



Fig. 1. Antonin Raymond, Official Residence, Diplomatic enclave, Tokyo, 1932-1933. (NCA, PA-120404)

### Abstract

The design of embassies throughout the twentieth century presented many challenges for planners and architects. The programmes for diplomatic buildings varied from one country to another, but they generally were designed to represent the nation at its best. Canada is no exception. The many functions that a Canadian Embassy must house can sometimes be incompatible. The examples of the first legation in Tokyo and Delhi demonstrate that it is impossible for such an intricate design process to successfully accommodate the governmental services of both the Immigration and the Foreign Affairs/International Trade Departments, which pursue opposite goals. The description of the context surrounding the construction of the legation in Tokyo in the 1930s is briefly described and serves as a point of comparison with the main subject of this article, the High Commission in India.

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## Diplomatic Malaise. The Challenge of Representing Canada Abroad<sup>1</sup>

Tokyo. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A previous member of parliament appointed diplomat by the Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King is about to build an official residence for the people of his Dominion.<sup>2</sup> His young nation is in the process of severing the umbilical cord with his Mother Country. This Canadian diplomat, Herbert Marler, is a wealthy anglophile Montrealer who paradoxically is also an ardent Canadian autonomist. Such ambivalent behaviour was not unheard of in the late 1920s when a series of imperial conferences was being held in London. The dominions' leaders who gathered there were also divided between their allegiance to the Empire and their more autonomous desires. When Marler commissioned an architect to design preliminary drawings for the first Canadian diplomatic enclave, his intentions were quite clear, though contradictory: if the buildings were to reflect the grandeur of his country, they should be built using a vocabulary that speaks of civilisation, British civilisation of course (fig. 1).

Marler's task was complicated. His work as a diplomat was to represent Canada. Though a young country, Canada, which was considered a senior Dominion within the Empire, had just obtained responsibility for managing its international affairs. Despite this new status, the ambivalent Marler wanted to emulate his motherland. For this plenipotentiary Minister, who was infatuated with the British diplomatic dress code,<sup>3</sup> the appropriate aesthetic architectural choice was the Neo-Georgian style. Promoting Canadian design was not a conceivable priority for Marler. Could he have acted otherwise? For where were the models for a distinct Canadian architecture? Even if the architect John Lyle had voiced concern about the state of Canadian architecture, the simple reality, at the time, was that it was more a concept than a fact. Moreover, if indeed there had been such a national architecture, would it have suited Marler's taste and would it have been appropriate for the "proper and dignified" residence he envisaged? Marler might have been in a position to commission a Canadian architect,<sup>4</sup> as he did for the proposal, but he did not expect his compatriot to produce a Canadian architecture. He was nonetheless genuinely concerned about the image of his country on the international scene, and more specif-



ically within the British commonwealth of Nations, a view that reflected Mackenzie King's beliefs.

The motivations to open a Canadian legation in Tokyo were threefold: expand the trade relationship, implement a Canada-Japan agreement on immigration, and collect information about the geo-political situation of the Asia-Pacific region. To reach those goals, the wealthy Montrealer, also an astute businessman, financed the purchase as well as the construction of the enclave, and maintained a firm grip on the design process. The initial diplomatic compound contained two main buildings: an official residence and a chancery for administration purposes, including the issuing of passports to a very restricted number of applicants. The official residence was a grand edifice, similar to what Marler could afford for himself in Montreal, while the chancery was a more sober office building. There is no doubt that Marler wanted to impress his guests with the residence. In his eagerness to persuade the Prime Minister to let him proceed with the construction of the enclave, Marler demonstrated a missionary zeal. Speaking of himself using the third person, the diplomatic Minister wrote:

As a result of the review, the study and the inquiries to which he has alluded the Minister is convinced in the most positive manner that it is particularly essential for the success of the Legation that it and the Chancellery should be of a proper and dignified nature. He says this not by any means having only in view the question of personal comfort and help to his staff and their families which he has already raised in this report—but on the contrary and in addition thereto the effect which proper and dignified accommodation will have on the Ministers of other countries now established at Tokyo and particularly on the minds of the people of Japan to whom he is accredited from a great Dominion. He ventures to express his viewpoint on this subject by employing an opinion expressed by the Rev. James Robertson who is or was the Superintendent of the Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the North West Territories of Canada when he said that he advised the people to build churches because he wanted to see a building as evidence of the ability and permanence of his people and that a building stood as visible evidence of such ability and permanence. This saying put in the language of the Minister commends itself as an opposite saying with respect to the position of Canada in Japan in the eyes of the rest of the world and the people of the Dominion in particular. The Minister is of the firm opinion that the people of Canada expect to have their legation as a source of pride and if so my reasonable expenditure for that purpose will have public approval.<sup>5</sup>

