

# GLOUCESTER DAILY

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## Are you ready for this?

### Developer proposes to build resort on artificial island

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A New Jersey man wants to build an artificial island for 100,000 people off the coast of Gloucester.

Richard Gugel of Clinton, N.J., not only wants to build the island, dubbed "Gugel's Arabian Nights," but he wants it to be an independent country.

Is this some kind of a joke?

Apparently not, say officials from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The government gets weird proposals for offshore islands all the time, said Tom Bigford, head of the Fisheries Service's habitat branch. He said this was just one of the more extreme proposals.

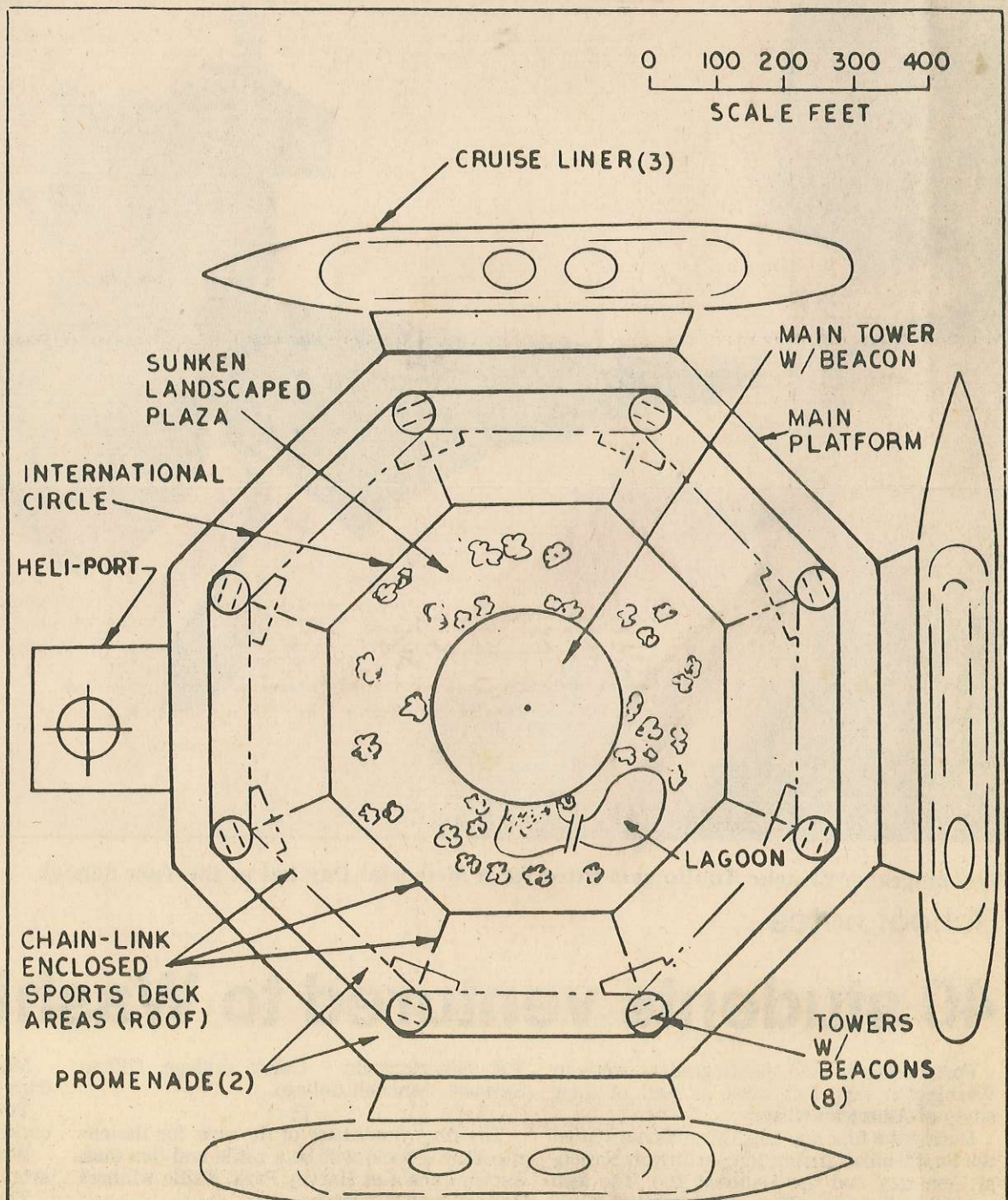
According to an official with the Corps of Engineers, Gugel has proposed the same thing for a site off the New York/New Jersey coast.

