

# Visions for a Multi-Mixed-Use Project

## ARCHITECTURE: New hotel, food hall, shark tank

By KATIE MURAR

“There’s nothing like this in Orange County,” said **Tom Bergerson**.

That’s saying something for a principal at **Architects Orange**, whose career in design spans three decades.

This is **Banc Hotel**, a proposed office tower-hotel-food hall with three pools, a Roman spa, medical office space and a rooftop events area that comes in at just more than an acre of ground—high above Jamboree Road in Irvine, not far from **John Wayne Airport**.

It is slated to be built on an empty plot of land between the new **Boardwalk** office development and a new **LBA Realty** creative office project, **2722 Michelson**, now partially occupied by **Palmer Luckey’s Anduril Industries Inc.**

Did we mention the night club?

The Business Journal reported last year on the mixed-use project when Irvine-based entitlement consultant **Starpointe Ventures** moved it through city approvals, which came in May.

Developer **John De Vries** plans to break ground early next year on the site that fronts Jamboree Road, but will carry a Teller Avenue address.

### Dreamt Up

Architects Orange—aka **AO** and the biggest local practice by OC billings (see story and list, beginning page 24)—is finding the ambitious idea an ongoing effort.

AO bested two other firms and climbed aboard the project in 2017.



Bergerson: ‘unique and ambitious’

“We put together a team of 30 architects that focus on hospitality and international business who could understand John’s vision and vocabulary,” Bergerson said.

The balance, as ever, has been between creativity and extravagance.

“We’ve had to reign him in,” at times, though original elements remain—a 16,000-gallon shark tank in the office-hotel lobby, say, or the 20,000-square-foot Roman spa (see story, this page).

### Creative Process

The project pencils up to 258 hotel rooms and 166,000 square feet of office space. The look originally mirrored Boardwalk’s glass-focused façade; current renderings-in-progress suggest a stone surface for the gawking, enjoying public.

Nobody said incarnating vision was easy.

De Vries is the mastermind, and his **HJ Capital Group** heading the development is doing some of the design work, too.

It was his call, for instance, to soften the exterior of the building, seeing stone as a more traditional hotel feel.

It’s clearly no **Marriott International** project—another client of AO’s, decidedly more conservative.

De Vries doesn’t come to the project with a background in hospitality; his backers run a Korean-made skincare and lifestyle products firm that has reportedly used synthetic snake venom in its wares.



Rendering: Banc Hotel a work in process

### Future Passion

A standard project might have designers meeting with engineers and contractors weekly to go over technical details.

For this one, which doesn’t yet have a contractor, a second weekly meeting of about two hours was added to discuss ideas and logistics.

Think charrette, but with **Nikola Tesla** at the table.

“It’s exciting as an architect to work with a client with such passion,” Bergerson said.

The final product, at least the current one, as tinkering continues, is “even better than the original.”

Once design is done the city gets another say; if all goes well, the Banc Hotel could deliver in June 2021.

“A project as unique and ambitious as this,” Bergerson said, “will influence future development.” ■

## Amenity Overload

Where do they put the Roman Spa? Asking for a friend.

**Banc Hotel** is a nearly 700,000-square-foot mixed-use project planned for a now-vacant 6-acre site at 18582 Teller Ave., with an estimated project development cost around \$330 million.

Developer **HJ Capital Group** is still choosing a general contractor; **Architects Orange** and **HBA Interior Design** are doing their work.

The “first-of-its-kind” project locally “will be huge for Irvine,” developer **John De Vries** told the Business Journal.

His project includes:

- An 11-story hotel with 258 rooms atop
- Six stories of office, 166,000 square feet
- 10,000-square-foot food hall **PiggyBanc**

- A high-end gym with 33,000 square feet

- Rooftop events area of 45,000 square feet

- A detached, nine-story parking structure

- The 20,000-square-foot Roman spa

Other amenities include three pools, high-end restaurants and bars designed by **HJ Capital**, hotel shuttles and access to a private plane at **JWA**.

Sixteen hotel rooms are planned as “condotel” units individually owned and rented out to guests; offices include 11,000 square feet devoted to medical tenants; some of the rest will house **HJ Capital’s** headquarters.

De Vries said Banc Hotel’s concept could work in other cities, such as Scottsdale, Ariz.; Nashville, and Miami.