

ORANGE COUNTY

Geometric Concepts Employed in Pier Plans for Huntington Beach

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HUNTINGTON BEACH—Diamond-shaped at its ocean end, the sleek structure slopes upward slightly as it extends from beach to sea.

That is how the city's new pier will look, according to an architect's drawing being submitted to the City Council on Tuesday. The proposed design also shows geometric concepts for buildings on the new pier. Plans call for the restaurant at the end of the pier to be eight-sided, and the bait-and-tackle and snack shops to be six-sided.

Architect Ron Yeo of Newport Beach says there are sound historic and engineering reasons for the geometric designs. Making the end of the new pier 11½ feet higher at the end than the old pier better protects the new structure against the rage of ocean storms, Yeo noted.

"The diamond shape [at the end of the pier] is a functional-type item that also makes the pier stronger and more aesthetically pleasing," Yeo said. "In taking a square and rotating it around so that it becomes a diamond, the result makes it easier for walking around the restaurant at the end and driving vehicles around it.

"As for the design of the restaurant, it copies the original restaurant built on the end of the pier in 1931. That restaurant was an octagonal building. So we're treating the design in the historic context."

The original eight-sided restaurant washed away in a 1939 storm, Yeo said. Subsequently, two more restaurants at the pier's end also were swept away in winter storms, one in 1963 and the other in 1988.

The 1988 storm caused such heavy damage to the old pier that it was closed later that year. A construction company last November began tearing down the old pier, and only a small portion of it—now unconnected to the land—remains.

Meanwhile, the mild winter has enabled construction of the new pier to proceed virtually without a hitch, officials said. Tall, thundering pile drivers on the beach at Pacific Coast Highway and Main Street are installing the gleaming white concrete pilings for the new pier. Scores of residents and tourists stand along nearby fences every day, rubbernecking at the construction activity.

The new pier will be 1,830 feet long, 30 feet longer than the old structure. The new pier also will be 30 feet wide—an increase of six feet from the previous pier. Yeo said the pier will gradually rise 7½ feet from street level as it advances outward to sea.

"It's our feeling nobody will notice the gradual incline because the slope takes place over such a long length," he said.

Completion of the new \$11.8-million pier is scheduled for spring, 1992.

City officials said the basic pier work is proceeding on target. Yet to be decided, officials added, is what buildings will be placed on the new pier and what they will look like.

Some preservationists, including Jerry Person, chairman of the city's Historic Resources Board, want three small buildings from the old pier returned to the new structure. Those 1930s-era, Art

Deco buildings—two small snack shops and a bait-and-tackle store—currently rest in the city's storage yard. The City Council has taken no vote on those buildings, but a majority has indicated they believe the old structures are too unsafe to be used again.

Yeo will suggest designs for new structures when he appears before the City Council study session at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at City Hall. Yeo said he will propose six-sided buildings for the two snack shops and the one restroom structure scheduled to be built.

"The reason for this elongated hexagon design is that it fits the square and allows traffic to flow around it," Yeo said. "It gives more railing space to viewers."

Under Yeo's design, a new life-guard tower on the pier would be "somewhat similar to the old one, but rather than being square in shape, it would be octagonal," he said.

"The new tower also would be slightly higher than the old one

and would have a pitched roof instead of a flat roof," Yeo said.

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