



January 28, 2019

Tim M. Hart, SE  
President  
Structural Engineers of Northern California  
575 Market Street, Suite 2125  
San Francisco, CA. 94105

Dear Mr. Hart,

Thank you for your letter to Deputy Director Daniel Lowrey dated January 24, 2019. I am writing to you to provide you with an update based on the role of Building Inspection Division (BID) relating to the inspection of the work for Soft-Story projects.

The 2016 San Francisco Existing Building Code (SFBC) and specifically, Chapter 4D references the compliance requirements for the Mandatory retrofit of soft-story buildings. A Building Inspector from BID performs the required building inspections. When an approved building permit has been issued, the inspections are scheduled by the contractor who performs the work.

The inspections scheduled and performed are mandated by the 108A.5 of the 2016 San Francisco Building Code (SFBC). For soft-story projects, inspections typically include reinforcing steel, structural steel, a frame inspection (hold downs, shear wall/shear diaphragm nailing and mechanical connections), lath or gypsum board and final inspection. These inspections are performed when scheduled and are based on review of the approved permit documents in relation to the as-built field conditions.

Building Inspectors will approve an inspection based on determining consistency between the drawings and the observations at the site or not approve the inspection, issue a notice for corrections to be made and require that another inspection be scheduled for field verification of the correction.

On site, the Building Inspector works closely with the Special Inspector from the approved testing agency, as well as with the engineer of record to determine ongoing compliance with Chapter 17 of the 2016 California Building Code throughout the duration of the project.

The Special Inspection requirements are documented on the approved permit drawings. Final letters must be submitted to DBI to validate these Special Inspections. The letters are on the letterhead of the Engineer of Record and/or the testing agency's engineer. Testing lab and special inspector documentation is included with these final letters as necessary. Again, these letters are based on site inspections and review by testing agency certified professionals and Engineers of Record. Prior to final inspection, final letters of certification must be submitted to and approved by DBI substantiating compliance with Chapter 17 of the 2016 California Building Code. Furthermore, the DBI system blocks scheduling or completion of final inspections on building permits inclusive of soft-story until all special inspections are completed.



The Building Inspectors are from a construction background and are certified by ICC. They are very familiar with these type of inspections and perform in excess of 5,000 inspections per month. Each and all of these inspections is treated equally with the importance deserved.

There is an inspection spot-check process in place whereby, a Senior Building Inspector conducts a site visit to verify that the inspection performed by the subordinate Inspector meets the standards for compliance with the approved drawings, the building code and the requirements other Departments and Agencies. Knowing the importance of these soft-story projects, there are more soft-story spot-check inspections performed than any other type of building permit.

The building inspection history for all building permits is documented at <http://dbiweb.sfgov.org/dbipts/> including those that relate to the mandatory retrofit of soft-story projects.

As an example, please see <http://dbiweb.sfgov.org/dbipts/Default2.aspx?page=PermitDetails>

Should you have any further questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Tom C. Hui S.E., C.B.O.  
Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick O'Riordan".

Patrick O'Riordan  
Chief Building Inspector

cc: Tom C. Hui S.E., C.B.O., Director  
Daniel Lowrey, Deputy Director  
Edward Sweeney, Deputy Director  
Gary Ho, Plan Review Services  
Robert Chun, Plan Review Services

BID File

Attachments:  
Samples of Spot Check Inspections

# **SFBC CHAPTER 34B “SOFT STORY” PROGRAM**

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE ISSUES**

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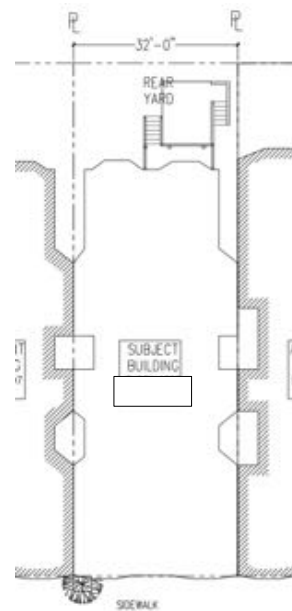
SEAONC EBC  
August 29, 2016

### **OUTLINE**

- Case studies
  - Building P: 3 obvious mistakes
- Applicable code sections
- Issue spotting
- Possible SEAONC approaches

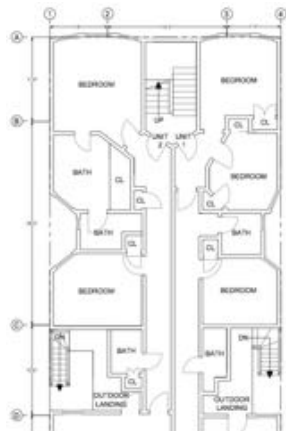
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# BUILDING P

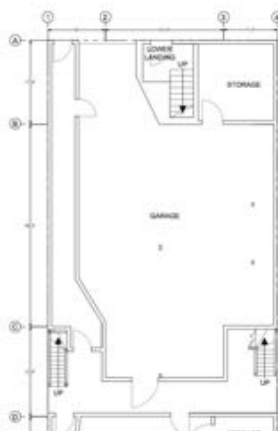


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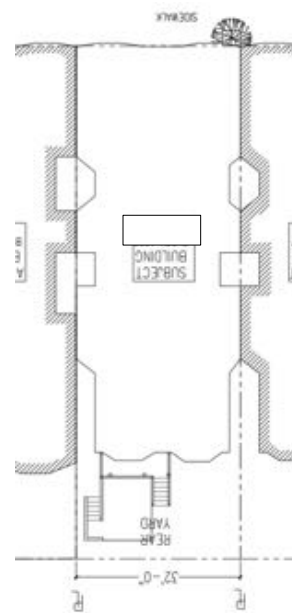
# BUILDING P



A: (E) Upper

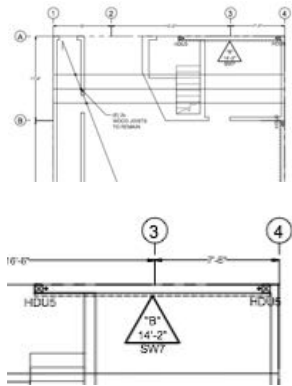


A: (E) Ground



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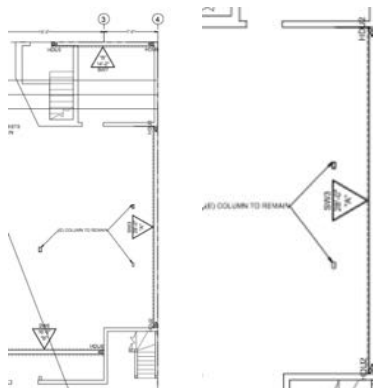
## BUILDING P: FRONT WALL LINE



