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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL ('F KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Grace Nicholson Building, occupied by the Pacificulture-Asia Museum, is located on a downtown Pasadena street opposite a major department store. The area includes small shops and parking lots. It is one block from the central downtown thoroughfare.

The building follows the Imperial Palace courtyard style, which is an ancient (9th century to the early 20th century) stone-constructed building style of Chinese architecture originally used as a repository for treasures and a retreat for the Experor. The Palace of Fine Arts in Feking is an outstanding example of this style. The Nicholson Building closely resembles this Falace and the National History Museum in Taipei, Taiwan. However, the Nicholson building is constructed of concrete and is fire and carthquake resistant. A steel beam understructure is used throughout. Authenticity of the Chinese style was insured by having all of the decorative roof tiles, wood, stone and marble carvings made in China or faithfully executed by Pasadena-area craftsmen.

Entering from the street, one sees the concrete building with a stucco overlay of a "tundra" color, topped with the familiar turned-up roofs that are traditional with Chinese architecture.(See Picture I) The imported tiles on the roof are green. As would have been used by a prince, red iron grill entrance gate enbellished with dragons and cloud patterns, opens into the central passageway.

The rest of the building, set back from the street by a long passageway, is arranged in "mirror" style around the courtyard garden. (The two long sides of the rectangular area are duplicates of each other in perfect balance.) The outside stairways leading to the second floor are at the four corners in the garden and thus form an integral part of the overall design and also act as fire escapes. (See picture II) The idea behind this typical Chinese style is that the palace-fortress compound should be secured and more easily defended, and could operate as a self-contained unit. The mirror arrangement insures that the space is both open and protected: the room/walls surrounding the courtyard offer no access to the outside street while the interior courtyard is exposed to the natural elements.

The museum exhibitions are in the galleries surrounding the courtyard garden and basically in the several long galleries on the 1st floor mirroring each other. A shorter wall with gallery inside closes off the area and connects the parallel sides.

(The two-story wall construction is reminiscent of the living compound structures of Southeast Asia. From very early times, separate buildings were placed near the wall of the compound with an open protected area in the middle; later, the separate buildings were linked, becoming an extension of the wall, but the open courtyard area remained crucial. In fact, this feature has remained the most important concept in the buildings plan. Because of faithfully following the requirements for a Chinese Treasure House, the building is secure, fireproof and earthquake proof.)

The first floor is actually devoted to exhibition space. The second floor has classrooms, a library, an auditorium and office space. Shops featuring fine Oriental art objects and handcrafted ethnic arts occupy the front second floor of the building.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE : Architecture 1. Architectural Setting

During the latter part of the 19 20th, Pasadena attracted a great of the city first, as a excellent who remained to build second or reitr. time, fine year round dwellings of hallmark of the city. Consequently an architecturally high standard of or since. In addition, the diversi another Pasadena tradition. Within Tudor and Beaux Art Regency could quality and distinctive style.

It is logical, therefore, that the quickly take its unquestioned plac mark. This sense of specialness re at that time and for that particul have been built.

The actual setting for the Nichol the time it was built. It was loc-Maryland Hotel which was, in 1923, of the Linnard hotel chain, who al and the Vista del Arroyo hotels. popular because of its elecance an The civic center had recently 1965 two blocks away, as it is today. the area with the Nicholson build of its size and unusual style.

Therefore, the building is importatied to Pasadena history. The hotel become shabby, but the Nicholson by a quality and a style that once cal

2. Landscape Architecture

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There are 28,000 feet of floor space, including galleries, auditorium, storage and classrooms, with 3,000 additional square feet in the courtyard. There has been minimum structural change to the building since it was built. For example, the large windows on the north and south sides of the courtyard have been modernized, but plans are being prepared to restore them to the original lattice work doors. In addition, the two large second floor rooms at the northeast corner have had the addition of basins which are necessary for their current classroom use.

