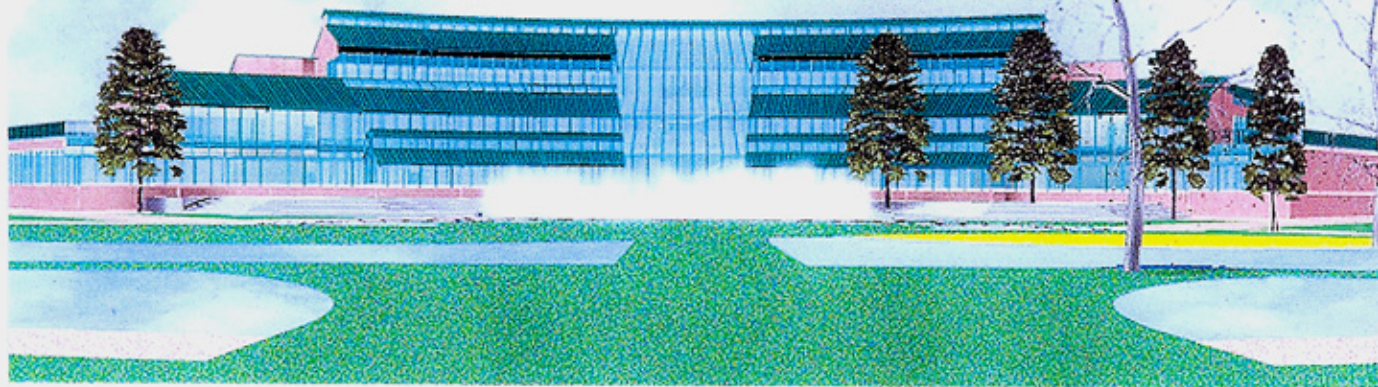


Inspired by Pittsburg's history and culture, the design of the Civic Center welcomes Pittsburg's community to the 21st Century with hope and inspiration.

— Architect Fani Danadjieva Hansen, AIA



Pittsburg unveils model of new City Hall

By Sam Richards
Staff writer

PITTSBURG — The clerestory roof is supposed to resemble those in the old U.S. Steel Corp. mill buildings. The ponds and fountains are designed to harken to Pittsburg's historical waterfront.

But the city's proposed City Hall and Civic Center will look like no other building out there, its lead designer says.

"We've tried to make this building as 'human' as possible," said Fani Hansen, a Tiburon architect who has spent the last several months asking city officials and members of the public what their new city office building should look like.

Monday, the City Council approved the basic design for the new City Hall and Civic Center project. A three-story main building will host the police department, city administrative staff and most clerical employees of all its departments.

"Our goal is to create 'one-stop shopping,' so to speak, and have city government run more smoothly, with all the department heads under one roof," City Councilman Bob Lewis said. All city offices except for public services, which would remain at the corporation yard off Central Avenue, would move there.

Mayor Joe Canciamilla said Friday that the new center will be a showplace for the city, able to accommodate a variety of events.

"It will be more than just a city hall and police department," he said.

If the project stays on budget, all the money

"We've tried to make this building as 'human' as possible."

— Fani Hansen,
Architect

to build it is expected to come from two separate redevelopment bond funds totaling \$17 million.

"That's what it has to come in for," said Hansen.

"If we can use trusses to hold up ceilings, and to (hold up) air ducts, and to hang lights on, we've cut costs there," she said.

And there won't be as many lights to hang. Using walls of windows, several skylights and reflective "fins," Hansen has designed the building to make maximum use of natural light.

R.D. Caughron, a PG&E energy manager, said Hansen brought a model of the civic center to the utility's Pacific Energy Center in San Francisco. There, it was tested for its use of natural light. Based on those tests, Caughron said it's safe to say the building will need very little artificial light during the day.

Such use of sunlight, which adds to employee well-being and saves on energy bills, is still innovative, he said.

"This will be a showcase project," he said.

It also may be the last city governmental building in California to be paid for through redevelopment. State law changed in 1994 prohibiting the use of redevelopment money for such projects.

Hansen and her staff have started to turn artists' conceptions and sketches into actual blueprints and lists of needed materials. She hopes the bids for the construction work go out by November, and that ground can be broken by January 1997.

For the past nine months, the City Council has been negotiating with agencies who also have buildings in the Railroad Avenue-Civic Avenue-Power Avenue area. The Pittsburg Unified School District, the county's Delta Municipal Court, the National Guard's Pittsburg armory, the county library's Pittsburg branch and the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce all have buildings next to the area where new city facilities will be built.

Lewis said the idea is for all these agencies to "end up whole again," by retaining any parking, office space, etc., they have now.

Hansen said the plan approved by the council Monday leaves the corner of Civic and Davi avenues open. A fire station, possibly relocated from Sixth and Cumberland Streets downtown, may be built there within the next few years. But Lewis said that station is not as high priority as the station planned somewhere near West Leland and Bailey roads.