

Building Scene

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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Clubhouses add resort dimension to developments

Clubhouses in condominium or apartment complexes can be looked at in two ways.

Yes, they are important marketing tools and are especially attractive to younger, more active residents who like to play and party as hard as they work.

On the other hand, many people don't much use clubhouses and other recreational amenities after an initial rush, owners and managers said. "I think it's important to have these facilities, but they're probably used by a small percentage of people," said George Nyman, president of a property management firm.

His clients include Somerset Park Apartments in Troy, opened in 1964 and one of the first in suburban Detroit to offer clubhouses, pools, tennis courts and a golf course as amenities to tenants.

"It's a bigger selling point than use point," concurred Mel Kaftan, president of Kaftan Enterprises of Southfield and president of the Apartment Association of Michigan.

"YOUNG PEOPLE come in and see a pool, an indoor Jacuzzi and all kinds of images come to mind," he said. "I think it's like all exercise equipment. We all have a piece, but don't use 'em."

Regardless of how much use clubhouses actually get, there can be no denying that they're getting fancier. Holtzman & Silverman of Farmington Hills has built what it considers to be a state-of-the-art clubhouse at its newest apartment development, Village Green of Madison Heights.

The 5,000-square-foot clubhouse contains an indoor racquetball court, a sauna with showers and lockers, aerobics studio with workout equipment, a business center with a personal computer, printer and typewriter, a community room with kitchenette and wet bar, two TVs and a loft with a pool table.

OUTSIDE, THERE'S a waterfall that tumbles into a pool, a heated whirlpool open year-round, a sand volleyball court and a tennis court.

"It's going to remind you more of a resort hotel than an apartment, and that's what it's designed to do," said Jonathan Holtzman.

Rents at the Madison Heights complex range from \$525 to \$830.

"I think it's important to recognize

who your renter is," Holtzman said. "At Village Green, they're renting one, two, three years before they become home buyers. They can afford a house, but they want to save to get a better home or condo.

"What we're really achieving is trying to make it seem like a vacation," he said.

Kaftan Enterprises has a clubhouse at its Westbury Village Townhouses in Auburn Hills that includes an exercise room and equipment, showers, a kitchenette social area with fireplace for rental, plus an outdoor pool, whirlpool and playground.

THE POOL is twice as large as in his previous developments and his first complex to include playground equipment, Kaftan said.

Monthly rents range from \$850-\$950.

"Developments nowadays have been getting a little bigger and we've been increasing the amenities package," he said. "It's a competitive thing. Lifestyles change."

The Irvine Group of Farmington Hills intends to build a clubhouse of some 2,500 square feet at Berwyck on the Park, a condominium complex with an equestrian motif in Milford.

Seventy-eight detached units, priced from \$250,000-\$350,000 are planned around a recreational area that includes stables, riding trails, an outdoor pool and clubhouse, said Paul Levine, Irvine's president.

The clubhouse will contain a sauna, exercise room and equipment, showers and lockers and two fireplaces.

A WHIRLPOOL also may be included, Levine said.

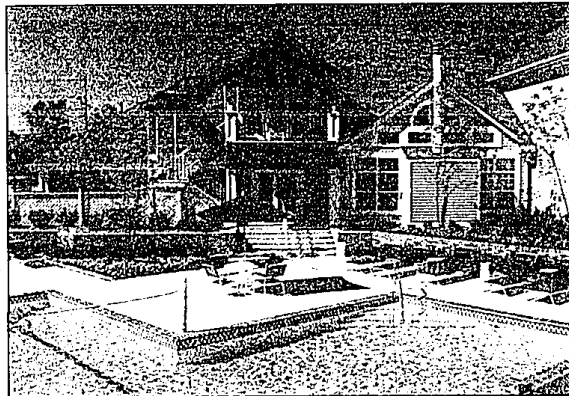
"It is our belief they (purchasers) would like to have everything right there," he said. "A lot of facilities on the property are already there."

Clubhouses and other recreational amenities usually appeal to younger residents, owners and managers agree.

"Empty nesters are more interested in square footage, safety, location and value for the dollar," Holtzman said.

