Chandigarh's Institutional and Emerging Counter Narratives

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Introduction

Chandigarh, India, is the state capital of Punjab and Haryana and sits close to the Himalayan Foothills. It was commissioned in the late 1940s shortly after the partition of India, which saw Lahore, the former state capital of the region, fall within the national boundaries of Pakistan. An American team initially headed the city's design, with architects Albert Meyer and Matthew Nowicki at the helm (Chalana and Sprague 201). However, following Nowicki's death in a plane crash in the Libyan desert in 1950, the project fell under the auspice of Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew. Chandigarh was hence not the modification of a pre-existing urban settlement, as Lahore had been under British colonial rule, but instead a bespoke city constructed from scratch as an embodiment of secular modernity in post-Independence India.

My research explores the architectural history of Chandigarh, India, through the critical perspective of 'collaborative modernism'.

Conceptually, my research deviates from Madhu Sarin's critique of Chandigarh as being European modernist architecture transposed onto the plains of Punjab, by the Swiss architect Le Corbusier (378). However, this article seeks to explore the following questions: Do the institutions in India specifically devoted to the architectural history of Chandigarh incorporate the Indian architects that contributed to the city, or do they perpetuate their obscurity? If so, is it possible to perceive counternarratives emerging that might displace Le Corbusier's dominance? Accordingly, this work focuses on Chandigarh's developing self-representation by considering narratives about the city found in India. It considers whether national institutions promote the narrative of a lone visionary or 'genius', in the form of le Corbusier, parachuting onto the Punjabi Plains to create an urban blueprint for the new capital with little or no help, and concomitantly whether these institutions downplay the considerable local and international support that the architect received.

Methodology

First, this article will consider the narrative of the city's design and construction presented by both the Le Corbusier Centre (henceforth LCC), and the City Architecture Museum (henceforth CAM). The LCC is devoted to the preservation of Le Corbusier's cultural legacy in Chandigarh and is run by the municipal tourist board. Meanwhile, although the CAM is the concern of Chandigarh municipal museums, both LCC and CAM are managed by Deepika Gandhi. The CAM aims to provide visitors with an overview of the making of Chandigarh, situating the city within a post-partition/independence context.

Second, this article will address the concern that Jeanneret's contribution to the city has been overlooked by canonical discourse. Accordingly, attention will be given to the recent efforts of Panjab University and Chandigarh College of Architecture to reinvigorate scholarly investigation into Pierre Jeanneret's contribution to the design of Chandigarh.

Third, consideration will be given to Vikramaditya Prakash's recent architectural guide to Chandigarh (2014), which controversially ascribes several significant buildings to Indian architects, previously attributed

to either Le Corbusier or Jeanneret.

Methodology: Explaining the article's use of the term "narrative" and its methodological implications

The reference to *narrative* in this article relates to Partha Mitter's critique of the canon of art history and the way it is supported by a Eurocentric narrative of art. Mitter (2008) highlights Hans Belting's concern expressed in The End of the History of Art (1987). As Mitter explains, Belting articulated the fear that art history as a discipline would collapse as a grand Hegelian narrative due to what Belting perceived 'as a progressive disjunction between the awareness of the enormous diversity of art forms and practices and the narrow focus of canonical art histories' (531). Art history's brittle Eurocentric focus would lead to its downfall. However, as Mitter (2008) argues, this fear has yet to be vindicated, and the master narrative remains intact. Using this logic, art history, or art histories, have a master narrative from which others might cascade. Furthermore, according to Mitter, these emerging narratives come into existence in relation to the pre-existing master narrative (531). For example, Modernism from Europe would simply be referred to as Modernism, whereas other forms of Modernism require what Mitter refers to as a qualifying epithet, Indian Modernism, Eastern European Modernism and so forth (532). Narrative then, is a taxonomic story that binds together artistic production, and its point of reference is a Eurocentric one.

It is hard to overlook the fact that emerging narratives, reflecting a desire for greater inclusivity, appear to reproduce the very logic they seek to nuance. This is possibly inadvertent and can be explained by the general lack of scholarship on the discipline's epistemological foundations. Arguably, what Mitter (2008) refers to as the master narrative remains entrenched since its epistemological basis is not fully understood. As Kamini Vellodi (2021) notes, citing works including Vernon Hyde Minor's Art History's History (1994) and Christopher Wood's A History of Art History (2019), publications on the subject are limited. Accordingly, taxonomic innovations that emerged in the writings of Giorgio Vasari (1568) and Johann Winckelmann have become naturalised. Fortunately, recent publications such as Éric Michaud's *The Barbarian Invasions: A Genealogy of the History of Art* (2019), have made a significant contribution to our understanding of art history's epistemological underpinnings.

According to Vasari and Winckelmann, each founders of art history who wrote, respectively, in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (Michaud 15), art was not only the result of the artist's individual creative capacity but also reflective of the racial group to which the artist belonged (*ibid*.). Both Vasari and Winkelmann proliferated the notion that the artist was a conduit of specific artistic and stylistic traits associate with their "people." Within his canonical Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects (1568), Vasari presented biographies of individual artists based on regional characteristics, grouping artists together based on their locality. Meanwhile, as Michaud (23) suggests, this grouping resulted in the notion of national schools and their corresponding styles, pioneered by Roger de Piles and his publication of The Taste of Several Nations in 1699. De Piles' decision to divide artistic production into 'schools' reinforced the Vasarian conflation with artistic style and race. As Michaud shows, de Piles' categorisation related to both urban centres and nations including Rome, Florence, Flanders, Germany, and France (23). Furthermore, this taxonomy gave the implicit notion of a centre. According to de Piles, taste became less refined the further one departed from the apparent primary centre of Rome (Michaud 206). However, for the purposes of this article, the precise functioning of de Piles' logic is not overly important. What is crucial, however, is the Eurocentric assumption that the closer a culture or people are to the perceived 'centre' or 'spiritual home' of art (be it, as in this case, Rome, or, alternatively, Paris or New York), the more able they are to both appreciate and to produce art is still pervasive today. It is not dramatically overreaching to apply this to architecture.

Next, it is necessary to answer the question: How does art historical epistemological bias relate to the architectural history of Chandigarh and the emphasis given to Le Corbusier, in the role of the cities' creation? Both Western and Indian narratives that emerged from the 1970s have given profound importance to Le Corbusier and credit the architect with

the design of the city. Madhu Sarin (1977), architect and scholar based in Chandigarh, critiqued Le Corbusier for having crudely transposed European modernism into the Punjabi plains. Von Moos (1977), on the other hand, presents the city as a convergence of ideologies, emerging from the mutual concerns of both Le Corbusier and Nehru. Curtis (1997) characterises Le Corbusier as a lone male 'genius' who created the plan for the city after briefly contemplating the Himalayan foothills.

