## Down under

## Architects deep-six new housing

Few underground houses have been built in the Detroit metropolitan area. But if more are built in the future, you'll have no trouble spotting them. The houses aren't literally under-ground

The houses aren't literally underground.
Generally they will follow the same earth sheltered style as the unconventional Oakland Community College campus under construction in Southfield. Three sides and the roof of the structure are covered by dirt analysis of the structure of

HAROLD VAN DINE, partner in a Troy architectural firm which designed OCC's Southfield campus between Nine Mile Road and the Lodge Expressway, said earth sheltering would be "terrific in a home,"

in a home."
Underground housing construction
'lends itself more to suburban and rural areas." he added. "You'd be hardpressed to do it in a subdivision."

rai areas. he added. You o be hard-pressed to do it in a subdivision."

Van Dine appears convinced that "going underground can truly be a saving."

That is the precise reason OCC decid-

ed to build the first "underground" col-lege building in the state. While invest-ing \$600,000 more than for a conventi-onal building. OCC will recover the cost in 15 years or less. Van Dine said, thanks to cheaper heating and opera-ting express.

ting expenses.

He said heating costs for the Southfield campus will be two-thirds of a similar size conventional building.

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WITH HOME heating costs expected to continue upward, Detroit area underground home promoter James Konarkse said the Idea will catch dear will catch of the Very et difficult things to buil and the Idea will catch be added to the Idea will catch of the Idea will catch of the Idea will catch of the Idea will be Idea will

one of a kind.

"It's like how much is it to build a Cadillac if you're only building one — \$100,000?"

Crites said he'd "be glad to look at plans" for building underground, but added the builder has "got to get around some problems in the code." He said variances could be granted to

MOST UNDERGROUND homes have been "predominantly built for the well-to-do because they wanted something different," said Konarske, who recently began Cave Enterprises, of Southgate, to promote earth-sheltered housing

"I don't build 'em; all I do is talk about them." he said.
The "underground" promoter said it costs an average \$600 annually to heat a conventional home, which he says is causing people to have "second thoughts about making their home en-orey efficient."

thoughts about making their norme en-ergy efficient."

Konarske said there were an esti-mated 2,000 underground homes in the country last year, including 200 in Michigan.



An underground house has earth and grass on three sides and is open to the sun on the fourth side, (Copyside) and is open to the sun on the fourth side, (Copyside)  $\frac{1}{2}$ 



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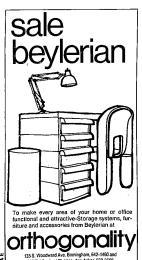
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