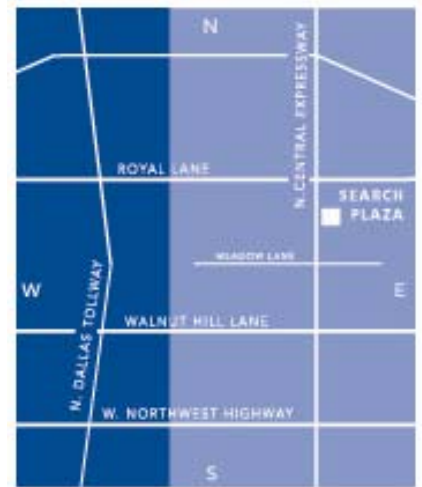


Dallas Business Journal

Pillar buys Search Plaza, surpasses 1M in acquisitions



REAL ESTATE REPORT



Fast growing Pillar Commercial has bought the home of the “We Buy Ugly Houses” people. Pillar purchased the 154,000-square-foot Search Plaza office building on North Central Expressway in Dallas, bringing the company’s acquisitions to more than 1 million square feet in slightly more than a year. The seven-story midrise is anchored by the headquarters of HomeVestors, the company whose advertisements scream “We Buy Ugly Houses.”

Pillar itself targets underperforming assets – the office world’s equivalent of fixer-uppers – and repositions them by reinvesting new capital and stabilizing them with aggressive leasing campaigns, said Manny Ybarra, the company’s founder. Search Plaza, built in 1984, is 65% occupied. The quoted lease rate is \$17 per square foot. The property sits on 3.5 acres just north of Meadow Park Tower, a 250,000-square-foot office tower Pillar acquired late last year.

Ybarra said he’s bullish on that location. “This section of Central Expressway is undergoing a major transformation, and we want to contribute to the area’s resurgence,” he said. Pillar Commercial plans to upgrade Search Plaza’s mechanical systems, modernize the elevators, renovate common areas and install new HVAC systems, Ybarra said. The third floor, consisting of 22,000 square feet, will be marketed as a single-tenant opportunity. Ybarra founded Pillar Commercial in 2004 and has focused on building the company’s North Texas portfolio. He said he may eventually look for buildings outside the region, but right now there’s no need.

“Dallas is an incredibly strong market for business relocations and expansion, so there is plenty we can accomplish right here,” he said. Andrew Levy and Todd Savage with Holiday Fenoglio Fowler brokered the sale for Search Plaza.

Bill Hethcock