

Architect Tries to Deposit Tech Hipsters in the Bank

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An old banking building would seem the last place young technology firms - which lean toward redone warehouses and industrial space - would want to be.

But, driven by California Bank & Trust's decision to shift its headquarters to Oakland, one developer is hoping to draw such firms to the heart of San Francisco's Financial District.

ATC Partners has bought the old Sumitomo Building at 300 California St. and hired Huntsman Architectural Group to give it a new lease on life.

San Francisco-based Huntsman is charged not just with taking an eight-story single tenant building and making the transition to multi-tenant occupancy, but also with creating a space in the Financial District that ATC's targeted clientele - Internet and venture capital firms - will want.

"They have the desire to be there," said Mark Harbick, a Huntsman partner. "but at this point, there are no facilities for them in the Financial District.

The challenge is to refurbish a traditional space in very untraditional ways.

Harbick said the renovation will expose many of the concrete walls and play up new industrial materials such as hot-rolled steel panels and backlighting these companies enjoy so much in South of Market settings.

"It's like being in a warehouse on California Street," Harbick said. "tenants won't be in the same type of environment as their neighbors."

by Cesca Antonelli - from San Francisco Business Times