A Narrative on the Wall

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Abstract: Architecture conveys a sense of rootedness through its form and fabric. Through the mode of experiencing architecture, a sense of belonging is conveyed through the psychological impacts of form and material. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate and substantiate the significance of the role of the wall in the manifestation of architectural experience. The perception of buildings are not always guided by our sight but also through our bodies. In a predominantly ‘form’ driven discipline there is a need to examine experiential architecture which focuses on surface texture and technique. Many architects and theorists have postulated on the way buildings can be felt. A phenomenological approach lets us experience buildings through a dialogue with our senses. Space and object are understood through our perception through our bodies via channels of materiality, scale, colour and texture. The paper aims to elaborate on this connection by studying the wall in its various roles in conjunction with space and its contribution to creating identity and place. Through a study of a range of houses from the vernacular to modern, the role of the wall as a fundamental element of enclosure, as a marker and facade will be examined in its phenomenological aspects through the framework of theories postulated by Heidegger and Norbert-Schulz. Mapping the behavior of the wall in courtyards, as a marker and as a facade to create presence and make space into place will be explored. Architecture it will show through its materiality, colour and texture and connection to the environment projects an atmosphere. Space or demarcated space or enclosure is created which in turn is identifiable, contextual and substantiates a “spirit of place”.

Keywords: phenomenology, facade, place, wall, materiality, marker

Introduction

The elements of architecture remain over time the basic essentials of a building. A surfeit of books have been written on the nature of architectural elements and their specific roles in building. History books map their contributions in the changing vocabularies of architecture they produce. With time, different approaches to design manifest in different ways of looking at elements. Contributions to structure, aesthetics and construction are well documented. However equally important is the phenomenological aspect of these elements. Phenomenology looks at the ways through which elements create presence and atmosphere and addresses the more existential aspects of character, identity, essence and atmosphere. A study of the phenomenological aspects of the wall is attempted in this paper within the framework of thinking postulated by Christian Norberg-Schulz. Schulz has developed his concept based on Heidegger’s concept of ‘to dwell’. A detailed examination of Norberg Schulz’s ideas suggest several parameters based on which a phenomenological study of walls can be carried out. In this paper walls from houses from around the globe and from the 20th century will be studied. In the words of Thomas Thiis -Evensen, the wall delimits space. “By the arrangement of walls the architect sets out the spatial matrices within which our lives are lived.”[1] A study of walls is essential to understanding the existential component of architecture as the role walls play in organizing space is fundamental to the practice of architecture. Focus is given to façade walls and courtyard walls. Walls from different typologies of houses and different contexts will be described and analysed. It will be shown that the sensory aspect is heightened through mass, verticality and horizontality, height, articulation, colour and texture which all contribute to attributing character to a wall and thus establish a ‘presence’. A sample of eight houses will be discussed in terms of how their walls manifest their existential being. The role of the wall itself in architecture will be examined within this context. In its functioning role the nature of the impact of its presence is the focal point of the study. Through

analysis it will be shown that phenomenological considerations are a constant and their impact is relevant and significant to an architecture which connects with people.

Literature Review

The wall can be studied as a boundary, as a structural member and as a marker. Simon Unwin in his book *Wall*, Routledge, 2000, comprehensively studies different connotations of the wall as an element of architecture. In its perception as a barrier, the wall remains a constant through time. "The wall is the one constructional element that defines the enclosed space" [1] Unwin describes different kinds of walls and their material and construction methods. He writes about short walls, long walls high walls and expounds on the depth of walls and their articulation. Unwin's book suggests a framework within which to study the role of walls.

