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## SAN FRANCISCO Business Times

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### Finalist: 185 Berry St. addition

San Francisco Business Times - by [Ron Leuty](#)

When **McCarthy Cook** & Co. wanted additional space atop its China Basin office building, the first question was: How?

Situated between the **San Francisco Giants'** new ballpark and the Caltrain station — and near Mission Bay — the existing three-story, concrete frame structure would need more space. But Edward Cook III and Michael Freeman of McCarthy Cook & Co. wanted to do so without a seismic upgrade to the original building and with minimal disruption to existing tenants.

Enter Simpson, Gumpertz & Heger. The engineering firm's team led by John Sumnicht proposed adding two new floors — 175,000 square feet in all — by using 87 seismic isolation bearings that act like a giant damper atop the existing structure.

That reduces the amount of earthquake force on the existing building as well.

Plus, the addition needed elevator access, so SGH attached the elevator shafts and stairs to the existing building — creating a tower that extends through the addition — and designed a three-foot moat around them. The shafts float around the core of the addition, Sumnicht said.

Because the design was outside the building code, it faced a peer review panel. Because it is the first U.S. building to use the concept, that process took more than a year. The project has yet to book a tenant, but SGH's unique approach has won seven awards to date.

#### 185 Berry St. Addition

Location: 185 Berry St., San Francisco.  
Size: 175,000 square feet.  
Completion date: March 2008.  
Developer: RREEF and McCarthy Cook & Co.  
Architects: Helmuth, Obata + Kassabaum.  
Contractors: Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Co.  
Engineers: Simpson, Gumpertz & Heger.  
Financial partner: Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. (MetLife).

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