The above narratives place Le Corbusier in a central role in Chandigarh's story. Ironically, Le Corbusier spent most of the city's construction elsewhere, delegating the city's design to his cousin Pierre Jeanneret and Indian team. It seems inconceivable to acknowledge an ancillary European modernist and his Indian cohort within canonical discourse, despite the clear historical evidence of their noteworthy and, at times, significant contributions. Perhaps this is because of inherent hierarchical conceptions relating to both India and Pierre Jeanneret and their position within pre-existing narratives about modernism. The inability to fully acknowledge Jeanneret's role emanates from the notion that he was ancillary to Le Corbusier. Likewise, the contribution of the Indian architects that worked alongside Jeanneret have not received just recognition, perhaps because of the notion that modernism is somehow solely European. In this respect, the term narrative is used as a shorthand for the art historical and architectural historical discourse that surrounds the Indian city, which gives undue emphasis to the role of Le Corbusier.

This article responds to the research trajectory established by Vikramaditya Prakash with The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India (2002) and Sarbjit and Surinder Bahga Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret: Footprints in the Sands of Indian Architecture (2000). Both texts give undeniable focus to Le Corbusier. However, both endeavour to articulate the Indian contribution to Chandigarh. Such publications made the unprecedented step of incorporating accounts from the Indian architects involved, facilitated by personal connections. Vikramaditya Prakash is the son of Aditya Prakash, one of the architects who worked with Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. Similarly, Sarbjit and Surinder Bahga included an entire chapter from Jeet Malhotra, another member of the Indian team. As shown in the 'Research Context' section below, scholarship from architectural historians like Iain Jackson (2013), Manish Chalana and Tyler S. Sprague (2013) developed this research trajectory. This article therefore aims to understand the relation between this emerging discourse in order to open a critical space to demonstrate the Indian contribution to Chandigarh as well as the narratives found in the municipal collections devoted to the city's creation. Aware that Jeanneret might have been underrepresented in canonical accounts, this research sought to investigate if a more nuanced account of the architect's contribution existed in an Indian setting. I also wanted to establish if the selected institutions cohesively documented the Indian contribution to Chandigarh.

As the city's two municipal institutions devoted to the architectural history of Chandigarh, both the CAM and the LCC were consulted over multiple visits during the fieldwork of this research. The ultimate intention was to uncover a more inclusive account of the city's creation that included further evidence of Jeanneret and the Indian team's contribution. This article also considers the presentation of Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's contribution to the city. Researchers such as Iain Jackson (2013) suggest that both the role of Fry and Drew, not least their work with Indian architects such as Aditya Prakash, has been under researched. Accordingly, this work also seeks to reflect on the presentation of these architects within the highlighted municipal collections. To avoid a narrow focus and to consider the developing nature of Chandigarh's self-representation, this article considers the output of Vikramaditya Prakash and a recent travel guide that ascribes buildings previously ascribed to European architects to Indian architects. Furthermore, this article considers recent commemorations of Pierre Jeanneret held in 2017 and reflects on what they contribute to emerging narratives about the city's creation.

It is now appropriate to explain certain omissions. The museums selected for this study could have included the Pierre Jeanneret Museum, however, this institution was established in 2017, after my itinerary had been formalised. Following my initial 5-week scoping and networking trip to India in early 2017, I was aware of the importance given to

Jeanneret by some in India and had looked for institutions that might help provide a more nuanced account of the architect's role. To defend the exclusion, in 2017 the museum did not have its own website and so it was difficult to locate. Having discovered its existence, I planned to visit the museum, but my research trip to India ended abruptly because of unforeseen circumstances. Regarding the recent scholarship on the city, this article could have considered texts such as Le Corbusier Rediscovered: Chandigarh and Beyond (2018), by Deepika Gandhi. However, since the CAM and the LCC are both managed by Gandhi, I felt that including Prakash's text offered the article a more balanced stance. Also, I did not want the article to become a critique of Deepika Gandhi's museums and academic work on the city. Another key reason for including Prakash's publication is its notable ascription of buildings previously assumed to be the work of the European architectural team referenced above to Indian architects instead. This unprecedented gesture in the evolving narratives surrounding Chandigarh necessitates its inclusion in this article.

Research Context

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a resurgence of interest in the architectural history of Chandigarh. This started with Vikramaditya Prakash's Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India (2002) and Sarbjit and Surinder Bahga's Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret: Footprints in the Sands of Indian Architecture (2000). Such publications represented the emergence of a discourse that prioritised the accounts from those that were directly This in the city's construction. literature counterbalances the oversimplified celebration of Le Corbusier's involvement in the process that is found in some Western literature.

Prakash (2002) made the gesture of not merely highlighting the Indian contribution to the city but went further and named nine Indian architects that worked on the city: MN Sharma, A.R. Prabhawalkar, B.P. Mathur, Piloo Moody, U.E. Chowdhury, N.S. Lamba, Jeet Malhotra, J.S. Dethe and Aditya Prakash. The importance of other key Indian figures, such as Chief Engineer P.L. Verma and Administrator Prem Thapar, was highlighted. While the latter individuals had been mentioned in previous publications such as Ravi Kalia's *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City* (2002) and Sarbjit and Surinder Bahga's *Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret: Footprints on the Sands of Indian Architecture* (2000), Prakash's gesture of articulating the extent of the Indian involvement was unprecedented. Following Prakash, scholarship by individuals such as Iain Jackson (2013), Manish Chalana and Tyler. S. Sprague (2013) has enabled this emergent research trajectory to develop.

