

'e-Urban' Design Breaks Density Barrier

By **Connie Gore**

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DALLAS — Rolling out its first copyrighted concept in five years, Humphreys & Partners Architects LP believes it has hit the multifamily industry's sweet spot, creating an urban infill product that could be bigger than its Big House. The e-Urban design has broken the density barrier of 35 to 40 units per acre plus boasts 88% efficiency in net rentable space.

"It's the arrangement of the parts that makes it unique," Mark Humphreys, CEO of the award-winning, Dallas-based firm, tells GlobeSt.com. "And, it is copyrighted." The mid-rise design has mini-lobbies at four corners, 25-foot corridors and units of 950 sf to 1,000 sf.

The e-Urban design hit developer's e-mail inboxes late Thursday night, triggering 25 calls from prospective clients on Friday and another 15 on Monday, says Greg Faulkner, the firm's president. Dibs have been placed for developments in Houston, Destin and Jacksonville, FL and two in Dallas.

The reaction has led the two top executives to believe that the design will surpass the Big House, now marking its 10th year and resulting in roughly \$3 billion of development in 200 projects nationwide. As the industry knows, the Big House design married multifamily product to single-family extras like attached garages, more baths and dens. Five years ago, Humphreys rolled out Home-Rise, a copyrighted high-rise design without corridors.

The e-Urban design, with elevators, has short corridors, separate fire halls and 88% efficiency ratio for net rentable space. Traditional urban infill has 65% efficiency and long corridors, in some cases, very long corridors. Humphreys also has broken out of the pack by planning wood-plank



e-Urban Rendering

exteriors instead of stucco or brick. More than 100 units per acre, with structured parking, can be packed into the five-story version.

"We were trying to hit that niche that didn't exist," Faulkner says. "This is a new sheet of music." The concept can be tweaked to include street-level retail for the mixed-use crowd.

Humphreys and Faulkner estimate the "double-loaded" design will save 15% to 20% in construction costs. In Texas, a regular four-story complex costs \$105 per sf to \$110 per sf, but the e-Urban will weigh in at \$75 per sf to \$80 per sf.

"We knew immediately we had a winner." Humphreys says. "We have prided ourselves in coming up with new revolutionary ideas. E-Urban may be our most successful new design."



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