Le Corbusier

History and Tradition

Edited by Armando Rabaça
South-west elevation.
In early 1951 Le Corbusier was commissioned by the Government of the State of Punjab to plan a new Capital. When he was in Chandigarh, a group of Jainist clients from Ahmedabad invited him to develop five projects, the museum of Ahmedabad, the Mill Owners’ Association and three family houses. Four among the five were built, one of which was the Villa Hutheesing-Shodhan (Figs. 1-3). The villa is the last referent of Corbusian family-housing architecture. Developed between 1951 and 1956, it was conceived on the basis of a conscious combination of modern architecture and the climate and culture of India.

Le Corbusier’s design for the Villa Shodhan—from here on referred to as Villa Hutheesing or Hutheesing-Shodhan—has three versions, which synthesize the vast investigation he developed over three years. The program for the villa is described on a sheet dated 23rd March 1951, titled “Bungalow de Surottam P. Hutheesing, Shahibag, Ahmedabad.” It reveals the importance of building verándahs and terraces, on every floor, which would serve each bedroom so that one could sleep outside during summer nights. Among the handwritten notes, possibly expressing Hutheesing’s request, Le Corbusier wrote: “very best modern (très bon modern).” This suggests the client’s receptiveness to Corbusian architecture. Referring to the villa, Le Corbusier wrote in Œuvre Complète.