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# ARCHITECTURE AND COMPENSATION:
## Renewal and expansion of the City Library in Gothenburg

**Magnus Rönn**

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with renewal and preservation in a combined architectural and detailed development planning project, including cultural values and architectural qualities. The focus is on how compensatory actions, cultural values and architectural qualities are expressed in the expansion of the City Library in Gothenburg. In this case, the detailed development plan regulates both land-use and architectural design.

The specific goal is to produce knowledge on how key players practise compensation and understand heritage values and architectural qualities. From a selection of 39 contemporary, detailed development plans, one plan has been chosen for investigation in this paper. The motive behind this selection is that the expansion provides both an interesting background to quality issues and raises important questions concerning the renewal of a public building at a site of great value for citizens.

The detailed development plan can be understood both as a product and a process. Seen as a product, compensatory measures are embedded in the plan as fixed regulations to support renewal as well as to safeguard values and architectural qualities. These regulations concern both land-use and architectural design. Compensatory thinking as part of the planning process is expressed through changes based on comments from key-actors, starting with the design of the expansion of library, and is continued in the transformation to make the renewal possible through the detailed development plan.

KEYWORDS

Architecture, Design, Compensation, Value, Quality, Detailed development plan

## INTRODUCTION

This article examines the 2008 expansion of the City Library of Gothenburg. It is a combined planning and architectural project that is reviewed in a case-study.[1] The architectural project of 2008 is a parallel commission of four architectural firms. The background is that the library required new space for its activities. The planning project aimed to produce a detailed development plan that made it possible for the builder to construct the winning proposal in the parallel commission. Preservation and exploitation were two clear interests that needed to be coordinated in the planning and architectural project. How the City Planning Office chose to make visible and weigh competing interests against each other is one reason for the choice of the case-study.

The purpose of the article is twofold. Partly the intention is to understand how cultural values and architectural qualities are presented and treated in detailed development plans; partly the intent is to examine which forms of cultural compensation can be found in the expansion of the City Library of Gothenburg and its planning and architectural project. The question is how compensatory measures are expressed when valuable aspects of the cultural environment are to be secured. The focus lies on how planning, architecture, cultural environment and compensation appear in the planning and design of the selected detailed development plan.

The City Library is located at Götaplatsen, which is an important urban space in Gothenburg. The expansion of the City Library is not only a local concern. This is an area of national heritage interest that is designated as valuable by the Swedish National Heritage Board. The parallel commission of 2008, therefore, took place at a sensitive point. The County Administration is charged with reviewing detailed development plans in areas of national heritage interest and are to reject plan proposals that risk causing considerable damage. The power over the land in areas of national heritage interest is shared by the Municipality and government agencies responsible for the cultural environment.

The City Planning Office in Gothenburg is responsible for the planning and design of detailed development plans at the request of the politicians in the Building Committee. The plan aims to make the site accessible for exploitation. The implementation of the plan is a subordinate goal for the City Planning Office. Detailed development plans are designed with consideration to the limitations that follow provisions in laws, authorities' regulations,

municipal policy and objections from key players in plan-projects. Compensation appears, in this perspective, as a method to remove obstacles and solve problems in planning processes (Rönn and Benjamin Grahn, 2020).

The study of the City Library is part of a research project that is executed with the support of the National Heritage Board's R&D Grant. The research project examines exploitations in areas of national heritage interest (Rönn, 2019). From a selection of 39 contemporary detailed development plans in Gothenburg, 8 cases have been the objects of study. The research project examines planning projects from the mission statements through to an approved, detailed development plan. This article is based on the experiences from one of these cases: the rebuilding and expansion of the City Library in Gothenburg. The practical benefit from the research project is in presentations of how key players change, renew, damage, defend and protect cultural environments in planning and architectural projects. The academic use is in the identification of compensatory thinking in detailed development plans. A first step is to define and highlight expressions of compensation in planning and architectural projects. The academic contribution includes methodological findings and knowledge development about culture environmental compensation in planning processes.

Cultural environment compensation has appeared in several different ways in Gothenburg when areas of national heritage interest have been renewed. So, for example, compensation can occur in planning as an answer to political regulation documents and can manifest as regulations in detailed development plans. Further, compensation can be seen as revisions of plan proposals or measures that aim to recreate cultural values and architectural qualities lost due to demolishment and rebuilding. Compensation may also be actions to minimise damage to national heritage sites, protect values, preserve qualities and support new properties of the cultural environment. Aesthetic programs that are developed to control the design of new buildings with consideration for the location and its qualities can also contain compensatory functions – unspoken and shown in illustrations as well as in written design guidelines. The concept should, therefore, be interpreted and understood in its specific context.

**Starting points**

In Sweden, the Planning and Building Act (Plan och bygglagen, PBL) and the Environmental Code (Miljöbalken, MB), demand that municipalities take

consideration of heritage interests in their planning. Detailed development plans that risk damage to national interests are to be rejected by the County Administration, which is responsible for monitoring national interests in the planning processes. It is the National Heritage Board that appoints areas of national heritage interest and affirms designated cultural values and properties of the environment. The County Administration is to review detailed development plans with a starting point in the National Heritage Board's descriptions of national heritage interests (PBL, Ch 3. §10). What, in the actual case, is considerable damage to the cultural environment based on the national heritage description depends on the extent and focus of the exploitation. There are no general answers – the assessment of plan-projects must arise from the effect on the location with a basis in the presented architectural project.

The cultural environment is a collective good in PBL and MB. It means that cultural heritage is viewed as a collective good for citizens. For this reason, areas "*that have a value from a public point of view because of their natural values or cultural values or with regard to outdoor life… [should] as far as possible be protected against measures that can considerably damage the natural or cultural environment*" (MB, Ch3 §6). Permission can be combined with an obligation for developers "*to execute or fund … specific measures to compensate the intrusion into public interests that the operation causes*" (MB Ch. 16 §9). The view of the cultural environment as a public resource in society is also a part of the Culture Heritage Act (Kulturmiljölagen, KML). The introductory regulation in the law is aimed at individual citizens, builders and authorities: *"The responsibility for the cultural environment is shared by everyone. Individuals, as well as authorities, are to show respect and care for the cultural environment. Those who plan or execute a project are to ascertain that damage to the cultural environment is avoided or limited*" (KML, §1).

