

Police Academy Hunt Nears Finish

The Chicago Police Department and city planners hope to announce a proposed site for a new Police Academy within the next few weeks, Robert W. Christensen, executive director of the Public Building Commission, said.

Site proposals for a new academy were requested a year ago by the city. The Building Commission, the Department of Development and Planning and the Police Department are in the final stages of selecting a proposed site for the project.

Overcrowded conditions and inadequate facilities at the present Police Academy, 720 W. O'Brien St., sparked the search for a new site and building proposal.

100-Plus

"The building is more than 100 years old and could be the oldest municipal structure in the city," said Lt. Stephen Flaherty, commanding officer of the academy's basic training program.

Flaherty said the building, previously used as an elementary school, is still under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.

He said the building has been well maintained and modified, but plans to refurbish it extensively could be very expensive. "We're using plumbing made for elementary school kids," said Flaherty.

Various Sites Used

For the last few years, the department's extensive training programs have forced the

academy to look elsewhere for classroom space. The Naval Armory, Field Museum, Police Headquarters Auditorium and other sites are used regularly for classes.

City Architect Jerome R. Butler Jr. said his office is working with the police to determine the department's specific needs. Butler said he could not estimate the size or cost of a new academy.

The proposed site designation, if approved by the Chicago Plan Commission, will go to the City Council for approval.