But before Gugel's island is advertised for public comment, the U.S. State Department must rule on whether it is legal for a person to build another country so close to the U.S. coast.

While the legal technicalities are hammered out in Washington, D.C., Fisheries Service and Corps of Engineers personnel are looking at the project with slightly raised eyebrows.

The main tower of Gugel's Arabian Nights, which would be topped by a huge, mirror-covered, onion-shaped dome, would be 500 feet off the surface of the water. The 50-foot-wide main tower would be ringed with eight, smaller towers, topped by gold-gilded onion shaped domes.

From a distance, it would, indeed, look like a shimmering palace from the Arabian Nights.





# ● Developer proposes artificial island

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entertainment rooms and a hotel, and the base of the main tower will include a marina and "under-sea arena."

The entire complex is divided into several levels.

The main platform is comprised of a lower level, which will house life support systems including a diesel electric power plant, a desalination plant, a sewage treatment plants and fuel, potable water and emergency water storage.

The upper level of the main platform, approximately 800,000 square feet, will include a "hypermarket," or a shopping mall without walls with 20 to 40-foot high ceilings.

The top of the main platform will have shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities as well as a four-story hotel.

The roof of the main platform will have a sports deck, which will be "totally enclosed by a plastic-coated 'cyclone fence' with small openings to prevent balls from becoming lodged in them and to dis-

courage attempts to climb the fence (feet won't fit in the openings.)"

There would also be an outdoor plaza complete with a "sunken landscape" and a lagoon.

The cylindrical, eight-story towers would contain long-term rental penthouse apartments. The towers would be 40 feet in diameter and each floor will have 1,250 square feet of space.

Despite the somewhat extravagant nature of the proposal, federal officials are treating it as an official proposal.

"It is not the first time we've seen outrageous proposals," said Bigford. "People have proposed artificial reefs out of tires, kitty litter trays and carpet.

"The more you look at it, it's very futuristic. It's very innovative, to say the least."

Bigford said that as technology has improved, so has the feasibility of floating projects.

"The technology is there," he said. "When they build skyscrapers in Boston, they bury the pilings in the mud and dirt."

He said the platform would be

built along the lines of an offshore oil drilling platform.

This is not the first project proposed to be floated on water, Bigford said.

In Australia, some developers permanently anchored an ocean liner in waters of the Great Barrier reef and turned it into a seven-story hotel complete with 200 rooms, a disco, tennis courts and two restaurants.

In St. Louis, a developer has proposed a 40-room inn and restaurant floating on Mississippi River.

Residential structures have been proposed for waters off the coast of New Jersey and New York.

The New York/New Jersey Port Authority wants to build a \$65 million floating ferry terminal.

The New York City Transit Authority is taking bids for construction of a \$50 million floating terminal for 250 buses.

In Nagasaki, Japan, plans have been proposed for a 12-story floating complex, with restaurants, stores, offices, hotels, a convention

center and parking.

There have also been proposals, none of which have passed, to build floating nuclear power plants.

Nonetheless, Bigford is concerned that a complex like Gugel's Arabian Nights would be exposed to serious storms common for this part of the Atlantic Ocean.

Bigford said it is no surprise people want to build offshore, because "there is no more land left on shore."

But there are "new impacts to worry about, such as tanker collisions, aesthetics and sewage treatment. Fishermen, whale watch companies and the Defense Department might care about this.

"I wonder about his ability to get insurance," he said. "It would be risky out there with winter storms. What happens if there is a power failure and they run out of drinking water?"

"There are a lot of questions. Building on ocean looks like a viable option to real estate developers, but there are a lot of problems."