



Design Considerations by Cole Stevens

Cowboys, copper and concrete. The wild abandon that has characterized the American Southwest for over a century undoubtedly remains today. An unlikely eclecticism, a fusion of tastes and styles, a startling building bric-a-brac that easily goes unnoticed when traveling at 50mph: this is the built environment that is Phoenix, Arizona. With the trend toward a more urbanized way of life, modern design in Phoenix invites traditional suburbanites and city dwellers alike to experience in reality the concept of live + work + play and to be a part of the urban renaissance that is changing the face of Phoenix at such a rapid rate.

Above: The Galleries at Turney from the drawing board to realization. The Galleries are entering the final stages of construction.

Below: A rendering of Portland 38 currently under construction at Portland just west of 7th Street.

The process for reaching a final architectural design ranges widely between individual projects and between building typology. From choosing the site to choosing a countertop material, input comes from all directions: future tenants, architects, interior designers, elected officials, developers and neighborhood associations. The basis and minutiae of design are all the result of a collaborative process between many personalities.

Sprawling ranches in an endless sea of stucco, Phoenix homes of the last 50 years have primarily been reactive in their designs, answering the call to a Californian sensibility and to the great need for mass-produced housing following World War II. While suburban homebuilding remains run-of-the-mill and unexceptional, low-rise, single-family construction in the heart of Phoenix pushes the envelope, taking a proactive stance within the design spectrum.

Perhaps the most proactive low-rise project under construction in Phoenix is The Galleries at Turney, a collaboration by Modus Development and architecture design studio, [merz] project. Adapted from a tabled project in Scottsdale, The Galleries will be the first development in Arizona to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Homes certification, raising the bar for other homebuilders in the state.

Ed Gorman, president of Modus Development, uses the inverted pyramid to demonstrate the process and important factors that guide project development through to completion. On top of the pyramid unsurprisingly is location. Location has always dictated the desirability of any property, as evidenced by the doubling land value of The Galleries in the past two years. Urban life has become increasingly appealing during the last decade, not just in Phoenix, but in most major metropolitan areas globally. The draw of convenience, proximity to goods and services and the simple idea of urban sophistication as lifestyle have led many to embrace this new trend in Phoenix.

O4, a new project under construction at Osborn Road and 4th Avenue, benefits from its location, which was meticulously scouted by New Zealand developer Redwood Group.

"The appeal of O4 is its location, and we need businesses in this area to thrive as much as they need residential development to bring in customers," states Andrew Crosby, VP of Redwood Group.

The company spent almost a year researching world markets, finally selecting Phoenix as the optimum building market to complement Redwood's foci and areas of expertise. Redwood chose Phoenix "based on the city's demographics, growing economy, welcoming business climate and the emerging acceptance of urban infill development in a city mainly known for large suburban, single-family home subdivisions."

Design pervades everyone's lives as it becomes more accessible to the masses. Design is, in fact, the second part of Gorman's inverted pyramid. Projects like O4, The Galleries at Turney and JAG Development's Portland 38 set the tone for low-rise design in Phoenix.

"[merz] has a history of using innovative materials in a unique way. The design aesthetic is a direct result of the process of distilling conceptual ideas, budgetary concerns and environmental/spatial/material concepts," says Jonah Busick, [merz]'s project manager for The Galleries.

The gallery aesthetic is evident throughout the entire construction at The Galleries at Turney, where monopoint fixtures allow for the ultimate in directional, customizable lighting. Italian cabinetry, Caesarstone countertops, Bosch appliances and limestone flooring all lend themselves to a simple yet elegant final design. The project is located a mere three blocks from the Biltmore, with beautiful views of downtown to the south and of the Esplanade and mountains to the north.





This page: Renderings of new development o4, located at 3500 N. 4th Ave. Kitchen model located at the sales office. The residences are slated for a 2008 completion.

Opposite page: Portland Place in Phoenix. Exterior rendering as viewed from the Japanese Friendship Garden, interior shots from the show model for the development.

like added insulation in overhangs and increased window glazing. Remarkably, the eight units at The Galleries will use less water than the two single-family homes that previously existed on the lots.

