

# An Innocent Abroad: Joseph Stein in India

It is an honour to speak about Joseph Allen Stein while standing in this sublime example of his work. This talk is a collection of thoughts from a work in progress, and I should point out that there are many people in Delhi, and even in this room, who worked with Joe and knew Joe much better than I ever did, having only met him briefly in the United States. Their memories, shared with me over the past year-and-a-half, make up a large part of today's presentation.<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge the generous financial support of the Clarence Stein Institute at Cornell University,<sup>2</sup> which has funded my research in India.

Stein was both an interesting man and a complicated one

An enjoyable part of this project over the past couple of years has been meeting people and talking about Joe, what his architecture means to them and what his legacy means to India. The question today is: who was Joseph Stein – after whom was named the street just to our right as we sit here in the India International Centre (IIC), and the architect of both the IIC and the India Habitat Centre, which *Outlook* magazine ranked number one and number two on the list of the best buildings in Delhi three years ago.

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<sup>1</sup> Among those who graciously consented to be interviewed for my research are: J.R. Bhalla, Sudeshna Chatterjee, Prem Chaudhary, Anurag Chowfla, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, Minakshi Devi, Sumit Ghosh, Pankaj Gupta, P.C. Jain, Ravi Kaimal, Bharat and Gabo Kapur, Ashok B. Lall, Kanai Lal, R.M.S. Liberhan, Meena Mani, Unkar Matu, A.G.K. Menon, Snehanshu Mukerjee, Ram Rahman, Mansingh Rana, K.T. Ravindran, Jagan Shah, Pritpal Singh, Nalini Thakur, Ravindra J. Vasavada, and Sudhir Vohra. I am especially grateful to Joseph Stein's sons, Ethan and David, for their generosity in sharing both memories and documents, as well as suggestions and comments, and in sum, making this project possible. Still, any errors are mine alone.

<sup>2</sup> The Institute funds research into the planning and architecture of Clarence Stein, and into the work of others whose ideas were influenced by his writings and practice.