

BUILDING SCENE

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1993

BUILDING SCENE'S NAMES & PLACES



Withers



Farrelly



Blough

Smith's movers-shakers

Southfield-based Arthur F. Smith Architects has added an architect and two designers to its full-service team that focuses on high-end residential, commercial and retail architecture and interiors.

Steven G. Farrelly, formerly of Constantine George Pappas, has been hired as a project architect responsible for the development and quality control of various projects including the master plan and design of a 300-acre camp facility in the Irish Hills.

Julie K. Blough, a drafting and design assistant for Smith, and Scott A. Withers, formerly of Neumann and Smith Associates, have been named designers for several interiors projects.

Classes and more classes

The Michigan Builders Institute and Livonia Community Education are offering the following classes in September:

■ Pre-licensing class. A 16-hour evening seminar to prepare people to pass the state's builders' licensing examination, 6-10 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, Sept. 20, 22, 27 and 29 at the Bentley Center (Hubbard south of Five Mile). Cost \$150. Pre-registration Thursday, Sept. 16.

■ Basic roofing techniques. One evening class on the basic techniques for applying roofing materials 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 21, at the Bentley Center. Cost \$35. Pre-registration no later than Friday, Sept. 17.

■ Applying vinyl siding. One evening class on the techniques of applying vinyl siding 6:30-9:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 23, at the Bentley Center. Cost \$35. Pre-registration no later than Tuesday, Sept. 21.

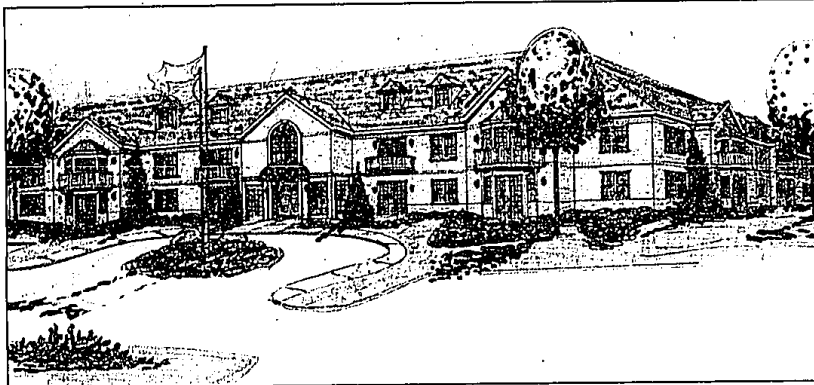
For more information on the classes, call Livonia Community Ed at 625-9277 or the Michigan Builders Institute at 651-4771.

AAM seminar

A seminar on communication skills, "The Art of Asking Questions," is being offered by the Apartment Association of Michigan 8 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Sept. 14, at the Northfield Hilton (5500 Crooks at I-76) in Troy. Registration fee is \$75 for AAM and Builders' Association members, \$100 for non-members.

Mike Wickert, a communications consultant in Birmingham, will speak on ways to create business and close sales by asking the right questions. Call 737-4477 to register.

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



Apartment: *Hardly looks like senior citizen housing, does it? As Botsford Commons administrator Steven Faine said: "Who wants to wake up every morning and be slapped in the face with a reminder that they are getting old?"*

Un-Commons

A fresh face for senior housing



■ To look at it, you would never guess that Botsford Commons was senior citizen housing, and that's the way it was designed. Things that normally distinguish a home for the aging — support rails, emergency equipment and the like — are built-in and out of sight.

By GERALD FRAWLEY
STAFF WRITER

Botsford Commons in Farmington Hills has been promoted as independent senior citizen housing — and it is that — but such a label is misleading.

When Steven Faine, Botsford General Hospital administrator for professional and support services, sat down with architect Scott Bowers of Bowers and Associates of Ann Arbor, the design philosophy was to take senior citizen housing a step further.

Let's call it evolving housing. That means designing houses suitable for perfectly healthy, active senior citizens and incorporating features that allow the houses to evolve to meet the needs of an aging population.

