

## Development update: The latest projects around Arcadia

By Katie Mayer

High-end multi-housing, a new residential subdivision, and a contemporary office and restaurant mixed-use space are just a few of the development projects kicking off and wrapping up in and around Arcadia.

Once known as the "oasis at the foot of Camelback Mountain," Arcadia's traditional landscape continues to evolve and development remains active.

Whether supported or contested, these projects and others like them contribute to the changing face of Arcadia and its surrounding areas, which are undergoing their own transformations due to the popularity of Arcadia proper.

"Arcadia is a great neighborhood in Phoenix, much like Encanto and other parts of North Central Avenue, it has evolved in much the same manner as those neighborhoods," said Phoenix Planning and Development Director Alan Stephenson. "New developments are revitalizing parts of these neighborhoods, yet at the same time, the pace of change is causing concern for some residents. The city strives to balance those diverse resident interests and property owner development desires to create quality communities that collectively add up to a vibrant city."

Here's a closer look at a few of our vibrant community's newest places to work, live and play.

### A place to live becomes a place to shop

On the southwest corner of 44th Street and Indian School Road, a project is underway to replace a former apartment complex and Circle K with about 30,000 square feet of stores and restaurants.

Called Arcadia Gateway Shopping Center, the project's design plans will incorporate brick walls and metal awnings, said Brice W. Samuel, vice president of Samuel & Company, which has owned the property since 1976. There will be no stucco.

"The timing was right... that we could work on developing the entire property, including the corner," Samuel said. "We want to have tenants that are going to be able to serve the Arcadia community really well and have a little bit more of a focus on local."

Samuel was not ready to announce tenant names, but said his company will make an announcement soon.

Construction on the shopping center began in August and the multi-tenant portion of the building is scheduled for completion in early 2016. Plans for the project include a multi-tenant building in the back of the property with almost 14,000 square feet of rentable space, three pads along Indian School Road and one along 44th Street, according to the shopping center's website.

"The old school look was the old ranch houses and the new [look] was big houses, so we decided to go with the use of brick to make

it older and look like it has been there for a while," Samuel said.

### A resort-style urban community

Rising into the sky and stretching north down the block at the northwest corner of 28th Street and Indian School Road is a new apartment project scheduled to conclude in February.

The crème and rust-colored stucco apartment buildings with purple and metal accents are called Park 28 Apartments. The development is the first multifamily project by Evergreen Devco in Phoenix.

The 152-unit development consists of studios and one-, two- and three-bedroom floor plans ranging in size from 640 to 1,341 square feet, according to Michelle Jensen, regional property manager for Greystar, which manages the complex.

"The community appeals to a wide variety of prospective residents," Jensen said.

She said that as of mid-December the complex was already 10 percent pre-leased.

Billing itself as an urban apartment community, the complex offers a resort-style swimming pool and spa, two-story clubhouse and fitness center.

"The apartment homes coming into Arcadia live like exclusive resorts, offering all types of recreation and entertainment without the home maintenance," said Tom Simplot, president and CEO of the Arizona Multihousing

Association. "Early additions to the neighborhood have proven that these premium communities quickly attract residents who can afford the lifestyle and [the communities also] positively impact the neighborhood."

Rent prices vary by floor plan at Park 28 Apartments, but studio units start at \$950 per month.

### An inspired workplace

Cushman & Wakefield is listing a redevelopment opportunity near 46th Street and Thomas that sellers describe as "an inspired workplace."

Called The Marilyn, the proposed design for the project features a sleek and modern office building and restaurant property combination with generous patio space.

Described on the brochure as a "dynamic office building targeting professionals looking to be part of a creative and dynamic work environment," The Marilyn's renderings include clean and modern landscaping, pops of bright red and prominent signage.

A spokesman for Cushman & Wakefield said the project is in the early stages and would not release more details.