This research reacts against the dominant conception of Chandigarh as the work of a single architect, as problematised by Jackson (1). It seems important to provide some renditions of the Chandigarh narrative found in Western scholarship, for example, Colin Davies' *A New History of Modern Architecture* (2017), states:

In February 1951, Le Corbusier travelled to India with his cousin and collaborator Pierre Jeanneret and for the first time saw the full potential of the project. Here was a chance to realise his ambition to design a government centre and align his architecture with the prestige of political authority. The League of Nations, The Palace of the Soviets, The Mundaneum and the UN headquarters had all been disappointments. Chandigarh promised satisfaction at last. (232)

Davies reduces Chandigarh to The Capitol Complex (the section of the city where the governmental buildings are located) and omits the Indian architects that contributed to the design of the city. Mailis Favre (2015), offers more nuance, stating:

After a lifetime exploring the urban question, Le Corbusier, along with his associate and cousin Pierre Jeanneret and architects Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, was finally entrusted in 1950 with the construction of Chandigarh, the capital of the Punjab state, a symbol of modernity and peace in a divided region, a city forged from any available material, on desert terrain, with the Himalayan ranges visible in the distance. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted a "new town, symbolic of the freedom of India, unfettered by the traditions of the past, an expression of the nation's faith in the future." On this immense construction site, Le Corbusier assigned residential areas to his associates and focused on the sites of power: Administration department, the Palace of Assembly, and the High Court of Justice. (48).

Within this analysis, there is a tacit acknowledgement that it could be beneficial to a greater and more nuanced understanding of Chandigarh's architectural history if we conceptualise the city beyond its governmental buildings. Furthermore, this slightly more pluralistic narrative mentions Fry, Drew and Jeanneret, thereby ebbing away at the notion of Le Corbusier as the lone male genius. There is overt mention that the residential areas were assigned to Le Corbusier's associates, which distances Le Corbusier from the city at large. This recalls the work of Manish Chalana and Tyler S. Sprague within the article 'Beyond Le Corbusier and The Modernist City: Reframing Chandigarh's 'World Heritage' Legacy' (2013). The article suggests the importance of rethinking Chandigarh's legacy and heritage beyond a 'Le Corbusier dominated framework' (206). Chalana and Sprague suggest viewing the city as a collaboration affords the city a 'richer and more nuanced historical significance' (207). However, Favre (2015) does not reference the Indian team; meanwhile, Le Corbusier is once more given centrality in the analysis.

The present article seeks to build upon a clear resurgence of interest in Chandigarh and narratives about the city that go beyond or displace the centrality of Le Corbusier. This article explores whether Indian architects that contributed to the design of the city remain invisible in the Institutional narratives within Chandigarh's municipal museums. This research helps understand if the invisibility of the Indian architects in Western scholarship reflects a knowledge transfer issue, e.g., that a more inclusive narrative exists in India that has not permeated into international scholarship, or if there is a confluence between Indian narratives and Eurocentric accounts of the city. This would entail perpetuating the story of a lone male genius, Le Corbusier, arriving in India to create an urban blueprint for Chandigarh with little or no assistance; overlooking the significant local and international support that the project received.

Theoretical framework

My research considers Chandigarh's architectural history through the lens of *collaborative modernism*. This theoretical concept functions as an investigative device deployed to unpack how Chandigarh was created and aims to augment certain figures. It will hence spotlight hitherto overlooked figures, among them Indian architects, engineers and administrators who are not typically included or given prominence in narratives of the city.

Collaborative modernism seeks to show that Chandigarh emanated from a mutual flow of ideas, collaboration, and emotive interactions. The notion of collaborative modernism does not suggest that the working relations that facilitated Chandigarh's creation transcended the post-colonial historical conditions of its creation. There is little doubt that there would have been a hierarchy between the white western 'experts' and their Indian counterparts. However, collaborative modernism suggests that as the working relations developed, it is possible that different roles, responsibilities, and contributions disrupted this implicit hierarchy.

Collaborative modernism uses a post-colonial critique of modernism's Eurocentrism. This involves questioning the inherent teleology associated with modernism which upholds in temporal terms a single straight line of modernity's development, one which perceives of Europe at the pinnacle and the rest of the world playing catch-up. The problematic that emerges in relation to the. The problematic that emerges in relation to the CAM and the LCC is whether they reinforce this linear spatialised history or disrupt it. While both might cohesively account for the roles of the Indian architects, town planners and engineers that contributed to the city, it is equally possible that they continue to perpetuate their obscurity, and to reinforce the linear spatialised narratives associated with modernism.

The conceptual coordinates of this article have been informed by *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures and Exhibitions* (2012) edited by Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston-Hanks, and Jonathan Hale. Within their co-authored introduction to the text, entitled 'Museum Making – The Place of Narrative', the editors problematise the function

of narratives within museums (xxii), which has great relevance to the concept of collaborative modernism. The view that narratives are human constructs dependent on an editorial process that perpetuates certain perspectives and stories at the expense of others informs the perspective of this article.

MacLeod, Hanks, and Hale show the potentiality of museums as interpretive environments and conveyors of narratives. multidimensionality and the interplay between the architectural, spatial and the textual facilitate this ability. From a methodological perspective, this article will also examine these respective elements in relation to the CAM, the LCC and the recent Jeanneret commemorations held by Panjab University and Chandigarh College of Architecture. This article will consider the extent to which the museums offer information that might facilitate a more nuanced micro-historical perspective on the city, which might displace the centrality of Le Corbusier from macrohistorical narratives about the city.

Collaborative modernism, much like the art historical concept transnational modernism, advocates a reframing of the 'archive.' To briefly explain, the concept of collaborative modernism relates to interrelated discourses such as transcultural modernism transnational modernism, which explore the phenomena of global modernism. Global modernism refers to modernism produced in the global context. Transnational modernism implies a network of firmly established nation states through which modernism circulated. Exponents of transnational modernism offer new ways of thinking about what can be considered an archive. Rowe, when discussing the endeavour to document the activities of the Black Arts Movement, presents the notion of a 'living archive' (290). Reference is made to the work of individuals including Eddie Chambers, Paul Gilroy, Kobena Mercer and Gilane Tawadros, citing their contributions to the journal *Third Text*.

The concept of the "living archive" recalls a Foucauldian understanding of the archive as a "practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge." The archive thus understood is transformed from a passive library or repository of past records "outside time and place" to an active system of enunciation' (290).

Reframing the archive is important to collaborative modernism, as it focuses on three sites of investigation: literature, the museum, and the archive. It is the view of collaborative modernism that these discursive sites make up what Rowe aptly conceptualises as an active system of enunciation. It is the contention of both this article and collaborative modernism that institutions such as the LCC and CAM form constituent parts of a system of enunciation, pertaining to the history of Chandigarh. It can be suggested Vikramaditya Prakash's (2014) travel guide to Chandigarh, especially with its decision to circulate archival information in a small and accessible publication, can be regarded as a disruptive element within an evolving system of enunciation. Methodologically, this article integrates these separate discursive fields when considering the different institutions involved in Chandigarh's developing self-representation.

