Lo and behold, the palazzo rucellai essay

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Alberti’s works can be seen as a series of experimental reinventions for modern use. Noteworthy among his works is the Palaccio Rucellai in Florence, Italy. The facade is unified by a delicate grid of superimposed pilasters and the three stories are of the same height. More so, its facade was one of the first embarking the new ideas of the Renaissance architecture founded on pilasters, entablatures in proportional relationship to each other. Evidently, the construction of this eminent structure was built on solid masonry, bricks and stone.

Though the construction of this “ palace” was a bit medieval, it nevertheless, created an impression of great strength particularly on the ground floor. The building’s facade is derived from several classical orders — cognizant of the Colosseum in Rome, the Tuscan order at the base, and a cut down version of the Corinthian order at the topmost level. This incorporation of various architectural ingenuities heightens the sensation and interest a passersby has towards the splendid structure.

The building has double windows on the upper levels and combined arches on it with highly articulated voussoirs that spring from pilaster to pilaster. De re aedificatoria, translated in English as On the Art of Building, is an archetypal treatise authored by Leon Battista Alberti in 1450. Although it was largely dependent on Vitruvius’ De Architectura, Alberti tells us how buildings should be built not how they were built compared to its predecessor. Alberti was systematic, and he presented architecture as an exalted pursuit, a sort of incarnate philosophy that left little room for the humble stonemasons of the Gothic.

He knew the ruins of ancient Rome well, and out of the creative interplay between his archaeological and textual studies formed a more internally coherent and pristine conception of architecture than any known to antiquity. Leon Battista Alberti advocated a system of ideal proportions and avoidance of the column-arch combination as incongruous and is evident in Palazzo Rucellai particularly on its windows which are enveloped by arches starting from the second level of the building.

Indeed, as stated in his book, the structure exemplified that the arch is a wall opening that should be supported only by a portion of wall, a pier, and not by an independent sculptural element, a column. In Alberti’s Palazzo Rucellai in Florence they were achieved through his application of classical elements to contemporary buildings. He likes to emphasize the two-dimensional qualities of the wall, as well as the horizontal and vertical relationship of the space.

Again, proper proportions were of consistency in a manner that it should be ingeniously planned that’s why he created the infrastructure with equal heights. In doing so, the great Leon Battista Alberti complies with every single detail he mentioned in his book, if not, at least the essentials on how a building should be built. Ironically, Alberti was just a genius behind all these because he was never able to execute his ideas for it was actually Bernardo Rosselino who executed the Palazzo Rucellai that’s why some people emphasized that on the great architect’s scholarly achievements rather than his artistic talents.

As a natural genius, he concentrated on writing rather than application of his ideas. In the treatise, Alberti makes “ openings” the sixth part of

architecture, but their placement and dimensions are governed by composition, structural integrity, and subservience to the columnar order—not by qualities of light. Here, he proposes that the windows be made in accordance to its function and form and putting quality of light as secondary consideration only.

Alberti suggests that “ each individual chamber, then, should have windows, to admit light and to allow a change of air; they should be appropriate to the requirements of the interior and should take into account the thickness of the wall, so that their frequency and the light they receive are no greater or less than utility demands. ” Likewise, he attributes the ambience and the “ feel” of the room or environment to the type and structure of windows. Alberti puts into consistency the proportionality of every structure built in an architectural edifice.

Sunlight is mentioned equally as something necessary and desirable for adequate illumination. As such, he created as many windows as possible to allow sufficient light to enter into the room as seen in the facade of the Palazzo Rucellai. Naturally, huge windows that allow sufficient light to pass through it would be useless if the location of the edifice itself is at the center of towering structures because it would hinder light to pass through. The only deviance from this approach is Alberti’s seizure on a symbolic aspect of light linked to beauty through the adjectives shining and brilliant.

This common idea of light appears in the treatise when Alberti describes ornament as “ a form of auxiliary light and complement to beauty. ” Although he is speaking metaphorically, it is surprising that Alberti never

articulates the possibility for physical light to be part of the ornamental program of the building. His wish for “ no greater or no less than utility demands” accords with Alberti’s general desire for moderation. It also fits well his definition of beauty — “ the harmony of all parts in relation to one another,” and subsequently “ this concord is realized in a particular number, proportion, and arrangement demanded by harmony. , which encompasses the fixed and immobile in architecture rather than that which is changeable.

Harsh or brilliant light causes dense shadows that alter the appearance of forms that have been carefully composed and distributed “ such that nothing may be added or taken away but for the worse. ” In such a formulation, shadow—and therefore direct light—is to be avoided. The aspect of light here poses a challenge to every architect and designer if they are to follow Alberti’s concept of lighting. But then again, with the recent innovations in technology, the aspect of designing is much more conceivable today than it is before.