

Sugar Creek Sets Bar for Master-planned Development

The extension of the Southwest Freeway to Sugar Land cleared the way for the growth of residential development during the 1960s. The state's highway project extended the freeway through rice fields in Sharpstown to U.S. Highway 90A, a milestone that spurred the development of Sugar Creek and other areas.

Jack Kamin, the developer of the very successful Nassau Bay, purchased 1,200 acres from the former Imperial Cattle Ranch, and in 1968, he began the development of Sugar Creek, a community that revolved around a golf course and a country club. It had the feel of rural estates with upscale amenities that included a Robert Trent Jones golf course. The golf course was a new amenity for Sugar Land, but it also addressed flood concerns that were common in the county.

The area's first master-planned community introduced country club living near Sugar Land.

Kamin and a member of the Kempner family reached an agreement for the acreage over coffee in a shop in Clear Lake. Terms were listed on a napkin that was signed, and they sealed the deal with a handshake. The new project was introduced to prospective buyers by Kamin's partner, Don Russell (pictured) at the Houston Club in downtown Houston during 1969.

Research by the developers of Sugar Creek showed that upscale homebuyers were interested in security, so futuristic standards were implemented to wire the community so homes could be monitored from a central facility that coordinated police, fire and emergency medical services. It was a

lengthy process but one of the many amenities that made Sugar Creek new and unique.

To ensure a safe community, Sugar Creek included its own security force. The around-the-clock detail included uniformed personnel that patrolled in marked vehicles. The force included licensed peace officers working extra jobs who supplemented the security detail. Safety remained a priority throughout the development, as the initial group included eight uniformed members.

The distinctive entrance to Sugar Creek includes dramatic imagery comprised of a reflection pool leading to five stately columns. The historic architecture was part of the historic 1898 Galveston County Courthouse – the building weathered the Hurricane of 1900, the worst natural disaster in United States history because an estimated 10,000 people lost their lives. The columns were brought to Sugar Creek after the closure of the famous building in 1966.

Money Magazine and CNNmoney.com rank Sugar Land as one of America's Best Places to Live.
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