

Erik Gunnar Asplund.

1 Erik Gunnar Asplund, being Sweden's most important 20th century architect and having massively
2 influenced Scandinavian architecture for more than twenty years, has an important place in the history of
3 modern architecture. Asplund, the architect, was a forerunner but also a product of his time and his
4 environment, i.e. Sweden from the turn of the century onwards. The industrialisation and rapid
5 urbanisation that took place in Sweden in the early 20th century created the conditions that produced a
6 new architecture. This new architecture, commonly called National Romanticism, insisted on genuine
7 materials and national character while integrating national heritage with international patterns. Asplund
8 emanates from this National Romanticism. His Karlshamn Secondary School, completed in 1918, is
9 unmistakably National Romantic as are a number of villas he designed during his early years,
10 including Villa Callin in the Sodermanland village in Albenga.
11 However, Asplund's works from 1911 to 1930 are permeated by neo-classical language, the so-called
12 Modern Classicism.
13 An interest in classicism had already begun in Sweden as early as 1910. Just as with National
14 Romanticism, the focus was on simple craftsmanship in building but other features of the Swedish
15 tradition now came into the limelight; the narrow building with its hipped roof and smooth walls of
16 timber or rough-cast. Asplund's principal work in the Modern Classical style is the Stockholm City
17 Library (1920-1928), which emphasises the geometrical simplicity and pure forms so favoured by this
18 Classical revival.
19 When designing his library, Asplund was inspired by the urban context, the operational requirements of a
20 library and extensive studies of built libraries in the U.S.A. with their essential scheme of a central lending
21 hall with downlighting surrounded by reading rooms and glazed courtyards. The library is famous for its
22 high circular lending hall rising as a drum above the three lower cubic wings which surround it and which
23 are arranged in the shape of a horseshoe. The roughly triangular spaces formed by the intersection of the
24 drum with the right-angled arms of the wings are open at the top to allow light in. This combination of
25 spherical and cubic forms is a motif frequently to be found in Asplund's earlier projects.
26 The first sketches of the library prepared in 1921 depict a domed central lending hall, however Asplund
27 substituted the dome with a tall cylindrical shaft, which made it possible for light to be admitted through
28 20 clerestory windows located on the outer walls of the cylinder instead of through the opaque glazing of
29 the roof lights. The building consists of four nearly identical symmetrical facades, three of which have
30 main entrances. Each entry is framed by a large grid of windows, approximately 12 ft wide and 30 ft tall,
31 whilst the rows of numerous, small windows on the upper half of the façade are reminiscent of those on all
32 of the surrounding buildings. The windows are constructed according to the "Bratt system" with metal
33 frames fixed directly to the wall. The large entry windows, the height of the clerestory windows, the
34 cylinder and the array of many small high windows give the building an impersonal but imposing feeling.
35 The building is constructed of brick and concrete and the roof over the lending hall is a steel construction
36 with sheet copper cladding and a suspended ceiling. Ornamentation on the external façade consists of a
37 few pictorial friezes in bas-relief and the doors of the library are free emulations of the Thorvalden
38 Museum in Copenhagen.
39 Overall, the facades are less impressive than the interior spaces. The library contains four floors; the
40 basement, the ground floor, the first floor and the top floor. The main library is located on the first floor
41 and the tall cylindrical volume is occupied by the lending hall. It is reached by a narrow staircase from the
42 entrance on the East wing of the ground floor. The lending hall is circled by two amphitheatre like
43 galleries. The central staircase to the lending hall is flanked on either side by two stairs, following the
44 perimeter of the cylinder as they rise. Circular space wrapped by stairs is an ancient motif also used by
45 Asplund in his Lister County Courthouse. The other floors contain the children and juvenile department,
46 study rooms, store rooms, workshops, offices and service spaces.
47 The architecture of the library occupies a unique position in Asplund's entire oeuvre. It is the last and the
48 most important work that was built before his sudden conversion to Functionalism in the late 1920's. Yet,
49 in the simple, glazed shop front base of the library, completed in 1928, Functionalism has already made its
50 entrance.

A) Answer the questions using the text.