On plans: SW 7, Type B, 14'-2", HDU5 each end  
Actual: Bay window, 3 segments, sheathed on opposite sides, HDs at mid segment only

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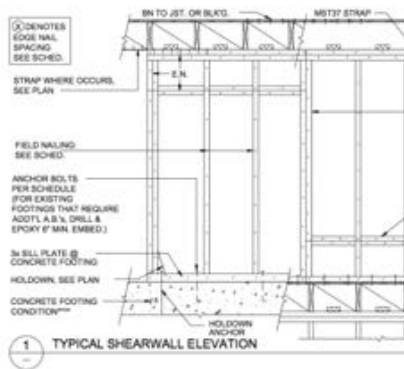
## BUILDING P: SIDE WALL LINE



On plans: SW 3, Type A, 28'-0", HDU2 each end  
Actual: Light well interrupts wall, footing/retaining wall shortens sheathing, HDs at ends only

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## BUILDING P: SHEAR WALL ANCHORS



On plans: Full-height SW on RC ftg, AB@24"/32"  
Actual: URM foundation/retaining wall, universal anchors into masonry

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## OTHER BUILDINGS

- Concrete anchors into URM
- HDs w/ short edge distance
- Approved plans inconsistent with field conditions
  - Foundation / retaining walls
  - (N) SWs relocated, shortened
  - Steel frame sizes changed
- Water heaters left unbraced
- Field revisions not documented

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## OTHER BUILDINGS

### ■ Proposals made without site visit

is a complete Design/Build Company. Services include, but are not limited to, Design, Engineering, Permits, Cribbing & Shoring, Excavation, Concrete, Carpentry, Utility relocation and Finish Services.

**Project Description:** Structural upgrade work to comply with mandatory soft story ordinance, Chapter 34B, Maher Ordinance #155-13, according to plans provided by

**Project Scope:** Depending on the final design and agreed upon terms,  Inc. will provide the materials and labor to complete the following:

- Excavation per plans
- Concrete as needed per plans
- Installation of structural steel
- Provide all permits to perform above work

**PRICE:**

\$18,700

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- AB 106, 107
- General DBI policies and procedures
- SFBC Chapter 1, 17

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- AB 107: “Application of Engineering Criteria”
  - A1.2, A4.1: Refer to AB 106
  - A3.1: Condition assessment required.
    - Scope generally left to discretion of engineer.
    - “VIF” allowed.
  - A5: Construction Quality Assurance
    - A5.1: “All work shall comply with inspection and testing requirements of the building code as they apply to existing buildings and structures. Additional field verification, structural observation, testing and inspection may be required ... as directed by the Department.”

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- AB 106: “Procedures for Implementation”
  - Unchanged since Sept 2013
  - Prioritizes over-the-counter review
  - “Permit applications ... will be reviewed for compliance [and] will be routed and tracked in accordance with standard Department procedures.”
  - “Work ... must meet all requirements of the SFBC including inspections and, when necessary, Special Inspections.” (See SFBC 106A.3.5.)

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- General DBI policies and procedures
  - Application Completeness Control Sheet
    - Checklist of items to be submitted
    - Clearly for new construction; no EB considerations
    - Sheet S1 to include special inspection requirements
  - Special Inspection Requirements form
    - 2-page form with checklist

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## BUILDING P: STRUCTURAL OBSERV'N

### STRUCTURAL OBSERVATION REQUIREMENTS

Structural observation shall be provided as required per Section 1704.5. **The building permit will not be finalized without compliance with the structural observation requirements.**

24. **Structural observation per Sec. 1704.5 (2013 SFBC) for the following:**  Foundations  Steel framing  
 Concrete construction  Masonry construction  Wood framing  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- Defined (CBC Chapter 2):
  - “The visual observation of the structural system by a registered design professional for general conformance to the approved construction documents.” Does not include or waive inspections.
- Solution: Cite SFBC 1704.5?

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## BUILDING P: SPECIAL INSPECTION

### 18. Bolts Installed in existing concrete masonry:

Concrete       Masonry

Pull/torque tests per SFBC Sec.1607C & 1615C

19.  Shear walls and floor systems used as shear diaphragms

20.  Holdowns

- Special inspector missed discrepancies?

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- General DBI policies and procedures
  - Application Completeness Control Sheet
  - Special Inspection Requirements form
  - DBI Plan Checker personal opinion:
    - “If assumed conditions are found to be different ... then a revision permit should be required to modify the approved drawings. The revision permit should be required prior to making the change in the field. The DBI field inspector ... determines whether a revision permit is required ... A revision permit, like any other permit, requires proper drawings and calculations.”

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

### ■ SFBC Chapter 1

- 106A.3.1: Application
  - Alteration permits must state occupancy.
  - No other EB requirements
- 106A.3.3: Information on plans
  - For alterations, “all existing partitions and construction”
  - “... all elements of the LFRS [and] load path.”

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

### ■ SFBC Chapter 1

- 106A.4.1: Issuance (106A.4.2 sim)
  - “[A]pproved plans and specifications shall not be changed, modified or altered without authorizations from the BO, and all work regulated by this code shall be done in accordance with the approved plans”
- 106A.4.7: Additional work (sim CBC 107.4)
  - “[A] separate permit for alteration work shall be required for any change [such as] construction differing from the approved construction documents sufficiently to require revised plans [including] changes in framing directions, spans, and locations of concentrated loads.”

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## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- SFBC/CBC Chapter 17
  - 1704.5: Structural Observation
    - Requires affidavits in advance and after.
  - 1704.5.1: Seismic
    - Required in SDC D, E, or F for any of:
      1. RC III or IV
      2. Height > 75 ft
      3. SDC E, RC I or II, more than 2 stories above grade
      4. When designated by EOR
      5. When specifically required by the building official.
- Solution: Require for SDC D too?

