



## CIVIC CENTER REVITALIZATION

The Civic Center of San Francisco is one of the nation's most complete collections of Beaux Arts buildings set in a formal plan. The former Main Library is one of the major contributory buildings to the historic Civic Center district. The opening of the new Asian Art Museum will culminate a lengthy effort by the citizens of San Francisco to revitalize the Civic Center district. By the time the new museum opens in the fall of 2002, several buildings in the immediate vicinity will have been newly built or seismically renovated and architecturally restored. These include San Francisco City Hall, the Civic Auditorium, the new San Francisco Main Library, the War Memorial Veterans Building, the Court House, and the Opera House. The combined cost for the Civic Center revitalization project is estimated at more than \$1.3 billion.

# ASIAN ART MUSEUM

The joint venture of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK), LDA Architects and Robert Wong Architect in association with Gae Aulenti, FAIA, is overseeing the design of the new Asian Art Museum. One of the most sought-after museum designers in the world, Dott. Arch. Aulenti specializes in the adaptive reuse of historic structures to museum spaces (for example, she was responsible for the spectacular Musée d'Orsay in Paris). HOK, an international design firm with offices worldwide, is known for their experience in historic rehabilitation projects.

Aulenti's concept revitalizes the famous old Main Library structure by creating a new heart for the building while respecting its historic elements and framework. An indoor skylit court, incorporating the prominent entrance and grand staircase, will provide a dramatic focus for the new museum's central space. Reworked interior walls will allow views into galleries, creating a sense of openness and orientation as visitors circulate through, above, and around the court.

The rehabilitation leaves the Beaux Arts exterior essentially unchanged, while the conceptual design retains the historically significant architectural spaces and details of the interior, including the entrance,

grand staircase, loggia and great hall, vaulted ceilings, skylights, inscriptions, molded plasters, light fixtures and stone floors, and other elements. At the new museum 29,000 square feet of gallery space — enhanced with state-of-the-art interpretive displays and programs — will house nearly 2,500 objects from the museum's world-renowned collection, offering visitors a comprehensive introduction to all of the major cultures of Asia.

Museum curators are working in collaboration with George Sexton, an award-winning independent gallery designer, to determine the best way to display the objects beautifully and dramatically with effective supporting text for all levels of understanding. Furthermore, another 8,500 square feet of gallery space on the museum's ground floor will be dedicated to temporary exhibitions. Overall, the amount of gallery space will increase more than 30 percent from the museum's present facility in Golden Gate Park.

The new museum will feature multi-purpose classrooms to support the wide range of educational and cultural programs for which the Asian Art Museum is widely regarded. The Great Hall, located at the center of the building, will also be used to showcase live demonstrations, hands-on art activities, and self-paced learning activities that allow visitors to gain a greater appreciation of Asian art and culture.

*Images and front page text courtesy of Asian Art Museum*





## CONVERSION AND SEISMIC STRENGTHENING

The existing building, the former Main Library, was constructed in 1917. It is a six-story (including the basement) essentially square structure with an eastward extending wing at the southeast corner. The building is structural steel with reinforced concrete floor and roof slabs supported by steel beams, girders, or trusses.

The seismic strengthening of the building includes installation of a base isolation system consisting of friction pendulum isolators installed at each of the column locations. A moat around the perimeter of the building will allow for lateral movement during an earthquake. In addition, shear walls

will be installed in a box-like configuration at the corner points of the main building and at isolated interior locations.

Treadwell & Rollo, leading a joint venture, provided geotechnical, foundation, and ground motion design criteria for the seismic retrofit of the structure. We also conducted the necessary environmental site assessment work.

Geotechnical and foundation criteria included: earth pressures for the design of the temporary shoring and permanent walls, recommendations for the bracing system, estimates of static, dynamic, and ultimate foundation bearing capacity, dewatering, and

backfilling. Design ground motion criteria included: development of three levels of response spectra associated with various earthquake scenarios and the development of spectrally compatible acceleration time histories for the design. The geotechnical and earthquake ground motion design criteria were successfully peer-reviewed as required by the San Francisco Building Code for isolated structures.

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