

# Capitol Complex

**Location:** Sector-1, Chandigarh

**Designed By:** Le Corbusier

**Highlights:** Secretariat, High Court, Legislative Assembly

The Capitol Complex is Le Corbusier's most spectacular work, which makes Chandigarh unique from other places of India. He conceived the master plan of Chandigarh as analogous to human body. He proposed the state to have a head (the Capitol Complex, Sector-1), heart (the City Centre, Sector-17), lungs (the gardens and the leisure valley), mind (cultural and educational institutions), the circulatory system (road network), and the viscera (the Industrial Area). The concept of the city is based on four major functions of living, working, taking care of the body and spirit and circulation. Located in Sector 1 of Chandigarh, the Capitol Complex serves as the seat of the government of the states of Punjab and Haryana.

The Capitol Complex consists of three architectural masterpieces: "the Secretariat", "the High Court", and the "Legislative Assembly". These buildings stand separated by large piazzas and present awesome beauty in their subtle and most evocative grouping. All the three masterpieces stand together, representing the democratic India. In the middle is the giant metallic sculpture of The Open Hand, the official emblem of Chandigarh, signifying the city's credo of "open to be given, open to receive". An 85-foot high monument, raised above the sunken trench, it was planned by Le Corbusier. Capitol Complex is basically a concrete structure that represents the monumental character authority of the government. Its three important monuments are described as under:

### High Court

High Court is the law-interpreting body in the city. Built in 1951-57, the structure has a double roof projecting over the office block, like a parasol or an inverted umbrella. There are three vertical piers rising 60 feet from the floor and painted in bright colors. These form the entrance to the building. A gigantic egg-crate screen covers the building facade. There are woolen tapestries on the rear walls of the courtrooms that were originally designed by Corbusier himself. The striking aspect of the monument is the magnificent sweep of its upper roof, symbolic of the assurance of protection and justice to people.

### Secretariat

The Secretariat is the law-executing monument in Chandigarh, which was built during 1953-59. It is the tallest and largest among all the other monuments in the city. The building has been shaped in the form of an eight-storied concrete slab, with its distinctive brise-soleil-louvered screen of deeply sculptured two-storey porticos in the centre. It houses the offices of ministers.

### Legislative Assembly

The Legislative Assembly, Chandigarh is a majestic building with artistic splendor. It is a square structure, with a monumental portico standing free from the main building. A pyramid covers the upper chamber of the erstwhile bicameral system and offers an exciting counterpoint to the

cupola, extending well above the roofline.

### **Others**

Among the other monumental attractions of the Capitol Complex, the ones worth mentioning are the Tower of Shadows, Geometric Hill, and Martyr's Memorial. All of them surely merit a visit from the tourists.