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"Architecturally, what we're building is a big house, a big home, a funeral home," he said. "You want friendly, warm, open-heartedness."

Different tasks
While Griffin's and McCabe's plans share many elements, they take slightly different approaches.

Griffin's single-story structure will contain three viewing rooms which can be expanded or contracted, a chapel, lounge, offices and restrooms over 11,000 square feet.

The chapel, which will seat 150, rises 22 feet above ground level and has some stained-glass windows.

The body preparation room and casket storage will be in the basement.

Unlike Griffin's first funeral home in Detroit and his current operation in Westland, there will be no residential living space above the business.

"I can't afford the extra \$175,000," said Larry Griffin, who pegged construction costs of the new Canton home at \$1.8 million.

McCabe plans a two-story structure of 12,000 square feet with living quarters upstairs at a cost of \$1.4 million.

Two large viewing rooms that can be subdivided, a lounge, and the preparation room will be on the first floor. An apartment, plus arrangement room and casket display, will be upstairs.

"There is no basement."

"A basement is so costly," McCabe said. "No one has told me yet what use it has except storage."

Neighborhood reflection

It's important that funeral homes look like other buildings in the neighborhood for that homey atmosphere.

Griffin's exterior will be all brick with a gentle sloping roof, asphalt shingles and small windows. "The roof has the typical slope a ranch house would have," Root said.

Dryvit, expanded polystyrene covered by a hard plastic, manufactured stone, and a high roofline with asphalt shingles that look like shakes will grace McCabe's exterior.

"We felt with this type of style, Tudor, it would blend in and look good," said Richard Garofola, a funeral director who will be assigned to the new location. "Several subdivisions are going up in the area. This is the kind of house going up."

The immense size of funeral homes and public health regulations require many mechanical modifications.

Griffin's home, for instance, will have five furnaces and air conditioning units.

"If one shuts down, the whole building isn't shut down," Griffin

said. "And at some parts of the day, there may be viewing rooms we may not want to heat."

Special air exchangers, showers/eyewashes and plumbing installations required by law in the preparation room also raise construction costs.

Fireplaces, off the main entrance of both homes — Griffin will have a second one off the parking lot entrance — further convey a homey image.

Then there are things that people might never think about unless specifically pointed out to them.

Wide corridors and doors accommodate traffic flow and constant in-and-out movement. Ceilings are also higher in viewing rooms, 10 feet in Griffin's building.

"As room dimensions grow larger, they (ceilings) have to grow higher or it becomes tunnel-like," Root said.

Larger rooms, and in Griffin's case, a separate chapel, allow services to be conducted right on the premises.

"Everyone belongs to a church," Griffin said. "Here, you can have funerals on Sunday and night funerals. People don't have to take time off work."

"We try to keep the windows in the chapel fairly high," Root said. "We don't want people sitting in the pews getting distracted and looking into the street."

McCabe pointed out the carpeting in a viewing room at his Farmington Hills funeral home.

"You're walking on something soft. People stand in funeral homes a long time so we use thicker padding," he said.

Interior designers and decorators provide other touches. An example — the table around which families make funeral arrangements. McCabe's is a regular dining room table because that's where most families share meals, discussion and make decisions, he said.

"The key to funeral home design is most people don't realize they move large amounts of people in and out in a short time," said Paul Shuler, McCabe's architect. "It takes a lot of open area."

Coordination of professional working space, often a tight fit, also is important, Shuler said.

The style of McCabe's building will escape the traditional colonial look of many funeral homes, Shuler said. "It's a little more residential, a little more inviting."

The challenge, Root agreed, "is really keeping it as warm, friendly and residential as you can and still accommodate a lot of people comfortably without making it feel like a commercial establishment."

Household pollution a threat to health

(AP) — These days, pollution hits many people right where they live. According to Better Homes and Gardens magazine, today's snug, energy-efficient houses trap more and more toxins, sometimes causing them to rise to levels 10 to 100 times higher than the levels experienced outdoors.

