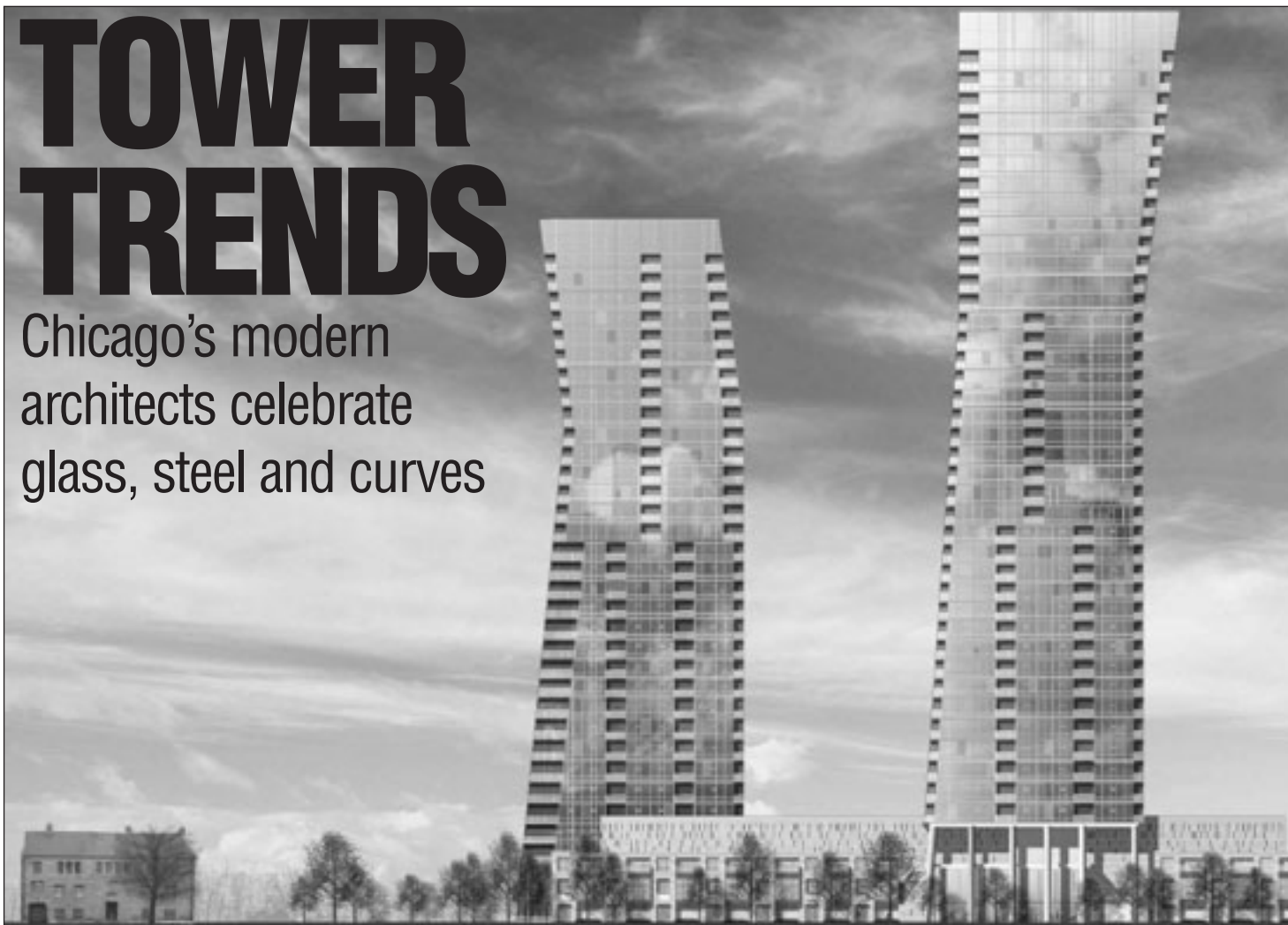


TOWER TRENDS

Chicago's modern architects celebrate glass, steel and curves



X/O, a contemporary condominium development planned for 1712 S. Prairie Avenue in the South Loop, features an edgy leaning-tower design that will make it one of the most distinct buildings on the Chicago skyline.

Far from the urban bane known as the "concrete jungle," Chicago architects are departing from traditional brick, concrete and stone to embrace and celebrate all that is modern—glass, steel and even graceful curves.

