



LUND UNIVERSITY

Territorial mimetics and room types

The spatial development of Swedish district courthouses 1970-2020

Kärrholm, Mattias

Published in:
City, Territory and Architecture

DOI:
[10.1186/s40410-023-00213-5](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-023-00213-5)

2023

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Kärrholm, M. (2023). Territorial mimetics and room types: The spatial development of Swedish district courthouses 1970-2020. *City, Territory and Architecture*, 10, Article 26. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-023-00213-5>

Total number of authors:
1

General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access



Territorial mimetics and room types: the spatial development of Swedish district courthouses 1970–2020

Mattias Kärholm^{1*}

Abstract

In this article I investigate the spatial development of Swedish district courthouses and their different room types from 1970 to 2020, with attention to the specificities and commonalities with other building types. How have spatial form and use travelled between building types during this period, and how has this contributed to the recent, quite radical developments and transformation of the courthouse as a building type? In the article, I focus particularly on aspects relating to the architectural and spatial culture of citation, and on what I call territorial mimetics here. Based on a mixed-method approach, the study traces and discusses five spatial themes of typological change in district courthouses, trends that also can be seen as a part of deeper spatial and mimetic tendencies circulating in Swedish society during these decades. I conclude with a discussion of the specific mimetic style of the courthouse as characterised by an ongoing negotiation between type-specific rules and cross-type models.

Keywords Architecture, Courthouses, Territoriality, Mimetics, Room types

The aim of this article is to follow the spatial development of the Swedish district courthouse and its different room types from 1970 to 2020, with attention to its specificities and commonalities in relation to other building types. How do spatial form and use travel between building types? Françoise Choay famously pointed to two types of mechanisms and their role in generating built space: the rule and the model (Choay 1997:8). Both mechanisms also play their own distinct part when it comes to Swedish courthouses of the 1970s and onwards. New rules and recommendations were introduced when the State took over the responsibility for the construction and maintenance of courthouse buildings in Sweden in the 1970s, first through *Kungliga Byggnadsstyrelsen* (The National Board of Public Building, hereafter called KBS)

in 1971, and then through *Domstolsverket* (the National Courts Administration, hereafter called DV) from 1975. This centralisation also included the production of guidelines and rules aiming towards a strong standardisation of both the specific building task and its room types. Rules and recommendations are always also embedded in the use of different kind of models, both ideal and real. These models can include for example ideal room plans and solutions (such as those provided by KBS and DV guidelines), or solutions implemented in different kinds of courthouses, or details from other kinds of building types that are in some way, implicitly or explicitly, regarded as exemplary or desirable. Both rules and models thus play their part in the spatial evolution of Swedish district courthouses from the 1970s and onwards. In this article, I will focus particularly on aspects relating to the model, i.e., on the architectural and spatial culture of citation, and more precisely on what I here call territorial mimetics. I will return to this concept below, but we can start by describing it as the way in which spatial forms and design solutions travel and are borrowed between

*Correspondence:

Mattias Kärholm
mattias.karrholm@abm.lth.se

¹ Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

different projects and building types, at different levels of abstraction, intentionally or not. I argue that territorial mimetics is generally underestimated in discussions on how society takes spatial form, and the spatial development of the courthouse presents a good case. This is, however, not an attempt to argue that Swedish courthouses are an extreme or unique case of territorial mimicry. On the contrary, both in Sweden and elsewhere, the courthouses have been subject to remarkably detailed strategic guidelines (Mulcahy and Rowden 2019), rational and precise programmes and scripts, at least from a Swedish perspective. It is therefore interesting to note that we encounter the phenomena of territorial mimetics even with this very controlled and rule-driven design assignment.

Similar designs and forms can be the result of similar material or societal conditions, but they might also result from the imitation of earlier and seemingly successful examples (cf. Åman 1976:424). Matthew Nowicki puts it like this: 'We have to realize that in the overwhelming majority of modern design, form follows *form* and not *function*' (italics in the original, Nowicki in Meyer 2010:260). This mimetic aspect of architecture is important to remember. Political, sociological and historical accounts of form and formation often overlook that forms are derived from other forms rather than directly from societal demands as expressed in texts, and one is sometimes left with the illusion that form is derived logically from policies, social rules or building programmes as a consequence of specifically formulated requirements tailored to the building task at hand. The transformation of ideas or text to form is never faithful, however (Forty 2001:28–41). Form feeds on other forms far more readily than from texts and political agendas. This might seem like a recipe for reproduction, and it has also been suggested that the modernistic architecture of the western world, and not least Sweden, fell into sheer reproduction in the 1960s (Werne 1997:138–46). It might perhaps be argued that the defining parameters established through structuralist programmes, norms, industrial solutions, etc., left little room for variation, and when a design solution to match these demands was found, it was often implemented. Such smooth translations were seldom possible, however. While the mimetic repetition of forms certainly contributes to some kind of inertia, it is not deterministic per se—it always comes with a difference. Among others Heinrich Wölfflin suggested this, emphasizing the importance of mimetics in all arts already in 1915: 'All artistic beholding is bound to certain decorative schemas—or to repeat expression—the visible form is crystallised for the eye in certain forms. In each new crystal form, however, a new facet of the content of the world will come to light' (Wölfflin 1950 (1915):231).

Mimetics—a territorial perspective

Yaneva (2012) pointed out that architectural theory traditionally tends to belong to one of two camps: Theories that use form to explain use or society, or theories that use social programmes to explain built form or space (Yaneva 2012: 25–37). Discussions on building- and room types have often run into the same problem (Kärholm 2013; Steadman 2014; Löfgren and Karlsmo 2016; Nordell 2022). How use takes shape and how shapes are put to use is a core question, but it cannot really be answered if we consider form-types (such as row houses, skyscrapers, etc.) and use-types (schools, shopping malls, etc.) to be two different questions. One way of addressing spatial types without automatically defining them as either use-types or form-types is to understand them as territorial types or, perhaps better still, as territorial sorts. Territories can be regarded here as imaginal and figurational forces of social life incorporated into and/or co-produced with a set of materials (Brighenti and Kärholm 2021). Territorial sorts are a kind of abstractions enabling the association between different territories. They are *territorial* since they territorialise a certain object or space with a certain meaning/intensity (Brighenti 2010), and *sorts*, since they are not defined by an obligatory set of actors (like prototypes might be). Instead, a sort must be seen as a more fluid assemblage in which no element is in itself compulsory, but where the stability of the whole, in terms of sustaining recurrent effects, also might be maintained through some transformation of its parts (Mol and Law 1994), both in terms of use and form. Certain room types (or sorts) such as 'the kitchen' or 'the wardrobe' can in fact thrive for centuries whilst changing quite radically both in form and use (Kärholm 2020). It is also important to note that the same place can represent multiple territorial sorts (a square can also be a meeting place, a marketplace, a crime scene, etc.), sometimes also relating to different scales. This heterogeneity can also be a driver of typological transformation.

A building type, such as the courthouse, partly gets its shape and character from the association to different room types (such as the courtroom), and these are the room types on which I will focus here. The room types are derived from regulations and guidelines (KBS 1971a, b; DV 1979; 2017; 2021a), as well as from room types or spaces known from other contexts. In short, they are often mobilised from a given set of territorial sorts, but as we shall see, sometimes a sort requires some adjustment, and at times a whole new sort of territory needs to be designed or mobilised.

So, what about territorial *mimetics*? Mimetic space has been used in dramaturgical contexts to discuss the set-design strategy for building a model of, for example, a living room for a specific stage production (Issacharoff

1981). However, mimetic space could just as well be used as a concept in architecture where loans might be more direct (the traditional use of classical column orders) or more associative, relating to e. g. a certain territorial sort ('let's include a museum shop in the brief, the Louvre has one!'). It should also be noted that territorial mimicry does not need to be intentional, and in fact, it usually probably isn't; perhaps this is also why it can be misleading to talk of a model in Choay's sense. Citations are not always the result of explicit models; they might also be used more unconsciously and/or for the sake of convenience. Territorial mimicry is thus an intentional or unintentional tendency that includes everything from borrowing certain features from another territory, or sort of territory, to borrowing one or a series of territorial sorts from another context as something akin to a ready-made. Territorial mimicry is thus a citational process in which certain aspects of one territorial production are borrowed to another. In short, one lets a certain territory take the figure of another, at least to some extent. The citation is not merely a citation of form, but of a form-meaning complex. Repetitions are always accompanied by re- and transformations however, and each individual example of a sort includes both repetitive and differential traits and thus the potential to suggest a new coordination of entities of a certain class, or as we may put it, a new species or sort of space (Deleuze 1994:248).

The investigation

The investigation of this article is based on a mixed-method approach that includes archive studies—the study of plans, guidelines, government documents and archive material—as well as observations, field trips and interviews. First of all, the study is based on an inventory and listing of all named room types of all buildings presented in the main Swedish journal of architecture, *Arkitektur*, from when it was founded in 1900–2020.¹ This includes a total of 2188 buildings, of which 23 are courts. To this, I have also added the study of 20 more plans of Swedish courthouses from the same era from other sources, thus allowing for a more intense study of 43 courthouse plans. The study is also based on a series of documents, published texts, and unpublished documents that were either received directly from contact persons at Domstolsverket (DV) or accessed via the DV archive. Last but not least, the study is based on field trips to a number of district courthouses from the period 1960–2020, including Attunda, Eksjö, Gothenburg, Halmstad, Helsingborg, Jönköping, Kalmar, Lund,

Södertälje, Södertörn, Solna, Stockholm and Varberg—as well as to Göta and Svea Courts of Appeal.² Some former courthouses were also visited, for example the former district courthouses in Helsingborg, Jönköping, Gamleby, Mönsterås, Oskarshamn, and Västervik. The visits have sometimes also included walk-alongs or short interviews, often with security guards (Solna, Södertälje, Svea Courts of Appeal and Varberg), and sometimes with administrative or legal staff (Göta Court of Appeal, Gothenburg and Lund), and sometimes both (Eksjö). They also included on-site studies of how the built environment was used, for example, by attending different kinds of trials (in Lund and Helsingborg). At the Swedish National Courts Administration (Domstolsverket), we also conducted a series of interviews with people responsible for security, technology, and architecture. Some of these were conducted on-site in Jönköping in 2021, and some were carried out via Zoom.

