- a library and documentation centre with a capacity for over 100'000 books, a museum (5'000sq m), and a series of offices and meeting rooms distributed between the first and eighth floor;
- a conference room, cafeteria and terrace on the ninth floor.

Description
The nine storey building is divided into two sections: the first curved northern half follows the line of the Seine while the second section, placed behind it, runs parallel to the university buildings. A driveway on the same axis as Notre-Dame runs between the two buildings and ends in an internal courtyard around which rise the building's seven storeys. This passage provides a direct entrance for official guests, while the public are required to use the main main entrance on the plaza. The far western end of the building is occupied by the library drum - a white concrete cylinder spiralling upwards behind a transparent façade. The spiralling ramp and wall have been carefully calibrated to

3. Fourth floor plan
4. Section through the patio & auditorium
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allow views of the Seine from the lower levels and a panoramic view from the upper levels.

The southern façade is cladded with 113 photo-sensitive panels with 16'000 moving parts that operate like a camera's diaphragm as they open and close to control the flow of sunlight into the interior. A photo-voltaic sensor electronically controls the lenses' moving parts, which in turn allow a variation between 10 and 30% of daylight to seep into the interior. The polygonal openings echo Islamic geometric forms, giving the 30x80m façade the air of a gigantic mashrabiyya, from which the visual allusion to traditional Arab culture is easily captured.

Project Significance

The project, blending as it does Islamic architectural elements (the central courtyard, the mashrabiyya) to a modern building standing in a European context, succeeds in showing that high-tech solutions, for example the photo-sensitive wall, can recall traditional elements, thereby creating a link with the past.

Construction

A steel frame structure with columns, beams, trusses and curtain walling has been used. The latter comprises glazé aluminium frame panels on most façades, squares of translucent marble held on metal armature in the central courtyard and photo-sensitive panels on the southern façade.

5. The north-east facing wall are entirely glazed
6. South-west elevation with diaphragms which respond electronically to light intensity
7. Axiometric view

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8. Detail of iris-diaphragm panels
9. Interior view of the exhibition area
10. Translucent marble panels overlooking the internal patio

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