

# San Francisco Chronicle

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## Mission Bay's details are making a big difference

Photos and commentary by John King

It may look like jumbled monotony from afar, but the residential district between Mission Creek and UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay is worth exploring on foot to see how a 21st century urban neighborhood gets built from scratch. Here are six examples of details that add variety to the scene — in one case, not for the better.



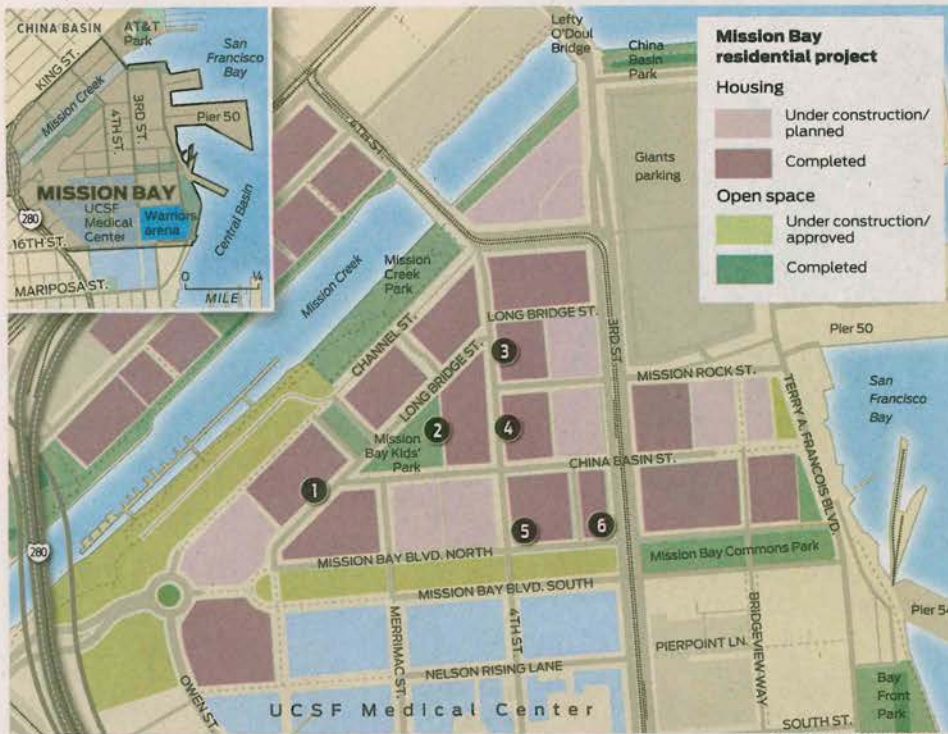
1 ARDEN, 718 LONG BRIDGE ST.

In a district where too many buildings do everything they can to try to look taller than they are, it's refreshing to see this pair of 16-story towers emphasize horizontal strokes, not vertical stripes. The developer and architect — Bosa Properties and Chris Dikeakos Architects — are both from Vancouver, British Columbia, where concrete-and-glass high-rises are common.



2 MISSION BAY KIDS' PARK, LONG BRIDGE AND CHINA BASIN STREETS

Any clearing with play structures would attract young children and their diversion-seeking parents, but this new park designed by RHAA Landscape Architecture ups the ante nicely. There are huts made from willow branches, pyramid-like rope climbs, and a log-topped hill ideal for clambering toddlers.



John Blanchard / The Chronicle



3 VENUE, 1155 FOURTH ST.

Here's an early example (2014) of the quest to add visual pizzazz to the residential area. Seidel Architects and Steinberg Architects attached a four-story, billboard-scale screen to an apartment building. It helps filter sunlight and adds a twist to an otherwise conventional block.



6 FAMILY HOUSE, 540 MISSION BAY BLVD.

Several buildings here are decorated by metalwork with cut patterns, where the designs are programmed on computer to reduce the cost of customization. This is the liveliest, with orange leopard stripes draping one corner of an unusual residential oasis for families whose children are being treated at nearby UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.



5 FIVE 88, 588 MISSION BAY BLVD.

Good architects can turn structure into sculpture. At this five-story building, soon to open with 200 affordable apartments, David Baker Architects exposes the structural columns along Mission Bay Boulevard and makes them big enough to be angled and deeply patterned. Old-school colonnades were never like this.



4 STRATA, 1201 FOURTH ST.

Mission Bay consists of soggy landfill, so the buildings sit on piles driven down to bedrock. The streets aren't on piles. That may prove to be a problem, judging by the gap between the sidewalk and this apartment building from 2009. We'll assume things gets fixed, before step-ladders are needed to enter the storefronts.