

Architecture in the modern arab and islamic world

[Design](#), [Architecture](#)



Architecture in the Modern Arab and Islamic World In the early 1960s, the American embassies in the Arab world were under threat of rising anti-American sentiments and therefore there was a need for designs that reflect enhanced security measures as well as public access monitoring. Thus, the Foreign Building Operations (FBO) was looking to integrate the latest US building technologies at the time. They needed to protect their dignitaries and hence the FBO decided to build an embassy in the Middle East implementing these technological advances. The proposal was to build a safe embassy that would transform architecture in the modern Arab world. The US embassy in Baghdad was built to these specifications. It was designed by Josep Serts taking into consideration the need to protect the building and staff and be able to withstand explosions at the same time. Serts bold design was to crown the ambassadors residence with a spectacular concrete canopy. The canopy as seen from an aerial view, evoked some striking geometric patterns that highlighted the ceramic tiles and wood inlay. In addition, the concrete canopy was constructed to specifications that would provide protection for the ambassador and staff, should there be an aerial attack. On the other hand, the US embassy in Baghdad is a fortress that few can see. Such a building in Iraq defied the Islamic architectural traditions and instilled little confidence in the government. Furthermore, critics argue that the Americans built the US embassy with its security modifications in order to signify its strength and impose its will on the surrounding areas. Also, in some opinions, the embassy depicts one of the most beautiful and well designed modernist structures in the region. In conclusion, the rise of the US embassy in Baghdad symbolized a successful architectural experiment for

the region, which paved the way for further transformation decades later, with thought-provoking and original Western influenced Architecture.