The Swedish district courthouse

The Industrial Revolution brought about many new building types, many of them related to the production of good citizens (Markus 1993), but also with facilitating the production and consumption of services and goods. As building types evolved, so did the specific room types of these buildings. In residential architecture, we see how the number of distinctive room types proliferated during the nineteenth century. However, standardisation and rationalisation in the early twentieth century meant a gradual decline in the number of room types (Kärholm 2020). For non-residential buildings, at least in Sweden, this decline started later. The building with the largest number of room types ever (or yet) to be presented in the journal *Arkitektur* is the hospital Sahlgrenska in Gothenburg in 1950, in which around 170 different room types were marked out on the plans. Hospital buildings are in general the richest examples when it comes to the number of different room types (cf. Åman 1976), but government buildings are also good examples. The decline of room types during the second half of the twentieth century is related to standardisation, which to some extent had started earlier in residential buildings in Sweden, as well as to the development of flexibility and the architectural structuralism of the 1960s (Forty 2000; Sigge 2017).

The courthouse is a rather well-studied building type. Linda Mulcahy for example has looked at how the courthouse and courtroom have changed through history, with a special focus on how this has affected our relationship

¹ It should however be noted that the journal was called *Byggmästaren* from 1922 to 1958.

² These field trips were conducted together with Eva Löfgren, Lars-Eric Jönsson and Jonathan Westin as a series of seven two-day visits between December 2019 and November 2022.

with justice (Mulcahy 2007; 2010; see also Mulcahy and Rowden 2019). Other studies have looked at the courthouse and its relation to the city (Branco 2019), the impact of video links (Rowden 2018), imagery (Haldar 2008), social ideology (Rosenbloom 1998; Resnik et al. 2014; Anthony and Grant 2016), security (Tait 2011) and architectural style (Bels and Branco 2017; Blumetti, Rodrigues and Januário 2020). For the Swedish context, we have Löfgren's important historical study of the Swedish district courthouse from 1732 to 1970 (Löfgren 2011), which also forms an important backdrop to this study. Underlying most of the studies is an interest in how space and spatial change affect the practice of justice. My study follows the development of room types, and this is of course also motivated by an interest in how territorial formation influences the practices of these buildings, and especially how the circulation of more general spatial solutions has come to play a role in the spatiality of justice and the making of law (Latour 2010).

The Swedish district courthouse architecture has been undergoing important changes during the last century. These changes can be seen as part of a longer territorialisation process with increasing precision, and with spaces especially designated and designed for e.g., the incarcerated, security and administration clerks. The early twentieth century has by Modéer been described as golden era for Swedish district court houses (1992:13). In Sweden, as in many other countries this era was related to the process of modernization, including the expansion of the railway, urbanization (see e.g., Caldwell 2001; Löfgren 2011:343 ff.) and the improvement of social infrastructures such as hotels and restaurants. The new and more specialized form of the courthouses also had to do with the professionalization of architects (more elaborated designs) and the professionalization of the judicial system with offices for administration and archives (Modéer 1992; Löfgren 2011, see also McNamara 2004). Lodging rooms as well as more permanent residential rooms for judges were housed within the Swedish courthouse at least until around the 1940s. New to this first period of the twentieth century was also specific rooms for lawyers and prosecutors.

During the 1940s the administrations increased, moving out from the flat of the judge and into more specially designed and neutrally located chambers, meaning that the old patriarchal structure around the judge became less important (Modéer 1992:16). The living quarters, increasingly left behind was often rebuilt for a growing administration. During the period 1940–1970 we also see a decrease in symbolical and aesthetical investments coupled with more uniform, austere and mundane designs interested in expressing rationality, equality and functionality (cf. Tägil and Werne 2007; Mulcahy 2011:140).

When it comes to the district courthouses this era saw the development of, for example, receptions, parking garages, rooms for *nämndemän* (voluntary lay judges), for journalists (an early example can be found in Katrineholm 1943), lunchrooms and extended offices, including archives and libraries.

The modernization of courts also led to an integration of courts into the urban fabric, and in many cases an architecture that is quite similar to that of other administration buildings (Bels and Branco 2017: 190). During the last decades of the twentieth century, we saw (in Sweden as in countries such as USA, UK and France) the development of specific design guides for courts (Resnik et al. 2014; Mulcahy and Rowden 2019). From being anonymously integrated in the urban context, the courthouse of the late twentieth century became more emblematic, often more vertically articulated, and internationally increasingly designed by renowned architects (Branco 2019:599). Well-known examples here include Richard Rogers' courthouse in Bordeaux (1992–1998), Jean Nouvel's courthouse in Nantes (2000) and more recently, Henning Larsen's courthouse in Malmö (2023). We can thus see the gradual evolvement of a new 'judicial monumentality' (Bels and Branco 2019:193) in Europe as well as in Sweden.

During the twentieth century, the construction of a district courthouse became an increasingly complex and extensive task. From the 1970s, we can also see a stronger focus on specialisation and upsizing, and later on singularisation and monumentality. In Sweden, this development can be divided into two phases. With *Tingsrättsreformen* in 1971, the Swedish State became responsible for building all courthouses. A series of national municipal reforms (*Kommunreformer* 1964–74) around the same time meant that Swedish municipalities were reorganized, with small municipalities—of which there were hundreds in the old division—becoming fewer but larger municipalities: Sweden went from 2532 municipalities in 1930 to 277 in the late 1970s. Both these changes laid the ground for the upcoming centralization of courthouses. In 1968, there were 146 district courthouses in Sweden (Modéer 1992:28)³; ten years later, there were only around 100 (KBS 1979). The building tasks that followed in the wake of this merging were guided by the new KBS programmes (1971a; 1971b), and the structuralist philosophy of Kungliga Byggnadsstyrelsen (Sigge 2017).

An even more comprehensive transformation started in 1999, as the number of district courthouses was halved

³ At that time, 124 of these also included residential rooms for employees; in the 1970s, these became obsolete.

in just a decade, going from 96 in 1999 to 48 in 2009 (Statskontoret 2017; Riksrevisionen 2017:33). A decrease in the number of courts can during this time also be seen in a large number of European countries (Chappe and Obidzinski 2013; Branco 2019). For example, in France a revision between 2007 and 2010 ended up in a reduction in the number of courts and tribunals from 1206 to 819 (Chappe and Obidzinski 2013:3). In Sweden, district courthouses decreased in number and increased in size as older courthouses merged, specialized and moved to more urban locations. In the evaluation that followed the merging of district courts (since 1999), Statskontoret concluded that although the average geographical distance to each courthouse had increased (by 13.9 km on average), better connections and improved digital solutions suggest that accessibility had nonetheless not decreased (Statskontoret 2017:9). The problem of location and accessibility is today thus high up on the agenda (DV 2017:5), and district courthouses are increasingly placed in connection to train stations and public transportation hubs. The merging of different courts into bigger ones has also triggered new territorialisation processes, and one could also argue that the building type has crystallised even further over the last decades, becoming a larger and more stable and specialised sort. It is perhaps worth noting that the latest programme and guidebook for the design of court buildings is the most comprehensive to date. The DV's guideline for building courthouses today includes about a dozen documents (for example DV 2017; 2021a; 2021b) focusing on room types, lighting conditions, video conferences, acoustics, etc. DV lists almost 70 different room types in their guidelines (DV 2021a); KBS only mentioned around 20 in the early 1970s (KBS 1971a). In fact, this might even be part of new tendency—albeit one that we have yet to confirm—that the number of room types of non-residential buildings is again on the rise. This would be a clear departure from the tendency of a decreasing number of room types that we have otherwise seen since the 1950s.

Five interconnected themes of typological change

From the 1970s until today, courthouse architecture has thus been dominated by specialised guidelines and standardisation, leading to increasingly specific and more tailored courthouse architecture. Nonetheless, territorial mimicry has played its part, both in relation to what is included in the guidelines and in relation to the forms that are built. In the following, I will discuss five spatial themes of typological change in district courthouses, which also can be seen as a part of deeper spatial and mimetic trends circulating in Swedish society during these decades.

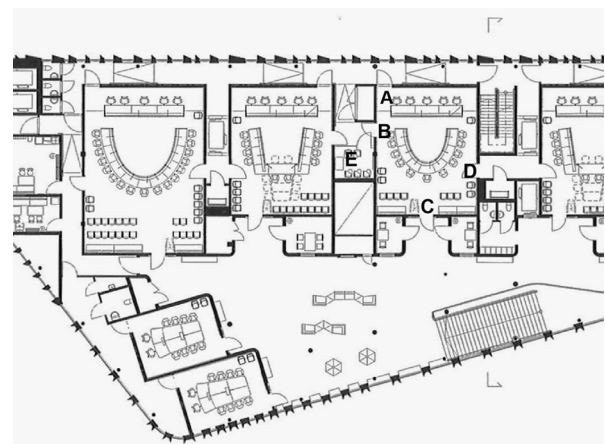


Fig. 1 The second floor of Lund District Courthouse, designed by Fojab 2018. The courtrooms have one door for the judges in the back (A), one for the prosecutor to the left (B), one for the public (C), and one for the incarcerated to the right (D). The debriefing rooms are backstage (E). Based on map in Bornstein (2019:84)

Sizing up and stacking

In Sweden, older district courthouses often contained just one courtroom. An exception is Stockholm's Courthouse (not a specialized courthouse building though), which contained five courtrooms (*domsalar*) on its completion in 1915 (Wahlman 1916: 13–48).⁴ Otherwise, one of the first examples of a district courthouse with more than one courtroom seems to be the courthouse in Kalmar, designed by Hans A. Brunnberg and built in 1966 for *Södra Møre domsaga*. As noted above, courthouses had already begun to increase in size and decrease in number in the 1970s (this accelerated further around 2000), and KBS reports from 1971 (1971a; 1971b) presented the first more comprehensive general programme for room types and room sizes applicable to all district courts. This standardization of room types and room sizes also laid the ground for an—at least in part—additive approach to design. This addition builds on a crystallized nucleus comprising the courtroom, its front entrance, a rear corridor, side entrances (one connected to an elevator) and often a debriefing room of some kind (see Fig. 1). This nucleus is stacked in different ways. Most new district courthouses now have courtrooms on more than one floor, and some district courthouses, for example those in Lund, Attunda, and Gothenburg, are rather high buildings. The new courthouse in Malmö, designed by Henning Larsen, will be the largest courthouse in Scandinavia with more than ten floors, including four floors of public

⁴ Today, it contains more than 30 courtrooms.



