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Soquel Water Directors Pare At Building Plans

In a 2½-hour discussion on the planned new headquarters building of Soquel Creek County Water District, directors Wednesday night were able to knock out only two nine-foot double doors in the lobby of the building.

They knew a lot more about their new building at the end of that discussion, and they did get from architect Melvin Calender a promise to calculate the cost of perimeter soffits.

The soffits were a target of much of the discussion. Directors argued they served no useful function, other than "beauty". Calender said they were necessary to the design of the building, and if they are deleted he'll have to "think up some-

thing else" to serve the purpose for which the soffits were intended.

Directors went into the meeting with the hope they could prune away some of the things they considered non-essential, and thus keep costs down.

There were several references to "no gingerbread" and "take out the frills", but by the time the meeting ended most directors seemed convinced that Calender had designed with compassion for the district's limited purse, as well as for an aesthetically appealing building.

Directors insisted they didn't believe the light soffits would add materially to the building's illumination. Calender said they were recommended by his electrical engineer and he accepted his judgment on electrical ques-

Board chairman Kenneth Izant suggested engineers are wont to "ask for the ultimate. There's a place between poor lighting and ultimate lighting, where we could get by very well. I hate to see us going to the deluxe end of it."

Calendar explained the soffits will serve to "break up" wide expanse of ceiling area, as well as provide supplemental lighting.

The architect added he was aware of the need to keep costs down, but he also felt responsible to design a public building which would be attractive to the people using it.

Izant replied he wasn't "too interested in its being attractive to people to look at. We wanted a building which will be serviceable and which will do a job."

The chairman finally ended

the long discussion by asking Calender to figure costs of the disputed soffits before the board comes to a decision.

Questioned about the exterior of the front of the building, the architect said it would be mostly masonry and glass with glass jalousies providing ventilation.

Some directors also were skeptical about the glass walls, suggesting the expanse of glass planned will create a serious heat loss and will require draperies or Venetian blinds to keep out unwanted sun.

Izant again opposed glass walls "down to the ground" (They are eight inches from floor level, Calender said) and suggested a "wainscoting" around the building as an alternative. He was told it will be less expensive to install glass walls to grade, then to frame them with wood, which must be maintained with paint.

Turning his attention to the lobby, the chairman said he was opposed to "four-foot (wide) doors that are nine feet high". He said he'd like to see glass doors in the entry with metal frames. All board members appeared to agree and Calender said he would design smaller doors for the entry.

Directors also discussed, but did not oppose, the rough-sawn plywood planned for the eastern exterior wall and costs of hardware to be used in the building.

Calender said plans are almost ready to submit to the county's architectural review board.

Asked how the project would be bid, he said there would be separate bids on the grading, shop building and office building (with the office to be bid in conjunction with the interior of the shop).