

MACHADO SILVETTI

Architecture and Urban Design

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City of Claremont Architectural Commission

Design Narrative for Pomona College Museum of Art

Pomona College

The general aesthetic, material and formal properties of the project are responses to the historic lineage of the college's campus and buildings, the College Design Guidelines and Master Plan, the unique character of the Claremont Village and the Village Design Guidelines

The museum site layout is defined by a perimeter of native and climate appropriate plantings, a large central courtyard and an art walk linking Second Street to Bonita Avenue. The building is a composition of two volumes, a connector zone, an events pavilion and a portico. The two volumes contain the art galleries, the teaching portals and storage vaults, and the connector zone includes the loading dock, storage and additional galleries. The volumes are expressed as discreet objects having the scale of the existing building fabric on the adjacent and nearby sites. These volumes are 1-1 1/2 stories each with a roof that forms gabled profiles. The two volumes are physically linked by the 1 story connector zone that has a flat roof behind a shallow parapet.

The exterior of the volumes and the connector is primarily concrete. The use of architecturally refined cast-in-place concrete is consistent with the use of the material across the Pomona College campus and the Claremont Village. The 2 volumes are defined by a high quality board-formed finish that mixes some characteristics of wood construction with the solidity and permanence of concrete. The connector zone has a smooth concrete finish. Both concretes will fall within a light-grey to slightly warm tones.

The roof of the three volumes will be defined by a red clay flat tile that will be seen as a straight edge along the perimeter of the roof. There is no overhang, but a reveal with a dark anodized metal channel is positioned on top of the concrete wall so that the roof seems to hover just above the volumes.

The events space is an architecturally unique element that sits on the south side of the central courtyard. Its roof is characterized by a nod to the gable forms of the houses and institution buildings; in particular the scale and irregular but well composed roofs of turrets, dormers, and entrances. The roof will be seamless metal. Clerestory windows provide indirect light into the space and give the ceiling/roof structure the appearance of lightness and floating.

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A tall and deep iconic portico defines the courtyard on College Avenue, the main entrance on Bonita Avenue, and a secondary entrance on College Avenue. The portico is defined by straight members that support a simple concrete slab. At the extension of the Courtyard Portico to the College Ave. sidewalk and at the Main Entrance on College Ave. the portico supports a trellis with large plantings provided for shading and to mark entrance.

The entrance sequence on Bonita Ave. is a formal means of entrance for visitors approaching from the West. The entrance is indicated by a portico which functions more as an arcade in this location. Passing through the arcade there is an open-to-the sky small courtyard that will contain a work of public art. A threshold with a lower ceiling and vestibule separates this exterior courtyard from the main lobby, filled with day-light via hidden skylights above a sculptural ceiling. The lobby gives physical access to all parts of the facility. It also gives direct visual and physical access/egress to the courtyard and its surrounding portico which is the means of arrival for the majority of visitors and students who will arrive from the College to the East.

The site's Courtyard, Art Walk and perimeter planting are unique contributions to the public space of the Village, compliant with the ideals of the Village Design Guidelines. The courtyard is about 76' square and is surrounded by the Portico which defines its character. The northern leg of the U-Shaped Portico is an ADA compliant ramp that negotiates an existing on-site grade change. A pre-cast concrete capped retaining wall along the eastern edge, a terrace on the north edge and the Events Pavilion on the south side give variety and programmatic opportunity to the courtyard. A large Chinese Elm tree that exists currently on site is relocated to the courtyard to provide shade throughout the day. Throughout the site locations for future public art have been identified.

The Art Walk on the west side of the museum links Second Street to the Main Entrance Plaza on Bonita Avenue, providing a pedestrian walkway similar to those advised in the Village Design Guidelines. This Art Walk is defined by the concrete of the building on the east and landscape feature (a hedge or series of native drought-tolerant planting) on the west separating the art walk from the existing county library parking lot. Variation in the footprint of the building breaks down the length of the art walk. Mid-way along the length of the Art Walk, a small plaza is created where two alcove areas provide seating with views into the sculptures on display in the Art Patio, secured behind a metal screen.

The Art Walk runs along the loading/service area along Second Street. This loading area is scaled to allow a full length tractor trailer to back into the loading door, assumed to occur no more than 2-3 times per year. Careful landscaping and treatment of the loading area will be employed to ameliorate the appearance of being "back-of-house."

Pomona College Museum of Art Academic Museum

The museum is a unique academic resource that provides specialized space that stimulates a learning environment. The Pomona College Museum of Art is an Academic Museum, an integral element in the teaching mission of the College. The new museum will consolidate the many different spaces on campus holding art including the Native American collection into one building.

In addition to the usual functions of a museum — Pomona College academic museum will provide hands-on teaching of collecting, preserving, and displaying art through its collections and exhibitions. Some of the key aspects are:

- Safe and secure storage for the College's collections of art.
- Convenient access to the collections for classes and individuals.
- Museum standard environmental and fire suppression controls for the exhibition and storage of art.
- Exhibitions that complement curricula and welcomes class use within exhibition and collection spaces.
- Designated galleries for student curators to develop and present exhibitions.
- Event space for workshops, lectures, films, and social activities connected to exhibitions.

An interactive design feature of Pomona College academic museum is the unrestrained movement between art and students, whether the art is in storage or on exhibition. The facility can then support the integration of programs and the care of the collections with the classes, research, and community-based learning that are part of a liberal arts education. This allows for a facility that can demonstrate and encourages future art enthusiast by offering:

- Classes that meet in a gallery and then move to the collection study room for in depth discussion.
- Collection study rooms immediately adjacent to collection storage.
- Galleries for student-curated exhibitions in close proximity to collection storage to allow for safe movement of art works.
- Spaces for student interns to work with local area schools through programs like our Native American Study Collection outreach program and ArtStart.