

Bharat Bhavan

Bhopal

1975–81

The site for this arts centre is on a gently sloping plateau overlooking the lake in Bhopal. The natural contours of the site have been used to create a series of sunken courts and terrace gardens around which a number of cultural facilities are organised. These cover a wide range and include a museum of Tribal Art, a library of Indian Poetry (in all the seventeen major languages of India), galleries for Contemporary Art, workshops for lithography and sculptures, and a studio for an artist-in-residence. Bharat Bhavan (literally “India House”) houses a full-fledged theatre repertoire company and extensive facilities for the performing arts, including the *Antarang* (indoor auditorium) and the *Bhairang* (open-air amphitheatre) overlooking the lake.

The terraces and courtyards once again reflect Correa’s concern with progression through space — the maze or puzzle — where parts are casually revealed and the complex of internal streets act rather like a village layout. In this way the architect makes the building reflect Bhopal’s own organisational layout.

Another device, the top lit “cannon”, provides the lighting and ventilation to the sunken covered spaces. In addition to these, the openings to the courtyards and terraces have two sets of shutters: the inner ones consisting of a combination of glass and openable panels for ventilation, and the outer ones with large wooden doors which can be closed for security.

The centre, which started in 1975 and was completed in 1981, is one of Correa’s most sophisticated expressions of the ideas of “maze”; of “progression”; of his early structural and design statements. It also combines these with a respect for landscape and site which becomes even more profound in his later works. For these reasons Bharat Bhavan is one of his key projects.



Entrance.



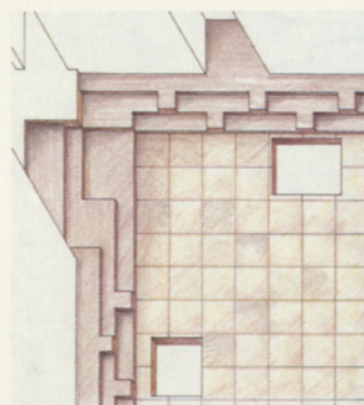
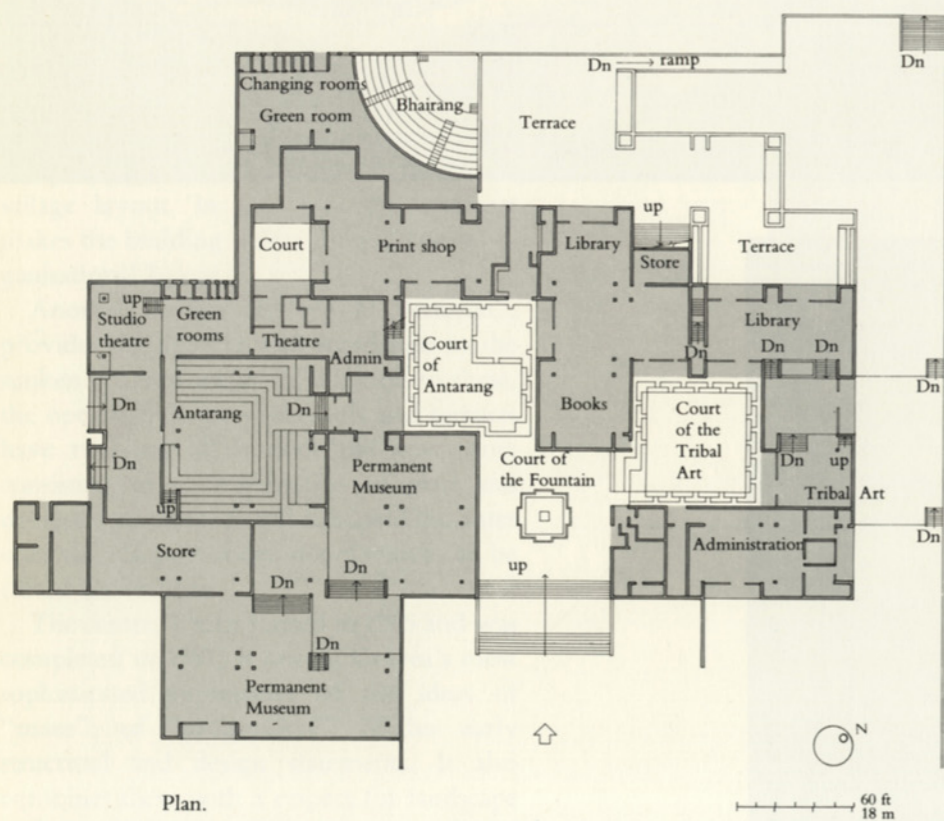
Courtyard of the museum of Tribal Art.



Terrace gardens overlooking the city of Bhopal.



View back towards the entrance.



Detail of steps in the manner of the bathing ghats.



The Bhairang with a performance in progress.



Courtyards connect the various activity spaces.



Museum of Tribal Art.



Gallery of Modern Art with its top-light 'cannon'.



Courtyard and gallery entrance.



An exhibition in the evening.