MB has a similar damage-hierarchy. Exploitations of valuable natural and cultural environments shall at first hand be avoided, secondarily be limited and thirdly be compensated (Naturvårdsverket, 2016:22). This damage-hierarchy represents, however, a scientific approach constructed on the assumption that environments can be delimited to measurable properties, which seldom fits in developments that affect cultural values and architectural qualities. Nor are there any unambiguous correlations between value, damage and compensation. Negative as well as positive impacts of architectural projects are judgments that vary with consideration to assignments,

participants, resources and roles in the planning. Instead, compensatory measures manifest in planning as answers to critical viewpoints to the plan proposal from key players. The compensatory thinking is part of a negotiation culture within municipalities that aims to remove obstacles for planned developments, make the most of cultural values and to control the design of new built environments to achieve architectural qualities. Compensation is no unambiguous concept in this context but has both negative and positive consequences.

There are two regulatory documents in the municipality of Gothenburg that mention compensation. The first is the policy of 2008 called The Compensatory Measures for Nature and Recreation (*Kompensationsåtgärderna för natur och rekreation).* Compensation in this policy means *"measures that are taken in connection to exploitation to compensate (replace) a lost value or function"* (2008:9). The second document is the Comprehensive Plan of Gothenburg (Översiktsplan för Göteborg, ÖP) of 2009, which specifies how the land is to be used, developed and preserved in the long run in the municipality. According to the ÖP of 2009, compensation should be practised in exploitations in Gothenburg. "*Removed nature, culture and recreational values are (to be) compensated*" (ÖP, Part 1:96) and the municipality shall "*develop and use methods of compensatory measures for natural, cultural and recreational values in planning*" (ÖP, Part 1:96). The City Planning Office shall actively apply *"usage regulations, protection regulations, demolishment prohibitions and compensatory measures for built environments of cultural, historical value in the development or elaboration of the Comprehensive Plan and detailed development plans"* (ÖP, Part 1:97).

**Criteria for cultural environment compensation**

This article assumes that cultural environment compensation is a concept in the planning and development of detailed development plans, which can be defined with support from four main criteria. If these main criteria are met, the detailed development plan contains compensation. According to this definition, it is required that (a) the City Planning Office receives a planning undertaking, which (b) aims for development that (c) has, or risks having, negative effects on the cultural environment in the planning area, which (d) leads to revisions of the plan proposal, new plan regulations or changed design of the architectural project. The prerequisite for compensation is that there is some critique that needs to be reviewed by the City Planning Office for the detailed development plan to be approved. The criteria are based

on both the use of language in reports and actions in planning processes conducted by key actors. It is not a question of what is true or false. Nor is the definition an issue of what is right or wrong language use, but concerns whether the criteria clarify what cultural environment compensation is as a concept and if they are be considered appropriate for its purposes, enlightening, fruitful, or misleading and confusing.

The difficulty in applying the concept lies in the interpretation of compensatory intentions, measures and functions. In the chosen detailed development plan, the compensatory thinking can be seen as embedded in the plan and implementation description. There is an *"invisible"* form of cultural environment compensation, which is hidden in the detailed development plan. Helena Teräväinen (2020) uses the word *"unspoken"* for this practice. A methodological insight is therefore that the compensatory thinking needs to be made visible through the study of planning as a process, from assignment to the approved, detailed development plan. The planning material and statements from key players show to what extent changes to the plan proposal has a compensatory background and function. The context and intentions convey knowledge of cultural environment compensation in plan-projects.

**Detailed development plans**

The planning and design of detailed development plans is regulated in PBL. The detailed development plan is, in contrast to the Comprehensive Plan of the municipality, a binding document that only allows for minor deviations. The detailed development plan as a document consists of three parts:

- *The Plan Description:* There is to be a plan description that describes the preconditions, aims and considerations behind the proposal. The plan description lies as a foundation for the design of the detailed development plan with regard to interests and consequences (PBL, Ch. 4. § 33).
- *Implementation Description:* There is to be a description that describes how the detailed development plan is to be implemented (PBL, Ch. 4, § 31). The concrete execution is then regulated in specific agreements between the municipality and the builder.
- *Zoning Diagram with Plan Regulations:* There is to be a diagram of the area with regulations that denote the purpose of the land and the conditions for exploitation. The zoning diagram regulations show how the land may be used and built (PBL, Ch. 4, § 30).

A crucial aspect of the communication of knowledge in the planning proposals is the presentation of the architectural project, enabled by the detailed development plan. A limited selection of illustrations of the built environment is included in the planning proposals as a foundation for assessments of how cultural values and architectural qualities are affected by the exploitation of the site. An essential requirement is therefore that the drawings and photomontages give a true visual impression and highlight crucial aspects of the future environment.

Typical of the contemporary, detailed development plans in Gothenburg as examined in the research project and which contain exploitations in areas of national heritage interest, is that consultants are hired to investigate natural and cultural values. New knowledge is added to the detailed development plans during the planning process. The key players ask for a more informative view of the planning proposal. The investigations by consultants are used as planning material. In the ÖP of Gothenburg 2009, it is also mentioned that changes of cultural environments require knowledge, increased awareness and *"clear prioritising of cultural, historical and architectural values"* (ÖP, part 1:95). The brief national heritage descriptions of The National Heritage Board have to be supplemented with historical information to become meaningful planning material in plan-projects.

External consultants produced the historical planning material for the expansion of the City Library during the period 2004-2008. The planning material was compiled by the City Planning Office's historian and had three specific functions in the architectural and plan-project. Firstly, planning materials were used to identify, describe and protect cultural values and architectural qualities. Secondly, planning materials served as a foundation for the design of plan regulations in the detailed development plan and thirdly to transfer qualities to the architectural project through an aesthetic program. It is three functions of historical planning materials that, to a varying degree, exist in the 8 detailed development plans from Gothenburg with exploitations of national heritage interests that are part of the research project (Rönn, 2019).

**Method**

The expansion of the Gothenburg City Library is a case-study. It is a planning and architectural project that is examined with case-study methodology. Behind the choice of research strategy, there are two considerations. The case-study methodology is firstly appropriate for examinations of complex

design and plan processes. The second reason is the proximity to practice. Professional competence in architecture and urban design is developed through the experience of practical cases. The cases generate a repertoire of examples that in an adapted form are reused in new assignments.

Linda Groat (2002) emphasises that the case-study as a research strategy aims to examine phenomena in their natural context. Flyvbjerg (2006) defends the case-study as a scientific method for knowledge production with strong arguments. He emphasises that the case-study methodology as a research strategy is useful both to develop theories, test hypotheses and present instructive narratives based on empirical evidence.

