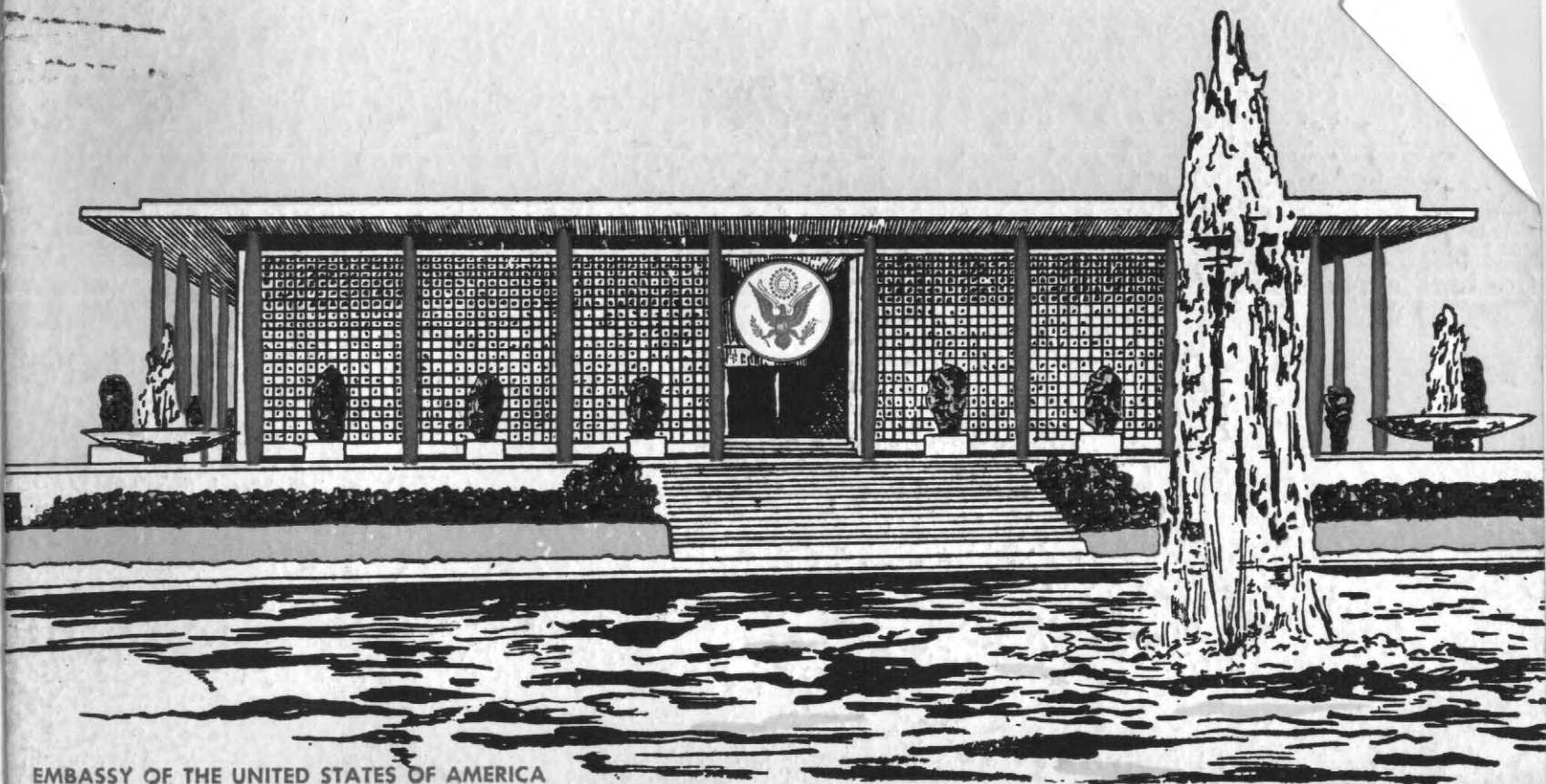


New Delhi - India



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY

WHEN on September 1, 1956, the Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren, laid the cornerstone of the new American Embassy in Chanakyapuri, he expressed the hope that it would become "a temple of peace." This structure is now completed. It stands as a symbol of the friendship, the understanding, and the respect that the people of the United States have for India. Its presence offers substantial evidence of America's desire for enduring friendly relations with the Indian people and their Government.

The Building in Its Setting

In its clear, open-sky setting overlooking a reflecting pool, the building merges into the surrounding landscape of Chanakyapuri and forms a part of it. The clean-cut outline, white lattice walls, and slender gold-leaf columns have been designed to harmonize with Indian patterns. Also Indian is the idea of building round a courtyard.

The Past Joins the Present

This embassy structure takes from the old a richness of texture, perfect symmetry, a high platform, a formal pool. It also embodies modern concepts of architecture, engineering, and building construction.

Set on a high marble platform lined with Thuja trees in terrazzo boxes, the Embassy is a white rectangular building twice as long as it is wide, with a flat roof-canopy. Apart from

giving a base to the structure, the seven-foot-high marble platform encloses the basement which serves to shelter cars from the burning sun, and in wet weather is a covered entrance for alighting.

The building's central garden was designed for function as well as beauty. According to Architect Edward D. Stone, it will serve as an air-conditioner during the six months of the year that the office windows remain open to the breezes. Similarly, the latticework—blocks of white glazed concrete and marble aggregate—that envelops the building is more than an aesthetic attraction. It serves as a walled protection that diminishes the fierce glare of the summer sun so effectively that it will be possible to reduce air-conditioning costs by one-third.