His comparison with the missionary church of the remote Canadian territories is puzzling. He envisioned the legation like

a transplanted "microcosm of an imagined social order," as the Africanists John and Jean Comaroff described the Christian missions in Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> Although Marler did not intend to convert the Japanese, he perceived his duty as part of a much broader effort to exhibit the benefits of Western civilization to the people of Japan. For the liberal-minded Marler, the religious comparison was probably not more than an accessory to give moral weight to his mercantile interests. As for the buildings themselves, they were the "visible frontage"<sup>7</sup> of a nation in the making, a nation pursuing a "diplomacy of the salesmanship"<sup>8</sup> while "discouraging immigration with all the tact and diplomacy at [our] hands" as stated by Kenneth Kirkwood who worked at the legation. Indeed, unlike the other Canadian missions established around the same time in Europe, that legation was not concerned with encouraging immigration. On the contrary, a strong anti-Japanese attitude in the Western provinces of Canada was one of the reasons that prompted the Mackenzie King Government to establish that mission in Tokyo. In good faith, King wanted to counteract the Tory resistance at home rather than blame "the Oriental mind" for the domestic problems on the West Coast.<sup>9</sup> While Marler was planning the diplomatic parties on the luxurious grounds of the enclave, where business deals could be initiated, the small team of secretaries were administrating the Consulate office and issuing their quota of passports, limited to 150 applicants per year.

As the Tokyo example demonstrates, diplomatic architecture is shaped by broad policies that can sometimes be contradictory. Conceived as prestigious buildings to represent the nation overseas, embassies are subject to careful planning. Similar to Tokyo, the story of the next example that constitutes the core of my analysis reveals a turning point in the development of the Canadian immigration policy. Unlike Tokyo, however, the diplomatic enclave of Delhi was planned by a team of specialists representing three distinct governmental entities: the Department of External Affairs, the Department of Immigration, and the Department of Public Works. At the time of its planning, the state apparatus was under pressure to modernize its management culture. It was a transitional phase where an old guard meets a new generation of postwar professionals eager to participate in the building of a nation, no longer a senior dominion but now a "middle power."<sup>10</sup> All were part of a larger scheme to project a positive image of Canada, a member of the post imperial organization called the Commonwealth, and a promised land for postwar immigration. I intend to elucidate how the Canadian authorities and architects conceived, planned, and produced that first postwar enclave during that time of bureaucratic transition.



I will first situate this story of the enclave in the realm of contemporary architectural historiography and pursue with a close examination of the floor plan in order to shed light on the strategies developed by certain groups of occupants who had to learn how to share such premises.

The decades after World War II saw the creation of many new Nation-States. Certain leaders of those recently emancipated States were determined to express their new status through colossal construction projects. Equating modernity with Modernist Western architecture, they, in some instances, appointed European and American architects who had helped shape new abstract building forms unfettered by historical references. The top-down decisions made in some of those newly independent States did not reflect the diverse positions of their multicultural societies, but rather represented the aspirations of the leaders of the time. With the growth of postwar nationalism, Western architects were recruited to design new governmental structures that can be interpreted, in retrospect, as one elite dream diverting resources from pressing social needs. However, that group of decision-makers, considered establishing a new national identity through architecture, a priority that justified the channelling of huge sums of money.<sup>11</sup> For the selected architects, the challenge was to create buildings that symbolized the new national identity recently retrieved by those countries. The gigantic national projects allowed architects like Le Corbusier to export their Western concept of architecture while attempting to adapt their frame of thinking to the local conditions.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike Canada, India fought a long battle to gain independence. During the formative years of the autonomist movements (1919-1947), still under the British Raj, political leaders and the elite had started to shape a new Indian consciousness. The *Hind Swaraj* or the "Indian Home Rule" paved the way for an "indianized"<sup>13</sup> administration. Occurring over several generations, that social transformation affected the state apparatus and was still taking place in 1947. Many of India's high civil servants who climbed the bureaucratic hierarchy, however, were trained in the "Oxbridge" tradition. Their presence was manifest for another two decades.<sup>14</sup> The architectural profession lived through a similar situation. Even if the British hegemony over the local architectural scene had started to erode after the completion of imperial Delhi (Lutyens and Baker, 1911-1931), which indirectly fostered the establishment of Indian or hyphenated Anglo-Indian firms, the training of most architects was still strongly influenced by British models.

When came the time to find a suitable architecture to express the post-independent Indian State, the situation was prob-

lematic. For in a multiethnic society such as India, contrasting views on the formulation of a national identity are bound to generate multiple interpretations, hence to retard or even prevent the creation of a unified State symbolism. One can argue here that such a situation is not restricted to India but, in fact, concerns all democratic countries in need of establishing or consolidating national distinctiveness. Canada is a perfect example of such multi-layered interpretations, though admittedly not as complex as India. However, both countries' elites, at the time, were attempting to shape a national identity with its own specific agenda: Canada was trying to distinguish itself from its powerful neighbour,<sup>15</sup> while India wanted to eradicate memories of the Raj. Attempts to define a national architecture did not produce identifiable results, for a good reason. The concept of a national architecture is dubious and does not survive close examination. We must be careful not to extract meaning by telescoping abstract political concepts and architectural forms. The motivations of political leaders and their elite can give birth to national cultural movements, but national architectural forms remain intangible. It is in that regard that we must understand the impetus generated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with respect to post-independence Indian architecture.