**Selection and data collection**

This case description is the result of a literature review, archival studies, close reading of documents, site visits and discussions at seminars and workshops. From a selection of 39 contemporary, detailed development plans in Gothenburg that contain exploitation in areas of national heritage interest, one case has been chosen for an in-depth analysis. The motive for studying the expansion of the City Library is that the case has given rise to questions about renewal and cultural, environmental compensation.

Data of plan-projects have been collected from the archives of the City Planning Office. The appeals have been obtained from the County Administration. The architectural project is based on the collection and analysis of four types of data: (a) program, competition proposals and the jury report from the architectural competition for a new library in Gothenburg from 1960-61; (b) program, proposals and the assessment statements from the parallel commission of 2006; (c) the review in the Swedish journal *Arkitektur,* following the grand opening of the rebuilt and expanded City Library. Complementary data about the library as an architectural project is based on a literature search; and (d) site visits and photo documentation have been used to compare architectural drawings with the built environment.

**Aims and research questions**

The expansion of the City Library of Gothenburg occured in an area of national heritage interest. The aim is to highlight the treatment of cultural values and architectural qualities in the planning and architectural project, including to identify and make visible how compensatory thinking is expressed in the renewal of the City Library.

The research questions are about architecture, cultural environment and compensation. How are cultural values and architectural qualities, identified in the planning and architectural project, treated? How do the key players refer to the national heritage interest? How is compensatory thinking expressed in the case? What types of compensatory measures exist in the planning and design of the detailed development plan?

## CASE DESCRIPTION

### The city library and its urban context

In the program for *Culturally and Historically Valuable Built Environments (Kulturhistoriskt värdefull bebyggelse)* of 1999, Götaplatsen with its surroundings is described as the most important area of Gothenburg. The urban space is the result of an architectural competition occurring in 1916-18. The space has been renewed with public cultural institutions in three stages. The first stage contains the art hall and art museum with connecting stairs in 1923. The second stage is completion of the city theatre and concert hall in 1935. The third stage is the City Library which was built in 1967 after an architectural competition was held in 1960-61. Not until six years after a winner had been selected in 1961 was a reworked version of the winning proposal constructed. The project mission was, however, not given to the first-prize winner but to the author of the proposal in second place, who were architects from Gothenburg. In 1967, Lund and Valentin Arkitekter presented the new library in the Swedish journal *Arkitektur* and stated that the office was given the assignment after a repeated competition. But an organiser should only arrange a repetition of a competition if the jury fails to select a winner. In the public competition of 1960-61, organised by the city, the jury awarded a clear first-prize winner: two students from Stockholm, Granström & Östberg.

The architectural competition for a new library at Götaplatsen was announced as an open competition in 1960, approved by the architects' association. The competition resulted in 86 design proposals, which were presented anonymously; only the competition administrator who received the proposals knew the names of the authors behind the designs. The demand for anonymity is a way for the profession to assure equal and just conditions in architectural competitions. The idea is that the best proposal shall be selected as winner, irrespective of the author's background, reputation and status. Only after the competition has been decided are the jury members allowed to know who had been awarded the first prize. During the judging full anonymity applies. A design proposal can only be presented to the jury in a manner that

does not reveal who has submitted the competition entry. The anonymity in architectural competitions is regulated by the competition rules, which in paragraph 8 has been given the following wording:

> *Full anonymity must be maintained during the assessment of the proposals. Each proposal should be given a motto. A sealed opaque envelope containing a slip with the name of the author should be attached. Each proposal must be presented in such a way that the author remains anonymous* (Competition rules, 2016).

**Jury and judging criteria**

In the Gothenburg competition of 1960-61, a jury of six members was given the task to rank the proposals. Two members represented the library in the premises: Arne Berggren and Helge Nyberg. The other four members had competency within architecture, planning and urban design: Kristian von Sydow, Karl Olov *"Koj"* Jonsson, Lars Ågren and Sven Silow. The jury structured their jury report in two main areas, based on the criteria of the competition program, which was the basis for the examination of the proposals:

- *The Library's Exterior Situation:* the disposition of the competition area, adaptation to the terrain and surrounding built environment.
- *The Interior Organisation of the Library:* accessibility and clarity, the grouping and inner design of the premises.

**First prize and second prize**

In 1961, the jury decided on the winner of the competition. First prize of 10.000 SEK went to a proposal with the motto *"Gabriella"* for its good organisation of the library's premises and the ability to develop the project, with regard to interior and exterior design. The authors of the winning design proposal were Tommy Granström and Erik Östberg, two students from the School of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. Their proposal had a modernist architectural expression and was given the following assessment by the jury in their report from the competition:

> *The library building has a well-collected volume, which in the floors effortlessly connects to the surrounding buildings and the terrain. The building's height is somewhat over-dimensioned, considering the rising rhythm of the location. The proposal, however, has partially succeeded in compensating for this drawback by keeping the annexe*

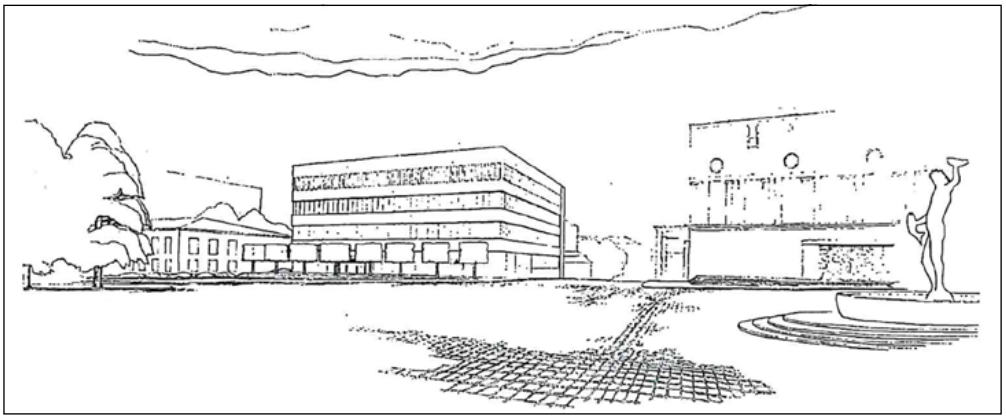

*Figure 1. Winning design. Perspective for proposal by Tommy Granström and Erik Östberg awarded first prize in the public competition for a new library in Gothenburg 1960-61. The flat roof is together with the horizontal window bands typical in expression for a functionalistic form language. Source: SARs tävlingsblad.*