Fig. 2 Central hall plan solution, Solna District Courthouse (2007), designed by BSK Arkitekter. Photo by author 2021

of courtrooms grew, how to organize them became a key question. Long corridors had become a common solution in schools, where the scaling-up process had started much earlier, but got competition when the central hall plan was introduced in Sweden in the mid-1930s (Kristenson 2005:397 ff.). In Sweden, schools became an important type for pioneering works in the architectural modernism and functionalism already during the early 1930s (Kristenson 2005:365 ff.), and schools were an influential type, very well represented in the Swedish architectural press during the 1950s and 1960s.⁵ In courthouses, the organization and configuration of courtrooms became an important question in the 1970s, and today we can see three different strategies: the linear one with an elongated corridor or foyer (Lund, Södertörn, Gothenburg and Alingsås); the central hall solution (Jönköping and Solna—see Figs. 2 and 3); or a combination of both (Attunda and Stockholm).

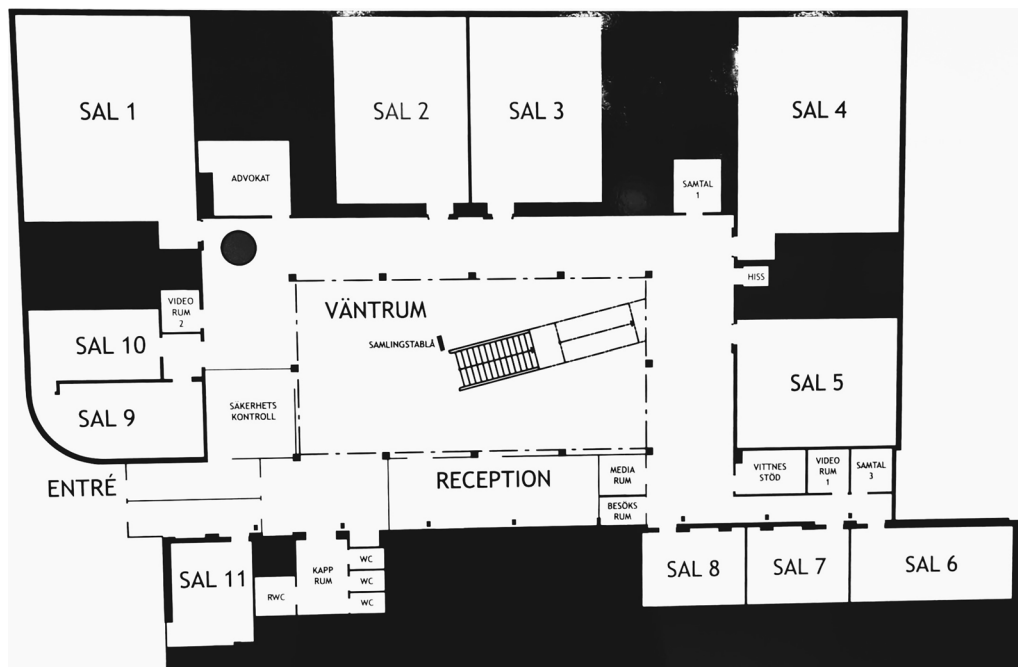


Fig. 3 Solna District Court House. Plan of ground floor (blackened spaces represent backstage areas that are not publicly accessible). Photo (of a public sign) by author 2021

spaces and 42 courtrooms. This trend towards bigness is an international one, with Manchester Civil Justice Centre (2007) as a prime example (Mulchay 2011 156 ff.; Resnik, Curis and Tait 2014: 531).

An interesting unit for dimensioning courtrooms is the school class: the largest courtroom should be able to host one (KBS 1971a, b:10). Although this is to afford study visits, the classroom logic is quite telling when it comes to the spatial structure of the courthouse. As the number

From the 1960s onwards, we see in general that a more structuralist large-scale approach to the organization of the built environment also meant that more 'urban' elements and types moved indoors. The hall plan of schools

⁵ In the main Swedish architectural journal of the twentieth century (*Byggnästaren*, later renamed *Arkitektur*), 66 different school projects were presented during two decades, 1951–1970. This can be compared with the 44 projects presented during the subsequent five decades (1971–2020).

soon grew in scale, with the hall becoming more of an interior square and subsequently also being named as such. In churches, interior squares or ‘church squares’ replaced entrance halls already during the 1970s, whereas different kind of squares in office buildings seem to become popular during the 1990s (‘entrances squares’ are most common, but we also have a ‘social square’ in the Canon office building in Sättra, 2007). The student complex Sparta in Lund, built in the early 1970s, features ‘interior streets’ instead of corridors. We also see a proliferation of atriums, squares and interior streets inside the growing university complexes of the 1990s (Yaneva 2010).

The larger buildings of the 1970s thus came with the introduction of interior squares and streets. The stacking of uniform room types also seems to be related with a certain anonymization of building types (mentioned above). Writing about town halls, Arvastson and Hammarlund-Larsson (2003:133) have pointed to how the council chamber as an architectural element decreased in importance during the 1970s, as the town hall came to be treated as any other office building thus emphasizing its civil administration role rather than its association to politics and power (Arvastson and Hammarlund-Larsson 2003:145). The stacking of more and more offices here seems to have led to a lack of singularity, where the design was used to strengthen the association to a general kind of office building, rather than to its type as a council chamber.

A similar trend is evident in the courthouses of the 1960s and 1970s, where the stacking of courtrooms can be seen in parallel with the clustering of law-related building types. In the investigation conducted by KBS (1971a, b:3), it is suggested that courthouses, police stations, public prosecution offices and prisons (*håkte*) should be clustered into large ‘law centres’ (*rättscentrum*). This was an important question in the 1970s, and it was not met with much counterargument at the time. In fact, Sweden seems to be a prime example of this trend.⁶ An example can be seen in Södertälje Town Hall, inaugurated in 1965 (Figs. 4 and 5). Here, the same complex hosts a town council, courthouse the prosecutor and the police, without any strong architectural differentiation between the different functions.

In the 1976 (DV 1976d) suggestion for a new law centre in Sollentuna, the courtrooms were located on the tenth floor, and they were hardly visible from the street (see Fig. 6). To a certain extent, the district courthouse

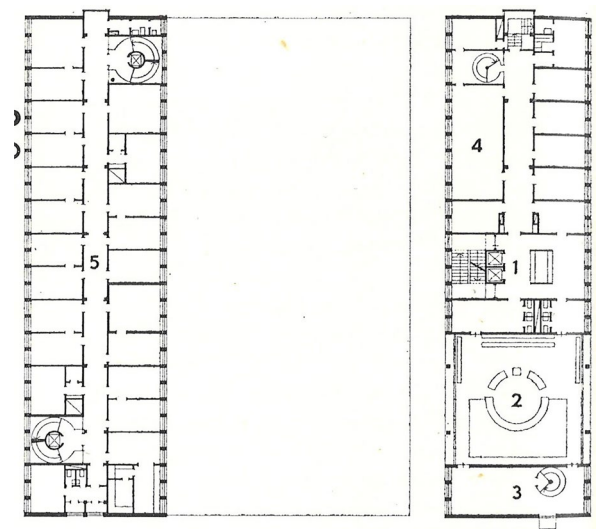


Fig. 4 Plan of Södertälje Town Hall. Third floor with Södertälje Courthouse. 1. Waiting hall. 2. Courtroom. 3. Lay judge's room. 4. Courtroom. 5. Police detectives. (Detail from Lindqvist 1965:304)

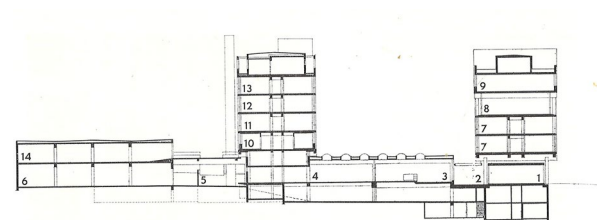


Fig. 5 Section of Södertälje Town Hall. 1. Entrances. 3. Post Hall. 4. Post Office. 6. Parking. 7. Courthouse offices. 8. Courtrooms. 9. Town Council. 10–12. Police. 13. Prosecutor's offices (Detail from Lindqvist 1965: 304)

thus followed the trend of sizing up and stacking different series of rooms to the point of *type desingularisation*, i.e., when the integration into larger office complexes almost results in its disappearance as a discernible type of its own.

Today, courthouses can still be grouped together with other buildings, but awareness has increased about the problem of mixing law-related buildings. Even when grouped together with other facilities, the courthouse should now, according to DV be legible for the public as an autonomous unit (interview, DV). The specificity of the courthouse is also receiving more architectural attention—perhaps due to its increasing exclusivity. The district courthouse is thus, on one hand, still very much an autonomous building type—and increasingly so—with its own, sometimes quite elaborated aesthetics: Lund, Solna, Attunda and Alingsås come to mind as striking examples (cf. Bels and Branco 2017). On the other hand, the specific room types and interiors have to some extent

⁶ From an international perspective, Swedish people have also, at least since the 1980s (when measurements started), had a very high and steady confidence in both the police and in the courts (Rönnerstrand and Johansson 2008).

