The Planning

There are two general plans for the Baghdad Stadium project. The first is for a site on the South Bank of the Tigris, and is completed and agreed with the Baghdad authorities in 1958. The second scheme, dated 1961, and the basis of final development, is for a slightly larger and more regular site on the North Bank of the Tigris. The 1961 scheme is very similar to the 1958 scheme, but rotated approximately 49 degrees counter-clockwise, with the stadium still orientated slightly West of due North.

The elements of both schemes comprise:

- The Olympic Stadium, for 50,000 spectators, together with facilities for athletes the press, the police, journalists, television, a presidential box; the gap in the seating admits the equipment for spectacles

- Gymnasium, with Open-Air Ampitheatre

- Racing and Diving pools, a 'pond' and a 'river' for Water Sports

- Sports Pitches (Tennis, Field Hockey, etc)

- Restaurant

- Administration

- Electrical Plant, Pumping Station, Air Conditioning (for Gymnasium and Restaurant)

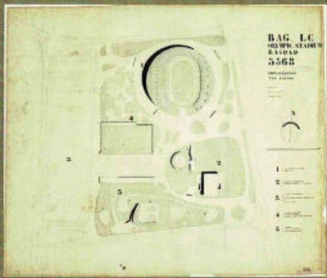
Le Corbusier's earliest notes remark upon the climate in Baghdad, which ranges from near-freezing on winter nights to daytime summer temperatures in the high 40's centigrade. It was imagined that the stadium would operate from 4:00 in the afternoon and would therefore require ample artificial lighting. Most of the facilities are open air and therefore, as Le Corbusier remarked 'inexpensive'.

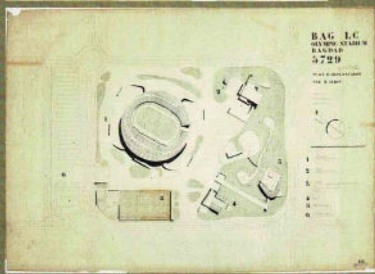
The elements of the Baghdad scheme are disposed according to a style of planning Le Corbusier classified as 'subjective intellectual'. The earth is treated as a species of painting, or bas-relief, with depressions and hills interacting with a field of fragments comprising the architecture, trees, water, low walls, benches, and so forth. His diagram illustrates the principle with the Mundaneum (1929), and the Museum of Unlimited Growth (1933). However, the most comprehensive precedent is the treatment of the plateau into which the government buildings of Chandigarh are set. The play of light and earth familiar from Appia is here made more ambiguous as the horizontal and vertical apertures offer a play of shifting horizons. At Baghdad, the North orientation casts a consistent oblique on the site, and because the ground-water is so near the surface, the water for aquatic sports is contained within the elevated banks.

From the very beginning of the project, Le Corbusier gathered notes for planting, both aromatic and for shade. As well as bounding the perimeter with palms the grove of nearly 200

palms would have created a dense rhythm pf tree-trunks beneath its substantial canopy. These trees run East-West through the centre of the scheme, with the gymnasium at their head. Slightly indented by one of the pools, this grove has the effect of isolating the elements from each other whilst preserving the integrity of circulation between them. Trees have always been highly significant to Le Corbusier, but rarely were they planted in a rectangular block, as here: usually he disposed them in the manner of an English landscape garden. The trees are, with the veils of the several stadia, part of the architectural order of rhythms which establish the foreground for the open settings for athletic contests. The insight for this too seems to have come from the Palace of the Assembly, Chandigarh.

THE PLANNING





There are two general plans for the Baghdad Stadium Project. The first is for a site on the South Bank of the Tigris, and is completed and agreed with the Baghdad authorities in 1958 (Fig 1). The second scheme, dated 1961, and the basis of final development, is for a slightly larger and more regular site on the North Bank of the Tigris (Fig 2). The 1961 scheme is very similar to the 1958 scheme, but rotated approximately 45 degrees counter-clockwise, with the stadium still oriented slightly West of due North

The elements of both schemes comprise:

The Olympic Stadium, for 50,000 spectators, together with facilities for athletes, the press, the police, journalists, television, a presidential box; the gap in the seating admits the equipment for spectacles

Gymnasium, with Open-Air Ampitheatre

Racing and Diving Pools, a 'pond' and a 'river' for Water Sports

Sports Pitches (Tennis, Field Hockey, etc.)

Restaurant

Administration

Electrical Plant, Pumping Station, Air Conditioning (for Gymnasium and Restaurant)

Le Corbusier's earliest notes remark upon the climate in Baghdad, which ranges from near-freezing on winter nights to daytime summer temperatures in the high 40's centigrade. It was imagined that the Stadium would operate from 4.00 in the afternoon, and would therefore require ample artificial lighting. Most of the facilities are open air and therefore, as Le Corbusier remarked, 'inexpensive'.

Fig. 1 Le Corbusier office, Site Plan, the 1958 Scheme, drawn by Tobito

Fig. 2 Le Corbusier office, Site Plan, the 1961 scheme, drawn by Oubrerie and Taves
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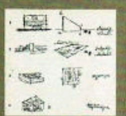

The elements of the Baghdad scheme are disposed according to a style of planning Le Corbusier classified as 'subjective, intellectual' (Fig 3). The earth is treated as a species of painting, or bas-relief, with depressions and hills interacting with a field of fragments comprising the architecture, trees, water, low walls, benches and so forth. His diagram illustrates the principle with the Mundaneum (1929, Fig 4) and the Museum of Unlimited Growth (1933, Fig 5). However, the most comprehensive precedent is the treatment of the plateau into which the government buildings of Chandigarh are set (Fig 6). The play of light and earth familiar from Appia is here made more ambiguous as the horizontal and vertical apertures offer a play of shifting horizons. At Baghdad, the North orientation casts a consistent oblique on the site, and, because the ground-water is so near the surface, the water for aquatic sports is contained within elevated banks.

From the very beginning of the project, Le Corbusier gathered notes for planting, both aromatic and for shade. As well as bounding the perimeter with palms, the grove of nearly 200 palms would have created a dense rhythm of tree-trunks beneath its substantial canopy. These trees run East-West through the centre of the scheme, with the gymnasium at their head. Slightly indented by one of the pools, this grove has the effect of isolating the elements from each other whilst preserving the integrity of circulation between them. Trees have always been highly significant to Le Corbusier, but rarely were they planted in a rectangular block, as here; usually he disposed them in the manner of an English landscape garden. The trees are, with the Veils of the several stadia, part of the architectural order of rhythms which establish the foreground for the open settings for athletic contests. The insight for this too seems to have come from the Palace of the Assembly, Chandigarh (Figs 7, 8).

Fig. 3 Le Corbusier, diagram of planning types, from The Modulor, Harvard University Press, 1966

Fig. 4 Le Corbusier, Mundaneum, site arrangement, 1929

Fig. 5 Le Corbusier, site perspective, the Museum of Unlimited Growth, 1933

Fig. 6 Le Corbusier, Chandigarh, from 1950, site model by Rattan Singh

Fig. 7 Le Corbusier, Palace of Assembly, Chandigarh, ground plan, 1955
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Fig. 8 CAD reconstruction of 1961 scheme, at entry