

## **Rudolph Schindler's Church School Lecture on Decoration (1916): A Preliminary Reading**

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### **Abstract**

*The primary aim of this paper is to contribute to the task of identifying and discussing the original ideas put forward by Rudolph Schindler in his writings. This paper examines a lecture on decoration given by Schindler in 1916, the notes for which have survived in an unpublished manuscript (the 'Church School Lectures') in the University of California, Santa Barbara Archive. Containing notes for 11 lectures, this manuscript contains Schindler's most extended and theoretical discussions on architecture. This paper offers the first transcription of these notes, and provides a commentary that contextualises Schindler's thought at this period. Schindler's views represent two important advances on the architectural thinking developed by Adolf Loos and Frank Lloyd Wright: first, articulating a new sense of decoration as material and texture; and secondly, the direct abutment of materials eliminating the need for facings at their connection.*

### **The Church School Lectures**

The Schindler archive contains an unpublished manuscript, consisting of 112 handwritten pages of notes in English, entitled “Church School Lectures”.<sup>1</sup> This manuscript contains the notes for 11 lectures delivered at the Chicago School of Applied and Normal Art in 1916.

In the introductory remarks to the “Church School Lectures”, Schindler described the form of the lectures as “not developed” and “a skeleton of ideas” that nonetheless “covered all ground”, Schindler indicated that first, the lectures were not the unfurling of rigid and dogmatic thinking, but that his thinking was conjectural and open-ended; and that secondly, the lectures were problem-based, having developed out of “the modern building problem”.<sup>2</sup>

The lecture notes revisit some of the ideas of the ‘Modern Architecture: A Program’ (1913).<sup>3</sup> There are a series of common topics shared by the 1913 document and the 1916 lecture notes; space and enclosure, construction and purpose, and the cultural status of the architect. These topics had been debated previously in the writings of Gottfried Semper (1803–1879), Otto Wagner (1841–1918), Adolf Loos (1870–1933) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959). However, each writer saw different problems with each topic and couched them in different terms.

As Harry Francis Mallgrave has noted, a shift in Schindler’s thinking had already begun as early as 1914.<sup>4</sup> According to Mallgrave, Schindler’s initial point that the architect’s concern was space and comfort had been extended to include “space-form, texture and color”. The implications of such a shift in Schindler’s thinking have not been pursued by scholars, who have maintained the illusion that the 1913 manifesto presented a definitive and unifying concept of architectural thought.<sup>5</sup>

This paper provides a transcription of Schindler’s Lecture XI, entitled ‘Decoration’, and a commentary on the lecture that clarifies the issues it raises. One difficulty in providing a reading of the document is to contextualise it against Viennese school and contemporary ideas of other architects and against relevant secondary sources. A second difficulty is that the notes are very brief. Most of them consist of incomplete grammatical sentences, and it is necessary to read between the lines and extrapolate their meaning. For this reason, an adequate contextualisation of the intellectual background of the lecture is very important for understanding the lecture.

Following the sense of the headings and subheadings, and also contextualizing the words, it becomes evident that the subtext of the front part of the lecture is Wagner and Loos. Schindler’s lecture is relocating popular words in American parlance in a European architectural context. From the fourth sheet recto side onwards, it becomes clear that Schindler wants to depart from this tradition by declaring that ornament is dead. He would highlight a sense of material and texture is the crucial to making this shift.

### **Textural Structure**

The manuscript contains several significant typographic features. The lecture was handwritten on four sheets numbered consecutively and written on both sides. The pagination was recorded at the upper right hand of the recto pages. Each page is divided vertically, with the lecture notes on the right and subheadings and marginal notes on the left.

On the top of the first sheet of the document is a header marked eleventh lecture. In the upper right-hand corner, roman numerals are also used to indicate this. On the first sheer on the recto side, Schindler gave the lecture the title “Decoration”.

The lecture consists of 11 un-numbered sections. Each section has a distinctive title. The section titled ‘material and color’ contains subheadings. We have added Arabic numerals in square brackets at the head of each section in our transcription for ease of reference.

This close reading of the manuscript follows existing order of the notes indicated by headings and subheadings.

