

Massive Redevelopment Transforms Lubbock's Inner City Neighborhood

LUBBOCK Construction is underway on the second of two initial components of a \$200 million redevelopment project that will stretch nine blocks between downtown and the campus of Texas Tech University. The project, described as the largest redevelopment in the nation's history funded entirely by private investment, began in 2002 with the bulldozing of an entire neighborhood that in recent years had become infamous locally as a harbor for drug dealing and prostitution.

Known as Overton Park, the 325-acre redevelopment project is primarily financed by the McDougal Company of Lubbock which envisions a mixed-use neighborhood with apartments, single-family housing, and retail businesses interconnected by pedestrian-friendly streets. First announced in July 1999 by McDougal CEO Delbert McDougal, the massive project is expected to be completed in 2007 or 2008. Dallas-based Humphreys & Partners Architects designed the master plan for Overton Park, as well as many individual components of the larger project.



The neighborhood was known formerly as North Overton, popular with university students for several decades because of inexpensive housing located within walking distance from classes. But, according to the McDougal Company, absentee landlords who owned 97 percent of the rental housing allowed the area to decline in the 1980s which led to a dramatic increase in crime rates. The dangerous conditions caused students to look elsewhere for housing.

North Overton was founded by Dr. M.C. Overton in 1907, the same year Lubbock incorporated, and soon became a desirable home for many of Lubbock's prominent families wanting to live adjacent to the downtown business district. The neighborhood later linked downtown and the campus of Texas Technological College when the school was established in 1925. In the 1960s, developers replaced many of the original single-family dwellings with apartment buildings.

(above) The Centre, a \$26 million multi-use complex, will cover two city blocks. (below) The Centre is represented as Parcel 9 on the far left of the master plan.

The redevelopment project's first component was completed earlier this year with the opening of a 242-unit apartment complex named Sterling University Trails. The second component, scheduled for completion next summer, is The Centre, a \$26 million mixed-use complex with three levels of apartment units atop street-level storefronts for large and small retail shops. Expected to contain nearly 400,000 square feet of leasable apartment/retail space, The Centre covers two city blocks near the eastern perimeter of the Texas Tech campus and includes a four-story parking garage.

The McDougal Company plans to add other components in the near future, including a 17-story hotel directly across from the Texas Tech football stadium and a subdivision with 400 single-family residences expected to range in price from \$160,000 to \$200,000. McDougal has partnered with the Dinerstein Group of Houston to develop some of the components. The developers have cited several factors that support their decision to invest in Overton Park, chiefly the continued growth in enrollment at Texas Tech but also a sustained migration of newcomers attracted to Lubbock now that the city has topped the 200,000 population mark. The redevelopment project is attracting other investors to Overton Park, including Lubbock-based City Bank which recently announced plans to build a two-story bank along University Avenue.

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