

I främsta rummet

Planerandet av en högskolebiblioteksbyggnad med studenters arbete i fokus

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I främsta rummet: Planerandet av en högskolebiblioteksbyggnad med studenters arbete i fokus

(In the foremost room: Planning a university library building with a focus on student work)

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The purpose of the thesis is to investigate planning processes for academic library buildings and the outcomes of such processes. This is accomplished through a case study utilising discourse analysis. The main question is: How is a vision of an academic library implemented in and through a building? The case study is retrospective and focused on the building of a new library at Kalmar University, Sweden, at the end of the 1990s. During this period, technological and educational developments and general societal change transformed the context of library planning and made way for renegotiations of the librarian profession.

A critical realist approach characterises the study of visions, processes and the analysis of the various functions of the building. Results reveal the proactive nature of the activities of the library director in Kalmar. Early in the process he formulated a vision in which he presents the library as an information resource, a meeting place between different user groups and a workplace intended to promote learning and knowledge. From a professional point of view, the vision implied a dehierarchisation of relations both within the library staff and between library staff and visitors. The vision was based on an interpretation of Swedish national educational policy, and architecturally manifested by an ambition to reduce the physical and psychological boundaries between library staff and visitors. The early formulation of the vision together with the clients' use of architectural expertise facilitated the choice of architects. However during the process a need arose to anchor the decision in the library field. Efforts were made to address library expertise and to collect user comments from a broader academic field. Discourses concerning the university library as a workplace and a meeting place were especially evident in the strategies of the leading agents. The discourses uncovered in the study correspond to more general discourses which became prominent in society and higher education during the period in question. The library itself has met growing appreciation by users both from within and outside the university.

The proactive leadership demonstrated by the library director in Kalmar was based on hegemony rather than coercion. This corresponds to contemporary tendencies. Hegemonic consent may persist even after changes in leadership. In Kalmar however, architectural solutions with insufficient support from the library staff have been reconstructed after changes in leadership. Future research on architectural planning processes may pay further attention to different discursive resources, social fields and the positions within them.

Keywords: Academic library buildings, College and university libraries, Architecture and building, Programming and planning, Social fields, Discourse analysis, Discourses, Professions, Librarians, Architects, Architectural design