Controversy flares over library plans

Design plans, by the Huntington Beach architectural firm of Anthony and Langford, were criticized by Barbara Milkovich, a member of the city's Historic Resources Board. "I haven't been able to sleep several nights because of the stone wall and teflon wall we have run into," Milkovich said. "The library is a cultural and architectural landmark."

Milkovich said Neutra's architectural message to bring "a flow of nature" into the building will be exterminated. "It will be really wrecked," she said. "I don't know why they wouldn't collaborate with Dion Neutra to work on design along the lines of his father."

"We've been working for this for a long time," said former Mayor Ruth Bailey, president of the Library Patrons Foundation that coordinated fund-raising campaigns for the expansion. "I feel very good. It really means we'll be breaking ground for a children's wing before long."

"Twenty-five percent of the library users are children. This will give them room that they need very badly."

The expansion plans, approved by the Planning Commission on Tuesday, will go to the City Council for review at an unannounced date.

Jan Halvorson, library operations supervisor, said the Central Library is one of the busiest in Southern California.

It numbers 164,000 card holders and last year circulated 1.2 million items at the central facility and branch libraries, she said.