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Livin' Large Thinkin' Big

The Dallas/Ft. Worth area aims to attract more visitors and hold 'em with a Texas-sized slate of entertainment and hospitality projects

By Bruce Buckley

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Crews erect one of the massive arches that will support the roof of the new Dallas Cowboys Stadium. (Photo: Manhattan Construction)

These days, it's true that everything is bigger in Texas, especially in and around Dallas. Contractors are busily filling out the Big D's skyline with an unprecedented lineup of new towers and megaprojects.

While the construction community of Dallas and Fort Worth has witnessed its share of development booms over the years, such as the flood of office tower work in the 1980s, the city's most recent makeover features a blend of entertainment, hospitality, commercial, residential, institutional and municipal work.

"It's never been so exciting," says Raleigh Roussel, president and CEO of the Dallas-based Quoin chapter of AGC. "We've had major spurts of activity in the past, but never this much activity spread across so many markets. There are opportunities for everyone."

The numerous cranes scattered amongst the city's gleaming new towers signal that more development is under way. "I counted 19 tower cranes in Dallas this summer," says Sam Latona, preconstruction manager at Turner Construction, Dallas. "As far as I can remember, that's the most there's ever been, and more are going up. We're all extremely busy these days."

Dome Alone

In nearby Arlington, there's another forest of cranes towering above the new \$1-billion Dallas Cowboys Stadium project. The future home to the city's beloved professional football team is

beginning to take shape under the eye of the Dallas office of Manhattan Construction Co. Groundbreaking was in September 2006, and completion is slated for June 2009.

As befitting its Texas locale, the dramatic 2.3-million-sq-ft stadium, designed by HKS Sports & Entertainment Group, Dallas, will be the largest venue in the National Football League, with 80,000 fixed seats and a capacity of up to 100,000 people.

The massive structure will use 200,000 cu yd of concrete, 21,000 tons of reinforcing steel and 14,100 tons of roof



structural steel. At 661,000 sq ft, the stadium's domed roof will be the largest in the world. The retractable roof design includes two bi-parting mechanized roof panels, each measuring 63,000 sq ft. They will be opened and closed with a rack-and-pinion drive system.



The 2.3-million-sq-ft Dallas Cowboys Stadium will feature a retractable roof and retractable end-zone doors. (Photo: Manhattan Construction)

The roof is supported by two arches that each span 1,224.5 ft, making the roof also the longest clear-span structure in the world. The arches cross the length of the stadium, reaching a maximum of 292 ft above the playing field. Each arch box truss is 17 ft wide and 35 ft deep and weighs 3,255 tons.

The roof will also support a center-hung video scoreboard that spans between the two 20-yd lines, projecting 20,000 sq ft of display.

Each end of the stadium will feature retractable end-zone doors that are 180 ft wide and 120 ft high, making them the largest of their kind in the world.

The 135-acre site is familiar ground for HKS and Manhattan Construction. In 1994 the team completed work on the neighboring Ballpark in Arlington, home of the Texas Rangers Major League Baseball team.



Crews led by Manhattan Construction place the first section of a roof span at the Dallas Cowboys Stadium project. The dual 1,224.5-ft-long arches will make the 661,000-sq-ft domed roof the longest clear-span structure in the world. (Photo: Manhattan Construction)

"For us to build the next big stadium in Arlington is a significant point of pride for us as a company," says Mark Penny, senior project manager at Manhattan Construction.

That's Entertainment

And work in the area won't likely slow down in the coming years. Developers Steiner + Associates and Hicks Holdings are hatching plans to build a \$479-million mixed-use development between the two stadiums. Dubbed GloryPark, the district would include 900,000 sq ft of retail, 150,000 sq ft of office space and a mix of residential units, hotels and entertainment venues.

The metroplex's future entertainment options won't be limited to Arlington. The Dallas Arts District is set to become a hub of opera, theater and dance with ongoing work at the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. The \$275-million project features multiple new performance venues, including the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House and the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre. Funded by private donations, the center is beginning to take shape, thanks to local generosity.

It's a good time to be raising money in this area," says David Stueckler, division manager at Linbeck's Fort Worth office. "People have a lot of expendable income and there are projects that have been on the shelf for quite awhile that are now coming off."

Linbeck broke ground on the Winspear Opera House in late fall 2006, setting the stage for the future 2,200-seat hall designed by Foster + Partners, London. The interior of the hall is laid out in a horseshoe configuration. From the lobbies, the exterior of the performance space will be clad in vibrant red glass panels, earning it the nickname "The Red Drum."

A transparent 60-ft-high curtain-wall exterior will allow outside views of the drum and the surrounding public concourses. A massive solar portico will radiate out from the building, covering three acres of the surrounding park. The shaded area will eventually be used as outdoor performance space.

The Addison, Texas, office of McCarthy Building Co. is building the innovative Wyly Theatre project nearby. Unlike most performance spaces, the 12-level building is stacked vertically to enable dynamic use of the spaces. Its mechanized "superfly" system can be used to pull up scenery or seating to meet various performance demands.

