RECOMMENDATION

Before I pen down my recommendation for the benefit of scholars, critics, and historians of Architecture, I would like to quote the poet WH Auden: A critic can “throw light upon the relation to art of life, to science, economics, religion, etc.” And as the American architect Louis Sullivan, one of the pioneers of Modern Architecture, has succinctly observed: “Once you learn to look upon architecture not merely as an art, more or less well or badly done, but as a social manifestation, the critical eye becomes clairvoyant, and obscure, unnoted phenomena become illumined.” (Quoted by Sylvan Barnet.)

The “obscure, unnoted phenomena” that has hopefully “become illumined” by virtue of the research methodology developed for the present study, it may be conceded, should draw the attention of scholars, critics, and historians of Architecture, for application (and further improvement) to their own areas of investigation. Such adoption, I dare say, should result in authentic and conclusive outcome of research projects. I, therefore, recommend that, for undertaking a critical evaluation especially of historical monuments, notably, places of Worship (like stupas, churches, mosques, Mandirs, and Gurdwaras), my Research Methodology be given a fair trial. I recommend that study of the historical monuments should be done in terms of the Elements of Building Design as enumerated below:-

(1) Space, (2) Structure, (3) Form, (4) Time, and Technical Aspects:

(1) Architecture, (2) Engineering, and (3) Aesthetics.

As has been noted earlier, in the formulation of my Research Methodology, the Elements of Building Design and their Technical Aspects are, at bottom, interrelated, and yield
their fuller sense only when they are used together in any discourse on the planning (i.e. conceptualisation followed by a comprehensive action plan) and making (i.e., construction, materials, and resolution of emerging problems of implementation) of Built (or Human) Environment.

Space is Architecture in the sense of Spirit, as Louis Kahn has so succinctly stated. Structure is Engineering in the sense of Skeleton (as in the human body) of a Building. Form communicates Aesthetics, which is the visual experience of Beauty as manifest in the Building. Spirit has a primary purpose to fulfill, and must be traced to its original source which, in the case of Places of Worship, would be found to be enshrined in the Sacred Scripture(s) of different peoples of the world. The approach would also resolve disputes concerning origin and evolution of various architectural styles, and their unwitting intermingling throughout the course of History.

The Metaphysical Dimension of Space is embodied in its purpose which conjures up the design concept as the genetic imperative of Architecture. Metaphysically, Structure is first and foremost a mental construct of a host of forces brought together in a state of dynamic equilibrium. Form is a Metaphysical visualisation of the Void of Space in conjunction with the Skeleton of Structure as an artistic (ie organic, holistic) expression of primary design intentions which transcend mere Utility to move up into the Realm of Beauty, and perennial significance. Time’s Metaphysics is its ability to contextualise new creation in the midst of the existing Built-Environment. Time’s masculinity impregnates Space’s feminity into the throbbing vitality of a work of Art. The Metaphysical Dimension of Engineering is Imagination-activated Rationality working out a method of how to translate an Idea (abstraction) into an
Object (concrete reality, ie, in this case, Building) by transferring it from the Mind to the Ground.

The Physical Dimension of Space is enclosed and roofed vacuity in which to live, worship, work, and recreate; of Structure, it is construction made possible by an assembly of materials by appropriate methods and skills supplied by Engineering. Form manifests its Physical Dimension when Architecture becomes Frozen Music. Time is arrested as Physical Dimension by marking out an event in the history of human civilisation. The physical Dimension of Engineering is crucial, because Engineering alone makes things happen on ground by putting its processes and inventions in action.

The other related factors, which must also be investigated, arc:-

- The Materials used, and how they contribute to the building's purpose (Utility) and physical aesthetic statement (Beauty).
- What is the function of Ornament, ie decorative art applied to the building, or of Sculpture in or around the building?
- Does Colour play any significant role in: articulating Form, giving aesthetic pleasure, symbolising meaning, etc.?
- How has Daylight been used in the architectural design of the building, and what part does Electric Light play in the quality of interior and in the appearance of the exterior (façade)?

The foregoing discussion may be summed up under three aspects of Architecture:-
(1) The monument as an envelope (its purpose, structural system, materials, source of design, history, and design ie articulation of the façade, including the disposition of doors, windows, ornamentation, colour, etc., (2) The interior (hierarchy of spaces, movement of users, connection with the outdoors (façade and the surroundings, notably, its landscape); and (3) the site (relationship of the building to the environment in terms of site-structure unity). In the case of Secular Architecture, a fourth topic to be studied is: the architect's philosophy, and the place of the building under investigation in the history of the architect's work.

Before closing this discussion, I would like to quote what Dr Arvind Krishan7 has stated in response to my query on the structural analysis of historical monuments :-

1) Structure analysis of existing structures is always a problem because of the following :-

a) Since structure details and exact drawings are normally not available ; and

b) Based on sketches or incomplete information, structural modelling is never accurate.

2) The basic parameters and requirements for structure analysis are what is normally done i.e. detailed architectural and structural drawings along with detailed material properties should be available.

3) Modern techniques of research involved in structure appropriateness, efficiency or etc. will inevitably require material testing check carried through core cuttings etc.

4) Devising methods for analysis of historical monuments is always bordering on approximations where the availability of drawings is rare.