Nehru envisioned a modern industrialized India; he had, as well, an architectural vision for his country.<sup>16</sup> Establishing a five-year plan, India embarked on a gradual process of modernization, and adjusted to the new post-partition context by providing the Indian State of Punjab with its own administrative centre, Chandigarh (superseding Lahore, the previous capital). Nehru, as the architectural historian Tillotson writes, "attached great significance to this new city; seeing it as a symbol of the new India, he wanted it to be something distinctively modern, something which would look ahead into the country's future."<sup>17</sup> According to Nehru, "India was in a mood to forget the past."<sup>18</sup> Unlike the Brazilian President Kubitschek, who endorsed the construction of Brasilia in the early fifties, Nehru could not rely on a group of Indian architects who, like Niemeyer, Costa, and Roberto Burle Marx, had been "admitted" into the ranks of the European tenets of modern architecture. Nehru decided to look abroad to find his architect, and abroad meant the West. That is the context in which Le Corbusier was invited to design Chandigarh.

The impact of Le Corbusier on the Indian architectural profession was, beyond doubt, tremendous, although mostly restricted to the north subtropical region that spreads from Chandigarh to Bombay through Delhi and Ahmedabad. The Modern Movement there appeared in the 1930s when a few wealthy individuals hired foreign architects like the Czech An-





Fig. 2. Canadian High Commission, Delhi, Gardiner, Thornton, Davidson, Garrett & Associates, 1969-1972. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

tonin Raymond (who was also practicing in Japan, and as such designed the final drawings for Canada's first enclave in Tokyo) or Marinus Dudok from the Netherlands. Ahmedabad with its enlightened industrialists<sup>19</sup> was fertile ground for modern architecture, but the Movement did not permeate the country until the thrust generated by the building of Chandigarh (1952-1964). By then, the belief that architects had a social mission—that they were called to shape the future of their country, an objective that European apostles of the Modern Movement had set for themselves in the inter war period—was well entrenched in this community of professionals. Far from being unique to post-independent India, that awareness of the architects' social commitment is also found in Canada and many other countries during the period of unprecedented growth following World War II.<sup>20</sup>

In Canada, the call for social commitment took place in an educational milieu where the Modern Movement was best nurtured, whether in Toronto, Montreal, or Winnipeg. During the 1940s, as France Vanlaethem observes, "almost all schools of architecture modernized their teaching methods [and] established syllabuses linking design to technical knowledge and to the humanities, and introduced the famous Basic Design course invented by the Bauhaus [school]."<sup>21</sup> Young aspiring architects criss-crossed the country to attend one of those schools, attracted by their reputations as being the strongholds of Modernist teachings. Some students came from as far away as India to study in Canada immediately after the war. Such was the case of F. Bennett Pithavadian who, according to Lang, Desai, and Desai, "[...] was very much influenced by his architectural training at McGill under the tutelage of John Bland."<sup>22</sup> In India, at the time

of Independence, there were only six schools of architecture, all still following British models of teaching. In the 1950s, while some foreign architects were invited to implement innovative curricula for new schools, others were brought in through Western aid programmes. But it was Chandigarh that really made a difference. As a watershed

in the development of modern architecture, it oriented the careers of many postwar Indian architects who worked in Le Corbusier's office during the years that it took to complete that ambitious scheme.

In postwar Canada, with the modernization of the architectural curricula, young architects were eager to break new ground, but were partially restrained by the persistence of the old guard. The impetus of Chandigarh that, as the architect Doshi wrote, "made Indian architects and planners think afresh,"<sup>23</sup> did not occur in Canada in the 1950s; though it would in the next decade, with the planning of Expo 67. Despite a polarized architectural scene, Canada was an attractive country for foreign architects. In certain governmental agencies, there was a shortage of architects and engineers, forcing them to search abroad for such professionals.<sup>24</sup> Due to Canada's ties with the Commonwealth, many came from Britain, a trend that was already well established before the wars. Michael Garrett, principal architect in charge of the design of the High Commission in Delhi, had completed his degree at the London Architectural Association before arriving in 1953. Garrett did not choose to join the ranks of the public service, but rather went to work for the Vancouver firm Gardiner, Thornton Gathé & Associates.

The firm had worked for the Federal Department of Public Works and also had some experience with building in the sub-continent. It was selected in 1959 by a jury of architects from the private sector and governmental agencies. As part of a "policy of exchanging representatives with new members of the Commonwealth,"<sup>25</sup> Canada had established diplomatic contact with Delhi in 1947 and, a decade later, the decision was made to construct an enclave there. The construction, started in 1959, spread over



more than three decades, if one considers its latest expansion in the 1990s. In the meantime, the Canadian Government developed new economic assistant programmes for developing countries and revised its immigration policy twice. Both services, in addition to routine diplomatic and trade activities, had impacts on the design of the Embassy.

Before his firm was commissioned, Michael Garrett traveled for the first time to Pakistan and India in 1958 for a consulting engineering company working for a pulp and paper corporation.<sup>26</sup> On his way back to Vancouver, he stopped in Paris, more precisely at 35 rue de Sèvres, to pay homage to Le Corbusier; a common pilgrimage in those days for the young admirers of the *Maître*. While a student in London, besides his affinities with Le Corbusier, Garrett had shown an interest in tropical architecture with his thesis project on a building for Ghana. Compared to Canada, Britain, for obvious historical reasons, was ahead of the game as regards questions of tropical architecture. When Garrett took over the responsibility of the design for Delhi, early in the 1960s, he traveled again to Northern India. By the time of his second trip in 1964, the overwhelming influence of the Modern Movement had left India with a vast number of buildings whose purist forms tended to “neutralize regional differences.”<sup>27</sup> Garrett’s own employers contributed to the proliferation of the Modernist impulse in the subcontinent, with the construction of a Catholic church in Dhaka (finished in 1967). In addition to Chandigarh, Garrett visited several Mogul historical sites and studied the work of Lutyens and Baker. In addition, he met with contemporary Indian and Anglo-Indian architects, and analysed the foreign embassies of the diplomatic district. His knowledge of Indian culture and architecture thus results from those short journeys. Quite understandably, Garrett could not produce a proposal that reflected the intimate knowledge of an architect immersed in local culture. But such was not his mission. He was commissioned by his adoptive country to conceive a diplomatic enclave that acknowledged local architectural traditions.

