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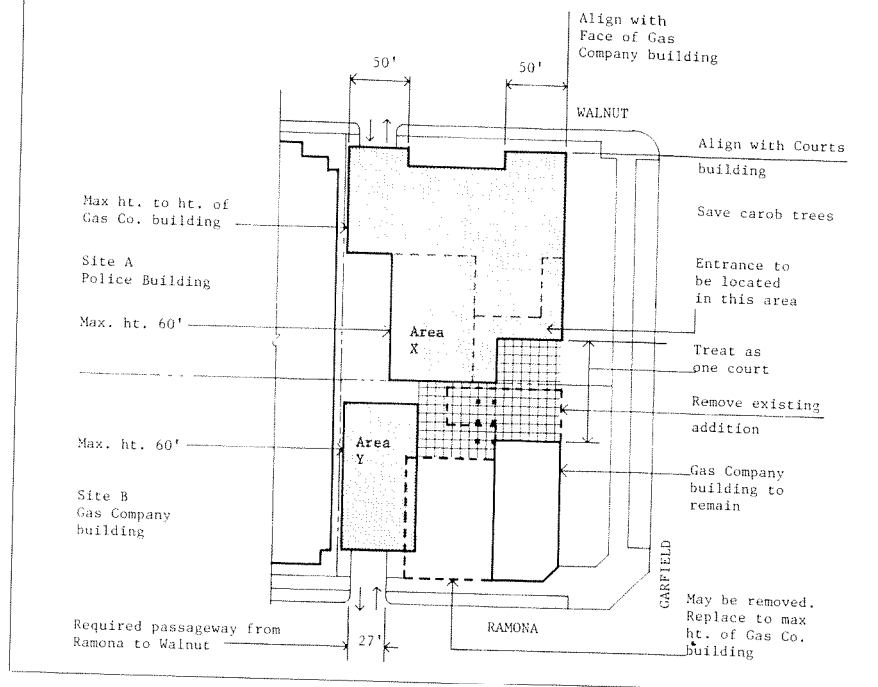
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The recently completed national design competition for a courtyard at the new Police Building in Pasadena is a conclusive step in the evolution of ideas that have been embodied in the site, have been articulated and given form by a succession of designers and have engaged the attention of several public commissions. It will soon become part of the public realm.

The Evolution and Transformation of an Idea

The court will be adjacent to a new Police Building nearing completion in Pasadena's Civic Center, a grand City Beautiful complex of axially arranged buildings first conceived in 1923 by Bennett and Parsons of Chicago.

City Hall was the first building of the complex to be constructed, in 1925. Its architects, Brown and Bakewell, bettered the initial plan by imagining City Hall as a great mission courtyard surrounded by open arcades and passages leading to city offices and focused around a vigorously bizarre fountain of baroque inspiration.

The Main Library followed in 1926. Its architect, Myron Hunt, also substituted a walled and fountained courtyard entry for the ponderous Roman temple front that had been visualized in the original master plan. Both buildings resulted from design

competitions; both are better, more enjoyable places than the urban design plan imagined.

The courtyards conceived for the Police Building thus take their place in a Civic Center that is already well informed by tradition. Succeeding generations have not, however, cared so well for the character of the Civic Center, so when the new Police Building and several other projects were proposed for the area the city commissioned consultants to update the Civic Center Master Plan.

Their work, which began at the same time that Robert A.M. Stern and Ehrenkrantz/Eckstut were commissioned to design the Police Building, led immediately to the preparation of design guidelines for the entire area and for the specific site. The general guidelines require, among other things, that "every building should have some visible penetration of the building volume for porches, loggias, or courtyard entries," and the specific guidelines for the block designate the location for a courtyard linking the new Police Building and the existing Southern California Gas Company Building designed in 1929 and recently acquired by the City.

Stern, working imaginatively with the Master Plan guidelines, established the courtyard as the major entry point for the Police Building, which faces

the court with a large porch and an upper loggia that serves as an identifying tower for the building.

The newly formed Pasadena Arts Courtyard as its first major collaborative public art project. The competition they conducted was open, in the first stage, to all Pasadena residents and to an invited list of approximately 35 artists and landscape architects recognized nationally for their work in public spaces. Each team submitting qualifications was required to include a landscape architect and an artist. Three finalist teams, selected by a jury, were each then commissioned to prepare a scheme for the project within strict budgetary limits.

The scheme prepared by Robert Irwin and Campbell and Campbell was selected by the competition jury, then approved by the Arts Commission and the City's Board of Directors and will be constructed this spring.

The three projects illustrate the opportunities for continuing imaginative investment that are still possible within the final stages of a project—even (and perhaps especially) when traditions and design guidelines set the stage.