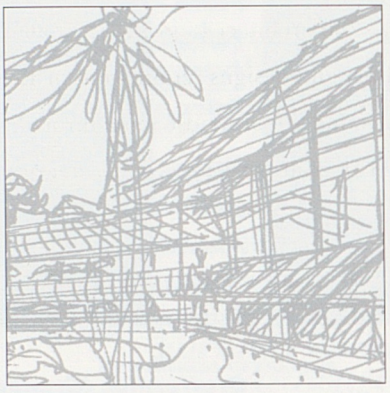
LANDSCAPING INTEGRATION OF SOEKARNO-HATTA AIRPORT

Cengkareng, Indonesia



■ We live in a time when the built environment is increasingly composed of hard surfaces. Designers generally provide only token reminders of nature. It is therefore rare and remarkable for an architect to successfully integrate landscaping into one of the most functional and technological buildings – an airport.

The design introduces landscaping on the air side of the terminal as well as the land side. The departure gates are connected by links that then separate courtyards and patio spaces. This also allows the architect to produce smaller spans yielding a more human scale of building, and designs reminiscent of the local architectural vocabulary. But it is the introduction of landscaping throughout the airport that is most notable. The green areas are instrumental in creating a meaningful relationship between interior and exterior spaces, and providing a human scale and visual relief in a complex facility.

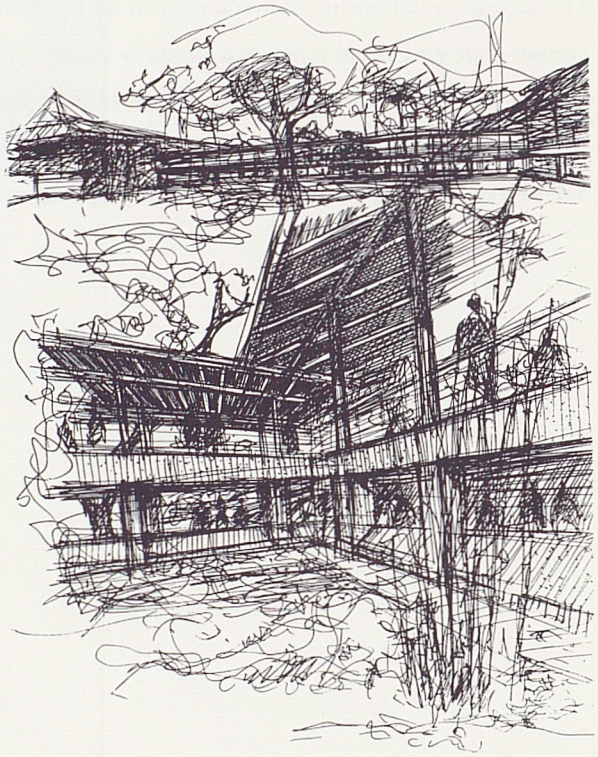
This is a noteworthy innovation in that its introduction into an airport suggests that landscaping can be more effectively included in the designs of other building types, from housing to offices to shopping malls.

■ In 1977 the Government of Indonesia acquired 1,800 hectares of paddy fields at Tangerang, about 20 kilometres west of Jakarta, for the construction of a new airport. It commissioned Aéroports de Paris to produce a master plan that could be developed in phases and that would serve the needs of the city into the twenty-first century. The first phase was completed in 1985 and the second in 1992, raising the airport's capacity to 18 million passengers a year. Both terminals were planned by the French architect Paul Andreu, who based his design on the premise that an airport should reflect the culture and traditions of its place. He proposed to build low-cost terminals that would visually reflect the building and social traditions of Java, which are clusters of small, shingled houses with inclined roofs scattered among expanses of flat fields.