As a result, the theater can be arranged in different stage configurations. The building, which broke ground in November 2006, was designed by Rotterdam's Rem Koolhaas. McCarthy also built a 600-space underground parking structure at the site.

Other future venues include the planned City Performance Hall, a publicly funded space geared toward local performing arts organizations, and the Annette Strauss Artist Square, which will feature outdoor performance areas.

Rooms for Rent



As the new wave of projects expands the city's entertainment options, developers are gearing up for an influx of visitors. Between the city's expanding cultural offerings and a steady flow of new commercial spaces, Dallas is also seeing a spike in hospitality work.

The recent spate of hotel work was led by The W Dallas Victory Hotel and Residences, completed by McCarthy's Dallas office in June 2006. The 33-story hotel is a key component of the 75-acre Victory Park development being built around the American Airlines Center, home of the Dallas Mavericks basketball team.

Like the planned GloryPark development, Victory Park is envisioned as a mix of residential and commercial spaces, including up to 4 million sq ft of office space.

As work was being completed at the W, Victory Park developer Hillwood announced plans for 120-room The Mandarin Oriental Hotel and The Residences at Mandarin Oriental, which will include 90 luxury condos. The hotel is part of the 45-story Victory Tower, designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox, New York City. The Dallas office of Balfour Beatty Construction is currently in the preconstruction phase of the tower.



Linbeck is building the 2,200-seat Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House as part of the \$275-million Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. (Photo: Dallas Center for the Performing Arts)



When completed, the performance space will be clad in vibrant red glass, earning the nickname "The Red Drum." A massive solar portico radiates from the building. (Photo: Jeffrey Buehner)

"These are exciting times for Dallas and Fort Worth when you look at all of the projects being built," says Eric Krueger, senior vice president at Balfour Beatty. "People that left in 2004 and come back in 2014 won't recognize it."

After the success of its first tower, Ritz-Carlton is expanding its presence downtown. As Manhattan Construction crews wrapped up work on the \$113-million Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Condominium project this summer, Manhattan broke ground on a second planned tower at the site. The first 575,900-sq-ft project includes 217 hotel rooms and 70 condos with a 286,400-sq-ft parking garage that accommodates 503 vehicles.

The new \$175 million, 23-story tower will feature 96 condominiums that range in price from \$700,000 to \$8 million.

Omni Hotels is banking on visitors to the Fort Worth Convention Center with its \$170-million Omni Fort Worth Hotel. Austin Commercial of Dallas broke ground on the 34-story hotel in late 2005 and is expected to complete it in late 2008. When it opens, the hotel will feature 608 guest rooms, 97 luxury condos, 48,000 sq ft of meeting space, two restaurants, a ballroom and a 550-space underground garage.

The hotel, designed by the Dallas office of HOK, features a masonry base with a boat-shaped glass tower rising from it.

Near Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport in Grapevine, Turner Construction is helping bring a "Northwoods-style" flavor to the area at the \$160-million Great Wolf Lodge project.

The company broke ground on the 450,000-sq-ft indoor waterpark resort in June 2006 and will wrap up work on the first phase in late 2007. The hotel features 402 family suites that sleep six to 10 people and an 80,000-sq-ft indoor waterpark.

Turner's Latona says the site required significant soil remediation. Crews removed soils up to 27 in. deep, then reconditioned them before putting them back in place. The concrete structure will be clad a variety of exteriors, including large timbers and wood ceilings to give it a lodge feel.



The innovative Wyly Theatre, being built by McCarthy Building, will feature a specially mechanized "superfly" system to pull up seating and scenery.

In October, Turner will begin work on the 150,000-sq-ft second phase of the project, which will include an additional 200 rooms and 25,000 sq ft of meeting space.

"It's a project that really fits with the revitalization of the whole area," Latona says. "The next big step is bringing in more outside visitors to the Dallas-Fort Worth market."

Putting Out the Welcome Mat

As downtown Dallas springs to life with new office spaces, entertainment outlets and retail options, a steady flow of people are looking for a place in the Big D to call home. Major hotel companies brought several hotel/condo projects to the city in recent years, while some local developers are going it alone with residential-only towers. Hillwood Residential of Dallas is welcoming new urbanites to the Victory Park development with its 28-story tower dubbed The House. Manhattan Construction, also of Dallas, is building the concrete structure, which will include 369,000 sq ft of total living space in 150 luxury condos.

The building will also include 30,000 sq ft of street-level retail and a 186,000-sq-ft parking garage. The exterior will feature a mix of "sparkled" precast concrete, champagne-colored aluminum curtain wall and olive-colored glass.

The project broke ground in November 2006 and is expected to be complete in May 2009.

This fall, Balfour Beatty will finish work on the \$100-million Azure tower. The 31-story building, designed by James KM Cheng of Vancouver with striking blue-glass exterior, features 202 luxury condominiums.

While many developers are choosing to build from the ground up, Hamilton Properties of Dallas chose to reclaim two downtown office buildings with its \$65-million apartment project, The Mosaic.

The project, which broke ground in November 2005 and was completed in the spring, created 440 luxury apartments within the 21-story Fidelity Union Building and the 32-story Mayflower Building. Andres Construction Services of Dallas was the general contractor.

