



THE NEXT PORTLAND

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Four Buildings That Are Setting New Design Standards in Portland

Portland's current multifamily housing boom is breeding some buildings to look forward to. Here are a few projects that each set new standards.

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By [Randy Gragg](#)

Kevin Cavenaugh has a term for most of the new apartment buildings rising in nearly every close-in Portland neighborhood: "greedy buildings."

"Everybody knows a greedy building when they see it," says Cavenaugh, himself a designer and developer. "The design follows a formula, no matter what neighborhood it's for. They're lazy. As a developer, everything you do to make a building better makes the numbers worse. So if you start from maximizing profits, you don't give yourself an opportunity to do great or even good buildings."

"Portland," he adds, "is suffering from that now."

Plenty of neighborhood advocates, architecture connoisseurs, and people who just care about beauty would agree, whether they're looking at developer Wally Remmers's bloated 50-unit box on NE Fremont Street or Urban Development Group's sad array of cynical, faux-historic boxes popping up all across the Buckman and Richmond neighborhoods (not to be confused with Urban Development *Partners'* more generous buildings). Nevertheless, Portland's current multifamily housing boom *is* breeding some buildings to look forward to. Here are a few projects that each, modestly or dramatically, set new standards.

BLOCK 296

What 114-unit, 6-story apartment building

Where The warehouse/parking zone in Northwest known as Con-way (next to a future New Seasons)



Properties and Holst Architecture

When Projected to break ground this spring

What's to like For the new, add-water-and-stir neighborhood taking shape on the compound around the headquarters of the freight and logistics company, Holst designed "a building that could look like multiple buildings," according to firm cofounder Jeff Stuhr. **Alternating volumes of dark and light, multiple brick patterns, and small storefront shops** echo the historic patterns of the adjacent Northwest District. The developer gave up leasable space for a gracious corner setback that, if matched by the future buildings destined for the adjacent corners, will define a plaza at the commercial and social heart of this budding neighborhood.

33 Division

What Two apartment buildings

Where 3330 and 3339 SE Division St, near Salt & Straw

Who Urban Development Partners and THA Architecture



completed summer 2014

What's to like Bay Area transplants Avi Ben-Zaken and Eric Cress of Urban Development Partners bring **Californian wisdom** to Portland: namely, **courtyards**. Both designed by THA's David Keltner, the just-finished 3339 fronts Division with a stucco façade reminiscent of the Bauhaus movement, while the soon-to-be-finished 3330 will rise across in white-stained cedar. But the magic lies in the courtyards. For both buildings at ground level, as Keltner puts it, they "draw the energy of the street inside," creating **airy outdoor spaces** for restaurants and other businesses. For the upper, residential floors, the courtyards allow each unit sunlight from two sides—plus cross-ventilation—an exciting, more environmentally friendly alternative to the thousands of shoebox-with-a-window-style apartments being built by greedier developers (and less responsible architects) throughout the city.

Block 15

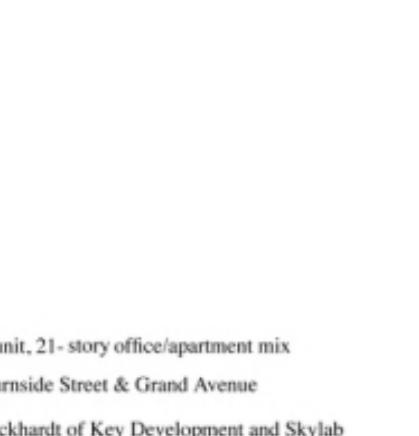
What 168-unit, 28-story condo tower

Where Between Tanner Springs and the Fields Parks, North Pearl District

Who Hoyt Street Properties and Boora Architects

When Projected to break ground this summer

What's to like For the best site in the Pearl District—between two parks, with picturesque views of Centennial Mills, the river, and Mount St. Helens—a Pearl District first: **a true Vancouver, British Columbia-style "point tower."** Rising 340 feet from a quarter-block footprint, this will be **the most slender skyscraper in the city**. Boora's John Meadows and team further fractured the building into "crystalline bars" with inboard decks (as opposed to protruding balconies) that offer better weather protection. With larger units and a likely precedent-setting \$525/square-foot average sales price (\$1,200/foot for the penthouses), it promises to be Stumptown's new luxury address.



Block 67

What 276-unit, 21-story office/apartment mix

Where E Burnside Street & Grand Avenue

Who Jeff Pickhardt of Key Development and Skylab Architecture

When Projected to break ground in August

What's to like After bringing environmentally sensitive new industrial development to downtown Hood River, Pickhardt paired one of Portland's most architecturally aggressive firms with **its most dynamic site**—culturally and physically. To the problem of fostering community on a former industrial site, Skylab's Jeff Kovel offers a simple solution: **layers**. Below bridge level will be gritty workspaces and parking with motion-activated, colored lights shining through metal mesh—perfect for its world-renowned neighbor, the Burnside Skate Park. Atop the Grand/Burnside-level retail is a sloping, landscaped podium that Kovel likens to "the river's bank lifted to bridge level," with **garden beds, amphitheater, fire pit, and gym**. From this, **the knife-edged tower** will rise to become the east side's most prominent landmark. (Hopefully. A stumpier 13-story version is also under consideration.) "It's a gateway to and from the east side, but like a check valve more than a hard wall," says Kovel. "It's about fluid transition."