Acknowledging architectural local tradition was a new requirement that appeared in the standard project brief for embassies in the early 1960s.<sup>28</sup> Before that inclusion in the official documents, the guidelines had rather been general, if not vague.<sup>29</sup> Such recognition of local tradition, or “regional character,” as stated in the brief, could be connected to the postwar discourses on regionalism that were gradually infiltrating the dominant doctrine of the Modern Movement as developed between the two wars. With publications from Drew and Fry on tropical architecture,<sup>30</sup> Richard Neutra’s own book, *Architecture of Social Concern*,<sup>31</sup> Lewis Mumford’s writings on regionalism, as

well as the turbulent postwar CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d’architecture moderne), the pendulum swung back in favour of a rediscovery of regional characters. Besides, the International Style, which was starting to lose ground, had showed its limitations when applied to diplomatic buildings. The conspicuous crystal box of glass and steel was an easy target for the mobs angry with foreign representatives,<sup>32</sup> an additional reason to be more sensitive to local practice. Echoing regional character in post-independence India was not an easy task, considering the multiple viewpoints on architecture. But in its own way, the challenge was made easier for Western architects who were preceded by the “masters” they wanted to emulate. Since the acceptance of Modernist Puritanism was so well entrenched in India, at least in the subtropical corridor of Chandigarh/Bombay, foreign architects must have felt implicitly encouraged to create forms within the abstract aesthetic principles of the Movement.

The Canadian High Commission in Delhi stands (fig. 2) on a vast property surrounded by high walls (as is usually the case with diplomatic compounds) in the diplomatic district of the city. The original buildings on the enclave included a chancery, a residential quarter, and a sports centre. At first glance, the chancery bears the typical characteristics of brutalism with its bold scheme of abstract forms and volumes and its textured surfaces. A closer look reveals affinities with Le Corbusier’s aesthetics; for instance the opening of the façade punctuated by pilotis evokes the ground floor of the *Unité d’habitation*. Apart from those aesthetic choices, the chancery demonstrates that it is not just a simple transplant from a “snowbound country”<sup>33</sup> type of architecture into a subtropical environment. The use of the parasol shell (a roof supported by posts, and with open sides, an architectonic solution applied by Le Corbusier in Chandigarh) allows for better cross ventilation and provides extra shade to the sealed building. The covered passageway is a well-adapted solution to the torrential rains of that monsoon region. It is a Modernist transformation of a veranda, which in a traditional residential Indian architecture is a transitional zone that wraps the core of a bungalow. That passage not only contributes to the air circulation, as a veranda does, but it serves a security purpose: it isolates the inner court behind a low concrete barrier. Unlike a veranda, however, it is not sheltered by devices such as screens or lattices, which provide privacy for the diverse domestic activities taking place in that transitional zone. In that sense, the passageway acts more as an arcade, which, according to Mehrotra, is a public extension of the veranda.<sup>34</sup> Rather than providing intimacy to the





Fig. 3. Aquatic garden, Canadian High Commission, Delhi, Gardiner, Thornton, Davidson, Garrett & Associates, 1969-1972.  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

residents of a bungalow, it protects the pedestrians and other users from the rain and sun.

The aquatic garden (fig. 3) with its circular monumental planter, stepping stones, and split-level pool, allowing for a constant circulation of water, recalls the Mogul gardens and, one must say, the courtyard of the American Embassy by Edward Durrell Stone. Here again Garrett shows how he tackled the process of adaptation with a cunning imagination, within the precepts of Modernist architecture. A mere transposition would have resulted into a rigorously symmetrical water garden, instead of the asymmetrical ordering. The chancery is also a good illustration of a design that was developed with a genuine understanding of the local building methods, which have been shaped by decades of Anglo-Indian entrepreneurship. It also takes into account the restricted availability of materials. Relying on an abundant labour force, contractors hired large mixed gender crews who worked on site with basic tools. The photograph taken during that second phase of construction of the High Commission, in the 1990s, shows men pouring concrete into wooden moulds, out of containers that the women of the team carried on their heads (fig. 4).