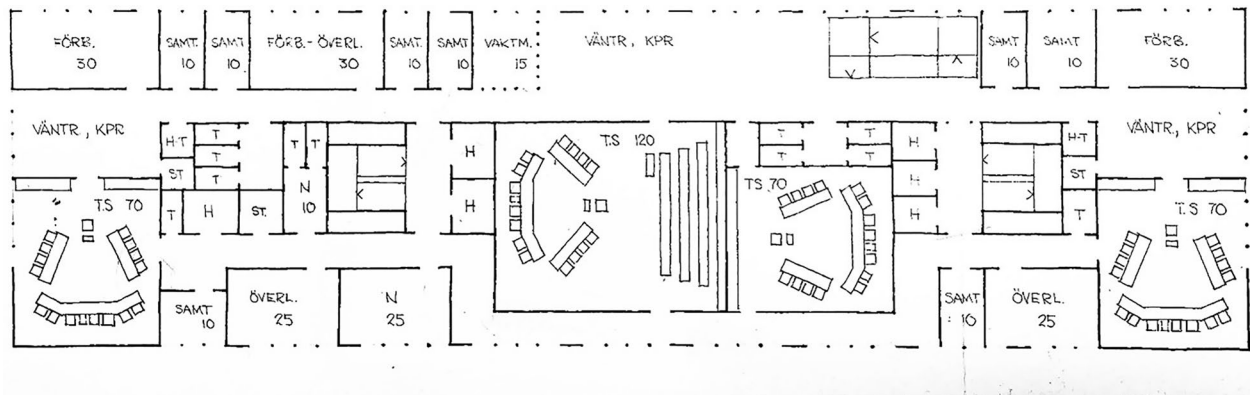


Fig. 6 Sollentuna Centre of Law (Sollentuna rättscentrum). Program by LLT architects 1976. Tenth floor with courtrooms (and an extensive backstage area). In addition to the district courthouse, this law centre also housed the police, the bailiff, the public prosecutor, postal services and the local tax authority (DV 1976a)



Fig. 7 Courtroom at Eksjö District Courthouse, built 1960 (photo by author 2022)



Fig. 8 Lund District Courthouse, built 2017 (photo by author 2020)

been desingularized. The devaluation of the courtroom as a singular space, at least visually, with a loss of architectural ornaments, details and dominant artworks, for example, is a case in point (see Figs. 7 and 8).

Swedish courthouses were quite late in their development towards bigness (Koolhaas 1995), and they can also be related to the development of other building types. For spatial design, the new district courthouse seems to have borrowed traits from airports, schools, universities, government buildings, etc. Room type development (long corridors, standardized offices, etc.)

followed in the wake of other building types, although there were of course also differences. For example, parallel to upsizing, we have seen a tendency of functional hybridization in many building types, for example, in the form of mallification, i.e., the addition of retail stores for a certain magnet or anchor function (Dovey 1999:126 f.). Stores have often developed in relation to a range of different attractions, including airports, railway stations, museums and libraries (Leong 2001). If we also include smaller shops, we can see how everything from dentists to churches today is accompanied by the possibility to buy something. Courts actually stand out in this respect, as one of the few places that has resisted this tendency. With the exception of a few places, such as Stockholm's District Court, where there is a café, and Svea Court of Appeal, where there is a restaurant, the courthouses that we visited usually offered nothing more than an occasional vending machine. The

solemn atmosphere thus remains (to some extent) in the hallways outside the courtrooms as well.

Making an entrance

The notion of making an entrance has changed over the years, as have its material prerequisites (Yütte 2015). While entrance rituals are still important, entrances are often architecturally downplayed and less formal. The courthouse is certainly an interesting example when it comes to studying different kinds of rituals of making an entrance, and again it has both typical and atypical traits.

As noted above, courtrooms today often have the dramaturgical setting of four doors. The idea of different doors for different visitors is an old one. Alberti recounts that Gracchus was the first to divide people into different kinds of audiences and to suggest separate doors for each (Alberti 1988 [1485]:121). Perhaps this tradition has survived in courts more than anywhere; it is still very much alive in the Swedish courthouse today, where DV suggests four specific entrances (see Fig. 1) in its recommendations (2017:6). Somewhat surprisingly perhaps this is, however, a quite late solution in the Swedish history of this type. A discussion of older courthouses in KBS 1971a, b notes that the court sometimes needs to pass through the public waiting room to access the courtrooms and the deliberation rooms. While they cannot find that anyone has complained about this, they suggest that it would be preferable to separate the movements of the court from those of the public (1971:20). The court should, they suggest, be able to reach the courtrooms and the debriefing rooms from their offices without passing through a public area. All examples in the model plans for courtrooms added to the programme thus show two doors: one to the public waiting area, and one to the debriefing rooms. The actual need for (even just two) separate entrances is questioned however, even after KBS 1971a, b. A statement made by the coordination group on the programme for the new law centre in Sollentuna explicitly notes that there is no need for an internal corridor (DV 1976a: 9). A similar comment can also be found in statements regarding the suggestions for new courthouse recommendations (DV 1976a:3). The question generally does not seem very important for the referral bodies. The only party to suggest interior communication for the staff is *Sveriges domareförbund* (DV 1976c:4), which claimed that it would be best if the public and the court did not meet before or after a trial. DV seems to have taken this to heart, as they included it in the final programme of 1979. There, they suggested that the courtrooms and debriefing rooms should be closely, but not directly connected, and that it must be possible to reach the latter without going through any courtroom or the public area (DV 1979:7). This is a clear change from KBS

1971a, b and its more openly held recommendation. As mentioned previously, this has been systematized even further today, with four entry points to most courtrooms. The arrival of the prosecutor and the judges (including the lay jury) is often planned via the same corridor, and they then enter the courtroom through two separate doors (see Fig. 1). However, our observations informal talks on site indicate that it is quite normal that the prosecutor uses the public entrance—in fact, one prosecutor with whom we spoke said she had never used the interior corridor at all.

If we look at the courthouse as a whole, we see that DV's strategical documents divide it into four zones today: (a) the public zone (including lawyers); (b) the prosecutors, the lay jury (*nämndemän*) and the protected witnesses; (c) the courthouse staff, and (d) the detainees and people from the prison and probation service (DV 2017; DV 2021b, cf. Bels and Branco 2017: 196). The connections between these are generally protected with code locks. In older courthouses there was also a rite of passage, using a more symbolical mediating space rather than a lock (see Fig. 9). The Swedish room type *tambur* (a kind of anteroom) was introduced in the early nineteenth century (see Kärholm 2020 for a discussion of this room type in residential buildings). One of its first appearances in a non-residential building was in the City Hall in Norrköping in 1801, and the last one (presented in *Arkitektur*) is in the post office building in Nynäshamn from 1954. In courthouses, the *tambur* served as an entrance room to the offices of the judge or the prosecutor. A *tambur* could be placed between the waiting room and the offices of the court and act as a sluice between public and more private quarters. We find one of its last appearances in a plan of a district courthouse in Klippan (1951). Here, the *tambur* is quite rudimentary if compared with earlier courthouse buildings; it is a small room in between the prosecutor's room and the courtroom. The loss of the *tambur* might be an early indicator of a cultural change when it comes to the question of how to make an entrance. Through the lack of anterooms, the extensive use of glass walls, open door policies, etc., the entrances and borders within the office zone of courthouses have indeed become remarkably open and transparent in Sweden during the last decades.

If entrances within the office zone are increasingly downplayed, entrances between different zones are still very important. The control of passage is, however, delegated less to symbolical features and janitors, and more to different kinds of technology and security guards. Doors are locked, and the public entrance now includes screenings, sometimes with x-ray machines. Especially since the mid-2010s, these security checkpoints have grown into an important room type in their own right

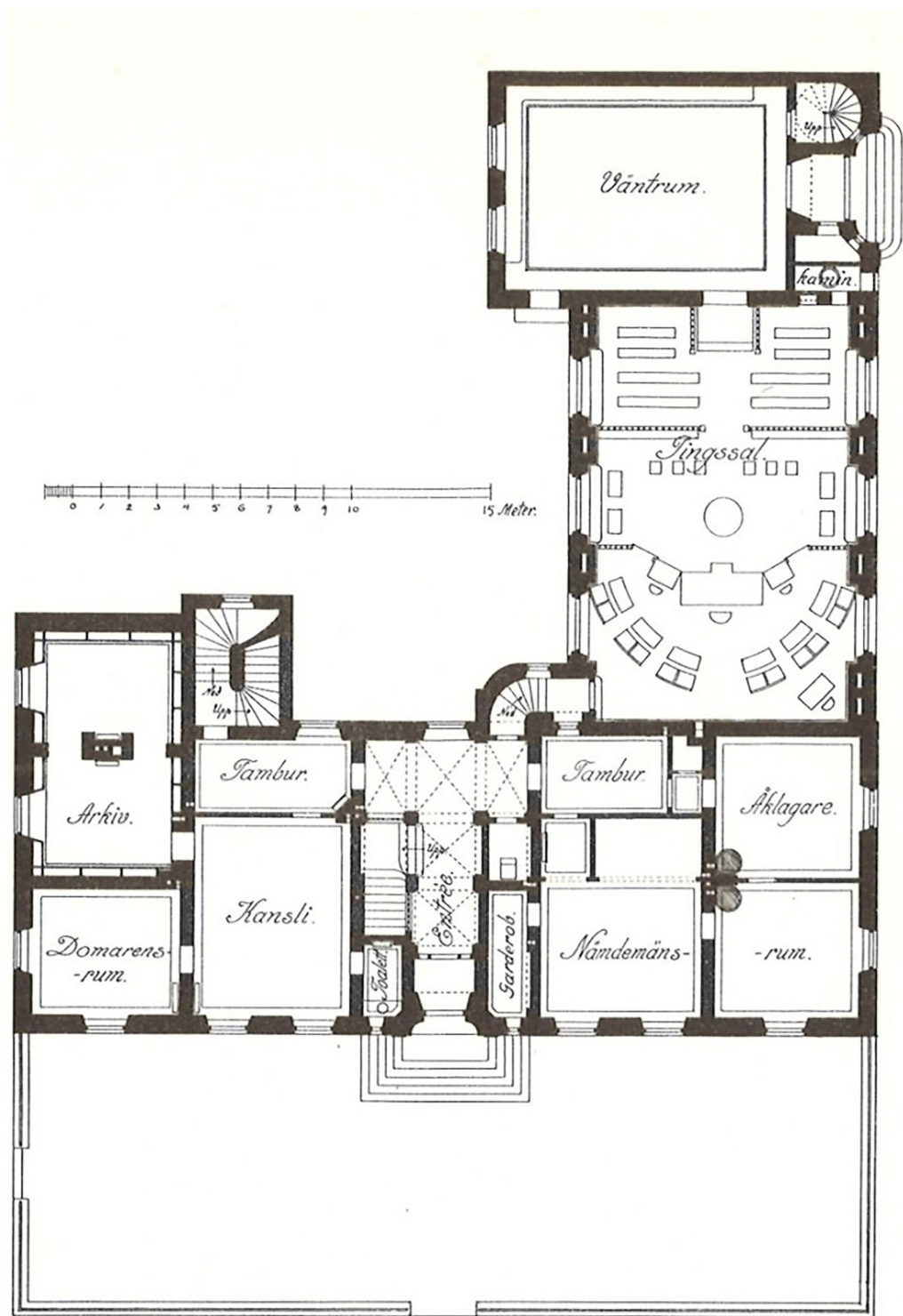


Fig. 9 District courthouse in Norrköping by I. G. Clason, 1901–1903 (Edestrand and Lundberg 1968: 76). Room types on the plan include waiting room (*väntrum*), courtroom (*tingssal*), anteroom (*tambur*), prosecutor (*åklagare*) rooms for the lay jury (*nämndemänsrum*), the judge's room (*domarens rum*) archive (*arkiv*) and administration (*kansli*)



Fig. 10 Security checkpoint at Stockholm District Courthouse (photo by author 2021)

(see Fig. 10), following the logic of the ‘stretched doors’ we see at airports (Koolhaas et al. 2014:634). Quite often, these have been added after the building has been built, and they are thus sometimes squeezed into spaces that cannot really afford them in a good way.