> *to the hotel low. The exterior design is powerful in that the somewhat heavy manner, which is characteristic of the location, and the material choice – gold brick – is suitable. The organisation of the library is thoroughly analysed and particularly well planned. The building is organised as an atrium building of four floors with different rooms grouped around a large and beautiful hall, which creates good clarity and makes the premises easily accessible. The lift and stair connections are good and function well. The required reserve spaces for administration are not presented. The library's two lowest service floors are particularly meritoriously planned with good suggestions for an effective and economical organization. The proposal is possible to develop. The proposal has been cost calculated.* (SAR:s Tävlingsblad 4, 1961:108)

In second place in the competition with 7.000 SEK as financial compensation, the jury placed a design proposal under the motto *"Fullbokat"* (fully booked). This proposal was developed by the architects Rune Lund and Alf Valentin, in cooperation with interior designers Sture Björnlund and Lennart Tropp, domiciled in Gothenburg. The jury gave the following comment to this competition proposal:

> *The library building has an elucidated plan shape and a low height, which gives the building a, for its context, rather too unassuming volume. The exterior design is, if you disregard some minor details,*

*essentially good. The facade design is full of character but somewhat stiff. The building's plan arrangement is good and the rooms are placed well in regard to each other. The open planning with large floor platforms makes it possible for not only flexibility but it is also personnel conserving. The building's dark core demands artificial lighting even during clear days. The reserve spaces are throughout easy to use both as rental spaces and for the expansion of the library, not least through how they are located on every floor. The expedition has an unpleasant location underneath the main stairs. The actual book floor has been given a generous and well collected solution, as has hall 5 with adjoining spaces in the subterrain floor. The café has been given an unsuitable location on the subterrain floor together with an under illuminated reserve space, which is interpreted as an exhibition space with passage to the city theatre – a hardly realistic thought. The proposal shows a suitable plan for the administrative department*. (SAR:s Tävlingsblad 4, 1961:110)

**Parallel commission**

In 2006, a parallel commission for new premises for the City Library of Gothenburg was organized by the City Planning Office. Four well known architect offices were invited: Lund & Valentin Arkitekter, Malmström & Edström Arkitektkontor, White Arkitekter and Erséus Arkitekter/WSP Sverige. Parallel commissions are similar to an invited competition, with some decisive differences. There are no requirements for anonymity, no need for approval from Swedish Architects nor are there jury members appointed. In parallel commissions, the architectural offices may develop their proposals in an open dialogue with the organizer. Swedish Architects views parallel commissions as a suitable form for investigating design questions, develop projects and for choosing an architect for an assignment.

The parallel commission had significance for the outcome of the architectural competition of 1960-61 and the City Library's renewal in 2006. It had an impact on the invitation from the City Planning Office to the four architect offices as well as on how the library was described in the supporting background materials. Ola Nylander described the decision by the city to assign the project mission to Lund & Valentin Arkitekter instead of Granström & Östberg as a scandal, in a newspaper article in 2008. The decision was contrary to the fundamental idea of the competition. There was a clear winner. The assignment should therefore have been given to the students who

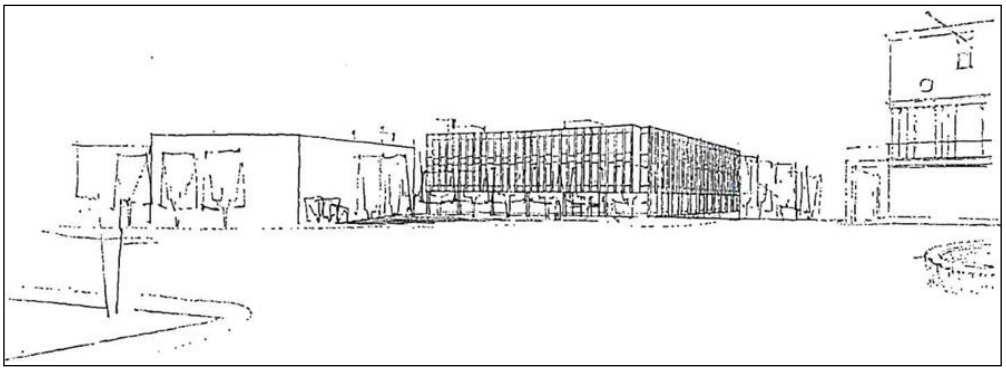

*Figure 2. Perspective of the proposal in second place in the competition by Rune Lund, Alf Valentin, Sture Björklund and Lennart Tropp. The vertical design language of the facade deviates from the surroundings. The architecture seeks a contrastive effect. The vertical design language of the facade reoccurs in the winner in the parallel commission for rebuilding and expansion of the City Library. Source: SARs tävlingsblad.*

had the copyright of the winning proposal in the architectural competition. The criticism by Lund & Valentin Arkitekter of the winning proposal in the parallel commission of 2006, Nylander appears foremost as an expression of a bad loser. A substantial part of the critique was that the expansion, with its new glazed facade and design with a vertical expression, had a foreign design language. A closer review reveals similarities in architectural expressions in the facade between the proposal in second place in the architectural competition 1960-61 and the winner in the 2006 parallel commission.

The explanation for why the City Planning Office invited Lund & Valentin Arkitekter to the parallel commission can both be found in that the office was allowed to complete the design of the winning competition proposal of 1960-61 and in the ethical rules that had been adopted by Swedish Architects.[2] Point 10 in these rules has the following wording: *"The architect shall respect the copyright and other immaterial rights. An architect who is offered to complete, develop, or change another architect's creation shall before the undertaking personally inform them"*. Point 11 is also relevant in this context: *"An architect who has worked on another's creation shall name the original copyright holder when papers that describe the creation are presented"*. However, Granström & Östberg, authors of the winning proposal in the competition of 1960-61, are made invisible and were not mentioned, neither in the parallel commission nor in the historical planning material. This may also be seen as a scandal according to ethical rules.

**The brief**

The program for the parallel commission was developed by the City Planning Office, the Culture Administration and an estate manager in Gothenburg for public business (lokalsekretariatet). The purpose of the assignment was described as twofold in the program: Firstly, the City Planning Office requested an architectural renewal of the City Library as a building to supply the operations needed for space. Secondly the parallel commission were to generate material for a new, detailed development plan that allows for an expansion of the City Library.

*Figure 3. The City Library of 1967 by Lund & Valentin Arkitekter. Source: The proposal for a new detailed plan of 2008, City Planning Office, City of Gothenburg.*

The invited architectural offices were encouraged to show *"ideas of how the meeting between Avenyn, Götaplatsen and connected city spaces can be designed"* (Program för parallella uppdrag, 2006:4). The aim of the renewal was that the building *"shall become an independent individual with a strong expression"*, which related to the surroundings (ibid. 2006:4). In the program, it was mentioned that the City Library is a part of an area of national heritage interest. *"The neighbourhoods around Avenyn and Götaplatsen are part of a larger area around Vasastaden with surroundings that are classified as of national heritage interest according to Ch. 3 6§ in the Swedish Environmental*

*Code. This has to be taken into account*" (ibid, 2006:6). But there were no specified directions or demands that describe how these requirements for the cultural environment were to be met and expressed in the renewal of the City Library.