The courtyard garden is rich in symbolic meaning. Carved closed lotus blossoms are on each newell post of the stone stairsteps. Carvings of cloud patterns and a flower form are also on the balustrades.(See picture III) The central area contains planting and a small pool. A flagstone walk is around the outer area, allowing easy access to the adjoining rooms. On the center of the back wall (east), is a medallion, filled with dragon carvings. Each of these forms carries its own symbolic meaning.

There are stone benches in the courtyard, as well as planting to soften the wall areas. At each corner, beside the stairsteps, there is a handsome "peony window", a design arrangement showing a flower form superimposed or overlaying on the life-giving earth, which is represented as a square form. (See picture IV) bragons with long and curly tongues are on the four corners and form part of the drainpipes.

The central space in the courtyard is the garden proper, which is arranged in a traditional Chinese style.

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California South of Art", Vol. 6 Mary Kellog, hpul Winifred Starr D Business Magazin Scenic, Historic Fasadena Beauti Trust for Histor Aug. 1970; Pasac the City of Pasa ics Environs, Ha Treasures in the 70-76; Appointm. Civic and Cultur Council); Pasad Now (Pasadena h: Architecture, G Westways, Vol. by Dane Apostol; Pasadona, Terry Pasadena, 1971.

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concrete building with a studeo the familiar turned-up roofs concure.(See Picture I) The imported We been used by a prince, red iron legons and cloud patterns, opens

the street by a long passageway, courtyard garden. (The two long lates of each other in perfect to the second floor are at the an integral part of the overall picture II) The idea behind this fortress compound should be uld operate as a self-contained t the space is both open and e courtyard offer no access to the ard is exposed to the natural

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iscent of the living compound early times, separate buildings d with an open protected area ings were linked, becoming an tyard area remained crucial. In important concept in the building e requirements for a Chinese fireproof and earthquake proof.) thibition space. The second floor and office space. Shops featuring ! ethnic arts occupy the front

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE , Architecture

1. Architectural Setting

During the latter part of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th, Pasadena attracted a great wany wealthy older proble, who check the city first, as a excellent vacation area, and then frequently remained to build second or retirement house in she area. During this time, fine year round dwellings of new Pasaders residents blocks a hallmark of the city. Consequently, Pasaders residents blocks a hallmark of the city. Consequently, Pasaders residents blocks a hallmark of the city. Consequently, Pasaders residents blocks a narchitecturally high standard that for sites have staller. Efforor since. In addition, the diversity of architectural sevies are a another Pasadena tradition. Within one eres along, creferers. If h. Tudor and Beaux Art Argency could be found, til distinguise of process quality and distinctive style.

It is logical, therefore, that the drace dicholast building ducid quickly take its ungussioned place to a diphinant dual restore to the mark. This sense of specialness remains. Tophysically in this dist, at that time and for that particular period would these priviles have been built.

The actual setting for the Nicholson building was on Astute choice of the time it was built. It was located directly expected the decay Maryland Hotel which was, in 1925, the cost significant and hotel broke of the Linnard hotel chain, who also evaluate Finitiation, the Grack, and the Vista del Arroyo photels. The Haryland had broken every bly popular because of its elegance and because it was conveniently of the civic center had recently been built nearby, and the civic center had recently been built nearby, and the civic service the area with the Nicholson building quickly assuring cosingnes broken of its size and unusual style.

Therefore, the building is important as a historical security, distant tied to Pasadena history. The hotel is gone and some of the short is the become shabby, but the Nicholson building remains as the testa and so a quality and a style that once made Facadena famous.

2. Landscape Architecture

In the history of architecture, this Chinese Tapple courtyard contraction is the oldest continuously used style that is still being fulle today. It is still in use in China and Taiwan.

The central courtyard, or meditation garden around which the builded is constructed is an outstanding example of Chinese londscape arcolume ture in America. It is meaningful both in itself and as an illu boyu Form No. 10-3008

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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of a style that stems from a totally different ideology. A distinguished British architectural historian, Laurence Binyon, has noted that in China a building was regarded less in itself than as a fusion of man's handiwork into nature, the whole surroundings of the scene making part, and perhaps the chief part of the architect's conception." This statement could be a description of the Nicholson garden.

