

## Developer predicts future building trends

"Learning and understanding is the key. Then familiarize yourself with your customer's needs."

That's where Abbey Homes' partner Robert Schmier believes real estate salespersons should begin when talking about residential construction. Schmier recently addressed a gathering of more than 300 members of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Board of Realtors. Real estate agents must devote time and effort to learning as much as they can about residential construction, he said.

He also offered his insights into what the future holds for housing trends:

THE KEY factors in housing value

are location, quality and design. These become important in the re-sale potential of the home.

Since he takes an active role in floor plan designing along with his partners David Johnson and Robert Katzman, Schmier claims that they are able to maintain innovative designs in their customer built houses.

"Due to our active and direct involvement in the business, we have a good feel for what homebuyers are looking for," he told the real estate agents.

"The best design has simple, clean lines, no gingerbread and a functional floor plan. The house should also be

energy efficient and not dated in terms of design."

Schmier pointed out that the appreciation potential on a house has to be evaluated carefully.

Will a \$2,000 sauna add \$2,000 in value (plus 8-10 per cent per year in appreciation) to the house? Will extra insulation add value? The homeowner must know before considering the improvements.

"You can spend extra money on exterior design which is really not as useable in a day-to-day sense as a sauna, but it may add many times its cost added value," Schmier said.

"Likewise, in considering installa-

tion of a humidifier, it not only adds to your personal comfort, but it aids in control of the shrinkage and expansion of the wood components of a house. It helps prevent warping of interior wood doors and drywall cracks," he added.

IN DISCUSSING future building trends, Schmier predicted more open floor plans for houses.

"We'll see a more efficient use of space, fewer, but wider hallways, rooms that can be combined with other rooms for large entertainment areas. The importance is that every square foot should have a useable function."

"Houses of the future will be more

energy efficient, with new types of furnaces, possibly solar converters. The home will offer more amenities, three-car garages and fancier appliances," he explained.

Schmier added that future homeowners will be concerned with eliminating maintenance upkeep. They'll look for a development where maintenance is provided for by the homeowner association for a monthly fee.

"With today's mobile lifestyle and added emphasis on leisure activities, buyers want to lock their homes and leave, resting assured that snow will be shovled, grass cut, in essence, that general maintenance will be taken care of," he said.

Abbey Homes is involved in numerous developments in Oakland County.

Among those are Chestnut Hills, Echo Ridge and the Hills of Bloomfield, all with homesites ranging from 3-1/2 acres. The three developments comprise some of the last remaining property in Bloomfield Hills.

Plans for a \$400,000 Tudor manor home with a central foyer and circular staircase spiraling upwards to the second floor balcony are underway at the Echo Ridge development.

Abbey purchased the property in 1977 and it's now 70 per cent sold out.

## Tired of high fuel bills?

### 3M product cuts heat loss

Are you tired of paying high fuel bills due to air escaping through your home's windows?

Are you ready to reduce your winter heat loss by up to 50 per cent next year and tackle this season's air conditioning loss?

An interior storm window, developed by the 3M Co., claims to reduce air infiltration by 60 per cent, eliminate drafts, dusty windows, increase room comfort, reduce outside noise and is easy to clean.

Available exclusively through Solar Sales, Inc., in Southfield, the "Thermal-View" window of vinyl framing is mounted 1-1/2 inches inside of the existing primary window in the sill and jamb.

Removable glass panels from the inside allow for easy cleaning and full access to open and close the primary window.

Solar Sales President Seymour Zate is the dealer for the windows in southeastern Michigan. The typical aluminum window, which is on most homes, is cold during the winter and has frost condensation and air infiltration from the window's moldings, he said.

By mounting the traditional exterior storm window, air entering the home may be minimized, but the condensation still appears on the frame, he said.

ZATE SAYS that with the Thermal View, the condensation is eliminated because of the air space between the storm and the primary window. The window is sealed around the edges, eliminating escaping air.

Another feature is the sliding interior storm window, which allows for usage of the primary window. Because

it is mounted on the inside, cleaning is simplified.

A minimum sill space is necessary for a Thermal View storm window to be mounted. If an existing sill doesn't have the full three inches, an insert may be pinned on but it would remain stationary and the window could not be opened.

