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With First Hotel Guests Due In December

Mid-July Opening Scheduled For Emerald-Shapery Center

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Really, really, really, Emerald-Shapery Center will be opening in mid-July.

Yes, that's only three months from now but the folks at Dillingham Construction, the contractor for the \$135 million mixed-use high-rise, say they will have the office portion ready to go by then.

The lower hotel portions, which front Broadway and will become the Pan Pacific Hotel, are slated to receive guests in December.

Emerald-Shapery Center consists of two towers containing eight interlocking hexagonal pods ranging in height from 189 feet and 4 inches to 403 feet and 4 inches. The pods surround a 100-foot-high glass atrium that too is hexagonal in shape.

The short explanation for the six-sided design is to maximize the views for tenants. Developer Sandor Shapery's interest in crystals, when conceiving of the project in 1981, also played a part in architect C.W. Kim's design.

As unique as they come, the project has already garnered write-ups in publications like the *New York Times* and *USA Today*. It's a joint venture between Shapery's Shapery Enterprises and San Diego 109, a newly formed sub-

siary of the giant Tokyu Corp. of Japan. Tokyu put up \$100 million in cash to finance the project.

But the progress on Shapery Center since it broke ground in late January 1988 has appeared painstakingly slow. Along the typical woes that slow down such huge developments, Shapery Center in its first nine months of construction suffered flooding from a sewage line cracked open by a subcontractor and, seven months later, the site was inundated by a million gallons of water flowing from an off-site broken water main. The city eventually paid project contractors \$260,034 for the damage.

Yesterday, in an effort to set the record straight and update the public on the project's progress, Dillingham held an open house of sorts that started with a briefing in Shapery Center offices and concluded with a tour of the site.

Lynda Bybee-Dane, Dillingham's director of business development, opened the briefing by declaring it provided builders a chance to dispell unfair rumors about the project.

"They say her tower is leaning, that she won't be completed until the next millennium," Bybee-Dane said. "All these are unfounded rumors and don't belong in a newspaper at a supermarket check-out stand."

Pam Hamilton, the executive vice president of the Centre City Development Corp., said she encouraged Dillingham to hold the session and said the project is a complicated one.

"It is a fabulous project," Hamilton said. "It has taken so much longer to construct because it is so complex."

Also alluding to those complexities was Ron Weisbecker, senior project manager. Weisbecker said two high rises that started at about the same time as Emerald Shapery and are now open — Koll Center and Cabot, Cabot & Forbes Corporate Center — are not nearly as complex.

"They're nice buildings," Weisbecker said. "There's nothing wrong with them. But I don't believe they are the kind of landmark building we are trying to build... This building is extremely complex. It's all hexagons. There may be one straight line, but we haven't found it yet."

Weisbecker said the difficulties in coordinating the construction of hexagon pads has a number of project carpenters walking around with pocket calculators that can do trigonometric functions.

The 30-story office tower contains 375,400 square feet of office space and 17,066 square feet of commercial space. The 27-story hotel will have 436 guest rooms

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and 22,000 square feet of ballrooms and meeting rooms.

The office project is all steel beams, while the bottom 22 floors of the hotel is concrete. The top five floors of the hotel are steel. Developer Sandor Shapery said the use of concrete on the hotel keeps the floor to ceiling heights down and lowered the project by about 40 feet. While concrete construction is also supposedly \$3 a square foot cheaper than steel, Shapery said slower construction times and interest expenses ate up most of the cost savings.

The concrete construction on the hotel should top out next month with the steel to follow. Dillingham hopes to finish with the steel work in July so it can remove the huge Favco 750 Luffing Boom Tower Crane being used for the first time on the West Coast.

As originally designed, Shapery Center was to have been skinned entirely in green glass. But San Diego officials quickly tired of all glass structures and limited the developer to a maximum of 50 percent of the building's skin in glass. Also, to reduce glare, the green glass first proposed was lightened up considerably in order to meeting a reflectivity coefficient maximum of 0.3.

"If you look at the green in the model you can see we took a little bit of artistic license (with the coloring)," Shapery said.

The top eight to 10 floors of each of the pods will be clad only in curtain walls of glass, adding to the project's unique looks.

Because of the hexagon shape of the hotel towers, nine of the 13 rooms on each floor will be of different design.

The atrium will likely be the tallest of any office project in San Diego. Guests will be able to board glass elevators in the atrium and ride them to the 30th floor. The glass elevators are encased in their own glass sheaths so they can leave the atrium on their way to the top of the building.

With the announcement yesterday of a 10-year, \$1.6 million, lease with the law firm of Friedberg & Bunge for the 25th floor, Shapery Center is now 30 percent pre-leased.

Other major tenants include the Greater San Diego Chamber of

Commerce, Coopers & Lybrand and the Headquarter Cos. Bill John of Grubb & Ellis, who with Vince Botticelli is handling leasing, expects the building to be 50 percent leased by the time it opens.

The project is being outfitted with state-of-the-art Mitsubishi elevators, the first of which were installed three weeks ago. A quick trip to the top of one of the towers yesterday was the smoothest elevator ride the 20 or so riders could recall. The elevators reach a top speed of 800 feet per minute.



The \$135 million Emerald-Shapery Center's hexagonal towers rise 18 to 30 stories. C.W. Kim designed the complex for Shapery Enterprises and Tokyu Corp. Robert Englekirk is structural engineer, Thomas Gilbertson & Associates is mechanical engineer, J.H. Anderson & Associates is electrical engineer, Richard Bender is design consultant, William Lam Associates is lighting design consultant and Dillingham Construction is construction manager.