This article regards granular and micro-historical detail as significant. To understand why, it is useful to consider Jo Melvin's article 'Holes in the archive – to fill or to leave, that is the question' (2015). The article reflects on archives and the material they contain. It also considers the decisions that researchers must make when including or excluding certain historical information. With great relevance to the concept of collaborative modernism, Melvin articulates the importance of exploring material that might offer insight into the interior worlds of the protagonists or actors in question:

Research exposes what was once confidential in letters, for example, in notes of ideas committed to paper or recorded from conversations. Often these documents reveal the dirty side: art's interpersonal connections, passions, opinionated reactions, anecdotes, hearsay, and gossip. It this kind of dirty matter which gives the archive its peculiar status and distinguishes it from the 'clean publication.' Often overlooked, the dirty or the banal can invigorate. It is transformative in its effect. (71)

Collaborative modernism concurs with Melvin's suggestion that 'dirty matter' anchored around the anecdotal and interpersonal can reconfigure historicised accounts through a 'vivid reconnection' (71). Both this chapter and collaborative modernism suggest that the consultation of micro-historical information and putting it into dialogue with macro-

historical narratives has the potential to alter the status of material and information previously considered ancillary. This process transformative for both the sources in question and pre-existing macrohistorical narratives of Chandigarh.

The City Architecture Museum

The permanent collection of the institution was installed in 1997 to commemorate India's independence and remains largely unchanged to this day. Why the institution has not engaged with developments in scholarships on the city, is not clear. Arguably, the hegemonic status of this narrative has been isolated from debate, evoking the sense of a grand and unchanging narrative. This exploration of the museum will consider the spatialisation of the narrative found within this institution. I will commence with the basement of the building, which contains material adjudged curatorially to be less important than the subsequent sections of the museum's display.

When entering the museum, we encounter an instructive wall text by architectural historian Rajnish Wattas, who co-authored Le Corbusier Rediscovered: Chandigarh and Beyond (2018), with Deepika Gandhi, the director of The City Architecture Museum. The text summarises the various sections of the museum. Wattas, with a sensitivity to spatial concerns, references how the entrance takes the visitor into the basement of the museum, whereupon the trauma of partition and the necessity of Chandigarh's construction is contextualised. Subsequently, we learn that we will discover how Chandigarh's site was selected, and the site's topography, vegetation and archaeology ('Introduction' Wall Text).

The text proceeds to mention the sketches and studies produced by the pre-Le Corbusier America team, led by Mayer and supported by Nowicki, another American architect. There is reference to Mayer's development of the original master plan for Chandigarh. Including Mayer – the architect and civil engineer who initially headed the project - on the lower ground floor spatially suggests that the American occupies a place in the figurative basement of Chandigarh's history, thereby indicating a curatorial value judgement of this contribution. However, the decision to include Mayer (and Nowicki) at all seems significant,

since although architectural historians including Van Moos highlighted the importance of the Mayer plan as early as 1977, Jeet Malhotra still found it necessary in 2000 to put on record the contribution that the American team had made.

However, this reference to the Mayer Plan does not indicate a deviation from a Le Corbusier dominated narrative. This minimal gesture which complicates the centrality of Le Corbusier in the narratives about the city is not sufficient for collaborative modernism. This is because this does nothing to subvert the idea that Chandigarh's modernism was imposed, since it merely points out an American input that preceded the European team. Rather than displacing Le Corbusier's centrality, including Mayer and the American team, does little more than prop up the grand narrative that ensues in relation to Le Corbusier.

Key Figures in the Chandigarh Story

In the 'basement' of Chandigarh's history, we also find an exhibit displaying information on key Indian figures from the Chandigarh story. There is a plaque entitled 'Significant Personalities who shaped the making of Chandigarh'. These individuals are as follows.

Gopi Chand Bargava, Chief Minister of Punjab (1947-April 1949; August 1949), Bhim Sen Sachar, Chief Minister of Punjab (April 1949-October 1949; 1952-1956), Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India (1947-1964), Partap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister of Punjab (1956-1964), Dr. M.S. Randhawa, First Commissioner of Chandigarh (1966-1968), C.P.N. Singh, Governor of Punjab (1953-1958), N.V. Gadgil, Governor of Punjab (1958-1962). (Adapted from 'Significant Figures' Wall Text)

There is little information or context, and the plaque could be more detailed. Regarding the concept of collaborative modernism, it is useful to understand which individuals contributed and to have a chronology of their involvement. However, the list-like, factual form of their inclusion here contrasts dramatically with the animated, almost lyrical exposition of the Euro-American architects in the text above. Although Mayer, Nowicki, Drew and Fry are designated to the basement of Chandigarh's history, we still learn something about their background and involvement with Chandigarh. Based on these exhibits, the institution

seems more focused on celebrating the European contribution than it does presenting evidence of a significant Indian agency in Chandigarh's design and development. Due to the lack of textual elaboration and its positioning within the spatial organisation of the museum, one can extrapolate a curatorial judgement on the significance of these contributions. These figures sit at the bottom order of hierarchical significance in the museum's narrative about Chandigarh.

Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew

There are wall texts on Pierre Jeanneret, Jane Drew, and Maxwell Fry. Despite the importance of these architects, they are within the basement of Chandigarh's history, located as subordinate within the museum's spatial hierarchy. In terms of how the narrative has been spatialised, Fry and Drew are in the underbelly of Chandigarh's history, reflecting a curatorial value judgment about their significance to the making of the city. Consideration will first be given to the information on Pierre Jeanneret. Saliently, Jeanneret's biographical information is anchored in relation to Le Corbusier:

Pierre Jeanneret was born on 22 March 1898. Like his famous cousin Le Corbusier, he too migrated to France, where the two worked together. He stayed on as Chief Architect and Town Planning Adviser to the Punjab Government until ill health forced him to leave in 1965 - long after other members of the team had returned. ('Pierre Jeanneret' Wall Text [CAM])

Of relevance to the concept of collaborative modernism is the text that describes Jeanneret's contribution pre-empts literature such as Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret: Footprints in the Sands of Indian Architecture. This is because the institution acknowledges Jeanneret affected architecture throughout the city. There is reference in the wall text to the architect's work on the Panjab University campus and the Gandhi Bhawan building. However, the notion that Jeanneret was 'prevailed upon' to join Le Corbusier, implies a subordinate relation, which is hard to overlook. It is acknowledged that Jeanneret supervised an Indian team, but the members of this team are not named, and this is not mentioned again.

