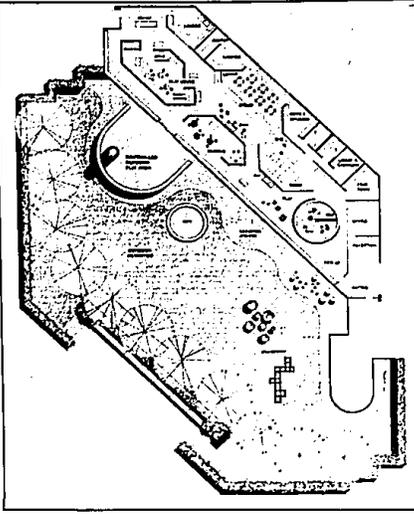


An artist's rendering shows the outside view of the Arboretum Office Park child care center in relationship to other office buildings.



This is the preliminary floor plan for the Arboretum Office Park child care center, with provisions for indoor and outdoor activities.

Hills complex unveils day-care center plans

Continued from Page 1
Farmington Hills architect-designer Nick Chatas of Chatas Associates, "to keep out people who shouldn't be there."

Chatas said approximate area of the center will be 4,700 square feet inside and 10,300 square feet outdoors — plenty of room for the projected populace of 70-75 children and infants.

INSIDE, THE facility will have different activity centers for play and reading, its own kitchen and laundry, storage for extra clothes and equipment, and a special sunken, soft-surface play area near the infant cribs, for toddlers.

The courtyard will include things like a hard, bouncy-surfaced play area — for riding big wheels or such — a sandbox, playground, controlled play areas for group-teacher activities, and a very big dinosaur sculpture.

"I understand children relate to dinosaurs very nicely," Chatas said.

There'll also be seating all the way around, and one section with a one-way mirror for parents to observe their children.

Burton said they haven't chosen a child-care operator to administer the center, yet but are considering three or four at present.

"It really is a little city that has been provided for children," said Southfield resident Alva Dworkin, a private consultant for child-care services who worked with the developers in planning the center.

Dworkin, who worked with the Michigan Department of Social Ser-

vice in child care for 20 years before becoming a private consultant, said the idea was a courageous step for the developers, one "that everyone was demanding, but no one was doing."

Part of the reason for that is prime first-floor space is being used by a facility that probably won't recoup the cost from the charges for the service it provides, according to Burton.

ANOTHER REASON is space. It's difficult to build a child-care facility into existing buildings, he said.

He and his partners did a survey when they considered the possibility a few years ago for another of their properties, the Bingham office center on Telegraph in Bingham Farms.

Besides the expense, Burton said, "There's a need for a uniform request or desire of tenants for a facility," and the Bingham tenants weren't interested.

A complex like Arboretum, however, enabled the developers to design and build it with the facility incorporated, "to create the environment," Burton said. And a survey of Arboretum tenants showed a very strong desire for the child-care center.

Burton, who said his wife was a working mother who had to raise two sons alone, said part of their motive was philanthropic to give back to society for what they've received, and to fill a growing need.

But on the practical side, he also foresees that in the long run, the child care center will ensure longevity of the complex. Families with

two working parents will want to remain at a building where their child-care needs are met.

DWORKIN SAW it as a way to reunite families divided by the necessity of making a living.

"I foresee centers, things parents and children can do together here," she said. "Mothers can have lunch with their children, and are readily available in case of emergencies."

Relief from anxiety about their children's care, and consequently increased productivity of workers, may be a reason for employers to consider subsidizing in-house child care facilities like Arboretum's, Marcia Baum suggested.

Baum, economic development liaison for the Michigan Department of Commerce in southeast Michigan, read a letter of congratulations and encouragement from Gov. James Blanchard to Burton, Katzman and Hughes at the conference.

"This is one of the most enjoyable parts of my job," Baum said.

In the letter, Gov. Blanchard commended the developers for being one of the first in the state, if not the nation, to include a child care center in its buildings. It's proving to the nation that Detroit is no longer the rust belt, but the state of the future: taking care of the needs of the market for the future, Baum read.

About one and a half million Michigan children will need such child care centers by 1990, Baum said later, with more single-parent and two-income families swelling the workforce.

"Employer sponsored child-care is here," Dworkin said.



Alva Dworkin, child care consultant, described her contribution to the development of the Arboretum child care facility.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Councilwoman Fox opposes construction of access road

By C. L. Rugenstein
staff writer

Not everyone is happy with Arboretum Office Park development plans.

Farmington Hills city councilwoman Jean Fox thinks the city is contradicting itself by allowing the developers to build an access road west from the complex, on 12 Mile, west of Farmington Road, to empty onto Drake, near a natural beauty and historic area.

"We went through all this expense to make Drake so beautiful and protect the environment," Fox said. "Then they (the planning commission) do this — put a lot more traffic than expected" on the road.

Fox's concern — and that of area residents, too, she said — is that increased commercial traffic will ruin "the ambience of the area."

TWO HISTORIC houses, the Miller's House and the Arnold House, are in the secluded section of Drake, between I-696 and 12 Mile, that used to be called Sleepy Hollow. Drake along this newly paved stretch used to be a dirt road and residents were apprehensive about blacktopping it in the first place, Fox said.

Fox, elected to the city council last year, said she was unaware of the arboretum's planned road until recently. Site plans are reviewed by the planning commission, but not at a city council meeting, she said. "We don't always have all the information to make correct decisions."

City planner Ed Gardiner said the access road was required, partly for safety. He declined to comment further, saying he didn't want to speak for the entire planning commission. Gardiner said he recalled a joint meeting between the city council

and planning commission on other topics, where Fox mentioned she was displaced with the road.

PETER BURTON, partner with Robert Katzman and Ronald Hughes in development of the arboretum, said their plans have included the access road west for six years.

"The road is essential," Burton said. "We already have the permit, and the city requires it as an access."

There's a temporary road there now, Burton said, where they've been taking topsoil out of the site. He stressed that his company is concerned with maintaining good community relations.

"We made it a point to get the support" of the city and homeowners, he said. "We operate as cleanly as any developer" in that regard.

City schedules hearing on spending block grant funds

Farmington City Council will hold a public hearing Monday, Dec. 5, to decide how to spend an anticipated 1989-90 community development block grant of \$37,647.

The administration proposes continuing its three-year plan adopted in August 1987. It proposes allocating \$30,147 to downtown redevelopment and \$7,500 to low-interest home improvement loans.

Federal regulations require that a public hearing be held to provide citizens a chance to review the plan and present their views.

The hearing is scheduled for 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5, in the council chambers of the city hall, 2300 Liberty.

The city's cooperative agreement with Oakland County relating to

community development block grant funding runs through Dec. 31, 1990.

Under the agreement, the city adopted a three-year plan for the period ending April 30, 1991. Each year, the city must submit an application to the county describing the specific projects that will be undertaken in carrying out the three-year plan, assistant city manager Robert Schultz said.

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