The anonymization of entrances and the lack of representative design and semiotic clarity can be seen in many public buildings from the post-war era in Sweden (Tägil and Werne 2007:48). Kristenson, for example, notes how signs indicating the main entrance to Swedish schools began to appear in the 1960s (Kristenson 2005:444), simply because the hierarchy of entrances was no longer evident from the architectural design. This dethroning of the main entrance is perhaps no longer as high up on the agenda as it once was; instead, we see a kind of redefinition of the design problem on the whole. This is more a question of capturing and screening the person making an entry than an issue of ritualisation or deritualisation of the entrance as such. Making an entrance today takes time and demands one’s attention in a much more direct manner.

It is perhaps telling that this new way of making an entrance into district courthouses, museums, airports, etc., has co-developed with a new building type: the visitor centre (Kärholm 2016). All about staging an entrance, this building type has thrived since it was first introduced in Sweden in the 1990s, winning architectural awards, etc. The visitor centre articulates a threshold for waiting, affording people to buy tickets, snacks and souvenirs, plan their visit, use restroom facilities, etc. In the courthouse, the rituals of the entrance include security checks, taking off and putting on wristwatches and belts, handing in umbrellas and other forbidden objects, passing through information desks, screens and witness

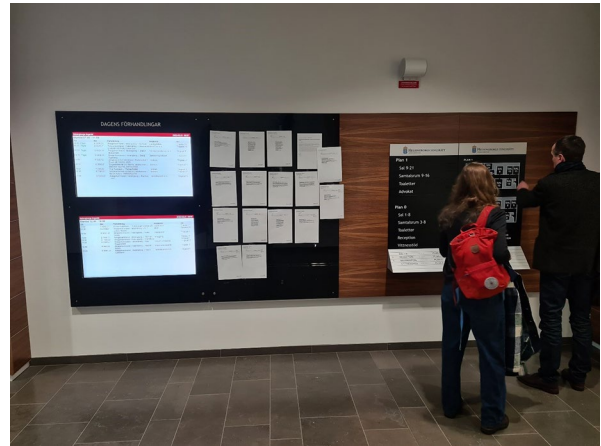


Fig. 11 Information area at Helsingborg Courthouse (photo by author 2022)

information booths, etc. (see Fig. 11). Today’s courthouse entrance excels in its capacity to capture the visitor rather than affording visual and actual access. This ‘capture’ is something I came to experience myself when a guard deliberately locked me in a revolving door from which I was not able to get in or out, while waiting for the person before me to finish her security check. This new attitude to entrances stages the visitor (as an object to control and scrutinize) rather than the entrance (and how it announces itself to the public), and it is also notable in the way in which new courthouses meet the city. Main entrances seldom face squares or busy streets, partly for security reasons (interview at DV). However, the symbolical importance of the entrance is not completely lost, of course. An interesting example of this is Lund District Courthouse. Like many of the new Swedish courthouses, it is located directly adjacent to a railway station, but instead of facing the station and the city centre of Lund, it turns its back to the city, and its main entrance is facing the city district *Väster*. As compensation, a series of fake and/or unused doors faces the city and the railway tracks. In this way, it was possible to stage entrances both as a visible sign in public space and as a space to control the visitor, but only by separating them into more than one object.

Waiting and moving in the same space

The need for larger circulation spaces is an old one in courthouses. Courthouses in France famously have a large assembly area called *salle des pas perdue*, a major public space welcoming the visitor and affording meetings between, e.g., the defendant and the lawyer (Bels and Branco 2017:195). In Sweden, where district courthouses with more than one courtroom appeared during the



Fig. 12 Södertörn District Courthouse was designed by Hans Blomkvist and opened in 2007. The sign reads *väntrum* (waiting room), for which are the seats on the left; *samtalsrum* (conversation room); *famijlerummet* (the family room), and *advokatrums* (room for lawyers). Photo by author 2021

1960s, the need for these larger circulation spaces came quite late. In Swedish courthouses built up until the 1950s and 60s, one often first arrives in a rather well-defined space that acts as a waiting room of sorts. Sometimes it was also labelled as such (see Fig. 9), or sometimes it was called an antechamber (*förrum*) or vestibule and combined with an integrated or a closely connected waiting room. These spaces thus had the character of antechambers rather than circulation spaces. In 1971, however, KBS recommended that all waiting rooms be part of communication spaces, and this is now legion. The halls of today (whether central, linear, or a combination of the two) are naturally also much larger, serving a series of different courtrooms. Södertörn District Courthouse, for example, has two storeys of 120-m-long corridors. These large hallways have a certain airport atmosphere: calls for next sessions are much like calls for departure; screens display when the next trial starts, and seating is distributed in relation to the different courtroom entrances (see Fig. 12).

We also see this tendency of integrating walking with other activities backstage, at the office floors. DV's

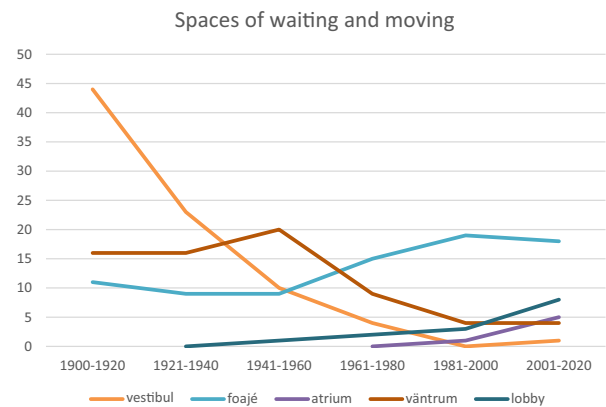


Fig. 13 Room types relating to waiting and moving in non-residential buildings (percentage of plans in the journal *Arkitektur* 1900–2020), including *vestibul* (vestibule), *foajé* (foyer), *atrium* (atrium) and *väntrum* (waiting room). (Figure by author)

recommendations, for example, states that the library preferably can be integrated into movement space. It no longer needs to be a room of its own but can be part of a corridor/lunchroom (DV 2021a:24). Again, this is a long way from the larger library with a workplace for a specific librarian and specific study places, and even secluded reading nooks, discussed in the 1970s (DV 1976b).

The continental room type *salle des pas perdue* probably influenced the development of larger entrance halls in the Swedish courthouse architecture of the time, but it also important to consider the general development of waiting rooms during the twentieth century. Looking at other building types, waiting rooms played their own part in the spatial culture of early architectural modernism. Waiting was serious back then, and waiting time should preferably be made productive through reading, needlework, etc. (Ehn and Löfgren 2010:41 ff.). This is especially clear in railway stations, where waiting rooms of the early twentieth century were properly defined. In larger railway stations, waiting rooms developed into larger halls. Referring to the Swedish railway architecture of the first part of the twentieth century, Linde Bjur wrote of 'the era of vast waiting halls' (Linde Bjur 2010: 326). Soon afterward, airports became known for integrating waiting and movement. Åman made this association in 1976 when he noted how the public spaces of the new hospital in Huddinge, built in 1972, resembled an airport with its huge communications spaces, long perspectives, information desks, etc. (Åman 1976:438 f.). As they developed towards bigness, many building types of this time found themselves facing a similar problem: how to welcome large crowds of people and distribute them smoothly to different places, while also allowing them to circulate and mingle. In airports, these spaces are filled

with retail, services, cafés and restaurants. In the courthouse however, these circulations spaces are most often devoid of people.

As Fig. 13 shows, the waiting room as a spatial denominator seems to peak on Swedish plans around the mid-twentieth century, and then numbers start to decline. We can also see how the vestibule was replaced by the foyer during the second half of the twentieth century (cf. Löfgren 2011:535). The vestibule and the foyer certainly have their similarities, and they can sometimes even be used as synonyms, but while the vestibule connotes a kind of sluice—a space which, much like the anteroom, simply leads from one space to the next—the foyer also connotes a place to mingle and socialise. The foyer is a room type that started in early nineteenth century, and it was first important in theatres and later in cinemas. There is a rather early Swedish example of a large and important foyer in Helgo Zettervall's plan for the Swedish House of Parliament, 1883–4 (Bodin 2017). The vestibule, especially popular in public and commercial buildings, disappeared from Swedish plans in the 1960s and early 1970s. At around the same time, the foyer, alongside the entrance hall, grew more common in schools, government buildings and offices. We see this trend somewhat later in sport arenas. Nordell points to the new Swedish arenas of the 2000s as another example where foyer space has increasingly developed from a pure transport space, a vestibule of sorts, into a place of consumption and social mingling (Nordell 2022:301). The lobby, another place of both waiting and circulation that is especially common in hotels, was imported into the Swedish vocabulary around 1911 and has slowly increased in frequency since the mid-twentieth century.

In her studies on scientific buildings, Yaneva has pointed to how the atrium has taken over the role of the laboratory as a specific cognitive environment of synergies and collaborations (Yaneva 2010:142). The atrium acts as a kind of square or 'urban knot' (Yaneva 2010:146) in this system of both distribution and circulation. Looking through the many new buildings for higher education institutions built in Sweden, we see this trend also establishing from the 1990s onwards. Today, the interior communication system is perhaps also more focused on circulation than distribution, although both remain important, thus echoing the ever-so influential spatial logic of the mall.

