ICTPW

**International Conference
of Tirana Planning Week**

by POLIS University

Façade's definitions through architectural transitions.

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Abstract

The definition of the architectural term "façade" will be addressed in this article, as a relatively new term and not very much explored in the vocabulary of architecture definitions. With globalization, homogenization of the environment, all places seem to look alike. We are losing to a great extent the beauty and richness of this of cultural expression through the architectural façade. Within the sections that follow, the architectural façade will be examined and defined as a term, as an architectural concept, and as an architectural element. The alterations of the facade as an architectural element will be described in this article. The methodology applied to describe these concepts is based on the description and analysis of some emblematic architectural objects in the international architectural field. The transition moments regarding the architectural concept of the façade will be illustrated with two examples: "The EasFaçade of the Louvre" and the "Crystal Palace". Both these examples demonstrate the evolution of the notion of the architectural façade, through transition architectural moments. Also, the key element that has altered how a façade appears is the explanation of the detail and ornament in the architectural façade. The "ornament" was not only lost in the early 19th-century modernist architectural movement, but it was also removed, altered, and assumed other shapes by different architectural language developments. The ornaments that were put to the exterior facades in limitless numbers and sizes are now thought of as things that may be placed in any home, similar to the furnishings in an apartment. The two contemporary architecture icons, Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, provided the architectural interpretation of this modernist movement through their renowned creations, Villa Müller by Adolf Loos and Ville Savoye by Le Corbusier. These façade alterations are outcomes of a blending, processing, or interchange between several disciplines and the instruments employed to discern the definition of the architectural term "Façade". There are two sides to the façade, it's not just the outward face but the inside surface. At the meeting point there are these internal pressures of program of space of circulation of structure, external pressures of site, context, orientation, approach. The façade has a relationship with the populace, the context, but also to the cycle of decay and rebirth that one finds in the natural environment.

Keywords: *Architecture, Definition, Façade, Interchange, Processing, Transition.*

Definition

Façade – the front part or exterior of a building
This is the definition that exists mostly in any dictionary. Probably for a few hundred years. The front of a building, especially an imposing or decorative one. Now, hidden within this is a supposition, presumption that a building has a front. If it doesn't have a front maybe it doesn't have a façade. The idea of imposing or decorative, the façade is given some treatment hierarchically that distinguishes it from the rest of the building. Normally, most buildings with façade this defini-

tion applies. This is a subsidiary definition to it that goes like this: Any side of a building facing a public way or space and finished accordingly. This begins to open up to the door to the possibility that any surface of the building can be considered a façade. Now we can admit to the fact that a building can have not only a front façade but a back façade or a side façade. But this says that any side of a building could possibly have a façade but does have the qualifying requirement that it faces a public way or space. That simply tells us there is a contingent and codependent relationship between façade and public space. If you take one out of the equation, either the façade or the public space, you lose presumably the other (The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023).

Façade a – the front of a building / an imposing or decorative one.
         b – any side of a building facing a public way or space and finished accordingly.

There is a disturbing trend in some dictionaries away from the standard definition. An authority no less than the Oxford Dictionary of architecture says this external facing, especially the principle façade, means you can, if it's not the principle façade, almost any surface can be considered a façade (The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023).

"… a facade frames and enhances the point of intersection of interior and exterior space, dividing but also allowing passage between contrasted functional and symbolic realms." – Charles Burroughs.

It's that depth of the building that really illustrates the idea of that zone of transition from the inside to the outside. Something that we don't think about as much as we should, what is sometimes referred to as the liminal transition of movement from the outside to inside. How façade can serve as an agent for making memorable moment of transition, preparing you for the experience when you leave the public realm and arrive into the private realm, or vice versa (The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023).

"…the façade, then, is a place where, in service of rhethorical effect, the corporeality of architecture is compromised" – Charles Burroughs.

When you design a façade, always remember there are two sides to the façade, it's not just the outward face but the inside surface. At the meeting point there are these internal pressures of program of space of circulation of structure, external pressures of site, context, orientation, approach (The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023).

"I would say that architecture occurs at the meeting of particular interior forces of use and space, and particular and general exterior forces of environment. Architecture as the wall between the inside and outside becomes the spatial record of this reconcillation and its drama.

This is one of the most beautiful quotations about the architectural façade. Nowhere is the word façade. In its place is the word architecture(The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023).