The location of this information within the spatial hierarchy of the

museum and the fact that neither the role of Jeanneret or the Indian team is given articulation in the subsequent sections of the museum, suggest this historical actuality is conveyed as footnote in Chandigarh's dominant narrative. The hegemonic status of this grand narrative which preserves the centrality of Le Corbusier, leads to a curatorial failure to respond to evolving scholarship on the contribution of Pierre Jeanneret.

Now it is necessary to consider how Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry are considered in the collection. Saliently, the information on Fry and Drew is largely contextualised within the origins of the Chandigarh story. Drew played a vital role in persuading Le Corbusier to take the commission and this is referenced by the museum's wall text ('Fry and Drew' Wall Text). Consequently, there does seem to be a curatorial decision to include some relevant historical information and contextualising the role of Fry and Drew.

The museum text mentions the contributions of Fry and Drew to the design of Chandigarh but does not elucidate the significance of their role in the design of Sector-22. The institutional narrative does not mention, for example, Drew's work with Aditya Prakash including the hospital in Sector-16. The lack of information on the Prakash collaboration is a clear instance of how the institutional narrative fails to convey a sense of Indian agency. The Prakash dimension is centrally relevant to the concept of collaborative modernism, since it shows not only collaboration - which is integral to architecture anyway - but collaboration with an Indian architect specifically. Failure to include this type of microhistorical information, can be regarded as a missed opportunity to disrupt the wider macro, generally Le Corbusier dominated narrative. Consequently, not only are Fry and Drew spatialised to the basement of Chandigarh's history, the historical details of their involvement are far from comprehensive. Furthermore, prime opportunities to inform visitors about the collaborative aspect of Fry and Drew's work in Chandigarh, are overlooked.

Le Corbusier

Le Corbusier first appears in the basement, through wall panel and text. We find biographical detail combined with more subjective claims about the buildings that the architect designed in Chandigarh, in this lyrical exposition of the architect:

Charles-Edouard Jeanneret was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds on 6 October 1887 and adopted the pseudonym Le Corbusier.

He was a powerful thinker of urban theories and propagated a bold modern architecture. In 1951 he was appointed Architectural Advisor to the Punjab Government for the designing of Chandigarh. This city represents the expression of his revolutionary ideas and is where his greatest monuments have been erected. ('Le Corbusier' Wall Text)

Moving on from the basement, the middle floor is firmly devoted to Le Corbusier and an exposition of his architectural principles and work completed in the city, achieved through a range of exhibits including models of the buildings in Sector-1. There is also The Edict of Chandigarh, which is displayed across several wall panels. As the significant text-based exhibit informs us:

The object of this edict is to enlighten the present and future citizens of Chandigarh about the basic concepts of the city so that they become its guardians and save it from the whims of individuals. ('Edict of Chandigarh' Wall Text)

Therefore, the museum operates as a repository for Le Corbusier's intellectual and architectural 'genius,' which according to the logic of this document should be preserved in subsequent developments within the city. This further indicates the hegemonic and unchanging nature of the narrative that it presents. The museum, therefore, takes on a central role both in the preservation of Le Corbusier's legacy and the architects aesthetic values. This is both intriguing and problematic, since as the recent lecture from S.D. Sharma reveals, Le Corbusier would only send very basic architectural drawings. Indeed, these blueprint style sketches would then be adapted by individuals such as Pierre Jeanneret and P.L. Verma. If the objective were to truly celebrate and preserve Chandigarh's aesthetic values, it might also give exposition to Jeanneret's aesthetic principles or Verma's excellent capacity for transforming sketches into engineering actuality.

However, the CAM does not idealise Le Corbusier or the design process

as exclusively harmonious. The curators have included letters that indicate various frictions amongst the design team. There is a significant letter between Le Corbusier and Jawaharlal Nehru, which can be perceived as achieving at least three functions within the institutional narrative of the museum. Firstly, it indicates that although Le Corbusier is venerated within Chandigarh and its municipal institutions, that he most certainly came up against opposition during the design process:

I have myself spent hours of anger, indignation and discouragement on the site of the High Court and Secretariat not being able to give my orders myself. I had to transmit them to a Sub-Engineer who himself transmitted them to a higher authority. The effects of these orders were not appreciable till fifteen days later. This is a mistake which should not last and which appeals to common sense to obtain a just reparation of power and responsibilities. (Letter from Le Corbusier to Nehru)

Secondly, although it was necessary for Le Corbusier to contact Nehru, very often it was the diplomacy of Pierre Jeanneret that navigated these numerous difficulties during the design process. Thirdly, the letter demonstrates that Le Corbusier was not averse to acknowledging the contributions made by his cousin. It can also be viewed as introducing the notion of Jeanneret's huge contribution to the institutionally endorsed narrative of the city. However, this is not explicitly signposted.

Things have turned out well (it is not so every day!) thanks to the personality of M. Pierre Jeanneret who has occupied the post of Senior Architect since February 1951. His temperament is perfectly adapted to the task set before him. Effectively, he is respected like a father and liked as a brother by the fifty or so young men who have applied to work in the Architects' Office. Pierre Jeanneret by means of his persistent work, his fundamental loyalty and his real capacity, has won over the respect of his staff and of everybody in Chandigarh. (Letter from Le Corbusier to Nehru)

Its inclusion demonstrates a symbiosis between institutionally endorsed narrative and emerging trajectories within Indian research on Chandigarh and the growing need to recognise Jeanneret-signified by texts such as and Sarbjit and Surinder Bahga's *Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret: Footprints on the Sands of Indian Architecture*, which was published shortly after the installation of the museum's permanent collection. Yet, while this type of micro-historical information is included

within the institution, it does not disrupt the overarching logic of the institutional narrative, which seems predicated on celebrating Le Corbusier's architectural legacy in Chandigarh.

The Le Corbusier Centre

The LCC was established in 2008 and is located in the Old Architects Office, which, alongside the Old Engineers Office and staff residences in Sector 19, is one of the earliest constructions of the city. The building retained its original function until 1965, when the Department for Urban Planning shifted to its present location within the U.T. Secretariat in Sector 9. It is a site redolent with significance for any narrative about the city. It was where Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew worked alongside the Indian team to design the city. The permanent collection, installed in 2008, displays a range of archival documents, drawings and photographs detailing the design and construction of Chandigarh. The focus of this section will be to consider the interplay of narrative, architecture, and spatial arrangement within the context of this museum, and whether it perpetuates the largely Le Corbusier dominated narrative found at the CAM.

