

Civic Center Plazas

Civic Center Plaza

Civic Center Plaza was designed as a processional space for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The original design included tree lined pathways, two sculpture-crowned fountains, and a perimeter of ornamental railings with decorative urns and sculptures at the openings. After the plaza was demolished in 1956 to allow for construction of the underground Brooks Hall and Civic Center Parking Garage, landscape architect Douglas Baylis unveiled a modern plan that included a long, rectangular pool and fountain down the center, pollarded London Plane trees lining central pathways, and olive trees in the corners. The plan was adopted and constructed in 1961, despite much controversy. In the 1990s, two children's playgrounds were added, olive trees were removed, the central pool was removed, and the decomposed granite pathway that today runs from Larkin Street to City Hall was added. Throughout its history, Civic Center Plaza has been an important public gathering space as the site of civic protests, celebrations, and casual gatherings.

An in depth historic resource evaluation of the Civic Center Plaza is currently underway as part of an upcoming San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department project involving the plaza.



MIG, Inc.

2013 photograph of trees near a children's playground at Civic Center Plaza



SF Planning Dept

2014 photograph of a lawn area at Civic Center Plaza



San Francisco History Center,
San Francisco Public Library

1973 photograph of Civic Center Plaza looking towards City Hall after the modernization of the 1960s.



San Francisco History Center,
San Francisco Public Library

1940s photo of Civic Center Plaza with the Civic Auditorium in the background