The chancery is not flawless. As with many sealed buildings with a controlled environment, the High Commission had continuous bands of windows, some of which could only be opened for cleaning purposes with a special tool.<sup>35</sup> Tinted glass was employed as well as a sealant and a waterproofing agent. Rows of windows in the semi-arid climate of Delhi admitted a lot of light that heated the interior and therefore obliged Garrett to incorporate into the design elements that offered a suitable level of comfort. Post-independence Indian architecture offered Garrett a whole gamut of climatic devices to deal with the particular environmental conditions of the subtropical region. The most

popular element certainly proved to be the brise-soleil. Le Corbusier, Drew and Fry had mastered the art of the brise-soleil, contributing to its popularity in the subcontinent and beyond<sup>36</sup> (as a comparison point, it is important to bear in mind that traditional Indian architecture as well as many other tropical architectures used to rely, and still do, on a wide array of climatic devices that evolved over centuries of anonymous and incremental development). Garrett's solution to

reducing light admission and its related air conditioning costs was to integrate a second envelope on the outside perimeters of the façade (as seen above the passageway). In strict adherence to the Modernist abstract rigour, Garrett designed two rows of brise-soleil made of concrete and marble that provided the needed shade. From an aesthetic point of view, it was a clever solution that brought warmth to the bland texture of the concrete and the repetitive structure underneath. Unfortunately, that elaborate system of brise-soleil failed to protect the window frames and the sealant that, because of the inflexibility of the device, were exposed to prolonged periods of subtropical heat and sunlight. Therefore, Garrett's uncompromisingly Modernist geometrical forms did not allow, as Mehrotra writes, "for a graceful weathering process where each part mutually protects the other."<sup>37</sup>

### **Ethnic Biases and Administrative Prerogatives**

In 1959, when the Department of External Affairs appointed the Vancouver firm, immigration was a high priority in Canadian national policy, as Freda Hawkins mentions in her extensive analysis of postwar Canadian immigration policy.<sup>38</sup> But postwar immigration was almost entirely limited to European applicants, a consequence of a policy that had set categories of admission based on ethnic selection. "Large-scale immigration from Asia was specifically rejected but small quotas were introduced for India, Pakistan, and Ceylon in the Immigration Act of 1952. From 1952 to 1961, only 150 Indian applicants were admitted to Canada, in addition to close relatives."<sup>39</sup> That restrictive policy was changed in 1962, and then refined in 1967, when Canada passed two non-discriminatory Immigration Acts. During that transition phase, old ethnic biases prevailed in the ranks of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration as its "ever frank" Minister Jack Pickersgill, referring to the Immigration Office in



Fig. 4. Construction workers during the building of the second phase of the High Commission, c. 1990. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)



Delhi in 1955, explained: "As a matter of fact, you know as well as I do, that we do not have an office in India for the purpose of getting immigrants, for the sake of increasing the population of Canada. We agreed upon this quota as a gesture for the improvement of commonwealth relations. And, having done so, we have to treat these applicants decently [...]."40 In addition to the blatant discrimination, immigration services abroad were not warmly welcomed into the precinct of diplomatic establishment, as we shall see below.

A closer examination of the chancery's layout reveals the administrative prerogatives' effects on spatial organization. The floor plan (fig. 5) shows two main entrances, at opposite corners. The first one serves the Diplomatic Section of the Embassy. The Ambassador, the VIPs, and any other visitors enter that section through a covered passageway and are, thereby, protected from bad weather. Opposite the Diplomatic Section, one finds the Immigration Service, but no covered walkway—a device that I earlier described as a well-adapted solution to the environmental particularities of the region. The waiting room itself can accommodate only a limited number of immigration candidates, leaving the rest of the queue outside to wait. At the time the programme was compiled, Canadian authorities knew that "prospective immigrants" waited outside with their families to meet with immigration officers. Unfortunately, the covered passageway was not extended on that side of the building, where it would have served a much larger group of users, essentially Indian citizens who wished to apply for Canadian citizenship. Like the layout of wealthy houses with their domestic wings and separate stairways, the two sections do not communicate. From the main façade on the side of the Diplomatic Section, one can barely see the Immigration entrance. The potential immigrants are marginalized in the periphery of the building, out of sight. If, to our contemporary judgement that is a case of segregation through a discriminatory spatial organisation, the situation at the time only seemed to be a question of departmental jurisdiction. The External Affairs officers, indeed, tended to have a dismissive attitude toward the mission and their colleagues of the Department of Immigration, especially when it took place in their "backyard," as the following excerpt illustrates:

The [two] buildings were considered necessary because the Immigration Section, particularly in India, is normally surrounded by

crowds of prospective immigrants and their families. If the Immigration Section were to be located in the same building as the rest of the Mission, it would result in the reception areas and lobby being crowded with these people. Such an arrangement would be unacceptable to the Department of External Affairs.<sup>41</sup>

As with the comment of Pickersgill in 1955, the derogatory tone of the preceding excerpt is perplexing. One realises here that this objection was not taken into consideration in the final layout, since the Immigration Service is integrated into the premises. What happened between the memorandum and the final design remains conjectural. However, Hawkins helps us again to contextualize the above excerpt and what followed. In fact, as shocking as it may appear, the "peripheral" integration of the Immigration Service within the wall of the Embassy is a real improvement when compared to earlier arrangements. As Hawkins explains:

The Department of External Affairs [from the late 1940s to mid 1960s] steadily favoured separate premises [...] and consistently regarded the Immigration Service as a lowly and separate part of the overseas establishment of the Canadian government. It was never seen at this early stage, and even much later, as an integral and potentially very valuable part of the whole Canadian image-building and information-giving apparatus overseas.<sup>42</sup>

Immigration officers were considered of lower status and were not welcome in the "jealously guarded"<sup>43</sup> boys club of the foreign agents. That compartmentalization of overseas administration left an impact that was still present during the planning stages of the enclave in Delhi. Michael Garrett recalled that the planning of that section was the subject of many changes due to reassessment of Immigration overseas administration. Indeed, the problems related to that compartmentalization were identified by the officers of the Glassco Commission in 1962 (a Commission established to assess all government administration). The integration of the Immigration Service with the overseas