While many design considerations are the same for both low-rise and mid-rise building projects, mid-rises can pose a bevy of different design issues altogether.

Looking around town, there is certainly no abundance of mid-rise residential structures, so one must ask himself why this is the case in Phoenix. The answer is relatively simple: desirability and land use. Mid-rise developments typically do not offer enough units to merit the kind of amenities most condo owners in an urban setting seek. Also, land value per number of units requires maximizing the development and that typically means high-rise. Portland Place, without a doubt, is the vanguard of mid-rise construction in Phoenix.

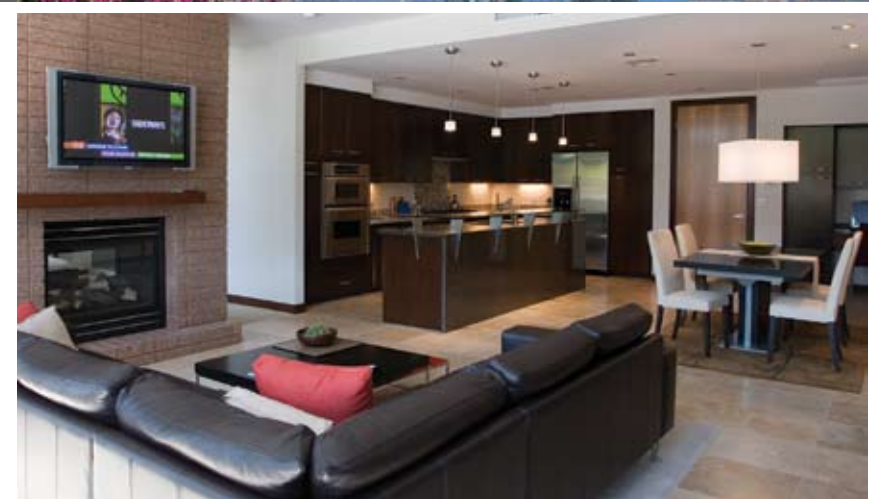
Mid-rise housing like Portland Place, especially a three-building cluster and three-phase development such as this, affords Phoenixians a very unique experience: a neighborhood feel right downtown. Close-by goods and services that characterize urban living are literally right underneath Portland Place residents. Businesses like Calabria Italian Grocery & Deli, My Florist Cafe and everything on Roosevelt Row exist within walking distance, resulting in a close-knit urban lifestyle sought by both developers and tenants here in Phoenix. Location, as with all projects, played a key role in building orientation and development strategy. The location of Portland Place integrates it into two city parks: the Japanese Friendship Garden of Phoenix and Margaret T. Hance

The design of Redwood Group's O4 resulted from creative input from architect Todd Associates, interiors studio Exclaim Design and Cambridge Properties.

Andrew Crosby colorfully describes the design process for O4, "We brought a hint of New Zealand with us, stirred it with American culture, style and construction methods and poured it in a Phoenician glass."

Green considerations bring up the bottom of Ed Gorman's inverted real estate pyramid. Gorman "envisions a 10-year swing, with increasing green consciousness until green requirements become fully integrated into all designs."

The original building specifications for The Galleries at Turney called for many green elements. When Modus and [merz] project put LEED certification into their sights, they found they only had to make a few minor adjustments to reach their goal—adjustments



Park. The heights of the buildings will create a nice, secluded enclave of seemingly non-urban living.

"Our future residents are looking forward to the benefits of living in the Roosevelt Historic District, with the convenience of nearby amenities and attractions," said Larry Throneburg, president of Rim Chaparral Pines Real Estate Services, LLC. "Residents will enjoy views of the nearby parks, as well as the comfort of living in a relaxing, neighborhood setting. Portland Place is set apart from the concrete structures that are prevalent in downtown Phoenix; we even have green grass just outside our doors."

