. (1988). Architettura, lingua morta: architecture, dead language (Ser. Quaderni di lotus, 9 = lotus documents ; 9). Electa

Grassi, G., & Moschini, F. (1984). Giorgio grassi, progetti 1960-1980 (Ser. Centro di cat, 136). Centro Di.

Klinenberg, E. (2018). Palaces for the people : how social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life (First). Crown.

Woolf, V. (2004). A room of one's own. Penguin Books.

references:

the briefs of the Stockholm city library:
    2006 competition brief
    2012 conservation brief
    2014 Revised Brief

Archive material of the Stockholm City Library

Information on the anex buildings:
    Spelbomskan 13, 3, del av 16: Kulturhistorisk karakterisering, Lena Lundberg (text), Ingrid Johansson (foto)

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?
2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

Reflection:

1. The design for the new Stockholm City Library is all about architecture and its connection to the surroundings – right between a park and the city. To tackle technical challenges in the design, I'm using building science. By incorporating sustainability and smart solutions, my work not only contributes to architecture but also joins the broader conversation about creating structures that are environmentally friendly and flexible. My graduation work fits well with the MSc AUBS program, which focuses on making sustainable urban and building systems. My research on the future of libraries, dealing with heritage while meeting modern needs, aligns with the program's goal of finding eco-friendly and smart solutions for the built environment.

2. By imagining an expansion for the Stockholm City library, my research provides valuable insights into the broader framework of architectural and urban development. It goes beyond just the physical appearance of the building; it explores the essential considerations and potential changes needed for a modern public library.
   While tackling the challenges of the current situation, my work challenges the usual role of a library in today's society. The significance lies in exploring what the future of a modern public library should involve, particularly when dealing with an existing monumental building. The research aims to show how to adjust and improve an already important monument while preserving and respecting its significant value. In doing so, my work not only adds to discussions about architecture but also joins broader talks about the changing role of libraries in the modern age.