

anhattan has its hip and trendy Soho, and Miami has Sobe. Now add McKinney to the list of communities establishing its own edgy corner of the globe as it repurposes aged buildings.

Just east of the Historic Downtown Square past Highway 5 on East Louisiana Street are the vestiges of McKinney's once-bustling industrial area. Big changes are occurring as businesses and artists take over vacant storefronts and old buildings. An example: For those with a penchant for artistic urban living and working with a view, McKinney offers two industrial mills totaling almost 200,000 square feet of mixed-use space.

The revitalization on the east side of McKinney is an inspirational work in

progress. Grant money is beginning to flow, rail tracks are in place and there's still plenty of room for others to take part in the revival effort.

So, make your way over to this booming part of town to see the evolution for yourself.

## McKinney Flour Mill

A quick walk from the Square down East Louisiana Street takes you to the McKinney Flour Mill, where owner Brad Kidwell has big plans for the 100-yearold facility. Featuring four buildings with a combined total of 53,000 square feet, the Mill is currently under construction as a mixed use/urban restoration project. It will feature live/work lofts, office space, retail and an event center able to accommodate 250 people.

At the moment the building hosts eight tenants and an event hall accommodating 196 people - and that's just the first two floors of the Flour Mill.

The Lily Pad, Herald Entertainment and Professional Concepts, Inc. are some of the tenants currently calling the Flour Mill home. Owners of Professional Concepts, Inc., George and Elayne Matson moved to the Flour Mill in 2009 and say it's convenient because it's close to everything. After being in business in McKinney for 25 years, they say the Flour Mill is by far the most unique location they have had.

Now Kidwell is ready to rehabilitate the third and fourth floors. He plans

to convert them to living and working loft space. And, with 22-foot-tall ceilings, exposed brick walls and scarred hardwood floors, the Flour Mill possesses authentic qualities that only a century of wear and tear can imbue. Kidwell plans to retain the integrity of the Mill by repurposing some of the machinery and gears and heavyweight accoutrements into the loft space.

For more information: mckinneyflourmill.com.

### The Cotton Mill

During the early 1900s the success of the local cotton trade was so great that McKinney needed a textile mill. The Cotton Mill in McKinney opened on a patch of blackland prairie in 1910 and eventually became a major manufacturer of denim. It was part of Texas' growing textile trade, and, by 1925, Texas was the largest cotton producer in the United States.

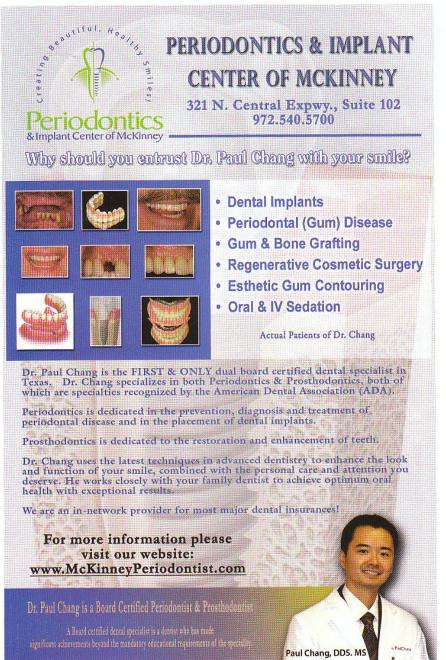
With more than 140,000 square feet of lease space and 15-foot-high ceilings, the historic Cotton Mill is now experiencing a renaissance. Artists, photographers and businesses of all types have adapted its unique loft offices to fit their needs, a remarkable feat for a building that has survived fires, tornadoes and years of neglect.

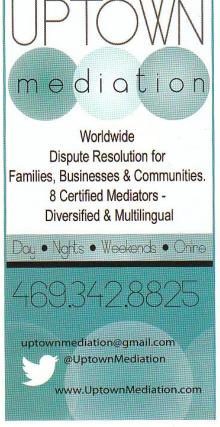
But it's that authentic history, texture and charm that make The Cotton Mill a sought-after locale for businesses, photographers, brides and art directors from across the country.

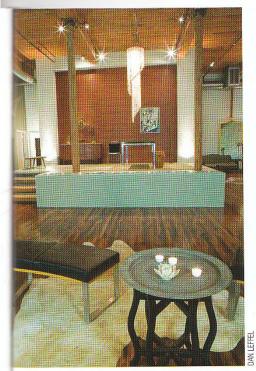
Contemporary conveniences and elegance juxtaposed against weathered years of history make walking through The Cotton Mill feel like a self-guided tour through time. Zynga With Friends, the company that created the popular smartphone game "Words With Friends," is one such company that enjoys the Cotton Mill's beautiful architecture.

The hidden garden, natural light and creative build-outs make The Cotton Mill a mecca for tenants of varying sizes and industries.

For more information: mckinneycottonmill.com.







