

## Dallas office buildings offer rooftop garden oases



Photos by VERNON BRYANT/DMN

Those who don't work for the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas can only see its rooftop garden from a high vantage point, such as a helicopter. But Fed workers aren't the only ones with access to an urban oasis.

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Watchful airline passengers landing at Dallas [Love Field](#) sometimes get a bird's-eye view of an exclusive Uptown garden.

Nestled high above street level at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, the urban oasis has an appropriate landscaping feature - a giant dollar sign made out of walkways and low walls.

It's a vista few but Fed employees get to see. Security at the Dallas Fed doesn't accommodate tours of its centerpiece garden. Even photographs are verboten.

"Unfortunately, because of security issues, we cannot provide a photo," Fed spokesman James Hoard said in an e-mail. "Hope you understand. Photography is very restricted in the building."

A handful of Dallas office projects are now offering rooftop gardens that aren't as shielded as the park at the Fed.

These new green spaces provide business tenants a convenient break from the big city far above the buzz and grind of the streets.

Along with fancy lobbies and fast elevators, outdoor spaces are the latest must-have item in the competitive office building business.

Developer Harwood International did its first elaborate garden in 1995 with construction on its 2728 Harwood building near the Crescent.

A 65,000-square-foot park with a reflecting pond and trees sits on top of a three-story parking garage. The venue is a favorite for corporate parties and wedding photos.

Harwood has taken things even further with its new Saint Anne Court office tower on Harry Hines Boulevard.

The high-rise has three rooftop garden areas, and a fourth is planned.

"The tenants appreciate it so much that it is increasingly popular at lunchtime, for outdoor meetings, as [Wi-Fi](#) conference space, for corporate and private events," said Harwood International CEO Gabriel Barbier-Mueller. "It is so popular that we are continuing to expand parks and gardens."

"Some of our tenants have added gardens on some roofs that would otherwise have been unused."

One of the biggest new rooftop gardens is at the 17Seventeen [McKinney](#) office tower on Akard Street just north of Woodall Rodgers Freeway.

The one-acre garden and recreation area is on the seventh floor, on top of a parking garage linking the new office building and an apartment high-rise, Gables Park 17.

"Given its urban location, there just isn't a lot of green space," said Greg Fuller, chief operating officer of developer Granite Properties. "We have received excellent feedback from the new tenants, as well as prospective tenants, in that providing a private outdoor experience allows them something they can't get in older buildings or buildings downtown."

And since the park serves two buildings, the extra cost is shared.

"Given that the structure of the garage is already built, the additional cost of the amenities at approximately \$2 million when split between the two towers is a lot of bang for the buck," Fuller said. "We also felt it was good synergy with the Woodall Rodgers Deck Park that is under construction."