Let us consider how the narrative of the LCC unfolds in relation to the spatiality of the museum. The museum commences with a corridor. On one side, we find photographs and information on Le Corbusier and saliently on the other, photographs and text about Pierre Jeanneret. The wall text states:

Pierre Jeanneret, one of the associates of [the] Le Corbusier team who stayed for 17 years in Chandigarh looking after the project (first Chief Architect and Secretary to Government). Most humble and noble person who created several projects himself. ('Pierre Jeanneret' Wall Text [LCC])



Figure 1. Entrance at the Le Corbusier Centre, taken in October 2017, during my three-month research trip based at Panjab University. © Will McCrory.

There are several portraits including photographs of Jeanneret with Rajinder Prasad (the first president of India). There is also another striking photograph (Fig. 2), which captures, as the wall text informs us:

Pierre Jeanneret's ashes being carried by Jacqueline his niece to be immersed in Sukhna Lake as per his wishes. Also present is Dr. M.S. Randhawa and architect M.N. Sharma. ('Pierre Jeanneret' Text Accompanying Photograph)

Thus, from the initial spatial arrangement and museum artefacts (photographs), it is evident that the narrative intimated by this initial encounter with the narrative presented in the LCC, seeks to assert a stronger role for Jeanneret in Chandigarh's story. This involves referencing the esteem held for Jeanneret's often-noted humility and the extent to which he assimilated into the Indian context, symbolised by his ash scattering in Lake Sukhna.

Furthermore, Fig. 1 shows both sides of the corridor flanked by photographs of the architects, with curators placing a photograph of the Euro-Indian team at the end of the corridor. The institution is devoted to Le Corbusier, however, the narrative encountered seems more expansive. The visitors entering the museum can see that Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret are given the same level of importance within the institution's narrative about the city. It is apparent that despite being named the LCC, the narrative of the city is presented more pluralistically in comparison to the CAM. This constellation, which combines spatial layout and museum exhibits, shows an acknowledgement that the city was an Indo-European venture; that this is spatialised from the outset.



Figure 2. Photograph exhibited at the Le Corbusier Centre. Courtesy of the Le Corbusier Centre. © Will McCrory

Documents and Correspondence Room

The room entitled 'Documents and Correspondences' holds several correspondences between Le Corbusier and Jawaharlal Nehru amongst others. This space contains a letter from the Chief Minister of Punjab dated October 18th/19th 1961. The letter concerns the formalising of the Indian architects involved in the project. Of relevance to the concept of collaborative modernism, the document complicates the notion of a homogenous nine-man Indian Team, as presented by Vikramaditya Prakash (2002). As the letter states:

The trouble about the seniority of senior architects really arose about two years ago. As you are perhaps aware architects for the Chandigarh Capital Project were initially taken only on an ad hoc basis for the building of this city. It was only recently that a decision was taken to formally organise an architect's area in the Punjab P.W.D [...]. Naturally, the question of fixing inter seniority of the architects, who had been taken into service from time to time arose. (Letter from Chief Minister (1961))

It can be extrapolated that one of the reasons for the differing lists of architects at various times, is that the Indian architects were hired on a casual, non-permanent basis. Determining the inter-seniority of architects required establishing a commission to make the final judgement. It is telling that this commission was instructed to consult Jeanneret and none of the other European architects involved (Fry and Drew had long since departed India). The perception was that Jeanneret had worked so closely with each of these architects that he would be able to make an informed judgement on their individual merits as architects. Saliently, this list contradicts the list provided by Vikramaditya Prakash in 2002:

- 1) M.N. Sharma
- 2) A.R. Prabhawalkar
- 3) U.E. Chaudhary
- 4) B.P. Mathur
- 5) J.S. Dethe
- 6) Aditya Prakash
- 7) J.R. Malhotra

- 8) P.J. Ghista
- 9) R.R. Handa
- 10) V. P. Dhamija
- 11) Surjit Singh. (Letter from Chief Minister (1961))

The implications of this list are enormous, since at the beginning of this project, based on information from Vikramaditya Prakash, I held the assumption that the Indian Team comprised of M.N. Sharma, A.R. Prabhawalkar, B.P. Mathur, Piloo Moody, U.E. Chowdhury, N.S. Lamba, Jeet Malhotra, J.S. Dethe and Aditya Prakash. However, this archival document held at the LCC complicates the accuracy of this list. This document therefore reveals a compelling insight that prior to the formation of the PWD under Pierre Jeanneret in the 1960s, the Indian team was employed on an ad-hoc basis. The disparity between the two documents reflects one of the key difficulties that any research seeking to better understand and document the Indian contribution to Chandigarh must overcome. To put it plainly, the Indian contribution is often unquantifiable as no formal records exist. The casual rather than permanent status of the Indian architects, is what distinguished the Indian architects from their European counterparts. This relates directly to establishing who counts in the story of Chandigarh and by extension, what gets recorded provides the basis for subsequent historical narratives about the city.

Furniture, Committee Room, and Master Plan of Chandigarh



Figure 3. Pierre Jeanneret photographed with Indian architects. (n.d) Courtesy of The Le Corbusier Centre, Chandigarh, India. © Will McCrory

The final room of the museum entitled 'Furniture, Committee Room and Master Plan of Chandigarh' is located within the seminar room where Le Corbusier would pontificate during his visits to the city (Prakash 2014 176). Curatorially, Jeanneret's role is once again alluded to with several large reproductions of photographs that show the architect during his time in Chandigarh.



Figure 4. Pierre Jeanneret Photographed with Indian architects including J.S. Dethe, S.D. Sharma and O.P. Mehta. (n.d) Courtesy of the Le Corbusier Centre, Chandigarh, India. © Will McCrory

There are two photographs which are particularly striking. Fig. 3, captures Jeanneret's integration into the Indian team, as he poses for a large group photograph. Fig. 4 shows Jeanneret alongside J.S. Dethe, S.D. Sharma and O.P. Mehta, demonstrating the difficulty of providing a homogenous list of architects that worked on the city. Neither of these photographs are dated. There is also a wall display devoted to model maker Rattan Singh. The inclusion of this panel results from possibility that this was where Singh's models were presented to the team before, they were executed as structures. This could have been explicated; the result of not doing so gives a disproportionate emphasis to Singh, the only Indian contributor to have a wall panel devoted to them.