The introduction of more modern circulation spaces transformed the role of the ceremonial stair, a feature that traditionally appeared in several courthouses (on the continent in relation to the *salle des pas perdue*). One of the more classical Swedish examples can be found in Gunnar Asplund's extension of the Town Hall and District Courthouse of Gothenburg. The ceremonial stair

theme has been borrowed more recently in several new courthouses (see Figs. 1 and 4), including when the district courthouse in Gothenburg moved from Asplund's building into a new building designed by Plain arkitekter that opened in 2010. Here, the stairs were in a mundane circulation space, and despite their formal look—with lower height between the steps, forcing a slower walk—they were difficult to read in the new environment. On a visit there in December 2019, there was a more or less permanent sign reading: 'NB! The stairs are difficult to walk. Hold on to the railing for your own safety'. But perhaps the sign was too quick to blame the stairs. Rather than an inherent problem of the stairs, the discordance between an aesthetics of smooth circulation and a stair designed to slow the walker down is probably what causes the confusion. Today, the circulation space is as smooth as in a shopping mall, and a ceremonial stair is thus unexpected, an anomaly in a space that rather seems to call out for an escalator. Here, two different tendencies of territorial mimetics – borrowing from historical examples of the same building type, as well as from circulation spaces of other contemporary building types – thus appear to clash.

The de- and resegmentation of space

Mulcahy has pointed out that traditional courthouse design has been rather keen on segmentation and hierarchy, where people were not represented as equal but given different supports by design (Mulcahy 2011:55). This is quite clear in the so-called 'wedding cake' interiors of the traditional British courtrooms (Mulcahy 2007:398). The importance of 'distinction through design' could also be seen in Swedish courtrooms, for example, in the so-called 'ditch' solution, where the court clerk was seated in a ditch in between the judge's bench and a barrier facing the defendant and the audience (Löfgren 2011:469). The judges were thus separated both by height, the spatial zone of the clerk, and a barrier/fence. Existing ditches were often rebuilt in the 1960s, however, becoming the solution with a simple bench on a podium that we see today.

Courthouses are still built to prevent people of different professions and roles from accidentally crossing paths (cf. Bels and Branco 2017:196). Today, a zone diagram based on the movement of different roles (DV 2021b:12) plays a key part in the spatial ordering of the Swedish courthouse. A segmentation of different roles thus certainly exists, and although the roles remain spatially separated, we can also see a desegmentation from the 1970s and onwards. In 1971 for example, the lowering of the podium was up for debate when 15 cm was set as a new recommended maximum height (30–40 cm was common in older buildings), and it was also suggested

Table 1 Comparison of recommended room types and room sizes in guidelines from 1971 to 2019

KBS 1971	Domstolsverket 2019
Courtroom 1 (<i>Tingssal</i> 1) 100–120 m ²	Large courtroom (<i>Storsal</i>) 110–160 m ²
Courtroom 2 (<i>Tingssal</i> 2) 60–80 m ²	Normal courtroom (<i>Normal sal</i>) 70–90 m ²
Courtroom 3 (<i>Tingssal</i> 3) 60 m ²	Small courtroom (<i>Liten sal</i>) 30–38 m ²
Room for preliminary hearing (<i>Förberedelse rum</i>) 30 m ²	N/A (small courtrooms are used for this)
N/A	Security courtroom (<i>Säkerhetssal</i>) 80–170 m ²
N/A	Large security courtroom (<i>Stor säkerhetssal</i>) 180–280 m ²
President of the court (<i>Lagman</i>) 25 m ²	President of the court (<i>Lagman</i>) 18 m ²
Ordinary office (<i>Tjänsterum</i>) 10 m ²	Ordinary office (<i>Kontorsrum</i>) 9 m ²
Judge (<i>Rådman</i>) 20 m ²	N/A
Head of administration (<i>Kanslichef</i>) 15 m ²	N/A
Copy room (<i>Kopiering</i>) 15 m ²	Copy room (<i>Kopiering</i>) 5–10 m ²
Deliberation room (<i>Överläggningsrum</i>) 25–30 m ²	Deliberation room (<i>Överläggningsrum</i>) 10–15 m ²
Conversation room (<i>Samtalsrum</i>) 10 m ²	Conversation room (<i>Samtalsrum</i>) 6–10 m ²

that the podium should be removable (KBS 1971a, b:9). In the discussions leading up to the DV's 1979 guidelines, the podium seems to be of some concern again. DV suggested a 20 cm podium, but KBS thought it should be removed for reasons of accessibility (accommodating people with wheelchairs). Ultimately, today's recommendation of 20 cm remained, but it is also suggested that the question of the podium can be handled individually in each project (DV 1979). The question of access is resolved with ramps, often in the now more or less obligatory rear corridor (see Fig. 1).

Apart from changes to the podium, we also see a change backstage, when it comes to the relation between different staff categories. In 1971, the room sizes for different offices were standardised, and the number of different office types decreased. Before the 1960s and '70s, plans usually tagged offices carefully with titles stating different professions and roles; this was not limited to courthouses, but applied to all office buildings.⁷ Some degree of this remained in the 1971 recommendations, but the number of specific offices is now down to four (see Table 1). When it comes to office size, some users argued in the early 1970s that the office of the president of the court (*lagman*) should be large enough to accommodate larger meetings. KBS stated however that such functions must be more neutrally located, e. g. adjacent to the library (1971:14), and that 25 square metres should thus suffice. The sizes of offices for judges and the president

of the court continued to be an issue after this as well. When a new general programme for district courts was being developed by the DV in 1976, several of the referral bodies brought up the question. *Sveriges domareförbund* (The Swedish Association of Judges) argued, for example, that the president of the court needed an office with an area of 30–35 square metres (DV 1976b, app. 2), and Gothenburg District Court argued for an even larger office, 35–40 square metres (DV 1977a:1). In the summary of these comments, the board of DV evaded the question of office sizes in the programme and referred instead to a general programme for offices made by KBS in 1975 (DV 1977b:2).

Comparing the recommendations of 1971 and 2019 in Table 1, we might notice two things when it comes to offices. First of all, they have decreased in size. As mentioned earlier, this is arguably a general trend when it comes to other kinds of public buildings as well. Second, the desegmentation of offices has increased further, as there are now only two different kinds of offices in the DV recommendations. In the Lund District Courthouse building—and on the explicit request from the court and its president—all single office rooms are actually only in one size. This is a long way from the debates of the 1970s.

During the post-war period in Sweden, many room types that were related to social status and titles, as well as gender differences, started to disappear. By the mid-twentieth century, rooms such as the salon (*salong/finrum*) the gentlemen's room (*herrum*) the maid's chamber (*jungfrukammare*) had disappeared from plans for residential buildings (Kärholm 2020). Gender-specific room types such as rooms for a *skrivfröken* ('writing miss'), a *maskinskriverska* (female typist), or a *värdinna* (hostess), or specific waiting rooms and reception desks for women and men, started to disappear in the 1950s. Throughout

⁷ And not only in offices, but in all kinds of spaces. For example, in the early twentieth century, waiting rooms at railway stations were often divided into first, second and third class (Linde Bjur 2010:159). Late examples of class division can be found in the City Hall of Tranås, and the new City Centre of Avesta, both presented in *Arkitektur* in 1944 – these were the last two examples of a division between first- and second-class restaurants that can be found in the journal.

the 1960s, we see how the dedifferentiation of single offices according to rank or title in several building types coincides chronologically with the open office landscape concept, which was introduced around the mid-1960s in Sweden. This open office concept first met backlash (cf. Arvastson and Hammarlund-Larsson 2003:137), but started to gain momentum again around the year 2000. Courthouses have been especially slow when it comes to open office solutions. The open office was suggested as a solution already in 1971, and newer recommendations advocate office units and open office solutions, but the latter is still not very popular. Lund District Courthouse (2018) is a telling example: there are close to 100 uniformly sized single offices on two floors, and just three quite small spaces for open office solutions and, gathering from a conversation during our visit, these were not used much.

Wherever there is desegmentation, there is bound to be resegmentation. What does this look like? In courthouses, segmentation today has to do more with the elimination of risks than with symbolical values or sheer size. Looking at the different kind of courtrooms (Table 1), we might notice that in addition to size, there is also a new differentiation based on the logic of security. The security court room was introduced in Sweden in the early 1980s (DV 1982), whereas the x-ray equipped security gates appeared around 2015. Mulcahy has been arguing for a de-democratisation of courthouses in Britain, where the spectator has been downgraded, contained and visualised over time. To a certain extent, this has also happened in Sweden: as the focus on the judges is being downplayed, the spotlight is put on the audience, both through containing the spectators behind glass in the security courtrooms (a so-called ‘fishbowl court’, Tait 2013:477), and with the new security checks at the public entrance. In Swedish courthouses, the defendant is not put in a glass cage. A bullet-proof glass cage was famously used in trial of Adolf Eichman in Jerusalem in 1961, and glass cages of different sorts are used in countries such as, e.g., France, Australia, UK, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Germany. The European Court of Human Rights have criticized this in several instances during the 1990 and later, as defendants were seen to be denied a fair trial (Tait 2013). In Sweden, as in Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, the defendant does, however, sit unfettered alongside the lawyer. The Swedish design approach is thus, just like in most other countries, focused on risk and on establishing safety and predictability between the different actors of the courthouse, but it is also works with design solutions that tries to ensure a fair trial for the defendant.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that when it comes to exteriority, we can see a remonumentalisation of district courthouses from the 2010s. This is of course related to



Fig. 14 Even a quite small district courthouse, such as the one in Jönköping (from 2000), has a certain monumentality to it. The old police building is on the left. Photo by author 2021

their increased size, but also to the use of more exclusive materials (like the copper façade in Lund or the zinc façade in Alingsås), and a more vertical design. Courthouses are thus increasingly trying to distinguish themselves from other buildings, not least the (still) more ordinary looking office buildings of the police and the prosecutor (see Fig. 14). The general trend towards more spectacular buildings is, however, not something unique to courthouses. On the contrary it is a trend that was set through other building types earlier on, most famously of course through Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (cf. Branco 2019: 599).