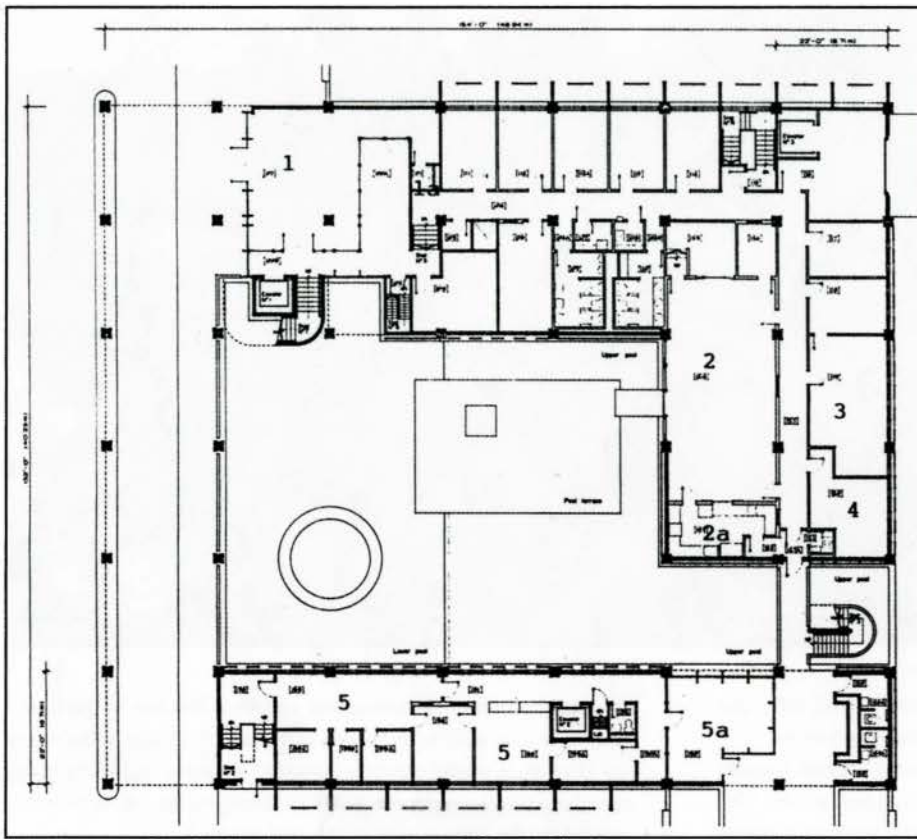


Fig. 5. Main floor plan, Canadian High Commission, Delhi: 1 Diplomatic entrance; 2 Cafeteria; 3 Library; 4 Theatre; 5 Immigration Services; 5a Immigration Service waiting room. (DFAIT)

certain countries, might be subject to State control (governmental surveillance or even reprisal). A surreptitious entrance is then well advised, so would be a covered passageway.

As Hawkins stresses in her introduction, "immigration does not sit too well with foreign relations."<sup>45</sup> Because it implies the "direct action of one government upon the citizens of another," Departments of External Affairs "have avoided close association with it or have kept it well apart from considerations of foreign policy."<sup>46</sup> Such an arm's length relationship was not only based on administrative prerogatives. It was, until the 1960s, an expression of the embarrassment resulting from discriminatory practices, like

administration slowly occurred in the following years, and eventually led to a more cooperative and egalitarian relationship between the different groups of officers. In that light, the integration of the Immigration Service within the walls of the premises was definitely an improvement over earlier conditions. It also meant that the Immigration Service deserved the attention of an architect, though not on equal ground.

Hawkins, in her perceptive analysis on the role of the Immigration Service abroad, notes: "In a harsh and competitive world too, immigrants need reassurance, comfort, and a measure of reasonable seduction."<sup>44</sup> Canadian Immigration since the 19<sup>th</sup> century had relied on an extensive body of visually persuasive documentation to attract new citizens. That "reasonable seductive process" has a long past riddled with many problems. Seducing prospective candidates must be done within certain limitations such as security restrictions, and political discretion. The "peripheral layout" of the immigration section must thus be understood in the context of those two constraints.

Security, which is a major and legitimate issue in the design of diplomatic compounds, often impedes the flow of the different activities that take place in a mission. Many design decisions have been made in the name of security. For that reason, the Immigration Service, even when fully integrated within the diplomatic building, tends to be located in a separate section of the premises, or at least isolated from other activities, therefore reducing the risk of circulation. In most instances, integrated immigration sections will have their own entrance. Let us not forget that security is also about the protection of the applicant who, in

those described by Kirkwood in Tokyo. With the creation of the new Immigration Act, the malaise remained although the reasons differed. After the 1960s, the embarrassment was due to the "removal of skill and talent," or the brain drain phenomenon, especially detrimental to developing countries. Attracting the "best" candidates is the purpose of the Department of Immigration and, in order to achieve that goal, it must establish aggressive strategies to seduce those potential candidates, even though those strategies tend to be incompatible with the diplomatic more discrete code of ethics.

