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FOR RELEASE AFTER 9:00 A. M.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1969

UNITED STATES STEEL TO CONSTRUCT

FIRST TWO "THEME HOTELS" IN WALT DISNEY WORLD

ORLANDO, FLA. -- The first two "theme resort hotels" to be built in Walt Disney World by United States Steel's USS Realty Development Division will employ the world's first major use of steel framed unitized or modular construction, it was announced here by Edwin H. Gott, chairman of the board.

"The 10-story Contemporary A-frame designed hotel and the 12-story Polynesian style resort hotel will be a demonstration of the kind of technical innovation Walt Disney sought to encourage on the part of American industry," said Mr. Gott, "in that the 1,450 steel framed unitized rooms for the two theme hotels at Walt Disney World will each weigh approximately six tons -- far less than the 30-ton modular hotel rooms that have been built using other construction materials."

Both hotels have been master-planned by WED Enterprises, designed by Welton Becket & Associates, and will be constructed and leased by U. S. Steel to Walt Disney Hotel Company which will operate them. Both hotels are scheduled for completion in the fourth quarter, 1971.

Significantly -- and with long-range implications for city housing as well as hotels -- the use of steel in lightweight modules could have wide adaptability in meeting the needs of the growing population.

In unitized construction, each hotel room is assembled at ground level in an on-site facility designed for this purpose. Furnishings and basic utilities including bathroom and air climate control fixtures are installed, and the hall door locked. The room is then hoisted into place, and the utilities "plugged in."

Disney planners point out that the rooms will be so complete at installation that "the first person entering the room after it leaves the ground could really be the maid."

"The unitized rooms, measuring 29 feet by 14 feet 4 inches, will be framed with steel structural members," notes Joseph R. Dembeck, president of USS Realty Development Division. "It is a self-sustained unit that can be stacked three high without additional structural support. The vertical steel supports will be covered on the inside of the room with gypsum board and a wall finish that will convey the motif of the respective theme hotel. The floor will utilize a light gauge steel deck with fill and then carpeted. Above the gypsum board ceiling, utility lines will connect room outlets that will be interconnected with other rooms after the units are set in place in the steel structural hotel frame," said Mr. Dembeck.

When set in place, the rooms are secured with a unique interlock system and the plumbing and utility lines are connected. As each room will have a two-hour fire rating, the exterior structural frame of the theme hotels will not require fireproofing.

Each room can sleep five people, thereby allowing entire families to share one room. The over-sized powder room, featuring twin wash basins, is designed larger than a standard hotel bathroom.

Architectural facades and interior designs will carry out the basic theme of the hotel -- South Sea Island in the Polynesian and a "tomorrow" motif at the Contemporary.

The Contemporary hotel will employ a primary frame, allowing three modules to be stacked one on another between the structural supports. The unitized rooms will be placed three high to make up the motel annex buildings surrounding each theme hotel.

The 360-room "tomorrow" hotel will also include a grand ballroom/convention hall that will seat 1,500 guests for dinner or 2,000 people theatre style. A monorail will run through the open mall lobby. In the "South Sea" hotel, many of the 250 rooms will have private garden patios. The remaining 840 identically constructed unitized rooms will make up the motel annex facilities.

Each resort complex will have specialty shops, restaurants and service facilities for hotel guests and visitors to nearby Walt Disney World Theme Park. A scuba diving pool, health club and high-ceiling "South Sea" dining room located atop the Polynesian hotel are other features of the hotels. The monorail which runs through the lobby of the Contemporary hotel and by the Polynesian complex will carry guests to the Theme Park and other locations in the project.

The agreement between United States Steel and Walt Disney World is the result of many months of research and consideration of alternate construction approaches. It began when WED Enterprises, the Disney design subsidiary, asked the Welton Becket organization to investigate the possibility of using "unitized construction methods" in assembling the hotel rooms in Walt Disney World.

The Becket architects and engineers studied concrete, plastic and steel framing methods of modular construction. U. S. Steel, which has had a continuing research study of unitized construction for many years, submitted a proposal to Walt Disney Productions and has collaborated with WED Enterprises and the Becket staff to prepare architectural drawings and specifications.