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## ISSUE SPOTTING

- Is there anything wrong with, or should SEAONC take a position on, typical practice regarding mandatory SFBC Chapter 34B projects?
  - Engineer
  - Contractor
  - Owner's Special Inspector
  - Owner
  - DBI plan checker
  - DBI field inspector

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## POSSIBLE SEAONC APPROACHES

- So far
  - Bonowitz memo to CAC, June 2016
    - CAC requested DBI response
    - CAC requested proposal for program status review
  - EBC, CQA agreement to jointly consider
  - Meeting with CQA committee, August 2016
- To come?
  - Additional DBI-CAC discussion, action
  - Revisions to AB 106, 107
  - SEAONC letter to DBI
  - SEAONC coordination w/ SFAA, ESIP

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## POSSIBLE AB 106, 107 REVISIONS

- Require EOR affidavit re condition assessment
- Require EOR structural observation
  - Conformance of existing conditions
- Specify conditions for revised plans
  - Clarify SFBC 106A.4.7
  - Require submittal of “as-built” plans or sketches
- Require EOR statement of compliance
  - With SFBC 106A.4.1 (“in accordance with plans”)

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## **POSSIBLE OTHER APPROACHES**

- Develop additional guidance to owners
  - Reviewing engineering proposals
  - Reviewing contractor bids
  - Working with design-build firms
  - Working with DBI
- Propose DBI procedures for mandatory EB projects
  - Plan check
  - Field inspection

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## **ISSUE SPOTTING**

- Engineer
  - Signing plans with “VIF”
    - Reliance on “as-built” plans by others
  - Pre-bid site visit
  - Pre-design condition assessment (AB 107 A3.1)
  - Structural observation
  - Role in design-build arrangements

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## ISSUE SPOTTING

- Contractor
  - Pre-bid site visit
  - Coordination w/ engineer re VIF discrepancies
    - Field revisions: Adequacy and documentation
  - Disclosure to DBI inspector

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## ISSUE SPOTTING

- Owner's special inspector
  - Scope of inspected conditions
    - Sample, or all cases of subject conditions
  - Review for "general conformance"
  - Disclosure to engineer
  - Disclosure to DBI

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## ISSUE SPOTTING

- Owner
  - Ability to review/select design proposals
  - Ability to review/select construction bids
  - Understanding of design-build pros, cons
  - Understanding of DBI roles, responsibilities
  - Selection of special inspector
  - Final project documentation

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## ISSUE SPOTTING

- DBI plan checker
  - Review of required condition assessment (AB 107 A3.1)
  - Mechanism for post-approval VIF confirmation
  - Mechanism for review of Struc Obs affidavit
  - Coordination with DBI field inspectors
  - Final project documentation

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## **ISSUE SPOTTING**

- DBI field inspector
  - Discretion re field revisions, documentation
  - Discretion re alteration permits
  - DBI typical practice
    - Existing building projects v. new construction
    - Mandatory retrofit v. other contexts

DAVID BONOWITZ, S.E.



# Structural Engineers Association of Northern California

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PRESIDENT

Tim Hart, SE

January 24, 2019

VICE PRESIDENT

Janiele Maffei, SE

Daniel Lowrey

Deputy Director, Permit Services

TREASURER

Marko Schotanus, SE

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection

1660 Mission Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

SECRETARY

Randy Collins, SE

Subject: Quality Assurance for Soft-Story Seismic Retrofit Construction

Dear Daniel,

DIRECTORS

Emily Guglielmo, SE

John Silva, SE

Megan Stringer, SE

Bill Tremayne, SE

Thank you again for agreeing with meet with Taryn Williams, Steve Harris, and myself on December 13 to discuss our concerns regarding quality assurance for soft-story retrofit construction. We appreciate the high level of attention that you and your staff brought to this issue at our meeting. We also appreciate that you were able to arrange for several key staff members to attend the meeting and participate in the discussion.

PAST PRESIDENT

Taryn Williams, SE

I would like to follow up with you on the procedures for building inspections that we discussed in the meeting. You may recall that I had requested copies of DBI's findings from building inspections done to date and copies of the inspection procedures that DBI used for these inspections. The reason for these

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Ken Miles

requests was so that we could correlate the findings of your inspectors with the reports that SEAONC has been receiving from our members who work on soft-story retrofit projects, and potentially identify where there may be gaps in the procedures that should be addressed. We would still like to receive and review these documents, not only to assist DBI in improving the building inspection program, but also to have documentation that we can give to our members should they notify us of any new building inspection issues. We also could use this documentation in case a member of the city government or the press contacts SEAONC or one of its members asking about inspections of soft-story retrofit construction. In addition, SEAONC members who are involved in developing soft-story retrofit programs for other Bay Area cities can use the lessons learned from reviewing this data to strengthen the retrofit programs in these cities.

SEAONC would like to receive these documents by February 1, so that our Directors would have time to review them prior to our next SEAONC Board meeting on February 5. If you need more

Daniel Lowrey  
San Francisco Department of Building Inspection  
January 24, 2019

time to collect these documents, please let me know so we can determine a new date that would work for both DBI and SEAONC.

One of SEAONC's missions is to help ensure that people can live, work, and play in buildings that are safe. Thus, when our members bring to our attention concerns that could affect the safety of the public, we are required to take these concerns seriously. This is especially true in the case of soft-story retrofits since the buildings being retrofitted are the primary residences for thousands of people. I feel confident after our meeting that DBI shares this mission and these concerns. My hope is that we will be able to continue to work together to help resolve the current issues and reduce the number of issues that come up through the remainder of the retrofit program.

Thank you and your staff again for agreeing to meet with us. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns that you would like to discuss further with me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Hart", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim M. Hart, SE  
President  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Cc: Tom Hui  
Edward Sweeney  
Patrick O'Riordan  
Gary Ho  
Robert Chun  
Steve Harris  
Taryn Williams  
SEAONC Board of Directors



# Structural Engineers Association of Northern California

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PRESIDENT

Tim Hart, SE

April 10, 2019

VICE PRESIDENT

Janiele Maffei, SE

Daniel Lowrey and Gary Ho  
San Francisco Department of Building Inspection  
1660 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

TREASURER

Marko Schotanus, SE

Subject: Quality Assurance for Soft-Story Retrofit Construction

SECRETARY

Randy Collins, SE

Dear Daniel & Gary,

DIRECTORS

Emily Guglielmo, SE  
John Silva, SE  
Megan Stringer, SE  
Bill Tremayne, SE

Thank you for agreeing to address our concerns regarding the quality control exercised for the soft-story retrofit projects. The SEAONC Board has received and reviewed the inspection data that Patrick O'Riordan sent to us following my last communication. We appreciate the responsiveness of DBI in this regard.

PAST PRESIDENT

Taryn Williams, SE

Nevertheless, while the data explains the process that DBI follows for building inspections and identifies the soft-story projects that DBI senior inspectors spot-checked in 2018, it does not address the specific construction issues that our members have identified as having quality control problems. The data also does not identify the issues that DBI inspectors found during their spot check process or how those issues were resolved. Finally, the data does not include any projects that were inspected prior to 2018. We understand that this may not be information that you can readily share in this manner; however, we would hope that some level of transparency can be achieved through continued dialog.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Ken Miles

SEAONC members continue to report instances of faulty design and construction on soft story projects in San Francisco. For reasons that we have discussed previously, we still feel strongly that DBI can and must take action to improve quality assurance for the benefit of building owners, DBI's own reputation, and the City's retrofit programs generally.