Colin Rowe: "…the vertical surface can only remain the threshold of understanding. For while the plan, as a document addressed to the mind, will always be the primary concept, the vertical surface, as a presentation addressed to the eye, will always be the primary percept, will never be other than the beginning of comprehension."
Colin Rowe: FACE "…exept for Le Corbusier from time to time, face was never a preoccupation of modern architecture. Nor was face, as the metaphorical plane of intersection between the eyes of the observer and what one may dare to call the soul of the build-

ing (its internal animation) a notable component of eighteenth century understanding."

One way to think about the façade is as a projection plane. On the outside are projected those things relevant to the context the façade finds itself within. On the inside are those things that are relevant to internal concerns. Those relevant to the internal concerns can find their way out to the surface of the building so that you do get some sense of internal organization, and vice versa. This is Colin Rowe who has written extensively about the architectural façade (The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023). … *"(The façade is) … the metaphorical plane of intersection between the eyes of the observer and what one may dare to call the soul of the building. (it's internal animation) – Colin Rowe.*

…"A façade may qualify primarily as an out surface, aesthetically and compositionally part of the street or square in which is stands, and carrying various kinds of information an cues for decoding by different interpretive communities."

This is a role that these days is becoming more and more scarce, in that with globalization, homogenization of the environment that all places seem to look alike we are loosing to a great extent the beauty and richness of this kind of cultural expression through the architectural façade. An example of this, a contemporary one, very modest building, is the library that can be found outside Bejing, in the hills. The library and the façade presents itself as this reticulated surface with a balcony, a little arch way on the right, stones pass through it, a stone garden passes underneath the library and it sits in front of a pool. The wall is steel frame and embedded in the wall are these twings. The twigs were gathered locally and are significant to the people who live in the village. These are twigs they gather for their cooking purposes, for heating purposes. This is designed so that as the twigs deteriorate over time, they will rot and fall away, they can be replaced. So the building not only speaks to its relationship to the populace, it speaks to its relationship to the context, but also to the cycle of decay and rebirth that one finds in the natural environment (The architecture of the façade, Korman 2023).

…"In the Pre-Modern city the facade mediates between the public and private realms. It is both public closure and private sign. In the Modern city open space absorbs any urban idiosyncrasy, and because street has disappeared as an enclosed space, the facade becomes only private sign rather than public closure as well" – Michael Dennis (arch) in his book "Court and Garden".

Facade as a term

Despite being extensively used in architectural theories, the term "facade" is relatively new in English. The term first appears in print in 1656 and refers to how a house's façade is presented. This word had both unfavorable and inaccurate meanings by the end of 1933. Its root is the French word "face," which developed from the Middle French term "visage," which means "what is presented." The word "gevel" (facade), which is derived from Old Dutch and refers to the axes of the earth and is based on the Old Slavic name for the human skull and bone structure, has been used in Dutch since the 15th century. (Façade, Rem Koolhaas, et al. Page 6).

Facade as an architectural concept

"The longer you look at a 'word' the stranger it looks"- Karl Kraus. This phrase perfectly describes the word "Façade." The word is derived from the building's façade or front. When compared to the building's structural components like the floor, wall, roof, and columns, the facade concept is a successor. The façade wasn't given much attention by architects until the 18th and 19th centuries. With the modernization at the turn of the 20th century came the de-conception just after its conception (Façade, Rem Koolhaas, et al).
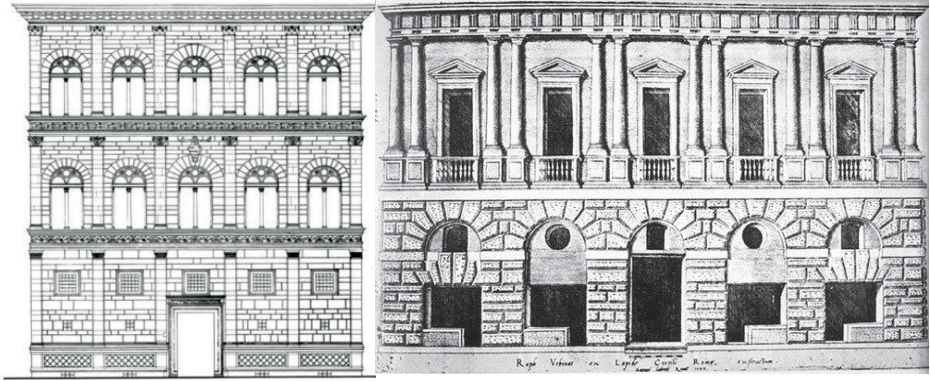
Fig.1, 2/ Alberti's Palazzo Rucellari – 1446, Florence, Italy   Bramante's house for Rafael -1500, Rome, Italy.