- 1. What factors contributed to the development of a new architecture, National Romanticism, in Sweden at the turn of the century?**

- 2. Name two buildings designed by Asplund in the National Romantic style.**

- 3. Asplund studied the already existing libraries in the U.S.A. Describe these libraries' essential theme.**

- 4. In Asplund's Stockholm City Library where was the lending hall?**

- 5. How did light enter the central lending hall?**

- 6. What features make the building imposing and impersonal?**

- 7. What is the building made of?**

- 8. How many floors are there in the library and what do they contain?**

- 9. How many main entrances are there to the library and what frames each entrance?**

- 10. Name the three architectural styles mentioned in the text which Asplund favoured.**

B) Write true or false next to each of the following statements.

1. The windows on the upper half of the façade of the Stockholm City Library are bigger than the than the lower windows. _____

2. Asplund's conversion to Functionalism followed his Classical period. _____

3. The cubic wings of the library are higher than the cylindrical shaft. _____

4. The external façade is quite plain and impersonal. _____

5. Classicism in Sweden incorporated some traditional features. _____

C) What or who do the following words refer to?

1. "which" in line 17 refers to

2. "their" in line 20 refers to.....

3. "which" in line 22 refers to

4. "those" in line 31 refers to

5. "they" in line 44 refers to

CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER:

1). _____ does he go to the theatre?

- a) How long b) How often c) What kind of d) Who

2) The concert _____ at nine and _____ at midnight.

- a) start finish b) starts finishes c) starts finishes d) startingfinishing

3) The parks surrounding the public library _____ by Asplund.

- a) designed b) was designed c) is designed d) were designed

4) The plaster on the walls _____ yet so we cannot finish the work.

- a) hasn't dried b) didn't dry c) has dried d) dry

5) The storm badly damaged the roof of the house and so they _____ to put on a new one.

- a) plans b) are planning c) planning d) is planning

6) The cylindrical shaft _____ it possible for the building to be lit through clear-glass windows in the outer walls.

- a) let b) made c) make d) allows

7) The combination of spherical and cubic forms, _____ Asplund had also used in his other projects, contributes greatly to the building's simplicity.

- a) who b) which c) whom d) where

8) Asplund became one of _____ representatives of Swedish Classicism.

- a) the most admired b) most admired c) more admired d) the admirest

9) The interior spaces are _____ the facades.

- a) more important b) most important than c) more important than d) as important than

10) They _____ substitute the dome with a cylindrical shaft.

- a) are going to b) is going to c) are going d) will to

11) The tiles were discovered accidentally while they _____ the floor of the tower.

- a) are repairing b) are being repaired c) were repairing d) repaired

12) Where _____ at six o'clock yesterday evening?

- a) were you b) was you c) have you been d) did you be

13) Unless they _____ the roof soon, it _____.

- a) repair...will collapse b) don't repair.....will collapse c) will repair.....collapses
d) repairedwill collapse.

14) The Stockholm City Library, which is one of the _____ examples of Swedish Classicism, was completed in 1928.

- a) the goodest b) the most good c) the best d) the better than

15) Very _____ Georgian buildings have been pulled down, most of them have been restored.

- a) few b) little c) many d) enough

16) He _____ his best friend _____ he was a child.

- a) has been knowing since b) has knew since c) has knownsince d) has known ...from

17) People _____ more letters before the telephone was invented.

- a) usually write b) used to writing c) used to wrote d) used to write

18) The project _____ approved by the European Union before work can commence.

- a) must be b) must to be c) must being d) hasn't to be

19) Noto is the _____ town that I _____ seen.

- a) most pretty....have ever b) prettier....had ever c) the prettiest.....have ever d) the prettiest....ever

20) _____ they _____ bridge in 1930?

- a) Didbuild b) Havebuilt c) Didbuilt d) Dobuild

21. We weren't hungry so we didn't eat _____.

- a) nothing b) something c) no thing d) anything

22. We _____ walk home last night because there weren't any buses.

- a) must b) had to c) ought to d) might

23. They _____ finished their dinner when she arrived.

- a) has already b) had already c) have already d) was already

24. They didn't want to go with _____.

- a) our b) ours c) we d) us

25. Susan _____ her photograph _____ last week.

- a) had took b) is having taken c) had taken d) hastaken

