

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM'S GARDEN TO BE RECONSTRUCTED

Construction will begin on July 1 to transform part of the garden behind the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, into a sunken sculpture court overlooked by a large tree-shaded terrace for outdoor dining. Although the Museum has always shown sculpture in the garden, this will be the first time that the space will have a design specifically providing a variety of backgrounds suited to outdoor sculpture exhibitions.

The 175 by 100 foot sculpture court will be sunk two feet below grade. On the west it will be bounded by a terrace, 27 feet wide and 100 feet long planted with honey locust trees. This will be an outdoor dining area extending from a ground floor restaurant in the Whitney Museum building, now under construction west of the Museum's garden. The east boundary of the court will be a screen of evergreens, birches, rhododendrons and hawthornes. These will separate the court from the area used by the Museum for exhibition houses, an area which will not be altered by the new construction. Along 54th Street a gray brick wall will be built and will eventually be covered with ivy.

A long, shallow pool, 15 feet wide, will run from the dining terrace to the eastern end of the court. Built in two sections, the pool will be divided by a mound of huge boulders and shrubbery near the eastern end. The ivy covered brick wall, the pool, the planting screen at the eastern end of the court and other carefully selected trees and low bushes which will be planted in groups in the court have been designed to provide four different areas and backgrounds for displaying different kinds of sculpture and for seeing sculpture at different distances and perspectives.

The four areas thus defined include an open central plaza for large monumental works, a long narrow plaza on the other side of the pool, a small square and a larger square. The court will be paved

with unpolished gray marble blocks, $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet, to give an architectural dimension to the viewing of the works of art.

Flowers in season will be placed in Stockholm pots, earthenware jars 4 feet in diameter, which can be moved to form a solid bank of color or spread throughout the terrace or court. Other trees to be planted include ailanthus, cork screw willows, plane trees and a 40-foot Norway maple.

The terrace and court were designed by Philip C. Johnson, Director of the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design. It is hoped that the court will be completed by early fall of this year. However, the restaurant in the new Whitney building is not expected to be opened until the fall of 1953.

Photographs of the model are available on request.