1. The order of the columns, the superimposition, the colossal order. The facades of classical architecture have been constructed in the west for millennia and ages without the right language for their components emerging. Wener Oechslin postulated in the 1980s that rather than being a planned design, the façade was more of a byproduct of bottom-up processes. The word "facade" has become so commonplace to us that we have forgotten that, unlike many other (Vitruvian) architectural terminology, it has a precise definition that may be interpreted as a collection of various situations, from design guidelines to aesthetic principles of architecture. Columns, capitals, timber embellishments, and ornamental features received the majority of attention before the façade was thought of as a field with a distinct theoretical perspective. Without any sort of holistic relationship, the components of the facade were coded separately. It was an induced idea rather than a deduced one. It only becomes a more generic idea after following a general route of development and independence. The column is regarded as the most significant component of a classical western façade. The writings of Vitruvius contain descriptions of the three Greek ancient orders. Books three and four of his "Ten Books" on architecture expose us to the Ionian, Doric, and Corinthian order as well as the Tuscan (Roman type) (30 BC). Theorists of the Renaissance then codified these ideas into laws. The Order of Composition was added by Leon Battista Alberti in 1452, bringing the total number of traditional Vitruvian orders to five. Sebastiano Serlio sanctified the classical orders a century later. The entire collection of the five commands has been passed down from father to son. The most significant component of what would later be known as the facade, the column, has been constructed using two principles. The first is known as the "Superposition" (It was practiced in ancient Rome where different types of orders were mixed in the same facade, placed in rows, on different floors, according to different orders, starting from the Doric order, and following them from the Ionic, Corinthian one - the case of the Colosseum in Rome). The "Colossal" is the name of the second principle. In this instance, the building's whole façade is covered in columns in the same arrangement. A frontal system was created in architecture when the Colossal concept was applied to several different buildings. This system was simultaneously exposed to and combined with architectural features and ornamental forms. The cult of purification has been interpreted as Colossal, Superimposition, and Order. (Façade, Rem Koolhaas, et al. Page 36, 37, 38)
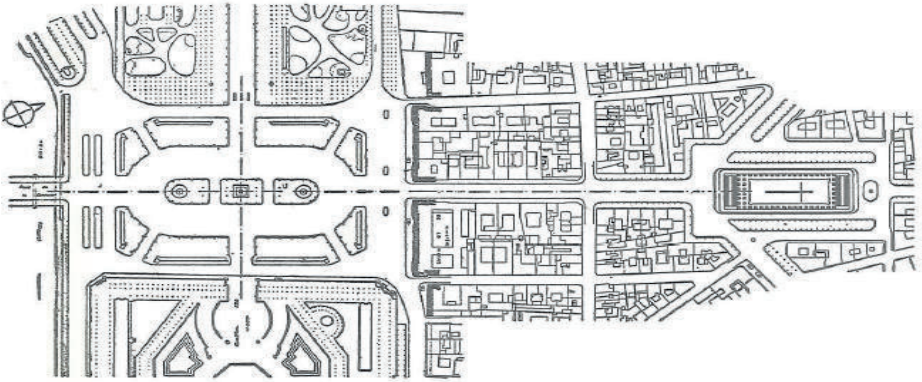
Fig.3/ Plan of "Rue Royale"

