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Kezar Pavilion Design Concept – 2/26/24

Building

Kezar Pavilion is a cultural landmark that celebrates a period of San Francisco's sporting and leisure boom in Golden Gate Park during the early 1900s. This project will maintain the spirit of the gymnasium structure, inside and out, by preserving the character-defining features of the simplified Spanish Revival architecture while modernizing certain interior aspects that will support and enhance these features and the building's athletic history.

Along with this commitment to respect and rehabilitate the historic gym, the project will reconstruct the adjoining annex building as a supporting structure for Park Rangers and for recreational use, drawing cues from the gym's significant details and expressing this architectural language in a complementary and contemporary manner. The annex will connect to the gym by a vertical circulation core glass hyphen, emphasizing the distinction between old and new. The new annex footprint will pull back from the historic west face, revealing a once obstructed entryway and the roof will be constructed as a flat roof to maximize clearance for the required continuous floor levels and maintain space below the historic cornice while emphasizing the datum of that roofline.

Annex materials and design elements will take inspiration from the gym. Natural finish, board formed concrete walls will be used below the second floor and at structural shear walls. Punctuated first floor office windows will mimic the rhythm of the gym's door and window openings. Alternately, larger expanses of glazing at the second floor and ribbon windows adjacent to the sunken garden reflect the linear continuity of the gym's clerestory windows. The terracotta of the gym's familiar earthy red roof will be repeated in the vertical and horizontal fins at the second floor.

The three façades of the annex will relate to the unique conditions of the site, each activating underutilized connections and views. While the first floor will reflect a more private zone for the Park Rangers, views to the plaza will be possible through ballistic grade glazing. At the south side, views will be provided to planted areas in the improved sunken garden. At the second floor, the largest of the multipurpose rooms will connect to a partially shaded outdoor terrace with both interior and exterior spaces looking out to the plaza, stadium, mature pine trees and possible future program in the parking lot. At the south, the second floor will cantilever over the sunken garden, providing shading to the windows below while the horizontal terracotta fins will provide shading to the second floor windows.

The vertical circulation will act as orienting features for the design. At the glassy hyphen, the north and south faces will be fully glazed, allowing light and views through this building entry and connecting hub. The southwest egress stair will be partially glazed, acting as a gateway marker, guiding visitors from the parking lot to the plaza and stadium entry. At night, the stair will be lit, supporting this wayfinding.

Site

The site design will shift from the existing focus of “front of house/back of house” to an approach where site access and programming are multidirectional. The formal gym entry will remain at the east on Stanyan Street. A new glass and steel ticket window will be constructed on the northeast corner of the gym with a minimalist presence to contrast with the historic architecture yet blend in with the subdued elegance of the gym.

The newly activated west plaza will be the day-to-day facility entrance and a hub for children’s camps and other visitors accessing the stadium from Kezar Pavilion. The design will address the historic axes of the gym and stadium entrances paired with the axes of the arrival points of the driveway drop off area and pedestrians approaching from the parking lot while providing a variety of planting and seating areas to congregate. The sunken garden to the south will be a private area for staff and sports teams, integrating planted areas and circulation to the historic stadium tunnel and egress from the building.