### From horticulture to homes

Towering above a graded clearing on the former Baker Nursery location at 40th Street and Osborn Road remains one special treasure of the past — a more than 75-year-old Silk Floss Tree.



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Speckled with pink blossoms at times and at other times leafy or bare, the living piece of history will be incorporated into the design of the new 44-lot gated housing community called The Villas at Baker Park.

"We're saving a lot of trees that were along the perimeter of the project," said Rich Zacher who oversees land entitlements for developer The Empire Group.

Zacher said construction crews will relocate about 40 trees from the land into other parts of the community.

As of December, crews at the former 46-year-old Baker Nursery site had graded the land, poured the pads, cut in streets and began installing sewer water and storm drains. The project began in the late summer and was originally slated to be 55 lots.

"We are incorporating a larger lot size and more common area," Zacher said. "We also wanted to be able to provide some single story homes."

The approximately 9.8 acre community will offer six different floor plans which will consist of three estate lots and three smaller park lots in the center of the community.

Zacher said the old Baker Nursery location was attractive for new home development because of its close proximity to Arcadia, the Biltmore area and Old Town Scottsdale, and because it was large enough to be a gated community.

"It's really one of the last large parcels of land of its kind in that Midtown Phoenix area that was available for development," he said. "We're making a pretty big investment in that area... close to \$25 million with the land



In 2015, Arcadia continued the trend of commercial and residential growth.



PHOTOS BY KATIE MAVER

acquisition, infrastructure and home building."

According to the development's website, the community will feature a park-like environment with open green space, a neighborhood gathering area, swimming pool, spa and gas fireplace.

As of mid-December, Zacher said there were more than 50 people who formally expressed interest in purchasing a home in The Villas at Baker Park.

**Vacant lot turns to retail**

A new modern brick and gray retail building has transformed a long-vacant lot at the southwest corner of 56th Street and Indian School Road into a convenient place to grab a cup of coffee or a smoothie.

Venturing the project is Firebrand Group, whose owner is Andrew Miller, widely known for Kitchen 56, and Frontera Development, whose president is Jay Schneider of Arcadia.

According to Miller, the retail space consists of four tenants, who include Starbucks, Smoothie King, Zoyo Frozen Yogurt, and Blue Nail Bar and Spa, and the parking lot has 55 spaces.

"All businesses are positioned to cater to the immediate neighborhood and we believe they will all be successful at this location," said Miller.

The Mutschler family has owned the parcel since the 1920s, said landowner Robert "Bob" Mutschler. Prior to the recent development project, the land sat vacant for more than five years.

"Until about five or six years ago it was a Mobil gas station," Mutschler said, "and before that it was an orange grove."

"Like many neighborhood centers, it took time to find the right blend of businesses for the site," Miller stated. "The resulting lineup will, we think, provide useful services to a location that is at the heart of Arcadia."

**Arcadia: A popular place**

Home prices in Arcadia have increased sharply since the start of the recovery, according to Arizona State University housing expert, Michael Orr. The communities surrounding Arcadia proper have also been able to cash in on the success.

Experts have long held that housing growth positively impacts retail growth and this is certainly true in Arcadia, which has seen a flurry of new stores and restaurants emerge.


"Historically, a healthy housing market has had an extremely positive effect on retail markets in the surrounding areas," said an announcement from the Association for Convenience & Fuel Retailing.

"The reason we have recovered so well is... we are a non-transient neighborhood in Arcadia," said Kelly Knapp, a real estate agent with Berkshire Hathaway who specializes in Arcadia and grew up in the community.

Knapp said Arcadia is a blend of loyal and longtime residents who are deeply invested in their community and new and younger residents who move to the area for its small town feel and central location.


"It really is a small little town in the big city. Kids are able to ride their bikes; neighbors know one another; moms have wine together," Knapp said. "It's truly the quintessential neighborhood and you don't have to move out to the sticks to get that."

"It is so nice to have the mix of young, vibrant families and the maturity and history of people who have been here forever."



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