Accordingly, SEAONC would like to continue the discussion with DBI on this issue, not only to properly address the issues that have been raised by our members but also to address and resolve public safety concerns before they become issues. SEAONC is interested in developing a list of lessons learned from the San Francisco soft-story retrofit program that our association can use to assist other cities who are implementing similar programs. To that end, I would like to propose

Daniel Lowrey and Gary Ho  
San Francisco Department of Building Inspection  
April 10, 2019

that SEAONC and DBI create a joint ad-hoc committee to study this issue and issue a white paper on its findings. The white paper would:

1. Identify how quality control procedures could be strengthened to address known and suspected problems,
2. Include recommendations for how building owners can be properly informed of known quality assurance issues, and
3. Clarify the roles and responsibilities that owners and their consultants have in the quality assurance process.

I have asked the chair of our Existing Buildings Committee to solicit SEAONC members for this committee. I would like to request that we get a commitment from DBI to identify staff members to participate in this committee.

Please let me know if DBI is agreeable to this proposal, or if you have any questions or concerns.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Hart", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tim M. Hart, SE  
President

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

cc: Keith Palmer, Chair, SEAONC Existing Buildings Committee  
Stephen Harris, Chair, DBI Code Advisory Committee, Structural Subcommittee

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Steve Harris, Chair, SF DBI Code Advisory Committee, Structural Subcommittee  
**FROM:** David Bonowitz  
**DATE:** June 6, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Notes on CAC-DBI Coordination re Implementation of SFBC Chapter 34B

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As noted in the minutes of the May 10, 2016 Structural Subcommittee meeting, I recommended a review by the subcommittee of any procedures DBI has put in place to ensure complete and consistent enforcement of Chapter 34B, as well as review of any compiled interpretations, positions, or new administrative requirements.

This memo provides a more detailed (though still in-progress) list of recommended topics for the CAC Structural Subcommittee and DBI staff to be coordinated on. Each of the following items represents a question or problem that I have observed myself or that has come to me from a practicing engineer or contractor.

### QUALITY CONTROL

Has DBI produced any procedures, checklists, or job aids regarding:

- Complete calculation packages (including special requirements for FEMA P-807 calcs produced by the WST software)
- Complete or waived scope of review (streamlined sign-off by planning or fire?)
- Inappropriate use of IEBC Chapter A4 (e.g. assigning *R* values to non-conforming materials or allowing them to contribute to lateral resistance)
- Approved plans consistent with field conditions, or missing details for actual field conditions
- Post-permit revisions to plans, including sketches or as-built plans
- Construction consistent with approved plans
- Proper *re*-installation of nonstructural components moved or reconfigured for construction access
- Irresponsible under-valuation or under-bidding
- Coordination of ADU approvals with approved or completed 34B compliance

### TECHNICAL ISSUES & INTERPRETATIONS

Has DBI produced any information sheets or internal procedures to ensure consistency (between engineers and between plan checkers) regarding:

- Designation of upper stories as target stories
- Designation of a target story in only one direction, with exemption in the other direction
- Use of unreinforced masonry footings and stemwalls (including sill plate anchors into URM)
- Edge distance for sill anchors and shear wall holddowns

## MEMORANDUM

- Use of cantilever column systems
- Investigation of existing sill anchors
- Investigation of existing load path for non-designed partitions
- Bracing of moment frame beams and beam-column joints
- Use of multiple system types in the same story, along the same wall line, etc.
- Treatment of building wings as structurally separate (e.g. where diaphragms are inadequate)
- Consistent calculation of upper story strength for purposes of deriving capacity caps
- Capacity adjustment (or affidavit) for deteriorated conditions
- Applicability of testing and inspection provisions, including:
  - Concrete cylinder testing
  - Special inspection for rebar
  - Special inspection for post-installed anchors
  - Special inspection for shearwall nailing

### PROJECT STATUS & ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS

- Is DBI anticipating a rush as the Tier 2 application deadline this September approaches?
- Is DBI anticipating any additional staffing prior to the Tier 3 run-up in 2017?
- Is DBI anticipating any special parking requirements or allowances during 2018-2019 when many blocks are likely to have multiple projects going simultaneously?
- What is the breakdown of permit applications so far by valuation? Has DBI adjusted its valuation rules based on confirmed actual cost data?
- Has DBI developed any guidance for owners to assist them selecting consultants or contractors? Or, has DBI coordinated with other organizations (SFAA, AllianceNRG, banks, etc.) to do so?
- What is the breakdown of DBI staff hours for plan review and field inspection for projects of different sizes, target story occupancy, or retrofit schemes?
- How many cases have been decided by the Appeals Board? Have those decisions been written into DBI procedures and interpretations?
- How many permit applications have been processed for ADUs based on Ordinance 30-15?
- About 160 permits have been issued for Tier 4 buildings (two years ahead of schedule), and about 70 of those have completed the work. What analysis has DBI made of the buildings in this Tier?
  - How many have done liquefaction mitigation?
  - How many are Tier 4 because of commercial occupancy?
  - Of those, what are the additional costs and triggered scope for accessibility?

## RE: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

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From: O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI) (patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)

To: dbonowitz@att.net

Cc: kdpalmer@sgh.com; thart@lbl.gov; skharris@sgh.com; dlmccormick@sgh.com; randy@ftfengineering.com; brian.olson.se@gmail.com; TNWilliams@sgh.com; JMaffei@calquake.com; robert.chun@sfgov.org; gary.ho@sfgov.org; daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org; tom.hui@sfgov.org; richard.w.tam@sfgov.org; edward.sweeney@sfgov.org; thormatteson@gmail.com; joseph.duffy@sfgov.org; bernie.curran@sfgov.org; kevin.mchugh@sfgov.org; john.patrick.murray@sfgov.org; william.strawn@sfgov.org; dkane@hk-se.com

Date: Friday, May 17, 2019, 3:44 PM PDT

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Hi David,

Yes, Inspection staff has made some adjustments in that the Senior Inspectors are now adding comments to the Spot Check Inspections.

Additionally, Building Inspectors have been advised to continue to require that the Engineer of Record or the appropriately certified special inspector note their approval of the inspection prior to DBI's approval (2016 CBC 1704.2.4) on the permit job-card. I believe that the Senior Inspector's second inspection of what was already approved by a line Inspector is not consistent with the requirements of the code 2016 SFBC 108A.5. Nowhere in the code is there an allowance for inspecting the same work again, when it's been approved once already. Please keep in mind building inspections are scheduled by the stakeholder, and are not generally set up by the Senior Building Inspector.

DBI's Senior Building Inspectors will continue to conduct Inspections that are scheduled to ensure consistency and for training purposes.

Please advise your members to continue to note their inspections for review by the Building Inspector in advance of the inspection.

