

ISLAND: Huge Hangars Make Great Movie Sound Stages

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draws.

The hangars at Treasure Island are mammoth. Buildings Two and Three each is larger than a football field, with space left over for offices. Building 180 is 100 by 200 feet with a 40-foot ceiling. Such spaces enable film companies to build huge sets, then make forays for location shooting in Bay Area cities, mainly San Francisco.

Rent on the big hangars is about \$30,000 a month, but film companies have gotten breaks by making capital improvements, said Clifford Graves, executive director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, which administers the island's hangars.

With San Francisco looming in the background through rows of palms, and weather that is usually sunny but windy, the islands are good work environments. There's plenty of parking and little interference from the outside world. Because the hangars are managed by the city, the Navy doesn't have to get involved with issues about scripts. In the past, the military has occasionally prohibited filming on its facilities because of scripts that put the military in a bad light.

'Copy Cat' Filming

"Copy Cat" in 1994 was the first film that used Treasure Island hangar space for shooting and production offices. The interior of the lavish house of the agoraphobic psychiatrist played by Sigourney Weaver was built in Building Two. Next came "Jade," the sexy crime melodrama starring David Caruso. "James and the Giant Peach" used island space for live-action segments.

Another part of Building 180 houses Don Johnson's "Nash Bridges" television series production offices and the elaborate set of his character's apartment near China-

town. Building Two is brimful of sets for "Metro," the Eddie Murphy police action movie, including a complete police station interior, with rain machines to give San Francisco a moody look.

The city's film commission just sewed up a big deal with Disney for the use of the remaining hangar, Building Three, which will become the set and production offices for the remake of "Flubber," starring Robin Williams, due to start production in October. "Flubber" will also use part of Building 180, effectively taking over the island through year's end.

Romantic Comedy

"A Smile Like Yours" recently moved into part of Building 180 too. The romantic comedy stars Greg Kinnear of "Sabrina" and Lauren Holly of "Picket Fences" as young marrieds battling career stresses to have a first child. Joan Cusack, Jay Thomas ("Mr. Holland's Opus") and Jill Hennessy ("I Shot Andy Warhol") are co-stars.

The filmmakers recently shot footage at a Giants game and in Kentfield and will use several San Francisco locations.

Also due in town, though not using island facilities, are shoots for "Father's Day," an Ivan Reitman comedy starring Robin Williams and Billy Crystal; a Michael Douglas thriller titled "The Game," to be directed by David Fincher ("Seven"); and "Desperate Measures," starring Michael Keaton and Andy Garcia. Filming at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo begins in early fall for "Sphere," with Barry Levinson directing the sci-fi thriller based on Michael Crichton's best-selling novel about an alien craft that lands in the ocean.

There is no accurate measure of the financial windfall for the Bay Area because of filming. The makers of "The Rock" spent about

\$5 million in San Francisco (not counting the millions spent to film on Alcatraz), and for each episode of "Nash Bridges," produced by CBS, \$2 million is spent.

"Safe to say these productions are spending a lot. They hire a lot in terms of local crews and use catering services, hardware and

supplies, hotel rooms, restaurants and transportation and other services," Eickman said.

