

Light from page 1F

son and develops it, the interior designer interprets the vision, and the lighting designer interprets the ideas of all three."

"Susan Winton Feinberg, interior designer with Walter Herz Interiors in Birmingham, said good lighting is important to the success of a project.

"It's not just lighting, it's mathematics," she said. "Correct lighting is a science.

"If it's done well, you will notice the difference.

"Most of the time, I do my own lighting design. But if there's an unusual room, high ceilings or a specific mood I want, a lighting designer is important."

Feinberg said normal lighting fixtures and ideas do not work in all circumstances. When a homeowner is looking for a showplace, and not just a residence, a lighting designer can play a crucial role in the development team.

"It would be like putting on a play without a lighting man."

David Lubin, partner with architectural firm Lubin/Tringali Associates in Bloomfield Hills, said the lighting designer enhances the design of a house by illuminating spaces, structures

and volumes.

More simply, "he helps to install drama," Lubin said.

Architects do their own lighting design on most projects, but with the evolution of lighting theory and technology, it is becoming more of a specialty, he said. Of course, not everyone needs a lighting designer.

But when a client wants to go one step further — and is willing to spend the money — the lighting designer can make a difference.

"It's a matter of convincing the client it's worth it," he said.

Lubin said he doesn't think lighting designers will play a key role in all house designs, although some multiple-residential condominium and apartment projects will use a lighting designer — particularly on landscaping — to add drama.

Obvious benefits

One of the benefits derived from being involved in commercial work is the experience of working in difficult situations. In commercial lighting design, the trick is to make something work in a place not designed with lighting in mind.

Much of what the designer learns in commercial settings can be translated when he has more control — like in the design of a custom house.

Another big plus, he said, is illuminating Concepts has more direct access to the latest materials and design concept. "Lighting manufacturers have paid little attention to residential market."

As a commercial lighting designer, he has the ability and wherewithal to not only test and manipulate commercial lighting products, he can also transfer that knowledge and product to residential use.

Working in residential has been a benefit for his work in commercial design. "Because (house buyers) are so demanding, it keeps my staff well tuned."

While the average person may not be attuned to the latest in lighting theory, he knows what he likes, Harwood said. By working with house buyers, he has discovered many nuances that can be used in commercial projects.

Taken for granted

Bob White, lead designer at Illuminating Concepts, said lighting

is important but it is often taken for granted. "Close your eyes and then open them — that's light. Lighting can make or break anything."

"A sighted person's perception of their environment is (paramount) to how people relate to their environment."

A lot of the growth in lighting design can be attributed to the media. Movie, television and magazines touting the good life have brought the importance of lighting to the masses.

Those images are the result of hours of painstaking design by professionals, he said.

"The quality of imagery (people are exposed to) has gone up, and it's become a standard," he said. People point to these images when trying to explain what they want in their own designs, he said.

When they discover a large part of a certain look's allure is lighting, they are at first surprised. "But when they get more involved in the process, they get excited."

Probably the biggest mistake in lighting design is overlooking it, he said. "You don't do lighting design because it's a cool effect."

■ 'It's not just lighting, it's mathematics. Correct lighting is a science. If it's done well, you will notice the difference.

Susan Winton Feinberg

Sales tumble

(AP) — Sales of new houses plunged 6.1 percent in August, the government said today, despite the lowest mortgage interest rates in nearly two decades. It was the steepest decline in five months.

Sales were off in both the South and West, while rising in the Northeast and Midwest.

The departments of Commerce and Housing and Urban Development said sales nationally totaled \$70,000 at a seasonally adjusted annual rate. That was down from a sharply revised \$97,000 a month earlier when they actually rose 4.5 percent.

Analysts had been expecting new house sales to increase about 3 percent in August. They had risen 1.5 percent in May and 4.9 percent in June after falling for three straight months.

The August decline was the steepest since sales plunged 11.5 percent in March.

Still, sales of new houses for the first eight months of 1992 were 18 percent above those of the same period last year, when the housing industry was coming out of the recession.

The median price of a new house rose 2.5 percent in August, to \$121,000. The median means half of the houses cost more and half cost less.

Regionally, sales plunged 19.5 percent in the West, to a 140,000 seasonally adjusted annual rate. That was the steepest drop since a 23.5 percent decline last May.

Sales fell 5.2 percent in the South, to a \$98,000 rate.

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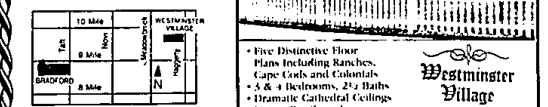
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