

# NEW HOMES

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SUNDAY, JULY 27, 1997

## Franklin Forest: Luxury housing, big lots

The extension of a municipal sewer line has made possible the creation of Franklin Forest, large, detached condominiums on large lots in Franklin.

A third of the 21 lots off 13 Mile between Telegraph and Franklin roads sold before the community's cul-de-sac road had been paved.

"Pre-sales before building speaks well of the subdivision, the location, qualities and features of the site itself," said Andrew Milia, the developer.

"I think that speaks well for the quality of the builder," Milia added. "We really like Hometowne (Building) because of the product they offer and their ability to work well with clients, the customer. They share our ideals of quality and the kind of product to go into this sub."

Lot sizes at Franklin Forest range from a half-acre to 1-1/2 acres. Buyers can build a plan already designed by Hometowne, customize a plan or start from scratch.

It will cost at least \$450,000 to build in the sub, speculated Patrick O'Leary, Hometowne partner. But most homes probably will run at least \$600,000 when all is said and done, Milia said.

Architectural controls include minimum size of 3,450 square feet, all-brick front, side-entry garage, dimensional or cedar shingles and sod lawns with underground sprinkler system.

Vinyl and aluminum siding aren't allowed.

Standard features in all plans presented by Hometowne include fireplace, air conditioning, double oven, cooktop, microwave and dishwasher, three-car garage, first-floor laundry and basement.

"All (plans) have the same features," O'Leary said. "We do everything the same. What changes is size."



"What else will change is specs, marble, granite, versus laminate counter tops or standard ceramic tile," he said. "You can easily spend \$100,000 in features or specs as we call it."

O'Leary's smallest plan, a colonial of just under 3,500 square feet, showcases a two-story foyer and two staircases.

The main living area contains a living room, dining room, library, family room with sloped ceiling, and kitchen/ nook with island and walk-in pantry.

Four bedrooms and three full baths are upstairs.

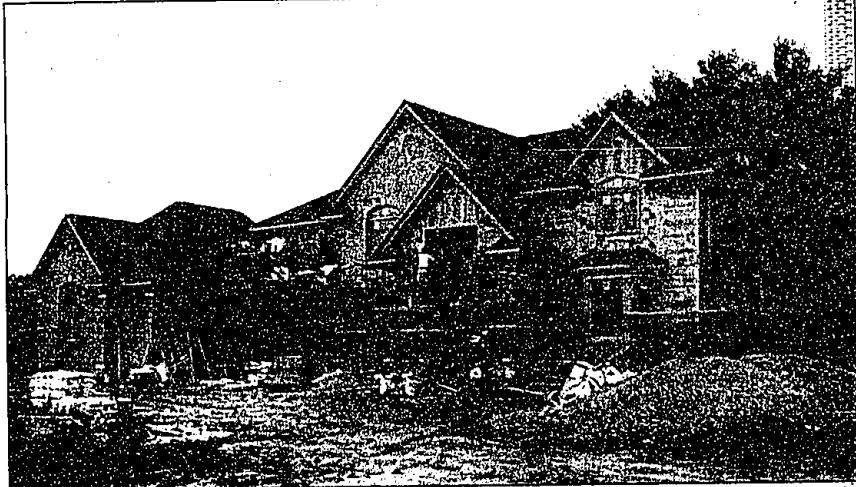
The master, with cathedral ceiling, has a separate tub and shower, two walk-in closets, dual-sink vanity and compartmentalized toilet.

Two bedrooms share a jack-and-jill bath, while the fourth bedroom has its own full bath.

Base price is about \$470,000.

There's plenty to bring buyers into Franklin Forest.

"All 21 lots either look out on a protected wetland area or a wooded area," Milia said of the 25-acre parcel. "We will build an acre-and-a-half pond on site. It will always have some water in it and be a very attractive feature."



Sample product: Custom work like this by Hometowne Building in Franklin Farms also will occur in Franklin Forest.

"Franklin has a charm that would be unique to northern Michigan, let alone in the 696, Telegraph, Northwestern corridor," O'Leary said.

"Franklin still has a very rural character," Milia added. "It's not a curb-and-gutter community."

"Geographically, it's one of the best areas," Milia said. "You're minutes from Southfield, 10 to 15 minutes from Birmingham and Troy, 10 from Farmington Hills. You're minutes away from the work base of an affluent population."

"Birmingham schools is another great draw," O'Leary added.

Milia anticipates a typical buyer as an auto executive or entrepreneur, 35 to 50 years of age who has owned two or three houses previously and probably has built before.

"I think a lot of people will be here a long time because they are making a significant investment," he said.

Each home in Franklin Forest will have its own well. There

won't be sidewalks.

The property tax rate currently is \$36.40 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation, half of market value. That means the owners of a \$500,000 home in the site condo community would pay about \$9,100 the first year.

An annual association fee of \$1,200 is projected.

Robert and Diane Strager ordered a colonial from O'Leary for themselves and children Hunter and Sam.

"I had been looking for a long

time," Robert said. "I happen to like the Franklin area. It's very pretty, very picturesque, densely treed. It has some character to it."

"I've been watching Pat build homes a couple of years," Robert said. "He's aggressive and builds a nice home. We tweaked the plan considerably. My wife had ideas she wanted to change, and he was very receptive. He's very flexible."

Anyone interested in Franklin Forest should contact O'Leary, at (810) 831-2650.

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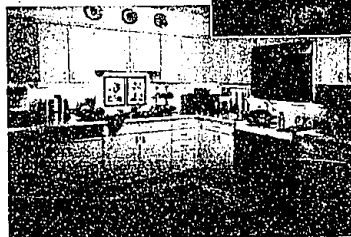
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