

Foster + Partner Completes restoration of iconic Transamerica Pyramid Center

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Words Foster + Partners.

Photography Nigel Young/Foster + Partners.



The biggest renovation in the building's 50-year history, the project gives a new lease of life to one of the city's most recognizable landmark towers.

Foster + Partners has completed the restoration of the Transamerica Pyramid Center in San Francisco. The biggest renovation in the building's 50-year history, the project gives a new lease of life to one of the city's most recognizable landmark towers and revitalizes the historic Transamerica Redwood Park at its base. The practice was appointed by SHVO, the luxury real estate development and investment firm.

Norman Foster, Founder and Executive Chairman, Foster + Partners, said: "We are delighted to see Transamerica Pyramid Center entering a new era. Our transformation honors the building's history while creating interior spaces that are world class and outdoor public gardens that reconnect with the city."

Michael Shvo, Chairman and CEO, SHVO, said: "The Transamerica Pyramid has always been ahead of its time, and now it always will be. The remastering of this historic block will mark a new chapter for this iconic landmark, ensuring it remains a vibrant hub for creativity, business, and community."

David Summerfield, Head of Studio, Foster + Partners, said: "Our work on the Transamerica Pyramid has revitalized the building, clearing away years of later additions that had compromised the space internally. The new masterplan restores the logic of Pereira's plan, reasserting its clarity and revitalising the ground plane."

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Located in one of the world's premier gateway cities, and a symbol of San Francisco's ambition, the Transamerica Pyramid Center encompasses an entire city block in the Financial District. Designed by the celebrated futurist architect William Pereira and completed in 1972, it is emblematic of the city skyline.



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The tower's lobby has been redesigned to emphasize the building's powerful structural rhythm. A forensic study of the original building blueprints showed a spectacular diagonal structure, which was hidden above the ceiling. This structure has been revealed and clad to match the building's exterior, creating a seamless transition between inside and outside.



The lobby and amenity levels are reimagined as elevated hospitality spaces, with an emphasis on quality and comfort.



The building features state-of-the-art gym, sauna and yoga studios with stunning views of the San Francisco Bay.

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structural rhythm. A forensic study of the original building blueprints showed a spectacular diagonal structure, which was hidden above the ceiling. This structure has been revealed and clad to match the building's exterior, creating a seamless transition between inside and outside. The full height of the lobby is restored, with a soaring glass façade that brings light deep into the space and reconnects office tenants and visitors with their serene natural surroundings.

Complete with a café, florist and bookshop, the lobby reflects the spirit of the local neighborhood, and provides a sense of calm and wellbeing from the moment of arrival. The refined material palette of oak, marble and terrazzo was selected to align with Pereira's original design. At the rear of the lobby space, the tower's Annex has been restored – with new skylights and glazing – to fill the space with natural light and provide spectacular views of the park.

The lobby and amenity levels are reimagined as elevated hospitality spaces, with an emphasis on quality and comfort. Incentivizing the return to the office, a fitness center and sky lobby are located at the middle of the tower – offering a state-of-the-art gym, sauna and yoga studios, as well as high-quality spaces for work and relaxation with panoramic city views. The tower is topped by an exclusive bar for office tenants.

Transamerica Redwood Park – which consists of nearly 50 mature redwood trees transplanted from the Santa Cruz Valley to the site in 1974 and now over 100 feet tall – has also been upgraded and additional landscape activates the site perimeter. Adding seasonal color to the space, Mark Twain Alley – the alleyway from Sansome Street – is lined with eastern red bud trees, leading up to the base of the Transamerica Pyramid featuring curated cafés, shops and restaurants.

The practice has also refurbished Two Transamerica's lobby space, stripping away more recent additions to express the original structure and enhance connections with the park.

Transamerica Pyramid Center's reopening is also marked by the launch of Pyramid Arts, a new series of public exhibitions celebrating innovation and creativity across the arts and sciences. The first installations, both curated by Norman Foster, will be

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on view to the public from September 12, 2024 – January 28, 2025: ‘The Vertical City,’ a design history of Foster + Partners’ towers that challenge convention, and Les Lalanne at Transamerica Redwood Park, an outdoor exhibition honoring the work of iconic French artists Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne.

The Pyramid’s famous spire will also be re-lit for the first time with over 1,300 feet of newly installed LED lights, as part of a comprehensive new lighting design of both the interior and exterior by the L’Observatoire International.

London Breed, Mayor of San Francisco added: “The Transamerica Pyramid is more than just a building, it’s part of our story as a City committed to rebuilding and reinventing itself, and a symbol of San Francisco’s spirit. This renovation not only cements an iconic building to continue as a landmark site for generations to come, but it also is creating a thriving hub for businesses and fostering a vibrant public space for everyone to enjoy. I want to thank Michael Shvo, Lord Norman Foster and all of our partners who are shaping San Francisco’s legacy and helping build a better future.”

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The colonnade is reimagined as an outdoor lounge that blurs the boundary between inside and outside.



The lobby and amenity levels are reimagined as elevated hospitality spaces, with an emphasis on quality and comfort alongside panoramic city views.