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Thursday, August 4, 2011

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TIAA-CREF Starts 42-Story Tower Redo

By Natalie Dolce

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Fifty Fremont

SAN FRANCISCO-**TIAA-CREF** is moving forward with a multi-million dollar renovation of Fifty Fremont and the Plaza at Fifty Fremont, the 42-story class-A office tower and its outdoor plaza located in San Francisco's Financial District at the intersection of Fremont and Mission Streets. Construction is slated to begin in July 2011, and is expected to be complete by the first quarter of 2012. TIAA-CREF tells GlobeSt.com that it will be approximately $10-million for this phase of improvements.

The tower's original architecture firm, **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**,will now oversee the dramatic transformation of the tower's main lobby and entries, common areas, retail buildings, outdoor plaza and streetscape, all in harmony with the building's LEED Platinum certification and sustainability commitments. The new phase of renovations follows a first phase of improvements completed in 2010 that focused on sustainable infrastructure and operations. These improvements, according to a prepared statement, led to the USGBC certifying Fifty Fremont as LEED Platinum, a nationally recognized certification showcasing the property's commitment to eco-conscious operations.

"Fifty Fremont is a trophy asset in a strategic location anchoring San Francisco's South Financial District," says **John Cornuke**, director of real estate asset management for TIAA-CREF. "Our renovation plan will focus on refreshing and improving the tower's arrival experience and public outdoor spaces in a modern context, changes that will enhance the day-to-day experience of our tenants at Fifty Fremont, help create value for clients, and deepen our connection to the local community."

According to a prepared statement, "This coveted certification will influence the design from architects **Craig Hartman** and **Tamara Dinsmore** of SOM who have offered a plan grounded in sustainability and focused on Fifty Fremont's landmark status in its urban community."

According to Hartman, "At Fifty Fremont, we are fortunate to have the quality architecture and class A business environment established by the original 1983 SOM building design. We see the rapid transformation of the South of Market and Transbay neighborhoods at the beginning of the 21st century as an opportunity to create an even more lively engagement of the property with the city. We will focus on creating a renewed arrival experience and identity, infusing the lobby and entries with light and an expanded sense of space. We will also address the outdoor plaza by enhancing its purpose as a communal gathering spot, creating an active piazza, where visitors will engage a comfortable open space juxtaposed against the density of the modern city."

The SOM design will infuse the lobby with natural light by installing larger window panes, replace the current black granite surfaces with domestically sourced limestone accented by sustainably harvested woods, and add a modern feel by adding brushed stainless steel on columns and door frames to identify building entrances, according to the statement. These stainless steel treatments will be carried outside to the tower entrances, including new canopy overhangs at the doors to the lobby. Additional illumination will come from energy efficient LED lighting, adding illumination along the canopies and for glass incased air duct columns to provide a night-time glow and signature.

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Natalie Dolce *Natalie Dolce, editor of the West Coast region for GlobeSt.com and Real Estate Forum, is responsible for coverage of news and information pertaining to that vital real estate region. Prior to moving out to the Southern California office, Natalie was Northeast bureau chief, covering New York City for GlobeSt.com. Dolce's background includes a stint at InStyle Magazine, and as managing editor with New York Press, an alternative weekly New York City paper. In her career, she has also covered a variety of beats Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel magazine, FashionLedge.com, Co-Ed magazine, and has also freelanced for a number of publications including MSNBC.com and Museums New York magazine. Contact Natalie Dolce.*

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