

# NEW HOMES

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1996

10

## Renovated apartments convey community

Oak Village in Westland is one unique living situation.

Some 315 units in 157 duplexes provide a rental opportunity in a setting that could pass for a community of ranches built in the 1950s.

They're renovated apartments - neat and clean - that don't look like apartments.

Certified Realty of Farmington Hills, which acquired the property in February of 1995, set about weeding out tenants who had chronic problems paying rent or keeping up the units.

Certified also has continued an upgrading process to bring the duplexes, now more than 40 years old, into the 1990s.

The result is a 600-square-foot unit with two bedrooms, living room, kitchenette, full bath, full laundry, plus a basement, driveway, front and rear yards and porch renting for \$500 per month.

About two thirds are occupied.

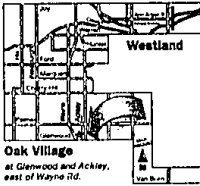
"This is an unusual property," said Ron Boraks, a managing partner. "It's not your typical apartment complex. Folks that live here want the feel of their own home, their own front door, their own driveway."

"When Ron and I first saw this property," said Ron Abrams, also a managing partner and Boraks' brother-in-law, "you didn't know it was a rental property. You'd never know."

"When I showed it to my wife for the first time, her mouth dropped open," Abrams added. "She said, 'It's a neighborhood.'"

Boraks picked up on that track. "It's a neighborhood where anyone can live. It's two single people who want to live together. It's a single parent, young marrieds who want to start a family or already have kids. It's older folks."

"You have the benefits of renting - someone else is responsible



Oak Village at Glenwood and Ackley, east of Wayne Rd.

for everything in your unit," Boraks said.

"The biggest key to tenant retention is making sure all maintenance items are taken care of immediately and people are treated as being king of the castle," Boraks said.

"Normally when you rent an apartment, you get a little storage locker in the basement," Abrams said. "It's unheard of to have a 600-square-foot basement."

"Young families have a place for their kids to play," Boraks said. "You can't get it (basement) in apartments."

Spacious yards with no fences also offer recreational opportunity, Abrams said. "It's great for kids back here."

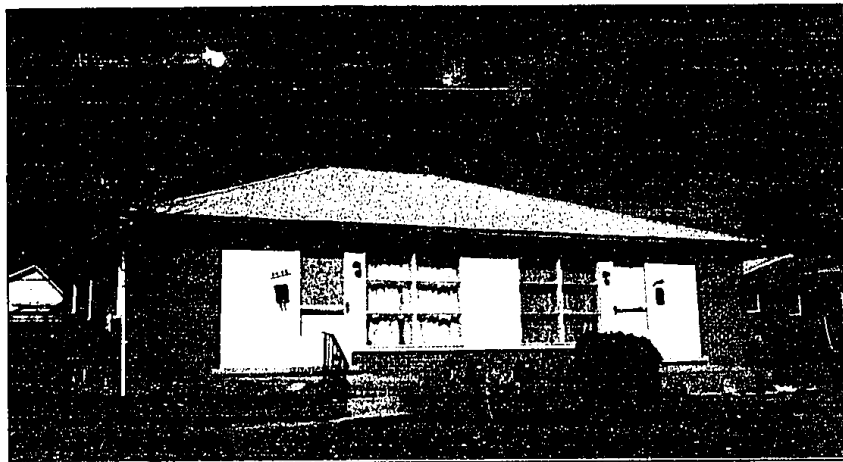
Abrams also brought up another selling - make that leasing - point.

"We allow a small pet which is very unusual for apartments today. This is something people like," he said.

Oak Village is on Ackley and Steiber off Glenwood east of Wayne Road. Refrigerators and ovens are included.

The duplex exteriors are predominantly brick. As windows are updated to vinyl, wood trim is replaced with aluminum siding.

Interior renovations are completed as needed. Most bathrooms get tile work. Carpeting



JIM JACOBSON PHOTOGRAPHER

Oak Village: Renovated duplexes are neat and clean for tenants in this Westland community.

is changed. Light fixtures, duct grates, electrical plates and door knobs are replaced.

Roofs and appliances are fairly new.

Tenants pay for all of their own utilities including water and gas. The complex is serviced by city water and sewers. It's within the Wayne/Westland school boundaries.

The city snowplows the streets. Oak Village clears snow from the sidewalks and cuts the grass.

Renters are limited to four residents per unit.

Marlene and Tony Lave moved in last September.

"Here, the kids can play in the back yard. They can run around and have a good time. I think it's great."

Carolyn Anderson  
Oak Village resident

"My husband lived here (in the area)," Marlene said. "His parents are a half mile away. That's why he likes it. Stores are close by. That's why I like it. What we like best is the fact it has its own entrance. An apartment doesn't."

"I love the basement," Marlene added. "That's where all the

kids' toys are. They still have the yard. That's attractive to me, also."

Carolyn and Karen Anderson, sisters, heard about Oak Village from a friend of a friend.

"It's more a neighborhood setting," Carolyn said. "You have your own driveway, your own

entrance. You don't have people living above you or below you.

"When you get a regular apartment, you pay \$500 to \$600 for a basic two bedroom," she said. "Here, you get your own basement. It's two levels. They're perfect."

"Here, the kids can play in the back yard," Carolyn said. "They can run around and have a good time. I think it's great."

The leasing office at Oak Village, (313) 721-8111, is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

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