

Building Scene

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Staff photos by STEPHEN CANTRELL

You don't see many spec houses with a listing price in the area of \$2 million, even in Bloomfield Hills. Harold Koss and Richard McCoppin have teamed up to bring two to the market. This old-South style mansion and a French manor look next door were designed by David Sellards.

Speculative thinking: building big houses

By Doug Funke
Staff writer

Spec houses today in excess of 7,500 square feet and priced at more than \$1.5 million?

Yes, believe it or not.

Georgian Properties of Birmingham, a corporation formed by mortgage bankers Harold Koss and Richard McCoppin, has completed one such house and nearly finished another in Bloomfield Hills with nary a buyer in sight.

But then the two have successfully operated a building sideline that way for eight years, said Robert Reason, development coordinator for Georgian.

"Most people in this price range are capable of paying cash," Reason said. "In good times and bad, people who buy houses in this range aren't affected by the economy."

"They (Koss and McCoppin) emphasize going for the higher end, the Bloomfield Hills area," Reason said. "They know when they're putting their money there, they will get a fair return on it."

"From the ordinary builder, I don't think you'll find spec homes like this."

GEORGIAN HAS turned away from a traditional Tudor look



Several touches of Old South architecture — a striking staircase, accented by oak flooring and sconce lighting — can be found in a spec house built by Koss and McCoppin in Bloomfield Hills.

for its two offerings on Brady Lane.

A house with an old South-style elevation surrounded by porches and a series of columns has a floor plan of 7,885 square feet. It's been on the market since late September with a listing price of \$1.8 million.

Oak wood floors can be found in all major rooms on the lower level — living room, den, keeping (family) room/kitchen and dining room. The den is oak from top to bottom.

Brass fixtures and top-of-the-line appliances abound.

An imposing staircase rises from the foyer in the middle of the house. Four bedrooms — to be carpeted to the buyer's specifications — are upstairs.

The bath portion of the master suite contains a marble floor, marble wall covering and a marble shower. A two-person Jacuzzi is mounted on a platform.

A THIRD LEVEL, originally designed for storage, can be used as a media room, exercise room or playroom for children. Fireplaces are located in the living room, den, keeping room and master suite.

Other touches include double 2-by-12 floor joists, a modern butler's pantry and sconce lighting fixtures on the second floor.

David Sellards, a Birmingham architect, designed the house. "I'm from the South. I can relate to it, traditional value, neo-Classical. I think everyone can identify with nooks and crannies of Grandma's house. It's comforting, nostalgic," he said.

While Georgian executives liked Sellards' floor plan, they thought the initial exterior elevation was a little too contemporary, Reason said.

"We worked with him. He put together some sketches," Reason said. "We took a very modern floor plan and incorporated an older-style home, which many people aren't building now."

"EVERY ROOM, every living area in the house on the first floor you can get outside to a porch," he added.

Kathy Billig, a Realtor associate, is marketing the house for Hall & Hunter. "The thing what sets this house apart is large, functional rooms," she said. "It's not chopped up."

"The immediate buyer would be an auto executive transferred to the area and needs immediate housing or someone who saw it and liked it," Sellards said.

"It's going to sell," Billig said. "We've had financial planners, an independent wealthy person, a doctor interested, entrepreneurs. There's been a lot of interest."

"We (Birmingham-Bloomfield Board of Realtors) have almost 40 listings over \$1 million, new and old," she said. "But we're in a community where per capita income is in the top 5 percent in the country."

GEORGIAN'S second house on Brady, also designed by Sellards and still under construction, has a French manor exterior.

The interior, 9,000 square feet, will contain six bedrooms, five full baths and two half baths, five fireplaces, two stairways and first- and second-floor laundries.

That house will list for \$2.2 million.

Sellards conceded that the magnitude of the two houses most recently built by Georgian as speculative ventures are "very rare even in Bloomfield Hills."

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