

PROCEEDINGS OF

**2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
DESIGN PEDAGOGY & CONTEXTUAL AESTHETICS**

**AT NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
CALICUT**

thanima 2

a quest for authenticity

**'Reimagining Aesthetic Unfolding
from conditioning to awakening'**

19TH, 20TH, 21ST JANUARY 2017

ARCHITECTURE OF ARRIVAL AND ITS AESTHETICS

Sandeep Sanjeev Pathe¹⁺, Suryagayathri G¹, Shivani Sharma¹

¹Final Year, M.Arch (Architectural Conservation)
School of Planning and Architecture,
Neelbad Road, Bhauri, Bhopal (M.P)

+ email:sandeepathe@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

India is a land of diverse people, cultures and traditions. The country showcase the aesthetics of unity in diversity. Diversity itself had formed a unique character of aesthetics from people to people, place to place, during various period of time.

Indian have an unique way to celebrate their lifestyle whether it may be their festivals, their kinships and relationship, day to day activities, their occupation and their deities. Indians have their own way of celebrating their lifestyle. Celebration of beginning of day, or beginning of life, when a new life is born event it's only we Indians who celebrate the end of the life span, the death. Celebration is just not limited to the traditions, customs and ritualistic practices. But it's interlinked with all the aspects related to the life practices of an Indian. The Indian culture have a yearlong traditions of celebrating their spaces. Their abodes, whether it may be the space of worship, the space of work, the space of cooking food and enjoying the food, Indians celebrates almost every nooks and corner of a space.

Similarly Indian culture has a unique aesthetes of framing an entrance, it's a way to understand and formulate the arrival, the arrival of people, things even the arrival of energies good or bad, whatever comes we celebrate, the entrance celebrates the arrival of 'athiti' (the guest). The entrance spaces forms one of such elements of architecture which attains a significant character improvising the aesthetical quality of the architectural product. Whether it may be an entrance of a temple, house, public spaces etc.

The paper aim to study these element of entrances in the discipline of architecture by taking examples of various architectural manifestations, it also tries to understand the overall expression of entrances in traditional architecture of India. The paper also aims to identify the key components which forms an aesthetical vocabulary of an architectural element, here entrance to a space.

Keywords: Entrance, Space of Arrival, Tradition, Aesthetical and Functional Entrances,

1. INTRODUCTION

The uniqueness of the discipline of architecture is that it has overlay its spectrum with many attributes of human life whether it may be the culture, belief, and lifestyle. Architecture is a discipline which is majorly govern by the influences of theses major attributes of life. While designing an architecture, the interaction of various characteristics of architecture are utilized to form the unique identity of architecture. The unique identity is attain by crafting the space, volume, form of an overall architectural asset. The designing is done with an aim to achieve two major qualities, which are functional and aesthetical qualities. Which enhance the experience of user and craft a unique architectural product. The architecture whether it may be a space or form, will utilize various elements such as floorings, openings, coverings and massing within a space. The opening is one significant element where the arrival of various agents takes place. The opening becomes an important element which if designed as a window or ventilator the arrival of light and air is governed also if designed in a form of door, it will indicate the entrance of various users. The position of this element of opening matters a lot, as the door or window which forms the façade of a structure are designed with high amount of aesthetical quality as compared to the other doors and windows. The designing based on various aspects or necessity of human user forms a unique character which showcase the aesthetical beauty of its own.

2. ENTRANCE, THE SPACE OF ARRIVAL.

Entrance, whether it may be the door, gateway, podium, foyer etc. it forms one of the most important element of architecture. An entrance or its connections from a space to another is well thought of during the process of designing of a space by an architect. The entrance designing is majorly governed also by the geographical location of the site, the climatic studies about the site, the directions which are believed to be good, or bad as per he notions, statistics, studies or the influence of scholarly disciplines such as vastu. The entrance to a space leaves a major impact on other aspects of architecture designing, circulation and movements is, one of them, arrangement of furniture and other things which facilitates the user experience. The interwoven process of designing which includes all the aspects such as the position of entrance which govern the facilitation, circulation etc. enhance the user interface by adding the sense of aesthetics and functionality to the space which formulates a unique character to the space

