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Major Renovation Set to Begin at San Francisco Office Tower

8/04/11

TIAA-CREF is set to begin a multi-million dollar renovation of Fifty Fremont and The Plaza at Fifty Fremont, a 42-story Class A office tower and its outdoor plaza in San Francisco's Financial District. The property, which offers more than 787k sf of rentable office space and 26k sf of storefront retail space, is located at the intersection of Fremont and Mission Streets.



The tower's original architecture firm, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), will now oversee the dramatic transformation of the tower's main lobby and entries, common areas, retail buildings, outdoor plaza and streetscape. The work is being done in harmony with the building's LEED Platinum certification and sustainability commitments.

"Fifty Fremont is a trophy asset in a strategic location anchoring San Francisco's South Financial

District," said John Cornuke, Director, 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."

Construction is slated to begin in July 2011, and is expected to be complete by the first quarter of 2012. This new phase of renovations follows a first phase of improvements completed in 2010 that focused on sustainable infrastructure and operations. These improvements led to the U.S. Green Building Council certifying Fifty Fremont as LEED Platinum, a nationally recognized certification showcasing the property's commitment to eco-conscious operations.

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.

"At Fifty Fremont, we are fortunate to have the quality architecture and Class A business environment established by the original 1983 SOM building design," said Hartman. "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. 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.

Plans for the Plaza at Fifty Fremont will focus on creating a more inviting outdoor space that provides a location for eating, relaxing, impromptu meetings and embracing urban culture. This will include the addition of an amphitheater seating block at the south edge of the plaza looking in towards center, positioned to maximize its exposure to natural light and views of the plaza environment and landscaping. Additional renovations will add a series of stone planters in the plaza; create intimate gathering areas and outdoor dining for a new restaurant; install native landscaping and trees; all to shape what will become more of an 'outdoor room' that is fully functional and encourages regular use.

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