

TEXAS REAL ESTATE BUSINESS™

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

SEPTEMBER 2008

www.TexasREBusiness.com

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LEADING TEXAS ARCHITECTS

These Texas-based firms are breaking ground in their fields statewide, nationally and internationally.

Lindsey Walker

You don't need to look far to find an innovative, award-winning or groundbreaking architecture firm for your next big project — there are dozens right here in our very own Lone Star State. Texas-based firms are forging new paths in the field of architecture and design worldwide, introducing

concepts like the "Big House"® or the "Texas Wrap Product" to the rest of the industry. We spoke with several of these leading architecture firms to talk about their latest Texas projects, their greatest innovations and what they see for the future of architecture.

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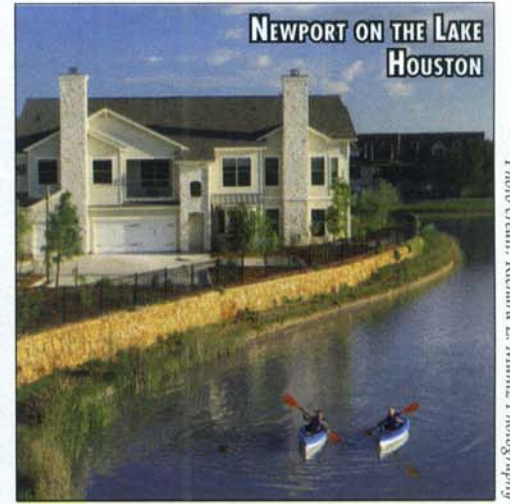
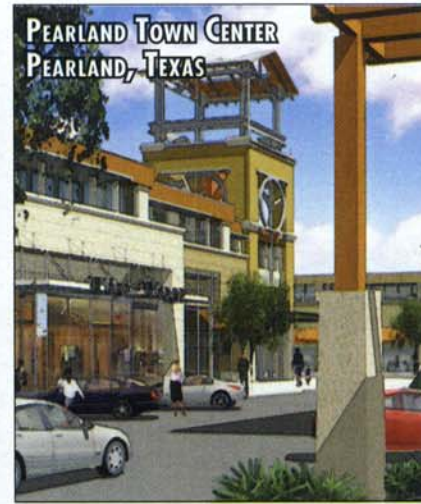
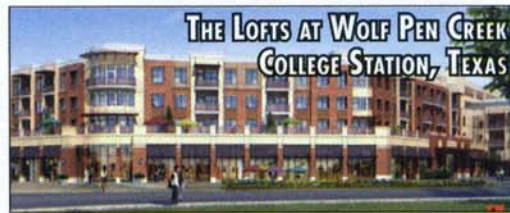
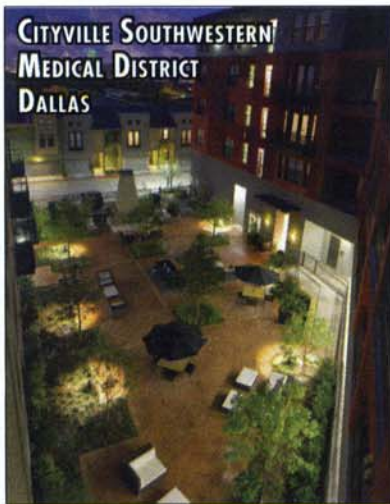


Photo credit: Richard L. Muniz Photography

HUMPHREYS & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS, LP

Fast Facts: Based in Dallas; introduced products such as the "Big House"® for the multifamily industry, the "Home-Rise" design for high-rise buildings and the new "e-Urban"® design.

Mark Humphreys left a partnership 17 years ago with the vision of building a large national and international practice. Today, Humphreys & Partners Architects provides architecture and planning expertise for apartments, mixed-use, condo towers, hotels, office and master-planning projects in markets around the world.

"Innovation is the key to our success," says Humphreys, the Dallas-based firm's CEO.

One of the firm's most innovative concepts includes the "Big House"® multifamily product, which resembles a single-family home. Instead of parking lots, each unit has a garage like a home does. The apartments also have no breezeways or balconies, typical features of garden apartment communities. This single-family look also helps "Big House" projects obtain approval in communities opposed to multifamily development. One such "Big House" development is Newport on the Lake, which just completed construction in Houston.

"This product is 100 percent efficient because there are no hallways," Humphreys says. "We used numerous green building components in the design, including indigenous plants that require little or no watering and pine straw mulch, which requires no maintenance."

The property, which is located 3 miles from the BP headquarters and the Energy Corridor, is achieving the highest rents in suburban Houston, Humphreys adds. The project integrates 234 units at 23 units per acre.

Atticus Real Estate/Cambridge Development Group was the project developer for Newport on the Lake, and C.F. Jordan was the contractor. Humphreys & Partners Architects served as the architect and land planner.

Another concept that Humphreys & Partners Architects created is the no-corridor "Home-Rise" design for high-rise buildings. This concept allows elevators to open onto a private elevator lobby on each floor, with just a few unit doors accessible from it. The firm's highly efficient "e-Urban"® design follows a similar philosophy. The urban infill, mid-rise design boasts 40 to 50 units per acre, surface parked, and 88 percent efficiency in net rentable space. Instead of a big central lobby or long hallways, the design has mini-lobbies at four corners and 25-foot corridors.

"New design trends in Texas match U.S. trends — smaller units, more sophisticated finishes, cost-efficient construction and more efficient green building," Humphreys says. "Our 'e-Urban' product typically costs \$4 million less to build than a comparable project of its type because of its higher building efficiency."

Humphreys believes that Texas' ranking as one of the fastest growing states in the nation will generate more new architecture with the addition of new office buildings and high-density mixed-use developments. In addition, Texas has some of the largest colleges and one of the largest populations of young people in the country.

"The 'Echo Boon' or 'Gen Y' generation is just starting to come into the marketplace," he says. "The peak of that curve is 15 years from today."

With that in mind, he sees another big boom coming to Texas.

"Texas has every single component going for it — it's centrally located; it is an energy capital; it has the lowest cost for housing in North America; and it has low taxes and very little bureaucracy," he says. "Texas has not a negative thing I can think of."