

MULTIFAMILY TRENDS

NEW HORIZONS

What do we know about the future of multifamily housing?



36 Future Stock

The multifamily industry is in the midst of a transformation, one that is driven by the explosion in condominium development, a shortage of affordable units, changing demographics, shifting development patterns, and a renewed appreciation for modern design. How can developers stay on top of these trends and, more important, best position themselves to capitalize on future opportunities? This 22-page special report looks ahead to the future of multifamily housing—who will make up the residents, where development is taking place, what is being built, and how to find the next hot spots. The secret to success lies in knowing what to expect.



38 The New Suburbanism: Communities in Profile

COLIN DRUKKER
Suburbs have borne the major share of growth over the past half century. Now, some architects, developers, and planners are looking at ways to make them better places to live.

44 UREBs: Finding the Next Real Estate Hot Spots

CHARLES LOCKWOOD
Often overlooked, UREBs—unexpected real estate barometers—are an important tool in a developer's effort to identify up-and-coming neighborhoods. But what are these indicators?

48 The New American Renter

MICHELE LERNER
More than 1 million immigrants enter the United States each year. These new residents are younger and more likely to rent housing than their native-born counterparts, which means multifamily owners and managers will need to reevaluate the way they do business.

52 Ten Modern Models

KENNETH CALDWELL
Modernism is regaining popularity. Here are ten multifamily projects that are leading the way.

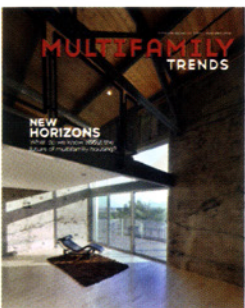


PHOTO: LIAM FREDERICK

60 Making Density Desirable

CHRISTINE ROMBOUS
Buildings are not the only components of successful urban projects—equally important are the spaces between the buildings.



68 Master-Planned Affordability

PETER F. DENNEHY
A number of new master-planned communities in southern California are mixing affordable units with market-rate housing, addressing an urgent need in the area.

72 Be My Guest: The Modern Leasing Center

CINDY SHEPARDSON
Once an afterthought, today's leasing center is combining technology and improved customer service with the comforts of a homelike environment.



TEN MODERN

KENNETH CALDWELL

Modernism is regaining popularity. Here are ten multifamily projects that are leading the way.

SUDDENLY MODERNISM SEEMS TO BE EVERYWHERE. Popular home furnishing chains like Room and Board, Design Within Reach, and even Target are filling homes with everything modern. In Manhattan, Philip Johnson's portrait appears on billboards selling modern condominiums (he seems to have come back to the fold before he died). While many architects are thrilled to sound the death knell for vacuous postmodernism, the risk remains of turning modernism into a style, taking it away from its roots as a progressive social idea. Can it have some social import and still be used to sell?

Early modernist projects like Walter Gropius's housing for students and workers were rooted in ideas about light, circulation, fresh air, and cultural legibility for everybody. Since then, some developers and architects have appropriated stylistic elements of modernism—glass curtain walls, thin balconies, the exposure of materials, the expression of structure, and architect-designed furniture—in projects that otherwise lacked a modernist approach or philosophy. At the same time, some younger architects are adhering to the original ideas of modernism: social equity, honest design, and contemporary expressions. What they add is a consciousness of the growing scarcity of natural resources and a greater sensitivity to place.

When European modernism was translated for America's corporate avenues in the 20th century, it got watered down until it was just plain dull. A few skillful architects who have been unfairly lumped in with the postmodernists argued that modern housing could also respond to the environment. Sea Ranch, California, could not be imitated anywhere else because it was so rooted in a singular stretch of coastline at the dawn of the modern environmental movement. American Institute of Architects gold medalist Tadao Ando has spoken eloquently about relating the logic of modernism to the spirit of place and the spirit of time.

The following ten projects capture something of these ideals in that they are rational in modernist terms, but also anchored in their specific place and in this moment.

They vary in their approach to sustainability and house everyone from the homeless to the wealthy. The benefits of orientation, reuse, Earth-friendly materials, and fresh air all are emphasized. But most important, they share a move away from the single-family, detached suburban house and its wasteful use of land and fuel. That is truly modern, and one can hope it is the trend of the future.