One look around the Chicago skyline tells the story—stunning glass exteriors are replacing heavy, ornate brick and concrete, design experts say.

Shimmering floor-to-ceiling windows and towering ceiling heights flood the new wave of skyscrapers with natural light. And sleek, modern European-style interiors are carving a niche into the hearts of condo buyers in Chicago's newest developments from Streeterville and River North to the South Loop.

"Buyers have shown a preference toward sleek modern designs in most of the latest projects being marketed," noted Gail Lissner, vice president of Appraisal Research Counselors Ltd., a firm that studies trends in the Chicago condominium market.

Architectural experts say the "modernist movement" in skyscraper design really got its start in Chicago in the early 1950s through the work of such renowned architects as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who introduced influential glass buildings and changed the look of American cities forever.

Following a "less is more" philosophy, Mies designed the classic twin apartment towers at 900 and 910 N. Lake Shore Drive. In 1969 came the IBM Building at Wabash and the north bank of the Chicago River. Both of these landmark developments featured a glass-enclosed lobbies, glass curtain walls, airy plazas and spatial setbacks.

Another modern Chicago landmark is the 900-unit Lake Point Tower. The glassy, cloverleaf-shaped apartment high-rise completed in 1968 was designed by architects George Schipporeit and John Heinrich, both students of Mies.

In 2006 leading Chicago architects now

are competing to design unique modern skyscrapers showcasing what very well may be the best of 21st Century residential architecture.

Showcasing some of the best of modern architecture throughout Chicago is CMK Development with outstanding designs such as the much-heralded Contemporaine, a trendsetting high-rise in River North. The developer's newest offering to the Chicago skyline—1720 S. Michigan in the booming South Loop neighborhood.

Designed by architect David Brininstool of Brininstool + Lynch, 1720 S. Michigan features CMK's signature contemporary style with plenty of glass and modern, clean lines.

"From the ground up, the 33-story 1720 S. Michigan will be ahead of its time, architecturally speaking," noted developer Colin Kihnke, president of CMK Development Corp. "Innovative design elements and construction—both inside and out will reach well beyond the predictable."

Condominium sales for the 498-unit tower, which began in February have already reached 65-percent sold mark. Construction is moving along at a very rapid pace with first occupancies scheduled for summer of 2007.

"Buyers have been consistently been drawn to the distinctive architectural style CMK has been known for — cutting-edge, clean-lined, concrete, steel and glass buildings with contemporary design both inside and out," Kihnke said.

The result is a striking three-part structure that begins with a 7-story all-glass base, delineated by an L-shaped fin that rises from the south corner and crosses over the 7th floor.

Rising above the base of 1720 S. Michigan are 26 residential floors that represent the second component of the overall design, Brininstool noted. This shaft is boarded by a strong concrete band that rises up from the corner of the 8th floor and then crosses over the top of the build-

ing several feet above the roof.

1720 S. Michigan's unique architectural façade also will showcase horizontal ribbons of concrete and an abundance of residences with large terraces and balconies with glass railings.

CMK Realty is marketing a wide mix of 1-, 2-, 3-bedroom and penthouse residences with 1 to 2 baths. The homes have 625 to 1,391 square feet of living area and prices range from \$185,900 to \$499,900. Parking is available for \$29,900 to \$34,900.

The sales center for 1720 S. Michigan is located at 1430 S. Michigan Ave and is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. For more information, call (312) 692-1741 or visit www.1720michigan.com.

Here are details on other modern high-rises either planned or underway downtown:

■ **X/O.** This innovative "lifestyle" condominium development with 515 residential units adjoining a 10,000 square-foot park is planned at 1712 S. Prairie Avenue in the South Loop.

Plans for the \$250 million development call for the 44-story north tower with 289 condominiums along 17th Street, a 34-story south tower with 216 units set back behind a row of 10 townhomes along Prairie Avenue on the 2-acre site, said developer Keith Giles of Frankel & Giles Real Estate, exclusive sales and marketing agents. The project is being developed by Kargil Development Partners, LLC.

"X/O's architect, Lucian Lagrange, designed these edgy, highly contemporary glass and concrete high-rises with floor plates of incrementally increasing and decreasing sizes that make the buildings appear to slope as they get higher," noted Giles.

X/O's unique leaning-towers design would make the high-rises appear to be "dancing in the sky against one another," Lagrange said.

