

Building Scene

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300



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★ 11



staff photos by RANDY BORST

Jim and Marilyn Funk, developers and builders of The Legends in Farmington Hills, built three ponds and seeded a meadow with wildflowers at the condominium site.

FLOWER POWER



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A bridge and gazebo complement three ponds and a meadow seeded with wildflowers at The Legends, a condominium site in Farmington Hills.

Away from the asphalt jungle

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Developers and builders have come a long way from days when landscaping seemed almost like an afterthought to a project.

Now, between complying with land use laws established by municipalities and trying to attract buyers or tenants into residential or commercial developments, hundreds of thousands of dollars get spent on trees, shrubs, berms, flowers and water at a single building site.

"I think there's a growing concern with the integration of an activity into the community as a whole," said William Allen, an associate professor in the college of architecture and design at Lawrence Technological University.

"A good landscape development — site plan — will facilitate that."

PEOPLE APPARENTLY are facilitating.

Fifteen years ago, the landscape contractor 'was told to get it green, throw a few trees on and get out. Contractors now are getting into brick work, decks, ponds, gazebos.'

— Dennis Crimboli
Crimboli Landscape Contractors

of Crosswinds Communities, said he spent \$1 million planting mature trees rather than saplings at Greenpoint Condominiums, a 112-acre site at 14 Mile and Halsted in West Bloomfield.

• Jim and Marilyn Funk, developers and builders of a 30-unit condominium community, The Legends, on Halsted just south of 14 Mile in Farmington Hills, said they spent upward of \$300,000 landscaping that 10-acre parcel.

• Dennis Crimboli, president of

Crimboli Landscape Contractors in Canton, said he did upward of \$250,000 worth of work landscaping the new Radisson Resort and Conference Center in Ypsilanti.

"Landscaping is a requirement in most communities," Gliberman said. "In condominiums or any kind of housing . . . you want to put in materials that are mature. No one wants to wait eight to 10 years for things to grow."

The Funks built three ponds and

seeded a meadow with wildflowers not only to comply with state wetland requirements, but also because they liked the concept and figured buyers would, too.

"THE WHOLE point is we wanted people to feel it was a natural transition from rough-rough, to wildflower to fine planting," Jim said. "I think it's a different concept."

"Landscaping sets a mood for me," Marilyn said.

Crimboli, who built his company from a two-person operation in 1972 to 35 now, has seen a dramatic change in the business.

"What happened maybe 10 years ago, maybe 15 years ago, (was that) the landscaper generally was the last person in on a project," he said. "The budget was sometimes limited and he was told to get it green, throw a few trees on and get out."

"Contractors now are getting into

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Selling or beautifying

By Doug Funke
staff writer

It's like a variation of the old chicken-egg argument.

Do developers and builders landscape because it's required by local ordinance or because it sells?

Probably for both reasons in different proportions on a case-by-case basis.

"I don't know if it's out of the goodness of their heart or the necessity of getting approval," said William Allen, an associate professor in the college of architecture and design at Lawrence Technological University.

"Developers are being forced to be more sensitive to the landscape as it exists and to regenerate it after development has taken place," Allen said.

Landscaping beyond minimum requirements can be an effective marketing tool.

"YOU'RE GOING to do what sells papers. They're going to do what sells property," said Thomas Bird, senior planner for West Bloomfield Township.

Bernard Gliberman said he went way beyond what was required by West Bloomfield when he built Greenpoint Condominiums.

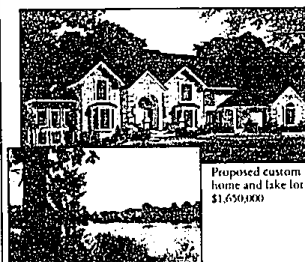
He received a landscape award from the Greater West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce this summer for his efforts.

"There's not one factor that causes someone to buy, but landscaping is a factor, and I feel a very important one," Gliberman said.

Pam and Jeff McAllell, who own a two-bedroom, three-bath unit at Greenpoint, prove Gliberman's point.

"Specifically, it offered a beautiful setting," Jeff said of the attraction. "They left a lot of trees and they did a beautiful job of landscaping. They have a lot of flowers, water and in front, a bridge from bathhouses to the pool."

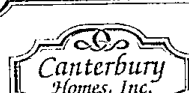
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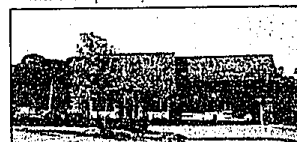
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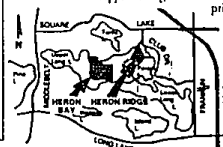
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