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## Metro Section B

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### Building a beacon for Uptown

Lighted sculpture hints at a former towering vision

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When the 40-foot sculpture *Tower II* is completed in Uptown next month, local leaders hope it will become both an icon for the neighborhood and a sly reminder of a vanished vision.

The stainless steel tower will be set with programmable LED lights that should make it stand out, even given the nearby bustle of North Central Expressway.

"It's going to be very noticeable," said Neal Sleeper, president of Cityplace Co., which developed West Village and much of the surrounding area. "We want it to be something that



David Woo/Staff Photographer

Work on *Tower II* is expected to be completed next month. The 40-foot sculpture is intended to be an icon for Uptown and a reminder of a tower that never was.

### Backers hope sculpture will light the way for Uptown

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will remind people they're in Uptown."

The sculpture is part of an extensive reworking of the old Hank Haney driving range. The project includes new pocket parks, two other sculptures, the extension of two nearby streets and, a few yards away, a new DART rail entrance and the McKinney Avenue Trolley turntable.

#### Fitting in

The project is scheduled to open in mid-December.

Eventually the land will be developed into residential and retail space, Sleeper said.

The creator of *Tower II*, Venice, Calif., artist Cliff Garten, said he wanted art that would stand out and yet be built to a scale that comfortably fits with its surroundings.

"It occupies an intermediate scale between the pedestrian realm and the surrounding architecture," he said. "What it is, is a beacon for the neighborhood."

For the moment, it will stand out, surrounded by a largely empty lot. But when the adjacent land is filled in

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Cliff Garten, creator of *Tower II*

with residential and retail buildings, *Tower II* will become less of a beacon and more of a neighborhood amenity, drawing pedestrians to sit on nearby park benches, Garten said.

#### Abandoned plan

The piece is also a veiled reminder of an abandoned grand plan for the area, one that never came to fruition.

Garten said the name of the sculpture is a reference to an office tower planned in 1980s for the space. The building was to be a twin of the Tower at

Cityplace on the east side of North Central Expressway.

The two towers were originally envisioned as the centerpiece of a 130-acre development by Southland Corp., then the parent company of 7-Eleven stores.

Southland bought and bulldozed blocks of land north of downtown with the intent of creating a vast complex of office buildings. The company went bankrupt, however, and the development, other than the Tower at Cityplace, was never built.

The land was sold to Sleeper's group, and from it arose much of what is now Uptown.

#### Footprint

The base of *Tower II* is a small-scale copy of the footprint of the unbuilt tower, according to Garten.

Asked if the sculpture was a wink at an unrealized vision, Sleeper said:

"I wouldn't say it was a wink. A wink implies that it's followed by a smile," he said. "But the artist asked if it there was something significant that happened on this site. After we told him about the tower, he took it from there."