**Assessment criteria and assessment process**

The proposals in the parallel commission were evaluated as a library project and as urban design, respectively. The library as an establishment included assessment criteria such as functionality, flexibility, work environment, accessibility and user friendliness, as well as aesthetics and design. The library as a city building was to be judged with regard to architectural qualities, cityscape, adaptation to surrounding built environment and to cultural, historical values. These are value loaded criteria, typical for architecture competitions, and which were used in the parallel commission.

For the ranking of the proposals in the parallel commission, a judging group and a task group of experts were responsible. The judging group comprised four politicians and four senior officials from the city.[3] There is accordingly a strong political representation in the choice of a winner. The politicians in the judging group, who were assumed to represent the interest of the citizens, came from the Cultural Committee and the Building Board. The senior officials in the judging group were the Library Director, the Project Manager at the Real Estate Manger as well as the Planning Chief and an architect from the City Planning Office. In the task group, there were only officials from the City Library (library director and coordinator), Real Estate Manager (project manager) and the City Planning Office (plan chief, plan architect and architect).[4]

**Selecting winner**

The judging group and the task group met nine times to review the proposals for the rebuilding and expansion of the City Library. The task group had a coordination meeting with the architects' offices and ranked the submissions. Two of the design teams, Malmström & Edström Arkitektkontor and Erséus Arkitekter/WSP, presented especially interesting proposals and were requested to adapt their solutions with consideration to the program. After a renewed comparison of the architectural proposals, the judging group recommended the design solution from Erséus/WSP for implementation (Figure 4). The reason to go forward with their solution was phrased like this:

*Figure 4. Winning design. The facade towards Avenyn in the proposal by Erséus Arkitekter and WSP in the parallel commission. The vertical expression is clearer in the adapted proposal for the facade that was built in 2014. Source: Erséus Arkitekter and WSP..*

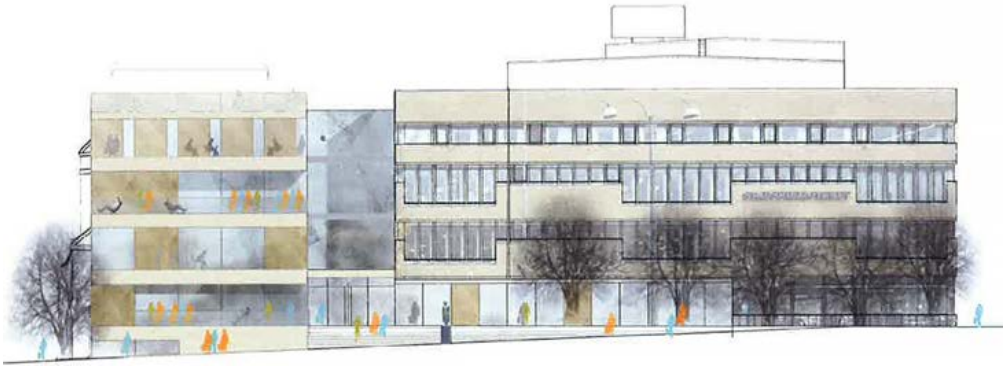

*Figure 5. The competing proposal in the final ranking by Malmström & Edström Arkitekter. Their solution is a new building on one side of the library. Source: Malmström & Edström Arkitekter.*

> *The judging group is of the view that the proposal's overarching approach to the assignment – to create a whole building – is the proposal's large advantage and, taken together, this can vitalize both Götaplatsen and the establishment. The interior of the proposal is well arranged and flexible, which gives great opportunities to create a functional and appealing library. In the continued undertaking, the design of the facades must be further studied to manage the insulation and simultaneously not hide the bricks of the existing building. In a continued adaptation, the context with the rest of the buildings at Götaplatsen should also be given particular attention. Altogether, the judging group considers that the proposal from Erséus Arkitekter AB/ WSP Sverige AB combines in an exemplary way an exciting, modern and innovative exterior with a well organised, flexible and functional interior.* (Utlåtande parallella uppdrag 2007:19)

The judging group was not unanimous in its decision. The competing proposal by Malmström & Edström Arkitekter was given good reviews (Figure 5).[5] A majority of the judging group found, however, that the solution with an expanded facade from Erséus/WSP was the best. As a foundation for the continued adaptation of the proposal, the City Planning Office developed an aesthetic program together with Erséus Arkitekter, the builder (Higab) and the City Library. To strengthen the steering function of the aesthetic program, the City Planning Office had the intention to let the document become an attachment to the detailed development plan. Additionally, the detailed development plan was to be given a clause that gave the aesthetic program the same legal status as the other regulations of the zoning diagram (Gestaltningsprogram 2008-11-18). The aesthetic program contained general advice and starting points. The ambition was to *"create a modern, open and attractive meeting place with a strong presence in the urban space"* (ibid, 2008:2). The renewal was to create a volume that corresponded to the surrounding built environment. The new facade of glass was to cause the building to be perceived as transparent. The inner life of the library was to be invited out into the urban space and to contribute to a safer and more ebullient environment. The design of the facade and the material choices was to connect to Götaplatsen's brick characteristics and be specially studied in the project. Additionally, the interior of the building was to be *"freed from recent additions and regain its original elegance and purity with open flexible floors. Great emphasis is put on preserving, recreating and renewing the interior qualities of the building in a conscious interaction between old and new"* (Ibid: 2008:5).

**Old and new facade**

The tension between new and old was a main theme in the renewal of the City Library. Daniel Koch (2008) notes that the judging group viewed preservation in the winning proposal by Erséus Arkitekter/WSP as a matter of keeping the existing brick facade by adding a glass expansion, a solution the judging group in their evaluation perceived as a way to create understanding for the history of the building. According to Koch, it is a simplified interpretation of the thematic. The architecture embodies the relationship between new and old as a cultural, historical border between outside and inside. Visitors who walk through the addition to the exterior and arrive at the interior, original parts of the library pass a clear border, a physical marker where two very different environments meet. However, this border can only be experienced distinctly at the corridor in the ground floors and the exten-

*Figure 6, 7 and 8. The original facade seen from inside. To the left, the brick façade seen in the corridor at the ground floor. In the middle the café in the extension at the second floor seen from the third floor. To the right, stairs to the third floor. Photography: Magnus Rönn, 2020.*

sion at second and third floors – not in the entrance on the ground floor (see figure 6, 7 and 8).