In Chinese architectural history, the courtyard arrangement can be initially traced to the early walled compound--a method of wall building stemming directly from the need to defend desirable land. However, centuries ago, the open space within the center became very important in its own right and remains so in Chinese architecture. It is in the open garden area (securely enclosed) where all of nature can be represented in one small area. The four elements of nature were always represented-earth, air, fire and water. Mountains, plains and living growing things were arranged in order to deepen one's awareness and sense of harmony with the universe. The success of the garden, then, lies not so much by the pleasures of being surrounded by growing plants, but by the garden's ability to promote meditation. The Nicholson garden is considered an outstanding example of this concept. (See Fhysical Description)

The garden is also rich in symbolic designs. Understanding the meanings of the symbols is critical to a true appreciation of Chinese art and philosophy; therefore the garden offers a unique spot for further understanding traditional Chinese culture.

As examples, walking around the garden, starting from the southwest corner, there is a "peony" window beside the stairsteps. The peony was the Empress's own flower--symbolizing everlasting beauty and productivity. The design is also a traditional one: the precious flower is surrounded or super-imposed on the life-giving earth which is shown as the square form within the blossom.

Continuing around the garden, there is a circle design at the base of each stairway representing six stones, or more probably a flower form with a reproductive center and five petals. The arrangement's message is that when one's five senses are fully developed and utilized, a sixth sense is awakened which allows one to be relaxed but also totally aware, thus an integral and interacting part of one's surroundings: a whole has been created.

At the southeast corner, as well as all the other corners, is a closed lotus form on each newell ascending the stairwoll. The closed lotus represents unawakened consciousness; as the lotuses climb, rising enlightenment is indicated; the higher the climber goes, the more one understands. Allegorically, the lotus will open only when one has reached

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are still wall. are offering v east, is a : patterns ar charge of + torrents, the or destroy of the cre destructiv. of both 11. virtue. bl. In China. understand garden is and arrance All of the heaven, may that it is like natur areas of eshould be there is a symbolic d and mounds bridge, while On many 19: town setti:

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> In China, a garden's success is measured by its ability to bring a deeper understanding of nature into one's heart and home. A Chinese courtyard carden is designed to incorporate all of the elements of the universal and arranged to provide the same visual harmony as is found in nature. All of the elements of matter must be symbolically present. The unity of heaven, man and earth is indicated in a successful garden. The thought is that it is in a garden where man learns to create with the "second nature" like nature itself. The carden should be arranged so that there are many areas of excitement and interest and transitional links between spaces should be dramatic. Within the small courtyard area of the museum garden, there is ample illustration of these precepts. In addition to the symbolic designs, there is a pool, growing plants, trees, moonstones and mounds to represent hills. The original garden also contained a bridge, which it is hoped will be replaced in the near future.

of both life and death. They are also said to be carriers of harmony,

virtue, blessings and riches, and guard against fire.

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On many levels and in several ways, then, an oasis is created in a downtown setting. In this garden, one can literally be a long way from the press of everyday street activity and traffic. This fact alone is important in understanding the special nature of the Nicholson building.

3. Architects

The building was designed by the leading Pasadena architectural firm of Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury. The firm still remains an important name because of the number and high quality buildings they produced. Taking the body of their work as a whole, they made a significant contribution by providing buildings of lasting quality for Pasadena. In a large and varied practive, they built both residential and office buildings, including the Mark Keppel High School, Eliot Junior High, the Westminster Presbyterian Church, the Athletic Club and numerous downtown office buildings and shops. A rumber of major Pasadena residences still stand as a testament to the firm's talert and ability. In 1925, when the Nicholson building was underway, the prostigious Southland

