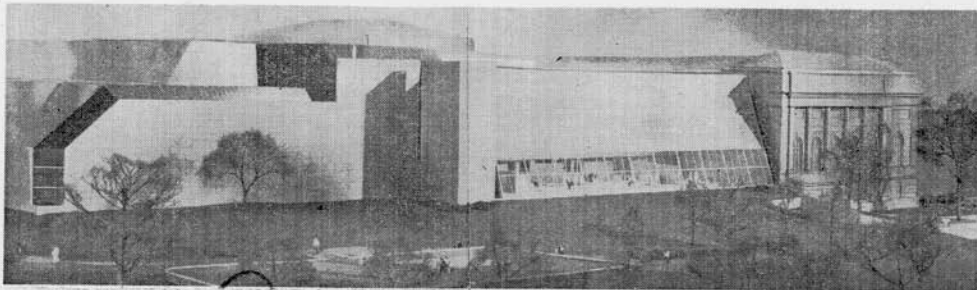


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'Last Expansion' for Metropolitan



A model of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing of Primitive Art at the Metropolitan Museum.

By ROBEETA B. GRATZ

Representatives of the Metropolitan Museum of Art have assured the Landmarks Preservation Commission the elaborate building plans it has submitted for approval will mark the end of the museum's expansion program.

Referring to the seven components of the museum's comprehensive architectural plan, Arthur Rosenblatt, administrator for architecture and planning, told a commission public hearing yesterday: "This is the completion of the Metropolitan. It will wrap up its construction. When finally completed the museum will have reached the limits of the sight and the limits of the permit is-

sued by the Parks Dept."

Rosenblatt pointed out that since the 1880s the Metropolitan had been added to in bits and pieces more than a dozen times and that two earlier master plans—one by Richard Morris Hunt in 1885 and one by McKim, Mead & White in 1902 — would have produced a considerably larger institution than now envisioned.

The present plan was 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 Pavillion on the west side and the Temple of Dendur enclosure on the north side—are now under construction.

The American Bicentennial Wing and the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing could be ready for construction at the end of the year, providing the landmarks panel and then the Arts Commission approve final designs. There are no present plans for construction of the Western European Arts Wing and the European Wing Garden Court.

Less than a dozen members of the public were present at yesterday's hearing. Major objections focused on the question of museum encroachment into Central Park even though it is legally within the confines of an 1878 lease signed with the city.

"The city ought to be able to reexamine the terms of that lease," said City Councilwoman Carol Greitzer (D-Man.) "since it was signed in

a day when the rural nature of the city never anticipated the present."

There was considerable approval expressed for the aesthetics of the museum's architectural plans although one observer, referring to the slanted glass and strait limestone facade of the Rockefeller wing, noted: "The Metropolitan hasn't decided if its building a Hoover Dam or a cement factory. The design is completely out of harmony with the other facades."

The museum is an officially designated landmark. By law, no exterior alteration of a landmark may be made without approval of the Landmarks Commission. Commission recommendations, however, are not mandatory for city buildings as they are

with privately-owned landmarks.

The American Wing is the only addition for which the museum is seeking city funds. Of the \$15 million construction and installation cost, the museum is asking \$3 million from the city to be matched by \$3 million from the federal government.

The Met has what it terms "the richest and most comprehensive collection of American art in existence" but 80 to 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.