Again, as I mentioned at the meeting, it would be helpful if you could provide examples of projects (addresses) that are concerning to you. Having addresses enables DBI to investigate allegations of non-compliance. If you know of properties that you believe are non-compliant, I again encourage you to report these projects to DBI without delay. Please include me in any reporting of these properties.

Thanks and have a nice weekend,

Patrick O'Riordan



Chief Building Inspector

1660 Mission Street, 3rd floor

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel. 415 558 6105

Email: patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org

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**From:** David Bonowitz [mailto:dbonowitz@att.net]

**Sent:** Friday, May 17, 2019 10:25 AM

**To:** O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI)

**Cc:** Keith Palmer; Tim Hart; DBI-StephenK.Harris; Dave McCormick; DBI-RandyCollins; Brian Olson; Taryn N. Williams; Janiele Maffei; Chun, Robert (DBI); Ho, Gary (DBI); Lowrey, Daniel (DBI); Hui, Tom (DBI); Tam, Richard (DBI); Sweeney, Edward (DBI); Thor Matteson; Duffy, Joseph (DBI); Curran, Bernie (DBI); McHugh, Kevin (DBI); Murray, John (DBI); Strawn, William (DBI)

**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Patrick,

Thanks for your reply to our questions (below). I'm sorry I did not acknowledge it and reply sooner than this.

Of course we feel that the Senior Inspector "spot checks" would be much more effective if all of them were done in addition to, not in place of, the line inspector's work.

But more important: It has now been a month since we met. Can you update us, please, on the new procedures in place? Are there any new written procedures or new data you can share? We'd like to inform our members about what has changed, and about what you've found in the month since.

Thanks,

David

**David Bonowitz, S.E.**

605A Baker Street

San Francisco, CA 94117

415-771-3227  
[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)

On Wednesday, April 17, 2019, 11:24:02 AM PDT, O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI) <[patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org](mailto:patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Hi David,

Thanks to you, Brian and Thor for stopping on Monday. In answer to your request for clarification, please see below:

-- Are these \*instead of\* typical line inspections, done with the same scope at the same point of construction, when senior inspectors sub in for line inspectors who happen to be out for the day?

Answer:

The Senior Building Inspector typically takes the District Inspectors daily schedule or a portion thereof. No, the inspections are simply based on what is scheduled and could be at any point in the project (random).

-- Or are they \*in addition to\* the typical inspections, done near the end of construction, as a double check on the typical inspection process?

Answer:

If either the Building Inspector or the stakeholder needs a Senior's involvement and if there are complications that require a Senior's interpretation, then the Senior Inspector's double check is additional. The double check/spot check is done at any point during the project which helps ensure compliance throughout the entire inspection process. Additionally, the spot check inspections involve review of the Inspector's paperwork for correctness which generally occurs at the time of CFC issuance.

As I mentioned at the meeting, it would be helpful if you could provide examples of projects (addresses) that are of concern to you. Having addresses enables DBI to investigate allegations of non-compliance. If you know of properties that you believe are non-compliant, I encourage you to report these projects to DBI without delay. Please include me with your reporting of these properties.

Per your suggestion, Senior Inspectors will start adding a comment to the spot check inspection report in relation to their findings.

I hope this helps with clarification.

Thanks,

Patrick O'Riordan

Chief Building Inspector

1660 Mission Street, 3rd floor

San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel. 415 558 6105

Email: [patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org](mailto:patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)

---

**From:** David Bonowitz [<mailto:dbonowitz@att.net>]

**Sent:** Monday, April 15, 2019 9:05 PM

**To:** Chun, Robert (DBI); Ho, Gary (DBI); Lowrey, Daniel (DBI); O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI); Hui, Tom (DBI); Tam, Richard (DBI); Sweeney, Edward (DBI); Thor Matteson

**Cc:** Keith Palmer; Tim Hart; DBI-StephenK.Harris; Dave McCormick; DBI-RandyCollins; Brian Olson; Taryn N. Williams; Janiele Maffei

**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

First, I echo Thor's thanks to DBI staff for meeting with us today.

Second, Patrick, if we can get a clarification, please, about the spot checks done by the three senior inspectors:

-- Are these \*instead of\* typical line inspections, done with the same scope at the same point of construction, when senior inspectors sub in for line inspectors who happen to be out for the day?

-- Or are they \*in addition to\* the typical inspections, done near the end of construction, as a double check on the typical inspection process?

(I thought they were the latter, but after the meeting we were unclear on that.)

Third, I'm not sure when I'll get to write up my notes, but here are a few things I think we agreed we can start to do RIGHT AWAY on the remaining soft story projects:

-- **DBI plan review:** Plan checkers should make a standard comment that all "verify in field" items should be summarized on the first sheet of the plans. Since the plan check phase is nearly done, this will have little impact, but it should still be done for late submittals and revisions.

-- **DBI field inspection:** Survey the field inspectors individually for the most common issues. Compile the individual responses into a Top 10 (or similar) checklist. This list should not limit the inspector's scope (or gut), but it should be used to ensure consistency and it should be used to create a consistent data set that will quantify patterns of good and poor construction practice. (The goal here is to show, hopefully, that the remaining 2000 or so projects are of reliable high quality, so we don't have to worry about revisiting the 3000 projects already issued CFCs.)

-- **DBI field inspection:** Encourage line inspectors to record even minor correction notices to ensure follow-up by contractors. (If contractors know that their improvised variations from the plans will be called out, we hope they will work with the engineer when the need for a variation is first recognized, instead of hoping the inspector will ok it.)

-- **DBI spot check inspection:** Based on reports from line inspectors, consider how to refocus these inspections on known and suspected problem areas. The spot check inspections should be in addition to, not in place of, normal inspections, and their purpose is partly to confirm that the normal inspections are finding what they need to find.

-- **DBI plan check and field inspection:** Jointly develop and enforce written criteria and procedures to require plan revisions based on field conditions, in accordance with SFBC Sec 106A.4.1 and 106A.4.7.

-- **SEAONC:** Update and simplify our FAQ page to focus on QA at this late stage of the program. Share this advice with SFAA and building owners' groups.

-- **SEAONC:** Remind engineers of their obligation for structural observation, and encourage Start-of-Work meetings with the contractor and DBI inspector to review unusual conditions and VIF requirements.

-- **SEAONC:** Develop handouts on these topics for the June 11 earthquake Fair.

Additional work SEAONC might do:

-- Ride along with spot check inspectors to better understand the process, and improve it as needed.

-- Presentations or Q&A at DBI staff meetings (plan checkers or field inspectors)

-- Analyze available spot check data to quantify rates of actual problems.