This disruption of a neat narrative is perpetuated by an exhibit which provides another conflicting list of architects (Fig 5). It is not affixed to a wall but casually propped up on a chair. The list is emblematic of a desire to identify the specifics of who did what and when; the institution successfully problematises the notion of a definitive or cohesive Indian Team. Furthermore, this decision to include contradictory lists and the perceived messiness this creates surrounding the history of Chandigarh's design, could well be regarded as an intentional curatorial device to evoke the complexity of Chandigarh's creation. Furthermore, this carefully orchestrated uncertainty, functions as a counterbalance to the assertiveness of the grand hegemonic Corbusian narrative found at CAM.



Figure 5. List of architects provided by The Le Corbusier Centre. Taken in October 2017, during my three-month research trip to Chandigarh, based at Panjab University. Courtesy of The Le Corbusier Centre. © Will McCrory

The LCC compensates for the monolithic nature of the CAM and introduces the notion of a significant Indian agency through articulating

the significance of Pierre Jeanneret. This ushers in the narrative of his ongoing collaboration with the nebulous, ill-defined entity that is referred to as the Indian Team. Although we encounter several lists of Indian architects, their involvement is not articulated, nor is their specific information on individual architects. Given that there is currently an unused section of this building, one wonders if these narrative omissions could be addressed within the context of this museum?

Contemporary Celebrations of Pierre Jeanneret and their Discontents

This article will now consider Commemorating the Legacy of Pierre Jeanneret: Foot Architect of Chandigarh the 2017 commemoration of Jeanneret's contribution to the city, in relation to Vikramaditya Prakash's Chandigarh (2014), a guidebook to the city. Commemorating the Legacy of Pierre Jeanneret (2017) saw multiple events across the city, including a two-day symposium at The Chandigarh College of Architecture, tours of the Capitol Complex and Panjab University and an exhibition entitled Modernism in South Asia: The Work of Pierre Jeanneret. The event featured speakers such as Deepika Gandhi, and architectural historians Surinder Bahga and Rajnish Wattas. Prakash's Chandigarh, ostensibly an architectural guide to Chandigarh, can also be perceived as a vehicle for disseminating the author's recent research, as it begins to ascribe certain buildings to Indian rather than European architects.

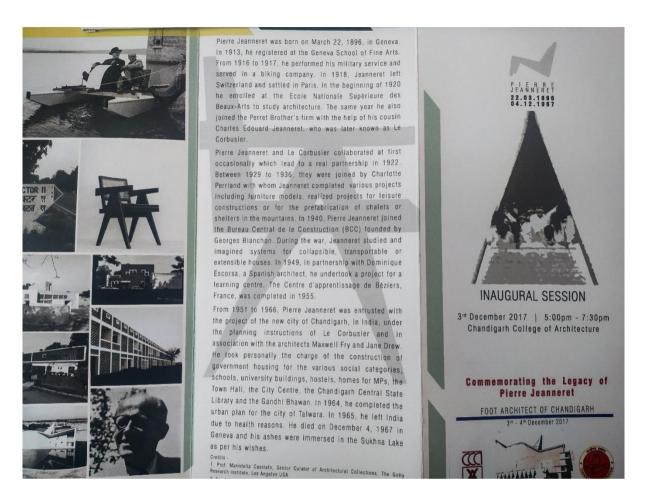


Figure 6. Handout for Commemorating the Legacy of Pierre Jeanneret: Foot Architect of Chandigarh. 2017. Chandigarh College of Architecture. © Will McCrory

Commemorating the Legacy of Pierre Jeanneret commenced on December 3, 2017, with an inaugural lecture from architect S.D Sharma (hosted at the Chandigarh College of Architecture), who notably worked with both Le Corbusier and Jeanneret on the design of Chandigarh. Sharma's (2017) lecture, entitled *Pierre Jeanneret: Apostle of Creative Humility*, focused on Jeanneret's individual merits and his contribution to the design of Chandigarh. S.D. Sharma stated the following:

He [Jeanneret] had three roles to play in Chandigarh, in the making of the city.

1. The implementation of Le Corbusier's projects in Sector 1 and Capitol Complex. Le Corbusier was only to come twice a year but a month each

time. In his absence he [Jeanneret] would go to the site to tell him what is happening and that everything is being implemented. Le Corbusier was only sending basic plans, but the details and everything else are being looked after here [Chandigarh]. That was a difficult time and luckily for Corbusier and Jeanneret. We had P.L. Verma, Chief Engineer, who was a great engineer, such a great engineer that he would go during the night and see [inaudible]... That is why the workmanship of the Capitol Complex is comparable to anywhere in the world.

- 2. The second thing was the personal projects, like the government housing, schools, dispensaries hospital and above all the mega projects like the university- Panjab University- that was a very big thing! He was always under the shadow of his cousin but given a chance he has shown himself as a great architect, a sort of genius by creating the university.
- 3. The third was the training of Indian architects, it was in their contracts, Le Corbusier and Jeanneret's that apart from whatever building they do, they would also train Indian architects [inaudible]... Architects from the office, those with practical knowledge would regularly visit the college, so that they would impart a very practical training to the students. (Sharma)

Sharma's lecture is intriguing for several reasons. First, Sharma's lecture clarifies that Le Corbusier sent very basic plans for Sector 1 and The Capitol Complex, and it was down to Jeanneret and P.L. Verma to translate these basic architectural drawings into reality; that this resulted from their hard work and labour. Second, despite having lived under the shadow of his cousin, Jeanneret contributed significantly to the architectural fabric of the city, designing civic amenities and the sizeable Panjab University Campus. Third, that Jeanneret would visit the Chandigarh College of Architecture to mentor the junior students which attended this institution; also guiding the young architects under his auspice.

The exhibition Modernism in South Asia: The Work of Pierre Jeanneret, was another event associated with the 2017 commemorations of Pierre Jeanneret held in Chandigarh. The exhibition, housed in a public gallery located on the Panjab University campus largely focused on Jeanneret's work design work for the very same campus. The exhibition conveyed the architect's contribution to the city and his architectural expertise. The exhibition cited Le Corbusier acknowledging the tireless work of this cousin:

In Chandigarh, Pierre Jeanneret had the thankless task of supervising, step-by-step, the creation of the new capital city, of sticking to the plans and carrying them through when the path was difficult and strewn with obstacles. On his own initiative, Pierre Jeanneret has created some excellent architecture with modest means and in the face of enormous difficulties. (Le Corbusier Archival Material)

The exhibition explores Jeanneret's work on Panjab University Campus but does not explicate the role of the Indian architects with whom Jeanneret collaborated. The exhibition includes a photograph of the Indian/Euro team from 1954 (roughly five years before any of the university buildings were constructed), including the following: V.P. Dhamija, S.K. Datta, M.S. Siali, R.R. Handa, B.P. Mathur, A.R. Prabahawalkar, M.N. Sharma, P. Jeanneret, Jane B. Drew, Le Corbusier, E. Maxwell Fry, N.S. Lamba, J.S. Dethe, Aditya Prakash, Jeet Malhotra, Surjit Singh, B. Dass, S.G. Nangla. Crucially, only one of these architects – B.P. Mathur – collaborated with Jeanneret on the design of Panjab University, while the other architects that worked with Jeanneret on Panjab University Campus included J.K. Chowdhury and B.S. Kesevan.