Norberg Schulz's theory of phenomenology is discussed in three of his books – *Phenomenology of Architecture*, *Intention in Architecture*, and *Space and Architecture*. Schulz's dialogue is essentially about the 'essence' of architecture. Schulz maintains that his approach to architecture has psychic implications and his view is that "architecture represents a means to give man an 'existential foothold'" [2]. He elaborates on the need for symbols which are represented in the concretization of life situations." [2] Concretization is furthermore explained by means of the concepts of "gathering" and "thing". Schulz has built his theory of phenomenology on the basis of Heidegger's concept of dwelling "Existential foothold" and "dwelling" are synonyms and dwelling in an existential sense, is the purpose of architecture. Man dwells when he can orientate himself within and identify himself with an environment, or in short when he experiences the environment as meaningful". Space becomes 'place' through this process and "spirit of place" is the phenomenological response achieved. Path, centre and domain construct spatially places. Architecture is to be understood in existential and concrete terms. The basis of concrete phenomena is character. "Any real presence is intimately linked with a character." [3] Material and formal constitution of the place contribute to character. Character is also defined by making and therefore formal articulation, light plays a role in its definition. "Meaning and character cannot be interpreted in purely formal or aesthetic terms, but are ...immediately connected with making". [4] Schulz refers to Heidegger's "set into work" *werke-setzen* which explains further his concept of concretization. He further says "The character of a work of architecture is therefore first of all determined by the kind of construction used; whether it is skeletal, open and transparent, (potentially or in fact) or massive and enclosed." [5] Making is an aspect of articulation". Schulz comments "Articulation determines how a building stands and rises and how it receives light." [5] Form and making are aspects of articulation. In the Heideggerian sense referencing the fourfold, "Standing is concretized through basement and wall". [5] Standing he says is about relating to the ground and earth and rising is relating to the sky. "In the wall, thus, earth and sky meet and the way man 'is' on earth is concretised by the solution of this meeting." [5] Horizontality and a heavy base he says tie a wall to the ground while verticality expresses a connect to the sky. In connection with the home the vertical direction, it expresses the very direction of building that is man's ability to conquer nature." [6] Openings in a wall make concrete inside outside relationships. Material and colour contribute to promoting character. Materials have their own sense of presence. Openings in a massive wall massive promote a sense of interiority Schulz maintains while an enclosure with large openings with glass expanses in a wall give a sense of interaction between inside and outside. Schulz's view on spaces are that they receive their being from their location. "The outside-inside relation which is a primary aspect of concrete space, implies that spaces possess a varying degree of extension and enclosure." [7] Centralisation direction and rhythm are he says important aspects of concrete space. When talking about bounded spaces, he says any enclosure is defined by its boundary. "In general the boundary and in particular the wall, makes the spatial structure visible as continuous or discontinuous extension, direction and rhythm." [8] To be differentiated from space, Norberg –Schulz proposes the idea of 'place'. A place has identity which is connected to how we experience that place. A place, he propounds interacts with the environment in creating an inside and an outside. And this inherent essence is called "spirit of place". This topological relation, therefore is a fundamental aspect of existential space." [6] Schulz talks about the importance of the path and its relation to spaces in that it leads either leads to a destination or away from it or around it in a ring. Continuity of

the path is created by the articulation of elements ie by walls, and roof. Shape and texture of wall is significant in creating a phenomenological experience. Curved walls have a concave and convex surface which produce different experiences.

In *Intentions in Architecture*, Schulz gives a detailed description on aspects of his theory of phenomenology as related to architecture. He says his theory is qualitative rather than objective in concept as it relates to expressions like 'heavy' and 'light' forms and spaces which are wide or narrow and references to tensions and movements. Form is described in terms of structure, and discusses the role of materials and construction. "The character of a surface (texture, colour) is for instance a function of material properties." [9] He defines mass as any tri-dimensional body and space as "a volume defined by the bounding surfaces of the surrounding masses." [9] "The first qualification of a mass is its topological concentration." [9] Corners are crucial to maintain this concentration and if the corners are broken the intensity is decreased. If the surfaces are treated the same way continuity ensures less weakening of intensity and if they are differently treated the continuity is broken and the intensity weakens completely. Treatment of corners allows us to interpret if the building mass is perceived as one block "or as a juxtaposition of thin-bounding surfaces". [10] Openings are significant as size alters perception. Small openings especially niched evoke a sense of massiveness. "Mass element is characterized by its topological geometrical form." [10] Colour, texture and illumination are also significant as polished surfaces are reflective and weaken mass concentration as opposed to roughly hewn surfaces. "The light finally, models the shapes." [10] Schulz talks about movement and line with reference to direction "We introduce organizing directions by means of so-called 'guiding elements'. "A 'guiding wall' for instance may unify two space-elements by means of its continuity". The contact between building and landscape may also be emphasized through guiding elements such as walls extending into the surroundings." [11] Lines as well as surfaces may guide.