Unique loft office suites are built to suit your specific needs at The Cotton Mill

Shannon Star whips up magic (above) at Layered Bake Shop

# Layered Bake Shop

Shannon Star is an artist whose medium is sugar. Her cakes are sculpture and her studio is Layered Bake Shop, which she opened on East Louisiana Street in January 2012.

Star loves nothing more than to be dared - and her work shows she's game for a challenge. A cake featuring Kiss's Gene Simmons made it to the band's website just hours after she posted it to her website.

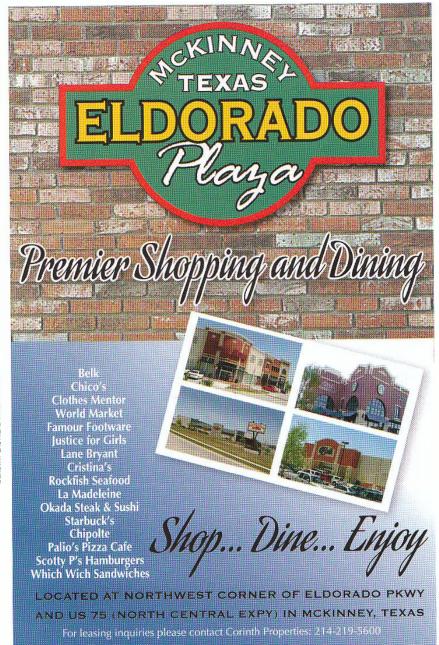
She baked the cake for the wrap party for television's GCB in Dallas, and her work has been featured in D Home and well as a plethora of websites. "I challenge myself to do new things; I'm really good at making things look real," she says, and the photos of her work show you the

magnificent things she can do with sugar.

If cake is not on your menu, her retail bakery features cake pops, French macaroons, cheesecakes, cupcakes and cookies, all natural and peanut-free. For more information: layeredbakeshop.com.

#### Louisiana Street Grill

When Emigdio Raymundo came to McKinney from Mexico in the 1960s, he built a successful furniture manufacturing





LIMA-O-PHOT

The atmosphere is just as pleasing as the fare at Louisiana Street Grill

business on East Louisiana Street – and never dreamed of opening a restaurant. But his son Jesse's vision and a decreased furniture demand motivated the Raymundos to turn the once-thriving furniture shop into the Louisiana Street Grill.

The father and son brought in Chef Rodolfo Cardoso to the large, airy space. With a tasty wine list, a variety of beer on tap, and a slightly Cajun/Southwestern flavor to the menu, Louisiana Street Grill menu has become one of McKinney's newest from-scratch eateries.

A closer look at the steakhouse-chops-seafood menu shows that Cardoso mixes haute cuisine with low-country fare. There's a Bayou Alfredo sauce with andouille sausage and tiger shrimp along with favorites such as shrimp po' boys, chipotle pesto pasta, crawfish linguine and the popular chicken Florentine sandwich.

And, the choice offerings extend to drinks as well. "The house favorite is the Citrus-tini, a cocktail concocted with two varieties of tequila, agave, lime and ghost peppers (alleged to be the hottest known to man), and sounds like it could fuel the space shuttle," says Jesse.

The Raymundos are hands-on owners, and Emigdio built the 20-foot-long cedar bar and the shelving, and he upholstered the tables and chairs. The building still has plenty of raw space left over, and the Raymundos plan to lease to artists looking for gallery space.

For more information: louisianastreetgrill.com.

# Fringe

When you walk into Fringe, do not think. Forget what design guides tell you and let your innate decorator lead the way. If you see something you want, be quick with the cash, too, because the treasure you see this month will not be marked down next month. It'll be gone.

Located in an old administration building of the Flour Mill, Fringe is an antique décor shop and a work in progress. Created by six veterans of the antiques and decorating businesses, once a month they – that's Sue Sanderson, Jennifer Spak, Susie Norton, Elizabeth DuVal, Donna Feddern, and Terry Rogers – scour hot spots for treasures then converge on Fringe.

Then they replace every object in the shop with their newly curated swag, which makes the cozy space more of an art gallery with rotating exhibits than a store.

Fringe really must be seen to be appreciated. Each grouping of objects might not fit together in a textbook decorating scheme, but when they're combined on a table, they become an artistic collage that makes sense.

"There are six different visions at work at Fringe," says Feddern, "And if one of them isn't on your wavelength don't worry, another one will be."

For more information: 903-821-1708



An eclectic mix
of treasures
can be found
at Fringe



As it continues to grow and thrive, east McKinney is once again playing a large role in McKinney's vibrant, diverse economy. Whether you take a walk from the Square or take a drive from home, take the time to experience these extraordinary venues.

Visit mckinneyonline.com to read profiles of other businesses booming on the east side.

About the author: Steven Nester is an educator and freelance writer who hosts Poets of the Tabloid Murder, a mystery author interview show that can be heard on public radio.

