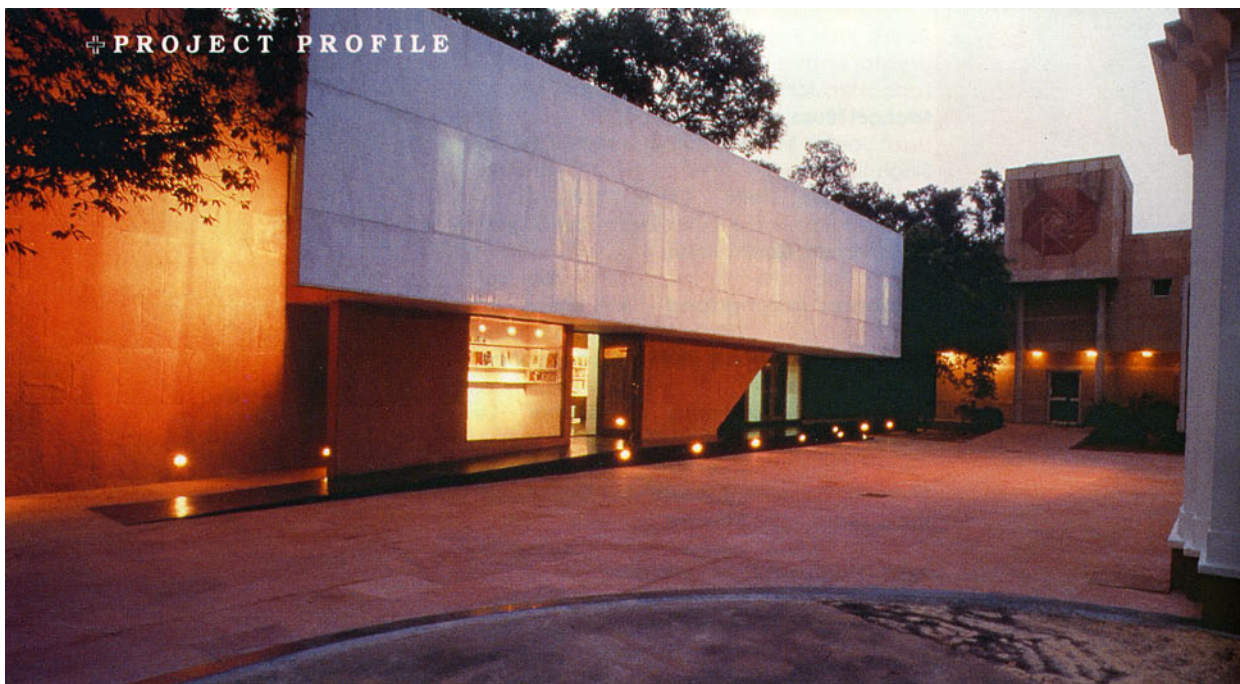


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French Information and Resource Centre New Delhi

