

## REAL ESTATE REPORT

Baylor All Saints expansion: The Fort Worth medical center will add a women's hospital and a medical office building. 30



MILTON BISSANT/Staff Photographer

In the Kessler Woods development in Oak Cliff, all the homes have the straight, clean lines of midcentury modern.

# It's a mod, mod neighborhood

## Demand growing for homes with contemporary style

By STEVE BROWN  
Real Estate Editor

The neighbors in developer Diane Cheatham's new North Dallas subdivision will have different incomes and ages, and they are moving from all over town.

But all the homebuyers in the Urban Reserve neighborhood share a taste for modern architecture.

"Our youngest buyer is 28, and our oldest is 75," said Ms. Cheatham, who is building her 50-home neighborhood north of Royal Lane. "What people have in common at Urban Reserve is they are connected by their love of architecture and nature."

The 12-acre subdivision on

White Rock Creek is one of a tiny few modern home developments being built in Dallas.

For years, modern and contemporary-style houses were a tough sell in North Texas, where buyers usually demand big traditional and faux European-style homes.

But that's changing somewhat, real estate agents and builders say.

"It has been a very narrow market, and there are still some people who say 'ugh' when they hear 'modern' or 'contemporary,'" said Sheila Rice of Virginia Cook Realtors. "But the midcentury modern house has now become popular."

"And I believe that the market for modern homes will grow



DEAN HOLLINGSWORTH/Staff Artist

appreciably."

Based on the response to the first modern home developments, demand for such residences already outstrips supply.

At Kessler Woods in Oak Cliff, developer Matt Holley has sold all 11 homes in the first

phase of his modern home neighborhood and has just broken ground on phase two.

"There are 19 more homes, and we have eight of those left," he said.

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## High-rises: No holding back

But developers face a challenge in filling so many costly units

Dallas developers aren't buying all the chatter about a housing bubble. You can tell it by looking at all the high-rise condominium projects in the weeks.

There are about 15 projects with more than 1,700 luxury condo units being offered in the

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Dallas area.

Although that's a fraction of the total housing construction in North Texas, the pool of buyers

willing to pay as much as \$450 per square foot for high-rise living can go only so far.

Compare that price tag to the average cost of a home in the Park Cities — \$273 per square foot. And the average pre-owned single-family home in North Texas sells for \$89 per square foot.

At least seven more condo projects are on the drawing boards for Uptown.

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C. Pharr & Co.

Among the developments rising in the Dallas area is the Stoneleigh Residences.

# Modern homes luring buyers

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Mr. Holley is building on a vacant parcel near Stevens Park Golf Course. The houses are selling for \$450,000 to \$2 million, mostly to buyers who are moving into Oak Cliff.

"Everybody is coming to us because they want something that is midcentury modern," he said. "You can get a Tudor-style house anywhere."

## Who's moving in

Richard and Michelle Akers are building a home in Kessler Woods. They had lived in a post-modern home in Oak Cliff and wanted a new house.

"We didn't want a huge McMansion," Ms. Akers said. "We wanted to be in a house with a lot of architectural interest."

What they wound up with is a 2,500-square-foot, three-story house built in the woods by a creek. "There's a 17-foot bridge leading to the front door," she said.

Robert Moore bought one of the lots in Urban Reserve and plans to start his 2,600-square-foot home after the first of the year.

He currently has a midcentury modern home in North Dallas and said there's an appeal to living in a neighborhood with the same architecture.

"After a while a lot of times you see a contemporary house they like, but because of the surroundings, there is a battle of styles going on," Mr. Moore said. "To be able to live in that aesthetic and walk the street and be surrounded by it is amazing to me."

Mr. Moore's new home has been designed by Dallas architect



Urban Edge Developers

An all-modern neighborhood on White Rock Creek includes two townhouses on Abbott Avenue.



MILTON HENNAVE Staff Photographer

Most of the modern-style houses in the Kessler Woods development are being sold to buyers new to Oak Cliff.

Lionel Morrison, who has done a series of award-winning modern residences. Morrison Seifert Murphy Architecture and Interior Design is also doing the new One Arts Plaza office and condo tower

in downtown Dallas.

"The awareness of modern architecture has expanded so much in the last 10 years," Mr. Morrison said. "It's not just an architecture for the elite anymore."

"Maybe it's because of people coming in from out of town or younger people with disposable income who aren't particularly interested in the type of environments they grew up in." While buyers of modern homes are in the minority, their influence in the market is growing, said Loty Goldenberg of David Griffin Realtors, who is marketing the Urban Reserve project.

"They are singles, young couples, older couples, couples with children — it's a cross section," Ms. Goldenberg said. "We started selling lots to these people when they couldn't even see what they were buying."

"But they were so enthusiastic about the project that they wanted to be there, even before the streets were built."

## A singular style

So far, 21 of the lots, priced from about \$116,000 to more than \$300,000, have been sold.

The houses will be priced from \$350,000 to more than \$1 million.

Developer Jerry Scibell is selling 12 lots in his 6300 Forest Lane project for \$356,000 to \$565,000.

All of the houses will be modern or contemporary, and constructed by spec builders and individuals.

"So many people in this immediate neighborhood say that's just what they want — a contemporary home in an alcove with other contemporary homes," Mr. Scibell said. "If you had varied architectural styles in there, it would look a little disjointed."