

Park Ridge from page 1F

"We have a large woodland that backs up to Pontiac Trail. There isn't a bad lot in the whole sub. The site really affords quite a bit of privacy," Cohen said.

"Aesthetically, this is a fabulously beautiful piece of land," Friedman said. "It's very low density with approximately 30 acres of open space."

"The perception of Pontiac Trail as you take it from Orchard Lake Road and go west is that houses are selling from a half million to three million. Pontiac Trail has never really been opened to this market," he added.

A good deal on the land, smaller models, no lakefront frontage or access and — until fairly recently — not the best of road access all combined to result in lower prices, Cohen said.

Construction of the Haggerty Connector (a limited-access highway under construction a quarter mile west of Haggerty between I-96 and Pontiac Trail) provides a golden opportunity for Park Ridge, Friedman said.

The partners acquired the land about 3 1/2 years ago but got haggled down in the approval and development processes as West Bloomfield struggled with growth.

Selective and Cohen will do all the building themselves. Six models each with several different elevations or exterior looks are available.

Our client is people in the growing family stage.

Larry Cohen
Cohen Associates Inc.

"Nothing is more disappointing than to go into a sub where a majority of builders does a fine job, but someone comes in with different standards and a homeowner finds something next door that he doesn't care for," Cohen said.

The typical Park Ridge family has children and is buying at least their second brand new house.

"They're mostly younger, dual-income families," Friedman said.

"It's definitely move-up," Cohen added. "You're seeing young physicians, attorneys, independent business types."

Visitors to the two models, the Monterey and Newport, are especially taken with the openness, the combination living room/dining room, the work island in the kitchen and the dramatic two-story foyer, said Gail Sandweiss, sales coordinator.

"Our client is people in the growing family stage," Cohen said. "Parents like a family room as a center of entertainment for the children. Things go on in the kitchen. Here's a

nook and there's four of us sitting around this table and no one is crowded. You have a large cooking area."

"Curb appeal is real important," Friedman said. "We put a tremendous amount of attention to detail on the elevations — bricks, porches, window details, roof lines."

One interesting twist in the Newport model is a second-floor room with windows overlooking the foyer. The space can be used as a fourth bedroom or as a study room, exercise room, dayroom or sitting/sewing room.

"The Monterey is our most popular model," Friedman said. "Any and every room has access to a tremendous amount of light. It has a sit-up master bedroom, open foyer, dramatic stairwell."

Selective and Cohen have acquired 70 acres directly across the street from Park Ridge, where they plan to build houses in the \$300,000-\$500,000 range starting next year.

Park Ridge is in the Walled Lake School District. The current property tax rate for municipal, school and county services is \$54.66 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation, half of market value.

That means the owner of a house worth \$250,000 in Park Ridge now would pay about \$5,500 annually in property taxes. That, however, probably will change as state lawmakers decide on a new school financing plan.



Dramatic view: The two-story foyer in both the Monterey and Newport is a visual lure. Shown is a stairway into the Newport living room.

Watchdog from page 1F

What we want to see happen is the two parties sit down and reach some kind of agreement. For the most part, I think we achieve that.

"We provide business reports to the public through our inquiry department (644-9100) 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We're currently reporting on 35,000 businesses."

"We don't report on number of complaints, but overall file condition — satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Satisfactory would typically reflect that when matters are presented by the BBB, the business has been responsive to get them addressed or resolved."

"If we identify a pattern of a specific type of complaint, that will be noted in the report as well."

What else do you do?
Nighbor: In September of this year, we sent out close to 2,100 complaint forms (which consumers can obtain by calling 644-9100).

"We'll review a complaint and be in a position to provide a copy to businesses and request that they review and respond. Eighty percent of the complaints to businesses are responded to either directly to our customers

or our offices.

We offer mediation and arbitration in a voluntary program. We can provide general tips through consumer information on a variety of subjects.

Advertiser: We take our advertising very seriously here. We have people assigned to read ads, challenge ads and a pool of volunteer shoppers who do much of the legwork.

What don't you do?

Nighbor: We don't get involved in collection of accounts, complaints against individuals, employer/employee disputes, landlord/tenant issues and matters that may have already been presented to regulatory agencies or courts of law.

Why would businesses join the BBB?

Nighbor: Probably the most important thing is they have expressed to the community an interest in ethical advertising and selling practices. Companies sign off that they're properly licensed to conduct business in the state.

Advertiser: Our base membership is \$250 per year for the smallest of customers. We have

members that pay \$10,000 per year. It's based essentially on a company's (sales) dollar volume.

If you said (annual dues of) \$250-\$500 . . . that's the bulk of what we do.

You have to find a way to get to the person who makes decisions. You have to make several calls to get someone signed up. I think that's a general condition of any sale.

It generally boils down to cost. They say, 'It's not in our budget, see us next time.' Cost, I'd say, is the biggest item, although it's a relatively small amount. But we're not the only organization pounding on their doors asking them to become a member.

What kind of complaints and inquiries are most common?

Nighbor: Now, mortgage companies, because of a decrease in interest rates, has been a large source of inquiries. We receive inquiries about working at home opportunities, from individuals that get notification of prize winnings.

Now in fall, we get an increase in furnace-cleaning companies. Every fall, like clockwork. In summer, it's vacations and travel agents; spring, home improvements.

Farmer Jack revamps store

Farmer Jack Supermarkets created 20 new jobs in refurbishing its Livonia store at 37685 Five Mile to the tune of \$450,000.

The face lift is part of the 77-store metro chain's \$70 million capital growth program in southeast Michigan, taking place during 1992 and 1993. The Livonia store is the 47th to be completed under the renovation-rebuilding program. Don Suida is store manager. Jim Fox and Brian Robinson are co-managers.

When the 38,000-square-foot store hosted its grand reopening Sunday, customers were introduced to many new departments, prototype conveniences and important advances in the supermarket industry.

"This new Farmer Jack Supermarket is typical of the new and remodeled facilities that are making Farmer Jack one of the most modern regional supermarket chains in America," said James Wood, chairman of The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., owner of the Farmer Jack chain.

Almost all of the company's Michigan stores have been revitalized recently. "We intend

to keep them that way and make sure our stores here are up to date," Wood said. "We have at least 10 new store locations identified over the next two years and our remodeling and expansion programs will continue."

"A combination of new consumer needs and high technology allows us to really focus on customer service in our new and remodeled stores," said Craig Sturken, Michigan Group vice president.

"In the Livonia store, customers can use the post office, pay bills, get photos developed and buy a lottery ticket as well as use many other services. We think they will especially like our innovative new recycling center," he added.

"We listened to our customers. We know they expect low prices and broad product selection with quality and service. They also want all the newest conveniences such as our innovative self-service bottle return, gourmet service meat counter, flower shop, pharmacy, post office, bakery and deli."

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CLARIFICATION

In the Nov. 11 Building & Business section, we inadvertently ran the wrong telephone number for the new Entertainment '94 West/Southwest book, one of three Detroit editions from Troy-based Entertainment Publications.

The books are available for \$40. To obtain a copy, call 637-8444 Ext. 868. Or write: Entertainment Publications Inc., 2125 Butterfield Road, Troy, MI 48064.

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