Certain parameters have been deduced from the study of phenomenological aspects as presented in the literature review. Two aspects are evident. One is parameters arising from the role of the wall and the other are parameters arising from phenomenological aspects. The table below lists the parameters to be studied. As mentioned earlier walls to be taken as examples will be under the category. Interior walls do not fall within the scope of this paper.

Wall description

1. Façade Wall
2. Courtyard Wall

List of Parameters

Different aspects defining character and identity and creating presence.

Function of the Wall

1. As a boundary
2. As a marker
3. As structure

Qualitative aspects

1. Heavy
2. Light
3. Wide
4. Narrow

Aspects of Mass-surface

1. Colour
2. Texture
3. Illumination

Aspects of geomtery

1. Shape
2. Form

Aspects of physical description

1. Height as representing verticality
2. Length as representing horizontality

Aspects of articulation

1. Opennings
2. Detail

Aspects of opacity

1. Size and number of openings
2. Transparency or opacity of surface

Aspects of Light

1. Surface reflection
2. Surface articulation through creating shadows

Aspects of enclosure

1. Corners
2. Bonded space through character of wall surfaces and

Methodology

Walls from a sample of eight houses will be studied in respect of façade walls and courtyard walls. The sample covers a range of contexts. Houses are located in urban and country locations and across countries and include different typologies of houses of varying size. Size and typology are not the basis of the enquiry as the paper focusses on the role of walls in creating a phenomenological experience. Houses range in size context and typology as they have been selected on the basis of studying the phenomenological aspects under different conditions. The paper restricts itself to a study of façade and courtyard walls.

A questionnaire to test the impact of the parameters suggested above on determining presence has been given to five architects. The objective of the questionnaire is to test the validity of the parameters as pertinent today.

List of houses where the wall is to be analysed.

1. Muurasatlo Experimental House , Alvar Aalto ,1952-53
2. Vanna Venturi House, Robert Venturi, 1962-64
3. Cuadra San Cristobal , Luis Barragan,1967-68
4. Vaidyanathan House, Laurie Baker,1972
5. 'T' house,Toyo Ito,1990
6. Neuendorf House,John pawsonand Claudio Silvestrin,1997
7. Mariwala House,Rahul Mehrotra,1994
8. Vernacular house,Tamil Nadu,India early 20th century.

Discussion

Fig1, Alvar Aalto experimental house in Muuratsalo, source:www.pamono.com

Experimental house in Muuratsalo 1952-53

Alvar Aalto built a summerhouse in the uninhabited island of Muuratsalo. He used the house to experiment on foundations, wall construction and materials primarily brick. etc. Aalto's work combines influences of modernism of functional simple spaces and geometry with a sensitive response to site and context. The house is squarish in plan with an open central courtyard and planned on the concept of a Roman atrium. It is built on a granite ledge and situated with the mountains as a backdrop and lies beside a pine forest and is oriented to the beach. (Fig 1) The central courtyard is the core of the house. The enclosing courtyard walls are exposed brick in different combinations of bonding and the exterior façade is painted white. The courtyard is not completely enclosed but opens up to the orientation of the beach and visually ties the house with the land around. The walls were divided into fifty panels and different bonding practices were experimented with by Aalto resulting in a collage effect. A range of sizes and colors were used and in some instances bricks were combined with ceramic tiles. The result is a playful approach in material not an emphasis on machine made accuracy but an exploration of colour, texture and pattern. A rustic texture is achieved which gives the building an expression of a ruin. The summerhouse seems to evoke the essence of the site through its materiality and form. The location and form of walls and enclosure have a dominant presence exuded by the impression of the white walls in stark contrast to the surrounding but echoing and harmonizing with the uneven surface and topographical detail. Scale, texture and colour reflect the site conditions in the building and the walls dialogue and connect through their character with the surrounding. Contrast, as in the visual mass created by the structure in a desolate environment have a role in the way they impact the senses. The wide courtyard corresponds and continues the expression of the vast uninhabited space of the island. The phenomenological experience is felt entering the house as well as in the courtyard created by walls as enclosing elements and as markers which demarcate a place.