Another device to cut down the load of air-conditioning is a second roof slab which has

been placed two feet above the regular roof, deflecting the sun and allowing the air to circulate between the two slabs. Around the periphery is a row of gold-leaf steel columns supporting the roof slab which is perforated near the edge to give a slotted shadow effect to the exterior wall.

The Interior of the Chancery

The entrance to the Chancery stands atop a flight of Makrana marble steps and a podium paved in Ganges pebbles set in squares. Beneath the suspended gilded Seal of the United States, tall glass portals open up into an enclosed water garden screened over with an aluminium-mesh sunshade which breaks the sunlight and gives the effect of light filtering through tree branches. Meeting the visitor's eye through white aluminium lattice-work are little islands studded with tropical trees and plants, groups

of fountains, the tallest playing almost to the roof screen.

Around the garden is the two-storeyed Chancery consisting of 150 offices and a small auditorium. Below is the basement which, in addition to its parking area, is fitted with utilities. These include a diesel generator which can supply power in an emergency. There is also a complete water cooling, chlorination and purifying system, an automatic fire-extinguishing system, a telephone exchange of the most modern type specially built by the Indian Telephones Industry, Bangalore, a canteen, and storage rooms.

Up a flight of concrete mosaic steps to the first floor are sliding tall glass doors beyond which are teak-panelled offices including the Ambassador's suite. The rooms have acoustically treated, slatted ceilings from which fluorescent

tubes provide diffused and shadowless lighting. The distant view from the Ambassador's office is dominated by the dome of Safdarjung's tomb, while immediately below is the circular reflecting pool with its fountains and the grassy lawns sloping down to the shrubbery limits of the Embassy.

The interior decoration is in contemporary American style. Some of the furniture was imported from the United States, some from West Germany, but most of it was made in India from designs supplied by one of the leading furniture makers in the United States. The draperies for the Ambassador's suite and the offices of other key officials are of fibre glass. Other offices have been furnished with Indian and Thai silks and American fabrics. The color scheme is magenta, yellow, grey, and green. The carpets, manufactured in India,

are grey, the drapery is white, and the upholstery is gold and green. Some of the lamps and table tops are of Italian marble.

Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Swiss firms have supplied steel cables, gold foil for the columns, plumbing fixtures, and electric power and other basic equipment. The air-conditioning was obtained from the United States. Wherever possible, orders for supply of equipment were placed with Indian firms.

Background of the New Delhi Chancery

The first diplomatic organization of the United States Government to be set up in New Delhi was the office of the Personal Representative of the President in Cochin House in 1941. The office moved into Bahawalpur House in 1943 and occupied half a wing with a small

cage, which won him a prize of two dollars and a half at the age of twelve.

After studying at the University of Arkansas, Stone went north, to Boston, Massachusetts, where he took a ten-dollar-a-week job as office boy in an architect's office and attended night courses in architecture. Stone went on to advanced studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At the end of his first year there, he won the State of Massachusetts' top architectural award.

Stone began his architectural career in New York City as a practicing disciple of the "stripped-down International Style." One famous example, designed in collaboration with Philip L. Goodwin, is the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. He later began to offset the austerity of the prevailing "modern" with the interplay of indoors and

out. "The idea of buildings designed around cloistered gardens and courtyards is one that I have cherished ; all of my recent buildings bear this salient feature," says Stone. The new American Embassy at Chanakyapuri is one of these about which Stone's fellow architects are particularly enthusiastic. "This beautiful building shines like a star above our night," wrote one.

The task of turning architect Stone's designs into reality fell to the Indian contracting firm of Messrs Mohansingh Tirathram, assisted by Adolf K. N. Waterval, sent to New Delhi by the Foreign Buildings Operations as supervisor of construction. For the first time in F.B.O. history, a one-man contract was signed for the construction of an American embassy building. This meant that Messrs Mohansingh Tirathram were given a piece of land, and the

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specifications, and asked to do the entire job from start to finish—including installation of plumbing, electrical wiring and fittings, air-conditioning—all within two years.

Aided by a dozen Indian engineers and architects, and some 1,200 Indian workmen and women Mr. Waterval and Messrs Mohansingh Tirathram set to work. Many unforeseen delays were encountered along the way. The construction supervisor and his Indian associates supervised work which in many cases was new to the men who were engaged in it. The enterprising Indian contractor was guided by one driving force: to equal the quality

specifications laid down in the contract. In order to do this, he had to set up several workshops adjacent to the site to fabricate various kinds of electrical fixtures, a foundry, and plants for pressing, anodizing, galvanizing and welding, and to make plastic equipment on the spot.

An interesting sidelight to these operations is the fact that they gave additional technical experience to a large number of already skilled workers, and opened up new avenues of opportunity for local artisans and manufacturers.

And now, today, the new American Embassy at Chanakyapuri is a reality.



Architect : Edward D. Stone
Supervisor of
Construction : Adolf K. N. Waterval
Contractor : Mohansingh Tirathram
Associate architects : K. P. Sharma
M. R. Kapur
Engineers : H. R. Bhandari
C. W. Haughes
K. R. Nanda
Interior Decorators : Chief, Miss Anita J. Mollar
Regional, Miss Janice B. Kropf



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