Victory is Sweet

Victory Park has proven a winner in the fight to revitalize downtown Dallas. The \$3-billion development is the epicenter of significant construction work in the area, with nearly 12 million sq ft of planned space.

The brainchild of Dallas-based Hillwood, a company owned by Ross Perot Jr., the 75-acre site could be home to more than 4,000 residences and 4 million sq ft of office and retail space at build-out. Hillwood established its footprint in Dallas with the completion of American Airlines Center in July 2001.



Victory Plaza and W Dallas Victory Hotel & Residences. (Photo: Jeremy Woodhouse)

Since then, the area has become home to seven new buildings with more than 600 residential units, 227,500 sq ft of retail and 155,000 sq ft of office space. Major projects include the 33-story, W Dallas Victory Hotel & Residences and two Victory Plaza buildings that sit at the doorstep of American Airlines Center and offer 65,000 sq ft of retail. Two

seven-story buildings bring a mix of residential offerings, including 129 rental units at The Vista and 95 luxury condominiums at The Terrace.

A third phase of the development will usher in 240 additional residential units, 150 hotel rooms, 110,000 sq ft of retail and 730,000 sq ft of office space.

The House by Philippe Starck and Yoo is a 28-story residential tower scheduled for completion in 2008. One Victory Park will deliver 455,000 sq ft of office space in mid-2008. The 43-story Victory Tower will house the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, The Residences at Mandarin Oriental and 275,000 sq ft of office space.

Open for Business

After years in retreat, commercial development is big business again in downtown Dallas. Local contractors are adding millions of sq ft of new high-rise office space to the area's inventory, and more could be on the way.

"It's encouraging that everything that's been talked about and all the projects we've seen in competition out there have turned into reality," says Mike Scott, vice president of marketing and business development at Austin Commercial in Dallas. "We're starting to see dirt move on these deals and starting to see a lot of structures go up downtown. It's a 'welcome back to downtown' for businesses."

Among the big jobs landed by Austin Commercial is the \$95-million Hunt Consolidated headquarters building. The 14-story, 400,000-sq-ft tower aims to bring together all of Hunt's business entities under one roof.

The building, designed by Beck Architecture, Dallas, adds a dramatic look to the local skyline with its curved-glass curtain-wall façade that resembles a sail. The project broke ground in October 2005 with occupancy slated for this fall.



One Victory Park

Austin is also building the first office tower within the Victory Park development. The 20-story One Victory Park tower will feature 456,000 sq ft of space and is expected to be completed in mid-2008. Plans have been approved for a second 20-story tower, Two Victory Plaza, but work has not started.

Austin Commercial was selected in August to offer Dallas a new spin on office development. In a unique partnership for the Dallas area, commercial developer Granite Properties and residential firm Gables Residential Trust teamed on a combined office-residential tower in downtown. Austin Commercial previously worked for Granite on its Granite Park III tower in Plano.

The Granite+Gables Uptown project will include a 21-story residential tower and a 14-story office tower. The 409,000-sq-ft residential tower will house 296 units. The 389,000-sq-ft office tower will be skinned with stone, glass and aluminum. Both towers will rise from a mixed-use base of retail, restaurants and parking.

While waiting to raise the curtain on the new Dallas Center for the Performing Arts projects, the Dallas Arts District has watched One Arts Plaza take shape. The \$150-plus million project is a 1.1-million-sq-ft mix of office, condo and retail. The 24-story tower offers 450,000 sq ft of office space, anchored by the headquarters of 7-Eleven Inc.

The top six floors house 60 luxury condos. The building also features 370,000 sq ft of parking for more than 1,000 vehicles. The project, built by Austin's Balfour Beatty Construction, broke ground in July 2005 and will be complete this fall.

Bridging the Dallas Divide

New bridges over the Trinity River will replace old structures and help cut the gap between northern and southern Dallas.

The \$69.7-million Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge is the first of three bridges planned as part of the Trinity River Corridor Project. The new bridge is being built with a mix of Texas-sized proportions and European flair.



The signature cable-stayed bridge, which is the first vehicular bridge in the U.S. designed by renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, features a dramatic 395-ft-tall central parabolic steel arch. Cables fan out from the arch to support the deck of the 600-ft-long clear span. The official groundbreaking was in December 2005, and Williams Brothers, Houston, expects to complete the project by August 2009.

The bridge has undergone a number of value-engineering efforts to stay within budget. Calatrava originally designed the center arch as a heptagon, but it was reworked as a cylinder, and the teardrop-shaped bridge piers were also redesigned as cylinders. Steel fabricated in Italy by Cimolai Costruzioni Metalliche is being used to help keep costs in line.

In addition to the cable-stayed bridge, nearly \$50 million of connections and ramping will be built by the Texas Dept. of Transportation to link the project to Interstate 35 and the Woodall Rogers Freeway.

A second Calatrava bridge is in design, intended to replace the existing Interstate 30 bridge. No work has begun on a proposed third bridge, which would replace the existing I-35 structure.