Fig2, Façade Vanna Venturi House, Source: Carol M. Highsmith, Wikipedia.org

Vanna Venturi House, Philadelphia

Vanna Venturi house, Fig 5, was designed by Robert Venturi for his mother. The house is located in a residential neighbourhood in Philadelphia. Louis Kahn's Esherick house is located close by. The house is a signature piece of architecture and encapsulates Venturi's post-modern thinking. It is a small house with only five rooms and "stands only about 30 feet (9 m) tall at the top of the chimney, but has a monumental front facade, an effect achieved by intentionally manipulating the architectural elements that indicate a building's scale".[12] The effect is to magnify the scale of the small house and make the facade appear to be imposing. The house facade has many features that give it a strong sense of delineation and articulation. The facade represents a composition of fragments. Not following the modernist thought process some features do not represent their function as in an arch whose function is to support is used here as decorative appliqué. Venturi states that "I like elements which are hybrid rather than "pure," compromising rather than "clear," distorted rather than "straightforward."...[12] (Fig 2) The facade is rendered. The windows in the front facade are not standardized as in modernist thinking but reflect the function of the rooms they serve. Although modernist ribbon windows are used they are combined with larger squarish windows. Vertical elements as in the chimney and the ridges of the roofs give it a sense of heightened scale and monumentality. A gable roof references the past and the ornamental arch gives emphasis to the entry. Symbolism and ornamentation are used to make more pronounced the effect of elements. Classical composition guides design of the facade. The symmetrical disposition of windows on either side of the centrally located door add to its feeling of gravitas. The house sits on the ground and does not open up to the street or grounds. The facade in Schulz's terms arises from the ground. The facade produces an image and through this image a narrative of what the house represents and it is in this narrative or schemata that its existential being or "dwelling" is conveyed. Venturi's design for the facade gives an interpretation of what a home signifies as expressed in the formal elements of its vocabulary.

Fig 3, View of the courtyard - Cuadra San Cristobal Source:

Cuadra San Cristobal by Luis Barragan, 1967-68

The ranch house was designed in 1966 and built between 1967 and 1968 for a Swedish horse trainer. The ranch was situated on a plot of seven and a half acres and consisted of a house and a complex of stables, barns and grounds for the breeding and training of thoroughbreds. It was located in the suburbs of Mexico city. The project consists of the house, the fountain garden and the stables. The plan is squarish in form. Barragan uses a frugal vocabulary of simple forms and few elements. The house is approached from the street through a door set in a blank recessed façade. The rear end opens up to connect to the exterior. The architecture of Modernism and minimalism are combined to create a dramatic architectural language. “Pure planes, be they walls of stucco, adobe, timber, or even water, are his compositional elements, all interacting with nature. (Fig 3) Elements of his architecture are deeply rooted in his country’s cultural and religious traditions.”[13] Barragan reinterprets from the vernacular its massive walls, small windows and lush gardens. “The thick walls have depth to the openings. The building is dressed in colors to indicate the Mexican baroque tradition along persistent and high walls which are arranged around the lakes.” [14] Red, pink and purple are colors reserved for horse related spaces, and the spaces related to the human sphere was painted with a neutral cream color. Architecture is filled with symbolism, unique spaces are created through a vocabulary of the water, geometric abstraction and color planes. Walls emote through their colors and by echoing the landscape in their horizontality connect to it and through their texture and shape establish a presence. Framed views of the landscape are created via large openings. The same colour is not repeated in creating a sense of continuity and emphasis in corners but different colors distinguish and delineate planes. Scale in the extensive length of walls that demarcate open courtyards add to the existential quality of the architecture. Individually the elements like sculptured objects mark space and instill a presence. Water through its reflectivity magnifies the effect.