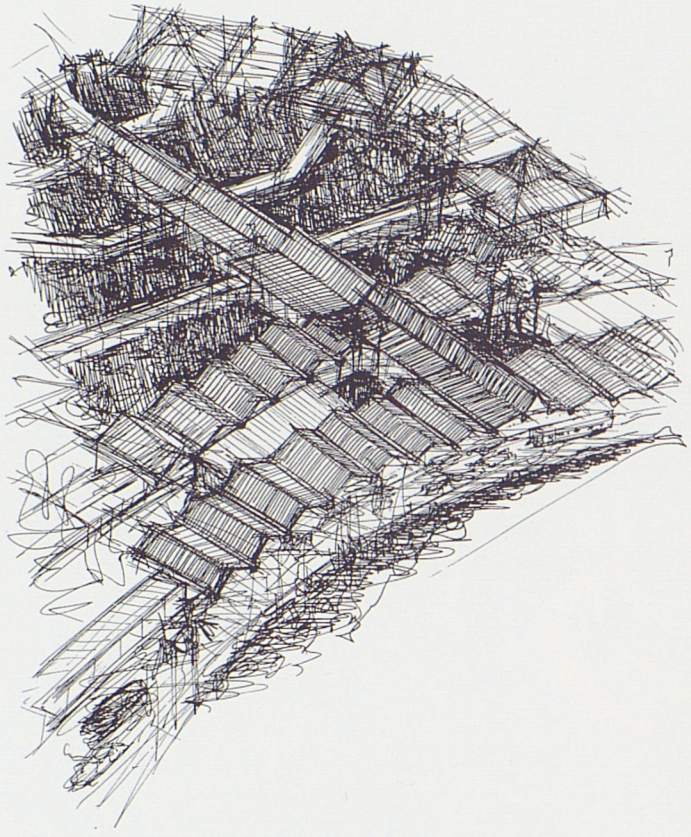
The architect's research into local building traditions yielded a keen understanding of the adaptation of architecture and social customs to the intense conditions of a tropical climate. His integration of traditional values and approaches is a radical departure from typical design solutions for contemporary airports.

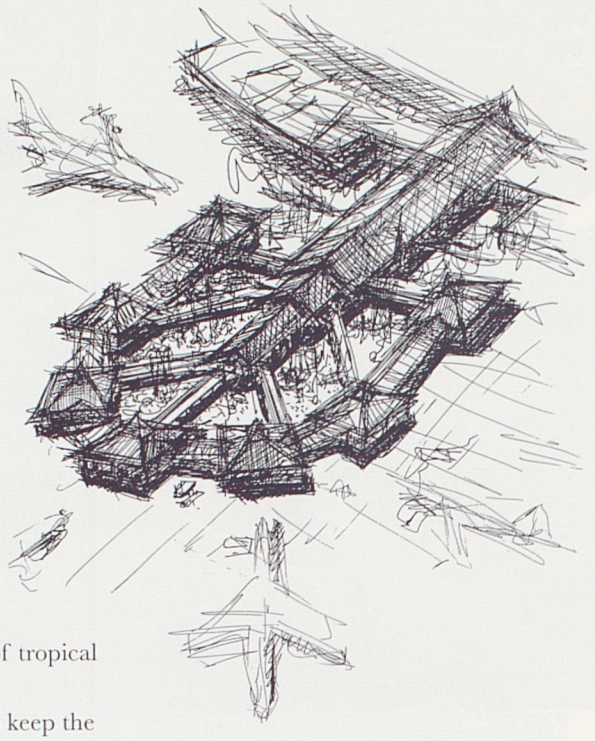
The architect determined that visitors arriving at Jakarta would immediately gain a sense of the place by experiencing – even at the airport – the integration of building, nature, and climate that is unique to Indonesia.

Terminal 2, entrance above landscaped garden; architect's sketch



ABOVE: The road access is situated between the two crescent-shaped terminals; LEFT: Car parks

