

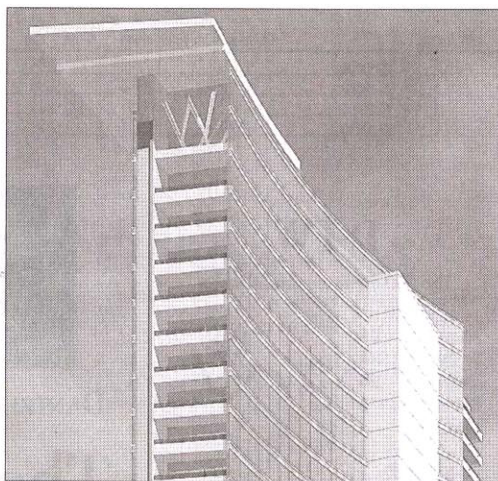
LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!



RANDY ELI GROTHE/Staff Photographer

The crown on the Millennium I Tower (above) fans out to the north at Dallas North Tollway and Arapaho Road.

The W hotel (right), under construction in the Victory project, already has its cantilevered wing in place.

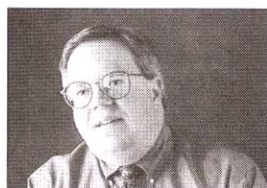


Hillwood

Architecture these days is taking wing

REAL ESTATE

This cutting-edge design is supplanting the once-trendy crown



STEVE BROWN

The hottest thing in high-rise architecture isn't a new type of colored glass or the latest in metal building panels.

If you want your building to soar, it needs wings.

That's right — like wings on a plane.

Cutting-edge skyscraper design these days is sometimes defined by rooftop ornamentation.

And the trendy accessory for towers is a wing or shelf projecting out from the roof.

A few years ago, circular crowns began popping up on buildings just like they did on people in the old Imperial margarine commercials.

There's a fancy crown on the Millennium I tower on the Dallas North Tollway.

And they're on smaller office buildings in West Plano and condos in Oak Lawn.

"Wings are in now," says Dallas architect Mark Humphreys. "For a while it was crowns, but now it's wings."

From Miami to the Las Vegas strip and out to California, designers are relying on these snappy little doodads to liven up boxy buildings.

Some look like spoilers on the back of racecars.

Those are supposed to make the building look fast.

Others look like wreckage deposited by a passing jet.

The new W hotel at the Victory project has a huge cantilevered wing projecting from the north side of the tower.

And early drawings of the Mondrian residential tower under construction on Haskell Avenue showed a big wing hanging off the roof.

Alas, the Mondrian's wing was clipped in the final design scheme.

Perhaps it was a cost issue.

These high-rise ornaments are pricey.

"The roof wings cost a lot of money, and they have to be engineered to withstand the wind," Mr. Humphreys said.

"Crowns aren't cheap, either — they can run as much as \$200,000 to \$300,000."

That's a lot of money for a bit of flash, but it's the Dallas way.

The old Mercantile National Bank Building has sported a series of gaudy neon roof towers since it was built in the 1940s.

And the Republic National

Bank Building has its rooftop rocket.

Now that wings have caught architects' fancy, can tailfins be far behind?