

Mini Parks in the Sky Set Park Tower Apart

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By Lisa Brown

SAN FRANCISCO—The newly completed Park Tower at Transbay, a 45-story office building developed by The John Buck Company, Golub & Company and MetLife, made news in recent months that it will be fully occupied by Facebook. At 755,900 square feet, that is the largest single lease deal in San Francisco's history.

Located at the corner of Howard and Beale streets in the city's Transbay district, the 803,700-square-foot tower sits across the street from the new Transbay Transit Center and is just three blocks from the Bay.

At 605 feet tall, the tower is designed with a massing that integrates three different floor plates. Within these distinct floor plates, a series of large outdoor terraces are carved out to provide substantial outdoor tenant amenity spaces or mini "parks in the sky".



Large outdoor terraces are carved out to provide outdoor spaces or mini "parks in the sky" (credit: Tim Griffith).

"The 'mini parks' are unique for office buildings," Scott Seyer, principal and senior project designer at Goettsch Partners, tells GlobeSt.com. "The larger size of these spaces makes them feel more like terraces rather than simply balconies. Given the mild San Francisco climate and the desire of today's tenants for outdoor access, we felt the office market would welcome this kind of building amenity."

The project marks architecture firm Goettsch Partners' first completed building in the city.

"The terraces are a defining element of the project, both in terms of what they contribute to the interior functions and also to distinguish the building in the downtown context," says James Goettsch, chairman and co-CEO at Goettsch Partners, as well as the design leader for the project. "They are specifically site-oriented throughout the tower to provide exceptional views of the Bay and Salesforce Park, offering clear connections to the city."

The tower's facade is composed of floor-to-ceiling glass and includes vertical glass fins that relate to the location of the tower terraces, which occur at a three-story module. The podium facade also utilizes a series of single-floor fins to break down the scale at the pedestrian level. The pattern is repeated to the base of the building.

"The materiality and scale of the facade changes with each of the distinct floor plate areas, yet they work in concert with each other," notes Seyer. "The design intent is to create a timeless aesthetic that serves as a positive addition to both the Transbay area as well as the city skyline."

At the base of the tower is a covered 3,600-square-foot outdoor plaza with a 35-foot-high ceiling. The area is designated as privately owned public outdoor space that abuts both the tower's main lobby and adjoining retail space. Along with a series of outdoor seating areas, a major focal point of this outdoor space is a large, site-specific art installation titled "Night Writing" by Teresita Fernandez, which is integrated into the main wall of the tower's core.

With design features such as raised floors, natural ventilation and high-efficiency building systems, the project addresses several sustainable initiatives and is certified LEED Gold.

In addition to Goettsch Partners and the development group, the project team included project manager Project Management Advisors, associate architects Solomon Cordwell Buenz and Stevens & Associates, structural engineer Magnusson Klemencic Associates, MEP engineer WSP, landscape architect Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture and general contractor Clark Construction Group, as well as Lightswitch Architectural and IA Interior Architects.

The San Francisco office market continues to display increasing amounts of tenant demand, as more than 2.5 million square feet was leased in third quarter, according to a report by Kidder Mathews. Direct vacancy increased 15 basis points quarter-over-quarter, standing at 4.55%. Average asking lease rates continue to climb, standing at a high of \$72 per square foot full service, up nearly 10% quarter-over-quarter.

Lisa Brown

Lisa Brown is an editor for the south and west regions of GlobeSt.com. She has 25-plus years of real estate experience, with a regional PR role at Grubb & Ellis and a national communications position at MMI. Brown also spent 10 years as executive director at NAIOP San Francisco Bay Area chapter, where she led the organization to achieving its first national award honors and recognition on Capitol Hill. She has written extensively on commercial real estate topics and edited numerous pieces on the subject.