Charles Eames Artist Studio

An Application of Pattern Language to the Entrance

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Through the use of the suggested patterns in *A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander, the exterior of this studio was greatly enhanced. This studio was originally designed as a live-work loft for artist Charles Eames. Charles Eames became famous for his molded-plastic chairs on a belief that life, creation, design, and living go hand-in-hand.

Eames inhabits this studio space, along with his family, and he welcomes guests, friends, and clients on a daily basis to collaborate in the studio inside the residence. The floor plan is open to suit the many skills and talents that Eames’ uses to create products and designs. However, the main entrance lacks thought, going against the beliefs of Eames. Through the use of Pattern Language, the entrance now welcomes guests and provides an outdoor living space for the residents to enjoy.
A Pattern Language was written by Christopher Alexander about the structured design approach he found useful in enhancing towns, buildings and constructions. A Pattern Language describes good design practices, organized into individual categories and subcategories. The approach of this method simply helps in solving large design issues that are commonly seen. Through the organization of this book, designers are able to start from the root issue that they understand, and then work towards more unknown issues. The solutions and methods described in this book can be seen in everyday situations, helping to create a more designerly world.
Case Study

The area of enhancement that is focused on in the Eames Studio is the main entrance. Originally, this space lacked thought and flow. It was unoriginal and bland. This space is shared between the residents and clients, thus it requires a more welcoming entrance and usable space for all the inhabitants.
110 Main Entrance

During the evolution of a building, an important consideration is the location of the main entrance, as it controls movement to and from the building. The main entrance should be designed so that the shape and position are clearly visible to those who are approaching.

The original Eames Studio main entrance was positioned flush against the long horizontal wall. By extruding the wall about three feet, the entrance now has a bold and visible shape which stands out in front of the building.
112 Entrance Transition

“A house with a graceful transition between the street and inside is more tranquil than that which opens directly off the street.” (Alexander) The addition of a scenic entryway surface creates a transition that welcomes guests, while simultaneously creating a transition from the outside views, sounds and lightings.

The Eames Studio was built to welcome friends, family, and clients. The added entrance transition contains three different materials and levels of intimacy. The first stone pavement with cracks (Pattern 247) directly connects from the public sidewalk, guiding the visitor to the scattered stones that open up to the wooden stairs, leading to a small porch and finally the main entryway.
117 Sheltering Roof

It is believed that “if the presence of the roof cannot be felt around the building, or if it cannot be used, then people will lack a fundamental sense of shelter.” (Alexander) The sheltering roof is an important aspect in design because it contains, embraces, covers and surrounds those activities inside and directly outside the building.

The exterior of the Eames Studio was enhanced with an extended rooftop. This feature covers the small porch directly over the main doorway. It also extends to the right, providing more shelter from the elements. The sheltering roof also adds a sense of privacy to a space that is near outdoor public space.
There are key aspects when designing a functional entrance room. This space is used by both residents and guests, thus it has many purposes. Windows were added to the sides of the door for security. Shelter from the weather is provided by the porch rooftop. The creation of the entrance room symbolizes a “goodbye” point, where guests can easily come and go. A shelf is added to the right of the doorway as convenience to leave packages or other objects while entering or exiting. This room was extended to provide space for seating as well as storage for shoes and coats. The doorway is not directly adjacent from the entryway for security purposes. Finally, a third window was added to bring light into the space, making it welcoming.
166 Gallery Surround

This studio redesign includes an extension of the front porch, which helps to connect the indoor and outdoor spaces. Residents and guests have space to walk out and look toward the outdoor space, helping them to feel like the “building and the larger public world are intertwined.” (Alexander) Hours of time can be spent out here and it is the correct balance of public and private. A second door entrance is added off the porch extension for easier, less formal access mainly used by the residents.
242 Front Door Bench

The addition of furniture to the outdoor porch space is a necessary aspect of enhancing the main entrance. Furniture creates the feeling of inhabitance and care, as well as being functional. “People like to watch the street, but they do not always want a great deal of involvement with the street.” (Alexander) It is then important to consider seat spots (Pattern 241) for outdoor seating, as they should be placed according to intended activity. The single bench to the left of the main entrance is for guests to wait or briefly set items down. The seating towards the right is intended for more casual interactions and gatherings. The space is flexible, allowing it to be adjusted for various activities.
174 Trellised Walk

The trellised walk is used to emphasize the path it covers and to set off one part of the path as an inviting entrance. The trellised walk also creates a virtual wall that defines the outdoor space in a soft and blended way. The addition of a trellis allows for plants or climbing flowers to grow along and across it. A small gate was added to the end of the trellis, creating a main gateway (Pattern 53). The main gateway helps to maintain boundaries, while creating a feeling of transition and enclosing the path to specific guests.
243 Sitting Wall

The sitting wall was added at the end of the property line, where the sidewalk meets. The sitting wall is an addition that creates division between the public world and the private residence. It creates a seam, “a place which unites the two but does so without breaking down the fact that they are separate places.” (Alexander) Although the Eames Studio is used as a living quarter, it is also opened to guests and clients, thus the sitting wall is the perfect balance of privacy, while still welcoming outsiders to be a part of the environment.
Revised Plan

Initial Eames Studio Plan

Revised Eames Studio Plan
In the beginning, before the application of the Pattern Language, my artist studio main entrance was bland, flat, and lacked character. With the initial bump-out of the entryway and the addition of the pavement textures and roofing, my design physically changed to better incorporate an outdoor life.

The space is now welcoming and while still reflecting the modern design aspects that the studio originally had. There is a good balance between private space and public space. The Eames Studio main entrance is now be a welcoming place for all who pass by.

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