Generally, household pollution is not a long-term threat to your health than an emergency. The major exception to this rule is household lead.

Here's what you need to know about some common indoor toxins, along with suggestions about how to lower their concentrations to safe levels:

■ **Making you sick?** Your house may be making you sick if you have nagging colds, fatigue, lingering headaches or allergies that mysteriously go away when you leave for a few days or when you open windows. Also, you may have health problems in the fu-

ture if the furnace malfunctions (carbon monoxide), if you remodel (lead in paint dust), if you have asbestos pipe insulation, or if your basement develops a crack through which radon seeps. The point is not to be alarmed, but to be informed and forewarned.

■ **Lead.** If you have young children, get the lead out when it comes to dealing with this extremely toxic chemical. Kids who take in even minute quantities of lead show signs of brain injury and reduced intelligence. Over time, lead poisoning can also lead to blindness and kidney damage.

The two most common sources of household lead pollution are drinking water and lead-based paint.

Last fall, a government study revealed excessive lead in the drinking water of homes in cities across the nation. The culprits in most cases were lead water pipes and lead-based solder used to join

water pipes. Lead solder was prohibited by federal law in 1988, but many homes and schools still have lead in pipes.

Lead-based paints pose a threat when they are peeling or chipping off, or when remodeling sends paint particles and scrapings into the air. Construction dust gets into the soil or air and onto windowills and floors — and into children's mouths. Even though the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission banned use of lead-based paints in homes in 1978, this kind of paint is still found in more than 60 million homes.

What to do? Your local health department or state environmental protection agency can tell you whether your home is at risk for lead. They can also point you toward reputable testing companies.

Complete removal of all sources

of lead isn't always practical. To minimize the problem:

■ **Keep a clean house.** Wet wipe windowsills with a phosphate detergent and regularly vacuum carpets.

■ **Leave your shoes outdoors** if your soil is contaminated, and take care to wash hands before eating. Removing old soil and hauling in new helps.

■ **Replace windows and doors** that are covered with peeling lead-based paints. That's often cheaper and safer than having the paint stripped.

■ **Run your water for a few minutes** before using to flush out lead. Use cold water for cooking; hot water picks up more lead.

■ **Check with state or local health officials** about low-interest loans or tax credits for lead abatement.

Case out case goods for material content

(AP) — Turn on your sleuthing skills when you're searching for high quality case goods, including dressers, tables, cabinets and beds. These nonupholstered pieces often contain materials other than wood, reports Better Homes and Gardens magazine, and the only way to know what you're looking at is to read hangtags carefully. Let the following definitions and tips help you find good quality furniture:

■ **Solid wood** means that all exposed surfaces on a piece are made from the wood named.

Other woods may be used on drawer sides and bottoms or in other unseen areas. Solid wood is a better choice than veneer for vulnerable surfaces such as heavily used tables and dressers because you can refinish solid wood repeatedly.

■ **Veneers** do not necessarily denote lesser quality. For centuries, furniture makers have faced less expensive woods (these days usually plywood) with thin sheets of decorative wood.

All-wood pieces can include components of plywood and com-

position board (particleboard and fiberboard).

■ **Laminates** are a contemporary twist on veneering. Similar to kitchen-counter material, furniture laminates get bonded to composition board. Veneers and laminates should be glued securely and cleanly to backings.

■ **Joints** indicate the overall quality of construction. Top-quality pieces will have drawers with dovetailed corners — interlocking sets of wedge-shaped "fingers."

Nails, screws, and staples can all give way over time, especially if a piece receives heavy use. Take out a drawer and examine the insides of a piece before you buy.

■ **Finishes** are especially important on dresser tops and tables where the surface may come in contact with perfumes, liquids, and other potentially damaging substances. A polyurethane finish is the most durable, but any finish should be smooth and even.

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