Tucson Gets Dense

Tucson, Arizona, is a postwar sort of boomtown. With the relatively strong economy offered by the combination of academia and the defense and retirement industries, the city has been fortunate enough to have resisted some of Phoenix's worst development mistakes. However, Tucson's downtown suffered terrible damage from ill-conceived redevelopment efforts. Architect Rob Paulus saw development opportunity in an abandoned 1923 icehouse adjacent to the downtown core. Though observers doubted anyone would buy a loft downtown, Icehouse Lofts' 51 units on just over two acres now command some of the highest per-square-foot prices in Tucson. Through adaptive use of the building and many of its materials, the project consumed fewer natural resources than most new buildings. However, Paulus's design makes clear what is new and what is old. Now developers across several Tucson neighborhoods are realizing that there are other possibilities for beautifully designed infill multifamily housing. Paulus believed that good design would sell, and it has.

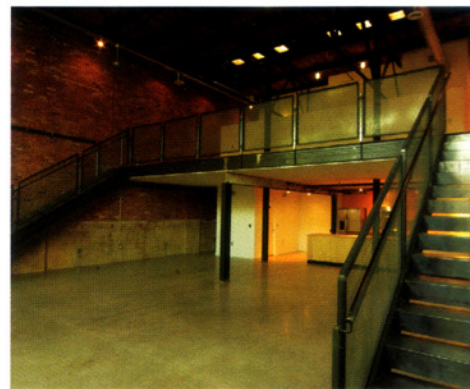
Seattle Goes Silver

Seattle, another town that loves its postwar suburban houses, also has some enlightened developers. Vulcan Real Estate, the development arm of Microsoft founder Paul Allen's business empire, advocates sustainability as a core value. With Pemco Insurance, the company has developed the office and housing complex Alley24. The office block is designed to receive a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, and the residen-

MODELS

NEWHORIZONS

LAM FREDRICK (ALL IMAGES THIS PAGE)



Icehouse Lofts,
Tucson, Arizona.



Austin City Lofts, Austin, Texas.

control and hydronic heating achieve energy savings well beyond strict California standards. In addition, photovoltaic panels, an extensive debris diversion program during construction, and use of various certified building materials will allow this building to achieve a LEED silver rating—a significant accomplishment for affordable housing. The high quality of this project surpasses much of the city's new market-rate housing.

Artful Austin

Great architects like Louis Kahn, Rafael Moneo, and Renzo Piano have shown Texas what is possible with artful modern design, but those innovations have largely been limited to museums. Multifamily housing has often reflected a preference for an imagined past—on steroids. Now, PageSoutherlandPage Architects has designed a 14-story, 82-unit tower in downtown Austin known as Austin City Lofts. The design integrates Texas materials like limestone and metal panels with familiar forms such as a deep porch, yet creates a modern residential tower that belongs in Austin. The base of the building relates to the downtown's pedestrian scale, while the tower portions are slender. Retail space lines the Fifth Street side of the project, extending the downtown's vibrancy.

The combination and placement of materials also help reduce the project's scale. The architects set the building back from Shoal Creek and its recreational trail. Lower units look over the abundant landscape close to the creek, while higher floors, including the two-story lofts that give the project its name, have views north to

the state Capitol and south to Town Lake. Over two decades ago, a planning study suggested that the lower part of Shoal Creek should be a high-density residential district. The more recent Town Lake Comprehensive Plan reinforced that idea, and more projects are in the works.

Kansas City Clarity

Clean, contextual, modern design has also reached the center of the country. In downtown Kansas City, Missouri, close to the new Sprint Arena and the city's performing arts center, the Rivermarket neighborhood has a number of industrial buildings with concrete frames and brick infill. El Dorado Architects' handsome design for 5 Delaware, a 13-unit building, responds to the nearby forms and rhythms while contrasting with them in its use of materials. The simple, expressed concrete structure frames windows of varying sizes and infill panels of tongue-and-groove Mangaris hardwood decking. Most of the spacious units have more than 2,000 square feet of space, with 11-foot ceilings and private terraces; five units are double height. Some of the penthouse unit terraces have more than 1,000 square feet of space and offer dramatic views of downtown. Like loft projects elsewhere, the units are mostly unfinished. The ground floor has one retail storefront; 21 parking spaces are tucked in the lower level.

Minneapolis Gets Fancy

Returning downtown to live is a trend elsewhere in the Midwest—and so is buying the units raw. The 301 Kenwood project—across the street from the Walker Art Center (with its dramatic new addition by Herzog + DeMeuron), the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, and the Guthrie Theater—has helped make the Kenwood neighborhood part of a denser downtown. This Elness Swenson Graham Architects—designed building represents the affluent embracing downtown.