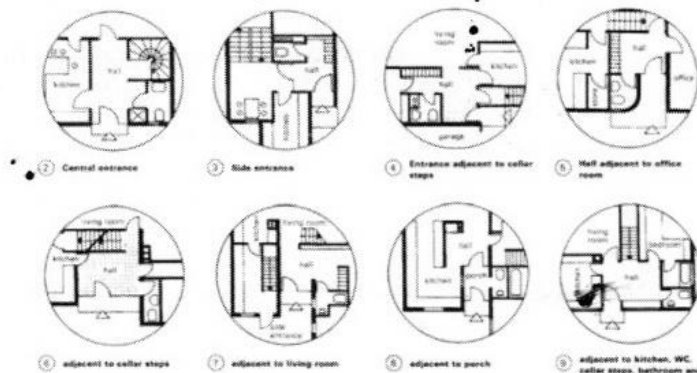


Figure 1: Designing the entrances through standards

¹ Neufert, E., Jones, V., Thackara, J. and Miles, R., 1980. *Architects' data*. Granada. 245

Figure above explains the entrance and the space inside and space outside, it states the design decisions to be taken to create the association between the spaces and the position of entrance whether central, side or adjacent etc. Thus, the entrance forms one of the major element in crafting the entire architectural identity. The entrance forms the coverage of an architectural product, also it forms the beginning of that user interface we often keep a thought while designing.

2.1 EARLY FORMS OF ENTRANCES,

For the better understanding of this element of architecture one can trace back to find answers upon how the early form of entrances existed where, also for whom it were designed. Therefore tracing down the lines; one can identify Caves, as the early form of shelters utilized by man to sustain. As caves were the naturally formed spaces, of various characters and forms. Thus it provided an ample space to reside inside, and to take shelter against the uncomfortable weathering conditions of nature for human being. These cave also had the element of entrance to it, which was more of a functional utilization. The entrances were narrow, short heighted, in a way which demanded the bending of human to enter the ample size space inside the cave. The narrow, shorter heighted entrances which formed the unique character of caves were designed or utilized for protection against the wild animals and other unavoidable agents of world. Hence the entrance has its own functional significance.

With time, humans learned to utilize this element of architecture for various other means, the height of entrances increased, the design of door changed as per the changing needs of user, but there was still a smaller opening to ensure the security of user. The door were now designed as per various other aspects of user, the user with higher status, like kings, nobles had gateways to welcome, to dignify the arrival of guests to their spaces, the entrances were designed in such a way that they become the aesthetic identity of user. The doors will get its unique identity from various aspects such as, the type of material, colors and texture, which will again vary from user to user.

The entrances forms the first impression of a space, from the character of entrance the character of space can be imagined. The entrance is therefore the face of architecture. Thus every single detailing done to design entrances, demands a good amount of understanding the overall architecture which needs to be introduced by the element of entrance. Thus a quality of aesthetical beauty is taken consideration with the agendas to fulfill the functional requirements of a space altogether is well thought of while designing.

3. THE TRADITIONAL ENTRANCES AND ITS AESTHETICS

In India, tradition forms the living history, the association of people with various ritualistic and social practices which are an outcome of a system, which is in a form of a cycle, trying to tie a knot from one generation to another, making the tradition sustainable and ongoing. Based on its diversified cultural practices, one can witness various forms, characters in this single element of architecture, i.e., entrance had also undergone to form a diversified character. Across the country the entrance is celebrated with various practices, somewhere the doors will have a grandeur character which tries to manifest the magnificence of user, or somewhere in vernacular architectural practices the entrance defines the social hierarchy or occupational character of an individual example the house of farmer will be simple yet aesthetically sound.

The house of landlord or noble will be majorly decorated with the wooden carvings. The traditions and customs practices by various communities in Indian leaves an impact building the unique aesthetical character of an entrance. Traditionally the door were framed with a bottommost element known as threshold, it is believed that the threshold safeguards the house, as it restricts the entrances of various energies also, keeping the space pure and holy, similarly the idol or carving of Ganesha on the lintel frame, symbolizes the beginning of user's experience inside the house or any other space. Variety of times the entrances host the hanging lemon and chili which again symbolizes as a safeguard against the evil energies.

Aesthetics can be said to be a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art, beauty, and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty² the architecture involves this quality of aesthetics in framing the visual vocabulary making the spaces to speak.

The entrance space is responsible to frame the element of surprise, which makes user curious about the upcoming space. Example in a step well right from the first step, when we start stepping down each level has its own visual aesthetics formed the column, bracket beams and marvelous sculpture done on them forms an aesthetics of the entrance to the step well, which is supported with the same element of surprise where one gets satisfy to enter to the final space of well.