**The plan process**

In November of 2007, SBK presented a detailed development plan that aimed to make the planned renewal of the City Library at Götaplatsen in the heart of Gothenburg possible (Detaljplan 2008-11-18). The aim was to support rebuilding and expansion of the City Library in three directions. The City Planning Office stated in the detailed development plan that the area is both part of the national heritage interest and falls under the municipality's program for the preservation of culturally and historically valuable built environments. In the national heritage interest description, Götaplatsen with cultural institutions is treated as an expression of the national heritage interest in part of city called the inner city of Gothenburg (*Göteborgs innerstad*). The description of the national heritage interest by the National Heritage Board is brief and does not give any guidance for the renewal. To gain a clearer idea of the area's cultural values and architectural qualities, the City Planning Office put together historical planning material, based on student work and consultant enquiries by Metelius, a cultural company, and White Arkitektkontor.

**Review statements**

According to the City Planning Office's report, the actors considering the proposed legislation were mainly positive toward the detailed development plan. The Cultural Administration wanted cultural values and architectural

qualities to be taken care of in a clearer way. The other municipal authorities and companies approved the detailed development plan, except for one municipal administration (SDN centrum), who thought that the plan proposal had too many negative consequences for the park in the area (Samrådsredogörelse 2008-11-18). The County Administration informed that it refrained from reviewing the detailed development plan. The authorities saw no risk for considerable damage to the national heritage interest (Yttrande 2009-01-26). The objections to the rebuilding and expansion of the City Library came mainly from residents in the area and private individuals. The most interesting critique was formulated by Rune Lund (2009-01-08, 2009-07-20), one of the architects who was given the assignment to adapt the winning proposal of the architectural competition in 1960-61, in a letter to the Building Committee and in an appeal to the County Administration. According to Lund, the solution with a new outwardly moved facade in glass and vertical lines contradicts the fundamental design idea in the original proposal. A complementary critique is that the detailed development plan accepts the rebuilding's negative effects on the national heritage interest at the site, at least as they are described and understood by professionals in the historical investigations. However, the students behind the winning design in the competition 1960-61 were still made invisible by all the key players actors in the consultation. The opinions from the review resulted in a few minor revisions of administrative character to the plan description by the City Planning Office. The design, protection and cautionary regulation in the detailed development plan was to be adjusted. Additionally, the historical planning material and the aesthetic program was to be updated. The Real Estate Office was given the assignment to follow up the executional description in the detailed development plan, with consideration to the revisions by the City Planning Office.

**Planning material**

In the detailed development plan of 2009 for rebuilding and expanding the City Library, an updated version of the historical planning material was included as an attachment. However, the students behind the winning design in the competition 1960-61 were still put in the shadows by all the key players. The Culture Administration noted with approval that the detailed development plan had been given an increased cultural-historical description and that the aesthetic program had been revised with consideration to the remarks of the Cultural Administration. To make the existing brick facade visible was a step in the right direction. The Cultural Administration was also

pleased with the new protection regulations for the furnishings (Yttrande 2009-02-05). The historical planning material included an extended presentation of the City Library's culture historical, architectural and experiential qualities of urban space. Initially it was pointed out that Götaplatsen is the result of an architectural competition held in 1916-1918, which was executed successively to become a monumental urban space according to the city plan of 1921 by Lilienberg. The buildings refer to each other. The plan form generates an experience of wholeness. The interplay in the urban space is conveyed by the buildings scale, volume, consistent roof lines, facades in yellow brick and retracted windows. According to the planning material, the City Library represents a new type of public business at Götaplatsen with a vernacular character. Aside from carrels and books in open halls, the citizens have since 1967 had access to an exhibition hall, an auditorium, a newspaper room with a café and a space where they can listen to music.

The design of the City Library of 1967 is attributed to Lund & Valentin Arkitekter in the historical planning material. The building has a functionalist style of architecture, typical for the period, with horizontal bands of windows and a flat roof. At street level, the library meets visitors with large windows. The department store is seen as an inspirational source for the architectural design. The interior is characterised by open, bright and perspicuous floors grouped around a glass-roofed well. A large part of the furnishing, surfaces and artistic decorations remain in original condition, despite an extensive reconstruction at the start of the 1990s following floor plans by Lund & Valentin Arkitekter. The historical planning material describes the City Library as a well-preserved building, both with regard to exterior and interior, with high architectural qualities and cultural values. The interior is attributed with a particular cultural and historical value, which tells of a new direction for libraries and a new system for reshelving in flexible floors (Planbeskrivning 2009-06-16, bilaga 1).

**Detailed development plan**

In the detailed development plan from 2009, the City Planning Office argued that the expansion created the most suitable use of the plot from a public point of view, considering the conditions of the location and requirements of the City Library. From the plan description, it is clear that there were two sculptures in the area that portrayed Karin Boye and J. A. Wadman, two poets. Both statues had to be moved because of the rebuilding and expansion of the City Library. The Municipality's group for public art was given the

assignment to place the sculptures in connection with the execution of the plan. The detailed development plan's consequences for the City Library's cultural values and architectural qualities were presented in terms of *negative effects* and *positive effects* respectively (Detaljplan 2019-06-16). For an in-depth analysis, the historical planning material was referred to.

The detailed development plan's negative effects on the City Library's exterior; the City Planning Office saw losses of architectural qualities in the urban space:

- A well preserved and pedagogical example of a skilful arrangement of a genuine late-modernistic expression in a monumental space formation defined by the classic design of the 1920s disappears in its entirety.
- Existing brick facing in form of the street facade disappears partially through the expansion.

As positive effects, the reconstruction of interior qualities as well as regulations for the perseveration and protection of modifications in the detailed development plan were presented:

- The interior is freed from recent additions and regains its original open and flexible floors.
- The interior is given long-term protection in the detailed development plan, including demands for adapted maintenance and demolishment prohibition.

Correspondingly, the consequences for the national heritage interest were presented in negative and positive effects following the rebuilding and expansion. The negative effects to the national heritage interest that the City Planning Office brings up in the detailed development plan were:

- The expansion of the City Library does not follow the original plan shape of Götaplatsen with buildings that are aligned around a symmetrically formed space. The experience of Götaplatsen as a symmetrical urban space is lessened through the expansion.
- The space creation and the facade's interaction are decreased through the expansion.