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Pautiful and boast." reant to wear t's plans and out her wishes that is closely the, but is rethods.(See rame a distin- action to the Hall. In 1929, Sinational		CONTINUATION SHEET She started including fine art object and other areas of the Lar East in 1 interest grew, so did her business. impressive Oriental art collection million dollars worth of art a year that she placed more than 40,000 ar and with individual collectors all said that she was the one who first. Oriental art; today the Brundage co famous. Many pieces from her own Am given to the Southwest Museum in Lo Her garden, full of its symbolic me an expression of the importance she	cts from China, Japan, Korea her shop. As her knowledge and She was soon amassing an and was selling over half a . During her career, she said t objects in leading art museums over America and Europe. It is interested Avery Brundage in llection remains internationally erican Indian collection were s Angeles. anings, is, in a literal sense,
d built, was y, recognition te. She was an early age. came to Calif- drawn to the p recognition own bank at culture and a shop so she ling their aint store on lity Indian hin a year, she auildings, 44 rears, she had	Q	an expression of the importance she Oriental culture. The more people w enjoy the courtyard garden, the more understanding of the Orient is fulf From 1919 to 1924, Miss Nicholson a most famous temples and palaces in creating her own Treasure House. It Marston, Van Telt and Maybury to dr Section) Consequently, a keystone i Pasadena, the building has tradition art and cultural activities. In 192 this unique Treasure House, it beca arts in Pasadena. Here were shown a art objects, but also the works of nationally famous living artists. used frequently by many film, music the Coleman Chamber Music Associat gave lessons in the classrooms whe Pasadena started the Youth Art Wor had its inception in the Micholson	the appreciate and continue to the her dream of furthering filled. Studied photographs of the China as a start towards a 1924, she asked the firm of raw up plans. (See Architecture in the cultural heritage of bonally been associated with 26 when Graceicholson opened ame an immediate center for the hot only museum quality Oriental local, national and inter- The upstairs auditorium Wa- c and lecture groups, such as ion. Music and art teachers re later, the Junior League of kshop. The Pasadena Arts Council
n3 and Began Itinued these Thershor Know- IY. She believed The Oriental China is most to western of harmony and	•	The building was deeded to the cit Pasadena Art Institute became the ly changed to the Pasadena Art Mus with its collection of the "Blue F Scheyer. The museum was also well museums in the world devoted to sh When the museum left the premises building in modern design, the Pac long been devoted to the idea of p building and its restoration to a became its temants.	y of Fasadena in 1943, and the lessee. The name was subsequent- eum, and became world famous our" painters given by Galka known as one of the leading small owing modern art. in 1970 to occupy its own new ificulture Foundation, which had preservation of the Nicholson

