SUSTAINED LIVING

Craftsman-style builder Trey Cole’s "city home" brings a new slant to downtown digs. / by Leigh Savage / photography by Rebecca Lehde
Trey Cole, a residential designer and developer in Greenville for 30 years, saw something missing from the local housing market: city homes. “I wanted to create an urban building that belongs in the city,” he says. “Something that was designed to be part of the city fabric.”

City Homes at Markley was created to fill that need, and Trey and his wife Jenny were the first to move in. With 14 units on the property at the corner of Markley and Academy, four units are complete, with four more under construction. “They’re selling more quickly than we can get them built,” he says.

As the City Homes name would indicate, each structure is a single-family home, and buyers own the property. “These are custom homes that abut each other but are not integrated,” he says. “They are individual homes.” He patterned them after row homes in larger Northern cities.

The Coles typically move in as a project goes into full swing, meaning they have lived many places over the years, but “this is the first time we customized one just for us with the goal of living here forever,” Trey Cole says. “We’ll see!”

Jenny Cole, who runs a cleaning business, said that after 15 moves in the couple’s 17 years together, their City Home is her...
favorite. “I love the location, the great view of downtown, how great it is for entertaining,” she says.

While most of the units will have two to four bedrooms, the Coles created theirs with just one master loft upstairs and a full suite for guests on the lower level. Because he has so much experience building in the Arts and Crafts style, Cole incorporated that look in his home while also going a bit more contemporary. “All of the homes have that loft-inspired look, with wood ceilings and lots of glass,” he says.

The top draw is the location, with a seven-minute walk to Fluor Field and a short stroll across the street to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and the new park district being constructed just around the corner. The walls of windows and extensive outdoor spaces allow beautiful views of downtown and even the North Carolina mountains.

The main living area features five-inch white oak floors and a white pine ceiling with a shadow-line trim along the edge instead of crown molding. “It gives it a more contemporary look but is more complicated,” Cole says. “You can hide anything with trim, but this has to be perfect.”

The concrete island, speckled with recycled glass, was created by the Cole’s friend Tobin Hines at Concrete Canvas. “That’s the predominant finish in the...
To keep the focus on woodwork and expansive views, the Coles designed the living area simply, with its art deco pattern on the concrete hearth, and decorated intentionally with prized pieces like a Stickley rocker.
“I like that it’s tactile, it’s friendly and it’s handmade.”

The concrete hearth has an Art Deco pattern that echoes the pattern on the elevator doors. A midcentury coffee table, and a Stickley chair show the couple’s love of Arts and Crafts style.

The open floor plan has been ideal since the couple has hosted at least 20 parties since moving in 15 months ago. With the doors open to the large outdoor deck area, the couple can have a bonfire, watch the fireworks after ballgames and create a roomy indoor-outdoor event space. “We gave up heated square footage for more outdoor porches,” Cole says.

Upstairs, the master suite has been transformed into an open loft with a spacious outdoor rooftop garden. The Coles are avid hikers and wanted to focus on the outdoors as much as possible, with outdoor seating, birdfeeders and plenty of plants. “I love to hang out there and have a cup of coffee and watch the birds,” Jenny Cole says.

Next to the Stickley bed, built-in niches ensure that “instead of having normal bedside clutter, we can tuck everything away and have more of a clean look,” Trey Cole says.

The area is accented with 1x6 tongue-and-groove paneling, painted the taupe color used throughout the home. “There is just so much going on with the wood and glass, we kept the trim and cabinetry one color so the rooms flow together and it’s more of an open look,” he offers.

The jetted tub and shower with bench echo the colors and styles throughout the home, including

To reduce clutter in the home’s third-floor master bedroom, Cole added niches on either side of the Stickley bed, providing a place to store belongings tastefully. He accentuated the area with 1x6 tongue-and-groove boards. Artwork above the bed is photos from a trip to New York City.

house,” he says, found on the floating shelves in the kitchen and the fireplace in the adjacent living room. “I like that it’s tactile, it’s friendly and it’s handmade.”
tongue-and-groove panels and a trapezoid shape. A large closet offers storage, though the Coles pared down their belongings by half before moving in. “The whole house makes you de-clutter endlessly,” he says.

One feature that has been more beneficial than he expected is the accessibility of the home. Thanks to the elevator, ADA-approved sink, and a roll-in shower in the lower-level guest suite, several people who use wheelchairs have attended events at the home and said they were happy to see such an accessible location.

The lower level is set up hotel-style, with a private suite with its own entrance and a kitchenette. The setup has been ideal for Cole’s adult children and other family and friends who visit but want privacy.

The high-efficiency home has a tankless hot water heater and solar panels on the roof. “I’m always thinking about consuming less,” Cole says. “We can build a walkable community where people don’t need a car everywhere they go. I’m trying to do my part not to create urban sprawl and to help people spend more time doing what they want instead of driving.”