[1]  
—XI<sup>th</sup> LECTURE— XI<sub>1</sub>  
— “DECORATION”—

[2]  
ARCHITECTURE AGAIN IN FIRST LECTURE. CITED “FERGUSON”<sup>6</sup>[sic]:/  
“ARCHITECTURE COMMENCES WHEN SOME/  
EMBELLISHMENT IS ADDED TO THE/ BUILDING  
WHICH WAS NOT A STRUCTURAL / NECESSITY”/  
ALL MY LECTURES TRIED TO SHOW FALSENESS/  
OF THIS VIEWPOINT. /  
ARCHITECTURE START WITH THE FIRST IDEA OF/  
CONCEIVING A HOUSE – & ENDS WITH /  
THE FIRST IDEA OF ADDING SOMETHING /  
WHICH IS NOT NECESSARY – /

ARCH. NOT MAKING CORNICES /  
BUT “BUILDING” [BLDG underlined]/<sup>7</sup>

[3]  
DECORATION ALL WHICH DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW/  
OUT OF THE – ESSENTIAL BUILDING. IDEA – LIKE/  
I DEVELOPED IT – IS ADDED SUPERFICIALLY/  
IS “DECORATION”/

A WELL CONCEIVED HOUSE DOES NOT/  
NEED THE “DECORATOR”/  
ALL WHAT IS NEEDED ARE INHABITANTS’/  
IS,, LIFE”/

[Sheet 1, verso]  
DECORATION IS SOMETHING ADDED/  
WITHOUT LIFE OF ITS OWN/

PURPOSE OF DECORATION:/  
EMPHASIS/  
DIVIDE/  
UNITE/  
IT FOLLOWS: IF EMPHASIS, UNITY & DISPARITY/  
OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF AN ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTION/  
IS ESSENTIAL – THE FORM OF THIS MEMBER/  
TO EXPRESS IT, LIKE EVERYTHING WHICH IS/  
ESSENTIAL HAS TO BE EXPRESSED/

THEREFORE THE NECESSITY OF DECORATION/  
INDICATES ALWAYS A LACK OF EXPRESSION/  
IN THE BASIC FORM – SOMETIMES ALRIGHT/  
MOSTLY WITHOUT EXCUSE./

[4]

DECORATIVE FORM THE MEANS FOR REACHING A DECORATIVE. EFFECT/  
ARE FORM/  
FORM DECORATIVELY USED/  
FORM ART FORM CANNOT BE REPEATED/  
TYPICAL FORM – BASED ON GEOMETRIC LAWS/  
CAN BE REPEATED/  
TYPICAL FORM USED DECORATIVELY/  
CALL “ORNAMENT”/

Schindler’s introduction to the lecture states that necessity is the hallmark of architecture. Following arguments posited by Wagner in *Modern Architecture*,<sup>8</sup> Schindler’s claim is separate to discussions centred upon ornament and structure. Obviously, James Fergusson’s (1808–86) was an enemy for Schindler. For Fergusson, a modern ‘true’ style was based upon a logical relationship between structure and ornament. Schindler’s rejection of Fergusson is critique of the long history of locating the architectural in the ornamental. If ornament and decoration were to remain viable ideas, they have to be somehow related to the topic of necessity.

Schindler had previously discussed Fergusson in the third of his Church School Lectures, “Architecture and its Language”. In the footsteps of his predecessor Loos, Schindler argued against Fergusson and John Ruskin (1819-1900), positing that the location of the architectural was enclosed space, in which the room and not the manipulation of mass through “making mouldings” was of central importance.<sup>9</sup> The subtext of Loos as the main point of departure for Schindler allows us to link the earlier rejection of Fergusson and Ruskin to concerns with space and the present discussion on decoration.

In Section 3, Schindler begins to define decoration. “Decoration” is normally understood in English as the addition of something to provide interest. But for Schindler, the purpose of decoration is “emphasis, divide and unite”. In an architectural conception where the architect is expressing disparate things that are unified, everything essential is to be expressed, and decoration is the means to such expression. If there is a need to decorate, it means that something has not been expressed in the basic form. Decoration is a proper means of giving expression to the way disparate things have been brought together in a unity.