Fig 4, Plan of Vaidyanathan house,

Fig 5, Circular jalli wall,

Source; Laurie Baker, Life works and writing, Gautam Bhatia

Vaidyanathan House 1972, Laurie Baker

The Vaidyanathan House is located in Kumarapuram, Trivandrum and overlooks paddy fields. Designed by Laurie Baker the Vaidyanathan house is an example of Baker's techniques in low cost housing and a sustainable approach to design. The house is built with the naturalness of the site unchanged. The plan evolves in a semi circular shape around a circular courtyard.(fig 4) The open to sky courtyard is a significant feature "completing the inner wall of the house in a pattern of staggered brick and becoming the home of an ancient mango tree"[15]. The entrance door is located such that one walks along the curve of the circular wall into the open courtyard space and then into the house. "Once inside the focus shifts away from the centre....to the outward curving walls and the paddy fields beyond." [15] Baker has designed the house to respond to nature by the omnipotent presence of the tree and views of the surroundings. The jalli wall enacts this interface. The house is built without disturbing the naturalness of the site. The courtyard and tree contribute to bring a sense of place to the house by creating an intimacy of space, context and memory. The jalli wall though its pattern affords privacy from the fields around as well as creates a backdrop for activities within. The circular courtyard wall is a 'jalli' wall which is made of staggered bricks with openings in between.(Fig 5) Light, air enter through these openings and the wall acts as a pierced screen subtly connecting the paddy fields to the house and yet maintains a sense of enclosure. Shadow cast by light on the jalli wall creates patterns that accentuate its being. Its existential character is further maintained by it being directional and a backdrop for activities within the house. The jalli wall is finely articulated by its pattern of construction and the intermittent interplay of patterns of light and shadow. The phenomenological presence of the wall is constituted by its materiality ie exposed bricks, articulation and its participation in activities of the house. Convex and concave aspects of its shape further enhance this presence. Articulation seen in the brick detailing evoke a haptic response. The wall retains its significance at all times in that it creates a boundary with a strong sense of inside and outside yet at all times adhering to context.

Fig 6, Façade of 'T' House Source: pinterest

'T' House, Toyo Ito

'T' House, was built in 1990. It is located in Tokyo in a dense residential district consisting of narrow streets. It corresponds in height and volume to its neighbors, but is distinct in its treatment of its façade which is approximately five metres wide. A large cherry tree in front of the house casts a shadow on the façade. Ito's works "seek to avoid any kind of solidity and present an evanescent, fragile and mutable appearance." [16] Toyo Ito 'T' house is a house and a studio for a graphic designer and their son. The design is a single volume which can be divided into individual spaces by screens. Two shear wall columns on either side support the structure. The house has a translucent glass façade of greenish translucent glass fixed in rectilinear exposed poured concrete frames. "The concept of using glass not as a banal high tech material but as the ideal non-material was the first step in Ito's quest for transparency and the ephemeral. The intention was to "blur" the relations between interior and exterior. [17] The façade changes in appearance depending on the time of the day. "When the rising sun is reflected off the milky white screen façade, it looks like a giant screen". [18] At night it is transparent and the interior is visible. "The translucent material protects the resident's privacy, while allowing full experience of natural light and shadow to penetrate the house, again keeping residents in touch with the natural (tangible) environment." [19] The changing modalities of the wall from day to night introduce different phenomenological expressions. The presence of the wall is felt in its changing existentialism from day to night. Articulation of the glass fixing give further identity and character to the building. It has achieved in creating a phenomenological experience in the context of lightness through manipulation of the property of transparency of the material to create fluid moments in time. Light plays a significant role in creating a phenomenological experience. During the day, the glass is opaque and the glass is patterned by the shadow cast by the tree. At night the interior is visible and the materiality of the glass de-materialises. Changes in the way the blurring of boundaries takes place heightens the existential aspect of the façade.

Fig7,Plan of Neuendorf House

Fig 8,Walls of courtyard

Neuendorf House , John Pawson and Claudio Silvestrin

Fig 9,View of path in Neuendorf House ,Source:

The Neuendorf House is a holiday home set in a wine in South Mallorca. It is minimalist and austere in its architecture with an orthogonal plan. Interest is created by the manner in which the circulation is organised in the plan highlighting route and point of arrival where in both cases the wall plays a definitive role in delienation as well as in creating a sense of place. The programme involves a path along a sequence of spaces Fig 9. The main house is approached by a long stepped path which is defined on one side by by a free standing wall. The countryside is visible from the path. The path leads to a courtyard, approached by a slit in the wall which gives access to the house . Two sides of the courtyard wall belong to the house, the other two walls are high boundary walls. The walls that enclose the courtyard are finished in pigmented stucco. The courtyard houses a waterbody. The wall at the entrance path directs as a guiding wall. The façade of the house and courtyard walls shut off the landscape and “you are at the very centre ...-the perfectly level surface of the water reflecting the sky. ”[20] The plan is almost squarish if the courtyard is included and the severe walls finished in pigmented render give it a monolithic presence, what Schulz refers to as the ‘block’. The house is harmonious to the environment through its use of natural materials. The similarly pigmented walls and corners in the courtyard enforce continuity and heighten the sense of enclosure compounded by the high walls which stretch vertically to the sky. Scale is manipulated to complement the atmosphere. Whereas the entry wall is horizontal and connects to the countryside the inner courtyard walls create a private enclosure which forces the visitor to look inwards. Walls through their mass and materiality, scale and form actively weigh on your senses and create different atmospheres, transitioning from public to private. The path with its guiding wall leads to the centre.

Mariwala House

Fig 9, Mariwala House Source: Tropical Asian House, Robert Powell.

Mariwala house, is a hill station retreat for a Bombay spice merchant. It is located in Mahabaleshwar in a deep ravine in the Western ghats. Local vernacular tradition of laterite is used for construction. Rahul Mehrotra has tried to combine the vocabulary of the vernacular and modernist vocabulary in his design. The plan is linear and shallow being one room in depth and the façade wall extends beyond rooms into the landscape. “A three metre high laterite wall forms the spine of the house and anchors it to the site.”[21]The wall is a spine and acts as a reference line which internally articulates the path inside from along which rooms are accessed. Framed views through articulated openings visually connect the outside environment to the inside. The wall is a key element in the architecture of the house. It commands presence through its form and articulation. It seems to arise from the landscape through its material connect and its horizontality draws the surrounding environment into a meaningful conversation. White plaster banding around windows and pattern and differential sizes in openings enforce a certain identity to the structure. Depth of opening enhances its mass. The wall acts as a marker punctuating the landscape and as a barrier protecting the interior yet connecting to the outside. The wall is an example of Schulz’s ‘guiding wall’ connecting through direction. A sense of place is evoked. Character is reflected in materiality and rustic workmanship of the vernacular. Its mass is felt through its deliberate detailing.

Fig 10, Vernacular agraharam house, front view. Source: author

Vernacular House

The house is approximately one hundred years old and situated in Tamil Nadu state in South India. The house is an agraharam courtyard house with two common walls and a narrow frontage, being the width of two rooms. There is an absence of an architect involved in the design and the architecture of the house is a response to environment and culture, materials and construction technology in the house is manmade and man driven. Scale

of the house and elements correspond to human scale. The house is a combination of different materials that react differently with the human body. The experience in a rural house is dominated by the haptic and sense of location and direction can be determined by touch and experience of the atmosphere. Light, movement of air and texture of surfaces play a dominant role. This aspect is reflected in the judicious design of the exterior façade. Plain painted walls in chunam on lime plastered brickwork ensure coolness. The single window is small and set in. The columns are detailed and entry to the house is through the transition of an intermediate zone and not directly from the street. This zone is defined by its floor material and texture. A slightly raised plinth ensures a base which gives the appearance of rootedness which is accentuated by the verandah, a transition and public interaction space, or thinnai as it is referred to. Mass and volume, solid and void and interplay of light and shade impart an existential hold to the façade. Richness of detail and mixture of natural materials in columns, doors and windows create a sense of character and identity. The façade expresses itself as a whole with a clear sense of identity contextual and in Schulz and Heidegger's terms manifests "dwelling".

Aspects discussed above have been compared in the Tables given below. It can be seen that the wall responds to and is modulated by different approaches in design. In the house designed by Barragan the courtyard wall as an element performs as an object. Emotion is an integral part of the interplay of parts. Barragan has abstracted the notion of the wall into sculpture and by this viewed the wall as an object. Colour, texture, mass, horizontality and punctures of openings add to articulate and define the object and together with placement and context create an existential foothold. The wall acts as a frame to view landscape. In Rahul Mehrotra's Mariwala house a similar strategy uses the wall, but here as part of the fabric of the house as a frame which views and in a phenomenological sense connects the terrain. In the Nana Venturi house the façade is treated as a decorated object created separately and responding to the viewer via semiotics. The façade is an information screen. The façade is rooted to the ground and has an existential sense derived from the dialogue it creates. In the vernacular house a row of columns indicate a metaphorical wall in as much as they create a visual barrier which demarcates public from privacy columns, doors and windows create a sense of character and identity. The façade expresses itself as a whole with a clear sense of identity contextual and in Schulz and Heidegger's terms manifests "dwelling".