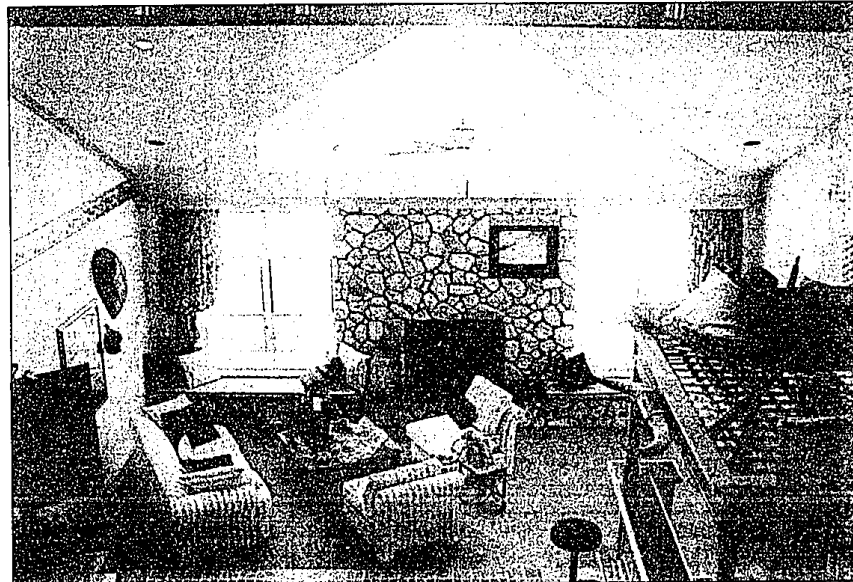
The Lagoons of West Bloomfield doesn't have a clubhouse because the older buyers there didn't really want one, Levine said.

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Staff photos by JIM RIDER

An outdoor pool accentuates the two-story clubhouse at the Village Green of Madison Heights, a Holtzman & Silverman apartment complex. Indoors, there's a main sitting room, exercise room, business center, sauna and a racquetball court.



Plan landscaping around family recreation needs

When putting finishing touches on a newly built home, it's easy to lose sight of things other than which appliances to buy or the color of carpeting to install. With so many decisions to make, don't forget that the land surrounding your home also needs design attention.

Landscaping, the art of decorating a home's yard, enhances any house and allows you the opportunity to personalize your surroundings. Here are some guidelines to help you create your own lawn and garden masterpiece from Better Homes and Gardens.

First, set your goals. The landscaping goals you establish for your new home depend largely on your family's recreational needs. Have family members make lists of home-outdoor activities they enjoy. Combine the lists and arrange items in order of importance. Include items such as privacy, streetside appeal, gardening, entertaining, recreation and relaxation.

Look at your lot. Whether you plan to do your own landscaping or oversee a contractor, it helps to look around at other appealing landscapes. Dot down the elements you like, paying close attention to shrub borders, entryway treatments, and foundations plantings.

Next, look at your lot objectively. Make a list of assets and liabilities, noting important factors such as sun angles during the day and throughout the year, direction of winter winds and summer breezes, privacy, good and bad views, and the closeness of the lot line to the areas you plan to work on.

ONCE YOU'VE spotted your yard's good and bad points, an accurate survey of your lot will allow you to determine dimensions and boundaries. The contractor or the architect may have a detailed plan of your home on hand if the house is in a development. Another good

Landscaping should blend with the architectural style of your house. Informal plantings create a natural setting for your home while softening structural edges.

source is the loan plat, or survey plat — a map of the property that generally accompanies the title to the land and is filed by your city planning office or with the mortgage holder. The survey plat shows lot lines drawn to scale, locations of all structures and any easements on the property. If you're not able to unearth a plan, make one of your own.

As you go to the drawing board to engender a plan, give some consideration to aesthetics. As you draw in all existing landscape and structures, experiment by placing various combinations of plants to scale (their size at maturity) on a tracing paper overlay. This trial-and-error method will lead you to a final design.

Landscaping should blend with the architectural style of your house. Enhance a ranch style, for example, with shrubs that complement the horizontal lines of the house without being so big they block the view.

INFORMAL PLANTINGS create a natural setting for your home while softening structural edges. For a two-story house, masses of evergreen of various sizes placed at the corners produce an attractive frame for the foundations.

Contrasting textures within groups of plants also plays a role in planning. The fine, feathery foliage of juniper, for example, is enhanced when set beside a

shiny, broad-leaved evergreen.

Keep in mind the following design principles used by professional landscapers: arrange plants of different sizes, shapes, textures and colors for a harmonious balance. Remember all seasonal qualities of plants so as to provide a year-round interest. Tie everything together by the repetition of a few plants.

In putting your plant to work, you will find that landscaping can be costly, but there are ways to stretch your budget. One way is to do some landscape work one year and some the next. You still end up with a unified look and can make changes along the way. Buying young nursery stock is another way to save money and create the same effect, but it may take longer. But don't sacrifice quality for economy. Bargain plants may be weak or diseased.

If you have mature trees on your lot, you're ahead of the game, but if you don't it's best to plant them first because they take longer to establish.

The plants you select for your landscape will make or break your design plan. For best results, choose a variety of plants from the following categories: shade trees, evergreens, ornamentals, evergreen shrubs, lawn and ground covers and flowers. Consult with a local landscape contractor or nursery to learn what plants will grow best in your soil and climate.

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