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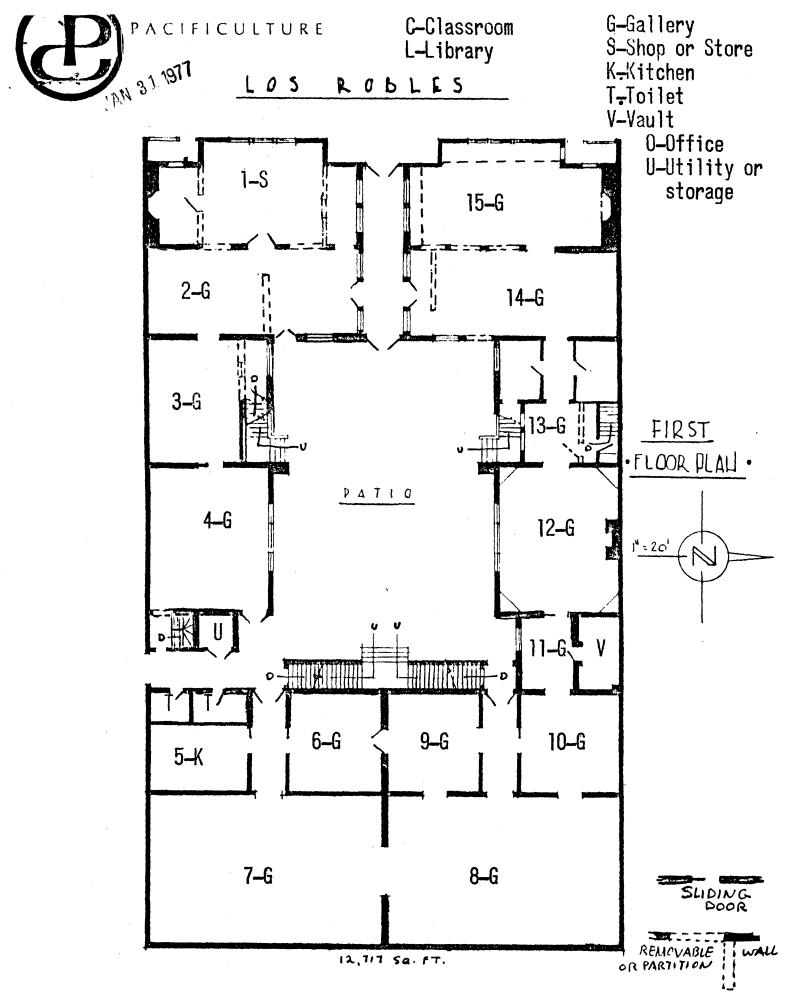
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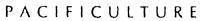
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		ALI 11 3 9.4 81810 3.717.87.90 BL LI		
e ·	•	VERBAL BOUNDAFY DESCRIPTION		
ov Sov Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv Sv			·	Dr. Willia Keeper of
968; 7 the 1 1				U. S. Depa 18th and C Washington
No. 8 No. 8		LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES		Attention:
ind				Dear Dr. N
, PP	0	STATE CODE COUNTY CODE Not applicable NA NA		
i		STATE CODE COUNTY CODE	1	We submit of Histor
<u>nd</u>		FORM PREPARED BY		the 22nd
5		NAME/TITLE		Sincerely
<u>1</u>		Polly Brewer, Public Information Nov. 10, 1976		
-		Facificulture-Asia Museum 449-2742		4
	•	STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE 45 N. Los Robles, Pasadena, 91109 Calif.		:Tu
		CITY OR TOWN STATE		Dr. Knox Historic
2		STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION		Enclosure
-		THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:		
		NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X	· 	K-4/ 2402
		As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service		
*		STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE		
<u>.</u>		FOR MAS USE GALY		
4. 2.		THERE & CERTIFY THAT THIS DODROTY & YOLUDGO IN THE NATIONAL & WOLTER		
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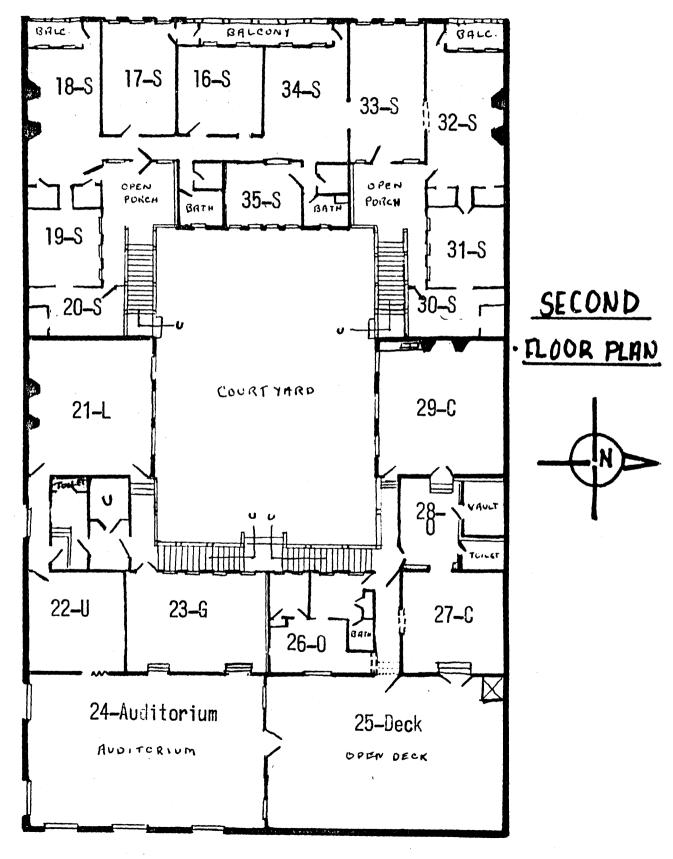


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