In Section 4 Schindler distinguishes between ornament and decoration. Schindler is setting up a classification, involving groups and subgroups, in which the largest term is “Form”. “Art Form” is a translation of the German term *Kunstform* in the Semperian tradition. *Kunstform* is the outer appearance of the building, and is distinct from *Kernform*. Forms are the means for reaching a decorative effect, and can be used decoratively. In other words, forms can also be used as not used decoratively but simply used otherwise.

Schindler proceeds to claim that the “Art Form”, *Kunstform*, is unique and cannot be repeated. It appears that Schindler names it as a special case, to be distinguished from typical form, which is based on geometric laws that can be repeated. Typical forms can be used decoratively. So, if forms can be used for decorative effect, Schindler does isolate typical form based on geometric laws would create something called “ornament”.

Ornament is a class of objects. Whether an object is called an ornament or not, the classification changes according to history. Decoration or decorative, is a manner of the form. Therefore, form used in a manner that is decorative should be called ornament. In other words, an art form that is unrepeatable cannot be called ornament. Only forms are able to make a decorative effect, but not all forms can be used decoratively.

While Schindler has so far not departed from the Semperian tradition, he has however tightened the definition of ornament. Ornament is not just any object applied to a façade, but has a communicative purpose and has something structural or geomantic in its nature. Ornament is not an art form or sculptural, nor is it about *Kunstform*. *Kunstform* in the Semperian discussion is about following a neo-classical order. In Werner Oeschelin's discussion of Semper, *Kernform* is something articulated and structural and not visible, and the purpose of cladding it with the *Kunstform* is to point towards the geometric and structural articulation that is in the *Kernform*. Schindler is following this tradition to give a specific nuance to the everyday vocabulary, of decoration, form and ornament.<sup>10</sup> He is shifting the American parlance of these terms and locating them within a Semperian and Viennese usage.<sup>11</sup>

[5] [Sheet 2, recto]

XI

ORNAMENT      ORNAMENT – DIFFERENT MEANING AT DIFFERENT TIMES/  
COMBINING THE RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY/  
WITH MY PRINCIPLES GET THE/  
FOLLOWING HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF ORNAMENT/

ORIGIN FIRST, PRIMITIVE MAN: FELT „I“ AS CENTER OF/  
HIS ACTION/  
CONCLUDED EVERY ACTION TO HAVE A „I“/  
BEHIND/  
THEREFORE SUSPECTING „I“'S OR GODS/  
WITH MYSTERIOUS POWER IN ANIMALS & PLANTS/

SECOND. LANGUAGE STARTING WITH NAMES/  
FOR CONCRETE CONCEPTION, THIS/  
NAMES USED TO DESIGN ESSENTIAL/  
QUALITY OF BEARER/

THAT MEANS THAT IN SPITE OF THE FACT/  
THAT FOR THE PRIMITIVE MAN THE CONCRETE FORM/  
WAS EVERYTHING HE SUSPECTED UNKNOWN/  
POWERS BEHIND./

THIS IS EXPRESSED BY THE FACT THAT THE/  
FIRST DRAWINGS & SCULPTURE THE PRIMITIVE MAN/  
MADE WERE REALISTIC – REPETITIONS/  
OF THE FORMS HE SAW - & EXPLAINS/  
WHY HE THOUGHT HIS DRAWN & SCULPTURAL FORMS/  
TO HAVE THE SAME POWER AS THE/

[Sheet 2, verso]      REAL ONES./

LAY STRESS ON POINT: FIRST DRAWINGS &/  
SCULPTURES ARE REALISTIC & TRY/  
TO IMITATE NATURE FOR THE/  
PURPOSE OF MAKING USE OF THE/  
POWER BEHIND THE FORM OF NATURE/

[6]  
HISTORY      THIS DRAWINGS WERE REPEATED/

BECOME THE ABSTRACT MEANING/  
 CHANGED FORM THROUGH REPETITION & COPYING/  
 & UNDER INFLUENCE OF THE HUMAN MIND/  
 WHICH HELPS IS FORM CONCEPTION THROUGH/  
 THE LAWS OF GEOMETRIE [sic] /  
 BECAME "CONVENTIONALISED"/

THAT IS ALL THIS FORMS WHICH WE CALL/  
 PRIMITIVE & OF WHICH OUR ORNAMENTS/  
 WHERE COMPOSED ARE NOT PRIMITIVE /  
 BUT DERIVATIONS/