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Table 1 –List of Examples

Phenomenological parameters	Experimental House, Aalto	Nana Venturi house	Colbes Barragan	Vaidyanathan house	T House	Neuendorf house	Mariwala house	Vernacular house
year	1952-53	1962-64	1967-68	1972	1990	1991	1994	Early 20th century
architect	Alvar Aalto	Robert Venturi	Luis Barragan	Rahul Mehrotra	Toyo Ito	John Pawson Claudio Silvestrin	Laurie Baker	none
context	countryside	Urban residential neighbourhood	Urban residential neighbourhood (suburbs)	country side	Urban residential neighbourhood (city)	countryside	countryside	village
typology	Summer house	house	Ranch house	Summer house	house	Summer house	house	house
Wall	Courtyard and facade	facade	courtyard	facade	facade	courtyard	Courtyard And facade	Façade Inhabited wall

Table 2 –Parameters that have an impact on creating presence.

Ranking of parameters where 1 is lowest impact and 5 is highest impact.

	A	B	C	D	E
Colour	4	3	3	4	5
Texture	3	2	5	4	5
Length	4	4	4	2	2
Height	4	2	2	2	3
Thickness	4	3	3	1	1
Visual Mass	5	3	3	5	
Transparency	4	2	3	5	3
Articulation	5	4	4	4	5
Form	4	3	4	2	5

Identity	5	3	2	2	5
Material	5	4	4	5	5

Parameters in order of rank according to Table 2

	A
Material	1
Articulation	2
Colour	3
Texture	3
Visual Mass	4
Form	4
Transparency	5
Identity	5
Length	6
Height	7

Set of 8 pictures on given to assess for “presencing”

Findings and Conclusion

A sample of eight houses were given to five architects who are at present students of a Master's programme at Anna University. The Farnsworth house by Mies van der Rohe is not included in my study and the Vaidyanathan house by Baker is not included in the sample given. The vernacular house is from the same state but a different house has been given to them.

From the table above it is clear that the majority feel that presencing of a wall is attributed to primarily its material, articulation and its colour and texture. Of a sample of five students only two students felt visual mass and length had some impact. Height was not accepted by them as contributing to presence and in this respect contradicted Schulz's premise. In general it appears that there is agreement with Schulz on what factors contribute to give a wall an existential feel. Slight deviations can occur due to individual's perception but it can be seen that the parameters derived from Schulz's theory are consistent with the observations of the students in general in determining the presencing of walls. The wall is not a mere physical entity that functions in different capacities in a building. Examples of the wall exist in its capacity of many roles or the double functioning element as alluded by Venturi in Complexity and Contradiction at the same time. The protective and structural and demarcating aspects of the wall have been well enumerated. The significance of the wall in the psychological qualities that these roles bring and their manifestations in colour, form, texture, direction and articulation have been showing the manner in which they give an existential foothold to the wall. It can be concluded from this analysis that the wall exhibits presence through a range of situations and roles. Function does not affect its existential foothold or rather the phenomenological aspects are not dependent on its function but are enhanced by context, articulation and materiality. Norberg-Schulz's theory of path and centre and domain concretize a strategy to understanding the phenomenological aspects to introduce the wall as a guiding element which leads a centre of enclosure within a specific context of topography and assisted by the performance of walls. Walls are fundamental to constituting architectural experience and continue to do so independent of architectural style and geography. The wall connotes "to dwell" in a holistic manner through its embodiment of socio cultural, psychological and aesthetic values. Phenomenological experiences are subject to variance and modify to changing technologies and circumstances as seen in the range of examples discussed. While there are some practicing architects in the field that concentrate on phenomenological aspects more detailed study on its benefits to architecture are implied to give a more humane approach to architecture.

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