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ON THE BOARDS

Uber is Building a Vertical Street for its San Francisco Headquarters

New York's SHoP Architects and San Francisco's Studio O+A are designing the 423,000-square-foot, two-building complex.

By [SARA JOHNSON](#)



SHoP Architects

Renderings of a new San Francisco headquarters for ride-hailing app Uber were released on Wednesday, [the San Francisco Chronicle first reported](#). New York's [SHoP Architects](#) and San Francisco's [Studio O+A](#) are designing the 423,000-square-foot complex for a site in the city's Mission Bay neighborhood.

The headquarters span two buildings, both with Third Street addresses, that are connected by three bridges over Pierpoint Lane. One of the buildings is 11 stories, the other is a shorter, longer one at six stories tall. SHoP principal and partner-in-charge Christopher Sharples, AIA, gives a one-word explanation for the building shapes: "zoning."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

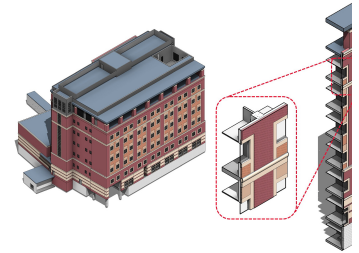


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SHoP Architects



SHoP Architects

The building is designed as a kind of vertical city, divided into "neighborhoods" with a circulation spine on the Third Street side called "the Commons."

"We really thought it was important that it should reflect some of the qualities that are unique to San Francisco, especially the sort of streetscape, the rises—it's really a vertical city in that sense—and so we wanted to bring that into the building, this almost inside-outside experience of the city," Sharples says. "That's really reflected in the experience of the Commons that wraps up through both buildings and connected by a series of bridges across Pierpoint. But the idea is really that every neighborhood, every engineered neighborhood is connected to this interior street called the Commons."

At least one Uber official gives a different motivation behind the design. From the [San Francisco Chronicle](#): "The 'inside-out' design seeks to reinforce the openness of Uber's corporate culture, according to Adony Beniares, head of workplace operations. 'There is a transparency we have internally where anybody can talk to anybody about what is going on' regardless of title or level of responsibility, he said."



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Sharples also explains that office space will project into this street-facing circulation space. "Within the Commons space—again this comes back to trying to take some cues from San Francisco—you know how the bay windows, as you are moving up, they stick into the space of the street, we were really looking into that same idea inside the Commons," Sharples says. "So we're cantilevering the volumes which will be conference spaces, workspaces that project out in the space, but above them we'll have breakout areas, almost like porches, where people can come out and hang out and do work or have conversations."



SHoP Architects

Both buildings will include space for retail on the ground floor, and the taller building will include a day care that would integrate with an adjacent public park. "We've got retail on both buildings facing Third Street and then a café on Pierpoint next to the nursery, and possibly looking at having the cafeteria open out onto Pierpoint Lane as well," Sharples says. "So really trying to make a strong connection with the community, and make it really feel it has a connection with the public side of the neighborhood. It's not too different from what we were trying to do with [Barclays](#), where you have a lot of retail in the base, but you can still see into the building, so really creating that sense of openness and transparency."



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SHoP Architects

The building will also literally open up to the outside. Parts of the glass façade will be operable, and the six-story building includes a double-height multi-purpose room with a retractable roof.



SHoP Architects

The project is currently in the schematic design phase, with an expected opening of late 2017 or early 2018. It is SHoP's first project in San Francisco.



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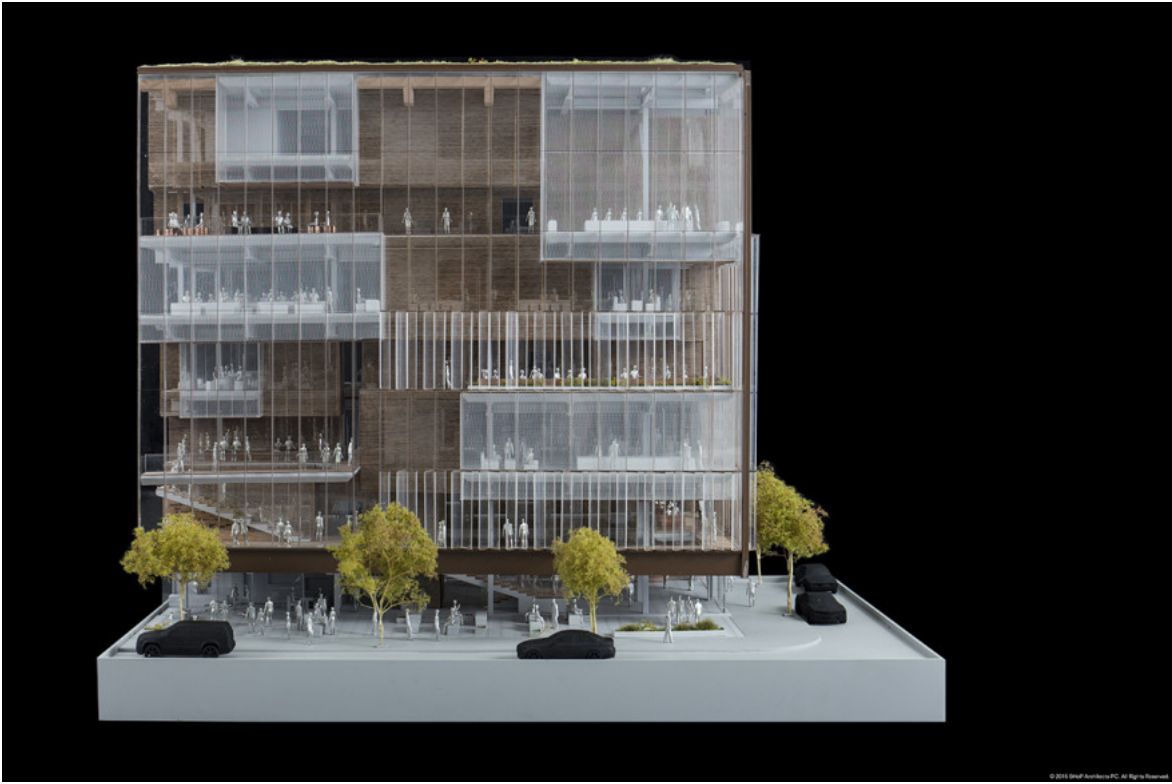


The Mission Bay site as of March 2014.



SHoP Architects

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For more work by SHoP Architects, visit [ARCHITECT's Project Gallery](#).

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