

Museum's Expansion Plan Getting an Airing

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The Metropolitan Museum's latest expansion plans are the subject of a public hearing today by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

"The historical and architectural appropriateness of the exterior design" of four components of the museum's master building plan will be considered at the hearing.

The museum is an officially designated landmark. By law, no exterior alteration of a landmark may be made without approval of the Landmarks Commission.

Today's presentation by Metropolitan representatives will include details of the American Bicentennial Wing and the South Museum addition which includes the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, Western European Arts Wing and European Wing Garden Court.

Appeared Confident

Museum officials appeared confident before today's hearing that the plans would be warmly received because, as one spokesman noted, they contain "a careful and discerning preservation of elements from the past with enclosures of them to guarantee preservation for the future."

In 1970, the Landmarks Commission recommended approval for the Temple of Dendur enclosure but "objected vigorously" to the Lehman Wing plans. Under question then was how much of the original 1880s Calvert Vaux Victorian Gothic Wing A (West Facade) would be covered over with Indiana limestone. However, plans were reworked to the commission's apparent satisfaction so that more of the landmark features of that facade were retained as an interior wall within the Lehman Pavilion.

Commission reports on city-owned buildings are not required by law to be made public—they're issued to the Mayor and Parks Administrator. And commission re-

commendations are not mandatory for city buildings as they are with privately-owned landmarks.

The negative findings on the Lehman Pavilion by the commission were unknown to the public until leaked to the press. Current legislation before the City Council revising the 1965 landmarks law would require that all commission reports be made public.

2 Being Built

There are seven components of the museum's comprehensive architectural plan, prepared by the architectural firm of Roche Dinkeloo and Associates, designers of the highly acclaimed Ford Foundation building on E. 42d St. Two of the seven additions—the Lehman Wing on the West side and the Temple of Dendur enclosure on the North side, are under construction. The Rockefeller and American wings are ready for construction this year, providing that the Landmarks Commission and then the Arts Commission approve the final designs.

The American Wing is the only addition for which the museum is seeking city funds. Of the \$15 million construction and installation cost for that addition, the museum is asking \$3 million from the city to be matched by \$3 million from the federal government, since the American wing has been given official status as a na-

tional bicentennial project. The remaining \$9 million is to be privately raised.

The Metropolitan has what it terms "the richest and most comprehensive collection of American art in existence" but 80-90 per cent of these holdings are not displayed, due to lack of space. Plans call for a new structure to surround the present American Wing at the northwest corner of the museum with three stories of public galleries, providing 55,000 square feet of new space.

A four-story glass-roofed enclosure will preserve the 1823 facade of the U. S. Branch Bank building which was incorporated in the museum facade when that wing was built in 1924. It will also provide a year-round American sculpture garden and an entrance to the wing from Central Park.

The Metropolitan has been built in various sections since 1880 with different wings designed by Calvert Vaux, Theodore Weston, Richard Morris Hunt and McKim, Mead & White. No new gallery space has been added since 1926.

Radical Sheikdom

BAHRAIN (AP) — Police are patrolling highways for the first time in this Persian Gulf sheikdom in an effort to curb speeders. Sixteen persons were killed in traffic accidents in the first four months of 1973.