Cost varies according to window size and sill type.

"Replacement windows may run from \$250-\$350 and up. A comparable price for this window would be \$75-\$85," Zate said.

Delivery is four to six weeks after an interior storm is ordered. Installation takes 45 minutes per window. First-hand experience proved the winter fuel cost savings to Zate during the past cold months.

"I put the windows on my own house. Last year, during January and

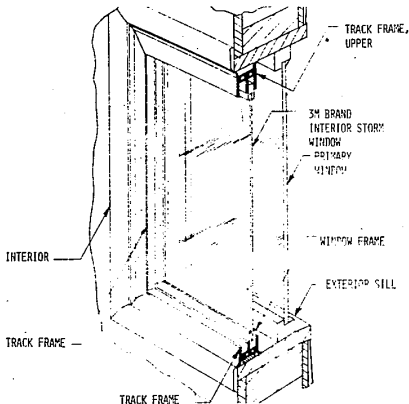
February, my bill was \$114. This year during the same period, my bill was \$82," he said.

Installed primarily on existing houses, Thermal View interior storms are making headway into the new housing market as an option.

HIGH-RISE apartment owners also are becoming familiar with the increased value of the interior storm windows.

"I've been talking with apartment building owners who pay for the tenants' heat. The high costs have caused them to raise their rents," Zate said. "They have found that exterior storms don't look nice and are turning to us for interior storms to save money."

For more information on Thermal View interior storm windows, contact Solar Sales, Inc. at 358-2211.



Here's a model of the interior storm window installation with 3M Company's new insulation set-up

## Tamper-proof lock helps prevent crime

With the advent of the-sliding glass patio door wall being offered on scores of modern homes came an increase in the number of burglaries credited to the easy illegal entry those doors provide.

But the Karmiotis Sales Co., in Detroit has developed a new sliding door wall locking device that several local police departments are talking about in their crime prevention programs.

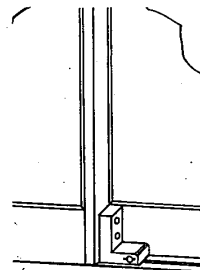
With many doorwalls, a tool can be forced between the door and the frame, easily snapping off the lock. Or the door can be lifted from the frame, disengaging the lock.

Many homeowners put a board or dowel in the sliding door track or install dock lock bars to prevent the

sliding door from being forced open. But the burglar merely makes his entry through the nonsliding side of the door wall.

With the Karmiotis' invention, it is impossible to lift the door to disengage the lock. The device is called the "Slide Lok." This is how it works: By mounting the Slide Lok at the bottom of the doorwall on the inside flange and drilling a hole into the dead door, neither the sliding nor the dead door can be moved upwards or sideways.

It is a fool-proof lock and is constructed so that any homeowner can install it himself in 20 minutes. The lock cost \$7, or the company will install it for \$15.



The Karmiotis Sales Co. offers a new sliding door lock that claims to be tamper proof, preventing burglars from entering through sliding doors or doorwalls—it's a lock that mounts to the door frame.

## It's air conditioning time

By SUZIE MARKS

Remember sweltering through last summer wishing your home was air conditioned? How about recalling those frequent visits to shopping malls and restaurants just to catch your breath in a cool place?

Now that winter has finally shed its coat, homeowners can prepare for the long hot summer ahead by installing central air conditioning. It may be a small price to pay to alleviate frustrations and tensions caused by perspiration and fatigue.

If ordered now, complete central air conditioning may be installed in an existing structure within ten days by most dealers, says Harold S. Laven, owner of Central Heating in Southfield.

"After we get a call, we are normally there in 48 hours. Once we give an estimate and the homeowner says OK, and if the house needs a standard unit, we can have it installed and operating within five to seven working days," he adds.

Cost and design of the units depend on the house's age and existing heating system. Home improvements such as adding insulation or new rooms makes every air conditioning case individual, says Dick Lampy, of D & G Heating and Cooling in Livonia.

"OLD RULES of thumb do not apply for every dwelling," he adds.

An attic unit with a forced air system needs a furnace with an air duct and blower in order to accommodate the cooling device, Laven says.