- A large deciduous tree which signals the park by Lorensbergsteatern is removed at the same time as parts of the park is claimed following the expansion of Park Avenue Hotel.

The positive effects of the detailed development plan to the national heritage interest were described as follows:

- The new facade of the City Library shows a combination of materiality, degree of detail, colour scheme and weight with alternating openness and closedness that is connected to the surrounding buildings.
- The view from Avenyn is accentuated. Oblique angles aligned to Lorensbergsteatern strengthen the experience of the block's asymmetrical shape.
- The expansion's cubical volume corresponds to the forms of the buildings around Götaplatsen and has been given an eave that conforms to the space-creation.
- The glass expansions towards Park Avenue Hotel and towards the park lessens its characteristics as a rear facade.
- The park, Lorensbergsteatern and the hotel building towards Avenyn are given long term protection through plan regulations.

The detailed development plan was finalised in November of 2011 after it was appealed against and tried by the County Administration (Beslut 2010-05-11). Rune Lund developed his critique of the expansions of the City Library in his complaint. As support for his objections, he used the historical planning material, which according to Lund describes Götaplatsen as an urban space with its design idea and qualities in an excellent manner. Lund saw the historical planning material as a *"code of conduct"* for the planned renewal of the City Library. A central point in his critique was that the rebuilding and expansion elongated the facade, which violated the original plan shape. The new extended facade had a negative effect in the interplay with the other buildings. This is a relevant critique. The County Administration, however, rejected his objections on formal grounds. As architect behind the design of 1967, Lund did not belong to the group of affected who had the right to have their objections evaluated. Because the County Administration, in the role of regional plan authority, had chosen to not bring up the risk of damage to the national heritage interest in the consultation, the objections to the architectural project lapsed. The County Administration instead focused on the judi-

cial interpretation in the trade-off between individual and public interests in the plan-project. The inconveniences that the residents brought up in the form of reflections of the sun were an individual interest that was not strong enough to void the detailed development plan. The County Administration's decision to not review the impact of the detailed development plan to the national heritage interest thus had a deciding influence on the outcome of the appeal.

**Inauguration and conducting the establishment**

In 2014, the rebuilt and expanded City Library opened to the public. In a review of the renewal in the Swedish journal *Arkitektur,* Claes Caldenby noted that the library had been given a new attire with more sassy imagery. He pointed out that the proposal by Erséus Arkitekter/WSP in the parallel commission had given rise to a certain surprise, as the solution did not respect the exterior of the building. But by attaching a three-metre-deep extension to the building, it became possible to keep the contact with Avenyn, theatre building and the park. It was a source of success. Yet it was the facade that Caldenby raised as problematic. The new facing of glass was, after adaptation, given pillars as sun screening, a solution in true 60s' spirit. The sun could probably affect the areas around the building in a negative way. The new location of the café a floor up with the newspaper section and a balcony gave possibilities for outdoor serving on sunny days. This is a *"lookout spot"* that is liked by end-users. During my visits, I have noted that the balcony at the café is appreciated by visitors during the spring and summer, although the Nordic climate does limit its use.

Caldenby's review in the journal *Arkitektur* was mainly positive. He viewed the library as a cultural institution at Götaplatsen that needed to be preserved. According to Hanna Carlsson (2013), the role of libraries in society has changed through the deregulation of the 1980s. Previously, libraries had the task to compensate for the shortcomings of the market, to give citizens access to welfare services and make possible a good cultural life. In the new assignment, creating preconditions for welfare by contributing economic growth were included. The aim of the library as public enterprise has transformed into a means for growth. It is, however, a change that is so far not visible in the documents behind the renewal of the City Library. The foundation for the expansion was described as an intention to support the meeting of people, to inspire self-study and research. In the program for the parallel commission, the organiser also referred to the national culture political goals

*Figure 9, 10 and 11. The original facade seen from inside. To the left, the brick façade seen in the corridor at the ground floor. In the middle the café in the extension at the second floor seen from the third floor. To the right, stairs to the third floor. Photography: Magnus Rönn, 2020.*

of democracy, freedom of speech, integration and diversity (Program för parallella uppdrag, 2006).

## FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The critique of the planning and architectural project and its handling of the cultural environment from individuals and neighbours did not gain the support of the Building Committee and the County Administration. For the City Planning Office, the rebuilding and expansion of the City Library became an approved renewal of cultural values and architectural qualities in urban space. The County Administration concluded that the effect to the national heritage interest was to be accepted. But how does cultural environment compensation appear in the planning and architectural project?

**1. Compensated losses through restored interior design:** The loss of the City Library as a pedagogical example of modernist architecture, typical for its period, well-integrated into Götaplatsen, was not seen as damage to the national heritage interest by municipal and governmental key players. Instead, interior design became the focus of compensatory measures. Architectural qualities in the original interior were to be restored simultaneously with the expansion. Later additions in indoor design were to be removed. Because the County Administration abstained from reviewing the detailed development plan, the balancing of interests appeared simple to the City Planning Office. There were no deciding obstacles given by the representatives of the cultural environment against alteration in the urban space. The encroachment into the national heritage interest appeared as compensated for in the updated historical planning material, together with extended regulations in the detailed development plan. Additionally, the aesthetic program

