



The historic Bach House is on Ardmore at Firwood.

RANDY BORGST/staff photographer



The Model House for the Oakland Subdivision, the historic John E. O'Brien House, is at Green Acres and Bond.

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2 Hills Depression houses designated historic homes

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The Great Depression put a glitch in the 1920s development of the Oakland subdivision at 13 Mile and Orchard Lake Road, delaying development until the 1950s.

The Bach House on Ardmore at Firwood, and the Model House for the Oakland Subdivision on Green Acres at Bond, are examples of the type of homes built in the subdivision, "part of the get out to the country" move, said Farmington Hills Mayor-Elect Jean Fox, also a local historian.

Though only 60-years-old, the houses are considered historical and have been placed in the city's historic district by the Farmington Hills City Council.

The two houses were designed by

Michigan's first woman architect, Emily Butterfield, a 20-year Farmington resident. Her father, Wells, was the first Farmington mayor.

Though she worked with her architect father, Butterfield's sorority sisters said, "she actually did the designing," said Ruth Mochlman, Farmington Hills Historic District Commission vice chair.

"These two homes might not be regarded as historical by some people, given their more recent vintage than others," said Paul Blizman, historic district commission chair. "They represent a style, a quality, that would have been a great benefit to our community."

THE HOWARD Bond family — of Bond Elementary School and Bond Street fame — began developing the subdivision in the mid-1920s. The depression slowed development. Full-

page advertisements in the Farmington Enterprise depicted the dream of moving out to the country in what turned out to be a financially unfortunate time in American history, Fox said.

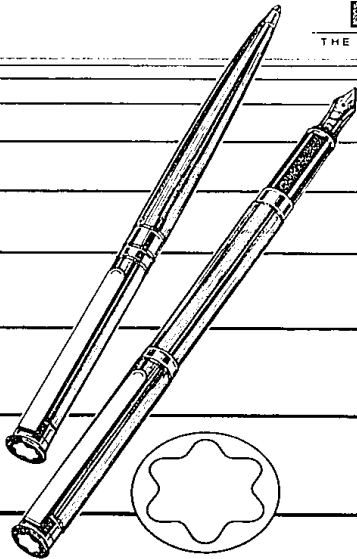
The model house for the subdivision was designed in the arts-and-crafts style, a style similar to one used by Frank Lloyd Wright. The house, for example, features pewabic tile, Mochlman said.

The Bach house is an example of "historic style," a two-story colonial, which also boasts a Japanese influence. The original owner conducted what has come to be known as marketing. He researched what new homeowners in the 1920s wanted in a new subdivision. Gardes, golf courses and tennis courts — much like today — are what people wanted, Mochlman said.

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