"If a house has an old furnace, the furnace should be changed, too," he contends.

Most homes over 10 years old that are heated electrically need additional work to raise the amps to meet government codes.

"Many older homes only have 60 amps. An air conditioning contractor has to build to 100 amps of electrical service which may cost an additional \$300," Laven says.

Hot water and steam heated dwell-

ings without forced air can be air conditioned with a Space-Pak cooling system. This method works for homes that are hydraulically or electrically using a four inch diameter flexible pipe tucked in the ceiling with a four inch terminator from which the cool air will flow, yard and there is a blower in the attic."

IN A COLONIAL home, the cool air flows through the closets to terminators in the ceiling of the first floor. This is a relatively new system, Laven continued, which works very successfully.

Cost for the Space-Pak depends on the number of tons of cool air required, which is figured on the house's square footage.

For example, Laven explains, "The minimum cost would be \$1,200 per ton. So if a house requires three tons of cooling it would cost about \$3,600. The homeowner can figure his tonnage requirements by taking the footage of the home and dividing it by six."

## Home Showcase



Impact ready to expand

Dallas Nagy, marketing director for Impact Marketing, a Farmington-based new house national firm, will expand into at least four—and possibly six—new developments this year in the Detroit area.

The company now represents 30 builders in five major developments: Rimbwood in Farmington Hills, Whisperwood in Northville, Turtle Creek in Novi, Georgetown in Rochester and Beacon Hill in Plymouth.

Nagy claims that by combining on one development, they are able to improve the quality of their merchandising such as lead-in signs, brochures, sales office tools and other items at considerably less cost.

Impact is called in to work with the developer at the feasibility stage if the property meets their standards, he said.

Impact will then arrange the sale of lots to a group of builders on a pooled basis and marketing the homes constructed by the builders.

Impact specializes in upper middle income markets with an average home price of \$90,000.



OLD ENGLISH

The Old English design is just one of six models offered in the Williamsburg Village II condominiums in Bloomfield near South Boulevard and Opdyke roads. The other models are classic, country and southern colonial and two varieties of garden apartments.

## Reservation now open

Reservations for the last 12 units in the final phases of the Williamsburg II, Inc., a condominium complex in Auburn Heights, are still open.

The three floor plans offered are two-story townhouses. One has 1,600 square feet with two bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths; the second has 2,850 square feet with three bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths; and the third has 2,240 square feet with two large bedrooms, a library (or third bedroom) and three full baths.

Each unit has a garage with automatic opener and a masonry wood-burning fireplace. The starting price is in the mid \$90,000s.

Fifty-two units are occupied. The complex has a completed clubhouse with full kitchen and cocktail room with wet bar, a combination card room-dining room, mirrored exercise room, showers and sauna facilities.

A large second-story deck overlooks the swimming pool for sunning and dining.

The are two shopping centers within walking distance and four close by.

Williamsburg II is off South Boulevard east of Opdyke Road. For more information, call 855-8000. The sales office hours are 1:30 p.m. daily except Thursday and 1-5 weekends.

## New models announced by Horizons

Horizons of Milford, a development of 44 custom houses, has opened.

Peter Orlop of Century 21 Cedar Shores, Inc., will handle sales of the houses. There are four finished models open, each with architectural variations, starting at \$108,000 and offered with a new home guaranteed trade-in program.

The houses will be landscaped in all front areas, said Ernie Rouse, a partner in P.E.R. Construction. They will have 12 inches of insulation in the ceiling and three-inch blanket sidewall insulation with styrofoam sheathing.

Standard items include Pullum wood windows and wood doorwalls, masonry fireplaces, stereo systems, dishwashers, drop-in gas range, rough plumbing for ice makers and soft water by-pass with instant hot water systems, bi-fold steel garage doors, automatic door openers and floodlights. It offers underground utilities and natural gas.

Horizons of Milford models are open 1-6 p.m. Wednesday and Friday-Sunday. It's closed Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. The development is three miles north of I-96 (Milford exit), one mile east of Milford Road on the corner of Southfield, and Duxson. Call Orlop at 696-4500 for more details.