THE SCROLL/  
 THE VOLUTE/  
 CONCENTRIC RINGS /  
 ROSETTE ETC/

& ALL THIS FORMS HAD KEPT A/  
 CERTAIN MEANING FOR THE PEOPLE/  
 EVEN IF THE DERIVATION COULD/  
 NOT BE RECOGNIZED ANY MORE./

[Sheet 3, recto]

XI<sub>3</sub>

ARCHITECTURE GOODEAR<sup>12</sup> FINDS THIS DEVELOPMENT FOR THE/  
 GREEK ORNAMENTS FORM STARTING IN EGYPT, BUT /  
 TO EXPLAIN THE SIMILARITY OF THIS FORMS/  
 IN STRANGE COUNTRY, HAS TO TRY TO /  
 PROUVE [sic] DIRECT INFLUENCE OF EGYPT OVER /  
 THE WHOLE WORLD – /  
 MY STATEMENT OF THE GEOMETRIC LIMITS OF/  
 HUMAN FORM CONCEPTION SOLVES PROBLEM /  
 EASIER./

[NOTE IN MARGIN]  
 PAINT. OF FACES/

HELPING & UNDERLINING/  
 GEOMETRIC CONCEPT/

In Section 5, Schindler suggests that ornament, in so far as it is typical form, is based on geometric laws that can be used decoratively. This kind of ornament has a different kind of meaning at different times. Schindler introduces the issue of meaning, linking it to the studies of the archaeologists of the 18th and 19th century.<sup>13</sup>

Schindler here is saying when primitive people make images, first drawings then sculptures, these were ritualistic repetitions that embody the same power as the real entities in the world. There is no ontological distinction.

Within the background discussions on ornament in which Schindler's lecture aims to intervene, resemblance or substitution by way of naturalistic motifs dominate. Schindler here is rejecting both.

Further, his critique of imitation also confronts arguments made earlier by Frank Lloyd Wright within the introductory remarks of the *Wasmuth* (1910).<sup>14</sup> Describing the use of ornament as 'conceived in the very ground plan, and [is] of the very constitution of the structure', Wright later admits that 'what

ornamentation may be found added purely as such in this structure is thus a makeshift or a confession of weakness or failure'.<sup>15</sup> While Schindler had admired Wright and would join him at Taliesin, Wisconsin in 1917, Wright was committed to imitating nature through the features of the American landscape.

Schindler's argument is linked to questions of historical time and modernity. Following Adolf Loos, who rejected the ornament of the Secession on the basis of its "false modernity", Schindler argues that ornament is anachronistic because it is futile. Hence Schindler's rejection of ornament is based on a historical argument in which he introduces 'primitive' man and ornament, to contrast it later with modern man and the use of writing. Schindler then discusses the background to this development;

Additionally, in Section 5 of the document, Schindler moves from a person that is at the centre of action, to a person as an instrument of conventionalised expression. Schindler here is suggesting that contemporary ornaments are not primitive, but derivations of them. So, Schindler here is pointing in Section 6 to neo-classical ornaments such as the scroll, the volute, concentric rings and the rosette. By naming these parts he also gives a stabilised sense of Section 4, where typical form based on geometric laws is not a large beam or column, which are also typical forms based on geometric laws, Schindler has in mind here at the smaller scale, that is in the classical orders.

In the primitive case, there is direct expression, and it is embodied the power directly, but subsequently, in historical usage when you have conventionalised ornaments, these are derivations the meanings no longer keep a certain meaning, but the derivation process cannot be recognized, so that it is no longer possible to study ornaments historically the way archaeologists are able to develop.

Schindler here collapses two discussions on ornament: one put forward by William Henry Goodyear (1846–1923) in respect of the Egyptian lotus, and a second developed by Owen Jones (1809–74).<sup>16</sup> In Goodyear's argument, ornaments have a continuous history based upon the widespread dissemination of motifs. Beginning with Egyptian plant motifs and ending in late antiquity, Goodyear aimed to demonstrate that ornaments were variations on the lotus that had meaning, symbolising either the sun, resurrection, creativity and power.<sup>17</sup> While for Schindler the underlining meaning of the ornaments is that they had lost their immediate meaning, it nonetheless wasn't about establishing a new modern ornament but something else.