The project only has 13 units, and, as at 5 Delaware, the units have outdoor terraces. The ground-floor parking is hidden by a two-story townhouse, with another parking level located below the street. Individual units, two per floor, except for the townhouse, were sold as shells, which were then finished out according to the owner's individual taste. The building harkens back to a traditional concept: base (stone), middle (glass), and crown (steel). As at Page-



5 Delaware Lofts, Kansas City, Missouri.



301 Kenwood, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SoutherlandPage's building in Austin, the base is clad in native stone.

Nashville Courts Modern and Traditional Together

In Nashville, a traditional-looking project turns out to be subversive by emphasizing density and community rather than the automobile. Sur-

rounded by mostly older, single-family houses, Germantown Court seems to build on the bungalow court traditions of Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles. The best part of the project belongs to all the residents: a central common open space for community activities, with access from all eight cottages, was created when Dryden Abernathy Architecture Design relegated cars to a space off the back alley. Inside, the houses are far more modern, with some connected kitchen dining spaces and overlooks from loftlike bedrooms. One sustainable strategy is that site runoff is contained in rain barrels and used to irrigate the landscaping. These detached little houses were developed at a density of 16 units per acre. As in Tucson, other nearby low-rise multifamily projects are coming on line, some with even greater densities.

Miami Grows Up

At the opposite end of the spectrum from Nashville is Miami, where Arquitectonica's projects of the 1980s



DEAN DIXON PHOTOGRAPHY

Germantown Court, Nashville, Tennessee.

have brought back the exuberance of Morris Lapidus and the 1950s, creating a cacophony of brazen high rises. Kohn Pedersen Fox's mixed-use Espirito Santo Plaza on Brickell Avenue offers a counterpoint—a calm yet powerful tower where design is given a high profile. The 36-story building houses 300,000 square feet of offices, the Conrad Miami Hotel, and 121 high-end condominium residences.

Each vantage point offers something dramatic. A full-height concave form on the facade is intended to symbolize the gateway to Latin America. The lobby for the offices shows off a four-story waterfall, and a glass-bottomed reflecting pool allows light to filter through to the vehicular access below. Starting on the 25th floor, an 11-story atrium distinguishes the hotel suites from the condominium residences. There is even access to the automated public Metromover across Brickell, although it seems hard to imagine that the well-off hotel guests or residents are using it. Despite all of these gimmicks, the building's design presents a grown-up attitude that integrates all the uses into a cohesive aesthetic—something Miami needs.



ALEX STEINBERG

Espirito Santo Plaza, Miami, Florida.



KOHN PEDERSEN FOX ASSOCIATES PC/WOODRUFF BROWN, PHOTOGRAPHER

Chicago Still Modern after All These Years

It is hard to do something new in Chicago, a city that has long embraced dense high-rise living and has some of the world's most distinguished modern residential towers. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe casts a long shadow here. But Ralph Johnson of Perkins + Will has done something remarkable at Contemporaine and Skybridge, his new condominiums. The Contemporaine, a 15-story project in River North, is the smaller of these two residential projects and has a lightness that the Skybridge does not, which is curious given that concrete is everywhere. But the glazing and delicate balconies take modernism in a dramatic new direction. In a more-modern-than-you move, Johnson exposed the vehicular movement at the base of the building.



Contemporaine, Chicago, Illinois.

JAMES STEINKAMP/PHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Developer Colin Kihnke and CMK Development are behind the project. Kihnke liked Johnson's work and hired him even though Johnson had not previously designed residential buildings. Kihnke controls his own construction, brokerage, and development, and seems willing to take greater risks than most developers. He has been quoted as saying he does not follow the market. His design confidence is worth watching.

New York Culture

New York City remains the nation's cultural capital. Throughout the city, a series of bland new high rises with astronomical prices have been built, making the old white-brick apartments look romantic by comparison. The city is always celebrating an imagined and lost grand era while pushing hard into the future. Few projects capture this dynamic better than Sharples Holden Pasquarelli/SHoP's Porter House in the meatpacking district. Named for the cut of steak, the building occupies a high-profile corner at Ninth Avenue and 15th Street. A 30,000-square-foot wine warehouse dating from 1905 was renovated and augmented by a new 20,000-square-foot zinc-clad element that rises four stories higher and also cantilevers over a smaller building below. Twenty-two relatively large luxury residences were



Porter House, New York City, New York.

SEONG KWON

created. Within the zinc panels, vertical light boxes reduce the apparent mass of the building when illuminated in the evening. The developer used air rights from adjacent parcels on Ninth Avenue to develop the new element. Already, the project is a landmark that lights the way for the first decade of the 21st century. The Porter House serves as a symbol of people's aspirations for the future—anchored in history, but transcending it.

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