Similar is the case of temple, the element of staircase in a temple adds to its aesthetics as well, as at each step or mid landing an aesthetical visual frame is formed for the deity inside the *grabhagriha*. Another example, explaining the architectural element of *gopurams* form the gateway to the temples, the sacred spaces and the overall aesthetics of a *gopuram* helps to builds the notion of sacredness which is further carried away inside the temple by a user.

The entrances of central India will have a raised platform on both the sides of entrance which provide an opportunity to sit and interact at the entrance, thus it forms and aesthetical quality of entrance spaces interacting with the neighboring spaces such as streets



Figure 2: The visual Aesthetics formed at the level at step wells of Adalaj, Gujrat
Source: Internet

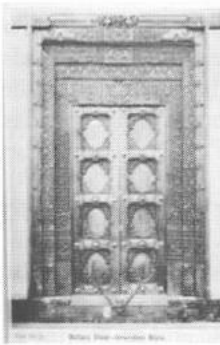


Figure 3: The Traditional Door of Dravidian style
Source: Internet



Figure 4: The Traditional Entrance of Central India
Source: Shutterstock.com

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aesthetic>

Taking the example of Kerala architecture which forms a vernacular character, developed since ages due to its geographical, climatical and cultural impacts. The entrance as an architecture element vary in its aesthetical forms, from space to space.

The entrance gates of traditional *Nair Tharavadus* and *Illams* of Kerala having unique architectural style and function compared to other entrances or gateways present in the region. These are the outermost entrance element, which acts as the first private-public segregation boundary of the residence compound. Which usually has a slightly raised platform or plinth with the roof over it according to the architectural style of Kerala. It has space for the visitors to wait. This will lead to the external courtyard of the house and then follows to the main door to enter the house located at the *poomukham* or front verandah space of the residence.

Similarly there exist the element of *padippura*, which itself is an architectural form. The traditional Entrance satisfies function as well as it is an aesthetical element of traditional residences of Kerala. For almost all the traditional *nair tharavads* as well as the *manas* and *illams* of Kerala have an architectural space called *padippura*, which is the first entrance gate to a residence. It is a structure containing a door forming part of Compound wall for the house with a tiled roof on top. It is the formal entry to the compound with the house. At present the door is not there, as car will have to enter the house through the entry. Still tiled roof is provided preferably with a traditional type lamp below the roof. Instead of door of entry, we now have the Gate.

It varies in scale; it is *padippura* or *padippura malika* where it also serves as an outhouse where the security and his family are allotted to live. Or else the space is provided for a guests to stay for a short period of time. Thus the *padipurra* forms an architecture which is contextual, cultural and functional, providing a unique interaction of space with the activities which are arrived at the entrance of a house. This vernacular element builds a significant aesthetics of entrances in Kerala architecture.



Figure 5: The Traditional padippura entrance of Kerala
Source: Internet

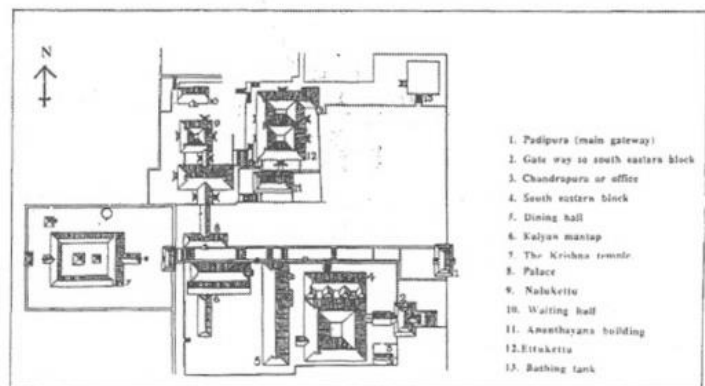


Figure 6: A palace complex in Travancore

Source: Joseph, M.Arch,

Thesis – Lessons from the past- The domestic Architecture of Kerala, 1991

CONCLUSION:

The entrance proves to be an important agent to enhance the aesthetical quality of the overall architecture, as it's the first impression of that architecture, needs to establish the overall character hence the entrance is designed keeping various aspects such as the contextual, climatical, cultural, social, and political values of individuals. The entrance shall also govern the functional attribute of it. The design of entrance whether a raised level, steps, decorated elements such as column which also forms the major structural element all together form one identity in a form of entrance which is accepted and appreciated by user and hence he receives that sense of arrival to a space. Thus from the example quoted above, there are three major component which governs the overall aesthetics of an entrance space in the overall architecture.