Architect **Stéphane Paumier** Paris

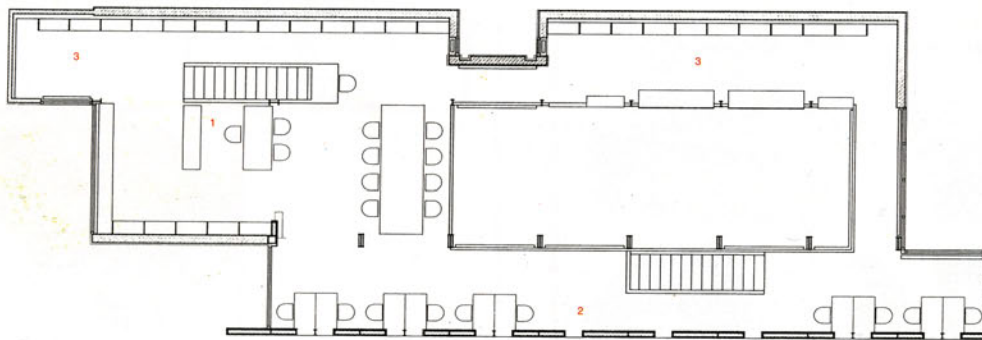
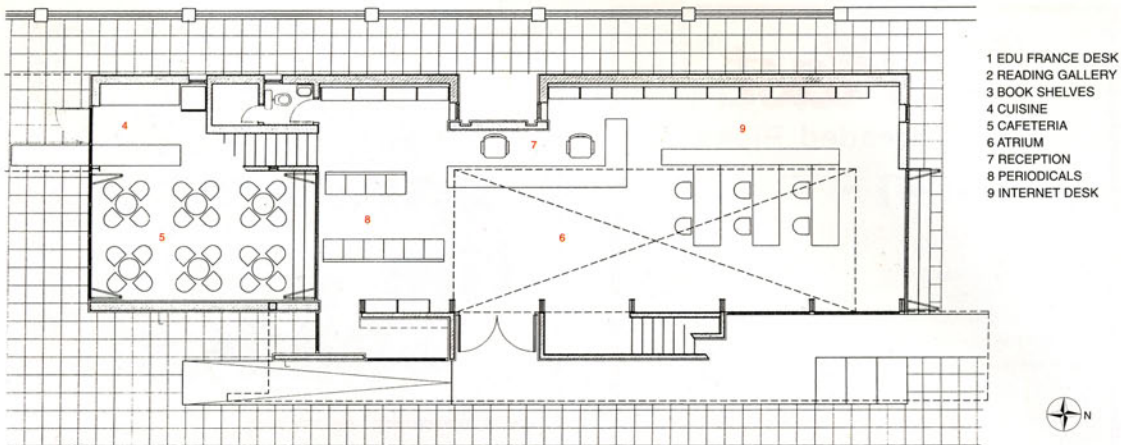
The site for the centre was a typical plot of Lutyens' Delhi, with a colonial bungalow in the middle and servant quarters on the rear boundary wall. In 1966, the staff quarters were built by Raj Rewal in a remarkable modern-brutalist style with exposed brick and concrete structure. The French school, the auditorium and offices were constructed in 1986 on both sides of the bungalow. These buildings form a courtyard around a huge Neem tree.

The French Information Centre comes into this context made of different types of buildings. An attitude was defined to respect the past but claiming an autonomy for the project, the building is erected on the periphery of the plot. The first consideration was to make the project the crossing point of Indian and French culture. In many aspects, the building borrows from histories of architecture, technologies and building materials, of both cultures.

The project forms a 'public strip' on



Stone benches outside the cafeteria



the western side of the plot. The status of each area is clearly established by the new building, which reveals the nature of the surroundings: the space between the buildings becomes a square paved in red Agra stone which can be used for cinema screenings or for meetings. While the cafeteria opens out into a garden with stone benches and tables, the library has a lawn in front of it. The exposed steel structure is composed of a main frame, with the beam resting on a brick wall and a pillar. All the building material used is from India. The furniture created for the centre by Eric Benqué, brings together the user, his body, his habits, and unites them with the architectural space, its volume and light. ❖

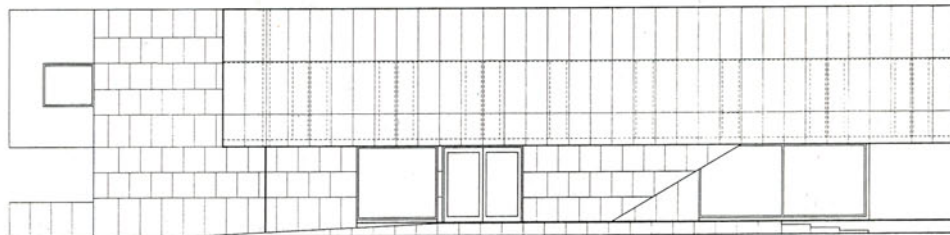




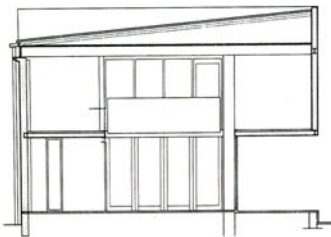
Designer furniture



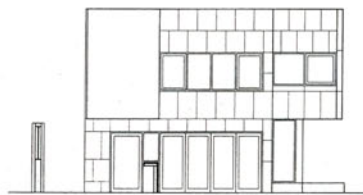
Interior space of the library



FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION



SOUTH ELEVATION

Client Embassy of France in India
Design team Stéphane Paumier, France (main architect), Eric Benqué, France (furniture designer), Rajesh Dongre, ABRD architects, India (resident architect), M Mittal, Shelter consulting engineers (structure design), S Venugopal, Sarimanya (electrical engineer), RK Khanna (AC engineer)
Contractors R Ahuja, Ahuja and associates (main), A Maidan, Jam services (electrical), Dunamatic, Carrier AC (AC)
Built-up area 385 sq m
Cost of project Rs 44 lakhs (buildings), Rs 8 lakhs (AC et slab), Rs 6 lakhs (furniture)
Year of completion 1999