

# Controversy flares over library plans

*HB Independent 11-29-80*  
HUNTINGTON BEACH — The Planning Commission has approved architectural plans for a children's wing at Central Library despite protests that the major remodeling will destroy architectural features of the building.

The expansion, which will be paid for by both by private fundraising efforts and the city's treasury, will cost about \$4.9 million.

Ground-breaking for the first phase of the project — the 26,000-square-foot children's wing — is expected to start next fall.

Phase 2, a 350-seat auditorium, will be built under the children's wing, but there's no set time for completion, officials said.

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 the library, in the park at Talbert Avenue and Golden West Street, was the last building designed by renowned architect Richard Neutra. Neutra died before the building was finished in 1974, and the architectural work was assumed by his son, Dion.

Milkovich contends that the plans to put the children's wing expansion in front of the library "obliterates" Neutra's design.

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 operation 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.

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