Caring for employees

The final theme of room type change has to do with the changing labour market. Around the mid-twentieth century there was a shift in Sweden, so the majority of people were employed, rather than self-employed. For example, counting the categories of self-employed and women outside organized work, the numbers went from 68% in 1900 to only 8% in 2000 (Edvinsson 2005:163). This also influenced spatial planning and design. In an early example of government instruction for room types in workplaces from 1958, we can see the development of new standards for different kinds of dressing rooms, locker rooms, washrooms, eating places, staff rooms, etc. (Kungl. Arbetarskyddsstyrelsen 1958). Spaces for employees had to some extent existed before (see Table 2), such as breakfast rooms (common in schools) or tea kitchens (most common in hospitals). The resting room (*vilrummet*) was introduced already in the 1920s (the first appearance that I have found is in a hospital in 1926), and it could, for example, also be found in Gustaf Clason’s modern and early large-scale office building Thulehuset (1938–1942)

Table 2 A few room types relating to work life and services for employees

Room types	SAOB/SO	First app. (non-resid)	Comments
<i>Rökrum</i> (Smoking room)	1807	1801	The earliest non-residential example I have found is in C. F. Sundvall's plan for the City Hall of Norrköping, 1801. Last appearance is in 1991
<i>Tekök</i> (Tea kitchen)	1874	1885	Small kitchen for making tea, especially common in hospitals. The first one I found is in F. G. A. Dahl's children's hospital in Stockholm, 1885. Last appearance is in 1969
<i>Frukostrum</i> (Breakfast room)	1878	1886	Common in schools, some workplaces and villas, but disappeared during the early 1960s (except for in hotels). The earliest non-residential example I have found is in P. E. Werming's plans for the schools Norra Real and Södra Latin, Stockholm 1886
<i>Vilrum</i> (Resting room)	1885	1926	Note that in Swedish <i>vilrum</i> can also refer to a grave chamber or grave, and this meaning has an older use
<i>Lunchrum</i> (Lunchroom)	1918	1922	The first lunchroom that I found is in G. Asplund's Stockholm City Library, 1922. The related room type <i>personal matsal</i> (staff canteen) can found at least from 1932
<i>Personalrum</i> (Staff room)	1920	1915	The first one can be found in A. Johansson's new building for Danviken new hospital clinic, 1915
<i>Kontorslandskap</i> (Open-plan office)	1964	1965	First example I found is on B. Nyberg's plan for the County Administrative Building in Malmö. 1965 ^a

The table shows the first appearance according to the Swedish dictionaries SO (Svensk ordbok) and SAOB (Svensk akademisk ordbok), and according to the plan studies of the author

^a A kind of open office of an older tradition, sometimes called *arbetssalar* (working halls), existed earlier, however; Clason's Thulehuset in Stockholm from 1940 is a good example here

in Stockholm, but it did not become common until the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the instructions from 1958 mentioned earlier, it is noted that resting rooms should be used especially for female employees and employees who perform more heavy work. Today, there is a rule in Sweden stating that workplaces with more than 50 employees must have a specially dedicated resting room. This was not the case for the district courts in the 1970s, but due to the development of larger district courts the mean number of employees is steadily increasing, and from 2006 the mean number was more than 50 (only a few years prior, in 1999, it had been around 30). The lunchroom, although also rising steadily in number during the mid-twentieth century, seems to have decreased to a somewhat lower level from the 1980s and onward, but is still a common room type.

A service that disappeared during the 1980s and 1990s is amenities for smoking. The idea that smoking should in principle be allowed everywhere was already being questioned in the 1970s. In the programme proposal of 1976 (DV 1976b), DV suggests ashtrays in all deliberation rooms (*överläggningsrum*), all rooms for preliminary hearings and in the waiting rooms. Katrineholm District Court questions the need to smoke in the first two room types in their response to the programme, and Malmö District Court goes as far as to suggest that even a part of the waiting room should be free from smoking (DV 1977a; 1977b). It seems that the times were not ready for these changes, however. The final programme of 1979 suggested that smoking be allowed in all three room

types (DV 1979), with floor-standing ashtrays as standard equipment in waiting rooms.

The increasing importance of room types related to employees during the second half of the twentieth century also affected courthouses. During the last decades, caring for employees has often been coupled with an attention to security and risk, i.e., efforts to produce a safe environment for people working at the court as well as visitors. The professionalisation and technologization of security and safety issues has led to a whole series of new room types, including for example, security courtrooms, security checks, back offices for security guards, witness protection rooms and specific garages for receiving incarcerated persons (*garageintag*).

Concluding discussion

In this article, I have discussed five deeply interrelated spatial trends affecting room type development in Swedish district courthouses, trends which I argue also relate to deeper mimetic tendencies surrounding different building types of non-residential architecture from the 1970s and sometimes earlier until today. These different trends have found their own version in courthouse architecture, suggesting that this building type and its use/reuse of different room types has found its own specific style of territorial mimetics.

The first trend was about the how the sizing up of buildings also led to a decrease in room sizes and increasing attention to the architectural problem of how to stack different series of rooms. Here, the courthouses

seem to follow other building types, including schools, office buildings and different kinds of government buildings, but tweaked in its own way. For example, courthouses do not display the same tendency of hybridisation of different functions that many other building types do. Although size has increased, there is no tendency of malification and no thematic merging, the likes of which we can find in travel centres, cultural centres, ideas stores, etc. The strong mimetic impulse in Sweden of doing ‘centres’ appeared as law centres during the early 1970s. At first, it led to some integration of different building types within the same building complex, but this was later abandoned, and the different building types were at least kept apart as distinct volumes.

The second trend was the new attention to the entrance situation, developing from the symbolic articulation of the entrance towards a focus on the visitor. Here, the architectural problem of ritualising, or, in the days of architectural modernism, of deritualising the entrance situation through symbolical design, has been replaced by the problem of how to capture and navigate the visitor through the entrance in a secure way. The threshold design of a stretched door, developed in airports, has now spread to other building types, recently also including Swedish courthouses. In Sweden, the trend of the captured visitor, which crystallised in the building type ‘visitor centre’ around the 1990s, also allowed the trend to develop, consolidate and spread further. For the Swedish courthouse, an increasingly exclusive building project, the entrance situation has resulted in a double problem: How can we make entrances publicly visible and accessible, yet safe and supervised? But today, the main focus is always on the latter.

The third trend, closely related to the second, is the increase in spatial accommodations for waiting and moving in the same space. This problem was dealt with both in courthouses of France and the contingent through the *salle des pas perdue*, and later of course in theatres and railway stations. During the twentieth century, these spaces got its special and very influential version through the shopping mall, a building type primarily developed for circulation. The focus on easy circulation has co-developed with increasing attention to the thresholds negotiating inside and outside. This is also true for the court, even though the circulation spaces are seldom very populated (in contrast to other building types, where regular rhythms of crowding seem to be characteristic). By not following for a trend of hybridisation, its autonomy is strengthened, but so are the association to empty halls.

The fourth trend is about the de- and resegmentation of space. Here, we both have the lowering of the podiums, the homogenisation and serialisation of courtrooms (as described above), and the standardisation of offices. If

the representation of status has decreased in importance, a new segmentation related to risk has evolved. New security courtrooms, witness protection spaces, x-ray screenings, special entrances for the incarcerated, etc. have evolved to prevent expected procedures from being interrupted or disturbed.

The fifth and final trend relates to caring for employees and users. New room types dedicated to employees were introduced in Sweden in the twentieth century. These include resting rooms and lunchrooms, as well as spaces dedicated to ensuring a safe work environment. At the same time, spaces for performing work (offices, courtrooms) seem to be decreasing in size. This is probably not unique to courthouses. Spaces for supporting activities such as administration, services technology and security have grown at the cost of the core activities.

In relation to these five trends, we also see several examples of trial-and-error processes in the material. For example, the first attempts to eliminate the podium during the 1970s failed, and although it is no longer very high, it still exists in practically all the courtrooms we visited, old and new. We also saw how the traditional ceremonial stairs clashed with the new ideas and design of circulation spaces. The upscaling of law-related building types into law centres also met with problems, as did open offices, which were recommended early on but have yet to gain popularity within this specific type.

Looking into territorial mimetics and the circulation of forms and territorial sorts, we might perhaps discern a specific mimetic style for the courthouse. Going back to Choay’s concept of the rule and the model, we can perhaps see how a distinction is possible between *type-specific* rules and models and *cross-type* rules and models. For the courthouse, the type-specific rules are very strong, and they have grown stronger during this period (through guidelines from KBS 1971a, b to DV 2019). The type-specific models also play their part. We see them both in the diagrams of the guidelines, in the persistent use of the traditional ceremonial stairs, and in the way that courthouses that invested in security gates and x-ray machines in recent years quickly become models that other courthouses followed. Overall, however, it is probably fair to say that the influence of type-specific models is weaker than that of type-specific rules.

When it comes to cross-specific rules and models, the relationship seems to be inverted. The impact of cross-specific rules is there—for example, the effect of national smoking prohibitions and new regulations for caring for employees—but they are not the most obvious ones. In fact, one could also argue that they have decreased significantly over the last decades, as the responsibility for courthouses went from The National Board of Public Building (KBS), which also produced a lot of general, cross-type

guidelines and recommendations, to the much more specialised National Courts Administration (DV). If the cross-type rules have decreased, the cross-specific models are plentiful and seem to dominate this period. I would argue that what characterizes the mimetic style of the courthouses during this era of typological transformation is the ongoing negotiation between strong and ever-more elaborated, type-specific rules on one hand, and the circulation of cross-type models on the other. The loans from other types were sometimes smooth, such as staging and securing the entrance, adding new room types for security, stacking models for courtrooms, the design of large circulation spaces (albeit empty), visitor centres with information desks, screens and booths with folders, etc. Other loans were harder to make and required more negotiation, like open offices and de-segmentation of status symbols (the podium).

In the 1970s we saw a desingularisation of the courthouse type, and today perhaps we see a strengthening of the type instead. This typological transformation is not so much about reverting to type-specific models from the past, and nor is it a question of applying general cross-type rules that played an important part in the desingularisation process of the 1970s. Instead, unsanctioned but widespread and popular cross-type models seem to have increased. The courthouse is, however, also an increasingly regulated type, and to retain autonomy and pedagogics when it comes to the procedure of law-making, the territorial loans have often found their own specific forms and mixes in the courthouse setting.

Acknowledgements

This article has benefited from the helpful comment of Eva Löfgren, Lars-Eric Jönsson and Jonathan Westin.

Funding

Open access funding provided by Lund University. The research of this article has been funded by the Swedish Research Council (VR) through the grant "Just Room? Architecture, Technologies and Spatial Practice of the District Law Court", project 2019-02600.