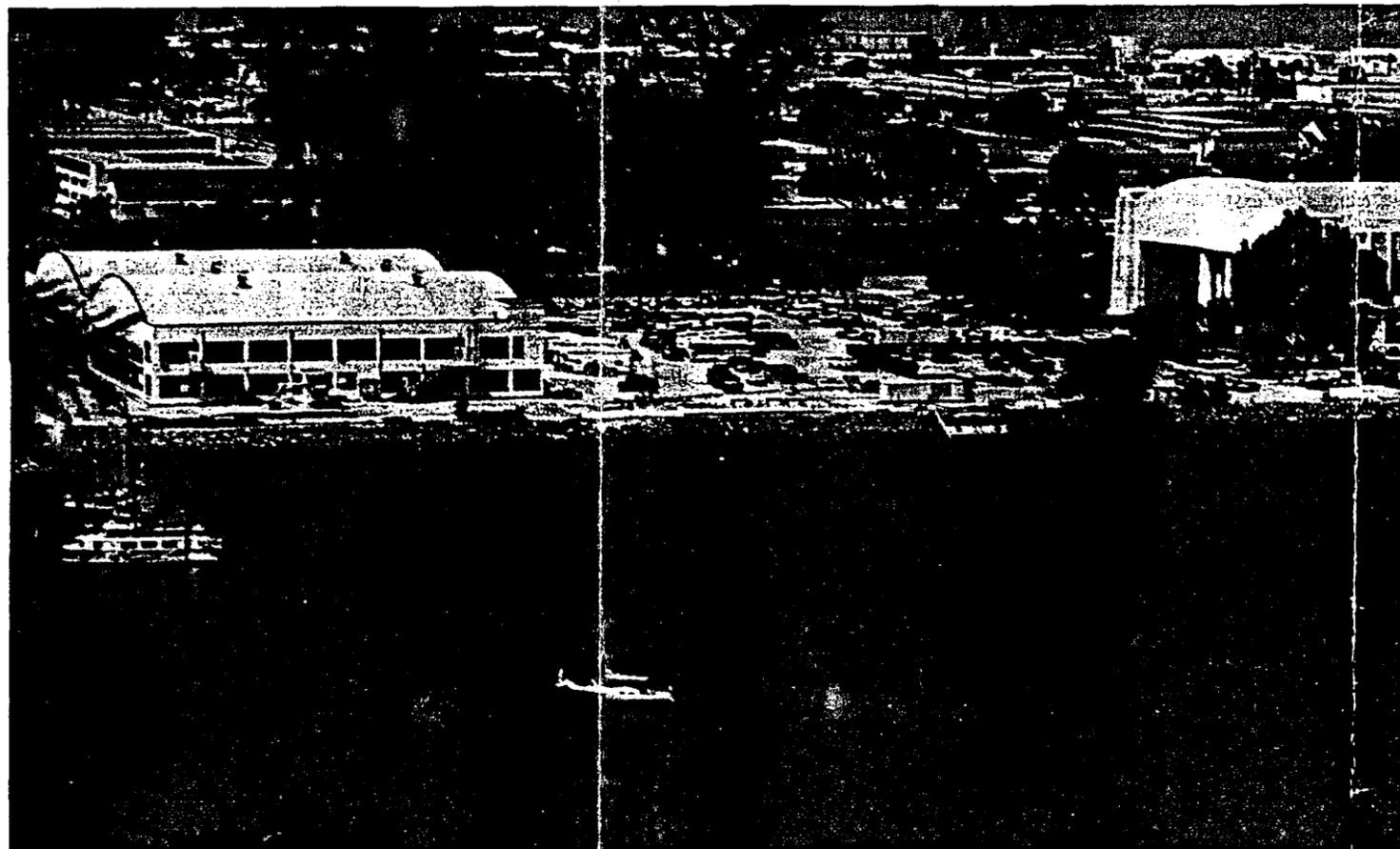
The Navy will abandon Treasure Island and nearby Yerba Buena Island by September 1997. Then the city must decide what is to become of the island, originally intended to be San Francisco Inter-

national Airport until World War II intervened.

Redevelopment's Graves has pitched Treasure Island to "a number of major entertainment companies" as a possible site for a theme park or other entertainment complex.

"It's not an entirely golden

piece of real estate for us to inherit," said Graves. "Access could be a problem, and we need to know more about the stability of the geology, since it's a filled sandbar. But Treasure Island is a unique place, and the feedback we've gotten from the entertainment industry is that it's full of promise."



BY VINCE MAAGGORA/THE CHRONICLE

Treasure Island hangars, originally built for an international airport, are being used as sound stages by movie studios desperate for space

Hollywood Discovers Treasure

Island's huge unused airplane hangars in demand as sound stages for movies, TV

BY PETER STACK
Chronicle Staff Writer

Treasure Island has become an island paradise for Hollywood film studios, thanks to big aircraft hangars designed for an international airport that never was.

Three huge hangars at Treasure Island Naval Station are filling a "desperate need" for sound-stage space that Los Angeles has outgrown as film production has soared in recent years.

"There just aren't that many buildings you can find anywhere with 80- or

Mare Island Becomes a Movie Set
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90-foot-high ceilings," said Robin Eickman, director of the San Francisco Film and Video Arts Commission.

The film commission is marketing 400-acre Treasure Island, which the Navy will soon abandon, as a great place to shoot. Hollywood has booked hangar space solid through next year.

This rush was prompted in part by the heavy demand for major sound-stage

space throughout Los Angeles by Warner Bros.' "Batman and Robin" production.

"Basically, there's no space in L.A.," said Roy Enke, veteran Bay Area location manager, "and that's great news for us — and for the Bay Area economy. We've got the talent here, some of the biggest names in the industry."

For filmmakers, San Francisco's "Hollywood North" reputation and the abandonment of military bases at Treasure Island, Alameda and Vallejo are definite ISLAND: Page E4 Col. 1