David

**David Bonowitz, S.E.**  
605A Baker Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
415-771-3227

[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)

On Monday, April 15, 2019, 4:48:04 PM PDT, Thor Matteson <[thormatteson@gmail.com](mailto:thormatteson@gmail.com)> wrote:

Greetings,

Thanks to DBI staff for taking the time to meet with David Bonowitz, Brian Olson and myself. I'm in an unofficial role here, and I am sure that a true SEAONC representative will be in touch to relay thanks on behalf of the organization (as well as following up on points discussed in our meeting today). As an individual engineer I appreciated the chance to meet and discuss with you..

Best wishes,

Thor

On Mon, Apr 15, 2019 at 12:18 PM Thor Matteson <[thormatteson@gmail.com](mailto:thormatteson@gmail.com)> wrote:

Greetings,

I'm attaching a **very** abridged case study that my senior engineer, Chris Pioli, presented at last year's SEAONC Fall Seminar. This illustrates my firm's level of involvement with projects and the opportunities for errors that one contractor took. There may be some ideas in the presentation that could be adopted to the situation at hand. For one thing, many building owners are not very familiar with construction outside of perhaps having a bathroom remodel or termite repairs--requiring a pre-construction meeting with the EOR, Contractor, Owner, DBI Field Inspector would be very worthwhile. It would also cost money. Owners would benefit tremendously from this coordination, whether they believe it or not; getting them to believe it as another issue that SEAONC and DBI would do well to work on.

Best wishes,

Thor

On Mon, Apr 15, 2019 at 8:17 AM David Bonowitz <[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)> wrote:

Gary, Patrick,

We look forward to meeting with you today at 1:30. Attending for SEAONC will be me, Thor Matteson, Brian Olson, and possibly Randy Collins. Unless you direct us otherwise, we will meet you on the 2nd floor.

At today's meeting, we are expecting to receive and discuss information from DBI's "spot check" process that Director Hui referenced in his letter of January 28 (along with a list of addresses checked last November) and that Tim Hart referenced at the top of his letter last week.

Specifically:

1. What is the intended rate of spot checks? If it's higher for soft story than for other projects (as Director Hui's letter states), how much higher? When and why was the decision made to use a higher spot check rate?
2. What is the specific scope of a "spot check" inspection? (Director Hui's letter does not address this.) What procedures are in place to assure completeness and consistency between the DBI inspectors who conduct them?
3. What portion of spot checks find an error that needs correction? How has the error rate changed over time? What does DBI consider to be an acceptable error rate, and is it different for soft story projects?
4. What are the most common errors found by spot checks? What training or procedures have been implemented to prevent these errors going forward, and how have they affected the error rates?
5. How do the errors correlate with particular building conditions, engineers, contractors, plan checkers, or inspectors?

See you this afternoon,

David

**David Bonowitz, S.E.**  
605A Baker Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
415-771-3227  
[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)

On Friday, April 12, 2019, 1:23:13 PM PDT, Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Hello Tim,

Yes, next Monday 1:30 will be fine.

Thanks.

Gary Ho, SE  
Senior Engineer  
Manager  
Plan Review Services  
Department of Building Inspection  
1660 Mission St., 2nd floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: 415.558.6083

**From:** Tim Hart [mailto:[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 12, 2019 1:05 PM  
**To:** Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** Chun, Robert (DBI) <[robert.chun@sfgov.org](mailto:robert.chun@sfgov.org)>; DBI-RandyCollins <[randy@ftfengineering.com](mailto:randy@ftfengineering.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; David Bonowitz <[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)>; Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>; Janiele Maffei <[JMaffei@calquake.com](mailto:JMaffei@calquake.com)>; Keith Palmer <[kdpalmer@sgh.com](mailto:kdpalmer@sgh.com)>; Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>; O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI) <[patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org](mailto:patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)>; Sweeney, Edward (DBI) <[edward.sweeney@sfgov.org](mailto:edward.sweeney@sfgov.org)>; Tam, Richard (DBI) <[richard.w.tam@sfgov.org](mailto:richard.w.tam@sfgov.org)>; Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; Thor Matteson <[thormatteson@gmail.com](mailto:thormatteson@gmail.com)>; Brian Olson <[brian.olson.se@gmail.com](mailto:brian.olson.se@gmail.com)>; Dave McCormick <[dlmccormick@sgh.com](mailto:dlmccormick@sgh.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Hello Gary,

1:30 on Monday looks like the best time for our group. Please confirm if this works for you.

Thanks,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**

Lead Civil/Structural Engineer

Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning

**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**

One Cyclotron Road

Mail Stop 76-R0222

Berkeley, CA 94720

Direct: (510) 486-4168

Cell: (510) 316-6711

Email: [thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)

On Fri, Apr 12, 2019 at 8:11 AM Tim Hart <[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)> wrote:

Hello Gary,

Keith Palmer, one of the chairs of SEAONC's Existing Buildings Committee, is organizing a group to meet with you and your team. He will be in touch with you shortly regarding available days and times. I am not available at the times you have proposed so I am working on identifying a SEAONC Board member who can attend.

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us on this important issue.

Best Regards,

Tim

On Thu, Apr 11, 2019 at 5:14 PM Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)> wrote:



Hello Tim,

We would be glad to meet to discuss the issues concerning the soft-story retrofit.

We will be available for the following time slots of next week:

Monday 4/15, 9:00am,

Monday 4/15, 1:30 pm, or

Tuesday 4/ 16, 1:30 pm.

Please let us know which slot would work best for your team.

Hello Patrick,

Will these time slots work for you?

Thank you.

Gary Ho, SE

Senior Engineer

Manager

Plan Review Services

Department of Building Inspection

[1660 Mission St., 2nd floor](#)

[San Francisco, CA 94103](#)

Phone: 415.558.6083

**From:** Tim Hart [mailto:[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)]

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 10, 2019 8:54 AM

**To:** Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>; Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** Sweeney, Edward (DBI) <[edward.sweeney@sfgov.org](mailto:edward.sweeney@sfgov.org)>; Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>; O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI) <[patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org](mailto:patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; Keith Palmer <[kdpalmer@sgh.com](mailto:kdpalmer@sgh.com)>; David Bonowitz <[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)>; Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; Janiele Maffei <[JMaffei@calquake.com](mailto:JMaffei@calquake.com)>; Emily Guglielmo <[eguglielmo@martinmartin.com](mailto:eguglielmo@martinmartin.com)>; John Silva <[John.Silva@hilti.com](mailto:John.Silva@hilti.com)>; Marko Schotanus <[marko\\_schotanus@marxokubo.com](mailto:marko_schotanus@marxokubo.com)>; DBI-RandyCollins <[randy@ftfengineering.com](mailto:randy@ftfengineering.com)>; Bill Tremayne <[Bill.Tremayne@holmesstructures.com](mailto:Bill.Tremayne@holmesstructures.com)>; Megan Stringer <[Megan.Stringer@holmesstructures.com](mailto:Megan.Stringer@holmesstructures.com)>; Ken Miles <[kmiles@seaonc.org](mailto:kmiles@seaonc.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Good morning Daniel and Gary,

I have been intending to get back to you in regards to the soft-story retrofit issues that we have been discussing. I have composed the attached letter that discusses our continuing concerns and our proposal to work with DBI to resolve them. Please see the attached letter and let me know your thoughts or if you have any questions. So that I can be responsive to the SEAONC Board and our members who are concerned parties on this matter, I would like to receive your response within the next few days.

