

Three new hotels in the works at Liberty Station

By DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

Liberty Station is getting a trio of new hotels.

The three new hotels include the 181-room Hampton Inn & Suites, the 247-room Embassy Suites and the 222-room Towne Place Suites.

They are going in on the former site of the recruit barracks along Harbor Drive, most recently where Wally Park was. They will share a common entrance off Harbor Drive. Construction is set to begin in spring and is estimated to finish in 18 months.

Featured at the main arrival court of the hotel trio will be a large-scale boat fountain, evocative of San Diego's maritime culture. Plans are for a sustainable-water feature that utilizes safe air-conditioning condensate derived from hotel operations in response to water-conservation concerns.

"We wanted to create a unique 'wow factor' upon guest arrival — from the streetscape along Harbor Drive to the main arrival auto court," said landscape architect Kurt Carlson, principal at KTUA Planning and Landscape Architecture in San Diego.

This is the only Liberty Station development on the east side of the boat channel that connects to the North San Diego Bay. The hotel site



An artist's rendering of the hotels planned for Liberty Station, which may be completed in 18 months.

looks across the channel to the shops, restaurants and hotels on the west side, and is adjacent to Spanish Landing Park along Harbor Drive.

The hotels will each serve different traveler needs, from short business stays to extended family vacations. The site includes a pad restaurant and a public, accessible esplanade along the boat channel edge.

Hampton Inn & Suites targets the "Road Warrior" visitor in an atmosphere that's aviation-inspired.

Embassy Suites, with a military-heritage theme, will target the smart and savvy traveler. Towne Place is a Marriott extended-stay hotel: a home-away-from-home with a Naval influence and nautical aesthetic with NTC references.

According to KTUA landscape architect Chris Langdon, "Travelers will be welcomed to enjoy the San Diego experience: coastal waters, cool ocean breezes, palm trees swaying in the wind, our world-famous

perfect weather, and the crisp, clean smell of saltwater, while discovering the plentiful amenities available to all in the area."

Degen & Degen architecture and interior design of Seattle and KTUA worked together to knit the three hotels into a common environment, with the goal of creating a stunning San Diego experience for guests, and yet satisfy all environmental, public-access, and public-amenity goals per the California Coastal Commis-

sion. Connecting to public transit and other forms of mobility was also important.

The two architectural firms collaborated to create seamless indoor/outdoor relationships. For instance, guests in each hotel lobby are visually connected to the outdoors, where the landscaping is carefully orchestrated to maximize their experience.

Project manager and architect Chris Miller at Degen & Degen explained, "With us being in Seattle, we relied heavily on Web meetings for the bulk of the coordination, but during the design concept we had multiple, in-person charrettes at both locations to get everyone's visions on paper."

KTUA's Carlson said, "We designed a landscape that provides the carefree, laid-back experience that visitors anticipate when visiting San Diego. Tying into the story of the former Naval Training Center, now known as Liberty Station, the landscape uses materials, colors and themes expressing the nautical aspects of the area, as well as the U.S. Navy heritage."

— Delle Willett, a marketing and public relations professional for more than 30 years, contributed this article. She can be reached at dellewillett@gmail.com.



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