James Maccormick

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expo67

The pavilions at Expo'67 are a fair indication of where modern architecture is heading. That over 1200 tons of Alcan aluminium went into making them is no mere coincidence.

India

Architect Mansinh M. Rana, designer of the Indian pavilion, has attempted to create a mood of 'being in India' by deriving inspiration from traditional architecture—Hindu temples, Moslem mosques and Buddhist viharas. For this reason, although basically the structure is steel and concrete, finishes are extensively imported—marble from Makrana, pink stone, Kotah stone, teaks, rosewood . . . even pebbles from the bed of the Ganges. As in other pavilions, this one is allied to display technique that is rather too concerned with the past and too little with the formidable tasks facing nations such as India at present. It almost gives an impression of escapism.

Indian pavilion fronted by a 72ft high replica of sundial at Raja Jai Singh's tenth century observatory in New Delhi

Australia

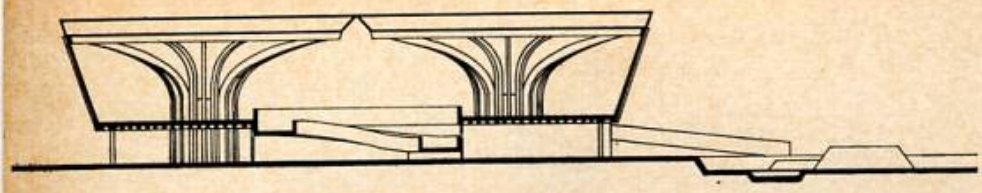
The Australian pavilion, designed by James C. Maccormick, is also a conventional building, this time placed within a 'bushland setting' (complete with kangaroo enclosure) to 'provide the visitor with a harmonious example of imaginative Australian architecture and landscaping'. In this object it succeeds, being second only to the Quebec pavilion (p1348) as a well considered piece of mid-twentieth century architecture.

Once inside and as 'exhibitionism', however, the whole concept comes into question. The principle followed has been to create a 'haven of tranquility' with air-conditioning, carpets and sixty deep armchairs. By sinking into the latter a commentary in English or French (identified by the colour of seat) is automatically switched on to explain (for example) the Australian way of life. This may be appropriate if one is completely exhausted—in which case one might drop off to sleep—for the restless and remarkably resilient Expo-goer, however, the technique lacks variety.

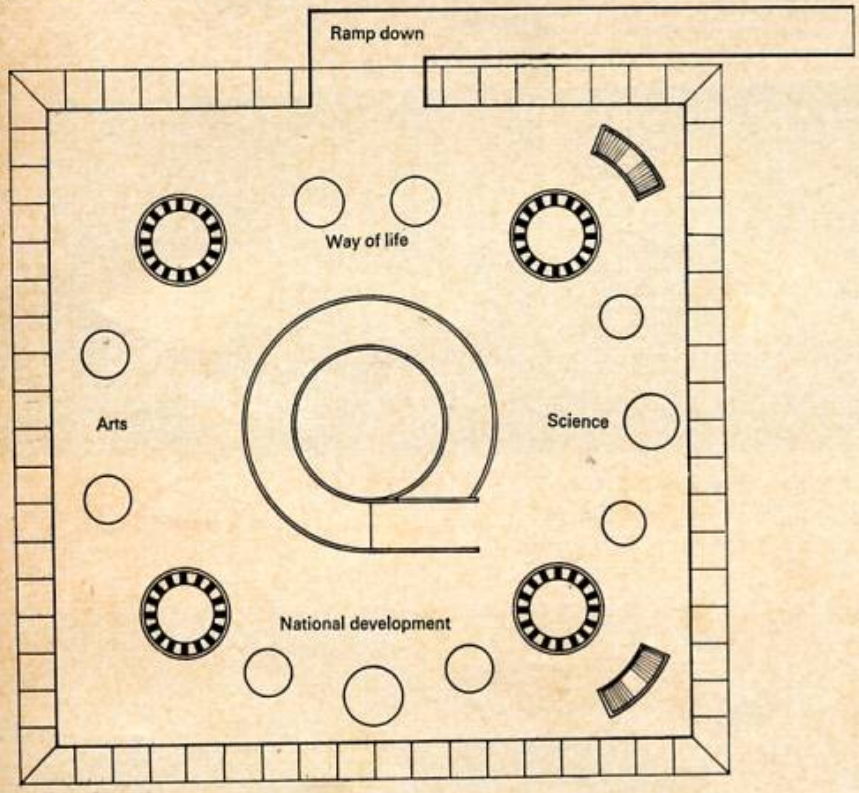
The basis of the pavilion structure is four laminated timber mushroom formations supported on reinforced concrete drums which contain mechanical services equipment. To consider one of these mushrooms in detail: sixteen laminated timber ribs rise from ground level to a maximum height of 34ft and have a (square) cantilever span of 44ft. The outward thrust of these cantilevers is restrained by a circular tension cable introduced into the plane of the roof. The roof covering spanning between timber cantilevers is tongued and grooved boarding finished with a light plastic membrane externally and an acoustic spray between laminated timber sections internally to deaden sound reflection.

The east and west solid walls are clad

Australian pavilion is intended to be a 'haven of tranquility'. Grouped round exhibits are high backed chairs from which one may hear a commentary

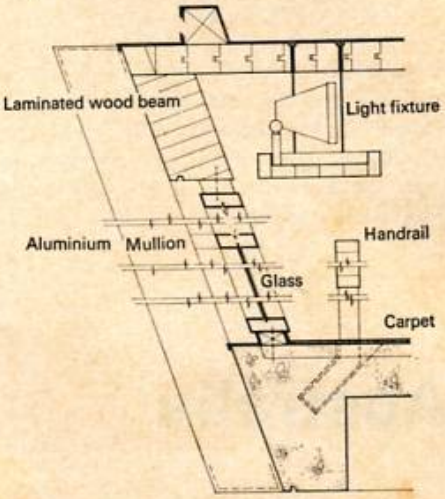


West-east section through Australian pavilion. Kangaroo enclosure to right



Upper floor plan

externally with metal panels in 4ft modules fixed to 3in rolled steel joists spanning from floor to ceiling, finished internally with carpet on dry wall construction with a further 2in of rigid insulation behind. The north and south walls are completely glazed with grey glass in 4ft modules, 11ft 6in high. They are framed with natural finished aluminium windows from floor to ceiling. All four walls of the exhibition area are braced externally with 8in × 4in steel box sections standing free 2½in from the window frame and spanning between concrete floor beam and timber roof beam to give extra rigidity for wind loading.



Detail section through cladding at upper floor level on north and south faces (½in = 1ft)