"At the same time, these things are invisible unless you need them," Faine said. "The analogy we like to use is that of a hospital birthing room."

Birthing rooms approximate a com-



fortable bedroom, but when the need arises for, say oxygen, a panel is slid out of the way and oxygen tanks are revealed.

"That's what we're trying to do here," Faine said. "When we're all done with this, I want people to say they own a nice house, not a senior citizen house."

Hidden safety aids

When completed, Botsford Commons will include attached residential condominiums and apartments for active seniors, an assisted living center for those who need a little help, the Botsford Continuing Health Center for seniors who need more intensive medical attention, a Town Commons with activities, dining, shops and services and a wooded site com-

pleted with a trail network for the entire development.

It may turn out that some residents of Botsford Commons never need the additional features the group is designing in.

"And that's fine," Faine said. "But it's nice to know it's there if you need it."

A simple example, Faine explained, are support rails. Certainly, not every person is going to need handrails.

It can be expensive to retrofit a house with hand rails if someone needs them. A builder who installs them during construction, however, risks scaring buyers.

"Who wants to wake up every morning and be slapped in the face with a reminder that they're getting old?" Faine asked.

For Botsford Commons houses, the solution is to design special chair rail moldings — almost invisible from anywhere but right on top of them and securely fastened to wall studs — that double as grab bars.

Breaking new ground

Builder John Wineman of Southfield-based building company Wineman & Komer, said Botsford Commons is unlike any project he's worked on.

"It's been a real learning experience," he said. "The biggest market coming is the senior market."

"You really have to put yourself in the mind of the senior citizen."

See BOTSFORD, 2F

Your grandmother might not recognize what they're doing with her vinyl today

No longer simply the serviceable stuff that covered your mother's kitchen floor, vinyl has come of age in the '90s.

While still as durable and easy care as you might remember, vinyl is now available in more colors and interesting patterns than ever before.

"If your cabinets and appliances are in good shape but your kitchen still seems like it needs some work, the problem may be underfoot," said Florence Perchuk, a top kitchen designer.

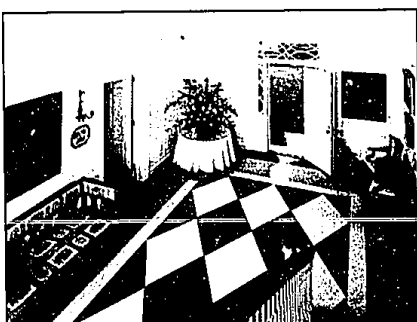
"Adding new colorful sheet vinyl flooring may be just the thing to breathe new life into the room without breaking the bank," she said.

Retail outlets here quote prices in the mid \$600 range for a good quality vinyl, subfloor and installation for a room 15-by-9 feet.

Builders also put vinyl in foyers, breakfast nooks, sunrooms, bathrooms and utility rooms of new houses.

Who's attracted to vinyl? "It goes from all ages — new homeowners to senior citizens who want something easy to maintain," said Sheri Barber, assistant manager at Independent Carpet in Westland.

"Usually the first question has to do with budget, then how long they expect the floor to last," she said. "Schemes constantly change. Technology is constantly improving."



It's vinyl: This floor in the foyer of a mansion in Atlanta is, believe it or not, vinyl. Shows you how far vinyl has come in terms of its design potential.

Like any other product, all vinyl flooring is not created equal.

Consumers should do their homework before buying to make sure the pattern, color, quality and maintenance of what they buy will meet their needs.

If you're remodeling, ask to take floor samples home to see how they actually look out.

"It looks different in your light," Barber said. "Look at it

with your cabinetry, how your carpeting comes up."

Major manufacturers include Armstrong, Mannington, Congoleum and Tarkett. Vinyl ranges in price from \$7.99 to \$33.95, Barber said.

Other things to consider when making a selection, according to Armstrong World Industries:

■ Easy care.

See VINYL, 3F

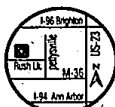
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