What sets mid-rise developments apart from low-rise and high-rise projects is the fact that they must take cues from the other two, respecting the context of their surrounding but adhering to the mentality set forth by a vertical and dense high-rise lifestyle. Portland Place offers luxury amenities, like all the developments mentioned thus far. Gourmet kitchens with granite countertops, designer fixtures and porcelain showers and baths signal to the lifestyle that people in a position to purchase a condo seek, especially in a market like Phoenix. Unlike low-rise, single-family developments like The Galleries at Turney, roof deck gardens, roof-top pools, a fitness center and a state-of-the-art IT environment are more on par with what's offered in a high-rise property.

It's not easy being the middle child, but Portland Place accepted the challenge and acts as an example to be followed.

High-rise residential developments in Phoenix promise to forge an entirely new mindset and possibly attract a new kind of citizen to the Valley. The perception of Phoenix as a rustic, unsophisticated burg of exponential suburban magnitude will change with increased density and the introduction of vertical living. Projects like 44 Monroe and Cielo Phoenix will finally bring big-city living to the big city of Phoenix, the fifth largest metropolitan area in the US.

David Pourbaba, president of 4D Development, and M. Aaron Yashouafar, CEO of Milbank Real Estate Services, are two of the most influential players bringing vertical living to Phoenix, creating the tallest residential structure in the entire state of Arizona with Cielo.

"Our initial campaign was geared toward buyers of second homes. Surprisingly, most of the people purchasing Cielo condos will be using the units as their primary residences," speaks Yashouafar.

European and international trends alike shine through in Cielo Phoenix, with a one-acre allotment for a pool, outdoor theatre and common spaces that provide for cooking classes led by gourmet

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chefs and a community room for special occasions or occasional get-togethers. The verticality of Cielo speaks to the necessity of sophisticated living absent in Phoenix as of yet.

Located at Central Ave and Columbus, Cielo will offer a sense of community and close proximity to downtown, furnishing Phoenix residents with a never before felt level of urban joie de vivre. Encompassing an entire city block, Cielo consciously divides elements like entry points for services, residents and commercial/retail. Having previously developed projects in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, the thoughtful separation of use speaks to the developers' highly successful urban track record.

Everything came together for the Cielo development team, with a perfect combination of the right zoning, ideal location and the unmet need of international-style urban living. Receiving excellent representation in the entitlement process, Pourbaba and Yashouafar found it relatively easy to realize the Cielo vision with minimal changes to the original design; a few significant façade deviations from the original design led to more friendly walking space along Central Avenue, accommodating the future completion of the light rail.

The final design came as a result of the collaborative process between Milbank, 4D Development and DeStefano & Partners, as inOne Advertising, The Kent Company and Bridges Media Group continue to disseminate the message of Cielo's appeal—an unparalleled level of urbanity. If O4 is a fruity cocktail, then Cielo is a dose of Veuve Clicquot in a Swarovski flute—a 36-story flute.

Reactive or proactive? When describing the overall tone of Phoenix's design aesthetic, this dichotomy comes to mind again and again. On one hand, much of the landscape is lined with cloned mid-century ranch houses and Spanish-style construction that are as prevalent as the palms that punctuate this suburban city's streets. On the other hand, there is a rich tradition of designers like Ralph Haver and Frank Lloyd Wright deriving inspiration from these environs and then creating something completely out of the box. There's no dearth of influence, no lack of money and no opposition to making Phoenix into one of the most advanced, well-designed cities of the 21st century. The ingredients for well-informed design reside here; this desert town is still as wild and untamed as it was a century ago. A creative class of people, businesses and firms is saddling the challenge and shaping a reality that lets us live on global scale, as global citizens.

All in all, these people know what they're doing. Birthed by seasoned professionals with proven design skills and project success, new construction exists because it can and should. And for the most part, the original designs don't differ greatly from the final designs. They do differ, however, in the details. Details are what sell and make for the best designs for everyone.

Cielo Phoenix is banking on location, design and full-featured amenities such as rooftop hot tubs, swim-up movies and a gourmet grocery store located at street level.



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