Facade as an architectural element

"A cultural movement against the historical-cultural backdrop that had prevailed up until that point occurred in the 18th century. The architecture was altered, the temples' "Temenos" disappeared, and "Classicism" as a whole was rethought. As mentioned in (The Origins of modern town planning – Leonardo Benevolo, page 15), the architects only created the architectural portion of the façade at Place de la Concorde and Rue Royale; the structures will be reconstructed decades from now. Regarding the regime of Classicism, streets, squares, and neighbourhoods were reconstructed (The Origins of modern town planning – Leonardo Benevolo, page 15). The historical significance of temples, or "Temenos," started to wane during this era. The customary benchmark for holy temples shifted. Cities, notably Paris under absolutism, which was exceedingly artificial and resembled a collection of shoots, followed the buildings of the Acropolis or the Roman Forum, which may have been classified as unconnected structures. In this way, the conflicts between the temples were replaced by those between a facade that, from the outside, resembled a temple and the structure that grew behind it. It appeared as though the Classical Temple had become a part of modern cities. The etiquette has evolved into the "doctrine of character" over time. With the help of contemporary effects of aesthetics, whose tools include the theory of perception, physiology, and psychology, this ideology sought to harmonize the exterior look with the function of the structure, in terms of architecture. The "façade's" beginnings are depicted in this description. (Façade, Rem Koolhaas, et al. Page 40). When adjectives like "elevation," "envelope," "skin," and "membrane" are used in place of the term "facade," the issue of the term's modern definition becomes even more complicated. They may refer to parts of a façade, but they are not the facade itself, it should be made explicit. Architectural elevations are technically an orthographic projection convention for frontalized representation of the building surfaces, allowing the observer to see the undistorted relationship of the components to the whole. The terms "envelope," "skin," and "membrane" all refer to the physical covering of the building, without specifying which surface would be considered the main face.
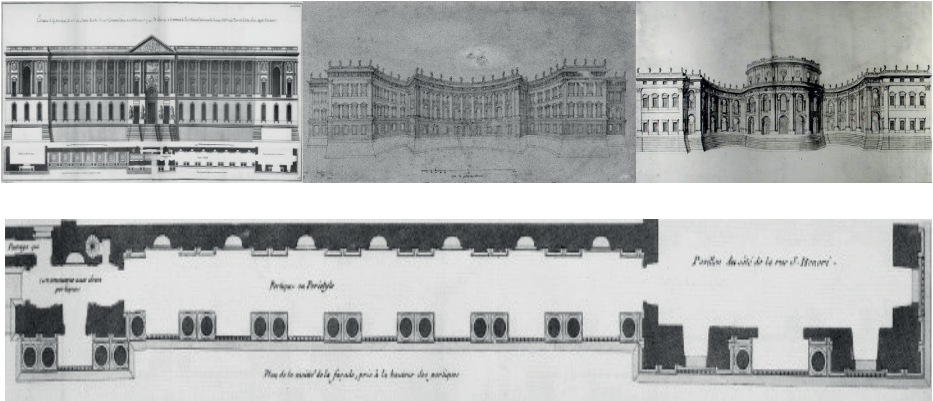
Fig.4,5,6/ Version I, Version II, Final Version
Fig.7/ Section of the final version

Architectural Transition moments

I. East Facade de Louvre: It is a model for succeeding palace designs, a monument linked to the beginnings of modern architecture, and a shining example of the strict architectural tradition in French classicism. Regardless matter where it is located, the façade receives a lot of attention because it was originally intended to be the major, ceremonial entry of the palace.

The Louvre through the centuries

The Louvre has undergone several additions over the course of 800 years to become what it is today. While the Louvre is currently in the heart of Paris, it used to be on the western outskirts of the city until the seventeenth century. The lengthy façade is composed of two pavilions, one at each end, and a central entrance with a pediment. This design is based on the five-part French palace type. The pavilions do not rise higher than the wings, as was customary; instead, they project somewhat forward from them. Only the center pavilion's low triangular pediment, which is accented and softened by a handrail, deviates from the rigorous horizontality of the roofline (continuous railing). The exquisitely wrought low-relief sculpture on the end pavilions is reminiscent of Roman triumphal arches. The bottom floor's windows, which are used to create visual continuity with the earlier portions of the Louvre and strong visual support for the top colonnades, were designed as a sturdy foundation.

Classical orders

Along with the façade's horizontality, the twin porticos' double columns—covered corridors or porticos along colonnades or sunken wings—mark a break from previous royal structures in France. The Corinthian columns provide a firm and consistent rhythm to the whole façade. The columns' position opposite the deep porches and the contrast between their light and shade provide aesthetic interest. Columns are used in a variety of ways. For example, although they are set back from the wall in the colonnades and central pavilion, arranged columns are used around the central windows and as pilasters at the pavilion's margins. The design's most shocking feature at the time was its use of paired columns. Vitruvius and Renaissance authors devoted a significant deal of attention to the problem of column separation (also known as intercolumniation). A little figure included in Claude Perrault's translation of Vitruvius' "Les Dix Livres d'architecture de Vitruvem" depicts a row of four equally spaced columns. An ancient temple's usual intercolumnation looks like this. Perrault demonstrates how each column has moved in the direction of its neighbor to the left to create the Louvre colonnade design.
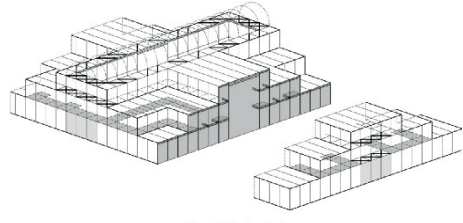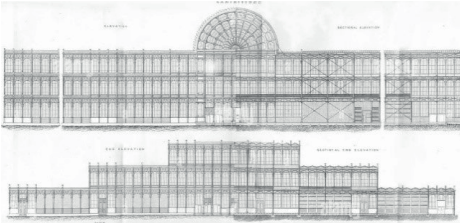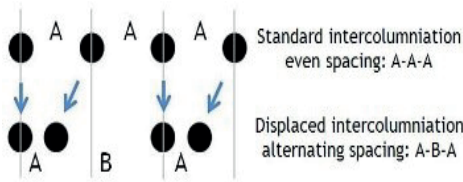
Fig.8,9/ The intercolumniation
Fig.10,11/ Crystal Palace