The discussion of the geometric making of ornaments can be found in Owen Jones, "*The Grammar of Ornament* (1856), in which one of the central principles is that 'all ornament should be based upon geometrical construction'.<sup>18</sup> This connection is logical given Schindler will refer to the work later in the document. While the figure of the savage recurs throughout reform arguments, for Jones the desire to ornament was a basic instinct, reflected in the desire of the savage to ornament the face and body, to heighten expression.

In his marginal notes, Schindler calls attention to the geometric concept of a face. Schindler wants to shift attention from the organic face to the geometric concept. Schindler says that his statement of the geometric limits of human form conception solves the problem more easily. Schindler shifts the thinking from a historical demonstration of influence to the idea that human form itself has innate geometric limits.

[7]

MEANING

FIRST WRITING SIMILAR – FORM PUT FOR WORD/  
ORNAMENTS THEREFORE MOSTLY SYMBOLIC/  
MOSTLY WRITING/  
NOT ART FORM/  
STILL IN ORIENTAL ART FORM = SYMBOL/

THIS MAKES THE OLD ORNAMENT EXCUSABLE/  
 BUT SINCE WE LOST MEANING/  
 SINCE ORNAMENT IS ONLY FORM – ADDED – /  
 NO EXCUSE FOR IT/

|                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| [NOTE IN MARGIN] | VICTOR HUGO [circle around] |
|------------------|-----------------------------|

[8]

MODERN            OUR WORDS HAVE GROWN ABSTRACT/  
 TIMES             BETTER SYMBOLS THAN FORMS – CLEARER/  
                       OUR JUDGES DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE CARRIED/  
                       IN FRONT OF THEM A BUNDLE OF STICKS WITH/  
    AN AXE/  
                       TO SYMBOLISE THAT HE CAN BREAK THE/  
                       ROD OVER SOMEBODY'S HEAD FOR SIGN OF/  
                       CONDEMNATION & THAN HAVE THIS HEAD/  
                       CHOPPED OFF – OVER TIME WRITES/

[Sheet 3, verso]

„JUDGE“ ON HIS CALL CARD & EVERYBODY/  
 KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS/  
 FOR THE PRIMITIVE THIS SYMBOL IS/  
 CLEARER THAN THE WORD./

OUR SYMBOLS STRIKE US CHILDISH/  
 AND THE MAKING OF ORNAMENTS/  
 ON THE RULES OF „OWEN JONES“/  
 BY CONVENTIONALISING NATURAL FORMS/  
 IS SIMPLY „PLAYING“/  
 THE TIME OF ORNAMENT HAS PAST/  
 WE HAVE NO ORNAMENT ANYMORE – /  
 THAT IS WHY WE CANNOT COMPETE/  
    WITH ORIENTAL RUGS/  
 WHY EVERY INDIAN WOMAN IS ABLE/  
    TO MAKE A BETTER BLANKET AS/  
    WE CAN/  
 THAT IS WHY WE DO NOT PAINT/  
    OUR FACES ANYMORE/  
 THE TEXTURE OF THE SKIN IS/  
    WHAT WE LIKE/  
 & IF SOME MAN HAS HIMSELF/  
 TATTOOED/  
 YOU CAN BE SURE THAT THIS TATTOOING/  
 IS A SYMBOL FOR HIS PATRIOTISM OR LOVE ETC/  
 & NOT A ARTFORM – THIS MAN LIVES/  
    IN THE CENTURIES BEFORE CHRIST./

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| [NOTE IN MARGIN] | OUR HOMES OVERLOADED WITH/<br>ORNAMENTS – NO CLEAR FORMS – /<br>IRRITATING INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN – /<br>BAD CHILD = RESULT OF UNCLEAR/ |
|------------------|--|



IRRITATING, COMPLICATED SURROUNDINGS/

[Sheet 4, recto]

XI<sub>4</sub>

THAT IS THE REASON WHY RUSKIN<sup>19</sup> COMPLAINS/  
ONCE THAT ART IS ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED/  
BY CRUELTY – BUT IF YOU READ/  
FURTHER YOU SEE THAT ART FOR HIM/  
MEANS ORNAMENT & THAT'S WHY HE IS RIGHT/  
LOOS<sup>20</sup> – ORNAMENT & CRIME/

ARCHITECTURE RENAISSANCE/  
SCULPTURES USED AS ORNAMENTS/  
WORK OF ART OF OUR TIME IMPOSSIBLE/

In Section 7, Schindler is returning to his introductory remarks to the lecture, in which he rejects ornaments that are added. Nonetheless, as Schindler remarks here, he accepts ornaments in the old world where they functioned symbolically, as in writing. In principle, Schindler accepts ornaments, but insists that changed historical circumstances have shifted how they should be understood.