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The Canadian Embassy type of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has evolved from relatively simple administrative programmes to elaborate plans with layers of contradictory requirements. Conceived to represent Canada at its best, its originators promoted aesthetic options, which reflected their system of beliefs, whether emanating from a single liberal-minded individual like Marler or the sub-group of civil servants and architects. That aesthetic selection is sustained by written statements included in official documents such as the project brief. This does not imply that the built forms are simply a mere translation of such statements. The case of the enclave in Delhi illustrates the complexity of the translation process, from the written specifications phase to the concrete layout. Designed in the Modernist idiom, then well accepted by the leading Indian architects, and thus seemingly acknowledging the regional character of architecture, the High Commission is aligned with the official explanation. But good design—despite a few flaws—and the right aesthetic choice do not lead by them-



selves to comprehensive planning, certainly not when prevailing mentalities is holding up the process.

The location of immigration offices in embassies constructed after Delhi continues to illustrate the malaise about the integration of such a service within diplomatic grounds. The next generation of diplomatic building (in major cities), the "cultural centre-embassy" was designed to promote Canadian culture, as a result of a political commitment to culture by the Trudeau Government. Official entrances leading to wide-open spaces, with large exhibition rooms, would serve that promotional purpose, while secondary doors would quietly welcome immigration applicants. Some of the doors were located on the main façade and others were relegated to the back of buildings. In the case of Mexico City, the Immigration Service and Diplomatic Sections initially used the same entrance. A few years after opening in the 1980s, the Immigration Office was moved to the back of the building. The multiple floor plans of the chancery in Washington showed similar hesitation when came the time to integrate that Service.

Such hesitations will constantly affect the design of embassies. The differences between the managerial cultures of the two concerned departments do not naturally lead to full integration. Future Canadian chanceries, such as the one soon to be inaugurated in Berlin, might continue to be welcoming cultural centres, but services that imply high levels of security will probably not (neither should they) have easy access. In light of recent terrorist acts, embassies are doomed to be less glamorous buildings. The critical analysis of such premises must take into consideration the interrelation of the external factors that shape and reshape diplomatic architecture.

## Notes

1. I wish to thank the following colleagues for their most useful comments: Sean Hawkins, Associate Professor, History of Africa, University of Toronto; Greg Donaghy, Historian, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Boyd Beck, Chief Curator, Prince Edward Island Provincial Museum.

2. See Therrien, M.J., 1997, « This Proper and Dignified Accommodation: 'The Marler House in Tokyo' », *SSAC Bulletin*, vol. 22, no. 3, p. 60-65.

3. Marler was renowned for his penchant for the British civil uniform. The diplomat Hugh L. Keenleyside, who was then an assistant to the plenipotentiary Minister, described in his memoir the quasi-obsession of Marler for the proper dress code (1981, *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside, Hammer the Golden Day*, vol. 1, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., p. 255-256).

4. Marler commissioned Kenneth G. Rea for a set of preliminary drawings. He brought those along with him to Tokyo where he hired the Czech architect Antonin

Raymond to design and execute the final drawings.

5. Marler, Herbert (no date), *The Canadian Legation in Japan*, NAC, RG 25, vol. 2611, p. 33.

6. Comaroff, John L.J., 1997, *Of Revelation and Revolution, The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, vol. II, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. 293.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Lynhiavu, Tou Chu Dou, « Canada's Window on Asia: The Establishment of the Tokyo Legation in 1928-1931 », *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 1996-1997, vol. 31, no. 4, p. 103.

9. Lynhiavu : 101.

10. On the question of the political image of Canada abroad as expressed by the political elite, see Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, 1994, *Empire to Umpire, Canada and the World to the 1990s*, Toronto, Copp Clark Longman, p. 177.

11. National state secular architecture like most of monumental architecture is built to achieve a "focalization effect," which, according to social historian David Levine, "results from concentrating a fraction of the whole social wealth on a particular objective" (2002, *At the Dawn of Modernity, Biology, Culture, and Material Life in Europe after the Year 1000*, Berkeley, University of California Press, p. 104). Levine abets his argument with this commentary by the French historian Paul Veyne: "The gigantism is misleading. It is much less costly to build what archaeologists and tourists call a high culture, rich in monuments, than to feed a population more or less adequately. Everything depends on the possessing class, which controls the surplus and decides what is to be done with it. The mere splendour of the monuments

arouses suspicion. Even the buildings intended for everyday purposes have an imperishable look that points to their irrationality. Everything has been built to last forever, which means that everything is too solid for its purpose" (1990, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, Harmondsworth, p. 56).

12. Contemporary discourses on architecture are now re-evaluating the impact of such building forms. India is a fertile ground for post-colonial interpretations of modernist architecture. Its intelligentsia, at home and abroad, plays a leading role in reassessing the Indian multicultural heritage. My interpretation of our High Commission in Delhi draws upon that body of works, as well as books and essays written by European and American scholars.

13. For a definition of the notion of Indianization, see Lang, J., M. Desai, and M. Desai, 1997, *The Search for Identity India 1880-1980, Architecture & Independence*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, p. 12-13.

14. Lang, Desai & Desai write on that matter: "These officials, veterans of service to the Raj, operated the legal administration system of India and the professions well into the 1960s and 1970s. By the mid-seventies, however, a new generation of leaders had emerged" p. 187).

