

Problem Statement

Albert Winn Park has the potential to be a major community asset to Midtown Sacramento, but is an underused space that desperately needs activation. At the center of the park is a distinguished historic building connected by four main corner paths, but a lack of an inviting entrance, secondary paths, and usable spaces contribute to the underutilization of the park. Through analysis of the site and the urban context of Sacramento, our proposal envisions a public/private venture to transform Winn Park into a gathering space for displaying and experiencing public art.

Program

The main level of the historic 1937 fire alarm building will be repurposed into resident artist studios. An addition to the historic building will create a new entrance to the art studio as well as provide a new, welcoming public face to the park. In order to better serve the community, an abundance of public gathering spaces will be added around the center buildings, creating strong connections throughout the park. These amenities include a public plaza and performance stage, grassy tiered seating, covered park benches and tables, a public restroom building, new pathways, and numerous public art pieces created by the resident artists.

Site Design

Analyzing the site context, P Street has the best potential for being the prominent face of the park. From P Street, visitors are immediately drawn into the site leading to the Winn Park Art Gallery. To align with the main level of the historic building, the art gallery's floor is also elevated 5' - 6" above the street level. The long, gently sloped Art Walk leads visitors up to the main level of the gallery, while also providing an accessible entrance with multiple locations to stop and mingle. The switchback-nature of the Art Walk encourages visitors to meander and enjoy the art and sculpture from all vantage points.

The Northwest corner of the park is transformed into a large public plaza featuring a performance stage at street level for performing arts and other ceremonies. A generous bank of tiered seating connects the plaza and the gallery, providing ample space to sit and view performances. The Southwest corner opens to covered seating and benches with the public restroom building defining the edge. The two existing corner paths on the East side of the park are left as existing to reference the original, diagonal entries to the park. New pathways are also added throughout the site to connect major points, while still preserving existing tree locations. Scattered throughout the park are art installations that are free to the public to enjoy, and great opportunities for the resident artists to exhibit their work.

Gallery Addition

Conceived as a minimalist glass box, the Gallery addition is meant to pay respect to the historic nature of the existing building by interacting very lightly with it. It is pulled away from the historic building and only connects at two entrance points. A strong visual connection to the historic building is reinforced through the transparent materiality, rather

than visually clashing with and obscuring the old building. The floor plan is open and flexible for a variety of public art installations and community events. Cantilevering off of the board-formed concrete base, the east end of the gallery floats and extends past the facade of the historic building, so the community room can reverentially view the historic main entrance.

Historic Building Renovation

At the heart of our proposal is the renovation of the historic building into resident artist studios. On the main level, interior walls are removed to create rentable studio space and bring in natural light. The open workspace and break room encourage collaboration among the artists. Other support spaces are provided in the basement such as restrooms, art storage, electrical, and mechanical rooms. The rooftop deck of the concrete structure is an open lounge area accessible to the artists. It provides wonderful views overlooking the surrounding neighborhood and will be a major perk. The proximity of the new addition to the historic encourages a strong sense of curiosity and desire to learn from and interact with the artists. The art studios can be periodically opened for public art classes as an avenue for public/private interactions.

The monumental copper doors on the east side serve as the main entrance for the artists, however this entrance is not accessible due to the steps up to the main level. Since modifying this entrance would greatly damage the historic nature of the building, the accessible entrance is via the Art Walk. On the south side, the new glass elevator tower connects all three levels.

Architectural Details

While the form of the new building addition and site work does not attempt to mimic the design concepts of the Art Deco building, there are many references to the existing scale and proportions that tie the old and new together. New retaining walls connecting the existing building to the gallery addition are built with the same style board-formed concrete. What were once fire alarm panels inside the building are now prominently displayed at the front of the main entrance facing P Street. This move creates a strong connection to the historic building's original use and signifies the entrance to Winn Park. The strong, geometric lines of the Art Deco building serve as form generating construction lines for the new addition. Curtain wall patterns are drawn from the rhythmic nature of the Art Deco building and its vertical aqua blue accents.

Covering the Art Walk and defining the covered seating and performance areas are copper paneled roof canopies, which reference the historic copper main entrance door. These soaring roof forms are thin and tapered at the edges to blend into the composition and not distract from the surrounding art. The canopies are supported with numerous, thin columns which create a rhythm to the pathways. Permeable grass pavers make up the plaza and covered seating areas to help soften the landscape and reduce runoff at the corners. Site lighting is achieved through vertical pipe fixtures that emulate the canopy columns, but produce a soft light glow at the top. These lights are placed throughout the park to create a safe environment during all times of day.