In *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831), Victor Hugo (1802–95) declared that the book of stone would give way to the book on paper. Schindler here alludes to this claim. For Hugo's *Hunchback*, in the nineteenth century, people revived the power of the words and acted against the power of ornaments. Whereas previously, according to Schindler, ornaments historically took the form of words, and they had this symbolic operation that made them legitimate. In early times when there was no opposition between ornaments and words, since the historical loss of meaning of ornament, words were liberated and gained the upper hand.

In Section 8, Schindler contrasts texture with ornament, the face with the skin. Texture is “what we like”, while ornament is cast a symbol. The Modern overcoming of ornament does not lead to unadorned form but textured surfaces. Following Loos, texture undoes the opposition between form, ornament and structure. Schindler's texture has depth that has a sense of specificity that is absent in Loos's argument for cladding.

While the excessive use of ornaments can produce detrimental effects on the subject, in advancing an argument of texture for the modern subject, Schindler within this passage conflates body and building surface as “texture of the skin in what we like”. Schindler then discusses the materiality of decoration;

[9]

MATERIAL      OUR TIME      SENSE FOR MATERIAL AND TEXTURE/  
& COLOR           DOES NOT NEED ORNAMENT./  
THE ORNAMENT IS DEAD./

USE OF MATERIAL HAS ITS DANGERS/  
CAN BE USED DECORATIVELY/  
INSTEAD OF CONSTRUCTIVELY/  
MATERIAL = FORM + COLOR/  
WHERE IS THE DANGER/  
FORM CAN BE FELT – TOUCHING/  
COLORS CAN ONLY BE SEEN – EYE/

COLORS DEPENDING ON LIGHT – (TIMED)/  
 ARCHITECTURE IS ART OF SPACE = FORM/  
 COLOR NOT ESSENTIAL IF ONLY SURFACE TREATMENT/  
 MATERIAL... TEXTURE = FORM/  
 FORM – CAN BE MONUMENTAL – MATERIAL TOO/  
 COLOR – CAN NOT BE MONUMENTAL – EMOTIONAL, TIMED/  
 THEREFORE ARCHITECT TO COMPOSE WITH MATERIALS/  
 & NOT WITH COLORS/

[NOTE IN MARGIN]

MONUMENTAL MATERIAL - ABLE TO HAVE AND KEEP FORM/

EXAMPLE. i SAN FRANCISCO EXHIBITION<sup>21</sup> COMPOSED IN COLORS/  
 REGARDLESS OF MATERIALS UNDERNEATH/  
 BUILT UP WATERCOLOUR – GHOSTLY/

In Section 9, “Material & Color”, Schindler suggests that modern man’s ‘sense’ of material and texture has made the use of ornament redundant. This suggestion implicitly connotes a more bodily understanding of surfaces, in which texture and materials can produce a deep sensuality. Sensing the material was not a new idea, but was discussed earlier by Loos in “The Principle of Cladding”, 1898.<sup>22</sup>

The discussion of the senses is made more complex by Schindler’s next series of statements. Echoing Wagner’s arguments of the constructive use of materials, a contrast is made between the decorative and constructive use of materials. In what will be extrapolated further, Schindler suggests that material has both form and colour. While form can be felt, colours are experienced visually. With this observation, Schindler hints at a split in the experience between optical and the tactile.

Schindler then proceeds to locate the architectural. While colours are experienced temporally through a relation to light, architecture is the art of space tied to form. Importantly, form is not abstract but is more concretely understood, tethered to materials and texture.

Two implications follow from Schindler’s emphasis on the importance of texture. First, Schindler is advocating a modern subject immersed in the diffuse extent of material texture. Second, the wall has changed. Refusing the structure/ornament binary, the wall is no longer a rigid tectonic element but textured, in which there is an implicit awareness of the surface.