15. I am referring here to the Massey-Lévesque Commission on the State of the Arts, Letters and Sciences. On that matter, see Litt, Paul, 1992, *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

16. Nehru's position on the making of the post-independent India contrasted with Gandhi's vision. According to Lang, Desai & Desai, "Gandhi drew on the traditional Indian experiences as a



- mechanism to achieve ends; Nehru too recognized India's heritage, but he sought a modern industrialized India" (p. 181).
17. Tillotson, G.H.R., 1989, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture: Continuity, Controversy and Change since 1850*, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, p. 127.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Concerning the role of the Ahmedabad elite with modern architecture, Lang, Desai & Desai wrote: "Their descendants were instrumental in bringing Le Corbusier to Ahmedabad" (p. 175).
20. On the role of the architect in the postwar years in India and Canada, see Doshi, Balkrishna, 2002, « The Modern Movement in India », *Back from Utopia, The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, Rotterdam, p. 190-197; and Therrien, M.J., and France Vanlaethem, 2002, « Modern Architecture in Canada 1940-1967 », in Hubert-Jan Henket, and Hilde Heyne (eds.) *Back from Utopia, The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, p. 126-137.
21. Therrien and Vanlaethem : 126.
22. Lang Desai and Desai add, on Bland's teaching: "[he] emphasized the development of an 'emphatic relationship' with clients and the understanding of structure as a generator of architectural form." Upon his return from Montreal, Pithavadian's practice took place in the southern regions of India, a tropical zone less influenced by the Le Corbusier, where "he developed the attitude that the spatial forms of the International style were irrelevant to India" (p. 212). Pithavadian first joined an Anglo-Indian firm, which he acquired in the 1970s. (p. 191).
23. Balkrishna : 197.
24. Wright, Janet, 1997, *Les biens de la couronne. L'architecture du ministère des Travaux publics, 1867-1967*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, p. 242.
25. Hilliker, John, and D. Barry, 1995, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Coming of Age, 1946-1968*, vol. II, Montreal, Canadian Public Administration Series/McGill Queens University Press, p. 12.
26. That paragraph is based on letters and phone interviews with Michael Garrett in the summer of 1996.
27. Mehrotra, Rahul, 2001, « Architectural Responses to Tropical India », in A. Tzonis, L. Lefavre, and B. Stagno, *Tropical Architecture, Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization*, Wiley-Academy Fonds, The Netherlands, p. 199.
28. Item 4 of the Design Criteria states: "Character: The development of regional character should be encouraged." In Department of Public Works, Building Construction Branch, « Project Brief, Islamabad, Parts A & C, Chancery Buildings, correct to 14/8/64 », Section A2, Design and Planning, Ottawa, MRPC, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).
29. The original version of the aesthetic statement of intent was copied from the American Foreign Bureau: "The policy shall be to provide requisite and adequate facilities in an architectural style and form which are distinguished, will reflect credit on the United States (Canada), and increase goodwill by intelligent appreciation, recognition, and use of the architecture appropriate to the site and country. Major emphasis should be placed on the creation of goodwill in the respective countries by design of buildings of distinguished architectural quality, rather than adherence to any given style of architecture." (Letter from Jules Léger, Under-Secretary for External Affairs, addressed to D.E. Kertland, April 24, 1958, NAC, RG 25, vol. 7101, 8591-F-40-pt, p. 1).
30. Drew, J., and M. Fry, 1956, *Tropical Architecture in the Humid Zone*, BT, London.
31. Publisher: Sao Paolo, Gerth Todtman, 1948.
32. See « Targets for Terror » in Jane Loeffler, 1998, *The Architecture of Diplomacy, Building America's embassies*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, An ADST-Dacor Diplomats and Diplomacy Book, p. 241-265. Although I could not find written evidence of a direct correlation between the American experience of early postwar vandalism and terrorism, it is plausible to think that Canadian experts were sensitive to such attacks. None of the embassies built by Canada presented a large percentage of glass to the public façade. The closest example of International Style is in Bonn, and even that example does not make too many concessions to the aesthetic of the Style. Built on pilotis with an open underground parking lot, the building looks like a modern fortress with recessed windows.
33. Mehrotra : 200.
34. Mehrotra : 195.
35. Phone interview with Michael Garrett, October 1, 1996.
36. On the impact of Drew and Fry with regard to the brise-soleil in tropical environment, see Lefavre and Tzonis : 34-37.
37. Mehrotra : 194.
38. Hawkins, Freda (2nd ed.), 1988, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, Montréal, The Institute of Public Administration of Canada and McGill Queen's University Press, p. 117.
39. Hawkins : 99.
40. Hawkins : 101.
41. « Minutes of a Meeting of the Treasury Board Advisory Committee on Accommodation Abroad Held in the East Block on April 26, 1961 », p. 2, ANC, RG 25, vol. 5268, file 8591-40, pt. 5.
42. On that matter, see Hawkins : 243.
43. Hawkins based her comment on a report from a senior officer of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration who toured the overseas office in Europe. The officer found "that with few exceptions, External Affairs staff regarded immigration as an inevitable but rather unpleasant fact; did not want to admit immigration officers into their jealously guarded category of foreign service officer; and did not feel that immigration officers were of the caliber, education, or class to make them suitable for any kind of equal status" (p. 244).
44. Hawkins : 255.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Hawkins : 30.