The two gaps between each pair of columns (B) and the narrow space between each pair of columns of each pair are given the most attention by moving half of the columns to produce the two-column pattern (A). Instead of the relatively static A-A-A beat, this produces the dynamic visual rhythm, A-B-A. The sixth form of intercolumniation of the classical Order, which produces a wider division than normal, is, in Perrault's opinion, a valid creation. Vitruvius, a famous Roman architect, had described five perfect forms of column division; Perrault asserted that the Louvre represented a new type appropriate for contemporary French taste.

II. Crystal Palace

Paxton created the Crystal Palace, which was 563 meters long and 39 meters tall, as the site of the first World's Fair. It was the biggest glass structure ever constructed at the time.

The Crystal Palace, which was finished in 1851 to accommodate the Exhibition of All Nations in London, was the first major public structure to fully eschew conventional building supplies and techniques. The construction was built with prefabricated iron columns and girders that were constructed on-site. The entire structure was based on modules that were 1.2 meters tall and 25 centimeters broad, the size of the biggest mass-produced panes of sheet glass.

After a six-month display in Hyde Park in central London, the structure was demolished and rebuilt on Sydenham Hill in south London. The region is currently known as Crystal Palace after the building. A fire destroyed the structure in 1936. As Norman Foster says for an architectural magazine: "That was the birth of modern architecture, of pre-fabrication, of soaring spans of transparency. That was truly a seminal building. And I remember saying: 'That is truly high-tech.'"

Crystal Palace encapsulates the 'form follows function idea that became synonymous with modernism in architecture. Using new methods and processes to create previously unseen designs, Paxton ensured the exhibitions within the Crystal Palace would be housed in a structure that, itself, symbolized the triumphant wonder and possibility that modern design, technology, and engineering presented.

III. Ornaments and details in architecture

What happened to art?

In terms of technology and aesthetics, what was going on in European cities at the time? Antonino

Fig.12, 13 14, 15/ Umberto Boccioni, 1912. Giacomo Balla, 1912. Marcel Duchamp, 1911 Antonio Sant'Elia, 1914

Saggio's "Architecture and Modernity" presents the three key current indications that fueled the modernist movement:

I - The "moral" revival of taste, fighting against decorum.

II - Acquisition of new construction techniques (cast iron, iron, steel, and concrete) that theorize the industrial world's importance.

III - The pursuit of an aesthetic that is consistent with industrialization. The response to simplicity, to the emergence of a new regulating force for a man of his time, was also profoundly tied to classical (Greek) purity, according to architect Peter Beherens.

What of the ornament? How did it shift from the ornamentation to the modern facade's details?

The author Alina Payne reflects in her book "From ornament to object" that despite the conflicts posed by Adolf Loos' essay "Ornament and crime" and Le Corbusier's "Le Modulor," where the ornament is forcibly rejected, open in the direction of modernism, the architecture of the exterior detail did not suddenly vanish but rather changed and assumed new forms. The ornaments that were put to the exterior facades in limitless numbers and sizes are now thought of as things that may be placed in any home, similar to the furnishings in an apartment.

The "ornament" was not only not lost in the early 19th-century modernist architectural movement, but it was also removed, altered, and assumed other shapes by different architectural language developments.

For the author Alina Payne, this shift was the outcome of a blending, processing, or interchange between several disciplines and the instruments employed to discern those meanings. What is the relationship between this renewed interest in external detail and the removal of embedded, glued-on ornaments? Is one a stand-in for the other when the other is absent?

The two contemporary architecture icons, Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, provided the architectural interpretation of this modernist movement through their renowned creations, Villa Müller by Adolf Loos and Ville Savoye by Le Corbusier. These façade alterations are outcomes of a blending, processing, or interchange between several disciplines and the instruments employed to discern the definition of the architectural term "Façade". The façade has a relationship with the populace, the context, but also to the cycle of decay and rebirth that one finds in the natural environment.

Fig. 16, 17/ Basilica di Santa Croce, Lecce, Italy.
Fig. 18, 19/ Villa Müller, Adolf L0-oos, Prage, 1930. Ville Savoye, Le Corbusier, Paris 1930

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