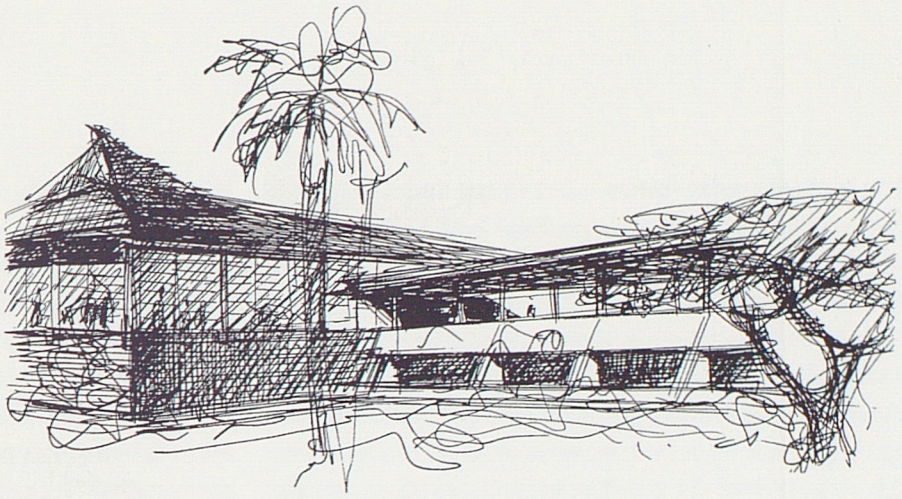


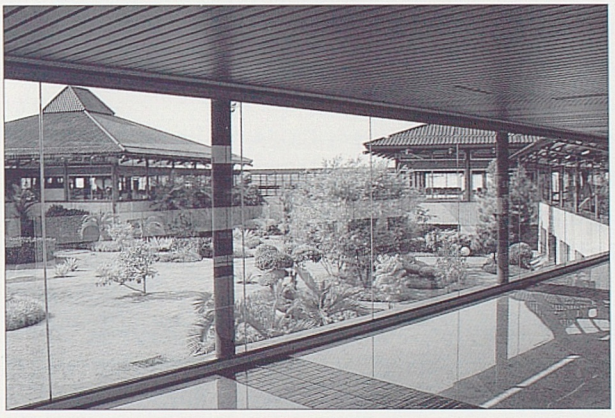


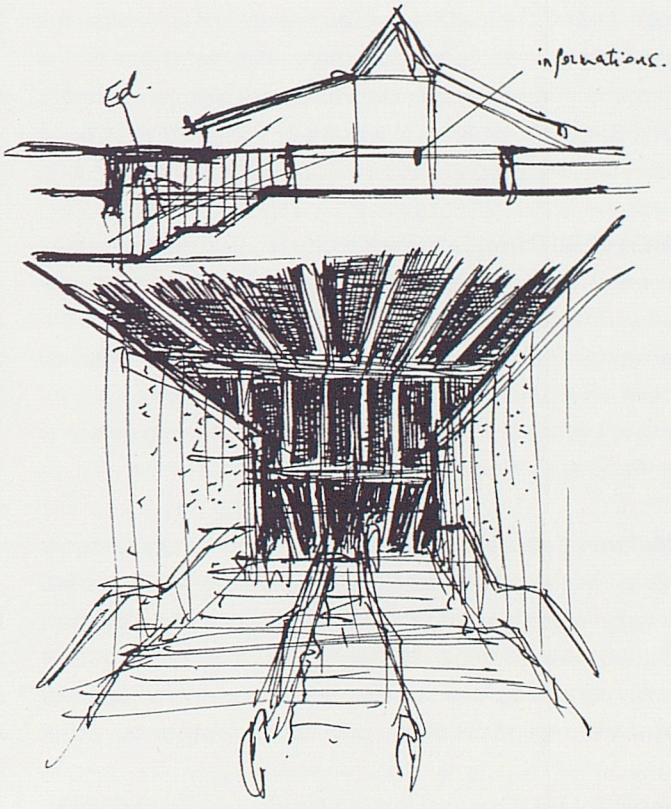
Thus the buildings, set in a lush green environment, are open pavilions that provide shade, shelter and ventilation. Even while meeting both the technological demands of a sophisticated airport, with its complex administrative and functional services, and the needs of arriving and departing travellers, the architect conceived of the terminals as a unique introduction to the open landscape. His approach was not limited to the environment, but encompassed the social and cultural dimensions of central Java. Thus, the airport provides passengers with a variety of facilities, or pavilions, for gathering and contemplation, alone or in groups, which are completely unexpected and different from most airports, where the efficient movement of large numbers of people is the principal concern. This functional objective is successfully achieved in Soekarno-Hatta Airport, but in an innovative manner. The courtyards formed by the pavilions are landscaped and planted with a variety of tropical plants, shrubs and trees.

Andreu's original idea to keep the pavilions and circulation spaces beyond the check-in areas completely open to the exterior landscape was fully realised in Terminal I, but in Terminal II the airport authorities requested that he provide air conditioning, necessitating the installation of windows throughout the pavilions and circulation corridors, and causing a separation between cultivation and construction. This was offset by providing larger windows (visual openings) that increase the views of the landscaped areas. The lush courtyard gardens portray to the visitors an enchanting interpretation of the natural landscape of central Java.
SA-R

Completed 1985 (phase I); 1992 (phase II)
Architect: Aéroports de Paris, Paul Andreu
Client: Ministry of Communications







OPPOSITE: Architect's sketches, showing perspective of the boarding area; ABOVE: Large windows on both sides of the corridors provide visual access to the lush gardens; RIGHT: Architect's sketches