



**Memorandum**

August 5, 2015 (revised from July 31, 2015)

To: Vice President Cortez  
From: Campus Architect  
Tom Lollini, FAIA

Subject: RTC Building 86 Preliminary Assessment

On July 29, I visited the Romberg Tiburon Center to undertake an overall assessment of the condition of Building 86. I was joined by Barry Jodatian, SFSU-PPD Director of Project Management; Roger Lenz, President of Construction Management Inspection; Robert White, Vice President of Environmental Services at PSI, and Mark Goodrich AVP SFSU University Property Management. We were met at the site by Brooke Halsey, John Kern, Scott Kern, who is the facility manager for SFSU, and an engineer, who is a TSI volunteer and friend of Brooke.

This is an assessment based on conversations and observations during the visit, review of a facility assessments conducted in 2003 by Charles Thiel during the handover and another conducted in 2014 by ISES, and the consultants' reports, which are attached.

**Building Type/Occupancy:** Building 86 is a single-story, 11,600 SF, steel-framed structure. The roof is supported by an open metal truss system. The building can be defined as a Type III B non-combustible construction with a fire separation of 30' depending on the lot line of this structure. This structure is currently a mixed-use occupancy combining office space B occupancy and storage (S-1 Moderate Hazard) occupancy. No fire rated separation is required between these two occupancies; and no fire resistive construction is required. However, for the S-1 Occupancy to be maintained, all hazardous flammable storage must be separated or removed.

**General Condition:** The building envelope, which includes the corrugated/galvanized sheet metal siding and roof is generally intact, though subsequently applied insulation and cap-sheet roofing has blown off the underlying sheet metal in large sections and is in a general state of disrepair. The roof is reported to leak considerably. The subsequent reroofing covered the intermittent fiberglass "skylights" making the roof unsafe for walking or firefighting.

**Seismic Safety:** The structure, though generally sound, does not meet CSU Trustees requirements for seismic safety due to a lack of shear strength.

**Recent Construction/Lack of Permits:** Recent interior construction appears to have been halted. It involves construction of several partitions, new flooring, and extensive electrical work purportedly to support educational and exhibit programs. None of this work has been permitted or inspected. This also goes for various other installations of aquariums and associated equipment, apparently donated to TSI by the Steinhart Aquarium.

**Accessibility:** The at-grade entrance to the facility is arguably adequate, as it is at grade. However, there is no main entrance, no clear path of travel within the facility, and none of the rooms have adequate hardware, door swing clearances, and other requirements of code. The restroom was not accessible by any definition, though recent construction to reportedly make access improvements is part of the work that has been halted.

**Electrical:** The main electrical panel system appears to date back to the 1970's with the exception of the extensive work undertaken without permits or inspection on behalf of TSI. The 2014 Facilities assessment indicates the main system panels are beyond their useful life. CMI Inspector Roger Lenz indicates all recently installed work should be removed, designed properly by an electrical engineer and replaced due to a multitude of non-conforming conditions, from access, to grounding, to wire sizes, lack of engineering or permitting, general poorly executed work and its unfinished condition.

**Heating/Ventilating Systems:** The original space heating system was gas-fired overhead heaters. There is presently no gas connection and the heaters themselves are defunct. There may be space heaters used in the offices, however, the entire facility essentially has no heating or ventilation system. The bathroom does not have an exhaust fan to the outside.

**Fire & Life Safety:** The structure does not meet fire and life safety requirements for occupancy as an assembly space. Though paths of egress may be adequate for a warehouse, they are virtually indiscernible due to the disheveled state of debris (storage). There is no exit signage, no fire alarm system (though not required for this building type), no smoke detectors, pull stations or strobes, nor is there an automatic sprinkler system. The one fire extinguisher that was observed had not been certified in the past fifteen years, and was hard to find due to random storage blocking its view.

The original interior wood structure is intact and would be permissible for this building type. However, storage on top of this office area is inaccessible, except by ladder, and should be removed as it puts the building over the limit of allowable area for an un-sprinklered facility.

**Environmental Health/Hazardous Materials:** The roof was verbally reported to contain asbestos by John Kern, who was present at our walk through and has thirty years of experience with these facilities as a volunteer and advocate. We have not found any documentation to substantiate the presence of asbestos and may need to conduct further investigation to make a determination. Since the deteriorated condition of the roofing results in sections blowing off in heavy winds, this is at minimum a safety risk, but may also pose an environmental health risk as well, based on the age of the structure and the conditions of the roof. PSI tested several fragments of roofing that had fallen adjacent to the building and none showed signs of asbestos. There appears to be lead-based paint in several places, though PSI felt it was generally good conditions, except for a few areas, where it had blistered. The age of the original offices is such that the drywall tape and mud likely contain asbestos, and it appears that work has been conducted in these areas that very well might have exposed workers to these materials. No further work in these areas should take place until a definitive assessment is made.

**Miscellaneous:** The overall condition of the contents of the warehouse areas is a mishmash of surplus items from the Steinhart aquarium, leftover projects, furnishing, materials and equipment. It is a mixed bag and hard to discern where TSI's storage and NOAA's leaves off, however, it appears to be about 60% TSI material. There were three boats stored in the area, and various parts and pieces of equipment, including several very old fume hoods of unknown age or ownership. Cans of motor oil and other flammable lubricants were noted in unmarked boxes, and not properly stored, representing a fire hazard given the volume of combustible material in scattered throughout the premises.

In summary, this facility should only be used for warehouse use, unless and until a comprehensive investment plan is developed and implemented to address the multitude of deficiencies in the areas of code compliance, seismic safety, deferred maintenance, environmental, and fire and life safety.