

BUILDING SCENE

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THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1993

BUILDING SCENE'S NAMES & PLACES

Members only



Kelly Carney, owner of Artistic Designs, Franklin, has been re-elected to membership in the Association of Professional Landscape Designers by its board of directors.

Artistic Designs specializes in annual and perennial design and installation for apartment communities, shopping centers and office complexes.

Carney

Clients include Kaffan Enterprises, Stuart Frankel and Associates, Singh Development, Richter Rosin Construction, Eric Yale Lutz, Lewiston-Smith, and Bernos Co.

Sales honor

Dick Williams of Canton has been elected a member of the Honeywell Ambassadors Club, which recognizes the highest level of achievement by field personnel in the company's home and building control organization.

Hospital tour

ESD's Construction Activities Committee will offer a case study and tour of the VA Hospital on Tuesday. The presentation will be made by James Stevens, director of VA Medical Center, John Holland, senior resident engineer of the VA Medical Center, Don Smith, project director with Bateson/Dalley, and Mike Brennan, project manager with Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates.

The tour and case study follows a luncheon that begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Rackham Memorial Center in the Detroit Cultural Center. Tickets are \$22 for ESD members and \$25 for non-members. For information, call 832-6400.

Architecture lecture

Michael W.R. Davis, formerly of Birmingham and author of "America's Favorite Homes," will address the friends of Baldwin Public Library at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday in a free program open to all.

His topic will be the national period of American Architecture from 1900 to 1920. The period is typified by three styles of houses: bungalow, craftsman and American four square, many of which were sold by catalogue. Davis will illustrate his presentation with slides, including those of Birmingham houses.

Davis, who teaches architectural history at Eastern Michigan University, is credited with uncovering two previously unnamed periods of American home architecture, the national and the academic (from 1920 to World War II).

For more information, call the library at 647-1700. The library is at 300 W. Merrill, Birmingham.

House building seminar

Miles Homes Services will offer a free seminar that includes information outlining the entire building process, including choosing a lot, obtaining financing, ensuring quality materials, building equity potential and choosing the right house style and floor plan for the right location.

The seminar will be offered at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 18, at Sheraton Oaks, 27000 Sheraton Drive, Novi.

Homearama dates

If the tulips are in bloom, it must be time to get ready for Homearama, the 11th annual showcase of new idea houses, built by members of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

This year's open house tour will be of single-family houses in the Silver Bell Village Subdivision at Silver Bell and Bald Mountain Road, one mile north of The Palace and one-third mile east of Lapeer Road in Orion Township. Houses start at \$169,900 with most priced under \$200,000.

Among the features are natural oak flooring from the foyer to the kitchen; nine-foot ceilings on the first floor; front porches; a three-sided fireplace, faced with ceramic tile with views from the kitchen, dining room and breakfast nook; and an inverted cathedral ceiling.

Admission is \$4. Discount coupons were mailed to homeowners in their Consumer Files and Detroit Edison bills and Standard Federal Bank statements. The three are co-sponsors along with BASM.

U-M renovation

Redstone Architects, Southfield, is completing construction documents for the renovation of the 70-year-old East Engineering Building, with construction to start in late spring. Thomas Platz is the senior project manager.

The \$25 million renovation will result in a new home for the university's mathematics and psychology departments. The building, originally designed to house the university's engineering department, will include classroom, instructional, laboratory and office spaces.

New facilities include laboratory and research facilities for bio-psychology, a child/family clinic, a 310-seat auditorium, a 150-seat general lecture hall, and a colloquium/meeting area for the psychology department. The building will exceed 300,000 square feet. Its last addition was in 1946.

Information for inclusion in this column should be sent to Marilyn Fitchett, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Building new houses with old charm



Housing option: Newer homes with a historic appearance like this Tudor sometimes can be built at a cost comparable to buying an older model, an area builder maintains.

■ In with the old along with the new is the idea of a builder whose aim is to satisfy buyers looking for yesterday's features with today's efficiencies.

By DOUG FUNKE
STAFF WRITER



Why not build old, now?

That's what James Rutkowski, a custom residential builder who lives in Rochester Hills, proposes to do.

Rutkowski, president of James Joseph Enterprises, has constructed many houses with contemporary designs during his eight years in the business. His American model won the Peoples' Choice Award as most popular at last year's Homearama in Oakland Township.

At the same time, he's noticed that some of his clients want touches of old within a modern structure. "We've done it in pieces," Rutkowski said. "It may be wood on walls like they used to do, wet plaster, special stacked wood trim on the floor, three-panel doors with maybe crystal knobs . . . hardwood floors, tile in the bath all the way up the wall."

Also, some of Rutkowski's acquaintances started expressing the desire to buy an existing historic house rather than building new, figuring that they could get more of exactly what they want for their money.

Builders don't really like to hear that. So Rutkowski started thinking and came up with a plan.

"We can do these exact duplications of houses in Royal Oak and Detroit. We can put a person in something like that brand new."

And it doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg, either, Rutkowski maintained. He's building a 2,500-square-foot Tudor with four bedrooms, 2½ baths and two-car garage in northern Oakland County for \$170,000. The lot cost an additional \$40,000.

"People might figure they've got \$160,000 to spend, so they'll settle for this house figuring this is the best we can do," Rutkowski said. "They should be spending \$100,000 or \$300,000 and getting exactly what they want."

"This is really headed for people who would like a new house, but like the feeling of an old house," he said. "Someone who might want modern appliances, engineering of today, modern heating systems, good windows."

"Basically, we can put someone in a new home for the price of a used home."

Reliable, experienced subcontractors plus knowledge of materials and supplies built up over the years in dealing with special touches requested by clients enable him to do just that, Rutkowski said.

Desire is a big key, too. "Most builders are taking a plan and deciding by themselves what someone wants," he said. "They offer that to the public and whatever comes through, comes through."

"I'm saying the heck with that. Why don't we do something exactly what people want? They can say, 'Jim, I've always loved this house in Grosse Pointe, this is my budget,' and I'm able to do it for them."

Rutkowski can work off photographs clients bring in. He also has access to reproductions that designers around the country make available.

"We've now got an architect (Tom Kurmas of Bloomfield Hills) who can do a 3D drawing of the outside and inside so a person can fit the rooms in however they want," Rutkowski said.

"We're able to color the mortar, color the concrete. Copper is tarnished. Through the years I've kind of collected where this stuff is available," he said. "It's a big load of expertise."

Rutkowski, who has built upwards of a dozen houses annually in recent years, most in a range of \$100,000 to \$275,000, hopes that diversification will bring him more business. But he has no delusions.

"I really feel there's a niche, but not in bulk numbers," he said. "I don't want to become a massive tract builder. What's the population in metro Detroit — 4½ million? I'm only looking for 10 people a year."

"We're not just doing this," Rutkowski said. "We're still going to be building some modern homes. I want to build and hold their hands through things on the exact lot, in the exact location exactly how they want it," he said.



Historic choice: This Federalist model is one of many reproductions that builder James Rutkowski can make available to potential buyers.

WHY ARE SO MANY FAMILIES SAYING "YES" TO VINTAGE ESTATES IN ROCHESTER HILLS?



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