

Homebuilder sees Fifth Ward as 'the next Heights'

By Nancy Sarnoff | July 25, 2017 | Updated: July 25, 2017 11:39am

2



IMAGE 1 OF 10

Parra Design Group homes in the Fifth Ward.

Camilo Parra started buying land in the Fifth Ward five years ago and has bought 100 lots -- most of them empty -- to build homes relatively affordable by inner-loop standards.

His company, Parra Design Group purchased many of the lots at county tax auctions. Most of them are between Waco and Lockwood, north of Lyons Avenue.

"Our approach has always been to go to find empty land. We don't want to displace anybody," Parra said. "That's what creates a strong neighborhood. The residents are what makes the neighborhood special."

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A historic home near Rice University -- historic not only for its age but for the architect who designed it -- is about to hit the market, a "once in a lifetime opportunity" says the real estate agent listing it. "It's considered one of the finest houses in Houston," said listing agent Katherine Warren of Martha Turner/Southeby's International Realty.

Media: David Funchess / Houston Chronicle

He designed three-bedroom floor plans of roughly 1,600 square feet, and began building two per lot priced at about \$235,000 apiece.

The interiors are open, with oak floors and tile finishes, European-style cabinets and Silestone or quartz counters.

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So far, the company has built 24 and sold 22.

The buyers, Parra said, have been "mostly young urban professionals" who may have been priced out of other neighborhoods close to downtown.

"We believe it's going to be the next Heights," he said.

Parra is also building his company's new office in the neighborhood. It's on Lyons Avenue and will have space for the

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