

# TEXAS REAL ESTATE BUSINESS™

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 7

SEPTEMBER 2007

## HUMPHREYS & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS' NEWEST DESIGN CONCEPT PROMOTES EFFICIENCY BY CREATING MORE VALUE IN THE SAME AMOUNT OF SPACE

Dallas-based Humphrey & Partners Architects — best known for its innovative Big House design — is at it again with its newest multifamily concept, e-Urban infill design. Using 20 percent less materials to house the same number of people, e-Urban upholds green design thought as well as provides huge dollar savings to building owners.

“The most interesting thing about the e-Urban design is that the building is much more efficient while using the same amount of materials and

square footage,” says Mark Humphreys, CEO of Humphreys & Partners Architects. “Basically, if you’re building a 200-unit apartment project at about 200,000 square feet, it’s going to cost you approximately \$20 million. With this design, you could potentially save \$4 million in construction costs.”

This is made possible by taking away large common area and corridor spaces. The concept behind the design is a four- or five-story, wood-frame building that utilizes a number of smaller, separate elevator lobbies that open up to five or six apartment doors, as opposed to the traditional large lobbies on each floor that have long corridors and dozens, even hundreds, of apartment doors.

“With this design, there are 70 percent less corridors and common areas — that’s 70 percent less space that needs to be lighted, heated and air-conditioned,” Humphreys says.

Humphreys & Partners came up with this notion in response to the rising construction costs, which, according to Humphreys, have been going up about 1 percent a month — totaling 24 or 25 percent in the last few years — and were causing the firm’s buildings to barely function financially.

“That was our first concern,” Humphreys says. “We also noticed that the efficiency of these buildings was only 65 percent — and not just ours, so were everybody else’s.”

Humphreys went to his firm’s design department and asked them to work on a design that would get the efficiency up higher, and they did that by eliminating the corridors and creating elevator lobbies. This new concept took it from 65 percent to 88

percent efficiency (efficiency meaning rentable or sellable area versus common area), he says.

“This has been very exciting to a lot of our clientele,” Humphreys says. “We’ve had over 150 phone calls in six weeks. It’s been a bigger reception that we received on our Big House product for which we’re well-known.”

Humphreys & Partners currently is working on approximately 30 projects with e-Urban infill design, several of which are located throughout Texas.

“We pride ourselves on coming up with new products that the market does not have. We felt there was a need for this, and it turned out we found the solution,” Humphreys says. “We have met with some of the largest developers in the U.S. already on this product, and they’ve looked at the design and said it was remarkable. It’s very simple; it’s amazing nobody has thought of this before.”

— Lindsey Walker

