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The Corner: Tectonic Intersections of the Architectural Environment

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Abstract

Architectural corners serve as nodes of constructional shifting, of structural logistics, of environmental control emphasis, of spatial experience, and of aesthetic considerations and it is in these particular building intersections that our greatest architects have excelled. Despite the importance of the corner, most architectural software introduces generalizations into design work that all but assures improper understanding of a building’s corners, especially for students and those novice to the profession. The transformations undertaken in the computer rarely reflect the strategies used to create physical, occupiable space. For instance, when working in building information modeling software, walls intersect via “butt” or “miter” techniques regardless of the materiality of the components. Any system can turn the corner with perfect resolution, without the need for additional components or finishes typically used to resolve aesthetic and performance issues. From this technical perspective, what is possible in the computer is often impossible in reality.

This presentation centers on a recently initiated, seminar-based research project through which a group of upper division and graduate architecture students are rigorously examining a set of precedents in an effort to better understand how significant architects of the 20th and 21st centuries treated or continue to treat, as the case may be, the architectural corner in their critically acclaimed works. The primary goals of this study are to absorb for configuring these junctures of construction, tectonics, and design potential and to create a framework of lessons, which students can use in the development of their own design work moving forward both in the academy and in the professional world.

Keywords: Materials + Construction Techniques; Architectural Tectonics; Architectural Detail

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The Corner is a technical and artistic exploration of the architectural corner in modern and contemporary architecture. It demonstrates the complexity and beauty of the intersection of walls, corners, and voids in architectural design. The presentation explores the tectonic intersections of the architectural environment, focusing on the intersection of a building's structural and aesthetic properties. It highlights the variety of techniques and materials used in the design of corners, emphasizing the importance of considering the corner as a significant element in the overall composition of a building.

The Corner is a comprehensive study that examines the historical and contemporary aspects of architectural corners. It presents a range of examples from different architectural styles and periods, illustrating the evolution of corner design and its influence on the architectural identity of a building. The presentation also explores the technical and aesthetic challenges associated with the design of corners, such as ensuring structural integrity, optimizing geometric forms, and achieving visual cohesion.

The Corner aims to inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation of the architectural corner as a critical component of modern and contemporary architecture. It encourages architects and designers to consider the corner as a site of innovation and expression, where the interplay of form, function, and material can lead to unique and compelling architectural solutions.