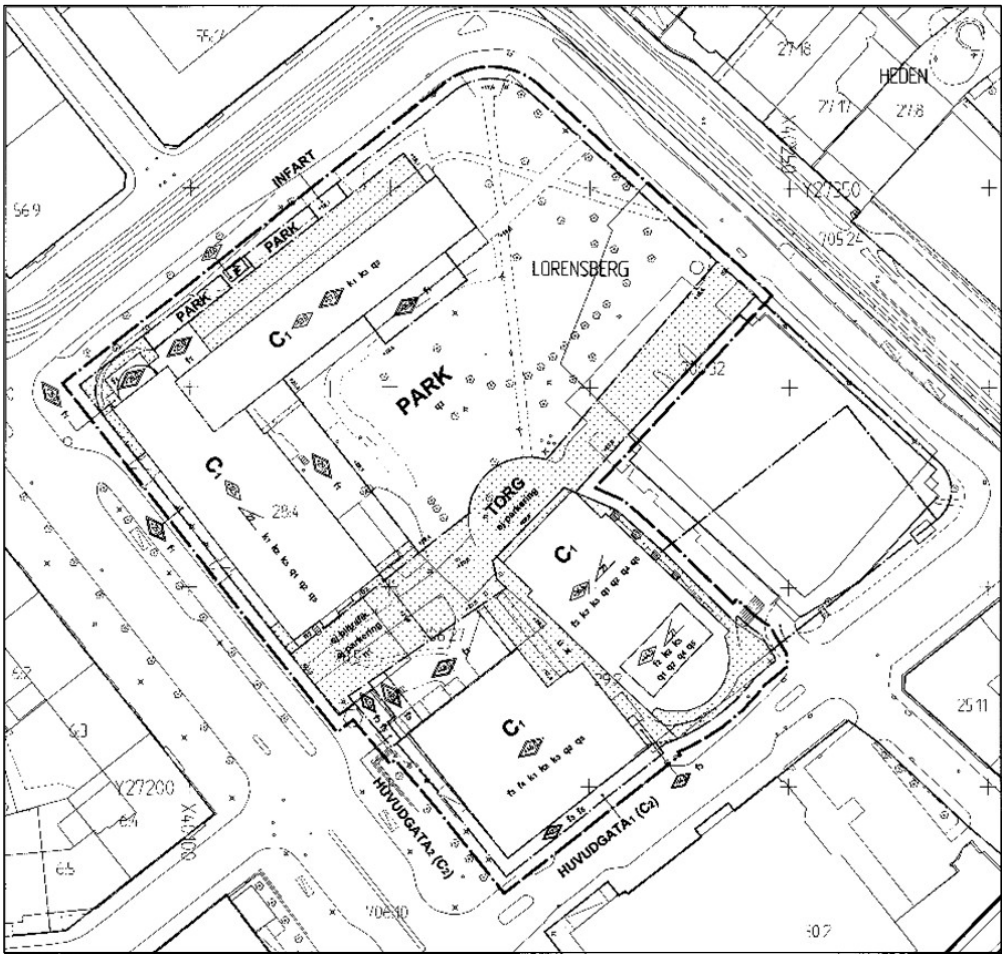


*Figure 12. Regulations in the approved detailed plan. Source: City Planning Office, City of Gothenburg.*

had been attached to the plan description. The City Library's need for appropriate premises appears as a dominating driving force behind the planning and architecture project modified by the planning material.

**2. Partly recreated cultural values at the site:** The sculptures at the City Library that were removed as a consequence of the rebuilding and expansion were to be given new placements. It was viewed as an unproblematic compensation for the exploitation. The Karin Boye statue was given a new spot in connection to the City Library. The same cultural value is in this case

recreated in another location within the planning area (Grahn Danielson et al., 2017). The statue portraying J. A. Wadman was, however, moved away from the planning area and was resurrected on a hill in Vasaparken, a park in the city centre. It led to a permanent loss of cultural values in connection to the City Library, at the same time as Vasaparken, through the new placement of J. A. Wadman, is given a new addition to the environment. The damage is thus compensated at a different location, outside of the planning area (ibid).

**3. Compensatory revisions during the planning process:** The plan description was completed in two ways during planning processes. New knowledge was added to the detailed development plan at the same time as requested values, qualities and properties were made clear in planning materials. Both of these types of revisions have a compensatory function. The detailed development plan was given a description of existing cultural values and intended architectural qualities. This revision of the detailed development plan satisfied considerations from the Cultural Administration. While the City Planning Office saw the rebuilding and expansion as a positive addition to the urban space, the renewal was admitted as having negative consequences on the cultural environment in the area. To compensate for the loss of cultural values and architectural qualities, the detailed development plan was given two updated attachments: historical planning material regarding cultural, historical, architectural and urban space qualities and an aesthetic program to steer the rebuilding and expansion of the library. It was additions to the detailed development plan that further minimised the risk for strong objections to the detailed development plan from the Cultural Association and the County Administration.

**4. Plan regulations as compensatory measures:** The regulations on the plan of the detailed development drawing were an expression of the compensatory thinking in the plan-project supported by the comprehensive plan (see Teräväinen, 2020). Through the regulation, the plot was made available for exploitation. The main purpose had been achieved by the City Planning Office's compensation. The architectural design, protection and preservation regulations in the detailed development plan were managed through several requirements.[6] However, the regulations varied in clarity and precision and had different orientations and timeframes. They comprised the expansion of the City Library as well as the upkeep of the property with maintenance and prohibition against demolition. A closer examination shows that the plan regulations have three orientations:

Firstly, the detailed development plan contained forewords that took note of the exterior of the building, its architectural exterior and role in the public urban space. Particular care was given to the exterior of the expansion with consideration to that the urban space and park space is an area of national heritage interest (f3). The facade of the expansion was to be designed with consideration to cultural and historical qualities, architectural distinctiveness and the significance of the building in the urban space and park space (f4, k1).

Secondly, the detailed development plan had regulations that treat the interior of the building. According to these regulations, the renewal of the interior was to occur carefully with consideration to cultural and historical qualities, architectural distinctiveness and artistic qualities (k2). Recent additions were to be removed. The qualities of particularly valuable interiors such as of the construction plan, the volume of rooms, fixed furnishings and installations were to be preserved and might not be distorted (q2).

Thirdly, the detailed development plan contained regulations that pertained to the property as a whole, such as a demolition prohibition (q5) and the demand that upkeep – exterior and interior – must happen with materials and methods that are adapted to the technical, historical and aesthetic distinctiveness of the building so that the cultural and historical value does not diminish (k3).

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## NOTES

1 Frida Andreasson has translated parts of the text and proofread the paper. Statements in reports from the competition jury and evaluation committee in the parallel commission are translated from Swedish.

2 https://www.arkitekt.se/app/uploads/2014/08/De-nya-etiska-reglerna-2017-pdf.pdf

3 The following politicians from the culture and building committee are part of the judging group in the parallel commission: Ewelina Toarczyk, Margita Björklund, Mats Arnsmar and Olof Wickman. The leading officials in the judging group are Christina Persson, library director, Lennart Johansson, project manager at lokalsekriteriatet, Malin Häggdahl, plan architect of the City Planning Office and Rune Johansson, architect of the City Planning Office.

4 The following officials are part of the task group: Christina Persson, library director, Håkan Grissler, coordinator of the City Library, Lennart Johansson, project manager of Lokalsekretariatet, Malin Häggdahl, plan architect at the City Planning Office, Rune Johansson, architect at the City Planning Office and Christina Jönsson, plan architect at the City Planning Office.

5 The critique of the proposal from Malmsötrm & Eström Arkitekter boils down to that the floors have lesser flexibility and is more difficult to furnish compared to the winner. The objection to the design of the exterior environment is that the proposal lessens the visual contact between the park of the area and Avenyn.

6 The requirements are marked in the detailed development map as f3, f4, k1, k2, k3, q2 and q5.