Availability of data and materials

Some of the data used and analysed in this study can be found in the archive of The Swedish National Courts Administration, *Domstolsverket* (see references for details of the documents used). Other datasets (photographs and compilation of room types from the journal *Arkitektur*) are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no competing interests.

Received: 24 October 2022 Accepted: 9 September 2023

Published online: 23 September 2023

References

- Alberti LB (1988) On the art of building in ten books. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA
- Åman A (1976) Om den offentliga vården: byggnader och verksamheter vid svenska vårdinstitutioner under 1800- och 1900-talen: en arkitekturhistorisk undersökning. Liber Förlag/Sveriges arkitekturmuseum, Stockholm
- Anthony T, Grant E (2016) Courthouse design principles to dignify spaces for Indigenous users: preliminary observations. *Int J Court Adm* 8(1):43–59
- Arvastson K, Hammarlund-Larsson C (2003) Offentlighetens materia: kultur-analytiska perspektiv på kommunhus. Carlsson, Stockholm
- Bels M, Branco P (2017) Law and architecture: courthouse architecture, searching for a new balance between representation and functionality. In: Gephardt W, Leko J (eds) Law and the arts. Elective affinities and relationships of tension. Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, pp 177–206
- Blumetti MD, Rodrigues DP, Pedro, D (2020) Courthouse architecture and power performances in the 20th century. In: 11th Academic International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies and Education - AICMSE 2020. United Kingdom, Oxford
- Bodin A (2017) Helgo Zettervalls arkitektur. Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm
- Bornstein P (2019) Vår tids former. *Arkitektur* 3(2019):80–89
- Branco P (2019) City/courthouse building: a mirror game. Examining connections between courthouse buildings and location in the urban environment. *Int J Semiotics Law-Revue* 32(3):597–620
- Brighenti AM (2010) On territoriality: towards a general science of territory. *Theory Cult Soc* 27(1):52–72
- Brighenti AM, Kärholm M (2021) Urban crystallization and the morphogenesis of urban territories. *Territory Politics Gov*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1872040>
- Caldwell WW (2001) The courthouse and the depot: the architecture of hope in an age of despair: a narrative guide to railroad expansion and its impact on public architecture in Georgia, 1833–1910. Mercer University Press, Macon
- Chappe N, Obidzinsky M (2013) The impact of the number of courts on the demand for trials. Working paper No. 2013-01. Université de Franche-Comté, Besançon.
- Choay F (1997) The rule and the model, on the theory of architecture and urbanism. MIT Press, Cambridge MA
- De Meyer D (2010) Mannerism, modernity and the modernist architect, 1920–1950. *J Archit* 15(3):243–265
- Deleuze G (1994) Difference and repetition. Columbia University Press, New York
- Dovey K (1999) Framing places: mediating power in built form. Routledge, London
- Edestrand H, Lundberg E (1968) Isak Gustaf clason. Norstedt, Stockholm
- Edvinsson R (2005) Growth, accumulation, crisis: with new macroeconomic data for Sweden 1800–2000. Stockholm Universitet, Stockholm
- Ehn B, Löfgren O (2010) The secret world of doing nothing. University of California Press, Berkeley
- Forty A (2000) Words and buildings. Thames & Hudson, London
- Haldrup P (2008) Law and the evidential image. *Law C Humanit* 4:139–155
- Issacharoff M (1981) Space and reference in drama. *Poetics Today* 2(3):211–224
- Karlsmo E, Löfgren E (2016) Historiography of Swedish building types. *J Art Hist* 85(1):8–28
- Kärholm M (2013) Building type production and everyday life: rethinking building types through actor-network theory and object-oriented philosophy. *Environ Plan d Soc Space* 31(6):1109–1124
- Kärholm M (2016) In search of building types: on visitor centers, thresholds and the territorialisation of entrances. *J Space Syntax* 7(1):55–70
- Kärholm M (2020) The life and death of residential room types: a study of Swedish building plans, 1750–2010. *Archit Hist*. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.343>
- KBS (1971a) Lokaler för tingsrätter, KBS-rapport 60. Kungliga Byggnadsstyrelsen, Stockholm
- KBS (1971b) Inredning av lokaler för tingsrätter, KBS-rapport 94. Kungliga Byggnadsstyrelsen, Stockholm
- Koolhaas R, Petermann S, Trüby S, Robilant M, Westcott J (2014) Elements. Marsilio, Venezia
- Koolhaas R (1995) S, M, L, XL. 010 Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Kristenson H (2005) Skolhuset: idé och form. Signum, Lund
- Latour B (2010) The making of law: an ethnography of the Conseil d'Etat. Polity, Cambridge

- Leong ST (2001) And then there was shopping. In: Chung CJ et al (eds) Harvard design school guide to shopping. Köln, Taschen
- Linde Bjur G (2010) Stationshus. Järnvägsarkitektur i Sverige. Balkong, Stockholm
- Lindqvist ÅE (1965) Rådhus i Södertälje. Arkitektur 1965(9):302–306
- Löfgren E (2011) Rummet och rätten, Tingshus som föreställning, byggnad och rum i användning 1734–1970. Rättshistoriskt bibliotek, Stockholm
- Markus T (1993) Buildings and power. Routledge, London
- McNamara MJ (2004) From tavern to courthouse: architecture and ritual in American Law, 1658–1860. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
- Modéer KÅ (1992) Tingsstället – Rättens boningar in [no ed.] Tingshus i tid och rum: ett rätts- och kulturhistoriskt seminarium i Domstolsväsendets informationscentrum, Jönköping den 24–25 februari 1992: 7–29. Domstolsverket, Jönköping
- Mol A, Law J (1994) Regions, networks and fluids: anaemia and social topology. Soc Stud Sci 24(4):641–671
- Mulcahy L (2007) Architects of justice: the politics of courtroom design. Soc Leg Stud 16(3):383–403
- Mulcahy L (2010) Legal architecture: justice, due process and the place of law. Routledge, London
- Mulcahy L, Rowden E (2019) The democratic courthouse: a modern history of design, due process and dignity. Routledge, London
- Nordell O (2022) Arenaboom, En arkitekturstudie av idrottsarenor i Sverige under 2000-talets första decennier. Uppsala universitet, Uppsala
- Resnik J, Curtis D, Tait A (2014) Constructing courts: architecture, the ideology of judging, and the public sphere. In: Wagner A, Sherwin RK (eds) Law, culture and visual studies. Springer, Berlin, pp 515–545
- Riksrevisionen (2017) Tingsrätters effektivitet och produktivitet, RIR 2017:6. Riksrevisionen, Stockholm
- Rönnerstrand B, Johansson S (2008) Förtroende för myndigheter. SOM-rapport 2008:25. Som-Institutet, Göteborg
- Rosenbloom JD (1998) Social ideology as seen through courtroom and courthouse architecture. Colum.-VLA JL & Arts 22(4):463–524
- Rowden E (2018) Distributed courts and legitimacy: what do we lose when we lose the courthouse? Law, C Humanit 14(2):263–281
- Sigge E (2017) Architecture's red tape: government building construction in Sweden, 1963–1973. The example of the National Board of Public Building, KBS (Kungliga Byggnadsstyrelsen). KTH, Stockholm
- Statskontoret (2017) Sammanslagna tingsrätter, en utvärdering 2007:9. Statskontoret, Stockholm
- Steadman P (2014) Building types and built forms. Kibworth Beauchamp, Matador
- Tägil T, Werne F (2007) Förorter i förändring. In: Nylund K (ed) Periferin i centrum-gränsöverskridande praktiker i Stockholms offentliga rum. Göteborg, Daidalos, pp 23–86
- Tait D (2011) Glass cages in the dock: presenting the defendant to the jury. Chicago-Kent Law Rev 86(2):467–495
- Wahlman LI (1916) (1916) Stockholms nya rådhus. Arkitektur 3(46):13–48
- Werne F (1997) Arkitekturens ismer. Arkitektur förlag, Stockholm
- Wölfflin H (1950) [1915] Principles of art history. Dover, New York
- Yaneva A (2010) Is the atrium more important than the lab? Designer buildings for new cultures of creativity. In: Meusbürger P, Livingstone D, Jöns H (eds) Geographies of science. Springer, Berlin, pp 139–150
- Yaneva A (2012) Mapping controversies in architecture. Ashgate, Farnham
- Yütte D (2015) The strait gate, thresholds and power in Western history. Yale University Press, New Haven
- DV (1979) Normer för tingsrättslokaler (GP Ting 1979), 1979–02–20, Dnr. 4807–1976.
- DV (1982) Ang. permanent säkerhetssal Stockholm, kv. Kronoberg, 1982-12-15, Dnr 3441-1982.
- DV (2017) Lokalförsörjningsstrategi för Sveriges Domstolar vid om-, till- och nybyggnationer. Strategidokument, Lokalenheten. Jönköping: Domstolsverket.
- DV (2021a) Bygg/Teknik, 2021-03-24, revision I, Unpublished working document, pp. 167
- DV (2021b) Lokalgrupper, lokalsamband, markdisposition m.m. 2021b-0-24, revision G. Unpublished working document, pp. 12

Publisher's Note

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Archive material and unpublished documents from The Swedish National Courts Administration, Domstolsverket (DV)

- DV (1976a) Sollentuna rättscentrum, Yttrande av samrådsgruppen, 1976a-04–30, Dnr 11716–1975.
- DV (1976b) Förslag till generellt program, underlag för tingsrättslokaler 1976b, Remissupplaga Okt. 1976b. Dnr 4807–1976b.
- DV (1976c) Yttrande från Sveriges Domareförbund, 1976c-12–20. Dnr 4807–1976c.
- DV (1976d) Sollentuna rättscentrum, programskiss, 1976d-03–30 Dnr 11716–1975.
- DV (1977a) Yttrande från Göteborgs tingsrätt, 1977a-01–14. Dnr 135–76
- DV (1977b) Normer för tingsrättslokaler, 1977b-03–10, Dnr 4807–1976.

Submit your manuscript to a SpringerOpen[®] journal and benefit from:

- Convenient online submission
- Rigorous peer review
- Open access: articles freely available online
- High visibility within the field
- Retaining the copyright to your article

Submit your next manuscript at ► [springeropen.com](https://www.springeropen.com)