Best Regards,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**  
Lead Civil/Structural Engineer  
Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning  
**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**  
One Cyclotron Road  
Mail Stop 76-R0222  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
Direct: (510) 486-4168  
Cell: (510) 316-6711  
Email: [thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)

On Tue, Jan 29, 2019 at 10:20 AM O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI) <[patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org](mailto:patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Hi Tim,

Thank you for attending the meeting. Please see the attachments which will help provide a greater understanding of the Building Inspection role in ensuring compliance with the inspection of these soft-story projects. Likewise, I feel assured after our meeting that Seaonc and DBI share a mutual interest in ensuring that these projects are

inspected by certified third party Special Inspectors, engineers of record along with DBI Inspection staff.

I am happy assist further as needed.

Thanks,

Patrick O'Riordan

Chief Building Inspector

[1660 Mission Street, 3rd floor](#)

[San Francisco, CA 94103](#)

Tel. 415 558 6105

Email: [patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org](mailto:patrick.oriordan@sfgov.org)

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**From:** Lowrey, Daniel (DBI)

**Sent:** Friday, January 25, 2019 9:07 AM

**To:** Sweeney, Edward (DBI); O'Riordan, Patrick (DBI)

**Subject:** FW: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

FYI

Thank you.

Daniel Lowrey, Deputy Director

Permit Services

Department of Building Inspection

[1660 Mission Street, 2<sup>rd</sup> Floor](#)

San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 558-6127 Office

**From:** Tim Hart <[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 24, 2019 12:15 PM

**To:** Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>

**Cc:** Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>; Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; Tam, Richard (DBI)

<[richard.w.tam@sfgov.org](mailto:richard.w.tam@sfgov.org)>; Chun, Robert (DBI) <[robert.chun@sfgov.org](mailto:robert.chun@sfgov.org)>; Le, Thomas (DBI) <[thomas.le@sfgov.org](mailto:thomas.le@sfgov.org)>; Yu, Cyril (DBI) <[cyril.yu@sfgov.org](mailto:cyril.yu@sfgov.org)>; Strawn, William (DBI)

<[william.strawn@sfgov.org](mailto:william.strawn@sfgov.org)>; Jayin, Carolyn (DBI) <[carolyn.jayin@sfgov.org](mailto:carolyn.jayin@sfgov.org)>; Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>; DBI-RandyCollins <[randy@ftfengineering.com](mailto:randy@ftfengineering.com)>; Janiele

Maffei <[JMaffei@calquake.com](mailto:JMaffei@calquake.com)>; Megan Stringer

<[Megan.Stringer@holmesstructures.com](mailto:Megan.Stringer@holmesstructures.com)>; Bill Tremayne

<[Bill.Tremayne@holmesstructures.com](mailto:Bill.Tremayne@holmesstructures.com)>; John Silva <[John.Silva@hilti.com](mailto:John.Silva@hilti.com)>; Emily

Guglielmo <[eguglielmo@martinmartin.com](mailto:eguglielmo@martinmartin.com)>; DBI-MarkoSchotanus

<[mschotanus@ruthchek.com](mailto:mschotanus@ruthchek.com)>; David Bonowitz <[dbonowitz@att.net](mailto:dbonowitz@att.net)>; Keith Palmer

<[kdpalmer@sgh.com](mailto:kdpalmer@sgh.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Hello Daniel,

I want to thank you again for agreeing to meet with us in December to discuss the soft-story retrofit program. I want to follow up with you on the inspection issues and concerns that we discussed. Please see the attached letter and let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Best Regards,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**

SEAONC President 2018-2019

Lead Civil/Structural Engineer

Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning

**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**

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Mail Stop 76-R0222

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Cell: (510) 316-6711

Email: [thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)

On Tue, Dec 4, 2018 at 1:15 PM Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Good Afternoon Tim,

We are looking forward to meet with your group. The meeting will be held December 13<sup>th</sup> 9:30Am. 1660 Mission St. second floor, Room 2004. Thank you for taking the time to meet with our Engineer Supervisors to discuss quality assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects.

Thank you.

Daniel Lowrey, Deputy Director

Permit Services

Department of Building Inspection

[1660 Mission Street](#), 2<sup>rd</sup> Floor

San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 558-6127 Office

**From:** Tim Hart <[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, December 04, 2018 7:49 AM

**To:** Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>

**Cc:** Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>; Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; DBI-RandyCollins <[randy@ftfengineering.com](mailto:randy@ftfengineering.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Good morning Daniel,

The morning of the 13th would work best for us. While Randy Collins will be out of town and Taryn Williams may be on jury duty, Steve Harris and I are available on that day and I would like to go ahead and have this meeting rather than wait until after the holidays. Please let me know if that works for you.

Best Regards,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**

SEAONC President 2018-2019

Lead Civil/Structural Engineer

Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning

**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**

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Cell: (510) 316-6711  
Email: [thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)

On Thu, Nov 29, 2018 at 2:34 PM Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Good Afternoon Tim,

I am unavailable next Wednesday or Thursday afternoon. I am available to schedule a meeting next Tuesday 12/4 or Wednesday or Thursday afternoon the following week, 12/12 or 12/13.

Let me know what time works for you.

Thank you.

Daniel Lowrey, Deputy Director  
Permit Services  
Department of Building Inspection  
[1660 Mission Street](#), 2<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 558-6127 Office

**From:** Tim Hart [mailto:[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2018 11:22 AM  
**To:** Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>; Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>; Sweeney, Edward (DBI) <[edward.sweeney@sfgov.org](mailto:edward.sweeney@sfgov.org)>; Pei, Carrie (DBI) <[carrie.pei@sfgov.org](mailto:carrie.pei@sfgov.org)>; Chun, Robert (DBI) <[robert.chun@sfgov.org](mailto:robert.chun@sfgov.org)>; Strawn, William (DBI) <[william.strawn@sfgov.org](mailto:william.strawn@sfgov.org)>; DBI-RandyCollins <[randy@ftfengineering.com](mailto:randy@ftfengineering.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Good morning Daniel,

I have checked with our meeting participants and we are available next week for a meeting either anytime on Wednesday or on Thursday afternoon. Our meeting attendees will be Taryn Williams, Steve Harris, Randy Collins, and myself. Our goals for this meeting are:

1. To obtain and review the procedures, findings, and conclusions of all quality assurance inspections of soft story retrofit construction performed by DBI to date, along with the plan for future inspections for the duration of the program.
  