The importance of working with materials is underscored by Schindler in his later claim within this section where the “architect is to compose with materials”. The implications of Schindler’s statements have important consequences, as historians have framed his work abstractly in which space is independent of material and textural qualities.

The split in experience of the modern subject between optical and tactile is echoed in Schindler’s division between the ephemeral and the monumental. While space/ form is monumental (see Semper), colour is ephemeral. Schindler gives an example from the 1915 Panama–Pacific International Exposition, where the building is composed of colors independent of material providing the building with a lack of material presence through a relation to light.

Previously, magnificent forms were displayed in light. Now Schindler thinks that colours depend on light too. However, he clearly diverges from the Semperian tradition in three important respects: (1) by advocating that ornament is dead; (2) that form is not a self-sufficient primary term as forms are understood in terms of material and texture; and (3) that the architect does not compose with colours, i.e. Schindler is against polychromy.

[10]  
CONSTRUCTIVE BUT EVEN MATERIALS CAN BE USED/  
& DECORATIVE DECORATIVELY/  
USE EXAMPLE: WRIGHT– BOARDS ON PLASTER TO/  
MAKE LINE OR COLORBAND – NO/  
ESSENTIAL VALUE FOR BUILDING AS/  
ROOM COMPOSITION – ADDED/  
  
USE OF MATERIALS. IN FORMER TIMES/  
ALWAYS DECORATIVELY (FACING)/  
PROVE: BOARDERS/  
TWO MATERIALS. ALWAYS DIVIDED BY THIRD/  
WHICH HAD ONLY ORNAMENTAL – DIVIDING/  
OR UNITING VALUE/  
NOW – MATERIALS MEET./  
& THIS IS THE START FOR NEW ARCHITECTURE– /

[11]  
FUTURE ARCHITECT CONCEIVING ROOM [Underscored]/  
FORMING IT BY MATERIALS [Underscored]/

In the final sections of the document Schindler contrasts the constructive and decorative as a major point. Schindler is using the special sense of decoration in calling attention and expressing disparate parts are united. How disparate parts are united is not a formal issue, but has become a construction issue. In arguing a shift away from compositional considerations, to the issue of construction, Schindler brings about a fourth major point of divergence away from the Semperian discussions.<sup>23</sup>

Schindler gives an example of the decorative use of materials using Frank Lloyd Wright. Critiquing Wright's extensive use of trim that masks the joining of materials, he construes trim as "decorative", as it is unrelated to the major architectural intention of the room.

By way of conclusion, with modern innovations in material and construction techniques, Schindler is positing that materials could now be directly handled where they meet without the need of trim or border that marked the position of the joint. For Schindler, this marked the "start for a new architecture".<sup>24</sup> While remaining within a textual economy initiated by Semper, Schindler refuses the purification of the surface in Loos in the name of textured surfaces.<sup>25</sup> Along with previous statements on texture and the decorative use of materials, Schindler's discussion of decoration in the Church School Lectures introduces an attentiveness to the sensual surfaces within Schindler's work and how they organise a spatiality.

Schindler's move towards space or room is roundabout. After arguing against ornamentation, he declares that if decoration is still an active consideration at the level of construction, the architect can call attention to how disparate things are brought together. The discussion then becomes materially oriented. When architects conceive of rooms, according to Schindler, they are not conceiving rooms formally in the sense of mass, but by materials in construction, articulated decoratively in a way that calls attention to how things are brought together.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> R. M. Schindler, Lectures “Church, School, Chicago” delivered Chicago School of Applied and Normal Art 1916, are held by the University Art Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) UCSB Box 3, Folder 231.

<sup>2</sup> Schindler, 1916 lecture notes, op. cit., Lecture I, “Introduction”.

<sup>3</sup> R. M. Schindler, “Modern Architecture: A Program (1913)”, in *R.M. Schindler: Composition and Construction*, eds L. March and J. Sheine. (London: Academy Editions, 1993), 10–12.

<sup>4</sup> H.F. Mallgrave, “Schindler’s Program of 1913”, in *R.M. Schindler: Composition and Construction*, eds. L. March and J. Sheine. (London: Academy Editions, 1993), 19.