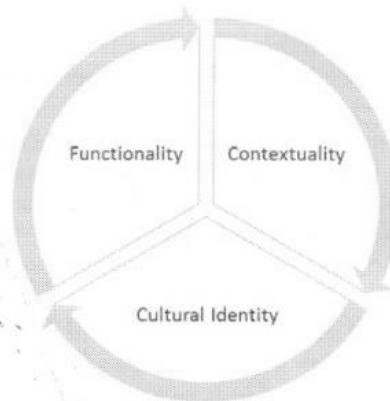


Figure: Parameters governing the aesthetical form of an entrance

1. Contextuality:

It is one of the most important parameter to study the aesthetical quality of an entrance, the context of a space leaves a greater impact on the design of the entrance. As the context governs major aspects like geographical conditions, location and settings, neighborhood and the macro and micro climate and its impacts. The position of openings will be governed by contextual understanding, which will formulate a depiction of aesthetics associated with the entrance space. The entrance may or may not have roof, it may be leveled up or down, it may use a particular material or element of architecture which brings the contextual specific design in architecture.

2. Cultural Identity

The entrance is also governed with the various cultural practice, which is based on the belief system which regulates rituals, notions of a lifestyle lived by the user. The entrance thereby becomes a reflection of a person living inside. The use of color texture and other elements builds the aesthetics of an entrance. The sculpture, carvings or texts on the entrances depicts the strong belief system which is inherent inside the user. Formulating the lifestyle of a user. The belief system, and the cultural practices changes from place to place people to people, forming a diverse cultural identity having its impact on the architecture. Thus this diverse cultural identities contribute enough to craft the aesthetics of an entrance.

3. Functionality:

The functionality is a kind of flexible element which varies from architecture to architecture, as the functionality of a door will be different for different typologies. Even if the contemporary understanding of aesthetics related to the entrance might have changed, but the core function of an entrance remains still the same, which is to safeguard the space within it. This prime function is still maintained thus, the aspect of functionality adds on the value to the aesthetics of overall entrance. As the traditional drops, locks, hinges and many more fixtures of doors forms a unique composition which creates an aesthetical representation of entire door. Thus the door may have an eye-hole to peek outside. Or a bell, informing about the arrival of user. Thus functionality is versatile as it is successful to shape the entrance of a space. Thus it plays a vital role defining the aesthetics of a door

Therefore, taking the parameters of contextuality, cultural identity and functionality one can understand the evolution also the transformation in the aesthetical quality of a traditional entrance by making a micro and macro level analysis which will include all the components which form the above parameter in architectural design.

REFERENCES

1. Kumar, V., 2000. *Vastushastra*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.(2)
2. Ching, F.D., 2014. *Architecture: Form, space, and order*. John Wiley & Sons.(2)
3. Pandya, Y., 2005. *Concepts of space in traditional Indian architecture*. Mapin Publishing Pvt. (2)
4. Neufert, E., Jones, V., Thackara, J. and Miles, R., 1980. *Architects' data*. Granada. 245 (2)
5. Koduveliparambil, J.J., 1997. *Construction practices in traditional dwellings of Kerala, India*.
6. Chaitanya, K., 1972. *Kerala*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India;[chief stockists in India: India Book House, Bombay.

GLOSSARY

1. ***Atithi*** : Guest
2. ***Nair tharavadu***: Traditional Nair residences of Kerala
3. ***Nair*** : A high class hindu community of kerala
4. ***Padippura***: Entrance gateway of Nalukettu .
5. ***Nalukettu*** : Residence typology of kerala domestic architecture.(residence having only one courtyard).
6. ***Illams/Mana***: Nampoothiri residence of Kerala,
7. ***Nampoothiri*** : Bhramins of kerala.
8. ***Poomukham***: Front verandahs space of the residence,
9. ***Tharavadu***: Traditiona residences of Kerala,
10. ***Illams/Mana***: Nampoothiri residence of Kerala.



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ARCHITECTS
CALICUT CENTRE



DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHITECTURE
NIT CALICUT

ekf

EXISTENTIAL
KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION
PUNE