2. Determine how DBI's quality control procedures can be strengthened to address known and suspected problems. This could include written procedures, job aids, and training for DBI staff; compliance checklists for engineers, contractors, and special inspectors; and amendments to Administrative Bulletin 106.
  
3. Determine how to inform all building owners subject to the program of known quality assurance issues and of the roles and responsibilities of their engineers, their contractors, and DBI.
  
4. Determine how SEAONC can assist DBI in this effort, including timely input from our board and committees.

Please let me know when you have a meeting scheduled, and if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**  
SEAONC President 2018-2019  
Lead Civil/Structural Engineer  
Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning  
**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**  
One Cyclotron Road  
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Direct: (510) 486-4168  
Cell: (510) 316-6711  
Email: [thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)

On Wed, Nov 28, 2018 at 3:51 PM Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Good Afternoon Tim,

My Plan Review Manager Engineer will return back to work tomorrow. I will check his schedule and will schedule a meeting for next week. I will let you know tomorrow the time of the scheduled meeting for next week.

Thank you.

Daniel Lowrey, Deputy Director  
Permit Services  
Department of Building Inspection  
[1660 Mission Street](#), 2<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 558-6127 Office

**From:** Tim Hart [mailto:[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 28, 2018 3:41 PM  
**To:** Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>; Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>; Sweeney, Edward (DBI) <[edward.sweeney@sfgov.org](mailto:edward.sweeney@sfgov.org)>; Pei, Carrie (DBI) <[carrie.pei@sfgov.org](mailto:carrie.pei@sfgov.org)>; Chun, Robert (DBI) <[robert.chun@sfgov.org](mailto:robert.chun@sfgov.org)>; Strawn, William (DBI) <[william.strawn@sfgov.org](mailto:william.strawn@sfgov.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Good afternoon Daniel,

Just checking in with you on scheduling our meeting. Please let me know what dates your staff will be available to meet with us. As I discussed in my email to Director Hui, I would like to schedule this meeting in the next week or two before the Christmas holiday slowdown.

Best Regards,



**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**  
SEAONC President 2018-2019  
Lead Civil/Structural Engineer  
Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning  
**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**  
One Cyclotron Road  
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Berkeley, CA 94720  
Direct: (510) 486-4168  
Cell: (510) 316-6711  
Email: [thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)

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On Mon, Nov 19, 2018 at 3:57 PM Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)> wrote:

Good Afternoon Tim,

I am checking the availability of my Engineering Staff to schedule a meeting to discuss your issues. Our Department will schedule a meeting with you in the near future.

Thank you.

Daniel Lowrey, Deputy Director  
Permit Services  
Department of Building Inspection  
[1660 Mission Street](#), 2<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 558-6127 Office

**From:** Tim Hart [mailto:[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 19, 2018 3:23 PM

**To:** Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>; Ho, Gary (DBI) <[gary.ho@sfgov.org](mailto:gary.ho@sfgov.org)>; Lowrey, Daniel (DBI) <[daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org](mailto:daniel.lowrey@sfgov.org)>; Sweeney, Edward (DBI) <[edward.sweeney@sfgov.org](mailto:edward.sweeney@sfgov.org)>; Pei, Carrie (DBI) <[carrie.pei@sfgov.org](mailto:carrie.pei@sfgov.org)>; Chun, Robert (DBI) <[robert.chun@sfgov.org](mailto:robert.chun@sfgov.org)>; Strawn, William (DBI) <[william.strawn@sfgov.org](mailto:william.strawn@sfgov.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

Thank you Tom, I am looking forward to hearing from them.

Best Regards,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**  
SEAONC President 2018-2019  
Lead Civil/Structural Engineer  
Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning  
**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**  
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On Mon, Nov 19, 2018 at 2:44 PM Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)> wrote:

President Hart,

Thank you for your email.

I am asking our Soft Story Program management staff to work with you in arranging a meeting to discuss your concerns and issues in the next week or two. I have copied them on this response.

Tom C. Hui, S.E., C.B.O.

Director

許子湯, 局長

City & County of San Francisco

Department of Building Inspection

[1660 Mission Street](#), Sixth Floor

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**From:** Tim Hart <[thart@lbl.gov](mailto:thart@lbl.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, November 19, 2018 1:22 PM

**To:** Hui, Tom (DBI) <[tom.hui@sfgov.org](mailto:tom.hui@sfgov.org)>

**Cc:** Taryn N. Williams <[TNWilliams@sgh.com](mailto:TNWilliams@sgh.com)>; DBI-StephenK.Harris <[skharris@sgh.com](mailto:skharris@sgh.com)>

**Subject:** Meeting to Discuss Quality Assurance on Soft Story Retrofit Projects

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Hello Director Hui,

I am the current President of SEAONC, taking over from Taryn Williams this past July 1. In that role I am contacting you in regards to the soft story retrofit program.

SEAONC is proud to support the Department of Building Inspection as you implement the City's "soft story" retrofit program, codified in *San Francisco Existing Building Code* Chapter 4D, "Mandatory Earthquake Retrofit of Wood-Frame Buildings." As you know, our Existing Buildings Committee provided review for the soft story ordinance and for the CAPSS studies that informed it, performed

research to enhance the engineering criteria in Administrative Bulletin 107, and continues to monitor this beneficial program.

As part of this monitoring effort, several SEAONC members have brought to my attention that there are instances of faulty design and construction on soft story projects. This unacceptable work is ultimately the responsibility of individual engineers and contractors, not of DBI plan checkers and inspectors. Even so, many owners reasonably rely on the City to enforce quality in a mandatory program. Further, if DBI does not enforce quality, responsible engineers and contractors are discouraged from participating. Therefore, we feel strongly that DBI can and must take action to improve quality assurance for the benefit of building owners, DBI's own reputation, and the City's retrofit programs generally.

I would like to set up a meeting with you to discuss the issues that have been raised by our members. I would also like to discuss how SEAONC could assist DBI in improving the construction quality level in this important seismic safety program. I have asked Taryn Williams and Stephen Harris, the Chair of the DBI Code Advisory Committee Structural Subcommittee, to join us in this discussion. We would be happy to come to your office for this meeting.

I would like to have this meeting before the Christmas holiday if possible, so please let me know if this is acceptable and what days you would be available to meet. I look forward to meeting you and working with you on this important issue.

Best Regards,

**Tim Hart, PE, SE, LEED AP**  
Lead Civil/Structural Engineer  
Facilities Engineering & Strategic Planning  
**Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**  
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