

# Brody retains designers

By Becky Eminger  
special writer

You know you want a home that reflects your lifestyle, and you know what you like and dislike. But you still feel uneasy about the decisions you'll have to make as a new home buyer.

If you've purchased a Brody Group home, you may find the going a bit easier. The decorating team of Linda Shears and Michele Silberhorn of Modern Studio Interiors in Birmingham are retained by the Brody Group to help buyers make those decisions. They are included as consultants to every Brody Group home buyer. Shears has worked with Brody for six years; Silberhorn for 2 1/2.

"Builders are not trained to work with people in selecting decor as a designer is," Silberhorn said. "The service we provide makes it a lot easier and a lot faster for the buyers."

Silberhorn finds that clients run the gamut from knowing exactly what they want to those who haven't a clue.

"People who have owned homes before usually have a much clearer idea of what they want," she said.

For those not so sure, one question asked is how long the buyers plan to stay in the home.

"If they plan on staying a short time, you tend to be more conservative in decorating to help insure resale value," Silberhorn said. "You can make a home more personal for those who are going to be there a while."

Knowing whether buyers lean toward contemporary or traditional styles helps the designers guide buyers toward color and materials selection.

"Those who want a traditional decor will select light backgrounds, while colors are more important for those choosing contemporary. And we're seeing a move toward black and white in contemporary homes."

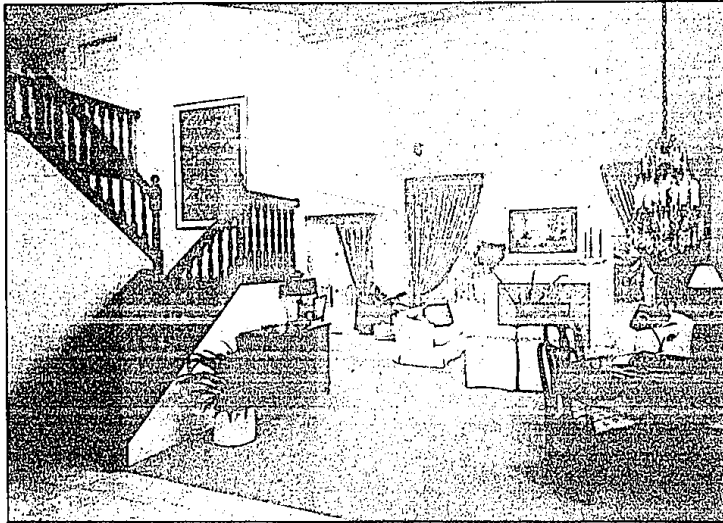
ONCE BUYERS have signed the deal and secured a mortgage, they meet Shears or Silberhorn at the Brody design center to begin choosing the features that will turn the house into a home. They start with the exterior, finding some parameters have already been set. Brody has deed restrictions that prevent houses with the same elevation or exterior design to be next to each other. The idea, according to the designers, is to guide clients in the selection of brick and trim stain that will give them the look they want while harmonizing with the neighborhood.

One of the design team then walks the buyer through the home plan, beginning with entry foyer. The decision-making begins with flooring, then wall color. The designers also explain upgrades.

"A room as a whole, that's our approach," Shears said. Perhaps the bulk of the decision-making is made for the kitchen where cabinets, flooring and plumbing fixtures are chosen. According to Shears, any extras are combined carefully so that the kitchen flows into the rest of the house.

"It makes a house breathe," she said. The powder room is one where upgrades are common because the room is used by guests. The master bath, from Shears' and Silberhorn's viewpoint, influences the adjoining master bedroom and can take on a more feminine or luxurious look. All but one Brody model offer full tile floors and showers and a separate soaking tub in the master suite.

Living areas and bedrooms are designed last. Some buyers bring silhouettes of existing furniture to coordinate their choices. Others retain Shears and Silberhorn for drapery, furniture and accessory selections. This is not included as part of the home buyer's package.



The goal of Shears and Silberhorn is to decorate homes that "always look like someone lives there" as in this great room at Cross Creek.

## Housing construction takes a dive

(AP) Housing construction fell 5 percent in August, the largest decline in six months, the government reported today.

The Commerce Department said new homes and apartments were built at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.35 million units, down from 1.42 million units in July. Starts had gained 1.3 percent in July and 7.5 percent in June.

The August drop was the largest since a 12.7-percent fall last February.

It was the first decline since May for the housing industry, which had been among the sectors hardest hit earlier this year as the Federal Reserve drove up interest rates to slow economic growth and control inflation.

Construction starts fell earlier this year for four straight months before rebounding in June, the longest string of declines since activity slowed for five months in a row from February through June 1987. The May level of 1.31 million starts was the slowest pace since the 1.3 million rate in December 1982.

But despite the rebound, the Federal National Mortgage As-

sociation — better known as Fannie Mae — said single-family starts at the end of July were running about 3.9 percent below their average for 1988.

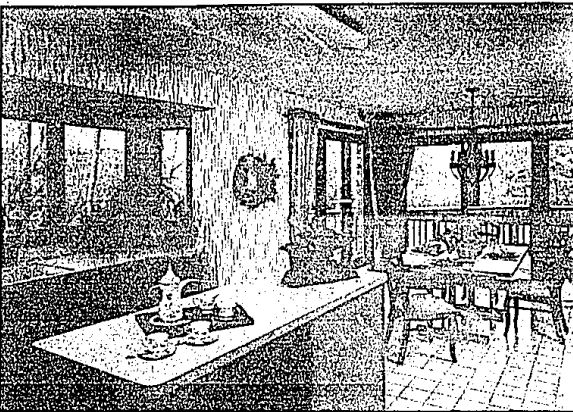
Total housing starts during the first eight months of the year are down 4.7 percent from the same period of 1988.

IN ADDITION to its effect on construction jobs and the building materials industries, the housing industry also has an impact on other housing-related businesses such as home furnishings and appliances.

Construction of single-family homes last month fell 2.5 percent to an annual rate of 1 million units. Single-family starts had risen 5.9 percent in July after falling 0.5 percent in June.

Apartment construction fell 11.4 percent in August to an annual rate of 350,000 units. It had fallen 9 percent in July after rising 31.1 percent in June.

The Northeast suffered the largest percentage decline, down 28.2 percent to 140,000 units at an annual rate.



Selecting a kitchen decor that will allow it to flow into the rest of the house is the

objective of the design team in this Cross Creek home.

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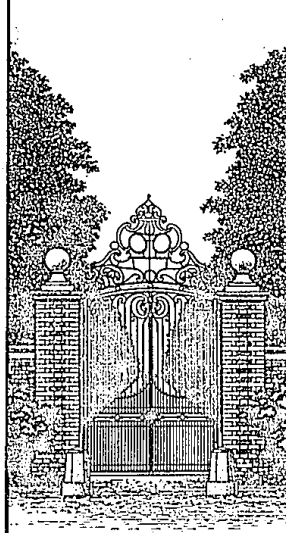
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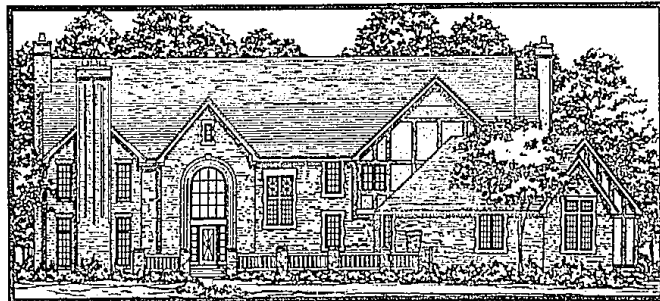
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