

Blast to the future 🚒

Dallas: Park Lane Place to arise from rubble of NorthPark Three

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By MICHAEL E. YOUNG / The Dallas Morning News

• **VIDEO** [Debbie Denmon reports](#)

The end arrived with a few small pops that rippled walls like a wind-ruffled pond and an elegant collapse reminiscent of Swan Lake.

Within seconds, accompanied by spectators' oohs and aahs, the 10-story, 28-year-old NorthPark Three office cube settled cleanly on its footprint beside Central Expressway near Park Lane.

Sunday morning's implosion, triggered by 100 pounds of explosives and the demolition team's artistry, opened the construction phase for Harvest Partners' \$400 million Park Lane Place development, across the highway from the newly expanded NorthPark Center mall.

The development signals what many in the area hope will be a new beginning for Vickery Meadow, a densely packed, hard-working neighborhood desperate for better times.

"We consider ourselves a partner in the Vickery Meadow area," said Tod Ruble, a co-founder of Harvest Partners. "It's believed our property will be the catalyst in the rehabilitation of this area."

"We've all lived at one time or another in the Vickery Meadow area," said Blaine Lee, another of Harvest's co-founders, "and we thought, 'What can we do to make this a special event for the neighborhood?'"

"So we decided to start this project with a bang."

Two young hands made certain that happened, at least ceremonially.

Nick Williamson and Truett Eckeberger, both 10, manned what Mr. Lee called "the Wile E. Coyote plunger" that sat center stage at Harvest Partners' "Breakfast at the Blast" gathering on the top floor of a nearby office tower. The \$20 breakfast ticket included a drawing to determine who would hit the detonator.

As the countdown ticked off – "10, 9, 8 ..." – each boy placed a hand on the vintage wooden contraption



WFAA-TV
The building collapsed in less than 30 seconds.

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and awaited the cue, pushing down sharply at "0," then turning to see what they had wrought.

Was it fun?

"Yeah," they said in unison.

"I mean, how can that not be fun – blowing up a building?" Nick said.

A crowd estimated at 300 came to enjoy the show and breakfast, with proceeds going to the Vickery Meadow Improvement District. Hundreds more took vantage points around NorthPark Center, nearby offices and parking garages and along Greenville Avenue.

And more than a few people got the chance to watch – whether they wanted it or not – when police closed both sides of Central Expressway for a few minutes as the office building came down just after 8 a.m.

For some of the central figures in efforts to improve the quality of life in Vickery Meadow, the implosion brings their dreams a step closer.

"This is definitely a highlight in our 13 years," said Frank Nuchereno, chairman of Vickery Meadow Improvement District. "This will invigorate an area troubled for a lot of years."

"It's very exciting," added Judy Jacks, executive director of Vickery Meadow Learning Center. "Looking down at Greenville Avenue, you can almost visualize the changes coming."

For Park Lane Place, at least, that change will come soon.

As soon as the dust settled Sunday, crews started work on utilities and other below-ground installations, Mr. Ruble said. "Vertical construction" should begin this summer, with the first stores in the multiuse project open by fall 2007 and the rest by spring 2008.

In all, Park Lane Place will include 700,000 square feet of retail space, including a nearly 90,000-square-foot Whole Foods Market, Mr. Ruble said.

The first phase of construction also includes 315 apartments, 50 high-rise condominium units, a 65,000-square-foot health club and a 201-room hotel.

When Park Lane Place is complete, it and the neighboring NorthPark Center – "One of the most dominant malls in the country," Mr. Ruble said – will place Park Lane among the great streets of American retail, like Michigan Avenue in Chicago, Palm Beach's Worth Avenue and Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills.

"Park Lane, like the others, will be synonymous with shopping," he said.

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