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## Modern Living: New condos rise near Cherry Street



Amanda Dailey's construction leans toward clean lines and right angles in a development next to Cherry Street. JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World

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Published: 4/5/2009 2:19 AM

Last Modified: 4/5/2009 3:12 AM

"I've seen houses there where the entire front fell over," she said.

But rather than complain, Dailey decided to do something about it. Now, nearly 100 sleek, modern lofts stand in the neighborhood or are under development, and much of them were partially or completely developed by Dailey and her company, Metro Development Group.

At least two other companies have joined her in bringing new architecture to the residential area. Kevin Stephens of Kevin Stephens Design Group has finished five lofts, is constructing another five, and plans to build 10 more.



Stephens said he's friends with Dailey and is even using Metro Development Group for construction management for at least the first 10 lofts, though he also saw the value in fixing up the neighborhood before things got started.

"We were independently thinking of this without realizing the other

was as well," he said.

B.C. Lee, operator of the BCBC Modern furniture store in Tulsa, said he was inspired by Dailey to buy a lot in the area and build the Noche Lofts, a half-million-dollar duplex he's hoping to finish by May.

"Amanda and I have been friends, and I thought I'd like to do this, too, since it looked fun and cool," he said.

For Dailey, the idea began when she moved from Tulsa to Houston, and worked in finance with an emphasis on condo development. While there, she was attracted to the significant number of modernistic designs architects have created in Houston.

When she moved back home five years ago, she found nothing but more traditional condos.

"Coming back from Houston, I couldn't find anything modern here," she said.

Though the area north of Cherry Street was past its prime, she liked the area, and felt its great view of downtown and walking access to Cherry Street's shopping and entertainment would be appealing to plenty of other people, assuming the housing options. But the ideas came fast. Not only would she design the lots, she would manage their construction and handle most aspects of their creation. To that end, she created Metro Development Group, which has grown to seven full-time employees.

Everyone keeps bringing up the economy.



The first set of lofts she finished were a risk, and they didn't catch on immediately, Dailey said.

"The first year, we had a little trouble selling the houses since the neighborhood was still a little sketchy," she said.

But she pressed on, and has now built and sold more than 70 units throughout the neighborhood.

Stephens said his first five lofts, finished last June, were a big success.

"They were all sold four months before they were completed," he said.

In her construction, Dailey leans toward clean lines and right angles.

Yet she doesn't let the form overwhelm function. Unlike some modern designs she's seen, she likes to make each feature as convenient as possible, such as connecting garages to the loft itself or making sure the kitchen is as usable as possible.

"Most of our employees are women, so we build with a woman's sensibility," she said.

Recently, Dailey has branched out beyond Cherry Street. She's finishing the Eastbrook apartments, an eight-unit complex with an office building at the 1300 block of East 35th Place in Brookside.

She decided to take on the work when a previous developer couldn't get a loft project to work there, although she said the recession may slow down condo purchases for Eastbrook and other new developments in Tulsa.

"We've slowed down quite a bit, since the industry as a whole has come to a screeching halt nationwide," she said. Though the Cherry Street district thrived with shops, restaurants and pubs, five years ago the neighborhood directly to the north was greatly deteriorating, said Amanda Dailey.