

# Square feat: Fitting one building on another could make builder a star

San Francisco Business Times - by [Jim Gardner](#)

The hardhats at **Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Co.** have learned a new trick, and it may get them on TV.

The **Discovery Channel** has expressed interest in filming the firm's 175,000-square-foot, two-story addition to 185 Berry St., adjacent to AT&T Park and Mission Bay. Hailed by industry publications and presented in college lectures as a feat of engineering prowess, it represents the latest in retrofitting technology, more focused on harnessing than controlling lateral movement during an earthquake.

Just getting the addition up on top was a feat. Originally designed as a six-story structure, Berry Street was built in 1991 with only three floors. A series of temblors increased the building code standards, and by the time Hathaway Dinwiddie stepped in, they were told they could only add 80,000 square feet.

"That was clearly not cost effective," said Mike Freeman, vice president at **McCarthy Cook & Co.**, the building's co-owner with RREEF. So the scheming began.

Engineers proposed a unique mass-dampening system, pioneered in earthquake-prone Japan, which increased building resiliency -- and the square footage -- to 175,000 square feet. The city of San Francisco closely examined the plans, and professional as well as professorial (from engineers at U.C. Berkeley) scrutiny was required before they gave the go-ahead.

Even after that, things were still shaky. Builders had to accommodate existing tenants who worked day and night in all three floors of the building. A medley of rooftop boilers, pumps and refrigeration units for UCSF's radiology and other labs had to be completely replaced in a nearby courtyard, while the third-floor roof was turned into the fourth floor. The two new floors are slated for life science offices.

The project finished in April 2008 -- ahead of schedule -- at an estimated cost of \$40 million.

With all the accolades, McCarthy Cook is still waiting on the most valuable attention of all: from a tenant. In the meantime, they are waiting to hear from the Discovery Channel. "Their photographer got some great videos of it, and if it goes through, we expect a feature in the fall," Freeman said.

No word on whether the project will be featured on "Modern Marvels" or "Mythbusters."