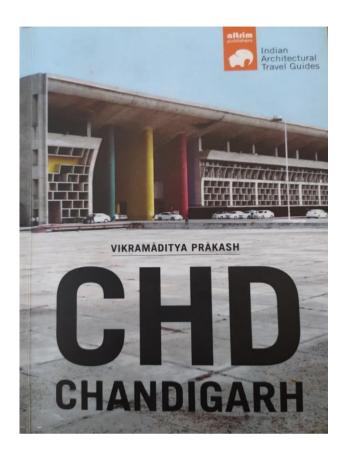


Figure 7. Front cover of Vikramaditya Prakash's Chandigarh, a pocket-sized guidebook to Chandigarh. Author's own photograph. © Will McCrory

Now let us turn our attention to the potential disparity between Modernism in South Asia: The Work of Pierre Jeanneret and Prakash's Chandigarh, published in 2014. The latter is at first glance a travel guide to the city, and it serves this function more than adequately. However, this publication transcends its status as a guide to the city, becoming an intervention into architectural-historical documentation of the city.

The publication provides a new list of the Indian architects that contributed to the city, differing from Prakash's earlier one provided in 2002, which attests to the difficulties that researchers face when attempting to clarify the nature of the Indian contribution to Chandigarh. The rest of the publication divides the city into various sections such as 'Capitol Complex and Sukhna Lake, 'The City Centre,' 'Museum Complex' and 'Panjab University'. The publication provides maps (fig.8), photographs, annotated historical information (fig.9) and cites the architects responsible for each of the buildings. Prakash provides an overview of who did what and when. Prakash uses this as an opportunity to acknowledge, for example, Aditya Prakash's work on the Chandigarh College of Architecture (1969), previously attributed to Le Corbusier. Prakash also renders B.P. Mathur's contribution to Panjab University campus emphatically clear, perhaps most notably ascribing The Student Centre (1970), to Mathur rather than Jeanneret. Vikramaditya Prakash demonstrates a micro-historical preoccupation with the granular detail of authorship and design.



Figure 8. Detail from Prakash's Chandigarh. Detail from map representing the Capitol Complex. Author's own photograph. © Will McCrory

There is discord between Modernism in South Asia: The Work of Pierre Jeanneret and Prakash's Chandigarh (2014), the architectural

historian's guidebook to the city. Even when they concur, for example in accrediting of The Gandhi Bhawan to Jeanneret, the work of Sarbjit and Surinder Bahga could have been called upon, to provide a more nuanced micro-historical account of Panjab University's creation. This building was the result of Jeanneret's immersion into the local context and his dialogue with Indian colleagues, who suggested the reference to the tomb found in Fatehpur Sikri.

While Modernism in South Asia: The Work of Pierre Jeanneret, attributes significant works such as the AC Joshi Library and The Student Centre to the Swiss architect, Prakash attributes them to B.P. Mathur (115). Likewise, whilst the exhibition attributes buildings such as The University Hostel for Girls and The Health Centre to Jeanneret, Prakash cites them as Jeanneret/Mathur collaborations (120-121). Therefore, this article shows that there is a heterogenous quality to the counter narratives emerging about Chandigarh's creation.

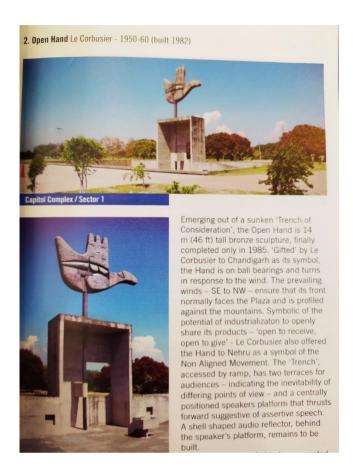


Figure 9. Detail from Prakash's Chandigarh. Example of presentational format.

Author's photograph. © Will McCrory

Conclusion

This research demonstrates a distinction between the LCC and the CAM, since the latter goes some way to mitigate the centrality of Le Corbusier, through highlighting the contributions of Pierre Jeanneret and the Indian contributors. The analysis offered in this article reveals that although the museum does not focus exclusively on the legacy of Le Corbusier, it does give the architect textual and spatial centrality within a permanent collection that alludes to plurality. On the other hand, this research reveals that within this Corbusian narrative, we still learn of the contributions of Maxwell Fry, Jane Drew and Pierre Jeanneret. However, these contributions are largely consigned to the basement of Chandigarh's story. The CAM gives Jeanneret a greater presence within the institutional narrative, which is pre-emptive of research published at

the beginning of this century. Yet Jeanneret is always ancillary to Le Corbusier. Furthermore, the Indian agency included within this narrative demands further expansion.

This research elucidates that the archival material on display at the LCC shows Prakash's (2002) concept of a team of nine Indian architects to be at the very least problematic historically. Intriguingly, the contextualising of Chandigarh's Indian agency can also be seen as inconsistent, with at least two contradictory lists being displayed. It could be suggested that this ambiguity perhaps accounts for Prakash continuing to press the matter of Indian agency in Chandigarh, and recent institutional drives to commemorate Jeanneret would be well complemented by this type of micro-historical research.

While Modernism in South Asia: The Work of Pierre Jeanneret and celebrations of the architect seek to assert the significance of Jeanneret in the Chandigarh context, arguably this emerging narrative replicates the coordinates of the Corbusian narrative, e.g., lone white male genius. Such observations confirm that overall, the museums and their curation reflect a confluence with Eurocentric discourse on the city, focusing on lone white men and their architectural output on the Plains of Punjab, with all other parties playing a secondary role.

This could be avoided through allowing the type of micro-historical information presented by Prakash, to alter the coordinates of the wider, currently Le Corbusier dominated narratives about Chandigarh. The failure to accurately present not only the individual architectural achievements of Indian architects such as Aditya Prakash, but also the Indian team's various collaborations with both Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry and Drew, perpetuates the coordinates of the lone male genius narrative.

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