

Studio Gang's Twisting MIRA Tower Tops Out in San Francisco

by Niall Patrick Walsh

Studio Gang is celebrating a significant milestone with the topping out of their twisting high-rise MIRA tower in San Francisco. Construction of the 400-foot-tall tower began in mid-2017, with steady progression leading to projected occupancy in late 2019. The scheme's design is centered on the evolution of the bay window element, a feature common to San Francisco's early houses. The bay window is reimagined in a high-rise context, twisting across the full height of the tower to offer views across the city.

The dynamic twisting form of the MIRA tower is created thanks to a sophisticated curtain wall facade system, which allows the bays to be attached to a repeatable structural slab from inside the building, hence reducing energy consumption and neighborhood disruption during construction. Although the façade is 55% opaque, the bay-inspired design means every unit has an outlook of almost 180 degrees.

Environmental performance has been central to the design, with integrated features such as a state-of-the-art grey-water harvesting system, green roofs, and high-efficiency fixtures. Combined with the high-performance façade and VRF cooling system, the scheme is targeting a LEED Gold certification.

Although primarily designed to address the need for dense housing in San Francisco, the scheme also meets the ground at a "pleasant human scale" with retail space and pedestrian amenities fronting Folsom and Main Streets.

News of the scheme comes at a busy time for Studio Gang, with the firm last month selected to lead the expansion of Chicago O'Hare Airport, while also unveiling their design for the University of Chicago Center in Paris. ■