<sup>5</sup> Discussion within scholarship of the lecture notes has been brief, having prioritized Schindler’s earlier “Architecture: A Program” (1913). The most extended discussion of the notes can be found in Jin-Ho Park, “Numerical Properties of Rudolph Michael Schindler’s Houses in the Los Angeles Area”, *The Mathematical Intelligencer* 28, no. 1 (2006). Park similarly locates Schindler’s approach to space as emerging from both the theoretical writings of Loos and Semper. However, in Parks analysis, Schindler’s lecture on decoration and the importance of texture are not discussed.

<sup>6</sup> James Fergusson (1808–86) theory of ornament can be found in *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture* (1855).

<sup>7</sup> In accordance with rules of transliteration, we write out in full words that were originally abbreviated in the notes. All abbreviations have therefore been expanded, with additions underlined. In this instance, the manuscript abbreviation is “BLDG”.

<sup>8</sup> See Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture: A Guidebook for His Students to this Field of Art*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Publications, 1988), 91.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the importance of room enclosure in Semper and Loos, see Alina Alexandra Payne, *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of Architectural Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 41 & 219. The Church School Lectures reveal the extent Schindler reworked a tradition and its key terms, particularly in Loos, Semper, and Wagner rather than its outright rejection. See Christopher Long, *The New Space Movement and Experience in Viennese Modern Architecture* ed. Wolfgang Thaler (Yale University Press, 2016), 39–40.

<sup>10</sup> Werner Oechslin, *Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, and the Road to Modern Architecture*, trans. Lynnette Widder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> The migration of the European discussions on ornament similarly tightened Frank Lloyd Wright’s definition of ornament when he visited in 1909-10, with the consequence that it led to a new system developed around primary motifs. The subtext to Schindler and Wright’s concern is the impact and integration of the machine and consequently present a departure away from the earlier craft based discussions in Loos and Semper. For an extended discussion of the impact of the European debates on Wright’s work see Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright--the Lost Years, 1910-1922: A Study of Influence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 153–220. For a discussion of the machine in Semper and Loos see Payne, *From Ornament to Object*, 46–48 & 217–229.

<sup>12</sup> William Henry Goodyear (1846- 1923) Architectural historian, art historian and curator.

<sup>13</sup> See Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, “*Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright* (1910)”, in *Wright: Collected Writings, 1894–1930*, ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (New York, Rizzoli, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Brooks, *Wright: Collected Writings, 1894–1930*, 111.

<sup>16</sup> See William Henry Goodyear, *The Grammar of the Lotus: A New History of Classic Ornament as a Development of Sun Worship*, (1891) and Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856).

<sup>17</sup> Margret Iverson, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 52.

<sup>18</sup> Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856) (New York: Tess Press 2006), 6.

<sup>19</sup> The discussion of cruelty can be found in Ruskin’s *The Two Paths* (1859). See John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*. 39 vols. Library edition. Eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. (London: George Allen, 1903–12), 307.

<sup>20</sup> Adolf Loos, “Ornament and Crime (1910)”, in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays* (California: Ariadne Press, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Panama–Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) held in San Francisco, in the United States, between February 20 and December 4 in 1915.

<sup>22</sup> Adolf Loos, “The Principle of Cladding (1898)”, in *Spoken into the Void*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H. Smith (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> The discussion on polychrome can be found in Gottfried Semper, "Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture in Antiquity", in Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trs, Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herman (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 45–73.

<sup>24</sup> In drawing attention to the abutment of materials Schindler similarly departs from Semper who defined Architecture as the "joining of materials into an organized form". While in Semper's argument, the joining of materials held a significance as it revealed the survival of craft based forms across materials through decoration for Schindler, Architecture no longer resides in ornament/ detail as resides in the play of textured surfaces. For a discussion of 'Ornament, Detail, and the Human Body' in Semper see Payne, *From Ornament to Object*, 56-64.

<sup>25</sup> The extent to which Loos "removed" ornament is contested within scholarship, see for instance Vittoria Di Palma, "A Natural History of Ornament", in Gülru editor Necipoğlu and Alina Alexandra editor Payne, *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* (Princeton University Press, 2016). For a discussion of the "removal" of ornament in Loos, see Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 2-33.