The Lagrange design for X/O also pro-



Designed by architect David Brininstool of Brininstool + Lynch, 1720 S. Michigan features contemporary style with plenty of glass and modern, clean lines.

vides three green roofs. The development also will include a 13,000-square-foot "lifestyle center" crowned with a sun deck, noted Brian Giles of Frankel & Giles.

A cutting-edge, state-of-the-art sales center and 2-bedroom, 2-bath model condominium designed by Riha Design is scheduled grand open in November in a 5-story office building on the site. This structure eventually will be razed to make way for the development.

Features of the units include high-end finishes such as granite and marble counter tops, porcelain tile in the bathrooms, European-style cabinetry and stainless-steel appliances in the kitchen. The upper floors' features are upgraded with higher-end Wolf and Sub Zero appliances with natural stone bathrooms.

Starting prices are expected to range from the \$200,000s to more than \$1 million. Approximately 600 parking spaces are also planned.

For more information about X/O, or to sign up for the VIP list, call (312) 986-0008 or visit www.XOcondominiums.com.

■ **600 North Fairbanks.** Another prime example of the best contemporary architecture has to offer the Chicago skyline is 600 North Fairbanks, a luxury 41-story condominium tower designed by

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world-renowned architect Helmut Jahn, and described as "an incredible work of art."

"The goal is to bring European influence into the design at 600 North Fairbanks," said Jahn of Murphy-Jahn architects. "Europe has encouraged innovation in technology and materials. The expectations for living accommodations are higher in Europe in such areas as fresh air, light and visual privacy."

The exterior building design is contemporary and transparent, featuring a dramatic, curved-glass curtain wall overlooking the corner of Fairbanks and Ohio, and a contemporary lobby highlighted by 20-foot ceilings.

600 North Fairbanks Court will be a 227-unit transparent glass tower combining a cutting-edge contemporary design and sophistication with volume and spatial flow, according to Schatz Development, the developer.

Ten-foot-plus ceiling heights and exposed concrete coupled with the continuity and warmth of hardwood flooring throughout provides a dynamic atmosphere that, when blended with the backdrop of a sleek high-rise, creates a very attractive and unique urban environment.

The \$135-million project at the northwest corner of Fairbanks Court and Ohio Street features architectural design by Helmut Jahn, the world-renowned designer of and recent award recipient for the Illinois Institute of Technology Student Housing project, the Sony Center in Berlin and the new Bangkok International Airport.



600 North Fairbanks

Sales have reached the 90-percent mark in only eight months at 600 North Fairbanks, making the high-rise the hottest selling new-construction condominium building in Chicago.

Despite swift sales, a good selection of condominiums remains available, said Steve Schwartz, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Schatz Development. Prices start at \$362,000 for 1-bedroom units sized between 821 and 926 square feet. Prices for the 3-bedroom penthouses start at \$2.1 million.

The sales center for 600 North Fairbanks, located at 610 Fairbanks, is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, and selection of a residence, call the sales center at (312) 951-0807 or visit www.600northfairbanks.com.

■ **550 St. Clair.** Another offering from the sleek designs of Brininstool + Lynch is 550 St. Clair, an inviting, 26-story condominium planned a half-block east of Michigan Avenue's "Magnificent Mile" in the heart of the Streeterville neighborhood.

"We've obviously hit upon a combination of design, architecture and location that people have been looking for, which hasn't been available until now," said Jerry Houlihan, director of marketing for Sutherland Pearsall Development Corp.

A modernist touch is highlighted in both the building's glass and steel exterior architecture as well as in the interiors of the residences, which feature imported modular European kitchen cabinets, Houlihan said.

"From its luminous glass arcade on the lobby level to the urban garden terrace on the 8th-floor amenity level overlooking Michigan Avenue, the building is all about thoughtful design," said developer Mark Sutherland, principal of Sutherland Pearsall Development. "550 St. Clair will be the only new residential building of its kind in the city."

Although sales have been swift, a good selection of luxury condominiums remains available—including spacious 3-bedroom, 3-bath residences with outstanding views.

When completed, 550 St. Clair will include 112 condominium residences, including a mix of studios, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom and penthouse residences, Houlihan said. Prices range from \$200,000s for a studio to \$1-million-plus for a 3-bedroom layout.

The sales gallery and model center for 550 St. Clair is located on the 4th floor at 201 E. Ohio. Sales gallery hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information on 550 St. Clair, call (312) 222-0550 or visit www.550StClair.com.



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