

DAILY PILOT EDITORIAL PAGE

A Proud Addition

A lot has been written and said about the new Huntington Beach central library, but one word sums it up — beautiful. It is the finest library in Orange County and may well be the prettiest in the country.

It shines from a distance, with copper-tone glass walls overlooking Talbert Lake, and it sparkles inside with bright colors, hundreds of plants and trees, and a half-dozen scattered ponds with fountains in them.

Architect Dion Neutra has designed the library to blend with the natural surroundings of the new central park, lacing both outside and inside with lush landscaping and flowing water. The book stacks are centralized with all activity rooms located on the perimeter of the stacks, removing the cluttered look of most libraries.

But the only way to believe it, is to see it. The formal dedication is set for 2 p.m., Saturday, and guided tours will be offered from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday. It opens for business Monday. Don't miss a chance to see it.

RICHARD BUFFUM

Lodestar Library

I have arrived at the conclusion that trying to describe subjectively the feeling I got when I first visited the new Huntington Beach Public Library would be like trying to write about a great musical composition which must be heard to be appreciated.

This building, which will be dedicated April 7, must be seen — and touched — to be really appreciated. It has an eloquence all of its own. I suggest you drive over to Golden West St. and Talbert Ave. and have a conversation of your own soon. This work of art was designed by Dion Neutra.

My wife and I saw it last Saturday night during a reception and preview sponsored by the Friends of the Library. The books were not shelved as yet and the guests wandered among the empty stacks.

You might think you'd feel like you're in an empty barn, which would be the case in a conventional building. But the uncanny harmony of the architectural and design elements produced the impression that nothing more really needed to be added to make you feel at home.

Architect Neutra, following six years of planning and work on it, expressed how we felt about his building. Calling it a community cultural center, he said it was a place to get involved in in a personal way, as opposed to the way you feel normally about civic buildings.

Author Leland Cooley put it this way: "It's got great vibes." I overheard somebody else say, "You drive out into the boondocks and there it is and you say to yourself 'Wow!'"

That's how it is — a great and lasting monument to the people and officials of Huntington Beach. We're going back in a month. We want to see the books in it, beginning with the initial 100,000 volumes. It's built to house 250,000 more, according to our guide, Nancy Phillips.

She explained that there were more "housing" needs than books. There's furniture and equipment, too, and the Friends are seeking benefactors to furnish more completely the \$2.9 million, 74,000-square-foot building.

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★ Los Angeles Times

EDITORIAL

A Beautiful Book Cover

All public buildings in Orange County are steel, stone and glass, but rarely, if ever, has one been put together as beautifully as the new city library in Huntington Beach.

Perhaps that's because most officials think that attention to aesthetics is a luxury not to be indulged in with tax dollars. But it's not a luxury. Not really. The beauty that architect Dion Neutra built into the new library building is as functional as it is eye-pleasing.

The lighting, landscaping, layout and pool and fountain treatment that blends the new building overlooking Talbert Lake into the natural landscape creates a library that is more than just a place housing books. It's a pleasant place to visit. A beautiful place to borrow a book — or just sit and read. And that is how it should be.



Neutra describes his building as "a simple, glazed pavilion placed at a high point in the park. Basically, it's only two stories in height, sheathed in reflective glass.

"The idea," he says, "was to place all readers in the outer portion of the floor area and concentrate the bulk of the book collection in a multi-tiered central core, brilliantly illuminated, and open on all sides to the spacious interior, housing planting, water-play and a light, airy infusion of natural daylight, by skylighting."

He did — magnificently. And the effect is the friendliest, most handsome public building we've ever seen.