

The Spirit of Southeast Asia: Designing the SPAFA Headquarters Building

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Background

After having been constituted as a SEAMEO Regional Centre in July 1987, SPAFA remained in the 8 x 15 metre office on the fifth floor of the Darakarn Building, Sukhumvit Road — the space where the SPAFA Project had occupied for many years (the word SPAFA stands for the SEAMEO Project for Archaeology and Fine Arts). With the growing number of its staff, from six to seventeen in three years, the Centre was striving to acquire new premises of its own in order for all its functions to operate more efficiently under one roof.

It took about two years for the Government of Thailand, the host country, to agree to provide a new building for the SPAFA headquarters. A total budget of 29 million baht, an equivalent of US \$1.16 million at that time, was allocated in 1989, and a site on Sri Ayutthaya Road behind the National Library was cleared for construction. It was agreed that the Centre would be responsible for the design of the building as well as the preparation of specifications and working drawings. However, due to the lengthy bidding process affected by the building boom during the 1980s, it was not until January 1991 that construction work actually took place. (Kulachol 1991: 39)

The Design Process

Generally in architectural design practice, architects more or less develop the following design process: *Analysis - Promotion - Design - Construction*. (Turner 1974: 52)