Introduction

Project Purpose
- Analyze the work of architect Adolf Loos
- Introduce the architect with a brief biography
- Explain the impact of his works
- Describe his design philosophies
- Define his organizing principles
- Reflect on his observable design language
- Present a precedent analysis of one of his major works

Background

Philosophy
- Loos' essay, *Ornament and Crime*, opposed the unnecessary use of ornamentation, stating it is “linked to degeneracy and crime and should be removed from objects of daily use.”
- Believed ornamentation to be corrupt as it “masked the true nature and beauty of materials with useless ornament.”
- Loos stated, “Architecture was an important means of providing people with an up-to-date, truly modern lifestyle, rather than being an isolated form of art.”

Organization Principles
- Loos did not sketch initial designs, instead he believed, “Architecture is not conceived in plans, but in spaces; For me there are only continuous spaces.”
- Raumplan principle was used in many Loos designs, which was a “plan of volumes” and “considered ordering and size of spaces based on functionality.”
- Designs seen as volumetric by creating one main volume with bilateral symmetry then organizing the interior of that volume with smaller cubes.
- Solid structures with simplified exteriors and linear style of design.

Portfolio

Café Museum • Vienna, Austria • 1899
The clean, undecorated Viennese coffee house, Café Museum, was constructed during the height of Art Nouveau. It became one of Loos’ prominent designs, as he applied his theories and ideas against the use of ornamentation in this design.

Goldman & Salatsch • Vienna, Austria • 1909
The building’s facade displays the separation between the sober apartments on the top floors and the more elegant department store on the first floors. All of the windows were uncommonly designed without window frames, earning the name “house without eyebrows.”

Kärntner Bar • Vienna, Austria • 1908
The bar is a “small, sleek temple of rebellion against the surrounding architecture.” Loos used unadorned forms along with lavish materials in the design.

Horner House • Vienna, Austria • 1912
The design presents itself with the rounded rooftop. The rooftop gives the illusion on the facade that it is two stories, when in fact a third lies within the roof.

Müller Villa • Prague, Czech Rep. • 1930
The Müller Villa was designed using Loos’ spatial conceptual idea, known as Raumplan, in which he designed spaces from the inside out. The irregular distribution of the windows directly correlates to the placement of the interior volumes.

Villa Moller • Vienna, Austria • 1926
The Villa Moller appears nearly hygienic and clean as it embodies Loos’ conceptual idea of Raumplan, with the orderly volumetric bodies and irregular windows.

Impact
- Loos’ works "influenced and introduced the modern movement”
- Loos’ essay, *Ornament and Crime*, explained his opposition to Art Nouveau Expressionism
- Interiors serve as functional and distinctive spaces
- Buildings were at first less pleasing to the Viennese public, which resulted in less recognition and appreciation at the time

Design Language
- Basic forms were compact in plan, usually resembling squares or cubic volumes
- Exterior walls were constructed as load bearing walls out of solid masonry brick
- Early interior houses utilized columns, while later designs were supported by interior walls
- Rooms on different levels with floors and ceilings set at different heights
- Many designs included flat rooftop areas, straight lines, clean curves, and “clear planar walls and windows”

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Overview

- The Steiner House was designed for painter Lilly Steiner and husband Hugo Steiner
- Building codes in the neighborhood declared all houses to be only two stories high on the street side, thus Loos designed the Steiner house to have a two story facade with a curved rooftop, allowing square footage for a third story in on the back
- The design was seen as innovative and proactive in maximizing what was given
- Some critics refer to it as the first “completely modern dwelling”

Concept

- Loos applied the idea of Raumplan design to this structure, particularly there is one main interior volume that is then divided into four separate quadrants
- The facade is a representation of a classical tripartite, which is a three part visible facade
- Due to the building codes, Loos designed the front and back sides to been seen as more symmetrical, while the two sides contained irregular window distribution
- The irregular window distribution is due to Loos’ theory of designing from the inside out

Analysis Structure

- The outer walls and middle wall of this structure are load bearing, constructed from brick masonry. There is a wood beam ceiling over the raised ground floor.

Plan to Section

- The structure is split into four quadrants, representing bilateral symmetry. There is one primary axis through the main entrance and a second axis lies horizontal through the center. The idea of organization began with one main volume, then organizing the interior of that volume with smaller squares and rectangles.

Circulation

- The primary entrance is located at the front, while the secondary entrance is off the terrace. The use space and primary circulation are dedicated to the main walkways through the structure. There are four vertical circulations contained interiorly.

3D Idea

- The street and garden elevations present nearly symmetrical window designs, while irregular window designs are on the side elevations.

Massing and Hierarchy

- The massing is the square shape and rounded rooftop. The hierarchy represents a classical tripartite, in which three volumes are visible on the facade.